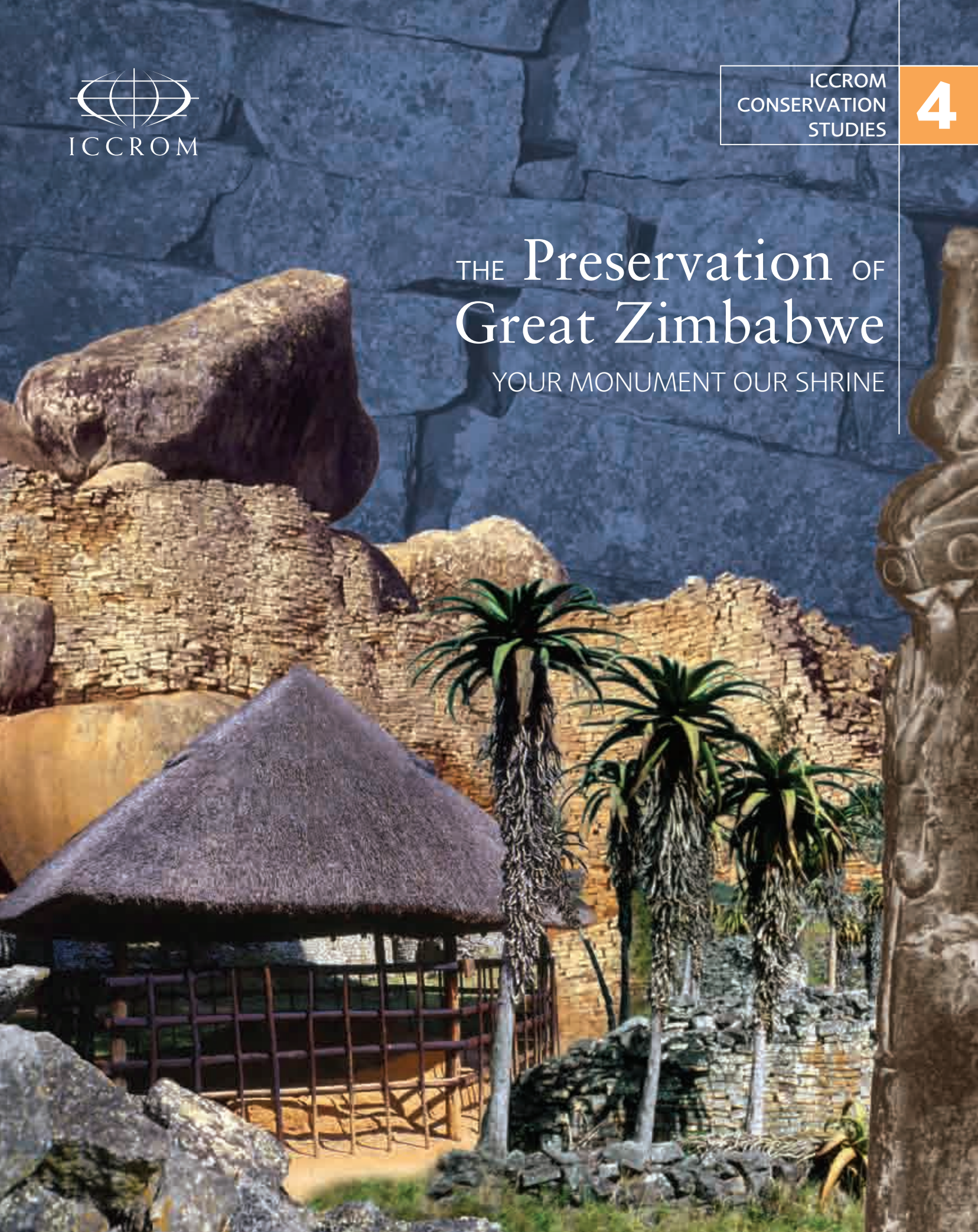

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THE Preservation OF Great Zimbabwe

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YOUR MONUMENT OUR SHRINE

by Webber Ndoro

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Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to write a foreword to this important volume, which represents a substantial contribution to the study of the management of sites recognized to be of heritage value.

In 1983 there was published a critique, written from the point of view of an Australian Aboriginal, of current approaches to Australian archaeology (Ros Langford, 'Our heritage - your playground', cited in the references in this volume). The provocative title of that article finds its echo in the subtitle chosen by Webber Ndoro for his study of the preservation of Great Zimbabwe. It encapsulates neatly many of the issues with which the more reflective archaeologists, conservators and heritage managers contend when trying to reconcile their treatment of the past with the realities of the present.

The issues concern the relative importance of different sources of information when trying to understand the past (for example, archaeological research, archival sources or oral tradition); the role of local communities in managing heritage sites; and how the understanding of the past that results is best used by or presented to different audiences (local, national, international, academic, school-age and so on).

Webber Ndoro's study, benefiting from his own intimate knowledge of the Great Zimbabwe site stemming from his many years as its Curator, is unusual in many ways. It treats with a fresh eye not only the contested interpretations of earlier decades regarding the builders of the Great Zimbabwe site, but also the physical conservation of its fabric and the wider cultural landscape in which the central site is situated. Returning then to the key theme of the interpretation and presentation of the site, the author calls attention strikingly to the gulf that often exists between academic knowledge and popular understanding of a site such as Great Zimbabwe.

ICCROM is proud to publish this volume which, by means of a case-study of a world-renowned site, contributes substantially to current debates in heritage management.

WEBBER NDORO
Rome
September 2005

Acknowledgements

This book is a revised edition of *Your monument, our shrine, the preservation of Great Zimbabwe*, which was published as a PhD thesis in 2001 by the Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University, Sweden.

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The management of ruined monuments

FOR SOME TIME cultural heritage management in Africa, and perhaps in other non-western societies, has primarily been concerned with preserving and presenting archaeological monuments from a technical point of view. In Southern Africa the emphasis has been on the preservation of spectacular *madzimbabwe* stone walled structures such as Thulamela in South Africa and Great Zimbabwe in Zimbabwe (Ndoro 1994, 1996; Miller 1996; Matenga 1996).

The underlying problem with most efforts to preserve and present the archaeological heritage in Southern Africa appears to originate from an incomplete understanding of the cultural significance of this heritage and its value to local communities. Following independence, Southern African nations have shown a keen awareness of the value of the past in nation-building and have recognized the need to restore cultural pride, once seriously eroded by colonialism. In this context, it is all the more surprising that the interests of local communities should continue to be ignored in the management of these impressive archaeological sites. It appears that, since independence, 'scientific' heritage management methods in Southern Africa have inadvertently been the pretext for the continued exclusion of local communities from their own heritage.

This is a study of heritage management through the lens of various experiences at the Great Zimbabwe National Monument. The architectural conservation programmes implemented at Great Zimbabwe are reviewed in the wider context of archaeological heritage management in Southern Africa. The definition of heritage management includes but is not limited to the preservation of physical remains, and development issues surrounding this. Heritage management also takes into account the whole landscape in which cultural property – tangible and intangible – exists, and involves a commitment to uphold every value ascribed to the heritage by all parties involved. In short, this understanding of heritage management (Grundberg 2000) includes:

- **Memories** – individual and collective, cognitive and culturally-constituted processes.
- **Culture** – actions and habits; text and music; rituals and events; material objects, monuments and structures; places, nature and landscapes.
- **Cultural heritage** – individual and collectively-defined memories and outworkings of culture; products of deliberate socio-political processes.

The main objective of this study is to explore the practice of archaeological heritage management in Zimbabwe and Southern Africa in general, and at Great Zimbabwe in particular, focusing on the manner in which archaeological monuments have been preserved and presented. The other concern is to examine whether there have been any significant changes in heritage management practices in these locales since political independence was attained.

This exploration of archaeological heritage management in Southern Africa undertakes to survey the influences at work, in practice, during colonial times and since, with particular regard to how the cultural significance of a place is constructed and maintained. Cultural significance tends to be a shifting concept, not least where the significance in question is contested from within – as well as from outside – local and national groupings. As we shall see, a disjunctive relationship between the significance of cultural heritage and its management prevails throughout the region. This study aims to bring into focus those notions and practices of archaeological heritage management which have denied access to indigenous communities or which have been

FIGURE 1.1
Map of Southern Africa

contested by indigenous communities. It centres on the preservation and presentation programmes at Great Zimbabwe National Monument, in which the issues of management and representation of archaeological heritage are negotiated by government, professionals, politicians, specific interest groups and the wider community.

The evolution of cultural heritage management in Southern Africa is also traced, using Great Zimbabwe as the starting point for examining changing practice. Other archaeological sites in Southern Africa are drawn in as amplification. Previous studies of Great Zimbabwe have focused on the cultural history and the economic organization of the prehistoric settlement (Garlake 1973, Huffman 1997, Sinclair 1987). While these studies recognize the ideological power of prehistory, and of the monument in today's sociopolitical environment, very few studies have actually focused on what this might imply in terms of the present day preservation and presentation of the site. This study aims to draw out those very implications, laying the foundations for an integrated heritage conservation and utilisation practice able to recognize the unique local and international status of the monument.

Why should we protect places like this at all? It is often pointed out that archaeological resources are non-renewable. Once a site is destroyed it is gone forever. Where such sites are one of the very few sources of information about pre-colonial history, as is the case in Africa, the significance of preserving them is manifest. Beyond even this consideration, some sites have acquired prominence as symbols of pre-colonial African achievements. As such, they are important to people of African ancestry wherever they may live; while for indigenous populations denied access to these monuments during the colonial period, such places may be a uniquely tangible way of inspiring pride in their cultural birthright.

Preservation

The practice of conserving archaeological monuments is well established in many developed countries, especially in the northern hemisphere where the long history of durable and permanent structures has meant that monuments have survived for many centuries. This has not simply been a question of favourable climate or the use of inorganic material (Herrmann 1988); a deliberate process of conserving the built and cultural heritage has also played its part.

Rapid industrialization has in many ways fostered a nostalgic view of the past (Lowenthal 1996, Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996), a significant factor in driving this process of conservation. It is relevant to note that no rapid industrialization has taken place in most of Southern Africa. Urban centres such as the Johannesburg-Pretoria conurbation, Harare, Lusaka and Maputo remain industrial outcrops in an otherwise rural cultural landscape.

Preservation normally refers to actions taken to prevent decay, and it embraces all acts that are intended to prolong the life of an object or structure. It can include restoration and reconstruction, as aspects of preserving the idea of a prehistoric monument, so long as original materials and designs are used. The objective of preservation the world over, when dealing with ruined monuments, has been to arrest or retard the process of decay (Feilden 1982, Thompson 1981).

In the case of excavated sites, the objective is to halt further degeneration and also rehabilitate the structure within its new environment. The preservation of ruined monuments of this sort presents special problems. Unlike historic buildings in use, ruins have in most cases lost parts of their structure, normally their roofs, thus exposing what is left to the elements. Such ruins may be covered with vegetation and could be structurally unstable. The dilemma in dealing with ruined monuments is that a large part of their attraction to the public may be based on their ruinous state. Any intervention, in the interests of preservation, to stabilize or clean up such sites risks conflicting with their romantic or picturesque public image.

Presentation

The presentation or interpretation of the archaeological heritage encompasses a range of endeavours, from formal education and curriculum development to less structured programmes such as site tours and displays. Presentation or interpretation is often mediated through the publication of popular histories, public awareness posters, brochures and development of multimedia materials. Public presentation and interpretation involves devising communication strategies between scientific researchers and non-specialists, especially on-site staff whose task it is to convey archaeological information to a variety of public audiences.

Over the last decade, involving the wider public in the discourse on heritage management has become a priority amongst practitioners in the field (Cleere 1984, 1989; Hewison 1987; Gathercole and Lowenthal 1990; Ucko 1994; Stone and Molyneaux 1994). This development has been accompanied by an increased willingness to question and criticize the assumptions by which museums and archaeological sites have constructed versions of the past for public consumption (Merriman 1993, Stone and Molyneaux 1994). At bottom there seems to be a general dissatisfaction with the way archaeological remains have been presented to the wider public.

Preserving the authenticity of archaeological remains while making them accessible and intelligible to visitors and the general public is a tightrope walked by all who manage these resources, especially in the case of ruined monuments. Archaeological remains, more than any other form of cultural property, are notoriously hard to understand just by looking at them; they require additional information to make them intelligible. Models and reconstructions can help, but large monuments are complicated structures, difficult to understand without the historical and comparative knowledge which visitors may have only in unpredictable and varying amounts. Yet these visitors are generally subjected to information selected, classified and analysed in a way that primarily appeals to the research specialist. The models and displays at most sites make one wonder whether we are preserving the past or the present (Wallace 1981, Leone 1983, Shanks and Tilley 1987).

Some of the most fundamental issues in presenting ruined monuments to the public, in the context of non-western societies, have not been addressed. Non-western societies, those of Southern Africa included, are for functional and structural reasons given to reflecting on their past in terms of myths and legends (Malinowski 1954, Levi-Strauss 1958), yet the way in which the few publicised archaeological sites in Southern Africa are presented is targeted at western tourists and does not aim to engage with indigenous visitors. The local community is absent or alienated from its own cultural heritage. If the cultural heritage is to be protected in Southern Africa, the presentation of monuments must take cognizance of the indigenous population. An integrated preservation and presentation strategy should ensure that the significance of the archaeological remains is interpreted and presented effectively to the indigenous communities as well as to tourists (Ndoro 1994).

Some might query how this can be done, in these societies permeated with myths and superstitions at first glance so unfamiliar to western modes of operation. However, recent studies in African and other non-western societies have served to illustrate that, in almost any society, the past is appreciated and cultural heritage respected in ways alien to Western academics. The light shed by archaeological and scientific research serves to illuminate only a narrow band of the whole spectrum of human experience, disregarding much that is meaningful to African communities (Hall 1984). Part of the challenge of preserving and presenting Southern Africa's monuments lies in learning how to take off the academic filters in order to view the social matrix and cultural perceptions of the past in full, and finding ways to integrate traditional indigenous knowledge with scientific methods of proceeding.

The starting point is a creative and meaningful presentation, of benefit to indigenous communities as they begin to participate in the conservation of their archaeological heritage.

2

Heritage management in Southern Africa and developments in Zimbabwe

ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE management is about care – and continuing development – of a place in such a way that its significance is retained and revealed to a wider audience, and its future secured. Archaeology's primary aim of reconstructing past societies should, in the heritage management context, be supplemented by a commitment to protecting and presenting sites and monuments. The range of activities involved in archaeological heritage management goes from technical prescription to the creation of a dialogue between the discipline of archaeology and the general public.

Heritage management requires from archaeology a sensitivity to public aspirations, alongside its commitment to protecting archaeological resources. Heritage management is central to defining archaeology's role in society. This chapter explores the development of heritage management in Southern Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular, with the object of discerning what the main influences have been.

Archaeological heritage management, as we know it, was introduced to Southern Africa during the colonial period and has continued to be linked with European ideas even after independence. Unsurprisingly then, Western ideas and international demands, rather than local values, have driven the course of heritage management in Southern Africa. Since political independence, it is a new heritage management elite administering novel models of managing the heritage but the fact remains that their values are rather different from those of the population at large. Indigenous views, and feelings about the past held by the wider community, are still disregarded.

From the nineteenth century onwards, heritage management in Europe could be described as an attempt to understand the landscape as a cultural construct with uses and meanings that have changed over time. Viewed in this way, landscape is one visible manifestation of the cosmology of a people; accordingly, heritage management plays a part in promoting or reinforcing social strategies.

Developments in Southern Africa

There has been a tendency to assume that heritage management began in Southern Africa as one of the many incidental aspects of European colonization. Yet the fact that Europeans found so many archaeological sites intact suggests otherwise. The survival of these sites points to forms of heritage management predating those introduced by the West.

As might be expected, places in everyday use or those associated with religious practices received more attention than sites that had been abandoned. In Zimbabwe it is no coincidence that so many of the national monuments – Khami, Great Zimbabwe, Domboshava and Silozwane – are also rainmaking shrines. (See Figure 2.1) As sacred places, these sites were protected by various taboos and restrictions. In the late 1800s King Lobengula preserved Khami's rainmaking function, with soldiers stationed at the monument most of the time (Summers 1967). During Lobengula's reign, the Shona religious leaders who resided in the Matopo area were allowed to conduct rituals at most of the caves. Mzilikazi and Lobengula were said to have sponsored some of the religious ceremonies conducted in the Matopo. Once the area was designated a national park and the sites declared national monuments, however, these activities were prohibited (Ranger 1999).

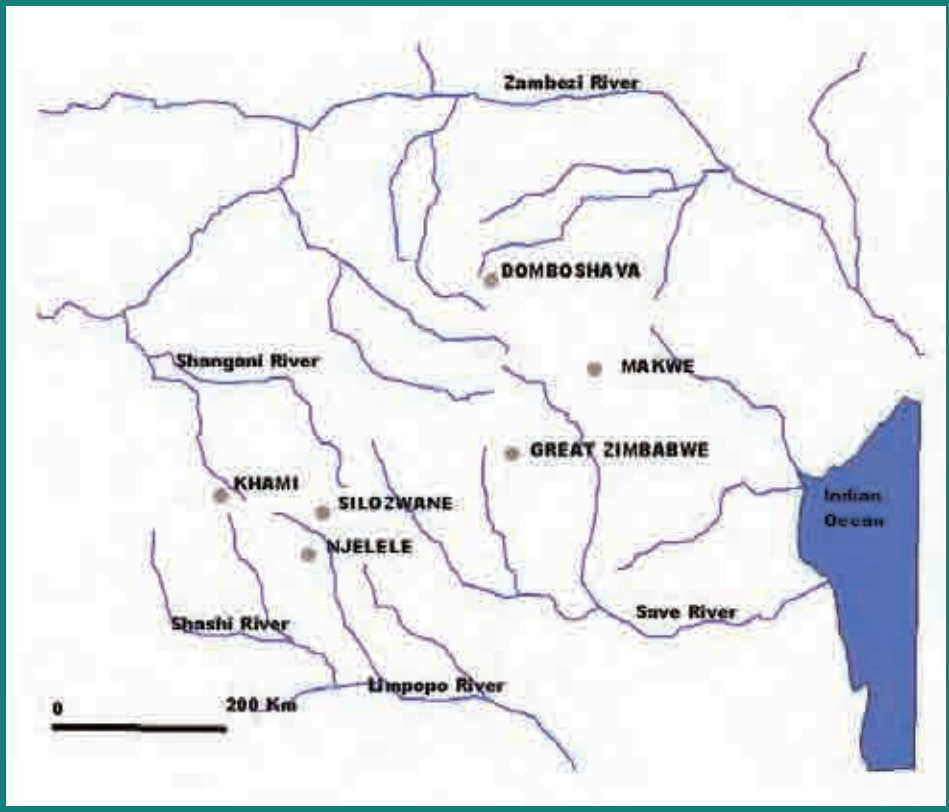


FIGURE 2.1
Map showing some of the sites regarded as sacred in Zimbabwe

At Domboshava the rituals have continued to the present day, although these are deemed illegal by the National Monuments Act (1972) 25, 11. Indigenous tradition views the entire hill and nearby forest as a sacred cultural landscape; in contrast, the area designated for protection is less than a square kilometre. A similar situation prevailed at Silozwane in the Matopo and Makwe in Wedza. In Mozambique, the site of Manyikeni remained under the traditional custodianship of the Shona until 1975, when it was handed over to the University of Eduardo Mondlane. Meanwhile, in Botswana there is evidence that the Khami-type site of Majojo is even today being used for ritual purposes (personal observations).

During the pre-colonial era, most places of cultural significance enjoyed protection, in the sense that no one was allowed to go to them without the sanction of the religious leaders. The advent of colonisation transformed these places into sites of scientific interest. Scientific demands require that these sacred sites become more widely accessible, to greater numbers of people. From the perspective of local populations, such developments are often associated with a cultural debasement of the site and its desecration.

Generally in Southern Africa, the mandate to preserve and present the archaeological heritage is entrusted to whichever governmental agency has responsibility for national museums. In South Africa the mandate is held by the Heritage Resources Agency together with certain universities. For instance, the University of Witswatersrand is responsible for sites in the Johannesburg area, while the University of Pretoria is responsible for Mapungubwe, the early town site on the Limpopo river. In Uganda, Ethiopia, Malawi and Tanzania the responsibility for archaeological resources is shared between the Departments of Antiquities and Museums. These arrangements have at times led to conflicts over responsibilities for specific resources; questions have arisen over the ownership of artefacts, and their presentation to the public.

On occasion, collections have even been shared between countries, one example being the Omo Early Stone Age material from Ethiopia shared between Berkeley (University of California, USA), France and Ethiopia. A similar arrangement prevails for the Olduvai Gorge material, a fragmented collection held in Kenya and Tanzania (Mzalendo 1996, p.783). In Botswana's case, part of the cultural material from Domboshava is now at the University of Texas in the

USA. The dual or multiple ownership of archaeological resources at times militates against a uniformly effective and holistic management system.

In Kenya, South Africa and Zimbabwe, where there were large populations of European settlers, heritage management developed as the preserve of the few. It was pursued as a highly academic subject not meant for popular consumption. Management of archaeological sites was the responsibility of museums and universities. These institutions existed in order to research and apply scientific principles. The research in which they were involved usually focused on establishing categories, typologies and chronologies. In carrying out these studies very little was done in the way of linking up with local communities, who were themselves seen as objects of study. During colonial times, local communities and their cultures were viewed in terms of discovery, analysis and taxonomy; as geographical and physiological entities (Kifle 1994).

Indigenous communities' apparent lack of interest in nearby cultural resources is only a recent phenomenon in the Southern African context. Many communities, particularly in countries with a large European settler community, were during colonial times excluded from using and managing their own cultural resources. Schools and churches, set up with Western philanthropic funds, for decades taught local attendees to despise their own indigenous culture. There was an assumption that only Europeans would be interested in these cultural singularities, as objects of study. Whilst communities drawn into the colonial sphere did not abandon their culture wholesale, the experience of being colonised undermined confidence and inhibited the unreserved expression of that culture.

Protective legislation

A central element in heritage management is in legislating for appropriate protection of archaeological remains. All Southern African countries have laws to govern the protection and use of heritage resources. In global terms, legislation for the protection of archaeological and cultural heritage is governed by these three basic criteria:

- Ensuring the resource's continued existence, in the present and for future generations.
- Developing an understanding and experience of the cultural heritage, with the aim of promoting quality of life for human beings.
- Protecting and extracting scientific information contained within the cultural environment, as a precondition for describing and interpreting the history it embodies.

National legislation governing heritage management in Southern African countries is fairly uniform in terms of objectives, definitions, forms of ownership, actions or practices permitted or prohibited, and sanctions. The focus has been on protecting structures and objects. One requirement throughout Southern Africa is that the heritage should be location-specific, and have historical, artistic or scientific value. It must also have existed before a certain date: before 1890 in Zimbabwe; before 1902 in Botswana; or for at least fifty years, in the case of South Africa. One consequence of such criteria is that those places associated with the recent liberation struggle do not automatically qualify for protection, and do not have grounds in law on which to claim to be national monuments. In South Africa for instance, Robben Island has not been declared a national monument despite its high-profile association with the struggle for freedom.

Protective legislation tends to categorise heritage resources into *national monuments* or ancient monuments/relics. In Southern Africa the highest designation, at the national level, is generally that of national monument. This designation, common to Botswana, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, is intended to provide a means of recognizing in law monuments of national importance. However, a closer look at the designated sites indicates that, even after so many years of independence, colonial sites dominate in all these countries. Notwithstanding the fact that all Southern African countries are now independent, sites from the colonial period are disproportionately afforded the highest protection. The legal instruments designed to safeguard the cultural and archaeological heritage of Southern Africa are, in practice, party to its continued undervaluation and misrepresentation. Of nearly 12 000 sites registered in Zimbabwe, approximately 200 are of colonial ancestry; yet of 172 declared national monuments in Zimbabwe, 143 are related to the colonial heritage. This means that almost every colonial site is a national monument. Meanwhile, no site associated with liberation or resistance movements has yet been declared a national monument.

In Zimbabwe, as in every other Southern African country (with the exception of South Africa, which introduced relevant legislation in 1999), the law is silent on intangible aspects of the heritage. In the definition of an ancient monument, the requirements to be met in order to receive the most basic level of protection are that it be classed as 'any building, ruin, relic or area of land of historical, archaeological, palaeontological or other scientific value' (National Monuments Act (1972) 25, 11).The terms *culture* and *cultural landscape* are not used in the legislation.

In most Southern African countries, the government or a state agency owns those sites designated ancient or national monuments. One exception is South Africa, where national monuments can belong to individuals or institutions and the legislation merely provides guidelines on how to manage nationally valued property. This means that, in South Africa, the designation of a place as a national monument does not in any way impinge on individual or groups rights to land ownership. Elsewhere, however, the enactment of protective legislation means that cultural property becomes government property, and government involvement means adherence to national and international regulations. These regulations have been formulated without reference to or input from local communities. The transfer, through designation, to state ownership of much of the cultural or archaeological heritage has also resulted in local people being displaced and disempowered. They no longer have control of how the cultural resource is used and often lose rights of access to it. Even in South Africa, the property laws allowing individual land ownership, and by extension, individual ownership of cultural sites, have – for the traditional custodians of the land – led to a loss of rights and alienation from the cultural heritage.

Origins of modern heritage management in Zimbabwe

The development of Western-style heritage management in Zimbabwe forged ahead in step with the pioneer column that entered Zimbabwe in 1890. Carl Mauch's 'discovery' of Great Zimbabwe and, more important, the discovery of gold objects at some sites sustained the fantasy that Zimbabwe could have been the source of the biblical King Solomon's gold. This neatly illustrates the two ideologies driving British and South African settler society of that time: commerce and Christianity. Images of a country gleaming with gold attracted people to join the pioneers; many of these early settlers had been prospectors in South Africa. The pioneer column arrived at Fort Salisbury, only to disband rapidly as people went in search of their fortunes. William Harvey Brown, writing in 1899, describes this rapid depopulation of the camp in his book, *On the South African frontier*. The search was not directionless but was rather guided by the gold of the Queen of Sheba myth. Prospectors travelled the countryside swapping blankets, beads, brass cartridge cases and sometimes the shirts from their backs for information about the location of ancient workings. Although references for the following assertion are not numerous, these prospectors apparently focused on *madzimbabwe* (dry-stone wall) sites and did find some gold.

The link between *madzimbabwe*-type sites, ancient workings and gold began to be confirmed by people's experiences. The disappointing results of early prospecting in Northern and Southern Mashonaland were not immediately apparent, in part because they were masked by the armed take-over of Matabeleland by the British South Africa Company (BSAC). BSAC's control of the area set the scene for the commercial exploitation of archaeological sites.

In June 1894, a visit to the Zinjanja (Regina) ruins by the newly arrived settler, Hans Saner, together with a number of companions, resulted in one of the first recorded archaeological interventions by Europeans in the area. Noticing bottle-shaped, stone-lined holes on the surface of the platform and thinking that they might contain treasure, the visitors drove a trench from the outside wall to one of the holes. The results were disappointing but they were compensated for their trouble at Danamombe, the next site they visited. Here the party found silver, pottery, chains, and over fifteen ounces of alluvial gold in the burnt and decayed remains of houses. Saner recounts that he kept the source of gold secret at first but eventually told two Americans, Burham and Ingram.

A few months later, in September 1894, the recovery of 208 ounces of gold from a ruin in Mberengwa (Belingwe) hit the headlines. This announcement came at an opportune moment for BSAC – whose credibility was taking a battering from the South African press, which was then casting doubt on the existence of vast mineral resources in Rhodesia – and the *Bulawayo Chronicle* played the story for all it was worth. BSAC was further assisted by Burham and Ingram's belated admission that they had found 607 ounces of gold at Danamombe. This late announcement seems to confirm Saner's story that Burham and Ingram had followed his lead to Danamombe, collected gold, and taken it to London where they had surreptitiously sold it to Rhodes.

With the Mberengwa and Danamombe finds now public knowledge, the formation of Rhodesia Ancient Ruins Ltd, which made the mining of stone ruins its business, was swift to follow. The process of establishing the company ran into temporary difficulties when it was discovered that Burham and Ingram had already secured a mineral rights concession for Danamombe, but a settlement was reached by granting these two individuals shares in the new company. Its launch was advertised in the *Bulawayo Chronicle*, in a notice at pains to point out that it was the only body licensed to explore for treasure (Summers 1967). In this work, the company was bound by two special conditions: (i) that it was forbidden to damage the ruins as such, and (ii) that

on Rhodes' instructions Great Zimbabwe was to be off-limits. BSAC was to receive 20% of all finds, and had first option on purchasing the rest.

It is clear that the development of heritage management in Zimbabwe was linked to the potential economic value of the ruined structures. Almost as soon as BSAC had been granted a charter to occupy the land which is modern-day Zimbabwe, the company sought assistance from the Royal Geographical Society and the Association for the Advancement of Science in conducting research on the origins of Great Zimbabwe. This research was to be led by Theodore Bent, a man who also happened to be linked to the treasure hunting company, Rhodesia Ancient Ruins Ltd. In an attempt to silence mounting criticism from the academic world on the company's activities, the legislative council passed a law to protect the ancient monuments. The Ancient Monuments Protection Ordinance came into effect in 1902. This law defined ancient monuments and relics as any material predating 1800, and the colonial administrator was charged with implementing the ordinance. However, the ordinance exempted ancient *workings* from protection. These were to be exploited under the 1895 Mines and Minerals Ordinance, an exemption that, as indicated earlier, still stands to this day.

The importance of the 1902 ordinance is that it laid the foundations for the present heritage management system in Zimbabwe. However, the ordinance did not cover everything; for instance, Rock Art sites did not come under its definition of ancient monuments. The large-scale exploitation of Rock Art sites in South Africa led to Rhodesia's legislative council amending the anomaly in its own law by proclaiming the Bushmen Relics Ordinance in 1912 (Murambiwa 1991). 1902 also figures large in the development of heritage management as the year in which the Natural History Museum in Bulawayo was established. Its mandate was to carry out research into the natural heritage with specific reference to geology, and to present its findings to the public. Again, one might say that gold mining was very much in the minds of those who established this museum.

Developments in South Africa continued to influence the heritage legislation in Rhodesia with the repeal of both the 1902 and 1912 ordinances and their replacement by the 1936 Monuments and Relics Act. The earlier ordinances had not differentiated between one type of ancient monument and another but the 1936 Monuments and Relics Act introduced an element of ranking, with its new National Monument designation. The same act brought into existence the Commission for the Preservation of Natural and Historical Monuments and Relics, better known as the Monuments Commission. For the first time, an administrative organization was charged with overseeing the implementation of protective legislation – a tacit admission that legislation was not enough and that effective physical protection, in the form of regular inspections, was required in order to safeguard the sites. In addition to undertaking maintenance and excavation, the Commission would be required to document all ancient monuments and relics in Southern Rhodesia and keep a register of them. From this national register the Commission would make its recommendations to the Minister of Internal Affairs of those it considered worthy of elevation to National Monument status. This was the thinking; in practice it took ten years before the Commission was able to make its first appointment.

By 1954, the Commission had designated seventy-nine sites as National Monuments. It also carried out publicity campaigns in the form of public lectures, given by its members. By this time, the number of visits by the public to National Monuments such as Great Zimbabwe, Victoria Falls, Rhodes Matopos and Inyanga was generally on the increase. The Commission also produced several publications aimed at academics and the general public. It even implemented a schools programme designed to popularise archaeology.

This all sounds like a commendable beginning, except that during this time the general public signified only 'white' members of society. Even the major archaeological surveys – out of which a supposedly comprehensive database was created – concentrated on commercial settler farms. In the new African reserves an awareness of heritage management issues, as articulated in the protective legislation, remained unknown. These reserves had been created by the implementation of the 1931 Land Apportionment Act and 1969 Land Tenure Act, which required large-scale population movements. A number of culturally significant sites, such as Great Zimbabwe, Matopo, Makwe, Ntabazikamambo, Khami and Tsindi, were designated commercial or National Parks lands. Many African communities, now confined to reserves, no longer had official access to these sites. The people of Mangwende in Murewa, for instance, used to occupy the area around Tsindi and conduct rituals at the site. After resettlement, they could not continue to use the site without fear of prosecution for trespassing or practising witchcraft. Movement to sparsely populated areas such as Gokwe and Sipolilo (Guruve) meant that these communities lost meaningful cultural links with the land. (See Figures 2.2 to 2.5) If site distribution maps

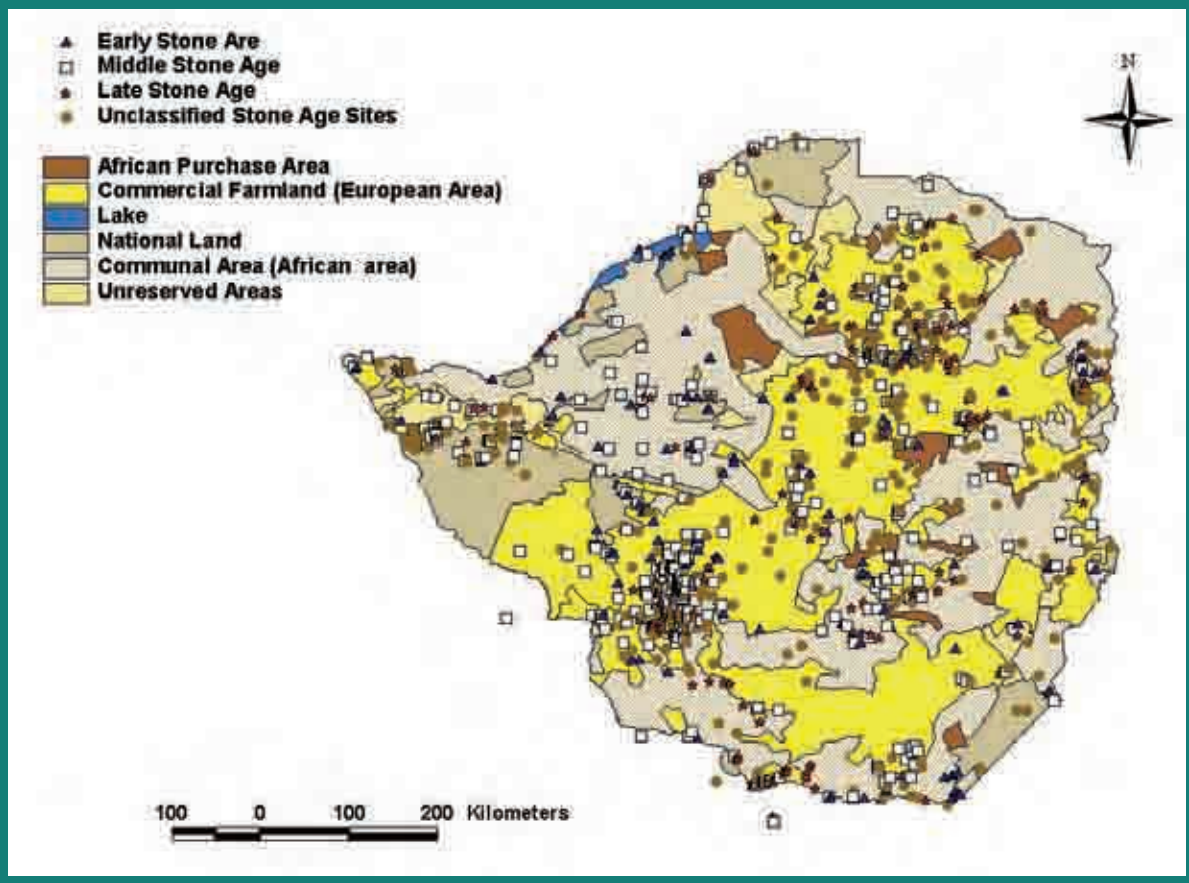


FIGURE 2.2
Distribution of Stone Age sites in relation to land apportionment

compiled from the databank in the Archaeological Survey are superimposed with those detailing land apportionment, it emerges that most archaeological sites are located in the areas reassigned during the colonial period for use as European Land.

Also party to the undervaluation and misrepresentation of traditional sacred sites were the Christian churches, which attempted to denigrate such places on account of their pagan associations. After many years of unsuccessful mission work in the Matopo, the Christian church at Hope Fountain in fact decided to conduct its services at sacred sites, including Silozwane, in an attempt to discredit their use by local communities (Ranger 1999).

Above all, by the late 1970s the African reserves were overpopulated and this led to deforestation and general land degradation. As a result, archaeological sites were destroyed and cultural landscapes altered. The effects of the land appropriation continue to this day, manifested in an apparent lack of appreciation and care for archaeological sites in areas to which communities were transplanted (Pwiti and Ndoro 1999). The creation of the Monuments Commission, although in theory designed to protect the archaeological heritage, in practice had too narrow a remit to prevent colonial land laws from impacting negatively on the cultural landscape.

In 1972, the National Museums and Monuments Act replaced the Monuments and Relics Act of 1936. The main contribution of the new legislation was to bring about the amalgamation of the Monuments Commission and the country's various museums. Although this move has been viewed negatively by some (Murambiwa 1991, Collett 1992), it has been of benefit in promoting best practice in heritage management throughout urban Zimbabwe. These city museums have succeeded in presenting the archaeological heritage to the general public. It has also meant that, for the first time, all archaeological property (finds and sites) comes under a single curatorial administration. The new act led to the creation of five administrative regions and, at present, each of the regions has the capacity to protect and present its own archaeological heritage. It is, however, at Great Zimbabwe that the most innovative methods of preservation and presentation have been tried. Placing the heritage management system at Great Zimbabwe under the microscope, we bring into focus a microcosm whose main features are those of heritage management in Zimbabwe at large.

