ZIMBABWE
BEFORE 1900

D.N. Beach

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by
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Contents

Introduction 4
1. Environment and prehistory 5
2. The basic units of society 20
3. The early Shona states before 1700 24
4. Intercontinental trade and the Portuguese 30
5. The local economy 39
6. The new states, the warriors and the migrations 45
7. The *mfecane* states 52
8. The advance of capitalism 60
Comment on the debates on Section 1: 66
2: 69
3: 70
4,5: 74
6: 75
7: 76
8: 77
References 79
Bibliography 88
Maps 38, 59

Cover photograph: Old and new in 1890, the spear and shield of the past, the guns, blankets and clothes of the future: Ndebele warriors at Tuli.
(National Archives of Zimbabwe).

INTRODUCTION

In 1978 I was asked to write a chapter on the history of the early Zimbabwean region for the first volume of the *History of Central Africa* edited by David Birmingham and Phyllis Martin and published by Longman for the senior secondary school and first-year university market. A first draft was produced in 1981 and circulated as a seminar paper at the University of Zimbabwe, and a final draft appeared when the *History* was published in 1983. This draft was necessarily cut down to meet the needs of a volume covering the whole of Central Africa from Zimbabwe to Cameroon, but Longman very kindly permitted the publication of the original draft of 1981 as a separate booklet for the Zimbabwean market.

In revising this booklet, efforts have been made to bring in the findings of research published since 1981, and also to make it more relevant to the needs of Zimbabweans. In particular, it has become clear that teachers and students often find it difficult to reconcile the different views of archaeologists and historians, especially when they contradict each other or supply insufficent evidence for their arguments. To help readers on these points, each section of this booklet will be supported by a comment on the differing schools of thought on the issues involved.

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1

Environment and Prehistory

> 'The interior of the country is excellent, temperate, wholesome, cool and fertile in everything which it produces [but other areas are] composed of vast plains, which are breeding grounds for all kinds of cattle and are so destitute of trees that the people use the dung of the cattle for fuel.'
>
> *Joao de Barros, 1552, on the environment.*

In many ways the history of Zimbabwe before 1900 is not very complex, when compared with that of some other African countries. In the first place, it is comparatively small – roughly half the size of Zambia, Tanzania or Moçambique, a third the size of Angola or a quarter that of Zaire. Bordered by the Kalahari and a rather arbitrary line from the Zambezi to the sea and thence back to the Kalahari by way of the Limpopo valley, it is dominated by a single large plateau with a few outliers, surrounded on most sides by dry lowlands. The geography looks very simple. Secondly, except for the last sixty years of the period discussed, and except for the peoples on the borderlines whose history is of considerable importance, we are dealing with people who nearly all spoke the same language — that which is now called Shona. The 'ethnic' picture also looks very simple. Thirdly, compared with some of the features found in other countries, we appear to have had a very simple history. We did not have floodplains or navigable rivers which could form the base of power for rulers who controlled them. We did not have rulers who founded their rule on iron or salt-working. We did not have any agricultural revolution caused by the bringing in of crops such as rice, bananas, maize and manioc. We had only one main system of intercontinental trade. We had very little domestic slavery, and very little trade in slaves. The main society was patrilineal, without initiation, blood partnerships, secret societies or even a very complex religious system. And, finally, the wars of the nineteenth century seem to have been less damaging here than in other areas, and the initial impact of mercantile or capitalist trade was, on the whole, not as destructive as in many other regions.

Naturally, nothing is that simple, and much of this booklet will be devoted to showing why this was so. But the complex features of the history of this area are complex on a smaller scale than those of other regions, and the reader must try to bear this in mind. For example, we will be discussing those migrations that we can be reasonably sure belong to reality and not to myth, but between the beginning of the Later Iron Age and the nineteenth century the longest migrations were less than 500 kilometres long, or about a month's walk for a fit traveller. Most were far shorter. We shall be discussing movements of people, but although we had some large movements in the 19th century — about 20 000 Ndebele moved in during this period — and we can probably infer some large movements at the beginning of the Later Iron Age, in absolute figures in the centuries between these events the numbers of migrating peoples were small compared with some of those connected with the slaving period on the Atlantic coast of Africa. In local terms, these movements were often extremely important. We shall be discussing the urban societies of the Great Zimbabwe, Torwa and Mutapa states, but whereas they were undoubtedly extensive in terms of the Zimbabwean plateau, they were not so outstanding compared with the great earthworks of Zaire. We shall be discussing the trade in gold and ivory and its effect on the area, but it is worth while remembering that — allowing for the very doubtful figures available — in the early sixteenth century when the gold industry was already beginning to decline there may have been no more than a thousand gold-miners operating at any one time, while a century later there may have been no more than 400 elephant hunters at work. In short, fascinating as the history of our country is, we must not get carried away and imagine that the developments here were always on the same scale as elsewhere.

Another major factor to be borne in mind is that we do not have anything like an even historical coverage of the area. Draw a line from the junction of the Umzingwani with the Limpopo to the junction of the Hunyani with the Zambezi. West of that line we have nearly half the land in this area. Yet in this western region we have very little evidence, compared with the eastern region, until the nineteenth century and the coming of the Ndebele and their state. The Leopard's Kopje culture, the Kalanga-speaking peoples, the Torwa state and even the Changamire state, not to mention the great Gwaai-Shangani river system and the Mafungabusi and Urungwe plateaux are only understood in outline, compared with the cultures, peoples and states in the east.

This brings us to another factor, that of orientation. Because this region is dominated by the single great plateau, because that

plateau has been dominated by speakers of the same language — with some important exceptions — up to the mid-nineteenth century, and because that plateau is today roughly bounded by the frontiers of the modern state of Zimbabwe, it is very easy to adopt a 'plateau' orientation and to treat it as a single unit. In many ways it would make just as much sense to think in terms of three units, extending into other areas to the the north-west, north-east, south-south-west and south-east. We could have one unit covering the land from the Hunyani to the Sabi, extending far into central Moçambique and Malawi. In many ways the histories of these areas are very closely tied together. We could look at the whole of the western region drained by the rivers that run into the Zambezi west of the Hunyani and treat it as a single unit extending into modern Zambia. We could look at the southern part of the Zimbabwean plateau and include it in a unit that extends south of Delagoa Bay and far into the mountains, plains and drylands on each side of the upper Limpopo. These possible orientations are well worth bearing in mind, but in this booklet we will be conventional and stay largely within the borders of Zimbabwe. It is important to remember, however, that the northern and eastern Shona were often far more concerned with events at the mouth of the Zambezi, or to the north of it, than they were with events much closer to home on the plateau, while the rulers of the southwest such as the Ndebele and Rozvi were sometimes much more interested in developments north of the Zambezi or on the trade routes to Delagoa Bay than they were with the north and east.

The plateau around which most of the action revolves is shaped like a giant 'T', with one arm running towards the sea to the east, another west towards Kariba and the stem going southwest until it merges with the dryland plains of the southwest. Running from north to south across the eastern arm are the Eastern Highlands, dramatic mountains which are over 2 000 metres high in places. On the northern and southern edges of the plateau, rugged ranges cut by rivers divide the high ground from the flat, dry lands of the southestern lowlands and those of the lower Zambezi valley. West of the main watershed, however, the plateau has been half buried by deposits of wind and waterborne soils and sands, so that the hilly features that stand out are much less noticeable than those of the north, east and south. This is important because although a great deal of the plateau is based on granite rocks, it is to the east of the watershed that they are exposed to the weather. The big granite mountains and open rock surfaces known as *ruware* or *dwala* are almost all found in a great crescent east of the watershed. This would hardly matter to us, were it not that the early Shona in the region seized upon the fact that some of these exposed granites split under heat and cold into flat sheets of rock, and built walls for themselves out of it: this was the Great Zimbabwe culture. The soils that cloak the plateau are complex, but for our purposes they can be divided into the red and black soils, and the sand and sodic soils. Since this part of Africa has been occupied by humans who started bush fires for tens of thousands of years, it is not surprising that there was little true 'climax' vegetation left by 1900, but the basic type was woodland, with a few grassland areas at the crest of the plateau in the centre. By 1900, however, as is clear from the regrowth of trees in some areas cleared of population under colonial rule, part of the plateau had had its tree cover very considerably thinned by Iron Age agriculturalists, producing more areas of open grassland dotted by trees. The climate was dominated by a summer rain cycle, and although it is possible that in the middle of our period it was colder and wetter than it is now, it was dominated by patchy rainfall and the probability that about once in every four or five years there would be too little, too much or badly timed rain.[2] Much depended upon the area involved, and some places were far more assured of good rains than others. In the southeastern lowlands, on the other hand, good seasons were far less common than bad ones. Only the Zambezi and some of the eastern rivers near the sea were navigable. There were no flood-plains and no lakes or large swamps.

As the twentieth century was to prove, there were few parts of the land that could not support agriculturalists, but there were definite areas that were generally regarded as sub-standard, and in most cases it was to such areas that the losers in apparently political struggles were consigned. These included the Nyanga part of the Eastern Highlands (good rainfall but poor soils), the crest of the watershed in the central plateau area (fair rainfall and soil but exposed living and grazing areas and limited resources), the southeastern lowlands and the middle Sabi valley (inadequate rainfall), the lower Zambezi valley (inadequate rainfall), the western sand and sodic-soil zone (poor soils) and many smaller environmental zones. Mineral resources such as salt were often sited in unfavourable agricultural areas such as the middle Sabi valley or the Mafungabusi plateau and were only able to ease the lot of the political losers who live there, not to make them into saltlords like some of the peoples of Zambia and Zaire. Gold was found in two zones, a large one that reached from the Umzingwani Valley northwards to the edges of the western river system and then northeast and east towards the lower Zambezi, and a small one that straddled the middle of the Eastern Highlands. Thus one might find gold in good cattle and fair agricultural land in the southwest, gold in poor sodic soils between the Gweru and Umniati rivers, gold in the favoured lands of the northern plateau and gold in the more dubious valleys that ran down to the lower Zambezi. Iron was usually found within fifty miles of any area, and it may be that this is why there is no evidence for large-scale iron mining before about 1800. It is very difficult to identify any single environmental or economic factor that underlies the growth of states on the Zimbabwean plateau. Here again we have the problem of an environment that is simple and undifferentiated — if one compares it with those of the rest of Central Africa, on the grand scale — or extremely complex, if one looks at the fine differences between regions on and around the plateau on a local scale.

The sources that historians are able to use directly to reconstruct the Zimbabwean past — that is, documents and traditions — only become of use from the fifteenth century. Before that, we have to use and interpret the work of researchers in two completely different disciplines, archaeology and linguistics. These have to be considered both in the Zimbabwean region and in the broader African context. Essentially, two main questions are being asked: who were the people at any given time, and where, if anywhere, did they come from? And what were the economy and culture of those people at any time, and how and why did they change? Both archaeology and linguistics are of relevance to these questions, but both fields of research are in a state of rapid change, and whereas there was a broad agreement among reseachers on many aspects of the prehistoric period in the middle 1970s this is no longer the case, and their views are often sharply opposed. This makes their interpretation difficult for historians, and even more difficult for teachers and students using the textbooks that reflect these differing views. We will therefore attempt to sum up the various views, both in the text and in the separate review of the evidence for this section, and offer a tentative opinion.

The first major issue is that of the transition in about 200 B.C. to 300 A.D. in this country from the hunting and gathering peoples, using stone tools and usually moving from living place to living place within one year, to the agriculturalists and herders, using iron tools and living in fixed villages for many years. It also concerns the origins of the Bantu-speaking peoples. The two rival camps of researchers can be termed 'migrationist' and 'anti-migrationist', though their views are not always incompatible, as will be suggested below.

The 'migrationist' view of the Early Iron Age and Bantu expansion is like this: In the Ethiopian, Kenyan and Tanzanian highlands almost as far south as Dodoma, there has been a very long history of animal-herding, crop-growing and pottery-making by peoples who otherwise used stone tools. This dates back to at least 1300 B.C., and is firmly linked to the Sudanic and Cushitic-speaking peoples whose descendants live in those areas today.[3] But there is virtually no evidence that either these peoples or their skills went any farther south.[4] South of their homes in these highlands, there were only hunter-gatherer peoples speaking Khoisan languages as far as the Cape, the southernmost of whom had become physically slightly different from the darker-skinned 'negroid' people along the line of the Equator.[5] One of these 'negroid' peoples, speaking several closely-related languages that are ancestral to those now called 'Bantu', and living roughly where Nigeria and Cameroon now join, began to grow crops, keep animals and make pottery, perhaps as early as 3 – 2000 B.C. Very slowly, their numbers increased and they began to migrate into the forests of the Congo-Ubangi basin. By about 500-300 B.C. they had reached the 'interlacustine' area between the lakes of Nyanza and the western Rift Valley, by which time they had acquired iron, cattle, sheep and goats and crops such as sorghum suitable for drier areas. Then, very rapidly, they began to expand, round the Kenya-Tanzania highland area to the East African coast and also generally southwards, until by about A.D. 580-760 they had reached the Eastern Cape and could go no farther because their crops would not grow in the climate of the Western Cape.[6] In comparison with the Khoisan hunter-gatherers their numbers were relatively large, and the former were absorbed and almost the whole area became Bantu-speaking. But the Khoisan-speakers living in the eastern Botswana and the far west of Zimbabwe did pick up the ideas of making pottery and keeping livestock — but not crops or iron — and spread these over to the Atlantic coast and into the Western Cape, becoming the 'Khoi' herders, while those who stuck to hunting remained the 'San'.[7] In Zimbabwe the Khoisan-speakers were replaced as the dominant group by the Bantu-speakers from the second century A.D., the main Bantu-speaking groups being known as the 'Gokomere', 'Ziwa' and 'Sinoia/Chinhoyi' groups after the places where their distinctive pottery was first found.[8]

The 'migrationist' view was originally based on the idea that all economic, social and language change must necessarily take place by the immigration of new people, often conquerors and displacers of the old. Often this was explicitly linked to racism.[9] The modern holders of the 'migrationist' view, however, are quite well aware of the fact that such changes can take place by the diffusion of ideas and languages; what they argue is that in the special case of the spread of the Iron Age to Bantu-speaking Africa, a migration of some sort is the most realistic explanation.

The 'migrationist' view has undoubtedly been pushed too far in the past, especially in the case of the prehistoric peoples of the Americas, Europe, Asia, Australia and much of Africa.[10] A rival fashion has now emerged that tends to argue against migrations whenever possible. It argues that changes in economy, society and even language may take place with no migration of peoples at all, but simply the passing of ideas and techniques from hunting band to hunting band until eventually they have all adopted them and become agriculturalists, herders, iron-users, pot-makers or speakers of a new language. Such a suggestion is well worth making, and has often corrected the wilder excesses of the older 'migrationist' school. But there is a danger of a swing too far in this direction. No 'anti-migrationist' would deny that there was once a migration of early humans from Africa into the uninhabited rest of the world, nor that the spread of people to islands can only be explained by ocean migrations,[11] and they are of course aware that the recent, historical period covered by documents has seen some major migrations, dispossessing other peoples, especially in the last few centuries. Indeed, that may be an explanation for the enthusiasm of some 'anti-migrationists': if one believes in a 'Golden Age' in Africa before whites, colonialism or capitalism appeared, actual African migrations in which someone loses their land can be an embarrassment.

As far as linguistics are concerned, the 'anti-migrationists' have two contradictory views on the Bantu-speaking area of today. One is that Bantu-speakers have 'always' lived where they do today, or at least for several thousand years, long before the coming of food production and iron, and that therefore it is purely coincidental that the spread of the Early Iron Age was into Bantu-speaking areas.[12] The other is that Bantu did spread with the coming of the Early Iron Age, but that it was a sort of *lingua franca* associated with it, and that it was passed from place to place without any migration and supplanted the original (?Khoisan) languages of the hunter-gatherers.[13] The basic view held by the 'anti-migrationists' about the spread of the Early Iron Age economy south of the Interlacustrine region is that the new techniques of iron-working, crop-growing, animal-herding, pot-making and hut-building — the 'package' seen by the 'migrationists' as belonging to a single migrating people — were passed from hunting band to hunting band, without any major migration and not always as a single package but sometimes in isolation or in twos or threes. Alternatively, in some cases the techniques (except animal-herding) may have been invented independently. There might have been a migration of very small, specialised groups of potters and iron-workers who moved south to trade their wares to the hunter-gatherers, but that was far as it went.[14]

Given such different views from two different groups of researchers, working in such varied fields as archaeology and linguistics, it is not easy for the historian to comment, especially when the condensed views given above are a great simplification of the evidence and may caricature the views held by the individual researchers in each group. Nevertheless, some sort of conclusion should be attempted for the sake of students and teachers for the next few years until new evidence and arguments appear, if we are not to be left in total confusion.

Firstly, the 'migrationist' theory does not totally exclude diffusion of ideas and techniques to hunter-gatherer groups living near Early Iron Age Bantu-speakers. This is one of the interpretations given to the 'Bambata' pottery found in certain cave sites in Zimbabwe,[15] and without dispute to the entire Khoi herding economy.[16]

Secondly, given that the spread of the Early Iron Age from the Interlacustrine region to the Eastern Cape was comparatively rapid, as the radio-carbon dates generally show, this is a very high speed for simple diffusion. Computer analysis shows that migration can account for the spread within this time span,[17] especially if agriculturalists and herders were moving into thinly-populated hunter-gatherer territory. Conversely, if agricultural and pastoral techniques diffuse as easily as is being suggested, the Cushitic and Sudanic peoples of the East African highlands should have had much more effect on the hunter-gatherers to the south, long before the Early Iron Age spread, than seems to have been the case.[18]

Finally, one comes back to the long-known correspondence of the Early Iron Age economy and culture to the area where Bantu is spoken today. Because Bantu languages are so similar — and thus are difficult to classify internally[19] — it is clear that they represent a comparatively recent expansion from a central area.[20] The 'anti-migrationists' do not account for this in a convincing manner, the 'migrationists' do.

In short, as far as the Zimbabwean teacher and student are concerned, it is at present much more probable than not that the first few centuries A.D. in this country saw Bantu-speaking immigrant

farmers replace the Khoisan hunter-gatherers as the dominant group. The latter would have been mostly absorbed, although others survived in dry parts of the south and west until much later.[21] Indeed, it should be stressed that right through the Early Iron Age and into the beginning of the Later Iron Age very nearly all the known village sites lie in the great arc of eroded valleys east of the watershed.[22] Other areas remained comparatively thinly populated.

From the first few centuries A.D. the Early Iron Age showed a steady and uninterrupted development, with the Gokomere and Ziwa communities becoming in time the Zhizo and Coronation groups in the southwest and northeast respectively. Again, a little later the northeastern Coronation group phased into the Maxton group in the same general area. There has been no doubt for a long time that the people of these groups were Bantu-speakers, and in the mid-1970s it might have been supposed that since their area of settlement was roughly the same as that of the modern Shona, therefore they were speakers of an early form of Shona. (It should be borne in mind that in linguistics there is never a magical point at which people stop speaking one form of the same language and start speaking another. In other words, the progression from proto-Bantu to Shona was a slow and possibly uneven one.) But in the early 1970s both the main local archaeologists, P.S. Garlake and T.N. Huffman, saw things differently:

> 'about the ninth or tenth century, new immigrants entered the dry Acacia sand veld of south-western Matabeleland, introducing what is known as the Leopard's Kopje culture. Their pottery shows such a marked typological break with Early Iron Age wares that, in this instance, there can be little doubt that these people were immigrants who had no direct cultural relationships with the previous inhabitants. No antecedents are apparent in the archaeology of Zambia or Rhodesia, leading to the rather risky supposition (for it is based on ignorance rather than knowledge) that the new group may have entered Matabeleland from the rich grasslands of northern Botswana — archaeologically unknown areas.'

This was Garlake's view, and Huffman agreed with him.[23] The 'break' in the Iron Age which covered all the area was not seen just as a question of pottery. The Early Iron Age people usually lived in valleys, had few cattle and did little trading; the Later Iron Age people usually lived on hilltops, had many cattle and often traded on a large scale. But if the 'break' was as strong as this, then although the Later Iron Age people were certainly Shona-speakers, then the Early Iron Age people were more probably not, although what kind of Bantu they spoke was uncertain. This was the situation as far as research was concerned in 1973 – 6.

If, therefore, the Later Iron Age people — the Shona-speakers — had not been the same as the Early Iron Age people, the question arose as to where the Shona-speakers had come from. We have already seen what Garlake referred to as the 'risky supposition' that they came from the west. In 1973 – 4 Huffman was still neutral on this point,[24] but in 1977 – 8 he suggested a new origin for the Later Iron Age migration into this country. This theory was that, after some of the Early Iron Age peoples had crossed the Limpopo in the first few centuries A.D., some of them in the Eastern Transvaal region built up large cattle herds and in the tenth and eleventh centuries began to migrate north into modern Botswana and Zimbabwe, eventually covering the whole area. These people, of the Toutswe, Leopard's Kopje, Gumanye, Harare and Musengezi cultures, were grouped by Huffman into the 'Kutama tradition'.[25] This argument was attractive on several grounds: the comparison of pottery types upon which it was based was a field in which Huffman had already shown skill;[26] it explained why the radio-carbon dates for the southern Later Iron Age communities in Zimbabwe were so much earlier that the northern ones;[27] and it was a limited, regional kind of migration on only slightly larger a scale than that which had been recently argued for groups in Southern Zambia.[28] Indeed, in the years that followed more evidence emerged which seemed to support the 'southern' origin theory.[29] Consequently, it found its way into the new textbooks of Zimbabwe.[30]

At the same time as Huffman's 'southern origin' theory emerged, another, grander theory appeared. This was D.W. Phillipson's suggestion that there had been a break between the Early and Later Iron Ages, not just in Zimbabwe but all over Southern, Central and Eastern Africa, caused by a general migration out of the Shaba (Katanga) province of southern Zaire.[31] This also had its effect upon textbooks,[32] but since it appeared in 1977 – 8 it has received little support, partly because the 'break' between Early and Later Iron Ages has not been proved in Eastern Africa, partly because it does not fit the evidence from Southern Africa.

