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From King Solomon to Ian Smith: Rhodesian Alternate Histories of Zimbabwe

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From King Solomon to Ian Smith: Rhodesian Alternate Histories of Zimbabwe

Edward Paul Guimont, PhD

University of Connecticut, 2019

In the eleventh century CE, the Shona people of Central Africa built the city of Great Zimbabwe, an administrative center and royal home. Connected to the Indian Ocean gold trade, it would become the largest pre-colonial city in sub-Saharan Africa. However, due to environmental factors, it entered into decline and was ultimately abandoned by the start of the sixteenth century – the period in which the first Portuguese expeditions crossed the Cape of Good Hope and came in contact with the region. The fact that this city entered into decline just as Europeans encountered it set it up to become the center of a number of fantastical legends about its origins, typically linking it with the Biblical King Solomon and his gold mine of Ophir.

Most prior studies of the “foreign builder hypothesis” have simply focused on the fact that white supremacist ideologies of colonial explorers and settlers tended to reject the idea that Africans could have built a city like Great Zimbabwe. This study instead focuses on how successive regimes in Central Africa (Arab, Portuguese, Afrikaner, British, Rhodesian, and Zimbabwean) approached the legend of Great Zimbabwe, and highlighted different aspects of it for their own political ends. In doing so, this study reveals how settler colonialism as a project not only builds off of, but facilitates the construction of “mythic histories” to justify their own rights not only to the land, but its history. Further, this project illuminates how those approaches to mythic history that formed in the nineteenth century persisted long after the end of formal colonialism, and have helped feed not only mainstream white supremacist discourse in former imperial metropoles, but served as the origin of modern anti-intellectual and anti-government political movements in the United States.
From King Solomon to Ian Smith: Rhodesian Alternate Histories of Zimbabwe

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Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation

From King Solomon to Ian Smith: Rhodesian Alternate Histories of Zimbabwe

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The earliest iteration of this current dissertation first publicly emerged in a paper presented at the 2016 Northeast Conference on British Studies, and I would like to thank both my fellow panelists and those who gave feedback on it in one way or another: Paul Deslandes, Claire Langhamer, Lacey Sparks, Stuart J. Robbins, Kenneth Gouwens, and Chris Waters, who was the first to suggest that that paper begged to be turned into something longer. Before it became this dissertation, however, the general outline became an article in The Tufts Historical Review, and I would like to thank Mallory Grider for her editing of that article.¹

An excised chapter of this dissertation ultimately became an article in Contingent Magazine, and I would like to thank the magazine’s editorial staff (Erin Bartram, Bill Black, and Marc Reyes) along with Victor Zatsepine who helped lead to that chapter becoming a separate paper in the first place.² It also became a panel at the 2018 North American Conference on British Studies, and I would like the thank my fellow panelists Timothy Alborn, Michael F.

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Guimont, v

Robinson, and Dory Agazarian. The publication in *Contingent* also led to Loren Coleman inviting me to speak at the Fourth Annual International Cryptozoology Conference in 2019, and I thank him for that, along with those who I spoke to at the conference – particularly Charles Paxton – who gave me additional ideas for areas to explore. Mónica Belevan of *Lapsus Lima* additionally approached me as a result of *Contingent*, and gave me both a further venue to publish my writings and provided me with inspiration to explore areas related to the dissertation I otherwise would not have thought of.³ Jason Colavito, Kenneth L. Feder, and Michael F. Robinson all provided both inspiration as well as (more kindly) inspiring feedback on my work.⁴

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List of Abbreviations:

ANC: African National Congress
BLM: Bureau of Land Management [US]
BPP: British Protected Person
BSAC: British South Africa Company
CAF: Central African Federation, formally the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland
CIA: Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962 [UK]
CO: Colonial Office [UK]
DO: Dominions Office [UK]
EIC: British East India Company
ICS: Institute of Commonwealth Studies [University of London]
MCP: Malawi Congress Party
MP: Member of Parliament
NAACP: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People [US]
NAC: Nyasaland African Congress
NDP: National Democratic Party [Southern Rhodesia]
NLS: National Library of Scotland
NRLP: Northern Rhodesia Labour Party
PFDJ: People’s Front for Democracy and Justice [Eritrea]
RF: Rhodesian Front [Southern Rhodesia]
RGA: Responsible Government Association [Southern Rhodesia]
RRWU: Rhodesian Railway Workers’ Union
SPLC: Southern Poverty Law Center [US]
SRANC: Southern Rhodesian African National Congress
STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TNA: The National Archives [UK]
UDI: Unilateral Declaration of Independence [Rhodesia]
UFP: United Federal Party [CAF]
URP: United Rhodesia Party [Southern Rhodesia]
WIF: West Indies Federation
WIFAC: West Indies Federal Archives Centre
ZANU: Zimbabwe African National Union
ZANU-PF: Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front
ZAPU: Zimbabwe African People’s Union

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Introduction

“Archeology is the search for fact, not truth…. So forget any ideas you’ve got about lost cities, exotic travel, and digging up the world. We do not follow maps to buried treasure, and X never, ever marks the spot.”

-Dr. Henry Jones Jr., Barnett College Professor of Archaeology, 1938

Introduction:

Although rejected by the mainstream consensus of modern science, the Gog and Magog of pseudohistory and pseudoarcheology are alive and well in the general public. According to a 2018 study by Chapman University, 57% of Americans believe in the notion of ancient lost mega-civilizations like Atlantis, and 41% believe in the “ancient alien” idea popularized by the History Channel, a modernized version of the Victorian belief that ancient white explorers were responsible for the achievements of non-white civilizations, such as the pyramids – or, more relevant to this dissertation, the central African city of Great Zimbabwe. More troubling, acceptance of those beliefs has risen each year since Chapman began its annual study in 2015.

These developments have continued hand in hand with the propagation of other pseudoscientific theories online, such as anti-vaccine fear and the belief in the Flat Earth. In 2018, as part of his StarTalk television program, astrophysicist and science popularizer Neil deGrasse Tyson released a methodical listing of scientific concepts in an attempt to dismantle Flat Earther claims through an easily-digestible nine-minute YouTube clip. However, a responding editorial in The Washington Post echoed the argument made by prior academics involved in debunking pseudoscience: Tyson’s claims were unlikely to actually sway any Flat Earthers, just as his

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1 Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, DVD, directed by Steven Spielberg (Hollywood: Paramount Home Video, 2003).
friend Bill Nye was unable to sway creationist Ken Ham in their 2014 debate, as both Tyson and Nye fundamentally lack understanding of the conspiracists’ mindset or why simply appealing to science, especially science promoted by government agencies and established academia, fails to engage with the anti-authoritarian conspiracy worldview. This is perhaps not surprising, given Tyson’s own focus on STEM education has led him to make statements on academia that completely ignore the role of the humanities, conflating all higher education with technical, scientific study.⁴

![Image of a Twitter exchange between LibrarianShipwreck and Neil deGrasse Tyson](https://twitter.com/libshipwreck/status/905408760520343552)

Fig. 1: Tyson’s conflation of STEM with all of academics, and a response from the humanities.⁵

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⁵ Librarianshipwreck, [https://twitter.com/libshipwreck/status/905408760520343552](https://twitter.com/libshipwreck/status/905408760520343552), September 6, 2017; accessed December 5, 2017.
Unsurprisingly, there is a way to prevent this type of pseudoscience belief from taking hold – but it requires going beyond solely relying on STEM-only education from academics with no knowledge beyond their own STEM fields. A 2014 North Carolina State University study found that simply teaching science was not effective as dispelling the belief in those pseudohistorical myths, even among scientifically-minded STEM students. However, emphasizing history, archaeology, and critical analysis did help stem support for pseudoscience among students. This approach has also been helpful in recent years for British academia debunking claims of a diffusionist origin of Stonehenge.6

The connection of southern African colonialism and modern Western far-right conspiracy theories go far beyond nineteenth-century Afrikaners – and twenty-first century Boko Haram followers – sharing Flat Earth sentiments. This was most starkly demonstrated by the 2015 Charleston shooting, whose perpetrator, Dylann Roof, wore a jacket adorned with the flags of Rhodesia and apartheid-era South Africa, and whose personal website was titled “The Last Rhodesian.” Roof was born in 1994, the year apartheid ended in South Africa and fourteen years after Rhodesia ceased to exist, showing that the legacy of those regimes is strong among the American far-right.7 As president, Donald Trump has also voiced support for the ‘white genocide’ urban legend promoted by white South Africans nostalgic for the era of apartheid. As


such, understanding the nature of conspiracy culture as it originated in the white supremacist, far-right, anti-authoritarian context of southern African settler communities is vital to understanding how those sentiments have evolved to take a prominent part in the commanding heights of the American political and cultural landscapes.8

Such a connection between the current American right and southern African settler societies is not as entirely out of the rhetorical blue as it might first appear. Take for example the conversation between Langdon Winner’s 1980 article “Do Artifacts Have Politics?” and Bernward Joerges’s 1999 follow-up, “Do Politics Have Artefacts?”9 Their debate over the racial and class politics of Robert Moses’ bridges in New York City, on whether Moses’ intentions and impacts on lower-class people of color were real or mythical, and the real-world effect of widely-accepted myths in shaping racial and class politics have an obvious parallel with the impact of the public debate over precolonial monuments and their shaping of colonial (and post-colonial) politics. The 2017 Confederate monument debate in the United States has an even more evident connection with the settler interpretation of monuments in southern Africa. These issues obviously are vital for modern American politics, particularly given the Confederate monument debate directly led to the murder of an anti-racist activist by a member of a movement that was then defended by the US President. But long before they became an issue in the US – indeed, even before many of the nation’s Confederate monuments were erected as a means of opposing

8 Jeb J. Card, Spooky Archaeology: Myth and the Science of the Past (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2018), 257-74. Also relevant is the case of Louise Linton (future wife of Trump’s Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin) and her 2016 memoir, In Congo’s Shadow, where she claimed to have spent a night “hiding in the bush from Hutu rebels” during her time working in “war-torn Zambia” (former Northern Rhodesia) in 1999.
the 1960s civil rights movements – they were presaged by longstanding struggles in what was then Rhodesia.10

Peter S. Garlake, the leading archaeologist of Great Zimbabwe during the period of Rhodesia’s Unilateral Declaration of Independence – and a staunch advocate of the city’s construction by native Africans despite his being a Rhodesian settler himself – noted in his study of the ruins how members of the ruling Rhodesian Front (RF) party tried to obscure the science surrounding the site. G. H. Hartley, the RF Member of Parliament for Fort Victoria, spoke in the Rhodesian Legislative Assembly in 1969 – the year Rhodesia formally severed its ties to the British monarchy – that only the members of the Organisation of African Unity and the local African nationalist parties took the “sheer conjecture” of the city’s African origins as fact. Hartley called upon the Minister of Internal Affairs Lance Smith to “correct” those in the National Historical Monuments Commission sympathetic to that view. Smith replied that on the basis of “evidence, which I personally have studied a good deal myself… there is no irrefutable evidence of the origins of the ruins.”11

The next year, Prime Minister Ian Smith (no relation) spoke in the new Rhodesian Parliament that recent directives his office had issued to the Monuments Commission ensured

10 A similar example occurring in the context of the Confederate monument debate is the Philadelphia statue of eleventh century CE Viking explorer Thorfinn Karlsefni. According to Norse sagas, he was the first Viking explorer killed by Native Americans, and his son was the first European born in the Americas. The statue itself was built in 1920, in the context of the racial tensions in the city and nation of the time. As such, the statue has been adopted by neo-Nazis as a symbol of the supposed anti-Aryan race war and Nordic settler claims to the Americas. As a result, the statue was destroyed by anti-fascist activists in 2018. Perhaps a more salient example is the “Rhodes Must Fall” campaign that began in March 2015 at the University of Cape Town, aimed at removing a campus statue of Cecil Rhodes; this spread to other universities across the world, including Oxford and Harvard, with Rhodes statues. See Saul Dubow, “Rhodes Must Fall, Brexit, and Circuits of Knowledge and Influence,” in Stuart Ward and Astrid Rasch, eds., Embers of Empire in Brexit Britain (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 111-20. For a case that is a near inversion of Rhodes Must Fall, there was the 2001-07 political drama in London over the building and placement of a statue to Nelson Mandela, with the Conservative-dominated Westminster City Council refusing to allow it to be placed on Trafalgar Square, the location of the High Commission of South Africa and with it eventually being placed in Parliament Square, next to the statue of Jan Smuts.

“all theories relating to [Great] Zimbabwe will be presented absolutely impartially” and that museums themselves, rather than the government Commission, would now interpret the origins of the ruins – which Garlake pointed out was ironic, as by then not a single archaeologist was employed by any Rhodesian museum. By that point, Garlake himself had already been fired from his position as Inspector of Monuments and exiled from the country, settling in Nigeria and becoming one of the few whites to return from abroad upon Rhodesia becoming Zimbabwe in 1980.\(^\text{12}\)

All of these approaches should sound familiar to American audiences. The government rejection of academics; politicians claiming to know more on an issue than professionals due to their own ‘research;’ the use of a ‘both sides have merit’ claim to discredit the side endorsed by said academics; institutionalized anti-intellectualism used to bolster racism; the normalization of settler presence and the eradication of indigenous claims to both history and territory; and funding cuts and firings of institutions deemed inconvenient, when simple regulatory capture is not enough. Yet these were all hallmarks of Rhodesian politics not only before they became embedded in American politics, but – by bolstering the claim to settler rule, both over the native Africans and independent of British interference – were far more vital to Rhodesian rule than such methods are to the American establishment. After all, at this point Smith’s regime was at war with the ZANU and ZAPU forces supported by the oppressed native majority of his country; the US Army and settler vigilantes had over a century earlier ensured its own natives posed no similar existential threat.

To be clear, however: this dissertation is not a work of African history, either in the long durée or of the country of Zimbabwe. Nor is it an archaeological study of Great Zimbabwe, a

\(^{12}\) Ibid, 210n6.
work of British history, or even a study of specifically British imperialism. It is a study of broad imperial political thought, driven by a discourse which draws on fable. It is a history of extrapolation, not exploration; a study of professional historians against consumers of history – be they the public or the body politic. It builds off of Michael Friedman’s analysis of the interplay between the core and periphery of political and cultural development. It is a way to talk about high politics and culture intersecting, how conspiratorial mindsets were pervasive for the nineteenth century project of European empire-building by helping transform fiction into the foundation of political realities – of how, in other words, conspiracy theories and mythic history serve as political language, and how it is useful to illustrate regime change over centuries. Great Zimbabwe and not only its role in the politics of the group of British settlers who became Rhodesian, but why those British settlers became Rhodesian, is particularly useful, due to the revelation that surprisingly, no matter the imperial power, this particular legend is remarkably protean and potent. This is also not only due to just to the impact on the settlers, but also the role of such “alt-history” – to use a term from the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) – can have on metropolitan politics as well.13

These approaches are used as a springboard for the asking, and answering, of five related questions. How are these pseudohistorical stories first deployed, and by whom? How are these legends circulated? How are they seized upon by specific historical actors? How do said actors use the past? And how do said actors used these legends to both understand the past, and to shape the understanding of the past for others?

Ultimately, this dissertation is in a way an examination of historiography – a look at how successive regimes in both Europe and Africa differed in their approach to analyzing the actual

historical record surrounding Great Zimbabwe, and viewed it through the lens of what whiteness might look like if white peoples existed outside the civilized sphere that Europeans at the time reserved exclusively for their own nation-states. As Terence O. Ranger noted, by the period of decolonization, many of the accepted traditions – especially the political traditions – of the British colonies in central and southern Africa had been invented, or at least curated, by the British rulers.\textsuperscript{14} To quote Ryan Nefdt of the University of the Western Cape, in a context slightly outside what he intended, “Perhaps in following a dictum of Edouard Glissant (that “the West is not the West: it is a project not a place”) we can appreciate an African philosophical project not bound by geography or history but not ignorant of them either.”\textsuperscript{15}

\textbf{The historical intervention:}

In order to explore the five questions of pseudohistory and imperial politics at the heart of this study, this dissertation will make three notable interventions into the existing scholarship of the mythic history of Great Zimbabwe, in the service of its argument on the role of mythic history in imperial and settler colonial politics.

The first is that the foreign builder claims of Great Zimbabwe did not emerge in a vacuum. The nineteenth century in particular was rife with European colonial powers making claims about ruins and lost civilizations justifying their right to settle at the expensive of native power and native history. Jeb J. Card, Kenneth L. Feder, and Michael F. Robinson have all published in-depth analyses of these colonial and archaeological trends within the last few years.


Obviously, this trend was linked in that white supremacy and settler colonial expansion required similar tactics. However, this dissertation will demonstrate that, especially in the Anglophone world, the claims of the emerging Rhodesian polity were actively engaging not only in actions taken by the British elsewhere in their empire, but by the British perception of their own metropolitan history and the achievements of indigenous Celts, as well as the American attempts to erase Native American history. Great Zimbabwe’s mythic history was therefore tied directly into the Rhodesian attempt to cast themselves as a world-power equal to their colonial metropole and the other emerging post-British settler state, the US.

The second and third interventions into the historiography of Great Zimbabwe this dissertation will make build off of the premise established by that central first argument. The second intervention involves the changing identity of the original builders of the mythical city. To be clear, Great Zimbabwe was an African city built several centuries before the modern day by Africans. However, in the legend of the city promulgated by European explorers and settlers, the city had any number of potential builders, who came to Central Africa for any number of reasons. To quote the French historian François-Xavier Fauvelle, summarizing the theories of the city in his study of the African Middle Ages:

Going by what has been said about them, these are the ruins of an ancient Phoenician, Egyptian, or Arabic trading post. Or perhaps the ruins of the capital city of the land of Ophir or the queen of Sheba. In any case, according to these diverse opinions, it was a great commercial city, a royal fortress, or a ceremonial center. We aren’t lacking for hypotheses.\textsuperscript{16}

The nineteenth and early twentieth century authors who popularized such theories – Karl Mauch, Cecil Rhodes, H. Rider Haggard, R. N. Hall, Theodore Bent – typically left the question

open-ended, although they often settled on one particular favorite theory of the city, with the Ophir claim being the most popular initially and the one with the most continuing resonance. The later historians who attempted to debunk such claims – particularly David Randall-MacIver, Gertrude Caton-Thompson, Garlake, Roger Summers – focused on debunking the foreign builder theory in general, occasionally singling out one or two specific claims for particular derision. This dissertation will look into something that has not been explored in the existing historiography: exactly why were there so many different theories about who built Great Zimbabwe, and why did particular ones wax and wane?

Some of the reasons for the plurality of explanations and uncertainty are clear: if evidence of foreign builders has to be manufactured from nothing, there will be no limits on what theories can be made; and some of the more out-there speculative claims – such as Atlanteans or aliens – were too far untenable even for the vivid imaginations of colonialists. I do not dispute either of those obvious explanations; however, this dissertation will build off of them, arguing that as the political situation in southern Africa changed, along with that of the hegemonic colonial powers – Arabs, Portuguese, Afrikaners, British, Rhodesians – the interpretation of the ruins and their builders changed. Specifically, as the political needs of the colonial powers evolved, the claims surrounding the ruins and who built them changed, reflecting the desires of the colonial powers and what realpolitik justifications they currently needed.

The third and final intervention is something of an inversion of a sort to the second innovation. The early Portuguese explorers believed that the ruins in modern Zimbabwe were perhaps connected to mythical realm of Prester John that for a time was identified with Ethiopia. Such claims were largely ignored by modern historians from the nineteenth century on, as it was
evident that Ethiopia did not have its own colonial presence in southern Africa, nor did Prester John exist. In the 1980s, Scott T. Carroll demonstrated how early Portuguese explorers were influenced in their perception of Great Zimbabwe by local Arabs, and more recently Tudor Parfitt and Sharae Deckard have demonstrated the role of myths being integrated into historical interpretation in southern and east Africa. I will build off these scattered arguments to demonstrate not only how much the foreign builder theories of Great Zimbabwe drew off perceptions of Africa from elsewhere on the continent and from indigenous peoples – particularly the Ethiopian state’s own adoption of Solomonic legend for its own nationalist purpose – but how the Portuguese used them to create a language of colonialism suited to east Africa and the Indian Ocean that were adopted by other powers. Further, I will show how these mythical histories of Great Zimbabwe, tied as they were to Ethiopia and the Queen of Sheba, were adopted by nationalists on the continent and Pan-Africanists in the diaspora. This enabled their use in liberation movements at odds with the colonial bent of the original theories, albeit just as pseudohistorical, a linkage which other scholars have not established prior.

Outline of chapters:

These above three focuses will be explored across five chapters. Although the dissertation will be largely chronological in scope, there will be occasional digressions to allow the pursuit of particular arguments in a more focused way than a rigid adherence to chronology would allow. Chapter one will provide an overview of Great Zimbabwe’s history, Portuguese explorers’ first encounter with the city in the sixteenth century, and Europeans’ re-discovery of the site in the nineteenth century. This chapter sets the stage for the remainder of the dissertation. It discusses not only the first European encounters with Great Zimbabwe, but also the origins of
the legends surrounding the city, with a brief overview of them. It explores how those legends draw from earlier European mythic history beliefs, and how the British beliefs in general combined with their specific colonial ambitions in southern Africa to incorporate the Great Zimbabwe myth into those realpolitik aims. From these specific circumstances in the late nineteenth century stemmed the various branches of the Great Zimbabwe myth throughout the twentieth century, and beyond.

Specifically, in this first chapter I argue that it was the Arab merchants along the Swahili Coast and the region of Great Zimbabwe at the time of the Portuguese visits who created the template of a regional colonial ideology from combining elements of the Alexander Romance and Abrahamic scripture (not only Quranic, but Biblical) with the desire for economic and political domination. This resulting ideology, what might be termed an “Indian Ocean Creole” – a creole of hegemonic colonial ideology, as opposed to creolized settler culture – was in turn adopted by the Portuguese and echoed in later Afrikaner and British (later Rhodesian) settler-colonialist mythical histories of southern Africa. By the time of the European Scramble for Africa, the idea that Great Zimbabwe had been built by a group of ancient white settlers from the Holy Land had become accepted enough that the legends provided an impetus not only for Cecil Rhodes to justify the gold mining that seemed to provide material evidence linking southern Africa to Solomon’s Temple, but also as a justification for the religious Afrikaners to occupy southern Africa and dominate the natives. The Boer War of 1899-1902 and subsequent arrival of direct British rule was therefore fueled by competing advocacies of the legend’s legacy: Rhodes’ exploitation of gold as Solomon had supposedly used the land for, versus Kruger seeing the Afrikaners as heirs of the Israelites’ sacred authority.
Building off that baseline legend and those arguments stemming from it, chapter two will cover the development of white self-rule in Southern Rhodesia – the British colony which became the modern Republic of Zimbabwe – and how the evolving use of the Great-Zimbabwe-as-Ophir legend by the British settlers paralleled their own experiences, all in service of reinforcing the settler colonial ideology underpinning their earliest years in Rhodesia. While the overwhelming majority of these early Rhodesians (and metropolitan Britons) shared the general assumption that native Africans could not have built the city, specific hypotheses were highlighted at various times so as to align with contemporary developments in Rhodesian politics. These included comparison of the builders of the city with the diamond miners of South Africa in the period when Cecil Rhodes formally established settler rule over the region in 1890, and their elimination by native revolt during the Matabele Wars of 1893-97. This was followed by a period where claims that the builders of the city had been Israelites who rebelled against the Egyptian Pharaoh were emphasized – a period that happened to be the height of settler opposition to Company rule, ending in 1923. After Rhodesians gained their self-rule, the dominant mythic history claims of Great Zimbabwe began to emphasise the ‘foreign invasion theory’ aspect to explanation the downfall of the city’s ancient white builders; this also happened to be during the time when Southern Rhodesians increasingly opposed their colony’s 1953-63 integration into the Central African Federation (CAF). These various claims were expressed not only through direct political statements by settlers and administrators at the time, but also works of popular fiction in southern Africa as well as Britain and the United States. In a feedback loop, these novels then in turn influenced the public debate, leading to an intertwining of fiction and reality.
This internationalist aspect of Great Zimbabwe-related fiction forms the basis of chapter three, which expands the focus from novels on the city to actual beliefs in lost civilizations across the wider Anglophone world. The chapter shows how Karl Mauch’s 1871 rediscovery and popularization of Great Zimbabwe must be seen not only in the context of the ongoing conflict between British and Afrikaner settlement of southern Africa, but of other archaeological programs happening in what might be called the ‘Greater British Empire,’ linking archaeology of indigenous sites with the mechanisms of British imperialism. Additionally, the popularization of Great Zimbabwe was related to the contemporary development in the United States of alternative settler histories, such as arguments that ancient whites had built Native American mounds, and that Vikings had extensively settled the North America. These parallel developments, using similar rhetoric and espousing the same ideologies, have to be kept in mind to fully understand the reasons why Rhodesians adopted the Great-Zimbabwe-a-Ophir legend. I argue in the chapter that the development of such a history for Rhodesia by Rhodesians therefore has to be understood as a prerequisite for the settler community’s achievement of political autonomy from, and international respect commensurate to, the British metropole. In other words, Rhodesians did not deny native Africans their history of Great Zimbabwe solely due to white supremacy, but because they believed it was part of the route to power other white settler states had taken.

The period of settler rule in Rhodesia achieved by that political maneuvering will be the focus on chapter four. The settler era in Rhodesia spanned three eras – its time as a self-governing colony from 1923-53, the next decade as the largest component territory of the CAF, and the subsequent road to its Universal Declaration of Independence (UDI) from Britain in 1965. During that period, the government’s use of the Ophir legend – both by Southern Rhodesia itself, and the Federal government of the CAF – emphasized new aspects from before,
particularly involving issues of white purity relating to the strength of the state. This emphasis was influenced not only by Rhodesia’s changing circumstances, but the cultural and political changes happening in the metropole. The Rhodesian government and the right-wing Conservatives in the UK subsequently found common cause with each other, which allowed the Rhodesians to depict themselves as true supporters of English values that by the 1960s they saw as being attacked by Britain’s Labour governments, while at the same time the Conservative right began its organizational assault on the party leadership by using Rhodesian advocacy as a rallying cry. When the Rhodesians proclaimed independence, therefore, it was a rebellion not only of colony against metropole, but of “Englishness” and Conservatism against “Britishness” and Labour, and an effort by Rhodesians to capture the claim of Britain’s imperial authority in Africa that both they and the Conservative right argued had been sold out by Labour and moderate Conservatives, even as those ‘traitors’ had inverted the imperial order by welcoming immigration from Britain’s formerly-colonized subjects. The role of the Great Zimbabwe legend became especially heightened in this era, with the Rhodesian government doubling down on the assertion that the ruins had been an isolated outpost of white civilization in southern Africa, destroyed by waves of Bantu migrants – examples particularly relevant for the regime’s view of both Rhodesia and Britain at the time.

The white regime’s fear of contemporary Africans learning from their ancestors’ supposed destruction of Great Zimbabwe is the focus of the fifth and final chapter, arguing that the belief in white origins for the city solidified not merely as a result of Rhodesia transitioning from a self-governed British colony to a unilaterally-declared independent state, but as a way to help lay foundation for that transition. The UDI era period in Rhodesia lasted from 1965-79, with a subsequent transition to the Republic of Zimbabwe in 1980. This was the height of Rhodesian
settler radicalism, when for the first time since 1776 a British colony had declared itself independent of the metropole without London’s consent. This stand resulted in the peak of Rhodesian settler claims about the Zimbabwe ruins, especially given their severing of ties to Britain eliminated the last vestiges of protection for academics and nationalists alike. Even as those professing the African provenance of the ruins were subjected to censorship and exile, the regime advocated for a vision of the city as a *civilizational* outpost in southern Africa, reflecting the official claims of the regime to promote a tolerant multi-ethnic state amidst the chaos of the surrounding majority-rule nations – just as its war against African nationalists was actually a war against Soviet communism, in the same way the city of Great Zimbabwe had been destroyed by totalitarian hordes. However, those fighting the Rhodesian regime were also taking their lesson from the Ophir legend – for if the legend’s advocates claimed that Africans had defeated the city’s white settlers in the past, it was clear they could do so again. Meanwhile, Afrocentrists across the Atlantic began to adopt the Great Zimbabwe myth for their own pseudohistorical beliefs of trans-Atlantic African exploration in direct opposition to the white supremacy of the Rhodesia, regime and its American defenders. By 1979, however, that regime had fallen and was replaced with a transitional government that led to the creation in 1980 of a republic named after the ancient ruins. If the Rhodesians had failed to resurrect Ophir, they had performed a different feat of historical necromancy, managing to bring the ancient city back to life.
Chapter 1: The Invention of Ophir

“It’s a madhouse in South [Africa]. All kinds of cruel fantasies have come true there. Let me tell you something about those Afrikander bastards, though. They’re crazy. I don’t mean just wild and cruel, I mean round the loop. Hot sun has turned their Dutch brain to soup.”

-Kalasinga to Yusuf, Paradise (Abdulrazak Gurnah, 1994)

Introduction:

This chapter has two main goals. The first is provide an overview of Great Zimbabwe’s history, discovery, and re-discovery by Europeans, in order to provide context for the rest of the study. But beyond that, this chapter will show that by combining elements of the Alexander Romance and Abrahamic scripture (not only Quranic, but Biblical) with the desire for merchant and political domination, the Arabs created the template of a colonial ideology – what might be termed an Indian Ocean Creole ideology – which was in turn adopted by the Portuguese. By the time of the scramble for Africa, the idea of Ophir had become accepted enough that it provided an impetus not only for Cecil Rhodes to justify the gold mining that seemed to confirm the legend as true, but also as a justification for the religious Afrikaners to occupy southern Africa and dominate the natives, as articulated by Paul Kruger, President of the Transvaal Republic and leader of the wider Afrikaner community. The Second Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 (commonly referred to simply as the Boer War) and subsequent arrival of direct British rule was therefore fueled by competing advocacies of the Ophir legend’s legacy: Rhodes’ exploitation of gold as Solomon had used the land for, versus Kruger seeing the Afrikaners as heirs of the Israelites’ sacred authority. Among the primary sources this chapter will focus on analyzing are theological works including the Bible and Quran; medieval and early modern explorers like Ibn Battuta and Vasco da Gama; early modern English theologians like Thomas Thorowgood and John Milton; Victorian-era colonial explorers and archaeologists like Alexander Wilmot,

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Theodore Bent, and David Randall-MacIver; and twentieth-century academics such as Peter Garlake and Tudor Parfitt.

The Lost City of Z(imbabwe):

The promotion of the supposed white origins of Great Zimbabwe for political purposes began with the attempts to exploit the ruins and their surroundings for economic benefits. This is not surprising considering British authority in the region with first established by the British South Africa Company (BSAC) led by the British arch-imperialist Cecil John Rhodes, England-born businessman who for the prior three decades had spearheaded the British settlement of southern Africa via his BSAC. Yet the linkage of Rhodes with Great Zimbabwe is best illustrated by an event literally at the end of his life, following his March 26, 1902, death in his Cape Town home. Rhodes’ corporate activities and political activism had steered the British into conflicts not only with the native African peoples, but also the prior European settlers, the Afrikaners whose Dutch ancestors had first arrived in the Cape in 1652, fourteen decades prior to losing their colony to the British during the Napoleonic Wars. Radical Calvinists and committed to a pastoral lifestyle, the Afrikaners were seen by Rhodes as opponents of modernity and capitalism. The Afrikaners’ final defeat at the hands of the British came as a result of the Second Boer War, a conflict formally begun in 1899 as a result of over a decade spent by Rhodes acting as an agent provocateur, and which ended only weeks after his March 26, 1902 death.

Rhodes’ last will and testament was published by the English journalist and future RMS Titanic casualty William Thomas Stead, who padded it with hagiographic paens of his life. In one example, about Rhodes’ 1890-96 tenure as Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, Stead recalled how “There are many stories of him telling worried and disputing politicians to turn
from their “trouble of ants” to the Mountain for calm, and in the same spirit he placed the stone Phoenician hawk, found at Zimbabwe, in the Cabinet Council-room, that the emblem of time might preside over their deliberations.”

The offhand reference to a Phoenician sculpture being found in ‘Zimbabwe,’ several thousand miles from the Mediterranean that was the domain of the Phoenicians, might seem odd to modern readers. But at the time, none would have been surprised by the casual connection. In fact, the belief that ancient Semites had settled what was then the Chartered Territory of Southern Rhodesia and is today the Republic of Zimbabwe was one of the few beliefs uniting Rhodes and his Afrikaner opponents – and on the Afrikaner side, it came from a wider set of beliefs that laid the foundation for their particular brand of settler colonial ideology. From 1895-98, an American named Joshua Slocum was the first person to sail in a single-person ship around the world. In the last leg of his journey, Slocum landed in southern Africa. There, he was accosted by a trio of Afrikaner clergymen who demanded to see his charts in order to prove that he had actually been sailing across a flat surface, and attempted to physically assault him when Slocum suggested that he had in fact been sailing across a globe. Slocum later met with their patron, Transvaal Republic President Paul Kruger, who similarly insisted that such a journey ‘around’ the world was impossible. Kruger’s remarks to Slocum were widely circulated in the English press of the British Cape Colony as part of the propaganda wave ahead of the tensions leading to the outbreak of the 1899-1902 Boer War, and remain cited in biographies of Kruger into the twentieth century.

The same strict Biblical interpretation

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which convinced Kruger and his fellow Afrikaners that the Earth was flat and at the center of the solar system also convinced him that it was Divine predestination that the Afrikaners had achieved dominance over the native Africans, and that the Afrikaners were the new Chosen People replacing those that God had led to southern Africa millennia prior. A century later, a different group in Africa would also blend fundamentalist religious beliefs and anti-colonial rhetoric to endorse the flat Earth and geocentrism as part of their struggle against the legacy of the British colonial order – Boko Haram in Nigeria.

Fig. 2: Cartoon of Kruger, based on the remarks he made to Slocum, printed in the British Cape Town newspaper *Owl* on March 5, 1898.

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6 Slocum, 246.
Rhodes had acquired the soapstone ‘Phoenician hawk’ that proved so unifying between him and Kruger during a trip to the ruins of Great Zimbabwe in 1891, setting in motion a long series of political appropriations of the symbol. The image of the ‘hawk’ would be incorporated into the Coat of Arms of Southern Rhodesia and the personal flag of its governor in 1924, and subsequently the flag of the Republic of Rhodesia. 2015 Charleston shooter Dylann Roof would pose in a picture wearing a jacket with the flag and its soapstone bird embossed on it. Rhodes not only installed one of the looted ‘Zimbabwe Birds’ (as they later, more accurately, became known) in his official Cape Town residence, but commissioned larger-than-life replicas to be used in the gates of his Cambridge home back in England.7

This display of ‘Phoenician’ relics from Great Zimbabwe was not the only connection linking Rhodes, England, and contemporary theories of ancient Phoenicians. Alexander Wilmot, an elected member of the Legislative Council of the Cape Colony, in an 1896 book dedicated to Rhodes and aimed at promoting the BSAC’s claims in southern Africa, argued that not only had ancient Phoenicians built Stonehenge, they had also mined tin in Cornwall.8 In this, Wilmot was building off a common British belief in Phoenician tin-mining in Cornwall that minimized the role of pre-Roman Celtic Britons, while also setting the stage for its own spinoff theory, that Christ’s uncle Joseph of Arimathea had been one such Semitic tin merchant. This myth would expand to include Joseph bringing a teenage Christ with him, and later on bringing the Holy Grail to Glastonbury, thus setting up Arthurian legend.9 Closer to Rhodes’ time, depression in

Cornwall had resulted in an exodus of Cornish miners across the British Empire. In 1851, two of them began a gold rush in New South Wales, at a mine they named Ophir, after the Biblical city that was the source of King Solomon’s wealth. By the 1870s, other Cornish miners settled in the gold fields of the Transvaal, where Kruger expelled them at the start of the Boer War. Returning home to Cornwall, they bitterly complained at what one referred to as “their expulsion from this modern ophir [sic].”

The Cornish returnees equating the gold deposits of southern Africa as Ophir were not just being metaphorical, as their fellow Cornish prospectors had been in reference to New South Wales. In 1865, a German missionary, Alexander Merensky, published an account of the ruins of Great Zimbabwe in the *Cape and Natal News*, describing them with Egyptian terms such as pyramids, sphinx, hieroglyphs – not surprising as he had not actually seen the site himself, only heard of it from natives. In 1866, a German explorer named Karl Mauch was commissioned by the Transvaal government to chart the area between the Limpopo and Zambezi rivers, a region which roughly corresponds to the modern Republic of Zimbabwe. Mauch had had a religious upbringing, reading the Bible as his main source of education, and when he returned in 1867 to announce his discovery of two gold reefs in the region of Mashonaland and one along the Tati River, he took it as evidence that the region was the Biblical Ophir, an opinion that was shared by the noted German geographer August Heinrich Petermann when Mauch wrote his findings to him. Merensky helped Mauch organize an expedition to find the ruined city he had written up, assisted greatly by the attachment of it by Adam Render, a German elephant hunter married to a native Shona woman, who more importantly had actually been to the city three years earlier.

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10 The Bible, I Kings IX 26-28; I Kings X 11-23.
Mauch entered the territory after being granted a limited conduct pass by the Mzilikazi, king of the Ndebele; Mauch received it under false premises, claiming he merely wanted to hunt. Aided by Render, Merensky, and African guides, Mauch’s search was seemingly vindication by his arrival in 1871 at the ruins of Great Zimbabwe. Convinced by, among other things, the misidentification of the local sandalwood with the Levantine cedar mentioned in the Bible, Mauch believed that he had found nothing less than the capitol of Ophir and the former home of King Solomon. The discovery was initially overshadowed by another discovery of a lost outpost of white civilization in Africa – specifically, Henry Morton Stanley’s meeting with David Livingstone the same year. Despite being scoped on African discovery news, Mauch published his claims in 1874, largely taking credit over Render for re-discovering the city.\footnote{Sir Harry Johnston, \textit{Britain Across the Seas: Africa: A History and Description of the British Empire in Africa} (London: Natural Society’s Depository, 1910), 148-50, 181; Jean-Loïc Le Quellec, \textit{The White Lady and Atlantis, Ophir and Great Zimbabwe: Investigation of an Archaeological Myth} (Oxford: Archaeopress Publishing Ltd., 2016), 100-02, 107; Meredith, 135, 207; Robinson, \textit{The Lost White Tribe}, 111-13; Asante and Asante, 85-87.}

Writing in 1965, Roger Summers, Senior Keeper of Antiquities at the National Museums of Rhodesia, noted that neither Mauch nor Thomas Baines (a Briton who was Mauch’s contemporary gold-prospector in southern Africa) attempted to connect Great Zimbabwe with nearby Mashonaland gold mining. However, others did, and the claims were publicized in the press to the extent that by the 1880s they were commonly conflated, with the assumption therefore that Africans could also not have been responsible for ancient gold mining, just as they could not be responsible for ancient city-building.\footnote{Summers, 4.}

Kruger and the Afrikaners he led were thrilled at this archeological confirmation of Biblical history in the territory God had chosen for them to settle, after the earliest Dutch settlers of the Cape had launched unsuccessful expeditions north to search for Ophir. How could He
make it clearer that the Afrikaners were his new Chosen People and southern Africa their new holy land? Rhodes and the BSAC were likewise thrilled; if Solomon had gotten rich from Ophir millennia ago, then with modern industrialized mining, Rhodes could only make even more money.

Fig. 3: 1920s British Empire Marketing Board advertisement, urging Britons to buy products from “East Africa. The land from which, men say, ages ago King Solomon’s ships came sailing with their freight of rare and precious things... is British.”

To Carl Peters, the architect of German colonialism in East Africa, the discovery of Ophir – by a group of Germans, no less – helped fuel his justification for German settlement of the continent, to beat the British in both finding the gold and gain the prestige of exploring Ophir first. To Peters, even the word ‘Africa’ now seemed to have originated as a corruption of ‘Ophir.'

Chapter two will look at how Peters’s decades-long interest in ‘Ophir’ influenced none other than W. E. B. Du Bois. After Peters’ German East Africa was conquered by Britain in World War I and became the Mandate of Tanganyika, Conservative Colonial Secretary Leo Amery used the Ophir legend to promote its agricultural products. More contemporaneously to Mauch, H. Rider Haggard – soon to become a minor British Colonial Office secretary in the nearby Natal Colony – thought that the rediscovery of King Solomon’s mines in Africa could be the basis for a thrilling adventure story of its own.

But neither Mauch nor Render were the first Europeans to see Great Zimbabwe, as the earliest Portuguese explorers in the region in the early sixteenth century had already encountered the city. It was the reprinting of those early Portuguese accounts that had started Mauch on his quest. Those earliest Portuguese did not believe that Solomon or Phoenicians had built the city, instead taking it as a matter of fact that it had been built by the native Shona people who were still organized into the powerful Mutapa state at the time. And by the first decade of the twentieth century, the consensus among professional European archaeologists was that Great Zimbabwe had been built by native Africans during the approximate time of Europe’s medieval period. Instead, the claim for Great Zimbabwe’s creation coming from Solomon originated with

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a different group, one who was also partly responsible for the city’s height of prosperity: Arab Muslim traders.

Return of the King (Solomon):

The ruins of the city now called Great Zimbabwe are located in the hills of the southern part of the country now called Zimbabwe, in a region Europeans termed Matabeleland at the time.

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of Mauch’s expeditions. ‘Zimbabwe’ itself comes from the Shona word for ‘stone houses,’ a reference to the large number of stone buildings constructed in the region during the time of its prosperity, approximately from the eleventh to the mid-fifteenth centuries; the exact dates of its construction and abandonment are still unknown. The Portuguese explorers referred to the site as Symbaoe; the appellation of ‘Great’ Zimbabwe was first given to the settlement in 1891 by James Theodore Bent, the first professional archaeologist to visit the ruins, to differentiate it from the many smaller surrounding zimbabwes. At its height, Great Zimbabwe was the capitol of a Shona kingdom retroactively referred to as the Kingdom of Zimbabwe. This kingdom spanned approximately the territory of modern Zimbabwe, and the capitol at Great Zimbabwe was also the largest pre-colonial city in sub-Saharan Africa.

Great Zimbabwe’s influence was not only regional, however; the gold it produced allowed it to take part in an enormous trade network spanning the Indian Ocean. Gold from the region of modern Zimbabwe would be collected at Great Zimbabwe, then taken the 250 miles to the trading port of Sofala, in the region called the Sofala Coast in modern Mozambique. From there, it would be taken to the northern ports of Mozambique or Kilwa, along the Swahili Coast. By the twelfth century, Kilwa had become the major port of the Great Zimbabwe gold trade, with Mozambique and Sofala its tributary vassals. While total gold output of Great Zimbabwe was at least equal to that of Timbuktu, another African entrepot that was the heart of European

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18 For a general overview of the history of Great Zimbabwe, see Peter S. Garlake, Great Zimbabwe (New York: Stein and Day, 1973).
19 In the 1851 Australian gold rush, Cornish prospectors also named a town in New South Wales after Sofala, located approximately fifty miles from the town of Ophir.
20 The only coin found within Great Zimbabwe itself was a coin of al-Hasan bin Sulaiman, Sultan of Kilwa from 1310-33: Asante and Asante, 87-89. For an overall history of the Swahili Coast in this timeframe, see Felix A. Chami, “The Long Durée of Zanzibar and Western Indian Ocean Seaboard,” in Felix A. Chami, ed., Zanzibar and the Swahili Coast from c.30,000 Years Ago (Dar es Salaam: E&D Vision Publishing, 2009), 212-20.
colonial fantasies for far longer due to its more northern location, the Zimbabwe trade was by far more extensive. Gold exported from Great Zimbabwe went as far as India, while the trade network it enabled allowed porcelain from Ming Dynasty China to be imported to Great Zimbabwe. A combination of drought, overpopulation, and economic contraction including the wider downturn of the Indian Ocean trade caused Great Zimbabwe to go into decline and be abandoned at some point in the second half of the fifteenth century, just prior to Portuguese explorers first encountering the ruins in 1506. By then, the city’s territory had become part of the successor state referred to as the Kingdom of Monomotapa, technically the title of the monarch. As early as 1511, Portuguese sertanejo (backwoodsmen) fled into the African interior from the Mozambique port, with hundreds doing so by 1528. The sertanejo included deserters from royal forts, shipwrecking victims, criminals, and mulattos. One of them was Antonio Caiado, who settled at the Monomotapa court as a linguist, and became a confidant of the king. In 1561 the Portuguese Jesuit missionary Gonçalo da Silveira converted the Monomotapa king Negomo Chirisamhuru to Catholicism, only for rival factions within the court to convince the king to murder Silveira and his party shortly thereafter. This precipitated a Portuguese invasion into the kingdom, and although direct Portuguese control of the area was short-lived, they retained a dominant position in the gold and ivory trade networks. Nevertheless, the conspirators against da Silveira did not kill all Europeans in the capitol. Caiado survived, writing an account of de

Silveira, and some Portuguese continued to own goldworks even after the end of the formal Portuguese invasion.\textsuperscript{22}

The initial Portuguese explorers of 1506 took at face value that Great Zimbabwe had been built by local Africans, especially as the city’s abandonment was within living memory of some of the elderly Monomotapa subjects. Into the mid-1500s, Muslim trade fairs could still have been held at Great Zimbabwe despite its earlier decline; in 1531 Vicente Pegado, the Captain of Sofala, met Muslim merchants who claimed to be there and whose descriptions of it matched those of João de Barros, who argued that the site of ‘Symbaoe’ was the same African country of Agisymba written about by the first century CE Roman geographer Ptolemy.

However, by 1549, when Portuguese sources next discussed the origins of Great Zimbabwe, they stated that it was the Biblical Ophir built by King Solomon, linking it phonetically to the name of the nearby Mount Fura (believed to be the mountain now known as Mount Darwin). The Ophir identification remained consistent until the last Portuguese account of the ruins in 1616.

Ironically, this was the same year that the Luso-Malay cosmographer Manuel Godinho de Erédia published a competing claim that Ophir could actually be found in the gold-rich Malay Peninsula, itself first referred to by Europeans as a gold-producing region in Classical geographers’ identification of it as the ‘Golden Peninsula.’\textsuperscript{23} One such Classical geographer was the Greek Strabo, in his first century BCE Geography. Strabo’s Geography was perhaps also the first account of lost cities established by Semitic explorers in sub-Saharan Africa, writing that


The historians, beginning with *The Circumnavigation of Ophelas*, have added numerous other fabrications in regard to the outside coast of [Africa]; and these I have already mentioned somewhere before, but I am again speaking of them, asking pardon for introducing marvellous stories, if perchance I shall be forced to digress into a thing of that sort, since I am unwilling wholly to pass them over in silence and in a way to cripple my history. Now they say that the Emporicus Gulf has a cave which at the full tides admits the sea inside it for a distance of even seven stadia, and that in front of this gulf there is a low, level place containing an altar of Heracles, which, they say, is never inundated by the tide – and it is this that I regard as one of their fabrications. And nearly as bad as this is the statement that on the gulf's which come next after the Emporicus Gulf there were ancient settlements of Tyrians, now deserted – no fewer than three hundred cities, which were destroyed by the Pharusians and the Nigritae; and these people, they say, are at a distance of a thirty day's journey from Lynx.\(^\text{24}\)

Although the *Geography* refers to these ‘lost cities’ as being established by Tyrians, later authors – especially Victorian Britons – would assume that Hiram of Tyre partnered with Solomon of Israel in the exploration of Africa and the supposed establishment of Ophir. However, this account of Strabo’s seems to have been largely ignored in the later debate over Great Zimbabwe’s origins and the wider history of Israelites in southern Africa.

Europeans would not again see Great Zimbabwe until the time of Mauch in the late nineteenth century, and for much of that time the city faded from general interest of Europeans outside of occasional references. Literary critic Sharae Deckard argued this long gap in the European interest in Great Zimbabwe, both on its own and as Ophir, can be explained by the fact that the metaphorical gold of the slave trade, followed by a European preoccupation with Timbuktu as a closer city of actual gold in the early nineteenth century, caused Great Zimbabwe to be superseded. Only after the suppression of the slave trade and the disillusionment with the actual Timbuktu did the search for a golden fantasy in Africa return to those earlier memories of

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\(^{24}\) Strabo, trans. and ed. Horace Leonard Jones, *The Geography of Strabo, Volume VIII* (London: William Heinemann, 1932), 159-61. There is some question about who Ophelas was, and whether Strabo was possibly referencing an historical companion of Alexander or a mythical companion of Hercules he assumed was real: Duane W. Roller, *Through the Pillars of Herakles: Greco-Roman Exploration of the Atlantic* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 95-99.
the Portuguese – or at least those of the later Portuguese explorers. The change in Portuguese belief in Great Zimbabwe’s origins, from African in 1506 to Solomon in 1549, did not originate from the Portuguese trying to use a Biblical claim to shore up their own rule as Christian representatives. Nor did it come from Africans themselves, as the city’s abandonment passed beyond living memory. Instead, as demonstrated by Scott T. Carroll in the 1980s, the origin of this new idea lay with the Arab Muslim merchants who had established themselves as the dominant economic power after the decline of the trade networks that had sustained Great Zimbabwe. They invented the Solomonic legend to give a historical justification for the new Muslim dominance in the area of the Monomotapa state, as Solomon holds a respected position in Islam as well as Judaism and Christianity. An example of this is evident in the account of the fourteenth century North African globetrotter Ibn Battuta, who recounted as a matter of fact Solomon’s binding of demons and djinn. The irony of the Solomonic legend being employed by subsequent white, Christian settlers originating with Arab Muslims is thick, but also underscores the utility and flexibility of the legend as a political tool.

