

TOPIC : THE DEVELOPMENT OF ZIMBABWEAN SOCIETIES.

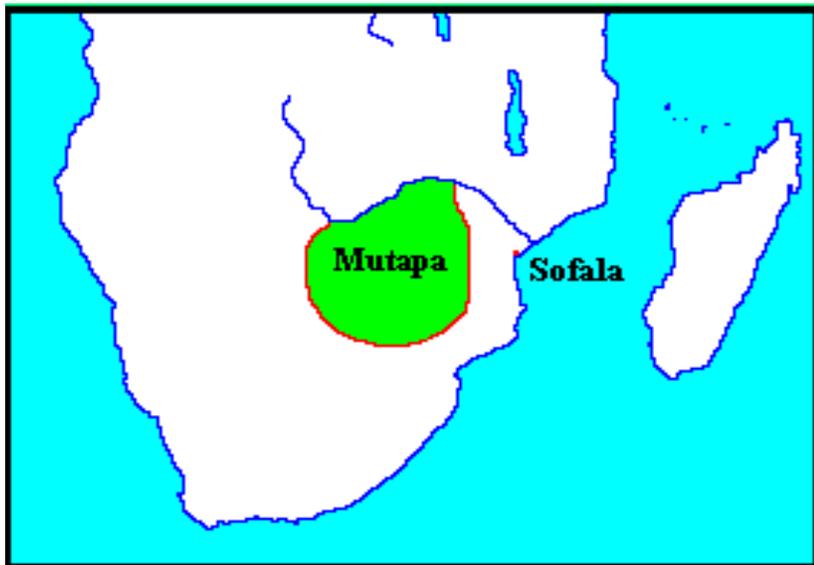
SUBTOPIC:STATE FORMATION - MUTAPA STATE.

OBJECTIVES

BY THE END OF THE SUBTOPIC LEARNERS SHOULD BE ABLE TO:

- ✓ Outline factors leading to the rise of the Mutapa Zimbabwe state.
- ✓ Describe political, economic and social organization of the Mutapa state.
- ✓ Describe the relationship between the Mutapa and the Portuguese.
Explain factors leading to the decline of the Mutapa state.

Origins of the Mutapa State



Location of the Mutapa state

- The Mutapa state is a southern African state that was established on the 15th century following the decline of the Great Zimbabwe state.
- Oral, archaeology and written records helps us account for the origins of the Mutapa state.

- The founder of the Mutapa State was Nyatsimba Mutota who left Great Zimbabwe in search of salt and after succession disputes according to oral history.
- King Chibatamatosi, Mutota's father ordered Mutota to find salt and the Prince Nyatsimba Mutota travelled north leading a large army of 300 men.
- Nyatsimba Mutota is said to have found large salt reserves in the Dande area and decided to take control of the area.
- Mutota moved to the Zambezi Valley where he defeated weaker communities such as the Torwa and the Tavara people.
- Mutota as a result earned the titles "Munhumutapa", "Mwenemutapa", "Monomutapa" as praise names, which meant lord of Conquering.
- These titles were used to name the state but it has generally been accepted as the Mutapa state.
- Mutota built his capital at "Zimbabwe" on the slope of Chikato Hill near the Utete River.
- Part of this Zimbabwe remains to this day at the bottom of the escapement north of Guruve.
Mutota formed an alliance with the Tavara High Priest called Dzivaguru and this strengthened his influence amongst his subjects.
- Archaeological evidence points out that Mutapa state originated from Great Zimbabwe.
- The downfall of Great Zimbabwe resulted in the origin of Mutapa state.

The rise of the Mutapa state

- After the death of Mutota, his son Nyanhwehwe Matope took over and ruled with his sister Nyamhita in 1415.
- Nehanda occupied the district of Handa, the two ruled the Mutapa Empire from the Angwa and Nyamane Rivers.

- The rise of the Mutapa state was coined by the factors that led to the decline of the Great Zimbabwe state such as;
 - Over population,
 - succession disputes,
 - exhaustion of land and minerals,
 - Inability of great Zimbabwe to control other lineages,
 - Drought and
 - The rise of ambitious leaders.



Factors leading to the rise of the State

- Some of the reasons which led to the rise of Mutapa state are:
 - Scarcity of resources such as salt, pastures at Great Zimbabwe, it is believed that the Dande had a vast of salt deposits that enabled Mutota to establish the state as salt was important in their diet.
 - Succession disputes at Great Zimbabwe which led to the rise of ambitious leaders such as Mutota who fled to establish his own state.

