

Full Length Research

Early Portuguese imperialism: Using the Jesuits in the Mutapa Empire of Zimbabwe

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The Mutapa Empire (Mwene Mutapa) or in Portuguese, 'Monomotapa', also known as 'Great Zimbabwe', was a mediaeval kingdom (1250 to 1629) which was located between the Zambezi and Limpopo Rivers of Southern Africa in an area which currently includes the modern states of Zimbabwe and Mozambique. In the sixteenth century, it was considered a strategic trade area to control by the Portuguese who sought to subdue it by introducing Christianity. Father Dom Goncalo da Silveira, a Missionary was dispatched from Goa in India for this purpose, but he was murdered in 1561 as his presence posed a serious threat to a number of contending parties in the Mutapa Empire. This resulted in a Portuguese expedition to conquer the lands militarily in 1570. The objective of this article is to show the extent to which the Portuguese crown used Jesuit Priests to promote imperialism in Southern Africa and how one Jesuit in particular was used in this regard.

Key words: Portuguese colonialism, Mutapa Empire, Zimbabwe, Jesuits.

INTRODUCTION

Early Zimbabwe was a broad-based, multi-ethnic society inhabited by the Tsonga in the South-Eastern parts of the Zimbabwe Plateau, the Venda in the South, the Tonga in the North, the Kalanga and Ndebele (Matabele) in the South-west, the Karanga in the Southern parts of the Plateau, the Zezuru and Korekore in the Northern and Central parts, and the Manyika and Ndau in the East. Due to very similar ethnicity, languages, cultures and beliefs, they were reduced to two distinct groupings, namely the 'Ndebele' and 'Shona' which are the two main groups in Modern Zimbabwe. The relations between these groups were always in a state of flux, highly complex and dynamic and have been typified by both variance and collaboration (Abraham, 1961). The Mutapa Empire (Monomotapa), developed gradually out of the culture of Great Zimbabwe between 1200 to 1450. The meaning of the name Mutapa is "the conquered lands". The Mwene ('conquering king' or 'master-pillager') was the designation given to the state which was referred to as Mwene Mutapa. The rulers of the Mutapa Empire were thus called Mwenes. Great Zimbabwe began to decline as gold production diminished and this resulted in the emergence of the Mutapa Empire at the start of the

sixteenth century (Braudel, 1979). Shona oral tradition states that the Mutapa state was founded by Nyatsimbe Mutota who went in a northerly direction from Great Zimbabwe in roughly 1420 to search for a new supply of salt. He settled in the Mazoe valley amongst the Northern Shona tribes. From this area Mutota had access to the Zambezi and Swahili trading posts that were established primarily due to the abundance of copper and ivory in the area. Mutota's empire eventually included the heterogeneous Karanga speaking populations and extended from the southern banks of the Zambezi River to the Indian Ocean but was most prominent in the plateau country where it received tribute from the Changamires. By 1450, the Mutapa Empire took over from Great Zimbabwe as the predominant Shona state on the Northern Zimbabwean Plateau of the interior.

The Mutapa Empire was controlled on three distinct levels, namely the capital, the province and the village where relatives of the Mutapa became chiefs in the provinces and villages. The Mutapa used their army to ensure that local headmen paid them tribute. They also used religion to control their subjects as their kings enjoyed a close and strategically important relationship

with the spirit world through either direct contact with their ancestors who originally owned their lands or through contact with their ancestors via media. The Mutapa rulers' extracted labour from their soldiers to cultivate their lands and for every thirty days work, seven days had to be for the benefit of the Mwene Mutapa. Over and above this enforced labour, tributes were also collected for the rulers from the profits obtained from gold mining. Although there have been numerous Mutapa rulers up to 1902, those from 1494 to 1589, covering the period in question in this article, include: Kakuyo Komunyaka (1494 to 1530), Neshangwe Munembire (1530 to 1550), Chivere Nyasoro (1550 to 1560) and more especially, Chisamharu Negomo Mupunzagutu (1560 to 1589). The Mutapa had their own source of alluvial gold in the Mazoe valley where gold nuggets often washed downstream from the Northern plateau. Most of the gold retrieved was used for the conduct of foreign trade with coastal communities of East Africa including Sofala, Beira, Kilwa, Kismayu and even Malindi, from whence cloth from Gujarat in India, spices, beads and other items were purchased. There was also trade with Mapungubwe in modern day South Africa, just across the Limpopo River and also with Mukariva and Zumbo in modern day Zambia.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher identified a need for certain historical knowledge based on misinformation concerning the role of certain early Christian missionary activities in Zimbabwe. He then gathered as much relevant information about the problem or topic as possible. The researcher then formed the hypothesis that tentatively explains the relationships between historical factors, in this case, the Jesuits and Portuguese Imperialism. He rigorously collected and organized evidence, and then verified the authenticity and veracity of the information obtained and its sources. The researcher then selected, organized, and analysed the most pertinent collected evidence, and drew the conclusion arrived at.