The Arab conflation of both Abrahamic scripture (particularly in an early form of the ‘civilizing mission’ trope) and market forces to justify their colonial occupation of southern Africa therefore not only predates, but thanks to the instances of southern Africa, informs the European use of those combined tactics. However, their creation of an origin for Great Zimbabwe was not the first example of the Arab merchant-imperialists using such a tactic. Similar claims were central to the Arab domination of the Swahili Coast from the first arrival of

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25 Deckard, 86-87.
Omani merchants in the region. The Arabic legend of Waq al-waq, a Muslim equivalent of Ophir which has also been located in various places across the Indian Ocean periphery, gave the Arabs a legendary justification for establishing their outposts among the city-states and ports of the Swahili Coast. In the case of Kilwa, the original sultanate invented a legendary history to claim descent from both the emir of the Persian city Shiraz and the kingdom of Ethiopia. Within those settlements, the Omani merchants were able to create ‘garden cities’ that were seen as replications of the Edenic paradise of scripture. Great Zimbabwe’s Solomonic origins being an outcrop of Swahili Coast myth-making is a connection that scholars have not made. Nor have they noted how the Omani pattern can be seen to have been continued, in a secularized form, by the British in southern Africa. When architect Sidney D. Adshead designed the new Northern Rhodesian capitol of Lusaka in his 1931 report (with the new city officially opened in 1935), he referred to it as the “first planned garden city in Africa” (although technically the Pinelands suburb of Cape Town beat it). Ironically, the British executed extremely limited colonial planning for the former Omani garden paradise of Zanzibar after it became a British protectorate in 1890.27

Arabic claims in regard to southern Africa became even more fantastical with time. From at least the sixteenth century, the same time as their Solomonic claims of Great Zimbabwe emerged, Arab merchants had created mythical accounts stating that the cities of the Swahili Coast had been established by Arab founders, even though those settlements pre-dated Islam

itself. Kilwa itself provides a key example of this link of Islamic and merchant power. At the same time Kilwa achieved dominance of the gold trade from Great Zimbabwe over Sofala and Mozambique, it also became home of what was then the largest mosque in sub-Saharan Africa; and it is also no coincidence that Kilwa went into decline along with Great Zimbabwe, just prior to the Portuguese arrival. Such was the appeal of Kilwa that Ibn Battuta sailed down the East African coast from Mombasa just to see it, despite it being a significant detour from the continuation of his journey to Yemen. From Yemen, Ibn Battuta continued east, taking with him the same mindset of Islamic imposition that the Omani Arabs had brought to the Swahili Coast. On Sri Lanka, he made pilgrimage to a Hindu shrine on the mountain of Sri Pada, believing that the footprint at the peak belonged to none other than Adam, that the local Hindus worshipped Adam and Eve under different names, and that Alexander the Great had installed the iron chains on the side of the stairway that led up the mountain.

Ibn Battuta’s association of Abrahamic worship with Hinduism was also not unique to him, or even to Arab Muslims, but became a facet of early Christian European exploration of South Asia. In 1497, King Manuel I of Portugal dispatched Vasco da Gama on a mission to sail around the Cape of Good Hope and across the Indian Ocean to reach India, and make contact with the supposed Christian monarch Prester John (who will be discussed more below). In 1498, da Gama reached Mozambique, where he recounted in his journal that the inhabitants were Mohammedans, and their language is the same as that of the Moors…. They are merchants, and have transactions with white Moors [who said ahead was] an island, one half the population of which consisted of Moors and the other half of Christians, who were at war with each other…. Prester John resided not far from this place; that he held many cities along the coast, and that the inhabitants of those cities were great merchants and owned big ships. The residence of Prester John was said to be far in the interior, and

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could be reached only on the back of camels. These Moors had also brought hither two Christian captives from India.  

In other words, even before the first Portuguese claims about Great Zimbabwe, da Gama was reporting a story about a white Abrahamic population in southern Africa, linked to the highly urbanized realm of the mythical Prester John further into the interior – aspects that can be seen as prototypes of the later Ophir legend. Da Gama also mentions the kidnapping of Christians from India by the local Arab trader; while sailing up the Swahili Coast to Mombasa, he further recounts repeatedly discovering additional islands populated by Christians. Upon reaching Mombasa, da Gama’s crew attempted to hold mass with the Christian community of the city, but were prevented from doing so by Muslim treachery. Nevertheless, they did encounter two “almost white” merchants who the Portuguese identified as Christians, partly due to them showing the Portuguese “a paper, an object of their adoration, on which was a sketch of the Holy Ghost.” The Portuguese encountered additional Indian Christian merchants in the port of Malindi, in modern Kenya. The true nature of these Indian Christians is made clear to a modern reader by da Gama’s account of finally reaching the Indian port of Kozhikode (Calicut), which is inhabited by Christians. They are of a tawny complexion. Some of them have big beards and long hair, whilst others clip their hair short or shave the head, merely allowing a tuft to remain on the crown as a sign that they are Christians. They also wear moustaches. They pierce the ears and wear much gold in them. They go naked down to the waist, covering their lower extremities with very fine cotton stuffs. But it is only the most respectable who do this, for the others manage as best they are able.

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32 Ibid, 40-46. It has been suggested that da Gama approached Malindi as a result of an earlier form of imperialism: the arrival of the treasure fleets from Ming-dynasty China under the admiral Zheng He eighty years earlier, with Malindi prospering as a result of Zheng He choosing to take his fleet there over its rival port Mombasa, and as a result being prominent enough to attract the later da Gama. See Tansen Sen, “The impact of Zheng He’s expeditions on Indian Ocean interactions,” Bulletin of SOAS, Vol. 79, No. 3 (2016), 620-21 and Fauvelle, 18-21.
33 Da Gama, 49.
If it were not clear, the ‘Christians’ da Gama encountered along the Swahili Coast were really Indian communities of Hindu merchants, Indian trade relations being mentioned along the northeast coast of Africa at least since Strabo wrote of Indian merchants in Egypt and Ethiopia. It has been suggested that the ‘Holy Ghost’ da Gama was shown an image of was actually the Hindu deity Shiva, and the complex hierarchy he noted among the ‘Christian’ community in Kozhikode was actually a description of the Hindu caste system.

While da Gama and Ibn Battuta both merged (or confused) Hinduism with Abrahamic faiths, the Arab traveler went even further with applying cultural syncretism to landmarks he encountered around the world. One notable example is his integration of Abrahamism, Alexander the Great, and local history in his description of a particular piece of architecture in China: “Between [Guangzhou] and the rampart of Yajuj and Majuj is sixty days’ travel, as I have been told. Wandering infidels live there who eat the sons of Adam if they overcome them [but] I did not meet in [China] anyone who had seen the rampart, or had seen anyone who had seen it.” The “rampart of Yajuj and Majuj” (Gog and Magog) that Ibn Battuta describes is a hybrid generated from several different sources. First and foremost is the Great Wall of China; Ibn Battuta is believed to be the first non-Chinese person to describe the Great Wall, even though he admits to not having seen it personally. Second is the passage from the Quran where the hero Dhul-Qarnayn (“He of the Two Horns”) builds a wall of iron between two mountains to keep out the monsters Gog and Magog, though Allah will destroy the wall to release them again on the

35 Da Gama, 36n116, 49n148; Fauvelle, 240-47.
36 Ibn Battuta, 90, 243-49, 265.
Day of Judgement. Dhul-Qarnayn is traditionally interpreted to be Alexander the Great, the passage forming the basis for the Islamic counterpart of the medieval Christian Alexander Romance. In actual history, at the time of his 323 BCE death Alexander had commissioned several seaborne expeditions to attempt a circumnavigation of Africa in the footsteps of the earlier Phoenician voyages, possibly as a prelude to attempt to expand his empire there, but the planning of them seem to have been abandoned after his death and they played little, if any, role in the various Alexander Romances.

Ibn Battuta’s contemporary peripatetic, the Englishman Sir John Mandeville, also demonstrated ways the Alexander Romance was adapted by popular medieval writers to fit into their travelogues. Although he also recounted visiting China within several years of Ibn Battuta, Mandeville’s account does not mention the Great Wall, but he does mention seeing Alexander’s “Gates of Iron,” relocating them to the pass of Derbent in the Caucasus Mountains, and stating that Alexander built them to control passage to and from India rather than holding back monsters (and locating it not too far from where Mandeville located the resting place of the still-visible Noah’s Ark). Ibn Battuta repeats a common Arabic myth, popularized in Flavius Josephus’s Antiquities of the Jews, to identify the Egyptian pyramids as the pillars of wisdom built by Enoch (who, in line with Muslim tradition, he conflates with the ancient Greek Hermes Trismegistus

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39 However, there is a popular account in the Muslim Alexander Romance of Alexander being lowered into the harbor of Alexandria in a glass barrel to observe the sea life, something much later Europeans attributed to Alexander inventing the diving bell. See Roller, 92-104.
and the Muslim Prophet Idris) to preserve antediluvian knowledge from the angels in the Flood of Noah. The eleventh century CE Persian scholar al-Biruni added to the myth with his claim that the water mark of the Flood and the effects of its waves on the stone could still be seen halfway up the Pyramids (presumably referring to the dislodged limestone casing stones).^40^ Mandeville instead saw the Pyramids as the Biblical granaries built by the Prophet Joseph (no relation to Joseph of Arimathea or Josephus) while in the service of Pharaoh, an interpretation that was just one of several that had their origins in Christian pilgrims of late antiquity and were reinforced by the writings of both Christian and secular historians.\(^41\) A notable early example is Bishop Gregory of Tours in the late sixth century, who claimed that the granaries of Joseph were still visible in Egypt, just as the wheel ruts from the chariots sent after Moses by Pharaoh during the Hebrew Exodus were still clearly visible on the Egyptian shore of the Red Sea.\(^42\) Gregory and Mandeville’s belief that the Pyramids were the Granaries of Joseph were repeated by African-American doctor Ben Carson during the 2016 Republican primary campaign, helping him briefly became the only candidate in the primary to eclipse Donald Trump in terms of approval ratings among registered Republicans. Perhaps based on his expertise on enormous construction works, Trump appointed Carson to be Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, during which he gave speeches claiming that African-American poverty was simply a “state of mind” and that the African slave trade was simply a type of

^40^ Ibn Battuta, 17-18; Flavius Josephus, trans. William Whiston, The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), 32-33. Although ‘Sir John Mandeville’ almost certainly was an invented figure and drew on most, if not all, of his book from other travelogues rather than his firsthand experience, it is still useful to refer to him as ‘Mandeville’ and of his work as an actual travelogue, as that is the way Western Europeans perceived it for centuries, during which it was extremely influential in shaping, among other things, the view of Islam and Prester John. See Suzanne Conklin Akbari, Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100-1450 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 52-66.


American immigration story.\textsuperscript{43} Strabo also set off a cottage industry of attempting to locate the ruins of the destroyed cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and even the fossilized remains of Lot’s wife.\textsuperscript{44}

For both medieval-era Muslims and Christians, combining their interpretations of the Old Testament with the appropriation of the legacy of Alexander provided a justification for imperial adventures, whether in the form of pilgrimage, exploration, market expansion, or simple travel; but in the context of Africa, the Jewish connection in particular was useful. From the Old Testament there was the Hebrew captivity in Egypt, and more recently, the fact that Luso-Jewish (and New Christian converso) merchants had played a central role in the establishment of the Transatlantic slave trade via the Portuguese and Dutch empires, and in whose context the Portuguese discovery of Great Zimbabwe had occurred.\textsuperscript{45} Blending the Old Testament with myth was the legend of the Ten Lost Tribes, the supposed descendants of Israelites deported from the Holy Land during the Assyrian Captivity of the eighth century BCE.\textsuperscript{46} The fate of those supposed tribes has been debated ever since. Since the mid-ninth century CE, the account of an individual named Eldad began to circulate, placing the location of one of the Lost Tribes, the Danites, in East Africa, as the conquerors and rulers of the land of Kush, a predecessor of the Aksumite kingdom from which Ethiopia emerged.\textsuperscript{47} The association of the Lost Tribes with


\textsuperscript{46} The Bible: 2 Kings 17:6.

Africa remained strong into the period of the start of the European circumnavigation of the continent. In 1499, the Florentine merchant Girolamo Sernigi, residing in Lisbon, wrote letters back to Florence describing the Vasco da Gama’s discoveries, based on the stories of da Gama’s crew on their return to Lisbon. One set of information came from a navigator the expedition had discovered in Kozhikode, who was apparently a Jew who had been born in Alexandria. According to the crewmembers’ recounting of the Alexandrian Jew, “He says that there are not many Jews there; and that there is a King of the Jews of the ten tribes of the Jewish people which went out of Egypt.”\(^4\) In this, either Sernigi or the crew he heard the story from appear to be confused, believing the origin of the Lost Tribes to be the Exodus of Moses rather than the Assyrian Captivity.

Centuries before the time of da Gama’s expedition, the mythical account of Eldad and the Danite kingdom in Africa would find a parallel in the myth of the realm of Prester John – a kingdom which became associated with Ethiopia in the thirteenth century, when a new ruling dynasty invented a mythical Solomonic heritage and reliance on Judaic symbolism to justify their seizure of power.\(^4\) Prester John and its association with Ethiopia will be discussed more in chapter three. For now, the myth is of particular importance for the fact that, as stated above, the search for Prester John was one of the main stated goals for the initial Portuguese desire to circumnavigate Africa, as a result of which they first encountered the stories of Great Zimbabwe. But for the Victorian British in particular, the association of Solomon and the Israelites with southern Africa had particular resonance as a justification for imperial authority. If Great

\(^4\) For a brief history of the Solomonic dynasty of Ethiopia, see Richard Pankhurst, The Ethiopians (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 53-60 or Northrup, Seven Myths, 25-30. For a brief history of the Prester John legend, see Northrup, Seven Myths, 30-34. For a substantial overview of the Prester John legend, see Silverberg.
Zimbabwe had been built by the ancient Israelites, then Britain had a claim to the region that superseded any other European country, let alone the native Africans – because to the Victorians, the ancient Israelites had been none other than the ancestors of the British themselves, and British settlement of southern Africa was therefore a homecoming instead of a colonial settlement.

**From Christ to Camelot:**

By the time the Scramble for Africa began in the 1880s, the history of Jews in Britain had gone through several cycles of gains and setbacks. King Edward I formally expelled all Jews from England in 1290 following a century of pogroms. The national expulsion was the first such in Europe, and Geraldine Heng has argued that institutional anti-Semitism was not only pioneered by the English state, but central to an early formation of English national identity. Jews were only formally allowed back into England in 1657. In 1753, an act of Parliament was passed allowing for naturalization of Jews, but it engendered widespread popular antisemitism, and it was repealed the next year. Following Catholic emancipation in 1829, there were repeated attempts to pass Jewish emancipation throughout the 1830s, which failed due to opposition from the Tories and the Church of England. Jews finally were granted the right to be elected to Parliament in 1858; Benjamin Disraeli, longstanding Tory leader and occasional Prime Minister from 1868-81 had been born a Jew but had been baptized into the Church of England at the age of twelve. Although British-born Jews were generally accepted and no longer had any formal legal restrictions by that time, nearly 150,000 Ashkenazi Jews fleeing pogroms in the Russian Empire began to emigrate to Britain from the 1880s to the early 1900s, leading to new waves of antisemitism, especially in the East End of London where many settled. Notably, in 1903,
Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain and Zionist leader Theodor Herzl considered a solution in the form of the “Uganda Scheme,” the resettlement of these Jewish refugees from Britain to a new Jewish homeland to be created from territory of British East Africa (in modern Kenya, despite the name of the plan).  

While the perception of contemporary Jews by the Victorian Establishment was mixed at best, the commanding heights of British society had a different perception of Jews as a concept – especially the ancient Hebrew Israelites. The individual who in 1657 allowed Jews to return to England openly worship was Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell, the radical Puritan. The reason his regime gave reason for their return was a mix of the period’s religious fervor by the Puritans who believed the Jews’ return (and eventual conversion) was a necessary component for the eminent Second Coming, as well as a practical matter of geopolitics, ensuring that Iberian Jewish merchants fleeing persecution in the Catholic kingdoms would choose England over the Netherlands for their new home. Cromwell and his supporters also saw the Commonwealth they had established as being a parallel to ancient Israel during the reign of the Judges. Puritans on both sides of the Atlantic considered whether Native Americans might have originated from some of the Lost Tribes of Israel; their ‘rediscovery’ being seen as divine providence enabling them to be converted, again fulfilling the need to convert the Jews for the Second Coming.

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52 Thomas Thorowgood, *Jewes in America, or Probabilities that the Americans are Jewes* (London, 1650); Tudor Parfitt, *The Lost Tribes of Israel: The History of a Myth* (London: Phoenix, 2003), 66-114. For an overview of how Spanish, Dutch, English, and American scholars from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries attempted to link
Specific ties of the Israelites to southern Africa were also still in mind; no less than primary Puritan polemicist John Milton, in his 1667 *Paradise Lost*, identified Ophir with the port of Sofala.\(^{53}\) On the other side of the Interregnum’s political divide, the Royalists opposing Cromwell saw both the executed King Charles I and his exiled son Charles II as ‘Davidic’ kings.\(^{54}\)

For seventeenth century followers of both the Puritans and their Church of England opponents, therefore, England and the English had a connection with the ancient Israelites beyond the other European kingdoms. By the nineteenth century, this association had only deepened, and moved beyond confessionally-driven concerns. The view, typified by William Blake’s 1808 poem “Jerusalem,” was that none other than Jesus himself had visited Britain during his unaccounted-for teenaged years, accompanying his uncle, the tin merchant Joseph of Arimathea. According to this legend, after Christ’s death, Joseph returned to Britain bearing the cup that had caught his blood during the Crucifixion and establishing a church at Glastonbury that later became associated with Glastonbury Abbey. The Joseph myth would become one of the strands woven into Arthurian legend, with Glastonbury becoming associated with the island of Avalon where the dying Arthur was taken to sleep before his eventual return, and the cup becoming the Holy Grail. As a result of the Joseph legend, the medieval English could claim to be the first true Christian nation, between the blessing upon it by the young Christ it had sheltered and the construction of the ‘first church’ by Joseph. This general legend became known

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as British Israelism, and while never formal doctrine of the Church of England, was widely assumed and celebrated by the Victorian-era Church and members of the Establishment.\textsuperscript{55}

The assumption that Joseph, a Middle Eastern tin merchant, would be familiar with Britain in the first century – decades before its conquest by the Roman Empire in 43 CE – itself builds off a secular counterpart to the British Israelist myth, that of Phoenician merchants having visited Cornwall to mine or trade for tin. Up until the early twenty-first century, the consensus of historians was that Phoenicians had established trade centers in Cornwall and the Scilly Islands to distribute Celtic-mined tin across Europe. In reality, this was based on a misreading of the first century BCE \textit{Historical Library} of Diodorus Siculus and \textit{Geography} of Strabo, both of whom specified that it was actually British Celtic merchants who distributed Cornish tin for sale in Gaul, where the Phoenicians then purchased it and carried it across the Mediterranean to resell.\textsuperscript{56}

No archeological search has found any evidence for a Phoenician presence in Britain. The sole remotely-Phoenician link is a single graffito written in the Phoenician alphabet by a Roman soldier from North Africa, who was stationed in modern Wales in the first or second century CE.\textsuperscript{57}

The reason this belief in Phoenician contact remained pervasive despite a lack of evidence was partly to give the United Kingdom – and specifically England – a connection to a more traditionally ‘Classical’ Mediterranean civilization. Phoenicians seemed to work to this


\textsuperscript{57} Quinn, 177.
end, both due to their historical status as builders of a large trade-based oceanic empire – a suitable parallel to the British Empire – and their role, via their colony Carthage, as an enemy of the Roman Empire that was particularly venerated by Britain’s own enemy, France. The comparison also served another purpose, however, in enabling the English to rewrite and invert the island’s historical domination by Celtic peoples. In this view, it was the Phoenicians, rather than the Celts, who were the true builders of Stonehenge and, in the words of the early archaeologist of Great Zimbabwe Richard Nicklin Hall, the ones who “left the memorials standing to this day of their nature-worship in Ireland, Scotland, England, and even in Iceland, and who gave Spain its earliest history.”

This view was a suitably ‘scientific,’ Victorian updating of medieval attempts to explain Stonehenge that had ranged from Gog and Magog, the wizard Merlin, or (in a case of reverse-colonialism) giants bringing boulders over from Africa. Others went even further and claimed that the Celts themselves were fully legendary, and Britain had therefore passed directly from the Phoenicians to the Romans to the English. For example, in 1590 John Twyne euhemeristically claimed the above belief in African giants building Stonehenge was a distorted memory of its Phoenician architects; into the late Victorian era, Mycenean origins for Stonehenge became to be considered following superficial architectural similarities uncovered by Heinrich Schliemann’s excavations of the ancient Greek site. Wilmot, for his part, agreed that “Stonehenge is a Phoenician temple” and as such that Great Zimbabwe had no more been built by native Africans than Stonehenge had been built by those supposedly

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58 See also a 2015 debate between then-Mayor of London Boris Johnson and historian Mary Beard, where Johnson claimed that Britain was the modern heir to classical Greece while the European Union was the modern heir of Rome, thereby justifying a (then-hypothetical) British exist of the EU: iqsquared, “Greece vs Rome, with Boris Johnson and Mary Beard,” YouTube, January 18, 2016 (accessed June 5, 2019), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2k448JqQv18.

“mythical inhabitants of Great Britain”.$^{60}$ As late as 1926, the British Egyptologist Arthur Weigall claimed not only that Egyptian beads had been found at Stonehenge thereby proving British trade with Egypt since 1300 BCE, but that he himself had excavated a tin vase in Upper Egypt dating from 1200 BCE, which he believed originated from Cornwall.$^{61}$ Weigall’s claim was a coup de grace; thanks to him, the Phoenician belief even allowed the ancient Britons to contribute to Egypt at its height, as opposed to the British protectorate it was at the time of Weigall’s writing.

The longstanding attempt by the English to give themselves a Phoenician ancestry in order to excise themselves from Britain’s Celtic past was also mirrored by a longstanding association of Asian peoples with the Celts, primarily the Irish. This linkage went as far back as the medieval period, when Irish incorporated Hindu and Arab legends into their Arthurian myths. These Orientalist appropriations were maintained by the Irish leaders of the Celtic Revival in the mid nineteenth century, as part of the cultural renaissance mirroring the development of Irish political nationalism.$^{62}$ Across the Irish sea, Welsh legends associated with Arthur, such as *Culhwch and Olwen*, had established Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table as veterans of campaigning in Africa symbolically extending British rule to that continent as early as the eleventh century.$^{63}$ Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *History of the Kings of Britain* claimed that Ireland had been conquered by the African warlord Gormund, who was subsequently hired by the

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$^{63}$ Higham, 238.
Saxons and Franks to invade Britain with 160,000 African warriors, defeating the British king Kareticus. By the Tudor era, while English historians had begun to acknowledge the ancient Celts as the predecessors of modern Britons, their perception of the Celts had begun to be shaped more by romantic depictions of Algonquin Native American ‘noble savages’ than by actual historical evidence of the British Celts.

This cultural association of the Irish with the colonized peoples of the British Empire paralleled political justifications for British rule of Ireland that were based on the same association of the Irish with Britain’s American, Asian, and African subjects. In an 1881 debate in the House of Lords on an (ultimately unsuccessful) Irish land reform act, Robert Bulwer-Lytton, 1st Earl of Lytton – just having returned from serving as the colonial Viceroy of India – based his opposition to distributing land from the English to the Irish due to race theories stemming from his belief in the invented Phoenician past. During the debate over Prime Minister William Gladstone’s 1886 Home Rule Bill, the Conservative Lord Salisbury argued that the Irish as incapable of self-rule as the Khoikhoi of southern Africa. Nor was this the only link between the Irish and Africa, as during the Home Rule debate Gladstone was accused by Salisbury of abandoning Ireland to the Catholics just as he had abandoned General Charles George Gordon to the Mahdists at the 1885 Siege of Khartoum. Gordon’s death more directly scuttled the Home Rule Bill by leading to a successful vote of no confidence in Gladstone’s government.

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64 Geoffrey of Monmouth, 201-02.
The British use of their own African imperialism to stifle Irish nationalism ended up backfiring due to its offering ways for Irish and African opponents of British rule to work together. Most directly, Irish nationalist volunteers fought with the Afrikaners during both Boer Wars, while also allowing for an equation of English treatment of the Irish and the Boer republics by anti-war Liberals such as the MP John Morley and the Liberal leader (and future Prime Minister) Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, himself a Scottish native. Those same Afrikaners supported by the Irish also had their own variant of British Israelism, not only based on the belief that God had granted them southern Africa due to it being the location of Ophir. Afrikaner theologians such as Willem Postma argued that the migration from the Great Trek of 1835 onwards, when the Afrikaners fled into the African interior and established the Boer republics to escape rising British emigration to the Cape Colony, was the modern equivalent of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt.

The Afrikaner association with the Irish was not the only factor causing the nineteenth century English rejection of Celtic achievements; nor were the rise of Irish nationalism and the associated Irish Home Rule movement of the time. The English rejection of Irish history also came on the heel of the exploration of the Pacific islands by James Cook, which had helped cause a reappraisal of ‘island races’ as being inferior in development to continental races; as a result, Irish critics of Cook sympathized with the Pacific islanders and their mutual vulnerability to English. The English rejection of the Celts therefore makes sense in this context. Some of

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69 Hexham, 46-52; Turda and Quine, 65-66.

the earliest English poems depicted the astonishment of Anglo-Saxons at the immense ruins of their new island home of Britain – though the most famous example, the ninth century poem “The Ruin,” describes the Anglo-Saxon astonishment of the Roman ruins of Bath, as opposed to prehistoric Celtic monuments. Some of the lines even evoke later British awe at Great Zimbabwe, such as the anonymous Saxon author noting that “the work of giants is decaying [and] the earth possesses the mighty builders, perished and fallen, the hard grasp of earth, until a hundred generations of people have departed.”

However, the English Victorians chose the Phoenicians to be their adopted predecessors for reasons beyond the Phoenicians’ supposed Irish ancestry, the English memories of Roman ruins, or the English love of the Joseph legend. As mentioned above, the Victorian English and the Biblical Phoenicians were both – at least in the eyes of the former – great empire-builders whose realms were based on the twin pillars of merchant trade and seafaring prowess. To quote Wilmot, the Cape Colony historian, parliamentarian, and Rhodes ally:

What the Great British Empire is to the nineteenth century Phoenicia was to the distant ages when Solomon’s Temple was built at Jerusalem, and Hiram, King of Tyre, sent out expeditions to the distant shores of India, Arabia, and South-eastern Africa…. In all history there is no greater analogy than that between the Empire of Britain in the nineteenth century and that of Phoenicia at its culminating point of glory, six hundred years before the birth of our Saviour.

It was therefore no coincidence that, in Wilmot’s worldview, the Phoenician city-state of Tyre reached the pinnacle of its greatness at the same time its traders reached Cornwall, but rather a sign of just how Britain was historically poised to inherit the symbolic reigns of empire.

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72 Wilmot, 49, 58.
from Phoenicia.\textsuperscript{73} This alignment was reflected by the close friendship of King David of Israel with King Hiram of Tyre, a friendship which continued between Hiram and David’s son Solomon. This alignment of personal friendship and state alliance included Hiram helping Solomon build the Temple and both countries being allied in exploration. “It will thus be seen,” according to Wilson, “that, by the close alliance of the Tyrian power, at its acme of greatness, with that of the Hebrew nation at its most prosperous period, great results naturally followed.”\textsuperscript{74}

In this analogy, I believe Wilson clearly intended not only for the Phoenicians of Tyre to be the British, but for the Israelites of David and Solomon to be the British-descended, but politically-independent, settlers of southern Africa.

The British Israelist concept finally began to decline in the late nineteenth century partly due to a mix of rising anti-Semitism and Celtic nationalism – not only Irish, but also Cornish, with their laying claim to Phoenician identity making it difficult for the English to continue to do so, let alone form a pan-British identity around the Phoenicians. As will be discussed in chapter four, this shift happened in the context of the Rhodesian settlers consciously patterning themselves as being more English than the English back home, and symbolically appropriating their forfeited imperial authority after World War II. The decline of the belief in links to Israelites and Phoenicians also was due to another development happening at the same time: the arrival of scientific archaeology in Britain, arriving from Scandinavia in the 1850s to Scotland, before diffusing into England.\textsuperscript{75} By the end of the nineteenth century, scientific archaeology had led to British historians accepting the “invasion wave” idea of periodization in Britain, and therefore an acceptance that early European civilization had been influenced from the Near East.

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid, 65.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid, 66-69.
\textsuperscript{75} Champion, 461-62.
This professionalization throughout the later nineteenth century came in the context of the British archeological field being pioneered by members of antiquarian societies, which tended to consist of what historian Philippa Levine termed an ‘intellectual aristocracy’ educated at the universities of the time, and thus reinforcing the supremacy of the English over the British Celtic populations, the aristocracy over those not ennobled, and members of the Church of England over Dissenters, Catholics, and Jews. British archaeology in the Near East and Mediterranean in particular was done in the context of public-private partnerships between the members of the learned societies and the British state, particularly the lobbying of the Colonial and Foreign Offices and the ability of the Royal Navy to offer protection and transportation to and from archaeological sites. Britain’s imperial activities in the eastern Mediterranean and Near East at this time shaped British archaeologists’ perception of past empires; this particularly was important as early pioneers in the archaeology of Great Zimbabwe, such as Theodore Bent, David Randall-MacIver, and Gertrude Caton-Thompson had begun their archaeological work in the late nineteenth century in Malta and Egypt, absorbing the assumptions of the field dominant at the time.76

It is clear, therefore, that there were multiple strains of alternative archaeological theories, British legends, and scientific dogma that would have an impact on how even professional archaeologists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries would interpret

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Great Zimbabwe. But the first person to actually conduct an excavation of Great Zimbabwe was no professional archaeologist. Richard Nicklin Hall was an English journalist, who in 1902 began digging at Great Zimbabwe at the behest of Rhodes. Hall’s initial studies were so destructive to the archaeological record that even the BSAC saw fit to remove him from his position as custodian of the ruins in 1904, despite the fact that his ‘findings’ reinforced Rhodes’ own view that the city had been built by explorers from Egypt or the Levant, not native Africans. Hall published his findings in 1905, the same year that David Randall-MacIver began a more thorough archeological study. Despite the extensive damage Hall’s excavations did to the historical record, Randall-MacIver concluded that Great Zimbabwe had been built not by ancient Israelites or Phoenicians, but by native Africans in the approximate time of the European Middle Ages. Although this would remain the consensus of professional archaeologists – European and American, as well as South African and Rhodesian – from that time forward, the popular consensus, especially among the settler communities of southern Africa, remained hostile. As John Hobbis Harris, an advocate for Rhodesian political independence, wrote:

> At the discussion upon the antiquity of the ruins held at the Royal Geographic Society Dr. Randall Maciver [sic] rather bluntly dismissed the theories of Bent, [Bent’s surveyor R. M. W.] Swan and Hall, and gave to some of the evidence a date subsequent to the sixteenth century. The difficulty one experiences in reading Dr. Randall Maciver’s [sic] paper is its inadequacy, whilst the somewhat arbitrary tone repels rather than attracts one to his views.

Harris’s twofold objections rested on anti-intellectual populism (“the somewhat arbitrary tone repels rather than attracts one to his views”) and a dismissal of Randall-MacIver as a

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representative of a cosmopolitan British elite arrogant in their distance from the Africa the Rhodesians know intimately due to their proximity. This contest between the populist Harris and academic Randall-MacIver would also be mirrored in Arthur Conan Doyle’s 1912 novel The Lost World, where the relatable protagonist Professor Challenger would face off against the intellectual Professor Summerlee during the expedition of British explorers attempting to reach the titular lost world, a journey that will be discussed more next chapter.\textsuperscript{79} These rejections of a British account of Great Zimbabwe prefigure how Rhodesians in the 1960s – both the endorsing the Central African Federation, and their opponents advocating for Rhodesian self-rule – would reject British attempts to impose racial equality on Rhodesia, as will be discussed in chapter four, as well as modern right-wing conspiracy thought, as briefly discussed in the introduction.

Hall, being a journalist and a supporter of both the BSAC and existing British racial and imperial theories, excavated Great Zimbabwe not to find evidence on the history of southern African natives, but to shape whatever he found into the mold of ‘evidence’ he had already decided he would find – evidence of Biblical history, even a Biblical monarch. In these goals for exploring southern Africa, Hall was not the first. Centuries earlier, the Portuguese circumnavigation of Africa – an achievement that would not only set the stage for Portuguese colonization in Africa and Asia, but also the establishment of the transatlantic slave trade – was primarily motivated by a desire to search for another mythical Christian monarch, Prester John. The motivations underlying the pseudohistorical theories of Hall, Rhodes, and their compatriots will be the subject of chapter two, while the Portuguese searches for Prester John – among other imperial projects – and their prefiguring of settler attitudes in southern Africa will be explored in chapter three. But the impact of those Portuguese narratives on searches for lost civilizations can

at least partly be explained by the specific nature of early Portuguese exploration of southeastern and central Africa in the sixteenth century. These aspects included missionary efforts and creolization that were unique to the Portuguese in contrast to the Dutch and English settlers of the region, while also serving as a cornerstone of the Arab Muslim merchants from the Swahili Coast. Although scholars such as Linda M. Heywood and John K. Thornton have placed more emphasis on the Portuguese creolization successes in southwest central Africa, there were, despite the setbacks involving Gonçalo da Silveira, still successes – but successes which underscored the relative Portuguese weakness in southeastern Africa compared to the southwest.

Early in the sixteenth century, the chief Inhamunda, a tributary of the Mutapa, made an alliance with the Portuguese based at Sofala, and was the first African in the region to receive firearms. As a result, he was able to consolidate his rule in the area around Sofala, reduce his political reliance on the Mutapa, and also reduce the expansion of the Portuguese. By the end of the century, it was the Portuguese paying tribute to the Mutapa for the right to trade in the area, particularly for access to the vital gold trade along the Zambezi River. It was along the Zambezi where the Portuguese established the prazo system, where native African women married Portuguese and Goan Indian men. The prazo estates, while part of the Portuguese imperial system, also were similar to local African chiefdoms, serving as a blending of the two societies. Due to the high mortality rate for the Portuguese men, their already-mixed children tended to marry natives, therefore increasingly Africanizing both the prazo population and their socio-political allegiances, as well as leading to the longer-living women achieving increasing power within the prazo system. The result of this was evident by the end of the seventeenth century, when in Sofala, the small Portuguese population lived in grass huts, while the Indian and Muslim communities flourished in the town. In 1856, David Livingstone visited the Portuguese fortress
of Sena along the Zambezi, and noted that the local native Ngoni population considered the Portuguese to be “a conquered tribe,” to the degree that the fort’s mixed population paying tribute to the Ngoni despite being officially told not to by the colonial administration of Portuguese East Africa. I argue that it is clear the ‘lessons’ of the prazo system’s failures in Portuguese colonization can be interpreted as serving as an additional brick in the foundation of the British belief in a lost white civilization in Central African connected to Great Zimbabwe (just as Stanley’s search for Livingstone’s own lost outpost of white civilization in Central Africa can also be seen as a brick in that foundation).

**Conclusion:**

Across the British-imposed border of Zimbabwe and South Africa is an ethnic group called the Lemba, whose religious and social practices contain elements that to some are suggestive of Judaism. Among South Africans, Paul Kruger was the first to make such a connection during the time he served as president of the Transvaal Republic. As a result, even into the 1990s the Lemba were commonly referred to as “Kruger’s Jews” by Afrikaner South Africans. However, at least by the 1970s, South African academics believed that – predating by a decade Scott T. Carroll’s connection of the Solomonic legend of Great Zimbabwe with Arab Muslims – the ‘Jewish’ connection to the Lemba actually came from when Arab and Swahili traders from Karangaland, north of the Limpopo River, intermarried with native African women in the area of modern Zimbabwe.

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In the early 1990s, Tudor Parfitt, a professor of Jewish studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies who had previously studied Jews in Ethiopia, studied the Lemba, with those he interviewed describing their oral history to him. The Lemba Parfitt spoke to told him how their Jewish ancestors had emigrated from the area of modern Yemen, first to Ethiopia and from there to modern Zimbabwe, in the sixth century BCE; that they had brought the brought the Ark of the Covenant with them from Israel during Solomon’s reign and hid it in the Soutpansberg Mountains of South Africa; and that they had built Great Zimbabwe on behalf of Solomon. Parfitt found at least some of their claims credible – including their Jewish ancestry, origins in Yemen, link to the Falashas of Ethiopia, and connection to Great Zimbabwe. Notably, however, he described his support for the Lemba claims alongside his childhood love of H. Rider Haggard’s 1885 novel *King Solomon’s Mines* and John Buchan’s 1910 novel *Prester John* (both authors, notably, serving in the British colonial administration in southern Africa) without considering how they might have fueled his credulity – or, further, how the Lemba themselves may have shaped their own claims to capitalize off the prestige such an association would give them in the eyes of the settler rulers. Michael F. Robinson described how Kabaka Mutesa I (r. 1856-84) of Buganda (in modern Uganda) did just that, in synthesizing the Bugandan creation myth with information from the Book of Genesis brought first by Arab traders and then by British explorers, so that he could claim to later British administrators that his ruling family was descended from Noah.82

Into the present day, Parfitt has continued to publish books which include his support for the Lemba, even though other scholars have dismissed the Lemba claims (or at least Parfitt’s

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literalist interpretations of them), with a 2014 study of DNA testing also finding no evidence of Lemba descent from Semitic peoples.\textsuperscript{83} Despite this, there is some merit in Parfitt’s suggestion that “Great Zimbabwe civilisation should perhaps be understood at least to some extent in the context of coastal culture, of mediaeval Indian Ocean culture.”\textsuperscript{84} The merit does not come in the way that Parfitt meant the term. For Parfitt, the “mediaeval Indian Ocean culture” he spoke of was an African civilization that had gained the knowledge to build and sustain Great Zimbabwe through its interactions with cultures from outside the continent, such as the Jewish ancestors of the Lemba and the Arab traders – at its core, simply a reframing of the ‘foreign builder’ belief in Great Zimbabwe that was professionally disproven ninety years before Parfitt wrote. Instead, the merit to the concept comes from how it might be modified to an “Indian Ocean Creole ideology” with Great Zimbabwe as an eastward terminus, rather than its (decidedly African) builders being at its center. In this context, Great Zimbabwe served as a place where the native African polities, Arab merchants, and Portuguese missionary-explorers interacted, resulting in an Indian Ocean Creole community. The specific nature, location, and history of Great Zimbabwe in that initial period of discovery by outsiders allowed it to be a place where imperial ideology and scriptural history interpretations fueled by the belief in the Alexander Romance and Abrahamic eschatology could first be developed, and then transmitted to the Portuguese for use elsewhere in the Age of Exploration, and then from the Portuguese to other Europeans, specifically the Dutch (later Afrikaners) and English (later British).

\textsuperscript{84} Parfitt, \textit{Journey to the Vanished City}, 212.
The mix of Classical history, modern colonial history, and outright fantasy forming conceptions of Great Zimbabwe can be seen in the works of the English journalist David Ker. In 1886, Ker interviewed Henry Morton Stanley on his expedition across Central Africa, including his claims to have identified the Classical Mountains of the Moon and the discovery of a lost white tribe in the area of modern Uganda. Ker subsequently published a novel, *Lost Among White Africans*, drawing influence not only on Stanley’s claims and the prior *King Solomon’s Mines*, but also the Portuguese prazos. The plot involves a fictionalized version of Stanley finding a white tribe along the Aruwimi River in the eastern Congo, the Fidaserra. Their name turns out to be a corruption of the Portuguese phrase ‘Filha de Serra,’ as they are descended from the first Portuguese settlers in Mozambique who had gradually adopted African customs. The novel also includes a missionary, Mr. Goodman, seen as a fictionalized version of the Alexander Merensky who helped Mauch reach Great Zimbabwe.85 As with Ker’s novel in its drawing on a blend of history and fantasy to argue for white tribes in Central Africa, the concept of the Indian Ocean Creole builds from several established concepts. The first is Ira Berlin’s original 1996 description of creole development amongst African populations transported to the American colonies, as well as Heywood and Thornton’s subsequent 2007 use of Berlin to analyze Luso-African creolization in the area of modern Angola. It also builds on Surekha Davies’ 2016 argument on how the Age of Exploration was what finally caused unbridgeable “fault-lines” to appear between competing Classical and Biblical explanations among early modern European academics for the differences in the human form, and as a resulting ultimately leading to the perceived scope of human history to shrink. And finally, it builds from Gwyn Campbell’s 2010 proposal to reject the existing Eurocentric division of Africa (Northern, Western, Sub-Saharan,

etc.) in favor of a division that would identify the entire east coast of the continent as an “Indian Ocean Africa” (IOA) integrated into the “Indian Ocean World” (IOW), which he argued was the true center of the original global economy, rather than earlier models rooted in either East Asia or the European empires. These ideas underpinning the concept of the Great Zimbabwe-based Indian Ocean Creole and the factors that fueled its development and spread – creolization and an African diaspora due to a European colonialism founded on applying Classical and Biblical interpretations over indigenous history – serve as a good capsule summary of the overall issues explored in this chapter, on why the British notions of Great Zimbabwe being built by ancient whites developed, and the combination of metropolitan and imperial factors that the legend built off of. It also sets the stage for the rest of the dissertation, as it will build off of those foundational claims. But most directly, it leads into the next chapter, which explores how the institutions of British rule – in the form of the British South Africa Company – established themselves formally in the territory around Great Zimbabwe, and how their interpretations of the ruins helped solidify their claim to what soon became known as Rhodesia.

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Chapter 2: Company Rule

“The world is a great mart, my Holly, where all things are for sale to whom who bids the highest in the currency of our desires.”

-Ayesha, She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed, to Professor Horace Holly, *She: A History of Adventure* (H. Rider Haggard, 1887)\(^1\)

“Rhodesia is a happy name for that land of piracy and pillage, and puts the right stain upon it.”

-Mark Twain, *Following the Equator* (1897)\(^2\)

**Introduction:**

The lesson of the prazo system’s failures, discussed at the end of the prior chapter, illustrated the degeneration of the white race in Africa – for if the modern Portuguese settlers could have fallen so far, then the ancient Israelites could have done so as well. But it also showed that the blame had to rest with the metropole, for if Portugal had maintained its strong authority, its settlers – and their whiteness – would not have been lost. One metropolitan Portuguese who recognized this was Major Joaquim Carlos Paiva de Andrada. A Portuguese artillery officer who repeatedly attempted to become the Portuguese Cecil Rhodes, de Andrada wanted to reverse the decline of the Portuguese empire in southeastern Africa, but his efforts all failed due to funding. One such effort in 1884 was tellingly named the Ophir Company, linking the emerging belief in the existence of Solomon’s outpost in southern Africa with an attempt to expand Portuguese territory in the region. The funding for the Ophir Company came from Sir William Mackinnon, Scottish founder of the Imperial British East Africa Company. Unfortunately, de Andrada was unable to secure funding from any other Portuguese, causing the Ophir Company to fail. For the

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\(^1\) H. Rider Haggard, *She* (Rockville, MD: Wildside Press, 2007), 125.

modern Portuguese, the luster of Solomon’s gold was no longer alluring enough to inspire investments of actual gold.\(^3\)

This final failure of the Portuguese to capitalize on their earlier encounters with Great Zimbabwe would mark the departure of their time as the colonial stewards of Ophir, setting the stage for Rhodes and his followers to make their mark on Solomon’s legend and the ruins his ghost haunted – and the settlers of the colony Rhodes named after himself would soon have their own opinions of the lost city of Great Zimbabwe. This chapter will cover the development of white self-rule in Southern Rhodesia and the evolving use of the Great Zimbabwe Ophir legend as a parallel to reinforce settler ideology. While the vast majority of Rhodesian settlers shared the general assumption that native Africans could not have built the city, specific hypotheses were highlighted at various times so as to align with contemporary developments in Rhodesian politics. These included comparison of the builders of the city with the diamond miners of South Africa in the period when Cecil Rhodes’ British South Africa Company (BSAC) formally established white rule over the region in 1890, and their elimination by native revolt during the Matabele Wars of 1893-97; claims that the builders of the city had been Israelites who rebelled against the Egyptian Pharaoh during the period of settler opposition to Company rule, ending in 1923; and promotion of an ‘invasion theory’ as explanation of the downfall of the white architects during the period of Southern Rhodesian opposition to the Central African Federation (CAF) of 1953-63.

This political development in Southern Rhodesia was reflected in fiction of the day, not only in the British world but in the rising power of the United States. The romantic story of Rhodes, the colony bearing his name, and the lost ruins located within it inspired novelists, and

the output of fiction writers in turn influenced political discourse in both Britain and Rhodesia. Rhodesia’s political development in the era of the 1890s-1950s also occurred in the context of dramatic political change within the United Kingdom, including the rise of the Labour Party and Celtic nationalism, European integration, the start of the Cold War, decolonization after World War II, and rising opposition to South African apartheid. These changes allowed far-right English Conservatives to feel at odds with the British state, just as the Rhodesian settlers began to feel threatened by the Labour governments of 1945-51 and 1964-70, as well as the more moderate Conservatives, both in opposition and in government, of the late 1950s and 60s. The Rhodesian government and the right-wing Conservatives in the UK found common cause with each other, which allowed the Rhodesians to depict themselves as true supporters of English values that by the 1960s they saw as being attacked by Labour governments. When the Rhodesians proclaimed their Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI), therefore, it was a rebellion not only of colony against metropole, but of “Englishness” and Conservatism against “Britishness” and Labour, and an effort by Rhodesians to capture the claim of Britain’s imperial authority in Africa. Those particular themes will be the core focus of chapter four. But as this chapter will explore how that initial rise of settler politics in Rhodesia impacted how the settlers interpreted the ruins of Great Zimbabwe, we will begin with a brief overview of Rhodesia’s history up until UDI to provide context for the deeper analysis of how mythic history was entwined with those politics.

**From Matabeleland to Rhodesia:**

It is somewhat ironic that the immediate impetus for the British occupation of Great Zimbabwe and promotion of it as the ancient gold mine of King Solomon came from the
business needs of a diamond entrepreneur. In 1888, English businessman Cecil Rhodes established the De Beers mining company, after a long struggle to consolidate various smaller mining groups in the area of modern South Africa. De Beers was primarily a diamond company, but Rhodes set his sights elsewhere: primarily, the gold that could be found in the region of Zambesia, the land between the Limpopo and Zambezi rivers. These gold fields had first been reported by Karl Mauch in the years prior to his arrival at Great Zimbabwe, while he was still working as a geologist for the so-called Boer Republics, the settler states established by Afrikaners independent of and hostile to the British. Zambesia was of particular interest to Rhodes because it lay beyond the two most powerful Afrikaner states, the Transvaal Republic (technically South African Republic) and the Orange Free State. Several months after establishing De Beers, Rhodes sent agents to meet with Lobengula, king of the Zulu Ndebele (referred to by the British as Matabele) people. Using questionable means, Rhodes’ agents extracted a treaty from Lobengula called the Rudd Concession, which Rhodes interpreted as giving him mining and settlement rights within the king’s domain.

In 1889, on the basis of the Rudd Concession and with the lobbying of colonial administrator and scholar Harry Johnston, the British government granted Rhodes a twenty five year charter to establish the British South Africa Company (BSAC) for the administration and exploitation of the region ‘granted’ to Rhodes in the Concession. In 1890, Rhodes became Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, the largest of the British colonies in southern Africa; because of his new political duties, he was forced to instead send deputies to formally establish the BSAC. Rhodes was motivated in part by the political suppression that year of Uitlanders (primarily British non-Afrikaners) in the Transvaal Republic by President Paul Kruger. In retaliation Rhodes sought to stop Kruger’s proposed Bowler Trek of Afrikaners from the Transvaal into
Mashonaland (roughly the eastern portion of the modern Republic of Zimbabwe). With the help of hunter (and H. Rider Haggard’s Allan Quatermain inspiration) Frederick Selous, the ‘Pioneer Column’ left for Zambesia in 1890, establishing the BSAC’s direct authority in the territory of Mashonaland while allowing Lobengula to retain rule over the territory of Matabeleland (roughly the western portion of modern Zimbabwe). Selous and his Pioneers established Fort Salisbury as the capitol of the BSAC’s administration; the portion of the city reserved for native habitation was named Harare, which became the entire city’s name in 1982 following the establishment of majority rule.⁴

Lobengula was not happy, and disagreements between him and the BSAC’s administration led to an 1893-94 conflict the settlers referred to as the First Matabele War. The conflict was particularly notable for two deaths. The first was Lobengula, who died in mysterious circumstances that was possibly a suicide due to shame over his people falling into British rule.⁵ The second death was the massacre of the Shangani Patrol, a group of several dozen BSAC soldiers killed by a much larger Ndebele force, and whose defeat became a cornerstone of Rhodesian identity similar to the role of the Alamo in Texan history. At the end of the war, with Lobengula dead and the Ndebele defeated, the territory of Matabeleland was incorporated into the area of the BSAC’s administration. Opposition to the annexation combined with drought led to the Ndebele and Shona forming an alliance against the settlers, unsuccessfully rising up against the BSAC from 1896-97 in what the settlers called the Second Matabele War, the end of which was also the end of widespread armed resistance against settlers in modern Zimbabwe.

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⁵ Lobengula’s family members survived, however; his own nephew, Ndaniso Kumala, would play Lobengula in a 1936 biopic of Rhodes, *Rhodes of Africa*. 
until the mid-1960s. Ian Smith, the Prime Minister of the unilaterally-declared Republic of Rhodesia from 1964-79, would later claim in his 1997 memoirs that Rhodesian settlement and victory over the Ndebele was actually a war of liberation for the Shona, freeing them from the Ndebele who had conquered them prior to the arrival of the Pioneer Column and who were supposedly the true opponents of the settler government, in contrast to the Shona. By the time of Smith’s memoirs, the Shona-Ndbele alliance had long fallen apart during the War of Liberation, as will be discussed in chapter five.

The BSAC’s settlers had referred to their territory as Rhodesia ever since the arrival of the Pioneer Column in 1890, but it was only in 1895 that the BSAC formally adopted the name for the territories it had been chartered to administer in Zambesia. The year also saw Rhodes establish the Rhodesia Ancient Ruins Company, Ltd., to formally take control over the Great Zimbabwe ruins, in an attempt primarily to make money and gain support for the BSAC in Britain by selling artifacts from ‘Ophir’ (as well as whatever else could be found in Rhodesia) to metropolitan buyers interested in owning a piece of Biblical history. 1895 was also an important year for southern African politics in the British metropole. In the summer, a general election for Parliament was held, with an alliance of the Conservatives and Liberal Unionists under Lord Salisbury gained a majority from the incumbent Liberal government. It was this government that would lead Britain into and throughout the Boer War of 1899-1902, but beyond that, there are also some notable regional specifics of the election. Henry Morton Stanley, the explorer already discussed in chapter one and who will be returned to in chapter three, was elected to Parliament.

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6 Ian Smith, The Great Betrayal: The Memoirs of Ian Douglas Smith (London: Blake Publishing, 1997), 69. In the same passage, Smith claims that Rhodesian settlers were the true representatives of the natives able due to their disconnect from tribal strife, and particularly as defenders of the Ndebele minority from supposed oppression from the Shona majority.

as a Liberal Unionist; the novelist H. Rider Haggard, author of the 1885 *King Solomon’s Mines*, came within less than two hundred votes of being elected to Parliament as a Conservative. In Cornwall, meanwhile, several longtime MPs lost their seats due to the domestic repercussions of Cornish miners being expelled from the “new Ophir” of the Transvaal Republic by Kruger. I argue this can clearly be seen as an example not only of the economic links between Cornwall and southern Africa, but also the cultural connection between the two regions caused by the twin myths of British Israelism with its association with Joseph of Arimathea and the supposed Phoenician tin mining in Cornwall, as discussed in chapter one.