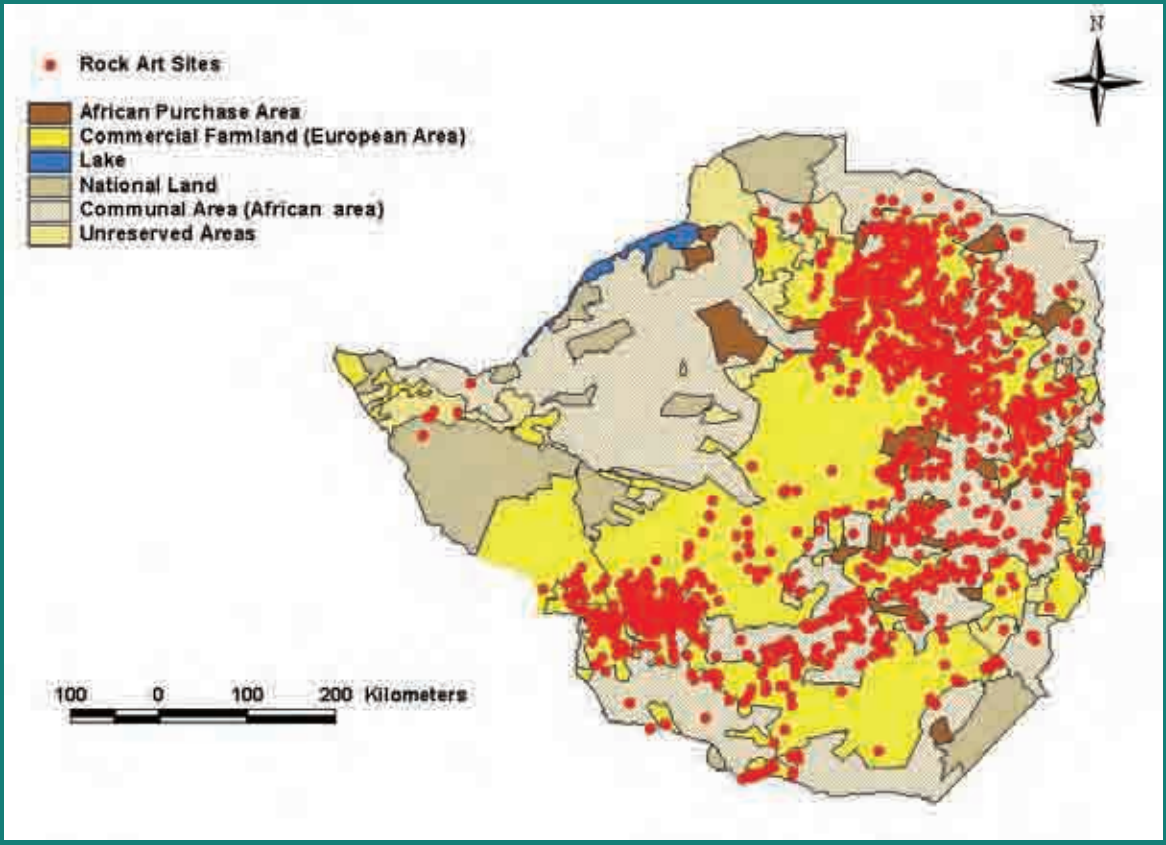


FIGURE 2.3
Distribution of Rock Art sites in relation to land apportionment

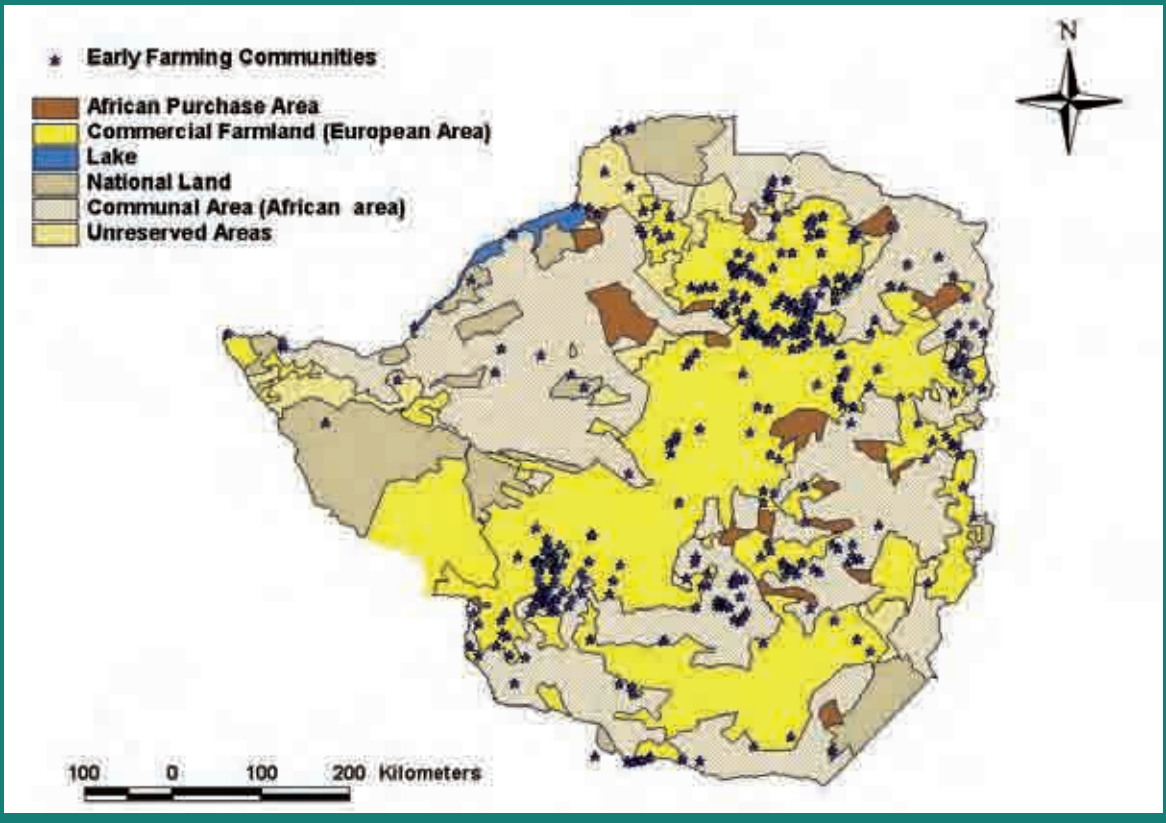


FIGURE 2.4
Distribution of Early Farming Communities sites in relation to land apportionment

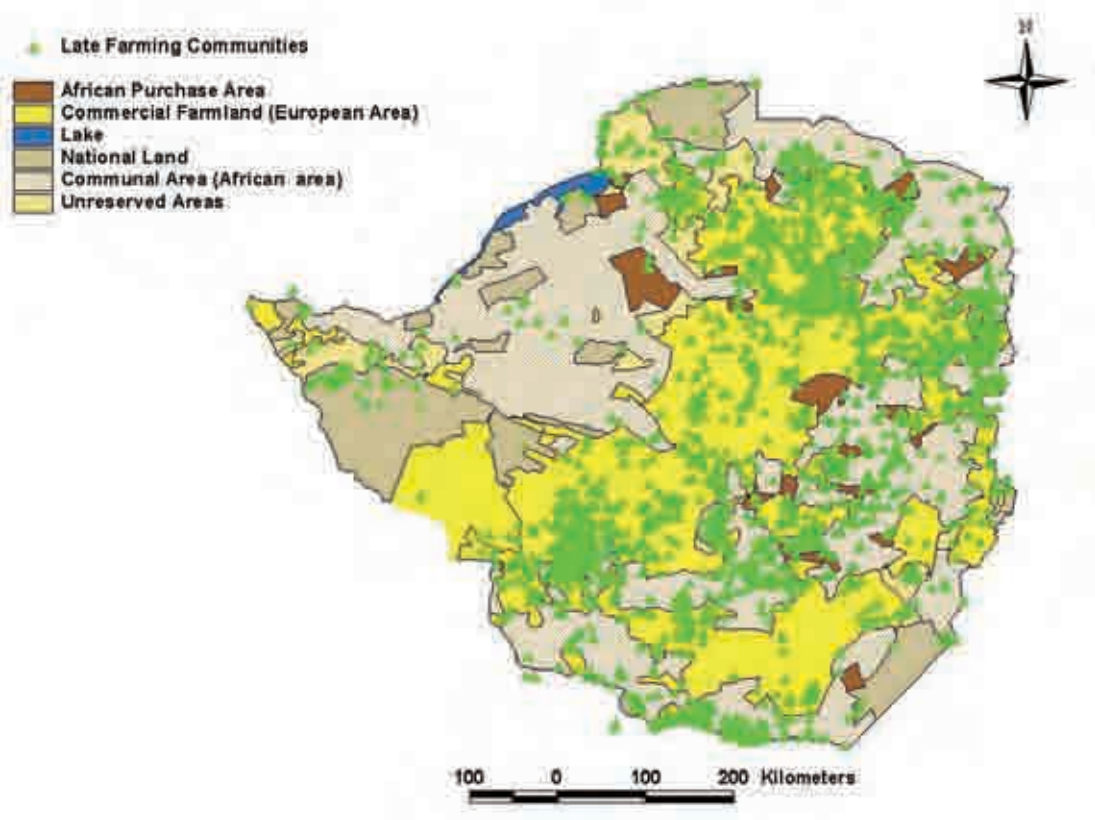


FIGURE 2.5
Distribution of Later Farming Communities sites in relation to land apportionment

Discussion

In an ongoing process that began with the colonisation of Southern Africa, and has continued undiminished by the attainment of political independence, local communities have experienced alienation from their cultural heritage. Legislative and administrative structures set up during the colonial period still prevail, and in many cases remain inadequate to promote the wider public interest. Protective legislation has had the side effect of making government property of archaeological sites. Government involvement in heritage management has continued to be associated with Western ideas and international demands, rather than local values, and the rituals or cultural ceremonies – for which the sites were customarily used – are banned. In many instances, local communities were moved hundreds of kilometres away from their original homes, creating physical and spiritual distance between the population and their ancestral land with its cultural landscapes and monuments.

What might at first appear to be pioneering protective legislation was not, in fact, founded on an objective approach to preserve the diverse African cultural landscape but on the desire to protect a few sites that served the interests of the early European settlers. The promulgation of the 1937 Witchcraft Suppression Act and the condemnation of ancestral worship by Christian churches suppressed African cultural activities. It is no coincidence that the main Christian churches were located near major cultural sites. The London Missionary Society at Hope Fountain, for instance, is near the Matopo sites and the Dutch Reformed Church at the foot of Great Zimbabwe, while the Anglican Churches in Manicaland are near several important sites and a Roman Catholic Church close to Domboshava. The cultural influence of Christianity has been particularly strong in that, during the colonial era, it controlled the education system.

3

Great Zimbabwe: nature of the mounument

GREAT ZIMBABWE, together with its associated features, is one of the most dramatic architectural landscapes in sub-Saharan Africa. As a cultural symbol and link with the pre-colonial past, it is of the first importance for African identity in Southern Africa. These characteristics were recognized in its designations as National Monument and World Heritage Site.

This world heritage site, administered by the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ), has always been at the centre of controversy in its management. Before any further discussion of the cultural significance of this monument and the landscape that surrounds it, this chapter will survey the physical and material components of the monument. These have been the main focus of previous archaeological studies. It has generally been assumed that the stone walling, being the most visible evidence of the settlement, defines the spatial extent of Great Zimbabwe.

Great Zimbabwe is situated at the southern edge of the Zimbabwean plateau. (See Figure 3.1) Numerous granite hills here form a scarp, which

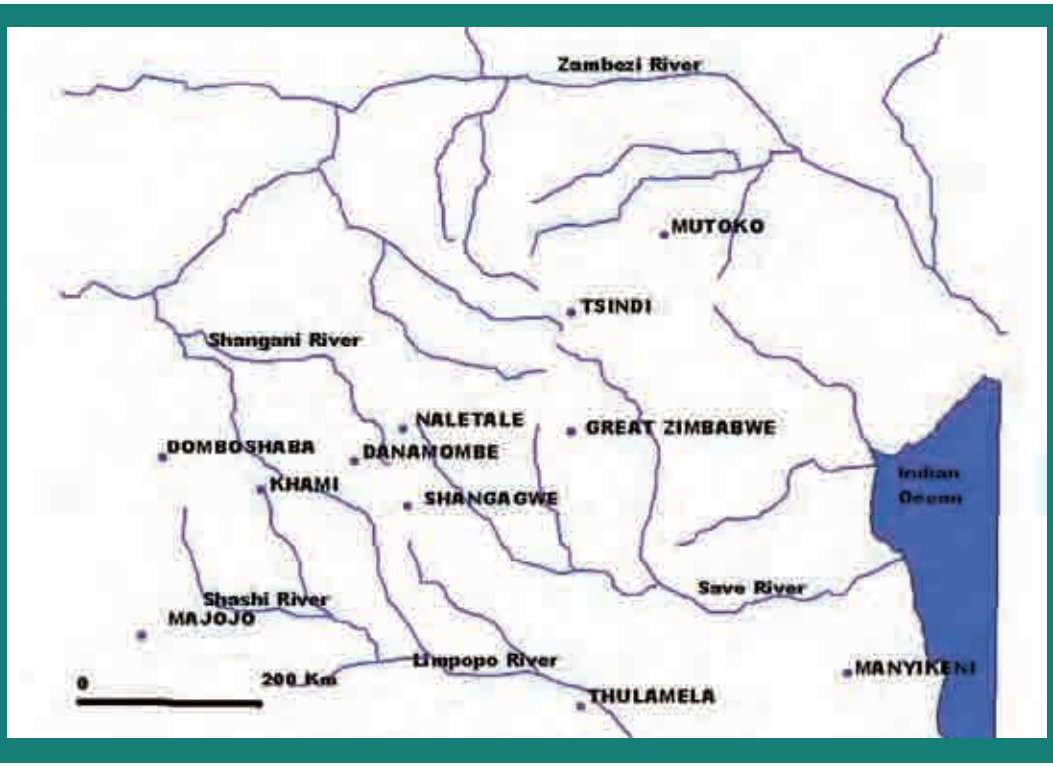


Figure 3.1
Archaeological sites referred to in the text

precipitates moisture from the prevailing southeasterly winds. Rainfall at the site is higher than in the surrounding area, with days of local mist and light drizzle common throughout the year even when the rest of the country is dry (Garlake 1973). The light sandy soils between the hills have the capacity to support luxuriant woodland. All in all, it is clear why farmers have always found the countryside around these hills attractive, with its abundant and relatively reliable rainfall for crops, easily tilled soil, and ample timber and firewood as well as small game.

Great Zimbabwe lies close to two other highly prized ecological zones. The hills to the north of the site are part of the gold-belt of metamorphic rocks that produce heavy and very fertile red soils. The country just south of the site suddenly descends into the drier and more open grasslands suitable for cattle rearing.

The impressive Great Zimbabwe National Monument is only the largest of many similar sites in the region between the Limpopo and Zambezi rivers. There are more than 300 dry-stone walled sites in the area. Other well known examples include Danamombe, Naletale, Khami, and Shangagwe in Zimbabwe, Domboshava in Botswana, Manikweni in Mozambique and Thulamela in South Africa. (See Figure 3.1) These structures date from the time of the Later Farming Communities (LFC) of Africa and most were built in the rocky granite hills that characterise the landscape in this region. The ruins of Great Zimbabwe are comprised of dry-stone walls and numerous *dhaka* (earthen) structures of varying sizes. As currently defined, the monument occupies an area of around 720 hectares. (See Figure 3.2)

LFC structures associated with Zimbabwe-type sites are a settlement pattern found throughout Southern Africa. The word 'Zimbabwe' is derived from a variant of the Bantu language, Shona, whose term for houses built of stone is *dzimbahwe*.

Archaeological background

As indicated, the *madzimbabwe* tradition is part of the dry-stone walled architecture of the Southern African Farming Communities. It is associated with the Bantu-speaking settlements dominating the region from the Zambezi to the Limpopo. The settlements were staked out with military prowess, and funded by accumulated wealth in cattle and trade with Swahili merchants on the east coast of Africa. The Great Zimbabwe site is perhaps the most spectacular and well-known monument of the *madzimbabwe* tradition (Sinclair 1987, Mahachi 1991, Huffman 1997).

During the Later Farming Communities period, Great Zimbabwe was probably the largest settlement in sub-Saharan Africa. It was certainly the largest built-up area in the region prior to European colonisation. The settlement pattern of this LFC site reflects the socio-economic arrangements and cultural ethos of African communities during this period (Huffman 1981; Mahachi 1991; Collett, Vines and Hughes 1991). The settlement was constructed over several centuries beginning in around 900 CE, with later additions dating to around 1500 CE (Sinclair *et al.* 1993a, Chipunza 1994). At its peak it appears to have had a population of between 12 000 and 15 000 people, settled over the 720 hectares of the present day monument (Garlake 1973, Huffman 1997). The ruined structures are the remains of an ancient capital, which controlled most of present-day Zimbabwe. The

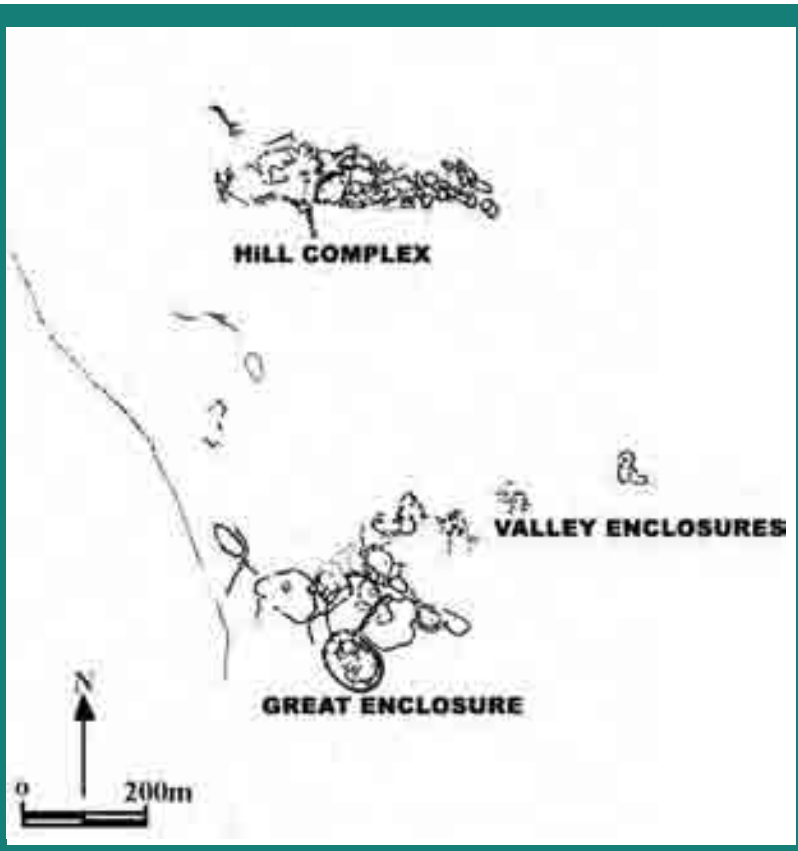


FIGURE 3.2
Great Zimbabwe core area (after Huffman 1997)

monumental architecture reflects the settlement's power in the region, and its wealth, primarily based on cattle husbandry, cultivation of crops and the domination of trade routes between the goldfields on the Zimbabwe plateau and the Indian Ocean to the east. Trade contacts between the Zimbabweans of the southern African interior and the Swahili on the east coast had been established well before 900 CE, and by 1250 CE the LFC town of Great Zimbabwe had become an important commercial centre. (Sinclair 1987, Pwiti 1991).

The population of the settlement began to decline towards the end of the fifteenth century, and by the sixteenth century very few people inhabited the site (Collett, Vines and Hughes 1991). The ecological imbalance caused by such a concentration of population, along with the rise of the Mutapa state in the north and the Torwa state in the southwest, may have contributed to the decline of the settlement (Summer 1971, Sinclair *et al*. 1993a, Pikirayi 1993). Although abandoned by the majority of its inhabitants, the site continued to play an important role in Zimbabwe. During the nineteenth century, there is evidence that the settlement was being used, in part as a religious site and also as a centre of refuge, but most areas of the site had been abandoned and were by then in a ruinous state (Burke 1969).

Europeans who visited the site during the early part of the twentieth century generally attributed the construction of the monument to the Phoenicians (Burke 1969, Kuklick 1991). However, the first serious archaeological investigations confirmed the indigenous African origin.

Architectural details

The structures of the *madzimbabwe* tradition, in the architectural method typical to the African Later Farming Communities period, were not built to a plan. They were constructed and altered over the course of two centuries to suit the needs and tastes of their occupants. The design and build of the structures vary considerably, although one consistent factor is the building materials used: *dhaka*, a puddled clay soil used as a binding for naturally weathered granite gravel aggregate; and stone. These materials are the staples of Zimbabwe-type architecture. Another common factor is that the stone and *dhaka* structures are curvilinear. This clearly demonstrates that the architecture was indigenous and that no geometrical designs from the Middle East or Asia were known at this time (Caton-Thompson 1931, Garlake 1973).

Unawareness of Middle Eastern construction methods is further evidenced by the fact that the stone structures do not interlock; they abut or lean on each other. This feature of the architecture seems to reflect the way in which the site developed over an extended period. The use of granite and *dhaka* has the effect of blending the settlement into the landscape. The stone walls enclosed and adjoined *dhaka* houses to form an integrated unit, and it would seem that one of the major functions of these walls was to screen off and enclose space. Although no defensive function for the

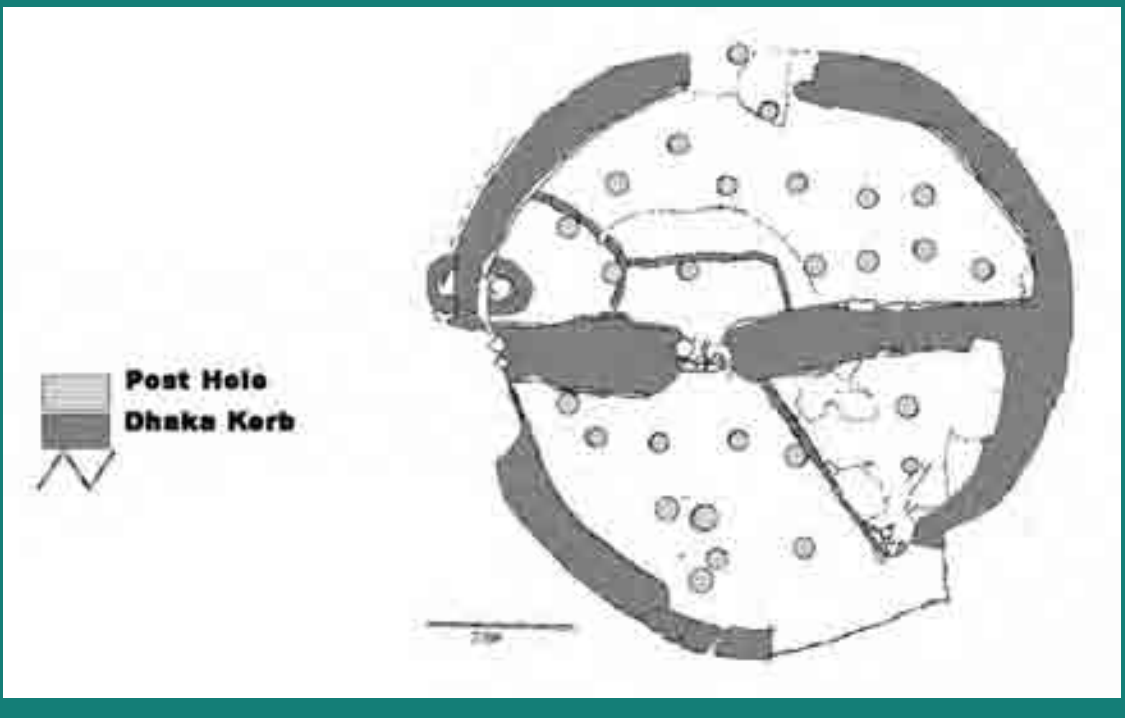


FIGURE 3.3
House remains from Posselt excavation 1987 (unpublished Collett excavation)

PLATE 3.1
Aerial view of hill complex at 200 metres (MT Survey Ltd 1994)

walls is apparent, the history of warfare during this time is not known. The stone walls vary in height between 0.5 and 10 metres, and are either retaining walls or free-standing.

Floors, foundations and sections of house walls are generally what remains of the *dhaka* structures; these tend only to become visible after excavation. The dry-stone walls, synonymous with monuments such as Great Zimbabwe and Naletale, can best be described as merely the skeleton of the prehistoric monuments. The flesh was the dwelling structures made of clay or *dhaka*. Unlike the dry-stone walls, very few *dhaka* structures remain above ground, and in any case tend to be concealed by vegetation. Archaeological excavations reveal the elaborate remains of the prehistoric *dhaka* features, such as the one in the valley at Great Zimbabwe excavated in 1986. (See Figure 3.3)

The Great Zimbabwe site can be divided into four main architectural zones. These are the hill complex, the Great Enclosure, the valley ruins and the peripheral settlements. The first three components constitute the core or central part of Great Zimbabwe. The inner perimeter wall separates the hill from the valley and the Great Enclosure. A second low stone wall, the outer perimeter wall which runs around the southern and western sides of the Great Enclosure and the valley ruins, separates these areas from the surrounding peripheral areas.

THE HILL COMPLEX

The hill complex is to the north of the site. The occupation of the hill goes back to the Early Farming period when the communities had not yet developed the technique of dry-stone walling. The archaeological stratigraphic sequence shows that stone wall building began on the hill (Chipunza 1994); the dry-stone walls constitute the major architectural features here. (See Plate 3.1)

The largest of these structures on the hill is the western wall; this is perhaps the finest architectural construction on the site, on account of its monolith decorations, solid stone conical turrets, and an entrance incorporating lintels. The western enclosure provides plentiful evidence of human occupation and gives the only complete occupation sequence of the whole settlement, from the Early to Later Farming Communities (Robinson 1961, Huffman 1971, Mahachi 1991). This enclosure contains between three and five metres of stratified house floors – the thickest concentration anywhere on the monument, and the deposit forms a complete sequence.

At the back of the western enclosure is another entrance with lintels of stone; this is the only original

PLATE 3.2
P-style stone wall on granite boulder foundation

entrance remaining on the site. The wall is founded on several uneven granite boulders and is one of the monument's most spectacular pieces of engineering. The original builders introduced wall breaks in order to stop the walls from sliding on the slopes of the rock foundation. (See Plate 3.2) This technique is also seen at Matendere, another *madzimbabwe*-type site. The south wall, built on the brink of a rock precipice, is imposing. Although its height is approximately 9.95 metres, the base is only 4.2 metres in width. In most of the enclosures on the hill, naturally occurring granite boulders were incorporated into the matrix of the dry-stone structure, creating a close symbiosis with the landscape.

The hill more than anywhere else shows the engineering qualities of the traditional stonemasonry. Most of the dry-stone wall structures on the hill are free-standing, although retaining walls are used, in places, to terrace the slope or provide a building platform. These developments may have been necessitated by a gradual expansion of the settlement. Few *dhaka* structures remain as part of the hill complex but when it was discovered in the late nineteenth century the western enclosure had moulded *dhaka* platforms, benches and walls. These were largely destroyed in 1915 under the misconception that their weight endangered the stability of the dry-stone wall (Garlake 1982). Construction of retaining walls and terracing on the southern and western slopes of the hill is evidence of extensive settlement.

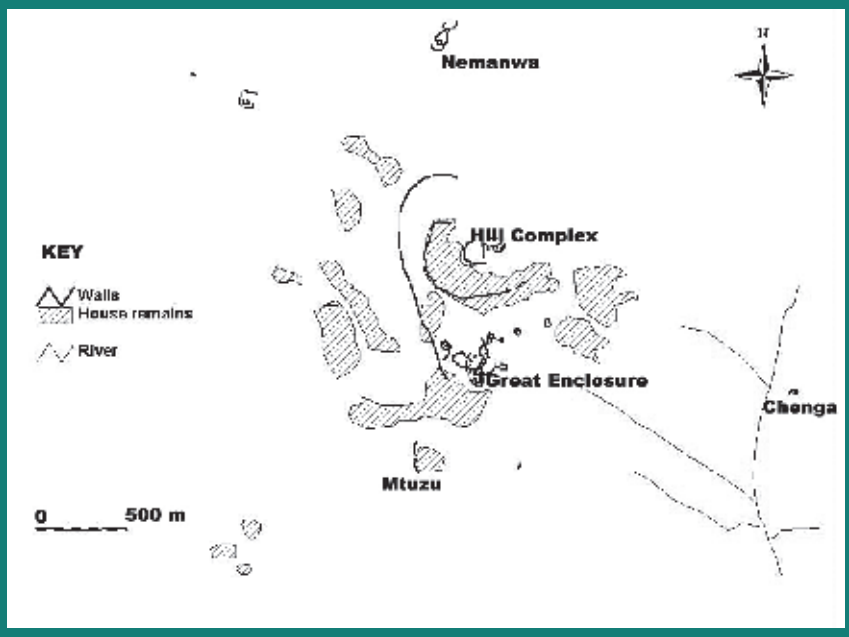
THE GREAT ENCLOSURE

The Great Enclosure, situated across the valley but adjacent to the hill complex, is perhaps the monument's most spectacular and substantial structure. Its outer wall is 11 metres tall at its highest point and approximately 252 metres long, making it by far the largest single prehistoric structure in sub-Saharan Africa (Summers 1971, Garlake 1973, Hall 1987). It contains a number of internal stone enclosures, *dhaka* platforms and other architectural features including an impressive conical tower.

This single enormous structure allows the evolution of the masonry techniques, as well as the growing ambitions of its builders, to be traced. Notable features of the outer wall are the gradual change in size and improvements in workmanship. The internal portion of the wall is decorated with stone monoliths and a chevron pattern. The entrances originally had wooden lintels, similar to those of the hill complex (Matenga 1996). Here, though, the entrances are round, and the external entrances have stepped thresholds. Most of the internal entrances

PLATE 3.3
Aerial view of Great Enclosure at 200 metres (MT Survey Ltd 1994)

FIGURE 3.4
Great Zimbabwe with peripheral enclosures (after Huffman 1977)



have a pair of semi-circular projections that look like buttresses, although these seem not to have had a structural function other than narrowing the entry and making it difficult to see into the enclosure. The same vision-restricting role seems to have been the purpose of the parallel passages found on the site. The main features within the enclosure are platforms and house remains that survived the early excavations carried out by Hall in 1905.

THE VALLEY RUINS

The valley ruins, located between the hill complex and the Great Enclosure, contain most of the architectural features already described. (See Plate 3.4) The valley ruins comprise multiple individual enclosures similar to the Great Enclosure, although the semi-circular buttresses of the external entrances are much wider and show no evidence of having had lintels over them. One striking feature is the existence of parallel passages connecting individual enclosures in the valley, the longest of which connects the valley enclosures and the Great Enclosure. The narrow, and at times buttressed, entrances together with the parallel passages hold a suggestion of peoples' movements having being restricted within this ancient complex settlement.

PERIPHERAL SETTLEMENT

The above three areas are where the building in stone is concentrated, although in terms of area they make up only around ten percent of the whole estate declared a monument. There are a number of peripheral enclosures and settlements within the monument and immediately outside it, situated around the ring of hills that encircles the core of central Great Zimbabwe. (See Figure 3.4) These areas have stone walling, terraces, *dhaka* structures and various features of archaeological importance, although they have generally been neglected as far as research and effective management are concerned.

Any serious attempt to understand or present the monument should take into consideration these peripheral areas – where most of the population lived, as is evident from the numerous house floors around the hills surrounding the core structures (Chirawu 1988, Mahachi 1991). The remains in these areas lend weight to suggestions that the stone walls should be viewed as just one component, for which most evidence happens to have survived, of a wider building technology (Garlake 1973, Sinclair 1987). Determining the internal sociopolitical and temporal relationships of the component parts of the monument is part of the task ahead, as is finding the relationship between core walled areas and non-walled peripheral areas.

PLATE 3.4
Aerial view of the valley enclosures at 200 metres (MT Survey Ltd 1994)

Dry-stone structures

Dolerite and ironstone rocks, timber and *dhaka* were used in the construction of the monumental walls, along with the predominant material, granite. Geological investigations indicate that the granite used for the blocks was mainly biotite. Its mineralogical composition is summarised below. (See Table 3.1) The blocks were quarried from the exfoliating bedrock located in the outcrops surrounding the monument.

TABLE 3.1
Mineralogical and physical properties of granite from Great Zimbabwe

	Material		Sample (%)	Overall sample (%)
1	Quartz			35
2	Feldspar	Microline	28	58
		Plagioslase	30	
3	Biotite			4
4	Muscovite			3
5	Iron ores			<1

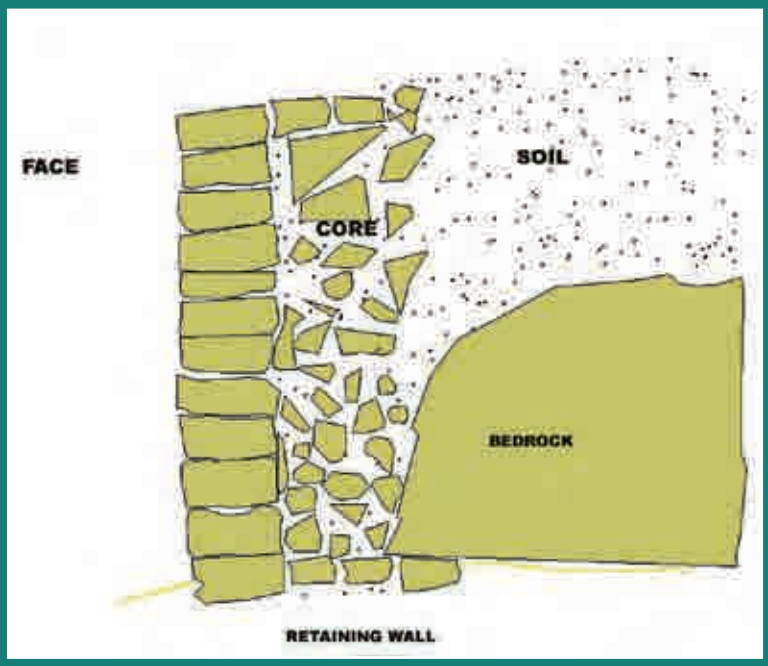
The dry-stone walls at Great Zimbabwe perform one of two functions: providing free-standing enclosures or boundary walls, or acting as retaining walls for the provision of terracing. The construction and structural behaviour of symbolic structures such as the conical tower and the buttresses found along passage walls, although not performing either of the above functions, may be considered similar to the free-standing walls.

The free-standing walls are generally constructed of two outer faces of carefully staked and coursed blocks infilled with core blocks less regular in size and shape but generally of a similar nature. Contrary to the general belief, the core is not rubble but carefully packed.

Generally, the retaining walls comprise an outer face of coursed regular blocks. (See Figure 3.5) Unlike the free-standing walls, the core material is more irregular but of a similar size to the face blocks. (See Figure 3.6) The core blocks have been placed in the backfill material up to two metres behind the face of the wall. Most of the core material cannot be considered to be part of the retaining wall as there are large gaps between the blocks, packed with backfill material. These walls cannot be considered to act as gravity structures as the walls' sections are generally insufficient to resist the over-turning movements. A number of walls were constructed as free-standing with two outer faces, but were subsequently backfilled and became retaining walls. Walls like these act as gravity-retaining walls (Jones 1979).

The walls at Great Zimbabwe are founded either on granite bedrock or on soil. The quality of foundation varies considerably. A number of retaining walls in the valley enclosures have been built on granite bedrock sloping downwards away from the wall face. For walls built on soil the foundation comprises layers of granite blocks at the base of the wall. These foundations can be surface footing, or up to a metre deep. The soil material on which the walls are constructed tends to be natural granite sandy clays or midden waste. Some walls have foundations resting on *dhaka* material, which was used to level the footing, for instance the buttress entrance in the hill complex.

There are noticeable architectural variations throughout the dry-stone walls at Great



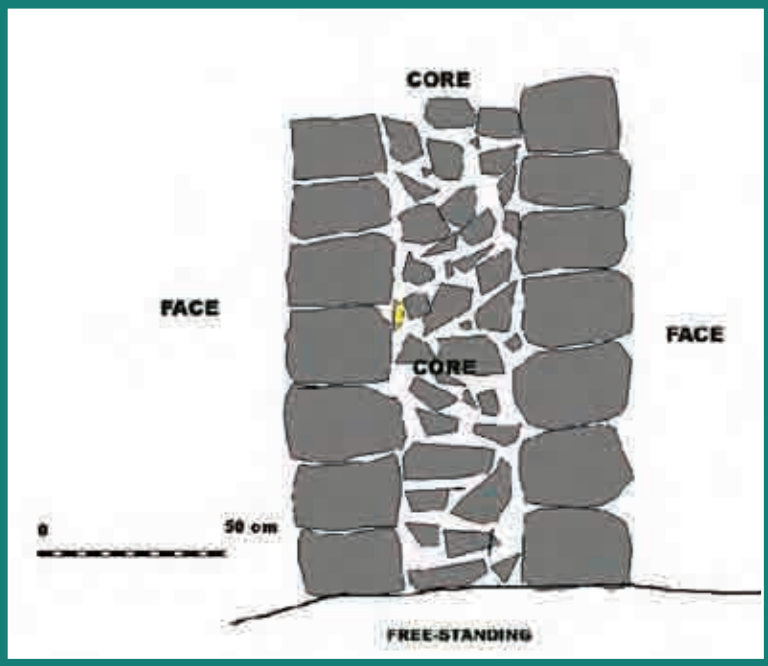


FIGURE 3.5 Illustrated dry-stone walling used for platform construction

FIGURE 3.6 Illustration of the components of a free-standing dry-stone wall

Zimbabwe, and from the time of Mauch onwards, these aesthetic difference have been recorded, in descriptions that changed very little over the course of the twentieth century (Hall 1905, Stevens 1931, Whitty 1961). The wall styles are important in the documentation process of the cultural property. Whitty's descriptions are given below because of their importance in the debate about the chronology and development of the site. He proposed a four-part system for classifying wall styles, based on observation of the shape and size of the face blocks, quality of workmanship and general aesthetic appearance:

(1) Class P walling. This consists of structures in which blocks forming the wall face are irregular in shape and size. They are laid in such a way that the longer dimension lies roughly in horizontal plane. This method of building produces a wall with pseudo courses running for short distances more or less horizontally but taking such crazy swoops as the variable thickness of the blocks and the lie of the land may dictate. The majority of the building stones show no sign of systematic dressing to shape, presenting sometimes a smooth unfaceted surface to view but often enough having an edge or corner knocked off to make a better fit. With very few exceptions all the stone has been noted, particularly in the bases of walls of this class, of occasional stones much rounded by weathering. Rectangularity was in any case obviously not the primary requirement for blocks (triangular-faced blocks are sometimes used) nor was consistency of size, for this varies considerably, some stones being large enough to require two men to lift. In spite of these irregularities the resultant face of the wall is fully consistent in texture and usually approximates to the vertical. This class of walling commonly, but not invariably, exhibits very careful laying of blocks, which are fitted together so that gaps and holes are few, and a nice face maintained.

(2) Class Q walling. This is easily recognized as the better-class and neater work. Walls of this type are built of approximately rectangular blocks laid in relatively even and level courses. The blocks laid relatively even and level courses. The blocks are confined to a far more consistent size than in class P walls, the face of a typical one being about 7–10 inches (178–254 millimetres) long by 4–6 inches (102–152 millimetres) high. Most of these stones show evidence of having been roughly dressed to shape. The greater part of this dressing work has been applied to the end and faces of the blocks, the upper and lower edges being in any case more or less parallel due to the natural tabular cleavage of the granite. The stones appear to have been shaped only in order to obtain a rectangular face, those parts of them hidden within the structure having been left random. They are carefully matched in height so that unbroken courses of equal depth run in

some cases for as much as 100 feet (30.5 metres). Areas of walling of this class often cover many square yards without a false course. The courses generally run out by tapering down to a shallow size, two such courses giving place to a single deeper one. As a rule each course is set wide of the face of the one below by a fraction of an inch, so the wall acquires its characteristic batter.

(3) Class R walling. The walls of this class are composed usually of a mixture of blocks typical of P and Q together with triangular and other irregular-shaped lumps of stone. They are poorly fitted together, needing the frequent use of small wedges, and often show gaps and holes in the facing, which varies considerably in appearance. There is sometimes what looks like half-hearted attempts to lay blocks in courses, but the results fail to achieve the standard of Class Q walls. There is no systematic batter on the walls, whose facing is rough, irregular and craggy.

(4) Class PQ walling. This is in appearance a style intermediate between P and Q, having some characteristics of each. Although it is well represented in the Great Enclosure, it is much less common in other parts of the ruins. As there is ample evidence, described below, and confirmed by Summers in Part IV, 36 for being a transitionary type, it is treated as such here. Undoubtedly there is no walling in the Great Enclosure, which could by a stronger argument, be described as 'PR' or 'QR'.

