CONSERVATION AND TREATMENT OF HUMAN REMAINS IN ZIMBABWEAN MUSEUMS: INFRASTRUCTURE, POLICY AND PRACTICE.

MUTERO PROSPER

(Zimbabwe)

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By

MUTERO PROSPER (Zimbabwe)

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Supervisors: Alice Choyke and Laszlovszky Jozsef

External Supervisors: Mtetwa Ezekia and Timothy McKeown

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ABSTRACT

Zimbabwe's long-standing history of archaeology, both academic and development-led research, continues to generate a growing corpus of ancient and recent human remains among other remarkable finds, presenting a prime context to study the preservation and presentation of mortuary heritage. This project specifically investigated aspects of the infrastructure, policies, and practices shaping and being shaped by the desire to preserve and present mortuary heritage ethically in Zimbabwe. Interest in the way human remains are recovered for research, preserved, and presented to the public in museum displays is on the rise, as societies across the globe tackle issues of ethics and repatriation. In countries with a colonial history like Zimbabwe and many in the Global South, the question of mortuary heritage also touches on the aspect of restitution, given the recurrent claims for parts of or whole human bodies that were taken to foreign lands by colonialists to be returned back home. This thesis aimed at establishing the various legal instruments and policies that have shaped the preservation and presentation of ancient and recent human remains in Zimbabwe, including an understanding of their similarities and differences with regional and international legal frameworks and local Indigenous knowledge systems. It was also aimed at assessing the facilities and conditions in which the human remains in Zimbabwean museums are curated. The results of this research were applicable recommendations and guiding principles for researchers and curators in the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ) on the treatment of human remains. This research also provided step-by-step guidelines and recommendations on the treatment of human remains for researchers, curators, and policy makers in Zimbabwe.

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DEDICATIONS

'KUMACOMRADE-*the Zimbabwean freedom fighters who perished in the bush (in the First and Second Chimurenga), may your souls rest in peace!!!'*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

AT – Amali Trust

DNA TEST - Deoxyribonucleic acid test

FHT – Fallen Heroes Trust

ICOM - International Council of Museums

NAGPRA - Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act

NMMZ - National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe

RCA – Royal Commission on Aboriginal People

SPEC – Statement of Principle for Ethical Conduct Pertaining to Aboriginal People

UND – United Nations Declaration

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

USA – United States of America

WAC – World Archaeological Congress

BACKGROUND: Research and Politics of the Dead in Zimbabwe

> 'Besides the complex nature of interactions between policy, archaeology, descendants, and heritage in South Africa, the future of the remains in neighbouring countries should also be considered …. there is no legislation that guides how collections should be made and maintained and how scientific assessments of human remains ought to be done ... The future of the collections ... needs to be addressed before any discussions regarding the repatriation of … specimens held outside the country can begin.' (Maryna et al. 2013: 4)

Human remains and their associated grave goods are the most direct and tangible evidence of the connections and interrelations of the living with their dead. They are a tangible testimony to the living's belief in the afterlife as well as their veneration of the dead. Ndoro (1996: 773-779) mentions that the Shona people of Zimbabwe do sometimes bury post-puberty women with ceramics that has feminist motifs or decorative depictions; and sometimes with beads and female clothing, while young boys (pre-pubescent boys and those who never married or had kids) are interred with either sticks or a dead rat to act as the child they never had in real life. Besides, when ordinary people die, they are usually accompanied by their personal belongings, things they owned in life, and yet, it is the decision of the living as to which item/s to inter with the deceased. For the elites, an example in the Science Newsletter (1940) discusses the Old Panama Chief (from South Africa) who was buried with many prestigious gifts, as well as slaves, offered to work for him in the afterlife. This case proves the living veneration of a dead king by assigning slaves to work for him in the afterlife. This case also shows the living's idea

of the afterlife, the use of burial rituals to message both the living and the dead as exhibited in the honor paid to the dead through material possessions.

Colonialism forced Africans to adopt many aspects of Western/European cultures and traditions, some of which scorned local traditions and practices as barbaric (Ranger 1993). Chiwaura (2007: 1-2) explains that the colonization of Africa by the Europeans almost destroyed and replaced the African systems, which includes the protection and management of cultural heritage. In Zimbabwe, for example, the colonial Rhodesian government enacted several laws that evicted indigenous people from their fertile and ancestral lands as well as, several acts that explicitly rejected the social roles played by the spirit mediums and local medicine men (see Maravanyika 1990 and Chiwaura 2005: 18-19). Concerning the safeguarding of heritage, a series of ordinances were passed by the Rhodesian government from 1902 until 1972 which had a specific focus on various types of heritage, ending with the passing of the National Museums and Monuments Act of Rhodesia, Chapter 313. The act, just like its successor the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe Act Chapter 25, focused on protecting the physical fabrics of the heritage sites, paying little or no attention to the intangible aspects, later alone the graves and mortuary heritages of Zimbabwe. Among other social issues, these harsh laws passed by the Rhodesian government made the local people to resent the authorities and ultimately wage war to regain their freedom. This war of liberations has been popularly historicized as led and informed by the ancestors through such spirit mediums as Ambuya Nehanda[1] and Sekuru Kaguvi[2] and Sekuru Chaminuka.

[1]Ambuya literary is grandmother and is used as a respectful way to address an old woman or someone's grandmother. The same term can also be used to refer to a female herbalist or spirit medium as in this case.
[2]Sekuru is literary grandfather, a term used to refer old man, someone's' grandfather and also a male herbalist or spirit mediums as in this case.

As demonstrated by Fontein (2010: 17 and 24) the spirits of the dead can place demands on the living through the avenging spirits '*Ngozi*[3]' and such demands do include the dead's desire for proper burial/reburial, burial among fellow kinsmen, respect for the burial goods they were interred with, among other social practices by the living (see also Mahachi 1986 and Murimbika 1999). In response to the demands made by the ancestral spirits, spirit mediums like Ambuya Nehanda, Sekuru Mkwati, Sekuru Chaminuka, and Sekuru Kaguvi[4] then spear-headed the liberation struggle (popularly known as Chimurenga), this leading to their assassinations by the Rhodesian government (Ranger 1967, Maravanyika 1990, Fontein 2010: 2-3). The brutal killing and exhibitions of the dead (including the above-mentioned spirit mediums) during the early days of Chimurenga were all efforts meant to instill fear among the colonized. It is during this time that Sekuru Mkwati's walking stick and his head among other skeletal remains of the liberation fighters were taken and exhibited for public viewing in the British Museum (Ndlovu 2015).

The beginning of the twentieth century saw a change in the way mortuary heritage was perceived, thus graves were now being looted as war booty or trophies for war, mostly from the global South to the global North. With the coming in of the twenty-first century, however, there was a rise in calls for the repatriation of human skeletal remains from countries of former colonial masters to former colonies. Such groups as the Aborigine people in Australia, among others, demanded the repatriation of the human skeletal remains stored in such overseas institutions as the British Museum, Natural History Museum in London, and London Museum among other museums in the United Kingdom, including many in the United State of America (Flessas 2007: 2 and 5; Clark 2010 and Baid 2008). It must however be noted that as discussed

[3]Ngozi is an avenging spirit, mostly when a person is murdered, his/her spirit is believed to haunt the perpetrator in the near future.

[4]Mbuya Nehanda, Sekuru Kaguvi and Mkwati are the spiritual mediums/traditional spiritualists who motivated the locals to wage the Second Chimurenga against the colonial government.

by Clark (2010:15), the repatriation debate is not entirely based on the return and reburial of human remains, but rather on the ownership and control of cultural properties and history. This realization led to the adoption of the Vermillion Accord on Human Remains on the First World's Archaeological Congress of 1989 held in South Dakota (USA) which called for the respect of the dead regardless of origins, age, race, religion, and location. It also called for dialogue between archaeologists and local communities to create a sustainable way forward, and to ensure respect for the dead. In response to such views later captured by Albert, Bienkowski, and Chapman (2009:137), who says that when we display the dead, placing them in a context with restricted information that we carefully choose to interpret them with, we reduce them into things used for the needs or the purposes of the living (curators), the Tamaki Makaurau Accord on the Display of Human Remains and Sacred Object was adopted during the World Archaeological Congress of 2006. This Tamaki Makaurau Accord just like the Human Tissue Act of 2004 in England, called for the respectful and dignified treatment of human remains. (see Albet, Bienkowski, and Chapman 2009: 138). It also has been hailed for having expanded the Vermillion Accord on which it is based by saying that the display of sacred objects and human remains must be culturally appropriate (see also Clark 2020: 33).

While there have been efforts by museum practitioners worldwide to create a dialogue with communities as well as creating public trust, this, unfortunately, has not been the case in Zimbabwe and some other parts of sub-Saharan Africa. Cremers (2006: 4) mentions that cultural objects were stolen from a Zimbabwean exhibition in broad daylight. The BBC News Navigation reported online on the 13th of August in 2015, that the (now late) former President of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, said that some European museums were keeping and exhibiting skulls of some of "our people, our leaders" and that he was prepared to negotiate repatriation and would have wanted to do it with bitterness as he questioned the rationale behind 'decapitating such skulls'. It is however sad to note that not many success stories (of

repatriation of human remains) have been heard of in Zimbabwe unlike for example in South Africa. Apart from having a policy on the dignified treatment of human remains designed by the Iziko Museum, South Africa has some other success stories like the repatriation of Sara Baartman in 2002 after dialogues with France for a period of not less than 8 years, (see Moudileno 2009). Rassool (2015: 655-656) articulates that in 2012, the Pienaar couple (Mr. Trooi and Mrs. KlassPienaar) were brought back to South Africa from Vienna in coffins as deceased democratic human beings and not in museum boxes as general artifacts. This event took place a century after the two's death and illegal disinterment and export to Vienna for scientific experimentation and exhibitions.

In Zimbabwe, however, many of the challenges in the preservation and presentation of cultural heritage are a result of improper/poor records management (see Chaterera 2013: 96). These challenges are also linked to the poor security systems (see Ndlovu 2015: 11), and the unchanged colonial storylines and legislative tools (see Jagero et al. 2016). Jagero et. al (2016: 58) also discusses that the displays in the Zimbabwe Military Museum have a colonial bias in terms of its themes and ideologies. All this proves that there is much that must be done to ensure a better way of curating the Zimbabwean cultural heritage, let alone archaeological mortuary heritage. It is the thrust of this research to consider the issues that surround the research, preservation, presentation and conservation of ancient mortuary practices and archaeological mortuary heritages in modern Zimbabwe.

Keywords defined

i. Human remains: the skeletal remains of human beings, the ones under the custody of curators, archaeologists, and researchers for either research or curation purposes.

ii. Mortuary remains: used here synonymously with grave goods and a combination of grave goods and the human remains found in the same context

iii. Grave goods: all other materials found associated with the burial, for example, gold beads, pottery, and other materials.

Introduction of archaeology in colonial Zimbabwe

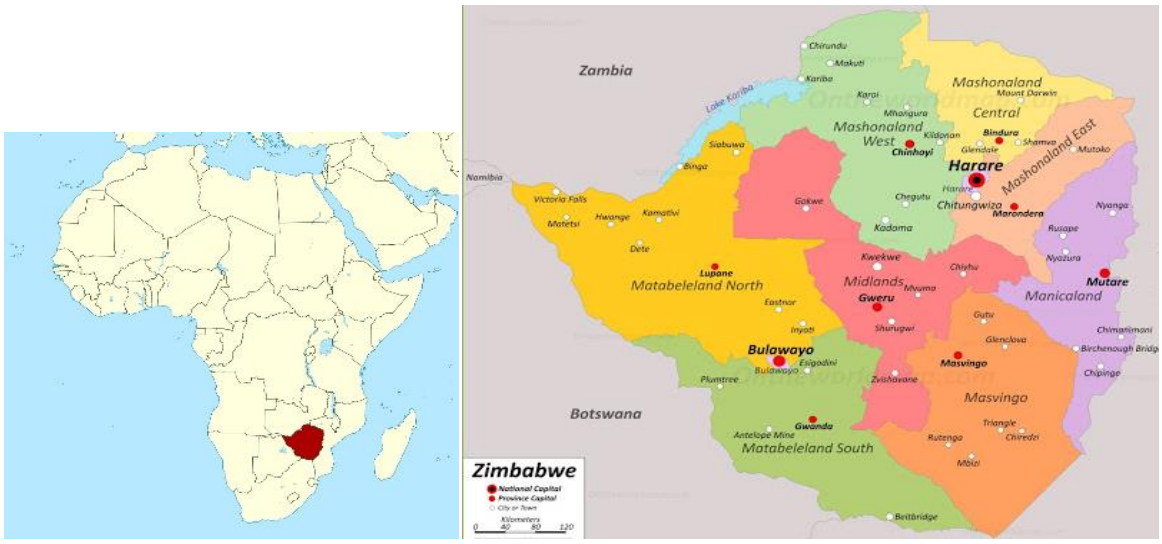

Figure 1. Maps showing the location of Zimbabwe. Adapted from http://ontheworldmap.com/zimbabwe/ Accessed in 2019

A concise historic and graphic survey of archaeological works in Zimbabwe has been well captured in such publications as (Hall 1990; Hall 1995; Mahachi and Ndoro 1997; Pikirayi 1997). Fontein (2006: 793) and Mutero unpublished (2014: 15) noted that archaeology in Zimbabwe was a brainchild of the colonial government, which sought first to legitimize and justify its rule over the colony and also to loot gold and other precious finds from historic monuments and graves using the antiquarians. The colonial Rhodesian government had employed and empowered journalists, antiquarians, and scholars to paddle an interpretation that Great Zimbabwe was not built by the indigenous, hence the Rhodesians were coming back to their land of ancestry. However, the arrival of professional archaeologists such as David

Randal MacIver and Gertrude Carton Thompson saw a radical shift from the colonial narrative to a more science-based explanation, that is, it became accepted that the ancestors of the modern Shona people did build the Great Zimbabwe site, informing the technological and architectural designs of the site (see Caton-Thompson 1930: 137-8, Hall 1995: 190-191, Pikirai 1997). This discussion among professional archaeologists disappointed the colonial government, resulting in enforced press censorship from 1965 up to 1980 by the Rhodesian government mainly targeting archaeological publications (Ndoro 1997: 99 and Matenga 2011: 155). This press censorship by the Rhodesian government resulted in most archaeologists resorting to publishing more of the scientific research far from the people/the general public (Katsamudanga 2015: 5). Mortuary/Burial archaeological studies also, could not escape this trap (press censorship) as much of the materials (human remains) came from rushed and/or ill-planned rescue missions and also expeditions with a hidden agenda to loot (see Crawford 1967; Whitty 1958).