In 1898, the British Colonial Office followed the example set by the settlers in 1890 and the BSAC in 1895 and formally adopted the name of Rhodesia for the BSAC’s territory, a decision important for two reasons. First, it was the first example, but far from the last, of the Rhodesian settler tail wagging the imperial government dog in London. Second, the same ordinance that recognized the Rhodesia name also established an elected Legislative Council to serve as the legislature alongside the colonial administrator appointed by the BSAC board in Cape Town. The regions of Matabeleland and Mashonaland became Southern Rhodesia, separate from the more sparsely settled regions of Rhodesia north of the Zambezi; in 1901, Southern Rhodesia was formally separated from the northern territories, which would themselves officially be united into Northern Rhodesia (modern Zambia) in 1911. While Southern and Northern Rhodesia were both under the purview of the BSAC, the North was directly governed by its BSAC representatives, as it was seen as lacking a sufficient number of settlers to justify the legislative system established in Southern Rhodesia. By the early twentieth century, settlers in Southern Rhodesia increasingly opposed Company rule, especially the so-called Free Settlers

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who had come to Rhodesia after the initial settlement and who, unlike their predecessors, had no ties to the BSAC. Despite increasing opposition, the BSAC charter was renewed for a decade in 1914, due to the outbreak of World War I. During the war, Rhodesians served as part of the British Imperial military forces under former Afrikaner general Jan Smuts, helping seize the German colonies of South-West Africa (modern Namibia) and East Africa (modern Tanzania sans Zanzibar). Germany’s remaining forces in East Africa surrendered to the Allies in Northern Rhodesia at the end of the war in 1918, in what was the final surrender of German soldiers in the entire war.9

Following the end of World War I, Rhodesian activism against the BSAC intensified with the emergence of competitive elections, partisan politics within the Legislative Council, and the formation of the anti-BSAC Responsible Government Association (RGA). In the 1920 elections to the Legislative Council, the RGA and its Rhodesia Labour Party (RLP) ally won eleven of the thirteen seats, leading to the acceptance that extending the BSAC charter for longer would not be tenable. After negotiations, British Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill agreed to hold a referendum in Southern Rhodesia on whether the residents of the colony preferred self-government or incorporation into the Union of South Africa. The referendum’s participation was held on the same qualifications for elections to the Legislative Council, a system of property ownership and literacy that in practice disqualified all but an extremely small number of native Africans and Indian laborers, as well as a proportion of the poorer settlers (primarily Afrikaners, Portuguese, Greeks, Italians, and Sephardic Jews). Although the referendum was only for Southern Rhodesians, Churchill decided that the fate of Northern Rhodesia would follow the

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decision of its southern neighbor, given both the economic links between the two colonies and their mutual ownership by the BSAC.\textsuperscript{10}

It was widely expected in Southern Rhodesia, South Africa, and the United Kingdom that the referendum would result in incorporation into South Africa; Churchill himself expected that outcome, and it was the one preferred by the BSAC. But in 1922, sixty percent of Southern Rhodesians voted for self-government; only in one of thirteen districts did a majority barely vote in favor of incorporation. Despite that lopsided result, the campaign was the first instance of political division between the British and Afrikaner settlers. After Rhodesia became Zimbabwe in 1980, many Rhodesians who supported the UDI regime, including ex-Prime Minister Ian Smith, would look back on the outcome of the 1922 referendum as the fatal wrong turn that eventually doomed the settler project in both Rhodesia and South Africa. The divisions exhibited in the referendum would still be present in those post-UDI claims, as well; Smith accused the government of John Vorster, then-State President of South Africa – and an Afrikaner – of working with other majority-rule African nations to undermine Rhodesia’s white regime, in exchange for concessions to South Africa (claims which were not entirely baseless).\textsuperscript{11}

In 1923, company rule in Southern Rhodesia ended with it becoming a self-governing colony able to chart its own course on almost all internal issues. In British legal terms, this meant it was technically a colony, but had its own elected government and full control of all domestic matters (save race relations, which the British government technically retained ‘reserve powers’


over, although those were never actually exercised). British relations with Southern Rhodesia were even exercised through the Dominions Office, instead of the Colonial Office. Northern Rhodesia was given its independence from the BSAC in 1924, although given its much smaller settler population, it remained an official colony under the Colonial Office. Along with neighboring Nyasaland (the colony that is now Malawi), the Rhodesias formed a unified settler economic bloc, where Nyasaland supplied migrant labor to the Rhodesias (as well as South Africa), Northern Rhodesia’s mining industry supplied the majority of the region’s economic output, and Southern Rhodesia contained the vast majority of the white population and the center for their political and cultural development. Together, the three territories of Central Africa became strong economic and political bastions of the British Empire, especially compared to the questionable loyalty of Afrikaner-heavy South Africa. It was this strong support of the British imperial project that would make Rhodesians in particular the targets of both praise and condemnation for British imperialism at large – among eager audiences in both the United Kingdom and the United States.

**Novelistic ambiguity:**

The belief that Great Zimbabwe is Ophir is pure fiction; therefore, it is perhaps suitable that popular fiction was perhaps the primary way knowledge of the Ophir legend spread not only beyond the nascent settler communities of southern Africa, but beyond the British world itself, particularly the United States. One American novelist in particular who took an interest in Britain’s settlement of southern Africa was Mark Twain, a man who was no admirer of

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colonialism. Twain’s most well-known opposition to imperialism were his invectives against the Spanish-American War of 1898 and the subsequent American occupation of the Philippines. But a year prior to that war, Twain’s sentiments were already clear in Following the Equator, his account of his 1895-96 global speaking tour spanning the British Empire. After mentioning the legend of Solomon and Sheba while in Africa, Twain then severely critiqued Cecil Rhodes as a businessman, as a colonial administrator, and as a man. Ten years later, however, Twain had a different opinion of another advocate of British colonialism. That year, Twain the American anti-imperialist and Rudyard Kipling the Anglo-Indian arch-imperialist were jointly awarded honorary degrees by Oxford University for their contributions to Anglophone literature. Despite their differing ideologies, both authors were friendly, joking with each other at the ceremony.

If Twain was a novelist with ambivalent views of the British Empire’s role in southern Africa and its proponents, he was not alone. So did another writer who played a minor role in its administration, H. Rider Haggard. The former bureaucrat of the Natal Colony was the author of two books that helped secure the conception of Great Zimbabwe as an outpost of a lost white tribe, King Solomon’s Mines (1885) and She: A History of Adventure (1887). The protagonist of the former was Allan Quatermain, the English-born son of a missionary who, while lacking formal education himself, has spent most of his life as a hunter, trader, and miner in southern Africa. Quatermain was inspired by Frederick Selous, the British hunter who helped lead the BSAC Pioneer Column into Mashonaland in 1890 and was the archetype of the hunter-as-colonial vanguard. Selous and Haggard were both members of the Legion of Frontiersmen, a libertarian pro-imperial volunteer group established in 1904. As with Rhodesian Bush War’s

13 Ibid, 66, 348-60.
reception in the US, as will be discussed in chapter five, the fin-de-siècle British support of empire paradoxically lead to a right-wing, small-government, paranoid paramilitancy movement in the metropole. Outside of Haggard’s own political membership, his creation Quatermain in turn inspired the trope of ‘Great White Hunters’ serving as colonial vanguards in Victorian fiction. Literary scholar Christopher Pittard argued that in British detective fiction of the same era, detectives were on the social margin because their contact with criminals imparted suspicion onto them.\(^\text{15}\) It seems obvious to me that this same conceit can be applied to European explorers and hunters similarly relegating themselves to such a liminal state due to the presence among the same colonized subjects they were helping to subjugate. The most well-known example of this in British fiction would be first Kurtz, and then Marlow, in Joseph Conrad’s 1899 novel *Heart of Darkness*.\(^\text{16}\) Outside of Pittard’s social-margin hypothesis, one of the more notable characters inspired by the archetype exemplified by Quatermain was the big-game hunter Lord John Roxton in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s 1912 novel *The Lost World*, a novel with several notable links to the proud British tradition of exploration-imperialism. The novel follows a British expedition led by Roxton, scientist Professor Challenger, and journalist Edward Malone to a plateau in the Amazon Jungle where dinosaurs still live. Doyle based the character of Roxton on his friend, British explorer Percy Fawcett, and the dinosaur plateau on Venezuela’s Ricardo Franco Hills explored by Fawcett in 1908.\(^\text{17}\)


\(^{16}\) For an analysis of the legacy of Haggard’s literary and scientific influences in his African adventure stories, as well as their own literary legacy, see Richard Daniel Lehan, *The City in Literature: An Intellectual and Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 91-94.

In 1925, the year Fawcett disappeared in the Amazon while searching for his Lost City of Z, *The Lost World* was adapted into a silent movie that took several departures from the novel. Most notably, while the novel ends with the realization that the dinosaur plateau is a source of diamonds explicitly compared to those of Cecil Rhodes in South Africa, the film ends with a Claymation dinosaur terrorizing London before Roxton can recapture it. The film version of *The Lost World* in particular has had a lasting legacy on the conception of giant, atavistic monsters. Willis H. O’Brien, who created the special effects for *The Lost World*, would go on to do the special effects for the 1933 American film *King Kong*, whose titular ape character – captured on a distant tropical island, and brought to New York in chains before escaping – has long been interpreted as a metaphor for African-American slavery. But beyond other movies, *The Lost World* film served as an inspiration for additional novels in the genre of its baseline work.

Most notably, *The Lost World* film was one of Michael Crichton’s inspirations for his 1990 novel *Jurassic Park*, and Crichton borrowed both the title and the character of John Roxton for its 1995 sequel. Crichton would reuse the Haggard-Roxton trope several times in his corpus. In his 1980 novel *Congo*, about an expedition to the ‘Lost City of Zinj’ in the Congo that, in the setting of the novel, inspired Haggard to write *King Solomon’s Mines*, the team is led by a mercenary named Charles Munro, who was born in Kenya to settler parents and worked as a “white hunter” in Nairobi before becoming a mercenary, smuggling weapons to Katangan separatist leader Moise Tshombe, working under the historical British mercenary Mike Hoare.

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and committing atrocities during the 1964 Operation Dragon Rouge hostage rescue mission.

However, Crichton’s narrative notes that Munro was the child of an illegitimate union between a Scottish farmer and his Indian housekeeper, and while the father was killed by the Mau Mau, Crichton describes them and their aims sympathetically.²¹ Crichton’s modification to the ‘great white hunter’ trope would be taken to an ironic bent in the 1995 film adaptation of Congo, where the character, renamed Munro Kelly, was played by the African-American actor Ernie Hudson. Congo also depicts its Ophir stand-in of Zinj as being guarded by human-ape hybrids that were based on actual legends of the kakundakari cryptids; a coup by the kakundakari against the humans is given as one possible reason for the abandonment of Zinj. In 1990, Crichton would again use the trope in Jurassic Park, where the warden of the titular dinosaur reserve was Robert Muldoon, a white settler from Kenya who worked his whole life as a big-game hunter, as had his father; the Kenyan background is kept in the 1993 Jurassic Park film, although the character was played by an English actor, Bob Peck.²²

Crichton’s use of the Ophir legend, cryptozoological creatures, and embrace of British hunters and mercenaries in Africa in the 1980s is significant given the embrace of those tropes by the American right in that decade. Along with Crichton’s own rising popularity through the 1980s and 1990s, combined with his own turn to the political right by the end of that period, helping bridge the tropes the Rhodesian political topics to American mainstream conservatism through his popular fiction. But the settlement colonial claims of Rhodesia were being brought to American readership from the very start of the twentieth century, thanks to the works of Edgar

Rice Burroughs and his most famous creation, Tarzan. The Lord of the Jungle was character whose stories were heavily influenced by the literary tropes around the pseudohistory of Great Zimbabwe. Even his basic premise – a British nobleman whose proper name is John Clayton, Baron Greystoke, serving as a one-man outpost of white civilization cut off from Europe in Central Africa, literally lording over the jungle natives – is a reflection of the Ophir legend. The Great Zimbabwe allusions shift from subtext to text in the second Tarzan novel, the 1913 *The Return of Tarzan*, which introduces the lost city of “Opar,” a colony of Atlantis located in the Belgian Congo and protected by human-ape hybrids.\(^{23}\) The city of Opar would reappear in many of the later Tarzan works, along with other parallels. The 1928 *Tarzan, Lord of the Jungle* would feature the ‘Valley of the Sepulcher,’ a lost colony of English knights from the Crusades who settled in what was then Colonial Kenya, serving as a more-modern attempt to justify settler rule through an imagined white past – and all the more pressing given the intense agitation against metropolitan interference and native African rights expressed by settlers in the 1920s, as will be discussed below. Notably, the knights of the Valley make common cause with their discoverers when they discover that Tarzan’s noble accomplices are Masons, and therefore heirs to the Temple of Solomon.\(^{24}\) The 1932 *Tarzan Triumphant* featured the realm of Midian, established by early European Christians in the heart of Africa, only for their beliefs to gradually be eroded by the savage natives surrounding them – the cautionary aspect of the Ophir legend.\(^{25}\) The 1935 serial *The Lost City* would rip off Burroughs, by having the titular city be a lost colony of Lemuria discovered in the Central African jungle.\(^{26}\)

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\(^{26}\) *The Lost City*, DVD, directed by Harry Revier (Golden Valley, MN: Mill Creek Entertainment, 2007).
I believe Burroughs’ Opar spin on Ophir was clearly an inspiration not only for Crichton’s Zinj and its kakundakari, but also American ‘weird fiction’ author H. P. Lovecraft, particularly his 1920 short story “Facts Concerning the Late Arthur Jermyn and His Family,” where the titular character learns that his great-great-great-grandfather, British explorer Sir Wade Jermyn, discovered a “grey city of white apes ruled by a white god” in the modern Belgian Congo – and that, rather than being a Portuguese trader’s daughter, his great-great-great-grandmother was one of those apes. 

Archaeologist Jeb J. Card argued that Lovecraft’s most famous story, his 1926 “The Call of Cthulhu,” was inspired by reporting of the 1922 excavation of Egyptian Pharaoh Tutankhamun’s tomb by the British archaeologist Lord Carnarvon, and the subsequent claims of a curse placed upon the Valley of the Kings by the ancient Egyptians. But colonialist aspects can be found throughout Lovecraft’s work, which largely focus on humans driven to madness by contemplating the vastness of the unknown after the discovery of ancient alien gods having visited Earth in the ancient past, and whose modern-day descendants of their followers seek to revive them. This focus also found itself in at least one of the many authors Lovecraft mentored; his young friend and eventual executor Robert H. Barlow not only became a weird fiction author of his own, but in the 1940s became one of the most renowned anthropologists of the Mesoamerican cultures of pre- and early-colonial Mexico, and fluent in the Nahuatl language of the Aztecs. Barlow’s academic works included many publications on Great Zimbabwe itself, one of the few actual historical sites he incorporated directly into his fictional universe: H. P. Lovecraft, “The Outpost,” *Bacon’s Essays*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Spring, 1930), 7; H. P. Lovecraft and R. H. Barlow, “Beyond Zimbabwe,” in S. T. Joshi, ed., *The Ancient Track: The Complete Poetical Works of H. P. Lovecraft* (San Francisco: Night Shade Books, 2001), 79, 481; H. P. Lovecraft and Zealia Bishop, “Medusa’s Coil,” *Weird Tales*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Jan., 1939), 26-53.


29 John Rieder, *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2008), 44-45.
native-settler relations in the era of the Spanish Empire. But beyond young academics, Lovecraft’s writing had a huge influence on later authors not only of horror and science fiction, but also pseudohistory and pseudoarcheology, particularly Erich von Däniken and his fellow ancient alien advocates.  

I have not found any evidence that Burroughs or Lovecraft were read by the Rhodesian leadership, though it would not surprise me given both authors were in print in the United Kingdom by the 1930s (Burroughs much earlier). Haggard and other British authors in the genre – Wells, Conrad, Hugh Mulleneux Walmsley – certainly were. But the point of focusing on Burroughs and Lovecraft is to demonstrate how through the popular fiction of Burroughs, central tenets of the Great Zimbabwe-as-Ophir myth were transmitted beyond the British world, particularly across the United States. And through Burroughs’ own impact on Lovecraft, the Ophir tropes would then be transmitted to an international audience, some of whom at least presented themselves as serious academics. Both of these international factors will be focused on in the next chapter. But although Burroughs leaned into the colonialist narrative with Tarzan, later adaptations would at least attempt an inversion. The most recent notable example is the 2016 movie *The Legend of Tarzan* which has Tarzan join with the historical African-American soldier George Washington Williams to prevent the Belgians from locating and looting Opar and its diamonds. 

Just as would eventually happen with the Ophir legend itself, as will be seen in chapter five, Tarzan the American colonial construct was eventually – if well after the fact – transformed into a collaborator with the native-anti-imperialists. Of course, long before the actual Tarzan character was invented by Burroughs, the colonial regime in Rhodesia was already...

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well versed in suppressing native African resistance – lessons inherited quickly from the longstanding experience not only of the Afrikaner settlers, but the British across their global empire.

**Immigration, Internationalism, and Settler Identity:**

As the voracious Anglo-American readership for Haggard, Burroughs, and Crichton attest to, empires are internationalist systems. The British Empire was no exception – and nor was the Rhodesian settler state, whose settlers came not only from Britain and South Africa, but Australia and India.\(^{32}\) This internationalist influence consisted of more than just settler origins, however, but ideological ripples as well, and the British administration of their Africans colonies in general at the time of Rhodes’ career were shaped by events that had happened half a century and half a world away. The Haitian Revolution of 1791-1804 had led to views of race changing not only among the opponents of emancipation, but also its advocates. Abolitionist poetry such as that of William Cowper and William Blake shifted from appeals *from* Africans to appeals *to* whites on *behalf* of Africans, while the cultural backlash to the Revolution led to interventionism and colonialism. In the 1850s, racial sentiments in the British world were hardened after the early optimism and universalism of emancipation, due to the perceived failures of West Indian emancipation (1834), the Indian Rebellion (1857-58), American Civil War and Reconstruction (1861-77), and Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica (1865).\(^{33}\) In the 1920s, Jim Crow-era Southern


United States education policy was promoted across Eastern, Central, and Southern Africa by Thomas Jesse Jones; they were particularly adopted by Northern Rhodesia due to the enthusiasm of its first governor, Herbert Stanley (no relation to Henry Morton Stanley), who would later also be appointed Governor of Southern Rhodesia.34

Between 1815 and 1914, 20 million people emigrated from Britain, mainly to elsewhere in the Empire and mainly from economically depressed areas of the United Kingdom. Stability for imperial emigration to help reduce the numbers of British poor was a feature of British colonial policy. As will be explored in the next chapter, contemporary British writers sometimes saw little difference between these poor white settlers and the native Africans they were sent to rule over.35 Rhodesia was a receiving area not only for migrants from Britain, but elsewhere in the Empire, including Afrikaners from South Africa and miners from Australia. Broken Hill (modern Kabwe), a mining settlement and union stronghold in Northern Rhodesia, was founded in 1902 by Australian miners who named it after the Australian mining town of the same name. The role of miners and railway workers in Broken Hill and the nearby Copperbelt region led to the development of both settler and native working-class political movements. This growing political consciousness among settler workers was one of several mass political movements that emerged in the 1930s. Other major examples were the broad settler support for the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Rhodesia into a unitary Rhodesia, and settler opposition to the British Government’s 1939 Bledisloe Commission, which advocated joining Northern Rhodesia and

Nyasaland while excluding the South until it abandoned discrimination against native Africans. The political currents culminated in the 1941 formation of Northern Rhodesia’s first political party, the Northern Rhodesia Labour Party (NRLP).36

The development of organized, partisan class politics among the European settlers (and politics of any sort among the native Africans) in Northern Rhodesia was both controversial among the existing elite, and representative of wider fears among the settlers of both Rhodesias. Unlike in contemporary South Africa, education in Northern Rhodesia was divided between European and Native Departments, with the Northern Rhodesian Legislative Council rejecting a committee of missionaries and educators to unify it. While education expenditure was almost non-existent for Africans, it was also low for Europeans, who were afraid of being on the verge of becoming “poor whites.” Governor James Maxwell’s (1927-32) social policies for the care of the majority were rejected by the Council, whose members did not see any equivalence between the treatment of Africans and the poor in early modern England, or even the Indians (“a race at least equal, if not more, in intelligence to the Bantu”, according to councilor Sir Leopold Moore) who had had to wait centuries before they had earned the right to represent themselves in the Indian Councils Act of 1909.37 If the largely industrial settler population of Northern Rhodesia were always concerned about becoming “poor whites,” the fear was endemic amongst the more self-consciously middle class and urbanized (as well as urbane) Southern Rhodesians. This was made evident in The Real Rhodesia, a book from the early 1920s published as part of the settler movement against the BSAC. The author was Ethel Maud Cookson Colquhoun, whose first husband, Archibald Colquhoun, had been one of the members of the 1890 Pioneer Column and served as the colony’s first administrator (predecessor to the position of prime minister) under

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36 Davidson, 66.
37 Ibid, 64-65, 70-71.
the BSAC from 1890-94. Although Mr. Colquhoun had died in 1914 while exploring South America, and Mrs. Colquhoun had remarried, she wrote using her first husband’s name, revealing an obvious political intent in the book. Mrs. Colquhoun was Secretary and Organizer of the RGA, one of the delegates to the BSAC from the Rhodesian government in 1922 who established the referendum’s terms, and was the first woman elected to a legislative assembly of any of the British Dominions.\textsuperscript{38} Given the prominent role she played in the movement to end BSAC rule, especially by working to position herself as the heir of her husband’s legacy while also taking strong positions against not only the BSAC, but the British and South African governments, and her integration of the historical debate into the contemporary political movement for self-rule, Colquhoun’s advocacy will be the primary aspect analyzed in this section, given her role in laying the rhetorical groundwork for Rhodesia’s self-government based on an argument incorporating the colonialist legend of Great Zimbabwe.

Notably, Colquhoun’s commitment to the advocacy of Rhodesians was predicated around a form of Southern Rhodesian chauvinism that would re-emerge among the Southern Rhodesian political opposition in the 1950s, who first sought to unify all Rhodesian settler territories, and then claim that only the south, with its larger settler population, truly deserved the name:

To avoid tiresome repetition of the word “Southern” the name “Rhodesia” which belongs equally to the territory north and south of the Zambesi under the Chartered Company, has been used for Southern Rhodesia, and apologies are due to her younger sister, Northern Rhodesia, whose history, both political and economic, is entirely separate from that of the southern territory, and is not touched upon in this book.\textsuperscript{39}

Note that Northern Rhodesia was described as ‘younger’ despite the fact that it originated from the same 1889 BSAC charter as Southern Rhodesia, was not formally separated from the

\textsuperscript{38} Colquhoun, v.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid, xvi.
south until 1901, was the birthplace of political movements for both settlers and native Africans which would then move south, and would receive its independence from the BSAC only a few months after the south. Already, Colquhoun establishes Southern Rhodesia (and its settlers) as paternalistically superior.

This is made just as clear by her opening description of Rhodesian society as consisting of “a community spread over a territory much larger than the United Kingdom, and including every shade of society (except the poorest).” This idealized communal territory was populated by such stereotypes as “the strong, silent rancher, the daredevil sportsman, the old prospector, the younger son of a noble family sowing his wild oats – all the stock figures of a Rhodesian Romance”.40 Even here, Colquhoun uses the literary terms ‘stock figures’ and ‘Rhodesian Romance’ to draw from stereotypes of British fiction set in Africa to frame her non-fiction appeal – a sort of ‘imagined non-fiction’ that would make Truman Capote proud. And this fiction she used had a definite class appeal. Her stock figures forming the ideal Rhodesian society were a combination of noblemen, ranchers, prospectors, strong and silent and most importantly, not poorest – the ideal population of Rhodesia are notably not only all male, but combine inherited wealth with the profession of explorers (such as Selous) and prospectors (such as Rhodes, but who were far more vital to the economy of the North). But vitally, Rhodesian society could be a melting pot for British society, where the class restrictions were weaker – thanks to a combination of its frontier aspect, it being larger than the United Kingdom and therefore able to offer expansion of the island’s crowding, and most importantly, the artificial exclusion of the (European) poor. But unfortunately for Colquohon, the latter factor was already changing in the late period of BSAC administration. By the time after World War I, “The accent of the English

public school is not heard as much as might be expected or desired by lovers of the old time Rhodesian legend.” This was due to a new wave of settlers removed from those of the Pioneer Column generation, and among whom could be found

the mealie grower who started from a cottage in the Lowlands of Scotland, drifted somehow to Rhodesia as a transport rider, or perhaps as a barman with previous experience as ship’s steward. Heaven knows how he leapt the intervening space, but here he is as a great landed proprietor and a solid man, whose children will go to English schools and colleges, unless (as is quite likely) he is not Scottish but Natal born, and sends them to the Cape University [now the University of South Africa].

But Rhodesia not only allowed for a sort of English class-merging, but an Anglicizing one, where the effects of the Rhodesian settler life could turn Scots into Englishmen via education and the life of the landed rural estates. But even here, a warning can be sensed in the arrival of Scots, particularly of the lower classes verging on the “the poorest” she earlier excluded from the Rhodesian polity. The answer (as well as the conflating of Scots with the poor) can be seen as a reaction to the development of class politics: the Rhodesian Railway Workers’ Union (RRWU), the most powerful union in the Rhodesias, was established in 1917 by Scottish emigres, who were also prominent in the establishment of the Rhodesia Labour Party and by the postwar era would also play a role in supporting the development of the African trade union movement. Additionally, Church of Scotland missionary schools were the source of education for most of the rising African nationalist leaders, including Clements Kadalie (a Nyasa migrant worker who founded the first African union in South Africa, which later expanded into

41 Ibid, 5.
42 Ibid.
both Rhodesias) and Kenneth Kaunda and Hastings Banda (the first presidents of Zambia and Malawi, respectively).\(^\text{44}\)

Colquhoun’s representative criticism of class politics, especially for those advocated by a non-English group, connects deeply with her already-evident sense of Rhodesian patriotism going into the 1922 referendum over incorporation into South Africa. Colquhoun leaves no doubt that she was opposed to incorporation:

Rhodesi\(\text{a}s\), as they listened to the taunts and accusations tossed backwards and forwards across the beautiful Parliament House of the Union [of South Africa] (many of the speeches being as foreign to British sentiments as they were in language [\(\text{i.e.,}\) Afrikaans]), wondered what part of their far-off country could play in such a scene and thanked God that Racialism, Bolshevism, and Capitalism are not yet problems which Rhodesia has seriously to consider.\(^\text{45}\)

In her statement, Colquohon reflects a common trend among British settler communities before World War I, as they began starting to view themselves as not only British, but British along their own national identities. For example, those who saw themselves as British North Americans in the nineteenth century had, by the twentieth century, evolved to see themselves as Canadian citizens who were also subjects of the British Crown and members of the British Commonwealth. However, the threat of Rhodesians losing their nascent nationality to South Africa was real, and based on an internal population potentially disloyal to both Rhodesia and Britain: the Afrikaners. To Colquohon, the Afrikaners were not only disloyally advocating for “incorporation” (an accusation which evidence points to being true, even if she ignores that some British Rhodesians also supported it) but stood a chance of achieving their goals, as the Afrikaner population was political and economically unified in contrast to the British settlers,


\(^{45}\) Colquhoun, 86.
who had become split between capital and labor. John Hobbis Harris, a contemporary advocate of the Rhodesian settlers who will be discussed in more detail below, argued that such divisions within the British settlers occurred as a result of the BSAC administration itself, which implicitly resulted in economic and political tensions between the Free Settlers who had no relation to the BSAC, and the settlers who had some form of employment or other economic dependency on the Company.46 The reluctance of the British-descended settlers to incorporate the Afrikaners continues into the twenty-first century; one aspect of Gwyn Campbell’s conceptualization of the “Indian Ocean Africa” discussed at the end of the previous chapter was to acknowledge that not only Afrikaans, but also the Asian-descended Swahili and Malagasy, should be recognized as fully-African languages and studied as such in contrast to the prevailing reluctance to see them as such in South Africa.47

It was not only Rhodesian nationalism that caused British Rhodesians to oppose incorporation with South Africa, but ironically a sense of British identity as well, as cannot be doubted that Rhodesian self-identity developed among the settlers alongside, and indeed relied upon, their simultaneous integral notion of being connected to Britain and the rest of its empire. In this, Rhodesians were similar to Scots at the time, whose own contemporary emerging nationalist movement saw no contradiction between an independent Scotland and a Scotland remaining within the United Kingdom. In both the Rhodesian and Scottish cases, this can be explained by the expanded political spaces that the Empire and the ties of the monarchy offered,

46 Ibid, 94-97; Harris, 26; Leys, European Politics in Southern Rhodesia, 93-94; Willson, 115; Cecilia Morgan, Building Better Britains? Settler Societies Within the British Empire, 1783-1920 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 133-35.
in contrast to the more legalistic state systems centered around formal treaties that emerged after World War II. As a result, according to Colquhoun,

No Rhodesian thinks of his country as anything but an integral part of the British Empire, and by the British Empire he stands or falls. If he has any complaint about the British Empire it is that his connection with it has been too shadowy, and that it has hitherto taken little interest in Rhodesia. He has no desire to be part of an independent sovereign State, or to have his foreign relations controlled from Cape Town instead of Westminster, but he has had so little opportunity for following the development of the Dominion Status idea that there appeared to him to be only two alternatives, Imperialism or Separation, and it was hardly to be believed that a Statesman who is as widely acclaimed at home as General Smuts, and who had fought for the Empire in [World War I], could be out for Separation.

For Colquhoun, even though South Africa was still part of the British Empire, for Rhodesia to be incorporated into it would see Rhodesia reduced to a mere province on the status of the former Afrikaner republics. At the time, the Union of South Africa was a self-governing Dominion within the British Commonwealth as was Canada, Australia, and New Zealand; its Prime Minister was the Afrikaner Jan Smuts, who ironically had been the former commander of the Transvaal forces in the Boer War before becoming chief Afrikaner advocate for the new British-formed state. Were Rhodesia to join South Africa, not only would its political autonomy end, but so would the dominance of its Anglo-settler majority faced with the Afrikaner majority of South Africa’s settlers. Instead, Southern Rhodesia’s ability to develop self-rule relied on it being autonomous within the British Empire, given space to develop apart from the BSAC, South Africa, and Colonial Office alike. This might seem ironic in light of the Rhodesians’ later fourteen-year rebellion against British rule. But as will be discussed in the fourth chapter, the same issues that led to UDI – Rhodesians’ association with the British monarchy and traditional

49 Colquhoun, 92.
Little England culture and conservatism – were the same factors that Colquhoun saw as being attractive to Rhodesian development at this time.

One of the factors that Colquhoun most highlighted as an example of that fidelity to the monarchy and the British establishment was the significant amount of soldiers and money Rhodesia spent on World War I. In this, Colquhoun was hardly unique among Rhodesians. In their steadfast support of Britain’s imperial ambitions in World War I and the 1920s, Rhodesians actually demonstrated more fidelity to British rule than the other British settler territories in Africa. In South Africa, Afrikaners had staged a revolt against the British and in favor of the Germans at the start of World War II in the 1914-15 Maritz Rebellion. In the subsequent 1921-22 Rand Rebellion, white miners – not only Afrikaners, but also native-born ‘British’ and Anglophone émigré miners from Britain and Australia – launched a communist uprising against Smuts’ government, which the former general easily crushed but at the cost of his party losing public support in the 1924 elections. The Rand Rebellion’s aftermath also saw a number of said British émigré miners deciding to further relocate from South Africa to the Rhodesias. As mentioned above in relation to the Crusader colony discovered by Tarzan, Kenya – the other major British settler colony in African – was the sight of an even more serious challenge to British rule. In 1923, white settlers were so incensed at the Colonial Office’s proposal to grant more land and political rights to the immigrant Indian community that they organized under a former British World War I general who proposed kidnapping the British governor and holding him hostage until the Colonial Office recognized the paramountcy of white settler rule in Kenya. While this threat was never carried out, it remained in the mind of British government officials into the 1950s, who worried it might serve as an inspiration for the increasingly-dissatisfied Rhodesians –

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50 Ibid, 89.
to the degree that by 1961, the Colonial Office was lobbying pro-native Kenyan settlers to themselves lobby Rhodesian settlers to support African majority rule.\(^{51}\)

While the expansion of rights to the Indian community nearly caused a settler revolt in Kenya, in the Rhodesias the Indians did not have nearly as major a political impact. While holding a relatively high concentration of wealth, the Indians of Rhodesia and Nyasaland were subjected to stringent social segregation in the circumstances when outright legal segregation was not a factor.\(^{52}\) An example of this can be seen from that fact that in 1968, three years after UDI, the only two Hindu temples in Central Africa were in (Southern) Rhodesia, not its majority-African ruled neighbors.\(^{53}\) Indians did, however, have a role in the emerging settler conception of Great Zimbabwe’s creation, in a reflection of the Indian Ocean Creole ideology concept discussed at the end of chapter one, and reflected by Tudor Parfitt’s “mediaeval Indian Ocean culture.”\(^{54}\) In this view, ancient inhabitants of India – at the time the celebrated ‘jewel in the crown’ of the British Empire, and the source of so much of the labor of British Africa and the West Indies – had also contributed to the development of Great Zimbabwe, slotted somewhere between the imagined historical strata of the Israelites and Phoenicians. For Colquhoun, in her brief touching on the history of her adoptive homeland, she offers the definitive assessment that

> It is generally allowed that the rock mining, which is found sometimes at a considerably deeper level than was at first supposed, is the oldest evidence of human occupation in the country; and from similarities with old rock mining work in India, and also the presence


\(^{53}\) Dotson and Dotson, 97.

of trees and plants of Indian origin which are not found elsewhere, it is assumed that
these “ancients,” as they are called in Rhodesia, were Asiatics. Then came the builders of
temples, towns and fortresses, who are believed by some writers to have been
Phoenicians, who exploited the gold of Rhodesia for export, via Sofala to Ophir, in
[Yemen], as a distributing centre, whence it found its way to Solomon’s Temple.55

In her analysis, Colquhoun was of the same mind as the earlier academic Augustus Henry
Keane, an Irish professor of Hindustani at University College London and author of several
works on Africa, Asia, South America, ethnology, and the Afrikaners. Keane died in 1912, but
he had a lasting effect in South Africa especially, where his ethnographic studies were used to
justify the solidification of proto-apartheid positions in the intellectual and political spheres,
especially in the Afrikaner stronghold of Transvaal. In a 1901 book, Keane “came to risk my
sanity for plunging into this ‘Ophir Question,’ so often authoritatively declared to be insoluble,”
arguing among other things that it was impossible for either the current “Bantu” population of
Rhodesia or their predecessors, the “lower race” of “Bushman-Hottentots” to have designed
“Zimbabwe,” although he thought they were likely used as the labor for the construction.
However, Keane did not believe that Great Zimbabwe had been Ophir, citing a range of scholars
dating back to the German explorer Ulrich Jasper Seetzen in the early nineteenth century, to have
“conclusively shown” Ophir to have been located in southern Arabia. Keane does, however,
accept that it was Himyaritic Jews from Ophir who were the first explorers of the Indian Ocean
and southern Africa, and were only joined by the Phoenicians “after Solomon had extended his
sway over Edom to the port of Ezion-geber, at the head of the Gulf of Akaba.” Keane’s imagined
Himyarities and Phoenicians went from Southern Arabia to Madagascar to Sofala and then
inland, where they constructed Great Zimbabwe in 1100 BCE.56

55 Colquhoun, 11-12.
Within half a decade after Keane’s writing, and nearly two decades before Colquhoun’s advocacy, professional archaeological opinion would solidify around the belief that Great Zimbabwe had been built by the native Africans disparaged by Keane the Indian scholar, thanks to David Randall-MacIver’s 1905 excavation.\(^5^7\) The next scientific expedition to Great Zimbabwe after Randall-MacIver would be that led by Gertrude Caton-Thompson in 1929, and whose findings she would publish in 1931.\(^5^8\) Caton-Thompson rejected the idea of Keane and Colquhoun that Great Zimbabwe was built by foreign “supervisors” with native Africans solely providing the labor. In the historical context of the era of its construction – the European medieval period, not the ancient past of Keane – Caton-Thompson argued that the “foreign” people would have had to have been Arab, Persian, or Indian; she rejected the idea of Chinese contact as “altogether improbable.” Her excavations showed that there was no specific links between Great Zimbabwe’s architecture and the standards of contemporary Arab, Persian, or Indian architecture – for example, a complete lack of arches, which were used extensively by all three of those cultures. The few slight parallels, if they were not simply coincidence, could be explained by the native African seeing such architecture built by Arab, Persian, and Indian traders in coastal merchant settlements like Sofala, Kilwa, and along the Swahili Coast – the sole concession to the idea of a foreign influence on Great Zimbabwe’s construction.\(^5^9\)

However, even after Caton-Thompson, there were advocates of African rights and decolonization who still believed in an Indian connection with the civilizations of precolonial southern Africa. As late as his 1946 *The World in Africa*, African-American scholar and Pan-Africanist W. E. B. Du Bois, while citing both Randall-MacIver and Caton-Thompson, still

\(^{59}\) Ibid, 102-04.
wrote about Indians serving as both an influence on Great Zimbabwe’s construction, and India as the major destination for its gold trade. Du Bois and his views will be discussed more in chapter five. But while his belief that the majority of Great Zimbabwe’s gold ended up in modern India is also incorrect, there was a history of elite African presence in the Muslim Deccan sultanates in the region of central India from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including Malik Ambar and Ikhlas Khan who became the respective political administrators of the Ahmadnagar and Bijapur sultanates. Bijapur in particular was identified by proponents of the Indian connection (including Du Bois) as the destination of the Great Zimbabwe gold trade. While Ambar was a Hapshi – an Indian-African of Ethiopian origin, reflecting the fluid Indo-African Prester John location – Ikhlas was Siddi, an African who had originated in the south-central region of Africa near Great Zimbabwe. The Siddis arrived in India due to the slave trade of the same Swahili Coast that facilitated the gold trade from Great Zimbabwe, and their community eventually became central to building and manning the naval forces of Bijapur’s sultan.60

Du Bois’ conception of Great Zimbabwe as having an integral Indian connection is important not because of its (lacking) accuracy, but because of the three issues revisions it makes to the ‘Ophir legend’ in light of contemporary Indo-African relations. The first such issue was its recasting the historical Arab-dominated Indian Ocean trade dominated into a model that emphasized India as a primary recipient and cultural originator of Great Zimbabwe, effectively turning the territory of ancient Rhodesia into a colony of India. This minimized the earlier Near Eastern origin claims of Great Zimbabwe, easing ties that had become problematic to British

elites by the early twentieth century due to anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim and -Arab sentiments, especially following World War I. As India was both the Jewel in the Crown of the British Empire, and home to an historical civilization that the British afforded more weight to than those of its African conquests – and with its historical association with both Alexander the Great and Prester John – India in this example could serve as a better proxy for Britain. The second issue highlighted by the ‘Indian model’ was the recasting of the mutually beneficial and heterogenous gold trade into model of one-sided exploitation and extraction primarily benefitting India. In doing so, this model established that the native Africans of Rhodesia had always been historically used as merely labor for foreign mineral extraction interests, and that any urbanization or architectural knowledge in the region had come as the benefits of those foreign mining interests. The application – and benefit – to European settler politics is obvious. Finally, the emphasis on this narrative during the period of settler agitation for self-rule in the period between World War I and the 1922 referendum is also telling. At the same time the Indian example highlights the supposedly historical foundation for native African exploitation by foreign mining interests, Indian influence seems to me to clearly serve as a stand-in for the BSAC which settlers were by then opposing on precisely the grounds of it being a foreign vampire, keeping Rhodesians powerless in its thrall while sucking the natural wealth of the country offshore. As Colquhoun herself claimed of the pre-European gold trade of Great Zimbabwe, “It is a rather rueful reflection to the modern Rhodesian that before he began to exploit the minerals of the country, gold to the amount of some seventy-five to one hundred and fifty millions had been extracted.”

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61 Colquhoun, 10.
But even those who rejected the Indian theory in favor of continuing to endorse the Solomonic theory of Great Zimbabwe could use their preferred theory to attack the BSAC. In 1920, at the height of the postwar Responsible Government campaign, John Hobbis Harris published *The Chartered Millions: Rhodesia and the Challenge to the British Commonwealth*. Harris was a British missionary and anti-slavery campaigner in the model of David Livingstone, but whose politics might be called ‘humanitarian interventionism’ in modern terminology – while critiquing Belgian rule in the Congo, he saw British rule in Central Africa as necessary for the suppression of slavery. He would briefly win election to the British Parliament as a Liberal in 1923, only to lose his seat to a Conservative in the next year’s election. Harris was briefly discussed in the previous chapter for his launching of an anti-intellectual condemnation of Randall-MacIver’s 1905 excavation and conclusions on the African nature of Great Zimbabwe, a demonstration of the ability of those in the socio-political establishment to determine what aspects of the past were not only usable, but able to be politicized.

The first part of Harris’ title, *The Chartered Millions*, was a reference to the money that the BSAC’s charter entitled it to expropriate from Rhodesia; the ‘challenge to the British Commonwealth’ of the subtitle was not the settler government that would reject the Commonwealth half a century later, but the alleged subversion of both democracy and the Crown being campaigned by the BSAC. He even decided to start his book by accusing BSAC President Leander Starr Jameson – friend of Rhodes, former Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, and Mr. Colquhoun’s successor as the BSAC Administrator of Rhodesia – of conspiring with Scottish lawyer Baron Finlay to attack the principles of the Empire in the UK Privy Council on August 4, 1914 – the same day that the Central Powers declared war on Britain.\(^{62}\)

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\(^{62}\) Harris, 5.
on “Rhodesia’s Riddle” of Great Zimbabwe – seeming a requisite inclusion for books on Rhodesia at the time – lays out how this central premise involving the colony’s economic export related to the source of its most famous cultural export:

To any student of history Rhodesia has one absorbing, almost irritating puzzler. The histories of those romantic personalities King Solomon, Hiram, King of Tyre, and the dusky Queen of Sheba have for centuries enchanted the minds of old and young alike, whilst their fabulous wealth has been perpetually challenged as to the land of its origin. Was the present-day Rhodesia the source of this colossal wealth?... It is clear, at least to most people, that these vast structures were not the work of the indigenous African, but of some immigrant race – a race bent not on colonization, but upon the exploitation of the resources of the valley.  

This was followed by further conclusion on the nature of the relationship between the city’s builders and the native Africans:

In the [Great] Zimbabwe ruins, as in those of Khami and the more scattered ones along the Anglo-Portuguese [Zimbabwe-Mozambique] border, the conclusion is irresistible that the ancient gold-seekers, whoever they were, numbered many thousands, and that in turn they must have been able to force and then control from amongst the native population a multiple of their own numbers in order to carry out these works of which the ruins only remain to-day – no other conclusion as to numbers is possible. It is further evident that these immigrants were an imperious race capable of imposing their will upon the indigenous people of the country, otherwise, how could they have forced them to labor incessantly at this colossal and exacting task?  

These passages implicitly cast Solomon, Sheba, and Hiram as predecessors of the BSAC – not interested in settlement as such (despite Harris’ use of “immigrants,” as will be discussed below) but merely resource extraction using native African labor. This follows from his introduction, where Harris argued that the Company’s ownership of the physical land of Rhodesia was itself a threefold attack by the BSAC against the rights of the British Crown, the white settlers, and the African natives alike. While the Crown was not hugely invested in the

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63 Ibid, 40-41.
64 Ibid, 43.
65 Ibid, 8.
rights of the African natives, and the settlers obviously far less so, even this rhetorical tripartite alliance would collapse with the end of Company rule in 1923. January of that year saw the formation of the Rhodesian Bantu Voters Association, the first political organization in Southern Rhodesia dedicated to African political organization and a self-evident seed for the end of white domination should true democracy ever be implemented in the colony. To drive the point home, Harris explicitly compared the architects of Great Zimbabwe to Pharaoh and the enslaved native Africans who built it to the Israelites. As a result, he pondered on whether the city’s abandonment could be explained by the native Africans breaking free of their slavery just as the Israelites had done in the Book of Exodus.66

Harris’ rhetorical connection is clear: if ancient Africans could overthrow their foreign mineral-mining exploiters, then certainly modern British settlers could, as well. That the native Africans might also be receptive to this lesson, Harris does not seem to have considered, although this dissertation will consider it in depth in chapter five. Chapter five will also explore the more positive aspects of Du Bois’ Indian connection advocacy, coming as it did in a time when Indians and Africans were working together to advance a vision of post-World War II global decolonization. Harris would likely have seen such a world as far less preferable than one where the BSAC continued to govern the Rhodesias. But in laying out his dystopian vision of Great Zimbabwe’s ancient slave rebellion – something that no liberal-minded reformer would prefer, especially after a century of the lesson of Haiti becoming ingrained into Anglophone abolitionist memory – Harris was essentially adopting the backstory of *King Solomon’s Mines* and *She*, the novels and their author additional reminders of the interplay between political discourse and literature in southern Africa. Haggard the former colonial official had used his

66 Ibid, 45.
experience to write works of fiction, which had in turn become so entwined in the British perception of Africa that forty years later, I argue they quite clearly served to influence a work of real-world political lobbying. It is notable that despite his abolitionist background and his explicit fears over white rebellion against unjust rule in Rhodesia, he does not seem to have drawn the obvious conclusion and expanded that realization to the majority of the population.

But Harris was aware of the range of political factions and their differing political approaches. To me, this is evident in his reference to Khami, an act connecting a site of pre-colonial ruins with contemporary settler politics. Khami is located near Rhodesia (and Zimbabwe’s) ‘second city’ of Bulawayo. Just as how today Bulawayo is the center of the Movement for Democratic Change opposition to the ruling ZANU-PF party, Bulawayo was long a center of opposition to the settler government centered at Salisbury (now Harare). Harris himself noted later in his book that Bulawayo, as the part of Southern Rhodesia located both geographically and politically to South Africa, was the only place in the territory where incorporation with South Africa could widely be discussed. This was not surprising, given its status as the most dense Afrikaner population center in Southern Rhodesia, but also that, in the opinion of Colquhoun, that it was only around the time of the referendum that Salisbury and Bulawayo contained individuals who had never visited the other city, leading to the development of “provincial patriotism.”67 While even in Bulawayo pro-incorporation candidates lost, it was only by narrow margins.68

In addition to its heavy Afrikaner population, Bulawayo was also the center of Jewish life in Southern Rhodesia. Despite there never being a large Jewish population overall, Jews had a leading role the city; during the period of settler rule, six Jews served as mayor, including the

67 Ibid, 282; Colquhoun, 4; Randall-Maclver, 51-58.
68 Harris, 282; Willson, 107-15.
founding mayor of the city, Isidore Hirschler.\textsuperscript{69} As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Afrikaners also tended to see themselves as the new Chosen People of God, sent on an Exodus to a new Promised Land, and with ‘Ophir’ a sign of south Africa being chosen for them. The emphasis on the Ophir myth and Rhodesia as the ancient kingdom’s modern heir, especially in the era when self-rule and potential incorporation with South Africa were being debated, can be seen as a way of bringing the two largest ‘minority’ populations of the colony’s opposition-based second city in line with the central government. In any case, whether Rhodesian settlers believed they were the heirs of ancient Indians or ancient Israelites, by 1924 they were satisfied by the removal of the BSAC from political and economic authority over the Rhodesias. They were still, however, under varying levels of authority of the Colonial and Dominions offices in London – a status which did not greatly impact settler politics until the arrival of World War II.

**The Immigrant “Threat:”**

Harris’ reference to “immigrants [of] an imperious race” in his description of the ancient BSAC-analogue gold miners of Great Zimbabwe is telling in its specific word choice.\textsuperscript{70} It would be logical to assume that an advocate of a settler colony’s right to be governed by its own settlers would be in favor of increasing the numbers of settlers, especially if they were British (or at the very least, pro-British) and therefore able to dilute the influence of the Afrikaner settler minority. The disparaging comment on immigration was part of a Rhodesian settler opinion that had already developed during the era of the RGA’s struggle against the BSAC, and only grew


\textsuperscript{70} Harris, 43.
stronger after responsible government was achieved. This rising opposition to immigrants by Rhodesians occurred in the context of increasing opposition to British colonial involvement in Southern Rhodesia. In 1927, Leo Amery, the Conservative British Colonial Secretary, appointed the Hilton Young Commission on Closer Union of the Dependencies of East and Central Africa to study the feasibility of the British consolidating several of their colonies in Africa. In particular, there was interest in London in forming an East Africa Federation out of the colonies of Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, and Zanzibar, as well as a Central African Federation from the Rhodesias and Nyasaland. In January 1929, the Hilton Young Commission gave its report to Amery, endorsing the idea of eventual federation of those regions, but only after advancements had been made towards coordinating policies towards native Africans. Angering Rhodesians, a minority of the commission also considered a wider East African Federation including all territories except for Southern Rhodesia, or dividing Northern Rhodesia between the East African Federation and Southern Rhodesia.

In May 1929, the Labour Party won elections in Britain and formed a new government, with Sidney Webb, the Baron Passfield, replacing Amery as Colonial Secretary and shifting the metropolitan government’s views towards the rights of the Rhodesian settlers. In June of that year, Webb issued what became known as the Passfield Memorandum, which declared not only that “native paramountcy” – i.e., a commitment, at least in theory, to advancing African economic and political rights – would come first in British colonial matters in Africa, while also rejecting the hope of settlers in Kenya and Northern Rhodesia that they would be granted self-government of the type given to Southern Rhodesia or South Africa. The Passfield Memorandum resulted in persuading the majority of Northern Rhodesian settlers to favor amalgamation with the south. The word choice was specific; during this era, ‘amalgamation’ explicitly referred to
the aim of completely assimilation the colony of Northern Rhodesia into the self-governing
dominion of Southern Rhodesia, resulting in a (reformed) single territory of simply Rhodesia.
The proposal can be compared to the fate of the German Democratic Republic with regards to
the Federal Republic of Germany in 1990. While amalgamation was the goal of the majority of
Northern Rhodesian settlers, a minority opposed it due to the fears that it would result in the
north adopting the harsher racial policies of the south; that Rhodesian integration would
eventually result in union with South Africa; and that even if integration with South Africa did
not occur, the northern settlers would be politically marginalized by the Southern Rhodesians.
The settler population of Southern Rhodesia also contained a larger minority opposed to
amalgamation, fearing the larger native African population of Northern Rhodesia might
challenge the viability of settler rule, given Southern Rhodesia had a much higher settler-to-
native ratio than the north.

