

were never again to see empires established the likes of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai.

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Patricia A. Vaum

SAVANNA STATES

The savanna, stretching just south of the rain forest from the Atlantic Coast to the Great Lakes region of East Africa, saw the progressive emergence of states, in contrast with what happened elsewhere in central Africa. Particularly prominent were the states of the Kongo, Loango, Tio, Mbundu, Kuba, Lunda, Lozi, and Luba, scattered from the coast to the interior. Most of these states ruled vast territories up until the time of colonial conquest. But so far, we have little archaeological evidence to document how these kingdoms arose out of the numerous communities present in the region during the 1st millennium A.D. Written documents exist for the Kongo kingdom from the 16th century onward. For most of the interior, written records improved only after 1880. This lack of documentary sources can be partially compensated for by numerous oral-history ac-

counts, even though in the best of cases, they are limited in time to the couple of centuries before they were collected. The recent investigation successfully combining historical, linguistic, and ethnographic data, the "words and things" technique, has nonetheless allowed for significant advances in our understanding of the political tradition in the rain forests in the region just north of the savanna.

Both areas were progressively colonized several millennia ago by Bantu-speaking farmers, who brought with them an ideological tradition oscillating between praise for "big men" and the maintenance of equality of all. While the latter part of the alternative prevailed in equatorial Africa, the notion of *big men* developed into sacred kingship in several areas on the southern savannas. Deep down, this political tradition may have resulted first due to the influence of the Eastern Bantu, who eventually migrated westward across the savannas, progressively mixing with the older Western Bantu speakers. These newcomers could have brought a more centralized ideology with them, probably under the influence of other East African populations.

In addition to having an ideological influence, the Bantu-speaking people also left a technological imprint. They introduced a new, largely cereal-based food-production system better adapted to the savanna habitat. Over time, this may well have resulted in population growth, especially in zones where there were rich, diversified resources.

Growing population densities provoked the need for a wider range of raw materials, which in turn led to increased trade. Moreover, the uneven distribution of some resources such as copper, salt, or fish and techniques like smelting, as well as demographic factors, may have produced both social inequality and increasing competition. This situation saw the emergence of more complex and centralized polities.

Environmental determinism alone cannot explain the process of state formation. These factors do not always lead to growth of scale and complexity, as amply demonstrated by the Western Bantu inhabitants of the rain forests to the north. Hence the underlying political tradition becomes important.

The need for security and solidarity, combined with the desire for flexibility and autonomy, must have created a state of equilibrium between communities based on kinship and associations. With respect to the latter, witchcraft and diviners played important roles for social control, counteracting the aspirations of "big men." Wars may also have helped maintain the status quo. Trade and economic development alone was not enough to provoke the emergence of large and complex polities. Well into the 1st millennium A.D., the scale of social organization was probably not larger than that of a group of approximately a dozen villages.

A particularly talented warrior or diviner or an enterprising trader or "big man" who grasped new opportunities in the production and distribution of goods would probably have been able to offset this stability. As chiefdoms regrouped, the resulting principalities may well have reached new states of equilibrium. Some of political entities became increasingly successful and started incorporating growing numbers of neighboring principalities. The three main kingdoms of the western savannas, the Loango, Kongo, and Tio, are believed to have originated through this process.

Linguistic evidence relating to a specific fashion of word shortening, to a set of political titles, and to terms designating single and twinned clapperless bells (authority emblems throughout central Africa) indicates that both the Tio and Kongo principalities originated well before A.D. 1200.

The notion of the paramount chief living in a village regarded as a "capital," surrounded by a court of title holders who elaborated rituals and emblems, arose within these principalities. This was a further development of the idea that the chief was the master of the land. The copper-rich area at the border between the Congo Republic and Zaire seems to have played a crucial role in these changes, probably due to the copper trade and major commercial routes and market-places like the Malebo Pool on the Zaire River.

Unfortunately, from an archaeological point of view, if there are traces of agricultural communities on the coast and in the lower stretches of the Zaire Valley from the 4th century B.C. to

the 5th century A.D., there is a surprising gap in the record up to the 11th century. Subsequently, there is evidence of iron and copper metallurgy in the copper deposit of the Boko Songho-Mindouli area, where several furnaces dating to between the 11th and the 14th centuries have been excavated.

Meanwhile, along the Zaire River, from the Malebo Pool to 200 kilometers upstream, numerous sites belonging to an important river-based culture have been surveyed and test excavated. They are likely to correspond to the Tio kingdom. Numerous other sites in the Lower Zaire Valley and on the coast north of the present-day town of Pointe Noire may correspond respectively to the Kongo and Loango states.

The Kongo Kingdom

The emergence of these states probably occurred more-or-less simultaneously. The period of their emergence is generally dated to the 14th century on the basis of the known list of Kongo kings. Judging from the antiquity and the quantity of the archaeological deposits throughout this area, however, as well as the antiquity of the political process in other savanna areas, these kingdoms may be significantly older.

Excavating the site of the Kongo capital, Mbanza Kongo (now Sao Salvador) in Angola, its various provincial capitals, and the capitals and major sites of the other kingdoms will be necessary to test this hypothesis. While doing so has been on the archaeological agenda for more than 20 years, the prolonged political and economic crises endured by Zaire and Angola has made such fieldwork impossible.

Research throughout the lower portion of the Zaire Valley has nonetheless yielded several richly decorated pottery groups from the 17th and 18th centuries. Their distribution up to the Malebo Pool corresponds to the trade routes of the Kongo kingdom. In the pool region, sites like Kingabwa, yielding pottery identified with sources from both upstream and down, confirm that the area was a major commercial center. The cemeteries of two provincial capitals, Mbanza Soyo and Mbanza Mbuta, have also been partially excavated, and some construction work in

Mbanza Kongo has revealed the foundations of various structures. This confirms the great archaeological potential of the site, which presently is at risk due to urbanization.

Visitors to Mbanza Kongo in the 17th century described the city as a large agglomeration of perhaps 40,000 inhabitants. Centered around the royal enclosure and function, it nonetheless continued to resemble a giant village with separate houses surrounded by gardens.

Kongo was considerably more centralized than other states in the region. There were six provinces ruled by governors, who were appointed by the king—and eventually removed by him—as well as many court title holders, who derived their income from tribute, tolls, and fines. Small *nzimbu* shells were used as a national currency. Their source was strictly controlled by the king, who closely supervised commercial, religious, legal, and military matters. He disposed of a permanent praetorian guard but did not maintain a standing army. Kongo gained control over a large territorial expanse and accumulated a large number of slaves.

The Portuguese played an important role in the Kongo kingdom after their arrival in 1483. At the apex of the political structure, the king ruled by virtue of his ancestors. His religious function was essential, but his power was more symbolic than real in areas outside the capital district. While Kongo was much more centralized than, for example, the Tio kingdom, much depended on the adhesion of major village leaders at the local level. This complex symbolic construct was paradoxically fragile because of the king figure himself. Indeed, much depended on his personality, but the absence of clear rules for succession led to many conflicts and civil wars.

The Mbundu Kingdom

Thanks to its control of commercial routes and economic resources, the Mbundu political power emerged in the 16th century, south of the Kongo kingdom, along the middle region of the Kwanza River. The Mbundu used a piece of iron called a *ngola* as the emblem of their authority. By the 1560s, one holder of such an emblem created a major kingdom. Mbundu kings, the Ngola a

Kiluanje, played a major role in the slave trade of the following centuries. By the 19th century, the Mbundu had organized, along with Portuguese immigrants, a large commercial network, whose considerable caravans reached the Lozi and Lunda kingdoms far to the east.

Small stone buildings have been noted in the Mbundu area since the 17th century. These tombs, probably dating to the 16th or 17th centuries, have only recently been excavated.

As already demonstrated for the rain forest, it is likely that kingdoms of the savanna also evolved from ideas of political and social structuring resonant within a common Bantu tradition. The concept of *royalty* in an ecumenical sense became well established. Yet, the royal ideology in support of this ideal seems to have developed out of the symbols, beliefs, and practices first used to legitimize the authority of local leaders.

Proceeding farther inland, evidence of the origin and the early development of states becomes even weaker. There is a total absence of traditional and written records or archaeological research.

The Luba Kingdom

At the center of the continent, more than 1,500 kilometers from either ocean coast, the Luba state emerged as a major political structure and ruled a vast area of savanna and woodland of southeastern Zaire. Written descriptions of this part of the continent were not made until the end of the 18th century. These, along with oral traditions, have helped reconstruct the major events that shaped this kingdom from 1700 onward.

Oral traditions here most often recount myths of origin, which are more helpful in understanding Luba's symbolic and cosmological mind-set than any precise historical events. Fortunately, the area is also rich in archaeological sites, recording the continuous development of the first agricultural, iron-using inhabitants of the region.

The Upemba Depression, which now appears to be the Luba heartland, has yielded a wide range of archaeological information providing a 1,500-year-long sequence of continuous human occupation. The vast floodplain of the Lualaba

(Upper Zaire) River is dotted with various lakes, and the Upemba Depression is rich in natural resources.

While more than 50 archaeological sites have been surveyed throughout the depression, the ongoing political crisis in Zaire has hampered intensive research efforts. Only six sites known there have been partially excavated. These are mostly in the northern half of the depression. Sanga is the most famous of these. Little evidence of occupation sites has been preserved, since most of the few places suitable for the establishment of villages have been in continuous use over a long period of time. Most of the data, therefore, come from the more than 300 excavated graves.

The unusual state of preservation of the burial sites, the wealth of the grave goods, and more than 50 radiocarbon dates have led to the identification of four main occupation phases. The most important conclusion here, nonetheless, pertains to the continuity of occupation and the persistence of many objects and customs. This indicates that the population remained much the same over time. The high population density supported by the richness of the ecosystem, appears to have strongly contrasted with neighboring less-populated areas.

At the present, the Luba kingdom of the last three centuries is regarded as the latest development of this long cultural process. The 19th-century capital, however, was located about 100 kilometers to the northwest and was moved after the death of each king. It has recently been suggested that Luba power was not vested in a single king or center but in a constellation of title holders and principalities whose identification with a single nucleus was a means of legitimating their role. The Luba state may well have been, above all else, a construction of the mind, its symbolic reach being more extensive than its practical one. Like many savanna states, it did not really reflect the Western ethnocentric view of *kingdom*. It was the strength of colonial preconceptions and policies that created the image of a highly centralized and powerful empire. In reality, it was very much a symbolic commonwealth.

From an archaeological standpoint, the long cultural continuity linking the present-day Luba to the first food-producing, iron-using commu-

nities allows for a credible use of ethnographic data to interpret excavated objects.

There are few such objects for the oldest period, commonly referred to as *Kamilambian*. The pottery of this period is similar to that associated with the Early Iron Age tradition farther south in the Copperbelt along the border between Zaire and Zambia. There is no evidence, however, that copper objects reached the Upemba Depression at that time. It seems that by the 7th century, the relatively sparse Kamilambian population had few trade contacts beyond their immediate sphere of activity.

The subsequent period, the Ancient Kisalian, seems to result from the transformation of the Kamilambian between the 8th and 10th centuries. Judging from the number of burial sites and their dispersion, the Ancient Kisalian population must have remained fairly small and, like its predecessors, scattered widely over the northern half of the depression. By this time, it can be assumed that the people living in the Upemba region had become involved in the copper trade due to the rare presence of some bracelets and necklaces at archaeological sites. Valued for its color and malleability, this metal was probably more in demand than any other commodity at that time. Smoked fish was (and still is) the staple food of people living in the region. It was exported over long distances and bartered for other commodities, such as raffia and beads in recent time, copper and other prestigious products in earlier periods.

Grave goods included vessels and various iron weapons, tools, and ornaments. In two of the wealthiest graves, ceremonial axes were found. What appears to have been their wooden handles were studded with iron nails, and their hollow iron blades were delicately engraved. They remain important symbols of Luba power today. In one grave, such an ax was found along with an iron anvil, another major symbol of authority in traditional Bantu society. This suggests that the buried individuals were local leaders who were manipulating elaborate symbols of power for their own legitimization.

Toward the 10th century, the early Kisalian culture evolved into a large and complex society and eventually gave way to the Classic Kisalian period, which lasted until the end of the 13th cen-

tury. The size and number of sites from this period, spread both across the northern half of the depression and outside of it to the west, suggest significant demographic growth.

Tools, weapons, food, and other products found in the graves demonstrate the nature and range of local economic activities: fishing, hunting, farming, trading, smithing, and pottery making. Very specialized and skilled artisans made fine pots. Some were crafted specifically as funerary items. Some miniatures were made for interment with children. The exclusive use of copper for ornaments and utilitarian objects testifies to the strong trade links with the copper-producing area to the south. The appearance of a few cowrie shells even suggests some contacts with the coast of the Indian Ocean approximately 1,500 kilometers to the east.

Funeral rites, which took into account age, sex, and rank, were complex. Some of the richest burials, with respect to the number of vessels and the amount of unusual and probably valuable objects, were those of women and children. This suggests that wealth and status were inherited by this time.

It is likely that the highly sophisticated Kisalian society, centered on the Upemba Depression with its 500-year-long tradition in the use of complex symbols of power and rank by its chiefs and notables, was at the origin of the *savoir-faire* and the great prestige enjoyed by the Luba ever after. For much of this part of the savanna, the Luba kingdom became the epitome of civilized life.

