

Memories and Contestations of The Scramble For Zimbabwe: Chivi (Mashonaland), c.1870-1892

Gerald Chikozho Mazarire

To be published in F. Kolapo (ed.) *Essays in Honour of Kanya Forstner* (July 2006)

This chapter discusses the events unfolding in Chivi in southern Zimbabwe on the eve of colonisation as they are remembered by the local people. This is placed in the wider context of Chivi's position as a contested terrain fought over between the British and the Transvaal Boers. Emphasis is placed on the implications of this conflict on the validity of the Rudd Concession that was used by the British South Africa Company to occupy what eventually became Zimbabwe. Because Chivi lay also on the route used by the British occupying force, the Pioneer Column, to enter Mashonaland, much of the memories of this episode and the Anglo-Boer conflict are still embodied in its landscape in the form of roads, graves and forts. It is possible to reconstruct the history of colonial conquest and all its contradictions and ambiguities by analysing the peculiarities written in these local landscapes and oral traditions decades after the Scramble with new insights on the subject.¹

Introduction

From the 18th century onwards the South has been the major route used to penetrate the Zimbabwean plateau. It is important to highlight the significance of the area between the Runde and Tugwi rivers, modern Chivi district, in south-central Zimbabwe as a place on this historic route through which most contacts between the plateau and the south have been made. Traversing its rugged landscape and the maze of dusty roads in a southwesterly direction just close by 'Mafuta'² and Chikofa townships, the most spectacular feature noticeable on its commanding landscape is the Pioneer Road or *mugwagwa waMapasure*: literally Mapasure's Road. The road itself is littered with graves of members of the occupying force known as the Pioneer Column which entered the territory in

African Agency and European Colonialism

1890. The local people have never really associated with these graves but the Pioneer Road has become a common feature of the landscape and it occurs in their everyday nomenclature and colloquial references. A few kilometres further down, as if in historical continuity and running parallel to the Pioneer Road, is the Masvingo-Beitbridge road, a major communication link with South Africa that had been Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith's sanctions-busting lifeline during UDI (Unilateral Declaration of Independence).

These two roads, as major features of the landscape tell a story in morphogenetics which is unique in two ways. First, unlike other modern districts in Zimbabwe, Chivi as it is known today shows little change, in spatial terms, from what it was in the 1890s despite the various changes brought elsewhere by colonial land policies. Secondly, the area is still inhabited by the descendants of the people who immigrated there about 150 years back; although they are not in any way a homogenous group. In ethnic terms, it is still organised according to the two main pre-colonial chieftainships of the Chivi-*Mhari* and the Nemavuzhe-*Govera* people and their sub-headmanships who continue to constitute an integral part of the local government. This has meant that there is a much strong degree of continuity in memorializing this area over a period in which so much has happened, the most spectacular of which was the drama of colonial occupation.

Briefly, the land that is modern Zimbabwe was annexed in 1890 by Britain through a chartered company the British South Africa Company (BSAC) with the Cape Premier Cecil Rhodes at its helm. The document that was used to effect this occupation was the Rudd Concession obtained from Lobengula, king of the Matabele conveniently presumed to rule over Mashonaland as well. The BSAC itself was a conglomeration of British interests forced to amalgamate due to competition between British companies. The amalgamation effectively brought treaties negotiated by Charles Rudd and others under a royal charter. Lobengula granted all concessions to these companies giving the impression that he was the overall ruler of Matabeleland and Mashonaland; an overstatement. This overstatement was the major weakness over which British claims lay and over which they were contested locally. The two main contestants with Britain in Mashonaland were the Portuguese in the east and the Boers from the south. Both were cowed into submission by British bullying and filibustering, a situation highly celebrated in Pioneer literature.

The Portuguese lost eastern Mashonaland due to poor planning and lack of financial support for their 'man on the spot' Jose Paiva de Andrada, and the Boers lost southern Mashonaland because of divisions amongst themselves caused by Rhodes' influence in South African politics, particularly the multi-racial Afrikaner Bond which worked against the essentialist and Boer-centred initiative led by Louis Adendorff to trek into Mashonaland. In both instances the British Imperial Government threatened military action in support of the BSAC,

a fact that puts paid to all assertions that the British were reluctant imperialists.³ A thorough analysis of the conflict over Manicaland in the east involving the BSAC and the Portuguese has been done by David Beach and needs not be repeated here.⁴ This chapter is a local account of the events unfolding in the south as they are remembered in Chivi. It builds on the pioneering work of Beach and others.⁵

The chapter will argue that Chivi offers a telling case in which local conflicts could have changed the tempo of the scramble in a completely different way. It brings to the spotlight the value of the pieces of paper better known as concessions that were used to bring most African countries under colonial rule. It argues that if it is accepted that the Berlin Conference sought to bring order to the chaos [of the European Scramble,] there is no better point to start analysing the Scramble itself than from the politics of this chaos, which is often at the local level. The sincerity of the Rudd Concession and the legitimacy of Cecil Rhodes were sharply contested in Chivi more than anywhere else in Mashonaland, bringing the BSAC on the brink of war with the Transvaal Boers in 1891. The reasons war was avoided demonstrate the powers at play in the international diplomacy of the Scramble for Africa.

