

# The Cognition of the Frontier: Great Zimbabwe

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## INTRODUCTION

The prospect of new world(s) summons us into *other* worlds. The tools with which we examine the unknown are inevitably obsolete, hampering our re-cognition of unexplored fields of knowledge. More often, the expectations surrounding the discovery and scrutiny of new worlds are saddled with proclivities, myth and lore which compromise exploration. Through a narrative of the mercantile and political exploitation of the Great Zimbabwe, this paper seeks to illustrate how predetermined hypotheses in the exploration of new frontiers thwarted and continues to impede a more inclusive research in the case of the Great Zimbabwe, an historical monument on ICOMOS' register of world monuments.

## COGNITION

The Great Zimbabwe has been at the center of sub-Saharan archaeological debate for over a century. Late 19th-century British settlers – believing that the Great Zimbabwe was the “lost city of Ophir – the site of King Solomon’s mines” – were intent on exploring it for its mineral wealth. It is now an ancient symbol of a newly formed nation. One of the few remaining stone pre-historic **monuments** on the African continent outside the pyramids, the Great Zimbabwe presented an opportunity to the British South Africa Company, led by Cecil Rhodes, to exploit its mineral deposits. (Re)discovered by Carl Mauch in 1871, Mauch published the impression that the monument was in fact the site of the Biblical “Ophir,” despite the apparent dissonance between the Great Zimbabwe and the description of Solomon’s temple in the book of Kings in the Bible. Published stories by Arab traders in the 10th century and Portuguese traders in the 16th century about stone fortresses protecting bounti-

ful gold mines in the African interior due west of Sofala – confirmed the desire to identify the Great Zimbabwe with King Solomon’s mines. By the 17th century, such ruminations had become common enough currency for Milton in *Paradise Lost* to make reference to Sofala in Moçambique as “Sofala thought Ophir.” Therefore, 19th-century British settlers, led by Cecil Rhodes, explored Zimbabwe with predetermined assumptions about its identity and history.

When the Great Zimbabwe was first discovered by Mauch, it was quickly acquired as a territory by the British South Africa Company – the only British colonial preserve acquired for the distinct purpose



Fig. 1 Northwest entry to Great Enclosure.



Fig. 2. Aerial view of Great Enclosure.

of extracting mineral wealth. After mining facilities were not found at the Great Zimbabwe, the plunder and exploration of the rest of Zimbabwe began with the assumption that the mines might have been located elsewhere, but the monument was the location of the ore's refinement and storage. The number of Portuguese 15th-, 16th-, and 17th-century accounts of stone fortresses due west of Sofala (now near Beira, Mozambique) in the African interior, protecting bountiful sources of gold, confirmed Mauch's and Cecil Rhodes' speculation about the possible identity of Ophir. In order to authenticate these assumptions, the British placed the construction of the ruins in ancient times, allegedly built by a non-African civilization. Dating



Fig. 3. Shona hut made of wattle and daub.



Fig. 4. "Street" at the Great Zimbabwe.

the ruins as "ancient" also allowed them to assume the existing indigenous population of branches of Bantu peoples were not the authors of the Great Zimbabwe.

The unique spatial characteristics of the Great Zimbabwe's architecture relative to architectural history, its stone construction, the fact that local contemporary native Zimbabwean housing at the time was, and still is, impermanent – made of wattle and daub and not stone construction – justified Rhodes' desire to look to foreign origins for the ruins.

As we understand Western space, its territorial, proprietary and marketable character depends on its compartmentalization and determination by boundaries that are mathematical and astronomically based on techniques of surveying and cartography. The historical western bias of orthogonally compartmentalized space has a long and complex history contingent on assumptions founded on Euclidean Geometry and Cartesian space, reconsidered when the 19th-century mathematics introduced us to the concept of "curved space" and 20th-century physics introduced us to the theory of irregular space. The attempt to transcend Euclidean space in modern architecture depended on breaking the rubric of compartmentalization — a classical principle. Needless to say, "comprehension" of the irregular and curvilinear walls at the Great Zimbabwe made them difficult to classify, but because they were stone, and due west of Sofala, they were presumed to be an ancient architecture.