The Luba had a long tradition of secret societies and associations that may have already existed in Kisalian times. Their various rituals indicate how a complex structure could have emerged in the absence of central authority. In Luba language, the word for *king* is much more recent than the word for *chief* or *notable*. By the end of Kisalian times, the old Bantu egalitarian tradition still seems to have been resisting centralization.

At the turn of the 13th century, Kisalian gave way, after a brief transition, to the Kabambian period. This is revealed by changes in pottery style, attendant rituals, and the appearance of cast-copper cross ingots as grave goods. There

seem to have been less cultural homogeneity at this time and fewer grave goods on the average. Evidence also suggests that social stratification had increased, as graves of intermediary wealth apparently disappeared.

Political power may have evolved as well. Status symbols, except for cone-shell disks and a small iron bell, are absent from even the wealthiest Kabambian graves. Such regalia may have been reserved for the most prominent leaders, who were buried separately.

The initial phase of the Kabambian was replaced by the Kabambian B around the 15th century. Grave goods were then reduced to a few vessels, and the large copper crosses, previously placed on the chest, were moved to the hands and hips. At the same time, these crosses became much smaller and more standardized, suggesting a shift from a special-purpose currency to a more general use in a market-oriented economy.

Around the 17th century, graves of the Luba resembled those of more recent people. Bracelets, belts, and anklets alone (usually made of glass beads) came to constitute grave goods.

The capitals of the Luba kingdom after 1700 were located outside of the Upemba Depression, to the northwest—an area for which there is no archaeological data. It can be conjectured, however, that the more recent Luba polity results from some political changes that came into effect by Kabambian times. This is especially so if this polity draws its inspiration from the long Kisalian tradition of manipulating status symbols in what was a complex, but still little-centralized, civilization. It may well be the result of new rulers, who progressively took control as they arrived from the east and likely fused the new hierarchical order with the old Kisalian symbolic political system.

After an initial use of force, the new rulers managed to control a large area through a strategy of intermarriage and through the use of old regalia, which they adopted to emphasize their legitimacy. Similarly, due to the difficulty of maintaining a standing army and to the resurgence of the old Bantu political tradition of autonomy, the modern Luba state relied more on prestige and influence than on authority or force. This is another reason why the Luba made use

of a wide array of beautiful memorial objects and performances.

Luba prestige and influence extended widely, as chiefs and kings to the east and south claimed Luba origins. These polities often resulted from various local processes, the elevated Luba notion of *leadership*, and a flexible system of political rule. The Lunda kingdom developed into a very extensive territorial state. By combining political and ritual syncretism with limited control of the military and trade, it established a loose polity over a huge area in the 18th and early 19th centuries.

Archaeological evidence for the origins and history of the savanna states is not widely available—except for Luba. It does provide, however, some interesting examples of political process for the recent past by stressing the importance of old underlying ideological traditions, symbolic and ritual behaviors, and unpredictable occurrences. These examples may help mainstream theoretical archaeologists revise conventional ethnocentric preconceptions about states—preconceptions that are all-too-often based on political, economic, and military factors.

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Pierre de Maret

LACUSTRINE STATES

The region of eastern Africa, bordered to the east by Lakes Victoria and Kyoga and to the west by the lakes of the Western Rift (the interlacustrine or Great Lakes region), witnessed the emergence of a number of highly organized societies in the 2nd millennium A.D. Arab traders and European explorers first encountered these kingdoms in the mid-19th century. Their possible origins were immediately a topic of considerable interest to Europeans because, unlike other parts of the continent, the lacustrine states could not obviously be explained by the presence of non-African rulers or traders. This preoccupation with origins has characterized the subsequent archaeological work on the lacustrine states. As will be seen, however, there have been a number of approaches to the archaeological record. These different approaches emphasize the significance of the historiography of archaeological research in the lacustrine states.

In Uganda, early documentation of archaeological sites was dependent on the recreational interests of Protectorate officials. Through their enthusiastic notes and records, writers such as E. J. Wayland and E. C. Lanning are still important primary sources on archaeological sites. In Rwanda and Burundi, by contrast, the major influence appears to have been the location of mission stations. From the early days of the Uganda Protectorate, large archaeological sites were recorded. These were not apparently associated with the 19th-century kingdoms or their dynastic traditions. The sites often featured networks of ditches that extended for several kilometers. On the basis of information from oral traditions and on historical interpretations of these traditions, it was concluded that these sites were capitals of an

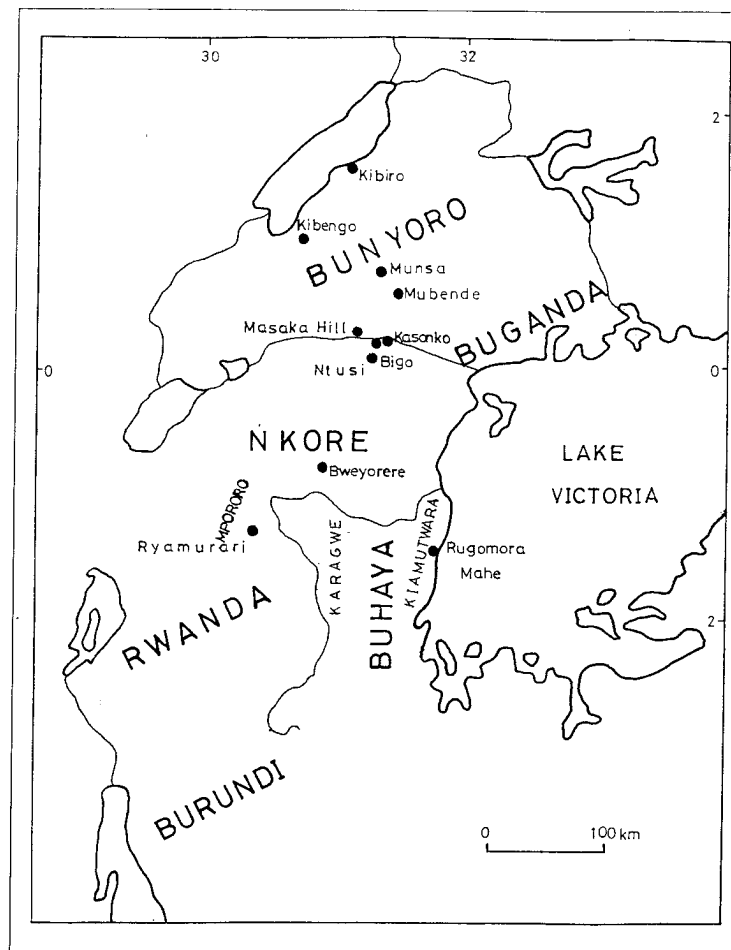


Fig. 66 The lacustrine states

empire run by mysterious characters known as Cwezi. The initial concept of state formation in the region was in terms of conquest, imposition of a preformed political system, and subsequent degeneration of this system. It was in this context that archaeologists first investigated sites in the region.

In 1957 and 1960 respectively, P. Shinnie and M. Posnansky excavated Bigo, the foremost of the "earthwork" sites. In 1958, Posnansky also excavated Bweyore, a site attributed to early rulers of the Nkore kingdom. These various excavations have subsequently been criticized, since they were intended merely to verify his-

tory from oral traditions. With the benefit of hindsight, it is difficult to imagine what might have constituted proof of Cwezi identity. Since then, the focus of archaeological work shifted away from Uganda and its earthworks. In Buhaya in northwestern Tanzania, P. Schmidt undertook a more critical evaluation of oral traditions to investigate the nature of power and authority in regard to ironworking, a process he traced to the very earliest Urewe ironworkers. F. Van Noten and others conducted similar work on ironworking in Rwanda and Burundi. Since 1986, there has been a resumption of archaeological research in Uganda. Interestingly, this has still been based on sites that have been known for many years, reaffirming the quality of early archaeological records. This latest work is largely ongoing and has not yet been fully published.

Archaeological research in its early stages generally focused on sites with either large ditch networks or associated by oral traditions with the Cwezi. Most noteworthy of all the ditch network sites has been Bigo. Situated on a hill overlooking the Katonga River, this site would appear to dominate the Mawogola Grasslands to the south. The identification of two smaller sites, one on either side along the river, added to this impression. The ditches themselves are cut to a depth of up to 4 meters into the subsoil and form an outer line and an inner complex of ditches clustering on the main hilltop. In all, there are some 10 kilometers of ditches representing a considerable feat of labor. Five kilometers down the Katonga River, there is the large network of Kasonko. Munsu, 80 kilometers north

of Bigo, features similar outer, middle, and inner ditches focused around a hilltop and with a river to the north. Excavations have shown the ditches to be up to 3.5 meters in depth. Kibengo, near the southern end of Lake Albert, completes the collection of the better-known and larger earthwork sites.

The function of the ditches and of the earthworks as a whole is not yet understood. Those at Bigo and Munsa, in particular, could not have been effective defensively, since the land beyond the outer ditches is higher than that inside, placing potential attackers at an advantage. While archaeological material is present within the inner ditches of most of these sites, the largest area, encircled by the outer ditch, is in all cases devoid of cultural material, suggesting that it was not occupied. The logical alternatives, therefore, would seem to be either land use for agriculture or pasturage. While there are several mounds of archaeological debris, ash, and dung at Bigo, suggesting a concentration of occupation, there is not a single trace of archaeological material or of occupation at Kasonko. At Munsa, moreover, the central area, situated on a hilltop, features a number of burials. The only dating evidence published so far comes from Bigo, with radiocarbon evaluations falling between the 15th and 19th centuries, and Munsa, dating to around the 14th or 15th centuries.

Archaeological sites principally associated with the Cwezi include Mubende Hill and Masaka Hill. Understanding of these sites is complicated by their continued use as shrines. Indeed in the first half of the 1990s, there was a revival in activity at these and other shrines. Excavations have been conducted on several occasions at Mubende Hill. In the 1950s, E. C. Lanning found a collection of five large, well-preserved pots near the tree that forms the shrine. Excavations in 1987 by P. Robertshaw indicated two occupations of the site, the first dating to the 13th and 14th centuries and the second to the 19th and 20th centuries. The earlier phase is conceivably consistent with oral traditions that state that this was the capital of Ndahura, one of the leading Cwezi characters. Archaeologically, there are large amounts of animal bone, dominated by cattle, and a number of pits into which grinding stones were thrown. The

site itself covers a maximum area of 5 hectares. There is little, therefore, in the archaeological record to indicate whether this was a royal center, a ritual center, or an ordinary residential site enhanced by subsequent traditions.

Besides the earthworks, which are restricted to the area of western Uganda between the southern shores of Lake Albert and the middle regions of the Katonga River, and the Cwezi sites, the region's archaeological sites dating to the 2nd millennium appear to have a broad unity. Most obviously, pottery is predominantly decorated by the use of roulette—knotted or twisted plant fiber or patterns carved in wood and rolled over the surface of the wet clay. While superficially uniform, encompassing all sites from the 2nd millennium as well as ethnographic collections from the 19th and 20th centuries, more detailed analyses have tended to indicate that subtle variations do occur in this pottery. Thus, G. Connah's work at Kibiro indicates a preference for carved, wooden roulettes not noticed at other sites. He also established a sequence of changes that have taken place in the Kibiro pottery assemblages between the 13th and 19th centuries. In western Uganda, Robertshaw has produced a pottery sequence on the basis of attribute clusters for sites located by archaeological survey. More ambitiously, C. Desmedts has identified three separate styles of rouletting that she considers to indicate separate waves of migration into the greater lacustrine region beginning in the 8th century. Given the richness of the ethnographic record, the continued production of pottery in the region today, and the success of iron-smelting reconstructions in the region, it is surprising that no analysis has yet adopted an approach to pottery collections based on categories recognized by potters themselves.

Since the mid-1980s, research has attempted to rely on interpretations based purely on excavated data rather than on historical reconstructions. In all cases, work has commenced at previously recognized sites, but research strategies have included surveys to examine sites in a broader, sub-regional perspective.

The earliest indicators of social complexity come from archaeological work on grasslands of the southern Uganda and at the site of Ntusi.

J. E. G. Sutton and A. Reid encountered occupation horizons at Ntusi dating from the 11th to the 15th century. From its earliest days, this settlement appears to have been predominantly concerned with the production of cattle. Evidence from faunal remains indicate herd-management strategies that exploited large quantities of immature animals. Cultivation of grain crops, such as sorghum and finger millet, was also widespread. By the 14th century, the site of Ntusi had grown to a size of as much as 100 hectares. In its later years, there is evidence for far-reaching trade in the occasional recovery of glass and cowrie-shell beads. Of more local origin, the inhabitants of Ntusi made regular use of ostrich-eggshell and ivory beads. Evidence for the manufacture of the latter was found in the midden of a household.

Central to the Ntusi economy was its control of cattle. Archaeological survey in the surrounding Mawogola area encountered more than 50 sites. Excavations were subsequently conducted at three: Buteraniro, Kakinga, and Kasebwongera. These sites are all small in size (less than 1 hectare) and are characterized at their lower end by long, low banks of ash and dung, suggesting single livestock enclosures. The banks contain abundant pottery and remains of cattle and occasional evidence for agriculture. Mortality patterns at these sites suggest the culling of animals at younger ages than evident at Ntusi. This pattern might be best explained by the removal of more mature animals to Ntusi.