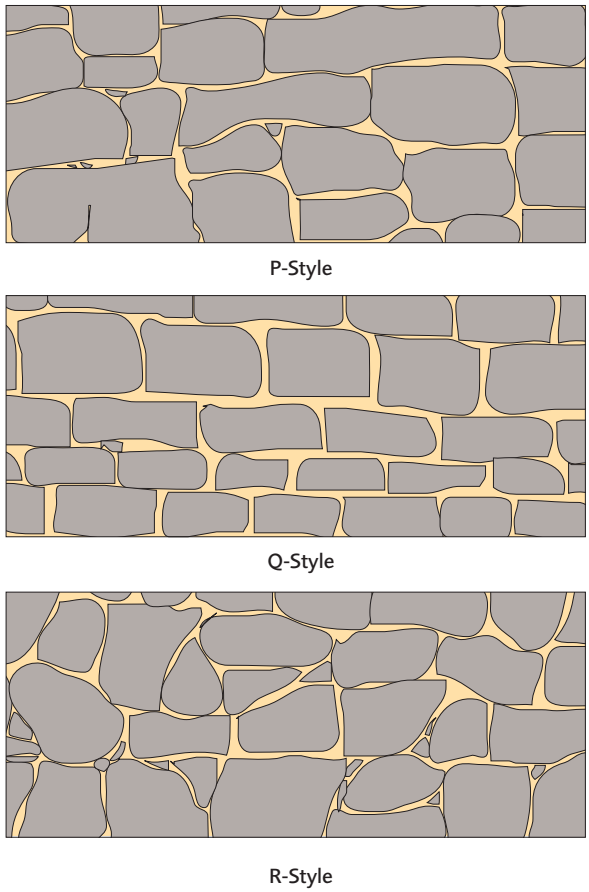


FIGURE 3.7
Wall styles at Great Zimbabwe (after Whitty 1961)

Whitty also made the very useful observation that adjoining walls are not bonded together and therefore the later wall must be leaning against the earlier. This provides a relative chronology, particularly when linked to the archaeological results of Summers and Robinson. Using the styles P, PQ, Q and R, Whitty established a chronological relationship, confirmed by archaeological research. This has been used to establish a tentative framework for the development and expansion of the settlement over the 200 years or so of its effective occupation (Collett, Vines and Hughes 1991; Chipunza 1994).

As noted earlier, the difference between wall styles is essentially aesthetic. However, the overall more impressive appearance of the Q style walls is an indication of an improved form of construction. The blocks in Q style walls are more regular and cube-shaped. The coursing and bonding in Q style is generally better than in others.

These styles are also associated with particular architectural features:

P style
- Generally sited on sloping rocky terrain or amongst boulders;
- Height/base width ratio in the order of 3.5;
- Batter inconsistent, irregular;
- Squared entrances, irregular;
- Foundations: structures follow topography, no trenching;
- Predominantly retaining and screening (free-standing) walls.

Q style
- Generally sited on low-lying ground without boulders;
- Height/base width ratio rarely exceeds 2.5;
- Fully consistent batter, in higher walls more marked towards the top;
- Rounded wall ends;
- Frequently trenched, levelling of trench, some evidence of footing;
- Predominantly free-standing enclosure walls, few retaining.

The architectural details of the Great Zimbabwe stone walling are important for understanding the developmental sequence of the individual areas.

FIGURE 3.8
Artistic reconstruction of prehistoric *dhaka* house (reconstructed from Posselt excavation)

Generally it has been observed that Class P predominates on the hill complex and the rocky sides of the valley, Class Q predominates in the Great Enclosure and the valley, and Class R generally occupies the outlying areas (Robinson 1961, Summers 1961, Whitty 1961). This study of the stone walling also demonstrates an indigenous evolution of the stonemasonry styles and indicates that Class P walling is the earliest, followed by Class Q which later devolved into the uncoursed Class R. (See Figure 3.7)

The work of Whitty, Robinson and Summers allows the following tentative chronological sequence to be made:

- **Period 1** Early settlement; no walls built; pole and *dhaka* houses. 400 CE
- **Period 2** First solid *dhaka* houses built on the hill; trading connections well-established with East African coast. 700–900+ CE
- **Period 3** Stone walling in the hill complex begins, extended to the slopes. 1085+ CE
- **Period 4** Q walling introduced; Great Enclosure built. 1450+ CE

An analysis of imported ceramics made it possible to refine the monument's chronological sequence (Garlake 1973). A piece of ceramic, of Persian origin, buried on the site was found to be similar to shards discovered in Mogadishu, dating to the thirteenth century. Other imported ceramics made of sea-green celadon and decorated with Chinese designs were examined and dated to the Chinese Ming dynasty (1368–1644 CE). These dates were supported by excavations during which an Arab coin with the inscription of Al-Hasan bin Sulaiman was found, dating to 1320–33 CE (Huffman 1981).

The ceramic and coin evidence was strengthened by new fourteenth century dates from Great Zimbabwe, showing that the first solid *dhaka* houses were dated to 1130 CE, and the Period 3 of Robinson, Summers and Whitty dated to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Huffman and Vogel 1991). On this reckoning, the construction of the walls at the Great Enclosure would now date to the thirteenth century and style Q to the fourteenth century, shortening the occupation period of Great Zimbabwe to less than 200 years. On the other hand, the discovery of Ming Dynasty (488–1503 CE) blue-on-white porcelain of the Honghzi period indicates that the site might have been occupied for a longer period albeit with a reduced population (Collett, Vines and Hughes 1991).

Dhaka (earthen) structures

The dry-stone walls, synonymous with the *madzimbabwe* tradition, may as suggested above best be described as the skeleton of the prehistoric monuments. The flesh, then, is the dwelling structures built with Africa's most common indigenous building material, *dhaka*, a puddled clay soil, binding together naturally weathered granite gravel aggregate. When dry, the mixture forms a durable material described as *dhaka* cement or gravel cement. In prehistoric times builders used the plastic properties of the material, when wet, to construct substantial round houses complete with moulded fittings on the walls and floors. The fittings were generally benches, kerbs and basins. At times, decorative motifs were designed on walls or floors (Garlake 1973).

Certain of the *dhaka* features are less easily identifiable today. A variety of *dhaka* surface textures and colour changes was achieved by exploiting the varied clay mineral compositions derived from the local parent geology. The most carefully selected and worked *dhaka* produced a hard, durable smooth surface and was able to withstand considerable wear and exposure. Some *dhaka* structures have survived, to varying degrees, for between 500 and 900 years. In prehistoric times the domestic *dhaka* structures were enclosed by the dry-stone walls, in order to divide space into areas and to form courtyards and enclosures. In some sections of the settlement the stone walls were also plastered with *dhaka* so that the enclosure presented a homogeneous appearance with the dwelling.

Unlike the dry-stone walls, very few *dhaka* structures remain above ground. Most of the structures are concealed by vegetation, soil and rubble

TABLE 3.2
Approximate mineralogical and physical properties of *dhaka* from Great Zimbabwe

Mineral content of *Dhaka*	Hill (grey samples)	Valley (brown/red samples)
Quartz	51.3	40.0
Kaolin	41.2	11.2
Mica	0.8	30.0
Feldspar	4.3	3.5
Iron/Potassium	2.8	2.8
Physical properties of *dhaka*		
Mean density	1.8g/ml	-
Mean porosity	-	33 %
Size range of pores-microns	>500	40%
	<500>105	11 %
	<105	49 %
*pH	6.6	
Soluble salts	< .23 %	-

deposits. Of those above ground, only partial structures survive to offer evidence of housing features. Numerous mounds scattered inside and outside the stone enclosures are evidence of deteriorated *dhaka* structures which, when excavated, reveal prehistoric *dhaka* features ranging from house floor fittings and dividing walls to artistically moulded and decorated features expressing aspects of the symbolic and figurative ethos of the Later Farming Communities.

Although the madzimbabwe-tradition *dhaka* structures are evidently related to contemporary Southern African vernacular architecture, archaeological evidence indicates subtle differences in their design and construction. The structures were designed to last, and were more complex than the single-compartment dwelling houses more recently synonymous with *dhaka* material. The *dhaka* houses in existence at the time of Great Zimbabwe were often divided into two or more compartments, with verandas, along with complicated interior platforms and fittings, all under one roof. (See Figure 3.8) Some of the walls seem not to have incorporated a timber framework within the *dhaka* matrix and were not load-bearing. The outer veranda posts supported the roof while non-load-bearing walls were used to maintain and divide interior space. The veranda sometimes had a low *dhaka* wall around it. The surface finishes for the walls and floor were similar and at times decorated (Rudd 1984).

PLATE 3.5
Artistic drawing of the Zimbabwe bird, a national symbol

The mineralogical constituents are summarised below. (See Table 3.2) Most of the *dhaka* structures were made from grey or brown material, the colour difference deriving from the two quarrying sites on the monument. Chemically, the material has high silica and aluminium content, and moderate amounts of iron and potassium oxides. The deficiency of kaolin clay mineral in some of the material indicates a degree of firing during or after construction.

Material culture

Archaeological artefacts constitute an important aspect of Great Zimbabwe's cultural property, in addition to the architectural structures. Every excavator and explorer over the past century has found material culture related to those who built and occupied Great Zimbabwe. The major class of material culture from the site is potsherds, which have been found in great quantities. There is evidence of spinning, as seen in the many spindle whorls. Numerous metal products ranging from axe and arrowheads to hoes and spears vividly illustrate iron-working. Gold, copper and bronze objects have also been found, usually in the form of adornments or ceremonial objects.

The most famous and intriguing finds have been the Zimbabwe birds, a series of soapstone monoliths that have at their apex a carved bird. These have received more attention from researchers than any other category of material culture found at Great Zimbabwe (Matenga 1998, Jacobson-Widding 2000). More important from a heritage management viewpoint, the carved birds are widely used as visual images for promoting the site and one of them has become the national symbol. (See Plate 3.5) Several other soapstone objects such as dishes and figurines have also been found. Some of the material culture found at Great Zimbabwe (and also found in Zambia and the Congo) is testimony to its trade prowess: imported glass beads, Chinese celadon, Islamic glazed ceramics and double iron gongs.

Discussion

This chapter has defined the monument primarily in terms of the archaeological research carried out so far. From this analysis it has emerged that stone walls have figured large in defining the site. The limitations of this assumption, in heritage management terms, will be discussed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. Research carried out by Sinclair and others has indicated that even for archaeological purposes the monument is much broader.

4

The development of heritage management at Great Zimbabwe

DURING THE COURSE of the twentieth century, there were several preservation efforts at Great Zimbabwe, most of which involved clearing vegetation and providing access to the visiting public. The 'discovery' of Great Zimbabwe by German explorer Carl Mauch in 1871 led to much speculation in interpreting the site and in particular its origin (Hall 1987, Kuklick 1991, Mahachi 1991). Some of the problems of preservation affecting the monument today derive from the early attempts to research and interpret the site. The British South Africa Company (BSAC) sponsored a number of expeditions directed at the question of the authorship of the monument. Theodore Bent, accompanied by the cartographer and surveyor R. W. M. Swan, mounted one of the first projects in 1891. They managed to produce one of the early maps of the monument; these have played an important role in the subsequent documentation of the site. Among other excavation pioneers at Great Zimbabwe was Willoughby who in 1893 dug extensively on the site and produced another of the earliest maps of the monument. (See Figure 4.1)

The first Europeans

Carl Mauch brought the size and grandeur of the Great Zimbabwe ruins to the attention of Europeans in 1871. Portuguese traders had previously, during the sixteenth century, written about the rich and famous kingdom in the interior; De Barros and Dos Santos had vaguely referred to the settlement of Zimbabwe in their writings of the sixteenth and seventeenth century. They were intrigued by the stone structures reported to them and sought to explain their origins. To them the ruins could only be linked with such legendary figures as Prester John, King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. In the absence of any detailed eyewitness accounts, by the eighteenth century, many myths and ideas about Great Zimbabwe had developed in Southern Africa, centred on the idea of a lost city in Africa's interior.

By the time Mauch reached the site in 1871 and was able to reveal the settlement for the first time to the outside world, many myths had already been built on the ruined site. Carl Mauch had heard about the place whilst in South Africa; like many Europeans of his time he had been taught that the southeast coastal area of Africa was the biblical land of Ophir, famous for its gold and precious stones. With gold-fever gripping Southern Africa at this time, it was predictable that whenever the ruins were referred to, they would be linked with the ancient Ophir. When Mauch actually found the ruins, it was as though all the wildest dreams associated with them were about to be realised.

Mauch explored the site with Adam Renders, a European whom he found living with the Shona people. He mapped the ruins and speculated about those who had built the place. Comparing wooden splinters from a crossbeam with his pencil, he concluded that the wood was cedar. As cedar could not possibly be found in this part of the world, it must have been imported. The ruins could thus only have been built at the instructions of the Queen of Sheba. His description of the ruins and its origins contained echoes of the popular literature of the time such as Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's mines*.

Carl Mauch's beliefs found a ready audience in Europe, where the mythology of African societies being backward and incapable of remarkable achievements was beginning to take hold, and caught the attention of imperialist Cecil John Rhodes. Rhodes was convinced that the site of Great Zimbabwe had been constructed by Phoenicians. Fuelling the idea of the Phoenician provenance of Great Zimbabwe was the general Victorian belief about African societies

being incapable of change. Rhodes, and his company BSAC, saw that the site could be used to justify their colonisation of the area. They would, after all, be following in the footsteps of the Phoenicians; so when Cecil John Rhodes visited Great Zimbabwe, the local people were told that the great white chief was coming to visit the home of his ancestors.

Men of science and politics

The association of Great Zimbabwe, in people's minds, with Ophir and King Solomon's mines had unfortunate implications. Many fortune seekers ransacked the ruins. Rhodes commissioned two separate research studies on the monument. The first was archaeological, led by antiquarian Theodore Bent. His 'findings' reinforced the mythology that Sabean Arabs, who were influenced by the Phoenicians, had built Great Zimbabwe. People like Posselt and Theodore Bent were able to find treasures such as the carved birds, which have become a national symbol. In addition to finding the carved birds, Bent dug a trench around the base of the conical tower, destroying important sections of the stratigraphy of the Great Enclosure. He recovered a few Persian beads but ignored and threw away thousands of artefacts, which he believed to be of a later date. More damage was to follow with the creation of the Rhodesian Ancient Ruins Company. The 1902 legislation to protect the monument had no effect on Bent for he continued the destruction of viable archaeological material. He threw away layer after layer of what he termed *kaffir* rubbish. He argued that the architectural style of the ruins supported a southern Arabian origin, and suggested that if Africans had built Great Zimbabwe, they would have done so 'as slaves of a race of higher civilization' (Bent 1892, p.33). A second research project was commissioned by Rhodes to furnish European libraries and archives with descriptions of the monument, and was undertaken by Alexander Wilmot (Kuklick 1991).

However, it was David Randall-MacIver, the first archaeologist to have been trained by the famous Flinders Petrie, who excavated the Great Enclosure. The artefacts he uncovered bore a marked similarity to modern Shona material, leading him to conclude that the monument itself had been built by the Shona people's ancestors:

> *The people who inhabited the Elliptical Temple belonged to tribes whose arts and manufacturing were indistinguishable from those of modern Makalanga (Shona).*
>
> (RANDALL-MACIVER 1906, P.63).

MacIver also demonstrated that the Arab and Persian imports could not possibly date from earlier than the Middle Ages and so the theory about King Solomon could not be sustained.

The settler community did not accept such findings. R. N. Hall, the first curator of Great Zimbabwe, led the attack, arguing that Randall-MacIver had no intimate knowledge of Africa. The settlers rejected the interpretation in part because it jeopardised the ideological underpinnings of the colonisation of the area, based on the notion that they were resurrecting the lost Caucasian civilization represented by the Phoenicians (Sinamai 1997, p.27). F. J. Scholfield later studied the architecture and building methods, in 1926, and concluded that the structures were of African authorship; as did Gertrude Caton-Thompson, whose excavations uncovered cultural material demonstrating that the present-day inhabitants had everything to do with the monument. In common with most of her compatriots, she did not think highly of the local populations; her findings therefore led her to disparage the architecture as typical of 'native' style:

> *No other than our happy-go-lucky Bantu could be accused of erecting them. Who else could build a place as big as the temple without working from a plan? Who else would just make encircling walls come together by a little deviation from the symmetrical when they were not going to meet? What other race would build walls without using a plumb line?*
>
> (CITED FROM KUKLICK 1991, P.155).

Caton-Thompson's findings did not challenge the doctrine of racial supremacy that underlay most European settlers' attachment to the notion that Zimbabwe had Phoenician origins:

> *The architecture at Zimbabwe, imitative apparently of daub prototype, strikes me as essentially the product of an infantile mind, pre-logical mind, a mind which having discovered the way to making or doing a thing goes on childishly repeating the performance regardless of incongruity.*
>
> (CATON-THOMPSON 1931, P.103)

Nevertheless, the settler community was reluctant to believe these 'scientific' findings that the site had African origins, and Europeans visiting the site during the early part of the twentieth century generally continued to attribute the construction of the monument to the Arabs.

There is hardly any doubt that by 1960, within the National Historical Monuments Commission at least, the creation of Great Zimbabwe was taken

to be indigenous. In 1958 Roger Summers, Keith Robinson and Anthony Whitty launched a large-scale research programme at Great Zimbabwe. The aim was not to reopen the question of who built it, since this matter had been settled to the satisfaction of most archaeologists, but to analyse the chronology using the site's ceramics and architectural styles. The Great Zimbabwe chronology was refined during the 1970s.

Although the settlers rejected the idea of the monument's indigenous authorship, Great Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwe bird associated with it were being used as national emblems from around 1924, first on the Southern Rhodesian flag, then on the Rhodesia and Nyasaland federation flag and finally on the UDI Rhodesian flag. So, even during colonial times, Great Zimbabwe's value as a national symbol was recognized. Politicians took turns to exploit its symbolic power and reinvent its history according to the political needs of the time (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983).

The first curator for Great Zimbabwe, R. N. Hall, was appointed in 1902, specifically charged by the British South Africa Company with the task of undertaking 'not scientific research but the preservation of the buildings' with the aim of making the monument more attractive to tourists (Garlake 1973). However, the early controversies surrounding the origins of the prehistoric settlement led Hall to change his job description. He began to conduct extensive excavations, particularly in the Great Enclosure. The belief that the dry-stone walls were not built by Africans led to his destroying most of the dhaka structures and artefacts that clearly indicated the indigenous origin of the site. Most of the excavated trenches were not backfilled and many of the erosion problems experienced on the site today have their origins in those early investigations. When Randall-MacIver visited the site in 1905 he castigated the amateurish methods of Hall and his predecessors for having caused much damage to the monument.

Hall's excavation culminated in 1905 with the publication of his book *Great Zimbabwe*, widely condemned by the international scientific community, but popular among the settlers. The interest in the origins of Great Zimbabwe had by 1919 generated no fewer than sixty-three books and articles on the subject (Cooke 1974).

In 1909 the first systematic report, commissioned by BSAC, was drawn up to describe how the site was to be managed (Masey 1911). This was in part a response to the extensive damage done on the site by Hall. The report noted the need to maintain the monument and to keep it clear of vegetation. It also pointed out problems caused by tourists, and cattle – whose grazing had destroyed some structures. One recommendation was to fence off the monument, at least to prevent cattle from coming in; another was to set up a site museum to manage the visitors, along with employing a resident archaeologist to take care of the general preservation work and interpret the site to the wider public. Given the general controversies surrounding Great Zimbabwe at the time, Masey's report was level-headed and quite comprehensive; it highlighted specific problems, such as local communities causing fires in the estate at times and allowing their cattle graze on site; and made specific recommendations such as the need to restore collapsed walls in addition to undertaking general maintenance work.

One of the major problems at Great Zimbabwe today is rapid erosion of parts of the western enclosure, in the hill complex. This is attributable to one of the report's less successful recommendations, namely that many of the dry-stone walls could be preserved by removing the archaeological and dhaka remains resting against them. The work was carried out by the Public Works Department of Southern Rhodesia (PWD), with little consideration for the archaeological or aesthetic appearance of the area. The work was also executed under the assumption that the dry-stone walls were the only important component of the monument. As a result, dhaka structures and archaeological artefacts were destroyed. The excavation by the PWD left a huge exposed pit, which had almost doubled in size a few years later, owing to continuous erosion. (See Plate 4.1)

Other than the recommendations of Masey's report, no direct intervention was made on the fabric of the dry-stone walls during the early years of managing Great Zimbabwe. However, the face of the monument began to change with the appointment of S. Wallace as curator in 1914. Wallace was responsible for a large number of necessary restorations between 1914 and 1931, unfortunately carried out in a misguided and inaccurate manner. Using Masey's 1911 report, he embarked on a major restoration of the monument; marking a departure from previous efforts, which had in the main been directed at finding the origins of the site and providing access to tourists. Wallace restored many walls at Great Zimbabwe, along with the entrances at the hill complex and those of the Great Enclosure. The restorations were architecturally inaccurate and did not follow any preservation ethics (Walker and Dickens 1992, Ndoro 1994).

Following Wallace, many curators at Great Zimbabwe carried out unsystematic repairs to collapsed and unstable walls on dry-stone ruins. Generally, though, their main concern was to interpret this unique heritage. Visitors to sites such as Great Zimbabwe, Khami and Danamombe tended to want to know who built them, when they were built, and

PLATE 4.1
Western Enclosure hill complex showing the excavated pit

PLATE 4.2
Collapsed wall owing to removal of wooden structural member for carbon-14 dating

what they represented. Aiming to establish the chronostratigraphic sequence of this heritage, Summers, Robinson and Whitty began major excavations and documentation work in 1958 at Great Zimbabwe. Robinson also carried out excavations at Khami in 1959; a fourth archaeologist, Peter Garlake, later undertook work at Nhunguza in 1973. Their findings have remained the basis of most of the interpretation of the *madzimbabwe* tradition. Since the 1960s the interpretation of the archaeology and architecture of these monuments has been the main preoccupation of archaeologists (Sinclair 1987, Mahachi 1991, Sundstrom 1992, Chipunza 1994, Huffman 1997).

In the 1960s the top priority for most curators in the country was archaeological research. No clear policy or management plan existed apart from attempts to satisfy research-based archaeological questions. Preservation was left to unqualified technicians. The archaeological research did not consider the long-term preservation of these sites. The list of all the archaeological and preservation work done at these sites in the past five or six decades is almost identical to the list of structures distorted or lost during the same period. Even the radiocarbon dating revolution of the 1950s left a scar on the fabric of these monuments. At Great Zimbabwe, it prompted the removal of the monument's few wooden structural members and resulted in the collapse of one section.

(See Plate 4.2) Such well-intentioned acts have led to most of the irreparable damage, and serve to illustrate some of the complications involved in managing the archaeological heritage today.

At other sites such as Naletale and Khami, Robinson carried out several restorations using concrete. The concrete capping at Naletale prevented the collapse of large areas of the decorated facades, but with the disadvantage of making their aesthetic appearance artificial. Concrete or cement grouting was used at some sections of Khami, particularly on the hill. Here dhaka was mixed with cement. As will be shown below, local communities were opposed to the use of cement on all monuments, although during this period no attention was paid to indigenous voices.

By the 1960s the potential of such sites as Great Zimbabwe to become major visitor attractions had been realised. A hotel catering to European tourists had already been opened near Great Zimbabwe by around 1928. The following year, the Southern Rhodesia Publicity Bureau published a guidebook aimed at these tourists, reflecting the contemporary settler community's interpretations of the monument – summed up by the way in which the various components of the site were named. (See Figures 4.1 and 4.2)

The early guidebooks were largely based on the works of Hall and Bent. In addition to attributing the construction of the monument to the Phoenicians, there was an attempt to link the site with the short history of Rhodesia. Major Alan Wilson, one of the heroes of the 1893 Anglo-Ndebele war, had originally been buried at Great Zimbabwe. Wallace in his 1938 guidebook urged the tourist not to leave the monument without paying a visit to Wilson's first grave. The number of visitors was growing each year and soon Great Zimbabwe became the second most popular attraction in the country after the Victoria Falls. In response, visitor facilities such as

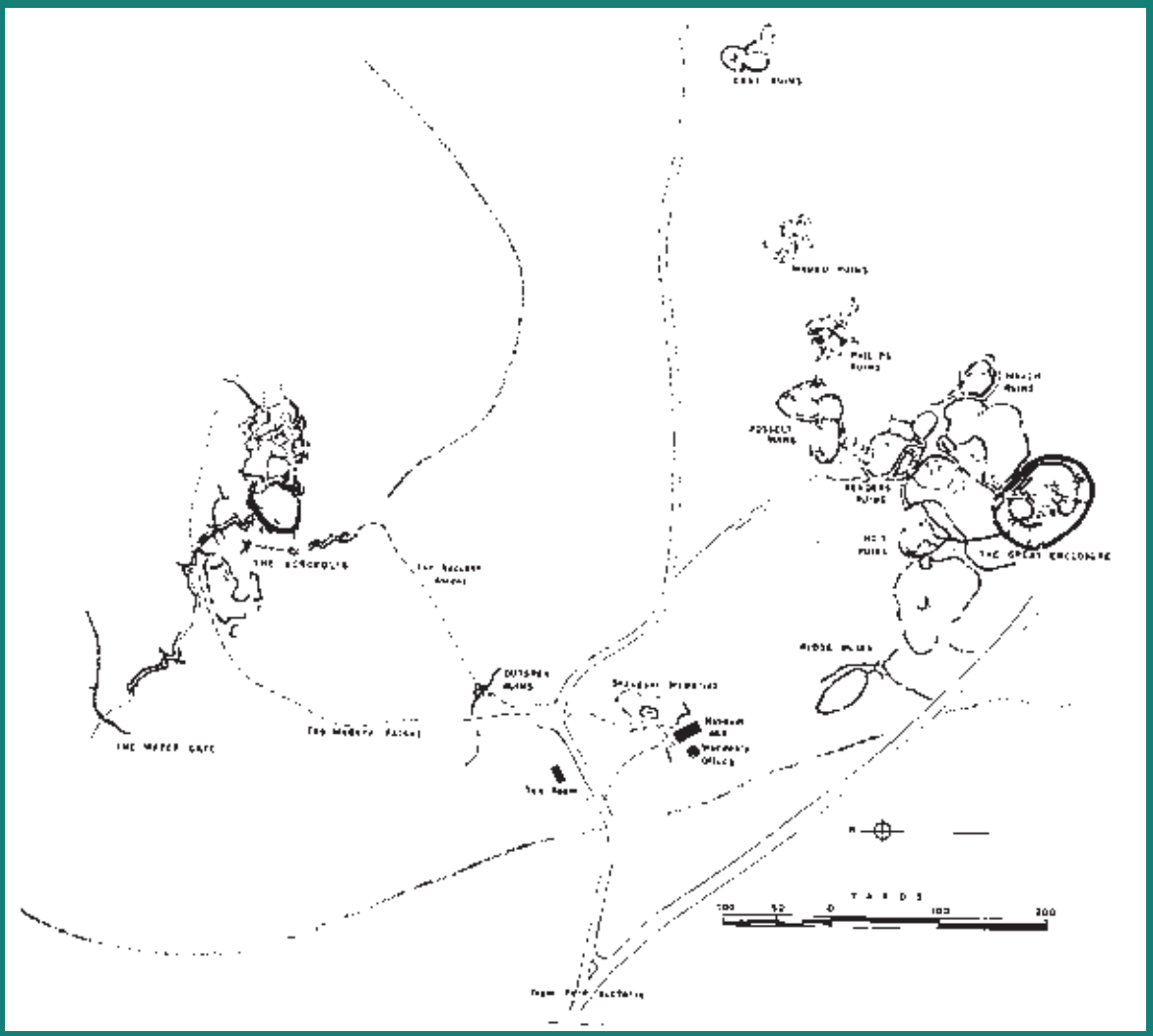


FIGURE 4.1
General map of Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia Publicity Bureau 1929)

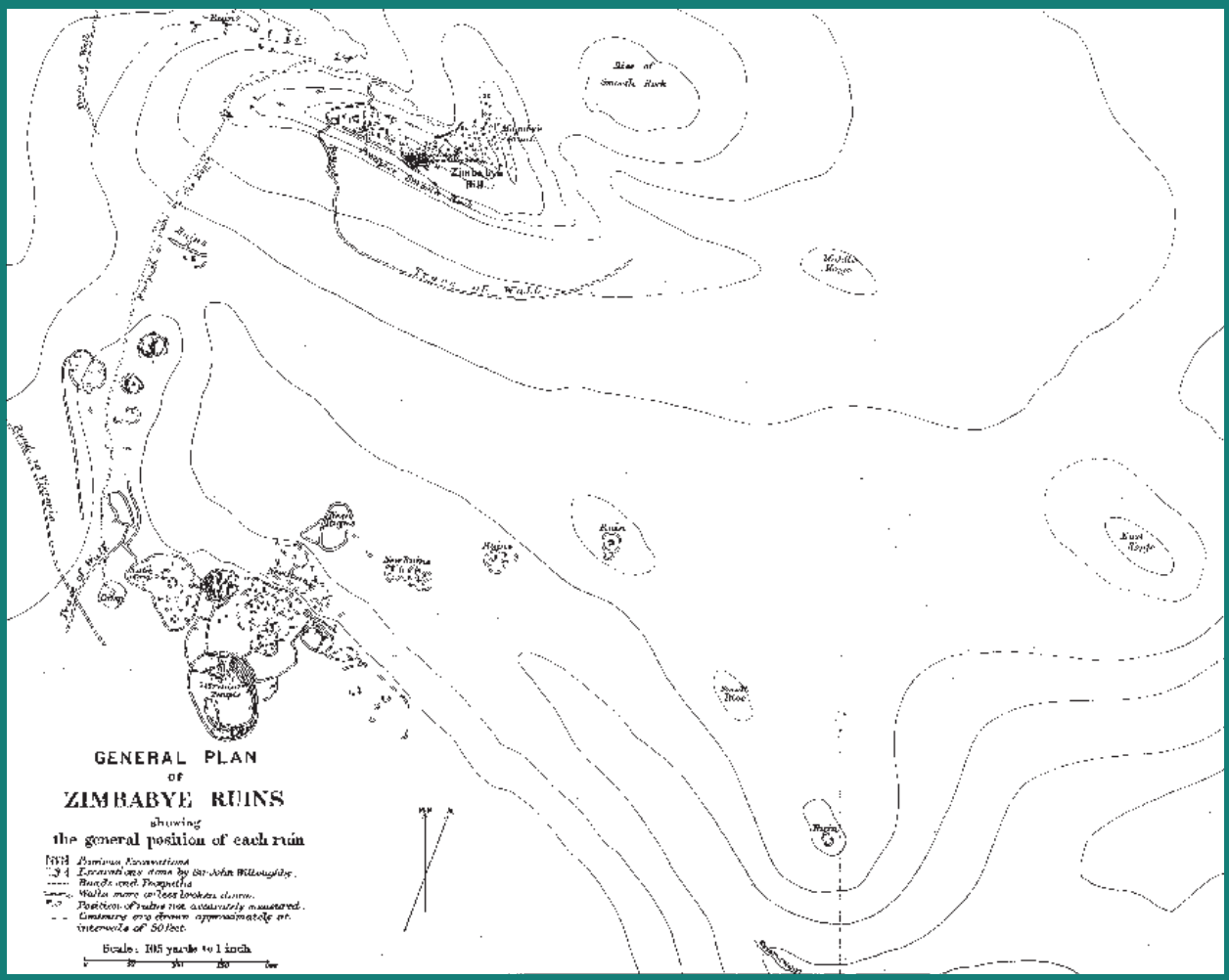


FIGURE 4.2
General map of Great Zimbabwe (Wallace 1938)

a car park, site museum, curio shop and traditional village were erected, along with lodges for visitors. A site museum was also built at Khami. Most of the facilities were randomly located, without taking the archaeological deposits on site into consideration. What mattered most were the dry-stone walls. There was no respect for the sites' archaeology or cultural significance. In any case the visitors were mainly of European origin and had no cultural affiliation to the sites. Part of Great Zimbabwe was even turned into a golf course.

Great Zimbabwe experienced the ultimate alienation when, under the administration of National Parks, forced labour bridges of prisoners were used to keep the place tidy for tourists. The agency's main concern was the preservation of wildlife rather than cultural property. The site's research archaeologists, including Robinson and Summers, were employed by a different agency, the Historic Monuments Commission, and operated from a base at the Natural History Museum in Bulawayo, more than 300 kilometres away.

Men of the people

From the 1900s to the 1970s, despite the research findings, most colonial settlers continued to believe that Great Zimbabwe was built by the Phoenicians. Successive governments did everything to encourage this notion, fearing that if the archaeological findings were accepted, notions about Africans' backwardness might be challenged, upsetting the colonial theory of white supremacy. The dissemination of such findings was accordingly restricted.

The Rhodesian Front government, itself built on an antagonism to all African aspirations towards equality, recognized the dangers of promoting black cultural pride and political consciousness through any indication that Zimbabwean history, however remote, had a proud record of achievement (Garlake 1973, 1982). This fear was heightened by the rise

of African nationalism on the continent and the attainment of independence by some African states such as Ghana and Nigeria.

Following the 1965 Unilateral Declaration of Independence and the rigorous control of information that accompanied it, archaeologists were to discover that research had become an overtly political activity. Andries Joannes Bruwer's book about Zimbabwe, *Rhodesia's ancient greatness*, was published that same year and carried a dedication to the Prime Minister Ian Smith. Bruwer perceived the work of Peter Garlake, Roger Summers and other archaeologists who continued to suggest that Great Zimbabwe was of African origin to be a concerted conspiracy (Bruwer 1965). Several other publications in Southern Africa branded these archaeologists either as misguided tools of politically motivated enemies or traitorous agents of a worldwide communist conspiracy of subversion (Gayre 1972).

During the colonial period, the settler community provided the organizational milieu, funds and audience for research, presentation and preservation of the monument. From 1965 to 1980 the Rhodesia Front acted to control and censor all displays, material, guidebooks and archaeological research available to the public, ensuring that no reference was made to the fact that Great Zimbabwe had a proven African authorship. The textbooks used in African schools up to independence in 1980 emphasised that 'old tribal stories tell us a race of brown-skinned people with straight black hair used to mine gold here long ago. They built stone forts or villages called Zimbabwe' (Miller 1960, p.29). However, the control of access to this monument and its grandeur prompted a counter-reaction in the African Nationalist politics of the 1960s and 1970s. The nationalist movements saw the site's potential as a political symbol, capable of unifying people against colonial rule by appealing to them as heirs to the proud civilization of Great Zimbabwe. Beginning with naming their political parties after Great Zimbabwe – for instance, Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU), they went on to declare that an independent Rhodesia would be named Zimbabwe.

The Rhodesian authorities were outraged. In one case, a correspondent for the *Rhodesia Herald* of 4 June 1962 talked of the misappropriation of the ancient pre-Bantu name of Zimbabwe to the cause of Mr Nkomo and his fellow black settlers. The correspondent's argument was that the black people of the country were, like the whites, recent arrivals and thus, 'it is of great importance that those who currently usurp the ancient name of Zimbabwe have historical or cultural right to do so.'

During the 1976 to 1980 war in Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia), most archaeological sites were abandoned by the authorities for security reasons. For almost six years no maintenance was carried out on monuments. The vegetation, which had previously been cleared from time to time, grew unchecked and began to threaten the structural stability of the monuments. After independence in 1980 the government viewed sites such as Great Zimbabwe as major visitor attractions and a source of great national pride. After all, the nation had been named after this type of monumental archaeology. There was a need to pay attention to the long-term integrity of the monuments and forge new management systems sensitive to all the demands of the monument. Just as under previous governments, the opportunity offered by Great Zimbabwe in fostering unity and a new identity could not be missed. Many of the artefacts from Great Zimbabwe become national symbols depicted on the country's currency, stamps, and insignia, and on the flag (Pwiti 1996).

In the same way as under the previous government, the nationalist government after independence took the opportunity offered by Great Zimbabwe of fostering a new identity. For Zimbabwe's new government, the past – including the archaeological past – was to play a political as well as nominal role, leading the Prime Minister of the new nation to declare that, 'independence will bestow on us ... a new future and perspective and indeed a new history and a new past' (cited in Pwiti 1996, p.153). Just as the colonial government had done, the new government was not hesitant to construct a past it was comfortable with. Herbert Ushewokunze, the then Minister of Home Affairs, stated it rather more bluntly in the foreword to a book on Great Zimbabwe: 'Now the time has come to set the record straight, to seek out and renew our past. Archaeology is no more than a tool. For the first time in Zimbabwe it is wielded for the people' (Pwiti 1996, p.153), which emphases the vulnerability of archaeology and Great Zimbabwe to political manipulation.

A milestone was reached by the new government on reopening Great Zimbabwe to the public and providing a skeletal staff to maintain the site and host the expected visitors. Major publicity campaigns were mounted; these were given a tremendous boost by publications such as Mufuka's populist guidebook to Great Zimbabwe, *Dzimbabwe: Life in the Golden Age* (1983), and Peter Garlake's *Great Zimbabwe described and explained* (1982). Mufuka's use of oral traditions, myths and legends was heavily criticised by all leading academics in Zimbabwe. However, many ordinary Zimbabweans welcomed his book. It offered an account of the past that they

could easily identify with rather than the dry pottery classifications and chronostratigraphic analyses that have until recently characterised studies on Great Zimbabwe. It would appear that most people do not view their heritage in terms of linear chronology nor do they seem to base their cultural identity on pottery studies. Like Wallace before him, Mufuka also turned his attention to the fabric of the monument. He unsystematically restored some of the collapsed walls in the valley ruins.

The interplay between nationalism and archaeology was not unique to Zimbabwe. In their protest against French rule, the West African Negritude movement (led by literary writers in French-speaking Africa) asserted the supremacy of African culture and found much evidence of Africa's past cultural richness in archaeology. The work of Cheikh Anta Diop was one major influence on the movement. Diop argued that a close relationship had existed between black Africa and Ancient Egypt; using archaeological evidence to trace migration routes, he suggested that the burial mounds of the Niger Delta were West African versions of Egyptian pyramids (Diop 1979, Holl 1990). It appears that a distinctive brand of archaeology has developed in postcolonial West Africa, retaining close links with issues of national consciousness and ethnic identity, and stressing continuities between the past and present, often providing a charter for the present day that draws its authority from a particular take on the past (Holl 1990, Hall 1995).

Great Zimbabwe is important to nationalism and state ideology in two main ways: in its link with ancestral worship, and as an example of African achievement. The rise of nationalism in Zimbabwe in the 1960s was accompanied by a cultural revival which manifested itself in the form of a regeneration of traditional religion. One person to make this link was a Christian Evangelist named Peter Fry, who commented:

> *I have been led to believe that traditional beliefs and practices were drying out and were of little significance to the contemporary situation. However, bit by bit I became aware that this was by no means the case ... the number of people succumbing to spirit medium-ship was increasing, churches were burnt and stoned ... It became quite clear that traditional beliefs and practices were related to the rise of African nationalism.*
>
> (PETER FRY, CITED IN RANGER 1985, P.187)

Others also allude to this revival in traditional religion during the process of decolonisation (Gelfand 1959, Abraham 1966, Lan 1985). Spirit mediums such as Nehanda, Chaminuka and Kaguvi became important at a national level during the days of African Nationalism. From the nationalist point of view, what better way to unite a diverse population than by means of their common religion, with Great Zimbabwe the legitimate shrine for the national spirit medium. In this connection, the spirit medium Sophia Muchini claimed that as Ambuya Nehanda, the legendary female guardian of the Shona people, she should be based at Great Zimbabwe.

The local communities at Great Zimbabwe also felt that, with independence, they could reclaim the place for their ancestors. During the liberation struggle the monument was at the centre of military activities, leading to an attack on the hotel and museum. The local people expected that with independence they would be allowed to settle at Great Zimbabwe. Thus Sophia Tsvatayi Muchini, claiming to be the spirit medium of this heroine (named Nehanda) of the 1896–7 Chimuraga war, occupied Great Zimbabwe in 1981.

