

# TEACHING ON SITE

Great Zimbabwe Heritage Site

2-6 October 2023

Workshop Report



University of Dar es Salaam



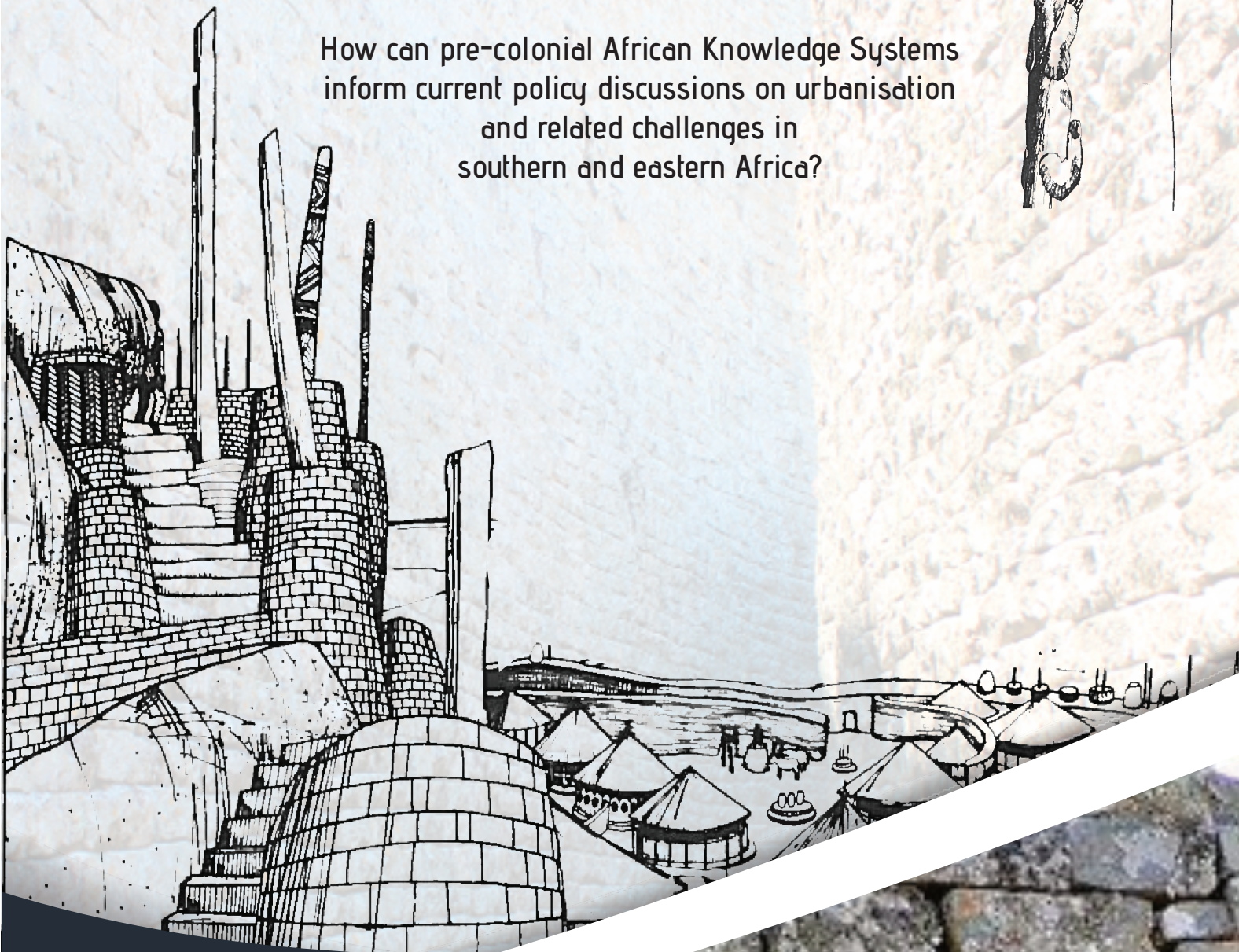
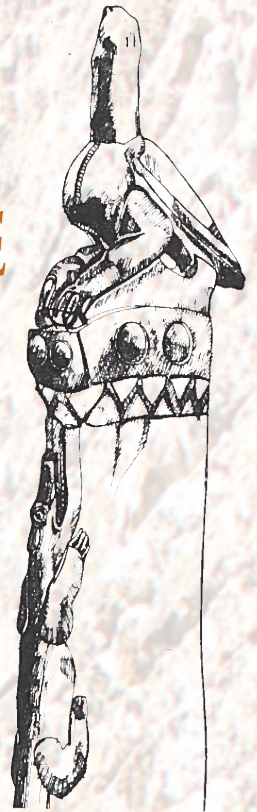
The Global Center of Spatial Methods for Urban Sustainability is funded by the German Academic Exchange Service – DAAD with funds from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation (BMZ).



# TEACHING ON SITE

Regional Workshop Southern Africa 2023

How can pre-colonial African Knowledge Systems inform current policy discussions on urbanisation and related challenges in southern and eastern Africa?



The Global Center of Spatial Methods for Urban Sustainability is funded by the German Academic Exchange Service – DAAD with funds from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation (BMZ).

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This is an innovative South-South collaboration of Midlands State University in Zimbabwe, University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, University of Pretoria Department of Historical and Heritage Studies in South Africa, and the SARDC History Institute in Zimbabwe with support from the Global Centre of Spatial Methods for Urban Sustainability (SMUS) at the Technical University of Berlin and the German Academic Exchange Service, in the context of the joint Action 2 Teaching Research Course: ARC 420 Research project on, Sustainable Cities Past and Present – Lessons from Pre-Colonial Urban Settlements in Africa.

The project seeks to address the emerging interest in exploring Indigenous Knowledge Systems and responses across borders and regions in Africa in the pre-colonial period, and how to draw appropriate comparative theories and practices for the purpose of contributing to current policy discussions in the development communities of southern and eastern Africa with reference to various dimensions of urbanization and how to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

The method draws on pre-colonial African systems in southern and eastern Africa, in large urban areas with well-developed physical and social structures, using the case studies of Great Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe), Mapungubwe (South Africa) and Kilwa (Tanzania), thus incorporating both inland and coastal spaces. These were capital cities of extensive functioning states based on agriculture with appropriate crops for the environment and rainfall patterns, extensive livestock development and products, mineral resources and mining (gold, silver, iron, copper, etc), an industrial base for smelting and value addition, and agro-processing, as well as cotton, weaving and fabrics, which traded locally, regionally and globally.

The Teaching on Site workshop focused on theoretical aspects as well as practical exploration of the site to address the topic,

*How can pre-colonial African Knowledge Systems inform current policy discussions on urbanisation and related challenges in southern and eastern Africa?*

The teaching of history at most universities and other learning institutions in southern and eastern Africa – and indeed most of the continent – has hitherto focused on the delivery of lectures on theoretical aspects of historical events and places. Without the privilege of personal visits to the places and access to online videos about the events or monuments in question, the actual appreciation of historical sites and events is left to the imagination of the learner – sometimes with wild imaginations and distortions.

It is against this background that the Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC) hosted a five-day, in-person workshop at the Great Zimbabwe Heritage Site in Zimbabwe, to provide archaeology and history lecturers and students with a practical experience of historical sites such as Great Zimbabwe.

The workshop was officially opened in Harare by Zimbabwe's Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development, Professor Amon Murwira, who unpacked the meaning of heritage-based education. He spoke about the Heritage-Based Education 5.0 philosophy adopted by the Government of Zimbabwe, which aims to promote teaching that focuses on the use of the local environment and locally available materials to develop the economy. The Heritage-Based Education 5.0 is a five-mission education design that adds Innovation and Industrialisation to the previous tripartite missions of education that focused on (1)Teaching, (2)Research and (3)Community Service.

After the opening ceremony at SARDC, the participants travelled four hours by bus to Masvingo where the workshop was held on-site at Great Zimbabwe. Participants comprised lecturers and students from Midlands State University in Zimbabwe, University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania and University of Pretoria in South Africa, as well as lecturers from the nearby Great Zimbabwe University, and Humboldt University of Berlin. The workshop was also attended by the Director of Research and Development from National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe who conducted a guided visit around the extensive site, and a representative from the Global Centre of Spatial Methods for Urban Sustainability at the Technical University of Berlin.

Key observations from the workshop:

- **Decolonisation of Curriculum.** There was a recognized need for the decolonisation of the education curriculum in most African countries to incorporate heritage issues and African perspectives on science and innovation, providing a more inclusive and representative education. One of the suggestions was the need to introduce heritage studies as early as possible in schools – perhaps as early as Grade One – to ensure that learners have a solid foundation of who they are as a people and to value that which they have inherited.
  - o One point of emphasis was the need to introduce heritage studies as early as possible in schools – as early as Grade One or the previous level of Early Childhood Development (ECD) – to ensure that learners have a solid foundation of who they are as a people and to value that which they have inherited.
- **On-site Teaching.** The use of on-site teaching as part of the curriculum for history and archaeology students was the focus of the workshop. This hands-on approach provides practical experience and context that is interdisciplinary in its approach to teaching and learning.
  - o In promoting heritage-based education, there is need for a multi-sectoral approach in which learning institutions can make arrangements with organisations responsible for managing heritage sites such as NMMZ and National Parks structures to facilitate the Teaching On Site concept. Such arrangements may include consideration to making heritage sites such as Great Zimbabwe accessible to students free of charge.
- **Further Research.** There is an urgent need for further research on Great Zimbabwe to gain a deeper understanding of life in the pre-colonial city/state. Much remains unknown about the Great Zimbabwe civilisation and there are potential research opportunities to better understand life and activities as well as sustainability. These research opportunities include the architecture, the manufacturing and trading systems, building technologies, cultural heritage and what pressures led to its demise. This research is needed to provide more insight into historical societal structures and lifestyles. However, the research should be done in context. It is important to interrogate the sources of information and base interpretations on sound local evidence. Interpretations need not to be imported as this could lead to misinterpretation. Effective research methodologies should be rooted in African value systems that recognise local sources and processes, including governance and spiritual structures.
  - o However, the research should be done in context. It is important to interrogate the sources of information and base interpretations on sound local evidence. Interpretations need not to be imported as this could lead to misinterpretation. Effective research methodologies should be rooted in African value systems that recognise local sources and processes, including governance and spiritual structures.
- **Review of NMMZ Act.** It was noted that the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ) Act of 1972 is outdated and out of touch with some of the contemporary issues.