On the other hand, the contemporary Zimbabwe's government present stance states that the Great Zimbabwe was the capital of a *Shona* empire, a group culturally similar to Bantu speaking peoples,

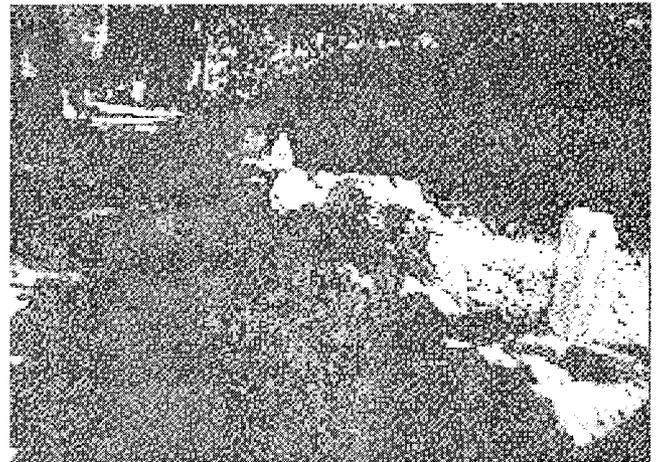


Fig. 5. Beginning of procession to BaVenda Homestead in Kruger National Park, South Africa.



Fig. 6. Manyika stone house in Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe.

that built with dry stone architecture to display its **power**, rather than excavate gold. Their explanation for the entire disappearance of stone building amongst the contemporary MaShona, and the shift back to wattle and daub, was the deterioration of that power through colonial invasion. However, there are existing Bantu cultures in the eastern highlands of Zimbabwe, northern South Africa and Moçambique that continue to build in dry stone construction with great similarity to the technical style at the Great Zimbabwe.

The history and archaeology of settlement with dry stone architecture in modern Zimbabwe, Moçambique and South Africa, Zambia and Malawi has been, since the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, a fascinating and hotly debated research issue. The Great Zimbabwe has been at the center of this debate because despite the presence of differing types of stone building throughout Zimbabwe, Moçambique, northern South Africa, Malawi, Zambia and Botswana, the Great Zimbabwe is the most dramatic and largest prehistoric site in sub-Saharan Africa. The myth that the Great Zimbabwe was tied to ancient gold mining motivated a singular preconceived archaeological study of it – at first by amateur archaeologists who stimulated interest in the stone monument by professional archaeologists as early as 1905.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, much of the archaeological study of the Great Zimbabwe throughout the 20th century has separated it from three stone building types found in Moçambique, northern South Africa and Zimbabwe: the Inyanga stone pit dwelling and dry stone terracing of eastern Zimbabwe, the zimbabwe free standing dry stone building found in Zimbabwe, Moçambique and northern South Africa, and dry stone retaining wall construction best represented at sites like Khami and Dhlodhlo, not far from the Great Zimbabwe. All in all, there are 500 known smaller dry stone ruins throughout Zimbabwe, northern South Africa, and Moçambique varying technically and formally from one another which have not been **systematically** studied in relationship to the stone technology at the Great Zimbabwe or to one another. Dry stone construction has been labelled “zimbabwe”

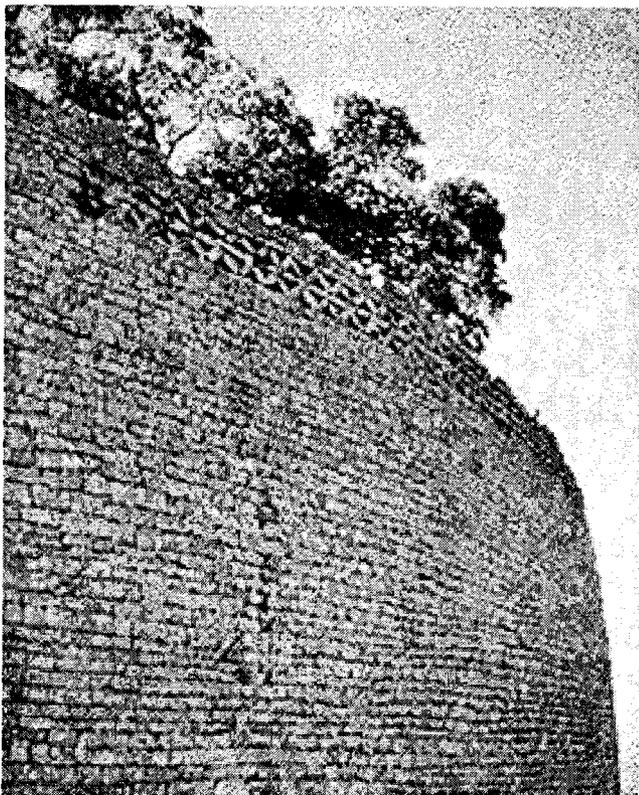


Fig. 7. South dry stone and undressed wall of Great Enclosure, Masvingo Zimbabwe.