On September 26, 1930, the first of several conferences were held at Victoria Falls, a
waterfall along the Zambezi River on the border between the two Rhodesias. The 1930
conference was held on the matter of Rhodesian amalgamation with delegates from the
legislative councils of both Rhodesias, with minorities of both legislators endorsing
amalgamation. It was accompanied by the passage of the Land Apportionment Act in Southern
Rhodesia, which formally divided ownership of the colony’s land between settlers and native
Africans, with the vast majority of land – especially that which was more productive – being
reserved for the settlers. The actions of that year inaugurated a decade of increased racial and
political tensions in both Rhodesias. In 1934, the Southern Rhodesian National Congress was
founded by Aaron Jacha, inspired by the ANC of South Africa, while European and African
miners alike struck on the Copperbelt in Northern Rhodesia due to the impact of the Great
Depression. Another Victoria Falls Conference was held in 1936, with the Northern Rhodesians now seeking amalgamation for its perceived economic benefits, with the Southern Rhodesians again opposing due to the Colonial Office refusing to give up its protections for native Africans in the northern territory. In 1937, the British Conservative government appointed the Rhodesia-Nyasaland Royal Commission, referred to as the Bledisloe Commission due to it being chaired by the Viscount Bledisloe, a former Conservative MP who had just finished serving as Governor-General of New Zealand. The Commission gave its report in 1939, advocating unification of not only the Rhodesias, but of Nyasaland as well, due to the economic interdependence of the smaller colony with its larger neighbors. The unification advocated by the Bledisloe Commission was not amalgamation, however, but rather confederation, in which all three colonies would retain their current governments and oversight by the Dominion and Colonial offices, but a larger federal government, responsible to the Dominions Office, would also be established to coordinate issues that impacted all three territories.\(^7^1\)

This was an amenable solution to many settlers, although a large minority of Rhodesians opposed the inclusion of Nyasaland and advocated instead for an alternate plan where the Northern Rhodesia Copperbelt and the rail corridor linking it to the south would be merged into Southern Rhodesia, while the rump areas to the east and west would become Colonial Office protectorates, the eastern one in its own federation with Nyasaland. However, before the process could be explored any further, the outbreak of World War II occurred, bringing with it a new threat to Rhodesia: refugees.

Throughout the nineteenth century, European scholarship had associated migration with assaults on civilization. Driven by German Romantic scholarship, this was the period where the

\(^7^1\) UK National Archives: DO 35/824/3: Report of Royal Commission: views on report.
era of the Roman Empire’s collapse was, after all, given the name ‘Migration Era.’ This apocalyptic notion of European civilization under siege from militaristic foreign tribes – the Huns in the late nineteenth century were generally depicted as East Asians in a Yellow Peril trope – had obvious applications for the legends of Great Zimbabwe. The widespread view in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was that the ancient white civilization that had established Great Zimbabwe had been destroyed by an invasion of uncivilized Africans from the north. This belief was reinforced by actual archeological evidence that Zulu invasions had destroyed Shona states several centuries prior to the British arrival in Central Africa. In that same time period, and until World War II, a cornerstone of British imperial policy was that their colonies could serve as an outlet for Britain’s excess population, especially in economically-depressed areas affected by the same Great Depression that caused turmoil in the Rhodesias.

As mentioned, one effect of the Great Depression on Rhodesian society was the emergence of formalized electoral class politics, especially in Northern Rhodesia. The leader of those newly-mobilized workers was himself a double immigrant. Roy Welensky had been born in 1907 to a poor family in Salisbury in Southern Rhodesia. His mother was an Afrikaner from South Africa, his father a Lithuanian Jew who had emigrated to Southern Rhodesia from the Russian Empire via South Africa; Welensky’s wife, Elizabeth, was herself the child of Scottish and Afrikaner parents. One of the Free Settlers whose caused was championed by Harris, Welensky hated the BSAC on what he called “orthodox class grounds” and joined the RRWU, opposing incorporation with South Africa along with the rest of the union due to South Africa’s anti-labor

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policies. After helping lead the 1929 RRWU strike, Welensky moved to Broken Hill in Northern Rhodesia. Starting in 1933 he was elected head of the local RRWU chapter for every year until 1953, at which point he became Deputy Prime Minister of the newly-established CAF.\footnote{Bill Schwartz, \textit{The White Man’s World} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 362-63; Leys, \textit{European Politics in Southern Rhodesia}, 178-89.}

Welensky’s “proletarian populism” – inspired by a mix of philosophers, trade unionists, and utopian novelists such as John Stuart Mill, Karl Marx, Percy Morris, H. G. Wells, and John Galsworthy – helped bolster the claims he made during that later political career to be someone who “knew” the native Africans due to their common poor backgrounds. Indeed, when working for the RRWU in Broken Hill, Welensky was attacked by members of Sir Oswald Mosley’s interwar British Union of Fascists (BUF) and subjected to anti-Semitic statements. The BUF was suppressed and Mosley arrested in 1940 as a condition of the UK Labour Party for entering the wartime coalition government of Winston Churchill. However, the memory of the BUF’s opposition to Welensky persisted. In 1950, a former member of the BUF named Lee-Tattershell emigrated to the Copperbelt and organized African opposition to Welensky specifically because his anti-Semitism towards Welensky was stronger than his racism against Africans, to the degree where the Copperbelt Africans petitioned the colonial government to nominate Lee-Tattershell to represent them in the Legislative Council. The petition failed, however, and by 1952 Lee-Tattershell had relocated to Cape Town in the more amenable South Africa.\footnote{Schwartz, \textit{The White Man’s World}, 363-64; Baxter Tavuyanago, Tasara Muguti and James Hlongwana, “Victims of the Rhodesian Immigration Policy: Polish Refugees from the Second World War,” \textit{Journal of Southern African Studies}, Vol. 38, No. 4 (Dec., 2012), 954-55; UK National Archives: CO 1015/781: “Representations by a Labour Party deputation to the Secretary of State on Federation in Central Africa”, Doc. 8.}

Welensky used this history of fascist association with African nationalism to bolster the claim that as a Jew he was “a member of an oppressed race myself,” despite never having been a practicing Jew. Indeed, he portrayed himself as a “social Anglican,” despite being buried in a
Reform Jewish portion of an Anglican cemetery after his 1991 death, and evidence from his personal correspondence that he and his family felt free to express their Jewish identity more in private than public – for example, their private use of Yiddish and holding of bar mitzvahs.\textsuperscript{76} Despite this, when Welensky first met Colonial Secretary Oliver Lyttelton in the January 1953 London conference on the Central African Federation, Lyttelton remarked how “I got to know him and like him. His disarming description of himself as 50 per cent Polish, 50 per cent Jewish, and 100 per cent British gives an insight into his character and humour.”\textsuperscript{77} At least in London, therefore, Welensky had no problem identifying himself as Jewish – rather, it was his maternal Afrikaner ancestry that he was intent on removing, especially as the ‘Polish’ and ‘Jewish’ fifty percents he referred to were both from his father. This speaks to the low degree that the Afrikaners as well as South Africa were held in both the Rhodesias and the United Kingdom on the eve of the Central African Federation that was partly intended to counterbalance their regional power.\textsuperscript{78}

Perhaps because of this masking of the problematic parts of his ancestry, Welensky was elected to the Northern Rhodesian Legislative Council in 1938, as part of a changeover in its longtime-static membership throughout the mid-1930s. In 1941, Welensky founded the NRLP, which put up candidates in five of the eight districts for elections that year and won all of them, including the unseating of three incumbent members up for re-election. In the resulting Council, the industrial workers were the best represented segment of the European population; some of them were newcomers to Northern Rhodesia, and their political ideas influenced by the European

\textsuperscript{76} Schwartz, \textit{The White Man’s World}, 363-64; Weston Library, Mss. Welensky 502/03 “UFP Misc 1957-59” Doc. 8, March 14, 1958 letter from Peter Staub.
\textsuperscript{77} Lyttelton, 375-76.
labor movements of Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. Despite being the leader of the new
majority party, Welensky chose not to become Chairman of the Legislative Council. Instead, he
let his mentor Stewart Gore-Brown, an appointed member representing African constituents,
remain in the position for the time being. This maneuvering gave the NRLP councilors the
leeway to work with the unaffiliated elected members, reducing partisanship. In late 1946, when
the push for Rhodesian amalgamation resumed once World War II had ended, Gore-Brown
stepped down and Welensky replaced him as Chairman.79

World War II not only contributed to the political realignment in Northern Rhodesia, but
it led to a new development in its southern neighbor as well. At the start of the war, large
numbers of British servicemen were sent to Southern Rhodesia to train for the Royal Air Force
(RAF), far away from the range of German air attack. A number of Rhodesians themselves also
served in the RAF, including future Prime Minister Ian Smith, one example of the pattern of
right-wing servicemen the RAF in particular attracted during the World Wars (Oswald Mosley
having been an example from World War I).80 Already by the 1930s, the celebration of the RAF
as a unifying object of specifically English, not British, pride across the Dominions of the
Empire had taken root, with Empire Air Day a formal holiday in the United Kingdom, Canada,
Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa by the start of World War II. Smith credited his RAF
training with giving him the fortitude needed to stand up to foreign pressure during the UDI
years for as long as his government was able to.81

79 Schwartz, The White Man’s World, 363; Davidson, 43-45.
81 Smith, 237; Rowan Thompson, “The Air League of the British Empire, Empire Air Day and the Creation of
‘Airmindedness’ in the 1930s,” Four Nations History Network, June 19, 2016, accessed June 7, 2018,
https://fournationshistory.wordpress.com/2017/06/19/the-air-league-of-the-british-empire-empire-air-day-and-the-
creation-of-aimindness-in-the-1930s/. As noted by Viktoria Fedorchak, by the 1960s the RAF faced steep
decline due to a number of factors, including the collapse of the Empire which resulted in the dismantling of the
In addition, a number of South Africans emigrated to Southern Rhodesia during the war, for reasons of both employment and politics. While Rhodesians tended to support the war, South Africans, particularly Afrikaners, were much less supportive. The South African government initially voted to remain neutral at the start of the war in 1939, and nearly voted to withdrawn from the war after the surrender of France in 1940. As a result, the war brought a number of ‘foreigners’ to Southern Rhodesia, who under the pre-war franchise legislation, were automatically granted the vote due to their status as subjects of the British monarchy. Because of this, the Rhodesian government revised its franchise law in 1941, requiring voters to meet much stricter guidelines on Rhodesian residency in order to vote, as opposed to simply being a member of a fellow British territory. It was not only an influx of ‘British’ voters that impacted Rhodesian political sensibilities in the war years, however; it was refugees from Poland, who were sent to Southern Rhodesia by the British government. Between the start of Polish resettlement in southern Africa (including Uganda, Tanganyika, and Northern Rhodesia) in September 1942, and the end of the program in 1946, 1,624 Poles were held by the Southern Rhodesian government in refugee camps. Even this small number was extremely controversial, and only able to be achieved as a result of the Rhodesian government stating it was a wartime expedient; in the 1930s, Rhodesians had repeatedly refused to admit refugees fleeing German expansion and the Spanish Civil War. The opposition to even the Polish resettlement was a combination of the fear of them bringing disease to Southern Rhodesia; the dilution of ‘Britishness’ due to their origin and widespread lack of knowledge of English; and the fact that

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RAF’s imperial commands; see Viktoriya Fedorchak, *British Air Power: The Doctrinal Path to Jointery* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 60-61. It is therefore possible that the same anti-British colonial nationalism that Smith and the Rhodesian Front fueled helped dismantle the RAF, whose diminishment could possibly have fueled his own increasing dissociation from the United Kingdom.

82 Willson, 4-6, 41-43.
many of them were poor, which upset the economic balance of white prosperity that the Rhodesian (and indeed, most settler colony) social and economic system was reliant upon. This combination of class, linguistic/educational, hygienic, and national biases against the Poles paralleled the most common contemporary anti-African stereotypes.\textsuperscript{83}

**Conclusion:**

In terms of the historical appropriation of the Great Zimbabwe narrative, the Rhodesian experiences from the end of Company rule in 1924 to the end of World War II twenty years later provide a number of parallels to the Solomonic legend of the ruins. The influx of Nyasa migrant workers coming south – and later the perceived non-white Jewish and southern European wartime refugees as well – were equated to the Bantu and Zulu migrations that had been variously claimed to have destroyed the white civilization of Ophir. The British settlers themselves mirrored Eldad the Danite and the Lost Tribes of Israel, as illustrated by the Colonial Office’s Solomonic-themed ad in the first chapter. But the Southern Rhodesian government – whether it was of the BSAC or settler self-rule – did not choose the policy parallels with the Great Zimbabwe legend out of thin air. The decision was made as the result of a long-standing tradition of settler regimes in the Anglophone world – Britain as well as the United States – to appropriate indigenous monuments and European myths to create hybridized mythical histories justifying the settler regimes as being restorations of the ‘original inhabitants.’

As will be seen in the next chapter, the American state in particular raised this to an art form in the nineteenth century, justifying their westward expansion through invented histories of not only the Israelites and Phoenicians familiar to the Rhodesians, but of Vikings, Welshmen,

\textsuperscript{83} Tavuyanago, Muguti and Hlongwana, 951-65; Leys, *European Politics in Southern Rhodesia*, 190-240.
and even Martians. In each of those cases, those specific theories were backed up by fiction, be it novels or folklore; often, those works of American fiction were influenced by works on the supposed lost civilizations of southern Africa, and then in turn influenced proponents on said lost African civilizations. But the use of mythic-history to justify settlement claims was an active practice in Britain as well – not only in other colonies across the Empire, but metropolitan attitudes towards ancient Celts and the British Israelism theory mentioned in chapter one. Rhodesian settlement occurred in the late nineteenth century, and their advocacy against the BSAC fully emerged after World War I – the precise moment when not only the British Empire was at its height, but the US had emerged as a world power. For the Rhodesian settlers, therefore, the lessons of both the homeland and the most successful settler state spinoff of the ‘Greater British Empire’ were clear. Both had made mythic history meant to obscure native history an integral part of their national psyches at the moment they were emerging as world powers. The Rhodesian path to taking their place alongside Britons and Americans on the world stage would also need to incorporate mythic history elements. To fully understand the Rhodesian usage of mythic history of Great Zimbabwe for their own political power, therefore, one must look beyond merely local white supremacy, and see how Rhodesia fit into what was then a pattern of similar settler-colonial mythic history. This will be the focus of chapter three.
Chapter 3: Imperial Parallels

“The day shall come when Albion’s self shall feel
Stern Afric’s wrath, and writhe ‘neath Afric’s steel.”

-William Makepeace Thackeray, “Timbuctoo” (1829)

Introduction:

This chapter will show how Karl Mauch’s 1871 rediscovery and popularization of Great Zimbabwe must be seen in the context, not only of the ongoing conflict between British and Afrikaner settlement of southern Africa, but of other archaeological programs happening in the wider British world: specifically, the discovery of ancient ruins and their association with myths by explorers associated with the imperialist organs of the British state. Additionally, the popularization of Great Zimbabwe was related to the contemporary development in the United States of alternative settler histories, such as arguments that ancient whites had built Native American mounds, and that Vikings had extensively settled the North America. These parallel developments have to be kept in mind to fully understand the reasons why Rhodesians adopted the Ophir-as-Great Zimbabwe legend. The British invention of that mythic history was not simply about justifying their own settlement of southern Africa, but later used by the new Rhodesian society to claim that they the equal to that of the United Kingdom and United States, mirroring the development of those mythic histories across the Anglophone world. The development of such a history for Rhodesia was therefore prerequisite for the settler community’s achievement of political autonomy from, and international respect commensurate to, the British metropole.

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To illustrate the articulations of mythic history by these various imperial projects, I will be drawing on a range of works spanning the classical to the modern, showing the development and spread of the mythic histories of lost races and civilizations. Specifically, I will pull from the work of classical authors such as Herodotus, Ptolemy, and Gregory of Tours; medieval sources such as the Quran, Ibn Battuta, John Mandeville, and the *Kebra Negast*; the accounts of Portuguese explorers from the Age of Discovery, such as João de Barros, Francisco Álvares, Vasco da Gama, and Girolamo Sernigi; fiction from Victorian authors such as Hugh Mulleneux Walmsley, H. Rider Haggard, Joseph Conrad, H. G. Wells, G. P. Serviss, and Cecil B. White; the reports of colonial-era European archaeologists and explorers in Africa such as R. N. Hall, Theodore Bent, Johannes Dahse, Leo Frobenius, David Randall-MacIver, Peter Garlake, and Percy Fawcett; colonial-era metropolitan scholarship from Peter Lloyd, Roger Summers, Patrick Keatley, and Helge Ingstad; pseudohistorical musings from Charles Piazzi Smyth, William Booth, Edward Mathers, Ignatius L. Donnelly, John Thomas Short, Samuel Adams Drake; the claims of colonial administrators such as Cecil Rhodes, Roy Welensky, Ian Smith; debates within the Northern Rhodesian Legislative Council, West Indies federal government, UK Parliament, and the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church.

**Searches across Africa:**

Mauch’s quest for Great Zimbabwe, as described in the previous chapter, was only one of several such searches by Europeans for lost civilizations and mythical locations across Africa, carried out by explorers even prior to the Scramble for Africa. One of the oldest such was the search for the source of the Nile River that flowed through Egypt. The earliest European claim regarding the origins of the Nile is the statement of Herodotus that the source was two
mountains, Crophi and Mophi, which were later referred to as the Mountains of the Moon by Ptolemy. For two millennia, Europeans as well as Arabs believed the Classical accounts despite there being no true subsequent evidence (though in the Arab world, the geographer Muhammad al-Idrisi had begun to discard Ptolemy’s inaccuracies by the twelfth century CE). For example, as late as the 1860s, David Livingstone – who knew more about Central Africa than any contemporary European explorer – still relied on those classical accounts to attempt to locate the Mountains of the Moon during his expedition to locate the origin of the Nile River. The search for the source of the Nile resulted in a competition between British Army officer John Speke and British-American journalist Henry Morton Stanley. After Speke claimed in the 1860s to have discovered that Lake Victoria was the source of the Nile, Stanley finally confirmed it in 1877, proving that the claims of the Classical authors were, indeed, nothing more than myths and that the Mountains of the Moon did not exist as the source of the Nile. Another possibility was that they might have been inspired by Mount Kilimanjaro, which was observed by Europeans for the first time in 1848, when it was reached by German missionary Johannes Rebmann. This had the opposite impact of Stanley’s announcement, as it confirmed that the ice-capped mountain near the equator reported was not actually an Arab myth, as Europeans had believed for centuries.

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4 Edward Brooke-Hitching, *The Phantom Atlas: The Greatest Myths, Lies and Blunders on Maps* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2018), 162-65; Robinson, 15-17. Since the time of Stanley, it has been suggested that the Mountains of the Moon may have had a kernel of truth by potentially being inspired by an ancient Greek traveler sighting the actual Ruwenzori Mountains straddling the boundary between the modern states of Congo and Uganda: Robinson, 179.
The search for the Nile was primarily driven by Victorian-era Britons convinced that a mix of ancient historical texts and mythology held the key for unlocking a mystery of Central Africa. This belief led to expeditions in which the searches attempted to fit the environments they encountered into their preconceived beliefs, even as their quests for knowledge laid the groundwork for subsequent expeditions that would establish formal colonial rule. In particular, the perennial attempts to locate the source of the Nile River helped create a template for the ‘Ophir’ quest of the following decade, save for one key respect. While the Mountains of the Moon were ultimately proven false, Great Zimbabwe was a kernel which allowed for the myth of Ophir to be decisively ‘proven.’ This was also the case in another nineteenth century quest based on the claims of Herodotus – the presence of gold in the coastal area of West Africa. Herodotus described not only the first circumnavigation of Africa by a Phoenician crew commissioned by the Egyptian pharaoh Necho II – a tale adopted by later advocates of a Phoenician origin for Great Zimbabwe – as well as a later Carthaginian account of an expedition to Cyraulis, an island off the West Coast of Africa. This account, likely the same expedition identified by later Greeks as that of Hanno the Navigator, described Cyraulis as containing a lake that the natives mined for gold; the Carthaginian crew traded their goods with the natives in exchange for the gold plentiful in their territory. The Portuguese first established trading stations in the region in the late fifteenth century, calling it the Gold Coast. The English, who would later formally rule the region as the Gold Coast Colony from 1821-1957 (after which it would become the independent

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state of Ghana – as Zimbabwe would do, taking the name of a prominent medieval gold-mining state in the region) came to it primarily for its gold supply rather than for its slave trade.⁶

By the late sixteenth century, the Portuguese imperial administration had also switched its primary focus on gold production in Africa to their Gold Coast region in West Africa from the poorer region of the southeast, the area including Great Zimbabwe.⁷ In 1911, German ethnologist Johannes Dahse published an article claiming that due to that more productive output, and its history of gold mining back to the Classical era, the Gold Coast of Africa was in fact the location of King Solomon’s Ophir. Two years later, German explorer and archeologist Leo Frobenius adopted Dahse’s hypothesis as part of his own “African Atlantis” theory, that the historical Atlantis was located in modern Nigeria, that the Yoruba culture is its descendent, and that not only the Etruscans but also the Maya were founded by the descendants of refugees from this African Atlantis. Despite the imperialist and racist views of Frobenius, his views on both the African Atlantis, and later studies of Great Zimbabwe, would be embraced by defenders of the city’s creation by Africans – including W. E. B. Du Bois – later in the twentieth century, as will be examined in chapter five. Ironically, Frobenius’ acceptance of Dahse went with his rejection of Herodotus’ accounts of Necho and Hanno’s expeditions, because they did not find any advanced civilization in West Africa.⁸

The combined searches for gold and legendary cities in West Africa were not only limited to the German efforts to locate Ophir there, however. In 1788, the African Association was established in Britain with the goal of finally locating Timbuktu – what was seen as an El

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Dorado-like city of golden excess due to the accounts by Leo Africanus and the stories of its wealthy ruler Mansa Musa, who distributed so much gold during his pilgrimage to Mecca that he depressed the entire Mediterranean gold market for a decade. This spurred a decades-long race to see who would be the first European to find it; the ‘Timbuctoo craze’ raged amongst British and French explorers until the 1820s. If the European explorers had been familiar with Ibn Battuta’s account of Timbuktu, they might have been less willing to sacrifice their lives, as so many did; he ascribed to the city a lack of noteworthiness save for it being the site of the grave of the noted poet Abu al-Sahili of Granada. Ibn Battuta regarded its contemporary ruler, Musa’s brother Mansa Suleyman, as extremely stringy in terms of both the quantity and quality of gifts bestowed upon visitors. As it was, in 1828 the Frenchman René Caillié became the first European to visit Timbuktu and return to Europe alive, ending both the race and the craze for the city, when he revealed it to not be a fabulous city of gold, but a drab settlement of mud bricks. The disappointment over the gold of Timbuktu, as well as the end of the wealth of the trans-Atlantic slave trade following its 1808 suppression, spurred a renewed European effort to find golden Ophir in Africa. Ironically, those early explorers could be excused for not being familiar with Ibn Battuta’s account of Timbuktu, as the historian only became widely known after the discovery and popularization of his Rihla by the French following their occupation of North Africa in 1830, in the post-Caillié disillusionment of Timbuktu.9

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As it was, the search for a West African Ophir would have if not another clue, then a neighboring attraction not too far to the south of Timbuktu. Sungbo’s Eredo is a series of massive defensive earthworks around the town of Ijebu Ode in the coastal area of modern Nigeria, dating from approximately the ninth century and one of a number of such massive earthworks in the southern coast of West Africa. The eredo (wall) is associated with a local noblewoman, Bilikisu Sungbo, whose tomb is a shrine that is a pilgrimage site in the nearby town of Oke-Eri. Yoruba tradition associated Sungbo with the Queen of Sheba, who in Muslim tradition was given the name Bilqis. In at least one example of early Muslim poetry compiled by the eighth century CE Muhammed ibn Ishaq, Alexander is established as the successor to Bilqis. In both the Bible and the Quran, the Queen of Sheba slept with King Solomon during a visit to Jerusalem by the queen. Although the location of Sheba is not specified in the Bible, and scholars since at least the Tudor era have identified it as a location in Arabia (particularly Saba in modern Yemen), the reference to her having dark skin resulted in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions alike associating her with Africa. The association of Quranic verse, wider Muslim mythology, historical figures, and sites of massive construction parallel the Muslim Alexander Romance in the East, particularly with the Great Wall of China. In 1959, British anthropologist Peter Lloyd argued that the association between Bilqis, Sungbo, and the eredo “must surely be a modern adaptation of the legend”, especially as the town of Oke-Eri only dated from the nineteenth century – the same era the European search for Ophir recommenced.

Nor was the Yoruba tradition linking a local noblewoman to the Queen of Sheba, whether originating in the nineteenth century or earlier, unique among African societies. The Igbo people, also in the area of modern Nigeria, have creation stories that in modern times have been interpreted – by both Igbo and British historians – as suggesting their ancestors were migrant Israelites or Egyptians. On the other side of Africa, another state had also done so – even as Europeans were imparting their own legendary connection to it. This was how the royal family of Ethiopia became not only the descendants of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, but also of the mythical savior of Christendom, Prester John. Prester John also played an important role in the search for mythical lost African kingdoms with ties to Europe, despite having even less of a historical basis than Solomon or Sheba – in that he was completely invented in the twelfth century CE. Nevertheless, the explicitly medieval European creation of this powerful African monarch perhaps is even more useful in demonstrating ways it served as a predecessor to the Solomonic Ophir myth.

The Realm of Prester John:

The medieval Book of John Mandeville, in addition to perpetuating Geoffrey of Tours’ belief that the Pyramids were the Biblical Granaries of Joseph, claimed that the intersection of the Nile with the Ganges, Tigris, and Euphrates rivers was where the Garden of Eden was located, and that the source could be found in the mythical realm of Prester John – and in doing so, engaged in an act of fourteenth century crossover nonfiction.\(^\text{14}\) The story of Prester John emerged from an 1165 letter to Byzantine emperor Manuel I Komnenos supposedly authored by

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a Christian emperor in ‘the Indies,’ Prester (Presbyter) John, who offered to help defend the Crusader states against Muslims. The belief in Prester John became associated with a mix of facts and legends. Perhaps the oldest was the actual presence of Syrian Christians along the west coast of India, dating back to the ministry of Saint Thomas the Apostle in the mid-first century CE and described in the apocryphal Acts of Thomas. There was also the story of the Magi who came from the East to visit the infant Jesus, and which later Iberian Christian tradition would transform into the Three Kings. Within a few decades of the letter to Manuel I Komnenos, the Mongol invasion would reach the periphery of Europe. When Hulagu Khan sacked Baghdad and destroyed the Abbasid Caliphate in 1258, many Christians believed the Mongols might have been fellow travelers dedicated to waging war on Islam in order to free the Holy Land in a pincer move from the East. In the British case, as early as the thirteenth century the belief in Prester John was incorporated into the Arthurian legend, with Avalon being located in the Indies (in some cases, in the Garden of Eden) and with Prester John as the nephew of the Grail knight Parzifal. This was itself part of a trend from the twelfth century of Europeans adopting Indian Hindu and Arabic Muslim traditions into European myths.

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As it became clear from the reports of missionaries and merchants – including Marco Polo, who searched for Prester John, and John Mandeville, who provided an account of his court – that there was no such kingdom in the area of modern India, the location of Prester John began to shift to East Africa, being located there for the first time in a 1306 map. This was enabled by the fact that in medieval European geography, the ‘Indies’ was a flexible term that included India Major (most of modern India), India Minor (the eastern coast of modern India, into southeast Asia) and Meridional India (from west of India down to the Horn of Africa). This allowed Prester John’s land to be shifted south, even while still remaining in the Indies; it could also work the other way, as in some editions of the Alexander Romance in which the Biblical Queen Candace (herself one of the models for Makeda in Ethiopia) is relocated from Ethiopia to India. Vasco da Gama, in his travelogue referenced the first chapter, uses these terminologies himself, when discussing “the river Nile, which rises in Prester John’s country in Lower India,” which he had earlier placed in the far interior of Africa from Mozambique. In 1499, the Florentine merchant Girolamo Sernigi later wrote, using information from da Gama’s expedition members after their return to Lisbon, “At the city of Chalichut [Kozhikode] they have some knowledge of Prester John, but not much, as he is far away.”

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While Prester John might no longer be found in India, another European monarch had made it there—an actually-existing monarch, though perhaps even more legendary than John given his exploits had happened. Just as with Prester John’s outright myth, the ‘Alexander Romance’ based on the life of Alexander the Great also played into imperial dreams of the East. A particularly notable British case was the life (and death) of Alexander Burnes, a Scottish officer of the British East India Company (EIC) who in the early 1830s explored areas of modern Pakistan and Afghanistan. His primary assignment from the EIC was to scout the area to ensure the British could lay successful claim to it before the Russian Empire could, but Burnes was obsessed with finding remnants of the more famous Alexander’s Indian expedition—remains in the form of both physical artifacts, and in the form of lighter-skinned peoples he believed to be descendants of Alexander’s soldiers. This included breaking into local burial mounds in the belief they had been built by Greek soldiers, in an equivalent way to how Americans had for centuries done the same to Native American burial mounds in search of Hebrew and Phoenician artifacts. Burnes’ quite literal mapping of the Alexander Romance onto Indian geography anticipates and may have been an inspiration to Rudyard Kipling’s 1888 story “The Man Who Would Be King.” In Kipling’s story, the two EIC protagonists are also Freemasons, and when they encounter the Kalash people of Kafiristan (in modern Afghanistan), discover they are not only the descendants of Alexander’s soldiers (as some British administrators did believe at the time), but also maintained the belief in Freemason brought to Asia by the fictional Alexander. Kipling’s story reflects his own experience as a Freemason in British India, where Masonry united peoples of different ethnicities and religions; Freemasons saw Kafiristan as the liminal
boundary between Europe and Asia, and the indigenous religion of the Kalash marking them as separate from the Muslim majority.20

The searches for Alexander the Great led by the EIC officers real and fictional, and the efforts to locate (or establish) a missing Masonic empire in the fringes of Alexander’s domain, are an important counterpart to the earlier shift of Prester John’s kingdom to East Africa. That relocation itself was important for how John was imagined in Europe, and stemmed from a history that was slightly more solid than Alexander’s Masonic membership. Unlike Indias Major or Minor, the Meridional India of the East African coast did indeed contain a Christian kingdom, and one with its own mythology related to King Solomon – Ethiopia.21 The empire of Ethiopia, more commonly known in the early modern period as Abyssinia, had been Christian since the time of its predecessor state, the Kingdom of Aksum, in 330 CE. It was in fact the second state in the world to adopt Christianity as its state religion, after only the Kingdom of Armenia (301 CE) and beating out the Roman Empire (380 CE). Christianity was spread to Ethiopia by Egyptian monks, and after the Christian Great Schism of 1054 CE, the Ethiopian Church remained firmly in the Orthodox camp. In 1270, an aristocrat named Yekuno Amlak overthrew the ruling Zagwe dynasty and proclaimed the start of a ‘restored’ Solomonic dynasty, with him justifying his rule by claiming to be an heir of the House of Solomon. This invented tradition, set down in the

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Kebra Nagast (*Glory of Kings*) approximately sixty years later, claimed that the Ethiopian state was established by the Queen of Sheba, here given the proper name Makeda, and that all subsequent monarchs of Ethiopia were descended from her son by King Solomon, Menelik. Menelik returned to Jerusalem to visit his father, stealing the Ark of the Covenant and bringing it back to Ethiopia with him. This claimed foundational connection to Solomon has also been taken as justification for the Judaic elements of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, although it is likely many of the Judaic influences in Ethiopian society are a result of, and not the cause of, the officially-endorsed claim to the ancient Hebrews. The writing of the *Kebra Negast* coincided with the writing of the *Story of Alexander*, which among other things drew parallels between Alexander’s meeting with Candace and Solomon’s encounter with Makeda, and attributed to Alexander the conquest of the modern area of Eritrea for Ethiopia.\(^2\)

Notably, the *Kebra Negast* was translated into English by the British Egyptologist Sir Wallis Budge, a friend of H. Rider Haggard who provided Haggard with details on Egypt and African history for his novels. The translation occurred in the context of a spike in British interest in Ethiopia following a formative 1867-68 conflict between the two countries. The Ethiopian Emperor Tewodros II (Anglicized as Theodore II) imprisoned a British missionary who challenged the truth of the imperial family’s descent from Solomon. The British government sent a military force from India which rescued the missionary, killed Tewodros, and sacked the Ethiopian capitol, sending hundreds of artifacts back to London for display which stimulated discussion of the Biblical Ethiopian origin claims. This expedition and sacking notably happened

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the same year that Mauch began his expeditions searching for Solomon’s outpost in southern Africa.  

The Solomonic dynasty would continue in Ethiopia into the late twentieth century, surviving the Italian occupation of World War II in the form of Emperor Haile Selassie, a man who even inspired a Solomonic spinoff of sorts, the Rastafarian religion. Ethiopia’s twentieth century history will be covered in more detail in chapter five. But for the purposes of this chapter, there is another way the Solomonic claims of the Ethiopian monarchy fueled modern alternative archaeology: by being the inspiration for the writings of the British journalist turned conspiracist Graham Hancock. From 1981-83, Hancock lived in Ethiopia, working as the East Africa correspondent for The Economist. After his return to the United Kingdom, Hancock spent the rest of the 1980s publishing a series of standard works on foreign aid in Ethiopia. This changed with his 1992 publication of The Sign and the Seal, based on the Ethiopian Orthodox claims that the Ark of the Covenant was located in the city of Axum and that the Ethiopian monarchy was descended from Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Hancock had learned about the legend during his tenure as The Economist’s correspondent, and The Sign and the Seal was not only a credulous endorsement of the Ethiopian national myth, but also allowed Hancock to make his own intervention, merging the Kebra Negast with medieval European Arthurian legend and

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suggesting that the Ark of the Covenant (as kept in Ethiopia) had been the Holy Grail sought by King Arthur. However, Hancock’s big break was his follow-up, the 1995 *Fingerprints of the Gods*. While its title was a deliberate nod to Erich von Däniken’s 1968 ancient alien tome *Chariots of the Gods?*, instead of von Däniken’s pseudo-colonialist aliens, Hancock proposed that the Sphinx and other ancient monuments were actually relics of a pre-Ice Age civilization based in Antarctica which had been wiped out by flooding caused by the melting glaciers, the memory of which inspired the Atlantis myth. Hancock has written numerous sequels to *Fingerprints of the Gods*, keeping him in the center of the pseudoscience community since, all thanks to his interest in mythohistory originating from the Ethiopian Solomon legend.

But in the historical reality Hancock has little conception of, it was Ethiopians encountering Europeans outside of Africa, rather than European visitors to the continent, who initiated the first contact stimulating interest in the country’s mythical history. Europeans first became aware of a land of black-skinned African Christians due to the presence of Ethiopian Orthodox monks guarding Christian sites in Jerusalem. By the early fifteenth century, not only had European rulers such as King Alfonso I of Naples, Duke Francesco I Sforza of Milan, Pope Clement VII, and Kings Manuel I and João III of Portugal established diplomatic connections with the courts of Ethiopian emperors Zara Yaqob and Dawit II, but the Europeans accepted that the Ethiopian rulers were Prester John and the descendants of Solomon. Writing from Lisbon to

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Florence in 1499, Girolamo Sernigi referred to descriptions of Prester John’s land that de Gama’s expedition learned from a Jewish navigator from Alexandria:

I do not understand that there are any Christians there to be taken into account, excepting those of Prester John, whose country is far from Calichut [Kozhikode in India], on [the western] side of the Gulf of Arabia, and borders upon the country of the King of Melinde [Malindi in modern Kenya], and, far in the interior, upon the Ethiopians, that is the black people of Guinea, as also upon Egypt, that is the country of the Sultan of Babylon [Cairo]. This Prester John has priests, who offer sacrifices, respect the Gospels and the Laws of the Church, much as is done by other Christians.28

The missionary Francisco Álvares led a Portuguese embassy to Ethiopia from 1520-26; on his return, his voluminous account of the expedition continuously refers to the Ethiopian emperor as “the Prester John” and takes the account of his descent from Solomon and Makeda as true history.29 Of particular note, and shaping the importance of first contact, was that this initial substantive European interaction with Ethiopia occurred at the time when Ethiopia’s traditionally positive relationship with the Muslim world was beginning to deteriorate, meaning that Catholic Portuguese and Orthodox Ethiopians could for a time form a united front against the Muslim Arabs and Turks – although as with the Portuguese and the Christian Kongo states, this alliance did not long survive the Portuguese desire to convert and conquer.30

In particular, the Portuguese view of Ethiopia – both imagined and real – also impacted their contemporary perception of southern Africa. The Portuguese established the trading port of Sofala in 1505 in hopes of taking part in the gold trade with the kingdom of Mutapa they had heard about during their circumnavigation of the Cape of Good Hope en route to India, centered around the former state of Great Zimbabwe. In his 1552 Década da Ásia, Portuguese court historian João de Barros argued that Great Zimbabwe could have been built by people from

28 Sernigi, 138.
29 Álvares, 145-58, 164, 462-63.
30 Salvadore, 115-22; Northrup, Africa’s Discovery of Europe, 45-48.
elsewhere in Africa; he stated (not having actually seen them) that the buildings of the site were “very similar to those which are found in the land of Prester John” at Aksum (and indeed, archaeologist François-Xavier Fauvelle has claimed that “Ethiopia certainly has more megaliths than any other country in the world.”).\(^{31}\) Notably, Aksum in Ethiopia is the location of the Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion, which the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church claims to hold the Ark of the Covenant after Menelik relocated it to Ethiopia from Jerusalem as depicted in the *Kebran Negast*. This connection worked in reverse, too; after finishing his excavation of Great Zimbabwe, the British archeologist Theodore Bent’s next journey was to dig in Aksum.\(^{32}\) It is also a common Ethiopian claim that Ophir was located not in southern Africa, but in Ethiopia itself, due to the alleged connection of the House of Solomon.\(^{33}\) While the last monarch of that ruling dynasty, Haile Selassie, was deposed in 1974 by the communist revolution of Mengistu Haile Mariam, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church continues to assert Ethiopia’s connection to both Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, even at the expense of the claimed connection between Solomon and Great Zimbabwe: “There are lots of reasons to support this land of Punt is situated within the present Ethiopian state. In recent times Kings [sic] Solomon’s gold mines have been discovered in the southern part of Ethiopia. So it is more unlikely to connect Zimbabwe as King Solomon’s mines.”\(^{34}\) Ironically, when Mengistu’s own Derg regime was overthrown in 1991, he took refuge in the Republic of Zimbabwe. Mengistu continues to

\(^{31}\) Fauvelle, 82.
reside there as of 2019, outlasting both the political tenure and the lifespan of his former patron Robert Mugabe.\textsuperscript{35}

While the legend of the Queen of Sheba may not have ultimately saved the Ethiopian empire, it did shape the view of the Portuguese African empire from its inception in the late fifteenth century. Although the Portuguese rule in Africa resulted in conquest, colonization, and a leading position in the slave trade, it initially took the form of circumnavigation of the continent in an attempt to finally make contact with Prester John. The Kingdom of Kongo took quickly to Catholicism after the Portuguese arrival, even as it resisted direct rule for nearly two centuries. In 1517, due to the Jesuit recognition of the Kongolesse monarch as “Expander of the faith of Jesus Christ and defender of it in these parts of Ethiopia,” King Álvaro III of Kongo attempted to establish diplomatic relations with Ethiopia, the only other Christian state in Africa. In the Feast of Saint Francis Xavier held in the Portuguese settlement of Luanda in 1620, Jesuits included floats of not only the kings of Kongo and Angola, but also the Emperor of Ethiopia and songs composed by the students of Luanda’s Jesuit praising Saint Francis, in the voice of those three monarchs, as thanking him for bringing Christianity to Africa.\textsuperscript{36} Most notably in the context of the Ethiopian legends, the territory of Matamba, which rebelled against its fealty to Kongo, was ruled in the 1560s by a “Great Queen” Portuguese sources believed had access to major silver mines and who was eager to enter into an alliance with Portugal to protect her independence from Kongo.\textsuperscript{37} It seems likely that this claim was colored on the Portuguese end by their knowledge of the legend of the Queen of Sheba and her alleged connection to southern Africa. Certainly, the relatively peaceful relations between Portugal and Kongo, and the latter’s


\textsuperscript{36} Heywood and Thornton, 60, 173, 214-15; Braude, 127-29.

\textsuperscript{37} Heywood and Thornton, 55; Salvadore, 203.
rapid acceptance of Catholicism, varied differently from the Portuguese experience on the southeast coast of Africa, characterized by the 1561 massacre of Gonçalo da Silveira and his missionary party by the Kingdom of Monomotapa.

Despite the obvious variety of Portuguese experiences (and cultures encountered) across Africa, I believe the Ethiopian adoption of Abrahamic figures into state myths played into how Portuguese, and subsequent European imperial powers, viewed not only Ethiopia but the rest of Africa as part of their imperial expansion. Just as the Ethiopian state invented its own mythic history by incorporating Solomon into its ideology, the Portuguese perception of Ethiopia was shaped by the longstanding European belief in the mythic Prester John and his kingdom’s location in Africa. The combination of Europeans viewing an African kingdom through that lens, especially an African kingdom with such an invented history of its own, in turn impacted how the eventual European settlers and colonial authorities of southern Africa viewed the ruins of Great Zimbabwe after they were rediscovered in 1871. But by that point, it was not just sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Portuguese experiences in Africa that shaped their views – but the more immediate experiences of a much more global empire.

**Shadows of the Empire:**

As mentioned in the first chapter, Karl Mauch and Theodore Bent’s belief in Great Zimbabwe’s supposed Phoenician or Semitic origins was a byproduct of two trends pervasive across elite Victorian society in Britain. The first of these Victorian trends was the notion of British Israelism, which placed a special connection between the British Isles and ancient Phoenicians and Hebrews and transformed England into a vital center for the development of early Christianity. This persistent belief meant that not only would British explorers be inclined
to interpret discoveries as part of that Hebrew-Phoenician lens, as a way to justify Britain’s imperial occupation of the regions, but also that the British settlers would be inclined to adopt those interpretations as they symbolically would give their communities a right to be autonomous from, if not superior to, the metropole. Nor was this view limited to those directly engaged in the colonial field; in 1864, Charles Piazzi Smyth, Astronomer Royal of Scotland and committed British Israelist, published a book arguing among other things that the Pyramids of Egypt had actually been built as a monument by the Hebrews during the reign of the Biblical King Melchizedek.38 Building from the Israelist tradition were that academic publications in the period of 1890-1925 attempted to rehabilitate King Arthur himself as an historical figure, arguing that the legendary founder of Britain perhaps had his origins in a Roman officer stationed on the island, in command of armored cavalry recruited from Central Asia, whose native legends became assimilated into the local Celtic cultures to become the Arthurian myth.39 This historical Arthurian argument in a way fits in with the Israelist myth, inserting the peoples of the mythical East – already imbued with eschatological significance from the Alexander Romance – into the founding of Britain.

The prevailing habits of British archaeologists was the second of the Victorian intellectual trends reflected in Mauch and Bent’s theorizing about Great Zimbabwe. By the time of Mauch’s search for his lost city, the mass of British archaeologists had been focused on the Eastern Mediterranean, Near East, Egypt, and Malta for decades. The dominance of this regional concentration conditioned British archaeologists – especially those who went on to study sub-

38 Charles Piazzi Smyth, Our Inheritance in the Great Pyramid (London: Alexander Strahan, 1864). Notably, Smyth was friends with engineer William Petrie, who became a proponent of Smyth’s views. Petrie passed his interest along to his son, Flinders Petrie, one of Britain’s first professional archaeologists, whose interest in Egyptology was initially stimulated by an attempt to prove Smyth’s theory, although he ended up disproving it.
Saharan Africa – to interpret their discoveries through the lens of the cultures of those regions.

Many of the pioneering early professionals who examined Great Zimbabwe – Bent, David Randall-MacIver, and Gertrude Caton-Thompson – were Egyptologists by training, and came from the schools of Near Eastern studies. Randall-MacIver in particular began as a student under Flinders Petrie in Egypt. The link also went in reverse at least once: Kathleen Kenyon, who became a pioneering archaeologist of Israelite sites in Jericho and Jerusalem, started her career as a member of Caton-Thompson’s 1929 Great Zimbabwe expedition. As Randall-MacIver was the first archaeologist to confirm the native African origin of Great Zimbabwe, the Israelist belief and Charles Piazzi Smyth’s conspiracy theories about Egypt indirectly helped disprove the similar theories surrounding Great Zimbabwe.\(^{40}\)

The reason why so many British archaeologists specialized in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Near East to begin with was not merely due to the Israelist belief, but rather more practical matters for the British state: specifically, it was both a byproduct of, and supported by, the organs of Britain’s imperial authority in those regions. The expeditions that led Mauch to Great Zimbabwe were themselves imperial in nature, though on behalf of the Afrikaner Transvaal Republic, both to chart its borders and to find gold deposits; Mauch’s search for the lost city of gold ironically led to him being the first to predict gold in the Witwatersrand.\(^{41}\) But Mauch’s rediscovery of the ruins also occurred in wider contexts of colonial power overlapping with archaeological discoveries, where the uncovered sites were connected (sometimes very


tenuously) with ancient myth. Mauch’s 1871 announcement of Great Zimbabwe as Ophir occurred the same year another German explorer, Heinrich Schliemann, identified the Turkish site of Hisarlik with ancient Troy, and who five years later would claim to have found Agamemnon’s tomb in Mycenae. Three years later, Polish ethnographer Jan Stanisław Kubary became the first European to examine the ruin city of Nan Madol in what is now Micronesia, and which fringe theorists saw as a potential remnant of the ‘historical’ Lemuria or Mu, ‘lost continents’ in the Pacific proposed to explain linguistic and animal similarities across Polynesia and later endorsed by Theosophists, among other groups. In 1887, the Amarna letters were uncovered in Egypt, highlighting Egypt’s wide-ranging diplomatic influence across the Near East and Easter Mediterranean during the reign of the Pharaoh Akhenaton, including to Egyptian tributaries in Canaan, the area which became the ancient territories of Phoenicia and Israel. In 1900, British explorer Arthur Evans identified the palace of Knossos in Crete with that of the mythical King Minos. In 1922, Howard Carter entered King Tutankhamun’s tomb. In 1925, Percy Fawcett’s search for what he had termed the Lost City of Z in the Brazilian rainforest, which he associated with El Dorado and which may have had its origins in the historical ruins of Kuhikugu. This came on the trail of several decades of speculation of lost civilizations on his part, which will be discussed more in chapter five. And in 1927, Toribio Mejía Xesspe identified the Nazca Lines in Peru, which were seemingly the product of an advanced civilization that could plan the enormous shapes from the air and make a coordinated construction project.

Beyond the discovery of archaeological sites, throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many countries – particularly the United Kingdom and United States – were in a race to be the first to reach the North Pole. Particularly in the American case, this served as a way to unify the nation both before and after the Civil War, provide an alternate frontier after the end of
Western expansion, and provided for new ways of racially classifying the natives of the far north.\textsuperscript{42}

The identification of Great Zimbabwe as the mythical site of Ophir was therefore not done in a vacuum; it was just one of several such discoveries being made across the British Empire, formal or informal, in the last few decades on either side of the \textit{fin de siècle}, building up prestige for the Empire by causing its agents and intellectual emissaries to depict it not only as a civilizing mission, but as a restorer of lost civilizations. An inverse of the British theft of the Elgin Stones from Athens in the early nineteenth century and subsequent refusal to return them to the independent Greek state, the British imperial authorities could use the ‘preservation’ of these ancient sites as justification for their imperial presence. In the case of Great Zimbabwe, a formal reservation for the area was made by the BSAC in 1893, only three years after the formal establishment of Southern Rhodesia.\textsuperscript{43} This claim to be the proper protectors of African structures – including reconstructing them according to the opinions of British ‘experts’ – served as an architectural counterpart to the claims of settlers that they, as opposed to the Colonial Office in London, best knew how to tend to, interact with, and most importantly civilize the natives. Central African Federation Prime Minister Roy Welensky and Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith – leaders of the Central African settler regimes from the 1950s-1970s, who will be discussed in the next two chapters – each made that argument in their memoirs. Welensky argued


for the benefits of ‘racial partnership’ in the Federation, while Smith used it to demonstrate the benefits of a white-governed independent Rhodesia.\footnote{Roy Welensky, Welensky’s 4000 Days: The Life and Death of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (London: Collins, 1964), 67-85; Smith, 27-48.}

Even this paternalistic claim by the settler government to supervising native development for their own good had metropolitan counterparts as its origin. Before the Hamitic theory was interpreted as categorizing Africans as the ‘children of Ham’ cursed to serve the European ‘children of Japheth,’ it was originally used during the medieval period to justify peasant servitude. Nineteenth century British authors saw the urban poor as “wandering hordes” and “nomadic tribes” reminiscent of the claims made by colonial administrators in the next century who advocated for the policy of ‘detribalization’ of African laborers. In 1890 William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, wrote a pamphlet for his organization rhetorically linking British colonial subjects in Africa as described by Stanley with the poor British inhabitants of ‘Darkest England.’ Another example was the career of Charles Warren, an officer in the Royal Engineers who led the first archaeological dig at the Temple Mount in Jerusalem in 1867, was then sent to various military commands in what is now South Africa, was then appointed Commissioner of the London Metropolitan Police in 1886, resigned due to his failure to apprehend Jack the Ripper, and then returned to South Africa to serve as a major-general in the Boer War when the war began in 1899. In that year, Joseph Conrad published his novel \textit{Heart of Darkness}. Its protagonist, Marlow, returns to an unnamed European capitol after his adventures in Central Africa only to realize that the industrial urban landscape of “the sepulchral city” was nothing more than a parallel to “The horror! The horror!” of the jungle he just left.\footnote{Geraldine Heng, “The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages I: Race Studies, Modernity, and the Middle Ages,” \textit{Literature Compass}, Vol. 8, No. 5 (2011), 317-18; Wendy Webster, “‘There’ll Always Be an England’: Representations of Colonial Wars and Immigration, 1948-1968,” \textit{Journal of British Studies}, Vol. 40, No. 4, At Home in the Empire (Oct., 2001), 580; Ivan Van Sertima, \textit{They Came Before Columbus: The African Presence in Ancient America} (New York: Random House, 1976), 109-10; William Booth, \textit{In Darkest England and the Way Out}}
While those metropolitan Europeans made this connection between the urban poor and colonial subjects, the British settlers resident in the colonies – many of whom had only escaped their urban poor status via emigration to the settler colonies – were determined to reject any such comparisons. Sir James Maxwell, Scottish military physician and veteran of several wars in West Africa, was appointed Governor of Northern Rhodesia from 1927-32. While in office, Maxwell suggested progressive social and welfare reforms for the native Africans, but they were rejected by the Northern Rhodesia Legislative Council, specifically because its members saw no equivalence between native Africans and the poor of early modern England, who in any case had had to wait centuries for political and economic advancement.\textsuperscript{46} The Northern Rhodesian legislators were putting into practice a contradiction which leftist critics of the UK Labour Party, particularly the Fabian Colonial Bureau but also Gandhi in his 1931 visit to England, had articulated at least since the Boer War. The benefits accrued to British workers from colonial markets not only created fractures between the natural alliance of the metropolitan proletariat and colonized peoples, but also softened the Labour Party’s claims to explicit anti-imperialism.\textsuperscript{47} It was not only the space between metropolitan and colonial workers that imperialism blurred the clarity of; the recognition of the labor of colonized peoples in the form of construction was also obscured. The comparisons to previous bouts of British discovering archeological sites in the course of imperial expansion has two particularly relevant examples. Neither seems to have been

\textsuperscript{46} James Wightman Davidson, \textit{The Northern Rhodesian Legislative Council} (London: Faber and Faber, 1948), 70-71.

identified by prior historians, but both show that the sort of mythic history that emerged from Great Zimbabwe was not unique to that specific set of ruins. Rather, it was a template for a model that was pervasive across the colonial system, particularly the British one – but a model I believe clearly reached its apex with Great Zimbabwe, even if it did not originate there.