Ntusi quite clearly dominated its hinterland, and its size and comparative artifact diversity imply both its economic and political hegemony. This two-tier settlement hierarchy suggests chiefly power and the maintenance of dominant lineages. Excavations indicate that cattle keeping and agricultural production were conducted within the same household. In later centuries, class divisions within the cattle-keeping states were based on the exclusive production of cattle by elite individuals and agricultural production by commoners. This creation of classes and, therefore, formation of the state, had evidently not occurred at Ntusi.

Elsewhere in the region, other important developments were taking place. From the 12th or

13th centuries, the site of Kibiro on the eastern shores of Lake Albert was first occupied. Connah found that archaeological deposits, more than 2 meters in depth, date from that time through to the 20th century.

Kibiro is significant for its salt production, an activity that continues today. Salt is produced by boiling soil impregnated by salt-rich springs. From historical sources, it is known that Kibiro became an economic asset of the Bunyoro state and was so important that at the end of the 19th century, it was targeted and destroyed several times by British punitive expeditions. Excavations have encountered industrial waste associated with salt working from the inception of the settlement. Kibiro's location at the base and in the rain shadow of a 500-meter escarpment means that it does not receive enough rainfall to make agriculture feasible. Stock rearing is possible but, on the basis of the archaeological faunal remains, does not appear to have been a major concern. It would seem, therefore, that the only viable means of economic activity for the community, besides fishing, would have been salt production. This being the case, the settlement would have been an important center for trade. Possible confirmation of Kibiro's economic significance comes from the recovery of glass beads throughout the archaeological sequence, augmented later by cowrie shells. At present, there is no evidence to suggest when Kibiro came under the direct control of the Bunyoro state, nor indeed is it known when Bunyoro itself came into existence as a state.

In a third area, based around Mubende and Munsu in western Uganda, there is further evidence for change. Robertshaw encountered around 130 sites during his widespread survey. On the basis of pottery collected from the surface, a tentative pottery sequence was created using attribute-data and cluster analysis. This analysis suggested that five distinct pottery facies could be recognized, and it was argued that these represented a chronological sequence. On the basis of this sequence, settlement of the area had begun by the 12th century. Furthermore, there is possible evidence of larger sites, site hierarchies, and defensive locations being created by the 14th century. These latter innovations would

suggest increasing pressure and competition for the control of land. Work is currently in progress to generate chronological data with which to evaluate this proposed pottery sequence.

Collectively, the developments at Ntusi and Kibiro and around Mubende are significant. Surveys in all three areas indicate that there had been no prior occupation of these locations by earlier ironworking communities. Such communities, characteristically using Urewe pottery, have been encountered in archaeological sites around the margins of Lake Victoria, along the Nile, and in the highlands of Rwanda and Burundi. All these locations have a good cover of vegetation and high and reliable rainfall regimes. Movement into the much drier grasslands around Ntusi and the arid shoreline of Lake Albert, therefore, represents a significant change. Although little economic evidence exists for these earlier communities, the uniformity of environments suggests a mixed-farming economy as a characteristic feature. The development of large-scale cattle production at Ntusi, the beginnings of salt production at Kibiro, and the settlement of new agricultural lands in western Uganda in the early 2nd millennium, all represent, therefore, considerable diversification and specialization in the regional economy. The power of the regional economy is perhaps best illustrated by the presence of glass trade beads by the 14th century. It is not known from which direction these items came, posing a challenge for archaeologists in neighboring regions. The beads are in small enough quantities to indicate that they were not the product of direct contacts with coastal trade, but their presence suggests that the regional economy was sufficiently vibrant to draw exclusive trade items from distant communities. The development of higher-risk economic activities, like cattle keeping and salt production, would have required the creation of new forms of physical storage and social support (such as clans) extending back into the long-settled lake and forest margins. These economic and social changes were a vital adjunct to political changes that ultimately led to the creation of the kingdoms.

This notion of increasingly sophisticated economies and gradual development of complex societies is consistent with new reconstructions

based on oral traditions and on comparative linguistics. In particular, D. Schoenbrun's work on comparative linguistics has highlighted new forms of power from the 8th century onward based on cattle and the control of land. The early stages of this process centered on personal power and charismatic leadership rather than on formal state structures. Archaeological work on the origins of the lacustrine states suggests that political complexity evolved, rather than devolved, during the 2nd millennium.

Archaeological research, therefore, has been largely preoccupied with the origins of the lacustrine states. The little work that has been done on the states that had matured by the latter part of the millennium suggest a valuable resource for general theories regarding the workings of complex societies. For instance, separate studies on different aspects of ironworking in Buhaya, Karagwe, Burundi, Rwanda, and Bunyoro have revealed a wealth of data on the physical and social contexts of iron production. Although much of this work has concentrated on smelting reconstructions in order to assist with the understanding of earlier episodes of ironworking, it is now being realized that these studies produce information of considerable interest for the study of the kingdoms themselves. Most obviously Schmidt's excavations of the 17th-century Kiamutwara capital of Rugamora Mahe (at Katuruka) demonstrated the importance of control over ritual and technology within the kingdoms of the interlacustrine region. At this site on the western edge of Lake Victoria, Schmidt demonstrated the juxtaposition of extensive iron-smelting evidence dating from the 3rd century B.C., a 17th-century royal enclosure, and modern oral traditions and spiritual power.

Unique archaeological work in Rwanda has augmented this interconnectedness of technology and ritual. Van Noten's excavations of the graves of Cyirima Rujugira and Kigeri Rwabugiri, both kings of Rwanda, provided an archaeological insight into the rituals of death. Due to the resurgence of the lacustrine states in the 1990s, such work is unlikely to be repeated in the near future. The graves contained large numbers of artifacts and provide a visible documentation of royal ritual to complement ethnographic information.

Rituals and artifacts involved in royal burials relate to the power of the king in life. Thus burials are important in ensuring the successful transition from king to restful spirit. Failure to follow these rituals results in the spirit wandering across the land causing havoc. Study of a 19th-century iron-producing community in the neighboring kingdom of Karagwe demonstrates the many different levels in which knowledge of iron smelting was interwoven within the state. There, smelters ultimately performed the burial ritual for the dead king.

Excavations have been conducted at two capitals of smaller states dominated by cattle keepers. Bweyore, a center of the Nkore kingdom, and Ryamurari, a capital of Mpororo, both occupied in the 17th and 18th centuries, consist of central areas surrounded by long, low banks of ash and dung. The central enclosures are, in turn, surrounded by smaller enclosures. Bone recovered in excavations indicates, not surprisingly, the predominance of young cattle at the sites. The results of excavations at Bweyore, in particular, and the recognition of structures suggest that research designs focused on the organization of complex societies would be very successful. Reconnaissance of other Nkore capitals demonstrated that they are archaeologically insignificant, neither being occupied for a long time, nor covering a large area. These are characteristics that could not be predicted from historical studies. Clearly, further work is required in these areas to explain the lack of material at the majority of sites and its abundance at sites like Bweyore.

As yet unstudied archaeologically are the capitals of the larger 19th-century kingdoms of Buganda, Bunyoro, and Rwanda. On the basis of extant historical accounts, these are known to have been very large (in terms of both size and population) yet were occupied for periods of less than ten years. They were very different from sites such as Ntusi, with its longevity of occupation, and Bigo, with its ditch network. This suggests that there were significant changes in protourban forms in quite recent times, changes that could be examined archaeologically.

Research into the lacustrine states has been considerably affected by the changing relation-

ship between archaeology and history. Archaeology is now providing a more coherent picture of the early transformations leading to the formation of states in the region. This success, however, merely serves to highlight the considerable gaps in archaeological input toward understanding the lacustrine states. Conspicuously absent from the archaeological reconstructions are the enigmatic earthwork sites, emphasizing the need to tackle these sites with focused, large-scale archaeological projects. Such a comprehensive program is currently being attempted by Robertshaw at the site of Munsu.

Archaeology also needs to recognize its own potential significance in contributing to more recent historical periods. Historians are increasingly aware of contradictions in historical sources and their significance for understanding the structure of the lacustrine states. Archaeologists can make a contribution to these debates, whether in general terms regarding settlement forms, or examining the roles of specific forms of production within the states. Most striking is the complete absence of any archaeological statement on any aspect of Buganda, the largest and, ultimately, the most complex of the kingdoms.

Another large gap, particularly by comparison with other regions of incipient state formation, is the absence of sensitive regional and sub-regional environmental data for the 2nd millennium A.D. The ecological consequences of large-scale cattle production and permanent agricultural settlement must have been considerable. They are certainly acute problems in the present. The absence of environmental data for the region and the lack of understanding of ecological dynamics will hinder the construction of more sophisticated explanations for the creation and elaboration of the lacustrine states over the last 1,000 years.

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Andrew Reid

SWAHILI AND THE COASTAL CITY-STATES

Anthropologists and historians use the term *Swahili coast* to refer to the East African coast and adjacent islands. The Swahili coast is a 20- to 200-kilometer-wide strip of the East African coast more than 3,000 kilometers long, extending from Mogadishu in Somalia to Cape Delgado in Mozambique. The area includes the Comoro and Lamu Archipelagos and the islands of Mombasa, Pemba, Zanzibar, Mafia, and Kirimba.

The Swahili coast is ecologically diverse and has a wide range of plant and animal resources. The offshore islands, including Lamu, Mombasa, Pemba, Zanzibar, and Mafia, formed out of fossil coral reef. Surrounded by deep harbors, these islands have freshwater and defensive advantages. The coral reefs and littorals bear rich fishing grounds. Inland from the reefs, the islands have poor soils but adequate freshwater supplies from the sand-dune formations close to the seashore.

On the mainland, the coastal swamps contain at least eight species of mangroves, important sources of timber and excellent fish-spawning habitats. The soils in the coastal strip are, in general, well watered and fertile. The lowland, wet forest along the coastal strip supports large animals, including cats, elephants, and rhinoceroses. The riverine woodlands in the Tana and Rufiji Deltas have green, well-watered forests and relatively fertile soils. West of the northern coastal littoral lies the dry rangeland acacia scrub. In contrast, the southern coastal hinterland is relatively well watered by the great Rufiji, Ruvuma, and Lukuledi Rivers.

On the northern coast between the Tana River and Mombasa are cliffs and shallow beaches stretching out to the reef. There are some creeks and countless small inlets rich in mangrove forests and fish. The Mrima coast, extending from the southern Kenya border to the vast delta of the Rufiji, rises in the northwest to the highlands of Shambaa, Pare, and Kilimanjaro. Southward lie the relatively fertile eastern plains of Tanzania.

The ecological diversity of the Swahili coast offered excellent resources for human adaptation. The creeks, lagoons, rivers, and the sea provided marine resources, including fish, coral reef, and mangroves, and allowed important communication networks to develop. Most creeks along the coast are navigable for several kilometers inland. The Lana River is navigable for longer distances, albeit only by canoes and small boats. The Rufiji is navigable for at least 30 kilometers inland and even farther by careful maneuvering. The sea and rivers offered an excellent communication system that could be used for developing and maintaining alliances, connections, and trade networks conducive for exploiting the coast, interior, and islands and indeed the Indian Ocean's vast resources. Soils on the islands are often sandy, heavily leached, and coralline. By contrast, the riverine woodlands and the floodplains of the major rivers flowing into the Indian Ocean, including the Juba, Tana, Ruvuma, Lukuledi, and Rufiji, contained fertile, well-watered soils and forests conducive to agriculture and hunting. Rice, millet, beans, peas, sesame, bananas, pumpkins, manioc, and yams were grown both for local consumption and exchange with island communities.

Fish, wild game, fowls, goats, camels, and domestic zebu cattle supplemented the diet.

In sum, the hot and humid climate of the Swahili coast, the fairly reliable rainfall, the abundant fish resources, the freshwater close to the sea along the beaches on both islands and mainland, the defensive advantages offered by the islands, the mangrove forests providing building timber, and the communication channels provided by the sea, creeks, and rivers, all combined to make the Swahili coast an attractive habitat for human settlement.

A very distinctive feature of this coast up to the early 20th century was remnants of ruined mansions, towns, and mosques built in coral rock. In 1956, Oxford Africanist historian and archaeologist Gervase Mathew described the Swahili coast as:

a compromise culture, always at least nominally Islamic, influenced from South Arabia, from Western India, and perhaps from Portugal but certainly deeply Africanized and probably integrally African. The ruined towns represent a group of small island states, oligarchic in their social structures, using currency of beads and rolls of cloth, and trading in ivory and slaves.

The first attempt to synthesize the archaeology of the Swahili coast was J. S. Kirkman's *Men and Monuments on the East African Coast*, published in 1964, in which the author treated all the ruined sites from Mogadishu to northern Madagascar as belonging to a single, continuous Muslim civilization of Arab origin. Recent studies by G. H. O. Abungu, J. de V. Allen, M. C. Horton, C. M. Kusimba, A. A. Mazrui, and J. B. Shariff, D. Nurse, and T. Spear, and R. Pouwels have shown that although a dynamic cultural, biological, and technical interaction existed among peoples living along the coast, in the interior, and throughout the wider Indian Ocean region, the resulting culture was African. Thus archaeologists no longer consider the identity of the Swahili coast inhabitants an issue. They have begun to evaluate the coast's archaeology as part of a world economic system delimited by the Indian Ocean.

