

MAFISA AND BULOZI CATTLE ECONOMY IN HISTORICAL
PERSPECTIVE 1886-1986

By

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APPROVAL

This dissertation of **MUYANGWA KAMUTUMWA** is approved
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I MUYANGWA KAMUTUMWA hereby declare that this dissertation represents my own research, and that it has not been previously submitted for a degree at this or at any other University.

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ABSTRACT

The dissertation looks at the change in Mafisa from 1886-1986. In the work we have shown that Mafisa was an authentic Lozi institution, which was practised long before groups such as the Mbunda and Kololo arrived in Bulozhi.

We have shown that the uneven distribution of pastures in Bulozhi was a very important factor in the practice of Mafisa.

In the hands of the political elite in Bulozhi, Mafisa played an important political role. Cattle were distributed in Mafisa as a seal of political relations between the rulers and the ruled. This was mainly because at the turn of the century, it was the political elite who had cattle in large numbers.

However, with new developments in Bulozhi such as the coming of colonial rule and the cattle trade, Mafisa underwent some change. Raids for cattle from the Ila and Tonga on which the Lozi had depended were brought to an end by the B.S.A. Co. Also the colonial government was the final authority in the territory, thus undermining the political position of the rulers in Bulozhi. The cattle trade enabled commoners who had earned some money to buy cattle. The cattle trade also led to cattle thefts by the herdsmen. With these two developments we see Mafisa assuming an economic importance.

About the 1940s onwards there was an increased involvement by the commoners in Mafisa. Workers and people in urban areas became involved in it. The 1940s also saw the sale of milk by the herdsmen to the urban centres and the proceeds accrued to the owner of cattle, while originally milk used to form part of the payment of herding Mafisa cattle. In the 1970s and 1980s it became quite common for a herdsman to ask for payment in cash for herding mafisa cattle instead of the traditional payment in cattle.

Finally, while earlier on it was possible to associate cattle ownership with political position, at the close of our study period this was no longer possible. This was so because the cattle of the political elite had greatly diminished in number through cattle diseases, the cattle trade and thefts by the herdsmen and cattle enumerators. While paradoxically some commoner herdsmen had become wealthy cattle-owners, some aristocratic cattle owners lost their animals.

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DEDICATION

For my mother, Mukubesa Lingungu and my late father
Kamutumwa Muyangwa who gave so much for so little.

ABBREVIATIONS

B.N.G.	Barotse Native Government.
B.S.A.CO.	British South Africa Company.
C.S.C.	Cold Storage Commission.
N.R.	Northern Rhodesia.
WENELA	Witwatersrand Native Labour Association.

CHANGED NOTES

OLD

NEW

Bulozi

Western Province

Northern Rhodesia

Zambia

CHANGED CURRENCY

OLD

NEW

One penny (1d)

One ngwee (1n)

Sixpence (6d)

Five ngwee (5n)

Twelve pence (12d)

Ten ngwee (10n)

Two shillings

Twenty-five ngwee (25n)

Six pence (2/-6d)

Ten shillings (10/-)

One Kwacha (K1)

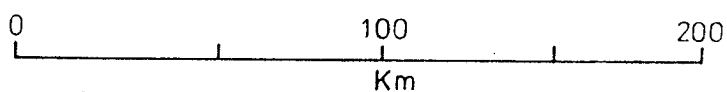
One pound (£1)

Two Kwacha (K2)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

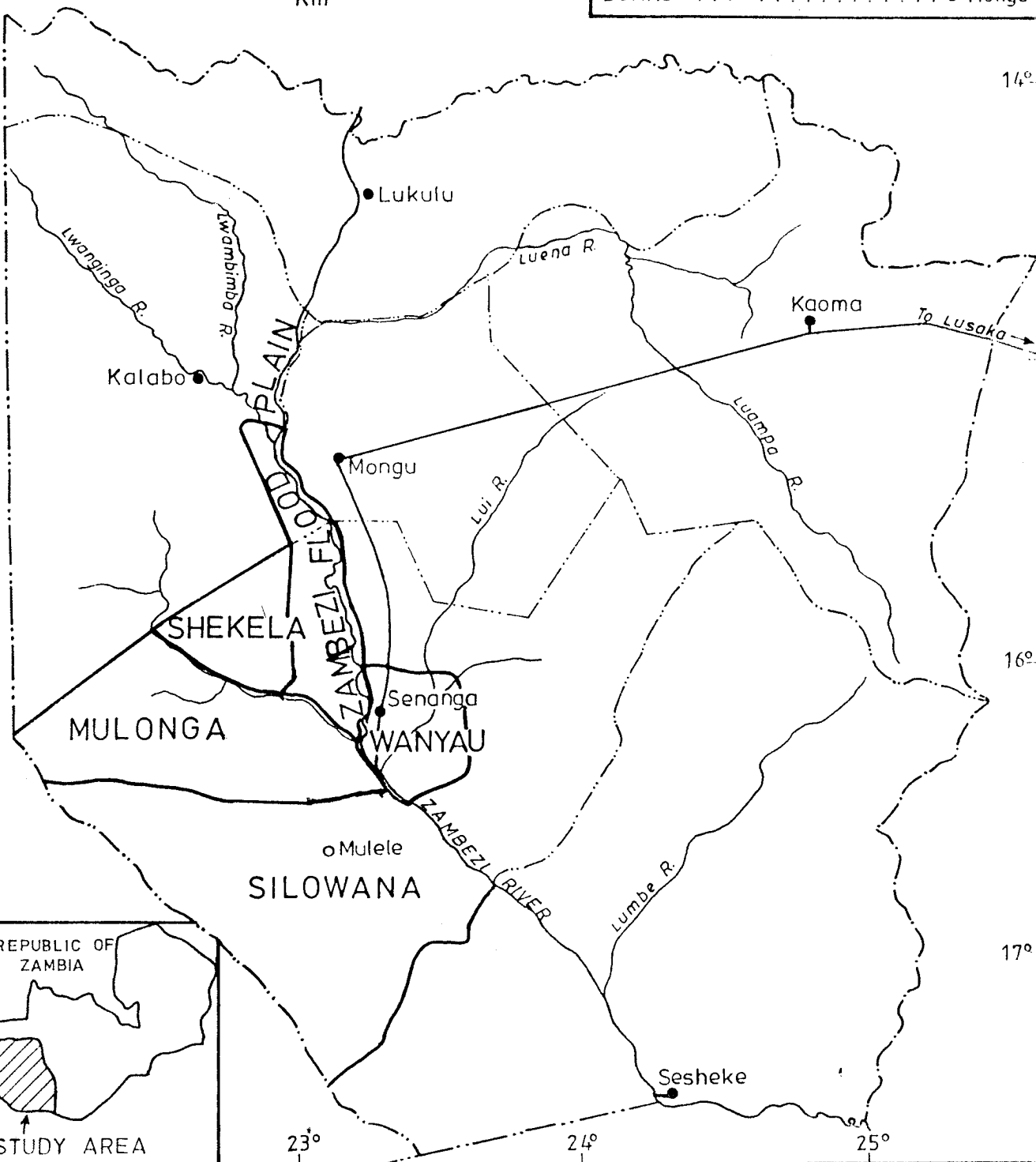
	Page
Title Page	i
Approval Page	ii
Declaration	iii
Abstract	iv
Acknowledgements	vi
Dedication	vii
Abbreviations	viii
INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter 1: Geographical Location and Historical Background of the Area of Study ..	12
Chapter 2: New Developments in Mafisa: 1900-1916	26
Chapter 3: Change in Mafisa: 1917-1947	36
Chapter 4: The Continuity of Mafisa: 1948-1986	49
CONCLUSION	60
APPENDICES:	
I. The Different Herding Arrangements in Bulozi	65
II. Ethnic Terminology	67
List of Oral Sources and Bibliography	68