The Road to the North

There were several parties interested in the territory that eventually became Zimbabwe. From the east the Portuguese had considered it their traditional territory owing to years of interaction with rulers of the Zimbabwean plateau stretching back to the 15th Century. It was this complacent assumption that partly disadvantaged them when the more robust rival forces came on the scene. South of the Limpopo however, Anglo-Boer rivalry had given rise to many conventions whose bargaining centred around strategic access to the Indian Ocean and by extension to the wider world including the road to the north of the Limpopo, which was by and large, the road to the interior. Ultimately these agreements failed as the Anglo-Boer Wars of 1891 and 1899 testify, but by the 1880s, as the search for a second rand intensified, various parties ventured across the Limpopo in search for treaties and mining concessions with local rulers. The Boers were the first to conclude treaties of friendship with Lobengula who was considered to be the most powerful ruler north of the Limpopo. However they were eventually surpassed by Rhodes' team and this culminated in the Rudd Concession which granted the BSAC sovereignty rights over the territory of Lobengula and became the instrument which the BSAC used to effect the colonial occupation of Zimbabwe.

The Rudd Concession was self-serving in many ways and many of its grey areas come out clear in the contestation it faced within the British camp itself and from outside it. From the work of S. B. Stevenson, it is clear that Rhodes was

not the only British representative in the search for concessions from Lobengula nor was he even the richest, and that from the middle of 1888, the British government was actively but secretly supporting London companies in the competition for Matabeleland. One such company was Lord Gifford and George Cawston's Bechuanaland Exploration and Exploring Companies which had the much better backing of London financiers and through its agent E. A. Maund had been able to secure a ratified concession from Lobengula that superseded the Rudd Concession which was already being repudiated by the Matabele king. Attempts by Rhodes and the Cape government to gain a Royal Charter had been turned down by the British Imperial government and these were the grounds on which the amalgamation of British Concessionaire companies into the BSAC with Rhodes as managing director was mooted; to serve British Imperial interests as a single entity.⁶

The Boers of the Transvaal Republic had a longer history of interaction with the people north of the Limpopo than the British. A Boer hunters' community had emerged in the Zoutpansberg since the late 18th century and these often crossed the Limpopo every winter in pursuit of game as far north in the highveld as the Save river and had constructed routes as far as the tsetse-fly could allow. Their most well known route is the 'Old Hunters' Road' entering Matabeleland via Botswana.⁷ Although some members of this expanding hunters' community had come to dwell in the interior, their relations with indigenous peoples was confined to trade in guns, a trade which subsequently gave rise to a gun culture in the interior evident in the increase in incidence and fatality of locals wars.⁸ In Mashonaland, these hunters had worked through the Venda people who penetrated the interior not only to trade but also to use their skills as *swart skuts* or 'black shots' to interfere in local Shona politics as mercenary soldiers. A number of oral traditions abound on the use of Venda guns and mercenaries in conspiracies within Chivi politics for instance in the Masunda-Makonese war of 1866.⁹ Indeed vivid memories of these guns and their names continue to exist in the recollections of the local people.¹⁰

Although the Boers were the first to obtain a treaty with Lobengula in the 1880s they were soon overshadowed by the British. The Boer President Paul Kruger who sought at all costs to avoid any further confrontation with the British, left the quest for the road to the north to be spearheaded by individual Boer parties without the support of the Transvaal government. Similarly in the context of the shortage of land in the Transvaal owing to the rise of Uitlanderism, many Boer parties began to *trek* north of the Limpopo in small parties in search of suitable land to settle in Mashonaland and Gazaland. The expedition to Gazaland was an ultimate failure due mainly to overwhelming evidence of Portuguese effective occupation there and due to disorganisation and the deaths within the party.

Mashonaland was known to Europeans south of the Limpopo as the land of the Banyai and there are constant references to this area as Banyailand in both

English and Afrikaner literature. It is however unclear where its borders began or ended although it is highly probable, judging from European accounts, that it was after crossing the Bubi river that Europeans came to talk of the Banyai. The people who lived here were not only on friendly terms with the Boers, they had also hosted a number of missionary expeditions from the middle of the 19th century, including those of the Dutch Reformed Church, the Paris Evangelical Society and the Swiss Mission Vaudoise.¹¹ Most Europeans had developed the impression that Chivi was the most important and powerful chief of the Banyai ahead of Matibi and Nyajena for instance and it was only with him that any meaningful deal could be struck.¹² This was also the impression of the Boer expedition to Mashonaland which arrived in Chivi sometime in July 1890 just before the Pioneer Column entered the territory. It was led by Louis Aderndoff who managed to obtain a concession from Chivasa a personality under chief Chivi and Musvovi of Nyajena.¹³ This concession ceded to Adendorff, Jan du Preez Field Cornet of Rhenosterpoort, de Meyer, Brummer and Klein Barend Vorster the land between the Zambezi and the Limpopo stretching 266 miles in width. This land was to be called the Republic of Banyailand and power was to be shared amongst the members of the group who immediately set out to organise an army of occupation.¹⁴