Muchini has been the only Shona spirit medium to be associated with war; during the liberation war she was involved in recruiting, organizing and advising the guerrilla forces on many occasions. She had tried to settle at Great Zimbabwe prior to 1980 precisely because she viewed it as a national shrine and felt that, as Nehanda, she should be allowed to practice there. Her first attempt to settle at Great Zimbabwe was in 1974. However the colonial government did not allow her to do so, instead imprisoning her on two occasions between 1978 and 1979 (Garlake 1983, p.16). She was released only a week after the 1980 elections. Muchini immediately returned to Great Zimbabwe where she began to conduct cleansing rituals on the site, particularly for freedom fighters just returning from the war. These activities, although supported by traditional leaders, did not go down well with the new government, which sent soldiers to evict her. After a bloody battle the spirit medium was forcibly removed from the site. This was a clear indication that government was prepared to use force against the local communities in order to regain what they wanted to be seen (and control) as a national symbol of unity.

Muchini's claim to stay at Great Zimbabwe is supported by most of the local people. Chief Nemanwa agrees that there is a need to conduct a cleansing ceremony at the site and further believes that his people should be given back the custodianship of the site. (Nemanwa pers. comm) The people of Zimbabwe with roots in traditional belief systems have always regarded Great Zimbabwe and the Matopo as the sacred shrines of the nation

(Aschwanden 1989, Ranger 1999). Between 1992 and 1996 no fewer than five traditional national ceremonies were held – at night – at or near Great Zimbabwe. The reason for holding them at night was the non-cooperation by NMMZ who feared that this would give political leverage to one group over the others (Matenga pers. comm. 2000). Muchini has tried on several occasions to establish herself at Great Zimbabwe with the help of the local politicians but without success.

The local people around Great Zimbabwe are not unique in being denied access to and control of their heritage and its presentation. The people of Murewa, for instance, welcomed the establishment of Murewa Culture House as a place to champion the local traditional culture. At other archaeological sites such as Silozwane and Domboshava, rainmaking rituals have been prohibited by NMMZ in order to preserve the monuments for scientific research, thus denying access to the local communities.

International input into Great Zimbabwe's management

In 1982 UNESCO sent a consultant to Zimbabwe to advise NMMZ on how to preserve Great Zimbabwe and other related monuments. The consultant, Sassoon, expressed concern at the desperate condition in which he found the monument, noting in particular the absence of any maintenance strategy (Sassoon 1982). Vegetation growth, especially of the *Lantana camara* plant, was causing damage and making access to parts of the monument almost impossible. The report that followed emphasised the need to consider the monument as a whole, including other archaeological remains such as dhaka structures, rather than just the stone walls; and it contained a draft plan of action for preserving the monument and other related sites, advising on the equipment needed and the training of personnel. Above all, continued cyclical maintenance on the site was recommended. The importance of Sassoon's report was its comprehensive nature in dealing with the general management problems, interpretation and physical preservation needs.

In 1987, UNESCO commissioned another two consultants – Rodrigues, a geologist and Mauelshagen, a photogrammetrist – to carry out a specialist evaluation of Great Zimbabwe. Their brief was similar to Sassoon's except that this time the experts were dealing primarily with the fabric of the monument. Their report observed that 'there is not a single metre of wall completely free of problems' (Rodrigues and Mauelshagen 1987). This conclusion was hardly surprising given the background of the two consultants, whose experience was with European historic buildings. Those building codes were scarcely applicable to Great Zimbabwe, where most walls are curvilinear and have neither mortar nor foundations.

The recommendations of the subsequent report included the setting up of an intervention team to include trained stonemasons, and the procurement of essential equipment and material. Mauelshagen's section of the report advised the adoption of photogrammetry to monitor the movement of the wall structures. Again the UNESCO report pointed out the need for trained personnel and the need to implement a maintenance plan on the site. It also advised that a research programme be established to identify intervention priorities and evaluate possible preservation techniques. The report specifically tried to address the condition of the dry-stone walls, and identified the need to document and monitor the structures. Thus it was clear that for NMMZ, the government agency receiving the advice, and for the international community as represented by UNESCO, Great Zimbabwe's management was to focus on technical matters.

Management plans drawn up by the various consultants for the preservation of Great Zimbabwe exposed NMMZ's inadequacies in dealing with some basic conservation problems on site. No accurate map of the site existed, making it impossible to inspect the 720 hectares of the monument. There was a lack of basic equipment for archaeological work. As is the case in many developing countries, efforts to preserve the monument received vital financial and technical support from foreign institutions.

In 1988 the Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries (SAREC) made funds available for archaeological investigations on the site. It also undertook to train archaeologists and artefact conservation technicians for NMMZ. SAREC further provided equipment for the archaeology laboratory. However, given the previous history of Great Zimbabwe, archaeological excavations could not be undertaken until solutions to the erosion of previously exposed areas had been found. The SAREC project understood the conservation requirements of the management plan and therefore decided to use non-destructive archaeological techniques. The project also provided archaeologists with field training in alternative conservation-friendly methods of archaeological research, including the application of remote sensing techniques such as magnetometer and phosphate analysis (Sinclair *et al.* 1993b).

Technical assistance additional to that available from the UNESCO consultants was provided by the British Overseas Development (ODA) on the conservation of the dry-stone walls. ODA funded a

joint project between NMMZ and Loughborough University to evaluate various methods of monitoring deformations in dry-stone structures and identify the failure mechanism of these walls (Walker and Dickens 1992). The programme went a long way towards providing a cheaper method of monitoring the structures using strain gauges. This is a more affordable method of monitoring than the photogrammetric system; the technique is simple and does not require highly trained personnel. The joint project also helped to isolate some of the possible causes of wall collapse. It was funded for two years but its findings were not very conclusive and NMMZ could not continue with the project beyond that period as the laboratory facilities did not exist: the University of Loughborough had provided the equipment used over the two-year period. This exposes the limitations of depending on donor funds.

Several international experts, including the engineers from Loughborough University, recommended the use of consolidates and geogrids as a way of improving the stability of the dry-stone walls. These would be good engineering solutions, capable of reducing long-term maintenance of the structures. The major problems would be the high cost of importing the material and the lack of expertise available within Zimbabwe to implement the solutions. After careful evaluation of the costs and benefits of the various options, the local conservation team decided that efforts should be directed at the training of traditional stonemasons. Should the need arise, some form of anastylosis or reconstruction could be done, provided proper documentation had been carried out. In addition to fulfilling conservation principles of using original materials and skills, this would also provide employment and training to the local community. This solution would not depend on foreign currency, which is a rare commodity in Third World countries, but on local labour, which is cheap and readily available.

Provision was made for the establishment of a team whose main task was to preserve, maintain and manage the archaeological resource. For the first time, the brief for the archaeologist at Great Zimbabwe prioritised the preservation of the monument rather than academic archaeological research. The government also undertook to build laboratory facilities to be used for preservation research and teaching purposes. This was largely in response to the UNESCO reports and the recommendations of the preservation team. It was, however, clear to those on site that a comprehensive management plan was necessary if the long-term preservation of the site were to be achieved, and this prompted the drafting of a Master Plan for the Preservation and Development of the Archaeological Heritage (Collett 1992). The plan covered all aspects of site management and was not limited to the preservation of the dry-stone walling: the resource was recognized to be much more than that.

UNESCO and UNDP have been involved with the preservation of Great Zimbabwe since 1981. As indicated earlier, consultants were sent out on two occasions and some of their recommendations were incorporated into the site management plan for Great Zimbabwe. However, the implementation of most of the requirements would depend on procuring funding. The equipment and some of the expertise could not be acquired from within Zimbabwe. The master plan outlined what conservation was necessary, along with ideas for developments aimed at promoting the monument. In addition to highlighting the situation at Great Zimbabwe, the document went further and looked at all the major archaeological sites managed by NMMZ. Its thrust was to combine preserving the archaeological resources with promoting tourism, with a view of generating income for the operations of the monuments organization. UNESCO and UNDP did not have the necessary funds to implement all aspects of the master plan, so a Donors Conference was organized in order to marshal human, material and technical support. UNESCO and UNDP helped NMMZ to organize and prepare for the Donor Conference held in June 1992.

The master plan was presented to international experts and potential donors at the Donors Conference. The aims of the conference were to brief technical experts and potential donors about the issues surrounding preservation of Zimbabwean archaeological sites, to encourage the donation of equipment, and to raise funds and awareness. The conference emphasised the potential economic development attendant on better management of the archaeological resources.

Equipment was donated in the wake of the conference, and it was also successful in exposing some of the heritage management problems in Third World countries such as Zimbabwe. In this context, the conservation of the archaeological heritage could easily be seen as a luxury given the other problems of hunger, health and education. The conference managed to focus on the potential economic and educational benefits if correct measures were taken.

The aims of the Master Plan for Resource Conservation and Development were to increase the publicity of monuments and thereby increase funding for their upkeep (Collett 1992). It was the first comprehensive document relating to heritage management in Zimbabwe (and perhaps in Southern Africa). The success of the Donors Conference Master Plan should not be evaluated on the basis of the

financial or material support given by the international community but in terms of whether it has enabled National Museums and Monuments to improve its management of the country's cultural heritage.

The idea to widen the scope of the plan beyond Great Zimbabwe, to include all the country's heritage, was a noble one. However, in terms of project management, the plan became too ambitious in its efforts to encompass all aspects of heritage management. The major weakness of the plan eventually presented at the Donors Conference was that it tried simultaneously to be a policy document and a project development plan. More than twenty-five projects were identified and the implementation period was less than fifteen years. Although the plan tried to schedule projects in stages, so that major projects would not overlap, this could not be put into practice given the regional administrative politics of NMMZ. Each administrative region wanted to have its own project running on the same magnitude as that of Great Zimbabwe and the result was that national interests were compromised. The Old Bulawayo project, scheduled to start in 1998, was brought forward to 1991. The Domboshava, Ziwa and Danamombe projects were also brought forward. Given NMMZ's limited personnel, the Great Zimbabwe management strategies as outlined in the plan were sidelined as the more politically conspicuous Old Bulawayo project began to take prominence. The original idea of concentrating on Great Zimbabwe as a flagship for other projects quickly disappeared.

It would be unrealistic to expect that the technical aspects of managing monuments such as Great Zimbabwe could be isolated from the administrative ethos of those who manage them. The implementation of the master plan has been partially successful. Projects such as the Old Bulawayo theme park, and the Ziwa, Danamombe and Domboshava site museums have been started, and several NMMZ staff members have been trained at one institution or another. It can therefore be argued that despite its over-ambitious targets the master plan's implementation has resulted in NMMZ being better able to manage the heritage. However, it has not been successful in its commercial ambitions.

Discussion

It is clear that the preservation of ruined monuments involves not only the physical structures, but also their setting and natural surroundings. The topography profoundly influences the impression a site makes on the viewer. Any serious preservation plan should incorporate a consideration of the environmental setting.

When dealing with ruined monuments there is a need to understand the structures together with the associated cultural history and historical values. This is because during its life, a monument may undergo repeated changes and alterations. In this way the ruins become a historical document on which people's cultural developments are inscribed. Preservation ethics demand that any intervention should respect the cultural significance of the place, and even the misguided previous restoration work is part of this significance. This is very problematic as the case history of Great Zimbabwe shows. In this instance, earlier restoration and preservation attempts were guided by the colonial controversies associated with the site. In a sense, the restorations by people such as Wallace document the turbulent historiography of Great Zimbabwe. However, we have to recognize that first and foremost the monument is a work of art; it bears witness to the technology and craftsmanship of the period when it was made. In the final analysis, the intentions of the original builders should take precedence over later claims to representation.

It is important to note that the physical structures are part of a cultural landscape extending beyond the area at present declared a national monument. There are archaeological and cultural sites related to Great Zimbabwe outside the estate. People are also present on the cultural landscape, interacting with it in various ways. The potentially powerful traditional institutions and their communities, and other environmental agencies, need to be considered in planning for the monument's protection. Current heritage management practice at Great Zimbabwe, although shrouded in the rhetoric that espouses local stewardship, is founded on international notions of scientific rationality. Evidence from sites such as Domboshava and Silozwane suggests that the persistence of such decontextualised practices ultimately leads to undesirable circumstances. The public is largely ignored in matters pertaining to research on or management of archaeological resources, although this seems to be changing.

5

Preserving the fabric of the monument

THE NATIONAL MUSEUMS and Monuments Act of Zimbabwe of 1972 sets out the legal provisions for protecting the prehistoric ruined monuments of Zimbabwe. The act also brings Great Zimbabwe under national administration, making the state responsible for its preservation and presentation through the statutory organization of National Museums and Monuments (NMMZ). This chapter highlights some of the problems associated with the preservation and presentation of Great Zimbabwe. It also gives a brief introduction to the physical condition of the monument, which until now has been the focus of preservation efforts. The primary purpose is to show the link between the preservation of the fabric of the ruins and the overall problems in presenting ruined structures. As already indicated, the important structures are built of stone and *dhaka* (earthen) materials. Each has its own structural problems and their different behaviour has implications for efforts to present the monument as a unified entity. In addition there are exogenous factors such as tourism, which contribute to the deterioration of the site's integrity; these also have a bearing on the overall presentation of the cultural landscape. This chapter further highlights some of the problems associated with defining the monument as the stone and *dhaka* structures at the expense of the totality of the cultural landscape.

Dry stone structures

The Great Zimbabwe ruins are situated in a landscape characterised by large outcrops of medium- to coarse-grained granite. The rock is fresh (not decaying or decomposing) and consequently very strong. The upper and lower faces of blocks that make up the dry-stone walls are fairly regular but are frequently curved and converging. The blocks are predominantly from naturally formed slabs taken from the granite outcrops. These slabs originate from stress releases within the rock mass (Rodrigues and Mauelshagen 1987). When the overburden is removed the rock mass expands in proportion to the removed loads. When the expansion is incompatible with the physical integrity of the rock mass, the expansion is accomplished by the development of rupture surfaces inside the rock. These rupture surfaces tend to be roughly parallel to the topography, which explains their gently curved appearance. The slabs produced by this mechanism are thick and wide, and some are several metres long. Weathering agents such as temperature and moisture changes can accelerate the formation of these slabs and their development. However, weathering agents, unlike pressure releases, tend to produce thinner and shorter slabs.

Once the slabs were formed it was not difficult for builders to break them into smaller blocks suitable for the construction in stone. It has been suggested that heating and then pouring water on the slabs was the method used to promote rapid contraction and subsequent breakage. Recent experimental work has shown that there would have been no need for water; heat alone could have produced the desired results (Dube 1990). From an examination of the granite outcrops in the quarrying areas, fine examples have been found of the broken slabs, with very distinct features indicating that percussion was used to produce some of the blocks. The heating and

cooling method would undoubtedly have been more expensive in terms of time, labour and resources.

The question of how the slabs were broken into usable blocks is of more than purely academic or archaeological interest. The two methods suggested introduce different degrees of fissuring in the stones, which, in turn affects the strength and durability of the blocks (Rodrigues and Mauelshagen 1987).

WEATHERING

Very few of the blocks are derived from moderately weathered outcrops but, even where this is the case, they still have sharp edges and a high strength, suggesting that weathering has been insignificant since they were placed in the wall. It is also rare to see fractured granite blocks on the site. The most common type of decay consists in the peeling-off of small chips, mainly along the edges and corners of the blocks. These features always occur in retaining walls, for instance in the hill complex. This peeling-off seems to be a continuation of the natural weathering mechanism of stress release but it is assisted by temperature and moisture fluctuations.

Some natural outcrops and large boulders in the hill complex show neat *taffoni* on the surface. Their origin is linked to the lichen growths in the area. The base rock is initially colonised by lichens, which promote some decay around their *hyphae*, producing small pitches in the rock. The existence of these features is taken advantage of by other colonisers, increasing the extent of decay. Once lichens are growing on a wall they promote a certain amount of decay. The high quality of most of the stone blocks at Great Zimbabwe has minimised the effects of this weathering agent.

The large voids and the small number of contact points between blocks in the wall means that water is not drawn in by capillary action. Furthermore, rainwater drains through the walls, thus reducing its potential as an agent of decay. It seems unlikely that the weathering of the rock is a significant factor in the degradation of the structures. Nevertheless, while weathering has little significance in the overall process of degeneration, its effect on some pieces of the stone located in critical positions within the wall may promote distress in the structure and can trigger its collapse.

STABILITY

Certain characteristics of the stone blocks have already been described but it is worth remembering those that affect the stability of the structure. The construction procedures adopted by the original builders seem to be the primary cause of most of the distress. An examination of a collapsed wall reveals that the walls have one well-defined stack of blocks in each external face. These external stacks extend from the bottom to the top of the wall. The external faces of the walls at times look like a succession of pillars made up of blocks stacked one on top of the other, having poor linkage with either the interior or even laterally. This peculiarity in the construction is further evidenced in some collapses where only the outer skin has fallen down. This is also seen in some pronounced bulges where large voids can be seen. In the interior of the walls blocks are placed with a tendency towards incipient coursing but the interlocking is often very poor. Frequently, these haphazardly placed blocks behave more like erratic agglomerations than self-supporting, interlocked block structures. The safety factor in such structures is very low and the smallest disturbance is enough to trigger destabilisation and collapse. These failure mechanisms can be summarised as follows (after Dickens and Walker 1992).

Bulging - A section of stone blocks in the wall protrudes outwards to form a convex vertical profile in a previously plane wall face. Bulging in a free-standing wall is likely to result from disturbance of the core material. In a retaining wall bulging may result from development of excessive lateral earth pressures, bearing capacity failures of the foundation material, or a combination of the two (Jones 1979).

Toppling - The displacement of upper blocks in the walls away from their vertical equilibrium position. Displacement may be caused by external factors such as vegetation growth.

Collapse - Once a section of wall has collapsed the zone of instability will progress along the remaining area owing to the toppling of the blocks.

Settlement - A section of wall may move downward owing to foundation failure.

Splitting - A vertical separation of blocks owing to the weight of the wall. This could be caused by differential settlement and frequently coincides with joints between sections of rebuilt and original walls.

Dhaka structures

As indicated earlier, the building material known as *dhaka* is paddled clay soil binding naturally weathered granite gravel aggregate.

FAILURE MECHANISM

Physical weathering, atmospheric conditions, movement of soluble salts and bio-deterioration account for most of the decay associated with *dhaka* structures. However, the rate of deterioration is a

function of the *dhaka* composition, texture, construction methods and subsequent usage of the structures. Prehistoric *dhaka* remains represent an end product of a sequence of events, ranging from construction and occupation to abandonment. Transformation and decay will begin again as soon as they are exposed to a new environment, for instance for presentation or exhibition purposes.

A comparison with contemporary vernacular architecture shows that *dhaka* structures begin decaying during the occupation period.

Besides the shrinkage fractures expected with this type of material, it seems that cracks appear on the structure immediately after construction. These tend to follow the joints between the floors, fittings and on the wall. The cracks in contemporary structures are normally covered up during routine maintenance by plastering, but certain areas of the floor almost always reveal signs of distress due to wear:

- The fireplace generally exhibits multiple microfractures superimposed on large, deep radial cracks, caused by continuous heating and use of the area.
- Doorways and stepped platforms show multiple microfractures and flaking of the *dhaka* surface.

In the *dhaka* remains at Great Zimbabwe, the failure patterns on the floors are similar to those found on contemporary vernacular buildings except that the ravages of time make them appear worse. In areas where timber posts have been dug into the floor, undulating cracks tend to develop radially. Besides these distinct patterns, randomly distributed cracks are noticeable on many floors. These cracks provide potential areas through which weathering and erosion agents can further the process of decay. The edges of the floors also show signs of continuous decay owing to micro-erosion and abrasion. With newly excavated remains, microfractures and flakes are a general phenomenon. These give a rough and undesirable appearance to the fabric of the remains. With the fired structures there are fewer signs of distress but they are weak in compression, and particularly so immediately after excavation.

The cracks and failure patterns of most ruined dhaka structures seem not to exhibit significant structural movement, although they tend to form zones of weakness, which facilitate the subsequent processes of decay when the structures are subjected to environmental fluctuations or loss of maintenance after abandonment. The prehistoric structures' post-collapse appearance is characterised by a random heap of *dhaka* blocks, deep vertical and horizontal cracks and general loss of shape. In some cases roots of plants have penetrated the cracked and eroding structures. The top sections of walls show signs of weathering, with most of the edges eroding away. The interior surfaces of most of these curvilinear walls shows signs of serious erosion, and the exterior surfaces exhibit a peculiar flaking towards the base of the walls. The wide cracks are a cause of anxiety with respect to the stability of these ruined *dhaka* walls. The fragile nature of most of these remains makes their presentation problematic. At present, five *dhaka* structures have been left exposed for visitors at Great Zimbabwe.

External factors

Most of the structural problems outlined above could be ascribed to the design and nature of materials used during the original construction, suggesting that the preservation of the site has been a problem from the very first day of construction. However, the fact that the monument was abandoned for centuries introduces a host of exogenous problems, associated with ruined structures all over the world. Apart from the natural decay of materials, which begins as soon as regular maintenance ceases, the major challenges faced by monuments in sub-Saharan Africa stem from uncontrolled vegetation growth and demands made on the site by contemporary society. Both types of challenge also impact on the cultural landscape.

VEGETATION

Possibly the most serious problem affecting preservation and presentation at Great Zimbabwe has been vegetation growth. One of the major attractions of ruined monuments is the juxtaposition of the ruin with plants or vegetation. At Great Zimbabwe, plants grow on both dry-stone and *dhaka* structures. To the romantic eye, this creates a very picturesque view of the whole site. The postcards most popular with foreign tourists at Great Zimbabwe are those with plant growth on or next to the structures. An example are the postcards that depict the valley enclosures in spring with the pink aloes in flower, or those showing the two big trees inside the Great Enclosure. (See Plates 5.1 and 5.2) However, sentimental attachment to beautiful plants blinds people to the damage they can do to the integrity of the monument. Large trees grow deep roots, which can destabilize structures. The growth of aloes and plants such as *Lantana camara*, if uncontrolled, blocks access to and views of the monument.

The problem of vegetation growth is a serious one and there are no easy solutions to it. Trees and plants cannot easily be removed. Their removal affects the traditionally held image of the monument, which the contemporary visitor has come to associate with the site's aesthetics. Besides, the vegetation also offers some protection to archaeological remains and even *dhaka* structures. The high trees and low

FIGURE 5.1
Aloe in the valley enclosures

creeping cover potentially shelters some remains from the direct impact of rain and wind erosion. Removal of trees can also upset the foundations, and hence stability, of ruins, and trigger the total or partial collapse of a structure.

Historically, vegetation has caused numerous problems for the walls at Great Zimbabwe. The devastating effect of uncontrolled vegetation growth on the stability of dry-stone walls was apparent from 1890 when Great Zimbabwe was first photographed. Indeed, most of the photographs taken between 1890 and 1920 show overgrowth on the site. Other sites such as Danamombe, Zinjanja, Tsindi and Ziwa were in a similar state. Carl Mauch, the German geologist and explorer who visited the site in 1871, reported the problems caused by vegetation growth on walls:

> *Otherwise everything is rubble and in ruins and thick undergrowth, Some tall trees of three diameter left their leafy roofs almost to double the height of the undamaged wall and many fast growing trees have such granite stones grown into them.*

Once vegetation growth has been established within the structure of the wall, its removal becomes a significant problem. At this point its presence is likely to have been causing distress to the structure. If vegetation is left in place then collapse of the wall may eventually occur. On the other hand, dry-stone walls by their nature do encourage vegetation growth within them. The voids and accumulated clay dust create an area conducive for plant growth. The rough surface of the granite blocks traps moisture and this provides for biological growth in the form of lichens and fungi, or large or high-growing trees. The flexibility offered by dry-stone walls in withstanding movements, and their ability to restabilize, means that trees can grow within a wall structure for a long time before collapse. By this time, the wall will have been deformed and blocks moved out of position. In some cases walls are totally destroyed.

The root systems of high-growth vegetation tend to cause deformations, and removing the root system without causing further disturbance is unlikely to succeed. Killing the plant may cause foundation failure as the roots decay and introduce voids and new moisture regimes in the soil strata. The site of Tsindi is a case in point: a tree had been allowed to grow on the dry-stone wall for many years, resulting in the development of a bulge. The decision was taken to cut it down and poison the stump in the hope that its slow decay would allow the wall to stabilize. (See Plate 5.3) However, this led to the wall's collapse three years on, and it then had to be rebuilt. An open mesh geotexiles grid with a herbicide was introduced to stabilize the wall and discourage plant growth. These grids are usually made of polypropylene or polyethylene with carbon/black ultraviolet radiation inhibitors. (See Plate 5.4)

As far as tree growth is concerned, the best option is removal before any roots are established. The fact that trees are growing on structures is a clear indication of the absence of maintenance schedule for the place. The problem is that most sites do not have staff employed to look after them, so any maintenance regime needs to be based on local community participation. For sites such as Tsindi, which is located in a commercial farming area 80 kilometres from the community claiming ownership, this option is not available.

Vegetation also provides fuel in the event of a veld fire; these occur very frequently at Great Zimbabwe. No proper research has yet been done on the effects of fire on the cultural property, although its prevention is perceived as central to the management of the estate (Nehowa 1997). The destruction of trees

could lead to the exposure of archaeological material to erosion; otherwise, the effects of fire on the dry-stone and *dhaka* structures is doubtful. Veld fires are common in this area and, after its abandonment, Great Zimbabwe must have witnessed several bouts of them before the modern management system was established. Veld fires rarely burn at temperatures above 500 degrees centigrade, and accordingly will have minimal effect on the dry-stone structures. The desire to prevent fires on the estate lies behind the prohibition of harvesting dead wood; this, however, leads to the accumulation of wood fuel, the existence of which increases the chances of a veld fire. The biggest cause of veld fires in the monument is supposed to be the surrounding local communities (Nehowa 1997). The villagers normally cause these fires when they clear land for cultivation or when they collect firewood. In fact Nehowa's report applauded the eviction of people from the nearby Morgenster farm because it reduced the occurrence of fires. Thus even present day management at Great Zimbabwe would welcome the removal of the local community as far from the monument as possible.

HUMAN EFFECTS

Great Zimbabwe is open to the public and the visitors cause some of the damage to the site. They overuse certain paths and areas of the monument, especially the entrances to the Great Enclosure and the western enclosure of the hill complex, walk over archaeological deposits, and climb on walls. Animals such as baboons and monkeys can cause the same problems. The ruins are under continued pressure from the growing tourist industry. The monument faces the problem that it is a basic tourist resource and also an area of great archaeological and research value. Each guise of the monument requires its own style of upkeep.

As pointed out earlier, previous archaeological and preservation practices have affected the preservation of the monument and hence its presentation. However, the general public – and in particular the local community – is perceived by management as a major threat to the site. Given what has happened at sites such as Domboshava, where archaeological sites have been vandalised by local communities, perhaps their fears are not unfounded (Pwiti and Mvenge 1996). Poaching, cattle grazing, cutting down trees for domestic use, and conducting rituals at the monument are all strictly discouraged by the authorities. Local communities have been blamed for the perennial devastating veld fires on the site; and their frequent requests to conduct rituals on site are considered a nuisance by management, although not a major threat to the fabric of the monument. The fear is also that granting permission for such events to go ahead would involve National Museums in what it considers to be 'petty local politics' (Matenga, per comm). In all preservation and presentation decisions, the local community has always been seen as a threat to the survival of the monument.

Recording and documentation

The aesthetic appearance of the dry-stone walls at Great Zimbabwe has been systematically recorded using P, Q, R styles (Whitty 1961). Combined with the fact that walls abut each other and *dhaka* structures, these architectural features provide a chronological record of how the monument was built and developed over the centuries and, together with excavated archaeological stratigraphy, have the potential to provide a historical documentation of the site. However, preservation and heritage management practices demand a far more systematic record and documentation than simply a chronological sequence. The two essential guidelines in recording and documentation are accuracy and easy access to the recorded data. Given the size of Great Zimbabwe, a system of coordinates is adequate to cover these requirements. Coordinates enable easy access to, and accurate checks on, areas of structural deformation, geometrical change or – in the case of *dhaka* remains – where mechanical changes and deterioration of the landscape are taking place.

At Great Zimbabwe, there is a twofold documentation and recording system in order to cater for preservation needs:

a) A survey has been made and a coordinate system established, enabling the condition of the monument to be recorded. On this basis, subsequent surveys of the site's condition can provide advance notice of areas that may need intervention, and also provide a record of interventions and their effectiveness in the long term. Such surveys should be done periodically.
b) A recording system has been implemented that provides monitoring component in areas identified in (a) above, and is designed to improve the effectiveness of recent work.

Grid-laying for the coordinate system was done by precise triangulation. Terrestrial photogrammetry is perhaps the most accurate documentation system suitable for the periodic surveys, as it gives the general morphology of the structures and an indication of the extent of defects. It also allows the structures and individual problems to be pinpointed in a grid reference system for easy access. Photogrammetry can additionally be used for the production of topographic maps and ground plans of the archaeological remains. It has the potential to be used for precise monitoring but, for a site such as Great Zimbabwe, this could be very expensive. Its use might best be

restricted to periodic surveys. In any case, the cost of acquiring and maintaining the photogrammetric equipment makes this form of survey far beyond the means of a developing country such as Zimbabwe, which will have to rely on donations for the acquisition of the technology; in addition to which, photogrammetry requires highly skilled technicians. The periodic documentation can adequately be carried out using conventional survey techniques.

For the day-to-day monitoring of critical areas, a combination of triangulation and use of strain gauges should be sufficient to detect any serious movement. Basic mapping along with precise recording can be used to obtain a warning system for *dhaka* structures. Bearing in mind that these are largely indeterminate structures capable of readjusting to a new equilibrium, monitoring should be repeated regularly before any intervention is made. Dismantling an existing structure for the purposes of remedial action should be executed only when a scheduled plan of intervention has been establish, to ensure that proper recording and investigations take place.

The Finnish government undertook an aerial and photogrammetric survey in 1994 as part of its contribution to the preservation of Great Zimbabwe. It produced a digital terrain model (DTM) for the central area of the monument, which in future surveys of the monument's condition will provide a base line against which any changes can be measured and identified. Aerial photographs, together with the terrestrial photogrammetry plates, provide an accurate picture of the cultural landscape as it then stood.

The need for pre-intervention documentation and recording should be emphasised, not only to show the condition of the structures but also to give an indication of the likely problems. No physical intervention should be undertaken in relation to any part of the monument without an intimate knowledge of that property. Such knowledge can only be acquired by archaeological research, recording and surveying as set out above. Photography is perhaps the simplest and most useful visual method of recording the monument. Fortunately for Great Zimbabwe, an archive of photographs taken between 1890 and 1900 exists, providing valuable information about the early condition of the monument.

Preserving sections of Great Zimbabwe: case studies

In dealing with the preservation of Great Zimbabwe and related sites, the criteria governing interventions have to be based on a strict respect for the authenticity, aesthetics, historical data and physical integrity of the monument (Philippot 1972, Feilden 1982, Jokilehto 1985).

From 1986, a dry-stone wall monitoring scheme was introduced at the monument as a means of identifying and recording sections threatened with collapse. The monitoring of the structures at Great Zimbabwe was introduced as an integral part of a comprehensive inspection to assess the condition of the site. This was an opportunity to put into practice the monitoring and inspections objectives of gathering information on which to base management and control of structural stability (Sowden 1990). Monitoring also provides data used in formulating maintenance strategies and assessing whether interventions are needed.

The monitoring scheme for the dry-stone structures at Great Zimbabwe aims at:

- Identifying areas where significant progressive movement and hence structural instability is occurring;
- Quantifying the movement and structural instability;
- Identifying the causes of deterioration; and
- Assessing the levels and extent of corrective intervention measures required.

Several monitoring methods have been tried out. Old and new photographs were compared in order to identify the recent development of bulges or collapses. The photographs dated from the 1920s, 1960s and 1980s, but no indication of the current condition of the wall could easily be deciphered by this method. Based on the principles of Young's Modulus, a method using glass wires was introduced to detect in-plane movement. This involved fixing a wire across an area where movement was suspected. From the presence or absence of broken wires an evaluation could be made of the wall's structural stability. The method was easy to use and did not require much skill to implement. Its disadvantage was that it was not easy to compute the magnitude of the movement. However, as an indicator of movement, the method is effective, except that visitors, animals and insects could easily break the glass wire and this would register a false movement of the structure. The method had to be used with caution.

The Universities of Zimbabwe and Loughborough, with funding from National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe and the British government, initiated a joint project in 1989 aiming to apply engineering expertise to archaeological practice at Great Zimbabwe (Dickens and Walker 1992). Its objectives were, amongst other things, to study the behaviour of the dry-stone structures and to identify suitable methods of monitoring the structural stability of the walls. Monitoring schemes using demountable Demec strain gauges and triangulation survey were introduced. Gauge points are mounted into small, drilled, stainless steel discs affixed to the surface of

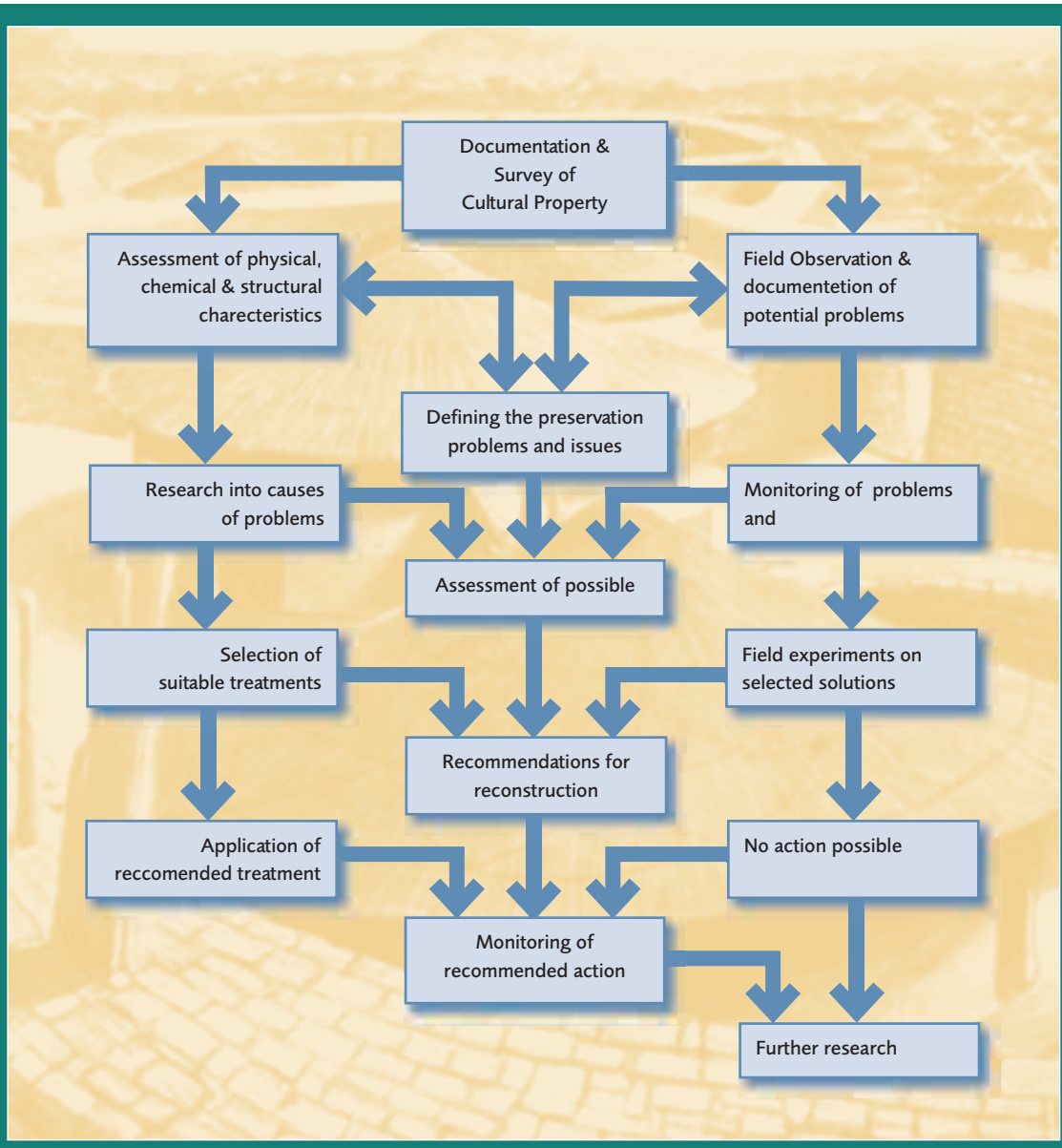


FIGURE 5.1
General preservation process implemented at Great Zimbabwe and related sites

stone blocks and readings are taken between them at regular intervals of time (Hendry 1977, Hume 1989). The discs are placed in pairs across horizontal and vertical joints in the wall, one disc on each block on either side of the joints.

The Demec strain gauges used at Great Zimbabwe are 200 millimetres long and their resolution is generally in the order of -/+ 0.1 millimetre. Using these gauges gives the magnitude of the movement. Although more reliable than glass wires, the method is more expensive, given that the discs have to be specially made. The use of Demec strain gauges only measures in-plane block movements and is not easy to interpolate, particularly on dry-stone walls. It cannot monitor the movements occurring in the core section of the wall. However, compared to theodolite surveying and photogrammetry, which require expensive equipment and highly trained technicians, the Demec strain gauge is relatively cheap and easy to use. Forty-three sites were selected for monitoring using this method and twelve areas showed signs of significant movement (Dickens and Walker 1992). The main areas of concern were the buttress entrance and the western entrance of the Great Enclosure.

TERRACE PLATFORM WALL

In 1986 glass wires were randomly fixed on several sites and, from the results, the terrace platform on the south slope of the hill was identified as being in danger of collapse. This is a retaining wall and movement was believed to be due to soil pressure forcing a section of the wall to move out of position. This is a common

cause of failure in most retaining walls (Jones 1979, Arya and Gupta 1983). The bulge affected the areas from the eleventh to the eighteenth – the top – courses, an area in the middle section of the wall of about 370 cm in height and 480 cm in length. It was recommended that the wall be dismantled and rebuilt with some form of stabilisation. The process of dismantling the wall was recorded in detail, providing an opportunity of examining and evaluating possible causes of the instability.

To ensure an authentic reconstruction of the stone wall, the wall face was mapped and each face block colour-coded. However, once the wall was dismantled, no easy solution could be found for dealing with it and for several years the wall could not be restored. At this stage, not much knowledge was available on the mechanisms of deterioration and collapse of these dry-stone walls. The major reason was lack of trained and experienced conservators familiar with dry-stone monuments. This period was, however, used to evaluate possible intervention methods and how they would facilitate preservation principles.

Initial restoration started with the terrace platform, which was a retaining wall and presented fewer complications. This gave the stonemasons time to gain confidence in dealing with large areas of restoration. Because the wall had been dismantled in 1987 it had to be cleaned and care was taken to arrange the core material. With the face stones each block of stone was returned to its previous position as worked out from the archival records. The relationship and hence the context of the blocks was deduced from the colour-coded numbers which record the course number and block number. Thus after eliminating the bulge and possibly some of the causes of instability, the restored wall still maintained the contextual relationships, and the method ensured that no new material was introduced. Movement was registered during the first year when the wall had to settle. Subsequent readings showed that the wall has now stabilized.