Archaeological and ethnological research on the Swahili coast during the last 50 years shows

that interactions between East Africans and communities traversing the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf may predate the development of urban polities on the Swahili coast and littoral islands. Many of the food crops and domestic animals that are now staple foods in much of sub-Saharan Africa were first experimented with and domesticated either in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, or the Americas. Likewise, some food crops that now grow in India and Southeast Asia were first domesticated in Africa. The presence of Asian artifacts (including Islamic, Indian, and Chinese ceramics) at Swahili sites, the widespread use of *dhow*s (Arab lanteen-rigged boats), outriggers, and other sailing vessels in the Indian Ocean, the similarity in architectural styles both for settlement sites, and a common adherence to Islam among most of the coast's inhabitants suggest a common cultural base for coastal societies and a relatively close link with cultures inhabiting other parts of the Indian Ocean region. The inhabitants of Swahili towns are now known to have played a prominent role in the triangular mercantile trade linking India, the Persian Gulf, and East Africa. Early writings by Arab travelers that survive from the early 10th century, plus accounts by European authors from the 16th century, show the significance of long-distance maritime trade in the Indian Ocean and the role of East Africans in this trade.

Trade items from the East African coast consigned to foreign markets in India, the Middle East, and China included marine products (such as turtle shell and ambergris), terrestrial animal products (such as ivory, rhinoceros horns, and cat skins), and plant products (such as mangrove poles, incense, and timber). Turtle shells and ambergris were in high demand in India and China. Ivory, rhinoceros horns, and leopard skins were exported to India, China, and the Persian Gulf. African timber for building and aromatic products were needed in the Persian Gulf until relatively recently. Silk was manufactured in Mogadishu and Pate, red cotton was woven in Zanzibar, and the surplus exported. Iron production was an important industrial activity at Malindi and several other Swahili towns. Recent analytical study of iron artifacts from archaeological contexts on the Swahili coast have yielded

crucible steel, previously credited only to Indian and Sri Lankan smelters of the 10th century. One crucible sample was dated to the 7th century, making it the earliest reported crucible steel in the world by perhaps as much as 300 years.

Historical Chronology of the Archaeological Record

The traditional method of determining the chronology of sites along the Swahili coast has been the comparative analysis of imported ceramics from known kilns in China and the Middle East. Many archaeologists now recognize the importance of radiometric dates and have begun submitting charcoal samples more regularly. Four broad archaeological periods, each with several phases, are now widely recognized. These periods include: Period I (100 B.C. to A.D. 300), Period II (300 to 1000), Period III (1000 to 1500), and Period IV (1500 to 1950).

Period I (100 B.C. to A.D. 300)

Few archaeological sites are known in Period I. These include Misasa, Kwale, and Ras Hafun located in Tanzania, Kenya, and Somalia respectively. The sites have been linked with the communities of proto-Bantu-speakers whose descendants now inhabit much of eastern and southern Africa. Period I sites have been associated with low-fired pottery, often having beveled, fluted rims and shoulders and decorated with narrow incised and stamped bands. Much of this pottery is dated to the 4th century B.C. in the Great Lakes region of eastern Africa and in southern Africa. Several phases of Period I are known by regional variants including Chifumbaze and Mwituu.

Period II (300 to 1000)

Period II is divided into two phases, characterized by pottery with a general decorative motif of triangular, oblique, and double zigzag incisions. The early phase (300 to 600) is also called the *Azanian period*. The later phase (600 to 1000) is called the *Zanjian period*. Known Azanian sites included Amboni Tanga, Chibuene, Kiwangwa, Limbo, Masuguru, Misasa, Mpiji, and Unguja Ukuu located on the southern Swahili coast. Later

Period II sites are more widespread along the length of the coast and include Gezira, Irodo, Kaole, Kilwa, Mahilaka, Manda, Monapo, Pate, and Shanga.

Unlike Period I sites, which are primarily dominated by local finds, Period II sites have yielded nonlocal artifacts including Sassanian pottery, glass, and carnelian beads. The presence of these items suggests that the people living on the Swahili coast had contact with the Persian Gulf. About 40 percent of the decorative motifs exhibited in Period I are retained in Early Period II, indicating continuity of stylistic traditions. Late Period II pottery was largely, though not exclusively, composed of red, burnished, and bag-shaped cooking pots and bowls with thickened rims. The common decorative motifs were graphite finish and trellis-pattern incisions. Archaeologists refer to local pottery by various names including *Kitchenware*, *Wenje ware*, *Tana ware*, and *Dembeni ware*. F. A. Chami recently proposed a more neutral, inclusive designation, *triangular incised ware*, to replace the earlier names.

Locally produced iron farming tools and fish and animal bones found at Swahili sites during this period imply a village subsistence economy based largely on the exploitation of local resources with some participation in local and international trade. Communication between Africans, Middle Easterners, and Indians appears to have increased during Late Period II. Much of this communication was primarily motivated by long-distance maritime trade. For example, al Masudi in 915 stressed the importance of ivory and the quest for amber, leopard skins, turtle shells, and gold in the trade between the Zanj and the Persian Gulf. He argued that the Zanj regarded iron and copper an equal to gold and silver as an ornament. Commenting on the technical quality of iron produced in East Africa, al Idrisi (1100–1166) noted that it was an important trade item for southern Indian merchants, who confessed of its superior malleability to Indian iron.

Imported ceramics recovered from Period II sites include Partho Sassanian Islamic wares, tin glazed ware, Chinese Sue ware, Guangdong coastal green ware, Ding ware (800–1150), Gonxian (northern white ware), Indian purple

ware, and fragments of Egyptian glass. Domestic structures were characterized by square mud-on-wooden frames with coral foundations. Shell beads, iron and copper artifacts, and shell spoons were locally produced.

Period III (1000–1500)

Period III is largely associated with the emergence of autonomous polities, the Swahili city-states. Settlements founded earlier expanded in size from villages into towns and cities. Many others including Barawa, Jongowe, Kingany, Kisimayu, Lamu, Mafia, Mkumbuu, Mogadishu, Mtambwe Mkuu, and Vohemar, among others, were founded. A marked increase in the quantities of imported material culture occurred. The vast buildings with coral walls appeared, suggesting establishment of a more secure economic base, increasing sociopolitical diversity, and an economy capable of supporting professional craft specialists like masons. The enormous quantities of slag and pottery recovered from Period III excavations at Kilwa, Manda, Shanga, and Ungwana, for example, suggest increased production to satisfy both local and international demand. Some scholars have interpreted the increased volume of debris to have been the result of population expansion due to immigration by coastal, hinterland, and Indian Ocean peoples who sought to benefit from the booming economy of the emerging Swahili coast cosmopolitan cities of Kilwa, Manda, and Mogadishu.

During Period III, Islamic *sgraffiato* pottery, Chinese *qing bai*, and Cizhou ware (dating from 1200 or 1250 to 1400), and chlorite schist (probably from Madagascar) were introduced. Bronze mirrors, kohl sticks, glass beads, and rock crystal (a semiprecious stone from the interior of Kenya) were added to the women's wardrobes. Cooking ovens and crucibles of pottery are found for the first time. Spindle whorls made from local pottery suggest the beginning of weaving and textile production. The appearance of copper and silver coins bearing the name of Ali Ibn al Hasan toward the end of 12th century and the increased use of stone in domestic architecture over much of the Swahili coast have been interpreted by some archaeologists as evidence for immigration by Persians from Shiraz and later by Arabs to East Africa.

Many archaeological sites of the 13th century contain Friday congregation mosques. Because the archaeological sites in Period III have mosques, most built in coral stone, it is safe to conclude that many inhabitants were converted to Islam during this time. For example, when Ibn Batuta visited Kilwa in 1331, he found the town's inhabitants "were engaged in a holy war, for their country lies beside that of Pagan Zanj."

Expansion and extension of trade continued in the 14th century. The use of coral stone in domestic architecture became more standardized among the wealthy elite, who constituted the farmers and traders. Cut coral, called *pyrites*, was used for door jambs, mihrabs (a niche or chamber in a mosque indicating the direction of Mecca), and for decorative purposes in the elite houses to signify socioeconomic status. Moreover, paneled tombs like those at Songo Mnara (Tanzania) and Kingany (Madagascar) first appeared on the Swahili coast to augment the domed tombs that were first introduced at Kilwa in the 12th century.

Chinese celadons, especially Longquan and Tongan (dating to between 1250 and 1500) and Sawankhalok or Sisatchanalai jars (dating to between 1350 and 1450 or 1500), perhaps from Indonesia, dominated the imports. Trade in Islamic pottery and Chinese blue and white wares declined, but Indian beads and Egyptian glass continued to be imported in large volume. The large number of spindle whorls indicated thriving textile industries at Kilwa, Pate, and Mogadishu to supply the increased local and regional demand for clothing. Local copper mints at Kilwa and Mogadishu provide evidence of the dynamic economic climate.

During the 15th century, East Africans continued to maintain trade with cultures around the Persian Gulf, India, and Madagascar. Blue and white Chinese porcelain and Longquan, Tongan, and other varieties of celadon were still imported, having undercut the Islamic ceramics in the preceding century. However, the appearance in considerable quantities of Persian Islamic pottery with a flower motif may indicate renewed attempts by Persian potters to recapture the African market. Indian beads were consistently imported. Innovations in local pottery making included the portable stove and lamps.

Two contrasting processes occurred in Late Period III especially at Kilwa: a marked decline in the volume of locally produced artifacts and a structural expansion and elaboration of public and domestic architecture. The proportion of houses built in coral and lime mortar and dressed in plaster dramatically increased. The volume of imported ceramics, especially Chinese ceramics, also increased. In contrast, the volume of iron slag and the number of spindle whorls decreased and by 1600 almost stopped. It is puzzling that decrease in local production of iron and textiles does not correspond with the inferred level of consumption and demand for these items. In fact, decline in local production industries is accompanied by the highest level of structural expansion at Kilwa, in the form of more elegant and larger houses and public buildings, including mosques and palaces built of squared coral blocks. Decline in local craft enterprises may indicate a shift of elite attention from local crafts to other, perhaps more profitable, concerns provided by the economic boom of the 14th and 15th centuries.

Decline in ironworking and textile making marked Kilwa's transition from a local manufacturing center to an international cosmopolitan trading entrepot. The location of Kilwa on the southern Mgao coast and Kerimba coast placed Kilwa's elite in a strategic position to participate, manage, and control much of the African trade between southeastern Africans and others on the northern Swahili coast, Madagascar, the Comoro Islands, southern India, Indonesia, and the Persian Gulf states. Gold, copper, ivory, slaves, and iron from southern Africa came to Kilwa via Sofala. Cloth, glass beads, cowrie shells, shell beads, and other trade items found their way to the interior through Kilwa.

Stylistic changes in local pottery in Period III suggest the professionalization of the craft technologies as well as demographic changes in the cultural and ethnic makeup of coastal societies. As an international trading region, the Swahili coast was an emerging cosmopolitan center that attracted settlement by all communities who wished to benefit from the economic fortunes of the era. Perhaps the cultural diversity of the population pressured the potters to make pots and ves-

sels in response to consumers' tastes. Demand for pottery may have led to the development of full-time professional potters' guilds. Decline in iron production may be attributed to competition for iron bloom brought in possibly from the interior and from Indian Ocean towns having commercial connections with the Swahili coast.

Period IV (1500–1950)

During Period IV, the colonial period, East Africans lost their territory and self-determination to a series of foreign powers. These powers included the Portuguese (from 1500 to 1970), the Omani Arabs (from the 1770s to 1884), the British (from 1884 to 1963), and the Germans (from 1884 to 1918). When the Portuguese arrived in 1495, they found on the Swahili coast a thriving civilization that had developed a complex regional and international trading system. Despite this commercial success, the Swahili coast was not sufficiently united to confront and resist foreign invasion. The Swahili coast was neither homogeneous, nor had it any naval power over the sea. Although the locals often outnumbered the invaders, the foreigners had the technological and military edge of well-equipped and highly sophisticated gunboats and firepower. For example, the Portuguese triple mission of finding the sea route to India, controlling the spice trade, and stopping the Islamic expansion helped them conquer the less-united autonomous polities.

The archaeology of Period IV is not well understood, in part because little research has been conducted on the contact period. Many Swahili sites appear to have been in decline by the 16th century and to have been abandoned soon after. Others diminished to small towns and villages, while some, despite the colonial setback, continued to thrive. Many chronicles of the Swahili towns were written during the colonial period and thus relate events of Swahili great rule. Kirkman's 1974 study of the Portuguese fortress of Fort Jesus in Mombasa remains the most important study of Period IV. Large-scale immigration from the colonial powers to the Swahili coast occurred during these times. The archaeological record of the colonial period needs to be carefully studied in order to understand interactions during the last 500 years. The archaeological rendering of the

Period IV will supplement the largely historical and ethnographic sources currently available.

The Development of the Swahili Coast

The archaeological record indicates that the inhabitants of Period I coastal sites exploited local resources through fishing, farming, and ironworking to meet local needs and for trade with neighboring communities. These people probably developed a canoe and boat technology, which they used to sail along the coast, trade with each other, and colonize new areas. The ecological diversity of the Swahili coast favored the development of local exchange networks between communities to supplement locally unavailable resources. The sea and proper boats provided excellent means of communication.

