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THE QUEST FOR AN AFRICAN ELDORADO: SOFALA, SOUTHERN ZAMBEZIA, AND THE PORTUGUESE, 1500-1865

By

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ABSTRACT

THE QUEST FOR AN AFRICAN ELDORADO:
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This dissertation details and analyzes the history of the Mozambican port of Sofala, in relationship to the Portuguese and to the peoples of southeast Africa, 1500-1865. Based upon European and African archival sources, interviews, published documents, and secondary works, the study emphasizes Luso-African perceptions and relations. The conclusions reached suggest that the wealth of Sofala was a gross exaggeration, and the settlement was preserved by Lisbon only because of its legendary and symbolic image. Significantly though, the myth of Sofala initially stimulated Portuguese trade and conquest throughout Southern Zambezia. The various Shona states, however, never fell under the firm grip of Lusitanian authority and, in fact, often utilized the Portuguese for their own political ends.

As early as the tenth century, Sofala acquired a fabulous reputation for its gold, thanks to imaginative Muslim writers. Some of the tales reached the court at

Lisbon and inspired royal efforts at overseas expansion. The Portuguese, however, erroneously believed that Sofala was a single entrepôt rather than an entire coastal region. As a result, in 1505, Lisbon established her presence at a port which she misjudged to be the one and only Sofala. The settlement soon proved to be of little commercial value. The Portuguese subsequently sought aggrandizement in the unknown interior where they ignorantly and impetuously became entangled in local politics. Luso-Shona compromise and conflict were features of the region's history until the arrival of Nguni peoples in the early nineteenth century. Their conquests altered the complexion of south-east Africa, and led to the abandonment of Sofala in 1865.

For 350 years of turmoil and disappointment, Lisbon retained the unremunerative Sofala and glorified its significance. The settlement had become a Portuguese symbol of an earlier halcyon age and the hope for a more radiant future. The legendary reputation of "Golden Sofala" remained intact, although the port itself was blighted. The present study seeks to dispel the myth and to provide an insight into Sofala's wider historical significance for Portugal and Southern Zambezia.

TO HARRY AND BELLE ELKISS

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Last, I offer my sincerest thanks to my friends and family. To my colleagues at the African Media Center, Diane Pflugrad and Robert Cancel, I am grateful for their good will and unselfish help. I am also deeply indebted to two unequaled friends, James P. Johnson and Charles McClellan, for their good natured encouragement during my "darkest days."

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.H.M.	Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique (Maputo)
A.H.U.	Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino (Lisbon)
Ajuda	Bilbioteca da Ajuda (Lisbon)
A.N.T.T.	Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (Lisbon)
APO	Archivo Português Oriental, Nova edição
B.N.M.	Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid
BSEM	Boletim da Sociedade de Estudos de Moçambique
BSGL	Boletim da Sociedade de Geographia de Lisboa
Documentos	Documentos sobre os Portugueses em Moçambique e na África Central/Documents on the Portuguese in Mozambique and Central Africa
DRI	Documentos Remetidos da India
F.U.P.	Filmoteca Ultramarina Portuguesa (Lisbon)
IJAHS	African Historical Studies/International Journal of African Historical Studies
JAH	Journal of African History
JRGS	Journal of the Royal Geographical Society
JSAIMM	Journal of the South African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy
LM	Livros das Monções
P.R.O.	Public Record Office (London)
R.G.S.	Royal Geographical Society (London)

RSEA	Records of South Eastern Africa
SAAB	South African Archaeological Bulletin

INTRODUCTION

In 1910, a disgruntled visitor to the Portuguese colony of Mozambique asserted, "the early history of this strange section of East Africa should not be, even if it could be, written . . . the endless tale of persistent, widespread and continuous butchery would not be good to read."[1] Although this bias has been challenged by a handful of recent monographs, as yet no comprehensive history of Mozambique exists.[2] The void is partly the result of both scholarly and political difficulties faced by the potential researcher. Archives in Lisbon, for example, have been a Kafkaesque nightmare to the historian. The numerous repositories are filled with crumbling documents which remain often uncatalogued or filed under a whimsical system not even understood by the various administrators. Fieldwork in Mozambique itself has been hampered by the difficulty in reaching any sites beyond the larger towns and the obstinacy of the former Portuguese regime in granting visas. Currently,

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[1] O. W. Barrett, "The Portuguese Colony of Mozambique," National Geographic, XXI (1910), 807.

[2] M. D. D. Newitt, "Towards a History of Modern Moçambique," Rhodesian History, V (1974), 33.

military activity, supported by the independent government at Maputo, has precluded research in certain regions.

Despite these obstacles, historical reconstruction is being undertaken. This dissertation attempts to contribute to the process by examining the history of Portugal's first Mozambican settlement, Sofala, and, more generally, by evaluating Lisbon's efforts at imperial expansion in Southern Zambezia[3] before the "scramble."

Only for the well documented sixteenth century has Sofala received more than passing attention.[4] The limited nature of these studies has left a series of questions unanswered. Little has been written on how the Portuguese came to view Sofala as a fabled city of gold or why they pertinaciously maintained the settlement in light of its insolvency. Too often, it has been glibly asserted that Sofala was the opulent entrepôt of the East African coast which handled vast quantities of bullion.[5] The evidence

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[3]Defined here as the region between the Zambezi and Limpopo Rivers, stretching from the coast westward to the present Botswana-Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) border.

[4]See, for example, Alexandre Lobato, A Expansão Portuguesa em Moçambique de 1498 a 1530, 3 vols. (Lisbon, 1954-1960); R. W. Dickinson, "Sofala and the Rivers of Cuama: Crusade and Commerce in South-East Africa, 1505-1595" (unpublished M. A. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1971); Eric Axelson, Portuguese in South-East Africa, 1488-1600 (Johannesburg, 1973).

[5]Most recently see Bailey Diffie and George Winius, Foundations of the Portuguese Empire, 1415-1580 (Minneapolis, 1977), 343; Philip Curtin, et al., African History (Boston, 1978), 143.

presented below suggests a revision of this perspective; Sofala was less significant to Lisbon for what it produced than for what it represented. In addition, a case can be made that subsequent Portuguese interest in southeast Africa was determined, at least partly, by the myth of Sofala.

Although this dissertation relies upon a corpus of Portuguese documentation, attention has been given to the relevant oral and archaeological data. This material allows an added insight into the African response to Lisbon's machinations. Europeans did not freely determine the course of events anywhere in Africa. In Southern Zambezia, sophisticated states existed long before Lusitania's arrival. It would be ludicrous to recount the travails of the Portuguese without examining the decisive part played by the local population. Lisbon's plans were thwarted less by the venality and ineptitude of her agents than by actions of Shona and, later, Nguni peoples.

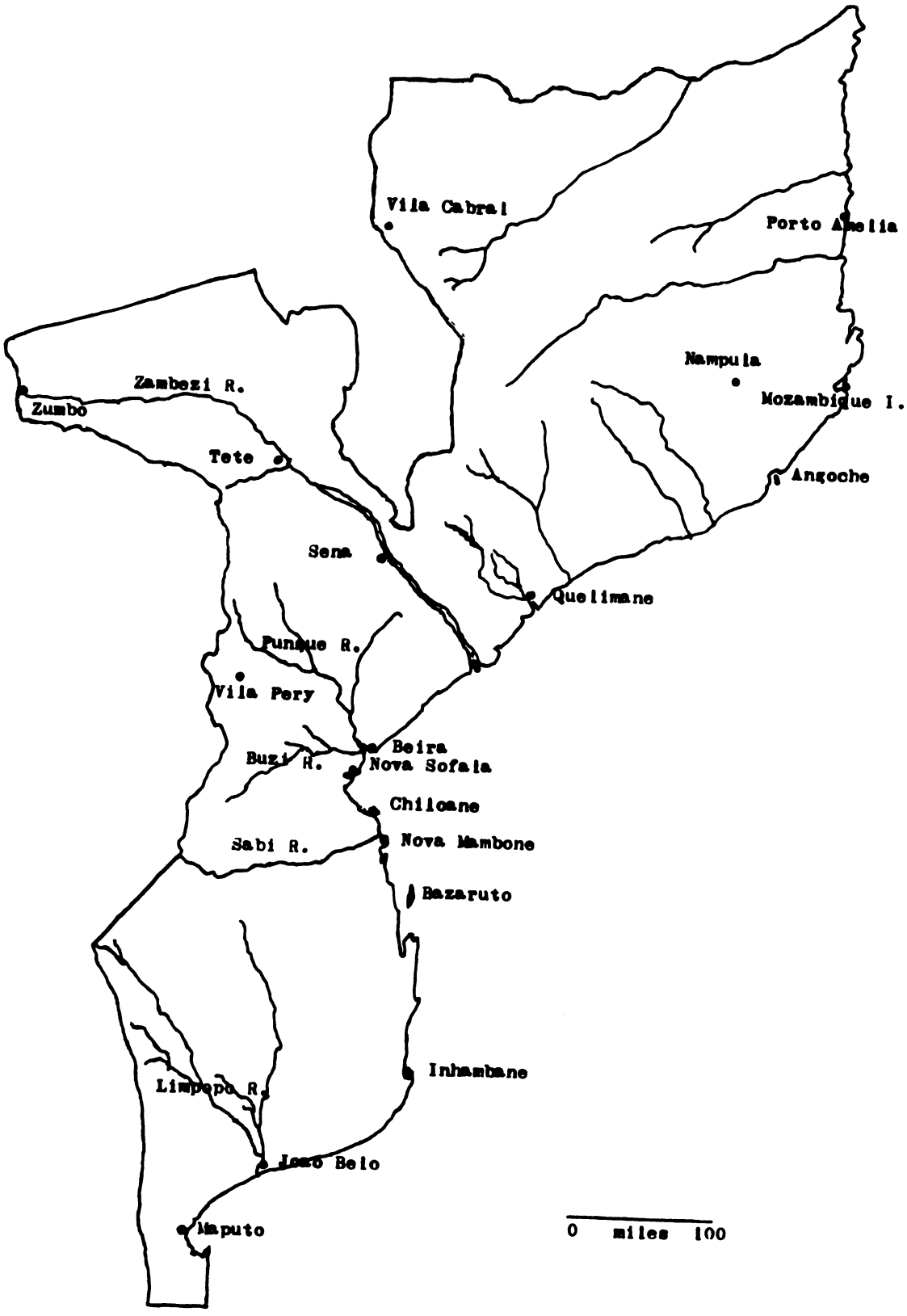

Figure 1. Modern Mozambique

CHAPTER I

THE ARABIC IMAGE OF SOFALA

Bilād as-Sufāla

The earliest references to Sofala appear in the commentaries of medieval Muslim geographers and seafarers. With rare exception, they regarded Sofala not as a single port, but as a lengthy and low-lying section of the East Africal littoral.[1] This perilous region, the Bīlad as-Sufāla, apparently marked the southern limit of the land of Zanj and adjoined the territory of the Wakwak.[2] According

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[1]The Arabic root safala literally means "low-lying" and in support of this etymology, al-Masudi stated that "whenever a mountain stretches for some distance below the sea, it is given . . . the name al-sofala"; Gabriel Ferrand, "Sofala," in The Encyclopedia of Islam, IV, ed. M. T. Houtsma, et al. (Leiden, 1934), 469-470; also see H. N. Chittick. "Observations on Pre-Portuguese Accounts of the East African Coast," in Sociétés et Compagnies de Commerce en Orient et dans l'Ocean Indien, ed. Michel Mollat (Paris, 1970), 131-132; R. W. Dickinson, "Angoche and the Sofala Shoal," Rhodesiana, 34 (1976), 28-37.

[2]The word Zanj has no precise meaning, and though it has been employed as a racial, cultural, and ethnic term, its most frequent usage has been in the geographical sense, to describe a large section of the East African coast. Wakwak also has no exact definition, but may have been a region south of Sofala inhabited by Khoisan-speaking peoples. See John Wansbrough, "Africa and the Arab Geographers," in Language and History in Africa, ed. David Dalby (London, 1970), 97-99; H. N. Chittick, "The Peopling of the East

to al-Masudi (?-956), Sofala was "the farthest goal of Muslim travel in Africa."[3] Beyond this zone, due to currents and winds, the sea was thought to be unnavigable. Those vessels which strayed beyond Sofala reportedly never returned.[4]

Although the location of the Bilād as-Sufāla cannot be precisely determined, it was regarded by early Arab and Persian mariners as a land of considerable wealth. Both al-Masudi and his near contemporary Buzurg Ibn Shahriyar agreed that Sofala was a source of gold and ivory.[5] By their time, Muslim merchants had established a vast commercial network linking the distant shores of the Indian Ocean.

Testimony to this flourishing trade is provided by the widespread distribution of similar Islamic ceramic

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African Coast," in East Africa and the Orient, eds. H. N. Chittick and Robert Rotberg (New York, 1975), 20-25; J. Spencer Trimingham, "The Arab Geographers and the East African Coast," in East Africa and the Orient, 116-122; E. E. Burke, "Some Aspects of Arab Contact with South East Africa," in Historians in Tropical Africa (Salisbury, 1962), 98; Raymond Mauny, "The Wakwak and the Indonesian Invasion in East Africa in 945 A.D.," Studia, 15 (1965), 7-16.

[3]al-Masudi quoted in S. M. Z. Alavi, Arab Geography in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries (Aligarh, 1965), 76-77.

[4]Edward Sachau, trans. and ed., Alberuni's India (Lahore, 1962), I, 362.

[5]Alavi, Arab Geography, 76-77; al-Masudi, "The Ivory Trade," in The East African Coast: Select Documents, ed. G. S. P. Freeman-Grenville (Oxford, 1962), 15-16; Buzurg Ibn Shahriyar, The Book of the Marvels of India, trans. Marcel Devic and Peter Quennell (London, 1928), 56, 152-153.

sherds from Zanj to the sub-continent. At Kilwa, for instance, the yellow and green sgraffiato earthenware uncovered is identical to the pottery found at the Pakistani ports of Tiz and Dabul.[6] Traders, of course, dispensed a variety of other "exotica" including spices, perfumes, and cloth which have not been so fortuitously preserved.

Muslim merchants also served as intermediaries for the commerce between Sofala and the orient.[7] Indians were the primary purchasers of Zanj ivory which they fashioned into ornaments and utilized in Hindu ceremonies.[8] In exchange for the elephant tusks, artisans, located mainly in Cambay, supplied the African coast with a steady stream of colored glass beads.[9] A plethora of these baubles has been discovered along the littoral and within the interior. Besides beads, it is likely that Indian manufacturers produced various textiles for the long-distance trade.

China, in turn, was also interested in obtaining Zanj ivory. Al-Masudi noted that fashionable Chinese

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[6]H. N. Chittick, "Kilwa: A Preliminary Report," Azania, I (1966), 10: idem, Kilwa: An Islamic Trading City on the East African Coast (Nairobi, 1974), II, 302-304, pl.II; James Kirkman, "The History of the Coast of East Africa up to 1700," in Prelude to East African History, ed. Merrick Posnansky (London, 1966), 113.

[7]Sachau, Alberuni's India, II, 141-142.

[8]al-Masudi, "Ivory Trade," 16; G. S. P. Freeman-Grenville, "Islam and Christianity in East Africa," African Ecclesiastical Review, II (1960), 197.

[9]See A. J. Arkell, "Cambay and the Bead Trade," Antiquity, X (1936), 295-305.

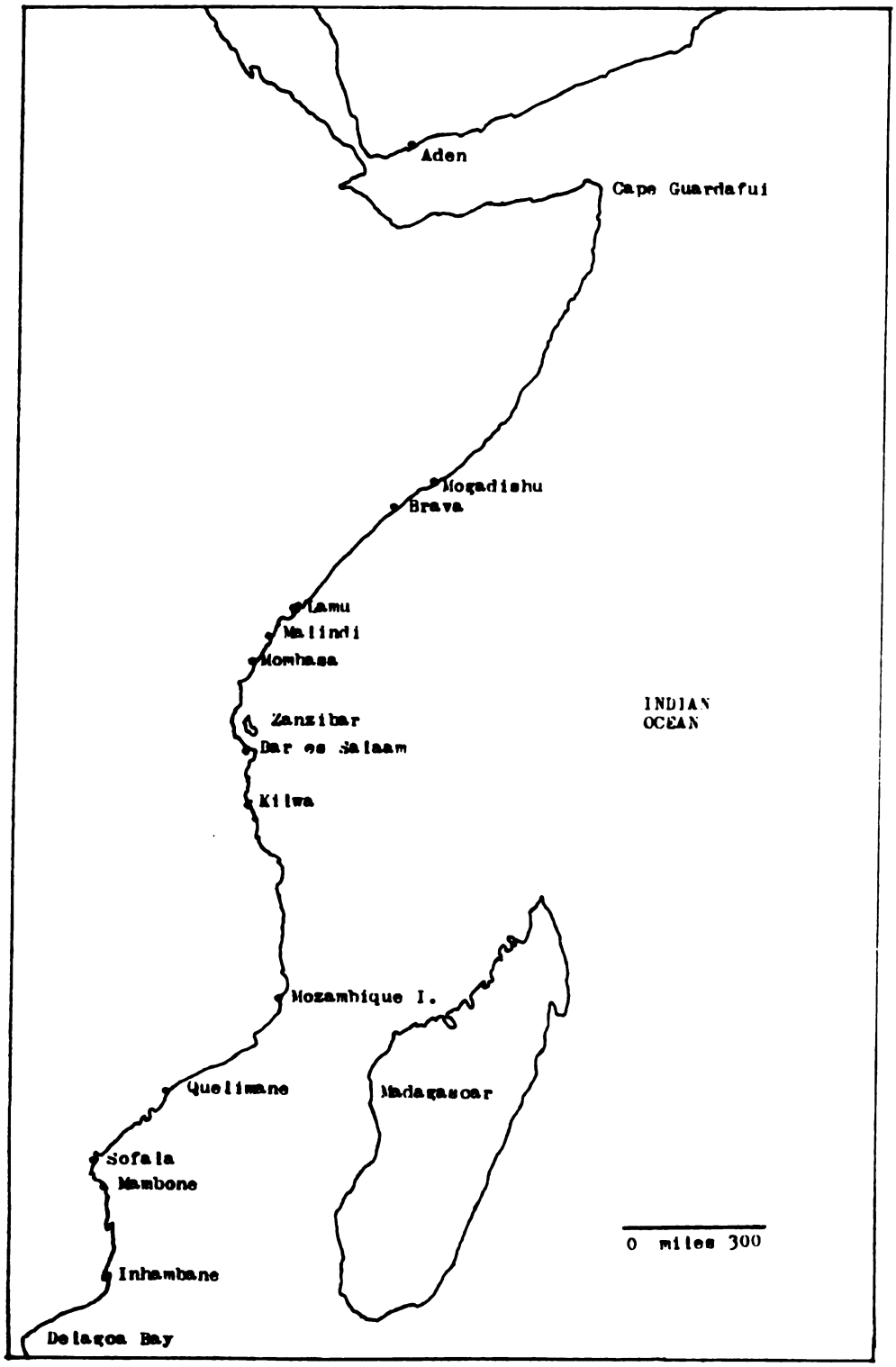

Figure 2. The East African Coast

officials dared not appear in public unless they were carried in ivory palanquins. The Arab writer further observed that ivory was burned in temples as a form of incense.[10] The rich finds of early Chinese porcelain along the East African coast confirm a commercial relationship, although it is unlikely, that before the fifteenth century, China actually initiated any voyages of her own.[11]

In order to exploit the Indian Ocean traffic, Muslim colonies were established at strategic points including the East African seaboard. Although the evidence is scanty, Islamic settlement along the coast probably began as early as the ninth and tenth centuries.[12] It has been claimed that during this period the port of Mogadishu

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[10] al-Masudi, "Ivory Trade," 16.

[11] See H. N. Chittick, "The Coast of East Africa," in The African Iron Age, ed. Peter Shinnie (Oxford, 1971), 119, 126; Teobaldo Filesi, China and Africa in the Middle Ages, trans. David Morrison (London, 1972); James Kirkman, "The Culture of the Kenya Coast in the Later Middle Ages," SAAB, XI (1956), 92, 94-95; G. S. P. Freeman-Greenville, "Chinese Porcelain in Tanganyika," Tanganyika Notes and Records, 41 (1955), 63-66.

[12] Chittick, "Peopling of the East African Coast," 37-38, 41; Randall Pouwels, "Tenth Century Settlement of the East African Coast: The Case for Qarmatian/Ismaᶜili Connections," Azania, IX (1974), 65-74. Professor Donald Abraham has informed me that Persian Muslims founded an entrepôt at or near contemporary Sofala between A.D. 825 and 846. He, however, did not reveal his sources; letter from D. P. Abraham, 25 August 1975.

initiated a thriving trade with Sofala for gold and ivory.[13] Unfortunately, there is no material evidence to document Mogadishu's early predominance.[14] In fact, it appears that Benadir ports, like Mogadishu, evolved only over centuries as they were settled by successive waves of Muslim traders, political refugees, and exiles. The colonists integrated themselves into the indigenous societies and then began a slow process of expansion southward which eventually brought Sofala under commercial domination.[15]

Although al-Idrisi (1100-1166) did not provide confirmation of the Sofala-Mogadishu connection, his writings suggested that by the twelfth century the Bilād as-Sufāla was well known to Muslim merchants. As resident intellectual at the Sicilian court of Roger II, al-Idrisi acquired enough information from commissioned informants, as well as traders and adventurers, to prepare a geographical treatise which contained a detailed description of the East

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[13]João de Barros, "Da Asia" (1552), in RSEA, ed. G. M. Theal, VI (London, 1900), 234, 273; Burke, "Arab Contact," 96.

[14]H. N. Chittick, "An Archaeological Reconnaissance of the Southern Somali Coast," Azania, IV (1969), 117. Two Persian inscriptions discovered date only to the thirteenth century, see Enrico Cerulli, Somalia, I (Rome, 1957), 2-3, 9.

[15]See H. N. Chittick, "The 'Shirazi' Colonization of East Africa," JAH, VI (1965), 275-294; B. G. Martin, "Arab Migration to East Africa in Medieval Times," IJAHS, VII (1974), 367-390; Pouwels, "Tenth Century Settlement," 65-74.

African coast.[16] Al-Idrisi's Sofala was composed of various centers, including Jantama and Dandama, which he characterized as collections of villages. In addition, he apparently mentioned other regional ports (such as, Sayuna, Bukha, and Daghouta) but, unfortunately, translations are incomplete and confused.[17] A major problem also remains as to the precise location of the sites and whether some of them concentrated on the commerce of particular goods. Export specialization would explain why al-Idrisi asserted that the inhabitants of Jantama and Dandama sold neither gold nor ivory, but only iron.[18] Ingots were then exported to India, where they were reworked into the wootz steel which gave fame to the Damascus sword.

Since iron is not found along the East African littoral, the location of the deposits is as uncertain as the exact whereabouts of the Bilād as-Sufāla. One intriguing possibility would be the Zambezi region of present

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[16] al-Idrisi, India and the Neighboring Territories, trans. and ed. S. M. Ahmad (Leiden, 1960), 12-18.

[17] Ibid., 23. Ahmad's recent translation, for example, is deficient in many respects. See also Burke, "Arab Contact," 100; Marcel Devic, Le Pays des Zendjs (Paris, 1883), 83; M. Guillain, Documents sur l'Histoire, la Géorgraphie et le Commerce de l'Afrique Orientale (Paris, 1856), I, 228; A. Matecka, "La Côte Orientale de l'Afrique au Moyen Âge d'après le Kitāb Ar-Rawd Al-Mi^{c}Tār de Al-Himyarī (XV^{e}S)," Folia Orientalia, IV (1962), 332.

[18] al-Idrisi, India and the Neighboring Territories, 23.

Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). Writing in the sixteenth century, the Portuguese friar João dos Santos indicated that "in these lands of Mocaranga, much iron is . . . found and of such good quality that some Portuguese took it from these parts to India for the manufacture of guns."[19] In 1881, a scientific expedition exploring the Zambezi located numerous iron mines and ore deposits in the Sena and Tete regions.[20] There is no reason to believe these resources could not have been exploited at a date compatible with the account of al-Idrisi.

Other sites located throughout Southern Zambezia, and even much farther south, may also have provided possible iron sources. Particularly notable is the region of Phalaborwa in the northeastern Transvaal. Investigation has indicated that extensive mining and smelting of both copper and iron were practiced here from the end of the first millennium A.D. Shafts were dug with great accuracy and depth, though sizeable magnetite pebbles could also be found on the surface.[21] Undoubtedly, there was a flourishing

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[19]João dos Santos, "Eastern Ethiopia" (1609), in RSEA, VII (London, 1901), 285.

[20]Paul Guyot, Voyage au Zambèse (Paris, 1895), 322-324. Recent investigation confirms that Rhodesia's "largest iron smelting deposits seem to be in the Zambezi valley and to the north of that river"; Roger Summers, Ancient Mining in Rhodesia (Salisbury, 1969), 212.

[21]N. J. van der Merwe and Robert Scully, "The Phalaborwa Story: Archaeological and Ethnographic Investigation

trade from this Transvaal site, since local needs cannot explain the intensive mining operations. While the nature of the early commerce is unknown, it should be noted that in more recent times the BaPhalaborwa people often traded their goods as far as the coastal towns of Delagoa Bay, Inhambane, and probably even Portuguese Sofala.[22]

It therefore seems quite possible that Jantama and Dandama could have functioned as Sofala's iron entrepôts, with ore supplies arriving from numerous different sources. To present this hypothesis is not to suggest that other commodities were insignificant during the twelfth century. According to several French scholars, al-Idrisi indicated that gold of excellent quality also existed in the region of Sofala.[23] A more thorough and precise translation of the original Arabic manuscript is required; the result may

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of a South African Iron Age Group," World Archaeology, III (1971), 178-196; Brian Fagan, "The Later Iron Age in South Africa," in African Societies in Southern Africa, ed. Leonard Thompson (London, 1969), 54, 66; C. E. More, "Some Observations on 'Ancient' Mining at Phalaborwa," JSAIMM, LXXIV (1974), 227-232.

[22]T. M. Evers, "Iron Age Trade in the Eastern Transvaal, South Africa," SAAB, XXIX (1974), 33-37. The historical link between the Transvaal and Sofala was also emphasized in my conversations with present residents of Nova Sofala; interviews with Paulo Gonçalves and Mzee Makandara, 16 May 1974, Nova Sofala, Mozambique.

[23]See for example, Devic, Pays des Zendjs, 173; Ferrand, "Sofala," 470; Guillain, Afrique Orientale, I, 226; al-Idrisi does not omit reference to the precious mineral as indicated in R. W. Dickinson's, "Sofala--Gateway to the Gold of Monomotapa," Rhodesiana, 19 (1968), 36.

well be that such items as gold and ivory were associated with specific localities.

Al-Idrisi's late contemporary, Yakut al-Rumi (1179-1229), makes no mention of Sofala's iron trade, but clearly notes its wealth in gold. Unlike al-Idrisi, Yakut was a Persian trader and probably acquired his knowledge from personal experience. It is unlikely that he actually visited Sofala in his travels, although oddly he did refer to it as "the last known town of the Zeng."[24] While this may indicate that one of the significant Sofalan ports, such as the gold entrepôt, could have appropriated the name of the entire region, Yakut may simply have been in error. Undeniably, later Arabic commentaries persistently referred to Sofala as a vast land.

Yakut's significance is not his contribution to the continued geographical confusion surrounding Sofala, but his brief discussion of how trade was conducted there. He explained that foreign merchants brought their wares to a prearranged Sofalan site where they left them and withdrew until the local people made an offer in gold placed nearby.[25] This description of the so-called silent barter is reminiscent of similar tales from other African regions and may be

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[24]Ferrand, "Sofāla," 470.

[25]Ibid.

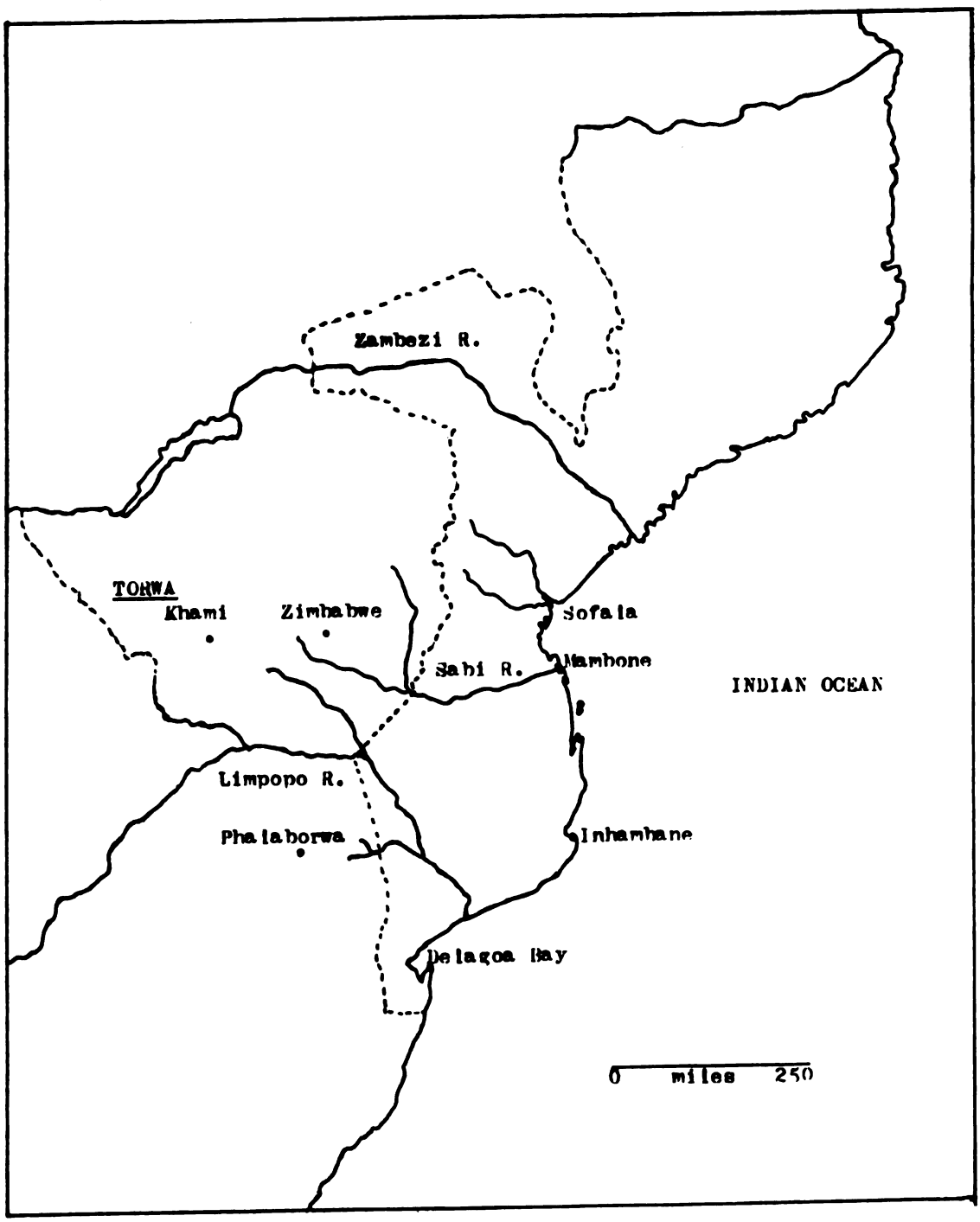

Figure 3. Southern Zambezia and Southeast Africa

of dubious historical validity.[26] It is possible though that in Yakut's time the Sofalan coast had not yet been colonized and trading patterns were still rudimentary. In fact, the Persian commentator while noting Mogadishu's commercial significance, does not link it to trade with Sofala.[27]

By the thirteenth century, Kilwa Kisiwani, under an expansionist dynasty, had emerged as the most important emporium on the East African coast. Part of her dominant position was related to control over the commerce of Sofala. Utilizing her more southerly location, Kilwa assumed loose hegemony over her neighbors. Although it is unlikely that the carrying trade with Sofala was completely monopolized, exorbitant tariffs were charged passing vessels. Three hundred years later, a Portuguese official noted the method of taxation which Kilwa employed. He pointed out that traders were required to pay in coin and in merchandise before departing for Sofala. On their return they were further assessed on their gold. Kilwa even had an arrangement with Mombasa to catch violators.[28] It is difficult to

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[26]See P. F. de Moraes Farias, "Silent Trade: Myth and Historical Evidence," History in Africa, I (1974), 9-24; Lars Sundström, The Exchange Economy of Pre-Colonial Tropical Africa (London, 1974), 22-30.