BUTTRESS ENTRANCE

The buttress entrance located on the hill complex exhibited movements that needed immediate attention. This is a free-standing wall with around 28 courses (approximately 786 centimetres) on the outer face and 17 courses on the inner face (approximately 530 centimetres), it is about 200 centimetres thick at the top and 456 centimetres at the bottom. The wall showed signs of stress as evidenced by a bulge. This was most likely due to core block disturbance and the fact that the foundation of the buttress entrance was a granite outcrop with a steep slope. The slope had a cross-section showing a steeper gradient on the lower section of 1:1 (45%) and a gradient on the upper section of 1:2 (26%). The data collected revealed evidence of increased movement during the rainy season due to pressures from the core material of the wall. These movements were exacerbated by tourist movement around the entrance. From the strain gauge readings it was apparent that the buttress was structurally unstable and intervention was required to redress the situation.

Given the magnitude of movement, it was decided that the buttress entrance should be dismantled and restored. The civil engineers from Loughborough recommended three possible options for its safe rehabilitation. They dismissed the rebuilding of the wall using the same techniques as the original builders because the safety factor against sliding was estimated to be approximately 1.4, whereas engineering designs required a minimum safety factor of 1.75 (Dickens & Walker 1992). The alternatives were:

A) Horizontal steps

In view of the tendency of the wall to slide on the granite outcrop, a stepped horizontal foundation would have to be provided by cutting back the granite bedrock. In order to have the horizontal step, the granite would have to be cut back. (See Figure 5.2) It was estimated that seven steps would need to be cut; the total length of the vertical cut would be 1 400 centimetres, and its depth 20 centimetres. About 1.5 tonnes of granite would have to be removed. The cutting of granite would be a radical intervention and would not be reversible. Historical information about the technical details of how the wall was founded would be lost. The height of the wall and inevitably the shape of the wall would change. This would compromise authenticity, a basic principle of preservation.

B) Concrete steps

The alternative to cutting into the granite would be to provide stability by constructing steps using concrete.

The concrete would have to be anchored to the granite using stainless steel dowels to prevent sliding. The concrete mix would have to be cement-rich to ensure good durability.

Approximately 1.4 cubic metres of concrete, 2.76 square metres of vertical formwork and 7 square metres of reinforcement mesh would be required. (See Figure 5.3) The introduction of concrete, although reversible in theory, did not guarantee stability in the long term. Besides, from a cultural point of view, it would disfigure the wall and the local community would find

this solution unacceptable. Given the cultural significance of this site to the nation and the local community, concrete could not be considered a viable option. It would also mean introducing new material. The local community had always made it known that the use of concrete was unacceptable and they blamed it for the frequency of drought. However their voice was usually ignored as retrogressive and based on unproven myths.

C) Dowelling blocks

A number of base blocks could be fixed to the granite using dowels small in diameter. The dowelled blocks would need to be bedded on cement mortar and the remainder placed on *dhaka* wedges.

The preservation team on site at Great Zimbabwe was to implement the outlined solutions. It was made clear that, from an engineering point of view, solution (A) of cutting the granite slope would be preferred. In addition to these suggestions about how to strengthen the foundation of the buttress entrance, the engineers suggested the use of a geogrid to strengthen the wall structure. The geogrid would be laid horizontally at several courses and this would reduce the movement of individual blocks. All these solutions would eliminate or at least minimise the need to constantly maintain and repair the structures. Dowelling of individual blocks could not guarantee structural stability without introducing new material.

The options offered by the engineers were evaluated against the background of archaeological preservation principles. All three options presented serious problems. In addition to those factors already mentioned, it was felt that the necessary experience in introducing these radical interventions was not available, at least at Great Zimbabwe. The preference would have been to try these methods out first in the experimental yard. In addition, the lack of detailed instructions about how the geogrid was to be used meant that its introduction would have been on an experimental basis. The long-term allowable strength of the geogrid was unknown. However, it is known that its strength could be influenced by the construction, the sustained-load (creep) and chemical and biological polymer degradation.

During the mid-1980s a number of short walls had collapsed and had been restored by the traditional stonemason. A method of recording the structures by photographs and planning frames had been introduced. Whenever a wall collapsed, any old photographs available would be retrieved and assessed, to evaluate how much of the original stone remained and whether there was sufficient historical evidence for a restoration by the stonemason. In the case of those walls in danger of collapsing the blocks would be colour-coded, photographed and mapped. This procedure of recording had been followed prior to the dismantling of the terrace platform and the buttress entrance. During the dismantling, further documentation was made to ensure accuracy in accordance with archaeological and preservation ethics. Given the fact that the traditional stonemasons had in the past dealt only with smaller structures, there was some hesitation in trying them on this buttress entrance. However, since none of the recommended options was consistent with preservation principles, it was decided to restore the terrace platform consulting archival records, using

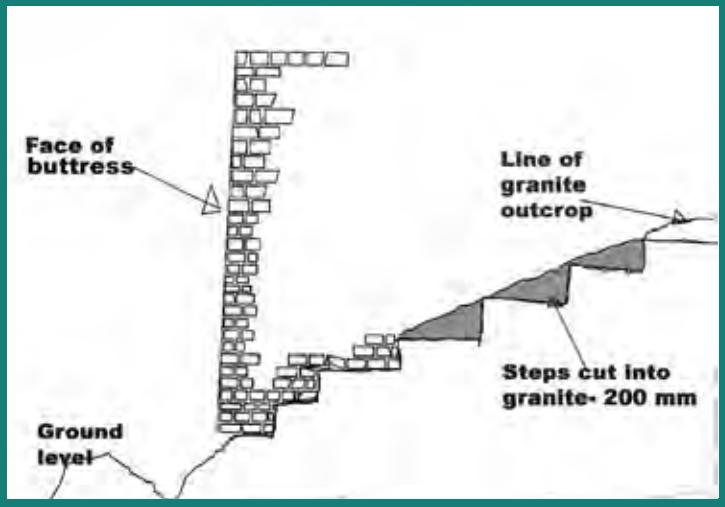


FIGURE 5.2 Steps cut into granite

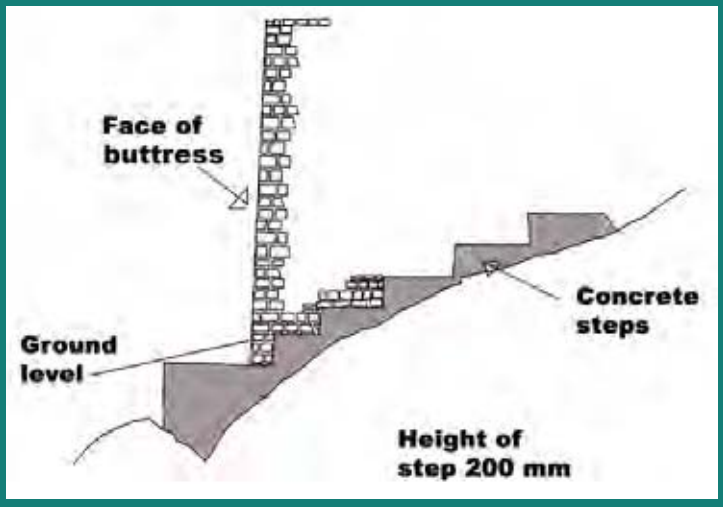


FIGURE 5.3 Concrete steps

PLATE 5.2
Restored western entrance to the Great Enclosure

the original method of construction and with no introduction of new material.

With the buttress entrance wall the same procedure was followed as with the rebuilding of the terrace platform. The task of reconstruction was made relatively easier by the fact that the wall had not yet collapsed and documentation had been carefully completed. However, the foundation presented practical problems since it was on sloping granite bedrock. During the process of dismantling it had been noted that clay (*dhaka*) had been used to wedge the foundation blocks into position, and the same technique was also used during reconstruction. Whilst the introduction of clay could potentially lead to problems in future, it played an important role in ensuring stability of the wall during the restoration. The restoration programme took three months. The wall has since been monitored for more than two years using strain gauges. The results indicate that movements occurred during the first year but it now appears that the wall has stabilized. The movement might also be seasonal. However, no serious movement has been recorded on the rebuilt sections.

WESTERN ENTRANCE

The Great Enclosure has three entrances; all were restored inaccurately before 1915 by S. Claire Wallace as open entrances. From observations made in the late nineteenth century by Mauch and Bent, the main entrances to the Great Enclosure and the hill complex were constructed with lintels (Bent 1892, Burke 1969). The lintels were either of wood or stone. There is clear evidence that at least two of the Great Enclosure entrances had wooden lintels. The monitoring programme had shown continuous movement in the western entrance of the Great Enclosure, which had resulted in a bulge. The engineers from Loughborough University advised that the wall would eventually collapse given the continuous movement. A decision to correct this problem was taken; the dilemma was whether to restore it to the pre-Wallace condition or to open entrance status. It has to be considered that restorations, just like excavations, are part of the historiography of the monument. It was felt that the restoration of this wall offered an opportunity to rehabilitate the entrance with a lintel (Matenga 1996), and correct the misconception that many visitors seem to have about the Great Enclosure entrances.

National legislation had to be taken into consideration in carrying out this restoration work, as well as international conventions, such as the much-criticised Venice Charter (Sullivan 1985, Larson 1994, Lowenthal 1996). The visiting public, to whom the action was to be explained, also had to be considered (Matenga 1996). The restoration employed traditional stonemasons for the greater part of the work. However, the wooden lintels were not load-bearing. Stone beams were used in order to stabilize the entrance. (See Plate 5.2)

The attempt to remain faithful to the methods of the original builders ensures that the restored area is as authentic as possible. It limits the introduction of new materials, and minimises the violation of preservation principles as laid down by the various international statutes. It is important to note that, in order to implement most radical interventions, expensive equipment and a high level of technical expertise are required. Most organizations that manage archaeological sites cannot afford such solutions.

Preservation process

Choosing the appropriate option for intervention has to follow preservation principles. Before any intervention, the historical evidence should be fully recorded. Nothing should be destroyed, falsified or removed. The intervention should be the minimum necessary, governed by unswerving respect for the aesthetic, historical and physical integrity of the structure or site, and should also be reversible if technically possible (Feilden 1982, Stanley-Price 1990). This may be difficult and in many cases it has been found to be impossible to achieve. Many physical interventions might be reversible in theory but in practice difficult to carry out. Related to the idea of reversibility is the fact that no intervention should prejudice any future work. It should be possible for future researchers to have access to all the evidence incorporated in the structures. It is also important that the maximum amount of existing material is

retained whenever possible. These principles ensure that we do not build a new design to replace the original. After all, people want to see the original (Molina-Montes 1982, Stanley-Price 1990).

The principles of conservation may be universal, but intervention at each ruined structure or site depends on the local circumstances. The solution must arise out of the ethos and social environment of the particular culture we are seeking to preserve. The method and the degree of intervention depend on the values we assign to the site. We have to consider the significant cultural, archaeological and other values of the site. In the case of Great Zimbabwe and related monuments, the significance of the dry-stone architecture is central, while all aspects of the site have to be considered as a whole in order to appreciate the historical significance of the site. It is the fact that such a monumental architecture was created by an African farming community, using stones without mortar, that makes it unique. The Great Zimbabwe site is in many ways synonymous with the idea of dry-stone walling. This should have a bearing on the decisions about method and degree of intervention. The assessment should be based on whether the method of intervention could possibly violate the significance of the site (Crosby 1984, Sullivan 1985).

When conserving Great Zimbabwe-type sites, the point is to preserve a prehistoric society's achievements. This should not be confused with advocating a policy of 'conserve as found', which can inhibit appropriate intervention to the extent of losing the site. The attitude and views of the local community must be respected as well as conservation principles. Great Zimbabwe plays an important function in the cultural and socio-economic life of the local people. During the 1990–1991 drought years, the monument became a centre of religious activities associated with praying for rain. Some even blamed the drought on the conservation programmes that were being carried out on site, blaming in particular the use of cement in consolidating the stone structures. At the same time, because crops had failed, many families become dependent on the tourist trade. They sold souvenirs and provided other services to tourists who visited the monument.

Discussion

It appears that the preservation of Great Zimbabwe has paid homage to the preservation principles espoused by the 1972 World Heritage Convention and the 1964 Venice Charter. Whilst this is a positive sign, the examples in this chapter clearly indicate that this is a technofix type of preservation. The approach fails to take into account that the monument is much more than dry-stone structures, and that its character and sense of place draw upon its being situated in a landscape.

Adhering to the universality of the preservation movement as espoused by the Venice Charter also entails that local communities cannot contribute in a meaningful way to the preservation or presentation of their heritage. Given that Great Zimbabwe in recent times acted as a rallying point for African Nationalism, the exclusion of local community participation is surprising, and also indicates that its preservation has involved no assessment of this monument's significant value. It appears the value of this site is determined by tourists, and by UNESCO through its charters; perhaps this is inevitable if income generation is the rationale in persuading donors to support the preservation of the ruins – as the Master Plan for Resource Development and the Strategic Plan both indicate (Collett 1992, 1998). National Museums and Monuments commissioned both these documents.

The preservation policy, which in many ways has emphasised minimum intervention, has been criticised by the local communities. Their disquiet about restoration projects at the site stems from the belief that the spirits already protect the monument, and they attribute problems encountered during restoration to a lack of understanding about how the monument should be protected (Ucko 1994, Pwiti 1996). Even the visitors, National Museums' intended audience, seem opposed to radical interventions in the fabric of the monument. Most feel that restoration debases the cultural value of the monument. The source of local community disquiet with the management of the monument seems to be the feeling of being ignored and not consulted in what they see as a major cultural phenomenon in their area. These feelings indicate that they do care about the archaeological heritage and realise that National Museums as a government agency has a role to play. The local council at Nemanwa Growth Point expresses ignorance of a number of projects going on at the monument and feels that National Museums does not take into consideration the fact that the monument is in their area of jurisdiction. They feel that National Museums hides behind its legal status and uses it as an excuse to ignore the local environment. What appears to matter to the heritage organization is the opinion of tourists and international organizations such as ICOMOS and World Heritage Convention.

6

Redefining the cultural landscape

IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER it was demonstrated that the core of the Great Zimbabwe site cannot simply be viewed as the architectural and archaeological features; a different perspective needs to be taken, in order to bring important aspects of this cultural heritage into focus. It was also pointed out that the local community is uneasy with some of the interventions put forward in the name of preservation. Interventions that have been suggested, although partially conforming to international standards, can best be described as technofixes that show little understanding of the complexities underlying the dynamics of cultural landscapes. The principles of preservation as espoused at Great Zimbabwe do not take into consideration the sociocultural matrix in which the monument is situated. Instead, they usually treat the monument as a museum object to be curated and separated from the larger sociocultural and environmental context. In order to begin addressing this fundamental aspect of heritage management, this chapter discusses the cultural landscape on which the site is situated, and how it has developed. The concern here is not only to offer a diachronic synthesis, but also to show that at any given moment the immediate landscape would have been of cultural importance. The primary objective is to reveal the evolutionary dynamics that have shaped and continue to structure the sociocultural landscape in which Great Zimbabwe is located.

The approach followed here starts from a need to understand the dynamics and historical development of the present-day cultural landscape in order to arrive at its present cultural significance, rather than to understand better the detailed functions and appearance of landscapes in the past. The point is to demonstrate that, at any given time, the cultural landscape is not static. This implies that the definition of Great Zimbabwe as a cultural place is always changing. Perceptions of the place are constantly changing too, under cultural and political influences. This approach also aims at providing a clear understanding of what the cultural landscape is. Understanding the current landscape in archaeological terms and assessing its cultural values are both important in guiding decisions about managing the cultural property and its landscape. Documenting and appraising cultural landscapes should be part of the task of preservation and presentation of cultural property because, without it, the significance of the place remains incompletely understood.

Landscape research varies widely from systematic/scientific environmental reconstruction approaches (Rossignol and Wandsnider 1992), through historical ecological approaches, which look at the environment as cumulative human modification effects (Crumley 1994, Balee 1998, Whitehead 1998), to phenomenological perspectives (Bender 1992, Tilley 1994). The phenomenological approach also explores the cultural meanings associated with a landscape, and the metaphors and symbolism through which meanings are expressed. In this chapter, the landscape is seen as an arena of political discourse; not as something already understood but, being socially constructed, subject to continuous reinterpretation (Hewison 1987, Bender 1993, McGlade 1999). Cultural landscapes are defined as geographic areas that include both cultural and natural resources and are associated with historic developments, events or activities, or exhibit cultural values. Culture exists in people's minds, not on the ground. However, the

activities that shape the landscape may be culturally constructed (Mulk and Bayliss-Smith 1999).

In practical terms, cultural landscapes consist of topography, vegetation, structures and settlements. Identities of place can be constructed in terms of somatic, perceptual, existential, architectural or cognitive space (Tilley 1994). Heritage management engages with all forms of these interconnected spaces and, in most cases, takes the following approach towards cultural landscapes:

- Nature as fundamental heritage in its own right;
- Environment as the setting of human actions; and
- Sense of place, as an awareness of local differences, and as cultural links with specific phenomena (whether tangible or intangible) on the landscape.

All this leads to an awareness of natural and cultural complexity and the stewardship needs of the landscape. This landscape provides an important dimension for understanding and experiencing the larger contexts – landscapes are created by people, and can be viewed as part of the cosmology of a people.

In most African societies there is no distinction between nature and creator and no sharp separation between humanity and nature. The trees, mountains, rocks, forests and animals are treated as part of human life. They too are supposed to have a soul. In this context, the landscape is a communal resource and provides for the interplay of the human and natural species in a shared environment. For instance, the sacred groves of Tali in Ghana, covering 25 square kilometres of dense forests, provide a catchment area that shields drinking sources and provides herbs for medicinal purposes. These groves and forests are protected through the custodianship of five villages and their shared system of taboos and customs. This is an illustration of some of the ways in which the interdependence of nature and culture are sustained (Amoaka-Atta 1995). It should be pointed out that the focus on cultural resources is in a sense artificial, as a discussion of this resource is intricately intertwined with the use and control of other resources such as water, soil, forests and grasslands.

The monuments on the landscape can also be seen as a cultural mnemonics, monumentally connected with local communities and organizations. Monuments can also be seen as permanent markers on the landscape, interpreted and dealt with in many different ways after they were built in prehistory. This relationship between landscapes, monuments and cultures occurs continuously and cannot be seen as frozen at a particular moment. This perspective in many ways challenges the whole basis of authenticity in setting as expounded by the 1972 World Heritage Convention.

The cultural landscape created at Great Zimbabwe includes both intentional and unintentional environmental modifications. Intentional changes include the erection of the monument, and internal management regulations put in place since 1902 through assorted

PLATE 6.1
The cultural landscape and research area in November 1999 (Landsat 7)

legislation. Unintentional changes include the various effects of continued farming activities, and of land appropriation and redistribution. The use of parts of the monument as cattle pens at the turn of the century, the construction of tourist facilities, the setting up of a golf course and the construction of a water reservoir are all intentional events, which have left their mark on the cultural landscape. It should be pointed out that the cultural landscape around Great Zimbabwe shows evidence of human occupation for all the major archaeological periods, from the hunting and gathering communities of several millennia BCE to the farming communities of recent historical times; the focus on the monument does not mean that other earlier or later landscapes are unimportant.

Place information

The recording and classification of archaeological sites in the past has concentrated on discrete sites usually identified by six-figure grid references, referring on a map to areas of approximately 100 x 100 metres. Each translates in real terms into a dot with a defined location but no defined boundary, and is viewed as representing past settlement patterns. Although these dots are used, they represent nodes of activity areas rather than the physical place. The attributes associated with the location coordinates are viewed as the data set, which we can use to infer meaning for the occupied place. Attributes include site type and size, finds, and geographic setting. They also give us the sense of the place and its relationship with the immediate environment. The main source of data for studying the cultural landscape before 1800 are the location records from the survey conducted in 1996–1997, and these are complemented by records from the Archaeological Survey site database located in Harare. The main aims of the latter survey were to establish what the settlement patterns had been, and obtain a greater understanding of the landscape area around the prehistoric urban centre at Great Zimbabwe.

The vegetation on the granite formation characteristic of the landscape is largely comprised of *Brachystegia, Apocynaceae* spp. and *Acacia* spp. The soils tend to be sandy with patchy areas of reddish clay. The survey was carried out by field-walking during winter, when visibility on the ground surface was optimum. Local people were at times interviewed in order to locate sites, but this proved to be time-consuming and seldom to the point. The information given was biased towards recent sites and walled places; informants appeared to be oblivious of other sites, even conspicuous panels of Rock Art.

The area for this study was the ten-kilometre radius around the present-day core area, as defined by the fenced boundary. (See Plate 6.1) This area

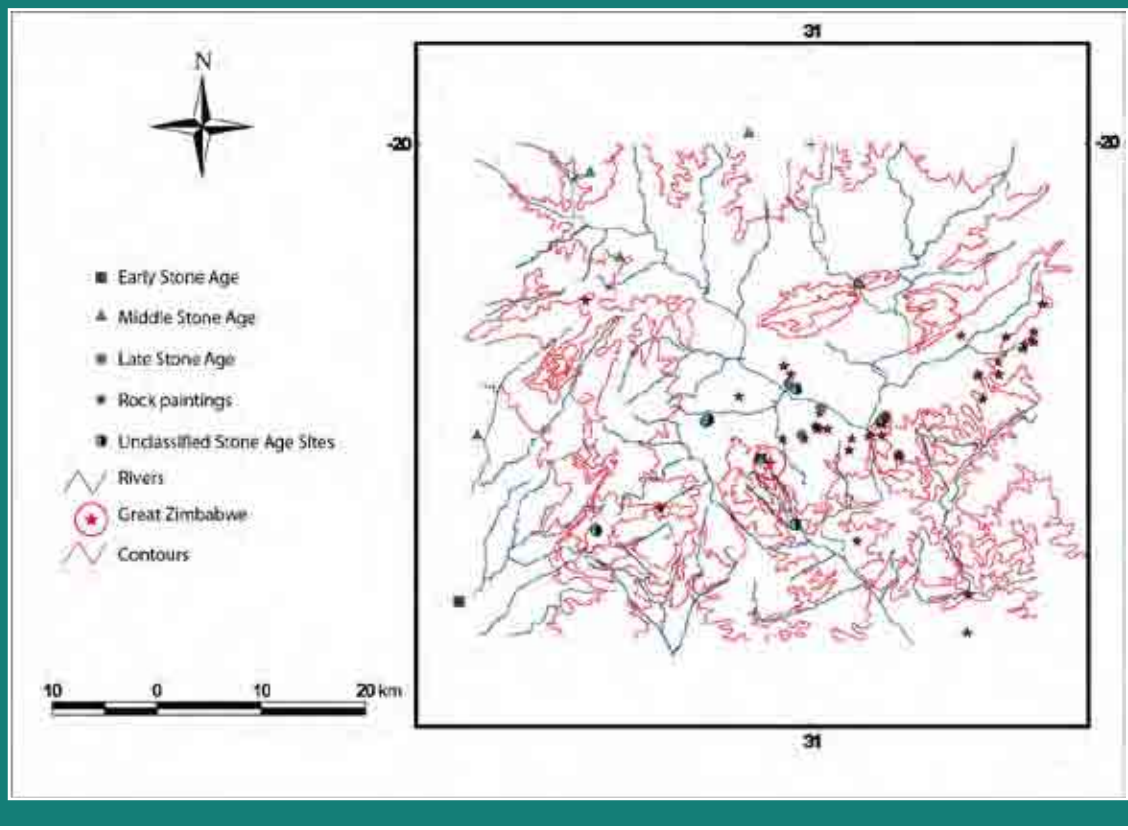


FIGURE 6.1
Distribution of Stone Age sites in the study area

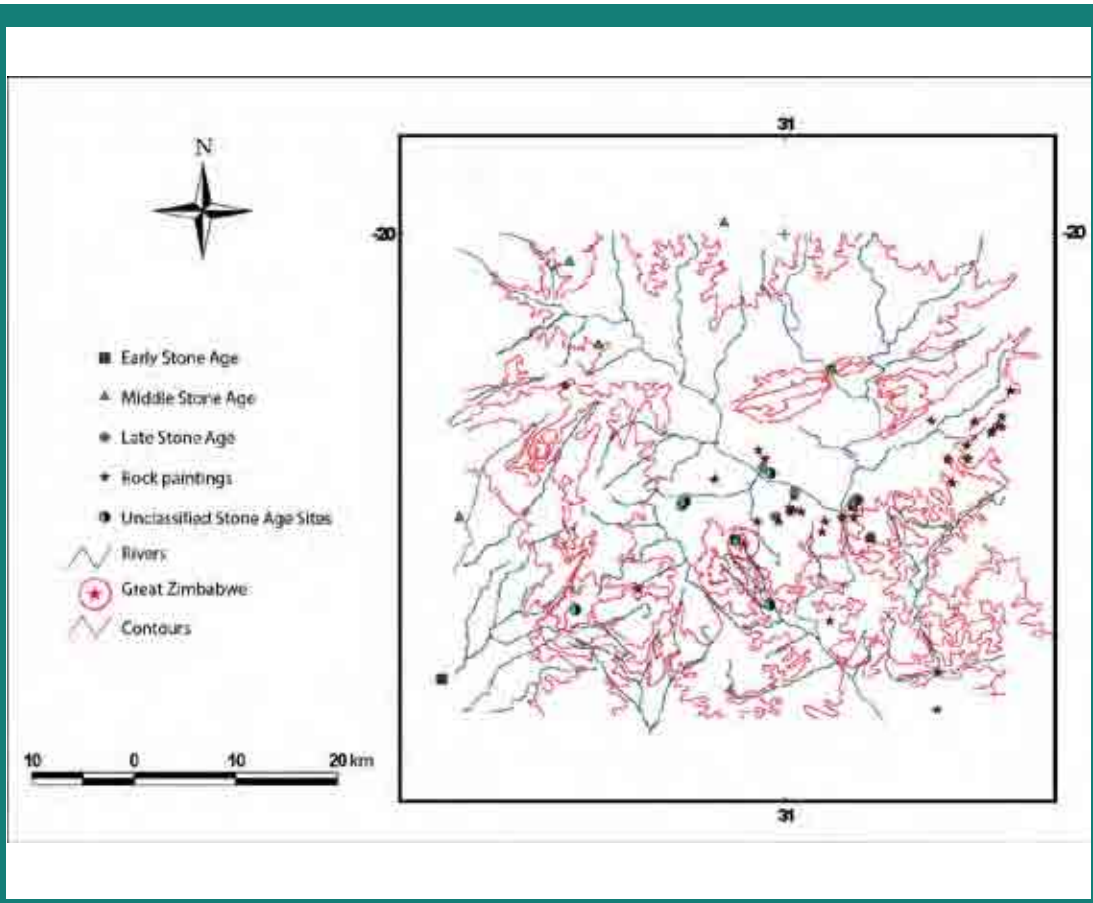


FIGURE 6.2
Distribution of Early Farming Communities (c.200-900 CE) in the study area

was chosen as a sample, to provide an insight into the dynamics that might have a bearing on the preservation and presentation of the monument and its context. Whilst it is clear that the catchment area of Great Zimbabwe in prehistoric times went beyond this, the objective here was to study the immediate environment on the management of the monument. The information from the Archaeological Survey database has certain limitations of accuracy and sample bias (Sinclair 1987). Its limitations are particularly apparent when trying to evaluate settlement size and socio-economic relationships among sites in the same locality, but we can roughly interpolate the level of occupation over the landscape from the database. Although on the map these places appear as dots, they represent spheres of interactions and are therefore part of a dynamic cultural landscape. Since we are also able to date the places relative to one another, these clues taken together give us a way of deciphering the cultural landscape through time.

The cultural landscape before the nineteenth century

Figure 6.1 shows that the area around Great Zimbabwe was sparsely populated during the Stone Age. Hunter-gatherers seem to have had a limited impact on the cultural landscape in terms of making physical alterations and a lasting impression. Recent studies on hunter-gatherers have shown the strong ideological links these communities had with their natural environment and landscape (Jolly 1996, Ouzman and Wadley 1997, Kinahan 1999). The absence of visible physical impacts on the landscape does not necessarily mean that there were not strong relationships between humans and nature. Despite modern perceptions to the contrary, not all human effects on the landscape are negative or result in scars on the natural environment.

The situation seems to have altered with the arrival of the Early Farming Communities. Activities such as iron smelting and subsistence farming may have played a role in altering certain aspects of the landscape, but this appears to have been limited. The Early Farming Communities in the area seem to have favoured riverine areas and the localised climate at Great Zimbabwe itself does not appear to have attracted any significant attention. Very few sites were located on hills. (See Figure 6.2)

The situation appears to have changed with the appearance of the Later Farming Communities who

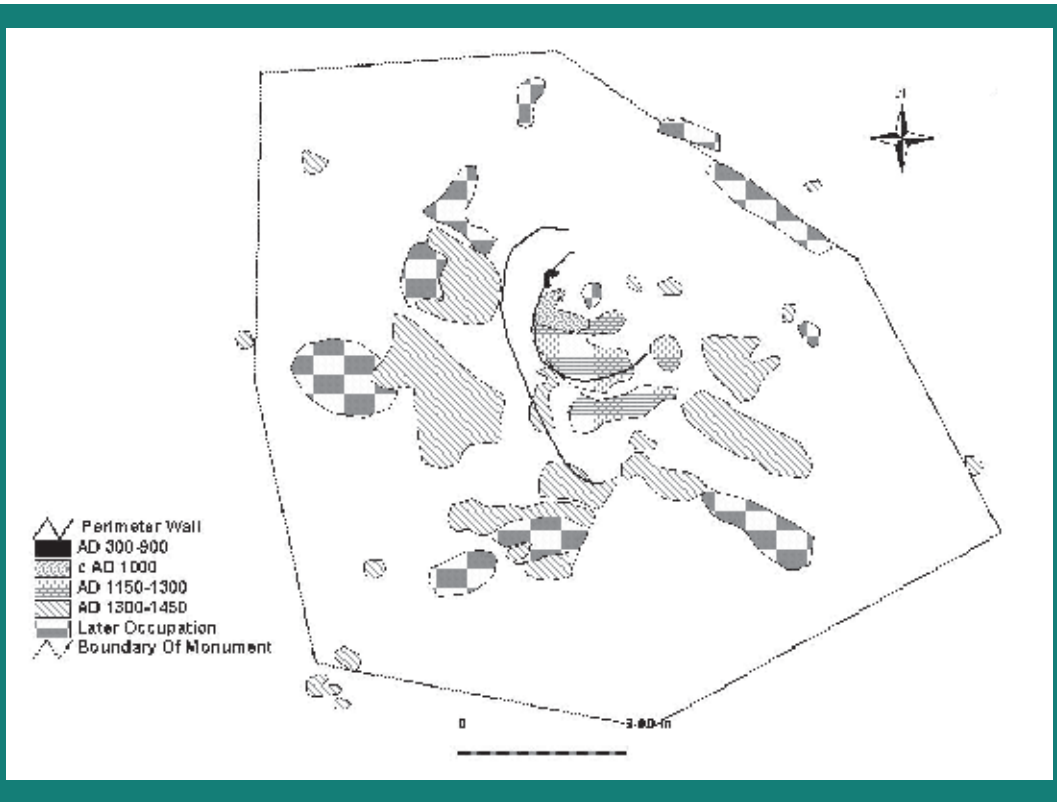


FIGURE 6.3
Developments at the centre of Great Zimbabwe (after Sinclair et al. 1993b)

seemed to favour hilltops. During the same period, the monumental architecture at Great Zimbabwe began to be constructed. At one level it seems as if the monumental structures were built to imitate the natural distinctive features on the landscape such as granite boulders. Some of the boulders were even incorporated into certain of the stone enclosures, forming a symbiotic relationship between natural and cultural creations. Natural features were incorporated into newer structures – from which the monumental architecture literally drew its strength as well as its social power. The stone structures resembled the natural granite boulders, as well as being obviously constructed out of raw material obtained from outcrops of this kind. The granite boulders, outcrops and shelters would have played a crucial role in human perceptions of the world at this time. The connection of the rock boulders and shelters with rainmaking and the *Mwari* belief system is well established (Beach 1980, Ranger 1999). It is no coincidence that the other most important religious place to the Shona, the Matopo (Matonjeni) landscape is characterised by natural granite boulders, outcrops, caves and shelters.

The effects of the settlement, and the modifications to the landscape associated with it, were largely the result of the heavy population concentration. Another sign of incremental population growth is the development of building platforms on the slopes of the hill. (See Figure 6.4) Away from the central areas of Great Zimbabwe, evidence of settlement has been found on a number of small hills that surround the designated monument. This evidence is in the form of exposed walls, the remains of dhaka walls, ceramics and middens. This evidence is important because it adds weight to the hypothesis that the stone walling must be viewed as just one component – for which most evidence happens to have survived – of a whole building technology (Garlake 1973, Sinclair 1987). Very little archaeological work has been done on most of these peripheral settlements although determining the internal sociopolitical and temporal relationships of the component parts of Great Zimbabwe is as important as finding the relationships between this complex and the smaller walled and unwalled sites in the immediate vicinity. By looking beyond the walls we begin to have a clearer definition of what the monument is about and how we can interpret and present the cultural landscape.

The spatial layout of Great Zimbabwe and of other sites in the *madzimbabwe* tradition has been the subject of considerable discussion (Sinclair 1987, Mahachi 1991, Huffman 1997). Some archaeologists have alluded to a possible catchment area for Great Zimbabwe of more than 40 kilometres, if transhumance is taken into account (Sinclair 1984, Garlake 1978). Cattle grazing played a major part in determining relationships with the natural

environment. Most archaeologists seem to agree that the building was not planned and represents a series of events rather than a single one (Garlake 1973, Mahachi, 1991, Chipunza 1994). However, whether it was intentional or unintentional, the construction of the monumental architecture and the associated settlement appears to have had a tremendous impact on the landscape development from then on. Possible effects on the surrounding landscape resulting from agriculture, and the cutting and burning of wood for domestic and metallurgical purposes, are more debatable. Metallurgy is well-attested, with reports of iron smelting and gold working (Hall 1905, Caton-Thompson 1931, Ndoro 1994). The excavation of *dhaka* for building however, did leave physical impressions in the form of pits. The relative absence of vegetation in some parts of Great Zimbabwe today might be explained by the heavy concentration of population. However, as discussed below, this fails to explain why the enclosures could have become overgrown by the 1900s. Alternatively, there could have been a deliberate policy to remove vegetation, ensuring that it did not grow outside the enclosures. However, even if we assume that the core area was effectively occupied for at least 200 years, the vegetation would have recovered over the 400 years since occupation, as seems to have happened with the areas inside the enclosures.

One indication from the archaeological research conducted so far is that large population movements possibly accompanied the decline of Great Zimbabwe (Garlake 1973, Beach 1980). Oral traditions seem to support this possibility (Abraham 1966, Robinson 1966). The decline of Great Zimbabwe has been attributed, in virtually indisputable terms, to ecological problems. The argument is that the local environment collapsed because of over-exploitation in every essential aspect of subsistence agriculture. The land simply failed to cope with the concentration of people. However, if the archaeological sites from this period are reliable indicators of occupation, it appears the area continued to attract large-scale populations. (See Figure 6.4) The settlements appear to have been smaller but right up to the 1800s large concentrations seem to have been the norm around Great Zimbabwe. Once the monumental structures were constructed, it appears that settlements continued to gravitate towards the area. Although the favourable climate was also an important factor, the communities in this area were not oblivious to the monumental structures around

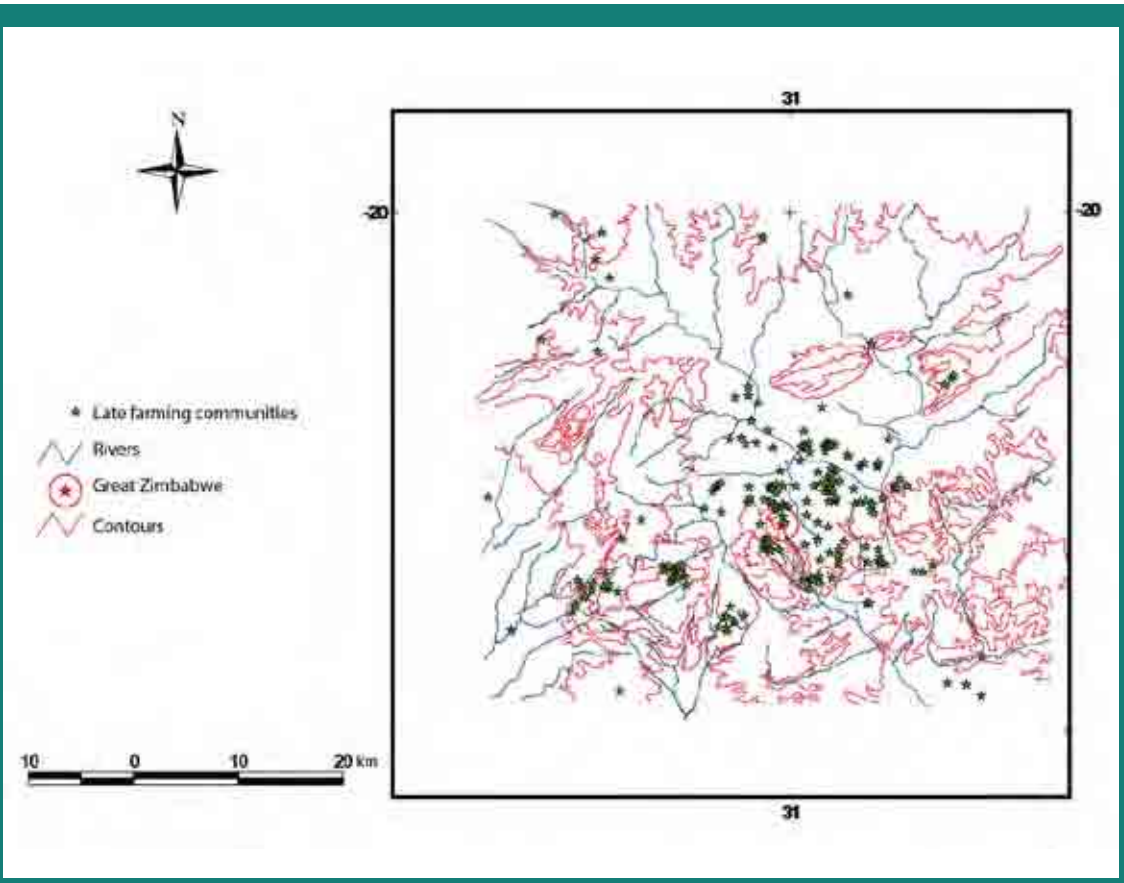


FIGURE 6.4
Distribution of Later Farming Communities (c.900-1700 CE) in the study area

them. The fact that they did not destroy them or reuse the stones means that they respected them as part of their cultural landscape.

The cultural landscape from the nineteenth century onwards

The archaeological survey data for the situation after 1800 is complemented by oral interviews and also by reports published by some European travellers. These sources clearly document a vibrant and dynamic but contested landscape. Looking first at the archaeological survey data for the period after 1800 (generally referred to as Refuge but hereafter as Terminal Zimbabwe), the area around Great Zimbabwe appears to have again been densely populated. (See Figures 6.5 and 6.6) Mauch and Bent corroborated this high population density on first visiting the area. They mentioned that several petty chiefs, whose settlements were often built near or on top of precipitous kopjes, occupied the Lake Mutirikwe area in settlements such as Chief Matewere's village near Mushagashi River, which consisted of 30 to 40 houses 'built around a large boulder on the Southern side of a considerable granite massif of about 120 feet in height'. Bent wrote that 'all the people and tribes around Zimbabwe.... and this is the most populous part of the whole country ....call themselves by one name' (Bent 1892, p.31).