ENTER THE PORTUGUESE

Once stories of wealthy gold deposits reached their ears, many Europeans, especially the Portuguese, believed that Mutapa was the area in which the fabled gold mines of King Solomon, as described in the Holy Bible, were to be found. Consequently, the Portuguese who were settled in Mozambique since 1505, from which they traded in ivory and gold, were keen to expand their influence. As they believed that the gold mines of King Solomon were to be found in Mutapa, the Portuguese had by 1505 begun to explore the hinterland of Sofala. In the early 1500s, two Portuguese Priests António Sequeira and Gaspar Azevedo, were tasked with assisting the Portuguese to dominate the trade with India but in essence became simple carriers of sought after goods between the Mutapa kingdom and India. A number

of Portuguese began to hear stories concerning the lucrative gold trade from Swahili traders, and began to gather information concerning the geographical location of the gold, the amounts of gold produced, what could be exchanged for gold, the African rulers in charge of the gold mining areas as well as the nature and extent of their political systems (Smith, 1983; Beach, 1980). The Portuguese consequently began to settle along the Mozambican Coast and gradually made their way into the surrounding area as *sertanejos* (backwoodsmen). A number of them lived alongside Swahili traders and some of them took up service among the Shona kings as interpreters and some were even hired as political advisors (Stewart, 1989). Mupunzagutu thus felt relatively safe with the Portuguese knocking on the doors of his empire.

As part of their strategy to gain control of as many as possible strategic positions in the Western Indian Ocean area, the Portuguese erected a Fort at Sofala in 1506 on the Mozambican Coast. From Sofala, they would send shipments of gold and ivory emanating from the interior, to Goa, the capital of all Portuguese possessions in the East. Since the Portuguese were unable to establish a monopoly of trade, they opted to infiltrate the Zimbabwe Plateau interior. Consequently, by the early 1520s, the garrison at Sofala was abandoned and they settled in the lower Zambezi Ports of Sena and Tete. By 1530, these towns were occupied by numerous Portuguese traders who conducted regular business with the Mutapa.

By 1540, trade was so vigorous that the Portuguese further entrenched themselves and established a trade mission at the Mutapa royal court of the Mwene Neshangwe Munembire. Portuguese interests and requests as well as tributes called *curva* to the Mutapa, were handled by a Portuguese 'captain of the gates'. Relations were relatively cordial especially since every governor of the Portuguese fortress of Mozambique was obliged to pay 3,000 cruzados worth in cloth and beads for each of every three years in office to the Mutapa. The Mutapa reciprocated by allowing safe passage through their kingdom. Consequently, more and more colonists were enticed to the area and the offshoot of this was the early development of Mozambique. The Portuguese experiment of linking missionary activity with political imperialism in the system known as *Padroado*, was a structural system in Portuguese politics that had begun through various papal bulls and proclamations (1452 to 1514), which gave the Portuguese crown great leverage in appointments. The crown would offer financial support to the Church and its missions abroad in return for the church supporting imperialistic initiatives (Asafo, 1997).

On their arrival, the Portuguese encountered Moslem traders including Swahili and Arab speakers that were controlling a vigorous trade route. The status-quo could not be allowed to be maintained as the Portuguese disliked the Moslems who were opposed to Christianity,

and in any case, they wished to dominate the trade in the area. The result was that the Portuguese began their attempts to subdue the Mutapa but were confined to the coast for several years. It was at this juncture that the Jesuit Provincial Head in Goa, India, decided to dispatch an evangelizing mission, consisting of three missionaries—Fr. Dom Goncalo da Silveira, Fr. Andre Fernandez and Brother Andre da Costa, to convert the Mutapa. It was believed that if the Mutapa could be proselytized to Christianity, all of his empire would follow suit and this would be a crushing blow to the ‘infernal sect of Mohamed’ (DPMAC, VII, 1971) who were threatening to usurp Portuguese influence in the region.

