PRE-COLONIAL POLITIES IN SOUTHERN ZAMBEZIA AND THEIR POLITICAL COMMUNICATIONS

by

Avital Livneh

Thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
at the
University of London

July 1976

ABSTRACT

Throughout the history of the Iron Age peoples of Southern Zambezia, there was an apparent division between North and South. Organized major polities first appeared in the south-east, then a balance was evident between the northern centre of the Mutapa, and the southern centre of the Butua-Rozvi. Then, the northern centre declined, and the Ndebele invaders re-shaped the southern centre. The communications of the plateau are examined through these centres.

A comparative examination of the political communication of the pre-16th century elites, the Mutapa, the Rozvi and the Ndebele, respectively, shows that in all of them the bulk of communications was on an unofficial level. Official communications were influenced by the capacity for grain storage and transport, and by succession regulations. Officialdom was tied to rulers with ties of affinal, personal nature, and were not eligible for the throne. Word of mouth was the main tool of contact in all the states examined, and literacy and the wheel failed to penetrate them. The Rozvi and Mutapa states display similarities, although the Rozvi appear to have been more tightly controlled. The Ndebele brought new forms of organization, which enabled them to mobilize more efficiently than Shona, and the intensity of contact within their densely settled land was probably greater. Their relations with their periphery, however, followed in tribute enforcement in the footsteps of the Rozvi.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research leading to this thesis could not have taken place without the aid of the Friends of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Great Britain. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem helped to keep our family united. The School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, provided a grant which made possible the journey to Rhodesia. The Anglo-Jewish Association and the Jewish Welfare Society of Mashonaland made additional grants.

I would like to extend special thanks to the directors and staff of all the libraries I worked in : especially the libraries, in London, of the School of Oriental and African Studies, the British Museum, the Institute of Commonwealth Studies (University of London), and in Rhodesia : the University of Rhodesia and the National Archives of Rhodesia, Salisbury. For the staff of the S.O.A.S., which was my second home during my stay in Britain, there will always be an affectionate place in my heart.

Thanks are extended to all the people who helped me during my work, whose names are too many to mention in the limited space available. One cannot fail to mention the people in the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Rhodesia and especially Mr.A.I. Bickersteth, and Mr.J.K.Latham. Also remembered are Mr.T.Reiz; Mr. A. Zumbolovic; Mr.E.Ben-Yitshak, Mr.A.Gee; Miss O.Kafri; and Miss.N.Sithole. Special thanks are due to the Wolfson Foundation who granted me the Lina Halper Fellowship. The Humanitarian Trust, the Frederick Rau Memorial Trust, and the Barnett Shrine Fellowship Fund contributed to my study fees.

All of them were of help, as well as the typists who typed the various drafts of this thesis, Mrs. N.Fuller, Miss B.Maimoun, and Mrs.G.Nakab.

All my interpreters, mentioned in the Appendix, were of immense help.

My thanks are also due to Dr. W.Zander and to Miss.C.I.Prince, for their understanding and encouragement.

Dr.D.N.Beach afforded me numerous occasions on which I drew on his vast knowledge of Shona history, supplied me with some documents and put his secretary at my disposal for typing my tape-recorded interviews.

Special thanks are due to Professor M.Abir of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

I owe a great debt of gratitude to Professor J.R. Gray, my supervisor. I enjoyed not only drawing on his vast knowledge and deep interest in the area under study, and his penetrating critique and scholarly criticism, but also I benefitted from his constant encouragement, sympathy and friendship, without which this work would never have been completed.

Last but not least, my wife and daughter are remembered, who endured it all, and were a source of strength in moments of gloom.

INTRODUCTION

A. Communications and Southern Zambezian History

This study of political communications south of the Zambezi was born out of a casual discussion with a student of Chinese history. The writer was telling him of empires stretching over hundreds of miles, from the Zambezi to the Limpopo. An effort to describe these "confederacies" of African polities[1] soon revealed a gap in the writer's knowledge, which puzzled the audience. Little could be said of the administration of these empires. How were communications maintained, in illiterate societies, with no other means of locomotion than the human feet, over such huge distances - was a point which that Chinese historian kept probing at. The writer promised to check this point. The following pages are the result of that examination.

Historians of the area between the Zambezi and the Limpopo, or southern Zambezia, ascribed the disintegration of "empires", on the plateau of present-day Rhodesia, in part to "over-extended lines of communications",[2] Yet little effort was made to dwell on the

---

[1]See, for instance, D.P.Abraham, "The early political history of the kingdom of Mwene Mutapa (c. 850-1589)" in Historians in Tropical Africa: Proceedings of the Lever-Hulme Inter-Collegiate History Conference, held at the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, September 1960 (Salisbury, southern Rhodesia; University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, 1962), pp. 61-93; L.H.Gann, A History of Southern Rhodesia, early days to 1934 (London: Chatto and Windus, 1965), p. 7 et seq.

[2]D.P.Abraham, "Maramuca: an exercise in the combined use of Portuguese records and oral traditions", Journal of African History (JAH) vol. II, 2 (1961) p. 214; E. Alpers, "The Mutapa and the Malawi political systems", in Aspects of Central African History, ed. T.O.Ranger (L[illegible] Native Affairs Department Annual (NADA), (Salisbury, Rhodesia; Na 1970), p. 25.
1970), p. 25.

substance of those "communications". Communications are essentially the transmission of messages from a source to a recipient. As such, there is little in human life which is outside the sphere of communications studies. Any interaction between two people or more involves acts of communication, verbal or otherwise. One could view communications as the scaffolding underlying any society. And in pre-industrialized, illiterate societies it is hard to define an autonomous sphere of communications, like the mass media of our society. As one student of the subject observed: "The most striking characteristic of the communications process in traditional societies was that it was not organized as a distinct system sharply differentiated from other social processes".[1] Where one speaks of "empires", however, a degree of differentiation is implied by the term used. The attempt at analysing the "empires" of the southern Zambezian plateau via their communications proved "challenging, fascinating and meaningful....", as one scholar described the study of communications.[2] Yet the road to determining the degree to which communications were a differentiated sphere of human activity, in the Iron Age society of the pre-twentieth century plateau, proved to be strewn with frustrations. Unlike studies of communications in a modern context, the problem facing a student of past patterns of communications in illiterate societies is not sifting through vast masses

---

[1] L.W.Pye, introduction to chapter I, in Communications and political development: Conference on Communications and political development, Dobbs Ferry, New York, 1961, ed. by Id. (Princeton, New Jersey: New Jersey University Press, 1963), p. 24.

[2] J.A.Devito, Communication: concept and processes (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey; Prentice Hall, 1971), p. VI.

of directly relevant source material.[1] It is more like trying to put together a jigsaw puzzle, with so many of the pieces missing. Rather than try and determine the way in which, say, public opinion was formed[2] - one is trying to locate and put together the most elementary facts, like who were the officials of rulers, where were they resident, and what techniques they had at their disposal.

Communicações was a recurring theme in Portuguese writings on the area south of the Zambezi, since their establishment on the coast of present-day Moçambique in the first years of the sixteenth century. They were worried about the uninterrupted flow of commerce between their outposts and the interior.[3] This was not necessarily coincidental with indigenous communications, for which they had little time to spare when writing. For the period before the Portuguese landing, apart from the odd piece by a Muslim geographer,[4] our knowledge of the area south of the Zambezi relies mainly on

---

[1] See, for example, I. de Sola Pool, The prestige press: a comparative study of political symbols (Cambridge, Mass.; M.I.T. Press, 1970); E. Katz and P.F.Lazarsfeld, Personal influence; the part played by people in the flow of mass communications (Glencoe, Ill.; Free Press, 1955).

[2] Ibid.

[3] See Manuel Barretto, "Informação do estado e conquista dos rios de Cuama" (1667) in G. McCall Theal, Records of South Eastern Africa, vol. iii (London; Government of The Cape Colony, 1898), p. 479.

[4] Al-Mas'udi was the first to mention trade through Sofala, in the tenth century; he also gave a few details of the inhabitants of the interior. See G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville (comp.), The East African Coast - select documents from the first to the early 19th century (Oxford; The Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. 14-17. For subsequent Arab documents see E.E.Burke, "Some aspects of Arab contact with Southern Africa", in Historians in Tropical Africa (1962), pp. 93-106.

archaeology. While archaeology locates the distribution of population centres, and the resources people were exploiting in some periods - it can only hint at the intensity of contact between communities, and the ways in which such contact was carried out. Then, even for the period when records are available, the southern part of the plateau is hardly mentioned in contemporary sources. Archaeology is relied upon for the reconstruction of this area's past right into the nineteenth century. Oral tradition supplements and aids the interpretation of our archaeological data in this case. Yet, available traditions tend to concentrate on major political events, like successions to positions of power, and on dynastic genealogies in Shona society. Descriptions of acts of communication are rare, and could well be anachronisms when they do occur. In the well-known story of Mutota, the semi-mythical founder of the Mwene Mutapa state in the fifteenth century, the following feature has been recorded through the last hundred years: "Mutota dispatches a trusted servant, Netondo or Nyakatondo, to make methodological enquiries. He locates rich salt deposits ..... and returns with a block of the precious salt to Prince Mutota, and informs him that, not only has he located ample salt supplies, but that the Dande [Zambezi valley] is rich in elephant and game and relatively sparsely inhabited..."[1] This is a rare piece of communication information. Although not necessarily descriptive of a particular incident ca. 1450, it conveys useful details which can be applied in a general way to Shona

---

[1] D.P.Abraham, "Early...," in Historians... (1962), p. 62; The story was recorded for the first time in the 1860s. See M.A.Pacheco, Diario de viagem de Tete ao Zumbo: Documentos historicos e geograficos da província de Moçambique (Moçambique: Imprensa Nacional, 1883), p. 23.

polities. Most eye-witness references likewise apply in a general manner to patterns and customs of communications, both at the courts of rulers and among the population at large.

There is one aspect of pre-twentieth century African life on the southern Zambezian plateau identifiable in many of our varied sources. Centres, housing members of elites, are easily located by archaeologists, and reveal more of human contacts than do common peasant sites. Objects differing from the ordinary finds indicate roles for residents of the centres, different from the subsistence farming of the majority of the population. Some finds indicate contact through trade with other communities. When foreign observers came to record their impressions of African life they tended to focus on their own trade, which was nearest to their hearts, and on the rulers and their courts. Shona oral traditions tend to concentrate on the migration routes of the groups preserving the traditions, and on genealogies, and sometimes deeds, of their past leaders. The bias of the evidence available for southern Zambezia thus directs the course of study of communications to the one aspect common to all its parts - centres of elites. Discernible centres on the plateau are evident since the twelfth century A.D. The last independent African centre, that of the Ndebele state, fell to the forces of the British South Africa Company in 1893. A study of communications on the plateau through the concept of centres therefore spans some eight centuries. During that period two presixteenth

century groups of people, who left behind the cultures[1] of Leopard's Kopje and Zimbabwe, established elite centres in the south western, and south eastern parts of the plateau respectively. In the fifteenth century a state, to be designated "empire" by the Portuguese, established itself in the northern parts of the plateau. With its satellites and related states, it was in contact with the Portuguese, and was recorded by them in documents, between the early sixteenth century, and its demise at the turn of the nineteenth century. A contemporary culture known as the Khami culture is evident in the south western parts of the plateau. A state, Butua, identified with the bearers of that culture, is recorded in existence at least since the 1490s. Both the northern complex of states, related to the Mwene Mutapa "empire", and the Butua state, comprised in the sixteenth century people speaking the language then known as Karanga, which is today called Shona. The elites of both northern and southern states can be traced through archaeology and history to the elite of Great Zimbabwe in the Fort Victoria area. Great Zimbabwe itself declined, and was abandoned, at the same period that its offshoots to the North and West were establishing themselves. The

---

[1]Culture is used here to denote a stage of development in history "in which all the artefacts have a definite similarity and relationship, so that they can be recognised and identified when they appear elsewhere..." L. Cortell, (ed.), The concise encyclopedia of Archaeology (London: Book Club Associates, 1972), p. 108 . Other archaeological terms used to describe geographical and chronological units are - facies, which is the basic unit of similar artefact assemblages; tradition, which is the development of one such assemblage through time; phase, which is a time segment of tradition. See T.N.Huffman, "A guide to the Iron Age of Mashonaland", in Occasional Papers of the National Museums of Rhodesia (series A, Human studies), vol. 4, pt 1 (1971), p. 21.

Karanga political aggregates continued to dominate the plateau until the Nguni invasions from the south in the third decade of the nineteenth century upset the pattern of life and brought about the establishment of two Nguni states. The Gaza Nguni of the east operated on the margins of the Karanga, or Shona, world. The Ndebele were established in the former centre of the Rozvi of Changamire, who ruled the Butua state since 1683.

In the period when elites are evident on the plateau, then, a few stages are apparent. Between the twelfth and the fifteenth centuries two different elites were established in the south-east and the south-west of the plateau. Then the south-eastern centre was abandoned, and the balance became that of north-east and south-west. At this stage the elites concerned were obviously political elites. The whole of southern Zambezia during this period was most probably a Shona speaking world, with small wedges of other groups in its margins. With the nineteenth century came the intrusion of the Zulu-speaking Ndebele into the Shona world, and the establishment of a non-Shona state as the dominant force over most of the plateau. Within the framework of the southern Zambezian plateau and its margins, thus, there was one centre with a continued existence of some eight centuries, in the south-west. Within this period three different elites succeeded each other in the same area. The centre of the south-east flourished rapidly, and declined, within three centuries. In the north-east, the same elite ruled for four and a half centuries, but with declining strength of its major state, the Mutapa. Viewing communications via centres presents an opportunity to compare contemporary centres in different parts of the plateau, to look at two state

complexes belonging to the same linguistic and cultural sphere and to review two different states operating in the same area, in different periods.

The concept of "centricity" denotes by definition a periphery. Geographically, a centre is a point where human activity is concentrated, towards which there is some convergence of people. Politically, a centre is the point in a political system which is able to make demands on its periphery. There is a reaction, or feed-back, of the periphery to such demands. Demand and reaction together comprise the political communications of the political system.[1] The political systems dealt with in the following pages all operated within the context of Iron Age cultures. Their population lived in permanent villages, subsisting on hoe-farming and livestock keeping, supplemented by hunting and gathering of wild fruits and roots. Mining of iron, copper and gold was practised, and trade was carried on, mainly in ivory and gold, with traders related to the international trading of Indian Ocean coasts.[2] Mineral deposits brought about convergence of people on them for their exploitation. Trade created some distinct market-places, on which people congregated for bartering minerals, ivory and foodstuffs. Religious practices demanded seasonal congregations of people in certain spots for ancestral worship in most parts of the plateau, and for praying directly

---

[1] K.W.Deutsch, Nationalism and social communication: an enquiry into the foundations of nationality (Cambridge, Mass.; The M.I.T. Press, 1966), esp. pp. 86-101.

[2] See B.M.Fagan, Southern Africa during the Iron Age (London; Thames and Hudson, 1965), esp. pp. 78-99.

to the supreme Being, Mwari, in the Matopo shrines. Political communications thus overlay communications for religious, mining and bartering purposes, the centres of which were in many cases different from the centres of the political systems. The interaction between those networks of communications, and the political systems of communications is one of the intriguing aspects of the history of communications on the plateau. Where techniques available to elites and commoners were very similar, another interesting aspect of communications is the relationship between deliberate transmission of messages by specialized officials, and informal communication of information. Literacy has never succeeded in penetrating southern Zambezia, in spite of the presence of literate people there at least since the tenth century. Neither had the centres any but the most rudimentary means of sending coded messages. The efficiency of official communications thus relied to a large extent on the degree of specialization, and the strength relative to the population, of the official corps of messengers.

The field of communications studies is all-inclusive, as far as the study of human communities goes. Theoretically, "it is possible to analyze all social processes in terms of the structure, content and flow of communications."[1] In the case of the history of southern Zambezia, the evidence leads the study of communications into narrower alleys. The structure of the communication systems is given to reconstruction more than their other aspects. Titles of officials, their roles in the state, and their location, are fairly common pieces of

---

[1] L.W.Pye, Communication... (1963), p. 4.

information. Furthermore, the broad outline of the states of southern Zambezia was the most permanent element of their communications systems. Some changes are discernible in the structures, like different officers taking charge of a similar role. The intensity and frequency of the flow of communications are more fluid, and given to fluctuations. The contents of communications is in most cases left unrecorded. Contents can be partly deduced by looking at the demands which centres were posing to their peripheries, and the reaction of the periphery to such demands. The following study is thus limited by its sources to broad outlines of structure of state machineries, with illustrative cases, where such are available. The routes taken by envoys in specific cases, the exact form messages took in each case, and the frequency of contact between every two points on the plateau will probably never be known. Enough is known, however, to provide some idea of the form political communications took within the structures outlined. Shona ethnographic studies, and histories of local nature, provide a corroborating body of evidence, mainly for the contact between people at an informal level, but also for practices of government. For the Ndebele state there is a large body of eye-witness accounts which allows a more detailed study of the communication patterns of that state.

The communications of four geo-chronological units of the history of southern Zambezia are examined in the following pages. The general background to the life of iron-working people on the plateau is presented, followed by a look at the first elites emerging among them. The elite of Great Zimbabwe is the first to be examined, representative of the pre-fifteenth century elites which are known almost exclusively through archaeological studies. Clues are sought for the possible relations

of that elite to its periphery, and its relationships with the Indian Ocean trade and the exploitation of mineral resources. It is argued that the elaborate organization envisaged by some scholars was based on overenthusiastic reactions to the impressive stone ruins left behind by that elite. The reconstructed communications of the pre-fifteenth century are, however, a mere skeleton. The Mwene Mutapa state, paramount among the states of the north-eastern complex, provides the rounded picture which written documents and oral history combine to produce. Its communications with its satellite states reveal how the reliance of the central Mutapa rulers on mobilizing the peasantry of their subject provincial rulers limited the demands put to the periphery in other spheres. The ever-present possibility of secession and emigration of dissatisfied groups also helped to keep demands at a minimum. These, in turn, were made easier by the presence of Portuguese sertanejo power in the north and east, and the state of Butua in the south. The difficulty of storing grain, with the techniques available to the Karanga, limited the ability of rulers to create food stores large enough to maintain a large specialized officialdom, or a standing army. The entourage of central rulers, therefore, probably did not exceed a few hundred men, acting as servants, messengers and body guards to the ruler. A number of senior officials, mostly ineligible for the throne, comprised the council advising the ruler. With the most powerful people in the state ruling provinces of their own, intense communication between such provincial rulers and the central ruler was essential at least when large-scale mobilization was called for. Otherwise, contact on the official level between centre and periphery was maintained by men of position coming from provincial centres to the seat of the Mutapa ruler.

Tribute was presented on these occasions. Such contacts were supposed to have happened at least annually, but in many cases were far less regular.

The state of Butua, established some time in the fifteenth century, is known almost exclusively through archaeology before 1683. The bulk of the data for the period after the Changamire Rozvi take-over in that year is made of oral histories, which allow far less detailed chronological observations than the data for the Mutapa state. It is obvious, however, that the Rozvi state was functioning within the same social context of Shona-speaking people. Like the Mutapa, the servants of the court were an all-purpose corps, recruited and absorbed into the ruler's family by being given wives. Tribute in foodstuffs apparently was as limited as it was in the northern state of the Mutapa. Unlike the Mutapa, however, the Rozvi officials seem to have been roaming the country, collecting tribute in the provinces. A centrally directed system of communication is apparent, then, as opposed to the hiererchical, provincially-operated system of the Mutapa. A closer look reveals that provincial agents were frequenting the Rozvi centre, visits which were accompanied by tribute presentation. The visits of officers of the centre to the provinces also appear to have been less regular than terms like "empire" would imply. The relationships between the Rozvi and the important religious centre of the Mwari cult in the Matopos are examined, to reveal links which were, however, probably less intense than previously thought.

The Ndebele state, established on the plateau in 1838, is the fourth state of which the communications are examined. Believed to have possessed a centralized, tightly controlled state, with officers appointed rather than inheriting office, it appeared to present a striking contrast to the loosely structured Shona states. The examination of its

communications shows a state with more intense contacts within it than the Rozvi state preceding it in the same area. Their communications machinery is shown to have been less efficient than some early European observers would have us believe. Then the impact on Ndebele communications is examined of the opening up of the southern approaches to the plateau by the horse and the ox-wagon. Unlike the Shona states, where those transport innovations were prevented by natural obstacles from penetrating, the Ndebele had to consciously adapt to the horse and the ox-wagon. The difference between the concise, clearly defined Ndebele state and its larger Rozvi predecessor is examined. It is argued that, in their relations with the Shona polities outside the state's heartland, their patterns of communications show similarities. Ndebele communications show that it can be described as a successor-state to the Rozvi in more than a geographical sense.

The term "state" is used repeatedly in the following pages to describe African polities. There is no equivalent term in indigenous languages. In Shona there are terms for the village, the ward or group of villages, the "land" of a tribe - currently referred to as "chiefdom".[1] There is no term for an organization including more than one "land", nyika. The Portuguese named the greatest of the Shona "lands" - "empires". Smaller polities they were apt to name "kingdoms". The latter usage was mainly replaced by "chiefdom" in recent works, but "empires" still enjoy wide currency. The Ndebele state was normally called a "kingdom" by foreigners. For the Ndebele themselves, it was a "land", with its basic units, the village, the "chieftainship" and

---

[1]The terms in Shona are musha, dunhu, and nyika respectively. See J.F.Holleman, "Some 'Shona' tribes of Southern Africa", in E. Colson & M. Gluckman (eds.), Seven Tribes of British Central Africa (Manchester: The University Press, 1959), pp. 354-369.

a vague ultrachieftainship unit named "division" by foreigners.[1] The term "empire" is loaded with connotations, and while the Portuguese had in mind probably the Holy Roman Empire rather than the Roman Empire,[2] this is not necessarily the main concept readers of scholarly works would associate with the term. The Ndebele were the paramount power on the plateau for decades, and held suzerainty over some Shona "lands" outside their own state. Yet their polity is normally referred to as "kingdom". The term "state" can be applied to both Shona and Ndebele political organizations. It is also less charged with associations than "empire". It is therefore applied here to the polities of the Mwene Mutapa, Teve, the Changamire Rozvi, and the Ndebele. Polities of the same structural order as the modern "chiefdom", ruled by ishe (chief) are referred to as "lands", and their rulers are called provincial rulers. Rulers of units smaller than a "land" are referred to as local rulers or by their indigenous names, sadunhu for a Shona ruler, and induna for a Ndebele.

Last, but not least, the land which was the arena for the development and operation of all those states should be remembered. An undulating plateau ("plateau" is used in many points in this work as synonymous with the land as a whole) is the dominant feature of the land of southern Zambezia. A broad ridge, running roughly from north-east to south-west,

---

[1]The Ndebele terms are umusi and isigaba; there is no term for the "divisions", although the concept of the ultra-isigaba units is familiar; land is ilizwe. See A.J.B.Hughes, Kin, caste and nation among the Rhodesian Ndebele (Manchester; The University Press, 1956), pp. 17-18; J. Cobbing, "The evolution of Ndebele amabuto", JAH, xv, 4 (1974), pp. 607-631.

[2]The fumos, said Manuel Barretto in 1667, would declare war, exact tribute and judge cases: they were, he said, just like the potentates of Germany. See M. Barretto, "Informacao do estado e Conquista dos Rios de Cuama" (Goa, 11.vii.1667), in G.M.Theal, RSEA, III, p. 468.

crowns a belt of High Veld, about 50 miles wide. The High Veld, between 4,000 and 5,000 feet above sea level, then gives way on both sides to the Middle Veld, between 3,000 and 4,000 feet above sea level. The plateau of the Middle Veld has been the region most preferred for settlement in the history of Southern Zambezia. The Middle Veld in turn gives way to the Low Veld, below 3,000 feet above sea level, hot, inhospitable and with a rainfall more irregular than any other part of the area between the Zambezi and the Limpopo. North and north-west of the watershed, running some 400 miles across the plateau, drainage goes to the Zambezi river. South of it - the Sabi in the east and the Limpopo in the south drain the plateau. Except for the Zambezi, none of the rivers touching the plateau were ever major water-routes. Extensive inhospitable areas, with land unsuitable for farming, accompany the Zambezi part of its way along the plateau, and the Limpopo, and to a smaller extent, the Sabi. On the plateau itself no river carries enough water for navigation, except for short periods in the rainy season. There are no major natural obstacles to movement on the plateau. Its margins are, on the other hand, clearly marked by the Zambezi, the Sabi, the Limpopo and the Kalahari sands. To the east, a range of mountains demarcates the edge of the plateau before the coastal lowlands begin. Rarely did the human cultures of the plateau spill into the Kalahari in present-day Botswana. Contact, in most periods not accompanied by settlement belts, between the plateau and the Limpopo valley, up to the Messina area in present-day Transvaal, is evident. There was a clear spillover of Shona people from the plateau eastwards, with the main point of contact being the Manyika area. There is no evident bridging of the Zambezi in the same way, except in the Urungwe district, where a spillover from north of the river is evident in some periods. The plateau of southern Zambezia is thus a distinct geographical unit, with

clear natural boundaries around it. Ever since the sixteenth century, and probably long before, it enjoyed a cultural unity too, being in the main settled by the Karanga.

For centuries the external relations of the plateau were with people associated with the Indian Ocean trade networks. The orientation of trade, with other culture contacts, was eastwards. In the nineteenth century the orientation of the plateau changed, gradually turning south for its trade. With it came a change from contact with the relatively weak Portuguese presence, to contact with the aggressive capitalism of South Africa, and to the eventual absorption of the major part of southern Zambezia into the sphere of the British South Africa Company. The conquest of the Ndebele state in 1893 brought to an end the era of African polities and their communications on the plateau. A new era began, with the horse, the ox-wagon, then the telegraph and the railway profoundly changing the pattern of communications of the area between the Zambezi and the Limpopo. But this is the end to the story which began in the fourth century A.D., with the advent of the first iron working people on to the plateau.

B. THE ELITES OF SOUTHERN ZAMBEZIA BEFORE 1500

"Item, and thence to Embire, which is a fortress of the king of Menomotapa and is now made of stone without mortar, which is called Camanhaya..."[1] Thus, in a letter to the king of Portugal in 1512,

---

[1] Letter of Gaspar Veloso to the King of Portugal (hence = "Rei") (1512) in Documentos sobre os Portugueses em Moçambique e na Africa central 1497-1840, vol. III (Lisbon; National Archives of Rhodesia and Centro de Estudos Historicos Utramarinos, 1964), p. 183.

was the connection, of stone-built sites to political elites south of the Zambezi, first recorded. Other reports of Butua, "... in the midst of which there is a square fortress, of masonry within and without, built of stones of marvellous size, and there appears to be no mortar joining them...",[1] followed. Then stone built sites dropped out of the recorded history of the plateau, as the art of stone building abated and declined in its northern parts. Elites, on the other hand, remained a feature of the literature of reports and letters produced by the Portuguese presence on the Zambezi. Only in the last third of the nineteenth century did the stone-built sites re-emerge into the records of the area south of the Zambezi. A raging controversy between scholars and laymen followed, concerning the linkage of indigenous elites to the conspicuous stone constructions of the plateau. The controversy, and the conclusive arguments proving that such a link did exist in the past, were the subject of many scholarly works in the last eight decades.[2] The post-1500 culture named after its site in Khami has been associated with the Butua state of the Rozvi. The archaeological evidence concerning that culture is supported by some written contemporary records, and collections of oral histories. The state of the Mwenemutapa was the

---

[1] Joao de Barros, Ásia, dos feitos que os Portuguêses fizeram... (1552), vol. III (6th ed.; Lisbon; Agencia Geral das Colónias, 1945), p. 393.

[2] The most recent scholarly works on the subject are the two books by Roger Summers: Zimbabwe - A Rhodesian mystery (Capetown; Nelson, 1963); Ancient ruins and vanished civilizations of Southern Africa (Capetown; T.V.Bulpin, 1971); and the excellent work by Peter Garlake, Great Zimbabwe (London; Chatto and Windus, 1973). See also Garlake's article, "The Zimbabwe ruins re-examined", in Rhodesian History, no. 1 (1970), pp. 17-30, and T.N.Huffman, "The rise and fall of Zimbabwe", Journal of African History (JAH), vol. 13, no. 3 (1972), pp. 353-366. The main previous works on the subject are mentioned in the excellent summaries in both Garlake's and Summers' books.

best documented of all polities of the plateau by contemporary sources. Its oral traditions were also tapped. The pre-1500 cultures of the southern and central part of the Rhodesian plateau left us only their material remains to go by.

The Mwenemutapa state had its origins in the south, in the south eastern culture called after its pre-eminent site in Great Zimbabwe. The Khami culture, in present-day Matabeleland, was a successor-culture to that of Great Zimbabwe. Its bearers took over the area of the group, named after its site in Khami, of the Leopards Kopje culture bearers. The two major political aggregates of the post-1500 Shona world had in this way roots in the elite groups which preceded them. They shared, with the other indigenous polities prior to the British South Africa Company occupation, a Later Iron Age culture. Subsisting on farming and livestock, with supplementary hunting and gathering, living in village communities, their techniques of production, of hut building, of smelting and smithing metals, were essentially the same. In that, they shared their way of life with their predecessors, the Early Iron Age cultures of the plateau. A glance at the people who preceded the Later Iron Age cultures is therefore offered, followed by a presentation of the world of the Later Iron Age as archaeologists have reconstructed it. Viewed against their cultural background, the elites of the stone-walled ruins will be discussed. Fortunately, their centres were marked very conspicuously by stone constructions, which supply concrete evidence on the development of centres on the plateau.

Unfortunately, the stone-structures created an uneven balance of archaeological knowledge in Rhodesia. Elite cultures are relatively well-known, whereas their popular strata, the commoner farmers who lived around them, received less attention. Many of the present assumptions

over elite-commoners relations are based, therefore, on analysis of features of the elite sites alone.[1] There is little, however, that one can infer about the structure of the elite organization on the force of archaeological evidence alone. Oral traditions, and written documents relating to the successor states of the pre-1500 elites are therefore recruited into the assessing mechanism. Such mutual dependence of the analysis of plateau societies is justified in terms of their evident overall similar background, and their historical relations. In the following pages, though, a conscious attempt will be made to present the evidence as seen through archaeologists' eyes. The comparative dimension will become clear as the story of the successor-states of the Mutapa and the Rozvi will be unfolded in the next chapters.

Around the fourth century A.D., iron working people appeared for the first time on the plateau south of the Zambezi.[2] They introduced grain cultivation, and small-stock breeding, into an area formerly inhabited by Stone-Age hunter-gatherers.[3] The routes by which they entered the plateau are still far from being determined. Their sites, the first permanent settlements on the plateau, replaced in a short

---

[1]Most of the elite structures were never thoroughly examined. Even in Great Zimbabwe itself the possibility of fully excavating the site was destroyed by R. Hall and others. See, R. Summers, Zimbabwe mystery... (1963), pp. 21, 27, 42; P. Garlake, Great Zimbabwe (1973), pp. 72-3. Our dearth of knowledge of commoner-peasant sites was emphasized in Summers' Ancient ruins (1971), p. 217. In Khami, for example, it took many years of residence near by, for Mr. Robinson to locate the many commoners' huts now known at the site.

[2]T. Huffman, "Guide to the Iron Age of Mashonaland", in Occasional Papers of The National Museums of Rhodesia, vol. 4, pt. 1 (Series A, Human Sciences), p. 26; P. Garlake, Great Zimbabwe (1973), p. 136.

[3]See P. Garlake, Great Zimbabwe (1973), pp. 153-4. The first substantial evidence for grain farming was found at Leopard's Kopje Main Kraal. See, T.N.Huffman, "Excavations at Leopard's Kopje Main Kraal: a preliminary report", in S. Afr. Arch. Bull., 26 (1971). p. 37.

while their predecessors. Their large villages spread all over the plateau and its fringes, like the low-lying Limpopo valley, and the eastern mountainous fringes. Two variants of a basically similar pottery tradition, spread over a much wider area, and having more variants, are evident south of the Zmabezi. Their distinctness is evident within two centuries of the appearance of the Early Iron people on the plateau. Their pottery indicates a relative absence of mutual influence between them.[1] The southern group, covering the south and central areas, was called after its site in Gokomere. Its northern counterpart, called after its site in Ziwa, had another variant sharing with it the north western part of the plateau, in the present Urungwe district.[2] By around the sixth century A.D., then, there is already a clear distinction between north and south on the plateau. The Urungwe pottery, with its associations across the Zambezi, points to one corner of the plateau where its natural borders were transcended. Both other variants of pottery were contained within the frame provided by the Zambezi valley, the low veldt areas of the Limpopo and the Sabi valleys, and the coastal lowlands to the east of the plateau. The southern part of the plateau appears to have been at that stage a favoured settlement area of the people now called Later Iron Age culture bearers. There is no way of telling which language the Early Iron Age people spoke; neither is it possible to go beyond the general statement that the two major cultural groups evident

---

[1] P. Garlake, Great Zimbabwe (1973), p. 153. J.R.Crawford suggested that one difference between north and south persisting to this day is the relatively low percentage of shallow bowls in the south, compared with the north. See, "An Early Iron Age site from the Kimberley Mine, Bindura", in S. Afr. Arch. Bull., 22, 85 (1967), p. 23.

[2] For previous classifications, later united into these three types, see, R. Summers, Zimbabwe mystery (1963), p. 53. For an updated typology, see T.N.Huffman, "Guide...", in OPNMR (1971), pp. 20-42.

on the plateau had distinct identities within an overall similar way of life. It is significant to record, though, that the dichotomy between north and south on the plateau did not find its last expression with the EIA people.

The Early Iron Age people clustered near water sources. Their villages show no apparent concern for defence.[1] Remains of metals, iron and copper, are fewer in their sites than in those of their Later Iron Age successors.[2] Cattle remains are very rare in their settlements. While the dearth of iron could be attributed to the acidity of Rhodesian soils, which destroys iron objects, cattle were obviously rare in the Early Iron Age period.[3] The reliance on farming small stock determined the way people moved and communicated in two important ways. First, sheep and goats are less vulnerable to tse-tse fly-borne diseases than cattle. They allow settlement in areas that would have been marginal to cattle keeping people. It would be hard, therefore, to base hypotheses

---

[1] P. Garlake, Great Zimbabwe (1973), p. 153. And see K.R.Robinson, "An Early Iron Age site from the Chibi District, Southern Rhodesia", in S. Afr. Arch. Bull., 16, 63 (1961), esp. p. 97.

[2] P. Garlake, Great Zimbabwe, p. 154. In Leopard's Kopje Main Kraal, for instance, there is clear evidence of iron smelting through part of the EIA layers, and all the LIA layers. See T. Huffman, "Excavations at Leopard's Kopje... Preliminary report", in OPNMR (1971), pp. 87-88. East of there, smelting is evident in Mabveni; see K.R.Robinson, "Early Iron Age... Chibi..." in SAAB (1971), pp. 96-97.

[3] In Leopard's Kopje Main Kraal, the EIA period revealed possible sheep or goat remains, but none of cattle. LIA layers at the same site have clear evidence of cattle being kept. See T. Huffman, "Excavations at Leopard's Kopje... Preliminary..." in OPNMR (1971), p. 87. At Mabveni, at an EIA site, sheep remains were found, but there were no cattle remains. See K. Robinson, "Early Iron Age... Chibi..." in SAAB (1961), pp. 97-98. South of the Limpopo, however, the recently discovered cattle remains at a site dated 460±50 A.D. indicate possible parallels north of that river. See R.J.Mason, "Background to the Transvaal Iron Age - new discoveries at Olifantspoort and Broederstroom", J.S.Af.Inst. of Mining and Metallurgy, 74, 6 (1974), pp. 211-13.

on human movement and contact between different cultural groups on the plateau on present-day, or reconstructed tse-tse infested belts.[1] Second, being both farmers and small-stock herdsmen indicated a limited range of movement for the Early Iron Age people.[2] It is also not easy to determine how far they would have to go to maintain contact between communities, for social purposes. Finds of sites which do not belong to the stone building type are in many cases accidental, and their survey is far from being complete.[3] Hunting, which supplied part of the Early Iron Age people's diet, and was no doubt accompanied by gathering fruits and edible plants,[4] would have taken the villagers into uninhabited lands and so not necessarily involve them in contact with people of other communities.

---

[1] R. Summers, on the basis of 19th century tse-tse fly distribution, and the distribution of Iron Age sites, postulated extensive tse-tse belts, with corridors in Central Mashonaland free of tse-tse. His assumption was that absence or dearth of human settlement implies the presence of tse-tse fly. That, in turn, assumed both EIA and LIA people relied on cattle, and could not cross, or live in, tse-tse infested areas. See R. Summers, "Archaeological distribution and a tentative history of tse-tse infestation in Rhodesia and the Northern Transvaal", in Arnoldia (Rhodesia), vol. 3, 13 (1967). Small stock can survive in "fly country", and even cattle, though "poor looking", can survive there. (See, for example, Montague-Kerr, The far interior, vol. II (London; Sampson, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1885), p. 58. Thus, besides the distinction now apparent between the EIA people with their scarce reliance on cattle, and the cattle oriented society of the LIA people, it would have been possible even for the latter to maintain settlement in "fly" infested areas. Tse-tse belts, however, can hardly be seen as favoured areas for settlement.

[2] P. Spencer, The Samburu (London; Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), presented an excellent detailed comparative analysis of the needs of cattle and small stock. Goats and sheep have to be watered every day, while cattle can bear thirst longer, and can travel better. See esp. pp. 2-9.

[3] The EIA site at Mabveni was discovered thanks to a ditch created by an old sledge track, which caught the eye of the archaeologist; K. Robinson, "Early Iron Age... Chibi...", in SAAB (1961), p. 77. See also, P. Garlake, "Iron Age sites in the Urungwe District of Rhodesia", in S. Afr. Arch. Bull., 25, 97 (1970), p. 26.

[4] See B. Fagan, Southern Africa (1965), p. 60.

There must have been a fair amount of human contact within the villages, as some of them appear to be larger than the Later Iron Age peasant sites.[1] One aspect of contact within villages might be represented by the little figurines found in many sites. At that stage they mostly represent human-like shapes. A strong probable link to worship of some kind is suggested. If such figurines belonged to some individuals only, then convergence for religious purposes might be suggested for the first time on the plateau.[2]

Itineration for other purposes is testified to by some material remains. Iron, found in small quantities, is a bad witness for human movement on the plateau. Iron is found in many areas, and its mining sites are difficult to locate. There is furthermore, no evidence which source of iron a particular village used. It may be generally assumed that on the plateau itself iron production involved itineration a few days' walking at the most.[3] Copper, mainly found near the Limpopo and the Sabi, on the southern

---

[1]The village studied by Robinson in Chibi covered several areas; other sites, however, were smaller. Compare Robinson, op. cit., with P. Garlake, "An Early Iron Age site on the Mukwichi river, Urungwe", in S. Afr. Arch. Bull., 26 (1971), pp. 147-152.

[2]See R. Summers, "Human figurines in clay and stone from Southern Rhodesia and adjoining territories", in Occ. Pap. of the Nat. Mus. of S. Rhodesia, vol. III, no. 21A (Human Sciences)(1957), pp. 72-74; P. Garlake, "Iron Age... Urungwe...", SAAB (1970), p. 38.

[3]Most mining areas south of the Zambezi are only dated within the range of categories such as "The Iron Age". In a few sites north of the Zambezi it was proven that itineration of up to 50 miles was involved in the presence of metals there. See B. Fagan, Southern Africa (1965), p. 53; for the Machili site; S.G.H.Daniels and D.W.Phillipson, "The Early Iron Age site at Dambwa, near Livingstone", in B.M.Fagan, D.W.Phillipson, and S.G.H.Daniels; Iron Age cultures in Zambia, vol. II (London; Chatto & Windus, 1969), p. 43, for Dambwa; In the Matopos, where smelting took place since early times, the ore was brought from various sources outside the hills, see J.S.Hatton, "Notes on Makalanga iron smelting", NADA, (1967), p. 42; C.K.Cooke, "An iron smelting-site in the Matopo hills Southern Rhodesia", SAAB, 14, 55 (1959), pp. 118-120. The possibility of some gold mines having been in effect worked for iron makes pinpointing iron-related communications very difficult. See M. Prendergast, "Research into the ferrous

and eastern margins of the plateau respectively, and in the Urungwe district, is an indicator of barter in most sites where it is found.[1] It does not tell us, though, which deposit it came from. At least some of it must have come from the Urungwe district. It strongly points to contacts between the people of the Urungwe and others, differing from them at least in their pottery style. What form these contacts took, we do not know, but it is probable barter followed inter-village chains.[2] The apparent lack of concern for defence may point to little active hostility between the peasant communities, which in turn may have been beneficial to inter-village contacts. Imported goods from the Indian Ocean coast are evident in small quantities of beads found in Early Iron Age sites. The goods most wanted by the coastal traders were ivory and gold. The location of some villages of that period near gold deposits suggested that at least alluvial gold was produced by the Early Iron Age people.[3] The quantity of beads testifies to barter rather than

---

metallurgy of Rhodesian Iron Age societies", in J. of the S. Af. Inst. of Mining & Metallurgy, 74 (1974), p. 254.

[1]For the distribution of copper mines see R. Summers, Ancient mining in Rhodesia and adjacent territories (Salisbury; National Museums of Rhodesia, Museum memoir no. 3, 1969), pp. 112, 212-13.

[2]B.M.Fagan, "Early trade and raw materials in South Central Africa", in R. Gray and D. Birmingham (eds.), Pre-colonial African trade, Essays on trade in Central and Eastern Africa before 1900 (Oxford; at the University Press, 1970), pp. 30-33.

[3]See P. Garlake, "An Early Iron Age site near Tafuna Hill, Mashonaland", in S. Afr. Arch. Bull., 26 (1971), pp. 103-4, 114-63. J.R.Crawford, "An Early Iron Age...Bindura...", SAAB (1967), pp. 2-23; R. Summers assigned to the EIA people mining of gold in his Ancient Mining (1969), pp. 216-219. T. Huffman, "Ancient mining and Zimbabwe", in J.S.Af. Inst. Mining and Metallurgy, 74, 6 (1974), p. 240 questions such associations. The scarcity of glass beads in many Early Iron Age sites, however, and the abundance of shell beads points to the glass beads being perhaps "simply not available". See T.N.Huffman, "Test excavations at Makuru, Rhodesia", in Arnoldia (Rhodesia) 5, 39 (1973), p. 20.

trading by itinerant merchants.[1] Yet at least an awareness of a world producing items which they were incapable of making is implied for the Early Iron Age people. Beads, like copper, indicate conscious production for barter of goods not being intrinsic to subsistence. Furthermore, gold can be produced in most areas of the plateau mainly in the dry season, which is also the season of hunting and gathering. Its production supports the division of the year for the Iron Age peasants of the plateau into a wet season, with limited itineration, and concentration on villages and fields; and a dry season, with people moving out of the villages looking for food, and some raw materials.

Between the fourth and the tenth centuries A.D. the Early Iron Age cultures underwent internal developments. Sites were used, then abandoned.[2] Apart from such geographical shifts of villages, human contact went on apparently along the same lines. Then, in the tenth century A.D., the social context of the southern part of the plateau underwent a radical change. A group of people, whose pottery shows no sign of having developed from that of the Early Iron Age people, appeared on the plateau. To archaeology, this is evidence of a migration.[3] The newcomers enjoyed one major advantage over their predecessors - cattle in large numbers

---

[1] B. Fagan, "Early trade...", in Gray and Birmingham, op. cit. (1970), p. 34.

[2] The Early Iron Age site at Mabveni, for example, was occupied only for a short period. See K. Robinson, "Early Iron Age... Chibi...", SAAB (1961), p. 96.

[3] P.S.Garlake, "Radio carbon dating of the Rhodesian Iron Age", in Rhodesian Prehistory, no. 2 (1969), p. 6; idem, Great Zimbabwe (1973), p. 155; T. Huffman, "Guide...", in OPNMR (1971), p. 40.

played an important role in their economy.[1] Iron remains are more abundant in their sites, which may be an indication of more extensive use of iron implements. Cattle enabled the new group to utilize areas which would have been marginal to their predecessors. They could now move further from fertile belts of soil, and had a living insurance against years of drought, so frequent on the plateau. Their presence in the south, while Early Iron Age groups went on developing uninterrupted in the north, emphasizes a few points. While their route is open to speculation, there is reason to suspect that they came from the south or south-west.[2] Their pottery supplanted the pottery of the Early Iron Age people. That may indicate a replacement of population, or a rapid absorption of the established people.[3] Whatever may have happened, the newcomers' settlements were limited in the first two centuries of their presence roughly to the old Gokomere area, in the south and centre of the plateau. That might be attributed to a relative mutual isolation of the two Early Iron Age groups. Having taken over the area of one of them, the Later Iron Age groups could have been satisfied to spread to the limits of that group's occupation area. There may have been, as Summers

---

[1] See T. Huffman, "Leopard's Kopje... preliminary...", SAAB (1970), pp. 85-89, for the Leopard's Kopje culture; Garlake, Great Zimbabwe (1973), p. 159, for the Musengezi culture. See also P. Robins and A. Whitty, "Excavations at Harleigh Farm, near Rusape, Rhodesia, 1958-1962", S. Af. Arch. Bull., 21, 66 (1966), pp. 61-80, for the Zimbabwe culture in the eastern part of the plateau. The Inyanga culture, though the best-surveyed of all the cultures of southern Zambezia, is still less well known in other respects. R. Summers suggested that in spite of unfavourable conditions for cattle-keeping in this north-eastern corner of the plateau, cattle may have been kept there; see his Ancient ruins (1971), pp. 153, 180.

2 P. Garlake, Great Zimbabwe (1973), p. 155.

3 T. N. Huffman, quoted by R. Summers in Ancient ruins (1971), p. 99.

claimed, a tse-tse belt which impeded contact northwards.[1] The persistence of the division from cattle-less days, however, suggests there was more to it than just an obstacle to movement of cattle.

The most important change which cattle had brought about was the possibility of accumulating wealth in a way which farming alone could not have provided.[2] Droughts are very frequent on the plateau. Storage for more than one year is hard to effect.[3] Cattle had, therefore, a very real economic value. They possessed the further advantage of being able to multiply themselves rapidly in years of plenty. The prestige value of cattle is widespread. It is evident in the appearance of cattle figurines in the Later Iron Age settlements. The figurines were probably used in some religious context, perhaps initiation ceremonies.[4] And

---

[1]Summers visualized even greater obstacles earlier, caused by more extensive tse-tse belts. His whole argument is based, however, on the very imperfect dating and classification of 1967 knowledge. See note [, p. 27 above.

[2]Mapela Hill, a rich elite site, is in typical cattle country, with an environment unfavourable to farming, and no evidence of grinding or farming at the site. P. Garlake, "Test excavations at Mapela Hill, near the Shashi river, Rhodesia", in Arnoldia (Rhodesia), vol. 3, 34 (1963), p. 13.

[3]Small storage-pits were found in Iron Age sites, but most have not revealed seed remains. The Shona do not seem to have practiced the Zulu-Ndebele system of underground large storage-pits under cattle enclosures. See K. Robinson, "A note on storage pits: Rhodesian Iron Age and modern African", in S. Afr. Arch. Bull., 18, 70 (1963), pp. 62, 63. Otherwise storage was in special storage-huts. See K. Robinson, "An Early... Chibi...", SAAB (1961), p. 81; idem, Khami Ruins (Cambridge; The University Press, 1959), pp. 16, 22.

[4]R. Summers, "Human figurines...", in OPNMSR, vol. III, no. 21A (Human Sciences) (1957), pp. 72-74.

while in the north there were neither evident elites, nor an increased trade with the coast, both were appearing in the south, in which Later Iron Age cultures preceded by two centuries their northern counterparts. At this period gold was mined on the plateau. Ivory was there for the taking, and could be obtained almost anywhere north or south of the Zambezi.[1] Like locally produced goods, gold and ivory probably travelled from one village to another. By early sixteenth century, though, the concept of sambadza (trading, in Shona) was already well established together with market places.[2] A degree of specialization in trade is thus indicated. The new pattern of settlement, with increased pupulations in the inhospitable lowveld of the south, may have facilitated movement in general, and movement of goods in particular. In the hot, dry, and wild beast-infested lowveld the spreading settlement of the Leopard's Kopje culture bearers must have been a boon for human contact. Henceforth, a continuous line of villages connected the main settlement area on the plateau with the copper deposits of Messina, and the salt deposits of the Kalahari. The Sabi valley has not yet revealed a similar proliferation of sites, nor traces of the caravan trade route some authors envisaged. Yet it was the most direct route of access outflanking the eastern mountain ranges. The relative abundance of imported goods in sites on the south of the plateau, compared with their northern counterparts, indicates that coastal trade went through the south eastern

---

[1]Governor de Lacerda e Almeida, in his trip of 1797-8, saw 50 elephants within 10 leagues on the Zambezi. See F.J. de Lacerda e Almeida, Diario da viagem de Moçambique para os Rios de Sena, Documentos para a historia colonias Portuguesas, (Lisbon; Imprensa Nacional, 1889), p. 12. In the late 1930s elephants were still met with between the coast and the plateau in herds of hundreds; see, J.Quintinha, Manica e Sofala Cadernos Coloniais, no. 50 (Lisbon; Ediçoes Cosmos, n.d.), p. 34.

[2]See letter of Veloso to Rei, Documentos, III (1964), p. 183.

approaches to the plateau.[1]

The Zambezi has always been the best waterway of the region. The Limpopo and the Sabi are navigable some distance from the coast, but both flow in inhospitable regions. The rise and flourish of Great Zimbabwe was coincidental with a similar affluence on the coast.[2] It was, then, not the easiest route to the plateau which determined the direction trade took in the prefifteenth century period. Although Sofala remained a trading station after the decline of Great Zimbabwe, its trade routes followed the river valleys in a north-westerly direction, to the Manyika area. Manyika provided another access to the plateau, which was apparently not extensively used in the early Later Iron Age period.[3] In the upper Sabi area there were copper mines, which may have added to the intensity of movement between that part of the plateau and its westerly neighbours.[4]

---

[1]The main protagonist of the Sabi trade-route, who went as far as suggesting a drying-up of an inland lake connected with the Sabi, is R. Summers. See his Ancient mining (1969), pp. 206-210. For earlier presentations of the idea, see R.N.Hall, Great Zimbabwe, Mashonaland Rhodesia (London; Methuen & Co., 1905), pp. 63, 67, 291-2. The Sabi is navigable only to its junction with the Lundi from the coast; Mauny claimed it could be used only downstream. See Benzies, "Lundi and Sabi rivers, 1906", (National Archives of Rhodesia NAR HMss, BE 8/11/2), who also remarked on the sparse population immediately along the rivers at the time of the expedition; R. Mauny, "Notes on the Zimbabwe-Sofala problem", in SAAB, 14, 53 (1959), p. 20. The chain of forts supposedly protecting the route is just not there. See H. von Sicard, "The ancient Sabi-Zimbabwe trade route", in Monumenta, 4 (1968), pp. 56-61. Compare P. Garlake, Great Zimbabwe (1973), p. 160; there are few beads in Musengezi and Harari sites although they inhabited some of the best gold regions of the plateau.

[2]T. Huffman, "Rise and fall...", JAH (1972), pp. 363-364.

[3]See R. Summers, Inyanga (Prehistoric settlement in Southern Rhodesia), (Cambridge; The University Press, for the Inyanga Research Fund, 1958), p. 214; idem, Ancient ruins (1971), p. 162. In the Inyanga culture area glass beads are virtually absent. Zimbabwe type sites in the area are obviously extensions of the centre of Great Zimbabwe northwards, implying a later extension of trade into the Rusape area. See P.Robins and A.Whitty, "Excavations at Harleigh Farm...", SAAB (1966), pp. 61-80.

[4]The Zimbabwe culture people were trading copper with the northwestern Ingombe Ilede culture people, which may or may not indicate a contemporary

The watershed of the plateau, which is higher and cooler than the areas east and west of it, created a rough dividing line between a south-western Later Iron Age group, and an eastern one. In the south-west, the Leopard's Kopje people developed a culture, distinctive by its pottery, while the Great Zimbabwe people east of them developed a parallel culture. Both were smelting and working gold, and both were trading with the coast.[1] The Harari and Musengezi cultures, their northern counterparts (roughly covering the present Tavara-Korekore speaking area, and part of the present Zezuru-speaking area) succeeded the Early Iron Age cultures at a time when the southern groups were already developing elites. The change in the north, like in the south, was apparently brought about by immigrants.[2] The fact that it differed from both southern groups in spite of being later in appearance, may point to a northern origin. The Urungwe district still held a distinct character, which may point to the migration not having followed a route through it.

There could have been contact, for barter purposes, and possibly also marriage, between neighbours of different groups. The specialization of the people of the Sinoia group during the EIA period, and that of the Ingombe Ilede people during the LIA, in production of copper for trade,

---

use of the Sabi mines. See Garlake, Great Zimbabwe (1973), pp. 115, 160.

[1] T. Huffman, "Rise and fall..." (1972), pp. 360-361, is categorical about the distinction between the two pottery traditions, while Garlake is more open to possible links. See his Great Zimbabwe (1973), pp. 157-158.

For general outlines of both cultures, see op. cit. and K.R.Robinson, "The Leopard's Kopje culture: a preliminary report on recent work", in Arnoldia (Rhodesia), 1, 25 (1965), and idem, "The Leopard's Kopje culture, its position in the Iron Age of Southern Rhodesia", in SAAB, 21 (1966), pp. 5-61.

[2] T. Huffman, "Guide..." OPNMR (1971), p. 40; Garlake, Great Zimbabwe, pp. 159-60.

points to such contacts. Many of the potential indicators of human contact are, however, perishable goods. Salt, wooden articles, cloth, and foodstuffs rarely survive, and when they do, it is extremely difficult to indicate their source. Copper can be certainly pin-pointed to a source when it is preserved in typical ingots made for trade. But such finds are few.[1] Iron tends to corrode in the acid soils of the plateau. Beads are the most raliable indicators of human contact, but they testify to contact with the coast only. Indeed, their relative quantities in sites may suggest probable contacts on the plateau too; they support the notion that trade with the north-west of the plateau was passing through the area of the southern cultures.[2] Beads are also indicative that the volume of trade was such that it could still be handled at that stage by inter-village barter.[3]

At the time that Later Iron Age cultures were being established in the north, their counterparts in the south were undergoing a process of change. In the grazing areas of the south large villages clustered around defendable hills.[4] Hill sites are very prominent in Shona oral histories, relating to later periods. They are mostly explained in terms of defensibility. The tendency to settle on hills, where water-carrying becomes a real burden for the women, must have been caused by reasons similar to those of the later Shona groups. Wealth in the form of cattle,

---

[1] P. Garlake, Great Zimbabwe, pp. 115, 160; 'cloth finds are still rarer, see, T.N.Huffman, "Cloth from the Iron Age in Rhodesia", in Arnoldia (Rhodesia, 1971), 5, 14.

[2] P. Garlake, op. cit., p. 160.

[3] op. cit., p. 132.

[4] P. Garlake, "Mapela...", Arnoldia (1968); idem, Great Zimbabwe (1973), p. 156. Many Early Iron Age sites, on the other hand, were clearly not located with defence in mind. See K.Robinson, "Early Iron Age... Chibi...", SAAB (1961), pp. 96-97.

easy to transport and always available, was now present in the villages. There may have been a coincident growth of population which sharpened competition over resources.[1] There is circumstantial evidence, then, pointing to a new form of contact between the village communities - raiding. Farming had its share, too, in the new population lay-out, as the fertile heavy soils of Matabeleland became the sites of dense groups of villages.[2] Gold mining, as opposed to exploitation of alluvial gold deposits, is evident without doubt for the first time in that period. Relative abundance of glass beads coincided with the fourishing of the coastal towns related to the trade with southern Zambezia.[3] Trends apparent in previous centuries, population concentration, a growing volume of trade, and possible violent competition over resources, thus became accentuated by the thirteenth century A.D. The universality of these trends is evident in Radio Carbon dates of that period for both a Leopard's Kopje and a Zimbabwe site.

Stone masonry, part of the life of the Later Iron Age people in the south since their settlement there, was becoming more extensive. It may have had some defence functions, but it appeared to have been above all a

---

[1]Those changes were internal developments, not the introduction of a new immigrant group, as pottery testifies. P. Garlake, "Ancient ruins..." in Rhodesian History (1970), p. 23; Huffman, "Rise and fall...", JAH (1972), p. 356.

[2]K. Robinson, "Leopard's Kopje... preliminary...", Arnoldia (1965), p. 2. P. Garlake, Great Zimbabwe (1973), p. 156. In some areas the need for defence is apparent already in the late stages of the Early Iron Age. The Coronation phase of the Stamped Ware tradition on Surtic Farm shows no concern for defence, while its successor phase, Maxton, on the same site, is located with very obvious defence considerations in mind. T. Huffman, "Guide...", OPNMR (1971), p. 39.

[3]R. Summers, Ancient mining (1959), pp. 184-194, claimed mining on the plateau as early as the sixth century A.D. Recent research, however, now changed the dating of early mining of gold to the Later Iron Age period.

prestige item, produced to announce the presence of people distinct from the farmers around them.[1] The thirteenth century, in which all this was happening, saw also a change in the relative strength of the two southern groups. Beforehand, the Leopard's Kopje people had many known sites, spread all over Matabeleland, and down the Shashi-Shashani to the Limpopo. The Zimbabwe group had only a few known sites.[2] With a sudden flourishing, the Zimbabwe group developed stone structures equal in scale to the major sites of its western contemporary. The masonry of their walls was superior to that of the Leopards Kopje people, and their affluence in imported goods is much more apparent.[3] These were accompanied by an expansion, which left in its wake about 150 known sites. The main drive of the Zimbabwe group expansion was northwards and northwestwards. Zimbabwe sites are found in areas bordering on the Leopards Kopje culture area. Their apparent poverty and unimportance indicate they were marginal sites. From the thirteenth century onwards, then, a co-existence of two large groups is evident, which were not, apparently, maintaining intensive contact with each other.

See T. Huffman, "Ancient mining and Zimbabwe", Journal of the South African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, (1974), pp. 238-242.

[1]The early walls may have served as cattle enclosures. See K. Robinson, Khami Ruins (1959), p. 8. The walls of the Leopard's Kopje culture were of the supporting type, carrying platforms. Some of them were also built with defence as a serious secondary consideration in mind. Both those walls, and the Zimbabwe type walls, clearly display prestige and high status of those dwelling inside them. See P. Garlake, "Mapela...", pp. 2, 8; K. Robinson, "Leopard's Kopje... preliminary...", Arnoldia (1965), pp. 3-4; P. Garlake, Great Zimbabwe (1973), p. 157.

[2]P. Garlake, "Ruins...", in Rhodesian History (1970), p. 23.

[3]op. cit., p. 25; idem, Great Zimbabwe (1973), p. 132; R. Summers, Ancient Ruins... (1971), pp. 164-165.

A small elite group was apparent by now in both Southern cultures. Its emergence signified a change in the history of communications on the plateau. The social and technical context of human contacts were to remain essentially the same to the twentieth century. The geographical division of human groups also showed remarkable continuity from the inception of Iron Age cultures south of the Zambezi. There might have been people in the Early Iron Age cultures who wielded more power than others. The archeological record, however, fails to reveal them. The elite of the southern, Later Iron Age groups, is very clearly marked off from the majority of the population in its way of life. The elite members were not aliens. They represented an internal development in the societies of the plateau. Yet they were obviously able to make others perform various tasks for them. In other words, they were able to put demands, to which others responded. This was a recurring process, which allows a search here for patterns of contact between elite and its periphery.

At Mapela, an elite site of the Leopard's Kopje area, the elite was small, aloof from its human environment on an upper platform, and screened by stone walls.[1] The elite's huts were distinct in construction, too. Mapela has not the lush environment of Great Zimbabwe, hailed as an explanation of the latter's wealth.[2] It is also outside the gold-belt of Matabeleland. Yet it has massive stone walls, and more beads

---

[1]The Leopard's Kopje culture produced more sites than did the Zimbabwe culture. Yet elite sites of the latter are by far better known. P. Garlake's study of the Mapela site provides some insight into the former elite. His study of Great Zimbabwe, superceding all previous works on it, forms the basis for discussion of its elite. See P. Garlake, "Mapela...", Arnoldia (1963); idem, Great Zimbabwe (1973), pp. 155-157, for Mapela; op. cit., for Great Zimbabwe.

[2]R. Summers, Zimbabwe mystery (1963), pp. 78-79.

(i.e. wealth) than in any other Leopard's Kopje site. The wealth associated with the elite is, therefore, not always explainable by environment.

The skills distinguishing elites may be prowess in war and hunting, proficiency in crafts, or religious office. The Mutapa elite of the sixteenth century possessed many of the above attributes. The Great Zimbabwe elite was controlling an apparent early state organization.[1] Let us check which of the above skills it possessed, and what did such imply for the communications of the plateau.

The non-defensive nature of elite sites implies apparent peaceful acceptance of the elite's rule. The latter is true of the Mapela site, which at the same time is built with defence clearly in mind.[2] Thus war, and mobilization for it, cannot be ruled out for the pre-Mutapa period. Great Zimbabwe's successor, the Khami culture, has sites as non-defensive as the former. Yet the Rozvi of Dombo had to fight hard for the Khami area. Then the Rozvi rulers, who resided in some of these sites were renowned for military prowess.[3] Furthermore, Ruanga, a late Zimbabwe

---

[1] T. Huffman, "Rise and fall...", JAH (1972), pp. 364-365.

[2] P. Garlake, "Mapela...", Arnoldia (1968), p. 2; Mapungubwe on the Limpopo, a very rich elite site related to the same culture, is located and built in a similar defensive-minded way. See L. Fouche, Mapungubwe. Ancient Bantu civilization on the Limpopo (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1937), p. 3.

[3] See N.J. Walker, "The Matabeleland excursion; part II: Later Iron Age", Rhodesian Prehistory, no. 9 (1972), pp. 3-7. Compare "History of the natives of Gwelo , 16.II.1906, in file A 3/18/28, NAR; F.W.T. Poselt, Fact and Fiction (Bulawayo; Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Company; 1935), p. 141; S.M. Kumile (trans. G. Fortune), "Three Kalanga praise poems", NADA XI, 2 (1975), pp. 184-188; and S. Mudenge, "The role of foreign trade...", JAH (1974), pp. 377-381).

site, assumed as non-defensive a nature as other Zimbabwe sites, despite having apparently been occupied by force.[1] Its dating brings it into the period of Mutapa expansion in the same northern regions. And the people of the expanding Mutapa did not earn their nickname of korekore (locusts) for peaceful settlement.[2] The Mutapa elite was ascribed roots in the Zimbabwe culture ~~Mutapa elite~~.[3] The record of Ruanga, and the Mutapa expansion, may be deviations from Great Zimbabwe's elite practice. More probably, it indicates that military activities, and mobilization, cannot be ruled out for the Zimbabwe area. Indeed inter-elite battles were recorded for as early a period as the 1490s.[4] The range of mobilization may be indicated by the size of later armies.[5] People were thus most probably mobilized at least in later stages of the Great Zimbabwe culture. Contact in the form of war or raids, is also apparent for the elite in the Leopard's Kopje area.

---

[1] P. Garlake, Great Zimbabwe (1973), pp. 164-165.

[2] D.P. Abraham, "Early political..." (1962), p. 63; and p. 79, n. 25.

[3] Ibid., p. 75, n. 5 and passim; P. Garlake, op. cit., pp. 198-200.

[4] Letter of Diogo de Alvaçova to Rei, Cochin, 20.XI.1506, in Documentos I (1962), pp. 393-395.

[5] During the 1569-74 expedition the armies of the Mongas, near the Lupata gorge, were estimated at 10 to 12,000, than at 16,000; even if the numbers were exaggerated, there must have been a few thousand there. See Father Monclaro, "Relaçao da viagem que fizerao... na conquista de Monomotapa no anno de 1569", in G.M. Theal, RSEA III (1899), p. 192.

Mobilization of another kind seemed obvious to anyone watching not only structures like The Great Enclosure of Great Zimbabwe, but also the massive stone platforms of Leopard's Kopje sites like Mapela. Huge numbers of people were envisaged as being recruited for the task. Garlake has, however, proven recently that The Great Enclosure built of a million blocks of stone, could be completed within four years, by 400 men.[1] The building of smaller zimbabwes would have required proportionately smaller labour forces. Their apparently rapid building[2] implies a reliance on followers of the elite. If a similar ratio was maintained between both elements as that calculated for Great Zimbabwe, then smaller zimbabwes would have had a commoner population of 60 to 150. That should have sufficed to carry out their construction. Traditions of the Rozvi, and the Venda, also spoke of accepting tribute in stone for the construction of their stone walls.[3] Those traditions have since been interpreted differently, as relating to symbolical rather than to large scale tribute.[4]

---

[1]The notion of labour "to an enormous and incalculable account" was propagated by R.N.Hall, Great Zimbabwe (1905), p. 278; in spite of G. Caton-Thompson's ridiculing of the idea, it was still strongly implied in R. Summers' works on Zimbabwe. Compare G. Caton-Thompson, "Recent excavations at Zimbabwe and related ruins in Rhodesia", J. Afr. Soc. 29 (1929), p. 137; and idem, The Zimbabwe culture (1931), p. 13; Summers, Ancient ruins (1971), p. 13: "it can only have been organised by someone... who had at his disposal a large and varied labour force..."; and cf. P. Garlake, "Zimbabwe ruins..." (1970), p. 26 and idem, Great Zimbabwe (1973), p. 195. In the first work Garlake estimated the numbers to be even lower.

[2]Idem. "Zimbabwe ruins..." (1970), p. 23.

[3]K. Robinson, Khami ruins (1959), p. 159; H.A.Stayt, The Bavenda (Oxford University Press, for the International Africa Institute, 1931), p. 6.

[4]R. Summers, Ancient ruins (1971), pp. 172-3.

Large-scale mobilization was not, most probably, carried out. Yet a symbiosis of elite and non-elite groups is evident. At the *floruit* of the Zimbabwe culture, the capacity of its sites did not exceed 750 adults altogether. About a fifth lived in Great Zimbabwe itself, itself, which community could have been self-sufficient. The rest, in groups of six to fifteen adults, were scattered in another 50 sites, which could not have been viable economic units.[1] A non-hostile, co-operative population around is evident.[2] Their ratio to the elite was estimated at ten to one in Great Zimbabwe.[3] In the Mutapa state, only the ruler himself, with one of his chief wives, occupied the central enclosures of their zimbabwes.[4] A large number of junior wives, whose number was estimated in hundreds, surrounded the central enclosure. Now, the Mutapa elite claimed descent from the southern elites. Its way of life was within the same framework of a Later Iron Age society. Men of standing expressed their status, and bolstered it in such contexts, by the acquisition of many wives.[5] It is very probable, therefore, that the neighbouring commoners could have been wives and their kinsmen, or men who had received wives from the elite. Such affinal relationships could have been the link of the residents of the central enclosures with the people around them. Archaeological statements are of necessity

---

[1] P. Garlake, *Great Zimbabwe* (1973), pp. 195-6.

[2] *idem.*, "Zimbabwe ruins..." (1970), p. 26.

[3] *idem.*, *Great Zimbabwe* (1973), p. 164.

[4] See A. Bocarro, *Decada... dos feitos dos portugueses no Oriente*, extracts in G.M.Theal, *RSEA*, vol. III (1899), p. 358.

[5] See, for one of the early statements of Shona polygamy, C. Alcantara Guereirro, "Inquerito em Moçambique no ano de 1573", in *Studia*, 6 (1960), p. 13.

silent about such possible kinship ties of the elite. Thus only the apparent politico-religious relationships are stated.[1] The designation of the non-elite groups as commoners, retainers or followers, though accurate, tends to support the same impression.[2] A community of relations, however, could render services as part of their kinship obligations. Pottery vessels, for example, of elite sites, reveal a unique absence of pots for carrying water or cooking. The implication is of household chores performed outside elite enclosures.[3] If the inmates of the enclosures, however, were rulers and chief wives - it could conceivably have been junior wives and daughters fetching water and cooking outside. Such was the position in the later Mutapa state.[4] Local retainers, then, could have been relatives as well.

Contact was maintained not only between elite and commoners. Inter-elite contacts are also apparent. The unity of material remains in all the Zimbabwe group sites, and what is seen as the rapid diffusion of changes in building style, led to the elite being viewed as a tightly knit group, maintaining contact over hundreds of miles.[5] While building

---

[1]For example: "The very small numbers of people who could have actually lived in the enclosures must have been dependent on much larger populations for food and labour and this must have been accepted by the latter without friction or physical coercion." P. Garlake, "Zimbabwe ruins..." (1970), p. 24.

[2]R. Summers, Zimbabwe mystery (1963), p. 82; P. Garlake, Great Zimbabwe (1973), pp. 164, 195-196.

[3]op. cit., pp. 112-113.

[4]See p. 107-8 above.

[5]P. Garlake, "Zimbabwe ruins..." (1970), p. 22. In some ruins there are two building styles evident within one generation, forming a functional unity. This implies the importation of new styles from Great Zimbabwe and their use side by side with the old style known to the local members of the elite. Garlake applied here a tradition attributing such wandering artisans to the later Rozvi state. See, K.R.Robinson, "A history of the Bikita district", NADA 34 (1957), p. 76.

skills would be carried by males, pottery styles were the preserve of women.[1] Groups of men and women, then, were carrying elite techniques and life style from Great Zimbabwe into its periphery. Many of the sites were short-lived, and were abandoned within a generation or two. The only way in which the archaeological evidence can be interpreted is that provincial elites are manifest here. This is not to say that they all belonged necessarily to the same kin group, or that all the sites maintained contact with Great Zimbabwe at all times. In the Mutapa area, dynasties for which descent was claimed from the Mutapa were of different kinship associations. The Mutapa rulers were Nzou (elephant), while those of Teve and Danda were Moyo (heart), and that of Manyika Tembo/Shumba, (elephant/lion).[2] In the southern state of Butua, associated with Khami culture, a successor-culture to Great Zimbabwe, Tumbare and Chihunduru were members of the ruling elite, Tumbare probably being the ruling lineage. They were of the Soko (monkey) and Shava (eland) clans respectively.[3] In the same way the prestigious Great Zimbabwe

---

[1] F.W.T. Posselt, Fact and Fiction (Bulawayo; Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Co., 1935), p. 103; H. Kuper, "The Shona", in idem, A.J.B. Hughes, and J. van Velsen, The Shona and the Ndebele of Southern Rhodesia (London; Int. African Inst. - Ethnographic Survey of Africa, Southern Africa, part IV, 1954), p. 27.

[2] See D.P. Abraham, "The Monomotapa dynasty", NADA (1959), pp. 61-62; 64; C. Bullock, The Mashona (Cape Town; Juta and Co., 1928), pp. 96-115; Posselt, op. cit., pp. 19-20, 33-35; A. Rita-Ferreira, Agrupamento e caracterizaçao etnica dos indigenas de Moçambique (Lisbon; Junta de Investigações de Ultramar, 1958), pp. 45-48: E. Alpers, "Dynasties..." JAH (1970), pp. 211-212; R.H. Baker, "The Mutupo among the Wamanyika", NADA (1925), pp. 48-54.

[3] F. Masola Kumile, "Three Kalanga praise poems" (trans. G. Fortune), NADA XI, 2 (1975), pp. 183-188; Posselt, op. cit., p. 141; Baker, op. cit., p. 53; H. von Sicard, "The origin of some of the tribes in the Belingwe Reserve", NADA, 32 (1955), pp. 78-80.

elite may have established local rulers belonging to the same elite, but not necessarily to the same kin group. The peaceful acceptance of the handfuls of elite members in the periphery, could perhaps indicate some kind of personnel interchange between Great Zimbabwe and its periphery. In the following chapters it will be shown how in two of the successor states to the Zimbabwe culture, young men were recruited to serve the rulers in return for wives. Some of them were later sent into the provinces as rulers. There is little we know of the clan organization of the Great Zimbabwe people. Yet within a short period of its decline its offshoots in the north were found to be the Karanga, living and organized in much the same way as ethnographers found them centuries later. It was suggested that some of the decorations found on the Great Zimbabwe bowls and carved monoliths correspond to the totem animals of Shona clans, the baboon, ox, zebra, bird and crocodile.[1] If those animals indeed represented clans of elite members, it could have been a channel for members of the elite to assume control of their clan-members in the provinces.

Contact apparently took part between elite sites on a provincial level too. Groups of smaller elite sites around the large secondary centres make sense if interpreted as related to their provincial centres. Chumnungwa, in the Belingwe district, is the most impressive in a group of a few sites within one day's walking distance of it. It lies halfway between Great Zimbabwe and the farthest outlying Zimbabwe-type settlements; the nearest known "ancient" mining area is about a day's walk away. Yet

---

[1] R. Summers, Ancient ruins (1971), p. 164. Of the baboons, oxen, zebra, birds and crocodiles which appear there, only the ox can be associated with one of the major successor-dynasties, the Rozvi, whose totem Moyo is understood as the heart of an ox.

it is richer than any of the other sites in the border area of the Zimbabwe and the Leopard's Kopje cultures. It is also the only one of the sites in the area in which evidence of gold smelting and working was uncovered.

Chumnungwa was clearly much more prosperous, and its walls evidence more prestige, than its neighbours. It either ruled the area as far as the gold deposits to the west of it, or possessed goods to barter the gold for. The limiting of gold smithing to Chumnungwa may indicate a special position of goldsmiths, which might have been a privileged craft, related to the elite.[1] One clear aspect of contact in the Zimbabwe elite area, then, was transporting gold from the mining areas to the smithing sites in the centres. In the sixteenth century, rulers were rewarding their miners with cattle.[2] It is probable that a similar process was occurring here. In that case, one has to assume wealth in other forms than gold concentrated in the elite centres. Matendere, between the Sabi and Nyadzidzi rivers in Buhera, another late Zimbabwe type site, offers support to that hypothesis. It is situated in an area poor in minerals. There might have been exploitation of the iron deposits of Mount Wedza to the north of it, or the Dorowa deposits, but there is no clear evidence of links of extensive iron production to the

---

[1] For Chumnungwa, see R. Hall and W. Neal, Ancient ruins (rep. 1972), pp. 227-234. Also P. Garlake, "Zimbabwe ruins", RH (1970), passim. Compare to the relationships of iron-working craft, wealth accumulation, and chiefly status, in the Njanja history, centuries later. See J.M.Mackenzie, "A pre-colonial industry: The Njanja and the iron trade", NADA, XI, 2 (1975), pp. 204-206; this ties up with I.R.Phimister's recent hypothesis that the emergence of Great Zimbabwe was due to exploitation of adjacent alluvial gold deposits. See his "'Ancient' mining near Great Zimbabwe", in S. Af. J. of Min. & Metallurgy 74, 6 (1974), pp. 233-237.

[2] J. De Barros, Asia III (1945), p. 397.

Matendere group of sites.[1] The surplus in wealth which produced elites prosperous enough to construct the different elite sites of the area could have been, therefore, cattle. In an area like that of Great Zimbabwe it could have taken the form of large cultivated fields. In an area like Mapela of the Leopard's Kopje culture it could have been cattle.

Other late Zimbabwe extensions to the north, like Tsindi in Marandellas, and Harleigh Farm in Rusape, cannot likewise be related to gold mines, and the prestige of their elites must have derived from wealth in other forms.[2] Some Later Iron Age sites, like Chedzurgwe of the Ingombe Ilede group, still derived a large part of their diet from hunting.[3] Extensive hunting could probably supply ivory. In the Karanga world one tusk of each elephant killed belonged to the owner of the land on which it was killed, the provincial ruler. Such customs most probably date back to pre-sixteenth century days, and could make ivory a component of accumulated wealth. Mapungubwe on the Limpopo, and Ingombe Ilede just north of the Zambezi are related to copper production. Copper was in great demand on the plateau for ornamentation. Its producers enjoyed apparent prosperity. Burials of elite members in both sites reveal wealth of ornaments of copper and gold parallel to that of the goldworking Chumnungwa site.[4] Copper ingots, made especially for barter purposes,

---

[1]For Matendere sites, see, G. Gaton-Thompson, The Zimbabwe culture (1931), pp. 134-142; R. Summers, Ancient ruins... (1971), p. 50. For relationships to mining areas, see idem., Ancient mining (1959), p. 140.

[2]R. Summers, loc. cit.

[3]P. Garlake, "Urungwe...", SAAB (1970), p. 31.

[4]R. Hall and W. Neal, Ancient ruins... (rep. 1972), pp. 229-230; L. Fouche, Mapungubwe (1937), pp. 2 and passim; B. Fagan, "Excavations at Ingombe Ilede, 1960-2", in idem. et al, Iron Age..., vol. II (1969), pp. 64-78.

were recovered in the gold-rich Chumnungwa site, together with a double-gong. Both indicate importation, with a clear lead to the Ingombe Ilede culture sites of the Urungwe and cross-Zambezi areas.[1] Coastal imports are more numerous in the southern sites than in the Ingombe Ilede site, which may point to inter-elite contact between the Zimbabwe and the Ingombe Ilede groups rather than direct links of the copper producers to coastal trade, and to exchange of the different kinds of wealth in their possession.[2] Centres are proven thus to have been related to either control, or the ability to barter, gold, copper and probably ivory, and most probably to wealth in cattle.

It is the relationship of such secondary centres to the prominent centre of Great Zimbabwe which might prove the most difficult to read from the archaeological record. Chumnungwa was thought by Hall and Neal to have been the capital of the Filabusi-Belingwe area; Matendere they described as the capital of the Buhera-Sabi regions.[3] This is highly probable. But did Great Zimbabwe ever control the elites of Matendere and Chumnungwa? The Tower of the Great Enclosure, together with the turrets and the monoliths, may be interpreted as representing tributary rulers in the provinces.[4] If that was the case, were all the provincial centres represented there? What was involved in their tributary position?

---

[1]R. Hall and W. Neal, op. cit., p. 233; P. Garlake, Great Zimbabwe (1973), p. 161; R. Hall, Great Zimbabwe (1905), p. 121.

[2]P. Garlake, op. cit., p. 161; B. Fagan, op. cit., pp. 135-137, 237-238.

[3]R. Hall and W. Neal, op. cit., p. 227; also p. 38, for their list of "capital" sites.

[4]P. Garlake, op. cit., p. 122.

It is impossible to determine. Were provincial centres involved in military mobilization? Great Zimbabwe itself at its height could mobilize a few hundred adult males for construction. They could conceivably be mobilized for other purposes, like fighting, or communal hunting. With the addition of neighbouring secondary centres, of which there are four around the site, a force strong enough by nineteenth century Shona standards could be raised. Thus no compelling evidence links provincial centres to a possible military effort.

Religion is probably the one aspect of contact outside trade and building which can be traced with some certainty. In our context it is irrelevant whether the elite was born out of its religious standing, or of wealth accumulated by trade.[1] Once it was established, it is evident that religion was an important aspect of elite attributes and activities. Relationships were suggested between the religious system of the Ingombe Ilede culture in the Urungwe district, and that of early phases of the Zimbabwe culture.[2] The figurines representing those sets of beliefs, however, tell us little of contact involved in their worship.[3] The

---

[1]For a recent summary of the argument of the 'trade versus religion' controversy (Hall-Summers versus Caton-Thompson-Garlake), see T.N. Huffman, "Rise and fall...", JAH (1972), pp. 353-366.

[2]P. Garlake, "Urungwe...", SAAB (1970), p. 38.

