



GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET

Make Great Zimbabwe Great Again

A study of the political usage of Great Zimbabwe 1980–2020



VT20

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Abstract

The purpose of this master's thesis is to show how Great Zimbabwe was politically used during the period 1980-2020. This work was also carried out with the aim to examine and nuance how archaeology is used within the framework of nationalism, and how cultural heritage is used by political organizations for different purposes. The essay applies a theoretical perspective based on critical cultural heritage studies. The essay's material consists of archaeological texts which deal with Great Zimbabwe, the material also consists of news articles, political speeches, and interviews with Zimbabwean archaeologists. This material is studied through an in-depth literature study. What is made clear in this thesis is that the Great Zimbabwe monument has different purposes during different periods. The thesis concludes that initially between 1980 and 2000, Great Zimbabwe was used in the creation of a new Zimbabwean identity, but at the onset of the 21st century this role changes towards a more active one. The study suggests that Zimbabwe's severe economic downturn over the last two decades has resulted in an increase in the political usage of Great Zimbabwe.

Keywords: Great Zimbabwe; Mugabe; Nkomo; ZANU-pf; ZANU; ZAPU; MDC; Zimbabwe Bird; Shona; Ndebele; Identity; Colonialism; Rhodesia; Cultural Heritage;

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1. Background/Introduction

The "modern" concept of archaeology was born in the 19th century at the same time as nationalism began to gain an ever-stronger grip on the world. This form of archaeology had a pivotal role in Europe, where feudal kingdoms gave way for the modern nation state. It was within these new nation states which archaeology would emerge as a profession and later a serious discipline. This newfound idea of nationalism could be seen in everything from national museum collections, to writing the history of your own nation. Through the usage of history and archaeology it was possible to build the new nation with a more solid foundation in history. What could be better than showing how much prouder your country's history was in comparison to your rivals? Archaeology became another political weapon partly because it gave the own nation prestige while it could be used to unite its own people. It was a tool which could be used to justify both war, conflict and territorial disputes. By invoking historical links, nations can justify their assertion of sovereignty over their neighbouring countries.

Archaeology is a subject which has at times been debated, it is a discipline which has at times been controversial. It can be argued that some archaeological practices present ethical dilemmas, every excavation become a matter of morality. There are professions which have to deal with far worse moral dilemmas, but that does not mean that archaeology is without sin, and that the discipline does not at times tread on the boundaries between right and wrong. Archaeological narratives have been used to justify a great deal of suffering, not least during the first half of the 20th century. This thesis will discuss how archaeology was and is still being used by political groups. As our society moves increasingly towards the extremes on the political scales our role as archaeologists is becoming increasingly important. It is the archaeologists who are the narrators of the time which has passed, it is the task of our discipline to let the truth and fact be told. It is the archaeologists and historians who shed light on the cultural and historical issues which are being asked by societies, and it is up to us to ensure that ignorance does not lead to conflict. It thus becomes the archaeologist's duty to study how society both views and use our common history, and to what purpose this is done.

Undoubtedly it is impossible to ignore the fact that the profession of archaeology initially to some extent went hand in hand with nationalistic projects. It is also impossible to deny that in their hold on the world, archaeology may still be used in nationalist agendas. Such agendas can be anything from building loyalty to one's own nation by pointing to the idea of a common history, a common cultural heritage. This interest and pride for one's own nation is not necessarily wrong. The issues start when this pride of a nation's history makes people feel a stronger connection to people who lived 500 years ago, than they do to people of another national affiliation today. The issues arise if pride turns into anger, hatred and the will to fight against people of another national affiliation. Nationalism is basically something that stands in the way of humanity's potential. It feeds perceptions of us versus them, and in so doing stands in the way of an increasingly united world. It is also this national connection to cultural heritage that gives life to these dead things and locations. Nationalism can be used to infuse heritages with life since it invokes emotions to the beholder.

It is with all this in mind that I have chosen to focus on Zimbabwe and the World Heritage of Great Zimbabwe. This is a cultural heritage which has been central to the formation of the modern nation state of Zimbabwe and is still used today for national purposes. I do not think that I in my life will see the end of the concept of the nation, there is a likelihood that it may never happen. However, with this essay I hope to shed some light on how history has been used in the name of nationalism, how this can be expressed, and what forms it may take.

For most of the existence of archaeology as a pursuit, let alone as a profession, the past has been exploited in the name of the future in order to legitimate the present. And for most of that existence, the present has been the epoch of nationalism: imperial or aspiring, liberating or atavistic, hospitable to strangers or sullenly racist. Indeed, without the impatient demands which nationalism made on historical, biological and social research, archaeology would never have developed into a world-wide established discipline. (Asherson 1996: VII)

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this master thesis is to show and study what political role Great Zimbabwe had between 1980 to 2020.

1.2 Research questions

This work is based on these specific questions:

- Have Great Zimbabwe been used by political groups in the region between 1980-2020?
- Why has Great Zimbabwe been so important for different groups?
- What effect might Mugabe's government have had on the view of Great Zimbabwe?
- Which of these groupings have potentially benefited the most from the usage of Great Zimbabwe?
- Has Great Zimbabwe played any role in Zimbabwe's political turmoil and economic problems?
- How has the research on Great Zimbabwe been developed in conjunction with the political situation?

1.3 Delimitations

This essay focuses on the period between 1980-2020. To provide background I will describe the general history of Great Zimbabwe, but not to the extent that all existing research on the site can be summarized, and which is why I have to sample a few number of researchers and their works. I will describe the history of the region, but this is done with the aim of placing Great Zimbabwe in a historical context, and not to give a full detail of the region. There was a limitation in the number of researchers who was interviewed within the framework of this thesis. When I choose to use critical cultural heritage studies, that also mean I will get a certain result. This does not mean that other theories necessarily must get a similar result, or that people using the same material would get the same result as I did. Another clear limitation is that the interviews conducted will not have room to ask everything. It is therefore possible to see the questions, and how they were asked as a delimitation. As previously mentioned, due to time restrictions have, I had to limit the number of archaeological researchers which I look at. The fact that I have been unable to visit the site itself is also something which has to be taken into consideration.

1.4 Research overview

This essay focuses on analysing how Great Zimbabwe was used between 1980-2020, with the purpose to study and to show what political role Great Zimbabwe played between 1980 to 2020. This purpose means that the essay originates in the study of critical cultural heritage. This theoretical framework was chosen because it is relevant for the subject which this thesis studies. It compliments my questions. There was a lot of interest within this and therefore I chose to take this approach when answering my questions. The thesis examines how a cultural heritage site has been used in the recent past, but also how it is used today, and tries to explain the changes observed. The study of how cultural heritage has been used in connection with nationalism, identity-creating politics and economic purposes has attracted some considerable research attention, e.g. Christian Keller (Keller 1978), Benedict Anderson (Anderson 1991) Laurajane (Smith 2004, 2006) Smith, and Rodney Harrison (Harrison 2010, 2013).

Christian Keller (1978) discusses how archaeology has been used in identity-making strategies, that doing so from a nationalist perspective is not a new phenomenon, and that the use of archaeological and historical narratives are politically situated. Keller demonstrates this by showing how prehistory was used in 16th century Scandinavia to bolster prestige and emphasize historical and cultural difference among neighbour states for political ends (Keller 1978: 62-67). Although the historical context is vastly different, these are similar processes to those described above in post-colonial Kenya and Zimbabwe. Similarly, Benedict Anderson (Anderson 1991: 23-24) discusses how culture and national identity are often created top-down as part of a wider political strategy or agenda, showing how these identities are used as tools to unite people who do not share an organically grown common identity.

Laurajane Smith has discussed the topic of critical cultural heritage studies in her research both in (2004) and in (2006). She exemplifies in *Uses of Heritage* how the Riversleigh World Heritage in Australia has been debated ever since its inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1994 (Smith 2006: 163-64). The site itself can be used to study how the Australian landscape has evolved. There are also several unique fossils located here, which exist nowhere else in the world (Smith 2006: 162-63). The reason why the location was included on the World Heritage list, was under the criteria XI;

Natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which are of outstanding universal value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view (Unesco Criteria. 2020).

Riversleigh is largely a representation of Australia's natural landscape, and Australia's unique nature has in turn become part of their culture (Smith 2006: 169). Therefore, the landscape itself became part of what's regarded as Australia's identity and the nation's culture. With the example of Riversleigh, Laurajane demonstrates how a cultural heritage was indirectly created, and how the latter was used. Smith uses Riversleigh as an example of how a nation is able to create a heritage site based on what they themselves consider to be worthy of such title. Riversleigh has become an important tourist destination, and the location has later been described as a picture of the real Australia (Smith 2006: 169). This is also why it became of importance for my thesis seeing as it demonstrates how a heritage site essentially can be created by a nation.

Rodney Harrison also discusses the use of cultural heritage. He on the other hand, uses Kenya as an example of where cultural heritage has been used by the nation (Harrison 2010: 240). Kenya, like Zimbabwe, is a former British colony. The new nation has also, like Zimbabwe, tried to shake off its colonial past. This has been done, among other things, through the renovation of their national museum, the new Nairobi National Museum (Harrison 2010: 244). It will in Kenya's case and like in all former colonies, become a question of whose past it is

which is being discussed. The newly renovated National Museum recently chose not to discuss the country's internal struggles. The museum also did not address things which could have been controversial or that could contribute to concerns, notably the Mau Mau revolt that lasted between 1952-1960 (Harrison 2010: 245). The Mau Mau revolt was a conflict in which colonial Kenya sought to free itself from British rule, the conflict ending with a British victory (Harrison 2010: 242). The Nairobi National Museum was used very much like European museums and collections to create a common national identity, and at the same time it becomes an exclusion of minority groups, as it is the National Museum legitimizing what is actually the nation's cultural heritage (Harrison 2010: 246).

Through his example of Kenya, Harrison shows how a cultural heritage is created by a nation. His research provides insight into how a cultural heritage is used both for identity creation purposes, but also to forget about a troubled past (Harrison 2010: 244-46). This thesis takes its theoretical perspective from primarily Laurajane Smith and Rodney Harrison. It is their research on critical cultural heritage studies that this thesis theory will be built upon and draw inspiration from.

There is a lot written about Great Zimbabwe, but much of it is written from a purely archaeological perspective. It was only recently that the focus shifted to including how the site was used. To put more focus on cultural heritage use is not unique to Africa, but it is something which has become increasingly common in the latter half of the 20th century. This is exemplified by researchers like the previously mentioned Smith (2006) and Harrison (2010). As this thesis will focus on the use of the site, it will be important to mention researchers who have devoted themselves to this kind of research. This is where I would like to mention Webber Ngoro. In his work from 2001 he addresses specific questions about conservation, presentation, and whose history it is which is mentioned. Ngoro also makes a few interpretations of how Great Zimbabwe was used, what different kinds of interests' different groups may have (Ngoro 2001). Webber Ngoro is obviously not the only one who has researched Great Zimbabwe. It is also here important to mention Edward Matenga and his work from (2011) (Matenga 2011). Both researchers have been central to the study of the use of Great Zimbabwe and Zimbabwean cultural heritage. Another researcher is Robin Derricourt (2011). This research work not only focuses on Great Zimbabwe but describes how archaeology and history have been developed and used throughout the African continent (Derricourt 2011). Great Zimbabwe, on the other hand, becomes a case study in Derricourt's text (Derricourt 2011: 24-25). It is with this in mind that his work becomes an important element of this thesis research overview.

Seeing as I study how archaeological history has evolved, I would also like to mention both Anders Gustafsson (2001) and Bruce Trigger (1989) Both researchers study how archaeology's own history has developed and this becomes relevant to my work. I will with this thesis aim to see how the archaeological field has evolved together with the changing political landscape within Zimbabwe, therefore it is important for the thesis to have a foundation within the archaeological discipline's own history. This is something which Trigger discusses at length in his text from 1989 where he studies how the field of archaeology has developed both as a result of new scientific methods, but also because of changes in the ideological realm (Trigger 1989: 16-18). He reflects on the topic of interpretation and how the past is viewed, which is something that my thesis will also aim to do. This study of previous research regarding Great Zimbabwe puts my thesis within the framework of scientific history, which is why I wished to mention the work of Anders Gustafsson (2001). Neither of these researchers have specifically worked with Great Zimbabwe, but I believe they are both of interest in terms of scientific studies regarding the archaeological discipline's own history.

1.5 Theoretical Perspectives

As the purpose of this essay is to carry out an analysis of the use of Great Zimbabwe, I choose to use a theoretical perspective based on critical cultural heritage studies of historical. These theories have no fixed dogma, but there are several ways to use them. Critical Culture Theories is an interdisciplinary way of studying and explaining the past. This is mainly done by studying political, demographic and economic effects of globalization. By studying how cultural heritage and perceptions of cultural heritage are experienced and used in different arenas today, it aims to contribute with critical alternatives for the future (Smith 2004, 2006 & Harrison 2010, 2013). It is a theoretical framework which lets one observe the objects with a more critical approach, to focus more on the meaning of the word culture, and the usage of the object in question. It is with these effects in mind that this theory can be applied to this thesis's case study, Great Zimbabwe. By observing Great Zimbabwe with Critical Culture Theories is possible to understand why the site has been of such great importance for different groups, and why it has been used during different time periods. It can also be possible to understand how historical sites can be wielded by political organisations and how sites can be turned into cultural monuments (Smith 2004, 2006 & Harrison 2010, 2013).

These theories can be exemplified by the works of Rodney Harrison and his writings; (2010, 2013), they can also be exemplified by Laurajane Smith's works (2004, 2006). Together, these researchers build a solid foundation for how to approach the use of cultural heritages, and critical culture theories. Harrison and Smith discuss issues in their writings such as what a cultural heritage is and what the concept means. In the history of humanity, there has always been an interest in saving things from ancient times, in understanding the past. During the Roman Empire there was an interest in understanding the Greeks, this was achieved through the acquisition of Greek sculptures and writings (Barringer 2014). This is later developed during the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period to collect works from antiquity (Biling 2017). Thus, there has been a development in what it is history, what it is which is a cultural heritage. Harrison points out that the way archaeologists discuss cultural heritage today is a relatively modern way of looking at history (Harrison 2013: 6).

These older ideas about heritage and the nature of the past and the present often persist alongside those ideas that have developed more recently. So heritage as a concept is constantly evolving, and the way in which the term is understood is always ambiguous. This provides one of the main incentives for taking a critical approach to heritage in the contemporary society, so that we can begin to understand what role the concept plays in any given context in which it is invoked, and the unique cluster of knowledge/power effects that it brings to bear on any given situation (Harrison 2013: 6–7).

What Harrison entails by this is that the concept of cultural heritage is constantly changing, and it is constantly evolving. There is no right or wrong since everything in theory could be interpreted as a cultural heritage. Which is why it becomes important to take a critical approach to the purpose, presentation and context. What Harrison discusses is why a cultural heritage is presented in a certain way, and why it is important to be critical of these presentations. This approach to the historical use of cultural heritage becomes central to the theoretical perspective of this thesis. When I in this thesis discusses questions about how Great Zimbabwe has been used, it cannot be inferred from the fact that there is a political dimension behind what has been said around the site. It is with this political dimension in mind, that the thesis finds its framework in critical cultural heritage studies and from theorists like Rodney Harrison (Harrison 2010, 2013) and Laurajane Smith (Smith. 2004, 2006)

As the thesis also raises questions about identity creation, nationalism, I also choose to base on Benedict Anderson (1991). Anderson addresses what this essay intends to address, namely questions about what purpose cultural heritage has and how it is used to create a national identity within the boundaries of nationalism (Anderson 1991: 24–25). Finally, it is perceived as a community because the nation, despite the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail, is always regarded as a deep, horizontal friendship. Ultimately, it is this brotherhood which has enabled so many millions of people not to kill as much as willingly to die for such limited conceptions over the past two centuries (Anderson 1991: 22).

The issue of cultural heritage and nationalism has of course been debated after Anderson, but his 1983 work: *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of Nationalism* has been a piler for recent research. Harrison also addresses the issue of nationalism and cultural heritage in his discussions. He argues that both heritage and nationalism are entwined, and he agrees with Anderson, and Smith, whilst still discussing the fact that heritage is something which is not one single thing. He makes connections to several previous works who defines that there are several types of archaeologists who in different ways have aided the nation state, nationalist, colonialist, and imperialist (Harrison 2013: 97). It shall of course be stated that not all archaeologists fall under these criteria. This become of importance seeing as a few of these types can be applied to the archaeologists mentioned in this thesis.

1.6 Method and Materials

The thesis method is based on an in-depth literature study of what has previously been written about Great Zimbabwe. I will also be looking at speeches, news articles from papers such as the *From* a scientific point of view, the essay will mainly be based on archaeological works by researches such as Theodore Bent (1893), Randell McIver (1906), Gertrude Thompson (1931), Peter Garlake (1973), Paul Sinclair, Innocent Pikirayi (1993), Ndoro Webber (2001), Edward Matenga (2011), and others. I have chosen these because they represent different time periods, and their respective research have in different ways been important to the view of the heritage site.

The purpose of the essay is to study the role of Great Zimbabwe within Zimbabwe's political landscape since its liberation in 1980, it is therefore important to see how groups such as Zimbabwe African Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), , Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and later National Union - Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) mentioned the heritage site. Since the creation of the nation in 1980 ZANU has been in office, it could therefore be possible to access how the government views the monument, by analysing how Robert Mugabe and the party chooses to mention Great Zimbabwe. In the essay I will focus on what kind of events have been organized at Great Zimbabwe, how the site is mentioned by political figures, how political groups choose to depict the cultural heritage, and also in what way this is done. I will therefore be looking at speeches by political figures, and in what context Great Zimbabwe is being brought up.

The thesis will also be based on a few interviews with researchers who have written about Great Zimbabwe. I intend to use these interviews in my analysis and in the conclusions and interpretations that I finally make. This is where the interviews become important for the thesis since it allows current researchers to be a part and add to this thesis. I choose to use the questionnaire format for several different reasons. There is a clear advantage in allowing researchers to sit down in peace and quiet. If they are given the opportunity to think about their

answers, there is a greater chance that the result they produce will be more thoughtful, and thus the essay will get more material to analyse. This would not have been the case if the essay instead consisted of traditional interviews. If I conducted oral interviews instead, the risk would always have been that things were missed but now it will be easier to gather all the information. I asked fifteen researchers to participate, all which had a connection to Great Zimbabwe. The researchers which I reached out to were current and former directors of Great Zimbabwe. They were researchers which had written articles, and papers about Great Zimbabwe, and who had insight knowledge on this subject. Out of the fifteen that I reached out only two decided to take part; Edward Matenga, and Munyaradzi Sagiya were the two researchers who chose to participate.

This will be the main material of the essay. It will be based on both scientific data such as the previously mentioned researchers, but it will also be based on how organisations such as ZANU and ZAPU mentions Great Zimbabwe in media outlets, and in political speeches. It is my hope that this material, together with my choice of method, will help me to provide a nuanced picture of how Great Zimbabwe was used between 1980-2020. It is also my ambition that the survey interviews included in this essay will enable further research, in addition to this master's thesis.

1.7 Reflexivity and Source Criticism

As previously mentioned, my choice of theoretical framework is critical culture heritage studies, and the paper is based on an in-depth literature study. Both the choice of purpose as well as theory come with their respective limitations. Seeing as there is a time and size limit, I will sadly have to select which archaeological research which I am studying, this might in the end affect the result which I am getting. Therefore, one source criticism is that I might not be looking at enough archaeological material. Seeing as I will be studying speeches, depictions, and actions of the Zimbabwe government and political organisations, it will be important for me to be critical of the interpretations and conclusions which I draw. I will be putting all their actions into the historical context and argue for why they're going through with certain policies, or taking certain actions, but in the end seeing as I am not interviewing anyone from the Zimbabwe government, it will be hard to get a full understanding of why things were done in a certain way. When referring to the interviews, I must also take note of the fact that the researchers I interview are not entirely objective. It is difficult to find a person who is not coloured by their own experiences and this is also the case with scientists (Shanks & Tilly 1987: 67)

1.8 Disposition

In the first sections 2.–2.1, I will discuss the underlying history of Great Zimbabwe, what research has been conducted at the site, and what this has ultimately led to. Later in sections 2.2–2.4.2, I will describe the region's general history, the colonialism, and how the country later became Zimbabwe. In sections 3. - 3.1.2 I will discuss the role of Great Zimbabwe between 1980 - 2000. I split them up in these two periods because there is a noticeable shift at the start of the new millennium. In the sections 4. - 4.1.5 the focus is on discussing how Great Zimbabwe was used during the period 2000 - 2020 and how this is expressed. The concluding discussion of the thesis can be found under sections 5. - 5.0.4, it is in these sections where I link back to the thesis analysis. This is done with several sub-headings which feed back to the purpose and questions of the essay. The thesis conclusion can be found under section 6. and it is in this section which the results of the thesis can be seen.

2 Review of the case study Zimbabwe, and Great Zimbabwe

In the following sections, the thesis will outline the general history of Zimbabwe as well as the research history of Great Zimbabwe. The thesis focuses on this to put the case study of Great Zimbabwe in a historical context, it will also be of interest to see how research history has evolved alongside political history. It is important for the reader to understand that site was not only politically relevant between 1980-2020, but that it was relevant before the timeframe of this thesis. The thesis will therefore describe the period from when the first Europeans discovered and then colonized the region. The thesis will then describe this with a focus on what role Great Zimbabwe played in this. The thesis will also summarize the war of liberation which lasted between 1964 and 1979, and what interest Great Zimbabwe played for these fighting parties. It shall also be mentioned that Great Zimbabwe was of course important long before the arrival of the Europeans, and that the site had a political and holy value for the local population, this will also be made clear by the thesis.

2.0.1 Shona and Ndebele

It is not possible to discuss Great Zimbabwe or Zimbabwe's history without mentioning the two peoples Shona and Ndebele, together they make up most of Zimbabwe's current population. These two groups have historically been against one another for different periods, not least during the war for liberation, and later the Matabeleland uprising. During the war of liberation both played a crucial role in the war against the Rhodesian government (Alao 2012: 7). The thesis will go into this in more detail in section 2.4. This section is more to give the reader an insight into how the two ethnic groups differ. I hope with this paragraph to clarify how and why these conflicts have arisen between the Shona and Ndebele populations.

Looking at the latest measurements, about 70% of the country's population speaks Shona (WorldPopulation. 2020) This makes Ndebele the largest minority group / language and they make up about 20% of the country's population. (WorldPopulation. 2020) Shona and Ndebele are two unique languages which both originate from the Bantu language family. In total, 98% of Zimbabwe's population speak some form of Bantu language. The differences do not stop at the languages, but there are also historical and cultural differences between the two ethnic groups. There is a link through the common linguistic lineage, but Shona and Ndebele do not originate from the same areas (Sinclair 1987: 16-17). Ndebele sees its origin from the south with a strong connection to the Nguni people and South Africa, they moved into Zimbabwe through a greater migration (Matenga 2011: 59). This is important to take with you during the rest of the essay, as it shows that Ndebele does not see its historical origin in only Zimbabwe. Shona is from Zimbabwe, but there are also Shona speakers in both Zambia and Mozambique. It is thus possible to see from the origin of both these ethnic groups that there is a direct historical and linguistic difference between the two largest ethnic groups in Zimbabwe.

There are also several major historical differences, one of which is that they reached their "golden ages" at different eras. Shona is the people group which is historically linked to the rise of Great Zimbabwe and the formation of the Zimbabwe state. It was the ancestors of the Shona who inhabited and used the agricultural lands before the culture reached its zenith. Their historical golden age is dated to sometime between the 1100s to the 1400s BC (Thompson 1931). Researchers can make this interpretation not only from the structures of Great Zimbabwe but also from the fact that there are similar stone structures throughout the region, these can all be attributed to Shona (Sinclair 1987: 63). Through this it is possible to make the interpretation

that it was the ancestors of the Shona culture which dominated and controlled a majority of today's Zimbabwe during the period 1100–1400 (Sinclair 1987). When later Great Zimbabwe lost its dominant position, the Shona people would be led by the kingdom similar to the Mutape State (Garlake 1973: 178).

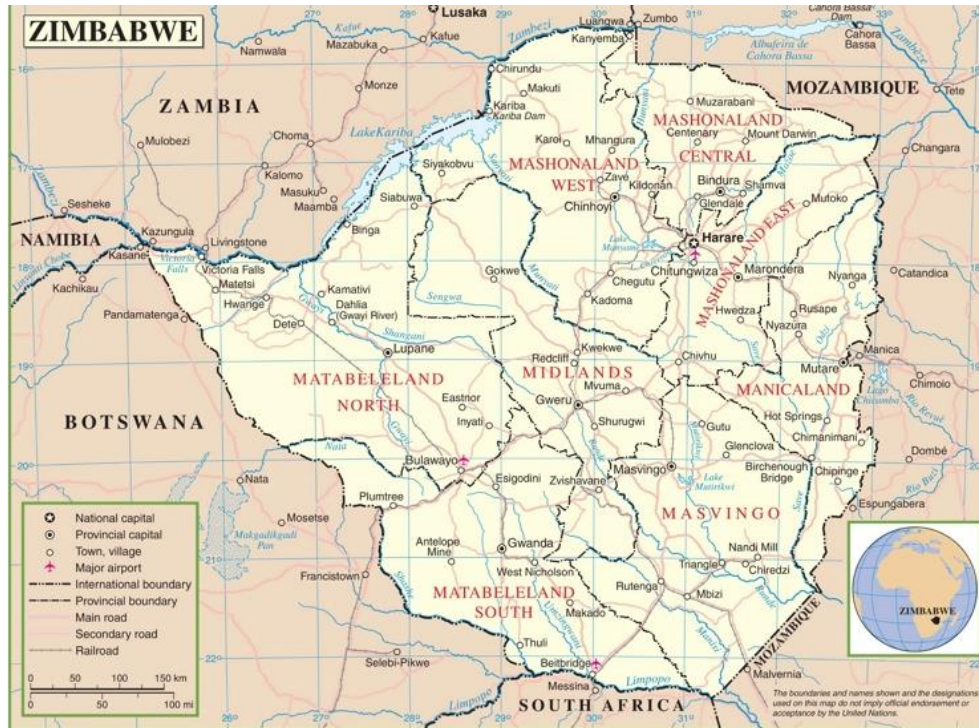


Fig. 1. Map showing Zimbabwe and the different regions (OntheworldMap. 2020)

Ndebele did not move into the region until early in the late 1700s and early 1800s. It was a large movement of people which came as a direct result of a conflict between the Zulu are, Shaka Zulu and his subordinate the Ndbele chief, Mzilikazi. This led to a revolt which caused Mzilikazi to lead his people from what is today South Africa up to Zimbabwe. They settled in the southern region called Matabeleland (Matenga 2011: 59). This also means that Ndebele is currently more prominent in the southern and western parts of Zimbabwe. After Ndebele settled, during the remainder of the 19th century, they would establish a new kingdom which established itself as the dominant force in the region. The formation of this Ndebele kingdom is not done under completely peaceful forms, it instead becomes an occupation of the lands which once belonged to the Shona tribes (Matenga 2011: 59). We thus see that at the entry of Ndebeles there is a conflict between them and the indigenous Shona people (Pikirayi 1993: 180). The Ndebele kingdom which was created would later become what would end up in open conflict with the British. During this conflict there were a few local tribes which chose to stand with the foreigners (Bourne 2011: 12).

Zimbabwe is thus not a homogeneous country. The nation's population consists of several ethnic groups, groups with their own unique cultures, historical backgrounds, and linguistic differences (World Population 2020). This is will be of interest when the thesis later analyse and study the freedom war. It will also be important to understand the country's ethnic situation when the thesis look at the recent use of Great Zimbabwe by the leading ZANU-pf.

2.1 The history of Great Zimbabwe and the site's archaeological history

It is important for the reader to understand the historical context surrounding Great Zimbabwe, it is also equally important for the reader to understand what the site's original usage was, but also what Great Zimbabwe's archaeological background is.

2.1.1 Great Zimbabwe's Research History

Great Zimbabwe has been of historical interest ever since its discovery of Europeans. It was of course of historical interest to the locals before that, but it became of interest to the Europeans ever since they first found their way there. It was a location that attracted fortune seekers, looters, adventurers and explorers who heard of the wealth of the Shona people (Ndoro 2001: 39). You could compare Great Zimbabwe with Eldorado, a monument that attracted adventurers, a location which was described as a mythical city of gold and riches. The European who first set foot in Great Zimbabwe and documented it was the German explorer Carl Mauch (1837-1875). It was Carl Mauch who received (assumed) the honour of discovering Great Zimbabwe, even though the location was still inhabited (Ndoro 2001: 37). After Mauch visited the site in 1871, he thought he had found the biblical city of Ophir (Garlake 1973: 62).

By his subordination, Hiram sent him ships with experienced crew. They sailed with Solomon's men to Ofir, and fetched 450 talents of gold from King Solomon (Second Chronicles: 9:18).

Carl Mauch thought he could make this biblical connection, partly because he did not believe that Africans were skilled enough to construct Great Zimbabwe themselves, all whilst there were great riches to be found. There was a pervasive Eurocentric view that put the white European over the local African population (Garlake 1973: 64). What Carl Mauch did is not to be regarded as archaeology, he was first and foremost an explorer and treasure hunter. That there is as much knowledge about him stems from the fact that he kept travel diaries (Matenga 2011: 60–61). It was Mauch who was the European who first mapped out Great Zimbabwe, it is also these that later researchers would use in their own studies (Ndoro 2001: 39). By studying Carl Mauch's travel diaries it is possible to get an insight into how the very first Europeans saw the location. This way of looking at Great Zimbabwe could also be regarded as research as it provides an insight into the Eurocentric approach prevailing among travellers and explorers (Matenga 2011: 64-65). He was also not there in the name of science, but the focus was on finding valuable artifacts and bringing with it as many valuable objects as it could (Matenga 2011: 65). This is exemplified in one of Mauch's diary entries:

... While trying to keep the chief near me by showing him several instruments, Render, all of a sudden disappeared with a hidden ax, went to the interior of the higher ruins [Western enclosure] and cut off 3 pieces of similar wood which had were used for the same purpose and brought these to a good hiding place (Burke 1969: 188).

Nor did Mauch have any direct grounds for the biblical interpretations he made of Great Zimbabwe, there was nothing that directly suggested that Mauch found Ophir. This biblical link would be fundamental to the great research history of Great Zimbabwe. It was Mauch's interpretations which would set the agenda for the research which was later done to the site.

It was this biblical link that the British imperialist Cecil Rhodes would use (Section 2.3), it was also this link that Rhodes asked archaeologist Theodore Bent to prove (Garlake 1973: 65). Bent was one of the first archaeologists to excavate at Great Zimbabwe. This excavation took location in 1891 he would later publish his findings and his research on the site in his work *The Ruined Cities of Mashonaland* (1893). This work brought about a number of things. Bent continued on the line on which Mauch began, as he predicted, just like his predecessor, that it was probably not local tribes who erected these monumental constructions.