Both of these arguments were developments of the 'migrationist' idea, which supposed that a change as great as that from the Early to the Later Iron Ages in Zimbabwe — as agreed by all up to about 1978 — meant that there had to have been a migration of newcomers. How great this migration would have been was difficult to judge, but no-one supposed that the Later Iron Age, Shona-speaking immigrants had outnumbered the Early Iron Age people, or that the latter had been massacred in the style of the old colonialist texts. One theory was that there had been a sizeable migration rather like that of the Ndebele and Kololo of the nineteenth century, which had changed the languages of their parts of Zimbabwe and Zambia, and that the cattle-rich newcomers had attracted the daughters of the Early Iron Age people and gradually absorbed all of them.[33]

In 1982 – 3, however, an 'anti-migrationist' view was put forward. This was the work of Garlake, who changed his mind on this point between 1974 and 1979.[34] This argument starts off with the assertion that the 'break' in the pottery styles of the Early and Later Iron Ages either does not exist, or that the differences between them are simply minor ones within a continuous pottery tradition. The explanation for the changes that did occur centres around the theory that the Early Iron Age potters were men, living in a matrinlineal society, and that as economic changes took place the societies became patrilineal and women took on the job of making pots, which led to apparent differences in the pottery. Thus, if there was no 'break' in the pottery style upon which to base theories of a Later Iron Age migration from west, north or south, then there was no migration at all. From the point of view of the historian, teacher and student this idea is attractive because it solves the problem of the origin of the Shona-speaking people. Rather than look for a distinct Shona-speaking group living in Shaba, Northern Botswana or the Eastern Transvaal in the last few centuries of the Early Iron Age, one simply assumes that the Early Iron Age people spoke an early form of Shona, and that their origins lie back in the Bantu expansion mentioned earlier — or, if one takes an extreme anti-migrationist view, in the Stone Age peoples of Zimbabwe. There is one problem with this view, however: it has not yet been proven. Garlake has asserted it in a number of pamphlets and articles aimed at non-archaeologists,[35] and these have already been echoed in one school text,[36] but so far there has been no publication of a detailed archaeological work on the subject. Huffman's analysis of the pottery of the Transvaal, which gave rise to his 'southern origin' theory, has been criticised for poor methodology,[37] but the main problem of whether there was or was not a 'break' in the Iron Age pottery sequence remains so far unexplained. Computer analysis of pottery, rather than the impressions of human archaeologists of what is or is not a significant difference between types, may offer a breakthrough. Essentially, the question has been one created by archaeologists, with historians and linguists trying to fit the prehistories of later peoples to the archaeological remains. Ultimately, archaeologists must solve the question.

Before going on to examine the Later Iron Age Shona-speakers, it should be explained that the Early Iron Age peoples had in no way occupied the whole country. Outlying Early Iron Age villages of the Gokomere-Ziwa type have been located as far away as the coast of Moçambique near the Sabi, and in the Northern Transvaal,[38] but even allowing for areas of the country not properly explored, it is clear that the majority of Early Iron Age villages lay in the same great crescent of eroded valleys east of the main watershed of the Zimbabwean plateau, and in the similar kind of country found in the Eastern Highlands. Obviously this was an environment especially suited to agriculturalists and small-scale herders. Once the Later Iron Age became established, much the same pattern of settlement was followed, although so far Later Iron Age villages of the Gumanye or Harare type have not been found in the Eastern Highlands, and there are some unexplained gaps between settlements in the great crescent itself.[39]

It used to be thought that there was a sharp economic distinction between the Early and Later Iron Age peoples, in that the latter were thought to have had many cattle, while the former had few. But it is now clear that there was no such sharp division: whatever languages they spoke, the Early Iron Age people in Zimbabwe — and even more so, those in Botswana — had gradually increasing cattle herds. By the tenth to eleventh centuries, wealthy cattle-herding groups were well on the way towards forming states, in particular at Toutswe and Mapungubwe, while other herding communities reached from Mapungubwe to the headwaters of the Gwaai-Shangani river system — the Leopard's Kopje culture — and others occupied the triangle between the future site of Great Zimbabwe, Mberengwa and the Gweru river — the Gumanye culture. By the twelfth to fourteenth centuries the similar Harare and Musengezi cultures had become established in the centre and north of the plateau.[40] We do not know for certain what language the people in Botswana spoke then, but the Later Iron Age cultures described above in Zimbabwe were certainly Shona-speakers, though their speech may have differed considerably from modern Shona.[41]

However, if the actual areas of these cultures are marked on the map, it can be seen that although Shona-speakers had become the dominant group on the plateau, these areas did not extend to the limits occupied by Shona-speakers two or three centuries after 1400. In some areas, such as the southeastern lowlands, up to about the modern political frontier, the plateau from the Bikita highlands northwards to Maungwe and Mutoko areas and some of the spaces between the 'Kutama' cultures already mentioned, we can make an educated guess that Shona-speakers were already there but have not yet been identified by archaeology. But in many other areas which lay inside the frontiers of the Shona language in about 1700, it seems that non-Shona speakers, either descended from the Early Iron Age or from other Later Iron Age peoples, survived for some time after 1400. In other words, it is an over-simplification to look upon the plateau as exclusively Shona.

In the little-known west, much of the land was held by non-Shona until relatively recently — say, about 1750. Shona-speakers of the Leopard's Kopje culture occupied the southwestern end of the plateau, but in the sand country crossed by the Gwaai-Shangani river system that reached west and north to the Makgadikgadi salt pan, the south bank of the middle Zambezi and the Mafungabusi plateau, as well as the lower valleys of the Umniati and Umsweswe, a different ethnic and settlement pattern was found. Much of the land consisted of badly-watered, poor soils, and in the west Khoisan hunters survived until quite recently, but cultivation was possible in the river valleys and between the ranges on the south bank of the Zambezi, and for a considerable distance to the east. This huge, but thinly-populated area was held by members of the matrilineal group that included the Leya, Lenje, Middle Zambezi Tonga and Ila best known to us from studies of Zambian history. Leya dominated the Deka and lower Gwaai valleys until Shona immigration took place in the eighteenth century, and in view of the Leya presence among the Kalanga of the southwestern plateau in more recent centuries, it is quite possible that the thinly-populated sandy-soil zone saw a good deal of travel and interaction between peoples who remained distinct, as in the southeastern lowlands. On and around the Mafungabusi plateau, fragmentary traditions indicate matrilineal Middle Zambezi Tonga and Mrenge settlement prior to at least two waves of Shona immigration, and the easternmost Middle Zambezi Tonga settlement of Rimuka between the Umsweswe and Umfuli, which was well established by the seventeenth century, might represent a basic Tonga population later surrounded by Shona settlement rather than a Tonga immigration into Shona territory. Finally, the archaeology, documents and traditions of the Mbara of the Ingombe Ilede culture on the Urungwe plateau make it clear that this area was also non-Shona until well after 1500.[42]

Turning to the eastern edges of the plateau, we have much the same pattern, of areas that were Shona-speaking or Shona-dominated in historical or modern times that may not have been so in about 1400. Thus, the southeastern lowlands appear to have been occupied by the Shona as far as the modern political frontier until the eighteenth century, though we do not know when they established themselves. Beyond that line, however, the vast area reaching Delagoa Bay, to the bay of Inhambane and to the bay of the Pungwe (including the southeastern highlands and the part of the plateau between the Sabi and the Pungwe) was held by Tsonga and Gi-Tonga-speaking peoples into whose land Shona-speakers moved widely — as far as Delagoa Bay — and in considerable numbers. Although in the end they were absorbed by the majority they left very marked traces upon their culture, especially in the case of the Chopi.[43] North of the Sabi, in the southeastern highlands and around the eastern end of the plateau, down to the bay of the Pungwe, there is good reason to suspect that the same situation existed. The traditional and linguistic evidence on the Ndau section of the Shona in the southeastern highlands suggests quite strongly that non-Shona lived there until the seventeenth century.[44] Towards the coast and in the Manyika 'gap', documentary references after 1500 to a 'Tonga' population suggest the same thing, though the evidence is not conclusive because 'Tonga' was used by Shona rulers to refer to Shona subjects. North of the Manyika 'gap' and the Pungwe was the territory of the Sena-speaking people, and before about 1800 they lived west of their current limits, on the Nyanga plateau.[45] In short, it is all too easy to identify the history of the Zimbabwean plateau before 1800 with 'Shona' history, when in fact it is not so simple.

To complete this introduction and to supply a background to the discussion of the Great Zimbabwe state, a very brief outline is given of the region's contacts with the economy of the Indian Ocean. We know that the coast of East Africa from Ras Asir (Cape Guardafui) as far south as Zanzibar was in contact with the east-west trade between southern Asia and the Mediterranean by at least the second century A.D., but for the next five centuries there is no indication that any organized commercial sailing reached as far south as the Zambezi. Since the Bantu-speaking people were already familiar with the simple canoe very early in their history, it is highly probable that the coastal peoples of the Early Iron Age used them for voyages, and in fact the Early Iron Age settlement on Bazaruto island confirms this. Such short voyages from point to point along the coast were the most probable means by which a few imported Asian beads reached the coast and were carried into the south of the Zimbabwean plateau by the end of the seventh century. The discovery of Persian pottery, Persian or Chinese porcelain and Indian glassware at a village site dating from the last half of the eighth century at Chibuene, however, is a hint that commercial vessels may finally have reached south of the Sabi by that time.[46]

Slightly over a century later, in the first part of the tenth century, the 'Sofalan' coast was well within the range of regular traders sailing from the East African coast. From this time, we have our first references to gold being exported from the 'Sofalan' coast, gold that can only have come from the Zimbabwean plateau, along with ivory and iron that could have come from a much wider area. If the first gold exported came from alluvial workings, it is clear that reef mining began not long after, with mines dating from at least the beginning of the thirteenth century. From their rapid response to opportunities outside agriculture in later centuries, it is probable that the Shona and their neighbours in the gold-bearing parts of the plateau responded very quickly to the contact with the Indian Ocean economy. The Muslims never had a chance of getting control of the gold-fields themselves. Indeed, although there was undoubtedly an immigrant Muslim community at Sofala and on the lower Zambezi, it seems that the majority of the people called 'Muslim' by the Portuguese on the coast, river and plateau were not even Swahili, let alone Arab, but Shona and Sena-speakers who had adopted at least some of the trappings and beliefs of Islam. There is no trace of any Swahili settlement on the plateau, and the ignorance of the literate Arabs of the situation along the well-travelled inland trade routes before 1500 suggests that their presence was stricly limited to the coast.[47] The local Muslims acquired lands along the Zambezi — or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that Zambezian rulers adopted Islam — and as late as the 1630's we have a Muslim ruler granted territory by the Mutapa, but in general the Muslims were better known as middlemen between the gold-miners of the plateau and the seagoing merchants. They did not even have a monopoly in this for the Shona of the plateau organised their own trading expeditions to the coast. By 1400 the Zimbabwean plateau and its neighbouring areas were firmly tied by trade links and routes to a long chain of coastal and river ports, (including Inhambane, Sofala, Sena and Angoche) that reached all the way up to the East African coast, with India as the main source of the cloth and beads that were the main items exchanged for the gold and ivory of the plateau. How this system worked, and with what effects upon the people involved, we will see below.

2

The Basic Units of Society

> 'He is weighed down by a great sorrow, for he already owns some 20 head of cattle, is already father of 7 daughters and still has no son to whom he can leave his wealth as heritage'.
>
> *K. Mauch, 1871, on a household dilemma.*

It would be best to point out at once that we do not know exactly how the basic units of society on the Zimbabwean plateau functioned in about 1400. Studies are beginning to be made in the relation of the hut foundations of the sites excavated by archaeologists to the social organization of the Shona in the last century, but the few Arab documents from the pre-1500 period are almost useless when it comes to basic social and economic data. Nor are the Portuguese documents as good as might be expected: they say surprisingly little about the role of cattle in society, and even references to whether brides lived in their father-in-law's village or not are very rare. Traditions have their limitations as far as the remote past is concerned, and so we have the dangerous but more or less unavoidable task of projecting back the situation in the last century, illumined by those early fragments of evidence that we possess. In our present state of ignorance, this short section is going to be tentative in the extreme, and based largely on the recent evidence for the Shona on the plateau.[48]

The basic social and economic unit was the household, consisting of a small cluster of huts containing a man, his wife or wives, their children and sometimes relatives or hangers-on of the same, allied or different lineages. This was the basic unit of production and consumption, although some co-operation with other units took place. But such a household could rarely exist in isolation, because of human or animal marauders, and the village of several such households and of widely differing sizes was the most visible unit of the society. A few, several or many such villages made up a *nyika* or territory under an hereditary ruler who might be tributary to one of the six big Shona and Nguni states that dominate the precolonial history of the plateau but who might just as, or even more, probably be independent. Bigger territories were often subdivided into wards on the same principle. Everybody in the plateau Shona society, and most of the other societies discussed in this booklet, belonged to their father's lineage — although married women joined their husbands' lineage — which was symbolized by a totem, typically drawn from a short list of animals, which drove home the point that no-one might marry a close relative. This being so, it followed that none of these household, village, ward or territorial units could be composed entirely of people of the same central lineage. Thus in no village or ward would there be much more than a third of the households belonging to the same lineage, though not much more than a quarter of the rest would be completely unrelated to the dominant lineage.

Nevertheless, although our traditions are those of the 'winners' in each case and therefore biased, it does seem that these dominant lineages, though in the minority, were usually dominant in each unit in fact as well as theory. Cases where one lineage of one totem was overthrown by another of another totem within the same unit have probably occurred, but they seem to be outweighed by *coups* within the dominant lineage. Looking at the political economy of Shona plateau society, it is easy to see why this was so, especially if one looks at the reality behind the ideology of society.

The basic underlying fact in the political economy was that society was not based upon an equal sharing of resources or wealth, in spite of public ideology that often insisted that it was. Take, for example, the fundamental issue of land. Control and use of land, whether for its surface resources such as wild vegetables, game, grazing or arable areas or for its underground minerals was the prime basis of relations between the ruler and his subjects. Probably almost every tract of land was claimed by some ruler, as far back as the Early Iron Age, though obviously actual control of the more remote and thinly-populated areas, even for hunting or herding, might be tenuous. But control of the more heavily-populated areas, even when there were tracts of almost untouched *deve* woodlands within them, was a very crucial issue indeed. In theory, control of the land, of whatever kind, was vested in the ruler as the leading living member of the dominant lineage. The ideology of the Shona stressed this: the ruler was given clods of earth at his installation, and hoes played an important part in ceremonies involving land grants, even in the grant of the right to work a gold mine.[49] In theory, the ruler had not only the right to grant land, but also to withdraw it from some of his subjects in order to grant it to others or to cede it to an outside group. In practice, once such a grant had been made — for example, of a ward to a 'house' or sub-group of the dominant lineage — it would take very strong pressures and a strong ruler to take it away from that house in the future. This did happen, but usually such grants were virtually permanent. The same principle operated at village level. The head of the village would grant land to the head of a household, but from then on the same fields were usually held by that household. This, in principle, offered every house and household an equal share of the land. In practice, however, it was not equal because the land was very rarely of identical quality within each unit. This can easily be seen in the cases of the large territories that covered two or more environmental zones: there would be highly-prized, well-watered, well-wooded, fertile valleys on the edges of the plateau on the one hand, and the bleak, exposed higher parts of the plateau or the hotter, drier lowlands on the other. Added to these factors were a multitude of others, such as soil types, local rainfall patterns, access to water, grazing, minerals and hunting areas. It seems probable that even in the micro-environment of the village, the same kind of differences existed on a lesser scale. Thus, land could not be shared equally because it was not equal in quality.

This becomes more clear when the obvious point is made that, in general, it was the losers in various political struggles who ended up holding the poorer land. There are many cases of this though they are clearer in the bigger territories.[50] Sometimes the losers were driven out of the territory as a whole, and had to migrate to get new lands. Thus in most if not all territories there was a distinction between those who held different types of land. This distinction, however, did not lie exclusively between the dominant lineage and the others. On the contrary since the central lineage was often bitterly and bloodly divided, each house within it went to get as many useful marriage alliances with other lineages as possible, using either cattle and other wealth as bride-prices to bring young women into its body and thus to increase its numbers, or by using its numbers and military strength to guarantee these other lineages access to good land.

The difference between theory and practice also existed at village level. There, in theory, everyone was equal under the leadership of the village head. Indeed, the ideology stressed communal activity in agriculture, with some of the hardest work during the year being done by working parties in the fields of each householder in succession. In practice, however, since the working-parties were fuelled by the beer provided by the householders, those who already had more or better land or had worked harder or had better luck in the year would have more and better beer to offer and thus would get better turn-outs to their fields and would thus get better crops.

Thus the division between the wealthy and the poor persisted at village level. This, as well as the capricious climate and the difficulty of acquiring the hoes, axes and labour to start a new holding, led to the persistence of a class of bondmen who became virtually lifetime servants of the richer men to whom they attached themselves in return for aid or a wife. These were not slaves, for they could not be bought or sold, but they formed the most depressed level of Shona society.

This, it must be remembered, is a very simple account of the basis of Shona society on the plateau as we think it functioned in about 1400. The regional differences in the outlying areas, such as the Shona in the Zambezi lowlands where husbands usually attached themselves to the households of their father-in-law and paid labour-services rather than a bride-price; the matrilineal Tonga and Leya of the northwest; the Tsonga-speakers of the southeast, with their lesser emphasis on agriculture, will be touched on in passing later on. So will the limitations of the local economy, the way in which the states operated, religion and later developments such as the semi-specialised herder-fighter units that began to appear after about 1700.

3

The Early Shona States Before 1700

Ushe idova, hunoparara: authority is dew, it evaporates. *Chikuriri chine chimwe chikuriri chacho:* every power is subject to another power.

Traditional, on power.

The word 'state' in Zimbabwean plateau history is here reserved for six political units that, though operating on much the same lines as the ordinary territories outlined above, differed from even the biggest of these, such as Barwe or Teve, in that only they were able to exact tribute from other territories over a wide area over a long time and or construct large-scale 'prestige' stone buildings. These were the Great Zimbabwe state (thirteenth to fifteenth centuries in the south), the Torwa state (fifteenth to seventeenth centuries in the southwest), the Mutapa state (fifteenth to nineteenth centuries in the north), the Changamire state (seventeenth to nineteenth centuries in the southwest) and the two Nguni-speaking states of the Ndebele and Gaza. This is a crude rule-of-thumb way of defining a state, on the basis that these were simply the most successful and wealthy compared with all the other political units, and we look forward to a theory that fits the evidence.

The last three of these states named above were 'conquest' states that involved large-scale immigrations of newcomers who, in the cases of the Changamire and Ndebele, simply took over the states that existed there before, including many of their personnel. Of the earlier three, Torwa and Mutapa started as out-growths of the Great Zimbabwe state, but in none of these do we know exactly how this happened. We have some dubious traditions for Mutapa,[51] but in the main we have to rely upon archaeology. Thus when writing about state formation among the Shona we have to be very cautious indeed.

Most of the accounts of the rise of the Great Zimbabwe state that have appeared so far have suffered from the 'pendulum' effect: a writer will stress one aspect at the expense of the others, whereupon the next account will react against it and proceed to stress yet another aspect, whereupon the process continues. We have had theories that stress the role of religion as a means of accumulating wealth,[52] theories that stress the importance of intercontinental trade,[53] and theories that stress the role of cattle.[54] None of these theories is clearly proven, and the most probable answer is that no single factor did lead to its rise. Cattle and intercontinental trade certainly played a great part, but although there was almost certainly some kind of religious element present, there is no evidence that this was a factor in the rise of the state.[55] The decline of the whole prestige-building Great Zimbabwe-Khami culture, however, does appear to follow the decline in gold exports, which would give slightly greater emphasis to the trade theory, but it is not intended to start the pendulum of argument swinging again: all branches of production were important at Great Zimbabwe.

Increased cattle-herding and gold-mining had led to increased wealth among the Leopard's Kopje people of the southwest in the tenth and eleventh centuries, which was shown not only by increased imports of beads but also by improved huts and pottery for their rulers, a limited amount of gold used locally for ornament and the beginnings of prestige public building in the form of hillside terracing for huts. Mapungubwe and Mapela were the best expressions of this.[56] But this move towards state formation in the southwest by the Leopard's Kopje people was effectively strangled by the rise of their fellow-Kutama relatives, the people of the Gumanye culture. At the eastern end of the Gumanye-occupied 'triangle', there was a hill overlooking a valley in the long southern edge of the plateau. There was no obvious reason why this spot should have become important, for it was no better environmentally than the rest of the plateau edge, nor did it command any particular route to the Indian Ocean ports from the goldfields. The inference — and it is no more than an inference — is that when the Gumanye community that held that hill and valley began to turn it into a state, they used their cattle herds to build up their numbers by acquiring wives (and hence sons) until they had a sufficiently big military force to dominate a good part of the trade routes, to the sea from the Leopard's Kopje mining area, compelling traders to pay a transit tax and, it seems, choking off the Mapungubwe developments in the process.

The Great Zimbabwe state probably started as a political unit before about 1250, but the city at its core, a great mass of packed huts that spread across the valley in between the marshes and up the hillsides on terraces like those of Mapela, and the few upper-class huts of the rulers behind their stone walls, was basically a mid-thirteenth to fourteenth century construction. All but four of the calendar interpretations of the fifteen radio-carbon and coin dates for the 'city' period date from the fourteenth century though it is safe to assume that the city lasted into the first part of the fifteenth century.[57] The social differences between the rulers and the ruled were at their most distinct at Great Zimbabwe, with contrasts in housing, living space, diet, and imported goods. The urban area of Great Zimbabwe was only about seven kilometres in circumference, which was not as large as some other Central African sites, but it was probably too great for such an environment for a period of over a century: even today, certain trees will not grow in the ruins areas,[58] and the theory that it collapsed in the fifteenth century for environmental reasons is looking more likely than ever.

Houses of the ruling dynasty at Great Zimbabwe — which, by the way, cannot be identified from traditions — were leaving the overcrowded state soon after it started, seeking a variety of things: better land for grazing, agriculture and ivory hunting, control of gold regions and trade routes and, in some cases, political independence from the Great Zimbabwe state. We know where some these houses went because they found enough suitable stone in site territories that were also near agricultural and grazing lands with suitable water, wood, etcetera, to build miniature copies of the stone walls at Great Zimbabwe. At least eight sites without walling have been found in Mberengwa and at Montevideo Ranch.[59] It is probably simplistic to tie these emigrant houses too closely to cattle-herding units: each house probably relied to differing degrees upon all branches of production. In the north and east, we can tentatively link these houses to later dynasties known to us from traditions and documents, such as Mukati, Mutwira, Nyakuimba and early Chikanga and Teve, and in particular the Mutapa dynasty which emerged in the north in the fifteenth century to become the best-known but not the most important of the states that succeeded Great Zimbabwe.

The successor of Great Zimbabwe, however, was the little-known Torwa state in what came to be known to the Portuguese as 'Butua', with its first great capital at Khami and its second at Danangombe. Khami was founded not long after the middle of the fifteenth century, and lasted until it was destroyed by fire in the first half of the seventeenth .[60] Danangombe was evidently built in the last part of the seventeenth century, in the last troubled years of the Torwa state before it fell to the incoming Changamire state, which promptly took it over, stone buildings and all.[61] In its culture, the Torwa state was a progressive development of that at Great Zimbabwe, in architecture, pottery, urban layout and in its whole economy. In terms of scale, however, it was significantly smaller:

its capital at Khami was smaller than Great Zimbabwe's, while Danangombe was smaller still — both in its ruling-class buildings and its total urban area, and it had fewer provincial centres in a smaller area.[62] Practically all dates for prestige building in the Torwa state predate about 1650, and there is little solid evidence for fresh construction under the Changamire dynasty which took over the buildings in about 1685 – 96.[63] The tradition of building new and elaborate structures of stone — though not defensive walls — seems to have come to a final halt in the southwest round about 1700. Since cattle remained abundant, it looks rather as though this decline in one particular technique was linked to the decline in gold exports, which declined similarly. As will be seen in the north, though, this was not quite the same as a decline in the strength of the states.