Mortuary Archaeology in Rhodesia: 'Science of the people, without them'

One of the first publications in Zimbabwean burial archaeology was a report written by Antony Whitty concerning a rescue excavation which he did in Harare (Salisbury then) during the construction of a service station underground petrol tank at Coronation Park (Whitty 1958). He mentioned that when he got to the site, construction had started, and some pot-shed had already been unsystematically recovered making it hard for him to follow the chronology of the pottery of the site (Whitty 1958: 10). He thought of a control excavation and it is upon this control excavation that he came across the burial (Whitty 1958). Robison's excavation at Gokomere hill in Masvingo province was kind of a follow-up to the improperly documented work of a Catholic priest, Fr. T Gardner who had excavated the site in 1940, and kept some of the

materials which according to Robinson were lost by the time of his research, (see Robinson et. al. 1963: 155). It is upon the excavations that he heard of the cave shelter, excavated it, and then came across a layer that contained a burial. In 1964, Cook published a report of what she called an unusual burial, a single burial she found at a cave in the Mtshela Hill in Gwanda (Cooke 1964: 41-42). The report published in the Southern African Archaeological Bulletin, having a single academic reference and a single quote from one informant, was filled with her assumptions of what might have resulted in a cave burial without any grave goods. Crawford's 1967 publication of Monk's Kops Ossuary seemed to be a more systematic analysis of the Refuge period site in Murehwa. The idea that locals were informants is evident in this research, and also he concentrated on the scientific descriptions of the pottery and other grave goods excavated. The 70 individuals recovered from Crawford's excavation, were later examined by one Professor Tobias then at the Witwatersrand University of South Africa who described the skeletons as of 'Bantu-speaking Negros' (Crawford 1967: 378). The same year (1967), Watson published his work on one of the termite mounds in then Salisbury (now Harare), talking only about the mechanics and chemistry of the mound soils and their influence on the conservation of the burial. However, (Maryna et. al. 2013: 1) argued that the methods used to study material from Monk's Kop and Dambarare are out-dated and abandoned, and also that generally, during the colonial era of Southern Africa, the documentation of archaeological finds was generally poor. Again, they cited (Legassick and Rassool 2000) who argues that the deliberate killings of the Khoisan in South Africa were done to get/increase human skeletal material for the studies done by the minority white ruling class. In 1972, Garlake published a description of his excavations of the Nhunguza and Ruanga Ruins and mentioned the several burial excavations which he did in Mashonaland and he concluded that the Musengezi tradition ceramics were used as grave pottery. In this brief summary of the burial excavations in colonial Zimbabwe, I conclude that their main research aim was to find dates and connections of sites through the

pottery designs (taken to be markers of traditions/ages). Today, however, the use of ceramics/pottery classifications and typologies in Zimbabwean archaeology to date, identify, and trace groups/tribes is a method that has highly been rubbished and abandoned (see Pikirayi 1997; Pikirayi 2007; Mtetwa et. al 2013; Chirikure and Pikirayi 2015; Manyanga et. al. 2017). Again as argued by Mosothwane and Steyn (2004: 47-49), researchers in colonial Southern Africa sought to differentiate between the bodies of the Europeans and the Indigenous in order to present the Shona tribes as recent arrivers just like the whites, and therefore justify colonization. Most of these excavations lacked proper documentation and contextual analysis of all remains recovered, and little attention was given to these burials' potential in telling about the general livelihood of these past societies.

Post-independence mortuary archaeology in Zimbabwe: 'New wine in an old vessel'

At the attainment of independence, Zimbabwean historians and the few indigenous archaeologists who had received professional training outside the country indeed aided in nation-building and the reconstruction of the pride of the precolonial past. Many have however criticized for example the works of Kein Mufuka who is described as an idealistic writer of the history of Great Zimbabwe (Mufuka 1983; Ndoro and Mahachi 1997). In the same vein of nation-building, I argue, that Mahachi (1986) regrettably over-generalized the burial practices noted in Northern Zimbabwe, the land of the Zezuru people, depicting them as 'Shona' burial practices, yet the 'Shona cultures' consist of at least nine different linguistic variants and different cultural traits, for example, the Karanga, Zezuru, Manyika, and others. Marufu was

the next indigenous archaeologist to do a major research on the burials in the northern part of Zimbabwe again, and just like Mahachi (1986), he generalized what he termed Shona burials, (Marufu 2008). He however made a key observation that most grave/funerary pottery were purposefully and intentionally selected from within the household based on the social messages communicated on the pottery decorations/designs they carry (Marufu 2008: v). Both the approach to burial material culture and the interpretation of material culture in the post-colonial era however seem not to significantly differ from that of the white colonial archaeologists like Crawford who sought only to identify racial differences between skeletal remains of the Africans and Europeans (Crawford 1967; Swanepoel and Steyn 2013) and to define the elites based on mare numeric figures of the ceramic pots associated with the dead (van Waarden et al. 2013) or the decorative patterns on the ceramics. Murimbika (1999) and Huffman and Murimbika (2003) realize the need to ethnographically ascertain the use and value of the grave ceramic pots, through a comparison of the ceramic decorations and types between those in the burial record and those excavated in the household area.

While most burial archaeological researches in Zimbabwe included or at least referred to the analyses of the materials excavated at the Monks Kopy site (which dated AD 1270-1285), the Ashford site (AD1330-1440), and the Dambare site (AD 1630-1693), it is only in 2015 when a South African based researcher had to create the 'first' catalog of the very material despite their being in the Zimbabwe museum of Human Sciences since even before independence in 1980 (Swanepoel 2015: 3). She mentioned that the human remains in the collection she wanted to work on were packed according to the human body part and not material of an individual or so, that is she found femurs in one plastic bags despite being of different individuals and it was difficult to trace which remains belonged to which individual since they carried no accessioning or identity numbers or marks (Swanepoel 2015: 63-64). The continuous study of the Dambarare and Monks Kopy remains can be best explained in the words of Maryna et. al (2013: 1) and

Swanepoel and Steyn (2013: 69-70) who argued that the methods used to study these materials by their excavators (namely Crawford and Garlake) have since been revised and abandoned. Maryna et. al (2013: 4) laments that there is a lack of a policy or at least guidelines on the curation and research of the mortuary heritages, both in Botswana and the SADC countries which includes Zimbabwe. Such observations have been paramount to my considerations of embarking on this research project in which I seek to come up with guidelines and policy recommendations for the treatment of human remains in Zimbabwe.

On the other hand, Eppel (2015: 359) notes that forensic archaeology as a sub-discipline in Zimbabwe is not official and that exhumations of the dead mainly liberation war veterans (those who died in the 1960-1980 war of liberation) are being led mostly by spirit mediums and politically inclined groups. Chipangura (2015: 4) and Chipangura and Silika (2019: 171) talks about the exhumation of some bodies found in the Hebert mine and Butcher site both in the Manicaland province of Zimbabwe. These exhumations as discussed by Chipangura shows how the NMMZ took a dormant stand in these exhumations, which saw the spirit mediums whom Chipangura (2020: 11-17) calls 'vernacular exhumers' having the dominant voice in the exhumation process at the Butcher Site, Hebert mine and yet another site in Pasipanodya village. The lack of forensic expertise and the expenses of undertaking scientific researches made the government allow the exhumation of these comrades to be done unsystematically and unscientifically. With these unsystematic precesses and the lack of forensic analysis, most of the exhumation ended up being very-much disputed/controversial, (see Benyera 2014). The 'so-called' spiritual identification of the dead (which could have been complimented or authenticated by DNA testing), led to the splitting and sometimes commingling of the human skeletal remains as the Fallen Heroes Trust (FHT are the vernacular exhumers) were interested in producing a huge number of the exhumed bodies and not the strategy/process of exhuming the same bodies (Chipangura 2020). Chipangura and Silika (2019: 171) explains that generally

mass graves are highly politicized in Zimbabwe and hence the reason why the FHT wanted to reach the highest number possible of the exhumed individuals. This reality presents the need for policy recommendations, or at least best practices guidelines for the general archaeological recovery of human remains, study, storage, and reburial. This need is the prime background context of this current research study.

'The dead among us': Zimbabwean people's belief systems

Fields (1980: 39-40) reviews how Kapenzi (1979) explains the fact that the indigenous people were treated by the missionaries as people having no religion, no tradition, no institution, or racial character of their own. However, Mbiti (1975a) and Mbiti (1975b) argued that Africans before the coming in of the missionaries were 'notoriously religious.' Mbiti (1969) in his introduction to African religion, explained that African Traditional Religion (ATR) was a monotheistic religion, worshiping the High and Sky-God, the creator, yet having more than 100 names given to him, which described his abilities and also differing as a result of the linguistic difference in the African continent. I argue that just like the Catholic Saints who are believed to be intermediates between man and God, African traditional religion venerated African ancestors who are believed to play this intermediatory role between man and God. Lan (1985: 34-38) and Ndoro (2005: 68) describe the roles of the various groups of ancestors, including the mhondoro (national guiding spirit) and mudzimu (family spirit). Machirori (2012) argues that the Shona managed to keep or stick to their ancestral belief despite the fact that this practice was barely legitimate during the colonial era. In the post-independence era, however, there is a defined divide between on one hand the Christians believing in Christ Jesus,

and the Catholics and Anglicans believing in both Christ and European ancestors called 'saints' as intermediates between man and God of heaven, and on the other hand, traditionalists and spirit mediums worshiping God/Mwari through their own ancestors. The belief of ancestors is very common among the community leaders, as demonstrated by Fontein (2011: 709) who argued that Chief Charumbira for the first time, supported or hailed Ambuya VaZarira and the Murinye clan people after their 'proper' and cultural burial of Chief Murinye (David Mudarikwa Murinye). Mbuya VaZarira (in her capacity as the most respected spirit medium of the Moyo-Duma people) ensured that the burial was to be in accordance with the Shona cultural traditions, thus most importantly interring him (Chief David Mudarikwa Murinye) in a seating position, wrapped in cowhide, in a sacred cave and also informing the community about his death three months after his burial. On the topic of avenging spirits, Fontein (2011: 710-713) advances that not only Africans have their spirits as ghosts or avenging spirits as he also discusses the ghost of George Shepard, an England born Rhodesian farmer and owner of the Ancient City Hotel which shares boundaries with the Great Zimbabwe World Heritage buffer zone. George Shepard's ghost is said to have tormented his workers, urging them not to be corrupt and also to give him what he wanted as proper and decent reburial just like the same case we see liberation war veterans doing in Chipangura (2020). Fontein (2006b: 787) interviewed Aid Manwa who told him that the people around Great Zimbabwe respected the 'ivhu' (literaly translation is soil, but in this sense taken to refer to ancestors) who are the real owner of the soil, environment, and all we have. Aid Manwa in (Fontein 2006b: 787) said that at Great Zimbabwe, locals used to get in freely, going to talk to God-*Musikavanhu* through the ancestor-*Vadzimu* and this shows that the ancestral worship and belief is still surviving among the Shona people despite the effects of Christianity and the imperial rules in the colonial era.

What the traditionalists believe is that when one dies, s/he joins the spirit world, the ancestors or the living dead, who are believed to guide and influence the living (Machirori 2012). As I

grew up, I got to understand that these living dead/the ancestors are made so or welcomed into this group through a process called (kudzosa mweya mumusha/magadziro) literary that is to say bringing back the dead into the homestead. It is only those brought back who can possess the living who would then become known as spirit mediums or (*homwe-the pocket which the spirit come to fill/possess in order to do their work).* These living dead through the spirit medium do guide the living, dictate what is right for their families and communities, and in liaison with Zame/Mwari/Musikavanhu the God of heaven, bring either rain or drought depending on how obedient the people are. Aiden Manwa in (Fontein 2006) talks about the continual hunger seasons around Great Zimbabwe after the 2002 Unity Gala[5] done at the site, as a result of the anger of the ancestors, who were angered at how promiscuous the gala attendees were, leaving huge amounts of used condoms in the sacred site (see Matenga 2011: 113). This, however, does not have any influence or bearing on the lives of the Christians who seem not to be influenced by these ancestors, whom some Christian groups refer to as demons. The ancestors however have since become political tools in the hands of the political ruling party in Zimbabwe (the Zanu Pf), as seen in the case of the recent exhumations discussed in this work above.

Conclusion

This background chapter has given a general background to this research, thus a highlight on the study of mortuary heritages both in pre-independence Zimbabwe and the post-independence era. Importantly it gave the context from which I am coming from such that the reader would understand where the research is coming from and going. It also presented the political manipulation of the dead and their memorialization and immortalization being done

[5]Unity Gala is a national gathering/vigil when musicians are called to celebrate the Unity Accord signed in 1987 between Zanla and Zipra political parties that formed the ruling Zanu Pf.

in Zimbabwe. Again, it was also important to note the different belief systems in the contemporary Zimbabwean society, thus mainly between Christians and Traditionalists and the politically inclined spirit mediums who are calling the shots whenever exhumations of the dead are being done in Zimbabwe. Importantly, the Chapter presented the prime context of the need to come up with a policy guiding the archaeological recovery, study, storage, and reburial of the dead in Zimbabwe which hopefully will be done in this research.

CHAPTER 1. Introduction to the Research

This chapter forms the introduction to my research. It presents my research intention, questions, methods, and ethical considerations. It outlines the problem statement for this research, the research aims and objectives, and my research methodology. The chapter is concluded by a highlight of the research ethics, and then what were the expected results and conclusions of this research.

Problem statement of the research

Firstly, in Zimbabwe, there is a great collection of human remains from all archaeological periods which are being curated in the absence of a guiding policy on the conservation of these remains. Secondly, the recently politically initiated and led human remains exhumations at the various sites in Zimbabwe (for example at the Chibondo site and Herbet mine) and the spiritualized reburial of the bodies exhumed at these sites as well as the planned exhumations of the Gukurahundi victims in Matebeleland (Southern Zimbabwe) present another archaeological challenge in Zimbabwe. Thirdly, the government of Zimbabwe is in current negotiations for the repatriation of the remains of the Zimbabwean heroes from the British Museum. In the face of all these developments, the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe [the sole organization mandated by an Act of the Zimbabwean government to preserve the national heritage, see (Chiwaura 2007)] does not have a policy document or best practice guidelines on the treatment of both ancient and recent human remains, mortuary heritages from archaeological researches and exhumations, their analysis for research, reburial or their care in the museum context. Therefore, the researcher has observed that there is a lack of a policy or guidelines on the preservation and conservation of human remains in

Zimbabwean museums, and hence this research endeavors to initiate dialogue in addressing this problem.

The above-mentioned issues present a prime context for this study. This study therefore looked at the treatment and preservation of mortuary heritage in Zimbabwe: specifically investigating aspects of the infrastructure, policies, and practices shaping and being shaped by the desire to preserve and present mortuary heritage ethically. It intended also to propose best practices for archaeological exhumation and reburial of the recently dead (1960-1980 liberation freedom fighters). Lastly, the study sought to come up with policy recommendations on the general treatment of ancient human remains in Zimbabwe, from excavations, their analysis, preservation, and reburial.

Research aims and objectives

i. To establish the various circumstances, legal instruments, and policies that have shaped the preservation and presentation of ancient and recent human remains in Zimbabwe.
ii. To compare and contrast local and international structures, policies, and practices of dealing with death-related remains/materials in order to advise on current and future mortuary heritage management in Zimbabwe.
iii. To assess the recent exhumations in Mutare and Bulawayo provinces in Zimbabwe, looking at the magnitude of the demands of the spiritualists (so-called vernacular exhumers)[6], and

[6]Reference is made to Chipangura (2019) who describes vernacular exhumers as those spirit mediums who claim to have been possessed by the dead liberation fighter who lead them to locating where they lay dead, demanding descend reburial among their people or in their various homesteads.

the politicians. Emphasis shall be on how these demands have shaped/affected the practice of exhumations and mortuary excavations in Zimbabwe.

iv. To investigate the preservation and conservation of human remains as informed by Indigenous knowledge systems in Zimbabwe.