“Allusions of these towers are constant in the Bible, and the Arabian Historian El Masoudi further tells us that this stone or towers was eight cubits high, and was location in an angle of the temple, which had no roof. Turning to Phoenician temple construction, we have a good parallel to the ruins of the Great Zimbabwe at Byblos; as depicted on the coins, the tower or sacred cone is set up within the temple precincts and shut off in an enclosure. Similar work is also found in the round temples of the Cabir, at Hadjar Kem in Malta, and the construction of these buildings bears a remarkable resemblance to that of those at Zimbabwe, and the round towers or nraghas, found in Sardinia may possibly be of similar significance. (Bent 1893: 116).

Through his excavation he thought he could see a connection with the Phoenicians, that it may have been a Phoenician trading colony. He also raised the possibility that it may have been Arabs who would have been inspired by the Phoenicians. He not only saw this from studying how the buildings were erected, but he also studied smaller objects. He finds himself able to prove this connection by studying several varied instances. From the pottery found, to the earlier mentioned how the temples were constructed (Bent 1893: 204), but also smaller objects and how these were produced (Bent 1893: 216).

This ingot of tin was undoubtedly made by Phoenician workmen, for it bears a punch mark theorem like those usually employed by workmen of that period (Bent 1893: 216).

These are just two of many examples where Bent clarifies his position. Like his predecessor Mauch, he notes that Great Zimbabwe can be linked to the stories found in the Bible (Bent 1893: 226). He says that the Bible mentions the Phoenician merchants who travelled south, and that King Solomon ordered explorations of the southern lands.

The Bible gives us the account of King Solomon’s expedition undertaken under Phoenician auspices; in fact; the civilized world was full of accounts of such voyages, telling us, unfortunately in the vaguest way, owing doubtless to the fact those who undertook them carefully guarded their secrets. (Bent 1893: 226).

Through his scientific analysis Bent believed that he could prove that Great Zimbabwe was not built by the locals, but instead that it was an outside culture that later departed the ruins (Bent 1893: 33). Bent was also not entirely objective in the research which was carried out, there were, as previously mentioned, clear motives for why he was there. He was there at the urging of Cecil Rhodes and his British South African Company (BSAC); they had a personal interest in diminishing the rights of the local Africans. This led to Theodore Bent to disregard a large number of objects and rejecting artifacts that did not prove his theory (Ndoro 2001: 39). This blind focus can be compared to Schliemann (1822 - 1890) and his search for Troja (Fagan 2014: 74). Bent was so convinced of his own interpretation that he chose to ignore many of the artifacts that did not confirm his own view (Ndoro 2001: 39). It is also highly likely that a large amount of information was lost, as a result of his excavations. There was an attitude that objects and artifacts which was not of interest was simply ignored and disregarded.

Theodore Bent and his studies provided a scientific basis for the mythological picture that existed around Great Zimbabwe. It was his studies that Cecil Rhodes leaned on, it was Bent’s research that helped to give legitimacy to the idea that it was not a colonialization, but rather a reconquest. Bent’s researched helped fuel an idea in which the white man took back what belonged to their ancestors. This is also noticeable in how Bent’s studies gave room for other research such as Richard Hall and his work: *The Ancient Ruins of Rhodesia* (1904). Both these men argued against the theory that the local Africans had constructed Great Zimbabwe, and both these men had an affiliation with the BSCA. It is difficult to say exactly how much Bent’s research affected history and how much the BSCA was based on his work. On the other hand, it must be said that the research image which Bent helped to create, it would last as long as the 1980s. It was this scientific view of Great Zimbabwe that the later Rhodesian government

would lean towards, and it was forbidden to disseminate any scientific image other than that Great Zimbabwe was built by an outside group (Garlake 1973: 7). Although Theodore Bent's theories of Great Zimbabwe were well received by Cecil Rhodes and his British South Africa Company (See section 2.3), he faced more criticism from the academia. This criticism came from working with the *Rhodesia Ancient Ruins Company*, a company whose role was to search ancient ruins for valuable objects (Sinclair 1987: 25).

It would take some time before anyone challenged the image that Mauch and Bent established. It lasted until the beginning of the 20th century and when that occurred, it was done under protests from the white settlers. It was the British archaeologist David Randell-McIver (1873–1945) who in 1905 proposed the theory that it was the Africans who themselves built Great Zimbabwe (Fagan 2014: 120). He published his work *Medieval Rhodesia* (1906) and in this text he advocates that it was not an external grouping. He believed that it was most likely not a forgotten white Phoenician colony who erected the large stone houses. He came to this conclusion when the dating did not match (Randell-McIver. 1906: 84). Randell-McIver dated Great Zimbabwe to the 15th century and if this was true then all biblical links disappeared, and all connections that allowed these constructions to be dedicated to the Phoenicians also became disproved. He instead wanted to dedicate the construction to the local inhabitants, and a more closely related culture (Randel-McIver 1906: 84). He seemed to see such similarities between the modern African buildings, and the older structures of Great Zimbabwe. He did however not comment in more detail on what culture might have erected these buildings (Randel-McIver 1906: 85). He couldn't comment on this because there was still a lot to discover:

That the character of the dwellings contained within the stone ruins, and forming an integral part of them, is unmistakably African. (Randel-McIver 1906: 83).

Randell-McIver dated the to the 1400s, partly based on the discoveries found at his excavation in 1905, but also from comparing with Portuguese historical records (Randel-McIver 1906: 85). Randell-McIver focused parts of his excavation at *The Valley Ruins* and the part called the Acropolis (Randel-McIver 1906: 78-79). It was also through the finds at this location that he could also point out that they were made in an African style, and not in the Phoenician as Theodore Bent claimed (Randel-McIver 1906: 79–81). Several imported artifacts, such as Persian pottery, were also found and they could be dated to the early 15th century. They also managed to excavate Chinese porcelain which could be linked to the theng-Ming Dynasty (14th – 17th century) period (Randel-McIver 1906: 81). However, what Randell-McIver did not find were any antiquity objects, and he found no indications at all that it would be an antiquity residence (Randel-McIver 1906: 83).

In architecture, whether military or domestic, there is no trace of Oriental or European style of any period whatever. Seven sites have been investigated, and from none of them has any object been obtained by myself or by others before me which can be shown to be more ancient than the fourteenth or fifteenth century A.D. (Randel-McIver 1906: 83).

It was this absence of antiquity objects in conjunction with the objects that had been found, which made him want to date Great Zimbabwe to the 15th century, and not to the period when the Phoenicians were active. Randell-McIver also did not agree with the theory Great Zimbabwe, had been built under the leadership of a higher civilization. After conducting his investigation, he could not see evidence at all that there had ever been a foreign and dominant race at Great Zimbabwe (Randel-McIver 1906: 85). He instead found that Great Zimbabwe was a commercial centre, a centre where several goods were imported. He made the conclusion that if it was either a Phoenician or another higher civilization, then there should be clearer indications of their existence. He came to this conclusion once again using the Portuguese sources. When the first Europeans documented contact with the people of the region, they were

described as dark-skinned and black-haired Africans (Randel-McIver 1906: 85). Through the finds and historical sources, he had at hand, David Randell-Randell-McIver concluded that it must be a domestic culture. He simply found no evidence of what Theodore Bent wrote. However, it should be noted that at this time he was not ready to devote to Great Zimbabwe any group (Randel-McIver 1906: 85).

As to which particular tribe of negroes erected the buildings, I make no suggestion (Randel-McIver 1906: 85)

This new theory, which Randell-McIver presented, became very controversial in Southern Rhodesia, it was strongly opposed by the white groups that sat in power and those who owned large parts of the country's assets. That it was the local Africans who built Great Zimbabwe completely went against their economic and political interests. If this research spread, it would undermine their activities and delegitimize their conquest of the region. At the time when Randell-McIver released his book *Medieval Rhodesia*, it was not the British Crown that alone decided in Southern Rhodesia, it was instead BSCA that set the agenda. It was they who controlled the police, the legislature and it was they who operated Great Zimbabwe.

What this meant was that they had the power to try to stop this research from coming out. After Randell-McIver presented his theory in 1906, all further excavation of Great Zimbabwe was stopped, no one was allowed to investigate the site. This was a clear indication that they wanted to prevent the spread of the image that it was the Africans themselves who constructed the site (Garlake 1973: 8). They would rather keep the illusion that it was a foreign power which had once inhabited these lands. This fact also indicates that the power holders appreciated the archaeological legitimacy that Theodore Bent and Hall helped create, that there was a strong value in the use of archaeology. This practice of denying research is something which the later Rhodesian republic would also seek to do.

It is impossible to deny that David Randall-Randell-McIver had a huge impact on the wider research regarding Great Zimbabwe. He was the first to refute the biblical connect and the Phoenician, but he also went against the theory of a dominant foreign power. He did this by dating Great Zimbabwe to a period which made it impossible for both the biblical and the Phoenician theories. He presented the findings he found, and he clearly pointed out that there was no evidence that there ever was another culture that built Great Zimbabwe (Randel-McIver 1906: 84). He proved this theory by pointing to several different source materials, partly the artifacts he found and partly written material. It was Randell-McIver that enabled further research to contradict what was previously said. By questioning the established view, he gave the opportunity for later research to have some legs to stand on. All whilst this was occurring the political landscape sought to undermine his findings. It would take until the end of the 1920s and the dissolution of the BSCA before any new excavation of Great Zimbabwe was made. This excavation was performed by Gertrude Caton Thompson (1888–1985).

Gertrude Caton-Thompson: Thompson continued to on the dating Randell-McIver started on. She dates several different smaller artefacts so that they jointly create a clearer picture of the site's history. However, she did not agree with him that Great Zimbabwe could be dated to the 15th century, but she believed that the location had been inhabited longer (Thompson 1931: 185-86). At the time of Randell-McIver's 1906 excavation, little was known about pearls and their use in dating (Thompson 1931: 186), however by the 1930s this form of dating was something which Thompson could take advantage of. By studying the pearls, Thompson seemed to be able to date Great Zimbabwe sometime between the 11th and 12th centuries. She felt that she could do this analysis when the beads themselves were found in several depots, all which were under a number of the Zimbabwean ruins (Thompson 1931: 188).

A foundation date of the eight to ninth century, arrived at by independent archaeological results, fits in well with the historical record, and clears away the difficulties of in accordance with the Portuguese records which occupy McIver's late medieval date. (Thompson 1931: 189).

She also succeeded by using stratigraphic methods pointing to proof that Great Zimbabwe, initially started as a smaller agricultural community. According to Thompson, this agricultural community would later gain growth as a result of population growth, and later trade (Fagan 2014: 120). This increase in population was also the factor that led to the increase in trade, which led to the site having a greater need to defend itself. Like Randell-McIver, she also thought she could see that Great Zimbabwe was a commercial centre, and that there was a clear trade link to the Middle East, and as far off as Asia (Thompson 1931: 197).

The Trade Connection with India is undoubtedly strong --- indeed, I believe it has been the primary stimulus that led to the development of indigenous Zimbabwe Culture. (Thompson 1931: 196).

What sets Randell-McIver and Thompson's theories apart are the facts that she saw this trade as something much more influential. She seemed to be able to see a direct link between the development of Great Zimbabwe, and the imported artifacts found. It was also here that she chose to make use of the Persian and Chinese finds that she made. Thompson by dating these implied that Great Zimbabwe was at the height of its power sometime during the 13-14th century (Thompson 1931: 185-86). That these goods could be imported during that period, Thompson considered that it was then that their influence and trade network were at their greatest. This is a theory that even today is completely correct. There is reason to believe that the strategic location of Great Zimbabwe made the trade was a vital reason for the influence of the Zimbabwe kingdom. Thompson also points out that it was not only the precious metal gold, but that Great Zimbabwe was also a major producer of other metals / commodities, including bronze, tin and copper (Thompson 1931: 190).

Through this interpretation, she also went against the preconceived notion that they could not break gold themselves at greater depth (Thompson 1931: 198). The later disappearance of these trade networks, she believed, was partly due to large migrations of ethnic groups, but also the arrival of the Portuguese (Thompson 1931: 197). Thompson also tries to understand who built these constructions, and she would like to dedicate Great Zimbabwe to some sort of Bantu grouping (Thompson 1931: 195). She believes that this group must have migrated to Rhodesia for some reason, but she cannot quite answer where they gained the knowledge to erect these stone houses (Thompson 1931: 195). Just as with both dating, and with the trade link, this theory would prove to be true as well.

Gertrude Caton-Thompson's role in the research history of Great Zimbabwe's cannot be overstated. What she contributed was multiple, she not only helped with dating, but she also helped discover Great Zimbabwe's role east-Africa's trading network. Her research also brought about the realization that these trading networks expanded far wider than anyone could've imagined (Thompson 1931: 196). Like McIver, she also consolidated the scientific interpretation that it was not an outside group, but that Great Zimbabwe developed from its own unique culture.

The Interest in Zimbabwe and the allied ruins should, on this account, to all educated people be enhanced a hundredfold; it enriches, not impoverishes, our wonder at their remarkable achievement: it cannot detract from their inherent majesty: for the mystery of Zimbabwe is the mystery of which lies in the still pulsating heart of native Africa (Thompson 1931: 199).

This would make it more difficult for political organizations to claim anything else. Her work would indirectly contribute not only to how the scientific view developed, but also from a political perspective. Her text *The Zimbabwe Culture (1931)* is therefore perhaps one of the

most vital texts written in regard to Great Zimbabwe. It was after this work that it became established in the academic world that it could not be anything other than a domestic group traveling

It is also important to put this in perspective against the society Thompson was active in, she was a woman who opposed an established power system. Thompson's research work opposed the status quo, which was still part of everyday life in Southern Rhodesia, and she took a step toward giving Africans back their cultural heritage. This may not have been something she consciously did, but the consequences were still that it was becoming increasingly difficult for the South Rhodesia government to lean on scientists like Theodore Bent and Richard Hall, there was simply no scientific basis behind their theories.

After Caton Thompson finished at Great Zimbabwe, there was hardly anyone in the academy who could argue against her results. However, there were still voices which were raised against her results. These voices came mainly from the country's white minority, where many did not want to contribute to an increased interest in the native Africans' own cultural heritage (Garlake 1973: 8). Should the indigenous black majority raise their eyes more for their own cultural heritage, this could entail a risk in the rise of increased African nationalism and identity. There were still those who saw Rhodesia's black majority as both lazy and uncivilized (Garlake 1973: 12). This was one of the reasons why, after Caton Thompson's excavation, studies on Great Zimbabwe decreased, as much research was no longer done on the ruins (Garlake 1973: 83). It should also be mentioned that all the researchers who have previously been mentioned all belonged to the school of classical archaeology, which means that the same amount of scientific methods were missing which would come in later (Garlake 1973: 11). This led to the negative effect that details which later archaeologists could have captured disappeared and information was lost (Garlake 1973: 10-11). Most researchers who visited the site had also not lived in the country, they had only visited the location for the purpose of research, and they all came from foreign countries. This could lead them not to be as familiar with the history of the region, they did not necessarily take in how the locals approached the ruins, or how the research would affect them (Garlake 1973: 13). The fact that these researchers came from outside also affected the fact that they were not always trained in how African archaeology was optimally conducted, which also means that they do not have the same relation to either the country, its population or Great Zimbabwe (Garlake 1973: 14).

With all this in mind, it becomes important to mention Peter Garlake and his 1973 writing, *Great Zimbabwe* (1973). He would, like Caton Thompson, attribute Great Zimbabwe to the locals, but he wanted not only to devote Great Zimbabwe to Africans generally, but instead more specifically to Shona (Garlake 1973: 175). It would end up being Peter Garlake who finally ended the question of whether Great Zimbabwe belonged to the indigenous people or if there were any outsiders. He did this by using new methods which were not available when neither Randell-McIver nor Thompson excavated the site (Garlake 1973: 201). Garlake had access to C14 dating a method which was not discovered until the late 1940s (Garlake 1973: 83). This new method would allow him to date much more precisely than Thompson did before. It would turn out that Garlake's findings confirmed what Thompson previously claimed, that Great Zimbabwe dates to the 11th century (Garlake 1973: 174). By using this method, the question of Great Zimbabwe's age was now completed, and it was clear that the site did not come from antiquity times. He also elaborates on what Thompson could not quite answer, namely the question of which ethnic group probably travelled to Great Zimbabwe. She never found out which group traveled to Great Zimbabwe, she speculated that it was probably a kind of Bantu speaking people, but she never went into more detail than that (Thompson 1931: 195).

The Advanced Bantu tribes of Central Africa, from whose ancestral elements I believe the Zimbabwe builder to spring, are not, it would seem, and never have been, stone-building people. (Thompson 1931: 195)

It would turn out that Thompson had been right, the research shows that Shona is descended from the same linguistic language tree as the Bantus language. Garlake makes a connection between Great Zimbabwe and Shona for several reasons. The foremost of these is that he also believes that there are clear similarities between Great Zimbabwe and the immigrant Mbire people (Shona) which should have replaced the Zimbabwe culture previously (Garlake 1973: 174). Garlake would instead like to say that the Mbire people were not immigrant people but instead were the ones who constructed Great Zimbabwe. This is an interpretation he does not think can be made solely based on archaeological premises, but he seeks the answer from oral sources:

As a preliminary to a fuller interpretation of Great Zimbabwe, one must at this stage turn from archeology and look at the evidence from oral traditions about the beginning of the Shona people and at descriptions of the country written during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Garlake 1973 : 174)

Garlake suggests that it must have been the Mbire people who brought with them the worship of the god Mwari to Great Zimbabwe. Mwari is the highest god, creator of the Shon people, and it is also Mwari who has contact with the spirit world (Garlake 1973: 174). Mwari was also the god associated with the leading Shona dynasties. This worship of Mwari is something clearly noticeable in the later Mutapa and Rozwi kingdoms (Garlake 1973: 179). Many of these traditions and practices are linked to what was done at Great Zimbabwe. Great Zimbabwe has been considered a religious center with a strong connection to Mwari and the worship of it took place there. The fact that Great Zimbabwe has such a strong connection to the Shona people's supreme god, together with the clear similarities in how the social structures looked in all kingdoms, made Garlake want to dedicate Great Zimbabwe to the Mbire people (Garlake 1973: 181). According to him, it is possible to see signs of a clear historical tradition throughout all these different groups. This historical tradition was almost unbroken until the 1830s and the invasion of the Ngoni people (Ndebele) (Garlake 1973: 180). This led to the relocation of people, which led a non-Shona group to take possession of Great Zimbabwe:

Thus, the invasion of an unimportant Karanga chief final disrupted a continuous historical tradition which can be traced back through the Rozwi, Torwa, Mwene, Mutapa and Mbire to the foundations of Great Zimbabwe. (Garlake 1973: 181).

The main difference between the former Zimbabwean culture and the direct success of the Mutapastat was that the stone-building art ceased. This need not mean that the knowledge was lost, Garlake rather believes that it is because they no longer had access to the kind of stone needed to construct structures like Great Zimbabwe (Garlake 1973: 178). His interpretation between Shona and Great Zimbabwe, together with his confirmation of Thompson's dating, are important for the future study of the site. His theories of Great Zimbabwe would also later become important for the political situation in the country. Garlake also makes a proper historical compilation of what previous archaeologists and explorers have previously written. He makes clear criticism of individuals like Theodore Bent and Richard Hall and the results they produced. He clearly distances Great Zimbabwe from the biblical connection. He also demonstrates why it was of great importance for the colonizers to make the biblical connection:

Great Zimbabwe also quickly became a symbol of the essential rightness and justice of colonization and gave the subservience of the Shona an age-old precedent if not Biblical Sanction (Garlake 1973: 65)

He understood that by linking Great Zimbabwe to the Bible, colonialization was justified, and it became a necessity to restore this cultural heritage to the hands of Christians (Garlake 1973:

73). He released his research during the ongoing Rhodesian Bush War/Zimbabwean war for liberation (Second Chimurenga) A few years earlier, Rhodesia had made its UI (Unilateral Declaration of Liberation) in 1965 and declared itself independent of the British Empire (Alao 2012: 18). It was a small white minority that took control of the former colony, and it was in this political climate that Garlake published the text, *Great Zimbabwe* (1973), I will be going over this more in section 2.4. Peter Garlake worked as a Rhodesian Inspector of Monuments between 1964-1970, it was Garlake's job to study, but at the same time to protect the nation's ruins. It was also this which would put him on a collision course with the country's government, his research would lead him to a result which did not support the government's agenda. Garlake was aware of the political role of Great Zimbabwe in the ongoing conflict and how research on the African cultural heritage affected the situation.

In recent years, most Africans, supported by a growing awareness of their own traditions and the results of archaeological and historical research, have not only claimed the ruins as the product of an indigenous African society but have taken pride in them as a reminder of past glories and as a symbol of a coming renaissance and freedom in a country whose destiny they will control and which will bear the name of the Ruins (Garlake 1973: 12).

The fact that Garlake was a white Rhodesian with a reasonably high-ranking position made his research treacherous to Ian Smith's government. They believed that his research would only undermine Rhodesia by giving new fervour to the growing African nationalism. His studies on Great Zimbabwe focused on proving that Great Zimbabwe belonged to the native Shona. Garlake would have to end this work in exile when he was expelled from Rhodesia in 1970. The fact that he was exiled is a sign of the power that Great Zimbabwe then had and what power it might conceivably hold today. It was obvious to Smith that there was a power in the story which Garlake sought to prove and which was why he was not allowed to continue his research (Pikirayi 2012: 223-225). This is also probably why he criticized the Rhodesian government in his work from 1973:

For many settlers, such aspirations have removed discussion of the Ruins from academic controversy or racial theorizing and made it directly political. They see such expressions of patriotism as sedition against the present white dominated political and economic structure of Rhodesia. Consequently, such people now evaluate any discussion of the ruins purely in light of its propaganda value. Inevitably, in an authoritarian and insecure state this has led to limitations on the dissemination of what is considered undesirable information and official and personal abuse of those who hold undesirable views. (Garlake 1973: 12).

Not only does he point out how important Great Zimbabwe and African culture are, he has also been somewhat critical of how the Rhodesian government has tried to prevent cultural heritage research (Garlake 1973: 12). It is also possible to read criticism of the other white settlers in the country, mainly because they support a regime which obviously became ever more authoritarian (Garlake 1973: 12). This negativity was probably due mainly to the fact that it held back the research and made the scientific conditions more difficult.

It is difficult to know whether Garlake worked on any direct political agenda, or if there was a political motive, but whatever he intended with his research, it became directly political. Garlake's theory helped to advocate the Shona people's right to not only Great Zimbabwe, but also the entire country. Finally, it would be ZANU which was victorious in the new Republic's first elections. This was done under the leadership of Robert Gabriel Mugabe, a man who saw his origin from the Shona majority (Alao 2012: 4), and this would be seen in how he later acted towards other minority groups. Garlake may never have intended to be political, but he helped to give the Shona people a proud story, this is nothing which can be ignored. When a people have a common history, it is much easier to unite a people, it is also much easier to assert their

ownership, and control over land. A good example of where this historical link was used in national formation in the founding of Israel (Oestigaard 2007: 135). The location for the founding of the new nation was founded and built on entirely historical, cultural and religious reasons (Oestigaard 2007: 133). The fact Israel was founded at the same location where the biblical kingdom had previously existed is not a coincidence, this was done even though a majority of the Jews did not inhabit the location for hundreds of years (Oestigaard 2007). It was thus a historical link which gave the Jews the right over an area that had been inhabited by Arabs, Kurds and other ethnic groups since the Romans expelled the Jews (Oestigaard 2007: 144). This is where it is possible see a connection to the theory Garlake puts forward, he indirectly gives the Shona people even greater rights to Zimbabwe and the regions history. This does not mean that all individuals immediately claimed this right, but he gives groups like ZANU a *Casus Belli* to take back the land which they feel they are entitled to. It is therefore impossible to deny Garlake's place in the archaeological research regarding Great Zimbabwe. It is therefore not possible to not overstate the importance of his work, especially not when it later is made clear how the ZANU government will be applying their view of culture on Zimbabwe.

During the mid-1980s, the political climate in Zimbabwe had changed and this new environment enabled new research at Great Zimbabwe. This is exemplified in the archaeologist Paul Sinclair. During the period 1965–1979, when Ian Smith was in power, there were strict rules for the kind of information that could be disseminated (Sinclair 1987: 26). This can clearly be seen in how Garlake was treated, and the reactions his 1973 work received. Attempts were made to both control but also to inhibit the spread of an image of Great Zimbabwe that favored ZAPU and ZANU (Sinclair 1987: 25). Smith wanted at all costs to prevent the research that Garlake, Thompson, and Randell-McIver wrote. This research climate opened in connection with the peace and the 1980s. When there was peace in the region and the change of regime came, it again became easier for research to be conducted.

What Sinclair chose to focus on in connection with his research project was a further development on what was previously said, but he chose to take a different approach. It was perfectly established at this time that there was no external grouping like Theodore Bent argued, thanks to the research Thompson did, so researchers could focus on other issues. Sinclair wanted to use more scattered source material and not only on the archaeological sources (Sinclair 1987: 13). In his work, *Space, Time and Social Formation* (1987), Sinclair combines archaeological, Anthropological, Historical and Linguistic sources to study how the Zimbabwean culture originated, while at the same time studying why it took the form it did. This can be exemplified in how Sinclair used anthropological studies to try to understand how the Zimbabwean agricultural community may have grown up, but also why the latter disappeared. Sinclair also made a conscious choice not to focus on just the stone structures of Great Zimbabwe, he wanted instead to examine the role of Great Zimbabwe in the region's political system (Sinclair 1987: 112). In Sinclair's work is it possible to see a clear shift in how research is conducted, there will be a greater focus on organization, system and how the Zimbabwe state as a political entity was connected. These were issues that the earliest researchers did not touch, and therefore Sinclair's work becomes an important part of understanding the overall perspective of Great Zimbabwe (Sinclair 1987: 112–113). It is through the usage of previous anthropological, oral studies and a survey of earlier archaeological excavations that Sinclair tries to build a clearer picture of how the states in the region may have emerged (Sinclair 1987: 18).

At Great Zimbabwe reproduction of the economy was clearly dependent on the cultivating and herding sectors and maintaining a population of c 10 000 people would have required a considerable degree of organisation. (Sinclair 1987: 144).

Sinclair continued on Garlake's theory, namely the theory that Great Zimbabwe didn't just find its livelihood from only agricultural lands, but also on larger herds of cattle (Sinclair 1987: 145). He uses anthropological studies from South Africa, McCrown (1979). These studies show a clear link between wealth and keeping up with larger herds. Sinclair also thinks that this could be applied to the Zimbabwe culture. He here argues that these herds must have moved between the different annual periods to avoid the dry seasons, but also that they would not devour the pasture of the region (Sinclair 1987: 146).

The idea of seasonal movements of cattle around the regional centres of the Zimbabwe Tradition agrees well with the location of the southern clusters of the Zimbabwe state in agroecological zone IV, which is very suitable for stock raising. (Sinclair 1987: 146).

It is possible to see how there has been a shift in the way researchers approach the material, at least compared to previous work at Great Zimbabwe. Where former researchers put most of their focus on Great Zimbabwe and only the surrounding area, Sinclair tries to put it in a much larger perspective. Through an application of several different scientific disciplines, Sinclair succeeds in getting closer to the material, and he manages to shed new light on what the region's political structure may have looked like (Sinclair 1987: 162–163). In his work he also tries to answer the question of how the various stone buildings in the region may have come together, he does not focus only on Great Zimbabwe (Sinclair 1987: 158). He thinks he can see that this is a development in different phases, where initially, with the Zimbabwean culture, there was a major focus on the production of food and agriculture. This mainly took the form of cereals, but also large herds of cattle (Sinclair 1987: 160). During this early period, there was no evidence of any international trade occurring in the later phases. Like Thompson, Sinclair concludes that control of trade is something which is a driving factor for the development of Great Zimbabwe. It is only during the later phases that imports of exotic prestige goods become more frequent (Sinclair 1987: 161), and it is also from this period that there are the most stone construction. It is during this period that Great Zimbabwe becomes increasingly important and it is during this period around 1100 AD that the first buildings are being erected. The final phase that Sinclair takes up is also the period when Great Zimbabwe falls in turn and he would like to attribute this to a variety of factors, including a change in the environment, socio-political conditions, and a decrease in resources (Sinclair 1987: 161). At the same time, Sinclair wants to highlight the fact that although Great Zimbabwe had tremendous wealth, it was also a location where the elite of the Zimbabwe state ruled, making it not necessarily representative for how everyone lived. In his conclusion he wants to claim that it is highly likely that their wealth came at the expense of these rural farmers.

However, one is left with the strong impression that at least to some extent the accumulation of wealth on the Zimbabwe plateau and the east coast of Africa was accomplished at the expense of the men and women of the rural areas of the Zimbabwe plateau and adjacent regions. (Sinclair 1987: 162).

Sinclair's work gives us a better foundation to stand on, it had previously been a major focus on only Great Zimbabwe, but his work *Space, Time and Social Formation* (1987), makes it easier to see Great Zimbabwe in a wider context. It is also his work that leads the research further and continues to develop the view of how not only Great Zimbabwe has evolved, but also the Zimbabwe culture / tradition. One of the researchers who continues this is Innocent Pikirayi and his work: *The Archaeological Identity of the Mutapa State: Towards an Historical Archaeology in Northern Zimbabwe* (1994). Like Sinclair, Pikirayi wants to put the Zimbabwean tradition in an ever-increasing perspective to understand how the Zimbabwean state may have looked, but also how it spread its influence (Pikirayi 1993: 63). The focus is not directly on Great Zimbabwe, but the research that Pikirayi takes up is related to the time after the Zimbabwean kingdom was split. The Mutapian Kingdom was partly a successor state to the

Zimbabwe Kingdom which had previously controlled the region (Pikirayi 1993: 176). This work also compliments Sinclair as it extends knowledge of how much influence Great Zimbabwe had in the northern parts of Zimbabwe. What this work also contributes is to provide a deeper understanding of what regional Zimbabwe has looked like (Pikirayi 1993: 188).

At the turn of the millennium and in the present, is it possible to see yet another change in how research chooses to approach Great Zimbabwe. Looking at the works written by Ndoror Webber (2001) and Edward Matenga (2011), it is possible to see how there is an increase in research regarding the preservation and the question of decolonization. There has previously been a focus on how cultural heritage should be managed and protected, but what can be seen from the start of the 21st century and onward is that the focus now includes the political spectrum. The works that I mention are selected for this reason, but both these works hadn't been possible during the Rhodesian government. It is possible to see this in connection with Garlake's work from 1973, but it was still not quite the same focus. This new focus includes what the usage of Great Zimbabwe has looked like through its antiquarian history. Ndoror Webber addresses in his work *Your Monument our Shrine; The preservation of Great Zimbabwe*. (2001) how Great Zimbabwe was used not only by Cecil Rhodes and colonial Britain, but also how the location was actively used in the new nation of Zimbabwe.