Fig. 8. Undressed stone “kraal” with daga as cement and daga huts above in Manyika Eastern Highlands, Zimbabwe.



Fig. 9. Retaining dry stone walls at Khami, Zimbabwe.

(spelled with a zed) due to the meaning of the word zimbabwe: “houses of stone.”

Subscribers to typing this stone construction and attributing formal differences to differing cultures of differing time periods<sup>2</sup> have been challenged by contemporary interpretation that prefers identifying stone construction in sub-Saharan Africa as part of an “encompassing civilization.”<sup>3</sup>

Ironically, Randall Maclver wrote in 1906<sup>4</sup>:

There is no difference whatever in essential character between the rough buildings that are found in the Inyanga district and those of the Monomotapa Capital: Great Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe reproduces every feature of the northern sites, only with more elaboration and on a huger scale. The “Elliptical Temple” can be completely explained as a combination of the developed form of Inyanga hill-fort with such a stone-fenced kraal as Nanatali.

The lack of information about ethnological history and the spotty archaeological digging amongst the three types of building have yielded inconclusive and conflicting theories about the “zimbabwe stone culture.” Pre-colonial history is a young discipline. Born in the 1960’s, much of what its sources depended on in Zimbabwe were oral tradition and written Arab and Portuguese accounts. By the 1980’s, pre-colonial history had become outdated and investigating the political history of people sharing the same language was considered “tribalist” and “racist.” As the contemporary Shona do not build in stone, academic archaeology in Zimbabwe today promotes the study of the ruins as evidence of a ubiquitous civilization

with little physical or written evidence beyond the stone building of the Zimbabwe Kame culture and Moorish and Portuguese reports. By contrast, the Zimbabwe government has no interest in further research connecting the Great Zimbabwe to stone building beyond its borders, sustaining pre-colonial historical conclusions which separate the Shona from other Bantu cultures building in stone outside Zimbabwe today, as well as Bantu cultures within Zimbabwe building typologically otherwise than free standing stone walling.

On the other hand, the Great Zimbabwe has been exhaustively studied throughout the 20th century by a series of archeological and has remained the focus of archaeological scholarship in the 20th century, intent on establishing its authorship. The present Zimbabwean government continues to reinforce the claim that the Great Zimbabwe was the locus of a **Shona** empire, a curiosity that promotes tourism.

Consequently, differing written accounts – by Arab, Portuguese, English and Dutch profiteers in the 10th, 16th and 19th centuries respectively, and 20th-century archaeological speculation marred by political manipulation – have unremittingly sensationalized the narration of the Great Zimbabwe, perpetuating expectations about it when it was discovered to some, while constructing narratives that cannot be confirmed to others.

### ICONOGRAPHIC RATIONALIZATION

African Shona and Rhodesian white Nationalists alike endorsed contradictory and mutually exclusive accounts of the origins of the ruins in order to justify their rule. So entrenched were these positions that the Great Zimbabwe became a battle cry in the war for independence for both sides. During the war, the monument was used by white Rhodesians to prove that native Africans were incapable of systematic organization because they contemporaneously were building in wattle and daub; for the MaShona people it became a sanctuary for divining with Shona ancestors and the reason they claim to have won their war, an anecdote not shared by the Zimbabwean government's tourist literature about the Great Zimbabwe today.<sup>5</sup> In fact, the indigenous Shona religious ethnography relating to the history at the Great Zimbabwe is dismissed by the quasi-Marxist government intent on entering the 21st century without sustaining Shona tradition. The Great Zimbabwe and exhibitions of Bantu and Shona traditions are currently marketed to the tourist trade with little disclosure of the communal and social practices that have made the Great Zimbabwe and the "zimbabwe" culture meaningful. Thus, the way in which the Great Zimbabwe might have been used other than as a royal court for a Shona empire is superficially represented to the foreign tourist.<sup>6</sup>

There is not a square angle throughout the Great Zimbabwe. The fluid spaces within the Great Zimbabwe, its sinuous curves, inconsistent granite walls made of local granite exfoliating from the hills, and its symbiotic relationship to the granite slopes it hugs eludes easy architectural categorization. As Randall-MacIver was to say: "For the style of the buildings by itself affords no criterion. It cannot be proved to owe anything to foreign influences: all characteristics of Oriental and European architecture are entirely absent..." The complex is a collection of unroofed stone wall enclosures which spread over one hundred acres, lying within a valley and atop a summit. The Acropolis (allegedly the oldest structure within the entire complex), weaves its way around and through large blocks of granite as if its builders were making deliberate attempts to establish a discourse between walling and existing granite boulders. The spaces created inbetween simulate the crevices between large granite boulders. Traces of turrets are said to have existed every 2 meters along the whole length of the West Wall, which is 8 m high and 5 meters thick at the top.

