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Abstract: The advancement of heritage into a culmination of thought processes and methodological approaches that we have to date speaks volumes. To a larger extent, the development of heritage has been influenced by the highly appropriated archaeological discipline, which had a tendency of considering the past as an ‘alien’ as opposed to an ‘inheritance’. It is therefore probably orderly by now that we have varying philosophies on what must be valued as heritage. We should debate and write freely on whether we are balanced (do we all have a voice) on our portrayal of heritage. The last few decades have seen pragmatic discussions on the nature of heritage as a geographically and conceptually global phenomenon. Heritage has therefore been defined differently and continually re-defined, structured and re-structured, conceptualized and re-conceptualized. This resulted in an array of notions that influence heritage research, preservation, consumption and presentation.

Keywords: Heritage, archaeology, heritage consumption, heritage presentation, appropriated heritage.

Decoding Heritage

this paper takes interest in how heritage has been defined, structured and conceptualized over time, resulting in an array of notions that influence its research, preservation, consumption and presentation. It defines the heritage as a concept that has evolved over time, and that has seen variation in values attached to it. The terminology associated with heritage changed as the nature and heritage scope broadened with inclusion of other role players. Several factors contributed to the ideology and conceptualization of heritage, but this paper largely focuses on how development of the archaeology discipline shaped the heritage discourse.

The varying notions and perceptions about heritage can be traced through key characteristic periods in its development. These influenced the values associated with heritage, firstly as a property, then as a token of ancestry that could be used to claim the history and attachments to land and places of significance. It then became a token of power which could be used to acquire and colonize other nations – on the basis of them not having legal right to what exists on their land. There was need for institutionalization to make sure that heritage remains under control by few external role players, who decided what was significant and worthy of protection and presentation.

From this time onwards, pressure mounted on the inclusion of other role players, and that heritage must be benefitted by all – if at all it was not generated or created by all. Also, there was need for consideration of heritage as nature, as a tangible and intangible phenomenon, and as art, religion, engineering, technology etc. Furthermore, the general notion was an appreciation of the geographically universal value of heritage as an instrument that could heal wounds. As an example, Afro-Americans, Afro-Brazilians and Jewish heritage in Britain (Wyatt-Brown, 2001; Kushner, 2012) are believed to have played a major role in the creation of heritage in the diaspora, and recognizing their input would allow heritage to bandage and heal the past wrongdoings. This shows that these other heritage typologies gained greater recognition at an international level owing to the influence of other regions.

There is nothing wrong with re-valuating and re-writing the values attributed to heritage so that we can have a more balanced portrayal of the past. However, one should be quick to note that this would have

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not been possible without a rebirth of the archaeology discipline, with its highly opinionated attitude towards knowledge about the past. The evolution of archaeology itself facilitated the variation in the notions about heritage and its protection. It is therefore not surprising that as early as AD 1607-1871, the Western world defines archaeology as a form of ancient history that systematically studies antiquities (Whewell, 1859). It was defined as a subject with interest in very old things such that it was orderly to compare it to geology (Wilson, 1853). It was also generally about primitive cultures (Tylor, 1871) that nobody has a right to unless with proof of legal association and academic qualification – demonstrating that they were an archaeologist. This had implications to heritage definition and access, especially in colonies.

As an example, in southern Africa, Botswana's earliest piece of legislation in 1911 (Bushman Relics and Ancient Ruins Protection (Bechuanaland Protectorate) Proclamation No. 40 of 1911) largely protected Bushman (Basarwa/San) relics and ancient ruins. In 1934, another Proclamation protected antiquities within the country, and was explicit in their definition – “any movable monument and any relic or any object of historical, archaeological and scientific value” (Ndobochani, 2016). According to the *Historical Thesaurus* of the *Oxford English Dictionary*,¹ antique relates to movable or immovable, very ancient material, often associated with Rome and Greece, and having positive stories to tell. Reference to what was considered significant at that time became important, no wonder heritage definition and classification of this period often used spatiality as reference for temporality.

Another thing to note is that the protection of structures is probably timely since this is the period that saw a quest for monumental structures that evidenced preexistence of superior cultures which would have prevailed before local populations. So this would have legitimized a disregard for consulting local populations, and consideration of the values

they attached to these seemingly ancient materials. So it is becoming evident that at this stage, the development of archaeology in the western world had impact on the incremental development of heritage, both as a physical and conceptual framework.