Oral and published data suggest that nineteenth century settlements were generally large and occupied hilltop locations, and that a lot of farming was going on in this area (Palmer 1977, Beach 1977, Bhila 1982). Collett's excavations at Goose Bay site also confirm the location and size of the Terminal Zimbabwe settlements (Mahachi 1991). There is oral and documentary evidence to the effect that the local communities in these areas were subject to Ndebele raids during the nineteenth century, and that these raids largely determined the location of settlements during the Terminal Zimbabwe period. There is no direct evidence that the area around Great Zimbabwe itself was raided; settlements were generally located on hilltops and fortified with rough walling, whether there was a fear of raids or not. However, oral traditions give the impression that a number of conflicts took place around or at Great Zimbabwe. During the later part of the 1800s, Mugabe was said to have driven the Nemanwa people from the area and occupied the hill at Great Zimbabwe (Mtetwa 1976). This is corroborated by Mauch's accounts (Burke 1969).

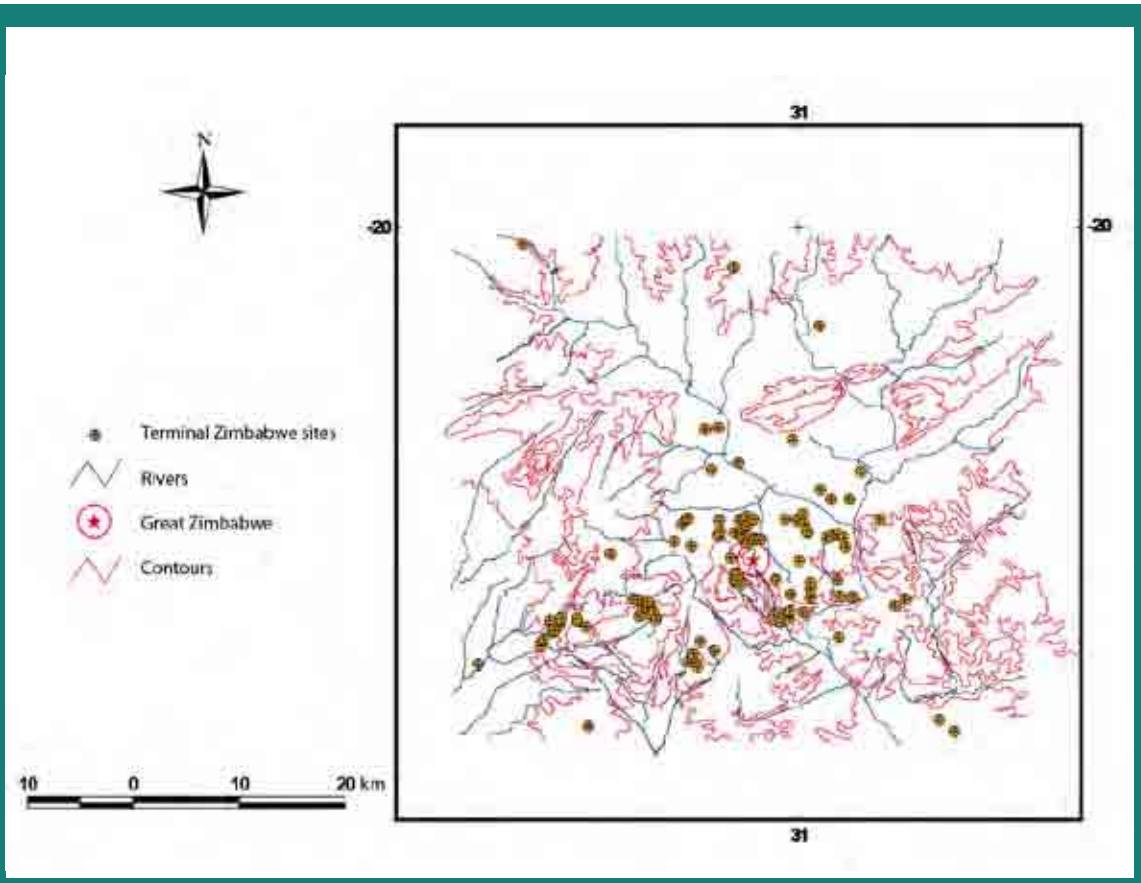


FIGURE 6.5
Distribution of sites during the Terminal Zimbabwe phase in the study area

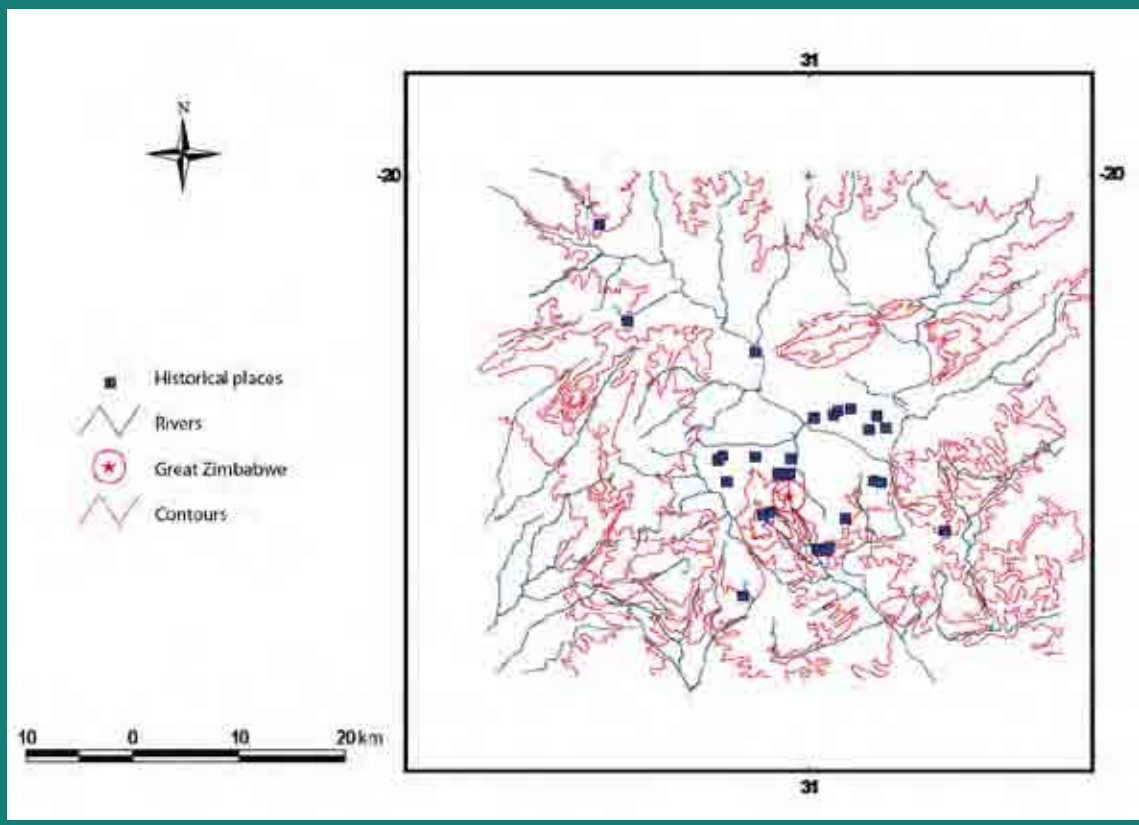


FIGURE 6.6
Distribution of historical places around Great Zimbabwe (post-1800)

The Nemanwa clan is known to have broken away from the old Mutoko–Budya Shumba Nyamuziwa dynasty sometime in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth centuries (Mtetwa 1976). From the Mutoko area they moved southwards and finally settled at Great Zimbabwe. They did not occupy it for long as they were driven away by the Duma under Mugabe who occupied the area until the British South African Company (BSAC) drove them away in 1902. According to traditions collected in the 1960s, Mugabe had left the Save area on hearing that the Rozwi had been driven away by the Nemanwa people (Robinson 1966). There is, however, very little evidence of the Rozwi having occupied the area (Beach 1980). These conflicts, primarily over the occupation of land near or at Great Zimbabwe, were witnessed by Bent (1892), Willoughby (1893) and Posselt (1935). This suggests that the landscape at Great Zimbabwe was a contested one with the victor occupying the monument and controlling access to it. Mauch again confirms that Mugabe's relative, Haruzivishe, had become the high priest of the monument even though the group had arrived in the area fairly late. During the late nineteenth century it appears that access to the monument was not strictly limited. Bent witnessed on several occasions that cattle were grazing within the monument and that people were being buried within the monument itself, particularly on the hill. Chief Mugabe's brother even lived on the hill at Great Zimbabwe but not in the stone enclosures.

The annexation of Great Zimbabwe by BSAC and subsequent imposition of the 1902 Ordinance changed the way people interacted with the place. The introduction of systematic management led to changes in the cultural landscape. Legislation and property law turned a cultural site into government property. As far back as 1909, its new managers advocated the fencing of the Great Zimbabwe estate to prevent cattle grazing and fires caused by local communities (Masey 1911). The community was denied access to the cultural heritage site and to the natural resources within the monument. The cultural landscape altered as a result, and relations between the local community and the heritage agency became characterised by mistrust. Although government regimes have changed, the mistrust has continued to the present.

On taking over the management of the site, BSAC imposed a tax on Africans known as the Hut Tax. From 1893 each house in a settlement cost the household head 10 shillings. This and other related developments clearly had direct implications for local settlement patterns and altered the cultural landscape.

The traditional settlement arrangement in the village changed from the 1920s when it was rearranged into lines of houses for what was thought to enable better management of the veld. With the 1931 Land Apportionment Act, the 720 hectares at Great Zimbabwe were declared a National Park and the areas immediately to the north and southeast were designated European land. The local community also lost land to the Dutch Reformed Church, which had grabbed land adjacent to the monument. This created mass movements of populations to other areas, a process furthered in 1961 with the construction of the Kyle Dam and designation of Kyle Game Park. More than three-quarters of the land originally contested by Mugabe, Charumbira and Nemanwa peoples had been lost to the government by 1970. Areas around the monument become private property. Above all, the local communities had lost all access to and control of Great Zimbabwe.

Vegetation

A major component of any cultural landscape is the vegetation, which plays an important part in the overall preservation and presentation of a monument. Certain trees in Shona tradition have special roles as intermediaries with the divine, and some forests become sacred through being considered the home of the spirits. The importance of trees is especially interesting in African mythology: whether as a single tree; or as a species, with each species associated with special attributes; or as sacred woods or forests. The relationship between nature and culture is also important. Shona resource management takes the form of environmental knowledge, together with technical and ritual practices. This resource management is embedded in belief systems that promote the conservation and sustainable use of cultural and natural resources. In the Shona tradition, a shrine is a quintessential natural source of culture; the two are inseparable, so that human society has no meaning without the rocks, the pools, the caves and the trees, and they in turn are given meaning only by the residence among them of human beings (Ranger 1999).

In the area around Great Zimbabwe, the Nemanwa, Charumbira and Mugabe people have trees considered important in communicating with the ancestors. Some of these areas are within the presently designated monument. No sacred forests exist for any of the groups but individual trees or species seem to be significant, *Parinari curatelifolia* (Muhacha) for instance. Some of the trees were indicated to the writer. Although trees could be used for the same purposes outside the monument it was clear that ceremonies or rituals held within the monument were regarded as far more important and desirable. Since these activities were prohibited within the site, they had to look for other locations to use in communicating with their ancestors.

Whilst carrying out this research project, a limited study was made of the vegetation growing in the Great Zimbabwe estate. The effects the vegetation had on the preservation of the site were evaluated in Chapter 5. In this section, the net effect of vegetation management on the site will be re-examined in the context of developing the cultural landscape. The research on vegetation was in part aimed at assessing the changes that have taken place on the monument in the last one hundred years. It was also felt that vegetation, more than anything else, would indicate lasting effects on the landscape. The intention was to study the presence or absence of certain species.

Historically, vegetation has been seen as a major problem for the stone structures, from aesthetic and conservation points of view. The early travellers who visited the place commented on the vegetation – with Mauch, for one, complaining that the dense vegetation hampered his work on site:

> *However, the ruined walls were hidden to such an extent by trees, thorns, nettles, creepers, shrubs, grass and dry branches, that I had to do the sketch without accurate measurements.*

Vegetation clearance also dates from that era. Clearing vegetation on the site was one of Hall's principal activities. Subsequent curators continued this practice. In addition, the creation of the golf course in 1960 and setting up visitor facilities entailed much clearance in the core area of the monument.

Certain exotic trees have been introduced into the landscape alongside the indigenous vegetation. The exotic trees disturb and also distort the landscape's aesthetic appearance. Following their introduction, some indigenous species disappear, or no longer do very well owing to competition. The main exotic species are the Jacaranda (*Jacaranda mimosifolia)*, the Eucalyptus and *Lantana camara*. These species were introduced over many years by various management regimes at the monument, at the same time as encouraging and propagating certain indigenous species in order to create a particular type of scenery. One instance of such activities is the propagation of the *Aloe excelsa* with encouragement from the Historic Monuments Commission. An aloe garden was even created for visitors, with the intention of creating romantic scenery around the monument, although the fact that aesthetics are somewhat subjective means that the actual effects on individual visitors can be

unpredictable. One researcher to visit the site recently found that the same aloes created a somewhat morbid atmosphere for him (Mueller 1998)!

The landscape has been altered and reshaped by successive heritage management regimes overseeing the monument. This process is continuing even today, with the introduction of several rehabilitation programmes (Nehowa 1997, Mueller 1998). There is no doubt that the Jacaranda and Eucalyptus trees were deliberately introduced. The Jacarandas are concentrated in areas where there are buildings, such as the curio shop, the museum, lodges and staff houses. It appears that one of the reasons for its introduction was to camouflage the built up areas. There is also a concentration of Eucalyptus trees in the built up areas, as well as at the bottom of the hill complex, particularly on the western side. *Lantana camara* might not have been deliberately planted; it is a weed that colonises large areas in a very short period of time. By 1980 almost 70 percent of the designated monument was infested by this weed. The area most affected was the slope of the hill complex (Sassoon 1982). The problem with *Lantana camara*, apart from destabilising the cultural material, is that it makes parts of the site inaccessible and also affects the aesthetic appearance of the monument, lending it an uncared-for look. Efforts to eliminate the weed using herbicides have met with only partial success, owing possibly to the methods of application.

Several observations can be made about the controlled management of vegetation within the estate. The management of fauna and flora in the estate has followed National Park management systems, taking it as a given that the subsistence methods of the indigenous communities ignore the ecological carrying capacity threshold of the area. Following this national standard destroys the natural equilibrium that had previously existed between people and nature, and somehow it is forgotten that, before colonisation, nature and people co-existed in the area from time immemorial. Some have even suggested that the implementation of protective legislation can be characterised as a new wave of colonialism, excluding people from their ancestral areas (Homewood and Rodgers 1987, Hitchcock 1990, Cordell 1993). There is mounting evidence that many landscapes considered historically to be natural, and undergoing degradation at the hands of humans, are in fact depreciating because humans are excluded from the systems. This has been demonstrated on the island of New Guinea (Fairhead and Leach 1996) and in Australia (Jones 1969). Research in Australia is particularly interesting in that the distribution and diversity of Australian biota across the continent are considered artefacts of Aboriginal peoples' intentional management. This is also witnessed in the Nyae Nyae area of Namibia where the ecology results from careful strategic burning. The local community, the Ju/hoansi, argue that many places in the northern reaches of Nyae Nyae have degraded and claim that this is due to the absence of a burning regime during colonial times (Powell 1998).

According to the local elders in Nemanwa, Mugabe and Charumbira areas, fires play an important role in regenerating land for grazing, germinating species, and bringing rain to the locality. Burning is a part of their subsistence system that has to be done at some point during the year before the planting season. Furthermore, they argue that the absence of regular burning results in biomass accumulation and this makes the area prone to veld fires, which in turn destroy trees and expose sacred places. In contrast to non-western land-users' notions of fire, land managers subscribing to conventional scientific management principles have only very recently begun to realise the need for fires in maintaining an ecological balance.

Fires within the Great Zimbabwe estate have not been allowed and, as a result, vegetation cover has increased. The continued non-burning of vegetation has created a dangerous situation. Any fires nowadays tend to be difficult to extinguish, given the accumulation of fuel over many years. The strategy has created an artificial forest around Great Zimbabwe, with the consequence that considerable time and funds have to be spent in fire prevention. Fires were almost certainly part of forestry management in the area before 1902. The modern assumption has been that heat generated by the fires would affect the stone walls and so fire management should be part of the preservation strategy. These policies have now led to a situation where the occurrence of fire becomes a real danger to the cultural landscape, given the accumulation of dead wood in the monument.

Another feature of this artificial forest is that certain species appear to have been targeted by administrators; prior to 1980, many of the indigenous species were replaced with fast-growing ones. Meanwhile, the high concentration of population in designated communal areas has led to a critical harvesting of trees in the areas around the monument for fuel. Recently the curio industry, fuelled by tourists who visit the monument, has caused the depletion of some species through poaching from the monument or national parks. Most of the *Brachystegia* species appear depleted within the core area itself (Sinclair 1987), although this may also be attributable in part to a deliberate policy in the early 1960s to replace some of the trees with the *Aloe excelsa*, which blooms in an atmospheric way.

The diverse vegetation of the monument reflects the area's environmental parameters including management systems, fire and rainfall. The isolation of the estate, for the past century, from the communities outside has artificially heightened the diversity and uniqueness of the flora. The fire and vegetation management regimes imposed during the last one hundred years have also affected the flora in a variety of ways. Fire had long been part of the environment of what is now the monument; lightning and indigenous community burning practices were a significant influence on the development of plant and animal communities. In some floral regimes, burning is a necessary component of maintaining vegetation balance; in others, fire damages the possibilities of regeneration. Some adapted to fire, some are dependent on it for their survival, and others are destroyed by it. Thus the present flora, and to a large extent the landscape, has been altered over the past century to the extent that it is now impossible to recreate the original landscape.

Of all the natural resources at Great Zimbabwe, vegetation has been one of the most contentious issues. It has had a direct bearing on the estate's management system. In addition to providing wood for fuel, vegetation is important for grazing and the carving of curios. The fact that the management system is geared towards the interests of tourists has generated tension and animosity among the local communities, which are usually prohibited from harvesting vegetation for fear that this will affect the aesthetics of the monument. The preservationist approach has proved costly and difficult to police as the dispossessed local population who live around the periphery of the designated monument are often forced, because of the scarcity of resources, to encroach upon the protected areas. The protected monument leads to shrinkage of the land resources accessible to the local communities; they are forced to modify their methods of subsistence, which usually leads to unsustainable land use practices (Deihl 1985). Around Great Zimbabwe overgrazing, soil exhaustion and high population density are now major problems.

Present setting

At present the land surrounding Great Zimbabwe estate is still under a number of landholding systems. (See Figure 6.1) To the north is the Mutirikwe National Park, which is state land, and to the west is the communal land of Nemanwa Growth Point. This land that remains in the communal area is divided among Chiefs Mugabe, Charumbira and Nemanwa. On the eastern side some commercial farms still exist, some of which have now been divided into smallholder plots. Some of the farms have been

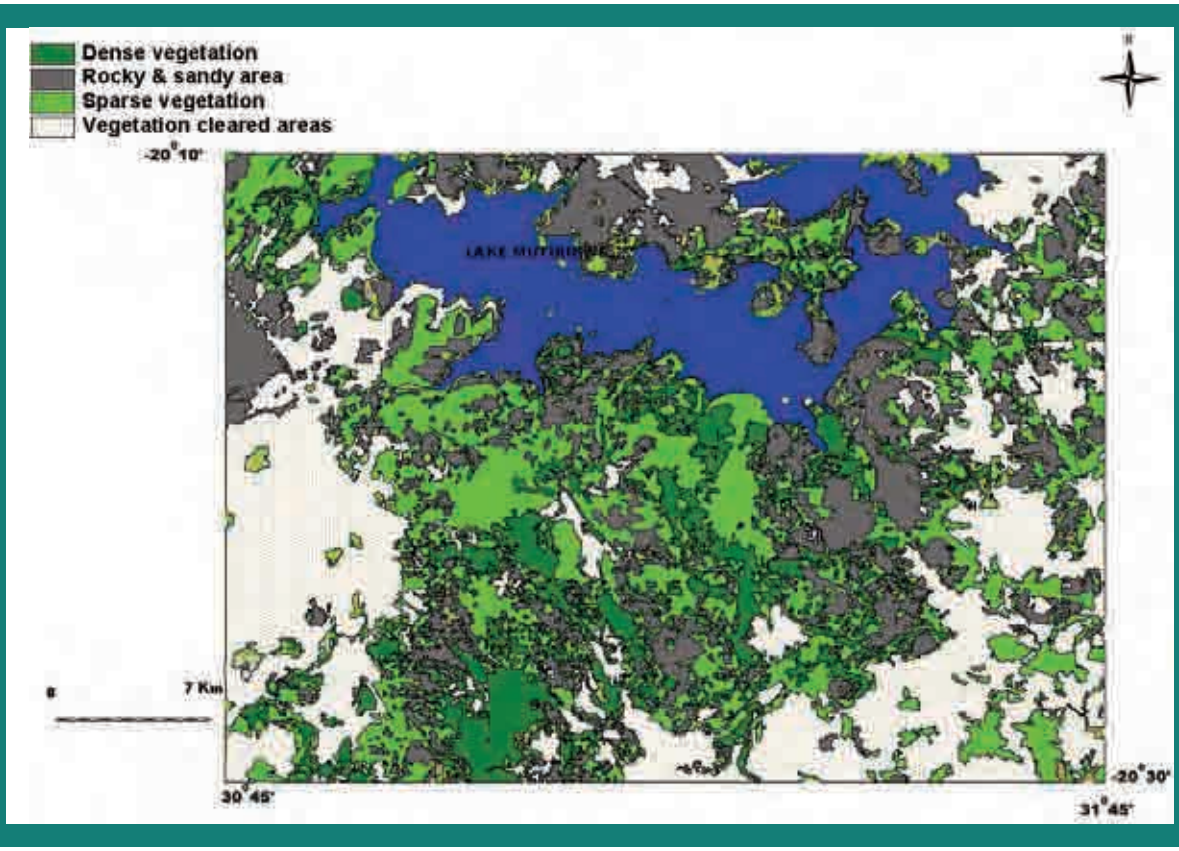


FIGURE 6.7
Land classification based on the Landsat 7 image taken in 1999

earmarked for resettlement. To the south is the Dutch Reformed Church land, used for educational and limited farming purposes.

The whole area around Great Zimbabwe from 1980 has witnessed several squatting and eviction problems. The creation of a buffer zone and fencing off the designated area was suggested in order to overcome this problem. NMMZ's fencing of the area has resulted in the creation of an isolated estate managed and administered as a no-go area for the local community, with neither natural nor cultural resources in the designated area legally available to them; in response, local people have contested the further creation of a buffer zone. When in 1985 the governor of the province told the people around the monument to move away from the area since the site was government property, the elders' reply was that they knew no boundaries in the past and therefore would not respect the buffer zone.

In 1980 when the country become independent, mass movements were witnessed around Great Zimbabwe, with people moving into the National Park area to claim land. They were quickly evicted, but despite the unavailability of land, Great Zimbabwe has become an economic attraction with many people wanting to settle around it in the hope of finding employment. It is no surprise that the area around the site has been subject to squatter problems and the mushrooming of unplanned settlements. The shortage of grazing and farming land does not seem to deter would-be settlers.

Fieldwork observations and inquiries into the current situation established six criteria viewed by local communities as essential in considering how to manage the cultural landscape near Great Zimbabwe. These are:

- Cultivation (considered important although it was observed that very few families depended on crop cultivation);
- Grazing lands (with cattle ownership still regarded as very important);
- Wood harvesting (for fuel and carving);
- Tourist facilities;
- At least five areas – including three trees – identified as important for rituals; and
- Burial areas.

It emerged that the hill complex was regarded as the most sacred area. The sense of belonging to a place enshrined in religious and spiritual beliefs affects a community's disposition towards the cultural landscape. Usually the community cares for only those material and metaphysical elements with direct significance for their spiritual apparatus. Some sites may be sacrosanct and unalienable, but other manifestations of the cultural landscape might be demolished or neglected as having no significance. The local communities felt that the monument and its environs were worth looking after and caring for.

Within the ten-kilometre radius considered here, several tourist facilities have been established in the past decade. The population around Great Zimbabwe has increased and the landscape has also significantly changed over time. There have also been new developments such as the establishment of curio markets and a reduction in the area under cultivation. Tourist-related developments have fuelled the growth of a semi-urban area at Nemanwa Growth Point, providing housing for employees of the various tourist enterprises that have been established. This has led to demands for modern installations such as water reservoirs, with one even located within the monument itself in 1998. The water reservoir was installed without any impact assessment of its effect on the cultural landscape. The perception that economic gains can be made from providing tourist services goes back to the 1890s (Bent 1892), and has continued to the present. Nowadays, though, there is clear evidence that in times of drought, for instance in 1992, more than 90 percent of families within the study area become dependent on providing various services to the tourist industry. These families have transformed the cultural landscape in several ways. As indicated on the satellite image (see Plate 6.1 taken in November 1999), communal areas are overgrazed and vegetation cover is depleted (see Figure 6.7 for land classification based on the satellite image). This contrasts with the area designated as the national monument, with its artificial forest, and private land. North of the monument in National Park land, vegetation is again sparse, owing to the fact that until 1984 the area was squatted and is only now beginning to recover. East of the monument lie areas that have recently been assigned to resettlement programmes. Here, although habitations were established fewer than ten years ago, vegetation cover is fast disappearing. (See Figure 6.8)

Discussion

The way in which people behave in relation to a monument in a given social and historical context is informed by their collective understanding of the past. The cultural memory reassures the members of a cultural group of their identity and supplies them with an awareness of unity and singularity in time and space. More often than not, prehistoric monuments acted as visible time markers in the landscape, referring people back to the distant past and prompting them to treat the site in a particular way (Lowenthal 1985, Evans 1985, Holtorf 1998). Convergence of the past with the present is very

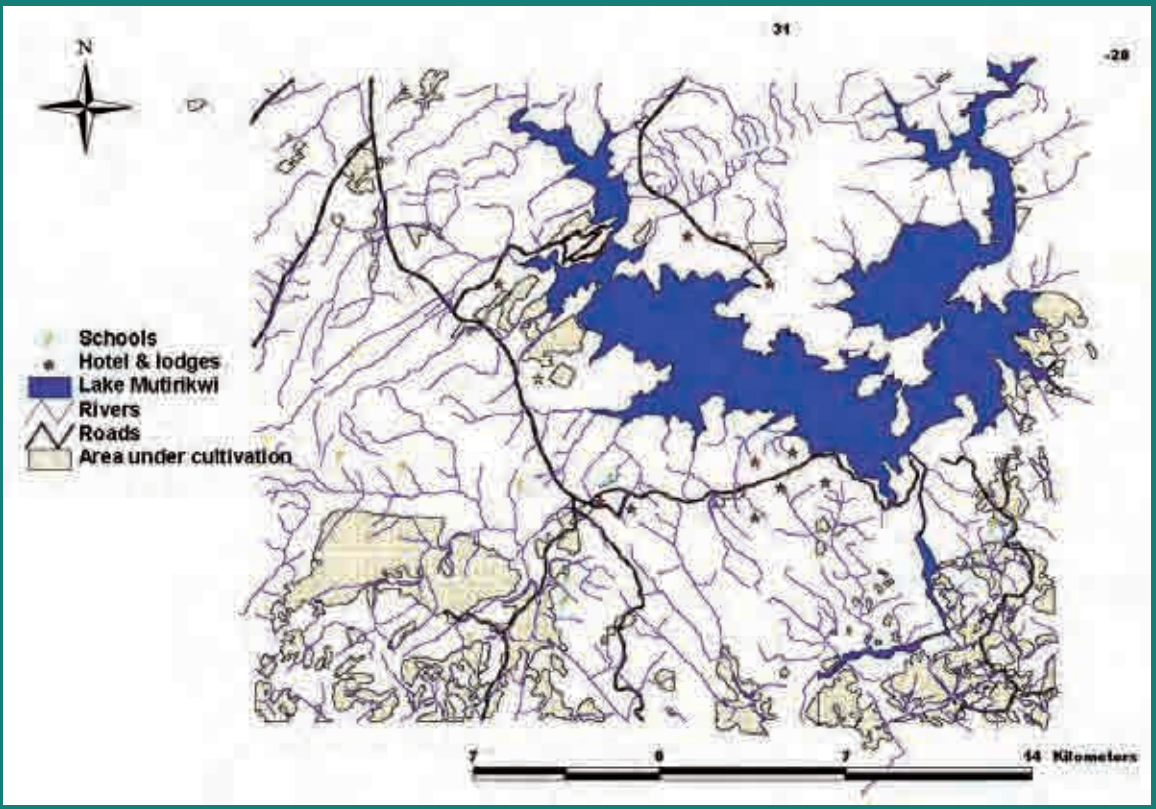


FIGURE 6.8
Land use around Great Zimbabwe in 1992

often closely associated with specific locations and structures in the landscape. The accumulation of evidence from different periods in particular locations suggests that people have always had a very strong sense of place with regard to Great Zimbabwe and its associated landscape. The frequently recurring settlements on the cultural landscape imply a sense of belonging and continuity built upon human experience and cultural identity.

In more recent times, it is clear that the communities around the monument have come to consider Great Zimbabwe not as an ancient relic but a cultural landscape from which they derive their spiritual and economic sustenance. Great Zimbabwe is not only about a Later Farming Community civilization, it is also about people who live around it today. The transfer to state ownership of much of the cultural property and the land resulted in displacement of people and also led to local disempowerment with regard to the control and access to the monument. For a long time now, the new heritage management systems have lent credibility to the view that local knowledge and concepts about how to protect the cultural landscape and its ecological systems are the result of superstition and of subjective interpretation, an attitude that would appear to stem from the same source as the discredited assertion (Malinowski 1954) that the interest of indigenous communities in totems and taboos is inspired by nothing more than the rumblings of their stomachs (Powell 1998).

Great Zimbabwe is part of a cultural landscape, in the functional sense and also because of its historical dimensions. Its functional role emanates from the importance of the area both as an economic resource and as part of the natural resource. There also exist within the immediate area of the designated monument many traces of past cultures, such as habitation sites dating from the Stone Age onwards. However, Great Zimbabwe's cultural significance now extends far beyond the communities in its vicinity. Its designations first as a National Monument and then, in 1986, as a World Heritage site impose the requirement to view Great Zimbabwe as part of a wider cultural landscape. This conferring of status on the site has been accompanied by new boundaries, regulations and legal restrictions, which have curtailed the possibility of viewing the monument in its proper setting. In order to define this cultural entity and manage it, we need to appreciate the ways in which past and present communities have encoded their values on it, rather than confining ourselves to the physical fabric of the stone walls.

7

Great Zimbabwe: a valuable cultural resource

IT IS CLEAR from the previous account that Great Zimbabwe is far from being an ancient relic whose only interest is to antiquarians and foreign tourists. It has been demonstrated that it is a dynamic cultural landscape and that contemporary communities around the monument draw on it for economic survival and spiritual strength. This chapter examines the cultural values associated with this world heritage site. It is argued that, in order to develop an effective management system, the value of this heritage to past, present and future societies must be considered. The values associated with a cultural landscape such as Great Zimbabwe are varied and can at times conflict. These values are constantly changing:

> *...preservation in itself reveals that permanence is illusion. The more we save, the more aware we become that such remains are continually altered and reinterpreted... what is preserved like what is remembered is neither a true or resemble likeness of past reality.*
>
> (LOWENTHAL 1985, P.410)

Great Zimbabwe is one of the finest examples of the *madzimbabwe* tradition and culture unique to Southern Africa; it is the largest, most advanced and best-preserved monument of its type. The monument and its associated remains contribute to an archaeological landscape without parallel.

Ultimately, cultural sites depend for their value on the recognition that society, or sections of society, affords them. Appropriate management for a place such as Great Zimbabwe requires a detailed knowledge of the cultural values assigned to it by society, if these values are to be preserved. Developing an empathetic understanding of these values minimises the risk of making decisions that inadvertently destroy or diminish important aspects of the site's significance. Finding out about the cultural significance of a place involves identifying and assessing the attributes that make it valuable to the community, to the nation and to the world. Once the value of a place is understood in this thorough sense, informed decisions can ensure that the values are retained and revealed to a wider audience (Pearson and Sullivan 1995). To summarise, key objectives in finding out about cultural values are:

- Knowing why the place is important;
- Identifying the nature of the values and how they came about; and
- Assessing the importance of the values.

As indicated in earlier chapters, there are always alternatives for the management of a site; an understanding of its cultural significance enables responsible choices to be made for the site's future. Decisions about alternative courses of action should therefore become clearer by means of a thorough evaluation of the site. This evaluation enables a comparison with society's other values or needs. Accepting that we cannot preserve and actively conserve all heritage sites, evaluation allows decisions to be made about the appropriate management of a particular place.

Even when a place is unquestionably important, with its legal protection secured and its active conservation proposed, this same level of understanding about its value is required in order to determine

the most appropriate method of conserving its cultural significance. Some 'conservation' measures may actually detract from the cultural significance; certain forms of protection or interpretation may, for instance, compromise the aesthetic significance of a place. The decision to construct a water reservoir, say, in the middle of a monument – to cite an actual example from Great Zimbabwe – might inevitably affect the landscape, however sound its location from an engineering point of view. The evaluation of a site's cultural significance requires that it be placed in its historical and social context, and that relevant consultation with the community in which the site exists, or for which it is particularly significant, be carried out.

Cultural values

There are a number of systematic ways to define and identify cultural values, although none is standard. Lipe, for instance, has devised the following four-part categorisation (Lipe 1984):

- informational
- associational
- economic
- aesthetic.

The Burra Charter of Australia ICOMOS also has four categories, namely:

- social
- historical
- scientific
- aesthetic.

Whilst Lipe's categories largely arise out of the experiences of heritage management in Europe and North America, those of the Burra Charter were formulated specifically with Australian heritage in mind. The Australian situation is comparable in many ways with Zimbabwe, and indeed Southern Africa as a whole, including the colonial experience, minority or majority rights, and land access issues.

Social value

Social value embraces the qualities for which a place has become a focus of spiritual, political, national, or other cultural sentiments to a majority or minority group (The Australian ICOMOS 1988). Many traditional sites have such a value. The local, regional or national community may gain a source of pride or celebration from such places; these sites may have educational value, or symbolise the endurance of a culture. The social value of a place may be influenced as much by the accessibility and fame of the site, as by its state of preservation or scientific importance.

Social values are very significant and have perhaps the strongest effect on whether a site is conserved. They do not just apply to the finest and best example of sites; relatively unknown sites may also have powerful values assigned to them by the local community. A site has often gained social value on account of its aesthetic, historic or research value. At Laetoli in Tanzania, for instance, palaeontological research into the three-and-a-half million year old hominid footprints (*Australopithecus afarensis*), indicating our ancestors' first efforts at walking upright, has conferred immense social significance on the site – as a source of pride, and a symbol of continuity and history for the local Maasai community in the area, as well as for Tanzanians at a national level and East Africans in general. This does not diminish the potential for disagreement about how to manage the site, however. The Maasai feel that they should determine its management whilst the government argues that the site is of world significance and therefore cannot be managed locally.

Equally frequently, places with a religious or traditional value may have great social significance sustained primarily by the knowledge of the community rather than by any visible mark; such places derive their value from this intangible association. A good example of such a place is Njelele (in the Matopo hills), which is supposed to be the most important Mwari shrine in Zimbabwe (Ranger 1999). There is no physical evidence for the site but the place is important, spiritually and socially. Nowadays the notion of intangible heritage is becoming an allowable subject for discussion (Rossler and Saouma 1999). In many instances a place has both tangible and intangible aspects, as seems to be the case for Great Zimbabwe.

The value of sites to local communities has been poorly represented in conservation thinking in the past, perhaps because the definition and evaluation of community value is relatively complex. Another part of the reason, in places like Southern Africa, has already been discussed in previous chapters: local communities may not understand or value the scientific techniques required by modern heritage management systems and therefore do not qualify to take part in the discussions. Yet another factor has been eviction and resettlement during the colonial period and since, serving to sever the links between communities and their traditional sites, and between values and those places to which they were ascribed. Many places have a community value unknown to the wider society. These special places often contribute to the community's sense of stability by reflecting the historic, scenic, recreational or social experiences common to that community, and distinguishing that community and that locality from other communities and localities. Only rarely will the community feel the need to state its strong feelings for such places;

the value of the site is often expressed only when the place comes under threat.

A place is often associated with a range of historical, scientific or aesthetic values of interest to the whole community or a particular group, and which become part of the majority's heritage. Problems tend to arise for indigenous groups from the majority culture's attitude to the minorities' heritage. The particular concerns and wishes of the minority can be disregarded or belittled, and in colonial times even the concerns of the majority were ignored. People may not want 'outsiders' to visit sites that are culturally significant but such wishes may conflict with the official aims of governments in developing countries. Sub-groups sometimes use their heritage to identify themselves as different from other sub-groups and this may be perceived as undermining a policy of building a unified nation. Such potential conflicts in assigning value may be resolved by applying a general rule of thumb: so long as the source of value is important to most members of the population, then the place should be preserved. Within this framework, the specific interpretation of the site by sub-groups within the population is of no concern. Thus, Rhodes' grave should be protected because he is an important figure in the history of Zimbabwe. The majority of Zimbabweans may well evaluate Rhodes' contribution to the country negatively although some groups will evaluate his contribution positively.

Historical value

Historical value is assigned to a place that marks human achievement or contributes in some way to our knowledge of the past. Such a place may be a typical or well-preserved example of the activity of a culture or group, or of an era; or it may be associated with a particular individual. Often places are valued for their long history and for representing the unfolding of events rather than one phase or aspect of history alone. Many places have historic value because they reflect a long period of human history. They help us to take an imaginative step back in time, to ponder the past lifestyles and histories of our ancestors. Such places can act as a trigger to the historic imagination, having powerful evocative and educational value. Rhodes' grave in the Matopo, Nyadzonya and Chimoiyo in Mozambique, or Sharpville and Robben Island in South Africa are cases in point.

Scientific value

The scientific value of a place provides – or has a realistic potential to yield – knowledge that cannot be obtained elsewhere. The scientific or research value of a place will depend upon the importance of the data involved, or its rarity and quality, or the degree to which the place is representative or may contribute substantial further information. It is variously called scientific, archaeological, research or information value; and has often been the only value of a place to be recognized by Western legal systems and professionals. It has been used to protect sites; it has also been used to remove them from their owners' care.

Much legislation in Southern Africa protects places for their scientific value. This, as we have seen, has led to local communities and traditional custodians being denied access to sites. Research findings have at times been used to interpret a site or culture in a way with which traditional people may not agree. However, scientific value has the potential to add or even enhance other values, which can result in a very strong case for protection. One instance of this process comes from Thulamela, a site in South Africa's Kruger National Parks, about which very little was known by the international community until the 1996 excavation. This recent scientific research has helped to forge links with the local community, enhancing the site's traditional value.

Aesthetic value

The aesthetic value of a place may be described in terms of the association or mood it conjures up, or the objective beauty of its design, or the fact that it exemplifies a particular style, or superb craftsmanship, or artistic development of a high level. It recognizes some kind of creative high point, although this may be difficult to measure or quantify. To the Western mind, with its strong emphasis on measured time, the symbolism of ancient things and the evidence of time's passing has in itself a strong effect on the visitor, in addition to the sense of otherness derived from such encounters with the past. These, combined with the innate beauty of artistic creations in original settings, produce a powerful aesthetic and emotional experience. This contrasts with the perspective of the local community, for which time past is immeasurable and dynamic because it is the time of the ancestors. The past is very often seen as the present. It should be borne in mind that aesthetic value is subjective, with elements deriving from cultural backgrounds as well as individual taste (Pearson and Sullivan 1995).