Research Questions

i. How are human remains in the Zimbabwean museums being preserved?
ii. What are the local and international structures, policies, and practices concerned with the preservation of human remains?
iii. Evaluate recent exhumations in Mutare and Bulawayo provinces in Zimbabwe.
iv. How can the preservation of human remains in Zimbabwean Museums be improved?
v. What best practices can be drawn to inform a better chain operator on the recovery, analysis, and storage of human remains in Zimbabwe?
vi. What guidelines for the preservation and conservation of human remains can be put in place in Zimbabwean museums?

Research Methodology

This research was qualitative and not quantitative. It looked for best practices that can be adopted into my Zimbabwean context, most prone to spiritual/ancestral understanding of dealing with the dead and not the radically scientific means of dealing with the dead. It was

based on Zimbabwean museums as a case study. I managed to conduct structured interviews with the Curators of archaeology from the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ), to hear their various viewpoints on the subject matter of the research. With structured interviews, I could ask questions aligned to what each region specifically deals with. One must remember here that the NMMZ has five administrative regions, focusing on different types of archaeological materials as shall be further discussed in chapter three. All this information was expected to result in the production of a policy proposal for the treatment of mortuary heritage in Zimbabwe.

I adopted selective sampling to identify informants for my research. Previously, during my work as an intern and a volunteer at the Great Zimbabwe World Heritage site, and also during my coauthoring of academic paper presentations with the Curator of Liberation Heritage in the Zimbabwe Museum of Human Sciences in Harare, I got to know some of the curators whose testimonies were instrumental in this research. Again, qualitative research questions were used since I wasn't prepared for any quantitative sampling or analyses.

I did literature review on documented excavations done on Zimbabwean burials by both European and African archaeologists within Zimbabwe. I then went on to look at the literature on the curation of human remains elsewhere, especially in Europe and America. I also reviewed some policies and guiding principles on the treatment of human remains as on some museum websites and also on some online repositories. These reviews informed me on the best principles and guidelines which were later used in proposing guidelines best fitted into the Zimbabwean context.

Challenges and threats to this research

The world has been invaded by the deadly novel Coronavirus which erupted in China in the year 2019. Only three months into 2020, countries had to impose travel bans on transcontinental air travel as well as closing borders between neighboring countries. These bans negatively impacted this project since the researcher could not travel back to Zimbabwe for his planned field research. Even if a special travel arrangement was to be made, Zimbabwe had imposed compulsory 14-21 day self-quarantine on anyone traveling into the country, and this would have affected the research in terms of time allocation for fieldwork. In Zimbabwe, most workers were working from home with limited or no internet connection, thus limiting the chances of planning online interviews with potential informants. Another avenue to deal with these challenges was to have a colleague do the interviews on my behalf and send me the audiotapes of the interview. This alternative would also limit the potential amounts of money and time I was supposed to spend in getting to and from the field for research purposes. This however didn't work out as planned as the person ended up having her personal businesses to attend to and dumping our initial agreement. I then had to resort to WhatsApp calling to reach out to my informants.

Scholars and the business community had resorted to using online tools such as Zoom, Skype, and Teams among other online platforms to host online meetings, lectures, etc. The online interaction was done in order to ensure social distancing, thus, limiting close physical interaction with other people. I, therefore, had to undertake online interviews with potential informants for this research. However, the fact that Zimbabwe is a country with generally bad and limited internet connectivity presented yet another threat to the research. I, therefore, had to resort to WhatsApp calls and Zoom meetings to interview informants for this research. Potential informants for this research were the curators and managers in the National Museums

and Monuments of Zimbabwe as well as archaeologist researchers interested on human remains. The NMMZ is the sole organization with the government mandate to preserve the history and heritage of Zimbabwe as enshrined in the NMMZ Act Chapter 25.11 The challenge, therefore, was that being an outside researcher, I had little experience in dealing with the bureaucracy in the NMMZ as an organization.

Research ethical considerations

This research involved (but was not limited to) unethically excavated materials (specifically human remains) especially those excavated in the colonial period. The research also comes in a period where the Zimbabwean government is calling for the repatriation of the skulls of Zimbabwean war heroes' housed in the British Museum despite the fact that Zimbabwe does not have a published/enforced policy on the treatment of both ancient and recent human remains. Thondhlana (2015: 21) mentions that as from 1903 when the Queen Victoria Museum (now the Zimbabwe Museum of Human Sciences) was officially opened, it operated without a general policy on the preservation of its collection up to the year 1945. This lack of policy is further supported by Mubaya (2015) who says that up to now, the museum does not have a policy on the management of human remains. Because of this lack of any policy, Mubaya (2015: 209) questioned the rationale of continuously keeping the human remains in museums and also whether African museums should continue being guided or controlled by western instruments which in many instances, happen to openly violate the African values and norms.

All the above mentioned demonstrates the gravity and sensitivity of this research and why I had to tread with caution especially given that I am an outsider from the perspective of the NNMZ as an organization. Ethical considerations for this research, therefore, included asking

for consent from all the research informants to share their names or just their job titles when discussing the research finds, considering the informants' right to privacy since my research was done using online interviews, referencing carefully all pictures and maps used in this study. As for the research permit from the NMMZ, my research did went along with Dr. Mtetwa's major research project (much thanks to him for incorporating me into his research).

Expected Results and conclusion

This research is the first of its kind in Zimbabwe and provides an original perspective on a critical type of heritage that has rarely attracted the attention of heritage managers and researchers. Successful heritage management structures, policies, and practices associated with ancient human remain in Zimbabwe will, therefore, demand a kind of rapprochement between international western guidelines, national policies as well as indigenous social practices and worldviews concerning the treatment of the dead. Efforts in this regard will enable the researcher to propose a national policy document for better management of the mortuary heritage alongside a reasonable number of publication papers/presentations elucidating the issues covered by this research. Key results include a definition of what constitutes mortuary heritage in Zimbabwe, the best practices, and a policy draft informing the treatment of mortuary heritage.

Conclusively, the results of such a rapprochement of international and national policies in managing mortuary heritage are expected to facilitate the treatment of the dead with dignity in the museums of Zimbabwe. It is also expected to influence how they are displayed for public education and used in academic research. New academic studies are focusing on ancient human remains for purposes of extracting ancient DNA samples, critical in reconstructing the population history and genetic structure of different countries. The significance of such studies

cannot be overemphasized, given their potential in informing biomedical studies, and in facilitating and encouraging the inclusion of African genetic variability in medical and clinical research.

The coming chapter will present what other museums in the European world have done in terms of policy recommendations and best practices on the treatment of the dead. I do not intend however to wholesomely import whatever is being done in Europe, but to take what seemingly are important exemplary case studies and be influenced by them in recommending context-based approaches and solutions to the point in question.

CHAPTER 2. Literature review on the treatment of the dead in other parts of the world

*"The living are responsible for the dead, and the dead are often seen not as being really 'dead' but as transformed, and still powerful, and must be treated with respect." Thomas King cited i*n (Gulliford 1996)

Introduction

In this chapter, I look at what's happening in the Americas and some European museums, not from a learner's point of view, but just to have an appreciation of what's happening on the other side of the world in terms of the treatment of human remains. Mubaya (2015: 217) argued that African museums on African soil must be managed in a manner that respects African values and norms and not the principles dictated by the west, and I do agree with him. However, we must acknowledge that the desire for repatriation, respect for the dead in museum spaces, and the creation of museum guiding principles in the curation of human remains started in the Americas and the European museums and that having an appreciation of how they did it will help/assist African and especially Zimbabwean museums to come up with more meaningful and competitive policies and guidelines.

The genesis of the concern for human remains in the museum spaces

Some commentators have suggested that collecting, keeping, and exhibiting the dead in European countries is a practice that dates back to the cult of relics in the Middle Ages (Jenkins

2010; Mubaya 2015: 209). It's not only for religious purposes that the remains of the dead were kept/curated, but also for scientific studies, both in science laboratories and museum spaces. McNutt (2011: 1) notes that the contestations about the treatment, display, and retention of human remains both in the academic and museum context started in the 1970s in America. He further asserts that this phenomenon later spread to the United Kingdom in the 1990s. In the United States, it was the Native Americans, (also minority groups) who revolted against the 'musealization' of human remains for scientific reasons and their 'future research potential'. Native American groups believed that it was not proper to box and shelve ancient Native American human remains. Jenkins (2012: 455) explains that when the movement involving calling for the repatriation of Native American human remains in museums erupted in the 1980s, scientists and anthropologists opposed it for they regarded human remains to be unique evidence from the past, used for researching evolution, population movements among other research themes. McGowan and LaRoche (1996: 110) observe that many cultures view human remains as pinnacles of sacredness, capable of possessing and imparting great powers. Unfortunately, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) focused on respecting the remains of Native Americans, leaving out African Americans. However, America is currently seeing some form of removal of African Americans from Museums to descendant communities in the name of 'confronting the reality of the past…. the slave trade' as expressed by Harvard President Lawrence S. Bacow cited in (Bolotnikova 2021). However, I argue that retention of the dead to the previously oppressed/slave without any form of compensation from the museum/former colonizer is not a gesture of peacemaking or remorse, but rather just an attempt to clean off the museum and make space for other collection or at least lessening the expenses of preserving the collection, let alone the human remains.

O'Sullivan (2001: 123) is of the view that a session on Archaeological ethics and the treatment of the dead was held at the 1989 World Archaeological Congress in the USA in the state of South Dakoda (WAC) was a turning point in the general treatment of human remains. This session resulted in the Vermillion Accord which adopted what I would call the six founding principles in the respect of human remains and the descendent communities, regardless of race religion, nationality, custom, and tradition, (see the Vermillion Accord http://www.patrimonio-santarem.pt/imagens/3/The_Vermillion_Accord_on_Archaeological_Ethics_and_the_Treatment_of_the_Dead__1989_.pdf, (accessed 20/04/21). Importantly the principles stress the need to respect the wishes of the dead and that of the community which happens to be the custodian of the culture to which the individual would have been an adherent. Although the resolutions of the Vermillion Accord were not legally binding, they brought the debates on the treatment of human remains to an international level/platform. Before the Accord, however, there had been several efforts from different groups across the globe who wanted either repatriation of the dead or respect for graves. One such group is that of the developers in the Navajo reservation, who requested from both tribal leaders and the Bureau of Indian affairs, a set of guidelines to treat graves and human remains they encountered during their development projects (Klesert and Andrews 1988). The 1973 resolutions of the Navajo tribal council (c0-60-73) provides the basic guidelines for the removal/excavation of bodies in the territory of the Navajo Nation. The five key principles recommended by the Navajo tribal guidelines include Identification, Consent, Proposal, Removal/Relocation, and Reporting (Klesert and Andrews 1988). It meant that when a grave is identified, consent to excavate it should be sought from the Navajo people and, a proposal must then be submitted to the tribal council. This having been done, one can then exhume, remove, relocate or study the remains and finally submit a report of the work done and results. Although it is quite old, the Navajo Tribal policy addresses much of the topical issues in the treatment of human remains especially by developers and their

projects. The Navajo reservation is just but one of the many other national efforts to deal with the question of respecting human remains, before the 1986 World Archaeology Congress which became the first international platform to debate this issue.

Another localized code is the Canadian code which is a 'Statement of Principle for Ethical Conduct Pertaining to Aboriginal People of 1996 (SPECPAP). Hanna (2005: 143) argues that this document was too weak compared to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (RCA) which was also developed at the same time. Hanna (2005: 144) points out that the RCA has many clear recommendations on how developers and archaeologists should deal with the communities and their associated gravesites, unlike SPECPAP which gave leeway to archaeologists and museums to define what constitutes 'ethical conduct'. A comparison cited in Hanna (2005) is that the SPECPAP does not define the connection and relationship between the First Nations and their heritage but rather says that archaeologists must recognize aboriginal heritage (Principle 1.3). On the contrary, the RCA mentions that aboriginal people must be considered as owners of the cultural sites (RAC 1996: vol2 648-9).

Jenkins (2012: 59) explains how the archaeologist Peter Ucko organized the first World Archaeology Congress in Southampton in 1986 (WAC), where concern for the human remains of indigenous people became a debated issue. The issue of human remains was debated by indigenous activists, American and Australian anthropologists. Stark (1996: 118) presents the complexity of the discussion, asking the vital question that who owns the past and has the authority to narrate it. Giesen (2013a) mentions also that the World Archaeological Congress adopted and built upon the Vermillion Accord which was the first to present respect for human remains as a concern. In the same year, ICOM published its first code of ethics which responded to the debate about the role of museums (Mubaya 2015: 208). Mubaya (2015: 208) says that the code looked mainly at the sustainability and morality of collecting, displaying, and keeping

human remains as part of the museum collection. Gareth Jones and Harris (1998: 254) observe that the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), took the position that human remains do not belong to an individual, an institution, or a government organization, and also that is the identified descendant group that has a right to determine what happens to the human remains. They also mention that American laws allow Native Americans to repatriate human remains from the federal and Indian land, although not forbidding archaeologists to continue excavating the Native American graves especially when consent is given by descendant communities. Gulliford (1996: 121) on the other hand, takes the view that the NAGPRA had the 1980 American protest over commercial grave looting as its background. The NAGPRA (despite being completed in November 1995), required American institutions to inventory the human remains in their repositories and spaces and notify the descendant communities about the remains and repatriate them by May 1996.

This idea further strengthened by the United Nations Declaration of 2007 (UND) which was on the Rights of the Indigenous people was to protect their rights and things that are of interest to them (The Swedish Board 2020). Apart from this, the declaration recognized the need to recognize, respect, and promote the inherent right of the indigenous people which they drive from their political, economic, and social structures and cultures, spiritual traditions, histories, and philosophies, especially their right to their land, territories, and resources (Australian Human Rights Commission 2007). Articles 11 and 12 of the Declaration give them rights to practice their traditions and customs including protecting the manifestations of their cultures e.g. archaeological and historical sites and artefacts. Wesche and Eeterts (2013: 37) pointed out that Article 12 mentions that indigenous people have the right to repatriate members of their community. Human remains in the museum spaces therefore must be inventoried and documented. Giesen (2013a: 20) also talks about the 2007 UN Declaration and also mentions

that over the past 40 years, there are now six International instruments created to address the treatment of human remains. The six instruments are the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import; Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property of 1970; the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and National Heritage in 1972; the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT); the World Archaeological Congress of 1989 which resulted in the Vermillion Accord on Human Remains and the Tamaki Makau-rau Accord on the Display of Human Remains and Sacred Objects adopted in 2006; the Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Object; the United Nation Declaration on the Right of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) of (2007); and the ICOM code which says if acquired and stored securely, human remains must be handled with respect.

Ethical issues on the treatment of the dead in archaeology

The Swedish Board (2020) explains that provenance is about how things are collected by the museum and the process in which these things become museum collections. The question then is were the remains collected nationally/internationally, legally/illegally, and were they collected with or without the consent of the descendant community (The Swedish Board 2020). Ubelaker and Grant (1989: 282) explain that the museum must maintain all appropriate records about the human remains, if they were donated, bequeathed, or bought by the museum. They said one would need these documents to evaluate the provenance of the remains before repatriating or disposing of the collections. Provenance, therefore, I argue, is all about documenting where exactly the item came from, how (conditions of the transfer/power balances between collector/buyer and the source community/seller), and under what condition

was an item obtained or transferred to the museum. This relates to the acquisition process in which museums are obliged to do due diligence when acquiring new collections. Museums must therefore seek to know how the donor or the seller of an item obtained it in the first place. A specially designed acquisition form can therefore assist Zimbabwean museums in knowing who is bringing what materials, from where and how they would have been obtained.