In most parts of the world, the conception of both archaeology and heritage took a positive turn from the early 20th century with recognition of the diversity and complexity that characterize the past. Evidence-based decisions (informed by scientific research) needed to be paramount in the processes for safeguarding the past for future generations. Most importantly, from the 1980s, there was unison on the need for pluralism in the theorization (Schiffer, 1988; Hodder, 1991; Wylie, 1993; Yoffee, 1993; Chippindale, 1993), formulation of appropriate methodologies (Fagan, 2005; Wobst, 1983), as well as research and consumption of the past in a manner palatable to all (Smith and Wobst, 2004; Wobst, 2004; Watkins and Ferguson, 2005).

The advancement of heritage

In terms of definition, it is clear that delineations and classifications attributed to heritage over the last few centuries contributed to its skewed development. For starters, the *Historical Thesaurus*, albeit that it is an English language source, was of great benefit in tracing how heritage has been defined over time. There are characteristic periods through which the development of heritage can be assessed. As early as AD 1225, the *Historical Thesaurus* shows that heritage was a matter of interest, and it defines it as property or land which may be inherited provided there was prove of association.

Therefore, from AD 1225-1874 and beyond, notwithstanding that there could have been other aspects pertaining to heritage, heritage was clearly becoming important. In the Western world, realization that more interest was on land and structural remains prompted the need for claims to inheritance needed to be backed by evidence for direct relationship to ancestry. Land as an example, was heritage, and was a very valuable resource – its ownership, control of

¹ <<https://www.oed.com/thesaurus>>.

the immediate and extended landscapes. It is not surprising that, according to Brands:

During the 1890s, Americans agonized over what the twentieth century about to begin held for their country. To many of them, America's finest hours were behind it. The continent was filling up and the vast open spaces that had characterized American life were quickly disappearing. [...] The distinctive traits that made Americans what they were – depended on the ready availability of free land. With the disappearance of this free land, an epoch of American history was ending (Brands, 2002: 1-2).

Also apparent during this period, besides issues of land and property, is the appropriation of heritage, the religion was given preference in the definition of heritage – e.g. the Israelites could have more rights to certain types of heritage than others as structures bearing their history was protected. This shows that during the period AD 1225-1874, individuals, communities and societies with demonstrable succession lineage and transmission had more rights than others. From 1874 onwards, heritage was broadened to include land, property, structures of religious significance, nature such as the sea and beautiful beaches, and anything worthy of being a heritage.

A comparative to the advancement of the archaeology discipline in the Western world during the period AD 1225-1874 (and up to 1940s) is necessary. At this stage, archaeology is this fantastic subject that studies very old things, in a systematic way (more or less the way the geologists would do), by a trained person called archaeologist. By the 1840s, this study of antiquities was already having a philosophy comparable to theoretical underpinnings of other scientific disciplines such as geology (Wilson, 1863). Archaeology was clearly dealing with things not recorded in written texts. The antiquities were explained and civilizations were observable (Lubbock, 1870) across nations. However, at this stage these civilizations would have nothing to do with the history of some of the local nations as a greater deal of the noteworthy civilization (as per definitions of ar-

chaeology and heritage) fell in the category of very old and distant past. This period therefore saw the past classified into antiquities, into archaic material, into monumental structures, and all of these would be considered to have very little ancestral connections to most of the nations they were found at. It is not surprising that during this same period, the heritage was a preserve for the few who could explain it or own it, the latter requiring demonstrable evidence of descent that would be backed by legal documents.

From the 1890s-1950s, there is a deliberate effort towards the protection of heritage and broadening its scope to recognize culture as a heritage (Mårdh, 2017). The scope of heritage was not only broadened, the heritage or the past needed to be extensively studied and protected for future research. This is achieved through institutionalization and nationalization of the heritage affairs (Chapman, 1989; Kalman and Létourneau, 2020). Also, there is appreciation of the diversity in heritage (Miller, 2005), and that stakeholders include not only those with legal documents to property or structures, but also those with the right to the land on which these properties were sitting. Other stakeholders included the media (Ferre, 1988). Heritage is institutionalized and mainstreamed in the education system from the 1950s onwards, although at this stage the civilizations in some parts of the world such as Africa are still considered of foreign origin.