With the fall of Great Zimbabwe in the fifteenth century, the rising Mutapa state in the north became the second most important Shona state. By about 1500 the Mutapa dynasty had gained control of a large wedge of gold-rich plateau country, suitable for agriculture, and a section of the Zambezi valley drylands, which also commanded parts of the trade routes. The Mutapa rulers devoted some attention to controlling the territory between the state and the sea at the Zambezi mouth and Sofala before about 1550. These attemptes failed, either because the local people resisted, or because houses from the state sent to control the trade routes promptly rebelled and became independent.

The Mutapa state started as a branch of the Great Zimbabwe culture, and several ruins within the state, particularly the Zvongombe complex, were probably early Mutapa capitals. Stone building was still going on as late as 1512, but by the middle of that century it seems to have stopped, apart from defensive sites. From then on, capital sites consisted of large stockades, some up to eleven kilometres in circumference — bigger than Great Zimbabwe, though with a smaller population because their huts were much more widely spaced.

Territories run on much the same lines as the Mutapa state filled in some of the land between the state and the sea: Barwe, Manyika, Teve, Gambe and Danda were all established by or in the sixteenth century, and possibly Maungwe, Bocha and Buhera as well. The territories nearer the coast extended into probably non-Shona areas, some of which became Shona-speaking, though in other areas the non-Shona speakers held out or assimilated their Shona rulers. Between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, in a much less clearly-known process, other Shona dynasties were moving into non-Shona areas west and southwest of the Mutapa state, including the Urungwe and Mafungabusi plateaus, to push the Shona frontier forwards for good.

Since most or all of the evidence on the Great Zimbabwe and Torwa states comes from archaeology, our knowledge of the structure of the early Shona states comes from the Portuguese observations of the Mutapa, and of some of the eastern territories. We assume that the contemporary Torwa state and the Great Zimbabwe state which existed up to a century before the Portuguese arrived operated in much the same way. The early states operated on much the same lines as the basic territories mentioned earlier, with a central lineage dominating the allocation of its land resources, by dint of the numbers of armed men it could command. Thus the Mutapa and the more powerful territorial rulers had a hard core of 200 – 500 regulars whose dual function was to stiffen the levies from the whole state or territory in time of war with others and to act as an internal security force in peacetime. A wise ruler balanced his dependence upon his own central lineage with alliances with others, especially the more favoured houses out of those who had ruled the land before his lineage conquered it. Thus, the Mukomohasha or 'captain-general' in both the Mutapa and Barwe polities was usually of the subject 'Tonga' people. In theory, the ruler was hedged by rituals that stressed his supreme power, but often in practice rival houses were waiting to stage a successful coup. (Since much of the evidence for this comes from Portuguese observers accompanying the very forces of mercantile capitalism that were making the Mutapa and eastern policies unstable after about 1600, it is not certain that this was always the case earlier, but there are references to rebellions in the relatively untouched Mutapa state before 1600 and in the Torwa state before 1650.)

The court, capital and army of the state ruler were supported by taxes on trade ranging from 5% to 15%, a tax of about 50% on gold and ivory levied on the people, and a tribute paid in agricultural labour by the people — though it is not certain whether this applied to all of them or merely to those who lived near the capital, since transport of crops was difficult. Also, of course, there were tributes paid in the produce of each region, in small quantities, and — probably — legal fees paid in court cases. From the 1640s there was increasing evidence that the legal system of the state and larger territory had become, to some extent, a branch of the economy for both the rulers and the ruled. A successful prosecution of a wealthy defendant brought wealth to the claimant and to those who ran the courts. Although the ordinary people used this tactic against each other in the seventeenth century, by the eighteenth, when intercontinental trade was in decline, the traders were becoming tempting targets — as the complaints of the Portuguese made clear.[64]

The evidence on religion is slight, but consistent in giving a simple picture, compared with the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There was a remote high-god known as *Mulungu*, a system of *mudzimu* spirits which possessed mediums, and a wide-spread belief of *uroyi* or witchcraft which was combated by the *n'anga* or diviner. The high-god cult of *Mwari* had not yet appeared under that name, nor had super-spirits such as Chaminuka or Nehanda, while local or territorial cults such as Karuva and Dzivaguru deriving from the pre-Mutapa era apparently did not emerge as such until after 1700. Perhaps they, and other cults such as *shave* spirits, had been there all along, but so far we have no proof for this.

It is implicit in the foregoing that the Shona states saw much more social and economic inequality than in the smaller territories. Not only were there the inequalities found in the smaller units, the inequalities of land, but also the ruling groups were considerably richer than the rulers of the smaller territories, so that the overall gap between the richest and poorest was greater. The stone buildings of the Great Zimbabwe and Torwa states, and many descriptions of the wealthy in the Mutapa state drive this home.

4

Intercontinental Trade and the Portuguese

> 'These kings are already accustomed to cloth. . . It will be hard to go backwards. Having gold extracted as he orders, he will know: he will need someone to buy it'.
>
> *Anonymous, 1683, on the basis of intercontinental trade.*

Although it will be argued later that the most important development in the history of the Zimbabwean plateau before 1900 lay in simple agriculture rather than in any other economic activity, undoubtedly the gold mining attracted the most attention. Gold attracted the Muslims and Portuguese to the Sofala coast, and gold was the main reason for two major attempts by the Portuguese to seize control of the plateau. In the 1570s the Barreto-Homem expedition set out with the aim of conquering not only the Mutapa state but Manyika and the Torwa state as well. It failed not only because of the inexperience of its European and Asian-trained commanders in African conditions, but because the mines of Manyika were not suited to European, American or Asian-style extraction methods. The much larger-scale invasion of the late 1620s and 1630s did succeed in conquering the Mutapa state and the eastern territories, largely because the Portuguese had adapted to African conditions and were using African armies. But it had already failed by the 1670s and early 1680s because the methods of the Portuguese in forcing increased gold production in the Mutapa state, while brutally effective and able to induce a slight rise in gold production, led to the large-scale abandonment of their lands by the agricultural people who were expected to work in the mines. The campaigns of the Changamire which drove out those Portuguese who were attempting to come back in the late 1680s and early 1690s merely confirmed the failure of the 1670s and early 1680s.

The attempts of the Portuguese to control actual gold production on the plateau failed because, even when the Portuguese could defeat the African armies as they did between the 1620s and the 1660s, they could not boost gold production without destroying the agricultural base of the economy. But such efforts were wasted in any case. As the more perceptive Portuguese realised, the expense and effort of controlling production were unnecessary because as long as the conditions of the economy forced the people to mine gold and hunt for ivory, they had no choice but to deal with whoever controlled the coast if they wished to export their products. This was a consequence of the simple trading system mentioned at the beginning of this booklet. As far as gold and ivory were concerned, there was a very limited local market. The same was true of the people of south of the Limpopo or west of the middle Zambezi.

Not until the eighteenth century did a limited export trade begin with the Dutch in Delagoa Bay, and with the Yao from eastern Central Africa. The natural trade routes of the region led to the Zambezi and the sea and thence to Asia by way of a narrow corridor of coastal waters navigable to small craft. No matter whether traders used the Bay of Inhambane, the Sabi mouth, Sofala or the Zambezi ports, all these routes met further up the coast, and whoever controlled the coast north of the Zambezi controlled the terms of trade. Since, for most of the time in which intercontinental trade in gold and ivory took place, one power — Mogadishu, Kilwa, Mombasa or the Portuguese at Moçambique — monopolised this route, the Shona producers of the plateau had very little choice but to accept the prices that were offered. In theory, the Shona rulers could stop trade until better terms were obtained, or even declare a *mupeto* (forced payment) and seize the goods of the traders in their territories, but in practice they had, in the end, to return to trading with the holders of the coast. The need for imported cloth and beads that were cheaper than the locally-produced varieties and the fact that the local production of gold and hunting of ivory was geared to the intercontinental trade, meant that, no matter how many clashes took place between the people of the plateau and the Portuguese, in the end trade resumed on much the same terms.

When the Portuguese took Sofala from the Muslims in 1506 it was intended that a royal monopoly would control the trade, run purely by the Portuguese themselves. This proved unworkable, and in the end private trade predominated, taxed by the royal Captains of Moçambique. Partly this was because illegal private trade was difficult to detect, and partly because individual Portuguese moved out from the ports of Sofala, Sena and Quelimane to set themselves up under the various Shona rulers of the interior. By 1541 there were some Portuguese already living in the Mutapa state, subject to the Mutapa's rule, and in that year the position was formalised, with a 'Captain of the Gates' appointed as leader of their community. The split between the 'royal' Portuguese subject to

Moçambique and the *sertanejo* (backwoodsman) had thus already appeared.

Even before the Portuguese finally sealed off the 'leak' of independent Muslim trade by taking control of the outlets of the Zambezi, the Muslim community had begun to be integrated into the Portuguese system on the coast. 'Trusty' Muslims became agents for the Portuguese, and by the 1580s this process was far advanced, with the Muslims being gradually squeezed out of this *comprador* role into a marginal position wherever the Portuguese became dominant. Muslims continued to operate in the interior in the independent Shona territories and states such as the Torwa state and Maungwe into the middle of the seventeenth century, but by about 1700 they were losing their prominence there too. They were also losing much of that degree of Islamic culture that they had acquired, and by the eighteenth century they had become the 'Lemba' communities of the Shona and Venda, with a certain amount of specialization in crafts but otherwise not much different from their neighbours.[65]

For the Portuguese traders in the interior in the early sixteenth century, therefore, a way of life had emerged within the Shona and other territories of the plateau whereby they concentrated on trade, actually refusing to take over production in the gold areas,[66] and co-existing with the Muslims, all under their recognised African rulers. The arrival of the Barreto-Homem expedition on the Zambezi in 1571, therefore, threatened to upset this system. This was an attempt to use the death of a missionary in 1561 in the Mutapa state as an excuse for the conquest of the entire plateau and the crushing of the supposedly influential Muslims. This optimistic venture broke down in the lower Zambezi drylands, and returned to Sena, weakened by disease, drought and the resistance of the local Marave on the south bank, who were also in 'rebellion' against the Mutapa.[67] A second attempt by way of Sofala and Teve was more successful militarily, but the plan for taking over the Manyika mines failed because of inadequate equipment, and a third attempt to exploit the Mutapa's mines at Chikova was crushed by local African resistance. The old system of trade appeared to have triumphed, for at least another quarter-century.

In the early 1600s, however, the growing weakness of the Mutapa state and the increasing strength of the *sertanejos,* who were acquiring large African armies of slaves from the Zambezi valley and other dependants, began to make the control of production a possibility. Invasions by the Marave from north of the Zambezi, and protracted civil wars within the Mutapa dynasty, linked to a revolt of the pre-Mutapa Tavara and wars with Barwe, put the Mutapa in a position where he had to turn to the *sertanejos* for support. A treaty conceding the mines was wrung out of him in 1607, and a twenty-year 'cold war' over trading terms preceded a major war in 1628 – 33, in which the Portuguese, using the divisions within the Shona dynasties, wound up in control not only of the Mutapa state but Manyika as well.

Since ultimate power was conceded in theory to the Portuguese crown, but the royal government had no way of controlling the *sertanejos,* the latter had a protracted field day. They took their African armies into the interior, flouted the authority of the Shona rulers — some of whom shifted their allegiance from the Mutapa to the newcomers out of expediency — and by coercion actually increased gold production, by forced sales of trading goods or more direct methods. It was during this period, in 1644, that a Portuguese expedition intervened briefly in the troubles of the weakening Torwa state, though this had no permanent effect as far as the Portuguese were concerned. The situation developed into one of chaos, which reached its peak in 1663 when the subject Mutapa himself was killed.

To a degree, the defeat of the *sertanejos* was the work of the astute Mutapa Mukombwe, who ruled from 1663 into the 1680s: he worked quietly against them, fomenting risings by the lower Zambezi Tonga, who were by that time formally under the Portuguese, and even trying direct action in alliance with the Manyika.[68] This had some effect, but the response of the people was even more effective: they voted with their feet, leaving the gold areas for places where the Portuguese could not reach them, either in the hills or away from the Mutapa state itself. This, as well as an epidemic of disease, removed the basis of the *sertanejos*'s hopes: with no people left near the gold mines, they could not get gold dug — and evidently they could not make their slave soldiers into labourers. By the mid-1680s most of them had gone back to the Zambezi ports.

This really marked the end of the Portuguese hopes of extracting the gold of the plateau themselves, though this was not apparent to many of them at the time. Indeed, the late 1680s and early 1690s saw a renewed reoccupation of their bases on the plateau, the *feiras.* Before any definite development could take place, however, they were caught up in the meteoric rise to power of the Changamire dynasty, which was rebelling against the Mutapa, building up power in the eastern territories, and conquering the Torwa state, in very quick succession. A temporary alliance between the Changamire and the Mutapa saw the Portuguese evicted from the latter's state in 1693, and two years later they had been removed from Manyika as well. This had a traumatic effect upon the Portuguese, some vowing vengeance and reconquest, others admitting the extent to which they had provoked retribution for their actions over the past century, but the upshot was that they never tried to conquer the plateau again until the late nineteenth century.

The result of this was not a break in the basic trading pattern, however, but a reversion to the sixteenth-century situation. The Portuguese hung onto their coastal and river ports — indeed, the Shona made no effort to remove them — and in due course they came back to Manyika on the sufferance of the Manyika rulers, and opened up the *feira* of Zumbo on the middle Zambezi. There was, in fact, little difference between the position of the Portuguese before 1600 and that after 1700. If they could not conquer the interior, the rulers of the interior could find no other outlet for their trade (the Delagoa Bay trade never came to much) and so agents for the Portuguese—African, not Muslim, this time — moved inland to trade. It suited the rulers to let them do so, as long as the Portuguese themselves made no attempt to turn these trade contacts into a political presence. Since the Portuguese had largely given up such ideas, it is ironic but not entirely surprising to find them beginning to look upon the Changamire dynasty as a protector which could impose order on the trade routes and bring the lesser rulers into line when they proved over-bearing. As a matter of fact, their hopes in this direction outlived the ability of the Changamire to do so.[69]

A main feature of the eighteenth century gold trade that must be borne in mind is that it was diminishing towards the point of no return. We know this partly because the figures of the Portuguese, unreliable as they are, nevertheless show such a decline, and because when the Rhodesians arrived in the 1890s[70] virtually all of the upper-level gold had been removed already. Since we know from contemporary accounts that very little gold mining was done on the plateau between 1840 and 1890, it follows that during the period of the Changamire ascendancy the end of Shona mining occurred, with output going down to the point where it was uneconomic to carry on, although a certain amount of alluvial working continued.[71]

Intercontinental trade was not as tightly tied to gold production as the above paragraphs would imply, however. Ivory was a major export during the entire period, and elephants were far more widely distributed, offering far more people the chance to taking part in an export trade. Moreover, elephant hunting may have been less subject to control by the rulers than gold mining, in that kills took place in more remote areas away from their view. As far as the plateau is concerned, however, we do not yet have an accurate picture of the scale of elephant hunting because most of the ports which supplied figures for ivory exports also drew upon other areas. Nor do we yet know the elephant territories as they were before guns became available in quantity and pushed back the elephants into more marginal lands. Traditions referring to Buhera and Rimuka, however, stress that they were becoming deeply involved in hunting in the eighteenth century.[72]

There were other items of intercontinental trade, such as copper, that figure in the documents and traditions, but none of them were as important as gold and ivory. In view of the situation in the rest of Africa, it is worth mentioning the very limited extent and impact of the slave trade on the Zimbabwean plateau. It has been shown that the demand for slaves in the Indian Ocean economy was strictly limited until the eighteenth century. Doubtless a trickle of slaves left the coast for the East African cities and beyond before 1500, certainly as many as 500 slaves a year might be exported from the Portuguese-dominated coast after that date, but it was not until the mid-eighteenth century that the need for slaves in the Mascarene islands and later in Brasil led to the rapid growth of the trade. Yet this did not affect the plateau to anything like the extent it did the lower Zambezi valley or the lands north of the river. By the time the trade was getting into its stride, Sofala — the port with the closest overall links to the plateau — was supplying about 8% of the trade. Inhambane, with more remote links and with most of its hinterland occupied by the southeastern lowlands, was supplying 15%, and Sena, in the Lower Zambezi lowlands, which had a broad hinterland in the valley and the lands to the north of it, supplied 25%.[73] In other words, whereas some of the Sofala slaves were probably plateau Shona-speakers, relatively few of the Inhambane and Sena slaves are likely to have fallen into this category. This is borne out by the proportion (7.4%) of Shona (and Lower Zambezi Tonga) slaves liberated at Tete in the nineteenth century.[74] Why was this so?

There is so far no definite answer. It cannot have been because of the military weakness of the Portuguese *vis-a-vis* the Changamire and Mutapa states, or even Manyika and Teve, because elsewhere — at Moçambique and Inhambane — slaves came from lands out of reach of the Portuguese. Nor can it have lain in some special feature of Shona society, since not only the lowland Shona of the

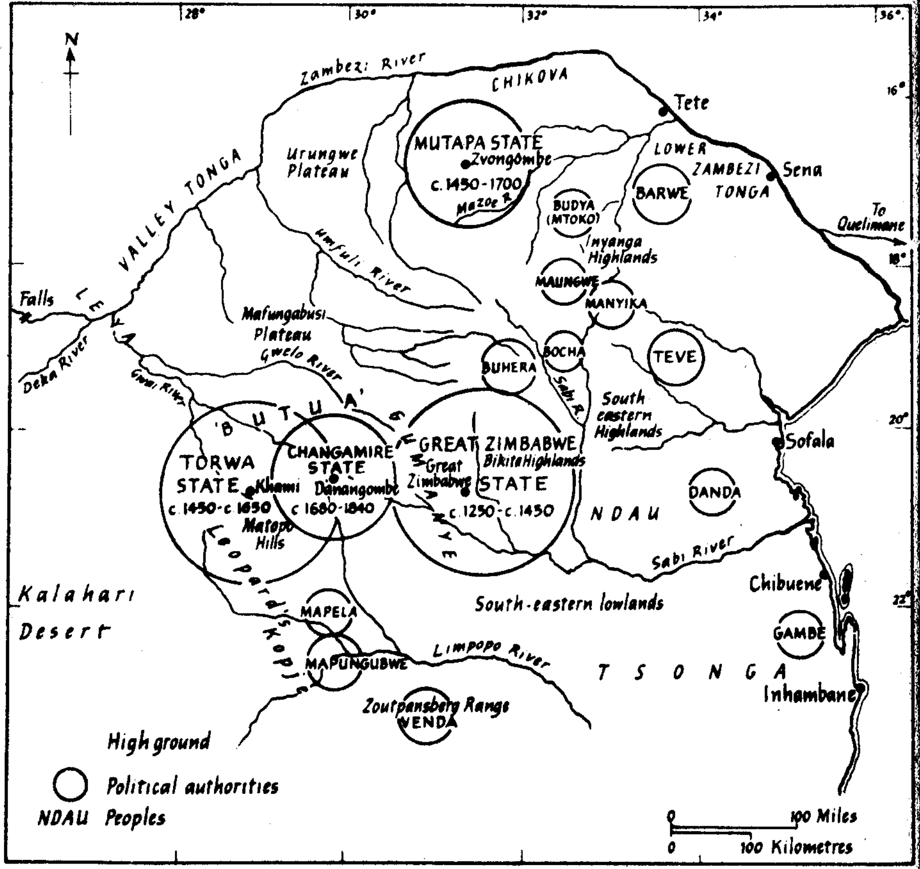
Zambezi valley[75] but the plateau Shona of Teve did have slaves — as opposed to bondmen — and isolated examples have been noted elsewhere.[76] Perhaps the answer lies in demography. Domestic slaves often came from especially drought-prone areas with a relatively high population, and it has been shown that the Shona and Sena-speakers on the south bank of the lower Zambezi used to buy slaves from the peoples on the north bank.[77] It has also been suggested that by the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the plateau lands of the north and east were relatively heavily populated compared with the centre and south, and that migrations were taking place from the former to the latter during this period.[78] This being so, the migrations may have acted as demographic safety valves, and thus domestic slavery was less common than in the lands north of the Zambezi and in the hinterland of Inhambane, because the under-privileged members of society could find land in the centre or south, or in the lands vacated by the migrants. Whatever the answer, it is a curious fact that there is practically no evidence for domestic slavery or slave trade over most of the plateau, and that the fragments of evidence that exist refer to a trade in women from the Zambezi valley to the centre and south, in return for grain and ivory.[79] In other words, whereas the early nineteenth century saw extensive export trading in slaves to the north and south of the plateau, the trend was running in the other direction on the plateau itself.

The old intercontinental trading system between the plateau and the Portuguese-held coast did not come to an end suddenly. Indeed, it was still operating up to the end of the nineteenth century, when the economy at the coastal end was ceasing to be run on mercantile lines and was being replaced by the capitalist system, and when the southern African regional capitalist system had become dominant on the plateau itself. Not only did gold-washers continue to work many of the northern and eastern rivers into the 1890s, operating on a small scale and exporting to the Zambezi and the coast as before, but the Portuguese-orientated trade proved to be surprisingly resilient.[80] The disturbances of the *mfecane* in the 1830s were neither the beginning nor the end of the troubles experienced by the Portuguese in Zumbo and Manyika. With the decline of the Changamire state and the trade by African agents between there and Zumbo, the latter station had been closed and opened a number of times before 1836 when it was abandoned, but it was re-opened in 1861, and by the late 1860s Portuguese traders had reached the Victoria Falls region.[81] Manyika also saw the Portuguese withdraw between 1835 and 1854, following Ngoni attacks, but the formal existence of a *feira* was not the only indication of trading activity.[82] The African agents of the Portuguese on the rivers continued to operate after 1835, and by 1857 Izidoro Correa Pereira of Sena had an extremely accurate picture of the remaining gold regions on the plateau.[83] Indeed, the Portuguese were trading regularly with the Ndebele state in the 1850s.[84] Thus even in this reputedly blank period, the old links continued. After 1860 and even until after 1890 the new breed of *prazo*-holder strengthened the trade links. The *prazo*-holders of the middle Zambezi and Zumbo had close trading links with the Hurungwe plateau, and up to 1890 Vicente José Ribeiro 'Chimbangu' had a post at Nyota mountain on the upper Mazowe.[85] In the 1870s and 1880s Manoel António de Sousa established such extensive trading links over the central and eastern plateau that in areas where he never set foot his African name 'Kuvheya' became a symbol for all 'Portuguese' traders.[86] These two *prazo*-holders in particular provided the personal link between the old intercontinental trade system and the new capitalism when they supplied the military force behind Portugal's *Companhia de Moçambique* and its attempt to seize the central, northern and eastern parts of the plateau in 1889.