THE JESUIT- FR. GONCALO DA SILVEIRA

Fr. Goncalo da Silveira was born near Lisbon, Portugal and was the tenth child of the Count of Sortelha. He was groomed for a position in the royal court and studied at Coimbra. He joined the Jesuits in 1543 and obtained a doctorate in theology after which he preached and instructed the faithful in travels around Portugal. His role-model was St. Francis Xavier whom he wished to emulate. When he received news of the death of St. Francis Xavier, who was then Provincial of India, Fr. Silveira wrote to Fr. Ignatius in Rome and requested to be granted the vacant position. Fr. Ignatius appointed Fr. Silveira as Provincial of India in 1556 as the successor to St. Francis Xavier. For a period of three years, he converted many Indians to Christianity and in 1560, Fr. Silveira was summoned to a new mission in Mozambique (www.jesuit.org.sg/html/companions/saints).

Fr. da Silveira dreamt of converting Southern and Central Africa to Christianity and he believed that the easiest way to do this was to convert Southern Africa's most powerful king – Negomo Mupunzagutu. There was a very close link between politics and religion in the day-to-day life of the Mutapa Empire. Consequently, the Portuguese decided to infiltrate it through the Christian religion and thus sent Fr. Dom Goncalo da Silveira, and two other fellow Jesuits to convert the Mutapa. Of the three, only Fr. da Silveira eventually went to the Mutapa Court. He landed at Sofala on 11 March, 1560, and proceeded to Otongwe near Cape Correntes. There, during a sojourn of seven weeks, he instructed and baptized the Makaranga Chief, Gamba and about 400 of his people. By the end of the year he made his way up the Zambezi River, through the Darwin District where the Queen of Sheba supposedly loaded her caravans with gold, on his great expedition to the capital of Negomo Mupunzagutu at Malaria-ridden Khami, near the M'Zingesi River, which is a southern tributary of the Zambezi River. He finally arrived there on 26 December, 1560, without the other two Jesuits who remained in Mozambique. Fr. da Silveira immediately began to work on converting the royal family to Christianity and

requested permission to visit Negomo Mupunzagutu at the royal court. Catholic Missionaries tended to concentrate on men and women of the ruling class when it came to conversion, but generally, women were easier to proselytize (Isichei, 1995).

Fr. Luis Froes wrote the following on the initial visit:

“...the king at once caused him to be visited, sending him a sum in gold and many cows and people for the Priest's service, having been told by the Portuguese who resided there that the Priest was not only a holy man of great virtue but also a man in the noblest rank and one of the most notable persons in India” (Froes, 1561).

Much to the surprise of Mupunzagutu, Fr. da Silveira did not accept the gifts sent to him, as most Portuguese seemed to either want gold or some other supplies or workers, and explained that he would inform the king of the Mutapa of what he was after (Froes, 1561). Mupunzagutu was surprised at Fr. da Silveira's lack of interest in secular things but was intrigued by what he was told concerning the Jesuit priest. He was informed that a beautiful woman was in Fr. da Silveira's house but this woman ‘was in actual fact a statuette of the Virgin Mary which was on the altar in his home. The Mutapa wanted to see this woman and Fr. da Silveira obliged him by taking the statuette to him. He unwrapped it in Mupunzagutu's presence and explained to him that this was an image of the Mother of God to which all kings were subject. Mupunzagutu asked if he could keep this *muzvagwa* (very beautiful woman) in his house. Fr. da Silveira agreed and set-up a small altar in Mupunzagutu's home, upon which he placed the statuette of the Virgin Mary. Mupunzagutu stated on a number of occasions that he had witnessed that the statuette had a heavenly aura and spoke to him very tenderly (Mudenge, 1986). He was so impressed with the statuette that he told his mother about it as well as a number of Portuguese traders. Mupunzagutu explained to Fr. da Silveira that he could not understand the language that the Lady in the statuette spoke to which Fr. da Silveira answered that only once Mupunzagutu became a Christian would he understand (Luis Froes, 1561). Mupunzagutu was greatly distressed because of his inability to understand the utterances of the Virgin Mary every night and demanded that he be baptized immediately (DPMAC, VIII).