The above cultural values are almost always interrelated and subject to interpretation. They also apply differently according to whether the perspective is local, regional, national or global, and according to the context and circumstances. Values might also vary within a site. For instance at Silozwane, the cave has a scientific importance in contributing to our understanding of the hunter-gatherer communities,

while the hill has religious significance to the Kalanga community who conduct rituals there.

Within the cultural values associated with places, economic values are beginning to have an influence and should therefore be considered as derived values. Generally, the economic value applies because other values are present, but sometimes a place may represent the only source of opportunity for revenue and employment, or may be held as a focus for potential achievement in this arena. In reality, these values are critical. Economic considerations very often temper decisions of all sorts. Places perceived to have a high economic potential often attract more interest and may therefore be more susceptible to exploitation. Very often the economic value depends on location, so that a site near an urban centre or hub of tourist activities is more likely to have an economic value to people who live around it, reinforced by the potential to attract visitors who might buy souvenirs, and need accommodation and transport. Its potential to provide direct income is augmented by the possibilities for employment and other downstream economic development.

Global and national values

The fact that the entire country takes its name from the Great Zimbabwe site is a clear indication of its cultural value. In 1937, decades before independence, the site had been declared a National Monument on the recommendation of the Commission for the Preservation of National and Historical Monuments and Relics, in terms of section nine of the Monuments and Relics Act (Chapter 70). This designation caused the communally owned landscape and its associated resources to be transferred to state ownership. Hunting, harvesting of forest products and religious rituals were then banned. This has led to large-scale displacement of communities located in the designated area, and to local disempowerment in regard to controlling how resources are managed and used, and who has access to the cultural property. Traditional taboos and rules ensuring ecological balance have been disregarded and yet government itself, particularly after independence, does not have the resources to enforce the protective legislations.

Another global and national value of Great Zimbabwe is that Africans, across ethnic boundaries, regard Great Zimbabwe as part of the African heritage and a prime example of their ancestors' ingenuity and achievements. Beyond its association with the national heritage, Great Zimbabwe is an essential part of the African heritage, and arguably provided the liberation movements with inspiration (see Chapter 5).

The outstanding universal value of Great Zimbabwe was recognized in 1986 with its designation as a world heritage site under the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. The convention provides for the identification, protection, conservation, and presentation of cultural and natural sites of outstanding universal value. For a site to be included on the world heritage list, it must meet at least one of the six criteria set out in the convention. The inscription of Great Zimbabwe on the list was based on three of those criteria, namely:

- Representing a masterpiece of human creative genius;
- Bearing a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
- Being directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.

The cultural values of Great Zimbabwe therefore have to be considered at various levels – local, national, regional and global – which do not always coincide. At times these values may be in conflict. Managing a cultural site involves resolving and negotiating these seemingly irreconcilable values. Conflicting and ambiguous values and interests in cultural resources, emanating from these various levels, also result in multiple jurisdictions concerning use, ownership, access and control of the heritage. For instance, international conventions have to be applied at Great Zimbabwe in order to satisfy its world heritage status. At the same time, NMMZ's protective legislation (Act 25, Paragraph 11) has to operate at the national level, together with all the other national and district regulations. At each level, access to the site is continuously restricted.

Analysis of values for Great Zimbabwe

It has to be noted at the outset that the NMMZ administration usually blames the local community for not fully appreciating the values of the site and they in turn accuse the government agency of desecrating the monument. Although some of the cultural values for Great Zimbabwe are assumed to be common knowledge, for the purposes of this study it was decided to carry out an assessment of the extent to which this is the case among the site's stakeholders – identified as the local communities, tourists, and workers in the hospitality industry directly linked with the monument.

Traditionally, the Nemanwa and Mugabe people have claimed custodianship of the monument but, given the long turbulent demographic history around the monument, it is now impossible to say that

only these two groups have a legitimate claim to Great Zimbabwe (Mtetwa 1976), especially when considering the monument as part of a cultural landscape. However, the further a group is from the monument the less their relationship and impact on the monument and its landscape. For this study it was felt that those within ten kilometres of the designated monument have a stronger attachment and direct influence on the cultural landscape and the site itself. They are more likely to be affected by the management systems in place at the monument. Nevertheless, it is recognized that this is an arbitrary boundary and that decisions made twenty or fifty kilometres away could also have some influence on the cultural landscape.

As in most parts of Zimbabwe, the basic social units in the area are the household or *imba*, the village or *musha*, and the district or *dunhu*. The village, as the basis of the community, recognizes itself in one sense as a congregation of households, and in a territorial sense as part of a larger community. There are approximately seventy-three villages in the area canvassed. The people have a strong religious and cultural belief system based on ancestral spirit reverence. Many have also been influenced by missionary activities and Christian teachings, with the Dutch Reformed Church particularly influential through its mission station at Morgenster farm. The cultural belief systems have been eroded to some extent by the Christian faith, which looks down on the indigenous style of ancestral reverence. Nevertheless, these underlying traditional and cultural views and values attached to the monument and its environs are what is important from a heritage management point of view.

Within the ten-kilometre radius are two hotels and nine lodges built to provide facilities to those visiting the monument. There are various government organizations and local authorities in the area, National Parks and Masvingo Rural Council being of particular importance to the landscape. Several schools exist in the neighbourhood.

The research aimed to determine what level of general knowledge the community held about Great Zimbabwe, in addition to discovering what values were ascribed to the monument. It was felt that a participatory heritage management requires an understanding in common of what that heritage is and so, to find out what the community knows and feels about the place, interviews were carried out over a period of three years. The first set of interviews was conducted in August 1997, and a second set the following year. August was chosen as the month with the highest recorded number of visitors in the past five years (from 1992). These two sets of interviews were targeted at the local community (namely people living within the ten-kilometre radius), Zimbabwean tourists (visitors from within Zimbabwe excluding those from Masvingo town), foreign visitors, and people employed in the hospitality industry. The total sample for the two years is shown below. (See Table 7.1)

The interviews were carried out over a period of three weeks. In addition to the questions asked, par-

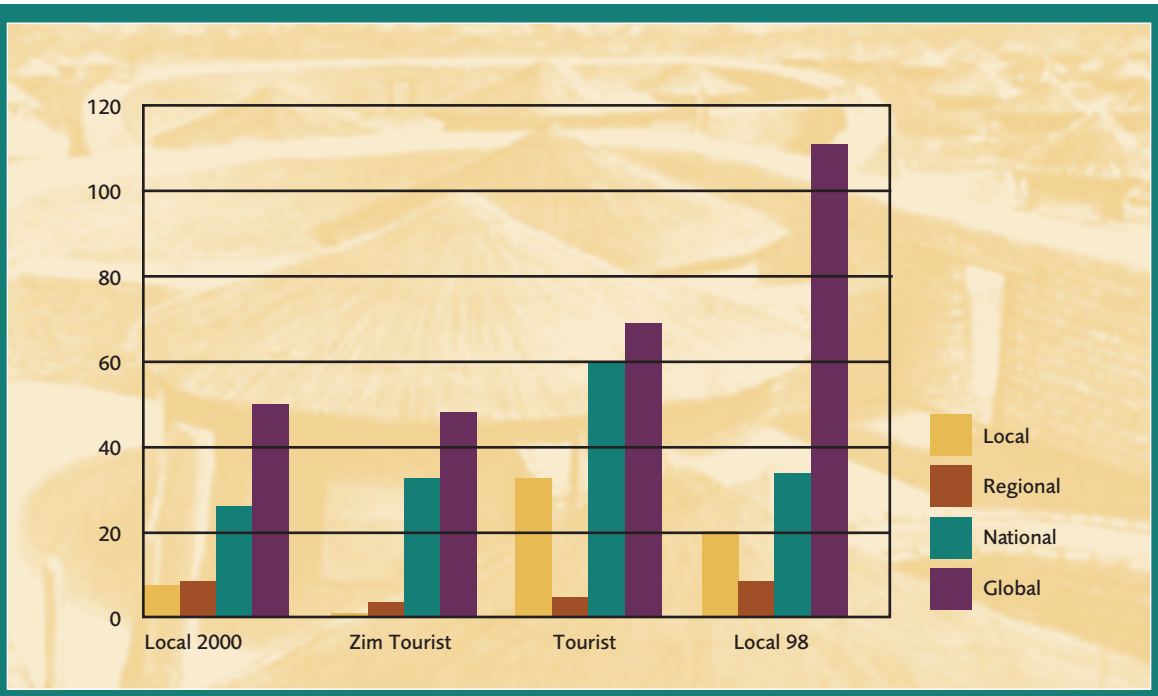


FIGURE 7.1
Significance of the site as expressed by interviewees

TABLE 7.1 Groups interviewed and in what proportion to the total populations

	Sample interviewed	Approximate population	Approximate percentage (%)
Zimbabwean tourist	85	350 (in three weeks)	24.3
Foreign tourist	159	900 (in three weeks)	18
Local community	202	3500 (estimate from District Administrators Office)	6
Local workers	27	200	14

ticipant observation was very important, for example on the question of Great Zimbabwe's benefits to the community. Most people indicated that they did not know, even when they were employed by organizations such as NMMZ or in hotels. Most of the interviews with the local community took place at their homes.

The third set of interviews was aimed at the local communities around Great Zimbabwe and was designed to verify certain trends apparently emerging from the first set of interviews. This final set was carried out in January 2000, interviewing 98 individuals.

Ranking the monument

The interviews indicated that all groups recognize the importance of the site as a place of national and world importance. (See Figure 7.1) Most of the people interviewed were not aware of its world heritage status although a number, among foreign tourists in particular, thought that it was one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Very few tourists took into consideration its importance for the local area. Even the local community, although wanting access, felt that Great Zimbabwe was of national importance first, and some referred to it as a national shrine. Generally, respondents had varying levels of knowledge about the site.

Cultural values

From the interviews it is clear that the local communities regard the place as having a social value, specifically that deriving from rituals associated with traditional belief systems. Whilst it is accurate to say that Great Zimbabwe is sacred to the Shona people as a group, there are significant regional and local differences within that group, especially in religion. Ancestral spirits play a fundamental role in people's

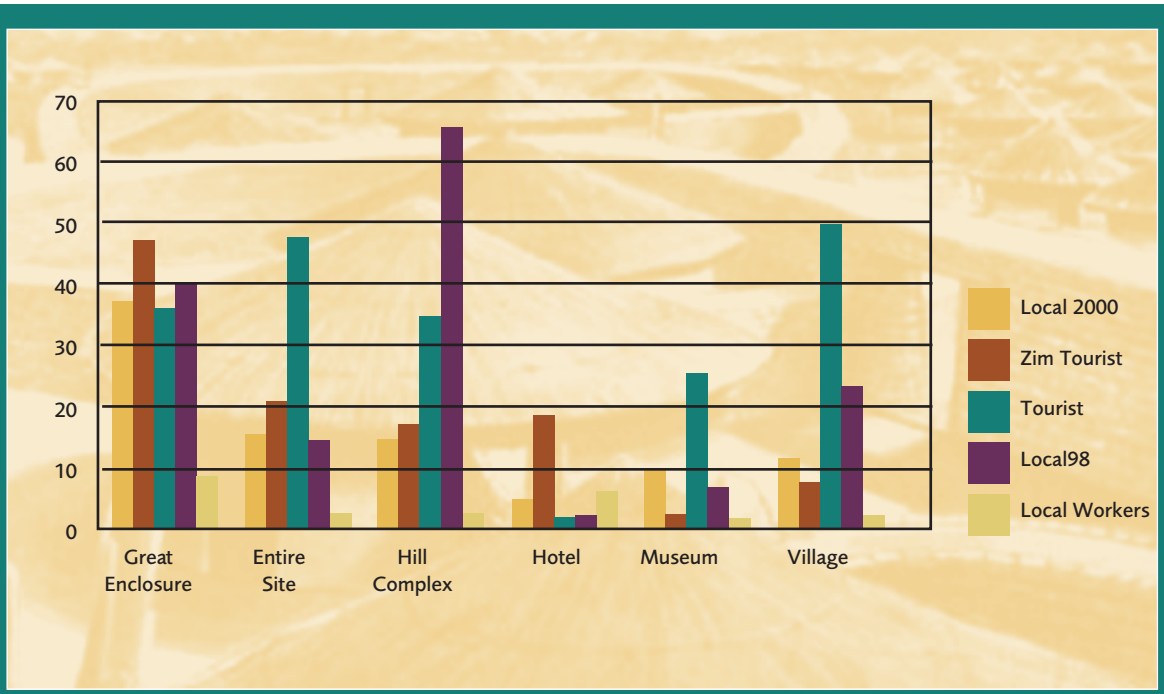


FIGURE 7.2
Areas at Great Zimbabwe considered important

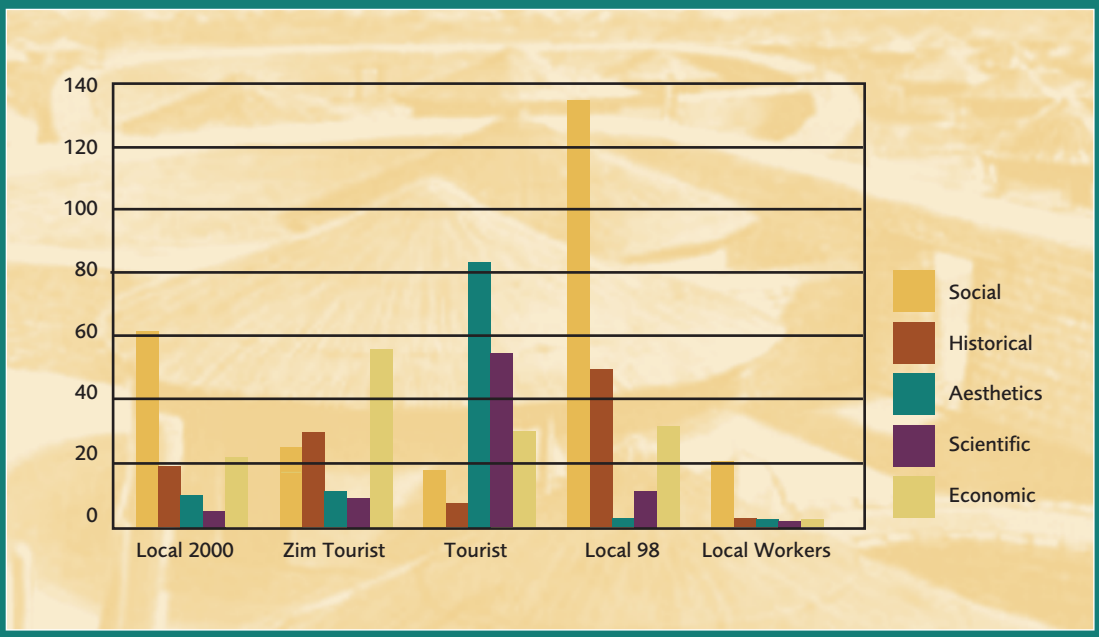


FIGURE 7.3
Cultural values represented at Great Zimbabwe, as seen by various groups

daily lives, on many levels ranging from the family to the whole community and even for the nation, as the importance of the spirit mediums to the liberation struggle shows (Lan 1985).

The spirit world may be divided into various categories (Lan 1985, p.38) but in relation to Great Zimbabwe it is the *mudzimu* and *mhondoro* that are important. They are believed to have built Great Zimbabwe and still dwell there, according to local informants, leading all the traditional ceremonies performed at Great Zimbabwe, owning the land and controlling the rain. They have more power than the political chiefs (Lan 1985, p.34). From the interviews it was clear that the Matopo (Matonjeni and Njelele) are more sacred by far to the Shona than Great Zimbabwe. However, at Great Zimbabwe, the hill complex emerged as the most sacred part of the monument, particularly the cave. It is here that the spirits used to speak through the rocks. Some speak of huge caves and underground passages in the hill complex. In recent times the conical tower has also gained popularity particularly with the Nemanwa people.

The local communities, then, view Great Zimbabwe as a sacred place, especially the cave in the hill. Such places are seen as the only way by which the ancestors can be contacted because they are said to be living in and speaking from these places. Local informants cite incidences such as when voices were heard emanating from the caves, and water that miraculously appeared whenever the rightful spirit medium went to the area to prepare the grain for the brewing of beer used at the ceremonies, as some of the mysteries that had vanished. Chief Nemanwa said that *madzimbabwe* were not built for living people but for the spirits of the dead, and the houses within them were for the spirit mediums. He claimed that the Nemanwa were the rightful custodians of the monument, and that the people came to Great Zimbabwe for solutions to different calamities befalling them.

> *Dzimbabwe was a place sacred to the chiefs and his ancestors where formal supplications were made to the Great God Mwari in times of dire tribal need: drought, cattle diseases and human epidemics*
>
> (SUMMERS 1971, P.2).

Great Zimbabwe was proclaimed a National Monument on the basis of its archaeological merit, notwithstanding the fact that even the nineteenth century accounts of early travellers such as Posselt, Bent and Mauch attached great spiritual significance to the site. In recent appeals to government, the traditional leadership living around Great Zimbabwe had this to say:

> *There used to be a lot of communication among traditional custodians of sacred shrines. The white government stopped the communication because they wanted to assert their power. When independence came and the Africans took control the traditional*

leaders celebrated because they felt we could now practice our customs and traditions. Every month customs and traditions were practiced. There used to be one major gathering at sacred places each year. That is no more allowed except clandestinely

(MUNJERI, PERS. COMM. 1997).

The local people complained that the heritage managers at Great Zimbabwe were denying them freedom of cultural expression by prohibiting ceremonies at the site. For the local communities, the place embodies life forces; it is where the spirits continue to reside, and is essentially linked to the land, their ancestors and their culture. Several elders were very eloquent about the remote history of the monument, referring to oral histories and traditions which all seemed to paint a golden age during pre-historic times.

Tourism and economic dimensions

Tourists perceived the monument differently from the other groups. Generally speaking, the main values they attributed to the monument were aesthetic and scientific. Tourists over the age of fifty considered the aesthetics to be of paramount importance and found that the ruinous nature of the place created a romantic atmosphere. They perceived the Great Enclosure, with its 'architecturally pleasing appearance'; the Shona village tourist attraction, with live activities taking place at the village; and the museum to be the most important area on the monument. Zimbabwean tourists seemed to have the same perceptions, although they also considered economic values to be important, particularly in terms of regional development and job creation.

More than 80 percent of the working population in the area of study had relatives employed by the hospitality industry and the monument. One illustration of the type of activities involved is seen at the traditional craft market on the fringe of Great Zimbabwe, which sells souvenirs to tourists – a transaction that in effect cements a bond between tourist and the site. According to the District Council, this area has one of the highest employed rural populations in the province.

Although people generally seemed not to recognize this, it appeared that most families benefited from being located in the vicinity of Great Zimbabwe. This conclusion was reached from observing the activities people were engaged in, whereas responses concerning the perceived benefits usually considered only hard cash. What emerged from the responses was that most local communities perceived NMMZ and the hospitality industries to be making huge profits in their activities. Respondents would acknowledge the benefits of employment after being reminded, but it was always felt that the high-paying or high-ranking jobs did not go to the local community. Local residents did not note the general development around the monument as a significant benefit.

Ownership of the monument

The issue of the site's ownership, particularly among the tourists, was at times confused with the question of the site's original builders. (See Figure 7.5) However, it was surprising that people, particularly the local

FIGURE 7.4
Benefits from Great Zimbabwe

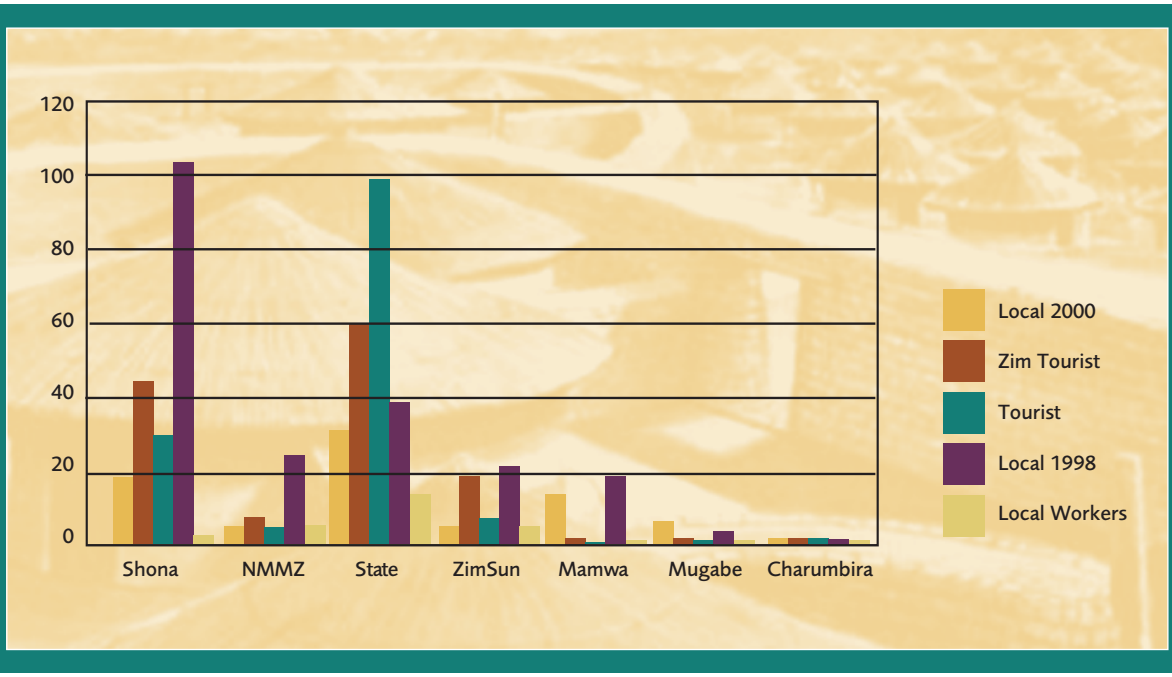


FIGURE 7.5
Responses to the question of who owns Great Zimbabwe

community, were confused about who actually managed the site. Some thought it was ZimSun Hotels and others that it was the government; almost everyone found it difficult to remember the actual name of the organization responsible for the site. This might in part be due to a lack of advertising by NMMZ – a name that very few could actually remember in full. Very often it was simply referred to as the 'Museum or Monuments Organization'. A high proportion of the people interviewed regarded the site as having been appropriated by government and no longer a communal property in any official sense. Perceptions of who owns the site can have profound effects on the success of managing the heritage, for whilst heritage managers felt that they were protecting the site on behalf of the local communities, those communities felt that their interests had been usurped.

Restoration programmes

Most people attributed the collapse of walls to the displeasure of the ancestors, and commented in terms of predictions such as, 'unless we are allowed to appease our ancestors the way we like, the collapsing of walls shall continue and worsen'. They also claimed that it is traditionally wrong and culturally unacceptable to restore the fallen walls. The excavation, preservation and restoration works are contentious issues today. From a local Shona perspective, the spirit of the head of household remains with the house he built or dwelt in during his lifetime. If the abandoned house has collapsed then it is because the spirits wish it. Restoration is viewed as worsening the situation. Others believe that, if conservation is to be carried out, traditional ceremonies should be conducted first. Either way, there is a conflict between the Western inclination to preserve tangible things for posterity and the local imperative to preserve correct relations with the ancestors.

The situation at Great Zimbabwe is consistent with observations in Northern Zimbabwe (Mabvadya 1990), where local attitudes towards NMMZ reveal similar issues pertaining to the restoration of walls at *madzimbabwe* traditional sites. Here, again, the elders argued that these places were the homes of the ancestors. When they disintegrated and fell into ruins, there was nothing wrong. The ancestors were simply abandoning their homes and relocating to some other place. Heritage managers should not interfere with this natural process. It was also clear, here, that the monument was not simply the architecturally pleasing stone walls but encompassed natural resources, land boundaries, historically shared experience and traditional knowledge. This heritage management dilemma is not unique to Zimbabwe. In Thailand, for instance, the heritage managers of the ancient Buddhist temples of Chaing Saen feel that the architectural fabric has to be preserved, whilst for the local community the collapse of the temples is regarded as Buddha's wish (Lertrit 1997).

Both Zimbabwean and foreign tourists were opposed to massive restoration of the structures at Great Zimbabwe. Although they appreciated the efforts being made to preserve the fabric of the monument, they argued that restoration interfered with the authenticity of the monument.

Cultural values for Great Zimbabwe

The sustainability of cultural sites such as Great Zimbabwe depends on the recognition society affords them. Whether and how the cultural heritage is valued determines whether and how it is safeguarded and preserved (or neglected and destroyed). Great Zimbabwe is a site laden with multiple cultural values, which are explored below.

Social value

It is clear from the research carried out at Great Zimbabwe that, despite the policies of NMMZ, the place continues to be a revered national shrine, a place of worship symbolic of the national and cultural identity of Zimbabwe. The site is home to the departed and living spirits of Zimbabwe. As a result, the site continues to play a central religious role and a number of religious activities continue to be held at Great Zimbabwe. The local communities (Charumbira, Nemanwa and Mugabe) esteem the place because of its spiritual or religious value. These indigenous communities regard the place as the abode of spirits or *dzimbahwe*. These communities have continued to use the site for rainmaking, spirit appeasing ceremonies and many other traditional rituals relating to the socio-economic plight or welfare of the indigenous communities. Land, fertility and water are linked, and ceremonies to request rain are held almost annually. 'For the local communities rain is life: without it animals, plants and people will die' (Bourdillon 1987, quoted in Pwiti and Mvenge 1996, p.819).

Historical value

The archaeological research done in the past century has demonstrated the centrality of the monument to Zimbabwean history and Southern Africa (Garlake 1973, Beach 1980, Sinclair 1987, Pikirayi 1993). Oral histories linking the monument with the development of the Munhumutapa Empire have also been recorded. Such links with the past, including material evidence of long-distance trade in the sub-region, have given the site an immense historical value or significance.

Scientific value

The array of cultural and natural values associated with the monument are of immense scientific value and provide opportunities for extracting knowledge about the prehistoric development of the Shona, and of Bantu speakers more generally. Great Zimbabwe also provides opportunities to study the evolution of a cultural landscape. The beauty of the site in its natural setting, together with the cultural property, provides a powerful source of inspiration to disciplines including architecture, engineering, geology, art and religion.

Aesthetic value

The aesthetic value of Great Zimbabwe includes aspects such as the size and form of the monument, its architectural style, materials used in its construction, and the general visual appearance. Part of its aesthetic value rests on the site being the most spectacular in sub-Saharan Africa, in terms of size and design, and being comparable to sites such as Stonehenge, the Acropolis and the Egyptian pyramids, all of which are physically attractive to see. Great Zimbabwe epitomises the design principles of an architectural style whose physical appearance, in particular the dry-stone architecture, has captured the imagination of all those who have visited the site.

Economic value

Great Zimbabwe has potential value as a source of revenue through tourism, attracting visitors from the times of Carl Mauch, and generating much-needed foreign currency. In addition, the place has significant economic value for several downstream businesses such as hotels, tour operators, transport hire companies, curio and craft centres, and labour (direct or indirect). The spin-off benefits include the direct and indirect development of the local areas, either, owing to the importance of the site.

Discussion

The cultural landscape at Great Zimbabwe is rich in values. The local inhabitants depend on this landscape, to varying degrees, in order to subsist and commune with their ancestors. Equally, heritage managers, government officials, politicians, regional planners, and national and international agencies inhabit the Great Zimbabwe cultural landscape. The outcome of the numerous interests acting upon each other is a diversity of attitudes and aspirations. Some of the prominent complaints are that conservation at Great Zimbabwe does not pay due respect to the site's central religious value; and that it does not recognize this as being at least as vital as, or even more important than, its aesthetic and economic values. Local people complain that heritage managers wish to preserve the standing walls at the expense of religious values, and point out that the cave in the hill complex is actually ignored by the heritage managers. It is considered that the caves are the dwelling places of the ancestors and should be honoured as sacred. To this way of thinking, nothing is more important than the caves at the site because they house the spirits responsible for the well-being of local people. Local

elders maintain the tradition that the ancestors look after all sites used for cultural functions. Sacred areas are supposed to be out of bounds at any time except during ceremonies. People refrain from carrying out any activity that may damage or destroy a place.

Interviews carried out at the site suggest that the local communities do not appreciate the way the monument has been managed so far. It appears that few efforts have been made to provide access to the monument or restore pride in the history of Great Zimbabwe. These alternative local perceptions and histories of the monument have not been considered central to the survival of the cultural property. In most cases, as demonstrated earlier, local communities are considered a major threat to the survival of the monument, mainly through their illegal activities such as collecting firewood and conducting rituals. These activities are blamed for the frequent fires at the monument.

Empowering local communities and restoring pride in the local heritage are contentious issues in most parts of Southern Africa. Achieving these gains would require the communities around heritage sites to be involved in preserving sites, fostering pride in these places, and encouraging a recognition of the need for the continued survival of the heritage. Although preservation offers a chance for community involvement, this is usually not taken, with the excuse that this is a highly technical subject best left to technocrats. One instance when local people got involved in heritage management was at the Zimbabwe type-site of Manyikeni located in Mozambique's south-central region. By 1978 some 400 local people had participated voluntarily in field work at the site, and in the following year a site museum was opened in an attempt to make the archaeological site accessible to the local communities (Sinclair *et al.* 1993a, p.429).

Another instance is the restoration of the *madzimbabwe*-type monument at Thulamela, occupied between 1400 and 1700 CE. The dialect-speaking Shona, who make up part of the modern Venda community, are directly linked to Thulamela. The Venda were moved from this area when the park was created, and claim traditional ownership of this site, although this ownership has been contested (Nehemani, pers. comm. 1999). The Tsonga, Shangaan and Sotho also lived in the same area; it appears that the most recent people to reside in the area were the Makuleke Tsonga, who also claim to have built the site and were evicted in 1969 to make way for the expansion of the Kruger National Parks. A restoration project to rehabilitate the stone ruins began preliminary work in 1994. The programme involved systematic excavation around the collapsed stone walls so as to establish the general direction and foundation of the walled enclosures. After scrutinising the wall styles, the enclosures were reconstructed using modern stonemasons. The width and height of each wall was determined by the bulk of the original stone collapse (Miller 1996).

Work at Thulamela was primarily archaeological and the reconstruction should be taken only as an interpretation of how the site might originally have looked. No attempt was made to return the stone blocks to their original position; this would have been impossible given the general state of collapse on the site. However, the discovery of burials during excavation necessitated involving the Venda people in the project's implementation. It was also hoped that they could provide ethnographic depth to the interpretation of the remains. The project aimed to set up negotiated decision-making processes that would involve local communities in the long-term site management. Part of Thulamela's attraction, in addition to the Great Zimbabwe-style stone walls, were the gold-adorned skeletons discovered during the 1996 excavations. The co-operation between academic archaeologists and Venda chiefs in resolving sensitive issues relating to the excavation and rebuilding of remains at Thulamela has been hailed as a model of successful negotiations. The Venda people have taken immense pride in the excavation and restoration project. The opening of the site to the public affirms the complexity of African culture in Southern Africa and reclaims a significant chapter in Venda history (Davison 1998). Yet the site is in the Kruger National Park and the Venda community lives outside the park. Thus the community cannot have access to the cultural place unless the park warden grants it. This leads to the critical questions of access and local community participation. Is participation to be defined primarily as appearing at the official opening? What role does Thulamela play today in Venda culture? Land ownership and access are questions that have not yet been satisfactorily addressed.

8

Presenting the cultural heritage

IT HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED that various groups have different interests in the monument of Great Zimbabwe. It was also indicated that the interests of the tourists and perhaps of the urbanised Zimbabwean coincide very much with those of the heritage managers. However, the majority of the local communities are ill at ease with these ideas. These new values seem to deny the local community any meaningful access to their heritage. It is proposed in this chapter that addressing the questions of access and restoration of pride among the local communities must begin by incorporating their interests in how the monument is presented. The *raison d'etre* for preserving the cultural heritage, in the final analysis, is presentation to the general public. By reconciling the various cultural values of the site we began to address some of the problems of enabling various groups to gain access to and pride in their heritage. It is also argued that this approach does not alienate visitors from abroad but that it offers an uniquely African experience.

Presentation (public interpretation) includes a broad scope of endeavours ranging from formal education and curriculum development to less structured programmes such as site tours and museum displays. It also encompasses singular communication devices such as the publication of popular histories, public awareness posters, brochures and development of multimedia presentations.

Four basic approaches to presenting the archaeological remains have been identified:

- Academic or theoretical archaeology;
- Indigenous views of the past;
- School history;
- The past as presented to the public in museums and archaeological sites (Stone 1994).

Generally, in Southern Africa, the academic interpretation and the museum presentation represent the same approach; museum displays and the ways in which monuments are presented has not changed significantly in the past fifty years or so (Mazel and Ritchie 1994).

Academic interpretation and public access

Archaeologists have for some time been aware of the importance of interpretation; that they have social responsibilities for the ways in which evidence is exhibited, and that the choices they make may have implications for human rights (Gathercole and Lowenthal 1990). The official interpretation and presentation of archaeological sites such as Great Zimbabwe has been carried out by academics. Debate about Great Zimbabwe, from Carl Mauch's day to the late 1970s, for the most part centred on who built the monumental architecture, although Randall-MacIver's research had already established the date and African origins of the *madzimbabwe* structures by 1905. Subsequent contributions to the debate about the origins of Great Zimbabwe essentially refined MacIver's monumental work (notably Caton-Thompson 1931, Robinson 1961, Whitty 1961, Summers 1964). When eventually the subject became a non-issue among academics during the 1970s, debate shifted to the study of non-walled areas or dwellings outside the prestigious monumental walls (Garlake 1973, Huffman 1981, Sinclair 1984) and this led to discussions about sociopolitical aspects of the Zimbabwean state.

The last few years have been dominated by the application of structuralist and cognitive archaeology to the core of the monument (Huffman 1981, 1984,

1986, 1997). This interpretation has been based on a combination of data sources from archaeology, ethnography and Portuguese records, and it aims to uncover the social and political organization of Great Zimbabwe's inhabitants. The hypothesis to emerge was that the basic structures of the monument were established at the beginning of occupation and the town remained pretty much unaltered for the next two hundred years of its existence. (See Figure 8.1 for a reconstruction of Huffman's interpretation) The hill complex is, in this interpretation, identified as the King's residence and the eastern enclosure as the ritual area; the King's wives are said to have lived in the valley below, and the Great Enclosure has been identified as the designated area for female initiation activities.

There are many critics of this interpretation in academic circles. Among the charges levelled at Huffman are that he has misread the Portuguese documents and made uncritical use of Shona oral traditions (Beach 1998), made inappropriate use of Venda ethnography (Mahachi 1991), and ignored the chronostratigraphic sequence of the site (Collett, Vines and Hughes 1992; Chipunza 1994).

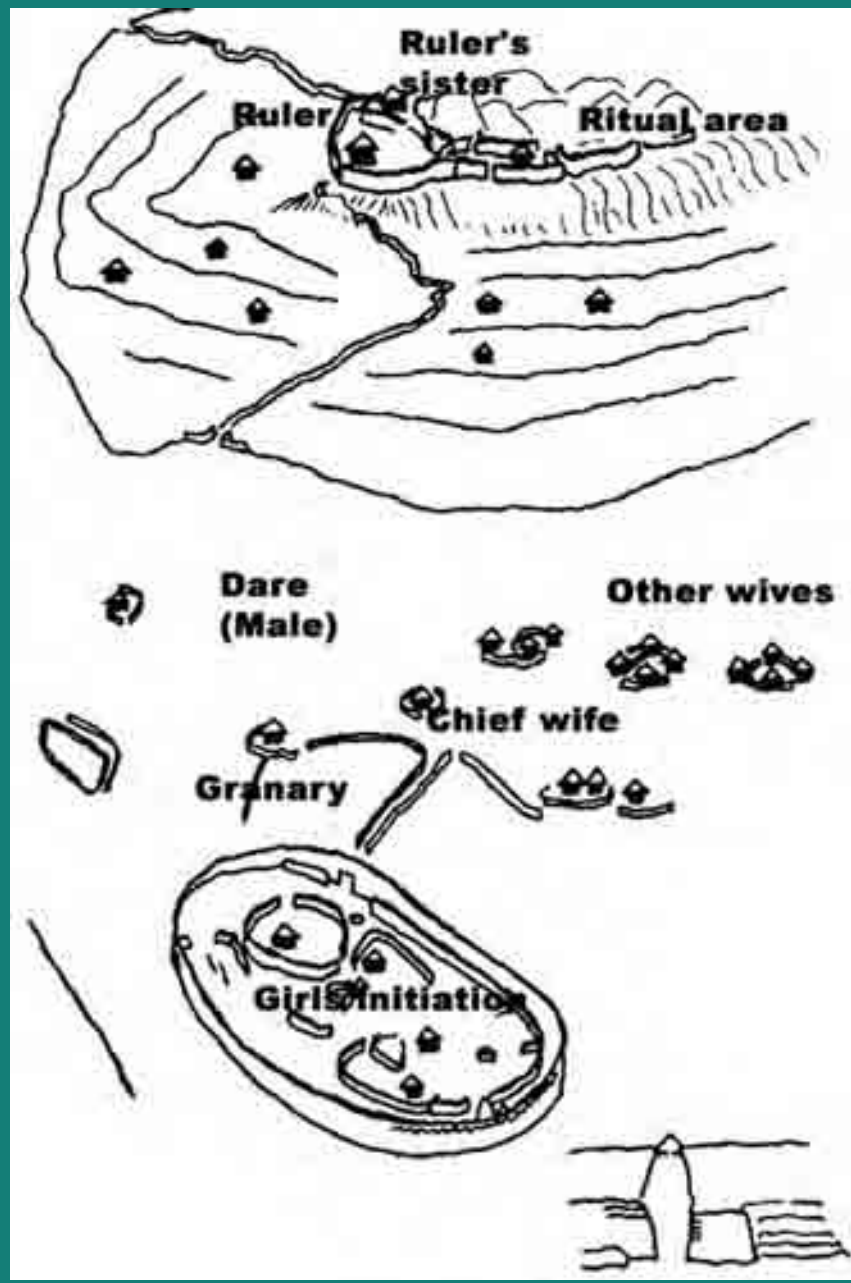


FIGURE 8.1
Huffman's interpretation of core area at Great Zimbabwe (after Beach 1998)

Problems with the relevance of academic archaeology (and the inaccuracies of popular archaeology) are not unique to Great Zimbabwe. Archaeology in Argentina, for instance, where striking advances have been made in uncovering important evidence of the past 10 000 years, has largely failed to find ways of transferring this knowledge to the education system or to the community at large (Oliva 1994). In India, meanwhile, the practice of archaeology excludes a large segment of the population from a sense of participation in the country's past (Chakrabarti 2000).

Archaeological debates about Great Zimbabwe have yet to win an audience outside academic circles; indeed, archaeologists have yet to pursue this aim, either in schools or among the general public. In interviews designed to discover the general level of knowledge concerning Great Zimbabwe, visitors to the site tended to know who built it, but members of the local community did not. (See Figure 8.2) Several of these in the over-50 age group attributed the building to Arabs or said they did not know who built it – despite, in many cases, their high level of education as teachers, nurses or civil servants. This might be a reflection of what was taught in schools during the 1960s and 1970s, or published during that era (for instance, Miller 1960). It was, however, clear that for all the groups the question of the origins was paramount and is still an issue which needs to be addressed and openly discussed. What is important to recognize here is the fact that some aspects of myths about the origins of the site, as well as some stereotypes of Africans and African culture reminiscent of Victorian and Rhodesian times, have not only survived but also found their way into Shona oral traditions. The situation is broadly consistent with that of the Australian Aborigines.