Antoine (2014) mentions that the repositories of the British Museum contain more than 6 000 human remains. Sayer (2010) cited in Antoiner (2014) argues that both researchers and museum staff should not objectify human remains as scientific objects/data. In 2008, the England Ministry of Justice required that all newly excavated human remains and all other archaeological remains must be recorded, studied, and be reburied after two years. England has two guidelines namely: 'Guidelines for the Care of Human Remains in the Museum' of 2005 and the 'Guidelines for Best Practices for Human Remains from Christian Burial Grounds in England from 2005 (see Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2005; Antoine 2014; Advisory Panel on the Archaeology of Burials in England 2017). The British Museum policy on human remains emphasizes that provenance should be provided and that the Board of Trustees will assess requests for the transfer of human remains from the museum. Most importantly, it provides a step-by-step procedure for the care of the human remains (Fletcher, Antoine, and Hill 2014). Jenkins (2012: 456) talks about the Human tissue Act of 2004 and comments that it brought force/power as an amendment of the British Museum Act as it allows deaccessioning, and this significantly resulted in the transfer of human remains out of the British Museum. Taking from all this, I intend to propose a step-by-step procedure for caring for the dead, from the excavation in the research field, the curation and research of these materials in museum spaces, and finally, the reburial or destruction of the human remains in Zimbabwe.

In contrast with the British Museum policy, the London Museum Policy of 2011, has a solid position that human remains aid to science, they are not to be loaned and are not to be disposed of, since the museum considers them to be of high research value (Museum of London Human Remains Working Group 2011). Access and research on these materials is done under strict monitoring of the senior curators, and it also says all unstratified or scientifically insignificant bones must be reburied (Museum of London 2018). The Museum of London (2018) further mentions that the policy provides that acquisition and disposal must be openly done transparently, it gives a set of standards for documentation, classification, and arrangement of the museum collections. In the face of a bequest, purchase, and gifts, the museum must carry out due diligence. Although the policy provides for disposal, it stressed that disposals must only be done after the governing board has taken full consideration of the reasons for the disposal. Finally, it also states that any money acquired /received by the museum in the work of disposal must be used for the benefit of the museums' collection. On this, I argue that the NMMZ must employ someone with an understanding of how to curate and manage human remains to be responsible for this collection in its museums. Again this individual must also guide researchers as they use the collection for research and also ensure that the remains are curated and researched with respect.

Concerning repatriation, Jenkins (2010: 1-2) talks about how Neil Chalmers director of the National History Museum in London opposed the idea of repatriation and refused requests from overseas to repatriate human bodies in 2000. However, this standpoint changed in the year 2006 when the museum transferred the skeleton of seventeen Tasmanian Aborigines from its collection to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (Jenkins 2011).

Policies from some European Museum websites

Unlike what I had initially thought, it was not as easy to get as many museum policies on the treatment of human remains on museum websites that I had planned/envisaged to analyse. Although different scholars tend to mention or critique the museum policies, most of the museums especially in Central Europe, do not have policies relating to human remains on their websites. As a result, I decided to look at this issue thematically, and not the museum to museum-based approach usually used by other publishing scholars and curators who talks about this topic. Again, it was going to be tricky justifying why I would choose one museum over the other. Some European museums have a strong colonial history and still have unjust policies from which I felt I had nothing to adopt while others have some reasonable content.

Acquisition has been defined by the Museum of London (2018) as a process of obtaining responsibility for an item, associated with due diligence, the right management, and transfer of title, and this can be done for items to go in the core exhibition or support exhibition. The Swedish Board (2020) says that the acquisition, storage, handling, research, and display of human remains must be done in compliance with professional standards and with the interest and beliefs of members of the community or ethnic or religious group from which the remains objects originated, insofar as this is known. This process entails that the museum must be aware of where either the skeletal remains or the sacred/grave associate items are coming from, the conditions in which they were taken (was there power and financial balance between collector(s) and source community), or the reasons for the excavation, exhumation or rescue operation. All this information must be documented as well as the conservation/preservation status of the material, that is to say, are the skeletal remains/bones wet, dry, or fragmented and this information reflects the conditions in which the bones must be curated in. The Teruvian museum on its website mentions that all acquisitions must comply with the stipulations of both ICOM, UNESCO, legal and ethical requirements. However, there are other museums which

does not respect/stress this principle of acquisition but rather the desire to know about the provenance of the materials as reflected in the British Museum act, (see Antoine 2014).

As highlighted above, provenance is the documentation of the information about where and how the item was moved out of the source community to the space of either the donor/seller or to the museum itself. Museum of London (2011) defines provenance as the origin and/or subsequent history of the object collection that is thoroughly documented and authenticated to the highest standards. Masiteng (2019) mentioned that the policy at the Transvaal museum says that the provenance and history of the item/object are often written in order, that's starting with the first/earliest known owner to the last, and this information is entered into the accessioning forms, the cataloguing cards, the registry, and other relevant museum documents. Masiteng (2019: 48) quotes (Giease 2013:17) who argues that materials/human remains without provenance do not have scientific/research value and hence are not useful in the museum space. This indeed is the same stand of the London museum as the Museum of London Human Remains Working Group (2011) emphasizes that only skeletons with good provenance will be used in the museum. The guidelines of this museum entail it to start by asking consent from the descendant communities and bona fide members of a community before displaying the human remains in its museum. Museum of London (2018) has a guideline that provides for the destruction of objects and skeletons which does not have clear provenance. This lack of provenance among other things is a result of poor documentation.

Documentation is a process in which all the information about the item is documented/recorded, that is, all the information is entered into accessioning documents, the catalogues, and the labels of the shelves at which these materials are to be stored. Ayau et al. (2018) emphasized that the documentation of the human remains should include information like the location of the materials within the collection, physical characteristics like the

dimensions, weight, photographic documentation, and conditional reports. Again, they believe that access to both the documentation and the human remain collections must always be regulated, despite that during a repatriation case, the museum might be asked to hand over the documentation to a descendant community. On a different setup, the London Museum has all its human remains materials recorded on the Welcome Osteological Research Database. This database provides information on the archaeological context from which the material was recovered from, skeletal completeness, demographics, measurements, and pathology, The Museum of London Human Remains Working Group (2011). They separately record storage location and other storage-related issues on a separate EXCEL sheet, while materials in the 'non-archaeological museum collection' are recorded on Mimsy XG. Others like Kuzminsky and Gardiner (2012) are recently calling for three-dimensional scanning (3D scanning) which is a more technological way of documenting human remains in 3-dimensional form, which allows more radical and physical research without breaking and destroying the very human skeletal remains.

Evin et al (2020: 3) argued that if all the petrous bones used for DNA studies over the last years had been scanned before destruction, there would have been an amazing collection significant for bioarchaeology. Their position is that the X-ray CT and the µCT provide high-`resolution models at reasonable costs per specimen (Evin et. al 2020: 2). The ideas of scanning and keeping digital models of both animal and human skeletal remains are mainly by zoo archaeologists, who argue that in the face of destruction from the research itself, and other causes like fire or war, electronic databases of the actual collection, serves as a backup. Haukaas (2014) in her MA thesis demonstrated the sufficiency of low-cost 3D modeling in replicating archaeological objects, offering low cost and easy access and use of the objects. She argued that 3D modeling has a promising future in archaeological documentation, conservation, and engagement with non-specialist audiences. This noble idea is however hardly

compatible with many African museums especially in Zimbabwe mainly because of the lack of financial and human expect resources to deal with 3D modelling of the remains.

One of the most time-consuming processes in the curation of human remains is the cleaning process. Museum of London Human Remains Working Group (2011) says that cleaning human remains requires a lot of time, resources, and skilled human labour, and also that no cleaning must be done without being sanctioned by the senior curator, because the most fragile bones should not be water-cleaned, but rather they should only be cleaned with a dry brush. The storage area should also be regularly cleaned, pest control, and if need be climate control, and both researchers and curators must not take food or drink into the storage area (Museum of London Human Remains Working Group 2011). Giesen (2013b) said that human remains should be boxed in a conservation-grade cardboard box. Antoine (2014) emphasized that human remains aid scientific research about human history and also that displaying them enables people to get a clear picture of the past. He however said that research on human remains must be done by an expert person, or with the guidance of an expert curator.

Vecco and Piazzai (2015: 1) defined deaccessioning as "as practice entailing a physical relocation of an item with the consequence of making the item less accessible to its previous audience. They trace the historical development of this process (deaccessioning) and also give the risks of deaccessioning. They mentioned that it can be done to resolve a dispute, to repatriate items, or simply to sell some items to have the resources to cater for the museum collection (Vecco and Piazzai 2015). Mairesse (2016) thinks that the term deaccessioning has two psychological meanings to a museum collection, that is its degradation, from being a museum item to being brought back to everyday life, or secondly, an alienation which presents delisting and removal of an item from the museum inventory. In the words of Vecco and Piazzai (2015: 1) deaccession has traditionally been considered a violation of the museum's

commitment to preservation and display. Miller (2018) believes that museums must have a policy on deaccessioning, stipulating a step-by-step procedure in writing, and must be periodically reviewed since it would be a living document. However, Bonney, Bekvalac, and Phillips (2019) and Gilmore, Aranui, and Halcrow (2019) agreed that some museums still have radical policies like the British Museum Act of 1963, Section 5 which prohibits the disposal of any object unless it was 'unfit to be retained' or could be disposed without any form of detriment to the museum and to research and finally when it is useless the purposes of a museum due to damage, physical deterioration, or infestation by pests. For the British Museum, this standpoint however changed with the coming into place of the Human Tissue Act of 2006.

Conclusion

Not all the above-stated principles apply to the Zimbabwean context, however, during this work of developing a policy in Zimbabwe, due diligence must be observed to concentrate on those which apply to the Zimbabwean context. As noted above, Zimbabweans believe in the sacredness of the ancestors and generally calls for respect of the dead. Heritage specialists like Mubaya (2015) on the other hand, also calls for the reburial of those human remains in the museums. However, there is a need to strike a balance on this issue since most of the remains date as far back in time as the Stone Age and hence descendant communities cannot be traced, therefore it will not be plausible to endeavour to rebury them.

CHAPTER 3. Treatment of the dead in Zimbabwe

"One question that keeps on lingering in people's minds is: should Zimbabwe and other African countries be guided and controlled by International legal instruments that openly violate cultural values and norms? It is important to note that European values originate outside" (Mubaya 2015: 209).

National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe: An introduction

The National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ) is the institution mandated by an Act of Parliament to care for the national heritage in the trust of the citizens of Zimbabwe (see NMMZ Act 1972, Chiwaura 2005)). For administrative reasons, the NMMZ is divided into five regions; namely, the Northern Region, which is based in Harare, the Central Region based in Gweru, the Eastern Region based in Mutare, the Western Region based in Bulawayo, and finally the Southern Region based in Masvingo (see figure 2). Each region is under the leadership of a Regional Director and has its research team of curators from different heritage fields like Rock Art, the Stone Age among others. During this research, I found out that these regions do house or deal with mortuary heritage from different periods and contexts in Zimbabwe. This realization influenced the interview questions that I asked my selected research targets in all these regions. The research questions then were tailored to understand how they are dealing with the specific groups of the mortuary heritage they have in their different regions.

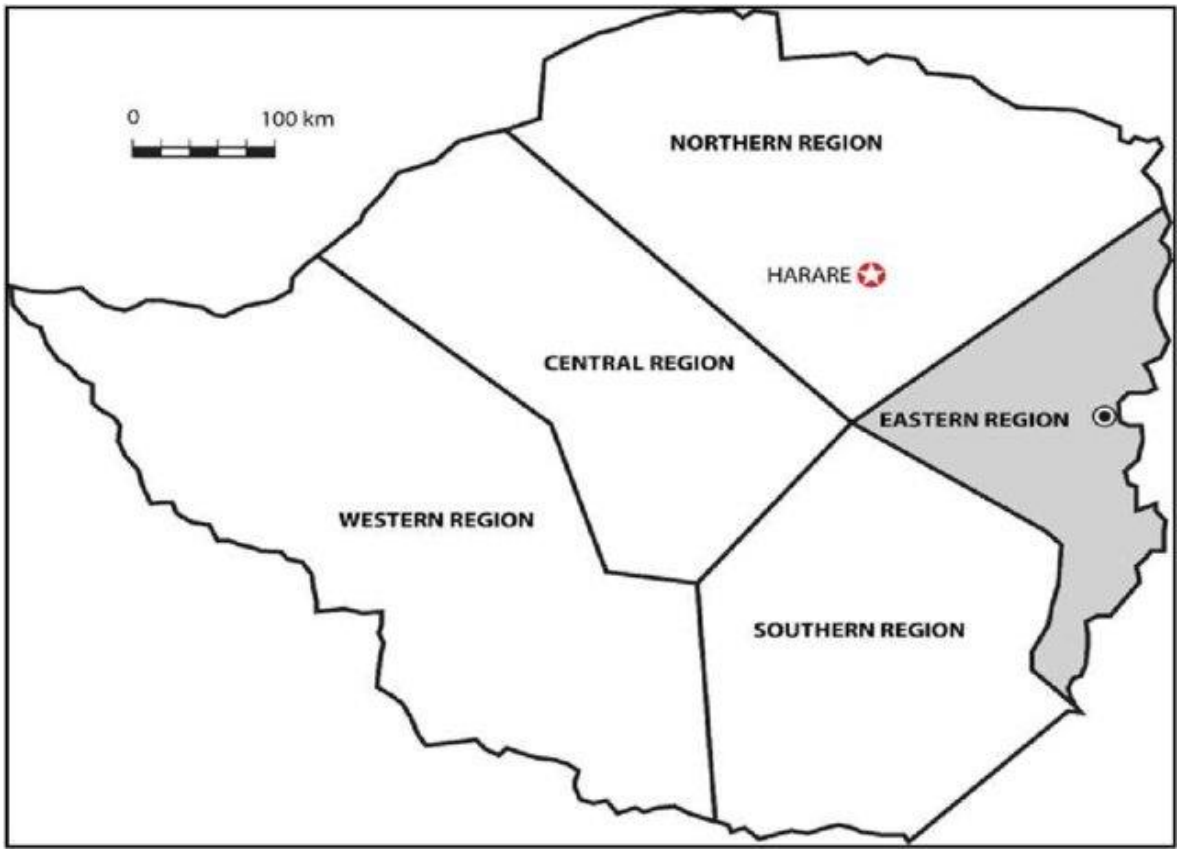

Figure 2. Map of Zimbabwe showing the five administrative Regions of the NMMZ. This map was adopted from Thondlana and Chiwaura(2017). Here the Northern region is stared, and that is where the Zimbabwe Museum of Human Science (ZMHS) is located. The Eastern Region is all shaded because the exhumations discussed in this research are from different places in this particular region, which is based in the city of Mutare.

I managed to interview at least one archaeologist/curator per region (the five museum regions of Zimbabwe). I managed to interview the Chief Curator of the NMMZ, the Director of the ZMHS as well as the curator of archaeology in the Northern region, a Curator of archaeology in the Southern Region, and a former assistant curator from the Eastern Region (now working as Curator of archaeology in the Western region, so he answered for both regions). Most of these interviews were done through WhatsApp voice calls and Zoom meetings that were recorded and later transcribed for analysis. Again, I also interviewed two scholars and researchers in Europe to create a scholarly comparison between the African and European views on my research. Here, I present the results of the interviews as summaries of what the

interviewed scholars and practitioners said and I also provide my comments/interpretations of what was said.