For a period of four days, Fr. da Silveira taught the king and his mother Roman Catholic Catechism and then baptised them both. Mupunzagutu was baptised as *Dom Sebastiao* (Lord Sebastian) and his mother was baptised as *Dona Maria* (Lady Mary) after the Virgin Mary. These baptisms were basically a rebellion against the norms and traditions of the Mutapa, a sacrosanct, and there was no guarantee that the ancestral spirits of Mupunzagutu and his mother, would be happy with their conversion to Christianity. To allay such fears, Fr. da Silveira presented the king and his mother with ornate gifts of weaved cloth

on the day of their baptism and Mupunzagutu reciprocated by presenting Fr. da Silveira with 100 cattle, which the latter requested be slaughtered and given to the poor. As a result of Fr. da Silveira's kindness, between 250 and 300 other people including men of rank in the state were baptized and converted to Roman Catholicism (Mudenge, 1986). The cordial relationship between Fr. Silveira and his newly found converts seemed to be permanent and no possible backlash appeared to be likely. Many members of the royal household presented Fr. da Silveira with gifts of milk, maize, butter and eggs on a regular basis further emphasizing the high esteem in which he was held. It was clear that Fr. da Silveira was gaining personal control on behalf of the Portuguese crown over the Mutapa, which did not auger well for them as the gold mines would soon become threatened. Fr. da Silveira was flourishing in his efforts to promote Portuguese interests mainly due to the many conspiracies, coup attempts, succession disputes and civil wars that threatened the Mutapa Empire. It certainly appears that Mupunzagutu probably wanted Portuguese help to maintain his hold on power and realizing this, Fr. Silveira proceeded to convert him. It is also worth noting that it is very unlikely that any of Mupunzagutu's subjects would have converted to Christianity if he himself had not done so, as in the case of Africans in Benin (Ryder, 1969).

THE OPPOSITION

The main antagonists of Fr. da Silveira were the Muslim traders who felt that their vested interest in the Mutapa Empire was being threatened. If Mupunzagutu was converted to Christianity, their interests would be threatened. Clearly, such groups of antagonists were an insurmountable barrier to the mission work of the Jesuits. Nonetheless, the Jesuits believed that the pagans had to be reached by them before Islam was able to convert them and so they concentrated on areas where Islam appeared to be making inroads. One group of Muslims were lead by a *Kisisi* (Priest), named Mingame, while another faction was lead by the Mbokorume (brother-in-law) of Mupunzagutu who enjoyed a prominent position as an advisor to the emperor.

The Muslim faction, according to Fr. Francisco da Sousa, feared that all of the Mutapa Empire would "follow the law of the crucified" very quickly. The Muslims were always going to be harassed by the Portuguese and all of them "will immediately flock here, and, gathering under their flag as many soldiers as the Kaffirs who have been baptized, will kill with their swords and their spears all the teachers of the Koran, they want to take control of everything and not enough people for all that they are making use of that deceit: let the Priest die so the name of Muhammad may live on. Let us go to the Monomotapa who is an inexperienced young man, let us pretend that we are interested in the good of his monarchy and let us

convince him that this priest is a spy sent by the Portuguese: that he is a famous magician and that the water he pours on the head is a powerful charm to win over the hearts of man as is the salt he puts in the mouths, the saliva he applies to the noses and ears and that only by his death can these charms be counteracted and the spells be broken (Fr. de Sousa, 1710). The Muslims clearly felt vulnerable and humiliated that a single Jesuit Priest could almost single-handedly reduce their control in the region to a precarious existence. His efforts were dissymmetrical to theirs and he seemed to have a psycho-social dominant hold over the Mutapa that could not be allowed to continue. The Muslims thus plotted against Fr. Silveira and laid the groundwork for a situation propitious to the manipulation of Mupunzagutu. He in turn was susceptible to feelings of vulnerability and loss of power. Consequently, when he was falsely informed that Fr. da Silveira was in an alliance with Chipute, the ruler of the Uteve, who were formerly under Mutapa rule, Mupunzagutu listened attentively (Luis Froes, 1561).

The Muslims also told the king that the Portuguese planned to take over the country and that Fr. da Silveira was a Portuguese agent and a sorcerer who had come to bring drought and famine to their lands and that he would eventually kill the king: "...the priest was a *muroyi* (which means a treacherous wizard), bringing sun and hunger and dead man's bone and other evil objects to conquer the land and kill the king" (Luis Froes, 1561). His sprinkling of holy water was also considered to be an evil plot to usurp the power of Mupunzagutu.