- Population pressure at Great Zimbabwe forced people such as Mutota to move in search of resources including land. The Dande area had fertile soils for Agriculture and watery pastures for livestock
- Availability of hunting grounds in Mutapa state attracted more people. It is believed that there was availability of elephants in the Dande area where the Mutapa state was established.
- Availability of gold and other minerals which were used for external trade.
- Cordial relations with foreigners.
- The role of the army who maintained peace in the state and punish rebels.
- The role of religion which made people loyal to the Mutapa.

Organisation of the state

- The Mutapa state based on three main pillars that is the economic, political and social activities.

A. Economic activities of the state



Economic activities

- Agriculture, trade and mining were **three pillars** of the Mutapa State's economy.
- More so, payment of tribute, hunting, fishing, weaving and basketry also contributed to the economy of the state.

(a) Mining



Mining

- The Mutapa people mined gold, iron, silver and copper.
- Copper was for the making of jewellery and for trade.
- Silver and gold was for the Portuguese trade and was mined at Chikoa.
- Iron was mined mainly for making of iron tools for use by the Mutapa people in farming, hunting and for war.
- Gold was for making jewellery and for trade with the Swahili and the Portuguese.
- The demand was so high that even the King began to demand tribute in the form of gold and others obtained goods through the gold trade with the Swahili and Portuguese.
- They practiced alluvial mining due to the simple iron tools that they used.
- Mining was also a laborious and dangerous activity and it was difficult to drain out water from the mines during the rainy seasons.

- Traditionally people used to mine during the dry season but the Swahili and Portuguese forced the people to mine in summer because of their increased demand for gold.

(b) Crop production



Crop Farming

- The soil was very fertile and the main crops grown were rapoko, millet and sorghum.
- Crops such as maize, water melons and tobacco were later introduced due to contact with foreigners such as Portuguese.
- The Mutapa people practiced shifting cultivation and they used ashes as fertilizer.
- The invention of iron tools allowed the clearing of larger fields and permanent crop production.
- Women and children did most of the work in the fields while men cleared the land and harvested crops.
- Farming produces were paid as tribute to the king and given as food hand-outs to the subjects in times of drought.

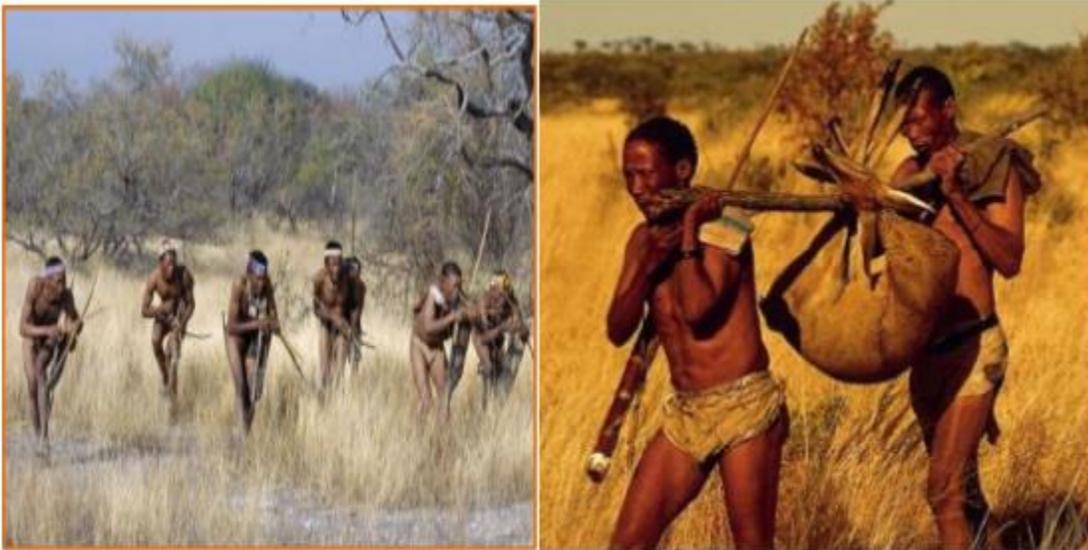
(c) Animal rearing



Pastoral farming

- The Mutapa people also practiced pastoral farming and they kept animals such as cattle, sheep and goats.
- These animals were very important for their milk, meat and hides.
- The king had large herds of cattle which was a sign of wealth such that he loaned these cattle to sub-chiefs through a system called "Kuronzera".
- Cattle were important and could be used to feed the Mutapa army and visitors to the court.
- They were also used to pay lobola that is why the Mutapa King had many wives.
- Cattle were sometimes used to pay tribute.
- The Mutapa people also practiced fishing which supplemented their diet.