Local perspectives on the Curation of human remains:

Policy on human remains in Zimbabwean museums

The main target of my interviews or rather the first and main objective of this research was to figure out if there was a policy or recommendations, or any guiding principle on the preservation and management of human remains in the NMMZ's custody. The Director of the ZMHS said that the NMMZ does not have a policy specifically on human remains and grave goods, (Director of the ZMHS hereafter referred to as Interview 21/01/21). The grave goods and human remains are rather managed using the general collections policy which is used to manage the rest of the collections in the museum repositories. This was quite surprising given that the NMMZ act is silent, especially on the curation and management of human remains and grave goods. Despite the absence of such a specific policy on the treatment of the dead, the NMMZ respects rituals, the rites of passage, and rites of a burial with reference to traditional communities including burial ceremonies and any other traditional ways of remembering and respecting burials of the dead (Interview 21/01/21).

Both the Director and the Chief Curator agreed in saying that if anyone wants to research on these remains, he/she must apply/ask for a research permit (Interview 21/01/21 and the Chief Curator of NMMZ in an interview, hereafter referred to as Interview 27/01/21). In the application letter, one must articulate how the human remains will be used for research, especially showing a commitment to respect the remains, working with them without destroying them. If carrying out an extractive research, one must also indicate how s/he will ensure less loss to the collection and also avoid destroying the human remains (Interview

21/01/21). Again, the museum staff would be given as research assistants to that researcher, and the researchers should leave or donate research equipment to benefit the museum among other things (Interview 27/01/21). As an illustration of this point, the curator of archaeology in the Northern Region mentioned that some of the boxes and bags they use in the ongoing documentation and bagging process were donated by a post-doctorate researcher from Uppsala University who was interested in researching the actual human remains in the museum (The curator of archaeology will hereafter be referred to as Interview 21/04/21).

The curator of archaeology at the ZMHS however emphasized the lack of a policy or guidelines on the curation of human remains (Interview 21/04/21). She questioned what it meant to 'treat human remains with respect', arguing that the notion of respect depends on the person/curator/researchers' personality and upbringing, thus one person might argue that bagging human remains in plastic bags is respectful given financial constraints, while another might deem that disrespectful. On this, she argued there is no one size fit all approach to the treatment of human remains, hence the urgent need for a clear policy and guidelines focusing on the management of human remains in the museum (Interview 21/04/21).

The Chief Curator, Director of ZMHS, and all the other curators I interviewed for this research all emphasized that the NMMZ is currently crafting/drafting a policy on respectful exhumations and reburial of the liberation war victims (those who died in the 1960-1980 war for Zimbabwean independence mentioned in the background chapter), and also the post-1980 political victims, (Chief Curator of NMMZ in an interview, hereafter referred to as Interview 27/01/21). This policy is intended to specifically address the exhumation and reburial of the recent dead stretching from the 1960s when the Chimurenga liberation struggle started and also the recent political victims. The Chief Curator also said that efforts are being made to include in this policy, the issues about the conservation of the human remains currently in the ZMHS

(Interview 27/01/21). However, I argue that exhumations for reburial should be the key principle or approach towards both the war victims and the political victims of the post-1980 violence because there are direct claimants to these bodies, and also displaying or putting these remains on display will raise emotions among many, for example, survivors of these atrocities and those orphaned or widowed by these acts of violence. Exhumations of the liberation fighters would also require more scientific scrutiny and publicity since it has great potential in history-making and nation-building through the immortalization of these veterans.

Preservation and conservation of Human Remains in the NMMZ Museums

To answer my first and second research questions, I had to understand the nature and the current systems on the preservation and conservation of human remains in the NMMZ museums. In this regard, the Northern Region whose headquarters lies in the city of Harare at the ZHMS and is the central hub of almost all human remains in Zimbabwean museums, houses human remains from as far back as the Stone Age (+/- 50 000years ago) up the historical period. The Director of the ZHMS also said that they have human remains from as far back as 200AD (Interview 21/01/21). These collections, however, largely contain human remains retrieved during the unprofessional excavations and rescue missions carried out by European archaeologists during the Zimbabwean colonial era.

The Southern Region has at least one complete human skeleton and a separate skull both excavated at the Nemanwa Hill (excavations done in 1992 by Chipunza K. and team). No scientific research has as yet been carried out on these remains from the Southern Region and hence hasn't been dated or attributed to any cultural group, (The Curator of Archaeology in Southern Region, hereafter referred to as Interview 03/01/21).

In the Eastern region, there are few human remains housed in the Mutare museum, they were excavated during colonial times and many of these remains have no provenance or proper

documentation, serve one complete skeleton excavated at the Ziwa site (assistant curator in the Western Region, hereafter referred to as Interview 04/12/20). Looking at all this, it became clear that almost all archaeological periods in Zimbabwe are represented by the Human remains in the Zimbabwean museums.

Excavations, impact assessments, and exhumations of human remains in Zimbabwe

Addressing the third and fourth objectives of this research and at the same time my third and fourth research questions, I had to look at the treatment of the dead during impact assessments and exhumations in Zimbabwe. At one point, archaeologists in the Southern region encountered human remains on Sviba Mountain, causing an outcry from local communities in the neighborhood (see also Mawere et al. 2012). This was during an archaeological impact assessment program (carried out by archaeologists from the NMMZ and the Great Zimbabwe University archaeology department) which sought to report the damage done by the Econet Wireless company which had erected the Sviba Econet booster without engaging the local leaders as well as disturbing some of the burials in the mountain (see Mawere et al 2012). Locals do claim that this company had disturbed the dead/ancestors (in the Sviba mountain) in their bid to accomplish the project of installing the network booster in this sacred hill (traffic of the heavy machines to and from the top of the hill and the vegetation clearance done in preparation of this project). One can therefore say that there is a need for dialogue between NMMZ heritage managers, communities, and the researchers to be initiated and maintained regarding the treatment of human remains in Zimbabwe.

The recent exhumations done in Mutare province which is the Eastern Regions were largely exhumations for reburial. However, the exhumation processes were marked by disagreements/conflicts between archaeologists and the spirit mediums who were engaged in the process (Interview 04/12/20). Various social and political groups had varying

interpretations of the process and intention of the exhumations especially being done in the face of the 2013 Presidential elections. The assistant curator in the Western Region also said that not a single human remain exhumed from the Butcher and Hebert mine sites were exhumed for storage in the museum,[7] (Interview 04/12/20). Rather, these bodies were all reburied respectfully either with the inclusion of their families who had come to collect them or by the government in a cemetery created for these very bodies. He mentioned again that the exhumation processes in Mutare were initiated by the Fallen Heroes Trust (FHT) (above referred to as vernacular exhumers following Chipangura 2015). He pointed out that the NMMZ later joined in, representing both the government and the scientists -archaeologists- (Interview 04/12/20). This account that the NMMZ joined in the exhumations at a later stage conflicted with that of the NMMZ Chief Curator who said that the NMMZ always leads these exhumations. Just like the Chief Curator, the ZMHS Director said that the NMMZ is always in the lead whenever there is a need for exhumation exercises, of course, doing their work in consultation with stakeholders like local communities (this however conflicted with the assistant curator who mentioned that the NMMZ joined the Mutare exhumations later as compared to the FHT as mentioned above). The Director also mentioned that the NMMZ in collaboration with the Ministry of Home Affairs has crafted an exhumation and reburial policy which is expected to guide the exhumation, reburial, and treatment of the remains of the liberation war heroes, both those from around Zimbabwe and those burials scattered in the countries surrounding Zimbabwe (Interview 21/01/21). The dire need for such a policy has been mainly marked by the recently contested exhumations that have taken place across the nation. It can therefore be argued that in the presence of a policy guiding these exercises, all

[7]Butcher and Hebert sites mentioned here are among the site where the recently highly politicized human reman exhumation for reburial happened as captured in all the Chipangura readings here cited.

stakeholders must be brought to the table first, to discuss the implementation strategy for such an exercise.

However, because of how politically charged the issue (the exhumations) was and still is, the FHT wanted control of the process, trying to increase the estimation of the number of bodies by counting disarticulated body parts as a complete person (Interview 04/12/20). The assistant curator mentioned (just as captured in Chipangura and Silika 2019 and Chipangura 2020), that there were issues around tools to use (use of picks and shovels for the process to be faster as compared to hand trowels and dustpans), the color of the clothing of the excavating archaeologists (FHT did not want the excavators to wear red and black clothing) (Interview 04/12/20). Of course, the red and black colors are not allowed wherever there is a traditional celebration, ceremony, or meeting, and following such norms, the spirit mediums in the FHT radically wanted everyone to observe these other traditional protocols during the exhumations. However, during these exhumations, the NMMZ archaeologists managed to ensure that they barricaded or protected the site from people and animals, documented the trenches, took pictures of finds in situ as well as numbering/registering the finds based on their alignment (how they were retrieved from the archaeological record). He also noted that when these spirit mediums pointed to a place claiming there were remains, they excavated and retrieved the remains in a pattern/manner which the spirit medium would have described (this implies that archaeologists should not turn a blind eye on the local traditional spiritual belief systems associated with the exhumation or general treatment of human remains). Because of this, the assistant curator argued that scientists cannot shy away from the fact that Africans (or rather Zimbabweans) have functional spiritual aspects of life as a people (Interview 04/12/20). However, he also pointed out and I do agree with him that in future exhumation projects, DNA tests are needed/required to be carried out to authenticate or ascertain the claims of the spirit medium in identifying relatives of the victims/the dead.

The Western region of the NMMZ, on the other hand, is planning to undertake exhumations of the Gukurahundi massacre mass graves, a sensitive and heated topic in the politics of Zimbabwe.[8] The interest here is on how these events inform our thinking about the need for a national policy on the treatment of mortuary heritages within the museum space. The Chief Curator said that the NMMZ is readying itself for the Gukurahundi exhumations, and the procedure includes consulting Chiefs and other stakeholders (Interview 27/01/21). He lamented that despite their intervention being only academic, just like the Mutare exhumations, they might be politically implicated.

The Chief Curator mentioned that the NMMZ Act recommends that if any ordinary person encounters or comes across a burial, whether, during development-led diggings or any other process, they should alert or apply to the NMMZ to send its curators to professionally excavate/exhume those remains (Interview 27/01/21). He also said that given the shortage of storage spaces in all NMMZ museum buildings, the NMMZ nowadays exhumes to rebury. He cited examples of the exhumations for reburial which the NMMZ carried out in the face of the construction of the Tokwe-Mukosi dam when the communities needed to relocate themselves and the graves of their dead as well. The assistant curator in the Western Region explained that engaging local communities and/or asking them to offer prayers or ceremonies before and after the excavations, as well as wrapping the exhumed bodies and skeletons using cloth whose colors are prescribed by the locals and their Chiefs is generally the most honorable way to respect the dead (Interview 03/01/21). During the exhumation for reburial done in the Eastern Region, the local elders and traditional leaders were consulted, and traditional customs were

[8]Gukurahundi is the post-independence massacre instigated by the ruling Zanu pf party as they sought to wipe out te Ndebeles rebels who were thought to be dissidents or sell-outs or ‘chuff’- the literal translation of the word ‘hundi’

respected (Interview 27/01/21). Commenting on this issue of Eastern Region exhumations, the Chief Curator had this to say;

> 'The information we got, for example, at Chibondo was actually pure academic information that was amazing, and unfortunately, this information did not make as much publicity as the political information or the political, eee, eee, the end result of what was happening on television and everywhere. The political mileage was more than the actual scientific information which we would have wished the society would have gotten during the process. And we got a lot of information which surprised, eee, I think even those people who were participating in the liberation struggle. We got absolute dates from the exhumations, we got newspaper articles from the pockets of the exhumed bodies, we got the types of ammunition, types of the pathology of the people who died and how they died, and poisons, you know, a lot of information, it was a large bank of information, very interesting research and the stratigraphy of it, was actually amazing.' Chief Curator in an interview on the 27 January 2021.

This scientific information was published through a public exhibition shown only in Harare at the National Heroes acre. He also mentioned that it was better to have an exhibition rather than publishing a journal article of which many would not be able to buy the journal. He mentioned that it could have been good to publish articles on Facebook where many usually spend time on to ensure that they get access to the information on their heritage and late alone mortuary heritage (Interview 27/01/21). However, in my online research, the NMMZ Facebook account is rarely updated, with probably a single or two posts a month just as exhibited by the Facebook screenshot which I took on the 12th of February 2021 below.

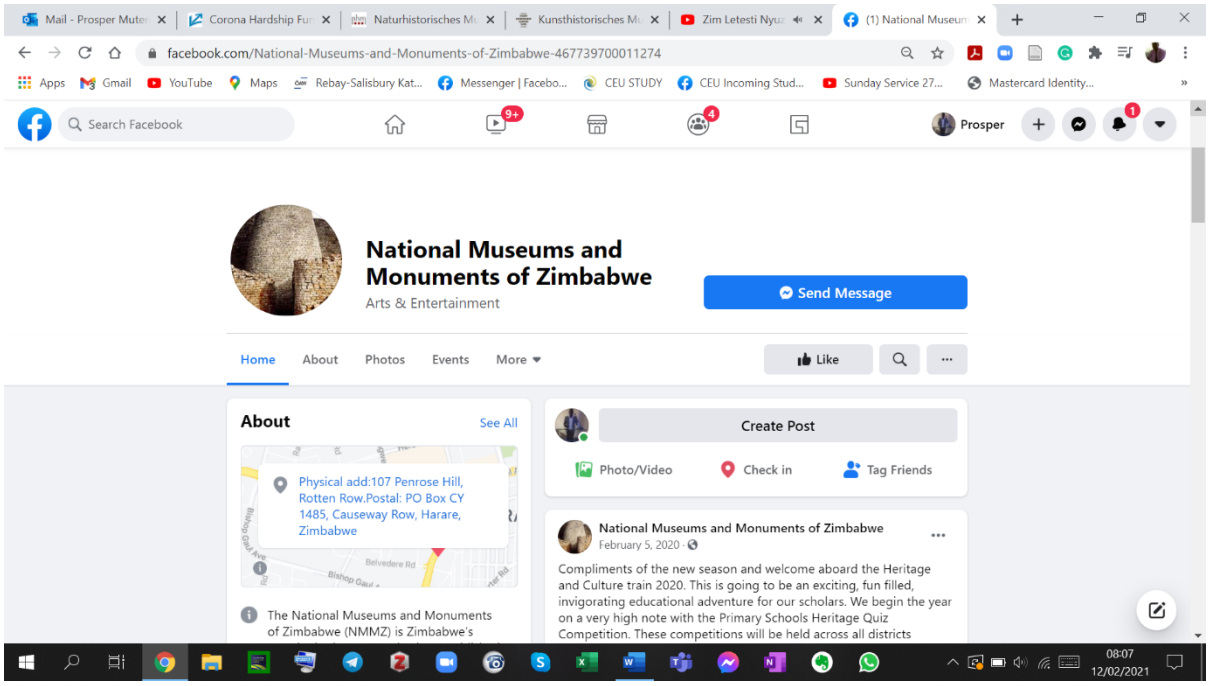

Figure 3. A screenshot of the NMMZ Facebook account taken on the 12th February 2021on general updates, not even to talk about the updates on Human Remains.