- o One of the issues raised is that the Act caters for archaeologists but not historians. This omission was reflective of the thinking at the time of the enactment of the Act pre-Independence, that black Zimbabweans had no specific history outside of that which could be gleaned from archaeological findings around the country. As a result, the Act only provided for the work of archaeologists and not historians.
  - o Cognisant of this shortcoming, the NMMZ has expanded its mandate to cover historical issues while awaiting the outcome of the review of the Act to include the work of historians as well as archaeologists.
  - o It was also noted that the Act is silent on spiritual and ethnographic matters, which are important issues that researchers must investigate to have a fuller understanding of any African society. NMMZ's mandate has been expanded to include spiritual and ethnographic issues although this is not yet provided for under the statutes governing its operations.
  - o Another topical issue is the need to capture, in the revised NMMZ Act, a number of emerging issues such as the advent of new research techniques including the use of drones and radar penetration technologies.
  - o There is concern that the requirement for researchers to first seek approval of the Research Council of Zimbabwe (RCZ) before undertaking any research in Zimbabwe is putting too many layers for people wanting to do research. The current arrangement has resulted in major delays in execution of research projects. It was felt that the review of the NMMZ Act would enable the organisation to reassert its position as the authority that oversees historical and archaeological research.
- **Reclaiming Material Heritage.** The ensuing debate among participants raised important points about the role of international law in the process of recovering or reclaiming stolen historical artefacts. International law recognises the sanctity of private property and does not recognise common property. As a result, artefacts taken from heritage sites such as Great Zimbabwe are, according to international law, the private property of their current holders – who may have acquired such artefacts by way of theft or through the purchase of stolen property on open markets. International law leaves it to bilateral negotiations to get the material culture returned. Participants felt that there is need for the inclusion of studies on the role of international law and heritage.
  - **Reading Culture.** There was encouragement for students to adopt a strong reading culture to enable a better understanding of historical issues. They must also strive to read the texts critically and compare the various sources, considering the potential subjectivity of the messages. It is important for students to interrogate the validity, reliability and relevance of sources to the theme or topic under discussion.
  - **“Silences in text”.** Students should look out for any key issues or items that have been marginalised or are not talked about during discussions or in writings about a particular subject.
  - **Sustainable Urbanism.** The following issues were highlighted during the workshop:
    - o There is need for a review of the classification system for cities and towns to replace euro-centric classifications.
    - o There is need to understand what made pre-colonial cities and towns more sustainable compared to modern urban centres. Urban sustainability was characterised as a set of inter-related cogs that make up a system which allows

cities to function properly without collapsing. A slight change in or misfiring of one of the constituent parts of the cogs of the system would cause the entire system to collapse. What are those key pillars of sustainable urbanism? This is an area that needs further scholarship.

- o Pre-colonial cities such as Great Zimbabwe had mastered the art of reducing the impact of overpopulation, using a mechanism of allowing the city “to breathe” with respect to the number of people within the inner city at any one time. There were thresholds in terms of the holding capacity of these cities, beyond which they would collapse. In this regard, there was dispersed urbanism where some people would move out of the city at certain times to stay in outlying areas. There was a controlled entrance point, referred to as Mujejeje, through which those coming into the city would enter. This ensured controlled access to the city and only those who had business to do would be allowed entry. This is a potential research topic in urban history in terms of cities having breathing space.
  - o There was also a mechanism to protect the environment by limiting economic activities such as mining and construction. Some scholars argued that mining was only allowed at certain times while the rest of the year was reserved for agricultural activities. This was because some mining and building at the time involved the use of firewood, which affected the environment. This presents important lessons for researchers and planners in modern cities.
  - o Another observation was that modern house designs are not energy efficient. Most current designs make use of materials used such as glass, corrugated iron sheets and tiles, which mean that the household requires a lot of energy for heating and cooling purposes. To ensure the sustainability of modern urban areas, there is need to embrace simple and energy efficient designs. One of the lessons from Great Zimbabwe is that the thick walls of the Great Enclosure made the interior cooler by preventing heat from penetrating.
- **Selected Emerging Issues in Teaching History and Archaeology.** There were a number of emerging issues highlighted during the workshop that may need further reflection as learning institutions move towards the review of the curriculum for archaeology and history studies. These included:
    - o *Gender and Heritage.* There is need to interrogate the roles played by women in the conservation of heritage in ancient civilisations such as Great Zimbabwe.
    - o *Climate and Heritage.* The collapse of civilisations such as Mapungubwe and subsequent studies to establish the role of agriculture in the society has raised questions about the possible impact of climate variability on the sustainability of ancient urban centres. Was Mapungubwe a victim of changes in weather patterns, given that it is in a dry or drought-prone area? The original inhabitants must have chosen that location because there was enough water along the Limpopo River. Should the impact of climate on heritage be one of the issues included in the revised curriculum?
    - o *ICT and Heritage.* Changes in Information Communication Technology (ICT) have necessitated changes in the methodologies used during historical and archaeological research. It is important for the curriculum to reflect these changes, including emerging technologies.

The results of the Teaching on Site workshop are published online as a report/teaching guide that is introductory to the subject. This report is produced by the Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC) and was written by Special Rapporteur, Joseph Ngwawi with review by the partners. Photographs by Tanaka Mhlanga and Arthur Makoni. \_\_\_\_\_

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# INTRODUCTION

The Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC) hosted a five-day workshop at the Great Zimbabwe Heritage Site in the context of the Action 2 Teaching Research Course: ARC 420 Research project on Sustainable Cities Past and Present – Lessons from Pre-Colonial Urban Settlements in Africa.

This is an innovative South-South collaboration of Midlands State University in Zimbabwe; the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania; the University of Pretoria Department of Historical and Heritage Studies in South Africa; and the SARDC History Institute in Zimbabwe which covers the region. The initiative is supported by the Global Centre of Spatial Methods for Urban Sustainability (SMUS) at the Technical University of Berlin.

The project seeks to address the emerging interest in exploring Indigenous Knowledge Systems and responses across borders and regions in Africa in the pre-colonial period, and how to draw appropriate comparative theories and practices for the purpose of contributing to current policy discussions in the development communities of southern and eastern Africa with reference to various dimensions of urbanization and how to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

The project draws primarily on pre-colonial African systems in Southern Africa, in large urban areas with well-developed physical and social structures, using the case studies of Great Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe), Mapungubwe (South Africa) and Kilwa (Tanzania), thus incorporating both inland and coastal spaces. These were capital cities of extensive functioning states based on agriculture with appropriate crops for the environment and rainfall patterns, extensive livestock development and products, mineral resources and mining (gold, silver, iron, copper, etc), an industrial base for smelting and value addition, and agro-processing, as well as cotton, weaving and fabrics, which traded locally, regionally and globally.

The Teaching on Site workshop focused on theoretical aspects as well as practical exploration of the site to address the topic,

*How can pre-colonial African Knowledge Systems inform current policy discussions on urbanisation and related challenges in southern and eastern Africa?*

The purpose of holding a workshop on site is to support and contribute to the objectives of the Action 2 Teaching Research Course to strengthen the development of teaching and research skills through co-designing research projects and teaching programmes to address research questions; to improve the appreciation of pre-colonial societies and draw relevant lessons; and contribute to current policy discussions.

The Teaching on Site workshop allowed the students access to an archaeological site, Great Zimbabwe, giving them valuable interaction with experienced academics on drawing relevant lessons. Research methodologies in history and archaeology were presented for discussion, including indigenous research methodologies, in addition to on-site discussions. The presentations included oral history, urban history, and heritage education, decolonizing history, and community-based approaches, with a planned interaction with the local community near the site.



The workshop was attended by seven senior lecturers from MSU, UDSM, UP, Great Zimbabwe University, and Humboldt University of Berlin. Eight archaeology and history students participated in the interdisciplinary experience – six from MSU and one each from UDSM and UP. Five of the eight students were women and three were men. In attendance were also representatives of National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ), SARDC and SMUS.

In terms of format, the workshop was held in a semi-formal setting in a large tent within the Great Zimbabwe premises, thereby providing the students with a comprehensive learning experience that included acquiring new theoretical knowledge and practical skills, exposure to archaeological sites, and interaction with academics and the local community. The workshop taught students about the ethics of heritage site research including clearances and permits, exposure of participants to innovative teaching skills and facilitating knowledge-sharing among peers. This immersive opportunity enhanced the students' studies, promoted interdisciplinary understanding, and encouraged responsible research practices.

# OPENING OF WORKSHOP

The workshop was officially opened by Professor Amon Murwira, the Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development during the first session held at the SARDC offices in Harare, Zimbabwe on 2 October 2023. In his remarks, delivered in the form of a lecture, Professor Murwira unpacked the concepts of home, defeat, restoration and heritage, and how they relate to an understanding of the history of a people.

He characterised the history or culture of a nation as “home”, which he said should be protected from external forces as it is the source of people’s power, dignity and sustainable livelihoods. He warned that a country that does not know or accept its history or culture is like a home taken over (defeated) by outsiders who subsequently impose their values and way of thinking on the owners of the house. He cautioned that defeated people are often stripped of their power and have their beliefs, food, values and technologies belittled by the victors who impose their own value systems and dictate how society should function.

The only way such a “home” can regain its dignity is through the process of restoration where the “defeated” society “learns from the life before the defeat or conquest” by accepting its history and culture.

He said it is in this context that the Government of Zimbabwe has adopted the concept of heritage as the cornerstone and enabler of development, with development being defined here as a process of strengthening the capabilities of meeting human needs. Through its Heritage-Based development philosophy, Zimbabwe is pursuing measures that promote the optimal use of the country’s natural endowments such as its flora, fauna, water, minerals and people. Teaching and learning focus on the local environment and locally available materials to develop the economy.

The Minister outlined the thinking behind Zimbabwe’s Heritage-Based Education 5.0, a five-mission design that adds innovation and industrialisation to the colonial tripartite missions of education that previously focused on (1) Teaching, (2) Research and (3) Community Service.

He said Zimbabwe has redesigned its education curricula so that it speaks to the country’s daily needs. Through the Heritage-Based Education 5.0, the country has established innovation hubs and industrial parks to apply theory to practice. Many new products are being developed and patented at these hubs and parks. In addition to saving valuable foreign currency, the products are well-suited to local conditions and therefore more durable than imported substitutes.

He commended SARDC, MSU, UDSM, UP, GZU and SMUS for organising the Teaching on Site workshop, saying the concept ties in and strengthens the strategic thinking behind the Heritage-Based Education 5.0. He said such workshops would assist to reclaim Africa’s pre-colonial history, particularly the history of civilisations such as Great Zimbabwe and Mapungubwe in Southern Africa, the trading port of Kilwa in East Africa, and the ancient cities such as Timbuktu in West Africa.

These settlements were presented as “ruins” in the colonial era, constructed by some exotic society, not African. It is, therefore, important to continue and expand research on pre-colonial African civilisations as there is a lot to learn in terms of the principles of sustainable living that applied at the time and how these can inform contemporary urban planning and development, architectural, mining, environmental management systems, etc.

He thanked SARDC which he said is well known as an innovative institution and knowledge centre that continues to contribute significantly to the development of Southern Africa in various sectors, through research that informs development. He acknowledged the support of the participants and partners, and encouraged more initiatives with universities for interaction and exchanges, working together across borders.

# SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS

## ON SITE Day One: 2 October 2023

## OBJECTIVES

Workshop Chair: Dr Terence Mashingaidze, Midlands State University

After the official opening by the Minister, scholars from MSU, SARDC, SMUS, UDSM and UP travelled by bus to Masvingo where the rest of the workshop took place. They were joined by scholars from GZU which is based in Masvingo and students from MSU.

There was a brief welcome session at the hotel on the evening of 2 October 2023 during which participants introduced themselves and the Workshop Chairperson, Dr Terence Mashingaidze, who is Director of the Harare Campus of MSU and a Senior Lecturer in the Department of History, gave an introductory briefing about the workshop, including its objectives as follows:

- ❖ to strengthen the development of teaching and research skills;
- ❖ to improve appreciation of pre-colonial societies; and
- ❖ to draw relevant lessons that can contribute to current policy discussions.

Over the next four days, teaching sessions were held at the Great Zimbabwe heritage site.

## ON SITE Day Two: 3 October 2023

## ON SITE TEACHING TOUR

Co-Facilitators: Prof. Munyaradzi Manyanga, GZU and Mr Kundishora Chipunza, NMMZ

Day 2 was dedicated to a guided tour of the Great Zimbabwe heritage site to acquaint participants with the various features of the national monument, and an extensive city came into view. The teaching tour was a team effort by Mr Kundishora Chipunza, Director of Research and Development at the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe, and Professor Munyaradzi Manyanga, Executive Dean of the Robert Mugabe School of Heritage and Education at Great Zimbabwe University.



### *Great Zimbabwe Information Centre*

The day started with an overview of the Great Zimbabwe civilisation.

Key messages were that:

Great Zimbabwe was one of the early African civilisations, which at its peak had a population of about 20,000 around 1400 AD which was greater than that of London at the time. It is the oldest capital in Zimbabwe.