THE MAIN GRAZING PLAINS OF BULOZI



REFERENCE

BOUNDARIES	Grazing Plain	—
"	International	- - - - -
"	Provincial	- - - - -
"	District	- - - - -
BOMAS		● Mongu



Source: H.A.M. Maclean, An Agricultural Stocktaking of Barotseland.

INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The dissertation studies Mafisa, a system of cattle lending. We will focus on the period from 1886 to 1986. The main purpose of the study is to investigate the role of this institution in the Bulozhi cattle economy and how it has changed since the late **nineteenth century**. The study intends to document and analyse its nature and role in the period under study. It further examines the impact of the cattle trade, cattle diseases, ecology, wage labour and urbanisation on the institution. We shall also analyse its impact on social stratification and the extent to which it caused conflict between the owners of cattle and those who looked after them. We will call "herdsmen" those looking after Mafisa cattle, those charged with responsibility of looking after the cattle, and not the people who take the cattle to graze without management responsibilities.

THE MEANING OF MAFISA

Taken broadly, Mafisa can involve all livestock such as goats, chicken and cattle.¹ In this study, however, our interest is in Mafisa in relation to cattle. Mafisa was not the only herding arrangement which existed in Bulozhi. There was the herding of cattle by the owner of

the animals who could as well hire labour for herding. If hired labour was used management responsibilities were not transferred to the hireling; the owner of the cattle was still responsible for them.² There was the short-term herding arrangement which was brought about by the annual floods, resulting in the shift (Kuomboka) of both man and animal from the Zambezi flood plain to higher dry areas. In this kind of herding arrangement, the owners of cattle in the plains usually entered into contracts with people on the upland to assume temporary responsibility for cattle, lasting for three to four months in return for manure and milk. In short-term herding, the herdsman was not usually paid an animal.

There was the long-term caretaking arrangement, under which the caretaker of cattle assumed the responsibility for cattle for long periods. This kind of herding arrangement was usually entered into by relatives. It was practised by anyone who was not in a position to assume the care of the animals and so would entrust them to a relative.⁴ Mafisa was a long-term herding arrangement. It was an institutionalised arrangement. Herdsmen looking after Mafisa cattle got the use of milk, part of the meat of dead animals, manure and a reward in the form of a live animal for their work.⁵ The difference between Mafisa and long-term caretaking was that the legal right to a reward in form of a live animal which was a cornerstone of Mafisa was absent in the case of caretaking.

While a relative might be given an animal in appreciation of his work, he had no legal claim to such an animal.

The other difference between Mafisa and long term caretaking was that, in the case of Mafisa, Mafisa cattle could not be placed in Mafisa by the herdsman, while those under long term herding could be placed in Mafisa by the caretaker. In short, in long-term herding arrangement the herdsmen had more management powers, while a Mafisa herdsman followed prescribed terms.⁶

The other herding arrangement involved cattle belonging to the Litungas. Most of our respondents along with Gluckman referred to the cattle given out by the Litunga as Zambuwa, thereby distinguishing them from cattle given out by the commoners. However, the main difference between Zambuwa and Mafisa cattle depends on the status of the one giving out the cattle. When literally translated Mbuwa can either mean royal herds or many cattle.⁷ In this light we shall argue that Zambuwa cattle were also given out in Mafisa.⁸ Since the Litunga also gave out cattle, this study will incorporate any material on Mbuwa into it.

ORIGINS OF MAFISA

The term Mafisa is a Kololo term. Though most of our informants claimed that Mafisa was an authentic Lozi institution, they, however, failed to give an equivalent term in the Luyana language. Their claim is, however,

supported by Prins, who found from oral traditions that Lozi cattle were grazed near the capital but Luvale persistently raided them. Because of this:

They tried to move the cattle from one place to another in hiding, but the people said 'we can not be without cattle at the capital, we need milk for the children. These people are annoying us... eventually Yeta I said, 'alright, let us move our cattle so that the Luvale may lose their way...'. However, because they were so many, it was decided that the cattle be divided up under certain Indunas. One is Inyambo, another is Namulata. 'So now', the people said, 'let us do this, each one should take up a certain number of cattle not as a whole', but divided up...'.⁹

From the foregoing, we see the embryonic development of Mafisa, during the reign of Yeta I. This was further confirmed by oral tradition which states that mafisa was an indigenous Lozi institution.¹⁰ In actual fact, most cattle owning people such as the Nuer, Ila, Tswana, Zulu and Sotho have some kind of cattle lending arrangement similar to Mafisa in Bulozhi.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Though a number of scholars have written on Bulozhi, little scholarly attention has been paid to Mafisa. Works of scholars like M. Gluckman, E.I. Hermitte, M. Mainga, J. Hellen, L. van Horn and G. Prins have mainly centred on Lozi agriculture and other aspects of Lozi history.¹¹ To date no historical study exists on Bulozhi giving

the patterns of cattle ownership. Peters has estimated that a large percentage of cattle in Bulozhi plain belonged to the paramount chief and his family, the Indunas and prominent headmen.¹² Hilda Kuper's work on the Swazi entitled An African Aristocracy reveals a correlation between the distribution of livestock and rank and economic privileges.¹³ Maclean, writing in the early 1960s saw ownership of cattle in Bulozhi as more widespread and not only restricted to prominent social groups.¹⁴ Following the style of earlier writers L. Entrup concluded that a substantial percentage of the cattle he surveyed belonged to permanently absent owners.¹⁵ He did not mention how many of the cattle he surveyed were in Mafisa and over this he has been taken to task by Beerling.¹⁶ Beerling has extensively written on Mafisa. She has written on the different herding arrangements which were found in Bulozhi and has given the definition of Mafisa and has also given the varied reasons why people enter into a Mafisa relationship;¹⁷ but because she is a sociologist, she does not give historical depth to Mafisa. She also does not give us her estimate of the cattle in Mafisa.

Since it does not necessarily follow that cattle owned by an absent owner are in Mafisa, for there were and are other herding arrangements, we can therefore assume that the percentage of cattle **in Mafisa was lower** than the percentage of ca.

THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study was undertaken in the Western Province of Zambia, hereafter referred to as Bulozhi. Bulozhi in the strict sense refers to the Zambezi flood plain, but when used loosely, it can refer to all the area formerly ruled by the Lozi chiefs. It is in this latter sense that we will use the term.¹⁸ Our analysis will concentrate mainly on the districts of Kalabo, Mongu and Senanga which were and are the major cattle-keeping areas.

Writing on agricultural self-sustaining societies, C. Meillasoux stated that 'we are studying things (objects, means and products of labour) seen as the focus of certain material or personal relationships, which link them with individuals or other things, or individuals with each other'.¹⁹ In this study we shall examine how and why the institution of Mafisa linked and continued to link individuals in the period under study.

METHODOLOGY

Between June and November 1989 we read published and unpublished materials on Mafisa and Mafisa related subjects in the University of Zambia Library and the National Archives of Zambia; and the Livingstone Museum Library. Between November and December 1989 oral testimonies in form of open-ended interviews in Senanga, Mongu and

Kalabo were collected. We had two advantages during the interviews, namely that we knew the language, Lozi, and the geography of the study area. However, there were some problems experienced. The first one is that of statistics, because of an agreement which was entered into between the British South Africa Company and later the colonial government, cattle in Bulozhi were not counted prior to 1934.²⁰ The second problem was that the funding of the research was not adequate. As a result, we could not visit all the places which needed to be visited for the purpose of our research, nevertheless, we feel that the areas we managed to visit are representative enough to enable us to draw valid conclusions. Thirdly, due to the nature of the topic, some people did not volunteer information, suspecting that maybe an investigation of people who had stolen other peoples' animals was going on. As a result of this, it was realized early that a formal questionnaire would invite the hostility of the respondents. In all thirty people were interviewed, two in Lusaka, ten in Senanga, sixteen in Mongu and two in Kalabo. The respondents were men who knew something about Mafisa and cattle in general. These were asked probing questions in an informal way. The answers got from the interviews were used to complement and supplement written material.

ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The study has been divided into four chapters. Chapter one, which goes up to 1900, deals with the geographical background and the role of the royal herds. Chapter two, which starts from 1901 to 1916 examines, the new developments in Bulozhi in relation to Mafisa. In chapter three falling between 1917 and 1947 we examine the change in Mafisa. Chapter four which is the last chapter looks at the continuity of Mafisa from 1948 to 1986. The study ends with a general conclusion which summarises the issues raised in the study.

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7. Interview: P. Mufalali, Nalionwa Village 12-11-89.
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B.N. Kalaluka, Nangomba Village 13-11-89.
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CHAPTER 1

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE AREA OF STUDY

This chapter is divided into two sections. Section one deals with the geography of the area. Section two discusses the institution of Mafisa before 1900.

GEOGRAPHY OF THE AREA OF STUDY

Bulozi lies between the 22° and the $25^{\circ} 30'$ lines of longitude and the $13^{\circ} 45'$ and the $17^{\circ} 45'$ lines of latitude. Most of its boundary was demarcated by sizeable rivers. Bulozi has been a good cattle keeping country. The distribution of cattle in Bulozi was determined by the absence of tsetse fly and the availability of sufficient pastures and water.

There were two types of tsetse fly found in Zambia. These are Glossina pallipides, which frequents shady river banks, and the the other is Glossina morsitans which was found in more open woodland. Tsetse fly transmits parasites, called trypanosomes from the blood of infected animals and humans to uninfected animals. Some parasites cause nagana in cattle and kill them. Wild animals are known to be immune, thus they act as hosts to the parasites.¹ Before the great rinderpest epidemic of 1896, tsetsefly in Bulozi was found in a much wider area than

they were ever later to be.² The main flood plain is the only island of tsetse free land, which is surrounded on almost all sides by more or less dense and continuous belts of fly.³ In recent years Bulozhi has been invaded by Glossina morsitans morsitans West w. from the Caprivi strip along the line of the Mashi river and then north eastwards towards the Zambezi river.⁴ By 1975 this line of tsetse has crossed the Zambezi and joined the belt of tsetse west of the Kafue river.⁵ In the fly belt area it has been difficult to keep livestock.

Bulozhi has a variety of ecological regions which dispose it well to practise the Mafisa system. Except for small areas, Bulozhi is covered by a deep mantle of the Kalahari sands. This characteristic sets apart Bulozhi from the rest of Zambia.⁶ Therefore, the availability of good pastures was a major constraint on the distribution of cattle. Cattle were concentrated in the Zambezi plain, and the adjoining valleys of the tributaries of the Zambezi. In times of high flood, cattle are moved from the main floodplain to the valleys of the tributaries of the Zambezi where the floods are not very high. This applies to both cattle in Mafisa and outside it.

In the east of the flood plain and the Zambezi river which cuts across it, there is a preponderance of sandy dambo soils.⁷ These dambo soils are at certain places characterised by the presence of shallow depressions or

pans which are roughly circular in shape. These pans are thought to be of aeolian origin. They are seasonally waterlogged or flooded. Cattle were grazed around these pans.

The region which is important in terms of the provision of good pastures was the Zambezi floodplain, measuring some 177 kilometres long and varying in width from about 16 kilometres to some 48.3 kilometres at its widest. The plain is flooded annually by the Zambezi river between February and June.⁸ Grassland, varied in type according to variations in soil type, drainage and other factors, covers the whole plain.⁹ There are three types of grassland found in the Zambezi floodplain; rainfed grassland, seepage grassland and floodplain grassland. The first is green during the rain season, the second is green all year round and the third is available for livestock after the recession of the flood and in the early rain season.¹⁰ The main grazing resource of the Zambezi flood plain is the seepage grassland which consists of complexes of levees/creeks and pointbar/swales. The clay and loamy stream channels (Sitapa) and especially the seasonal ponds and lakes (Masa) produce good forage grasses like Echinochloa Stagnina and vossia cuspidata vital for cattle growth.¹¹ The islands on the Zambezi river are equally important for producing pastures.

On the west of the Zambezi river lies a sandy region which extends northwards into eastern Angola. These sands

are flat, forming table-like plains, which are waterlogged in the wet season but are surprisingly waterless prairies in the dry season.¹² The western plains consist of grassland of which Loudetia Simplex (Mwange) is dominant. These regional characteristics continue in the (Shekela) Mulonga and Silowana plains of western Senanga plains.¹³ The plains on the west of the Zambezi were the most favoured for Mafisa by the Lozi.

In the south of Bulozhi occur numerous large belts of firmer sands which contain a high proportion of fine sand. There has been less leaching in this severe, hotter and drier climate. There is a reduced occurrence of plains or pans in this region.¹⁴ As a result, in much of the region cattle does not do well, for add to this the ever present menace of tsetse fly.

CLIMATE

Bulozhi experiences great variations of temperature. The mean maximum being about 32.8°C and the mean minimum temperature is about 15°C. The temperature ranges from 48.8°C to heavy frost. The rainfall is lower than most parts of the country and the rain season starts in November and ends in April. The areas on the plateau margins in the north receive about 600mm of rainfall annually.¹⁵ As a result some areas may experience a lot of rainfall while others would have drought. same applies

for pastures.