The first such unrecognized prior example of obscured archaeological origins was the British experience with the island of Rapa Nui, more commonly known as Easter Island. The Dutch sailor Jacob Roggeveen became the first European to land on Rapa Nui in 1722, as part of a Dutch East India Company expedition to locate the mythical Terra Australis. Roggeveen was the first European to report on the massive moai statues there. But by the time James Cook became the first Briton to visit the island in 1774, the population of Rapa Nui had already begun their iconoclastic toppling of the moai. When the time the next British ship, HMS Blossom, landed there in 1825, none of the statues were left standing. As with the early Portuguese explorers of southeastern Africa who believed the ruins of Great Zimbabwe had been built by Africans due to the presence of Africans living there, those early European visitors to Rapa Nui could not doubt their relation to the natives. And as the later Portuguese began to doubt the African connection to Great Zimbabwe, so did later Europeans begin to doubt that the Rapa Nui natives could have built the moai. In both cases, the act of abandonment by the natives was what opened up the space for later Europeans to create mythic histories of the abandoned ruins.

The other, far more substantive, parallel to the rediscovery of Great Zimbabwe I identified was Fawcett’s search for the “Lost City of Z” in Brazil. As with Mauch’s knowledge of Great Zimbabwe and desire to search for it, Fawcett was inspired in his search by the records

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of sixteenth-century Portuguese missionaries. The legend of Z was possibly inspired by those missionaries having seen the ruins of the historical Kuhikugu civilization; and Fawcett was even friends with H. Rider Haggard, who would go on to popularize the legend of Great Zimbabwe as being King Solomon’s mines. In 1923, Haggard even gave Fawcett a hieroglyphic-inscribed stone idol that he himself had received from a source in Brazil who claimed it had been made by Indians in the interior; Fawcett had it examined by a number of museum experts, most of whom believed it was fake. However, its ‘provenance’ was confirmed by a psychic, which therefore convinced Fawcett it was a relic from the Lost City of Z and helped set him on his fateful final journey.49

Nor was Fawcett’s belief that psychics could aid in his search for Z the only fringe view he espoused. In 1924, Fawcett wrote the majority of a book he planned to complete following his discovery of Z, but it was left unfinished due to his disappearance the following year. In 1953, Fawcett’s surviving son Brian edited the manuscript, added an epilogue, and published it as Lost Trails, Lost Cities. In the book, the elder Fawcett indulged in a high degree of pseudoscientific speculation on the nature of Z. The psychic who identified the idol as coming from Z further explained that the civilization of Z had existed thousands of years prior, when South America and Africa were still physically united; the cataclysm that divided the continents was the basis for the myth of Atlantis, which Fawcett identified as being located in “parts of what is now Brazil”. The new continent of the Americas was under continuous contact with Asia. Fawcett cites not only the Chinese legend of the journey of the Buddhist monk Hui Shen to Fusang, a land far across the western sea from China, but the alleged similarity of Quechua to both Chinese and Hebrew and the presence of Mongolian artifacts in Guatemala, similar to Frobenius and his

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African Atlantis claims. The Caribs, meanwhile, were deemed to have been a white race possibly descended from the legendary expedition of the medieval Welsh prince Madoc or the Vikings under Eric the Red.\textsuperscript{50}

At the end of his book, Fawcett directly compared his search for Z with the search for other mythical and real cities such as El Dorado, El Gran Paititi, the City of the Caesars, and Cuzco. In the 1953 epilogue, his son Brian compared the searches to find his father to another search for a legendary figure, referring to Percy as “The New Prester John.” Fawcett’s search for Z would be an inspiration for others, both in the real and literary worlds, and continuing into the twenty-first century.\textsuperscript{51} In 2017, \textit{The New Yorker} columnist David Preston published \textit{The Lost City of the Monkey God}, a book recounting his twenty-year involvement in the search for a “lost city” in Honduras and no doubt influenced by the 2009 publication of David Grann’s \textit{The Lost City of Z}, which re-popularized Fawcett in the public eye (and was itself adapted into a movie in 2017). Despite there being no evidence the “legend” of the city existed prior to it appearing in print in 1927 – an inconvenient fact that Preston does admit, and brush over, at the start of his book – Honduran president Juan Orlando Hernández gave his full support to both the invented myth and Preston’s book in order to bring American tourists (and their money) to Honduras.\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{50} Fawcett, 15-18, 260-76; Brooke-Hitching, 114-17.
Indeed, as discussed in chapter one, Cecil Rhodes himself recognized the monetary benefits of pseudohistory when he formed the Ancient Ruins Company, Ltd., as the initial organization to govern Great Zimbabwe and sell both its access and its artifacts to interested parties. R. N. Hall’s initial destructive survey of the Great Zimbabwe site explicitly included cataloguing artifacts that could be sold to buyers in the United Kingdom or Cape Colony. And Haggard himself reversed his friend Fawcett’s use of Old World pseudohistory to justify New World claims; in *King Solomon’s Mines*, the tomb of the city’s builders was deliberately based upon an Inca tomb, just as many authors and colonial advocates alike contrasted Native Americans and native Africans. In this, Haggard was just following a common trend of contemporaries to refer to the regions of Great Zimbabwe, the Witwatersrand, or the Gold Coast as an African El Dorado. In this, the search for sources of legendary gold in Africa were themselves shaped by the combined efforts to merge imperial projects and settler imaginations in the Americas.

American Upstarts:

Fawcett’s references to the search for El Dorado, Paititi, the City of the Caesars, and Cuzco did not emerge out of nowhere; such claims had been mainstays of Spanish exploration of the New World from the start of the European encounter with America. El Dorado had not only motivated the Spanish, but also Sir Walter Raleigh’s exploration of what is now Guiana, where

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53 Derbyshire Record Office: D3287 BSA/4/46: R. N. Hall, Zimbabwe, to Administrator, Salisbury: enclosed list of relics found at Zimbabwe, 15 October 1902.
Spanish explorer Alvise Cadamosto had located it. Fawcett could also have added to that list the legend of the Seven Golden Cities of Cibola, which was inspired by a combination of medieval legends of Christians sailing to an unknown western land to escape the Muslim conquest of Spain, with the Spanish discovery of the actual Native American ruins of the Zuni-Cibola Complex. As the Spanish were the first Europeans to establish an empire in North America, at the same time the Portuguese were exploring both coasts of southern Africa, many of the Spanish claims about North America and its inhabitants played into Portuguese beliefs about the societies they were encountering in southern Africa, especially considering both countries’ neighborhood to each other, close history, and union of crowns from 1580-1640.56

As with the Portuguese in Africa, the Spanish gave considerable thought to how Native Americans fit into the racial hierarchy of the Curse of Ham, along with a debate spanning the 1590s-1600s on whether Ophir was actually located in modern Peru with its silver mines. The nature of the Spanish Empire’s political organization also anticipated the settler politics that the structure of the British Empire’s settler-autonomous dominions would engender, particularly South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, and Kenya which all experienced settler revolts in the mid-twentieth century. As early as the 1560s the Spanish settlers of the New World saw themselves as citizens of autonomous kingdoms within Greater Spain, the same as the inhabitants of Naples, the Netherlands, and even Aragon in Europe. In order to separate themselves from the rest of the Spanish empire, they adopted the legacies of Native American cultures, even as they adapted them to fit into their own invented history and political program – even while enslaving and

exterminating the populations to whom they gave that glorified invented past.\textsuperscript{57} With this combination of territorial politics and invented history, the settlers of New Spain developed the formula for advocacy of settler rule and metropolitan resistance that Rhodesians would later use around Great Zimbabwe as rhetorical justification for their independence from Britain.\textsuperscript{58}

But while the Spanish Empire in the Americas provided closer models for the contemporary Portuguese in Africa, by the time of Fawcett – and Haggard, Mauch, Bent, Hall, and the other popularizers of Great Zimbabwe – the United States had become the preeminent empire of the New World, with its colonial views consequently having more of an impact. Colonialist archaeology as a discipline emerged in the United States to facilitate Native American studies, and Native Americans were the focus of two related myths that mirrored the settler approach to Great Zimbabwe. The first myth, stemming from the seventeenth century, was that several Native tribes with lighter skin, eye, and hair colors were actually the descendants of Old World explorers. The identities ranged from the classics familiar from the Great Zimbabwe legend (ancient Greeks, Phoenicians, Hebrews including the Lost Tribes of Israel) to more recent (medieval Welsh, Knights Templar, Vikings, and even the lost colonists of Roanoke). Medieval legends such as those of St. Brendan and Prince Madoc and their supposed voyages west to lands on the other side of the Atlantic had helped set the stage for British claims to the New World in the reign of Elizabeth I. The 1830 publication of the Book of Mormon further popularized a belief that the supposed ancient tribes of Nephites, Lamanites, Jaredites, and Mulekites were all


\textsuperscript{58} For how Spain’s imperial ideology in the Americans was transmitted to the British (nee English) imperial mode, see Anthony Pagden, \textit{Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c.1500-c.1800} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).
groups of Israelites who crossed the ocean to settle the Americas around 600 BCE, creating an advanced civilization that was later destroyed by the ancestors of the current Native Americans.\textsuperscript{59}

This belief in non-native origins of Native Americans set the stage for the second myth paralleling Great Zimbabwe, this one surrounding the massive, complex earthwork mounds of the East Coast and Midwest. As the Native Americans were considered lacking in the ability to construct elaborate structures, it was obvious that the so-called Mound Builders had been one (or more) of those Old World migrant groups. Native American removal was in turn partially justified on this excision of Native Americans from their own historical development due to the government of the United States promoting the myth of European Mound Builders. This invented history allowed Americans settlers to claim they were not displacing Natives, but simply reclaiming the continent for Europeans, who in this context had been the original inhabitants of the Americas before the arrival of the Indians.\textsuperscript{60} A variant of this ‘earlier European’ belief can also be found in the stone ‘megaliths’ of New England and New York. The earliest waves of European settlers built walls, cellars, wells, houses, and other structures out of stone, but then abandoned them when they relocated elsewhere, typically migrating further west. Later settlers arrived from Europe with no knowledge of the earlier settlers, occupying their now-abandoned lands, and assumed the stone relics were built by pre-Columbian explorers,


given their similarities in design to buildings from back in Europe (and immediately assuming the more romantic explanation instead of the more logical one). These colonial American legends, placing ancient migrant Europeans as the original owners of the land and responsible for all visible artifacts of the pre-Columbian past, were staples of ‘alt-history’ narratives which fully parallel the role of Great Zimbabwe’s invented history for settler imperialism in southern Africa.

However, unlike British professional archaeologists with Great Zimbabwe, it took far longer for mainstream American archaeology to reject the fringe belief of the Mound Builders, possibly due to the Mound Builder myth enduring longer prior to the maturation of the field. Scientific investigation into the origin of the mounds began in 1788, when Thomas Jefferson supervised the excavation of one in Virginia. By 1894, Cyrus Thomas of the Bureau of American Ethnology conclusively stated that the Mound Builders had been Native American, settling the issue for professional archaeologists and ethnologists, if not those with a lay interest. As with the case of the Portuguese and Great Zimbabwe, this realization came centuries after the earliest European explorers in the fifteenth century – in this case, the Spanish in what would become the southeastern United States, including Hernando de Soto – had no problem believing the Natives built the mounds, as they observed it firsthand. And as with the myth of Great Zimbabwe, the results of professional archaeology could not banish the fringe view from the mainstream of settler culture, and its political establishment.

One such American political figure who rejected the conclusions of Thomas on the Native provenance of the mounds was Ignatius L. Donnelly – a US representative, lieutenant

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61 With thanks to Kitty O’Riordan for pointing out this historical trope to me, and its similarity to the origins of the Solomonic theory of Great Zimbabwe promoted by the sixteenth century Portuguese, as described in chapter one.
governor of Minnesota, and founder of the Populist Party – who provided an explanation that was far more popular and rooted far more in the fringe. In 1882, Donnelly published *Atlantis: The Antediluvian World*, a book which revived the ancient story of Atlantis into the modern form. Donnelly’s Atlantis was a lost continent in the Atlantic Ocean which served as the diffusionist point of origin for all ancient cultures across Europe, Africa, and the Americas. Among the indigenous constructs that Donnelly attributed to ancient Atlantis were the North American mounds, the pyramids of both Egypt and Mesoamerica, and Stonehenge. Donnelly’s book has had a lasting legacy, and has been attributed as the ancestor of both modern ‘lost civilization’ and ancient alien claims. It also did not emerge in a vacuum; for example, two years earlier, John Thomas Short published *The North Americans of Antiquity*; otherwise straightforward, he briefly considered whether the Native Americans might have originally been the natives of Atlantis. But more to the fact, it seems clear that Donnelly (and Short) promoted a North American Atlantis in the early 1880s specifically to provide the United States with its own chance to rival the works of British and German archaeologists like George Smith and Heinrich Schliemann. It should also be remembered that Donnelly wrote at the time when, following the end of Reconstruction in the United States and the outbreak of rebellions in India and Jamaica, racial boundaries had become hardened across both the American and British worlds.63

However, by the time Short and Donnelly wrote about the connections of North America to Atlantis, there was already a widely accepted theory promoting European claims what had

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become the United States: the belief in Viking exploration and settlement of North America. The 1832 discovery of the ‘Skeleton in Armor’ in Fall River, Massachusetts helped spark the interest; while likely a Native American in ceremonial attire, it was widely interpreted as the remains of an armored Viking explorer. In 1841, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow published a poem about it of the same name, in which the skeleton was established as Thorvald Eiriksson, the brother of Leif killed by Native Americans in the Vinland sagas. Longfellow also linked the ‘Viking’ skeleton to the Newport Tower in Newport, Rhode Island, a stone monument that was claimed to be a remnant of Viking exploration, but is actually the remains of a windmill built by the colonial governor in the late seventeenth century.64

Academic attempts to historicize the ‘legendary’ claims that Vikings had reached America began in 1837, with the publication of the book *Antiquitates Americanae* by the Danish historian Carl Christian Rafn, who identified Vinland as the area around Narragansett Bay. Among Rafn’s supporting claims were that several relics in the region of the bay were actually of Viking origins, including the Newport Tower and the so-called Dighton Rock of Berkley, Massachusetts. A large boulder, Dighton Rock is covered in symbols given esoteric meaning by English settlers since the late seventeenth century; yet if they are anything more than graffiti, the most likely explanation are Native American petroglyphs. In the late eighteenth century, Ezra Stiles, president of Yale and founder of Brown, believed it to be evidence of ancient Phoenician or Israelite exploration, fueled partly by his studies of Hebrew from Newport’s Jewish community and partly by his own students vandalizing the rock in Hebrew to toy with their professor. Eighty years after Rafn, Brown psychology professor Edmund B. Delabarre proposed

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Dighton Rock was actually the work of the Portuguese explorer Miguel Corte-Real, who vanished in North America in 1502. Delabarre asserted that Corte-Real actually became chief of the Wampanoag tribe, his crew intermarrying with them and giving the natives the technical ability to carve the rock. The official Dighton Rock Museum continues to heavily endorse the Corte-Real theory, fueled in part by the political influence of the area’s large Portuguese population. It should be pointed out that this Portuguese population is the result of immigration in legacy of recent decades, and not from the supposed descendants of Corte-Real’s stranded crew.65

While it is the presence of Portuguese immigrants in southern Massachusetts that has helped shape the interpretation of Dighton Rock, it was a mix of Scandinavian immigrants and state action of their homelands that helped fuel the pre-Columbian Viking claims. In 1893, the World’s Columbian Exposition was held in Chicago to commemorate four hundred years since the voyage of Columbus. The government of Norway’s contribution to the world’s fair was a full replica of a ninth century Viking longship that was sailed from Norway to Chicago via Newfoundland to honor Leif Eiriksson’s preemption of Columbus’s achievement. The capstone ‘discovery’ of Viking explorers came in 1898 when Swedish immigrant Olof Ohman ‘discovered’ the Kensington Runestone on his farm in Donnelly’s native Minnesota.66 The Runestone is allegedly an inscription left by a fourteenth century expedition into the American heartland from Vinland. Despite almost immediately being dismissed by scholars, the Runestone set up the longstanding association of the Midwest with alleged Viking explorers (the Minnesota

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66 At the time of the Runestone’s alleged discovery, Donnelly was serving as a member of the Minnesota House of Representatives; there does not seem to be any surviving record of him commenting on the discovery, if he did indeed ever do so. His *Atlantis* is also absent of speculation on pre-Columbian Vikings in America.
Vikings football team, and the Runestone as U-Haul’s image for its Minnesota trucks, just as the Newport Tower is its Rhode Island image) despite the Runestone’s widely-accepted status as a hoax.67

By the time of the Runestone’s discovery, the theory of pre-Columbian Viking settlement had already become widely accepted in the United States at a time when the political elites worried about demographic changes; in particular, it helped them reframe the New World, and therefore the United States, as being founded by northern European Protestants and not southern European Catholics. The Viking belief stemming from the runestone’s discovery also had the implication of altering the geography of European settlement of the Americas. Instead of the logical first arrival on the East Coast, the Runestone established the Midwest as the starting point of the supposed Viking exploration of America. In this way, it echoes how the location of Z would place the Amazon as the starting point for white settlement of South America (as well as Europe given its supposed role as Atlantis), and Great Zimbabwe as Ophir would cause establish the origins of European presence in Africa’s south, rather than the northern part closer to Europe – which, between the early Portuguese and Dutch settlement, was close to the truth.68

It should be noted that the Vinland sagas were eventually confirmed to be historical in 1960, when a team led by Helge and Anne Stine Ingstad discovered a Viking settlement at L’Anse aux Meadows on the coast of Newfoundland, Canada. Ironically, the ruins of the settlement had long been known to the local Newfoundlanders, who dismissed the site as just being an “old Indian camp” and therefore not worthy of consideration.69 With the public

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69 Horwitz, 17.
announcement of the site in November 1964, speculation on Viking exploration of the Americas was no longer an entirely evidence-less hypothetical. However, the L’Anse aux Meadows discovery did nothing more than confirm that a small number of Vikings very briefly visited the very edge of a single island on the North American coast; the Ingstads’ team believed that the settlement had fewer than one hundred inhabitants and lasted less than a decade. As the journalist Tony Horwitz remarked after visiting L’Anse aux Meadows, “It had taken me ten minutes to tour the remains of Norse America. The story here was bigger than the place.” Historian Daniel Boorstein put its lack of impact on either Viking or Native societies more succinctly: “Was there ever before so long a voyage… that made so little difference?”

As such, the Vikings’ supposed roles as runestone carvers and Mound Builders remains completely unsubstantiated. A year after the L’Anse aux Meadows announcement, Yale University unveiled the Vinland Map, an alleged early fifteenth century map showing Viking voyages to Canada. Announced the day before Columbus Day, the Vinland Map was widely attacked by both the Italian-American community and politicians seeking to curry their favor, and by the 1970s was widely acknowledged as a hoax. One of the investigators who helped disprove it, Walter McCrone, later headed analysis of the Shroud of Turin disproving that the image on it was formed from blood. Further, by the time of the announcement of the L’Anse aux Meadows discovery, the idea of ancient white settlement of the Americas had found an ostensibly progressive parallel in Afrocentrism, the idea that West Africans had reached the

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70 One week prior to the completion of this dissertation, however, a new study emerged which suggested that L’Anse aux Meadows may have been occupied for dramatically longer, potentially from the tenth through the twelfth centuries CE. See Paul M. Ledger, Linus Girdland-Flink, and Véronique Forbes, “New horizons at L’Anse aux Meadows,” Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, July 15, 2019, accessed July 22, 2019, https://www.pnas.org/content/early/2019/07/09/1907986116.

71 Horwitz, 23.

Americas before Columbus and given rise to Olmec culture. This equally invalid theory will be discussed in chapter five.\footnote{Helge Ingstad, “Vinland Ruins Prove Vikings Found the New World,” National Geographic Magazine, Vol. 126, No. 5 (Nov., 1964), 708-35; Feder, Archaeological Oddities, 136-41; Horwitz, 11-46; Boorstein, 204-16.}

The above section lays out just how extensively Americans – both the settlers and those in power in the state – were interested in pseudohistorical archaeological and ethnographic theories regarding Native Americans, fantastical white settlers, and the appropriation by the latter of the former’s quite-real architectural achievements. Further, this racist alternate history promotion was used to justify westward expansion, Native American expulsion, and even denigration of segments of the white population (i.e., Catholics of Southern European descent) not deemed suitably white. If this sounds familiar, it is because each of these policies were closely followed by the settlers of Southern Rhodesia from the 1890s on – just with the replacing of Vikings by Israelites, Native Americans with Africans, and mounds with Great Zimbabwe. Indeed, such theorizing – from the Colonial Office officials in London, the BSAC administration in Cape Town, and the settlers in Salisbury – all emerged at the moment the Mound Builder myth was finally being eclipsed in the United States, at least among professional academics. As with the British Israelist myth finding a new home in Southern Rhodesia thanks to ‘Ophir,’ the Rhodesian claims allowed them to symbolically take up the torches that had been lit, and then laid down, by imperial powers elsewhere in the world. But it was not only those imperial authorities’ use of native monuments that shaped their attitudes to the colonized regions – a key aspect included replicating those monuments in the metropole.\footnote{Metropole in this case refers to Great Britain in the case of southern Africa, but also the ‘incorporated’ territory of the United States in the context of Native Americans.}

Building monuments:
In 1834, the Palace of Westminster, home of the British Parliament, burned down, followed by the burning of the Royal Exchange in 1834; within four years, London’s symbolic centers of politics and trade had been destroyed, and the rebuilding of both took decades. In 1847, a suggestion for the interior decoration of Westminster included a set of six murals, pairing three ancient topics with modern equivalents. These included ancient Phoenicians landing in Cornwall and meeting savage Celts, paired with Captain Cook landing in Tahiti and meeting savage natives, as well as the Roman suppression of the Druids with the East India Company’s 1829 banning of sati in Bengal. This found its equivalent in a mural for the Royal Exchange painted in 1894-95, which depicted ancient, sophisticated Phoenician merchants trading with fur-clad Celts in Cornwall. Both art pieces – located in the political and economic centers of the British Empire – not only demonstrated the contemporary English association with the Phoenicians as the true ancestors of British civilization, but also the association of the Irish with the Pacific Islanders encountered by Cook by contemporary supporters of Irish independence.75 Phoenicians encountering ancient Celts, English conquering the Irish, and British encountering Pacific Islanders were seen as overlapping examples of sophisticated maritime commerce powers meeting uncivilized ‘small islanders’ in need of the colonialists’ cultural upkeep.

This Victorian Anglocentric rejection of the historical Celtic Britons in favor of the mythical Phoenician merchant-civilizers took a more legalistic turn in the 1870s debate over a proposal from Sir John Lubbock, a Liberal MP and archaeologist, that Parliament should pass a law to protect pre-Roman Celtic archaeological sites such as megaliths and hill forts. This was strongly opposed by the Conservative MP Lord Francis Hervey on two grounds. The first, which

would find an echo in the modern American right (as will be discussed in the fifth chapter) was that such an act would involve granting too much power to the government, and infringe on the private property rights of landowners. The other reason was because Hervey saw no value in those pre-Roman monuments, explicitly comparing them with the works of the Sandwich Island natives encountered by Cook and arguing they were not even the ancestors of the modern English, as the Phoenicians were. Lubbock would eventually prevail with the 1882 passing of the Ancient Monuments Protection Act, even as Lubbock himself would join the Liberal Unionist faction opposing Irish Home Rule when the Liberals split over the issue in 1886.76

While many in the Victorian political class were reluctant to protect Celtic monuments due to their lack of Middle Eastern provenance, they were simultaneously engaged in a program of creating their own range of Egyptian monuments – taking it upon themselves to construct the legacy of ancient Near Eastern contact that they knew in their hearts had happened, even if the evidence remained stubbornly elusive. These modern monuments took the form of the Egyptian Revival architectural style that was popular for several decades after Napoleon’s 1798 invasion of Egypt and the subsequent destruction of the French fleet at the Battle of the Nile by Horatio Nelson, for which he was elevated to the peerage. The Egyptian Revival style was especially popular in industrial Northern England and Scotland. The epitome of the trend was John Marshall’s Temple Mill, an enormous flax mill in Leeds based on an Egyptian temple to Horus that at the time of its opening in 1840 contained the world’s largest open room and the world’s first industrial hydraulic lift. Egyptian architecture therefore became closely tied to Britain’s industrial, technological, and economic dominance in the world. At the same time, the predominance of Scottish architects in the Empire – building Imperial monuments which blended


One of the more striking examples of this trend in popular fiction is the 1895 debut novel of H. G. Wells, \textit{The Time Machine}. When the novel’s protagonist arrives in the London of the year 802,701 CE, he is greeted by an enormous ‘White Sphinx,’ whose visage was “greatly weather-worn” – the achievement, if in the far-future, of the contemporary Victorian desire to find ancient Near Eastern relics in Britain.\footnote{H. G. Wells, \textit{The Time Machine} (London: Penguin Classics, 2005), 21. For an overview of the role of sphinxes in nineteenth century British culture, see Wood, 105-06.} Notably, the narrator also reflects on the difficulty of explaining such a future to his friends back in the Victorian era:

> Conceive the tale of London which a negro, fresh from Central Africa, would take back to his tribe! What would he know of railway companies, of social movements, of telephone and telegraph wires, of the Parcels Delivery Company, and postal orders and the like? Yet we, at least, should be willing enough to explain these things to him! And even of what he knew, how much could he make his untravelled friend either apprehend or believe? Then, think how narrow the gap between a negro and a white man of our own times, and how wide the interval between myself and these of the Golden Age!\footnote{Wells, 40-41.}

The Time Traveller’s contrast of his own experiences in the future London to a visiting Central African’s experience of Wells’ London is soon followed by his first encounter with the Morlocks. Living underground, the Morlocks are the ape-like, quasi-sentient descendants of the
uneducated laborers of London’s past.\textsuperscript{80} The description of the Morlocks draws upon racialized imagery that, due to their ancestry, also serves as a reflection of both the pre-colonial (social status) and post-colonial (racial) interpretations of the Curse of Ham.

In contrast to the Morlocks are the Eloi, carefree and simplistic surface-dwellers descended from the idle rich of the Victorian era. When the Time Traveller arrives and makes first contact with them, they believe he arrived out of the sun during a thunderstorm.\textsuperscript{81} John Rieder argues that this scene was an allusion to Haggard’s \textit{King Solomon’s Mines} from a decade earlier, with the Time Traveller as Allan Quatermain, the Eloi as the Kukuana tribesmen, and the arrival of the Time Traveller from the sun as Quatermain claiming to control the eclipse.\textsuperscript{82} This interpretation is particularly useful as it reinforces how the Ophir legend stood in for Britain specifically, by relocating Quatermain’s claiming of Ophir to future London. This association is further solidified by the fact that, when observing the décor of the Eloi, the Time Traveller reflects on how “I fancied I saw suggestions of old Phoenician decorations;” later, he encounters actual Phoenician artifacts, among many other cultures, stored in an ancient London museum (and one of which he casually desecrates by writing his name on, the traditional of indifferent tourists eternal).\textsuperscript{83}

Nor were futuristic proletarian Morlocks or Victorian British industrialists the only ones who were interested in rebuilding Egyptian architecture in their homeland. In 1923, American moviemaker Cecil B. DeMille filmed his Biblical drama \textit{The Ten Commandments} in the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes of southern California. Adjusted for inflation, the movie remains one

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid, 45-50.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid, 25.
\textsuperscript{82} John Rieder, \textit{Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction} (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2008), 87; H. Rider Haggard, ed. Gerald Monsman, \textit{King Solomon’s Mines} (Peterborough: Broadview Literary Texts, 2002), 147-59. For how \textit{The Time Machine}’s London reflected Wells’ views of colonialism and evolutionary science, see Lehan 153-55.
\textsuperscript{83} Wells, \textit{The Time Machine}, 26, 69.
of the most successful of all time. The set was virtually a miniature city built by thousands of workers, and included two dozen sphinxes, four thirty-five foot statues, and enclosed by walls and gates over 100 feet tall. After filming, weather and erosion caused the sets to be buried under the sand dunes, leaving a miniature Egyptian city buried in the desert outside of San Francisco. For decades, film historians searched the California desert trying to find the set’s lost location. It was eventually discovered in 1983, which then set off another decades-long endeavor to raise the funding to finally excavate the fictional Egyptian city, which finally happened in 2012-14. As a loose British equivalent, during World War I, New Zealand soldiers stationed in England carved the Fovant Badges and Bulford Kiwi hill figures, enormous figures cut into the grass of hills to reveal the rock beneath; these were the latest of such hill figure carvings in England since the seventeenth century, a process that echoed earlier pre-Roman constructs such as the Uffington White Horse.

It is notable that this trend of metropolitan monument making emerged, in the form of the Egyptian Revival style, at the exact time in British culture that the belief in in a historical ancient contact between Britons and Near Eastern peoples was strongest. The style’s popularity expanded in both form and number in the late nineteenth century, exactly as the Phoenician claim began to become seriously challenged, but as the British Empire began to expand into those same Near Eastern locations. This expansion allowed for the proliferation of the architectural style that brought the dream of an ancient Near Eastern Britain to fruition. And notably, this architectural embrace of the mythical unifying British national identity emerged first in the colonies, before being transmitted back to the metropole. The conflation of ancient monuments and modern technology evident in the Leeds Temple Mill, Californian Egypt, and

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84 The Lost City of Cecil B. DeMille, DVD, directed by Peter Brosnan (Harrisburg, PA: Lost City Productions, 2016); Feder, Archaeological Oddities, 222-27.
hillside monuments reached their apex in the late nineteenth century, but only partially with terrestrial monuments. Instead, the collusion of technology, industrialization, and imperial power allowed for the creation of telescopes that, for a brief time, seemed to allow for the discovery of lost civilizations and their enormous monuments on lands far more distant than Africa.

The Final (Imperial) Frontier:

While the belief in lost civilizations on other planets may seem on an entirely different level from the belief in lost civilizations on other continents, the idea that alien beings lived (or had lived) on the Moon and Mars and had left behind enormous structures that could be observed from Earth was widely accepted in both the public and scientific communities in the nineteenth century. Further, both the speculated nature of those extraterrestrial civilizations, and theories on observing and communicating drew heavily on the history of imperialism. Many of the observatories used to examine planets for signs of life were built by European powers in their colonies, while the hypothetical alien civilizations were based on models of civilizational hierarchy developed to categories the colonized societies surrounding those observatories – and the fear that Earth itself might become a colonized settlement of its own.

The idea of intelligent life on other planets predates modern scientific thought; among others, ancient Greeks considered it, the Quran has been interpreted as endorsing the idea, and Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake by the Inquisition in 1600 for preaching what was then referred to as the ‘plurality of worlds.’ The mid-eighteenth century ‘nebular hypothesis’ of Immanuel Kant and Pierre-Simon Laplace argued that the solar system formed as planets cooled from the outside in. Therefore, as Mars is further from the sun than Earth, it would also be older than Earth, and its inhabitants would correspondingly be more advanced than humans. From the
early 1800s, proposals circulated – commonly attributed to Austrian astronomer Joseph Johann von Littrow – to make contact with these advanced Martians by digging giant Pythagorean shapes into the Sahara Desert of North Africa, filling them with oil, and lighting them at night so that Martian astronomers could see signs of mathematical knowledge.  

In 1824, Bavarian astronomer Franz von Paula Gruithuisen published *Discovery of Many Distinct Traces of Lunar Inhabitants, Especially of One of Their Colossal Buildings*, in which he claimed to have discovered vast ancient constructs and relics of a vanished civilization on the Moon. Eleven years later, Gruithuisen’s theories were seemingly confirmed when, from 1833-38, the greatest astronomer in the world, John Herschel, relocated from Britain to Cape Town in what is now South Africa, to carry out a survey of the sky of the southern hemisphere. For most of that time, Herschel’s neighbor in Cape Town was William Petrie, a friend of the Astronomer Royal of Scotland and father of Flinders Petrie. In 1835, readers of *The Sun* newspaper in New York were astonished to read a story from Cape Town, where Herschel announced the discovery of advanced life on the Moon. Over the next few days, the ‘reports’ from ‘Herschel’ described the inhabitants of the lunar city in terms harkening back not only to African wildlife, including baboons and orangutans, but also as hominids in racialized terms clearly evoking stereotypes of Africans. While this “Great Moon Hoax” was quickly unmasked, as late as the 1890s – and taking the opposite rhetorical path as Gruithuisen, if for the same end – French astronomer Camille Flammarion claimed that it was still plausible to search for intelligent civilizations on the Moon, as signs of them would still be invisible through earthly telescopes of the day. To back

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up his claim Flammarion used the examples of how the African jungles could hide ancient buildings, and that even the Egyptian Pyramids were minuscule on an interplanetary scale.  

The Great Moon Hoax was only a taste of the hysteria that was to come from Mars later in the century. In 1877, Italian astronomer Giovanni Schiaparelli announced that he had discovered immense ‘canali’ on Mars. The Italian word for ‘channels,’ it was mistranslated into English as ‘canals,’ with the connotation of artificial construction. To add to the confusion, Schiaparelli himself eventually came around to accepting their artificial nature, endorsing it in his 1893 book Life on Mars. This was followed by a trilogy of works by the American astronomer Percival Lowell – Mars (1895), Mars and Its Canals (1906), and Mars as the Abode of Life (1908) – which more than anything established the idea of intelligent canal-building Martians in the mind of the global public. Lowell was a member of the wealthy Lowell Family of Boston, and prior to becoming interested in mathematics lived in and wrote extensively about Korea and Japan. After returning to the United States, he relocated to Flagstaff, Arizona, where in 1894 he commissioned the building of Lowell Observatory specifically to facilitate his efforts to map the Martian canals. Lowell Observatory’s location in the only-recently closed (1890) colonial frontier of the American West – Arizona would not become a state until 1912 – is the first of several connections between American imperialism and astronomy. It was followed by the Arecibo and Mauna Kea Observatories, both built in the 1960s and protested, respectively.

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by the Puerto Ricans and Native Hawaiians on whose land they were built. The Great Moon Hoax was also only possible due to Herschel’s being situation in a remote observatory in colonial South Africa. The widespread acceptance of massive Martian canals was itself partly due to the claims coming in an era of massive canal construction – specifically the Suez Canal (1859-69) and Panama Canal (1881-1914), both of which were explicitly colonial endeavors, and the former of which was the catalyst for Egypt being taken under British ‘protection’ for ninety years.  

The interest in the Martian canals was the inspiration for another novel by H. G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds*, published in serialized form in 1897. The novel depicts a Martian invasion of Britain specifically based on British colonial occupations of Africa, Asia, and Australia – the novel’s narrator even cites the British genocide of the Aboriginal Tasmanians as an example of the moral equivalency between British and Martian settlers. In this, *The War of the Worlds* was a spiritual successor to British satirist William Makepeace Thackeray’s 1829 poem “Timbuctoo,” his first publication and both a parody of contemporary abolitionist poetry and a reflection of the disappointment from Caillié’s reporting on the actual Timbuktu the year prior. The poem ends with the stanza warning, “The day shall come when Albion’s self shall feel/Stern Afric’s wrath, and writhe 'neath Afric’s steel.” In line with Thackeray’s satiric depiction of an African invasion of Britain, *The War of the Worlds* was published compiled into

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88 Notably, Australia also had an equivalent to the Great Zimbabwe myth. British settlers in Australia used the reluctance of Aboriginals to discuss their own past to claim ownership of Aboriginal stone structures, arguing they were built by earlier voyagers from Britain. Lynette Russell, “Remembering Places Never Visited: Connections and Context in Imagined and Imaginary Landscapes,” *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, Vol. 16, No. 2: Archaeology, Memory, and Oral Tradition (Jun., 2012), 402-05.
novel form in 1898, the same year as the Battle of Omdurman resulted in the end of the Mahdist Revolt, an Islamic uprising in Sudan that had annihilated Charles Gordon’s Anglo-Egyptian army at Khartoum in 1885 and ruled Sudan as an independent theocracy since. Just as the Martians of Wells had heat rays and war tripods that the British could not match, Omdurman was the debut of the machine gun in colonial wars. Forty-seven British were killed, compared with over ten thousand Sudanese.\footnote{H. G. Wells, \textit{The War of the Worlds} (New York: The Modern Library, 2002), 3-6; Thackeray, 531-33.}

Wells followed \textit{The War of the Worlds} up with a second space adventure, \textit{The First Men in the Moon}, serialized from 1900-01. It recounts an expedition to the moon by two Englishmen, the professor Mr. Cavor and the businessman Mr. Bedford. On landing, Bedford recounts how, in drunken celebration,

In some way that I have now forgotten, my mind was led back to projects of colonisation. “We must annex this moon,” I said. “There must be no shilly-shally. This is part of the White Man’s Burden.”… I embarked upon an argument to show the infinite benefits our arrival would confer on the moon. I involved myself in a rather difficult proof that the arrival of Columbus was, on the whole, beneficial to America.\footnote{H. G. Wells, \textit{The First Men in the Moon} (New York: Airmont Publishing Company, 1965), 65-66.}

This Kipling-esque call to literally ensure the sun never sets on the British Empire – coming from the businessman, no less – is complicated by their discovery that the moon is populated by a race of insectoid drones called Selenites. While individually mindless, the Selenites are lorded over by the ‘Grand Lunar,’ named in clear reference to the term ‘Grand Turk’ used to describe the Ottoman Sultan with Orientalist despotic undertones.\footnote{Chapter 24, “The Grand Lunar”: Ibid, 148-58. For the state of the term ‘Grand Turk’ as a “powerful, arrogant, bombastic and boastful stock figure” in England dating from the sixteenth century, see Dimmock 118, 124.} During the course of the novel, Bedford returns to Earth while Cavor remains behind, sending reports back by radio for a time. In describing how the Selenites bring food from the lunar surface to their
subterranean abodes, Cavor states – in a term reminiscent of the Time Traveller’s account of the London of 802,701 – “I have as yet scarcely learnt as much of these things as a Zulu in London would learn about the British corn supplies in the same time.”92 At the end of the novel, Cavor’s transmissions end, apparently cut off by the Grand Lunar as part of preparations for a pre-emptive strike at Earth after learning from Cavor of the human (or perhaps specifically British) propensity for conquest.93 The reference to Zulus, and their attack on the remote British outpost that Cavor symbolizes, is particularly notable not only for transposing the Battle of Rorke’s Drift to another planet, but takes on new context given that Wells wrote the novel during the Second Boer War, which secured British control of southern Africa. As with *The War of the Worlds*, the apparent Selenite preparation for a pre-emptive strike on Earth (or possibly a retaliatory strike, depending on the Grand Lunar’s interpretation of Bedford and Cavor) is a cosmic re-imagining of the threat of African counter-invasion of Britain in Thackeray’s “Timbuctoo” poem.

It was not just Wells who followed up *The War of the Worlds* with a space adventure successor; the Martian invasion novel immediately inspired copycat authors, including the 1898 unauthorized sequel *Edison’s Conquest of Mars* by the American astronomer G. P. Serviss. Written the year of the Spanish-American War, it depicts Thomas Edison being commissioned by President William McKinley to lead an international space fleet to counter-attack and invade Mars. Along the way, they not only discover the giant ruins of an extinct species on the Moon (an apparent validation of Gruithuisen) but also learn that the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt were in fact established by an earlier Martian invasion, with the Pyramids and Sphinx specifically having been built by Martians to commemorate their own

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93 Ibid, 156-60.
rulers. Another early work in the genre was Cecil B. White’s 1927 short story “The Retreat to Mars,” in which an astronomer discovers that humanity originated not in Asia (as then believed by anthropologists) but in Central Africa, and that the earliest humans were the degenerated descendants of a Martian colony (explicitly compared to the Babylonians) abandoned by the mother planet as the settlers’ progression to savagery became impossible to stop. White’s equation of ancient alien visitors and the ‘standard’ Ophir myth of Great Zimbabwe is even starker than that of Serviss.

The modern ancient alien concept that gained popularity from von Däniken is racist, and specifically racist against Africans. In Chariots of the Gods? alone, von Däniken discussed a total of fifty-one archaeological sites he claimed were of alien origin. Divided by continent, the largest amount (sixteen) were in Africa, with twelve in Asia, eleven in North America, and ten in South America. Europe, on the other hand, was the location of only two such sites. But more broadly, the general concept of ancient aliens – and the entire nineteenth century belief in intelligent beings on the Moon and Mars, and the methods of both observing and communication with them – is racist, drawing heavily from British and American colonialism, particularly in

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regards to Africa and the American West.\textsuperscript{98} The difference between seeing Biblical Ophir in Central Africa and a giant face on the surface of Mars is merely whether explorers used caravels or rockets to reach the sites in question.

**Conclusion:**

This chapter has demonstrated that the late nineteenth and early twentieth century belief that the ruins of Great Zimbabwe were actually Ophir did not occur in a vacuum. Instead, it occurred in the context of similar claims being made across the realm of European empires, the Anglophone world in particular. Indeed, this process – creating mythical ancient white histories for works of Native peoples – was integral to the process of justifying settler colonialism and creating a foundation legend for national unity. Nor was it only imperial advocates in London or Rhodes and the BSAC in Cape Town who supported the appropriation of African history for the benefit of European colonial projects. By 1898, Southern Rhodesia had been granted the right to elect its own legislature for self-government, and in 1922 its citizens voted in a referendum to end all political allegiance to the BSAC.\textsuperscript{99} For the new Rhodesian political class, the association of Great Zimbabwe as Ophir took on new meanings, separate from the British explorers of the past. If other such connections between ruins and alt-history had enabled Britain and the United States to become imperial powers, then it would also allow Rhodesia to become one such power. And if a core feature of Victorian British identity was the claim to not only Phoenician ancestry, but a special history with Christ, then by connecting themselves to the Phoenicians and Great


Zimbabwe, the Rhodesians could claim precedence over the British. After all, Solomon was Christ’s predecessor and ancestor.

As Rhodesians moved towards first self-government outside of the BSAC’s rule, and then towards full-on opposition to British oversight itself, these mythic history claims would become more important to their project of nation-building, just as they had to the British and Americans. This will be central to the fourth chapter which explores how the settlers of Southern Rhodesia, after their authority was finally established, began their own interpretation of Great Zimbabwe, at the same time as they began to oppose the governing BSAC. Just as the settlers opposed Company rule, their own interpretation challenged that put forth by Rhodes and his successors. And in particular, the Rhodesian government only intensified in its strident defense of mythic history, even as the American and British claims of Mound Builders and Phoenician visitors to Stonehenge had long since lapsed. These would appear as a microcosm of one of the animating beliefs of the Rhodesian settlers – that Rhodesia was destined to carry the baton of Anglo-Saxon greatness that Britain was in danger of dropping. If changing British society was threatening British traditions, then it would be up to Rhodesia to sustain the stereotyped England of yesterday – in part by building on the mythic history claims of an even-longer-ago yesterday.
Chapter 4: Settler Rule and the Central African Federation

“Magnanimity in politicks is not seldom the truest wisdom; and a great empire and little minds go ill together.”

-Edmund Burke, “Speech on Conciliation with America” (March 22, 1775)\(^1\)

**Introduction:**

Edmund Burke, the Irish father of English conservatism, lived prior to the true start of British imperialism in Africa, let alone the settlement of what became Southern Rhodesia – but through that lens of Ireland, he nevertheless played a role in developing English attitudes to and ideology of imperialism. In his speech quoted above, where he called upon Parliament to negotiate with the rebellion American settlers, he noted how New England whalers operated from the Arctic to the coasts of Africa and Brazil and the Falklands, spreading de facto English authority to those areas that were all independent of formal British supervision and regulation. A conservative English parliamentarian defending rogue settlers on the basis of their autonomous operations is a scenario as much at home in the 1770s as the 1970s. Nor were the defenses by metropolitan conservatives the only similarities between the American Revolution and the Rhodesian Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI). The Rhodesian UDI represented the first time a British colony had declared its independence against London’s wishes since 1776, and both the Rhodesian settlers and the African nationalists rebelling against them made

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references to not only the Boston Tea Party, but also to Abraham Lincoln and the American Civil War.2

The Rhodesian settlers themselves would have agreed with the Burke statement opening this chapter. From the beginning of their settlement, the Rhodesians recognized that to turn their colony into a great empire, they would need great imagination. This chapter will cover the development of white self-rule in Rhodesia and the evolving use of the mythic history of Great Zimbabwe as a template to reinforce settler ideology. While the majority of Rhodesians shared the general assumption that native Africans could not have built the city, specific hypotheses on the city’s origins waxed and waned in prominence over the years. This chapter will demonstrate how these changes over time align with contemporary developments in Rhodesian politics. As the political trajectory of the Rhodesian majority changed, so too did the portrayal of Great Zimbabwe. In the period when the BSAC established white rule over the region, the fictive city builders were compared with the diamond miners of South Africa. During the settlers’ advocacy for self-rule from the BSAC, the city builders were equated with the Israelites who had risen up against their enslavement by the Egyptian Pharaoh. And as Southern Rhodesians united in their opposition to membership in the Central African Federation, as well as British supervision overall, the promotion of an African ‘invasion theory’ to explain the downfall of the white architects became prominent.

When the Rhodesians proclaimed UDI, therefore, it was a rebellion not only of colony against metropole, but of but of “Englishness” and Conservatism against “Britishness” and

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Labour. Nor was it an anti-imperial revolt, but rather an effort by Rhodesians to appropriate what they saw was Britain’s claim to imperial authority in Africa that both Rhodesians and the Conservative right saw as being abdicated by Labour and moderate Conservatives – even as those ‘traitors’ had inverted the imperial order by welcoming immigration from Britain’s formerly-colonized subjects. The role of the Great Zimbabwe legend became especially heightened in this era, with the Rhodesian government doubling down on the assertion that the ruins had been an isolated outpost of white civilization in southern Africa, destroyed by waves of Bantu migrants – examples particularly relevant for the settler regime’s view of both Rhodesia and Britain at the time. And it is not surprising that across all of these changing portrayals, racial politics were central.

**The Evolution of Race:**

In 1935, Italian dictator Benito Mussolini launched an invasion of Ethiopia, one of the two remaining independent African states, with the goals of avenging the Italian defeat of 1896 – when Ethiopia had become the first non-white country to defeat the wave of European ‘new imperialism’ – and recreating the Roman Empire, restoring a Mediterranean-centered Classical civilization. The British were long admirers of that earlier Mediterranean empire, even if the British Israelist legend partly resonated by giving the British a Phoenician counter-example to the Roman legacy preferred by their French rivals. But while the British government did next to nothing to oppose Mussolini, his invasion sparked wide opposition by Britain’s colonial subjects,

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3 The other independent African state at the time was Liberia, which in 1933 the British had considered granting to Hitler in order to appease his colonial desires: Rayford W. Logan, *The African Mandates in World Politics* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1948), v-viii.

especially those of African descent in the West Indies – and in Britain’s African colonies themselves, particularly in West Africa. Nor was protest limited to Britain’s colonies; the metropole itself had its critics of Mussolini’s unprovoked war of conquest. On August 15, 1936, the New Times published an editorial by Hazel M. Napier, Secretary General of the Friends of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) League of Service, with the sarcastic title “The Benefits of Italian Rule in Ethiopia.” Influenced by the British Egyptologist Edward Budge’s 1922 translation of the Kebran Negast and the socially-diffused implications from the British Israelist myth, the article cast Ethiopia as England’s Christian counterpart in Africa: both had served as an “island of Christianity in a sea of paganism” and both countries’ priests “have struggled to preserve their ancient form of Christianity from the insidious influence of Rome”.

However, among those who had left the metropole for the African colonies, the attitude was different. In the century between the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the start of World War I, twenty million Britons emigrated from the metropole to the Empire’s outposts. The start of that mass migration wave coincided with changing views of race in Britain, largely stemming as a reaction to the 1791-1804 Haitian Revolution and the 1808 abolition of the British Transatlantic slave trade. Evangelical abolitionists attempted to address the Hamitic theory not by rejecting it, but either by ignoring it, or emphasizing that Ham was cursed not to slavery but to servitude. Abolitionist poetry, such as that of William Cowper and William Blake, shifted from portraying appeals from Africans to portraying appeals to Europeans on behalf of Africans. Interventionism and colonialism with the pretext of humanitarian intervention come from this cultural backlash.

which only intensified as a result of the political and economic impact of West Indies emancipation after 1834 culminating in the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865, the Indian Rebellion of 1857-58, and the perception of Reconstruction after the end of the American Civil War from 1865-77.  