[27]Interview with E. E. Burke, 9 May 1974, Salisbury, Rhodesia; Chittick, "'Shirzai' Colonization," 275.

[28]Diogo de Alcaçova to King, 20 November 1506, in Documentos, I (Lisbon, 1962), 397-399.

discern how merchants could turn a sufficient profit if they were fleeced so mercilessly; undoubtedly, many engaged in contraband trade.

Kilwa's ascendancy over Sofala has led most commentators to believe two related points: Sofala was a specific town, and it was located at the site of the later Portuguese village. Neither observation is verified in the Arabic literature or by the scanty archaeological work. The source of this mischief, which now pervades all the historiography, is probably João de Barros's tongue-in-cheek tale relating Kilwa's discovery of Sofala. According to the sixteenth-century account:

> A man was fishing in a canoe outside the bar of Kilwa, near an island called Miza, and caught a fish on the hook of the line which he had cast into the sea; and feeling from the struggles of the fish that it was very large, in order not to lose it he unmoored his boat and let the fish go which way it would, and sometimes the fish dragged the boat and sometimes it was carried by the currents, which are very strong there, so when the fisherman wished to return to port he was so far from it that he could not find it. Finally after suffering hunger and thirst, he arrived more dead than alive at the port of Sofala where he found a ship from Mogadaxo which was trading there, in which he returned to Kilwa and related what had passed and what he had seen of the gold trade.[29]

From this report it would be logical to conclude that Sofala was a single entity. Barros further noted that once in the possession of the lucrative trade, the Muslim rulers of Kilwa always sent governors to Sofala, and that one of these officials was in charge when the Portuguese reached

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[29]Barros, "Da Asia," 273-274.

the port.[30] Barros's primary source, the Chronicle of the Kings of Kilwa, is no longer extant, although a summary of the work is contained in an anonymous Arabic history of Kilwa.[31] The latter version, however, includes none of the above material on Sofala. Therefore, interpretation rests solely upon the comments of a Portuguese historian who could not read Arabic and has been criticized for making statements that do not always correspond to the documentation.[32] Yet, modern scholars assume that Barros's Sofala was synonymous with the Portuguese one. It is more likely that the Portuguese historian had no reason to suspect that early Sofala may once have had a broader identity, and that it had not always existed at the same site.

This hypothesis, although unverified, has the virtue of not affronting the existing historical record. While archaeological investigation of Portuguese Sofala has been hampered by the sea's encroachment, the work undertaken thus far indicates an almost absolute lack of pre-fifteenth-

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[30] Ibid., 274.

[31] See "An Arabic History of Kilwa Kisiwani c. 1520," in Select Documents, 34-49.

[32] C. R. Boxer, "Three Historians of Portuguese Asia," Boletim do Instituto Português de Hong Kong, I (1948), 24. I. A Macgregor, "Some Aspects of Portuguese Historical Writing of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries on South East Asia," in Historians of South East Asia, ed. D. G. E. Hall (London, 1961), 182.

century artifacts and no evidence of early residence structures.[33] Of course, sites can be scoured by tides and more thorough examination is required. A case, however, can be made that contemporary Sofala was only the latest in a series of ports along a stretch of coast, with settlement taking place only shortly before the Portuguese conquest.[34]

In addition, Arabic sources dating from Kilwa's ascendancy, with only one possible exception, continued the earlier tradition of enumerating the various towns of the extensive Bilād as-Sufāla. The Arab-Spanish geographer Ibn Said (c. 1214-c. 1286) cited Sofala's capital as Sayuna and its most southerly entrepôt as Daghouta.[35] He added that Sayuna's inhabitants were non-Muslims who were ruled by a local king.[36] Since the Moorish writer made no mention of

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[33]Interview with R. W. Dickinson, 3 May 1974, Salisbury, Rhodesia; R. W. Dickinson, "Archaeological Investigations at Sofala, Moçambique, 9-18 June 1969" (unpublished report, Salisbury, 1969); idem, "Archaeological Investigations at Sofala, Moçambique, 29 May-11 June 1970" (unpublished report, Salisbury, 1970); idem, "The Archaeology of the Sofala Coast," SAAB, XXX (1975), 90.

[34]Idem, "Excavations at Sofala," Rhodesia Science News, IV (1970), 423.

[35]In an attempt to identify these ports it has been argued that the river upon which Sayuna was located was the Zambezi, while Daghouta was the ancient site of Inhambane; see W. G. L. Randles, South East Africa and the Empire of Monomotapa on Selected Printed Maps of the 16th Century (Lisbon, 1958), 11-14; Lereno Barradas, "Inhambane de Outrora," Monumenta, VI (1970), 21-22.

[36]Ferrand, "Sofāla," 470.

Kilwa's domination of this port, either his sources were dated or Sayuna was not an important enough emporium to require resident agents. Perhaps Kilwa controlled the transit trade to its south, but maintained officials at only the Sufālat adh-Dhahab: the Sofala of Gold. Abu al-Fida (1273-1331), the Arab prince who dabbled in geography and history, revealed that after passing Sofala's capital, Seruna (Sayuna), one arrived at Leirana. He noted, "Ibn Fathuma, who visited the town, said that it was a seaport where ships put in and whence they set out. The inhabitants profess Islam."[37] Possibly, Leirana was Kilwa's gold entrepôt; the information is simply too inadequate to determine the answer.

While the Muslim writers continued to point out other products found at Sofala, it was gold that preoccupied their interests from the thirteenth century onwards. Ibn al-Wardi (1290-1349) claimed that "Golden Sofala" possessed remarkable quantities of the precious metal: "one of the wonders of the land of Sofala is that there are found under the soil, nuggets of gold in great numbers."[38] Like his predecessors, he did not suggest any relationship between this region and Kilwa in his study. Only the knowledgeable Arab traveler Ibn Battuta (1304-1377) implied such a

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[37]Abu al-Fida, "Malindi, Mombasa, and Sofala," in Select Documents, 23.

[38]Ibn al-Wardi quoted in Ferrand, "Sofāla," 471.

connection. Ibn Battuta, visited Kilwa in c. 1331 and "was told by a merchant that the city of Sufāla lies at a distance of half a month's journey from Kūlwa . . . and from Yufi gold dust is brought to Sufāla."[39] Yufi was apparently a site in the interior, perhaps Great Zimbabwe, where gold was collected and dispatched to the coast.[40] The Sofalan town Ibn Battuta cited must have been within Kilwa's political grasp. Unfortunately, the Arab adventurer did not travel further south and provided no unequivocal confirmation.[41]

For Arab geographers, even during the late fourteenth century, Sofala remained a vague toponym designating a large region.[42] This stretch of coast contained many entrepôts, some of which gained fame for supplying gold, ivory, and other commodities to distant lands. The fortunes of these Sofalan collection centers probably varied in

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[39]H. A. R. Gibb, trans. and ed., The Travels of Ibn Battūta, II (Cambridge, 1962), 380.

[40]T. N. Huffman, "The Rise and Fall of Zimbabwe," JAH, XIII (1972), 362; also see below Chapter III.

[41]One frustrated scholar has seriously asked whether he actually even traveled south of Mogadishu; J. Spencer Trimingham, "Notes on Arabic Sources of Information on East Africa" in East Africa and the Orient, 275. See also H. N. Chittick, "Ibn Battuta and East Africa," Journal de la Société des Africanistes, XXXVIII (1968), 239-241; Burke, "Arab Contact," 101.

[42]See, for example, Ibn Khaldun, The Muqaddimah, trans. Franz Rosenthal (London, 1958), I, 99, 123.

relation to political and economic developments, as well as to geological alterations of the coast. While the literary and archaeological evidence is too fragmentary to identify the sites with assurance, a strong case can be made for the existence of one such port just south of the eventual Portuguese settlement.

Mambone: A Pre-Portuguese Sofala

It appears likely that Mambone, a port at the mouth of the Sabi (Save) River, once served as an emporium for foreign merchants and a gateway to the interior. Before the arrival of the Portuguese, Mambone may even have been the Bilād as-Sufāla's principal gold entrepôt. This hypothesis is based partly upon the recent Portuguese translation of an ambiguous Arabic nautical poem, the al-Sofālīya by Ahmed Ibn Madjid (c. 1432-1500).[43] The author was largely concerned with providing a seafaring guide to the perilous Sofalan coast, where "if you commit an error the world will forget your existence."[44] The unique contribution, however,

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[43]T. A. Chumovsky, ed., Três Roteiros Desconhecidos de Ahmad Ibn-Madjid, Port. Trans. M. Malkiel-Jimounsky (Lisbon, 1960), 17-56. For criticism of the editing and translation of the Leningrad Ms. see G. R. Tibbetts, Arab Navigation in the Indian Ocean before the Coming of the Portuguese (London, 1971), 430; Lereno Barradas, "O Sul de Moçambique no Roteiro de Sofala do Piloto Ahmad Ibn-Madjid," Revista da Universidade de Coimbra, XXII (1970), 159; idem, "Sobre o Roteiro de Sofala do Piloto Arabe Hamad Ibn-Madjid," Studia, 32 (1971), 14-15.

[44]Chumovsky, Três Roteiros, 43.

of the al-Sofāliya was Ibn Madjid's insertion of previously unmentioned toponyms and titles. Specifically, he noted that to the south of Sofala was Mulbaīunī (or Malanbūnī), a place inhabited by Muslims, but frequented by "infidels" ruled by a great and wealthy king called Munā-batūr.[45] It is conceivable that this statement was a veiled reference to trade between Mambone and the rich Southern Zambezian gold area of Torwa (Butua) controlled by a Shona chief. A 1512 Portuguese report noted that the ruler of Torwa "has much gold which is mined in his land along the fresh water rivers, and he is as great as the king of Menomotapa and is always at war with him."[46] Although the exact location of Torwa is not known, it was probably an extensive geographical area encompassing the goldfields of southwestern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe).[47]

Another intriguing verse in the al-Sofālīya provides some hint of a commercial route from coast to interior.

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[45] Ibid., 43-44; There is no concurrence of opinion on the identification of Mulbaīunī/Malanbūnī, but G. R. Tibbetts, who has examined the original manuscript, states that the site is "almost certainly Mambone"; Tibbetts, Arab Navigation, 431. The question of the Munā-batūr's identity is also controversial. It may be a Shona praise title, see W. G. L. Randles, "La Fondation de l'Empire du Monomotapa," Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines, XIV (1974), 222.

[46] Gaspar Veloso to King, c. 1512, in Documentos, III (Lisbon, 1964), 185.

[47] Peter Garlake identifies Torwa with the region of Guruhuswa to the west of Great Zimbabwe; P. S. Garlake, Great Zimbabwe (London, 1973), 16, 171, 177.

According to Ibn Madjid, south of Sofala, there was a route to the rich mines which was utilized for more than two months each year,[48] possibly along the meandering Sabi-Lundi River. In the late nineteenth century a series of resolute English explorers attempted to venture from the Sabi estuary inland. Without exception, they notified the Royal Geographical Society that the river was largely unnavigable due to its narrow banks, shallow depth, and occasionally raging currents.[49] More recently, the French geographer François Balsan dismissed the Sabi-Lundi waterway as a possible ancient commercial highway for similar reasons.[50] Yet, this negative evidence is open to challenge. A thorough survey of the Sabi and Lundi Rivers concluded that for, perhaps, "three or four months" during the year craft of good size could travel about 250 miles from the coast.[51]

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[48]Chumovsky, Três Roteiros, 47.

[49]R. G. S., anon. letter, 10 October 1880, in the Journal Mss. of C. E. Foot and T. L. Phipson-Wybrants, 1881; R. G. S., A. Vaughan Williams to the secretary of the R. G. S., 3 October 1892, in the Papers of A. Vaughan Williams, 1892; St. Vincent Erskine, "Journey to Umzila's, South-East Africa in 1871-1872." JRGS, XLV (1875), 36, 94; idem, "Third and Fourth Journeys in Gaza, or Southern Mozambique, 1873-1874 and 1874 to 1875," JRGS, XLVII (1878), 28-29, 35-36.

[50]François Balsan, "La Route de l'Or du Matabele-land," BSEM, XXXII (1963), 99, 103; idem, "Ancient Gold Routes of the Monomotapa Kingdom," Geographical Journal, CXXVI (1970), 240, 244-246.

[51]H. de Laessoe, "The Lundi and Sabi Rivers," Proceedings of the Rhodesia Scientific Association, VI (1906), 128.

Ibn Madjid's gold route, it should be reiterated, had a similar limited period for travel.

More convincing data for the Sabi-Lundi theory are provided by geology and archaeology. Sufficient attention has not been given to tectonic movements that have affected not only the Mozambique coast, but also the course and depth of rivers. Ports and islands have sunk into the ocean, while waterways have become shallow and unnavigable or even silted up. The rate of this process appears to have been very rapid. In addition, rainfall patterns have also significantly altered over the centuries.[52] These points make it possible to suggest that the Sabi-Lundi network might have provided a more effective link to the hinterland than is presently the case. Interestingly, a tributary of this river system, the Mtilikwe, passes near the ruins of the earliest notable gold collection center, Great Zimbabwe. It is not known, however, if this stream was ever utilized for commerce or, indeed, whether it has undergone various changes.[53]

While it would be encouraging to be able to delineate a chain of ancient ruins following the river network,

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[52]Summers, Ancient Mining in Rhodesia, 206-208.

[53]Balsan, "Route de l'Or," 99; H. von Sicard, "The Ancient Sabi-Zimbabwe Trade Route," NADA, XL (1963), 12.

no such pattern has been discovered.[54] Roger Summers has investigated the region near the confluence of the Sabi and Lundi which, according to legend, was once the site of a man-made dock. He has speculated that this anchorage may have served trading vessels which could not proceed upstream because of rapids.[55] There are also oral traditions which indicate that the Sabi River was regularly utilized as a trade route with emporia located at its mouth and along its course.[56] Corroboration for these tales must await the work of archaeologists.

Although the Portuguese never apparently utilized the Sabi-Lundi network (which was probably defunct by the date of their arrival), they were well aware of the existence of Mambone.[57] The European governors regarded the port as insignificant commercially, especially in comparison with their stronghold, Sofala. Duarte Barbosa (?- c. 1521),

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[54]Interview with T. N. Huffman, 8 May 1974, Salisbury, Rhodesia; O. R. De Oliviera, Amuralhados da Cultura Zimbáuè-Monomotapa de Manica e Sofala (Lourenço Marques, 1963), 19.

[55]Summers, Ancient Mining in Rhodesia, 156-157, 206-208.

[56]Most of the material was collected by J. Blake-Thompson and exists largely in unpublished manuscripts and extracts, see J. Blake-Thompson, "The Oriental Ancestry of the Aulaya-'Nyungwe," South African Journal of Science, XXVII (1939), 464-467. His material is quoted in Summers, Ancient Mining in Rhodesia, 206-208; von Sicard, "Sabi-Zimbabwe Trade Route," 8-10.

[57]The earliest reference I have found to Mambone dates from 1511, see António de Saldanha to Troilos Brandão, 27 April 1511, in Documentos, III, 71.

a minor official, noted simply that in the Hucicas Pequenas (Sabi Delta) there were "Moorish" trading settlements.[58] Pearls were apparently the only valuable commodity obtained at Mambone, and they were of questionable quality.[59] It seems that such items as ivory and gold were no longer shipped there, but to more northern ports such as Sofala, Angoche, and Quelimane, and, later, to the southern town of Inhambane. The Portuguese, however, did establish a small garrison post at Mambone, as indicated on numerous seventeenth century maps.[60]

Even from this brief description, it is clear that Mambone hardly impressed the Portuguese as anything more than a typical coastal village. Yet, persistent traditions of the port's more glorious past appeared in the commentaries of some of the local clergy. Padre António Gomes, in a 1648 document, indicated that to the south of Sofala were ruins of the Queen of Sheba's factory. They were (supposedly) located on a river preserving her name, the Rio da Saba.[61] In 1723, the prelate of Mozambique reported to the

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[58]M. L. Dames, trans. and ed., The Book of Duarte Barbosa (c. 1518), I (London, 1918), 5.

[59]Eric Axelson, Portuguese in South-East Africa, 1600-1700 (Johannesburg, 1960), 186.

[60]See Armando Cortesão and A. Teixeira da Mota, Portugaliae Monumenta Cartographica (Lisbon, 1960), V, pls. 560 B, 578 F.

[61]Eric Axelson, ed., Viagem que fez o Padre Ant.º Gomes, da Comp.ª de Jesus, ao Imperio de de (sic) Manomotapa;

learned Academia Real de História de Lisboa that a local tradition described ships at the mouth of the Sabi that traveled upstream to procure gold.[62] The vicar of Sofala, Friar Francisco de Santa Catarina, was even more specific in his 1744 account. He noted that near Sofala "in a land that is called Mambone one can still see the palace where the Queen of Sheba was, and in the walls of the said edifice one can discern some letters that cannot be understood because they appear to be Moorish." None of the Muslims he asked, however, could interpret the inscription either.[63] If any credence can be given to these semi-legendary accounts, there is some support for the view that in a previous period Mambone was a rich entrepôt servicing foreign merchants who voyaged up the Sabi. Recent oral traditions, in fact, suggest that at one time Mambone was called Sofala.[64]

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e assistencia que fez nas ditas terras de Alg'us annos (Lisbon, 1959), 44.

[62]Frei Manuel de S. Thomas cited in H. von Sicard, "Pero de Covilhã's 'Relaction,' 1587," Studia, 29 (1970), 167.

[63]Frei Francisco de Santa Catarina's original report is contained in C. R. Boxer's, "A Dominican Account of Zambezia in 1744," BSEM, XXIX (1960), 1-14, note esp. 9-10. Professor Boxer interprets the curious account of Mambone as a confused reference to Zimbabwe, see 14 n. 14. I cannot concur since the document is not geographically muddled and the author, resident at Sofala, would have been familiar with Mambone.

[64]Summers, Ancient Mining in Rhodesia, 205.

Further confirmation of this theory through archaeological work has been hampered largely because of the difficult terrain. Mambone is situated in a region where the coastal shelf is rapidly sinking.[65] Little serious investigation has been conducted until recently. Professor Balsan, who only briefly visited sites in the Sabi Delta, indicated that he found no traces of Arab occupation in the pre-Portuguese period.[66] The late Lereno Barradas, however, carefully scrutinized sites in the Mambone area and pointed out a number of possible ancient anchorages. He based his claims, not only upon observation, but also on examination of old maps and interviews with local residents. The lack of any observable ruins, he noted, was probably the result of "strong fluvial corrosion that must have destroyed everything."[67] The destructive force of both the Sabi River and the Indian Ocean, in conjunction with devastating cyclones and tectonic movement, could have eliminated any vestiges of an early emporium.

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[65]This aspect can be most readily observed at Sofala, where the ruins of the old Portuguese fort are under water and only the outline of the ravaged site can be seen at low tide. When I visited Sofala on 17 May 1974, the remnants of the fortaleza were visible for only one hour, making archaeological work almost impossible.

[66]Balsan, "Ancient Gold Routes," 245-246.

[67]Lereno Barradas, "A Primitiva Mambone e Suas Imediações," Monumenta, III (1967), 24.

Recently, R. W. Dickinson began the first excavations at Mambone. He initiated his work to the southwest of the present village at a site mentioned by tradition and where pottery previously had been discovered.[68] Dickinson found evidence of an old "Swahili" trading community including, pottery, spindle whorls, and trade beads. As yet, he has not been able to assign any definite dates to the material, though nothing appears to precede the second half of the fifteenth century.[69] Further research is required to clarify this picture, but there appears sufficient reason to believe that Mambone's history is closely aligned to any consideration of pre-Portuguese Sofala.

It seems reasonable, at this point, to present a speculative picture of how early commercial agents may have utilized Mambone and the Sabi-Lundi network. Beginning no earlier than A.D. 1000, traders began to penetrate the Southern Zambezian plateau in order to obtain the gold mined there.[70] "Not until gold mining in Rhodesia was reasonably

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[68] Ibid., 27; R. W. Dickinson, "Archaeological Investigations at Nova Mambone, Moçambique," Monumenta, VII (1971), 24-26; Balsan, "Ancient Gold Routes," 245.

[69] Dickinson, "Investigations at Nova Mambone," 24-26; interview with R. W. Dickinson, 3 May 1974, Salisbury, Rhodesia.

[70] There is no evidence that gold was ever mined in Rhodesia before this date; T. N. Huffman, "Ancient Mining and Zimbabwe," JSAIMM, LXXIV (1974), 240; also see below Chapter III.

well organized from within would it have been profitable for Arabs to establish a permanent settlement in the Sofala region. Both gold-mining and the coastal trade probably developed together."[71] There are numerous rivers which may have served itinerant merchants, but the Sabi-Lundi waterway with its various tributaries reached one of the richest gold production areas and near the center of a powerful Shona state, Great Zimbabwe. Navigating from the coast, according to the season, traders could have departed from their vessels near the Sabi-Lundi confluence and proceeded by foot. Land routes alongside the rivers may have been followed where the waterways themselves were impassable.[72]

The commerce from the coast may generally have been conducted by African middlemen and Swahili traders although, conceivably, foreign craft did venture up the Sabi. Gold, admittedly, was the major stimulus to this enterprise, although other important commodities such as copper and ivory were also sought in exchange for beads, printed cloth,

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[71]T. N. Huffman, "Cloth from the Iron Age in Rhodesia," Arnoldia, V (1971), 16.

[72]Carl Peters, The Eldorado of the Ancients (London, 1902), 348; Balsan, "Ancient Gold Routes," 243-245; Hugh Tracey, "Vias Comerciais Árabes de Sofala ao Monomotapa antes do Estabelecimento dos Portugueses," Moçambique, 26 (1941), 33-37; Gervase Mathew, "Some Reflections on African Trade Routes," Research Review, III (1967), 69-70; Christoph von Oidtman, "O Porto de Sofala e o Problema de Zimbauè," BSEM, XXVII (1958), 5-19.

and ceramics.[73] It is also likely, as hinted by Ibn Madjid, that African people made use of the Sabi-Lundi system to bring their goods directly to Mambone. Almadyas or log canoes long have been vehicles of transport, at least on the lower Sabi.[74] In either case, commercial traffic must have followed a strict seasonal calendar, not only to maximize river travel, but also to take full advantage of the monsoon patterns which determined the movement of cargo ships along the littoral and across the Indian Ocean.[75]

As simply a collection center and landing site for foreign mariners Mambone may never have possessed impressive buildings but, instead, warehouses and storage facilities. A small resident community would have sufficed to provide the necessary amenities and organize the commerce. The lack of conclusive evidence for Mambone's past may be related to both its transit function as well as the vagaries of nature. Wealth percolated from the interior and filtered through the port to international centers.

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[73]Barradas, "Primitiva Mambone," 28. It is relevant to note that the lower Sabi was navigated to collect ivory in the Danda region until nineteenth-century invasions disrupted this traffic; Sebastião Xavier Botelho, Memoria Estatistica sobre os Dominios Portuguezes na Africa Oriental, I (Lisbon, 1835), 173-174.

[74]Dickinson, "Investigations at Nova Mambone," 27 n.5.

[75]See Raymond Mauny, "Notes sur le Problème Zimbabwé-Sofala," Studia, I (1958), 181-182.

The future of Mambone as an Indian Ocean entrepôt was foreshortened for natural and, probably, political reasons. Over the years the course of the Sabi-Lundi River altered and became impassable over long stretches. It is impossible to calculate at what date this development may have occurred. except that it was prior to the Portuguese arrival. Although other regional centers probably existed, the focal point of commercial operations was the Sofala of Gold which apparently shifted northward to the site the Portuguese claimed in 1505.

This outline is highly conjectural, but provides an indication of the possible significance of one pre-Portuguese Sofala. More work must be done not only on the port of Mambone and along the Sabi-Lundi network, but also at numerous other sites which possibly were part of the Bilād as-Sufāla. The research will help provide answers to questions concerning the changing political conditions in the interior as well as the nature of early trade on the western fringe of the Indian Ocean.[76]

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[76]The recent excavations conducted by Peter Garlake in the interior of the Inhambane province are a step in this direction, but the work is too incomplete to draw any conclusions, see his "An Investigation of Manekweni, Mozambique," Azania, X (1976), 25-47.

CHAPTER II

PRELUDE TO PORTUGUESE SOFALA

Until the end of the fifteenth century, Europe knew little about southeast Africa or, for that matter, the mysterious world of the Indian Ocean. While a handful of Italian and Jewish merchants long had plied the eastern trade, their ventures were sporadic because sea routes were unfamiliar and Muslims dominated the commerce. The Portuguese voyages of discovery and conquest altered this picture by establishing new patterns of trade and political authority throughout the Indian Ocean complex.

Lisbon's efforts at gaining domination in the orient were prompted by mixed motivations, both sacred and profane. The chronicler Gomes Eannes de Azurara (c. 1410-1473) suggested that exploration was inspired by strategic interests and the desire for rich profits, as well as Christian zeal.[1] If the hated Muslims could be outflanked and destroyed in the east, Portugal would secure the lucrative Indian commerce and, moreover, receive pontifical

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[1]Gomes Eannes de Azurara, The Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea (1453), trans. and eds. C. R. Beazley and Edgar Prestage, I (London, 1896), 27-29.

gratitude. In fact, the various Papal Bulls of this period specifically recognized and authorized the amalgam of imperial, commercial, and religious objectives.[2] According to King Manuel (1495-1521):

> in those parts, so remote from the Roman church, the faith of His Son our Lord Jesus Christ will not only be published by our means and received there, by which we shall win a reward from Him and praise and glory from men, but also kingdoms and new states and great riches will be won by force of arms from the hands of barbarians.[3]

While the Portuguese may have been inspired by such visions of grandeur, their successes were all the more remarkable considering the limited resources and manpower available. These shortages, however, were not detrimental to overseas expansion. Given Portugal's position on the Atlantic, it was quite logical for the Iberian nation to turn to the sea for its basic sustenance. Deficient in cereals and meat, one of Portugal's dietary staples was fish. This dependency was precarious, since along the coast, the narrow continental shelf prevented the development of an abundant home fishery. In order to supplement local sardines, Portuguese fishermen were forced to make long voyages, thus providing not only food, but also a contingent of trained seafarers.

It should furthermore be noted that the only avenue open to Lusitanian ambition was the sea. Inland expansion

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[2]C. R. Boxer, The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 1415-1825 (New York, 1969), 20-23.

[3]Barros, "Da Asia," 160.

was prevented by the superior power of her neighbor, Castile. The Portuguese, though, had one distinct advantage over the Spanish; their small state was unified and not embroiled in the dynastic and foreign difficulties that occupied Castile until the end of the fifteenth century.[4] Portugal was able to benefit from an effective leadership which closely supervised the voyages of discovery and carefully scrutinized all possible opportunities.

Even the hated infidel was utilized as a source of information on seafaring and distant lands. For several centruies, the "Moors" had dominated sections of Portugal, and their defeat in the thirteenth century did not dispel their influence. Early Portuguese sailing directories, roteiros, for instance, owed much to Arabic sources.[5] After the conquest of the North African commercial fortress of Ceuta in 1415, Portugal acquired additional geographical knowledge from Muslim captives and confiscated maps.[6]

Equally important as the Arab sources were the reports of Italian merchants residing in Lisbon. Many of these Venetians and Genoese possessed practical navigational

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[4]See J. H. Elliott, Imperial Spain, 1469-1716 (New York, 1963), 17-51.

[5]C. R. Boxer, "Portuguese Roteiros, 1500-1700," Mariner's Mirror, XX (1934), 173.

[6]Edgar Prestage, "The Search for the Sea Route to India," in Travel and Travellers of the Middle Ages, ed. A. P. Newton (New York, 1926), 199; Boxer, Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 19.

experience, while others provided the capital necessary to finance the Portuguese fleets.[7] Along with other Europeans, the Italians also supplied the latest technology, from ship-building and textile manufacturing to the important production of guns and artillery. Ship mobility and firepower were the forces that assured the success of Portuguese imperial expansion. In the case of weaponry when local industry could not fulfill the demand for arms, Portugal employed its foreign profits to make purchases from Flemish and German manufacturers.[8]

Portuguese mariners were well prepared for their lengthy voyages, and, in 1488, Bartolomeu Dias and his crew rounded the Cape of Good Hope. Lisbon, though, did not dispatch another recorded sea expedition to the east for nearly a decade. Considering the allure of East Africa and India, this delay is difficult to understand. Possibly, there was a conservative reaction among royal advisors against further exploration. They may have opposed conquering new lands not only because such efforts would drain

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[7]Charles Verlinden, "Le Influence Italiane nella Colonizazazione Iberica," Nuova Rivista Storica, XXXV (1952), 254-270; Leo Magnino, "António de Noli e a Colaboração entre os Portugueses e Genoveses nos Descobrimentos Marítimos," Studia, 10 (1962), 99-115; Bailey Diffie, Prelude to Empire (Lincoln, 1960), 49-58; J. H. Parry, The Age of Reconnaissance (London, 1963), 48-52.

[8]Carlo Cipolla, European Culture and Overseas Expansion (Harmondsworth, 1970), 40.

their modest resources, but also because an oriental empire would be difficult to defend. The burdensome obligations would outweigh the possible advantages.[9]

Some historians, however, prefer to believe that Portuguese caravels were not idle during these years and, supposedly, made secret voyages in the South Atlantic and along the southeast African coast. The expeditions, it is claimed, remain unknown because of a deliberate policy of obfuscation, the política de sigilio, (policy of secrecy).[10] It seems unlikely that such ventures could remain concealed from the numerous foreign merchants and sailors present in Lisbon.

The most probable explanation for the (apparent) failure of the Portuguese to pursue immediately the sea route to the orient was the desire by the crown to await the detailed reports of two agents dispatched overland to Aden at the same time that Dias was setting sail for Africa.

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[9]Barros, "Da Asia," 158; Douglas Wheeler, "Anti-Imperial Traditions in Portugal: Yesterday and Today," Boston University Graduate Journal, XII (1964), 127-130; Boxer, Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 36.

[10]There is nothing to substantiate this hypothesis which was originated by the late Portuguese historian Jaime Cortesão. His views are summarized in his Os Portugueses em África (Lisbon, 1968), 123, 127-129; also see Prestage "Sea Route to India," 212-214; George H. Kimble, "Portuguese Policy and Its Influence on Fifteenth Century Cartography," Geographical Review, XXIII (1933), 653-659. For criticism of the sigilio theory see Samuel Eliot Morison, Portuguese Voyages to America in the Fifteenth Century (Cambridge, Mass., 1940), 76-86; Bailey Diffie, "Foreigners in Portugal and the Policy of Silence," Terrae Incognitae, I (1969), 23-34.

Pero de Covilhã and Afonso de Paiva were commissioned by King João II (1481-1495) to explore the Indian spice trade and to form an alliance with the legendary Prester John, thought to reside somewhere in the east, probably Ethiopia.[11] Before the crown could formulate a definite strategy, precise information was required on the extent of Muslim authority and commerce in the Indian Ocean.

Unfortunately, only the outline of the peregrinations of Covilhã and Paiva is known. When the two reached Aden they parted company; the Arabic speaking Covilhã traveled to India while his companion embarked for Ethiopia. Paiva apparently died in Cairo before gaining entry to Abyssinia.[12] In contrast, Covilhã was successful in reconnoitering the spice traffic, and eventually followed the northeast monsoon to East Africa. He even claimed that he had reached the "coast of Sofala."[13] Like his Muslim

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[11]Barros, "Da Asia," 154; Fernão Lopes de Castanheda, "History of the Discovery and Conquest of India by the Portuguese" (1551), in RSEA, V (London, 1901), 350-351.

[12]It had originally been thought that Paiva reached Ethiopia and died there, but research in the Vatican Archives has altered this view, see C. F. Beckingham, "Notes on an Unpublished Manuscript of Francisco Alvares: Verdadera Informaçam das Terras do Preste Joam das Indias," Annales d' Éthiopie, IV (1961), 150.