In the preceding pages, we have endeavoured to demonstrate that the uneven distribution of pastures in Bulozhi, as a result of ecology, favoured a wide dispersal of cattle there. However, ecology was not the only factor which influenced the Lozi ruling class and later the commoners to place their cattle in Mafisa. There were other factors which we will discuss in the present study.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Lozi, formerly known as the Aluyi or Aluyana, came to their present habitat sometime before the ~~seventeenth~~ century from the Luba-Lunda Kingdom of Katanga.^{16a} 'By the seventeenth century a Lozi Proto Kingdom existed at the plain's western edge'.^{16b} They conquered groups such as the Makoma, Nyengo, Mulonga and Liuwa.¹⁷ They established a centralized Kingdom in the flood plains.¹⁸ The conquered ethnic groups paid tribute to the Lozi ruling class. The kingdom of the Lozi was greatly dependent on the flood plain. The flood plain afforded good grazing for cattle during the dry season.¹⁹

Since land was relatively scarce in the Zambezi flood plain, positions of authority went with allocations of land. The Lozi had a mixed economy. They were pastoralists, crop cultivators, fishermen and hunters. Cattle herding was entirely in the hands of men. In the early days, control if not ownership of cattle was largely in the

hands of the royal family,²⁰ as could be discerned from a number of traditions concerning cattle. One tradition particularly says: Usike wa lumba komu haiba i ku fepa ni bana ba hao kono u lumbe mulena ka ku ifa mutanga (do not praise the cow if it feeds you and your children but praise the king for giving it to a poor man).²¹ Cattle had many uses, it is this which made them prized assets. They provided milk and meat, they were used for sacrifices, payment of fines and manuring gardens. Slowly cattle increased in number even among the commoners as rewards for gallantry in war and for other distinguished services.

In the early Nineteenth Century during the reign of Mulambwa, the Mbunda arrived in Bulozhi from Angola. About 1840 the Kololo from the south conquered the Lozi.²² The Kololo introduced a number of changes in Bulozhi, though they did not introduce Mafisa. In 1864 the Lozi freed themselves from Kololo rule. There followed a period of political turmoil, which came to an end in 1885. The person who managed to establish a climate of relative political stability in Bulozhi was Lubosi, later known as Lewanika. He had first come to the throne in 1878 but was overthrown in 1884. In 1885 he recaptured the throne. Lewanika widely dispersed cattle throughout his kingdom and used cattle as a means of establishing political control.

THE ROLE OF ROYAL HERDS

The Mafisa system was practised in Bulozhi, a society in which the vital resources of the land were owned and/or controlled by a minority.²³ Cattle were one such resource owned by a few. This minority that owned the productive resources of the land did as little work as possible.

The Litunga's cattle, called Mbuwa, were given out because the Lozi king was not expected to do any work; people would work for him. Royal herds were also given out because of their great numbers, they could not be sustained in one area. Many observers and travellers passing through Bulozhi acknowledged the wealth of the Litunga Lewanika in cattle.²⁴ He was the biggest cattle owner in Bulozhi. Prins found, from oral traditions, that in the 1880s and 1890s, the immediate hinterland of the floodplain on the west, was settled by colonists who went there in charge of royal cattle.²⁵ This view has also been corroborated by our informants.²⁶ Even as late as the early 1920s a colonial official recorded that 'important cattle owners send some of their cattle to be herded in Shekela and Siloana (sic)(plains) which are regarded as the best breeding grounds'.²⁷ The increase of the herds taken to the western plain system proved their suitability for cattle keeping.

Lewanika used cattle as a political instrument. Following the ravages of the rinderpest epidemic of 1896

which killed cattle in the south of Bulozhi, but spared those in the Zambezi floodplain. Lewanika sent cattle to the Indunas and others in the south of Kingdom. In so doing, Lewanika renewed patronage bonds in an area which had become strategic.²⁸ Lewanika had also sent cattle to the Ila, Nkoya and Luvale. Lewanika therefore used his great numbers of cattle to have a loyal following. In this regard parallels between Lewanika and Moshoeshoe can be drawn. Lewanika, like Moshoeshoe, used to bind people to himself by lending them cattle.²⁹ Lewanika had some people moved from their villages and given land and royal cattle to look after. Looking after royal cattle was considered a great honour. Regarding the position of the herdsmen of royal cattle Gluckman says:

The King used to allot his herds to various herdsmen, again with a special name, bo Imutongo. The King was obviously Mung'a (owner) of these herds. But the King could not take cattle from anyone of these herds. without the herdsman's permission. He had to ask for permission, and the herdsman could refuse to yield if he felt the herd was being depleted. Nor could the king take the herd from a man unless the man had wronged him. For the herdsman was also Mung'a, owner.³⁰

Those who looked after royal cattle were called Bo Imutongo and enjoyed certain rights in the cattle they looked after. This was then, a very prestigious title and all our informants heed this view. In outlying areas, the presence of royal herds strengthened the influence

of the Litunga there.

Royal cattle were dispersed due to fear of outbreaks of cattle diseases. If cattle were concentrated in one area and were attacked by a cattle disease, then all would perish. The other reason for the wide distribution of royal cattle was the need for provision of ready food when the Litunga was touring his territory.³¹

Another important reason for the Litunga placing cattle in Mafisa was that, as succession to the royal throne was by election, the one on the throne tried to hide some cattle for his own branch of the family through Mafisa.³² If his successor inherited all royal property, still there would be some herds which would not be known to the new king. These would go to the family of the previous king. A case in point is what happened following Lewanika's death. The Secretary for Native Affairs asked Paramount Chief Yeta III to distribute some property and cattle left by Lewanika his father, to his brothers and sisters. Yeta refused, arguing that it was not Lozi custom to do that.³³ In another case a Lozi commoner wrote to the Secretary for Native Affairs complaining of the bad treatment of other members of the royal family who were not part of Yeta's family. He complained that some sons of Lewanika had not been given villages, farmland and cattle, thus they were living like paupers, while Yeta's family had all these.³⁴ These cases illustrate the difficulty experienced by the offspring

of the deceased Chief to get a portion of what had been his when he was alive. It was in anticipation of such eventualities that the Litungas placed some cattle in Mafisa, so that their offspring could benefit from them.

The British South Africa Company (B.S.A.Co.) established nominal control over Bulozhi in 1890. From 1897, the B.S.A. Co. began to establish effective control. This control meant that Bulozhi was no longer an independent political entity. The Litunga's policies in the Kingdom had to be ratified or approved by the B.S.A.Co. officials.

One important result was that the raids for the Ila and Tonga cattle, on which the Lozi had increasingly come to depend in the late Nineteenth Century, were brought to an end. This meant that one important line of supply and replenishing of cattle for the Lozi was blocked and the ability of the Litunga to dispense cattle to his subjects was limited.