So far, this account of the thousand years of intercontinental mercantile trade has concentrated on the coastal traders and the export of products from the plateau. What did all this mean to the people, and what did they get out of it? The short answer is 'cloth, beads and wars', but as usual the picture is more complicated than that. For a start, the imports also included a bewildering variety of goods that went to the ruling elements: *ndoro* shells, cowries, manufactured clothing, a few guns and even small cannon, distilled drinks, fancy celadon or porcelain ceramics, etcetera.[87] But in terms of sheer bulk, cloth and beads predominated. Cloth was obviously useful. Although it also formed a kind of currency it ultimately ended up in use. Given the slow rate at which the otherwise excellent local cotton cloth was woven and the disadvantages of cured skins, imported cloth was not really a luxury in a climate that saw frost in winter. We know less about the beads, but it has been suggested that where the female half of the population had, generally speaking, the more monotonous side of the basic agricultural economy to carry out, beads may have oiled the "machinery" of the household unit of production.[88]

But what price was paid for these imports? If gold and ivory were, bulk for bulk, the most valuable exports the plateau could offer, as they undoubtedly were, they demanded a very high expenditure of labour hours.

Moreover, if gold washing was merely tedious, gold mining was not only unpredictable because of the broken nature of the reefs, but dangerous as well, with collapses and cave-ins claiming lives fairly frequently. And, before guns became readily available in the nineteenth century, elephant hunting could also be highly dangerous. It is an indication of the local economic forces that drove people to these branches of production that they were prepared to push a reef mine down below the water-table, bailing it out by hand, or to tackle an elephant by sneaking up behind it to hamstring it with an axe — especially when, as we have seen, the state rulers would take half of the gold and ivory obtained. What were these local forces? To answer this, we need to look at the local economy over these same thousand years.


28°
30°
32°
34°
36°
16°
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N
Zambezi River
CHIKOVA
Tete
MUTAPA STATE
Zvongombe
c. 1450-1700
Mazoe R.
Urungwe Plateau
VALLEY TONGA
LOWER ZAMBEZI TONGA
Sena
BARWE
BUDYA (MTOKO)
Inyanga Highlands
To Quelimane
Umfuli River
MAUNGWE
MANYIKA
Falls
LEYA
Deka River
Mafungabusi Plateau
Gwelo River
BUHERA
BOCHA
TEVE
Sabi R.
South eastern Highlands
Gwai River
'BUTUA'
TORWA STATE
Khami
c. 1450-c. 1650
CHANGAMIRE STATE
Danangombe
c 1680-1840
GREAT ZIMBABWE STATE
Great Zimbabwe
Bikita Highlands
c. 1250-c. 1450
Sofala
NDAU
DANDA
Sabi River
Matopo Hills
Leopard's Kopje
Kalahari Desert
MAPELA
South-eastern lowlands
Chibuene
GAMBE
MAPUNGUBWE
Limpopo River
TSONGA
Inhambane
Zoutpansberg Range
VENDA
High ground
Political authorities
NDAU Peoples
0 100 Miles
0 100 Kilometres

5

The Local Economy

Pagara murimi, pagara mupopoti: where there is a farmer there is a querulous man.
Hurudza inofa ichinzi inodya: an expert farmer may starve while his neighbours believe he has plenty.
Gore harizi rakaze rimwe: the same year can never come again.

Traditional, on industry and fortune in the local economy.

The basic unit of society on the plateau, the household, was an agricultural one. True, there was no such thing as a completely agricultural unit. Each household took part in hunting, the gathering of wild vegetables and fruit, the herding of cattle and/or small stock and at least some of a variety of mining, craft, industrial or specialised agricultural activities, to varying degrees. Nevertheless, agriculture was the basic, underlying activity of society. This was particularly true of the plateau itself, but it was also true of the agriculturally marginal lands around it. On the plateau, the Njanja built up a deservedly great reputation as makers and traders of hoes over a very wide area, yet they put the greatest number of their labour hours into agriculture, as well as the herding of the stock they acquired in their iron trade. The Shangwe of the Mafungabusi plateau in the west had a similar reputation with their tobacco trade, but they still planted many more fields of grain for their own consumption.[89] Even the Ndebele, once seen as primarily herdsmen, are now known to have been basically agriculturalists with a strong herding element.[90]

In the marginal lands — the lowlands, the Nyanga highlands or the watershed areas of the main plateau — agriculture remained of vital importance. The Tsonga-speaking Hlengwe of the south-eastern lowlands knew that only one year in three or four would have sufficient rainfall for average crops, so that they relied far more heavily than the plateau-dwellers on fishing and hunting meat for themselves and for trade to the plateau-dwellers and on gathering, yet they never abandoned agriculture and continuted to plant crops in the best-watered land available to them, year after year.[91] In the Nyanga highlands, poor soils, steep slopes and complex microclimates made agriculture precarious, yet the people of the Nyanga Uplands culture put more energy into simple agriculture than anybody else in the region, building miles of stone terracing and irrigation channels for their crops, thus managing to survive as agriculturalists.[92]

In short, the truism that the basis of plateau society was agriculture remains true, though in different areas the other branches of production approached agriculture in importance. We therefore need to know how successful plateau agriculture was in terms of its ability to supply the people in their various needs. Probably the best short summary is that it was 'useful but dangerously static.'[93] The 'useful' part of this contradictory statement is easy to explain: most of the time most of the people got sufficient food for their needs out of their crop-fields and vegetable gardens, and needed wild vegetables, fruit and hunted or herded meat only to add vitamins, protein, etc., to the basic diet of millet porridge that meant 'food' to them. By careful choice of the right crop for the right soils, planted at the right time according to the weather predictions of the experts in the community, the people of the plateau fought a treacherous climate with a great deal of success. Storage techniques made it possible to store grain for up to, but not more than, five years, which cushioned the impact of *shangwa,* famine. It is a tribute to the 'useful' side of the agricultural economy that although *shangwa* occurred frequently in varying degrees, most people managed to ride them out on their own lands and were rarely forced to go elsewhere, even temporarily.[94]

Yet the 'dangerously static' side of the picture was true as well. In part, it lay in the fact that no selection of crops and soil and no expertise in predicting *shangwa* could ward off the worst of these disasters, whether caused by climate, locusts or other blights. Nor could the grain stores, good though they were, keep sufficient grain in store to feed the people throughout the really bad *shangwa.* There was no absolute security in agriculture by itself, as is made clear by accounts in traditions and documents of people reduced to near starvation.[95] This is, of course, a feature of agriculture throughout the world up to the present day, even in the 'developed' nations. But it did mean that *shangwa* lay behind the agricultural system as a constant danger to the people.

The agricultural system was also 'static' in another way. Although we saw that crops were carefully selected with a view for their suitability for the soils and expected weather, these were crops within a very limited range. The original food crops of the Early Iron Age in this region had been various millets and sorghums and cowpeas, and by and large that was still the situation nearly two thousand years later. New food crops from Asia, America and Europe were available, and in many cases were used by the people of the plateau, but they did not become staples until the twentieth century. Asian rice was grown extensively on the coast by the sixteenth century, but although it was widely known and grown on the plateau it never became a staple there, being confined to small, marshy areas and the personal gardens of the women. Bananas, too, spread widely but never became a staple crop. Maize also became available by the sixteenth century,[96] and by the 1890s it had spread over most of the plateau, but although it was to become a staple crop in the next century, it apparently still had not done so by the 1890s, being used largely as a relish in its cob form to back up the millet porridge. Manioc remained practically unknown. Wheat was produced on the Jesuit *prazos* in the Zambezi valley, but never became common on the plateau.[97] No doubt there were good reasons for this conservatism, because the plateau people were quick to introduce and adapt a very wide range of exotic vegetables and fruits, but the fact remained that in terms of basic crops very little did change until the last years of the nineteenth century, when the demands of capitalism began to provoke a swift response.

Nor, for that matter, did the agricultural techniques of the Later Iron Age differ much from those of the Early Iron Age. Grain bins appear to have been much the same, and not only did the types of hoe not differ greatly, but as late as the nineteenth century iron hoes were not always available, and wooden hoes had to be used.[98] The expanding iron industry and trade of such groups as the Njanja did much to remedy this, but it is significant that iron was not available to all at such a late date.

This analysis looks at the darker side of the picture. It was still possible for people to increase their production and trade their surplus, where there was a market. This was true in the hinterland of Sofala, where there was a ready market for crops at the port.[99] It was also true at some of the inland *feiras* such as Manyika where traders were accustomed to buy supplies.[100] But it was also possible for some areas, favoured by their climate and soils, to grow crops for trade with less fortunate zones. In other words, there was an internal peasantry unconnected with external trade. The best known of these areas was the Bikita section of the southern plateau, where the central houses of the Duma people grew crops for sale to the lowland Duma and the Hlengwe of the lowlands. Another was in the middle Sabi valley, where the highland Ndau grew crops for sale to their relatives on the dry valley floor.[101] But such a trade depended upon there being a favoured agricultural zone close to an unfavourable zone, so that crops could be regularly carried over a relatively short distance. Where the 'slope' between favoured and unfavoured lands was more gradual and thus the distances were greater, this sort of regular production of surplus crops apparently did not exist, although a closer examination of micro-environments might very well reveal more examples at village level. On the whole, it is clear that only a few favoured areas were able to market agricultural produce before 1890, though there was a rapid response in the 1890s when markets did become available across the plateau.[102]

If Iron Age agriculture on and around the plateau was in fact an economic *impasse,* stock-breeding offered a way out of it. The advantages of keeping herds and flocks of cattle, sheep and goats were obvious: they bred fairly rapidly and lasted much longer than stored grain, and it is not surprising that much of the ideology of the Shona and Ndebele was expressed in terms of cattle, exchanged between lineages in the bride-prices paid for each marriage. Even when cattle were not available to a household because of poverty or environment, they remained the ideal. The great herds of the Kutama immigrants, the herds of the Great Zimbabwe state and of the Torwa state are all known to us from archaeology. Documents stress the importance of cattle in the Torwa, Mutapa and Changamire states and in the north-eastern territories known to the Portuguese, and traditions stress their importance everywhere. Having stated this however, the sources can tell us very little about cattle management and distribution in the centuries before the nineteenth. We know that the slaughter of young cattle by the ordinary people was unusual even in the period of the Great Zimbabwe state's heyday[103] that the Torwa state at Khami could export cattle to the Zambezi valley in the sixteenth century as the Ndebele occasionally did in the nineteenth;[104] and that the founder of the Changamire state started as a herdsman. We know that cattle-rich and cattle-poor people existed in the same communities, but we know little else from contemporary sources. For example, it is reasonable to assume that the custom of *kuronza*, the entrusting of cattle to clients, was practised before the nineteenth century, but these seems to be no contemporary proof, any more than there is that the Changamire state practised transhumance grazing, although this too is a reasonable assumption.[105]

What is clear, though, is that cattle herding was a vulnerable means of storing wealth, and that the poorer people, obviously,

were more vulnerable than the rich. In time of *shangwa,* cattle could be exchanged for grain from the more fortunate regions, or eaten. This could diminish a herd very rapidly. By early 1895 the Shona of the eastern Salisbury District had accumulated about 2 000 head of cattle between them. Their feelings by the end of the year, when they had had to trade 1 000 and eat another 500 because of *shangwa,* can easily be imagined.[106] Granted that herds could be built up again by breeding and a little judicious cattle-raiding from neighbours, stock-raising was still a precarious business, and one that favoured the big stockholders the most.

Industry and specialised agriculture, as has been pointed out before, were marginal to the basic economy. Iron-working, manufacture and trade, the salt industry, cotton-growing and weaving, specialised pottery manufacture and a host of other industries tended to be resorted to by groups excluded from the better agricultural and grazing lands. The salt-workers of the middle Sabi valley are a good example. Certainly, some of these groups turned their skills to good advantage, but there are few cases where they were also sufficiently well-off to become politically dominant.

There is no need to belabour the point any further: the people of the Zimbabwean plateau turned to the gold and ivory trades, in spite of their difficulty, danger and relative unprofitability, because of the weakness of the basic economy of agriculture and herding. However, as we have seen, gold and ivory trading were at best options only available to people who lived in gold regions or elephant territories. Moreover, the gold mining industry rose to a peak and dwindled almost to nothing as a result of the extremely efficient mining of the upper reefs by the Shona. Elephant hunting was not an exhaustible branch of production until the last decades of the nineteenth century when guns in quantity led to the extinction of elephants in many areas, but by the same token it was not easily expandable until those guns became available, and relatively few people were engaged in it: a crude estimate is that between 300 and 400 hunters operated on the plateau at any one time.[107] Thus we have the contradiction that whereas the limitations of agriculture and herding forced people into marginal industries for local trade or difficult and dangerous production for the intercontinental trade, until the late nineteenth century, when guns and trading and labour opportunities in the south as well as post-1890 peasant production opportunities became available, people were nevertheless forced to turn more and more to the basic economy.

The basic economy of agriculture and herding was, as we have seen, a conservative one. We have already seen that Asian and

American crops made very little impact, and there is so far little in the archaeological record to show that the very effective methods of cultivation and storage of crops used in the nineteenth century had not been in use as far back as the Early Iron Age, even if vegetable production did use ever more varied types. We have seen that the irrigation and terracing of the Nyanga highlands were the work of a poor people trying to remain at the agricultural norm, not people pushing their production above the norm by intensive farming. In the same way, there is little or nothing to indicate that cattle and small stock breeding had improved in numbers of head per hectare of grazing between the coming of the Later Iron Age and the nineteenth century. In other words, the basic economy was not one of intensive but of extensive production.

Earlier it was stated that the agricultural history of the plateau was in the end the most significant development in plateau history before 1900, outshining all developments in intercontinental trade, including the showy but ephemeral urban sites around the stone *zimbabwe*. In terms of the extensive character of plateau agriculture, this development lay in the 'Battle of the *deve*'. *Deve* is uncleared land uninhabited by agriculturalists or herdsmen. Since there was little natural grassland on the plateau, the cleared or semi-cleared land existing by 1900 represented the cumulative victory of Iron Age people in the battle of the *deve* since about 180 A.D. So, too, was the population in 1900, in both humans and beasts. There were about 700 000 people on the plateau, and perhaps 500 000 head of cattle. We do not know by what stages these figures were reached. There was almost certainly a significant immigration at the beginning of the Early Iron Age, another at the beginning of the Later Iron Age, and yet another in the southwest in the 1840s. Apart from these, however, in the absence of any indications to the contrary, it seems likely that there was a steady growth in both people and beasts over the whole period. This was not an even growth everywhere, however. As is argued at much greater length elsewhere, there seems to have been a particularly rapid increase in human – herd population in the Great Zimbabwe state before about 1400, followed by emigration in most directions and actual depopulation in the state's hinterland from about 1450 to about 1750. During this same period, population appears to have mounted in the north and east, and there were a number of reflex movements that led to a resettlement of the central plateau area between about 1700 and 1800, and of the southern plateau between 1750 and 1850. The wars with the Portuguese undoubtedly played a part, but cannot explain the whole movement.[108]

6

The New States, the Warriors and the Migrations

'The men and the women are of a disproportionate size, very swift in running, strong and brave and extremely resolute in their undertakings, so arrogant in speech that they click their tongues with each word with such strength that they seem to pull the voice violently from their inside. . . the said Borozes, although they are coarse, unruly and ignorant, obey their superiors in a way that seems equal to that of the European troops.'

Anonymous, c. 1794, account of the Rozvi.

Between about 1650 and 1750, new types of state emerged on and around the plateau. We have seen how both the Torwa and Mutapa states were on the verge of extinction by about 1650, both ravaged to greater or lesser degrees by the civil wars and the Portuguese. The Mutapa state survived in a changed form until the mid-nineteenth century. The Torwa state fell to the Changamire Rozvi from the northeast, who then erected a new state on the foundations laid by the Torwa. In both cases, much of the old system survived, but new elements became prominent. These changes occurred as the migrations mentioned earlier were taking place.

In the case of the Mutapa, the efforts of the Mutapa Mukombwe and his immediate successors could not restore the state to what it had been before 1629. For one thing, much of the plateau section of the state had been reallocated in this Mukombwean period to new groups from outside the state. Prominent among these were the Budya, who started out in the Lower Zambezi Tonga-speaking territory of Barwe.[109] Occupying the Mutoko shoulder of the plateau, they set up a complex of new dynasties there, by 1650 at the latest. But other groups pushed on, and while a few reached Urungwe, most settled in the old heartlands of the Mutapa state at the invitation of the Mutapa. By about 1720 the Mutapa held little of the plateau directly and the plateau segment was beginning to drift out of his control. From then, on the heart of the state was in the Zambezi lowlands between Zumbo and Tete.

It was at about this time that a change occurred in the military and social structure of the state. Until then it is fairly clear that most men in the state had paid a cattle bride-price for their wives and lived with their fathers. There had been no real regular military force apart from the Mutapa's bodyguards. By about 1695, however, the *nyai* began to be noticed and they were prominent by about 1750.[110] This was a class of young men who, lacking cattle to get wives in the lowlands, became clients who did military service for a period of time to get wives from their patrons — usually the house-heads who squabbled for the Mutapa title. Thus, even when the Mutapa title was being fought for, as it very often was, there was still sufficient military force readily available to keep the Portuguese *prazo*-holders out of the state until the last half of the nineteenth century.

A rather different origin lay behind the Rozvi. They seem to have coalesced around the great Changamire leader of the 1670s, 1680s and 1690s. He had his origins, apparently, in a number of unsuccessful rebels against the Mutapa who had operated between 1490 and 1547, but he rose to power in the war-torn northeast, first as a cattle-keeper for the Mutapa and then as a rebel against him. Very soon his 'Rozvi' or destroyers had become powerful enough to eject the Portuguese from the Manyika area as well as to make two major raids into the Mutapa state, while at about the same time they captured the Torwa state, and soon the Changamire dynasty and most of the Rozvi were relocated around the old Torwa capital of Danangombe in the southwest.[111]

The new Changamire state also had a strong military element, as evidenced by the armies of 2 000 – 4 000 men that the ruler could send as far away as Zumbo and Manyika. These were known to Portuguese as 'Rozvi', but it is probable that the term *nyai* was also used for them, since the people of the northwest called the Changamire state Unyai, and the southern Shona near the frontiers of the state were much later known as *nyai*. We do not know, however, exactly how the Rozvi armies were composed. Since they lived in a cattle-rich part of the plateau, they can hardly have been recruited in the same way as the Mutapa's *nyai*, though possibly they were also poor young men who did military service for cattle and thus for wives. It is a fair guess that they also herded the Changamire's cattle, like the Ndebele *amabutho* of the next century.

Control of these armies of adolescents and young men by the Changamire and the Mutapa's house-heads cannot have been an easy task. The *nyai* not only fought off the Portuguese but also mugged travellers between Zumbo and Tete, and we know of at least one Rozvi army that turned 'dissident' and had to be defeated by more disciplined troops. For the first time we seem to be seeing the beginnings of a 'youth' revolution that was to become more marked after the *mfecane* of the 1830s. It is in the 1760s that we see more hints of this: the Hiya, a group of emigrants from the middle Sabi valley and the southeastern highlands, broke away from a larger migration which had reached Buhera, and set off on an astonishing career of raiding. They ranged over an area from Nhowe to the Mazowe valley to the Umfuli – Gweru river systems. They were finally crushed by the Rozvi and settled near the Gweru, by the 1790s, but in their thirty years of raiding they had given the central plateau a foretaste of the *mfecane* groups of the next century, migrants looking for agricultural and grazing land to settle, but not averse to raiding in order to add to their herds and numbers. Allowing for the tendency of traditions to ignore the agricultural similarities between peoples and to stress their differences, it seems that the Hiya were not alone in their tendency to take up raiding. '*Dumbuseya*' means 'sway bellies' and refers to the well-fed people who took up raiding as a career. Two groups of *dumbuseya* emerged after the rapid passage of the Ngoni in the 1820s – 30s, and were made up of young Shona who had been very briefly caught up by the Ngoni and trained in *mfecane* fighting methods. Since their contact with the Ngoni was so brief, it is remarkable with what enthusiasm they took up raiding. One group was defeated by the Duma and vanished from tradition,[112] but the other had quite a flourishing career on the southern plateau edge before being partly absorbed into the Ndebele system.[113] Old age, marriage and increased responsibility mellowed the *dumbuseya*, and they probably never lived entirely off raiding, but their existence, as well as the speed with which many young Shona adapted to the Ndebele and Gaza identities suggests that by the early nineteenth century there was a kind of dissatisfaction among the young with the old social system of the plateau.

It is important not to exaggerate these early fore-runners of the *mfecane*, nor to misunderstand the raiding element in the *mfecane* states themselves. The migrations within the plateau during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are of far more significance, representing as they do another stage in the battle of the *deve*, and social changes within Shona society, changes that led both physically and ideologically away from the state and the old territorial systems of the north and east. Not all the Rozvi were close followers of the Changamire. It has been suggested that a major factor behind the rise of the Changamire Rozvi in the northeast was population pressure in a relatively crowded environment. Some

Rozvi did not follow the Changamire to the southwest, but travelled a shorter distance and settled around the central plateau. Many more made a major migration at about the time of the Changamire's rise to power, and moved into the southeastern highlands, competing with earlier immigrants from the Great Zimbabwe state and possibly with non-Shona in other parts of the highlands. Still more moved into Teve after the Changamire campaigns, and took over the territory from its previous rulers, driving 'Tonga' up into the eastern slopes of the mountains.[114]

But these moves were only the beginning of the resettlement moves of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: as soon as the Changamire had moved to the southwest, other groups from the north, east and event the south came to fill the relative vacuum that had been left. Most of the modern dynasties of the central plateau date from this period in the first half of the eighteenth century, and by the end of that century the late-comers such as the 'belly-rippers' of the Guzho were forced to take the less desirable lands on the western part of the centre. Old Buhera, a territory that may date back earlier than the seventeenth century to the period of the Great Zimbabwe state, survived in a fragmented and diminished form, losing much land to the immigrant Njanja from the lower Zambezi, but south of Buhera and west of the Sabi there was a land-rush between about 1700 and 1850 that was probably unrivalled since the days of Great Zimbabwe. Duma immigrants from the old Teve territory were first on the scene, and staked out a huge territory around the prized agricultural land of the Bikita highlands. They lost some of the fringes in the ensuing crush, but hung onto the highlands to create a prosperous confederacy — significantly not a centralised state. The immigrants gradually moved over most of the southern plateau as the Changamire state weakened: Rufura, Ngowa, Bonda, Mhari and many others, pushing successively through the Tokwe and Lundi river systems towards the fringes of the Changamire state and the southeastern lowlands. Moreover, from about 1800 the Tsonga-speaking Hlengwe began to push up the rivers of the same southeastern lowlands, overcoming the scattered Shona there and imposing their language and culture on the area, while a few groups from the Venda-speaking area south of the lowveld moved up, with Sotho-speakers on their left flank.