[13]Francisco Álvares, Verdadeira Informação das Terras do Preste João das Indias (Lisbon, 1540), 129. Padre Álvares interviewed the elderly Covilhã who was resident in Ethiopia when the Portuguese expedition arrived in 1520.

predecessors, Covilhã was probably referring to a long stretch of the littoral rather than the site of the later Portuguese settlement.[14]

Yet, despite his long absence, Covilhã upon arriving in Cairo found that his travels were not over. The death of his compatriot meant that he had to set out for Ethiopia. Before departing, Covilhã left an account of his discoveries for King João with two Portuguese Jews. It is unknown, however, whether this report was ever successfully delivered.[15] It is likely that, at least, some of Covilhã's information was relayed to Lisbon by other travelers and merchants.

While João was collecting such commercial and cartographic data, he also succeeded in negotiating the Treaty of Tordesillas with Castile in 1494. The pact divided the largely unexplored world between the two Iberian powers. Portugal was now free to pursue an eastern empire without interference from her neighbor. One of her immediate goals was to capture the gold trade of Sofala, which

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[14]See above Chapter I; cf. C. F. Beckingham, "The Travels of Pero da Covilhã and Their Significance," in Actas, III (Lisbon, 1961), 4.

[15]Boxer, Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 34. Many Portuguese historians assume that Covilhã's report was received and utilized, see, for example, Cortesão, Portugueses em África, 107; Lobato, Expansão Portuguesa, I, 51; M. L. de Freitas Ferraz, ed., Documentação Histórica Moçambicana (Lisbon, 1973), 7-8. A recent effort to discover the document has proved fruitless; von Sicard, "Pero de Covilhã's 'Relaction,' 1587," 155-168.

had acquired exaggerated proportions, thanks to Muslim writers. Yet, it is widely presumed that Sofala was ignored during da Gama's first voyage to India.

After rounding the Cape in 1497, the Portuguese captain did avoid much of the Mozambican seaboard, but only:

> because the coast curves inward so far . . . that Vasco da Gama feared the waters would draw him in and that it was some deep bay from which he would not be able to get out. This fear made him so cautious in keeping far off the shore, that he passed without seeing it, the settlement of Sofala, so celebrated in those parts.[16]

Da Gama was not only wary of the uncharted coast, but also was probably convinced that the fabled land was located farther to the north, as it appeared in Fra Mauro's Venetian map (c. 1460).[17] Apparently, Portuguese geographical information was outdated since, as has been suggested above, the port of Sofala, which Lisbon eventually settled, was only the latest in a series of such regional entrepôts. Da Gama seemingly attempted to correct this error by later gleaning information on the gold emporium from a "Moorish" pilot captured near Mozambique Island. While India was his ultimate destination, Sofala was not disregarded.

Although da Gama failed to survey the famous southeast African site, King Manuel, João's successor, was not

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[16]Barros, "Da Asia," 169. On the coastal configuration see figure 1.

[17]G. R. Crone, "Fra Mauro's Representation of the Indian Ocean and Eastern Islands," in Studi Colombiani, III, (Genoa, 1951), 57.

deterred from prematurely announcing to his Castilian rivals that the land of gold mines had been discovered.[18] This observation was evidently one of his more modest comments when it came to the subject of Sofala's wealth. While information on the port remained limited, royal hyperbole abounded.

It was not until the early sixteenth century that the first documented Portuguese adventurer sighted Sofala. In 1500, under the leadership of Pedro Álvares Cabral, another flotilla was dispatched with the intention of not only subduing India, but also establishing Portuguese economic relations along the East African littoral. A specific objective was to initiate commerce between Lisbon and Sofala. For this reason, among Cabral's captains was Bartolomeu Dias, commissioned to raise the first Portuguese settlement at Sofala. The ill-fated Dias and his crew, however, drowned on the outward passage and failed to reach the Indian Ocean. Therefore, although some reports suggest that Cabral arrived at Sofala before touching India,[19] it

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[18]King Manuel to Kings of Castile, 1499, in Documentos, I, 31.

[19]British Museum, Add. Ms. 20,902, fol. 4 "Relação das Naos e Armadas da India," n.d.; "Extractos da Navegação de Pedro Álvares Cabral," in RSEA, I (London, 1898), 48. Barros only suggests that Cabral reached the "parcel de Çofala" or the Sofala shoal, a considerable length of the coast, see Barros, "Da Asia," 49; cf. Theal's faulty translation of Barros, 198. Manuel Faria e Sousa (1590-1649) confirms that Cabral reached the "coast of Sofala," but not the port; see his "Asia Portuguesa" (1666), in RSEA, I, 7.

is more likely that any information he acquired on the site was derived from captured Muslim seamen or through his visits to other coastal entrepôts. According to a member of Cabral's crew, the captain was informed by a "Moorish" captive that golden Sofala was ruled by the King of Kilwa. He further learned that Kilwa "was on the route we were to take, and that Zaffalle [Sofala] was behind us."[20] Again the Portuguese had missed the port on their passage to India, providing another indication of how imprecise geographical information remained.

Only upon his return from the orient in 1501, did Cabral actively attempt to seek Sofala. From Mozambique Island, the commander discharged a caravel under Sancho de Toar to investigate the emporium. The lack of Portuguese knowledge of Sofala's commerce is evident from the items which Toar intended to present to the local ruler. Among the goods were little bells, woolen caps, and even "trappings for hawks."[21] None of these trifles indicates any comprehension of the specific articles necessary to negotiate the sophisticated Sofalan commerce; Sancho de Toar

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[20]Anonymous narrative, 1507, in The Voyage of Pedro Álvares Cabral to Brazil and India, trans. and ed., William B. Greenlee (London, 1938), 63; also see Damião de Goes, "Chronicle of the Most Fortunate King Dom Emanuel of Glorious Memory" (1566), in RSEA, III (London, 1899), 92-93.

[21]Gaspar Correa, "Lendas da India" (1858), in RSEA, II (London, 1898), 26. (Although written in the mid-sixteenth century, Correa's work was not published for three centuries.)

was ill-prepared to commence serious bartering. Actually, it is unlikely that the Portuguese agent even set foot at Sofala. On his arrival, he sighted several Arab vessels and, following the method of his predecessors, he took a Muslim hostage while sending his envoy ashore. It was the usual procedure for Portuguese captains to refrain from leaving their ships until their secrutiy was guaranteed; instead, banished convicts, degredados, were carried aboard for such purposes as surveying dangerous or unknown regions.[22] In Toar's case, his representative never returned, and, therefore, no attempt was made to explore the site further. The report provided by Toar to the king indicated that Sofala was:

> a small island in the mouth of a river, and the gold which comes here is from a mountain where the mine is situated, and it is inhabited by Moors and heathens who barter the said gold for other merchandise.[23]

Even though inadequate, the description provided by this expedition further stimulated the European interest in the distant Mozambican entrepôt. King Manuel boastfully wrote to Ferdinand and Isabella in 1501 that a treaty had been arranged with Kilwa over Sofala's commerce. He,

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[22]On the neglected subject of the role played by degredado explorers see T. H. Elkiss, "On Service to the Crown," Journal of the American Portuguese Society, X (1976), 44-53.

[23]"Navegação de Pedro Álvares Cabral," in RSEA, I, 49. Correa's tale of Toar's visit to the Sofalan King seems to be a total fabrication, note his description in "Lendas da India," 27-28.

moreover, attempted to impress upon them the frightful demeanor of the local Africans, as well as the amount of gold available, noting that even "the cows of the king wear collars of heavy gold."[24]

Manuel was not alone in his exaggerations; Italians resident in Lisbon related even more grandiose tales. One Venetian claimed that there was more gold at Sofala than anywhere else in the world,[25] and Americo Vespucci wrote that Sofala had the reputation of being as great a city as Cairo.[26] These views were still based on imagination, since little new information actually had been gathered, and no Portuguese settlement had been constructed at Sofala.

When Vasco da Gama set sail on his second voyage to India in 1502, the Portuguese had not even established commercial contact with the fabled port. The captain determined not only to complete the conquest of the spice traffic, but also to usurp Sofala's gold trade. These efforts would strike a devastating blow against the Muslims, Portugal's only commercial and religious competitors in the Indian Ocean. In June 1502, the Portuguese explorer, with part of his fleet, arrived at Sofala in order "to inspect the port

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[24]Manuel to Ferdinand and Isabella, c. 1501, in Pedro Álvares Cabral 51.

[25]Letter of Giovanni Matteo Cretico, 27 June 1501, in Pedro Álvares Cabral 156.

[26]Americo Vespucci to Lorenzo de Medici, 4 June 1501, in Pedro Álvares Cabral 156.

and obtain information concerning the inhabitants of the country."[27] Although well received, the Europeans found their efforts were hampered in bartering for gold. Da Gama learned that he had arrived eight or nine days after Muslim ships had taken most of the available supply and that a struggle between coast and interior was delaying additional gold from reaching the port.[28] Although little was actually accomplished by this frustrating venture, a new myth was born. According to Tomé Lopes, one of da Gama crew, certain Sofalan Muslims possessed information proving that the emporium once had been King Solomon's Ophir.[29] In the Old Testament, Ophir was the font of gold and spices which the Israelite ruler sought on his triennial voyages. Lisbon's officials enthusiastically accepted the Sofala-Ophir connection and prepared to reap the golden dividends.

Despite the inherent dangers and continual disappointments encountered by Portuguese mariners, Sofala as

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[27] Goes, "Most Fortunate King," 99.

[28] Tomé Lopes, "Navegação da Armada de Estevam da Gama" (1550), in APO, ed. A. B. de Bragança Pereira, I-I-I- (Bastorá; 1936), 230-233. An anonymous Dutch sailor, a member of da Gama's crew, confirmed this picture and noted that the local people were reluctant to allow the Portuguese to discover the actual gold sources; J. Berjeau, trans. and ed., Calcoen (London, 1874), no pagination.

[29] Lopes, "Navegação da Armada," 232-233. Biblical figures often appear in the Koran, and Muslim traders along the East African coast adapted these tales to their own environment, see T. N. Huffman, "Solomon, Sheba and Zimbabwe," Rhodesian Prehistory, VII (1975), 21.

Ophir became an integral part of the plan for the east. Gold would be needed to pay for Indian pepper, and the desire for this glittering treasure prompted da Gama's subsequent conquest of Kilwa. This city-state not only was important to Lisbon as a coastal center, but also was coveted for its control of the (seemingly) lucrative Sofalan trade. The gold tribute collected at Kilwa and carried to Lisbon only served to enhance the reputation of Sofala itself.[30]

During the following years, other Portuguese armadas were dispatched to the orient. In 1504, Pero Afonso de Aguiar may have initiated the first successful trading expedition to Sofala. Unfortunately, the only extant source for this event is the unreliable Gaspar Correa (c. 1495-c. 1563) who wrongly assigned the date of 1502 to the venture.[31] According to the chronicler, Aguiar's negotiations provided him with abundant gold, as well as the promise of loyal friendship. The bargain struck was unlikely to have been as simple as Correa indicates.

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[30]The gold was crafted into the Belem Monstrance, a classic example of Manueline art, which can still be seen in the Museu do Arte Antiga in Lisbon; see Robert Smith, The Art of Portugal, 1500-1800 (New York, 1968), pl. XV.

[31]Correa, "Lendas da India," 28-30. Aguiar was one of Lopo Soares's fleet captains during the 1504 expedition; Goes, "Most Fortunate King," 104. The chronological question has been thoroughly analyzed by Alexandre Lobato in his Novos Subsídios para a História da Fundação de Sofala (Lisbon, 1950), 136-137, and Expansão Portuguesa, I, 72, 204.

Furthermore, his suggestion that the local Sofalans were astounded by the sight of writing[32] seems unlikely considering the number of Arab merchants who frequented the port. To reject, however, the entire Aguiar episode presents "an unacceptable pause" of three years between da Gama's reconnaissance and eventual Portuguese settlement.[33] Although India was the primary objective, it is difficult to believe that no effort was made during this period to gain control of Sofala and its highly valued gold sources. These mines had been praised by King Manuel as "the richest which have ever been reported in those parts, and of any others which are known in the world."[34]

Yet, only in 1505, under the supreme command of Francisco de Almeida, was Pero de Anhaia assigned to undertake the establishment of a fort and factory at Sofala. The Portuguese were about to learn the truth of Camões's prophetic words:

> Gold will reduce the strongest fortress, it will turn friends into traitors and deceivers, constrain the noble to acts of infamy, make men betray their leaders to the foe . . . Gold causes authorities to be interpreted with something more than subtlety, makes and unmakes laws, turns ordinary men into perjurers, and kings, times

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[32]Correa, "Lendas da India," 30.

[33]Lobato, Novos Subsídios, 137-138.

[34]Quoted in C. R. Boxer, An African Eldorado: Monomotapa and Moçambique, 1498-1752 (Salisbury, 1960), 1.

> without number, into tyrants. Even among those who are wholly dedicated to the service of God Omnipotent you will find countless examples where this enchanter has corrupted and misled under cover, withal, of virtue.[35]

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[35]Luis Vaz de Camões, The Lusiads (1572), trans. W. C. Atkinson (Harmondsworth, 1952), 198.

CHAPTER III

TERRA INCOGNITA: SOFALA AND THE STATES OF SOUTHERN ZAMBEZIA

Fortress and Factory: Sofala's Early Years, 1505-1530

Lisbon's strategy for subjugating the orient was to establish a chain of coastal factories and fortresses throughout the Indian Ocean basin. The crown considered Sofala one of its essential East African links and, therefore, instructed the first viceroy, Francisco de Almeida, to secure it from Muslim domination.

According to Almeida's 1505 regimento (royal instructions), he was to enter the port, intern the "Moorish" traders, and confiscate their merchandise. The local African population, in contrast, was to be well-treated:

> the natives of the land you shall not hurt either their persons or their property, for it is our wish that they be protected and you shall tell them that in ordering those Moors to be made captive and their property taken, we do so by reason of their being enemies of our holy catholic faith . . . whilst to themselves it will ever be our pleasure to bestow every bounty and grace to treat them well and help them as though they were our own and that we shall ever hold them in esteem.[1]

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[1]Instructions to Francisco de Almeida, 5 March 1505, in Documentos, I, 181.

The king apparently hoped that this plan would permit the replacement of Muslim merchants with his own commercial agents. Once the port was secure, Almeida was to begin the construction of a fortified trading post to monopolize the gold traffic. The monarch's scheme faltered, however, when Pero de Anhaia, the designated captain of Sofala, overloaded his flagship which slowly sank in Lisbon's harbor before a startled assemblage of dignitaries. The viceroy was thereupon instructed to proceed with the remainder of his fleet directly to Kilwa while Anhaia prepared a new vessel.[2] Sofala was, after all, only one of several strategic and economic enclaves in Portugal's proposed Estado da India (eastern empire). Grandiose imperial plans could not be postponed to accommodate the conquest of the fabled gold emporium.

Two months after Almeida's departure, Pero de Anhaia with his newly out-fitted flotilla set sail for southeast Africa and reached Sofala in September 1505. The specifics of the captain's regimento are not known, but (presumably) besides geographical information, it contained new orders on how to deal with the merchant community. The crown may have decided on a more subtle approach to the Muslim traders.[3] Anhaia made no attack, but instead peacefully

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[2] Ibid., 257.

[3] In 1974, I discovered a badly mutilated document in Lisbon which may once have been part of Pero de Anhaia's

ventured ashore with a few sailors.[4] Yusuf, the elderly shaikh of Sofala, and his retainers received the Europeans and granted them permission to build a fortress. The obsequious behavior of the Muslims suggests that they had learned the fate of their coastal neighbors who resisted the Portuguese. Only a few months earlier, both Kilwa and Mombasa had been stormed and looted by Almeida's troops.[5] Yusuf had no desire to see Sofala similarly victimized.

Pero de Anhaia, nevertheless, doubted Muslim intentions and therefore carefully selected a defensive location for the stockade. The site, reportedly, was encircled by a small river and commanded a good view of the bay.[6] The troops quickly constructed a makeshift wood and earthen palisade to serve until a more permanent structure could be erected.

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regimento. The extant section noted the necessity of employing diplomacy at Sofala to insure peaceful relations and subsequent trade and tribute; A.N.T.T., Fragmentos, Cx. 3, Maço 3, Doc. 7, n.d.

[4]According to one of Anhaia's crew, the landing party was small so that it could more easily escape a possible Muslim assault; see Martín Fernandez de Figueroa, A Spaniard in the Portuguese Indies (1512), trans. and ed. James McKenna (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), 41.

[5]Account of the Voyage of Francisco de Almeida, 22 May 1506, in Documentos, I, 523-537; Barros, "Da Asia," 274.

[6]The drastic alteration of the coast over the centuries precludes an exact geographical description of the original site. For a thorough study of the early maps on Sofala see A. Teixeira da Mota, "Cartografia Antiga de Sofala," Monumenta, IX (1973), 5-18.

The fledgling settlement, in fact, scarcely survived its first years. The land was soon found to be insalubrious and several of Anhaia's troops died, apparently from malaria. Meanwhile, trade had dwindled to a trickle because of Portuguese restrictions on Muslim commerce and their related attempts to replace Indian textiles and beads (which Africans demanded) with European manufactures. The Lusitanians awaited the arrival of quantities of gold bullion, but found that their offers of woolen caps, table cloths and brass chamber pots attracted few Shona traders.[7] Captain Anhaia, reputedly, even notified the viceroy that it was futile to build a permanent fortress at Sofala since it would needlessly sacrifice men and provide Lisbon with dominion over nothing.[8]

In 1506, the settlement's prospects further shriveled when the frustrated Muslim community, assisted by local Africans, assaulted the fort. According to an eye-witness account, Yusuf's forces might have succeeded if the weakened defenders had not been forewarned by a Swahili defector and consequently employed their superior firepower. While such weaponry was often inefficient in the field, it could prove effective in a struggle waged from a fortified encampment

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[7]Pero de Anhaia to King's Treasurers, 27 October 1505, in Documentos, I, 297-299; Pero de Anhaia to Manuel Fernandes, 29 December 1505, in Documentos, I, 341; Barros, "Da Asia," 277.

[8]Correa, "Lendas da India," 26.

such as Sofala; even so, the Muslim siege lasted three days.[9] As a warning to others who dared to contest Lisbon's sovereignty, Yusuf was executed and his head was displayed on a pike outside the stockade.

Although Anhaia designated a new, and seemingly tractable Shaikh, he took little pleasure in the event. A caravel reaching the port a short time later found the settlement blighted and without supplies. Anhaia, like many of his men, was dead.[10] His post had been assumed by the factor, Manuel Fernandes, who had acquired local notoriety when he personally decapitated Yusuf.

Fernandes's brief tenure as captain did nothing to diminish his reputation. Just before the arrival of Nuno Vaz Pereira, the new commandant, in 1507, Fernandes was caught pilfering the royal coffers. Pereira's inquiry discovered that his predecessor was also guilty of embezzlement.[11] Despite this villainous record, Fernandes was never convicted and, in fact, was knighted by the king and given

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[9]Figueroa, Portuguese Indies, 49-51. On the question of firearms see Richard Gray, "Portuguese Musketeers on the Zambezi," JAH, XII (1971), 531-533; E. A. Alpers, "Review of Eric Axelson's, Portuguese in South-East Africa, 1488-1600," IJAHS, VIII (1975), 93.

[10]Pero Quarema to King, 31 August 1506, in Documentos, I, 627.

[11]Enquiry Instigated by Nuno Vaz Pereira, 25 February 1507, in Documentos, II (Lisbon, 1963), 170-177; cf. Axelson, Portuguese . . . 1488-1600, 59-60.

a coat of arms.[12] It appears that the captaincy of Sofala could be lucrative for the unscrupulous official.

Ironically, the circumspect Pereira was dismissed not for any misdeed, but because the great distances separating Portuguese centers made communications difficult. After learning of Anhaia's death, the king had dispatched a replacement, Vasco Gomes de Abreu, unaware that the viceroy already had sent Pereira from Goa. After arriving at Sofala in 1507, Abreu found that Pereira had constructed a stone fortress at the site,[13] a surprising achievement since the bulk of building material had to be imported from Kilwa and even Portugal.

Besides assuming command of Sofala, Abreu had been commissioned to establish a way station and trading post on Mozambique Island. The island, in contrast to Sofala, possessed a shoal free anchorage and was strategically located to intercept Muslim interlopers. Abreu's men soon began work on the new settlement.

Meanwhile, the captain was occupied with the plight of Sofala. Official memoranda claimed that while there was

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[12]Castanheda, "Discovery and Conquest," 394.

[13]The square bastion, later named São Caetano, enclosed a small community which included not only barracks, but also a parish church, a factory, and an observation tower; see dos Santos, "Eastern Ethiopia," 185.

much gold in the land, little ever reached the fortress.[14] To redirect commerce to Sofala, Muslim contraband traffic had to be suppressed. Before Abreu could provide any remedy, he mysteriously disappeared along the coast in 1508.

In frustration, Viceroy Afonso de Albuquerque (1453-1515) proposed to the king that the fortress of São Caetano be leased to the "Moors" of Malindi for a few years "so that the affairs of Sofala may be better understood."[15] António de Saldanha, Sofala's new captain, decided upon a more direct approach. In 1511, he launched a surprise attack on the center of clandestine Muslim commerce, Angoche Island. Although Saldanha looted and burned the settlement, by the following year merchants seeking to avoid the Portuguese monopoly were once more prospering there.[16]

At Sofala itself, the captain discovered that, during his absence, the fortress had faced another crisis. Yusuf's successor, Maulide, had not proved as pliable as the Portuguese hoped. Without warning, the shaikh quit

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[14]Afonso de Albuquerque to King, 6 February 1507, in Documentos, II, 127; Duarte de Lemos to King, 30 September 1508, in Documentos, II, 293; Lobato, Expansão Portuguesa, III, 96-97.

[15]Summary by António Carneiro of Letters from Afonso de Albuquerque, 1511, in Documentos, II, 127.

[16]M. D. D. Newitt, "The Early History of the Sultanate of Angoche," JAH, XII (1972), 397-406; B. A. Datoo, "Selected Phases of the Historical Geography of the Major Eastern African Ports" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1968), 194, 197-200.

Sofala to reside in the hinterland with his African allies. He abandoned his earlier allegiance to Lusitania and blockaded all trade routes to the entrepôt. After three months of Maulide's harassment, a Portuguese column secretly left the fort and proceeded inland; the shaikh was captured and executed.[17]

Saldanha and his comrades were beginning to appreciate that not only did they know little about the nature of Sofala's external economy, but they were also ignorant of the interior African states which controlled the coveted sources of gold. As early as 1513, Pero Vaz Soares, the factor of São Caetano, correctly surmised that "although there is gold in all the land it is spread out . . . [no communities have] it in such quantity as to allow them to come so far [as Sofala] to trade it . . . they wait for the merchandise to be taken to them."[18] Consequently, Sofala's expenses continued to exceed revenues. In fact, subsidies designated for the heirs of deceased Portuguese soldiers were spent simply to cover the fort's maintenance. Soares added that since desired gold supplies had not materialized, greater emphasis should be placed by Lisbon

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[17]Maulide's insurrection is only known in outline from a document provided by his executioners; see Statement by Pero Sobrinho and Diogo Homen, 15 April 1512, in Documentos, III, 234-249; Lobato, Expansão Portuguesa, III, 102-103.

[18]Pero Vaz Soares to King, 30 June 1513, in Documentos, III, 461.

upon the acquisition of ivory. Elephants abounded in the area, and their tusks could be sold profitably in India.[19]

In 1530, the crown officially made Sofala's ivory a royal monopoly,[20] but, by that time, the settlement was already in a state of ruin. One observer reported:

> The factory has fallen to the ground and has to be re-timbered and the water flows through it as it does in the street; the granary is falling down; nobody can go into the church; the house where the captain dwells has to be re-tiled and repaired; a wall begun by Samcho de Thoar must be finished, so I am told, in order that the fortress does not fall to the ground.[21]

Except for officials who accumulated considerable fortunes by fleecing the king's treasury and engaging in private trade, Sofala had proved a financial fiasco. Yet, Lisbon remained sanguine over São Caetano's prospects and refused to consider relinquishing it. Unlike the once opulent Kilwa, which had been quickly abandoned when it proved unprofitable, Sofala retained an impressive biblical reputation which even its grim reality did not diminish. The Portuguese, however, soon realized that the acquisition of wealth would require penetration of the interior and the establishment of direct relations with various African polities.

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[19] Ibid., 459-469; see also Dames, Book of Duarte Barbosa, I, 8.

[20] Regulations for Sofala, 20 May 1530, in Documentos, VI (Lisbon, 1969), 355-357, 389-391.

[21] António da Silveira to King, c. 1529, in Documentos, V (Lisbon, 1966), 559.

The Shona and Early State Building

When the Portuguese began to filter inland from the coast during the sixteenth century, they encountered a number of powerful African states. Before considering the course of Afro-Lusitanian relations, it is necessary first to examine the evolution of Southern Zambezia's indigenous communities.

The fertile plateau which crowns much of the interior proved an attractive early habitat and was first settled by hunter-gatherers. During the initial centuries of the first millennium A.D., however, Bantu-speakers began entering the region and displacing (or incorporating) the original population.[22] The tall grasses, perennial rivers, and favorable climate of the highland were suitable to their agricultural and herding activities. These Early Iron Age immigrants also began (to a limited extent) to mine copper and iron both for local use and to exchange within regional bartering networks.[23] Apparently, they did not, however, exploit the gold bearing reefs of the region, and any gold which they obtained was probably from alluvial

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[22] T. N. Huffman, "Radiocarbon Dates and Bibliography of the Rhodesian Iron Age." Rhodesian Prehistory, 11 (1973), 4; R. C. Soper, "New Radiocarbon Dates for Eastern and Southern Africa," JAH, XV (1974), 184-185; D. W. Phillipson, "Early Iron-Using Peoples of Southern Africa," in African Societies in Southern Africa, 30-35, 40-42.

[23] D. N. Beach, An Outline of Shona History (forthcoming), Chapter I; Brian Fagan, "Early Trade and Raw Materials in South Central Africa," JAH, X (1969), 2, 10.

sources. Mining and commerce were largely marginal economic activities for these farmer-herders.[24]

In about the eleventh century, a second wave of Bantu-speakers invaded Southern Zambezia and established the related Leopard's Kopje and Zimbabwe traditions over much of the region.[25] These people, tentatively identified as Shona,[26] assimilated their culturally similar forebears and came to dominate the interior.

It was within the economic sphere that the Shona differed most from their predecessors by exploiting the gold reefs of the plateau. Although cattle represented a source of food and a mark of wealth to the Shona, it was their export of gold, along with copper and ivory, which placed these Bantu-speakers within the Indian Ocean complex.

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[24]Beach, Outline of Shona History, Chapter I; I. R. Phimister, "Pre-Colonial Gold Mining in Southern Zambezia: A Reassessment," African Social Research, 21 (1976), 4. The trading and mining pursuits of these people have been inadequately studied thus far.

[25]T. N. Huffman, "Excavations at Leopard's Kopje Main Kraal: A Preliminary Report," SAAB, XXVI (1971), 85-89; idem, "The Leopard's Kopje Tradition" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1974), 136-154, 180-183, 185; Garlake, Great Zimbabwe, 155-159.

[26]It should be noted that the term Shona is, in the strictest sense, a linguistic designation for the south-central zone of Bantu-speakers. It is not an ethnic or 'tribal' label, although the six Shona dialect groups display broadly similar cultural patterns from the interior to the coast; see C. M. Doke, Report on the Unification of the Shona Dialects (Hertford, 1931), 34-35, idem, The Southern Bantu Languages (London, 1954), 21-22; K. G. Mkanganwi, "The Relationship of Coastal Ndau to the Shona Dialects of the Interior," African Studies, XXXI (1972), 111-137.

At Leopard's Kopje sites (near modern Bulawayo) the discovery of glass beads and rich funerary goods points to increased long-distance trade, new artisan skills, and social stratification. It is, however, by examining the related Zimbabwe culture that a more detailed picture of early state building emerges.

The well studied site of Great Zimbabwe provides evidence of the evolution of Shona dominance over much of Southern Zambezia. Located to the southeast of the plateau, Zimbabwe provided a suitable environment for a centralized state. Rainfall was more abundant there than in surrounding areas, providing reliable water supplies for crops, cattle, and the growth of a rich woodland. Lying nearby were two other ecological zones which possessed rich red soils for farming and open grasslands for grazing. Moreover, placer deposits of gold around Great Zimbabwe made it additionally attractive to the Shona.[27]

It was the establishment of the gold trade to the coast which largely generated the expansion of Zimbabwe. The income from long-distance commerce was concentrated in the hands of Shona aristocrats who were distinguished from their subjects by their material culture and increased authority which included control over the redistribution of exotic goods. The monumental architecture associated with

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[27]Garlake, Great Zimbabwe, 15, 184, Huffman, "Rise and Fall of Zimbabwe," 361; I. R. Phimister, "Ancient Mining near Great Zimbabwe," JSAIMM, LXXIV (1974), 233-237.

Zimbabwe can be seen not only as an ostentatious display of power and wealth, but also as public works projects to organize the local labor force.[28]

Although mining and trade were significant during Zimbabwe's height of dominance (c. 1350-1450), they were not the primary Shona occupations, but rather part-time, seasonal activities for a population of farmers and herders. While commerce provided the Shona aristocracy with prestige goods, agriculture sustained the economic system and cattle were the mark of wealth. Even among Zimbabwe's successor states, farming and pastoralism continued to underpin their economies.[29]

By the fourteenth century Zimbabwe had extended its political and cultural influence over Southern Zambezia, as evidenced by the appearance of characteristic stone buildings throughout the region.[30] Originally these satellites may have been the seats of provincial administrators who increasingly exerted their independence from the ruling dynasty. Eventually, the outlying districts became capitals

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[28]Huffman, "Rise and Fall of Zimbabwe," 365.

[29]See, for example, S. I. Mudenge, "The Role of Foreign Trade in the Rozvi Empire: A Reappraisal," JAH, XV (1974) 373-391.

[30]Huffman, "Rise and Fall of Zimbabwe," 365; idem, "Ancient Mining and Zimbabwe," 241; P. S. Garlake, "Rhodesian Ruins--A Preliminary Assessment of Their Styles and Chronology," JAH, X (1970), 505-506; idem, Great Zimbabwe, 193, 196; idem, "Investigation of Manekweni, Mozambique," 25-47; Oliveira, Amuralhados da Cultura Zimbáuè-Monomotapa, 41-103.

of competing Shona states.[31] In turn, these offshoots often incorporated other peasant groups and enlarged their own political sphere. Zimbabwe, therefore, was not actually the center of any far-flung empire, but the stimulus to state-building and economic expansion in southeastern Africa.

It is ironic that by about the mid-fifteenth century Great Zimbabwe had been virtually abandoned.[32] The resources in the area, including timber, grazing land, soil, and even gold, had been depleted.[33] Such overall environmental deterioration was common, and the Shona responded by vacating the site. One result of the break-up of Zimbabwe was the establishment of the Mutapa kingdom which was to obsess Portuguese traders and officials.

The Rise of the Mutapa Empire: Another Look at the Evidence

Until recently, the orthodox view on the origin and development of the Mutapa state has rested upon a scatter of Portuguese documents, some incomplete archaeological evidence, and, most importantly, the writings of D. P. Abraham who collected oral traditions in the 1950s.

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[31] Beach, Outline of Shona History, Chapter I.

[32] P. S. Garlake, "The Value of Imported Ceramics in the Dating and Interpretation of the Rhodesian Iron Age," JAH, IX (1968), 29-30. Garlake's view has found wide acceptance among historians and archaeologists.

[33] Phimister, "Pre-Colonial Gold Mining," 20; Garlake, "Rhodesian Ruins," 507-508.

Abraham's articles, although occasionally contradictory and poorly referenced, reveal the dominance and extent of this empire during a brief "golden age" in the late fifteenth century. In summary, Abraham asserted that the ruling Zimbabwe dynasty under Mutota, in c. 1440, abandoned their settlement for the northern Dande area along the Zambezi River. The southern area encompassing Zimbabwe was left in the hands of a close relative, Torwa (Togwa). Following Mutota's death (c. 1450), his son Matope (c. 1425-c. 1480) expanded the empire to encompass most of Southern Zambezia, installing his kinsmen as provincial governors. This unity was short-lived as Torwa and another nearby ruler, Changamire (Changamira), revolted after Matope's death and a subsequent succession dispute. The Portuguese arrived to find the ruling Munhumutapa struggling to regain his lost provinces from his disobedient relatives, as well as attempting to prevent any further diminution of his territory.[34]

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[34]Only the baldest summary of Abraham's views are possible because of the frequent alterations in his writings; see D. P. Abraham, "Early Political History of the Kingdom of Mwene Mutopa (850-1589)," in Historians in Tropical Africa, 62-66; idem, "Maramuca: An Exercise in the Combined Use of Portuguese Records and Oral Traditions," JAH, II (1961), 212-214; idem, "Ethno-History of the Empire of Mutapa: Problems and Methods," in The Historian in Tropical Africa, eds. J. Vansina, R. Mauny, and L. V. Thomas (London, 1964), 108-109. For excellent analyses of Abraham's writings, see D. N. Beach, "Historiography of the People of Zimbabwe in the 1960s," Rhodesian History, IV (1973), 21-30; idem, "The Mutapa Dynasty: A Comparison of Documentary and Traditional Evidence," History in Africa, III (1976), 1-17.