[3]The only possible clues to organized worship represented by figurines may be found in the concentration of figurines around Bulawayo, which R. Summers, "Human figures in clay, and stone from Southern Rhodesia and adjacent territories", Occ. Pap. Nat. Mus. S. Rhodesia, vol. 3, 21A (Human Series), p. 71, claimed was not a fortuitous occurrence. Since then, however, figurines were recovered in sites elsewhere, which may change the basis of that statement. See P. Garlake, op. cit., p. 38; idem., "An Iron Age site of the Mukwichi river, Urungwe", SAAB (1971), p. 147; T. Huffman, "Test excavations... Makuru...", Arnoldia (1973), p. 9. In the "Altar" site in Umtali, 134 soapstone figures were recovered in 1904. There is no doubt a centre of worship existed there. See D. Randall-MacIver, Mediaeval Rhodesia (1906; Rep. New York, Frank Cass &

apparent religious function of some structures at Great Zimbabwe, and sites like Nhunguza, clearly associate elite sites, congregation of people, and worship. The "shrine" of Nhunguza was apparently used by groups of people, who were from outside the elite site, as the size of the hut, relative to the site, shows. The shrine, apart from the later decline of monoliths, is reminiscent of later Shona shrines of ancestral spirit mediums.[1] On the other hand, it differs radically from the cave shrines of the Mwari cult of the Matopos, the only religious framework in the Shona world with an organized "priesthood".[2] The shrine of Nhunguza thus points to convergence of people on elite sites for religious purposes. But there is no indication in it of an "institutional priesthood" differing from the elite.[3] Movement to the shrines would have probably been most intense before the rains, and after the harvest, for propitiating the supernatural and then for thanksgiving.[4] In times

---

Co., 1971), pp. 35-37; also M.A.Bordini, "The 'Umtali Altar' site: a preliminary report", Rhodesian Prehistory, no. 13 (1974), pp. 7-9.

[1]P. Garlake, "Zimbabwe ruins...", RH (1970), p. 25. Compare the descriptions of Shona mediums in M. Pacheco, Diario... (1883), pp. 44-45 and M. Gelfand, Shona ritual (Capetown; Juta & Co., 1959), pp. 67-68 and passim.

[2]M.L.Daneel, The god of the Matopo hills: An essay of the Mwari cult in Rhodesia (The Hague; Mouton, 1970), pp. 40-45. Mwari speaks through an oracle, whose words are relayed to the audience via another official of the cult; no broadcasting through the acoustic qualities of the cave, like that presumed for Great Zimbabwe by Summers (Zimbabwe mystery (1963), p. 101), is apparent. The myths of the voice of Mwari relate to him as speaking from any natural object, like trees, and rocks. See N.G., "Magango Hutari", NADA (1933), pp. 30-31.

[3]P. Garlake, "Zimbabwe ruins...", RH (1970), p. 25, used the term in an implicated connection to the Mwari cult.

[4]M. Gelfand, loc. cit.

of calamity, like drought, the congregation for worship would probably have been even more intense. The possibility of there being an organised cult officialdom in Great Zimbabwe, functioning like the Mwari cult, with provincial delegates and messengers, would add an exciting dimension to its communications. The Mwari cult is known as having had special links to the Rozvi.[1] Scholars linking the Mwari cult to Great Zimbabwe did it on the premise that the Rozvi resided there until the early nineteenth century. Once that was disproved, Mauch's description of ceremonies in Great Zimbabwe in the nineteenth century, and the potentialities of a cave in the site for magnifying sound, became the supporting evidence for the hypothesis. Mauch's descriptions, unfortunately, do not resemble the Mwari cult practices in the Matopos, while the cave is unlike any cave used by the Mwari cult, and its use is subject for dispute.[2] The myth relating the movement of the cult from Great Zimbabwe to the Matopos[3] supports the obvious religious significance of the place. But a projection of the present Mwari cult on to Great Zimbabwe must still await firmer support.

---

[1] G. Caton-Thompson, The Zimbabwe culture (1931), p. 178; W.F.Posselt, Fact and Fiction (1935), pp. 141-143.

[2] What Mauch described in 1872, and Hall in 1905, were sacrifices of black oxen, very reminiscent of ordinary Shona sacrifices, and different from the oracline nature of worship of the Matopo shrines. Compare Daneel, loc. cit., with E.E.Burke, (ed.), The journals... (1969), pp. 215-16; R. Hall, Great Zimbabwe (1905), p. 93; and L.J.W. "A legend of Zimbabwe", in The Outpost (Rhodesia), 13, 6 (1935), p. 15. I am indebted to Dr. D.N.Beach, and to Dr. T.N.Huffman, for fruitful discussions on the subject.

[3] J. Blake-Thompson and R. Summers, "Mlimo and Mwari", NADA 33 (1956), p. 56. M. Daneel, op. cit., pp. 22-26. D.P.Abraham, "The roles of 'Chaminula' and the Mhondoro-cults in Shona political history", in E. Stokes and R. Brown (eds.), The Zambezian past (Manchester; The University Press, 1966), pp. 33-35.

Apart from relations between various components of the elite, and between those and the peasantry, there must have been a large amount of contact for other purposes. The Shona are affiliated to exogamous clans. This probably reflects pre-sixteenth century practices.

A man had to seek his wife from among people of a different clan. That would imply both going out of the village for that purpose, and encouraging settlement of people of clans different from your own at your village. Kinship ties tend to cut across village and local groups of villages.[1] Contact for working the land together, a common Shona practice, must have been important in bringing people together during the farming season. Various ceremonies call for congregation of kinsmen together, but here again, one is in the realm of probable conjecture. Barter for local goods may have increased with the emergence of elites, consuming prestige items. Spindle whorls found in many sites may point to trade in wild cotton, found mainly in the river valleys.[2] A hoard of iron tools found in Zimbabwe indicates trade on a large scale in these goods.[3] The vital role the hoe played in the Iron Age farming must have made it the most stable commodity in the barter system. Hoes would wear out in a few years, and therefore demand would be regenerating, unlike the

---

[1] J.F.Holleman, "The pattern of Hera kinship", Rhodes-Livingstone Paper no. xvii (Oxford; The University Press, 1949), pp. 42 et seq.

[2] Spindle whorls may also be associated with other functions, yet their spread inland after their appearance on the coast clearly indicates weaving. See P. Garlake, Great Zimbabwe (1973), pp. 116-117; T.N. Huffman, "Cloth from the Iron Age...", Arnoldia (1971).

[3] R. Hall, Great Zimbabwe... (1905), p. 132; P. Garlake, op. cit., p. 132.

demand for ornaments.[1] Salt leaves no traces of being bartered, yet the Mutota story of moving his political centre to the north, because of the availability of salt there, emphasises the importance of salt to the Iron Age people. Zimbabwe and some of its sites were importing copper from the Ingombe Ilede group. The people of that group were not smelting iron, and therefore probably importing it. The people of Mapungubwe were probably importing gold.[2] The incomplete nature of our knowledge prevents further unspeculative observations of such contact.

Coastal trade, the best documented aspect of communication in later period, is still largely an enigma in the Great Zimbabwe era. That trade was channeled via Great Zimbabwe is evident in its affluence, and in the abundance of coastal impacts. Direct evidence for presence of coastal people on the plateau is very limited.[3] In the absence of clear indications of routes taken by bartered goods - all that can be said is that contacts sponsored by demands for gold from the coast did take place. People from the coast took part in the movement of goods; their activity extended to trade in local contexts as well.[4]

---

[1] Interviews with Chief Gideon Nenguwo, Chihota Tribal Trust Land (TTL), 16. viii. 1973; "many years"; Mr. Njere, Chihota TTL, 21. viii. 1973, "Three years", with which many other informants agreed.

[2] L. Fouche, Mapungubwe (1937), p. 25, and compare B. Fagan "Excavations..." in idem et al Iron Age... II, (1969), p. 136.

[3] P. Garlake, Great Zimbabwe (1973), p. 132.

[4] G. Caton-Thompson, The Zimbabwe Culture (1931), p. 37.

The argument about the relations of elite sites to trade routes can, therefore, only clarify how routes in this period, if routes they were, cannot in most cases be defined with the evidence at our disposal.[1] External relations with coastal "Moors" are, then, evident. The extent of direct contact with people belonging to the Indian Ocean cultural zone, with wider horizons and more advanced techniques is indeterminable. This aspect of communications comes clearly to light only with the records of the sixteenth century and onwards.

In this chapter some aspects of contact among the people of Southern Zambezia were discussed, against their historical background. The division of the plateau into southern and northern sections, seems to have been valid for both the Early Iron Age, and the later Iron Age periods. The economy of mixed farming carried on to the end of the nineteenth century, with the patterns of contact implied thereof. Most human activity concentrated in and around villages; the vast majority of inter-community contact was probably between neighbouring villages. Contact with Indian Ocean coast traders is evident, but there is no indication that it took a form other than goods seeping through from village to village. The later Iron Age people increased the scope of economic activity with introduction of cattle, and probably a greater use of iron

---

[1]Hall claimed that elite sites were located either on "ancient" mining areas, or on trade routes.
R. Summers revived Hall's theory, with an exhaustive research of pre-industrial mining in Rhodesia and the geographical adjacency of those to Iron Age sites. See R.N. Hall, Zimbabwe (1905), pp. 291-92 and passim; R. Summers, Ancient Ruins (1971), p. 160; idem, Ancient Mining, esp. pp. 137-141. The view negating such associations was presented by G. Caton-Thompson, The Zimbabwe... (1931), p. 190, and P. Garlake, "Ruins...", RH (1970), p. 24.

implements. Both the range of the settled area, and the scope of people's movements, were enlarged as a result. Gold mining, almost certainly begun at that period, added to the scope of human contact by its call for communal effort, and for seasonal convergence on gold deposits. Increased gold output was related to a greater volume of trade, which meant increased human contact. The fundamental change in the pattern of plateau communications, though, was the emergence of elites, and of recognisable centres. With it movement for religious purposes becomes apparent, though on what scale it is hard to determine. The presumed presence of the Mwari cult, with an organised personnel regularly communicating over hundreds of miles, is far from proven. But convergence on elite centres for worship most probably did take place, at least on a regional basis. Surplus produce and export commodities like gold likewise found their way to elite centres, at least regionally. Labour was not mobilised on a large scale. Services rendered were probably in the nature of kinship obligations. The deployment of people for war, on the other hand, cannot be ruled out, in spite of the non-defensive nature of elite sites. Of all the Zimbabwe-type elite sites, Great Zimbabwe maintained a conspicuous paramountcy of wealth, size and prestige. There may have been a political paramountcy involved, but we are in the dark when it comes to the workings of this apparent nascent state. Rather than speculate on the state communications of the Great Zimbabwe elite, let us turn to its successors. The way state systems on the plateau managed to organize people in similar social and ecological contexts might also throw some light on the pre-sixteenth century elites.

Chapter I

The Mutapa complex of states and its communications

A. Of emperors, kings, and their changing fortunes

The Mwene Mutapa state made its entry into documented history with one of the first-hand accounts of southern Zambezia, a letter of 1506.[1] It was to remain part of that history for the next four centuries. It was known by the dynastic title of its rulers, meaning "master pillager" in the Shona language. The Portuguese rendered the name mostly as "Monomotapa". Its ruler, already known in the early sixteenth century to possess "grande terra", was called "rey" (king), like other rulers in the hinterland of Sofala.[2] This Portuguese nomenclature conformed to local African usage. The subjects of the Mutapa used to address their ruler as mambo or ishe.[3] Both titles were widely used in the lands around the Zambezi. Rulers of greatly differing powers and authority were called by either, or both.[4] By mid-century, however, the Portuguese found it expedient to fit another grade in their scaling of African rulers south of the Zambezi. Having designated the rulers of Teve, Barwe, and Danda

---

[1] Letter of Diogo de Alcaçova to Rei, Cochim, 20.XI.1506, in Documentos, vol. I (1962), p. 393.

[2] Letter of G. Veloso to Rei, (1512), in op. cit., vol. III (1964), p. 183.

[3] João dos Santos, Ethiopia Oriental (1609), extracts reprinted and translated in G.M. Theal, RSEA, vol. XII (1901), p. 288.

[4] Ishe is the common title for chiefs in Shona society. Mambo is used to this day by the ruling houses of the old Mutapa area. See F.R. Byron, Acting NC, Mtoko to Acg CNC, 23.XI.1903, file N 3/6/3, (National Archives of Rhodesia). It is also a generally used honorific epithet today, as the writer had ample opportunity of observing during field work carried out in 1973 in the Chihota and Buhera areas.

"reis", kings, they gave the Mutapa, with claims to overlordship over them, the title "imperador". This usage persisted for the next four centuries, despite varying fortunes of Mutapa rulers over this period. The Portuguese insisted on designating "imperador" even rulers whose rule, according to the author's description, did not exceed by far the bounds of their royal residence.[1]

Such retentions of titles like "empire" long after they had little justification in the realities of power and authority, is not unique to the Mutapa state. A case in point were the rulers of Kotte in Ceylon.[2] Unlike the Mutapas, the Ceylonese rulers laid expressed claims to their title.[3] So, the tenacious usage of "emperor" for the Mutapa ruler is a matter deserving some thought. There are occasional references to "Rey Manamotapa",[4] but only rarely was any other ruler designated "emperor".[5]

---

[1]Antonio Pinta de Miranda, "Monarchia Africana" (ca. 17667) in L.F. de Carvalhu Dias (compiler), "Fontes para a historia, geografia e comercio de Moçambique (sec. XVIII)" in Anais (Lisbon) 9, 1 (1954), p. 111. (Same also published in A.A. de Andrade, Relaçoes de Moçambique setecentista, (Lisbon; Agência Geral do Ultramal, 1955), pp. 303-312.

[2]G.D. Winius, The fatal history of Portuguese Ceylon (Cambridge, Mass.; Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 6.

[3]In an inscription of the early sixteenth century, the ruler is called ... "His majesty, the Imperial Lord ... who is the Supreme Overlord of the three Sinihalas, the sovereign overlord of other kings ..."; See S. Paranavitana, "The emperor of Ceylon at the time of the arrival of the Portuguese in 1505", in University of Ceylon Review XIX (1961), p. 23.

[4]This was very infrequent, see M. Barretto, "Informação..." in G.M. Theal, RSEA, III, p. 482, where he speaks of 'O imperio de Quiteve.'

[5]Letter of viceroy to Rei 13.I.1721, in A.B. de Bragança Pereira, Arquivo Português Oriental (Nova ed.) (Bastora, Goa; Tipografia Rangel) Tomo I, vol. III, part III (1940), p. 37.

Even the Changamire rulers of the southern part of the plateau were normally referred to either as 'reys', or by their dynastic title.[1] Modern scholars inherited the old Portuguese usage.[2] Unlike contemporary writers, however, the distinction of the Mutapas as emperors is no longer reserved. If the Mutapas ruled an empire, the argument is implied, then, mutatis mutandis, so did the rulers of another karanga supra-polity, that of Changamire.[3]

Objection to the usage of terms such as "empire" was expressed already with the beginning of modern research into Mutapa history. G.M. Theal, one of the pioneers of this research argued that the term carried with it misleading associations. Empires, he claimed, connoted highly organised, technically advanced polities. All the Mutapa had in common with polities like the ancient Mediterranean empires was its claim to overlordship over other polities.[4] Even if we were to ignore all associations to famous predecessors, there still remains the question of the meaning and validity of the imperial status accorded to the Mutapa polity. The dictionary defines

---

[1]See Fr. A. da Conceição, "Tratado dos rios de Cuama, 1696" in O Cronista de Tissuary (Goa), II (1867), p. 41; Fr. M. de Santo Thomas, "Resposta dada pelo reverendissimo administrador..." (1723) in ibid., IV (1869), pp. 43-44.

[2]E. Alpers, "The Mutapa and Malawi..." in T, Ranger (ed.) Aspects... (1968), p. 1 et passim. Likewise, W.G.L. Randles's book is entitled L'empire du Monomatapa du XVe au XIXe siècle (Paris and The Hague; Mouton, 1975). This book came to my hands when the above was already being typed; consequently, only odd references to it could be inserted at this late stage.

[3]One of the most recent examples of such usage is S. Mudenge's "The role of foreign trade in the Rozvi empire: a reappraisal", in JAH XV, 3 (1974), pp. 373-391.

[4]G.M. Theal, History and ethnography of South Africa before 1795, vol. I, (London; S. Sonnenschein & Co. Ltd.; ; 1907) pp. 293-294.

an empire as a "Supreme and extensive political dominion"; also as "An extensive territory (esp. an aggregate of many states) ruled over by an emperor, or by a sovereign state."[1] Then there remains the problem of the extent of Mutapa power, and of the ways in which its supremacy was expressed. The examination of the political communications of the Mutapa state seeks to answer these very questions.

The imperiality of the Mutapa state provides the framework and the main theme of the present chapter. It will be looked at along two interlocking lines of approach. On the one hand it is attempted to clarify the relationships between the different grades of the political organization of the people of southern Zambezia. The nature of "imperador", "rey" and "regulo" (petty king) is examined, and their relations, as expressed in their communications. On the other hand, the development of such relations through time is examined. Put in concrete terms, when our sources speak of a kingdom of Manyika, belonging to the empire of Mwene Mutapa - it is attempted here to define what form that belonging took; was it similar to the way smaller political units belonged to Manyika; and how consistent and durable was the tie between the "kingdom" and the "empire". For both purposes the examination relies on a combination of contemporary sources, and modern ethnographic material. Prior to the nineteenth century, Portuguese authors are our main source of information of

---

[1]See The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, (3rd revised ed.) ed. by C.T. Onions (Oxford; The Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 602.

daily life in southern Zambezia. Some of them rolled a wide view of life and customs like the ethnographer extraordinaire Frei João dos Santos.[1] Still, even he might find the enumeration of many details to be an "unending and tedious task", to be avoided.[2] Most other contemporary sources are far less engrossed with African life. Mainly luso-centric, with trade and administration their major themes, such sources afford only rare glimpses into the workings of African society. But such small pieces of information, put together, support the larger bodies of contemporary data. Thus the shaky foothold of literacy in the Mutapa court, described by chroniclers, is confirmed by the ease of forging Mwene Mutapa's letters.[3]

Our reconstructed map of Mutapa communications is far from complete. Yet the main features of that state, as they clearly emerge already in sixteenth-century sources, are perhaps best looked at from the communication angle. Some of the Mutapa's features

---

[1]See the extracts from his "Ethiopia..." in Theal, RSEA, vol. VII (1901), pp. 1-371; Later-day ethnographers, like J. dos Santos Junior, are enthusiastic of his achievements; See his Contribuçâo para o estudo de antropologia de Moçambique (Porto, 1944), p. 62.

[2]A. Bocarro, "Decada..." (bef. 1649), in Theal, RSEA, vol. III (1899), p. 357.

[3]Compare A. Bocarro, "Decada, composta por Antonio Bocarro, chronista de sua magestade, do estado do India, dos feitos dos portuguêses no Oriente", in Theal, RSEA, vol. II (1898), p. 369; with Letter of Vice Roy to the Secretary of State, A.G. Pereira, 30.I.1738, in Pereira, Arquivo Portuguès Oriental, T. I, vol. III, part IV, p. 158.

were its possession of extensive territories, "grande terra";[1] the existence of a court, central to these territories, with a set of dignitaries, and a body-guard;[2] and the administering of the territories by provincial rulers. The provincial rulers were said to visit the court regularly. The visits entailed some form of tribute presentation.[3] Such aspects of the state are sometimes presented as rather static qualities.[4] Or it might be claimed that the maintenance of vast territories required constant presence of the ruler's army. When lines of communication became over-extended, control was no longer possible.[5] The purpose of the following is to examine the nature of this control over "grande terra". What were the demands put to the provinces, which apparently called for military backing, is one of the key questions to be answered. Then come questions concerned with the means of conveying the demands from centre to periphery. These means include both techniques of conveyance,

---

[1]G. Veloso to Rei, (1512), in Documentos... III (1964), pp. 183, 185.

[2]Domião de Góes, "Chrônica do felicissimo rei Dom Manuel..." (1566), in Theal, RSEA, vol. III, p. 130.

[3]Ibid.

[4]See, for example, D. Chanaiwa, "Politics and long-distance trade in the Mwene Mutapa Empire during the sixteenth century", in International Journal of African Historical Studies, vol. 5, 3 (1972), p. 427; Changes in government are not dealt with, beyond stating that "the administrative fabric of the empire disintegrated...", with the weakening of the state in the 17th century; The list of officials given is based on seventeenth century sources.

[5]E. Alpers, "The Mutapa and Malawi..." in T.O. Ranger (ed.) Aspects (1968), p. 10. By "communications" Alpers was apparently referring to the possibility of moving military forces.

and the personnel deploying them. The way demands went, and responses came back, and its relations to the general flow of information, is interlocked with the composition of the personnel of the central settlements. The extent of the courts, the forces at their disposal, immediate and otherwise, had a bearing on their functioning as communications centres. In that context, the degree of specialization of dignitaries of the courts, and of other servants of the ruler, is of special relevance. There being subsidiary courts, their composition and inter-relations form an important aspect of the examination of controlling the Mutapa state.

Understanding the "imperiality" of the Mutapa, then, calls for a dive into its communications. And the examination of its political centres as communications centres is laid against a background of the techniques at their disposal. Only when set within the social and geographical environment can the use of techniques become meaningful. It is argued here that at all levels, Mutapa political centres were essentially self-sufficient. Even the "emperor", and his family and dependents, relied mainly on their own efforts for growing their own food. The size of the court, and the number of the ruler's followers, to an extent depended on the carrying capacity of the land in the immediate environment of the royal residence. A combination of the unpredictable rainfall on the plateau, and the inefficiency of Karanga storage facilities, prevented accumulation of foodstuffs in political centres. This in turn limited the number of specialized administrators a ruler could maintain. Consequently, the intensity of contact by specialized messengers between centre and periphery was at most times limited. Most communications between centre and periphery, and

between centres, were of an informal, irregular nature. Flow of information to and from centres was largely external to formal communications channels. Coupled with very few mnemonic devices for preservation of information, this situation allowed provincial centres a large degree of independence. The rulers' reliance on mass mobilization of peasants for enforcement of demands made on the periphery enhanced provincial fissiparous tendencies. Farming activities limited the period available for compaigning, and environmental conditions made movement of armies difficult in some parts of the country, at both the wet and the dry seasons. The reliance of armies on the country for their maintenance made mobilization difficult in periods of want, when tribute was most needed, and its enforcement necessary. A peasant army, living off the land, also meant that the further peasants lived from the centre - the less likely they were to be mobilized. The limited number of specialized court functionaries; and the limitations on regular use of force in their support, limited effective control over subjects.

Mutapa administration can be understood in the context of Karanga social organization. The laws regulating marriage, it is argued, had a decisive role in it. All Karanga groups practiced clan exogamy. This compelled one to look for spouses outside one's kin group. Marriage also always involved obligations on the part of a man towards his in-laws. Rulers had control over a large number of females. This provided rulers with a very strong bond with which to secure the services of a number of men. It is argued that the servant-messengers, the backbone of Mutapa communications, were largely recruited in this way. The Karanga succession system was

another factor determining Mutapa administration. Regulated succession in most Karanga polities made every male whose father had been a ruler, eligible to succeed to his father's post. Succession regulations thus made sons and brothers potentially dangerous to be given positions of authority in the centre. The muzukuru (nephew) therefore emerged as a component of Mutapa courts, besides the bonded son-in-law.

It will also be argued that the limitations of the communications system combined with succession laws to curb the extent of demands made upon subjects. The large number of available candidates for succession in every ruling lineage provided a ready mechanism for reaction to pressure. There were always leaders available to lead people unsatisfied with present conditions elsewhere. A ruler had, consequently, to be wary of placing too heavy demands on his subjects. Frequent mobilization over large areas was one such demand. Tribute in labour and goods was another. The limited number of immediate court followers, and the lack of a commissariat system, prevented regular moves against secessionist groups. Tribute, therefore, was normally maintained at a low level, making an elaborate machinery for its collection and transportation superfluous. This in turn corresponded to the inability of rulers to maintain more than a limited number of functionaries.

Mutapa administration and government, however, can be discussed only with relation to the history of the state. Especially, as the three main periods of its history are seen also as stages in the development of its internal organization. At least according to some early records there seems first to have been a relatively tightly-knit state. It extended over a huge area, including the whole plateau,

and the low lands between the plateau and the Indian Ocean. This period appears to have extended from the establishment of the Mutapa state, some time in the fifteenth century, into the middle of the sixteenth century.[1] This state of affairs seems definitely to have been changing already at the beginning of the sixteenth century.[2] Late in the same century, the Mutapa's court still possessed an impressive list of "grandes". Yet its claims to overlordship were sadly reduced to the northern part of the plateau, and only part of the lowlands.[3] The intensity of its control over these much shrunken areas seems to have fallen considerably, too. So had the pomp and numerical strength of the Mutapa court.[4] The third stage seems to have followed the Changamire Dombo's ascendency on the plateau in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Apparently reaching its lowest ebb in the middle of the following century, the Mutapa seems to have lost most of its territory to rebellious vassals. Furthermore,

---

[1]See De Góes, "Chronica..." in Theal, RSEA, III, p. 130; later authors, like Miranda, in "Monarchia", in "Fontes..." Anais (1954), p. 111, were attributing obedience and respect, lacking by mid-eighteenth century, to days of old. For a modern protagonist of the "Golden Age" theory, see D. Abraham, "Early political..." in Historians... (1962), pp. 63-64; idem, "Maramuca..." JAH (1962), pp. 213-214. The "vast feudal domain" is presumed to have collapsed with the death of Mutapa Matope ca. 1480.

[2]Ca. 1494 a ruler from the south, Changamire, overran and ruled the Mutapa state for four years. In 1506 Diogo de Alcaçova wrote, "Toloa, with the remaining son of the amyr now wages war..." against the Mutapa. See his letter to Rei, in Documentos, I, pp. 392-93.

[3]A. Bocarro, "Decada..." in Theal, RSEA, III, pp. 355-358.

[4]J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia," in Theal, RSEA, VIII, p. 287.

it seems to have lost the last vestiges of its power and control over any of the lands still under titular government.[1]

Change in the Mutapa state was apparently occurring at two different levels. A contraction of the territory recognizing some sort of Mutapa overrule is apparent at one level. A loosening of control is apparent at another. Already in the 1490s Changamire and Torwa, two rulers to the south of the Mutapa, attempted to take over the Mutapa state. By 1506 they were beaten back, but the Mutapa lost for ever any claim over the southern state of Butua.[2] Not a decade passed before the ruler of Teve set out to consolidate his rule between the plateau and the coast of the Indian Ocean. The Portuguese in Sofala were informed it was a rebellion against his overlord, the Mutapa ruler.[3] This process continued during the following centuries. In the early seventeenth century the Mutapa ruler was still attempting to assert his paramountcy over Barwe by force. By the nineteenth century Barwe was independent and its vassalage days remembered as having been "in the days of the conquest".[4] The pattern was not

---

[1]"...não tem o Imperador do Monomatapa na sua Breve duração mais dominio que o seu Zimbabwe...", A. de Miranda, "Monarchia...", in "Fontes...", Anais (1954), p. 111.

[2]Diogo de Alcaçova, loc. cit.; D. Abraham, "Early political...", in Historians (1962), p. 66.

[3]Letter of D.A. da Silveira to Rei (post 18.VII. 1513) in Documentos, vol. V (1966), p. 568; E. Axelson, Portuguese in South-East Africa 1488-1600, (Johannesburg; Witwaterstrand University Press, 1973), pp. 89-90.

[4]It was Mutapa Gatsi Rusere, in 1608, who was defeated on his mission. Gatsi Rusere faced wide popular opposition in any case, and Barwe continued to be claimed by the Mutapas. See Bocarro, "Decada", RSEA, III, pp. 372-3, and compare A.C.P. Gamitto, "Succeçao e acclamaçao dos reis do Baroe", Archivo Pittoresco, vol. I (1857-8), p. 28.

always uniform. In the third quarter of the seventeenth century Portuguese sertanejo power was biting large areas off Mutapa territory. A large portion of those lands was retrieved by Mutapa Samatambira Nyamandu (c. 1719-1740).[1] By the third quarter of the nineteenth century the Mutapa could claim only the lands of Chidima and Dande along the Zambezi.[2]

A change of the nature of control, by the Mutapas, of their state, is also apparent. The apparent change may have been partly due to the differing relationships between observers and the state they were describing. The information contained in early documents was derived mainly from Muslim traders and Portuguese sertanejos like Antonio Fernandes.[3] The martyrdom of D. Gonçalo da Silveira in 1561 provided a brief insight into the Mutapa court. The real insight came only later, with the advent of educated clergy into the Mutapa heartlands, following the Barretto expedition of 1569.[4] Once direct observations from the centre of the Mutapa state are available, some elements attributed to Mutapa officialdom in earlier,

---

[1] M. de Santo Thomas, "Resposta...", Chronista de Tissuarry, IV (1869), p. 62.

[2] A. Pacheco, Diario..., (1883), passim.

[3] H. Tracey, "Antonio Fernandes, Rhodesia's first pioneer", in Rhodesiana 19 (1968), pp. 1-26.

[4] Letter of Antonio Caiado to friend (1561), in A.P. de Paiva e Pona, Dos primeiros trabalhos dos portugueses no Monomotapa (1892), pp. 70-73. The account of Father Monclaro, who accompanied the expedition, was followed by the excellent works of the missionary Dos Santos and the archivist Bocarro. See Pe Monclaro, "Relaçao da viagem q fizerao os Pes da Companhia de Jesus com Franco Barretto na conquista de Monomotapa no anno de 1569" in Theal, RSEA, III (1899), pp. 157-254.

coastal-derived documents, disappear. The hypothesis to be examined in the following pages is that the distinction between periods, as far as official communications are concerned, is perhaps overdrawn. The point of vantage most appropriate to look at the changes is that favoured by our sources, the Zimbabwe, the Mutapa's centre.

B. Of Zimbabwes and officials

The Mutapa ruler's residence was the zimbabwe, literally meaning "a stone house". Zimbabwes were not exclusive to Mutapa rulers. Other rulers in the area had them too, especially, it seems, those who could boast of the title "rey" in Portuguese descriptions of them.[1] Symbolically, the zimbabwe moved with the ruler. "Zimbabwe" was applied to the location of the ruler, within or without his royal settlement.[2] In practice, however, zimbabwe was a fixed location, providing a permanent point of reference for the state at any one time. Except in extremely disturbed conditions, like those of the mid-eighteenth century, zimbabwes persisted throughout a ruler's lifetime, and in some cases much longer.[3] Zimbabwes seem to have been not only political centres, but population centres too, with a relatively large number of inhabitants. The Mutapa zimbabwe was reported to be "very large" in the early years of the

---

[1] In the 18th century the rulers of Teve, south of the Zambezi, and of the Maravi, north of it, boasted zimbabwes of their own. See D. de Melo e Castro, "Noticia do Imperio Marave e dos Rios de sena mandada ... ao governador Pedro de Saldanha Albuquerque" in "Fontes para a historia...", Anais (1954), p. 139.

[2] Fr. M. de Santo Thomas, "Respostas..." in Chronista de Tissuary IV (1869), p. 44.

[3] Ibid., pp. 61-62.

sixteenth century. In the first quarter of the seventeenth century it was still "said to be a large city".[1] Dos Santos gave the number of all the males of the Teve capital as three to four thousand.[2] Multiplied by three[3] at least, this implies a population of about ten thousand souls. This is twice the whole estimated population of the Manyika state in the eighteenth century. It is also higher than the largest Ndebele settlement known to us on the plateau.[4] It

---

[1]Duarte Barbosa, "Livro em que da relaçao de que via e avia no Oriente" (1516) in G.M. Theal, RSEA, vol. I (1898), p. 95. The later source was written by an anonymous Dominican friar, titled "Ethiopia Oriental" and was already in Lisbon by 28.VI.1631; Quoted from Theal, RSEA, II, p. 436.

[2]Dos Santos, "Ethiopia..." in G.M. Theal, RSEA, VII, p. 208; He then went on to say (p. 290) that everything relative to the Mutapa is "almost exactly the same as what I have related of Quiteve ... which I shall not repeat here...."; his figures can thus be safely applied to the Mutapa as well.

[3]This appears to be the ratio of males to others in African society south of the Zambezi. In 1950, Bernardi found over 60°/o of children in a Zezuru village, with the majority of households monogamous. Cabral, studying the lands of Inhambane district, estimated the ratio there to be 0.707 men to every 1.1 woman, and 0.935 children. His ratio of men to women is very similar to Bernardi's; his percentage of children out of the total population is much lower, which may be due both to inadequate census procedures and to the high mortality prevailing at 1910, which probably reflects conditions in previous centuries. B. Bernardi, "The social structure of the kraal among the Zezuru in Musami, Southern Rhodesia", Comm. from the School of African Studies (N.S.) (University of Cape Town; 1950), p. 60; A. Cabral, Raças, usos e costumes dos Indigenas do districto de Inhambane (Lourenço Marques; Imprensa Nacional, 1910), p. 60.

[4]Descripçao Corografica de Manica, Caixa 17, A.H.U. Lisbon; A.W. Vaughan Williams, who visited Bulawayo in 1889, estimated its population at 15-20,000. See p. 121 in typescript of his "A visit to Lobengula in 1889", NAR, HMss WI 10/1/1; more modest estimates are the norm, however. See J.G. Wood, "A visit to Lobengula, 1887", NAR, HMss WO 1/4/1, p. 84, who calculated 4,000 inhabitants.

seems as if Dos Santos included in his figures the men of all the dunhu (ward), under the Mutapa's immediate control It was common practice in Karanga society to muster the force of whole dunhus, or wards, for such collective hunts.[1] Indeed, in an area where large settlements contained two to three hundred males - everything above that must have seemed "very large" to the observer.[2] Counting 300 guards, with their dependents, a few hundred royal wives, numerous musicians and jesters, and other officials, leads to a clear impression of one to two thousand adults as the zimbabwe's population at the turn of the seventeenth century.

At the centre of the zimbabwe, as Fr. Julio Caesar reported in 1620, the ruler had a few enclosures, with his own huts in them. This 1620 zimbabwe conforms to elite sites studied by archaeologists - and in them the 'royal' centre is rather small.[3] The Portuguese called it sometimes "palacio", but it was clearly not even like the residence of coastal Muslim sultans.[4] It is probable that a sacral aura was associated

---

[1]See Burke (ed.), Journal of Karl Mauch... (1969), pp. 159-163.

[2]When Captain Graham travelled to Barwe in 1892, he counted in 3 major settlements 302, 295 and 353 huts respectively. A ratio of 1-2 adults per hut produces an adult population of 600-700, of which slightly less than a half were probably men. See, Report of Capt. M.D. Graham, encl. in no. 102, Loch to Lord Knutsford, 30.III.1892, in Great Britain. Public Records Office (Hence: PRO) Colonial Office. "Affairs of Bechuanaland and adjacent territories" (October 1892), CO 879-36, p. 230.

[3]Compare Garlake, Great Zimbabwe (1973), pp. 195-196.

[4]Dos Santos, Ethiopia... in RSEA, VII, passim, speaks of "palacio". Both he and Fr. Julio Cesar, however, make it clear that an enclosure with huts in it is what they saw. This was still true by the middle of the eighteenth century, as I. Castano Xavier wrote: "The palaces and the rest of the houses ... are of wood...". See his "Noticias dos Dominios Portugueses na Costa de Africa Oriental, 1758", in A. de Andrade, Relações... (1955), p. 173. Compare with the description of the house of the sheikh of Sofala where all the houses of the village were built African style, "only the houses of the king showed being those of the principal man of the land, with patios and big houses, the major of which was made like they do in the body of churches without a cross..." de Barros, Asia, vol. III, p. 388.

with the royal huts. Public political life was carried out outside them. Only rarely was anyone, apart from females of the royal family and "pure" pages, allowed in.[1]

This conforms to the apparent effort of Zimbabwe builders to conceal elite huts from the public eye.[2]

This, in turn, may be related to the element of divine kingship in Mutapa government. Rulers were imitated in public, and even a defeated Mutapa could be killed only in a prescribed way.[3]

The focus of the state was, then, a few enclosed huts, Immediately next to them the Jesuit Caesar saw a settlement sprawled over a League's distance.[4] With huts far removed from each other, the plan is reminscent of Great Zimbabwe; or the khami elite sites, the southern counterpart of the Mutapa elite.[5] In the settlement lived the wives of the ruler, who numbered at least hundreds.[6]

---

[1] Pe Francisco de Sousa, Oriente Conquistado..., vol.II (Lisbon; Oficina Costa Deslandes, 1710), p.837; B. Leite, D. Gonçalo da Silveira (Lisbon; Agência Geral das Colonias, 1946), pp. 169-170; M.F. de Faria e Sousa, Asia Portuguesa IV (trans. M.V.G.S. Ferreira; Livraria Civilizaçaô, 1945), pp. 170-171.

[2] See Summers, Zimbabwe Mystery (1963), p. 102; Robinson, Khami Ruins (1959), p. 41.

[3] D. de Melo e Castro, "Noticia do imperio Marave e dos rios de Sena..." (20.I.1763), in "Fontes...", Anais (1954), p. 138.

[4] Francisco de Sousa, op. cit., p. 837.

[5] Robinson, Khami Ruins (1959), p. 23.

[6] Julio Cesar said they were over a thousand in number; Conceiçâo described them as "innumerable". See F. de Sousa, Oriente Conquistado... (1710), II, p. 837; Fr. da Conceiçao, "Tratado ..." in Chronista de Tissuary, II, (1867), p. 66. Compare to Garlake's cautions definition of similar non-elite inhabitants in Great Zimbabwe (1973), pp. 195-196.

The Mutapa evidence shows clearly that though the number of central enclosed huts may be only nine - many more people directly related to the elite may be found just next to it. This calls for viewing the Great Zimbabwe elites within their social milieu. On the other hand, Mutapa zimbabwes seem to have lacked the prestige display of stone walls. Later than the fifteenth century, it was a "great wooden fence" that separated the ruler from his wives and followers.[1] Similar enclosures housed the chief wives, but the rest of the wives lived outside these.[2] It is significant to note that while some royal wives are mentioned as having had "courts" similar to the ruler's, none of the "grandes" of the realm is mentioned in the same context.

Physically closest to the Mutapa were his personal attendants, the masacariras.[3] At the end of the sixteenth century, and the beginning of the seventeenth, these were sons of what the Portuguese called the "nobles" of the realm.[4] Sharing the ruler's own entrance into the central enclosure, they had to be under twenty years old,

---

[1] A. Bocarro, "Decada..." in Theal, RSEA, III, (1899), p.356.

[2] F. de Sousa, loc. cit.

[3] A. Bocarro, "Decada", in Theal, RSEA, III, p. 357; J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia..." in Theal, RSEA, VII, p. 288.

[4] A. Bocarro, loc. cit.; M. de Faria e Sousa, using much the same sources as Bocarro, mentioned the institution without naming it. He also spoke of the young servants as sons of "grandes", "principal lords" and "nobles". See his Asia Portuguesa (1666-1674), trans. M.V.G. Santos Ferreira, (Livraria Civilização-Editora), vol. IV (1945), pp. 170-171; The relevant extracts are also reproduced in Theal, RSEA, I, (1898), pp. 1-47.

and bound to chastity. This rule strengthens the attribution of sacredness to the ruler's enclosure, by demanding purity of anyone in close contact with him. The pages had a 'capitâo' in charge of them, apparently to make sure their purity was maintained. Transgressions were "severely punished".[1] Pages made the first tier of contacts of the central figure in governement. The pages were divided into two groups, apparently differing in status. Being all of similar qualifications, some of them lived inside the central enclosure, some without. This is credible enough, though there is no indication on what grounds the indoors attendants were chosen. The indoor pages were apparently the more trusted ones. Their continued services of the ruler later on in their career indicates as much. What exactly was the role of the other group is somewhat uncertain. Bocarro, whose information generally tends to be accurate, ascribed to them the role of royal cooks. Under two young men "from among the principal lords of his kingdom" they made and served the food.[2] This conflicts with later accounts, which state that no male was allowed to approach the ruler's table, the servers at the table being females of his family.[3] Bocarro's account is also at variance with normal Karanga practice, being a rare reference to male cooks in historical and ethnographic sources. It is possible there was a change between seventeenth and eigtheenth century practices. If the "cooks" were

---

[1] op. cit., p. 171.

[2] A. Bocarro, "Decada...", RSEA, III, pp. 356-7. M. de Faria e Sousa, Asia..., IV, p. 170-171.

[3] D. de Melo e Castro, "Noticia..." in "Fontes...", Anais (1954), p. 134.

serving food rather than preparing it, then their disappearance in the eighteenth century may indicate a decline in the number of pages available.

The servants nearest to the Mutapa were thus of families mostly not resident in the court. Being young, and lacking the backing of a kin group, they had to be very dependent on the ruler personally. Attending to the ruler, they probably were observers of most affairs of state. Livingstone's description in the nineteenth century, of how such youth had to demonstrate, on return home, the art of government they had absorbed, testifies to that.[1] Their retention as outdoor servants after dismissal from the enclosure,[2] also suggests that rulers could trust the provincial recruits. Right in the centre of the state they constituted a living link between central and provincial rulers. When affairs of their home-province came to be discussed they would probably be around, possibly to have their home knowledge drawn on. Pagery achieved in this way for the Mutapa a dual objective. It brought provincial contact points right into the centre, and ensured loyalty to, and knowledge of, the centre at a personal level, by potential regional rulers. Another consideration may well have been paramount in promoting the presence in court of scions of ruling houses. It may have helped to ensure the loyalty of those houses to the centre. This was claimed to be the case early in the sixteenth century, a period to which De Goes' informants were

---

[1] D. Livingstone, Missionary Travels and researches in South Africa (London, John Murray, 1857), p. 618.

[2] A. Bocarro, loc. cit.

probably referring. He had it that all lords and vassals of the Mutapa sent their sons as hostages to the court.[1] That involved more than merely teaching government ways, as was suggested later in the nineteenth century.[2]

As a communication institution, then, pages had two functions. Being the ruler's nearest personal contacts, they also provided a potential link to provincial centres. This potential gives rise to the problem of the range over which pages were recruited. From an early date such areas did not include the lands between the Sabi to the south and Manyika to the north, between the plateau and the coast. In this area Inyamunda, the Teve ruler, launched a series of wars against the Mutapa. Wars flared up again periodically for three quarters of the sixteenth century.[3] Indeed, by the eighteenth century, Teve was claiming sovereignty on an equal basis to the Mutapa.[4] Wars at the turn of the fifteenth century cut irretrievably any Mutapa claims to overlordship south of the Umfuli.[5] In the late 16th century, the Mutapa claimed to rule over the northern part of the plateau, and a narrow strip along the south bank of the Zambezi

---

[1]De Góes, "Chronica...", in Theal, RSEA, III, p. 130.

[2]Livingstone, op. cit., p. 618; The institution was widespread, and hostages could be found with rulers as far away as the West African states of Ghana, Mali and Songhai. See N. Levtzion, Ancient Ghana and Mali (London; Methuen & Co., 1973), p. 112.

[3]E. Axelson, Portuguese... 1488-1600 (1973), pp. 89 seq.

[4]Fr. M. de Santo Thomas, "Resposta...", in Chronista de Tissuary, IV (1867), p. 45

[5]Abraham, "Early..." in Historians (1962), pp. 63-4.

to the sea.[1] Yet even within this area not all rulers bothered to obey Mutapa orders. The local rulers near the sea are especially mentioned,[2] but there must have been others, like the intractable Mongas of the Kebra Basa rapids.[3]

Portuguese notions of "nobreza" did not necessarily involve considerable power. In feudal Europe, impoverished fidalgos were still nobles. Manyika at the end of the eighteenth century could be crossed by four days' walking. Yet it contained 42 nobles and vassals of its "king", each probably ruling what is termed by the Shona a dunhu, ward.[4] These 42 petty rulers governed a population estimated as smaller than that estimated by Dos Santos for the Teve zimbabwe. The Mutapa could in this way recruit sons of enough "nobles" without going out of his own ward of the state. The fact that pages were sons of "lords" does not necessarily imply, therefore, recruitment on a wide scale. De Goes' claims of a universal recruitment was negated shortly after by Dos Santos, who wrote: "These writers in their description follow ... very incorrect information ... that the other kings of this coast paid tribute to Monomotapa, and that

---

[1]Dos Santos, "Ethiopia..." in Theal, RSEA, VII, pp. 286-7.

[2]See note 1 on the next page.

[3]The Mongas were beatn by the Barretto expedition of 1572, supposedly in the name of Mutapa. By 1694, one of the claimants to the Mutapa throne had again to defend himself against the Mongas. See Monclaro, "Relaçao...", Theal, RSEA, III, pp. 240-244; A. da Conceiçâo, "Tratado...", in Chronista... (1867), II, p. 108.

[4]"Descripçâo Corografica de Manica...", AHU, Cxa 17.

the sons of these kings were brought up and resided at his court..."[1] The denial clearly refers to the people on the coast only, not on the custom in general; yet it provides an example of rulers under Mutapa's overlordship and not contributing to his pagery. Dos Santos explicitly spelt distance as the determining factor.

By the eighteenth century other easterly provinces, like Barwe or Maungwe, were probably not supplying pages to the Mutapa court. By the nineteenth century the system was contained within "Munyai" country, i.e. the Dande-Chidima area.[2] The only certain thing about pagery recruitment, therefore, is that it was a feature of the immediate neighbourhood of the central zimbabwe. The further away from it one went, the less likely it was to take place. Clearer information could provide an excellent indicator of relations between the centre and areas claimed to be under it. Yet a situation can be envisaged where a major source of recruitment for pagery was not royal vassals, but refugees from succession disputes. It was quite common for eligible relatives of rulers to settle under a neighbouring ruler, and await their chance to return home.[3]

---

[1] J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia...", Theal, RSEA, VII, p. 286; "...this sea coast is so distant from his court that even his own vassals who reside there do not obey him..." Santos was disclaiming Osorio's information, which leaned on the same sources as De Goes. (For Jeronimo Osorio and his book of 1571 see W.G.L. Randles, L'image du sud-est africain dans la litterature europeenne au XVIe siecle (Lisbon; Centro de Estudos Historicos Ultramarinos, 1959), p. 72).

[2] D. Livingstone, Missionary travels... (1857), p. 618.

[3] When, in 1614, the Portuguese deposed the ruler of Chicova, near the Zambezi, the Mutapa had an eligible relative to replace him at his zimbabwe. A. Bocarro, "Decada" in Theal, RSEA, III, p. 399. Examples abound in Shona oral histories, see H.E. Sumner, "The Kwenda story", NADA, IX, 4 (1967), p. 3; D. Abraham, "The principality of Maungwe: its history and traditions", NADA, 28 (1951), p. 65; H. Franklin, "Nyaningwe: notes on the Chibi family", NADA (1928), p. 80.

They would have brought with them all the communications advantages of the other pages, knowledge of provincial affairs, and personal links to their land of origin. They lacked, however, relations to provincial government. Some of them, at least, may have been long past the age of pagery when seeking refuge, bringing with them a family and followers.[1] Such could still be recruited into the second group of Mutapa servants, called maveiros in the seventeenth century.

Maveiros were the ex-pages who graduated into outdoors service. They were given lands to subsist on, and served in this capacity for several years, before being promoted to higher ranks.[2] In Karanga society women had such a vital role in farming that land must have entailed marriage as well. The coincidence of land grants with exclusion from indoors service, demanding abstinence, very strongly indicates that this was the case. All the attributes of this group of servants fits neatly with a common Shona institution called kugarira on the plateau, and kupfava in the Teve-Danda area. Under this system women were given in marriage not for bride-wealth, but for services rendered by the husband. Such services to the in-laws continued for a number of years, until the wife-givers were satisfied. Although the bride-wealth system was the norm in Shona society, kugarira seems to have been especially favoured by rulers.[3] Its

---

[1] M. Deyo, "History of the Mutambara tribe, in NADA, 32 (1955), p. 58.

[2] A. Bocarro, Decada, loc. cit.; M. de Faria e Sousa, Asia... IV, p. 171.

[3] See Livingstone, Missionary Travels... (1857), p. 622; H.Ph. Junod, "Coutumes diverses des Ndau de l'Afrique Orientale Portugaise", Africa, 1937, pp. 162-4. Rochford Byron, Acg NC Mtoko, to Acg CNC, 23 Nov. 1903, NAR N 3/6/3.

advantages included binding of the wife-receiver by supernatural sanctions; it also ensured control by the wife-giver over the marriage of at least the first female offspring of the marriage.[1] The evidence points very strongly, then, to the maveiros being mugariri, serving the ruler in return for rights in women, whom the Portuguese called the wealth of the "kaffirs".[2] The land given to them outside the royal enclosure also made the servants self-sufficient in food.

The above two groups of servants at the zimbabwe reveal some features characteristic of Mutapa government: Links between centre and province on a personal basis; Ruler and sub-rulers tied by mutual personal knowledge; Servants closest to the ruler from outside the centre, and competing for the ruler's favours with his own kin group.[3] Recruitment to service was influenced by distance from the centre. Service possibly derived from exclusion from government in the provinces, as much as from being delegated by provincial government. Except, probably, during the stage of indoors pagery, servants maintained themselves. Most probably their main reward lay in women provided by the ruler. The same personnel moved later on into the maintenance of centre-periphery contacts, retaining its characteristics.

---

[1] W. Edwards, NC Mrewa, to Acg CNC, 14 Nov. 1903, NAR N 3/6/3; C. Bullock, The Mashona (The indigenous Natives of Rhodesia), Cape Town and Johannesburg; Juta & Co., 1928), pp. 215-216.

[2] "Kaffirs who are careful to choose laborious wives are the richest, and have most provisions". DosSantos, op. cit., p. 208; also G. Liesegang (ed.), "Resposta das questoes sobre os Cafres, ou noticias ethnograficas sobre Sofala do fim do seculo XVIII", Estudos de Antropologia Cultural, no. 2 (Lisbon; Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, 1966), p. 22.

[3] Significantly, when Fernandes gave examples of witch craft accusation, it was between a nephew and a brother of the ruler. See his letter of 5.XII.1562, in Paiva e Pona, Dos primeiros... (1892), p. 85.

C. The role of the Mutapa wives in the court

The immediate entourage of the ruler included, naturally, his wives and children. Most of these did not share his central enclosure. In the same way that its size probably limited the number of pages,[1] so it did with the number of wives. Only one of the chief wives had her residence in that enclosure.[2] In a symbolic way the central enclosure presented the whole Mutapa government in a nutshell. The central point of the state included the ruler himself, representing the lineage whose ancestral spirits were protecting the land; pages, apparently representing the provincial houses; and a wife, of the royal extended kin group. Some other chief wives had their own enclosures in the zimbabwe. The lesser wives were dependents of the chief wives, working the land and apparently occupying a large number of the "houses" with a piece of garden around them.[3] The smallest number given for the wives of Mutapa ruler is a hundred. That was in the nineteenth century, when only Chidima was left under the Mutapa.[4] The Shona succession system

---

[1]Dos Santos said of the Mutapa suite that it was very limited; he mentions one valet only next to the Mutapa. "Ethiopia..." in Theal, RSEA, VII, p. 288.

[2]A. Bocarro, Decada in Theal, RSEA, III, p. 358.

[3]Ibid.; F. de Sousa, Oriente... II (1710), p. 837. A. de Conceiçao, "Tratado...", Chronista... II (1867), p.66.

[4]D. Livingstone, Missionary travels (1857), p.617.

brought, in many cases, old men to the throne.[1] Collateral succession, combined with polygamy, ensured the existence of a group of eligible brothers whose ages could range over a few decades. Old encumbents would have married sons, with their dependents, around them.[2] The custom of wife inheritance could have added substantially to the household of a Mutapa ruler. A major section of the zimbabwe, and the royal dunhu, must have been therefore occupied by the ruler's immediate kin, apparently also caring for their own maintenance.

It was claimed that the royal wives constituted a communication network which was the reversal of the page system; that the paramount ruler deposited his wives in the provinces. There they ruled, or supplied an extension of the ruler's person. When a wife was established in a province apart from the purely administrative aspect, at least occasional contact between husband and wife was called for. Abraham envisaged visits by the ruler to his distant wives as part of the supervision apparatus of the state.[3] Applying Abraham's theory to an extensive Mutapa household, hundreds of ready made civil servants can be pictured all over the state. It seems, however, that the problem should be approached with some caution. Female rulers are not unknown in Shona history. In the Mutapa

---

[1] See, for example, memorandum of 9.IX.1929, dealing with messengers of chiefs, file S 235/435, NAR.; "A", "A native indaba", The Outpost (Rhodesia), 8,1 (1930), p. 9.

[2] J.F. Holleman, The pattern... (1949), esp. pp. 49 et seq.; Compare to list of "Family trees" compiled by Mr. B.T. Garwe, and by Mr. T.F. Chadambura, of Buhera, Rhodesia.

[3] D.P. Abraham, "The Monomotapa dynasty", in NADA (1959), p. 77.

complex area they are found in Manyika, Teve and Mtoko. In all the known cases, such females ruled either as mediums of a powerful spirit, or as descendants of the local ruling house. In Manyika female rulers are installed by right of their being members of the ruling lineage, and they used to be a common feature of Manyika government.[1] In Teve, at a period when the throne remained unoccupied, the related royal wives still maintained their courts.[2] In Mtoko, the medium of Charewa was traditionally female. Like all mediums, she was chosen through being possessed by a spirit. Unlike most mediums, she seems to have held a governing role rather than a consulting one.[3] Indeed, de Barros, whose informants refer to an early period of the Mutapa, presents a rather different picture. In one of the only references to royal wives established outside the centre of government, he depicts them under an official of the ruler.[4] In all probability, then, Mutapa wives that had "kingdoms pertaining to their houses"[5] may have held them by hereditary right. Marriage with the Mutapa would have been in such cases an enhancement to existing rights.

---

[1] A.H.K. Bhila, "A journal of Manoel Galvao da Silva's travels through the territory of Manica in 1790", Monumenta, 8 (1972), pp. 83; Anon., "Manyika headwomen", NADA (1940), pp. 3-5; R.H. Baker, "The Muttupo among the Wamanyika", NADA (1925), p. 50.

[2] G. Liesegang, "Resposta...", Estudos... (1966), p. 22.

[3] R.G.S. Simmonds, "Charewa, voice of the Rain God", NADA (1964), pp. 60-63; J.F. Holleman, African interlude (1958), pp. 224 et seq.

[4] J. de Barros, Decada, vol. III, p. 394.

[5] A. Bocarro, Decada, in Theal, RSEA III, p. 358.

A possible source of confusion was the Karanga custom to apply the title "great wife" of the ruler to privileged provincial rulers. The Portuguese "capitao" of Massapa was called "captain of the gates" (to the Mutapa's domains) by the Portuguese. For the Mutapa he was a "great wife". Rodrigo Lobo, a powerful sertanejo, and close confidant of the Teve ruler, carried the same title in Teve.[1] Although de Sousa was complaining that he could find nobody who could explain this privilege,[2] it is strongly reminiscent of Tswana customs. Tswana rulers were often honoured by the title "chief wife". It is said to denote their providing the people aplenty, as a chief wife does to her husband, through the produce of her fields.[3] In the same way, privileged local rulers were entitled "great wife" for supplying plenty of food. The application of the title to an official in charge of collecting entry dues from traders, indeed fits well the role of provider. He supplied the ruler with a percentage of all imports coming into the country. In the same way "Inhacanemba", described as the "great wife of Monomotopa", was in fact a ruler decorated by the title, and not a wife. In the list of Mutapa chief wives and their titles, given by the same source, no Inhacanemba is mentioned.[4] In passing it will be noticed that Tswana usage strengthens the notion that rulers'

---

[1] J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia" in Theal, RSEA, VII, pp. 226-7, 271.

[2] F. de Sousa, Oriente..., vol. I (1710), p. 834.

[3] I. Schapera (ed.), Livingstone's private journals 1851-1853 (London; Chatto & Windus, 1960), p. 59.

[4] A. Bocarro, Decada in Theal, RSEA, III, pp. 356, 358.

households in Southern Africa were not free from providing for their own needs, even when receiving tribute.[1]

Most of the wives were resident at the zimbabwe itself. Julio Cesar, in 1620, said the Mutapa had nine "cercas", or enclosures in the zimbabwe. These were apart from the houses of his wives, who numbered more than a thousand.[2] Dos Santos, slightly earlier, said all the Teve royal wives were in the "palace".[3] The Kiteve claimed equal status to the Mutapa, and their court practices were very similar. Even Bocarro does not say specifically that royal wives did dwell in the country. They had lands "pertaining to their houses". These lands could not have been in the very large tracts of the state, ruled by dynasties mentioned by name. Indeed, of all the important "reynos", kingdoms of the realm, none is mentioned as ruled by a royal wife. The wives' domains, then, had to be of those "dominions which are not called kingdoms", probably the domains of an inkosi or fumo. The modern parallel of these two is the sadunhu, ward head, or even samusha, village head. The circuit of 2-3 leagues around Tete (8-12 miles) was governed by eleven such encosses.[4] At the period to which Bocarro refers the Mutapa zimbabwe was near the river Matambo. When in 1599 Chicanda (who settled there after having

---

[1]Tswana rulers had extensive rights over tribute, especially from their San serfs in the Kalahari.
J. Chapman, Travels in the interior of South Africa, I (London; Bell & Baldy, 1868), p. 66.

[2]F. de Sousa, Oriente... I (1710), p. 837.

[3]J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia" in Theal, RSEA, VII, p. 191.

[4]J. Dos Santos, op. cit., pp. 290-291. These encosses could muster about 2,000 men between them.

invaded from across the Zambezi) attacked Mutapa lands - he started with the lands of the royal wives, which were in this part of the land.[1] The "kingdoms" thus shrink to dunhus, and their location pinpointed to the zimbabwe's immediate environs. The role of the "queens" becomes clearer. Their lands could have been within no more than one or two days' walking from the zimbabwe. Within this range it took relatively short trips to visit the ones who resided in their lands. Abraham identified two of Mukombwe's wives as having lived with their own people. Exact location is not given, but it seems that Mukombwe's wife from the Mushowani people lived about fifty miles from his zimbabwe, identified by Abraham's informant as sited on the confluence of Chinhuhwi stream with the Dande.[2] Even considering the climb eastwards from Sipolilo, it is still no more than a three days' walk at the most. The network of wives, then, seems to have been in fact more concentrated than a superficial reading of Bocarro would lead one to believe. Bocarro ascribed ruling positions only to the chief nine wives. Nine women distributed within a range of fifty miles at the most, and probably less, could in this way contribute to the government of the core area only.

Wives of Mutapa did, however, maintain contact between centre and province in an unofficial manner. They are said all to have been daughters of lords and vassals.[3] Karanga exogamy rules

---

[1]A. Bocarro, Decada in Theal, RSEA, III, p. 363.

[2]The location is the present location of the people. Ancient location is not supplied. Abraham, "The ~~Mutapa~~ Mwenemutapa Dynasty", NADA (1959), p. 77.

[3]A. Bocarro, "Decada", RSEA III, p.358.

dictated they would be of lineages other than the Mutapa's Nzou/ Samanyanga. Vatorwa, people external to the ruling clan, were to be found at near range.[1] Political reasons may have sent the Mutapa further afield, in search of marriage alliances. Mukombwe's wife of the Mushowani people was possibly about fifty miles away. Another of his wives, mother of Mutapa Baroma Dangwarangwe, came from the present Mangwendi TTL area; it is a hundred and ten miles as the crow flies from Mukmobwe's zimbabwe.[2] Shona kinship rules demanded presence in certain ceremonies of delegates of the mother's family. Some form of contact had to be kept to satisfy such demands, disregard of which was considered to endanger the offspring of the marriage. Occasionally mothers took their children and went to live with their own people.[3] In the case of Mutapa Baroma, this may well have happened after his father's death.[4] Recruitment of wives, and maintenance of intermittent, unofficial contacts with their kin, were therefore feasible within a range greater than that in which wives were located as rulers.

---

[1] M.F.C. Bourdillon, "Peoples of Darwin", in NADA, 1970, pp. 103-114; J.B. Matthews, "The Mhondoro of Mutota and his village", in NADA (1960), pp. 66-74.

[2] P. Abraham, op. cit., p. 69.

[3] Holleman, Pattern of Hera (1949), pp. 46-48; idem, Shona customary Law (Cape & London; Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 177 et seq.; idem, African interlude (1958), p. 43.

[4] Mukombwe died, according to Abraham, in 1696. His son Baroma succeeded him in 1711, the third son to succeed his father; he died after a short reign, like his brothers, which implies old age, as his father had ruled for 30 years before his death.

Some of the wives filled offices in governing the state, besides ruling their dunhus. The chief wife, called mazarira in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, apparently held a semi-sacred position. The Portuguese describe her as the Mutapa's full sister, but according to Shona terminology this could have meant other members of his own lineage. Traditions of ritual incest at a dynasty's mythical past are common in Shona histories.[1] Portuguese sources mention that both sisters and daughters of the Mutapa were eligible to marry him.[2] This royal incest is reminiscent of divine kingship in ancient Egypt, and seems to tally well with some features of the Mutapa court.[3] Accounts of royal incest in Shona traditions, on the other hand, consistently delegate it to the semi-mythical stage of history. They are always mentioned at the founding generation of dynasties. Details of the participants in the ceremony are specifically mentioned. At later stages of the histories no ruler is mentioned as having married his sister. The mere emphasizing of the act in the early history is indicative of

---

[1] M.A. Pacheco, Diario... (1883), pp. 33-34; D.P. Abraham, "Maungwe...", NADA (1951), p. 64; idem, "The Mutapa Dynasty...", NADA (1959), pp. 65, 74; R. Mtetwa, "The rise of the Duma confederacy 1700-1800: a study of an African state in Southern Zambezia", Henderson Seminar Paper No. 23, Dept. of History, Univ. of Rhodesia (1973), p. 16.

[2] Miranda, "Monarchia" in "Fontes...", Anais (1954), p. 117. Miranda takes it for granted, though, that children are born of such marriage, but he stressed such children were excluded from succession to the throne.

[3] See De Goes, "Chronica...", in Theal, RSEA, III, p. 130. Every little act of the Mutapa was imitated by his followers, compare Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", Theal, RSEA, VII, p. 193.

its unusual nature. The recurrence of names, like Nehanda, in that context in different traditions of different clans, may indicate a common mythical source, upon which all these traditions drew.[1] In Manyika, male confidants of the ruler, who were sometimes married to the female provincial rulers, also carried the title "Nehanda".[2] Mutapa's marriage to Mazarira, "whom he dearly loves",[3] was then, most probably, a symbolical one. This may be referred to in her official name, which seems to be related to the Shona zarira, to close; and zariro, a bar for closing entrance.[4] By extention it is probably related to her virginity. The sacred virgin-sister, mbonga, is common in Shona histories. Mbongas apparently held positions of power in their groups, as they had varanda, or servants, accompanying them.[5] Another indication in the same direction is the residence of the first wife outside the royal enclosure.[6]

---

[1]Under her other name, Nyamita, she appears in the Mangwende myths. M. Gelfand, Shona ritual (Cape Town; Juta & Co., 1954), pp. 40-41; compare D. Abraham "The Mutapa Dynasty", NADA (1959), pp. 61, 74.

[2]Anon., "Manyika headwomen", NADA (1940), p. 4.

[3]Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", Theal, RSEA, VII, p. 288. Compare Conceiçao, "Tratado...", in Chronista... II, p.66.

[4]See M. Hannan, Standard Shona dictionary (1961), p. 702.

[5]Nyemba, the mbonga of the Chihota people in Marandellas is remembered in all versions of the myth as having had servants. See, for example, F.W.T. Posselt, "The Banyemba legend and ceremony", NADA (1935), p. 105. Posselt translates varanda as "slaves". Interview with Mrs. Patrick Faramera, Chihota TTL, 26.VIII.1973; interview with Mr. Furamera, 17.VIII.1973.

[6]It was only the "real wife", the third in rank, who lived in the palace. A. Bocarro, "Decada" in Theal, RSEA, III, p. 358.

The custom of appointing female members of the ruling lineage to rule over dunhus was especially common in Manyika and its environs. Well into the present century they were appointed as washe (chiefs) to inherit male machinda (headmen). Significantly, they were appointed after consultation with the "great spirit" of the Manyika.[1] Mazariras in the Mutapa court were, likewise, appointed to office not by the ruler on his own. The nominator was Ambuya, associated with the shrine of the Dzivaguru cult.[2] The Manyika headwomen were called mazari (sing. muzari), probably related to the same meaning as mazarira. The argument for the accession of a muzari was clearly that it would prevent rival local nuclei of power developing. "If you put a muchinda in charge again he will rise in rebellion."[3]

There is a very strong probability, then, that the mazarira, she of the closed gate, was only symbolically a wife of the Mutapa. This is of vital importance to the understanding of the role of wives in Mutapa government. Wives were not useful components in regional government. They were mothers to groups of sons who were potential contenders to the throne. Numerous disputes over positions of authority are recorded both by external observers, and Shona traditions. These show how real a threat to rulers were the eligible males of the ruling lineage. The Mazarira, therefore, held her position in her capacity as the Mutapa's official sister, rather

---

[1] Anon., "Manyika headwomen", NADA (1940), p. 3.

[2] A. Bocarro, op. cit., p. 357; D.P. Abraham, "The ~~Mutapa~~ Monomotapa Dynasty", NADA (1959), p. 77.

[3] "Manyika headwomen", loc. cit.

than as his wife. In other words, hers was an unusual role among the Mutapa's wives, and not indicative of spouses' functions. She was entitled to share power as one of the ruling lineage. Yet her position entailed no danger if her marriage was only symbolical. There is a close parallel to the Mutapa institution of sister-wife in the Venda courts. The Venda, closely related historically to the Shona, ascribe an important role in government to the ruler's mother's sister, the makhadzi. Supported, and on her death succeeded, by the khadzi, the ruler's offical sister, the makhadzi took part in councils, and was informed on all important state matters. She was also entitled to a part of the tribute and presents brought to the ruler. Though, unlike the Mazarira, marrying out of her own lineage, she normally resided with her brother's court rather than her husband's.[1] The role of the Mazarira in this way conforms to general government principles of Shona and Venda rulers.

In her capacity as chief wife, with her own enclosure and servants in the Zimbabwe, the Mazarira controlled an important sector of the external relations of the state. Mazarira was in charge of relations with the Portuguese. In 1561, when D. Gonçalo da Silveira visited the zimbabwe, they were apparently not yet important enough to have an officer of the state appointed for contact with them. Significantly, though, Mutapa Nogomo Mupunzagutu was supported by a female throughout his dealings with the foreigner. His mother, who was later instrumental

./.

---

[1] H.A. Stayt, Bavenda... (1931), pp. 196-198.

in determining Silveira's fate, was also the only one present in the private interview between the Mutapa and the Jesuit father. During a very unusual procedure for Shona courts, reception of the foreigner in the ruler's own hut, the Mutapa's mother took part in the negotiations.[1] Another female who took part in dealing with foreigners was 'Inhahanda", the Mutapa's second wife. She was in charge of relations with the "Moors", Muslim traders of the interior.[2] Nehanda, it was seen, was the incestuous sister of mythical history. Like the Mazarira, her marriage may have been symbolical, unlike the "real wife" who came third in the hierarchy.[3] Nehanda, like her brother, Mutapa Matope, appeared soon after her death as a mhondoro (ancestral spirit) of primary importance in the Mutapa heartland. In the nineteenth century her medium had a village, parallel to that of the mediums of Great Mutapa spirits.[4] At least the possibility is there, then, that the Nehanda described as the Mutapa's wife might have been in effect the medium of the original Nyamita Nehanda.

External relations with Muslims and Portuguese sertanejos were in this way focused in the zimbabwe, but outside the royal enclosures. The two enclosures of the Mazarira and the Nehanda dealt with foreigners, spoke for them and "of their concerns" with the ruler. Furthermore, embassies to the Portuguese could not leave

---

[1]B. Leite, D. Gonçalo (1946), p. 171.

[2]A. Bocarro, "Decada", Theal, RSEA, III, p. 358.

[3]Ibid.

[4]M.A. Pacheco, Diario... (1883), pp. 23-24.

without inclusion in them of one of the Mazarira's servants.[1] At the turn of the sixteenth century, to which Bocarro and Dos Santos relate, Muslim power on the coast was greatly reduced. In the fifteenth century, when Muslims were paramount in the coastal trade, embassies presumably went to them, and it was possibly the Nehanda's servant who had to accompany these embassies, This is supported by the attribution of the Nehanda title to the earliest stages of Mutapa establishment, ca. mid-fifteenth century.[2] Relations with coastal people, with access to luxury imports like cloth, silk and porcelain, were a source of power. These were left neither to the servants, whose loyalty depended on not having access to an independent source of power, nor to potential pretenders to the throne, males of the ruling lineage. The sister-wives presented an instrument well-suited to balance loyalty with control of resources. The other chief wives, as was seen, had areas of their own near the zimbabwe. The rest were subservient to the chief wives, allocated to the households of each.[3]

The two groups of people with direct access to the Mutapa ruler were, thus, his pages and his wives. The wives had, by the custom of clan exogamy, to belong to lineages different from that of the Mwem Mutapa. At least part of them linked the zimbabwe with kinship ties

---

[1]A. Bocarro, loc. cit.

[2]D. Abraham, "Monomotapa dynasty", NADA (1959), pp. 61, 74; idem, "Early history", Historians (1962), pp. 63-64; Pacheco Diario (1883), p. 23; Bourdillon, "Manipulation of myth", Africa (1972), p. 113.

[3]Conceiçao, "Tradado...", in Chronista... II (1867), p. 66.

to lineage of rulers subject to the Mutapa. Some of them spent part of their lives with their groups of origin. The majority seem to have resided in the immediate vicinity of the ruler. Wives in this way formed a link carrying with it obligations of mutual attendance in certain ceremonies; such links probably entailed less contact, the further away from the zimbabwe the wife's origin. Even in modern Shona society, however, where travel is aided by bicycles, buses and lorries, distance has an adverse effect on maintaining the obligatory visiting of kinsmen.[1] Wives do not appear to have officiated in the actual government of the land. The exceptions to the rule appear to have been wives belonging to the royal lineage. Their marriage carried supernatural associations. The children of such wives were barred from succession to the throne.[2]

Pages supplied a link between centre and periphery by being recruited from houses of "lords". They may have helped to keep the provinces in check, as hostages, or as potential replacements for misbehaved rulers. The pages, however, had also an active role as communicators. They were in attendance on the ruler when young, then graduated into the role of messengers of the court. Like the royal wives, they were removed at the zimbabwe from their families of origin, dependent on the ruler. They were more likely than the wives to retire back to the periphery, where they might have kept some of their ties to the Mutapa zimbabwe.

---

[1] J.F. Holleman, "The pattern..." (1949), p. 19.

[2] Miranda, "Monarchia..." in "Fontes..." Anais (1954), p. 117; Pacheco, Diario... (1883), p. 28.

D. The lords of the Mutapa

A third set of people connected to the Mutapa were the "lords" of the court. There are two major sources for our knowledge of the "officers of the king's household". There is no correlation between them, except for one title of one of the ruler's advisers. Scattered references to some of these officers throw some light, however, on their roles and relations to the Mutapa. Reference to later customs and techniques of the Shona is also useful for clarifying their position. All accounts are clear on the distinction between servants, dependent on the Mutapa, and "officers" or "grandees", who had independent power bases of their own. An official like Ningomohasha, "governor of the kingdoms" in the seventeenth century, was at the same time ruler of the land of "Daburia". The Mukomohasha, "captain general" and commander of the armies was also ruler of the land of Hondosaka.[1] In the zimbabwe itself, only a few of them were to be found. Ambuya, the major-domo, was by definition of his role a resident of the zimbabwe. Unlike the Ningomohasha and the Mukomohasha, he was not of a house with a claim to the throne. Politically, he held the important duty of nominating a successor to a Mazarira who died.[2] Posts of electors or nominators to office were traditionally entrusted in Shona history to houses of ruling lineages disqualified

---

[1] A. Bocarro, Decada, Theal RSEA, III, p. 357; D.P. Abraham, "Early...", in Historians (1962), p. 68.

[2] A. Bocarro, loc. cit.; D.P. Abraham, "The Monomotapa Dynasty", NADA (1959), p. 76. And compare to the role of Nyamita, the officer in charge of the royal wives in Venda courts. H.A. Stayt, The Bavenda (1931), p. 200; there it was a hereditary role.

from succession, or conquered lineages.[1] Ambuya, like all other officers, is described as a great noble, with lands and vassals. As his title implies, for it could mean either grandmother or an excellent person, he commanded great respect. Prayers for rain on the north of the plateau include propitiations of the supernatural under the title of Ambuya, together with the Tavara deity name of Dziraguru. In that context it is translated as "Grandmother of quiet rains". Nehanda is propitiated in the same prayer.[2] The principal headman acting under a muzari, female ruler, in Manyika, carried the title of Nyambuya. Such people acted as chief assistants and councillors to the female rulers, which is reminiscent of the relationships of Ambuya and Mazarira of the Mutapa court.[3] The "kingdom" of Choe (Choma) is said by the same author to have been ruled by Ambuya. In a list arranged by geographical location, it is put next to Antaura (Tavara), which lay next to the Mvuradona escarpment.[4]

---

[1]The house of Gamaseza, for example, in Maungwe carries the title of Zibaba, with the role of selecting successors to the position of Makoni, ruler of Maungwe. D.P. Abraham, "Maungwe...", NADA (1951), p. 63.

[2]Ambuya was of the Nhari clan of the Tavara, and thus eligible to intermarry with the Mutapa lineages. See S.S.M. Chitehwe, "Rainmaking in Moshonaland", NADA, 31 (1954), p. 25.

[3]Anon. "Manyika headwomen", p. 3.

[4]D.P. Abraham, in "The ~~Mutapa~~ Mavuradonha Dynasty", NADA (1959), p. 76, identified Choe as Choma, east of the Mvuradona escarpment, wherein lay the shrine of the Tavara rain cult of Dzivaguru. The Choma dynasty is, however, ruled by the house of Chigango, while its major mhondoro are not related to the ruling house; both houses trace their origins to the days of Mutota. See M.F.C. Bourdillon, "The manipulation of myth in a Tawara chiefdom", Africa (1972), pp. 112-21. Ambuya may have been, then, a title rather than the name of a lineage.

South west of Tavara country, near present-day Sipolilo, lay Mokaranga, the Mutapa heartland. Ambuya's land was apparently adjacent to both. The distance between Tavara and Mokaranga was probably between thirty and fifty miles. Ambuya's land could not have been, thus, more than two days' walking distance from the Mutapa zimbabwe.

Ambuya's position raises the most crucial problem of Mutapa state communications. Officers of the state with lands of their own, some of them even "reis" (kings) to the Portuguese, had a dual role. They were both functionaries of the centre and provincial rulers. It is argued here that most of these officers were first and foremost resident in the provinces and occupied with their local problems. Only intermittently were they called upon to serve the central ruler. It is further argued that such functions were highly dependent on changing relations between particular rulers at the centre, and their sub-rulers. Shona succession rules had an important role in determining this pattern of government. In the beginning of the seventeenth century, for example, Ningomohasha, the Mutapa's uncle, was the second person in the state. Interhouse feuding between Mutapa Gatsi Rusere and Ningomohasha's house brought the Ningomohasha into the camp of pretenders ~~to the Mutapa's into the camp of pretenders~~ to the Mutapa's throne. In 1612, Ningomohasha was again commanding the Mutapa's forces against Matuzianhe.[1] A more profound change seemed to have occurred in the course of the seventeenth century, for by the mid-eighteenth century the Mukomohasha and Ningomohasha have both disappeared from the lists of leading people in the state. Nevinje appears in the chronicles as a leading power in the state.[2] Movements of the centre of the state must have ./.

---

[1] A. Bocarro, Decade, Theal, RSEA, III p. 382.

[2] A. P. de Miranda, "Monarchia", in "Fontes...", Anais (1954), pp. 114. The Nevinje was regent during interregnum periods.

had a part too in the changing roles of "lords". Mutapa 'Inhapando', active since 1710 around Tete in his efforts to gain the throne, moved his zimbabwe from the interior into Chikova, "distante de Cabrabaça 50 legoas".[1] As provincial rulers went on ruling their lands, the whole geographical setup of centre and peripheral rulers thus changed drastically.

Besides Ambuya, and at least some of the "many others officers of lower rank", there were a few others whose residence in the zimbabwe was highly probable. "Inhantou", the chief musician, was in charge of the musicians of the ruler.[2] These, Dos Santos affirmed, for Teve, and by implication for the Mutapa, were "very numerous". They had "no other office than to sit - at the outer door - playing...".[3] Musicians tended to inherit at least their instruments from their fathers south of the Zambezi, and may well have succeeded to their position.[4] Inhantou, however, was probably not a musician himself. Musicians were a prominent element of the regalia of both rulers and spirit mediums in Shona society. In Venda society, closely related to Shona both by historical traditions, and musical practices, there is a common institution of visiting troops of musicians. These are sent by rulers to perform at the villages of neighbouring rulers, or

---

[1]Fr. Manoel de Santo Thomas, "Resposta...", in Chronista... IV (1869), pp. 61-62. See D.P. Abraham, "The Mutapa Dynasty", NADA (1959), p. 81, for the location of his zimbabwe on Nauterezi Hill, southwest of Tete.

[2]A. Bocarro, "Decada", Theal RSEA, III, p. 357.

[3]Dos Santos, "Ethiopia...", Theal RSEA, VII, p. 202.

[4]H. Tracey, "The Mbira class of instruments in Rhodesia (1932)", in African Music (1969), p. 79.

sub-rulers. Though each troop had its musical director, there had to be an official head to the troop from among the personalities of the court.[1] The Inhantou was probably filling the same role in the Mutapa court.[2] He was a "very great lord". Could his title be another version of "Nenzou" of the Miranda and Melo de Castro accounts of the eighteenth century? Nenzou was the treasurer at the court, responsible for storing and allocation of the ruler's wealth.[3] Inhantou, unlike most of the officers listed, was not a "king". His role of supervising the musicians indicates a residence at the zimbabwe. It implies a high standing at the court, which could not, however, be derived from his role; it is rather indicative of it. It may well be, then, that Inhantou was the treasurer, or held a similar trusted position in the court.

Others who were apparently resident in the zimbabwe were the "chief apothecary", and the door-keeper. Netambe, keeper of "spells and unguents", had to be close to the ruler.[4] Called after his medicinal role (medicine in Shona is mutombo/mutombwe), he was one of the few officers who probably owed his position to personal achievement only. He had to be one of the closest counsellors, in the entourage of the Mutapa, to the ruler. His was an intermediate position between the pages and the provincial rulers. His location and source of power

---

[1]See John Blacking, "Musical expeditions of the Venda", African Music, 3, 1 (1962), pp. 54-79.

[2]Bocarro, "Decada," Theal, RSEA, III, p. 357.

[3]A. P. de Miranda, "Monarchia", in "Fontes...", Anais (1954), p. 112.

[4]A. Bocarro, loc. cit.

depended on his close contact to the ruler, like the pages. Unlike them, his skill gave him a power they lacked, in his own right, without a provincial power base. "Nehonho", the door keeper,[1] must have also been established nearby. There is no indication in our sources what were his exact duties. In Venda royal villages the role of the official door keeper is to interview all visitors, and then report their purpose to the ruler.[2] This was also the accepted practice in Shona society, when a visitor came to a village. One of the notables had to interview him, and a report brought to the local ruler.[3] Nehonho had, therefore, to be on the spot, ready to accommodate any visitor. As visitors of rank were entertained by "grandees" of the zimbabwe, Nehonho probably had his fair share of guests.[4] In Venda society, looking after guests entailed receipt of an ascribed portion of all presents and tribute brought to the ruler.[5] Nehonho, like Netambe, is not listed among the "kings". His land and vassals, therefore, may have been, like those of the chief wives, dunhus of Mucaranga proper. He may have had access to wealth accumulating in the zimbabwe, which could have enabled him to increase the number of his dependents, and thus his power, in the zimbabwe.

---

[1] Ibid.

[2] H.J. Stayt, Bavenda (1931), p. 199.

[3] Fr. Antonio Gomes, "Viagem que fez ... ao Imperio de de /sic/ Manomotapa..." in Studia, 3 (1959), p. 204.

[4] All visitors were entertained by officers of the court for at least a week, the duration of an official visit. A.P. de Miranda, "Monarchia", op. cit., p. 112.

[5] H.J. Stayt, loc. cit.