What all this represented in human terms is difficult to tell, because most of the evidence on this comes from traditions which notoriously exaggerate the role of the immigrants. But we do know that this process was not affected by the Ngoni *mfecane*, whic occurred in its latter stages, and that by the end of the century the southern plateau was the most heavily populated section of the plateau. The later *mfecane* states of the Ndebele and Gaza effectively contained this demographic movement, but it is interesting to consider what would have happened if these powerful states had not emerged to the west and east of the southern plateau. Perhaps, if there had been no *mfecane* deriving from the pressures south of the Limpopo, there might have been a southern-Shona based one, with Shona groups leaving the Shona area to establish themselves beyond the Limpopo and Zambezi. As a matter of fact, the Changamire state had already given rise to two such movements that spread into non-Shona speaking areas. In the first half of the eighteenth century a number of dynasties, calling themselves Rozvi but more probably coming from the original Torwa element in the Changamire state, since they still built stone capitals, migrated through the Mafungabusi plateau to the Deka-Gwaai river area, where they settled and turned a largely Leya-speaking area into a Shona-speaking one. At about the same time, a section of the Changamire dynasty proper broke away and crossed the southeastern lowlands to conquer the Venda-speakers of the Zoutpansberg some time after 1727, this area having been under the Thovela dynasty which was also of Shona origin. The result was the short-lived sub-state of the Singo, which broke up in the early nineteenth century at about the time that its Rozvi element was absorbed by the Venda-speakers. What is implied in the above paragraphs is that although the extensive economy was being used very effectively, it might not have been able to be used for much longer than the nineteenth century without serious consequences. This was, in fact, what was happening in Natal at about the same time.[115]

In the resettlement areas of the centre and south, the new dynasties established were moving away from the kind of structure found in the Mutapa state and the northeastern territories in earlier centuries. No new state was founded, and even the Changamire Rozvi gradually lost what control they had exercised in these areas. The typical unit was a small territory that rarely reached seventy kilometres across, and was often much smaller. Few of the institutions of the north and east were continued with in the centre and south. The practice of granting wards to the wives or sisters of the rulers, which had been and still was common in the Mutapa state, Manyika and Teve, was discontinued in the centre after a short time, and was apparently never used in the south. Only the Duma preserved the special grain tribute to the rulers, and even so it was on a decentralised basis, as Duma was run on confederal and not unitary lines. Elsewhere, rulers received only a token tribute, except where there were elephants, — there was little or no gold left in these regions — and it is not surprising that there was no regular force or capital maintained except in Duma, though quite large *zimbabwe* survived in the northeast. Even the title of *mambo,* used frequently in the northeast, was dropped.

These changes away from the ideal of the state become more obvious when it is realised that earlier migrating groups had tried to maintain it. The Rozvi emigrants to the Deka-Gwaai and Zoutpansberg had maintained capitals, and so had the emigrants into Teve and the southeastern highlands. The migrations into the centre and south of the plateau do indeed show a movement towards a less complex way of life than had been offered by the states. But this was not a new development, nor were these small unities a debased or fragmented form of the state. On the contrary, they were in the same tradition not only of those small territories that had co-existed with the states in their heyday, but, it is fairly certain, with the original Shona settlements in the beginning of the Later Iron Age, or even with the political formations of the Early Iron Age. Seen in this light, therefore, the new settlers were reverting to the mainstream of Shona politics and society, from which the state-forming period had been a diversion.

To conclude this section, it is worth taking a look at religion. In the north and east, on the evidence we have available, the religious system had been relatively simple in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: it had been based on ancestral spirit cults, with particular emphasis on cults based on the ancestors of the ruling lineage. By the eighteenth century we know that earlier political formations, such as those of the Tavara or of Musikavanhu in the southeastern highlands, were beginning to gain recognition by the dominant lineages as religious entities.[116] By the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, an even more diverse picture was emerging. Spirit cults that bore no relationship to the local lineages became prominent — Chaminuka, Nehanda and Kaguvi. The specifically Rozvi high-god Mwari, a combination of sky-god and ancestral spirit, seems to have been of importance in the northeast where the Rozvi had originated, and of course in the Changamire state.[117] The Rozvi emigrants to the Venda country had taken Mwari with them, and there the cult syncretised with the older Venda cave-cult of Raluvhimba and that of the former Thovela dynasty, and a modified version of the Mwari cult, by now based on mediums operating from caves, was re-exported to the Matopo hills in the early nineteenth century. For the rest of this century and well into the next, this cult, which now appealed to a large number of people who had

had no connection with the Rozvi, spread rapidly over the southwest and south.[118] Cults based on the possession of rain charms and regalia also became prominent in the south, and alongside all of these ancestral cults of the new settlers continued to function. The 'new frontier' seems to have produced a kind of religious free-for-all at the same time as the great southern land rush was in progress.

7

The Mfecane States

> 'They have completely taken over the language, costume and customs of the (Ndebele) and do not want to know that they are descendants of the (Karanga) — although they keep visiting their (Karanga) relatives.'
>
> *Rev. Knothe, 1888, on Shona members of the Ndebele state.*

Most of the foregoing has been inevitably centred upon the Shona in spite of the fact that they were not the only people on or around the plateau. This is because so little is known of the matrilineal peoples of the western sector between 1400 and about 1800 or, for that matter, about many of the eastern non-Shona. But from the 1830s onwards, permanent settlements of Nguni-speakers appeared in the land. (Indeed it was from this time that the term 'Shona' first came into use, at first as a term used by the Ndebele about the Rozvi and gradually adopted by the Shona-speakers themselves. Prior to this different sections of them had called themselves 'Karanga' 'Kalanga', 'Zezuru', etc. but they seem to have had no universal name for themselves.)

In spite of over ten years of modern research, it is still very difficult for most readers to think of the nineteenth century on the plateau without their ideas being dominated by the idea of the *mfecane*. The great disturbances of southern Africa, which reached across the plateau into central and eastern Africa, used to be thought of as a major cataclysm that brought to an end the entire stone-building culture of Great Zimbabwe as well as that of Khami, and sent the survivors into the hills where they crouched behind rough defensive walls until colonial rule arrived to release them. That the *mfecane* saw widespread raiding is true, but the version outlined above was a gross exaggeration. We have already seen, for example, that prestige stone building had already tapered off to a halt by 1700, though the Changamire dynasty was still using Danangombe. A much more important factor is time and space. The very first *mfecane* band did not appear on the plateau until 1826, when the nineteenth century was already a quarter over, and then it only operated in the east. The rest of the plateau did not see invaders until after 1831, and although several groups ranged over the plateau they moved so fast and spent so much time fighting each other that by the time the last of them had left in 1838 most of the people, with the exception of the unlucky Rozvi who had had to contend with most of these groups in succession, had probably not suffered too badly. The Ndebele, who settled permanently in the southwest in about 1840, and the Gaza in the southeast, were another matter, but as we shall see they took time to extend their raids, with the result that many areas saw no raids until the 1860s and few or none after that. Moreover, it proved possible for many of the Shona and Tsonga to live quite happily under Ndebele and Gaza rule, and for others to resist them successfully. The acid test of the *mfecane's* impact was its effect upon human settlement, and we shall see that it had very little effect indeed. All in all, the Zimbabwean plateau got off relatively lightly in the nineteenth century.

The first wave of *mfecane* migrants, the Ngoni — those Nguni-speakers who eventually crossed the Zambezi — were not intending to pass through at all; they wanted to set up their own states. The first of these groups, led by Nxaba, did succeed in doing this for nearly a decade, from 1827 to 1836, based on Sanga in the Eastern Highlands. Like many Nguni groups, Nxaba's Ngoni needed to restock with humans and cattle, and Nxaba raided Manyika, the disunited territory of Teve and even Sofala. This might have developed into a major state, but the Gaza Nguni under Soshangane attacked and drove out Nxaba, who then went north of the Zambezi. Soshangane remained in the Eastern Highlands for two years, before smallpox forced him south again. The picture in the rest of the plateau is much more complex. Basically, what happened was the Changamire state, which had already been at war with the advancing Tswana further to the southwest, was over-run by several Ngoni and Sotho groups in very quick succession after 1831. The Rozvi regular army succeeded in driving them off at grave loss to itself, and the ruling Changamire was killed in the fighting. This left the battered Rozvi no more than a few years before worse trouble arrived in the shape of the Ndebele. The Ngoni groups then moved separately towards the central plateau, where the Zwangendaba section also attempted to start a state in the middle Mazowe valley. This move was foiled by the Ngwana Maseko and Nxaba sections, and the upshot was that by 1836 all of these groups had left the plateau and gone over the Zambezi.[119] These five years must have been hectic ones for those Shona who lived on the routes taken by the Ngoni, but the whole episode was so brief that it is unlikely that very serious damage was done. For many central territories another twenty years were to pass before raiding became a problem again in the late 1850s and early 1860s.

From then on the only Nguni powers on the plateau were the Ndebele and the Gaza. Despite the obvious similarities that were due to their common origin in Natal in the 1820s, there were some very significant differences between the states that they set up. The Ndebele, arriving in the Changamire state in about 1840, took it over, complete with most of its population, and remained there until their conquest by the Rhodesians in the 1890s. The area from which they exacted regular tribute was smaller than that of the Gaza but much more tightly controlled. The Gaza, on the other hand, shifted the centre of their state frequently. Before his short stay in the Eastern Highlands Soshangane had been based in the lower Limpopo valley, and it was there that he returned in 1838 – 9. From then until 1862 the Gaza state was based there, and then Mzila son of Soshangane shifted the state once more back to the southeastern Zimbabwean highlands, on the headwaters of the Buzi river. There the state remained until 1889 when Mzila's son Ngungunyane shifted it once more to the lower Limpopo valley where it remained until its conquest by the Portuguese in 1895. Thus the centre of the state was never continuously in one place for more than 27 years, and this affected the structure very considerably. Moreover, the area within which the Gaza exacted tribute — as opposed to simple raids — was far greater than that of the Ndebele. They maintained a frontier south of the Limpopo during this whole period, and exacted tribute on the Zambezi near Sena from 1844 until the 1880s with their eastern borders approaching Inhambane and the sea and their western borders running approximately from Manyika through Maungwe, Buhera, Duma and the southeastern lowlands (of Zimbabwe) to the mountains west of the lower Limpopo. This was a huge area to be controlled by a core of Nguni-speakers, much smaller than that of the Ndebele, and it is not surprising that Gaza control of its tributary area was looser than that of the Ndebele. Nor, with such a small Nguni nucleus and such frequent shifting over the Shona-Tsonga ethnic frontiers is it surprising that the Gaza were largely absorbed by the cultures of their subjects, unlike the Ndebele who not only retained their linguistic and cultural identity but also converted many of their Shona subjects to that identity, so that by 1893 about 60% of the Ndebele were of Shona origin.[120]

It is not difficult to point how and where the Ndebele state resembled and differed from the Shona political and socio-economic formations that had preceded it, because it occupied roughly the same areas as the old Changamire state. The Gaza state, with its mobile tendencies and its successive bases in Shona highland and Tsonga lowland areas, poses far more problems in this kind of exercise. To take the Ndebele state first, the basic unit of society, the household, formed part of a village, which was part of a ward, which was part of a territory, which formed part of the state, just as in the Shona system. Indeed, in some cases these were Rozvi or Kalanga units which had become culturally absorbed over the fifty-odd years of Ndebele independence, but the system was true for the whole state. These units were basically agricultural, with a strong herding component and the usual hunting, gathering, industrial and trading sectors. The position of the king, too, was not very different from that of a Shona state ruler. There was still the same theoretical supremacy backed up by ritual and the same practical necessity to watch out for plots and attempted *coups*. We know that Mzilikazi and Lobengula were to survive all internal opposition to their reigns, but they did not. Consequently, the political trials and executions of the potential Ndebele rivals to the king — accompanied sometimes by the killing of their entire lineages and villages in order to forestall rebellion — were intended to keep the king in power, as had not happened in other Nguni states known to the Ndebele, or, for that matter, in the Shona states.[121]

The most obvious difference between the Ndebele and the Shona states, however, lay in the *amabutho,* the so-called regiments. *Amabutho* were composed of young men called together into a separate residential unit when the king thought fit. These occasions were almost always times when the state was threatened by external or internal enemies, and the ideology of the *amabutho* was that they were defensive and offensive military units. In practice, however, they spent the great majority of their labour-hours in herding the cattle of the state, rather like the age-sets or age-grades of the eastern African pastoral peoples. There was a parallel here with the Mutapa's *nyai*, except that the latter could not herd cattle. Unlike their contemporaries in the *amabutho* of the much more tightly regimented Zulu state, however, and unlike the *nyai*, they did not remain unmarried until they were stood down as a regular unit, but gradually married and became, in time, villages and later territories like those from which they had been called up. Since not all young men joined *amabutho*, there were at any one time the ordinary villages and territories on the one hand and the *amabutho* in different stages of development from first call-up to complete transformation into a village-territory unit. We do not know enough about the Changamire state to draw close parallels with its system of military recruitment, but it is not difficult to see how the Ndebele remained such a powerful force, able to dominate an area rivalling that of the Changamire.[122]

It is clear that in the Gaza state even more than in the Ndebele state, the basic units of Shona and Tsonga retained their identity and remained in place on their territories practising their local economies. True, some of the leaders of the Shona near the 1862 – 89 centre of the state in the southeastern highlands had to take refuge west of the Sabi until the state centre shifted once more, but the communities from which they came remained on the spot and continued into the twentieth century. Even the large numbers of Shona who were compelled to join in the mass march back to the lower Limpopo in 1889 did not reduce the numbers of those communities enough to lead to their collapse.[123] The actual numbers of Gaza Nguni in the state centre and the small Gaza communities scattered about the tributary state from Manyika to the plateau's southeastern edges were, as we have seen, too small to survive as Nguni-speaking units over the sixty years of Gaza independence.[124] The kingship had much in common with that of the Ndebele, though it suffered far more than the Ndebele from actual civil war, the war of 1859 – 62 between Mawewe and Mzila being a far more serious affair than the war of 1870 – 2 between Lobengula and his opponents.[125] The *amabutho* of the Gaza were not like the *amabutho* of the Ndebele, in that they did not evolve into separate territorial-dynastic units, but retained their links with their home areas and continued in existence as fighting units by occasional recruitment of young members to the same unit. Even so, like the Ndebele *amabutho*, they were not full-time fighters but took part in herding or the agricultural work on the king's fields. Another distinction is that whereas the Ndebele tended to raise progressively fewer *amabutho* from decade to decade, the reign of Mzila saw a slightly higher average recruitment of *amabutho* than in either of the main reigns before and after him.[126]

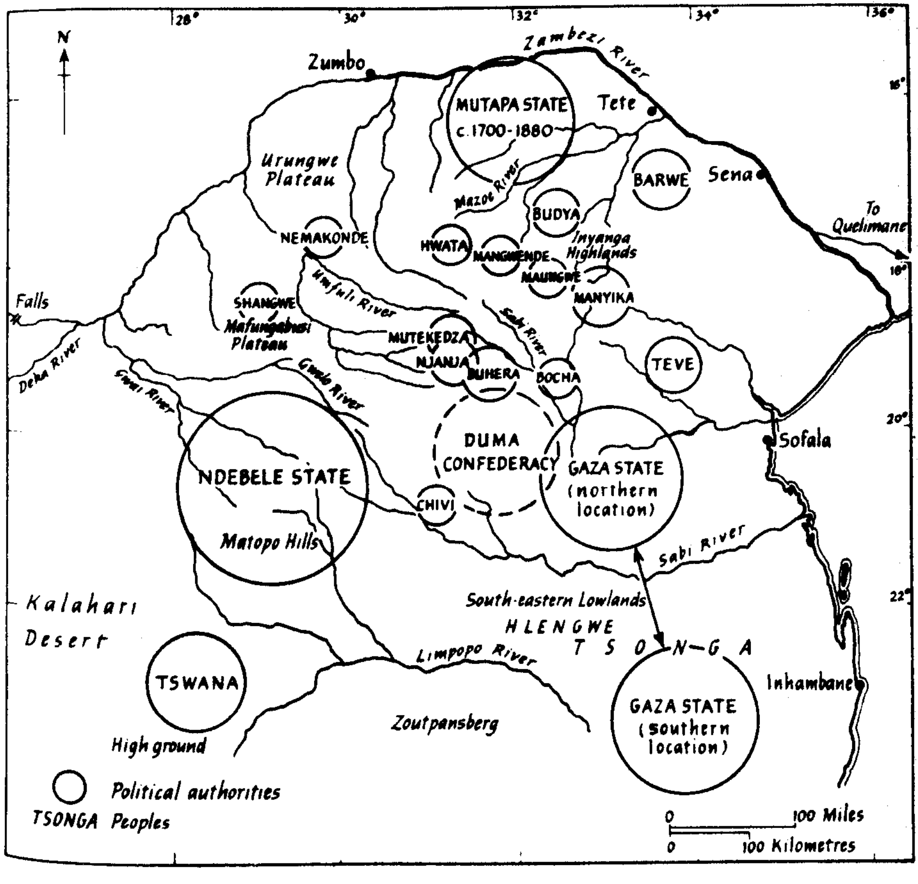
One point that is worth stressing about both the Ndebele and the Gaza states is the remarkable appeal their identities had for the Shona and Tsonga under their rule, especially the younger members. It has already been suggested that the Shona *nyai, Hiya, dumbuseya* and Rozvi may have represented the beginnings of a 'youth' revolution against a society largely controlled by their elders. The young men who joined the *amabutho* of the Gaza and Ndebele seem to have felt much the same, and to have enthusiastically assumed the Nguni identity. Among the Ndebele, as we have seen, sixty percent were of Shona origin, people who had adopted the Ndebele language. By the early twentieth century there were bilingual villages, with the men speaking Ndebele and the women, Shona.[127] Among the Gaza subjects, even though the Nguni language did not survive in itself, many Nguni words were adopted and people changed their clan names to Nguni ones, while the whole style of military fashion was affected by the Gaza, with southeastern Shona warriors adopting Gaza dress and weapons just as the *dumbuseya* had done after Ngwana and Nxaba's short-lived presences on the plateau.[128] The name of 'Shangana' borrowed from Soshangane's name became a prized title among the southeastern Shona and the Tsonga-speakers, only partly because 'Shangaans' got higher pay on the South African mines.

The impact of the Ndebele and Gaza on the older societies on and around the plateau outside their states was considerable but has been grossly exaggerated, with most of the exaggeration relating, as we have seen, to raiding. The true extent and policy of raiding will be examined below, but one aspect needs clearing up at once. It used to be thought that raiding caused widespread depopulation, with a sort of scorched earth zone around at least the Ndebele state. This simply was not so. Indeed, the southern Shona were still moving towards the Ndebele state in the last stages of their resettlement moves. It is simpler to look at the few areas that were abandoned by their inhabitants as a result of raiding. A few of the Shona to the west of the Ndebele state were forced to move, but the majority of the inhabitants of this thinly-populated area remained where they were. The Shona settlers and the Leya of the Deka-Gwaai confluence area, stuck between the Ndebele and the Kololo-Lozi state of the upper Zambezi, suffered more seriously, and while some moved north of the river, others went towards the Ndebele state, leaving a thinly-populated but not devastated area between them.[129] North and east of the Ndebele state, nearly all the existing communities remained where they were. Ngezi's 'Tonga' of the lower Umsweswe suffered badly and some of them left, while Nyandoro of Tsunga and Chihota's people of the Umfuli headwaters, who both lived in exposed areas with no useful strongpoints, were forced out of their lands.[130] But that was the limit of actual depopulation: thinly-populated areas noted after 1890 had been thus before the *mfecane*. As for the Gaza, there do not seem to be any cases of people being forced completely out of their lands and many areas they raided remained heavily populated, as in Manyika, Maungwe and other eastern territories.

The Ndebele had a simple policy towards their Shona neighbours: those who submitted to them and paid a small tribute were exempt from raiding. Those who resisted or who invited attack by raiding the Ndebele were attacked, although occasional payments might buy off raiders temporarily. By and large this sytem worked well. Few tributaries were ever touched, and they often identified closely with the state. Because Ndebele raids were not pin-point strikes on their targets, the neighbours of resisting groups were often raided as well, for an Ndebele raid was usually composed of small parties straggling over a front of up to seventy kilometres. But on the whole there was a clear distinction between the tributary state of the Ndebele and the independent Shona. The distinction between them was not one of distance. Some of the southern Shona territories such as that of Chivi, though geographically quite close to the Ndebele, remained independent and resisted through most of the century. Some tributaries of the state, on the other hand, were much further away — Mutekedza, Hwata, Nemakonde and Shangwe, separated from the main body of the state by independent communities. Once raided they had submitted and, partly because of their internal political tensions, had remained as tributaries.[131]

Around the centre or centres of the Gaza state the distinction between tributary and independent territory was much less clear. Undoubtedly this was partly due to the shifting centre of the state, since in the sixty years of Gaza independence the distance between any territory and the Gaza capital could increase or decrease by about 450 kilometres at short notice. Naturally, this affected the pressure that the Gaza could put on their tributaries, especially when the Gaza had such a huge area to spread their strength over, from the Zambezi to the Limpopo. This being so, it seems that outside the regions around the two main centres of the state and the area between them, a single territory could fluctuate frequently between being tributary or trying its luck at resistance. This seems to have been true of Manyika,[132] and in the Duma confederacy, with the difference that the unitary system of government of Manyika, run on the lines of the older territories of the north and east, survived, whereas the looser confederal system of the Duma broke up because each section of the Duma had to make its own defence against the Gaza. Thus by 1889 the Duma had become much more like the separate territorial units of the rest of the southern Shona.[133]

To conclude, it must be borne in mind that a very large segment of the Zimbabwean plateau was effectively beyond the range of either the Gaza or the Ndebele, and while some territories may have been raided once or twice in the century others missed them entirely. The survival into the middle of the century of the Mutapa state, the strength of such north-eastern territories as those of the Budya and the wars between the *prazo*-holders and the Portuguese on the Zambezi kept the latter two potential invaders out of the north for a long time, with only traders penetrating. Many of the central and northern Shona seem to have had a relatively peaceful time in the nineteenth century, occasionally enlivened by the raids that they carried out on each other. Since few could mobilize many warriors, however, these did little serious damage.[134]


28°
30°
32°
34°
36°
16°
18°
20°
22°
N
Zumbo
Zambezi River
MUTAPA STATE c.1700-1880
Tete
Urungwe Plateau
Mazoe River
BARWE
Sena
To Quelimane
BUDYA
NEMAKONDE
HWATA
MANGWENDE
Inyanga Highlands
MAUNGWE
MANYIKA
Falls
SHANGWE
Umfuli River
Mafungabusi Plateau
MUTEKEDZA
Sabi River
NJANJA
BUHERA
BOCHA
TEVE
Deka River
Gwai River
Gwelo River
DUMA CONFEDERACY
GAZA STATE (northern location)
Sofala
NDEBELE STATE
CHIVI
Matopo Hills
Sabi River
South-eastern Lowlands
Kalahari Desert
HLENGWE
TSONGA
Limpopo River
Inhambane
TSWANA
GAZA STATE (southern location)
Zoutpansberg
High ground
Political authorities
TSONGA Peoples
0 100 Miles
0 100 Kilometres

8

The Advance of Capitalism

> 'While he (Chaminuka) was being killed he said "I will send an *impi* from my grave that even you Matabele will be unable to beat" '.
>
> *A.D. Campbell, 1896*

> 'I go to the Madzwiti, but I shall not return; but mark you, some eight years hence, behold the stranger will enter, and he will build himself white houses'.
>
> *F.W.T. Posselt, 1926, quoting the Chaminuka medium on the changes after his death in 1883.*[135]

As has been hinted at earlier, the *mfecane* wars and states did not destroy the basis of the economy or society of the vast majority of the peoples of the plateau. The crucial fields were tilled and planted, the cattle herds continued to be grazed where this was possible, the Ndebele and Gaza having failed to appropriate all of them. The Shangwe and Njanja continued to sell tobacco and hoes and a few gold-washers and elephant hunters were still operating. True, the very success of the people in the battle of the *deve* posed some potential problems, with the steady build-up of population on the southern plateau, and the built-in problems of society, such as *shangwa*, unequal access to land and the differing status of the successful householders and the poorer bondman, meant that life was not utopian. Indeed, in many ways it meant a continual hard struggle for most people. But, by and large, there had been few gross major changes over the previous thousand years. The 'gold boom' had come and gone; the stone buildings of the rulers were in ruins, but it is questionable whether they had affected the lives of many people except for the worse. The *mfecane* probably had led to more raiding than before, but not by such a large margin as used to be thought, as we know that there had been some fairly violent periods before then. In short, compared with, say, the Angolan region, the changes that had taken place had been on a muted scale.