Socioeconomic and technological transformations were already in motion before the onset of large-scale long-distance trade and also before Islam was fully adopted and adapted as a religion of the locals. By the end of the 1st millennium A.D., a cadre of leaders with greater access to important resources had emerged on the Swahili coast. Qualitative distinctions between those with more access and those with less access is indicated by a greater diversity in domestic structures in Period III than is seen in earlier periods. This marked the emergence of an elite class, which is often associated with complex polities.

Once Islam was adopted by many local inhabitants in Late Period II and Early Period III, it became a major integrative mechanism in Swahili culture. The small size of Period II mosques suggests that Islam was initially the religion of a minority. Once adopted and adapted to local conditions, Islam became a major factor in determining sociopolitical, economic, and ideological relationship between the Swahili coast and other regions.

The archaeology of the Swahili coast, though far from being exhaustively known, shows that the area reached its political floruit in the 14th century and began a slow but steady decline in the 15th century. This path was accelerated by colonization from the early 16th century up to

the 1600s. It was a coast composed of autonomous polities that were initially self-reliant in technology and food production but became more and more dependent upon external trade toward the end of Period II. Long-distance trade played a crucial role in the formation of an elite class in Period II. It is possible that overreliance on external trade affected the development of local industries. Consequently, the Swahili coast may have been unable to sustain itself without external trade. This dependence may have led to political instability, thus paving the way for the colonial period, which lasted for the next five centuries.

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Chapurukha M. Kusimba

ZAMBEZIAN STATES

The ancient Zimbabwe culture was characterized by sacred leadership, a well-defined political hierarchy, and a marked distinction between nobles and commoners. Senior families of different lineages across the cultural area formed a single bureaucratic upper class, concentrating wealth, prestige, and political power to themselves. By virtue of birth, these senior families formed a

high-status community with universally recognized rights, duties, and behaviors. This class distinction manifested itself, among other ways, in two settlement patterns: commoner settlements followed the principles of the central cattle pattern, while the elite Zimbabwe pattern characterized political centers.

The elite Zimbabwe pattern was the result of a worldview that included the concept of *sacred leadership*. A noble leader's power was based in part on the claim that his ancestors could intercede directly with God to ensure the fertility of the land and his people. As part of the spatial pattern, this sacred leader was ritually secluded behind a stone-walled palace.

Stone-walled palaces have been recorded over a large area of modern-day Zimbabwe, eastern Botswana, northern South Africa, and parts of Mozambique. Some of these sites were the headquarters of political organizations sufficiently large and complex to be called *states*.

Archaeologists now divide the Zimbabwe culture into three chronological periods named after important state capitals: Mapungubwe (from 1220 to 1290), Great Zimbabwe (from 1290 to 1450), and Khami (from 1450 to 1820). Three other states existed during the Khami period: the Changamire-Rozvi state based at Danangombe (or, more popularly, Dhlhlo Dhlhlo), the Mutapa state centered in the northeastern corner of Zimbabwe, and the Thovhela state based at Dzala in the Venda area.

Portuguese eyewitness accounts written during the Khami period make it clear that the Zimbabwe culture was the product of Shona-speaking people. These accounts, along with Shona and Venda oral histories and ethnographic data, help reconstruct the nature and extent of these states.

The Nature of Zambeian Political Hierarchies

In the Zimbabwe cultural area (and indeed throughout southern Africa), every settlement had a place, a court, where men met to discuss political matters and resolve disputes. This court was directly associated with the leader of the settlement, and the extent of this person's jurisdiction

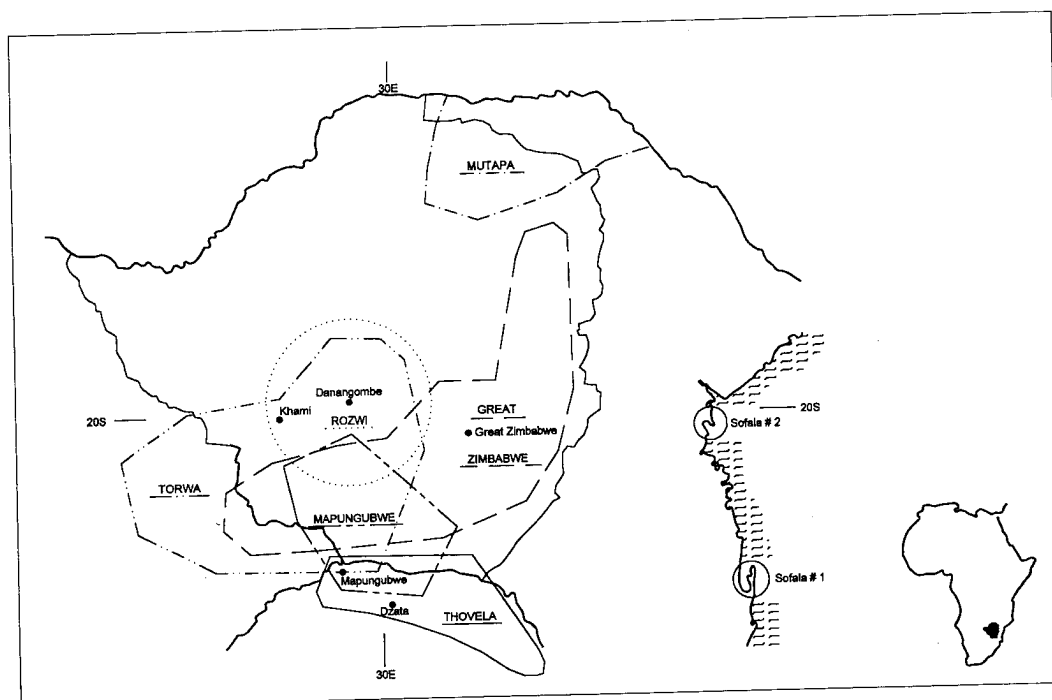


Fig. 67 *Zambezi states*

varied according to his rank and class. The head of a commoner homestead, for example, resolved disputes between members of his family, while disputes between members of separate homesteads went to the court of the ward headman, and then to the court of a chief. The chief was always a sacred leader and member of the ruling class. Each court level received cases from the level below, and the final court of appeal usually reserved for itself the right to administer the death penalty, ordeals of confession that could end in death, and all cases of national importance, such as witchcraft and treason. As part of the dynamics of political life, the status of a court may have been disputed or the system challenged in other ways. Nevertheless, the general principle of a hierarchy remains.

This court hierarchy goes hand in hand with a hierarchy of settlement size because of a systemic relation between political power and the unequal distribution of wealth. As a rule, the senior leader had the largest settlement because he was the most wealthy person in the nation. Within

the Zimbabwe culture, cattle were usually the exclusive property of the ruling class, and the leader, accumulating cattle through death dues, court fines, forfeits, tribute, raids, and the high bride price of his daughters, had more than anyone else.

Besides cattle, the Zimbabwe leaders participated in a long-distance trade network that brought glass beads, cloth, and glazed ceramics from locations around the Indian Ocean, as well as from Egypt and China, in return for local ivory, rhinoceros horn, and gold. Zimbabwe people used the wealth they accumulated from trade for bride price and other traditional transactions, and so the wealth augmented the traditional wealth in cattle. The control of this trade was a major dynamic in local politics and the underlying basis of class distinction. Zimbabwe leaders also participated in a regional trade network for such items as salt, tin, and copper.

Leaders used their cattle and trade wealth to establish allegiances (through loans and payments) and political alliances (through the ex-

change of cattle for wives). Besides formal marriage alliances, a leader received wives as tribute, and he usually had more wives than any of his subjects. One Venda chief was supposed to have had more than 100 wives, and one Mutapa king, more than 1,000.

Partly because of so many wives, the senior leader had more fields around his capital than anyone else. In addition, there were also a number of fields elsewhere, cultivated for him as another form of tribute. In fact, a nation wanted its leader to be wealthy so that he could function properly. As "father of the nation," the leader was expected to feed his people in time of famine, to support those who could not support themselves, to lend cattle to commoners, and to supply refreshment to visitors in the capital.

To help them function, leaders maintained a body of court officials, including guards, messengers, musicians, retainers, and councilors. Usually, the senior leader had more of these officials than his subordinates because the staff in the capital had more to do. The capital was more active than other centers, partly because it was both a district headquarters and a national center, and partly because more people lived in the leader's district than elsewhere. Thus, the capital needed to be large to accommodate all of the district and national activities as well as the relatively high number of family, officials, nobles, and commoners who lived there. In Zimbabwe states, this overall pattern was replicated at the next administrative level because these leaders were the next most wealthy and powerful people.

Because of the intertwined relationship of wealth and political power, the number of court levels in a group was related to the size of its population and territory. Small territories with low populations usually had only a few levels, while large territories with high populations had many.

Ethnographic examples drawn from Sotho-Tswana-speaking people illustrate the differences between levels (in this example Level 1 represents household heads, Level 2 represents ward headmen, Level 3 represents petty chiefs, Level 4 represents senior chiefs, and Level 5 represents paramount chiefs):

	Level-3 Hierarchy	Level-4 Hierarchy	Level-5 Hierarchy
Paramount chiefs	-	-	1
Senior chiefs	-	1	19
Petty chiefs	1	5	316
Ward headmen	4	133	1,006
Total population	1,800	39,000	500,000

In recent examples and in the Zimbabwe states, Level-5 capitals controlled areas ranging from 30,000 to 40,000 square kilometers. Some archaeologists only apply the term *state* to hierarchies of this size because at least three administrative levels existed above the common people: a king and his court at the head of the nation, followed by provincial governors and district chiefs.

In recent historic examples, Level-5 capitals were two to three times larger than capitals of Level-4 hierarchies, and these, in turn, were two to three times the size of Level-3 capitals. In actual numbers, Level-5 capitals had 5,000 to 7,000 people, Level-4 capitals had 1,000 to 2,000 people, and Level-3 capitals had from 300 to 600. The majority of people in all hierarchies lived in small settlements close to their agricultural lands.

To estimate the populations of the various Zimbabwe state capitals, archaeologists have used Great Zimbabwe as a datum for comparison because it has been intensively surveyed. First, they extrapolated the densities of huts found in excavations inside and outside the stone enclosures to comparable areas throughout the town. Second, they calculated the number of adults and then children by applying a 19th- and early 20th-century population pyramid to the hut count. Using this procedure, they reached the reasonable estimate of 18,000 people.

This total is three times the number of people in the capitals of historically known Level-5 leaders such as Chaka of the Zulu and Lobengula of the Zimbabwe Ndebele. The king at Great Zimbabwe, therefore, represented a sixth level of authority, and he probably controlled at least 90,000 to 120,000 square kilometers. This is the largest-known indigenous state ever to have existed in southern Africa.

The later capital at Khami, near present-day Bulawayo, was two-thirds the size of Great Zimbabwe. About 13,000 people lived there. Khami is the only other Level-6 capital on record. The remaining state capitals were all at the pinnacle of Level-5 hierarchies, all more-or-less the same size, and each housed about 5,000 people.

Military conquest was one means of increasing the size of a nation, and it must have been present from the beginning. In southern Africa, however, the ideology of sacred leadership was equally important. Ideological unity occurred in three different spheres. First, the ideology of sacred leadership unified ruling families into a single upper class. Second, it brought together the upper and lower classes into a larger social formation. And third, it formed the common basis of sociopolitical organization in different places at lower levels of the political hierarchy.

A brief history of the Zimbabwe culture will help place the importance of ideology, economy, and war into context.

The Origins of the Zambebian States

At one time, Great Zimbabwe was thought to have been the place of origin, but now we know that class distinction and sacred leadership—the cultural essence of all Zimbabwe states—evolved in the basin of the Shashi and Limpopo Rivers, where present-day Zimbabwe, Botswana, and South Africa meet. This evolution took place at a series of sites known as Schroda, Bambandyanalo (K2), and Mapungubwe.

A change in climate to warmer and wetter conditions than present today made it possible for Iron Age cattle-herding agriculturists to occupy the Shashi-Limpopo Basin at about A.D. 900. The first people to inhabit the area are known archaeologically as Zhizo, and their capital was located at Schroda. The Zhizo settlement hierarchy shows that Schroda was a Level-3 capital and housed between 300 and 500 people. The wealth of the capital was partly based on cattle, for it was organized according to the central cattle pattern, and partly on the east coast trade, for Schroda is the earliest Iron Age site in the interior of southern Africa to yield a sub-

stantial amount of locally made ivory objects and imported glass beads.

Even today, *mopane* woodland makes the basin prime elephant country. Furthermore, the rivers that drain the western gold reefs of Zimbabwe flow into the Shashi and Limpopo Rivers, and it would have been possible to pan for alluvial gold anywhere in this region. Significantly, a 10th-century Arab document suggests that gold was part of the trade.

Archaeologists in Mozambique have located coastal trading stations, such as Chibuene in the Bazaruto Archipelago, that probably supplied glass beads to Schroda. Stations such as Chibuene can be identified as the Sofala of early Arab documents.

According to the archaeological record, Schroda lost control of this trade at about 1000 to a new group of people, the Leopard's Kopje, who moved into the basin from the south. Among other things, this interpretation is based on the abrupt and massive introduction of Leopard's Kopje ceramics, the simultaneous abandonment of Schroda, and the disappearance of Zhizo ceramics throughout the basin and southwestern Zimbabwe. Furthermore, archaeologists found a threefold increase in Zhizo-derived ceramics (known as *Toutswe*) dating to this time farther west in Botswana, and the largest sites were all located on hilltops in defensive positions. Although the linkage is not straightforward, Leopard's Kopje can be identified with the ancestors of present-day Shona speakers.