Remembering Mapasure: The Pioneer Column in Chivi

Africans in colonial Rhodesia had a way of remembering colonial personalities through the use of vernacular names associated with the activities, physical structure or in/abilities of the people concerned. Thus most native commissioners, agricultural demonstrators and police are remembered by their nicknames than by their actual names in local recollections of their activities. It comes, therefore, as no surprise that the people of Chivi have a local name for the person they associated with the coming of colonialism—*Mapasure*. Remembering the Pioneers is easy, not only because the Pioneer Road continues to act as mnemotope but also because of the abundance of forts that litter the road all the way from the Limpopo to as far north as Mt. Hampden near modern Harare. One such fort remains at Mhindamikova Pass on the Munaka mountain range in Chivi as a living testimony to the violence associated with the Scramble for this part of Mashonaland, a theme we shall later return to.¹⁵

It is interesting to still find people remembering the names they associated with the Pioneers a century later. Mapasure, a figure associated with the road has generated a lot of confusion ever since the 1960s when Rhodesian historians attempted to establish his identity. First impressions of this inquiry seemed to suggest that Mapasure was Cecil Rhodes, seen as the ‘man who opened the road by cutting trees to make it wide enough for wagons before Europeans reached Fort Victoria’ or one of the ‘two white men who came into the country from the south.’ (the other one being Makuwire).¹⁶ Further investigations seem to show that Mapasure was Frederick Courtney Selous who led the Pioneer Column into

Mashonaland. Mapasure is derived from the Shona word *kupasura* meaning to cut open bush. Makuwire is thought to be J. S. Brabant, the Chief Native Commissioner of Rhodesia up to 1895.¹⁷ Rhodes was never part of the Pioneer Column and of the few visits he made to Mashonaland, he never used the Pioneer Road. Indeed even the one occasion that he came to Nyanningwe, Chief Chivi's capital in 1892 he came through the north route via Fort Victoria.

Meanwhile several other people used the southern route and also cut trees, including workers of the Ministry of Roads and those who came to erect telephone lines later in the 20th century. Thus the name Mapasure could be a personification of colonial conquest with its masculine attributes of forcible penetration far much more than it is a reference to a person.¹⁸ At any rate, Rhodes and Selous are remembered as a metaphor of conquest and arbitrary use of brute force, and this memory is sustained by reference to relics such as roads and forts. Rhodes or Selous's physical identity seems not to matter in these recollections at all except to contextualise events in the absence of dates. This contrasts sharply with the international memorialisation of Rhodes and the Pioneers captured in monuments, memorials, books and public commemorations of empire building and the Commonwealth where his name and identity feature prominently clearly in an exaggerated manner.¹⁹

The first members of the Pioneer Column to arrive in Chivi did so on the 1st of August 1890 after crossing and laagering at the Runde river. By the 2nd, an advance party composed of Selous, a certain Lieutenant Nicholson, a Boer named Borius, John a Hottentot servant of Selous and a Bechuanaland mount scout reached some Chivi villages. A later account by Adrian Darter claims he was also part of this team although Selous does not mention him. They had gone ahead to examine the country and to find a line for a wagon road while the rest of the Pioneers remained camped at the Runde. This team approached a zone occupied by chief Chivi's brothers belonging to the Masunda house occupying the Chirogwe area. The team was able to trade and sleep over at Gwitima's who was settled on Zamamba hill. It was from the top of Zamamba that Selous was able to gain an excellent view of the land ahead which was the Mashonaland terrain familiar to him.²⁰ According to Adrian Darter's account, Selous held an *indaba* or meeting with Gwitima who they all thought was chief Chivi. Gwitima also claimed to be chief Chivi and head of the Banyai and defined his boundaries. He acknowledged vassalage to Lobengula and that he paid 'tax' to him. Selous explained to him that Rhodes had a concession from Lobengula to mine gold and that his 'expedition was a peaceful one, that a road would be maintained through his country without interfering with his people or their lands.'²¹ Selous left some of the members of the advance party with Gwitima as he went forward to scout the Pioneer Column's trail. Claims by Darter that Gwitima knew Selous well because he was a famous hunter are frivolous since Selous was not familiar with this territory until he had crossed the Tugwi river. He confessed;

Latitudes of Negotiations and Containment

As I stood alone on that little hill on the evening of the 3rd August 1890, and looked first forwards across the grassy downs, in the middle of which the thriving town of Fort Victoria now stands, and then backwards down the easy pass by which I had ascended the Tukwi [Tugwi River], a weight of responsibility, that had at times become almost unbearable, fell from my shoulders, and I breathed a deep sigh of relief. It must be remembered that the guidance of the expedition to Mashunaland had been entrusted entirely to me, and had any bungling taken place, causing delay, there is no telling what might have happened, for we were cutting a road round the flank of Matabililand, in the teeth of the remonstrances and very very unequivocal threats of Lobengula.²²