Unfortunately, there is a notable flaw in this interpretation: it is based exclusively upon Mutapa-biased information.[35] The sixteenth-century Portuguese tended to accept this version of events, largely because Sofala was probably within the Mutapa's sphere of influence when they arrived[36] and there were no other local sources of information upon which to rely. Abraham compounded this imbalance by collecting traditions from Mutapa-oriented informants and then confirming his evidence with Portuguese records. The result obviously has not provided a full and balanced account of events which took place in Southern Zambezia.

In light of recent research, a very different historical reconstruction can be proposed. First, it is apparent that the direct successor of Zimbabwe was not the Mutapa state, but (the site of) Khami located on the south-west of the plateau. Migrants, tentatively identified with the Torwa dynasty, slowly moved westward from Zimbabwe, a process which can be traced from pottery and stonework styles. Archaeologically, Khami was the natural outgrowth of Zimbabwe and its immediate successor in material

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[35]Beach, "Historiography," 29; Richard Gray, "Review of Portuguese in South-East Africa, 1488-1600," JAH, XVI (1975), 148.

[36]See, for example, Diogo de Alcaçova to the King, 20 November 1506, in Documentos, I, 391; Gaspar Veloso to King, 1512, in Documentos, III, 183.

traditions.[37] If this is the case, then Abraham's contention that Torwa was left by Mutota in the south is historically upside-down; it was Mutota who broke away from the core state to move northward. It is, of course, not unusual that Abraham's informants would characterize a senior and rival Torwa dynasty as junior to their own.[38] Such a maneuver for prestige was also useful in legitimizing the Mutapa's authority to the Portuguese who were induced to support him in his struggles against "rebellious vassals."

Assuming that the Torwa state was an independent Shona center at Khami, the emergence of the Mutapa dynasty can be deduced as follows. The environmental disaster at Great Zimbabwe engendered a political crisis which caused a segment of the population to move northward to Dande, a more fertile region, closer to sources of gold and copper. As Zimbabwe had done earlier, the rising Mutapa state began to establish provincial centers, some of which paid nominal allegiance to it but were never tightly integrated into a

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[37]These ideas are associated with T. N. Huffman and D. N. Beach with whom I conversed in Salisbury on 8 May 1974 and 10 May 1974 respectively. See Huffman, "Ancient Mining at Zimbabwe," 241; idem, "Leopard's Kopje Tradition," 161; idem, "Rise and Fall of Zimbabwe," 356-357, 360; Beach, Outline of Shona History, Chapter I; idem, "Historiography," 28-30; Garlake, "Rhodesian Ruins," 508; idem, Great Zimbabwe, 169-171, 180; K. R. Robinson, Khami Ruins (Cambridge, 1959), 115-117; G. Fortune, "Who Was Mwari," Rhodesian History, IV, (1973), 3-4.

[38]Beach, "Historiography," 29; cf. Abraham, "Ethnohistory," 108.

large-scale empire. The myth of the extent and power of the Munhumutapa empire was accepted by the Portuguese who perpetuated it throughout Europe.[39]

With this construction in mind, the question of Changamire also takes on a new perspective, although little is known about the early evolution of this important dynasty. A 1506 Portuguese document identified the first Changamire as a chief justice or governor within the Mutapa empire. His power and popularity engendered the fears of the Munhumutapa who eventually provoked him to revolt.[40] It may be suggested alternatively, that with the break-up of Zimbabwe, Changamire simply established his own independent state. In turn, the Mutapa state characterized him (like Torwa) as a rebel. Unfortunately, Changamire's affined relationship to the Mutapa dynasty is unclear and even his original sphere of influence is unknown.[41] In any case, in c. 1494, an early alliance between Changamire and Torwa was forged which led these dynasties to struggle with

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[39]See references cited in n. 36; Filippo Pigafetta, A Report of the Kingdom of the Congo and of the Surrounding Countries (1591), trans. and ed., Margarite Hutchinson (London, 1881), 117-119. Particularly valuable is W. G. L. Randles, L'Image du Sud-Est Africain dans la Littérature Européenne au XVIe Siécle (Lisbon, 1959).

[40]Alcaçova to King, 20 November 1506, in Documentos, I, 393-395.

[41]Abraham, "Early Political History," 64; idem, "Ethnohistory," 108; D. N. Beach, "Historians and the Shona Empires, Part II" (unpublished seminar paper, University of Rhodesia, 1972), 19-27.

their rival for the domination of Southern Zambezia.[42] The conflict continued intermittently until the mid-sixteenth century when, with the aid of the Portuguese, the Munhumutapa succeeded in displacing Changamire's forces in the lands surrounding Sofala. Thereafter, no reference to the Changamire reign appears in the existing documents until its late-seventeenth-century revival under Dombo at Danagombi (Dhlo Dhlo). During the long hiatus, the dynasty was probably reduced to a minor power which survived along the periphery of the Mutapa empire.[43]

Considering these suggested revisions, it is clear that the Mutapa empire was never so large or powerful as it claimed. The depiction of the region in terms of conflict between the Munhumutapa and his rebellious underlings provides a truncated view of reality. The Torwa and early

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[42]Alcaçova to King, 20 November 1506, in Documentos, I, 393-395.

[43]Abraham, however, suggests that as early as the 1500s, the Changamire dynasty already had wrestled power from Torwa and established its kingdom far to the south of the Mutapa paramountcy (the region from which Dombo emerged two centuries later to overrun Southern Zambezia); Abraham, "Ethnohistory," 109. Historical records and oral traditions though indicate that this invasion occurred much later than Abraham speculates; see Beach, "Shona Empires, II," 19-27; S. I. Mudenge, "An Identification of the Rozvi and Its Implications for the History of the Karanga," Rhodesian History, V (1974), 27, 31; António Pinto de Miranda, "Monarchia Africana" (17th century), in Anais da Junta de Investigações do Ultramar, IX-I (Lisbon, 1954), 111; António da Conceição, "Tratado dos Rios de Cuama" (1696), in O Chronista de Tissuary, ed. J. H. da Cunha Rivara, II (Nova Goa, 1867), 68; E. M. Lloyd, "Mbava," NADA, 3 (1925), 62.

Changamire dynasties were politically underestimated by the Portuguese who based their interpretations upon what they were told by their Mutapa associates. Since so little is known about either the Khami or Changamire competitors, an examination of aspects of the more familiar Mutapa empire is in order.

When Mutota and his retainers first migrated northward to the Dande region, they were undoubtedly attracted by mineral resources and the growing Zambezi trade. It is rarely mentioned, however, that the Mutapa state, like other Shona polities, was sustained by farming and herding, with cattle one of the chief signs of wealth.[44] To some extent the Portuguese recognized these economic facts when they complained about the insolent Africans who only mined gold when they were coerced. António Bocarro (1594-c. 1649), the royal chronicler, observed that the land of Munhumutapa had plentiful crops and abounded in cattle since "the greater number of the Kaffirs are inclined to agricultural and pastoral pursuits, in which their riches consist."[45] Yet, the Mutapa state was not simply a

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[44]Beach, "Shona Empires, I," 12; idem, "The Shona Economy: Branches of Production" in The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa, eds. Robin Palmer and Neil Parsons (Berkely, 1977), 40-47, Phimister, "Pre-Colonial Gold Mining," 20-21.

[45]António Bocarro, "Decade" (1876), in RSEA, III (London, 1899), 355. The same view is reiterated in Faria e Sousa, "Asia Portuguesa," 23. For Torwa see dos Santos "Eastern Ethiopia," 274.

subsistence level peasant society. International commerce had important effects upon the community, particularly in the way people thought about their economy and social relations.[46] Although trade brought changes, the Mutapa state was not merely a torpid puppet in the process. For the rulers, the exchange of gold, copper, and ivory for cloth and beads allowed a process of accumulation and expansion to take place, analogous to Great Zimbabwe's rise. The Portuguese, however, were unlike earlier Swahili and Muslim merchants, their interests included political domination.

The first tentative Luso-Mutapan encounter took place at Sofala as early as 1506, when "a Kaffir of the interior of Menapotaque" reached the fort to initiate trade.[47] For the rising Mutapa state, an alliance with the Portuguese had two aims: it provided the exotic goods desired by the Shona rulers, for themselves and for redistribution among their people, and it established a diplomatic tie. As previously indicated, the Mutapa kingdom was not secure; it was threatened initially by Torwa and Changamire, and later by its provincial appointees. The Portuguese were potential allies in such clashes. Actually, the instability characterizing the Mutapa empire was inherent in Shona political systems. There was no clear method of

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[46] E. A. Alpers, "Re-Thinking African Economic History," Ufahamu, III (1973), 120; Mudenge, "Role of Foreign Trade," 390.

[47] Pero de Anhaia to King's Treasurers, 19 May 1506, in Documentos, I, 507.

succession between dynasties or even within dynasties, and civil war was an ever-present threat. Dos Santos observed:

> This uncertainty in the succession is because the Kaffirs say that any legitimate son of former kings of that land can inherit the kingdom of his father, and that he has the best right of succession who is best fitted to govern.[48]

Differing views on candidates opened the gate to factional politics and conflict.

In an attempt to inhibit such fragmentation, a three tier administrative system was devised to balance threats to the Mutapa's authority. The core of the empire (the Dande "metropolitan" area) was administered by the Munhumutapa and his appointed territorial chiefs, known as mambos. The latter were composed of patrilineal relatives, close associates, and even senior wives, all of whom held their posts and lands for life.[49] This system theoretically stabilized politics by surrounding the paramount ruler with a coterie of loyal supporters who owed their positions to him. These officials collected taxes and probably performed ritual (or religious) obligations in exchange for their hereditary positions and lands. To insure that the Mutapa's

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[48] dos Santos, "Eastern Ethiopia," 191; also see Beach, "Shona Empires, I," 13-14.

[49] Allen Isaacman, Mozambique: The Africanization of a European Institution (Madison, 1972), 7; Abraham, "Early Political History," 63; Bocarro, "Decade," 358; Beach, "Shona Empires, I," 14.

perquisites were observed by the mambos, there existed an elaborate royal bureaucracy and a powerful army.[50]

At the second administrative level, provincial rule, a more difficult problem was posed. Those lineages barred from the throne often were granted outlying lands, thereby theoretically removing them as potential rivals. Yet, these same regions later served as offensive bases against ineffectual Munhumutapas whose justification to rule was no better than the claims of their opponents. To prevent the provincial chiefs from attaining complete autonomy, the Munhumutapa demanded periodic service and gifts, and even kept the sons of his governors as hostages.[51] Another method was to recall rulers who posed a threat to his reign, although without military intervention such an order probably was not obeyed. As in the case of Changamire, the command may have stimulated more friction.

Besides employing provincial appointees, the Mutapa exerted some influence over indigenous authorities whose lands remained under their own control. This form of indirect rule formed the third administrative tier and was based upon tax payments and allegiance. This method,

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[50]Bocarro, "Decade," 356-357; Miranda, "Monarchia Africana," 112-116; Ajuda, 51-viii-40, fol. 214v., Vasco Fernandes Homem to Luys da Sylva, 15 February 1576.

[51]Bocarro, "Decade," 356-357.

utilized especially among the Sena and Tonga (along the Zambezi), had only limited success.[52]

In providing a composite picture of political administration it should be emphasized that there were no clearly defined procedures, and much was dependent upon the personality of the individual Munhumutapa. The essential point is that, even in its halcyon days under Matope, the empire was far more circumscribed than its representatives cared to admit. The Munhumutapa's overlordship of his dependencies was more de jure than de facto.[53] Why the Portuguese chose to accept the Mutapa view is related to their initial contacts in southeast Africa as well as the advantages they perceived would be gained from cooperation. In practical terms, the Europeans quickly discovered that they had to deal with several different Shona rulers, whether they regarded them as legitimate or not.

States of the Sofala Hinterland

The Portuguese found that even the communities forming the Sofala hinterland, and therefore claimed by the Munhumutapa as part of his domain, were hardly servile. Manyika, Teve, and Danda were really offshoots from the empire and only nominally subject to its control.[54] For

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[52]Abraham, "Early Political History," 64; Isaacman, Mozambique, 8.

[53]Beach, "Shona Empires, I," 18.

[54]Ibid., 17. See figure 4.

such distant provinces, the centrifugal forces in Shona society tended to be exacerbated by the least instability at the center. With little supervision over their activities, provincial governors held free rein in their lands. Portuguese chroniclers and officials, however, perceived the states surrounding Sofala as fragments of a once fully integrated Mutapa empire.[55] Although the Shona ruling dynasties were related and culturally similar, political unity was always tenuous. Even boundaries were flexible and subject to dispute, and when the lands around Sofala engendered such conflicts, the Portuguese became not only participants but also pawns.

Located to the northwest of Sofala was the important gold producing area of Manyika.[56] According to one tradition, the first Chikanga (ruler) of Manyika was the son of one of the Mutapan provincial rulers and was himself related to the royal dynasty.[57] The documents indicate that

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[55]See, for example, dos Santos, "Eastern Ethiopia," 273; Diogo De Couto, "Da Asia" (1778), in RSEA, VI, 391.

[56]Abraham has placed Manyika in the Inyanga and northern Umtali districts of Rhodesia with extensions into Mozambique; see Abraham, "Early Political History," 83, n. 44. It is difficult to be precise in light of the fluctuating political situation at the time, as well as from the documents available.

[57]The Chikanga was the son of the Makombe of Barwe who was a matrilineal relation to the Munhumutapa according to Abraham, "Early Political History," 66-67, 83 n. 44. This view rejects the Portuguese claim that the Chikanga was actually a son of the Munhumutapa; see n. 55 above for citations. In this case, Abraham's evidence seems stronger.

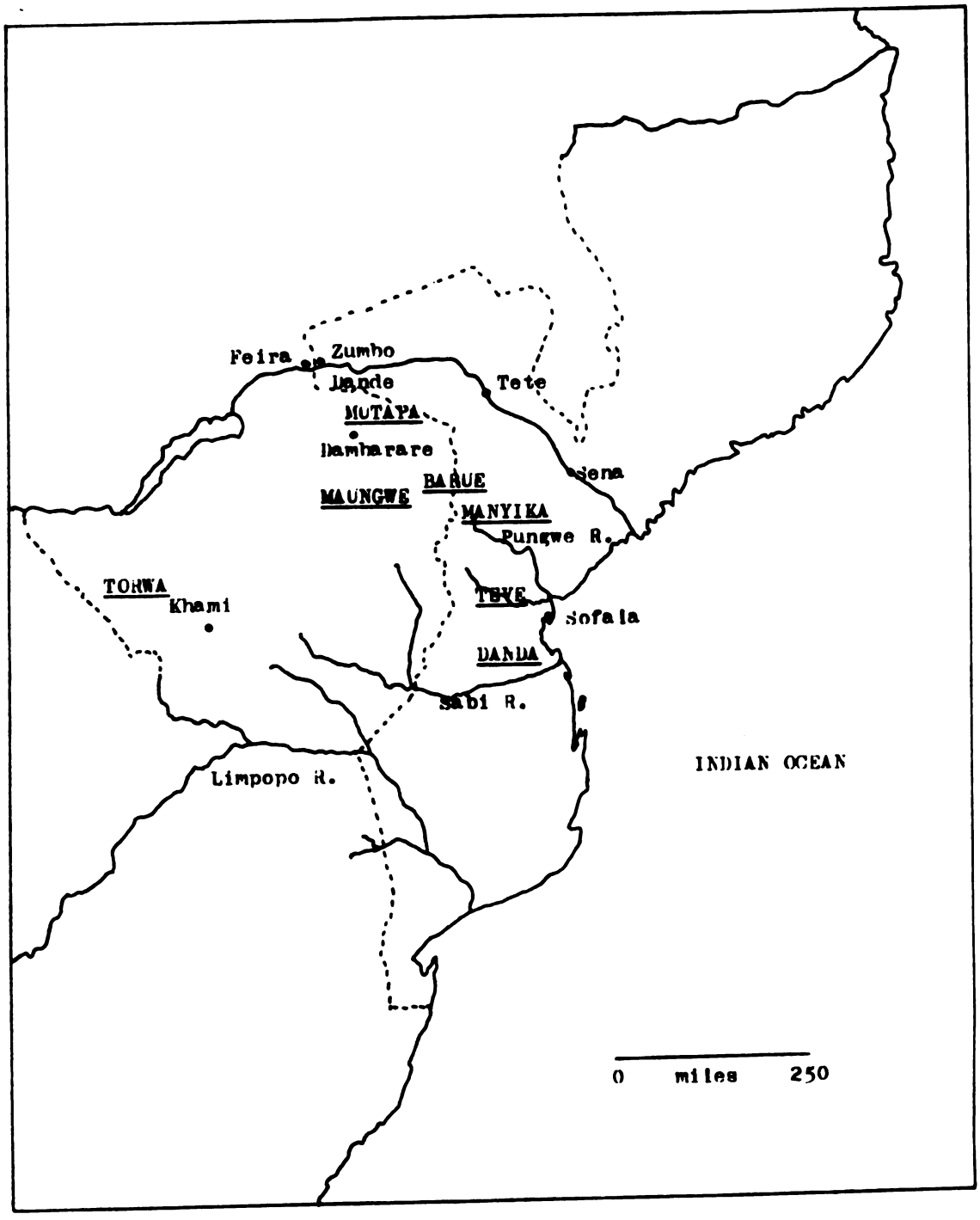

Figure 4. States of the Sofala Hinterland

in both domestic and foreign policy the Chikanga was virtually an autonomous authority until the seventeenth century. And although the Chikanga and the Munhumutapa were old adversaries, they did cooperate when it was mutually beneficial.[58]

Unlike the Mutapa state and other Shona polities, it has recently been suggested that gold production and trade, rather than agriculture and herding, were the main pursuits of the Manyika people.[59] Since rivers in the region were perennial, gold washing as well as mining in alluvial ground could have been carried on year-round.[60] While proximity to the coast would have facilitated commerce from Manyika, it still remains unlikely that such gold working replaced farming as a full-time occupation.[61] Portuguese troops who reached the region late in the sixteenth century were disappointed to discover "the difficulty and labour of the Kaffirs, and with what risk and peril of their lives they extracted gold from the bowels of the

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[58]Francisco de Brito to King, 8 August 1519 in Documentos, VI, 13; Ajuda, 51-viii-40, fols. 212-212 v., Homem to da Sylva, 15 February 1576; dos Santos, "Eastern Ethiopia," 285-287; Bocarro, "Decade," 362-364.

[59]H. H. K. Bhila, "Trade and Survival of an African Polity: The External Relations of Manyika from the Sixteenth to the Early Nineteenth Century," Rhodesian History, III (1972), 11.

[60]Ibid., Phimister, "Pre-Colonial Gold Mining," 24-25.

[61]Phimister, "Pre-Colonial Gold Mining," 25-26; Beach, "Shona Economy," 52, 63 n. 124.

earth and from the stones."[62] Lisbon's overemphasis on gold has obscured Manyika's other economic activities. In any case, her alluvial sources were rapidly exhausted, and by the mid-eighteenth century gold production had declined considerably.[63]

Leaving aside economic considerations, Manyika was faced with other major concerns. Foremost was the antagonism to her efforts at independence by the Munhumutapa, who was often joined by the Portuguese. In addition, the Chikanga was also challenged by the coastal states of Teve and Danda. These two related communities formed the immediate hinterland for Sofala and seem to have stretched from about the Pungwe River to the Sabi River. Their boundaries were flexible, and at different times Sofala fell under the influence of each state. Teve's first ruler or Sachiteve supposedly was the son of the successful competitor for the Mutapa throne (after Matope's death).[64] He, in turn, dispatched his own son and successor, Nyamunda, to expand the

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[62]dos Santos, "Eastern Ethiopia," 218. Diogo de Couto characterized Manyika gold working as a "poor and miserable business" in his "Da Asia," 389. The observation is true for Southern Zambezia in general.

[63]H. H. K. Bhila, "The Manyika and the Portuguese, 1575-1863" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 1971), 87. Europeans had a "bullionist fantasy" according to Professor Curtin. "A country with gold mines was automatically taken to be wealthy, regardless of cost conditions"; Philip Curtin, "The Lure of Bambuk Gold," JAH, XIV (1973), 627.

[64]Abraham, "Early Political History," 65-67, 84 n. 47.

kingdom to the south. The conquered region of Danda was placed under the authority of Nyamunda's younger brother (or son) who assumed the title of Sedanda.[65] After becoming Sachiteve, Nyamunda gained Portuguese assistance in his expansionist activities.

Nyamunda's duplicity exemplifies how Europeans could be used as a lever in Shona factional politics. The Sachiteve realized that the Portuguese could be enticed with gold to support his breach with the Mutapa state, as well as the expansion of his own domain. For this purpose, in 1515, he sent some of his retainers to Sofala to request peace and friendship, and to deliver a sum of gold to the fortress's captain.[66] In return, the Portuguese provided men and arms which Nyamunda used to conquer the surrounding lands including various gold mines belonging to his foe, the Chikanga.[67] Once he had subjugated the Sofalan interior, the Sachiteve made an about-face. By 1519, the trade routes linking Sofala to its hinterland were cut, and merchants

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[65] Ibid., 67; J. K. Rennie, "Christianity, Colonialism and the Origins of Nationalism among the Ndau of Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1935" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1973), 67.

[66] João Vaz de Almada to King, 8 August 1519, in Documentos, IV, 277-279.

[67] Ibid., 285; Brito to King, 8 August 1519, in Documentos, VI, 13; da Silveira to King, c. 1529, in Documentos, V, 567-571.

were robbed and killed.[68] Ironically, Portuguese officials probably supported Nyamunda because they considered him to be a weak ruler of a small state who could be manipulated as a counterweight against the perceived predominance of the Munhumutapa.[69] The plan had dual advantages: it would gain an African ally in the immediate region around Sofala and would fragment the "powerful" Mutapa empire for easier conquest. Nyamunda's intrigues, however, altered their strategy.

From the Teve viewpoint, the economic blockade of Sofala prevented the delivery of merchandise (primarily cloth) that its Shona enemies used to pay their warriors. Furthermore, rather than being dependent upon the Portuguese, Nyamunda now set the terms of trade and established himself as overlord of Sofala. The Sachiteve, for example, demanded that all commerce between the two communities be conducted by the "Moors of Sofala," which intensely angered the officials of the fortress[70] and forced the captain to admit that Nyamunda had out-maneuvered the Portuguese with his "ways and wiles."[71]

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[68]Brito to King, 8 August 1519, in Documentos, VI, 11-13.

[69]Lobato, Expansão Portuguesa, II, 81.

[70]Lopo de Almeida to King, 27 August 1527, in Documentos, VI, 277-279. Apparently, the Portuguese had been charging excessive prices for their beads and cloth; Axelson, Portuguese . . . 1488-1600, 102.

[71]da Silveira to King, c. 1529, 569.

Unfortunately, after about 1529, Nyamunda vanishes from the historical record, and it can only be guessed that after his death the vast Teve domain followed the pattern of other Shona polities by fragmenting. Besides being divided into two separate states, Teve and Danda, Nyamunda's kingdom was probably diminished by the Manyika reconquest of its gold fields.[72] For the Portuguese, the reduced authority of Teve did not spell an end to their difficulties. Well after Nyamunda's demise, it was reported that interior communities often prohibited traders from reaching Sofala for long periods.[73] These states also frustrated the fort's establishment of communications with the Munhumutapa. A Portuguese officer reflected that the powerful Munhumutapa, original lord of all the region, "wants nothing more than our friendship."[74] What he desired was nothing less than what the Sachiteve had earlier attained.

During the sixteenth century the states surrounding Sofala prevented either the Munhumutapa or the Portuguese from threatening their autonomy. The Sachiteve was eventually able to compel the captain of Sofala to pay a yearly

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[72]dos Santos, "Eastern Ethiopia," 193, 217; Couto, "Da Asia," 390. Almost nothing is known about the Danda state; see E. A. Alpers, "Dynasties of the Mutapa-Rozwi Complex," JAH, XI (1970), 212.

[73]João de Sepulveda to King, 10 August 1542, in Documentos, VII (1971), 137-139.

[74]Ibid., 139.

tax for safe passage through his land.[75] It, however, must be pointed out that neither Teve nor Danda was concerned exclusively with trade, anymore than Manyika was totally dependent on gold production for its economic base. Nyamunda's warlike tactics or commercial inclinations did not mean that the Teve neglected traditional economic activities. In fact, the people were often observed herding their cattle.[76] There is also evidence that cultivation was the predominant responsibility for many of the Teve residents, since the Sofala hinterland was well known for its rice, wheat, and fruit supplies.[77]

A Poor and Miserable Business: Gold Production in Southern Zambezia

The proof that sixteenth-century Shona societies did not overly emphasize mineral exploitation (particularly gold) is evidenced from the Portuguese descriptions of such workings. The difficulties, limitations, and dangers inherent in Manyika mining were true throughout Southern Zambezia. Furthermore, the combination of an increasing internal demand for the scattered sources of gold as well as its declining profitability in international trade (due

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[75] dos Santos, "Eastern Ethiopia," 219-220.

[76] Brito to King, 8 August 1519, in Documentos, VI, 11.

[77] See, for example, "Memorias da Costa d'África Oriental" (1762), in Relações de Moçambique Setecentista, ed. A. A. de Andrade (Lisbon, 1955) 205; dos Santos, "Eastern Ethiopia," 207, 209-210.

to the sixteenth-century Spanish discoveries in the Americas) encouraged draconic local restrictions on gold extraction.[78] On the whole, gold production was a high-risk, low-return investment.

While the Shona were astute prospectors, they were far less capable miners. Even so, they stripped the surface mineral deposits of Southern Zambezia so completely that most modern mines have been pegged over old workings.[79] It was in the area of deep shaft mining that the Shona lacked the necessary technology; once easily worked deposits were exhausted, they had to be abandoned. According to one typical Portuguese account, the miners, consisting of men, women, and children under a village leader, were organized into working groups which began to dig narrow shafts. When done, steps were constructed within the pit, and the workers began to excavate by slowly passing the dirt in bowls to the surface for washing. Gold veins were followed in every possible direction, but sometimes the poorly constructed

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[78]Roger Summers, "Notes on the Economic Bases of Southern Rhodesia Iron Age Cultures," in Conference on the History of the Central African Peoples (Lusaka, 1963), no pagination; idem, Ancient Mining in Rhodesia, 194; Phimister, "Pre-Colonial Gold Mining," 22-23; Victorino Magalhães-Godinho, L'Économie de l'Empire Portugais aux XV^e e XVI^e Siècles (Paris, 1969), 260.

[79]Beach, Outline of Shona History, Chapter I; Eric Axelson, "Gold Mining in Mashonaland in the 16th and 17th Centuries," Optima, IX (1959), 170; Garlake, Great Zimbabwe, 69.

mines were subject to flash-floods, and rich sources had to be abandoned for the lack of any way to pump out the water.[80]

Beside flooding, there were other health and safety risks. In order to draw off foul fumes and help exfoliate quartz reefs, fires were set at the bottom of the shafts.[81] The process itself was dangerous and, on the whole, poor ventilation must have made working conditions difficult. There also existed the imminent threat of cave-ins because the Shona did "not know how to sink mines or to manage manage machinery for this work."[82]

Most mining took place during the winter season (August, September, and October) when the water table had fallen and after the harvest, thereby not interfering with cultivation.[83] In November when the rains became heavy, excavation had to cease because of flooding. Shona production methods never solved this problem, probably because mining remained, much to the consternation of the Portuguese, a marginal activity. Besides the obvious technical and geological limitations in Southern Zambezia, the work

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[80]See Manuel Barretto, "Report upon the State and Conquest of the Rivers of Cuama," (1667), in RSEA, III, 490.

[81]Summers, Ancient Mining in Rhodesia, 166.

[82]Couto, "Da Asia," 367; also see dos Santos, "Eastern Ethiopia," 219; Francisco Monclaro, "Account of the Journey Made by Fathers of the Company of Jesus with Francisco Barreto" (1569), in RSEA, III, 233.

[83]Barretto, "Report upon the State," 489-490; Phimister, "Pre-colonial Gold Mining," 5, 12.

was labor intensive with a low profit return. Under these circumstances the Shona were fully aware of their economic priorities. An early English writer failed to understand the Shona system when he noted:

> If the negroes were couchous [conscious] of gold themselves they might make great advantage of it, but being extremely lazie themselves never work but when urged thereto by extremity of want to oblidge 'em.[84]

By the sixteenth century many of the easily mined deposits had been largely worked out, and the Portuguese caused a further contraction in operations by offering low prices.[85] These features made it necessary for rulers to exert control over dwindling gold supplies in an effort to increase the mineral's market value.

Within the Mutapa empire, the ruler invoked the death penalty for those of his subjects who mined gold without his permission.[86] The fear of working unauthorized deposits was so great that accidental discoveries of ore were covered with branches in order to warn others to flee

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[84]Bodleian Library, Oxford University, Ms. Rawlinson A. 334, fol. 63, "Description of the Gold Mines on the Sofala Coast," c. 1693; Barros makes a similar comment in "Da Asia," 267.

[85]I. R. Phimister, "Alluvial Gold Mining and Trade in Nineteenth-Century South Central Africa," JAH, XV (1974), 447 n. 9; idem, "Pre-Colonial Gold Mining," 26-27. For a view of a comparable situation in West Africa see Curtin, "Lure of Bambuk Gold," 623-631.

[86]Alcaçova to King, 20 November 1506, in Documentos, I, 391.

from the area.[87] Production depended on the Munhumutapa's consent and command, and other Shona rulers enjoyed the same absolute authority. One Sachiteve, for instance, executed a number of people, not for digging, but for having provided the captain of Sofala with information about new gold mines.[88] Such disclosures threatened the state's integrity as well as the ruler's dominant political and economic suzerainty.

Much of the gold traded, of course, was not from rich veins, but from alluvial sources. Manyika, cited above, was not alone among Southern Zambezian states in collecting gold from streams. For some Shona the winter season was spent panning a few grains and particles of river gold, a process which required neither extensive social organization nor complicated methods.[89] In turn, there were probably less restrictions placed upon the trade of such gold by individual Shona with the Portuguese. This irregular commerce may have satisfied, to some extent,

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[87]dos Santos, "Eastern Ethiopia," 280-281. This author often exaggerated, but there is no doubt about the strict prohibitions in force; see also Bocarro, "Decade," 355; Barretto, "Report upon the State," 490-491; Monclaro, "Account of the Journey," 234; Couto, "Da Asia," 367.

[88]Ajuda, 51-vii-34, fol. 46v., Pedro Coelho de Carvalho, "Papel de Noticia que Deu da Fortaleza de Sofalla," 3 August 1698.

[89]Barros, "Da Asia," 266-267; Couto, "Da Asia," 389; dos Santos, "Eastern Ethiopia," 219, 280; Barretto, "Report upon the State," 489; Phimister, "Alluvial Gold Mining," 445-447.

the African desire for exotic items without upsetting local economic foundations. Yet, the Shona laborer's output of gold rarely exceeded a few ounces for an entire season's work; in return he obtained only a few pieces of cloth or some beads.[90] This unequal exchange was in itself a natural disincentive to gold working, even without the influence of royal prohibitions.

Eventually the Portuguese realized that gold production in Southern Zambezia was a poor business. Disillusioned by the amount of capital, equipment, and labor necessary for development, Portuguese traders even refused mineral concessions.[91] The official mind was slower to accept such a bleak view, and in Lisbon the vision of African Eldorado persisted. At best, it may be said that after 1519, the crown began to place greater emphasis upon the ivory trade, and it became the major Mozambican export by mid-century.

In passing, it should be noted that ivory collecting in Southern Zambezia was certainly as dangerous as gold mining. Little source material is available on the elephant hunt, but the methods described by two sixteenth-century observers reveal the high risk involved. One procedure was for a group to attack a sleeping elephant with spears and

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[90]Summers, Ancient Mining in Rhodesia, 22; Phimister, "Pre-Colonial Gold Mining," 22.