All this was to change very quickly indeed. By the time a person born in 1860 had reached middle age, the countryside was dotted with towns, crossed by roads and railways and pierced by deep mines and the land had begun to be divided up into 'commercial' farms and 'traditional' reserves. Yet, for all the suddenness of the changes of the 1890s, they did not come out of a clear sky. Even if the prophecy quoted above had not been made before 1890, a well-informed and perceptive observer on the plateau would have noticed the distant rumble of economic thunder from the south, and drawn the correct conclusion.

We have already seen that the old, mercantile economy oriented towards the Zambezi and the sea, concerned now mostly with the export of ivory, continued into the period of the *mfecane*. But the growth of the capitalist economy of southern Africa had been having its effect on the plateau well before 1890. The first signs of this had come with the increased availability of guns in the nineteenth century and the increased demand for ivory during the same period. In the Ndebele state, the existing trade in these items with the Portuguese from the Zambezi was overtaken by trade based on the South African ports. As early as 1852 a large consignment of guns arrived from the south for sale to Mzilikazi, and from then on the trade was unchecked. Ndebele ivory hunting boomed, and from the 1860s licensed ivory hunting by white hunters became common, with the result that by the 1880s most of the easily accessible elephants had been killed.[136] In the independent Tsonga and Shona zone between the Ndebele and Gaza tributary areas, Venda and Afrikaner hunters and gun-sellers were common from the 1860s, and both had reached the plateau proper by the 1880s.[137] The pattern was identical in the Gaza state, and we have already noted the activities of the *prazo*-holders in the north and northeast. The central plateau may have been the last area to gain guns in quantity, but by 1890 it too had caught up. A gun, originally paid for by a tusk, could easily recover its cost in later hunts, as well as supplying more meat and security in defence.

By the mid-1860s the Ndebele had begun to trade cattle with the south, and the rise of the Kimberley mines in the late 1860s, the Transvaal mines in the 1880s and even (briefly) the Mashonaland mines in 1890s made the cattle trade a profitable one for the Ndebele. Both this and the ivory trade seem to have escaped from the full control of the Ndebele monarchy, and while they probably led to greater social mobility in Ndebele society they also tied the Ndebele to the supply of consumer goods from the south. Not only guns, but blankets and manufactured clothing began to become common.[138] The independent southern Shona and the Duma also began to export cattle on a small scale.[139] In the Gaza state, however, though the centre of the state was organized to preserve the royal herds, there was an overall shortage of cattle, and there is little evidence for cattle exports to South Africa.[140]

Perhaps the most significant development, however, was the response of the people to the opening of the Kimberley mines and the demands they made on the potential labour force of southern Africa. This was important not only for the goods brought back by the labour migrants, nor for the much increased knowledge of southern African affairs and conditions that they spread, but also because it indicated some of the stresses within the societies from which the migrants came. Moreover, in some cases the skewing of the precolonial economy towards dependence on labour migration occurred well before the onset of colonial rule. The response was amazingly swift. The first diamonds were found at Kimberley in 1867, but real working did not take place until 1869 – 70. The first of the southern Shona were returning from Kimberley by 1873,[141] and the first labourers were returning to the Ndebele state at the same time.[142] The southward stream from both areas grew steadily after that, but to nothing like the proportions in the Gaza state. There, workers had already gone south to the Natal sugar plantations in the 1860s, and the 'Shangaans' were to become one of the most important sectors of the Kimberley labour force and, when they opened in the 1880s, the Rand gold mines.[143]

The reasons for this migration were quite simple: dangerous and hard though the long walk to the mines might be, unpleasant though conditions on the mines were and relatively low though the wages were, there were enough people in Ndebele, Shona and Gaza society who were poor and unprivileged in the nineteenth century who thought that they could better their condition by going to the mines. Among the Ndebele, it tended to be the section of Shona origin who went; among the independent Shona it was probably the people from the poorer territories and wards and households in all the territories. In the Gaza state, where famine and Gaza rule had impoverished far more people in the dryland area, it was a broad cross-section of society. Apart from the Gaza state, the labour migrants were a relatively small minority, and it was to be the pressures of twentieth-century capitalism that turned a majority of men into labour migrants, but the fact that this response occurred so rapidly is an indication of the economic pressures felt at the lower economic levels of society in and around the plateau. The rewards of migrant labour before colonial taxation and land seizures became felt were evidently enough to keep the migration going: a gun could kill an elephant and recoup its value overnight; gold, trade goods or a tusk might pay the bride-price for a wife, and a single journey might give a man the hold he needed to claw his way back into the more successful levels of the local economy. Only in the Gaza state, so far, had the practice led to a true skewing of the old society, with an unprecedented load being placed on women in the absence of the men.[144]

So far, then, the perceptive plateau-dweller might have concluded that the growth of capitalism to the south offered only benefits to the plateau, but there had already been signs that this was not so. The rediscovery of gold on the plateau by whites from the south in the 1860s, who did not realise that the Shona had already worked out the upper levels of the reefs, led to the request to Lobengula that white miners be allowed the right to mine the gold themselves. Ominously, they demanded exclusive rights of extraction granted to commercial companies that could then, if need be, be resold to other companies. Luckily for Lobengula there was insufficient capital in the south for the concessions he granted in the 1870s and early 1880s to have an effect, though even then the Ndebele were aware of the potential danger and the concessions were of limited scope.[145]

Even, so both the governments and the companies of the south were beginning to take an interest in the region, with an eye to commercial exploitation and government control. Shepstone's manoeuvrings in the Ndebele succession crisis of 1870 – 7 were a symptom of Natal's interest in the north.[146] So, too, were Erskine's missions to the Gaza state in 1871 – 2 and Beningfield's interest in Gaza and Manyika in the 1880s.[147] Meanwhile the long-standing Portuguese interest in the Zimbabwean plateau was beginning to shift its stance from that of a mercantile state to that of a capitalist one. Portuguese claims to the plateau dating back to the seventeenth century, still made a reflex action to any rival claim, became more significant as a struggling succession of capitalist companies began from the late 1870s to work towards the direct exploitation of the plateau's resources rather than trade with its people. Incongruously allied to the *prazo*-holders such as Sousa and Ribeiro, by 1890 the *Companhia de Moçambique* had actually started the exploitation of the gold of Manyika, ahead of its British-South African rival. Meanwhile, a varied collection of chancers with even less capital than the *Companhia* had been getting concessions from the two major (Lobengula and Ngungunyane) and many minor (Mutasa, Mapondera, etc.), rulers in the hope of selling them to the bigger concerns which they correctly sensed would be arriving on the scene.

All this was not a one-way process, however. The African rulers of the states and territories in the region were perfectly aware of the problems they were facing, and took their own steps, albeit unsuccessfully, to solve them. It had been Mzila's attempt to sign a treaty with Natal in 1870 that had led to Erskine's visit in 1871 – 2, and although nothing concrete came from this the Gaza made repeated attempts to make some kind of accommodation with the British and their associates that would keep the Portuguese at bay without conceding anything significant in the treaty.[148] Since the Portuguese controlled the only practical access routes this was impossible, and the 1891 British-Portuguese treaty settled the matter. The meaning of the 1885 treaty between Kgama's Tswana and the British, by which Kgama was lent a force of British police to back up his power — internal and external — was not lost on the Ndebele. In 1887 Lobengula made a deal with the Afrikaners of the Transvaal. In return for minimal concessions that he could not be compelled to honour, he got the alliance — as opposed to protection — of the top military power in Southern Africa which, moreover, had all the gold it needed and did not want to encourage white emigration because of its own problems with white immigrants. He was jockeyed out of this position by the British, partly because the Afrikaners were basically concerned with the east, not the north. This left the Ndebele to the mercies of the British and their subjects.

The Shona also took an active part in diplomacy at that time, but — understandably in view of the past half-century — they were more worried by the Ndebele than by the European powers. Isolated southern Shona rulers tried to hire Afrikaner mercenaries in the 1880s, but when they did get a treaty in 1890 it was with a 'chancer' group who intended to sell it to Rhodes. The northern Afrikaners had no serious intention of moving north.[149] The big chance for the central Shona came in 1889. The *Companhia de Mocambique,* well aware of the progress of Rhodes's BSA Company, made a belated — due to wars on the Zambezi — move to get the allegiance of the central Shona. Two expeditions reached Nemakonde and Mangwende, laden with guns and ammunition. In return for flying the Portuguese flag, which some actually did, and fighting off the Ndebele — who had views akin to those of the British about the Portuguese — the *Companhia* handed out free guns to whoever would take them. The central Shona rulers rushed to take up the offer. It was probably the biggest political gathering in the central plateau since the 1680s. Alas, when the enemy did appear it was not the Ndebele but a heavily-armed British column. The guns vanished until 1896, when they were put to good use.[150]

After 1890, there was no serious doubt about what would happen to the people of the Zimbabwean plateau. The Ndebele and Gaza states were diplomatically isolated and surrounded by unsympathetic powers. Their subjection by the Rhodesians and the Portuguese was only a matter of time, and on the whole they maintained a united front before their falls in 1893 and 1895 respectively, basically because unsuccessful treason in those states was fatal. Once that had occurred, however, many of them made their accommodations with the colonial powers, and collaborated or remained neutral in the risings of 1896 and 1897.[151] Perhaps the disunited Shona dynasties were less well informed than the Nguni states on the fate of the Zulu and other monarchies further south. In any event, compared with the alignment of the central Shona against the Ndebele in 1889, there was no such general response in 1890. Central, eastern and southern Shona factions made their own individual responses to the Rhodesian occupation, and before hut taxation started in 1894 collaboration was more common than resistance. For reasons connected with rivalries between territories or within dynasties, many groups found the Rhodesians useful potential allies. Manyika played off Rhodesian against Portuguese, and even in the brief Rhodesian occupation of Teve in 1890 – 1 the same pattern emerged. Many of the notorious incidents of 1892 came from this kind of alliance, and until the 1896 *chimurenga* Shona politics followed the same patchwork pattern, so that within the same territory in 1894 – 5 a ruler might be resisting Company hut taxation by force while at the same time trading peacefully with a European storekeeper. Even the southern Shona alliance with the Rhodesians when they attacked the Ndebele in 1893 was an *ad hoc* development, not the result of a planned conspiracy: Chirimuhanzu and Gutu had actually been tributaries of Lobengula until the war.[152]

The *chimurenga* of 1896 – 7 was really many *zvimurenga* or separate up-risings. When the Ndebele rose in 1896 and the Gaza in 1897 they knew that they had been defeated in war, even if the Ndebele had won the last battle in 1893. The Ndebele fought to restore their state under a new king.[153] The Gaza fought to get Ngungunyane back from exile.[154] But the central Shona had not been defeated in battle. They had seen the gradual arrival of Rhodesian miners, trader-farmers and tax-collectors, but they still thought of themselves as independent, and when the news of Ndebele victories came in June 1896 those who decided to rise did so in the belief that if they could kill the foreigners in their individual territories they could continue to hold those territories against all comers as they had done for so long before. It is a measure of the way the past gripped the minds of the people of 1896 – 7 that the southern Shona fought on the side of the Rhodesians because they saw the Ndebele as the greater enemy, and that some of the central and eastern Shona did the same because of their local feuds.[155] And so the independent people of the Zimbabwean plateau vanished from view beneath the capitalist steamroller, to re-emerge once more in the 1980s as an independent people.

Comment on the debates on Section 1: 'Environment and prehistory'

Unlike the Sections of this booklet that follow, this one deals with a great deal of the debate between archaeologists and linguists in the text itself. There are several reasons for this. In the first place, although archaeology deals with humans in the past, it is essentially a science and not part of the humanities, while linguists use techniques that are also scientific in nature. If an historian is faced with disagreement between two other historians, he or she can check the documents and traditions involved and arrive at an independent conclusion. But, although the historian can sometimes question an archaeologist's views — for example, by using analogies from history — when it comes to such matters as disagreement between two archaeologists over pottery classification, the historian often has problems deciding whose view — if either — to choose. Similarly, historians have difficulty assessing the work of linguists and their handling of word-lists from literally hundreds of languages. In the second place, archaeology and linguistics are fast-developing disciplines. So little archaeological work has been done in Africa, compared with Europe or America, that even the smallest excavation can change the picture of the past of a whole region. New archaeological papers come thick and fast, so that as fast as a general overview is written, it is usually obsolete by the time it is published. Partly because of this, and partly because the total of available evidence is so slight, J. Vansina ('Bantu in the crystal ball, II') suggested that more general overviews should not be written without careful study. Unfortunately, the history-reading public cannot wait for long, ordinary historians are forced to put together the available bits of evidence knowing full well that their theories will become obsolete very fast indeed.

An excellent example of these problems occurs in my *Shona and Zimbabwe.* P.S. Garlake *(Great Zimbabwe described and explained,* 63) claimed that it 'suffers badly from a complete and uncritical reliance on a single source for all its archaeological interpretations', which is completely untrue, as anyone who reads the text and references carefully can tell. Garlake, however, may have been thinking more specifically of my use of Huffman's 'southern origin' theory on the origins of the Later Iron Age Shona-speakers. This is a good example of the effects of scattered sources and delays in publication: the original draft of the relevant chapter of *Shona and Zimbabwe* was written in 1976, leaning heavily on Garlake and Huffman's works of 1973 – 4 (footnote 23 above) and D.W. Phillipson's 'The Chronology of the Iron Age in Bantu Africa', in *Journal of African History,* xvi, 3, 1975, which stressed the Early Iron Age/Later Iron Age 'break' without offering any distinct origin for the Zimbabwean Later Iron Age. Consequently, Garlake's tentative 'western origin' migration theory of that time was cited. Then in 1977, Huffman's 'southern origin' theory appeared in draft form, and for the reasons given on p. 14 of this booklet it was reckoned to be 'the best explanation of the evidence that has *yet* appeared, however much it may be modified by later findings' (*Shona and Zimbabwe,* xvii, 19 – 21, emphasis added) and incorporated in the book, at a late stage of its preparation. D.W. Phillipson's *The Later Prehistory of Eastern and Southern Africa,* with its theory of a Later Iron Age migration from southern Zaire to all of eastern and southern Africa, reached Zimbabwe in 1978, too late to affect *Shona and Zimbabwe,* which appeared in early 1980. A late-1981 draft of this booklet compared the rival views of Huffman and Phillipson, coming down rather in favour of Huffman, for reasons given above (p. 14). But since 1981, Garlake has come out with his version of the anti-migration view (footnote 35 above), though as yet it has not been proven. Thus teachers and students who find themselves confused by the rapid changes in opinions on archaeology and linguistics are advised to pay particularly close attention to the date of publication of each work, and the fact that it usually takes much longer to publish a book than an article.

Like historians, archaeologists are given to enthusiasms. Certain questions that occupy their attention at one time will be replaced by others, and what causes heated debates in one decade of this century may not be the main topic of discussion in the next. Nevertheless, there are certain overall themes. Precisely because African history is less well recorded than, say, European or American history, historians and readers of history look far more to archaeologists to explain the 'origins' of present-day peoples in Africa than their counterparts elsewhere. There is a widespread desire to know where and when each 'modern' group, such as Shona, Sotho or Nguni, 'emerged'. As pointed out above, ultimately this a futile exercise, because at some point in the remote past there were no distinct 'Shona'; 'Sotho' or 'Nguni' people at all, but simply a general 'Bantu' population, (p. 13) above. In theory, the people of an African country should take pride in the history of an early population that had no connection whatsoever with the modern inhabitants, but inevitably in the political climate of both colonial and independent Africa there is going to be a concentration on proving or disproving links with the early populations. That is why there has been so much discussion of migrations — or the absence of them — in Zimbabwean archaeology.

To conclude, for the teacher and general reader who wishes to follow up this debate, an essential starting-point is Phillipson's *Later Prehistory*. Its suggestions as to the origins of the Later Iron Age may not have been widely accepted, but as a review of the archaeological evidence available over the eastern and southern African regions in the mid-1970s it is very valuable indeed, and it has a very full bibliography. Moreover, it is usually on sale in Harare. From there, the reader may turn to the specialist articles and pamphlets used in the footnotes of this booklet. The local works of A.S. Chigwedere *(From Mutapa to Rhodes,* Harare, 1980) and *The Birth of Bantu Africa,* Harare, 1982) may have attracted some attention, but are best ignored. The former makes extensive and uncritical use of tradition in Zimbabwe at the expense of documents and archaeology, while the latter shows a comprehensive ignorance of nearly a quarter of a century's work in history, linguistics and archaeology.

Comment on the debates on Section 2: 'The basic units of society'

The very few references to this section show that, as far as historians are concerned, debate as such has hardly started. This is primarily due to the shortage of source material on the micro-politics and micro-economies of precolonial Zimbabwe. The Portuguese sources, covering the period when external trade was well developed but when local communities were not controlled — and observed — the way they have been in the twentieth century, are annoyingly vague on questions like this. We know a great deal about the relations between the Portuguese and Mutapa or Manyika, but very little from these sources as to just which house occupied which tract of land, and why. Beach, *Shona and Zimbabwe,* Chapter 3, assembles most of the available evidence for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and Bhila, *Trade and Politics,* Chapter 1, uses mixed sources from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries for the Manyika area. There are many anthropological accounts of the twentieth-century Shona local scene, summarized in Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples,* but the trouble with such evidence is that colonial rule for ninety years has so skewed Shona society that it is not always certain what the precolonial scene was. For example, the *dunhu* (ward) was a regular feature of the Shona society under colonial rule, and we know that it existed in Manyika in the eighteenth century, but did it apply all over the country in the past? Only very detailed local studies can tell us. This leaves us with traditional evidence. Mtetwa's work gives us a good account of precolonial Duma, while a forthcoming work of my own, previously advertised as *Shona Dynastic Histories,* provides the raw material upon which most of the conclusions of this section are based.

Nevertheless, one debate has been lurking in the background and may emerge in the historiography of the 1980s: to what extent was precolonial Zimbabwean society dominated by classes and the class struggle? There has, since at least the sixteenth century (Beach, *(Shona and Zimbabwe,* 63), been the idea that people ought not to be conspicuously richer than their neighbours, and that such a state of affairs might be the result of the use of witchcraft. (This idea was also found in Europe at the same time.) Since the coming of colonial rule, nearly all Africans have been so much poorer than most whites that differences in wealth between them have not been as obvious as they were before 1890 or as they have been since 1980. Hence an idealized picture of an egalitarian past has grown up, well

Hence an idealized picture of an 'Egalitarian Shona', *Nada,* x, 4, summed up in M. Gelfand, 'The egalitarian Shona', *Nada,* x, 4, 1972. Unfortunately, the evidence for the pre-1890 scene does not support this. No-one has ever described the Nguni states as egalitarian and, as the comment on the next section shows, the Great Zimbabwe and allied states were anything but that. However, although class differences among the Shona were less marked between 1700 and 1900 they still existed, as all serious historians have shown — but with varying enthusiasm.

Comment on the debates on Section 3: 'The early Shona states before 1700'

For at least the last ten years the debate as to whether or not Great Zimbabwe was Shona or not has been finally concluded in the affirmative. A long line of racist works trying to prove otherwise, culminating in R. Gayre of Gayre's *The origins of the Zimbabwean civilization* (Salisbury, 1972) has finally given way to the succession of scientific works started by Randall-MacIver in the 1900s and carried on by Caton-Thompson, Summers, Robinson, Garlake and Huffman into the 1970s. Concluded, that is, in Zimbabwe and the rest of the civilized world: in South Africa, Cyril Hromnik has recently put considerable research into the ridiculous argument that Great Zimbabwe and virtually everything else of importance in Africa was the work of Indians, *Indo-Africa* (Cape Town, 1981). But for a long time argument as to the identity of the builders of Great Zimbabwe has been a waste of paper.

What has occupied archaeologists and historians since about 1970 has been the economic, social and political structure of Great Zimbabwe and, to a lesser extent, the Torwa and Mutapa states. The main trouble with Great Zimbabwe is that a great deal of the evidence comes from rather small excavations, and it takes only a very slight emphasis on one particular aspect of these excavations to produce a distorted picture and the 'pendulum' effect noted in the text. More excavation would undoubtedly clarify the picture, at the cost of making it impossible for archaeologists of the future to carry out any further work. (It should not be supposed that archaeology has reached the end of its progress as far as research techniques are concerned: archaeologists studying Great Zimbabwe in another 500 years will be using techniques undreamt of now, and the Zimbabweans of 2583 will not thank the Zimbabweans of today for making their research impossible by reckless excavation.) It is also possible to study Great Zimbabwe by looking at the environment and at the standing buildings — provided the latter are not spoiled by inexpert reconstruction — but here again it is easy to exaggerate the picture of Great Zimbabwe's political economy by stressing one factor a little too hard. The theories on the working of Great Zimbabwe and related sites since 1970 have thus undergone shifts of emphasis between the agreed points as to when they were built and by whom.