(d) Hunting



Hunting

- In the Mutapa State hunting was a traditional practice as it was a source of meat and hides for clothing and trade.
- They hunted for both small and big game.
- In the hunting they used iron spears, arrows and knobkerries.
- They also made use of dogs in their hunting.
- They also used nets (mambure) and fibre string snares for trapping animals.
- Hunting was done by men and even the Mutapa hunted on some occasions.
- Hunting however became more trade oriented with the increasing demand for ivory and skins.
- Men were required to pay tribute in the form of precious skins and ivory.
- This was a dangerous activity but the people were compelled by the tribute credit obligations to take the risk.

(e) Tribute payment



Tribute payment

- The Mutapa, like most African States charged a loyalty tribute on his subjects, which was the only way the Mutapa could realise who was under her control and who had to be attacked.
- It was a way to measure the extent of their authority.
- Every family had to pay tribute to the King through the village head.
- The villages then paid through the sub chiefs who in turn paid through the chiefs and provincial rulers.
- Also the defeated vassal chiefdoms had to pay tribute to the King for example the Kings of Uteve, Barwe and Manyika.
- Tribute was also paid in the form of agricultural produces, contributing agricultural labour, gold, iron tools, and cattle.
- The king who received tribute in the form of cattle used those cattle to pay for services and to reward their subjects.

(f) Trade

- Trade was very important to the Mutapa economy.
- The Mutapa people traded amongst themselves through barter trade.
- They exchanged grains for iron tools as well as basketry for grains.
- They also engaged in external trade and they traded with the Arabs, Swahili and the Portuguese.
- Local people known as middlemen or vashambadzi facilitated the trade between the foreigners and the Mutapa people.
- The Mutapa established trading stations at Zumbo, Tete and Sena.
- The Mutapa traded with the foreigners using gold, copper and ivory in exchange for guns, cloth, beads, chinaware and alcohol.



Ivory



Beads

- They ordered foreign traders such as the Portuguese to pay a tax called curva that enabled them to do trade in their state.
- The Portuguese managed to expel the Arab traders from the Mutapa kingdom.
- The Portuguese established more trading stations such as Dambarare, Masapa, Masekesa and Manica.
- The foreign traders brought with them exotic crops such as maize, potatoes, pumpkins and citrus fruits.

(g) Blacksmithing

- Blacksmithing was also very important to the Mutapa economy.
- Blacksmiths made iron tools such as hoes, axes arrows and spearheads.
- These items made work easier especially farming and could also be used for barter trade.

(h) Craftwork

- The Mutapa people developed an art in pottery making, weaving and basketry.



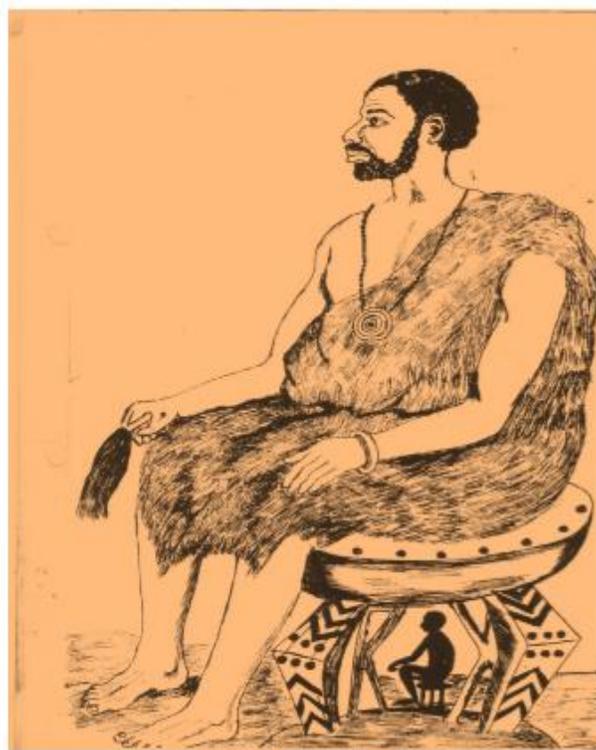
Claypot

- The people made clay pots and weaved baskets that were used for internal trade as each person specialised on his or her trade.
- Mostly women specialised on pottery making.
- The craftwork was exchanged for grains, goats and sheep.