The result of this changing depiction of race in the decades of mass emigration to the colonies would color the self-perception of those settlers, especially in Africa, where the British colonists viewed themselves as nobly liberating native Africans from foreign Arab slavery and Afrikaner oppression, even while justifying their rule of the Africans’ land. In Southern Rhodesia, an example of this selective perception of settler history came to a head in 1936, the same year Mussolini proclaimed victory over his new province of Ethiopia and its integration into his revived Roman Empire. The Monuments and Relics Act of 1936 formally established that “antiquity” in Southern Rhodesia referred to anything prior to January 1, 1890. This decision compressed all of pre-European history into a homogenous past, and established that history – and therefore civilization – were synonymous with the arrival of both permanent European settlers and the British South Africa Company which employed them.

With the Africans’ past rhetorically – and legally – wiped clean, the stage was therefore set for the European settlers to insert their own history. With pre-1890 land claims by native

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Africans no longer recognized, a new phase of settler land seizure was also inaugurated. This process was effectively begun with the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 (LAA), passed under the guise of promoting African development on land isolated from European ‘intervention,’ much as the United States government had claimed Native Americans would benefit from their removal to reservations. Under the terms of the LAA, approximately seventy-three percent of Southern Rhodesia, including the most fertile farming areas, were set aside for the approximately seven percent of the population who were white settlers – a disparity so large that most of the country’s richest farmlands lay fallow due to there not being enough farmers to cultivate them. The remainder of the colony’s land was divided between the Tribal Trust Lands where native Africans could reside without the permits they needed for urban residency, and reserves and national parks – including Great Zimbabwe and other historical sites – thereby also effectively separating natives from their history. With the Monuments and Relics Act effectively denying any ‘development’ of the African population had existed prior to 1890, that paternalistic justification of the Land Apportionment Act was given a pseudohistorical defense. As with the ruins of Great Zimbabwe specifically, the appropriation of native African history by the Rhodesian regime was deemed necessary to ensure the territorial seizure of the native Africans.9

The Myth of Racial Partnership in Africa:

As discussed in chapter two, from the very end of Company rule in the Rhodesias, amalgamation was one possibility of the region’s future – whether of the Rhodesias themselves, with South Africa, or even with other British protectorates and colonies in Central and Eastern

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Africa. The 1922 referendum ending Company rule decisively ruled against incorporation with South Africa, but in both Salisbury and London there was continued debate over amalgamation in those alternate contexts. By the period of the postwar British Labour government of 1945-51, a rough consensus had emerged between both the Labour and Conservative parties in London, and representatives of the settler governments of both Rhodesias, in favor of a joining of Southern Rhodesia (modern Zimbabwe), Northern Rhodesia (modern Zambia), and Nyasaland (modern Malawi). Southern Rhodesia was effectively a self-governing dominion within the Commonwealth along the lines of Canada and Australia. However, the other ‘Northern Territories’ were colonies directly administered from London by the Colonial Office, with correspondingly far fewer white settlers. Nyasaland in particular was the smallest but most populous of the three territories, with even fewer European settlers than Indians. In addition to the differing colonial status and settler populations, the major sticking point was Southern Rhodesia’s strict race laws, which under amalgamation would likely be expanded into the Northern Territories, something the native Africans (and a minority of settlers) were extremely opposed to.

The compromise reached was federation rather than amalgamation – instead of a unitary government spanning the regions (as in the pre-1997 United Kingdom with England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland) there would be a federal government, as earlier established by the British in Canada, Australia, India, and Nigeria. The formal name of the new entity was the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, but it was more commonly referred to as the Central African Federation (CAF). The structure of the CAF would involve each territory continuing its

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own government, while a new federal government – also headquartered in Salisbury – would be established to handle issues such as defense, foreign relations, and economic policy. However, the federal solution would require awkward conditions, including the fact that while Southern Rhodesia and the new federal government would be supervised by the Dominions Office and governed by elected assemblies, the Northern Territories would continue to be directly administered by the Colonial Office, meaning four divisions of two government branches in London would have to coordinate supervision of the CAF. Another compromise stemming both to the federal structure and the differing policies over race relations was that there was no unified citizenship of the CAF, only the continuing status of Southern Rhodesian citizenship, British Protected Person (BPP) status in Nyasaland (formally a protectorate, not a colony), and a mix of BPP and colonial subject status in Northern Rhodesia. Each territory would administer its own regulations for voting (both for the regional legislatures and the Federal Assembly) based on their own internal policies.12

The CAF was inaugurated in 1953, with federal elections quickly following and resulting in a majority for the new Federal Party. Formed as a result of the CAF and in support of it, as its name implied it existed solely to contest Federal-level elections, but was effectively a merger between the United Rhodesia Party (URP) of Southern Rhodesia, and the Northern Rhodesia Labour Party (NRLP). Godfrey Huggins, the incumbent Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia and leader of the URP, became Federal Prime Minister and was replaced as Southern Prime Minister by Garfield Todd. Roy Welensky, leader of both the Northern Rhodesian Legislative Council and the NRLP, became Huggins’ Deputy Prime Minister. In 1956, Huggins retired and

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Welensky became Federal Prime Minister; the next year, the URP formally merged into the Federal Party, forming the United Federal Party (UFP).\(^{13}\)

The cornerstone policy of the CAF (second only to the promise of superior economic development), used by its leaders to justify its existence and bordering on an official ideology, was a concept termed “racial partnership.” The term drew widespread analysis not only in Rhodesia, but Britain as well. One metropolitan group particularly interested in it was the Monday Club, a right-wing lobbying group within the UK Conservative Party established in 1961 to shore up Conservative support for the CAF and South Africa while opposing non-white immigration to Britain.\(^{14}\) A Monday Club publication on Rhodesia believed that the promotion of “multi-racialism – a partnership between the races” would be the ultimate legacy of the CAF, as it was “widely accepted” in the Federation that “in due course” Africans would become the majority of both the electorate and elected officials in all three territories as well as at the Federal level. However, those hypothetical African-majority legislatures “should not in any way be racial in character but should work for the good of the nation as a whole.”\(^{15}\) To those Conservative Monday Club proponents, racial partnership was not only the sole possible middle ground between African nationalist states and South African settler apartheid, but also the only way to bring Africans of different tribes together peacefully into the body politic. Because of this, racial partnership had implications spanning “the context of Africa as a whole” and as such “the aim of


\(^{15}\) \textit{Bury the Hatchet} (London: Conservative Monday Club Africa Group, 1962), 4.
the Federation should be to provide an example of multi-racialism that can convince the rest of
the world that the idea is workable.”

But such a description was in and of itself vague enough that even the Prime Minister,
Conservative Harold Macmillan, and his Labour opposition leader Hugh Gaitskell could debate
its definition and true practical meaning on the floor of Parliament. As stated more succinctly
by the Winston Churchill’s former Colonial Secretary Oliver Lyttelton in 1962,

Our colonial record in Africa gives no ground for the assertion that we wished to keep the
African races in political bondage. Our policy was and is one of partnership. The skill
and experience, both economic, social and political, of Great Britain must for many years
be the foundation, if a free, law-abiding, well-administered and prosperous society is to
be built. On the other hand, all these will be useless unless the African is brought
increasingly into the control of affairs. His labour and therefore his goodwill and his
consent must be engaged. Only partnership will achieve the common aim.

Racial partnership was indeed official policy of the UFP which governed the CAF for the
ten years of its existence. Roy Welensky, leader of the UFP and Prime Minister of the CAF from
1956-63, devoted the entire third chapter of his 1964 memoirs to a defense of it.

In line with the
opening quote of this chapter, Thomas Hodgkin argued that the justifications for racial
partnership or “the multi-racial state” draw on Edmund Burke, in that representation should be
communal, based on the representation of various socio-economic interests rather than universal
suffrage.

Hodgkin argued that racial partnership was simply a term invented by the British to
retain racial domination in its colonies after World War II, similar to the French use of the term
Eurafrique in their African colonies and the Belgian use of the term La Communauté Belgo-

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16 Ibid, 7-8.
17 https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1959/jul/22/central-africa
1958 / United Federal Party”
20 Thomas Hodgkin, Nationalism in Colonial Africa (London: Frederick Muller, 1956), 44.
Congolaise in the Congo.\textsuperscript{21} Indeed, racial partnership emerged as an essential refutation of the belief in “native paramountcy,” a concept particularly relating to race relations in Kenya that stated the goal of British policy should be the ultimate majority rule of natives rather than perpetual settler rule. First articulated in the Devonshire Declaration of 1922, the racial paramountcy doctrine was expanded to become policy across all of British Central and Eastern African as recommended by the 1927 Hilton Young Commission Report and formally adopted by the 1930 Passfield Memorandum, the latter passed by a Labour government. This was widely criticized by the Rhodesian settler community, especially by Welensky. As NRLP leader, his statements accusing the British Labour Party – his supposed fraternal comrades in the metropole – of being “anti-European” particularly resonated, giving ammunition to Labour’s Conservative opponents at home.\textsuperscript{22}

But at the same time, at least on paper the official end goal of racial partnership and native paramountcy were not entirely different, in the same way that anarchists and communists envision radically different paths to the abolition of the state. As stated by anthropologist Melville J. Herskovits, while the UFP’s definition of racial partnership was “The realization that the European is the senior and the African is the junior partner; that the latter requires to be guided by the former and that each should be rewarded according to his contribution to the welfare of the community” it nevertheless “is to be noted that here, as elsewhere, the ability of the African to develop is not denied.”\textsuperscript{23} While serving as Deputy Prime Minister, Welensky had defended “that much maligned word ‘partnership’” from those who argued it was merely a cover

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid, 189.
\textsuperscript{22} UK National Archives: CO 1015/553: “Doctrine of racial partnership in relation to Northern Rhodesia: threat to partnership”.
\textsuperscript{23} “Some Contemporary Developments in Sub-Saharan Africa”, \textit{Africa in the Modern World} 291.
for apartheid. The Anglican Bishop of Mashonaland, Rev. E. F. Paget, also argued in defense of the concept, claiming in 1954 there was no “colour bar” in any Anglican church in the Federation, though some worshiped in English and others Shona. To Paget, this revealed the true nature of partnership, “a recognition of culture in the place of a colour bar.” This was at odds to the Church of Scotland, whose own 1959 report on racial partnership found that partnership meant white superiority, and always would while the UFP was in power. Despite his simplistic worldview, Paget did join in the chorus of those calling for the creation of “mixed race zones” in the capitol, which put him and the Anglican Church directly in conflict with the segregationist Salisbury City Council.

Racial partnership was therefore a concept – however amorphous – that came to define both the UFP and the CAF. As African nationalists came to power in the Northern Territories, and the Rhodesian Front (RF) in Southern Rhodesia, attacks on racial partnership from both perspectives became integral to attacks on the CAF – though the degree to which the RF’s racial policies truly differed from those of the CAF are hard to precisely define. In this light, James Lemkin, member of the Conservative Commonwealth Council and Chairman of the Bow Group (at the time the more moderate Conservative think tank, in opposition to the far-right Monday

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26 NLS Supplementary report of the General Assembly’s Committee anent Central Africa. 6th May 1959. Pg. 2. The Church of Scotland was highly active in Central African affairs due to its missionaries’ role in establishing Nyasaland, and the large number of Nyasa political leaders – located across the Federation due to the colony’s role of supplying migrant labor in the region – who received their education in Church of Scotland missions, often becoming ordained themselves. These included both Hastings Banda and Kenneth Kaunda, respectively the founding presidents of Malawi and Zambia. By the end of the 1950s, after contentious internal debates, the Church embraced decolonization and played a major role in supporting Banda, who himself traveled to Edinburgh to participate in debates in the Church synod with Sir Gilbert Rennie, Governor of Northern Rhodesia and fellow Church clergyman.
27 DO 35/7631: Comments on race relations in Federation [1953-60] Docs. 36, 82A, 89.
29 ICS PP.RH.UFP.4: Sir Roy Welensky attacks critics of partnership ... February 13 1961.
Club) perhaps summed it up best in 1956 when analyzing racial politics in Northern Rhodesia: “Partnership can mean as many things as there are cynics.”

Perhaps the only proponent of racial partnership who lacked cynicism – to a critical fault, at least when it came to matters internal to the CAF – was Welensky himself, whose leadership in the final years of the CAF personified not just the policy of racial partnership, but the political viability of both the UFP and the CAF itself. As such, Welensky’s leadership also became the focal point for opposition to the UFP, racial partnership, and the CAF, particularly in Southern Rhodesia. In the 1962 elections to the territorial legislature, the Rhodesian Front (RF) won a majority, overturning the UFP which had governed, along with its URP predecessor, since the 1930s. Winston Field, the new RF Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, would be the driving figure leading to the dissolution of the CAF in 1963, aided by the African nationalists who had already been elected to power in both of the Northern Territories. Ironically, this joint termination of the CAF by African nationalists and white supremacists was perhaps the most effective demonstration of true racial partnership in the Federation’s entire existence.

The year after the dissolution of the CAF – with Southern Rhodesians now calling their colony simply ‘Rhodesia’ after Northern Rhodesia achieved independence as Zambia – Field was overthrown in a palace coup by his ambitious RF deputy, Ian Smith. Smith would serve as Prime Minister until the end of white rule, and of Rhodesia itself, in 1979. Especially as the RF rose in popularity, the notion of racial partnership, the governance of the UFP on the Federal level, and the continuation of the CAF itself all became increasingly associated – and indeed, indivisible from – each other. The loss of the UFP’s majority in Southern Rhodesia, at the same time African nationalists won majorities in the Northern Territories, critically wounded not only

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the CAF, but also the perception of racial partnership. What came next in Southern Rhodesia was a hardening of racial policies, especially after the 1965 UDI. However, within the white opposition in Southern Rhodesia – a common strain that had produced the RF, following a string of less-successful predecessors – had for a decade affiliated critique of the CAF and Welensky with a different type of racial politics. This was not a policy of promoting whites over natives, but rather a criticism of the quality and origin of whites among the Federal leadership. The RF was, in other terms, an opposition that had emerged into the frontlines by integrating white settler politics with anti-immigration nativism.

**The Role of Immigration in Rhodesian Identity:**

One of the factors leading to the success of the RF over the UFP was immigration – but the critique of white immigration was, of course, inexorably tied into fears of non-white immigration into the colony. These fears, especially exploited by the RF in the 1962 elections, reached their height in what was called the Nyasaland Emergency. In 1959, the leaders of the African nationalist Nyasaland African Congress (NAC) were arrested by Federal authorities on spurious terrorism charges, followed by arrests of African leaders in the other two territories of the CAF. The charges were ultimately dropped in 1960 on the intervention of a legal team from the UK Labour Party led by future Solicitor General Dingle Foot (older brother of 1980s Labour leader Michael Foot), and the NAC was reorganized as the Malawi Congress Party (MCP). The MCP won the territorial Nyasaland elections in 1961, on a platform of achieving the independence of Nyasaland from both the CAF and the British Colonial Office as the nation of Malawi. Nyasaland was the source of a large amount migrant labor within both the CAF and South Africa, as well as being the CAF territory with the largest African and the smallest settler
populations, characteristics that already made the settlers of Southern Rhodesia hostile about being in a state integrated with the colony. Combined with the claims of the NAC’s radicalism and its followers being told to murder whites, the Nyasaland Emergency took on the appearance to frightened Rhodesians of a mass invasion of barbarian Africans from the north that had been suppressed in just the nick of time – an invasion which the metropole, specifically its Labour Party, had at least tacitly been supporting.\(^{31}\)

This fear of an onrush of anti-colonial Africans into the southern regions of the European presence had deep historical roots for Rhodesian settlers. Patrick Keatley, a Canadian reporter for Commonwealth affairs for *The Guardian*, published a study of racial politics in Central Africa at the end of the CAF era in 1963, the year the CAF dissolved, Keatley noted how the Africans initially encountered by the earliest Victorian explorers and hunters in Mashonaland had had their civilizations “smashed” several times by Zulu invasions.\(^{32}\) Sir Harry Johnston, naturalist and governor of Uganda, wrote on this theme in 1910, the year the Union of South Africa was established:

> It is a curious fact that coins of the Maccabees, dating from more than a hundred years B.C., have recently been found in Natal and Zululand, an evidence possibly that Jewish indirect trade with East Africa was kept up almost down to the time of Christ….

Something – we may infer – happened to slacken pre-Islamic Arabic intercourse between A.D. 100 and 600 approximately. It was most likely the great Bantu invasion of Eastern and Southern Africa. The Arabs of those ancient days had, no doubt, found it easy enough to cope with the East African nomad and pastoral tribes and the feeble Hottentots and Bushmen; but they met with a very different problem when they battled with the hordes of Bantu Negroes, akin in type to the modern Zulu. So they seemed to have abandoned their great stone cities of modern Rhodesia and Zambezia, and to have retreated to a few footholds on the coast. Even these last may have been surrendered for a time when the up-rising of the Mohammedan religion turned all thoughts and ambitions of Arabia to the conquest of the Greek and Roman world…. [Arab traders] may have

\(^{31}\) TNA: CO 1015/2335: “Matters arising from Monckton report; public opinion; debate in Federal Assembly; examples of political intimidation.” Particularly document 104A, in which Welensky attacked British Labour MP Fenner Brockway for talking with NAC leader Hastings Banda while Banda was in a Federal prison, even though Brockway was part of Banda’s legal defense.

penetrated inland once more to the deserted cities of pre-Islamic days, but it seems more probable that the working of the gold was left to the Bantu-speaking barbarians who, on the ruins of the ancient Arab dominions, had built up a negro empire, subsequently to be known as that of Monomotapa.33

For Johnston, the arrival of the Christian era symbolically was the severing of the Jewish claim to and trade with Rhodesia, while the arrival of Islam severed the Arabs’ claim to the region. But eclipsing both was the “great Bantu invasion,” the “hordes… akin in type to the modern Zulu” who had for so long resisted the British and Afrikaners in South Africa, whose migration south had decimated the civilization so kindly left to the African natives by the Jews and Arabs.

Nor was it only British colonial administrators who had this view of migratory history in southern Africa. Writing five years after Johnston, W. E. B. Du Bois mused on what might have destroyed the Great Zimbabwe civilization:

The migration of the Bantu is the first clearly defined movement of modern times. As we have shown, they began to move southward at least a thousand years before Christ [to the Zambesi. The] primitive culture of the Hottentots of Punt had been further developed by them and by other stronger Negro stocks until it reached a highly developed culture. Widespread agriculture, and mining of gold, silver, and precious stones started a trade that penetrated to Asia and North Africa. This may have been the source of the gold of the Ophir…. What was it that overthrew this civilization? Undoubtedly the same sort of raids of barbarous warriors that we have known in our day. For instance, in 1570 there came upon the country of Mozambique, farther up the coast, “such an inundation of pagans that they could not be numbered. They came from that part of Monomotapa[…] just as four hundred years later the Zulu impi marched. Again in 1602 a horde of people came from the interior called the Cabires, or cannibals. They entered the kingdom of Monomotapa, and the reigning king, being weak, was in great terror. Thus gradually the Monomotapa fell, and its power was scattered until the Kaffir-Zulu raids of our day.34

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As will be discussed more next chapter, Du Bois – especially in this book, *The Negro* – was somewhat credulous at the thought of some external civilization as an influence on the construction of Great Zimbabwe. This is reflected by how Du Bois drew his knowledge of Great Zimbabwe in *The Negro* from the contradictory works of Theodore Bent (who firmly believed Great Zimbabwe had been built by ancient Phoenicians), Carl Peters (who believed it had been built by ancient Egyptians), and David Randall-MacIver (who rejected both in favor of relatively modern Africans).\(^{35}\)

From even before native Mashonaland had been turned into British Rhodesia, therefore, the English and their Rhodesian descendants were preoccupied with the idea that Zulu migrants from the north had destroyed the civilization which had built Great Zimbabwe – which to the modern settlers, had also been light-skinned colonists from outside of Africa. But this preoccupation with emigration from the north did not originate from the settlers in Rhodesia (or South Africa). After all, the European settlement of southern Africa itself began from the southernmost point and expanded north. Instead, this fear was something the English settlers brought with them from their own medieval European heritage, the mid-ninth century CE legend of Eldad the Danite. As briefly discussed in chapter one, the saga of Eldad was the first recorded “lost tribe traveler,” and his account placed the Lost Tribes of Israel somewhere in East Africa.\(^{36}\)

In Eldad’s narrative, an inversion of what were the common Lost Tribe tales, the Danites were not forcibly removed from Israel by the Assyrians, but chose to go into exile rather than face having to fight their fellow Israelites due to their crowded conditions in the Land of Israel. They made their way to the south of Egypt, where they conquered and ruled the land of Kush, an

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\(^{35}\) Ibid, 81-82, 276-77.

account which established that the notion of a decentered national homeland founded by settlement from outside was as legitimate an option as a group remaining in the territory of their ‘origin.’ According to Eldad, the Lost Tribe based their rule on their own Talmud, which they saw as purer than the one “redacted” in Palestine and Babylonia as a result of the Babylonian Captivity. The Captivity itself arose from the division of Israel into Northern and Southern Kingdoms after the death of Solomon, which allowed the Assyrians to invade and conquer the Northern Kingdom, deporting the Ten Lost Tribes.\(^{37}\)

Eldad’s account evinces what are clear parallels to the situation Rhodesian settlers perceived themselves to be in during the final years of the CAF, with the division of a homeland leading to invasion and conquest of the northern segment by a foreign group. For the Danites, the cause Israel’s division and conquest were the Israelites forgetting the legacy of Solomon in uniting Israel. In the case of Rhodesia, at least as seen by the RF, the threat to the colony’s existence came from the liberal settlers who advocated for African majority rule, who had forgotten the rhetorical legacy of Solomon symbolized by the Great Zimbabwe ruins – white civilization in Central Africa, no matter how advanced, was vulnerable to largescale African mobilization. In the worldview of the RF and its Monday Club allies, the lessons of Great Zimbabwe and Eldad also symbolized Rhodesia’s stand against the division of the British Empire (by surrendering its territories to native rule) and the perceived failures of the British ‘race,’ which had left the metropole itself open to black ‘invasion’ via migration, symbolic of the Assyrian invasion of ancient Israel. But there were also positive lessons to take from the inherited claims of Eldad. His Lost Tribes had themselves become a migratory foreign group who conquered and ruled African natives. And even after the division of Israel, the Southern

\(^{37}\) Ibid.
Kingdom had held out against the Assyrians, even as the Northern Kingdom was overrun – just as Southern Rhodesia maintained its white rule, while Northern Rhodesia succumbed to African nationalism and became Zambia and Britain fell victim to the destructive forces of multiculturality. Indeed, Rhodesia’s settlers and the Danite conquerors of Kush had made their new African territories ‘more home than home’ in the process.

For the Rhodesians, the Danite example both demonstrated their ties to the British metropole even as those links became strained. Perceived moderates in the Conservative government, and then after 1964 the new Labour government, were seen as abandoning their fellow Britons in the African colonies by embracing decolonization even as they threatened Britons at home by welcoming in Afro-Caribbean migrants from the West Indies. While there had been periods of large-scale emigration to the United Kingdom in the past – for example, the late nineteenth century wave of Ashkenazi Jews mentioned in chapter one – for the first time, colonial subjects were making their way to the metropole. This period of mass emigration symbolically began with the arrival of the passenger ship Empire Windrush in 1948, tied to the manpower needed for the creation of the National Health Service and other aspects of the welfare state established by Prime Minister Clement Attlee’s Labour government of 1945-51.38 The defeat of Labour in the 1951 elections ushered in thirteen years of Conservative Party rule in the United Kingdom, initially under a returning Winston Churchill, briefly followed by Anthony Eden. But the longest officeholder of this period was Harold Macmillan, who was Prime Minister from 1957-63. A Scotsman with less rigid views on the empire, he was viewed with

suspicion both from the right of his own party, and the settler communities of Africa. In 1958, Macmillan’s government attempted to federate Britain’s West Indies colonies together into the West Indies Federation (WIF), largely as an attempt to impose immigration controls from the islands in order to avoid obviously-racist immigration legislation on the receiving end, a strategy still largely followed into the twenty-first century by European countries with their former African colonies, under the term “Fortress Europe” – a phrase tellingly borrowed from Nazi Germany. However, the WIF was critically weakened in 1961 from the unexpected victory of the independence side in a Jamaican referendum on leaving the WIF. The impact of this ‘Jamexit’ and the oncoming dissolution of the WIF as a whole led to Macmillan turning to an alternative, a proposal for race-based immigration control which became the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962 (CIA). By elevating racial rhetoric in the immigration debate, the act further predisposed Conservatives to influence from CAF leaders and the Monday Club.

That response to the CIA was the culmination of a split within the Conservatives that had begun with anti-immigrant race riots in Nottingham and Notting Hill in 1958, just after the establishment of the WIF. Macmillan and other members of his government had been pitted against Lord Hailes, the WIF’s governor-general who had come up through the Scottish Conservative apparatus with Macmillan and served as the Conservative Chief Whip in Parliament before being sent to the West Indies. As governor-general of the WIF, Hailes felt bound to defend the rights of West Indian emigrants from the attacks, both literal and rhetorical,

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40 Both the Monday Club and its Rhodesian compatriots drew on the same far-right authoritarianism that had grown within the Conservative Party since the electoral rise of the Labour Party in the 1923 UK elections, and from which came the primary support for Oswald Mosley’s interwar fascists. See Bernhard Dietz, Neo-Tories: The Revolt of British Conservatives against Democracy and Political Modernity (1929-1939) (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018).
of his Conservative colleagues back home. These colonial federal issues came to a head the same time Macmillan finally applied for British membership in the European Economic Community, spurred on by support from political elites within the WIF and CAF. These colonial advocates counterbalanced Conservative opponents in groups such as the Monday Club and the Anti-Common Market League, who had begun linking traditions of Englishness, imperial greatness, anti-Europeanism, and British unity into an alternative English Conservative conception of the UK. These cases illustrate the fluidity of the Conservative cleavages caused by the internal politics of the CAF and WIF. In particular, Ian Smith himself blamed British policy on Rhodesia in the first half of the 1960s on Conservatives bowing before Labour’s rhetoric due to there not being any true leadership of the party – by which Smith clearly meant a dominant, right-wing leader, the sort eventually personified by Margaret Thatcher, whose first month as British Prime Minister overlapped with Smith’s final month as Rhodesian Prime Minister.41

Beyond the schism of Lord Hailes critiquing his comrades from the safe distance of Trinidad, a more substantive threat to the moderates within the Conservative Party came from the coordination of the CAF’s High Commissioner in London with the MPs of the Conservative right over Macmillan’s criticisms of South Africa and endorsement of majority rule in the remaining African colonies. It was this action which led to the formation of the Monday Club, but also directly opposed a number of local Conservative associations in Scotland who were sympathetic to African nationalists, and whose attempts to inject their views into the national party platform had to be carefully dealt with by Conservative Party leaders in Edinburgh and London.42 This institutionalizing of the connection between Rhodesian settler politics and the

42 Technically, until 1965 the Conservative Party in Scotland was the formally independent Unionist Party, whose MPs caucused with the Conservatives in Parliament and ran on the same national party manifesto in general elections. Macmillan, Hailes, and Macmillan’s Colonial Secretary Iain Macleod all came from the Unionist ranks,
British Conservative right was accompanied by the rise of Conservative “residents’ associations” in the UK protesting immigrant settlement in white neighborhoods, issuing statements that immigrants were not suited to Britain’s political or environmental climate.\(^{43}\)

A year after the Notting Hill riots, native riots broke out in Salisbury and other cities in Southern Rhodesia in response to the repression of the Nyasaland Emergency. That same year, the Colonial Office began a program of training colonial police in the London Metropolitan Police and circulating police between the metropole and the colonies.\(^{44}\) This joining of training led to similarities in terms of the response between the roles of the police and military in both riots.\(^{45}\) Notably, this was only a short time after a number of Scottish nationalists were charged in 1954 with planning on attacking government buildings in Edinburgh to protest the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. M. R. Metcalf, High Commissioner (ambassador) of the United Kingdom to the Federation from 1955-61, blamed the Salisbury riots on the “hooligan element,” a term with a strong connotation in England to violent, generally white and working-class soccer rioters.\(^{46}\) Metcalf’s comments formed a strong rhetorical link between “bad” Africans in Southern Rhodesia to “bad” whites in England. This seems to me to clearly establish a sense that immigration of African-descended peoples from Britain’s West Indian colonies would create an inversion of Britain’s colonial settlement in Africa, with the British now stuck in rural territories in the United Kingdom under siege from the immigrant-populated and radicalized cities. Wendy

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\(^{43}\) Pitchford, 137-38.


\(^{45}\) DO 35/7600.

\(^{46}\) DO 35/7600. On the other hand, Jomo Kenyatta denounced the Mau Mau insurgents in Kenya as “hooligans” – apparently the opposite of Metcalf, with Kenyatta’s usage a rhetorical application of white British violence to African nationalists (and notably, African nationalists opposed by the Conservative government of Britain).
Webster has noted that British cinema at the time had already firmly established in the public mind that African liberation wars were a threat to the domestic ‘Little Englands’ established by settlers in colonies like Kenya, particularly with the 1952-60 Mau Mau Rebellion depicted as a threat to traditional English settler life.\(^{47}\)

By 1961 this mix of colonial and metropolitan politics had created a specific political equation in the CAF, and specifically Southern Rhodesia. Along with the fact that UK Labour Party played a role in the creation of the Rhodesian Labour Party, and members of Labour’s Fabian Colonial Bureau defended African nationalists in the CAF in the aftermath of the Nyasaland Emergency, Rhodesian and British conservatives alike were given fuel to support a specific worldview.\(^{48}\) To these right-wingers the United Kingdom, under the influence of Labour socialism and weak (and to a disproportionate degree Scottish) Conservatives, was welcoming in dangerous non-Europeans to its shores at the same time it was abandoning its metaphorical children to those same masses of non-Europeans in Africa. The actions of the Labour Party after it returned to power in 1964 under Harold Wilson, only added to this narrative. Wilson’s government passed the Race Relations Act 1965 and subsequently established the Race Relations Board in 1966. This legislation, the first dealing with racial discrimination in the UK, seems to have been influenced by the African Affairs Board and the Federal Office of Race Affairs in the by-then dissolved CAF. No such organizations had existed in the settler-light West Indies, Malaysia, or West African colonies. Such organizations had existed in Kenya, but the post-independence white minority believed they were being deliberately undermined by the African-

\(^{47}\) Webster, 557-84.
\(^{48}\) TNA: DO 154/17, Doc. 158: Dingle Foot interacts with delegates to UFP congress over immigration policy
majority government in order to punish remaining whites. However, the same fear was not present among the whites in post-independence Zambia, the former Northern Rhodesia.\textsuperscript{49}

These intertwined political developments in the UK, linking domestic and colonial issues, helped refine the new Conservative right which developed in the second half of the 1960s – and with those issues so linked with Rhodesian politics, the changes in the British right tied into the rapid changes in the Rhodesian political landscape as well. In particular, the issues which animated the Monday Club and its supporters (pro-English, anti-black and -socialist, and opposed to national integration into a regional federation) also fueled the core tenets of Rhodesian nationalism (solidification of white rule in Southern Rhodesia, a desire to severe the colony’s ties to both the United Kingdom and the CAF, and supporters of those policies uniting behind new Rhodesian Front as opposed to the prior party structures). With the perceived British abandonment of settlers elsewhere in the splintering Empire, and South Africa having abandoned both the Commonwealth and the monarchy, this left Rhodesia in the position of inheriting Britain’s role as the defender of Anglo-Saxon values, particularly with the RF’s emphasis on Englishness and its support (at least initially) for the monarchy, aspects which as described in chapter two had been central to settler articulations for self-rule separate from both the BSAC and South Africa.\textsuperscript{50}

The Ophir legend of Great Zimbabwe would prove central to the Rhodesian claims to inheriting Britain’s English, civilizing empire in Africa. As described in the first chapter, the British Israelist legend provided the British state and the Church of England with a way to claim direct descent from the ministry of Christ. But Rhodesians, by focusing on their own connection

\textsuperscript{49} TNA: CO 1015/1875-77
\textsuperscript{50} Leys, \textit{European Politics in Southern Rhodesia}, 1-36, 241-89. See also the descriptions of Rhodesian politics in the period between 1962 (the RF victory) and 1969 (the formal abolition of the Rhodesian monarchy) by Welensky and Smith: Smith, 31-78; Welensky, 330-68.
to Solomon – the ancestor of Jesus – could effectively overrule the British legend by arguing they had a superior claim to descent from Old Testament figures. Further, since the very start of England’s empire-building project during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, Solomon had been seen as a symbol of English empire. Partly this was because both Solomon’s and England’s empires were focused on importing riches from overseas. Another part was because of Solomon’s close alliance with King Hiram of Tyre became symbolic of the union of England and Scotland, particularly given the fact that it was British imperialism which truly helped solidify those two British kingdoms into a United Kingdom. And part of this symbol of Solomon the empire-builder was as a warning against miscegenation, due to his importing of concubines from overseas and his dalliance with the Queen of Sheba.\(^{51}\)

The Great Zimbabwe claims not only helped Rhodesia form its claims to nationhood and historical supremacy over Britain, however, but also to justify whom to exclude from that nation, creating pseudohistorical precedents to back up their opposition to immigration as detailed in chapter two. The belief that immigration played a role in the disturbances marring the latter half of the CAF’s existence was not a fringe view among Rhodesians. High Commissioner Metcalf explicitly linked the Salisbury riots to native hostility to immigration policy – specifically, both the Federation and Southern Rhodesia’s differing treatment of the ten thousand white Belgians who came south fleeing the Congo Crisis and Katanga secession, versus the black South Africans escaping north after the Sharpeville Massacre.\(^{52}\) But as far back as 1920, the historian


\(^{52}\) DO 35/7600: Disturbances in Southern Rhodesia arising from arrest of members of National Democratic Party, 1960. As stated in chapter two, there was no such thing as a citizen of the CAF; issues of citizenship were handled individually by each of the three territories, which also ran into factors concerning populations deemed ‘British Protected Persons’ in the two Northern Territories, and what rights they subsequently had in Southern Rhodesia.
and politician John Hobbis Harris argued that, in relation to Great Zimbabwe, “It is clear, at least to most people, that these vast structures were not the work of the indigenous African, but of some immigrant race – a race bent not on colonization, but upon the exploitation of the resources of the valley.”

With this claim, Harris laid the groundwork for the claim that the (white) builders of ‘Ophir’ were not colonizers, but merely immigrants coming to a region to improve both it and its natives with the fruit of their labors, for the benefit of all, including the natives who provided said labor in question. Even into the era of the RF and UDI, Rhodesian scholars used the rhetoric of immigration to critique the state-sanctioned white colonizer ideology, while also integrating post-World War II neoliberal globalization (which, ironically, Rhodesia was somewhat shielded from due to international sanctions over UDI). Roger Summer, Senior Keeper of Antiquities of the National Museums of Rhodesia, wrote in 1969 that although it is very probable that the original stimulus came from India and that immigrant Indian prospectors from Mysore commenced on the exploration of “Rhodesian” gold-fields, the development seems to have been in the hands of African groups…. During its first few centuries, external trade with “Rhodesia” was in the hands of a very few people, possibly Indians and almost certainly Asians. Later when gold collecting and gold mining came to pass, the group controlling the trade became rather larger but still it cannot have been very big and it has been suggested that it took steps to maintain its monopoly by subterfuge.

In Summer’s formulation, the builders of Great Zimbabwe come across almost as Indian Cecil Rhodeses, emigrating to Central Africa to establish a gold industry staffed by native labors, all for the funneling of gold back home to Mysore. It should also be noted that while Summer – unlike his contemporary Rhodesian archaeologist Peter Garlake, who was exiled for his troubles

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54 Summer, 216-18. Summer’s ideas perhaps reflect how one of the earliest crises between the BSAC and the Colonial Office was the former’s attempt to recruit Chinese immigrant labor to restart the African mines.
takes no explicit position on whether Great Zimbabwe was built by whites or was the Biblical Ophir, he does make sure to state that “most unexpectedly, I find myself substantially in agreement with a theory of Hall’s that has been suspect by archaeologists for many years past.”

In other words, Summers sided with the disgraced R. N. Hall, the archaeologist hired by Rhodes to confirm Great Zimbabwe’s Phoenician origins, over Gertrude Caton-Thompson, the later archaeologist who rejected Hall’s claims in favor of an African origin to the city – findings whose endorsement by Garlake led to his exile.

Summer also discussed a folk tale from the sixteenth-century CE *Kilwa Chronicle* detailing the discovery of the Arab sea trade route from Kilwa to Sofala, the port that in the twentieth century was Rhodesia’s primary access to sea trade. As the overland route from Kilwa to the Mashonaland gold fields was eight hundred miles long, Summer argued it would be a difficult route “although much of it is said to have been used traditionally for Bantu migrations.”

In other words, the traditional Bantu migration routes were dismissed by the Rhodesian archaeologist in favor of those of the newer Arab traders. Summer’s discussion on the migration of Africans into the interior of the gold field regions reflected contemporary fears by Rhodesians over the decline and fall of the white builders of Great Zimbabwe, and how that mirrored the viability of their own outpost of European settlement currently under the siege of international sanctions. The widespread view in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries

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55 Ibid, 137-40; Harris, 219-21. See also a book by a South African economist, released the year of UDI and dedicated to Ian Smith, which explicitly argued for continuity between the Phoenician builders of Great Zimbabwe and the British settlers, and positioned the latter as the direct heirs, rescuing the gold mines from the Arab migrants who cut off its trade to the outside world, presumably a parallel to the economic sanctions being threatened against both South Africa and Smith’s regime: A. J. Bruwer, *Zimbabwe: Rhodesia’s Ancient Greatness* (Cape Town: Hugh Keartland, 1965).

was that the ancient white civilization which had established Great Zimbabwe had been
destroyed by an invasion of uncivilized Africans from the north. This was reinforced by evidence
that Zulu invasions had destroyed Shona states several centuries prior to the British arrival in
Central Africa. At the same time, and until World War II, a cornerstone of British imperial
policy was that the colonies could serve as an outlet for Britain’s excess population, especially in
economically-depressed areas; as mentioned above, twenty million Britons did so in from 1815-
1914 alone. This British goal of using settler colonies as population relief was at odds with the
anti-immigration sentiment of not only the Rhodesian government, but the mass of the
Rhodesian population who saw lower-class immigrants threatening their settler community’s
carefully-maintained social hierarchy and resisted temporary accommodation of wartime
refugees as being bringers of disease and pollution. The mythical Rhodesian past can therefore
be read as justification for Rhodesians to exclude contemporary immigrants, as the prior white
civilization to which they were the heirs met its end with the arrival of unsuitable settlers.

The RF government’s endorsement of Great Zimbabwe’s Solomonic origin can also be
seen as reflecting the anti-immigration stance – an implicit contrast between the ancient, white
Israelite King Solomon and the modern Jewish, and therefore more racially ambiguous,
Welensky. Such an anti-Semitic posture would be in line with the pattern of the far-right
activists, in both Britain and Southern Rhodesia, using Welensky’s religion to attack the CAF.

57 Keatley, 61-63.; H. Rider Haggard, “Preface”, in Alexander Wilmot, Monomotapa (Rhodesia): Its Monuments,
58 Correspondence to Alan Lennox-Boyd from Karl Albrecht, 31 October 1935, Mss. Eng. c. 3384, leaves 3-4, Alan
Lennox-Boyd papers, Weston Library, University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom; Tamara S. Wagner,
Victorian Narratives of Failed Emigration: Settlers, Returnees, and Nineteenth-Century Literature in English
(Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 220-28; Morgan, 165-68.
59 James Wightman Davidson, The Northern Rhodesian Legislative Council (London: Faber and Faber, 1948), 60-
61; Baxter Tavuyanago, Tasara Muguti and James Hlongwana, “Victims of the Rhodesian Immigration Policy:
Those who participated in this trend included former members of Oswald Mosley’s 1930s British Union of Fascists emigrating to Rhodesia in the 1950s to organize against Welensky and the UFP. Fascist opposition to Welensky’s leadership only caused him to state that as a Jew he was “a member of an oppressed race myself” and to make ineffectually appeals to African nationalists for support on that basis, even as that reduced the support of his white base and played into the aspect of the Solomonic legend emphasizing that modern Jews were closer to Africans than Europeans. This treatment of Welensky was part of a broader pattern of de-facto Rhodesian anti-Semitism, including an unwillingness to allow Jewish refugees to settle in the colony during and after World War II. While this social anti-Semitism was never institutionalized, the role of Jews in Rhodesian politics is revealing. Despite there never being a large Jewish population overall, Jews had a leading role in the establishment of the colony’s second city, Bulawayo, and six Jews served as mayor (including the founder), during which the city retained its reputation of being politically opposed to the rest of the colony and more oriented towards South Africa. Significant numbers of Jews left Rhodesia under the RF government, especially during the War of Liberation.
As for Southern Rhodesia’s most prominent Jew, while Welensky had been born in Salisbury he had spent most of his life, including the start of his political career, in Northern Rhodesia. Welensky’s governance of Southern Rhodesia was solely due to its integration the CAF, as he came to the federal premiership out of his position in the Northern Rhodesia Legislative Council. For Southern Rhodesian settlers in particular, opposition to the CAF was epitomized by opposition to Prime Minister Welensky, the foreigner who had come from the north to rule, therefore symbolically following the southern route of Zulu invasion and Bantu migration. Further, with his Lithuanian Jewish father and Dutch Afrikaner mother, Welensky has none of the British ancestry that was so valued by his white nationalist opponents in the RF. I argue Welensky clearly recognized this, attempting to both obfuscate his Afrikaner heritage (referring to himself as half Lithuanian and half Jewish, even though both ‘halves’ were from his father) due to widespread anti-Afrikaner sentiment amongst Anglo-Rhodians, while at the same time expressing more Jewish identity in his private letters than he did in his public speeches. Even worse for his electorate, Welensky – at least on paper – advocated eventual African political elevation as part of the UFP’s commitment to racial partnership.64

Welensky remained in Southern Rhodesia after the Federation’s dissolution, a lingering presence like the civilizational relicts left behind by the ancient Jews of Johnston’s history. Welensky ran for the Rhodesian Parliament in a 1964 by-election at the head of a movement that sought to unite African and European moderates. That neither were enough to secure him victory was a sign of the Rhodesian political landscape. Welensky was easily defeated by Clifford Dupont, the deputy RF leader and post-UDI head of state, in a campaign that painted Welensky

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64 Schwartz, 362; Morgan, 160-65; Leys, *European Politics in Southern Rhodesia*, 93-97; Weston Library: Mss. Welensky 502/03: UFP Misc 1957-59, Doc. 8, “March 14, 1958: Letter from Peter Staub (Federal UFP MP) to Welensky.” Welensky also serves as an interesting counterpart to Joe Slovo, a South African unionist who was a Lithuanian Jew, who then became a leading figure in the anti-apartheid movement.
as a meddling foreigner. With this ignominious loss, Welensky retired from public life.

Following the end of white rule in 1980, Welensky – in contrast to Ian Smith, who remained in Zimbabwe – reversed the path of settler colonialism and emigrated to rural southern England.

Welensky’s unwillingness to remain in the Republic of Zimbabwe reflects his seeming disinterest in the ruins of the republic’s namesake. Notably, the only apparent time Welensky ever discussed the issue of Great Zimbabwe’s origins was a 1959 correspondence to the Warden of the Zimbabwe National Parks, passing along a suggestion for a new target for radiocarbon dating, an indication that Welensky did not accept the dominant cultural myth of the ruin’s ancient foreign origins as promoted by the RF.65 Despite this, some of Welensky’s policies as Federal Prime Minister did reflect aspects of the RF ideology of Smith. Welensky devotes a full chapter of his biography to an attack on Harold Macmillan, and two on the Katanga secession crisis in the Congo, where his government directly intervened to support the breakaway Katanga province, essentially transforming it into an unrecognized satellite state of the CAF.66 This reflected the ideological aims of having Rhodesia serve as inheriting the role of the British Empire and creating its own empire in the mold of Solomon – Katanga after all being a mineral-rich mining province.

Welensky’s recognition of anti-Afrikaner bias and Rhodesian ambivalence towards South Africa also reflected an aspect of the Great Zimbabwe theorizing of the Rhodesians, an argument against the religious Afrikaners who wanted amalgamation with South Africa.67 Much like the Rhodesian usage of the Solomonic theory against British Israelism, the repurposing of Solomon into an ancient Founding Father of Rhodesia gave a Biblical argument for Rhodesia’s primacy

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66 Welensky, 170-240.
67 Leys, European Politics in Southern Rhodesia, 93-95; Willson, 1-6, 39, 115.
over South Africa, undercutting the Afrikaners from the core of their identity. Such religious justifications could even provide a Rhodesian claim to the South African Witwatersrand as part of ancient Rhodesian gold-mining region, given predictions of gold there first came from Ophir popularizer Karl Mauch as part of his expedition to locate Great Zimbabwe (albeit in behalf of the Transvaal Republic). There was, however, one other aspect of policy unique to Welensky’s government that helped provide justification for the CAF’s (and by extension, Southern Rhodesia’s) independence from South Africa, especially after the latter’s 1948 implementation of apartheid and 1960 departure from the Commonwealth. This was its racial policy.

Specifically, while South Africa embraced apartheid, the CAF followed the idea of racial partnership – as mentioned above, a fluid term whose own vagueness allowed it to be mapped onto the imagined history of the colony embraced by the same settler population who were the primary beneficiaries of both. Ironically, the racial partnership so decried by Ian Smith and the RF would help solidify their own regime’s independence after their destruction of the CAF that had promoted partnership in the first place.

**The Foundations of Apartheid:**

South Africa and Southern Rhodesia were far from the only settler states (or even colonial polities with minimal settler presence) to establish what the British termed a ‘colour bar,’ but it was in those two territories where settler rule became most entrenched, combining the strongest defense of the rule of settlers with a simultaneous rejection of rule from Britain. Partly this is due to the longevity of European settlement (especially in the case of South Africa) and the number of settlers. But the density of Europeans in Southern Rhodesia was not much higher

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than of settlers in Kenya, whose own attempts to demand autonomy from Britain collapsed quickly in the 1920s. The mythic history of southern Africa can, at least in part, explain the difference through a combination of its religious origins, and what might be termed the secular spinoffs thereof. As mentioned earlier, the Afrikaners were intensely religious, and the Dutch Reformed Church formed a bastion of Afrikaner national identity in opposition to British encroachment, especially following the Afrikaner defeat in 1902 and incorporation with the British colonies in 1910. In South Africa, the institutions of apartheid were supported by the Church, which provided theological defenses of the Curse of Ham and the association of the Afrikaners as a new Chosen People who had been granted South Africa their Promised Land following the 1839 Great Trek, the Afrikaner equivalent of the Exodus.69 But the Great Zimbabwe legend also played a role, demonstrating that the association was not a random parallel, but a sign that God had already placed ancient (white) Israelites in southern Africa to lay the foundation for their Afrikaner spiritual descendants to take their place. Stephanus Jacobus du Toit, one of the leading Afrikaner theologians and head of education for the Transvaal Republic, wrote his belief that Great Zimbabwe were the ruins of Sheba and Solomon, and that he was “perfectly agreed” with the British settlers on the subject.70

In Southern Rhodesia, it seems clear to me that the mythic history of Great Zimbabwe was obviously useful in the development of the mutually reinforcing ideologies of settler hegemony over the natives and settler autonomy from the metropole, as argued not only in this


chapter, as well as chapters two and five. But the South African example also played a role in developing those political ideologies. As mentioned in chapter two, Afrikaners formed the largest minority group among European settlers in the Rhodesias, and they remained strongly devoted to the Dutch Reformed Church, united as a community (and especially concentrated in their electoral districts), and supportive of South Africa. The Afrikaners in the Rhodesias opposed self-government in the 1923 referendum as the alternative was incorporation with South Africa, a decision which set off intense suspicion and social stigmatization on behalf of the Anglophone Rhodesians. But a generation later, a rapprochement of sorts became possible when Afrikaners joined the Anglophone opposition against incorporation of the Rhodesias into the CAF. This again put the Afrikaners in the minority of Rhodesians, but a minority which contained a strong and growing Anglophone opposition.

More to the point, this opposition – coming after the institution of apartheid in South Africa, and with it growing republicanism and opposition to the Commonwealth – was one wherein Afrikaner ideology could not only coexist with Anglophone opposition, but serve as a nucleus, predating the policies that crystallized within the latter, larger group. The Rhodesian Front itself emerged from a continuity of political opposition in Southern Rhodesia that originated with the Afrikaner-dominated Confederate Party in 1953. Indeed, at the time of the initial 1953 Federal elections, it was Afrikaners like Guillaume François Marais Van Eeden and John Richard Dendy Young who led the Confederate Party and its associated opposition strains, at a time when Winston Field and Ian Smith were still Federal Party members. The route was cleared for the shift to an Anglophone-led opposition partly by Dendy Young resigning from the Legislative Assembly due to being appointed to the judiciary in 1956 as a means of appeasement

71 Colquhoun, 86-97; Leys, European Politics in Southern Rhodesia, 93-97.
72 Willson, 47-49.
to the opposition, whose success in terms of shaping the public debate at the time far outstripped its electoral success.\textsuperscript{73}

The emphasis here would seemingly indicate the Rhodesian opposition’s loyalty to South Africa, especially after the latter’s 1961 separation from both the British monarchy and the Commonwealth. The routes of the two settler states are even mirrors of each other, as while South Africa originally attempted to retain the Commonwealth without the monarchy before being forced to reject both, Southern Rhodesia originally attempted to retain the monarchy while leaving the Commonwealth, before ultimately abandoning the experiment in its 1969 republican referendum.\textsuperscript{74} But such a connection by Afrikaner Rhodesians was evidently not their loyalty to South Africa, but a wider evocation of Afrikaner ‘national’ identity in the earlier, broadest sense of ‘nation.’\textsuperscript{75} And as mentioned above, the cornerstones of this Afrikaner identity came from the sort of pseudohistorical, alt-history concepts – Biblical theology applied to secular modern politics, appropriation of native African land and history for settler history, transposing European settlement into an invented past – which formed the basis of Afrikaner identity. Therefore, the policies which crystallized settler rule and resistance in Southern Rhodesia, and set it on a path towards UDI and the War of the Liberation, were rooted as much in Afrikaner political theology and its approach to southern African mythic history, including Great Zimbabwe and ancient Semitic settlement, as the Anglophone Rhodesian use of those themes. The irony is rich, especially considering – as discussed in chapter one – Cecil Rhodes articulated those aspects of mythical history around Great Zimbabwe to differentiate Rhodesia from the competing Afrikaner

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid, 163-217; Leys, \textit{European Politics in Southern Rhodesia}, 190-240.