The Leopard's Kopje people responsible for the takeover in the Shashi-Limpopo Basin established their capital at Bambandyanalo, a short distance from Schroda. Excavations at Bambandyanalo have produced considerably more ivory objects and glass beads than fieldwork at any other settlement at this time. Few trade goods reached the Toutswe area, and the Leopard's Kopje people had clearly taken over the interior portion of the coastal trade. An enormous midden next to the court and central cattle byre yielded most of these trade items. The size of this midden was due to the amount of activity in the court, and the trade items show that the leader's status had been enhanced by the trade wealth. The coastal trade injected far more wealth into the

basin than could be generated locally with cattle, and by the time of its abandonment, Bambandyanalo had reached Level-4 status.

What is more, the local control of this trade resulted in an unprecedented inequality that ultimately led to the evolution of a bureaucratic class.

The evolution of this bureaucratic class and its associated worldview led to the transformation of the central cattle pattern into the elite Zimbabwe pattern. When Bambandyanalo was abandoned in about 1220, the capital shifted to Mapungubwe, less than 1 kilometer away. The leader lived on the hilltop above the court, while the majority of his people lived down below. This is the first time in southern Africa that a leader was so physically separated from his followers. A short while later, the now-sacred leader lived behind a stone-walled palace, and the elite Zimbabwe pattern had evolved.

The famous gold burials on the hilltop show that gold had acquired an indigenous value: it was no longer simply a means to wealth but wealth itself. The continuing coastal trade must have also increased Mapungubwe's power and territorial sovereignty because, by about 1250, it had become the capital of a Level-5 bureaucracy. Mapungubwe was, therefore, the center of southern Africa's first state.

In about 1290, the climate throughout southern Africa was affected by the spread of the Little Ice Age, and it became colder and drier. In many areas, it was no longer possible to cultivate traditional grain crops such as sorghum and millet. As a result, Mapungubwe was abandoned, and the entire basin was depopulated, as was the Toutswe area farther west in Botswana. The state disintegrated, and Great Zimbabwe became Mapungubwe's economic, cultural, and political successor.

The particularly dry conditions at the beginning of the Little Ice Age help explain the rise of Great Zimbabwe. Located along the southeastern escarpment, Great Zimbabwe received whatever rain did fall, and it, therefore, had an ecological advantage over its competitors. With this advantage, Zimbabwe people were able to seize the opportunity presented by the demise of Mapungubwe. Many other Zimbabwe cultural settlements are located along this escarpment, both small

commoner villages and larger chiefly settlements, and grain-bin foundations are common. The settlements were concentrated in this zone because it was one of the few good areas at the time for subsistence agriculture.

Although the people at both Mapungubwe and Great Zimbabwe were probably ancestral Shona speakers, the ceramic evidence indicates that they belonged to related but separate populations. Consequently, the leaders at Great Zimbabwe could not have belonged to the same dynasty that controlled Mapungubwe.

Chronological and stratigraphical evidence shows that Zimbabwe leaders adopted the elite spatial pattern from Mapungubwe at the beginning of their own dramatic increase in wealth and importance. The elite spatial pattern did not evolve independently at Great Zimbabwe. These leaders therefore also adopted sacred leadership and class distinction. It is unclear what processes were involved in these adoptions—perhaps a few Mapungubwe royals moved to Great Zimbabwe. Whatever the case, convincing the common people to accept this new order must have posed a problem. To legitimize their authority, Zimbabwe royalty needed to emphasize the link between God and their ancestors. The famous Zimbabwe bird stones appear to have been one solution.

The soapstone birds are unique. None is known from any other capital. Seven were found in the ritual enclosure of the palace, and one in the lower valley. Each is about 30 centimeters long and perches on the end of a pillar 1 meter high. Although they present a general raptor theme, it is not possible to identify any specific species because the carvings combine human and bird attributes. For example, they all have masculine limbs, and most have four or five toes, or fingers, rather than talons. The role of raptors in relation to royal ancestors explains this combination of human and bird attributes.

Because eagles travel between heaven and earth, they are sometimes seen as messengers of God and mediators between God and man. Royal ancestors are also mediators, and the spirits of former kings are said to travel between earth and heaven as eagles do, interceding with God on behalf of the nation. The bird stones, then, were a sculptural metaphor for the intercessory

role of royal ancestors—the prime spiritual duty of sacred leadership.

The bird stones probably did not commemorate actual rulers at Great Zimbabwe, for the style suggest the stones in the palace had been carved at the same time, rather than sequentially. Instead of rulers at Great Zimbabwe, the bird stones probably represented leaders before the rise of Great Zimbabwe. A new sacred leader must glorify his ancestors, not himself.

This ancestral glorification would have been disseminated to the people through an institutionalized premarital school where Zimbabwe values, symbols, and traditions were inculcated to commoners and royals alike. Perhaps this glorification was disseminated further through actual attendance at royal rituals, for the Eastern Enclosure, where most of the bird stones stood, was notably larger than equivalent areas in later capitals.

This new need to legitimate sacred leadership also explains why more bird stones have not been found elsewhere. Great Zimbabwe was the capital of a state for about 150 years, three times longer than Mapungubwe's tenure as a capital. During this time, the state spread over an area three to six times larger than the Mapungubwe polity, and the ruling class expanded accordingly. As a result, virtually every ruling dynasty in the culture was already integrated into a single upper class by the mid-14th century, and there was no need to recreate and reestablish their link with God when Great Zimbabwe declined. Thus, early leaders at Great Zimbabwe used ideology to unify their followers and consolidate their power.

Great Zimbabwe was abandoned between about 1420 and 1450. In the past, scholars believed the abandonment was due to ecological degradation, but this explanation no longer suffices. Cultivated fields vulnerable to degradation would have been an important component in the neighborhood around Great Zimbabwe, but a system of tribute from distant areas provided the main support. These distant fields, as well as other resources, were an important component of the political hinterland of Great Zimbabwe.

A further reason to reject the degradation hypothesis involves the climate. Independent climatic data indicate that the effects of the Little Ice Age began to ameliorate at about 1420, and

southern Africa became warmer and wetter. It would have, therefore, been easier to feed the population at Great Zimbabwe, not more difficult. Had environmental degradation been the cause, Great Zimbabwe would have been abandoned much earlier.

It is more likely that political disruptions caused the hinterland of Great Zimbabwe to fragment. Some scholars associate the origins of the Mutapa state in the northeast with the abandonment of Great Zimbabwe. In this interpretation, the last king at Great Zimbabwe moved north to become the first Mutapa king. The archaeological evidence, however, indicates that the capital at Khami near Bulawayo in the southwest was the successor to Great Zimbabwe. Consequently, it is more likely that a provincial leader in the northeast used the political breakdown of Great Zimbabwe as an opportunity to become independent. Or, possibly, his own bid for independence was part of the political upheavals.

Whatever the case, the Mutapa state was the result of the northward spread of the Zimbabwe culture. Oral traditions suggest that the spread proceeded through a combination of conquest, political assimilation, and ideological unification.

As Zimbabwe people spread north, they moved into a non-Shona-speaking area occupied by the Musengezi and Ingombe Ilede cultures. Scholars have identified the Ingombe Ilede group as the VaMbara noted in 16th-century Portuguese documents. By the late 16th century, they had been incorporated into the Mutapa state, and their descendants today speak Khoikhoi, the northern dialect cluster of Shona. The former Musengezi area is also inside the modern Khoikhoi zone, and these people were also incorporated. Among other mechanisms, some of these non-Shona people would have joined the upper class. Furthermore, some traditional leaders would have been integrated into the new political hierarchy, ruling their own kinsmen on behalf of a Mutapa king. The precise modes of contact and assimilation, however, will remain unclear without further research. Events to the south are better known.

In the 15th century, several Zimbabwe groups moved south of the Limpopo River and established new chiefdoms. Today, this area is the traditional homeland of the Venda. According to

Venda oral traditions, various Level-4 chiefdoms are associated with Zimbabwe settlements in the Khami phase. These royal Zimbabwe settlements all have basal dates around 1450, suggesting the chiefdoms moved south when Great Zimbabwe collapsed.

With the collapse of Great Zimbabwe and fragmentation of the empire, a state arose at Khami about 300 kilometers away. It is not clear if the dynasty at Khami came from Great Zimbabwe or if a new dynasty had taken over. Counterparts to the Khami's rulers competitors in the Mutapa state referred to them as the *Torwa* (stranger or foreigner), and scholars have adopted this name.

The Torwa-Changamire state based at Khami was second in size only to Great Zimbabwe and it must have controlled an area two or three times the size of the Mutapa kingdom. Archaeological evidence indicates that they controlled copper and salt deposits around the Makarikari Pans to the west and that they traded for tin with Rooiberg, 500 kilometers to the south.

Both the Torwa-Changamire and Mutapa states were greatly affected by the European discovery of southern Africa. At the beginning of the 16th century, the Portuguese came into contact with the Mutapa state. The Portuguese pursued a policy of divide-and-rule, introduced guns, and changed the scope of warfare forever. This intervention ultimately proved counterproductive to trade. As civil wars raged, no one could mine gold yet the indigenous armies were paid in trade goods. As the economic and political bases of the Mutapa state were undermined, class distinction and sacred leadership diminished.

In 1644, the Portuguese participated in a civil war in the Khami state and helped to sack Khami. The winner probably ruled from a new capital, Njanja (or Regina), but the size of this capital suggests that the new leader's power was reduced to Level-4 status.

A new royal dynasty, the Rozvi, began a military campaign in the 1680s and 1690s under Changamire Dombolakonchingwango, and for a while, the Rozvi state controlled most of Zimbabwe. After this Changamire's death in 1696, his sons fought over the kingship. Normally in such succession disputes, the losers leave with their followers and establish a chieftainship some-

where else. In the case of the 1696 dispute, one son went to the Wanke area, near Victoria Falls, spreading the Zimbabwe culture into a new region. Settlement data suggest that this chieftainship never grew beyond Level-4 status.

Another son moved south across the Limpopo into Venda. Later known as the Singo, these former Rozvi conquered the area and formed a new Level-5 state based at Dzala. This state can be identified as the Thovhela kingdom mentioned in 1730 by the Dutch in Delagoa Bay. Shortly after this time, the center of trade shifted south from the Portuguese in central Mozambique to the English and Dutch in Delagoa Bay. This important shift coincided with the rise of the Pedi and northern Nguni and with civil war in Venda. At this time, the Thovhela state fragmented into three Level-4 chieftaincies, and these divisions remain today. Thus, the Thovhela state only lasted for about 50 years. It is possible that the trade shift undermined the economic base of the Thovhela kingdom while stimulating others.

The original winner of the Rozvi-Changamire succession dispute maintained his capital at Danangombe where it remained until the early 19th century. Largely independent of Portuguese interference, the state continued until it was defeated through warfare during the *difaqane* (the aftermath of the Zulu and Afrikaner expansion).

The successor to the Rozvi were the Zimbabwe Ndebele under first Mzilikazi and then Lobengula. Although these paramount chiefs ruled a Level-5 hierarchy, the society lacked class distinction and an institutionalized bureaucracy. Instead, it had a military organization like that of the Zulu from whom the Ndebele derived, and trade wealth was no longer fundamental. Their appearance brought an end to the Zimbabwe states.

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Thomas N. Huffman

PRECOLONIAL TOWNS OF ZAMBEZIA

The Zambezian states, over an extended period between the 10th and 19th centuries, were dominant economic and political authorities on the Zimbabwe Plateau. They included the Mapungubwe state in the Limpopo Valley, the Great Zimbabwe state in south-central Zimbabwe, the Mutapa state on the northern plateau margins, and the Torwa-Changamire state in southwestern Zimbabwe. The present evidence suggests that this complex of states occurred as a historically related cultural succession. They share a significant number of cultural traits and should be regarded as serial manifestations of an autochthonous (locally derived) sociopolitical tradition.

Over time, the geographical focus of authority transferred from polities on the plateau margins to ones located farther into the interior. This progression seems to have been dictated by a number of different factors, including environmental and security considerations, as well as the economic potential of the different regions. Each state was organized around a principal lineage associated with a major town. Each town had impressive monumental stone-built architecture, increased specialization in domestic crafts, long-distance trade connected with the east coast and the world beyond, a transfer of settlement loci from valley floors to terraced hillsides and hilltops, and an increasing importance of cattle in the economy.

This system lasted for nearly 1,000 years. The foundation of the Mapungubwe state in the 11th century laid the basis for the state centered at Great Zimbabwe from the 13th century onward to the Mutapa and Torwa-Changamire (Rozvi)

states of historic times. It may be suggested that these states flourished as participants in east coast trade. Although no satisfactory explanation may be posited for the demise of any individual state, observations of present-day land-use and demographic patterns suggest the difficulty of sustaining large populations without seriously upsetting the ecological balance.

The transfers of authority from region to region may be explainable, therefore, within a context of agricultural and ranging potential. This is most evident with respect to the succession of Great Zimbabwe from the Mapungubwe state. Similarly, by the late 15th century, northern Zimbabwe offered better agricultural and commercial opportunities than did areas farther south, while in the southwest, the area of the Torwa-Changamire state seems to have been more capable of supporting the viable pastoral economy necessary to underwriting social complexity.