B. Political activities of the State

- The king or Mambo led the State and had many advisors and sub-chiefs to assist in governing the State.
- These were aristocratic officials, territorial kings and chiefs who were part of the royal lineage and they were trusted.

- The army general was known as the Tumbare and he was the king's right hand man. He led the state upon the death of the king before the new king was installed.
- The king was the head of the judicial, military and religious affairs of the state.
- The king had a final word in Judiciary and political matters but he was always guided by the advice from his council.
- He was in charge of all communal land and therefore everything in the state was regarded as his (cattle, ivory, grain and war captives among others).



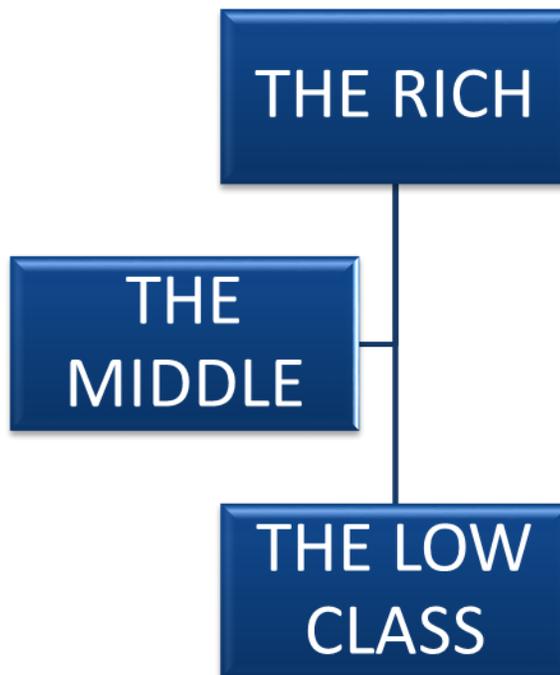
Mutapa king

- The royal wives were also regarded as officials and powerful.
- Mutapa's wives and officials wore expensive jewellery and clothes made from cotton and silk.

- A large Army was maintained which travelled long distance, patrolling, and collecting taxes/tribute.
- If an emergency arose, the king would gather his Council of war “Dare rehondo” to make plans on attacking or defending measures.
- Tribute was used to maintain the kings’ control of the state and used as a way to pay homage and loyalty to the king.
- Since the king and his ruling class were in control of long distance trade they also received annual tribute from the Swahilis and the Portuguese.
- The foreigners would pay tribute in the form of luxury goods and ornaments.
- This was meant to show respect to the king and in return they would be allowed free passage into the state for trading purposes.
- In times of drought the king would in turn feed the nation from his royal granary. (**Zunde ra Mambo**)
- The Mutapa had a royal fire which was to be kept burning at all times as a sign of his everlasting authority.
- The kingship was hereditary and a collateral system was used. (From father – 1st Son- 2nd Son- 3rd Son).
- The king also presided over rituals such as rain making and spirit appeasement ceremonies as well as enchantment before going to war.
- This showed his superior divine power and he was a source of inspiration.
- He therefore ruled the state with very little opposition or rebellion.
- They practiced a system of cattle leasing which was aimed at giving poor people milk, but politically it aimed at strengthening the king’s dominion.
- The cattle used in kuroonzera/ukusisa were from the kings’ royal kraal.

C. Social organisation of the state

- The people who had the same Shona language, customs and culture similar to the people of the Great Zimbabwe state.
- The cultural level of the society had the family being the nucleus of the society and it was the foundation of the nation.
- The state practised division of labour based on gender, with women doing household chores, gathering wild fruits and looking after children.
- Men were involved in hunting, mining and defending the state.
- The state's wealth was based on cattle.
- The state was divided into three groups the rich, the middle and the low class.
- The formation of classes in the state was based on wealth.



Social structure

- The law was well developed to deal with the cultural custom and building a wholesome obedient citizen.