Before 1900 Mafisa cattle were mainly given out by the Litunga and by members of the ruling class, since it was they who had cattle in large numbers. The Litunga had no obligation to pay anyone for services rendered to him before 1906. But in case of cattle it would be expected that those who looked after royal cattle got one or two animals as reward for their services. Some got land as well. One could still gain by stealing some animals and place them in turn in Mafisa, and many people who looked after royal cattle have been known to have

done this.³⁵ Yet, if it was discovered that the herdsman was spoiling the herds, he would be punished.³⁶ As a result of this arrangement there was a saying which stated that 'Tulye ko mawe akatumba ni ka minya ngombe',³⁷ (let us drink the milk, the hide is for the owner of the cattle) **which** implies that the people looking after Mafisa cattle knew that they were only supposed to make use of the produce of the cattle.

In this chapter we have tried to show how the geography of Bulozhi among other factors affected the institution of Mafisa. We also showed the reasons why the Litunga distributed cattle among his subjects. Mainly we showed that the cattle which were dispersed by the Litunga played an important political role. They were used by the Litunga to bind people to himself.

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CHAPTER 2

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN MAFISA: 1900-1916

This chapter examines the problems which were brought by the coming of colonial rule in Bulozhi in relation to Mafisa. It discusses the impact of the cattle trade on Mafisa and the related institution of Zambuwa and how **the Lozi ruling** class responded to these new developments in Bulozhi.

After 1900, the institution of mafisa experienced some changes. A case in point was that of the Masubia cattle. Before the Germans occupied the Caprivi Strip, the Masubia were under Lewanika. As in other areas under Lewanika, he had placed some cattle in the charge of the Masubia on the south bank of the Zambezi. Litia, Lewanika's son who was at Sesheke, used to **graze** his animals on the south bank of the Zambezi. When it became known, in 1907, that the Germans would occupy the Caprivi Strip, Litia asked all of Lewanika's people who preferred to live under Lewanika and under British protection to come to the northbank of the Zambezi. At the same time Litia sent men to collect all cattle belonging to Lewanika.¹

When the German resident, Captain Streitwolf, arrived, the Masubia claimed that the cattle taken by Litia were their private property. They claimed that the original cattle were given as presents. Captain Streitwolf took up the claims. In all there were 486 animals in dispute,

of these, Lewanika, Litia and others on the north bank of the Zambezi got 53 head and 218 were given to the Masubia. Thus 215 head of cattle remained in dispute. The B.S.A.Co. administrator solved the issue by giving the Masubia claimants 73 head while Lewanika and others on the north bank of the Zambezi were given 142 head.² This case illustrates how precarious a Mafisa relationship could at times be. Problems like this used to arise because the herdsmen were allowed to own cattle. At times it became difficult to draw a line between cattle placed in Mafisa and personal cattle of the herdsmen. Mafisa was therefore a potential source of conflict. Yet, it was unlike the Buhake institution in Ruanda. Under the Buhake institution, 'when a Buhake relationship broke a patron could take all the animals kept by his client; including those which were not given by him'.³ Under Mafisa the owner of cattle could only take those he had placed in Mafisa and the increase, minus the payment to the herdsman. Disagreements over the the payment of an animal for herding Mafisa cattle were usually settled in court. The Masubia cattle case was also a clear testimony of the changed circumstances under which Lewanika was operating after 1900. Due to German occupation, he was no longer in a position to control cattle given to the Masubia. The German presence in the Caprivi Strip resulted in Lewanika giving up part of the cattle he had claimed as his, such a situation would not have arisen without German intervention.

The cattle trade which grew in Bulozhi starting from the late 1890s, brought far-reaching changes. Cattle selling took the place of ivory trade in the 1890s. The new trade in cattle became very profitable after the rinderpest epidemic of 1896 wiped out much of the stock of both white and black farmers in Southern Rhodesia. A new source of supply became necessary to supply them with breeding stock and also the urban centres which had sprung up as a result of mining activities which were taking place in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. Since it was only the Southern part of Bulozhi which was affected by the epidemic, while the major part of Bulozhi was unaffected, Lozi cattle found buyers from outside.⁴

While Lewanika had been giving cattle to his herdsmen as reward for herding cattle, after 1900 we come across evidence that Lewanika paid some herdsmen between one and as many as five head of cattle, depending on the rank and size of the herd of cattle one looked after.⁵ This development should be seen as having been brought about by the commercialization of cattle due to the cattle trade. The trade in cattle was very lucrative:

One source states that 3,600 were exported in 1901, and another says that Lewanika alone had an income of £1,500 from sales in 1905. Estimates for 1911 and 1912 suggest that 8,000 and 10,000 were⁶ exported in those respective years.

Starting from the late 1890s, Lewanika had been selling

cattle so as to acquire trade **goods**.⁷ The new trade in cattle gave cattle high exchange value when previously they had little exchange value.⁸

As a result of the increased cattle trade, Lewanika tried to wrest control of Mbuwa cattle from the herdsmen because the people looking after them were allegedly wasting them. Since doing so nearly caused a revolt, Lewanika was forced to withdraw his edict of trying to get control of Mbuwa cattle.⁹ Chief Khama was confronted by a similar situation soon after coming to power. He renounced any royal rights to the ownership of the cattle that were parcelled out in Mafisa. Khama did this in order to take advantage of the cattle trade. He built private herds which he could sell freely without upsetting anybody.¹⁰ Lewanika, on the other hand, did not renounce his rights to royal cattle parcelled out, but made efforts to bring them under his direct control. He made no distinction between private and royal herds. Counting and branding of cattle were means Lewanika used to get the cattle under more direct control.

The presence of the B.S.A. Co. in Bulozhi made it possible for Lewanika to hold on to the cattle. The B.S.A. Co. protection stopped Lewanika's herdsmen from claiming the cattle they were looking after. Neither could Lewanika withdraw the cattle from the herdsmen. The commercialization of cattle in Bulozhi took place when the B.S.A. Co. Administration was already effective. While in the case of Khama cattle were commercialized

before the British extended protection over him. Clinging to the cattle he had dispersed would have made him face an uprising. The only safe way out was to renounce his rights to the royal herds.

A large proportion of the men who pioneered the cattle trade were East European Jews,¹¹ such as the Susman Brothers. The profitability of the trade attracted many speculators. This resulted in cut throat competition. However, the competition was controlled through the issue of trading licences. In 1907 the Livingstone Mail reported that the small native cattle owners had almost been bought out such that they were even selling their cows.^{12a} In 1908 and 1911 the same newspaper reported that business was bad.^{12b} This shows that the cattle trade faced some fluctuating fortunes.