Established around the 12th century, Great Zimbabwe was an African achievement set on a 720-hectare estate, whose influence extended beyond the immediate surroundings, reaching the Zambezi River valley and beyond, the Indian Ocean trading ports in what is now Mozambique and Tanzania, and trading with Persia, Goa and China, among others. It had a core space that consisted of several structures: the Great Enclosure, Hill Complex and Valley Complex.

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The Great Enclosure is the largest stone structure south of the Sahara, and second in size on the continent only to the pyramids in Egypt.

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Great Zimbabwe was not an isolated centre. There is a wide network of similarly built structures around the country and just across borders in Botswana, Mozambique and South Africa. More than 350 sites have been identified that are stone structures like Great Zimbabwe although most are smaller in size.

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Most of these structures supported large populations without suffering some of the challenges encountered by contemporary society. This is an area where researchers and modern urban planners can learn from, in terms of sustainable ways of ensuring good management of the urban environment.

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Great Zimbabwe had a thriving economy centred around agriculture and mining. There was vibrant trade with Arabia and Persia, and China, anchored on gold, copper and tin. There was a network of more than 450 well-coordinated goldmines and more than 500 copper and tin mines that were spread over the whole of Zimbabwe and linked to the Great Zimbabwe civilisation. Many had Zimbabwe-type stone structures nearby

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Much remains to study about the Great Zimbabwe civilisation and there are a lot of potential research opportunities to better understand the life, location and activities. These include, among others, the architecture of the heritage site, the manufacturing and trading system, the environment, and what led to its demise as the prestigious capital of a prosperous state. The findings of such studies on pre-colonial African Knowledge systems could inform current policy discussions on urbanisation and efforts by member states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to industrialise.

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However, the research of Great Zimbabwe and other historical African civilisations should be done in context. It is important to interrogate the sources of information and base interpretations on sound evidence viewed from an African perspective. Interpretations need not to be imported as these could lead to misinterpretation. Effective research methodologies should be rooted in African value systems that recognise local sources and processes, including governance and spiritual structures which had significant impact in protecting the environment, especially trees and water.

### ***Great Enclosure***

After this general briefing, the participants were taken through the Great Enclosure, a massive 200-metre-long structure with walls as high as 11-12 metres. Key messages were that:

- ❖ The structure was built in such a manner that it would not collapse. The perimeter wall is made of granite without using mortar or cement. It tapers at the top, where the thickness is about four metres. The bottom part of the wall is thicker than the top. The unique engineering of the enclosure has attracted a lot of scholarly interest from around the world, with many researchers seeking to understand the complexity of the structure and how that could inform contemporary urban planning and development. This is an area that requires further exploration by scholars of urbanism.



- ❖ There has been no major architectural or structural shift to the outside wall, which is only repaired at the entrances. This points to the architectural and construction skills of the people of Great Zimbabwe. To facilitate preservation and restoration work, the structure is photogrammetrically documented in 3-D. This allows NMMZ officials to put the various blocks in their original positions in the event of a collapse. There is also a collection of photographs from colonial times showing how the structure looked like then, as well as local traditions and descriptions. The preservation and restoration of historical sites is another issue that requires deeper exploration as a discipline for those studying history and archaeology.
- ❖ There has been extensive debate on the significance of the Great Enclosure. What was it used for? Was it the internal walls of the core of the city or a village, or used for special purposes and occasions, or the residence of the chief and family or council? There is need for continuing research to understand the role of the enclosure and its various components, as well as the structure of the society at the height of the Great Zimbabwe civilisation.
- ❖ Another area that drew a lot of interest from participants was the symbols at the top of the main wall of the Great Enclosure in the form of the monoliths and the Chevron design or Zvikwati in Shona language. In Shona culture, Zvikwati or Hakata are bones that traditional healers or diviners use to communicate with the ancestors. Could the chevron designs on the Great Enclosure have symbolised that communication? And what was the significance of having the same chevron or Zvikwati design on other artefacts found at Great Zimbabwe and one of the Zimbabwe birds? Were the monoliths placed on the wall for decorative purposes or were they symbols of authority?
- ❖ Semiotics or the study of symbols is another field of academic inquiry that needs to feature as a distinct discipline in the curriculum for history and archaeology students to enable a better understanding of historic sites or civilisations.
- ❖ There was also discussion around the issue of vandalism and plunder of archaeological material from heritage sites. On the question of where the people of Great Zimbabwe buried their monarchs and others, Prof. Manyanga spoke of a “whole underground world” on the Hill Complex where the graves are. The location of the graves is, however, a well-kept secret until the conduct of historians, archaeologists and antiquarians improves. He noted that history has shown that there is a general lack of respect for burial sites, resulting in vandalism and plunder of artefacts. As a result, there is a lack of trust by people whose ancestors are buried at or near historic monuments. This calls for the strengthening of the curriculum of Ethics.
- ❖ It was agreed that the study of heritage sites such as Great Zimbabwe, Mapungubwe in South Africa or Kilwa in Tanzania requires an inter-disciplinary approach to understand the roles played by various disciplines. An understanding of the various approaches would ultimately inform methodologies to be used in the execution of research projects. As part of a Teaching on Site exercise, students were given homework to reflect on the types of disciplines that were most relevant at the height of the Great Zimbabwe civilisation, and their reflection on policies that modern society could learn from the ancient cities.



### *Valley Ruins*

After visiting the Great Enclosure, the participants were taken through a small part of the Valley Ruins, which are enclosures with dry stone masonry walls, some inter-connected, extending over a large area which was the living area of the general population of the city. Some enclosures were used for different purposes and various activities took place there, including workshops for value addition, for skilled trades such as textiles, gold jewellery and leather products, and a place that appears to have been a court or meeting place. There is need for further research on the use of the specific enclosures, but the area is extensive with evidence of dwellings within the stone walls. The extent of the Valley Ruins stretching away into the distance can be seen from a low connecting wall outside the Great Enclosure.

### *The Hill Complex*

The tour of the Hill Complex was quite an experience for most participants, climbing up the narrow stone steps of the Ancient Ascent, which was the original route used by the people of Great Zimbabwe, and emerging at a high stone wall with a well-crafted entrance. This route is very steep and difficult to use and would deter unexpected visitors from reaching the top very fast.

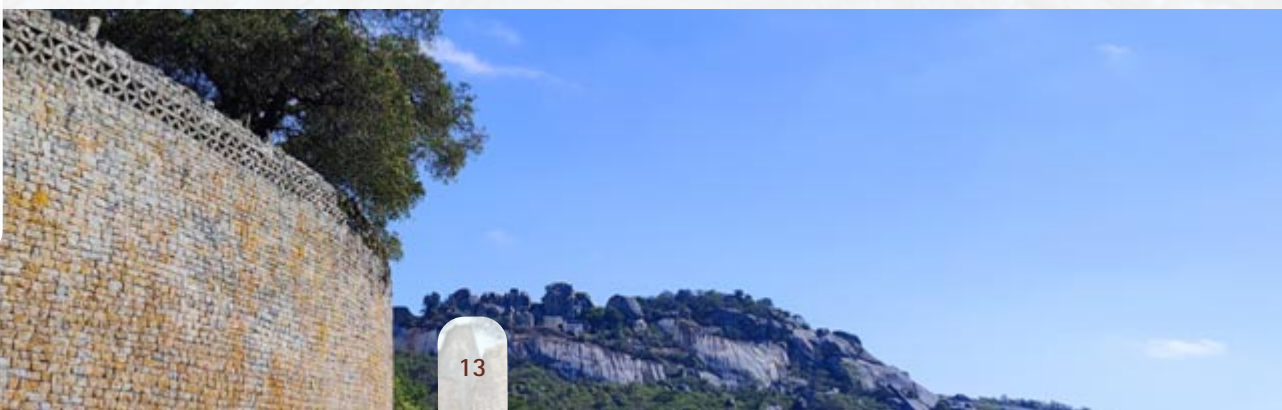
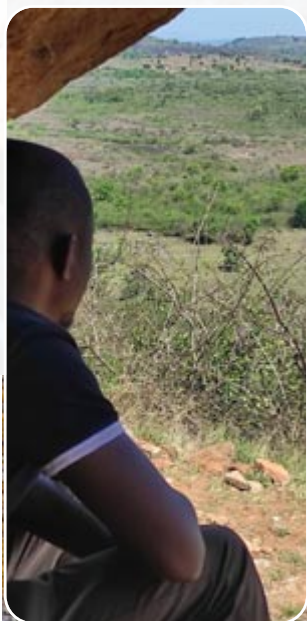
There are three routes to get to the top of the hill. One is the Ancient Ascent, which is the original route, short and steep but straight up to the top. The alternative is the Terrace Path or Water Gate, which passes through a series of terrace platforms and was the route used by people carrying water from the river below. This route is longer and winding, and scenic, giving a broad spectrum across the valley. The third route is the Modern Ascent, which was made in modern times for easier movement of people as it is a gentle slope for walking down, or up.

The Hill Complex is generally considered as a royal city, the western enclosure is thought to have been the resident of successive paramount chiefs and the eastern enclosure the cultural and religious hub where six steatite upright posts topped with carved soapstone birds were found.

The Hill Complex sits at the top of a huge granite mass rising about 100 metres and comprising several terraces where walls were built on top of natural boulders. There are many layers of traces of human settlements showing that the site was continuously inhabited for at least 500 years. At one of the terraces, participants were shown a wall that had been restored after it collapsed. They were informed that the restoration process is elaborate, often involving searches into archival materials such as pictures that would show how the wall looked like, as well as research into the materials used to build the wall. The process is also used to ascertain why the wall fell.

Wall collapses are usually taken as an opportunity to combine archaeological research and conservation. Archaeologists would use the collapse to comb the area, without destroying the ground surface, for material culture that they can use for research.

The students and lecturers took photos at the top of the Hill and had the opportunity to visit one of several caves that are found at the complex. The cave was previously used as a place for speaking with God, Mwari or for offerings. It is said that up to some point Mwari spoke from the cave which gives a panoramic view of the area including the Great Enclosure and Valley Ruins.



### ***Museum***

The visit to the museum exposed participants to the archaeological material culture that has been used to interpret Great Zimbabwe. This includes a large collection of artefacts that were excavated from the Great Zimbabwe monument or recovered from the personal collections of colonial officials or fortune-seekers. Among these are eight Zimbabwe birds carved in soapstone that were recovered from the valley and from South Africa and Europe. Some were damaged or vandalized. One of the birds is on “permanent loan” from Germany.

The ensuing debate among participants raised important points about the role of international law in the process of recovering or reclaiming stolen historical artefacts. It was noted that the process is cumbersome and requires some diplomatic dexterity by the aggrieved country from where the artefacts were taken. International law recognises the sanctity of private property and does not recognise common property. As a result, artefacts taken from heritage sites such as Great Zimbabwe are, according to international law, the private property of their current holders – who may have acquired such artefacts by way of theft or through the purchase of stolen property on open markets.

International law leaves it to bilateral negotiations to get the material culture returned. Participants felt that there is need for the inclusion of studies on the role of international law and heritage to enable a better understanding of African history.

There was also debate on the symbolism of the birds which all have different features. The meaning and use of the birds falls into the realm of speculation but they are said to resemble a Bateleur Eagle (chapungu) or a Fish Eagle. The crocodile motif on one of the birds is associated with royalty. Are they birds such as the chapungu or they represented deceased kings from Great Zimbabwe era? Some of the birds on exhibition in the museum have their wings clipped and have what look like human feet. This is an area that requires further studies to understand the symbolism of the Zimbabwe birds.