The "chief wizard", Maguende, is another of the officers briefly mentioned by Bocarro and Faria e Souza.[1] Maguende is very probably Mangwendi, the dynastic title of the rulers of the Nohwe people. The Nohwe are of the Moyo (heart) clan.[2] As such they would have been eligible for marriage with the Mutapas, of the Nzou clan, but not eligible for succession to rulers of the state. They migrated to their present location from Chidima, at the heart of the Mutapa state. It is claimed they came together with the peoples of Samuriwo, also of the Moyo clan, and of Nyandoro, of the Nhari clan (which is a Tavara clan). Genealogical evidence points to this migration having taken place towards the end of the seventeenth century.[3] This southward migration may have been related to Portuguese activities in the Mutapa area. Writing in the third quarter of the seventeenth century, Barretto attributed the depopulation of the Mutapa state to violence and malpractices of Portuguese sentanejos.[4] The Mangwendi case is thus illustrative of a few aspects of Mutapa administration. First, it shows that the pattern of official communications could change not only by the court's movements, but by components of the population migrating, as well. Secondly,

---

[1] A. Bocarro, "Decada...", Theal, RSEA, III, p. 357; Faria e Souza, Asia IV, p. 171, renders it "magandi" and says that the name is correspondent to a magician, of both sexes.

[2] For information on the Nohwe see "A short History of Mangwendi's people", II.XII.1903 in "History of Mashona tribes", file N 3/33/8 in NAR; also "History of Samuriwo tribe", I.I.1904, in same file. Also W. Edwards, "The Wanoe", NADA (1926), pp. 13-28.

[3] The Mangwendi people were attacked by the people of Zwangendaba in the days of Gatzi, the 6th chief, in the 4th generation since the migration from Chidima. According to Samuriwo genealogies, their chief then was of the 6th generation since the migration. This, together with the fact that Changamire of the Rozvi was paramount in their new habitat, points to late in the 17th century, as the time of migration from Chidima. Also, the displacement of Gunguwo from the present Chihoto area by Chibasvi (founder of the Chihota dynasty) occured in the days of the 3rd generation of Samuriwo rulers. This was early in the 18th century.

it points to at least some of the offices based in the court being hereditary in certain lineages. In later lists there is no "feiticeiro-mor" (chief wizard), but a "sacredote" (priest) emerges instead. One of the "sacredotes", Simboti, is most probably titled by the chidau (praise name of a section of a clan) of the Soko/Simboti group.[1] Some of this group are still to be found in the Zambezi region.[2] The use of a dynastic title in the Mangwendi case, and of the chidau in the Simboti case, point to offices being vested in groups, rather than individuals, Another hint which the Mangwendi may be offering is related to their chidau. Two of their praise names are muzukuru.[3] The muzukuru, nephew or grandson, is a position resulting from relations by marriage to a certain group. When one of the related groups is senior in status, the muzukuru position is attributed to the group inferior in social rank. The muzukuru is not only a trusted member of any Shona family. He also has a role in propitiating the family's spirits.[4] Indeed, one of the terms for an acolyte of a spirit medium is muzukuru.[5] Thus the Mangwendi were vazukuru of some group senior to them. This position could have entailed close relationships, and services connected to the supernatural. It is possible, then, that some of the Mutapa offices were vazukuru of the ruling lineage.

Compare the sources in the previous note, with the history of Chihota in "History of the Mashona tribes", N 3/33/8, NAR.

[4]M. Barretto, "Informaçao...", in Theal, RSEA, III, pp. 490-491.

[1]F. de Melo e Castro, "Noticia...", in "Fontes...", Anais (1954), p. 136.

[2]Antonio Rita-Fereira, Agrupamento e caracterizaçâo etnica dos indigenas de Moçambique (Lisbon; Junta de Investigaçôes do Ultramar), Estudos, Ensaios e Documentos, no. 50 (1958), p. 58.

[3]See C. Bullock, The Mashona (1928), p. 110.

[4]See C. Bullock, op. cit., p. 132, n. 1.

[5]M. Gelfand, Shona ritual (1959), p. 6.

Two kinds of "lords" were connected to the Mutapa centre. Provincial rulers with national functions probably spent most of the time in their provinces. The problems of communications inherent in that arrangement will be dealt with later. Others were apparently resident in the zimbabwe or its environs. Contact inside the zimbabwe would have been a face-to-face affair, or servants were used. It seems that some of the zimbabwe offices were invested in certain lineages. Officers may have held a muzukuru relationship to rulers. The holders of office could change, and zimbabwe officers were liable to migrate like other Shona groups. More fluid than the officer group, was the servant corps, working in close cooperation with the zimbabwe officers.

Some of the servants of the Mutapa, the pages, were "sons of lords". There were others, apparently of humbler descent, who ranked lower in the Mutapa hierarchy. Unfortunately, for the early periods there is only the description of Dos Santos to go by of Kiteve. This was "almost exactly the same" as the Mutapa.[1] Basically they divide into armed servants, and praisers of the ruler. The guards, or executioners, at the beginning of the seventeenth century numbered two to three hundred men. They are vividly described as walking round the ruler's enclosure, shouting "inhama" (nyama), correctly interpreted as "flesh". It was said to be a call for executions by the ruler.[2] There is strong reason to believe the "executioners", guards of the ruler, were given wives by him. It is significant that the word "mugariri" in Shona means both a son-in-law, and a guard.[3] A century and a half later, accounts of a

---

[1] Dos Santos, "Ethiopia..." in Theal, RSEA VII, p. 290

[2] J. Dos Santos, op. cit., p. 202.

[3] M. Hannan, Standard Shona Dictionary (1961), p. 387.

company of household "slaves" of the Mutapa put their number at around a hundred. Unlike the rest of the Mutapa armies, who were "volunteers", these "slaves" were permanently stationed in the zimbabwe.[1] Isaacman reported forms of early slavery on the Zambezi; accounts of their Shona counterparts, the varanda, point to many of the male slaves having been in fact mugariri.[2] The roles of the bodyguard, as reported in the eighteenth century, are also in accord with those of a mugariri. They carried the machilla, palanquin, of the ruler. Manual tasks of the household were also performed by bodyguards, like carrying water for the enclosures of the Mutapa and his chief wife.[3] In the seventeenth century they were called "inficis". In old Portuguese script and print the letters 's' and 'f' were written in a very similar way: Inficis may be "insikis". This might relate to siki, which conveys in Shona the idea of feiting, threatening. If that is correct, it fits with their role of bodyguards.

The musicians were probably associated with the Mutapa in the same way as the guards. They were "very numerous", and took part in many functions alongside the Inficis. On the other hand, they may have been a more mobile element. Musicians are described, south of the Zambezi,

---

[1] A.P. de. Miranda, "Monarchia", in "Fontes...", Anais (1954), p. 116. The 'Captain' of these slaves was also in charge of controlling the behaviour of royal wives.

[2] Compare A. Isaacman, Mozambique, The Africanization of a European Institution, The Zambezi prazos 1750-1902 (University of Wisconsin Press, 1972), pp. 47-49, and C. Bullock, The Mashona (1928), pp. 65-66, also p. 60.

[3] Miranda, "Monarchia", loc. cit.

as playing for immediate reward. Bards were also not unknown in Shona society.[1] While congregating round rulers and spirit mediums, they were not all tied permanently to one place. Musicians were called upon to perform during ritual processions, and those in which rulers were involved; they played as part of official delegations, and outside the royal enclosure.[2] This last function should not be taken to mean it was performed day and night. Surely, when there was an interview, or some other court function, in process, music would be called for. At other times, musicians were employed in other tasks.[3] There were also the marombes, called jesters by Dos Santos. These were praisers of the ruler, shouting his praise "in very harsh voices". They took part in the same functions as the guards and the musicians. Their title may be related to Murumba "poor person" in Shona, and it may imply people who came to the Mutapa for support, lacking the ability to marry and start on their own. As such, they could be varanda, and eventually be helped to obtain a wife.[4]

---

[1] J. Lenherr, "Advancing indigenous Church music" in African Music, 4, 2 (1968), p. 34. Personal communication from Mr. J.K. Latham, then Research Officer of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Rhodesia, 1973. When Leask tried to buy an mbira from the Shona in 1868 he was refused on the grounds that it had belonged to the deceased father of the player. This hints at the position being hereditary. See J.P.R. Wallis (ed.), Southern African Diaries of Thomas Leask, (London; Chatto & Windus), The Oppenheimer Series, No. 8 (1954), p. 115. A classical example of wandering musicians is found in the history of the Gutu people, of the Gumbo (leg) clan. The first five founding brothers came to the present Gutu district from Abercorn. All were mbira (Shona hand-piano) players. They used their skills to such good effect in the court of the Shiri (bird) ruler of the area that he granted each a wife, and eventually made them sub-rulers under himself. See "History of the Natives of Gutu district" in "History of the Mashona tribes", file N 3/33/8, NAR.

[2] The great mhondoro Chaminuka is famous for his retinue of mbira players and singers. See F.W.T. Posselt, Fact and Fiction (1935), p. 201; The Rozvi mambo is likewise remembered as travelling with mbira players, op. cit., p. 153. "The people who were playing those mbira were the ones who were asked to do so for the chief and they would be given a chicken afterwards". Interview, Mr. Furamera, Chihota TTL 21.VIII.1973.

[3] Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", in Theal, RSEA, VII, p. 203.

The guards, musicians and jesters all took part in delegations of the ruler to the provinces. The guards seem to have been particularly effective in supplying delegations with contributions of food from the people.[1] In their role as couriers they were presumably used within the zimbabwe itself, too. Perhaps they were the "spies" who informed on breaking on the law, of whom the Kiteve, and no doubt the Mutapa too, had "an infinite number".[2] Before turning to communications between centre and periphery, however, the operation of the court should be considered.

E. The operation of the Mutapa court

The zimbabwe, centre of government, and of communications, included a few tangent circles. In its heart, the Mutapa shared his central enclosures with a wife, and a few pages. More pages, and many more wives, shared with some high officials, and with the servants, the rest of the zimbabwe. Two of the wives, each in charge of one aspect of external-trade relations, maintained secondary points of reference for official communications. The whole establishment, calculating all given figures for servants, wives and officials, and adding dependents, numbered probably a few thousand people at most. Apart from the large number of wives, the zimbabwe royal personnel seems relatively much larger than, for example, its Portuguese counterpart at the time of the first voyages. In the last quarter of the fifteenth century, the personnel of the Portuguese court, including cooks and kitchen hands, did not

---

[4]Compare to the history of Gutu, in N 3/33/8, NAR ; and cf. Bullock, The Mashona (1928), p. 216.

[1]Dos Santos, op. cit., pp. 203-204.

[2]op. cit. p.200.

exceed a hundred people; these included men of the arsenal, of the accounts department and other specialized services with no known parallel at the Mutapa court.[1] Even Portugal of 1480 enjoyed a far more developed and diversified economy than that of southern Zambezia. "There are no craftsmen among these kaffirs except blacksmiths ... and weavers ..." said Dos Santos.[2] That was true of the period before the Mutapa arose, as of the days from the late seventeenth century to the end of the nineteenth century. How did the Shona economy, based on hoe cultivation, support the large zimbabwes - this problem had its implications for the pattern of communications in the Mutapa area.

The evidence points to the zimbabwes being a larger version of the standard Shona village. Their inhabitants, it appears, were essentially maintained by their own farming efforts. The pages, once graduating from the royal enclosure, received lands to subsist from. The houses in the zimbabwe were at a distance of a stone's throw from each other, allowing enough space for cultivation. When Julio Cesar visited the Mutapa, in 1620, he found it difficult to obtain an interview, as the Mutapa was busy supervising the planting of his fields. Indeed, the Mutapa himself was gone in search of thatching for his house when the Portuguese arrived.[3] In the 1570s, half a century earlier, the Jesuit Monclaro heard from his African informants that the Mutapa had 3,000 wives. Of these wives, "besides those at his court, he has a great number of a farm, where they dig, sow, and do everything with their

---

[1] A.H. de Oliveira Marques, Daily life in Portugal in the Middle Ages (University of Wisconsin Press, 1971), pp. 203-204.

[2] Dos Santos, "Ethiopia..." in Theal, RSEA VII, p. 207; and compare Marques, op. cit., pp. 190-196.

[3] F. de Sousa, Oriente... I (1710), p. 837.

own hands."[1] And in 1696, Frei Antonio de Conceiçâo, in his lucid description of Zambezia, summed up the position very clearly. In the zimbabwe, he said, lives the Mutapa in state, which does not consist of tapestries, palaces, and the like, "but in having innumerable concubines". All these "make their grain-fields", i.e. those of the chief wife, including the Mutapa himself, and his "Cafres" (the Portuguese term for Africans; here - Mutapa servants). The Mutapa fields yield such a harvest, that normally his chief wives, with the concubines, live in abundance.[2] The Mutapa, then, was no exception to the Zambezian rule that richness lay in women, who cultivated the land. Where that was the case for the royal family itself, and its servants, surely smaller rulers relied even more on their own efforts for growing their food.

The self-sufficiency of rulers and their personnel had several important implications. First, for the duration of the rainy season, all hands, even the ruler himself, were busy in the fields. The farming season lasted, with changes according to the year, from October to April-May. Various kinds of grains and vegetables had to be planted and reaped in different times, and with the iron hoe as the only agricultural implement, preparing the land for cultivation was a most time-consuming task. Weeding was even more labour-intensive, and had to be carried on throughout the season for the different kinds of crops.[3] It is not suprising, therefore, that armies in the field would drift back home

---

[1]Fr. Monclaro, "Relaçao...", in Theal, RSEA, III, p. 229.

[2]A. de Conceiçao, "Tratado...", in Chronista... II (1867), p. 66.

[3]M. de Santo Thomas, "Resposta...", in op. cit., vol. IV (1869), p. 46.
A. Pinto de Miranda, "Memoria sobre a costa de Africa" /c. 1766/ in A. de Andrade, Relaçoes..., (1955), p. 244.

once the wet season set in.[1] Officers of the state would be tied down to their fields, like the Mutapa, to supervise, if not to participate in, the farming. So, obviously, would be the servants who had their own fields, and those of the ruler, to look after. In consequence, both the centre, and its sub-centres, would be severely restricted in communicating during the farming season. Secondly, the centre was unable to outgrow its ecological conditions. The Mutapa zimbabwe, a very large settlement by Later Iron Age standards, contained a large enough number of wives and their children to maintain it. Any substantial increase in the number of men available to the Mutapa had to be achieved by increasing the number of wives, and the acreage under cultivation. Thirdly, demands to the provinces were in this way not motivated by urgency. When the communications machinery lapsed, tribute could cease, or become intermittent, without endangering the physical existence of the zimbabwe.

Zimbabwes, however, were governement centres, and in contact with the world outside them. Their communications circles started with the ruler. Centres like Great Zimbabwe and Khami show a conscious effort to conceal the central elite huts. Secret passages in Khami, and double walls in Great Zimbabwe, testify to it. This combines with early sources to portray secluded rulers in southern Zambezia. "And he sees them from a window, and they do not see him".[2] The Mutapa complex elites had their central enclosures as concealed by a wooden fence as were those

---

[1] P. Barreto de Rezende, "Do Estado de India" /1635/ in Theal, RSEA, vol. II, p. 419.

[2] Duarte Barbosa, "Livro..." (1516) in Theal, RSEA I, p. 96.

of the southern centres by stone walls. Entrance was forbidden to all but a few "pure" ones. Yet later accounts show that the ruler was not isolated from his people. It was rather the symbolic centre of the state which was kept secluded. The ruler in person was sometimes involved in farming and other activities. Though performed "with solemnity", like everything he did, there he was to be seen by all residents of the zimbabwe.[1] Anyone wishing to interview him, even the poorest of his subjects, was accepted by him, provided they brought a symbol of homage. Even a present as meagre as a handful of thatch, or some earth, was sufficient.[2] It is true that, like all rulers of the Shona people, rulers of the Mutapa complex had to be spoken to through an "interpreter". The greater the ruler, the larger the number of go-betweens to transfer the message to him.[3] That demand of etiquette and respect ensured that judicial and decision-making processes included counsellors. It did not exclude the ruler from contact with complainants and messengers. In a court case, for instance, a Shona ruler would listen to the litigants, through their mouth pieces, then deliver justice.[4] When out of his enclosure, the Mutapa was preceded by a herald, and some of his musicians and jesters.[5] There is no indication in the sources that people were supposed to refrain from seeing their ruler passing.

---

[1] A. de Conceiçâo, "Tratado...", op. cit., p. 66.

[2] J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", in Theal, RSEA, VII, p. 288.

[3] A. Bocarro, "Decade..." in Theal, RSEA, III, p. 404.

[4] See J.F. Holleman's lively description of a Shona court, in African Interlude (1958), p. 93. In many cases the moment of decision in court is the first time the chief opens his mouth in the proceedings; compare Ayres d'Ornellas, Raças e linguas indigenas em Moçambique (Lourenço Marques; Imprensa Nacional, 1905), p. 55.

[5] Dos Santos, op. cit., p. 287.

The system of go-betweens, and of using archaic, metaphoric language, persisted in Shona courts to this day. It is used to mark the elevated position of the court. Having every point raised in the court a number of times, made the process of information delivery a public process. Everyone present could question the informant.[1] The knowledge of counsellors, and others present, of subjects discussed, could in this way be tapped.[2] Furthermore, it made the preservation of any information brought before the ruler easier. The repetition of a piece of information many times over, must have brought every detail to the attention of those present. The Shona interview system ensured in this way the involvement of some of the court officials in any discussion. It was also sure to entrench in the minds of Portuguese authors the idea of the "royal council". The Portuguese sought in the Mutapa court the same neat structure of contemporary European courts. There is no doubt that the Mutapa rulers did have a body of confidants and officials who took part in court proceedings. "Grandees" are reported present in audiences with the ruler. The reported imitation of the Mutapa's every action also denotes the presence of a group of people around him.[3] Likewise, every Shona chief to this day is normally found surrounded by hangers-on and confidants. Shona informants seem extremely reticent to ascribe specific roles in councils to participants. Unlike

---

[1] J.F. Holleman, op. cit., pp. 88-9, 268. Some Shona tribes call the process of justice Kutumba mhoswa, to play cases, indicating its value as a social activity, op. cit., p. 93.

[2] C. Bullock, The Mashona (1928), pp. 383-84.

[3] D. De Goes, "Chronica" in Theal, RSEA, III, p. 130; A.M. Pacheco, Diario..., (1883), p. 14.

the detailed division of roles reported for Venda courts, accounts of the Shona courts are equally vague on any such division.[1] In this they do not differ from Dos Santos, who never mentioned the word "council", nor specified court titles.

A royal council of sorts did, however, exist in the Mutapa court. In the eighteenth century, the Mutapa was at its lowest ebb politically. Some very detailed accounts of the workings of that "monarchia africana" were written then. Significantly, a council is mentioned only when relating to the "formality of military government".[2] When the Mutapa planned a military expedition, the account goes, he gathered his "mutumbus", who are like dukes, marquises and barons, for a war council. The European titles would denote control over land, and high standing. These, accompanied by the "priest", Simboti (Cimbote), and "war counsellors" decided on the plan of the coming war. Then it was delivered into the hands of the three "generals", who were responsible for carrying out the decisions. In sum, a royal council with a clear cut internal hierarchy, between mutumbus and councillors. Members, it is implied, gathered from their lands to take counsel with the ruler. And only after a decision was reached, was action taken, by men who were not mutumbus.

It will be noticed that no princes are mentioned as having taken part in the council. This cannot be accidental, as "principes" feature throughout these accounts. A prince of royal blood is mentioned as titular head of military expeditions, in clear contrast with the other

---

[1] J.F. Holleman, "Some 'Shona'..." in Colson & Gluckman (eds) Seven tribes... (1954), pp. 376-80; Interview with Mr. Gudza, Buhera, 1.IX.1973.

[2] A.P. de Miranda, "Monarchia", in "Fontes...", Anais (1954), p. 115.

officials.[1] "Principes", in the context of Miranda's, and de Melo e Castro's accounts, are scions of lineages related to the ruling house, with a potential claim to the throne.[2] Potential claimants to the throne were thus not included in the council. Neither is the nevinje, the regent, who was one of the "grandees" nearest to the Mutapa, mentioned in the council. On the other hand, Mbokorume, one of the three "generals", was a member of the council. Now, "mbokorume" is one of the only titles in the Mutapa state to appear consistently in mid-sixteenth, early seventeenth, and mid-eighteenth centuries respectively. According to Abraham, it means senior son-in-law in the dialects of the northern parts of southern Zambezia.[3] The other titles were apparently also of some historical standing in mid-eighteenth century; their hierarchical order was determined partly on the basis of their relative antiquity.[4] The "bucurume", the only title to be identified with certainty, may thus provide a clue to the nature of the other members of the council. Being neither of royal blood including a son-in-law of the ruler, the council sounds very similar to Shona courts of later date. There in-laws and nephews held positions of trust and confidence, acting as close counsellors. In traditional history, sons-in-law are some of the last and most faithful followers of leaders in internal struggles.[5] In the

---

[1] Ibid., p. 110. A. De Melo e Castro, "Noticia", op. cit., p. 120.

[2] Miranda, op. cit., p. 111.

[3] D.P. Abraham, "Early..." in Historians (1962), p. 86, n. 65. See also F. de Sousa, Oriente, I (1710), p. 860, who relies on a letter by Luis Froes. A. Bocarro, "Decada", in Theal, RSEA, III, pp. 356-7; A.P. de Miranda, "Monarchia", op. cit., p. 115.

[4] A.P. de Miranda, loc. cit.

[5] Cf. "His counsellors had deserted him, and he had no following except his own sons and sons-in-law." W. Edwards, "The Wanoe", NADA (1926), p. 27.

Karanga court of Tonge, near Inhambane, when in 1560 the missionary Fernandes wanted some help he stressed how the "King's sons and nephews" came with those sent. The sons, though, seem to have held no offices in that state, as only a brother, a nephew, and a son-in-law of the ruler are depicted as holding office in government.[1]

The council's composition thus sounds plausible for later, and probably earlier, periods as well. But the council's very regulated operation seems to be a projection onto days of glory rather than a factual account of the situation in times when the ruler was hardly in control of his own zimbabwe. The emphasis on the council as a military oriented institution is understandable in the days of Miranda. Internal struggles were frequent, rulers held the throne for short periods only.[2] A point to be considered is the wide attendance of provincial rulers in the council's sessions. Those described in the eighteenth century were "mutumbus" as "mutumbzes". The chronicles explained the titles as "dukes, barons, and marquises."[3] We know that these European titles were used by the Portuguese as translation for the ranks of "fumo" or "inkosi". These two interchangeable terms refer to local rulers, the grade in the

---

[1]"Carta do padre Andre Fernandes...", 24.VI.1560, in Documentos, VII, pp. 465, 467.

[2]See Miranda, op. cit., pp. 108-111; compare letter of I. de Melo e Alvim, e.III.1769, "Inventario", Mocambique 80 (1954), pp. 124-125;

[3]See Miranda, loc. cit.

territorial administration below that of "reys" (kings).[1] As the description apparently deals with the days before decline, the participation of low-ranking rulers in the royal council is not of necessity an indication of the weakness of the state. Even in the period of impaired royal authority, there were still important provincial rulers like the regent, Nevinje, closely related to the ruler. Yet his name is not on the council's list.[2] The participation of rulers of villages, or groups of villages, suggests they were there because the council was dealing with mobilization of armies. The first to supply peasant-soldiers would naturally be the local rulers under immediate Mutapa rule. Once the army of the core area moved out, others would probably join it as it marched. It is not unreasonable to assume that similar councils were operating in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Mobilization within the range of a "kingdom", like Manyika for example, seems to have been preceded by a conference of all local rulers.[3] The war-leaders of that period, the Ningomohasha and the Mukomohasha, were supposed to

---

[1]"... Emcoce i dest Duque, Marques, ou Conde..." Antonio Gomes "Viagem..." Studia (1959), p. 193; see also F. de Sousa, Oriente..., II (1710), p. 843.

[2]Melo e Castro, "Noticia", in "Fontes", Anais (1954), pp. 134-136.

[3]See Jason Machivanyika, "History and customs of the Manyika", HMSS MA 14/2/1, NAR, Lesson 22. When Makoni was raiding the Manyika, the councillors, who were also locar rulers, assembled and called for revenge, but chief Chafambausiku refuse. When he thought the time ripe, he collected all his councillors and had a large army assembled.

belong to the court.[1] Presumably they would, then, start on a campaign with the force locally supplied by the "dukes" of the central land of the Mutapa.[2]

The notables comprising the Mutapa's council were not just fumos, however, they were "mutumbus" or "mutmubzes". This is the way people of the Zambezi valley, as the Mutapas were in the eighteenth century, would pronounce the Shona mutumwi or mutumwa.[3] Mutumwi means "one sent, a messenger", and although at present a synonym of munyai the two terms were clearly signifying different roles in the Mutapa state. Mutumes or mutumez headed all delegations of importance to the Portuguese, and were termed by them "embaixadores". Mutume, like many other terms in the political terminology of the region, was shared by the Maravi and others north of the Zambezi.[4] It was first mentioned in relation to the

---

[2]Although the general pattern seems quite clear some light may be thrown on details when research is again possible in the northern parts of Rhodesia. A case in point is Dotito, whose people live in the heart of the Kore-Kore country. Dotito claims ancestry from Mutota by the female line, in a semi-mythical past. (D.P. Abraham, "Monomotapa dynasty...", NADA (1959), p. 64; idem, "Early political..." in Historians... (1962), p. 78; M.F.C. Bourdillon, "Peoples...", NADA (1970), p. 104). "Ditito" was known to D. de Melo e Castro, as his land is mentioned as one of the gold-mining areas in the pre-Changamire period ("Noticia..." in Anais (1954), p. 123). Yet this close neighbour of the Mutapa is not mentioned as one of the "Duques" listed by the same author as sitting on the council (op. cit., p. 135). Was it that Dotito, who must have been of some importance when gold was mined in his land, lost stature as mining declined?

[1]A. Bocarro, "Decada..." in Theal, RSEA, III, p. 357.

[3]For the changes between plateau and Zambezi valley language see Ayres D'Ornellas, Raças... (1905), p. 71, where he gives a very similar example.

[4]See Manoel Barrotta, "Informaçao", RSEA, III, p. 477; A.C.P. Gamitto, (trans. I. Cunnison), King Kazembe and the Marave, Cheva, Bisa, Bemba, Lunda, and other peoples of Southern Africa..., I (Lisbon; 1960), p. 121.

Barretto expedition, in 1571,[5] but it is probably older, since ambassadors frequented Portuguese centres early in the sixteenth century.[2] It continued in use throughout the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. Now, the mutumes were not the great rulers of the land, but men of rank representing them. The delegation from the Mutapa to Francisco Barreto in 1571 included ten or twelve such men, representing "the King's greatest" officers. The delegations sent to collect the curva, or present, from the Portuguese governor, were "generally all nobles".[3] It is evident, therefore, that the council, in the main, included people who could serve as envoys, take the responsibility of negotiating state matters, and enjoy the accompanying benefit of presents. On the other hand, they were not the great lords of the land, but lesser cfficials, who in delegations merely represented the more important officials. The Mbokurume, for example, was not even listed among the mutumbus but among the "councillors" of the Mutapa. Senior son-in-law to the Mutapa, one such officer was around the court when the Jesuit da Silveira came there in 1561. Apparently he held some role in the court, as he was very active in court circles. He was later to be in charge of the execution of his Portuguese acquaintance, which he did with eight men. Bucurume was the ruler's "right hand" in the early

---

[1]De Sousa, in Oriente..., II (1710), p. 603, mentions a motume in the negotiations with the Barretto expedition.

[2]On the 19th of May 1506 an African from the interior of "Menapotaq" for the first time traded for gold in Sofala. And in a despatch of the 21st of October of the same year a delegation is already mentioned, which came to negotiate peace and friendship. See A. Lobato, Colonização Senhorial da Zambezia e outros estudos (Lisbon; Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, 1962), pp. 40, 47 and passim.

[3]J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", in Theal, RSEA VII, p. 220.

seventeenth century, mentioned among the court officials. And in the eighteenth century he is described as one of the generals of the army, and a member of the council.[1] The only member of the court constantly mentioned is thus very clearly a near neighbour of the ruler. This ties in with the status of sadunhu the title of councillors implies. It also tends to support the hypothesis that the pages kept in the Mutapa court graduated into affinal relationships with his family, and served him as mugariri. The pages, when grown up, were employed first around the court, then used as ambassadors, heading delegations composed of servants of the court.[2] They were not provincial rulers, yet were close confidants of the ruler, and lived off lands given to them.

It is not claimed that court officers were the only members of councils of state in the Mutapa complex. The council was most probably, as it is today, a fluid body, including all men of rank present at the court. On special occasions, when at least some of the provincial rulers were supposed to attend the court, it included some of them. Not all visiting provincial rulers, or their delegates, were allowed a place on the council. After delivering their message, they were left out of court for three days, then came back for their reply.[3] The nucleus, which was there daily in the dare to discuss news, gossip, and judge cases,

---

[1] F. de Sousa, Oriente, I (1710), p. 860. He was then described as "homem principal" of the Mutapa. In Bocarro, "Decada", Theal, RSEA III, p. 357, he is the king's "right hand". In Miranda's account, he was one of the three 'generals'. A.P. de Miranda, "Monarchia", in "Fontes...", Anais (1954), p. 115.

[2] A. Bocarro, Decada, Theal, RSEA, III, p. 356; M. de Faria e Sousa, Asia, IV, p. 171.

[3] A.P. de Miranda, "Monarchia...", op. cit., p. 112.

were the same trusted officers who would also serve as ambassadors.[1] Some of them were old, as was the head of the delegation to Sena in 1571. Like old councillors in Shona courts, they probably acted as keepers of custom providing guidance to rulers on precedents in court.[2] Nephews probably were on the council, too, as they were employed in ambassadorial roles. When Diogo Simões Madeira was on his way to occupy the elusive silver mines of Chicova, it was a nephew of the Mutapa who was sent to smooth the way for him with the local rulers.[3] It may well be that sons of the ruler were amongst his councillors. Although rarely mentioned in administrative capacities, sons were often sent on embassies, as well as on military expeditions. Significantly, they were there in the titular role of representing the person of the ruler on such expeditions, rather than commanders in charge of them.[4]

The chief councillors of Mutapa rulers were thus their main communicators. Likewise, court servants filled subsidiary roles in delegations to the provinces and to external powers. The Portuguese were later to discover that embassies from other African rulers operated along very similar lines.[5] Mutumes of the Mutapa, Teve, and probably

---

[1] "In the afternoon, everyday, they gather every one in his Bairro... telling their stories..." A. Gomes, "Viagem que fez...", Studia (1959), p. 204. Compare with the court of Kazembe, where almost every night there was an informal gathering of the court officers for a beer drink and discussion of current news. A.C.P. Gamitto, Kazembe... (1960), II, pp. 126-27.

[2] Fr. Monclaro, "Relaçao...", RSEA, III, p. 246, describes the Mutapa envoy as 'old'. On the role of old councillors, see J.F. Holleman, African Interlude, (Cape Town; Nasionale Boekhandel, 1958), pp. 156-57; Mr. Gudza, in an interview in Buhera, 1.IX.1973, claimed machinda (headmen and councillors) had to be of middle age.

[3] He was Inhaxangue, a nephew of Gatsi Rusere, and a "great lord". A. Bocarro, "Decada", RSEA, III, pp. 395-96.

[4] J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", RSEA, VII, p. 220.

lesser rulers went accompanied by drummers and musicians, with praisers glorifying the ruler they represented. They were also accompanied by a guard of "executioners", whose cry "inyama" had a very literal meaning for the people on their way, who had to supply the embassy with food, or have it taken by force.[1] A large embassy, like those going for the curva, could drain the court of a considerable number of its servants. In the late sixteenth century, a suite of a hundred and more, out of a few hundred servants, accompanied the ambassadors. Normally, the embassy would not stay at its destination for more than a few days.[2] Just reaching the Portuguese sites on the Zambezi, however, took about a fortnight for a caravan like this.[3] On years that the curva was paid, then, a large number of the court's servants would be absent for at least a month. There were occasions, though, that the ambassadors remained at their destination for months on end. In the Sofala accounts of the early sixteenth century, maintenance expenses for African ambassadors are listed in one case between March and July.[4]

Not all delegations from the centre were of the same magnitude as those who went for the curva. Envoys were accompanied by court servants

---

[5]A.C.P. Gamitto, Kazembe, I (1960), pp. 59-60, 121, 132 and passim.

[1]J. Dos Santos, op. cit., p. 221.

[2]Ibid. The embassy to Barretto in 1572 was said to have numbered two hundred men "all in good order". Fr. Monclaro, "Relaçao", RSEA, III, p. 246.

[3]A.M. Pacheco, who sailed on the river, took 7 days to reach Chidima from Tete in the 19th century. See his Diario, (1883), p. 4. In the 1690s, when the zimbabwe was still in the Mount Darwin area, it took traders 10 to 11 days to reach it from Tete; see A. de Conceiçâo, "Tratado...", Chronista... II (1867), p. 66. A large official delegation would probably take longer.

[4]See "Incomplete Book of receipts...", in Documentos, VI, entries for March to August 1522, pp. 131-139.

but how many of them there were is unknown in most cases. Very little is known, in fact, of Mutapa delegations. There is no doubt that "embassies" were the regular means of official contact with external and internal correspondents. In the sixteenth century, for instance, the ruler of Teve was in regular contact through ambassadors with the Portuguese fort in Sofala. So much so that a Portuguese official complained about the expenses involved in keeping them, without adequate rewards through trade.[1] The ruler of Barwe was in the first quarter of the seventeenth century in regular contact with the Portuguese to the north of his land. Contact was maintained through envoys.[2] "Ambassadors" were used for contact with vassal rulers too. In the futile Portuguese attempts to exploit silver mines in Chicova, a "nephew" of the Mutapa acted as envoy alongside them.[3] In a very intriguing hint in 1560, Fernandes tells of an ambassador of a king from the interior in the area of Inhambane, who was there "on a purpose".[4]

By the nineteenth century when envoys were identified by their roles, an apparent change is evident in the sources. Envoys, both of the Mutapa "Imperador", who was then at the Chidima area, and of other rulers,

---

[1]Report of Antonio de Meixa to the king. Cochim, 15.XII.1527, in Documentos, VI, p. 291.

[2]Conceiçao, "Tratado", Chronista... II (1867), p. 44.

[3]Bocarro, "Decada", Theal, RSEA III, p. 395.

[4]A. Fernandes; letter to Luis Frois, 25.VI.1560, in Documentos, VII, p. 487.

are described as "principes".[1] 'Principes', in the context, appear to mean scions of ruling lineages. However, Pacheco, who visited Chidima in the 1860s, translated as "principes": "muanamambos" (hereditary provincial rulers, who were not necessarily of the Mutapa's lineage), "machinda" (sons of the Mutapa ineligible for the throne as children of incestuous marriages), and "nachenanga" (administrators of the court, probably equivalent to Ambuya, the majordomo, of Bocarro), not to speak of "muenemuxa" (heads of villages).[2] There may have been some decline of distinctions between functionaries of the zimbabwe with the shrinking of the Mutapa lands to Chidima and Dande. The very wide range of African terminology translated by the term "prince" does not allow any definite conclusion. In cases where the Mutapa "princes" are specifically described as eligible for the throne the circumstances show them not as regular ambassadors. Prince Utiora, for example, "a very influential member" of the royal family, conducted contacts with the Portuguese during the war of 1807.[3] It is clear from the description that he was one of the commanders of the Mutapa army, as the Mutapa himself was waiting away from the battlefield.[4] Utiora was acting, then, as a general rather than

---

[1]See "Termo da abertura da embaixada do rei Massa", 31.V.1827, Maço V, Doc. no. 133, in F. Santana, Documentaçao avulsa Moçambicana do Arquivo Historico Ultramarino, vol. I (Lisbon; Centro de Estudos Historicos Ultramarinos, 1964), p. 315; Tomas F. Frichaut to Governor of the Rivers, 17.V.1827, Maço II, doc. 182, op. cit., p. 336; Jose L. Rodrigues to Governor of the Rivers, 20.X.1828 wrote that the emperor Muanamutapa had sent two princes to ask for the present of cloth. See Maço IV, doc. 16, op. cit., p. 482.

[2]M.A. Pacheco, Diario... (1883), pp. 28-29. Muanamambo means "son of mambo", i.e. son of a "king". A.P. de Miranda, "Memoria sobre a costa de Africa" /c. 1766/, in Andrade, Relações (1955), pp. 266-7.

[3]F.G. de Almeida de Eça, Historia das guerras no Zambeze, Chicoa e Massangano (1807-1888), vol. I (Lisbon, Agencia Geral do Ultramar, 1953), pp. 109, 133 and passim; Utiora was involved in succession struggles in the early 19th century. See M.A. Pacheco, Diario... (1883), p. 26.

[4]F.G. de Almeida de Eça, op. cit., I, p. 112.

as a regular ambassador. Oral histories, are, unfortunately, even more silent on envoys than written sources. There are many instances were "messengers" are mentioned. Some of these accounts were, however, recounted by outsiders who thought little of beautifying a story. Besides, the Shona terms behind the account are in some cases lacking.[1] One can only infer from Shona practice, and Portuguese evidence, that the messengers sent to the Mukmohasha on the death of Mutapa Chivere Nyasoro, for example, were mutumwis and not just some of the lesser servants of the court.[2]

Mutumwis were not only close physically and politically to the ruler. When travelling, they were thought of as extensions of the ruler's person. A mutumwi would therefore be treated with the same honours as were given to a great mambo.[3] At the head of their suite of servants, they carried an emblem of office, which identified them as envoys. It also entitled them to presents of food from the local inhabitants, wherever they went.[4] Like all travellers in those days, they would spend their

---

[1]See, for example, D.P. Abraham, "The Mononotapa dynasty", NADA (1959), p. 60. The Shona term given is muranda, servant, rarely used in Portuguese accounts. F.W. Posselt, describing the fire distribution in Maungwe, again ascribes it to "messengers". See A Survey of the Native Tribes of Southern Rhodesia (Salisbury, 1927), p. 16.

[2]D.P. Abraham, "Early...", Historians... (1962), p. 68. Abraham uses the term "messengers" without supplying the Shona original. The tendency of Shona informants to call all state officials and envoys varanda (servants) observed by the present writer in his field-work, makes their linkage to terms in contemporary accounts rather difficult.

[3]When a Mutapa ambassador identified himself to the ruler of Chicova, the king and all his grandes "prostrated themselves upon the ground and clapped their hands". A. Bacarro, Decada, Theal, RSEA III, p. 397; likewise, the delegate of the ruler-medium Charewa in Mtoko is treated exactly "as any other chief" outside her zimbabwe. See, P. Berlyn, "The keeper of the spirit of Nehoreka", NADA, vol. 10, (1972), p. 58.

[4]D.P. Abraham, "Early...", op. cit., p. 68, and p. 86, note 60; F.G. de Almeida de Eça Guerras, I (1953), pp. 113, 116.

nights in villages on the road whenever they could. As was customary, and still is, the guests would be entertained in the dare of the local fumo, or headman. There they were interrogated about their destination, where they came from, and of news accumulated on the road.[1] Thus when the central authorities had to communicate with their periphery, their mutumwis became agents spreading information direct from the royal central enclosure to many settlements on the road. In the same way, every occurence on the road had to be reported to the ruler. Cross-checking by members of the delegation insured minimal loss of details in their reporting. In very important delegations, a strict and formal division of roles within them controlled their functioning. A son of the Mutapa, in many cases, acted as a nominal head of the delegation. Besides him there were the mutumwis who conducted the delegation's business. The "king's mouth" negotiated on behalf of his ruler, while the "king's eye" was responsible for watching and reporting visually, and the "king's ear" had the same duty regarding all that was said and done.[2] The concept of appointing a delegate as the 'mouth' or 'ears and eyes' of

---

[1] A. Gomes, "Viagem", Studia (1959), p. 204.

[2] J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", RSEA, VII, p. 220; Fr. Monclaro, "Relaçao", RSEA, III, p. 228, relates how they spend "many hours in these narratives, and if they forget anything their companions remind them of it". Envoys of the Mutapa area were apparently fond of long reporting sessions at the end of the 18th century. Lacerda complained of a messenger from Barwe to Sena who "harangued loudly for a good half-hour, with immoderate jesticulations, in order to give a short message. On the contrary, the Cazambe envoy spoke little, with great civility, and so softly...", R.F. Burton, The lands of Cazembe (London; John Murray, 1873), p. 44.

a ruler is widespread throughout Southern Africa. The Kazembe embassy early in the nineteenth century had a very similar oganization. The Portuguese envoy Gamitto, who travelled with the embassy, observed how a fine balance was kept between the various members of the delegation.[1] The Mwari cult in the Matopos', was said to be organised in exactly the same way. Communications between the Mwari and his worshippers was claimed to have been conducted through the "mouth", with the "eye" and "ear" acting as go-betweens and interpreters.[2] There may have been a correspondence between the division of roles in a delegation, and zimbabwe lords. The delegation to the Portuguese of 1571 included representatives of at least three important personalities of the Mutapa court. And no embassy went to the Portuguese without being accompanied by a "slave" of the Mazarira, the sister-wife in charge of relations with the Portuguese.[3]

The contacts of the zimbabwe with the surrounding lands were maintained also at a lower level. Messengers were used for carrying word "to certain parts of his kingdom". They were part of the royal establishment. The servants, who on major delegations acted in their normal roles of musicians, guards and jesters, were also used as "couriers".[4] There is very little evidence on the nature of the messages they carried.

---

[1] A.C.P. Gamitto, Kazembe, I (1960), pp. 160-61 and passim.

[2] See J. Blake-Thompson and R. Summers, "Mwari", NADA (1956), pp. 54-5, but compare Chapter II, the section on Rozvi religion.

[3] Fr. Monclaro, "Relação...", in Theal, RSEA, III, pp. 246-7; A. Bocarro, "Decada", op. cit., p. 358. The officers represented in 1571 were "the king's greatest"; "the king's chief wife [a title, not an actual wife]; and "young moagem", the general.

[4] J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", in Theal, RSEA, VII, p. 203.

The clear distinction to the present day in Shona society, between the communicative roles of councillors and messengers indicates a probable answer. Notice of a ruler's death or a message to a mhondoro (ancestral spirit) were never carried by mere messengers. They summoned people to court, and councillors - to meetings with rulers.[1] The nature of their role probably limited the messengers to "certain parts" of the state immediately adjoining the zimbabwe. It was only in court cases failing decision in local dares that the litigants travelled to a higher dare. And most of the councillors were probably not further than a few days' distance from the zimbabwe. The distinction between junior mutumes and messengers is not, however, always clear. In 1635, the Portuguese obtained messengers from the Mutapa to locate the people who knew the silver mines of Chicova. Failing, they were replaced with another lot of messengers, who failed too. Only when one of the "grandes" of the court was sent were any mines shown to the Portuguese.[2] The latter envoy is easily recognized as a mutume, but whether his predecessors were simple servants or junior pages is a distinction impossible to make. The "spies" which the Portuguese reported being inside the zimbabwe could have been either the servants or those pages serving outdoors.[3]

The Mutapa zimbabwe, with its personnel of pages, wives and councillors, was not unique south of the Zambezi. Teve, ruling the area

---

[1]Interview with Taruwona Nyashanu, Buhera, 1.IX.1973; interview with Gudza, Buhera, 1.IX.1973; interview with Machokoto Mungani, Chihota TTL, 11.VII.1973. Abraham's "messengers", informing the Mukomohasha of the Mutapa's death ("Early..." in Historians... (1962), p. 68) were thus most probably mutumwis.

[2]Quoted in Axelson, Portuguese in South East Africa, 1600-1700 (1969), p. 111. The "successful" location, however, proved also to be a mirage.

[3]J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", RSEA, VII, p. 199.

between the coast and the plateau, had a zimbabwe with a similar composition, Manyika to the north of Teve, and Danda to its south, are said to have had the same courts, only on a smaller scale than that of the Mutapa and Teve.[1] There is such a difference in scale between "reynos" like Inyabanzo, for instance, with its twenty-five villages, and Teve or Barwe, that the qualification for the title seems to have been the paraphernalia of a court as described above.

Communications roles were embodied in each section of the rulers' entourage. Yet, this claimed "extensive bureaucracy"[2] was far from being a rigid, static organization. There were fluctuations in the zimbabwe itself. The rule of personal loyalty of officers to their ruler could bring about sudden changes in the court. In 1627, on the death of Mutapa Gatsi Rusere, his successor replaced his counsellors with a set of younger men, his own personal confidants. The empata (permission to rob traders) proclaimed in 1628 was ascribed to this change.[3] Secondly, there were changes in relations between zimbabwes. Teve, with a possible vassalage tie to the Mutapa in the fifteenth century, was engaged in an active campaign of expansion throughout the sixteenth century against the Mutapa and its allies in Manyika.[4] Barwe, apparently tributary until

---

[1]J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", RSEA, VII, p. 199.

[2]E. Alpers, "Mutapa and Malawi" in Ranger, Aspects... (1968), p. 14.

[3]A. Gomes, "Viagem", Studia (1959), pp. 189-190.

[4]By 1575, when Homem's expedition conquered it, Teve was independent of the Mutapa, and hostile to the Mutapa-backed Manyika. Letter of V.F. Homem to Luys da Sylva, 15.II.1576. Sena; in B. Leite, Dom Gonçalo (1946), pp. 390-91. By the end of the 16th century, Mutapa typical royal ornaments were forbidden in Teve. J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", Theal RSEA, VII, pp. 218-19, 273, 289.

the internal struggles of the houses of Mavura and Nyahuma, rebelled successfully against Mutapa Gatsi Rusere in 1608.[1] Thirdly, zimbabwes were not permanently located. In the fifteenth century, Mutapa zimbabwes were still built of stone, and were probably found in the Mount Darwin district.[2] In the mid-sixteenth century, the zimbabwe was not far from the Musengezi river, in present day Sipolilo.[3] And in the first half of the seventeenth century it is already described as situated in

---

[1] A. Bocarro, "Decada", Theal, RSEA, III, pp. 372-3.

[2] Diogo de Alcaçova, in his letter of 1506, referred to the Mutapa killed 15 years previously in his "house of stone and clay". Documentos, I, p. 395; The stone-house referred to could be either at the low-lying Dande, as Abraham's informant claimed, or on the plateau, perhaps in a site like Zwongombe Hill, "15 miles east of the upper Muzengezi, a major ruin" (K.R. Robinson, "A note on Iron Age sites in the Zambezi valley, and on the escarpment in the Sipolito District, Southern Rhodesia", Arnoldia (Rhodesia), vol. I, no. 27 (1965), p. 6; Compare to Abraham, "Early...", Historians... (1962), p. 62, and idem, "~~Mutapa~~ Mavomutapa dynasty...", NADA (1959), pp. 60 and 64). In both areas there are Zimbabwe-type stone ruins. Unfortunately, archaeology has only touched on this area superficially. In a personal communication, Dr. T.N. Huffman confirmed what Robinson (op cit.) hinted at, that the ruins can be dated to the 15thC. and to the expansion of the Zimbabwe culture area. In the Zimbabwes below the escarpment, however, there is little evidence of human occupation (Robinson, op. cit., p. 3 and 6). It seems on archaeological grounds, that Robinson's implied location of the Mutapa ruler on the plateau, is very plausible. It should also be borne in mind that "The ruins in the Zambezi Valley are located in most unattractive country from almost every point of view, including the fact that cattle could not be kept in view of the presence of tsetse fly. The very fact that these buildings were placed at the foot of the escarpment surely suggests that those who occupied them had close contact with the plateau, and the occupation of the stone built enclosures in the valley may have been only seasonal in so far as an important ruler was concerned" (op. cit., pp. 5-6).

[3] Letter of A. Caiado to friend (1517) in A.P. de Paiva e Pona, Dos Primeiros... (1892), p. 73. And compare to previous note.

the hot, unhealthy Dande, below the Mvuradona range.[1] In the first quarter of the eighteenth century, the zimbabwe was moved from where it had "always" been, to a site fifty leagues of Tete.[2] With smaller lands, like Manyika, which could be crossed in four to six days' walking, the location of its zimbabwe could not have mattered much. There it seems to have been fairly consistently in the geographical centre of the land.[3]

Last, but not least, were the changes of ruling houses. Frequent wars brought Portuguese rulers, for example, to Inyabanzo, near Tete, by the early seventeenth century. The land of the Mongas near the Lupata gorge, a formidable obstacle to Mutapa power in the 1560s; and an unreliable vassal seven decades later, was ruled by a Portuguese sertanejo in the 1660s.[4] In inter-house struggles in the Mutapa state,

---

[1] A. Bocarro, "Decada...", Theal, RSEA, III, p. 356: "Mokaranga, where the Monomotapa resides with his court... There is also another kingdom adjoining this Mokaranga... of Beza, where there is a palace of the ancient monomotapas... All the monomotapas are buried there..." and cf. Abraham ("~~Mutapa~~ Monomotapa dynasty...", NADA (1959), pp. 67 and 77-8), who ascribed to this period both the kasekete and Utete sites, below the escarpment.
When M. Barretto published his "Informaçâo..." (1667) (in Theal, RSEA, III, p. 82), it appears from his description that the zimbabwe was still in the low-lying areas. It took then 14 days to reach the feira of Dambarare from Tete, while it took 20 days to reach the Zimbabwe. Dambarare must have been using the Mazoe and Luya valleys as its route to Tete. The Zwongombe area on the plateau is right on this route, and the fact that people had to travel longer to reach the zimbabwe points to its continued location below the escarpment.

[2] M. de Santo Thomas, "Resposta...", Chronista... IV (1869), pp. 60-61.

[3] See "Descripçao Coragrafica...", AHU, Cxa 17. F.T.M. Pasipanodya, "Mutasa chiefdom 1870-95: some preliminary notes on research", History Seminar Paper, University of Rhodesia, Sept. 1972, p. 2.

[4] M. Barretto, "Informaçaõ...", RSEA, III, p. 477; M.D.D. Newitt, Portuguese settlements on the Zambezi, exploration, land tenure, and colonial rule in East Africa (London, Longman, 1973), p. 68.

the first act of a victor was to replace rulers with men of his own.[1] Many of the rulers in the northern districts of Rhodesia received their lands from Mukombwe, the great Mutapa of mid-seventeenth century. There is a clear distinction between them and those who received their land from Mutota, the legendary founder of the Mutapa dynasty.[2] There is also the lifferent beginning of the Mutapa dynasty, as described in accounts of the third quarter of the eighteenth century. Prior to Mutapa, or Nebeza, two rulers are mentioned, instead of Mutota, Nemapangere or Nemassengere, and Nemangoro.[3] Could they represent yet another branch of the dynasty, with zimbabwes and appointees of its own, which preceded the Mutapa house? All four facets of change concerning Zimbabwes were bound to influence the directions of contact, the personalities involved in it, and the intensity of contact of any one court.

---

[1] In 1632, when Nyambo Kapararidze was defeated by the Portuguese, he left behind 2,000 dead "strong young men, the sons of nobles, whom Capranzine had brought to fill the highest places". L. Cacegas and L. de Sousa, "Historia de S. Domingos..." (1767) in RSEA, vol. I, p. 400. And compare to the migration of Mangwende from the Mutapa area, W. Edwards "A short history of Mangwendi's people" (1898), in file N 3/33/8, NAR.

[2] M.F.C. Bourdillon, "The people", passim.

[3] Miranda, "Monarchia...", in "Fontes...", Anais (1954), p. 108; Melo e Castro, "Noticia...", op. cit., p. 130.
I am indebted to Dr. D.N. Beach, who drew my attention to this point.

F. The techniques of Mutapa communications

Mutapa communications adhered to the spoken, verbal message. Literacy, a potential agent of change, hovered on the fringes of Mutapa society for centuries. Some of the Muslim inhabitants of the coast were literate in Arabic. De Barros spoke of the presumed inscription on the walls of, probably, Great Zimbabwe, which "...some Moorish merchants, learned men, who went thither, could not read".[1] 'Moors' were active around rulers' courts, heavily represented in the Mutapa zimbabwe in 1561. They were still very influential, intermarrying with ruling houses to the south of the Mutapa, a century later.[2] When they lost their position there, they could still be found in Maugwe.[3] The "Moors" were probably less than 10,000.[4] For our purpose only the "turbaned Moors", men of position and ~~rich~~ wealth are relevant.[5] Such men would include literate people and their position as engangas in the Mutapa court may have been related to the use of amulets with written

---

[1] J. De Barros, Asia, III, p. 394

[2] Letter of A. Caiado to a friend [ca. 1561] in Paiva e Pona, Dos Primeiros... (1892), p. 71. Caiado, who was a resident of the zimbabwe, spoke of them as engangas (witch doctors), for which position they had to be trusted residents of the capital; A. Gomes, "Viagem...", Studia (1959), p. 197.

[3] op. cit., pp. 170, 186, 19708. Also H. von Sicard, "A proposito de Sisnando Dias Bayao" in Studia 16 (1965), p. 184.

[4] Summary by Antonio Carneiro of letters from Antonio de Saldanha, Captain of Sofala and Mozanbique, to Rei [1511], Documentos, III, p. 17. The argument flaring around this figure seems to be around the inclusion of Africans under the rule of Muslims in the "Moorish" category. Abraham, who went as far as to suggest that the Mutapa expansion in the north of the plateau was planned by Arab merchants ("Maramuca...", JAH, 1961, p. 212), accepts Saldanha's figure (private communications quoted in R.E. Gregson, "Trade and politics in south-east Africa, The Moors, the Portuguese and the kingdom of Mwenemutapa", African Social Research 16, (1973), p. 419; Gregson follows Abraham). M.D.D. Newitt, whose reading of Portuguese documents seems to be more critical on this point, sees the figure of 10,000 "Moors" as a gross over-estimate. (See his Portuguese... (1973), p. 40; also his "The early history of the sultanate of Angoche"; JAH XIII (1972), p. 402).

pieces in them. In West Africa, the rate of literacy can be fairly low in Muslim communities. Admittedly, the more prosperous the community, the more literate it seems to have been.[1] Even in West Africa, with Muslim scribes definitely described in rulers' entourages, literacy seems to have been used mainly for external contacts.[2] Yet there is not one recorded instance of an African ruler south of the Zambezi using literacy to communicate with the Muslims. The ruler of Tonge, in close contact with the coastal Muslims, required the services of the Jesuits to write a letter to the Viceroy in Goa.[3]

Catholic priests introduced an element dedicated in theory to nothing but spreading Christianity, and incidentally literacy. Very soon, however, a large section of the clergy preferred more earthly occupations to spreading the Gospel.[4] Where there were schools, the majority of their small populace was Portuguese or mestiços.[5] The road to controlling the interior was thought to be partly through educating scions of ruling families. The first efforts in that direction

---

[5]Monclaro, "Relaçao...", Theal, RSEA, III, pp. 235-6; compare also Gomes, op. cit., p. 197.

[1]For the use of literacy in Muslim West Africa, see J. Goody, "Restricted literacy in northern Ghana", in idem (ed.) Literacy in traditional societies (Cambridge; The University Press, 1968), esp. pp. 200-208.

[2]N. Levtzion, Ancien Ghana... (1973), p. 111.

[3]Letter of D. Constantino, King of Inhambane /V, 1560/ in P.P. de Paiva e Pona, Dos Primeiros... (1892), pp. 50-52.

[4]A. Isaacman, Mozambique (1972), p. 62. Examination of letter of G. de Sousa de Lacerda from Sena (3.VII.1682), Lisbon, 8.II.1684. RSEA, IV, p. 426. Letter of Rei to VR, Lisbon, 15.III.1702, in RSEA, V, pp. 8-9. Letter of Fr. J. de Sao Tomas, cited by A. de Andrade, "Relaçoes" (1955), p. 79.

[5]A. da Conceiçao, "Tratado", Chronista II (1867), pp. 88-9.

brought a son of the ruler of Tonge into a Portuguese school. He was followed decades later by sons of various Mutapas and scions of the ruling houses of Manyika and Teve, one of whom died as a master of theology in a monastery in Goa.[1]

Educated Mutapas were apparently not the right channel to introduce literacy into Zambezia. Their Portuguese neighbours hardly constituted an inspiring example. Their level of literacy was rather low, and in the nineteenth century a Portuguese sertanejo treated a letter with deep suspicion, as a matter of witchcraft.[2] Furthermore, the Portuguese assumed largely the ways of the African rulers they inherited, excluding the use of literacy.[3] A major hindrance to literacy being adopted lay in its exclusivity to Portuguese speaking people. The position of the Portuguese language in the prazo society was rather like that of Latin in feudal Europe.[4] In the Mutapa state it never reached even that position. The Mutapa zimbabwe was far inland. The Portuguese settlements inland contained at the best of times a few dozen Portuguese, who were fluent in the local languages anyway.[5] There were few attempts recorded

---

[1] P. Barretto de Rezende, "Do Estado da India [1635]" in Theal, RSEA, II, pp. 411, 415; "Authentic testimony of the baptism of the emperor and king Manamotapa..." in op. cit., II, pp. 445-448 [1652]. Rei to VR, Lisbon, i.VII.1612, in op. cit., IV, p. 91.

[2] A.P.C. Gamitto, Kazembe (1960), I, pp. 79, 159-60.

[3] A. Isaacman, Mozambique, (1972), pp. 29 et seq.

[4] Ibid., p. 62; compare Marc Bloch, Feudal Society I, trans. L.A. Manyon (London; Routledge & Kegan-Paul, 1965), pp. 75 et seq.

[5] At the height of Portuguese presence, in 1631, 3-400 Portuguese died in the battles with Kapararidze, and a few dozen only remained; see, Faria e Sousa, "Asia", vol. VI (1947), p. 380; Also undated letter of Francisco de Lucerna, giving account of a letter by Diogo de Sousa de Meneses to Rei, of 17.II.1635, in Theal, RSEA, IV, p. 277. E. Axelson, Portuguese... 1600-1700 (1960), pp. 77, 97. By the third quarter of the eighteenth century, Sena had "very few" (less than ten) Portuguese residents. See "Noticias dos dominios portugueses na costa de Africa Oriental" (1758 and 1762) in A.A. de Andrande, Relações (1955), p. 161, 163. Thus varying the number of sertanejos probably never exceded 500. See Newitt, Portuguese.. (1973), p. 142.

of reducing local languages to writing. The Dominican Francisco da Trindade compiled in the seventeenth century "a catechism and exercises for confession in the language of the natives". These, it was claimed, bore great fruit for Christianity around Tete. A similar compilation in "the language of the land" (presumably Shona) was supposed to have had similar effects, including the conversion of a son of the Mutapa, Mhande or Dom Pedro (c. 1694-6).[1] The Jesuit Gomes was highly impressed with a group of African children singing Christian hymns. It is evident, though, that the teaching was done verbally.[2]

Literacy, carried first and foremost by clergymen, was inseparably associated with Christianity. This fact loaded the odds against its taking root in indigenous society. Portuguese individuals and groups were accepted, albeit reluctantly, into local political and social milieux - Christianity remained on their fringes. Early mass conversions soon proved a farce. Father Silveira paid with his life for his attempts to rapidly convert the Mutapa court. When it was realised that Christianity could affect relations with the long-established "moors", the missionary was executed. Perhaps the possible effect of the conversion of the Mutapa, Nogomo, on his role in the ancestral cult was appreciated, too. It is significant that the opposition to Silveira was of "moors" and ngangas.[3] Portuguese penetration was accompanied by clashes

---

[1] Luis Cacegas and Luis de Sousa, "Historia...", in Theal, RSEA, III, p. 405. This Dominican was shortly after killed by the rival Mutapa Kapararidze. See, op. cit., p. 398.

[2] A. Gomes, "Viagem...", Studia (1959), p. 194.

[3] Letter of Luis Frões, to Fr. B. Toscano, 15.XII. 1561, in B. Leite, Dom Gonçalo (1946), pp. 185-89.

between "moor" and Lusitanian. Acts like the massacre of the Zambezi "moorish" community by Barretto in 1571, or the burning of the Sofala mosque by Dos Santos could not have passed unnoticed by the Africans.[1] This record, adds credibility to Portuguese allegations of "moorish" propaganda against them in the interior.[2] Combined with little zeal of most clergymen, it is not surprising to note the sad state of Christianity in the "Rivers of Sena". Although famine and poverty brought some converts, their conversion was not lasting, neither did they possess the social status to be an influence on others.[3] The posthumous incorporation of the Dominican Pedro da Trindade in the ancestral spirit cults of the Zambezi valley was a tribute more to his greatness as a ruler than to his propagation of the Christian faith.[4] Christianity did not prosper, and with it went literacy.

The educated members of ruling families seem to have been outstanding oddities rather than a nucleus of a literate elite. Some of the best educated of them were kept in involuntary exile. Desperate pleas to be returned home (in writing, not always by themselves) were not always successful.[5] Furthermore, such people tended to be

---

[1] J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", Theal, RSEA, VII, p. 351; Fr. Monclaro, "Relação", op. cit., pp. 166-7; E. Axelson, Portuguese... 1488-1600 (1973), p. 158.

[2] See P. Vas Soares to Rei, Doc. III, p. 463. R.E. Gregson, "Trade and politics in South-East Africa: The Moors, the Portuguese and the Kingdom of Mwenemutapa" in African Social Research, 16 (1973), pp. 421-422.

[3] Joao de Castro, "Relaçao..." /1751/ in Theal, RSEA, V, pp. 210-217; P.V.B. Miller, "A few historical notes on Feira and Zumbo", Journal of the African Society, IX (1909-10), p. 419.

[4] M.D.D. Newitt, Portuguese (1973), pp. 78-9. Pacheco, Diario (1883), p. 57. Compare letter of G.B. Coelho to Capt. Gen. Zumbo, 10.I.1768, in "Inventario of AHM", Moçambique, 88 (1956), p. 123.

[5] See, Rei to VR, Lisbon, 23.III.1712, in Theal, RSEA, V, pp. 34-5, about the son of Mutapa Pedro, and Prince to V.R. Lisbon, 24.III.1681, regarding a prince from Teve, who went to Goa in op. cit., IV, p. 404.

ex-refugees, or ex-captives, with the Portuguese. Sometimes they were installed by force of arms, against strong popular opposition, as was Mutapa Mavura (c. 1629-1650). Although at least one Mutapa used to preach in court, education could have been seen in those circumstances only as an unwelcome intrusion.[1] The few literates in court thus had nobody to write to but the Portuguese. More often than not, Portuguese scribes performed the task for them. The good services of a Portuguese were used already in 1562. In 1607, though, asked to sign a document, Mutapa Gatsi Rusere was wondering how it could be done, since "in his empire no one could write".[2] A few decades later it was still possible to dispute the authenticity of the Mutapa's letters, on the grounds that his seal was easily obtained by unauthorised persons.[3] The ruler of Barwe of the same period was said to have been in "muita correspondecia" with his Portuguese neighbours; on one occasion, it was carried on by letters. It seems, though, the envoy bearing the letter played a major role in the process.[4]

There were still two potential uses of literacy for the small literate group of the Mutapa. Historical details could be recorded for future generations, which was not done by the Africans themselves. The Jesuit Gomes lamented the effect of passing time on Mutapa history, kept

---

[1] L. Cacegas and L. de Sousa, "Historia...", in Theal, RSEA, I, p. 401; "Authentic testimony...", op. cit., II, p. 447.

[2] M. de Faria e Sousa, Asia, VI (1947), p. 103; Bocarro, "Decada", Theal, RSEA, III, pp. 369-371. The majority of the Portuguese present were as illiterate as the Mutapa, and only 26 of them were able to sign their names on the document.

[3] Document of council, Lisbon, dealing with a letter of de Lacerda from Sena [31.VII.1682], 8.II.1684, Theal, RSEA, IV, p. 426.

[4] A. da Conceiçao, "Tratado", Chronista..., II (1867), pp. 41-44.

and transmitted by oral means.[1] Two centuries later, Pacheco still recorded his history of Chidima from non-literate informants.[2] Defunct Mutapas were represented on earth by mediums speaking for their spirits.[3] Recorders of history were thus the people most removed from Christianity. Educated Mutapas, dependent on the Portuguese in the first place, could not afford to estrange the mhondoros of previous Mutapas by writing and manipulating an "official" history for their own ends.[4]

Recording of manpower, tribute and goods traded could also benefit from the art of writing. This does not seem to have been done. Partly the intermittent nature of contact with the provinces may have been responsible for that. Partly it was because there were too few literate people around. Simple mnemonic devices were used instead.[5] Knots tied on ropes to symbolise figures were widely used. The king lists of Barwe were kept with the aid of such tallies. Numbers of people, or sums owed, were recorded in the same way. Prazo holders, who inherited many of the local institutions, used knots on ropes for recording payments of

---

[1] A. Gomes, "Viagem", Studia (1959), p. 239. See also de Faria e Sousa, Asia, IV (1945), p. 171, 172; "Having no knowledge of letters, they speak of the past by tradition". This was in the 17th century.

[2] A.M. Pacheco, Diario (1883), pp. 23 seq.

[3] Ibid., p. 24 and passim.

[4] Compare, D.P. Henige, "The problem of feed-back in oral traditions, examples from the Fante Coast-lands", JAH, 14, 2 (1973), pp. 223-235.

[5] E. Alpers, "Dynasties of the Mutapa-Rozvi complex", in JAH, XI, 2 (1970), p. 212; H. von Sicard, "The Rhodesian tally", NADA, 31 (1954), p. 53; A.P. de Miranda, "Memoria...", in Andrade, Relaçoes... (1955), p. 266; A. Isaacman, Moçambique... (1972), p. 33; A.C.P. Gamitto, Kazembe... I (1960), p. 56. In the sphere of operations of Muslim traders in West Africa, the use of literacy for recording and accounting purposes in commerce was also limited; that in spite of letters being used in long-range contact. J. Goody, "Restricted literacy...", in idem , Literacy... (1968), pp. 208 et seq.

tribute by their colonos. The system was also used in business transactions. Some debts, it was claimed, were in this way preserved in memory for 2 or 3 centuries. The disadvantage of such tallies lies in their not being self-explanatory. A human memory is needed to decipher the symbols. The dual role of the mutumwis, in court and as envoys, may have had significance for recording purposes, with the person bringing certain information also being responsible for its preservation. At this stage, this aspect of the Mutapa court still lies open to conjecture.

Other instruments of communication failed to penetrate the Mutapa state too. Transport and locomotion patterns remained much the same, despite the presence of wheeled transport. Some blame the lack of cohesiveness in the Mutapa state partly on the "incredible" failure to adopt the wheel.[1] Yet African reaction to the wheel should not be judged by the initial surprise recorded by Monclaro. When the Portuguese used oxen-drawn carts to transport stones for their forts, Africans present "laughed heartily" at the sight. This may have turned to ridicule at the sight of ox-wagons used by the Barretto expedition, which proved very slow, and had to be burnt on the way back. The road along the Zambezi proved too difficult for oxen-drawn transport. Even the Portuguese never attempted it again.[2] The tse-tse belt between the coast and Manyika foiled later attempts, much better financed and organised, to establish

---

[1] C.J.K. Latham, "Dzimbadzimbagwe", NADA (1970), p. 25.

[2] Monclaro, "Relação...", Theal, RSEA, III, pp. 231 et seq.; J.J. Teixeira Botelho, Historia militar e politica dos portugueses em Moçambique (Lisbon; Centro Tipografico Colonial, 1934), pp. 188 et seq.; E. Axelson, Portuguese... 1488-1600 (1973), p. 158.

a wagon contact with the plateau.[1] Furthermore the Mutapa state lay just on that part of the plateau least suitable for wheeled transport. Contact between the Zambezi valley and the plateau had to deal with the Mvuradona escarpment. Chidima is not ideal for wagons either. All the above factors combined to condemn the wagon.[2] Bearers remained the normal means of transport both for Africans and foreign merchants. This has some bearing on the ability of Mutapa rulers to accumulate provisions.

Perhaps more significant was the use of beasts of burden. Horses were unknown in South Central Africa. Despite Portuguese attempts to introduce the horse there, it could not be acclimatized. A few dozen horses were brought by the Barretto expedition, together with camels and donkeys. All the horses soon succumbed, probably to the 'horse sickness' that was to play havoc later with horses on the plateau.[3] Plans to use horses re-surfaced from time to time. Even one Mutapa asked for a horse. He asked for its delivery to be delayed, however, due to the lack of water on the way to his zimbabwe.[4] Horses could have, conceivably, provide Mutapa men with speed, and high mobility.[5] Cattle could provide

---

[1]Frank Johnson, "The great coast route...", Outpost, 1929, July to Oct. issues.

[2]In Angola, where conditions were much more favourable to the use of wagons, it took the "Dorstland trekkers" of the 1870s to introduce the "transportation revolution" of the wagon. See D.L. Wheeler & R. Pelissier, Angola (New York; Praeger, 1971), p. 72.

[3]See Fr. Monclaro, "Relaçao", Theal, RSEA, III, pp. 186-87. M.D.D. Newitt, Portuguese (1973), p. 19.

[4]Rei to V.R. Lisbon, 10.III.1622, Theal, RSEA, IV, p. 184. In 1635 it was planned to import 200 horses, and breed them in Zambezia; nothing came of the plan. Rei to V.R., 24.II.1635, Lisbon, in op. cit., IV, p. 257.

[5]But see H.J. Fisher, "He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: the horse in Central Sudan", part II, JAH XIV, 3 (1973), pp. 355-379.

a part alternative. Cattle can be ridden; their feet are more sensitive than those of horses, but they can achieve the same speed, for limited distances. Oxen are no chargers, but they do provide the psychological advantage of a higher position, which can be useful for shooting weapons.[1] Oxen were ridden by Hottentots, Tswana and other Kalahari region peoples. The same use was made of cattle on a fairly large scale among the nineteenth century Shona. There is no evidence, however, of riding oxen in the Mutapa area before then. Al-Masu'udi's tantalizing remark about 300,000 oxen-riding soldiers in the land of Zanj, still awaits the missing link to connect it with the ox-riding people further south.[2] In the sixteenth century the people of the Sofala region were fighting on foot. The first reference to ox-riding comes in a description of Manyika in the eighteenth century. In Orobze, i.e. the land of the Rozvi, somewhere west of Manyika, "the oxen are so vigorous and huge that they do not differ from a good horse; some are trained as cargo and saddle beasts...".[3] One is immediately reminded of the huge oxen of Butua, imported for the Barretto expedition,

---

[1]The Griqua, Korana, and other South African groups, used oxen in this capacity. See, for example, Le Vaillant, Travels from the Cape of Good Hope into the interior parts of Africa (1790) (trans. from the French; London, New York, Johnson Reprint Co., 1972), II, pp. 87-90; W.C. Baldwin, African hunting and adventures from Natal to the Zambezi, from 1852 to 1860, 3rd ed. (Rep.; Cape Town; C. Struik, 1967), pp. 166, 240, 320, 331.

[2]Al-Masu'di, "The Ivory trade" /10th C./ in Freeman-Grenville, (ed.), The East African Coast (1966), p. 16. The capital of Masu'di's Zanj was in the land of "Sofala and the Waq-Waq", but it is not clear whether his Sofala is the Sofala of the sixteenth century, cf. T.N. Huffman, "Rise and Fall", JAH (1972), p. 362.

[3]"Descripçao Corografica", AHU, cxa 17.

which were "as large as the large oxen of France and very tractable...".[1] The fact that these had to be brought all the way from Butua to Sena, implies they were not to be found nearer to the Zambezi, in the Mutapa area. Although small oxen, the other strain present on the plateau, could be trained for riding as well, the identification is emphatic, of the large cattle of the Rozvi. The sight of oxen "cavalry" is so strange that it is very difficult to imagine meticulous observers like Dos Santos or Gomes neglecting to describe it, had they seen it. The fact that this detail did come up with regular contact between Manyika and the Rozvi of Butua shows it to have been unusual in the Mutapa area before. It may be safely assumed, then, that beasts of burden were not part of the Mutapa communications system. Human feet were left to perform locomotion. There were the couriers and the mutumwis; the mutumwis, some of them old, with their suites, were probably slower.[2] In case of emergency, runners could cover distances rapidly. A messenger sent from Nangwendi to Salisbury during the 1896 rebellion covered the distance of over a hundred miles within three days. This was achieved at the price of "toes torn through and bleeding...".[3]

---

[1] Fr Monclaro, Relaçao, Theal, RSEA, III, p. 237.

[2] The Mutumwi to Barretto from the Mutapa in 1571 was old. He had with him a large suite, including some 10 to 12 mutumwis of a lower rank. Even the petty rulers around Zumbo were sending 3 and 4 envoys each, who presumably had their suites too. Fr Monclaro, "Relaçao", op. cit., p. 246; de Faria e Sousa, Asia, IV (1945), p. 171. Letter of G.B.C. de Campos to Capt. Gen. Zumbo, 15.I.1768, in "Inventario...", Moçambique, 88 (1956), p. 124.

[3] J. Farrant, Mashonaland martyr, Bernard Mizeki and the Pioneer Church (Cape Town, London, etc.; Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 154.

For transmitting a message urgently over longer distance, a relay system was required. Fire beacons were allegedly widely used by the Shona in the nineteenth century, to warn of Ndebele raids, and some even spoke of a "code of signals". During the 1896 rebellion similar allegations were made.[1] African informants today do not have any memory of such signals. Its use without any "coding" was common in the area. Ndebele soldiers were said to have used it. Shona historians place it in their histories.[2] Fires could not have been effective unless for sudden alarm, or where there was some mutual agreement about their meaning, of which there is no evidence.

Drums were associated with rulers both south and north of the Zambezi. Royal drums were beaten on special occasions only, and when their booming noise was heard, it meant either the ruler was dead, or men were called out to war. Such drums were highly respected, magical qualities were attached to them, and they were carried into battle.[3]

---

[1] Chitsa's story, in M.E. Weale, "The native rebellion 1896 to 1897", NAR, HMss. We 3 2/6. T.O. Ranger, Revolt in Southern Rhodesia 1896-7 (London; Heinemann, 1967), pp. 24-30. The writer was unable to find any reference to beacons in Portuguese sources.

[2] P.R. Kirby (ed.), The Diary of Dr. Andrew Smith (Cape Town; Van Riebeck Soc., 1939), p. 238. W. Edwards, "The Wanoe", NADA, 1926, p. 21: "On the might of the 18th of June the beacon fires blazed out from the hills of Noe, and were answered by similar fires on the far-off hills of Goromonzi and Jeta". Mr. Furamera, interviewed 17.VIII.1973 in Chihota, said in his version of the Nyemba story, "The brother came during the evening and found there was no one at the place. When her brother came, he took some lit grass so that he could make her see, because he was thinking that she had been lost."

[3] Drums reached the highest degree of reverence and sacredness with the Venda of the northern Transvaal, closely related to the Shona. Ngoma Lungundu, the royal drum, was "feared and revered most", and was "called the voice of the Great God, Mambo wa Denge..."; it was tabu to the people, not even to be looked at. See N.I. Van Warmelow (ed.), The copper miners of Mesina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg, (Pretoria; Dept. of Native Affairs, Ethnological Publications, Vol. III, 1940), pp. 10-11; Chiefly status in Shona society was attested to by the possession of drums. See Chinyandura, "The Sinoia caves - a historiette", NADA (1931),

In the 1629 battles with Mutapa Nyambe Kapararidze, the Mutapa royal drum, decorated with lions and leopards ("tigres") still frightened the African auxiliaries after it was taken by the Portuguese.[1] For one purpose, the importance of drums lay in their relaying capacity. A drum can be heard over distances of a few miles, especially at night. The Shona never coded their messages, as was done in the Congo area, and further west.[2] However, informants maintain that there was a specific way of beating the drums, now defunct, which meant war was in the offing.[3] In 1788, when Galvâo da Silva was suspected of bewitching

---

p. 67: "he gave his cousin Shinoyi the royal drum... as a token... that Shinoyi was the heir-apparent..."; On the migration of the Shangwe people to Sebungwe, a magical drum is said to have been sent by the ancestors, to lead the migration and protect Sileya's people. D.M. Coley, "The fate of the last Bashankwe Chief", NADA (1927), pp. 65-66.

[1]A. Gomes, "Viagem...", Studia (1959), p. 191.

[2]Cf. U. Beier, "The talking drums of the Yaruba", African Music, I (1954), pp. 29-33; J.F. Carrington, "The drum language of the Lokole tribe", African Studies, vol. 3 (1944), pp. 75-88.

[3]Takundwa Mudzingwana, interviewed on 8.VIII.1973, Chingwanda African Purchase Area, stated drums were beaten after battles, while messages were relayed by boys. Machokoto Mangani, interviewed 11.VIII.1973, in Chihota TTL, said of the Rozvi ruler, "He never used drums. The Rozvi would send messengers to call people"; Chief Nyandoro and his counsellors, interviewed on 14.VIII.1973, in Chihota TTL, volunteered the information that "They would be able to use the drums for signals... It was only the chief [who would beat the drums]..." People could hear the drums, they stated, over 2-3 miles, "The people knew the difference between the sound of the drum for pleasure and for the war." Mr. Chigumbo and his mother, B.E. Chigumba, interviewed in Buhera on 30.VII.1973, volunteered similar information: "[The chief] used not to have mapurisa as they are today. He used to beat a drum whenever he wanted to send a message and the machinda could come... The drums had different sounds and each sound had a meaning different from the other."
A. Fernandes wrote that the drum of the Karanga ruler of Otongue could be heard at a distance of 3-4 leagues (9 to 12 miles). See his letter to the "brothers... of the Company of Jesus in Portugal", Goa, 5.XII.1562, in Paiva e Pona, Dos Primeiros... (1892), p. 89.

the mines of Manyika, the Chicanga threatened that unless a fine was paid, he would beat his war drum and send his soldiers against the Portuguese expedition.[1] This same system was used in Chidima in the nineteenth century, as well as north of the Zambezi.[2] Likewise, parapara horns, reported by Dos Santos to have made a "terrible and frightful sound", were widespread throughout the Shona area, and in Venda lands in the south. Horns were used in celebrations too; apparently when blown on their own, they had a definite meaning of sounding the alarm, mainly of wild animals. Horns, too, were controlled in their use, so that their communications value was not confused by other uses.[3]

Mutapa courts, then, did not utilise literacy in their internal administration. Tallies were used, but it is not clear whether on any organized basis. For locomotion, runners and envoys had to be relied upon. A royal monopoly was exercised in certain usages of drums and horns which signalled alarm and mobilization. More elaborate messages could not be transmitted by those instruments. For more complex messages rulers had to send messengers, from the zimbabwe to lesser zimbabwes, or to the muzindas, villages of local rulers.[4] Transport, for rulers

---

[1] H. Bhila, "A journal of... da Silva's travels", Monumenta (1972), p. 84.

[2] M.A. Pacheco, Diario (1883), p. 360; A.C.P. Gamitto, Kazembe, I (1960), pp. 37, 129 and passim.

[3] Dos Santos, "Ethiopia...", in Theal, RSEA, VII, p. 203; Interview with Taruwona Nyoshanu, 1.IX.1973 Buhera: "... The people who saw the animal would take a trumpet and then blow it for the other villages to know of the danger. The trumpet was made of a horn". And compare P.R. Kirby, The Musical instruments of the rative races of South Africa, 2nd ed. (Johannesburg; Witwaterstrand University Press, 1965), pp. 74-79. Messengers to the Mwari cult in parts more to the south also used horns to assemble people, in ritual contexts. H. Franklin, "Manyusa (Amanxusa)", NADA (1932), p. 78.

[4] Interviews with Chief Chimombe and his counsellors, 22.IX.1973, Buhera; Interview with Shonhiwa Nhondoro, 20.IX.1973, Buhera.

and others, relied on bearers. The absence of a quick relaying system such as a "drum language", slowed contact between centre and periphery. Transport limitations seem to have influenced accumulation of food in large quantities in centres. This, in turn, prevented deployment of large numbers of officials who were tied to their lands. The result was a hierarchical system in which more communicators came to the centre from its periphery than vice versa. Tribute was probably rather a gesture of submission than a substantial contribution to maintaining the court. And contact with its periphery was for the centre an intermittent affair.

G. The context of Mutapa communications

Periphery and centre alike were set in a primarily agricultural context in the Mutapa complex. "The greatest majority of the kaffirs are inclined to agricultural and pastoral pursuits, in which their richess [sic] consists."[1] The relations of centre and periphery in the Mutapa area cannot be understood unless drummers, bearers and messengers are placed in their social context, of Shona and Tonga agriculturalists. This basically farming population was clustered in villages. Only a small minority lived in family groups outside the villages.[2] Villages divided roughly into three grades, according to scale. The smallest, and perhaps the commonest, villages, the imcubes, consisted of about 30 to 40 fighting men, and their dependents. In the

---

[1] A. Bocarro, "Decada", Theal, RSEA, III, p. 355.