They were partly correct in their assessment as the Portuguese had begun their attempts to subdue the Mutapa as early as 1505 when they captured Sofala on the Indian Ocean Coast. By 1550, they set out in force to take charge by whatever means of the Mutapa Empire (Isaacman, 1972), and their military activities made this evident to all and sundry. Consequently, a number of Shona traditional leaders began to feel vulnerable by what they regarded as Portuguese encroachment into their territory. They also informed Mupunzagutu that the Moor (Arab) *Engangas* (witch-doctors) were foretelling that Fr. da Silveira was sent by the Portuguese Governor of India and the Captain of the Portuguese Garrison at Sofala as a spy to prepare the way for a Portuguese invasion of the Mutapa Kingdom. This information must have increased the levels of insecurity that pervaded the Kingdom and the evidence for this is in the emergence of hilltop settlements, which served as defensive positions (Mudenge, 1988).

A WORSENING SECURITY SITUATION

The primary Portuguese objective was to gain mining and political concessions in the state and they wished to control the Mutapa kings as Portuguese vassals (Theal, 1964). Essentially, Mutapa proved to be invulnerable to

assault and even economic exploitation as a direct result of the Emperor's control over gold production. The Mutapa Kingdom did eventually sign treaties which made it a Portuguese vassal state. They also ceded gold mines, but in reality none of these concessions were ever realized (Oliver et al., 1975).

Nonetheless, at the time of Fr. da Silveira, tension was high when it came to security issues. In this regard, the Portuguese made reference to four different types of fortifications that they encountered and which are supported by the archaeological record. There were hilly defensive positions used by rebels against Mutapa-Portuguese attacks. There were also earthworks constructed by the Portuguese, both private and governmental, to control the gold producing areas of the Mutapa State and part of the Zambezi River. The Mutapa also used fortified hills to protect their towns from enemy assault. They also constructed *chuambos* (stockades) made of wood that were used by the rebels operating in the lower Zambezi. They used wood in the lower Zambezi area due to the lack of stone. The use of earthworks as ramparts was a common feature in the lower Zambezi and almost certainly dates back to the late 16th century (Axelson, 1956).

These fortifications were all probably introduced due to the insecurity of the Emperors and as a direct response to the introduction of firearms by the Portuguese. When Mupunzagutu was informed of the possible motives of Fr. da Silveira, his demeanour towards the Jesuit priest altered rapidly.

THE DEMISE OF FR. DA SILVEIRA

An anti-Fr. Silveira group led by Mingame urged Mupunzagutu to exercise extreme caution in dealing with Fr. Silveira and warned him as follows:

"Do not forget upon what agreement and false understanding these people were allowed to enter into the kingdom of Mozambique, and violently occupy the kingdom of Sofala which was at first tributary to you. Do you not know that these Langaru (Portuguese) have by craft contrived to possess themselves of the sea coast of India Recognize all this guile; plots are being hatched against you" (Wilmot 1896).

Mupunzagutu was surprised about the charges being made against Fr. Silveira and was gripped by fear and decided to summon the Council on 14 March 1561, to hear the accusations that were presented against Fr. Silveira. The case was carefully orchestrated by Fr. Silveira's enemies to such an extent that the Council of Mutapa which comprised of a number of Chiefs decided that he would be sentenced to death. Caiado advised Fr. Silveira to leave immediately but this recommendation was not taken notice of.

It was clear to Fr. Silveira that Mupunzagutu has turned against him but despite this, he would not relinquish his post. Caiado in the meanwhile, visited Mupunzagutu and pleaded with him to spare the life of Fr. Silveira to which Mupunzagutu responded that the most he could do to the Priest was banish him (de Sousa, 1710). Mupunzagutu then decided to summon a second meeting with his Council which his mother also attended but Fr. Silveira's death sentence was upheld (Mudenge, 1986). Caiado informed Fr. Silveira of everything that had transpired after which the later invited all the Portuguese traders in close proximity to the Mutapa court to visit him to receive the sacraments, which many of them did. He was so determined to stand his ground that on 15 March. 1561 he baptized 50 more neophytes that he had been teaching and also heard the confessions of a number of Portuguese traders. Before retiring, he told Caiado:

"I am more ready to die than the Muslims are to kill me. I forgive the king, who is young, and his mother, because they have been deceived" (de Sousa, 1710).