The Mapungubwe State

The Mapungubwe state managed affairs in the middle Shashi-Limpopo Valley from its principal seat of authority on Mapungubwe Hill. Originating within an indigenous farming community, it soon extended its influence throughout southern Zimbabwe and the northern part of the former Transvaal province.

Bambandyanalo

Bambandyanalo is a massive midden of occupation debris and cattle dung, about 1 kilometer east of Mapungubwe Hill south of the Shashi-Limpopo confluence. It flourished during the early centuries of the 2nd millennium as the principal town in a settlement system, which included Schroda, 6 kilometers to the northeast, and numerous agricultural communities spread along the valley periphery. The productivity of these farms must have been constrained by the hot, dry conditions. Nevertheless, these people prospered, their herds grew, and the richness of the area's natural resources attracted long-distance trade.

Bambandyanalo's inhabitants were adept cattle herders and elephant hunters who worked extensively in ivory and bone. The ivory was carved into bangles and bracelets, and the bone

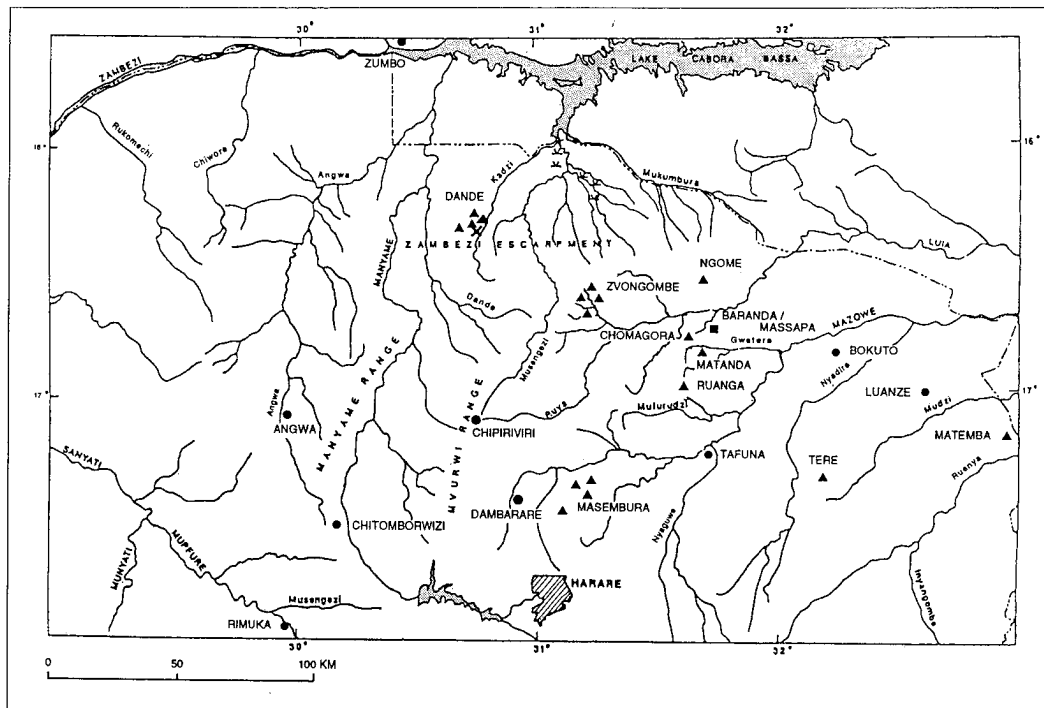


Fig. 68 Great Zimbabwe tradition sites in northern Zimbabwe

- ▲ Stone-walled enclosures
- Non-stone-walled field sites
- Sites connected with the Portuguese trade in the 16th and 17th centuries A.D.

was carved into points. These items and some gold from farther north were at first traded locally but later were exchanged for goods brought up the valley from coastal towns, such as Chibueni, in southern Mozambique. Trade goods began arriving in the Shashi-Limpopo Basin as early as the 9th century to be exchanged for ivory and animal skins, an activity mentioned by 10th-century Muslim travelers.

The people at Bambandyanalo lived with little apparent social distinction in houses plastered with sun-dried clay and featuring hardened earth floors. The layout of the town is still unclear, but as the political role of the settlement changed, the traditional cattle byre was moved from the center in order to make room for a more restricted men's assembly area. The primacy of Bambandyanalo was shortlived, however. The house floors and vast amounts of domestic refuse were

all accumulated in the period of a single generation. By the late 11th century, the elite moved to nearby Mapungubwe Hill.

Mapungubwe Hill

Mapungubwe is a high sandstone hill, 3 kilometers south of the Shashi-Limpopo confluence. It has steep sides topped by a settlement of substantial houses enclosed in rough stone walls. Below the hill to the southwest is an extensive settlement originally founded in the 11th century. By the 12th century, the summit was settled, as well.

Like Bambandyanalo, the town sent gold and ivory to the coastal towns of Mozambique and received glass beads, cowrie shells, copper, and iron in return. Mapungubwe produced pottery, iron, and other crafts, such as ivory and bone carving.

The volume of trade and indications of elite management increased under the rule at Mapun-

gubwe. But its time as the paramount power on the plateau was rapidly coming to an end. The town was abandoned in the 13th century, as political and economic power transferred to Great Zimbabwe.

Mapela

Mapela, a satellite of Mapungubwe, shared the florescence and the fate of its paramount. It is a stone-terraced bluff rising above the Shashi, 85 kilometers northwest of Mapungubwe. Its flat summit featured stone-walled enclosures arranged on platforms, similar to those at Mapungubwe. The sides of the hill were terraced. The elite lived on the hill top in well-made, polished, and decorated *dhaka* houses. Those lower down the social ladder lived at the base on the hill in simpler pole-and-*dhaka* huts.

Mapela obtained gold from Matabeleland and many trade items, such as ivory and glass beads, through a network of local exchanges and external trade managed by their kindred at Mapungubwe.

Finally, the prominence of the Shashi-Limpopo Basin declined as the center of trade and authority passed to the Save River and Great Zimbabwe.

The Great Zimbabwe State

Great Zimbabwe

Great Zimbabwe, the capital of the largest and most powerful of the Zambezian states, is 27 kilometers southeast of Masvingo on the eastern edge of plateau. It is surrounded by granite kopjes (small hills) and rock outcrops interspersed with level plains and stream valleys. Its setting is *middleveld*, the hilly country of the Zimbabwean Plateau. The area of moderate temperature receives rain throughout the year and possesses a thick vegetation cover. It has access to both *sourveld* and *sweetveld*, vegetation zones vital to livestock management. *Sweetveld* is nutritious throughout the year.

Great Zimbabwe is a large town covering more than 720 hectares. Its core settlement includes the hill to the north, the Great Enclosure to the south, and the valley to the east, as well as a large open area with no evidence of occupation.

The base of the hill is marked by a north-south perimeter wall. When the settlement grew large enough to include the valley and the Great Enclosure, a new western boundary of the town was marked by a second perimeter wall. Other settlements developed outside this to accommodate the growing population and expanding functions of the town. Population estimates vary from a little as 11,000 to as many as 18,000 people.

The town is built from granite quarried from nearby hills. The famous walls were erected without mortar on earthen or stone foundations. The dressed-stone walls, though unbonded, are abutted firmly against one another in a manner meant to minimize structural weakness and ensure stability. The walls are 4 meters thick in some cases, and some of them are battered with each succeeding course sloping inward to give additional stability.

In 1958, K. R. Robinson described four occupation periods of the town. Period I was a 1st-millennium early farming community, which predated building in stone. Period II marks the appearance of later farming communities of the Gumanye culture, whose people constructed pole-and-*dhaka* houses and participated in long-distance trade for glass beads. During Period III, people constructed substantial *dhaka*-plastered houses and the first stone walls on the hill. The peak of development occurred during Period IV when stone walls were extended beyond the center. The most elaborate walls, for example the Great Enclosure, were built around this time. Following investigations in the Great Enclosure, R. F. H. Summers proposed the existence of Period V, during which the quality of the architecture deteriorated and rough stone walls were erected.

The high point of Great Zimbabwe during Period III occurred between the 12th and early 13th century. Period IV extended into the next century and declined in the 15th century. The life of the town may be said to be mirrored in its monumental stone walls.

The stone walls at Great Zimbabwe were a political expression of the authority and prestige of the builders. The monumental stonework is a natural extension of the granite terrain, uniting man and nature. Here and there were upright

monoliths and turrets atop some of the highest walls on the hill and the Great Enclosure. They are thought to represent the power of the leaders as mediators between man and the elements. Inside the walls are well-made *dhaka* houses, with grass roofs supported by timber beams.

Great Zimbabwe was a considerable human achievement. It took nearly 200 years to build it. The town and its freestone walls symbolize a confident and powerful society—a hierarchical society based on elite control of production and an authority to command both a capable, reliable labor force and the wealth needed to maintain the allegiance of its labor reserves.

By the mid-15th century, control of the gold trade and the political confederacy built on it had slipped away from Great Zimbabwe. Other lineages elsewhere on the plateau extended their reach, and the Torwa-Changamire state at Khami and Dhlo-Dhlo and the Mutapa state in northern Zimbabwe grew in prominence. Each was the cultural and political heir to founders of the Great Zimbabwe state. Imports to Great Zimbabwe ceased during the 15th century, while they grew in abundance at Khami and Baranda. By the end of the century, Great Zimbabwe had little commercial significance. The Portuguese reports are rather vague on its status and never refer to it as

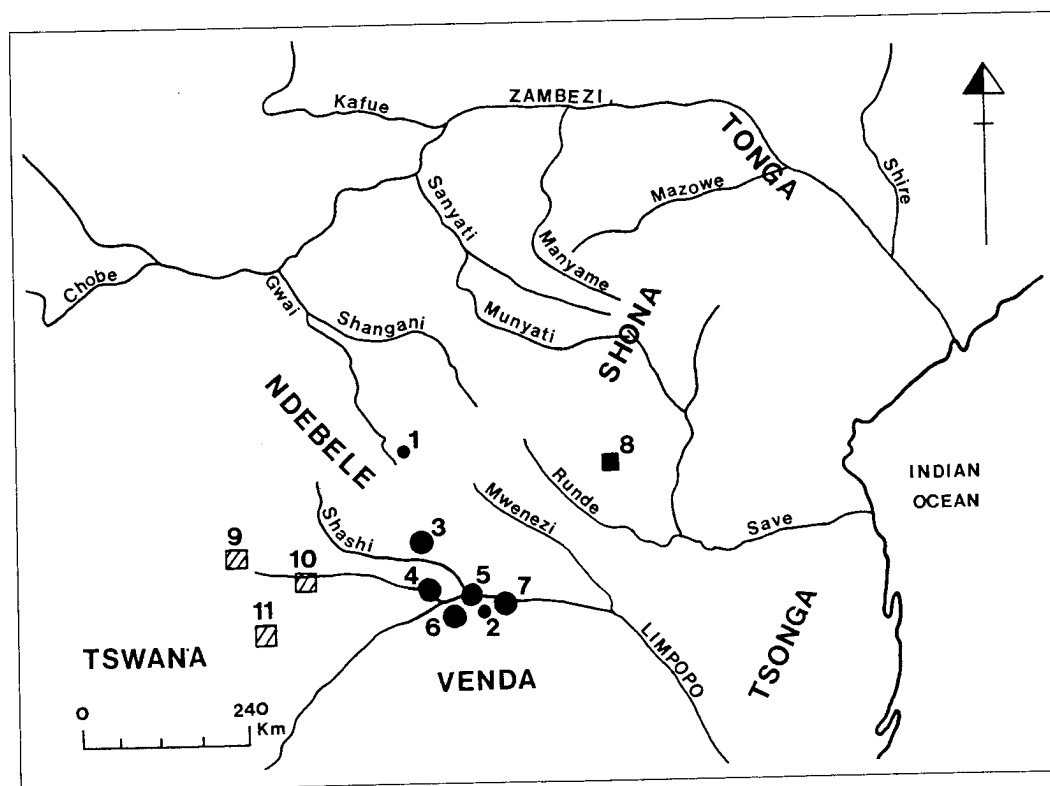


Fig. 69 Precolonial towns of Zambezia

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|----|----------------|
| • | Leopard's Kopje (A.D. 950–1200) | 6 | Little Muck |
| ● | Mapungubwe (1050–1200) | 7 | Skutwater |
| ■ | Great Zimbabwe (1250–1450) | 8 | Great Zimbabwe |
| ▨ | Toutswe tradition (700–1300) | 9 | Bosutswe |
| 1 | Leopard's Kopje | 10 | Toutswe |
| 2 | Bambandyanalo (K2) | 11 | Shoshong |
| 3 | Mapela | | |
| 4 | Mmamgwa | | |
| 5 | Mapungubwe | | |

a place of commercial interest. Though they were conscious of the place, the chroniclers imply an aura of bygone glories.

Mutapa State

In the late 15th century, as the Portuguese established their trading stations in the Zambezi Valley, the flow of goods to Great Zimbabwe dried up. As a result, authority passed to the chiefs living in northern Zimbabwe. This Mutapa state, well-documented in Portuguese chronicles and studied in detail by historians, dominated political and economic life into the 19th century.