One of the Zimbabwe birds which incorporates a chevron pattern is featured on the national flag of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

## **ON SITE Day Three: 4 October 2023**

## **METHODS AND ETHICS**

Sessions Chair: Dr Frank Edward, University of Dar es Salaam

Day Three was chaired by Dr Frank Edward from UDSM and involved a plenary session that was held at the workshop venue which was a suitably decorated tent with tables and chairs set up in the grounds of the Great Zimbabwe heritage site, among the trees at the campsite near the ascent to the Hill Complex. There were three sessions that looked at three thematic areas:

- ❖ Oral History as a Source for Research
- ❖ Access and Ethics, and Permits
- ❖ Case Study Research Methodology

### **Reflections by Students**

Discussions on these areas were preceded by reflections from the students on Great Zimbabwe urbanism, as follows:

- o Some saw it as an indigenous urbanism which developed around an area that had abundant resources such as water sources, agricultural land and minerals.
- o Other students said the Great Zimbabwe civilisation had very skilled architects and master builders who used passive cooling techniques and systems that enabled them to construct buildings without windows and with thick walls to keep the structures cool. Such systems could inform modern urban construction to minimise energy consumption.



- o Others said the city was segregated according to class divisions, with different members of society responsible for different activities. For example, some were stone masons involved in construction of the city while others were smiths who produced metal products, implements and tools.
- o Another reflection was on the use of home-grown approaches that should be adopted by contemporary African societies to ensure sustainable urban development. There was an argument that the Great Zimbabwe experience proved that a country does not really need to import resources to build sustainable cities but can use readily available materials that are suited to local conditions.
- o There was debate about the purpose of the walls at Great Zimbabwe. Were they fortress walls that were erected for security purposes or for other purposes? While some felt the walls were put up to protect the city from invading forces, others felt that the thickness of the walls did not correspond to the level of sophistication of weaponry at the time. Yet, others felt that it was not about security but invoking a sense of symbolism.



## ORAL HISTORY AS A SOURCE FOR RESEARCH



*Prof. Baz Lecocq, Humboldt University of Berlin's Institute of Asian and African Studies*

The first presentation for the day was by Prof. Baz Lecocq who is a professor of African History at the Humboldt University of Berlin and Executive Director of the Institute of Asian and African Studies.

The presentation focused on how students can use oral history sources as part of their research. He took the students through the two main forms of oral history – oral tradition and oral history. Oral traditions are reflections about things happening in society or the values of the community. These can take the form of jokes, proverbs, songs and epics. Oral traditions create social order by highlighting what is appropriate or inappropriate. Oral history is written from sources, often done by talking to members of a particular society and getting their views about issues or about their personal beliefs. Sources of oral history interest include biographies, expert interviews, life stories, and eye-witness accounts.

Prof. Lecocq spoke about how colonialism stripped Africans of history as some European historians were of the view that since there were no written works about Africa by Africans, then Africans had no history or had no stories to tell. This narrative changed following the book by Belgian historian Jan Vansina who argued in his book *Oral Tradition as History* that Africans do have a history which is in oral form. He wrote that to understand the history of Africa one needs to make use of the various oral sources. Like Vansina, Prof. Lecocq cautioned about the problem of those sources being distorted to suit certain narratives. Oral history changes over time and captures the social, economic and political situation of those telling the history, but the meaning of the issue to a particular society does not change much over time.

### Discussion

The presentation by Prof. Lecocq drew a lot of interest from the students, some wanted to know how they could extract historical facts from oral history, given that there is the danger of distortions. To do this, it is important to talk to as many people as possible to pick out those issues that are recurring.

There was also the question of referencing of oral tradition sources such as songs or jokes. Prof. Lecocq suggested the use of footnotes or the Chicago referencing style. He referred the students to the Chicago referencing website --

([https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)).

## ACCESS AND ETHICS, AND PERMITS



### *Mr Kundishora Chipunza, National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe*



Mr Chipunza took the participants through the legal and regulatory requirements for those wishing to undertake research in Zimbabwe. He started by sharing with participants some of the facilities offered to researchers by National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ). These include museum collections; a repository of field notebooks used by previous archaeologists; maps and sketches; and catalogues of archaeological sites and collections. NMMZ also produces a number of publications for dissemination of research work. These include periodical journals where researchers in human sciences and natural sciences can have their work published. NMMZ also produces occasional papers that deal with specific subjects of national interest. Mr Chipunza also spoke about Museum Memoirs which provides researchers with an opportunity to publish their PhD thesis on archaeological issues.

He revealed that NMMZ has an archaeological survey that has more than 50,000 sites, with over 200 of these being national monuments. There are five national museums which have substantive collections. The Natural History Museum of Zimbabwe (located in Bulawayo), Zimbabwe Museum of Human Sciences (Harare), Zimbabwe Military Museum (Gweru), BaTonga Museum (Binga) and the Mutare Museum (which showcases transport collections). The Natural History Museum is believed to have the largest collection in the southern hemisphere.

### ***Requirements for researchers***

Operations of the NMMZ are governed by the National Museums and Monuments Act (Chapter 25) of 1972. Implementation of the Act is supported by subsidiary bylaws that govern activities at various monuments.

The following are some of the requirements for researchers wishing to conduct research in Zimbabwe:

- All researchers must seek approval of their research proposals from the Research Council of Zimbabwe (RCZ). The process of getting the approvals usually takes time.
- For those wishing to undertake archaeological research, they also need to submit a proposal to NMMZ outlining their research interest. The proposal can be approved or rejected depending on ethical or other considerations.
- Before getting final approval from the NMMZ head office, researchers are required to get written approval from the regional director of the respective areas where they want to carry out the research. NMMZ has five regional offices -- Central Region (with offices in Gweru), Eastern Region (with offices in Mutare), Northern Region (with offices in Harare), Southern Region (with offices in Masvingo) and Western Region (with offices in Bulawayo).
- After getting the necessary approvals, the researcher will have to apply for permits, which are regulatory instruments that allow NMMZ to have a record of where and when research has been or is being undertaken as well as to identify research gaps and set priorities for the country in terms of human sciences and natural sciences research. There are several types of permits available, depending on the kind of research to be undertaken:

- o All researchers need to apply for a general permit that costs US\$200;
- o A researcher who wants to carry out some excavation work is required in addition to apply for an excavation permit. To get such a permit the researcher will have to furnish NMMZ with details such as the location of the proposed excavation, grid reference of the excavation site and size of the excavation site. NMMZ will use such information to check whether there were no prior excavations in the target area. Fees for the excavation permit depend on whether the one applying is a student, a qualified local researcher, a foreigner or a local institution;
- o In cases where foreign researchers want to analyse outside Zimbabwe some archaeological materials – either those already found in NMMZ collections or those they will have excavated themselves – they will be required to apply for temporary or permanent export permits. Temporary export permits are given to researchers who want to take out of the country archaeological collections for purposes of studying them in their respective countries and then return such material back to NMMZ. Permanent export permits are given to foreign researchers who want to take out collections but where the archaeological material will be destroyed during the process of analysis. In this case, the material will not be brought back to the country. The export permits cater for those researchers from countries with more advanced analysis facilities; and
- o There is also a permit to be acquired by researchers who want to access NMMZ collections. The fee for students is US\$10.

In addition to the various permits and approvals from NMMZ and the Research Council of Zimbabwe, history and archaeology researchers must adhere to other regulations. These include:

- Permits are not exchangeable. The researcher in whose name a permit has been issued is the only one allowed to carry out research using that document and is held responsible for anything that goes wrong;
- In cases where a researcher is undertaking an excavation, the permit stipulates that such an excavation should not exceed a third of the available site. This ensures that there is something left for future archaeologists to excavate;
- According to Act, no one is allowed to use metal detectors as part of their archaeological investigations. There is need for a review of the Act due to a number of emerging issues including the advent of new technologies such as drones and remote sensing techniques; and new archaeological research techniques such as the use of ground penetration radars. The NMMZ Act has, therefore, become outdated;
- In terms of ethics, researchers are expected to commit to adhere to certain issues of ethical conduct during their investigations. These include the need to respect the rights of and conditions set by rightsholders such as the traditional leadership of the areas where the research is undertaken. For example, it is not ethical to start conducting research in a community without first approaching the local leadership for that area to brief them and to seek their approval. It is also necessary to respect local traditions or beliefs during the process of undertaking the research. In most areas, a token of appreciation should be given to the chief in recognition of his or her time;
- The use of cameras and video cameras is prohibited in NMMZ museums for security reasons; and
- Upon completion of their research, researchers are required to deposit their research papers with NMMZ.

## Discussion

During the group discussion, it was felt that the NMMZ Act only caters for archaeologists and not historians. This omission was reflective of the thinking at the time of the enactment of the Act in 1972 that black Zimbabweans had no specific history outside of that which could be gleaned from archaeological findings around the country. As a result, the Act only provided for the work of archaeologists and not historians. Cognisant of this shortcoming, the NMMZ has expanded its mandate to cover historical issues while awaiting the outcome of the ongoing review of the Act. The thinking behind this is that the work of historians complements that of archaeologists.

It was also noted that the Act is silent on spiritual and ethnographic matters, which are important issues that a researcher must investigate to have a full understanding of any African society. According to Mr Chipunza, NMMZ's mandate has also been expanded to include spiritual and ethnographic issues although this is not provided for under the statutes governing its operations.

Another topical issue is the need to capture, in the revised NMMZ Act, a number of emerging issues such as the advent of new research techniques including the use of drones and radar penetration technologies, as well as to align this with the Research Council of Zimbabwe Act. There was concern that the requirement for researchers to first seek approval of the RCZ before undertaking any research in Zimbabwe was putting too many layers for people wanting to do research. The current arrangement has created a huge bureaucracy, resulting in major delays in execution of research projects. The review of the NMMZ Act should enable the organisation to reassert its position as the authority that oversees historical and archaeological research.

## CASE STUDY RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



*Ms Nyasha Gurira, Midlands State University*



The last presentation on Day Three was made by Ms Nyasha Gurira, a lecturer in the Department of Archaeology, Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies at MSU. She is also the Department of Archaeology Field School Coordinator.

She spoke about the various approaches to conducting case study research, where a case study is a methodological research approach used to generate an in-depth understanding of a contemporary issue or phenomenon in a bounded system. This type of research requires in-depth investigation to be conducted into an individual, group or event to gain an understanding of a real-life phenomenon. It is often used in social sciences and humanities research to explore complex issues and to provide insights into specific phenomena or situations.

She spoke about the four types of case study research: single-case study research; double-case study research; collective (multiple)-case study research; and intrinsic case study research. In a single case study, the researcher focuses on an issue or concern and then selects one case to illustrate the issue. Similarly, in a double-case study the researcher selects multiple cases to illustrate the one issue or concern. The goal of a multiple-case study is to compare cases and identify common patterns, relationships or similarities. In a multiple-case study, the cases may be similar or diverse in nature and the researcher will be looking for patterns or relationships across cases. This research involves selecting and analysing two or more cases that share some common characteristics or features but also differ in some aspects. The aim of the study guides the methodology to be used during the research.

Finally, in an intrinsic case study the focus is on the case itself because the case presents a unique situation, thus resembling the focus of narrative research but maintaining the analytic procedures of a case study. In an intrinsic case study, the case is the primary focus of the research, and the goal is to gain an in-depth understanding of the case itself. Intrinsic case studies are often used in the social sciences and humanities, particularly when the case being studied is unique or rare, or when the researcher wants to gain a deeper understanding of a specific issue or situation.

Ms Gurira took participants through the characteristics of case study research and shared her experiences in undertaking three case study researches. The first one was a Master's level single-case study into how the 2014 restoration work done at Naletale monument fared in maintaining the original state of the site. The research culminated in a study titled *The Monument We Want: Issues of Authenticity at Naletale National Monument*.