Most of the argument about Great Zimbabwe has revolved around the three questions of its rise, its continuation and its decline, and what economic, social and political forces lay behind each. P.S. Garlake's theories of the 1973 – 4 period pointed out that 'rather than attempting on present knowledge to isolate all the factors that led to Great Zimbabwe's rise, one can see it as due to a combination of forces,' (*Great Zimbabwe,* 184), but elsewhere, while acknowledging trade and cattle-herding as economic forces *(Great Zimbabwe,* 183) he did tend to lay stress on religion and ritual — which latter does not always mean religion, but is often thought of as being mainly religious. (*Great Zimbabwe,* 164 – 5, 174 – 6, 183 – 4, *Ruins of Zimbabwe,* 11 – 2). Actually, the traditional evidence on religion at Great Zimbabwe was most unreliable (footnote 55 above) and Huffman argued equally strongly for trade as the decisive factor in Great Zimbabwe's rise ('Rise and fall of Zimbabwe', 361 – 5). By the early 1970s both Garlake and Huffman were agreed that the most likely reason for Great Zimbabwe's decline was local environmental stress and impoverishment.

In 1975 – 7, however, both Garlake and I independently came to a stress on cattle, at least in the rise of Great Zimbabwe. I argue *(Shona and Zimbabwe,* 42 – 3) from geographical factors that Great Zimbabwe could hardly have gained control of the gold trade in the first place without military power that was probably based ultimately on the wealth of cattle herds. Garlake, having excavated at the outlying *zimbabwe* of Manyikeni near Inhambane in Moçambique, where the ruling class had relied a good deal on cattle for food, went a good deal farther in a theory that covered not just the rise of Great Zimbabwe but its later development and that of all the other small *zimbabwe* across the Zimbabwean plateau, ('Pastoralism and *zimbabwe*', 479 – 493.) As in 1973, Garlake allowed for all factors in the *zimbabwe* economy, 'farming and cattle-herding as well as gold-mining and processing and foreign trade,' (479, 492) but he left a definite stress upon cattle herding as the dominant base of production, and his later, secondary works continued to stress this: *Great Zimbabwe described and explained,* 14 – 5; *Life at Great Zimbabwe,* (Gweru, 1982) 5 – 6.

Obviously, this theory is a step forward, but as in the past there is a danger in pushing it too far on the evidence we have. The stress on the bones of the cattle eaten by the rulers tends to draw attention away from the lifestyle of the ordinary people; the location of *zimbabwe* near the edges of the plateau may be related to many more causes than grazing lands, for the first requirements for having a stone *zimbabwe* at all is that there should be exposed stone for the walls, and this naturally means that the great crescent of eroded valleys would contain most of the sites. Moreover, the biggest clusters of *zimbabwe*-construction shown up by computer analysis are in roughly the same areas favoured by earlier Later Iron Age and Early Iron Age communities (Sinclair and Lundmark, 'A spatial analysis of archaeological sites from Zimbabwe'), and, of course, settlements of this culture without stone walling are only recently being recognised and studied. The relative shortage of grindstones at *zimbabwe* sites does not necessarily mean a neglect of agriculture, (M. Wilson, 'Nguni markers', in *Before and after Shaka*, ed. J. Peires, Grahamstown, 1981, 148). Traditions that could mean a thin population in the area ca. 1700 prove nothing about the fourteenth century. A useful recent comment on the danger of overstressing one economic factor over others is Bannerman, 'Ecological and other factors in the rise and fall of the Zimbabwe state'.

Other recent views on Great Zimbabwe have come from Huffman and K.N. Mufuka. Huffman tends to play down the cattle angle, arguing that cattle-oriented cultures can now be shown to reach back into the Early Iron Age — and indeed, on this point he now plays down the differences between Early and Later Iron Ages ('Archaeology and ethnohistory of the African Iron Age', 142 – 8). He has also entered on a promising spatial analysis of the architectural features of Great Zimbabwe and other sites, but unfortunately goes far beyond the reliable limits of oral tradition in trying to explain them. 'Snakes and Birds: expressive space at Great Zimbabwe', *African Studies,* 40, 1981, has been criticised in D.N. Beach, 'Oral History and archaeology in Zimbabwe', *Zimbabwean Prehistory,* 19, 1983 but his latest attempt to show that the Great Enclosure was a girls' initiation centre — a sort of fourteenth century St. Trinian's — goes even further and is even less probable. ('Where you are the girls gather to play: the Great Enclosure at Great Zimbabwe', paper presented at South African Association of Archaeologists Conference, Gaborone, July 1983). K.N. Mufuka's *Dzimbabwe, life and politics in the Golden Age 1000 – 1500 A.D.,* Harare, 1983) attempts to use rather dubious traditions to provide a detailed picture of the pre-1500 period that has already been shown to be impossible in the rest of Africa.

Great Zimbabwe will never lack for writers. What it needs is a rather less heated atmosphere of debate. The Khami phase of stone building, that of the Torwa state, has never attracted the same amount of controversy. Later and on a smaller scale than Great Zimbabwe, it has generally been assumed to have been run on the same lines. The only question that has arisen lately has been the specific identity of its ruling dynasty. Until the early 1960s it had usually been regarded as being the work of a dynasty preceding that of the Changamire Rozvi who ruled the region — and used some of the buildings — from the late seventeenth century onwards. From the early 1960s, however, D.P. Abraham's work led to the assumption that it had been under Changamire control from the late fifteenth century, and this version found its way into a lot of the secondary literature. In the early 1970s S.I.G. Mudenge and myself independently showed that the rulers of the southwest up to the late seventeenth century had been the Torwa, as originally proposed by von Sicard, and this view has gained general acceptance. If the main Khami-type buildings predated the late seventeenth century, therefore they were the work of the Torwa. (There is a summary of this in Beach, *Shona and Zimbabwe,* chaps. 6 and 7, and especially pp. 357 – 8.) In 1977, however, Mudenge tried to show that the buildings, including Khami itself, were eighteenth-century and therefore the work of the Changamire Rozvi. (S.I.G. Mudenge, 'Eighteenth-century Portuguese settlements on the Zambezi and the dating of Rhodesian ruins: some reflections on the problems of reference dating', *International Journal of African Historical Studies,* x, 3, 1977, 384 – 393.) The radio-carbon dates, as well as other archaeological and traditional evidence, show that it was not so, and that Khami certainly and Danangombe (Dhlodhlo) probably predated the Changamire and were the work of the Torwa. The latter was undoubtedly the main Changamire capital, though.

Comment on the debates on Sections 4 and 5, 'International trade and the Portuguese' and 'The local economy'

These two sections are discussed together because the arguments concerning them are closely linked. One of the problems that underlies the discussion of the internal and external economies of the Zimbabwean past is that the questions are so relevant to the problems facing the economy of the Zimbabwe of today. Writers have to fight the temptation to see the past in terms of the way they would like to see the Zimbabwean economy of the future. Thus it is asked, who controlled the production and trade from the Zimbabwean end? Was there state control, individual enterprise or both? How monopolistic was Muslim and Portuguese trade? Who gained the greatest advantage from the trade? How close did the Zimbabwean communities get to achieving a self-contained economy? And, finally, how stable and successful was the local economy?

Firstly, although attempts have been made to show that external trade was a state monopoly (e.g. N. Sutherland-Harris, 'Trade and the Rozvi Mambo', *Pre-colonial African Trade, essays on trade in central and eastern Africa before 1800*, eds. R. Gray and D. Birmingham, London, 1970, 243 – 264) most local writers are agreed that although the rulers decided whether trade was to take place at all, except in the periods of Portuguese dominance, and that they traded on varying scales themselves, production and trade was to a great extent left to individual local units to organise. (Mudenge, 'Role of trade'; Beach, *Shona and Zimbabwe*, chaps. 1 and 3; Bhila, *Trade and politics*.) Seen as a system the Portuguese mercantile system did function as a monopoly, with its prices generally fixed to the advantage of the system as a whole, but sometimes members of this system did break the price ring, as when the African *vashambadzi*, with their lower overheads, undercut the more 'Portuguese' *feirantes*, (Bhila, *Trade and politics*, 147). Since 1973 – 5 when E.A. Alpers published his 'Rethinking African economic history' (*Ufahamu*, iii, 3) and *Ivory and slaves in east central Africa*, (London, 1975), few writers have questioned that the Portuguese system as a whole — and almost certainly that of the Muslims before them — was making undue profit out of the trade (even if individuals in the trading chain sometimes found it hard to make the fortunes they sought), so that gold and ivory realised only a fraction of their real values in either trade goods or labour hours. This being so, though, why did the people persist in this unequal trade for nearly a thousand years? Alpers, *(Ivory and slaves*, 30 – 1), implies that the mere availability of foreign goods gradually distorted the values held by the Yao and others north of the Zambezi, so that they accepted the unequal exchange and became almost 'addicts' to foreign trade. Mudenge ('Role of trade') argues that the Changamire state, at least, was more self-sufficient than has been realised, though it was still part of the same foreign trade system. Bhila, (*Trade and politics*, 30, 48) on the other hand, argues for a much more serious impact of foreign trade, to the point of underdeveloping the agricultural economy to a certain extent. Beach ('Shona economy'; *Shona and Zimbabwe*, chap. 1) proposed an argument — used in this booklet — that was the converse of Bhila's : that it was weakness in the basic agricultural and pastoral economy that forced people into the unequal trade in the first place and kept them there as long as there were products that could be exported. None of the main African writers on this subject — Bhila, Mtetwa and Mudenge — have liked this argument very much, though as pointed out in the text of this booklet, both sides of the argument are in a way complementary. The debate on these interlinked topics is by no means over, but it looks as though Zimbabwean historians are moving away from broad generalizations and towards much finer distinctions between the economies of different times and places.

Comment on the debates on Section 6: 'The new states, the warriors and the migrations'

Because until recently most of the evidence for the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century on the Zimbabwean plateau has come from the Portuguese documents, much of the discussion on this period has related to matters that appeared in those documents, in particular the question of the extent and strength of the Changamire Rozvi. Mudenge, 'Role of trade', has tended to stress Rozvi power over a wide area up to the late eighteenth century, but Bhila, *Trade and politics,* chap. 3, looking at a small but important area, sees it as much more limited some time before that. Beach, *Shona and Zimbabwe*, chap. 7, agrees, showing a gradual retraction of effective Rozvi power from the northeast to the southwest throughout the century. But the Rozvi were only one element in the history of the time. Historians of the lower Zambezi valley such as A.F. Isaacman, M.D.D. Newitt and W.G.L. Randles have always been aware that the Mutapa state remained important long after the Changamire wars of the 1690s, but so far Beach's theory on the change to a confederal form of government after that period — outlined in this booklet — has not so far been challenged. It is hoped that Mudenge's forthcoming book on Mutapa will do so. Similarly, although there is a mass of comparatively reliable tradition on the eighteenth century,.there is so far little debate on the histories of the ordinary peoples outside the Changamire, Mutapa and Manyika areas, partly, perhaps, because the historians interested in this tended to confine themselves to regional studies and to accept most of their research neighbours' findings. Finally, the debate on the Mwari cult (summarized in Beach, *Shona and Zimbabwe,* 247 – 253) has not progressed since the mid-1970s. but it has left us with a history of part of a religion developing over time and not simply a projection of the modern situation into the past.

Comment on the debates on Section 7: 'The Mfecane states'

We know far more about the nineteenth century than any of the other precolonial centuries, basically because it has a very well-balanced mixture of documentary and traditional sources. If this section had tried to cover all of it, it would have been disproportionately long compared with the others, and so many important issues are passed over rather quickly here, or in some cases, such as the Ndebele relations with the London Missionary Society, passed over entirely.

Since 1970, writing on the Ndebele has been dominated by the work of R. Kent Rasmussen, Julian Cobbing and Ngwabi Bhebe. Rasmussen's *Migrant Kingdom, Mzilikazi's Ndebele in South Africa* (London, 1978) gives us a meticulously detailed account of the pre-1840 period. Bhebe's *Christianity and traditional religion in western Zimbabwe 1859 – 1923* focusses mainly on religious questions, and should be read in conjunction with his articles. Cobbing's thesis 'The Ndebele under the Khumalos 1820 – 1896' goes furthest in questioning virtually every assumption made by previous writers about the Ndebele. Unfortunately, this thesis, presented in 1976, remains unpublished, and apart from a few specialist articles the only published summary of his work is a short article in *Before and after Shaka,* ed. J.B. Peires, (Grahamstown, 1981), 160 – 177. The main debates about the Ndebele concern religion (Bhebe argues for the assimilation of Ndebele ideas by the Shona majority, while Cobbing argues for a much more complex picture including Nguni, Sotho, Venda and Shona elements) and the extent of and reasons for Ndebele raiding. On this latter point, Cobbing's thesis of 1976 tended to stress raiding and suggested that it derived from a 'dominant mode of production' of the *amabutho,* using a theory derived from the French Marxist E. Terray's work

on the West African Gouro. His 1981 paper was less definite on this point. An alternative, suggested in this booklet, is that whereas the *amabutho* did do most of the raiding, their function as herders was even more important.

Studies of the Gaza Nguni are dominated by the work of G.J. Liesegang, whose original thesis was produced in German in 1967 but whose articles, in particular that in *Before and after Shaka,* are updating the original work, and being published in English in advance of a major synthesis, 'Changing south-east Africa: southern Mozambique and neighbouring territories from the 18th to the first half of the 20th century', which is expected soon. Rita Ferreira's work of 1974 is the most recent published general work. Gaza historiography has not been marked by quite the same sharp differences of opinion that characterize Ndebele history in recent years, but an interesting new development is in P. Harries, 'Slavery, social incorporation and surplus extraction: the nature of free and unfree labour in south-east Africa', *Jnl. Afr. Hist.,* xxii, 3, 1981, 309 – 330, in which it is argued that the Gaza were much more involved in both slavery and slave-trading than had been supposed. On the Zimbabwean side of the Gaza state, on which this section concentrates, we have studies of the Gaza impact by Bhila, Rennie and Mtetwa, but the different pictures they give are basically regional.

Comment on the debates on Section 8: 'The advance of capitalism'

Up to ten years ago, most of the attention of historians was caught by the process by which the British and Portuguese assumed control of their parts of the Zimbabwean plateau. Much attention was given to the precise meaning of the treaties and concessions negotiated with Lobengula, and to a lesser extent with Ngungunyane. S. Samkange, *Origins of Rhodesia,* (London, 1968) and E. Axelson, *Portugal and the scramble for Africa,* (Johannesburg, 1967) are good examples of this. The risings of the people against the colonial powers were rightly regarded as being of crucial significance, and T.O. Ranger's *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia 1896 – 97* (London, 1967) and A.F. Isaacman's *The tradition of resistance in Mozambique,* (London, 1976) not only examined the risings of the time but linked them to the liberation wars of the 1960s and 1970s. Work on these themes has continued, and even on apparently well-worn topics like the Ndebele-British treaties and concessions new ideas have emerged: N.M.B. Bhebe, 'Ndebele politics during the scramble', *Mohlomi*, 2, 1977, J.R.D. Cobbing, 'Lobengula, Jameson and the occupation of Mashonaland', Rhod. Hist., 4, 1973 and M. Stocker's article in *Zimbabwean History*, 10, 1979, forthcoming. Ranger's work on the organization of the 1896 – 7 risings, on the other hand, has been shown to be fundamentally incorrect, and the role of religion in these wars has been overshadowed by the residual power of the Ndebele state on the one hand and by the complex local policies of the Shona rulers on the other: J.R.D. Cobbing, 'The absent priesthood: another look at the Rhodesian risings of 1896 – 1897', *Jnl. Afr. Hist.,* xviii, 1, 1977, D.N. Beach, 'Chimurenga: the Shona rising of 1896 – 7, *Jnl. Afr. Hist.,* xx, 3, 1979, H.H.K. Bhila, *Trade and politics*, chap. 9, all point the way from broad generalizations to detailed micro-studies.

As this section shows, however, the recent trend has been towards the economic and social side. This has two main thrusts: on the one hand there is the working of capitalist imperialism from the top, the intricate world of companies and shares, while on the other hand there is the effect of the same structure from the bottom, the equally complex world of peasant farmers and migrant labourers. So far, however, this new trend has remained an unfulfilled promise. Apart from J.S. Galbraith's rather disappointing *Crown and Charter,* (Berkeley, 1974) we have only a few promising articles and chapters of basically twentieth-century books on capitalism from the top, such as I.R. Phimister's 'Rhodes, Rhodesia and the Rand', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, i, 1974, and R.H. Palmer's *Land and racial domination in Rhodesia,* (London, 1977), chaps. 1 and 2. The picture is equally vague on the second aspect as well: Cobbing's and Mtetwa's theses and the papers in *Roots of rural poverty* are only a beginning to the enormous task ahead.

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1. Map based upon the research of Mr J.R. Whitlow, in the author's possession.
2. On a national scale, 13 years out of 82 recorded in this century have seen less than 500mm of rainfall and as many as 29 have seen less than 600mm, the mean being 680mm. But the position is much more complex that this, with mid-season droughts and regional differences.
3. P. Robertshaw and D. Collett, 'A new framework of the study of early pastoral communities in East Africa', *Journal of African History,* 24, 1983, 289 – 301; G.G.Y. Mgomezulu, 'Recent archaeological research and radiocarbon dates from Eastern Africa', *Jnl. Afr. Hist.*, 22, 1981, 435 – 456; C. Ehret, 'On the antiquity of agriculture and linguistic reconstructions of history in East Africa', in *The archaeological and linguistic reconstruction of African History,* eds. E. Ehret and M. Posnansky, (Berkeley, 1982), 104 – 157.
4. Apart, that is, from the possibility of Central Sudanic-speakers with herds and pots getting as far south as southern Zambia in the period 1000 – 1 BC, deduced by linguistic evidence but not yet supported by any archaeology: C. Ehret, 'The first spread of food production to Southern Africa' in Ehret and Posnansky, 171.
5. *Ibid.*
6. N. David, 'Prehistory and historical linguistics in Central Africa: points of contact', in Ehret and Posnansky, 78 – 95; C. Ehret, 'Linguistic inferences about early Bantu history', in Ehret and Posnansky, 57 – 65; M. Hall and J.C. Vogel, 'Some recent radiocarbon dates from Southern Africa', *Jnl. Afr. Hist.*, 21, 1980, but this belies the speed of the spread of the Early Iron Age to south of the Limpopo: it had reached Delagoa Bay perhaps as early as the first century A.D. and certainly Natal and the Eastern Transvaal by 200 – 300 A.D., *ibid.*
7. Ehret, 'The first spread of food production to Southern Africa'.
8. T.N. Huffman, 'Archaeology and Ethnohistory of the African Iron Age', *Annual Review of Antropology,* 11, 1982, 133 – 50.
9. W.M. Adams, D.P. van Gerven and R.S. Levy, 'The retreat from migrationism', *Ann. Rev. Anthropol.,* 7, 1978, 483 – 532.
10. *Ibid.*
11. In particular, the population of Madagascar and the Pacific islands by peoples from the Indonesian island chain.
12. R.M. Gramly, 'Expansion of Bantu-speakers *versus* development of Bantu language in situ: an archaeologist's perspective, '*South African Archaeological Bulletin,* 22, 1978, 107 – 112; but linguistic research seems to have proven conclusively that not only are the Sandawe and possibly the Hadza of central Tanzania Khoisan-speakers, but that there are significant traces of Khoisan in the speech of hunter-gatherers as far north as Mount Kenya and behind the Kenyan and Tanzanian coasts. The only alternative to their being descended from an original Khoisan-speaking population in East Africa itself would be a migration from South Africa, which would be equally unacceptable to anti-migrationists. Ambrose, 'Archaeology and linguistic reconstruction', 111 – 113.
13. J. Vansina, 'Bantu in the crystal ball, II, '*History in Africa,* 7, 1980, 312 – 3,

318 – 9. Vansina's parallels, however, are Latin and Mandarin, products of rather different historical processes.