It is probably at this *indaba* that Selous became known locally as Mapasure, thereafter the name gradually became associated with the white man as coloniser and as the new authority. In August 1999 Muringani Matumbure or headman Chipindu and Jim Tawanda an elder of the Masunda house of Muzogwi described how they had grown to know *mugwagwa waMapasure* as a permanent feature of their landscape but still believed that Mapasure was a physical being who led a road gang.²³ A joint National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe and University of Zimbabwe History Department team led by Jesmael Mataga and the author were able to inspect the road where it is more visible from Munaka Range via Gwitima to Muzogwi and found it still very much traceable. The area is replete with relics of the occupation period and Pioneer graves. The last documented and wide covering inspection was done in 1966 by D.K. Parkinson and a team of African assistants and made useful detailed notes. At the time of this inspection, the road was visible as 'poorly defined track' or 'eroded track' and sometimes as a 'track' between Chomuruvati and the Tugwi river. It is clear from this survey and supporting documents that the column was in the district between the 1st and 10th of August 1890. They laagered at various points including Gwitima Chirambamuriwo's where the Selous's advance party had slept. Here the column presented him with a rifle and a blanket believing that he was Paramount Chief Chivi. The laager points are still visible so are graves with notes which lie right by the sides of the road of which at least ten have been identified, eight of them with names and epitaphs. Police patrols in the colonial period used to maintain these graves and in the late 1970s it was being suggested that beacons and cairns be erected on the road and laager spots in commemoration of the route which 'opened up Rhodesia.'²⁴ There is no doubt however that these relics and their maintenance, at least in Chivi, have kept the memory of the drama of colonial occupation in place. The other concept keeping this memory alive is Mr. Wilson's or 'Mafuta's' store which is located on the Pioneer Road and was erected in the early colonial days. Today a township has emerged around it by the same name.

Ironically the most conspicuous relic captures the most important conflict in the scramble for Mashonaland and lies at the Mhindamikova Pass on the Munaka Range where the Pioneers constructed a fort in anticipation of a Boer attack as news of Adendorff's occupying force began to filter through.

The Adendorff/Banyailand Trek and the Significance of Chivi in Scramble Politics

From the outset, it should be known that a northward bound Boer trek was seen as a real possibility in 1889 and this was a constant source of anxiety for the Pioneers especially as South African newspapers such as the *Transvaal Observer* were awash with this news. The most dreaded rumour doing the rounds was one concerning a possible co-operation between the Boers and the Portuguese in such a trek where the latter were alleged to have given 'some sort of charter' to Adendorff and Vorster to 'open up Mashonaland', form a 'Republic of the North' and thereafter hold a conference with the Portuguese on the partitioning of the rest of Mashonaland.²⁵

The British took this very seriously. Rhodes was quick to act at the news and in February 1890 he urged the British Imperial Government to use Swaziland as a bargain to guarantee that the Transvaal government would not interfere with the Pioneers' occupation of Mashonaland and this they did. At any rate President Kruger as has been indicated above had been cowed into submission and was compelled to cooperate. At a meeting held at the Blignaut's Pont on the Vaal River on 21st March 1890 between himself, Rhodes, Sir Henry Loch, the High Commissioner at the Cape and the President of the Orange Free State, Kruger vowed to take some action to stop the trek from the Transvaal side. This included confiscating the land of all those would be-trekkers, which was sufficient to scare away a number of them who had begun assembling.²⁶ Thus for the rest of 1890 news of the trek died down.

Armed with their concession later in 1891 Adendorff's party had sufficient grounds to challenge Rhodes, so they went back to the Transvaal and sent invitations to willing Boers from Transvaal, Orange Free State and the Cape to trek into and occupy Mashonaland. Arrangements were made for trekkers to assemble at the banks of the Limpopo river by May and move into Mashonaland on the 1st of June to proclaim their Republic.²⁷ British anxiety once again reached fever pitch because the Boers, to all intents and purposes, now possessed very strong and sufficient grounds to challenge the British Charter. As Stevenson puts it, the trekkers and many others in South Africa doubted the very idea on which the Charter was based: that Lobengula was the overall ruler of Mashonaland up to the Portuguese frontier. By implication this meant that 'the territory [Mashonaland] still belonged to Lobengula-until it belonged indisputably to the Company-and it was not open to the Boers to take it, since

Lobengula was “our ally”...²⁸ This was a cunning British trick which stood as long as the Boer threat existed, once it had subsided and Lobengula became the target for attack it fell through and as shall be seen, Chivi was once again the pawn in the battle to overthrow Lobengula.