During the period 1890s-1950s, and a little beyond that, the archaeology discipline was developing a lot faster, with a lot of classification, periodization and explanation of material culture – including structures as they were a very good example of complexity and civilization. The past was indeed intricate and required robust investigative measures to record and explain how things all began (Hall, 1905), till past societies reached the zenith of the complex socio-economic and socio-political manifestations that archaeologists had to disentangle. There was need for theorization and formulation of appropriate methods – specifically scientific methods. It is actually interesting how in 1933, Randall-MacIver is almost designing a birth certificate for the archaeology dis-

cipline – placing its birth date to 1850, and showing how the discipline was an equally competitive child to others such as anthropology, geology and science (Randall-MacIver, 1933).

The discipline, according to Lewis Binford, could very well explain the cultural similarities and variations, and as such had a great contribution to anthropology (Binford, 1962). Michael Schiffer also thought that archaeology qualified to be conferred a behavioral science discipline (Schiffer, 1975), as it studies people’s behavior through material culture. The 1950s-1970s archaeology emphasized that past societies were highly structured with systematic world views evidenced by the robust architecture and ritualistic monuments. This notion did not only alienate other types of material culture, it also shaped research agendas, leading to skewed interpretations and conclusions about the past.

From the 1980s, archaeology is theorized again and refined methodological approaches proposed (Hodder, 1985), to recognize the voices conveyed by material culture, and the societal values that can be learnt from past civilizations. The complexity of past cultures needed to be interpreted and the synergy between the social, political and economic systems could be understood through drawing parallels with the present. This has, for example, seen current trends in the African archaeological discourse calling for re-examination and evaluation of the past, which has been devoid of value (Chirikure and Pikirayi, 2008). According to them, “The priority at Great Zimbabwe is to give more value to the existing data and finds. Great Zimbabwe’s archaeology is currently elite archaeology; more work needs to be done on the commoner areas that formed part of the settlement” (Chirikure and Pikirayi, 2008: 991). The quest for understanding the meaning behind material culture incidentally paved way for pluralism in interpretation of the past. This was most beneficial to the advancement of heritage, for example, the European and American heritage preservation protocols changed from the 1970s onwards (Tomlan, 2015). The work of Nagaoka (2014) shows that the 1970s onwards often meant heritage conservation interventions needed to

reconsider the context of heritage –especially the values ascribed by local populations.

In light of these developments, from the late 20th century, heritage philosophies sought to redefine issues, and sought to demonstrate that the notion of unison could facilitate a harmonized conceptualization of heritage (Kibria, 1996). Also, universality paved way for appreciation that we all have a heritage, varied meanings and significance as it may be, and we can celebrate the varying significances at local and international levels. Globalization was facilitated by the institutionalization of heritage matters, with Museums and other relevant authorities now regulating the collection and management of heritage, and research institutions collect information relating to the heritage.

Notwithstanding these, there was concern that peculiarity in heritage must be promoted as too much generalization often leads to missing the uniqueness that make up the cosmopolitan nature of heritage. To achieve this, heritage needs to be continually redefined, and the scope of the media through which it is manifested constantly broadened. Besides the basic tangible natural and cultural heritage, the intangible heritage such as religion, art, folklore, languages and writing must be considered (Lee, 1999). Consideration of the skills-base such as technological innovations (Rieger, 2003) and engineering (Miller, 2005) as heritage would also facilitate recognition of the diverse histories and other role players in the development of past civilizations. Rycroft (1991) is of the view that music is an important aspect that can better illustrate the uniqueness of heritage.

Another critical aspect to the advancement of heritage as a concept is the education and the inter-generational consumption and transfer of knowledge about the past. However, it is necessary to guard against the heritage teachings that are not at par with the progressive philosophies of both heritage and archaeology. King (2014) notes the need for education systems that are multicultural, and open doors to possibilities of rewriting historical narratives as these are often used to perpetuate control over some cultures. Besides the education content, Smith (1957) is of the

view that a portrayal of African heritage must guard against indiscriminate apportioning of uniformity and uniqueness, as well as an inverted approach to the study of the African cultures. Equally important is the need to re-write histories where the science, in this case archaeology, has tended to leave out the voices of makers of the very past or heritage under study (Fontein, 2006). It is argued (Pikirayi, 2009) that some of these challenges may not be overcome unless if the history associated with the material culture is accorded equal significance.