\textsuperscript{75} See again Hexham and Moodie for Afrikaner ideas of religious nationhood in the period of British rule in South Africa.
But times had changed since the 1890s, and the political landscape with it. Southern Rhodesia and South Africa were now on a path towards international pariah status for the next few decades and had become bound by the issues originally meant to divide their settler populations.

But this close alliance between the two settler states of southern Africa would have negative repercussions for Rhodesia, for the exact same reasons the alliance initially buoyed Smith and his RF regime. South Africa had a larger settler population, a larger economy, and a more powerful military, along with access to the sea for trade – not to mention formal international recognition, which Rhodesia entirely lacked. As a result, Rhodesia received more from the alliance than did South Africa, especially as it was Rhodesia which was facing the internal African guerilla war. Along with the fascist regime in Portugal – which still controlled neighboring Portuguese East Africa and the port of Beira, vital for Rhodesia’s trade – Rhodesia became increasingly reliant on South Africa. In February 1974, Wilson’s Labour Party returned to government in Britain, signaling a harder approach to Rhodesia than the departing Conservatives. Two months later, the Carnation Revolution resulted in a democratic left-wing government taking power in Lisbon, and Portuguese East Africa becoming independent Mozambique, and the South African regime saw the writing on the wall. Not wanting the Rhodesia to collapse from a military defeat at the hands of Robert Mugabe’s Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), an outcome where violence and refugees alike might spill across the border, South Africa chose the lesser of two evils. Negotiating with Rhodesia’s northern neighbor Zambia, South Africa’s government agreed to put pressure onto Smith to negotiate with
the British and ZANU, leading to the end of UDI and Smith’s rule in 1979, transitioning to majority rule under Mugabe in 1980.76

Ultimately, the solidarity between the Rhodesian and South African regimes became the poison pill that, even if it wasn’t entirely fatal on its own, helped bring the era of settler rule in Rhodesia to its abrupt end. However, this fatal union was not the only internationalist byproduct of Rhodesia’s particular brand of mythic history and anti-federalist settler politics.

**The Politics of Partnership:**

The opening lines to Ian Smith’s 1997 memoirs, *The Great Betrayal*, begin with an anecdote stemming from his own time in the Royal Air Force in World War II: “‘You Rhodesians are more British than the British.’ So often I heard that during the war years 1939-1945. It was a comment which pleased Rhodesians. To think that we were not British would be ridiculous. After all, what is our history? Rhodes’s dream of a British route from Cape to Cairo.”77 However, the quote, and the wider recollections it appears in, offer two hints that there was something different from mere Britishness at work in the idealized Rhodesia of Smith’s memories. First, there is the fact that the title of his memoirs, *The Great Betrayal*, are the last three words of Enoch Powell’s infamous 1968 ‘Rivers of Blood’ speech, where the Conservative MP railed against non-white immigration. Powell’s speech was not exactly an opposition to non-white immigration to the United Kingdom, but rather of such immigration to England specifically. Powell began his speech with a complaint from “a decent, ordinary fellow Englishman.” Powell argued that non-white immigration was a problem “not throughout Great Britain, perhaps, but in the areas that are already undergoing the total transformation to which

76 Smith, 159-82.
77 Smith, 1.
there is no parallel in a thousand years of English history [as w]hole areas, towns and parts of towns across England will be occupied by sections of the immigrant and immigrant-descended population.” And he was aghast that even the descendants of those immigrants who were “born in England… cannot speak English.” Powell’s speech makes it clear that he did not see non-white immigration as an attack on Britain’s Britishness, but Britain’s Englishness.

There are several reasons why Smith would have been drawn to Powell’s speech for the title of his memoirs. Both men began as supporters of the Conservative Party, who then drifted away after its perceived ‘great betrayal’ of Englishmen. Powell was even a sort of reverse Edmund Burke, as after leaving the Conservative Party, he joined the Ulster Unionist Party of Northern Ireland, despite representing an English constituency and being English, not Irish. Smith and Powell also shared similar views on Britain’s relation with the Commonwealth. In a January 3, 1969 interview with David Frost on the latter’s Frost on Friday program, Powell claimed that one of his two greatest achievements was speaking against Elizabeth II being given the title Head of the Commonwealth in her 1953 coronation, and that his biggest regret was not reading a speech he had prepared that same year opposing the formation of the CAF. Like Smith, Powell critiqued the CAF from the right, opposing what the two men saw as the sublimation of the monarchy and British imperial majesty to the increasingly non-white Commonwealth. And like Smith, Powell’s Commonwealth critiques connected with his views on race in domestic politics. Just days before his interview with Frost, dock workers chanting their support of Powell booed a black Commonwealth High Commissioner from an African country entering his High Commission in London.79

79 Enoch Powell, Frost on Friday, ITV, January 3, 1969. What Powell considered his other greatest achievement was speaking in Parliament on the 1959 massacre of Kenyan prisoners by the British in the Hola Camp during the
Beyond similar views with Powell on Englishness and its role in making Britain great, the second aspect of Smith’s opening to his memoirs revealed a more nuanced view of Britishness. This was expressed in Smith’s claim that to Rhodesians, “our history [is] Rhodes’s dream of a British route from Cape to Cairo.” Rhodesia was therefore not just a colony, and not just a unit of territory along Cecil Rhodes’ vaunted Cape-to-Cairo line, but intrinsically a part of Rhodes’ sub-imperial project which epitomized British imperialism in Africa and along which were the sole major sites of British settler colonialism on the continent – South Africa, Rhodesia, Tanganyika, and Kenya. The idea of a British colony being so central to the British Empire in a region is not an outlandish invention of Smith (or Rhodes). T. R. Metcalf argues that rather than London, it was the British Raj in India – due to it being an administrative center, a nominally-independent military power, and the origin of the Indian Diaspora – which was essentially the locus of British power in the Indian Ocean rim, rather than just another British possession in the region.  

While Rhodesian military units served in the Boer War, World Wars, and Malaysian Emergency, it was not in the same context of independently-commanded Imperial Indian armies being sent to East Africa and Asia during the wars; South Africa was much more the center of regional British administration, especially with the High Commission Territories; and unlike

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80 Smith, 1; T. R. Metcalf, Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860-1920 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). I presented a paper on this topic at the 2017 meeting of the Northeast Conference on British Studies, under the title “Indian Political Leverage in the Commonwealth of Nations, 1947-64.” Echoes of this can be found as far back as 1779 in the Portuguese empire, when Indian Christians from Kerala were taken by the Portuguese to Rome, along the way stopping to criticize Portuguese treatment of both native Africans in Angola and African slaves in Brazil, the first time Indian critiqued European empires outside of India: Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Europe’s India: Words, People, Empires, 1500–1800 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 317-18.
India – or Nyasaland – there was no major Rhodesian émigré workforce or diaspora. But absence of facts need not hamper national narratives. Indeed, a popular song in Rhodesia, “The UDI Song” – to be discussed more next chapter – is filled with references to Rhodesians fighting to preserve the British Empire across the world, even as the “sun is setting upon a great regime,” referring to the phrase “the sun never sets on the British Empire.” The lyrics further compare the departure of the Pioneer Column from Cape Colony to Rhodesia’s symbolic departure from British rule with UDI, as well as comparing the Matabele Wars with a potential conflict with the United Kingdom after UDI, as Wilson was urged by his party’s left – in other words, placing the Labour-led British state on the level of natives to be subdued by Rhodesians.81

What enabled Rhodesians to see themselves as the inheritors of the British Empire in Africa, as well as of the Englishness that immigration and Wilson’s Labour government was erasing from Britain, was not merely the fact that they were named after the Rhodes who dreamed of the Cape-to-Cairo line and originated as his personal company property. It was the legacy of Great Zimbabwe, and the belief that it had been built by ancient whites, which enabled the Rhodesian regime to see itself as the true inheritors of both Englishness and the British Empire in Africa. Nor were the settlers in Rhodesia the only ones who turned to the Great Zimbabwe legend for inspiration. In his 1963 study of racial partnership at the end of the CAF, Patrick Keatley interviewed Nathan Shamuyarira, editor of the African Daily News in Salisbury. Shamuyarira told Keatley that his newspaper had able to increase its readership at an annual rate of eight to ten percent, far outstripping the population growth. Shamuyarira attributed this to the African Daily News printing historical articles on the Shona and Ndebele, helping boost the

paper’s readership as a result of it feeding African natives’ interest and pride in their history.\(^{82}\)

This was reflected in the political organization of Africans at the end of the Federal era, as well. In 1961, the main African nationalist group in Southern Rhodesia was renamed from the National Democratic Party to the Zimbabwe African People’s Union. As stated by Keatley:

> Indeed, it is now the firm intention of the men who lead the nationalist movement in Southern Rhodesia to change the name of their country on attaining independence to Zimbabwe, thus wiping out a name which now serves only to remind them of bitter military defeat in 1896-97. Thus the stone temples and towers of Great Zimbabwe, which the ordinary white Rhodesia today regards simply as a tourist attraction, have taken on special significance for the African nationalist movement in the territory.\(^{83}\)

On the other hand, the official Federal Government handbook, published at the same time the African nationalist movement adopted Zimbabwe as the name of their country, described Great Zimbabwe – listed under the National Parks and Game Reserves section – as “a fascinating relic of Rhodesia’s hidden past… the origin of the ruins is still swathed in mystery and romance.” By this time, carbon-14 dating had already roughly estimated its creation to around 800-1200 AD, confirming the earlier archaeological estimates of Randall-MacIver and Caton-Thompson. Despite this certainty of its construction by Africans in the relatively recent past, the CAF government still spoke of it in mysterious terms.\(^{84}\) It was not just the Federal Government’s handbook that continued to sow doubt into the 1960s; as mentioned above, Federal Prime Minister Roy Welensky himself dove into the debate on carbon-14 dating challenging the official regime narrative of Great Zimbabwe.\(^{85}\) That official narrative remained strong, with the RF’s

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\(^{82}\) Keatley, 58-59.

\(^{83}\) Ibid, 60.


views only hardening after UDI. And that official defense of that mythic history of Great Zimbabwe’s white origins could backfire, however.

**Conclusion:**

As a construct of an older African civilization, Great Zimbabwe could naturally fill the native Africans with pride in their own ancestry – but the Ophir legend did not necessarily fully negate that. If Great Zimbabwe had actually been built by ancient light-skinned foreigners, then modern Africans would be denied the pride in its construction – but would be able to take an alternate lesson from the legend. An intricate part of the foreign Great Zimbabwe myth was that its lighter-skinned architects had been overthrown by African natives who had destroyed the civilization based around the city and let the settlement itself go into ruin. If white settlers promoted this myth, they were inadvertently promoting the idea that ancient Africans had defeated a white colonial regime in the past – and the lesson of the ‘Ophir myth’ was therefore that modern Africans could once more overthrow the newest incarnation of the white settler regime. Such was its potency that during the War of Liberation, the Rhodesian government banned the use of the name ‘Zimbabwe’ from radio and print, and in 1970 exiled the principal archaeologist of the city, Peter Garlake, from Rhodesia due to his advocacy of the African origins of the city.\(^86\)

This African appropriation of the Rhodesian mythic history of Great Zimbabwe would also be paired with an African, if not appropriation than an African alternative, to the Rhodesian internationalism mentioned above embodied by first the CAF, and then the alliance with South Africa. If Great Zimbabwe helped Rhodesians like Smith believe that they were building a

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newer, more purely English empire in Africa, then they did not reckon with the types of
transnational resistance that empires made possible. These two strands – anti-imperial resistance
and appropriation of the Great Zimbabwe myths – would result in a sort of African
internationalism binding not only the natives of Rhodesia, but South Africa, Ethiopia, Eritrea,
and members of the African Diaspora beyond the continent. This African internationalism would
adopt the precepts of Rhodesian mythic pseudohistory to suit their own ends, turning the
Rhodesians’ use of mythic history against them even as the settler claims became most strident
in the era of UDI. These mutually reinforcing trends resulted in on the one hand, the concept of
Afrocentrism, and on the other hand, the reliance on outright fiction for the Rhodesian settlers to
gather international support for their claims to a civilizing mission. This dialectical relationship,
the settler mythic history and the African nationalist reaction against it, will be the subject of the
final chapter.
Chapter 5: UDI and Black Liberation

“And you can call us rebels, and you can call us rogues;
But we were founded by an Englishman by the name of Cecil Rhodes.”

Introduction:

In 2017, Cecilia Morgan published Building Better Britains?, a study of settler communities within the British Empire between the ends of the American Revolutionary War and World War I.² Though she does not address Rhodesians in her monograph, Morgan offers several analyses of settler populations of the time that resonate with the Rhodesian experience. The settler communities Morgan profiles began to view themselves as being simultaneously British and holding their own national identities in the years before World War I. There was strong appeal for the British monarchy within them, particularly during the period of Victoria’s reign and her 1897 jubilee. The concept of Greater Britain and the proposal of Imperial Federation – by which the political lines separating the metropole and the settlers would be blurred – were also popular. Perhaps most importantly, settler communities commonly invented extensive fictional histories to not only justify their rule in their new colonial homes, but to help create identities for themselves matching the long (European) history of Britain.³ However, the implicit question of Morgan’s title – were settlers trying to build better Britains in their colonies? – has a negative answer in the case of the Rhodesians. Instead of building a better Britain, I believe it was specifically a better England that Rhodesians saw themselves constructing, as mentioned briefly at the end of the last chapter.

² Cecilia Morgan, Building Better Britains? Settler Societies Within the British Empire, 1783-1920 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017).
³ Ibid, 133-44, 156-60.
An example of what might be called this Rhodesian Novanglianism can be seen in John Edmond’s 1966 “The UDI Song.” Edmond was born in the Copperbelt of Northern Rhodesia to Scottish parents, and grew up back and forth between the Copperbelt and Edinburgh. After the dissolution of the CAF in 1963, he moved to Bulawayo in Southern Rhodesia and enlisted in one of the most prestigious units of the Rhodesian Security Forces. Edmond’s American-style folk song lyrics includes the Scottish word “weemed” (raised), seemingly at odds with the refrain, “And you can call us rebels, and you can call us rogues; but we were founded by an Englishman, by the name of Cecil Rhodes.” The fact that Edmond could make a song associating his adopted homeland with England shows his own flexible identity. It would continue to be flexible, as well – after the end of white rule, Edmond moved to South Africa, and initially composed songs in favor of the new Zimbabwe regime. Ironically, the Scottish National Party had a much stronger affiliate presence in South Africa and none in Rhodesia. Perhaps this due to South Africa’s Afrikaner population making such Anglicization impossible.

The provenance of “The UDI Song” stands as a case study to the overall effectiveness of the Rhodesian state’s commitment to Anglicization – and the myth of Great Zimbabwe’s foreign origin was central to that. The song, after all, commemorates the 1965-79 period of UDI – the height of Rhodesian settler radicalism, when for the first time since 1776 a British colony had declared itself independent of the metropole without London’s consent. This era also witnessed the peak intensity of Rhodesian settler claims about the Zimbabwe ruins, especially as Ian Smith’s severing of ties to Britain eliminated the last vestiges of protection for academics and nationalists alike. Even as those professing the African provenance of the ruins were subjected to

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censorship and exile, the regime advocated for a vision of the city as a civilizational outpost in southern Africa, reflecting the official claims of the regime to promote a tolerant multi-ethnic state amidst the chaos of the surrounding majority-rule nations – just as its war against African nationalists was actually a war against Soviet communism. This rhetorical tactic was centered around the details of the actual first contact of Europeans with Great Zimbabwe, particularly with the Portuguese Jesuit Gonçalo da Silveira’s 1561 mission to the Monomotapa court. Silveira converted King Negomo Chirisamhuru to Catholicism, only for rival factions within the court to convince the king to murder Silveira and his party shortly thereafter. This precipitated a Portuguese invasion into the kingdom, and although direct Portuguese control of the area was short-lived, they retained a dominant position in the gold and ivory trade networks.

Later figures involved in the debate on the region’s history, including Alexander Wilmot and H. Rider Haggard, used Silveira’s story to portray Great Zimbabwe as the center of Christian civilization in southern Africa. Writing in 1896 – at the start of a conflict the British referred to as the Matabele Rebellion against their land concessions to Rhodes’ British South Africa Company (BSAC), and which the natives later referred to as the First War of Independence, linking it with the struggle against the UDI regime – Haggard proclaimed, “under the shadow of its ancient walls the proto-martyr of South-eastern Africa, Father Gonsalvo Silveira… laid down his life in the service of the faith.”5 By this point, Haggard had already included a character I see as clearly based on Silveira into King Solomon’s Mines, whose testimony starts the adventure in motion.6 Haggard’s loosely-interpreted aspect of Great Zimbabwe’s history – not the least,

6 The character is a sixteenth-century Portuguese explorer, Dom José da Silvestra; his map to King Solomon’s Mines is passed along to Alan Quatermain by his descendant, José Silvestre. H. Rider Haggard, ed. Gerald Monsman, King Solomon’s Mines (Peterborough: Broadview Literary Texts, 2002), 52-56.
relocating Silveira’s murder to Great Zimbabwe, when the Monomotapa court was several hundred miles away – can be seen not only as powerful propaganda for the BSAC during the Matabele Wars of the 1890s, but more than adaptable to the circumstances of the Rhodesian Front during the 1964-79 War of Independence. Silveira’s missionary party, while serving as a vanguard for Portuguese temporal power, included African and Arab converts from Islam and the Shona religion, and was depicted as a mixed-race attempt to bring universalist (i.e., European and Christian) civilization to the Monomotapa, only to be wiped out by uncivilized Africans with parochial interests. Similarly, during the War of Liberation, Smith’s government depicted its fight to retain white rule from African nationalism as a non-racial conflict to preserve Christian civilization against atheist communist terrorism. And just as Rhodesians saw Silveira’s murder as encouraged by Arab Muslim advisors in the Monomotapa court who viewed European Christians as their rivals, the omnipresent refrain in the 1960s was that African nationalists were merely a front for Soviets and Chinese who saw majority rule as only a rallying cry to destroy a Western government.

However, those same communist-supported rebels fighting the Rhodesian regime were taking their own lesson from the Ophir legend. If the mythical history of Ophir ended with the white outpost being overrun by ancient Africans, couldn’t their modern descendants in the guerilla movements bestow a similar fate to the modern white outpost of Rhodesia? African nationalists on either side of the Atlantic began to incorporate the city into a reappraisal of pre-colonial African civilization, taking the tropes of the Ophir legend and turning them on their

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head, to create mythic histories of Africa meant to promote, rather than erase, ancient African civilizational achievements. This movement exploded in the 1970s, the decade which ended with the collapse of the Smith regime in 1979. The UDI government fell that year, replaced with a transitional government that led to the creation in 1980 of an African-majority republic named after the ancient ruins. The mythical history of Ophir was finally replaced with a reborn Zimbabwe by an African nationalist movement – though ironically, one whose supporters in the West had begun to endorse their own variant of mythical history, in the form of Afrocentrism.

**Afrocentrism:**

Afrocentrism is a theory of cultural diffusionism that argues European, Asian, and Native American cultural traditions have their origins in Africa. Aspects of the theory had been proposed centuries prior to the establishment of Rhodesia. As early as 1642, Hugo Grotius proposed that while Native Americans of North America were descended from the Vikings, and those of South America from East Asia, the inhabitants of the Yucatan Peninsula were descended from Africans. From the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, many Americans, including President Thomas Jefferson, believed that there were so-called Welsh Indians descended from an expedition led by the twelfth century Welsh prince Madoc, still speaking Welsh centuries later. In the early twentieth century, the German ethnographer Leo Frobenius advocated what he called the “African Atlantis” theory, claiming that Israelite, Etruscan, and Aztec civilizations could be

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9 A preceding example can be found in World War II, in the experience of the German settlers living in the Banat region of central Europe. After being indoctrinated with the belief that Slavs were literal blood-drinkers by the Nazi regime, the Banat Germans came to believe that actual vampires were attacking them as the Yugoslav Partisans began to win victories over the Axis Powers. The official propaganda of the Nazi regime had prompted its own subjects to be vulnerable to Slavic myth. See Eric Kurlander, *Hitler’s Monsters: A Supernatural History of the Third Reich* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 281-85.

traced back to the Yoruba culture of modern Nigeria.\textsuperscript{11} Frobenius was discussed in more detail in chapter three, as was British explorer Percy Fawcett, who believed that Mayan and Incan archaeological sites showed influence of both African and Chinese contact.\textsuperscript{12} But the two most influential Afrocentric works are from the late twentieth century: Ivan Van Sertima’s 1976 \textit{They Came Before Columbus} and Martin Bernal’s 1987 \textit{Black Athena}. Van Sertima’s work was a variant of Frobenius’ claim, arguing instead that Olmec culture actually originated from West African seafarers. Bernal argued that ancient Greece was colonized by Egypt, and therefore Greek civilization – and European civilization in general as a result – actually came from Africans.\textsuperscript{13} Ironically, the advocates of the early nineteenth century Egyptian Revival architecture in Britain discussed in chapter three anticipated Bernal. One such leading architect, Thomas Hope, criticized the preceding Georgian popularity of Greek architecture by arguing “that Greek at was merely a more elegant restatement of the aims and practices of Egyptian artists.”\textsuperscript{14} Bernal’s work (which he followed with additional volumes in 1991 and 2006) in particular reflects one critique of Afrocentrism beyond its diffusionist claims. Afrocentric theories tend to focus extensively on ancient Egypt, or to ahistorically depict ancient Egyptians as modern sub-Saharan Africans. As such, they unintentionally sideline actual sub-Saharan Africans and their achievements.\textsuperscript{15}


\textsuperscript{14} Quoted in Robert Holland, \textit{The Warm South: How the Mediterranean Shaped the British Imagination} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 76.

\textsuperscript{15} Wyatt MacGaffey, “Who Owns Ancient Egypt?,” \textit{The Journal of African History}, Vol. 32, No. 3 (1991), 515-19. In describing his concept of Indian Ocean Africa as referenced at the end of chapter one, Gwyn Campbell has noted
Ironically, the Afrocentric emphasis on Egypt and the association of its culture with Sub-Saharan Africa provides one way in which Afrocentrics were similar to earlier Eurocentric lost race theorists of Great Zimbabwe, for whom ancient Egyptians (which they ahistorically considered to be white) might be the city builders. From the very start, when Alexander Merensky first reported about the ruins in the *Cape and Natal News* in 1865, he described them in Egyptian terms – pyramids, sphinx, hieroglyphs – as he had not actually seen the city himself, and was likely referring to what he expected an African archaeological site to contain. In the first novel inspired by Great Zimbabwe, Hugh Mulleneux Walmsley’s *The Ruined Cities of Zulu Land* – written in 1869, two years before Karl Mauch’s expedition and therefore necessarily based on Merensky – the titular ruined cities were built by the expedition of Egyptian pharaoh Necho II discussed by Herodotus, as mentioned in chapter three. When the explorers finally find the ruined cities, they are inscribed with Egyptian hieroglyphs, as claimed by Merensky. Even H. Rider Haggard, writing after Mauch in 1885 and despite the title of *King Solomon’s Mines*, has his novel vacillate on who actually built said mines for Solomon; Egyptian hieroglyphics, Hebrew writing, Greek columns, and Phoenician sculptures are all present in his novelistic Ophir.

As mentioned in chapter one, the early pioneers in the archaeology of Great Zimbabwe – Theodore Bent, David Randall-MacIver, Gertrude Caton-Thompson – began their archaeological

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work in the late nineteenth century in Malta and Egypt, absorbing the assumptions of the field dominant at the time, and which impacted Bent’s conclusions about Great Zimbabwe in particular.\textsuperscript{19} Egyptologists like Karl Richard Lepsius and Wallis Budge also pioneered the European study of Ethiopia in the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{20} Into the era of the Central African Federation, even sympathetic European writers could still include Egyptians alongside Israelites and Phoenicians as possible builders of the city.\textsuperscript{21} Even Erich von Däniken’s followers in the ancient alien craze reflected aspects of Afrocentrism, in two notable works published the same year as Van Sertima. Zecharia Sitchin’s \textit{The 12th Planet} claimed that Egyptians had been the first to mine in the area that became Rhodesia.\textsuperscript{22} Robert K. G. Temple’s \textit{The Sirius Mystery} argued that the Dogon people of Mali received supposedly advanced astronomical knowledge due to their ancestors having migrated to West Africa from Egypt thousands of years ago (with alien beings having been the origin of the Egyptian knowledge).\textsuperscript{23} Temple’s work illustrates the


\textsuperscript{20} Robinson, \textit{The Lost White Tribe}, 91; \textit{The Queen of Sheba and her only Son Menyelek (Kebra Nagast)}, trans. Sir E. A. Wallis Budge (Ontario: In Parentheses Publications, 2000).


\textsuperscript{22} Zecharia Sitchin, \textit{The 12th Planet} (New York: Stein and Day, 1976), 288-89.

\textsuperscript{23} Robert K. G. Temple, \textit{The Sirius Mystery} (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1976). Temple’s work was based on the 1931-56 studies of the Dogon by French anthropologist Marcel Griaule, who claimed they had known about the existence of the star Sirius B as the home of their god Nommo (who Temple turned into an alien visitor), despite it being invisible to the naked eye. Subsequent studies of both the Dogon and Griaule’s work found multiple flaws, including debates on just which astronomical object the Dogon believed Nommo resided on, and whether they had actually learned about Sirius B from French astronomers who had established themselves in Dogon territory for several weeks in 1893. Marcel Griaule and Germaine Dieterlen, trans. Stephen C. Infantino, \textit{The Pale Fox} (Chino Valley, AZ: Continuum Foundation, 1986), 446-521, 550-52; Walter E. A. van Beek, “Dogo Restudied: A Field Evaluation of the Work of Marcel Griaule,” \textit{Current Anthropology}, Vol. 32, No. 2 (Apr., 1991), 139-67. However, Griaule’s claim about the Dogon having advanced knowledge of astronomy also has its defenders; see Hunter
political needle that ancient astronaut theorists had to thread by the 1970s; by inserting the Egyptian intermediary into their ancient astronaut theory, they could ameliorate some of colonialist edge in the claim that black Africans had to have received their civilization by alien visitors to the continent.\footnote{Notably, Temple’s book on the Dogon inspired the five-book \textit{Canopus in Argos} series (1979-83) by Doris Lessing, Nobel Prize in Literature laureate and the greatest Rhodesian fiction writer.}

Despite that Egyptian focus of Afrocentrism and its related claims, Bernal does acknowledge that Great Zimbabwe was built by the Shona, and talks about the Victorian fascination with Phoenicians playing into its misattribution by settlers. He also discusses the Afrikaner association with the Israelites enslaved by the Egyptians, as well as emphasizing that in Biblical tradition both the Phoenicians and Egyptians are descendants of Ham, and that it was the “half-Phoenician” King Hiram who built Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem.\footnote{Martin Bernal, \textit{Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization, Volume I: The Fabrication of Ancient Greece 1785-1985} (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 168, 173-74, 417-18.}

Van Sertima does not mention the builders of Great Zimbabwe, but he does twice mention the city and the Monomotapa state in was a part of. In the first passage, Van Sertima argues the Monomotapa were one of several sub-Saharan African cultures who inherited the idea of divine kingship from the ancient Egyptians.\footnote{Ivan Van Sertima, \textit{They Came Before Columbus: The African Presence in Ancient America} (New York: Random House, 1976), 113-14.}

The second reference is in the context of the supposed pre-Columbian arrival of maize into Africa; Van Sertima claims that Arab traders brought maize to the Monomotapa after earlier “Arab-African” expeditions to Central America, possibly connected to the Mali Empire, brought maize to West Africa in the centuries before the Columbus voyages. He even asserts that maize was present at the Monomotapa court when Gonçalo da Silveira was murdered there in 1561.\footnote{Ibid, 246-51.} Van Sertima also uses evidences from excavations in Egypt carried out...
by David Randall-MacIver following his work at Great Zimbabwe.\textsuperscript{28} It should be noted that Van Sertima wrote this book in 1976; no African or African-American scholar studied Great Zimbabwe until after Zimbabwe’s 1980 independence.\textsuperscript{29}

As is clear from his speculation, just as Grotius did in the seventeenth century, Van Sertima accepts multiple pre-Columbian contacts across the Atlantic. He recognizes not only the by-then uncontroversial L’Anse aux Meadows Viking settlement, but also goes so far as to say that “the Newport Tower may be questionable,” something that no mainstream academic has endorsed since the nineteenth century. Van Sertima correctly asserts that such voyages were meaningless as the Vikings left no cultural or ecological impact on the Native Americans in their extremely limited visits.\textsuperscript{30} However, on the topic of the Mound Builders, Van Sertima agreed with his earlier Eurocentric forebears that the Native Americans did not build the mounds, based on their supposed similarity to “stockades” that were “used for the protection of Mandingo trading posts.”\textsuperscript{31} Even while moving away from earlier claims of light-skinned Israelite, Phoenician, Welsh, or Viking construction, his anti-Eurocentric views still resulted in ahistorical claims which erase Native American history and material culture. Native Americans themselves, it should be noted, have also displayed agency in using settler mythic history to their own advantage in ways mirroring the twentieth century African uses of the Greta Zimbabwe legend. As early as the sixteenth century, Native Americans encouraged legends of hidden cities full of gold – El Dorado, Cibola – to the Spanish as a way to deflect the Spanish from pillaging their

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid, xv, 108, 111, 263n1. Van Sertima mistakenly refers to him as “Randall McIver,” and not “David Randall-MacIver.”


\textsuperscript{30} Van Sertima, 77.

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid, 224.
own settlements, in favor of going further afield on ultimately futile quests. Adrienne Mayor has also identified a number of examples of Native Americans adopting European archaeology to give validity to their own legends, including using mastodon fossils as evidence to support Iroquois legends of Stone Giants.32

The modern American successors to such legends and mythmaking are undoubtedly, for better or for worse, superhero comic books and their blockbuster film adaptations – and Afrocentrist narratives are still present in these major forces of Western culture. The Afrocentrist example from DC Comics is the African nation of Zambesi, a name barely changed from the Zambezi River which once divided Northern and Southern Rhodesia and evocative of the early colonial term for the area, Zambesia. In particular, the version of Zambesi from Marguerite Bennett’s alternate history World War II comic Bombshells (2015-18) is steeped in the Temple’s Dogon narrative; Zambesi’s resistance to European colonialism comes from technology left by ancient alien visitors worshipped as Egyptian gods. More well known to general audiences might be the fictional African kingdom of Wakanda from Marvel Comics, specifically as depicted in the Black Panther comic series written from 2015-17 by African-American intellectual Ta-Nehisi Coates, who based his Wakanda on the Monomotapa kingdom. Wakandan political power comes from its access to indestructible metal which fell to ancient Wakanda in a meteorite, its rulers’ reliance on a magical flower to give them super-powers, and the kingdom’s foundational myth is that it was established by gods who left ancient Egypt and who are still worshipped in modern Wakanda. As with rival DC Comics’ Zambesi, this draws clear inspiration from Temple, though in Coates’ version the Wakandan gods are at least actual gods. The 2018 movie adaptation of Black Panther specifically drew from Coates’ run of the comic. Director Ryan


Modern American comic books and their movie adaptations have kept elements of the Afrocentric myth alive, infusing them with the actual history of Great Zimbabwe and the society it was at the center of. Given the huge resonance these comics and movies have – especially given that the most popular of those discussed above are by African-Americans with experience in Africa – this is of no small importance. But Africans themselves have also been able to use the colonial powers’ ahistorical myths of African history against them – both common Africans, and the political institutions who governed them before and after the colonial period.

\textbf{The Sons of Noah and the Heirs of Sheba:}

That the use of what might be termed ‘liberation pseudohistory’ has a wide appeal in African nationalist movements can be seen in the fact that it is present even beyond the Anglophone colonies of the continent. The Mali Federation also provided a political (and Francophone) equivalent to Afrocentrism in the form of the ‘African Road to Socialism’ advocated by Léopold Sédar Senghor, who helped lead the Mali Federation to independence.
from France in 1960 before becoming President of Senegal. In a May 1960 speech of the same title, Senghor argued that African people were not suited to orthodox Marxism and would need to adapt it to their historical and spiritual circumstances, which predated Marxism and, through the slave trade and colonialism, had actually laid the economic foundations for Marxist theory.\footnote{Léopold Sédar Senghor, trans. Mercer Cook, \textit{On African Socialism} (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), 67-103. Notably, Senghor cited Marcel Griaule’s 1948 book \textit{God of Water} – one of the anthropologist’s works on the Dogon – as providing historical evidence of Senghor’s West African brand of socialism; see Senghor 148, 171n101.}

Nor did this type of usage originate with twentieth century republican nationalists. The Lemba tribe of southern Africa, as mentioned in the first chapter, continue to embrace the theory originally promulgated by Paul Kruger that they were the descendants of lost Jews, perhaps the Lost Tribes themselves, and because of that are the true architects of Great Zimbabwe.\footnote{Tudor Parfitt, \textit{Journey to the Vanished City: The Search for a Lost Tribe of Israel} (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1992), 22.} Tudor Parfitt has been the claim’s chief advocate and popularizer since the 1990s. But over a century before Parfitt’s writings, and even before Kruger’s claim, other natives in Central Africa claimed a connection to ancient figures from the Old Testament to shore up their rule – in a more successful way, all the more surprising for their more controversial choice.

By the nineteenth century a commonly accepted European argument for the racial and cultural differences between Africans and Europeans were that Africans were descended from Noah’s son Ham (specifically Ham’s son Canaan) while Europeans were descended from Noah’s son Japheth. As mentioned in the previous two chapters, Europeans justified their rule of Africa, as well as the African slave trade, by the curse Noah placed on Canaan to serve Japheth and to help enlarge his dominion.\footnote{Book of Genesis, Chapter 9, verses 18-27.} By the 1840s, this legend had been transmitted into Central Africa by Arab merchants and slave traders, who told the natives the Islamic creation myth – including Adam and Eve, the Flood, and Noah – along with Muslim apocrypha incorporated from
Christianity, including the story of Ham and its curse. As with the Arab merchants claiming that Solomon built Great Zimbabwe, this was intended to justify Arab superiority amongst the native Africans, as the Arabs were seen as descending from Noah’s son Shem, rather than Ham.\textsuperscript{37}

In 1862, British explorers John Hanning Speke and James Augustus Grant visited the Kingdom of Buganda, along the shores of Lake Victoria in modern-day Uganda, meeting with the Kabaka (king) Mutesa I (r. 1856-84). The two Britons spoke to the monarch about Christianity and the Hamitic claim, along with their belief that Mutesa was descended from Ethiopians who (again presaging the Afrocentric theory) they believed had both conquered the region in prior centuries, and had Caucasian origins in the more distant past. Mutesa surprised them by not only endorsing their views, but synthesizing the Genesis legend with the superficial similarities of the local Ganda creation myth. As part of Mutese’s syncretic view, Ham himself was the same individual as the Ganda folk hero Kintu. In the Ganda creation myth, Kintu became the first Kabaka by defeating Bemba the Snake, ruler of the Great Lakes region, and was buried in Buganda upon his own death. As such, the story of Ham was not a curse to Mutesa, but something which allowed him to claim legitimacy by making him a direct descendent of one of the religious figures revered by the new colonial powers, Arab and British alike.\textsuperscript{38} The myth had its limits, however; Mutesa’s son Mwanga II formally submitted Buganda as a protectorate of the British East Africa Company in 1892. Ironically, this resulted in the British finding massive earthworks in Uganda at Biggo in 1909, which drew comparison with Great Zimbabwe and led to similar theories of foreign builders. As with Sungbo’s Eredo in modern Nigeria (as discussed


\textsuperscript{38} Robinson, \textit{The Lost White Tribe}, 95-107.
in chapter three), while the Biggo walls were ancient, they were only associated with Old Testament figures in the colonial era – the Queen of Sheba in the Nigerian case.39

No less than the cornerstone of African nationalism in the twentieth century – the Ethiopian monarchy – also built on pseudohistory, with the ruling dynasty’s claim of descent from King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. The medieval origins of the adoption of those figures by Ethiopia’s ‘House of Solomon’ were described in chapter three, and their reign continued into the late twentieth century. The House of Solomon’s rule was buttressed by Ethiopia’s 1896 victory over Italian invaders, which secured its victory from European imperialism and raised its status in the eyes of the African diaspora. Empress Zewditu ascended to the throne of Ethiopia in 1916, after her predecessor, Iyasu V, was deposed due to his support of the Central Powers (which Italy and its colony in neighboring Eritrea were allied against) during World War I. Zewditu was proclaimed to the first woman to rule Ethiopia in her own right since the Queen of Sheba. On her death in 1930, Zewditu was succeeded by her regent, Haile Selassie, who became celebrated by Rastafarians as the Redeemer of Africa (his pre-coronation title and name being Ras Tafari). To this extent, Rastafarians refused to be swayed by Selassie’s 1974 deposition at the hands of the communist Derg regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam, or his death the following year. Through this support (which he admittedly was critical of, being an Orthodox Christian) Selassie provided the basis for ‘alternative facts’ promoted by ‘fake news’ upon his death, much like the alt-history promoters of the modern day. In the words of Ibrahim Sundiata, concerning Rastafarian use of Pan-Africanism, apocalypticism, and the Solomonic legend, “Myth conquered reality.”40

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The deposition of Selassie by the Derg was at least partly a result of the Eritrean war of independence, a guerilla insurgency that waged since 1961 as a result of Ethiopia effectively annexing its fellow former Italian colony after World War II. The war of independence in turn helped undermine the Derg regime, and Eritrea was granted its independence upon the collapse of the Derg in 1991. Situated between modern Ethiopia and the Red Sea, the territory of Eritrea had been part of Ethiopia’s predecessor Aksumite kingdom. In *Paradise Lost*, John Milton had the Archangel Michael show Adam “Th’ Empire of Negus [the Abyssinian emperor] to his utmost Port Ercoco [the Eritrean port Arkiko],” just prior to him taking Adam further south to see Ophir, which he associated with the port of Sofala in modern Mozambique. From a governor in Arkiko, the territory of modern Eritrea was ruled by the Ottoman Empire until it was taken by the Italians in the 1880s. Only when Italy finally occupied Ethiopia in 1935 were the two regions united in the modern era, and Eritreans resisted their postwar occupation by Ethiopia even before the start of the war of independence. As a result of this political hostility, which only began to lessen with a 2018 rapprochement, while the official views of the governments are often at odds, Eritrean culture shares many similarities with that of Ethiopia. These similarities include the role of the Orthodox Church and Ethiopia’s claims to Biblical connections.

In particular, in the period in between Ethiopia’s absorption of Eritrea in 1952 and the overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974, a dominant narrative of the Ethiopian regime was that along the Mai Bela River in Asmara is the location where the Queen of Sheba gave birth to

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42 As noted by Mia Fuller, this includes their respective use of Italian architecture, with Eritreans incorporating it into their national identity: Mia Fuller, “Italy’s Colonial Futures: Colonial Inertia and Postcolonial Capital in Asmara,” *California African Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Jan., 2011), n. pag. In a discussion with Mia Fuller in 2019, she pointed out that the Eritrean appropriation of Italian architecture played a similar mythic-history role to the Rhodesian appropriation of the ruins of Great Zimbabwe.
Menelik, her son by Solomon and the progenitor of Selassie’s royal family. While local Eritrean traditions associate a lake in the Eritrean Qohaito region with the Queen of Sheba, the official view of the ruling Eritrean People’s Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) is that

In order to maintain their hegemonic domination over the people of modern Ethiopia and Eritrea as well as derive religious and historical legitimacy for their power, successive Ethiopian rulers created and maintained mythical narratives that were forwarded as true history. The Ethiopian myth tries to show that the ancestry of Ethiopian royalty goes back three thousand years to King Solomon and Queen of Sheba. By connecting contemporary Ethiopian leaders with King Solomon and Queen of Sheba, the myth aims to create a religious and historical justification for the Ethiopian empire-state, while in reality there existed no actual connection between the two.

In contrast to the Ethiopian state historically using its claims of connection to Sheba and Solomon to support its independence, the PFDJ leaders in the Eritrean government attacked those claims as nothing more than “mythical narratives” in order to secure its own independence. Afrocentrism in a way came full circle; African nationalists were now attacking the pseudohistory that other African nationalists had used to help support their own liberation struggle. With this policy born of Eritrea’s specific historical circumstances, however, the PFDJ opinion of Ethiopia’s connection to Biblical history and actual history was unique among African liberation movements. Especially in African churches on both the continent and the diaspora, Ethiopia had long come to symbolize African liberation due to that mix of real and mythic-history.

**Africans in the New World Consider the Old:**

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One of the first prominent Ethiopians in early modern Europe was Juan Latino, a slave in sixteenth century Spain who after his manumission became the only African humanist in that kingdom. Latino argued that he had an ‘Ethiopianness’ that made him both superior to the defeated Moriscos, classified by their ‘Africanity,’ and undeniably Christian, in contrast to the Moriscos’ suspect conversions. Unlike eighteenth century Anglophone slave narratives, Latino never claimed that his enslavement was a good thing because it led him to Christianity; as an Ethiopian, he had not only already been Christian, but part of a nation whose had converted to Christianity before Spain had even existed. Instead, Latino argued that his Ethiopian background should give him a privileged position in the Christian war against the Ottoman Empire, building a new extension on the by-then discredited belief that Prester John would lead an army to save European Christendom from Islam.  

Such a new crusade never developed, despite the wishes of the Spanish monarchs to raise the funds for it from the New World. Their settlement of the New World did lead to the kidnapping and enslavement of twelve million Africans in order to maximize profits from Europe’s American colonies. During the height of the abolition movements in the Americas and West Indies – from the late eighteenth century, through American abolition and the Morant Bay Rebellion in in Jamaica 1865 – the term ‘Ethiopian’ became associated with African liberation by African churches in those regions, drawn by its independence and its claims to be ruled by the descendants of the Queen of Sheba and the protector of the Ark of the Covenant used by the Israelites to escape slavery in Egypt. In the latter third of the nineteenth century, after American abolition and with the start of the Scramble for Africa, African-American and -Caribbean missionaries promoted Ethiopianism in their missions to spread African Christianity to Africa.

By the end of the century, the term was being adopted by separatist churches splitting from the governance of settler church authority in modern South Africa. After the Ethiopian victory over Italy in 1896, ‘Ethiopian’ took on a political context; in the first few decades of the twentieth century, Ethiopianist missionaries, along with the nascent Rastafarian movement following the ascent of Selassie, contributed a major impact on the African trade union and nationalist political movements in Central and South Africa, partly due to lobbying from the Ethiopian state itself.46

As mentioned above, the Rastafarian movement itself was predicated on the supposed Solomonic ancestry of Haile Selassie, combined with a New World-focused Pan-Africanism. Perhaps the most celebrated Rastafarian of the twentieth century, Bob Marley, performed at Zimbabwe’s independence celebrations in 1980 (against the wishes of Robert Mugabe, who for one felt no affinity for Marley’s music, politics, or religion).47 Mugabe was not alone; in 1961-62, Jamaican Rastafarians who visited the continent received at best lukewarm receptions from native Africans and British colonial administrations alike.48 However, by the time of his assumption of the presidency of Zimbabwe, Mugabe was in the minority among African nationalists. One earlier Pan-Africanist not influenced by, and occasionally in direct opposition to, the more spiritual currents of Garveyism and Rastafarianism in their usage of the Solomonic legend was African-American intellectual W. E. B. Du Bois, who embraced the Great Zimbabwe

48 TNA: CO 1031/3996: Account of a fact finding mission to several African countries by a party of Jamaican Rastafarians. The aim of the Rastafarians was to investigate the possibility of a ‘Return to Africa’. It was decided to send a team of experts on a more formal mission in the future but the African governments were to prove less than enthusiastic.
legend in *The Negro* (1915) and *The World and Africa* (1946). Near the start of the former, Du Bois describes how

To the west of the Nile the Negroes expanded straight across the continent to the Atlantic. Centers of higher culture appeared very early along the Gulf of Guinea and curling backward met Egyptian, Ethiopian, and even European and Asiatic influences about Lake Chad. To the southeast, nearer the primitive seats of the earliest African immigrants and open to Egyptian and East Indian influences, the Negro culture which culminated at Zambabwe arose, and one may trace throughout South Africa its wide ramifications.49

This overview of the development of African civilization eschews some aspects of later Afrocentric narratives in having the West African and Ethiopian civilizations arise independently of Egypt. However, Du Bois was still open to the ‘outsider’ hypothesis of Great Zimbabwe’s construction, even if the cultures he suggests influences it were Asian and Egyptian, rather than European or Semitic. Du Bois also differs from later Afrocentrics by acknowledging “European and Asiatic influences [around] Lake Chad,” a concession he built off of when describing how, for the history of northeast Africa,

legendary history declares that a queen, Maqueda, or Nikaula of Sheba, a state of Central Abyssinia, visited Solomon in 1050 B.C. and had her son Menelik educated in Jerusalem. This was the supposed beginning of the Axumite kingdom…. Throughout the middle ages, however, the legend of a great Christian kingdom hidden away in Africa persisted, and the search for Prester John became one of the world quests.50

Although he uses modifiers such as “legendary” and “supposed,” Du Bois nevertheless accepts the broad Solomonic claims of Ethiopian history.51 Du Bois drew from a source more surprising than Ethiopian legend in his chapter on West Africa, when he noted how

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50 Ibid, 42-43.
51 Richard Pankhurst, *The Ethiopians* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 45-46. Du Bois also cites Edward Gibbon – an eighteenth-century English historian of Rome – to recount an adversarial history of Ethiopia’s relation with early Muslims that is not accurate. As reflected by Muslim history, including the Qu’ran – which had been translated into English in 1734, decades before Gibbon’s writing (and long before that of Du Bois) – Muslims and Christian Ethiopia enjoyed a millennium of peaceful coexistence, a policy which Mohammed himself ordered his followers to continue; see the Sira of Ibn Ishaq and Dimmock, 206-08.
Frobenius, perhaps fancifully, identified this African coast with the Atlantis of the Greeks and... ancient commerce reached down the west coast. The Phoenicians, 600 B.C., and the Carthaginians, a century or more later, record voyages, and these may have been attempted revivals of still more ancient intercourse.\textsuperscript{52}

The surprise here is not only that Du Bois seemingly accepts the African Atlantis theory of Frobenius (albeit with the admission that the idea was developed “perhaps fancifully”) but that there is seemingly no recognition of the colonial justifications that Frobenius inlaid into the theory, as discussed at the start of this chapter. It is also ironic that Du Bois accepts the stories of the Phoenician voyages referenced by Herodotus outlined in chapter three, as Frobenius explicitly \textit{rejected} them due to the fact they did not encounter his hypothesized African Atlantis civilization.\textsuperscript{53} But it is the sixth chapter of \textit{The Negro}, “The Great Lakes and Zymbabwe,” which is most relevant to this chapter. Du Bois begins by arguing that the Biblical Land of Punt was more likely located in the area of the Great Lakes, rather than modern Somaliland as traditionally accepted. His evidence seems to come from another German colonial academic, the Carl Peters mentioned in chapter one. Du Bois’ listed sources for this chapter are a 1902 article by Peters and David Randall-MacIver’s 1906 \textit{Medieval Rhodesia}.\textsuperscript{54} In the history of Du Bois, from this formative Great Lakes region migrated the Bantu,

\begin{quote}
the first clearly defined movement of modern times…. down to the Zambesi. What did they find in this land? We do not know certainly, but from what we do know we may reconstruct the situation in this way: the primitive culture of the Hottentots of Punt had been further developed by them and by other stronger Negro stocks until it reached a highly developed culture…. This may have been the source of the gold of the Ophir.\textsuperscript{55}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{52} Du Bois, \textit{The Negro}, 63.
\textsuperscript{55} Du Bois, \textit{The Negro}, 80.
Again, Du Bois treads near Afrocentrism and the Solomonic legend. While he states the Bantu migrated south to build Great Zimbabwe, it was Punt – a land associated with Egypt and the Near East trade – where their culture originated, and he still suggests the linkage of the area with Ophir, although only that it was exploited, not built, by Solomon. Even so, a native African gold mining region being discovered and used by an external monarchy seems to replicate the colonial situation of Africa of Du Bois’ day. The apparent acceptance of Africa as a permanently colonized region did not prevent Du Bois from recognizing that southern Africa had been home to powerful states. This included the one centered around Great Zimbabwe which was strongly organized; it employed slave labor [and] carried out a system of irrigation and built stone buildings and fortifications. There exists to-day many remains of these building operations in the Kalahari desert and in northern Rhodesia…. Mining operations have been carried on in these plains for generations, and one estimate is that at least three hundred and seventy-five million dollars’ worth of gold had been extracted. Some have thought that the older workings must date back to one or even three thousand years before the Christian era.56

The “some” who thought that the older gold mines of modern Zimbabwe were up to five thousand years old appears to be Randall-MacIver’s predecessor as archaeologist of Great Zimbabwe, Theodore Bent. Du Bois quotes from Bent’s 1891 The Ruined Cities of Mashonaland, a text which endorsed the ‘foreign builder’ theory. But while Du Bois took the much older date of the Solomonic theory of Great Zimbabwe’s origins, he ascribed it to a powerful, expansive native African state (albeit one which was still heavily reliant on slave labor).57 Despite his use of Bent as a source, Du Bois quite evidently draws on Randall-

56 Ibid, 81. It should be noted that by “northern Rhodesia,” Du Bois presumably means the northern part of Southern Rhodesia, more commonly referred to as simply ‘Rhodesia’ (modern Zimbabwe) and not Northern Rhodesia (modern Zambia).
MacIver’s scholarship for his discussion on the end dates for Great Zimbabwe’s civilization, even if he ignores Randall-MacIver’s dating for the city’s construction:

As usual there have been repeated attempts to find an external and especially an Asiatic origin for this culture. So far, however, archeological research seems to confirm its African origin…. How far back this civilization dates it is difficult to say, [but] the earliest limit was 1000 B.C.; it might, however, have been much earlier, especially if, as seems probable, the use of iron originated in Africa. On the other hand the culmination of this culture has been placed by some as late as the modern middle ages.  

In this case, the “some” referenced in the ending sentence is clearly Randall-MacIver.

And again, Du Bois uses the older dating theories of the foreign builder believers like Bent to justify locating the first human Iron Age in Africa, not the Middle East or Europe, again anticipating later Afrocentrist pseudohistory. But apart from the dating of the civilization, Du Bois also considers just what the cause of the city’s destruction was.

Undoubtedly the same sort of raids of barbarous warriors that we have known in our day. For instance, in 1570 there came upon the country of Mozambique, farther up the coast, “such an inundation of pagans that they could not be numbered. They came from that part of Monomotapa….‖ just as four hundred years later the Zulu impi marched. Again in 1602 a horde of people came from the interior called the Cabires, or cannibals. They entered the kingdom of Monomotapa, and the reigning king, being weak, was in great terror. Thus gradually the Monomotapa fell, and its power was scattered until the Kaffir-Zulu raids of our day.  