14. P.S. Garlake, 'Prehistory and ideology in Zimbabwe', *Africa,* 52(3), 1982, 12.
15. D.W. Phillipson, *The later prehistory of Eastern and Southern Africa,* (London, 1977), 250 – 1.
16. Ehret, 'The first spread of food production of Southern Africa.'
17. D.P. Collett, 'Models of the spread of the Early Iron Age,' in Ehret and Posnansky, 182 – 198.
18. But see references 4 above.
19. Vansina, *passim.*
20. Ehret, 'Linguistic inferences about early Bantu history.'
21. D.N. Beach, *The Shona and Zimbabwe 900 – 1850,* (Gweru, 1980), 6.
22. P. Sinclair and H. Lundmark, 'A spatial analysis of archaeological sites from Zimbabwe', paper presented at South African Association of Archaeologists Conference, Gaborone, July 1983.
23. P.S. Garlake, *Great Zimbabwe,* (London, 1973), 155 – 6; P.S. Garlake, *The Ruins of Zimbabwe,* (Lusaka, 1974), 2; T.N. Huffman, 'The linguistic affinities of the Iron Age in Rhodesia', *Arnoldia,* vii, 7, 1974, 1 – 12.
24. Huffman, 'The linguistic affinities of the Iron Age in Rhodesia'.
25. T.N. Huffman, 'The origins of Leopard's Kopje: an 11th. century Difaquane', *Arnoldia, vii, 23, 1978, 1 – 23.*
26. Huffman's re-examination of the pottery sequence of the southwest, in particular, had evidenly gained general acceptance: T.N. Huffman, *The Leopard's Kopje Tradition,* (Salisbury, 1974).
27. The radio-carbon dates available in 1976 – 7 showed a range from the tenth to the twelfth centuries for Leopard's Kopje and Gumanye sites, and from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries for Harare and Musengezi sites.
28. D.W. Phillipson, 'Iron age history and archaeology in Zambia', *Journal of African History,* xv, 1, 1974, 14 – 16.
29. Thus by 1980 fully-developed Leopard's Kopje pottery, apparently made by people who had developed this pottery elsewhere, was found in sites dated to the ninth and tenth centuries in the Tuli-Limpopo confluence area. Hall and Vogel, 'Some recent radiocarbon dates from Southern Africa', 448 – 9.
30. Beach, *Shona and Zimbabwe,* 19 – 21; D.N. Beach, *Zimbabwe, a new history for primary schools,* (Harare, 1982), 22; J.M. Chirenje, *A history of Zimbabwe for primary schools,* (Harare, 1982), 1.
31. D.W. Phillipson, *The later prehistory of eastern and southern Africa,* 225 – 230.
32. Both Beach and Chirenje in their primary texts written in 1979 – 81 cover themselves by referring to the irreconcilable theories of both Huffman and Phillipson. D. Martin and P. Johnson, *Zimbabwe: a new history,* (Harare, 1982), 10 – 11, gloss over the distinction between the spread of Bantu languages in general and the origins of Shona in particular.
33. Beach, *Shona and Zimbabwe,* 15 – 7.
34. First published hints of Garlake's change of mind appeared in his review of Phillipson's *Later prehistory of eastern and southern Africa* in the *Journal of African History,* xx, 3, 1979, 457 – 9.
35. Garlake, 'Prehistory and ideology in Zimbabwe', 12 – 3; P.S. Garlake, *Great Zimbabwe described and explained,* (Harare, 1982), 8 – 9; P.S. Garlake, *Early Zimbabwe from the Matopos to Inyanga,* (Gweru, 1983), 13 – 22. On matrilineal societies, see the critical survey.
36. M. Sibanda, H. Moyana and S. Gumbo, *The African Heritage, History for Junior Secondary Schools, Book I,* (Harare, 1982), 44 – 5, referring explicitly to the question of the coming of the Early Iron Age and implicitly to the Later.
37. M. Hall, 'Tribes, traditions and numbers: the American model in southern African Iron Age ceramic studies', *South African Archaeological Bulletin* in press.
38. Hall and Vogel, 'Some recent radiocarbon dates from Southern Africa', 443, 448.
39. Sinclair and Lundmark, 'A spatial analysis of archaeological sites from Zimbabwe.'
40. *Ibid.;* J.R. Denbow, 'Cows and kings: a spatial and economic analysis of a hierarchical Early Iron Age settlement system in Eastern Botswana', a paper presented at the South African Association of Archaeologists Conference, Gaborone, July 1983.
41. The work of C. Ehret and M. Kinsman, 'Shona dialect classification and its implications for Iron Age history in Southern Africa', *International Journal of African Historical Studies,* 16, 1981, has been criticised for dubious methodology by C.H. Borland, 'The conflicting methodologies of Shona dialect classification', *Proceedings of the Conference of the African Language Association of South Africa,* in press.
42. J.R.D. Cobbing, 'The Ndebele under the Khumalos, 1820 – 1896', (University of Lancaster, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1976), 132 – 9; Beach, *Shona and Zimbabwe,* 72 – 4; A.K.H. Weinrich, *The Tonga people on the southern shore of Lake Kariba,* (Gwelo, 1979), 13 – 8; D.P. Abraham, 'Maramuca: an exercise in the combined use of Portuguese records and oral tradition', *Journal of African History,* ii, 1, 1961, 211 – 25.
43. J.H. Bannerman, 'Towards a history of the Hlengwe people of the south of Rhodesia', *Nada,* xi, 5, 1978, 483 – 496; Bannerman, 'A short political and economic history of the Tsovani, Chisa and Mahenye dynasties of Ndanga, Chiredzi and Chipinge districts to ca. 1950', *Zimbabwean History,* 12, 1981 in press; A.K. Smith, 'The peoples of Southern Mozambique: an historical survey', *Journal of African History,* xiv, 4, 1973, 565 – 580.
44. J.K. Rennie, 'Christianity, colonialism and the origins of nationalism among the Ndau of Southern Rhodesia 1890 – 1935', (Northwestern University, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1973), 55; Gustavo de Bivar Pinto Lopes, *Respostas ao Questionario Etnografico,* (Beira, 1928), 2; Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa, Res.1, Pasta E. No. 19, Companhia de Moçambique, Subcircunscriçao de Moribane, questionario Ethnografico, Resposta E/20, Jose Luis Ferreira to Secretario Geral, Moribane, 20 October 1916.
45. Beach, *Shona and Zimbabwe,* 157 – 9.
46. Departmento de Arqueologia, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 'Arqueologia e conhecimento do passado', *Trabalhos de Arequeologia e Antropologia,* i, 1980, 4.
47. Thus, by the fourteenth century the Arab traveller Ibn-Battuta described the Zimbabwean region behind Sofala as 'Yufi' — but this was a common Arabic term for gold-bearing hinterlands, and was also used in West Africa, while more than a century later Ahmad ibn-Madjid had only vague references to rulers and *zimbabwe* centres.

48. R.M.G. Mtetwa, The "political" and economic history of the Duma people of south-eastern Rhodesia from the early eighteenth century to 1945', (University of Rhodesia, unpublished D.Phil. thesis, 1976), 209 – 294; M.F.C. Bourdillon, *The Shona Peoples,* (Gwelo, 1976), 35 – 144; C. Bullock, *The Mashona,* (Cape Town, 1927), 52 – 6; Beach, *Shona and Zimbabwe,* 89 – 94; H.H.K. Bhila, *Trade and Politics in a Shona Kingdom,* (London, 1982), 13 – 26.
49. Arquivo Historico Ultramarino, Mocambique, Maco 14, Luis Felis to Governor of Sofala, Zamve, 2 October 1830.
50. For example, after an early eighteenth-century civil war in Duma, the houses descended from Rukweza were driven out of the fertile central part of the Bikita highlands; losers in Bocha civil wars were driven into the drier southern part of the territory; and in Mbire III the Marondera house was driven up the Ruzawi valley, while the Govha house was pushed farther downstream.
51. D.N. Beach, 'The Mutapa dynasty: a comparison of documentary and traditional evidence', *History in Africa,* 3, 1976, 1, 117.
52. Garlake, *Great Zimbabwe,* 164 – 5, 174 – 6, 183 – 4.
53. T.N. Huffman, 'The rise and fall of Zimbabwe', *Journal of African History,* xiii, 3, 1972, 361 – 5; Huffman, 'Archaeology and ethnohistory of the African Iron Age', 142 – 7.
54. P.S. Garlake, Pastoralism and *zimbabwe*', *Journal of African History,* xix, 4, 1978, 479 – 493; Garlake, *Great Zimbabwe Described and Explained,* 14 – 5.
55. D.N. Beach, 'Great Zimbabwe as a Mwari-cult centre', *Rhodesian Prehistory,* 11, 1973, 11 – 2, shows how thin the 'traditional' evidence on religion at Great Zimbabwe was. Mtetwa, 'Duma', 90 – 107, goes farther.
56. Huffman, 'Archaeology and ethnohistory of the African Iron Age', 142 – 6; this confirms the suspicion in Beach, *Shona and Zimbabwe,* 38 – 41, that the rise of Great Zimbabwe was at the expense of Mapungubwe.
57. T.N. Huffman, 'Great Zimbabwe Carbon-14 Dates', unpublished list.
58. J.H. Bannerman, 'Ecological and other factors in the rise and fall of the Zimbabwe state; paper presented at Conference on Zimbabwean History, University of Zimbabwe, 23 – 7 August, 1982.
59. Hall and Vogel, 'Some radio-carbon dates', 452; T.N. Huffman, 'The Iron Age of the Buhwa district of Rhodesia', *Occasional Papers of the National Museums and Monuments of Rhodesia,* Series A, Human Sciences, iv, 3, 1978, 89.
60. Khami was built after SR 94 (1455 – 95 corrected to 1410 or 1420 plus statistical error) but probably not long after, since two heartwood posts (Pts 77 and 748) have corrected dates of 1360 or 1390 and 1430 or 1445 plus statistical error, while the outer ring of a post (Pta 1918) is dated at 1445 + 40 or 1400 – 20 plus statistical error. The thatch burned in the final destruction at Khami, formerly thought to be the work of the much-maligned Ngoni of the 1830s, is dated (Pta 2430) to 1710 + 40 corrected to 1630 plus statistical error. (Personal communication from T.H. Huffman.)
61. Danangombe has upper construction posts (not heartwood) dated (Pta 1914 and 1915) to 1770 + 40 corrected to 1650 plus statistical error and 1840 + 35 corrected to 1670 – 1710 plus statistical error. (Personal communication from T.N. Huffman.)
62. Garlake, *Great Zimbabwe,* 162 – 6; Sinclair and Lundmark, 'A spatial analysis of archaeological sites from Zimbabwe'; T.N. Huffman, 'Snakes and birds: expressive space at Great Zimbabwe', *African Studies,* 40, 1981, 131 – 50.

63. Beach, *Shona and Zimbabwe,* 188 – 203, 325. The ca.1630 terminal date for Khami shows how unreliable traditions linking it to the Changamire Rozvi can be.
64. Bhila, *Trade and Politics,* 132 – 4.
65. G.J. Liesegang, 'New light on Venda traditions: Mahumane's account of 1730', *History in Africa,* 4, 1977, 163 – 80; D.C. Chigiga, 'A preliminary study of the Lemba of Rhodesia', paper presented at the Central Africa Historical Association Conference, Salisbury, 1972.
66. Beach, *Shona and Zimbabwe,* 109.
67. M.D.D. Newitt, 'The early history of the Maravi', *Jnl. Afr. Hist.,* 23, 1982, 152 – 3.
68. Beach, *Shona and Zimbabwe,* 134.
69. S.I.G. Mudenge, 'The role of foreign trade in the Rozvi empire: a reappraisal', *Jnl. Afr. Hist.,* 15, 1974, 386 – 7; Bhila, *Trade and Politics,* chap. 3
70. 'Rhodesian' here means a follower of Rhodes, just as 'Shangaan' originally meant a follower of Soshangane.
71. I.R. Phimister, 'Precolonial goldmining in Southern Zambezia: a reassessment', *African Social Research,* iii, 21, 1976, 1 – 30; W.G.L. Randles, *L'empire du Monomotapa du XVe au XIXe siecle,* (Paris, 1975), 113 – 4.
72. Beach, *Shona and Zimbabwe,* 289; D.N. Beach, 'Second thoughts on the Shona economy: suggestions for further research, *Rhodesian History,* 7, 1976, 4. The traditions to which these pages refer do not always specifically stress elephant hunting as opposed to hunting in general, but Rimuka certainly and south-east Buhera probably contained elephants. Southern Bocha had elephants in recent times.
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74. A.F. Isaacman, 'The origin, formation and early history of the Chikunda of south central Africa', *Jnl. Afr. Hist.,* 13, 1972, 449.
75. C.S. Lancaster, 'The Zambezi Goba ancestral cult, *Africa,* 47, 1977, 229 – 241
76. This includes slaves acquired by raiding or trade as well as voluntary 'service' husbands. D.N. Beach, 'The Shona economy: branches of production' in *The roots of rural poverty in central and southern Africa,* eds. R.H. Palmer and Q.N. Parsons, *(London, 1977), 56.*
77. A.F. Isaacman, *Mozambique, the Africanization of a European institution: the Zambezi prazos, 1750 – 1902,* (Wisconsin, 1971), 48.
78. Beach, *Shona and Zimbabwe,* chaps. 5 and 8.
79. Beach, 'Shona economy', 56.
80. I.R. Phimister, 'Alluvial gold mining and trade in nineteenth century south central Africa', *Jnl. Afr. Hist.,* 15, 1974, 445 – 456.
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82. Bhila, *Trade and politics,* chaps. 5 and 6.
83. Izidoro Correia Pereira, *'Mappa das minas conhecidas no districto de Senna', Annaes do Conselho Ultramarino,* '*Parte Nao Official,* Serie II, Lisbon, 1867, 186 – 7.
84. Cobbing, 'Ndebele under the Khumalos', 189; T.I. Matthews, 'Portuguese,

Chikunda and peoples of the Gwembe valley: the impact of the 'Lower Zambezi Complex' on southern Zambia', *Jnl. Afr. Hist.*, 22, 1981, 23 – 42.

85. National Archives, Zimbabwe, CT 1/1/6, Valligy Mussagy to F.C. Selous, Nyota, 23 November 1890.
86. University of Zimbabwe History Department Texts 71 – 6 Mutare.
87. Mudenge, 'Role of trade', 387 – 8.
88. Beach, *Shona and Zimbabwe,* 30 – 1.
89. Beach, 'Shona economy', 51.
90. Cobbing, 'Ndebele under the Khumalos', 152 – 6.
91. Mtetwa, 'Duma', 222, 263; Bannerman, 'Tsovani, Chisa and Mahenye', 12 – 4.
92. R. Summers, *Inyanga,* (Cambridge, 1958)
93. J. McCracken, 'Rethinking rural poverty', *Jnl. Afr. Hist., 19, 1978, 612.*
94. Mtetwa, *'Duma',* 209 – 294.
95. Beach, *'Shona economy',* 37 – 65.
96. The earliest reference to *milho zaburro* is in Andre Fernandes to the Society of Jesus in Portugal, Goa, 5 December, 1562, *Records of South East Africa,* ed. G.M. Theal, ii, (Capte Town 1898), 129. Assuming that this did mean maize (M.P. Miracle, 'The introduction and spread of maize in Africa', *Jnl. Afr. Hist.,* 6, 1965, 39 – 40, 47 – 8) the traditions used in Beach, 'Shona economy' were adamant that it was not a staple crop in precolonial times.
97. W.F. Rea, *The economics of the Zambezi missions 1580 – 1759,* (Rome, 1976), 103.
98. Mtetwa, 'Duma', 226.
99. Beach, 'Shona economy', 56 – 7; Bhila, *Trade and politics,* 253 – 6.
100. Bhila, *Trade and politics,* 256.
101. Rennie, 'Ndau', 48; Mtetwa, 'Duma', 209 – 294.
102. Beach, 'Shona economy', 44; I.R. Phimister,, 'Peasant production and underdevelopment in southern Rhodesia, 1890 – 1914, with special reference to the Victoria District', *Roots of rural poverty,* 257 – 264.
103. C. Thorp, M.A. thesis in preparation, University of Witwatersrand.
104. Beach, *Shona and Zimbabwe,* 99 – 100; Cobbing: 'Ndebele under the Khumalos', 191.
105. Mudenge, 'Role of trade', 389.
106. Beach, 'Shona economy', 44.
107. *Ibid.,* 54.
108. Beach, *Shona and Zimbabwe,* chaps. 2, 5, 7 and 8.
109. Beach, *Shona and Zimbabwe,* 164 – 5, wrongly locates the Budya homeland of Mungari as being near Tete. It should have been clear from A.F. Isaacman, *The tradition of resistance in Mozambique, anti-colonial activity in the Zambezi valley, 1850 – 1921,* (London, 1976), xvii, that Mungari was the Barwe centre 120 kilometres to the south.
110. Beach, *Shona and Zimbabwe,* 150 – 1; there is one reference to a Mutapa centre, 'Camanhaya', which might relate to *nyai* in 1512: Gaspar Veloso, 'Notes', *Documents on the Portuguese in Mozambique and Central Africa, 1498 – 1840,* vol. 3, eds. A. da Silva Rego and T.W. Baxter (Lisbon, 1964), 182.
111. 'Danangombe' as it was originally spelt in the 1900s could mean 'cattle enclosure, *dang'a'* or *'dana,* a bare hill'. Both would fit the site aptly.
112. Mtetwa, 'Duma', 149. Beach, *Shona and Zimbabwe,* 320, incorrectly implies that they preceded the *mfecane.*

113. J.D. White, 'Esitshebeni', unpublished book, Shabani, 1974 (National Archives Zimbabwe), 252 – 358.
114. Ferreira, in reference 44 above. Beach, *Shona and Zimbabwe,* chap. 5, assumed a continuum in dynastic control of Teve from the sixteenth century onwards. Ferreira's account refers to a group who by 1916 were known in traditions as people from Urozvi or Mbire, who came into the land of Teve, tried to build a tower to reach the moon (a common Rozvi tradition), failed and returned to their land, coming back later to make a final settlement. This sounds very much like the Changamire campaigns of the 1690s preceding an immigration like that in the Ndau country. This would account for the short ruler-list recorded by Silva in the 1830s – 1840s and the connection between the later Teve dynasty and the Changamire noted by him and Ferrao. On the other hand, if Mtetwa was right in dating the original Duma departure from Teve to the mid-seventeenth century, then the early Teve dynasty must have been *moyo,* as well as the later. As stressed in *Shona and Zimbabwe,* this is quite likely.
115. J. Guy, *The destruction of the Zulu kingdom,* (London, 1979), 3 – 18.
116. Beach, *Shona and Zimbabwe,* 104; J.K. Rennie, 'From Zimbabwe to a colonial chieftaincy: four transformations of the Musikavanhu territorial cult in Rhodesia,' *Guardians of the Land, essays on Central African territorial cults,* ed. J.M. Schoffeleers, (Gwelo, 1978), 263, tends to see the earliest phases of the Nyakuimba-Musikavanhu cult as the most 'religious'. This does not agree with the picture given by contemporary Portuguese documents, and it is suggested that Nyakuimba was originally a more 'political' unit which acquired more religious importance after the *moyo* conquest, only to become gradually secularized at later dates.
117. Beach, *Shona and Zimbabwe,* 247 – 253, combines the compatible elements on the various theories on the origin of Mwari, but is difficult to follow because the matter is treated historiographically, working backwards from the more recent evidence. The argument that the Mwari cult in its earliest form started in the north-east in association with the Rozvi and *moyo* dynasties, already implicit in G. Fortune, 'Who was Mwari?', *Rhod. Hist.* 4, 1973, 13, where Mwari is seen as a Rozvi ancestral spirit, is reinforced by early references to prayers to Mwari in the old *moyo* nuclear area before the arrival of the Mwari cave-cult, J.T. Bent, *The ruined cities of Mashonaland,* (London, 1892), 310 – 341. ('Cult', by the way, is used to mean a sub-division of a religion as opposed to a separate religion.).
118. Beach, *Shona and Zimbabwe,* 247 – 253.
119. G.J. Liesagang, 'Nguni migrations between Delagoa Bay and the Zambezi, 1821 – 1839', *Int. Jnl. Afr. Hist. Studs.,* iii, 1970, 317 – 337.
120. G.J. Liesegang, 'Aspects of Gaza Nguni history, 1821 – 1897', *Rhod. Hist.,* 6, 1975, 1 – 14; G.L. Liesegang, 'Notes on the internal structure of the Gaza kingdom of southern Mozambique, 1840 – 1895', *Before and after Shaka,* ed. J.B. Peires, (Grahamstown, 1981), 178 – 209.
121. Cobbing, 'Ndebele under the Khumalos', chaps. 2 and 7.
122. Cobbing, 'Ndebele under the Khumalos', chap. 3; J.R.D. Cobbing, 'The evolution of Ndebele *amabutho', Jnl. Afr. Hist.,* xv, v, 1974, 607 – 631.
123. Rennie, 'Ndau', chap. 3.
124. Bhila, *Trade and politics,* chap. 8; Bannerman, 'Tsovani, Chitsa and Mahenye'.

125. Liesegang, 'Aspects of Gaza', 4 – 9; Cobbing, 'Ndebele under th Khumalos', chap. 7.

126. A. Rita-Ferreira, 'Etno-historia e cultura traditcional do grupo Angun (Nguni)', *Memorias do Instituto dos Investigacoes cientificas de Mocamb que,* 11, Serie C, 1974, 201 – 3.

127. National Archives, Zimbabwe, Hist. Mss. Bu. 1/1/1, C. Bullock to C. Doke, Fort Victoria, 1 September 1929.

128. Rennie, 'Ndau', 146.

129. Cobbing, 'Ndebele under the Khumalos', chap. 4.

130. Beach, 'Ndebele raiders and Shona power', *Jnl. Afr. Hist.,* xv, 4, 1974 633 – 651.

131. N.M.B. Bhebe, 'Some aspects of Ndebele relations with the Shona', *Rhod Hist.,* 4, 1973, 31 – 8; Beach, 'Ndebele raiders', 633 – 651; Cobbing 'Ndebele under the Khumalos', chap.4.

132. Bhila, *Trade and politics,* chap.8.

133. Mtetwa, 'Duma', 147 – 206.

134. M.D.D. Newitt, *Portuguese settlement on the Zambezi,* (London, 1973 251 – 340. 'Little serious damage' here means, on the national scale. On local scale, such minor wars could sometimes be quite serious.

135. National Archives, Zimbabwe, N. 1/1/9, Native Commissioner, Salisbur quarterly report, 29 January 1896; F.W.T. Posselt, 'Chaminuka the wizard *NADA,* 4, 1926, 25 – 7. Notice that these 'predictions' of Chaminuka we only recorded after 1893, the year in which they came true, and that th earlier version was very much less specific than the later.

136. Cobbing, 'Ndebele under the Khumalos', 193 – 203.

137. Mtetwa, 'Duma' 274 – 7.

138. Cobbing, 'Ndebele under the Khumalos', 207 – 213.

139. Mtetwa, 'Duma', 274.

140. J. Ford, *The role of trypanosomiasis in African ecology,* (Oxford, 1971 311 – 2, 333 – 5; S. Young, 'Fertility and famine: women's agricultur history in southern Mozambique', *Roots of rural povery,* 72; Rita-Ferreir 'Etno-historia', 189.

141. Beach, 'Shona economy', 57.

142. Cobbing, 'Ndebele under the Khumalos', 215.

143. Young, 'Fertility and famine', 73 – 5.

144. *Ibid.*

145. Cobbing, 'Ndebele under the Khumalos', 203 – 5.

146. Cobbing, 'Ndebele under the Khumalos', chap. 7; N.A. Etherington 'Labour supply and the genesis of South African confederation in the 1870s' *Jnl. Afr. Hist.,* xx, 1, 1979, 235 – 254.

147. E. E. Axelson, *Portugal and the scramble for Africa 1875 – 1891,* (Johannesburg 1967), 10, 135; Bhila, *Trade and politics,* chap.9.

148. Axelson, *Portugal and the scramble,* 9 – 11, 117 – 281.

149. D.N. Beach, 'The Adendorff trek in Shona history', *South African Historical Journal,* 3, 1971, 30 – 48.

150. Beach, 'Ndebele raiders', 648 – 9.

151. Cobbing, 'Ndebele under the Khumalos', 389 – 390; Liesegang, 'Aspects of Gaza', 13.

152. D.N. Beach, 'Chimurenga: the Shona rising of 1896 – 7', *Jnl. Afr. Hist.,* xx, 3, 403 – 4; Beach, 'Ndebele raiders', 649 – 650.

153. J.R.D. Cobbing, 'The absent priesthood: another look at the Rhodesian rising of 1896 – 1897', *Jnl. Afr. Hist.,* xviii, 1, 1977, 61 – 84.

154. Liesegang, 'Aspects of Gaza', 13.

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In writing this booklet, efforts have been made to bring in the findings of research published since 1981. In particular, it has become clear that teachers and students often find it difficult to reconcile the different views of archaeologists and historians, especially when they contradict each other or supply insufficient evidence for their arguments. To help readers on these points, each section of this booklet is supported by a comment on the differing schools of thought on the issues involved.

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