Lastly, the Chief Curator expressed his invitation to scholars to work together with the NMMZ, especially as they are preparing the exhumation and reburial Act as well as preparing to repatriate remains from the first Chimurenga struggle which are housed in the British Museum, (Interview 27/01/21). Many questions are still unanswered, especially with regards to what exactly to do with these remains when they return, who are the key stakeholders, and how best to engage all of them.

Storage of human remains in the NMMZ museums

Concerning my fourth and fifth research questions, I had to give a critical look into the storage facilities of the museums under the NMMZ. Unlike the Eastern region that once had a complete human skeleton on display (for public viewing), the Southern and Northern Regions have all

their human remains in the storage facilities/storerooms only (Interview 04/12/20 and Interview 03/01/20). Human remains in Southern Region are preserved in a wooden casing which is stored in the same storeroom with all other archaeological remains that are usually packed in brown manilla envelopes and boxes at the conservation center (Interview 03/01/20). Actually, at the conservation center, there is a single human skeleton recovered from the Nemanwa hill, as well as a separate skull, and some grave goods from Mozambique, associated with the Chimoyo bombings of 1977. The grave goods from Chimoyo in Mozambique, which came from the Chimurenga Liberation war genocide ground/base (at Chimoio) includes cups and other daily objects collected from the site where thousands of training Zimbabwean freedom fighters were all bombed in a day, that is in November of 1977. These grave goods from Chimoyo were initially supposed to be in the Harare museum or the National Heroes Acre site museum, but because of storage space issues, these materials were however moved to the Great Zimbabwe conservation center for storage (Interview 03/01.21).

The human remains in the Northern Region are also stored in the same facilities as other archaeological remains for the region and are also facing problems like shortages of storage places, unregulated atmospheric conditions, and poor packaging (Interview 27/01/21). Unfortunately, some of the remains in the Northern Region are in plastic bags, and some are heaped upon each other (Interview 21/04/21). In the Eastern Region, on the other hand, one complete human skeleton excavated from the Ziwa site had been placed on exhibition for public viewing since 1964 and was only removed recently in 2015 when the Beit Gallery was revamped (Interview 04/12/20). This skeleton is now in the common storeroom just like other archaeological finds from the region, a structure covered with an Asbestos roof without an intervening ceiling. There were plans, however, to put a ceiling in the storeroom of the museum in Mutare since an asbestos roof without a ceiling is not good for conservation purposes, or for the health of both researchers and the curatorial staff who enters or works in such an area

(Interview 04/12/20). Again, just like in all other regions, the Eastern Region curatorial staff checks the burial materials every week, (basically just like all the materials in the storeroom) and also regularly fumigates the storeroom for insects and other living organisms which cause deterioration. All this meant that although there are poor facilities for the conservation of the remains, yet, the NMMZ has put in place means of intervening and responding to the deterioration agents.

Figure 4. A picture showing human bones bagged in plastic bags at the ZHSM. Cattecy of Nyararai Mundopa NMMZ Curator of archaeology at the ZMHS. 2019/11/12

Figure 5. The researcher himself identifying human bones at Visegrad Museum in Hungary during an Internship training period. One can see the type of manila envelopes here recommended for use in bagging human bones. Captured by Istvan 'Koko', the head archaeologist at Visegrad Museum. (June-August 2020)

Interview with Dr. Mtetwa, Uppsala based Zimbabwean archaeologist

To hear the side of researchers, I contacted Dr. Mtetwa (he is a post-grad archaeologist and researcher based at the Uppsala University, he allowed me to mention his name), who helped

me by shedding light on how current researchers interested in human remains feel about the treatment of human remains in Zimbabwe. In my interview with him, we focused on his experience during his exploratory research in the communities around the Great Zimbabwe site and then in the Human Science Museum. He said that by the time he mentioned intentions to study human remains at the Human Science museum, the museum custodians seemed not welcoming for there was a lot of work to be done since the remains were not properly conserved. To help the situation, he assisted with bagging materials (boxes and manila envelopes) and also assisted in drafting working guidelines on what must be done to properly conserve the remains. Regarding documentation, he assisted by designing an electronic database for recording human remains in the Zimbabwe Human Science Museum which the curators are now updating. He observed that because of shortages of storage space, the NMMZ is no longer taking in human remains, but rather advocates for exhumation for reburials. He mentioned that protocols on research, accessioning, cleaning, conservation, preservation, and interpretation are being developed and that contributions from scholars who have specialized in such studies would be welcomed. However, he mentioned that the basic protocols that must be observed when working with human remains are that:

1. One must put on protective gloves to avoid contaminating the remains
2. When bagging human remains, one must remember that human bones have different strength and resistance capacities, hence for example long bones must be bagged in their separate bag and must be the first to be placed in the box (the base of the box), followed by a bag with semi-fragile bones, the vertebra, rib-bones, and others, and then lastly the bag with the most fragile bones, the Skull, mandible, and teeth bones (which in most cases will be attached to the mandible).
3. One should remember not to mix in the same bag, human bones and such finds as iron, bronze, tin and glass beads or bangles or any other different type of finds which might end up being an agent of deterioration of human remains

Lastly, he advised that when researchers are working in the museum laboratory with the human remains, there must always be an employee of the NMMZ in attendance. This he said, will enforce the researcher to keep and adhere to the protocols of safeguarding and respecting the

human remains. One can therefore conclude that my interview with Dr. Mtetwa helped answering the fifth research question.

International perspective on the preservation of human remains: Interviews with scholars and curators in Europe

I conducted a purposeful research sampling to identify two European female curators/scholars, whose role and research contributions or interests would complement the efforts of my research (90% of my informants in Zimbabwe were male informants hence the need to have female informants and at the same time wanting to have a European perspective). I interviewed Chinara Knutson who works for the Jamtli Foundation in Östersund and is based in the Jamtland region in the north of Sweden. It is from her work and understanding of the museum institution's interaction with descendant communities that I decided to learn about the interaction between museum institutions and the descendant communities. The second interviewee was Professor Katharina Rebay- Salisbury who is based in Vienna and works for the Austrian Academy of Science, Institute of Oriental and European Archaeology.

I interviewed Chinara Knutson on the 5th of February 2021, and my main intention was to understand how the Swedish government/museums treat human remains from indigenous groups or descendant groups in Sweden. With this information, I intended to create parallels with the situation back home in Zimbabwe where we can have claimant families and spirit mediums during exhumations (probably liberation fighters from the past at least forty-year) or maybe even concerning future claims on some of the human remains now housed in museum repositories. I was interested to see how we could deal with such a situation, learning from her experience. In my interview with her, she said that about 90% of archaeology in Sweden is mostly development-led, that is to say, it is usually conducted to rescue archaeological

materials, see also (Knutson 2021: 43). Thus, not many human remains are currently being recovered.

My concern was how the museums treated human remains of traditional descendant communities in Sweden. An example given was that of the Sami communities who have been resident in the Sampi region in Northern Sweden, particularly in Jamtland from as far back as the fifteenth century (Chanara Knutson Interview 5/02/21). In the history stretching up to 700 years in the past, the Sami communities were slowly but surely integrated into Swedish politics. Today, however, the Sami communities have a government (or representatives) that can be consulted by archaeological project managers or companies. The Swedish National Heritage Board which governs all archaeological and heritage projects and endeavors do not require it by law that archaeology companies must consult and engage descendant communities, but as a gesture of goodwill, many companies do engage the communities, For the Sami, it is the Sami government that choose who goes or not among their people.

This same Sami government working together with the Swedish National Heritage Board has asked for the museums to prepare inventories of their museums, especially for those sacred objects and human remains that have information on where these materials come from. This is being done as the descendant communities now claim to have a voice or right to advise on culturally sensitive ways of conserving the sacred material (which they are not willing to claim for repatriation) and also to smoothen the process of claiming for repatriation. This to me seemed a noble idea to take home, that is to say, the NMMZ can inventory the human remains and sacred grave goods, and this information enables the museum to know which communities or Chiefs to engage in the curation or respect for the mortuary heritages in its custody.

Lastly, Chinara Knutson regretted that even though Sweden had signed UNESCO's Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), it is still the Swedish National

Heritage Board that governs all heritages in Sweden (Chanara Knutson Interview 5/02/21). Unlike Sami communities in other neighboring countries whose governments control their heritage, that is not the case with the Sami groups in Sweden. Again, Sweden as yet does not have a law or policy that enforces archaeological companies to engage the descendant communities when working on traditional grounds.

This discussion was important for me because I had very good points to take home from it. Firstly, for museums to effectively dialogue or engage communities, the communities must have representatives or a committee that should be responsible for the discussions. Secondly, museums must have inventories with all the important information about the materials recorded in them. The provenance of the materials, that is, the dates of collection from the archaeological record, name of the collecting archaeologist, dates of inventorying among other things, must be clearly labeled on the accessioning form. In Zimbabwe however, it is hard to trace and authenticate repatriation claims because some communitites where entirely moved from one place to another as part of either the fast-track land reform program or other programs during the colonial period, (see Chinak 2020). This is probably the reason why up to now, no one has claimed remains held in the Harare Human Science Museum in Zimbabwe.

Professor Katharina Rebay- Salisbury, said that it would not be advisable for museum curators to try to deal with flesh-covered human remains or for those from wet/swampy areas but rather would give them to medical departments for preservation and conservation. Again she mentioned that the basic requirements for the cleaning, research, and observation of the human remains are that one must first clean them with water and dry them, pack them in non-plastic material bags such as cardboard boxes. If finances permit, one can use purified water or gentle sand-blasting, a method that requires special equipment. In some Austrian cases she said, there are no excavation records, but now, however, their people and private companies are trying to

create a database from all private companies practicing archaeology. The federal record in Austria is not comprehensive, focuses on specific contexts, and does not present the whole picture of the nation's archaeological endeavor.

Concerning the interaction between descendant communities and the human remains in the museum space, she mentioned that there was a case two years previously (2019) where Maori leaders came to the Natural History Museum and were happy with how the remains of their elders were preserved and left them there. She also mentioned that there are strict procedures (stipulated by law) that must be followed if any descendant community initiates a repatriation process of the human remains in any Austrian museum. She also mentioned that up to the 1990s there might have been human remains on display in Austrian museums, but now there are none except mummies (she distinguished between human remains and Egyptian mummies). Egyptian mummies are on display in the Art History Museum in Vienna, there are some human remains in the repositories of many Austrian museums including the Natural History Museum (personal observation in the year 2021). She claimed Austrian museum argue that there are no clear descendent communities who can claim these Egyptian mummies, however, I do contend that given that they are Egyptian, the nation of Egypt will know how to respectfully rebury/store/treat these mummies if repatriated.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the interviews that I carried out for this research. Notably, the crosscutting concern or message was that the human remains in the museum space must be curated and treated with respect. Although the clause, 'must be treated with respect' is deeply

contextual, the inclusion and acceptance of local and descendant communities' perspectives into whatever the museum curators intends to do cannot be downplayed. The museum specialists/ heritage practitioners therefore must ensure that their museums are in liaison with relevant local and descendant communities to ensure a wholesome and transparent approach to the treatment of mortuary heritages.

CHAPTER 4 Discussion of the research Finds

'… the role of the conservator is to act as an advocate for proper care of a cultural property that may be of artistic, historical, scientific, religious, or social significance…' (McGowan and La Roche 1996: 117)

This chapter is discuses the research findings. Based on my findings from the literature review and the interviews conducted for the purposes of this research, I propose recommendations and guidelines for the respectful treatment of archaeological human remains in Zimbabwe. I conclude the discussion by arguing that Zimbabwean governmental authorities must create a robust and strict policy as well as practical guidelines, including workshops and training sessions on the treatment and curation of human remains in Zimbabwean museums. I also argue that researchers must also endeavor to find solutions and methods to properly curate and research human remains in Zimbabwean Museums.

Discussion

As discussed in the previous chapter, workers of the NMMZ interviewed for this research all agreed that the NMMZ does not have a specific policy or any guidelines for the treatment of human remains in Zimbabwe. However, it is not fair to think that the human remains are not being cared for since they are currently being curated under the general NMMZ Act which says that the human remains are to be treated with respect. It was however discussed that saying 'treat human remains with respect' is not a clear statement for it is prone to individual interpretations which might be influenced by the individuals' upbringing, experiences, as well as the available resources, and hence, there is no one size fit all interpretation or definition for 'treating human remains with respect'. The conclusion to this issue, therefore, is that the

museum must have a policy, clearly stipulating what is meant by 'respect for human remains' in its cultural, socio-economic, and political context.

There was a call by my research informants for the NMMZ to train its curators, be it through in-house training programs, webinars, and symposiums on such issues as documentation, handling, and other key aspects of caring for museum collections particularly human remains (Interview 21/04/21). Besides training workshops which seemingly are costly for the NMMZ, the organization must simply employ someone trained for this or with the knowledge/capacity/experience, and/or research interest in the curation of human remains.

It has been established through the literature review and interviews that most of the human remains in the ZMHS were collected either unethically or unprofessionally during the colonial period (see for example Maryna et al. 2013; Mubaya 2015). This has a bearing on how these remains have to be curated, researched, and how the information about and from them is to be communicated/published. One of the challenges on the ground is that most of the remains collected pre-independence were not properly documented (Interview 21/04/21). Unlike in the Southern Region where the provenance and the archaeologist who excavated the skeleton in the Conservation Centre is known, most of the human remains in the ZMHS were poorly documented. The Curator of Archaeology at the ZMHS mentioned that the current registers and site-cards do not contain complete information pertaining the human remains. Currently, they have a documentation project underway, trying to reconcile field notes submitted to the museum by the researchers and collectors, with the site cards and other forms of documentation available in the museum. This effort will help them create a detailed digital database of the human remains in the museum.

On the topic of storage, at the Zimbabwe Museum of Huma Sciences, there was a time when they had to shift the human remains from one table to the other as the roof leaked\during rain pour (Interview 21/04/21). Some of the bones are in plastic bags which can trap humidity when summer comes, leading to the quick deterioration of the skeletal remains. The storage place must therefore be well-covered, and unlike the Mutare museum whose roof is asbestos without a ceiling, and the temperature is not regulated as indicated by the assistant curator in the Western Region; the room must at least have a ceiling to avoid massive temperature changes, especially during winter and summer (Interview 04/12/20). In countries with a better economy, or in well-funded museums, they would rather have an air conditioning system installed in the storeroom or collection storage space. However as indicated by the curator in the Northern region, the idea of installing an air conditioning system in the storeroom can just but be wishful thinking (Interview 21/04/21). Again, there is an agreement between the Chief Curator and the curator of archaeology at the ZMHS on plans for creating a separate storage place for human remains from the general collection. The curator of archaeologysaid this is going to be done by means of installing a door and lock to separate the spaces designated for human remains and other general collections.

On security, human remains are generally as secure as the other collections for they are currently under one lock, and there is always a security person manning the whole museum property. In the Southern Region, there is always a security person manning the whole premises at night and hence the human remains are as secure as the rest of the materials in the storeroom. However, only if funds could be sourced, the museums must have closed-circuit television among other security measures.