[91]Monclaro, "Account of the Journey," 233, 253.

then retire until the animal was presumed dead. Unfortunately, the hunters sometimes found that they had miscalculated, and they instead became the victims.[92] Even more precarious was the method in which Africans employed only small hatchets to hack at the elephant's legs until it stumbled and was killed.[93] For the Shona, ivory collection remained another means to acquiring fine cloth held by their rulers and imports from the Portuguese.[94]

It should be clear that both gold mining and ivory hunting were adjunct activities for the Shona. Each provided highly desired items for local use and international trade. Shona rulers not only carefully supervised production, but also controlled long-distance commerce through the collection of import and export duties from their own people and, later, Portuguese traders.[95] The European arrival, however, provided a new element in the economic and the political complexion of Southern Zambezia.

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[92]dos Santos, "Eastern Ethiopia," 321.

[93]André Fernandes to Luís Fróis, 25 June 1560, in Documentos, VII, 483. Undoubtedly, traps were also set to capture big game; see E. A. Alpers, Ivory and Slaves in East Central Africa (Berkeley, 1975), 16.

[94]Interview with Mzee Makandara, 16 May 1974, Nova Sofala, Mozambique.

[95]David Chanaiwa, "Politics and Long-Distance Trade in the Mwene Mutapa Empire during the Sixteenth Century," IJAHS, V (1972), 429-430; Veloso to King, 1512, in Documentos, III, 183. Professor Magalhães-Godinho contends that the Portuguese payments were customary gifts rather than taxes, but this objection is more semantic than real; see Magalhães-Godinho, "L'Économie de l'Empire Portugais," 255.

CHAPTER IV

MERCHANTS, MISSIONARIES, AND MUSKETEERS IN THE INTERIOR, 1531-c. 1600

Much to their chagrin, the Portuguese learned that Sofala was a costly undertaking. Their solution was not to abandon the port, but to gain control over the actual sources of gold in the mysterious interior of Southern Zambezia.

As early as 1511, the degredado António Fernandes had been commissioned to explore the vast terra incognita composing Sofala's hinterland. He was instructed to establish friendly relations with the surrounding peoples and to discover what valuable resources they possessed. Unfortunately, Fernandes's peregrinations are only partially known because he was illiterate, and his adventures were recorded only years later by secretaries who themselves had only the vaguest knowledge of local geography.[1] For

[1]The primary documents on Fernandes's journeys are: Veloso to King, 1512, in Documentos, III, 181-189, and Almada to King, 26 June 1516, in Documentos, IV, 275-295. Other scattered references appear in the literature. An annotated version of these letters with maps is also available; see Hugh Tracey, António Fernandes, Descobridor do

several years, Fernandes served as both explorer and roving ambassador. Subsequently, he suggested to Portuguese authorities that they establish permanent settlements in the interior to guarantee their interests. Specifically, he recommended the construction of a factory house along the Zambezi for the acquisition of gold and ivory, and as a restraint on illicit Muslim commerce in the region.[2] It was, however, not until about 1531 that Sena and Tete, sites of previous Swahili fairs, became Portuguese strongholds. Partly as a result of Sofala's failure, Lisbon had finally decided to penetrate the hinterland of Southern Zambezia and thereby establish her imperial presence beyond the coast.

Ironically, instead of sustaining Sofala, the Zambezi settlements sealed its fate. Sena and Tete became linked to the port facilities of Mozambique Island and later Quelimane. With the lines of commerce following the Zambezi, Sofala's continued degeneracy was guaranteed, particularly because the Manyika gold commerce now had another outlet.[3] By trading at the new inland fairs, the Manyika people

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Monomotapa, 1514-1515, trans. and ed., Caetano Montez (Lourenço Marques, 1940). The English version: Hugh Tracey, "Antonio Fernandes, Rhodesia's First Pioneer," Rhodesiana, 19 (1968), 1-26, is less useful. Recent commentators have made extensive efforts to chart Fernandes's journeys and identify the places he visited, note, for example, some of the works cited in Elkiss, "On Service to the Crown," 52 n. 37, and R. W. Dickinson, "Antonio Fernandes--A Reassessment," Rhodesiana, 25 (1971), 45-52.

[2]Veloso to King, 1512, in Documentos, III, 187.

[3]Bhila, Manyika and the Portuguese, 24.

avoided tariffs imposed by the Sachiteve and consequent conflicts. The Portuguese also established early commercial posts within the Chikanga's realm, and even these factories were probably tied to the Zambezi trade, not Sofala.[4]

Sofala's decline not only was a matter of competition or miscalculation, but also derived from flagrant transgressions by São Caetano's officials. It is little wonder that in 1539, the famous navigator João de Castro echoed the earlier sentiments of Afonso de Albuquerque by suggesting that the captaincy of Sofala be leased.[5] It brought little profit and no glory to the crown. The disgusted viceroy Estesvão de Gama added that it was fruitless for the king to issue any further instructions to the settlement, since none were ever followed. He calculated that "were only half of them obeyed, no more would be necessary."[6] The situation was dramatically illustrated in the late 1540s, when Sofala's captain and factor ordered the assassination of an obstructive leader of the nearby Muslim trading community.[7] They also reportedly stirred revolt in the interior when they supported a tractable candidate for

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[4]M. D. D. Newitt, Portuguese Settlement on the Zambesi (London, 1973), Pedro Barretto de Rezende, "Of the State of India (1634), in RSEA, II, 411-413.

[5]Axelson, Portuguese . . . 1488-1600, 133.

[6]Estevão da Gama to King, 11 November 1540, in Documentos, VII, 125.

[7]João Velho to King, c. 1548, in Documentos, VII, 169.

the Changamire's throne. In retaliation, the Shona ruler besieged the Sofalan hinterland, and, according to one witness, if Mutapan troops had not come to the rescue, "the fortress would have been lost and the whole land closed and we would have starved to death."[8] Despite their misdeeds, the two reprobate officials succeeded in accruing massive fortunes by stealing almost all of the ivory brought to the port. In fact, upon departure, the captain was considered the wealthiest man in the east, with the possible exception of the viceroy.[9]

By mid-century a drastic remedy was proposed to the crown:

> I write to His Highness of the little need I think he has of the fortress of Sofala, and of the disservice and little service that is carried out in it, because the captains have factors and factories there that overshadow that of His Highness . . . if His Highness does not think it good for his service to demolish the fortress at Sofala . . . let him demolish forthwith the captain's factory.[10]

The design was apparently rejected, in part due to Sofala's golden mystique, as well as the efforts of various officials.

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[8] Ibid., 173.

[9] Ibid., 173-175; also see João Velho to King, 4 November 1548, in Documentos, VII, 184-189; Afonso de Noronha to Queen, 27 January 1552, in Documentos, VII, 257. It is little wonder that the post of captain was highly prized by ambitious fidalgos for themselves and their relatives; for example, Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa, Cod. 886, fols. 783-784, "Provisão que Pedio Francisco de Sa para seus Irmaos," 24 March 1552.

[10] João de Gamarfa to Queen, 8 November 1555, in Documentos, VII, 315.

Lisbon, however, was not unaware of the financial burden São Caetano represented. The king even dispatched an emissary to the east in an effort to discover why certain imperial possessions continuously produced excessive and unnecessary expenses. According to the agent, Sofala was the most egregious example in the Estado da India, and although he made recommendations, no changes resulted.[11]

More and more the road to riches seemed to the Portuguese to run along the Zambezi in the direction of their ally, the Munhumutapa. Lisbon hoped that its good neighbor policy would permit the growth of royal commerce and, subsequently, domination over the legendary wealth of Southern Zambezia. In turn, the Mutapa state seemingly viewed Portugal not only as a trading partner, but also as a military comrade in its struggle with Shona foes.

Even before the mid-sixteenth century a Portuguese representative had been assigned to the Mutapa kingdom and had acquired judicial and administrative powers. According to João dos Santos, the resident served "as agent in all matters between the Portuguese and Monomotapa . . . and as factor of Monomotapa to receive all the duties paid to him by the merchants."[12] The existence of this office facilitated peaceful commerce as long as amenities and decorum

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[11]Antão de Noronha to Captain and Officers of the Fortress of Sofala, 12 April 1565, in Documentos, VIII (Lisbon, 1975), 137-149.

[12]dos Santos, "Eastern Ethiopia," 271.

were observed. The failure, for example, to observe the curva (the traditional payment of cloth made by each newly arrived captain of Mozambique Island) resulted in an attack on Portuguese merchants and the seizure of their goods.[13] In no way were sixteenth-century Luso-Mutapan relations simply a matter of European domination. Further proof is provided by the demise of the first Portuguese missionary enterprise and the subsequent Barreto-Homem expedition.

Shadowing the penetration of Southern Zambezia by officials and merchants were the spiritual advisers. Their first obligations were to tend to their own flock (within the Portuguese settlements) and to attempt to convert nearby African populations. The developing commercial and political relationship with the Munhumutapa led the Portuguese to believe that his conversion was both timely and appropriate. For this purpose, the Society of Jesus chose Gonçalo da Silveira (1526-1561), whose religious assignment was also diplomatic and economic. There was, therefore, no contradiction in the Portuguese mind between transmitting "the light of Jesus Christ" and emphasizing the quantity of gold available within the Mutapa state.[14]

It should be pointed out that da Silveira was atypical of Portuguese priests, and, in fact, his choice

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[13] Ibid., 272; Beach, "Shona Empires, I," 25 n. 2.

[14] Gonçalo da Silveira to Society of Jesus, November 1559, in Documentos, VII, 425.

as first religious councilor to the Mutapa court was a strategic error. Da Silveira had abandoned his aristocratic heritage in order to devote his life to the church as a Jesuit missionary, serving first in India before being called to Mozambique. Even from his early career, the father was known for his austere lifestyle and was regarded as a man obsessed by his religious convictions.[15]

After reaching Mozambique Island in 1560, da Silveira traveled south with two companions to a region inland from the port of Inhambane. During his brief tenure there the padre calculated that he had baptised 450 Africans.[16] Da Silveira, however, soon returned to Mozambique Island to collect trade goods and to set sail along the Zambezi for passage into the Mutapa empire.

The travails of the journey itself seem only to have stimulated da Silveira's zeal. At one point, after surviving a violent sea squall, the Jesuit reportedly said mass in the blazing sun until his head blistered, and then

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[15]On his early life, see António Garcia, "Gonçalo da Silveira, Proto-Mártir de Moçambique e da África do Sul, 1560-1561," Monumenta, VI (1970), 53-57.

[16]Gonçalo da Silveira to Society of Jesus, 9 August 1560, in Documentos, VII, 503. The report is confirmed by other documentary sources on da Silveira's efforts among this mixed Tonga-Shona group. A study of these people in the sixteenth century is provided in C. E. Fuller, "An Ethnographic Study of Continuity and Change in Gwambe Culture" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1955), 43-72; cf. Alan Smith, "The Peoples of Southern Mozambique: An Historical Survey," JAH, XIV (1973), 565-566, 573.

refused any remedy for his misery.[17] Such rigid self-discipline also was exemplified when da Silveira spent eight days aboard ship in seclusion reading a book on the lives of the saints while "only eating once a day a handful of roasted grain, and refusing everything else."[18] By the time he arrived at the court of the ruling Munhumutapa Negomo, Gonçalo da Silveira was prepared for his eventual martyrdom.

Negomo was immediately surprised by the missionary who, unlike other Portuguese, rejected gifts of gold, servants, and cattle. Through his interpreter, the ruler speculated that such a man was unnatural and "must have been born of the herbs."[19] To Negomo, da Silveira's other-worldliness made him suspect. The padre meanwhile was busy devoting himself to the massive conversion of hundreds of the Shona elite, although it is unlikely that the effect was more than superficial. According to a resident Portuguese trader, Negomo was dissuaded from the new Christian teachings by "Moorish engangas" (wizards) who convinced him

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[17] Luís Fróis, "Of the Voyage of the Father Dom Gonçalo to the Kingdom of Monomotapa and of His Happy Passing Away" (1561), in RSEA, II, 116-117; Book Concerning the Work of the Society of Jesus in the East, 1573, in Documentos, VIII, 213.

[18] Fróis, "Voyage of the Father Dom Gonçalo," 118.

[19] Ibid., 120. The fact that da Silveira ate no meat, but only fruit and millet cooked with herbs, may have contributed to the Mutapa's observation.

that da Silveira represented a political threat.[20] It is unnecessary, however, to attribute the padre's undoing to a Muslim plot; the episode appears to represent the reaction of traditional religious authorities to Christianity.[21] Furthermore, Negomo's anxieties, regarding not only Portuguese intervention, but also Shona competitors for his kingdom, contributed to his mistrust of da Silveira. The Munhumutapa seems to have believed that the Jesuit missionary was actually an agent of the Sachiteve Chipute, his sworn enemy and claimant to the empire.[22] The simple fact that da Silveira had become a permanent fixture of the court also threatened to undermine Negomo's authority.

Thus Gonçalo da Silveira fell prey not only to the encounter between competing religions, but also factional Shona politics; the padre was perceived as an element in the competition. His intolerant attitudes and impetuous behavior only contributed to his doom. Da Silveira seems to have been fascinated with his impending martyrdom: when warned of Negomo's decision to have him assassinated, he absolutely refused to depart, forgave his persecutors, and,

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[20]Letter of António Caiado (c. 1561), in RSEA, II, 102; also see Frois, "Voyage of the Father Dom Gonçalo," 122-123.

[21]Beach, "Shona Empires, I," 20-21.

[22]Letter of Caiado (c. 1561), in RSEA II, 102; Frois, "Voyage of the Father Dom Gonçalo," 123; Abraham, "Early Political History," 69.

with a smile, prepared for death.[23] Luís Fróis, who wrote the dramatic account of the missionary's final days, added that da Silveira was impatient to meet his end; he paced back and forth "as if he wished to be already free and reigning with Christ."[24]

On 16 March 1561 the Jesuit father was strangled and his body cast into a nearby stream. Negomo reportedly regretted the deed, but his sorrow was related to the warning of Portuguese merchants that the padre's death might engender a military reprisal by Lisbon.[25] (During this episode the traders were neither harmed nor expelled, indicating the absence of general xenophobia.) The Mutapa state, like its other Shona counterparts, sought to manipulate the Portuguese for its own purpose and did not seek warfare.

The murder of a Portuguese priest, especially from an aristocratic family, demanded immediate punitive measures from Lisbon. Yet, the reaction was hardly swift, not being initiated for almost a decade. It is sometimes assumed that the misguided fiasco known as the Barreto-Homem expedition (1569-1575) was the direct result of the execution. The delay in response, as well as the facts of the mission, deny

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[23]Letter of Caiado (c. 1561), in RSEA, II, 103.

[24]Fróis, "Voyage of the Father Dom Gonçalo," 125.

[25]Ibid., 127.

this contention. It may be argued that it was decided only fater that da Silveira's death could be exploited as a pretext for invasion and conquest.

When the fourteen-year-old Sebastião (1557-1578) assumed the Lusitanian Crown in 1568, the Jesuit educated youth was obsessed "with the idea of becoming Christ's captain against the Infidels."[26] One way of achieving such glory was to dispatch a military expedition against the Mutapa state. The legal justification for the king's plan was provided by theologians and lawyers who cited the Munhumutapa as being guilty of encouraging Islam and brigandage as well as da Silveira's murder. They furthermore claimed that the Shona ruler's failure to allow commerce and the promulgation of the gospel was punishable by "lawful" warfare.[27] Padre Monclaro, the apologist for the expedition, repeated these indictments, but added that the anticipated riches of the Mutapa state induced many men, including nobles, to participate in the mission.[28]

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[26]H. V. Livermore, A New History of Portugal (Cambridge, 1966), 153.

[27]Decision of the Lawyers, 23 January 1569, in RSEA, III, 153-156. In terms of international law, the document was inconsistent with even the existing precepts of jurisprudence; see J. M. Chirenje, "Portuguese Priests and Soldiers in Zimbabwe, 1560-1572: The Interplay between Evangelism and Trade," IJAHS, VI (1973), 42-47.

[28]Monclaro, "Account of the Journey," 202-204. Even the lawyers' judgment stipulated that the Munhumutapa was to provide tribute in gold or land, but these issues were hedged in legal terms rather than ones of personal profit;

Leading the entourage was Francisco Barreto, the former Governor of India, who commanded a company of perhaps one thousand troops. If retribution was his motive, Barreto certainly displayed no anxiety in postponing the struggle. The captain had a mania for wasting time. Although he departed Lisbon in April 1569, Barreto decided to lay over in Brazil rather than proceed directly to Mozambique, as did his subordinate Vasco Fernandes Homem. Barreto's delay was both unnecessary and unusual, since few vessels sailing to the orient stopped in Brazil. By 1565, the crown had even prohibited India bound ships from wintering there.[29]

The well rested commander finally reached Mozambique in May 1570, but complained that his provisions were insufficient for the task and therefore the expedition would have to await supplies from Lisbon. Instead of initiating the conquest of the Mutapa kingdom, Barreto sailed up the East African coast as far as Pate, ostensibly to collect overdue taxes from local potentates, but it was little more

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Decision of the Lawyers, 23 January 1569, in RSEA, III, 156. Other chroniclers indicate that gold provided the single inducement for the expedition; see Couto, "Da Asia," 357-358; Faria e Sousa, "Asia Portuguesa," 21.

[29]On this subject, see Alexander Marchant, "Colonial Brazil as a Way Station for the Portuguese India Fleets," Geographical Review, XXXI (1941), 454-465.

than a sight-seeing excursion.[30] The unscheduled expedition so exasperated the king that he censured Barreto for abandoning his main purpose.[31] The admonition did not, however, dissuade the captain from his procrastination. He even considered embarking for India, where local rebellions threatened Portuguese rule, until the viceroy convinced him that his own fleet was sufficient to deal with the emergency.[32] Barreto seems to have underestimated the difficulties posed by the Mutapa campaign, and while he tarried, more than one hundred of his crew died of disease long before reaching the battlefield.

Further delay was caused by debate over which route to follow into the interior. The conflict indicates how little da Silveira's death influenced the goals of the mission. Originally, a council had decided to depart from Sofala and march westward into Manyika to obtain gold in addition to an alliance with the Chikanga, the Mutapa's known enemy.[33] It was argued that the direct Zambezi route was more dangerous; yet, beginning at Sofala certainly

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[30]Barreto, for example, wrote to the king of the beauty and fertility of Zanzibar which greatly impressed him; A. N. T. T., Gavetas, 2-6-30, Francisco Barreto to King, 5 August 1571. For the complete tour, see Monclaro, "Account of the Journey," 209-216.

[31]Couto, "Da Asia," 360.

[32]Ibid., 360-363.

[33]Ibid., 361-363; Axelson, Portuguese . . . 1488-1600, 157.

implied a more circuitous journey. Furthermore, unless the goal was simply to conquer the Manyika mines, the Barreto plan made little logistic sense. Padre Monclaro, therefore, demanded that the troops follow an undeviating course into Mutapan territory. Barreto capitulated, according to Diogo de Couto, because he feared the wrath of the Jesuit hierarchy and Dom Sebastião.[34] Barreto probably would have been intimidated by the threat of another rebuke from the king, particularly if he were not complying with his orders. While the monarch was interested in both God and Mammon, it appears that the Barreto expedition was concerned only with the latter. Monclaro, however, was condemned by Portuguese chroniclers for his political interference, although, in reality, the padre only was attempting to retain the mission's original purpose.[35]

Finally at the end of 1571, the expedition entered the Zambezi and proceeded to Sena, where a base camp was established. A Portuguese trader was sent to the Munhumutapa to announce Barreto's arrival and to deliver the message that the Portuguese wanted only friendship and trade; the

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[34]Couto, "Da Asia," 363. Monclaro's report is strangely silent on this dispute, perhaps because of the mission's outcome.

[35]Faria e Sousa, "Asia Portuguesa," 21; Couto, "Da Asia," 363. In his analysis of the entire expedition, Vasco Fernandes Homem observed that the Jesuit advisers had strict orders to proceed directly to Mutapa state; Ajuda, 51-viii-40, fol. 212v., Homem to da Sylva, 15 February 1576; also see Jerónimo de Alcântara Guerreiro, "Inquérito em Moçambique no Ano de 1573," Studia, 6 (1960), 9-10.

troops were only there to clear away underbrush along the commercial routes.[36] Meanwhile, men and horses at Sena were dying from disease--either malaria or cholera--attributed to "Moorish" poison. With Monclaro's encouragement, these deaths were utilized as a pretext to annihilate the local Muslim community.[37] The violence was horrific: Muslims were impaled alive, hacked to pieces with axes, blown apart with cannons, and torn asunder while tied to bent trees. The Portuguese seem to have relished the massacre, less for its anti-Muslim sentiments, than for the opportunity to loot the "Moorish" establishment.[38]

From Sena the enriched Portuguese column traveled up the river where they attacked Samungazi's Tonga. The latter were regarded by the Munhumutapa as within his sphere of influence, although they retained local autonomy. At some point, Samungazi had rebelled by cutting the route between the Shona state and Sena, and therefore, the Portuguese assault was welcomed by the Munhumutapa.[39] The Europeans inflicted a large number of casualties, but the

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[36]Monclaro, "Account of the Journey," 237.

[37]Ibid., 223-225; Couto, "Da Asia," 370-372; Faria e Sousa, "Asia Portuguesa," 26. Monclaro admitted that he persuaded Barreto to believe the Muslims were responsible, although he knew many Portuguese deaths were due to other causes.

[38]Couto, "Da Asia," 370-371.

[39]Ibid., 373; Faria e Sousa, "Asia Portuguesa," 26; Monclaro, "Account of the Journey," 247; Beach, "Shona Empires," I, 21.

weakened force could venture no further into the interior and returned to Sena in October 1572 without having reached the Mutapa state.

Greeting the troops at Sena was a representative of Negomo who complimented the commander on his victory over the Tonga and indicated the desire of his people to have peaceful commerce with the Portuguese. Barreto set three conditions: the expulsion of Muslims from the state, the acceptance of Christianity, and the grant of Mutapan gold mines to Lisbon.[40] Portuguese envoys returned with the Shona ambassador to receive the Munhumutapa's answer.

Not wanting to remain idle when his talents were needed elsewhere, Francisco Barreto returned during December 1572 to Mozambique Island. His purpose was to collect more supplies for the campaign and to settle a political tangle that had developed at the fortress. While at the coast, Barreto was unaware that in the interior Negomo had agreed to expel the Muslims, to provide the Portuguese with unspecified mineral concessions, and to discuss the issue of Christianity.[41] Clearly, Negomo was not simply playing a clever diplomatic game; he was willing to sacrifice the Muslim traders as long as Portuguese merchants could supply the same commodities. The allocation of mines, assuming they were in peripheral areas and of typically low yield,

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[40]Monclaro, "Account of the Journey," 247.

[41]Ibid., 251-252.

also posed no threat. Only on the issue of Christianity did Negomo disarm the original demand by making it a point of mutual consideration. In return, the Portuguese had silenced the troublesome Tonga revolt and consequently enhanced Mutapan authority in Southern Zambezia.[42]

In May 1573, after frittering away valuable time, Barreto finally returned to Sena. To his horror, he found many of his men dead, and not a single one remained in good health. A few days later the commander himself succumbed, and the remaining force of less than two hundred, under the authority of Vasco Fernandes Homem, returned to Mozambique Island to convalesce.

The Portuguese had failed to reach Negomo, but they were not yet finished. Homem fitted out a new expedition from the crews of recently arrived ships, and in 1574, they departed for the interior via Sofala.[43] The troops first entered the Teve state where their reception was hostile. The Sachiteve feared that the Portuguese penetration of the interior would lead to the elimination of his role as middleman between Manyika and Sofala.[44] Furthermore, the movement of a foreign army through his domain was an obvious

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[42]See Beach, "Shona Empires, I," 21-22.

[43]Axelson, Portuguese . . . 1488-1600, 161. Many of the soldiers fled before departure when they became aware of what possibly lay ahead of them.

[44]Couto, "Da Asia," 387-388; dos Santos, "Eastern Ethiopia," 217.

infringement on his sovereignty and evidence of conquest. For these reasons, food was hidden and wells were polluted; the Portuguese retaliated by burning and killing, and even imprisoning the Sachiteve's family.[45] The defeat of Teve not only opened the route to Manyika, but also eliminated one of the Munhumutapa's most serious competitors. While, ironically, Gonçalo da Silveira may have been killed because he was thought to be the Sachiteve's agent, the Portuguese removed this threat in their effort to reach the Munhumutapa and punish him.

When Homem's company reached Manyika, they were well received, not simply because the Chikanga was aware of what had happened in Teve, but also for the possible leverage the Portuguese could provide in Shona politics. Even so, it is unlikely that the Chikanga volunteered the location of the richest gold deposits. Although it has been noted above that mining was a marginal activity, the Manyika people would not have encouraged the expropriation of their mineral wealth, if clever subterfuge could be used to mislead the Portuguese.[46] Homem was extremely disappointed in the quantity of available gold, and though his mining expert found it to be of high quality, great numbers of workers and

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[45]Couto, "Da Asia," 388-389; Faria e Sousa, "Asia Portuguesa," 29; Ajuda, 51-viii-40, fol. 214, Homen to da Sylva, 15 February 1576.

[46]See the comments of H. H. K. Bhila in his "Trade and Survival," 13.

machines would have been necessary for the crown to turn a profit.[47] Instead of continuing the expedition, the Europeans returned to Sofala where they once again sailed for the Zambezi. It is unclear why Homem did not continue northward, but if, as Professor Eric Axelson suggests, he feared a Mutapa invasion of Manyika,[48] it is further proof that Portuguese claims of regional sovereignty were only a sham. Since the new voyage along the Zambezi was to search for silver mines, any higher motivations for the mission's purpose had by then dissipated.

The next assault on the Zambezi proved no more successful. During the latter part of 1575, the fever-plagued soldiers struggled up the river. Ambassadors of the shrewd Munhumutapa granted the Portuguese mineral concessions over territories they did not control, and local rulers accordingly refused to cooperate. The exasperated Homem returned to Mozambique Island, leaving a small contingent in the interior which was subsequently ambushed and killed.[49]

The first attempt at military conquest of the hinterland had proved a costly and ill-conceived adventure. The

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[47]Ajuda, 51-viii-40, fols. 214-214v., Homen to da Sylva, 15 February 1576; Couto, "Da Asia," 389-390; dos Santos, "Eastern Ethiopia," 218.

[48]Axelson, Portuguese . . . 1488-1600, 162.

[49]Faria e Sousa, "Asia Portuguesa," 30; dos Santos, "Eastern Ethiopia," 282-285.

Barreto-Homem expedition was doomed by vacilation, delays, military blunders, and illness. Its pitiful ignorance of the interior terrain led to inappropriate preparations--from cumbersome wagon trains to Barreto's own unsuitable coat of armor (which he wore during the entire campaign). More importantly, the Portuguese underestimated their enemy and were duped in their effort to undermine him. In reality, they little affected the course of sixteenth-century Mutapan history because most of the important developments were of an African nature.[50] To the extent that they were useful, the Portuguese had become tools in the struggles between Shona polities.

For the Portuguese, events beyond Southern Zambezia proved to be more crucial during the last quarter of the sixteenth century. Young King Sebastião involved his country in Moroccan internal politics, which culminated in the Spanish captivity (1580-1640). The monarch led a force of several thousand men to Ksar el Kebir where, on 4 August 1578, a battle was fought which was so badly organized that it ranks among the greatest military disasters in history. The Portuguese forces, including Sebastião, were annihilated.[51] The throne was assumed by the elderly Dom Henrique,

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[50]Beach, "Shona Empires, I," 22.

[51]For a précis of these events see Livermore, New History of Portugal, 156-158; a detailed study is provided in E. W. Bovill, The Battle of Alcazar (London, 1952).

Sebastião's uncle, who died in 1580, leaving the way open for the related Filipe II (1580-1598) of Spain to usurp the Portuguese crown.

The Spanish monarch assuaged his new Iberian subjects by promising to retain their officials and respect their laws and customs. In theory, Lusitania remained a sovereign unit, but Castile continuously encroached upon Portuguese local autonomy. Furthermore, Lisbon's neutrality in European politics was abrogated; Spain's enemies now became hers. Portuguese overseas territory was regarded as fair game by the Dutch, French, and English, especially since the empire was less secure than its Spanish counterpart. From East Africa to the orient the vulnerable Estado da India was attacked. Along coastal Mozambique, the fear of these "Inimigos da Europa" was expressed by urgent requests to rebuild defenses, prominent among which was the deteriorating fortress at Sofala. Local commerce scarcely covered São Caetano's expenses, and it was not unusual for officials to seek credit in order simply to purchase trading goods.[52] In fact, although captains were instructed to divide their time equally between the fortresses at

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[52]Regimento da Fortaleza de Sofala, 27 July 1574, in Regimentos das Fortalezas da India, ed. P. S. S. Pissurlencar (Bastorá-Goa, 1951), 195; Book of Expediture of the Fortresses of Sofala and Mozambique, 7 November 1574, in Documentos, VIII, 431.

Mozambique Island and Sofala, they generally preferred to reside continuously at the more profitable northerly entrepôt.[53]

Within the interior, trade between the Portuguese and the Shona states continued, although the crown arrogantly proclaimed that gold could be obtained easily by the conquest of the Mutapa state. A more cautious approach was advocated, however, due to the lack of royal capital.[54] The fiscal situation notwithstanding, in 1585, one captain proposed yet another major campaign. He even had the temerity to suggest that a great expedition of 2,000 men be launched, once again, along the Zambezi.[55] Meanwhile, Shona rulers maintained control of mineral resources and still set the terms of trade in Southern Zambezia.

During the following decade, both Portuguese traders and the Mutapa state were intimidated by offshoots of the so-called Zimba migrations.[56] In 1592 and 1593, the Zimba

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[53]B. N. M., Ms. 3217, fol. 38v., "Livro das Cidades e Fortalezas," c. 1582.

[54]A. N. T. T., Cartas dos Vicereis da India, no. 58, King to Duarte de Meneses, n.d. (c. 1585); British Museum, Add. Ms. 25,419, fol. 183v., Francisco Roiz Silveira, "Governo do Estado da India Oriental," 1578.

[55]Nuno Velho Pereira to King, 29 October 1585, in Documentos, VIII, 529. The suggestion is especially peculiar in light of the captain's revelation that a large proportion of the Portuguese settler population of Mozambique Island recently had been annihilated by a Makua attack.

[56]On the ethnic identification of what were apparently diverse groups see Alpers, Ivory and Slaves, 46-53.

defeated garrisons from Tete and Sena when they impetuously crossed the Zambezi.[57] Later, the Munhumutapa's own domain was invaded by two groups from the same northern region. The Shona ruler was powerless to suppress these enemies without aid. The Portuguese were obligated to help, not only due to their tributary position, but also because trade was suffering.[58] The Munhumutapa's reliance upon them, however, was to prove costly, especially when it became obvious to his Lusitanian supporters that he had little authority over surrounding Shona communities. In the ensuing period, the Portuguese attempted to salvage the Mutapa state for their own purposes, but found that their plans were largely thwarted by the rise of the Changamire empire.

The sixteenth-century optimism which marked the Portuguese entrance into Southern Zambezia had been dampened, but not extinguished. New schemes were being constantly considered by the royal court which both exaggerated the mineral wealth available and the ability of the Portuguese to determine events in the region. And although King Filipe complained that Sofala showed no profit for the crown, but

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[57]dos Santos, "Eastern Ethiopia," 293-299; Couto, "Da Asia," 404-410.

[58]Bocarro, "Decade," 361-364; Beach, "Shona Empires, I," 23.

only expenses,[59] he was as reluctant as his predecessors to abandon the fabled port.

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[59]A. N. T. T., Corpo Cronológico, 3-21-1, King to Mathias de Albuquerque, 31 March 1593.

CHAPTER V

IN PURSUIT OF THE GOLDEN FLEECE, 1600-1800

Penury and Profit in Seventeenth Century Southeast Africa

During the seventeenth century the fiction of Portugal's domain became increasingly apparent. A barren treasury and manpower shortage made the empire vulnerable on all fronts to European rivals. In the Indian Ocean arena interlopers denied Lisbon her traditional freedom of the sea, while on land Portuguese settlements survived, largely through the sufferance of the indigenous populations. Despite these circumstances and previous experiences, the Iberian nation remained sanguine about the prospects for Southern Zambezia.