The rest of the Great Zimbabwe includes what is known as the Great Enclosure, the Maund Ruins and the Valley Ruins. Turrets,

buttresses, platforms, pillars and hut mounds appear throughout. The Great Enclosure's walls are characterized by masonry detailing that is allegedly several centuries later than the Hilltop Enclosure and suggests, to those that think the same people built the Great Enclosure as did the Hilltop Enclosure, that the later building marks a clear development of "technological style."<sup>7</sup> In this sense, the "style" of walling of the north-east wall of the Great Enclosure is probably the most impressive walling throughout the Great Zimbabwe. The conical towers that mark the Great Enclosure are completely solid and previous digs to probe them for treasure or to determine their function have all yielded virtually no understanding to date. (Archaeological analysis throughout the 20th century has remained speculative because, despite numerous amateur excavations and professionally organized digs, early looting by amateurs and profiteers at the beginning of the 20th century removed five to six levels of strata, leaving behind findings that had been shifted around thus thwarting conclusive archaeological investigation.<sup>8</sup> Inconclusive evidence has not stopped speculation, however. Four professional archaeological digs, (including carbon dating) intended to finally date the ruins have simply added more contention to the number of already abundant stories about the Great Zimbabwe, while political oppression has precluded any further attempts to draw parallels to stone building outside of Zimbabwe.

Before independence and before it was fashionable to attribute the building of the Great Zimbabwe to the Shona people, Peter Garlake, a local white archaeologist and architect, was deported for his assertions in *The Great Zimbabwe* of 1972, that the Shona built the Great Zimbabwe. Ironically, Garlake uses 15th-17th-century Portuguese "written accounts" to substantiate the claim that the Great Zimbabwe was the center of a native African kingdom whose only purpose was its representation of power. He uses João de Barros' familiar quotation from *Da Asia*, published in 1552, as evidence that Portuguese traders were referring to the Great Zimbabwe in their accounts.<sup>9</sup> João de Barros says:

There are other mines in a district called Toroa, which by another name is known as the kingdom of Butua, which is ruled by a prince called Burrom, a vassal of Benomotapa, which land adjoins that aforesaid vast plains, and these mines are the most ancient known in the country, and they are all in the plain, in the midst of which there is a **square fortress, of masonry** and within and without, built of stones of marvelous size, and there appears to be no mortar joining them. The wall is more than twenty five spans in width and the height is not so great considering the width. ...When, and by whom, these edifices were raised, as the people of the land are ignorant of the art of writing, there is no record, but (the people say they are the work of the devil, for in comparison with their power and knowledge it does not seem possible to them that they should be the work of man. Some Moors who saw it, to whom Vicente Pegado, who was the captain of Sofala, showed our fortresses there and the work of the windows and arches, that they might compare it with the stone work of the said edifice, said that they could not be compared with it for smoothness and perfection. The distance of this edifice from Sofala in a direct line to the west is a hundred and seventy leagues, or thereabouts, and it is between 20° buildings in those parts, the people being barbarians, and all their houses of wood.

In the opinion of the Moors who saw it, it is very ancient, and was built there to keep possession of the mines, which are very old, and no gold has been extracted from them for years, because of the wars. Considering the situation and the fashion of the edifice, so far in the interior, and which the Moors confess was not raised by them, from its antiquity and their we may suppose that this is the region which Ptolemy calls Agysymba.

Garlake uses this quotation to verify this siting as the Great

Zimbabwe by the Portuguese, despite the fact that this description – “a square fortress” and the vague references to the Queen of Sheba and gold mines – hardly comes close to describing the monument or substantiating Garlake’s claim that the Great Zimbabwe was simply a Royal Court built to express Royal power. The quotation, and in fact the number of Portuguese citations are evidence that the gold of Sofala was as important to the Portuguese in the 16th century as the mining of the entire eastern coast of Africa had been to Islam and the Moors in the 10th century. The occupation of the East African coast was a secondary affair for the Portuguese. Citations like:

In the whole kingdom of Vealanga gold is extracted; and in this way: they dig out the earth and make a kind of tunnel through which they go under the earth a long stone’s throw, and keep on taking out from the veins with the ground mixed with the gold, and, when remains and the gold all fine gold”<sup>10</sup>

by Diego de Alcaçova confirms Portuguese interest in gold in the African interior.