The reluctance of Aborigines to accept the position of archaeologists has been noted, regardless of positive changes in archaeologists' perceptions of Aboriginal prehistory (Langford 1983). A number still view their history through the 'officially' discarded views about aboriginal cultural heritage. In fieldwork among the Shona, it has been clearly demonstrated how the interpretation of the recent past reflects colonial prejudices, especially as seen in local oral histories that touch on Ndebele/Shona relations (Beach 1974). During interviews carried out around Great Zimbabwe, informants sometimes gave modified versions of the long-discredited theories about Arabs having constructed the place. Some of the local people confessed their convictions that the Shona could not have had the capacity to build such structures. It is apparent that these informants grew up in a sociopolitical milieu that denigrated all things African. They now fail to distinguish between those elements of the past that are truly historical and those that were forced on them through the colonial education system or via other forms of information exchange (Ucko 1994). It was also illustrated that, whilst the debate on the origins of the Zimbabwe tradition was solved decades ago by archaeologists, the general public (those who visit the monument and those who live near it) have not yet had access to this information. The site museum and the guidebooks

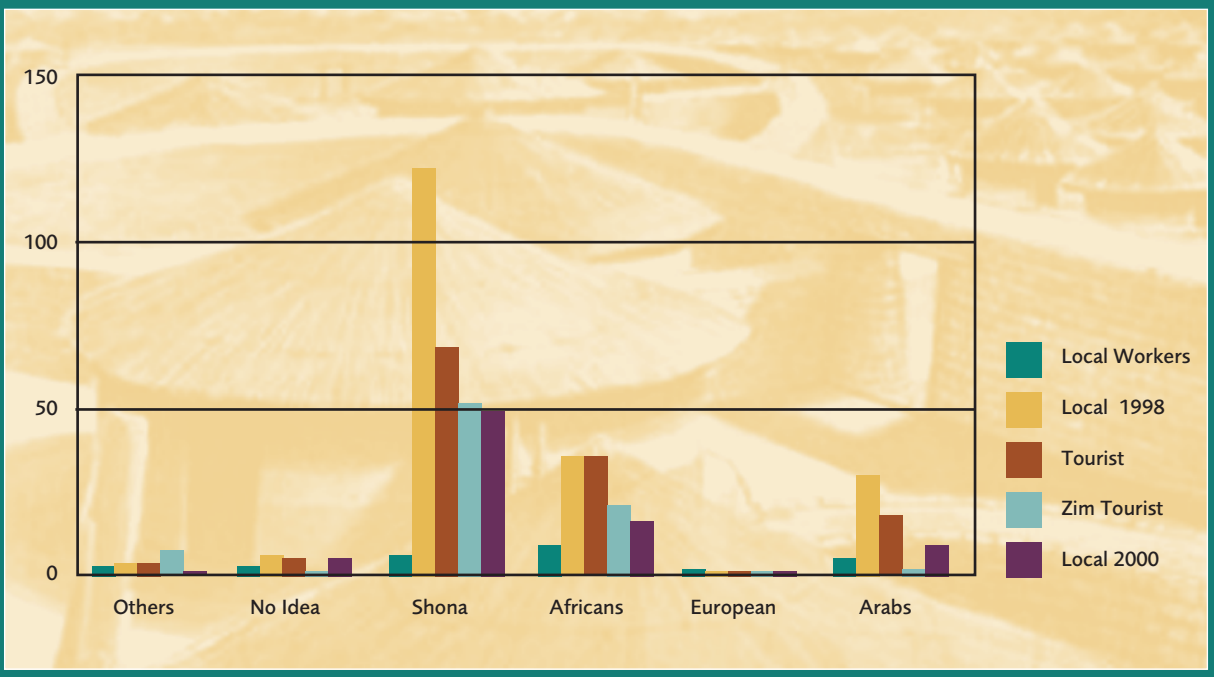


FIGURE 8.2
Responses to the question of who built Great Zimbabwe

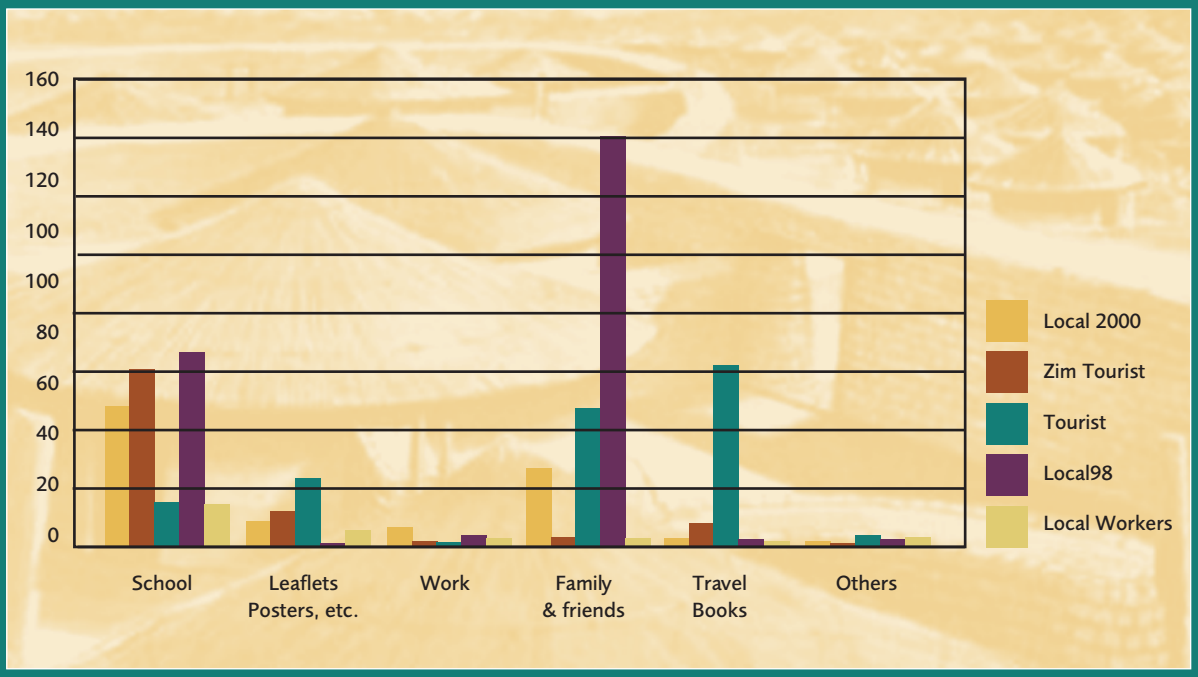


FIGURE 8.3
Sources of information about Great Zimbabwe

have failed to communicate some of the most interesting and vibrant discussions about the monument.

Sources of information

Sources of information for how different groups came to know about the site were varied, although academic literature was not one of them. Generally there seems to be a lack of any organized campaign to inform people about the monument. This is compounded by the lack of suitable and affordable literature at the monument. The main source of information for the local communities is word of mouth, oral history, and general history taught in school. Schools were the main source of information for the Zimbabwean tourist. For tourists from abroad, travel literature was the main source – the *Lonely Planet* guide in particular. This book lacks accuracy, not just about Great Zimbabwe but also about other sites in southern Africa, and yet more than 70 percent of tourists had read this book. Very few people were aware of the general academic debates going on about the site despite the fact that the site museum had abridged versions of Huffman's interpretations.

Alternative interpretation

As indicated above, the debate among the general public about who built Great Zimbabwe is still ongoing. Although among the local communities it is generally agreed that the ancestral Shona were responsible for the construction, each individual group seems to claim ownership. Both the Nemanwa and Mugabe groups, for instance, claim to have built the place despite their relatively recent arrival into the area. The site's national significance and its associated political clout has led to a situation in which every group would like to be associated with the monument. Although there are many competing claims for ownership of the monument, all agree on the significance of Great Zimbabwe as a national shrine alongside other places such as Njelele. There is also general agreement that religious activities synonymous with the site should be allowed to take place.

Despite the fact that each of the local communities has its own opinion about the history and significance of Great Zimbabwe, these have had little impact on the way the monument has been presented or interpreted. Such opinions have largely been based on oral traditions and oral histories, and academics have dismissed them as baseless myths and legends. Ken Mufuka's book was the first bold attempt to incorporate the opinions of the local communities in the way in which the monument was presented to the general public (Mufuka 1983). His study is largely based on oral histories collected from communities local to the site, depicting a bright and glorious life at Great Zimbabwe. This version of the reality contrasts sharply with academic historians' descriptions of conditions at Great Zimbabwe as slum-like (Mtetwa 1976, Beach 1980). Mufuka's interpretation portrays the place as a classless society, adding that

FIGURE 8.4
Illustration of relationship of houses and stone enclosures by Lance Penny 1974. (Note lack of human figures owing to Rhodesian censorship)

FIGURE 8.5
Illustrations to help visitors to interpret Great Zimbabwe by Lance Penny 1976

music, intoxicating drink and roasted meat were part of the daily pleasures enjoyed by the hangers on at Great Zimbabwe (Mufuka 1983, p.24). Many ordinary Zimbabweans welcomed this exploitation of myths and legends, which offered a timeless heritage they could easily identify with, devoid of the chronological classifications of archaeology.

Presentation and the public

Most visitors to archaeological sites lack all but the most basic information about this place on their itinerary. This lack of knowledge translates into a frequently-asked set of standard questions, centring on the people who built and lived in the monument. Typical questions include: Who built it and when? Why did they abandon it? Who lived in this area? What did they do here? How did they build it? Providing answers for these questions is one of the primary requirements for visitor satisfaction. The time constraints that affect visitors, coupled with the generally short attention span of the holiday-maker, make it imperative that these questions are answered in a simple and clear manner. The number of messages provided should be limited to those necessary to answer the six basic questions outlined above.

Tourists also have difficulty in visualising what the site would have looked like. These difficulties can often be compounded by the problem of differential preservation; namely, the elements that visitors cannot see, for example the decayed *dhaka* structures at sites such as Great Zimbabwe, leading them to construct incorrect interpretations on the basis of what they can see. It is therefore essential to provide on-site displays, which help the tourist to visualise an area in its totality. In the late 1970s, National Museums and Monuments of Rhodesia produced a guidebook with illustrations depicting reconstructed sections of the monument, to show the relationship between the stone walls and uses of some of the enclosures. (See Figures 8.4 and 8.5) Although limited, this depiction went a long way towards explaining life during the Great Zimbabwe period. The map accompanying the guidebook was also illustrated. (See Figure 8.6)

The monument's core area consists of a set of walled enclosures concentrated over an area of around fifty hectares. As indicated in earlier chapters, there are a number of outlying enclosures scattered over the rest of the designated monument, as well as a number of occupation areas lacking stone walls but dated, by the associated pottery, to the Zimbabwe period. The core area of walled enclosures is at present the principal area for public presentation and interpretation; everywhere else is generally regarded

as a no-go area and has not been prepared for official public access. Even within this core area, presentation and interpretation to the public is a complex problem. At present the monument is presented and interpreted mainly at the site museum, and through tour guides and a guidebook provided by NMMZ. Private companies also provide tour guides.

Other than the map at the entrance there are no information or interpretative signs on the monument. What signs there are give either directions or regulations. There are at least three *in situ* displays of *dhaka* structures. The main one is the miniature construction of the Posselt house in the valley enclosures. In 1987 the Posselt house in the western valley enclosure was excavated. It was decided to leave the area open in order to show visitors the relationship between the stone walls and *dhaka* structures. After ten years, the structures had undergone rapid deterioration owing to the effects of the elements and visitors on the remains, and were backfilled, closing the only place where visitors could gain an insight into the relationship between the stone walling and the ordinary dwelling houses. A quarter-size miniature has now been constructed in its place. The two other exposed *dhaka* structures are in the hill complex and are not accompanied by interpretative information.

The presentation and interpretation in the museum displays and the guidebook is derived from archaeological sources. No mention or reference is made to the myths, legends, oral histories and folklore related to the monument. Yet during our interviews with the local community elders it became clear that there are many legends and oral traditions pertaining to Great Zimbabwe. The official presentation and interpretation mainly focuses on the site as a relic, with no relevance to today's socio-economic or cultural environment. The monument is presented as a bygone civilisation. The problem with this style of presentation was acknowledged decades ago. 'We suspect that unless the archaeologists find ways to make their research increasingly relevant to the modern world, the modern world will find it increasingly capable to getting along without archaeology' (Fritz and Plog 1970). Our presentation needs to be made more relevant and accessible to the public. It can also be argued that, although we claim to preserve this heritage for future generations, the remains are with us now and people have a right to enjoy these in the present.

The public is taken to mean simply those people who do not regard themselves as professional researchers. This public is, obviously, not a homogeneous group. In Southern Africa the public can be divided into three general categories:

a) Visitors from abroad who in most cases come to enjoy and learn;
b) Local middle class and educated groups who have similar interests to (a), along with a cultural affiliation to the site; and
c) Local people who come for the above reasons but have a religious interest in the site.

If we are to make a successful presentation, it is necessary to understand the needs of this heterogeneous public.

Each of these groups may hold changeable and potentially conflicting attitudes to the monument, as indicated earlier. Their interests have to be catered for. These attitudes are prone to change in response to fluctuations in the ideological environment. The history of Great Zimbabwe might well illustrate this point. Carl Mauch as indicated earlier, brought the site to the attention of Europeans in the 1860s. Its size and grandeur impressed many and soon study tours from Europe began. The presentation of this monument has not escaped the racial prejudices associated with the early historiography of the site; after all, the settler population from the 1900s to 1980 provided the organizational milieu, funds and audience for research at Great Zimbabwe, and this had an influence on how the site was conserved and presented (Garlake 1982). From 1965 to 1980, the Rhodesia Front acted to control and censor all museum displays, guidebooks and archaeological writings accessible to the (white) public. Africans were not encouraged to visit the site except as providers of tourist services. Limiting access to the monument and its grandeur provoked strong reactions among the local communities, manifested in the form of the African Nationalist movement of the 1960s and 1970s, which saw the site as a powerful political symbol. This turbulent recent history of the monument affects its presentation in the future. It can be argued that presentation and exhibition of archaeological materials and remains, especially those with varied symbolic overtones, will never be objective and will always touch on controversial debates. Stonehenge and the Acropolis are well known examples.

In terms of the site's presentation, it has so far been assumed that the public who visit such museums and cultural sites would be visitors from abroad or people with a European connection. Certainly, the impression is conveyed that the uniqueness and mysteriousness of such sites and exhibits would only appeal to curious foreign visitors, as evidenced by the fact that (using both Fry and Cloze tests) displays and guidebooks at the Great Zimbabwe museum are pitched at an average reading level of above seventeen years, whilst university student reading levels are around fifteen years. Besides being

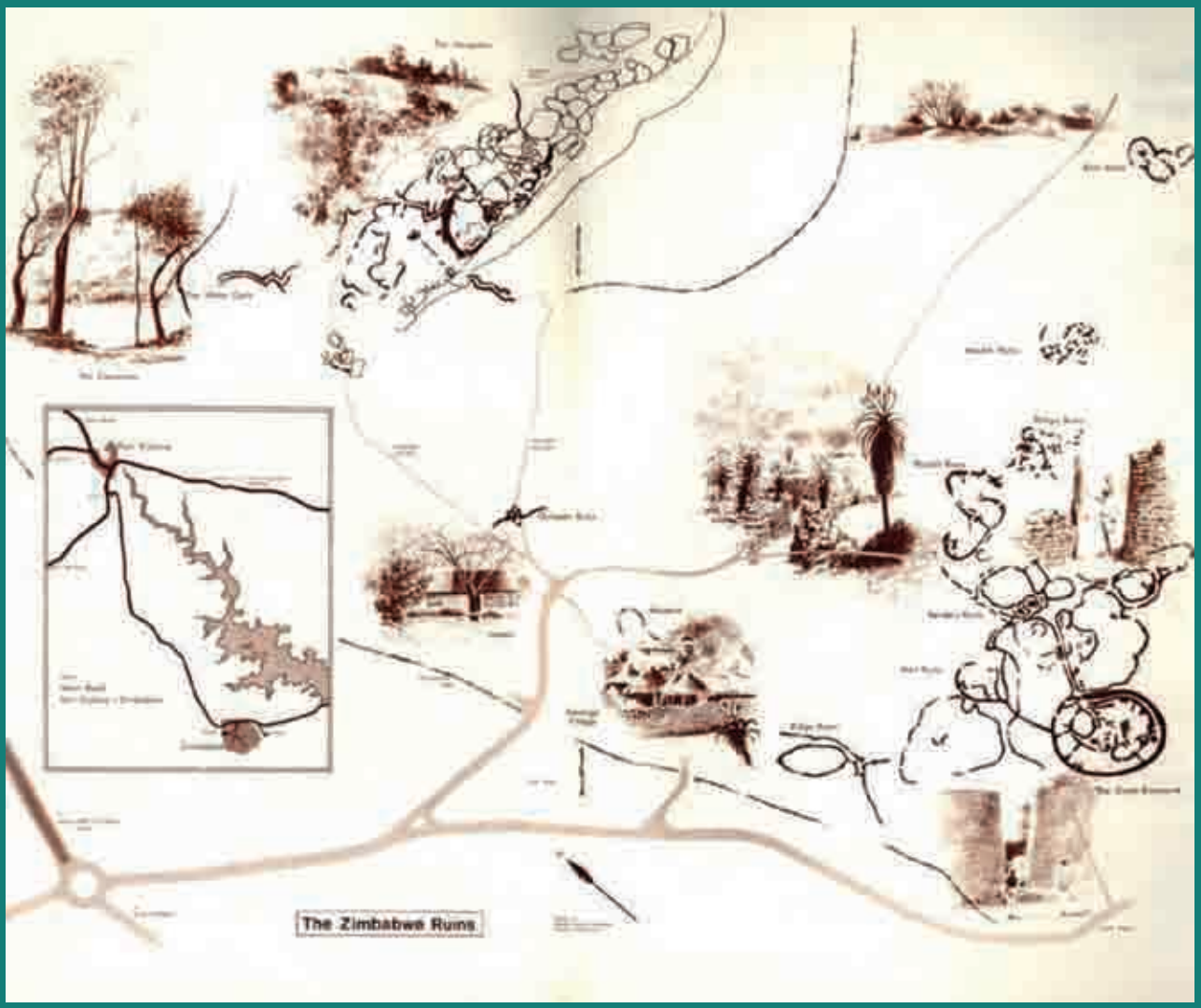


FIGURE 8.6
Illustrated map of Great Zimbabwe by Lance Penny (National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe)

pitched above local reading levels, the guidebook and museums displays use a lot of unexplained technical terminology. For instance, the fairly complex pottery classifications used by archaeologists are indiscriminately used on displays aimed at the public. These facts, along with the sole use of English, mean that more than 70 percent of the African community is alienated from the site. Yet any good preservation strategy will draw on the interest of the local communities and should provide guidebooks in indigenous languages.

The local oral traditions, myths and legends, with which the Western scholar seems so ill at ease, need to find their way into the exhibitions, displays and general presentations. This will serve the local communities, and also those foreign visitors genuinely interested in the culture of the area, for it will create that visitor experience which is uniquely Southern African. It will also help to generate the contextual framework within which to interpret the cultural heritage. A work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses the cultural competence, or code, into which it is encrypted (Bourdieu 1984). Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*, which takes into account the wider social contexts such as home and school that provide the basis on which culture is assimilated, could be useful in the appreciation of archaeological remains and what they represent. People, in order to appreciate or understand certain cultural resources, must have experienced certain forms of socialisation, for instance familial upbringing and education, endowing them with the cultural competence necessary to recognize the information contained in such things (Bourdieu 1977). Yet the

study of history in school curricula is dominated by the past as presented in written records.

The archaeological presentation of the past has been sketchy at best, and opportunities for indigenous communities to present their version of the past have been non-existent – an omission that in the long term is unsustainable. Any meaningful and lasting exhibition strategy has to depend on the interest of the indigenous local communities, and will require the use of indigenous languages. At Great Zimbabwe, owing to the inadequacies of the current presentation in English, a direct translation of the current English version will not suffice; explanations should be framed in terms of concepts readily identifiable to local people. At Domboshava caves, for instance, there are well-executed display panels, which have been translated into Shona. However, an undigested translation into Shona of David Lewis-Williams' complex trance hypothesis has also been included, and the panels discuss the rainmaking ceremony in terms of past practices, when the most recent one was held in 2001! Whilst the local communities should be able to access and enjoy their heritage in a medium with which they are familiar, few would go along with Mufuka's suggestion that they have the exclusive right to interpret the site (Mufuka 1983).

What is proposed here is that monuments in countries such as Zimbabwe, with a long colonial experience, should take the approach of using parallel presentations. Traditional museum and exhibition techniques may be used, with the proviso that these take into consideration the local language and cultural environment. The notion of heritage preservation should be addressed when promoting the monument among schoolchildren and the public, and professional execution of the presentation is crucial. If the point is to interpret the past and convey information effectively, then the better a presentation can stimulate a visitor's interests and emotions and create an enjoyable experience, the better able a visitor is to absorb the information conveyed. Recent studies have found that the most important factors at visitor centres appear to be the interpretative theme, the presentation media and the overall atmosphere of the displays.

TABLE 8.1 Visitor numbers from Great Zimbabwe (paying visitors only)

YEAR (from July to June)	NUMBER OF PAYING VISITORS
1989 – 1990	84 960
1990 – 1991	87 820
1991 – 1992	88 296
1992 – 1993	70 720
1993 – 1994	102 877
1994 – 1995	111 649
1995 – 1996	120 993
1996 – 1997	91 652
1997 – 1998	88 122
1998 – 1999	153 343

Visitor management

Visitor management incorporates a number of methods, skills and techniques. Psychological barriers, signs and staff presence can be deployed to protect areas, while presentation (interpretation) programmes such as guides, guidebooks and visitor facilities may be provided in order to enhance the understanding the place and maintain its significance. The main aim of visitor management should be the provision of a worthwhile on-site experience (Pearson and Sullivan 1995).

There are two aspects of visitor management that should be considered when dealing with presentation of the archaeological remains:

- Providing enjoyment and a worthwhile visitor experience; and
- Providing this experience with minimum interference to the conservation of the site and its immediate environs.

Recent studies show that the number of visitors to Great Zimbabwe has been increasing and this obviously is having an effect on the site. (See Table 8.1) Visitor facilities may also be extended beyond their intended capacity. With these factors in mind, careful planning and monitoring is paramount in order to provide access to the public whilst limiting damage to the cultural heritage.

Visitors on average spend about two-and-a-half hours on the monument per visit, and approximately 80 percent of the time at specific areas. In order of priority these areas are the Great Enclosure, the curio shop and the hill complex. Even in these areas, specific locations are preferred – for instance, the conical tower in the Great Enclosure. This preference for certain areas inevitably causes a certain amount of erosion to the ground and archaeological remains. The erosion can also trigger foundation problems for the stone walls. There is a need to alleviate pressure on these popular spots by providing alternative routes. Flexible but easily controlled alternative paths for visitors should be available. The alternatives will cater for the disabled and elderly who may find it difficult to visit certain sections of the monument, whilst making it difficult

to visit certain sections of the monument. It will be difficult to restrict visits to certain areas; the only way to alleviate this pressure is to provide worthwhile exhibits and in-site interpretation areas. For example, in the hill complex the PWD pit can be used to show the public the occupation sequence of the site. This has been shown to work with the valley enclosures. Prior to the 1987 excavation in the valley, very few visitors went to the area but now, with the excavation exhibit, it is beginning to attract attention. Grouping together visitors' amenities such as car parks, curio shop, entrance and main museum offers greater control of the flow of visitors and limits unnecessary intervention into the historic environment of the monument. Provision of areas to take photographs will limit the climbing of the walls and walking over archaeological remains. The diversity of routes around the monument can also be used as a vehicle to give visitors a varied but rich experience of the heritage.

A major problem with large outdoor sites is how to sustain the interest of the visitor throughout the tour. This is very difficult given that most of the interpretation is done in a single museum. Studies in Australia have indicated that, on average, visitor interest at an archaeological site is captured for approximately 20 minutes before it starts to wander. In order to counter this, it is paramount to have *in situ* displays in various sections of the site rather than at one centralised place. The main museum then becomes the interpretation centre. Frequent displays about archaeological excavation would help to de-mystify archaeological methods of recovering data to the general public. These will be presented as complementary to oral traditions and local legends, which are the other source of local history in most of sub-Saharan Africa. Similar exhibitions about conservation work and methods would also help in making visitors aware of some of the problems of the site. Full-scale and model reconstructions, along with living exhibitions of traditional crafts (in the form of demonstrations), will also help bring archaeology to life and give the public an added satisfaction. However, several constraints have to be taken into account in presenting and interpreting the monument and landscape, including the protection and conservation of the site's significant values, and the capacity of the site to cope with more visitors.

An educational resource

One of the most important roles of the archaeologist in Zimbabwe – with important implications for the future of archaeology as a discipline – is trying to get teachers to understand what archaeologists do and how archaeological methodology can be applied in the classroom. This is necessary if the next generation is to recognize its value. Archaeology is an extremely visual subject and one that cries out for proactive student involvement.

Studies carried out in the classroom and at archaeological sites demonstrate that archaeology is an effective tool and has, in the classroom, been a powerful means of introducing excluded elements of the past (Stone and Mackenzie 1990). In South Africa it has provided pupils with the tools to deal with and challenge negative images of the past, along with racial, ethnic and gender stereotypes associated with the former political system. It has been shown that archaeology can enhance pupils' awareness and appreciation of the contribution made by all South Africans in the country's past, by providing new ways of investigating the past and allowing them to question the authority of the written record. Introducing pupils to the whole gamut of different kinds of evidence demonstrates that the experience of the past is not limited to the comparison of different texts; their eyes are opened to a multiplicity of clues about the past that exist independently of the written word. This also places them in a position to expand their knowledge and understanding of the unwritten Southern African past.

The interaction with actual artefacts in a specific context is a valuable and effective means of promoting empathy and an eagerness to engage and identify with the past. Archaeology can enable pupils to understand and engage with the process of interpretation, as can multimedia techniques. A multimedia presentation, in which various media such as video, sound, graphics, animation and text together come to form a single unit, provides a creative and educational platform from which schoolchildren can explore a wide range of source materials about the history of a place. It also promotes the use of computers in general. Interactive multimedia packages offer the user ways of controlling and navigating through the material presented. The CD format has several advantages, including easy handling and transport, high storage capacity, durability and low cost. A multimedia package was produced as part of this study, in order to popularise Great Zimbabwe and archaeology in schools. The objectives of the project were:

- To make the methods and results of archaeological research accessible to children in such a way as kindle enthusiasm for, and encourage understanding of, historical and cultural processes; and
- To build and encourage an appreciation of the value of African archaeology and of archaeology in general.

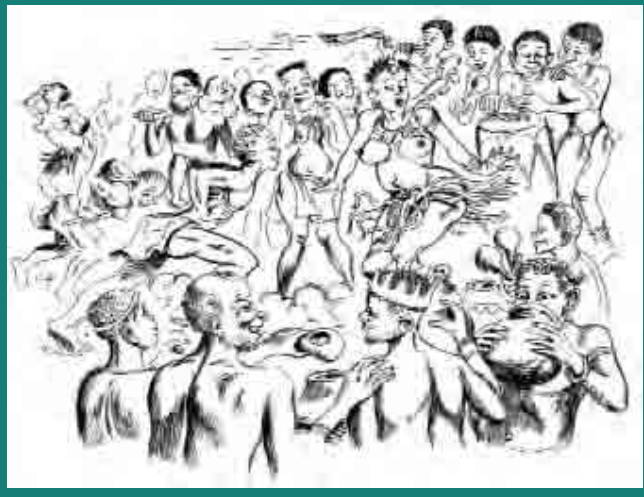


FIGURE 8.7
Some of the illustrated interpretations from the educational CD- ROM

The result has been a pilot demonstration, based on the following themes:

Understanding Great Zimbabwe, Exploring
A basic introduction to the four main components of the Great Zimbabwe site, namely the Great Enclosure, hill complex, valley enclosure, and peripheral areas.

Great Zimbabwe, *Madzimbabwe*
An exploration of life at Great Zimbabwe, using a series of simple questions through which the origins of the site, life at the site while it was inhabited, fashions during the Great Zimbabwe era, and religion are presented.

Myths and legends
An insight into alternative histories, using a popular myth about a pair of magical zoomorphic pots.

Looking after Great Zimbabwe
A discussion of conservation efforts underway, with the aim of ensuring that present and future generations enjoy this monument.

Other Zimbabwe sites
An introduction to other *madzimbabwe* sites in the region, such as Manyikeni in Mozambique, Thulamela in South Africa and Domboshava in Botswana.

The resulting CD-ROM makes use of scientific knowledge provided by archaeologists, together with the oral histories and legends from traditional knowledge sources. Some of the academic debates about the society that built Great Zimbabwe and what their everyday life might have been like were explored using cartoon drawings and animated figures. (See Figure 8.8) The idea was not to rely too much on text for communication. The participating schools provided music to accompany the images; they were not simply recipients of the CD-ROM.

The pilot demonstration was presented in September 1999 to three teacher-training colleges and two primary schools in Zimbabwe, and the reaction was overwhelming. The students enjoyed the experience and they also learnt something about Great Zimbabwe. Deciding to target teacher-training colleges was a practical choice: first, they were likely to have computers; and second, it was hoped that, once they graduate, they will be able to pass on the information to their pupils.

The overall objective of this project was the dissemination of archaeological knowledge to the general public, with a particular emphasis on educational institutions located around Great Zimbabwe. The theory is that children who use the CD-ROM will assimilate these images, and that these may

have a profound effect on the construction of their knowledge and their perceptions of the past by the time they reach adult life. Images demand less privileged knowledge, less of the jargon that sets academics apart from the general public. A picture may be recognized outside the relativist domain of language.

Discussion

The presentation of the past in school curricula and in museums and site interpretations will benefit from a better understanding of how the past is interpreted by archaeologists and indigenous peoples. It is argued here that fostering a greater understanding among the general public and pupils will help to ensure greater levels of protection of the site. Broadening the manner in which the past is studied and understood by students and members of the general public would go a long way towards empowering indigenous communities and boosting pride after so many years of being alienated from these monuments and denied meaningful access. The incorporation of indigenous values and views into how archaeologists, museums and educational institutions present the past would also enrich the academic discourse on the heritage presented. It is argued that the preservation of the heritage must incorporate methods that make it easier for schools and the local communities to use the resource. National Museums and Monuments has made limited attempts to address children in producing a colouring book and also another booklet, both of which use cartoons to educate children about Great Zimbabwe (Sanyahumbi 1992, Mvenge and Masona 1994). Unfortunately, these booklets were never distributed to schools but sold at the monument as part of the tourist literature.

The monuments in Southern Africa encounter special presentation problems. Visitors are equipped with varying levels of skills and expectations. The displays therefore have to cater to all ages, including adults with no reading skills. This diversity in skills levels is further complicated by the fact that Southern African countries are multi-lingual societies with no single language in common. Whilst most foreign visitors speak English, there are some who do not. Visual images go a long way towards overcoming language-related barriers.

It is argued that presenting archaeological places in Africa as cultural attractions offers a means of putting the continent's colonial era behind us, and an opportunity to combine a balanced interpretation of the past with economic and cultural benefits for today's stakeholders in the monument, along with a more positive legacy for the future. Yet, as observed in Zimbabwe, despite attaining political independence and freedom from censorship in the practice of archaeology, Great Zimbabwe (and, indeed, most archaeological monuments) remains to the mass of the population 'a remote and meaningless abstraction alienated from all that is significant in their culture' (Garlake 1982) – a statement still true more than two decades on. However, as indicated above, efforts are being made to rectify the problems created in the past. The responsibility ultimately rests on the new generation of archaeologists, researchers and the public at large to overcome the very deep divisions resulting from the imposition and clash of differing worldviews on the Zimbabwe plateau over the past 500 years.

9

Summary and conclusions

ALTHOUGH HERITAGE management systems in Southern Africa are slowly changing, the experience from Great Zimbabwe and elsewhere, as indicated in previous chapters, offers little support for this view. Heritage management at Great Zimbabwe and many other places continues to focus on the tangible elements of the heritage, over-emphasising the monumental and archaeological aspects. The colonial experience and the more recent influence of international conventions through organizations such as UNESCO have strongly influenced the way in which heritage management has evolved. These have tended to entrench the view of monuments, sites or places as relics from the past with limited relevance to the present sociocultural environment.

The practice of heritage management in Southern Africa has in the past ignored the role of local com-

PLATE 9.1
K2 after many years of excavation campaigns

munities and people in the management of cultural sites. This is not surprising given that most heritage managers are researcher professionals such as archaeologists, botanists, historians and anthropologists who view the heritage in terms of objects, artefacts, monuments and specimens. This, in the end, puts people at a remove from the environs of such monuments as Great Zimbabwe, Domboshava or Thulamela. These monuments and sites are intricately intertwined with people's lives, as they are part and parcel of a vibrant and dynamic cultural landscape. In attempting to protect these monuments, buffer zones have been created which prevent local communities from interacting with their heritage.

Heritage management has both a technical and a political dimension. First rate, unarguable technical data is important, but so is realistic information about the legal, regional and political situation. This study has demonstrated that the cultural landscape in which monuments are situated is not just a matter of its tangible physical aspects in the form of architectural and archaeological remains; a sensitivity to the contextual setting is required, beyond the myopic focus on the site, artefact or monument (Hodder 1992). The metaphysical or intangible aspects are of great importance, particularly if we are to understand the total cultural significance of these places. Great Zimbabwe, like Njelele in the Matopo, is regarded by many Zimbabweans as first and foremost a national shrine. It is additionally regarded by many African people all over the world as a symbol of African identity. The local communities also regard Great Zimbabwe as being of spiritual significance. Local and indigenous communities have been denied access to the site, owing initially to colonial practices and later to the new heritage management systems, which have tended to ignore the metaphysical aspects of the place. Access to the cultural property is a high priority for local and indigenous communities; not only is the heritage theirs but it can also play a part in restoring damaged self-confidence. If development projects are to succeed, those communities involved need to recover a sense of self-worth; one source of which is found in taking a pride in their past, and recognizing their stake in the heritage associated with that past.

Preservation

At Great Zimbabwe, any conservation programme has to recognize that structures such as the dry-stone walls began to deteriorate from the moment they were built. They are unique structures and have their own inherent weakness and problems. This means that intervention in the form of rebuilding and making alterations must have been a continuous process over the two or more centuries during which they were inhabited. The same can be said of the other structures such as the *dhaka* houses, with old ones destroyed and new ones constructed in their place. This process of continuous building and alteration is clearly demonstrated by the exposed and now eroding sections of the western enclosure in the hill complex. Here the stratigraphy shows the continuity of occupation with structures lying on top of each other, thus providing a visual chronostratigraphic sequence of the hill. It appears that the continued existence of most of the structures depended on a regular maintenance programme. We do not know how long *dhaka* structures lasted with regular maintenance, but the dry-stone walling lasted several centuries with minimal intervention. Any conservation programme of this monument must therefore place emphasis on regular monitoring and maintenance for the preservation of the structures and objects.

As discussed in previous chapters, the recent steps taken to preserve monuments such as Great Zimbabwe or Thulamela have all been based on sound international conservation principles as espoused by the 1964 Venice Charter. It can therefore be argued that the practice of conserving monuments and archaeological remains has met international standards. Nevertheless some disturbing attitudes persist, which can be traced back at least one hundred years. Starting in the early twentieth century, a number of sites have had sections destroyed by treasure hunters looking for gold. Some of the early archaeological excavations were not systematic and were destructive, particularly to structural remains. Most excavators were primarily interested in the artefacts. Trenches excavated in the past at places such as Naletale, Danamombe, Khami, Mapungubwe and K2 have left unsightly scars on the archaeological landscape. (See Plate 9.1) At times, water collects in these uncovered trenches, promoting rapid decay of artefacts. At Naletale and Danamombe, for instance, unsystematic trenches give the impression of haphazard archaeological research. At Great Zimbabwe also, excavations by Hall and Bent left scars on the surface of the site. These have a distorting effect on the cultural landscape we are trying to preserve, in which, under a comprehensive conservation strategy, relations between the structures and their environment should be taken into consideration. Also, in terms of the presentation of the site, such scars interfere with the absorption of visual information relating to the heritage's primary significance. Care over the image of the past we present is important precisely because the largest proportion of our information intake is derived from visual impressions.

Presentation

Presentation is not just about visitor management; it takes into consideration the whole on-site experience, from the entrance and facilities, accessibility of information provided and what people remember about the place. Presentation in essence centres around communication. It is ironic that the public most directly connected to the heritage in Southern Africa has not been a primary audience for presentations of its monuments. Although there have been some notable and promising moves to address the situation, such attempts are still rare. One significant development was the ritual ceremony, to reopen a sacred water fountain, conducted recently at Great Zimbabwe. The sacred natural water source had been closed and sealed using concrete in the 1950s, an action which had displeased the neighbouring communities of Charumbira, Nemanwa and Mugabe because they regarded the fountain as a gift from the ancestors to help deal with drought years. In 2000 NMMZ sponsored a ritual ceremony to re-open the fountain, allowing the local community to have access to the site for this occasion.

This development of allowing the local community access to the monument to perform rituals and perhaps use certain resources must be supplemented by attempts to communicate the professional research results of archaeologists and conservators. Their findings should be presented in a number of ways so as to reach the various groups with an interest in the heritage. In short, the general public must be informed about this heritage in which they are stakeholders, and whilst educational efforts take time to yield results, they are the only way of ensuring that present and future generations play a part in managing their own heritage.

Conclusion

Alongside the promotion of the site to the public and local community, the conservation of ruined monuments such as Great Zimbabwe must be based on simple but familiar techniques. These should preferably be in sympathy with the traditional and local conditions of the area. The need is to find appropriate solutions that do not depend on expensive imports of high technology. The management of monuments is influenced in many ways by contemporary ideas and so a successful presentation of the archaeological heritage to the public requires the integration of preservation and presentation strategies in a multidisciplinary way. The central issues are how to make the monument intelligible and accessible to the public without degrading the very site that people want to see, and how to bequeath it to the next generation so that they too can benefit from the cultural heritage.

Cultural tourism is one way in which the rural community around Great Zimbabwe, and in many other places, can begin to develop. It is a source of income, and in most cases the only feasible source, providing funds for the conservation strategy as well as being a major source of income for the local community. The danger is that we become too concerned with heritage as a marketable commodity, losing sight of its educational and conservation objectives. Any corporate development strategy for the heritage industry should include a code of practice designed to reconcile the needs of the monument and its environment with those of the public, additionally taking into consideration the impact of all this on the local rural community. The future of conservation and heritage management in most developing countries will depend on how these efforts can be seen to be enhancing the life and development of the area. Adopting a purely academic view towards the monuments will, in the long run, lead to the heritage being neglected and a tendency for the local community and policymakers to ignore the need to manage the heritage. Heritage management projects, seen as low priority by central government owing to their lack of tangible and meaningful benefits to the development of the country, will lose funding. The alternative is to reconcile the various cultural values of places and begin the process of addressing questions of access for local communities and the general public, inspiring them with pride in their past as a prerequisite for participating in present-day economic and democratic developments.

In the final analysis, the long-term management of heritage places in Southern Africa will depend on an ongoing evaluation of the local environment rather than huge infusions of international aid. A management ethos that arises from the local socio-environment is preferable. The future of places such as Great Zimbabwe, Khami, Domboshava, Thulamela and Manyikeni continues to be determined by the values which society, at any given time, might ascribe to them. Management of these sites must be based on a wide consultation with stakeholders, and must accommodate their diverse interests and aspirations.

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