Although southeast Africa was hardly the focal point of Portugal's imperial interests, it was still widely believed that strategically and economically the region was significant. The battered fortress at Sofala, however, remained a persistent source of anxiety and embarrassment. For reasons more imagined than real, it was feared that the Dutch, French, or English would appropriate the legendary gold emporium if innovations were not undertaken. Yet, over

the following decades Lisbon's ability to retain this settlement was neither the result of wise administration nor military valor. Quite simply, her competitors directed their energies at more lucrative pieces of real estate. The Netherlands, in particular, waged fierce campaigns against the Portuguese which took place on three continents and seven seas.[1]

As early as 1601, Dutch pinnaces were sighted off the Sofala coast, although they apparently did not threaten the port. Of far more interest to the Lowlanders was Mozambique Island. Jan Huighen van Linschoten, a Dutch merchant, sailed there during 1585, and made an optimistic report to his countrymen. He observed that the island provided an excellent harbor for ships engaged in the India trade and also served as a collection center for the gold of Munhumutapa.[2] Just after the turn of the century, the Dutch reconnoitered the isle and even managed to seize two vessels laden with ivory. It was, however, in 1607 and 1608 that the settlement was besieged, severly damaged, and almost captured by Holland.[3]

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[1]See C. R. Boxer, "Portuguese and Dutch Colonial Rivalry, 1641-1661," Studia, 2 (1958), 7-42; idem, Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 106-127.

[2]Jan Huighen van Linschoten, Discours of Voyages into ye Easte and West Indies (London, 1598), 9-10.

[3]The literature on the Dutch attacks is prolific and deserves a full length study in English. See, for example, Ajuda, 51-iv-36, António Durão, "Hystorya dos Cercos que

King Filipe III (1598-1621) long had urged the viceroy of India to refurbish his East African settlements against such assaults, but little had been done because the means were lacking. At Sofala, in particular, the fort was in a frightful state: it lacked ammunition and soldiers and needed considerable repair.[4] The threat of sea attack, though, seemed remote owing to Sofala's dangerous shoal and the shallow depth of its channel. Without the aid of local pilots, larger ships could not reach the port or risked running aground.[5] Additionally, with the exception of the private trade by petty officials, commerce at the enclave was of only trifling significance. In retrospect, the crown's continued belief that Sofala was worth retaining and would ultimately bring glory and wealth seems absurd.

Pecuniary considerations, however, did play a dominant role in the expansive Portuguese aspirations for

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Olandes Puzerão a Fortaleza de Moçambique o Anno de 607 e 608," 1609; Academia das Ciências de Lisboa, Ms. Azul 384, fols. 1-72, untitled, n.d.; Luiz Coelho de Barbuda, "Military Achievements of the Portuguese" (1624), in RSEA, II, 362-377; Humberto Leitão, "Um Notável Episódio do Primeiro Cerco de Moçambique," Ultramar, XII (1971), 5-13; Axelson, Portuguese . . . 1600-1700, 15-29. Important sources also exist in Dutch.

[4]A. N. T. T., DRI, 1, fol. 61, King to Viceroy, 27 January 1607; A. N. T. T., DRI, 2, fol. 32, King to Viceroy, 12 February 1608; A. H. U., Moç., Cx. 1, Cristovão de Moura to João de Forjaz Pereira, 21 March 1608.

[5]Rezende, "Of the State of India," 403. The growth in ship size during the seventeenth century was an important cause of the increase in shipwrecks; see James Duffy, Shipwreck and Empire (Cambridge, Mass., 1955), 50-54.

Southern Zambezia. The faltering and increasingly dependent Mutapa state was central to these desires. Gatsi Rusere (c. 1589-1623), the ruling paramount, relied heavily upon his European comrades for military aid. Foremost among these men was a resident of Tete, Diogo Simoẽs Madeira (Inhamacoto) who assembled a private army to aid the beleaguered Munhumutapa. In return, on 1 August 1607, Gatsi ceded to King Filipe all the mineral wealth of his land.[6] Although the difficulties posed in exploiting these mines and in subordinating local Shona authorities made this concession less momentous than it appears, the transfer did reflect a continued diminution in Mutapan authority. Furthermore, it initiated a new strategy by the Iberian monarchy for penetration of the interior.

The blueprint for subjugation of southeastern Africa included the utilization of established forts along the Zambezi as offensive outposts and military support for the tractable Munhumutapa.[7] Shamelessly, an advisory council even suggested to the king that conquest of the mines would be more easily accomplished if the "heathens" were converted to Christianity.[8] These efforts, it was

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[6]Bocarro, "Decade," 366-370.

[7]A. H. U., Moç., Cx. 1, Moura to Forjaz Pereira, 21 March 1608; A. H. U., Moç., Cx. 1, Alfonso da Faza, "Sobre as Minas de Manamotapa," 24 September 1609.

[8]A. H. U., Moç., Cx. 1, Consulta do Conselho da Fazenda to King, 24 September 1609. Motives, in this instance, were clearly temporal rather than spiritual.

believed, would yield not only gold, but also rich quantities of silver from the fabled mines of Chicoa.[9] There is no evidence, however, for the existence of mines within the region. Much to the chagrin of the Iberians, the silver of Chicoa was as illusory as the gold of Sofala. A series of royal appointees with grandiloquent titles failed in a futile quest which served to exacerbate local tensions as well as to diminish commerce.[10]

Meanwhile, at Sofala, the old fortress remained unrenovated and neglected throughout the 1620s. The settlement reportedly lacked a captain of the garrison or indeed troops for him to command. In fact, parts of the fort's walls had crumbled to the ground and gates were missing or without locks. Failure to make the necessary repairs, officials emphasized, would permit Dutch seizure of the port and its trade.[11] King Filipe IV (1621-1665) feared

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[9]For reports on the legendary wealth of Chicoa see, for example, Bocarro, "Decade," 412-433; Jerónimo de Alcântara Guerreiro and José de Oliviera Boléo, As Minas de Prata de Chicoa (Lourenço Marques, 1944); Axelson, Padre Ant.º Gomes, 32; Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa, Fundo Geral, Cod. 176, fols. 21-23; Henrique Bravo de Moraes, "Informação sobre os Rios de Cuama e Sofala," 1726; cf. W. G. L. Randles, L'Empire du Monomotapa du XVe Siècle (Paris, 1975), 49-50.

[10]The details of this chapter of imperial malfeasance are described in Bocarro, "Decade," 381-435; Axelson, Portuguese . . . 1600-1700, 33-77.

[11]Archivo General de Simancas (Spain), Cod. 1552, fol. 93, letter to King, 7 March 1620; A. N. T. T., DRI, 15, fols. 231-232, Nuno Álvares Pereira to Viceroy, 26 June 1621; Ajuda, 50-v-32, fol. 169, "Propuesta de Francisco Vaz d'Almada," c. 1622; A. H. U. Moç., Cx. 1, letter to Luís da

that the loss of Sofala or the establishment of a rival trading station nearby would provide an opponent the opportunity to undersell Portuguese merchandise in the interior.[12] With Mozambican commerce already diminished, competition would destroy Portugal's frail authority in Southern Zambezia. For this reason, definite plans were approved to dispatch men and munitions to fortify coastal enclaves.

Under the command of João da Costa, a crew which included carpenters, bricklayers, miners, and the fortification engineer Bartolomeu Cotão was assembled for the passage to southeast Africa. The laborers were engaged to restore the various fortresses and to begin mineral exploitation of the hinterland. Such efforts, it was believed, would guarantee Portuguese sovereignty in the face of not only Dutch antagonism, but also suspicious English activities.[13] When da Costa's vessels finally embarked in 1633, their departure was so sudden that, incredible as it may seem, Cotão and several of his colleagues were accidentally

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Silva, 9 February 1623; B. N. M., Cod. 2362, fols. 290-291, Pedro d'Almeida Cabral to King, 15 November 1630.

[12]A. N. T. T., DRI, 25, fol. 150, King to Viceroy, 1628.

[13]F. U. P., LM, 16-A, 21/1-2, King to Viceroy, April 1632; F. U. P. LM, 17, 31/5, King to Captain of Mozambique and Sofala, February 1633.

left behind.[14] The absurdity of this incident was soon overshadowed by the expedition's extravagant claims that Southern Zambezia was rich in gold and silver beyond any expectations.[15] The anticipated wealth of the region contrasted though with the actual conditions there and, in particular, at Sofala.

In a report commissioned by the viceroy in 1634, Pedro Barreto de Rezende presented a bleak picture of the port. According to the author, the fort remained in disrepair with neither soldiers nor ammunition. A handful of Portuguese lived in the nearby village and, with their slaves, could be employed to defend the palisade. Such slaves were Sofala's only Christian converts, and they quickly shed the faith once they gained their freedom. Rezende added that the Sachiteve, whose kingdom surrounded Sofala, did not even consider this foreign theology and, moreover, treated the settlement as a tribute-paying community to aid him in his struggle against the Munhumutapa. The Portuguese observer concluded that since the alleged purpose of São Caetano was to protect the (nominal) trade

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[14]The documentation on this expedition is confusing and is probably a reflection of the events; see King to Viceroy, 2 April 1632, in RSEA, 230-231; F. U. P., LM, 17, 26/5, King to Viceroy 1633; A. N. T. T., DRI, 31, fol. 87, King to Viceroy, 10 December 1633; King to Viceroy, 7 March 1634, in RSEA, IV, 239; A. N. T. T., DRI, 31, fol. 434, King to Viceroy, 17 March 1634; Margarida to Viceroy, 28 March 1636, in RSEA, IV, 272-273.

[15]Axelson, Portuguese . . . 1600-1700, 99-100.

in gold, ivory, and ambergris from the covetous designs of rival nations, the fort should be refurbished.[16]

The captain of Mozambique Island and Sofala, Filipe Mascarenhas, added his own warning. He pointed out that once the Dutch occupied the port they would gain control of the trade with Manyika and threaten Portuguese interests in the Mutapa state.[17] Yet, even before the receipt of these reports, the monarch proposed a new plan for Southern Zambezia.

King Filipe's design involved the massive colonial settlement of the region in order to promote commerce and mining. Besides soldiers and miners, marriageable women (from the overcrowded poor houses) would be sent to assure the growth of the Portuguese community. Additional clergy could aid the scheme by proselytizing Africans and assuring not only expansion of the gospel, but also Iberian rule. Of course, thought was also given to refortification, and Sofala, the king noted, needed immediate attention. Besides repairs, he suggested a garrison of two hundred men and the construction of another nearby fortress to protect the port.

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[16]Rezende, "Of the State of India," 404-406.

[17]Filipe Mascarenhas to King, 4 February 1635, in APO, IV-II-II (Bastorá, 1938), 119. Mascarenhas himself abandoned his office after less than one year because of alleged financial loses; see Diogo de Sousa de Menezes to King, 17 February 1635, in RSEA, IV, 280; King to Viceroy, 24 February 1635, in RSEA, IV, 263; Archivo General de Simancas, Cod. 1469, royal letter, 24 March 1636.

Filipe claimed his proposals were essential to the preservation and defense of an important part of the Estado da India.[18]

The extravagant design for Southern Zambezia was a misguided attempt by Spain at external reform. Early in the seventeenth century Castile had become aware of her diminished status as a world power, but the remedies officials considered were frequently misconceived.[19] In this case, Filipe's notions bore little relation to the realities which were to be faced. While royal councils debated who would fill important posts, it became impossible during 1635 and 1636 to find rank and file settlers for the dangerous undertaking. This development partly derived from the doubts expressed by mining experts about the richness of the region's mineral deposits. Another deterent was the hostility of Portuguese sertanejos (backwoodsmen) and local Shona to any further interference from agents of the Iberian Crown. The project was finally abandoned in 1637 because India itself was in desperate need of relief from external invaders.

Castile's fortunes were declining elsewhere as well. In 1640, Lisbon took advantage of a revolt in Catalonia to

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[18]King to Viceroy, 24 February 1635, in RSEA, IV, 253-262; A. H. U., Moç., Cx. 1, fragment of a royal letter, 24 February 1635.

[19]See J. H. Elliott, "Self-Perception and Decline in Early Seventeenth-Century Spain," Past and Present, 74 (1977), 41-61.

declare her independence with massive popular support.[20] Reluctantly, the Duke of Bragança accepted the Portuguese throne and was crowned as João IV (1640-1656). One of his first priorities was the arrangement of a non-aggression treaty with the Dutch. In truth, the pact was so poorly observed that the king constantly warned his viceroy to be vigilant for no funds were presently available for the reinforcement of the Estado da India. João, however, paradoxically commanded the viceroy to construct new fortresses in Mozambique, including Sofala:

> a new fort shall be immediately built in this port of Sofala, in whatever way appears to you most fitting, and in such a manner that it may defend the entrance to the said place, convey there for this purpose all the requisite workmen and materials, that the work may be carried out.[21]

There was no explanation of how this edifice was to be funded.

During the years following the restoration of Portuguese sovereignty, Southern Zambezia was generally neglected and increasingly came under the influence of ambitious sertanejos who garnered vast land holdings, prazos.[22]

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[20]Idem, Imperial Spain, 1469-1716, 337-345; Luis d'Oliviera Guimarães, "O Povo na Revolução de 1640," in Congresso do Mundo Português (Lisbon, 1940), VII, 139-146; also see José M. da Cunha Saraiva, "Causas do Levantamento da Nação em 1640," in Congresso do Mundo Português, VII, 59-94.

[21]King to Viceroy, 24 February 1644, in RSEA, IV, 299.

[22]Portugal eventually institutionalized these estates as Prazos da Coroa. According to the legal fiction, such

Sisnando Dias Bayão, for example, was an influential resident of Tete by nature of the large estates he had inherited from his father-in-law. With his African retainers, he assisted the neighboring Munhumutapa in local struggles, as his predecessor Diogo Simoẽs Madeira had done. In 1644, Bayão expanded his operations to Teve, where he was able to restore the dethroned ruler and received in turn new tracts of land. Subsequently, the Portuguese adventurer penetrated westward and introduced stockades and troops to the Torwa region. This accomplishment proved short-lived because after his return to Sena, Bayão mysteriously died, and his forces were withdrawn.[23]

Although details are sketchy, Bayão's efforts point out the volatile situation within Southern Zambezia during this period. Two significant features should be noted. First, powerful settlers with private armies could carve out small empires, which neither the Portuguese Crown nor Shona authorities could prevent. In the case of Bayão, the

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lands were granted by the crown and could be held for only three generations. In reality, the prazos were often the domain of strongmen who were Portuguese only in name. The subject has recently been investigated in detail, see Newitt, Portuguese Settlement and Isaacman, Mozambique.

[23]C. R. Boxer, "Sisnando Dias Bayão: Conquistador da 'Mâe da Ouro,'" in Primiero Congresso da História da Expansao Portuguesa no Mundo (Lisbon, 1938), III, 101-115; Axelson, Padre Ant.º Gomes, 43; Barretto, "Report upon the State" (1667), in RSEA, III, 504-505; Newitt, Portuguese Settlement, 53-54; cf. H. von Sicard, "A Propósito de Sísnando Dias Baião," Studia, 16 (1965), 179-187.

political situation allowed him to exploit antagonisms for his own benefit (and, indeed, for his descendants who also became great landowners). Additionally important, Bayão's conquest of a portion of the western plateau exposed the internal weakness of the Torwa dynasty in the 1640s. Its frailty may have resulted from the rise of the nearby Rozvi state of Changamire. These developments were to have considerable influence over the region in succeeding decades.

The Portuguese government clearly could not control events within the interior nor, for that matter, even manage her coastal settlements. Nowhere was the situation more pathetic than at Sofala. By mid-century the viceroy pointed out that it was fruitless to renovate São Caetano since it had no purpose except to raise Lisbon's expenditures. João and his overseas council, however, rejected this advice.[24] The king not only commanded its preservation, but also magnified its virtues:

> the said fortress was the cause which led to the king of Monomotapa and others becoming tributaries to my crown . . . it serves to hold the neighboring petty rulers in subjection, and to protect the commerce of my subjects and the gold and ivory trade . . . the Moors and heathens respect the residents of the rivers on account of the same fortress, and it is not right to abandon the Christians there.[25]

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[24]A. H. U., Moç., Cx. 2, Consulta do Conselho Ultramarino to King, 8 January 1652; King to Viceroy, 6 February 1652, in RSEA, IV, 317-318.

[25]King to Viceroy, 6 February 1652, in RSEA, IV, 317-318.

Local Mozambican officials still considered razing the fort; since communications were so tardy, they were unaware of royal desires. From their on-the-spot observations, they noted that trade at Sofala was almost non-existent, and there seemed no threat from abroad.[26] The viceroy, however, ordered São Cataeno conserved amidst a flurry of court memos on the subject.[27]

The volume of correspondence dictated no change in Sofala's floundering circumstances. Nicholas Buckeridge, a representative of the English East India Company, visited Sofala during the 1650s and reported that its only commerce consisted in the collection of small quantities of ivory and ambergris.[28] He found that the fort was in ruins and that the settlement was defended by an ill-equipped rag-tag garrison, composed of a few mulattoes and convicts (who were often more conversant with Shona culture than Portuguese). Padre Manuel Barreto noted in 1667, that Sofala was

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[26]Axelson, Portuguese . . . 1600-1700, 133; Francisco de Lima to Governor of India, 6 January 1652, in APO, IV-II-II, 124.

[27]A. H. U., Moç. Cx. 2, Consulta do Conselho Ultramarino to King, 30 January 1654; King to Viceroy, 25 February 1654, in RSEA, IV, 327; F. U. P., LM, 24, 12/2, Bras de Castro to King, 4 February 1655.

[28]John Jenson, ed., Journal and Letter Book of Nicholas Buckeridge, 1651-1654 (Minneapolis, 1973), 32, 43. Ivory and ambergris are also the only commodities mentioned in roughly contemporary Portuguese documents; see Manuel Cesar Pereira, "Discurso sobre a Conquista das Minas de Monomotapa," BSGL, VIII (1888-1889), 539; Barretto, "Report upon the State," 479-480. I wish to thank Professor E. A. Alpers for referring me to Buckeridge's records.

almost deserted owing to the insalubrity of the land and the redirection of trade routes elsewhere. He caustically pointed out that no priest was to be found in the local church, nor, for that matter, any parishioners.[29] It was a place "where none are made Christians who are not born so."[30] In short, the site had no prospects, yet Lisbon remained adamantly convinced of Sofala's value and suspicious about the intentions of other European powers.

Sofala was, of course, not Portugal's primary consideration among her far-flung possessions. In Southern Zambezia, much attention remained centered upon the Munhumutapa state and how to manipulate its new ruler, Siti Kazurukumusapa (1652-1663). As previously noted, Christianity was considered a useful instrument. Although Siti accepted the faith, conversion for him was not simply an act of fidelity to Lisbon, but also a means of obtaining Portuguese support for his own interests.[31] Siti's succession had never been assured, and he apparently used the baptismal rites both to obtain Portugal's approval and to test the political loyalty of powerful nobles who were

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[29]Barretto, "Report upon the State," 479-480.

[30]"Eastern Ethiopia" (c. 1631), in RSEA, II, 437. (This document is not to be confused with the 1609 study of the same title by João dos Santos.)

[31]"Authentic Testimony of the Baptism of the Emperor and King Manamotapa," 14 August 1652, in RSEA, II, 445-448; King to Viceroy, 15 March 1655, in RSEA, IV, 330.

reluctant to follow his example.[32] Unfortunately, the Munhumutapa did not correctly calculate the role of the prazo holders, and he opposed them. They, in turn, forged their own pact with Siti's rivals, who assassinated him. The new appointee Mukombwe (1663-1692) proved not to be the sertanejos' pawn; he showed himself to be a wily ruler, suggesting that, in this case, it was easier to create a puppet than to control one.[33]

Despite this situation, Barretto observed that the time was ripe for the conquest of the Mutapa state:

> If this king [Mukombwe] should rise in rebellion it would be proper to conquer the whole of the kingdom, and divide the lands among the Portuguese, by which there would be great favours and rich appointments for the deserving. Then the natives would dig as much gold as the masters, the Portuguese, required.[34]

More realistically, the viceroy saw that, conquest aside, troops were needed at the Munhumutapa's court simply to sustain Portuguese survival in the interior. He stated that unless men were sent quickly their interests would be shattered "like a house without a tenant, which falls in time without being pulled down."[35] The viceroy, however, had no troops to offer because of the disorders elsewhere in the east. Moreover, Portugal was in the grip of its own

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[32]Beach, "Shona Empires, I," 27-28.

[33]Ibid., 27; Barretto, "Report upon the State," 483.

[34]Barretto, "Report upon the State," 484.

[35]Viceroy to King, 9 January 1668, in RSEA, IV, 344.

national crisis. King João had died in 1656, and his twelve-year-old heir, Afonso VI (1656-1668), was both retarded and partially paralyzed. As regent, his mother Queen Luisa attempted to steer a moderate course while threatened by both Spain and the Netherlands. Young Afonso, in turn, showed a decided disinclination to rule. His time was devoted to various toys, nightly attacks on citizens, and a keen interest in the local bordellos. Afonso's companions, though, were ambitious and prompted him to take the throne in 1661, and to exile his mother. He served as monarch in name only and was controlled by court favorites. Finally, in 1668, Afonso was forced to resign, losing both his kingdom and his wife to his brother Pedro II (1668-1706).[36]

As Pedro assumed power, it was remarked that the Portuguese empire had been reduced to a few enclaves "with some other fortresses and places of less importance . . . either a memorial of how much we formerly possessed in Asia, or else as a bitter reminder of the little which we now have there."[37] One of these relics was the captaincy of Sofala. While Mozambique Island and other East African settlements had been attacked in the 1660s by Omani Arabs, there was no threat to São Caetano from them or other

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[36]Livermore, New History of Portugal, 185-196.

[37]Manuel Godinho quoted in Boxer, Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 128-129.

aggressors. Sofala's trade was so stunted that, except for the profits of a few unscrupulous or clever individuals, nothing was to be gained there, and money had to be borrowed from the fortress of São Sebastião.[38]

In an effort to revive Mozambique's entire economy, Pedro sanctioned freedom of commerce for all of his subjects and encouraged further emigration, although he recognized that in the interior, settlers were among the most disruptive elements.[39] Pedro's advisory council also urged the development of Southern Zambezia and suggested mounting another large and expensive expedition which would exploit the region's wealth and establish new towns. The unsuccessful record of past efforts in this regard did not discourage this design, and, although perhaps two thousand people departed in 1677, little is known of the result of this expedition. Many Portuguese undoubtedly died on the voyage while others probably fell victim to various epidemics ravaging the interior.[40] Surviving settlers did nothing to bring gold and glory to Lisbon. According to an official,

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[38]A. H. U., India, Cx. 29, anon. report, 20 January 1672; A. H. U., Moç., Cx. 2, Consulta do Conselho Ultramarino to Prince, 23 February 1680.

[39]Royal order, 13 February 1672, in RSEA, IV, 351-352; A. H. U., Moç., Cx. 2, royal order, 9 March 1672; Prince to Viceroy, 22 September 1672, in RSEA, IV, 357-358; Prince to Viceroy, 14 March 1675, in RSEA, IV, 365; Prince to Viceroy, 14 March 1675, in RSEA, IV, 367-368.

[40]On the ill-fated expedition, see Axelson, Portuguese . . . 1600-1700, 147-151.

"the married men who went to those parts were only a source of expense to the royal treasury and of discredit to the Portuguese nation, on account of their bad conduct."[41] Truculent sertanejos posed a constant problem for authorities, but during the last decades of the seventeenth century the foremost threat to Portuguese sovereignty arose from a different source.

Seemingly unnoticed by officials, the Khami state's Torwa rulers had by (at least) the 1680s been superceded by an aggressive Rozvi dynasty under Changamire Dombo. Although this process is unclear, it has already been suggested that Bayão's earlier success in the region (in 1644) was due possibly to the societal transformation taking place there. The Changamire state apparently evolved over a long period and perhaps peacefully absorbed the related Torwa community.[42] While these points remain speculative, Dombo's activities are unequivocal.

In 1684, Caetano de Mello de Castro, capitão-geral and governor of Mozambique,[43] led an expeditionary force to

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[41]Gaspar de Sousa de Lacerda to King, 3 July 1682, in RSEA, IV, 423.

[42]The possible relationship of the Changamire and Torwa dynasties is discussed in Chapter III; cf. S. I. Mudenge, "Eighteenth-Century Portuguese Settlements on the Zambezi and the Dating of Rhodesian Ruins: Reflections on the Porblems of Reference Dating," IJAHS, X (1977), 384-393.

[43]Pedro's dual appointment in 1682, made Mello de Castro the highest official in the region and subordinate only to the viceroy; see Prince to Viceroy, 9 March 1682, in

the Maungwe region west of Manyika. There he encountered Changamire's army, and a day-long battle ensued. During that evening Dombo set numerous camp fires around his foes, leading them to fear that new reinforcements had arrived. Mello de Castro's forces retreated, and although Changamire's men possessed only bows and arrows, they were victorious with this strategy.[44]

This success was followed by a Rozvi rout of the Mutapan army which had attempted to conquer Dombo's homeland during his absence. Changamire had demonstrated his mastery of Southern Zambezia, a phenomenon which culminated in the 1690s with what Portuguese historian Alexandre Lobato has called "the great disaster."[45]

For almost ten years there is a hiatus in the information on Changamire's regime. Dombo may have spent the intervening period outside the Portuguese sphere consolidating his forces and gradually gaining control of the plateau before launching his attacks on Lisbon's settlements. Governor Mello de Castro complained in 1687 that, since his arrival, virtually no assistance had been sent to Mozambique

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RSEA, IV, 414. The title capitão-geral is often defined as captain-general, but it is more precise to translate it as the highest ranking military officer.

[44]Conceição, "Tratado dos Rios de Cuama," 105-106; Axelson, Portuguese . . . 1600-1700, 179; Gray, "Portuguese Musketeers on the Zambezi," 533.

[45]Alexandre Lobato, Colonização Senhorial da Zambézia e Outros Estudos (Lisbon, 1962), 92.

from the viceroy, and that soldiers were badly needed.[46] As victim of the earlier clash with the Rozvi, Mello de Castro realized the poor condition of Portuguese defenses against serious attack.

Despite these unstable circumstances, Changamire's assault on the trading fair of Dambarare in 1693, caught the settlers by surprise, and all were slain.[47] Dombo had forged an alliance with the new Munhumutapa, Nyakunembire, who succeeded to the throne despite Portuguese opposition. In turn, the Munhumutapa encouraged the Rozvi attack on Dambarare, an event which produced shock waves among the other commercial outposts, including the Zambezi stations of Sena and Tete. Changamire, though, focused his campaigns in Maungwe and Manyika. Subsequently, the Rozvi-Mutapa coalition weakened when Nyakunembire was dethroned by a Portuguese supported competitor.

In 1695, Dombo besieged the fair of Masekesa in Manyika, when a local captain refused to pay his annual tax and assaulted the Changamire's emissaries. More than

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[46]Caetano de Mello de Castro to King, 24 June 1687, in RSEA, IV, 430. The king commanded the viceroy to send troops and munitions to Mozambique; F. U. P., LM, 52, 7/4, King to Viceroy, 23 March 1687.

[47]The tales of wholesale destruction, including disinternment of graves and the burning of the church, described in Conceição, "Tratado dos Rios de Cuama," 106, are exaggerated, as the excavated site provides no such evidence; see P. S. Garlake, "Excavations at the Seventeenth Century Portuguese Site of Dambarare, Rhodesia," Proceedings of the Rhodesia Scientific Association, LIV (1969), 51.

revenge, Dombo sought to destroy Lisbon's military and economic authority in Manyika in order to proclaim his own suzerainty there. He accomplished this goal and appointed a Chikanga to his liking, possibly the deposed Nyakunembire.[48]

Meanwhile, the traders who had escaped from Manyika fled to Sofala and were horrified to find the old fortress provided no defense against Changamire. Various walls were weakened or ruined and steps leading to the bastions had collapsed; no stone was available for repairs. In addition, the artillery was rusted and the firearms were useless because they lacked stocks or bolts. Since Sofala was considered to be the next Rozvi target, thought was given to deserting the port.[49]

It was therefore with a collective sigh of relief that the Portuguese learned of the Changamire's death in 1696. Although the state he created remained an important feature in Southern Zambezia, the conquests were over. It can be argued that Dombo was not concerned with destroying every vestige of Portuguese society or pushing the Europeans into the sea; he may have sought a new modus vivendi.

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[48]See Manuel Galvão de Silva, "Diário das Viagens Feitas pelas Terra de Manica" (1788), in Anais, IX-I, 327; Bhila, "Trade and Survival," 14-18; Beach, "Shona Empires, I," 30.

[49]Ajuda 51-vii-27, fol. 32, Rafael de S. Martinho to King, 1697; Ajuda, 51-vii-34, fols. 45v.-46v., Carvalho, "Papal da Noticia," 3 August 1698; Ajuda, 51-vii-34, fols. 48-49, António Ferreira, "Barra de Sofalla," 12 August 1698.

Settlers with their personal armies had long disrupted Shona society for their own pecuniary gains, and, in turn, the Rozvi ruler employed force in his attempt to change relations of authority and terms of trade. Although Dombo did not live to see such developments, his successors did establish new relationships with the Portuguese.

By the close of the seventeenth century, Portugal was fully aware of how vulnerable she was, both to African and European enemies in southeast Africa. Reports about the mineral wealth of this region now attracted Lisbon's primary concern, for her treasury was depleted and her empire attenuated. Only with gold and silver, it was believed, could Portugal revive her diminished stature as a world power and complete her mission of promoting Christianity and trade. Despite its dismal history, Sofala retained the glitter, if not the gold, of a legendary past and, though neglected, it was not abandoned. In 1698, the captain of São Caetano promised to rebuild the fortress, but like his predecessors there is no evidence that he did anything.[50] Increasingly, the reality of Sofala was subordinate to a mythical image which looked not only to the past, but also to hopes for the future.

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[50]Ajuda, 51-vii-34, fol. 46, Carvalho, "Papel da Noticia," 3 August 1698; cf. Axelson, Portuguese . . . 1600-1700, 191, which claims that the captain did rebuild the fortress, although there is nothing to confirm this view. Since writing this volume, Professor Axelson has indicated to me that he may have been in error; interview with Eric Axelson, 27 May 1974, Cape Town, South Africa.

Misfit of Empire: Eighteenth Century Southern Zambezia

By 1700, only the veneer of Portuguese dominion survived throughout the vast Estado da India. Many settlements had been seized by European competitors or retaken by local authorities. Lisbon's ill-equipped troops, within their ruined and defenseless stockades, proved no match for these forces. Remaining possessions were often little more than decaying monuments to past aspirations.

Although the traditional ideals of prestige, proselytization, and profit were reaffirmed by the crown, it became increasingly difficult to enlist Portuguese citizens for eastern missions. At times, men had to be impressed and chained aboard ship. Expeditions frequently consisted of a few seasoned sailors and a motley band of young boys, vagabonds, and degredados.[51] Those who survived the voyage were hardly ideal settlers and, when they did not desert, they scandalized the government with their fractious behavior.

Local Portuguese officials and clergy also contributed to the crown's embarrassment by their unauthorized activities and breach of royal edicts. Many were tyrants who manipulated policies for their own profit, resorting,

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[51] C. R. Boxer, "The Carreira da India, 1650-1750," Mariner's Mirror, XLVI (1960), 36-54, esp. 40-41; idem, Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 313-315.

when necessary, to murder.[52] The king was powerless to do more than require cursory investigations by his viceroy.

Despite the prevalent decadence of the Estado da India, the lands of Southern Zambezia retained their fabled appeal for Lisbon. King João V (1706-1750) described the region as "the richest that I possess in my royal dominions."[53] The legendary wealth of King Solomon's mines continued to hypnotize the monarch despite decades of failure and pessimistic reports. As usual, new royal plans were formulated to refurbish dilapidated fortresses and resuscitate commerce.

Along the Mozambican littoral the expansion of Dutch and British trading companies posed a growing threat to these schemes. During the 1720s, João was particularly fearful of foreign intentions in Delagoa Bay. He also expressed consternation over the safety of his emporium at Sofala,[54] although from a commercial viewpoint, the old port with its dangerous anchorage and minimal economic value offered little advantage to any merchant.