While some of Great Zimbabwe's cultural values are assumed to be known, an assessment was carried out among the local community, tourists and workers in the hospitality industry around Great Zimbabwe. (Ndoro 2001: 97).

Thus, it is possible to see how scientific developments have gone from studying only the history of Great Zimbabwe and how the regional Zimbabwean culture spread, to now also conducting research in relation to its political value (Ndoro 2001). In his work, Ndoro addresses how the site is presented, who it is aimed at, and how the public both views and take part in Great Zimbabwe:

Public presentation and interpretation involve the development of communication strategies between the scientific researchers and non-specialists such as park interpreters whose job is to deliver the message of archaeology to a variety of public audiences. There seems to have been a growing interest in the last ten years to make archaeology reach the public and involve them in the discourse on heritage management (Ndoro 2001: 5).

This focus on presentation and usage is something which has only become possible, thanks to the fact that previous research projects was able to answer questions about the site's history. What is possible to see in both Ndoro's and Matenga's works is research which is beginning to focus on the effects of the country's colonial history. Especially in Ndoro's work from 2001, it is possible to gain a deeper insight into what the European relationship with Great Zimbabwe has looked like, and how that research has affected the nation. This is important as it helps to open and maintain the dialogue about a cultural heritage which has been in constant focus since 1890 (Ndoro 2001: 45). It becomes a way for the nation to move on from a period which may not always be easy to discuss. By studying the management of Great Zimbabwe, its artifacts, and how these presenters become, it also becomes a focus on the study of the site's usage, and to what end it has been important.

In his work, Ndoro also addresses how their presence laid the foundation for the later conflict that occurred between 1965 and 1979 (Ndoro 2001: 46). It could be said that this kind of research on Great Zimbabwe has not been possible before, simply because the whole history has not played out yet. To be able to study how a site has been used, you'll need a certain timeframe. Partly it was required to have historical questions answered, and there's a need for political space so. It would not have been possible, under the Rhodesian government, to study

how colonialism affected the view of Great Zimbabwe, as that completely opposed the country's guidelines. Matenga partly focus on this in his work: *The Soapstone Birds of Great Zimbabwe: Archaeological Heritage, Religion and Politics in Postcolonial Zimbabwe and the Return of Culture Property* (2011) on the role of Zimbabwean birds in the religious, political and cultural spheres (Matenga 2011). Just as with Ndoro's work, this work not only a focus on the history of the object, but also what role it has played within the nation, how they have been used, and what the effects of this have become. It cannot be overlooked that both works have been important in the continued understanding of the political usage of Great Zimbabwe.

To summarize, there is a development in how archaeologists have approached Great Zimbabwe between 1890-2020. The first archaeologists who arrived at the site were there as treasure hunters, looters and this was done with the only purpose of finding valuable artifacts (Matenga 2011: 60). As the British presence became increasingly fortified, these looters were replaced by archaeologists who were financed by Cecil Rhodes and the BSAC. Their excavation had clear political motives, which helped to legitimize the European colonization, while undermining the local African population. By claiming that Great Zimbabwe was erected by a dominant foreign group, this gave the British an opportunity to claim these lands by the right of reconquest rather than colonization (Garlake 1973). This question about who constructed Great Zimbabwe would become a question which was not fully accepted in the 1980s in connection with the nation's first general election. Research by Thompson in (1931) and Garlake (1973) would help to prove that Great Zimbabwe was erected by local indigenous people. Both these scientists would have to work against the local government, which still favoured the studies of previous archaeologists such as Theodore Bent and Richard Hall. When this question was later answered, it is possible to see how research in the 1980s-1990s is becoming increasingly focused on putting Great Zimbabwe in an ever-larger context, this can be exemplified with Sinclair (1987) and Pikirayi (1993). However, by the time of the new millennium it is noticeable that a new focus on the political use of Great Zimbabwe is being conducted. It is also noticeable that this new focus also must deal with the country's cultural heritage and the nation's history as a former colony. Some of the prime examples of this are Ndoro (2001) and Matenga (2011). It is therefore possible to make out how the research regarding Great Zimbabwe changes depending on how the political landscape develops. It is also worth mentioning that I have only mentioned a handful of researchers and I was not able to go over all of them. It is how ever possible to see how the research changes together with the ever-evolving political landscape.

What can be more obvious than the remark that we, as archaeologists, are thinking when we experience, interpret and try to understand the past through its material culture? Of course we are always thinking (in some of way) as we live our lives in the world; there is no reason to question obvious fact. (Karlsson 1998: 3).

2.1.2 Great Zimbabwean Ruins and what the research has led to

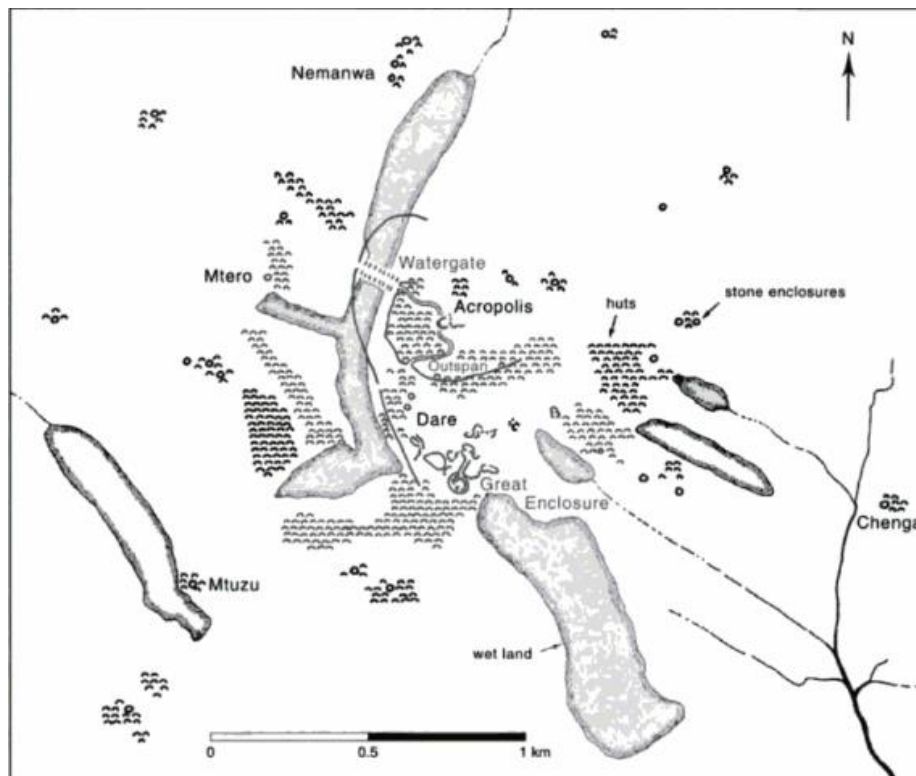


Fig. 2. Great Zimbabwe and different locations (Huffman 1981).

Zimbabwe can be translated from Shona *dzimbahwe* (which is a variant of Bantu) to mean "stone houses", Great Zimbabwe is then translated directly into "large / revered stone houses" (Garlake 1973: 11). Great Zimbabwe is also not unique, it is built in the traditional Madzimbabwe style. The Madzimbabwe tradition is defined by dry stone construction, their strength also being that they are self-contained, and they can be rebuilt if needed without major problems. The buildings at Great Zimbabwe and similar sites are unique in the way which most buildings are curved and rounded (Ndoro 2001: 24). This way of building is found neither in the Middle East nor in Asia. In addition to the large stone walls, you can also see slightly smaller earth structures, *Dhakas*. There are very few of these *Dhakas* left above ground and most are found below ground, and excavations are required to obtain them. It is also possible to make out from research that the Madzimbabwe style has not imitated any other region/continent. Great Zimbabwe has naturally developed based on the conditions the region has had to work with (Ndoro 2001: 24). There is nothing to suggest that an outside group has constructed these ruins. This way of building is partly what defines the contemporary African peasant culture (Ndoro 2001: 23). What really sets Great Zimbabwe apart from other ruins is the size of the structures erected at the site (Ndoro 2001: 21). There are several smaller premises in the area, but none of these have received the same focus. Great Zimbabwe consists of an area of approximately 720 ha and is divided into three major sections: Hill-Complex, Great Enclosure and Valley Ruins (Ndoro 2001: 23).



Fig. 3. from Great Zimbabwe showing the Madzimbabwe building technology (UNESCO. 2020).

What the research shows is that the site was in use during the African Iron Age, the fortification began to be constructed sometime during the 11th century AD by a Bantu speaking people. (Vogel 1994: 43). Great Zimbabwe is the largest prehistoric construction found to date to the south of the Sahara Desert (Garlake 1973: 11). This fact is probably one of the reasons why the location has received such great attention. Great Zimbabwe was used for a period of about 400 years between the 11th century and around 1400 AD. The site where the fort was erected also had access to several important natural resources, there are naturally with gold, silver and copper (Vogel. 1994: 43). In addition to these precious metals, Great Zimbabwe also had access to water. This access to water was what allowed the agricultural community to grow and the population to increase. This mixture of precious metals, pastures, agricultural lands and Great Zimbabwe's location would lead to it becoming a centre of power (Ndroo 2001: 22).

It was mainly the trade in gold that caused the site to grow with increasing economic growth. During the period 1100 - 1400, Great Zimbabwe was a commercial centre with trade links to the Indian Ocean. There are also indications Great Zimbabwe not only imported artifacts and goods from other countries, but it is more likely that Great Zimbabwe took an active role in the trading of eastern Africa. There are several indicators of the site's importance, some examples of this is that excavations have found both Arabic and Chinese coins (Thompson 1931: 196). In addition to these coins, ceramics have also been found from large parts of both the Middle East, Persia but also here China (Ndroo 2001: 33). It is these finds of pottery, coins along with C14 tests of the smaller dhakas which the dating of Great Zimbabwe has been based on. The earlier methods of dating were based on stratigraphic analyzes along with glass beads (Thompson 1931: 189). These methods all point to the fact that Great Zimbabwe was built sometime in the 12th century (Thompson 1931). It should also be noted that the researchers agree that the site was inhabited before, but it was first around the 1100s that the larger stone structures begun being erected (Sinclair 1987: 153). It is highly likely that the fortifications were erected in conjunction with Great Zimbabwe becoming an increasingly important trading centre. As trade and population increased, there was suddenly a greater need to defend the natural resources which were in circulation. Another theory that supports this is that it may also have been migratory Bantu people. When ever-increasing crowds were in circulation, this may have caused the agricultural community of Great Zimbabwe to defend its position by raising larger walls (Thompson 1931: 196).

The fact that Great Zimbabwe fortifications were erected sometime during 12th century is also an indicator that trade contributed to development. The researchers agree that trade was an important part of what drove the development of Great Zimbabwe forward (Randell-McIver. 1905. Thompson 1931. Garlake 1973. Sinclair 1987.). The trade together with the region being rich in both cultivated land and natural resources, enabled the development of Great Zimbabwe and the accumulation of wealth. This made it possible for the culture residing at Great

Zimbabwe to take on a more leading role in the region. The fact that pottery arrived on several occasions, thus it has been a long-standing trade for several hundred years, which reinforces the image of Great Zimbabwe as a commercial centre (Matenga 2011: 57). This trade appears to have been primarily an import of luxury goods in the form of ornaments, jewels, ceramics, etc. The archaeological material shows no evidence of being an import of industrial goods (Matenga 2011: 58). What this is because is difficult to know, it can be so simple that there was a greater need from the elite to procure exotic prestige and status objects (Matenga 2011: 57–58). During its golden age, it is estimated that approximately 10,000 individuals inhabited the site and the surrounding area. There are also signs that Great Zimbabwe should also have been the region's centre of power, not only from an economic perspective, but also from a religious and military one. Religious symbols have been found which can be linked to the Shona people's rain god Mawri (Vogel 1994: 44). Several large finds of young cattle have also been made in connection with Great Zimbabwe (Sinclair 1987: 146). This also shows that Great Zimbabwe had resources in addition to other locations in the region, which may also be indicative of greater cult activity. The most likely theory, however, is that this reflects the wealth that Great Zimbabwe had, they had enough resources to eat young and not just on special occasions (Sinclair 1987: 146). At times, in Great Zimbabwe, there was no need to use the cattle all their lives, but they could also be used for food.

Based on the buildings at the Hill-Complex in particular, interpretations have been made that Great Zimbabwe was the location where the Shona king of the people had his residence. This interpretation is partly based on the fact that material from other parts of the world was found, also the size of the fortifications themselves. As previously mentioned, there is no other fortification of the same magnitude, south of the Sahara, which gives Great Zimbabwe a unique position in African prehistory. At Great Zimbabwe, there have also been several signs that metal production has taken place at the site (Sinclair 1987: 114). The fact that there has been metal production can be attested by the fact that a few smelting furnaces have been found in connection with the site (Sinclair 1987: 114). Power was needed to fortify the site, and resources were also needed to establish the trade networks that operated. It is this fact which has laid the foundation for the theory that those who controlled Great Zimbabwe, controlled commerce, wealth and throughout this entire region. This is also one of the reasons why Great Zimbabwe is abandoned, it got abandoned when it later lost its strategic value.



Fig. 4. Here is another example of the Madzimbabwe style (Unesco. 2020).

There are no clear signs that the Shona people were forcibly expelled, nor are there any indications that an external threat must have been behind the site being abandoned. There are slightly different theories as to why the location was eventually abandoned in the mid-1400s. The collective research consensus today is that this is probably partly a change in the climate and a decline in natural resources (Sinclair 1987). A lot of resources were required to keep the trade networks at Great Zimbabwe alive, and as they depleted it was impossible to keep them

going. As the networks grew in both size and influence so did their demands for gold, ivory, and other commodities resources. Great Zimbabwe consumed much of the natural resources that allowed them to grow strong and this led to a decline in what they could later actually produce. There are theories that their own success may have caused their downfall (Sinclair 1987). When they could no longer maintain their trading networks with these resources (gold, ivory, etc.), they became relocated and Great Zimbabwe lost their strategic value (Sinclair 1987). It was probably not only a reduction in natural resources, but there are also signs that Great Zimbabwe was suffering from a decline in food. There are also signs that there has been over-exploitation of the region's agricultural lands and this must have caused starvation and a population decline (Sinclair 1987: 150). It was simply not possible to support the large population towards the end. There were also some indications that Great Zimbabwe occasionally suffered intense periods of drought. When this drought occurred, this should have led to further famine, death and had a clear negative effect on the economic and military power of the region. One of these periods of drought seems to have occurred in connection with Great Zimbabwe already having difficulties with its trade and its supply (Sinclair 1987: 161–162).

The fact that Great Zimbabwe had access to water, arable land and natural resources at its formation was what made the location strategically valuable, when these were no longer available, Great Zimbabwe lost its central role in the Zimbabwean Highlands (Sinclair 1987: 150). When Great Zimbabwe could no longer produce gold, ivory and other commodities, the location was no longer as valuable, and this caused the trade to stop, which contributed to more decay. When the trade networks disappeared, this had the effect that Great Zimbabwe did not have the same status as before, there was simply no reason to defend a location which was not important. This is one of the interpretations that the people emigrated from there, they began to search for new gold deposits and cultivation landscapes. It is during this period that the Mutapastat is growing stronger in the north of Zimbabwe, and therefore Garlake made the interpretation that it is probably a continuation of the earlier Zimbabwean culture (Garlake 1973: 179). This is also why when the Portuguese arrived about fifty years later, it was met by ruins. There are signs that Great Zimbabwe was not completely abandoned, but that it was not at all the same amount of people as it did during their peak (Garlake 1973: 180).

To summarize, as to why Great Zimbabwe was formed and subsequently abandoned, it is possible to say the following; Initially, people settled in the region as a result of the favorable situation. What this research also shows is that the group that settled at the site belonged to Shona (Garlake 1973). This is primarily due to the study of the successor states that belonged to Shona and who shared a variety of cultural traits with the people around Great Zimbabwe. What made the location ideal for agriculture was the fact that there was water available. There were also a number of other natural resources gold, ivory and iron were some of the natural resources used. Access to these natural resources led to an increase in population at the same time as it also led to an increasingly strategic value for the site. It was when this happened that the larger Madzimbabwe constructions would be erected. The research also shows that Great Zimbabwe was probably not only an economic center but also a religious one (Garlake 1973). Great Zimbabwe would hold this leading role for about three hundred years between the 12th and 14th centuries. Findings from Asia, Persia and the Middle East show how far Great Zimbabwe's trade relations went. It is thanks to these finds that the research interpret the Golden Age of Great Zimbabwe at some time during the 1300s, when most of the long-distance finds were imported during this period. There are also several interpretations as to why Great Zimbabwe was later abandoned, but the overall research view is that it was probably an over-exploitation, partly of agricultural land and partly of the region's natural resources. There are

also reasons to believe that there has been a change in the climate. This climate change caused more intense periods of drought, which hastened Great Zimbabwe's decline.

2.2 The Portuguese presence between 1500–1880

The region that today includes Zimbabwe was first discovered by Europeans in the early 16th century (Matenga 2011: 58). This initially consisted of Portuguese explorers, traders on their quest for a faster route to India. It was never a direct invasion or colonization of the region, but the Portuguese established trading stations around the coast, but they left the inland almost unexplored (Beach 1980: 176). However, this was not the result of an unwillingness to do so, but rather a resistance from the tribes who lived more inland (Beach 1980: 177). The few explorations inland consisted mainly of men in search of gold, jewels and other wealth. The Portuguese also caused an end to the Arab and Swahili merchants who existed in the region (Pikirayi. 1993: 101). It was also here which the Europeans first heard of Great Zimbabwe, and the first contact with the Shona people was established. It was not about expelling them, or conquering their lands, it was sometimes a mutual trade between the two peoples. It was sufficiently favourable for the Portuguese to control the ports, that they did not have to go deeper inland (Beach 1980: 220). However, it was not a completely peaceful coexistence between the Portuguese and Shona people, attempts were made to undermine the rich gold production in the Zimbabwean highlands, but without success (Beach 1980: 220–221). The foremost of these pressures came from the Portuguese Prazo landowners¹ (Beach 1980: 176–177). It was a political game where the Portuguese prazo owners played the local people against each other. This conflict culminated in the late 17th century when the Portuguese forcibly attempted to take over gold production. It was under the leadership of Changamire Dombo and the Rozvi Empire which a united Shona people would resist the Portuguese invasion (Beach 1980: 220–221). The Rozvi kingdom that the Portuguese encountered was an indirect replacement state for the former Zimbabwean state (Beach 1980:). Rozvi was a continuation of the Mutape States, which in turn was a successor to the Zimbabwean kingdom centered around Great Zimbabwe (Garlake 1973: 178). Changamire succeeded in defeating one of its rivals in what would later become Zimbabwe. It would take until the arrival of the British before the Europeans made a new attempt to capture the Zimbabwean highlands. The Portuguese presence in the region would last for about three centuries, it first ended when the Berlin Conference was held in 1884–1885. It was there and now that the British Empire, along with the other European powers, divided Africa among themselves. This would be the end of Portugal's influence over the highlands, but they still held onto the coast in Mozambique. It was only now that the region today known as Zimbabwe was to be occupied by the Europeans.

2.3 Cecil Rhodes, the British South Africa Company and Southern Rhodesia 1880-1965

After the Berlin Conference, the main European powers, Germany, Britain, France, Italy, and Portugal, had divided Africa into several territories and Portugal had seen itself outmanoeuvred. They lost influence in the area around the upper Zambezi River, they had to remain by the coast and their colony in Mozambique. There were still voices raised from the Portuguese side, but Britain completely ignored the Portuguese claims in the region. When the Portuguese Empire lacked the resources to assert its position with military power, the Zimbabwean Highlands were

¹ Prazo – Portuguese colonial owner who gained access to large lands in the colonized areas. They did not control these quite unlike feudal lords, where they were allowed to raise their own armies and utilize the occupied land (Beach. 1980: 176).

assigned to the British Empire (Mungazi 1992: 2) It was still a race but there was not much Portugal could do to prevent the British Empire from getting an increasing influence in the region (Mungazi 1992: 6)

The British presence in Zimbabwe began in earnest during the 1880s-90s under the leadership of the British imperialist, Cecil Rhodes (1853-1902) and what would later become the *British South Africa Company*. It was Rhodes who led the colonization and exploitation of the region. Cecil succeeded in obtaining mining rights in Matabeleland and Mashonaland (Mungazi 1992: 6) through negotiations with Lobengula Khumalo (1845-1894), the then king of the northern Ndebele people. Lobengula had on several occasions already denied Rhodes, and when he finally accepted, this was done under false pretences. When Lobengula accepted the agreement, he did so in the belief that only a dozen men would quarry minerals (Mungazi 1992: 7). Which was what he had orally agreed to, but once the agreement was concluded, the conditions were much more extensive:

- I, Lobengula, King of Matabeleland, Mashonaland, and other adjoining territories, in exercise of my sovereign powers, and in the presence and with the consent of my council of indunas, hereby grant and assign to the said grantees, their heirs, representatives, and assigns, jointly and severally, the complete and exclusive charge of all metals and minerals situated and contained in my kingdoms, principalities, and dominions, together with full power to do all things that they may deem necessary to win and procure the same, and to hold, collect, and enjoy the profits and revenues, if any, derivable from the said metals and minerals, subject to the aforesaid payment - (Rudd Concession October 30, 1888)

Not only did he give Rhodes the sole right to mine minerals, he also gave them the right to do anything which benefited their operation. The oral number determined was also removed, so there was nothing which prevented a much more extensive exploitation from being initiated. It was also this agreement which laid the foundation for Rhodes to be allowed to start his British South Africa Company in 1889, and to receive the letter of privilege which gave him the rights to break the earth in the name of the British Crown (Mungazi 1992: 7). The earliest British presence was thus not a crown colony in the same sense as say Canada or Australia. It was not the British crown which administratively governed the new colony, but it was Cecil Rhodes and BSAC who decided how the newly conquered land area would be managed. This was led by Rhodes and BSAC's private police force, the so-called British South Africa Police (BSAP) (Bourne 2011: 12). BSAP acted as the company's private military force, it was they who kept the peace in the new colony. Thus, under BSAC's rule, a focus was on exploitation, mining, and this would attract a great deal of migration to the country.

Just a year after the agreement was concluded, BSAC occupied large parts of Mashonaland, today part of northern Zimbabwe (Mungazi 1992: 10). This was done under the direct direction of Cecil Rhodes and his force Pioneer Column. It was also this which later led to both the First 1893–1894 and the Second Matabele Wars (First Chimurengan) 1896–1897 (Bourne 2011: 13–15) to secure control of resources and mining rights, but also a struggle for power in the region among competing groups. During the first Matabele War, other tribes stood on the British side, especially warriors from the Tswana tribes. These were tribes which had been enemies of the United Ndebele Kingdom and saw them more of an enemy than the British. It was not quite unlike what happened in Central America when the Spaniards arrived, they played the native indigenous people against one another. The first Matabele War ended with the death of Lobengula, the fragmentation of the Ndebele kingdom and a full BSAC occupation of Matabeleland.

What this meant was that BSAC was now the foremost power factor in the region, nor was there a direct challenger to their position. It was after this victory the new colony would be named after its conqueror Cecil Rhodes, namely Rhodesia. The Second Matabele War or the first

Chimurenga depending on who you ask was a revolt against BSAC rule in Rhodesia (Garlake 1973: 65). It was a revolt led by mainly Shona tribes who tried to expel Britons and put an end to colonial rule. Just like the first Matabele War, this ended with a victory for BSAC (Bourne 2011: 15). It should be noted that the Second War of liberation, which lasted between 1965 and 1979 today, is seen as the second Chimurengan. What was a revolt in the eyes of the British is viewed by the Zimbabweans as a war for liberation. Thus, it is of great importance which side you decide to study the conflict from.

There were underlying motives for Cecil Rhodes's interest in the region, and it is also of great importance to put this in perspective. It was not only about the economic benefits which the mining brought, but there was also a purely ideological ambition (Garlake 1973: 65). Rhodes was driven by a notion of the superiority of the white race, he also saw it as the duty of the Anglo-Saxon race to lead the world (Mungazi 1992: 4). This ideological view took off in his desire to expand the influence of the British Empire (Matenga 2011: 146). Cecil Rhodes was not alone in this kind of dreams and this approach, but it was at the very time of 19th century imperialism and with a growing European nationalism. It was this desire for empire building which was the driving factor in the European states choosing to divide Africa. It shall also be mentioned that the Europeans held a world view which saw themselves as bringer of civilization, a view which by its very nature was racist, and put the white man above the local Africans. The foremost of Rhodes' ambitions was the so-called Cape–Cairo Redline. This was his vision of a British colonial empire extending from Cape Town in South Africa, to Cairo in Egypt (Mungazi 1992: 2–3). Rhodes would never see this ambition fulfilled, but after the First World War and the assignment of Germany's colonies in Africa, this dream came true. He also used this ideological view to justify his conquests in the region. Cecil Rhodes supported archaeological research in the region and one of his main goals was control over Great Zimbabwe, the largest and most monumental archaeological site in inland southern Africa. When the site was first found, the British colonial enterprise quickly established that it could not have been erected by the indigenous people, it was far too complex and well built. Great Zimbabwe was considered so grand that an imperialist Eurocentric mindset posited that Africans could not have constructed it, instead they credited the monument to the Phoenicians. Cecil Rhodes financed the archaeologists Theodore Bent and Richard Hall to confirm this interpretation (Bent 1893 & Hall 1902). Indeed, Bent reported what he described as "obvious" evidence that Great Zimbabwe had not been erected by indigenous people, but instead by Phoenicians. It could be said that they found King Solomon's and the Queen of Saba's mythical mines (Bent 1893: 226). Among the material unearthed at the excavations were bird figurines in soapstone which were deposited on the site. These bird figurines would become a symbol for Rhodesia, and later, an independent Zimbabwe (Matenga 2011: 136). The alleged proof of this link meant that the British received a biblical claim in the area, and their colonization could be further justified. It was no longer about occupying a land from Shona, but rather it was about regaining a lost land.

Hiram's men and Salomon's men who brought home gold from Ofir, also had with them the Almugtree which was made to decorate the lord's house. King Salomo gave in return the queen of Saba all that which she desired, as well as thanks for all that she had brought with her to him. She then returned to her own land with her servants (Second Chronicles: 9:18)

It was not only a war for the region's resources, but it was also a war for the culture of Zimbabwe. By claiming that Great Zimbabwe was Phoenician / Biblical, not only did the British increase their right to rule they also diminished the right of the indigenous African. It was mainly the Shona who lost their identity and cultural heritage, it was their ancestors who had erected the fortification (Garlake 1973: 65). This forgery of history not only gave the British the right to the land, it also elevated them even further in the racial conflict which was still

highly relevant during the late 19th and early 20th century (Sinamai 1997: 1-12). They took away Shona the right to show that also they had a proud history of. One modern example of this to compare it with what the British did would be someone invade Greece today, and then claiming that the Acropolis was not constructed by the Greeks, but it was the Celts who erected the building. This was an effective way to not only attack a people's culture, but also take away some of their identity and unity. This conflict of identity is something which becomes important in connection with the formation of Zimbabwe. Through this kind of justification, a new kind of legitimacy was found in the question of who it was who owned the land. It became easier for BSAC and Cecil Rhodes to pursue their agenda if it was about the history of their own people, it was more so a colonization to recover something which was lost. This is where Great Zimbabwe would play a central role in the issue of Rhodesia's survival. The decisions which Cecil Rhodes made in these introductions are something which still haunts today's Zimbabwe, and how Great Zimbabwe has been interpreted. It is easier to come as a liberator of something lost than to arrive as a bloodthirsty conqueror. With the usage of Great Zimbabwe Rhodes could be Christian hero who took back their lands from the savage Africans. The image of Great Zimbabwe Cecil Rhodes helped establish would later be reused by Ian Smith and the Rhodesian Republic (Ndoro 2001: 45).

It would take a little over two decades from that the The British South Africa Company took control in Mashonaland and Matabeleland before they'd be losing their administrative rights. It was initially seen by the British government as an advantage to let BSAC govern themselves, but as the colony grew, they began to become more and more burdens (Mungazi 1992: 17). It became more difficult to know exactly which agreements were in force between the British and the various tribes. They were able to conclude an agreement with BSAC and then another with the British Crown. This system also meant that if the British Parliament wanted to act in Rhodesia they would first have to go through the company. Having two decision-making entities made it more difficult for the colonizers to know which laws they lived under. These reasons were just some of the reasons that, in the end of 1923, Britain ended BSAC's control of Rhodesia. Instead, they set up a self-governing British Crown colony which had its own parliament, they set their own laws, and it governed their own country (Matenga 2011: 151). This colony was set up based on the South African model, which afforded enormous rights to the white settlers (Alao 2012: 15). In order to vote for parliament, the person in question had to be a British subject, you also had to be at least twenty-two years old, and of male sex, and you had to be white. You also needed to be able to write your own name on the registration forms which were required. In addition to these criteria, you either needed to own mining rights, or to own some other form of property (Mungazi 1992: 15). As a result, the right to vote for the ruling government excluded a majority of the population and left the self-governing colony in the hands of a small white and male minority (Alao 2012: 15). The system was developed on a few occasions between 1923-1970. In the later stages, you became more focused on income if you reached a certain annual sum, your vote weighed heavier than someone earning less. There was a higher value for education where this could give your voice more weight. Both criteria meant that the white minority had a clear advantage in power and the voices of the black majority were not heard. This voting system would continue in various forms until 1980 and the end of the war for liberation the majority system was introduced. This exclusive voting system most likely helped lay the foundation for the conflict which would later erupt in the 1960s. By effectively excluding most of the population, this gave room for groups such as ZANU and ZAPU to find ever-increasing support from the people. Both parties felt that if there was no opportunity to influence how the country was governed in a democratic way, there was only one alternative, revolution (Alao 2012: 16).

Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable. (Kennedy 1962)

2.4 Rhodesia, the Bush War and the Second Chimurengan 1962-1979

The wind of change is blowing through this African continent, and whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact. We must all accept it as a fact, and our national policies must take account of it. (Macmillan 1960)

After the end of the First World War, the British Empire controlled almost a third of the world, and in Africa, Cecil Rhodes's dream had come true. Following the seizure of Germany's colonies, the British Empire's control now extended from Cairo to Cape Town. However, after two devastating world wars, the world was not just tired of war, Europe and their economies laid in ruins. This would lead to two new major powers gaining influence, the United States of America and the Soviet Union. What also happens in the 1950s-1960s is that the world, and especially Britain, is going through a strong wave of decolonization, they simply did not have the resources to keep their colonies. It should also be mentioned that, especially in Africa, this decolonialization came under intense pressure with growing African nationalism (Alao 2012: 16). This nationalism was also supported by both the United States and the Soviet Union, both of which wanted to see an end to the European empire. The two new superpowers saw only benefits with the fall of the colonial empires. The British Empire, along with the other European colonial powers, were liquidated and plans were made for Africa to have a chance to self-government.