### THE FOUNDING OF A NATION: EARLY AMATEUR SPECULATION, DIGS, AND CIVIL WAR

Cecil Rhodes’s mania to ransack the country of Zimbabwe motivated him to establish the Royal Charter for his own British South Africa Company in 1890, which Britain granted on the condition that white settlers be granted self-government within ten years. However, the charter was granted on the strength of an agreement between Rhodes and Lobengula, the ruler of the powerful Ndebele kingdom which inhabited the surroundings of the Great Zimbabwe in 1888. Lobengula permitted the occupation with the misunderstanding that the agreement acknowledged his sovereignty. It was only later that he and his kingdom were told that the Great Zimbabwe had originally been built and occupied by white men. The BSAC established itself in Mashonaland in 1890, and in 1895 its territory south of the Zambezi was named Rhodesia. A merger was rejected by whites and a very few eligible African voters with the Union of South Africa. Instead, Rhodesia became a British colony in which income qualifications excluded Africans from electoral rolls and the government enjoyed complete autonomy.<sup>11</sup>

In a 1965 Unilateral Declaration of Independence, a white supremacist government declared Rhodesia independent of Britain, retaining in the newly independent government what had been established already in the colony: native Africans were not represented and were to be used as slave labor. Finally destroyed by international economic sanctions and tribal guerilla warfare, the Rhodesian regime ended in 1979 and was replaced by its first native Prime Minister who had been the leader of the African freedom fighters—Robert Mugabe—and the official country name became Zimbabwe. To understand the native African’s triumph in claiming authorship for the Great Zimbabwe and the vacuous understanding of its architecture, one must summarize the archaeological scholarship prior to independence in 1980.

From the beginning, Rhodes financed several projects seeking the origins of the ruins and its famous soapstone birds. He commissioned translations of the Portuguese records of southeastern Africa, the original ancient sources for Gibbons’ *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, as well as an archival search by Alexander Wilmut for descriptions of Zimbabwe, in an attempt to make correlations between the style of the bird statues, the ruins, and any possible literary description of them. He also commissioned Theodore Bent, an English explorer and author, to embark on an archaeological expedition, financed by the Royal Geographical Society, the British Association for the Advancement of Science and the British South Africa Company. The results of both of these efforts came to the same conclusion and are important to mention because they set the tone for all arguments to follow: The Shona could not have built the Great Zimbabwe, despite their peaceful and industrious character,

because “the Negroid brain could never be capable of taking the initiative in work of such intricate nature. Africans were congenitally incapable of the social organization required for such a task because they were both natural wanderers and anarchists.”<sup>12</sup> Bent concluded that Monomotapa had disintegrated “like all kaffir” combinations do after a generation. He thought this was proven by the fact that the present Shona people of Rhodesia couldn’t even fight off their common enemy (the Zulu) some of which had migrated north in droves and called themselves Ndebele. “The only possible way Africans might have built the Great Zimbabwe was as ‘slaves of a race of higher civilization’,”<sup>13</sup> Bent argued, as perhaps by Arabs, Phoenecians, Assyrians or Egyptians, basing his conclusions on the style of the architecture and decoration of the ruins, the orientation of the structures denoting sun worship, and the stylized statues of the birds and phalli. Artifacts found around the ruins indicating its inhabitants had been involved in gold mining and commercial trade with the East, India and Arabia, only served to strengthen his argument: that a commercially sophisticated people far more advanced than black skinned Africans had built the Great Zimbabwe.

The real plundering and distortion of the Great Zimbabwe, after its valuable booty had been extracted, was accomplished by Richard N. Hall, another amateur archaeologist and English journalist living in Zimbabwe, appointed by Rhodes to preserve the ruins. Instead of preserving the site, he disturbed it so much that stratigraphical reading, strictly speaking, became virtually impossible. Despite his rabid feelings against the indigenous natives around the Great Zimbabwe, Hall concluded that a heathen “Negroid people,” described by the Portuguese, had probably built the Great Zimbabwe under coercion and direction from an ancient people who finally had to leave the area, forsaking their progeny: a mixture of Semitic and Black Africans called the Makalanga, or the Karanga (the Karanga are direct descendents of the Mashona.) Significantly, Hall wrote two books: *Great Zimbabwe*, (London 1905) and *Prehistorica Rhodesia* (London 1909) about the Great Zimbabwe which were soon to come under direct attack from scientific circles.