In a review of the Russian heritage from the period 1890-1930s, Lyssakov (1998) demonstrates how re-thinking, reinterpretation and recognizing other typologies of heritage is a necessary approach in the consumption and management of heritage. In Brazil, the notion of heritage post 1890 was that there must be consideration of other role players in the creation of heritage. In a review of Matory's work on Black Atlantic Religion, Hayes (2008) emphasizes the role of Africans in the creation of Brazilian heritage.² Kushner (2012) calls for recognition of the role played by the Jewish in Britain, and calls for preservation of their heritage. Since most nations' histories were built with input from others, it can only be appropriate that they are credited in the celebrations of such achievements. Brands (2002) for example shows that the American history in this period was pretty much an effort of many – the powerful at the tip of the pyramid and the powerless providing much needed input at the base. As such, American cities largely “drew their denizens from all races, regions, and cultures; yet the very diversity that was one of the glories of Houston in the 1990s and New York in the 1890s was also the dynamite that threatened to blow each city apart” (Brands, 2002: 2).

Because most regions have ancestry that stretches back in time, disregarding the significance of some religions deprives the owners the right to heritage. It is therefore orderly that most of the work on the advancement of the heritage concept calls for recognition of the diverse religions and the role of others in

the creation of heritage (Teriba, 2017). The impact of slavery must not only be characterized by annual commemorations, but as noted by Wyatt-Brown (2001) must include recognition of the role played by slaves in the creation of heritage at recipient nations. It is clear that the diversity of heritage, and as may be witnessed in the diaspora, bears testimony to the geographic spread of heritage. Now, the challenge with enforcing an inclusive heritage does not always mean the matter is given less attention academically, professionally and at societal level. The lack of legislation or presence of inadequate legislation, and poor implementation strategies often compromise realization of the values that may typify the advancement of any discipline.

Legislative framework

What is legislation? According to the *Historical Thesaurus*, in the early 15th century, the word legislator predominantly had a lot to do with the mental capacity and philosophy of those who studied Chinese history and law in general. Law here defined as “the body of rules, whether proceeding from formal enactment or from custom, which a particular state or community recognizes as binding”. So legislation then becomes the action and process of giving laws or enacting them, and making sure that an operational system is in place to serve and protect the interests of societies and governments.

The legislation, by nature, perpetuates appropriation by giving certain sections of the society, or certain institutions and nations more right over the other –it allows the upper hand to bring others and things under control, and to prohibit certain things or actions. It is therefore not surprising, as noted by *World Tomorrow* in 1922 that “you would hardly expect an agricultural state to be greatly interested in legislation on behalf of the worker”.³ In 1828, Caroline Fry had likened the practice of making laws and enacting them to a process where an inspired historian tells his story of the wars and legislation of other

² See also Hayes (2009).

³ *World Tomorrow* (1922, July 214/1).

ages. Clearly, there is nothing wrong with the telling nor formulation of legislation, the issue is the content of the story, and the fact that it is often told by one player.

The good thing though is that legislation, as noted by Samuel Johnson in 1775, often passes its limit, and may at this stage require some revision. Legislation ought to be progressive, and according to Allen (2013), it must develop through time to better its definitions, widen its scope, and improve its implementation and operations. When it comes to matters such as heritage, which are to a larger extent affected by societal perceptions and inclinations, deciding what is worthy of protection becomes highly opinionated, and serving the aspirations of a few in control. As such, any piece of legislation that would have been formulated anytime from AD 1225 onwards regarding heritage and enquiries into the past, would have followed in the footsteps of the reigning philosophies.

Legislation protects issues that matter most to society. Earlier on, the discussion on the advancement of heritage shows that the period AD 1225-1874 witnessed a definition of heritage that was categorically intending to exclude the common or universal ownership and access to heritage. Those in control needed to prevent others from interfering with the past, making sure that this is indeed achieved, through institutionalization of heritage matters. A piece of legislation may probably never be ‘adequate’ or ‘just’, unless if it is deliberately aligned to the aspirations of the affected or beneficiaries. In 1923, the *Journal of Comparative Legislation and International Law* (1923) noted for example that South Africa had grave problems that required a careful review of the country’s legislation. Although this was not necessarily focused on heritage, careful review here is taken to imply that a revision for the sake of it would not necessarily solve issues at hand.