During the 1960s, just like the rest of Africa, Southern Rhodesia had seen an ever-growing movement liberation African nationalism. This was expressed in the formation of several African parties. The first of these parties was the Southern Rhodesia African National Congress (SRANC). This was a party and an organization that fought for the rights of the indigenous people (Alao 2012: 16). It was a party which opposed the large land holdings which the white minority still possessed, together with the large racial inequalities. It was an organization that advocated change without violence (Pindula A 2020). The party wanted to implement reforms which would put an end to discrimination, segregation and better living conditions for the black majority. It was also a matter of the introduction of the system of one man one vote, which would see the introduction of majority rule in the country (Arnold & Wiener 2008: 20). SRANC took inspiration from Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights movement. It is also possible to see similarities with how Mahatma Gandhi led Indian liberation. The SRANC was thus an attempt to bring about change, using the country's laws and the democratic system, without violence. This attempt, on the other hand, would prove impossible when the later *Unlawful Organizations Act* (UOA) came into force, causing the party to be banned by the South Rhodesian government (Arnold & Wiener. 2008: 20). The introduction of that law made it much more difficult for the country's black majority to organize. This was also not facilitated by the introduction of additional restrictions in the form of the *Native Affairs Amendment Act* (NAA). This law made it unlawful for more than twelve Africans to convene if they did so for the purpose of opposing the government (Arnold & Wiener 2008: 20-21). These two laws made it impossible for the country's black majority to try to bring about a change without resorting to violence. This would later become a leading reason for the development of militant organizations. It is therefore possible to say that SRANC is a precursor to all the parties which would come afterwards and that the black majority was initially a much more united front.

The SRANC was to be replaced by the National Democratic Party (NDP) created under the leadership of Joshua Nkomo (1917-1999). The NDP was in many ways a direct continuation of the former party but under a different name. Like their predecessor, they fought for more rights for the country's black majority and (Bourne 2011: 46-47). It is still possible to see here that it was not done under purely violent forms, there was still hope that reforms could take place without conflict. Just like SRANC, the NDP still wanted to work within the system to achieve change, but because of both the Unlawful Organizations Act and the Native Affairs Amendment act was still in effect and the NDP was forced to dissolve in 1961 (Arnold & Wiener 2008: 22). After the NDP was banned and dissolved, Joshua Nkomo chose to start a new political party ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People's Union) that year. This party would not be like either SRANC or NDP but ZAPU was far more militarily oriented (Bourne 2011: 53). It was a party which no longer advocated change through non-violence and civil disobedience. ZAPU found its ideology built on Soviet communism. It is first now that it is possible to see the beginning of the war of freedom/liberation which would shake the nation. Very much like both SRANC and NDP, ZAPU was banned by the sitting white minority, but instead of completely disbanding or starting a new party, ZAPU's leadership chose to initiate an armed conflict and they remained organized. The armed conflict was led by the party's armed division Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), and it was mainly this part of the party which fought in the guerrilla war which lasted from 1962-1979 (Alao 2012: 20).

Initially, ZAPU was the leading party during the growing conflicts, but there were early signs of internal strife within the party. It was those who were not entirely satisfied with Joshua Nkomo's leadership or how ZIPRA acted. There were also those who had other ideological backgrounds and did not consider that party leadership did enough (Bibliography. 2020). One of the main advocates for this was Robert Gabriel Mugabe (1924-2019). Mugabe did not think that the Soviet version of communism would work in Rhodesia, the country was as he simply put it not industrial enough. Instead, he wanted ZAPU to try to follow a more Maoists form of communism. What this briefly meant was that Mugabe did not think the revolution in Rhodesia should not come from the country's industry, but instead would have its origin from the countryside (Alao 2012: 24). He believed that the only way to victory was to organize the resistance from the farmers, and peasants. This, together with a dissatisfaction with Nkomo's leadership, was what prompted Mugabe, along with a large part of the party, to break with ZAPU to create their own party, ZANU (Alao 2012: 20). ZAPU and ZANU were the two political parties that led the fight for Zimbabwe's freedom. ZAPU was led by Joshua Nkomo (1917-1999) with his militant faction ZIPRA. ZANU was led by Robert Mugabe and their militant faction Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA). It is also important to note here that the principal of the military actions was not carried out by the main parties, they stood apart from their militant sections and stayed more diplomatic (Alao 2012: 20).

The two groups would not become fully united after the end of the war. They advanced different ideas about... and there were clear ideological differences, they were also supported by different allies. ZANU was supported by the People's Republic of China and leaned more towards the Maoist version of communism; ZAPU, on the other hand, was backed by the Soviet Union and followed a more Leninist form of communism. There was also cultural and ethnic differences between the two freedom movements. ZANU as an organization consisted primarily of people from the Shona people group, including Mugabe. Nkomo his affiliation with the Ndebele people (Bourne 2011: 56-57), it was also from this group he received his main support (Mungazi 1992). These differences were large enough to make the two groups unable to ignore their differences and stand together (Alao 2012: 20). What can be seen is that they acted in different parts of the country, ZANU / ZANLA trained and acted mainly from Mozambique, ZAPU / ZIPRA led their actions from Zambia (Alao 2012: 24).

It was the British planned right to self-rule / majority rule, together with British withdrawal and growing African nationalism, which worried large parts of the white minority in Southern Rhodesia. At this time, it was estimated that Rhodesia consisted of about 4 million Africans and about 220 000 of European decent (Benettsson 1966: 6). The white minority owned most of the land and industry, and had much to lose on majority rule, particularly if socialist. Rhodesia consisted of huge class divisions between the ethnic groups and this was what made the freedom movements so attractive (Ndoro 2001: 45). The white minority knew that if one man, one vote was introduced, they would lose their power. There was a fear from the incumbent government that the black majority was not ready to govern. They simply feared that if universal suffrage were introduced, Rhodesia would be harmed in its entirety.

There was some cause for this concern when in many parts of Africa where European withdrawal was followed by conflicts and war, including in Congo (1955) and Sudan (1960). There was also a general fear that the communist parties would confiscate their land and their businesses. They would with other words not only lose their privileges, but perhaps everything they owned. At this point in time a lot of Rhodesia were second-third generation of settlers, many had lived in the region their entire lives, to them this was their homeland. It is possible to understand why many of them were reluctant to give up their way of life, even if this way of life was oppressive for the majority. It was this fear of majority rule which prompted the incumbent government, led by Ian Smith, to proclaim the independent nation of Rhodesia on November 11, 1965 (Alao 2012: 18), this was done without the support of Britain. This one-sided Unilateral Declaration of Liberation (UDI) never received any international recognition and they stood almost entirely alone. The newly proclaimed state of Rhodesia would find no support from the old colonial powers or the rest of the world. Britain stood firm on the point of giving all the people a chance to make their voices heard, through a majority government, and they were not prepared to recognize Ian Smith or his government (Mungazi 1992: 85). From the UN, sanctions were initiated and these would not end the end of the war (Alao 2012: 16). These sanctions mainly took the form of not recognizing the nation, but also an embargo of natural resources (Bourne 2011: 62). The only support Rhodesia saw during the war came from South Africa and Mozambique, still a Portuguese colony (until 1975, following a bloody war of liberation). The racist white minority government of South Africa faced similar difficulties like Rhodesia, and Portugal tried to maintain the few colonies they still had. When their support later waned in the mid-1970s, the strength was not to maintain power. It was, above all, a lack of both military resources, but also oil, which in the end caused the isolated country to try to resolve the conflict through diplomatic means (Bourne 2011: 62). This, along with the growing pressure from both ZAPU and ZANU, Smith had to compromise. This compromise came in 1979 in the form of the Republic of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia (Alao 2012: 30). It was an attempt to unite both whites and blacks under one and the same banner, Smith hoped this would put an end to UN sanctions, and that Zimbabwe-Rhodesia would gain its international recognition. Smith believed if he could get Zimbabwe-Rhodesia recognized as a nation, then the increase of resources could lead the whites to retain power. It was also at the same time an attempt to exclude the two Marxist organizations from taking control of the country. If a sufficiently large proportion of the population joined up behind Zimbabwe-Rhodesia then this could possibly lead to an end to the war. It was therefore in connection with the creation of the new nation that Ian Smith stepped down as prime minister and Abel Muzorewa was elected the nation's first primary minister of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia (Alao 2012: 29-30). Ian Smith's attempt to unify the country and exclude both ZAPU and ZANU failed and the war continued. It would not come to an end until December 12, 1979, in the meeting called the Lancaster House Agreement (Mungazi 1992: 93). It was Zimbabwe-Rhodesia abolished and the decision to introduce majority rule was introduced. The first general elections were held in February 1980, with ZANU getting the majority of votes (Alao 2012: 33), and Mugabe became the first elected

prime minister of the new nation Zimbabwe (Mungazi 1992: 97). It should also be noted that ZANU had also threatened not to accept the result of the election if the result did not fall in their favour (Bourne 2011: 94–95). The country’s first president would be Canaan Banana, the role of the prime minister and president would first become one and the same in 1987, and Robert Mugabe would take up this office (African Elections. 2020).

2.4.1 The role of Great Zimbabwe during the war and in Rhodesia

Great Zimbabwe as a cultural heritage played an important role during the Bush War / Second Chimurengan. The thesis makes this clear by showing how all the groups in different ways claimed the rights to the heritage site. By using these ruins, they sought to create legitimacy for their respective movements. This was expressed in the name of both ZANU and ZAPU (Ngoro 2001: 45). It was also made very early on that once these groups had taken power, the nation would also change its name to Zimbabwe. Great Zimbabwe was used during this period by the nationalist freedom movements as a symbol of the colonial rule represented by Smith’s government (Ngoro 2001: 45). Great Zimbabwe became a symbol of the identity which the nationalist/freedom movements were trying to create.



Fig. 5. ZAPU’s Party flag from 1972 with Great Zimbabwe in focus clearly see the ruins here (Zapu.org. 2020).

Thus, early claims were made on the region’s history, but not only by the freedom movements. The Smith government did on several occasions attempt to link Rhodesia to the legacy left by Cecil Rhodes. This took the form of the country’s new city arms where a Zimbabwean bird in gold could be clearly seen (Fig. 6. Other connections which were made were the country’s currencies where once again the Zimbabwean bird was found on both coins and banknotes. The government of Rhodesia also worked intensively to maintain the image that Great Zimbabwe was not constructed by Shona or Ndebele. The story which was instead taught in school was that it was an external group which erected these stone houses (Ngoro 2001: 45). It went so far as to show interpretations completely banned in trying to preserve the image which has existed with everything since Cecil Rhodes, and BSAC. Ian Smith knew that Great Zimbabwe was a nationalist symbol to which the majority of the people would potentially gather around which is why in the 1960s he encouraged archaeologists to write fake articles and disseminate the erroneous image of cultural heritage (Sinclair 1987: 26). Whenever this wasn’t the case the Rhodesian government encouraged silence and supported casting Great Zimbabwe in a veil of mystery (Matenga 2011: 152). Despite archaeological data disproving the idea, ever since Cecil Rhodes’ time the biblical narratives continued, persisting in minority Rhodesian thought as fact (Matenga 2011: 155). Hence, the minority government’s adoption of Great Zimbabwe symbols was a strategy to support the argument of white rule; an idea that made sense to a colonialist mindset (Matenga 2011: 154).

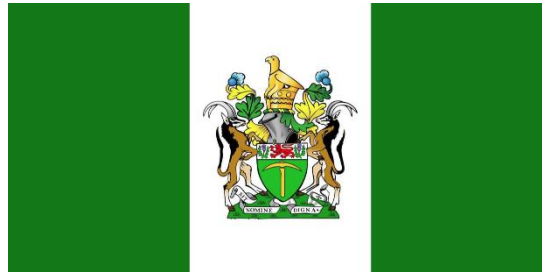


Fig. 6. Rhodesia's national flag between 1968–1979 with the Zimbabwe bird in focus (Svartahistoria. 2020).

Finally, before the Lancaster House agreement was announced in 1979 Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. When this name was taken, it was partly an attempt by the government to appease the freedom movements, while at the same time making a connection to the country's history that also supported a colonialist outlook. As in the two previous pictures, it is possible to see another connection to Great Zimbabwe, this time through the Zimbabwe bird (Matenga 2011: 154).



Fig. 7. Zimbabwe-Rhodesias national flag in 1979 with the Zimbabwe Bird in focus (Fotw. 2020).

Hence, all groups that fought for power were appropriating Great Zimbabwe symbols as part of their ideologies, but with widely different arguments of what the symbols represented in relation to their cause. It is therefore possible to draw the conclusion that during this period, was Great Zimbabwe used politically both by the guerrillas, but also by the sitting Rhodesian government.



Fig. 8. The current flag of Zimbabwe (Countryflags. 2020).

2.4.2 The merger of ZANU – ZAPU and the creation of ZANU-pf.

Between 1980 and 2000, ZANU's position as the country's governing party strengthened. It was made clear quite early on that ZANU, with its ethnical ties to the Shona, had strong voter support in the country (Alao 2012: 81) and in the country's first elections they won a lone majority. The first free elections in the country ended with such a victory for ZANU that even if the three other parties had gone (ZAPU, Rhodesian Front (RF) United African National Council (UNAC) the same they would not have had a majority in Parliament (African Elections. 2020). This meant that there was no real opposition party to ZANU. This hegemony would hold ZANU between 1980-2000 without any party directly threatening them. After the War of Liberation was won, there was only one party which managed to give any decent opposition, and that was ZAPU.

ZAPU still had reasonably strong support in the country (about 20%) and mainly this support came from Matabeleland and in the areas, which historically belonged to Ndebele (African Elections. 2020). This part of the country was still the region where the Ndebele people lived as the most densely populated (Alao 2012: 82), and this is where ZAPU found much of its support. This was probably because Joshua Nkomo was of Ndebele origin, and this led the majority to support ZAPU over ZANU. Throughout the War of Liberation there had been clear differences between the two parties, not only ethnic but also ideological. What also happened after the war was won was that there was dissent between the two parties, both camps accusing the other of not doing enough, while both organizations wanted to take on the honor of winning the war (Alao 2012: 84). Mugabe simply could not allow two communist parties to share voter support in part, and both could claim to lead the country to freedom. It is also highly likely that ZAPU was considered to be one if not the greatest threat to ZANU's leading role in the country (Alao 2012: 82). This threat was also not only political, after liberation was won, there were still those within guerrillas (ZANLA, ZIPRA) who did not want to disarm (Alao 2012: 76.) This fact was something that diluted Mugabe's concern that ZAPU was Joshua Nkomo was also someone who, on a personal level, could compete with Mugabe's background as a freedom fighter. Nkomo had, in fact, both created and led NDC and ZAPU, he had long been a front figure in the fight for universal suffrage and a free Zimbabwe (Bibliography. 2020). This fact together with the relatively large ethnic and linguistic differences between ZAPU and ZANU, almost guaranteed that it would end in conflict between the two parties.

The growing tension would eventually culminate in 1983 when Mugabe's command the Zimbabwean army to enter Matabeleland and forcibly strike down the remains of ZIPRA (Alao 2012: 84). Mugabe's decision to send in the country's armed forces has been highly debated, and it is considered a genocide. It is estimated that between 1983 and 1987 up to 30,000 Ndebele were killed (Bourne 2011: 139). This did not always happen in armed conflicts with guerrillas, but many civilians also fell victim to the violence. This ethnic cleansing also became an opportunity for ZANU to simultaneously attack ZAPU. It often happened that the individuals who were accused of cooperating with the guerilla belonged to the ZAPU (Alao 2012: 84). It was an opportunity for Mugabe to effectively weaken that party, which had the greatest chance of challenging ZANU's leading position in the country. This conflict would not come to an end on December 22, 1987, when Mugabe and Nkomo signed the Unity Accord agreement. This agreement meant that ZAPU and ZANU would be united under a joint party ZANU-pf. Mugabe thus consolidated his power when, with this agreement, he absorbed ZAPU into ZANU to form ZANU-pf (Alao 2012: 82). He had effectively outmanoeuvred one of the few parties which could've potentially opposed ZANU but also one of the few threats to his own position. Great

Zimbabwe would play an important role in this agreement and the new party. This will further be discussed this further in section 4.2

3.0 The political usage of Great Zimbabwe between 1980-2020

The following focuses on how Great Zimbabwe has been mentioned by politicians / statesmen during the period of 1980-2020. How their heritage law is formulated, the thesis will also analyse and interpret how the sitting ZANU-pf government has made various kinds of connections to Great Zimbabwe. How this is expressed in name changes; pictures and how Great Zimbabwe is depicted and presented.

3.0.1 National Museums and Monuments act

Zimbabwe, like the rest of the world, protects its country's cultural heritage through special regulations and heritage laws, in Zimbabwe this takes the form of the National Museums and Monuments act. This is the law which provides directives for what it considers to be a Zimbabwean cultural heritage. By studying this law it is possible to see how the government chooses to use the National Museums and Monuments act to pursue an agenda. There are tendencies to exclude recent phenomena, which means that most of the British presence does not fall under the protection of their culture law's protection (National Museums and Monuments act. 2001).

"Ancient monument" means any— (a) building, ruin or structure or remaining portion of a building, ruin or structure; or (b) statue, grave, cave, rock shelter, middle, shell mound or other site or thing of a similar kind; which is known or believed to have been erected, constructed or used in Zimbabwe before the 1st January, 1890, but does not include an ancient work; "Ancient working" means any shaft, cutting, tunnel or stope which was made for mining purposes before the 1st of January, 1890. " (National Museums and Monuments act. 2001).

Here it is possible to see how Zimbabwe's culture heritage act is used politically to exclude the activities of the British South Africa Company. It is specifically aimed at not including tunnels, mining shafts and mining. What this means more directly is that when they came to power, ZANU-pf chose to rewrite the country's cultural heritage to completely exclude the white minority population. Their ancestral activities are not seen as cultural heritage worth protecting by this law. This is a deliberate choice on the part of the government, which means that Zimbabwe as a nation is further distancing itself from the British colonization. This can also be interpreted as a way for Robert Mugabe to further strengthen his historical legitimacy in Zimbabwe. After the 1980s, there were still those who opposed his access to power, not least among the Rhodesians who lost both power and their privileges. When the new version of the National Museums and Monuments act came into force in 1984, their influence in Great Zimbabwe was reduced as a result of their historical connection being legitimized. There was no longer any law protecting their ancestor's activity in the country. Setting the date to 1890 and onwards was an effective way to completely eradicate an ethnic group's history from Zimbabwe's history. The fact that it specifically mentions mining activity as something which is not included is also an indication of whose history, he wanted to get rid of. This is an exclusive method which means that they no longer have the same rights, and in many ways, they are no longer part of the country. This change in the law makes it possible to interpret it as a way of saying that the white minority was no longer welcome in Zimbabwe. This change of law became a step for the new nation Zimbabwe to distance itself from the colonization they had endured, but this step was at the expense of the country's white minority.

Of course, it is possible to discuss whether what Mugabe and ZANU-pf did was right or wrong, and this is nothing I will try to do in this paper. On the other hand, you understand why this change of law was made, it may have been an effective way to bring together a divided nation. This change can be interpreted as an attempt to unite the two largest ethnic groups in Zimbabwe. Therefore, this change in the law must be put into its historical context. Shortly after Zimbabwe was proclaimed, the conflict between Shona and Ndebele again flared out. The ideological differences and ethnic differences that separated the two freedom groups were still there and they would get increasingly worse. This conflict takes its shape in the massacres which occurred between 1983-1987 (Alao 2012: 84-78). What this version of the National Museums and Monuments act does is that it includes both Ndebele and Shona (Matenga 2011: 59). Most of Ndebele's presence in Zimbabwe began in the late 1700s and early 1800s, which means that their cultural heritage is protected by law. By placing the year in 1890, only the white minority becomes the target for this legislative change. The year chosen is also a historically important year, it is also the year when Queen Victoria recognized Cecil Rhodes and his mining operations in the region. If Mugabe instead chose to set the date in 1790, it would also have excluded the Ndebele. Now the law instead includes both people's cultural past. It could then be interpreted as an attempt to unite the two peoples under a common nation where each ethnic group history was respected. However, this will be at the expense of the ethnic white minority.

It could also be possible to interpret this change in law as an attempt to also highlight the Shona people over Ndebele. This interpretation can be done since the research shows that most monumental cultural heritage is constructed by ancestors of the Shona people. By specifically pointing out ruins and larger structures, the focus is placed on the cultural heritage that Shona has left behind. So it is possible to see how the National Museums and Monuments Act is used twice, it is possible to see how the law unites the black majority by excluding the white minority population, while at the same time reinforcing Shona's historical legitimacy. The fact that Ndebele did not construct larger buildings like the Shona did with their Madzimbabwe structures between 1100s-1400s means that their cultural heritage is not as well represented. This means that although their history is included within the cultural heritage timeframe, it is simply not as much preserved seeing as the Nguni did not construct constructions like Great Zimbabwe. (Garlake 1973: 179-180). There will indirectly not be an equal distribution between the cultural heritage of the two ethnic groups. To use an example of one of the heritage sites protected by law, it is possible to use Great Zimbabwe. Great Zimbabwe is the ideal example of a location which will be included within the framework of the country's cultural heritage. It was a cult site, there are well-preserved ruins, and it is a location which was erected long before 1890. It could partly be interpreted as when the government wrote the changes to the National Museums and Monuments act this was done to make Great Zimbabwe a cultural heritage more associated with Shona. It becomes more difficult from a Ndebele point to show a connection to something their own people have not actually constructed.

(1) Subject to subsection (2), the Board shall consist of such members, being not less than five in number, as may be appointed by the Minister after consultation with the President and in accordance with any directions the President may give him. . (National Museums and Monuments act. 2001).

It is the National Museums and Monuments act which partially sets the agenda for what it is that counts as Zimbabwe's cultural heritage. There is a direct link between the country's President and the one who leads the discussion about the country's cultural heritage. At the time this law was updated it was Canaan Banana (1936–2003), but after 1987 Robert Mugabe would take over this post as well. It cannot be overlooked that changes to which groupings have the right to make a historic claim in Zimbabwe will become much more decisive in the 2000s. The fact that the government effectively took away from the country's white minority to count the

activities of their ancestors as a cultural heritage makes it later difficult to claim that they also have historical rights to the nation.

3.1 Great Zimbabwe between 1980-2000 the creation of an identity

During the period 1980–2000 Great Zimbabwe was used by the government, and this was mainly done with the aim of uniting the nation behind a common history. Great Zimbabwe was something which united a nation which had been in constant struggle for almost twenty years (Matenga 2011: 158). One of the individuals who saw the importance of exploiting Great Zimbabwe was Robert Gabriel Mugabe. During the liberation war, ZANU had made connections to Great Zimbabwe both in the name of ZANU, through flags, symbols and promises. Now that the war was won, the first free elections in the country's history were held. It was ZANU who won the first election held in 1980 and through this Robert Mugabe became Zimbabwe's first prime minister (Mungazi 1992: 93-94). When the election was won, he had to unite the divided nation and the various domestic groups. It is in a situation like this the use of a common history can come into play. It will always be easier to unite people behind an idea if they all feel connected to it. There is something within the idea of nationhood which unit people. It gives individuals a sense of belonging as well as a sense of pride to be part of something larger than oneself. It was within all this which Great Zimbabwe was to be used, it was the foremost of all the cultural heritage sites in Zimbabwe, and it was something which connected the nation with its pre-European origin.

One of the clearest symbolic decisions of this new era was to immediately rename the nation. Mugabe chose instead of retaining Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, instead choosing to simply name the nation to Zimbabwe. By completely removing Rhodesia from the name, this was a clear statement from the side of Mugabe. It clearly indicated where he stood in relation to previous colonialism and Smith's white minority government. With the name change ZANU sent out the signal that they would be a stepping away from the time that had been, and instead look to the future, and that ZANU would lead the nation in a whole new direction. This new direction and this new name were also at the same time a clear link to a prehistory which during Ian Smith's time in power had been somewhat kept in the dark (Matenga 2011: 157). Great Zimbabwe had ever since Cecil Rhodes and Theodore Bent had been appropriated to legitimize colonialism, but also indirectly the presence of the whites. It is therefore of great importance for Mugabe to regain this cultural monument and once again make it African. It was important to see that Great Zimbabwe was no longer associated with the Europeans, but instead it was a cultural heritage which represented the indigenous Africans.



Fig. 9. Rhodesia state emblem 1968-1979 (Fotw. 2020) (Zim.gov. 2020)

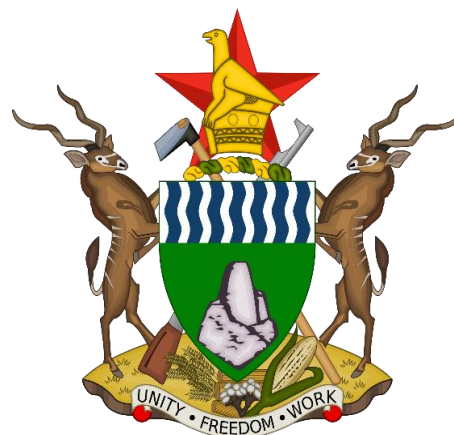


Fig. 10. Zimbabwe state emblem 1981

ZANU-pf chose to use several different strategies to achieve this, there is the obvious change of the nation's name, but it is also possible to see it with the update of the national coat of arms. Figure 7 shows the Rhodesian Coat of Arms, just as on the former national flag can the gilded Zimbabwe bird also be seen here at the centre. What is also noticeable is the gilded pickaxe something which represented the mining operation which had driven the Europeans to colonize the region. The Red Lion represented the link to Britain. The fact that the former city arms had a Latin quote is another factor which linked Rhodesia/Zimbabwe more to Europe than to Africa. The quote says: *Sit Nomine Digna*, which can loosely be translated to; *May it be worthy of the name*. This is in fact a connection to Cecil Rhodes and that the new republic should be worthy of his legacy. The interesting thing to take away from studying this coat of arms is that the soapstone-created Zimbabwean bird is at the top. The gilded Zimbabwean bird stands on top of the connections made to Europe, together with the pickaxe it is one of the two symbols that clearly stands out. It is obvious that Great Zimbabwe was of great importance to Rhodesia, the Zimbabwean bird was a national symbol they had a connection to. It is possible to see how in Rhodesia they tried to create their own national identity with affiliation with the cultural heritage (Matenga 2011: 152).

It is also another reason why it probably became important for Mugabe to destroy the links between Rhodesia and Great Zimbabwe, one way to do this is to take over the symbols that Rhodesia previously used as their own national symbols. This is likely why Mugabe in 1981 chose to replace the former coat of arms with a new one. There are clear similarities between Rhodesia (Fig. 9) and Zimbabwe's (Fig. 10) arms. Both pictures show the gilded Zimbabwean bird in focus. This indicates that it was of great importance for both nations. In the Zimbabwe emblem is it possible to draw the conclusion between the Zimbabwe's city arms and the link to communist ideology. The new city coat of arms also shows how guerrillas won power through the Kalashnikov Act, and that power comes from the working people. Mugabe chooses to place a structure from Great Zimbabwe on the site where the golden pick had previously been located. This can be interpreted as Zimbabwe now having a new history, the new nation does not claim to be miners and the new country does not see its origin from that history. It is made clear to all that Zimbabwe has its connection to the Zimbabwe culture and the time before the arrival of the British Empire (Matenga 2011: 193). Just as the new coat of arms represents the nation's new historical heritage, it is also a way for Mugabe to reconnect with the future. By linking his new Zimbabwe to Great Zimbabwe, he is trying to show what greatness the nation is striving for. With research is it possible to say that the period when Great Zimbabwe was active was a golden age for the Shona people (Thompson 1931 & Garlake 1973). This golden age is something which ZANU-pf tried to use for a political purpose. Reclaiming Great Zimbabwe as a cultural heritage is also a way for the new government to point to the future of the new nation. Mugabe is trying to create a direct link between the new and older Zimbabwe through depictions of Great Zimbabwe. Through this link he tries to show the people that they are heading into a new golden age.

There are several examples where leaders have tried to make connections to past historical cultural heritage and a country's past, one of which could be fascist Italy under the leadership of Benito Mussolini (Kallis. 2014). Mussolini on more than one occasion relied on how his new Italy was linked to the former Roman Empire, that the new Italy would reach similar heights as their ancestors did. This is exemplified by the panels that Mussolini made, on these paintings shows the evolution of the Roman Empire.



Fig 11: Mussolini's panels at "Via dell'Impero" (Kallis 2014).

The panels demonstrate how the Roman Empire went from being a small village at the edge of the Tiber to becoming the dominant force in the Mediterranean. It is a focus on territory, power, and it is meant to awaken feelings of pride. It was meant to remind the Italian people of their ancestors golden age. The fourth shows the Roman Empire under Emperor Trajan about 117 AD when the empire reached its territorial peak (Billing. 2017). There are no panels depicting the period after the Roman Empire began to decay, these depictions do not show the whole story, they only help to paint a certain part of the Roman Empire. It is also this image of antiquity which Mussolini wanted to link his new Italy, a powerful empire which had military and territorial power. Mussolini made a fifth painting which represented the territorial ambition he saw for Italy (Kallis. 2014). He placed this fifth panel in association with the previous four because he wanted to show a direct link between the Roman Empire and the new empire he was trying to create (Giovanni. 2017: 227). Mussolini created a new loyalty to the nation by playing on the common Roman cultural heritage, his new Italian empire was the "Third Rome" and they would achieve similar successes (Kallis. 2014). The history Mussolini used was linked to the nation's identity and what his vision of the nation looked like. There is another example of this in the Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu (1918–1989). Like Mussolini, Ceausescu claimed that Romania was a direct heir to the Roman Empire that they were all which remained of the empire (Henighan 2002: 14). He used this rhetoric to assert his sovereignty, above all, over the Hungarian-Transylvanian and German-Transylvanian populations in Romania (Henighan 2002: 13). By interweaving his Romania with the Roman Empire and claiming that the regions always belonged to the Romanians, he gained more legitimacy to assert his influence (Henighan 2002: 14). It was a chance inspire a new sense of national pride by looking to a great historical past. It was also an effective way to win loyalty from the Romanian people, he united them against a minority group and created a national loyalty by enlarging the history of Romania (Henighan 2002: 15).