[2] J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", op. cit., VII, p. 208.

"reyno" of Inhabanzo, near Tete, there were 25 villages, able to supply 2,000 warriors. When da Silva clashed with Manyika villagers in 1788, there were 30 to 35 men who formed the fighting force of the village.[1] Such villages were ruled by mocuros, i.e. vakuru (sing. mukuru) or elders in Shona. Every few villages were clustered under a fumo, a term used in contemporary sources for both village headmen and sadunhu (ward heads). The fumo occupied a village greater in importance and size than the imcube. The muzinda, his "metropoli", were said in the seventeenth century to correspond to Portuguese cidades.[2] Muzinda nowadays in Shona means the meeting place of a chief. Village size and political standing went hand in hand in Mutapa society. The 25 villages of Inhabanzo had 11 fumos. Most of the settlements in it were then, "colonias" of the 11 muzindas. Manyika of the eighteenth century was estimated to have had 5,000 men. These were divided into 42 vassal units of the Chicanga.[3] An average of 120 men per unit makes it obvious they were domains of fumos. The average does not allow for more than two to three satelite villages for each muzinda. Very few of the "cidades" in the area were bigger, containing at most a few thousand people. The Mutapa zimbabwe, as was seen, was one of these large villages. The Teve zimbabwe was probably as large. But the zimbabwe of Manyika, the smallest of the eastern "reynos", with an adult male

---

[1] Ibid.; A. Gomes, "Viagem", Studia (1959), pp. 204-6; A. Bocarro, Decada, Theal, RSEA, III, p. 432. H. Bhila, "A journal of... da Silva's travels", Monumenta (1972), p. 84.

[2] F. de Sousa, Oriente, I, (1710), p. 843; A. Gomes, loc. cit.

[3] Descripçao Corografica", AHU, cxa 17; cf. C.A. Guereiro, "Inquerito", Studia 6 (1960), p. 14, for Manyika population 2 centuries earlier.

population of 4 to 5 thousand, could not have been as large and yet allow for 42 muzindas. Barwe, a stronger state, counted villages of about 200 men each, in the late nineteenth century. With at least 23 "indunas" for an estimated minimal force of 13,000 men, not many zimbabwe-size villages could have flourished there.[1]

How densely settled were Mutapa villages is very hard to establish. The 42 fumos of Manyika shared an area of four by two days' walking distance. With an average daily walking of 15 miles - a rough estimate of over forty square miles per fumo can be calculated. The 25 villages of Inhabanzo were all within 2 to 3 leagues from Tete. And in the nineteenth century Pacheco found in Chidima villages of fumos and "regulos" within half a league of each other.[2] Manyika, of which it was said "there is no country as fertile", was probably always fairly densely populated.[3] One indication for it is the scarcity of big game, especially elephants, in the land. Barwe, on the other hand, with a low population density of just over 7 persons per square mile as late as 1941 - was renowned for its elephants.[4] The swampy areas of the coast, in which one could travel for days on the way from Sofala to the Zambezi without meeting a village to spend a night in - were probably always a low density area.[5] The Zambezi valley above Tete seems to

---

[1]"Descripção Corografica", AHU, cxa. 17; Report of Capt. Graham, encl. in no. 102, 30.III.1892, in CO 879-36, p. 230, PRO. And see Section B, Chapter I, above.

[2]See references to previous paragraph; A.M. Pacheco, Diario (1883), passim.

[3]~~loc. cit.~~ "Descripção Corografica" AHU cxa 17.

[4]Dos Santos Junior, Contribuçao (1944), p. 21.

[5]J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", Theal, RSEA, VII, pp. 251-2.

have been consistently thinly populated. And the Korekore area of the previous core area of the Mutapa is thinly populated relative to other Shona groups on the plateau.[1] Yet even there, on the road to the Mutapa zimbabwe in the seventeenth century, traders could spend all their ten nights on the road in villages.[2] However, population fluctuated from time to time and from area to area. In the seventeenth century, complaints of the depopulation of Kafraria, i.e. Portuguese Zambezia, were frequent.[3] The desertion of inhabitants was a common practice when a strong and renowned ruler was replaced with less popular ones.[4] Likewise, the size of the populace of villages, as well as states, was increased by the generosity and ability to ensure peace of their rulers.[5] Severe famines also played their part in changing habitation maps. The great shangwa, famine, of the 1820s caused large scale internal migrations, as well as wars which upset settlement even more.[6] Manyika in the eighteenth century was said to be drawing people

---

[1] C.M. Doke, Report on the Unification of the Shona dialects (Hertford, England; Printed for the Govt. of Southern Rhodesia, 1931), p. 4; C.S. Lancaster, "The economics of social organization in an ethnic border zone; the Goba (N. Shona) of the Zambezi valley", Ethnography, 10, 4 (1971), p. 446.

[2] A. de Conceiçao, "Tratado", Chronista, II (1867), p. 66.

[3] See Manoel Barretto, "Informaçao", Theal, RSEA, III, pp. 490-91; A. Gomes, "Viagem", Studia (1959), pp. 192-93. Report of D. da Cunha de Castelbranco, Goa, 7.II.1619, in Theal, op. cit., II, p. 161. M.D.D. Newitt, Portuguese (1973), pp. 62-68.

[4] Letter of G.B. Coelho to Capt. Gen., Zumbo, II.I.1768 in "Inventario", Moçambique, no. 86, p. 123.

[5] A.M. Pacheco, Diario (1883), p. 31.

[6] Compare histories of Shona tribes, as given in NAR N 3/33/8, with documents for same period, for example, letter of Rodrigues to Governor, 19.XII. 1827. Representation by renters of prazos, 29.X.1828, in F. Santana, Documentaçao, I (1964), pp. 347 and 367.

into it, while Chidima of the third quarter of the nineteenth century was said to have been depopulated by Nguni raids, and the great Shangwa.[1]

Villages moved site as their shifting agriculture practices exhausted the land round them. Yet, unless there was a general upheaval, or a political reason, villages tended to move within their dunhu.[2] A muzinda and its satellite villages, hen, although shifting, remained within easy reach of each other. For a fumo to contact his people was, therefore, a matter of hours, if the message was sent by runners. Sounding the alarm with drums and horn did not even call for relay stations, as drums could be heard over at least three miles.[3] Besides, the structure of Shona kinship dictated close links between the inhabitants of a dunhu. Groups of torwa, members of clans other than that of the ruling house in a dunhu, were normally related to it by marriage. Kinship ties involved mutual visiting, participation in each other's ceremonies, and mutual help. It was only natural that news of any kind travelled rapidly around the community. The open nature of a village dare contributed to the speedy diffusion of news.[4] Contact did not stop at the boundaries, however, neither was it necessarily all official contact that crossed boundaries.

---

[1] "Descripçâo Corografica", AHU, cxa. 17; M.A. Pacheco, Diario (1883), pp. 16, 31, 43.

[2] J.F. Holleman, African Interlude (1958), pp. 25-6; Ayres d'Ornellas, Paças (1905), p. 59; A.C.P. Gamitto, King Kazembe, I (1960), p. 101.

[3] Letter of Andre Fernandes, 5.VII.1562 in Paiva e Pona, Dos Primeiros, p. 89, says the drum of Tonge could be heard for 3 to 4 leagues (9 to 12 miles). The counsellors of Chief Nyandoro, int. Chihota TTL 14.VIII.1973, said the range was 2-3 miles.

[4] C. Bullock, The Mashona and the Matabele (Cape Town, Juta & Co., 1950), p. 106.

Between lands of different states there was a recognised border. This did not mean, however, that contact between lands was necessarily difficult. The river Aruangwa, the border between Manyika and Barwe, had villages on both sides, within one day's walking distance from each other.[1] In the nineteenth century belts of uninhabited "bush" separated some Shona states from others.[2] This may have been the case with a land like Rimuka, known as a wild area, full of big game, in the seventeenth century.[3] Besides contact for various social purposes, there operated what Europeans called later "the bush telegraph". Within a dunhu, and between neighbouring dunhus, news could travel fast simply through people working in the fields or visiting each other. Speed was obtained by increasing the range of such friendly contact, by the use of shouting. Refused a secret, you would say "Am I a person who stands on an ant-hill casting the secrets of other people into the winds?"[4] "I called as the Natives had taught me, using their long vowel sounds and high pitch and throwing my voice to the hills", wrote Bullock.[5] And Hole assured us that he "had ocular demonstrations of this practice on several occasions and can testify that shouting from

---

[1] H. Bhila, "Journal...", Monumenta (1972), pp. 81, 84.

[2] S.P. Hyatt, The old transport road (1914) Rep. (Bulawayo; Books of Rhodesia; 1969), pp. 99-100

[3] D.P. Abraham, "Maramuca", JAH (1961), p. 224.

[4] J.F. Holleman, African Interlude (1958), p. 97.

[5] C. Bullock, Rina, a story of Africa (Cape Town, Juta & Co., n.d.), p. 53. Though a novel, its ethnographic background is on the whole accurate.

kraal to kraal actually takes place...".[1] This was most probably what Rodrigo Lobo, the famous sertanejo, was afraid of when he killed a lion, which was forbidden in the lands of Teve, whose "great wife" Lobo was. Lobo sent the carcass at once to the ruler of Teve, "knowing that the king was sure to hear of it at once, for the kaffirs cannot keep anything secret, and are very ready to carry evil tidings...".[2] Even uninhabited parts were not safe from informal information collection. When Inhamunda of Teve staged a blockade of Sofala in 1515, some people tried to penetrate his lands through the "bush", i.e. uninhabited area. That plan was effectively foiled by his herdsmen, who "are always out with cattle..."[3] Inter-land contact, then, could be very effectively carried on without officials taking part in the process.

Whenever people met, greetings could transcend simple polite questions into exchange of news on each other's domestic and community affairs. One's destination, starting point of one's journey, and one's business, could all be discussed on the roads.[4] Foreigners would not go unnoticed, and soon be reported to the ruler, if it seemed there

---

[1] H.M. Hole, Old Rhodesian days (1928), rep. (London; Frank Cass, 1968), p. 50.

[2] J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", Theal, RSEA, VIII, pp. 226-7.

[3] Letter of F. de Brito to Rei, Sofala, 8.VIII.1519, Documentos, VI, p. 11.

[4] W. Harvey Brown, On the South African frontier (1899), rep. (Bulawayo; Books of Rhodesia, 1970), pp. 208-211; J.T. Bent, The ruined cities of Mashonaland (London; Longman, Gray & Co., 1902), p. 312.

could be an interest in the foreigner.[1] Travellers normally tried to stop over in villages for the night. As it was the custom of the country to travel until midday, then stop until the next morning, there was plenty of time for social contacts in the villages they stayed in. The afternoon was normal gathering time for the villagers anyway, so the travellers could join in the telling of stories and news.[2] The informal talks at the dare were additional to official inquiries staged before a foreigner would be admitted.[3] Travellers supplied in this way a mobile diffusion of information and news. Invalid people in the Mutapa area cometimes specialized in crafts. The craft for blind people was playing the mbira, and singing to its tune.[4] There were itinerant mbira players in the late nineteenth century, and it is not improbable that some of the "king's poor" of the seventeenth century, travelling from village to village and living off people's hospitality were such itinerant bards.[5] Bards used in their songs any subject, including information on the country and its people, the rulers and their attitudes to strangers, and the wild game of the land.[6] Bearing in mind the traditional association of mbira

---

[1]Thus da Silva, although he passed far away from the Makombe village, was soon after entering Barwe approached by emissaries demanding presents, H. Bhila, "Journal...", Monumenta (1972), pp. 80-81.

[2]A. Gomes, "Viagem", Studia (1959), p. 204.

[3]A. Gomes, loc. cit.

[4]For some such examples, see Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", Theal, RSEA, VII, p. 251; R. Blennerhast and L. Sleeman, Adventures in Mashonaland (1893), Rep. (Bulawayo; Books of Rhodesia, 1969), pp. 246-7.

[5]Faria e Sousa, Asia, IV (1945), p. 172; "... there is a quantity of blind negroes and negresses who occupy themselves in singing, dancing and playing various kafir instruments at the doors of their king and princes, who maintain them..." G. Liesang, (ed.), "Resposta" (1966), p. 21.

[6]M.C. Hubbard, No one to blame; an African adventure (New York; Minton, Balch & Co., 1934), pp. 134-38.

players with rulers and mhondoro, such musicians could also act as diffusers of praise-songs, including historical information, from land to land.

The unofficial communicators par excellence in the Mutapa region were the traders. The coast-based group of "Moors" and Portuguese was engaged in long distance trade. There is no need here to go into the details of their history in southern Zambezia, very aptly dealt with by Lobato, Axelson, Newitt and Isaacman. In the sixteenth century, and long before, the "Moors" were scattered in the interior of the Mutapa region in their hundreds, perhaps even thousands. They established what may be seen as the forerunners of the Portuguese prazos, with thousands of slaves, mainly along the Zambezi. The majority of the "Moors" looked no different from the local Africans, and spoke the local languages.[1] "Moors" from the coast and the Zambezi travelled inland with their Indian wares, cloth, beads and trinkets, which they traded for gold and ivory. Some of their bearers were recruited from among the people they travelled through. The readiness of Africans in Inhambane to perform services "for a price" points to an established custom.[2] Traders provided a link between people hundreds of miles apart. Bearers would become familiar with far-removed people.

---

[1] Letter of D. de Alcaçova to Rei, 20.XI.1506, Documentos I, p. 397; Summary by Carneiro of letters of A. de Saldanha to Rei /1511/, Documentos III, pp. 15-17; Letter of P. Vaz Soares to Rei, Sofala 30.VI.1513, op. cit., pp. 465-469; "Description of the situation, customs and produce of some places of Africa" /ca. 1518/, Documentos V, pp. 357-359, 363-365; R.E. Gregson, "Trade and politics...", Af. Soc. Res. (1973), pp. 417-422. Letter of A. Caldo to friend /1561/ in A. de Paiva e Pona, Dos Primeiros (1892), pp. 70-73; E. Axelson, Portuguese, 1488-1600 (1973), p. 148.

[2] A. Fernandes, letter 25.VI.1560, in Documentos, VII, p. 483.

The locals, presumably, had a chance to hear of fairs, big ships, firearms and the like.[1] Bearers could be hired for a part of the journey, then dismissed and others hired.[2] This practice involved even more people in the communication process.

African middlemen, some of them free agents, but increasingly slaves trading on their masters' behalf, also took part in the trade. Being of local origin, they were familiar with the land and the language. Their wide travelling provided them with knowledge which ~~they~~ they could impart from one part of the land to another. Gomes recorded a slightly decorated version of mutual investigation between two such African agents, who reached for the first time a southern land, and the locals.[3] Both African vashambadzi, and Portuguese and "Moor" merchants, spent months, sometimes over a year, intinerating. Their contact with people was thus deep and long.[4]

---

[1]See for an example of such contact, A.M. Pacheco, Diario (1883), p. 4, 44. Contact was close to the extent of having bearers accused of adultery with wives of local rulers, op. cit., pp. 7-8.

[2]This was sometimes due to fears of the strange lands ahead. Oral historians in Selukwe reported early in the 20th century that Rozvi trading parties never crossed into Portuguese territory, for fear of being castrated and detained as carriers there. See, "History of Selukwe", in file A 3/18/28, NAR. In those days, traders tended to use slaves. See Teixeira Botelho, Historia militar (1934), pp. 188, 205; R. Burton, Lands of Cazembe (1873), p. 65; A.C.P. Gamitto, Kazembe I (1960), p. 21.
In the 19th century it became more common to rely on local bearers south of the Zambezi; partly due to the deteriorated security. See H. Townsend, The history of the Umvukwes (Umvukwes Women Institute, 1960), p. 17; W. Montagu Kerr, The far interior I (1886), p. 107; The latter also described vividly the type of communication likely to have taken place in trading caravans; while some Africans were telling of the Portuguese on the Zambezi, others spoke of the area south of Mashonaland, of wagons, horses "with very vivid illustrations", op. cit., vol. II, pp. 4-5.

[3]A. Gomes, "Viagem", Studia (1959), p. 188.

[4]Letter of D. Lopo de Almeida to Rei, Sofala, 27.VIII.1527, Documentos VI, p. 277.

Some of the Portuguese sertanejos were already absorbed in local zimbabwes within the first few decades of contact. By 1515 Teve already had some Portuguese deserters, as firearms experts. Although Teve envoys, long after, were still frightened of the noise of the firearms of Sofala. Teve was asking for a bombarda in 1515.[1] This early recognition of the value of firearms owed something to information reaching him from Sofala, place of "Moors" and Portuguese. Furthermore, both "Moors" and Portuguese converted slaves and established families with local women.[2] Once sertanejos were established in the interior, clergymen used them as a channel for establishing Christian churches and institutions. Da Silveira in 1561 thus used the influence of Antonio Caiado, a Portuguese established in the Mutapa zimbabwe.[3] The ruler of Barwe, one of the less hospitable states towards the Portuguese, refused in the late seventeenth century to allow the establishment of a church in his lands. His argument rested precisely on the potential contacts of the priests with his people. He would not mind having them as traders, his envoy intimated to the Portuguese, but not as teachers of Christianity. Only the influence of a powerful sertanejo forced the "Baruistas" to accept the priest.[4]

---

[1] M.D.D. Newitt, Portuguese (1973), p. 33; F. Axelson, Portuguese... 1488-1600 (1973), pp. 89-91.

[2] "...there are many Moors, who are careful to buy Pagan boys and instruct them in the cursed sect of Mohamed." Fr. A. da Zevedo, "Informaçao..." in Theal, RSEA, IV, p. 37. The Portuguese had Africans converted as early as 1506. See Order of Pero de Anhaia, to king's Treasurer, Sofala, 24.I.1506, Documentos I, pp. 382-3.

[3] Caiado served as Silveira's interpreter and was also the person who warned him of the plans against him. He was apparently of some standing in the court. See B. Leite, Dom Gonçalo (1946), p. 169.

[4] A. da Conceiçao, "Tratado...", in Chronista... II (1867), p. 44.

The combined operations of Portuguese, "Moors" and shambadzi strengthened in this way patters of inter-village, and inter-state contact. The practice of buying Maravi-made cloth north of the Zambezi, and supplying it to the Mutapa area must have strengthened ties between the two banks of the Zambezi.[1] It was to be strengthened by infusions of population fron the northern, to the southern, bank.[2] It was not, it was claimed, worthwhile for Africans in the interior to travel all the way to the coast or the Zambezi.[3] The presence of shambadzi in the interior acted as an incentive to more extensive travelling. Manyinka of 1788, well supplied with cloth and beads of a large variety, could still produce a rush of hundreds of women from distances of miles away when a trader's caravan passed by.[4] Trade encouraged mobility in other ways, too. A deliberate use of credit to encourage production of gold and ivory pushed more Africans into hunting and mining, both of which activities involved spreading out from villages.[5]

Africans were also involved in trade. Early in the sixteenth century, a somewhat overstated report complained: "... no kaffirs come here to trade as they did in the past, which was the main profit of

---

[1]See A. Gomes, "Viagem...", Studia (1959), p. 222; and compare Conceição, op. cit., p. 43.

[2]The establishment of the Portuguese South of the Zambezi supported the general tendency by importing slaves and mercenaries from the north. A. Isaacman, Mozambique (1972), p. 48; Luis Cacegas & Luis de Sousa, "Historia...", Theal, RSEA, III, p. 399; A.M. Pacheco, Diario (1883), pp. 51, 52, said neither Chidima nor Dande were trading in slaves but were importing domestic slaves from the lands of the Senga and Marawi.

[3]"... and although there is gold in all the land it is spread out throughout the land, and there is none who has it in such quantity as to allow him to come so far to trade it." P. Vaz Soares to Rei, 30.II.1513, Documentos, III, p. 461.

[4]H. Bhila, "Journal...", in Monumenta (1972), p. 82.

[5]J. de Barros, Asia (1945), IV, p. 393.

Sofala..."[1] Africans who came to trade from Inyancouro on the Zambezi were mentioned in the accounts of Sofala, for the years where such accounts survived.[2] Africans rallied on fairs on the Zambezi from the interior, and on the fairs established in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the lands of Manyika, Teve, and Mutapa.[3] In eighteenth century Manyika, many of the men were engaged in retailing cloth.[4] Areas rich in gold were more extensively mobilized in this way than others. Manyika of the late eighteenth century was much better supplied with trade goods than Barwe, through whose lands the road to Manyika from Sena lay.[5] The most extensive trade-oriented movement of people came with the extension of fairs into the Urungwe district, and Rimuka, south-west of there, besides fairs in the Mazoe and Mount Darwin areas. The Changamire wars, starting at 1683, brought most of these fairs, and their local trade, to an end.[6] Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, trade reverted to operating from the fringes of the Mutapa complex, based on Sena, Tete, Zumbo, and their related prazos, and the greatly declined fairs in Manyika. Local mobilization for trade must have declined accordingly.

---

[1] J. de Almeida to Rei, 1527, Documentos, VI, p. 276.

[2] See E. Axelson, Portuguese... 1488-1600 (1973), p. 92; C. de Tavora to Salema, 27.XI.1517, Documentos, V, p. 310; same correspondents, 15.V.1518, ibid., p. 466.

[3] M.D.D. Newitt, Portuguese (1973), pp. 38-47.

[4] "Descripçao Corografica", AHU, cxa. 17.

[5] H. Bhila, "Journal...", Monumenta (1972), p. 82.

[6] A. de Conceiçao, "Tratado...", Chronista... II (1867), pp. 68-69.

Trade looms large in Portuguese sources, and consequently in scholarly studies of the Mutapa area. Yet the people of the Mutapa area were first and foremost agriculturalists. Cattle was kept, and was an important means of wealth accumulation. Yet the basic diet was a grain and vegetable one.[1] Their hoe culture was left undisturbed by innovations like the plough, even in Portuguese controlled lands.[2] Towards the beginning of the rainy season, in September-October, all hands had to be used for preparing the fields. Thenceforth, till April-May, various crops were planted, constantly weeded, and then harvested. Cultivation was a woman's task, yet men took an active part in tilling the land. This preoccupation was so great as to result in armies in the field dispersing in the wet season.[3] Rhodesian settlers were later faced with the same problem, as labour supplies dwindled in the wet season.[4] The greater the investment of labour, the more food a family had for the coming year. Even the Mutapa and his wives were busy in the fields in the wet season, and their food stores depended on their labour.[5] During the wet season, therefore, both men and women were tied to their villages and fields, and little inclined to travel.

---

[1]For some accounts of African agriculture, see: Fr. Monclaro, "Relaçao...", Theal, RSEA III, p. 176; Dos Santos, "Ethiopia...", op. cit., VII, p. 209; Senhor Ferao, "Account of the Portuguese possession" (trans. W.F.W. Owen), op. cit., vol. VII, p. 380.

[2]de Melo e Castro, "Noticia", in "Fontes...", Anais (1954), p. 125, said the plough, and other implements used in other parts of the world were not in use.

[3]Barretto de Rezende, "Do estado...", Theal, RSEA III, p. 419.

[4]See J. White, Marandellas, to Acg CNC, 5.XI.1903, in file N 3/6/3, "South African Native Affairs Commission", NAR.

[5]A. de Conceiços, "Tratado", Chronista... II (1867), p. 66.

The wet season imposed other obstacles in the way of travellers. Most rivers in southern Zambezia had little water during the dry season, but in the wet season they were swollen by the rains, and created a real obstacle to movement. "Innumerable" people drowned in attempts to cross rivers in the rainy season.[1] Pacheco, who started his journey in December, had to wait for days on end for the weather to clear before he could proceed.[2] The area below the Mvuradona escarpment was almost devoid of contact with the plateau above it during the rainy season well into the 1960s.[3] Most recorded visits of African envoys coincide with the dry season, from March onwards.[4] In the Changamire campaigns of the 1680s and 1690s, battles started in the dry season, but dragged on into November and over. The Changamire army, however,

---

[1] J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", Theal, RSEA VII, p. 240, and compare "Statistical report for the year ending 31st March 1898" of Belingwe district, file NB 6/1/1, NAR; and see D. Livingstone to B. Pyne, Banks of Moretele River, 7.XII.1846, in London Missionary Society Archives [Hence: LMS] Africa, Odds, Box 10 - the month of December was called by the Africans "the month of all rivers".

[2] A.M. Pacheco, Diario (1883), passim.

[3] R.C. Walacoot, "Dzivaguru", NADA (1965), p. 116: "... the imposing Mvuradona mountains form a natural barrier that even now helps to isolate the valley people from authority".

[4] See E. Axelson, Portuguese... 1488-1600 (1973), p. 54 and passim. The first man from Mutapa to arrive at Portuguese Sofala, in 1506, came in May. Given a 24 days' march, he set out in the end of the rainy season. P. de Anhaia to Contadores, 19.V.1506, Documentos, V, p. 506. Other delegates and a group thought to have been an official Mutapa embassy came in August and October of the same year. See "Mandados" of Fernandes, of the 25.VIII.1506 and 21.X.1506 in Documentos, II, pp. 614 and 686 respectively. Inyamunda's messengers, coming from the nearby Teve, sometimes came late in the season. On normal business they came in March, as they did in 1522, and were delayed till June, at least. See Baltasar Matoso's book of receipts, Documentos, VI, pp. 128-130, 132, 134 and 134-6, for the months of March to June. On pressing business, like getting powder and ball (for the 'bombarda'?) Inyamunda sent envoys in October 1521. See ibid., pp. 104, 124.

was accompanied by the soldiers' wives, who may have helped in living off the land, and thus miss one farming season.[1] On the whole, though, campaigns were limited to the dry season. Both Barretto in his 1571 Zambezi expedition, and Homem in his 1574 Teve expedition, waited until July before marching. Sisnando Dias Bayão was preparing in June 1644 for an expedition, which was diverted to Butua. He then hurried back to Sena before the end of the rainy season.[2] The empata declared by Gatsi Rusere in November 1628 against the Portuguese followed the very late arrival of the curva, virtually at the end of the travelling season.[3] Vashambadzi sent out from Zumbo were expected back in November at the latest, and officials were worried at their not arriving in time.[4]

The early months of the dry season were the months of highest mobility and contact. Food was plentiful, relative to other seasons.

---

[1] A. da Conceiçao. "Tratado", Chronista... II (1867), p. 105. Describing the battle of Maungwe, he speaks of the women "que costumao vir em companhia dos cafres".

[2] Diogo de Couto, "Dos feitos que os portugueses fizeram na conquista e descobrimentos das terras e mares do Oriente", Theal, RSEA, VI, pp. 373, 387-8; Couto has it right that the army of Homem marched "when summer came", but he mixed it with the arrival at Sofala, which was at February. Compare letter of Vasco F. Homem to Luys da Silva, 15.II.1576 in B. Leite. Dom Donçalo (1946), pp. 389-391. Fr. Monclaro, "Relação...", Theal, RSEA III, pp. 238-240; E. Axelson, Portuguese... 1488-1600 (1973), pp. 158, 161. C.R. Boxer (ed.), "Sisnando Dias Bayao, conquistador da 'Mae d'ouro'", I Congresso da Historia da Expansão Portuguese no mondo (4a Secçao), Lisbon, 1938, pp. 99, 114. Also A. Gomes, "Viagem", Studia (1959), p. 197.

[3] The Portuguese ambassador arrived in November 1628, but then the empata was declared. Letter of Fr. Louis, of the Order of Preachers, to his Provincial, 3.II.1630, in Theal, RSEA, II, p. 427.

[4] Letter of G.B. Coelho to Capt. Gen. Zumbo, 10.I.1768; "Inventario", Moçambique, no. 88, (1956), p. 122.

Farming work was at a lull. Beer could be produced, and people gathered for beer drinks, sometimes accompanied by thrashing parties. Ceremonies like weddings could be celebrated. Various economic activities, subsidiary to farming, were embarked on. Pots were made during the dry season, when women were free from farming, and the weather not destructive to clay making and drying of articles. Men were free to hunt, while the game tended to congregate around watering places in the dry season, and became more available. The dry season also produced a wide variety of berries, roots and fruits, collected by women and youth mostly.[1] Mining, impossible during the rains in most parts because of the high water table, was also an activity of the early months of the dry season. There was still water in rivers and holes, and the soil was relatively dry. Alluvial gold was also best produced just after the rainy season, when the current brought gold dust from the hills.[2]

The making of iron and copper was also mainly confined to the dry season. The craftsmen were then free, coal was easier to make, and travel to ore sources easier.[3] It is hard to over-estimate the importance of

---

[1] A.P. Jackson, "Ample food without ploughing", NADA. 31 (1954), pp. 62-66. Interview, Mr. Chirimutu Chinamanu, Epworth, 17.XI.1973; Int. Mrs. Tweure Chihota, Epworth, 17.XI.1973; E.E. Burke (ed.) The Journals... (1969); pp. 160-168; Miranda, "Monarchia..." in "Fontes...", Anais (1954), p. 57; L. Vambe, An ill-fated people, Zimbabwe before and after Rhodes (London; Heinmann, 1972), pp. 55, 182.

[2] M. Barretto, "Informaçao", Theal, RSEA III, pp. 489-490; C.R. Boxer, "A Dominican account of Zambezia in 1744", Boletin da Sociedade de Estudos de Maçambique, no. 125 (1960), p. 8; R. Summers, Ancient mining (1969), esp. p. 172.

[3] Chapwanya Denye, interviewed in Buhera, 20.IX.1973, claimed season made no difference to craftsmen; Runeso Jeffias, interviewed in Salisbury, 27.XI.1973, said, on the other hand, "They did not make the things when it was time to plough" and explained that wet season smithing was done at the villages, on stocked ores; Chirimutu Chinamanu, interviewed at Epworth Farm, 17.XI.1973, made a similar statement, qualifying it by adding that those who were not farmers would go at any time to dig for ore. Compare J.M. Mackenzie, "A pre-colonial industry: the Njanja and the Iron trade", NADA, XI, 2 (1975), p. 208.

iron and copper in Zambezian economy. Unfortunately, the Portuguese were more interested in gold. Iron mining areas used in the past are difficult to locate. Our knowledge of iron production is therefore based mainly on nineteenth century evidence. If there was a change at all in that field, and its mobilization of people, it was towards a limited increase in wet season activity.[1] Iron and copper production involved a degree of mobility. Gorongoza, east of Manyika, lacked iron, and its inhabitants had to go to Manyika for their iron.[2] Wedza mountain, with its concentrated ore deposits, apparently attracted iron smelters from areas south of the Mutapa domains.[3] Copper produced in the Melsetter district, was traded in Sofala and Manyika from the sixteenth century onwards. The Mutapa core areas were probably supplied from north of the Zambezi.[4] Salt, another major item of trade and diet, was highly valued in Zambezia. This is evident in the migration myth of the Korekore, who claim Nutota was attracted to the Dande because of the salt deposits there. In most areas on the plateau it was produced from the ashes of certain plants.[5] There were some areas where salt

---

[1]See J. Mackenzie's argument for innovation and change of scale by the Njanja, in op. cit., pp. 211-212.

[2]G. Vasse, "The Mozambique Company's territory", Journal of the African Society, VI (1906), p. 261.

[3]H.A. Chilvers, "Master-armourers of the impi", Sunday Mail (Johannesburg), 16.III.1930; J.E.S. Turton, "Native history of Salisbury", NADA (1939), p. 17; Interview, Mrs. Tewura Chihota, Epworth, 17.XI.1973; Int., Nelson Zvengwni Gondo, Epworth, 17.XI.1973; Int. Mr. Magwaza, Chigwanda African Purchase Area, 8. VII.1973.

[4]H. Bhila, "Journal...", Monumenta (1972), p. 82; Carl Peters, The Eldorado of the ancients (London, C. Arthur Pearson, 1902), pp. 256- 270.

[5]W.H. Brown, On the South African... (1970), p. 227; Interviews: Maponda Magarasadza Buhera, 21.IX.1973; Chief Chitsunge, Buhera, 21.IX.1973.

was produced on a larger scale, from marshy lands in the low lying areas around the plateau. There were such deposits in the Dande, north of the Zambezi not far from the Kafue, and in Tete. Gorongoza was another salt producing area, which paid for its iron with salt to the Manyikas.[1] The making of bark-cloth, from which blankets, sacks and containers were made, was also a craft of the early dry season, when women were free to collect the bark in the woods, and the bark still supple.[2]

The wet season brought about limited movement. Work and beer parties were a common feature of Shona society well into the twentieth century. Beer and kinship obligations brought people to the nhimbe, both at the planting and the harvest season.[3] The context was that of a dunhu, more or less within a day's walk, and in a community tightly knit anyway. The dry season mobility involved a variety of activities, longer distances covered, and more contact engendered. The going into the woods for bark, food and hunting, the outing to mining areas (which

---

[1] D.P. Abraham, "Early political history...", in Historians (1962), p. 62; Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", in Theal, RSEA, VII, pp. 265-266. G. Vasse, "The Mozambique...", J. of Af. Soc. (1906-7), p. 261; M.A. Pacheco, Diario (1883), p. 38; A.C. Campbell, "Chimombe", NADA, 34 (1957), p. 31; R.F. Burton (ed.), The Lands of Cazembe (1873), pp. 76, 238.

[2] A gudza, or bark blanket, ordered in Buhera in August could not be finished, because of lack of raw material in the dry season.

[3] One of the versions of the Njanja origins relates that Chirwa's daughter was seduced by the trader Muroro while the other inhabitants of her village were away at a nhimbe party. /Source undisclosed. Reference with author/; For an early 20th century example, see the case of M'julu, murder charge, in file DE 3/16/1 of NAR, 23.XII.1901; cf. L. Vambe, An ill-fated people (1972), pp. 182-183.

involved additional mobility for water and firewood) and the resulting barter of iron articles, copper ornaments, cloth and salt - brought men and women into contact with people on a large scale. Social and ceremonial functions supported the trend,[1] and the traders of imported goods added to it where and when they were active.

The fear of Shangwa, famine, was ever present in the Mutapa area and a vital factor in communication. The area south of the Zambezi is notorious for its unreliable distribution of precipitation, both in time and space. Droughts were a recurring feature of the region's history, sometimes accompanied by locust invasion.[2] The droughts of the 1820s and 1830s reduced people to such misery that the inhabitants of Sena were unable to repair their own houses, so weak were they. In Zumbo bearers could not be had, as they were too weak to carry the loads. Chidima was said to have been depopulated largely due to that famine. And widespread internal migrations brought recurring attacks

---

[1]See below, section on Mutapa religion.

[2]G. Kay, Rhodesia, a human geography (London, Univ. of London Press, 1970), p. 19; As locusts were later mentioned as a substitute for grain in African diet, they seem to have favoured dry years. R. Pearson, "Red locusts again on Southerly marches", The Outpost (Rhodesia), 28, 3 (1951), p. 41; Droughts were so many that only the most recent ones are remembered by tradition. "There are years", wrote A. Fernandes in 5.XII.1562, "in which because of drought, the seeds do not sprout, and then they sustain themselves with the game they hunt, especially elephants, and the fruits of the 'bush'..." - letter to brothers...of Society of Jesus... Goa, in Paiva e Pona, Dos Primeiros... (1896), p. 76; A large-scale drought was the one said to have affected the Mutapa area, together with a severe locust attack, and an unspecified epidemic, after da Silveira's death in 1561. F. da Sousa, Oriente conquistado I (1710), pp. 866-867; A more certain severe drought was that of 1511. The drought created an apparent famine, as one of Antonio Fernandes' directives was to check on provisions for travellers. See E. Axelson, "Portuguese settlement in the interior of South-east Africa in the seventeenth century", Actas de Congresso Internacional de Historia dos Descobrimentos, vol. V, part 2 (Lisbon, 1961), p. 1.

of the "baruistas" on Sena.[1] Yet even in normal years a seasonal shortage of food seems to have been the rule in Zambezian society.

Crops were consumed in the form of beer during the dry season. The frequent seasonal shortage that followed, and the inevitable starvation if the following year was one of full or partial drought - seemed to Europeans to highlight the extreme foolishness of such wasting.[2] Yet already in the eighteenth century, it was observed that storage systems in the area were inadequate. In a country the fertility of which the Portuguese praised, they emphasized at the same time that food would run short at the end of the dry season. The archaeological record points to storage in small granaries, supported by stones or flat rocks.[3] Maize, probably introduced into the area in the sixteenth century - was the most vulnerable to attacks by weevils.[4] Rapoko could

---

[1] F. Santana, Documentaçao, I (1964), p. 189, doc. of 27.2.1827, p. 788, circular of Governor, of 1.VIII.1829, etc.; F.V.B. Miller, "A few historical notes on Feira and Zumbo", J. of the African Society, IX (1909-10), p. 420.

[2] London Missionary Society 131st Annual Report (1926), "Matabeleland", p. 92; Ann. Rep. of Shangani-Inyati district, for 1939, W.W. Anderson, in Box 9, "Africa South-Reports", LMS Archives. In Charter district the farming season of 1923 was "the best in many years"; consequently beer supplies of nhimbe parties jumped from 10-20 pots per piece of work to 50-60. See J.W. Posselt, NC Charter in his Ann. Rep. for 1923, 7.I.1924, file S 235/501, NAR.

[3] K.R. Robinson, "A note on storage...", SAAB (1963), pp. 62-63; Even modern storage facilities lose a large percentage of crops stored to weevils, if kept for a whole year. The writer witnessed such a spoilt store in St. Mary's Mission, Wedza TTL, in the end of the dry season, 1973. See A. Bocarro, "Decada", Theal, RSEA, III, p. 377. M. Barretto, "Informaçao", op. cit., III, p. 478; J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", op. cit., VII, p. 214, said starvation is the cause of most deaths, as all are poor and niggardly with their food; A. Lobato, Colonizaçao (1962), p. 119; Ferrao, "Account...", op. cit., VII, pp. 371-2.

[4] M.P. Miracle Maize in Tropical Africa (London & Madison; Wisconsin Univ. Press, 1966), pp. 14, 242.

be stored for about a year, but then would rot. The consumption of beer was, then, not simply due to the "stupidity of the kafirs". It was rather the logical result of the inability to store surpluses of grain for years of want. The changing pattern of rainfall through the years, meant that while one province was suffering in a partial drought year, others had food.[1] Food could be traded for salt, iron products, or the bidding of young girls in marriage.[2] Hence food shortage again meant movement of people.

The society of which Mutapa zimbabwes formed a part was an agricultural society, relying mainly on grains for food. It was clustered in villages, with a few larger settlements at political centres. Through social contacts, and various economic activities, contact between villages was maintained, with heightened pace during the dry season. Information could travel along these channels rapidly. The wet season brought new supplies of food, which sometimes did not suffice for the whole year, and could not be stored for more than a year in any case.

---

[1]For the drought of 1922, reports from the various districts in the Rhodesia Herald of that year were checked. The drought was very severe in that year, the worst since 1899. Present-day Mashonaland suffered less than Matabeleland, while the eastern districts, the areas adjacent to them in Mozambique, and Malawi, were very hard hit. In some cases there was a difference in precipitation even between neighbouring farms (Rh. Herald, "Mazoe valley notes", 20.I.1922). See "District notes" for the dates from 13.I.1922, then in weekly intervals.

[2]Interviews: Munyira, in Buhera, 4.IX.1973, "There was hunger in Nyashanu so they would come here to sell the salt so that day they could get something to eat"; interview Chidumi 2.IX.1973, Buhera: /Zimutu people/ "My people would move to another place called Njanja which is across the river... We would buy grain and then carry it on the makudza /bark-cloth sacks/ on the back of the cattle."

H. The Mutapa communication system in historical prespective

The earliest accounts of the Mutapa courts presented it as a tightly knit state. Early accounts deriving their information via Sofala, point to the ruler of the Mutapa being highly respected, served by a kneeling entourage, who admired each sneeze or cough of his. He used to receive delegations, carrying expensive presents, "daily". Visitors could not view the ruler, who was watching them through a little window. Officers appointed by the ruler were delegated to the provinces to collect duties on gold production.[1] A standing army of a few thousand men (the more fanciful accounts included 5-6.000 Amazons...) was always ready under its "captain", Sono.[2] A further insurance of peace rested in hostages, including sons of all Mutapa vassals and lords.[3] A symbolic renewal of tributary relations occurred once a year, when the Mutapa lit a new fire, and despatched it to all his vassals by "leading citizens". All fires in the state were rekindled from the royal torch. Refusal to accept the annual fire brought immediate reprisal at the hands of the ever-ready Sono.[4]

---

[1] D. De Góes, "Chronica", Theal, RSEA, III, p. 129.

[2] Ibid., p. 130. Duarte Barbosa "Livro", in op. cit., I, p. 96. Anon, "Descripçâo da situaçao, custumes e produtos de alguno lugares de Africa", in Documentos, vol. V, pp. 360-361.

[3] De D. Góes, op. cit., p. 130; J. de Barros, Decada, IV (1945), p. 396.

[4] Anon, "Descripçâo", loc. cit.

Damião de Góes and João de Barros have more or less the same picture of the Mutapa. Both seem to have at least partly relied on the description of southern Zambezia, written circa 1518.[1] Their information on Great Zambezia, however, is a strong corroborating evidence to their accuracy.[2] Furthermore, by 1518 envoys of the Mutapa had visited Sofala more than once. Antonio Fernandes was already apparently a popular figure in Mutapa and Teve lands. The notebook containing his impressions of the Mutapa has not survived, but some of his information survived in Sofala's correspondence.[3] Barring the odd fantastic detail, (like the Amazons...) the accounts present an internally consistent picture of government: Tight control over the provinces, close and regular contact with them; available forces to quell rebellion, and enforce the sending of hostages. That highly-organized state held sway over the whole area between (anti-clockwise) the river Sabi, the Indian Ocean, the Zambezi, and a large, undefined portion of the plateau to the south of Maungwe, Sipolilo and Mount Darwin districts of today.

At the time the above accounts were written, Teve was already fighting the Mutapa for the lands between Manyika and the Sabi. And it was at least thirteen years prior to 1506 that "Changimir", a ruler of

---

[1]Anon, "Descripçao", in Documentos, V, p. 361.

[2]P. Garlake, Great Zimbabwe (1973), pp. 51-53.

[3]See A. Lobato, A expansao portuguesa em Moçambique de 1491 a 1530, II (Lisbon, Centro de Estudos Historicos Ultramarinos, 1954), pp. 227 seq.; E. Axelson, Portuguese... 1488-1600 (1973), pp. 78-85, and compare H. Tracey, Antonio Fernandes: descobridor do Monomotapa, 1514-1515 (Lourenço Marques; Arquivo Historico de Moçambique, 1940).

Mokaranga, was said by Mutapa informants to have rebelled and seceded from their state.[1] There is nothing in the accounts, however, to suggest there was a radical change in government between the fifteenth century, and the pre-"secession" period. Presumably, then, the same tightly-knit administration operated in pre-sixteenth century days. Some of the features of the early reports disappear with first hand accounts of educated visitors to the zimbabwe itself. Dos Santos, one of the best ethnographers of the region, dismissed previous accounts of the riches and pomp of the Mutapa court. He possibly also rejected altogether the idea of hostages kept in court, definitely said hostages were not sent from the coast.[2] Bocarro and Faria e Sousa elaborated on the institution of pages, but avoided the hostage aspect.[3] The "standing army" was modified already by De Barros in 1555, to an army recruited from among the farmers in each ruler's land.[4] Furthermore, the distribution of fire, an outstanding ceremony which could hardly have escaped notice by men like Dos Santos, is not mentioned after 1556. If taken at face value, the evidence suggests that some time between 1556 and the last decade of the sixteenth century there was an apparent decline of control of the Mutapa state.

---

[1]Diogo de Alcaçova to Rei (1506) in Documentos, I, pp. 392-399.

[2]J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", Theal, RSEA, VII, p. 286. Although A. de Silva, Mentalidade Missiologia dos Jesuitas em Moçambique antes de 1759, I (1967), pp. 281-82, sees the passage above as disconfirming Goes' words, it is clearly ambiguous in its phrasing.

[3]D. Bocarro, "Decada", Theal, RSEA, III, p. 357; de Faria e Sousa, "Asia", IV (1945), pp. 170-171.

[4]J. De Barros, loc. cit.; Barros destroyed other myths as well. See Randles, L'image... (1959), p. 53.

There may arise two alternative hypotheses to explain that apparent change. Either the constant wars with neighbours, vassals and contenders to the throne so weakened Mutapa power that it was unable to maintain the tight control of the past. Fire distribution and enforced delivery of hostages thus apparently lapsed, together with agents in the provinces.[1] Or, earlier accounts were coloured by the Muslim traders, and early Portuguese sertanejos, and a close analysis may reveal the state to be the same as that described at the end of the sixteenth century.

The period to which the early accounts relate is of importance. The correspondence between the accounts of Góes and Barros and the "Descripçao" of 1518 indicate that the information relates to a period prior to 1518. The inclusion of information about Great Zimbabwe by people who went there, about half a decade after its abandonment according to the archaeological evidence - points to sources even earlier.[2] Furthermore, the army of the Mutapa according to the above accounts, was commanded by the "captain" Sono. Sono is never heard of afterwards, and in 1561 Mukomohasha was made commander in chief of the

---

[1]This is implicit in Abraham's concept of the "golden phase" of the Mutapa, which ended when the 'empire' became too large for its institutions to hold it together. Although Abraham did not amplify on the government of the state before the presumed disintegration, it is implied that such government could not function after Mutapa's death; See his "Maramuca", JAH (1961), p. 214; Abraham's acceptance at face value of George, or Kupara, the Mhondoro of Mutota's claim that Mutota "swept north" with a "great army" ("Mutapa dynasty", NADA (1959), p. 60) - visualizes a two-stage conquest within 40 to 70 years. See "Maramuca", op. cit., pp. 212-214; "Early political history...", Historians... (1962), pp. 62-65; and compare "Chaminuka..." in Stokes and Brown (eds.), Zambezian Past (1966), p. 36, note 2. The rapid conquest by a "sizeable army" assumes central control for the conquest period, prior to disintegration.

[2]P. Garlake, Great Zimbabwe (1973), p. 53. It is definitely pre-1538, as Pegado, Captain of Moçambique and Sofala, who supplied the information, left Sofala at that year.

armies. Mbukurume, senior son-in-law to the Mutapa, was already active in the court in 1561, and his namesake is mentioned two centuries later as one of the generals. The clue may lie in the wars of 1516, in which, following the alleged secession of Togwa and Changamir, various provincial rulers "were in revolt" against the Mutapa. Together with Inyamunda of Teve, and "Omboyro", (Mbire, or perhaps Barwe) the 'rey' Osono took part in the wars against Mutapa "Kakuyu Kamunyaka".[1] His disappearance thenceforth from the records, unlike Barwe and Inyamunda, may signify a defeat and the complete loss of his land. It may be, on the other hand, that Sono was a private name, not a dynastic title. Sono's rebellion of 1516 must have cost him his command of Mutapa armies, and the above accounts pre-date 1516. In the accounts that survived of Fernandes' travels no Sono is mentioned; there was a "capitao moor", the king of Inhacouee (?), whose land was six days from Manyika, and who had a big fair in his land.[2] One wishes Fernandes would have indicated what local title he translated. It is possible that it paralleled the later Portuguese "Captains of the gates" who controlled the main fair of the land, at their time, Massapa. On the other hand, since "Sono" was called "capitão", it may well be that the ruler of Inhacouee (?) held either a parallel position to Sono, or that the unknown land of Sono was Inhacouee. His inclusion among the rebellious "reys" indicates he did have a country. The location of Inhacouee makes feasible a common cause with Teve and Barwe.

---

[1]Letter of J. Vaz de Almada to Rei, Sofala, 26.VI.1516, Documentos, IV, pp. 291-292. E. Axelson, Portuguese... 1488-1600 (1973), p. 91.

[2]G. Veloso, letter to Rei, /1512/, in Documentos, III, p. 183.

Now, between 1494 and 1506 there was a war raging in the country between the usurper Changamir, and the Mutapa. By the end of 1515 Inhamunda was already fighting the Mutapa in Teve, expanding his domains there.[1] Both the lands of Togwa and Chagamir (probably south of the Umfuli), and the lands of Teve and Danda in the south-east, were in these years permanently cut off politically from the Mutapa state. The various institutions like hostages, and fire distribution, then, could not have applied to the southern states after 1494, and to the south-eastern states after 1515. The army apparently was not strong enough to prevent Changamir from killing the Mutapa within his own zimbabwe, neither to stop the Teve expansion. Thus the "Descripçao"-school picture was either true for the northern part of the plateau only, or referred to an even remoter period, pre-1494 perhaps.

Fire was associated with rulers in Shona society, as in many other societies in Africa.[2] Rainmaking, closely related to rulers in the Shona world, was performed among the Tswana by extinguishing all fires and relighting them from a centrally kindled fire.[3] The custom of distributing fire survived into the twentieth century in the eastern components of the Mutapa complex. In Barwe it was still observed by

---

[1]See letter of Diogo de Alcaçova [1506], Documentos, I, pp. 393-395; Extract from a letter by Antonio da Silveira to Rei [post 18.VII.1518], op. cit., V, pp. 568-569; E. Axelson, Portuguese... 1488-1600 (1973), pp. 89-91.

[2]Compare, Monica Wilson, Communal rituals of the Nyakusa (Oxford University Press, for the Int. African Institut, 1959), pp. 3, 7, 10-11, and passim.

[3]See J.T. Brown, Among the Bantu nomads, a record of forty years spent among the Bechuana (London; Selly, Service & Co., 1926), p. 2; I. Schapera, Rainmaking rites of Tswana tribes (Leiden & Cambridge; African Social Research Documents, no. 3, 1971), p. 127; and compare H.A. Stayt, Bavenda, (1931), pp. 207, 311.

Peters early in the 20th century. In Maungwe it is said to have lapsed with European rule. And in Manyika the installation of a chieftainess was accompanied by the kindling of a new fire at her headquarters.[1] Abraham claimed that fire distribution was still remembered in connection with vassalage to the Mutapa in Buhera, Wedza and Makoni.[2] There cannot be any doubt, then, that fire was distributed from centre to periphery, and its acceptance conveyed homage to a new ruler. In view of later practices, however, it seems safe to assume that the fire distribution was not consistently annual but occurred with the accession of a new ruler. It is probable that the close contact of the Portuguese with the eastern lands of the Mutapa complex brought them to ascribe their institutions to the western Karanga, then less well-known.[3] Or the practice may have lapsed in the western polities, which seems less probable. It should be remembered, too, that in all the states proven to have practised fire distribution, the extent of their area was small enough to enable all sub-rulers within these polities to

---

[1] Anon. "Manyika headwomen" in NADA (1940), pp. 3-5, and H. von Sicard, "The Vuxwa Hills and their inhabitants", NADA (1958), p. 72; Carl Peters, The Eldorado... (1902), p. 126; "Great religious importance attaches to fire [in Barwe]. Every year at the time of the great national sacrifice all the fires in the Kingdom must be extinguished and relighted from a sacred fire which Quaira Quate keeps in the house over to his people..." In Barwe, then, the ceremony was annual. See also A. Isaacman, "Madzi-Manga, Mhondoro and the use of oral traditions - a chapter in Barwe religious and political history", JAH, XIV, 3 (1973), pp. 398-399.

[2] D.P. Abraham, "Early political history", in Historians... (1962), p. 64, n. 50. Most of my informants in these areas, however, hardly knew the name Mutapa at all. Even in Maungwe, mentioned as part of the Mutapa state, it is the Rozvi, and not the Mutapa who are remembered in oral history. See idem, "Maungwe...", NADA (1951), passim.

[3] Likewise, the ndoro, worn by western rulers as part of their regalia, was prohibited in Teve and its neighbours; J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", Theal, RSEA, VII, p. 289.

gather at the zimbabwe on a ruler's death anyway.[1] It is significant, though, that the carriers of the new fire are described variously as "nobles", "chief courtiers", and "leading citizens".[2] This aspect of the story ties in with the mutumes, leading citizens employed by Mutapa courts as ambassadors.[3]

An examination of later periods in Mutapa history might clarify the position of officials in preceding periods. The "captains" of De Góes version appear as rulers of provinces, stationed there to collect tribute of gold. In other versions, "grandes principais" and kings and vassals are spoken of. The itineraries of the explorer Antonio Fernandes include only "reys", kings, vassals of the Mutapa. He visited a "capitao mor" of the Mutapa near the Zambezi, whose role was concurrent with his being "rey" of Inhacouee. His land was a rich one, with a great fair in it.[4] On all other occasions where "captains" are mentioned it is in a military context. It is evident, then, that the "captains" of De Góes were the "reys" or "grandes" of other authors. The term "king" is significant in that it carries the quality of

---

[1] G. Liesegang, "Resposta" (1966), pp. 18-19. Compare A.C.P. Gamitto, King Kazembe, I (1960), p. 102.

[2] See D. De Góes, Chronica, Theal, RSEA, III, p. 130; D. Barbosa, "Livro", op. cit., I, p. 96; Anon, "Descripçao" /1518/, Documentos, I, p. 361.

[3] See Section E below.

[4] G. Veloso to Rei, /1512/ in Documentos, III, p. 182. Lobato and Axelson were not certain of its exact location. M.D.D. Newitt identifies it with Tete, see Portuguese (1973), p. 39.

heredity with it. The "reys" of Barwe and Manyika were said to have conquered their lands during the second half of the fifteenth century. The Mukomohasha, of the Mutapa lineage, carved for himself a land between the Luanze and the Luenya rivers in the third quarter of the sixteenth century. Together with becoming "rey" of Hondosaka, he received the title of "captain in chief", which used to belong to the ruler of Inhacouee.[1] In all these cases, establishment in office was the result of conquest.

Rulers nearest to the Mutapa centre were close companions of the first Mutapa, settled on lands conquered by the Mutapa central group.[2] Further away, the state of Tonge was established by a break-away group from a Karanga ruling house, among the Tonga of Inyambane. This was clearly not a centrally inspired move, yet the ruler of Tonge was described as a vassal of the Mutapa.[3] As near to the Mutapa zimbabwe as Hondosaka, then, subject rulers were rather confirmed in office *a posteriori*. Not all dynasties established in this way survived, as did the *mambos* of Mount Darwin and Sipolilo, and the Makombe and Makoni dynasties of the eastern part of the plateau. Some, like the

---

[1] D.P. Abraham, "~~Mutapa~~ Monomotapa dynasty...", *NADA* (1959), p. 65; *idem*, "Early political history", *Historians...* (1962), p. 68; In the Dos Santos version ("Ethiopia", Theal, *RSEA*, VII, p. 273), the land was conquered by the Mutapa, then allocated. This does not contradict the above, as conquest could be carried by them, under the aegis of the Mutapa. In the Ferrão "Account" (*op. cit.*, pp. 377-378), which is obviously Rozvi-influenced the aspect of breaking away from the Mutapa is even more emphasized.

[2] M.A. Pacheco, *Diario* (1883), p. 30; C.J.K. Latham, "Some notes on the tribes in the Mount Darwin, Rushinga and Centenary districts", *NADA*, XI, 2 (1975), pp. 176, seq.

[3] Letter of Fernandes to Father Provincial, Tonge, 24.VI.1560, *Documentos*, VII, p. 471.

ruler of Inhabanzo, lost their domains to Portuguese sertanejos. Others were established much later, with the conquests of Mutapa Mukombwe in the last third of the seventeenth century.[1] The rule emerging is one of hereditary succession once a land was established as a unit. When the incumbent Ningomohasha was killed by the Mutapa at the turn of the sixteenth century, another inherited his place.[2]

In the first third of the seventeenth century, Mutapa Kaparidze was challenging Mutapa Mavura, a Portuguese puppet. He brought with him a large number of "sons of lords", in order to instal them as replacements to Mavura's men.[3] Had the two thousand youths not died on the battle field, they might have carried on the Mutapa pattern discerned above. Rulers could be changed for disloyalty, but they too were chosen from among "sons of lords", most probably of the same ruling lineage.[4] The inducement for provincial rulers, once established, to turn to the Mutapa confirmation was probably dual. First, the Mhondoro spirits of the Mutapa were considered very potent even during the days of decline. Dande was proud in the 1860s of possessing the "most potent pondoro" in the whole of Kafraria.[5]

---

[1] M.F.C. Bourdillon, "People", NADA, (1970), p. 104 and passim. But comparison of the accounts of Mutapa expansion, in the notes above, (and others like those of Miranda "Monarchia", in "Fontes...", Anais, (1954), p. 109-111; Melo e Castro, "Noticia...", op. cit., pp. 130-132; J.B. Matthews, "One account of the history of the Vatande", NADA (1966), pp. 31-32) shows that facts changed with time and place of collecting information. Names were forgotten, and alternative names offered. This is a reminder of the ever-changing nature of political maps.

[2] A. Bocarro, "Decada", Theal, RSEA, III, pp. 362-364; E. Axelson, Portuguese... 1600-1700 (1960), p. 36.

[3] Advices from Goa of 1630, Propaganda Fide Archives, in Theal, RSEA, II, p. 429; Luis Cacegas and Luis de Sousa, "Historia", op. cit., III, p. 398.

[4] When the Portuguese killed Chikanga of Manyika in 1630, his brother was put on the throne, P. Barretto de Rezende, "Do Estado", Theal, RSEA, II, p. 411. When the ruler of Chicova was found disobedient, he was replaced by a son of a previous ruler, resident of the Mutapa Zimbabwe. A. Bocarro, "Decada", op. cit., III, pp. 399-400.

Secondly, Mutapa military might was a very real one even during the decline.[1] Chicanga of Manyika may have rebelled early in the sixteenth century. But being pressed hard by Teve later in the century, it was his "overlord" the Mutapa who supported him. During the Homem expedition to Manyika in 1572, Mutapa forces operating with the Manyikas were partly responsible for Homem's withdrawal.[2] For newly established rulers, staging a claim to be 'mwenenyikos' (masters of the land), a backing of a spiritual force like that of the Mutapa could be significant. The story of Chicuma, ruler of that part of Tavara land with the centre of the rain-cult of Dzivaguru, is a case in point. The Tavara ruler Chicarra was according to legend endowed with magical powers, and was beaten only due to Chicuma's betrayal of her secrets. Having been then established in office by Matope (whose spiritual qualities were enhanced by incestuous cohabitation with his sister Nyamita), he could rule the land, presumably as the spirits of the conquering lineage went on protecting his house.[3] The strict banning by Teve rulers, once separated from the Mutapa, of ndoro shells may be relevant here. Kiteve's threat of executing anybody wearing ndoro, the symbols associated with both families of rulers, and with mhondoros in the Mutapa state,[4] may have been an attempt to liberate his domains from Mutapa spiritual influence, after effectual political separation had been achieved. Spiritual influence could have taken the form of confirmation in office of provincial rulers. The Miranda and Melo e Castro, account in the eighteenth century, of former days, spoke of the Mutapa's confirmation in office of heirs to provincial offices. How that was done is not, unfortunately, specified but fire sent by the centre is not mentioned.[5]

---

[5] M.A. Pacheco, Diario, (1883), p. 49.

[4] P.G. de A. de Eça, Guerras, I (1953), pp. 108, 119.

[3] Letter of Homem to Luys de Sylva, 15.II.1576 in B. Leite, D. Gonçalo (1946), p. 391; E. Axelson, Portuguese... 1488-1600 (1973), p. 162.

I. Tribute and communications

A vassal of the Mutapa, had certain obligations to fulfill, apart from the possible symbolic recognition of allegiance. Tribute was probably the most frequent of these obligations. There are different accounts of what tribute in the Mutapa state consisted of. Records from all periods agree that tribute was brought to the Mutapa zimbabwe by rulers from the provinces, or their agents; this is the opposite pattern to the described distribution of fire. The "Descripçao" of 1518 speaks of precious presents carried on the head into the Mutapa court, by envoys from the vassal rulers. Authors well versed in Mutapa traditions, gave a very detailed account of interviewing provincial delegates who came with presents to the zimbabwe.[1] Pacheco in the nineteenth century recorded a similar process, including the mhondoro mediums of Chidima and Dande.[2]

Of the essence of the tribute there is, however, little in the sources. There is very little on the subject in the traditions used by Abraham, in his publications. Informants in Buhera and Chihota denied strongly ever having paid tribute, or given presents, to any overlords whatever. It is common in Shona society, however, to render assistance to a chief in the cultivation of

---

[3] Pacheco, op. cit., p. 24.

[4] J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", Theal, RSEA, VII, p. 289, and compare M.A. Pacheco, op. cit., p. 35.

[5] Miranda, "Monarchia", "Fontes", Anais (1954), p. 113; Melo e Castro, "Noticia", in op. cit., p. 134.

[1] Anon., "Descripçao", Documentos, V, p. 361; Miranda, op. cit., p. 112; de Melo e Castro, op. cit., p. 133.

[2] M. Pacheco, Diario, (1883), p. 44.

his fields.[1] Furthermore, it was customary to approach a ruler with a present. This is especially true for litigants, who had to pay the ruler's court a fee, in recognition of its authority to settle their case.[2] It is also customary to hand over to a ruler certain parts of specific wild animals. This hunting tribute included the tusk touching the ground in the case of elephants.[3] A large component of a chief's revenue in Shona society came from presents brought as court fees.[4] Oral histories and ethnography throw little light on tribute in the past, but its existence at the provincial level is clear. For the supra-provincial level one has to turn to written sources.

The earliest account of tribute in the Mutapa complex appears in the accounts of Fernandes' travels. One of the rulers he visited was charging half the output of gold as tribute from his subjects.[5] Unlike this ruler of Mazofe (Mazoe), no similar tribute is mentioned for the other rulers in whose land there was gold. De Gôes, speaking of the gold mines of the plain, in which

---

1 The custom is called Zunde in Shona, and the fruits of the communal effort are supposed to be a food reserve of the community. S.S.M. Chitehwe, "Rain making in Mashonaland", NADA, 31 (1954), p.25; J.F.Holleman, "Some 'Shona'...", in Colson & Gluckman (eds) Seven tribes... (1959) pp.371-372. Interview with Chief Chimombe and counsellors, Buhera, 22.ix.1973; A.R. Ross, NC Makoni, to Acg CNC, (1902) in file N 3/6/3 NAR.

2 G.Veloso to Rei, Documentos, III, 185; letter of Andre Fernandes, 5.xii.1562, Goa, in Paiva e Pona, Dos primeiros, (1892) p.83.

3 J.F.Holleman, African Interlude... (1958) p.113; F. de Sousa, Oriente..., I, (1710) p.842; A. Fernandes, letter to L. Froes, Documentos, VII, p.483.

4 See F.W. Posselt, NC, The Range 2.xii.1903; Y.B.Halley, NC Umtali, to CNC, 15.x.1903; in file N 3/6/3, NAR. Holleman, "Some Shona", In Colson & Gluckman(eds) Seven tribes (1959) p.327.

5 G. Veloso to Rei, op.cit., p.183.

Butua was, described the captains, "receiving the duties on the gold".[1] Yet Barros affirmed there was very little tribute paid to the Mutapa. Instead of tribute, there was a system under which seven days each month were given in service to the ruler. The subjects would go to work in an organised manner, under their captains of war. Most of the tribute in kind brought to the Mutapa was of an irregular nature, paid as court and audience fees.[2] Barbosa said tribute was brought in a fixed quantity for each ruler.[3] The above different ways of paying tribute each in its way call for contact between zimbabwe and periphery. Tribute exacted from gold production implies an ability to supervise closely the mining areas. Organised labour tribute implies extensive public works, or cultivation, for the ruler. A fixed tribute might even carry the notion of a system of records kept in court of goods paid in. All three presuppose ability to enforce payment.

The only kind of public works on a large scale undertaken south of the Zambezi were the stone buildings of the Great Zimbabwe and Khami cultures. When Fernandes visited the Mutapa, a fort of stone was being built at Mbire. There, said Fernandes, was the permanent seat of the Mutapa, five days' distance from Mazofe (Mazoe).[4] Already in 1518, however, the "Descripçâo" spoke of the "Zimbaoche" as built of wood and straw.[5] Being so

---

[1] D. De Goês, "Chronica", Theal, RSEA, III, p.129.
[2] J. de Barros, "Asia", (1945),pp.396-397.
[3] Duarte Barbosa, "Livro", Theal, RSEA, I, p.96.
[4] G. Veloso to Rei, in Documentos, III, p.183.
[5] Anon., "Descripçao" in Documentos V p.361.

near in time to the journeys of Fernandes, it is not impossible that the ever-present palisade around was still made of stone. The last time a house of clay and stone is mentioned, is in the description of the Changamire war of 1494.[1] It was known that even the massive walls of Great Zimbabwe needed little more than the local work force to have built them.[2] Zimbabwes of a much smaller scale, let alone those of wood and straw, would hardly have called for more labour. The only possible outlet, then, for Barros' presumed massive recruitment could have been in tilling fields, with an additional labour in mines.[3] Tilling a ruler's fields is common in Shona society, as well as in neighbouring ones.[4] And at the turn of the sixteenth century Dos Santos described a similar institution. In every village in Teve the ruler had a field, worked by the people, who had to supply 30 days' labour per year.[5] The Mutapa customs, according to Dos Santos, were very similar to those of Teve.[6] Later authors, from Bocarro, through Gomes, to Conceiçao and Miranda, did not mention labour tribute. Neither is it mentioned in the "Descripçao", of 1518.

---

[1] Diogo de Alcaçova to Rei, Documentos, I, p.395.

[2] P. Garlake, Great Zimbabwe (1973), p.195.

[3] J. de Barros, "Asia", pp.395-6.

[4] J. Chidziwa, "History of the Shawasha", NADA, IX, 1 (1964), p.21; Chitehwe, "Rain making...", NADA (1954), p.25; de Melo e Castro, "Noticia", in "Fontes", Anais (1954), p.139, confirmed a similar custom for the Maravi. I. Schapera, Rain Making (1971), p.119, speaks of fields worked by subjects for Tswana chiefs. There, however, such fields seem to have had a rather symbolical value.

[5] J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", Theal, RSEA, VII, p.222.

[6] Ibid., p.290.

There is thus only a partial confirmation for tribute payment in labour. Large scale mobilization from periphery to zimbabwe is, then, unlikely to have been part of the tribute system. The fields in the provinces, however, leave open the question of transportation of the harvest to the centre.

Accounts of tribute brought to the Mutapa court do not mention what were the "precious" or "large" presents offered. Where they are listed, it seems that goods valued for their export value were favoured. Ivory and gold are often mentioned, as is livestock, large and small.[1] Ivory was probably the most favoured item of tribute in the Mutapa area. The tusk of an elephant hunted, touching the ground belonged to the "owner of the land", normally a mambo, or "chief" for modern ethnography.[2] Ivory production was one of the easiest of all produce to control, without special overseer officials.[3] Elephants were highly appreciated in Zambezia throughout the centuries for the prodigious amounts of meat they had. An elephant killed, therefore, was great news. Many a nineteenth century hunter related how with the killing of an elephant, without any obvious transmission

---

[1] A.P. de Miranda, "Monarchia", in "Fontes" Anais (1954), p.112: Listed are gold, ivory, slaves, cattle and small stock. His list of looted goods is : slaves, livestock, ivory and other items, (p.115). In the undated Mss by Francisco de Lucerna, in Theal, RSEA, IV, p.278, the loot after defeating Mutapa Kapararidze included his "baggage, women, cattle and arms".

[2] " a duty of the tusk that an elephant touches the ground with when dying is paid to the heathen king". Rei to VR, 24.ii.1635, in Theal, RSEA, IV, 260. Two centuries later, Livingstone did not touch an elephant killed in "Banyai" land, until the land mambo was informed, and collected his prescribed tusk. I.Schapera (ed.), Livingstone's African Journal 1853-55, II, (London; Chatto & Windus, 1963); cf. J. Young. "The legendary history of the Hodi and Ngorima chiefs", NADA X, 2 (1970), p.59; Honyera, "The story of the Mastinda leadmanship" NADA (1964), p.55; ././.
* pp. 398, 403.

of the news, multitudes of people from all over the neighbourhood would flock to its carcass.[1] As hunting in pre-fire arms times was done in groups, the likelihood of keeping secret a successful hunt was very low indeed.[2] It was claimed that elephants were hunted for their meat rather than for their tusks. A constant supply of ivory was therefore more certain than gold supplies.

Provincial rulers were sure, then, to have some ivory at all times. Of all the export-valued products of the Mutapa area, ivory was the most wide spread geographically. Manyika, thickly populated, was an exception in being deplete of ivory already in the sixteenth century. Most other lands had elephants, while lands like Barwe, and Dande, were famous for their ivory up to the nineteenth century.[3] On the other hand, very many lands in the Mutapa area were devoid of any gold deposits. In the seventeenth century, Portuguese court circles played with the idea of levying a poll-tax in gold on the Africans in Zambezia, one mitical per person. Local Portuguese dismissed the idea on the grounds

././.

3 Conceiçao blamed the scarcity of ivory in his day to the combination of meagre awards with strict control of hunters on the Maravi side of the Zambezi : see his "Tratado..." in Chronista ... II (1867), p.42.

---

1 Compare A. Gomes, "Viagem", Studia (1959), p.212, with L.Meredith's account of how, without any apparent transmission of news, hundreds of people would appear "almost as though they had smelled a killing." Quoted in J.Farrant, Martyr (1966), p.155.

2 A. Fernandes described hunting by 100-150 men. The royal hunts of Teve were attended by a few thousand men. See letter of Fernandes, 25.vi.1560, Documentos, VII, p.483. J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", Theal, RSEA, VII, p.208. "When an elephant was killed the people would know about it and so there was no chance for selling it without the other people knowing". Int. Gidi 19.IX.1973.

3 Antonio Fernandes' report of Barwe in G. Veloso, letter (1512), Documentos, III, p.182.; and of Manyika, on p.183; R.F.C. Maugham, Zambezia (London; John Murray, 1910), p.245; M.A.Pacheco, Diario, (1883), pp.36,51.

that a large part of Botonga did not contain any gold whatever, with which to pay the proposed tax.[1] Chidima and Dande, where Mutapa state contracted in the nineteenth century, had no gold in them. On the other hand, Dande was a rich ivory land.[2] Barwe did not possess any gold of its own, but being a transit land for Manyika, gold passed through it, and some of it was kept.[3]

Ivory was also traditionally associated with rank in many societies in the Zambezi area. Ivory ornaments formed a prerogative in some societies of the elite.[4] In areas where external trade was late to penetrate - graves of rulers were found decorated with dozens of tusks.[5] Tusks were used as symbols of goodwill, to be sent with embassies. In some cases they signified subjection to an overlord.[6] The combination of symbolical value with a demand for it as an export commodity must have made ivory a popular tribute item. Rulers, however, had to remunerate hunters for tusks supplies. In the nineteenth century, the chief remuneration was in livestock.[7] Large amounts of

---

1 G.Velose to Rei in Documentos, III, p.183, "The King of Betomgue... has no gold..." "In the great part of Batonga not a grain of gold...", undated (1688) "Juiso", in Theal, RSEA, vol.IV, p.436.

2 M.A.Pacheco, Diario, pp.36, 40, 50-52.

3 Veloso, op.cit, p.183; Conceiçâo, "Tratado..." in Chronista II (1867), p.45; and compare letter of I. de Melo e Alvim to Governor, Tete, 1.II.1769, "Inventario", Moçambique no.79 (1954), p.117.

4 Young, in "The legendary history", NADA, (1970), p.59: the custom of the Hodi people was to lay a chief in his grave with a tusk as a head-rest. Venda chiefs, too, used tusks as head-rests. H.Stayt, Bavenda, (1931), p.204.

5 I. Schapera (ed.), Livingstone : African journal (1963), p.328.

6 The sertanejo Gouveia claimed overlordship over some of the Eastern Shona lands because of tusks they paid him, as he claimed. Embassies to the Portuguese carried tusks with them as a sign of peace and amity. See letter of I. de Melo e Alvim to Governor, Tete, 1.II.1769, in "Inventario...", Moçambique, no.79 (1954), pp.117-118. F.G. de A de Eça, Guerras, I.p.415, for the Mutapa embassy of 1808. Doc. no. 11, by J.S. de Ataide.

ivory sent as tribute would therefore mean a real investment. Either an ability to coerce must be assumed, or a counter-present at the zimbabwe which would make it worthwhile. Fernandes claimed in the sixteenth century that a gift to a ruler was rewarded with a counter-present of double value. Reports of following years, on the other hand, complain of the meagre value of counter-presents sent to the Portuguese in Sofala by African rulers.[1] Furthermore, had tribute been such a lucrative proposition rebellion on account of refusal to pay tribute, like that of Barwe in the early seventeenth century, is hardly understandable.[2] In Barwe, in the 1890s, the raising of its tribute to the powerful sertanejo Gouveia to ten tusks and fifteen heads of cattle per year, was a casus beli for the Makombe.[3] Barwe's tribute to the Mutapa could hardly be much larger, and that of smaller states could have been smaller.

./.

F. Santana, Documentaçao, I, p.889, of the envoy of the "regulo" Chinssamba, who came with one tusk in October 1829 to ask for alliance.

7 Interview with Tarwona Nyashanu, Buhera, 1.ix.1973, "The hunter would give the ivory tusks, both of them, to the chief... (the chief) would give gifts like goats." Interview Chief Menzi Nerutanga, Buhera, 3.ix.1973. "(the chief) is the only person who was supposed to have the tusks... something like a goat, he would give it to the person..." Munyira, Interview 4.ix.1973, Buhera, made a similar statement.

1 G. Veloso to Rei, Documentos, III, p.185. Compare with complaints sounded by Antonio de Meira, on 15.xii.1527 in Documentos, VI, p.291, and Pero Vaz Soares to Rei, 1513, in Documentos, III, p.463, "when one of the kings here sends a gift for articles sent to him, valued at 40 miticals, he sends to the captain here a string of very small gold beads which weighs between ten and twelve miticals."

2 See A. Bocarro, "Decada", Theal, RSEA, III, pp.372-73; E. Axelson, Portuguese 1600-1700, (1960), p.32. The campaign took place in the dry season of 1608.

3 PRO, CO 879-36, Report of Capt. Graham, in no. 35o, pp.230 and 231. Both Makombe and Gouveia agreed on the amount of tribute stated. Compare to the small number of tusks sent to the Portuguese by local rulers; Letter of I. de Melo e Alvim, Tete, 1.II.1769, in "Inventario..." Moçambique 7º (1954), p.117; idem, 23.II.1770, in op.cit. no.82 (1955), p.68. Santana, Documentaçao, I (1964), p.889, "Oficio" of P.F.Pereira, 24.X.1829.

From the zimbabwe's point of view, ten tusks from each of twenty-odd mambos could amount to a considerable quantity of ivory. It would have justified the office of treasurer, Nenzou, reported in the eighteenth century. Hundreds of elephants were killed annually in the Zambezi lands.[1] Even if all the ivory traded was coming from Mutapa lands, the average figures for each mambo are not very high. It seems, then, not unreasonable to assume that the Barwe tribute to Gouveia was typical of tribute south of the Zambezi.

Gold was as prominent on tribute lists as was ivory. De Goês saw the Mutapa "captains" as collectors of gold tribute. Fernandes reported that in Mazofe (Mazoe, a major gold-producing area to the twentieth century) half the gold output was paid in tribute.[2] Mining was a communal activity, in which women played a leading role. It was also limited in most of the region to part of the dry season, a complementary occupation to the farming activity of women. Still, it was an arduous task, which the Portuguese gave up quickly when they first tried their hand in the rich Manyika mines.[3] Only with the development of the prazos and

---

[1] In 1506, the official trade of Sofala alone included 558kg of ivory: even with large tusks of 30 kg each, there should have been at least 18 tusks. An additional quantity of 48 big and small tusks is recorded. A.Lobato, Expansao, vol.III, (1960), p.66. Between September 1518 and March 1519, 560 arrobas of ivory, which are roughly 400 kg, were obtained, ibid., p.324. Sofala was not the only market of the time, and 'Inhacouro' was nearer to Barwe and other ivory-rich areas.

[2] G.Veloso to king, Documentos, III,p.183.

[3] V.F.Homem's letter, 1576, in B.Leite, D. Goncalo, (1946) pp.389-91.

large scale slavery, the Portuguese started to exploit gold mines. In the sixteenth century the "moors" had to induce Africans through artificially created demand for import goods, by a credit system. A century later the eagerness of Portuguese sertanejos to extract gold produced a mass emigration from their lands. In the eighteenth century complaints were voiced of the queer attitude of the Africans to trade : they did not realize how worth their while it was to mine gold and barter it for cloth and beads.[1] In some cases, the Mutapa and the Teve rulers forbade mining in their lands, to discourage settlement of sertanejos there.[2]

The ultimate authority over mines lay with the masters of the land, the mambos. Any one wishing to mine gold had to give a present to the ruler. In the seventeenth century, any new mine located had to be marked and reported at once to the mambo, under pain of death.[3] Gold mining was even easier to control than hunting. First, it was a community affair, and people would not dig

---

[1] J. de Barros, Asia, III, p.393. In the eighteenth century de Melo e Castro complained that trade in Zambezia differed greatly from most parts of the world. The Africans, he said, could not recognize their own interests. See "Noticia". "Fontes..." Anais (1954), p.124. Cf. also E.A. Maund, "The country North of Shoshong", Encl. 7 in no.34, British Parliamentary Papers, C.4643, "Further correspondence relating to the Transvaal and adjacent territories" (1886), p.323; E. de la Panoux, "Report on Mashonaland", in BPP, C' 4588, "Correspondence relating to the Transvaal and adjacent territories" (1885), p.682.

[2] Manuel Barretto, "Informaçao", Theal, RSEA, III, pp.483, 490-1.

[3] Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", op.cit. VII, p.280. See also A.Bocarro, "Decada", op.cit., III, p.355; and A.Gomes, "Viagem", Studia (1959), p.187. D. de Alcaçova to Rei, 1506, Documentos, I, p.391; A.Lobato, Colonizaçao, (1962), p.86.

on their own. Secondly, crashing the ore and washing the gold needed a lot of water. As water is scarce in most parts south of the Zambezi in the dry season people were bound to meet near water sources. Output, on the other hand, is very difficult to check, as one deals with minute quantities, stocked in quills. The Portuguese employed overseers in the mines, with priests to ensure honest accounting in expeditions to mining areas.[1] Nowhere, however, is such a system of overseers mentioned for African states.[2] Mutapa subjects could, and did, migrate to other lands when unhappy with local conditions. Submitting half of one's produce, in an area where excessive tribute is related to depopulation[3] sounds therefore extraordinary. It can be explained by assuming the miners were paid for the gold presented to the ruler. In the Mutapa state, the Mutapa would send a cow or two to the people near a gold deposit, as a payment for their efforts.[4]

Rulers were paid, then, for permission to mine, and rewarded gold presents with counter-presents. Part of the gold thus acquired found its way to the Mutapa court. Envoys of Mutapa and

---

[1] For the Portuguese organized mines see A.P. de Miranda, "Monarchia", "Fontes", Anais (1954), pp.89-90; A. Isaacman, Mozambique, (1972), pp.69-71; M.D.D. Newitt, Portuguese, (1973), p.83.

[2] Montague-Kerr bought gold from individuals in the 19th.c., without interference of chiefs. See in The far interior I (1866), pp.147,149.

[3] A.Lobato, Colonização (1962), p.120.

4. De Barros, Asia, III, p.397.

n.l. p.189 [4] Already in May 1506 an envoy came from the Mutapa to Sofala with gold to trade. P. de Anhaia to Rei, Sofala, 19.v.1506, Documentos, I, p.506. On 17.xii.1515, Inyamunda, ruler of Teve, sent 400 miticals to buy merchandise; letter of J. Vaz de Almada, Sofala, to Rei, 26.vi.1516, in Documentos, IV, pp. 277-279. In 1513, however, P. Vaz Soares as complaining of the small quantities of gold received from African rulers ;

././.