Mount Fura

Mount Fura, a rock-spined peak 1,507 meters above sea level, is located in the Mount Darwin district of northern Zimbabwe. About 150 kilometers from Harare, Mount Fura is part of a mountainous zone stretching to the Mazowe River. On its slopes are stone-built structures, described by the Portuguese in the 17th century. Manuel e Sousa, dos Santos, and Diogo de Couto refer to them as "great stone buildings." Manuel e Sousa commented "in the mountain of Afur near Massapa are seen the ruins of stately buildings supposed to be palaces and castles." Muslim legends even associated the Queen of Sheba and the exploitation of the gold fields of the Mukaradzi River with the construction of these *zimbae* (a Portuguese transliteration of a Shona term for elite residences marked by stone-built enclosures).

In the 1980s, Thomas N. Huffman posited Mount Fura as a seat of the Mutapa state and claimed that the presence there of elite enclosures encircling a large palace, court, and a premarital building. His concept of the Mutapa state derived from the historical research of E. Axelson and D. P. Abraham, who identified loopholed stone structures as part of the Great Zimbabwe tradition.

The Portuguese were informed that these buildings were used by the Mutapa, and as a result, Mount Fura became linked with the capitals of the Mutapa state. These secondhand accounts created the impression that the Mutapa courts were built of rough walls—an idea taken up by 20th-century investigators, who posited that the Mutapa capitals were smaller than those of the

preceding Great Zimbabwe state. Recent research though has located building in the Great Zimbabwe style of walling and related unwallled sites at Mount Fura. The chronicler may have been referring to these, rather than the cruder architecture of the loopholed structures.

Investigators have recorded 19 of these later structures in the Mount Fura area. Their building style is coarse, and some of the enclosures have loopholes. They are nearly circular in plan but lack the radial walls typically found in enclosures of the Great Zimbabwe style. This suggests a somewhat different building canon from that associated with the earlier states on the plateau. The style of pottery does not compare with any known ceramic assemblage.

The sites have a distinctive linear plan imposed by the lay of the land, as do other enclosures located on nearby spurs or ridges of the mountain. There are no court, premarital building, or other elite enclosures to be found there. If there was a capital on the mountain during the 16th century, the Portuguese would have observed it, but they never mention Mount Fura as the capital of the Mutapa state. In fact, the Portuguese reports make no mention of mountain locations at all. Their only mention of stone walls on Mount Fura is from the early 17th century, and these walls were built in response to wars at that time.

The rugged nature of the mountain, and the difficult access to the settlements there, makes Mount Fura a poor choice as a capital.

Baranda

Baranda, in the Chesa farming area of Mount Darwin, about 165 kilometers northeast of Harare, has more graphite, burnished pottery in the Great Zimbabwe style and imported Chinese, Persian, and Iberian pottery and glass beads than any other 16th- to 17th-century town in northern Zimbabwe. The town is on a granite outcrop in a zone of whitish-gray sandy soils dominated by wooded savanna. There is only a thin grass cover. It is a small settlement with an area of nearly 1.8 square kilometers.

Baranda flourished between the early 16th and 17th centuries. It was well placed to exploit the gold fields in the Mukaradzi Valley to the south. As a result, it developed extensive commercial

contacts, which brought it locally made pottery and imported ceramics, glassware, glass beads, and copper from the northern copperbelts. Crucibles in the settlement debris attest to the processing of gold ore for exportation. Quantities of slag, as well as finished iron implements, at Baranda suggest a substantial companion ironworking industry.

The location of Baranda coincides with that of the 16th- to 18th-century trading station of Massapa, described by Portuguese as frequented by Swahili traders even before it became an official Portuguese possession after 1580. Joao dos Santos named it as one of three villages in Mukaranga where the Portuguese conducted trade with the local people and located it near Mount Fura. Diogo de Couto described it as a "very extensive and very rich" market, 50 leagues from Tete reached by traveling along the Mazowe River. Antonio Bocarro located it 4 leagues from the Mazowe River, 50 from Tete, and 10 from Bokuto and described it as the principal market in Mukaranga. De Couto reported that the richest gold mines were in Fura, an area near Massapa. A Portuguese official representative to the Mutapa stayed at Massapa to treat with Portuguese traders coming into the state.

In the early 17th century, Massapa is mentioned again in connection with civil strife in the Mutapa state. At some point, it was attacked by Marave, who used the mountain of Chizinga as a stronghold. In 1610, the Portuguese built a fort at Massapa, which was occupied by Mutapa Kapararidze while fighting the Portuguese in November 1628, though he was expelled soon after. About 1631, it is described as a town with a church. But it soon thereafter lost importance following civil war and lawlessness in the Mutapa state. In November 1693, a force led by Changamire Dombolakonchingwango destroyed it, and the Portuguese left for Sena on the Zambezi River. The town was reoccupied briefly in the 18th century.

Massapa was not founded by the Portuguese traders. All the evidence points to Baranda as a prosperous trade center in northern Zimbabwe long before the coming of Europeans. At Baranda, though, we have an opportunity to see the impact of Portuguese merchant capital on the

Mutapa state. The settlement reflects socioeconomic transformation, and this change represents an intermediate stage between the Great Zimbabwe and the Mahonje traditions. Baranda was a major center with a dual identity. It was part of the Afro-Portuguese trading network as well as a component of the traditional culture of the region.

Torwa-Changamire (Rozvi) State

At the same time that Great Zimbabwe was declining in importance and the Mutapa state came to dominate affairs along the Zambezi Valley, another state emerged in southwestern Zimbabwe. It developed in an area of grassland, which may be the Guruuswa region called Butua by the Portuguese in the 16th and 17th centuries. The Torwa-Changamire state, which emerged at the decline of Great Zimbabwe, was the peer of Mutapa. It was a highly organized society. Its people had migrated out of the Mutapa core area and settled beyond its borders. The Mupfuri-Munyati River Basin acted as a buffer zone.

Between 1490 and 1547, there was a rebellion in the Mutapa state. According to the Portuguese, it was caused by Torwa-Changamire from the southwest, people outside the chiefly lineages who felt shut out of deliberations of the court. Sometime late in the 15th century, the Torwa-Changamire dynasty broke away from Mutapa and established itself in Guruuswa. The rise of the Torwa-Changamire state led to the eminence of the town at Khami near Bulawayo. We know nothing more about the state until the mid-17th century when the capital was destroyed in a civil war. Further strife within the state occurred in the early 1640s, when a Torwa-Changamire ruler was bested in a power struggle. Forced to flee, he appealed to the Portuguese for help. A small Portuguese army, led by Sismundo Dias Bayao, was sent to the area. These events precipitated the decline of Khami and the loss of the nearby middle plateau lands west of the Bembezi River.

Following the fall of the Torwa-Changamire state in the early 17th century, the principal town in southwestern Zimbabwe, the center of Rozvi authority, was transferred eastward to Danangombe (known popularly as Dhlo Dhlo).

The Rozvi state emerged when the Torwa-Changamire dynasty was replaced by the Karanga under Changamire Dombolakonchingwango and his Rozvi followers. The Rozvi managed to expel the Portuguese from the Zimbabwe Plateau and establish their own state. There is little apparent difference between the Torwa and Changamire states, and much of what transpired in the 17th century was little more than a military reorganization of the society, in a desperate effort to ensure the survival of the state under a strong leader against the growing menace of Portuguese settlers and traders. Historians are not clear who the Rozvi were. What is clear is that after 1680 they ruled the land of the Torwa.

During the early years of this state, the Khami style of stone building was common in southwestern Zimbabwe. This is characterized by retaining walls built with well-shaped rectangular blocks supporting an elevated platform for circular houses. Characteristically, the stone walls were profusely decorated with checkered, herringbone, dentele, and other linear patterns. The Rozvi continued to build in the same style, indicative of a cultural continuity between the two states, and decorated walls retained their significance as displays of wealth and the command of labor.

Khami

Khami, the second largest town on the Zimbabwe Plateau after Great Zimbabwe, is located west of Bulawayo on the banks of the Khami River. It was the principal town of the Torwa-Changamire state. Although it was a vital town throughout the period covered by Portuguese documents, it was never mentioned in them.

The stone-built structures at Khami are a combination of the building canon inherited from Great Zimbabwe and local invention. The architecture includes the use of terraced-stone platforms, elaborately decorated stone retaining walls, houses erected on top of stone platforms or small hills, and roofed passages plastered with *dhaka*.

At its peak development, the town covered an area of over 40 hectares and accommodated about 7,000 people. The ruling lineages erected ten stone enclosures within the complex. The paramount lived in the largest of these. It was located

to the north of the main group and was entered through a secret passage, covered by a *dhaka*-plastered roof supported by timber beams. A hidden room was discovered in 1947 at the top of the passage. In it, the royal regalia was found in a basket, wrapped in cloth. The room also contained iron axes (one with a wooden handle covered in copper), iron spears, copper ingots, ivory carvings of lions and leopards from ceremonial staffs, a set of carved ivory divining dice, and drinking pots marked with red and black patterns.

There are between 80 and 100 zimbabwes (sites with elaborate stone-built architecture) of the Khami type in southwestern Zimbabwe. Many of these are small, with a single stone-faced platform on which the main house is built. Their number and distribution is an indication of the spread of Torwa-Changamire political influence.

Unsettled conditions in the mid-17th century led to the destruction of Khami, and the state center was moved to Danangombe.

Danangombe

Danangombe is located on a granite eminence commanding a wide view of the countryside, 120 kilometers northeast of Bulawayo. The surrounding country is wooded grassland well suited for cattle ranging.

The town spreads outward in a radius of nearly 200 meters. A perimeter wall marks its southern and southeastern limits. On open ground within the town are prominent middens and house mounds. In the vicinity are a number of satellite enclosures, indicative of the attraction of the town as a political and economic center.

Danangombe has a central building complex of two large rectangular rubble platforms, separated by a passage. One platform covers an area of 900 square meters, with a retaining wall of well-fitted stone blocks rising more than 6 meters in places. The other platform is even more impressive and covers an area of 2,800 square meters and rises to a height of 3 meters. The retaining walls are profusely decorated with checkered, cord, herringbone, and chevron patterns. Huffman estimates the population of the town to have been between 5,000 and 6,000 people.

A large open area is enclosed by low, rough, free-standing walls forming a subrectangular

enclosure. This enclosure is appended to the central complex which faces to the west. Immediately adjacent to the enclosure and the platform complex is an extensive midden, rising to the height of the platforms.

D. Randall-MacIver posited that Danangombe was a fortress commanding a high ground with strategic advantages. This idea is no longer tenable, since we now understand that the terraced platforms were linked to the most important people in town, while the lower areas belonged to the commoners. Differences in the value of grave offerings confirms this impression of unequal distribution of wealth.

Danangombe is correctly associated with the Changamire state. Though some small additions to the original stone walls were made, the erection of elaborate stone walls ceased sometime in the 18th century, a time of declining gold production, when the state was declining in influence.

Naletale

Naletale is a site of the Khami phase situated about 25 kilometers east of Danangombe in the Insiza District. It is on a kopje commanding a wide view of the countryside. A contemporary of Danangombe, Naletale used ironstone obtained from the nearby gold belt to erect the most elaborately decorated walls in Zimbabwe. The town has an elliptical, neatly coursed outer girdle wall with a maximum diameter of nearly 55 meters. It is decorated with chevron, herringbone, and checkered patterns in varying degrees of elaboration around the entire enclosure. The wall is interrupted to the west by a large circular platform on top of which are well-preserved *dhaka* remains.

The interior is arranged almost symmetrically. The most important part was a platform on the northern half, 2.5 meters high overlooking the top of the girding wall. Three other platforms fill the interior of the enclosure. The main platform, made of large stones layered successively with *dhaka* plaster and wooden posts inserted at regular intervals, is 28 meters across at the bottom and 18 meters at the top, on which sits a circular house. The house has a wall 40 centimeters thick, and some standing wall portions reach 1.7 meters. The floor plaster is 20 centimeters thick. An un-

derground chamber, possibly a latrine, 1.2 meters deep and 50 centimeters at the top, was sunk in the rubble foundation and carefully lined on its sides with stones. This house is divided into four outer rooms from a central room by radial walls.

Radial walls extend from the platform of the main house toward the girdle wall, dividing the town into several enclosures connected by passages in the south. There are no doorways on the northern side, however. The main house is approached only via the entrance to the west. It is here and in parts of the northern section that decoration is most elaborate.

On top of the outer perimeter are nine so-called battlements, on top of which were four monoliths more than 50 centimeters high. Two of these were still standing at the beginning of the 20th century. On the inside of the battlements, the facade wall descends in four tiers to the ground level. A staircase leads to the main house. Outside, the wall is two-tiered. The lower tier rises 1 meter from the ground level, and the other, receding 2.2 meters from it, rises 1.7 meters.

Another house connected to the main platform by a gangway and steps has a circular room 5 meters in diameter, with no partitions. Directly inside is a curb of *dhaka* plaster, built parallel to the outer wall, and a regular line of post holes, dug close to the edges of the floor. Two pits were filled with ivory fragments, remnants of large elephant tusks set into the floor.

Naletale was a center of some importance. Although it was a prominent part of the Torwa-Changamire state, its small size suggests that it served as a secondary center. However, it managed the affairs of a considerable territory with a number of nearby elite towns subservient to it.

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