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

In 1905, the British Association for Advancement of Science sponsored David Randall MacIver, a trained archaeologist, to conduct the first official dig at the Great Zimbabwe for their first meeting in South Africa. His conclusions shook the white establishment in Rhodesia. He said that the ruins were not an evolution of building, but rather a single monument built in one epoch, around the 14th or 15th century. He said foreign trading had confused the issue for previous research projects by providing foreign artifacts. He astounded the local population by proclaiming that there was no real evidence that foreign intruders had actually built the ruins. In fact, Portuguese settlers had stated explicitly that the people inhabiting the Monomotapa kingdom (at the Great Zimbabwe) were what the Moors called Kaffirs. Thus, the Great Zimbabwe “was built by Africans, in African style, for African purposes.”<sup>14</sup>

It was clear to Randall-MacIver that the structures were an amplification of contemporary ethnography throughout the country. Most significantly for the reception of his thesis, however, MacIver’s observations defused the ruins’ architectural importance by stating they were anything but architectural marvels: The technology was far too simple-minded and crude, and the ruins themselves unrepresentative of anything but an evolution of an inferior culture. The Great Zimbabwe had not been the site of a gold mine, but the site of a distribution center for minerals mined elsewhere by native Africans.<sup>15</sup>

There were counter-attacks by locals, namely Hall, who criticized MacIver for not talking to the local natives. (According to Hall they had no existing oral tradition that spoke of the Great Zimbabwe.) The fact that black scholarship is now unearthing an impressive amount

of oral tradition about the Great Zimbabwe, somehow escaped Hall's notice.) Hall also criticized MacIver for not acknowledging that any archaeological dig would have to be fallacious due to Hall's own pillaging. Hall's counter-attack finally became a quasi-official defense of the superiority of local and amateur knowledge and a moral tale justifying the establishment of a white settler society in southern Africa because native Africans had no clear title to the land for reasons already mentioned.<sup>16</sup> Despite the opposition, there were those locals who were able to swallow MacIver's account because "it was easier to accept that Great Zimbabwe had been built by Africans if its construction (as MacIver had already conceded) were to be considered rudimentary."<sup>17</sup> F. C. Selous was one such supporter of MacIver stating "there was not a single straight line throughout the ruins."<sup>18</sup> Proof positive that the Great Zimbabwe was not a significant monument. By the time a second serious archaeological expedition was under way in 1928, the opposition to having an "expert" evaluate the ruins was considerably organized. Gertrude Caton-Thompson, another highly qualified British archaeologist, was commissioned by the British Association to conduct another dig. Her findings were even more palatable to the white Rhodesians than MacIver's on one level, even though she believed the ruins were built by local natives, she judged the technical standard of the building to be extremely inferior and went so far as to declare that the "architecture at Great Zimbabwe (was) essentially the product of an infantile mind, a prelogical mind."<sup>19</sup> Caton-Thompson had previously spent a great deal of time in Greece and Egypt and therefore compared the Zimbabwe ruins with classical monuments in terms of technology and the rational organization of space. She inferred that since the Great Zimbabwe technology was crude it could not have withstood the millennial time frame expounded by the foreign theory. The Zimbabwe ruins could not be as old as pronounced.<sup>20</sup> She also surmised that the few examples of decoration found in the Great Enclosure did not prove foreign authorship, but, foreign trade. Had foreign authors been responsible for the Great Zimbabwe, the technology and the decoration would have been far more consistent and abundant. Nevertheless, she praised the ruins as material evidence of remarkable indigenous and vigorous native achievement. Not surprisingly, her conclusions were a compromise between Hall and MacIver's conclusions, stating along with MacIver that natives had built the ruins, but that the quality of walling had not evolved from inferior to superior as MacIver concluded. She also concurred with MacIver's thesis that traces of the Great Zimbabwe could be seen in 20th century native indigenous housing. The Great Zimbabwe became a lesson writ in stone for Africans and colonists alike, but for exactly the opposite reasons. For natives, the Great Zimbabwe was positive proof that they were capable of purposive organization and skill. For the colonists, the Great Zimbabwe was proof positive that native culture was and always would be inferior. Still wanting to squelch the indigenous theory, colonists exploited the fantasy of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba theory in the interests of promoting tourism in Rhodesia despite the fact that museum pamphlets, under state auspices, more or less sustained Caton-Thompson's conclusions.<sup>21</sup>