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[52]See, for example, the account of a Mozambican captain who executed a local ruler and replaced him with a more tractable candidate: King to Viceroy, 15 March 1702, in RSEA, V, 7; King to Viceroy, 19 January 1704, in RSEA, V, 13. Such incidents were not isolated, as I have previously noted.

[53]King to Viceroy, 16 August 1710, in RSEA, V, 23.

[54]King to Viceroy, 16 April 1721, in RSEA, V, 115-116, 118; King to Viceroy, 12 April 1723, in RSEA, V, 130; António da Silva Rego, O Ultramar Português no Século XVIII (Lisbon, 1967), 99.

According to a 1722 census, there were only twenty-six Portuguese settlers at Sofala.[55] It appears that few of these residents had actually been born in Europe, and their descendants were usually of mixed blood. The fort itself was garrisoned by a handful of mulattoes or degredados who often lived outside the ruined stockade because there were no barracks. The fortress was, in fact, constantly threatened by inundation or collapse since sections of its walls had crumbled. By this time, the empty regimental church was even being utilized as a cattle kraal.[56]

While Sofala was of little importance in the designs of Portugal's European rivals, it also had a diminished role in local African politics. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Changamire dynasty remained the predominant force within Southern Zambezia. Rozvi attention was, however, focused upon the nutritive commercial and mineral regions in Manyika and along the Zambezi. Within the Dande area, the Changamire's influence was demonstrated by his efforts to control Mutapan succession, which often stimulated debilitating factional disputes.[57] Additionally, he sought to control the remunerative Zambezi trade. It was

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[55]1722 census report, in APO, IV-II-II, 90.

[56]Alexandre Lobato, Evolução Administrativa e Económica de Moçambique (Lisbon, 1957), 37, 163.

[57]Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa, Fundo Geral, Cod. 176, fols. 21-23, Moraes, "Informação sobre os Rios;" Beach, "The Mutapa Dynasty," 9.

under his protection that, in 1716, the Portuguese established the fair of Zumbo at the confluence of the Zambezi and Luangwa. Commerce was strictly supervised by the Rozvi: from Zumbo only authorized African traders were permitted to penetrate into the rich southwestern plateau in search of gold and ivory. This policy, at least theoretically, prevented the disruptive introduction of sertanejos into the Rozvi state; it was not an economically hostile reaction to Lisbon. In fact, more than once, the Changamire aided the Portuguese in keeping Zumbo operating and the trade routes open.[58]

The harmony at Zumbo was also created in Manyika, where Portugal was permitted by Rozvi authorities to re-establish a trading station early in the century.[59] In this region, settlers were not only prohibited from commercial expeditions, but also had to pay a large annual tax and were

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[58]On Zumbo see Newitt, Portuguese Settlement, 75-79; J. D. Clark, "The Portuguese Settlement at Feira," Northern Rhodesia Journal, VI (1965), 275-292, esp. 275-280; "Memorias da Costa d'Africa Oriental," 200-204; "Descripção da Capitania de Monsambique, Suas Povoações, e Produções" (1788), in Relações de Moçambique Setecentista, 402-403. The Changamire's trade monopoly was never as thorough as implied by his restrictions, see Nicola Sutherland-Harris, "Trade and the Rozwi Mambo," in Pre-Colonial African Trade, eds. Richard Gray and David Birmingham (London, 1970), 257-259; Mudenge, "Role of Foreign Trade," 384-387.

[59]Viceroy to António Cardim Troes, 21 January 1719, in RSEA, V, 50.

prevented from mining.[60] In return, the Portuguese sought protection from local Manyikan authorities, who increasingly followed an independent course. Chikangas attempted to reassert their control over the internal economy by supervising all merchants and concealing mineral resources while, at the same time, carefully avoiding actual conflict with Rozvi agents.[61] Although unsettled conditions were an impediment, Manyikan trade was proving profitable.

This prosperity, however, only contributed to the continued stagnation of Sofala. Under Changamire supervision, mineral wealth from Manyika was carried to the Zambezi fairs, and São Caetano was deprived of any of this trade. While Sofala had never been the opulent center described in legend, the old Chikanga state had, at least, given some credence to the tale by filtering small quantities of gold to the fort in the past.

Sofala's real staple had been its modest ivory trade. This commerce also disappeared after the Portuguese established Inhambane in 1731. The new settlement was located close to elephant country and became the primary entrepôt for the ivory traffic.[62] Thus deprived of any

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[60]Newitt, Portuguese Settlement, 74; Bhila, "Trade and Survival," 17, 19: idem, trans., and ed., "A Journal of Manoel Galvao da Silva's Travels Through the Territory of Manica in 1790," Monumenta, VIII (1972), 82.

[61]Bhila, "Trade and Survival," 18-28.

[62]"Memorias da Costa d'África Oriental," 211-213; João Baptista de Montaury," Moçambique, Ilhas Querimbas,

commercial purpose, Sofala no longer interested the Rozvi and was reduced to a pawn in the turbulent relations of a handful of aggressive sertanejos and the Teve state.

Although the Sachiteve seems to have regarded Sofala as a dependency, during the first half of the eighteenth century, he was himself the client of Portuguese settlers who acquired vast prazos in his domain through subterfuge or threat. In 1735, for example, the merchant João Pires was killed when he ventured within Teve territory. To retaliate, Pires's wife raised a private army and marched into the interior. The Sachiteve, reportedly, was so intimidated that he granted the woman a large tract of land in compensation for her husband's death.[63] Lisbon admitted that such sertanejos had "become so powerful that not only do they free themselves from the condition of subjects, but on many occations act with the tyranny of petty kings."[64] The crown lacked the resources to thwart

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Rios de Sena, Villa de Tete, Villa de Zumbo, Manica, Villa de Luabo, Inhambane" (c. 1778), in Relações de Moçambique Setecentista, 372; P. R. O., Admiralty 1/2269, 'Cap. O 35', fol. 24, João Julião da Silva, "A Brief Description of the Fort and Town of Sofalla and Adjacent Lands and Possessions Belonging to the Captaincy," 1824; Alan Smith, "Delagoa Bay and the Trade of South-Eastern Africa," in Pre-Colonial African Trade, 278-279.

[63]P. R. O., Admiralty 1/2269, 'Cap. O 35', fol. 6, da Silva, "Brief Description." On other grants see, F. H. Ferão, "Account of the Portuguese Possessions within the Captaincy of the Rios de Sena" (c. 1810), in RSEA, VII, 374-375.

[64]Conselho Ultramarino to Viceroy, 13 February 1727, in RSEA, V, 147.

its countrymen from pursuing their own ambitions. At the same time, the Sachiteve was inhibited by factional conflicts and African foes from controlling the European intruders. By 1740, Portuguese even resided within the Teve court serving allegedly as scribes to aid in matters of diplomacy and commerce.[65] It is apparent though that their activities did nothing to alleviate Sofala's torpor. One official described the fort as so debased that it could easily be subjugated by any enemy. Its defense consisted of fifteen soldiers--mostly degredados.[66]

Although Sofala appears an anachronism, it was only the most egregious example of Portugal's fortunes in Southern Zambezia. Even the more prosperous settlements were subject to closure by African states or the vexations of local prazeros. As a remedy, schemes were proposed for the transport of Indian settlers to southeast Africa because it was believed that they could be more easily constrained than degenerate Portuguese. Undoubtedly, though, the most bizarre suggestion was that impoverished Irish peasants be transferred to Southern Zambezia. It was emphasized that such colonists would not only be more dependable and industrious than Lisbon's misfits, but also that they were good

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[65] A. E. X. Soares, Descripção da Villa de Sofalla (Nova Goa, 1857), 38-39.

[66] A. H. U., Moç., Maço 32, Pedro de Rego Barretto to King, 10 November 1745.

Catholics who would promote the faith in the interior.[67] Yet, rather than engaging in such fanciful emigration plans, a more drastic action was undertaken by the crown.

In 1752, southeast Africa's administrative tie to Goa was severed, and it was placed under the command of a governor-general stationed at Mozambique Island. The idea of dividing the two distinct regions of the Estado da India had been formulated, at least, as early as 1634, but was still being rejected by the monarchy more than a century later.[68] The reasons for the long standing refusal are not entirely clear, but it apparently was believed that the Estado da India had an organic unity. This view, according to one eighteenth-century official, was absurd because Southern Zambezia and the orient had nothing in common. He adduced:

> The relationship should be seen as the same as that of Brazil with Angola, which latter being some distance from that great continent has always remained quite separate resulting in an increase of its commerce and establishment which would never have happened had Angola been dependent on Brazil.[69]

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[67] J. P. Monteroy Mascarenhas to Viceroy, 6 April 1746, Archivo das Colónias, I (1917), 154-156; Boxer, African Eldorado, 11-12, 15 n. 30.

[68] A. H. U., Moç., Cx. 1, Consulta do Conselho de Estado to King, 16 November 1634; Jerónimo de Alcântara Guerreiro, "Quadros da História de Moçambique," Moçambique, 68 (1951), 12.

[69] M. D. D., trans. and ed., Account of a Journey Made Overland from Quelimane to Angoche in 1752 by Francisco Raymundo Moraes Pereira (Salisbury, 1965), 4-5.

Under the authorization of King José (1750-1777) the separation was completed. Its real instigator, however, was his influential minister, Sebastião de Carvalho e Mello--the Marquis de Pombal (1699-1782).[70] But even the energies of Pombal could not stem the drift of Southern Zambezia into undisturbed lethargy.

While the viceroy was no longer responsible for East Africa's internal squabbles, he retained control over its commerce with India.[71] This trade, however, was increasingly in the hands of Gujarati merchants, Banyans, not their hapless Portuguese colleagues. Mozambique and its hinterland therefore remained economically subordinate to Goa and dominated by Indian itinerant merchants. The king confirmed this relationship when he opened East Africa to all of his Asian subjects, and permitted them to "trade there as they think fit, in the manner most advantageous to them." His only stipulation was that they pay the required royal

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[70]Pombal was responsible for various, extensive domestic and external reforms during his tenure as virtual dictator, see C. R. Boxer, "Pombal's Dictatorship and the Great Lisbon Earthquake, 1755," History Today, V (1955), 729-736. Specific information on his reforms relevant to southeast Africa is provided in Lobato, Evolução Administrativa, and Fritz Hoppe, A África Oriental Portuguesa no Tempo do Marquês de Pombal, 1750-1777 (Lisbon, 1970).

[71]Boxer, African Eldorado, 12; King to Francisco de Mello e Castro, 23 April 1752, in Relações de Moçambique Setecentista, 45.

duties.[72] Although Sofala was generally neglected by these long-distance traders, the governor-general noted that an occasional Banyan appeared at the port with the hope of exchanging his cloth for ivory. The deplorable conditions there and in Teve, however, precluded any extensive dealings.[73]

Future aid to Sofala or any ultramar settlement was inhibited by the devastating earthquake which struck Lisbon on 11 November 1755. Consequently, during the second half of the eighteenth century, Southern Zambezia was dependent upon its own limited resources for survival. Depopulation and decay had reduced several settlements and now threatened them with the prospect of becoming ghost towns. Governor-General Pedro de Saldanha de Albuquerque reported that these trading centers lacked sufficient settlers and soldiers to retain even the crumbling facade of Portuguese sovereignty. As a minimal measure, he suggested that hardy Asian women be dispatched to southeast Africa to provide mates for Lusitania's dwindling male population.[74]

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[72]King to Viceroy, 5 April 1755, in RSEA, V, 224-225; Law Relating to the Commerce of Mozambique, 10 June 1755, in RSEA, V, 228-230.

[73]A. H. U., Moç., Maço 38, Francisco de Mello de Castro to King, 20 November 1753; A. H. U., Moç., Cx. 4, Francisco de Mello de Castro to King 22 November 1753; A. H. U., Moç., Cx. 5, Francisco de Mello de Castro to the King, 10 November 1754.

[74]A. H. U., Moç., Cx. 6, Pedro de Saldanha de Albuquerque to King, 28 December 1758.

By 1762, Sofala was nearly under water, and the garrison had been reduced in four years from thirty to six.[75] Of the few residents there, most were Africans or mulattoes; the leading merchant was a Goan.[76] The growth of the slave trade in Mozambique during the 1760s did provide Sofala with some economic stimulus. Captives from this area had the reputation of being stronger and more intelligent than elsewhere, and they therefore demanded a greater price.[77] It appears though that the number exported during this period was never great; nonetheless, the once fabled Sofala had now become little more than a debased enclave for the slave trade. Small quantities of ivory and gold were also occasionally traded there, but the amounts were so insignificant that thought, once again, turned to abandoning the site.[78]

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[75]Ignacio Caetano Xavier, "Notícias dos Domínios Portuguezes na Costa de África Oriental," 26 December 1758, in Relações de Moçambique Setecentista, 155; Pedro de Saldanha de Albuquerque to King, 30 December 1758, Archivo das Colónias, IV (1919), 78; A. H. U., Moç., Cx. 8, Pedro de Saldanha de Albuquerque to King, 13 August 1760; "Memorias da Costa d'África Oriental," 205.

[76]"Memorias da Costa d'África Oriental," 205; Hoppe, África Oriental Portuguesa, 111; A. H. U., Moç., Cx. 10, João Pereira da Silva Barba to Captain of Sofala, 18 April 1763; "Rellaçam das Moradores Portuguezes que Assitem em Monssabique e Seos Destrictos" (c. 1767), in Anais, IX-I, 167.

[77]"Memorias da Costa d'África Oriental," 208.

[78]A. H. U., Moç., Cx. 10, Ignacio de Mello [Alvim] to King, 5 April 1767; "Instrucçao que o III^{mo} e Ex^{mo} Sr. Governador e Capitão General Baltazar Manuel Pereira do Lago

Lisbon tenaciously refused to relinquish São Caetano, but continued to find it difficult to enlist settlers and soldiers for Southern Zambezia. The viceroy, for example, rejected a royal edict to recruit sepoys for East Africa: none would volunteer because "white men," who took appointments in Mozambique, returned without profit and vowed never to go back.[79] The interior was racked by inter-Shona conflicts, civil wars, and the imperial pretentions of local prazeros. These disruptions were, in small part, the result of the developing external slave trade. More importantly, they reflected the inability of any single faction to exert overwhelming authority for any extended period.

As early as 1730, the viceroy claimed that the once feared Changamire was "without power."[80] Although this view was exaggerated, it has been suggested above that Rozvi authority was circumscribed and constantly threatened not only by Portuguese ambitions, but also by Shona politics. The Mutapa state, for example, was shaken by civil war from 1759 until 1763, strife which spilled over into the

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Deo a Quem lhe Suceder Neste Governo" (1768), in Relações de Moçambique Setecentista, 322-323. In 1762, it was reported that the Zambezi settlements exported twelve times as much gold as Sofala, see Hoppe, África Oriental Portuguesa, 244.

[79]Viceroy to Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado, 28 January 1764, in RSEA, V, 240-241.

[80]Viceroy to King, 2 January 1730, in APO, IV-II-II, 172.

neighboring Tete prazos and threatened Changamire's merchants at Zumbo.[81] A few years later, fierce succession disputes erupted in Teve, Manyika, Barue, and even within the Rozvi state.[82] The unstable conditions led to the abandonment of Portuguese estates or the forging of frail alliances between prazeros and Shona communities in the interests of self-preservation. These features were hardly an inducement to future European settlement, and Mozambique's forts became the dumping grounds for Lisbon's felons.

At Sofala, in particular, São Caetano appeared more like a prison than a fortress. The governor-general finally requested that no more degredados be sent to the settlement because they lacked respect and discipline. In addition, they did nothing for the crown and further degraded the port.[83] These soldiers and the few mulatto settlers had gone "native" (caffralmente) and lived in extreme poverty in grass huts near the ruins of the fort. The officers were little better off. Most could neither read nor write Portuguese, and even the captain was regarded as an

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[81]Mirada, "Monarchia Africana," 110-111; Isaacman, Mozambique, 108-109; Beach "Mutapa Dynasty," 12.

[82]A. H. U., Diversos, Moç., Cx. 1, João Julião da Silva, "Memoria sobre Sofala," 1844; P. R. O., Admiralty 1/2269, "Cap. O 35', fol. 25, da Silva, "Brief Description:" "Instrucção . . . Baltazar Manuel Pereira do Lago," 323; Isaacman, Mozambique, 111-112; Sutherland-Harris, "Trade and the Rozwi Mambo," 257.

[83]A. H. U., Moç., Cx. 14, Baltazar Manuel Pereira do Lago to King, 14 August 1772.

insignificant appointee.[84] A contemporary English commentator concluded that "the inhabitants of the town and kingdom of Sofala are a mixture of Mahometan Arabs, idolatrous caffres and bad Portuguese christians."[85]

During the last decade of the eighteenth century, Southern Zambezia was struck by one of the periodic droughts and consequent famines which plagued the region.[86] The abject conditions at Sofala were exacerbated by the danger of starvation during 1793 and 1794. Settlers voiced the fear that if food were not available soon, they would have to leave the port. Nothing was arriving from the interior because of crop failure and the closure of commercial routes. Merchants who ventured outside the settlement were

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[84]Biblioteca Geral da Universidade de Coimbra, Ms. 3069, fol. 372 v., "Vida do Illustrissimo e Excellentissimo Senhor Sebastião José de Carvalho e Mello, Marquez de Pombal," 1781; J. J. Nogueira de Andrade, "Descripção do Estado em que Ficavão os Negocios da Capitania de Mossambique" (1790), Archivo das Colónias, I (1917), 83-84; A. H. U., Moç., Cx. 28, "Mappa da Forca da Tropa da Guarnição da Fortaléza de São Caetano," 20 July 1793; M. D. D. Newitt, "Ignacio Caetano Xavier's Account of Portuguese East Africa," in Conference of the History of the Central African Peoples (Lusaka, 1963), no pagination; idem, Portuguese Settlement, 207.

[85]C. B. Wadstrom, An Essay on Colonialism (London, 1794), 128.

[86]Isaacman, Mozambique, 67. Oral traditions relating such frequent ecological disasters are common; interview with Mzee Makandara Nova Sofala, Mozambique, 16 May 1974; also see Franz Boas and Simango Kamba, "Tales and Proverbs of the Vandau of Portuguese South Africa," Journal of American Folk-Lore, XXXV (1922), 162.

robbed.[87] Furthermore, in contrast to its earlier open-door policy, Teve increasingly prohibited Portuguese penetration into its territory. There were no further land grants to sertanejos, and trade was so restricted that one Sachiteve was assassinated by his subjects when he opened new gold mines. The ruler's action, it was thought, would expose Teve to further Portuguese ambition and interference.[88]

Despite the very real threats in southeast Africa, Lisbon was preoccupied with imaginary fears that Napoleonic France would seize her Mozambican ports. For unknown reasons, it was believed that along with Inhambane and Delagoa Bay, Sofala would be a target.[89] Ironically, even after the Peninsula War had begun, commercial relations along the East African coast, between French and Portuguese, remained cordial.[90]

The fate of Sofala, however, was not affected by any new European interlopers. One official described São

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[87]A. H. U., Moç., Cx, 29, António Alberto Pereira to King, 21 July 1793; A. H. U., Moç., Cx. 29, João de Paz e Temes Brinha to King, 3 July 1794; A. H. U., Moç., Cx. 29, João de Paz e Temes Brinha to King, 27 July 1794.

[88]See Xavier, "Notícias dos Domínios Portuguezes," 155. This example, of course, indicates the extent of internal dissention in Teve. At the end of this century the state was threatened by new African enemies which affected the Sofalan trade, see below Chapter VI.

[89]M. V. Jackson Haight, European Powers and South-East Africa (London, 1967), 123.

[90]Paul Mazery, "Mozambique and the Napoleonic Wars," Studia, 37 (1973), 387-399.

Caetano quite simply as "a small fort, much neglected."[91] Although not forgotten, the decayed settlement only barely managed to survive. The myth of Sofala, nevertheless, continued to prosper in the mind of Portuguese officials. Its real future, however, was to be determined not in Lisbon, but in the hinterland of Southern Zambezia.

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[91]Montaury, "Moçambique, Ilhas Querimbas," 370.

CHAPTER VI

REQUIEM FOR GOLDEN SOFALA

After navigating along the Mozambican coast, Captain James Prior observed: "notwithstanding the progress of science and discovery, this country remains, in 1812, in that happy state of obscurity in which it was found by Vasco da Gama."[1] His somewhat fanciful picture was subsequently erased by events which transformed Southern Zambezian society and increased Mozambique's economic significance during the turbulent nineteenth century.

Long before Prior's voyages, the forces of change had already been set in motion. As early as 1700, Tsonga peoples had begun migrating northward from their homeland which spread across both sides of the Limpopo. This initial expansion led to the conquest and incorporation of the Tonga-Shona communities located south of Inhambane and threatened the Portuguese settlement itself until the arrival of reinforcements forestalled the invasion. By

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[1]James Prior, Voyage along the Eastern African Coast (London, 1819), 24.

mid-century, however, the Tsonga had expanded throughout southern Mozambique and even conquered portions of the Sofala hinterland.[2]

Although these disruptions greatly contributed to economic and political instability in Southern Zambezia, it is difficult to be precise in describing the Tsonga migrations. The problem is partly semantic, as well as historical. Descriptions are obscured by the tendency of Portuguese officials of the period to refer to all unfamiliar African groups as Landins.[3] This unfortunate term lacks either ethnographic or linguistic applicability, and even its etymology is unclear.[4] While it is safe to assume that

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[2]About these events see Smith, "Peoples of Southern Mozambique," 574-578. Literature on the Tsonga is particularly confusing because of the lack of agreement on what these people should be called. Among the various designations applied, the name Tonga has posed the greatest problems, since it is also employed in reference to a distinct group in the region of Inhambane, as well as an unrelated Ndau dialect of Shona; see M. Wilson, "The Sotho, Venda, and Tsonga," in The Oxford History of South Africa, eds. M. Wilson and L. Thompson, I (New York, 1969), 176; Doke, Southern Bantu Languages, 22-23.

[3]For example, see Smith, "Peoples of Southern Mozambique," 560; "Notícias de Moçambique e Suas Conquistas," 11 November 1754, in Lobato, Colonização Senhorial, 158; Xavier, "Notícias dos Domíninios Portuguezes," 145; Francisco de Santa Tereza, "Plano e Relação da Bahia Denominada de Lourenço Marques," 6 August 1784, in Caetano Montez, Descobrimento e Fundação de Lourenço Marques (Lourenço Marques, 1948), 164; C. J. dos Reis e Gama, Reposta das Questoens sobre os Cafres (1796), ed. Gerhard Liesegang (Lisbon, 1966), 22.

[4]A spirited, if not always rational, debate has existed over the origin of this appellation. Perhaps, the most amusing suggestion was put forth by W. F. W. Owen who

these so-called Landins were actually Tsonga migrants, the specific movements of various clans is conjectural. Despite these questions, it may be concluded that the incursions set the stage for the more destructive Nguni invasions to follow.

South of the original Tsonga homeland, revolutionary events were beginning to take shape during the last part of the eighteenth century. In the Natal region, a combination of population growth, land pressure, and trade seemingly contributed to the rise of the Zulu state which reached its military apogee under Shaka (c. 1787-1828).[5] His elaboration of earlier battle techniques and organization and the development of a warrior society resulted in the conquest or flight of neighboring peoples. Once again,

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postulated that Landim (sing.) was a corruption of "L 'Indian." A less improbable possibility suggests the term is related to the Rjonga kulandya: to follow, or landya: slave; but even these explanations are not entirely satisfactory. A lively discussion is provided in Caetano Montez, "As Raças Indígenas de Moçambique," Moçambique, 23 (1940), 53-66, esp. 58-64; F. Toscano, "Sobre os Indígenas Portugueses ao Sul do Zambeze," RSEM, XLIV (1941), 144; José Luís Quintão, Gramatica de Xironga (Landim), (Lisbon, 1951), 8-9; A. C. P. Cabral, Pequeno Dicionário de Moçambique (Lourenço Marques, 1972), 59; W. F. W. Owen, Narrative of Voyages to Explore the Shores of Africa, Arabia, and Madagascar (London, 1833), I, 276.

[5]This major event is outside the scope of this study, but see J. D. Omer-Cooper, The Zulu Aftermath (London, 1966) 25-33; Alan Smith, "The Trade of Delagoa Bay as a Factor in Nguni Politics 1750-1835," in African Societies in Southern Africa, ed. L. Thompson (London, 1969), 171-189; Max Gluckman, "The Rise of a Zulu Empire," Scientific American, CCII (1960), 159-169; idem, "The Individual in a Social Framework: The Rise of King Shaka of Zululand," Journal of African Studies, I (1974), 113-144.

Southern Zambezia was invaded from below the Limpopo. This second shock wave was composed of related Nguni groups who fled from Shaka's armies. Their onslaught spelled an end to Shona domination of the interior and Portuguese safety along the coast.

Although the information on Nguni infiltration is far superior to our knowledge of the Tsonga, much confusion still exists. Portuguese commentators (and later their British counterparts) called all Nguni, Vatuas, and rarely distinguished among them.[6] They further managed to confuse the issue by employing the terms Landim and Vatua as though they were synonymous, despite the fact that the Tsonga and Nguni belonged to different language groups. It is therefore often impossible to identify, with assurance, the movements and actions of the numerous refugees from the Zulu conquests.

It appears that initially four Nguni groups penetrated southern Mozambique in about 1821. During the next several years these clans managed to clash not only among themselves, but also with the local population and the Portuguese as well. The ultimate victor in these squabbles

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[6] Vatua may have been a Portuguese corruption of the Shona vatorwa, meaning strangers or foreigners. Variations of the term in other Bantu languages are common, such as, the designation of so-called pygmies as "Batwa." The issue is by no means settled; see M. Hannan, Standard Shona Dictionary (London, 1961), 411; M. D. W. Jeffreys, "The Batwa: Who Are They," Africa, XXIII (1953), 45-54; W. H. J. Rangely, "The Angoni," Society of Malawi Journal, XIX (1966), 70.

was Soshangane Nquamayo (Manicusse), whose Gaza empire eventually covered much of Southern Zambezia.

Soshangane and his followers originally settled near Lourenço Marques, but in 1827 they swept into the lower Limpopo Valley, where they resided until 1835.[7] During this eight-year period, the Gaza had demonstrated their mettle by defeating both the Ngoni warriors of Zwagendaba Jere and an invading Zulu army, and now were prepared to expand northward. Occupying the Sofala hinterland, however, were the rival Nguni forces of Nxaba Msane (Muava) who dominated local Shona communities and had forced the Portuguese to abandon their Manyika fair.[8] Nxaba, though, was no match for Soshangane's troops, who attacked in about 1836. The vanquished Nguni either joined the Gaza or fled toward the Zambezi to unite with the Maseko Ngoni.[9]

It should not be construed that Soshangane's conquests were solely the result of aggressive Gaza sub-

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[7]W. F. W. Owen, "The Bay of Delagoa," 1 May 1823, in RSEA, II, 470; Gerhard Liesegang, "Nguni Migrations between Delagoa Bay and the Zambezi, 1821-1839," IJAHS, III (1970), 323; idem, "Aspects of Gaza Nguni Hisotry 1821-1897," Rhodesian History, VI (1975), 2.

[8]A. H. U., Diversos, Moç., Cx. 1, da Silva, "Memoria sobre Sofala."

[9]Liesegang, "Nguni Migrations," 328-333; Ian Linden, "Some Oral Traditions from the Maseko Ngoni." Society of Malawi Journal, XXIV (1971), 69; M. S. Alberto, "Os Angones os Útimos Povos Invasores da Angónia Portuguese," Moçambique, 27 (1947), 88.

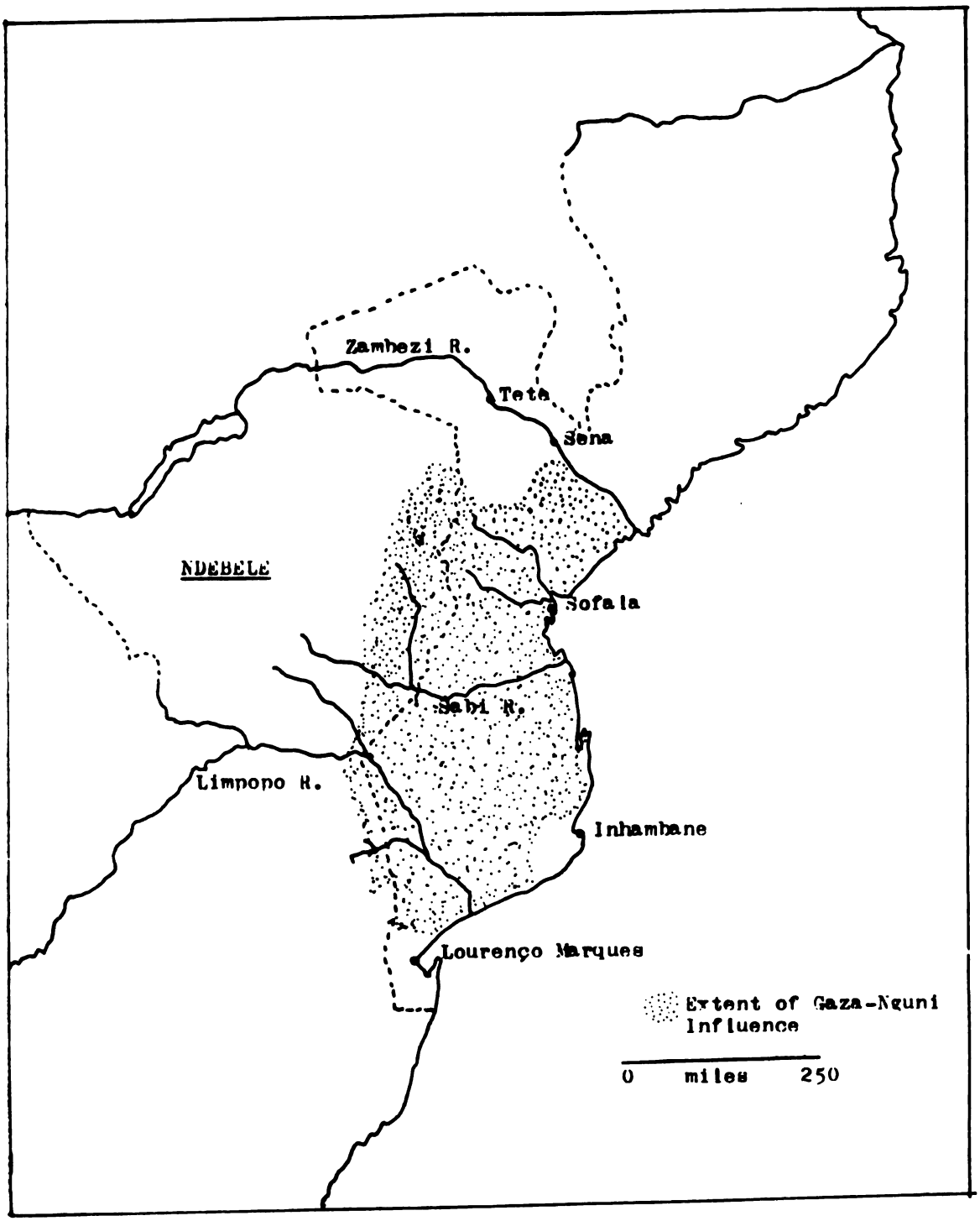

Figure 5. The Gaza Empire

imperialism; in reality, his own homeland was itself being threatened by enemies. In 1833, the Zulu came uncomfortably close when they assailed Lourenço Marques.[10] The following year the captain of Inhambane launched an expedition against Soshangane which, though unsuccessful, may well have encouraged the Gaza to march northward.

Until recently, it was generally accepted that Soshagane's arrival heralded not only Nxaba's demise, but nearly Sofala's as well. In October 1836, the town was stormed by large numbers of Nguni troops. Although Soshangane would seem to have been the culprit, Professor Gerhard Liesegang has suggested that Nxaba's warriors were responsible.[11] Perhaps, before retreating from the Gaza, Nxaba made a final sally against the Portuguese; the documentation is unfortunately ambiguous. There is, however, no question about the intensity of the assault.

According to eyewitness accounts, the village was sacked and looted by an army of 4000 Nguni. Although slaves

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[10]Gerhard Liesegang, "Dingane's Attack on Lourenço Marques in 1833," JAH, X (1969), 565; A. H. U., Moç., Maço 1-A, notebook of Antônio José Nobre, 1833.