It is possible to see similarities between Mussolini, Ceausescu and Mugabe. Like the two, Mugabe wanted to use an earlier historical period to legitimize his own power. Not only did he want to recapture Great Zimbabwe as an African cultural heritage, he also wanted to link his new Zimbabwe with the grand Zimbabwean kingdom which had ruled the region some 700 years earlier. This is to create a new loyalty to the nation he was trying to create. It shall of course be said that these are completely different circumstances, and these were all done for different reasons. It shall also be noted that these two nations are two European powers who were trying to enlarge themselves, whilst Zimbabwe had been an occupied nation trying to find her identity. However, it is possible to compare them on the basis that all these examples are using their historical heritage to create a sense of pride, national unity, and create a national identity which found its base in history.

It was probably not just about removing the association between Great Zimbabwe and colonialism; it was likely he aimed to use Great Zimbabwe to create a new Zimbabwean identity based on history. This new historical identity would find its roots in the history of Great Zimbabwe, and its golden age during the 14th century. It is important to take note of the fact, that at the outbreak of the liberation war, everyone had been Rhodesian, there was no Zimbabwe in the sense that it did now. It was probably a large part of the population who still saw themselves as Rhodesians. Mugabe not only had to dispose of the earlier norms and cultural traits which colonialism had brought with itself, he now also had to create a whole new national identity. This identity not only needed to include Shona, it also needed to unite the country's ethnic minorities where the largest group is Ndebele. It is in this situation that finding links to a common cultural heritage can be important. Creating a common history was one way to unite the divided black majority against the white minority. This focus towards the white minority also became a way of uniting the country's black population. This united both Ndebele and Shona through a common cultural history, it is possible to partly see this in how the country's heritage law was designed. This new law excludes the country's whites and their settler background, but that both Ndebele and Shona are included (National Museums and Monuments act. 2001). There are thus signs that the new government wanted to use history to construct a new kind of national loyalty and nationalism. This new identity was to include both the major ethnic groups.

By changing the name of the nation, the people no longer associated themselves as Rhodesians, but they became Zimbabweans. Not only is it an effective way to reclaim a cultural heritage which has been contested, but it is also an effective method of making people forget. If you ask most people today what Rhodesia is, there are probably not many who would know what it is. The children born after 1980 would feel no connection to ancient Rhodesia but would instead feel a national affiliation with Zimbabwe. When they then ask where the name comes from, they hear the story of the nation's proud history. There are several other examples of how the old Rhodesia was eradicated in exchange for the new national identity, after the new nation was proclaimed, statues of Cecil Rhodes were removed throughout the country (Shift. 2020). It was a way to erase some of what made Rhodesia the nation it was, it becomes more difficult for people to feel a belonging to something which no longer exists. While this was being done, names of cities, streets and several other landmarks were also changed, with the aim of speeding up the process of transforming former Rhodesia into Zimbabwe (Matenga 2011: 193). It was not just the birth of a new nation; it was the eradication of national heritages which contributed to what was Rhodesia's cultural identity. Some of the things that symbolized Rhodesia were mining, colonialism, British heritage. It was also in the colonialist context that Great Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwean bird became part of the Rhodesian culture (Matenga 2011: 146, 151–52). Above all, the country's white minority could probably still feel a loyalty to the former Rhodesia. This is the reason why the destruction of cultural heritage sites is of top priority when conquering a new people. Unless you destroy their identity, it will always be hard to assimilate them into your country, they will always consider themselves as a conquered/oppressed people, and therefore be more likely to revolt.

It is there possible to draw the conclusion that the political usage is about the creation of a new identity, and that this new identity finds its origin within the Zimbabwe culture. It is also the decline of an increasingly pre-European and African culture. By partially returning to the older Zimbabwe culture, it will also be by returning to Great Zimbabwe. By associating the new nation with the older Zimbabwe culture, Mugabe can build a loyalty not to a new nation but to a continuation of that era before Europeans. It becomes easier to gather a people behind a national identity if it has a history if there is tradition behind it (Anderson. 1991). It is possible to see similarities to what Mussolini did in Italy, by invoking the Roman cultural heritage, it

was able to get the people behind the national spirit and above all his Partito Nazionale Fascista (PNF). This is exactly what Mugabe's government wants to achieve with his political usage of Great Zimbabwe. By using Great Zimbabwe, it will not only be a re-conquest of a cultural heritage, it will also be a newly created African and Zimbabwean nationalism. It could be interpreted as the creation of this new nationalism gave ZANU-pf enormous popularity. This popularity was mainly found among the country's Shona population, this being their cultural heritage. It should also once again be mentioned that Robert Mugabe belonged to Shona himself and this probably also included his treatment of Zimbabwe's ethnic groups (Ngoro 2001). It is therefore possible to draw the conclusion that by effectively erasing the white minority (Rhodesia), and the remnants of colonialism, ZANU-pf can establish itself as Zimbabwe's foremost liberator and national hero. This gave Mugabe a takeover against his rival Joshua Nkomo and ZAPU (Alao 2012: 76–77). It is therefore possible to understand the importance of Mugabe rejecting Rhodesia and focusing instead on creating a new Zimbabwean identity. It was important to establish ZANU-pf as part of this new identity, by associating the party with Great Zimbabwe, Mugabe creates a direct link between the incumbent government and the country's proud history. This new identity and advocacy of unity is something which Mugabe invoked in his first speech as Zimbabwe's newly elected prime minister.

Finally, I wish to assure all the people that my government will strive to bring about meaningful change to their lives. But everyone should exercise patience, for change cannot occur overnight. For now, let us **be united** in our endeavour to lead the country to **liberation**. Let us constitute a oneness derived from our common objectives and total commitment to build a **Great Zimbabwe** that will be the **pride** of all Africa. (Mugabe Speech A. 2020)

This figure was held by Mugabe in front of the new nation of Zimbabwe was announced, but after ZANU won the election with a majority of the votes (African Elections. 2020). Once again it is possible to see how the President invokes a unity for a free Zimbabwe and for groups to put aside their differences of opinion. It is also made clear by expressions like "liberation" that the Rhodesian government was a colonial occupation. Mugabe is not trying to hide his disdain for the white minority, it can therefore be interpreted as the unity he seeks, above all else is for the country's divided black majority. It is also noticeable that he in this part of the speech talks about building a Great Zimbabwe which all of Africa can be proud of. It is not a coincidence that he uses the term "Great Zimbabwe" it is again a play on the historical and cultural heritage. Mugabe also talks about creating a nation which all of Africa in the future can be proud of. This might just be words, but it can also be interpreted as advocating an African nationalism within Zimbabwe, that the people should see Africa as a whole, and not just focus on Zimbabwe. In this paragraph it is also possible that he mentions the creation of a new Great Zimbabwe for another purpose, it is possible this new Great Zimbabwe was to be united and be the pride of all of Africa, which could be an indication of a desire for a more united Africa.

Thus, from 1980 it is possible to make out a change in the usage of Great Zimbabwe. This difference is not only made clear in how the new government chose to directly use Great Zimbabwe by changing the nation's name, the Coat of Arms, or the open rhetoric around the monument, it is also noticeable in how the research situation is changing. In regards to the research in 1980 the question of the origin of Great Zimbabwe has now been fully answered, and after Zimbabwe's declaration of liberation there are no politicians who can claim anything else. It will be another tone where research is again encouraged something which had not been done during the Rhodesian government (Garlake 1973. Ngoro 2001. Matenga 2011). This is also noticeable after the Declaration of Liberation, once again it becomes a more inviting tone for outsiders to not only visit, but also conduct research at Great Zimbabwe. This new encouraging attitude was vastly different from that of Ian Smith's reign. The prime example is how Garlake was treated, his research as previously mentioned led him to be banished from

Rhodesia (Pikirayi 2012: 223-225). It had previously been an attitude which encouraged silence instead of continuing to study the cultural heritage. This was probably done on the grounds that an ever-increasing exploration of Great Zimbabwe would only make colonialism increasingly clear. It would help to demonstrate the European occupation, which occurred during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Instead, it became easier to stop all research altogether so as not to provoke or help unite a still-divided black majority (Garlake 1973). It is also precisely for this reason that after 1980 it is possible to see a new increase in research around Great Zimbabwe (Matenga 159).

This fact itself becomes a political use of history. By encouraging history research through the creation of organizations like the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ), this can also be made out in how the country's history is becoming an increasingly important role (NMMZ. 2020). It will be more important for the new young nation of Zimbabwe to rediscover the history lost not only during the British colonization but also during the white minority government. This is where a location like Great Zimbabwe gets an important role it is a heritage site which represents a time in the region's history when they were leaders. It will be a political move to encourage research on something much of the country's population can feel a certain community and pride in (Matenga 2011: 193). This can be interpreted as an attempt to recapture the cultural heritage which was lost during the time when the country could not control its own destiny. Great Zimbabwe becomes a symbol with which the black majority can be united. It was no coincidence that both ZANU and ZAPU chose to name their political organizations based on this cultural heritage, or that ZAPU chose to place Great Zimbabwe on their party flag. This was something the new government under Banana and Mugabe also understood. And why they took credit for South Africa's repatriation in 1981 when they returned five of the Zimbabwean birds. These were the same objects which had been excavated in connection with various excavations at the site (Bent 1893 & Hall 1902). This can be interpreted by a politically usage not only to unite the nation, but also to recapture a history which the country felt justified to.

The return of lost cultural artefacts is something which rulers have used on several occasions throughout history, it is an effective way for a sitting regime to find support from the people. There are countless examples of when this has occurred, I will exemplify this with the *Horses of Saint Mark*. This was a cultural heritage which Venice ironically themselves obtained when they raided Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade (Venice Prestige. 2020). When Napoleon invaded Italy in the late 1700s and early 1800s, a lot of looting of Italian cultural heritage occurred. One of these examples was the Byzantine Horses which Napoleon brought with him from Saint Mark's Basilica in Venice. He later placed the horses on top of the triumphal arch he had built in his own honour (Venice Prestige. 2020). When later Napoleon was defeated, the horses would be returned to Venice and this was done under ceremonial forms (Venice Prestige. 2020). Getting their lost cultural heritage back could be compared to Venice regaining its honour. It became an important reason for Venice continued involvement during the Napoleonic Wars. This example also shows how important it was for Napoleon to collect historical artefacts to promote France's prestige. With this example it is possible to see the importance of returning items which are national symbols (Venice Prestige. 2020).

There are far more examples of where, under difficult conditions, nations try to win political favours through the restoration of historical cultural heritage. This can take the form of how Greece is currently trying to recover the part of the Parthenon which the British brought with them during their excavation at the beginning of the Acropolis in the 19th century (British Museum. 2020). Since the financial crisis of 2008-2009, Greece has suffered from financial problems. It is also a nation which is still struggling with the aftermath of the refugee crisis which occurred in 2015. Recovering the historic crisis could be exploited by a sitting

government which could be used for the purpose of trying to unite a divided nation. It is not uncommon to use historical account to shift the focus away from current problems. It is an effective way to get domestic groups to ignore external problems, forget their differences and show loyalty towards their own national identity, and government. If the Parthenon frieze was to be returned, it is something all parties in Greece could support, and it would be more difficult for the opposition to argue against the government which finally brought them home.

With these examples is it possible to see some similarities to what Robert Mugabe and ZANU-pf wanted to achieve. By returning the Zimbabwean birds, they hoped to gain political points and at the same time find support from the people. Reverting something which is so clearly associated with Zimbabwe and the country's African identity is good public relations and can be used for propaganda purposes (Matenga 2011: 112). The Zimbabwean birds which were brought back in 1981 would later be presented during a ceremony at Great Zimbabwe. It was presented under the light of something which has been lost but then reclaimed (Matenga 2011: 113).

It is possible to see that the Zimbabwean bird was something which was not only associated with Zimbabwe but previously also with Rhodesia. It was placed on Rhodesia's coat of arms and on the flag of the nation. It was important already to Cecil Rhodes as it was one of the foremost objects from the archaeological excavations he financed at Great Zimbabwe. This is also why one of the eight birds can still be found in South Africa at his former residence (IOL. 2020). Returning these birds to Zimbabwe was seen from several directions as a readmission to the nation's cultural heritage. It could be interpreted as an attempt to unite an African majority which still struggled with ethnic and ideological problems. During the period immediately after liberation, there was still a conflict between Shona and Ndebele, where the main conflict was between Robert Mugabe (ZANU) and Joshua Nkomo (ZAPU). There were still clear ideological differences between the two groups, but Great Zimbabwe was something which united them. They had both tried to associate themselves with the cultural heritage and it was something the two looked on with pride. For Mugabe then it will be a strong mark to be the one who returned something which both camps considered important. There may have been differences between them, but no one could say anything negative about the fact that he returned something which could be considered important to all blacks in Zimbabwe. The return of these Zimbabwean birds would only strengthen Mugabe's position over his rival Joshua Nkomo. It was under Mugabe's leadership that the new nation regained some of its national symbols, all which helped to fortify Mugabe's role as the country's liberator and founding father. There is a legend about these Zimbabwean birds, it is said that peace will never come to Zimbabwe until all eight birds have been returned. Should Mugabe become the person to find all the birds, this would help to further legitimize his right to rule the country (Matenga 2011: 194). It was a chance for ZANU to further consolidate its position as the country's governing party and lay the groundwork for making the historic link between the party and Zimbabwe. What will later be discussed is that this was not the first or last time Great Zimbabwean birds were used by ZANU-pf. In section 4.3.2, the thesis will focus on how ZANU-pf once again chose to use the return of African cultural heritage as a means of trying to win the country's trust (Dewey 2006: 3).

It is thus possible to partly interpret the new research situation as a result of the new political situation. This new encouragement for research is both an indirect and direct use of Great Zimbabwe and the country's history. This further encouragement of the academia and history was also expressed in political reforms which saw the opening of new state universities and more education. One of the universities which was opened at the invitation of the 1995 Chetsenga report was Masvingo State University (GZU: 2020). The Masvingo regional capital of the province of Masvingo and the city is only a few kilometres from Great Zimbabwe. It

would be a few years after the university was opened before the state chose to rename Masvingo State University's curriculum to be called Great Zimbabwe University (GZU) (GZU: 2020).



Fig. 12. Great Zimbabwe University symbol where both the construction nations and the Zimbabwean bird (GZU. 2020).

It is important to point out the fact that this is a government-run university and the decision to rename it was thus made from the government. Having this as a starting point it can be interpreted as a politically conscious decision to rename a university and instead name it after Great Zimbabwe. The new Great Zimbabwe University has a few different visions and aspirations. Once these are put into perspective with what the thesis has already discussed regarding the creation of a Zimbabwean identity, it is possible to make the connection between Great Zimbabwe and the government's encouragement of historical research. Their vision is to:

To be the centre of excellence in arts, culture and heritage studies as well as the advancement of other academic disciplines for the promotion of the development of society (GZU: 2020).

GZU's focus is art, culture and cultural studies, so it is a focus on history and the humanities. This becomes of interest as we have already established that the young nation of Zimbabwe has chosen to make use of Great Zimbabwe in the creation of their shared history. It is thus possible to see a continued use of the cultural heritage site in several different political arenas, and not always in the absolute most prominent roles. As GZU is a state-owned and state-managed university, it is also possible to assume that the government under ZANU-pf probably has an influence over what research direction the new university was devoted to. To repeat what's being said on the GZU website about what their mission is:

In order to support the vision, we shall: Reclaim and preserve our African culture and heritage. (GZU: 2020).

The government's decision to rename this university and instead choose to name it after Great Zimbabwe thus becomes a continued way for them to link Great Zimbabwe to the country's history. That the university's focus also becomes cultural heritage, with the mission of safeguarding African culture becomes a way to weave in Great Zimbabwe in the country's continuing history writing. Making the political decision to name one of the country's foremost ways of teaching cultural heritage after Great Zimbabwe becomes a way to further consolidate Great Zimbabwe as the core of what is the country's history and culture. It is also possible to make the connection between their vision of "reclaiming" and what ZANU-pf wanted to achieve. By looking at what the government was doing with Great Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe bird it is possible to see a connection with the mission of the new Great Zimbabwe university.



Fig. 13. New Zealand's Prime Minister David Lange visiting Great Zimbabwe in 1985 (NMMZ Annual 1985).

What is also worth noting is that Great Zimbabwe was used as a destination for international delegations. From the National Museums and Monuments Zimbabwe's annual report from 1984–1985 that Great Zimbabwe was used to receive New Zealand's Prime Minister, David Lange (NMMZ Annual 1985: 9). This fact is worth pointing out as it helps to further demonstrate the importance of the heritage site and how the government chose to use it. Great Zimbabwe. It was clearly culturally important enough to allow international diplomats and government men/women to visit the site, and possibly further spread its history. The fact that this was done helps to increase the value of Great Zimbabwe, it could also increase tourism as well as other lucrative benefits.

3.1.1 Summary of the political usage of Great Zimbabwe between 1980 and 2000

To summarize it can be said that Great Zimbabwe has been actively used during the period 1980-2000 and this has been done under various forms. This political practice is made clear, in part in the nation's new name, city arms, and in how the country's new heritage law is designed.

It is possible to see political use of Great Zimbabwe in the form that Robert Mugabe indirectly mentions the location in his first speech to the nation. During this speech, Mugabe uses the term Great Zimbabwe in conjunction to advocate the building of a Zimbabwean community. This community has its root in the idea of a common historical identity, which is based on the country's historical connection to Great Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwean culture. It is also this search for a new consensus which seems to be the background to the use of the historical site. It is made clear through partly through the new heritage law Act, the mention in speech and also the exchange of state seal / symbols that Robert Mugabe's government is trying to associate the new Zimbabwe nation with the Shona state which previously existed about 700 previously in the same region. It could be interpreted as the fact that this is done because Mugabe wants to create a new African-Zimbabwean national identity, something which has not been as permissible or prominent in neither Southern Rhodesia, nor in Rhodesia under Ian Smith's government (Matenga 2011: 152). You can see a partial continuation of the previous political movements of the SRANC and the NDP, both of which advocated an African identity, African

nationalism and better conditions for the country's local population (Alao 2012: 16). It also moves through the exchange of symbols associated with Rhodesia, to recapture them and thereby reject colonialism and instead link them to the new African Zimbabwe. The prime examples of this are Great Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwean bird.

This is where the active use of Great Zimbabwe is noticeable as it was previously also used as a justification of colonialism. It is therefore possible to see that Great Zimbabwe was initially interpreted as non-African and that it was instead considered an outside group (Bent 1892 & Hall 1902). This continued claim was a European seizure of an African cultural heritage, it was a way of denying them their own history. This is also why it can be considered important for the government and ZANU-pf to once again establish African ownership over heritage sites like Great Zimbabwe. It is possible to assume that ZANU-pf is actively trying to re-establish these colonial heritages and once again bring these locations back into Zimbabwean historical writing. ZANU-pf aimed to clarify that cultural heritage sites like Great Zimbabwe and symbols such as the Zimbabwean bird are African cultural heritages and not European. He does this by increasing the research knowledge of Great Zimbabwe. This takes the form of the creation of the NMMZ, and the specialization of a university such as Great Zimbabwe University. This is also done by encouraging researchers like Garlake, Sinclair. Mugabe also enables a new generation of researchers to be trained, like Ndoro, Matenga and thanks to this, more investigations are done at the site. Both Great Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwean birds had an iconic value for Cecil Rhodes as well as for Britain during the period when Zimbabwe was a British colony. Initially it is possible to see how the Zimbabwe bird was used as a colonial cultural heritage, which iconic value was used by the British settlers. It is possible to make this conclusion seeing as it was depicted both on Rhodesian banknotes, flags, and even the nation's coat of arms. It became important here not only to re-instate them as African cultural heritage, but at the same time to destroy their iconic value for the former Rhodesian state. Robert Mugabe used Great Zimbabwe on several occasions. Not only was it about replacing Rhodesian symbols, he is also used its iconic value more actively. He was involved when South Africa 1981 reunites five of the Zimbabwean birds that lost away in connection with excavations during the late 19th century early 1900s. By portraying himself as both the anti-colonial hero and the man who recovers and restores Zimbabwe's pride, Mugabe can further consolidate his and ZANU's grip on power. He used both Great Zimbabwe as well as symbols associated with the cultural heritage to gain popularity and strengthen his political influence. Mugabe probably also had the underlying motive of seeking to unite the black majority, which had had ideological and political disagreements during the war of liberation. This is a conclusion which can be drawn seeing as Great Zimbabwe had a common historical value for the entire black population. With the new changes to the National Museums and Monuments act of 1984 (National Museums and Monuments Act. 2001) is it possible to see that there are severe restrictions on the white minority of the country. Under the new law, no previous settler activity is protected, and only historical remnants older than 1890 are included. This meant that previously the white's ancestral activity was protected by the new heritage law, but this protection disappears during the new ZANU government and the changes to the National Museums and Monuments Act. Great Zimbabwe is used indirectly in within the boundaries of the law as this is a textbook example of what is included within the framework of the law. There are thus signs that Great Zimbabwe has had a political role and that the ruins have been used by the sitting government. This practice, on the other hand, has mainly taken on an indirect form, what does not occur between 1980-2000 is an active use of the site itself. The role which Great Zimbabwe is assigned is one more like an icon and a symbol. It could be said that it is the idea behind Great Zimbabwe and what it represents which was used by the government, and not the ruins themselves. It could thus be interpreted that the political role of Great Zimbabwe was to help in the unification of the Zimbabwe people. Great Zimbabwe represents the freedom gained by

the new nation. It is a symbol that goes over the ethnic, political and conflicting differences that still existed.

4. The political usage of Great Zimbabwe between 2000-2020s

From 2000 until today it is possible to see a continued usage of Great Zimbabwe, do however change somewhat from the previous two decades. What the thesis will go over is that Great Zimbabwe continues to play an important role in the legitimization of Mugabe's ZANU-pf. It is a cultural heritage which has been involved in the formation of the country's new identity by linking it to the region's history. What it will I will also show with my analysis is that there are signs that by linking Great Zimbabwe to ZANU-pf, it becomes a way to directly interweaving the party with both the country's history, the country's cultural / historical identity, and thus indirectly with the country itself. During this period my analysis will also indicate that there's an increase in the direct usage of the heritage site.

4.1 The background to Zimbabwe's economic problems

What also happened in Zimbabwe during early the 2000s is that the nation also underwent an economic withdrawal, this later lead to a major economic and political crisis (Bourne 2011: 128, 173–174). It will be difficult not to mention this as it may directly affect how Great Zimbabwe was used politically during this period. This economic crisis is causing hyperinflation, which effects are is still visible in today's Zimbabwe.

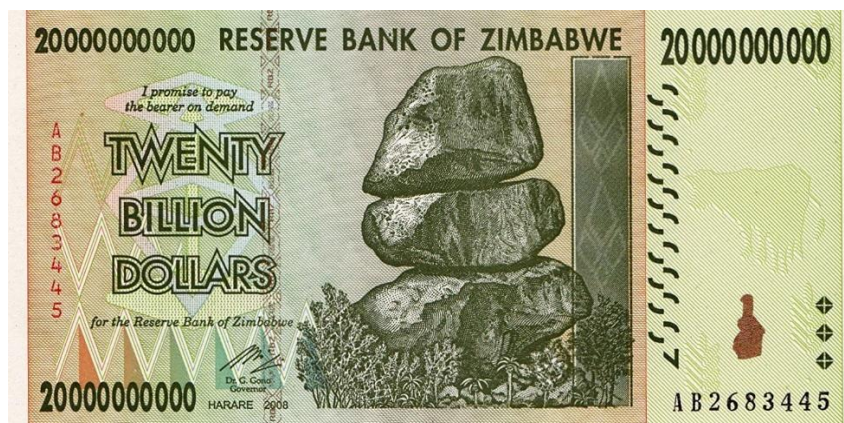


Fig. 14. One of Zimbabwean Twenty billion banknotes, which is worth approximately 554 Swedish Crowns on April 1, 2020 (Currency Converter. 2020).

This economic recession came as a direct result of several major land reforms which the government undertook. These led to starvation and a reduced standard of living for much of the country's population (Bourne 2011: 167). These land reforms also lead to a revival of the conflict against Zimbabwe's ever-declining white minority. It is this group which at beginning of the 21st century still owned most of the country's agricultural land. It was also still the country's white minority which contributed most to Zimbabwe's economy and the nation's livelihood. This was why these land reforms would bring about an economic withdrawal when this white minority was suddenly forced off their land (Bourne 2011: 165).

It had after the War of Liberation never been an immediate transfer of these lands, the fighting parties had instead made a deal in which the British government would help Zimbabwe buy these land from the landowners who -willingly- wanted to sell their lands. This was all agreed in 1979 with signing of the *Lancaster House Agreement*. With this agreement the United Kingdom had undertaken to help Zimbabwe with the This agreement also made sure to protect the country's white minority from some major land reforms between 1980-1990. Should Mugabe breach this agreement, support for Zimbabwe would cease and very much like Rhodesia, sanctions would be imposed which would most likely result in greater complications. Why the United Kingdom chose to agree to this is probably due to a sense of obligation, both towards the country's black majority, but also the country's white minority (Bourne 2011: 90). Zimbabwe was a former British colony this led to a sense of responsibility, there was potentially also a feeling of guilt towards the indigenous Africans. Therefore, from many British politicians there was a sense of some responsibility to see the decolonization over and done with. Above all else it would be Margaret Thatcher and her Conservative government, which would provide Zimbabwe with the greatest support. This approach had the effect that not everyone wanted to sell their land, and there was still a white minority left in the country (Bourne 2011: 122–123). It had also led to the transfer and exchange of land still under reasonably civilized forms. The fact that people sold their land of their own accord made is to that violence wasn't required to any great extent. This approach also did not cause any sudden instability when it became a sudden change of ownership. It was a system which would ultimately see a return of much of the country's land ownership to the country's black population. However, this way of doing things changed when Britain changed their government and Labour under leadership of Tony Blair's leadership came into power in 1997 (Bourne 2011: 144).

Tony Blair's new government changed its attitude to the agreements previously concluded with Zimbabwe. This change of attitude would see an end to the financial support received by Zimbabwe under the previous Conservative governments (Bourne 2011: 147). Blair chose to conclude these agreements on the grounds that Mugabe had violated them. There were also those within the new government who did not fully support the previous administration's policy, because they had no connection to the British Empire:

I should make it clear that we do not accept that Britain has a special responsibility to meet the costs of land purchase in Zimbabwe. We are a new government from diverse backgrounds without links to former colonial interests. My own origins are Irish and, as you know, we were colonised, not colonisers. (Clare Short 5 November. 1997).

In the early 1990s, Zimbabwe's economy had begun to stagnate and to try to start the economy again, new land reforms were initiated, these reforms taking the form of The Land Acquisition Act 1992 (Acts 3/1992). This law gave the country's incumbent president the right to legally take control of private property (Bourne 2011: 146)

AN ACT to empower the President and other authorities to acquire land and other immovable property compulsorily in certain circumstances; to make special provision for the compensation payable for agricultural land required for resettlement purposes; to provide for the establishment of the Derelict Land Board; to provide for the declaration and acquisition of derelict land; and to provide for matters connected with or incidental to the foregoing (Acts 3/1992).

The law states openly that this should be done in order to both reclaim, but also at the same time give room for the country's majority to settle on the large agricultural lands. This law would be updated and supplemented on several occasions, 2000, 2001 and 2002. Following that the Land Acquisition Act came into force in 1992, the pressure on the country's white minority increased radically, there was simply no stopping the government from taking control of their

lands. According to Zimbabwean law, it was only required that the government felt that the country was needed for the purpose of "re-settlement" and they could then take control of it.

“agricultural land required for resettlement purposes” means any rural land the acquisition of which is reasonably necessary for resettlement purposes and which is identified in a preliminary notice as being required for such purposes (15/2000.)

The first law got legislated in 1992 and it would be this law which Tony Blair and Labour opposed once they came into power in the 1997 election (Bourne 2011: 148). Initially, payments and negotiations were still taking place between the parties, but there were signs of corruption in connection with the land distribution of the farmland required (Bourne 2011: 149). A large amount of the purchased land did not go to the people, but Mugabe instead distributed it directly to members of ZANU-pf. This was something that the new Labour government in Britain wanted to see a stop to, but after talks between the two parties, they could not come to an agreement. After the UK broke the agreement, they previously concluded with Zimbabwe in connection with the Lancaster House deal, Mugabe increased the pace of seizure of the land. It is clear to see this with how the law became more stringent between the years 2000, 2001 and 2002 (15/2000). In the end, there were sufficiently severe conditions against the landowners that the government seized land without at all compensating the families who owned the land. That these land reforms were carried out under the premise that the lands historically belonged to Zimbabwe’s black majority (Bourne 2011: 151). Mugabe makes this clear in his rhetoric that the lands owned by the white minority of the country are not really theirs, and that this is why it must be redistributed to its rightful owners. He claimed that the previous settlers had not paid anything when they took the land, so they did not have to pay anything now when they took it back. During an interview with CNN 2009, Mugabe talked about why these land reforms were implemented:

Historically, they have a debt. They occupied the land illegally; they ceased the land from our people. Therefore the process of land reform involved them handing it back. (CNN 2009)

These reforms were implemented and legitimized with historical arguments, so they were about land reclamation, which the British had previously stolen, occupied and colonized during the 1800s-1900s (CNN. 2009). In the early 21st century, the government took control of much of the remaining white-owned land, and this rapid seizure would lead to the economic collapse which later occurred (Bourne 2011: 153). At the turn of the century, the white minority of the country still owned a majority of the companies, the agricultural lands and the industry which provided the country with food, and commercial products. When these larger plantations were quickly replaced by thousands of smaller family farms, this caused famine. (Bourne 2011: 167). One of Zimbabwe’s main export goods was and still is tobacco, just as with the essential agricultural lands these commercial crops were also seized. The fact the tobacco farms were taken by the government was a contributing reason for the economy taking damage. It should also be mentioned another reason why these reforms did not have the effect which the government hoped for, was for the simple reason that those who took over did not always have the skills required (Bourne 2011: 167). It was often individuals who had no previous experience of farming, this led to neglect and that not enough resources were being produced. This decrease in production led to the country not producing enough food, but it also brought with it the negative effect that trade was declining which affected the economy. This decline in agricultural competence and the loss of major parts of the industry also resulted in the effect that banks began to overturn (Bourne 2011: 128, 173–174). Land reforms led to fewer and fewer individuals taking out loans, which hampered economic development (Economist. 2020). The fact that the government chose to increase pressure on the vital owners and dispose of their property also had the effect of raising economic and diplomatic sanctions against the country.

These sanctions partly prevent politicians within the government from traveling, it also affected trade with the nation, which further negatively affected the economy (Bourne 2011: 173–174). It was in connection with this difficult financial situation that the Zimbabwean banks chose to start printing more money. The intention of printing more money was to pay the country's growing debts and to pay the military. Money was needed to pay salaries, to pay state programs, and to keep the economy going (Economist. 2020). However, this only had the effect that now the government was dependent on printing more money, which has the effect that the currency becomes less worthy of each circulation. When the currency becomes worth less, more money is needed to pay the rising prices. It was this continued printing of more money which caused Zimbabwe to suffer from hyperinflation while undergoing a severe economic withdrawal. This political and economic situation also led to the country increasingly losing confidence in ZANU-pf and Mugabe's ability to lead the country. At the 2002 election, Morgan Tsvangirai and the newly created MDC were to seriously challenge ZANU-pf for the first time (Bourne 2011: 168–169).