The next serious dig occurred as a group effort in 1958. Amongst a group of three employees of the museums of Rhodesia, Anthony Whitty (who was not an architect) studied the architectural development of the site by classifying wall typology. Keith Robinson, studied pottery and bead sequences on the hill, and Roger Summers excavated the Great Enclosure. Whitty's contribution was significant because it was the first attempt to coordinate walling types to period analysis and pottery analysis. Whitty noticed significant technological changes in wall construction between the Hilltop Enclosure, the Valley Ruins and the Great Enclosure. He also noticed that when walls intersected, what he considered latter walls always rested on earlier walls. He recorded what walls rested on others and his results pointed convincingly to a sequence of walling, which generally classified large areas of the Great Zimbabwe and

supported the notion that the Great Zimbabwe evolved technologically. According to Whitty, the Hilltop Enclosure, with its irregular coursing, illustrated early stages of a development, climaxing in the regularized coursing of the Great Enclosure. Whitty encoded the entire Great Zimbabwe in a walling typology which he labelled: P-PQ-Q-R. P walling was found in the Hill Enclosure and rocky side of the plateau; Q walling was found in the Great Enclosure and Valley Ruins; and R walling was found in peripheral building. Whitty identified two main structural purposes for the walls through his careful classification: retaining walls supported daga accumulations while enclosing partitions separated open areas and daga structures.<sup>22</sup> The difference in these walling types is so significant and consistent that Whitty concluded it must point to a significant difference in function. Q walling, being far more regularized, battered and "stylistic" suggested a great deal of organized effort over a considerable amount of time (which also implied enough social organization to effect such an undertaking.) Whereas entrances were buttressed, wall endings were rounded, and platforms occurred throughout the Great Enclosure, nothing of these features occurred in the Hilltop Enclosure. The irregular P walling might have been erected quickly as the stones had only been modified slightly to approximate a rectangular shape by knocking off rough corners. At the time of this dig in archaeological circles, significant changes in building construction were thought to evidence an intrusion of a new, more developed cultural group.<sup>23</sup> Whitty's conclusions, at the time, were corroborated by changes in pottery and beading style.

It wasn't until Peter Garlake, a Zimbabwean archaeologist and architect, entered the controversy with the possibility of one cultural group evolving over several centuries that serious interest in the relationship to ethnography and the ruins of Zimbabwe were investigated simultaneously. One must keep in mind that at this time, "pre-colonial" historical scholarship pursued theories that supported singurallanguage group and tribal migration studies. This thesis was corroborated in Whitty's typology classification because R walling (which seemed to be erected for purely utilitarian purposes) was clearly inferior, in terms of technology to Q walling, but occurred in the vicinity of Q walling.

After 1965 and the call for Unilateral Declaration of Independence, the state changed its position on archaeological scholarship and no longer allowed the theory of indigenous authorship of the Great Zimbabwe to be told. Guidebooks were changed, and scholarship prevented. Even so, Garlake, as the Inspector of Monuments and Senior Curator of Archaeology at the Queen Victoria Museum discovered a new group of ruins at Bindura in 1968, similar to the Great Zimbabwe, though considerably smaller in scale.<sup>24</sup> The state of Rhodesia officially forbade the narration of the Bindura ruins, but also forbade all state employees from crediting "black-skinned people" with the construction of the Great Zimbabwe. Protest from the international academic community was met with a statement in *Property and Finance*, a Rhodesian magazine, which said "if for centuries Rhodesia was the center of a sophisticated Negroid 'civilisation'...there should be no legitimate opposition to a black take-over of the country."<sup>25</sup> In order to maintain their integrity over scholarship, Garlake, Summers and others were forced to leave Rhodesia.

After Independence, Garlake and others returned to Zimbabwe but found an insidious oppression almost equal to the white supremacist regime. Any conjecture that the Great Zimbabwe – and now the many numbers of ruins that have been discovered that share characteristics with the Great Zimbabwe – was not a civilization of Mwene Matapa or Shona, or even the Rozvi – credited for enterprise in mining, trade, construction, state organization, and a progressive historical trend is discouraged, at least by the Zimbabwe government. Instead, the Great Zimbabwe is promoted as a Mwene Matapa Shona artifact. Studies continue, but the Great Zimbabwe has not been studied systematically by local architects, historians and ar-

chaeologists with regard to surrounding zimbabwe and ethnological studies in and outside of Zimbabwe.