She spoke of the importance of collaborations among students where those undertaking research at the same heritage site could combine forces and do common aspects of their research together. In her case, she was one of five students who had been assigned to investigate the Naletale restoration work. She shared how the five found common ground to collaborate on some aspects of their research – despite having different research topics. This included organising combined interviews and peer reviews of each other's work. This was taken as a best practice that current and future archaeology and history students should adopt as part of their research methodologies as it saves on time and costs.

She also shared her experiences in undertaking another single-case study to investigate whether there is a balance between conservation efforts and tourism in the use of the Great Zimbabwe heritage site. She again used a similar methodology by collaborating with some of her students who assisted in data gathering using various sources of information such as interviews with tourists, members of the local community and NMMZ officials.

The final best-practice experience she shared was when she led a team of MSU researchers to undertake a project to document five heritage sites in the Insiza cluster in Matabeleland North Province, with a view to understanding their architecture, relationship and state of conservation. The study involved visits to the five sites (Naletale, Dhlodhlo/Danamombe, Regina/Zinjanja, Shangagwe, and Nsala Nsala) and the use of multiple sources of information such as desktop reviews of existing reports, use of archival photographs and archaeological surveys to define the extent of the site, and the use of GIS for mapping the sites and environs.

### Discussion

The discussion highlighted several pertinent issues including the need for students to carefully consider the demands of each research approach as they develop their project proposals. Some research approaches would necessitate the application for several permits or the use of high-terrain vehicles. Taking these issues into consideration during formulation of the project proposal would prepare the students on what to expect when they ultimately go for fieldwork, and save them time and money.

Another pertinent point was the need to carry out prior desktop research ahead of the fieldwork. This is necessary to acquaint the students with local traditions and other issues relating to the site or community where they intend to carry out interviews. This includes finding out what to do to get an audience with local chiefs; the dos and don'ts at sacred places; and background on the target site or community. There was emphasis on the need for students to develop a reading culture.

There was also debate on the topical issue of restoration of historical sites, with some participants questioning whether restorations do not take away the authenticity of the site. It was felt that there was need to ensure the integrity of the original monument. Mr Chipunza said NMMZ is mandated to ensure that Great Zimbabwe does not dilapidate into a ruin, and therefore needs to regularly restore sections of the structure with assistance from members of the surrounding community. He noted that NMMZ endeavours not to distort or reconstruct Great Zimbabwe but tries to maintain the original design. The heated debate pointed to the need for introduction of a course to teach students on issues around the restoration and preservation of historical sites.



### *Visit to Spiritual Village*

Participants visited the spiritual village located just outside the Great Zimbabwe heritage site where they were taken around the complex, including the cave where the spirit medium works from and the rondavel where ceremonies are held. Mr Chipunza said the village was built by NMMZ in response to an expressed need by members of the community to have a place to seek divine assistance.

### *German Academic Exchange Service*

The session Chair announced that German Academic Exchange Service was offering research stay support to scholars from anywhere in the world who want to study various issues. Individual meetings with various researchers and students were held later at the hotel to discuss the programme.

## **ON SITE Day Four: 5 October 2023** **RESEARCH METHODS, HERITAGE-BASED EDUCATION**

Sessions Chair: Ms Nyasha Gurira, Midlands State University

The Sessions Chair for Day Four was Ms Nyasha Gurira who guided proceedings throughout the day. There were two plenary sessions followed by a visit to the Chief of the local community. The plenary sessions focused on:

- o Research Methodologies in History, and
- o Heritage-Based Education

### **OVERVIEW ON RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES IN HISTORY**



*Dr Terence Mashingaidze, Midlands State University*

The first presentation of the day was delivered by Dr Terence Mashingaidze. He identified, defined and critiqued various methodologies used in researching history as well as the sources of information that students could make use of while doing research. He started by highlighting some of the key characteristics of historical writing, noting that anyone writing about history should ensure that their work is evidence-based and chronological or sequential in nature. He cited some of the key skills or attributes of historians as:

- o the capacity to identify and search for data;
- o the capacity to evaluate and analyse information;
- o the capacity to synthesize and summarise information from diverse sources; and
- o the capacity to interpret information.



There are diverse sources of information on history, which are broadly categorised as primary and secondary sources, where the former relates to those sources produced concurrently with or soon after an event while the latter do not have a direct physical relationship with the events being studied and are produced by persons who did not witness the event. Examples of primary sources include photographs taken during an event or historical period, skeletons, tools, weapons and Acts of Parliament, while secondary sources include biographies and books.

Dr Mashingaidze called on students to read all texts critically and compare the various sources, considering the potential subjectivity of the messages. It is important for students to always interrogate the validity, reliability and relevance of sources to the theme or topic under discussion.

The same applies to the “silences in text” where students must look out for those issues or things that have been marginalised or not talked about during discussions or in writing about a particular subject. For example, while so much has been written about how the liberation struggle began and how it was prosecuted in Zimbabwe, there is a lot more that still needs to be told. Those aspects that have not yet been told are the “silences” that students should target to investigate as they undertake their research projects. These include the regional dimensions, the role played by women, and the role of the international community in supporting the liberation struggle.

He critiqued sources of history such as oral traditions, oral history and archival sources and their associated methodologies. First, he noted that oral traditions ensure that cultures remain alive as they are part of a community’s tangible heritage. He cited the praise poems that exist in most African societies as some of the oral traditions that help to keep cultures alive and act as rich sources of historical information. However, the efficacy of oral traditions as sources of historical information is hampered by challenges of fading memory among community members, distortion of information, and the issue of “telescoping” whereby there are inaccurate perceptions regarding time. The issue of chronology is not very clear in oral traditions. Some narratives are frozen in a time warp called “the past”.

Oral history, on the other hand, is premised on engaging people who experienced specific events. It is a primary source of information and involves interviewing people who were involved or were affected by an event. Oral history sources should, however, not be verified as the interviews may reflect personal opinions or subjective reflections of the interviewees, which may not necessarily be the views of the whole community. Therefore, history scholars “have to appreciate the total sum of local interpretations which may vary from person to person but revolve around a common intellectual and emotional call.” This requires researchers to adopt classical ethnographic research methods characterised by long interviews and follow-up interviews with selected individuals as well as the building of trust with community members.

At the disposal of researchers are also archival materials such as those found at the National Archives of Zimbabwe, other organisations and even individuals. These materials include colonial records such as native commissioners’ reports, delineation reports produced by the Rhodesian authorities, and liberation war documents.

Dr Mashingaidze also took participants through the life history or micro history method, which employs a qualitative research approach and focuses on collecting and interpreting personal narratives to understand the intricate experiences of individuals or groups over time. Although the focus is on an individual, this research method allows the researcher to investigate broader societal issues.

Finally, he spoke about indigenous research, which is research by and for indigenous peoples using techniques and methods drawn from the traditions and knowledge of the people. It is important to note the challenges faced by researchers in defining indigenous research methodologies, as what is regarded as “indigenous” varies from place to place and country to country. As a result, the term

indigenous is contextual and differently understood in different parts of the world. Use of indigenous research methodologies is, therefore, informed by the specific knowledge and value systems of the place where the research is taking place.

Similarly, indigenous research methodology demands that researchers be sensitive to some of the social and political beliefs of target communities. As with other research involving communities, it is important to follow protocol and engage local chiefs before undertaking the research.

Indigenous research methodology makes use of various sources of information but primarily oral tradition and oral history sources. There is, however, need to be sensitive and respect the worldview of the people being interviewed.

### Discussion

There was a lively discussion after the presentation, with some participants highlighting the importance of adopting a multi-disciplinary approach in which historians, archaeologists, anthropologists and sociologists undertake joint research that would adequately interrogate some of the intriguing historical questions. This would enable a better understanding of the processes and perspectives of different communities at different times. It was noted that the need to integrate disciplines depends on the narrative that the researcher wants to produce.

The issue of the biases of historians during fieldwork was another topical issue during the discussion. Examples were given of certain researchers who allowed their personal positions to influence their writing. It was noted that researchers need to carefully critique all sources to pick out biases by historical writers. Hence, the need for history and archaeology students to read widely and critique what they read. In addition, as they undertake their own research, the students – and any other writer of history – explain the methodology used in producing the research paper. This should include commenting on and critiquing the various sources used, and an explanation on fieldwork positioning in terms of how they navigated their way in the field, the people they interviewed and why they were selected.

Another topical issue was that of silences in historical texts or events. Some participants noted that sometimes the silences are not by design but are due to other circumstances that are “very loud”. Therefore, as students prepare to undertake research on various topics, it is important to take note of the fact that there are some issues for which the timing is discussing them is not yet right. As a result, despite developing brilliant methodologies the researcher may end up dropping a study due to some “loud silences”.

Another “silent” that was identified was the role of women in the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe. Women played an important role during the war of independence – from being commanders at the frontline and carrying weapons from the rear to the front to providing food to the liberation fighters – but their contribution has not been adequately highlighted in available literature. It is important that these stories are told and captured in the annals of the country’s history.

It is important to cultivate genuine sources when undertaking studies on the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe. It was noted that researchers need to be cautious about sources for liberation war history as some of those readily available to talk about the war may not be genuine liberation fighters. Those who played important roles in the liberation struggle often do not want to talk about the war or their role as it may trigger painful memories – memories they would rather want to leave in the past. It would take some effort to persuade them to talk about their experiences during the war.

It was also noted that there researchers often make the mistake of only targeting liberation history sources based in urban areas at the expense of rural communities, some of whom had harrowing experiences of the war of independence. It is essential, therefore, to broaden the sources when one is researching about the liberation struggle.



## HERITAGE-BASED EDUCATION

*Dr Plaxcedes Chikunda, Great Zimbabwe University*

The second presentation for the day was made by Dr Plaxcedes Chikunda, Lecturer on Sociology of Education in the Department of Educational Foundations at Great Zimbabwe University in Masvingo. She shared some ideas from her PhD thesis titled “Curriculum Transformation in Teacher Education in Zimbabwe: The Case of Sociology of Education at a Selected University”. Her study was motivated by the 2017 decision by Zimbabwe’s Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to adopt a competence-based curriculum framework that encourages unity in diversity of cultures and promotes an education system that produces learners who value and practice the country’s Unhu/Ubuntu/Vumunhu philosophical perspective.



The framework aims to produce graduates with critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, leadership skills, effective communication skills, team-building and technological abilities. As a result, the teacher education curriculum had to be transformed to align with the competence-based curriculum that seeks to promote the country’s heritage, history, national beliefs and aspirations.

The competence-based curriculum framework was informed by United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Number 4, Target 7, which aims to promote Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). SDG 4:7 requires governments to ensure that, by 2030, all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development through, among others, gender equality; promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence; and appreciation of cultural diversity and culture’s contribution to sustainable development.

A key recommendation of her study is the need for decolonisation of the curriculum of Zimbabwe’s primary and secondary education on the basis that the bulk of the existing content and theories used are Euro-centric; are exam-oriented; do not recognize students’ experiences and heritage; and lack relevance in solving local challenges.

The study was informed by the principles of cognitive justice, which acknowledges that all forms of knowledge are valid and should co-exist in a dialogic relationship to each other. Cognitive justice implies the strengthening of the “voice” of the defeated and marginalised and believes that traditional knowledge and technologies should not be “museumised” while the knowledge and technologies of colonial settlers are given prominence.

She said curriculum decolonisation would involve deconstruction of dominant Western views of science and challenging the Western view of what counts as knowledge. Decolonisation would entail involving indigenous knowledge in the curriculum and allows for the questioning of and revealing of hidden colonial influences in past and current beliefs and practices. Therefore, community cultural wealth views and funds of knowledge can be used as guiding perspectives in the process of curriculum decolonisation. Decolonial ideas resonate well with the heritage-based philosophy that has been adopted by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development in Zimbabwe.



