

Cultural heritage management in African and in other non-western societies, has mainly been concerned with the preservation and presentation of archaeological monuments primarily from a technical point of view. In Zimbabwe the emphasis has been on the preservation of spectacular monumental architectural places like Great Zimbabwe. Most efforts to preserve and present the archaeological heritage in Southern Africa suffer from a failure to fully understand the significance of the cultural heritage and its value to local communities. Following independence, many Southern African nations realised the value of the past in nation building and the need to restore cultural pride, which had seriously been eroded by colonialism. However, local community interests are often ignored at the expense of international guidelines and frames of operation. Despite the attainment of independence heritage management in Southern Africa assume that local communities are irrelevant to a 'scientific' approach of managing their own heritage. This thesis explores traditional ways of heritage management. They are discussed in relations of the various experiences at the Great Zimbabwe National Monument. The architectural conservation programmes implemented at Great Zimbabwe are outlined and reviewed in the context of archaeological heritage managers in Southern Africa. The thesis emphasises the need for integrative planning and management structures that promotes a rapprochement between scientific and local knowledge structures. This provides the best chance of avoiding irreversible cultural degradation resulting from arbitrary decisions of management and policy makers.