Both the literature review and interviews with the NMMZ curators proved that the recent exhumations in Zimbabwe have been doubted, disputed, and contested in different sectors. The

Chief Curator of the NMMZ highlighted that most of the exhumations in Mutare for example got more political milage in terms of reporting compared to the reporting of the scientific knowledge gained (Interview 27/01/21). This often results from the fact that much publicity of these exhumations is peddled by the vernacular exhumers and the ruling party in a bid to gain political mileage -politicizing the dead- (a concept discussed by Benyera 2014). However, as demonstrated by Silika and Squires (2019), there is some mistrust among academics and the public because of how the vernacular exhumers particularly the Fallen Heroes Trust (FHT) undertake the exhumations. The fact that the Trust has been dominating the exhumation processes and the reporting while countering or somehow thwarting/disapproving the counter-narratives has led opposition parties and some Non- Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to become skeptical about the whole issue (see Eppel 2015). However, it must be discussed that some scholars seem to be harsh or misjudging these vernacular exhumers, especially the FHT. An example is Silika and Squires (2019: 590) who claim that the exhumations by the FHT were not reported particularly at the Butcher site and the William Mines and that the NMMZ was not present at the exhumations at the William Mine in Mt Darwin and some in exhumation in Mutare. However, a simple read of (Chipangura 2015; Benyera 2014; Chipangura and Silika 2019; Chipangura 2020) and a look at these publications' references will tell that despite the inhouse reports by NMMZ curators, scholars and newspaper writers have both published on exhumations at all these sites. The assistant curator in the Western Region also mentioned that there was a team of curators from the Northern Region who participated during the William mine exhumations while he had participated at the Butcher site among other Mutare exhumations (Interview 04/12/20). Again, Silika and Squires (2019: 588) demonstrate a clear misunderstanding of the Zimbabwean religious background when they celebrate the Amani Trust for calling a Christian bishop to pray before exhuming the victims of the Gukuruahundi instead of calling the Ndebele Chiefs, Spirit mediums, and traditionalists. One should also

remember that most of the Gukurahundi victims were villagers in the traditional rural villages under the custodianship of traditional leaders like kraalheads and Chiefs and hence the appropriateness of engaging traditionalists instead of a Christian bishop. In all this, therefore, I argue that a total inclusion of all stakeholders like the NMMZ, all political parties as well as community leaders, and the community people is the key solution to the debates and doubts on the exhumations in Zimbabwe, be they political victims of the rescent past (years after 2000), or the long dead (Chimurenga liberation war fighters).

On repartiation as an issue, I did give highlight of the importance of this issue above and if any policy is to be developed in Zimbabwe, it must deal with this issue as well. I highlighted above, that the government of Zimbabwe is negotiating the repatriation of the remains of Mbuya Nehanda and other Chimurenga freedom fighters back from Britain. However, I do argue that repatriating these remains without a policy and a proper clear strategy of what to do with them and how, (thus who is to be consulted among the traditional Chiefs, concrete ethnographic accounts of tracing the real descendants of these individuals and agreeing with them on how to nationalize these heroes) will be setting a time bomb in the whole nation. This issue will have a bearing on the national history and heritage telling, the creation of national memory, and other things. There are also efforts to repatriate remains of the liberation fighters buried in the neighboring countries and this is a noble idea only if done not on a partisan basis, but as a national endeavor. Repatriation therefore must be done on a non-partisan basis and with respect to the opinions of all stakeholders like schollers, traditionalists and the NMMZ curators.

Policy recommendations to the heritage policymakers

I argue that Zimbabwe, through the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe and the Ministry of Home Affairs, must create a policy that specifically guides the curation, treatment, and management of human remains in Zimbabwe. As a starting point, the NMMZ can adopt and develop from the recommendations here presented:

- Firstly, the policy must provide for the respect for and acknowledgment of the role of local communities in all decision-making processes, be it during exhumation, examination/research, or curation of human remains, depending on the age of the remains and their closeness to local/descendant communities.
- If descendant communities can be traced, then they must be involved in each stage of the decision-making process, regarding the conditions of curation and preservation, research, presentation, return, or reburial of the human remains. The museum must also make sure that the scientific values of the human remains are respected and taken into consideration, that is creating a conducive environment for research and publication.
- Powers must be granted to the board of trustees to decide if permission should be given to a researcher interested in using the human remains for research. A researcher must start by submitting an application later in which s/he must indicate interest/intention to respect the human remains as s/he proceeds with his/her research. Researchers must respect and minimize destruction of these remains, and also ensure they capacitate in one way or the other the curators responsible for the care of these remains
- There must be provisions for digitizing data on the human remains to create an online database for the human remains in the NMMZ museums. This database can later be

used for research and curation of the human remains, avoiding physical handling and possible wear and tear on the remains (McGowan and LaRoche 1996).

- The storage of these human remains in museum facilities must be secure and temperature regulated. In the Zimbabwe Museum of Human Science, there are human remains that were excavated from both dry and wet environments (as highlighted by the Regional Director of the Northern Region above). Climate control and storage regulations must be put in place to cater for human remains found in both environments. Air and humidity control systems (warming slightly in the winter months and cooling gently in the summer months to maintain even temperatures and constant levels of humidity), therefore, must be provided.
- Requirements must be stipulated for the documentation processes of these human remains. Documentation therefore must be a process that enriches the museum and researchers concerning the information about the human remains. Documentation must capture where the item/object comes from and who excavated/donated it among other key aspects of these materials.
- There must be a stipulated procedure for the acquisition and disposal of the human remains in the collection. In cases where there are associated grave goods that can not be boxed in the same box with the associated human remains, strongly linked documentation must be created and kept to enable future reference. The acquisition can occur only after the board of trustees has practiced due diligence and the same applies to when deaccessioning must be done (see also the Museum of London 2011). Disposal just like other materials must only be carried out to benefit theu existing collections.
- It would be good for the NMMZ to advocate for the use of DNA testing where applicable to identify descendant communities when unidentifiable individuals are exhumed, be it in single or mass graves.

Practical guidelines for archaeologists and exhumers

Archaeologists and exhumers must treat human remains with respect. Firstly, they must get consent from the local/descendent/concerned communities if they can be traced/identified (Gareth Jones and Harris 1998: 258). As discussed above, clothing worn by the excavators might be an issue since (as in the case of the Mutare exhumations discussed by Chipangura 2020) some clothing colors (red and black) can be deemed improper to wear during exhumations. In the case of exhumations of human remains, therefore, researchers must always consult and engage the spirit mediums and local community leaders before going into the field. I do acknowledge that it is difficult to trace descendant communities when excavating human remains from more than two thousand years ago, and in such circumstances, the local communities might be consulted or engaged. In the case of some Zimbabwean communities affected or shifted during the Land Reform programs of both the Rhodesian government and the Mugabe regime, ethnographic inquiries can be made to trace the descendant communities.

- During excavation and especially during the exhumation of massacre victims, participants must wear protective clothing including protective gloves for proper handling of the human remains.
- Provision of proper documentation must include taking pictures while the materials are still in situ, drawings of the grave and finds in situ, recording the GPS readings, name of the leading researcher/excavator among other things.
- Documentation must also include writing down the cemetery/grave name/number or just the location of the grave, the direction of the grave/pit, the grave pit, size of the grave, position of the body in the grave, posture of the body in the grave, direction of the head among other important aspects of the grave.

- Documentation must also include mentioning the associated grave goods found as well as other finds like animal bones, plant collections or metal or wooden finds if they are found associated with the human remains.
- Care must be taken when removing the skeletal remains from the graves, that the archaeologists must properly handle them, not to break them, in some cases, soil samples especial around where the skeletal remains would have to be collected for further research. This usually comes after the initial documentation like photographing and drawing of the skeletons in situ.
- Excavators must provide for proper packaging and handling of the human remains in the field. Proper handling, in this case, includes handling a single item at a time to avoid breaking the skeletal remains. Cleaning with a dry toothbrush can be done before bagging the remains despite that in some cases (depending on the analogy of the excavator), it is important to bag the remains as well as some soil samples, especially from the immediate places to where the human remains would have been found. The bag might or might not be the one to ultimately be placed in the museum repositoryor storage area.
- Water cleaning the remains must be a preserve of the museum since in the Shona culture it is taboo to let a body lie uncovered under the sun. The museum therefore must have spacious places in the laboratory to allow for the drying of the human remains if need be that some of the human remains must be water cleaned and then dried for further research.
- If there is an exhumation of a body for reburial, this reburial must take place following the traditions of the concerned clan cultural group or concerned community. Depending on the organizations involved in the exhumation exercise, befitting/suitable coffins and reburial places must be provided for the remains, and befitting burial rituals and

procedures must be arranged and practiced. In all these issues, local leaders and spirit mediums must be given a chance to voice on what should be done while letting archaeologists do the physical exhumation, documentation packaging, and transporting of the remains for reburial or to the museum.

Practical guidelines for curators in the NMMZ

The museum curators are the people who have a day-to-day interaction with the Human remains in question especially those at the Zimbabwe Museum of Human Sciences. Curatores are to ensure the longevity of this colosile heritage and also to ensure that when researchers do come for research, they are monitored. For a start, the NMMZ curators can adopt the following recommendations:

- All human remains must be accorded the decency of proper documentation, numbering, and boxing.
- Human remains must be packed in acid-free manila envelopes and boxed in large cardboard boxes. Plastic containers must be avoided because with the Zimbabwean climate, there is a danger of humidity accumulation in such non-breathable containers and damaging the sometimes-fragile human remains and grave goods, especially in storage rooms without air conditioning systems.
- The human remains of each individual must be boxed in a separate box. Each body is given an accessioning number (written on the box or bag) that must tally with that entered in the digital and hard copy accessioning register in the museum. If shelf numbers and position numbers are also entered in the register, this will make numerous avenues of easily identifying the remains in the storage area.

- The accessioning register must contain such information as the size, dimensions, age, and sex (if available or if someone can ascribe that to the remains), conservation status, and the number of bones in a bag, name of the skeletal elements contained in each bag.
- There must be periodic checks of the climate in the museum and storage spaces. It must be regulated/provided for by a policy/regulating guideline.
- There must be regular checks the conservation status of these human remainsas well as other associated remains. Regular checks must enable curators to do away with other agents of deterioration such as pests among others.
- Given that currently there are no climate control systems in the Zimbabwe Museum of Human Sciences storeroom, it is better to have at least a ceiling under a proper/unleaking roof to lessen the impact of temperature and climatic changes on the collections.
- Properly regulated lighting systems must be provided in storage areas.
- When handling the remains (whether for research or conservation processes) one must first put on protective gloves, and handle a single bag/item at a time (so as not to mix up skeletal remains from different bodies, or not to break them). Work should be carried out on a working table in the laboratory to avoid breaking and mixing the human remains.
- Each box of human remains must have an accessioning number corresponding to that on the hard copy and a digital database stipulating what and where each box of remains is found within the repository/storeroom. Location data will enable quick retention of the remains and hence the ease of researching with the collection.
- When a researcher comes to the museum for research, the curators must ensure that the researcher is oriented and guided on how the remains must be handled respectfully and properly handled to conserve them.

- The museum must provide a separate and security-tight storage place or storage room for human remains.
- De-accessioning of the human remains must be done in compliance of the guiding principle provided for in the policy and also in compliance with the expectations of the concerned descendant community

Practical guidelines on deaccessioning human remains

Zimbabwean communities have always revered and acknowledged the importance of their ancestors and their ancestral remains. Again, with the current work of vernacular exhumers, communities might start challenging the authority of the NMMZ in curating the human remains in its custody. Although this might sound unlikely for most of the remains are from the Stone and Iron age where the actual descendant communities might not be easily identified/traceable, however, I do argue that the NMMZ must be ready for such a situation if it is to arise. In this regard, I propose that:

- Any person/community claiming or demanding repatriation of an assemblage or any form of human remains in the NMMZ must prove through (a) written records, (b) DNA evidence, (c) any other tangible evidence, (d) clan or community oral traditions that prove a connection and that they are true descendants from the said collection.
- Any person or community claiming repatriation of the human remains from the museum, must prove his/her or its connection or presence at or around the place where the human remains were excavated/exhumed at/before the time the remains were excavated/exhumed and collected.
- The community must be in a position to demonstrate who bought/stole/removed the remains from their jurisdiction, when, and how.

- The community must have a leadership/representation that stands for them during the negotiations for the repatriation of human remains in the museum's custody
- The community through its representatives must tender a repatriation appeal/application to both the NMMZ and the Ministry of Home Affairs and when called, come for the debate/negotiations.
- The person or community applying for the repatriation of human remains must be in apposition to allow the NMMZ curator to undertake a field work to ascertain the claim or request for the repatriation or reburial as part of the museums' preparation for the delibarations on application.
- The person or community applying for the repatriation of human remains must also demonstrate how the remains in question will be treated, how they will be reburied/deposited/cremated/or any other method deemed fit by the community to deal with the remains in question.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the findings of this research, mainly looking at the key issues central to the treatment of human remains in the museum space. I discussed the key concerns in the Zimbabwean museums, issues including shortages of storage spaces, incomplete or even missing documentation, and the absence of guiding policy on the treatment of human remains in Zimbabwe. Central to my argument here was the fact that there is need to develop a policy as well as practical guidelines on the treatment of human remains in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER 5: Summary and Conclusion

This chapter presents the concluding remarks of this research. I brief the concerns of every chapter in this research. The findings and conclusions of this research are also summarised here. I then conclude this chapter with suggestions for future research or rather future research prospects.

Research summary

The background chapter presented the background of this research, how colonialists tried to force Africans, particularly Zimbabweans to abandon their African traditions and practices which included the respect and adoration of their ancestors (Chiwaura 2011). However, despite the attempts by the colonial government to overshadow the reality of the living dead (the ancestors) the chapter proved that not only the ancestors of the black does place commands/demands on the living, but also the those of the Europeans as in the case of George Shepard, an England born, former owner of Ancient city lodge whose ghost is on record to torment corrupt employees at the lodge as well as the management commanding them to give him what he deemed a befitting burial in his hotel premises (Fontein 2011). However, threats to the respect of the dead in Zimbabwean museums include the poor financial base to conserve these remains, the lack of experts/trained staff in the conservation and treatment of the dead, and the greatest of all being the lack/absence of a policy or guidelines in the preservation and treatment of the mortuary heritage. Although there are efforts to create a policy on the treatment of the victims of the 1960-1980 Chimurenga/liberation armed struggle, I gave in this chapter, a reflection on the lack of basic protocols for the conservation and preservation of human remains in Zimbabwe. Again, I gave a simplified rundown of the past key researches done in Zimbabwean burial archaeology, their research themes, research methods, agender, finds, and

conclusions (for example Mahachi 1986; Murimbika 1999). I also argued that the lack of a robust scientific backup to the spiritualized human remains exhumations and identification processes done in Zimbabwe is complicating the authenticity of the intention of exhuming the 'liberation fighters' for example, and also overshadowing the role or importance of archaeologists in the nation.

The first chapter highlighted the problem of this research namely the lack of guiding principles in the treatment of human remains despite their existence in Zimbabwean museums and also the pressure from various traditional and political groups to exhume the dead (be they liberation fighters or victims of the rescent political violence). As later indicated by some of the NMMZ curators, the vernacular exhumers do have their expectations which sometimes go against the proper and scientific methods of exhuming the dead. Given such a situation then, guiding principles must be drawn up to ensure that things are properly done in respect of the values of all parties concerned. I then highlighted the aims of the research which were pretty covered in this project.

