

CHAPTER 7

The 17th-19th Century Zimunya Tradition and 19th Century Nguni Empire Archaeology in Mozambique

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Part of the area of distribution of the Zimunya tradition, named after a site excavated in Eastern Swaziland in 1999, was the result of a process of “predatory expansion” which led to the formation of new small and medium sized lineage states in the Tsonga and Chopi areas of present-day Mozambique and Southeastern Zimbabwe in the 18th century. Finds of Zimunya pottery decorated with impressed lozenges point to populations affected by migrations. A later process of expansive state formation in the 19th century, by the Gaza Nguni, leading to the much larger Gaza state has much less archaeological visibility.

Une partie de l’aire de distribution de la tradition Zimunya, que reçut son nom d’un site au Swaziland Oriental fouillé en 1999, peut être attribué a un processus «d’expansion prédatrice» que produisit, au 18^{ème} siècle, de petits et moyens état lignagers dans une zone dans la zone tsonga et chopi du Mozambique e du Zimbabwe. La céramique Zimunya à impressions en forme de losange est probablement un indice de la présence de populations affectées par ces migrations. La formation du royaume de Gaza, politiquement plus important et beaucoup plus grand, n’a pas produite une visibilité archéologique aussi important.

Uma parte da area de distribuição da olaria da tradição Zimunya, chamado assim segundo uma estação no leste da Swazilândia escavada em 1999 deve estar ligado a um processo de “expansão predatória” que levou à formação de pequenos estados linhageiros nas áreas Tsonga e Chopi no sul de Moçambique e no Sudeste do Zimbabwe. Os achados de olaria Zimunya decorada com impressões em forma de losanges parecem em parte um indício de populações afectadas por migrações. A formação do estado de Gaza, muito mais extenso e num processo de expansão politicamente mais importante, no século XIX, tem muito menos visibilidade arqueológica.

Introduction

This chapter will comment briefly on attempts to identify some 19th century sites in Southwestern Mozambique as Nguni and F. Ohinata’s suggestion to establish “Tsonga” archaeology on the basis of the study of the distribution of the Zimunya tradition. As regards the Nguni identification the argument presented here is that historians and some archaeologists have been fascinated with the mid-nineteenth century mfecane migrations and conquests which were of a patrimonial structure