4.1 Great Zimbabwe between 2000-2020 third Chimurenga

It is thus in the light of this new economic and political reality this thesis study the usage of Great Zimbabwe. During the period 1980-2000, ZANU (later ZANU-pf) had been alone in aspiring for power, the country's economy had been stable and since the unification of ZANU and ZAPU there had been little to no internal opposition for the power. What can be seen from the start of the 21st century and onwards is that Great Zimbabwe is once again becoming more important, Mugabe and the ZANU-pf choose to make use of the heritage site on multiple occasions.

4.1.1 Unity Day Anniversary 2001, 2003

In the early 2000s (2001, 2003), the government and ZANU-pf organized gala and music events on two occasions to celebrate Unity Day (Matenga 2011: 102). These events were held to celebrate the merger of ZAPU and ZANU into ZANU-pf. It would also be a way for the incumbent government to reconnect with Zimbabwe's cultural life once again, while also linking ZANU-pf to Zimbabwe's African cultural heritage. It is impossible to deny the symbolic value of Great Zimbabwe, and it is also worth noting at what time the party arranged these. Thus, the very first was held in 2001 amid the ongoing conflict with Britain, this also happened while Zimbabwe was undergoing the effects of Mugabe's land reform. Something else which is worth noting in connection with this is also the fact which the newly created party MDC has also grown stronger (Bourne 2011: 168–169). This newly created party was a group that by some could be considered as Western and thus non-African. MDC has on several occasions been accused of receiving financial support from both the United States but also the United Kingdom (Sagiy Orally 2020). It could therefore again be important for ZANU-pf to show the people that they was the only party which stood up for African values. Arranging these glitches was an easy way for the party to once again remind the people that it was they who won the country's freedom, and that their leadership had freed them from colonialism, all while it was happening in festive forms.

It is important to remember that Great Zimbabwe still a holy site is within the Mwari cult, it is the location where the living can speak to their ancestors (Matenga 2011: 103–4). It was probably one of the reasons and motivations which the ZANU-pf management had for wanting to arrange the event there, it was a historic location where warring parties took to brokering

peace. The warring parties met at Great Zimbabwe to communicate with their ancestors accepting their advice and later ending the conflict at hand. Celebrating Unity Day there was a chance to further strengthen the peace that now existed between Ndebele and Shona. What cannot be ignore is what these events were meant to celebrate, namely the Unity Accord agreement (Matenga 2011: 102). These events were held to celebrate the fact that ZAPU and ZANU were united under a joint party and leader, so it is not entirely unlikely that it was also meant as an opportunity for Shona and Ndebele to look beyond their differences of opinion. Of course, it is difficult to see how these events could make the Ndebele people forget what was happening in Matabeleland, and how the Shona-led army turned against them. However, this is where it is important to focus on the timing and when these events were organized.

Another probable reason for these deficiencies was also that it was an opportunity for ZANU-pf to win new support from Zimbabwe's younger population. It had been over two decades since Zimbabwe was proclaimed and the country was undergoing a generational shift. there were now young people who did not experience the war of freedom or lived in the former Rhodesia. There were also now Ndebele youths who may never have experienced how ZANU invaded their home regions and forced ZAPU to join their ranks. It would therefore not be impossible for these events to be organized to win new loyalty from the country's youth. It played modern music and became something of a folk party, and it was something that everyone had some form of contact with (Matenga 2011: 102). It was a way to weave together the older and younger generations. The elderly would look at Great Zimbabwe and be reminded of how far the country has come, how they have managed to regain their African cultural heritage. The young people who participated would be allowed to participate in festive activities, but they would also be told the stories of their ancestors. This kind of folk party became an indirect use of Great Zimbabwe as it enabled ZANU-pf to gain stronger political support through these festivities. These events would only be held on a few occasions and it did not end with completely positive headlines. It would turn out that the young people who were on site behaved rather disrespectfully. There would be drinks, sex and after the last event a lot of condoms were found which was considered totally inappropriate (Appendix Sagiya). The fact these galas later degrade was highly disrespectful, and inappropriate, and in the end may have caused more harm to the image ZANU-pfs wanted to uphold. They tried to paint themselves as a counterpart to a "Western" MDC and as a defender of the country's African cultural heritage (Matenga 2011: 112). The fact that young people, drank, had sex and partied all over Great Zimbabwe became something which went directly against the image the party wanted to convey (Appendix Sagiya).

The analysis which can be made up by studying these arranged galas is that it is possible to see that Great Zimbabwe still had a symbolic value, and ZANU-pf was willing to use it. The most important thing to note is during which political climate these galas were held. In the early 2000s, Mugabe and ZANU-pf were pushed from different directions. They were partly pressured for power in the country, including economically and politically from an international point of view. The 2002 election became the closest election in the country's history and for the first time since the liberation war, ZANU-pf risked losing power (Bourne 2011: 168–169). As mentioned earlier, it was an ever-growing MDC which could now seriously challenge leadership in the country. MDC was also a party which sought to make a historical link to Great Zimbabwe through one of the party's logos (Matenga Orally 2020):



Fig. 15. The Zimbabwe bird in the middle of the MDC party's log. This is a way for the new party to make a direct connection to the country's history (Pindula B. 2020).

At the beginning of the 2000s, ZANU-pf was also in a diplomatic conflict with Britain, over the disputed land reforms and the fact that financial support had now ceased (Bourne 2011). Thus, there were a number of reasons for ZANU-pf to once again make use of a cultural heritage which was synonymous with the country's liberation and the power in the country. The fact that these events were held during the same period that ZANU-pf was hard pressed cannot be a coincidence, but rather it can be seen as a direct and indirect political use of the cultural heritage. There were several benefits to organizing these events and there were several benefits to holding them at precisely Great Zimbabwe:

- 1 Connect ZANU-pf with the country's liberation and Zimbabwe's African cultural heritage. It would make the party appear more African than the Western sympathetic MDC
- 2 Arrange it at a cultural heritage that both Ndebele and Shona had in common. Together with Unity Day, this could bring the two groups closer together, and thereby gained new support from Ndebele.
- 3 It was a chance for ZANU-pf to win votes in the country's younger generation, while also reminding the elderly of the country's history.

It is very difficult to know the exact reasons why these events were held at Great Zimbabwe; it is also difficult to know exactly what potential effect they may have had. What can be said with reasonable certainty, is that when the government was under pressure, they chose to try to use Great Zimbabwe to once again arouse positive feelings. It may not be possible to compare these events with how the country was named after the ruins, but the ruins obviously held a continued symbolic value. This symbolic value made ZANU-pf want to organize these events because they thought it would give them positive response from the country. Arranging a celebration of the Unity Day Accord agreement at the country's most famous cultural heritage is nothing you do without a reason. It was a chance for ZANU-pf to once again win the loyalty of the people by connecting themselves with the liberation of the country. It was another chance to use the country's history to legitimize its role as the country's leading party. All this was done under the guise of a folk party where everyone enjoyed life. The fact that this was only held on two occasions, 2001, 2003, on the other hand be evidence that it may not have the desired effect.

4.1.2 The repatriation of another Soapstone Bird, 2003

The events and crowds would not be the last time the government chose to actively use Great Zimbabwe. When Germany returned another of the removed Zimbabwean birds in 2003, this would be a new opportunity for the government to once again invoke the country's most famous cultural heritage. It became a chance for the nation to celebrate the return of a historic object (Matenga Orally 2020). At the same time, it also became an opportunity for ZANU-pf to once

again paint himself as the party, which not only liberated the country, but also as the party, which was still working to restore the country's pride (Matenga 2011: 160). The repatriation of this Zimbabwean bird occurred during the same period as the events at Great Zimbabwe, and at the same time as the government implemented its land reforms (Matenga 2011: 164). There was also this narrative and this connection Mugabe wanted to make when this Zimbabwean bird was presented. Recapturing and recovering the Zimbabwean bird was compared to the land reforms voted by the government. This is made very clear in the speech Mugabe held in connection with the presentation of the Zimbabwean bird:



Fig. 16. President Mugabe and Germany's ambassador Peter Schmidt witness the returned Zimbabwean bird in Harare 2003 (IOL. 2020).

On behalf of the Government and the people of Zimbabwe, I feel privileged and honoured to receive the lower half of one of the soapstone Birds from the Great Zimbabwe era which we heartily welcome back home after years of exile which began with illegal movement from our country between 1889 and 1903. The Great Zimbabwe birds are our nation's prized culture treasures, a symbol of our nation whose meaning defies time and location. The return of the pedestal of this national symbol is, therefore, cause for celebration because it fits into our on-going programme of national identity and restoration. Like our Land Reform Programme, today's ceremony allows us to assert ownership over our national resources and treasures (Mugabe Speech B).

It is made clear why the repatriation of this artifact is important, it is a continuation of the decolonization. Through successful repatriation programs like this one, it is possible for the government to continue to present itself as a party which stands for Zimbabwe's African values. This is made clear in the comparison that Mugabe himself makes. In his comparison do he resembles this repatriation with the land reforms the government carried out, the land reforms which saw the seizure of the white-owned land. It could almost be seen that, with the help of the Zimbabwean bird, he justifies the government's land reform. Recovering this cultural heritage object was part of the process of reclaiming the country's identity and rejecting the colonial heritage. Mugabe himself says in this speech that both cultural heritages are part of the nation's identity, which they are and that they both define their national identity. One of ZANU-PF's goal was to restore the nation, restore the country's identity and build a society free from the country's colonial history, which is also why this became such an important event. It will be an important event because it is possible to put it into a larger context, which is also exactly what Mugabe does. By taking credit for the return, he sends the signal that, under ZANU-PF's leadership, the country was on the right track. It gave the impression that Zimbabwe was still making progress, both internationally and partly in national decolonization. He interweaves through this ceremony the cultural and political sphere and makes Great Zimbabwe political. These interpretations can be made based on the speech Mugabe held in connection with the

repatriation. In this context, the Zimbabwean bird become part of the political rhetoric, which would later be seen the *Third Chimurengan* (Sabelo & Willems. 2009). These repatriations, the land reforms, they were all made out to be the continuation of their struggle versus the colonizers. He knew that the country was going through a rough time and therefore it became ever more important to create an enemy to unite against.

It should also be noted that although Mugabe was involved in the repatriation of six of the seven Zimbabwean birds, this was the return that caused the most stir. When South Africa returned five of the birds in 1981, it did not receive the same national attention as the individual half received in 2003 (Appendix Sagiya). It did not happen in the same ceremonial forms, although it should be considered a major political victory in terms of only the number of artifacts. It will be important here to put this repatriation into perspective in the prevailing political landscape. When the first five Zimbabwean birds were brought back in 1981, ZANU was in a completely different situation. They had just won the Freedom War, and the party was by a clear majority of the country's largest party. It was also a completely different economic situation where Zimbabwe was one of Africa's richest countries. When the first five Zimbabwean birds were returned, it was still a great victory, it was still seen as part of the national identity-making process ZANU was trying to accomplish, but it was only part of the puzzle. Thus, in 1981, there was not the same need to see the return as something great, the party contributed to decolonization and received the same impact from other political manoeuvres.

It should also be noted that between 1980 and 2000, the tone was not quite as harsh with the country's decolonization, there were still pressures against the country's white minority, but it was still not as tough as it would be. It was still talked about reclaiming a lost country, seeing a free Zimbabwe, and creating an African identity. There are several examples of this in the thesis's earlier sections. They showed how Great Zimbabwe was used to contribute to this new national identity. What is different, however, is that it was not as direct; it had previously been about exchanging symbols, like Rhodesia's state emblem, the name of the nation, the name of cities, etc. The agreement concluded at *Lancaster House* in 1979 had also meant that land redistribution also took place in more orderly forms. There was never the same amount of force as during the early 21st century.

The political landscape, on the other hand, was changing during the early 2000s, which is also why there's an increase in the political usage of Great Zimbabwe and its artifacts. It is these changes to the country's economic situation and the prevailing political climate that probably prompt Robert Mugabe to equate the return of the Zimbabwean bird with the land reforms the party implemented. Of course, it is difficult to say anything negative about Zimbabwe recovering artifacts which were very much plundered by Britain, there is a lot of positive to say about these repatriation programs. Undoubtedly, it is impossible to argue against the fact that the United Kingdom wasted enormous amounts of cultural heritage from its colonies. However, it is also impossible to deny that ZANU-pf chose to take advantage of the situation to present themselves in a better light. ZANU-pf was strained by a stagnant economy (Bourne 2011: 128, 173–174) they no longer had the same loyalty from the nation's population, the party needed to continue to show that progress was made (Bourne 2011: 171). Such an advance could therefore be to bring back another iconic and important cultural heritage. It is therefore possible to make the interpretation that Mugabe needed to use this repatriation to once again possibly win the favour of the people.

This is also why the reintroduction of this Zimbabwean bird is a major event. It provides the government with a forum to speak directly to the nation. It will be a chance for ZANU-pf to present themselves as the whole of Zimbabwe's party, just as before, to remind the people that it was they who fought for Zimbabwe's pride. It will be difficult for any political opponent to

argue against the importance of Great Zimbabwe and its relics. By making it ceremonial a big thing, it allows Mugabe to speak to all Africans, and not just to the loyal to the party. Recovering this iconic symbol is a clear test that the government is leading the country toward better times. Probably this is also why Mugabe says in his speech that this is an occasion worthy of celebration, ZANU-pf wants to make the people care about the return as it takes focus from the country's other difficulties. It is a unique situation to which most Zimbabwean citizens can have a connection to, and it becomes exceedingly difficult to see anything negative, so it becomes easy for the government to angle it to something positive. There is also the aspect that it not only makes ZANU-pf appear as a party which values its African values, it is also an opportunity for them to prove themselves strong against former colonial powers. This is something Mugabe also addresses during the ceremonial speech which was held in conjunction with the signing of the Zimbabwean bird:

Indeed as some scholars have written, the aim of the colonizer was to foist an image of inferiority into the colonized and, to a large extent this was achieved by teaching our people a history which was not theirs and consequently alienating them from their own... To justify these acquisitions, the colonial collectors employed all sorts of hypotheses to clothe the cultural material in question in borrowed Semitic, Egyptian or western robes. The most classic example of these attempts to deny Africans their heritage is the Great Zimbabwe monument whose origins were attributed variously to Semites, Egyptians and Arabs... Once the colonizers convinced themselves that the civilizations, they were discovering in African were foreign to the indigenous Africans, they freely collected even those objects which were sacred to communities (Mugabe Speech B).

It can be seen in this part of the speech that it is considerably more than just a repatriation; it is very much about regaining Zimbabwe's African pride. What can also be seen by studying this part of the speech is how Mugabe chooses to talk about the colonizers and the British presence. He does not mention them in any positive light; he chooses instead to clarify the crimes the colonization caused. That he chooses to address this is of course of interest as it indirectly justifies the land reforms which were being implemented. When he chooses to address the fact that the country's whites lack culture in the region, it becomes just as he also says that the country's white minority has no right to the land they now own. This part of the speech is therefore not only an elevation of the country's African cultural heritage and connection, it is also another step away from the colonial heritage. It is therefore worth asking why he chooses to address this on this occasion, and why in this context. One could make the argument that this situation provided an opportunity not only to interweave the land reform and repatriation, but also to lodge a fight (Matenga 2011: 168).

There was still anger left in Zimbabwe, there was still a desire to get rid of the last vestiges of colonial heritage. This was something Mugabe wanted to bring out through his speech. It would benefit the incumbent government if the rural population continued to have a desire to support the reforms implemented. One way of doing this could therefore be to remind the people of how the colonizers profaned and defiled some of the most sacred locations in the country (Matenga 2011: 168). It is a reminder that during their time as a colony, the British not only tried to reduce them, but they also tried to steal them on their own culture. It could therefore see this figure as an opportunity to fire up the country's population and provoke a continued rage against the country's white minority. It will be a perfect moment to get most of the country's population to further feel anger towards the whites, and to turn them against them.

It is impossible to say anything negative or positive about this use of a national cultural heritage. There is no justification for the brutal colonization Britain carried out. It is therefore also difficult to argue against what Mugabe is saying in his speech. This essay will not address the question of the political use of Great Zimbabwe being used for "right" purposes, it is a matter which is entirely subjective. What will be of interest is how and in what light Great

Zimbabwe as well as the returned Zimbabwean bird are presented, and this light is in a clear nationalist way. The fact that it is handed over in a ceremonial state procession becomes a political event, which portrays ZANU-pf as a restorer of Zimbabwe's pride, its traditions, and the country's African heritage. It will be an opportunity for the religious who are still following Mwari to celebrate, for the rest of the country it is the return of something which has been lost. This event is not in itself negative, it is a positive event for the whole of Zimbabwe, but it is also impossible to avoid the fact that Mugabe and ZANU-pf also used it as a PR trick to justify / directly justify the disputed land reforms . If you only look at repatriation it would be an innocent event, but it is also possible to see how a cultural heritage is used as a political weapon. It was used as a forum to give legitimacy not only to parity, but also to the policy which was driven in the early 2000s.

Historically they have a debt. They occupied the land illegally; they ceased the land from our people. Therefore the process of land reform involved them handing it back. (CNN. 2009)

This can be an important quote as it could also be used as an argument for how Mugabe looked at Ndebele. It may well have been that he also saw them as a group that invaded a Shona-owned land, and that they were no longer welcome.

4.1.3 Robert Mugabe's 92nd birthday celebration, 2016

There are several examples of how ZANU-pf and Robert Mugabe continued to legitimize their right to power, by linking the party to both the country's history and, above all else Great Zimbabwe. One of the more interesting examples of this is Robert Mugabe's birthday celebration in 2016. When the president celebrated 92 years, the entire event was held at Great Zimbabwe monument. This can be interpreted as a way of not only interweaving ZANU-pf with the country's history, but it is also a way of consolidating Robert Mugabe's place in Zimbabwe's history writing. There are several parables to be made where the sitting president holds his celebration at a venue where former kings reigned. This could be interpreted as such that Robert Mugabe was no longer just seen as a president, but that he had become something more.

At the time of his birthday, Robert Mugabe had shown no signs of resigning, neither as the country's president, nor the leader of ZANU-pf. This, in conjunction with his reaching the low age of 92, meant that several in the party felt that he should name a successor. They felt that he should support someone who would take over after him or perhaps simply resign as the country's president. What now is common knowledge is the fact that in 2016 ZANU-pf had had problems with internal strife. These internal conflicts led to unrest within the party and this led to Robert Mugabe becoming increasingly questioned. Two years earlier Mugabe fired her former Vice President Joice Mujuru, she was later excluded from the party and started her own opposition party Zimbabwe People First (ZPF) (BBC 2020). It was not only Mujuru who lost her seat in the party, but several other ministers associated with her were let go. Therefore it is possible to know that Mugabe was not quite politically safe in 2016 and that there were problems within ZANU-pf (Independent. 2020). These internal struggles culminated in the fall of 2017 when Mugabe chose to get rid Joice Mujuru's replacement and the incumbent Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa. It was only a few months after this happened before a coup took place under the leadership of the kicked Emmerson Mnangagwa and Zimbabwe Defense Force (ZDF).



Fig. 17. The birthday cake in the form of Great Zimbabwe Monument (Newsday. 2020).

It could therefore be seen that holding his birthday celebration at Great Zimbabwe was not only a way for Mugabe to link himself and the party to the country's history, it could also be seen as an attempt to unite an increasingly conflicting ZANU-pf. This is something which can be seen in part through the speech Mugabe held in connection with his birthday celebration. There are clear signs in the speech of trying to use Great Zimbabwe to focus on something more important than the party and the individual power struggles. That attempt took the form of focusing on a common African cultural heritage, and a symbol which has been a big part of ZANU PF's identity, Great Zimbabwe.

I am happy to share with you that I treat this event with seriousness it deserves rightly and as a patron of the Movement, I remain highly committed to ensuring that it maintains its importance and aims and objectives for which it was founded (Mugabe Speech C. 2020).

By re-merging with Great Zimbabwe and the country's cultural life, Mugabe tried to unite a divided party. What we have seen before with the events with the Unity Day Anniversary, the name of the nation, the state emblem etc, is that Great Zimbabwe is something which crosses ethnic boundaries, it is something which brings together groups, and it is something which many Zimbabweans can support . Great Zimbabwe had by this time become indoctrinated in their shared history. It is therefore not entirely inconceivable that Robert Mugabe did not just want the public to make the link between Great Zimbabwe and ZANU-pf. It was also the fact he hoped that Great Zimbabwe would get the split party to focus on something larger. Not only did Mugabe want to unite the party through the common African cultural heritage, he also wanted to unite them by reminding them of their real opponents. These opponents were, in part, ZANU-pfs political opponents, the MDC , but it was also the Western world, and the nations which were responsible for another political system. Great Zimbabwe still symbolize / symbolize the struggle they were forced to wage against the very nature of imperialism.

The venue selected for the celebrations, our majestic Great Zimbabwe Monument whose African origins the imperialists wished to denigrate so much, is itself iconic for the African people as a whole (Mugabe Speech C. 2020).

It is therefore possible to interpret that by celebrating his birthday at Great Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe wanted to remind the leadership of ZANU-pf how far the party had come. He wanted to show them how much they have managed to accomplish since the second Chimurengan, at the same time he wanted to focus on the fact that there was much left to do. It was important to point out that their revolution was not yet complete, that a consensus was needed for it to

survive. The choice of location could also act as proof of how far all of Zimbabwe has come in the fight for the country's freedom, and not just ZANU-pf. In 1965, it would have been completely unthinkable for a black elected president to hold his celebration at the iconic monument. That they are now 61 years later is exactly what happened. It is a reminder of how far Zimbabwe has come, it was also a way for Mugabe to remind the party of how far Zimbabwe has come under his leadership. Thus, there is probably an element of wanting to elevate himself, even he is associated with the old Shona kings. The choice of location gives him the same status as those who once ruled these countries. It is also, as I said, a reminder of the country's progress, and Great Zimbabwe largely represents Mugabe's top victory. Before taking over the leadership of their struggle, they had still been a British colony and lacked rights, but under his leadership they had liberated the country. Thus, it becomes partly a way for Mugabe to once again make himself appear as the father of the country, and leader of the revolution:

The Great Zimbabwe Monument from which derives the name of our great country is rock solid as you can see, and unshakable, typifying the ideals of pan-Africanism upon which our founding fathers have inexorably anchored our shared conception of African identity and heritage (Mugabe Speech C. 2020).

It cannot be denied that Mugabe chose to use the symbolic value of Great Zimbabwe to try to unite not only a divided party, but also partly a divided nation. At the time of this birthday celebration, Zimbabwe was still suffering from high unemployment and financial difficulties. There were indications that things would get better, but it was still a while (Sundaynews. 2020). There were still social problems within the country, and it is obvious that Mugabe was no longer as safe as he had previously been. Mugabe had previously been able to rely primarily on the leading elite within ZANU-pf, he used a hierarchical loyalty system where his closest was loyal to himself. From what is possible to make out in his speech, the choice of location, and how he presented himself, it is possible that Mugabe tried to personalize himself not only with the success of ZANU-pf, but also with the freedom of the country. It is in this context that Great Zimbabwe is given an iconic and symbolic role. Just as Mugabe himself says, Great Zimbabwe represents the struggle and difficulties the nation has endured. It represents the foundation on which they built the land, and it represents their connection to the past and their ancestors (Mugabe Speech C. 2020). This is also where it is important to mention the religious aspect. What research shows is that do that within certain African beliefs, Great Zimbabwe is a location where communication with the ancestors is at its strongest, so it is impossible to ignore this symbolic value (Matenga 2011). Thus, holding this personal celebration of Zimbabwe is not only a way of placing Mugabe in the country's history, it is also a way of indirectly interweaving him with the traditional African practice of faith, and with the old Zimbabwe kings.

There is no denying the fact that Robert Mugabe has been a leading factor in Zimbabwe's liberation. He was a leading force in the freedom movement, and he has earned his place in the country's history. This is something he and ZANU-pf are really trying to make clear by arranging their birthday celebrations at the country's most important cultural heritage. It will also be a clear example of how a historical monument can be used within the framework of the political sphere, above all, it will also be a perfect example of how Great Zimbabwe was still used by ZANU-pf. It goes without saying, of course, later to discuss whether it had the desired effect, it would still only take a little over a year before Emmerson led the ZDF in a coup d'état and deposed the then 93-year-old Mugabe.

4.1.4 Great Zimbabwe, the Soapstone birds and the time after Robert Mugabe

After the 2017 coup d'état, Emmerson Mnangagwa took power in Zimbabwe and Mugabe lost his political influence. It is still too early to say what role Great Zimbabwe will have for the

future governments, and the country's new President Emmerson Mnangagwa, after all, it has only been three years since he took over the Mugabe presidency. It is not yet possible to say whether he values the iconic and symbolic value as highly as Robert Mugabe did.

It is also important to point out that although ZANU-pf has been the leading party in the country, they are not the only ones who have tried to use Great Zimbabwe to take political points. One of the other parties that tried to use Great Zimbabwe was the very largest opposition party, MDC. What the thesis shows (see Fig. 15) is that the opposition party also chose to use Great Zimbabwe, by placing the Zimbabwean bird on the party's logo. This would not be the only time the party made a connection to the country's history, but it would happen on more occasions. One of these occasions happened before the 2018 election, and it came from MDC leader and presidential candidate Nelson Chamisa. There were, of course, several parties ahead of the 2018 elections, but it was clear early on that it would either end with a victory for Mnangagwa or Chamisa. Chamisa would make this statement in connection with one of her political rallies:

The name Zimbabwe is cursed as you can see our national soccer team always lose matches – cricket team is always defeated; volleyball is always defeated. (Nehanda Radio. 2020).

He continues by saying:

We will be renaming it to Great Zimbabwe in line with the greatness which is coming (Nehanda Radio. 2020).

He thus promised to change the name of the nation from Zimbabwe, but to Great Zimbabwe. Arguably, this is a strategy to further link the nation to the iconic monument, although Chamisa provides another explanation for the renaming. That he chooses to make this election promise could be seen as a way to win new support, and perhaps win over some of the more conservative voters. It was well known at this time that the MDC was considered a progressive party, they wanted to change in the governing order. They were also the foremost opposition party to ZANU-pf and were the best option for those who wanted to see a major change in the country. What was also known was the fact that it was rumoured, and there was reason to believe that they were a party which received support from Western countries. That there was this concern was something that argued that more conservative voters would choose to support them. There was a risk that they might not always be portrayed as a party which would stand up to Zimbabwean valuations and to the country's African culture (Appendix Sagiya).

This could be one of the underlying reasons why Nelson Chamisa chose to make his promise and his statement. There was also a chance that this PR trick could have a double effect. Making such a radical statement also had the opportunity to further activate the country's younger population, make them feel involved in something greater. Chamisa could, through this statement and this parable, be similar to Mugabe and Nkomo and how they won the country's freedom with a promise to change the name of the nation to Zimbabwe. It is therefore not impossible that he hoped to win votes for doing something as revolutionary. It is difficult to know exactly what logic he used when making this promise, but what is made clear is that even in the country's most recent elections, Great Zimbabwe played a role. There is little to no gain from changing the name of the nation, but it could, on the other hand, create headlines and potentially win a choice. What can be seen is that even a party that propagates itself as an progressive party chooses to use Great Zimbabwe as a monument (Blessing-Miles. 2010: 203-204).

Also, changing the name of the nation to "Great Zimbabwe" could not only hint at the country's most famous cultural heritage, it could also be that it is an attempt to provide faith in the future. Chamisa says he wants to change the name of the nation to give a try to the greatness which is

still to come (Nehanda Radio. 2020). It could be likened to how US current President Donald Trump chose to use the electoral slogan "Make America Great Again", it becomes a way to instill future faith. Previous to the latest election Zimbabwe still had financial difficulties, there were still famines and social problems, it was a country in need of hope. Which is why a change of the nation's name to Great Zimbabwe could have multiple positive effects. It would partly portray MDC as a party which shows respect for the country's cultural heritage, it is made a connection to something which a large majority of the country's population can feel a cultural affiliation. It would at the same time give this feeling of hope for the future, and really give the hope that the country's difficulties will be over. It is impossible to deny the fact that Zimbabwe went through several tough periods in the early 2000s. Therefore, it will not be impossible to conclude that a large part of the people was also tired of ZANU-pf, the established elite and the statue's quo. Therefore, having proposed a name change could therefore be an opportunity for the country to have that rebirth, get another chance to succeed.

What can be seen with this is that there still seems to be an interest in using the site, it is hard to see that the government has not been involved. Earlier this year in February, four of the Zimbabwean birds were exhibited at Great Zimbabwe. (Aljazeera. 2020). They were moved from a nearby museum and presented at Great Zimbabwe for use in a photo shoot in conjunction with a book release.

In a rare move last month, four of the statues were temporarily set on the original plinths from where they were stolen at the Great Zimbabwe monument. (News Zimbabwe. 2020).

The book which is called - *African art - Zimbabwe: Art, Symbols and Meaning* is written by the authors Gillian Atherstone and Duncan Wylie (Reading Zimbabwe 2020-04-16). This text will be released later this year but was obviously important enough to access some of the country's most iconic cultural heritage. This would be one of the first occasions since it was removed by Theodore Bent and Richard Hall, when several Zimbabwean birds would be visible on site at Great Zimbabwe (Bent. 1892 & Hall 1902). This new appearance did not take place under any major ceremonial forms, nor was it for any length of time, but it is still worth noting at what time this was done. This performance happened earlier this year, and 2020 will be a special year for Zimbabwe, the nation celebrating forty years of liberation from the UK. This could therefore be a reason for the Zimbabwean birds to once again become visible and remove them from the nearby museum to be part of the book. It is still difficult to determine how they will be portrayed in the script, or whether there will be any clear political narrative in how they are presented. What can be stated is the fact that not everyone has access to these iconic artifacts, this becomes especially relevant after a statement from Godfrey Mahachi:

Not everyone who visits a museum is there to admire the displays (Zimlive. 2020).

Godfrey is responsible for the Zimbabwe National Museum and with this quote he makes it very clear there is a reason why the Zimbabwean birds have been safely stored in the museum. During the same interview, he also says:

The birds are among the most symbolic cultural objects of our time (Zimlive. 2020).