The Adendorff Trek also needs to be understood in the context of its representation in literature concerned with the event. Most of it however is written by the Pioneers themselves and often in retrospect. The usual tendency in this literature is to play down the reality of the trek and caricature it as yet another ‘trek’ - meaning the usual Boer flight from the ‘burdens of civilisation’ like the Great Trek before it. The dominant image portrayed is one of the Pioneer as a man, ‘at ease in the bundu’ and in harmony with the ‘natives’. Pioneer antics with dangerous wild animals such as hippos and crocodiles as well as adaptation to a unique diet (sometimes of cockroaches) are overplayed and described with cinematographic acuity. The image of the Pioneer as a conqueror of rugged terrain is juxtaposed with the awe and mysticism accompanying his triumphant entry and welcome by the ‘natives’ as a liberator.²⁹ This is made to contrast sharply with the apparent disturbance of this peaceful scenario by the news of the Adendorff Trek, largely seen as Boer conniving; seeking to achieve by force what they had lost through diplomacy. In this sense there is a deliberate depiction of the trek as a Boer blackmailing project seeking to get Rhodes the ‘millionaire to pay’. Here the main objects of caricature are Klein Barend Vorster, and Adendorff himself. Vorster is depicted as a shrewd and ambitious junior member of the Transvaal *volksraad* and son of the powerful Zoutpansberg commandant and Adendorff a boring half-wit who fails to persuade a disinterested Rhodes to purchase the Adendorff concession.³⁰ In reality however the Adendorff concession was strong enough to create panic on the British side and they began to prepare themselves militarily. Apart from alerting the Bechuanaland Border Police for support and preparing for extra accommodation and staff at the Macloutsie Hospital as early as March. J.S. Brabant was discharged from the police and appointed as Civil representative at the Chivi capital Nyanningwe to keep an eye on Boers who might pay visits to the Chief.³¹ This is probably where he obtained the name ‘Makuwire’ from the local people which they still recalled in 1965. The other act of preparation was fortifying the route that was likely to be used by the Boers and one such fort was created in Chivi where it can still be seen.

Scramble Violence Remembered in Chivi Landscape: The Fortification of Munaka

For the people of Chivi, the fortification of Munaka and the coming of the Pioneer Column are often compressed together as [or telescoped into] a single event: where the Pioneers went up to Mhindamukova through which their road passed and mounted maxim guns on either side of the pass.³² In 1965 and 1966 people remembered the occasion fairly vividly, they remembered the type of

guns mounted as *zvigwagwagwa* and that on one occasion these guns were fired and that people were actually warned to keep away from the area south of the pass. This confusion of the passage of the Pioneer Column in 1890 and the fortification of Munaka in March and April 1891 still continues as seemed to be the case to the research team that went there as late as 1997.³³

In 1965 one of D.K. Parkinson's informants, Jim Nyika went as far as alleging that the fortification was actually done by the Pioneer Column which left some twenty European and twenty African soldiers manning the fort. There is not much evidence to support this from documents of the Pioneers and these appear in every way to be separate events. The more striking thing is that when asked what the fort was constructed for most people thought and still think that it was built for the service of the Ndebele who allegedly followed the column. Little or no mention is made of the Boers even in the earliest interviews conducted around the area.³⁴ As shall be shown below, this is probably because after settling with Chivi and the Boers, the Company was quick to launch a pre-emptive strike on the Ndebele using a raid on Chivi as an excuse.

The Boers are probably not remembered because they never undertook the dreaded trek after all. A combination of threats of punitive action by President Kruger on would-be trekkers in the Transvaal and British diplomatic and physical intimidation did the trick. Unfortunately we do not have much coverage of this event in Afrikaaner literature nor has the little that is available been accessible to the author. However the account of the BSA Company historian Hugh Marshal Hole has it that as the days of the trek drew closer, Kruger sent one of its leaders, du Preez, on a land commission elsewhere under oath not to leave the Transvaal. The trek was nonetheless to proceed under the leadership of an appointed Boer commandant one Ferreira, a daring personality who was as determined as ever to lead his men through to Mashonaland. By June nearly a thousand trekkers had assembled at the Limpopo, the bulk of them coming from the Waterberg district where a large number of farms had been acquired by an uitlander syndicate and some from other districts in the Free State. The trek was an escape route for many marginalized Boers including those without property in the Transvaal seeking to explore new opportunities in Mashonaland. By then, the British had already put their act together and fortified and mounted the various drifts on the Limpopo including making various other arrangements such as moving the Bechuanaland Border Police to Tuli, deploying an agent to spy on Boer movements in the Transvaal and despatching Dr. Leander Jameson to patrol the Limpopo zone. Thus by the 24th June when the Boers attempted to cross, their leader Ferreira was arrested and an offer was made to the rest of his team and some who had gone before them to settle in Mashonaland under BSAC law which most accepted. Eventually Ferreira himself agreed to this and was released and allowed to acquire land on which to settle in Mashonaland.³⁵ The fate of Adendorff himself is unknown but one cannot escape the over-dramatisation of this event in the triumphalist narratives of the BSAC such as

Hole's, but so far no Boer antithesis to this account has emerged. However even though the Boer threat had fizzled out by the next year, Rhodes personally felt compelled to visit chief Chivi and interrogate him over the alleged Adendorff Concession and if necessary administer corrective action. This was done fairly promptly in November 1891 and once the issue was settled Chivi became the excuse for launching the much awaited attack on Lobengula in 1893.