Firstly, I wanted to establish if there were legal instruments guiding the treatment of mortuary heritage in Zimbabwe, and on this, I realized that the human remains are curated under the general principles in the NMMZ Act, just like any other museum collections. There was a general agreement among the curators that human remains must be treated with respect, but what was not clear is what it means to treat human remains with respect. Secondly, I also aimed to compare the local and international policies and practices regarding the treatment of human remains. On this, the literature review looked at international conventions and guidelines that deal with this issue of care and treatment of the dead as well as a few selected museum policies. I did not choose a lot of museum institutions for I had a purposeful selection of those museums whose themes and matters addressed were relevant to my Zimbabwean case. On this, I realized

that the policies for the British and London museums were key for their principles could be easily related or adapted to the Zimbabwean context.

The third objective was to assess the recent exhumation in Zimbabwe which were largely spearheaded by the 'vernacular exhumers' to see how they have affected or shaped the practice of archaeology in Zimbabwe. For this one, I was told by the archaeologist who participated in the exhumation that when a spirit medium pointed to a place saying 'there lies someone' they would excavate and find the person as said by the spirit medium. However, the problem was that the methods that the spirit mediums wanted to use conflicted with the ones which the archaeologists wanted. My conclusion to this matter was that there must be a policy that creates synergy between the IKS and the science of exhumations in Zimbabwe. Lastly, I wanted to investigate the IKS related to the respect for the dead, related grave good, and the places of the dead or the graves. To this effect, I failed to interview traditionalists and Chiefs, this can however be done in future researches. However, from the archaeologists whom I interviewed I learned that the communities had their own ways of conserving the burials which include such ceremonies as 'kurovaguva' and the yearly rituals usually done in November when families gather, prepare traditional beer and go to weed off and restore the graves of their dead. Such practices were also done by spiritual mediums who would privately go to the 'mapa', the King's cave-graves or resting places, and then restore the stones closing the doorways of the graves (Mtetwa Interview).

As for the research questions, the first was on how the preservation of human remains in Zimbabwean museums can be improved. To this, I created a simple stage-by-stage guideline which is in chapter four of this thesis. Based on a critical study/analysis of the guidelines adopted elsewhere,as well as the ideas demonstrated by the NMMZ curators during my interviews with them, I created a simplified method of how for example archaeologists in the

field must deal/excavate human remains and how curators must treat the human remains, and how researchers must treat human remains with respect. The second was the creation of a chain operator on the recovery, analysis, and storage of human remains in Zimbabwe. On this just like the first question, I did create a step-by-step procedure which again is in the fourth chapter, stipulating how both archaeologists, exhumers and curators must approach the treatment of human remains. The same applies to the third question which is about the creation of guidelines on the retrieval, reburial, and use of human remains either for research and ritual reburial.

In my chapter two, I looked at some International policies particularly the European museum policies guiding the treatment of human remains. I established that the debate or discussion on treating human remains was first put on the International platform in 1989 at the World Archaeological conference that was held in South Dakoda, USA. During this congress, it was agreed to respect human remains regardless of their race, age, nationality, custom, and tradition. These principles were adopted from the Vermillion Accord whose key message was that respect must be given to the wishes of the dead and at the same time the community from which one came from and is the custodian of the culture which one upheld. Despite international conventions, the chapter also looked at national and state laws like the Navajo Tribal policy whose five key principles on the treatment of the dead include identification, consent, proposal, removal/relocation, and reporting (Klesert and Andrews 1988). These five principles were all centered on respecting the dictates of the local or rather descendant community. I also looked at the 1989 ICOM code which among other key things questioned the sustainability and morality of collecting, displaying, and keeping human remains in the museum repository. This summary cannot go without mentioning the NAGPRA Act which commanded respect for Native Americans. The NAGPRA was the first recognized effort by Native groups to oppose the so-called scientific value of human remains, arguing that human remains do not belong to an individual, an institution, or any governmental organization but

rather it is the descendent groups that have the rights to determine what must be done to the human remains of their family or community member. The chapter also talked about the UN Declaration of Human Rights which brought about the rights of Indigenous people. Articles 11 and 12 of the same declaration gave rights to the practicing of traditions, customs, and all other manifestations of culture. Article 12 provided indigenous communities with the right to repatriate their dead (Weshce and Eetertes 2013). Lastly and most importantly, I realized that there are six International conventions which address the treatment of human remains, and these are: the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import; Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property of 1970; the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and National Heritage of 1972; the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT); the World Archaeological Congres of 1989 which resulted in the Vermillion Accord on Human Remains and the Tamaki Makau-rau Accord on the Display of Human Remains and Sacred Objects adopted in 2006; the Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Object; the United Nation Declaration on the Right of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) of (2007); and the ICOM code which says if acquired and stored securely, human remains must be handled with respect.

I also looked at the key terms and principles in caring for human remains and grave goods in museum spaces. Such terms include acquisition, provenance, documentation, cleaning, and deaccessioning. Defining and looking at the practices informed by these terms helped me to clearly understand how the museum institutions has to deal with human remains. As discussed in the past chapters, the acquisition is the process in which the museum accepts incoming human remains or other types of collections, either from excavators, researchers, or donors, and then have to create an accession document which documents all the information necessary about the object in question. After accessioning the human remains, the museum must ensure

that proper documentation is done to capture all essential information about the human remains in question.

Chapter three explored the treatment of human remains in Zimbabwean museums according to the NMMZ curators and Zimbabwean archaeologists interviewed for the purposes of this research. Firstly, there was consensus among NMMZ curators and managers that there is no existing policy or guiding principle specifically on the treatment of human remains and that these remains were being curated under the general NMMZ Act. Secondly, if a researcher wants to undertake a research using the human remains in the custody of the NMMZ, he/she must first tender a research application letter in which s/he must indicate the intention to treat human remains with respect, not to harm/break them, and to follow necessary procedures and protocols as s/he undertake that research. However, as in the discussion, some of the curators felt that the statement 'treat human remains with respect' is an empty statement, prone to individual interpretation which might differ because of background, expertise, and resources available, therefore, my research informants generally agreed that there is need for a specific policy focusing on the treatment of human remains in Zimbabwe. I also discussed the issue of exhumation in Zimbabwe and concluded that the is a need to create a synergy between the science and the spiritual aspects of exhuming the dead in Zimbabwe. This can be done for example by following the simple step-by-step procedure outlined in chapter four of this project. Traditional/spiritual ways of identification of graves and human remains must be complemented with scientific ways of excavating, collecting, and identification of materials and then the use of DNA to identify relatives of the dead.

The Director for the Northern region mentioned that the ZMHS housed human remains from as far as the stone age, and among the recent remains, some came from wet/damp mine shafts, and some from dry places. This, therefore, presents a complicated situation of how exactly to

curate these remains since they require different treatment and conditions yet the museum is financially and expert incapacitated. The conclusion to this matter was that research must be done to measure the deterioration pace and also to determine what exactly must be done to ensure proper preservations of these remains. Given that the facilities/storerooms in the Mutare museum, as well as the storeroom at the conservation center at Great Zimbabwe (Southern Region), have no such facilities as air conditioning facilities, I argue that at least a ceiling must be provided to lessen the atmospheric fluctuations. As already practiced elsewhere, I argue that using mad-brick and mad-plaster to demarcate places where human remains are to be stored serves as traditional heat control. While cement buildings are prone to the effects of climatic fluctuations, the mad structures usually maintain a warm temperature. Lastly, it was discussed in this research that whenever human remains are exposed from the ground, whether by processes of development, excavations, the nearby community or the descendant community must be engaged, to come and perform traditional rites, and also to inform the archaeologists or researchers involved on how best to treat or respect the human remains in questions. This must also apply to exhumations in which care must be taken to ensure that the demands by the spirit mediums are complied with only when they do not interfere with the scientific course of the exhumation process.

Future research prospects

There is still a lot of potential in the study of human remains in Zimbabwe. Future research must look at issues like the curation of human remains from wet places, developing guidelines for researchers, and guidelines for the museum curators on issues like the disposal of human remains. Research must be done to understand what does traditionlists and Chiefs as traditional

custodians of our culture say about this whole issue, (treatment of human remains in Zimbabwe).

Conclusion

For this research, I conclude that it is important for Zimbabwe, through the National Museum and Monuments of Zimbabwe, to create a policy as well as practical guidelines for the respectful treatment of human remains from archaeological contexts as well as exhumations of the remains of people who died in the different episodes of conflicts in Zimbabwe's past. This of course can be done firstly by adopting the guideline proposed in the fourth chapter and then include stakeholders to commend and add on them. Secondly, it is not only important to have a policy but also to follow and adhere to its dictates. Human remains must be curated with dignity and respect according to the norms and customs of the Zimbabwean culture. Documenting and digitizing the human remains is key to this process of protecting the human remains and making them available for future research as well.

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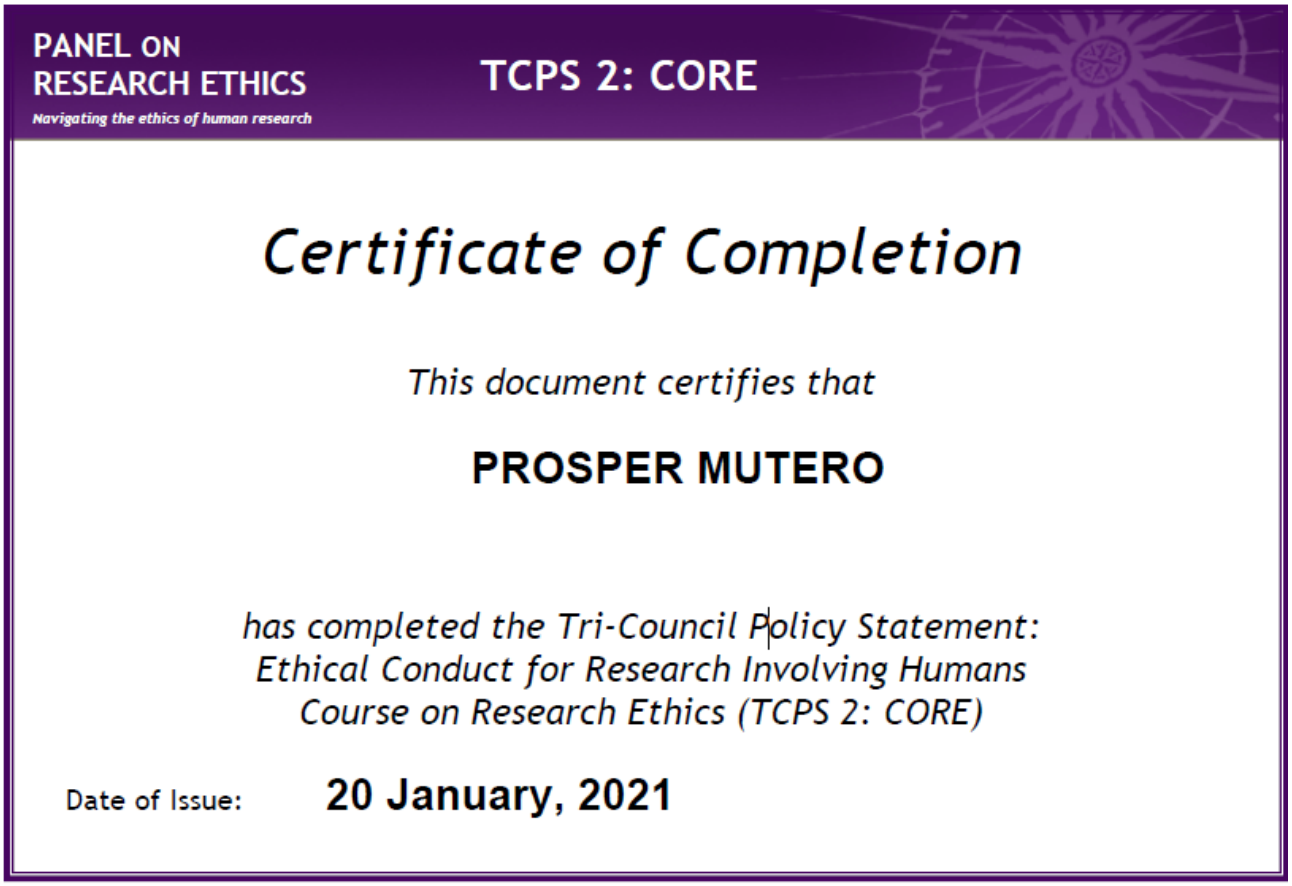
APPENDICES



PANEL ON RESEARCH ETHICS
Navigating the ethics of human research

TCPS 2: CORE

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Date of Issue: **20 January, 2021**

Figure 6. A screenshot of my TCPS 2 Certificate.

CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY
CULTURAL HERITAGE DEPARTMENT
CONSENT FORM

Mutero Prosper is a Central European University student who is currently pursuing a Master's research entitled: Conservation and Treatment of Human Remains in Zimbabwean musems: Infrastructure, Policy and Practice.

Zimbabwe's long-standing history of archaeology, both academic and development-led research, continues to generate a growing corpus of ancient, historic, and modern human remains among other remarkable finds, presenting a prime context to study the treatment of mortuary heritage. This project will specifically investigate aspects of the infrastructure, policies, and practices shaping and being shaped by the desire to research, preserve and present mortuary heritage ethically. Interest in the way human remains are recovered for research, preserved, and presented to the public in museum displays is on the rise, as societies across the globe tackle issues of ethics. In countries with a colonial history like Zimbabwe and many in the Global South, the question of mortuary heritage also touches on the aspect of restitution, given the recurrent claims for parts of or whole human bodies that were taken to foreign lands by colonialists to be returned home.

In a bid to engage in these conversations, Mutero Proser has engaged in this research looking into the treatment of Human and mortuary remains. As such, you are kindly asked to participate in this research as an informant/ respondent.

Mutero Prosper is also a holder of a TCPS 2: CORE certificate on ethics and again it is a legal requirement of his University to do researches ethically. Again, it is also a requirement of the CEU Ethical policy that he conducts his research ethically. The requirements are that the research should be done with the free-will consent of the informants/participants, ensure that both the process of acquiring and then disseminating the information does not in any way affect them.

Given the above, would you please give him the right to use the information you share with him for this research through signing this consent form? This form seeks to get some of your

information for identification purposes and then your agreement or statement on the research process. Your personal information will surely be protected in compliance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

I …….
would like in this research to be addressed as…..…….

1. Name of the institution affiliated to ……..
2. Position/Role …….
3. Gender of the respondent: ……. Male ☐ Female ☐

4. Highest Educational Qualification attained?

   ☐Ph.D.☐Masters ☐Bachelor degree ☐Diploma ☐Certificate ☐Other

5. How many years have you been involved in heritage studies and/ or management?☐ Less than 5years ☐6 – 10 years ☐11 years and above

   ……..

6. Address ……
7. Email Address……..
8. Signed at (City)…….
9. Date……
10. I agree that the information in the interview and questionnaire was provided freely and voluntarily given YES…….. NO…....

I give my consent to *MUTERO PROSPER* to make use of the information given to him by me through 1. Interview ☐

2. Questionnaire☐

I confirm that the interview was done as part of his preparation for an MA Thesis to be submitted at the Central European University, Medieval Department. His use of this data however must be in the context of proper scholarly referencing.

Signature ……