Another consequence of the cattle trade was that cases of cattle theft became endemic. This was so because a stolen animal could be easily disposed of by selling it to a cattle trader. To keep check of this situation, Lewanika started branding his herds with a w in 1907, and the company officials were contemplating persuading the Mulena Mukwae of Nalolo in the South to do so too.¹³ But cases of cattle theft did not cease. Clay relates how a certain headman stole cattle from Lewanika's vast herds in 1913 and bought slaves with them from Angola.¹⁴ In 1914 a certain Mamuna stole a cow from the Mukwae's cattle which were being looked after by Kekelwa. Mamuna sold it

to Brasch, a white trader, for £2.15.0.¹⁵ Lewanika complained on a number of occasions to the District Commissioner about this new type of crime, arguing that this was a new development, which caused him much concern and annoyance. This cattle theft also led Lewanika to have regular cattle census expeditions in order to minimize the number of thefts. Lewanika even appointed one of his sons, Mwanañono (who later became paramount chief Imwiko), as one of the cattle enumerators,¹⁶ known in Lozi as Kuwa Kuwa. Lewanika's appointment of his son as one of the enumerators was an indication of how **valuable** cattle had become to the Lozi royalty. It was during the cattle counting exercise that a herdsman of Mbuwa and Mafisa cattle was rewarded for his work.

The changes brought about by the cattle trade were not only felt by the herdsmen and cattle owners; they came to affect nearly everybody in Lozi society:

In 1905, the paramount Chief Lewanika fixed the bride wealth for a woman who has never married at at least two head of cattle.¹⁷

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This law gave/advantage to those who had many cattle, to marry many wives. It enabled cattle owners to control women. It is unlikely that this law was brought about by increased cattle numbers because cattle had just been depleted in the south of the kingdom by the rinderpest epidemic. The cattle trade also reduced the number of

cattle in Bulozhi. While before 1905 it was iron implements, such as the hoe, which were used as bride price, because of its utility in the traditional economy, the change to cattle as bride price shows how important cattle had become in Lozi society. This made it imperative that young **men** wishing to marry had to acquire cattle. Lobolo therefore became a mechanism through which cattle were distributed in Lozi society.

Though, there is no evidence to show exactly when cattle began to be used as bride price, we can surmise that, use of cattle started before 1905. The Law which was introduced in 1905 should therefore be seen as reinforcing an already existing practice. In the same light, hoes continued to be used as Lobolo after 1905, because their utility value in the traditional economy was not diminished by the introduction of cattle as bride price.

The cattle trade which had brought a number of changes in Bulozhi came to a halt in 1915 due to the outbreak of Bovine Pleuro Pneumonia. Following the outbreak of this disease government veterinary officers went about Bulozhi advising people to isolate and disperse their cattle in order to avoid infection of entire herds.¹⁸ In this regard government policy encouraged Mafisa. The sale of cattle to outside areas was stopped for fear that the disease would spread to other unaffected areas. As a result of this, the people in Bulozhi experienced financial problems. They had been

accustomed to selling cattle to meet their cash requirements. Many young men were forced to leave their homes and go and seek wage employment outside the region. In 1916, Lewanika passed away, and his death marked the close of an important chapter.

Though the cattle trade contributed to conflicts in Mafisa, the cattle trade did not lead to a decrease in Mafisa. If anything, the trade in cattle came to involve sectors of society which were not previously involved in Mafisa. Originally, Mafisa was the preserve of the elite. Other sectors of society joined because Mafisa was looked upon as of advantage to both parties concerned. The herdsmen got the payment of an animal or two, while the owner of the cattle did not risk loss of all animals if a disease broke out. In short, the factors which made owners of cattle place them in Mafisa were too strong to be broken by the cattle trade. In this period cattle parcelled out lost much of their political significance. Cattle were more and more lent out for economic considerations.

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CHAPTER 3

CHANGE IN MAFISA: 1917-1947

This chapter looks at the closure of the cattle trade and the problems this brought to Bulozhi. We also examine commoners' involvement in Mafisa. Furthermore, we examine the impact of Mafisa on social stratification and how the Litunga's cattle were affected.

Bulozhi had occupied a unique position amongst other African territories due to the absence of menacing cattle diseases, such as Rinderpest, Pleuro-Pneumonia, and African East **Coast** Fever.¹ While Pleuro Pneumonia had existed in every stock-bearing territory adjoining Northern Rhodesia (N.R.) the disease did not, however, spread to N.R. until the Anglo-Portuguese boundary commission returned to Mongu in Bulozhi. It was then that, the disease broke out in areas adjoining Mongu and it followed the route travelled by the boundary commission. It is therefore reasonable to argue that the disease was introduced into Bulozhi from Angola.² Due to the outbreak of Bovine Pleuro Pneumonia in 1915 an embargo was placed on the sale of Lozi cattle outside Bulozhi.³ This created problems for the Lozi, who had been accustomed to selling their cattle to outside buyers.

The outbreak of Bovine Pleuro-Pneumonia had a number of effects on the Lozi cattle trade and on Lozi economy in general. The obvious one was the ban of the cattle

trade between Bulozhi and the outside world. This was prompted by the desire to curb the spread of the disease to areas outside Bulozhi. The disease also led to a great reduction in Lozi cattle.⁴ An attempt was made to re-open the cattle trade in October 1918, and permits to buy cattle were granted to established traders to purchase more than one hundred slaughter stock at one time. But in April 1919, the cattle trade was banned on account of sickness detected amongst stock sent to Livingstone.⁵ As a result of the disease and the ban on the transfer of cattle from Bulozhi to other areas, the price of cattle fell. While in 1914 the price of cattle was about £2.0.0, in 1922 the price fell to between £1.0.0 and £1.5.0.⁶

The outbreak of Bovine Pleuro-Pneumonia and the ban on cattle movements forced out young men in Bulozhi to go and seek wage employment. While starting from the 1880s the Lozi had been known to have gone to the South to seek wage employment,⁷ after 1916 the numbers swelled.

Kapaale states that between 1935 and 1966 WENELA (Witwatersrand Native Labour Association) brought cash to Bulozhi and improved the lives of the people. To substantiate his argument, he cites two migrants who started businesses from their earnings. One established a shop and the other had a shop and a ranch.⁸ Among the Swazi Kuper's work revealed that, 'in former times cattle were concentrated in the kraals of national leaders, but at

present any one able to earn enough money can buy a beast and gradually accumulate a herd'.⁹ This was equally true of the Lozi. While some migrants spent their earnings on luxury goods, others managed to invest them in productive ventures. Hermitte observed that the, 'Lozi commoners were interested in purchasing goods and cattle with their money rather than investing in European tools or local business'¹⁰ and Entrup also observed that wage employment was an important way among the Lozi of securing cattle.^{11a}

The operation of WENELA increased the inflow of money in Bulozhi. The increased inflow of money was used by some ex-migrant workers to buy cattle, some of which were placed in Mafisa.^{11b} Examples of such ex-migrants are N. Inambao, L. Neta, and L. Lubinda who were interviewed by the author. The involvement of the Lozi commoners, who formed the majority of the migrants, in cattle buying was facilitated by the low prices of cattle which obtained in Bulozhi during this period.