[11]Liesegang, "Nguni Migrations," 326. Liesegang bases his view on the consumate diplomatic skill displayed by Soshangane vis-à-vis Europeans. In an interview with a Portuguese envoy in 1840, the Nguni leader claimed that he was innocent of any assaults or robberies. He added that his military reputation was so highly valued that "other people" assumed his name in order to inspire fear. Years later, Soshangane continued to claim that he had not attacked Sofala; Caetano dos Santos Pinto, "Viagem de Inhambane as Terras de Manicusse em 1840," Arquivo das Colónias, I (1917), 272; A. H. M., Cx, 4-75, Maço 10, Filippe da Costa Correa to G. Oliveira Rego, 25 March 1856.

working nearby fields were slain, the bulk of the population managed to retire to the old fortress, which scarcely offered adequate protection. Surprisingly, no serious attempt was made to attack the fort, as the invaders were satisfied to depart quickly with their booty of cloth and cattle. Since the town was not set ablaze, the Portuguese feared that the Africans would return and catch them unprepared once again. In response, several frightened residents embarked on a small vessel for the safety of Mozambique Island.[12]

Sofala appeared in imminent danger of surrender not just to the Nguni, but also to the more destructive forces of nature. The first decades of the nineteenth century present an uninterrupted history of neglect and degeneracy. The harbor could admit only the smallest ships because it was nearly blocked by shifting sandbanks, and even lighter vessels required local "Moorish" pilots to guide them to a safe anchorage.[13] The appearance of any craft, however, was a rare event because even the port's nominal trade had been reduced to a trickle. When the routes to the interior were not impeded, the Portuguese

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[12]A. H. U., Diversos, Moç., Cx. 1, da Silva, "Memoria sobre Sofala"; M. S. Alberto, "Carta de Sofala," BSEM, XXVIII (1959), 130, 135-136.

[13]Prior, Eastern Coast of Africa, 25; Salt, Voyage to Abyssinia, 18-19; William Fisher to Albemarle Bertie, 2 September 1809, in RSEA, IX (London, 1903), 8-9; A. H. U., Moç., Cx. 51, Joaquim do Rosario e Monteiro to Governor-General, 7 April 1809.

lacked both the inclination and resources to take advantage of their opportunities. One captain, for example, complained that despite the Sachiteve's concession of a gold producing area, none of his compatriots could be swayed from their lethargy to establish an official fair there.[14] Contrary to M. D. D. Newitt's view, there are no indications of a "vigorous revival of Portuguese activity in Sofala in the early years of the nineteenth century."[15]

Only the expansion of the slave trade (briefly) sustained Sofala, although this commerce led to an economic boom in other Mozambican ports. The British Parliamentary Abolition Act of 1807 encouraged Brazilian, Cuban, and French slavers to prowl the East African coast where London's cruisers were less active. At Quelimane, for instance, slaves accounted for only about 17 percent of the export revenues in 1806; fifteen years later, they represented 85 percent of the total.[16] A burgeoning business was conducted at other entrepôts, where captives were obtained as a result of the disruptive Nguni migrations and the consequent evolution of large scale slave trading prazos.[17] The British even accused Mozambique's governor-general of abetting the

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[14]Ferão, "Account of the Portuguese Possessions," 380-381.

[15]Newitt, Portuguese Settlement, 210.

[16]Isaacman, Mozambique, 93.

[17]Ibid, 85-93, 115-117, 124-153; Newitt, Portuguese Settlement, 220-226.

traffic while hindering their efforts.[18] Strictly speaking, of course, the Portuguese official was within his rights, since Lisbon did not outlaw the commerce until 1836 (although, even afterwards, the decree was flagrantly violated).

Despite the increase in the export of black cargoes from Southern Zambezia, Sofala initially profited little. Few slaves were traded at Sofala because of its poor anchorage for passing ships and its distance from the Zambezi prazos which filtered much of the human traffic.[19] Captain W. F. W. Owen, an ardent abolitionist, explored Sofala in 1823, and found it to be of "trifling importance even to the Portuguese." Although he suspected that local Muslims maintained nearby estates as slave depots, he found no evidence of a flourishing commerce.[20] Owen added that the port certainly did not live up to its inflated historical reputation:

> it was with much curiosity that we looked forward to our arrival at Sofala and with much disappointment as

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[18] P. R. O., Admiralty, 1/2270, 'Cap. O 35,' W. F. W. Owen to J. W. Croker, 3 June 1825.

[19] Prior, Eastern Coast of Africa, 25. Research in the Portuguese archives indicates that there was little commercial interest in Sofala during the early part of the nineteenth century. Only an occasional small vessel sought to make the voyage: A. H. U., Moç., Cx. 40, "Pedido para um Passaporte," 18 May 1802; A. H. U., Moç., Cx. 48, "Pedido para um Passaporte," 27 April 1807; A. H. U., Moç., Cx. 68, "Relação de Equipagem da Escuna," 28 June 1821; A. H. U., Moç., Cx. 76, "Pedido para um Passaporte," 10 January 1825.

[20] P. R. O., Admiralty 1/2269, W. F. W. Owen, "The Portuguese Settlements and Dominions of the Eastern Coast of Africa," 15 April 1823.

> at the total failure of our expectations. Instead of what the fancy pictured, remains of past grandeur and opulence, frowning in decay and falling gradually to dust, we found but a paltry fort and a few miserable mud-huts, the deserted abode of poverty and vice.[21]

Owen's bleak description was confirmed by Portuguese commentators as well. The crumbling stockade was largely protected by a handful of degredados or their progeny. Since the troops resided outside the fortress and received their pay in cloth, most devoted their efforts to trade, in order to survive. It is not surprising that they were Africanized, both racially and culturally. Soldiers took Shona wives and accepted indigenous customs, so much so that local medicine men were consulted about planting and harvesting, as well as about various illnesses.[22] Sofala was such a backwater village that, over long periods, there were no doctors, teachers, or priests to minister to the impoverished population. Inevitably, though, there were always sufficient officials prepared to serve there.

For the unscrupulous officer, Sofala provided suitable scope to engage in private trade, which could assure a handsome stipend. In order to turn a profit, officials, however, had to combine larceny with evasion of duty--an effort which never seemed to tax appointees. In

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[21] Owen, Narrative of Voyages, I, 318-319. Also see the comments of Lieutenant Boteler, one of Owen's officers; Thomas Boteler, Narrative of a Voyage of Discovery to Africa and Arabia (London, 1835), I, 347-348.

[22] A. H. U., Diversos, Moç., Cx. 1, da Silva, "Memoria sobre Sofala"; Soares, Descripção da Villa de Sofalla, 40.

fairness, it should be pointed out that Lisbon was unable or reluctant to furnish her representatives with adequate, regular wages. Cynics aptly remarked that payments from the royal coffers were made, "late, in part, or never."[23] With little choice, magistrates had to become merchants. The concept of office holding as a duty with fixed jurisdiction and compensation was alien to this period.[24] Posts of various grades were sold to the highest bidder and regarded almost as personal property. Only those officers who grossly overstepped the liberal limitations of propriety were castigated. Thus, when Luís Araijo Rosa, commandant of Sofala, absconded with the treasury in the 1820s, his superiors agreed that he should be imprisoned because he had not served with "appropriate decorum."[25]

It is unlikely, though, that the rapacious Captain Rosa secured much capital in his unsuccessful effort to fleece the settlement. During his time, Sofala's only significant export was rice, which partially explains the governor-general's refusal to approve repairs for the unremunerative factory. The absence of regular commerce, lack of sufficient manpower, and obvious negligence of royal

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[23]Boxer, Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 77.

[24]See H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, trans. and eds., From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology (New York, 1958), 196-244.

[25]A. H. U., Moç., Cx. 77, letter to Governor-General, 11 April 1826.

appointees made the re-edification of São Caetano an unlikely prospect.[26] Conditions continued to degenerate to the point that in 1829/30, Sofala once again faced starvation. A combination of drought, locust infestation, and Nguni upheavals in the hinterland made it impossible for the port even to feed itself, let alone export any foodstuffs.[27] An effort to rescue Sofala initially resulted in disaster, when two supply ships were wrecked along the perilous coast, and only later did the necessary staples arrive.[28]

Despite such dreary circumstances, it was believed that restoration of trade with the interior and revival of agriculture would insure Sofala a brighter future.[29] In

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[26]A. H. U., Moç., Maço 3, petition of Pascoal Pires de Carvalho, 14 April 1828: A. H. U., Moç., Maço 5, Governor of Inhambane to Ministro do Ultramar, 15 February 1828; A. H. U., Moç., Maço 21, Francisco Miguel Rodrigues Nunes to Governor-General 5 April 1831; "Descripção sobre o Estado de Sofalla na Costa Oriental d'Africa" (c. 1829), Archivo das Colónias, I (1917), 185-192.

[27]A. H. U., Diversos, Moç., Cx. 1, da Silva, "Memoria sobre Sofala; A. H. U., Moç., Maço 10 letter of Jerónimo Francisco Ferreira, 14 September 1829; A. H. U., Moç., Maço 11, petition of Pascoal Pires de Carvalho, 24 December 1829; A. H. U., Moç., Maço 12, António José da Maia to Governor-General, 3 March 1830; A. H. U., Cod. 1424, fol. 5, Paulo José Miguel de Brito to Francisco Miguel Rodrigues Nunes, 30 May 1830; A. H. U., Moç., Maço 12, Francisco Miguel Rodrigues Nunes to Paulo José Miguel de Brito, 5 August 1830.

[28]A. H. U., Moç., Maço 14, Francisco Miguel Rodrigues Nunes to Manuel da Silva Gonçalves, 22 April 1830.

[29]A. H. U., Moç., Maço 21, "Nove Documentos Relacionados com a Reocupação do Território Bandire," 1831; A. H. U., Moç., Maço 25, Paulo José Miguel de Brito to Governor-General, 4 September 1831; A. H. U., Cod. 1424, fols, 8-9, Paulo José Miguel de Brito to Francisco Miguel Rodrigues Nunes,

1836, any optimism was dashed by the devastating Nguni attack which demonstrated the settlement's extreme vulnerability. Ironically, in spite of the disaster, the coincidental Portuguese abolition of the slave trade actually increased Sofala's commercial importance. The port's inaccessibility now made it an ideal haven for the illicit traffic. Such poor harbors were difficult for British vessels to survey because of the unpredictable currents and shifting shoals along much of the littoral.

By the 1840s, Sofala therefore had become one of the more important sanctuaries for slavers. Meanwhile, Mozambican officials not only disregarded Lisbon's dicta and London's censure, but also actively assisted in increasing the commerce.[30] With large fortunes to be made, these officers were reluctant to prosecute slave merchants whose venality they shared. One governor-general audaciously proclaimed: "Portuguese laws are for me a dead letter after I have passed the Cape of Good Hope."[31] His view was confirmed by a mid-century census of Sofala which revealed 968 slaves in the town--a figure representing nearly 85

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29 December 1831; A. H. U., Cod. 1424, fols, 18-20, F. António José da Maia et al. to José de Amante de Lemos, 21 November 1832; A. H. U., Moç., Maço 30, "Notícia sobre Maxanga," 4 October 1833.

[30]Haight, European Powers and South-East Africa, 257-283; James Duffy, A Question of Slavery (Oxford, 1967), 41-42.

[31]P. R. O., Foreign Office 84/908, Portuguese official quoted in Pakenham to Clarendon, 18 April 1853.

percent of the total population.[32] This total certainly exceeded the demands of local agriculture and documents Portugal's failure to prohibit the trade. Sofala's new found prosperity, however, proved ephemeral as a result of the Gaza state.

After Soshangane's defeat of Nxaba, the Portuguese feared another foray would be made against Sofala as soon as the Gaza finished raiding the interior.[33] The Nguni leader, however, had more grandiose plans. By 1845, Soshangane had subjugated all of southern Mozambique and transformed its towns and prazos into tribute paying dependencies.[34] He never sought to drive the Portuguese into the sea, but to reduce them to vassalage as a subordinate community from whom valuable commodities could be collected.[35]

From the Shona viewpoint, the growth of the Gaza state represented the latest in a series of far-flung empires that had engulfed their communities over the centuries. Soshangane largely usurped the role of his Rozvi

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[32]Soares, Descripção da Villa de Sofalla, 25.

[33]A. H. M., Gav. 4-63, Cod. 1742, fol. 81 v., untitled report, 29 August 1837; A. H. U., Moç., Maço 1-A, Governor-General to Count of Bomfim, 16 November 1840.

[34]A. H. U., Diversos, Moç., Cx. 1, da Silva, "Memoria sobre Sofala"; Randles, Empire du Monomotopa, 64; Liesegang, "Aspects," 2-3; Isaacman, Mozambique, 122-123; J. P. R. Wallis, ed., The Zambezi Expedition of David Livingstone, 1858-1863 (London, 1956), I, 34, 73, II, 340-341.

[35]Omer-Cooper, Zulu Aftermath, 59.

predecessors rather than establishing a new political system. Although some Shona were incorporated into Nguni style age-regiments and introduced to Zulu military techniques, they were never totally assimilated. Fighting units remained segregated, with fresh recruits often forced to man the front lines. Gaza society was, in fact, so stratified that acculturated Shona were prevented from rising to positions of power, although those who refused to adopt Nguni customs faced ridicule.[36] For the most part, the Gaza were satisfied with extracting periodic payments of ivory, cattle, or cloth from the Shona and attempting to restrict trade.[37] The numerical inferiority of the Nguni to their subjects meant that, in reality, many of the hinterland states enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy.

In establishing his reign, Soshangane had mixed diplomacy with military threat in relations with both the Portuguese and Shona. He continued this policy by not over-extending his empire, and thereby avoided conflict with Voortrekkers south of the Limpopo and with the Ndebele west

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[36] Ibid; Rennie, "Christianity, Colonialism and the Origins of Nationalism," 135-164, esp. 144-147, 154; P. R. Warhurst, "The Scramble and African Politics in Gazaland," in The Zambesian Past, eds. E. Stokes and R. Brown (London, 1966), 48; David Chanaiwa, "A History of Nhowe before 1900" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1971), 133.

[37] H. H. K. Bhila, "Manyika's Relationship with the Portuguese and the Gaza-Nguni," Rhodesian History, VII (1976), 35-36.

of the Sabi.[38] Perhaps, even Soshangane's unsuccessful efforts to prohibit slave dealing within his domain[39] reveal less altruism than a sagacious understanding of how this trade could undermine his rule. Soshangane's heirs proved less astute.

The death of the Gaza leader in 1858 precipitated a lengthy succession struggle between two of his sons, Mawewe and Mzila.[40] The Portuguese-supported candidate, Mzila, emerged as victor, but hardly proved obsequious. In 1862, he crossed the Sabi and settled just north of the river. The local Shona found, to their chagrin, that Mzila not only exacted considerable tribute but also greater allegiance than had his father.[41] He left no doubt about his view of the Portuguese when he remarked that they were "women" who only settled along the coast, in order to be

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[38]In 1836, Afrikaners initiated the Great Trek to escape British rule. In turn, they forced the Ndebele under Mzilikazi to migrate across the Limpopo and establish their kingdom (c. 1840) within the core of the Rozvi realm. Although the Ndebele state represented the other major Nguni polity in Southern Zambezia, it had little impact on Sofala or its hinterland and has been thoroughly analyzed elsewhere.

[39]Gerhard Liesegang, Beiträge zur Geschichte des Reiches der Gaza Nguni im südlichen Moçambique 1820-1895 (Cologne, 1967), 244.

[40]Although the struggle did not actually terminate until 1865, Mzila's victory was assured by 1862. Most of the fighting took place in the Limpopo Valley and outside Lourenço Marques. For an outline of events see Liesegang, "Aspects," 4-8; J. Steven-Hamilton, The Low Veld (London, 1929), 170-176.

[41]Liesegang, "Aspects," 8; João Tavares de Almeida to King, 7 August 1863, Archivo das Colónias, II (1918), 101.

able to flee quickly.[42] After meeting the new Gaza ruler, a British emissary noted: "The Portuguese he neither fears nor hates, but regards . . . as necessary appendages to his dominions to fetch and carry goods for him; and, in fact, as being sort of enlightened Tongas [Tsonga]."[43]

Mzila demonstrated his scorn by robbing Sofalan merchants and preventing the fort from obtaining needed supplies. He negotiated with the Portuguese only when it suited his purpose and, as officials complained, Mzila's price for ivory was double or triple the current rate.[44] Sofala's small population could not endure these exactions and feared an imminent attack. Thus, plans were formulated to abandon the settlement and retreat to the safer site of Chiloane Island, fifty miles to the south.

It appears that even at this point, it was with some reluctance that the transfer was initiated in about 1862. The sparsely populated Chiloane long had been considered a plausible alternative to the deteriorating post

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[42]Warhurst, "Scramble and African Politics," 50; St. Vincent Erskine, "Third and Fourth Journeys in Gaza, or Southern Mozambique, 1873-1874 and 1874 to 1875," JRGS, XLVIII (1878), 32.

[43]St. Vincent Erskine quoted in Liesegang, Reiches der Gaza Nguni, 246.

[44]A. H. M., Gav. 4-63. Cod. 1460, fol. 19v., "Actas da Delagação da Junta da Fazenda, 1862-1866"; Francisco de Paula Castro Domingues, "Relatorios," Boletim Official do Governo Geral da Provincia de Mocambique, 12 (1871), 49. There are no indications of further slave dealing at Sofala in this period, testifying to Mzila's interference, increased British activity, or lowered demand.

of Sofala. As early as 1518,[45] Lisbon had utilized the island as an anchorage and subsequently had surveyed it for possible colonization. Yet, only the assaults of Mzila prompted its actual settlement. After years of gradually transporting people and goods from Sofala to Chiloane, the change was finally completed in 1865.[46] The fortress of São Caetano retained a small detachment of poorly supplied degredado troops, who were often isolated within the stockade by the frequent Nguni attacks.[47]

Despite depressing past circumstances and its present malaise, the mythical glory of Golden Sofala was not forgotten. In 1871, the governor-general claimed: "The district of Sofala, in my opinion, is the richest in all the province."[48] Fifteen years later, the former commandant of São Caetano urged that the fort be immediately repaired before this "glorious monument" of Lusitanian history was

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[45]Lobato, Expansão Portuguesa, III, 319. Even prior to the Portuguese arrival, the island had served as a Muslim trading station, see Dames, Book of Duarte Barbosa, I, 5; Balsan, "Route de l'Or," 103; Owen, Narrative of Voyages, II, 411.

[46]A. H. M., Gav. 2-8, Cx. 4-76, Maço 21, letter of 8 March 1864; A. H. M., Gav. 4-63, Cod. 1460, fols. 42 v., 53v.-54v., 60, "Actas da Delagoção."

[47]A. H. M., Gav. 2-8, Cx. 4-76, Maço 24, "Relação Nominal de Todos os Degredados," January 1865; A. H. M., Gav. 2-40, Cx. 4-82, Maço 2, report of 30 November 1876; G. L. Sullivan, Dhow Chasing in Zanzibar Waters (London, 1873), 232-233.

[48]Paula Castro Domingues, "Relatorios," 49.

swept away.[49] Such fanciful notions, surely, defy a dollars-and-cents view of Portuguese imperialism and require an explanation as to what Sofala symbolized over the centuries.

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[49]A. B. Cró de Castro Ferreri, Apontamentos de um Ex-Governador de Sofalla (Lisbon, 1886), 73-74.

CHAPTER VII

SOFALA RETROSPECTIVE: FACTS AND FANTASIES

In 1506, the Portuguese Crown was informed that "Sofala is and will always be one of the best things Your Highness has here, albeit it might not seem so now."[1] Rhapsodized for centuries as the gateway to an African Eldorado, Sofala proved a bitter disappointment, whose substance never approximated royal expectations. Yet, despite its protracted record of debits, the East African entrepôt survived. Lisbon refused to relinquish the port and extended her meager resources in the pursuit of a fantasy that defied economic theories of profit and loss. For Portugal, Sofala was imbued with a legendary and symbolic reputation which superceded its blighted reality. Moreover, Sofala's renown influenced the disastrous course of Portuguese actions throughout southeast Africa. Instead of gold and glory, the Lusitanians were rewarded with only frustration and failure.

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[1]Pero Ferreira Fogaça to King, 22 December 1506, in Documentos, I, 757.

The fantasy surrounding Sofala, the product of imaginative medieval Muslim writers,[2] seduced a credulous Europe of the Middle Ages. The land of Sofala was perceived not only as a source of abundant gold, but also as an enchanted place populated with extraordinary people and curious beasts. As early as the tenth century, an inventive Persian seafarer claimed that local Sofalans were so grotesque that they could frighten away gigantic elephant eating birds.[3] Utilizing such misinformation, Marco Polo elaborated upon the appearance of these coastal folk: they "have large mouths, their noses turn up towards the forehead, their ears are long, and their eyes so large and frightful, that they have the aspect of demons."[4] Such exaggerated accounts intrigued many Europeans and were responsible, in part, for stimulating the age of exploration. The pursuit of fanciful places and people was the result of a predisposition which in the Middle Ages acknowledged the possibility of even the most spurious notions.[5]

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[2]See above Chapter I.

[3]Buzurg Ibn Shahriyar, Book of Marvels, 56.

[4]Manuel Komroff, trans. and ed., The Travels of Marco Polo (New York, 1953), 309.

[5]On the medieval imagination and its impact on renaissance voyages of discovery see John K. Wright, The Geographical Lore of the Time of the Crusades (New York, 1925); Boises Penrose, Travel and Discovery in the Renaissance (Cambridge, Mass., 1952); W. G. L. Randles, "Notes on the Genesis of Discoveries," Studia, 5 (1960), 20-46; Carolly Erickson, The Medieval Vision (New York, 1976).

Sofala was an integral fragment of this enchanted world view--one which the Portuguese never entirely abandoned.

During the fifteenth century, Lisbon was convinced that golden Sofala would be discovered within the realm of the fabled Prester John. Although the legend of a rich and sagacious monarch residing in the east was unsubstantiated, it was widely credited throughout Europe.[6] Prince Henry and later King João II dispatched expeditions in search of this possible Christian ally and his gilded emporium. It was, however, only during the reign of Manuel that accounts were received in Lisbon confirming that Prester John's dominion was to be found in East Africa. His opulent kingdom reportedly encompassed the mysterious region of Sofala where four-eyed monsters could be seen handling quantities of gold.[7]

While the Portuguese investigation of the littoral helped to diminish the supernatural image of Sofala, a new myth was soon inaugurated. In 1502, when Vasco da Gama

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[6]For the legend of Prester John see Charles Nowell, "The Historical Prester John," Speculum, XXVIII (1953), 435-445; Wright, Geographical Lore, 283-286; also note above Chapter II.

[7]Manuel to Ferdinand and Isabella, c. 1501, in Voyage of Pedro Álvares Cabral, 51; "Italian Account of the Portuguese Discoveries" (1505), in Documentos, I, 45. Although the Portuguese came to equate Ethiopia with the land of Prester John, they grossly exaggerated its dimensions, see Afonso de Albuquerque to King, 4 December 1513, in Documentos, III, 497, 499; British Museum, Cotton Tiberius Ms. D. IX, fol. 29, "Roteiro de Dom Joham de Castro da Viagee que os Portugueses Fizeram dela India ate Soez," 1541.

inspected what was called Sofala, he found neither strange creatures nor evidence of a flourishing gold commerce. Da Gama seemingly had happened upon a recently settled town which had appropriated the name originally applied to much of the coast.[8] Yet, Sofala's fabled pedigree was preserved by one of da Gama's sailors, Tomé Lopes, who linked it to the biblical grandeur of Solomon's Ophir.[9] The unhesitating acceptance of this connection by the Portuguese suggests how potent the medieval imagination remained despite the evidence provided by exploration.

Since, as John Milton later wrote, "Sofala [was] thought Ophir,"[10] Lisbon anticipated golden dividends by constructing an impressive settlement there. It was not assets, however, that the crown collected but considerable liabilities. Nevertheless, the royal court remained sanguine that a great mine would be found to justify its unwavering confidence. Thus, the initial Portuguese penetration into the hinterland of Southern Zambezia was a quest for the elusive sources of King Solomon's biblical wealth. The subsequent discovery of massive stone ruins,

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[8]See above Chapter I.

[9]Lopes, "Navegação da Armada," 232-233. See above Chapter II.

[10]Milton Paradise Lost xi. 400.

mining sites, and ostensibly wealthy Shona states seemed to provide positive confirmation for this pursuit.[11]

By the end of the sixteenth century, however, the ignominious condition of Sofala and the general failure of Portugal's efforts throughout Southern Zambezia cast a shadow over the already diminished Estado da India. Lisbon's grandiose self-image had been eroded by European competitors who snatched away her valuable overseas territories. In 1580, Castile captured the Portuguese Crown and dominated the small Iberian nation for sixty years. Once liberated from Spain, Portugal found it necessary to emphasize her unique cultural identity and even to justify her national sovereignty to neighboring states. Lisbon defended her claim as a world power by pointing with pride to a far-flung empire. Dom Luís da Cunha, an eighteenth century diplomat, for example, observed, "the conquests are what honour us and what sustain us."[12]

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[11]Some sixteenth century Portuguese commentators even suggested that Ophir was actually to be found within the Mutapa Empire, see Couto, "Da Asia," 367; Pigafetta, Kingdom of the Congo, 118-119; dos Santos, "Eastern Ethiopia," 276-270; also note Randles, L'Image du Sud-Est Africain.

[12]Quoted in C. R. Boxer, "Faith and Empire: The Cross and the Crown in Portuguese Expansion, Fifteenth-Eighteenth Centuries," Terrae Incognitae VIII (1976), 86; also see Fred Bronner, "A World Apart: The Role of Empire in the Problem of Portugal's Identity," Journal of the American Portuguese Society, IX (1975), 18-29; J. H. Parry, "Portugal Overseas: The Search for Riches," Journal of Interdisciplinary History, II (1972), 281; R. J. Hammond, "Uneconomic Imperialism: Portugal in Africa before 1910," in Colonialism in Africa, I (Cambridge, 1969), eds., L. Gann and P. Duignan, 355.

The imperial mystique was best represented by Sofala which symbolized, for the Portuguese, the magnitude of their heroic age of exploration. Its significance was not in its blighted physical reality, but in its legendary past and exalted future. Lusitania tenaciously clung to this image, although her perseverance was amply tested. While she possessed the will, the means were lacking to provide more than minimal sustenance for the settlement's survival. Somewhat paradoxically, the crown desired the preservation of Sofala at any cost--as long as it was not too expensive.

Portugal's frustration in holding a fabled gold emporium which produced no revenue led some dissenting officials to recommend Sofala's abandonment. The crown sharply criticized such heresy, but royal solicitude did not result in solvency for the port. In fact, its golden image became debased as Europeans questioned whether the miserable Mozambican town could ever have served as King Solomon's débouché. By the early nineteenth century, Henry Salt cautiously observed that the Old Testament did not provide sufficient information to link Sofala with Ophir. He particularly chastised his older contemporary James Bruce for drawing this conclusion based only upon "visionary principles."[13] A few years later, Captain W. F. W. Owen

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[13]Henry Salt, A Voyage to Abyssinia and Travels in the Interior of That Country (London, 1814), 99, 101, 103; cf. James Bruce, Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile (Edinburgh, 1790), I, 434-440, 445.

described Sofala as "the Ophir of Scripture," but after surveying the site, he admitted that he was puzzled by the absence of any opulent ruins.[14] Such scientific investigation inevitably would have encouraged the debunking of the Sofala myth, but late nineteenth-century discoveries in Southern Zambezia granted the legendary tale renewed credibility.

Although Lisbon had long claimed hegemony over the interior of southeast Africa, crushing defeats by various Shona states and later by the Gaza-Nguni demonstrated that Portuguese domination was little more than a cherished fiction. Therefore, when various European explorers penetrated the region, there was no Lusitanian force to impede them. In 1871, Carl Mauch, a German geologist, reached Great Zimbabwe and noted, "I do not think I am far wrong if I suppose that the ruin on the Kopje is a copy of Solomon's Temple on Mount Moria and the building in the plain a copy of that palace where the Queen of Sheba lived during her visit to Solomon."[15] Since local Shona were thought incapable of such construction (despite the evidence of Portuguese historical records), Mauch's explanation was accepted. The subsequent discovery of old gold workings

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[14]P. R. O. Admiralty 1/2269, Owen, "Portuguese Settlements"; idem, Narrative of Voyages, 318-319; also see Chapter VI.

[15]Quoted in Roger Summers, "Carl Mauch on Zimbabwe Ruins," NADA, 29 (1952), 15.

seemed to confirm his conclusion. A correspondent of the Spectator observed that, "there may well be greater wonders in the heart of Africa than even the romancer dreamt of . . . traditions are apt to have a base of reality."[16]

Much to the chagrin of the Portuguese, British prospectors and settlers, in particular, were soon staking claims over Southern Zambezia in the hope of finding another Rand. But, like their predecessors, these new adventurers exaggerated the land's mineral potential. Manyika, for example, was cited as a region where "gold is found everywhere" and the source of "the richest mines the world has ever known."[17] Such exultation is reminiscent of Lisbon's sixteenth-century predictions and is a reminder of the persistence of the medieval world view.[18]

It should not be surprising to note that even at the turn of the twentieth century, the question of Sofala

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[16]"Reality and Romance," Spectator, 28 April 1888, 571.

[17]R. G. S., East Africa Journal Mss., report by E. de Kergarion to the British Association, 30 August 1889; also note P. R. O., Foreign Office 403/111, Salisbury to Petre, 31 October 1889; J. S. Galbraith, "Cecil Rhodes and His Cosmic Dreams: A Reassessment," Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, I (1973), 173-189.

[18]Professor Charles van Onselen recently stated that the myths embracing southeast Africa "cannot really be traced to the Portuguese so much as to the nineteenth century and the era of imperial expansion." This view skews the course of historical continuity and suggests that, suddenly, in the nineteenth century men began thinking in fantastic ways. These ideas did not originate from thin air; see his Chibaro (London, 1976), 12.

and Ophir was subject to scholarly debate.[19] Ironically, though, the Portuguese settlement essentially had been abandoned by 1865. Soon thereafter, Sofala was destroyed by the elements: the village was inundated, roads were covered with sand, and even the crumbling fortress was deserted. What nature did not destroy, men did. In about 1904, a shipload of convict laborers--aboard, appropriately enough, the Ophir--was sent to Sofala to obtain stone for the growing port of Beira, twenty miles to the north. They wrenched loose every available block from the battered stockade for the edification of the new coastal center. Thus, quite literally, modern Beira was constructed from the foundations of Sofala's past.[20]

Although the old entrepôt is beyond redemption, its legendary reputation remains largely intact,[21] and provides

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[19]Armand Rainaud, Le Continent Austral (Paris, 1893), 54-67; Carl Peters, King Solomon's Golden Ophir (London, 1899); idem, Eldorado of the Ancients, esp. 12, 361, 365, 385; idem, "Ophir and Punt in South Africa," Journal of the African Society, I (1901-1902), 174-183; A. H. Keane, The Gold of Ophir (London, 1901); Gustav Oppert, "Tharshish und Ophir," Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, XXXV (1903), 50-72.

[20]"Sofala--Transferencia da Villa," BSGL, X (1891), 204; Mário Malheiros, "Fortalezas da Moçambique: Sofala," Moçambique, I (1935), 13-15; R. W. Dickinson, "Sofala," Rhodesiana, 10 (1964), 47, 51, 53.

[21]For the most egregious examples see Francisque Marconnes, "The Two East African Sofalas and King Solomon's Ophir," NADA, XIII (1935), 59, 65-74; Julião Quintinha, "Descobertas Sensacionais no Território de Manica e Sofala," Boletim da Sociedade Luso-Africana do Rio de Janeiro, 24 (1938), 43-44; Quintão, Gramatica de Xironga, 23; Elaine

a bizarre reminder of a much embroidered historical fantasy. Few sites can claim the unwarranted grandeur that was thrust upon Sofala, first, as part of the medieval Imago Mundi and later, as the proof of biblical lore. To the Portuguese specifically, Sofala was the symbol of a once impressive empire and the hope for an illustrious future. Sofala could not be viewed, therefore, in logical terms, but only metaphysically as an abstraction for all the fabled lands of gold and glory which were always just one day's march away. Sofala was not merely a place, but a state of mind.

Sanceau, Good Hope: The Voyage of Vasco da Gama (Lisbon, 1967), 13; M. D. W. Jeffreys, Some Semitic Influences in Hottentot Culture (Johannesburg, 1968), 13.

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