Two of Caiado's servants were instructed by him to stay at Fr. Silveira's house and it is from them that we know what transpired the night of his death. They explained that he walked up and down holding a Crucifix in his hands and looking up to heaven while he prayed. At midnight, he became so weary that he decided to sleep on his reed mat (Wilmot, 1896). According to Caiado's servants, seven men rushed in and pinned him down while he was still asleep. One man sat on his chest, four of them lifted him up by his arms and legs while two others tied a rope around his neck and strangled him (du Plessis, 1911), after which they dragged him and flung his corpse into the Musengezi River (Froes, 1561) where it was apparently devoured by crocodiles. With his martyr's death (Parrinder, 1969), the first Portuguese efforts to introduce Christianity into the Mutapa Empire in the 16th Century came to an end. Only in 1905, 344 years after the death of Fr. Silveira, was there an official investigation to establish his martyrdom and its causes.

CONCLUSION AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF FR. DA SILVEIRA'S MURDER

The murder of Fr. da Silveira was the ideal pretext for further Portuguese encroachment into the Mutapa Empire. They opted to further penetrate the interior and assume total control of the gold mines and the precious ivory trade route. In 1568, they dispatched a military force of 1,000 men under Francisco Barreto which managed to proceed as far as the Upper Zambezi, but malaria decimated them. As a result of the heavy losses sustained, the Portuguese returned to their base in 1572 where they released their frustrations on a group of Swahili traders, whom they annihilated. They substituted them with

Portuguese and their half-caste descendants who became *Prazeiros* (estate holders) on the Lower Zambezi. The Mutapa Empire maintained a position of power by demanding financial support from every Portuguese captain of Mozambique that took the office and also levied a duty of 50% on imported goods. Fr. da Silveira's mission demonstrated the close links between Portuguese imperialism and Roman Catholic Missionary Evangelization in Southern Africa. The death of the Jesuit Priest ended early Portuguese attempts to spread Christianity in the region and also demonstrated his desire to make himself a martyr, for even after being warned by Caiado of the threat against his life, he continued on his zealous mission to proselytize the Mutapa Empire, to the glory of God and Portugal. Fr. Goncalo da Silveira, was the first Jesuit martyr on the African Continent. Politically, he enjoyed short-term success as the Muslims were unable to further halt Christian activity and encroachment in Central and Southern Africa. However, for the most part, many of the tribes of the interior were out of the reach of both Christianity and Islam.

The expedition under Francisco Barreto in 1568, previously mentioned, which was sent to avenge his death never reached its destination, and his apostolate came to an abrupt end due to a lack of missionaries to carry on his work (www.jesuit.org.sg/html/companions/saints). There is no doubt that Portugal used missionary evangelization to further her imperialistic ambitions and Fr. Silveira was clearly a zealot bent on martyrdom. If this was not the case, he would have heeded the advice of Caiado and fled when he had the opportunity.

In response, the Portuguese decided to send further punitive expeditions to assist the Mutapa's enemies, especially Chief Mavhura, who was a rival claimant to the Mutapa kingship. The Portuguese said they would help Mavhura if he signed treaties essentially making him subservient to the Portuguese crown. Such treaties would link the Mutapa Empire to the Portuguese Crown. The Portuguese advanced their interests further by using slave labour to work on the land they acquired under the treaties signed with Mavhura. Eventually, these resulted in regional armed conflicts which obliged many Shona to flee to the south where Changamire's rule was taking shape. A 1574 Portuguese invasion managed to oblige the ruler of Uteve to provide the Portuguese freedom of passage to the Kingdom of Manyike in exchange for which the Portuguese Captain of the Garrison of Sofala had to pay a tribute of 200 pieces of cloth, but the Mutapa Empire managed to keep out of Portuguese control and still dominated the Eastern Plateau of Zimbabwe for the next fifty years. Trading posts, mining settlements and churches gradually grew in the Mutapa Empire and by the seventeenth century, the Mutapa gave all their gold to the King of Portugal. After the death and martyrdom of Fr.

Silveira, no further Jesuit missionary activities were reported in the Mutapa Empire until the 19th Century. It was the Dominicans who later converted many to Christianity in the region.

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