In spite of the outbreak of Bovine Pleuro-Pneumonia the Lozi continued to invest in cattle. In the 1930s and 1940s the desire could be seen as a result of the need to exploit the traditional economy effectively.¹² Peters argues that after 1936 cattle numbers in Bulozhi increased, as a result of the control of Bovine Pleuro-Pneumonia through the establishment of the cattle cordon in 1933 between the Zambian and Angolan border; and inoculation campaigns which were conducted in Bulozhi by the colonial

government. This increase in the numbers of cattle was to the advantage of those who owned or used cattle. Maize replaced sorghum because of increased cattle numbers and manure availability.¹³ Increased cattle numbers provided the incentive to adopt the plough.

Purchase of cattle by Lozi commoners made them become involved in Mafisa relationships. Ban on the sale of cattle outside the region made it easier for the commoners to buy cattle within Bulozhi, for sale of cattle within the region was not stopped. The commoners' involvement was something new. The commoners placed their cattle in Mafisa because due to their employment, they could not look after the cattle themselves. Some placed their cattle in Mafisa for fear of losing all their animals at once in case of an attack by a fatal disease, if their animals were concentrated in one area.¹⁴

The establishment of the Cattle Cordon on the Angolan border with Zambia in 1933 also encouraged commoners near the cordon line to place their cattle in Mafisa. It was a requirement by law that there should be no cattle near the cordon line, while villages could still be there. Cattle-owners on the cordon line moved away their cattle and placed them in Mafisa. Whenever the cattle went, they were reported to diminish in numbers due to poor management, as a result there were a number of cases taken to court.¹⁵ Yet, other commoners placed their cattle in Mafisa because the area they inhabited was not suitable

for cattle-rearing.

Commoners also placed their cattle in Mafisa because other commoners without cattle came to ask them for some cattle to look after. As with Mbuwa cattle, in a commoner to commoner relationship, the owner of the cattle was obliged to pay an animal to the herdsman. However,, the terms of payment were not fixed they depended on the agreement the two parties entered. As a result of Mafisa rules not being fixed, a man who asked for mafisa cattle would not usually get the same reward as one who was given Mafisa cattle because of his renown management skill.¹⁶ In the event of the cattle-owner dying, his children or his heirs would be at liberty to withdraw the animals provided a reward was paid, or leave them with the caretaker. While the death of a herdsman was likely to bring a Mafisa relationship to an end, **however,** in some cases a herdsman's children could take after him the herding of the cattle, if the cattle owner so desired.¹⁷

A commoner herding cattle for another commoner was obliged to report the birth and death of cattle. When a cow bore a calf he was supposed to take butter and milk to the owner of the lactating cow as proof. Conversely, if an animal fell sick or died, he was required to report to the owner and/or take the meat and hide of the dead animal as proof to the owner. If the owner of the cattle did not visit them regularly, the herdsman could easily

substitute his own dead animal for the patron's live one. If the owner of the cattle came to learn of this, he took the herdsman to court!¹⁸ This was usually a source of conflict in Mafisa. The refusal of the owner of cattle to pay a reward animal or animals also usually ended in court.

Cattle which had replaced the hoe as bride price were increasingly being replaced by money as bride price in the 1940s.¹⁹ This could have been due to the increase in the money supply in Bulozhi as a result of WENELA'S activities; or the inconvenience of receiving cattle as Lobolo by people who were in employment, in such cases, money was more convenient as bride price.

Through the cattle trade and labour migration, commoners came to be involved in Mafisa. While there were few people who actually owned cattle, a large proportion of the population depended in various ways on the cattle in Bulozhi either as cattle owners or members of the family or members of the community.²⁰ Thus there were very few people who were completely excluded from the use of cattle. This meant that wealth differences resulting from the use of cattle were not very significant since nearly everyone had access to the use of cattle. However, the sale of cattle did cause some wealth difference between cattle-owners and those without cattle. Due to the importance of cattle in the traditional economy, owners of cattle

occupied a high position in society. Those who looked after Mafisa cattle were not on the same social plane as the owners of the animals. Those without cattle of their own and without other peoples' animals held in Mafisa were in most cases at the lowest stratum of society.

The changes which took place in Bulozzi's cattle economy came to affect a custom known as Kufunda. Kufunda was a custom among the Lozi, which was the seizing and carrying away of property by day without the knowledge, will or consent of the owner of the property, but with the knowledge of a third person. This carrying away was to be done by a blood relative of the owner of the property. If the person who performed the Kufunda had property, then the one who had lost his property in the first place could go and funda the culprit's property after an interval of time. Amongst people with the same property endowment, Kufunda was a good reciprocal custom. Where Kufunda was performed by a poor relative, it lost its reciprocal value. Cattle were usually a target of Kufunda. Towards the end of Lewanika's reign Kufunda was prohibited. In 1932, it was decided by the Lealui Royal Court that in future, Kufunda would not be taken as defence in **charges** of theft.²¹ As a result of the individualisation of property which in part was a result of the penetration of the money economy and the cattle trade, Kufunda was defined as theft.

In socio-economic terms, Kufunda was a levelling mechanism; its practice ensured that there was no

excessive accumulation of cattle by one person. If a man had a lot of animals he was a target of Kufunda. This was tolerated when cattle were not valued in money terms, but once this happened, Kufunda could no longer be tolerated, for cattle wealth could then be converted into money which was not easily available to relatives.

During this time the Litunga's cattle were still dispersed throughout Bulozhi. The Litunga in actual fact struggled to strengthen his position in relation to the herdsmen who were looking after his animals. In Senanga West headman Mulele was a well known herdsman of royal cattle.²² One of our informants related how he used to accompany his father on trips to count Yeta III's cattle in the Bulozhi floodplain.²³ Yeta III was able to bring the royal cattle under his direct control, they were listed and his commoner herdsmen could no longer use them independently for their own ends.²⁴ Yeta also gave some cows to a commoner herdsman near Livingstone to sell milk for him.²⁵ This was a departure from the old custom, where the herdsman had the right to the milk. Yeta III listed and counted his cattle because of their economic value. His sale of milk which was supposed to accrue to the herdsman shows how determined he was to maximize the economic benefit he could get from his cattle.

The Litunga was also still keen on maintaining his dispersed herds for political as well as economic reasons. In 1927 Litunga Yeta III sent headmen Mulanda and Siywa

to go and inspect his cattle in Ila Country. He asked the Namwala District Commissioner to deal with any headman who had misused his animals. He argued that according to Lozi custom if any person looking after someone's cattle was found wasteful, he had to pay for the missing animals as well as replace them. The Paramount Chief was, however, **was not sure whether this law** could be upheld in the Namwala district, and asked the District Commissioner to do whatever was appropriate in such a situation. He also advised the District Commissioner that the two Indunas were to count and brand the cattle they found; and that no one was to sell the branded cattle without the permission of Induna Mulanda.²⁶ This was an indication that as late as the 1920s the Litunga was still intent on maintaining Mafisa relationships for both political and economic considerations. Politically, the cattle indicated the subordination of the herdsmen to the Litunga. While economically, the proceeds from the sale of cattle went to the Litunga, hence the need for Induna Mulanda to know herdsmen who had sold the Litunga's cattle.