Teve rulers appear in the incomplete lists on early Sofala trade. They did not bring outstanding quantities for sale, but it was gold they brought.[1] Yet, their subjects were trading in gold too. This is evident in the credit system of the "moors", later adopted by the Portuguese . It is evident in the taxation of merchants, done on entry to the state, and assessed on imports, not exports. Once inside the state, a merchant would either stay in one of the fairs or, he or his agents would roam the countryside. The retailing of cloth on a large scale in Manyika, the mining land, is evidence of individuals bartering gold.[2] There is not one reference to rulers monopolizing gold in the Mutapa area.[3] Gold was, however, in great

---

././.

n.1. see his letter to Rei, Sofala, 30.vi.1513. Documentos III, pp. 459-461. The quantities are small if one bears in mind that 4,000 miticals of gold exported from Sofala in 1506 were considered very little compared with normal trade quantities; see M. Fernandes' order, 21.xi.1506, in Documentos, I, pp.704-706.

2 Descripçao Corografica, Cxa 17, AHU.

3 Some informants, however, claimed chiefs controlled trade with coastal-based traders, at least on a local basis; thus, there was control over gold traded. Interview, Taruwona Nyashanu, Buhera, 1.ix.1973, "the chief and the machinda were the direct traders and the rest of the people would buy the things from the chief and the machinda". Interview with Mushonga, Chihota TTL, 8.viii.1973, who stated that ivory was given to the chief, not sold, and "He would send them (the tusks) to the Vazungu (Portuguese-connected persons)."

demand by importers of cloth, which was cherished by rulers for its prestige value. It was also the easiest item to transport and carry.

Transportation problems may have influenced the kind and amount of tribute paid. Ivory needed one bearer per tusk carried, plus additional bearers to carry food. As long as delegations were within their own land, they could expect to be fed by their villagers on the way. Once outside it, the feeding of a convoy could become a problem. Ten tusks carried wanted a group of some fifteen men.[1] An envoy accompanied by his jesters and musicians would want more bearers. The preoccupation of the explorer Fernandes with provisions was not accidental. Travellers could find it a problem to feed their men.[2] Grain called for an extensive organization of porters. There is no evidence, other than Dos Santos' of Teve, of grain sown as tribute on an extensive scale. And Teve was a

---

[1] When Carl Mauch set out on his way from Zimbabwe to Sena in April 1872, he took 12 bearers for loads including a few tusks. See, E.E. Burke (ed.), Journals, (1969), p.205. Livingstone, going from the Makololo to Tete, employed over a hundred people; some carried 15 large tusks, and 6 or 7 smaller ones, but the others carried food for the ivory bearers. I.Schapera (ed.) Livingstone African Journal (1963) p.331. Munyira, Interview, Buhera, 4.ix.1973, stated a person could not carry more than one tusk.

[2] Even a diet of meat, when this could be supplied by hunting, was not enough, as diarrheoa might follow. See M.A.Pacheco, Diario, (1883) p.10; "I wonder how men travel who depend on their guns alone to feed their camp" wrote Cullen H.Reed, "This is a game country... but have often been short of meal...."; see his letter of 16.ix.1917, LMS Archives, Africa Personal, Box 5.

small land, compared to that of the Mutapa. Grain could not be stored, with the means available to the Karanga society, for over one year. The periodic want of grain in different parts of the land in different years must have called for changing the source of grain tribute with the changing pattern of drought and want. The rebellion of Barwe in the early seventeenth century, in which Mutapa armies were defeated, was attributed to demands of tribute.[1] It may be that local shortage of food in the Mutapa's immediate domains induced the demand from more fortunate parts, like Barwe. The fertile Luabo area served as a refuge for the Portuguese in times of famine.[2] It maybe that Barwe and Manyika, with their higher rainfall averages, served in the same way as granaries for the Mutapa western lands.

Since there is no evidence of large work parties going to the Mutapa court, and the Mutapa's wives were growing their own food both in 1620 and 1696, labour tribute must have been used locally. Dos Santos never mentioned transportation of the grain of the "king's fields" anywhere. It seems probable, then, that the grain was at the disposal of the local rulers, at least partly. In later Shona states, the fields of chiefs served

---

[1] A.Bocarro, "Decada", in Theal RSEA, III, pp.372-3, when tribute was not forthcoming and Barwe resisted, the Mutapa's army was reduced to starvation. At least part of the expected tribute must have been paid in food, therefore.

[2] M.D.D. Newitt, Portuguese, (1973), p.158; F.Santana, Documentaçao, I (1964), Henrique Ferrao to Gov., 28.vii.1828, p.376.

as a communal reserve, and for producing the beer with which to entertain visitors. Beer was also given to work parties, as a reward and inducement.[1] Travellers were fed at the expense of the village in which they spent a night on their way.[2] The food seems to have come from the heads of such villages. It seems that the 'agents' of Dos Santos could have been the local headmen. In that case, the part of their grain reaching the zimbabwe must have depended on zimbabwe controls. In sum, the scanty relevant data of Mutapa tribute, emphasizes, at all periods, its symbolic value, and the limited quantities in which it came. A labour tribute system, at least in Teve, was used in "fields of the ruler". Later accounts do not mention that form of tribute again. Grain, if carried to the central zimbabwe, would have necessitated large caravans of porters, of which nothing is heard.

An alternative to the use of force for enforcing tribute was a system of rewards. The exchange of presents was the rule in the area south of the Zambezi to this day. When Fernandes passed through African states he could not approach a ruler without a present. Indeed, he had to cut one of his journeys short when his supply of gifts ran out. Presents were rewarded, however, by the recipients.[3] When Mutapa Nogomo wanted to honour Silveira in 1561, he offered him lands, cattle and women. Although the figure of hundreds of cows quoted is probably exaggerated - it reflects the system current in the Mutapa regions.[4] Gold

---

1 S.S.M.Chitehwe, "Rain making...", NADA (1954) p.25; J.F. Holleman, African Interlude..., (1958) p.156.

2 A.Gomes, "Viagem" Studia (1959),p.204; J.T. Bent, The ruined cities of Mashonaland (1896),pp. 342, 351-2.

3 G. Veloso, letter to Rei, (1512), in Documentos,III,p.185.

././.

miners were also rewarded with cattle. The reward for tusks submitted by hunters to rulers was given in livestock, too.[1] Cloth, the luxury commodity of the Mutapa state, was given in reward for presents to sons of rulers visiting the zimbabwe.[2] The force of the incentive thus offered clearly depended on the distance of the tributary from the court. Availability of alternative sources of exchange was obviously crucial. In cloth-rich Manyika there would have been little incentive to send large presents to the Mutapa zimbabwe just for the counter-present of cloth. Where there were fairs, it is hard to envisage tribute carried from Hondosaka in the 16th century, for instance, to the Mutapa zimbabwe, for rewards; Massapa, the main Portuguese fair then, was too near. A monopoly of imported goods by the rulers was never exercised. Traders had to pay duties on entry into a state. In many cases more than token gifts to local rulers and headmen were necessary too.[3] But once that was settled, imported goods could be traded away from the zimbabwe.

Excessive demands of labour tribute, in mining, and of goods, brought emigration en masse.[4] It was the limited tribute demanded in Manyika which drew many strangers to settle in his land.[5]

---

[4] Mutapa heartland areas were not the best on the plateau for cattle. Yet in the war with the rebel ruler Matuziawe, 8,000 head of cattle were reported taken from him. A. Bocarro, "Decada", RSEA, III, pp. 361-5. E. Axelson, Portuguese 1600-1700 (1960), p.34. It must be remembered, however, that ~~Matuzianne was a~~ "pastor de vaccas", the number of cattle possibly reflects the wealth of more than just a rebel ruler, then.

1 Interview, Machokoto Mungana, Chihota TTL, 11.viii.1973 who stated people could refuse the ruler's remuneration and trade the tusks themselves; interview with Chief Mudzimurema, and his counsellors, Chihota TTL, 17.viii.1973: "In exchange he might be given a wife"; Njere, interview, Chihota TTL, 21.viii.1973, stated most of the time the chief gave nothing in reward, but on occasions he would gather the people, and slaughter a cow for them.

Tribute in the late seventeenth century and onwards was indeed limited. In the nineteenth century the mhondoros of past Mutapas were said to receive larger presents than the ruling Mutapas themselves.[1] The accepted view is that the Portuguese intervention in the affairs of the Mutapa, backed by their firearms, brought about a decline of the Mutapa power.[2] Had there been a change in the quantities of tribute, it must have followed that decline. The threat of potential desertion was there all the time. The state of Tonge was described as having been established, some time prior to 1560, by a seceding Karanga group.[3] Such a potent weapon against excessive tribute would only be countered by the threat of the use of force. Yet in the south lay the state of Butua, and in the east that of Teve, so that easy refuge was available to seceding individuals and groups. Extensive tribute, then, over a large area implies a strong army able to enforce it.

The captain of that army, Sono, may have been a ruler on his own account. His followers to the title of commander general of the army were the Mukomohasha, and the Ningomohasha, both of branches of the Mutapa house. Both were rulers in their own

---

./.

2 A.P. de Miranda, "Monarchia", in "Fontes" Anais (1954), p.112; This was in the 18th c., relating to earlier days.

3 Report of D. da Cunha de Castelbranco, 7.11.1619, Theal, RSEA, IV, p.101: "... sufficient to give presents to the petty kings to gain free access among them." For a detailed description, see de Melo e Castro, cited by A.Lobato, Evoluçao administrativa e económica de Moçambique 1752-1763 (Lisbon ; Agência Geral do Ultramoi, 1957), p.115.

4 M. Baretto, "Informaçao", RSEA, III, pp. 490-491. M.D.D. Newitt, Portuguese, (1973) pp. 88-9. Officio of S. Xavier Botelho, III, 1829, while lamenting the depredations of the famine, believed that the tyranny and oppression of the Portuguese lost them their slaves and colonos. Santana, Documentaçao (1964) I, pp.905-6.

5 "Descripçao Corografica", Cxa 17, AHU.

1 M.A.Pacheco, Diario, (1883), p.44.

./.

right, a few days' distance from the Mutapa court.[1] The armies were levied from among the subjects - farmers of the state. In the rainy season campaigns could not be fought, as soldiers deserted and went home to cultivate their fields.[2] Armies were recruited by beating the war drums. The size and composition of the armies depended to a large extent on the area of action. A long standing resident of the country said in the 1570s Manyika could muster 2,000 men for operations outside its borders, but a 1,000 more for defending the land.[3] In the wars of the early seventeenth century, the Mutapa army recruited the Tonga villagers as it went through their lands.[4] The Portuguese used to pay their armies in cloth. It was claimed that cloth, rather than expeditions, was the right weapon to open the interior to Portuguese influence. Only the fumos, or ward and village heads, were paid for the recruitment of their followers.[5] War seems to have been a lucrative prospect for the farmers, nevertheless. When Dos Santos wanted wood cut for his church in Tete, it was enough to announce that a war was forthcoming to have Tete's eleven dependent villages turn out en masse for the presumed fights.[6] Mutapa rulers were said to have paid their armies with cloth, too. It was rather rulers like Mavura, devoid of popular support, who needed cloth for hiring soldiers. Even his cloth could not obtain for him soldiers

---

2 See M.D.D. Newitt, Portuguese, (1973), pp.63 seq.

3 A. Fernandes, letter, Tonge, 24.vi.1560, in Documentos, VIII, p.471. Compare to the histories of Varumela tribe, in "History of Native tribes", file N 3/33/8 NAR; Zengwe tribe, op.cit; Mabushe tribe, op.cit.; M'shimura tribe, op.cit.; History of the Hera in Holleman, The pattern (1949), pp. 22-24; etc.

---

1 Bocarro, "Decada", Theal, RSEA III, pp. 356-7, 363; Abraham, "Early political" Historians (1962), pp.71, 85; Antonio Suarez, "Authentic testimony" (1652), Theal, RSEA II, p.447.

in his own lands, and he had to get them from the Maravi, north of the Zambezi.[1]

Thousands could be mobilized in campaigns in the Mutapa area. The only figures we have are of armies which took the field against the Portuguese. The Portuguese, naturally, would exaggerate their strength, to augment their achievements, or explain failures. Diogo Simões Madeira with his 4, 000 Maravi mercenaries was able to subdue Mukaranga for Mutapa Mavura.[2] Yet even in the early nineteenth century, when the Mutapa ruled only Chidima and Dande, it was claimed he put an army of 5,000 men in the field.[3] An important factor limiting the size of armies was the commissariat problem. Armies lived off the land, and there was a limit to the carrying capacity of local farming, even when looted ruthlessly. The armies of Macombe and 'Chissaca', his Portuguese ally, numbered in the Bonga wars of 1853 some 4,000. In spite of operating on the banks of the Zambezi, convenient artery of transport unequalled by any overland route in the area - their supplies gave way after a campaign of three months.[4] Monclaro was obviously overstating the case when he claimed that no army could stay in

---

././.

2 Barretto de Rezende, "Do estado", Theal, RSEA, II, p.419.

3 M. de A.Guerreiro, "Inquérito" in Studia,(1960),p.14

4 A. Bocarro, "Decada", RSEA, III, p.410; E. Axelson, Portuguese 1600-1700, (1960),p.415.

5 B. de Rezende, op.cit., p.408.

6 J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", op.cit.VII,p.291.

1 Luis Cacegas and Luis de Sousa, "Historia", Theal, RSEA I,p.399. M.D.D.Newitt, Portuguese (1973),p.50.

2 Ibid.

3 Eça, GuerrasI(1953)pp.106 and 119, n.1 ; Earlier sources claimed 50,000 Mutapa soldiers.

././.

the field for more than three days in the Mutapa area, for lack of provisions.[1] In principle, though, he was right. Mavura, in one of his unlucky campaigns, almost starved to death with his small army, being unable to extract food from the surrounding villages.[2] In the 1597 campaign against the invaders from north of the Zambezi, Mutapa armies could not follow the enemy, as they burnt all the villages and supplies in their retreat.[3]

In sum, Mutapa armies were recruited from among the farming population of the state. The people of the centre, and those living on route to any specific war zone, were likely to form the bulk of the army. Defending armies were larger than forces mobilized for offensive action. Farming activities, as well as travelling difficulties, limited their actions to the dry season, between April-June, and September-October.

It seems as if there was no period in Mutapa history without some rulers being in open revolt. The Teve wars, between 1515 and 1572, brought about the independence of all the eastern areas,

---

././.

4 Delfim J. d'Oliveira, A Provincia de Moçambique e o Bonga (Coimbra; Imprensa Academica, 1879), p.10; Eça, Guerras, I (1953), p.287. Numbers of soldiers began to dwindle, and a large part of the army beseiging the Massangano aringa was sent out to look for food. Soldiers took the opportunity to supervise agricultural operations in their fields.

1 Fr. Monclaro, "Relaçao", Theal, RSEA, III, p.243.

2 E. Axelson, Portuguese... 1600-1700 (1960) pp.32-33. A similar situation developed in 1694, with a Mutapa pretender stuck in Barwe with a starving army. A. da Conceiçao, "Tratado", Chronista II (1867) p.108

3 A. Bocarro, "Decada", Theal, RSEA, III, p.362.

including Teve, Danda and Tonge. In 1518 Osono, and 'Omboyro' were in rebellion with Inyamunda of Teve.[1] The Mongas of the Lupata mountains defied the authority of the Mutapa till 1572, then passed into the sphere of influence of Portuguese sertanejos.[2] When Barwe was in revolt, the road to the claimed domains along the Zambezi was effectively blocked for Mutapa armies and officials. Internal struggles over the throne between competing lines of the Mutapa house also played their part in estranging subject rulers from the central zimbabwe. The struggle between the Mukomohasha house and that of Nyahuma at the turn of the seventeenth century was one such case. The constant struggles of the eighteenth century, when rulers replaced one another within the year,[3] was a culmination of trends inherent in the state long before. It is the incomplete state of our records, which makes for our ignorance of more such examples. The armies depended partly on subject rulers willing to send troops for any one campaign. A delicate balance emerges, in which the ability to enforce tribute depended on the Mutapa's ability to levy soldiers from subject states. The delegation of the command of the armies to the Mukomohasha house of the Mutapa may have been a result of that pattern of affairs. Thus, only by mutual agreement of the central and provincial houses of the

---

[1] Letter of J. Vaz de Almada, 26.vi.1516, Documentos IV, p.291. E. Axelson, Portuguese... 1486-1600, (1973), p.91.

[2] Even then, Diogo Simões Madeira had to fight a bitter war against Chombe, who had firearms, in 1616-14, over the control of the same area. See A.Bocarro, "Decada", Theal, RSEA, III, pp.388-393.

[3] The result of such struggles was hampered communications, especially as the death of a ruler signalled liscence for robbery of all on the roads. See : Letter of I. de Melo e Alvim, Tete, 3.II.1769, "Inventario", Moçambique, 80 (1954), p.125; Pacheco, Diario (1883), pp.25-27, 46.

Mutapa line could the army be deployed. The Mutapa, therefore, was largely dependent on provincial rulers for the force to enforce large payments of regulated tribute. The goods brought in were mainly export goods, and grains most probably came in only on a local basis, from the immediate domains of the Mutapa.

G - The Official Communications of the Mutapa

One of the most conspicuous features of the Mutapa state was the periodical visits of subject rulers to the Mutapa court. On that point the early descriptions parallel those of the eighteenth century. The early descriptions stated that presents were brought to the zimbabwe. The Mutapa would then see the delegate briefly, (an indication of the high rank of the delegates, as the Mutapa was generally hidden from sight.)[1] The later accounts are more elaborate, though they probably reflect the practice of earlier times. Small rulers, and in some cases their sons delegating for them, had to come annually to the zimbabwe. Presenting their gift, their message went to the ruler through a hierarchy of go-betweens. They were then entertained in the house of one of the officials of the zimbabwe for three days. Then, the visitor was summoned before the ruler, a reply to his message was conveyed to him, and a counter-present in cloth added.[2] Mutapa embassies were also

---

[1] Anon., "Descripçao"(1518), in Documentos, V.p.361.

[2] A.P. de Miranda. "Monarchia", "Fontes" Anais (1954),pp.111-112.

headed by "princes", i.e. persons representing the ruler's person. Mutapa delegations, however, included other functionaries, the "mutumes", as well as jesters, musicians and porters.[1] The presents brought must have called for some porters with provincial delegations. Envoys of lesser rulers were also accompanied by suites, only its size differed.[2] Not only subject rulers sent their delegates to the Mutapa. Embassies from Changamire in the south also frequented the zimbabwe.[3] Changamire was maintaining contact with Manyika by the same means.[4] It is reasonable to assume that in pre-1693 days, too, similar delegations would visit the Mutapa for discussing common enemies, or making peace.

The Mutapa state was, then, clearly hierarchical. Provincial rulers levied the tribute on gold in the sixteenth century. It was not ~~his~~ the Mutapa's agents who went to the provinces to collect presents, but delegates from there who came to him. However, roads were not always safe for delegates travelling to the zimbabwe. Already in the days of Dos Santos the rulers of the coastal domains of the Mutapa lived an almost independent existence. This is understandable in view of the marginality of the Zambezi for Mutapa internal

---

1 See J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", RSEA, VII, p.220.

2 When Prince Ganiabazi's "Munyais" were attacked by the Portuguese in 1769, their "suite" were taken and sold as slaves. As men of rank were kept in prison, it is evident that those sold were commoners. See Letter of I. de Melo e Alvim, 3.II.1769 Moçambique 80 (1954).p.123; and idem., letter of 10.II.1769, op.cit., p.131.

3 See Miranda, "Monarchia", op.cit.,p.112, who talks of this occurrence as a commonplace. An expected embassy was mentioned in Zumbo at the same period. See letter of G. Coelho of 1768 in "Inventario", Moçambique,88, (1956),pp.122-123. Previous wars, like that of 1714, ended with peace, which was normally accompanied by formal contact by envoys. See Capello e Ivens, Quelques notes sur l'établissement et les travaux des Portuguais au Monomotapa,(Lisbon; Ministère de la Marine et des Colonies, 1889,)p.27.

4 "Descripçao Corografica". Cxa 17, AHU.

communications. The Zambezi was called an "insurgent" (mpando) by the Mutapa people, for comprising a barrier to the expansion of their state northwards.[1] This did not prevent occasional contact across the river.[2] The use of the river as a highway, however, was left to the "moors", then to the Portuguese. The expanding Mongas state, which the Mutapa was unable to subjugate in the 1570s, passed later into sertanejo hands. Under both regimes it controlled traffic along the river banks. From the Lupata to Tete the river bank road was very difficult in any case.[3] The only safe Mutapa route to the coast passed through Barwe, and Manyika. The eastern section of Barwe is not easy to cross at any time, with its swamps and its sparse population. It was, furthermore, being gradually taken over by sertanejo dynasties, from the late sixteenth century onwards.[4] It is difficult to see how contact could be maintained in such conditions between the zimbabwe and the coast. With the loss of Manyika due to the Changamire Rozvi wars in the last decade of the seventeenth century, Mutapa shrank even further. The frequent revolts and internal struggles discussed above, presented a more formidable, if ever-changing, obstacle to communications.

Delegates may not have come in annually ; this is probably

---

1 A. Gomes, "Viagem" Studia (1959), p.203; J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia" Theal, RSEA, VII, p.274.

2 One such example was the recruitment of 4,000 men for the Mavura campaign of 1608. In the late sixteenth century invaders came from north of the Zambezi with considerable forces. A.Bocarro, "Decada", Theal, RSEA, III, p.361; L.Cacegas and L. de Sousa, "História" in op.cit., I, p.399. Later, the areas north of the river served both as a human reservoir for both the Portuguese and the Mutapa and as a refuge for deposed rulers of the Mutapa in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Letter of I. de Melo e Alvim, Tete 23.I.1770, "Inventario" Moçambique 82 (1955) pp. 70-71. A.Isaacman, Mozambique, (1972), pp.47-51; Miranda "Monarchia" "Fontes", Anais (1954), passim; M.A.Pacheco, Diario, (1883), pp.21,29, seq. and 51-2.

././.

a schematic presentation of a model of the past, as seen from the mid-eighteenth century. Replacement of provincial rulers was probably the most important occasion of contact. It was claimed in the eighteenth century, that in the past successors to provincial government were appointed by the Mutapa.[1] Provincial government rested with dynasties, with hereditary claim to a piece of land. Appointment to office, then, really meant the confirmation of one candidate from the local ruling house. In Teve of the late sixteenth century the Sachiteve dealt with provincial rulers on his accession. All subject rulers had to attend his Zimbabwe for the accession ceremony. Rulers unpopular with him would then be put to death.[2] During the annual gatherings that followed, new claimants to office presumably had their chance to approach the Sachiteve and ask for confirmation. The Mutapa state was much larger in area, and more complex than Teve. It is probable, then, that the Mutapa heartlands, including the Mount Darwin and Sipolilo area, the Dande and Chidima, followed the pattern of contact and confirmation to office as described for Teve. Provinces further away probably maintained a lower rate of contact with the court. In the eighteenth century, the custom seems to have lapsed.

A probable incentive for provincial rulers to maintain contact

---

./.

[3] F.G. de A. de Eça, Guerras, I(1953), p.203.

[4] M. Barretto, "Informaçao" Theal, RSEA, III, p.477.

[1] A.P. de Miranda, "Monarchia", "Fontes" Anais (1954), p.136.

[2] J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", Theal, RSEA, VII, pp. 192-3; And Mutapa customs were said to be similar. op.cit., p.290.

was worship. Rulers at every level were the living representatives of the line of ancestors whose spirits were responsible for the welfare of the land. Already in 1560 the power of rulers derived from their supposed control of rain was observed. The role of the midzimu, sometimes confused by Portuguese writers with the Karanga supreme being, was widely known to outsiders throughout the period dealt with.[1] The mhondoros, spirits of great persons, normally rulers, but also great rain makers, were at the apex of the spirit pyramid.[2] Abraham constructed an elaborate model of co-operation between a hierarchy of spirit mediums, headed by Chaminuka, and the Mutapa rulers.[3] While Chaminuka was famous in the second half of the nineteenth century in the area north of present day Salisbury,[4] his name does not appear in Mutapa-related Portuguese texts. Pacheco, who was in contact with the mhondoros of the Mutapa in 1863, never once mentioned Chaminuka. Nor is Chaminuka's role apparent in Abraham's published interview with the medium of Mutota.[5] On the other hand, there is no doubt the mhondoros of the ruling houses of the Mutapa area played a role in keeping the states cohesive and united. The annual

---

1 Letter of A. Fernandes, 5.xii.1562, in Paiva e Pona, Dos Primeiros (1892), p.87; cf. "Descripçao Corografica", AHU,; J. de Barros, Asia, p.395; M.A.Pacheco, Diario (1883), passim; D.P. Abraham, "Chaminuka" in Stokes & Brown (eds) The Zambezian (1966), pp.30-31.

2 D.P.Abraham, loc.cit.; A.K.H. Weinrich (sister Mary Aquina), "The role of ritual in the traditional political system", Rhodesian Prehistory, no.4 (1970), pp.6-7.

3 D.P. Abraham, "Chaminuka", op.cit., pp.31 seq. M. Gelfand, Shona Ritual, (1959) pp.30-39. The role assigned to the mhondoro chaminuka in Gelfand's account is assigned to Mwari, the supreme being, in Rozvi traditions. See F.W.T.Posselt, Fact and fiction (1955), pp. 141-143.

4 Interviews with Chief Mudzimurema, Chihota TTL, 10.vii.1973;

./.

gathering of provincial rulers from all over Teve was a celebration for the midizimu of the Sachiteve. For eight days the delegates celebrated on the mountain where the shrine was; the medium was possessed and relegated the words of the spirits to the crowd.[1] At such ceremonies, preceding the rains, blessed seeds would normally be handed to provincial delegates, for distribution to the farmers.[2] Displeasing the mhondoro could bring with it supernatural punishment.

Supernatural sanctions, then, were responsible for the presence of provincial delegates in the zimbabwe. The power of mhondoros, however, was not an unchanging factor. New mhondoros were created with each generation. The case of Father Pedro da Trindade, who became the guardian spirit of Zumbo, is a case in point.[3] Teve of the late fifteenth century could possibly be in contact ~~or~~ with the Mutapa mhondoros of Mutota, and then Matope. By the end of the next century, however, they were calling on their own mhondoro. It is probable that the successful wars begun in 1515 raised the reputation of the mhondoro of the Kiteve. The influence of the

---

Furamera, Chihota TTL, 21.viii.1973. The story of his death at the hands of the Ndebele, recorded by F.C.Selons (Travel and Adventure in South-east Africa,(1893) pp.113-117; idem, A Hunter's wanderings in Africa,(1881, rep.1970), p.331 is well known among the Mashona, far south of the medium's sphere of influence. Interview with Chikwerema Gidi, Buhera, 19.ix.1973.

5 D.P. Abraham, "Monomotapa dynasty" NADA (1959) pp.61-71.

1 J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", Theal, RSEA, VII, pp.197-8.

2 M.Gelfand, Shona ritual, (1959), p.22.

3 Pacheco, Diario (1884), p.57; Compare Bourdillon, "Peoples" NADA (1970) esp.pp.103-107.

mhondoro depended greatly on the vagaries of the weather. In good years people found it sufficient to turn to the nearest mhondoro. The more difficult it became to achieve sufficient rain, the further away people would go to ask for rain.[1] Teve, as a small state, probably enjoyed high attendance at its central mhondoro ceremonies. Manyika, even smaller, may have been even more fortunate in that respect. There is no positive proof, however, of any but rulers from the Mutapa heartland acknowledging Mutapa mhondoros.

The Mutapa's supernatural sanctions rested on a combination of their own mhondoros with those of the subjugated Tawara. Matope became one of the greatest mhondoro after his death, together with his sister-wife Nyamita-Nehanda.[2] At the same time, the cult of Dzivaguru, the Tavara rain-god, went on flourishing. Ambuya, "major domo" to the Mutapa in the seventeenth century, was the ruler of the cult centre area. His presence in the Mutapa court is evidence of the co-operation of both powers.[3] In the eighteenth century the Mutapa was still sacrificing in state ceremonies to Chicarra, the manifestation of Dzivaguru defeated by the Korekore invaders.[4] The Dande-Chidima

---

[1] The attribution of the descent of the Teve rulers to the Mutapa implies ritual inferiority, whether in fact delegates were sent from Teve to Mukaranga is not known. By J. Dos Santos' days, Teve no longer acknowledged Mutapa superiority and worshipped its own midzimu. See his "Ethiopia", RSEA, VII, pp. 197-8. Compare with more recent Shona customs of sending further afield, and to more important mhondoro only when a calamity hit them. Interview, Tarumona Nyashanu, 1.ix.1973; Mrs. Chigumbu and Chigumbu, interviewed Buhera, 30.viii.1973.

[2] Abraham, "Monomotapa dynasty" NADA (1959), pp.64-65; Bourdillon "Manipulation", Africa (1972) p.113.

[3] A. Bocarro, "Decada" Theal RSEA III, pp.356-7; Abraham, op.cit, p.76.

[4] Miranda, "Monarchia" in "Fontes" Anais (1954), pp.114-115; Pacheco, Diario (1883), p.24.

area, with the adjacent northern edge of the plateau, thus became a spiritual centre for both Karanga and Tavara. In the nineteenth century there were numerous shrines for mhondoros in both Dande and Chidima. The war of 1807 between the Mutapa and the Portuguese of Tete was sparked off by the desecration of Mutapa shrines in Chicova.[1] Numerous people attended mhondoro shrines, who dealt also with private matters.[2] The Mutapa heartland in this way possessed a major communications centre, in the form of the shrines. Drought years would probably see a more intensive contact with the Mutapa immediate area by provincial rulers. Now, entry into a ruler's area entailed obtaining permission, and the payment of a present called Murumo (mouth) for the right of way.[3] Delegates coming to ask for rain probably had to obtain permission from the Mutapa to go to shrines in his lands.

The accession of new rulers at the centre was an obligatory occasion for attendance at the court. In Teve mobilization of the provincial rulers for that occasion seems to have been complete. In the Mutapa it may have been limited to immediate lands of the zimbabwe. In the nineteenth century, when two houses took turns to rule the Mutapa state, a full gathering of all the rulers of the state was carried out. All provincial rulers are said to

---

1 F.G. de A. de Eça Guerras I (1953), pp.104-105.

2 op.cit., passim.

3 Letter of A. Fernandes, 5.xii.1562, in Paiva e Pona, Dos Primeiros (1892), p.83. Report of D. da Cunha, Goa, 7.II.1619. in Theal, RSEA, IV, p.161.

have been replaced on accession.[1] The area covered then was limited to Chidima and Dande. In the eighteenth century, and probably earlier, the Mutapa had evolved a system of government transfer through a regent, the Nevinge. The Nevinge ruled an area adjacent to the zimbabwe.[2] Mbokurume, active in the court in 1561, later appears as a ruler of an adjacent land, and as a member of the council, in the following two centuries. Ambuya, another member of the council, was a ruler of a neighbouring Tavara area. Thus all neighbouring rulers had probably to attend accession ceremonies through their role in the council. The attendance of other rulers would probably have been in direct relationship to the strength of the deceased Mutapa. Mutapas like Inyapando in the eighteenth century, or Kakuya Komunyaka of the early sixteenth century, probably had wide attendance in the ceremonies of their departure. Unpopular Mutapas like Mavura in the early seventeenth century, who had caused the death of so many representatives of provincial houses, were probably less popular.[3]

Failure to attend accession ceremonies, as in Teve of the seventeenth century, called for censure. But failure to comply with a ruler's demands did not bring immediate punishment. The system of court officials was first brought into use. Early in the seventeenth century, the Mutapa sent instructions to

---

[1] M.A.Pacheco, Diario, (1883),pp.29-30.

[2] Miranda, "Monarchia...","Fontes" Anais (1954) p.114; F. de Melo e Castro, "Noticia" op.cit.pp.134-5

[3] When Mutapa Mavura died, some nobles' were at the court; his heir was "many leagues distant", and on his accession 'all the nobles' were present. These probably did not include all the rulers of the land, as the shadow of Kapararidze still hung over the proceedings. See Suarez, "Authentic testimony..." in Theal RSEA, II, pp.445-447.

Chicova about the presumed silver mines with some envoys, which were not obeyed. Although the Mutapa, Gatsi Rusere, was accused by the Portuguese of double dealing, the way the presumed disobedience was dealt with is very instructive. When the first envoys failed to achieve results, others were sent, of higher rank. When those failed too, a nephew of the Mutapa, Inyaxangue, was sent, who was treated with the respects due to a Mutapa.[1] Officials sent by the Mutapa carried his staff of office, signifying their authenticity. The insignia of office seems to have had more than a mere symbolical nature. When in 1807 Mutapa Chufombo gave his staff to the Portuguese Truao as a guarantee of safe conduct, he tried to take it off his hands once he decided to have him killed.[2] Outwardly, an envoy of high rank carrying the insignia with its possible magical powers, and being an 'extension' of the Mutapa powers brought about total submission. In the case of the Chicova mines the effectiveness of the hostage system was also demonstrated. The Mutapa had in his court a son of the previous ruler of the province. According to succession customs of the area, that person, Cherema, was entitled to the throne. He was indeed put on the throne, once dis-

---

[1] E. Axelson, Portuguese... 1600-1700 (1960) pp.42-43.

[2] F.G. de Eça, Guerras, I (1953), pp. 113-116.

obedience to the Mutapa was proven.[1] The hostage of a rival line to that ruling at the moment, proved an effective weapon, however, only with the backing of a Portuguese force. Censure for disobedience was thus dealt with by a combination of diplomacy and force in the Mutapa state.

If the court officials failed, the army had to be mobilized. It was claimed the Mutapa could mobilize 300,000 men within eight days.[2] This is obviously a gross exaggeration. Some of the largest armies reported in the area numbered 15,000 men, and these figures also seem overstated in the context.[3] It was seen how mobilization was limited to the dry season. The military season was the same as the politically active period.[4] Mobilizing within the lands of a mambo, like Manyika, or Tonge, was a matter of beating the war drum.[5] Mobilization on a larger scale, however, called for co-operation of provincial rulers. Not always was there obedience. Gocha, of the royal house of the Mutapa, was ruling the land between the zimbabwe of 1693, and Tete. Ordered to intercept the flight of the Portuguese residents and garrison of the zimbabwe, he failed to do so.[6]

---

[1] E. Axelson, Portuguese... 1600-1700, (1960), pp.43-4,46.

[2] Letter of Br. Luis Froes, Goa, xii.1561, in Paiva e Pona, Dos Primeiros, (1892), p.54.

[3] The Mongas army, according to Monclaro, numbered 16,000 in 1571. Fr.Monclaro, "Relaçao", RSEA, III, pp.240, 243. In mid-eighteenth century it was claimed that Portuguese sertanejos could send 17,000 men into the field. On another occasion, four sertanejo armies were said to have numbered 15,000 together. A.Lobato, Colonizaçao (1962), p.114.

[4] Most embassies recorded by the Portuguese were in the dry season, although some late delegations are mentioned in November. See "Incomplete book of receipts..." (1522), Documentos, VI, pp.131,133,135; A. Fernandes, letter of 25.vi.1560 Documentos, VI, p.487; R. Silva Cunha, "Vasco Fernandes Homem e a expediçao ao Monomotapa", Actas do Congresso Internacional de história dos cobrimentos (1961), V, pt. I, p.93; R. Burton, Lands, (1873), p.44.

././.

There could be reprisals later on. Thus, when in the late eighteenth century da Silva's men clashed with villagers in Manyika, no help was extended to the village headman from his overlord. The reason given was some previous disagreement between the two.[1]

It therefore called for an agreement of the great lords of the state before a major war effort could be launched. It was a matter to be decided in the centre. It is not coincidental then, that the council is mentioned in the context of "governo militar".[2] The council included the Mutumbus, no doubt the same as seventeenth century 'Mutumes'. The Rozvi of Changamire had already acquired a dominant influence in the north of the plateau, and Manyika. The councillors could, therefore, have come only from the lands of Chidima, Dande, and the edge of the plateau; they were probably the 'regulos', petty kings, mentioned in the context of the civil government of the state. The Portuguese terms explaining 'mutumes' were in other sources applied to "encosses", rulers of one grade lower than "reys" or mambos.[3] It is most probable, then, that the council deciding on wars was composed of sub-rulers of the Mutapa's own domain. The size of the army

---

./.

5 A. Fernandes, letter, 5.xii.1562, in A. de Paiva e Pona, op.cit., p.89; H. Bhila, "Journal", Monumenta, (1972), p. 84.

6 A. da Conceiçao, "Tratado", Chronista II (1867), p.115; E. Axelson, Portuguese 1600-1700 (1960), p.183.

---

1 H.Bhila, "Journal" op.cit., p.84, n.10.

2 Miranda "Monarchia" in "Fontes", Anais (1954) p.115; Melo e Castro, "Nóticia", op.cit., pp.136-138.

3 M. Barretto, "Informaçao", Theal, RSEA, III, p.483.

mentioned, sixteen companies of unknown size, also indicates a relatively small size of the area of recruitment. With an estimated 5,000 men in the army,[1] it sounds reasonable for sixteen "captains", equivalent to "fumos" of other descriptions. All the officers, it was said, had lands of their own, where they lived with their soldiers. The command of the army was in the hands of "councillors", a title probably implying closeness to the Mutapa. Mbukurume, the senior son-in-law of the Mutapa, being one of them, strengthens the assumption that they were men with close contact to the court.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the council may have been the same, and the generalship was clearly in the hands of people "closely related" to the ruler. Mukomohahsa, commander of Mutapa armies in the late sixteenth century, was entitled to inherit the Mutapa throne in 1560. He was ruling Hondosaka, between the Luanze and Luenya rivers, in which proximity to the Mutapa he conformed to later "generals".[3]

His title could be related to his having had, shortly before then, led the latest stage of Korekore conquest, the conquest of the Hondosaka.[4] Once the Mukomohasha house succeeded to the throne, with Mutapa Gatsi Rusere (1589), the command

---

[1] Eça, Guerras I (1953), p.108, note 2.

[2] A.P. de Miranda, "Monarchia...", op.cit. ,p.115; A. de Melo e Castro, "Noticia",op.cit.,p.136.

[3] D.P. Abraham, "Early...", Historians (1962) pp.68,71.

[4] Ibid., p.68.

of the armies went to the Ningomohasha house. The Ningomohasha was ruler of Daburia, adjacent to Hondosaka, and apparently near to the Mutapa Zimbabwe, as he took part in the negotiations there with the Portuguese envoys of Barretto in 1573. Then he was described as "chief minister",[1] yet a quarter of a century later he emerged as general of the armies, under Gatsi Rusere. This Mutapa brought on himself a large-scale rebellion in 1597, by executing the incumbent Ningomohasha.[2] This points to Mutapa reliance on his rulers' goodwill, and to the danger inherent in high-handed treatment of them. A few years later, however, once the rebellion was crushed with Portuguese aid, another Ningomohasha was leading Mutapa forces.[3] It is probable that the Mutapa used here a rival claimant to the title from within the Ningomohasha house. The Ningomohasha of 1573 was described as "cousin" of the Mutapa; that of 1652 as "nearly related" to the Mutapa.[4] Like the Mbokorume, he was probably not eligible for royal succession as Ningomohashas served under both rival houses of the Mutapa, those of Mukomohasha and Negomo. Ningomohasha displays similarities to the Mbokurume's. Both seem to have been inelligible for the throne; ruled lands near to the zimbabwe; and were present at the court at various periods when important events were taking place, and probably at other times too. Both

---

1 Ibid., p.71.

2 A. Bocarro, "Decada", Theal, RSEA, III, pp.364-5.

3 Ibid., p.382.

4 D.P. Abraham, "Early...", Historians (1962), p.71; A.Suarez, "Authentic testimony of the baptism of the emperor and King Manamotapa...", 14.viii.1652, Theal, RSEA, IV, p.447.

seem to have fulfilled other roles besides leading the armies. The pattern of operating Mutapa armies seems, then, to have been continuous since at least 1589, if not before. The 18th century council of war possibly had its roots in earlier days too. The Mutapa embassy to Barretto in 1572 included delegates of all the great lords of the land, including "young moagem", general and captain of the Gates.[1] The general at the time was Mukomohasha, so "Moagem" can be identified with him. That embassy was sent to avert an unexpected Portuguese attack; some mobilization in the Mutapa state must take place as well. It was probably preceded by a gathering of all the great lords whose delegates were on the embassy.[1]

In the eighteenth century there appears for the first time the term munyai in Mutapa historiography. Munyai is a common Shona term, meaning a messenger. It is used in many social contexts, and whenever formal contact between two persons or groups takes place, the go-betweens are called vanyai.[2] In a context near to that of the Mutapa government, the term is applied to the official communicators of the Mwari shrines in southern and central Mashonaland.[3] According to Miranda, there were fifteen vanyai, or muhaes (Europeanised form of the plural), in the Mutapa court. They were apparently different from the

---

[1] Monclaro speaks of representatives of "the king's greatest", the "king's chief wife" and "young moagem". Moagem is almost certainly Mukomohasha. The other two titles are listed as belonging to two "reys" on the lists of Bocarro and Faria e Sousa. Fr. Monclaro, "Relaçao", Theal, RSEA, III, pp. 246-7; Bocarro, "Decada", op.cit., pp.355-56.

[2] Holleman, Shona customary (1952), p.99; Bullock, The Mashona (1928), p 215 The synonym for munyai of the Hera is samukuru, senior elder, emphasizing the standing of the office.

[3] See E.G. Howman, "The traditional history and customs of the Makaranga (wa Rozwi)", S.Afr. Journal of Science, 15 (1919), p.387.

mutumwis, and were like Portuguese meyrinhos (bailiffs).[1] The vanyai were not mentioned before the eighteenth century when embassies were undertaken by mutumwis. Inside the state, the vanyai were responsible for transmitting the Mutapa's orders to the provincial rulers. The vanyai were obviously court dwellers, dependent on the Mutapa's favours. Pacheco described them in the nineteenth century, clinging to the ruler like leeches to a stone, waiting for favours. He also mentioned their being rewarded with wives by the rulers they served.[2] This is strongly reminiscent of Bocarro's description of the Mutapa's ex-pages or chuveiros, a title still current in the nineteenth century to denote a close and confidential friend of the Mutapa.[3]

The appearance of the term munyai in the eighteenth century cannot be coincidental. Other political terms, though, like "mutumwis", "mambos", "fumos", keep recurring, while "munyais" occurs only in later sources. The title might have been an innovation introduced by the Rozvi of Changamire. Ever since the historic alliance which crushed Portuguese dominance over most of the plateau in 1684, tenuous links existed between the

---

1 Miranda, "Monarchia", "Fontes", Anais (1954) pp.111,115. They ruled the lands nearest to the Mutapa zimbabwe.

2 M.A.Pacheco, Diario (1883), pp.14,23.

3 M.A.Pacheco, op.cit. p.46; A.Bocarro, "Decada", Theal, RSEA, III, p.357.

Mutapa and Changamire's people. In 1694, there was a small permanent garrison of 7-8 of Changamire's men in the Mutapa zimbabwe. When driven away by the Portuguese-supported Mutapa "Pedro", contact did not cease.[1] In 1714 the Rozvi were yet again fighting the Portuguese.[2] Later they were accused of participating in the succession crises of the Mutapa.[3] Their embassies were in contact with both the Mutapa court, and the Portuguese beyond.[4] It might be that such contacts brought about the introduction of a new institution. Whatever the origin, foreigners soon applied the term to people under Mutapa control. Apparently since the carriers of Mutapa commands were the vanyai, the term was first applied to his armies. Then the term was extended to include the whole nation, until Pacheco found it necessary to use the uncommon term adima, to overcome the confusion of office and nation.[5] Thus came about the phenomenon of two groups called Banyai in the Shona world of the nineteenth century. One was the people of the remainder of the old Mutapa state. The other lay on both sides of the now Ndebele-occupied former heartland of the Rozvi state.[6]

The fifteen 'munhaes' were responsible for transmitting

---

1 A. da Conceiçao, "Tratado...", p.109.

2 Capelo e Ivens, Quelques notes (1889), p.27.

3 Morais Pereira, "Noticia dos dominios portugueses" cited in A. Lobato, Colonizaçao, (1962), p.121.

4 Letter of G.B.Coelho to Capt. Gen. Zumbo, 10.1.1768, "Inventario", Moçambique, 88, (1956), pp.122, 124; D.P. Abraham, "Early...", Historians (1962) p.79.

5 M.A. Pacheco, Diario, (1883), p.23, n.4.

6 Schapera (ed.) Livingstone's African journal I (1963), pp. 367, 419; Burton, Lands of Kazembe (1866), pp.97, 229; Gamitto, King Kazembe I (1960), pp.57, 92, 162-3; Bishop Knight-Bruce, Encl. in no.14, 28.I.1889, in PRO, CO 879-29, no.368, "Extension of British influence" (1889), p.62; "Translation of act of concession" End in no.14, PRO, CO 879-29, no.426, pp. 166-168;

The Mutapa's commands. Mobilizations of armies, then, would have been effected by the munyai, of the Mutapa's entourage, carrying his staff of office. The provincial ruler, might also consult his own "mutumwis". Once a decision was reached, the army could be summoned by the big drums. Armies used to appoint meeting points for the different contingents.[1] The vanyai would carry the message.[2] Most probably the munyai were announcing the time of the annual festivities.[3] The munyai was travelling with a suite, perhaps even bonded sons-in-law owing him personal loyalty.[4] Travelling, he would rely on villagers for hospitality. There seemed to have been recognised roads, in fact, footpaths, for travel.[5] The villages on those roads were probably more familiar with the official messengers than others.

The vanyai, and this might have distinguished them from the mutumwis, had clear martial connotations. The "munhaês" were called the Janinassaries of the Mutapa, said to be the most fearsome and belicose soldiers in the region, equal to the Landins (Nguni), and second only to the Rozvi.[6] Mutapa armies in the nineteenth century were called "munyais".[7] The vanyai were probably most

---

1 A. da Conceiçao, "Tratado...", Chronista II (1867), p.39; E. Axelson, Portuguese 1600-1700, (1960) p.183.

2 A.P. de Miranda, "Monarchia", in "Fontes..." Anais (1954), p.115.

3 Compare to the role of modern vanyai in similar circumstances, M.Gelfand, Shona ritual, (1959), pp.68-69.

4 A. muranda, servant, would not change his status even if he became rich and had a high standing. (Holleman, Shona customary (1952), p.127). The vanyai were called slaves by the Portuguese, which probably stood for a bonded son-in-law. Ayres d'Ornellas Raças (1905), p.56.

5 J. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia..." Theal, RSEA, VII, p.203.

6 Eça Guerras I (1953), p.108; Ayres d'Ornellas Raças (1905), p.56. Teixeira-Botelho, História militar (1934), p.498.

7 Oficio, 18.viii.1828, Tete, in Santana Documentaçao I (1964), p.518; Oficio (1831), unsigned, Doc. no.44, Maço 15, op.cit. II (1967), p.463;

./.

active in the heartland of the state. This land, once called 'Mukaranga' came now to be called 'Muhay' (Manyai).[1] However, their activities led them into adjacent lands with their followers. It may have been trade or robbery, that brought them there.[2] There is no doubt these were matters of importance as the Vanyai intermarried with the sertanejos. This indicates their high standing, as the Mutapa himself is mentioned in the same context of intermarriage.[3] In sum, the Vanyai, or bailiffs, were few, probably bonded sons-in-law, and operated both within and without the state. They were military men, and therefore effective in living off the land. It may have been a result of developments in the stormy 17th century. Under a strong ruler, they were apparently a cohesive force.[4] Since every prince had loyal vanyai of his own,[5] in years of strife the vanyai became a drifting force, destructive for state cohesion.[6]

One important aspect of Mutapa state contacts was the presence of Portuguese in the court. The impact of prazo establishment in the lands of the Mutapa was exhaustively dealt with.[7]

./.

Ayres d'Ornellas, op.cit.(1905), p.56; S. Mudenge, "The role" JAH (1974), p.377.

1 Gamitto, King Kazembe I (1960), p.63; Burton, Lands of Cazembe (1873), p.97; F. da Sousa, Oriente I (1710), p.834, called it the 'patrimonio' (Lit.- family estate) of the Mutapa.

2 Letters of I. de Melo e Alvim, Tete, 3.ii.1769. in "Inventario", Moçambique 80 (1954) p.123; Letter of 10.ii.1769, op.cit., p.131; cf. Oficio of 1831, unsigned, in Santana Documentaçao II (1968) p.463 : "dois munhais que vinham a roubar gente".

3 Unsigned oficio (of M.J.M. de Vasconcelos e Cirne) 9.xii.1829. op.cit. I p968 p.968 complained of the company of Zimbabwe of the Portugues, in which most of the soldiers were entitled relatives of the 'munhaes', especially of the Mutapa; Capt. Cruz of the 1807 war was also a relative of the Mutapa. Eça, Guerras I (1953), pp.27, 54.

4 Under Prince 'Leze', for example, they formed a group of sub-rulers around his Zimbabwe. See Miranda, "Monarchia", in "Fontes" Anais (1954) p.110.

./.

Their communications with the Mutapa did not differ in essence from those of local rulers. From the Mutapa's point of view there was no difference between dynasties like the Pereira's, or the Makombe's of Barwe. However, the presence of Portuguese soldiers,[1] and sometimes priests, was different from other torwa in the court. Ever since the early seventeenth century, Mutapas were baptized on accession.[2] Though not permanently in the Zimbabwe, Portuguese maintained a vestige of an alien culture in the state's very centre. They also provided an alternative channel of contact with the outside world.

The Portuguese were also related to one of the major external contacts of the Mutapa - the Curva. With it went empatas, which mobilized people on a large scale. The Portuguese used to send a present to the Mutapa, and other rulers in control of routes and mines. Ever since the Barreto-Homem expedition it was regulated. First sent whenever a new governor took office in Moçambique, it then turned into an annual practice, which lapsed

---

././.

5 Letter of Alvim, 3.II, 1769, "Inventario", Moçambique 80 (1954), p.123.

6 Miranda "Monarchia", in "Fontes", Anais (1954) pp.110-114.

7 See Isaacman, Mozambique (1972); Newitt, Portuguese (1973).

1 The Zimbabwe company of the Portuguese was not always present in the zimbabwe. By the 19th c. it was as Africanized as the prazo families. See, list of officers requested, "Inventario" Moçambique 79 (1954), p.111; Letter of I. de Melo e Alvim, 9.ii.1769 in op.cit., p.130; "Mapa geral das cinco companhias"... 23.i.1828, Santana, Documentaçao I (1964) p.435; etc. "Oficio", 9.xii.1829, op.cit. I,p. 968.

2 Newitt, Portuguese (1973), pp.58-9, 83; Rey to V.R., 1.vii.1612, in Theal, RSEA, IV, p.91; L. Cacegas & L. de Sousa, "História" in op.cit., I,pp.397-8; Letter of Fr. G. of the Passion, to Provincial in Portugal, Goa, 20.ii.1630, in op.cit.,II, pp.428-9; "Authentic testimony..." 14.viii.1652, op.cit,II,pp.445-448; Letter of Rey to V.R., Lisbon, 2.ix.1719, in op.cit., V, p.72;

sometimes.[1] Failure to comply caused an empata, which made the property of every Portuguese in the land free for all. One such empata was declared in 1608, another in 1628. Large numbers of people took part in this obviously popular mobilization against the Portuguese.[2] The order, like all other delcarations of war, had to go through the council first. When in 1828 a "prince" of the Mutapa state planned to rob a Portuguese of cloth, it was said the council of the Mutapa gathered and counselled to do so.[3] Our sources are silent on the methods of the empata declaration. Apparently, it had to be done by someone clearly authorised to impart such a serious procedure, probably either by vanyai or mutumwis. The cloth looted in empatas, which on a minor scale was a recurrent complaint since the eighteenth century,[4] was probably distributed by the provincial rulers. Loot taken in war seems to have had a more centralised channeling. Grain and small stock were probably eaten by the soldiers, going kuruwira (looking for food).[5] Captives, ivory and cattle were brought to the zimbabwe, under pain of death.[6] This was probably true

---

././.
In earlier days, religious officials could not enter the zimbabwe. "Ethiopia Oriental" (pre-1631), a Dominican account, op.cit., II, p.438; In Barwe, however, baptism was proven to have been not so vital. Compare Gamitto, "Succeçaô"... Archivo Pittoresco I (1857-8), pp.28-9; & A. Isaacman, "Madzi-Manga..." JAH (1973), pp.395-409.

1 Rei to VR, 1.vii.1612, Theal, RSEA, IV, p.91; Rei to VR, 10.iii.1622, op.cit., IV, p.184; Rei to VR, 31.iv.1631, IV p.223; A.P.Gomes, "Viagem", Studia (1959) pp.172,190; F. de Sousa, Oriente, (1710), II, p.601; Barretto de Rezende, "Do estado", Theal, RSEA, II, p.411; R. Burton, Lands, (1873), p.237; A.C.P.Gamitto, Kazembe, (1960), p.176; F.G. de A. de Eça, Guerras, I, pp.114, 172,416.

2 A. Bocarro, "Decada", Theal, RSEA, III, p.383; "Advices from Goa of 1630" (Archives of Propaganda Fide), RSEA, II, p.429. L. Cacegas and L. de Sousa, "Historia", RSEA, III, p.396; Barreto de Rezende, "do Estado...", RSEA, II, pp.414-15; also "Oficio" of F.C. da Silva to Gov. 10.vi.1830, in F.Santana, Documentação (1967), III, p.346. ././.

of the smaller eighteenth century Mutapa. In campaigns with longer distances, it might again have been diffused more easily. In the court, it was Nenzou, the treasurer, who took charge of it all. His title could refer either to the nzou/samanyanga clan of the Mutapa rulers, or to his charge of elephant tusks in the treasury. Nechenanga, an official of the court of the same order as Mbukurume, might have been instrumental here too. Councillor and general, Nechnanga, was a title for ineligible princes, carrying out the Mutapa's orders.[1] Such officers, of the Mutapa's inner circle of confidants, took part in leading the armies, and in this dual role were well placed for distributing looted wealth. A son of the Mutapa and in some wars the Mutapa himself led the soldiers,[2] and booty distribution could take place on the battle-field.

Our way started at the zimbabwe and its officers; and at the wives of the ruler. Then the lords of the state were examined, as communicators between centre and periphery. The operation of the court, with its officers and council, showed the division of roles between lords and councillors. The zimbabwe, growing its own food, had not a large officialdom. The techniques it could deploy for contact with the provinces were elementary : word of

././.

[3] "Oficio", 26.x.1628, in Santana, Documentação, I (1964), p.519.

[4] See, for example, J. Caetano Xavier "Noticias", in A. de Andrade, Relações (1955), pp.152, 163-4, 169-70; "Oficio" of J.L. Rodrigues, 19.xii.1827, to Gov., in F. Santana, Documentação I (1964), p.347.

[5] F. E. de A. de Eça, Guerras I (1953), p.293.

[6] A.P. de Miranda, "Monarchia", "Fontes"..., Anais (1954), p.115.

[1] Pacheco, Diario, (1883), p.28. On p.26 there is an example of a Nechenanga in action. In Miranda and Melo e Castro's accounts, the title belongs to one of the three generals; it is also the chidawo of the Buzya of Mtoko, who had contacts with the Mutapa. See P.Berlyn, "The keeper", NADA (1972), pp.55-60. ././.

mouth, messengers and bearers were relied upon. Drums and horns had a communications value, too. These Techniques were used to put through the demands of the centre to the periphery, and receive provincial reaction. Mainly due to the balance of power between central rulers and their subject rulers - such demands could not be heavy, and tribute seems to have been not too regular. This was partly due to the inability to store food for over a year, which hampered the development of a large officialdom. Environment and economy limited the effective range of army deployment. The presence of powerful neighbours, the Portuguese and other African states, supported secessions, disobedience and succession struggles. There was always an external power to offer refuge or support. Institutions aimed at cementing the state proved strong only at close range. Distribution of fire was probably practiced only in some lands. Hostages, absorbed into the central establishment were from near the Zimbabwe. Most contacts of centre and province were hierarchical, with provincial delegates coming to court. Later, the "Mungais", martial bailiffs, assumed importance. Tribute was mainly of export-items with a possible local tribute of grain. Official contact was maintained by zimbabwe servants, bonded sons-in-law of the ruler, "Mutumes", and also acted as councillors, were the ambassadors. Most communications however, were in the realm of ordinary day to day life, helped by bards and traders.

Butua, a neighbour of the Mutapa to the south, was also a state of the Shona-speaking people. An examination of its communications in comparison with the above will follow, also viewed through the state's centre.

---

2 A. P. de Miranda, "Monarchia", op.cit., p.115.

Chapter II

THE ROZVI STATE AND ITS COMMUNICATIONS

A. Of the Rozvi and the land of Butua

Butua, a powerful neighbour of the Mwene Mutapa state, was normally summarily referred to in the lists of gold-producing regions. An attempt by the Butua-associated rulers, Changamir and Torwa, to take over the Mutapa state in the 1490s earned for it the only detailed record for a century and a half to come, in 1506.[1] Butua shows how the history of southern Zambezia is a history built on shifting bodies of data. The omission of Butua from contemporary sources is in itself indicative of one aspect of that state's communications - it was not in intense contact with the Portuguese. A great many details of the history of Butua are unfortunately unavailable to the historian through that fault. Muslim traders were present there at least to 1644,[2] yet if they produced any, no literature of theirs has reached us. The Khami culture area, which can be identified with the sphere of influence of the Butua rulers, received due archaeological treatment, with its prominent stone-built elite sites. Yet Archaeology can supply but a skeleton of the communications of the southern areas.

---

[1] D. de Alcaçova to Rei, 1506, in Documentos, I, pp. 395-397, and see Barros, Asia III (1945), p. 393 : "There are other mines in a district called Toroá, which by another name is known as the Kingdom of Butua."

[2] A. Gomes, "Viagem..." Studia (1959),p.197.

Butua was a land rich in cattle and gold, indeed it was called the 'maê d'ouro' (mother of gold), and it lay somewhere to the south or south-west of the Mutapa lands.[1]

The contemporary written evidence following the Changamire Dombo wars of the 1680s and 1690s was all based on second-hand knowledge. All the contemporary observers saw of the state of the south was its armies, or its envoys.[2] No whites, it was claimed, were allowed into the Changamire lands.[3] Furthermore, the descriptions we have of the southern lands follow a takeover by the Rozvi of Changamire of those lands. The archaelogical sequence shows no break or sudden change at the end of the seventeenth century.[4] Yet, an unbroken sequence of pottery development does not justify a projection into the past of institutions as they were known later on. The relative scarcity of documentary sources brings the history of the Rozvi state to rely greatly on oral histories. Now, the whole nature of oral history leads to concentrating around myths of origin and genealogies. Some remarkable events, like outstanding famines, rebellions or succession disputes, occasionally accompany the genealogies. Rozvi oral histories, then, are useful for the chronology of the state, and of some events. Yet, there is very little detail of the kind found in contemporary

---

[1] Ibid., p. 196. C.R.Boxer, "Sisnando Dias Bayão...", (1938), passim. Fr. Monclaro, "Relaçao...", Theal, RSEA III, p.223.
[2] See A. de Conceiçao, "Tratado..." Chronista II (1867), pp.105-6; D.P.Abraham, "Early..." Historians (1962) p.79.
[3] Caetano Xavier, "Noticias..." in A. de Andrade, Relaçoes, (1955), p.169.
[4] Dr.T.N. Huffman, personal communication, K.Robinson, "The archaeology of the Rozvi", in Stokes and Brown (eds) The Zambesian (1966), p.4.

records like the description of Mutapa audiences. Furthermore, the Mutapa state continued its existence in the same general area throughout its history; the Rozvi state was broken and replaced by Nguni invaders, beginning at 1822. At least two generations elapsed before the first collection of Rozvi traditions were made.[1] Later traditions, collected in mid-century, were already polluted somewhat by the adoption of the Rovzi into Rhodesian mythology, both black and white.[2] Any details of the administration of the state have to be elucidated from oral histories, and lack the more penetrating insights offered by eye-witnesses.

The Rozvi state, as it emerges from a combination of oral history, contemporary records, and archaeology, had very extensive claims to authority. It claimed areas from present day Matabeleland to Manyika, including the south eastern part of the plateau. These were the areas of the former Great Zimbabwe and Leopard Kopje cultures together. The most important feature of Rozvi authority, as it comes out of traditions, was the right to appoint rulers to office.[3] The Rozvi affirmation was the ultimate seal of legality to provincial rulers. Tribute

---

[1] The main bodies of Rozvi and other tradition can be found in files N 3/33/8 and A 3/18/28 of the NAR; such traditions were gathered mainly in the early years of the 20th century.

[2] See R.Howman,"The effects of history on the African", Rhodesiana, 2 (1957),pp.1-2.

[3] A typical characterisation of the Rozvi : "We were the paramount people and we used to give the people the chieftainship, those who deserved it." Interview with Chikumu Ranga, Buhera, 31.viii.1973.

is rarely mentioned in the oral histories, and then it is mentioned as having been collected by officials of the centre itself. Rozvi armies are sometimes mentioned by traditional histories, but obviously no figures of their size are mentioned. Oral histories emphasize the pacific nature of the Rozvi state. "They never fought any one", said Mr.Gadza, a muRozvi. Contemporary sources, however, leave the impression of relatively small armies by the standards of the Zambezi wars, of 2-3000 men, which were nevertheless very effective.[1] Another prominent feature of the Rozvi state was the close association by tradition of the Rozvi with the Mwari cult of the Matopos.[2]

There emerges a picture of a very extensive state, where the centre was clearly the source of all legitimate government in the land. Tribute was collected from the centre, and armies were small but highly effective. A special sacred aura is lent to the Rozvi mambo by his association with the Mwari, the supreme being. The communications of that state would seem to have been very different from those of the Mutapa state. It seems, however, that there were some similarities between the two systems, too. Not all regional rulers were as tightly controlled by the Rozvi nomination to office and centralized tribute, combined; many seem not to have differed much from the largely autonomous provinces of the

---

1 Interview with Mr.Gadza, 23.ix.1973, Buhera; F. de Melo e Castro, "Descripçao dos Rios de Sena", cited by A.Lobato, Evoluçao, (1957),pp.113-14; Mudenge, "The role..."JAH (1974) p.380.

2 "During the night many lights appeared. A voice was heard calling 'Lembewu Lembewu !'... Then he was told 'take care of the people...'", Posselt, Fact and Fiction (1935),p.142. Other sources make it clear the voice was Mwari's.

eastern parts of the Mutapa. The Rozvi, like the Mutapa, were ruling a part of the Shona speaking group of people. In language and culture there was an essential similarity between the two societies. In material culture both were extensions of the Great Zimbabwe culture. The differences, viewed against this similar background, may be attributed partly to Rozvi distance from the coast. The very incomplete picture of the Rozvi state suggests that the distance of Rozvi centres from the power of firearms and their wielders, the sertanejos, helped to maintain its integrity. On the other hand, it seems that the Rozvi state's apparent calm, as opposed to the stormy history of the Mutapa, owes a lot to the absence of contemporary accounts. Rozvi armies encountered less formidable enemies inside the state, as there were no mambos controlling sources of wealth and prestige like Teve, and Barwe in their sphere of influence. The main sources of wealth in the Rozvi area, gold mines and cattle land, were both within the immediate reach of the Rozvi centre.[1]

Unlike the Mutapa, where a continuity of the same dynasty is attested for over four centuries, the problem of continuity and change is of vital importance to studies of the Rozvi. The term Rozvi appears for the first time after the establishment in power of Changamire Dombo in 1683.[2] When the Nguni invaders arrived

---

[1] Barros, Asia III (1945), p.393.

[2] In the "Descripçao Corografica" (Cxa 17, AHU), in mid-18th century, the land of "Orobze" was mentioned as the land of the Changamire people.

at the present Matabeleland in the third decade of the nineteenth century, they found a Rozvi mambo ruling the land.[1] There is no doubt, then, that one is referring to the period 1683-1838, when talking of the Rozvi period. We come to a less certain ground in trying to determine where the Rozvi were, and who was ruling the southern states of the plateau, prior to Changamire Dombo. Rozvi, as used by Shona speakers, means a member of the Moyo/mhondizvo group, from which the Changamire mambo was derived. It can also stand for a member of some other kin group, traditionally associated with the Rozvi.[2] In some scholarly works, Rozvi came to mean a member of any of the elites that ruled the plateau before the Nguni invasions.[3] The Rozvi were ruling the land of Butua after 1683,[4] and Butua was mentioned in the first two decades of the sixteenth century. It was ruled by a powerful ruler, who was "at war" with the Mutapa.[5] Records of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries repeat the information in much the same way. The description by Gomes of a land rich in gold, in mid-seventeenth century, which answers almost certainly to present-day Matabeleland, presents the feat of the two accidental "discoverers" as a surprise and an adventure.[6] This south-

---

1 "Chitsa's story" in M.E.Weale, "The Native rebellion 1896 to 1897"HMss We 3/2/6 NAR

2 Many of the informants would refer to the non-Moyo Tumbare, Nerwande and others as Rozvi. For most informants the term seems to include both the Moyo mhondizvo people and the non-Moyo associated with the Rozvi court. Interview with Chief Samuriwo and councillors,9.viii.1973,Chihota; interview Chikumu Ranga, 31.viii.1973,Buhera.

3 R.Summers, Zimbabwe mystery (1963),pp.76.100; E.Alpers, "The Mutapa",in Ranger (ed.)Aspects (1968) pp.8 seq.

4 The account of the Rozvi conquest of Butua is given by Con-

ern, sometimes hostile (although no specific campaigns are recorded before 1683), rich land, was ruled by the dynasty of Torwa.

Torwa, or Tolwa, is first mentioned in 1506, as a captain of Changamire, who rallied to his aid in the struggle between the Changamire and the Mutapa house in 1494 to 1506. Changamire and Torwa ruled southerly areas of the plateau, and Changamire was evidently in possession of considerable amounts of gold, as well as of cattle.[1] Apparently by 1547, Changamire was defeated in a way that made Torwa the most important dynasty of the south, and the rulers of Butua, until 1683.[2] Now, Torwa was the great mystery of Rhodesian history. No traceable history or genealogy of it have been found.[3] Indeed, it is suggested that their name is a mere descriptive term on the part of the northern elites (it stands for "foreigners, unrelated people".)[4]

././.

5 ceiçao, "Tratado...", Chronista II (1867),p.68.
Letter of G.Veloso to Rei (1512), Documentos,III,p.185.
J. de Barros, Asia (1945),p.383; Duarte Barbosa, "Livro", Theal, RSEA, I,pp.359-361; Fr.Monclaro, "Relaçao", op.cit,III pp.223,227. and compare

6 A.Gomes, "Viagem...",Studia (1959),p.188.

1 D. de Alcaçova (1506), Documentos,I.pp.393-95.

2 Letter of João Velho do Rei (Post 1547) Documentos VII,pp.169, 173; The Changamire was in a position to block and ruin the trade of Sofala. He was probably where he controlled Manyika and its road to Mukaranga.Portuguese aid helped defeat him, and was rewarded with a shipload of ivory traded.

3 E.Alpers, "Dynasties...",JAH (1970) p.209.

4 Personal communication from Mr.J.Latham, Research Officer of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Rhodesia,1973.

According to the detailed, eye witness account of Conceiçao in 1696, Torwa were ruling Butua, which was conquered by Changamire Dombo in 1683.[1] Oral histories point to a movement from the Marandellas area of people of the Moyo totem at the same period.[2] Apparently, then, there were two different dynasties to the south of the Mutapa. After a co-existence of almost two centuries with Torwa, the Changamire dynasty took over the land of Butua.

Abraham identified Butua as a corruption of "Guruuuswa", claimed homeland of the Mutapa dynasty and its associated groups.[3] However, the location of the "Land of tall grass" is far from certain.[4] Butua was a plain, the richest gold mining area, and a good cattle land.[5] Since the Portuguese knew Rimuka, the only other major gold mining area south of Mutapa is present day Matabeleland, which is also a cattle land. In that area there developed in the sixteenth century the Khami culture. A successor in material culture to the Great Zimbabwe culture, it centred on stone walled sites; like Khami, Dhlo Dhlo and Naletale.[6]

---

[1] A. da Conceiçao, "Tratado..." Chronista II (1867), p.105.

[2] See D.N.Beach, personal communication ; Compare to the histories of the Moyo/Wakapiwa of Samuriwo; and of the Temb-Mazvimbakupa of Chihota, who forcefully displaced the Rozvi of Gunguwo early in the 18th c. in that area; 1/I/ 1904, in file N3/33/8 NAR ; also interviews in Chihota with Chief Chihota's brother, 7.viii.73; Mrs.P. Furamera, 26.viii.73; Mr.Furamera, 17.viii.1973.Samuriwo's people refer to a mythical past when all Rozvi (i.e.Moyo) people were together. See "History of the Samuriwo people" (1972), (I am indebted to the DC Marandellas for this document). The Rozvi claim to have come to Matabeleland from the north-east. See "The Abelozwi (Barozwi)" in file N 3/33/8, NAR.

./././.

Butua, then, that the Torwa dynasty was ruling, could have been only the southern part of the plateau, i.e., the Khami culture area. Nothing in the archaeological record suggests a change in the development of the Khami culture at the end of the seventeenth century. Still, the Torwa dynasty vanished without trace, and the Rozvi are identified with the Khami culture. S.Mudenge suggested the Rozvi might have been a branch of the same ruling house as the Torwa.[1] D.Beach is now suggesting a dynastic change, without disruption to the material culture.[2]

Our discussion of the Butua state will relate to the Rozvi period between 1683 and their final defeat in mid-nineteenth century by the Ndebele. Some of the aspects discussed, especially when the evidence is archaeological, may apply to earlier periods. The likelihood of continuity between the Torwa, and the Rozvi period, is great. But as long as there is no hard evidence on the administration of the Torwa state, the extension backwards of our discussion should be regarded as tentative.

./././.

[3] D.P.Abraham, "Maramuca", JAH (1961), p.214; idem, "Early...", Historians (1962),p.75, note 5;

[4] J.Latham, in a personal communication, located it on the watershed of the plateau. The people of Samuriwo locate it to the north of Marandellas. Int. with Chief Samuriwo,Chihota, 9.viii.73.

[5] J. de Barros, Asia, III (1945),p.393.

[6] K.R.Robinson, "The archaeology of the Rozvi", in E.Stokes and R.Brown, The Zambezian past,(1966),pp. 3-27.

[1] S.I.Mudenge,The Rozvi empire and the Feira of Zumbo (unpublished Ph.D.thesis; Univ. of London,1972),p.69.

[2] Personal communication.

B. The Butua Zimbabwe

The earliest of the Khami zimbabwes, Khami, is also the best studied of them all. Most of what is said of Khami is probably true for the pre-Changamire period too. Khami, like all other elite centres on the plateau, consists of a central enclosure area, circled with stone walls. A few smaller sites around the central enclosure are much simpler in design and building techniques.[1] Numerous commoners' huts are also evident around the main sites.[2] Elaborate arrangements designed to keep the inmates of the central enclosure from outsiders' eyes are evident. The arrangement of the walls points to attempts to magnify the part where the most impressive hut stood.[3] The small number of huts within the main enclosure could not have included more than a few people.[4] All these features are familiar from Great Zimbabwe. A small elite group, with a prominent and prestigious figure in its midst, dwells in an enclosed area. An unknown number of commoners were scattered around. Some accounts claim that the Rozvi rulers spent their time travelling from one place to another.[5] This is true of Changamire Dombo,

---

[1] K.R.Robinson, Khami, (1959) pp.16-24.

[2] Ibid., p.23.

[3] Ibid., p.77.

[4] See plan of Hill Ruin, ibid., fig.13,opp.p.16.

[5] F.W.P. Posselt, Fact and Fiction (1935),p.153. Interview with Chikuma Ranga, Buhera, 31.viii.1973.

who died on his campaigns in the north of the plateau.[1] Dombo, however, was a conqueror, and his days were not days of normal routine. Later sites, Naletali and Dhlo Dhlo, display exactly the same traits as those of Khami.[2] Even if the Rozvi were indeed itinerant rulers, there was a formal centre to their state, symbolized by the stone-walled enclosures. One suspects that the Rozvi would have hardly gone to the trouble of investing in such elaborate structures, unless the mambo was in fact resident there. The elaborate passages and walls point to some eminence that had to be hidden from the general view.[3] The great reputation of the Rozvi as possessing magic powers may have been enhanced by such concealment. It is significant, though, that such arrangements were common long before 1683.[4]

The zimbabwes of the Rozvi were apparently self-supporting in food. Khami, the earliest and most westerly, is in a relatively poor farming area today. There are traditional accounts of the country having been better watered once. The archaeological record points to a large part of the food of the zimbabwe coming from hunting and livestock.[5] The almost unused grinding stones may point to a non-extensive use of grain in the site.[6]

---

1 Conceiçao "Tratado" Chronista II(1867),p.111.

2 D.Randall-MacIver, Medieaval Rhodesia (1905),pp.38-44, and 49-55.

3 K.R.Robinson, Khami (1959) D.Randall-MacIver, op.cit.,pp.40-41, 50-52.

4 Tumbare and Chihunduru, who occupied hill sites before the Rozvi rule, were attributed magic powers. The Rozvi were reputed to have stolen that magic. F.W.P.Posselt, Fact and Fiction (1935),p.141. and cf. G.Fortune, "A Rozvi text", NADA (1956) pp.81,83-4.

5 Robinson, Khami, (1959) pp.5,24.

6 Ibid., p.24.

The wives and children of the Mambo were said to have been "countless". In a land where local rulers like Samuriwo of the Marandellas area had 25 wives and the present Nyashanu of Buhera has 34, "countless" probably points to well over a hundred. The common tradition of the Rozvi going around obtaining wives by devious means points to accumulation of wealth in the form of wives.[1] Considering the prestige and wealth of the Rozvi, it is likely that some scores of wives were around the central enclosure. Of them only one or two could have been residents of the enclosure. Their role in the economy of the zimbabwe may have been smaller than that of their Mutapa counterparts, especially in Khami. Hunting and cattle-keeping were the province of men in Shona society. Thus a reliance on a male subservient population is evident. There are claims that the Rozvi rulers used to store grain in underground stoes, like the Ndebele rulers.[2] N.Sutherland-Harris used this claim for hypothesizing a royal store of grain, from which Rozvi officials were provisioned.[3] If there were any such stores, they were

---

[1] Compare :"History of the Natives of Selukwe District; the Balozwi", in file A 3/18/28. NAR: Interview with Chief Samuriwo and his councillors, Chihota, 9.viii.1973; and"Family tree of Chief Chikuma Nyashanu", compiled viii.1971 by T.F.Chadambura.

[2] K.R.Robinson, Khami,(1959), p.161; Interview with Mr.Gadza, 23.ix.1973, Buhera, "All these people got their fire and food from the Rozvi because the Rozvi had a store room at Matopos where they kept rukweza,mhunga, rice and so many other things.."

[3] Sutherland-Harris, "Trade and the Rozvi mambo" in R.Gray and D. Birmingham (eds), Pre-Colonial African trade (1970),p.246.

not found by the archaeologists. All the grain-bins recorded in Khami are of the common Shona type, which is either supported by stones or built on flat rock.[1] As the practice of underground storing was a common feature of Ndebele villages, it may be that this account was coloured by the informant's knowledge of the Ndebele usage.[2] Basically, then, it appears that Rozvi centres were self-sufficient in food. The residents of the zimbabwe were, then, busy to a large extent in providing their own food. There is no indication how many retainers and wives were included in the Rozvi centre. If one were to go by Garlake's calculations for Great Zimbabwe, the figures would not be far from those of one or two thousand adults, also suggested for Mutapa centres on the basis of contemporary records.[3]

The structure of the zimbabwe suggests that servants, parallel to those of the Mutapa, lived around the central enclosure. There is no reference to there being hostages in the Rozvi court. Servants, varanda, are occasionally mentioned by traditional history. In some cases the pattern was clearly of a man coming to serve

---

1 K.R.Robinson, Khami, (1959),pp.16, passim; compare idem, "A note on storage pits...",pp. 62-3.

2 For Ndebele storage practices, see N.M.B.Bhebe, "The Ndebele trade in the 19th century", in Int. Journal of African Studies, vol.I,1 (1974),pp.86-9.

3 See section B of chapter I.

the ruler in return for a wife.[1] When the servant was a favourite, he could gain an area to rule later on.[2] To what extent such varanda served as vanyai, messengers, is not clear.[3] The application of the name Banyai to the area nearest to the Rozvi may point to it being administered by vanyai. Informants, however, do not always distinguish between muchinda (councillor), and muranda (servant).[4]

Some of the names of the prominent councillors of the state are still remembered. Thus, although of the circle nearest to the Rozvi one can do little but guess, of the circle around it there is some evidence. Of those, the best known is Tumbare. Tumbare, the greatest of the grandes of the Rozvi state was even mentioned by the Portuguese.[5] Together with Chihunduru, he is remembered by tradition as a former ruler of the Rozvi heartland, whose land was taken from him by guile rather than war.[6]

---

[1] Traditions included in statistical report for 1896 of Belingwe District, file NB 6/1/1 NAR, claim this was the general custom in Rozvi days.

[2] Sister M.Aquina, "The tribes of the Chilimanzi Reserve and their relations to the Rozvi", NADA, IX, 2 (1965),p.42.

[3] Interview with Magarasadza brothers, Buhera, 21.ix.1973; M. Magarasadza stated: "Then came the Njanja, and they made us their servants"; his brother Chengerai clarified in his version; "He stayed with the Njanja as their servant (muranda); he was being sent everywhere as the messenger (mupurisa) of the Njanja."

[4] The offices of the machinda Tumbare, Mavhudzi, etc., are often alluded to as varanda, as in the interview with Chief Chimombe of the Rozvi of Buhera and his councillors, 22.ix.1973; The Rozvi themselves are sometimes counted with the Banyai See F.Marconnes, "The Rozvis or 'destroyers'",NADA (1938),p.73.

[5] "Descripçao Corografica", AHU, cxa 17.

[6] G. Fortune, "Rozvi text", p.72. "History of Bulawayo", 28.v.1906, in file A 3/18/28 NAR; L. de Bertonado, "Brief notes on the early history of some of the native tribes of southern Rhodesia", HMs BE 8/10/3, NAR. It is significant that the most

Both may therefore have been associated with the Torwa dynasty, either being part of it, or its subordinates. Like the Tavara Ambuya to the north, who was incorporated in the Mutapa state, Tumbare, together with Chihunduru, was incorporated in the Rozvi establishment. In that way the Rozvi basis of power was strengthened by the additional authority of former rulers. The roles Tumbare was entrusted with, like commanding the army, are typical of the roles of an affinal relative in Shona society.

Tumbare and Chihunduru were residents of the Butua heartland before the Rozvi came. Tradition seems to point to their occupying zimbabwes of their own. There is no indication in tradition that they went anywhere else after the Rozvi conquest.[1] Their role in the court points to continued residence in their original area. The most important personalities of the court, then, lived in the centre of state. "Mambo had a wife... she had her village built at the foot of the hill of the court (pedzimbabge). "It was there that Tumbare lived."[2] Mavhudzi and Nerwande were clearly associated with ritual functions, related to professed refusal to accept government. Histories relate to their having lived "with the Rozvi", with no specific reference to areas ruled.[3] Thus the groups associated with the Rozvi court were resident in the central area, either by virtue of previous occupation, or association with the Mambo migration. A Portuguese chronicler, had one ever left an account, of Mambo's land, might have called them "great lords", ruling great lands. The dispersal of the Kalanga-speaking peoples by the Nguni has prevented us from determining precisely the domains

---

./.. important Zimbabwe-type ruin, near the Leopard's Kopje culture area, the Chummungwa (Umnukwane) site in Belingwe, was claimed to have been built for Chihunduru. See H. van Sicard, "The derivations of the name Mashona", in African Studies, vol.9 (1950), pp.140-141. If this was so, then Chihunduru may represent part of the movement of the Zimbabwe elite westwards, into the area of the Leopard's Kopje culture, which he was later found to be ruling when the Rozvi came.

of the Tumbare and Chihunduru groups. They possessed a mountain each, apparently a zimbabwe of the Khami type. It is also hinted that the people on the western side of the Bembesi river, where Khami lies, retained a sort of autonomy under Rozvi paramouncy.[1] The ruler of the westerly group is claimed to have been Ndumba, while "Sigunduli", said to have been ruler of the Nyubi, of the Matopo mountain, was described as Ndumba's successor.[2] It is probable, then, that one of the prominent officials of the Rozvi centre remained in charge of that western group, with whom the Rozvi agreed on "dividing the country".