The Scramble Aftermath: Rhodes's Visit to Nyanningwe

In the process of preparing for a Boer attack the company was consolidating its grasp on Mashonaland. This was part of a larger policy in preparation to launch the final attack on Lobengula and seize Matabeleland. To this end, the company won over most of the Mashona chiefs who had been constantly fighting with the Ndebele and targeted those embroiled in long drawn out conflicts with Lobengula for 'liberation'. When the Boer threat died down the company was for the rest of 1892 engaged in provocative action designed to stretch the patience of Lobengula and entice him to strike. This would naturally create a pretext to attack him.³⁶ Chivi was an obvious choice for a number of reasons. First in 1879, the Ndebele had been dealt a heavy defeat by the Chivi people although they managed to capture their chief Mazorodze. His successor Madhlangove was to prove a more formidable force because of his use of sophisticated Venda guns in larger numbers. Another raid by the Ndebele in 1888 bore testimony to this. Secondly Chivi, to the company, was the source of the concession that led to the futile but much dreaded Boer trek and it was necessary to settle with him first before courting trouble with Lobengula. This was considered a serious political priority, so once again in 1891 the Company was back in Chivi. On 4 November 1891 a high-powered company delegation led by Rhodes himself, Selous, Jameson, J.S. Brabant, and D.C. de Waal went up Nyanningwe hill ostensibly to seek clarification with Paramount Chief Chivi Madhlangove. In reality the interview turned out to be an interrogation with leading questions simply designed to confirm that Chivi was a vassal and tributary of Lobengula and to consequently deligitimise the authority of Gwitima Chirambamuriwo to enter into public agreements on behalf of the Paramount chief Chivi. When this was obtained from the intimidated Madhlongove, Chirambamuriwo was sought promptly, flogged and relieved of the rifle that had been given to him as a gift when the Pioneer column passed.³⁷

Beach has submitted that Chirambamuriwo and Chivasa as anybody else from the Chivi clan were not far from the truth when they called themselves chief Chivi because it followed that they and others were part of the long line of succession to that title and therefore could conduct business on that strength.³⁸ In this sense company rage against Chirambamuriwo can only be understood in the context of the danger people like him and Chivasa could cause to company interests if they were left like that. It also is a pointer to the significance of Chivi in the scramble; that it was not Lobengula's territory and, hence, fell outside the

jurisdiction of the Rudd Concession and being so it was the weakest link. Chivi's display of independence from Lobengula was a direct challenge to the assumptions of the Rudd Concession and the company had to contain this. Once this was achieved by the end of 1891, the company could safely attack Lobengula as it did two years later. Chivi remained the company's skeleton in the closet not to be known to the wider world or brought to the Berlin Conference table. Chivi also remains the single most significant factor accounting for the timing of the 1893 Anglo-Ndebele war which effectively brought Zimbabwe under the rule of the BSAC. Nevertheless, throughout its entire life as the government of Southern Rhodesia the Company continued to be haunted by the paranoia of a *Boer conspiracy* something that was to carry on through the period of Responsible Government until the Rhodesian Front was able to foster a new form of Rhodesian nationalism in the 1960s based largely on the principle of 'whiteness'.

¹ This paper has benefited from the input of many people who I am grateful to, I wish to thank especially the University of Zimbabwe, History Department for allowing me to offer it as a seminar in preparation for this book. I am also indebted to Jesmael Mataga, my research partner who conducted some of the interviews used in this paper with me in a joint project with the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe who also provided a research vehicle. My students particularly Paul Hubbard were helpful in locating some of the rare Pioneer literature so were my research assistants in Chivi, Jeremiah Jangajanga Mabhanditi and Member Zivanai.

² 'Mafuta' refers to Mr. J. Wilson, a storekeeper at Chivi (corrupted to Chibi) from the Pioneer days whose store was at Chirogwe, right on the Pioneer Road as shall be shown below. See J.R. Duncan, 'The Story of Simba Jim' *Native Affairs Department Annual* (Hereinafter *NADA*) vol. 35, 1958, p.103. Most landscapes, characters and episodes of the colonial period are recalled in Chivi through local names which help to maintain a vivid picture of this period. In many instances however there are always contestations of the real identities of the issues and people concerned. For instance the name 'Mafuta' could also have referred to Mr. Ecksteen, see R. Howman, *NADA* 32, 1955, p.57.

³ For an incisive critique of British Imperial hypocrisy in this respect see S. B. Stevenson, 'The Colonial Office and the British South Africa Company: Imperial Collaboration in the Founding of Rhodesia and the Establishment of Colonial Rule,' Unpublished D.Phil Thesis, University of Rhodesia, 1978.

⁴ D.N. Beach, 'The Origins of Mocambique and Zimbabwe: Paiva de Andrada, the Companhia de Mocambique and African Diplomacy 1881-1891', Unpublished History Department Seminar Paper no. 89, University of Zimbabwe, 1992.

⁵ See also D.N. Beach, *War and Politics in Zimbabwe 1840-1900* (Gweru, Mambo Press, 1986), Chapter 2, H.M. Hole, *The Making of Rhodesia* (London,

Macmillan, 1926)

⁶ S.B. Stevenson, 'Rhodes, "More an Agent than an Initiator"', *Heritage: Journal of the History Society of Zimbabwe*, no. 1, 1981, pp. 11-15

⁷ T.H. Chisi, 'The Hunting Frontier: A Study of the Commercial Hunters' Life in Pre-Colonial Zimbabwe (1850s-1890s)', Unpublished BA Honours Dissertation, Department of History, University of Zimbabwe, 1986, pp. 4-5.