It is therefore possible to ask a little question about the decision to allow the birds to participate in this photography, or on whose order it was actually made. It could be interpreted as the birds again playing a role, but this time to celebrate Zimbabwe liberation. There never was a permanent exhibition for them, but it is also not too far-fetched to make a connection between Zimbabwe's liberation celebration, and the four Zimbabwean birds, for the first time since returning, were involved in a photography and book release. Of course, this is still speculation if there is a political motive behind this, or if it is merely a purely research grant. What is clear is there is still an interest in the world heritage, and headlines are still being created. This brief

appearance got the attention of a number of newspapers. It was also obviously big enough for the head of the nation's museums to make a statement as to why it happened (Zimlive. 2020-04-17).

4.1.5 Summary of the political usage of Great Zimbabwe between 2000-2020

Thus, between 2000 and 2020 it is possible to see a change in the political use of Great Zimbabwe, from the beginning of the 2000s it becomes an increasingly active player. What is made is clear is the fact since 1980-2000 has Great Zimbabwe played an important cultural role in an identity-creation purpose. This is the foundation for future political practice during 1980-2000. If Great Zimbabwe was not central during the Second Chimurengan, and especially during the 1980s, it may not have been used as it did in the 2000s. What can be seen is from the beginning of the 21st century the ruins themselves are starting to take on an increasingly active role, this is expressed by the fact various events are organized in connection with Great Zimbabwe. What can also be noticeable is this new heated conflict against the country's white minority is seen and propagated as a continuation of colonialism. It is also this rhetoric which justifies the powerful takeover, it is painted as a Third Chimurenga (Sabelo & Willems. 2009). This can be seen on three occasions: Unity Day Anniversary (2001, 2003), The Return of the Zimbabwean Bird (2004) Robert Mugabe's Birthday Celebration (2016). All these events were arranged and had a direct connection to Great Zimbabwe. What is also made clear with my thesis is the fact the fact that these events have a correlation with their respective current political situations. The prevailing political situation here is that Zimbabwe is going through a difficult economic crisis and that ZANU-pf is no longer alone in challenging the power in the country (Bourne 2011: 170, 173–174). This fact is something that may play a central role in how Great Zimbabwe was used by the party. That this interpretation is possible is mainly due to the speeches Robert Mugabe made in 2003 in the return of the Zimbabwean bird, but also in his own birthday celebration 2016:

The Great Zimbabwe birds are our nation's prized cultural treasures, a symbol of our nation whose meaning defies time and place. The return of the pedestal of this national symbol is, therefore, cause for celebration because it fits into our on-going program of national identity and restoration. Like our Land Reform Program, today's ceremony allows us to assert ownership of our national resources and treasures. (Mugabe Speech B).

Quotes from Robert Mugabe's speech during his birthday celebration:

The Great Zimbabwe Monument from which derives the name of our great country is rock solid as you can see, and unshakable, typifying the ideals of Pan-Africanism upon which our founding fathers have inexorably anchored our shared conception of African identity and heritage (Mugabe Speech C. 2020).

With this speech it is made clear he uses the symbolic value of Great Zimbabwe, in 2003 it was to justify his land reform. Through his quote he resembles the cultural readmission of the Zimbabwean bird, with the seizure of the landmarks belonging to the country's white population (Bourne 2011: 167). The fact ZANU-pf also made a major difference in the return of this single Zimbabwean bird to the return of the poultry in 1981. The fact this was made into an important return in 2003 is probably due to the change in the political landscape. There was a greater need to present something positive, in 1981 ZANU had just led the country to its freedom, the economy was good, and the outlook was bright. This was not the case in 2003, the economy had stagnated, ZANU-pf was challenged by an ever-growing opposition party, MDC and the nation faced international pressure from, among others, the United Kingdom, the United States. What this meant was the government needed a victory, they also needed to awaken a new loyalty and nationalist feeling towards the nation. When Germany later chose to repatriate

half of the Zimbabwean bird, it was given the opportunity to present this as a great victory, something which the whole nation should celebrate. Again, because of the current political / economic situation, there was again a need to bring credibility and loyalty to the incumbent government. It was also likely this return / presentation was meant to be done. Thus, based on speeches and the then political situation, there is reason to make the interpretation that it was about presenting the government from a positive point of view, to send out the image of progress.

At the time of 2016, there was a similar motive for organizing an event at Great Zimbabwe, and this is made clear in the speech Mugabe held in connection with his birthday celebration. In hindsight it is possible to notice the fact that ZANU-pf was fragmented, not everyone was completely happy with Mugabe or how he led the country. There were those who wanted to see him resign the presidency and let someone else take over the leadership (Independent. 2020). There was again a need to unite a party which was haunted by intrigue and internal conflicts, one way of going about to try and fix this would be to have them focus on the larger picture. This could be one of the reasons why Mugabe chose to arrange his birthday celebration at Great Zimbabwe. Great Zimbabwe is in many ways evidence of how far the country has come, while also representing a large part of Zimbabwe's cultural identity. This symbolic value is something which Mugabe used in the creation of the country's national identity; it was also likely which he hoped to use iconic value in 2016. The decision to hold the celebration at Great Zimbabwe, together with the speech Mugabe held, as well as the knowledge which the party was fragmented makes it possible to make this interpretation of the political usage. This celebration gave Mugabe a chance to gather the party in one location in more festive forms, while also allowing him to turn the focus to something greater than the individual ambitions of the people. He sought, through the symbolic value of Great Zimbabwe, to show how far Zimbabwe has come, but also where it came from, and what would be required for their revolution to continue (Mugabe Speech C. 2020). It would require consensus. It was required that ZANU-pf be assembled, and this was something which Great Zimbabwe represented.

It is thus possible to interpret the symbolic value which Great Zimbabwe received during the War of Liberation and the 1980s becomes something in the 2000s which can be used by the sitting government. Almost only ZANU-pf and the incumbent government have had access to farming Great Zimbabwe. Through the various events, repatriations, several connections have been made between the party and Great Zimbabwe. This is also where it is possible to see the impact Mugabe may have had. ZANU-pf is a top-ruled party, where Mugabe sets the foremost agenda. It would therefore be easy to conclude that he too had a crucial role in the repatriation. It is also possible to assume that he in some way would be taking part in the orchestration of the ceremony and how it would appear. It is therefore possible to see what political value is being placed on the ruins. What is made clear from Nelson Chamisa's statement is the fact even the country's opposition parties are trying to make use of the cultural heritage.

5. Discussion of analysis

The purpose of this master thesis was to show and study what political role Great Zimbabwe had between 1980 to 2020.

Research Questions:

This work was based on a few scientific questions:

- Have Great Zimbabwe been used by political groups in the region between 1980-2020?

- Why has Great Zimbabwe been so important for different groups?
- What effect might Mugabe's government have had on the view of Great Zimbabwe?
- Which of these groupings have potentially benefited the most from the usage of Great Zimbabwe?
- Has Great Zimbabwe played any role in Zimbabwe's political turmoil and economic problems?
- How has the research on Great Zimbabwe been developed in conjunction with the political situation?

5.0.1 Why Great Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwe Bird

The first thing to say is that between 1980-2020 Great Zimbabwe played a political role. There is also evidence to make the interpretation that Great Zimbabwe was politically used even before the 1980s, and that this former custom determined what role the ruins would later have. Great Zimbabwe was important in Rhodesia where the ruins were a cornerstone in the nation's history writing. What the analysis has shown is that the Rhodesians government embraced both Great Zimbabwe monument, but also the Zimbabwean bird as important iconic cultural heritage. What was made clear in the analysis is also that after Rhodesia was proclaimed, the government chose to place mainly the Zimbabwean bird both on the city emblem, the flag, and on banknotes and coins. The Rhodesian government also chose to continue to claim that Great Zimbabwe was not constructed by the locals, but instead was an outside grouping. Thus, it was a direct continuation of the arguments which gave legitimacy to British colonization some 75 years earlier (Bent. 1892 & Hall 1902). Great Zimbabwe was a monument used for a very long time to justify the British supremacy, and the European presence. This erroneous picture of history could also be used to defend a minority government. The history used by the British and later Rhodesians was the story of a small outside group which ruled the region (Bent. 1892 & Hall 1902). When they thought Great Zimbabwe was constructed by a smaller, more knowledgeable grouping, it became like anchoring a minority government in history. Great Zimbabwe was used politically to say: "There was a time in history when this was the norm" It was this image which both Bent, and Hall helped create and which they sought to prove. This was later disproved by Thompson (1931), and Garlake (1973) was of less interest, it became Bent's version used to assert the supremacy of the white man. This becomes important to understand the role of Great Zimbabwe during the 1980s, and how this role develops in later periods.

The fact the Rhodesian minority government chose to adopt both Great Zimbabwe, and the Zimbabwean bird as their own cultural heritage, made it important for both ZANU and ZAPU to "re-Africanize" them. I make the interpretation that when Great Zimbabwe is so clearly linked to colonialism, it becomes more urgent to assert the opposite. It will be important for the freedom movement to refute the European claims, while it will also be important to re-associate these icons with the country's African heritage. Therefore it is possible to see similarities in the emblems (Fig. 9. and Fig. 10.) and why the Zimbabwean bird continues to appear on coins and flags. It is with this in mind that I put forward the argument that it is not just about establishing these as central themes in the country's new Zimbabwean identity, but this is simultaneously being done with the aim of eradicating them as Rhodesian cultural heritage.

There are several advantages to using these cultural heritages, but I would argue that the reason why they were selected, in part, is the fact that they had been charged with value by the

Rhodesian government. This fact made it extremely important to make them central to the country's new identity. They became important to make the transition to Zimbabwe easier. By retaining some of the most important cultural heritage, it became easier to see a continuity between the two states. This was also important in order not to completely tear up society, as there was still a population which would continue to associate themselves as Rhodesians. That group was made up of the country's white minority, who lived in the country and who had a settler background. It was therefore important not to tear up the cultural link too quickly, while still doing so. The analysis then showed, that in the land reform, and the changes in the National Museums and Monuments act, that the white minority group would not receive the same rights. It is with these legislative changes in mind I also conclude that it became important for the new government not only to make the transition easier, or to merely "re-Africanize" the iconic cultural heritage, but also to destroy the symbols previously associated with Rhodesia. This assumption is also supported by the fact that after the War of Liberation was won, the nation was given a new name, as was the name of the country's capital, which changed its name from Salisbury to Harare. There is more evidence that it was about erasing the memory of Rhodesia, distancing itself from colonialism, and thereby building a whole new Zimbabwean identity. This new Zimbabwean identity would be based on the nation's African heritage, and the country's own prehistory. It would not be based on either Britain or the nation's colonial heritage (Andersson 2019: 29).

This is also where it is possible to see how Great Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwean bird are getting their new roles. Great Zimbabwe gets a symbolic value, it becomes something that transcends ethnic boundaries, and becomes something which indirectly represents the local people's struggle for liberation. This is made truly clear in the flags and the name of the two largest political organizations, ZAPU and ZANU who fought for the nation's freedom. They both claim, through the name of their organizations, Great Zimbabwe, and they both make two direct links to the country's prehistory. What we are left to wonder is how important Great Zimbabwe was. Was it just the name of some organizations? Was it later just a symbolic name of the nation? Or there were deeper political motives. I would like to argue that Great Zimbabwe was central to the future nation, which both Mugabe and Nkomo intended to create.

Through my analysis I want to present the interpretation that Great Zimbabwe became central to the Zimbabwean identity which was to be created. Of course, it is difficult to fully assess how Nkomo and ZAPU intended to use the cultural heritage. It is possible to see that Great Zimbabwe was included in both the name and that the party's flag depicted the ruins (Fig. 5.). It was obvious that there was a political interest, where they saw Great Zimbabwe as something which united people. It is only possible to speculate on how ZAPU would continue to use the site if they came to power. It would eventually be Mugabe and ZANU stood as the winner in the 1980 election (Bourne 2011: 97).

There is clear evidence that the Zimbabwe born out of the liberation war claimed to be a successor to the former kingdom of Zimbabwe. It is also this conscious political choice, to take a historical name, that makes me argue that Great Zimbabwe was crucial in the creation of the country's new national identity. There are several historical examples of this, I chose to compare Zimbabwe with Mussolini's Italy, and Ceausescu Romania. The two examples I used made both claims of a legacy from the Roman Empire. Both Ceausescu and Mussolini believed that they were successors to Rome because they inhabited areas which were previously Roman. They used the Roman heritage of the regions to build a new identity, legitimize their power, and later claim land. I would like to argue that there is a similarity in how Mugabe used Great Zimbabwe and the Kingdom of Zimbabwe and how these two nations used their connection to the Roman Empire. I make this interpretation mainly because Great Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwean bird are used as the pillars of Zimbabwe's history writing. It is Great Zimbabwe

which become the foremost cultural heritage, linking the new Zimbabwe to the former Shona state which existed between the 1100s to the 1400s BC (Thompson 1931). This is made noticeable in how the Zimbabwe bird is placed on the nation's flag (Fig. 8.), how the ruins are placed on the nation's emblem (Fig. 10.), but most clearly in the name of the new nation. Thus, there are several indications that the new nation that Mugabe created sought to prove its historical link in the kingdom which existed in the 12th century. This was probably done to legitimize the young nation and give it a historical foundation to stand on. By asserting its historical right, a new nation is not created, it is instead a question of a potential continuation of something which has been lost. Which is why Great Zimbabwe gets involved in the process as it is the foremost and most impressive cultural heritage of the time before Europeans. It is also this need for legitimization that makes Great Zimbabwe get involved in the political sphere. It cannot be inferred from the fact that Great Zimbabwe becomes a pillar of Zimbabwean nationalism, thereby becoming a political tool.

It is impossible to underestimate the power of a good story, nor can it underline the strength of the sense of national belonging. It is this sense of national belonging that makes people feel connected with people which they have no other connection to, except for national belonging. It could therefore be interpreted exactly as Benedict Anderson does in his work: *The Imagined Community* (1991). This sense of national community comes from the construction of a shared history, shared traditions, and a shared cultural heritage (Anderson. 1991). It was this sense of nationalism which Mugabe had to create. Zimbabwe is not an ethnically homogeneous country and there are several different groupings, and there are historical contradictions, especially those between Ndebele and Shona. This is also why there was probably a greater need to create a new national affiliation, something that all black Zimbabweans could support. He chose to use the history of Great Zimbabwe to form a new Zimbabwean and African nationalism based on the history of Zimbabwe's first golden age. It will be a way of creating a new identity and a new kind of national belonging from the country's pre-colonial history. I do not claim that there was not already an African and / or Zimbabwean identity before 1980. Nor do I claim that the locals did not know any affiliation with Great Zimbabwe or the region's history. There are several signs of this, not least that the location was inhabited, and that religious ceremonies were still held at the site (Garlake 1973 & Beach 1980). With all this in mind it is quite easy to conclude that Great Zimbabwe had a value before both ZAPU, ZANU and even before 1980. However, I would argue that after 1980 Great Zimbabwe would have a more definite place in the country's history writing. I would also like to put forward the argument that it is only after 1980 Great Zimbabwe received the truly symbolic value, the value which it still has today. I make this interpretation precisely because both Great Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwean bird are depicted on most city/coat of arms, names, flags, coins, and other state-controlled sections of society. Thus, clear political decisions are made to place both the Zimbabwean bird, but also Great Zimbabwe in the everyday lives of society, and to get the population to associate both cultural heritage with the new Zimbabwe nation, but also the government. It is only after 1980 that it is established that Great Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwean bird are the country's common cultural heritage, and this is something that everyone should feel connected to.

I would also like to present the interpretation that it is really during Zimbabwe's very first year that the foundation is laid for Great Zimbabwe's later use. In particular, I refer to the latter use during the 2000s. I argue that if Great Zimbabwe did not become relevant during the War of Liberation, and during the 1980s, it is possible that we would not have seen the same political valuation of the ruins later. It is still likely that Great Zimbabwe would have been used but it is likely that it has not been in the same shape and extent as today. The place and depiction of Great Zimbabwe and Zimbabwean birds in several different locations gives legitimacy to the value of the ruins. The fact Mugabe mentions the ruins in his very first speech to the nation, a

speech in which he talks about building a new "Great Zimbabwe" it is gaining attention, as well as interest. All this increases (the political) value of the ruins and makes people feel a connection and a sense of national pride. The effect is then what raises the status of Great Zimbabwe, and in conjunction it is also raises the status for the party controlling Great Zimbabwe. The party most associated with the ruins, will have an ever-greater influence. In the paragraph below, I will go into more detail on who/what grouping is the one which has benefited most from Great Zimbabwe. I will present why it was important to create this historical link and historical identity.

5.0.2 The Government, ZANU-pf and Great Zimbabwe

Thus, Great Zimbabwe becomes a political tool used mainly by the incumbent government. It is also important to note that Zimbabwe has only had one party in power. From 1980 to 1987, ZANU ruled alone, but after the merger with ZAPU in 1987, the two parties under the leadership of ZANU ruled Zimbabwe under the name ZANU-pf. What is possible to see in the essay's analysis is that Great Zimbabwe was used by the sitting government for a nationalistic and identity-creating purpose. What also is noticeable is that it is also the government which has been able to benefit most from the symbolic value of Great Zimbabwe. I would also like to underline the fact that the government has been one and the same since the proclamation of Zimbabwe. There are thus grounds for claiming that ZANU-pf is in many ways the only government Zimbabwe has had, and it can also be argued that it is ZANU / ZANU-pf who helped construct the symbolic value of Great Zimbabwe, and who also had most use of this value.

There is what I can see no other groupings that have had the same benefit or use of Great Zimbabwe as ZANU and ZANU-pf. This may be due to several reasons. The connection and conclusion I think I can make is that it is again an issue of identity, in this case both the national identity but also ZANU-pf's own party identity. You can see a link between Great Zimbabwe, ZANU-pf and the look the party is trying to create. This is when ZANU-pf strives to evoke the image of being the party which gave Zimbabwe their freedom, but that they are also the party best suited to restore the nation to its former glory. This ancient greatness refers to the period when Great Zimbabwe was most powerful, when the region flourished, and the Zimbabwe Plateau was an important trading center. They try to portray themselves as a party that restores African pride, a party that stands up for its African heritage and its African traditions. This is also one of the reasons why the party is choosing to use Great Zimbabwe, and why the ruins are of great importance to them. I conclude that Great Zimbabwe is a good way for the party to maintain its appearance, which is why they place such great value on the site by associating the party with Great Zimbabwe in various ways. These ways take different forms, and a few examples which the thesis previously mentions are, ZANU-pf's increased focus on educating new academics, the creation of the NMMZ, and the specialization of Great Zimbabwe University. It is therefore possible to see an increased focus on culture and history, where Great Zimbabwe will play a central role. It is also possible to see this in how Mugabe mentions Great Zimbabwe on various occasions. In parallel with several other conditions and changes in society, they thus preserve the image of a party that both protects and highlights its African cultural heritage. It takes them the opportunity to portray themselves as a party that accounts for a majority of the country's population. Thus, in my opinion, ZANU-pf's use of Great Zimbabwe becomes multiple, and there are several reasons why the monument becomes important:

- The government usually uses Great Zimbabwe politically to create a new national identity, to unite an ethnically / politically divided nation and to create a new loyalty to a shared historical heritage.
- The government usually uses Great Zimbabwe politically to eradicate a former Rhodesian cultural heritage, thereby rejecting colonialism, and portray itself as a party that stands for the country's black majority.
- The government usually uses Great Zimbabwe politically to portray ZANU-pf as a party that restores Zimbabwe and the country's African heritage, and through this restoration prove to be best suited to lead the nation into the future.
- It could also be argued that ZANU previously chose to link Zimbabwe to the mighty Shonar empire in order to indirectly rise above its ethnic rivals such as Ndebele.

It is thus possible to see why Great Zimbabwe became of interest to the ruling government, it became not just something that anchored the new nation in history. It was not just an opportunity to unite a politically divided country with a common cultural heritage. It would also be an opportunity to anchor ZANU-pf with Zimbabwe's history and give them historical legitimacy and a traditional right to remain in power. There are several signs that ZANU-pf was trying to weave the party with Great Zimbabwe, but the clearest of these occurred in 2016 when Robert Mugabe's birthday celebration was arranged at the site (See section 4.2.4). The fact that this birthday celebration took place at Great Zimbabwe shows what iconic value the location possesses, but it also shows how interconnected ZANU-pf and the monument are. It is difficult to see that any of the country's opposition parties would have access to Great Zimbabwe in the same way as ZANU-pf. There are examples like Nelson Chamisa's statement about changing the name of the nation to Great Zimbabwe, and how the MDC used logos depicting the Zimbabwean bird, but these examples fade in comparison to what ZANU-pf has done. What is instead made clear in the thesis is how a party has almost exclusively taken sole rights to the country's most famous cultural heritage. This birthday celebration will therefore be interesting to study, as it will be an opportunity to clearly see the role Great Zimbabwe has played in the nation, but above all in ZANU-pf. Great Zimbabwe was still seen and seen as something that unites.

The interpretation that Great Zimbabwe is regarded as something that unites can be done given how the location was woven into the national identity. Great Zimbabwe was centrally located as something pan-African; the monument is something which was built to transcend both political and ethnic differences. This is also what the thesis shows in the connection between Robert Mugabe's birthday celebration and Great Zimbabwe. The question we have to ask is why this was arranged as it was done. This was the President's first and only birthday celebration of this magnitude at Great Zimbabwe. Mugabe possibly thought that the symbolic value of Great Zimbabwe could unite an increasingly divisive ZANU pf. We know in fact that Mugabe was increasingly pressured, and the question was who would take over after him. It was a matter of internal strife and struggle within the very highest ranks of the party. This is also why it becomes interesting to study this opportunity because it is an obvious use of the symbolic and spiritual value of Great Zimbabwe. It is impossible to ignore the fact that the monument becomes the gathering place for the party's elite, all at a time when there was an uncertainty about the future.

It is therefore difficult to deny the fact that ZANU-pf, in its position as incumbent government, has been the political group that sought to make the most of Great Zimbabwe. What is important to ask is however how much benefit this interweaving has had, or if it has had any impact at all. What can be ascertained is that there has been, and still is, an interest on the part of the

government to try to prove this link. It will also be difficult to comment exactly on how much ZANU-pf's users differ from, for example, MDCs, since MDC did not hold the office. It is possible to see in statements and logos from the party, that there is also an interest from their side to use Great Zimbabwe, and it is evident that they also understand the symbolic value of the monument. It might be possible in the future to discuss how the two parties' practices differ, but this will first require that ZANU-pf lose power, and that MDC be given a chance to implement its own policy in the country. This, on the other hand, is pure speculation, but the interpretation I make is that so far it is ZANU and ZANU-pf that have benefited most from Great Zimbabwe. I feel that I can draw this conclusion primarily because it is mainly ZANU-pf which has had the opportunity to arrange major events at the site. I refer to the Unity Day celebration and Robert Mugabe's birthday celebration. At the same time, I would also like to mention the return of the Zimbabwean birds in both 1981 and 2003. These occasions were both related to Great Zimbabwe and I would like to argue that both strengthened the ZANU / ZANU-PF's legitimacy hold on power in the country. Successful reclaiming of important cultural artefacts helped to solidify ZANU / ZANU-pf's role as a restorer of the country's African heritage, while also giving parity the opportunity to highlight its effectiveness. The repatriation of the Zimbabwean bird also gave the party an opportunity to organize a ceremonial event at Great Zimbabwe. This opportunity gave them the chance to further weave the party, with the monument, but also with the ongoing land reforms.

5.0.3 Zimbabwe's economic situation and an evolving political usage

There are obvious situations where Great Zimbabwe was used for various political purposes, perhaps not least in the return of the Zimbabwean bird in 2003, an occasion that reflected Zimbabwe's early 2000s. I have now presented why I conclude that Great Zimbabwe has been central to Zimbabwe's national identity creation. I have also gone through why I believe that ZANU-pf, in the form of the sitting government in Zimbabwe, is the political group which has both used and benefited most from Great Zimbabwe. What I now intend to discuss is how this practice has developed in parallel with Zimbabwe's economic situation changing.

It is clear in my analysis that Great Zimbabwe has been used by different groups at different times, and that the underlying motive for the use has been identity creation with the aim of uniting people. I make this interpretation based on the thesis's analysis, that it was initially both during the liberation war (1964-1979) and later in the 1980s that it used to use Great Zimbabwe for a nationalist identity creation purpose. This was something that both the former Rhodesian government did, but above all, this custom would be used by the freedom fighters. Great Zimbabwe's political role became that monument which Zimbabwe's black majority could feel a historical connection with, it became the basis for the country's shared history. This is what Great Zimbabwe was initially used to, it was not about big events, or using the physical location, it was more of a symbolic use. Which was the story behind Great Zimbabwe and what the monument represented. Great Zimbabwe becomes a key element of the region's African heritage. Great Zimbabwe not only represents the history of the time before the Europeans, the monument also represents a golden era when the influence of the region's inhabitants was greatest. It was this story that ZANU and Mugabe wanted to highlight and connect with the new nation.

It is possible to see how the use of Great Zimbabwe changes as Zimbabwe's economic conditions deteriorate. As the country's economy gets worse in the late 1990s and early 2000s, it is once again possible to see a greater need to turn to the monument. It is not just about using the location to highlight a common history or continue to create an African identity. During the

2000s, it was also a focus on using Great Zimbabwe to justify the government's policies and conduct. There will now be more focus on fostering loyalty to the common cultural heritage as part of the Zimbabwean national culture. Great Zimbabwe would again be used, but this time for a more active nationalist purpose. This is something that becomes noticeably with the comparison of the reimbursement of the Zimbabwean birds in 1981 to how the individual bird was presented in 2003. When the larger collection was reintroduced in 1981, it was not at all as great a stir as when the lone half was reintroduced in 2003. I do the interpretation that this happens as a direct result of the country going through an economically complicated period, and there was a need for the government to present a victory, while it was an opportunity to look ahead:

On behalf of the Government and the people of Zimbabwe, I feel privileged and honoured to receive the lower half of one of the soapstone Birds from the Great Zimbabwe era which we heartily welcome back home after years of exile which began with illegal movement from our country between 1889 and 1903. The Great Zimbabwe birds are our nation's prized culture treasures, a symbol of our nation whose meaning defies time and place. The return of the pedestal of this national symbol is, therefore, cause for celebration because it fits into our on-going programme of national identity and restoration. Like our Land Reform Programme, today's ceremony allows us to assert ownership over our national resources and treasures. (Mugabe Speech B).

This quote, which is from Mugabe's speech in conjunction with the ceremonial handover, is a good example of how political practice is taking on a new dimension during the 2000s. This speech is not only of interest because the assembly itself is arranged at the monument, or that traditional and religious connections were made. Rather, it is the fact that both the Zimbabwean bird and Great Zimbabwe are clearly woven into Zimbabwean nationalism here, and the prevailing economic situation. There is no secret of the symbolic value of these cultural heritage in the eyes of the government. I would argue that this, in addition to the name of the nation, is perhaps the most obvious case of the political use of Great Zimbabwe. Clear parallels are made between the economic land reform and the return of one of the stolen Zimbabwean birds. To understand why Great Zimbabwe was used, it is important to understand why these land reforms were important. It is made relatively clear by Mugabe that they were still part of the decolonization that ZANU-pf still carried on:

Historically they have a debt. They occupied the land illegally; they ceased the land from our people. Therefore the process of land reform involved them handing it back. (CNN. 2009)

It was about completing the process enshrined in the 1979 Lancaster House agreement (Bourne 2011: 90), and the land reforms were thus a necessary step to end the decolonization begun in connection with the nation's liberation. It was not just about economic reform; it was about recovering a lost country. Both in 2003, but also in interviews such as the one Mugabe did in 2009, that he saw land reform as a necessity to restore Zimbabwe. It is also in this context that it is possible to see how Great Zimbabwe is becoming a tool for these major land reforms. As I mentioned earlier, it is clear to see the link Mugabe wanted to create between the repatriation of the Zimbabwean bird, and the takeover of the white-controlled farms. Arranging a ceremonial, religious and traditional handover at Great Zimbabwe had several benefits, but I would argue that the main benefits are:

- Legitimizes the government and increases confidence in the government getting things done. It also gives ZANU-pf a continued opportunity to connect with the historical monument.
- Produces ZANU-pf as a party which continues to put black Zimbabweans first, and that they are actively fighting for continued decolonization.

- It gives ZANU-pf the opportunity to show that they respect the country's cultural heritage, and the country's African heritage, something which their biggest political rival MDC was accused of not doing.
- It will be an opportunity for the government to justify the land reforms which were implemented and awaken a new nationalist loyalty to the readmission of their common land / cultural heritage.
- It will also be a way for ZANU-pf to respect that part of the country's population, which continued to follow the traditional African religions.

Thus, arranging the ceremonial handover at Great Zimbabwe can bring great benefits. Above all, however, I would like to argue that the main advantage is that it gave ZANU-pf an opportunity to justify its land reforms. It also provides a chance for the government to awaken a new nationalist feeling in relation to the country's common cultural heritage. Mentioning these in connection with the ceremonial surrender provides a historical basis as to why they were necessary, something which becomes particularly clear in this quote:

Indeed as some scholars have written, the aim of the colonizer was to foist an image of inferiority into the colonized and, to a large extent this was achieved by teaching our people a history which was not theirs and consequently alienating them from their own... To justify these acquisitions, the colonial collectors employed all sorts of hypotheses to clothe the cultural material in question in borrowed Semitic, Egyptian or western robes. The most classic example of these attempts to deny Africans their heritage is the Great Zimbabwe monument whose origins were attributed variously to Semites, Egyptians and Arabs.... Once the colonizers convinced themselves that the civilizations, they were discovering in African were foreign to the indigenous Africans, they freely collected even those objects which were sacred to communities. (Mugabe Speech B).

Mugabe, just as before in the speech, takes up the history that existed before the Europeans. However, I would like to argue that this part is meant to bring in more anger and will to fight. Mugabe uses Great Zimbabwe to point out how badly the white people profaned their holiest places, and how they degraded their common cultural heritage. That he chooses to do this there and then I interpret as an opportunity to further justify the land reforms implemented by the government. I would like to argue that it will be easier to implement these land reforms against the country's white minority, if there is a stronger hatred towards them, which is why Mugabe chooses to report this. If he had intended to broker peace or increase understanding between ethnic groups, he probably would not have had an equally loaded language. Thus, by linking Great Zimbabwe to the prevailing political situation, Mugabe wanted to awaken old and new nationalist sentiments, and once again push the "we" towards "them" mentality to the forefront. It is important not to forget that ZANU won a lot of political influence in assuming the role of Zimbabwe's restorer, and Mugabe took on the role of country father. A large part of how they won this role was through the victory in the Freedom War against Ian Smith, and that they were leaders in the fight between 1962-1979. It is therefore not far-fetched to make the connection that ZANU-pf possibly thought that a rebirth of the conflict against the country's white minority could cause the nation to join the party. They probably hoped that this victory would lead to a new sense of loyalty to not only Zimbabwe but also to the party, which led them to freedom, the party that once again restored one of the country's most important cultural heritage.