There are three phenomena that still contribute to complicating the depiction of the Great Zimbabwe as a strictly Shona artifact:

1. The public and private habitation patterns of the Shona "musha" as well as their respective building technology demonstrate both great similarities to and marked differences from the Great Zimbabwe.
2. The 500 dry stone smaller zimbabwe suggest an encompassing African civilization whose technology revolved around the use of stone and reaches beyond the borders of Zimbabwe. The smaller zimbabwe often differ dramatically from one to the next in terms of form and building technology.
3. Contemporary groups in northern South Africa and Mozambique continue to build in stone.
4. The Shona homestead, or "musha" does not represent individual proprietorship but rather is a "home of a kinship group" which is mobile and extendable. This fact alone allowed English colonial appropriation, and, even 15 years after Zimbabwe's civil war ended under Shona rule, sustains the impasse between landowners and the Shona culture, whose migratory living patterns often result in squatting on privately owned land. This also helps us understand Zimbabwe's natural affinity to a socialist distribution of half of the land owned by former Rhodesians. But, it does not help explain why the Great Zimbabwe was clearly intended to prevail as a permanent "place of stone" as the Shona "musha" is not.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> D.R. MacIver, *Medieval Rhodesia* (London: 1906).

<sup>2</sup> Joseph O. Vogel, *Great Zimbabwe: The Iron Age in South Central Africa*, (New York: Garland Publishing, 1994).

<sup>3</sup> Augustin F.C. Holl, "Ethnologie et Préhistoire, Université de Paris X," *African Archaeological Review* Vol. 13 #1 (1996). See also: K.T.

Chipunza, "A Diachronic Analysis of the Architecture of the Hill Complex at Great Zimbabwe," *Studies in African Archaeology* #8 (Uppsala: Societas Archaeologica Upsaliensis, 1994).

<sup>4</sup> D.R. MacIver, *Medieval Rhodesia* (London: 1906).

<sup>5</sup> *A Trail to the Great Zimbabwe National Monument* (Harare: ZUNA, 1994).

<sup>6</sup> David Lan, *Guns and Rain: Guerrillas & Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

<sup>7</sup> A. Whitty, "A Classification of Prehistoric Stone Buildings in Mashona land, Rhodesia," *South African Archaeological Bulletin* #14 (1956): 57-71.

<sup>8</sup> See G. Caton-Thompson, *The Zimbabwe Culture: Ruins and Reactions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1931).

<sup>9</sup> See Peter Garlake, *The Great Zimbabwe* (London: Watson and Viney, 1972).

<sup>10</sup> Theal, *Records...*, op. cit.

<sup>11</sup> Kuklick, *Colonial Situations*, op. cit.

<sup>12</sup> Garlake, *Zimbabwe*, op. cit.

<sup>13</sup> T. Bent, *The Ruined Cities of Mashonaland*, 2nd ed. (London: 1893).

<sup>14</sup> D. Randall-MacIver, "The Rhodesia Ruins: Their Probable Origin and Significance," *Geography Journal* #27.

<sup>15</sup> D. Randall-MacIver, "The Rhodesia Ruins: Their Probable Origin and Significance" *Geography Journal* #27.

<sup>16</sup> R.N. Hall, *Great Zimbabwe, Mashonaland, Rhodesia: An Account of Two Years Examination Work in 1902-4 on Behalf of the Government of Rhodesia* (London: Methuen, 1905).

<sup>17</sup> Hall, *Great Zimbabwe*, op. cit.

<sup>18</sup> F.C. Selous, *Travel and Adventures in South-East Africa* (London: Rowland Ward and Co. Ltd., 1893).

<sup>19</sup> G. Caton-Thompson, "The Zimbabwe Culture: Guesses and Facts," *Letter to Man* #31.

<sup>20</sup> G. Caton-Thompson, *The Zimbabwe Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930).

<sup>21</sup> Southern Rhodesia Publicity Bureau Poster, 1938.

<sup>22</sup> A. Whitty, "Architectural Style at Zimbabwe," *The National Museums of Southern Rhodesia: Occasional Papers* (1961).

<sup>23</sup> A. Whitty, "Architectural Style."

<sup>24</sup> P. Garlake, *The Kingdoms of Africa* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978).

<sup>25</sup> See J. Frederikse, *None but Ourselves* (New York: 1982).