⁸ R. Wagner, 'Zoutpansberg: The Dynamics of a Hunting Frontier', in S. Marks & A. Atmore (eds.), *Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa* (London, Longman, 1980).

⁹ National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ) File S2929/8/2 Ministry of Local Government Division of District Administration, Delineation Report for the Musvuvugwa Headmanship and Community 1965.

¹⁰ G.C. Mazarire, 'Defence Consciousness as Way of Life: The Refuge Period and Karanga Defence Strategies in the 19th Century', *Zimbabwean Prehistory* no. 25, March 2005; see also H. Ellert, *The Material Culture of Zimbabwe* (Harare, Longman, 1984) p.57 for more recent local names of English guns.

¹¹ NAZ Hist. Mss. CO5/1/1 Francois Coillard, 'Nyanikoe, Banyailand', 17 September 1877, NAZ Hist. Mss. BE2/1/1 Diary of Superintendent Knothe, 1888; for a detailed description of early missionary activity in Banyailand see D.N. Beach, 'Initial Impact of Christianity on the Shona: The Protestants and the Southern Shona', in J.A. Dachs (ed.) *Christianity South of the Zambezi vol. 1* (Gwelo, Mambo Press, 1973).

¹² See for instance A. Darter, *The Pioneers of Mashonaland* (Bulawayo, Books of Rhodesia, 1977, Facsimile Reproduction of the 1914 Edition), p. 78.

¹³ D.N. Beach, *War and Politics*, pp. 60-61.

¹⁴ S.P. Olivier, *Many Treks Made Rhodesia* (Bulawayo, Books of Rhodesia, 1975, Facsimile Reproduction of 1957 edition) p.21.

¹⁵ P.S. Garlake, 'Pioneer Forts in Rhodesia', *Rhodesiana: Journal of the Rhodesiana Society*, no. 12, September 1965, p.43.

¹⁶ As recalled by the Madzivire and Gororo people of Chivi respectively noted in Honyera Zvakavapano, 'The Story of the Masunda Headmanship' *NADA* vol. IX no. 1, (1964) p.58.

¹⁷ 'Regulus', 'Mapasure and Makuwire' *NADA* vol. ix. no. 2 (1965), p. 5.

¹⁸ D.K. Parkinson, 'Mapasure and Makuwire', *NADA* vol. ix. no. 3 (1966), pp. 87-89 gives a detailed description of these two names and equally advances that Makuwire was the name also given to C.C. Meredith, Provincial Commissioner of Mashonaland East until 1962. For a particularly interesting gendered interpretation of colonial conquest as a masculine event see H. Schmidt, 'Penetrating Foreign Lands' *Environment and History: Zimbabwe* (The White Horse Press, London, 1995).

¹⁹ P. Maylam, 'Monuments, Memorials and the Mystique of Empire: the Immortalisation of Cecil Rhodes in the 20th Century', *African Sociological Review* 6, no.1 (2002) pp.138-147.

- ²⁰ F.C. Selous, *Travel and Adventure in South East Africa* (Picadilly, Rowland Ward & Co., 1893), p. 375.
- ²¹ Darter, *The Pioneers of Mashonaland*, pp. 84-85.
- ²² Selous, *Travel and Adventure in South East Africa*, pp. 376-377.
- ²³ Interview with the late Muringani Matumbure (Headman Chipindu) and Jim Tawanda 7 August 1999.
- ²⁴ D.K. Parkinson, 'The Pioneer Road: Tuli to Fort Victoria in Chibi District: 1890-1966', *Rhodesiana* no. 37, 1977 (Reprinted in *Heritage of Zimbabwe* no. 22, 2003), pp.41-48.
- ²⁵ H.M. Hole, *The Making of Rhodesia* (London, Macmillan & Co, 1926), pp.267-268.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 266.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.* p. 270.
- ²⁸ Stevenson, 'The Colonial Office and the British South Africa Company', p. 86.
- ²⁹ For the macho image of the Pioneer and how it is further sustained later in the 1960s and 1970s in Rhodesian nationalism see M. Epprecht, *Hungochani: A History of Dissident Sexuality in Southern Africa* (Montreal, McGill-Queens Press, 2004).
- ³⁰ This imaged is well captured in D.C. de Waal, *With Rhodes in Mashonaland* (Bulawayo, Books of Rhodesia, 1974, Facsimile Reproduction of 1896 Edition), pp. 92-107.
- ³¹ Beach, *War and Politics*, p. 62.
- ³² D.K. Parkinson, 'The Fort at Naka Pass', *Rhodesiana* No. 19, 1968, p. 58.
- ³³ G.C. Mazarire, 'An Oral Historiography of the Chivi People: A Study of Chivi Oral Traditions from the Earliest times up to 1900', Unpublished BA Honours Dissertation, Department of History, University of Zimbabwe, 1997, p. 62.
- ³⁴ Parkinson, 'The Fort at Naka Pass', p. 59.
- ³⁵ Based on H.M. Hole, *The Making of Rhodesia*, pp.272-275.
- ³⁶ For this Company 'strategy' of liberation see J.R.D. Cobbing, 'The Ndebele Under the Khumalos 1820s-1896' Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Lancaster, 1976, p. 339.
- ³⁷ An account of the interview with Chivi is given in de Waal, *With Rhodes in Mashonaland*, pp. 237-238, for the fate of Chirambamuriwo, see D.K. Parkinson, 'Chief Chibi, 1890', *Rhodesiana* , 15, 1966 p.65.
- ³⁸ D.N. Beach, *War and Politics*, p.60.