- Murderers, thieves and law were corrected in line with the law seeking to reconcile the injured and the culprit and compensate the victim or his relatives.
- They believed in god known as the Mwari and they communicated with their God through the ancestral spirits and through the mediums of Mhondoro.
- Religious ceremonies were held to honour the spirit mediums where music, dancing and feasting occurred (bira guru).
- Intermarriages were encouraged and roora/lobola was paid in form of cattle or other iron implements.
- The ruling class was the most respected.

Portuguese interference



The Portuguese

- The Portuguese were not satisfied by the gold which they got from the Mutapa people through trade.

- The Portuguese sent an emissary Antonio Femades to the Mutapa state in 1513 and he reported on abundance of gold deposits.
- They sent other emissaries who gave same information and it urged the Portuguese to establish trading ports.
- The Mutapa asked for the permanent representative of the Portuguese who was to be entitled "Captain of the Gates" and represent the Mutapa and Portuguese relationship.
- The first Captain of the gate was Fernando de Proemca and was entitled "Great Wife" and he resided at Masapa.
- The Portuguese also brought Father da Silveria who converted Mutapa king and his subjects to Christianity.
- The new king Mutapa Negomo ordered the execution of Silveria and other converted Christians to be thrown into the Msengezi River.
- After the death of Da Silveria, the Portuguese king Sebastian sent a troop of 1000 men to occupy the Zambezi valley.
- The failure of the Mutapa to control gold in Mutapa state led to the interference of the Portuguese in the Mutapa politics.
- They helped Nyambo Kapararidze to power and he refused to follow their demands.
- The Portuguese hence used their private army called Chikundas to install Mavhura Mhande who went on to grant concessions the the Portuguese.
- The Portuguese installed their puppet leaders and ruled everyone and they also controlled trade.
- They built schools, churches and taught the Africans
- After the death of Mavhura Mhande, the Portuguese enjoyed the Prazos System.



New maize crop in Mutapa State

- The Prazo system was a land holding system and it helped the Portuguese to control the Mutapa land.
- The Prazo system introduced new farming and mining methods.
- The Portuguese introduced new crops such as maize, sweet potatoes, paw paws, groundnuts and melons.
- The Portuguese firstly paid tribute to the Mutapa King called curva but eventually the Mutapa people were subjects to the Portuguese.
- Those who failed to pay tribute were forced to provide cheap labour in the Prazos.
- They installed the Vashambadzi as professional traders.
- The Portuguese activities exploited the Africans and their resources leading to the decline of the state.

Decline of the Mutapa state

- The Mutapa state is believed to be the longest and last standing empire before the entrance of the whites.
- Factors which led to the downfall of the state are as follows:
 1. State size
 - At its peak, it is believed that the Mutapa Empire stretched from the eastern borders of Mozambique to the fringes of the Kalahari in the west.
 - It was a vast size that made it difficult for the state to be ruled under one leader. As such the political power of the Mutapa was only theoretical in far areas such as Manyika, Tete and Mbire.
 2. Break away factions
 - As the state was now too large, the lack of one political unit, allowed smaller tributary chiefs to be able to rebel and resist paying tribute or homage to the Mutapa king.
 - This led to the decline of the state as areas such as the Manyika and Tete declared independence from the Mutapa Empire with the assistance of Portuguese agents.
 3. Succession disputes
 - The battle for kingship in the Mutapa Empire fuelled factionalism and broke state unity. Some notable battles include Gatsi Rusere against the Maravi people.
 - It was this clash that ultimately led to the Portuguese invasions who capitalised on the weaknesses of the political structure in the state.
 4. Depletion of resources
 - The Mutapa state was largely founded on resources such as land for agriculture and cattle rearing as well as ivory and gold for trade

- . As such the rapid exhaustion of these resources led to livelihood declining within the state. It is important to note that the depletion of these resources was largely due to Portuguese interference.
- This forced native people to migrate in search for greener pastures.

5. Portuguese interference

- The coming in of the Portuguese into the state severely led to the states downfall.
- The Portuguese affected the state economically, socially and politically. From the introduction of Christianity, installing of puppet kings as well as the introduction of the credit and Prazo system, all these activities crippled the livelihood and efficiency of the Mutapa state.
- As such as life became unbearable most people fled from the state, while powerful leaders such as Changamire Dombo went on to form powerful states.