## Discussion

There was an interesting exchange of ideas following the presentation by Dr Chikunda. One of the issues raised was the need to introduce heritage studies as early as possible in Zimbabwean school – perhaps as early as Grade One – to ensure that learners have a solid foundation of who they are as a people and to value that which they have inherited. To ensure the success of the shift towards heritage-based curriculum, there is need to learn from the experiences of other African countries that have taken a similar route. One such country is the United Republic of Tanzania which adopted an education for self-reliance curriculum in the 1960s that focused on practical-based education. Zimbabwe may want to learn from the Tanzanian experience and identify the reasons why the system did not succeed in that period soon after independence when the colonial structures were still in place.

Some participants said there is need for caution as countries move towards decolonisation of the curriculum, noting that it is important not to discard positive aspects with negative.

Another contribution was that, in support of heritage-based education, organisations such as NMMZ and South African National Parks (SANParks) should consider making monuments such as Great Zimbabwe and Mapungubwe accessible to students free of charge. This would encourage interest in heritage issues among students and inculcate a sense of ownership of the history and culture of the countries. Complementary to that is the need for teaching-on-site history sessions at these monuments, which could be aligned with the summer or winter schools for history and archaeology students from southern Africa.

One observation was about the perception of “indigenous knowledge”. Should it be known just as “knowledge” or “African knowledge”? This participant said that in the interest of decolonising the education system, it may be necessary to replace the term “indigenous knowledge” or define it more clearly as the word “indigenous” is often associated with negative practices. As a result, anything prefixed with the word “indigenous” is shunned, and so is indigenous knowledge. Another participant noted that this supports the need to decolonise education to remove the stigma attached to indigenous culture and generate pride in African heritage.

## *Visit to Chief Mugabe’s Homestead*

The afternoon session of Day Four was reserved for a visit to the homestead of Chief Mugabe, one of the local traditional leaders who claim rightful ownership of the Great Zimbabwe heritage site. Others with similar claims are Chief Nemanwa, Chief Charumbira and Chief Murinye. The purpose of the visit was to provide the students with experience on how to communicate with traditional leadership and ensure that their research is inclusive of the perspectives of local communities.

Thus, the visiting delegation of workshop participants respected local traditions when it arrived at the Chief’s Dare (or court). All participants removed shoes before entering the Dare. The men clapped as they entered while women ululated as per the tradition of the local community. The use of cellphones and cameras was not allowed in the court. Permission had to be sought from the chief – and was granted – to take pictures and videos as well as to record the discussion.

As is good practice when having meetings of this nature, there were introductions of members of both sides to ensure that everyone gets to know one another. The Chief was accompanied by four of his officials while the workshop participants were 25. To facilitate easy communication Ms Nomaqhawe Ngwenya and Mr Raymond Ndhlovu translated from Shona to English for the foreign scholars for the introductory stages of the discussions until the Chief switched to English for direct communication.

Ms Gurira started by explaining the purpose of the visit, which was to enable the scholars to get a deeper understanding of Great Zimbabwe. Key messages from the Chief were that:

- ❖ The Mugabe clan are the “rightful owners” of Great Zimbabwe but due to the ownership dispute, Great Zimbabwe is currently considered off-limits;
- ❖ The Mugabe clan considers the heritage site as a sacred place where their ancestors ruled from and are buried. He said there is documentary evidence that his ancestors are interred at the site. The clan was forcibly removed from the site by the colonial settlers;
- ❖ He is not happy about the way the site has been and is being handled as a heritage site with national administration through National Museums and Monuments, especially the fact that his people are not allowed to perform their rituals on site. They have to apply for permission to do anything at the site;
- ❖ Among the rituals that they are no longer allowed to perform is the annual sacrifice of a bull without horns (called Sharimakanda) to cleanse the heritage site. The bull would be donated by the Chief presiding at Great Zimbabwe;
- ❖ The Chief believes that some of the misfortunes being experienced in his area are due to the fact that outsiders are coming to perform rituals at the site without involving or allowing his clan to take the lead.

At the end of the audience, participants presented tokens of appreciation to the Chief. He was given Maasai fabric worn by men in Tanzania and other parts of East Africa, and a colourful kanga fabric was presented to his wife by a delegation who met with her separately. The visit ended with a group photo with the Chief and his officials.



## ON SITE Day Five: 6 October 2023 URBAN HISTORY, EARLY AFRICAN CITIES

Sessions Chair: Mr Raymond Ndhlovu, SARDC

The final day of the workshop was chaired by Mr Raymond Ndhlovu who ably steered the proceedings. There were three plenary sessions that focused on:

- o Urban History in Africa
- o Early Southern African Cities and their Hinterlands: The Case from Mapungubwe
- o Roundtable Discussion on the workshop topic, “How Can Pre-Colonial African Knowledge Systems Inform Current Policy Discussions on Urbanisation and Related Challenges in Southern and Eastern Africa?”

### URBAN HISTORY IN AFRICA



*Dr Frank Edward, University of Dar es Salaam*



Dr Edward started by defining Urban History as a field of history that examines the nature of towns and cities using a temporal perspective. It explores urbanisation processes in the world, where urbanisation is taken to mean the process by which large numbers of people become permanently concentrated in relatively small areas, forming towns and cities. By its very nature, the study of urban history is interdisciplinary as it draws sources, perspectives and methods from different disciplines such as archaeology, anthropology, historical linguistics, geography, urban planning, economics and sociology. The main sources of information that urban historians consult are oral traditions, archives, ethnographic reports, statistical abstracts, newspapers, census reports, city master plans and online reports by international agencies such as the World Bank.

He then stated the features of urbanisation or urbanism as follows:

- o Existence of large numbers of people who are engaged in activities other than agriculture;
- o Main economic activities are industrial and trade;
- o Existence of large-scale architectural structures such as monuments and obelisks;
- o Existence of large-scale technical infrastructure such as water supply, electricity and transport;
- o High consumption of resources such as water and food, and parallel production of waste;
- o Existence of elaborate civic control; and
- o Existence of cosmopolitanism in that cities and towns are meeting places of different cultures and customs.

Regarding urban history in Africa, the continent has had towns and cities from ancient times to the present. Cities and towns existed, either as regions of larger precolonial empires – for example, towns and cities of the western Sudanic empires of Ghana, Mali, Songhay as well as Islamic caliphates – or as independent city states such as Mombasa, Kilwa, Zanzibar and Mafia. Dr Edward, however, noted that the study of the history of towns and cities in Africa is not exhaustive as so far only a few towns and cities have been covered, leaving several others still to be investigated.

He said literature on African urban history is as old as history itself, citing the seminal work by famed Tunisian historian Ibn Khaldun titled *The Muqaddimah*, which was produced around the 14th century. One of the chapters of the publication looked at the connection between African

urbanisation and civilisation. The book notes that urban centres in Africa and other regions are subject to continuous cyclical processes that result in their rise and fall.

Research interest in African urban history did not emerge until the 1930s when anthropologists started using fieldwork to try to understand communities in urban centres. Before then most of the information on urban history was sourced from accounts of travellers, traders and missionaries. The advent of independence in some African countries in the 1960s witnessed a spike in the documentation of urban history as local historians tried to understand issues to do with urbanisation. Attention to urban history further increased from the year 2000 as the challenges of urbanisation grew.

Citing the 2007 book by Bill Freund titled *The African City: A History*, Dr Edward said there are four basic types of cities and towns in African history:

- o Traditional cities and towns, which are cities and towns developed before the colonial era. These include Great Zimbabwe and Khami, Zanzibar and Mombasa;
- o Colonial cities and towns, which are cities and towns that did not exist before the coming of the colonialists such as Harare, Lusaka and Zomba;
- o Dual cities and towns, which combine elements of traditional and colonial cities and towns such as Accra, Bulawayo and Lagos; and
- o Post-modern cities and towns, which borrow from the structures and amenities of towns and cities from the coloniser's home country.

He suggested that the cities and towns can be classified into two broad categories as follows:

- o Pre-modern cities and towns for those urban centres that were:
  - Less dense than modern cities;
  - Built close to critical resources, especially water, food and minerals;
  - Nations/empires by themselves or capitals. Some of these were vulnerable to external attacks, hence fortifications;
  - Walking cities;
  - Largely self-sufficient; and
  - Important trading centres.
- o Modern cities and towns where there are modern facilities such as piped water and electricity.

In terms of topical issues in urban history in Africa, Dr Edward cited the theoretical controversy over African versus non-African agency in the development of African urban centres. The controversy revolves around the debate about whether some of the great African civilisations such as Great Zimbabwe and the Egyptian pyramids were built by Africans or by Europeans. He said contrary to Cambridge histories of Africa, there is evidence to show that these cities were built by Africans, such as the records and publications of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). UNESCO records show that there were early traces of urban planning, city parks and fortresses in dynastic Egypt and Nubia, earlier than in Greece and Rome. The same records show that Egyptians had geometric plans, standardised housing, and experts in monumental architecture such as the famous architect Imhotep who lived around 2580 BC.

Another issue that African urban historians grapple with is the challenge of urban spatial inequality where some areas developed during the colonial period were favoured at the expense of others. This saw areas inhabited by the indigenous population receiving less resources for development projects while those where the colonisers stayed got disproportional amounts to build infrastructure and provide amenities.

Dr Edward noted that several lessons could be drawn from the experiences of pre-colonial African urbanism. One such lesson is that residential and public structures in modern African cities and towns should be built by using locally available resources to ensure durability, economy, environmental-friendliness and ease of repair and maintenance.

The experience of pre-colonial cities and towns such as Great Zimbabwe galvanises the need for the use of local experts in construction of urban centres. This ensures the preservation and development of local architectural technologies, and acts as a source of employment.

Citing the examples of Great Zimbabwe and the pyramids in Egypt, he said another point to note is that cities and towns should be developed in areas where there are critical resources for the urban communities such water and food. Cities and towns should be developed by ensuring that there is a sustainable urban economy.

### Discussion

Participants agreed with Dr Frank's classification of African cities and towns into pre-modern and modern. There was a feeling that the classification as suggested by Freund and others was euro-centric. For example, there was a question on "what is a traditional city and traditional to who?"

There was also the question of religious cities. How did these develop and how can they be classified? The discussion showed that there may be need for a course focusing on the issue of Religion and Urbanism in Africa to show the influence of such cities on urbanism in various parts of the continent.

There is also need for a review of the features of urbanism, in particular the one that relates to the fact that cities and towns are identified by the existence of large numbers of people not involved in agricultural activities. It was felt that this marker of an urban area may not be the case as agricultural activities are often prevalent in African cities and towns.

There was debate on the issue of overpopulation, which is threatening the sustainability of modern cities. It was noted that the expanding population in most cities and towns in Southern Africa is causing challenges such as overstretched infrastructure, leading to disease outbreaks and rising crime.

## EARLY SOUTHERN AFRICAN CITIES AND THEIR HINTERLANDS: THE CASE FROM MAPUNGBWE



*Dr Alexander Antonites, University of Pretoria*

The second presentation for the day was by Dr Alexander Antonites who is a Lecturer in the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology at the University of Pretoria. The presentation focused on the Mapungubwe civilisation.

He started with a preamble in which he made a distinction between archaeology and history as both disciplines involve the study of the past. What makes archaeology different is that it focuses on the "unwritten word" and uses material remains in defining a narrative. Whereas historians read text and analyse the oral word, archaeologists study material culture and the uses of space to understand history.



Using the example of the visit to Chief Mugabe's homestead on the previous day, he noted that for archaeologist the main issue was not what the Chief said but the significance of the various material elements in and around the Chief's court. What was the significance of the platform where the Chief was seated, why was the floor covered with cow dung and the symbolism of the stuffed animals and chevron patterns?

He noted that human activities have an archaeological footprint, but should not be viewed as being bound by time and related only to things that happened some years ago. Archaeology is not static as everyday activities of a community add to the archaeological footprint of that community. Litter thrown in an area will become part of the material culture of that place. The material culture is used to extrapolate answers about the community that lived in that area.