All the Rozvi officials became related by marriage to the Rozvi ruling house. Daughters given in marriage to Tumbare and Chihunduru played, according to tradition, an important role in stripping them of their magic powers.[3] It may be that more than mere emphasis of the superiority of the Rozvi power lies in that story. In the similar Mutapa story, of the conquest of the Tavara Chicara's land, it was another Tavara who revealed the secret of Chicara to the Mutapa.[4] In the Rozvi story, it is daughters given in marriage who helped subdue the otherwise unbeatable hill-rulers of Butua. This seems to hint at the giving of daughters prior

---

./.

1 G.Fortune, op.cit. and S.M.Kumile, "Three Kalanga praise-poems" (trans.G.Fortune), NADA, XI, 2 (1975), p.187, place their mountains specifically in the Inyati area, former heartland of the Rozvi.

2 G.Fortune, "Rozvi text", op.cit., p.83.

3 F.W.T.Posselt, Fact and fiction (1935), pp. 142-3; G.Fortune, op.cit., p.76. Interview with Mukayesango Nagarasadza, Buhera, 20.ix.1973, "The Mavhudzi people)...did not agree to be chiefs.. They said they were rainmakers..."

1 "History of the tribes of Gwelo", in file A 3/18/28, NAR.

2 Ndumba is described (ibid.) as being the ruler at the time the Rozvi came, who later ruled part of the area under Mambo; in

./.

to conquest.[1] The case of the Njanja, about two generations later, who usurped the government of their land from their sekuru, the Vaera Shiri, is perhaps parallel.[2] We know that the state of Butua was weakened by internal rivalry over the throne in 1644. Portuguese sertanejo power, in the form of Sisnando Dias Bayaô, contributed to the weakening of Butua consequent on the 1640s crisis.[3] It is not out of probability, then, that Torwa were called so by the people of the north as they were the people the northern dynasties married with, Rozvi married into the Torwa dynasty could have played a role in the conquest of Butua.

In the centre itself the pattern of using women as the binding force between the mambo and his retainers is more than a probability. This is reminiscent of Mutapa practice of pagery. The different terminology probably derives from the nature of the sources available for each state. It is said that the mambo had no standing army. Yet, in the court, there was a corps of young men, called Bugwanana. These youths were unmarried, and were allowed to settle down and marry when they reached man-

---

other sources it is Chihunduru from whom the country was taken; see interview with Lukoto, son of Mtshete, in K.R.Robinson, Khami, (1959) p.160. "Khami came under Ndumba, a Kalanga chief. He built walls of stone, and was succeeded by Ntumbani (Tumbare). After this came Sipunduli, who also built some low walls. During his time Mambo came and built his walls."

3 G. Fortune, "Rozvi text", NADA (1956), p.72.

4 M.A.Pacheco, Diario, (1883), p.24.

1 S.M.Kumile, "Three Kalanga", NADA (1975), p.184.

2 Interviews with Shonihwa Mhondoro, Buhera, 20.ix.73; Tafiranyika Matsveru, Buhera, 6.ix.1973; N.C.Nyanzira, Buhera, 3.ix.73.

3 A.Gomes, "Viagem...", Studia (1959), p.197; H.von Sicard, "A proposito de Sisnando Dias Bayao" in Studia, 16 (1965), p.183.

hood.[1] There might be a possible influence of Ndebele practice on those traditions, collected in Gwelo and Selukwe. Yet the parallel with the Mutapa is so striking that it is hard to dismiss on these grounds alone. Furthermore, the informants who supplied the story pointed out differences between the system of government of the Ndebele and the Rozvi mambo, like the mambo having no regiments.[2] Some of the origin stories of late-established groups, like Chilimanzi, point to young men in the role of varanda (servants) to the Rozvi mambo, before settling down to rule land allocated to them.[3]

The women whom these young retainers married were supplied by the mambo. In 1935 F.W.Posselt wrote - "The law of "lobolo" did not obtain among them, and among certain sections it is not recognised even now. They practice what is generally known as 'ku garira', that is, the rendering of personal services by the son-in-law to the parents of the women."[4] A similar custom is in force in Maungwe, an area which may have been related to

---

1 See histories of Selukwe and Gwelo, in file A 3/18/28, NAR. The bodyguard was called variously Bugwanana or Abogranana, and were also described as a "police force".

2 "History of Gwelo", A 3/18/28, NAR.

3 Sister M.Aquina, "The tribes of Chilimanzi Reserve and their relations to the Rozvi", NADA IX,2 (1965),p.42.

4 F.W.T.Posselt, Fact and Fiction (1935),p.154, and compare Statistical Report of Belingwe district, 1898, reporting the same tradition, in file NB 6/1/1, NAR.

the Rozvi before their move south.[1] Rulers east of the plateau practised the same custom, and the difference from common practice was emphasized in both instances.[2] The services of the son-in-law terminated with the first daughter originating from the marriage being given to the wife giver. Another form of kugarira binds the wife receiver for a life time, and for residence with the wife giver.[3] The "large group" of young unmarried men is called "police" by the informants of the Gwelo tradition collection.[4] The term, as used to this day by informants, mapurisa, means messengers, both of government Native Administration and of chiefs. Messengers of the pre-Rhodesian period are also called mapurisa. The duties of messengers in Shona society were summoning people to the ruler's court. They are very conspicuous in the legal process, but were also used to summon machinda, councillors, to the ruler.[5] The Rozvi chief Musuarurwa claims that messengers had a role in audiences with the mambo, too. Messages would be repeated, by a munyai, then repeated again by one of the machinda for the mambo.[6] The phenomenon observed in the Mutapa court had, then, a parallel in the Rozvi court.

---

1 See B.Hulley to CNC, Umtali, 10.xii.1919, in file N 3/31/5, who reported that Nakoni, as chief, had a "call" on many girls whose mothers he had alloted to men ~~either~~ under the "Mugarira" system, which entitled him either to all the offspring, or to one girl only.

2 H.Ph.Junod, "Coutumes", Africa (1937) pp.161-164.

4 In File A 3/18/28, NAR.

3 See Holleman, Shona Customary (1952) pp 124-128; Compare W. H.Stead, "Bride price in Rhodesia", HMss St 7/1/1 NAR : "If I see a man who has no wife I shall say to him, come and stay with me, and I shall give you a wife. He will be my muranda, he will stay with me."

./.

The Rozvi habit, remembered widely, of extorting women from their subjects, may be related to this custom. Girls received as fines for breaking the law : for disobedience or, as compensation for supposed bewitching of the Rozvi, were acquired without bride price being paid for them. Mr.Gadza said on the results of failure to report the death of a chief to the Rozvi, "The Rozvi would ask them why they never reported and they would be given two girls as wives."[1] "Yes, the Rozvi used to go about asking for water to drink. If he got to a place and asked for water and saw a beautiful girl he would then pluck some of his hair and throw it into the water and then he would tell them that he had been bewitched and that way he would win the girl."[2] These girls provided the ruler with a reserve of females, on whom, and on whose female descendants, he could draw to reward his servants.

C. Of Rozvi lords

Besides the messengers, there were the officials of the zimbabwe. Fewer names are remembered than for the Mutapa court. The four most famous, Tumbare, Chihunduru, Nerwande and Mavhudzi,

././.

5 J.F.Holleman, African Interlude (1958),p.88. Interview with Chief G.Nenguwo, Chihota, 16.viii.1973. Interview with Mr.Gadza, Buhera, i.x.1973.

6 Interview with Chief Musarurwa of Nharira, TTL, 24.ix.1973 : "He (a visitor to the mambo) could only talk to the munyai and then the munyai could report to the Chief."

1 Interview, Buhera, 23.ix.1973

2 Interview with Chief Chimombe's councillors, Buhera, 22.ix.1973.

seem all to have been close to the court. Mavhudzi and Nerwande are said by one account to have been rulers of Bubi dsitrict. Chihunduru was associated with the Kalanga of the Matopos.[1] Tumbare was resident, "at the feet of the zimbabwe". The first two have very clear northern origins. Nerwande, of the Soko/Simboti totem, carried the same totem as the "sacredote" or priest of the Mutapa court, of mid-eighteenth century.[2] Some of the members of the same totem of Soko/Simboti can still be found in the Zambezi valley.[3] He is remembered in close association with the Shava/Zvarambuya Mavhudzi. Both are related by myths to the original founder of the Changamire Rozvi dynasty, Chikuru Wadyembeu (the seed eater). Each claims the other provided the woman who gave birth to Dyembeu, who was not the son of man.[4] Both accounts, however, link both groups to each other, and to the original Rozvi movement, via Shangwe, to the south. "When we came, we came from the east and crossed the Zambezi; we spent three years on the other side of the river after we had crossed it; from there we travelled to Mabwemasimike. We stayed there for three years and then we left the place. From there we slept in the bush. We were with our sekuru (grandfather or maternal uncle). He was called Mavhudzi. Mavhudzi was told by Mwari that he wanted to give him the chieftainship so that he could rule. Mavhudzi said that he did not have any sons, he had only daughters. He had a muzukuru (nephew or grandson) called Zvembe. He was told that the muzukuru was going to be the chief..."[5] Both houses

---

1 G.Fortune, "Rozvi text", NADA (1956) pp. 72,80; S.M.Kumile, "Three Kalanga", NADA (1975) p.183. Native Teacher, Marodzi, "The Barozwi", in NADA (1924), p.88.

2 F. de Melo e Castro, "Noticia, "Fontes", Anais (1954),p.136.

3 A.Rita Ferieira, Agrupamento e caracterizaçao (1958),p.55.

4 F.W.T.Posselt, Fact and Fiction (1935),pp.142.43; for a Chaminuka-oriented version, see M.Gelfand, Shona ritual (1959),pp.30-31.

5 Interview with Chief Chimombe's councillors,Buhera,22.ix.73.

claim to this day a high standing as rain-makers. There are strong hints that their supernatural powers were related to relinquishing claims to secular rule in the formative stages of the southern Rozvi state.[1] Unlike Tumbare and Chihunduru, the houses related to the Rozvi movement from the north appear to have a more emphasized ritual function. Nowadays the names of the houses related to the Mambo are mostly remembered for that function.

The Rozvi, unlike all other Shona states, were outstanding in the fact that they did not have any mhondoros.[2] All the Rozvi myths of origin lay great importance on the special relations between the Rozvi and the Mwari. Mwari's voice accompanied the Rozvi speaking from the rocks, trees and the sky.[3] While the Mutapa, Teve, and indeed all Shona rulers to this day appeal to their mhondoro for intercession with the supernatural, the Rozvi used to turn to the Mwari. Not much is known of the Mwari cult prior to the nineteenth century, but its centre seems to have been in the Matopos, not far from any of the Rozvi zimbabwes. It was the duty of Mavhudzi to carry out communications between the mambo and the Mwari. Nerwande is also sometimes counted a-

---

1 Interview with Mukayesango Magarasadza, Buhera, 2o.ix.1973; "No they did not agree to be chiefs. They said that they were rain makers"; Machokoto Mungani, interviewed Chihota, 11.viii. 1973. stated: "They were not of the same order as Tumbare. Tumbare was higher..."

2 "All along in the history of the Rozvi there was never a svikiro (spirit medium)," Mr.Gadza, interviewed 23.ix.1973,Buhera; and compare D.G.L., "Mlimo", in NADA,12 (1934),p.84; G.Fortune, Introduction to "Rozvi text",,NADA (1956),p.69; Chief Sileya of Gokwe, whose dynasty is an offshoot of the "mulozwi tribe" was adamant that his people have no svikiveo (spirit medium) and never had one. See "Comm. on Native Production" 1944, ZBJ 1/1/4, NAR. ././.

mong those sent to the Mwari, but Tumbare most clearly was not.[1] On the other hand, duties like going out with the army. were clearly outside the range of Mavhudzi and Nerwande. In the court itself, Mavhudzi claims to have had a special position, with his standing as sekuru to the Rozvi enabling him to castigate erring rulers.[2] On the other hand, Chihunduru, one of the "secular" houses of the court, was the first to be told of a mambo's death. He would then transmit the message to Tumbare, the other prominent non-ritual official. Only after the two administrators learned of the death, would the house of Mavhudzi be informed.[3]

The definition of roles emerging may throw some light on the nature of the southern state, both before and after the Rozvi incursion. The secluded nature of the mambo was stressed by the efforts of concealing the inmates of the Khami culture zimbabwes.[4] The strong traditional links between the Rozvi and Mwari, draw attention to the religious basis of their power.[5] At the same time, Khami culture sites display a clear

---

././.

3 N.G., "magango Hutari", NADA, 11 (1933),p.31. Interview, Chief Chimombe, Buhera, 22.ix.73.

1 Native Teacher Marodzi, "The Barozwi", NADA (1924) p.90; C.L. Carbutt, "A brief account of the rise and fall of the Matabele", NADA, 25 (1948),p.40; interview with N.C.Nyanzira, Buhera, 3.ix.1973. "The Njanja used to go to him (Mavhudzi) to get the permission to go and ask for the rain at Matonjeni", to which C.N.Chirombe added :"Yes, Nerwande and Mavhudzi were called 'vana Chin'anga'; they were the proofs of the rain."; and compare to Pacheco's Nachenanga, in Diario (1883),p.28.

2 G.Fortune, "Rozvi text",NADA (1956),p.76, footnote 1.

3 Interview with Mr. Gadza, 23.ix.1973, Buhera.

4 K.R.Robinson, Khami, (1959) pp.41,113. Robinson also cited information by Mabira to the effect that "mambo very rarely descended from his private quarters but on these occasions all the people had to...remain hidden...", op.cit., p.162. See also R.Summers, Ancient ruins (1971),p.200. ././.

non-defensive character.[1] The post-1683 Rozvi were seen by Portuguese observers as a fighting group. Changamire Rozvi could be seen, therefore, as introducing an element of martialism into an hitherto pacific, religiously based state. The legends of the magical powers of Tumbare and Chihunduru may support this hypothesis. However, the former rulers of the seemingly non-martial state became the military leaders of the post-1683 Rozvi state. Furthermore, the officials who accompanied the Rozvi became the ritual functionaries of the state.

Tumbare, the best-known of all Rozvi officials, was called the "secretary" of the mambo by the eighteenth century 'Corografica'. Far from denoting a clerk, the term means a close confidant of an indigenous ruler. Tumbare was also supposed to have received the tribute sent from Manyika to the Rozvi.[2] Tribute from foreigners was collected in the Mutapa state by the "captain of the gates". There tribute and external contact were combined. Whether or not Manyika was paying tribute, it is clear he was communicating with foreigners, as his name reached Manyika. He had also probably the role of collecting

././.

5 D.P.Abraham, "Chaminuka", is Stokes and Brown (eds)., The Zambesian (1966) pp.36 and passim.

1 K.R.Robinson, Khami (1959),p.113; N.J.Walker, "Matabeleland excursion", Rhodesian Prehistory (1972),p.3.

2 Descripçao Corografica, AHU, cxa 17.

tribute, as suggested by an interpretation of a praise song, by S.Mudenge.[1] This seems to have been related to his command of the army. One of the best remembered Rozvi praise songs seems to be that relating Tumbare's praises. "Were it not for Tumbare, where would we all be." It is said to relate to his prowess in the war against one of the Nguni invading groups in the nineteenth century.[2] He was also in charge of the drum, which was used to summon the armies to the field.[3] Rozvi armies recorded by the Portuguese were smaller than those recorded in the Mutapa complex.[4] The Rozvi used to recruit their subjects in the same way as did the Mutapa states. Tumbare was mobilising, then, probably mainly the people of the Rozvi heartland, around the zimbabwes. Some traditions refer to his subjects before the Rozvi came as the Nengove, the people who use arrows, which may point to fame as warriors.[5]

---

1 S.Mudenge, The Rozvi empire (1972),p.150.

2 N.G., "Magango Hutari", NADA (1933), pp.4-5, has a confused version. G.Fortune, "Rozvi text..." NADA (1956),p.80; K.R. Robinson, "A history of the Bikita District", NADA,34 (1957), p.79. "Tumbare was of the Rozvi who helped the people in many fights. That is why they praise him saying that because of Tumbare we were secured". Interview Chief Musarurwa, Nharira, 24.ix.1973. Chikumu Ranga, interviewed in Buhera, 31.viii.1973, knew of Tumbare, but not of Nerwande, "Some of the great people were sung in the songs but I have not heard of this one..."

3 G.Fortune, "Rozvi text", op.cit., p.83.

4 F. de Melo e Castro (1750),cited in A.Lobato, Evoluçao,(1957), pp.113-114.

5 Interview with Gidi Moyo, Buhera, 19.ix.1973.

The pattern of recruitment was no different from that of the Mutapa state, and indeed, of any Shona policy. Tumbare, the commander, was probably leading into the field his subjects of the Rozvi heartland. The evidently lonely fight put up by the Rozvi against the Nguni invaders points to the reliance of the Rozvi on their immediate heartland for recruitment.[1] In the absence of cloth-rich enemies, who could muster thousands of mercenaries, there was no need for more than relatively small armies. Tumbare was, then, an officer of the centre, and an inlaw of the Mambo, like some of the Mutapa "generals". Unlike them, our limited evidence indicates, he seems to have had no need for extensive consultation before recruitment was begun.

Apart from Tumbare there was Chihunduru, of the previous rulers of the Butua area. Before his incorporation in the Rozvi state, Chihunduru was renowned for his wealth in cattle.[2] If there was a continuation of the office of "herdsman", once a Rozvi title,[3] Chihunduru may have been the officer carrying it. The association of Chihunduru with cattle is prominent, like that of Tumbare with the fertility of his domain. The praise-

---

[1] See Chitsa's story in M.E.Weale, "The native rebellion, 1896 to 1897", HMs, Vol 3/2/6 NAR.

[2] S.M.Kumile, "Three Kalanga", NADA (1975), p.183; of his three councillors, two were praised as zvikono (fat bulls) and Nkami (the Milker).

[3] See I.Caetano Xavier, "Noticias..." in Andrade. Relaçoes (1955), p.171.

name of Tumbare "antheap" relates apparently to the abundance of grain in his lands.[1] It was claimed he was of the Lilima,[2] whose land was renowned for its fertility, and served as the grain-providing area in times of famine.[3] Chihunduru, probable ruler of the westerly area, which is more reliant on cattle, is praised for plentiful herds of cattle. According to the Rozvi Gadza, Chihunduru was the closest councillor to the mambo. When a mambo died, he was the first to be informed : he would tell Tumbare who passed it to Mavhudzi. Deka, alias Foto, was another official with administrative responsibilities. A member of this group is remembered as one of the commanders of the army.[4] After the Rozvi retreat before the Nguni, the people of Foto followed the Rozvi branch which settled in Buhera. They were the confirming authority in the Buhera district for rulers well into the present century.[5] This role is reminiscent of the Nevinje of the Mutapa complex, a commander in times of war, and connected to the nomination of rulers.

A number of other officials are remembered, whose function is not always clear. Some, like Deka, may have been subordinates of Tumbare, to whose names the verb tumwa, to send or delegate, is attached by some informants. The various pieces of the

---

1 Kumile, op. cit., p.186; Tumbare was praised as "The antheap of Nnava / The antheap surrounded by abundant sorghum (antheap stands for very fertile land.)

2 Interview with Mr. Gidi, Moyo, Buhera, 19.ix.1973. S.M.Kumile, "Three Kalanga", op.cit. p.184, said he was a Humbe. Traditions collected by N.C. Bulawayo (statement of Nagwala) in file A 3/18/28, NAR, say he was a Nyubi. F.W.T.Posselt, Fact and fiction (1935),p.141, described him as chief of the Shangwe.

3 G.C.H. Reed to W.Thompson, Bulilima, 5.xii.1895, in LMS, Matabeleland, Box 2/ii

4 K.R.Robinson, "A history of the Bikita...",NADA (1957),p.79; Interview with Mr/Gadza, Buhera, 23.ix.1973.

5 Personal communication from Mr.I.A.Bickersteth, D.C.Buhera, drawing on material available to him.

picture are difficult to frame in their chronological associations. Kumile's praise - poem places Tumbare as fourth in order of the councillors of the Mambo.[1] Praise poems tend to preserve archaic language, and old themes. Perhaps the other testimonies relate, then, to later periods of Rozvi rule : perhaps at some remote time Tumbare was of less importance. The three other councillors, machinda, were Ninjigwe, Nnali and Ntasi. All three, like Tumbare, possessed mountain stone-walled sites, in the heartland of the Rozi state. Ninjigwe's praise-name was "chooser of beautiful girls".[2] It may be related to the well-remembered practice of the Rozvi of taking girls from their subjects. In the Mutapa state the vanyai, envoys of the court, were responsible for the supply of women to the Mutapa.[3] Ninjigwe's praise-name may hint at a similar role in the Rozvi state.

There were some officers who had prominent ritual functions. Mavhudzi and Nerwande are associated with Dyembeu, the first mythical mambo.[4] Both hold claim to sekuru status vis-à-vis the Rozvi mambos. The Rozvi mambo, as muzukuru, could be either nephew or grandson, which put them in a relationship of close familiarity, with a right to mutual censorship. Both are linked

---

[1] S.M.Kumile, "Three Kalanga", NADA (1975), p.186.

[2] Ibid., p.187.

[3] Miranda, "Monarchia..." in "Fontes", Anais (1954) p.117.

[4] Posselt, Fact and fiction (1935), pp.142-3.

by the migration story with the Rozvi proclamation as mambo, and the special relationships of the Rozvi and Mwari.[1] Mavhudzi is to this day remembered as intercessor with Mwari for requesting rain. The Rozvi do not have any mhondoros, and in Buhera they send envoys to Mavhudzi.[2] Other groups in the same area send to Mavhudzi when their mhondoro feel it is beyond their powers to cope with a drought. Mavhudzi then sends on their behalf to either Goronga, in Sinoia, or to the Mwari shrines in the Matopos. The roles of both Mavhudzi and Nerwande are seen in the same light as far as the Rozvi state is concerned.[3] The presence of Mavhudzi in the Umtali district, and of Nerwande in Maungwe, was explained by an attempted coup by the Rozvi Ntevere against mambo Gumboremvura ("rain-leg"). Gumboremvura lived in Manyanga, in the present Bubi district, where Mavhudzi and Nerwande are remembered as having been "mambo's chiefs".[4] The Mavhudzi praise-name of zarambuya, troubles, may point to that event. Informants of the Magarasadza branch of Mavhudzi either failed to explain the 'trouble' that made them flee north, or attributed it to the often invoked story of incest, which called for escape and change of laudatory terms.[5]

---

[1] Ibid.

[2] Interviews with: Chief Chimombe's councillors, Buhera, 22.ix.1973; the Magarasadza brothers, Buhera, 21.ix.1973; Mukayesango Magarasadza; Buhera; 20.ix.1973; Shonhiwa Mhondoro, Buhera; 20.ix.1973.

[3] see previous note.

[4] F.W.T.Posselt, Fact and fiction (1935),p.146. Ntevere could have been Mandebele, mentioned with Tumbare as one of the two great people of the Rozvi in 1802, in a Portuguese document; Quoted in S.Mudenge, The Rozvi empire (1972),p.111.

[5] Interview with Magarasadza brothers, Buhera, 21.ix.1973.

Gumboremvura's name, and his statement - "it will rain when I stretch my leg" - point to association to rainmaking. The reported conflict between the two rain-making officers and the mambo may have had, then, a religious context.

The principal Rozvi lords, like those of the Mutapa were associated both with the capital, and roles outside it. Tumbare was a probable son-in-law of the Mambo, clearly resident near the court. Sons-in-law were very close to the Rozvi mambo,[1] which is reminiscent of Mbokorume in the Mutapa state. Chihunduru was also resident near the zimbabwe, and had a high standing in court. Tumbare had a generalship in the army and was in charge of tribute. Both were associated also with parts of the Rozvi heartland. The Rozvi lords seem, however, to be more firmly related to the court than some of the early Mutapa lords, like the Mukomohusha. There is a possible association of Chihunduru to control of cattle-lands, and of Tumbare to grain-producing areas. Nijingwe was possibly associated to supplying girls to the ruler. The partial picture of the Rozvi lords is thus very similar to eighteenth century Mutapa lords. Officers of the centre were rulers, but in the state's heartland, and had specific roles in governing the periphery. Butua being larger than Mukaranga, the intensity of communications

---

[1] Marodzi, "The Barozwi", NADA (1924), p.90.

involved in the dual roles must have been greater. With the chronological setting of the ascribed roles so vague, it is impossible to be more specific on the subject. The officers with ritual functions had a clear communications role, to link Rozvi Zimbabwes with Mwari shrines. They were probably principally Zimbabwe residents.

D. The Rozvi religious communications

Praise poems and history link the Rozvi to a guardian spirit, of whose many names Mwari is the most prominent. It is also remembered as Thovale, which might be a more archaic form.[1] The supreme being spoke to the Rozvi from various natural objects. He is remembered as the giver of the mamboship to the Rozvi. He was worshipped, and supplied his followers with gifts of food. Mavhudzi and Nerwande were the intermediaries from early stages on, between the Rozvi and the Mwari.[2] Blake-Thompson and Summers depicted a clear division of roles in the Mwari shrines, now limited all to the Matopo hills. The roles of muromo (mouth), Mwari's mouthpiece; nzeve (ear), the receiver of messages; and ziso (eye), a less important transmitter of information, were identified. They belonged to families of the Mbire Soko/mbereka, the Hera Shava/museyamwa, and the Rozvi, Moyo/mhondizvo, res-

---

1 S.M. Kumile, "Three Kalanga", NADA (1975) pp. 188-89.

2 F.W.T. Posselt, Fact and fiction (1935), pp.142-3 ; Daneel, The god of the Matopo Hills (1970), pp.22-28.

pectively.[1] D.P.Abraham presented a clear model of state-cult parallels. A hierarchy of mhondoros, with Mwari at the top, paralleled the hierarchy of provincial rulers with the Rozvi mambo at the top.[2] The presence in the shrine of members of the Shava and Soko groups who preceded the Rozvi in the south, with a Rozvi in a junior role, coincided with a Soko/Mbire dynasty preceding the Rozvi in the south, in Abraham's reconstruction of Shona history.[3]

The communications of the Mwari cult deserve, therefore, a close examination. It appears that the cult's influence was less widespread than supposed. Hence its value as an information service was limited to parts of the Rozvi state. On the other hand, it created a link to Venda land. Its relations to the Rozvi also appear different to those visualized above.

Daneel made the vital distinction between Mwari the Creator, known but worshipped through ancestral spirits ; and Mwari Vamatonjeni, worshipped directly in the Matopos.[4] South of Tati, among the Tswana, Morimo/Mwari is known, but worship is also centred on ancestral spirits.

---

[1] J.Blake-Thompson and R. Summers. "Mlimo and Mwari, notes on a native religion in Southern Rhodesia" in NADA (1956),pp.54-5; R.O.Ranger, Revolt in Southern Rhodesia 1896-97 (1967),pp.22-24.

[2] D.P.Abraham, "Chaminuka", in Stokes and Brown (eds). The Zambesian (1966),pp. 38-43.

[3] D.P.Abraham, "Ethno-history of the empire of Mutapa. Problems and methods", in J. Vansina et al, The historian in Tropical Africa (Oxford Univ.Press; 1964), p.107; idem, "Early...", Historians (1962),p.62; T.O.Ranger, op.cit., p.24, citing Father Devlin.

[4] Daneel, The god (1970),pp.15-18; cf. Bullock, The Mashona (1928),pp.122-124; E.G.Howman, "The traditional" S.Af.I. of Sci. (1919),pp.386-387;

The small groups of Kaa, Talaota and Khurutshe maintained a link between the Tswana and Rozvi area. Yet the Ngwato, who settled at Shoshong, ca. 1770, seem to have remained unaffected by the Mwari cult. Only with the advent of Kalanga refugees was Mwari worship established in Shoshong.[1] Among the Duma to the east Mwari cult influence seems far weaker than was supposed. The centre of the great mhondoro Musikavanhu was a focus for Ouma, and even Manyika Worship.[2] West of the Duma, and even in present-day Matabele-land, the Shrines of the Matopos were the dominant spiritual centres. Another centre of Mwari worship supplied a strong link between the Matopos and the Zoutpansberg. The Mwari of the Venda also accompanied their invading dynasties, spoke from the rocks with the sky, and supplied food to worshippers. He is also known as Mwali or Thevela.[3]

---

[1] I. Schapera, "Notes on the history of the Kaa", African Studies, IV, 3 (1945), pp.110-12 ; J.T. Brown, Among the Bantu, (1926), pp.95-111 ; Brown rendered God as "Modimo", and said there were caves at the foot of mountains in which the god dwelt, where men of old used to converse with Him; when Moffat enquired of the Tawana what they knew of God the standard answer was that he was in the earth; others knew only the name, Morema. See I. Schapera (ed.), Apprenticeship at Kuruman, being the journals and letters of Robert and Mary Moffat 1820-1828 (London · Chatto & Windus, 1951), entries for 24.iii.1822, p.49 ; 26.ii.1822, p.56; 24.v.1823, p.82. During the drought of 1876, the missionary Hepburn boasted of having driven away a 'Makalaka rain-maker' who was addressing the 'Makalaka Rain-God', i.e. the Cave-God or Mwari of the Matopos. It is clear from the story that the attachment of the Kalanga speaking refugees settled among the Tswana to the cult was far stronger than that of the Tswana; see J.D. Hepburn, Twenty years in Khama's country and pioneering among the Batauana of Lake Ngami, (London ; Hodder Stoughton, 1896), pp. 133-37. The northern Tswana, the Ngwato, also used to appeal to Mwari in the Matopos for rain. See I.Schapera, Rain making (1971), pp. 127-28.

[2] Mtetwa's Duma informants claim the Mwari cult was brought into Duma country by the Rozvi refugees in the nineteenth century and they are its worshippers to this day. See, R.Mtetwa, "The rise...", (1973), pp.20.

./.

The centre of Mwari worship in Venda is called Njhelele, like one of the principal Matopo shrines.[1] Delegations used to come from Vendaland to the Mwari of the Matopos.[2]

The Mwari cult claims a mythical origin in Great Zimbabwe. It was moved by divine command hundreds of miles west, to Njelele of the Matopos; and south, to Njhelele of the Venda.[3] Both Rozvi and Venda rulers claim association of their establishment with the Mwari. It is possible, then, that the cult came to the Matopos with the movement of people of the Zimbabwe culture to establish the Khami culture. However, the ascription of the cult in its present form to Great Zimbabwe is not proven.[4] And the victory of the Mwari supported Rozvi over the powerful magic of Chihunduru[5] suggests a possible difference of their respective religious practices. The cult is known to us in its present form, and as deeply associated with the Rozvi.[6] The term Mwari itself is changing its meaning.[7] It is impossible at this stage to de-

---

././.

3 F.T.M. Pasipanodya, "Mutasa chiefdom...", p.7; further south, while the Njanja informants all declared they used to go to the Matopos for rain, Tazaranku Muziligazi, interviewed 4.ix.1973, said the Hera used to go to the Duma mhondoro to ask for rain.

1 Compare initiation song of Venda girls, in ~~idem~~ van Warmelo (ed.), "Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual". (Dept. of Native Affairs, Union of S.A.) Ethnological Publications, vol.III (1932),p.65.

2 H.A.Stayt, The Bavenda (1931),pp. 310, 313.

3 Blake-Thompson and Summers, "Hlimo and Mwari", NADA (1956), p.56. N.J. van Warmelow (ed.), "The copper mines of Messina and the early history of the Zantpansberg", (Dept. of Native Affairs, Union of South Africa) Ethnological Publications, vol. VIII (1940),p.6.

4 See section B of the Introduction, above.

5 Fortune, "Rozvi text", NADA (1956),p.72; Kumile, "Three Kalanga", NADA (1975),p.184.

././.

termine whether there may have been a fusion of two ways of worship when the Rozvi took over ~~Buhera~~ Butua.[1]

Projection of Mwari cult practices into the past should, then, be done with precaution. Whatever form the cult had, the Rozvi were associated with it. Today the cult has an organised network of messengers linking its shrines to the provinces.[2] Projected into the past, its usage for information-collection for the Rozvi rulers seemed of great importance.[3] Yet there is no evidence, besides conjecture, for such Rozvi usage of the Mwari cult. Mavhudzi and Nerwande were carrying presents from the mambo to Mwari shrines.[4] But relations between the temporal and spiritual authorities were not always cordial. Rozvi defeats at the hands of the Madzviti are ascribed to a conflict between Mwari and mambo. The way oral history tells it, mambo destroyed systematically every item out of which Mwari spoke. Even a young wife of the mambo himself was killed when Mwari spoke through

---

./.

6 Informants never mentioned Mwari when talking of the Matopos; Every informant spoke of 'Mabweadziva' and 'Rozvi' as synonymous. "The first place we go to ask for rain is at Mavhudzi's and then he is the one who would take us to Mabweadziva". Interview with Chief Chimombe, 19.ix.1973, Buhera; "He, the uncle, used to go to Mabweadziva to have the ceremonial festivals for the chieftainship." Interview with Dinga, 6.ix.1973.

7 M.L.Daneel, The God...,(1970),p.37.

1 Cf. Abraham "Chaminuka", Stokes & Brown (eds) The Zambesian (1966),p.32.

2 Daneel, The God (1970),pp.4o-61; Howman, "The traditional..." op.cit., pp.386-7.

3 Daneel, op.cit., pp.22-26; R.Summers, Zimbabwe mystery (1963), pp.99-101; T.O. Ranger, Revolt (1967), p.24; S. Mudenge, "The role" JAH, (1974),p.382.

4 G.Fortune, "Rozvi text...", NADA (1956),p.82. Once Mavhudzi settled in the north east, he apparently no longer went to Mabweadziva, but used the famous tree in Marandellas, Muti Usina Zita, a huge tree which fell in 193o. Interview with Mukayesango Magarsadza, Buhera, 2o.ix.1973. This "tree with-

./.

her, The story obviously cannot be taken as relating specific historical events, but it clearly points to a clash between the mambo and the Mwari officialdom. It may well be that the destruction of objects relates to an attempt to stifle the voice of Mwari, as pronounced through his human oracles. The killing of a wife of the mambo hints that having a Rozvi-related oracle did not necessarily have the advantage of rallying the cult to the mambo. This throws some doubt on the linkage of the "eye" of the cult, a Rozvi, with aid to the Rozvi rulers ; or of making the Mbire priests virtual servants of the state.[1]

The consistency of the cult's organization is also open to dispute. The shortlived shrine at Inyati is claimed not to have been a centre of the Mwari cult at all, and Mkwati, the famous 'priest' of the 1896 rebellion, dubbed an impostor.[2] The shrines, then, seem consistently to have been confined in the Matopos, close to the Rozvi centre. The personnel of the shrines, however, are not so clearly linked to the Rozvi as was assumed. Cockroft, with a life-long knowledge of the Matopo shrines, claims the Rozvi oracle described/69 previous

---

././.
out a name" was also mentioned by Rozvi informants as the destination of Mavhudzi; interview with Gadza, Buhera, 23.ix.1973.

4 F.W.T.Posselt, Fact and fiction (1935),p.158; D.G.L. "Mlimo", NADA (1934),p.12; Marodzi, "The Barozwi" NADA (1924),p.90.

1 Daneel, The god (1970),pp.23-24; Mudenge, The Rozvi empire (1972),p.133.

2 I.G.Cockroft, personal communication, 25.vi.1973; idem, "The Mlimo (Mwari) cult", NADA, X, 4 (1972),p.85. This is an important revision of Ranger's view of the role of the Mwari cult in the rebellion; cf. T.O.Ranger, "The role of Ndebele and Shona religious authorities in the rebellions of 1896 and 1897", in Stokes & Brown (eds). The Zambezian Past,(1966),p. 107 seq; idem, Revolt,(1967) p.144 seq.

authors is in fact a deviation from accepted practice. According to Cockroft's informants, the cult was brought to Rhodesia from the northern Transvaal. The genealogies of the shrine officials of Njelele show a migration from Vendaland "in the days of the mambo". The migration has not stopped there, as some of the officials came even later.[1] The totem of the Njelele priests is indeed Ncube, (soko). The founders of the shrine, however, are described as "wozhana" (messengers of the cult) of the Venda cult. The first of the Venda priests remembered is Mbikwa Ncube, who was "executed by Mzilikazi".[2] His son, Shula Timila, was succeeded by Tabulawa, of the Moyo, who officiated until 1960. The Moyo base their claim on a powerful spirit who seized their mother, herself of the Ncube group, and then her son Tabulawa. The Dula shrine, parallel in importance to Njelele, has also been founded by a Venda. So are most of the minor shrines.[3] All genealogies of the Ncube priests go no further than four generations back. Informants early in the century claimed that the cult originated with the Lilima and the Kalanga, with whom the pre-Rozvi rulers, Tumbare and Chihunduru, are connected.[4] It seems, then, unsafe to stretch the present structure of the Mwari officialdom too far into the past.

---

[1] I.G.Cockroft, (1967), op.cit.,p.86.

[2] Ibid., p.84, in fact the execution took place in 1881, and was by Lobengula.

[3] Ibid., passim.

[4] Statistical Report of Belingwe for 1898, file NB 6/1/1, NAR.

The reconstruction of the past relations between the mambo and the cult hinges partly on the office of the Moyo "eye". The "eye", though, is a modern phenomenon. Cockroft does not mention the term at all among the various terms for priests, the meaning of which are a caretaker, or "the one who takes them in". Daneel himself used five titles for the Njelele-Wirirani priesthood, none of which corresponded to the "mouth-eye-ear" division.[1] It was suggested by Schoffeleers that the Blake-Thompson terminology is metaphoric, "referring to the information gathering and decision taking aspects of the cult".[2] Envoys have been traditionally referred to as "eye, ears, and mouth" of their sender.[3] The Moyo female priest who spoke for Mwari was there in her capacity as wife of the Soko priest. The interpreters of the message into Ndebele, or Karanga, are the chief functionary and his sister. Daneel remarked on the control over the message the interpretation role carried.[4] The closest to Mwari is the female of the Soko group in charge of interpreting the messages, called "mbuya venyika", grandmother of the land.[5] Furthermore, the cult is non-centralized. Shrines

---

[1] M.L.Daneel, The God... (1970),pp.42-44; I.E. Cockroft, "The Mlimo", NADA (1972),p.86 seq.

[2] J.M. Schoffeleers, "An organization model of the Mwari shrines", paper presented at the University of Rhodesia, 30.vi.1973,p.5; And compare section E, chapter I above.

[3] Cf. J.A. Holleman, African Interlude, (1958),pp.7o,88.

[4] M.L. Daneel, The God... (1970),pp.43-45. and cf. P.Berlyn, "The keeper", NADA (1972) p.57, for a similar arrangement at the court of the mhondoro Nehoreka.

[5] M.L.Daneel, loc.cit. Schoffeleers, "The organization", p.3; And cf. Chitelwe, "Rain making" NADA (1954),p.25.

rise and decline in importance. Within shrines there may be a pattern of alternate succession to office between lineages of different origin. The Rozvi seem to be one of those groups, present in only some of the shrines.[1] As for the cult's communications with the provinces - they are dealt with below.

E. The operation of Rozvi communications

The techniques available to mambo officials were essentially those used all over the plateau.[2] The Rozvi royal drum is remembered as a revered object. Mambo used a big drum for summoning his subjects.[3] Tumbare, as leader of the army, was also in charge of the mobilization process. "The drum which used to sound at Thaba-ezinduna at the village of the court is called Ditiwe ... It used to sound in the month of June." "This drum used to be played by Tumbare himself. He was a servant of the Mambo." The same informant also mentioned the use of the mambo's gun in that context.[4] One of the officers of the mambo, Nijingwe, is praised as the keeper of the mambo's gun. He is also praised as the chooser of beautiful girls. This may refer either to lifting girls as tribute, or to a position of

---

1 Compare Daneel, The god (1970), pp.28, 31-33, 42-43; Cockroft "The Mlimo", NADA (1972), pp.83-93; Schoffeleers, op.cit., p.15.

2 See section F. of chapter I, above.

3 "The Abelozwi", Lukulube's statement, Insiza report, file A 3/18/28, NAR.

4 G.Fortune, "Rozvi text", NADA (1956) p.83. The gun may have been one of the four cannons of the mambo in the 19th c. See Mudenge, "The role" JAH (1974), p.378; and cf Fortune, "Rozvi text" NADA (1956), p.73; 2 cannons were found in Dhlo Dhlo : Marconnes, "The Rozvis", NADA (1933), p.81.

high prestige. Either way, the two major mobilizing instruments, the drum and the gun, were in the hands of prominent officials of the court. For the actual drumming, though there was no sound code for words and phrases, there were special functionaries in the court. They belonged to the same class as the messengers.[1] Another system mentioned is that mambo ordered his armies to be collected by whistling carried from one hilltop to another.[2] It may be that the whistling was done by instruments.

Transportation was probably one step ahead of the Mutapa area. The Butua oxen were praised already in 1572 for their size and strength. In the eighteenth century they were mentioned as beasts of burden in Rozvi land.[3] The Rozvi mambos are remembered by tradition as riding oxen. One version of their encounter with the Nguni invaders describes the mambo and his wives were then riding oxen from one of their zimbabwes to another. Riding oxen, however, seem to have been a valuable possession. The mambo's ox, like his gun, had a name of his own, by which

---

[1] Interview Munyira, Buhera, 4.ix.1973

[2] This was stated by Rozvi informants; report for Charter District, "The Abelozwi (Balozwi)", in file N 3/33/8 NAR; cf. P. Kirby, Musical instruments (1965) pp.94-96. Whistling was used in the 1896 rebellion for signalling. See report of Capt. Taylor, 26.vi.1896, in E.A.H. Alderson, "staff diary, 1896", HMss A1 1/1/1, NAR.

[3] Fr. Monclaro, "Relaçaõ", Theal, RSEA III, p.223. In the "Descripçao Corografica", cxz 17, AHU.

he is remembered.[1] A Rozvi informant claimed it was only the mambo and his machinda who rode oxen, while all the others walked.[2] There is another transportation means mentioned as the mambo is described riding a bamboo stretcher carried by his followers.[3] While oxen were used for riding in the whole of south and central Mashonaland, and Matabeleland, stretchers did not survive in the same form. They were used for transportation, especially for heavy cumbersome loads like iron ore.[4] Their use for carriage of rulers, though common in the north, seems to have been unique to the Rozvi. The oxen, however, provided the Rozvi with an important way of transporting foodstuffs from one point to another,[5] which their northern neighbours seem to have lacked. The hints at oxen being a privilege of rulers point to a possible later extension of the oxen riding into more utilitarian spheres. Stretchers called for extra personnel, and it is doubtful that they could have speeded up communication. Oxen were faster, but as some of the retinue were walking there is hardly anything they could add to delegations by way of efficiency. The only way in which oxen could substantially add to the efficiency of the communications machinery was by increasing the

---

1 Report for Gwelo, in file A 3/18/28 NAR; "Some Barozwi rode an oxen", wrote Narodzi in "The Barozwi", NADA (1924), p.90., "The name of Tinima's ox on which he rode was called 'Gumbo tungamira' (leading leg)".

2 "The person who used to ride on the ox was the mambo and this ox was called daswa. The mambo and his deputy would ride on the oxen while the other people of lesser importance would walk." Interview with Chikumu Ranga, Buhera, 31.viii.1973.

3 F.W.T. Posselt, Fact and fiction (1935), p.153; interview with Chief Chimombe's councillors. Buhera, 22.ix.1973, "The king used to be carried on a dara, something that looks like a bed."

4 Interview with Chief Chitsunge, Buhera, 21.ix.1973; talking of transporting mhangura (iron ore), "They used to build dara and they would get the people to carry the dara and then pay the people."

./.

carrying capacity of tribute paid to the centre.

The Rozvi demands from their lands were recognition of supremacy, and payment of tribute.[1] Their claim to being the only legitimate source of government in the land was emphasized in a way unparalleled in the Mutapa state. Communications techniques which varied little from those of the Mutapa, were put by Rozvi officials into different intensities of usage. The most conspicuous aspect of Rozvi rule was their right to appoint provincial rulers. Oral history tradition pointed to provincial rulers visiting the zimbabwes with their tribute to the Rozvi.[2] Nomination to office by the Rozvi is reported by people as far north-east of the Rozvi heartland, as the Nohwe of Mangwendi.[3] Over a range of several hundred miles, then, Rozvi power seems to have been effective enough to be the source of legitimacy. This power applies to dynasties established long before the Rozvi ruled the south, like the Hera rulers, and to dynasties established at about the same time, and apparently deriving their land from Rozvi power, like Chilimanzi.[4] It was further claimed that the mambo maintained a monopoly over all the gold mined in his lands.[5] Rozvi government, then, is seen as one with both titular and actual power

---

././.

5 E. Burke (ed.) The journals (1969), pp.201,221; J.S.Hatton, "Notes on Makalanga iron smelting" NADA (1967), p.39; Interview Chikumu Ranga, 31.viii.1973; Int. Taruwona Nyashanu, 1.ix.1973; It is clear from numerous accounts that oxen were used alongside human bearers.

1 Statement of Nyele, NC, Bulawayo, and statement of Nagwala, informants in Gwelo, in files A 3/18/28, NAR. F.W.T.Posselt, Fact,p.154; G. Fortune, "Rozvi text", NADA (1956),p.82.

2 K.R. Robinson, Khami, (1959),p.159.

see next page

over the provincial rulers under it. A network of contacts involving both officials of the zimbabwe going out, and rulers coming in, appears to have operated.

The nature of the sources on which our reconstruction relies is of significance. Most of the evidence on Rozvi government derives from oral histories, consistent on two points - the Rozvi were paramount, and they were the people going about the country giving the chieftainship. There are also two stories connected with the Rozvi mambos which are widely known on the Rhodesian plateau. One relates an unsuccessful attempt by a mambo to dig out and transfer a rock to his zimbabwe, to be his throne. A second story related how mambo ordered his people to build a wooden tower, in order to get to the moon. The attempt failed, many people were killed.[1] Despite the resemblance to biblical myths, they seem to be independent of such influences.[2] The mythical nature of these stories indicates relative antiquity.[3] Other parts of the Rozvi story are apparently undergoing change. Perhaps the most prominent of the changes in the story is that relating to Rozvi-Mutapa relations. Abraham claimed in his writings on the Mutapa that Mutota, the founder of the Mutapa state, is widely known all over Mashonaland.[4] However, informants asked

---

[3] W.Edwards, "The Wanoe", NADA (1926),p.28;

[4] Sr. M.Aquina, "The tribes of Chilimanzi..." NADA (1965) p.41; "History of the Bahera", in file A 3/18/28, NAR; Information at disposal of DC, Buhera, quoted to the writer.

[5] N.Sutherland-Harris, "Trade", p.258. ././.

about Mutota in Buhera were unable to identify the name. Munhumutapa is sometimes mentioned, as a son or son-in-law of the Rozvi.[1] In the early collected histories of the Rozvi, however, Muenemutapa is not mentioned once. Chief Chimombe, whose line used until recently the title "mambo", indeed stated: "Munhumutapa, long ago we did not know him...".[2] The Mutapa connection seems to be an intrusion into tradition, due to the identification of the Mutapa and the Rozvi states by historians. Its main bearing is on the determination of the origins of the Rozvi, but it is illustrative of the kind of change which tradition undergoes in the Shona world.

The paramouncy of the Rozvi is also one of the factors undergoing change in oral accounts. Statements in Selukwe and Gwelo of the Rozvi having been paramount there are in line with the old Rozvi centres nearby. When one applies the same principle to the Duma, Maungwe or Hera, hundreds of miles away, the permanence and duration of such an application must be questioned. Rhodesian mythology-makers, both black and white, spread the idea of Rozvi paramouncy.[3] The idea of a glorious ruling elite,

---

././.

1 W.H.Brown, On the South African, (1970), pp.259-60; E.L.Lloyd, "Mbava", in NADA, (1925), p.64: Int. Chikumu Ranga, 31.viii.73: "They tried to go into the sky to take the plate. That plate was the moon. Then the poles would get eaten up by the ants. They would then fall." Interview with Chief Chimombe's councillors, Buhera, 22.ix.1973: "Then they went back to Tikwiri. The chief asked the people to dig the Tikwiri so that it could be his seat. They failed to dig the mountain and so they left."; and compare with another well-known story - Interview with Chief Samuriwo, Chihota, 9.viii.1973, "They came from Gurumswa, in Tanganyika... In the north... When they approached the Zambezi river; they asked how they were going to cross the sea... their sister Mwenda was told to take off her front skin (nhembe) and beat the water with it... There was a road..."

2 See Van Warmelow's discussion of a similar problem in Venda history, in his introduction to Copper Miners (1940), pp.6 seq.

././.

offered many advantages for self-respect and the development of a black nationalist ideology.[4] The result was that text-books planted the idea of a Rozvi paramouncy which coincided almost exactly with the state of Rhodesia, the modern frame of reference for both black and white. New claims to have had relations with the Rozvi spread.[2] Accounts imply a huge state in which all rulers were subject to nomination by the Rozvi.[3] Traditions of various groups show, nevertheless, that not all provincial rulers were subject to Rozvi confirmation in office. And those who were, were not consistently so.

The problem lies with the significance of references, to specific instances of Rozvi intervention in provincial affairs. Such references are outstanding in some traditions as a deviation from the normal course of events. The Rozvi are remembered as having come when the Hera were already there. There is a mythical reference to their bringing with them fire, and some techniques, which were new to the Hera.[4] Such myths clearly refer to a superiority of the Rozvi, recognised by the Hera. Further instances of rela-

---

./.

[3] There seems to be little change in them in the last 70 years; Compare, for instance, the interview cited above with the Chimombe people, to the version in "The Abelozwi (Barozwi)", Charter District, in file N 3/33/8, NAR.

[4] D.P. Abraham, "Early...", Historians (1962) p.79, note 24.
——, Aquina, "the tribes of Chilimanzi" NADA (1965), p.41.
H. Gelfand, Shona ritual, (1959) pp.30-31; interview with Gadza, Buhera, 23.ix.1973; interview with Chikwerema Gidi, Buhera, 19.ix.1973.

[2] Interview with Chief Chimombe's councillors, Buhera, 22.ix.1973.

[3] O.N.Ransford, The rulers of Rhodesia (London; John Murray, 1968).

[4] T.O.Ranger, "Connexions between 'primary resistance' movements and modern mass nationalism in East and Central Africa", JAH, ix, no 3 pp.437-453, and no 4 pp.631-641.

[2] R.Howman, "The effects...", Rhodesiana (1957), pp.1-2../.

tions with the Rozvi are supplied very sparingly. It was when there were five brothers, sons of the Hera ruler who was either first or second in the remembered genealogy of the Hera. "They wanted to have real chieftainship", so they sent one of their number to the Rozvi in the Matopos. The envoy, a younger brother of the rightful heir, was appointed ruler by the Rozvi.[1] Then the Rozvi disappear from the Hera genealogies, to emerge as the official confirmers of Hera chiefs under Rhodesian rule.[2] It is evident that the relation of the voyage to the Rozvi centre by a Hera of the ruling house explains how a junior line received precedence over his seniors. Approval by the Rozvi is a sufficient and legitimate explanation for such an accession. It could be, therefore, that under normal circumstances a confirmation by the Rozvi was supplied in every instance of accession to the throne.[3] Specific case like the one above reflect rather the deviation from normal rules of succession. Or it could be that the Rozvi intervention, mentioned only sporadically, reflects the actual course of events.

7./.

Mudenge, "The role", JAH (1974), p.382.

F.W.T.Posselt, Fact and fiction (1955), pp.23-24; "The Bahera" in report of Charter district, file N 3/33/8 NAR; Interview with Chief Musarurwa, Nharira, 24.ix.1973.

---

1 "Family trees" collected by Mr.Chadambura, Aug.1971. Information quoted by DC Buhera to the writer;

2 There was one instance, during the reign of Matema, probably early in the 19th century, when a Rozvi army came and demanded tribute. See "The Bahera", file N 3/33/8 NAR.

3 Lloyd "Mbavha", NADA (1925), p.62.

The Njanja, relative late-comers to the Charter and Buhera districts, have a very similar story. Muroro, a Portuguese trader, fell ill while trading in the land of the vaera Shiri, neighbours of the Hera. He was treated by a daughter of the head of the vaera Shiri, who later bore him a son. The nephew/grandson (muzukuru) of the vaera/Shiri eventually usurped the government of the land when their ruler died. The story in this case relates how the Rozvi rulers knew the muzukuru, Muchena or Neshangwe, from previous visits to their court with the vaera Shiri ruler. When he came to report the death of the chief, he was installed as ruler of the land instead of his uncles, who were unknown to the Rozvi. Then Njanja tradition becomes a straightforward story of succession, without reference either to visits to the Rozvi, or to installation of chiefs by them. Later divisions of the Njanja into different polities is not related to Rozvi intervention. Like the Hera, under Rhodesian rule the Rozvi confirmed their rulers on accession.[1]

Chirimanzi was established according to tradition, as a muranda, servant, of the Rozvi. He won his name, Chirmuhanzu, the robe owner, due to a garment he had, which drew the attention of

---

[1] Interviews in Buhera with : Mr.S.Mhondoro, 20.ix.1973; Chapwanya Dengue, 20.ix.1973; T.Matsveru, 6.ix.1973; Dinga, 6.ix.1973; Chief Makumbe, 3.ix.1973; "Family Trees", compiled by Mr.B.T. Garwe: of Ruzengwe, the Svikoro of Makambe people; of Musasa of Dinga; and compare the account in D.L., Charter District, 10.ix.1964.

the mambo. He is described also as a craftsman serving the Rozvi.[1] Once he was installed, however, the Rozvi are mentioned in a general way as confirming rulers, not in relation to individual accessions. There is one case, however, where our knowledge rests on contemporary evidence. In the last decade of the eighteenth century a Manyika claimant to the throne, Inharungwe, invoked the name of Changamire to the Portuguese, as an excuse for his inability to take certain actions. H.Bhila claimed the whole affair seemed a bogey used by Inharungwe, and in reality the Chicanga authority was not dependent on Rozvi confirmation in office.[2] S. Mudenge, on the other hand, claimed Inharungwe was using Rozvi backing to support him in his unconstitutional claim to the Manyika government. Once that was achieved, his position was secure.[3] There is little doubt that some form of tribute was coming from Manyika to the Rozvi. However, this tribute was derived from the Portuguese traders at Manyika, who repeatedly tried during the eighteenth century to establish contacts with the Rozvi.[4] The "Corografica" asserted how real the threat of Tumbare's army looked in Manyika, but it did not refer to their actually being deployed there. Likewise, in Inharungwe's case, Rozvi delegates are not proven to have come. The Nohwe of Mangwendi had a Rozvi representative in their accessions, and the Maungwe had similar arrangements.[5] Maungwe

---

1 Sister M.Aquina, "The tribes of Chilimanzi", NADA (1965), pp. 41-42. Interview with Kanyowa, Epworth, 17.xi.1973.

2 H.H.K.Bhila, The Manyika and the Portuguese, 1575-1803, (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of London, 1973) pp.66-69.

3 S.Mudenge, The Rozvi empire (1973), pp. 148-149; and cf. the Hera case above.

4 "Descripçao Corografica", and cf. H.Bhila, op.cit., pp.58-65. and cf. similar attempts on the Zambezi. Letter of I. de Melo e Alvim, Tete, 9.ii.1769, "Inventario", Moçambique 80 (1954), p.128; also his letter of Sena 12.vii.1769, op.cit., 81 (1955), p.137, etc.

./.

is adjacent to Manyika, so there is no reason why intermittent contact could not be maintained. The Inharungwe case, whether or not the Rozvi did confirm him in office, is in itself proof of the strength of the Rozvi prestige and power. Nearer home than Manyika, the Chihota people, who branched off the Manyika in the eighteenth century, did receive Rozvi confirmation. The people of Samuriwo, their neighbours, claim the same, but Nenguwo deny ever having the Rozvi take part in their government.[1]

The house of Gwangwava, of Charter District, was mentioned by the Samuriwo people as their crowner of rulers. Likewise, they are remembered as the Rozvi who gave Nyashanu the chieftainship.[2] This raises the problem of what D.N.Beach called the "provincial"Rozvi. Beach claimed the Gwanwava Rozvi acted as an intermediate grade between provincial rulers and the Rozvi centres in Matabeleland.[3] It is true that they claim to have intervened in the Muroro case, thus causing the later Njanja take-over.[4] Other informants, however, claim it was the Rozvi of Mabwendziva who intervened.[5] The fact that 'provincial Rozvi seem to have got there as a result of unsuccessful attempts to usurp the mambo throne points to potential hostility, rather than co-operation.

./.

5 W.Edwards, "The Wanoe" NADA (1926),pp.13, 14, 28; D.P.Abraham, "Maungwe", NADA (1951), pp.63-64.

1 "History of Shihota", "History of Samuriwo" in file N3/33/8, NAR; "History of the Samuriwo people as recounted to the DC. by the chief and his advisers" (1972), unpublished ms; but cf. R.Howman, "The effects", Rhodesiana (1957), pp.1-2; also Interview with Gwata, Chihota, 15.viii.1973.

2 "History of Samuriwo", unpublished ms. Interview with Chief Musaururwa, Nharira, 24.ix.1973.

3 D.N.Beach, The rising in South Western Mashonaland, 1896-7, (Unpublished Ph.D.thesis, Univ. of London, 1971) pp.61-3.

4 DL Charter, 1964; Interview with M.Nembawari, 21.ix.1973,Buhera.

./.

So the arrival of Gwangwava at Nharira is attributed to a competition in magic prowess between him and his brother. Such competitions, it was seen, stand in myth for attempts to take over government.[1] The Chireya house of Shangwe, another group of provincial Rozvi, is recorded by contemporary evidence in 1784 as rebelling against the mambo, their origin is also in strife with the Rozvi centre.[2]

There is no doubt that the Rozvi were recognised as the source of legitimacy for rulers over a wide area. Some dynasties were established on the land by the mambo.[3] Others turned to the mambo when succession disputes broke out.[4] Traditions do not mention a change after the Rozvi were dispersed; installation in office is described as a continuous feature of the life of polities.[5]

Rozvi history underwent a traumatic change between the days of Rozvi power in the Khami culture area, and the recording of their traditions. The Rozvi were defeated by two consecutive waves of Nguni invaders and ousted from their central area. Then they held on until the middle of the nineteenth century as a power to be reckoned with, until the final victory of the Ndebele

---

./.

5 Interview with Chief Chitsunge, 21.ix.1973; Interview with S. Mhondoro, Buhera, 20.ix.1973.

1 Interview with Chief Musarurwa, Nharira, 24.ix.1973, and cf. NAR HMs BE 8/10/3, Benzies, "Brief notes".

2 S.Mudenge, The Rozvi empire (1973), p.155, and cf. D.M.Coley, "The fate of the last Bashankwe chief", NADA (1927), pp.65-6. The name Shankwe was given to them by the Rozvi of Mambo, meaning: "a person who lives alone & apart from his fellow beings." History of Sebungwe, file A 3/18/28, NAR.

3 The tribes of Chilimanzi are one such example. See Aquina, "The tribes of Chilimanzi", p.42; "History of Shihota's people" in file N 3/33/8, NAR; "History of the Njanja", in file N 3/33/8, NAR.

4 Sometimes, however, the initiative came from the Rozvi themselves, who called members of provincial ruling families "to settle a dispute" and then disposed of them. See H. von Sicard, "Shaka and the north", African Studies, 14.4 (1955), p.152. ./.

over the Rozvi ruler Chibambamu.[1] From a state centred in Matabeleland, they turned into a few groups, scattered all over the plateau.[2] The Duma, in whose history the Rozvi appear only occasionally, received a Rozvi contingent in their midst.[3] The Hera who once went to 'Matopos', to the Rozvi zimbabwe, had now a Rozvi house, with the title of mambo, among them. Furthermore, they had Tumbare, the chief Rozvi minister, and Foto, the "decorator", or official responsible for crowning, settled amont them too.[4] The Mbire of Swoswe near Wedza mountain, who once sent a woman to the Rozvi, according to tradition, to receive the insignia of rulers, now had a Rozvi royal house in their midst.[5] The disappearance of the Rozvi centre brought about the establishment of Rozvi groups in the provinces. With an old established claim to confirmation of rulers, they were more available than ever before. In some cases, they were probably more powerful, in the provinces, as residents, than before.[6] That prominent shift in political geography brought the central elite into the provinces. Zimbabwe rulers became provincial rulers, in some cases inferior in power to their neighbours. Their proximity made them both partners for marriage, and an easy source of legitimacy for local rulers to call upon. It is possible, therefore, that although

---

./.

[5] F.W.T. Posselt, Fact and fiction (1935), pp.155-6. In some cases, when disputes arise these days between government appointments and traditional custom the Rozvi presence in an installation ceremony is the criterion for legitimacy. Chief Nerutanga (Interviewee Buhera, 3.ix.1973) said:"... there was no muRozvi at this installation". For him, therefore, the chief was not the 'real' chief; "There was no one who was called chief when he was not given the chieftainship by the Rozvi", Int. Chief Mudzimurema, Chihota, 10.viii.73.

[1] The story of the defeat of Chibambam is told by Leask in J.P.R. Wallis (ed.), Southern African diaries, of Thomas Leask (London; Chatto & Windus, 1954), pp.100-102; cf. "History of

./.

Rozvi claims to paramouncy were widely recognised. The implementation of the claims became more intensive with their dispersal.

Installation in office involved expression of loyalty, accompanied by material tribute. When talking in general about Rozvi installation of subject rulers, the presents handed over are described ~~to them~~ as "cattle", without reference to quantities.[1] There was an incentive, then, for the Rozvi to perform installations in office. If presents were only two heads of cattle, as in this century,[2] it might not have been worth a trip of hundreds of miles in pre-dispersal days. The ability of the Rozvi to change the colour of cattle, related by tradition,[3] is related to the rufimbi institution. Rufimbi was the quite respected occupation of stealing cattle by magical means.[4] Its relation to the Rozvi might be tradition's way of saying that the Rozvi were great collectors of cattle.[5] Whatever the reward, the Rozvi delegate would formally install the new incumbent: "I am Nerwandi. Today you, Chibanda, are appointed Mangwandi, the chief of Noe. According to our old custom I put the Chiremba (crown) upon your head. Take care of that which has been given to you today, be just to your people and all will salute you."[6]

././.
Selukwe" in file A 3/18/28, NAR; "The Abelozai" in "History of Insiza", op.cit.

2 See D.N.Beach, "Ndebele raiders and Shona power", JAH XV, 4 (1974), pp.635-637.

3 R. Mutetwa "The rise" (1973), p.21.

4 Information supplied by Mr.Bickersteth, DC. Buhera, from files available to him; DL Charter, 1964. (The writer was on his way to interview the Tumbare people when his car broke down.) "History of Samuriwo", Mss, (1972).

5 These are the Rozvi of Rhozhani. DL Charter, 1964. Compare F.W.T.Posselt, Fact and fiction (1935), p.35. "History of Swoswe", in file N 3/33/8, NAR.

6 In 1929 the people of Bikita were still complaining of the inclusion of some other chiefs' villages in the Rozvi domain. NC Bikita to Actg Supt. of Natives, 27.vi.1929, in file S 235/435, NAR; cf. Robinson, "History of Bikita", NADA (1957), pp.79-80.

The emblems of office vary in different accounts. However, it is possible that the Rozvi envoy himself was carrying some kind of emblem, like Mutapa 'Mutumes'.[1] They communicated visibly Rozvi affirmation of rulers by presenting them with a Chiremba to put on their heads.[2] Ndoro shells, a typical elite insignia of the Mutapa;[3] or a tsvimbo (club) which was normally the emblem of office of a messenger.[4]

In sum, installation in office was done by Rozvi delegates. The delegates, called vanyai or varanda, are reminiscent of the Mutapa "munyais". The presence of provincial Rozvi houses, which at least in Sebungwe, Nharira and Maungwe precedes the Rozvi dispersal, makes the range of the Vanyai unclear. It may be, too, that the 19th century dispersal, made Rozvi presence in ceremonies more intensive. The problem hinges on Rozvi information about the provinces. Their installing delegate always followed a message brought from the provinces.[5] There are indications that, like Mutapa vanyai, Rozvi vanyai were operating in the provinces. One of the most widely spread stories relates how the Rozvi were going about the country visiting people. When they would see a pretty girl, the story goes, the Rozvi would drop some hair into the water given to them to drink

---

././. 1
Interviews: Chief Mudzimurema, 10.viii.1973, Chihota; Machokoto Mungani, Chihota, 11.viii.1973; Chikumu Ranga, 31.viii.1973, Buhera.

2 Interview with Mr. Gidi, Buhera, 19.ix.1973: "... when chief Gutu was installed...my father installed chief Gutu... he came here with a cow and a calf."

3 Source undisclosed. Reference with author, and of their general magical attributes, in Conceiçao, "Tratado", Chronista II (1867), p.106; Fortune, "Rozvi text", NADA (1965),p.81; Int. chief Musarurwa, Nharira, 24.ix.1973.

4 See E.G. Howman, "Rufimbi" NADA (1950) pp.31-33. Compare K. Fairbridge, The story of Kingsley Fairbridge (Oxford Univ. Press, 1938) pp.36-37.

././.

from, and claim an attempt to bewitch them had been committed. As a compensation they would ask for the pretty girls to be given to them.[1] It indicates quite clearly that the Rozvi normally came to the provinces. They were able to extract presents in the form of girls, the most important form of wealth in Shona society besides cattle. And they had some powerful sanction which enabled them to claim such tribute. The title of one of the mambo's officials, "chooser of pretty girls", may have something to do with it.[2] The claim that the Rozvi had not a permanent location, and were roaming the country, may reflect vanyai activities.[3]

The Rozvi vanyai, as apparent from the above, were moving in the country partly at least for collection of tribute. Early statements accompanied the words "the Rozvi were the paramounts" before the Nguni came, with the assertion "everybody paid tribute to the Rozvi."[4] But, in 1973, informants, Rozvi and non-Rozvi, were adamant that no tribute was paid to the Rozvi.[5] In 1973, taxation had already several decades of bitter memories among the Africans in Rhodesia. People seem to be wary of admitting to having paid tribute in days which are often described as a golden-age.[6] Furthermore, research in the 1970s follows the collection of the material for the 'Delimitation Reports' of the Rhodesian Ministry of Internal Affairs. That effort was aimed at establishing relative rights to land and seniority. It may be that people, following these enquiries, were cautious of supplying a precedent for taxation. Women were of prime importance in the Shona economy and social system. The Rozvi had the same

././.

5 Two interesting examples of mythization of recent events by the Shona are included in the writer's interviews. One relates the moving of the DC's office of Buhera, from Domborevazungu to its present location, to the intervention of supernatural forces. This mythization of rulers' deeds; which happened during the

././.

cultural frame of reference as the Mutapa. Gathering girls, then, is a clear act of tribute collection. The ability of the mambo to reward his servants with wives,[1] may have been based on the girls gathered at the court as tribute. Sanctions imposed by the Rozvi for disobedience, were fines, in the form of two girls per subject polity.[2] Cattle also feature prominently as one of the items passed from subject rulers to the mambo. The reply to the question - 'have you ever given any presents to the Rozvi?' - was generally negative, accompanied by the statement that the Rozvi officials, in installation of chiefs, were presented with some livestock.[3] The praises of some of the Rozvi officials are in terms of their wealth in cattle.[4] Names of the Rozvi mambos may point to their fame as cattle owners.[5] In the rare accounts of a raid by the Rozvi army of a subject ruler, cattle and women are described as the booty taken.[6] Bearing in mind the Rozvi's

---

././.
narrator's lifetime - emphasizes the process concerning the past Rozvi rulers. Interviews in Buhera with - Chief Makumbe, 3.ix.73; M.Magarasadza, 20.ix.73.

[6] Edwards, "The Wanoe" NADA (1926) p.23.

---

[1] Int. Chief Samuriwo, Chihota, 9.viii.73. Int. Magwaza, 8.viii.73. Int. Mudzimurema, 10.viii.73.

[2] Edwards, oc.cit; Int. Mudzimurema, 10.viii.73;

[3] Int.Machukoto Mungani, Chihota, 11.viii.73; and cf. Dos Santos, "Ethiopia" Theal, RSEA, VII, p.289;

[4] Int. Chikuma Ranga, Buhera, 31.viii.73 :"It was just a stick (tswimbo) and when it was given away - then it becomes a sceptre...".

[5] Abraham,"Maungwe", NADA (1951), pp.63,65; Int. Chief Mudzimurema 10.viii.73; Int. Chikumu Ranga, 11.viii.73.

---

[1] Interview with Gadza, Buhera, 23.ix.1973; Interview with Chief Chimombe's councillors, Buhera, 22.ix.1973.

[2] Kumile "Three Kalanga", NADA (1975),p.186.

[3] Posselt, Fact and fiction (1935),p.153; Int. Chikumu Ranga, Buhera, 31.viii.73.

[4] See, statements of Nyele and Nagwala, NC Bulawayo report, file A 3/18/28; "History of Selukwe", file A 3/18/28. ././.

description as ruled by a "herdsman" by the Portuguese,[1] the evidence points very strongly to cattle being one of the mainstays of Rozvi wealth, as well as an important item on their tribute list. The renowned riches of Butua in cattle, and the obvious reliance of Khami,[2] one of its centres, on cattle and hunting, support this prominence of cattle.

Cattle and women were relatively easy to transport to the zimbabwe. However, other items are also remembered by present day informants. In Bikita, mealies, cattle and beads were mentioned as items of tribute. The presents sent to Mwari by the Rozvi, probably reflecting what they received as tribute, are listed as beads, cloth, hoes and gold. The Hera and Njanja were said to have paid their tribute in iron implements. The Humbe and Lilima were said to have paid their tribute with pottery, made in the Rozvi zimbabwe.[3] Gold is rarely mentioned.[4] Ivory is better remembered, ~~but~~ its importance, evident in the accounts about mambo's zimbabwe built with ivory steps leading up the

---

./.

5 Only presents were given on installation of rulers. Interview with Chikumu Ranga, Buhera, 31.viii.1973; Chief Mudzimurema, Chikota, 10.viii.1973.

6 Interview with Mushonga, Chihota, 8.viii.1973: "The land inspectors had not invaded the place ; we were able to find plenty of fruit in the forests... There was no hunger..."

1 History of Gwelo, in file A 3/18/28; F.W.T.Posselt, Fact and fiction (1935),p.154.

2 Int. Mr.Gadza, Buhera, 23.ix.73.

3 Interview with Magwaza, 8.viii.1973; Interview with Chief Mudzimurema, 10.viii.1973.

4 S.M.Kumile, "Three Kalanga", NADA (1975), pp.185-86. ; compare to the discussion of"Rufimbi" above.

5 Chirisamhuru, for instance, means a calf herd. When the Rozvi of Buhera gave up the title Mambo because of the death of some incumbents, the name Chimombe - that of cattle - was chosen instead.

./.

hill.[1] The name of one of the Rozvi zimbabwes, Manyanga, tusks, points to a similar connection between the Rozvi centre and ivory. There is also some evidence of ivory having been stored in Khami.[2]

Rozvi demands on their periphery are thus described in two different patterns. Portuguese contemporary accounts describe a monopoly of the mambo over gold trade.[3] Early oral evidence points to tribute in cattle, in girls, ivory and other items. The present claims, non-payment of tribute to the Rozvi, point to a probable past pattern. The unspecified "tribute" described by the early tradition collections may well be the same as the presents, mentioned recently. The statement that tribute was not paid annually, but once in every few years, leads to the same conclusion.[4] The once-in-a-few-years tribute could well be the presents given to the Rozvi delegates at installation ceremonies.

The Njanja story is illustrative of Rozvi administration processes. Most of its versions relate periodical visits by the Chirwa ruler of Charter district to the Rozvi zimbabwe.[5] The story serves, as mentioned above, the function of historically

---

./.

6 In a raid on a group near the Zambezi, with the Rozvi army under Tumbare, the cattle and girls of "Hele" were taken. History of Gwelo, in file A 3/18/28, NAR .

1 Conceiçao "Tratado" Chronista II (1867) p.105

2 See section B of the present chapter.

3 K.Robinson, "History of Bikita", NADA (1957),p.80; G. Fortune, "Rozvi text", NADA (1965), p.24.Posselt, Fact and fiction (1935),p.24; K.Robinson, Khami, (1959),p.161.

4 Early in this century gold was still remembered as traded by the Rozvi. See "History of Selukwe" in file A 3/18/28, NAR. Gold tribute is mentioned also in the context of Kalanga praise-poem of Kumile. The writer's research area, however, is one where even pre-Rozvi elites were clearly relying on resources other than gold. (cf.R.Summers, Ancient mining(1959),pp.140.

1 F.W.T.Posselt, Fact and fiction (1935),p.143; Interview with Mr.Mungani, Chihota, 11.viii.1973. ./.

explaining the usurpation of Chirwa's land by the Njanja. Yet other Shona traditions are not shy of mentioning outright wars and feuds as causing similar usurpations.[1] It seems, therefore, that the Njanja story is more than a metaphoric reference, to recognition by the Rozvi of a political change in the land of Chirwa. A reality of visits by provincial rulers to the zimbabwe may be reflected in it. Genealogical evidence points to the early eighteenth century as the presumed date of the Njanja ascent to power.[2] This corresponds to the days of Rozvi glory, when they could send an army of two thousand men as far as Zumbo, then were able to eliminate that force completely, for disobeying mambo's orders.[3] The traditions collected by Robinson, of subject rulers coming with tribute to the Rozvi zimbabwe, may point to the same pattern.[4] The dearth of such stories possibly means these were intermittent affairs, not a regular annual parade of subject chiefs in the zimbabwe. Most such visits would have been those of sons or brothers of a departed ruler, coming to report ~~the death~~ his death.[5]

./.

2 R.Summers, Ancient ruins (1971)p.206.

3 An anonymous document, cited by Sutherland-Harris, "Trade", in Gray and Birmingham Pre-colonial (1970),p.258.

4 Nagwala stated, "The only indication of sovereignty was the exaction of tribute. The tribute was not paid annually but every few years", in file A 3/18/28,NAR. H.Mungani, interviewed Chihota, 11.viii.1973, said "They did not send them every year".

5 Interviews: Chief Chitsunge, 21.ix.73; Chapwanga Denye, 20.ix.73; Shonihwa Mhondoro, 20.ix.73.

1 Interview with Chidumi, Buhera, 2.ix.1973, for the Zimutu people; Interview with Furamera, Chihota, 17.viii.1973, for the Chihota people. For a claimed peaceful transition, see H. Franklin, "Nyaningwe", NADA, 1928, p.81; Honyera, however, in "The story of the Masunda headmanship", NADA (1964),p.55, said there was a fight.

2 H.E.Summer, "Notes on the Njanja people of Charter District", NAR HMs, accession no.1220; J.M.Mackenzie, "A pre-colonial...", NADA (1975) p.203.

3 A.Lobato, Evolução (1957),pp.113-14,116. ././.

There was a sanction on neglect of that duty. The Chirwa people apparently defied the Rozvi on this point, and had to fortify themselves against reprisals.[1] In areas not far from Rozvi centres, therefore, attendance in court of delegates followed the death of a ruler. Like the Mutapa, there could be no audience with the ruler without a present.[2] The tribute of the Rozvi was probably largely brought on such occasions. This is probably true of items like hoes, axes, ivory, and skins, mentioned above.[3] Indeed, ivory was said to have been sent to the Rozvi, with provincial envoys.[4] Bikita traditions of grain tribute again [5] present the problem of transport. Oxen were used for carriage but at the same time carriage on the head, and on dara (stretcher) was employed.[6] It may be significant that in Bikita, like in Teve of Dos Santos, there was a nearby ~~Rozvi~~ centre.[7] As the Rozvi of Bikita came there in the nineteenth century, [8], the grain tribute probably

---

./.

4 K.R.Robinson, Khami, (1959),p.159. There are some rulers specifically remembered for having visited the Rozvi, like Kutuma, the third Maromo who is said to have died while on a visit to the Rozvi zimbabwe "at Bulawayo". See History of Maromo people, Charter District, in file N 3/33/8, NAR.

5 Abraham "Maungwe" NADA (1951) pp. 63,65. Int. Gadza, Buhera, 23.ix.73.

1 Int. Mr. Gadza, Buhera, 23.ix.73; Int.Chief Musarurwa, Nharira, 24.ix.73

2 M. Aquina, "The tribes of Chilimanzi..." NADA (1965),p.43

3 Posselt, Fact and fiction (1935),p.156; Robinson, Khami (1959), p.164; idem. "History of Bikita" NADA (1957) p.80,etc.

4 Int. Chief Mudzimurema, Chihota, 10.viii.73.

5 Robinson "History of Bikita" NADA (1957),p.80.

6 Interviews: Chikumu Ranga, Buhera, 31.viii.73; Taruwona Nyashanu, 1.ix.73; Chidumi, 2.ix.73; Munyira, 4.ix.73,etc. Fortune, "Rozvi text" NADA (1956),p.84: "they were travelling with sacks for goats, which used to travel carrying beans and kaffir corn"...

7 Dos Santos, "Ethiopia", Theal, RSEA VII,p.222; Robinson, loc.cit.

8 Beach, "Ndebele Raiders" JAH (1975)pp 635 et seq.

relates to this period. Grain was, therefore, probably, brought in from areas adjacent to the Rozvi. The iron tribute of the Hera and Njanja[1] probably relates to the Rozvi of Gwangwava in Nharira. The food supplied by the mambo to visitors,[2] like the Mutapa's entertainment of delegates, probably derived from such close-range tribute.

Gold, for which Butua was famous, produced a claim for a Rozvi monopoly over it.[3] However, Butua was equally famous for its cattle, and the Rozvi remembered association to cattle was discussed above. There is no need to reiterate here Mudenge's conclusive argument, showing there could not have been such a tight control over gold production.[4] Gold mines, however, had to be reported to the ruler. Failure to do so brought severe penalty by Rozvi "munhaes".[5] This is exactly what was happening in the Mutapa.[6] The Rozvi, then, punished subjects for failure to keep them informed of crucial matters like the death of rulers, or the discovery of mines. Their vanyai seem to have been active more intensively than Mutapa vanyai, and their control of information probably stronger. Also, the Rozvi had the important advantage of being centred in the gold mining areas. A re-

---

1 Posselt, Fact and fiction (1935),p.24.

2 Posselt, op.cit., p.152; Int. Gadza, Buhera, 23.ix.73.

3 N. Sutherland-Harris "Trade" in Gray & Birmingham (eds) Pre-colonial (1970),p.258; based on letter of M. da Costa, 13.iii.1769, "Inventario" Moçambique 84 (1955),pp.90-97; and on other records.

4 Mudenge, "The role", JAH, (1974),pp. 384-387.

5 Letter of Costa, 13.iii.1769, "Inventario", Moçambique 84 (1955),p.92.

6 Dos Santos, op.cit., p.280.

volt of a chief like Chireya, like that of 1784[1] could disrupt trade, but not gold production. The shift of the centre to the later zimbabwes of Dhlo Dhlo and Naletali, further to the north-east than Khami, must have facilitated overseeing the mining areas.

In essence, then, Mutapa and Rozvi contacts with their periphery were much alike. However, the Mutapa were controlling a much smaller area. By the time vanyai appeared in their administration, their state was already small. The Rozvi vanyai were probably influenced in their movements by occurences of accession ceremonies. Shona chiefs tending to be old, this was not infrequent. If the death of a chief was not reported, it was claimed, Tumbare would be sent, with Deka/Foto, the "decorator" of rulers, to enquire into the matter. They would camp outside the village of the ruler of the polity involved, and beat their drum. When the people of the village would come forth, a fine would be demanded for the failure to call upon the Rozvi to bestow the insignia on the new ruler.[2] There is disagreement as to the mambo's part in such excursions from the zimbabwe.[3]

The visiting officials were backed by two sanctions. First,

---

[1] Sutherland-Harris, op.cit., p.257

[2] Interview with Gadza, 23.ix.1973: "The Rozvi group would be about ten people, including Deka, Mupamanca, Chihunduru, Tumbare, and Mavhudzi. These people would not go into the village. They will start playing their drums outside the village. The people in the village would know why. They would come out and they then will be charged and they will produce two girls for the mambo"; Gadza, however, stated only Deka and Mupamanga were vanyai; while Tumbare was mukuru (important man), Int. 23.ix.72.