While a lot of issues relating to appropriation of the past could be attributed to the issues discussed under the advancement of heritage above, there are also very strong opinions that the problem faced by most nations to date stems from colonialism. By definition, a colony is: “A settlement in a new country; a

body of people who settle in a new locality, forming a community subject to or connected with their parent state; the community so formed, consisting of the original settlers and their descendants and successors, as long as the connection with the parent state is kept up”.⁴

Metaphorically, in light of this, yes, children would have had to imitate sentiments of their parents, especially so where the good intentions of the parents were not always to see the children growing, but for them to remain children. This would be partly due to the significance for a geographical spread/expansion, and the resources therein, in empire and super-power establishment. As shown above, the past was used to ascertain existence, existence that predated occupations by most nations. Also, this definition of colony could have easily normalized and continued a system that prejudiced and appropriated notions and values about the past. A continued interest in matters such as heritage, or resources such as minerals, would in a way result in endless descendants, successors and connections which may never be broken.

So all the efforts –legislation, the scientific publications, attitudes, notions etc.– that resulted from the exertion of preexistence by the parent states, will need to be rethought or broadened in scope to include the voices of other role players. It will take time, considering that most colonies were declared independent pretty much post 1960s, and that, as per the definition of colony, it is orderly for the interests of the parent states to be more or less generational. Most of the colonies are still teething and learning to walk as they also struggle to meet the global standard and definition of ‘developed’ status. Also, for most of them, rightly so, matters pertaining to heritage may not be of immediate concern. Furthermore, for those who may have started the race, it will take time to reach the desired destination as even the nations themselves are bound to have varying notions and values to heritage, let alone inclusion of such values in legislation. In light of the above, it is not surprising that even up to date, there are still concerns that

⁴ <<https://www.oed.com/view/th/class/158468>>.

the research, conservation and consumption of past is not decolonized – colonies have been given their independence, but the heritage is still colonized, it needs to be decolonized. The thought processes and methodological approaches to investigating and safeguarding the past in former colonies are still largely based on notions of the parent states, and sometimes still nurturing their aspirations. The greatest challenge for the former colonies was to understand and apply this legacy. Not only that, while still having this mammoth task, there is now a need for the former colonies to tell their own stories – in a way that recognizes the wealth of heritage they host.

Pluralism in Heritage

The extensive literature on the quest for knowledge about the past shows that the parallel thought processes were through time concerned about the science – the past as a scientific concept needing vigilant investigation and protection by those with authority and knowledge about it. As such, the philosophy or viewpoints and ideologies on how everything came into being, was science orientated, and there was need for physical evidence, material culture demonstrating the temporal and geographic spread. Unavoidably, the methodological approaches, which are now operationalizing the ideology and setting standards and procedures of how to go about it, were naturally scientific. So when a consensus is reached on the need to open up interpretation of the past to several ideologies, and accommodate the resultant aspirations in the consumption of this past, there are a few issues to note. If one was to include aspirations of local populations, what sort of issues would need a redress? Clearly, there is need for more research that can categorically demonstrate the nature and magnitude of aspirations of local populations. Do they even value heritage, and if they do, what is it that makes heritage to them, how do they apportion values to heritage?

In 2007-2008, a study was conducted amongst three communities in Botswana, and a sample in-

cluded forty-five participants. The intention was to seek their opinion on why they should be engaged in the research and management of archaeological and heritage resources in general (see Ndobochani 2009 for details). Their views differed (Fig. 1), with a larger percentage seeking to be engaged because they have knowledge of heritage resources, and that they own some of them.

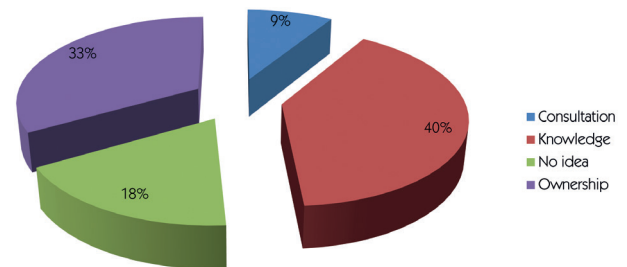


Figure 1: Reasons for community engagement in heritage research and management.

The study also showed that, besides the knowledge of heritage resources, certain values are attached to them. For example, of the 45 participants, a total of 33% of those who said they had knowledge of archaeological resources only attached the historical, socio-economic and spiritual values to them. So in cases such as this one, an archaeologist would attach scientific value to a resource and declare it a national monument, the local population will see it as heritage and attach spiritual value to it. The studies by Ndoro (2001) and Sully (2007) illustrate the diversity of issues to be considered in the definition, and assessment of values associated with heritage and its management.