Bibliography

National Archives of Zimbabwe

Files

S2929/8/2 Ministry of Local Government, Division of District Administration, Delineation Report, Musvuvugwa Headmanship and Community, 1965.

Historical Manuscripts

Hist. Mss. BE2/1/1 'Diary of Superintendent Knothe' 1888.

Hist. Mss. CO5/1/1 Francois Coillard, 'Nyanikoe: Banyailand' September 1877.

Published Books and Articles.

Beach, D.N. 1973. 'Initial Impact of Christianity on the Shona: The Protestants and the Southern Shona', in J.A. Dachs (ed.) *Christianity South of the Zambezi vol. 1* (Gwelo, Mambo Press.)

_____. 1986. *War and Politics in Zimbabwe: 1840-1900*. (Gweru, Mambo Press.)

_____. 1992. 'The Origins of Mocambique and Zimbabwe: Paiva de Andrada, the Companhia de Mocambique and African Diplomacy 1881-1891', Unpublished History Department Seminar Paper no. 89, University of Zimbabwe.

Cobbing, J.R.D. 1976. 'The Ndebele Under the Khumalos 1820s-1896' Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Lancaster.

Chisi, T.H. 1986. 'The Hunting Frontier: A Study of the Commercial Hunters' Life in Pre-Colonial Zimbabwe (1850s-1890s)', Unpublished BA Honours Dissertation, Department of History, University of Zimbabwe.

Darter, A. 1977. *The Pioneers of Mashonaland* (Bulawayo, Books of Rhodesia, Facsimile Reproduction of the 1914 Edition.)

Duncan, J.R. 1958. 'The Story of Simba Jim' *NADA* vol. 35.

Ellert, H. 1984. *The Material Culture of Zimbabwe* (Harare, Longman.)

Epprecht, M. 2004. *Hungochani: A History of Dissident Sexuality in Southern Africa* (Montreal, McGill-Queens Press.)

Garlake, P.S. 1965. 'Pioneer Forts in Rhodesia', *Rhodesiana: Journal of the Rhodesiana Society*, no. 12.

Hole, H.M. 1926. *The Making of Rhodesia* (London, Macmillan & Co.)

Maylam, P. 2002. 'Monuments, Memorials and the Mystique of Empire: the Immortalisation of Cecil Rhodes in the 20th Century', *African Sociological Review* 6, no.1.

Mazarire, G.C. 1997 'An Oral Historiography of the Chivi People: A Study of Chivi Oral Traditions from the Earliest times up to 1900', Unpublished BA

- Honours Dissertation, Department of History, University of Zimbabwe.
- _____. 2005. 'Defence Consciousness as Way of Life: The Refuge Period and Karanga Defence Strategies in the 19th Century', *Zimbabwean Prehistory* no. 25.
- Olivier, S.P. 1975. *Many Treks Made Rhodesia* (Bulawayo, Books of Rhodesia, Facsimile Reproduction of 1957 edition.)
- Parkinson, D.K. 1966. 'Chief Chibi, 1890', *Rhodesiana* , 15.
- _____. 1968. 'The Fort at Naka Pass', *Rhodesiana* No. 19.
- _____. 1977. 'The Pioneer Road: Tuli to Fort Victoria in Chibi District: 1890-1966', *Rhodesiana* no. 37, (Reprinted in *Heritage of Zimbabwe* no. 22, 2003.)
- 'Regulus'. 1965. 'Mapasure and Makuwire' *NADA* vol. ix. no. 2.
- Schmidt, H. 1995. 'Penetrating Foreign Lands' *Environment and History: Zimbabwe* (The White Horse Press, London.)
- Selous, F.C. 1893. *Travel and Adventure in South East Africa* (Picadilly, Rowland Ward & Co.)
- Stevenson, S.B. 1978. 'The Colonial Office and the British South Africa Company: Imperial Collaboration in the Founding of Rhodesia and the Establishment of Colonial Rule,' Unpublished D.Phil Thesis, University of Rhodesia.
- _____. 1981. 'Rhodes, "More an Agent than an Initiator"', *Heritage: Journal of the History Society of Zimbabwe*, no. 1.
- Waal de, D.C. 1974. *With Rhodes in Mashonaland* (Bulawayo, Books of Rhodesia, Facsimile Reproduction of 1896 Edition.)
- Wagner, R. 1980. 'Zoutpansberg: The Dynamics of a Hunting Frontier', in S. Marks & A. Atmore (eds.), *Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa* (London, Longman.)
- Zvakavapano, H. 1964. 'The Story of the Masunda Headmanship' *NADA* vol. IX no. 1.