His presentation was based on research he did on Mapungubwe, which he described as the earliest urban centre in South Africa. It is located at the confluence of the Limpopo and Shashe rivers where Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe borders meet. Mapungubwe's material culture has, therefore, been found over a large area extending into Botswana and Zimbabwe.

The research found that there were strong links between the Mapungubwe civilisation and areas around it in South Africa. The study showed similarities in the material culture found at Mapungubwe and at sites in nearby areas. At one of the hinterland sites at Mutamba, a 13th-century settlement located on the northern slopes of the Soutpansberg range in South Africa's Limpopo Province, material culture was found in the form of ceramics, glass beads, gold, iron and copper attributable to Mapungubwe. This pointed to the existence of social interactions, and possibly trade relations, between Mapungubwe and the communities in its hinterland. Another possible explanation is that Mapungubwe was the heartland where the ruling class lived while the outlying areas were reserved for others in the society.

Dr Antonites said that, unlike Great Zimbabwe, Mapungubwe has been allowed to remain in a state of collapse to preserve it in its original form. No restoration activities have been carried out. As a result, some of the structures are covered with sand and research work has not been done on site so as not to disturb the site.

### Discussion

Participants noted that it may be worthwhile to undertake studies to establish the role played by agriculture at Mapungubwe in terms of crop production and livestock rearing. Dr Antonites revealed that there is ongoing research on the issue. A major challenge to such research is that plant material culture does not preserve as long as animal or other archaeological materials.

There was an interesting observation about the importance role played by the hinterland in the sustainability of pre-colonial cities. It was noted that without the communities that surrounded them, and other far-lying areas, cities such as Mapungubwe and Great Zimbabwe would not have survived as long as they did. They may have relied on these other areas for labour, food and trade. There are, therefore, important lessons to be drawn by modern urban planners from the experiences of such pre-colonial city-states.

The discussion also raised questions about the possible impact of climate change or climate variability on the sustainability of urban centres. Linked to the issue of research on role of agriculture at Mapungubwe, a corresponding question is whether change in weather patterns contributed to the demise of Mapungubwe, given that it is in the dry Limpopo Province of South Africa. Surely the original inhabitants of the area would have chosen that particular location because there was enough water. Should the impact of climate change on heritage be one of the issues to be included in the revised curriculum?

## HOW CAN PRE-COLONIAL AFRICAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS INFORM CURRENT POLICY DISCUSSIONS ON URBANISATION AND RELATED CHALLENGES IN SOUTHERN AND EASTERN AFRICA?

*Discussion led Dr Terence Mashingaidze, Midlands State University*

The final plenary of the workshop was led by the workshop chair Dr Mashingaidze, and took the form of a roundtable during which senior scholars discussed several issues guided by a set of questions. The questions were as follows:

- o What is urban sustainability?
- o Was Great Zimbabwe a sustainable city?
- o What are some of the contemporary urban sustainability challenges?
- o What are some of the insights drawn from Great Zimbabwe that can inform policy decisions on urban sustainability in Eastern and Southern Africa?

Participants characterised urban sustainability as a set of inter-related elements that make up a system which facilitates the proper functioning of cities so they do not collapse. A slight change or misfiring of one of the constituent parts could cause the entire system to collapse. Urban sustainability is thus the sum total of certain key pillars that would sustain, for example, the growth in population or the networks necessary to keep cities going. What are those key pillars? Some key pillars were identified, but this area needs further scholarship.

A related point is the need for some comparative analysis to determine what made the pre-colonial cities sustainable compared to modern cities. A case in point is a comparison between Great Zimbabwe and Harare. Whereas Great Zimbabwe may have survived at least 400 years before its demise, Harare is facing serious sustainability challenges just over 130 years after its establishment. Like other modern cities across most of Southern Africa, Harare is grappling with challenges of water supply, electricity, infrastructure, health, food security and crime. There is need for scholarly reflection on these comparisons to inform policy and urban planning decisions.

The role of effective management systems came up during the discussion. Could it be that the governance systems in place at the time of Great Zimbabwe, Mapungubwe, Kilwa and others was more effective than what is available now? One participant likened an urban setup to a machine or a car that consumes resources or fuel and produces waste or fumes, respectively. If the management of the waste or fuel is not keeping up with the consumption process, then there are bound to be sustainability challenges. This calls for good management of the entire value chain, a process that requires a multi-disciplinary approach. The same principle could be applied to the issue of urban sustainability.

An interesting point that was highlighted was the issue of population and the mechanisms employed at Great Zimbabwe compared to what is currently happening in modern cities. It was noted that research shows that ancient civilisations such as Great Zimbabwe and Mapungubwe had mechanisms that allowed them “to breathe” from time to time with respect to the number of people within the inner city. There were thresholds in terms of the holding capacity of these cities, beyond which they would collapse.

In this regard, there was dispersed urbanism where some people would move out of the city at certain times to stay in outlying areas. There was a controlled entrance point, referred to as mujeje, through which those coming into the city would enter. This ensured that access to the city was controlled and only those who had business to do would be allowed in. This is a potential research topic in urban history in terms of cities having breathing space.



There was also a mechanism to protect the environment by limiting economic activities such as mining. Some scholars argued that mining was only allowed at certain times while the rest of the year was reserved for agricultural activities. This was because mining involved the use of firewood, which affected the environment. This presents important lessons for researchers and planners in modern cities.

Another observation was that modern house designs are not energy efficient. Most designs nowadays make use of materials used such as glass, corrugated iron sheets and tiles, which mean that the household requires a lot of energy for heating and cooling purposes. To ensure the sustainability of modern urban areas, there is need to embrace simple and energy efficient designs. One of the lessons from Great Zimbabwe is that the thick walls of the Great Enclosure made the interior cooler by preventing heat from penetrating.

However, another dimension to the issue of house designs is that houses using some of the more energy-efficient materials such as thatched roofs are more expensive to maintain and attract higher insurance premiums. This tends to discourage modern homeowners from going that route.

Another point raised was the issue of knowledge transfer among the various civilisations. It was noted that there is a knowledge gap in that area and there is need for further interrogation of the issue to better understand the role, if any, played by knowledge transfer in ensuring the sustainability of cities such as Great Zimbabwe and how that can be used to address contemporary challenges.

There was a long exchange around semantical issues such as which period could be termed “pre-colonial” and the definition of “African knowledge”. Some scholars were of the view that it is difficult to properly define the “pre-colonial” period, noting the difficulty to have an agreed cut-off point at which it ended. Equally, what qualifies as “African knowledge”? Others argued that terms such as “pre-colonial” and “colonial” are convenient temporal markers that make it easy to interpret certain issues. These are issues that need further academic interrogation.

## Conclusion

The debate on pre-colonial African knowledge systems and effective practices to inform current policy discussions must move beyond debate on the definition of terms and towards the facilitation of research with a specific focus on the relevant gaps including the aspects discussed here.

The discussion could also continue online as a support mechanism to policy development on urbanisation, and proceed to respond further to questions such as, What is urban sustainability?



It is clear from the discussions here that there is not one response but several, and although there are certain basic needs for the city populations such as water, food and shelter, and livelihoods, the specific needs and responses for urban sustainability will vary from city to city, therefore analysis would be in the context of the existing physical, political and sociological environment, then and now.

The technologies used to sustain the city at Great Zimbabwe such as the water reticulation and the air conditioning as well as site location and the local environment, proximity to food sources, grazing grounds and the goldmines, as well as value addition and the accessible value chains, should be explored further in the context of informing modern needs for sustainability.

Was Great Zimbabwe a sustainable city? That raised another question regarding, how long must a city flourish to qualify as “sustainable”. Great Zimbabwe was operational for at least 400 years and it is believed that its demise was accelerated by a lack of resilience to the environmental changes resulting from climate, although this needs further study. Significant infrastructure remains standing today with cultural artefacts that have inspired a modern nation.

How Can Pre-Colonial African Knowledge Systems Inform Current Policy Discussions on Urbanisation and Related Challenges in Southern and Eastern Africa?

This question will be pursued further in 2024 in the context of eastern Africa through the expected comparative experience of a Teaching on Site visit to Kilwa, a sophisticated pre-colonial coastal city and port in what is now the United Republic of Tanzania.

# CLOSING OF WORKSHOP

The Closing session for the workshop was addressed by representatives of the partners.

## *University of Dar es Salaam*

In his closing remarks, Dr Frank Edward described the workshop as a ground-breaking initiative in the sense that it enabled participants – students and lecturers alike – to appreciate the value of learning or teaching on-site by exposing students to living examples. He thanked SARDC, MSU and SMUS for organising the workshop. He appreciated the support to the process by lecturers from Great Zimbabwe University and Technical University of Berlin as well as National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe for their excellent input into making the workshop a success. He also noted that the workshop would not have been successful without the active participation of the students from MSU, UDSM and UP.

## *University of Pretoria*

Representing University of Pretoria, Dr Alexander Antonites said the workshop was a learning experience for everyone as lecturers and students from outside Zimbabwe were also able to learn about Great Zimbabwe. He thanked the organisers and funders as well as participants, for the productive workshop.

## *Midlands State University*

Speaking on behalf of MSU, Ms Nyasha Gurira started with a special thanks to the representatives of SARDC and SMUS for working tirelessly to make the workshop take place. She expressed appreciation to the entire SARDC team for the behind-the-scenes commitment that went into organising the workshop, as well as to colleagues from UDSM, UP, Technical University of Berlin and GZU for their active participation during the workshop. She expressed confidence that this is the beginning of many more future collaborations inspired by this initiative. Ms Gurira thanked the students for their active participation.

## *Southern African Research and Documentation Centre*

Mr Raymond Ndhlovu, who spoke on behalf of the SARDC Executive Director Mr Munetsi Madakufamba, said the workshop had opened the eyes of young researchers like himself in that it allowed them to appreciate their history and heritage. He thanked all partner organisations and the students for making the workshop a success. Special mention went to the Technical University of Berlin which, through SMUS, made it possible to hold the workshop through their financial and technical support. He looked forward to more exchanges among the partners and future workshops of a similar nature. He encouraged the students to share with their colleagues the knowledge and experiences gained from this workshop.

Ms Phyllis Johnson thanked the SMUS representative, Ms Thando Dika Tilmann for her perseverance and encouragement that made it possible to have the workshop. Due to her efforts, as well as those of Mr Ray Ndhlovu of SARDC and Ms Nyasha Gurira of MSU, SARDC was able to get the project going at short notice. She acknowledged the substantive role of Dr Mashingaidze in guiding the process of structuring and preparation for the workshop. She thanked the other partners and SARDC staff for their passion in seeing through the project which she said had high expectations and exceeded those expectations thanks to the input of all participants, including students.

She noted a very special thanks to National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe for permission to hold this workshop on site at Great Zimbabwe, and to the Director of Research and Development, Mr Kundishora Chipunza, who shared his advice, guidance and support on the logistics of holding such a workshop on site, and then provided the introductory teaching tour with Professor Manyanga on the first day. She also thanked Professor Munyaradzi Manyanga and Dr Plaxcedes Chikunda of Great Zimbabwe University for their significant contribution to the depth of the discussions.

#### ***Global Centre of Spatial Methods for Urban Sustainability***

Speaking on behalf of SMUS, Ms Thando Tilmann said she learnt so much from the workshop and thanked all participants for sharing their knowledge about Great Zimbabwe and other pre-colonial African civilisations. She took the opportunity to give an overview of the work that SMUS does, saying that it is one of less than 20 centres of excellence based in Germany and administered by the German Academic Exchange Services (DAAD) which is funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The centres look at specific sustainability challenges, with SMUS focusing on SDG 11 on urban sustainability. SMUS operates under a framework of five different actions. Action 2, under which the Teaching-on-Site workshop was funded, is one of the areas that she is personally involved in as the coordinator.