I will once again mention that the 2002 elections were the first time that another party had seriously challenged ZANU-pf position of power. It is very possible that, once again, the party's contribution to uniting them during the 1980s was of great value. It is possible to make this interpretation not only based on this individual incident, but also in the light of the fact that Mugabe and ZANU-pf when the party again had problems in 2016 would use Great Zimbabwe.

Thus, it can be stated that when the party is facing a difficult period, they choose to use the iconic monument.

It is therefore possible to say that Great Zimbabwe was given a new role in the early 2000s and it is safe to say that the place will be important in connection with the economic changes. It is impossible to ignore the fact that there is an increase in political activities at the monument after 2000. I therefore interpret that Great Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwean bird were not only used to justify land reform; it is also very likely that it was also used to create a new wave of nationalist pride. This nationalist pride and loyalty would once again strengthen the government's position and help to give further legitimacy to the land reforms that ZANU-pf struggled to implement. It would be of interest here to make a connection to the national identity created around Great Zimbabwe, and to ask the question: If it were not for the government's choice to depict Great Zimbabwe on banknotes, emblems and in other parts of society, the return of this latter Zimbabwean bird seen as an equal victory?

5.0.4 Has the political view of Great Zimbabwe been influenced by the political landscape?

It is possible to see in many ways that the research view of Great Zimbabwe has evolved in relation to changing society and the political landscape. With my thesis it is possible to see how the research view of Great Zimbabwe goes from initially, with scholars like Theodore Bent, supporting colonialism, to later, under scholars such as Edward Matenga, discussing the political use of the country's cultural heritage. Earlier Great Zimbabwe was linked to the Phoenicians and Bent refuses to attribute the ruins to the local population (Bent 1893). The reason for this is to facilitate the justification of the colonization of Zimbabwe. This view can, of course, be attributed to what society looked like during the era of imperialism, and how empire like Britain acted. What this also shows is how politically important Great Zimbabwe was already in the late 1890s. Great Zimbabwe was an important religious and cultural location even before the arrival of Europeans, but in connection with their arrival the monument became much more political.

I would like to argue that already here, Great Zimbabwe became a monument which would be important for the region's political development. This is where the foundation is laid for Great Zimbabwe to become important later in Rhodesia, but also later in Mugabe's Zimbabwe. The fact that Bent's research lived in both Southern Rhodesia and Rhodesia means that the latter are adopted as cultural heritage in the British colony, but also in the independent nation. Since the monument and the Zimbabwean bird were important to Rhodesia, the latter would become even more important to Zimbabwe, it was a direct struggle over who Great Zimbabwe belonged to. It is also important here again to reiterate that there were researchers who opposed the theories that Bent presented relatively early.

It was only until 1905 before Randell-McIver disproved Bent's Phoenician theory. After Gertrude Thompson performed his excavation and later published his research in the text *Zimbabwe Culture* (1931), there were no longer any doubts in the academic world that Great Zimbabwe was constructed by local people. The question of which grouping constructed the monument was finally answered by Garlake in the work *Great Zimbabwe* (1973). After the liberation war, and after Zimbabwe got her liberation it is possible to see how researchers like Sinclair (1987), and Pikirayi (1993) focuses on providing a new overall picture of Zimbabwe's early prehistory. The fact that more focus on the overall picture could be an effect of the fact that after 1980 there was a greater need to thoroughly research Zimbabwe's prehistory. It is important not to forget that prior to 1980 research on the local populations and their prehistory was not encouraged. Thus, after the freedom movement, there was a greater need to explore the

country's prehistory. This is also something that ZANU realized. As previously mentioned, it became a focus on nationalism and identity creation. A role in this was the country's prehistory/history and this is also probably why the build-up of Zimbabwe's education system and cultural research efforts. As the world move into the 2000s, it is noticeable how researchers like Ndoro (2001) and Matenga (2011) choose to focus more on the political, and the use of the country's cultural heritage. Their work also becomes part of the decolonization process which is still ongoing. By focusing on how Zimbabwe's cultural heritage has been used not least by Europeans, it is possible to clarify the country's history.

How has the research view really been affected? This is difficult to fully answer, but I would argue that it has evolved in line with society. There are cases of Great Zimbabwe where researchers may have been deliberately affected. When I draw this conclusion, I mean primarily the earliest researchers like Theodore Bent and Richard Hall, both of whom were encouraged and sponsored by Cecil Rhodes and there was a direct political motive behind why this happened. At the same time, it is all too easy to say that their conclusions are only a result of Rhodes sponsorship. The fact that he chose to support them with research funding was probably a big motivation for making some Biblical / Phoenician connections, while reading Bent's work *The Ruined Cities of Mashonaland* (1893) he can be seen arguing why he makes the interpretations as he does. It is far more likely that Bent was influenced by the political landscape of his time, an era when Europeans dominated and considered civilizing less enlightened populations and areas. It will thus be difficult to fully determine whether he let himself be consciously affected, or whether this happened subconsciously. It is also possible here to ask how the region developed if Rhodes only justified its activities through military force. If he had not tried to make use of the region's history, would Great Zimbabwe have become as fundamental to Zimbabwe's future national identity? If Bent had not done the research he was doing, or if he had not drawn the conclusions which undermined locals, would the political focus still have fallen on Great Zimbabwe? I would argue that it laid the groundwork for later use and conflicts around this. I find it difficult to see that the latter colony would have adopted the Zimbabwean bird as a national emblem if it were not for Bent's excavations and research grants. If this has not been the case, it is unlikely that Great Zimbabwe will receive the same focus from the latter Rhodesian Republic. This may have caused the same need not to re-Africanise the cultural heritage.

Another example of how research has been influenced by the political landscape is Peter Garlake. He was banished from Rhodesia after his research argued that Great Zimbabwe belonged to Shona (Pikirayi 2012: 223-225). The fact that he was forced to leave the country as a result of the research he conducted shows what symbolic value the monument had, it also shows at the same time that there was a conflict between academia and politics. There was obviously an agenda, especially during the Rhodesian Republic, to try to silence research on Great Zimbabwe. I support the interpretation given by Matenga (2011) that this was probably a direct consequence of not wanting to dilute African nationalism. It was simply better not to draw attention to the fact that their ancestors probably dominated Zimbabwe long before the Europeans. What is noticeable in Garlake's work from 1973 is how he chooses to take up the current political situation in his work:

In recent years, most Africans, supported by a growing awareness of their own traditions and the results of archaeological and historical research, have not only claimed the ruins as the product of an indigenous African society but have taken pride in them as a reminder of past glories and as a symbol of a coming renaissance and freedom in a country whose destiny they will control and which will bear the name of the Ruins (Garlake 1973: 12).

This is just as in the case of Theodore Bent a clear example of how research has been affected. It could be partly said of Garlake's work that he only tried to access the truth of the ruins, but it is also impossible to ignore the fact that he was aware of what the work would mean on the political level. It is based on his text to see that he was not an open opponent of Zimbabwe's freedom movements, but he criticized the Rhodesian government. This was probably the result of his expulsion from the country in the past, and his lack of respect for his former employer. He was influenced by what the current political situation looked like. He may not have meant to be involved in the conflict in the country, but he would still be important. Finally, Garlake was the archaeologist who presented the theory that Shona constructed Zimbabwe, and this was information which Mugabe and ZANU-pf would later have great use of.

I would like to argue that all the researchers I present in my work have to some extent been influenced by their respective political environments, and some more than others. It will be difficult not to be influenced by their own experiences or the experiences you yourself have gone through / go through, this becomes extra difficult when you are researching something that most people have an opinion about. When discussing a location like Great Zimbabwe, you cannot escape the fact that almost everything you say becomes political. This is a direct result of the location having a religious value before the arrival of the Europeans and that it then became central to the justification of the future colony. This means that almost all research on the site is politically charged, and the research is influenced by how the political situation looks. I think one of the clearest cases in my analysis is Theodore Bent. He lived, and worked, during a period when Europeans and, above all, the white man dominated the world. It is therefore not surprising that his research on Great Zimbabwe focuses on justifying his worldview. It is likely that he was paid by Rhodes to prove that it was not the case that Africans had constructed Great Zimbabwe, but it is also impossible to ignore that he also probably believed it himself. Their view of Great Zimbabwe was thereby also influenced by the political climate in which they worked and lived.

These are conclusions I draw as a result of my analysis and the fact that it is only a grouping which has had the opportunity to really organize events and events at Great Zimbabwe. What I can see is that it has been mainly ZANU-pf in office who has been able to physically use the site on several occasions. In my analysis, I include three occasions all of which occurred after the 2000s. I make the interpretation that the reason why all these occasions were arranged after 2000 is a consequence of the economic crisis and the land reforms that the country underwent in the early 2000s.

That these later became so central is also another reason why it was important to return and "re-Africanize" Great Zimbabwe, which is why the Zimbabwean bird is placed on banknotes, emblems, names, it was one of the locations that could legitimize the country's new nationalist direction. It could be said that the story of Great Zimbabwe in many ways is the story of the nation.

6. Conclusion Great Zimbabwe's political role between 1980-2020

Again, I would like to reconnect to the purpose of this master's thesis which was:

To show and study what political role Great Zimbabwe had between 1980 to 2020.

It is clear to see that the cultural heritage has had different roles during different periods. I conclude that initially between 1980 and 2000, Great Zimbabwe was used in the creation of a new Zimbabwean identity. Great Zimbabwe gets here the role of something which unites the country's black majority and the location is elevated as their shared history. You can also see

Great Zimbabwe's iconic value by seeing both the ruins, as well as the Zimbabwean bird depicted on the nation's names, banknotes, emblems, flags and logos. It was about systematically eradicating the Rhodesian cultural heritage and establishing them as African and Zimbabwean instead. I make the interpretation that it is not only about eradicating the Rhodesian coupling of cultural heritage, but also trying to completely eradicate their colonial significance. This will be of great importance in establishing Great Zimbabwe as something which unites the new nation's ethnically diverse population. There is thus reason to make the interpretation that Great Zimbabwe becomes the core of the country's new historical culture, and the ruins acted like a bridge between the older history and the one that ZANU was trying to create. What is made clear in my analysis and in this essay, is how ZANU-pf was established as the dominant power in the the new nation, and that they actively tried to weave the party with Great Zimbabwe. They present themselves as restorers of the country's African cultures and their treatment of Great Zimbabwe becomes a way to continue to assert this. This is also noticeable with how there will be a new focus on conducting archaeological / historical research and that the government will encourage further research on Great Zimbabwe. My thesis highlights it is also the fact that the ZANU-pf in office which governs how Great Zimbabwe should be used. This essay also shows that it is the government which has had the greatest political use of the monument. It is the government that uses the history of Great Zimbabwe to find historical legitimacy both for Zimbabwe, but also to legitimize its own party. I therefore conclude that, initially, between 1980 and 2000, the iconic and symbolic value of Great Zimbabwe was primarily used. The purpose was to use the traditional history of the Zimbabwean Empire to legitimize the new nation in history, and to create a common identity and history. This common history becomes important not only for uniting the black majority of the country, but also for contributing to the decolonization and continuing conflict against the country's vitamin minority, which Zimbabwe would undergo. It is between 1980 and 2000 that the foundation was laid for Great Zimbabwe to become central to the country's nationalist identity.

What is possible to see in my analysis is that there is a shift in the political usage of Great Zimbabwe between 2000-2020. This shift takes the form of ZANU-pf arranging various events, and ceremonial events at the site. I conclude that this change in use is for a variety of reasons, but the two are mainly that Zimbabwe is going through difficult financial problems around the turn of the millennium. These economic difficulties mean that ZANU-pf and in office have a need to unite the nation, and to give the impression that the country is moving towards better times. It is in this context that it becomes important to unite the nation and use the national identity and nationalist loyalty which was previously created during the 1980-2000s. This is where Great Zimbabwe becomes something that the whole nation can gather around, it is a common cultural heritage that awakens nationalist sentiments and pride in Zimbabwe's history. These feelings of loyalty could also prompt a new support for the sitting ZANU-pf government. Arranging events like the ceremonial return of the Zimbabwean bird in 2003, and later the religious one in 2004 becomes a way for the government to give hope, but also justify the land reforms which they implemented. This case, together with the fact that events such as Unity Day, Mugabe's birthday, shows that Great Zimbabwe continues to have symbolic and iconic value. It also shows that during difficult times the government chooses to invoke the cultural heritage to try to unite people, and probably to make them focus on something greater. That I choose to make this interpretation comes mainly from Mugabe's speech in 2003 when the Zimbabwean bird ceremonially returned to Zimbabwe, but also based on the speech he gave during his own birthday celebration in 2016. The thesis also shows that Zanu-pf has almost taken exclusive rights to the cultural heritage, there are clear signs that Great Zimbabwe is still a power symbol which has great political value. Great Zimbabwe has continued to be regarded as a symbol of Zimbabwe's African heritage during the 2000s, which is also why Zanu-pf

chooses to connect with the location. Great Zimbabwe becomes a way for them to portray themselves as anti-Western, and a clear opposite to the Western-friendly MDC.

To sum up, it is thus possible to say that Great Zimbabwe is a monument which has gained great importance for Zimbabwe. It is a monument which has had a political significance for the region ever since its walls were first erected. It is possible to see this in my thesis, how the role of Great Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwe bird evolves from being a central British / Rhodesian cultural heritage, during which period it helped justify colonialism, to later become a symbolic monument which becomes central to the new free nation's shared history writing. Thus, it is possible to see how Great Zimbabwe's role develops from how the site was used before 1980, but also after 1980 and until today. Finally, I would like to conclude that Great Zimbabwe's political role has become that of a national monument on which the new Zimbabwe nation bases its history and it is highlighted as something the entire nation should feel proud of. It is a monument to which the sitting government led by ZANU-pf feels a strong connection to. It is a monument with a symbolically important role, and this is something which has been actively used on several occasions both by Europeans and later by the Zimbabweans themselves. I am absolutely convinced that Great Zimbabwe will continue to play a role in Zimbabwe's political landscape, but the question will be how this will manifest itself. If ZANU-pf loses power, or if there are any major political changes, it might be worthwhile to revisit Great Zimbabwe once again. It could also be of more interest in the future to compare how different heritage sites have been used in the creation of the modern African nations.

7. Summary

I will now briefly summarize the content of this essay in this section. This essay was written with the aim of:

To show and study what political role Great Zimbabwe had between 1980 to 2020.

This was the purpose of the dissertation and this was discussed based on a number of leading research questions:

- Have Great Zimbabwe been used by political groups in the region between 1980-2020?
- Why has Great Zimbabwe been so important for different groups?
- What effect might Mugabe's government have had on the view of Great Zimbabwe?
- Which of these groupings have potentially benefited the most from the usage of Great Zimbabwe?
- Has Great Zimbabwe played any role in Zimbabwe's political turmoil and economic problems?
- How has the research on Great Zimbabwe been developed in conjunction with the political situation?

This purpose and these questions are studied from a cultural heritage-critical theoretical perspective. The main material that forms the basis for the thesis is earlier archaeological texts concerning Great Zimbabwe, the material also consists of news articles, speeches and questionnaire interviews which were conducted to complement the remaining material. This material is studied through an in-depth literature study. The paper presents both the archaeological history of Great Zimbabwe and the political history of the region. This account is made to place Great Zimbabwe's political use in a historical context. What is made clear

through the essay's analysis and review of the past historical material, is that Great Zimbabwe is a location which has been used politically throughout history. It is through this essay to clearly see how political development goes from having been strategically important at the time of construction, to later justifying colonialism, and finally being an important part of Zimbabwe's cultural/national identity. The thesis concludes that initially between 1980 and 2000, Great Zimbabwe was used in the creation of a new Zimbabwean identity. This is made clear by the fact that several symbols such as the state emblem, name, and flag carry connections to Great Zimbabwe. The fact that these connections are being made allows for the conclusion that Great Zimbabwe is of great importance, that it is important enough to be a recognizable face for the nation. This new identity which was created was one based on traditional African values and this thesis makes the case that Great Zimbabwe was to be a cornerstone in this historical identity. It was also not just a creation of a new identity, but the thesis also points out that it was a way for the new government to build a new nation based on historical legitimacy. What is also made clear with this thesis and its analysis is that it is possible to see how Great Zimbabwe's political role changes at the start of the 21st century. The thesis makes draws the conclusion that as a result of Zimbabwe's economic hardships, the political value of Great Zimbabwe increases. That the thesis can draw this conclusion stems from the fact that ever since the start of the 21st century when Zimbabwe was going through economic hardships, the government decided to host several different events at the site. It can therefore be concluded that Great Zimbabwe has had several different roles throughout the years, and that this role changes depending on who's in control of the country.

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Fig. 1. Map showing Zimbabwe: <http://ontheworldmap.com/zimbabwe/zimbabwe-political-map.html>

Fig. 2. Map showing the Great Zimbabwe: Huffman 1981

Fig. 3. Picture of Great Zimbabwe Madzimbabwe building technology - Ko Hon Chiu Vincent.

Fig. 4. Image showing Madzimbabwe building technology - Ko Hon Chiu Vincent.

Fig. 5. Image of one of the ZAPU political organization's flag: <https://www.zapu.org/>

Fig. 6. Rhodesias Flag : <https://svarthistoria.com/blog/nr-rhodesia-blev-zimbabwe>

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Fig. 12. Great Zimbabwe University logo: <http://www.gzu.ac.zw/at-a-glance/>

Fig. 13. New Zealand's Premier Minister during a visit to Great Zimbabwe (NMMZ Annual 1985).

Fig. 14. Zimbabwe twenty billion dollar bill: <https://www.banknoteworld.com/zimbabwe-currency/20-billion-zimbabwe-dollars/>

Fig. 15. MDC party logo: https://www.pindula.co.zw/Movement_for_Democratic_Change

Fig. 16. Germany's Ambassador and Mugabe 2003: Howard Burditt

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8.5 Orally

Interview with Matenga Edward 2020

9. Appendix

Interviews with Sagiya Munyaradzi 2020

General question: In your opinion, has archaeology in general been important in the creation of the Zimbabwe nation? If so, in what ways has it been used, and by which political groups?

In both the colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe, archaeology has been a usable source of knowledge and information. Cecil John Rhodes (CJR), among other strategies, [ab]used archaeology to justify occupation of the Zimbabwean plateau by the British South Africa Company. Armatures and antiquarians sponsored and commissioned by CJR such Theodore Bent and Richard Hall published voluminous work that attributed the authorship of (great) Zimbabwe to the Arabs, Phoenicians and other non-Africans. This would then mean; the Africans were not the indigenes of the land which was being occupied. From the early 1950s, such denial of the indigenous authorship of this civilisation (GZ), become the rallying point in fighting colonialism. The African political parties (e.g. Zimbabwe African People Union -1961 & Zimbabwe African National Union -1963) are the earliest political formations to name themselves after the archaeological site – Zimbabwe. At independence, the country was named after this archaeological site. The newly independent country went on to adopt a number of artefacts and archaeological features as national symbols, e.g. the Zimbabwe birds, Conical Tower etc. Recently, Zimbabwe is constructing a new parliament building whose design mimicry the Great Zimbabwe ruins. It is against this background, that I think to a larger extent, archaeology has been central in defining the Zimbabwean nationhood. Often, Great Zimbabwe features in ZANU's political speeches and televised programmes depicting a glorious past.

1 Was Great Zimbabwe used in the political discourse towards independence among the different groups struggling for independence (ZANU, ZAPU, RF) during the period of the war of independence (1965-1979)? How? Did these political groups use Great Zimbabwe differently in their political discourse towards independence?

During the struggle for independence, the site of Great Zimbabwe was politically contested between the African political parties and the RF. The Rhodesian government ended up censoring museum displays, research, guidebooks, among other publications on Great Zimbabwe. Even in parliament, Great Zimbabwe and its implication in the struggle for independence was debated. The RF as it was the case with Cecil John Rhodes perpetuated the foreign origins of Great Zimbabwe. On the other hand, ZANU in particular used Great Zimbabwe as a political and spiritual rallying point. From my interaction with the local elders, I have been told of secret visits to Great Zimbabwe by the nationalists who were leading the struggle for independence. These visitations were meant to seek guidance from the national ancestral spirits. As you may be aware, the site of Great Zimbabwe was and continue to be regarded as the home to the living and departed ancestral spirits of the nation.

2 After the war of independence was won, was it important to reclaim/associate previous Rhodesian culture heritage sites/symbols, such as Great Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwe bird, with the new Zimbabwe nation? If so, how is this reflected in the actions of the government (e.g., repatriation claims towards foreign museums that held artefacts from the Zimbabwe culture)?

When the political independence was won in April 1980, it was important to deal with the problematic past of the nation that had been contested since the early 1900s. It was necessary to conclude the 'Zimbabwe' controversy. For me the re-naming of the country formerly known as Rhodesia to Zimbabwe, was the first step towards reclaiming the past that had been manipulated and denied by the colonial government. As such, it did not took long for the post-colonial government to invest in the training of the Zimbabwean archaeologists who quickly took charge of the discipline both in practice and knowledge production (theory). These archaeologists mainly trained in European universities (e.g.

Uppsala, Cambridge) engaged in researches which were meant to 'correct' some of the pasts that have been misrepresented, distorted and appropriated during the colonial era. In 1981, the government also successfully managed to negotiate for the return of five soapstone curved Zimbabwe birds which were in South Africa. The other half-bird which was in Germany was returned in 2003. Although, of the eight known Zimbabwe birds, one has remained in South Africa to this day, all these efforts were meant to reclaim and restore the past that had been plundered by the colonialists. This process of restitution and reclaiming the past, however, continue to be the burden of the current government and political actors. There are still several other archaeological objects which were taken from Great Zimbabwe and there are still scattered in foreign museums such as the Iziko in South Africa and the British Museum (UK).

Decoloniality is gaining currency in both the practice and the theoretical aspects of archaeology in Zimbabwe. In particular, from around 2012, there are a number of large-scale archaeological research projects that are being undertaken at Great Zimbabwe. Most of these studies are meant to understand Great Zimbabwe using the indigenous knowledge systems and other African worldviews or cosmologies.

3 Was Great Zimbabwe important and used by ZANU in the political discourse to help create a new Zimbabwean identity after the new republic was declared in 1980? If so, how does ZANU's usage of Great Zimbabwe in the political discourse differ between 1980-2000 and 2000-2020? And if so, in what ways does it differ?

I would say one of ZANU's strength is that of effectively deploying the selected pasts and its material remains to achieve different political agendas. However, besides adopting the colonial tower as its symbol in 1987, there isn't much useage of Great Zimbabwe by ZANU for political scores between 1980-2000. There are of cause, some early 1980s events pitting certain ZANU political figures (Cde Ushewekudze) and a local spirit medium (Sophia Muchini) who wanted to organise a big ritual ceremony which was meant to cleanse the freedom fighters who had 'spilt blood' during the war. And of cause, a number of government departments and organisations such as the Zimbabwe National Army, Zimbabwe Broadcasting Television etc. adopted mainly the Zimbabwe birds as their symbols.

The year 2000 was a turning point and that is when the past became a useful resource for ZANU. This strategy intensify after 2000 when MDC emerged as a strong opposition party. From this period, ZANU has been evoking certain pasts to discredit their opponents or to justify its political programmes. At Great Zimbabwe, in 2001 and 2002, the ZANU government organised all-night and free of charge musical gatherings dubbed 'Unity Galas' where pro-government musicians would entertain the public drawn from different parts of the country. This was an indirect way of political campaign by Zanu, a party claiming to be deeply rooted in African values and heritage as opposed to the MDC accused to be sponsored by the Western countries such as Britain and America. By coming to Great Zimbabwe, the ZANU government was therefore identifying themselves as the party with strong connections to the nation's foundation – Great Zimbabwe being the earliest and most successful pre-colonial state! After the 2002, these galas, however, were banned at Great Zimbabwe following an outcry among the traditional leaders and local communities due to the behaviour of the youths during such ceremonies. There are allegations of large quantities of used condoms which were picked after each of these events. Such things according to the elders were desecrating Great Zimbabwe and exposing the nation to the anger of the ancestral spirits (have powers to cause different calamities). Until 2016, there wasn't any major ZANU organised event at Great Zimbabwe. But in 2016, when ZANU was deeply immersed in factional politics, the 21st February Movement (a Zanu affiliate) decided to host the birthday party of President Mugabe within the Great Zimbabwe ruins. Even from his speech (attached here and photos), Mugabe wanted to instil unity among his members. He even cited that, if the Great Zimbabwe people were not united, they were not going to achieve what they manage to build. With the 'new dispensation' which came through the 2017 November event, the approach of Zanu with regards to Great Zimbabwe seem to remain the same. There has been any noticeable difference. Maybe it is still early to take note of any difference.

4 In your opinion, how does the general public in Zimbabwe value Great Zimbabwe? Do you think these valuations have changed since independence until today?

From what I have observed, the local people and some from elsewhere regard Great Zimbabwe as a sacred archaeological landscape. There are several individuals and groups who frequent the site to perform rituals and other spiritual activities. Since permission for these spiritual activities involves other government departments, some end-up performing these secretly or coming to the site as pseudo-tourists. We then notice of such visitations due to various spiritual paraphernalia which would have been left behind. So the site is still respected by many for its spiritual significance.

To many other Zimbabweans, Great Zimbabwe is a tourist destination. As a tourist attraction, many people converge to the site as part of entertainment. And in Zimbabwe, Great Zimbabwe is the second most visited heritage site after the Victoria Falls. Because of this tourism value, there are some people who regard Great Zimbabwe as their source of livelihood and economic hub. In particular the local people who are benefitting from craft industries, employment and other tourism-related businesses.

There are other people, who regard Great Zimbabwe as an educational resource where one can learn about the country's pre-colonial history, architecture, engineering, archaeology, among other subject disciplines. And it is because of such educational values that a certain portion of the public visit or value Great Zimbabwe.

So Great Zimbabwe mean different things to different publics, to some it is an archaeological site, to others it is a national monument, a shrine, world heritage site and to others all of these. These values have largely remained the same although there has been some continuity and change along the way.

5 Are there major differences in how different kinds of social groups (ethnic groups, men/women, young/old) value Great Zimbabwe? If so, has the government favoured any social group's connection to the site?

Since the pre-colonial times, the custodianship of Great Zimbabwe has been contested among the local clans, mainly the Nemanwa and the Mugabe. Today, in addition to these two, there are also the Murinye and Charumbira clans, all settled around the Great Zimbabwe and lay different but almost similar claims to the site. So locally, there has always been a 'cold war' with regards to 'who is who' when it comes to the traditional custodianship of Great Zimbabwe. It has always been difficult for the government to resolve these contestations. However, chief Charumbira who is currently the President of the Chiefs Council and has always been a publicly known supporter and beneficiary of ZANU government seem to have an upper hand over these claims at government level. These contestations were extensively covered in Joost Fontein's book – the silence of Great Zimbabwe: the contested landscape and the power of heritage (2006).

Besides educational and tourism uses, I have not seen the kin interest of the youths on Great Zimbabwe. Maybe due to Christianity and modernity, most of the youths in Zimbabwe no longer believe in traditional beliefs, customs and cultural heritage. It is the elderly, who revere and value Great Zimbabwe as an important cultural location that should be well preserved and protected. The government is however trying to cultivate public interest of Great Zimbabwe in particular among the youths. For example, a university named after Great Zimbabwe was established in 2007 (Great Zimbabwe University) whose research niche is anchored on culture and heritage. The main campus of this university was supposed to be constructed just about 4km from the Great Zimbabwe site. However, this failed following resentments from other stakeholders, UNESCO included. But this university is functioning mainly from rented infrastructure in the nearby city of Masvingo as it awaits constructing of its main campus at a new site, more than 30km away from GZ.

6 Has the government's policies influenced the direction of research on Great Zimbabwe? If so, in what way? Which are the strategies of political controlling or influencing of research. In your opinion, which are the consequences of political governance of research?

Since independence the research on Great Zimbabwe has been focused on conservation and management of the site. Justifiably, this was a direction taken following serious vandalism and plunder that the site went through during the colonial era. Besides, there have been so much excavated materials from the site that had not been analysed. It is only in the 2012s when archaeologists and other researchers have shifted from conservation issues and started to revisit some of the interpretations of the site, among other new emerging questions such as the role of water to the rise and fall of Great Zimbabwe. I do not think these researches has been influenced by the government policies. In fact, most of the researchers leading these studies are Zimbabweans based in foreign universities such as the University of Cape Town (Prof. Shadreck Chirikure) and University of Pretoria, South Africa (Prof. Innocent Pikirayi). For me, these studies are being influenced by the discourses of decoloniality that continue to gain academic attention in southern Africa as might be the case in other parts of the world.

7 Are the current economic and political issues in Zimbabwe reflected in any changes in how Zimbabweans value Zimbabweans value Great Zimbabwe?

Among those who believe in African Traditional Religion, the current economic and political woes, is a call for the nation to engage with the national ancestral spirits that are found at Great Zimbabwe. For the ten years that I have been at Great Zimbabwe, the more problems Zimbabwe is facing, the more visitation that site receives from different spiritual individuals and groups. However, to those who regard Great Zimbabwe as a location of entertainment, during this economic challenges, the location is not of any significance as many grapple with the bread and butter issues.

8 Is there a discernible difference in how the government sponsor or use Great Zimbabwe in the political discourse before and after Mugabe stepped down?

I have not yet seen the difference. In fact, it has just been the stepping down of Mugabe but the government's approaches to many things have remained the same. There has been change of political leadership yes, but the governance system was adopted holistically.

9 In your opinion, what is the connection between the Great Zimbabwe and the state of Zimbabwe?

Great Zimbabwe is the ideological and symbolic foundation to which the state of Zimbabwe is built upon. So in other words, the current state is traced from Great Zimbabwe. The majority of the people in Zimbabwe (Shona) claim ancestral connection to the builders of Great Zimbabwe. As the foundation of the state, lessons are always drawn from Great Zimbabwe especially those around working hard and becoming a prosperous nation. Spiritually, Great Zimbabwe is the soul of the nation. Rituals and ceremonies meant to address critical state issues are held at the site. So there are largely political and spiritual connections between Great Zimbabwe and the current state of Zimbabwe.

10 Do you have anything else you would like to add concerning the role of Great Zimbabwe in the political discourse in Zimbabwe and among Zimbabweans?

- *I have attached a number of annual reports from 1978 which were published by the state heritage agency. Of interest will be the chairman's report, the executive director's report and the report of the southern region to which Great Zimbabwe falls. Also, attached is a draft report that I prepared with a colleague after the Mugabe's 92 birthday celebrations held at Great Zimbabwe in 2016. More, there is Mugabe's speech which should be of interest to you. Ignore*

the first part which is dominated by Shona language. Basically, he was detailing about the party politics and functional fights...later he addressed in English, giving his thoughts why it had been important for the ceremony to have been held at Great Zimbabwe.