The historical and recent historical resources on the other hand, had a diversity of values. The historical value was only placed on archaeological and historical resources, while the spiritual value was largely associated with recent historical resources. At the end of the day, heritage will have multiple values, some of which are embedded, and some of which are ascribed, and the nature as well as the extent of these other values must be investigated, as exemplified in Figure 2.

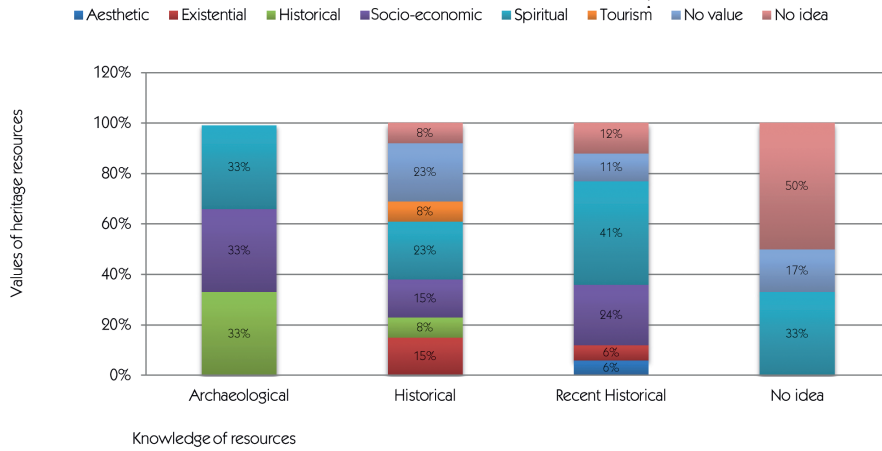


Figure 2: Variation in the community values attached archaeological, historical and recent historical resources

Although this exemplifies why local voices should be included in the definition, protection and research on heritage resources, there are varying perspectives on the aspect of community engagement. Chirikure *et al.* (2010) are rather blunt on the matter of pluralism in heritage management as they think it is an overly ambitious notion that might do more harm than good to the intended beneficiaries. The aspirations and values placed on heritage by other role players may, according to them, never see the light of day even if they are researched on, unless they are included in governmental decision-making processes.

Concluding remarks

It is clear from the above that the conception of heritage as early as AD 1225 has played a role in its definition and protection at localized and international level. Certain things were heritage, while others were not, and demonstrable proof of ancestry was critical –and this is what often disadvantaged the right of local populations to the heritage in their land. An interest in past civilizations from the 1890s, saw a boom in the protection of monumental structures. As an example, Lowenthal (2005) demonstrates that the American heritage of the 1890s and beyond focused on monumental structures, and that this trend was also observable in Europe. Civilizations are recognized as evidence of complexity, and a trademark

for pre-historic existence of superpowers in their immediate territories and beyond. For example, in the early 20th century, Hall (1905) thinks the architectural complexity of Great Zimbabwe makes a timeless heritage worthy of some foreign intellect. This is an example of heritage that has generated scholarly debates in both the archaeology and heritage disciplines –conceptually and geographically global debates indeed. The work of (Chirikure and

Pikirayi, 2008) offers an informative review of how biases towards the past, coupled with the abuse of power (colonial, political and academic) can lead to disproportionate and institutionalized polarization of its presentation and consumption. It is time to have new perspectives regarding the science behind material culture, and the other values that may be attached to it (Chirikure and Pikirayi, 2008; Chirikure, 2019).

The discussions in this paper have shown that tendency of the archaeology discipline to alienate knowledge and research into the past from non-archaeologists contributed to a highly prejudiced consumption of heritage. The values attached to heritage are therefore unavoidably in no way close to being balanced. There is indeed a long way to go. Take for example issues of environmental management, pre-historic food production systems such as agriculture and pastoralism; these are not given much attention as key matters of heritage concern. It is evident from the literature on herding in Africa that as early as AD 1488 when the Europeans reached southern Africa, the local population had sheep, goats and cattle. The knowledge of herding was there, but why is pastoralism only a matter of debate amongst very few scholars –maybe it is time for Africa and other children of the parent states to embrace agriculture and pastoralism as a matter of heritage concern to be reckoned with.

The above challenges are compounded by the fact that there is competition of resources when it comes to addressing matters of concern to everyday

needs of the society. Heritage must categorically demonstrate its worth, and compete for funding with other amenities such as politics, health, food and education. However, the prioritization of social amenities over heritage, must not be misconstrued to mean heritage is not significant to local populations.

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