The passages quoted by Du Bois come from another sixteenth century Portuguese missionary, João dos Santos, itself cited in an anthology of South African historical documents. Here Du Bois seems to grant that the Monomotapa state only collapsed in the seventeenth century, apparently at odds with his statement a few pages prior that the “modern middle ages” would be a “late” date for the collapse of Great Zimbabwe. There is also apparently no

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59 Ibid, 83-84.
consideration given to the colonial aspects of a Portuguese account of an attacking wave of African cannibals and how such colonial dimensions might affect the validity of such a statement, especially as it lines up with later Rhodesian interpretations of the fall of the city which relate to their interwar anti-immigration policies, as recounted in chapter two.

Du Bois ends his *The Negro* chapter on Great Zimbabwe by noting that “Vasco da Gama doubled the Cape of Good Hope in 1497 and went north on the east coast as far as India. In the next ten years the Portuguese had occupied more than six different points on that coast, including Sofala.”

He added in a footnote to that passage, “It was called Sofala, from an Arabic word, and may be associated with the Ophir of Solomon. So, too, the river Sabi, a little off Sofala, may be associated with the name of the Queen of Sheba, whose lineage was supposed to be perpetuated in the powerful Monomotapa as well as the Abyssinians.”

Du Bois here not only perpetuates the association of Sofala and Ophir, which was common by the time Milton referenced the connection in *Paradise Lost*, and which Walmsley and Keane included in their late nineteenth century works on the African ‘Ophir.’

Du Bois also brings the Queen of Sheba down to Great Zimbabwe, establishing a dynastic link between it and Ethiopia reflective of the belief of Prichard and Speke that the elites of southern Africa were descended from lighter-skinned Ethiopians.

By the time Du Bois returned to writing about Great Zimbabwe in his 1946 *The World and Africa*, much had changed in both his life and the world. Both were embodied in his role in organizing five Pan-African conferences, the latest of which was held in the United Kingdom in October 1945 and had included participation from several key postwar leaders of African

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60 Ibid, 87.
61 Ibid, 87n1.
decolonization, including Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta, and Hastings Banda, whose own activism would help dissolve the Central African Federation and lead to Rhodesia’s UDI. The fifth conference came only months after Du Bois, as part of an NAACP delegation, submitted a proposal to the United Nations on behalf of the colonized peoples of the world, which achieved support from the governments of the Soviet Union, China, and India – itself not yet independent, but with representation at the UN, and which had supported a number of proposals on behalf of colonized African peoples.63

One thing that had not changed, however, was Du Bois’ use of Frobenius as a source. On the contrary, when citing the 1936 translation of Frobenius’ *Histoire de la Civilisation Africaine*, Du Bois referred to him as no less than “this greatest student of Africa.”64 Although Du Bois no longer mentioned the African Atlantis theory, his seventh chapter, on West Africa from 500-1500 CE, is titled ‘Atlantis,’ potentially a nod to Frobenius.65 Its argument implicitly equates the Atlantic slave trade destroying West African civilization with the flood that destroyed legendary Atlantis. Du Bois even asks, in a question prefiguring the Afrocentrists, “What in our civilization is distinctly British or American? Nothing. Science was built on Africa and Religion on Asia.”66 This combination of Africa and Asia, perhaps inspired by the Afro-Asian bloc emerging in the UN which Du Bois himself had a starting role in, was particularly strong in his five-page passage on the kingdom of Monomotapa and Great Zimbabwe.67 From the start, it emerges in his statement on how the Portuguese came to East Africa as a stepstone on the way to India, excited by the tales of African kingdoms and especially by that of gold in Sofala. By 1506 the Portuguese were participating in the wealth of these gold mines. They

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66 Ibid, 149.
mentioned the kingdom of Velanga and especially the empire of the Monomotapa. Vasco de Gama found prosperous and busy cities, some built of stone and mortar. The Portuguese established themselves on the coast but could not penetrate into the Bantu interior.68

Already, early in the post-World War II era of African nationalism and decolonization, Du Bois depicted the native Africans as more active in the resistance to European incursion than he had in *The Negro*. But even with this anticolonial aspect, Du Bois still cites Frobenius, attributing to him the belief in the fact that Zimbabwe was “a very great kingdom” approximately the size of modern Mexico, and the greatest ancient structure in Africa beneath the Great Lakes. However, “any reconstruction of this ancient African culture and history must be pursued today mainly in the Negro-hating atmosphere and amid the color-caste system of South Africa. Despite some eminent and fair scholars [apparently including the colonialist Frobenius], the main situation is like setting Nazis to study Jews.”69

The difficulty Du Bois had in divesting Frobenius from his colonial context is matched by the difficulty he has in fully withdrawing from the Solomonic legend, even while arguing an African origin for Great Zimbabwe: “It is evident that the vast amount of gold extracted from prehistoric Rhodesia, as indicated in the Hebrew Scriptures and by ancient historians before the commencement of the Christian era, exceeded that obtained within historic times.”70 With that statement, Du Bois perhaps even retreated from *The Negro* in maintaining the supposed Ophir-Zimbabwe connection. However, there is at least one way in which Du Bois eliminates the Solomonic legend’s stand-in for European colonialism that the British and Rhodesians put it to: by relocating the destination of its resource extraction to Asia. Du Bois claims that it was

68 Ibid, 169.
69 Ibid, 172.
70 Ibid, 173.
not that difficult to account for the gold mined between the ninth and sixteenth centuries. Probably the bulk of it went to India. The wealth of the Hindu kings in the fourteenth century was astonishing. Firishtah, the Persian historian in A.D. 1311 recorded a hoarding of gold worth a hundred million pounds sterling. In the sixteenth century a Portuguese correspondent described the immense revenue, the gold-covered furniture, and trappings of the kings of Vijayanaga and of the religious institutions.71

Surprisingly, Du Bois does not cite Frobenius for this, although Frobenius also claimed a link between Great Zimbabwe and the Vijayanagara Empire. Du Bois instead cites Gertrude Caton-Thompson’s 1931 publication of her 1929 dig of Great Zimbabwe which reaffirmed the African origins settled upon in 1905 by Randall-MacIver. Randall-MacIver had been both the first professional archaeologist to study the site, and the last to do so before Caton-Thompson; Du Bois had already cited him in The Negro.72 Caton-Thompson noted that Frobenius both stated at the July-August 1929 meeting in South Africa of the Council of the British Association that the Elliptical Tower in Great Zimbabwe was an “emblem of a sacrificial ant-hill,” but that he also speculated had similarities with medieval structures near Hampi, the former Vijayanagara capitol in southern India, indicating an Indian connection to Zimbabwe’s creation.73

Caton-Thompson admitted that if gold from Great Zimbabwe went to Hampi in the medieval era, Europe would have known nothing about it.74 However, she outright rejected the idea that Great Zimbabwe was built by native Africans under foreign “supervisors.” In the historical context of the era, she argued that any foreign builders would have had to have been Arab, Persian, or Indian; she rejected Chinese contact as “altogether improbable.” She saw no specific links between the architecture of Zimbabwe and the contemporary Arab, Persian, or

71 Ibid.
72 Ibid; Gertrude Caton-Thompson, The Zimbabwe Culture: Ruins and Reactions (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), 1, 194-95, 198. Notably, Caton-Thompson’s 1929 expedition was the first all-woman professional archaeological dig. It also focused on areas of Great Zimbabwe that were less notable, and therefore received less attention from earlier, more destructive archaeologists like R. N. Hall.
73 Caton-Thompson, 94, 103.
74 Ibid, 198.
Indian standards – for example, no arches, which three all used extensively. Some slight parallels, if they were not simply coincidence, could be explained by African natives seeing such architecture in merchant settlements along the Swahili and Sofala Coasts of East Africa. As such, Caton-Thompson provided a slight basis to Tudor Parfitt’s 1992 suggestion, discussed at the end of chapter one, that “Great Zimbabwe civilisation should perhaps be understood at least to some extent in the context of coastal culture, of mediaeval Indian Ocean culture.” Parfitt in particular takes Caton-Thompson’s noting of coincidental parallels as her supposedly endorsing the presence of Muslim minarets in the ruins.

While it is easy to see these hypotheses as simply making the Vijayanagara into medieval colonizers of southern Africa, it should instead be seen in the context of the early postwar decolonization movement – which in the next decade lead to the Bandung Conference and Non-Aligned Movement – as an example of Africans and Asians mutually benefitting each other during an era of European decline on the world stage. As an example, Du Bois noted that the presence of Asian and Chinese culture at Zimbabwe were entirely possible due to trade networks that predated Mohammed. “But just as neither Arabs, Persians, nor Portuguese ever dominated the blacks here in historic times, so the culture of Zimbabwe was without doubt always dominantly Negro, with that cultural inspiration that everywhere comes with foreign contacts.”

However, as great as Great Zimbabwe had been, it still eventually declined. In *The Negro*, Du Bois muses “What was it that overthrew this civilization? Undoubtedly the same sort of raids of barbarous warriors that we have known in our day.” As an example, he cites a Portuguese account from 1570 of coming from Monomotapa to Mozambique, to describe how in

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75 Ibid, 102-04.
76 Parfitt, *Journey to the Vanished City*, 212, 273.
78 Ibid.
“later days throng upon throng of herdsmen invaders overthrew Bantu settlers and were in turn overwhelmed.”\textsuperscript{79} This was the culmination of a move that began between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries, in which the Bantu began a migration southward due to the southern expansion of Islam from northern Africa. As part of this expansion, “they fell upon the civilization of the Monomotapa centering at Zimbabwe. They overthrew and changed the culture while at the same time continuing it.”\textsuperscript{80} Du Bois’ depiction of Great Zimbabwe being overrun by invasion in the sixteenth century, and his use of Portuguese sources for it, is interesting not only due to its similarity to the official Rhodesian accounts of invading black Africans destroying the city’s white civilization. As early as 1511, Portuguese sertanejo (‘backwoodsmen’) fled into the interior from the African coast, numbering in the hundreds by 1528. These included deserters from royal forts, shipwreck victims, criminals, and mulattos. One of them, Antonio Caiado, settled at the Monomotapa court as a linguist, became a confidant of the chief, and wrote an account in 1561 of the murder of Gonçalo da Silveira and his retinue under the instigation of a rival court faction allied to Arab Muslims.\textsuperscript{81}

In Portuguese sources, the African interior was depicted as a safe haven for the sertanejo; however, to the Africans whom the sertanejo settled among, the perception might have been very different, with little difference between the agents of the Portuguese state and those escaping it. In this case, I see the destructive southward Bantu migration described by Du Bois as a stand-in for the arrival of Europeans to southern Africa. The fate of the sympathetic Silveira is another example of how Portuguese perceptions were not shared by the peoples they were infringing on. This severe reaction to the fate of Silveira could also be due to the relatively peaceful reception

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid, 219-20.
\textsuperscript{81} Newitt, 36-37.
the Portuguese missionary efforts had achieved in the Kongo kingdom of southwest Africa for the prior several decades. The earlier Kongo efforts may have convinced them that East Africa would be similarly fertile and that any opposition was fueled by Arabs and requiring a strong response. The sertanejo history can also be seen as a useful tool for the Rhodesian regime, not just through the murder of Silveira, but by showing that only criminals and outcasts – whether in the sixteenth century, or the twentieth – would choose to form an alliance with native Africans opposing European authority.

Du Bois’ descriptions of Indian links to Great Zimbabwe in *The World and Africa* are also notable in the context of India’s relationship to Britain’s African and West Indian colonies, in the era when British rule in all three regions was ending. Due to the British need for labor following the abolition of African slavery in the Empire, large numbers of Indians had been sent to the West Indies as indentured workers. Indian merchants had been present in East Africa for an even longer period, as a result of the trade routes that made possible what Caton-Thompson and Parfitt referred to as “mediaeval Indian Ocean culture.” As in the West Indies, British imperial labor needs led to increased numbers of Indians in eastern, central, and southern Africa from the late nineteenth century onwards. While the members of the Indian diaspora did not fit neatly into the racial schema of European settlers and African natives, in most cases they were subject to discrimination nearly on the level of African natives, leading to natural alliances of Indians and Africans for anti-colonial and majority-rule movements. This included both the Indian government supporting Du Bois’ NAACP appeal to the United Nations and making the first call in the UN to sanction South Africa, and the South African Indian National Congress.

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But within Africa, as majority rule was achieved and colonialism ended, so too did the alliance between Indians and native Africans, the latter of whom now resented the Indian community for being in general wealthier than the native population. This led to a string of ‘Africanization’ programs in Uganda and Kenya in the late 1960s; ironically, by 1968, one of the only two Hindu temples in central Africa was in Salisbury, capitol of UDI Rhodesia.\footnote{84}{Floyd Dotson and Lillian Ota Dotson, The Indian Minority of Zambia, Rhodesia, and Malawi (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 97. The other was in Blantyre, Malawi.} While these events were still decades in the future of the initial 1946 printing of The World in Africa, Du Bois’ depiction of the Indian cultural involvement at Great Zimbabwe – especially in its expanded edition reprints into the 1960s – may have been motivated as much by a desire to preserve the Afro-Asian anticolonial alliance against such a future outcome, rather than to simply commemorate its 1940s existence.

African nationalists in the diaspora such as Du Bois could use both the real and mythical histories of Great Zimbabwe as a rallying cry into the 1960s. Therefore, it is perhaps not surprising that people within Southern Rhodesia – African as well as European – would also find Great Zimbabwe a useful tool, in both its mythical and historical aspects. It is no coincidence, after all, that the colony of Southern Rhodesia became the Republic of Zimbabwe – a name that had never been used for the name of a polity in the region.

**Great Zimbabwe as a Symbol within Rhodesia:**
During the era of the Central African Federation, the African nationalist movements in the Northern Territories (Northern Rhodesia, later Zambia; and Nyasaland, later Malawi) were far more developed and powerful than the Southern Rhodesian nationalist movement. The strength of the Nyasaland African Congress (NAC), led by the aforementioned Hastings Banda, was such that terrified Federal authorities declared a state of emergency in Nyasaland in 1959, banning the organization, arresting 1300 of its leaders, and imposing martial law, all due to what a British enquiry, the Devlin Commission, identified as fabricated charges stemming from the fear of African political power. Using the Emergency as a pretext, Southern Rhodesian authorities suppressed their own territorial Southern Rhodesian African National Congress (SRANC). In some ways, this was less of a blow than the suppression of the NAC (or the concurrent suppression of the Zambian African National Congress in Northern Rhodesia) due to the fact that the SRANC held much less authority over the native African population than did the movements of the Northern Territories, and was itself much more divided internally. This was partly due to the different population dynamics of the territories; Nyasaland had the largest African population, concentrated in the smallest territory, with a negligible settler population, while Southern Rhodesia had the largest ratio of settlers to natives and an older, more entrenched system of settler rule compared to the Northern Territories whose natives had more protections from the Colonial Office.85

As a result of the 1959 crackdown on African nationalists across the Federation, the National Democratic Party was formed as a replacement for the SRANC and in 1960, its

85 Roy Welensky, Welensky's 4000 Days: The Life and Death of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (London: Collins, 1964), 109-69; Weston Library: Alan Lennox-Boyd, Mss. Eng. c. 3395: Hola Camp and Devlin Report Debates 1959. Of note, in the UDI era the only official opposition to the Rhodesian Front government was the extremely tiny moderate African party granted the right to participate, and whose electorate was not much larger than the number of legislators it returned in the tightly-controlled elections.
members met to discuss what name their future country should take once white rule had ended. The proposed names were Machobana, Matopos, Monomotapa, and Zimbabwe. The first two drew on regional geographical sites, while the latter drew on the historical states of pre-settlement Rhodesia. Rhodes designated the Matopos Hills as a burial site for the heroes of Rhodesia settlement; Rhodes himself, along with his deputy Leander Starr Jameson and the members of the Shangani Patrol are all buried there.\(^8^6\) It therefore seems possible that the Matopos name may have been rejected due to the quite literal insertion of settler colonialism into the geological formation revered by the natives. But whatever disqualified the other options, the name Zimbabwe was ultimately chosen, due to its historical significance and the fact that it had national appeal beyond the tribal and regional ties of the former three. After the NDP was itself banned in 1961, its replacement embodied the name: Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU). ZAPU itself would have an initially more moderate faction, Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), split from it in 1963. Upon independence in 1980, they would form a coalition government, fully merging in 1987 into the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) which remains the uninterrupted ruling party in Zimbabwe as of 2019.

Zimbabwe as a name also offered something that the name of the historical Monomotapa state did not: spiritual power. The area around the city was believed by the Shona to have curing abilities, and a small cave near the gold furnace of the city also has large voice-amplifying ability that enabled oracles to recite prophecies to a widespread audience.\(^8^7\) These traditional properties

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of the site seem ready-made to serve as a symbol of national liberation. The latter aspect even had a quite literal application during the War of Liberation, when the ruins were not only an actual rallying point for ZAPU and ZANU forces, but where shamans conducted rituals calling upon ancestral spirits from the site for help in the struggle, and to induct new members into the revolutionary struggle. But beyond the spiritual aspect, there was the mythic history itself. If Great Zimbabwe really had been built by whites – whether Israelites or Phoenicians – in the past, and destroyed by African natives, then in its own way the ‘foreign builder’ theory was a template for the War of Liberation. It was this use of Great Zimbabwe, ironically based on the same racist myth of Ophir which had justified colonialism in the past, which was most responsible for the Rhodesian government’s reappraisal of Great Zimbabwe during the War of Liberation.88

Zimbabwe’s Erasure within Rhodesia:

While Du Bois used Great Zimbabwe as a way to underpin Afro-Asian cooperation in the early era of decolonization, Kenyan political theorist Ali Mazrui had a different argument on how India and Rhodesia were linked in that period. For Mazrui, this took the form of the three eras of the Commonwealth. The first had been the era of exclusively white governments, the one to which Southern Rhodesia had sought formal inclusion in since 1932. This was superseded by a ‘Second Commonwealth’ beginning in 1947, when India and Pakistan became the first non-

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white Dominions. The ‘Third Commonwealth’ emerged with the accession of Nigeria in 1960, which for the first time meant that the majority of Commonwealth states were non-white; it was no coincidence, according to Mazrui, that South Africa was forced to leave the Commonwealth at the following Commonwealth meeting, the first with its non-white majority. India in 1950 further broke the concept that the British monarchy was what kept the Commonwealth unified and established that republicanism and Commonwealth membership were not incompatible; the 1958 military coup in Pakistan then established that authoritarianism was not incompatible with Commonwealth membership. These changes initiated by the Asian countries were culminated by Rhodesia’s 1965 UDI: for the first time, a country claimed the British monarchy while rejecting the Commonwealth. In December, Tanzania and Ghana broke diplomatic relations with Britain over its perceived weakness in responding to UDI; for the first time, there were two Commonwealth members who did not diplomatically recognize the United Kingdom.89

The white minority regime of Rhodesia and the majority-rule regime of Zimbabwe were both notable for their ambiguous approaches, to say the least, to the United Kingdom and its Commonwealth. This parallel was reflected by the fact both also had ambiguous approaches to the Great Zimbabwe mythic history at the center of the Rhodesian project. The settlers took exception to the idea that native Africans could build complex cities and the large-scale state societies needed to sustain them; this was the core aspect of opposition to the acceptance of an African origin of Great Zimbabwe. By the 1950s, however, the steadfast belief in a simple, rural existence of tribal Africans prior to European arrival had come to be challenged by the Rhodesian government – not due any historical analysis, but rather a realpolitik based on

justifying settler rule to its British critics. Especially from the 1930s onward, urbanized Africans in the Copperbelt of Northern Rhodesia had been at the forefront of political organization against the colonial regime and, after 1953, the CAF. In 1958, at the same time studies on urban African politics were being printed in the United Kingdom, the Rhodesian Institute of African Affairs argued that such ‘detribalization’ had begun prior to the arrival of Europeans, and therefore that traditional religious and social views, or the issues involved with urbanization, could not explain African nationalist hostility to Europeans.

In 1964 – the year between the 1963 dissolution of the CAF and the 1965 UDI – a thirty-year-old newly-minted professor of archaeology, Peter S. Garlake, was appointed Inspector of Monuments, a position within the Rhodesian government originally created for Theodore Bent for his 1890s investigation of Great Zimbabwe. As has been mentioned before, Garlake was the preeminent scholar of Great Zimbabwe during the UDI period thanks to his using his position to conduct the first excavations at Great Zimbabwe since Caton-Thompson in 1929 – ironically resulting in a sudden outpouring of new information on the site at the exact time that Rhodesia was most isolated from the rest of the world. Like Caton-Thompson, Garlake found the evidence pointed beyond a shadow of a doubt that Great Zimbabwe had been built by the Shona, and far later than Biblical times. Garlake’s prior work in Mozambique (then still under Portuguese colonial rule) enabled him to further show the complete divide between the styles of Great Zimbabwe and the Asian-influenced architecture of the Swahili and Sofala Coasts. Garlake continued his work until 1970, when he was dismissed by the Rhodesian government due to his continuing advocacy for Great Zimbabwe’s African origins. His dismissal was more dramatically

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followed by exile from Rhodesia itself; as stated in the introduction, it was a sign of how seriously the Smith regime saw historical research as a genuine threat to not only its legitimacy, but its stability. Garlake ended up at the University of Ife in Nigeria, returning only in the 1980s, after the collapse of the Rhodesian regime and its replacement by the Republic of Zimbabwe.  

The year of Garlake’s dismissal and exile is also notable for its being the year that Rhodesia gave up the pretense of retaining the British monarchy, establishing itself as a republic after a decisive approval in a (whites-only) referendum. Humphrey Gibbs, the Governor of Southern Rhodesia since 1959, and who had remained under effective house arrest in the British High Commission since UDI, finally gave up the ghost and returned to a hero’s welcome in London.  

The severing of Rhodesia’s last links to the metropole, however tenuous they were at the time, coincided with the severing of any pretense the regime had to the actual history of its territory and native population, and the license to take steps against historians that would have been untenable even under the pre-1970 rhetorical links.

By the time of Garlake’s removal and exile, another factor had also come into play: the War of Liberation, which had begun, albeit on a very small (but escalating) scale, in 1964. The embrace of both the name, but also the legends, of Zimbabwe by the African nationalist forces gave additional impetus for the suppression of legitimate historical work on the city, the all-encompassing justification of national security. Not only was historical work suppressed, but the very name ‘Zimbabwe’ was banned from Rhodesian state media as the war escalated.  

The claims for the white origins of Great Zimbabwe during the UDI period therefore take on another aspect: ceremonially severing the spiritual legitimacy of the liberation movement and its

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93 Smith, 135-50.
94 Kuklick, 160.
connection to the native African majority, even while the template of the Solomonic legend was acknowledged as giving the nationalists inspiration that foreign colonizers could be overthrown. The fear of such lessons was in a way present in British colonial thinking from the start of modern southern African settler rule.

In 1910, the year the British colonies and former Boer republics were federated into the Union of South Africa, the Scottish novelist John Buchan published the novel *Prester John*, the first twentieth-century work of fiction to reference Great Zimbabwe. The protagonist of the novel is a Scottish minister’s son, David Crawfurd, who moves to a fictional Boer city in South Africa. On arriving, Crawfurd has a talk with his host, the schoolteacher named Mr. Wardlaw, which at first appears to be a positive endorsement of Randall-Maclver’s then-recent conclusions of native construction:

To-night as he sat and puffed in his armchair, he was full of stories about a fellow called Monomotapa. It seems he was a great black emperor whom the Portuguese discovered about the sixteenth century. He lived to the north in Mashonaland, and had a mountain full of gold. The Portuguese did not make much of him, but they got his son and turned him into a priest…. ‘He must have been a big man, Davie. You know that the old ruins in Rhodesia, called Zimbabwe, were long believed to be Phoenician in origin. I have a book here which tells all about them. But now it is believed that they were built by natives. I maintain that the men who could erect piles like that’ – and he showed me a picture – ‘were something more than petty chiefs.’

But the real reasoning behind this apparently progressive sentiment is soon revealed to Crawfurd:

Mr Wardlaw thought that we were underrating the capacity of the native… not his intelligence [but] his dangerousness. His reasons, shortly, were these: There were five or six of them to every white man; they were all, roughly speaking, of the same stock, with the same tribal beliefs; they had only just ceased being a warrior race, with a powerful military discipline; and, most important, they lived round the rim of the high-veld plateau, and if they combined could cut off the white man from the sea. [‘]It would be a

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second and bloodier Indian mutiny [if] a second Tchaka turned up, who could get the
different tribes to work together[,] I don’t see what could prevent a rising.”

Wardlaw accepts that native Africans built Great Zimbabwe, but only because it justifies
stronger vigilance against them; the Monomotapa kingdom is compared to the expansionist Zulu
Empire of Shaka, and the threat of African rebellion is stronger than the danger of the 1857-58
Great Rebellion in India. This plot element leads to the central antagonist of the novel: an
African reverend, John Laputa, who seeks to organize a Zulu revolt, specifically by claiming to
be the heir to Prester John. Nor has Buchan simply shifted Prester John from Ethiopia to South
Africa; one of Laputa’s mystical incantations links him with another figure already familiar from
local settler legends:

It spoke of old kings and great battles, of splendid palaces and strong battlements, of
queens white as ivory…. No Kaffir ever forged that ritual. It must have come straight
from Prester John or Sheba’s queen, or whoever ruled in Africa when time was young…. It
must have been some old sacred language – Phoenician, Sabaean….98

Prester John and the Queen of Sheba appear as more than just the originators of
invocations, however, as Crawfurd sees something

which no Portuguese adventurer had ever attained. There, floating on the smoke-wreaths,
was the jewel which may once have burned in Sheba’s hair. As [Laputa] held the collar
aloft, the assembly rocked with a strange passion…. In that moment I learned something
of the secret of Africa, of Prester John’s empire and Tchaka’s victories.99

The novel’s usage of mythic history of Ethiopia, both its own (the Queen of Sheba) and
that applied to it by Europeans (Prester John), and linking to Great Zimbabwe and Shaka, has
implications beyond more than just stoking fear of native Africans, although that is certainly

97 Ibid, 94-95.
98 Ibid, 182-83.
99 Ibid, 186.
present. By allowing its teenaged Scottish merchant protagonist to “see a sight to which no Portuguese adventurer had ever attained,” *Prester John* evokes the primacy of Britain’s imperial endeavors over all others, and Britain’s victory over an Africa which the transposing of historical and mythical figures, along with the contemporary uniting of South Africa, almost assumes a pan-African form. Perhaps not surprisingly, in 1935 the Conservative British government would appoint Buchan to be Governor-General of Canada, one of the most prestigious appointments in the British imperial bureaucracy. This also is a culmination of a path of a different sort; while Haggard began as a minor colonial administrator who became an adventure novelist inspired by Great Zimbabwe, Buchan began as a secretary in the Cape Colony administration, became a novelist inspired by Prester John, and then graduated to becoming a major colonial administrator.

Buchan’s collapsing of Ethiopian and southern African speculative history also set him as a continuation of another author: Mark Twain. The difference is that Twain did so with the actual history of both regions rather than their mythic versions. In his 1897 nonfiction work *Following the Equator*, Twain gives a satirically uneducated pro-British account of how the invasion of the Transvaal, with the design of seizing that country and adding it to the British Empire, was planned by Cecil Rhodes [which] brought out a storm against Rhodes and the [BSAC] for degrading British honor. For a good while I couldn’t seem to get at a clear comprehension of it, it was so tangled. [A]s I understand it, Dr. Kruger and Dr. Jameson, not having been able to make the medical business pay, made a raid into Matabeleland with the intention of capturing the capital, Johannesburg…. They would have succeeded in this great scheme, as I understand it, but for the interference of Cecil Rhodes and Mr. Beit, and other Chiefs of the Matabele, who persuaded their countrymen to revolt and throw off their allegiance to Germany. This, in turn, as I understand it, provoked the King of Abyssinia [Ethiopia] to destroy the Italian army and fall back upon Johannesburg; this at the instigation of Rhodes, to bull the stock market.100

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To Twain, the difference between the Boers and the Uitlanders, the allegiances of Jameson and Kruger, and the continent separating Ethiopia’s defeat of the Italians and the Afrikaner victory over the BSAC are all unclear. What is clear to the American observer is one overriding fact: Rhodes and his Company always act to advance their own interests in southern Africa over all others, including Britain’s. Given his anti-imperialist views, Twain likely would not have been surprised to – in the reverse of his Connecticut Yankee – have been sent seventy years into his future to find that his observations on Rhodes and the BSAC were still applicable to Smith and the Rhodesian Front he led.

Conclusion:

Twain was, of course, not the only famous novelist to comment on Rhodesian politics. The Rhodesian settlers themselves even produced several of note. As mentioned above, the Nobel laureate Doris Lessing is undoubtedly the greatest novelist to come out of the Rhodesias. But she lived in Southern Rhodesia; if Rhodesian novelists are ranked by the boundary divide, then the greatest Northern Rhodesian novelist was Wilbur Smith (no relation to Ian Smith). Although Smith’s early novels tended to be about mercenaries in contemporary Congo and West Africa, he changed topics with his 1972 The Sunbird, an homage to Haggard’s King Solomon’s Mines. Smith’s novel depicts an archaeological expedition sponsored by the Anglo-Sturvesant gold company to Botswana, which uncovers the ruins of “Opet,” a Carthaginian gold-mining outpost so “huge [you] could fit Zimbabwe into the main enclosure half a dozen times.”¹⁰¹ The novel’s hero is Dr. Benjamin Kazin, Director of the ‘Institute of African Anthropology and Prehistory’ and author of the monograph Ophir: A Personal Investigation of the Prehistoric

Gold-Working Civilization of Central Africa, with Special Reference to the City of Zimbabwe and the Legend of the Ancients and the Lost City of the Kalahari. The villains of the novel, inasmuch as there are villains, are professional archaeologists who don’t share Kazin’s daring iconoclastic views, given that they are intellectuals intent to suppress the ‘truth’ of Carthaginian presence in southern Africa due to sympathy with African nationalists intent on destroying civilization (i.e., settler society) in Africa. This in particular is made clear in an extended sequence in the latter part of the novel where, due to a magical curse, Kazin is sent back in time to inhabit the body of the Opet resident Lannon Hycanus. The characters from the present-day story are replicated in the past, with the credulous archaeologists representing the white ruling elite of Opet and the skeptics aligned with those attempting to destroy the Carthaginian outpost.

The Sunbird has been seen as a defense of the Rhodesian government’s views of Great Zimbabwe and professional archaeology, even though Wilbur Smith later claimed – in 2015 – to have left Rhodesia due to his opposition to the “injustices” of the Ian Smith regime. Such ‘opposition’ should be judged in the context that, in addition to relocating to apartheid South Africa, Smith served in the British South Africa Police (despite the name, the militarized colonial police of Southern Rhodesia) prior to his move south. Wilbur Smith’s modern claim of opposition to the Ian Smith regime is also suspect based on an analysis of his literary output following the 1980 establishment of the Republic of Zimbabwe. That same year, he published A

102 Ibid, 8, 11.
103 Ibid, 422-83.
*Falcon Flies*, an historical drama on the start of white settlement in Rhodesia, followed by the 1981 *Men of Men* set in the First Matabele War, and 1982’s *The Angels Weep*, which had one storyline set in the Second Matabele War and a second following both the African and settler descendants of the first story during the War of Independence. Smith’s linking of the two conflicts was an implicit acceptance of the African nationalist historical view; it was ZANU who saw the War of Independence as a continuation of the 1890s struggles. By the 1990s, Smith had seemingly changed focus again, moving on to a series of novels about an ancient Egyptian eunuch named Taita who becomes an immortal magician. Even this series would not fully escape Smith’s coloni alist fantasies, as in the 2007 installment, *The Quest*, Taita is sent by the Pharaoh on an expedition to discover the source of the Nile; Taita instead finds a hidden lost city where the light-skinned descendants of a prior Egyptian expedition rule over the dark-skinned Africans. With *The Quest*, Smith came full circle, not only returning to the lost city theme of *The Sunbird*, but also evoking the Victorian searches for the Nile’s origin, and ironically also the Afrocentrist worldview of Egyptian primacy over African history and heritage.

Wilbur Smith’s equivocal relationship to both the fantasies of Great Zimbabwe and foreign settlement of southern Africa, as well as the settler regime of Ian Smith which promoted those views, is representative of the general ambiguous nature the mythic history of Great Zimbabwe had assumed by the era of UDI and its African resistance. Wilbur’s sharing of the same surname as the Rhodesian leader is especially apt, given the novelist’s views. For it was in the 1990s that Ian Smith also released a fantasy of what was by then a long-vanished white society in southern Africa – one which, according to him, had been the true defender of both multiracialism, and the authentic precolonial tribal cultures of the Shona and Ndebele, protecting them from the European-inspired nationalist Marxism of the coming Mugabe regime. In Ian
Smith’s memoirs, recounted decades later and just before his own relocation to South Africa, it had been the white settlers who had saved the local Africans from the horrors of a foreign occupation, in the form of the nationalist guerillas who based in Zambia and trained by the Soviets and Chinese.105

In Smith’s view, the collapse of Rhodesia was therefore the collapse of true African civilization in what became the Republic of Zimbabwe – and the turning of the wheel was therefore complete. The fantasy of Ophir fully eclipsed the reality of Great Zimbabwe – at least in the mind of Ian Smith, the man whose government had in the end not been able to suppress Great Zimbabwe from history books or public memory. In a way, therefore, the mythic history – or rather, histories – of Great Zimbabwe became a rare ideological bridge between the settler and native populations of Southern Rhodesia.106 In a way, perhaps the legacy of Great Zimbabwe was the most lasting expression of the “racial partnership” ideology espoused by the CAF, as mentioned at the start of the prior chapter.

If the Rhodesian settlers had failed to resurrect Ophir, therefore, they had still performed a different feat of historical necromancy – as the final burying of Ophir was paired with the rise of the ancient city of Zimbabwe back to life.

105 Smith, 68-70.
Conclusion

“Seven hundred years after the Hereford, Duchy of Cornwall, and Psalter maps of the world had located monstrous races in southern Africa, there would indeed be a race of human monsters practicing monstrosity in the name of apartheid in South Africa, and the color of that monstrous race, as it turns out, was not black.”

-Geraldine Heng

Introduction:

I began the introduction to this dissertation with an overview of pseudohistorical beliefs among the American public. In the final stage of completing this dissertation, I would personally experience several examples of that credulity. In June 2019, two months before defending this dissertation, I spent a week as a grader of the national AP World History tests in Kansas City, Missouri. While around town one day, I spoke with a local who told me that she used to be a home-school teacher. On hearing I was an historian from Connecticut, she was excited to tell me how she had read from two different home-school history textbooks how about ancient Phoenicians had visited the state and built the Gungywamp ruins located in what is now the town of Groton, Connecticut, and which mainstream historians agree are colonial-era cellars. Another grader I met during the week told me that he knew about the ancient Jews who settled in South Africa and built Great Zimbabwe. Yet another, who was himself an African native of Kenya, surprised me one morning by talking about how British colonization in Africa was good because the Britons brought civilization and peace to the natives of their empire who would otherwise


remain mired in tribal warfare. It should be noted that both of these men were public high school history teachers.

As it was, the topic of the AP World History tests for 2019 was the impact of Portuguese trade on the Indian Ocean in the fifteenth century – a topic which, as shown in chapters one and three, had no small impact on the development of the settler legends of Great Zimbabwe. At the end of that first chapter, I discussed the concept of an Indian Ocean Creole, which among other scholarly speculations, builds off of Gwyn Campbell’s 2010 proposal to reject the existing Eurocentric division of Africa – Northern, Western, Sub-Saharan, and the like – in favor of a division that would identify the entire east coast of the continent as an “Indian Ocean Africa” integrated into the “Indian Ocean World” or IOW. Campbell argued that the IOW was the true center of the original global economy, rather than earlier models rooted in either East Asia or the European empires.3 Tansen Sen argued in 2011 that such an integrated Indian Ocean trade was a result of the 1420s expeditions of the Chinese admiral Zheng He.4 If Sen’s conclusions are taken at face value, then it was this imposition of state power from the eastern terminus of the IOW (in the form of the Chinese navy) that maintained unity in the immediate aftermath of the decline of the state power of Great Zimbabwe in the western terminus of the IOW.5 In a similar vein, the historian François-Xavier Fauvelle – previously cited in the introduction to the present study – chose to end his history of what he called the “African Middle Ages” not with Cadamosto’s first

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5 Molefi and Kariamu Asante’s comments after their 1981-82 expedition to Great Zimbabwe are also worth repeating in this context: “Since we had accepted Diop’s position that Nubia and Egypt represented one locus of civilization in Africa we believed that Great Zimbabwe, while much later, had to represent another key area of African civilization.” Molefi and Kariamu Asante, “Great Zimbabwe: An Ancient African City-State,” in Ivan Van Sertima, ed., *Blacks in Science: Ancient and Modern* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1983), 84.
expeditions to the sub-Saharan coastline of West Africa in the 1440s, but with Vasco da Gama’s arrival in the Indian city of Kozhikode in 1498, an act which symbolically signaled Europeans’ ability to circumvent Africa instead of traverse it to reach their vaunted Asian markets.6

Zheng He, Cadamosto, da Gama – what do their travels have to do with a modern American fascination with African pseudohistory? Consider what the collected claims of Campbell, Sen, and Fauvelle indicate – that such global trade networks as the IOW were extensions of an imperial network grounded in a metropole of sorts, even if not the sort of metropole consistent with modern understandings of empires. And if the original metropole went into decline, the patterns established by it could be sustained by a new rising imperial power. And consider again the claims of chapters two and three in this dissertation. Just as the Rhodesian settlers considered themselves a rising empire in the Anglophone world, the Rhodesians’ inspiration was not only metropolitan Britain, but the United States. And as described in chapter four, the Rhodesian experiment in UDI was both directly influenced by, and in turn influenced, the development of the Conservative far right in the UK.

Is it therefore any surprise that what we might call ‘Rhodesianism’ – the ideology of settler counter-revolution couched in independence from the metropole – also had an impact in the development of the New Right in the United States, especially in the late 1970s when the US right was facing a post-Vietnam crisis and resurgence with Reagan’s campaign at the same time the Rhodesian regime went into terminal decline? After all, in the 1970s this prospective Rhodesianism had not only had a broad appeal in the West, but it even played a foundational role as the nucleus of what Kyle Burke termed an “Anticommmunist Internationalism.” According to Burke, while the US New Right

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is usually told as a domestic tale [the] story of US mercenaries in Africa shows that right-wing Americans were also part of a larger international anticommunist mobilization that spanned the Cold War era. Drawing upon arguments pressed by US conservative leaders, they enacted a shadow foreign policy that linked overseas conflicts to domestic struggles, leaving legacies that resonate today. Although most US mercenaries had a marginal impact on the wars in Rhodesia and Angola, the circulation of violence – both real and imagined – between the United States and southern Africa helped radicalize domestic paramilitary groups in the late 1970s and early 1980s.⁷

This far-right conservatism, animated by Vietnam veterans recruited to fight in the Rhodesian army, has had an influence in the United States far outlasting the dying Rhodesian regime the veterans briefly fought for. As mentioned in this study’s introduction, this legacy was starkly demonstrated by the Rhodesian imagery and self-identification held by the terrorist who perpetrated the 2015 mass shooting at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina.⁸ Nor is it only the Western far-right that masters this racist pseudohistory that the Southern Poverty Law Center termed alt-history.⁹ In India, Hindu nationalists supporting Prime Minister Narendra Modi have created a mythologized “Aryan Vedic” identity and falsified the history of Alexander the Great to endorse the superiority of

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⁸ Horne, *White Supremacy Confronted*, 382-87; Stuart Schrader, “From Charleston to Rhodesia,” *Jacobin*, June 25, 2015, accessed July 10, 2015, https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/06/dylann-roof-charleston-massacre-rhodesia-confederate/. On the other hand, scholar of empire Dane Kennedy became interested in studying the British Empire while a student at the University of California at Berkeley during the height of the Vietnam War, which in turn inspired him to write about settler society in Rhodesia (with the country ceasing to exist the year before he earned his PhD). See Dane Kennedy, *The Imperial History Wars: Debating the British Empire* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 3-4.

Hinduism over the foreign. This modern-day variant of the Alexander Romance that played into the worldviews of Ibn Battuta and Sir John Mandeville, as related in chapter one, has very real consequences for India’s Muslim minority, whose faith is considered part of that foreign influence by those Hindu nationalists. While the Hindu nationalist campaign to rewrite Indian history is relatively new, the Rhodesianist ideology in the American body politic has existed for decades, long before if more subtly than its visible presence in the singular act of terrorism in Charleston. The most visible and significant exemplars of this American Rhodesianism is the “Sagebrush Rebellion,” which emerged in 1976 as cattle farmers in the American West refusing to pay taxes on land they illegally occupy from the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Since 1993, the Sagebrush leaders have been the Bundy family, famous most recently for their 2014 armed confrontation in Nevada led by patriarch Cliven and the 2016 occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon led by Cliven’s son Ammon.

The Sagebrush Rebellion, especially in its Bundy era, has a number of not only clear parallels to, but direct inspiration from, Rhodesian settler politics. In the early 1960s, Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall’s African Technical Exchange Program had African students from both Northern and Southern Rhodesia (along with Nigeria, Uganda, and Kenya) attend American universities to learn ecological conservation skills. When they visited Arizona, it was the BLM that hosted them. In 2008, a Wyoming protest against the George W. Bush-era BLM was led

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11 It should also be remembered that as early as 1935, Ernest Hemingway was comparing the Western states of Nebraska and Wyoming to the East African British settler colonies of Kenya and Tanganyika in Green Hills of Africa. See Ernest Hemingway, Green Hills of Africa: The Hemingway Library Edition (New York: Scribner, 2016), 248.

by a white Rhodesian émigré, Alexandra Fuller. And Cliven Bundy’s 2014 protest was vocally backed by at least one other white Rhodesian immigrant to the United States, John Normanton, who proclaimed in a rambling comment on a news story covering the standoff that in his mind,

To hate the government is not to hate your country. The federal government has become as big of a tyrant as the British were in 1776. You would have been on the Brits side, because you would not have had the stomach to face the most powerful country in the world, just like you don’t have the stomach to face the most powerful government in the world now…. I fought a war in Rhodesia for 14 years [and] the blacks used terrorist tactics to win their war against the whites and the whites will do the same in this country. I will most likely leave the country it is not my war, but I am certainly on the side of the ranchers…. They are the first freedom fighters to stand up to this government of tyranny and I salute them…. I fought a war for 14 years in Rhodesia. The black majority used terrorism to take power from a white minority. Jimmy Carter called the terrorist[s] freedom fighters. Whites are still the majority in this country and the majority of whites will become freedom fighters. There is a rebellious attitude towards the Federal Government [in] which I support the citizens, but I have no plans on getting involved. If you are white you are a traitor and a coward. If you are not be very careful which side you choose.

The scenario imagined by Normanton inverts the sentiment of the Rhodesian settlers during their opposition to inclusion in the CAF. In that era, Rhodesian critics compared the CAF and Southern Rhodesia to the Union and Confederacy of the American Civil War, respectively; the predecessor of the Rhodesian Front was even called the Confederate Party in opposition to the pro-CAF Federal Party, terminology both sides recognized as harkening to the American Civil War. As mentioned with the Edmund Burke quote at the start of chapter four, by the late 1950s both Southern Rhodesian settlers and Northern Rhodesian African nationalists were using...
the Boston Tea Party as a reference point for their independence aspirations. As late as 1962, the UK Colonial Secretary, Oliver Lyttelton, perversely used Abraham Lincoln’s efforts to preserve the Union as justification for refusing to grant independence to the African-majority territories of the CAF. Among the Rhodesians and their supporters on the British right, therefore, the rhetoric of linking 1776 (and 1861) to 1965 existed; Normanton was not inventing that wholesale. But with the Bundy movement, the link of 1965 to 2014 and 2016 (and 2015) is also clear, if not explicitly spelled out by a commentator. The Bundys and their followers after all are white agrarian settlers with militarized ranches protesting against distant federal control (in the case of Cliven, refusing to recognize that the federal government legally exists, as did the Rhodesian Front in the final months of the CAF) while spouting racist rhetoric.

For Cliven, his statements advocating the virtues of slavery for African-Americans eventually cost him the support of mainstream American conservatives. This lesson was seemingly not lost on his son Ammon. During the latter’s 2016 Malheur occupation, Ammon’s espoused opposition to the Black Lives Matter movement was combined with not only a promise to protect Native American artifacts stored at the Malheur building, but the claim that the occupying ranchers would do a better job at it than the professionals employed by the Fish and Wildlife Service. Of course, this was predicated on the Bundys’ stated belief that archaeologists’ right to explore or work at the Malheur refuge area was secondary to the right of ranchers and loggers to exploit it, and the argument – familiar from any settler to colonial claim – that it was

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16 ICS: “PP.ZA.UNIP.3, Memorandum on Northern Rhodesia Crisis”; UK National Archives: “CO 1015/1598: Possible counter-measures in the event of rebellion by elements in the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, particularly in Southern Rhodesia or the Copperbelt”.
necessary to “recognize that the Native Americans had the claim to the land, but they lost that claim. There are things to learn from cultures of the past, but the current culture is the most important.” That statement of Ammon’s was informed by his ahistorical view that “Before white man came, so to speak, there was nothing to keep cattle from tromping on those things [Native artifacts and sacred sites],” despite the fact that cattle did not exist in North America prior to the arrival of Europeans.¹⁹

In the case of Ammon in particular, the Bundy movement reflects the same ahistorical appropriation of Native American artifacts and sites as Rhodesian settlers did to native African sites during their campaign for self-rule from Britain. This pathology is evident in the Rhodesian metropole as well; in the context of Brexit, British Neo-Nazis in the summer of 2019 increasingly attempted to “take back” Celtic and Neolithic sites from the National Trust for their own usage.²⁰ But this view was reflected by Britons long before Brexit; for the view of Victorian Conservatives who, as discussed in chapter three, believed that ancient Celtic monuments in Britain should not be protected, a sentiment based on a combination of views on property owners’ rights and the belief the native peoples lacked any true cultural merit or signs of civilization, allegedly not even being the ancestors of the modern English – the opposite actions of the modern Neo-Nazis, but for the same end. The Americans of the nineteenth century similarly could not imagine that Native Americans built the massive mound settlements, coming

up with any number of alternative theories for the identities of the Mound Builders. So while the ‘Anticommmunist Internationalism’ of Rhodesian settler politics may have ultimately doomed Ian Smith’s regime through its links to South Africa, making it vulnerable to the supposed betrayal of the latter government, Rhodesianism’s internationalist aspect would prove to have a lasting impact in the United States specifically – even if such an impact was too late for the Reagan Administration, elected as the vanguard of that conservative resurgence to replace South Africa as Rhodesia’s foreign benefactor. The irony is that the Bundys ultimately suffered no punishment for their armed rebellion against the United States government and their destruction of Native artifacts. The case against Cliven was dismissed in 2018, and Ammon was found not guilty in his own trial, only days before the 2016 election. This seeming victory of American Rhodesianism was heralded by the election’s winner, Donald Trump, whose own political rise was fueled by African pseudohistory, the Birther claim that Barack Obama was actually a Muslim born in Kenya. Indeed, Birtherism – relying on Obama having been born in the former Swahili Coast region of Kenya, and embracing Islam during the time he lived with his mother in Indonesia from 1967-71 – can be seen as a sort of conspiratorial reflection of the Indian Ocean Creole ideology discussed in chapter one. On the other hand, in a 2019 article defending the 1619 Project which has drawn the ire of President Trump and his allies, historian Ibram X. Kendi directly sited Ivan Van Sertima’s They Came Before Columbus.

On the surface, what does this have to do with the legends surrounding Great Zimbabwe? Perhaps very little directly. It is worth remembering the warning from the introduction, that this

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is not a dissertation on the history of Great Zimbabwe per se. To paraphrase from the introduction, this dissertation is a study of imperial political thought, and how mythic history and its cousin, conspiracy theory, work as political language, specifically in the settler colonial context. As demonstrated in the previous five chapters, the creation of a mythic history of Great Zimbabwe as an outpost of white settlement in southern Africa was both a result of, and fed into, the development of actual white settler societies in the subcontinent. The durability of the legend across different colonial regimes spanning centuries shows both the usefulness and adaptability of the legend. The Rhodesian regime was more than just mythic history, as were the Afrikaners of the Boer republics, the British of Cape Colony, the Americans as they crossed the Appalachian Mountain Proclamation Line. Yet mythic history underpinned all of those settler projects. Claims about Ophir or Mound Builders were the most visible aspects of said mythic history – yet perhaps less insidious than the sort of mythic history that in the United States lets memory of the pre-1607 past and the cultures that thrived there lie almost completely forgotten. Or the sort of mythic history that allowed the victorious Shona-dominated ZANU forces to eliminate the Ndebele history of resistance, along with the lives of thousands of Ndebele civilians.

Yet the strain of mythic history contained within the alt-history of megaliths and monuments and lost civilizations and white tribes served as a pivot between the earliest eras of imperial exploration and the settler regimes that followed. If the settlers could see the ‘evidence’ in the very landscape of their new home that their ancestors – symbolic or otherwise – had been there before, had pre-emptively terraformed their future home and taught the natives to worship outsiders as gods, it would be all the easier to transition to a settler state with no natives at all. And in a way, this is why this dissertation is important, and ends with an overview of just how
much contemporary American politics draws from the Rhodesian experience. Even at the height of UDI, Ian Smith never dreamed of eliminating the native majority of Rhodesia, even as he used the mythic history of Great Zimbabwe to attempt to destroy their history. In the United States at the same time, however, it had become almost impossible to remember that a ‘native majority’ meant anything beyond the settlers trying to restrict any new migrants from arriving – as Rhodesia itself attempted in the 1940s.23

Rhodesia and its mythic history centered around appropriating native monuments may have failed. But the settler project of mythic history succeeded in the United States, the sole world superpower, to the degree that native monuments are barely even known – because the remnants of the native majority have been so thoroughly expunged themselves. If for no other reason, this demonstrates why the colonialist project of mythic history remains important to study; and this dissertation hopefully demonstrates why Great Zimbabwe is such a central key to understanding that aspect of mythic history.

23 Indeed, by the 1950s, nativist politicians in the United States were suggesting that settler colonies in Africa were a more suitable alternative for European refugees from World War II and its aftermath than their traditional path to North America. See Horne, *White Supremacy Confronted*, 381-418.
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