[3] Posselt claims the mambo travelled far and wide. Traditions supplied by Robinson claim that he rarely left his zimhabwe; see F.W.T.Posselt, Fact and fiction (1935), p.153; K. Robinson, Khami, (1959), p.162. Interview with Chief Chimombe's councillors, 22.ix.1973: "He never used to go anywhere himself; he used to send his messengers."

there was the installation by the Rozvi. That, however, would carry less weight in times of orderly succession in the provincial courts. For cases where legal sanction failed to work, or when officials failed to extract tribute, armies invaded the disobedient territories. Specific instances of armed intervention are not numerous. In 1714, a Rozvi army of 2,000 was reported annihilated by the mambo for robbing vazungu traders.[1] A Rozvi raid on the Shangwe is remembered, following a hostile reception to some officials sent there by the mambo. An abortive campaign against Chibi is mentioned as the instance of the death of the hated mambo Rupengo.[2] The Duma refer to a Rozvi army early in their history, which decided a succession dispute.[3] In Marandellas district, punitive expedition punished the Hera for failure to pay tribute, and took cattle.[4] These instances are remembered as outstanding events. This may be one of the reasons for the claims that the Rozvi never fought, and had no army. On the other hand, the campaigns are demonstrative that there was occasional resistance to central demands.[5]

The armies which backed Rozvi administrators were probably

---

[1] A.Lobato, Evaluçao, (1957), pp.113-114.

[2] F.W.T. Posselt, op.cit.pp.145-46.

[3] R.Mtetwa "The rise" (1973) p.7.

[4] "History of the Bahera", Charter District, in file N 3/33/8, NAR. And cf. letter of Costa, in Moçambique (1955) cited above.

[5] Interview with Shonhiwa Mhondoro, Buhera, 20.ix.1973. "The name Nharira comes from the watch-tower where people used to watch for the enemy... It was a muRozvi from madweadziva, and Mbiru, a muhera..." - These were the Chirwa people, of Vaera/Shiri, who later had their rulership transferred to the Njanja.

smaller than parallel armies in the northern sphere. The army sent to Zumbo in 1714 numbered 2,000. It is claimed to have been annihilated, which must have called for a second army, of about the same order of number.[1] Armies of that size could have easily been recruited in the central area of the Rozvi. Tiny Manyika was able to put larger numbers in the field.[2] The armies of the Dombo campaigns as well as the expeditionary force to Zumbo of 1780, again did not transcend 5,000 soldiers.[3] Tumbare, chief Rozvi commander, had a mountain near the Rozvi zimbabwe, it is clear he had his own dunhu, or perhaps nyika in the central area.[4] With each of the officials supplying even a few hundred men, Rozvi armies need not have called further afield for recruitment. Since their early campaigns, the Rozvi enjoyed a reputation as warriors which caused people north of their state to tremble at the mention of their name.[5] Rozvi armies, like all other armies of the Shona world, were seasonal affairs. When the army was called, Tumbare beat his drum, the mambo fired his gun, or whistling from hill tops passed the recruitment message.[6] Apparently, when the message reached the villages,

---

1 A. Lobato, Evoluçao (1957),pp.113-114.

2 A. Guerreiro, "Inquerito", Studia (1960),p.14.

3 Mudenge, "The role" JAH (1974),p.380.

4 Compare to the old title of sagomo (mountain-keeper), a title given by a ruler to an officer put in charge of a mountain stronghold and its environs. Holleman, "Accomodating the spirit amongst some North Eastern shona tribes", Rhodes Livingstone Paper, no.22 (Oxford Univ.Press, 1953), p.viii.

5 Conceiçao, op.cit.,p.41. Report by Andrade, 1789, quoted in Abraham, "Mononotapa dynasty" NADA (1959),p.75; cf.Mudenge, "The role" JAH (1974),p.377.

6 "The Abalozwi", Insiza Report, in file A 3/18/28, NAR, Fortune "Rozvi text" NADA (1956),p.78.

criers went shouting "fill your bags with food".[1] This is a clear indication that Rozvi armies were not supplied from any central stores, but provided their own food. Armies were sent as far away as Zumbo on the one hand, and into present-day Botswana on the other hand. Other armies went into the Zambezi valley, and Marandellas and the Duma country.[2] At least during the campaigns of Changamire Dombo there were women accompanying the Rozvi army. It was said to have been the custom of the land.[3] That female contingent could have acted as a carrier corps, or for helping in gathering food.

The social context of unofficial communication was already described in the discussion of the Mutapa state. There were the bards, mbira players, who were found in southern areas just like in the north.[4] There were the vasambadzi whose role was more limited in southern parts than in the north. The well-known trade-route of Zumbo was thoroughly studied by S.Mudenge. The pattern of trade, with the traders setting out towards the end of the dry season, and returning a year or more later with the gold of Butua, is clearly established.[5] The relations of the Rozvi country

---

1 F.W.T.Posselt, op.cit., p.156.

2 A.Lobato, Evolução, (1957),pp.113-14; F.W.T. Posselt op.cit., pp.145-46; "History of Gwelo ", in file A 3/18/28 NAR; "History of the Bahera", in file N 3/33/8, NAR; R.Mtetwa, "The rise",(1973) p.7; Mudenge, "The role", JAH (1974),pp.380-381.

3 Conceiçao, "Tratado", Chronista II (1867),p.105.

4 E.E.Burke, The Journals,(1969),p.183. Posselt described how the mambo was preceded by Mbira players on his travels, in Fact and fiction, (1935),p.153. J.F.Holleman, African interlude, (1958) p.259; Wallis (ed.) Southern African (1954),p.115.

5 Sutherland-Harris, op.cit., pp.257 et seq; Mudenge, "The role" JAH (1974), 386,et seq.

with other trade centres is, however far from being clear. On at least one occasion in the 16th century, Butua had exported oxen to the Sena area.[1] It was claimed that traders from Butua frequented the fairs of the Teve-Manyika area.[2] There is no noticeable growth in the trade of Sofala in the eighteenth century. The Duma used to follow the trade route eastwards, to the island of Chiloane, which replaced Sofala. It is difficult to tell, though, what period are they referring to.[3] The Fort Victoria area was frequented by vazungu traders in 1872, coming from the north.[4] The people of Buhera and Marandellas point east and claim to have traded with Sena in ivory before the whites came.[5] Here again, it is impossible to tell how far back these patterns go. Newitt suggested that Butua traded with the coast via the Sabi-Lundi road.[6]

The distance to Butua is greater than for most of the northern areas. Except for the single recorded occasion of 1644, no sertanejo with firearms penetrated into Butua. The impact of the vazungu traders was, therefore, smaller than that of their colleagues in the north. The influential Mwenye, Muslim commu-

---

1 Fr. Monclaro, "Relaçao" Theal RSEA, III, p.223.

2 A. Gomes, "Viagem" Studia (1959), p.196; "Descripçao Corografica" Cxa 17, AHU. M. Newitt, Portuguese, (1972), pp.52-53.

3 R. Mtetwa, "The rise" (1972), p.22.

4 E.E. Burke, The journals (1969), p.222-24.

5 Interviews in Chihota with Machokoto Mungani, 11.viii.1973; Chief Nyandoro, viii.1973. Interviews in Buhera with Chingumbu, 30.viii.1973; Mazengi, 31.viii.1973.

6 M.D.D. Newitt, Portuguese (1972), pp.52-53.

nity of Butua was prominent in the land until 1644. They were expelled, according to the Portuguese, when the ruler of Butua discovered they hid the existence of the Portuguese from him.[1] This seems exaggerated but perhaps indicative of the isolation of Butua from the Portuguese. In the nineteenth century there were only sorry remnants of the mwenye in the lands of the Shona, many of them claiming Venda descent. They were no longer linked with external trade. With the rising to power of Changamire, white men were prohibited from entering Butua.[2] The vassambadzi were apparently well settled into local life, as they managed to acquire large herds of cattle.[3] While creating local mobilization, they were less effective as agents of coastal-Portuguese culture than the sertanejos. Also, upheavals could cause stoppages of trade.[4]

Internal trade was, as in other areas of the plateau, an important agent of contact between people. The most important manufactured item of the Shona economy, crucial to the maintenance of agriculture, the hoe, was also necessary for mining; in the same category were axes and spears. Some of the most conspicuous ore deposits were on mount Wedza, which supplied the needs

---

1 A. Gomes, "Viagem...", Studia (1959), p.197; H. von Sicard, "A proposito", Studia (1965) p.183.

2 I. Caetano Xavier, "Noticias dos Domínios Portugueses na costa da Africa Oriental, 1758", in Andrade, Relaçoês (1955), p.169.

3 Letter of M. da Costa, 13.iii.1769. "Inventario", Moçambique, 84 (1955), p.94.

4 Letters of I. de Melo e Alvim, 4.ii.1769, in op.cit., 80 (1954), pp.126-130, etc.

first of the Hera, then of the Njanja and the Mbire/Swoswe people.[1] The Njanja developed an expanding trade network in iron implements which extended far south and west.[2] They had to travel for their ore, into the Mbire controlled Wedza area. The Hera, once pushed south by the Njanja, had to go for ore to Wedza. On the other hand, salt, another sought-after commodity, was produced in surplus in some areas. The lower Sabi valley had many such places. In Fort Victoria area there was another salt-producing area. The Makari-Kari pans of the Kalahari may well have been used by the people of the Kalanga area.[3] Copper was in great demand for ornaments, and copper ornaments were retailed by the Lemba in some areas.[4] The main copper deposits were those of the Sabi in the east, and of Sinoia in the north-west. Clay was also a commodity for which people travelled, although on a more limited scale. The ascendance of the Njanja in the nineteenth century, and probably earlier, as great retailers of iron implements is evident in the dispersal of the Njanja type mbira, or hand piano. For other commodities, and the groups who bartered them it is extremely difficult to nail down their network of contacts, and the periods in which

---

1 H.A.Chilvers, "Master armourers of the impi", Sunday Mail, (Johannesburg), 16.iii.1930; C.C.Chivanda, "The Mashona rebellion in oral tradition: Mazoe District", History Honours Seminar paper, Dept. of History, Univ. College of Rhodesia, 23.vi.1966,p.3. H.E.Sumner, "Notes...", HMs,no.1220,NAR; Interview with Madzivanyika, Chihota,22.viii.1973.

2 H.Tracy, "Mbira", African Music (1968),pp.88-93. See J. Mackenzie, "Pre-Colonial", NADA (1975) pp.45-46.

3 G.E.Nettelson, "History of the Ngamiland tribes up to 1926", Bantu Studies, vol.8 (1934),p.349; L.Decle, Three years in savage Africa, Bulawayo; Books of Rhodesia, (1974).,p.52; E.E.Burke (ed.), Journals,(1959),p.158; Interview Chikumu Ranga, 31.viii.1973; Vachetesa, 1.ix.1973; Tarwona Nyashanu 1.ix.1973.

./.

such contacts were in operation. It is clear from the examples supplied above that a very active barter system operated under the Rozvi. Nor was the system limited to the Rozvi sphere of political dominance. There are clear links to the Venda of the Transvaal, which may have involved copper carried from Messina northwards.[1] The Duma do not appear to have been under intensive Rozvi administration. They had nevertheless their links, to the west. On the other hand, they were connected to the Teve-Sofala trading system.[3]

Movement of people for religious purposes was another prominent aspect of communications of the Rozvi state.[2] The Mwari cult had a system of messengers, vanyai, also known as wozhana. The messengers were resident at the various lands of provincial rulers, after undergoing instruction in the cult centre in the Matopos. The messengers are still expected to visit the cult shrines annually.[4] In the days of Ndebele rule this was not always possible, as is evident in the story of Mzilikzi of the

---

[4] E.A.Maund, "Country North of Shoshong" in C. 4643, encl. 7 in no. 34,p.313; H.von Sicard, "Places of ancient occupation in Chief Negove's country", NADA, 34 (1957),p.12; Interview, Buhera; Taruvinga Ruzoma, 22.ix.1973; Interview Sby, R.J.Magadzire and J.Bhima, 27.xi.1973; D.C.Chigiga, "A preliminary study of the Lemba in Rhodesia", History Seminar paper: UR 1972-2 Research project, IX.1972,pp.3 seq.

---

[1] Chigiga, op.cit., p.5; M.Aquina, "The tribes of Chilimanzi", NADA (1965) p.41; Van Warmelow, Contributions, (1932),p.6; G.P.Lestrade, "Some notes on the political organization of the Venda-speaking tribes" in op.cit.,pp.I-II; H.Stayt, "Notes on the Bavenda and their connexion with Zimbabwe" in G.Caton-Thompson, The Zimbabwe,(1931),pp.249-59.

[2] See section D in this chapter. ././.

[3] R.Mtetwa, "The rise..." (1973) pp.21 seq; Sr.Ferrâo, "Account of the Portuguese" in Theal RSEA, VII, pp.371-72.

Hera, who went on a mission to the Mwari shrines, and was detained for years in Ndebele land.[1] The messengers went to the Matopos as delegates of their local ruler, to propitiate the god for their group. Years of drought widened the range from which delegates were coming. Delegates from as far as Venda land are said to have been coming to the Matopos in bad years.[4] Not all the areas under Rozvi suzerainty, however, were sending delegates to the Mwari. The Duma were centred around the Musikavanhu cult.[2] Yet they were touched by at least sporadically Rozvi armies intervening in local life. The Mwari cult was operating a network of provincial delegates probably unequalled by anything the mambo had. Although they were subject to their own local rulers, the delegates were regularly reporting to the shrines. On the other hand, their sphere of operations seems to have been more limited than that of mambo officials. The mere presence of provincial delegates so near the Rozvi court may have been beneficial to the Rozvi. They certainly contributed highly to informal communications.

In sum, the Rozvi state, established at the end of the seventeenth century, included rulers who preceded it in its administration. For the period from the end of the seventeenth century onwards, they claimed to be the sole source of legitimacy in the land. Some of the groups in their sphere did not, nevertheless, always turn to them for installation of rulers in office.

---

4 S.D. Sandes, "Zwenyika remembers", NADA, 32 (1955), p. 33.

1 Personal communication, Mr.A.I.Bickersteth, DC Buhera, 1973.

2 R.Mtetwa, "The rise...", (1973),p.21.

Tribute was not an annual affair and appears to have been paid in girls, cattle, and ivory, and gold from some areas. The presence of Rozi armies in the provinces, gathering tribute for the centre, indicates that state control over its provinces was not tight enough to ensure tribute paid by all provincial rulers at all times. There were visits by subject rulers to the zimbabwe, especially on the occasion of an accession to office in the provinces. The main official contacts between centre and province was however, maintained by officials of the centre. These included the varanda, servants who came to serve the Rozvi for wives received. Above them there was a group of Machinda, councillors, the roles of most of whom are obscure. It seems that the officials who accompanied the Rozvi from the north were associated with the supernatural. Former rulers of the south were state ministers in charge of relations with the provinces, and of the army. The Rozvi possessed one means of communication superior to that of the Mutapa area - riding and carriage oxen. There is no evidence of organised use of oxen in the administration of the state.

The Rozvi appear to have relied more than the Mutapa on officers sent from the centre. That tied up with delegations for the installation of provincial rulers. It had one major religious centre, which was near to the court, yet, unlike the Mutapa complex states, was separate from it. The Mwari cult has a much more elaborate network of communications than any of the mhondoro shrines and as such contributed to regulated communications. There were other religious centres in the Rozvi sphere of influence. In the Rozvi state not all who recognised Rozvi paramounty worshipped Mwari in the Matopo shrines. The Rozvi

dominated the flat country in which two major assets were to be found - gold and cattle. The Mutapa centre had to contend with rulers controlling both resources and the access of foreigners to these resources. The Rozvi appear to have mobilised on a smaller scale than the Mutapa and therefore relied less on their periphery for military support.

When the Ndebele started replacing the Rozvi as rulers of the south-west, in 1838, they established a state which was in many ways a successor to the Rozvi. While the Mutapa state was being pushed into the Dande and Chidima, the Rozvi were replaced by a non-Shona state. In the next chapter, it will be shown how, with all the differences between them, the Rozvi and the Ndebele operated from the same central area, with the same religious centre alongside it. Both had a tight control over a core area, with sporadic excursions into the wider periphery. There was still the difference, though, of the central Ndebele being aliens for the Shona groups of the wider periphery. The survival of the scattered former central rulers, the Rozvi, created a duality in some areas, with an impact on the plateau communications.

Chapter III

THE NDEBELE STATE AND ITS COMMUNICATIONS, SOME NOTES

A. The Ndebele centre

The history of southern Zambezia provides an opportunity for the comparative study of states and their communications. The advent of the Ndebele state in 1838 created a non-Shona state within the Shona world. For the first time since the appearance of the Later Iron Age people, a massive immigration into the land between the Zambezi and the Limpopo took place. The Mutapa, the Rozvi and probably the Zimbabwe and the Leopard's Kopje elites operated within the linguistic sphere of the Shona language. The Ndebele brought their Zulu dialect, not mutually intelligible with Shona. Their religious and state organization differed from those of the Shona. At the same time, the Ndebele state occupied the area which housed successively the Leopard's Kopje people; the Khami culture people, and the Rozvi state. It incorporated a large part of the former Karanga population of the Rozvi state, and had contacts with many Shona groups outside of Ndebele lands. It also incorporated the religious centre of the Mwari cult in the Matopos. Ndebele statehood was, then, geographically and in other features, a successor-state to the Rozvi state. The south-western centre had between 1838 and 1893 a nucleus of strange population, busy absorbing people into its linguistic and cultural sphere. The balance of power on a regional scale altered significantly, with the Ndebele centre struggling with its periphery more intensively than their predecessors. Age-old contacts with the Indian Ocean, via the Zambezi valley and Sofala, were being gradually replaced by South African trade for large parts of the plateau. From the 1870s onwards, large-

scale mining, in White-controlled areas to the south, was accompanied by a new kind of human mobilization, migratory labour.

No attempt at full reconstruction of Ndebele social structure and history will be made in the following pages. The discussion will concentrate on clarifying the Ndebele communication system; and on a comparison of its centricity vis-a-vis its Shona periphery to Rozvi centricity. Perhaps one of the crucial differences is the short life-span of the Ndebele state. The Mutapa state lived through four and a half centuries. The Togwa state had a recorded existence of two centuries. The Changamire Rozvi successor state, existed for almost four centuries. Processes which had affected through centuries the development of Shona states, like succession crises, happened in the Ndebele state only once. The traumatic effect of the Ndebele succession crisis of 1868-70 suggests possible developments, had not the British South Africa Company cut short the development of the Ndebele state in 1893. The foreign influences to which the Shona and the Ndebele states were subject were also different. Both were directly involved with only a small number of foreigners, traders, hunters, and missionaries. Both were pressured for mining rights by the foreigners. Yet while Muslim and Portuguese merchants were delegates of trade alone, the Ndebele were increasingly faced with nineteenth-century capitalism, with a greater ability to deploy force than any of its foreign pre-decessors on the plateau. Wealth in both the Shona and Ndebele states was counted in terms of cattle and women. Imports were in all of them used to indicate status. But the exports used to buy the imported goods with

differed. The Shona states traded gold and ivory as their main export items. The Ndebele banned the exploitation of gold, and relied on ivory to obtain the coveted foreign goods, especially firearms. Since the opening of the southern route to Ndebele lands in 1854, ivory could be obtained with the use of horses, and wagons. Both were communications innovations, later to prove crucial in determining Ndebele history.

The Ndebele state was presented as a centralized state, with its officers appointed by the centre, but not hereditary.[1] The ruler was personally informed of every little occurence in the state.[2] A division into administrative units corresponded to the military organization.[3] A council operated beside the ruler, with its officials entitled by the White observers with titles like Prime Minister, Commander-in-Chief and councellor.[4] All the property in the state belonged to the ruler, who could dispose of it at will.[5] Even wives were said to be at the disposal of the ruler. The society was conceived as a military system, ready to be mobilized at a short notice. It was emphasized that there

---

[1] A.J.B.Hughes and J.van Velsen, The Ndebele, (1954),p.65.

[2] J.Chapman, Travels in the interior of South Africa, vol.I, (1868),p.247; Maund, "Matabeleland", encl. 8 in no.34 C 4643, BPP, p.323: "The system of centralization is carried out in Matabeleland even to the smallest details."

[3] R.Summers and C.W.Pagden, The warriors (1970),pp.41-42.

[4] T.Baines, The gold regions of South Eastern Africa (London & Port Elizabeth; E.Stanford, 1877),pp.19,31. J.P.R. Wallis (ed.) The Matabele mission (London; Chatto and Windus, 1945),p.213;

[5] Maund, "Matabeleland", in C 4643,p.323.

is no term for "soldier" in Ndebele, as every man was a soldier.[1] Communications were more intensive than in Shona states and one of the major factors influencing this was the size of communities. Although small compared with the huge Tswana villages, Ndebele communities were the largest of the Later Iron Age period in Southern Zambezia. Bulawayo was variously estimated during the last third of the nineteenth century at three to ten thousand.[2] It was not infrequent to see contingents of hundreds, sometimes thousands, marching around.[3] Villages like the central site of the Enta regiment had a population of 3,000.[4] Most provincial centres had 500 to 1,000 inhabitants. Furthermore, the centricity of the capital encouraged a large fluctuating population. The ruler was the centre of Ndebele life, and accessible to all his subjects. The short distances involved, where most of the subjects were within a day or two's walking distance from the ruler, insured that every subject of the state could gain the ruler's ear.[5] This ensured the ruler a steady flow of information, sometimes of a petty

---

1 R.Summers and W.Pagden, The warriors,(1970),p.20.

2 E.C.Tabler, Zambezia and Matabeleland in the seventies (London, Chatto and Windus, 1960), narrative of Barber, p.103 (3,000); N.Rouillard (ed.), Matabele Thompson, an autobiography (London; Faber,1936),p.120 (10,000); J.G.Wood, "A visit to Lobengula", HMs, WO/1/4/1,NAR, p.84 (4,000).

3 W.Finnaughty, The recollections of William Finnaughty, elephant hunter, 1864-1875 (Bulawayo; Books of Rhodesia,1973),p.13.

4 Summers and Pagden, op.cit., p.36.

5 T.M.Thomas, Eleven years in South Central Africa (London, Snow, 1872),p.226: "He also encouraged visits to his court from all his subjects, treating each one, when there, with very great kindness."

nature, of life in his state.[1] The ruler had his central enclosure, the symbolic centre of the Ndebele state. Wooden fences, thick and high, encircled the whole village, with an inner enclosure for the ruler, his wives and his cattle. The immediate entourage of the ruler included some of his wives, and some young pages or servants attached to his person. In this he was like Shona rulers. The pages were, unlike Mutapa custom, not scions of ruling houses but captives of war, aged twelve to fourteen. About a dozen were serving the ruler, "the king's black ants".[2] The cooks were there, too, in a position of influence and trust, but unlike the claim for seventeenth century Mutapa, they were female at the Ndebele court.[3]

The second circle around the ruler consisted of his wives. Nzilikazi was said to have had about 300 wives, Lobengula had a few dozen. Of those, the majority were stationed at the various villages. Only a few accompanied the ruler wherever he went. They do not seem to have taken any part in the administration at the

---

[1] Wood, "Visit", HMs WO 1/4/1, NAR, p.91.

[2] W.H.Vaughan-Williams, "A visit", HMs, WI 10/1/1, NAR,p.127.

[3] D.H.Varley (ed.), The Matabeleland travel letters of Marie Lippert (Cape Town 1960), p.49; "Velaguba. the king makes a confidant of her...", and see B.Wilson, "Lobengula as I knew him", HMs, WI 6/5/3. NAR.

centre, although present at all interviews of the ruler, at least with foreigners. In the villages outside the capital, it seems that royal wives were more than mere attendants on the ruler. Royal wives were "mothers" of the villages in which they were stationed, and immensely honoured.[1] It seems as if the shields of all the warriors in a queen's village were stored under her protection, which points to some say in the affairs of the community.[2] More important than that, wives were said to have constituted an efficient information service for the ruler: "she was invariably consulted by the town chief of all important matters. Thus they served the king both as regular channels of communication and as a check upon any disloyal behaviour...[3] Royal wives visited the centre frequently, and normally waited for the ruler's visit to their village, which might have been an annual

---

[4] J. Wallis (ed.) Southern African, (1954), p.65; idem (ed). The Matabele journals of Robert Moffat, 1829-1860 (London, Chatto and Windus, 1945), I, pp. 26.310; J.D. White, "Amakosini, some notes on the queens and families of Mzilikazi and Lobengula" NADA XI, 1 (1974), pp.109-13; B. Wilson, "Lobengula..." HMs W 6/5/3 NAR; J. Mackenzie, "Notices of the Matabele mission" in The Missionary Magazine and Chronicle (LMS) encl. 27 (1864), p.75, p.85.

[1] J. Wallis (ed.) Matabele Journals (1945), p. 262.

[2] L. Decle, Three Years in Savage Africa (Bulawayo; Books of Rhodesia, 1974) p. 171

[3] Mhlagazanhlansi (N. Jones), My Friend Kumalo (Bulawayo; Books of Rhodesia, 1972), p.48; H. Hughes and Van Velsen, "The Ndebele" in H. Kuper et.al. The Shona and the Ndebele (1954), p.68; T.M. Thomas, Eleven Years, (1872) p. 271; H. Child, The amaNdebele (Salisbury; Ministry of Internal Affairs, 1968), p.19.

affair, and sometimes not even that. As the queens had servants of their own, contact should be maintained between them and the centre by messenger.

The central enclosure of the Ndebele capital, then included the ruler, embodyment of the nation; servants and wives, who represented a wider group of wives, spread throughout the country. Besides them, there were groups of outdoor bodyguards, normally of a recently recruited regiment. These counted sometimes a few hundred and again created a living link with secondary centres.[1] A greater awareness of the affairs of the state as a whole is evident than in Shona States. The young warriors knew the nation's leading indunas. Also, being present in the centre en masse created an awareness of a wider body of people than the village or regiment. All serious cases had to come before the central ruler. The inner, or court circle, permanently present in the capital, were the few great councillors, and a group of the king's close kin and confidants. Not all of them were there all the time, since it was from among the members of this inner council that ambassadors were recruited, who had sometimes to spend a long time abroad.[2]

[1] P.Kirby, John Burrow, Travels in the wilds of Africa (Cape Town; A.A. Balkema, 1971), p.51; H.Hughes, Kin, caste, (1956) pp.12-13. These were different from the 'Imboune', the 'black ants' who were permanently attached to the ruler; cf. J.Cobbing, "The evolution of Ndebele Amabuto", JAH, XV, 4 (1974), p.628.; W.E. Thomas (Letter 19-12 1941) said Umbezazwe regiment was the bodyguard of Mzilikazi, in S.Jackson, "Military history and organization of the Metabele" HMs JA 5/2/3. Imbizo was Lobengula's central regiment in the last years of the state.

[2] P.Kirby, op cit, pp.47, 74-5; W.C.Harris, Narrative of an expedition into Southern Africa (New York, Arno Press, 1967) p.242; E.P.Mathers, Zambezia (London, King, Sell & Railton, 1891), pp. 144-46 et seq.

Unlike the Mutapa state, ambassadors were not an annual feature of the political scene. On the whole, there was a fairly permanent corps of people around the ruler, taking part in, or watching, the decision-making progress, and the collection and diffusion of information.

Contact with an officer of the state was automatically contact with the locale of the majority of the people under that official. "The great ones", the council including provincial officials had at any time delegates of many of the settlement sites, and of major administrative divisions.

Mncumbata, one of the most prominent officials of the Mzilikazi period, was a typical Ndebele councillor. Designated Prime Minister by Europeans, he was maintaining contact with foreigners during the first encounters between Ndebele and Europeans in the Transvaal. He headed the delegation sent with Andrew Smith in 1836 to Cape Town to sign a treaty on behalf of the Ndebele. He took part in the supervision of borders and information collection through spies. But he was also to be found in court when judging cases took place. On top of all this he was heading one of the main administrative units of the state.[1]

When Mzilikazi died Mncumbata, an old and feeble man, ruled the nation from his village, and navigated it through the succession crisis, to the election of Lobengula.[2] There was a degree of continuity in the composition of councils. Although no position in the group close to the ruler was hereditary, close contact with a father tended to bring sons into the

---

[1] P.Kirby (ed.), John Burrow ,(1954), pp. 51, 74-5; W.D.Harris, Narrative.(1967) p.245; P.Kirby (ed.), The diary of Dr. Andrew Smith. II (1940), pp. 129,139.

[2] T.Baines, The gold regions (1977), pp. 20,31; Mziki (A.A.Campbell), Mlimo, The rise and fall of the Matabele (Bulawayo; Books of Rhodesia, 1972), pp. 145-46; Wallis, Southern African, (1954) p.150; R.Brown,"The Ndebele succession crisis", CAHA, Local Series Pamphlet No. 5 (1962).

central orbit. Umthlaba, son of Mucumbata, who was his right hand in the crisis of 1869-1871, was by 1886 described as chief adviser of Lobengula, and regent.[1] People like Magwege, "chief induna", i.e. officer in charge of the capital Bulawayo, were probably most of their time in the ruler's environment, and thus took part in councils more than others. His position earned him the title "head chief" for the time the Chaminuka medium was killed in 1883; but he was also referred to as "Chief justice".[2]

Officials like Gambo, on the other hand, seem to have been less active in the centre. Gambo was a family closely related to the house of Matshobana, father of Mzilikazi. Gambo was in charge of the Igapha division of the Ndebele, stretching across the whole of western Matabeleland. His standing apparently entiteled him to take part in the council. It is illustrative if we view Gambo's case against the Mutapa and Rozvi picture of government. A scion of a family historically close to the ruler; a son-in-law of the ruler; in charge of a large part of the national territory - surely in any reconstruction of history he would be numbered among the potentially closest officers to the ruler. In fact, however, "the most powerful induna" of the Ndebele, who had "possibly half the fighting men" under him had to flee the land of the Ngwato in 1887, for having an affair with Loben-

[1] S.Edwards, "Report on proceedings...", encl. no. 2 in no. 34, BPP C 4643, p. 305.

[2] Ibid., and see R.M.M.Ncube, "The true story re Chaminuka and Lobengula", NADA (1962), p.62; L.Decle, Three years (1900), p.155. Incidentally this is very illustrative of the difficulties faced in identifying roles of officials on the force of a reference by a foreigner, who was translating a specific African role to a title forming part of his own experience.

gula's favourite daughter, intended for a political marriage with Gungunyana of the Gaza Nguni. Later he was pardoned, married the girl, and was soon caught in an affair with a royal wife.[1] This, incidentally, throws some light on the assumption that royal wives based in the periphery were a centre of loyalty to their ruler, and remote husband, and not form local loyalties.

Not all officers of the Ndebele were hereditary. Leaders, both at the central and the peripheral level, could rise on the basis of merit.[2] Once power was gained, however, the leader used his own kinship unit as a nucleus to the group he led.[3] In this, the Ndebele centre seems to have been similar to the Shona states. A greater social mobility, however, was afforded by the structure of the state, which was based not solely on territorial units.

Commands and demands of the centre were passed to the peripheral hierarchy. The periphery constituted in theory units of people, divisions and regiments. In fact, these units had their own territories, and the boundaries were were clearly demarcated, and remembered even long after they ceased to have any practical significance.[4] The court being mobile, and

---

[1] For the above, see Chief F.Gambo II, "Some true history about the royal house of the Gambos", NADA (1962), pp. 46-51; "History of Matabeleland" in file A 3/16/28 NAR; J.S.Moffat to Shippard, Gubalawayo, 12.xii.1887, encl.in no. 358,1889, CO 879-29, PRO, p. 16; R.Summers and W.Pagden, The warriors,(1970) p. 110.

[2] Mziki, Mlimo,(1972) p.49, gives one such account of Malida, a young warrior, raised to prominence for serving the ruler.

[3] Thus when Mncumbata was sent to Cape Town it was his brother who took over the government of his province, rather than an officer appointed on merit. P.Kirby (ed.),The diary II (1940), p.139.

[4] J.Hughes and Van Velsen. "The Ndebele", op. cit. (1954) J.Cobbing,"Evolution" JAH (1974) p.621.

council sessions held at different parts of Ndebele heartland. Peripheral officers had thus an opportunity to meet each other in the court.[1] They had also a chance to meet with large sections of the population if attached to the moving ruler. Since the court sat to settle difficult cases, they had access to each other's problems. Officials were in this way involved with each other's affairs to a degree greater than in the Shona states. The centre in the Ndebele state was not only physically closer to most of its subjects than the centres of the large Karanga states. It also dealt in its communications with masses of people. A visit by the ruler concerned a large number of people, who did not have to travel far to meet the ruler.[2] The regimental system also provided a framework for collective action. Especially in the turbulent years that led to the European settlement in the country, whole regiments came sometimes to the capital to express their views to the king.[3]

Contact between centre and subcentres was by messengers. Messengers and ambassadors were referred to as the king's eyes and mouth.[4] This was common terminology on the plateau, as was seen

---

[1] "Lobengula calls certain indunas to try cases, then sends them back and brings others" E.R.Renny-Taillour, "A journey to Lobengula, 1887" HMs MISC. TA 5/2/1 NAR

[2] See, for instance, the description of Mzilikazi's journey in Sept. 1857, in Wallis (ed.), The Matabele journals (1945) I, pp. 259 seq. It brought about sessions of the council to settle local matters, collection of local information, and mass movements of people to watch the ruler.

[4] "Lobengula can only find out the truth by sending eyes to see.. the indunas are his eyes" Lobengula to Queen Victoria, Encl. 1 in no. 56, Knutsford to Robinson, 7.III. 1889, im BPP, C 5918 p.184. E.M.Weale, "Lobengula's mission to the Queen", HMs WE 3/2/1. NAR "... these are the men who are to be my eyes, ears and mouth".

3. B. Wilson, "Lobengula..." H. Mss W1/6/5/3 NAR p.2 ; cf Mulahlo and Whitney, "Major Wilson's ..." NADA (1933), p.46.

above[1]. Messages from the ruler to Europeans were brought through indunas[2]. For really crucial matters, the king sent his closest advisers, as far as England in one case. This was both in order to have a reliable source of information; but also to have the highest possible representative standing for him.[3] The king, and all regiment indunas, had at their disposal groups of executioners. For small regiments their number was meagre, but in the larger regimental towns, and in Bulawayo, they were numbered by the hundreds.[4] The executioners were a ready, loyal corps of men, which could have been used for message carrying. European observers spoke of the king's network of spies, who kept him in daily contact with the slightest events in all corners of his state.[5] No doubt servants were sent on specific spying missions, on foreigners especially.[6] As a rule commoners kept the ruler well informed on the most interesting, though trivial, events of the periphery.[7] The indunas, with the military structure at their disposal, had no difficulty in

---

[1] Blake-Thompson and Summers. "Mlimo and Mwari" NADA (1956) p. 54.

[2] Wallis (ed.) The northern goldfields diaries of Thomas Baines I (1946) p.58.

[3] See relevant correspondence in BPP C 5918, from no. 54.p.180 et seq.

[4] Mziki, Mlimo (1972). p.112.

[5] E.C.Tabler, Zambezia, and Matabeleland (1960) p.104 and compare the Teve court; Dos Santos,"Ethiopia", RSEA, VII, p.199.

[6] Mziki, Mlimo (1972), pp.60, 64-65. Shippard had an encounter with what he called a "chief spy" whose role seems to have been information collection on the frontier. See Shippard to Robinson, Encl. in no.32, 12.X.1888, BPP, C 5918 pp.139,142.

[7] P.Kirby (ed.), The diaries II (1940 . p.72.

dispatching information to the capital.[1] The incessant struggles for power and privilege, amongst individuals, as well as sections of the nation, was a guarantee that rivals would keep the ruler informed of their enemy's actions.[2]

Like the Karanga states, the Ndebele had their collective gathering at the centre, and like many other aspects of the state, it was conducted on a much more intensive basis with the Ndebele.

The Ndebele gathering was an annual reassertion of the cohesiveness and loyalty to the state. A large majority of the officialdom of the state was present at the annual gathering. About an half or third of the fighting force of the nation was present with them.[3] The fact that all the regiments were going through the same process simultaneously served to underline the sense of unity around the king and facilitated

---

[1] C.Chapman, Travels, I (1868), pp. 247.

[2] Wallis (ed.), Southern African, (1954), pp. 93-9, 100; D.F. Ellenberger, History of the Basuto (London; Caxton Pub. Co; 1912), p. 207.

[3] For descriptions of the Inxwala see J.Fry to Shippard, encl. in no. 7, C 5237; Mhlagazanhlanzi, My friend, (1972) pp. 66-67; R.Summers and W.Pagden, The warriors, (1970) p.70 and picture opposite p.17.

the work of controlling it. The ceremony served also as an instrument of acquiring information of past history. Each regiment boasted of its achievements in the inxwala ceremony.[1] Army operations also added to the communication pattern. Units in the field reported to the capital directly, especially when on major expeditions.[2] The centre's reactions and commands were returned through the same messenger, even fairly important commands. This was the case when the Ndebele "impi" beaten back by the Ngwato was ordered to wipe out the Kalanga village of chief Mahuku.[3]

The techniques at the disposal of Ndebele messengers were the same as those of the Shona. Locomotion was by feet. Oxen were sometimes trained for transport.[4] The majority of load carrying, however, seems to have been done by human effort and power.[5] Although they took over the country from the Rozvi the practice of riding oxen seems to have been discontinued.

---

[1] Cf. J.P.R.Wallis, The Northern Goldfield Diaries of Thomas Baines (1946), vol. II, p.333.

[2] W.C.Harris, Narrative, (1838) pp. 122 and 126, Muhalo and E.C.P.Whitney, "Major Wilson's last stand on the Shangani River, 1896" NADA, 13 (1935) p.45.

[3] J.Mackenzie to Tidman (1863) in Af. Pers.,Box 2, LMS.

[4] T.M.Thomas, Eleven,(1872), pp.191-192. "Few individuals who trained an ox each, led them burdened..."

[5] J.Wallis, Matabele journal,I (1945) p.280: "... as the Matabele never pack oxen or ride themselves" but cf. ibid,p. 128, when decades earlyer Mzilikazi wanted Moffat to train riding oxen for him.

Oxen were used as transport and riding tools to the South of Ndebele country. This was an area, well known to the Ndebele, who passed through it on their way to present day Rhodesia, in the 1830s. They kept the story of defeating rulers riding oxen, and even the names of such royal oxen were remembered.[1] The memory of the Mambo riding oxen was also widespread in Ndebele country. In stories of the defeat of Mambo by the Nguni, his riding ox featured prominently.[2] Yet oxen were not used extensively.

Wheels, in the form of wagons drawn by oxen, were one of the most prominent features of the migrating Boer. Early on in their history , the Ndebele came into contact with the Boers and the wagon.[3] Later on, when they were followed into present day Rhodesia by missionaries and traders, the wagon was an inseparable part of every European in the country. Its usefullness as a transport tool was obvious to the Ndebele rulers.[4] Mzilikazi asked the Reverend Thomas to transport the possession

---

[1] Magodanga, a chief raided by the Ndebele in the Transvaal period, was remembered decades later as the one who " rode on a red pack ox with a mark in the middle of its forehead..." Mhlagazanhlanasi, My friend (1972). p.18.

[2] Mziki, Mlimo (1972),p.86; Marodzi, "The Barozwi", NADA (1924) p.90. Even Rhodesian settlers used pack oxen, W.H.Brown, On the South African (1970),p. 121.

[3] D.F.Ellenberger, History, (1912) pp.207,210; Chapman, Travels (1868).pp.129-130; Mziki, Mlimo, (1972) pp. 61-63.

[4] Mzilikazi "stood gazing on the "moving houses" as if incapable of opening his mouth with surprise". Wallis (ed.) The Matabele Journals I (1945), p.14,note 1; op. cit. pp. 110,132,137; op.cit.vol.II p.109,214.

of one of his indunas moving town in his wagon.[1] The rulers themselves boasted wagons of their own. The picture of the king's train moving court from one site to another is prominent in many contemporary documents. Lobengula especially favoured his wagon as a place of residence. He judged his people, and interviewed strangers, sitting on his wagon-box. Yet never did the wagon transcede its status as a royal showpiece. Like the guns, many Europeans lamented rusting in the royal store huts, the kings kept wagons a closely kept royal prerogative.[2]

Bearing in mind the revolutionary effect wagons had on the history of the whole of Southern Africa, Ndebele failure to adopt them is significant. Partly it is only one facet of a wider problem, that of the failure of the Ndebele to modernize any aspect of their society. This stands in contrast to the extensive use of wagons by the Ngwato, and the contribution this made to their ability to compete with the European hunters, which must have been well known in the Ndebele country.[3] Still, the Ndebele hunters failed to follow suit. Purely on the level of

---

[1] T.M.Thomas, Eleven, (1872) pp. 191-92

[2] Thomas, op. cit. , p.391; Wilson, "Lobengula" HMss W1 6/5/3 NAR, p.9, Wood, "Visit the Lobengula" HMss WO 1/4/1, NAR p.88.

[3] J.Wallis (ed.), The Matabele Mission (1945), p.103; hard on the heels of the road-openers to the Ndebele, Moffat and Edwards, came Tswana wagons; H.R.Lewis, "Andrew Kgasa, some reminiscences" ,1903; in Africa Personal Box 3, Campbell Personal Papers, LMS.

transport needs and local conditions, there were good reasons for this failure. In the first place, Ndebele state demands for coverage of distances were minimal. It was seen above how compact the whole state was. Secondly, game came mainly from areas outside the inhabitable plains, to the west and the north-west of the Ndebele heartland. These areas were some of the last in Rhodesia to be crossed by any form of transport except human feet.[1] Difficult terrain, thick bush, and above all, tse-tse fly, prevented the use of wagons in hunting grounds in these directions. There was very little gain, then, obvious to the Ndebele mind, from the introduction of wagons.

Paradoxically, it was the rulers' understanding of the potential of transport which prevented its accession. Long before the concession hunting period, the Ndebele were aware of the danger the white man represented. They were defeated by the Boers in Marico.[2] The two Ndebele kings were well aware of the vital importance to the arrival, and survival, of the white man, of his transport. Except for Africans, everyone coming from the south came by wagon. Allowing Ndebele adoption of wagons

---

[1] T.M. Thomas, Eleven (1872), pp. 84-113, and cf. H.N. Hemans, The log of a Native Commissioner (1971), pp. 23,114.

[2] Mziki, Mlimo (1972), p. 62 : "we fought not with men but with devils"; Transvaal Africans were quoted as attributing their defeats by the Boers to the simple fact that "we have no guns". See D. Livingstone, Motletle, 7.XII.1846, LMS Africa Odds, Box 10; The Ndebele in the Transvaal period were heavily raided by Griqua, when "a cammando attacked them with seven guns and some horses, carried off half the cattle". P. Kirby (ed.) The diary of Andrew Smith, II, (1940), pp. 261-262.

would have necessitated the clearing of roads. Of this the Ndebele were aware from their experience with both royal wagons, and those of visitors.[1] Roads, once created, could serve anyone. Moreover, the amakiwa were noted for their ability to communicate information of parts traversed by them. That was a major reason for Ndebele kings limiting access to the Shona areas.[2] Opening roads would open the way to massive European penetration. The movement of wagons was therefore strictly controlled. Every European allowed to travel or hunt in the country was accompanied "for protection" by a Ndebele party. There were only two official entry points into Ndebele country, for wagons. Only two roads were allowed to develop, the "hunters road" leading from Shoshong to Hartley, and the Pandamatenga road, leading north-westwards, northwards, to the Zambezi river. Wagon movement was strictly restricted to these two routes.[3] Horses, unlike wagons, were a desired commodity by the Ndebele. Although it is apparent that some aspects of past experiences were not properly passed on to the next generation of warriors, which was proven by Ndebele mockery of the Tswana guns in 1863,[4] there were enough Europeans using horses in Ndebele land to demonstrate at least to the elite in the capital their usefulness.[5] Horses, unlike

---

[1] See description of Mzilikazi journey with Moffat, in Wallis (ed.) The Matabele journals I (1945), pp. 272 et sq.

[2] E. Holub, Seven years in South Africa II (1881), p. 205 ; the "Manausa", near the Zambezi, refused him information lest he write it in a book.

[3] When Renny-Taillour and his party tried to enter via Swaziland it caused a great commotion. See his "Journey to Lobengula" HMss MISC TA 5/2/1 WAR, p. 2 Cf. J/G/ Wood "A visit to Lobengula", HMss WO 1/4/1 NAR, p. 280.

[4] J.Mackenzie Ten Years (1971), pp. 276-277.

[5] Sir Sidney Shippard even had his guards exercise in the Ndebele. See Shippard to Robinson, 12.X.1888, encl. in no. 32, BPP C 5918 p. 167.

wagons, do not call for an infra-structure of roads, however elementary. Their use was not, therefore, a potential endangering process. Huge sums were, therefore, paid by the Ndebele for horses.[1] Unfortunately for the Ndebele, the Rhodesian environment did not favour horses. The notorious "horse sickness" reduced swiftly the horses brought into the country.[2] The number of horses in the country did not, therefore, transcend a few score at any time prior to the 1891 invasion. At one stage there was even an attempt to train an Ndebele cavalry unit. The hunter in charge attributed its failure to opposition in the court to a royal initiative.[3] A horse was very much a prestige item. The king owned some, and many indunas owned one. Leading their units to battle, they did so in many cases on horseback.[4] The formation of a cavalry unit would have required concentration of the limited number of horses in the country. Giving up a most conspicuous prestige item for the benefit of young majaha was against the whole way of life of the Ndebele. And being restricted to leaders of foot regiments, fighting in the traditional close combat methods of Chaka, horses remained a trivial episode in Ndebele

---

[1] A "salted" horse cost up to £ 100. See J. Wallis, The Northern Gold fields, (1946), p. 37 ; for Ndebele encounters with horses, and their use, see P. Kirby, John Burrow (1971), p. 63 ; W.D. Harris, Narrative (1838), p. 154 ; R. Maguire, "Rhodesia" J. of Af. Soc., vol. 22 (1922-23), p. 86 ; T. Baines, Northern Goldfields (1877), pp. 29, 37.

[2] The Pioneer Column was losing horses at the rate of 4-5 per day. H.F. Hoste, "Rhodesia in 1890", Rhodesiana 12 (1965), p.5.

[3] F. Johnson, Great Days (1972), pp. 43-44.
Harris, however, told how Mzikilikazi frequently urged him in the Transvaal to teach his people the use of horse and gun. See his Narrative (1963), pp. 154-155.

[4] E.P. Mathers, Zambezia (1891), p. 87 ; Wallis (ed.) The Northern Gold Fields, I (1946), p. 213 ; Hepburn, Twenty years (1896), pp. 250-251.

history.[1]

In spite of a greater opportunity to adopt advanced modes of transport and locomotion, then, Ndebele techniques were the same as those of the Shona. In one sense, perhaps, their means were more efficient. Each regiment had its group of boys, slaves and trainees, who accompanied its members to training and raiding expeditions. Their role was to carry the warriors'blankets, some of their equipment, and food.[2] They were not, however, an inseperable feature of all Ndebele units. Perhaps, on swift and ligth patrols or raids such carriers were not taken. Indeed when Ndebele soldiers returned from a long raiding expedition they had "eyes sunk in the head, meagre" from death of food.[3] In this, the Ndebele sacrificed an available transport system for speed. The military organization of the Ndebele made the messengers a conspicuous sight in its relations with its neighbours. Messengers for transmitting the ruler's commands are mentioned in every record of the Ndebele state.[4] Some Ndebele, however, were employed as spies. The spies were

---

[1] S. Marks and A. Atmore, "Firearms in Southern Africa", JAH 12, 4 (1971), pp. 525-26, argue that firearms failed to penetrate where traditional fighting methods were successful, and not compatible with guns ; cf. W.C. Harris, loc. cit., of the "funny" attempts of Ndebele to adopt horse-riding

[2] In 1855, Livingstone saw about 50 skulls of Ndebele warriors killed in a raid north of the Zambezi. Many were of "mere boys". I. Schapera (ed.) Livingstone's African (1963), p.335; and see picture of such bearers, plate I, in R. Summers & W. Pagden, The warriors (1970), op.p.16.

[3] P. Kirby, John Burrow (1971), p. 45.

[4] "The King used to send one of his warriors with messages to Chief Chilimanzi". R.M.N. Ncube "The true story" NADA (1962) p. 66 ; T. Baines Gold Regions (1877), p. 20 ; J. Finnaughty A hunter's recollections (1916),p.62.

apparently members of regiments sent out to patrol.[1] Ndebele spies were not always as knowledgeable as presumed. Peripheral areas could even have contact with white people without being directed.[2] The official delegation of Shippard in 1888 was made by the induna in charge of the border, designated "chief spy" to sound the alarm about a large army approching.[3] Warriors were sent hastily to intercept the foreigners, and the country was up in arms.[4]

In sum, the regiments supplied an excellent communication tool to the Ndebele, unavailable to Shona states. Despite the numerous references to messengers there is little differentiation as to who they were and how they operated. This probably reflects the fact that any of the youths in a regiment could be commanded to go. The Ndebele probably followed the common Nguni practice of distinguishing messengers by some emblem. In other Nguni states, it was customary for the chief's messengers to carry his spear in his right hand. This was a signal that he was carrying an official message and was not to be stopped. Food was brought to him, and he ate while running.[5] Not many authors bothered to

---

[1] Franklin "Nyaningwe..." NADA (1928), p. 84 ; W.H. Brown, On the South African (1970), p. 285 ; W.C. Harris, A narrative (1963) pp. 107.

[2] E. Chapman, Travels, I (1868), p. 252.

[3] Shippard to Robinson, Encl. in no. 32, BPP, C 5918, pp. 138-140.

[4] E.P. Mathers, Zambezia (1891), pp. 84-87.

[5] Basil Mathews, "Cullen Reed" typescript in Papers of Cullen Reed, Box 5, Africa Personal, LMS.

record such details for the Ndebele. It was noticed, however, that messengers carried feathers distinguishing them.[1]

Ndebele ambassadors to outside groups are not as conspicuous as Shona ambassadors. Partly this may be due to the short life-span of the Ndebele state. Between 1838 and 1854 their state was cut off from South-oriented contacts. As this was also a period of hostility to its immediate neighbours, ambassadors probably featured little in their external contacts.[2] In the 1820-1830's and after 1854 some ambassadors did go to the whites. They were always officers of the highest standing in the state. Thus the envoys who went with Andrew Smith were Mncumbati, a trusted councillor, who later was chief councillor and regent after Mzilikazi's death.[3] With him went Mowhabe, who was "chief spy"[4]. The envoys to Queen Victoria were Umshete and Babyaan. Both were prominent among the councillors of the ruler. Babyaan was the best orator in the land.[5]

---

[1] W. Baldwin, African hunting (1967), p. 192 ; Zulu ambassadors were attired in the same way, D.F. Ellenberger, History of the Basuto (1912), p. 204.

[2] D.N. Beach, "Ndebele raiders", JAH (1974), p. 638 et sq. ; "Chitsa's story" in E. Weale, "The native rebellion" HMss WE 3/2/6, NAR ; Mziki, Mlimo (1972), pp. 97-99.

[3] P. Kirby, John Burrow (1971), p. 74 ; cf. J.P. Wallis (ed.) The Matabele journals, I (1945), pp. 119, 122, 246, 267 ; C. Harris, Narrative (1838), pp. 105, 245 ; R. Ncube "The true story", NADA (1962), p. 64.

[4] P. Kirby, loc. cit.

[5] See Correspondence in BPP C 5918, (1888). Compare E. Mathers, Zambezia (1891), p. 144 ; E.M. Weale "Lobengula's mission to the Queen" HMss, WE 3/2/1 NAR.

B. Ndebele communications with the state's periphery

Our intention here is to dwell mainly on the features comparable to Rozwi statehood. Perhaps the most relevant feature was the Ndebele mobilization of armies. The existence of groups of unmarried young men, in special settlements, was of crucial importance. The habit of fighting and operating in a unit helped keep the married men easily able to mobilize.[1] Thus during the period of Ndebele struggles for survival in the Transvaal people had to mobilize rapidly and often.[2] Even in the relative security of the land north of the Limpopo mobilization of thousands could take place rapidly.[3] The ability to deploy a large number of units organized better than any Shona army, leads to the second aspect of our comparison - Ndebele relations with their Shona periphery. The common allusion in contemporary records was to the Ndebele raiding annually around them. Great suffering and bloodshed followed.[4] This is apparently radically different to Rozvi relations with their own periphery.

There does not seem to have been such a radical change in the communications of the area. The change was one of degree.

---

[1]See Summers and Pagden, The warriors (1970), esp. pp. 41-54 ; Julian Cobbing "The evolution", JAH (1974), pp. 613 et sq.

[2]Mziki, Mlimo (1972), pp. 41-43, 62-65, etc..; P. Kirby (ed.) The Diary, II (1946), p. 126.

[3]Shippard to Robinson, encl. in no. 32, BPP C 5918, pp. 137-139.

[4]People like Bishop Knight-Bruce were instrumental in this, see C.E. Fripp and V.W. Hiller, Gold and the Gospel (1949), p. 15 ; cf. Letter of J. Mackenzie to Colonial Office, London, 10.III.1889, no. 78 in BPP C 5918 ; F.C. Selous, A hunter's wandering (1971), p. 57.

but the general pattern was kept. Informal contact between people was as intense as with the Karanga, and probably more so, with all the opportunities for contact mentioned above. The diffusion of information through informal channels had its disadvantages, too. Once a raid, for instance, was decided upon in advance it was very difficult to keep it a secret from the would-be objects. The famous raid on the Ngwato, for instance, in 1863, was known to the Ngwato in advance a couple of months before it actually took place. Here Europeans helped to pass on to the Ngwato what was apparently common knowledge in the Ndebele capital.[1] The information might have passed by other channels as well, since individuals were maintaining constant contact over the border.

On the southern border a few communications systems operated side by side. A desert area, with restricted water sources, it attracted little settlement from both the Ndebele and Ngawato sides of the border. On the other hand, a large number of cattle posts were scattered along the border. Cattle posts were ideal targets for raiding. They had few people, were remote, and had a lot of tempting cattle in them. Hostilities on any scale started with looting of cattle posts[2], and the herdsmen were rather hesitant about creating contacts with the

---

[1] Definite news reached the Ngwato in march 1863, but already in September of the previous year, news of the preparation were brought by traders. See J. Mackenzie to Tidman (1863), LMS Africa, Personal Box 2.

[2] J. Mackenzie, undated letter to Dr. Tidman, of the 1863 Ndebele raid on the Ngwato, LMS Africa Personal Box 2; idem, Ten years (1971), pp. 276-77.

other side. There were some settlements on both sides of the border, too, in most cases of Kalanga-speaking Shona. Some of those under Ngwato rule fled south with Ndebele advent. Ties with brothers across the border were fairly consistent, and on a wide scale. The Ndebele were apparently unable to tell local "Makalaka" from Southern "Makalaka" visitors.[1]

To the north and north-west of the Ndebele lay the waterless, uninviting Somabula forest, and Mafungabusy plateau. Behind the Mafungabusi lay the hot, equally uninviting Zambezi valley. The Somabula forest was unpopulated. The Mafungabusi and the Zambezi valley were very scantily populated. These areas offered uninhabited buffer zones to the Ndebele. They were used as hunting grounds, as training grounds for small raiding parties, setting out to attack the Shona, and as a corridor for some of the raids beyond the Zambezi.[2] They did not form an isolating cordon, though, since the sparse Tonga population kept close contacts with their brethren from accross the river.[3] The Nyoka tobacco trade carried on with the Ndebele heartland, insured constant visits of people from that area to the capital.[4] Some peaceful contact was thus kept between the Ndebele and their trans-Zambezian neighbours. On the whole, however, the west served the

---

[1] Mackenzie, op. cit. ; C.D. Helm to T.W. Thompson, Palapye, 14.VIII.1893, LMS Matabeleland. Box 2, II.

[2] E. Tabler, Zambezia and Matabeleland (1960), p. 88 ; E. Colson, "A note on Tonga and Ndebele", Northern Rhodesia Journal, vol.I, II (1950-52), pp. 35-41. Cf. "History of Sebungwe" in file A 3/18/28, NAR ; I Schapera (ed.), Livingstone's African (1963), pp. 329, 335.

[2] F.C. Selous, A hunter's..."(1970), p.88.

[4] Ibid., p. 323 ; C.L. Carbutt, "A brief account of the rise and fall of the Matabele", NADA (1948), pp. 38-44; R.E. Renny-Tailour, "A journey to Lobengula, 1887", NAR HMss MISC TA 8/2/1.

some purpose it served the Rozvi - a route to the Zambezi valley. The bustling trade route of Rozvi days, though, was gone. Ndebele-Portuguese trade went rather eastwards, perhaps also to the Mazoe valley.[1]

The south-east was the most guarded frontier of the Ndebele. This was the direction where the Boers were. And the Boers were feared and guarded against. The reception given to anyone attempting entrance from that direction proves beyond doubt how sensitive this frontier was.[2] The Ndebele, on their part, refrained from crossing it, too. No Ndebele raids are recorded in that direction.[3] The Boer power, and the tse-tse infested basin of the Limpopo were strong enough deterrents for them. From the other side, though, there kept a steady flow of communication. The Venda had very close tied with the Mwari cult in the Matopos. Some of the priesthood were Venda. It was seen how annually messengers came to ask Mwari's blessing for the rains. In the same direction lay the route to Mzilikazi's old homeland, Zululand. The Ndebele retained their traumatic fear of the Zulu long after they settled in their new home. Zulu servants of Europeans were not allowed into their state.[4] On the other hand, the mission sent to Natal to search for Nkulumana was not the only Ndebele contact with that area.[5] It was stated on some occasions that Zansi families went on importing wives from Zuzuland.[6]

---

[1] Compare Sutherland-Harris, "Trade" in R. Gray and D. Birmingham Pre-Colonial (1970), p. 268 to N. Bhebe "Ndebele trade" (1974) p.92. Cf. Letter of Mandy 8.II, 1887, CO 417/14 PRO ; Montagu -Kerr, The far interior, I (1885), pp. 243, 260.

[2] R.E. Renny-Tailour , "A journey to Lobengula, 1887", HMss MISC TA 8/2/1. NAR

[3] See list of Ndebele raids, in R. Summers and W. Pagden, The Warriors (1970), p. 91 ; and cf. D. Beach, "Ndebele raiders", JAH (1974) passim.

[4] S.J. Moffat to Shippard, 15.XII.1887 encl. in PRO Robinson to Holland, CO-879, vol. 29, no. 358, p. 16. Compare E.R. Renny-Tailour "A journey to Lobengula", HMss MISC TA 5/2/1 NAR but cf. Wallis (ed.) The Southern African (1946), p. 90.

5. See R. Brown, "The Ndebele..." (1965), p. 8.

6 Personal communication, Mr. I.G. Cockroft.

To the east, and north-east, lay the main bulk of the Shona. There, the traditional pattern of communications of the plateau ties with the Ndebele one. The over-all authority of the Rozvi was gone. But the Portuguese were still on the outskirts of the Shona world. Still operating through African and other non-white agents, they traded with the plateau. Traders from the prazos and the Sena area were coming as late as 1872 as far as Fort Victoria.[1] The traditional contact between the Tete area and the Mazoe was also still kept, though its intensity was much on the decline. Gold was not mined on the plateau any longer in the 19th century, at least not in its second half. A little gold was collected in river beds.[2] Ivory was traded southwards in growing quantities ever since the Ndebele opened their land to hunters and traders in the 1860s. All these lessened the importance of coastal contact. And the Portuguese and their middlemen were wary about the Ndebele.[3] There is some evidence that coastal trade goods did reach the Ndebele.[4] It was, on the whole, a mere trickle of human contact. It did have its effects, but mainly through Ndebele contacts with the Shona.

The main type of contact the Ndebele are supposed to have had with the Shona was until recently presented as a permanent hostile relationship. Sites of deserted villages were invariably ascribed to Ndebele destructiveness. The "fertile lands" which were deserted due to Ndebele cruelty became a commonplace in writing Rhodesian history.[5]

---

[1] E. E. Burke, Journals (1969), p. 213 ; and cf. Njanja history, Interviews in Buhera.

2. Wallis, Northern Gold Fields, II (1946), pp. 474,483, 802 ; J.G. Wood, "Visit to Lobengula", HMss WO 1/4/1, NAR, p. 148.

[3] E. E. Burke, loc. cit.

[4] Wallis, Matabele Journals I (1945), pp. 225, 242.

[5] J. Mackenzie to Mullens, 1.IX.1873, LMS Africa Personal, Box 3.; F.C. Selous A hunter's (1970), p. 57.

One aspect of the Ndebele-Shona contact on the plateau is thus over-emphasized. Lists of raids, even if some smaller raids escaped their compilers, show that most parts of the Shona country lived through long peaceful periods between Ndebele raids.[1] This has been shown conclusively by Dr. D.N. Beach, in a major contribution to the study of interpolity relationships on the plateau.[2] After an initial period of massive hostility, Shona-Ndebele relations stabilized into a peaceful co-operation with near neighbours and occasional raiding of others. Shona traders are reported in the Ndebele state, and some groups, like Chilimanzi, paid tribute on a more or less regulated basis.[3] Shona rulers defeated in war were later re-installed by the Ndebele, who in a sense acquired so a claim for legitimizing provincial rulers, outside their heartland. Thus chief Whata of Mazoe, and chief Chibambam of the Rozvi.[4] While informants in Chihota disclaimed any social contact with the madzviti (grass-hoppers, the nickname of the Ndebele) in areas further south contacts were recorded.[5]

---

[1] R. Summers and W. Pagden, The Warriors (1970), p. 92

[2] D. N. Beach, "Ndebele raiders", JAH (1974), pp. 633-651.

[3] J. Wallis, Southern African (1954), p. 71 ; idem, Matabele journals (1946), I, p. 280 ; Sister M. Aquina, "The tribes... Chilimanzi", NADA (1965), pp. 46,50 ; K.R. Robinson, "History of Bikita", NADA (1957), pp. 77,80 ; G. A. Taylor "The Matabele headring", NADA (1925), p. 41 ; "History of Belingwe" in file NB 6/1/1 NAR ; Yet it was claimed there was no intermarriage betwwen Ndebele and Shona, "History of Gwelo", file A 3/18/28, NAR and cf. Int. Chief Samuriwo, Chihota, 9.VIII.1973

[4] Wallis, Northern Gold Fiels II (1946), p. 498 ; idem, Southern African (1954), p. 102.

[5] Cf. E.E. Burke, Journals (1969), pp. 181-183 ; Interview in Buhera, T. Muzilikazi, 4.IX.1973 ; Interview in Chihota, Chief Samuriwo, 9.VIII.1973.

Captives escaping from the Ndebele were another link between the two peoples,[1] not to mention groups under Ndebele rule, who went on speaking Shona dialects.[2] The main areas of organised state communications with the Shona groups remained very much the same. Tribute was paid, in much the same products that tribute to the Rozvi was paid. Grain is not mentioned as a tribute item. Only in extremely lean years, with drought and famine hitting the Ndebele heartland, did the Ndebele go out of their way to collect grain of areas who had it.[3] Those tribes who paid tribute on an annual basis did it in the same way they paid it to the Rozvi. The chief's son or other close relative, would come with the tribute to Mzilikzi's, or Lobengula's court, once a year.[4] Other tribes, further away from the Ndebele land, paid whenever an Ndebele tribute collection party came along.[5] Tribes who paid their due were not molested. Beyond the Shona area lay the state of the Gaza Nguni. In the period under discussion the Shona world, which was spreading eastwards when the Portuguese first came in, was shrinking with the advance of the Nguni, from its position on the fringes of the plateau itself. There was a more or less fixed boundary between

---

[1] E. Colson, "A note", N. Rh. J. (1950-52), p. 40 ; "Mafohla", "The curse of Chigadoro", NADA (1928), pp. 20-22.

[2] Cullen Reed, Letter of 5.XII.1895, Bulilima, in Box 2,II Matabeleland, MS.

[3] E. E. Burke, Journals (1969), p. 212.

[4] See for Chibi file N 3/33/8, NAR ; for Nyashanu, interview, Buhera, T. Muzilikazi, 4.IX.1973. Compare Wallis (ed.), The Southern African, (1954), p. 82.

[5] Interview, Muzilikazi, Buhera.

the two Nguni powers, the river Sabi. Tribute was collected by both sides, each on its own side of the river.[1] There was a tenuous contact between the two states, via their tributary people, neighbouring each other, but on occasions contact was more intensive. When Lobengula married a Gaza princess, a very substantial delegation from the Gaza accompanied her to the Ndebele capital. Some of those people then returned to their country. This was a major opportunity for communication. There were apparently previous to the coming of that princess negotiations as to the marriage arrangements.[2] On the whole, contact seems to have been intermittent.

One of the results of the south-oriented phase that came with the Ndebele into the plateau was its linking with the whole range of white-black relations in the area. Labour migrants to the mines are evident in the second half of the century.[3] Literacy and newspapers were present on an ever-increasing scale, within the expatriate European community. Limitations of space prevent us, however, from going into that intriguing aspect of Ndebele communication.[4]

Summing up, the Ndebele state emerges as both a continuation of its Shona predecessors, and as an innovator in forms of social organization, which led to more intense communications in it.

---

[1] "The Barowsi", in file A 3/18/28, NAR. Robinson, "History of Bikita", NADA (1957), pp. 78-79.

[2] White, "Amakosikasi - some notes", NADA (1974), pp. 109-113;

[3] C. Thorpe, Limpopo to Zambezi (1951), p. 61 ; E. Tabler, Zambezia and Metabeleland (1960), p. 75.

[4] See for an extensive discussion of these contacts, N.N.B. Bhebe, Christian missions in Matabeleland, 1859-1923 (1972), unpublished Univ. of London Ph. D. thesis.

The large settlement, the densely settled land, and the smallness of the area under direct Ndebele control, all contributed to maintain contact on both official and unofficial levels between subject and ruler and between central and provincial officials. Those aspects of the communications system dwelt on reveal a larger and more efficient body of men available to the Ndebele rulers than there was to their Shona counterparts. This related to the regimental recruitment system, to the ability to store grain, to reliance on large herds of cattle, and to lesser inhibitions, and greater military might, than those of the Shona in collecting tribute. Like the Shona state of the Rozvi, however, tribute from the areas external to the heartland was not collected annually, and had to be enforced with military deployment. It was also seen how contact on informal levels, after the initial period of conquest and active hostility, was maintained accross Ndebele heartland boundaries. Last, it was shown how communications innovation like the wagon and the horse failed to establish themselves in the Ndebele system of transport. Ecology and the attempt to keep foreign influence from penetrating too deep were material in this. The Ndebele establishment on the plateau coincided with the re-orientation of plateau communications towards the south, and the penetration of the wagon into the interior, which brought with it the eventual demise of the Ndebele state. So the Ndebele state never passed the second generation of its existence on the plateau when it succumbed - unlike the Shona states compared with it, of which we know more, the nearer to their phase of decline we come. As it is, the Ndebele state during three generations of existence altogether seem to have maintained a tighter and more intense system of

political communication than its Shona counterparts. All were similar in the tools at their disposal, and all were pre-literate societies, and one of them had ruled the same area as the Ndebele. The tightness supplied by Ndebele patterns of settlement and organization thus brought about a distinguished intensification of human contact which was the main contribution of Ndebele to the pattern of communications on the plateau. This was soon to undergo a drastic change with the advant of the telegraph and the railway.

CONCLUSION

Our thesis set out to define, out of a puzzle of bits of evidence the political communications of non-literate societies with political systems described as "empires" and "kingdoms". The major aim was to clarify the operation of administrative systems of states on the plateau of southern Zambezia, and its margins.

The bearers of the Early Iron Age culture settled on the plateau around the fourth century A.D. They established a social and economic milieu, within which human communication operated until the end of the nineteenth century. People lived in village communities, the majority practicing a mixed agriculture. Production of iron implements and copper ornaments was a specialized occupation. Barter of iron and copper production transcended the range of local barter for foodstuffs, clay vessels and salt. Copper sources are few on the plateau. The origin of copper products can thus be determined, but in most cases not the route traversed to destination. Iron deposits are so numerous that only for the last two centuries can its diffusion routes be ascertained. Most trade communications probably occurred in stages, and some commercial contact was already maintained with the Indian Ocean commercial networks. Religion is evident in figurines but the patterns of contact related to it are obscure. Contact within and without villages, for cultivation and social purposes, obviously occurred. Distances travelled, and range of geographical awareness, remain unknown. A rough division of the plateau into a northern and a southern cultural groups is evident, however, already at this stage.

By the tenth century the bearers of the Later Iron Age culture appeared on the plateau. Increased use of iron and copper, and increased volumes of coastal trade intensified human contact. General directions of trade, first through the Sabi-lundi area, then through the Buzi-Revue and the Zambezi, become evident. Mobilization for the production of trade goods, like ivory and gold, increased. Cattle, introduced in that period, enlarged the area of settlement, and hence - the scope of human contact. Cattle, with import goods, provided means for wealth accommulation, hence social stratification. Contact in the form of raids is also apparent. The bulk of human contact remained within the framework of these activities.

In the twelfth century A.D. elites, small and with a distinct archaeological record, introduced a new dimension of communications. Elites were clearly pivots for communities around them. A political organization was emerging. Great Zimbabwe was evidently the centre of the elite, but the exact relations between elite centres remain in the realm of conjecture. It was seen that elite demands on its periphery were not as intensive as was supposedly implied by the elite's massive stone structures. It was also suggested that the elite's followers were related to its members; hence, a lesser need to assume the instance of formalized, intensive tribute.

The political elites recorded by written and oral evidence since the sixteenth century show that such was indeed the case on the plateau. Communication techniques used were the same. Drums and horns were used to raise the alarm and mobilize people. No coded drum language existed. Literacy failed to penetrate African communications. It was used on the fringes of the plateau, marginal to indigenous states. The wheel and the horse

failed to penetrate even the Portugese-controlled margins. Only in mid-nineteenth century the two penetrated the plateau from the south. They were only adopted by Africans to an insignificant degree, but had an impact on communications. Transport and locomotion were, therefore, reliant on the human body. Oxen were used for both purposes in the centre and south of the plateau, at least since the eighteenth century. Even then, human porters and runners remained the main instruments of state communication. The Ndebele differed from the Shona in not using drums. All the states discussed relied on a corps of messengers. In the Shona states their numbers seem to have been limited by the difficulty to store enough grain to maintain a specialized administration. A large number of royal wives was essential to maintain the zimbabwe, the political centre. Messengers-retainers were bonded sons-in-law to the ruler, and rendered service as part of their kinship obligations.

The elite included provincial rulers and councillors. The former ruled their own lands, with high officers like the chief of the army apparently coming to the centre only for emergencies. This made the operation of the state dependent on communication between zimbabwe and lords. In the Mutapa area, the presence of sertanejos with firearms supported potential and actual secessions. Hence demands on the provinces had to be kept at a minimum. Tribute was therefore brought in by provincial delegates. The frequent internal struggles, and the ability of sertanejo power to use mercenaries hired with cloth - necessitated large armies. Deployment of many thousands of mobilized peasants brought a greater reliance of the zimbabwe on subject rulers. All communications slackened during the wet season. The two major

shortcomings of the Mutapa communications system were its inability to transport grain from afar , which was complementary to its inability to deploy thousands of peasant-soldiers in the dry season further than Manyika.

The Rozvi state had the same techniques at its disposal. It proves that its distance from the Portuguese, combined with its wealth in cattle, were crucial factors in making the same communications system effective. Its principal lords lived near the Zimbabwe, and could, therefore, be contacted easily. Their loyalty to the mambo was greater than that of their Mutapa counterparts, partly because they were all in-laws of the ruler. The reliance on cattle, much greater here than in the Mutapa lands, made their vanyai, or bailiffs, more mobile and more effective. Their armies were smaller than those of the Mutapa area, as their enemies were less formidable. This, of course, after the conquering outburst of the Dombo wars defeated the Portuguese on the plateau. Rozvi greater efficacy is evident in their collecting part of their tribute at the provinces, rather than wait for provincial delegations with tribute. Yet even with the Rozvi tribute was probably not an annual affair. Central based tribute collection owed a lot to the Rozvi sanction of legitimizing accession to chieftainship. In the Mutapa there is very scant evidence for a similar sanction. The Mutapa rulers were the living descendents of the mhondoro, ancestral spirits. As such they combined ritual and political authority. Unfortunately, almost every ruler in the Shona world was the descendent of his own dynastic mhondoro. Hierarchical relations between mhondoros were vague. The Rozvi had no mhondoro, and thus were not directly in the centre of a cult. Yet they claimed special relations to

Mwari, the supreme being, whose cult encompassed their heartland, and spread as far as Venda land. The relations between the Rozvi centre and the adjacent Mwari cult centre were not as close as previously assumed. Yet they provided the state with indirect benefits from the best organized Shona communications network.

Rulers were highly respected, with divine kingship features in both Shona politics. Yet the rulers were not cut off from the people. Courts were organized on the basis of personal bonds, which included hostage pages in the Mutapa zimbabwe. The hostages, however, seem to have been recruited only from areas within effective range of the Mutapa army, rather than enlarge by their presence the lands effectively controlled. Most administrative posts in the Mutapa zimbabwe were at the hands of in-laws or vazukuru (nephews/grand sons). Eligible agnates either ruled lands of their own, or acted in ceremonial roles. The presence of provincial branches of the ruling house increased strife and internal struggle. In the Rozvi state, provincial Rozvi houses were paramount in their areas, but their exact relations to the mambo zimbabwe is not yet clear. The Ndebele state brought with it a mass-migration, then created a mass absorption. A dichotomy appeared between the language spoken by centre and periphery. Its heartland was parallel to the core of the preceding Rozvi state. Its organization, however, differed from that of its periphery. It was also much tighter than Rozvi government. The Ndebele introduced the regiment system, supported by reliance on cattle herds and raids on neighbouring people. Ndebele storage systems were also more efficient than those of the Shona. There always was a group of men free from cultivating fields by forbidding marriage for certain groups of youths, until otherwise ordered by the ruler. There was always a reservoir of available

messengers and soldiers. Discipline could thus be maintained at a high level. The emerging nature of the Ndebele state, which was still in the process of expansion and assimilation - centralized the state around the person of the ruler to a degree unknown in Shona states. However, Ndebele armies, too, had commissariat problems and operated mainly in the dry season. Their directions of operation followed largely in the footsteps of Rozvi armies. And their relations with provinces outside their heartland also largely followed Rozvi practice.

The Ndebele also changed the major orientation of plateau contacts with the outside world from the Mozambique coast and the Zambezi to the South African interior. This was a gradual process, greatly enhanced by the penetration of the waggon and the horse from the south. The emergence of labour-intensive mining economy in the white states of South Africa played a crucial role in the process. Eventually it brought about the British South Africa Company, accompanied by the great communications revolution of Southern Zambezia - the introduction of the telegraph, the railway, wheeled transport, and the creation of a new kind of centre. Our search, however, studied only the road leading to that revolution through the history of the Iron Age period in southern Zambezia.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AHU	Arquivo Historico Ultramarino, Lisbon.
Anais...	Anais da Junta das Mioês Geograficas e de Investigacoês do Ultramar, Lisbon.
ASR	African Social Research.
BPP	British Parliamentary Papers.
CAHA	Central African Historical Association.
Chronista...	O Chronista de Tissuary, ed. by J.H. da Cunha Rivara, Goa.
BSEM	Boletim da Sociedade de Estudos de Moçambique.
Int. J. of Afr. Hist. Stud.	International Journal of African Historical Studies.
JAH	Journal of African History.
J. Afr. Soc.	Journal of the African Society.
JSAIMM	Journal of the South African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy.
LMS	London Missionary Society Archives, London.
NADA	Native Affairs Department Annual, Salisbury.
NAR	National Archives of Rhodesia, Salisbury.
OPNMR	Occasional Papers of the National Museums of Rhodesia.
PRO	Public Records Office, London.
RH	Rhodesian History.
RSEA	Records of South Eastern Africa (by G.M. Theal).
SAAB	South African Archeaological Bulletin.

B. MANUSCRIPTS AND TYPESCRIPTS.

I. AHU, Arquivo Historico Ultramarino, Lisbon.

Avulsos de Moçambique, Caixa 17, Anon. "Descripçâo Corografica do reino de Manica, seus Custumes e Leis".

II. LMS, London Missionary Society Archives ; Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, London.

Africa, Personal, Box 2 - J. Mackenzie papers ; Box 4 - R. Moffat papers ; Box 5 - Cullen Reed Material.

Africa, odds, Box 1 - Khama Tshekedi papars ; Box 2 - Miscellaneous papers ; Box 9 - 10 - 11 - Livingstone letters and papers ; Box 13 - Matabeleland Controversy, 1909.

Matabeleland, Incoming Letters, Boxes 1, 2 I, 2 II, 1854 to 1899.

South Africa, Incoming Letters, Box 49 to Box 89, 1892 to 1927.

South Africa, Reports, Boxes 1 - 9, 1866 to 1939.

III. NAR, National Archives of Rhodesia, Salisbury.

1) Public Archives :

A series, Administrator's Office,

A 3/18/28 - "History of Native tribes".
A 3/18/38 -"Portuguese Native rising."

D series, District courts,
D 1 files, civil cases.
D 3 files, criminal cases.

LO series, London Board of the British South Africa Company, correspondence.
LO 5/6 series (1896-7).

N series, Native Affairs (later, Internal Affairs) Department files, Chief Native commissioner, Salisbury.
N 1/1, Native commissioners, In Letters, 1894-1902.
N 3/1 files, Interdepartmental correspondence.
N 3/3 Witchcraft.
N 3/4 Chiefs and headmen.
N 3/7 Complaints.
N 3/14 Internal Security.
N 3/23 Native laws and customs.
N 3/32 World War I.
N 3/33 Miscellaneous.
N 6 Conferences of Superintendents of Natives.
N 9/1-4 Reports 1895-1923.

S Series, Miscellaneous Files, Department of Native Affairs.
S 138 Numerical series (to 1923).
S 235 Unnumbered series (to 1923).

NB Series, Native Department, Chief Native Commissioner, Buluwayo.
NB 1 In Letters 1897-1904.
NB 3 Correspondence 1904-1913.
NB 6 Reports 1897-1908.

2) Historical Manuscripts:

Alderson, E.A.H., "Staff diary", HMss AL 1/1/1.

Benzies, W.R., "Brief notes on the early history of the native tribes of Southern Rhodesia", HMss BE 8/10/3.

_____ ,"Lundi and Sabi rivers", HMss BE 8/10/2.

Jackson, S.N.T., "Military history and organization of the Matabele", HMss JA 5/2/3.

Machivanyika. J., "History and Customs of the Manyika" HMss MA 14/2

Stead, W.H., "Bride price in Rhodesia", HMss ST 7.

Sumner, H. F., "A history of the Njanja people", Accession no. 1220.

Sykes, F. W., "Notes on my trip to Matabele and with the Rev. J.D.Helm", HMss MISC/SY 1/1/1.

Taillour, E. R. Renny, "A journey to Lobengula, 1887", HMss MISC TA 6/1/1.

Thomas, M. T., "Articles", HMss TH 3/1/1.

Waddell, W. T., "Journals", HMss WA 1/1.

Weale, M. E., "Reminiscences", HMss WE 3/2.

Williams, H. W. Vaugham, "A visit to Lobengula in 1889", HMss WI 10/1/1.

Wilson, B., ("Matabele"), "Reminiscences", HMss WI 6/5.

_____ , "Journals", HMss WI 6/2.

Windram, R. Foster, "Reminiscences", HMss,W 8/1.

Wood, J. G., "A visit to Lobengula, 1887-1888". HMss WO 1/4/1.

IV. Public Records Office, London.

Great Britain, Colonial Office.

CO 417 - South Africa, Correspondence. Files 72 (1891) ; 89 (1892) ; 110 (1894) ; 160 (1895).
(British South Africa Company).

CO 879 - Confidential Prints.
Vol. 29, no. 358 : Africa (South), 1889.
Vol. 29, no. 368 : British Bechuanaland, 1889.
Vol. 36, no. 426 : Bechuanaland, 1892.
Vol. 37, no. 441 : Bechuanaland, 1893.