She said SMUS is a global network, with about 50 partner organisations around the world. MSU, SARDC, UDSM and UP are part of the network. The partnerships aim to promote peer-to-peer learning where organisations from around the world get to work with one another. The Great Zimbabwe Teaching-on-Site workshop was one such opportunity for peer-to-peer learning.

She said Professor Baz Lecocq and herself would take the lessons from the workshop to inform programming on the German university work with partners in the Global South. The collaborations made during the workshop would contribute to building a stronger partnership between German universities and partner institutions from Southern Africa.

She also used the opportunity to talk about DAAD scholarships available for Masters students from around the world as well as for those wishing to do three-month research-stays at German universities. The scholarships are listed on the DAAD website. For research-stays, applicants need to identify a German university willing to host them and submit proposals accompanied by a letter of recommendation from their local university.

She spoke about an 11-part video podcast series that she worked on with decolonial scholar, Prof. Sabelo Ndlovu Gatsheni. The series, which is available on the SMUS website, will soon be turned into audio files that can be accessed by anyone. The series includes maps and timelines and could be a useful teaching resource for partner universities in South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

She was happy with the progress of Phase One of the collaboration between SMUS and SARDC, which started in 2022. She said she was impressed with SARDC's outputs and will be moving on to Phase Two that will cover the period 2023-2024.

She announced that SMUS also plans to make a contribution of about €10,000 to purchase textbooks for the history departments of MSU and UDSM.

She spoke about a conference on research methods to be held in Thailand in July 2024. This will be the fourth global research conference for universities organised by SMUS. The first one was hosted online by Botswana in 2021, followed by another virtual one hosted by Brazil in 2022, and a physical conference held in India in February 2023.

### *Great Zimbabwe University*

Prof. Munyaradzi Manyanga described the workshop as a useful initiative that helped to demystify some myths and opened avenues for multi-disciplinary collaborations. He thanked the organisers of the workshop for the environment provided and for the smooth logistics that ensure there were no distractions from the substance of the discussions. He said he looks forward to more collaborations in future.

### *Humboldt University of Berlin*

Prof. Baz Lecocq said the workshop allowed him to experience Great Zimbabwe, which he described as more than just a fascinating milestone. He thanked everyone for the thought-provoking discussions over the past five days.

## **VOTE OF THANKS**

One of the students, Nickson Mujee, gave the vote of thanks. He said the students were grateful for the opportunity to visit Great Zimbabwe and learn about one of the great pre-colonial African civilisations. He said the students are taking important lessons that they would apply in their education as they move towards undertaking their research projects. He was thankful for the opportunity to interact with esteemed professors who are experts in the areas of history and archaeology. Finally, he thanked the organisers of the workshop for the hospitality shown to the students during their stay and time at Great Zimbabwe, as well as the universities that allowed their students to attend.

Finally, all participants thanked the organisers for the arrangements and acknowledged the work and services provided by Lulu's Catering from Masvingo that enabled excellent tented facilities for the workshop as well as nourishment through teas and lunches on site, and Clever's Lakeview Resort nearby which provided comfortable accommodation and other meals to enable a suitable environment for reflection and discussion outside the workshop.

# ANNEX 1 PROGRAMME

## REGIONAL WORKSHOP SOUTHERN AFRICA 2023 TEACHING ON SITE

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Great Zimbabwe, Masvingo  
2 - 6 October 2023

***How can pre-colonial African Knowledge Systems inform current policy discussions on urbanisation and related challenges in southern and eastern Africa?***

### **Day 1 Monday**

Meet at SARDC in Harare 0830 for 0900 – Introductions, welcome by SARDC Executive Director Munetsi Madakufamba.

Official opening of the Teaching on Site regional workshop by Hon. Professor Amon Murwira, Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development.

Refreshments and departure mid-morning for a four-hour journey by bus to Masvingo to Clever's Lakeview Resort and Conference Centre, nearby to the Great Zimbabwe heritage site. MSU students travel direct to hotel.

Initial workshop session early evening at hotel by the Workshop Chair, with introductory briefing and context of South-South partnership in the Teaching Research initiative. Logistics briefing. Dinner at 1900 and early night

#### **Workshop Chair**

Dr Terence Mashingaidze, Senior Lecturer in the Department of History and Director of the Harare Campus of Midlands State University, Zimbabwe

#### **Logistics**

Workshop will be conducted daily on site at Great Zimbabwe.  
Bus departs hotel half hour earlier in morning, returns late afternoon.

### **Day 2 Tuesday**

**Early Morning Session on site 0700** – Familiarisation with the site, guided tour by Chief Curator Mr Kundishora Chipunza, who is the Director of Research and Development at National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe. He will discuss Great Zimbabwe, the site in history, its political economy and the use of space.

This is combined with a joint walk-through lecture with Professor Munyaradzi Manyanga, Executive Dean of the Robert Mugabe School of Heritage and Education at Great Zimbabwe University discussing his research on Great Zimbabwe World Heritage Site -- Understanding Great Zimbabwe in the post-colonial theories, methods and practice.

**Late lunch at site, followed by discussion and questions**

### **Day 3 Wednesday**

Sessions Chair Dr Frank Edward

**Morning Session at site 0830 – 1030** - Oral History as method by Professor Baz Lecocq, Professor of African History at the Humboldt University of Berlin's Institute of Asian and African Studies (IAAW) and Executive Director of the institute  
Discussion with students on how to use oral history sources as part of their research

#### **Refreshments and break**

**Mid-morning Session at site 1100 - 1300** – Access and Ethics, Permits by Mr Kundishora Chipunza, NMMZ  
Discussion with students on issues of access and research ethics, permits they might need to apply for on their selected topics

#### **Lunch at site**

**Afternoon Session 1400-1530** – Case Study Research Methodology  
by Ms Nyasha Gurira  
Discussion on site selection for research purposes  
Discussion with students on possibilities for their research

#### **Refreshments and break**

**Afternoon Session 1545-1745** – Visit to Great Zimbabwe Spiritual Village

### **Day 4 Thursday**

Sessions Chair Nyasha Gurira

**Morning session 0830 – 1030** - Overview on Research Methodologies in History including indigenous research methodologies by Dr Terence Mashingaidze  
Discussion with students on possible research topics and research approaches

**Mid-morning session 1100 - 1300** – Heritage-based Education, aspects such as curriculum decolonization and culturally responsive pedagogy will be discussed by Dr Plaxcedes Chikunda, Lecturer on Sociology of Education in the Department of Educational Foundations at Great Zimbabwe University

#### **Lunch at site**

**Afternoon session – 1400 -1600** Visit to a local chief, teaching students the importance of interaction with communities, facilitated by Ms Gurira. The aim is to give students experience in communication with communities and ensuring that their researches are inclusive of locals where indigenous communities are found such as at Great Zimbabwe. This also has implications on research ethics. (A Visit to Chief Mugabe's Dare)

## **Day 5 Friday**

Sessions Chair Raymond Ndhlovu

**Morning Session 0830-1030** –Urban History in Africa by Dr Frank Edward, Lecturer, Department of History, University of Dar es Salaam

**Mid-Morning Session 1100 - 1300** – Early Southern African Cities and their Hinterlands: The case from Mapungubwe, by Dr Alexander Antonites, Lecturer in the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology at the University of Pretoria

**Lunch at site**

**Afternoon Session on the Workshop Theme 1430** – *How can pre-colonial African Knowledge Systems inform current policy discussions on urbanisation and related challenges in southern and eastern Africa?*

Making Historical Methodologies relevant to SDG 11 - Creating Sustainable Cities and Communities - by Dr Terence Mashingaidze, Senior Lecturer in Department of History and Director of the Harare Campus of Midlands State University

**Refreshments and break**

**Workshop Closing – 1700**

University of Dar es Salaam – Dr Frank Edward

University of Pretoria – Dr Alexander Antonites

Midlands State University – Nyasha Gurira

Southern African Research and Documentation Centre – Raymond Ndhlovu

Global Centre of Spatial Methods for Urban Sustainability -Thando Tilmann

Vote of Thanks – Representative of Students

Workshop Wrap up - Dr Mashingaidze to wrap up and close as Chairman

**Sunset at Great Zimbabwe**

## **Day 6 Saturday**

Early breakfast and Depart 0630 to Harare to be at airport 11am for check-in to Tanzania and South Africa



## ANNEX 2 LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

This is an innovative South-South collaboration of Midlands State University in Zimbabwe, University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, University of Pretoria in South Africa, the History Institute of the Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC) in Zimbabwe, and the Global Centre of Spatial Methods for Urban Sustainability (SMUS) of the Technical University of Berlin. The team comprises of 3 Professors with their Principal Investigators.

The workshop participants include the two project representatives from each of the partner universities in Zimbabwe, Tanzania and South Africa, and the SARDC History Institute, as well as two representatives from Great Zimbabwe University and from National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe. The Global Centre for SMUS will participate, together with an academic from Humboldt University in Germany. Six students from Zimbabwe, plus one each from Tanzania and South Africa brings the total number of participants to 22 people, plus a photographer and videographer.

Name of Participant	Title	Organisation
Dr Terence Mashingaidze	Senior Lecturer, Department of History, and Director of the Harare Campus of MSU	MSU
Ms Nyasha Gurira	Lecturer in the Dept of Archaeology, Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies and Department of Archaeology Field School Coordinator	MSU
Dr Frank Edward	Lecturer, Department of History	UDSM
Dr Alexander Antonites	Lecturer, Department of Anthropology and Archaeology	UP
Prof. Munyaradzi Manyanga	Executive Dean, School of Heritage and Education	GZU
Dr Plaxedes Chikunda	Lecturer, Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education	GZU
Mr Kundishora Chipunza	Director of Research and Development	National Museums & Monuments Zimbabwe
Professor Baz Lecocq	Professor of African History and Executive Director of the Institute of Asian and African Studies	Humboldt University of Berlin
Ms Thando Tilmann	Scientific Coordinator, Global Centre of Spatial Methods for Urban Sustainability	SMUS
Mr Munetsi Madakufamba	Executive Director	SARDC
Ms Phyllis Johnson	Founding Director and Special Projects	SARDC
Mr Raymond Ndlovu	Senior Researcher/Writer, History	SARDC
Ms Shumirai Govo	Administrator	SARDC
Ms Nomaqhawe Ngwenya	Research Assistant, History	SARDC
Mr Joseph Ngwawi	Special Rapporteur	SARDC
Nickson Mujee	Student	MSU
Muchineripi P. Mukarakate	Student	MSU
Maryrose Korera	Student	MSU
Trish Chitewo	Student	MSU
Panielle Moyo	Student	MSU
Christabel Muneni	Student	MSU
Siphesihle Kuhlase	Student	UP
Rabia Kulunge	Student	UDSM
Mr Tanaka Mhlanga	Photographer	
Mr Arthur Makoni	Videographer	

## ANNEX 3 LIST OF PRESENTATIONS

- ❖ Research Methodologies in History  
Dr Terence Mashingaidze, MSU
- ❖ Case Study on Research Methodology  
Ms Nyasha Gurira, MSU
- ❖ Oral History as a Source for Research  
Professor Baz Lecocq
- ❖ Heritage-based education  
Dr Plaxcedes Chikunda, GZU
- ❖ Urban History in Africa  
Dr Frank Edward, UDsm
- ❖ Early Southern African Cities and their Hinterlands: The Mapungubwe polity  
Dr Alexander Antonites, UP

*NOTE: Links to the presentations will be provided*

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Citation SARDC et al. 2023. Teaching on Site: Great Zimbabwe, Regional Workshop Southern Africa 2023 Report. SARDC, Midlands State University, University of Dar es Salaam, University of Pretoria, Technical University of Berlin, DAAD

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