V. University of London, Unpublished Ph. D. theses.

Beach, David N., The rising in South Western Mashonaland, 1896-7, 1971.

Bhebe, N. M. B., Christian missions in Matabeleland, 1859-1923, 1972.

Bhila, H. H. K., The Manyika and the Portuguese, 1575-1803, 1971.

Mudenge, S. I., The Rozwi empire and the Feira of Zumbo, 1972.

VI. Other typescripts.

Chadambura. T. F., "Family trees" (of kraals in Buhera District) compiled 1972.

Chigiga, D. C., "A preliminary study of the Lemba in Rhodesia", History Seminar Paper, University of Rhodesia, 1971-2 Research Project (sept. 1972).

Chivnada, C. G., "The Mashona rebellion in oral tradition : Mazoe District", History Honours Seminar paper, University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, 23. vi. 1966.

Garwe, B. T., "Family trees" (of kraals in Buhera District), compiled 1972.

"History of Samuriwo people, as recounted to the DC by the chief and his advisers, 1972", (kindness of DC Marandellas, Mr.B.Lucas), 1972.

Mtetwa, R., "The rise of the Duma confederacy, 1700-1800 : a study of an African state in Southern Zambezia", Henderson Seminar Paper, University of Rhodesia, Department of History, 16. vi. 1973.

Pasipanodya, F. T. M., "Mutasa chiefdom 1870-1895 : some preliminary notes on research", History Seminar Paper, University of Rhodesia Research Project 1971-2, 1972.

Schofeleers, J. M., "An organizational model of the Mwari shrines", Department of History Seminar Paper, University of Rhodesia, 30. vi. 1973.

C. OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS

GREAT BRITAIN : BRITISH PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS (published by H.M. Stationary Office, London).

C-4643 "Further correspondence re affairs of the Transvaal and adjacent territories" (Feb. 1886).

C-5237 "Correspondence re affairs of Bechuanaland and adjacent territories" (Sept. 1887).

C-5524 "Further correspondence re affairs of Bechuanaland and adjacent territories (Aug. 1888).

C-5918 "Further correspondence re affairs of Bechuanaland and adjacent territories" (Feb 1890).

D. PRINTED DOCUMENTS

Andrade, Antonio Alberto de (ed.), Relaçoês de Moçambique Setecentista, Lisbon ; Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1955.

Bragança Pereira, A. B. de, Arquivo Português Oriental (Nova Ediçao), 11 vols., Bastora Goa, Tipografia Rangel, 1936 to 1940.

Carvalho Dias, Luis Fernandes de, "Fontes para a historia, geografia e comercio de Moçambique (sec. XVIII), in Anais da Junta das Mioês Geograficas e de Investigaçoês do Ultramar, vol. 9, Tomo 1 (1954).

Documentos sobre os portugueses em Moçambique e na Africa Central 1497-1840. Documents on the Portuguese in Mozambique and Central Africa 1497-1840. (ed. by Silva Rego, A. da, and Baxter, T.W.) Lisbon ; Centro de Estudos Historicos Ultramarinos - National Archives of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (to date : 7 vols.) 1962-1971.

Montes, Caetano, "Archivo Historico de Moçambique, Inventario do Fundo do Seculo XVIII", Moçambique, nos. 72 to 92 (1952 to 1957).

Paiva e Pona, A. de P., Dos primeiros trabalhos dos portugueses no Monomotapa (O Padre Dom Gonçalo da Silveira. 1560). Memoria apresentada a 10a sessão do Congresso Internacional dos Orientalistas, Lisbon, Imprensa Nacional (1892).

Santana, F., Documentaçao avulsa Moçambicana do Arquivo Historico Ultramarino, 2 vols., Lisbon, Centro de Estudos Historicos Ultramarinos, 1964 and 1967.

Theal, G. M., Records of South-Eastern Africa, 9 vols.,(London ; Government of Cape Colony, 1898 to 1903).

E. BOOKS AND ARTICLE

I. Primary sources for the period to 1900 :

1) Portuguese sources

Alcaçova, Diogo de, Letter to the King, Cochim, 20.XI.1506 (II.1506) in Documentos sobre os portugueses, vol. I (1962), pp. 388-401.

Anon., "Ethiopia Oriental" (before 28.VI.1631), in G. M. Theal, RSEA, II, (1898), pp. 432-441.

Barbosa, Duarte, "Livro em que da relaçao do que via e avia no Oriente", (1516) in G. M. Theal, RSEA, vol. I (1898), pp. 85-99.

Barretto, Manoel. "Informaçao do Estado e Conquista dos Rios de Cuama" (sent to Vice Roy João Nunez da Cunha, Goa, 11.XII.1667) in G. M. Theal, RSEA, Vol. III (1899), pp. 436-463.

Barros, João de. Asia : Dos feitos que os portugueses fizeram no des cobrimento e conquista dos mares e terras do Oriente. 6th ed., 4 vols., Lisbon ; Agencia Geral das Colonias, 1945.

Bhila H(Owini) H. K. "A journal of Manoel Galvaô da Silva's travels through the territory of Manyika in 1790", Monumenta 8 (1972), pp. 79-84.

Bocarro, Antonio. "Decada, composta per Antonio Bocarro, chronista de sua Magestade, do Estado da India, dos feitos dos portugueses no Oriente" (completed ca. 1636). (Extracts) in G. M. Theal, RSEA, vol. III (1899), pp. 254-436.

Boxer, C(harles) R. "A Dominican account of Zambezia in 1744" (Fr. Francisco de Santa Catarina). Boletim da Sociedade de Estudos de Moçambique, no. 125 (1960), "Humanidades" section (independent pagination).

_____ "Sisnando Dias Bayâo, conquistador da mae d'ouro" (Lisbon, I Congresso da Historia da Expansâo Portuguesa no mondo, 4a secçâo, 1938), pp. 99-114.

Burton, Richard F. (Translator and editor). The lands of Cazembe. London, John Murray, 1873.

Cacegas, Luis de, and Sousa, Luis de. "Historia de Sâo Domingos" (Extracts from vol. IV, published 1678) in G. M. Theal, RSEA, I (1898), pp. 380-406.

Conceiçâo, Frei Antonio da. "Tratado dos Rios de Cuama, 1696" in Chronista de Tissuary (ed. by J. H. da Cunha Rivara) Goa, vol. II (1867).

Couto, Diogo de. "Decadas da Asia : dos feitos que os portuguezes fizeram na conquista e Descobrimento das terras e mares do Oriente" (Extracts from Decada IX, written before 1616), in G. M. Theal, RSEA, vol. VI (1900), pp. 309-410.

Da Silva, M. G. "Diario de viagens, feitas pelas terras de Manyica" cf. Bhila H. K. "A journal...", Monumenta 8 (1972).

"Descripçâo da situaçâo, custumes e produtos de alguns lugares de Africa" (ca. 1518), Documentos, vol. V (1966), pp. 354-371.

Faria e Sousa, Manuel. Asia Portuguesa (trad. Maria Vitoria Garcia Santos Ferreira), Editora ; Livraria Civilizaçâo, Bibliotecca Historica - serie Ultramarina - no. VI, 4 vols., 1945-1947

Ferâo, Captain of Sena. "Account of the Portuguese possession within the Captaincy of Rios de Sena", in G. M. Theal, RSEA, vol. VII (1901), pp. 371-383.

"Fontes para a historia..." Anais, 9, 1 (1954) - Cf. Carvalho Dias, L. F. de (ed.).

Gamitto, Antonio Candido Pedroso (Trans. Ian Cunnison). King Kazembe and the Marave, Cheva, Bisa, Bemba, Lunda, and other peoples... 2 vols. Lisbon, Junta de Investigaçoes do Ultramar, 1960.

_____ "Succeçâo e acclamaçâo dos reis do Barotse", Archivo Pittoresco (Portugal), vol. I (1857-8), pp. 28-9.

Goês, Damião de. "Chronica do Felicissimo Rei Dom Manuel da Gloriosa Memoria". (Extracts of 1556-7 ed.) in G.M. Theal, RSEA, vol. III (1899), pp. 1-143.

Gomes, Antonio. "Viagem que fez O padre Antonio Gomes, da Compa. de Jesus, ao Imperio de de (sic) Manomotapa ; e assistencia que fez nas ditas terras de Alg'us annos" (1648), Studia no. 3 (Jan. 1959), pp. 155-242.

Guerreiro, C. Alacantara. "Inquerito em Moçambique no anno de 1573", Studia no. 6 (1960), pp. 7-18.

Homem, Vasco Fernandes. "Carta... Pa Luys da Sylva em que lhe da conta de tudo o sucedido nas Emprezas de Monomotapa. (15.II.1576) in Leite, B., Dom Gonçalo da Silveira (1946), pp. 385-395. (cf. Cunha R. S.,"Vasco Fernandes...", 1961).

Lacerda e Almeida, Dr. Francisco Jose de. "Diaro da viagem de Moçambique para os Rios de Senna" (1797) Documentos para a historia das Colonias portuguezas, Lisbon, Imprensa Nacional, 1889.

Lago, Baltazar, Manuel Pereira do. "Instrucção que o Ill.mo e Ex.mo Sr. Governador e Capitão General Baltazar Manuel Pereira do Lago deo a quem lhe suceder neste Governo" in Andrade A.A.de (ed.) Relaçoês de Moçambique Setecentista, 1955, pp. 317-339.

Liesegang, Gerhard (ed.) Reposta das questoens sobre os Cafres ou noticias ethnograficas sobre Sofala do fim do Seculo XVIII. Lisbon ; Junta de Investigaçaês do Ultramar - Estudos de Antropologia Cultural, no. 2, 1966.

Melo e Castro, Dionizio de. "Noticia do imperio Marave e dos Rios de Sena, ... ao Governador Pedro de Saldanha Albuquerque" (Sena, 2o. I, 1763), in "Fontes para a historia...", Anais, vol. 9, Tomo 1 (1954), pp. 119-151.

Miranda, Antonio Pinto de. "Memoria da Africa Oriental e da Monarquia Africana" in "Fontes para a historia...", Anais, vol. 9, Tomo 1 (1954), pp. 43-119.

Monclaro, Pe. Francisco. "Relação da Viagem q̂ fizerão os Pes da Companhia de Jesus com Franco. Barretto na Conquista de Monomotapa no anno de 1569" in G. M. Theal , RSEA, vol. III (1899), pp. 157-254.

Pacheco, Albino Manoel. Diario de viagem de Tete ao Zumbo, Moçambique, Imprensa Nacional ; Documentos Historicos e geographicos da provincia de Moçambique, 1883.

Santos, Frei João dos. "Ethiopia Oriental" (1609). (Extracts) in G.M. Theal, RSEA, vol. VII (1901), pp. 1-371.

Santo Thomas, Frei Manoel de. "Resposta dada pelo reverendissimo Aministrador... as diligencias, que Deos guarde, manda se façâo nestes Rios de Senna pera a verdade das materias contenhidas nos capitulos abaixo", in Chronista de Tissuary, IV, 39 (March 1869), pp. 42-46 , 61-66.

Sousa, Francisco de. Oriente conquistado. Lisbon, 1710. 2 vols

Veloso, Gaspar. "Apontamentos de Gaspar Veloso, Descrivâo da feitoria de Moçambique enviados a el-rei", in Documentos vol. III (1964) pp. 180-189.

Xavier Inacio Caetano. "Noticias dos Dominios Portugueses na Costa de Africa Oriental, 1758" in Andrade A. A. de (ed.) Relacôes de Moçambique Setecentista,(1955),pp. 139-189.

Zevedo, Agostino da. "Informaçâo por sua magestade ... India e no reino de Monomotapa" (ca. end of 16th century) in G. M. Theal, RSEA, vol. IV (1899), pp. 33-37.

2) Other primary sources

Anderson, Andrew A. Twenty five years in a waggon in The Gold regions of Africa, 2 vols., London : Chapman & Hall, 1887.

Baines, Thomas. The gold regions of South Eastern Africa, London & Port Elizabeth, A Stanford, 1877.

Baldwin, William Charles. African hunting and adventure from Natal to the Zambezi (including Lake Ngami, the Kalahari Desert, etc...), from 1852 to 1860, 3rd. ed. (1894), Cape Town : C. Struik, Rep. 1967.

Blennerhassett R. & Sleeman L. Adventures in Mashonaland (1893), Bulawayo, Books of Rhodesia, rep. 1969. Rhodesiana Reprint Library, vol. 8.

Brown, J. Tom. Among the Bantu nomads : a record of forty years spent among the Bechuana. London : Selley Service & Co., 1926.

Brown, William Harvey. On the South African frontier. The adventures and observations of an American in Mashonaland and Matabeleland. (1899). Bulawayo : Books of Rhodesia, 1970. Rhod. Rep. Lib., vol.12.

Burke, E. E. (ed.). The journals of Carl Mauch, his travels in the Transvaal and Rhodesia, 1869-1872. (Transcribed from original Mrs. E. Bernhard & trans. by F. O. Bernhard). Salisbury : National Archives of Rhodesia, 1969.

Casalis, E. The Basutos or twenty three years in South Africa. London : James Nisbet & Co., 1861.

Chapman, J. Travels in the Interior of South Africa. 2 vols. London : Bell & Baldy, 1868.

Decle, Lionel. Three years in savage Africa, new ed.(1900). Bulawayo: Books of Rhodesia, rep. 1974. Rhod. Rep. Lib., vol. 25.

Finalson, C. E. A nobody in Mashonaland (1893). Bulawayo : Books of Rhodesia, rep. 1970. Rhod. Rep. Lib. vol. 9.

Foa, Edouard. A travers l'Afrique Centrale, du Cap au Lac Nyassa. 2nd. ed. Paris : Librairie Plon, 1901.

Fripp, Constance E. & Hiller V. W. (eds.). Gold and the gospel in Mashonaland, 1888. Being the journals of : 1- The Mashonaland Mission of Bishop Knight-Bruce ; and 2- The concession journey of Charles Dunnel Rudd. London : Chatto & Windus, 1949, Oppenheimer Series, vol. 6.

Harris, Capt. W. C. Narrative of an expedition into Southern Africa, during the years 1836 and 1837.(1838). New York : Arno Press, rep. 1967.

Hepburn, Rev. J. D. (ed. by C. H. Lyall). Twenty years in Khama's country and pioneering among the Batauana of Lake Ngami. London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1896.

Holub, Dr. Emil. Seven years in South Africa : travels, researches and hunting adventures, between the diamond fields and the Zambezi.(trans. E. E. Frewen), 2 vols. London : Sampson Law, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1881.

Kirby, P(ercival) R. (ed.). The diary of Dr. Andrew Smith (1834-36). 2 vols., Cape Town : The van Riebeck Society, 1939-1940.

_____ John Burrow - Travels in the wilds of Africa : being the diary of a young scientific assistant who accompanied Sir Andrew Smith in the expedition of 1834-1836. Cape Town : A.A. Balkema, 1971.

Leyland J. Adventures in the Far Interior of South Africa. (1866). Cape Town : C. Struik, rep. 1972.

Livingstone, David. Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa. Including a sketch of sixteen years residence in the interior of Africa. London; John Murray, 1857.

Mackenzie, John. Ten years North of the Orange River.(1871). London : Frank Cass & Co., rep. 1971.

Mas'udi, Al. "The ivory trade". (Extracts from 'Muruj al-Dhahab wa M'adin al-Jawhab", in G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville (ed.), The East African coast. Oxford : Oxford University Press,(1966), pp. 14-17.

Montagu, Kerr, Walter. The far interior : a narrative of travel and adventure, from the Cape of Good Hope across the Zambezi to the Lake regions of Central Africa. 2 vols. London : Sampson, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1866.

Peters, Carl. The Eldorado of the ancients. London : C. Arthur Pearson, 1902.

Rouillard, Nancy (ed.). Matabele Thompson, an autobiography. London : Faber & Faber, 1936.

Schapera, Isaac (ed.). Livingstone's private journals, 1851-1853. London : Chatto & Windus, 1960.

_____ Livingstone's African journal, 1853-1856. 2 vols. London : Chatto & Windus, 1963.

Selous F. C. A hunter's wanderings in Africa. (1881). Bulawayo, Books of Rhodesia, rep. 1970.

Tabler, Edward C. (ed.). Zambezia and Matabeleland in the seventies. (The narrative of Frederick Hugh Barber, 1875 and The journal of Richard Frewen, 1877-1878). London : Chatto & Windus, 1960.

Thomas, Rev. T. M. Eleven years in Central South Africa. London : Snow, 1872.

Vaillant, Monsieur Le , Travels from the Cape of Good Hope into the interior parts of Africa. (1790). 2 vols. London & New York : Johnson Reprint Corporation, rep. 1972.

Varley D. H. (ed.). The Matabeleland travel letters of Marie Lippert. Cape Town : University of Cape Town, 1960.

Wallis, J. P. R. (ed.). The Northern Goldfield Diaries of Thomas Baines. 3 vols. London : Chatto & Windus, 1946.

_____(ed.) The Matabele Journals of Robert Moffat, 1824-1860. 2 vols. London : Chatto & Windus, 1945.

_____(ed.) The Matabele Mission. London : Chatto & Windus, 1945.

_____(ed.) Southern African diaries of Thomas Leask. London : Chatto & Windus, 1945.

Wood, Joseph Garbett. Through Matabeleland. London : Richards, Glanville & Co., 1893.

3) Secondary sources :

Anon. "Manyika Head women", NADA (1940), pp. 3-5.

"A" "A native indaba", The Outpost (Rhodesia), 8, 1, (july 1930), pp. 9-10.

Abraham, Donald P. "The early political history of the kingdom of Mwene Mutapa (850-1589), in Historians in Tropical Africa. (Lever Hulme Inter-Collegiate History Conference, Salisbury, 1960, proceedings ; Salisbury, University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, 1962), pp. 61-93.

_____ "Ethno-history of the empire of Mutapa. Problems and methods." in J. Vansina, R. Mauny, L.V. Thomas The Historian in Tropical Africa, London : Oxford University Press for The International Africa Institute (1964), pp. 104-127.

_____ "Maramuca : an exercise in the combined use of Portuguese records and oral tradition", JAH, II, 2 (1961), pp. 211-225.

_____ "The Monomotapa dynasty", NADA, 36 (1959), pp. 58-85.

_____ "The principality of Maungwe : its history and traditions", NADA, 28 (1951), pp. 56-84.

_____ "The roles of 'Chaminuka' and the Mhondoro cults in Shona political history", in E. Stokes and R. Brown, The Zambesian past : studies in Central African history (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966), pp. 28-47.

Alpers, Edward. "Dynasties of the Mutapa-Rozwi complex", JAH, XI, 2, (1970), pp. 203-220.

_____ "The Mutapa and Malawi political systems" in T. O. Ranger (ed.), Aspects of Central African history. (London : Heinemann, 1968), pp. 1-29.

Aquina, Sr. Mary, O.P. "The tribes of Chilimanzi reserve and their relations to the Rozvi", NADA, IX, 2 (1965), PP. 40-52.

Axelson, Eric. Portuguese in South-East Africa, 1488-1600. Cape Town: C.P. Struik, on behalf of the University of the Witwaterstrand, 1973.

_____ Portuguese in South-East Africa, 1600-1700. Johannesburg : Witwaterstrand University Press, 1960.

_____ "Portuguese settlement in the interior of South-East Africa in the seventeenth century". Lisbon : Congresso Internacional de Historia dos Descobrimentos, Actas, vol. V, part 2 (1961), pp. 1-17.

Baker, Robert H. "The mutapo among the Wamanyika", NADA (1925), pp. 48-54.

Beach, D. N. "Nedbele raiders and Shona Power", JAH, XV, 4 (1974), pp. 633-651.

Beier, Uli. "The talking drums of the Yoruba", African Music, 1 (1950), pp. 29-31.

Bent, J. Theodore. The ruined cities of Mashonaland. London, New York, Bombay : Longmans, Green & Co. 1902.

Berlyn, Phillipa. "The keeper of the spirit of Nehoreka", NADA, X, 4, (1972), pp. 55-60.

Berglund A. J. "Pack-oxen and cattle-riding among the Zulu", African Studies, 27, 1 (1968), pp. 29-30.

Bernardi, B. "The social structure of the kraal among the Zezuru in Musami, Southern Rhodesia". Communication from the School of African Studies, University of Cape Town (new series) no. 23 (april 1950).

Bhebe, N. "The Ndebele trade in the nineteenth century, IJAS (1974)pp.87-101

Blacking, John. "Musical expedition of the Venda", African Music, 3,1 (1962), pp. 54-79.

Blake-Thompson J. amd Summers R. "Mlimo and Mwari, notes on a native religion in Southern Rhodesia", NADA (1956) pp. 53-58.

Bloch, Marc. Feudal society (trans. L.A. Manion), 2nd. ed., 2 vols. London : Routledge & Kegan-Paul, 1962.

Bordini, M. A. "The Umtali Altar site : a preliminary report." Rhodesian Prehistory, no. 12 (Dec. 1974), pp. 7-8.

Bourdillon M(ichael) F. C. "The manipulation of myth in a Tavara chiefdom", Africa (London) XLII, 2 (1972), pp. 112-121.

_____ "Peoples of Darwin", NADA, X, 2 (1970), pp. 103-114.

Boxer C.R. (ed.). "Sisnando Dias Bayão, conquistador da mãe d'Ouro'." I Congresso da Historia da Expansao Portuguesa no mondo (4a Seccao), Lisbon, 1938, pp. 99-114.

Brown Richard. The Ndebele succession crisis, 1868-1877, CAHA Local series, no. 5, 1962.

Bullock, Charles. The Mashona (The indigenous natives of Rhodesia), Cape Town : Juta & Co., 1928.

_____ The Mashona and the Matabele, Cape Town: Juta & Co., 1950.

_____ Rina, a story of Africa. Cape Town: Juta & Co, n.d. (1950).

Bulpin, T. V. The white whirlwind (life of Johan Collenbrander). Cape Town : Nelson, 1961.

Burke, E. E. "Some aspects of Arab contact with Southern Africa", in Historians in Tropical Africa (1962), pp. 93-166.

Cabral, Augosto. Raças, Usos and Costumes dos indigenas do districto de Inhambane. Lourenco Marques: Imprensa Nacional, 1910.

Campbell, A. C. "Chimombe", NADA, 34 (1957), pp. 31-37.

Capello, H. and Ivens, R. Quelques notes sur l'etablissement et les trafaux des Portugais au Monomotapa. Lisbonne : Ministère de la Marine et des Colonies, 1889.

Carbutt, C.L. "A brief account of the rise and fall of the Matabele", NADA, 25 (1948), pp. 38-44.

Carrington, John F. "The drum language of the Lokele tribe", African Studies, vol. 3 (1944), pp. 75-88.

Caton-Thompson, G. "Recent excavations at Zimbalawe and related ruins in Rhodesia". Journal of the African Society, no. 29 (1929), pp. 32-38.

_____ The Zimbabwe Culture: ruins and reactions. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1931.

Chanaiwa, David. The Zimbabwe controversy : a case of colonial historiography. Syracuse : Syracuse University Program of Eastern African Studies, 1973.

_____ "Politics and long-distance trade in the Mwene-Mutapa empire during the sixteenth century". Int. J. of Af. Hist. Stud., V, 3 (1972), pp. 424-436.

Chidziwa, Josbua. "History of the vaShawasha", NADA, IX, 1 (1964), pp. 17-34.

Child, Harold. The amaNdebele, n.p., Ministry of Internal Affairs, Rhodesia Government, 1968.

Chilvers, Hedley A. "Master armourers of the impi". Sunday Mail, Johannesburg, 16.III.1930.

"Chinyandura", "The Sinoia caves - a historiette", NADA (1931), pp. 67-8.

Chitehwe S. S. M. "Rain making in Mashonaland", NADA, 31 (1954) pp. 24-26.

Cobbing Julian. "The evolution of Ndebele Amabutho". JAH, XV, 4, (1974), pp. 607-631.

Cockroft, I. G. "The Mlimo (Mwari) cult," NADA, X, 4 (1972), pp. 83-93.

Colley, D.M. "The fate of the last Bashankwe chief", NADA (1927), pp. 65-6.

Colson Elizabeth. "A note on Tonga and Ndebele", Northern Rhodesian Journal, vol. 1, II (1950-52), pp. 35-41.

Colson E. and Gluckmam M. (ed.). Seven tribes of British Central Africa. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959.

Cooke, C. K. "An iron-smelting site in the Matopo hills Southern Rhodesia." J. Afr. Arch. Bull . vol. 14, no. 55 (Sept. 1959), pp. 118-120.

Cortell, Leonard (ed.). The concise Encyclopedia of Archaeology. London : Book Club Associates, 1972.

Crawford, J. R. "An early Iron Age site from the Kimberley Reef Mine, Bindura", SAAB, vol. 22, no. 85 (June 1967), pp. 20-23.

Cunha, Rosalina Silva. "Vasco Fernandes Homem e a expediçâo ao Monomotapa." Actas do Congresso Internacional de Historia dos Descobrimentos, Lisbon, 1961, vol. V, part. 1. pp. 93-103.

Daneel, M. L. The God of the Matopo hills (an essay on the Mwari cult in Rhodesia). The Hague and Paris : Mouton, 1970.

Deutsch, Karl Wolfgang. Nationalism and social communication : an inquiry into the foundations of nationality, 2nd ed., Cambridge, Mass : MIT Press, 1966.

Devito, Joseph A. Communication : concepts and processes. Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice Hall, 1971.

Deyo, Marguerite. "History of the Mutambara tribe", NADA, 32 (1955), pp. 54-64.

Doke, C.M. Report on the unification of the Shona dialects. Hartford, England : printed for the Govt. of Southern Rhodesia, 1931.

Dornan, Rev. S. S. "Rain making in South Africa", Bantu Studies, Vol. III (1927-1929), pp. 185-196.

Eça, Filipe Costa de Almeida de. Historia das guerras no Zambeze, Chicoa e Massangano (1807-1888), 2 vols. Lisbon : Agencia Geral do Ultramar, 1953 and 1954.

Edwards, W. "The Wanoe", NADA (1926), pp. 13-28.

Ellenberger D. Fred. History of the Basuto Ancient and modern. (written in english by J.C. MacGregor), London : Caxton publishing co., 1912.

Fagan B(rian) M. "Early trade and raw materials in South Central Africa", in Gray R. & D. Birmingham (eds), Pre-colonial African trade. Essays on trade in Central and Eastern Africa before 1900 (1970), pp. 24-38.

_____ "Excavations at Ingombe Ilede, 1960-2". in idem et al. Iron Age cultures in Zambia, vol. II (1969), pp. 57-184.

_____ Southern Africa during the Iron Age, London : Thames & Hudson, 1965.

Fagan B.M., Phillipson W.D., and Daniels S.G.H. Iron Age cultures in Zambia (Dambwa, Ingombe Ilede and the Tonga). vol. II, London : Chatto & Windus, 1969.

Fairbridge, Kingsley. The story of Kingsley Fairbridge, told by himself. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1938.

Farrant, Jean Cecil. Mashonaland martyr : Bernard Mizeki and the pioneer church. London and Cape Town : Oxford University Press, 1966.

Fisher H. J. "He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage : the horse in Central Sudan", JAH, part I, vol. XIII, 3 (1972), pp. 369-388 ; part II, vol. XIV, 3 (1973), pp. 355-379.

Forrestal, P. "Chibi tribe", NADA (1970), pp. 84-86.

Fortune G. "A Rozi text with translation and notes", NADA, 33 (1956), pp. 67-91.

Franklin, H. "Manyusa (Amanxusa)", NADA (1928), pp. 77-83.

——— "Magango Hutari", NADA, 11 (1933), pp. 29-31.

Gambo, Chief Frank II, "Some true history about the Royal house of the Gambos", NADA (1962), pp. 46-51.

Garlake, P. S. "The dating of the Zimbabwe ruins", Rhodesian Prehistory, no. 5 (Oct. 1970), pp. 3-5.

——— Great Zimbabwe, London : Chatto & Windus, 1973.

——— "An Iron Age site on the Mukwichi River, Urungwe". S. Afr. Bull. of Arch, vol. 26, no. 103-104 (Dec. 1971), pp. 147-152.

——— "Iron Age sites in the Urungwe District of Rhodesia", S. Afr. Arch. Bull., 25, 97 (June 1970), pp. 25-44.

——— "Radio Carbon dating for the Rhodesian Iron Age", Rhodesian Prehistory, no. 2 (June 1969), pp. 5-9.

——— "Test excavations at Mapela Hill, near the Shashi River, Rhodesian", Arnoldia (Rhodesia), vol. 3, 34 (30/5/1968).

——— "The Zimbabwe ruins re-examined", Rhodesian History, 1 (1970) pp. 17-30.

Gelfand, Michael. Shona ritual. Cape Town : Juta & Co., 1959.

Goody, Jack. "Restricted Literacy in Northern Ghana", in idem (ed.) Literacy in traditional societies (1968), pp. 198-264.

——— (ed.) Literacy in traditional societies. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1968.

Gray, Richard and Birmingham, David (eds.). Pre-colonial African trade : Essays on trade in Central and Eastern Africa before 1900. London : Oxford University Press, 1970.

Gregson, Ronald E. "Trade and politics in South-East Africa : The Moors, the Portuguese and the Kingdom of Mwenemutapa". African Social Research, 16 (Dec. 1973), pp. 413-445.

Hall, R. N. Great Zimbabwe, Mashonaland, Rhodesia. London : Methuen & Co., 1905.

Hall, R. N. and Neal, W. G. The ancient ruins of Rhodesia (2nd ed., 1904). Bulawayo, Books of Rhodesia, rep. 1972.

Hannan M. Standard Shona Dictionary. London : Macmillan & Co., 1961.

Hatton, J. S. "Notes on Makalanga iron smelting", NADA (1967), pp. 39-42.

Henige D. P. "The problem of feedback in oral traditions, examples from the Fante coastlands", JAH, 14, 2 (1973), pp. 223-235.

Hole, Hugh Marshall. Old Rhodesian days, London : Frank Cass & Co., rep. 1968.

Holleman J. F. Accommodating the spirit amongst some North-Eastern Shona tribes. Oxford University Press, 1953, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, no. 22.

_____ African Interlude, Capetown : Nasionale Boekhandel, 1958.

_____ The pattern of Hera Kinship, Oxford University Press, 1949, Rhodes-Livingstone Paper, no. 17.

_____ "Some 'Shona' tribes of Southern Africa", in E. Colson & M. Gluckman (eds.) Seven tribes of British Central Africa (1959), pp. 354-396.

Honyera, son of Zwakavapano. "The story of the Masunda headmanship", NADA (1964), pp. 55-59.

Howman E. G. "Rufimbi", NADA (1950), pp. 31-33.

_____ "The traditional history and customs of the Makaranga (Warozwi)", S. Afr. J. of Sc., vol. 15 (1919), pp. 383-392.

Howman R. "The effects of history on the African", Rhodesiana, no. 2 (1957), pp. 1-2.

Hubbard, Margaret Carson. No one to blame. An African adventure. New York : Minton, Balca & co., 1934.

Huffman T. N. "Cloth from the Iron Age in Rhodesia", Arnoldia (Rhodesia), 5, 14 (1971).

_____ "Excavations at Leopard's Kopje's Main Kraal : a preliminary report", S. Afr. Arch. Bull. 26 (1971), pp. 85-89.

_____ "A guide to the Iron Age of Mashonaland" in Occ. Papers, Nat. Museums of Rhodesia, vol. IV part 1 (series A, Human Sciences), pp. 20-42.

_____ "The rise and fall of Zimbabwe", JAH, XIII, 3 (1972), pp. 353-366.

_____ "Test excavations at Makuru, Rhodesia", Arnoldia (Rhodesia), Vol. 5, 39 (1973).

_____ "Ancient mining and Zimbabwe", J. of the S. African Inst. of Mining and Metallurgy 74, 6 (1974), pp. 238-248.

Hughes, A.J.B., Kin, Caste and nation among the Rhodesian Ndebele, Manchester; Manchester Univ. Press, 1956, Rhodes-Livingstone Paper no. 25.

Hughes, A.J.B. and Van Velsen, J., "The Ndebele", in H. Kuper et al, The Shona and the Ndebele (1954), pp. 41-110.

Hyatt, S.P., The old transport road (1914), Bulawayo; Books of Rhodesia, Rep. 1969.

Isaacman, Allen, "Madzi-Manga, Mhondoro and the use of oral traditions - a chapter in Barwe religious and political history", JAH, XIV, 3 (1973), pp. 395-409.

_____ Mozambique: The Africanization of a European institution: The Zambezi prazos 1750-1902, Madison; Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1972.

Jackson, A.P., "Ample food without plough ing", NADA (1954), pp. 62-66.

Johnson, Frank, Great Days, The Autobiography of an empire pioneer, (1940), Bulawayo, Books of Rhodesia, Rep. 1972, Rhod. Rep. Lib., vol. 24.

Junod, H. Ph., "Coutumes diverses des VaNdau de l'Afrique Orientale Portugaise", Africa, vol. X, 20 (1937), pp. 159-175.

Katz, Elihu, and Lazarsfeld, Paul, F., Personal influence; The part played by people in the flow of communications, Glencoe, III; The Free Press, 1955.

Kay, George, Rhodesia: a human geography, London; University of London Press, 1970.

Killef, Clive & Peggy, Shona customs: Essays by African writters. Gwelo, Mambo Press, in assoc. with the Rh. Lit. Bureau, 1970.

Kirby, Percival R., The Musical instruments of the native races of South Africa, 2nd ed., Johannesburg; Witwaterstrand University Press, 1965.

Kumile, S. Masola, trans. G. Fortune, "Three Kalanga Praise Poems", NADA, XI(1975) pp181-191.

Kuper, Hilda, Hugues. A.J.B., and Van Velsen, J., The Shona and Ndebele of Southern Rhodesia, London, Int. African Inst. Ethnog. Surv. Afr., Southern Africa, pt. IV. 1954

Latham, C.J.K., "Dzimbadzembagwe", NADA, X, 2 (1970), pp. 24-31.

_____ "Some notes on the tribes in Mount Darwin, Rushinga and Centenary Districts", NADA XI, 2 (1975), pp. 166-181.

Leite, Bertha, Dom Gonçalo da Silveira, Lisbon; Agência Geral das Colonias, 1946.

Lenherr, J., "Advancing indigenous church music", African Music, 4, 2 (1968), pp. 33-40.

Lestrade, G.P., "Some notes on the ethnic history of the Venda and their Rhodesian affinities", in van Warmelow, N.J. (ed.) Contributions towards Venda history (1950), pp. XX-XXVIII.

_____ "Some notes on the political organization of the Venda-speaking tribes", in van Warmelow, Contributions... (1950) pp. I - XX.

Levtzion, N., Ancient Ghana and Mali, London; Methuen & Co., Studies in African History, no. 7, 1973.

Lewis, D.G.,"The battle of Zwangendaba," NADA 33 (1956), pp. 51-52.

Liesegang G., "Ngumi migrations between Delagoa Bay and the Zambezi 1821-1839", African Historical Studies, vol. III, 2 (1970), pp. 317-337.

Lindblom, K.G., "The use of oxen as pack and riding animals in Africa", Stockholm, Ricksmuseets Etnografiska Avdelning (1931), Smarre Meddelanden, n. 10.

Lloyd, Elaine M., "Mbava", NADA (1925), pp. 62-64.

Lobato, Alexandre, Colonização senhorial da Zambezia e outros estudos, Lisbon; Junta de investigaçaò do Ultramar, 1962.

_____ Evalução Administrativa e Economica de Moçambique 1752-1763, Lisbon, Agência Geral de Ultramar, 1957.

_____ A expansão portuguesa em Moçambique, de 1498 a 1530, 3 vols., Lisbon; Centro de Estudos Historicos Ultramarinos, 1954-1960.

Mackenzie, John, M., "A pre-colonial industry: the Njanja and the iron trade", NADA XI, 2 (1975), pp. 200-220.

"Mafohla", "The curse of Chigodoro", NADA (1928), pp. 20-22.

Maguire, Rochfort, "Rhodesia", J. of The African Soc., vol. 22 (1922-3), pp. 81-95.

Mansfield, Charlotte, Via Rhodesia, A Journey through Southern Africa, London, Stanley Paul & Co., n.d.

Marcornes, Rev. Francisque, "The Rozvis or 'Destroyers'", NADA 11, (1938), pp. 72-90.

Marks, Shula, and Atmore, Anthony, "Firearms in Southern Africa", JAH, XII, 4 (1971), pp. 517-530.

Marodzi (trans. F.P.), "The Barozvi", NADA (1924), pp. 88-91.

Marques, A.H. de Oliveira, Daily life in Portugal in the late Middle Ages, Madison, Wisconsin; University of Wisconsin Press, 1971.

Mason, R.J., "Background to the Transvaal Iron Age - new discoveries at Olifantspoort and Broederstroom", J. of S. Afr. Inst. of Mining and Metallurgy (1974), 74, 6.pp. 211 - 215

Mathers, E.P., Zambesia, England's El Dorado in Africa, London, King, Sell & Railton, 1891.

Matthews, J. Brian, "One account of the history of the Vatande", NADA (1966), pp. 31-32.

_____ "The Mhondoro of Mutota and his village", NADA (1960), pp. 66-74.

Maugham, R.C.F., Zambezia; A general description of the valley of the Zambezi River, from the delta to the River Aroangwa, with its history, agriculture, flora, fauna, and ethnology, London, John Murray, 1910.

Mauny, Raymond, "Notes on the Zimbabwe-Sofala problem", SAAB, vol. 14, no. 53 (March 1959), pp. 18-20.

Mennell, F.P., A guide to mining in Rhodesia, Bulawayo, Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Co. Ltd., 1930.

Mhlagazanhlansi (Dr. Neville Jones), My friend kumalo (1944), Bulawayo, Books of Rhodesia, Rep. 1972.

Mhlanga, Wilson, "1) The story of Ngwakazi; 2) The history of the Amatshangana", NADA, 25 (1948), pp. 70-73.

Miller, F.V. Bruce, "A few historical notes on Feira and Zumbo", in J. of the African Society, vol. IX (1909-10), pp. 416-423.

Miracle, M.P., Maize in Tropical Africa, Madison, Milwaukee, & London; University of Wisconsin Press, 1966.

Mudenge, S.I., "The role of foreign trade in the Rozvi empire, a reappraisal", JAH XV, 3 (1974), pp. 373-391.

Mulahlo & E.C.P. Whitney, "Major Wilson's last stand on the Shangani River, 1896", NADA 13, (1935), pp. 45-47.

Mziki, (A.A. Campbell,) Mlimo, The rise and fall of the Matabele (1929). Bulawayo, Books of Rhodesia, Rep. 1972.

Ncube, Rufu M.M., "The true story re Chaminuka and Lobengula", NADA (1962), pp. 59-67.

Nettelson, G.E., "History of the Ngamiland tribes up to 1926", Bantu Studies, vol. VIII (1934), pp. 343-360.

Newitt, M.D.D., Portuguese settlements on the Zambezi exploration, land tenure & colonial rule in East Africa, London, Longman, 1973.

_____ "The early history of the sultanate of Angoche", JAH XIII (1972), pp. 397-406.

_____ "The Portuguese on the Zambezi: an historical interpretation of the Prazo system", JAH, X 1 (1969), pp. 67-85.

Nida, Eugene A., "Tribal and trade languages", African Studies, vol. 14, 4 (1955), pp. 155-8.

Oates, Frank (ed. by O.G. Oates), Matabeleland and the Victoria Falls, London, C. Kegan Paul & Co., 1881.

Oliveira, Delfim Jose de, A provincia de Moçambique e o Bonga, Coimbra, Imprensa Academica, 1879.

Ornellas, Ayres D., Raças e linguas indigenas em Moçambique, Memoria apresentada ao Congresso Colonial Nacional, Lourenço Marques, Imprensa Nacional, 1905.

Paranavitana, S., "The emperor of Ceylon at the time of the arrival of the Portuguese in 1505", Univ. Ceylon Rev., XIX (1961), pp. 15-30.

Pearson, Roy, "Red locusts again on Southerly marches", The Outpost (Rhodesia), vol. 28, no. 3 (1951), pp. 41-43.

I.R. Phimister, "Ancient mining near Great Zimbabwe", J. of the S. Afr. Inst. of Mining and Metallurgy, vol. 74, no. 6, January (1974), pp. 223-237.

Pool, Ithiel de Sola, The prestige press: a comparative study of political symbols, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1970.

Posselt, F.W.T., "The Banyemba legend and ceremony", NADA (1935), pp. 104-106.

_____ Fact and Fiction: A short account of the Natives of Southern Rhodesia, Bulawayo, Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Co., 1935.

_____ A survey of the native tribes of Southern Rhodesia, Salisbury, Government of Southern Rhodesia, 1927.

Prendergast, M.D., "Research into the ferrous metallurgy of Rhodesian Iron Age societies", J. of the S. Af. I. of Mining and Metallurgy, 74, 6 (1974), pp. 254-264.

Pye, Lucien W. (ed.), Communications and political development (Conference..., Dobbs Ferry, New York, 1961), Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1963.

Quintinha, Julião, Manica e Sofala, Lisbon; Edições Cosmos, n.d. (1938), Cadernos Coloniais, no. 50.

Randall-MacIver, D., Medieval Rhodesia, London, Macmillan & Co., 1906.

Randles, W.G.L., L'empire du Monomotapa du XVe au XIXe siecle Paris & The Hague, Mouton, 1975 .

_____ L'image du sud-est africain dans la litterature europeenne au XVIe siecle Lisbon; Cent. de Est. Hist. Ult., 1959 .

Ranger, T.O., "Connexions between 'primary resistance' movements and modern mass nationalism in East and Central Africa", JAH, pt. 1, IX (1968), no. 3, pp. 437-453; pt. 2, no. 4. pp. 631-644.

_____ "The role of Ndebele and Shona religious authorities in the rebellions of 1896 and 1897", E. Stokes and R. Brown (ed.), The Zambezian Past (1966), pp. 94-137.

_____ Revolt in Southern Rhodesia 1896-7, London, Heinemann, 1967.

Ransford, Oliver Neil, The rulers of Rhodesia from the earliest times to the referendum, John Murray, London, 1968.

Rita-Ferreira, Antonio, Agrupamento e caracterizaçao etnica dos indigenas de Moçambique, Lisbon, Junta de Investigaçoes do Ultramar, 1958, Estudos, Ensaios, e Documentos, no. 50.

Robins, P., and Whitty, A., "Excavations at Harleigh Farm, near Rusape, Rhodesia, 1958-1962", S. Afr. Arch. Bull , 21, 66 (1966), pp. 61-80.

Robinson, K.R., "A note on Iron Age sites in the Zambezi valley and on the escarpment in the Sipolilo District, Southern Rhodesia", Arnoldia (Rhodesia), I, 27 (1965), pp. 1-12.

_____ "A history of the Bikita District", NADA (1957), pp. 75-87.

_____ Khami Ruins, Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1959.

_____ "An Early Iron Age site from the Chibi District, Southern Rhodesia", S. Af. Arch. Bull. 16, 63 (1961), pp. 75-102.

_____ "A note on storage-pits: Rhodesian Iron Age and modern African", S. Af. Arch. Bull., 18, 70 (1963), pp. 62-63.

_____ "The Leopard's Kopje culture: a preliminary report on recent work", Arnoldia (Rhodesia), I, 25 (1965).

_____ "The Leopard's Kopje culture, its position in the Iron Age of Southern Rhodesia", S. Af. Arch. Bull., 21, 81 (1966), pp.5-61.

_____ "The archaeology of the Rovwi" in Stokes, E. and Brown, R., (ed.), The Zambezian Past (1966), pp. 3-28.

Rudd, Sheila, "Lekkewater ruins, Tsindi hill, Theydon, Rhodesia", Proc. & Trans. of the Rh. Sci. Assoc., vol. 52, pt. 2 (1958), pp. 38-50.

Sandes, S.D., "Zwenyika remembers", NADA, 32 (1955), pp. 31-40.

Santos Junior, João dos, Contribuçâo para o estudo da antropologia de Moçambique: Algunas tribus do distrito de Tete, Porto, 1944.

Schapera, I., "Notes on the history of the Kaa", African Studies, vol. IV, 3 (Sept. 1945), pp. 109-121.

_____ Rainmaking rites of Tswana tribes, Leiden, Afrika-Studiecentrum Cambridge: African Studies Centre, African Social Research Documents, no. 3, 1971.

Sebina, A.M., (trans. A. Mahloane), "Makalaka", African Studies, vol. 6, 2 (1947), pp. 82-94.

Shepherd, W.C.A., "Recruiting in Portuguese East Africa of natives for the mines", J. of the African Society, vol. XXXIII (1934), pp. 253-260.

Silva, Antonio da, Mentalidade missiologia dos Jesuitas em Moçambique antes de 1759, 2 vols., Lisbon; Junta de Investigaçôes do Ultramar, 1967.

Simmonds, R.G.S., "Charewa, voice of the Rain-God", NADA (1964), pp. 60-63.

Spencer, Paul, The Samburu, a study of gerontocracy in a nomadic tribe, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965.

Stayt, Hugh, "Notes on the Bavenda and their connexion with Zimbabwe", Appendix IV, to G. Caton-Thompson, The Zimbabwe (1931), pp. 249-259.

_____ The Bavenda, London, Oxford University Press, Pub for the Int. Inst. of African Languages and Cultures, 1931.

Summers, Roger, "Archaeological distributions & a tentative history of tse-tse infestation in Rhodesia and the Northern Transvaal", Arnoldia (Rhodesia), vol. 3 (13) (30.VIII.1967).

_____ Ancient mining in Rhodesia and adjacent areas, Museum Memoir no. 3, National Museums of Rhodesia, Salisbury 1969.

Summers, Rogers. "Human figures in clay & stones from Southern Rhodesia and adjoining territories", Occ. Pap. of the Nat. Museums of Sn. Rh., no. 21 A, vol. 3 (Human Sciences), (1957), pp. 61-75.

_____ Ancient ruins and vanished civilisations of Southern Africa, Cape Town : T.V. Bulpin, 1971.

_____ Zimbabwe : A Rhodesian mystery, Cape Town : Nelson, 1963.

Summers, R. and Pagden, C. W. The warriors, Cape Town : Books of Africa, 1970.

Sumner, H. E. "The kwenda story", NADA, IX, 4 (1967), pp. 3-5.

Sutherland-Harris, Nicola. "Trade and the Rozwi mombo", in J.R. Gray & D. Birmingham (eds.) Precolonial African Trade (1970), pp. 243-265.

Taylor, Guy A. "The Matabele headring (Isigodhlo) and some fragments of history", NADA (1966), pp. 79-84.

Teixeira Botelho, Jose Justino. Historia militar e politica dos Portugueses em Moçambique, Lisbon : Centro Tipografico Colonial, 1934.

Theal, George McCall. History and ethnography of Africa South of the Zambesi, from the settlement of the Portuguese at Sofala..., 4 vols., London : Sonenschein & co., 1907-1910.

Thorpe, Clarence. Limpopo to Zambezi : sixty years of methodism in Southern Rhodesia, London : Cargate Press, 1951.

Townsend, Hazel. The history of the Umvukwes, Umvukwes Women Institute, Rhodesia, 1960.

Tracey, H(ugh). Antonio Fernandes : descobridor do Monomotapa, 1514-1515. Lourenço Marques ; Arquivo Historico de Moçambique, 1940.

_____ "Antonio Fernandes, Rhodesia's first pioneer", Rhodesiana 19 (1968), pp. 1-26.

Tracey, Hugh. "The mbira class of instruments in Rhodesia (1932)", African Music, vol 4, no. 3 (1969), pp. 78-96.

Tredgold Robert. Xosa, Tales of life from the African veld, London : George Allen & Unwin, 1973.

Tsodzo, T. K. "The man from there", NADA (1971), pp. 26-29.

_____ "An historical account of the massacre of the Njanja tribe", NADA (1970), pp. 44-46.

Turton, J.E.S. "Native History of Salisbury as related by Chari Gwati...", NADA (1939), pp. 17-19.

Vambe, Lawrence. An ill-fated people, London : Heinemann 1972.

Vansina, J. "The bells of kings", JAH, X 2 (1969), pp. 187-197.

Van Warmelo, N. J. (ed.). Contributions towards Venda history, religion and tribal ritual, Union of South Africa, Dept. of Native Affairs 1950, Ethnological Publications, vol. III.

Van Warmelo, N. J. (ed). The copper miners of Musina and the early history of the Zoutpansberg. Union of S.A., Dept. of Native Affairs, Pretoria, 1940, Ethnological Publication, vol VIII.

Vasse, G. "The Mozambique Company's territory", Journal of the African Society, VI (1906-7), part I, pp. 259-268 ; part II, pp. 385-389.

Von Sicard, H. "The derivations of the name Mashona", African Studies, vol. IX (1950), pp. 138-143.

——— "The origin of the tribes in the Belingwe Reserve", NADA 32, (1955), pp. 77-92.

——— "Places of ancient occupation in Chief Negove's country", NADA 33 (1956), pp. 32-50 ; NADA 34 (1957), pp. 8-30.

——— "The Rhodesian tally", NADA 31 (1954), pp. 52-54.

——— "The Vuzwa Hills and their inhabitants", NADA 35 (1958), pp. 71-83.

——— "A propositu Sisrando Dias Beyão", Studia, 16 (1965), pp. 179-187.

——— "The ancient Bani-Zimbaiwe route", Nsungwita no. 4 (1968), pp. 55-61.

W., L. J. "A legend of Zimbabwe", The Outpost 15, 6 (1935), p. 6.

Walker, N.J. "Matabeleland excursion. Part II : Late Iron Age", Rhodesian Prehistory, no. 9 (oct. 1972), pp. 3-7.

Wallacoot, P. G. "Dziwaguru - God of rain", NADA (1963), pp. 116-121.

Weinrich, A. K. H. (Sister M. Aquino). "The role of ritual in the traditional political system", Rhodesian Prehistory, no. 4 (1972), pp. 3-7

Wessmann, H. The Baroeda of the Spelonken (Transvaal), Transl. from the German by Ice Weinthall, pub. "The African World", London.

Wheeler, D. and Pélissier, R. Angola. Pall Mall Press, London, 1971

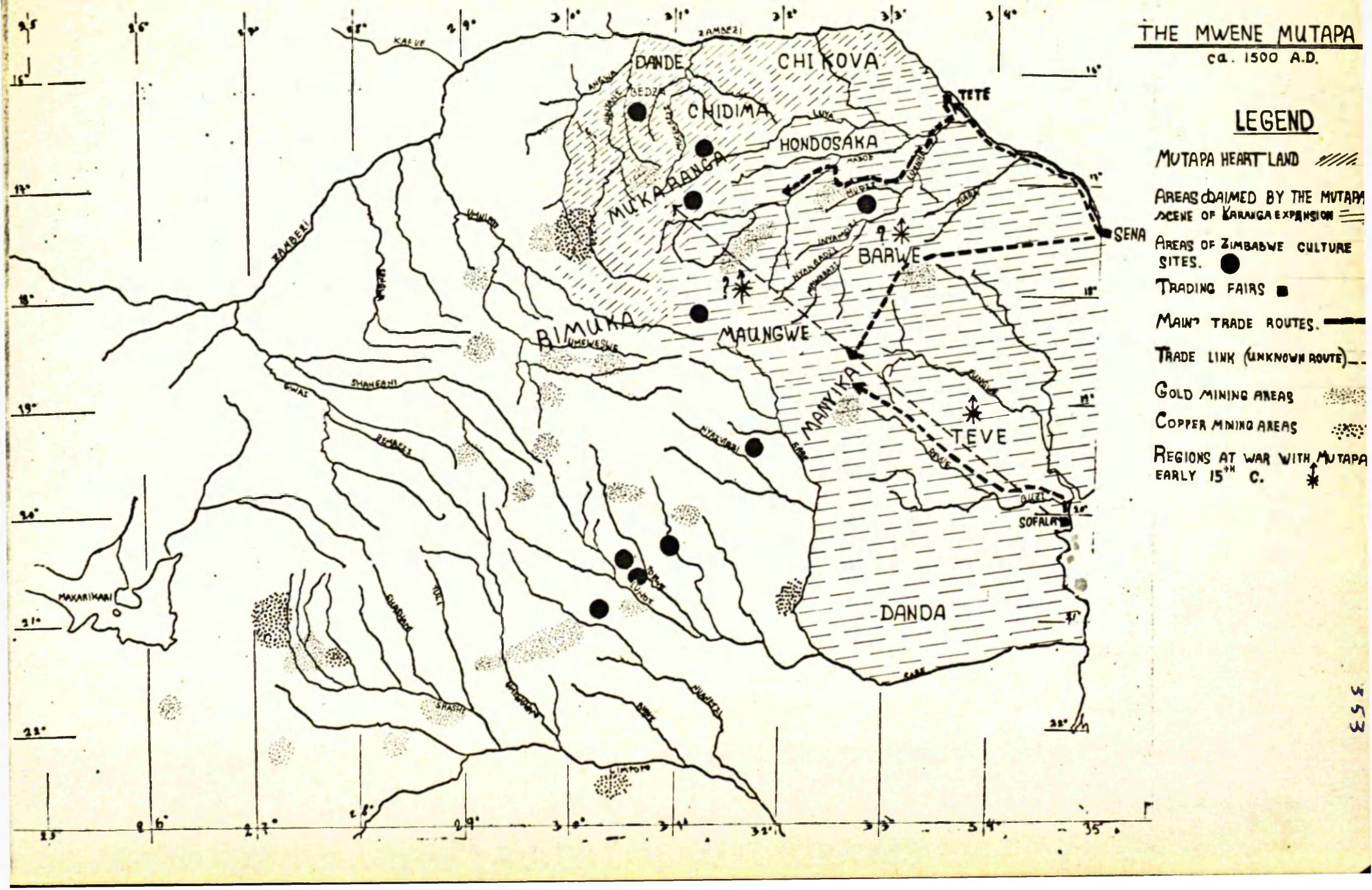
White, J. D. "Amakosikasi - some notes on the queens and families of Mzilikazi and Lobengula", NADA XI, 1 (1974), pp. 109-113.

——— "Some notes on the history and customs of the Urungwe district", NADA X, 3 (1971), pp. 33-75.

Wilson, Monica. Communal rituals of the Nyakusa, Oxford University Press, for the Int. Africa Inst., 1959.

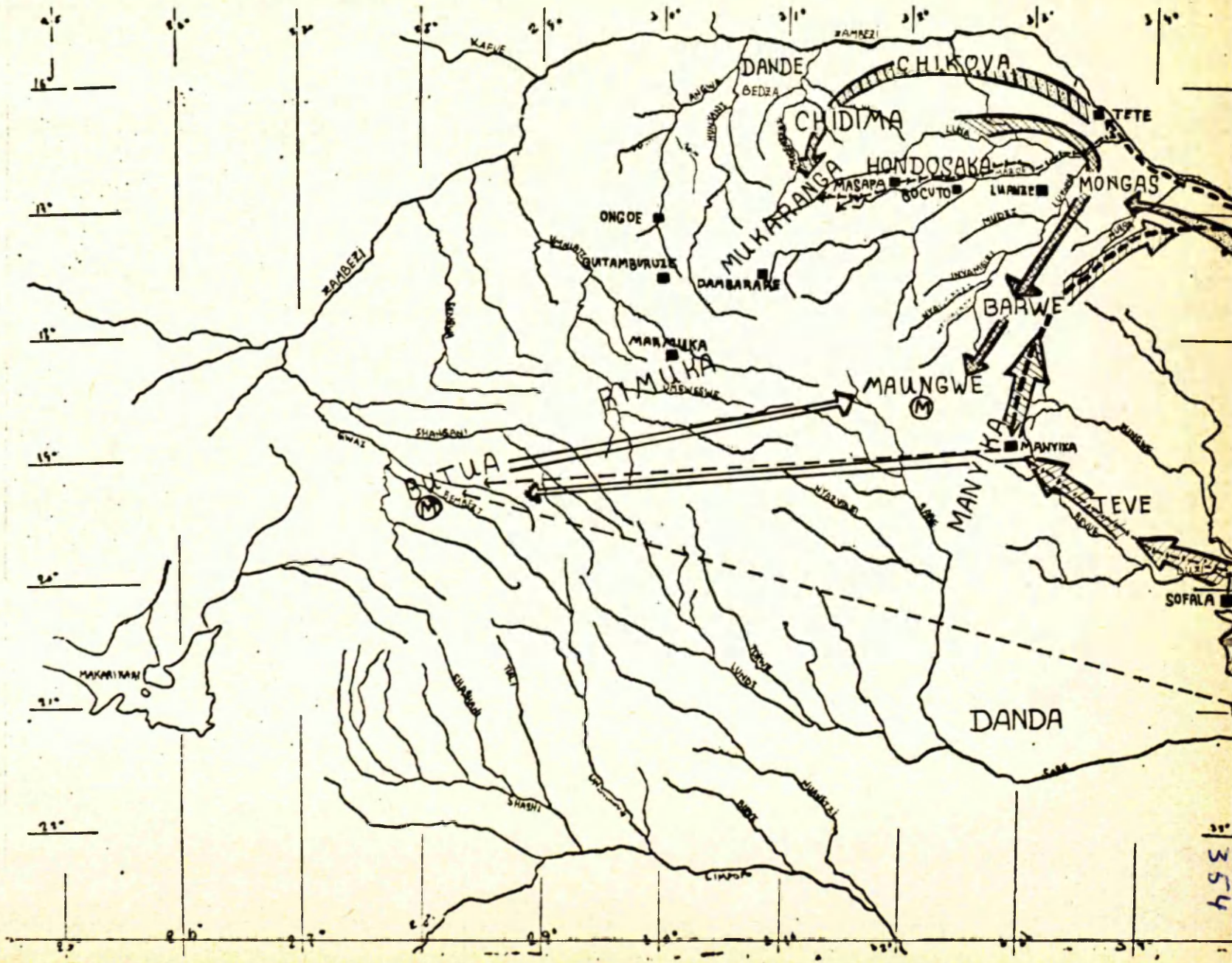
Winius, George Davison. The fatal history of Portuguese Ceylon, Camb. Mass : Harvard University Press, 1971.

Young, John. "The legendary history of the Hodi and Negomi chiefs". NADA X, 2 (1970), pp. 49-61.


THE MWENE MUTAPA
ca. 1500 A.D.
LEGEND
MUTAPA HEART LAND
AREAS CLAIMED BY THE MUTAPA
SCENE OF KARANGA EXPANSION
AREAS OF ZIMBABWE CULTURE SITES.
TRADING FAIRS
MAIN TRADE ROUTES.
TRADE LINK (UNKNOWN ROUTE)
GOLD MINING AREAS
COPPER MINING AREAS
REGIONS AT WAR WITH MUTAPA EARLY 15TH C.
DANDE
CHIKOVA
CHIDIMA
HONDOSAKA
MUKARANGA
BARWE
BIMUKA
MAUNGWE
MANYIKA
TEVE
DANDA
TETE
SENA
SOFALA
ZAMBEZI
KAFUE
SHANGANI
MAKARIKANI
LIMPOPO

ASPECTS OF COMMUNICATIONS
ca. 1550 to 1680

THE MWENE MUTAPA AREA.



LEGEND

- Portuguese trading fairs.
- (M) "Moor" active trade.
- Trade routes.
- Routes of trade and diplomatic contact.
- Routes of some military expeditions:
- Barretto 1571.
- Homem 1576.
- Gatsi Rusere 1608.
- Gatsi Rusere and Madeira 1609.
- Bayaão 1640.

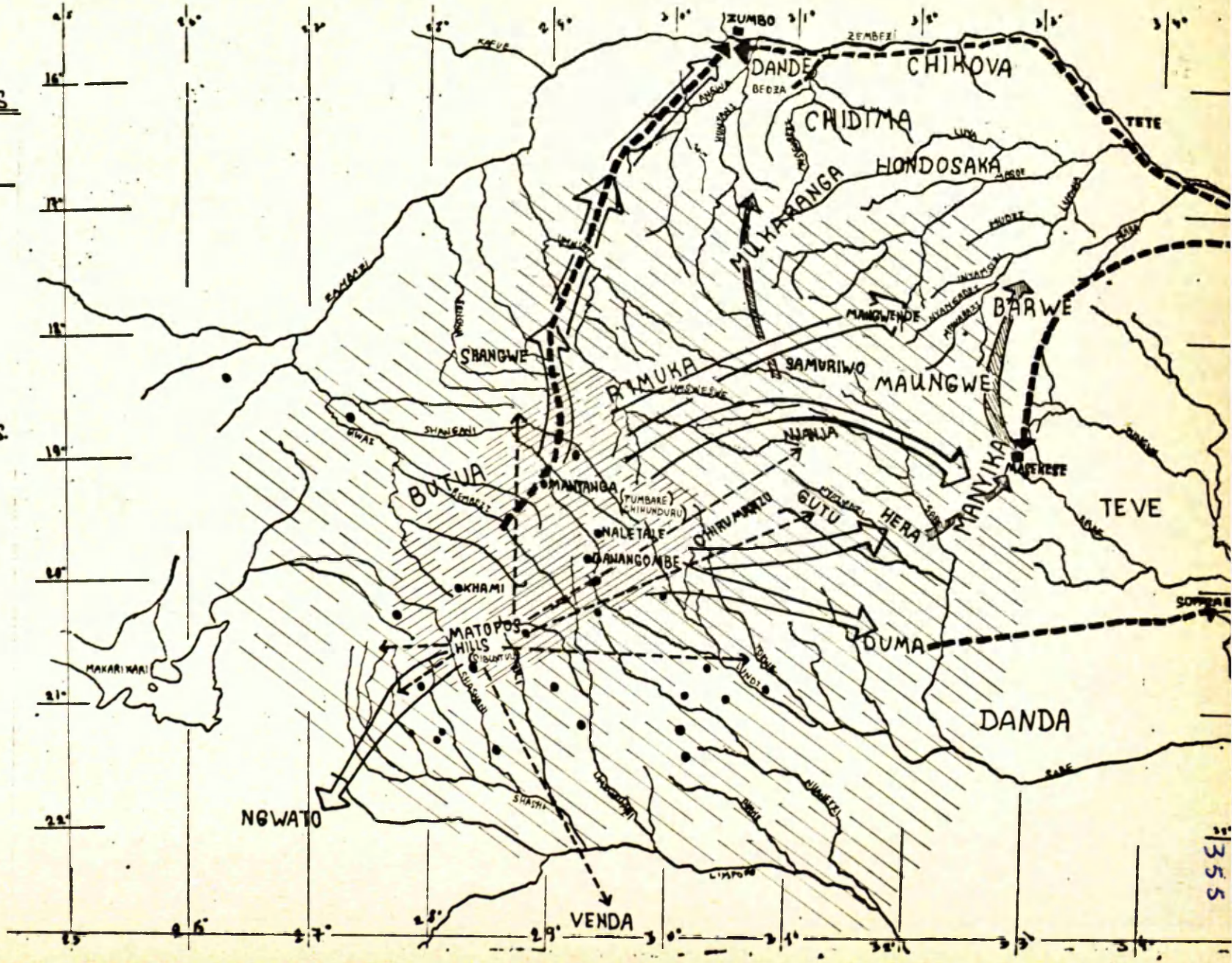
ASPECTS OF COMMUNICATIONS

ca. 1680 to 1820

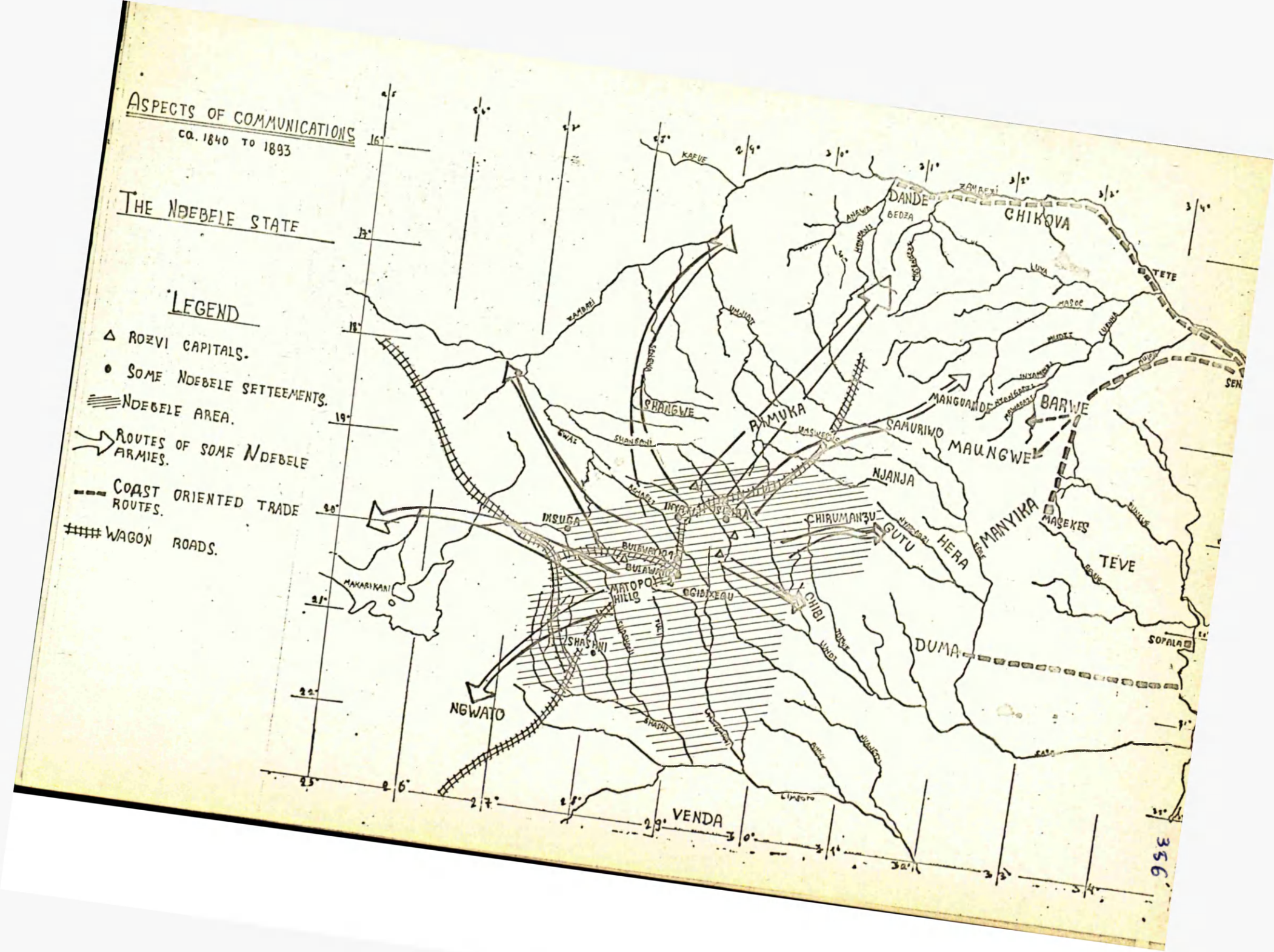
CHANGAMIRE ROZVI STATE

LEGEND

- ● KHAMI CULTURE SITES.
- ■ PORTUGUESE TRADING FAIRS.
- TRADE ROUTES.
- ROUTES OF CHANGAMIRE CAMPAIGNS.
- ROUTES OF SOME ROZVI ARMIES. 1696 – 1820
- DIRECTIONS OF INFLUENCE OF MWARI CULT.



355


ASPECTS OF COMMUNICATIONS
ca. 1840 TO 1893
THE NDEBELE STATE
LEGEND
ROZVI CAPITALS.
SOME NDEBELE SETTEEMENTS.
NDEBELE AREA.
ROUTES OF SOME NDEBELE ARMIES.
COAST ORIENTED TRADE ROUTES.
WAGON ROADS.
KAFUE
ZAMBEZI
DANDE
BEDZA
CHIKOVA
TETE
SHANGWE
RAMUKA
SAMURIWO
MANGUANDE
BARWE
MAUNGWE
NJANJA
INSUGA
CHIRUMANZU
GUTU
HERA
MANYIKA
MASEKES
TEVE
BULEWAYO
BULAWAYO
MATOPO HILLS
GOIBIXEGU
CHIBI
DUMA
SOFALA
MAKARIKARI
SHASHANI
NGWATO
VENDA
SEN.
356

Appendix

A note on oral information

Some 57 interviews with African informants were carried out by the writer during a stay in Rhodesia in 1973. All interviews were taped and full typescripts of them are deposited with the Department of History, University of Rhodesia, Salisbury. The recorded interviews will be deposited with the National and University Library, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Records can be consulted in both depositories.

Interviews were carried out in August in the Chihota TTL, near Marandellas, inhabited by groups under Chief Chihota of the Tembo clan, Chidawo Mazvimbakupa, Chief Mudzimurema of the Soko /Vudzijena, Chief Nenguwo of the Shumba / Nyamuzibwa, Chief Samuriwo of the Moyo/Wakapiwa, and Chief Nyandoro of the Nhari/ Unendoro. Some of the informants belonged to vatorwa (foreigner) groups settled with the above groups. A series of six interviews was carried out on the 17.vi.1973 in Epworth Mission, near Salisbury ; informants referred to the same general area of Marandellas-Salisbury. Another series of interviews was carried out in Buhera District in the months of August and September, 1973. The two main groups there are the Njanja of the Moya/Sinyoro, under various chiefs, and the Shava/Museyamwa people under Chief Nyashanu ; there is also a Rozvi group of the Moyo/Mhondizvo, under Chief Chimombe, and the Dziva/Pakuru people under Chief Nerutanga. One interview was carried out at Nharira TTL with Chief Musarurwa of the Moyo/Mhondizvo. A last interview with two Lemba men was carried out in Salisbury.

It was planned to carry out some interviews in the Wedza TTL, bridging the territorial gap between Marandellas and Buhera, but for technical reasons this did not prove possible.

Informants were on the whole co-operative. A lot of time was invested in trying to locate informants at home, at a time of the year when beer-drinking parties are given. An average of two interviews per day was considered satisfactory under the circumstances. Some time was taken by establishing a rapport with each informant, and allaying suspicions of being a C.I.D. man, or a journalist. This was true especially in Chihota, where the influence of the then tense situation on the northern border was felt. Three of the chiefs, Mudzimurema, Nyandoro and Chimombe would allow only group interviews, in the presence of the chief. A typical interview lasted for about an hour and a half, by the end of which time most informants were exhausted. (A second visit to some informants was carried out in less cases than was desirable, due to the frequent breakdowns of the writer's car.) Questions and answers were translated and recorded in full in both Chishona and English. All the interviews in Chihota and Epworth interpreted by Mr/Gershom Khiaza. Most of the interviews in Buhera were interpreted by the teacher C.N.Chirombe, and Mr. S.M.Matsveru.

Most informants were in their sixties or over, and varied in their knowledge of the past. Genealogies, historical tribal itineraries and historical residence places were the aspects of history most commonly remembered. Details not fixed in group histories of activities like trade and iron-smelting were not

always as clearly remembered. In Buhera the writer was able to supplement his interviews by condensed records of interviews held by the Community Advisers Messrs. Garwe and Chadambura, which they kindly allowed him to consult. Details of the operation of communications at the nyika ('chiefdom') level were elicited, however, by questioning, with details of trade, crafts, and tribute presentations. Informants were not shy of stating : handizvi (I don't know).

LIST OF INTERVIEWS

(Details : name and age of informant ; place and date of interview ; when place not stated - it was at the village of the particular chief).

a) Chihota TTL (interpreter: Mr.Gershom Khiaza).
1. Mr.Chihota, chief's brother, Tembo/Mazvimbakupa, (about 70), with the chief's son (an accidental later recording on same tape deleted their names) ; Interview was short, 7.VIII.73.

2. Mrs/Patrick Furamera : Origin - Nenguwo people (Shumba/Nyamuzibwa), (about 60), educated at Waddilove Mission ; near Furamera school, 26. viii.73.

3. Mr/ Takundwa Nzigwana, Soko/Vudzijena, old and fragile, married into Nyandoro people ; interviewed at Chingwanda African Purchase Area, 8.viii.73.

4. Mr. Mushongwa, Moyo/Vakapiwa of Samuriwo : (about 50), recommended by others as knowledgeable ; interviewed near Mahusekwa township, 8.viii.1973.

5. Mr. Musarurwa, Moyo/Vakapiwa ; (about 60), a good informant; interviewed near Mahusekwa Township, 9.viii.1973.

6. Chief Wiri Samuriwo, with his two councillors, Mr. Mungani and Mr. Tafiranyika, (all over 60), 9.viii.73.

7. Chief Mchechesi Mudzimurema, Soko/Vudzijena ; (about 90), an extremely good informant ; interviewed at his place, 10.viii.1973.

8. Mr. Machokoto Mungani, (see no. 6) ; interviewed near Mahusekwa, 11.viii.1973. A good informant.

9. Chief S.P.Nyandoro, Nhari/Unendoro, with his councillors ; the main speaker was Mr. Chari Kunzvi ; interviewed 14.viii.1973.

10. Mr. Gwata, Nenguwo people, (about 50) ; also his younger brother ; interviewed near Chakadini school, 15.viii.1973.

11. Mr. Chakadenga, same tribe and location as above, same date (about 70).

12. Chief Gideon Nenguwo, middle aged ; 16.viii.1973.

13. Mr. Taruvinga, middle aged, Nenguwo people ; interviewed near Manyera School, 15. viii.1973.

14. Mr. Mujengwa, Shava/Masarirambi (Hera of Mutekedza) ; resident in the Nenguwo area ; (about 40), interviewed near Chakadini school, 17.viii.1973.

15. Interview with Chief Mudzimurema and his councillors, main speaker, his younger brother, Mr. M. Randazha ; interviewed 17.viii.1973.

16. Mr. Furamera, (over 60), of the Chihota people ; interviewed near Furamba School, on 17.viii.1973. A good informant.

17. A second interview with Mr. Furamera, 21.viii.1973.

18. Mr. Njere, of the Chihota people, (about 60) ; interviewed near Furamera School, 21.viii.1973.

19. Mr. Mapisa, a blind old man, (born before 1896) ; very suspicious and unco-operative ; interviewed 21.viii.1973.

20. Mr. Madzivanyika, a Moyo/Sinyoro (Njanja) ; resident in the area of Chief Samuriwo (about 50-60), interviewed 22.viii. 1973.

21. Mr. Langton Sangu, (about 50) ; a retired Native Messenger ; Samuriwo area ; interviewed 22.viii.1973.

22. Mr. Mapuka Chisengeni (an old man) Shumba/Murore ; near Chisengeni School ; interviewed 26.viii.1973.

b) Buhera District

1. Mr. Chigumbo (about 50), and his mother, Mrs. B. Elizabeth Chigumbo : Nhenga/Gwizo, Chief Nerutanga's area ; 28.viii.1973; Interpreter: Mr. Gaston Chigumba, D.C.'s clerk, Buhera ;

2. Mr. Chikumu Ranga (born long before 1896), Moyo/Dzimbabwe, of the Rozvi of Mutinhima, resident at Chief Nerutanga area, interviewed at Chikuvire School ; 31.viii.1973.
Interpreter : C.N.Chirombe, Headmaster of Chikuvire School.[1]

---

[1] Mr.Chirombe interpreter in interviews 2to 11 in Buhera.

3. Mr. Mazengi, (born after 1896), Dziva/Pakuru of Nerutanga : near Chikuvire School : interviewed 31.viii.1973.

4. Mrs. Vachetesa, (born after 1896) Rozvi, married to a Njanja; Interviewed Tsodzo Village, 31.viii.1973. Was recommended by other informants, but proved a disappointment.

5. Mr. Taruwona Nyashanu, elder brother of Chief Nyashanu of the Hera (Shava/Museyamwa) (about 70); interviewed 1.ix.1973.

6. Mr. Gudza, Shava/Museyamwa (born long before 1896), blind, a nganga (witch-doctor). Main participant, his son Pembayi, born after 1918 ; interviewed near Bika school, 1.ix.1973.

7. Mr. Dakwa Sidanda (Gumbo/Madyira, of Gutu), resident at Tsodzo village, Njanja area of Buhera, (born about 1908) ; interviewed 2.ix.73.

8. Mr. Chidumi, (already old during World War 1) ; Ngara/Mambo of Zimutu ; resident in the Njanja area of Buhera ; interviewed near the Buhera Office, 2.ix.1973 ; also took part his son, Francis Chidumi.

9. Chief Menzi Nerutanga, Dziva/Pakuru (about 60), a Zionist elder, a good informant ; interviewed 3.ix.1973.

10. Mr. N.C.Nyanzira, a retired teacher of the Shava/Nyakudirwa people of Chief Chihunduru, resident in the Njanja area of Buhera ; Interviewed near "Jack's Store", Buhera, 3.ix.1973. A good informant.

11. Chief Chiyangwa Makumbe, Moyo/Sinyoro (Njanja), (about 50) ; he was recommended by other informants, interviewed 3.ix.1973.

12. Mr. Munyira, (had children already before 1918), Njanja ; a good informant. Interviewed near Munyira School : 4.ix.1973. Interpreter, S.Muziligazi, teacher at Chikuviri School.

13. Tazavanku Muziligazi, Shava/Museyamwa (born after 1896); a good informant, interviewed near Muziligazi School, 4.ix.1973. Also appended a story of the Makombe rebellion, told by the old man's son, Solomon. Interpreter:S.Muziligazi.

14. Mr. Dinga, son of Dick (about 50), Njanja ; interviewed near Marenga township, 6.ix.1973. Interpreter : S.M.Matsveru, of the same township.[1]

15. Mr. Tafiranyika Matsveru (about 60), Njanja, a retired school-manager ; spoke Chishona, in order to transmit oral history as he received it from the elders. Interviewed at Marenga township, 6.ix.1973.

---

[1] Mr.Matsveru interpreted in interviews 14 to 26.

16. Chief Chimombe of the Rozvi of Buhera, (an old man); interviewed 19.ix.1973.

17. Mr. Chikwerema Gidi (born 1893) Rozvi ; resident in the Njanja area of Chief Chitsunge; a good informant ;
Interviewed at Chiturike School, 19.ix.1973.

18. Mr. Shonihwa Nhondoro, (born 1910), Vaera Shiri/Gambiza, at Chitsunge's area ; Interviewed near the Chitsunge Council, 20.ix.1973

19. Mr. Mukayesango Magarasadza (born soon after 1896) Shava/Mhondizvo ; Interviewed at Chitsunge's Council, 20.ix.1973.

20. Mr. Chapwanya Denye, Njanja (born soon after 1896); informant was drunk when interview began, later sobered ; Interviewed near Chitsunge Council, 2-.ix.1973.

21. Chief T.M.D. Chitsunge (born 1919), Njanja ; helped by his councillor, Mr. Mutero Muchengete (much older), Soko, Mujindwe of Zimunya ; Interviewed 21.ix.1973.

22. The brothers Magarasadza, nephews of informant No.19. All young people, but their father was said to have been a good historian. Interviewed at Chiturike School, 21.ix.1973.

23. Mr. Ruzoma Taruvinga, a Muremba of the Lemba community near the Dorowa Mine (born 1918) ; Interviewed at Chimombe Council, 22.ix.1973.
24. The councillors of Chief Chimombe, Rozvi ; main speaker Mr. Chityo Chifamba ; (all of middle age or older) ; Interviewed 22.ix.1973.
25. Mr. Chenjerai Ruzengwe (about 40), medium of the Sengu spirit, was dressed in the black and white cloth used on ceremonial occasions, but was not possessed, aided by three elders of his family ; Interviewed near Makumbe Mission, 23.ix.1973.

26. Mr. Gadza, (an old man), considered one of the best Rozvi informants in Buhera ; Interviewed at Munyani Township, 23.ix.1973.

27. Chief Musarurwa, Moyo Mhondizvo, of Charter District, (an old man) ; Interviewed 24.ix.1973.[1] Interpreter : Mr. P.Madzivira, son of the chief and a school-teacher.

28. Mr. Muranganwa Nembawari (an old Hera man walking about with a beautiful ceremonial axe, and asking for help to be recognised as king of Rhodesia) ; was not recorded on tape ; notes were

---

[1] On that night the writer's car broke down, this time for a very long spell, and then the rains came... The rest of the interviews had to be confined to the Salisbury area.