A colonial official making a tour in Senanga district in 1938 observed that the Mukwae's and Indunas' cattle which were sent to **distant** places, such as **Shekela** were not well looked after. There was complacency on the part of the herdsmen emanating from the fact that the animals were not theirs.²⁷ This was a change in attitude

among the herdsmen, indicating change in circumstances. At the turn of the century a negligent herdsman was punished swiftly. During the colonial period he had to be taken to court, which made the process long resulting in many herdsmen going unpunished.

During this period the Litunga and other members of the ruling class maintained Mafisa relationship in order to preserve their political influence. The colonial government undermined this purpose, for it was the final authority in the territory other than the Litunga. However, it was also of value economically to disperse cattle in Mafisa, for they would not all perish in the event of a disease outbreak. On the other hand, the commoners, through their engagement in labour migration were able to buy cattle and place them in Mafisa.

In 1947, the cattle of Bulozhi were opened to outside buyers again. The period between 1919 and 1947 was characterised by the ban on the movement of cattle from Bulozhi, and low cattle prices within Bulozhi. These factors led to the involvement of many commoners in Mafisa. They were able to be involved because of the animals they had bought using earnings they obtained as a result of labour migration mainly to the mines.

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CHAPTER 4

THE CONTINUITY OF MAFISA: 1948-1986

This chapter examines the opening of Bulozhi to the cattle trade and how wage employment facilitated Mafisa. It also examines the extent to which Mafisa was affected by urbanisation and the impact of cattle diseases on Mafisa. Here, we intend to consider how Mafisa has affected social stratification in Bulozhi.

Following the lifting of the ban on the transfer of cattle in 1947, Bulozhi was once again opened to the outside world for its cattle. The largest buyer of cattle in Bulozhi was Susman Brothers and Wulfsohn Limited. In 1953 Susman Brothers and Wulfsohn faced competition in the beef market, because the Cold Storage Commission (C.S.C.) of Southern Rhodesia was allowed to export beef into Northern Rhodesia (N.R.) following the establishment of the Central African Federation. The C.S.C. was also allowed to buy cattle from Bulozhi, between 1960 and 1963 it was granted sole rights of cattle exports out of the region by the Barotse Native Government (B.N.G.).¹

The C.S.C. wound up operations in 1963. The activities of the C.S.C. were taken over by the Cold Storage Board (C.S.B.) in 1964.² From 1960 to 1966 an annual average of 3,805 head of cattle were bought by the C.S.C. and the C.S.B.³ In addition to these major

cattle buyers there were local butchers who bought cattle for slaughter in their butchereries. The commoners also still bought cattle for breeding.

In the 1950s there was some noted reluctance by owners of cattle to sell their animals. In 1954 it was noted that, 'sales to the Cold Storage Control Board (in Bulozhi) rose by 500 at the high average of £11.2.6d. Nevertheless, the cattle owner is still a reluctant seller. The more he gets the more he expects next time'.⁴ Mafisa was to some extent a hinderance to cattle sales. In 1953 Susman Brothers and Wulfsohn Limited had applied to open a buying station in the Shekela area, on the border of Senanaga and Kalabo districts, but the Nalolo royal court in Senanga objected to such a move.⁵ In 1955 a similar application for the opening of a buying post at Mulele in Senanga West was also strongly opposed by the Nalolo royal court arguing that the area was regarded as breeding ground for Lozi herds.⁶ Since cattle thefts in Bulozhi had become endemic, the objection expressed by the Nalolo royal court was prompted by the suspicion that the people in Shekela and at Mulele who looked after Mafisa cattle would be tempted to sell some of the animals they were looking after due to the nearness of the buying depot.

There was usually some resistance if the owner of cattle in Mafisa wanted to retrieve them. A herdsman of royal cattle could refuse to allow the Litunga to take some cattle from a herd entrusted to him, if he felt the

rarely an individual one, it was taken in consultations with other members of the family. Family ties therefore tended to slow down the rate of selling cattle, but this was not due to Mafisa. In actual fact Mafisa was not antagonistic to the cattle trade, this explains why it was able to exist alongside the cattle trade.

Bulozi was still afflicted by cattle diseases such as foot and mouth, but they did not reach devastating levels like the outbreak of Bovine Pleuro Pneumonia in 1915. As such Bulozi did not experience a ban of the cattle trade again. Yet many animals died, in 1953 out of total of 228,772 animals in Bulozi,¹¹ 8,000 cattle died due to poor pastures, 2,349 from diseases and 900 from predators.¹² The large numbers of animals which were lost due to insufficient pastures and diseases made the colonial government persuade cattle-owners in Bulozi to distribute and disperse their cattle through the Native authority to avoid over crowding.¹³ By so doing the colonial government encouraged the practice of Mafisa.

The Lozi had been engaged in labour migration for a long time. This labour migration which at first involved small numbers, increased with the passage of time. It was only stopped in 1966 when the activities of WENELA were terminated. Its activities were terminated following the independence of Zambia, as a sign of Zambia's anger at the apartheid regime of South Africa. Wage employment provided

money to the migrants with which they could invest in cattle. Some migrants used to send money back home and some sent it through the deferred payment system from which cattle were bought; which were either placed in Mafisa or were looked after by relatives.¹⁴ Similarly, people who came to live for long periods in the emergent towns within and outside Bulozhi became involved in Mafisa.¹⁵ Examples of such people are M. Mulobela a Secondary School Teacher in Mumbwa who has his cattle in Mafisa in Kalabo district;¹⁶ N. Kaimoyo a bursar at Senanga Secondary School and G.N. Njamba a retired boarding master now living in the town of Senanga, both have Mafisa cattle in the Zambezi flood plains.¹⁷

Despite the involvement of people in towns and in wage employment in Mafisa, it was predominantly an institution of rural dwellers.¹⁸ It was an institution which mainly involved cattle-owners. The herdsmen were usually cattle-owners or people who had been herding other people's cattle; people without the experience of cattle-keeping were rarely given Mafisa cattle to look after. With the wider distribution of cattle Mafisa was less important as a means of distribution.¹⁹ During this period a new dimension to Mafisa emerged. It became quite common for a herdsman to ask for payment in form of cash instead of the traditional payment of cattle. The herdsman could also ask for payment to be made in both cattle and cash.²⁰ This shows how important money had become for the Lozi.

The Litunga throughout this period continued to be involved in Mafisa though on a reduced scale. Peters, writing in the 1940s, had estimated that between 71-75 percent of the cattle in Bulozhi plain belonged to the Paramount Chief and his family, the Indunas and to prominent headmen.²¹ Maclean, writing in the 1960s saw ownership of cattle in Bulozhi as more widespread and not only restricted to prominent social groups.²² This view has also been confirmed by Entrup.²³ The Senanga cattle development area report also states that 50 per cent of the (10,000) families surveyed owned cattle, of the remaining 50 per cent, 25 per cent of the population have access to cattle in form of caretaking, which includes Mafisa.²⁴ This therefore proves that by the 1980s cattle ownership was more widespread. Beerling, writing in the 1980s observed that, 'there are hardly any Za mbuwa herds in existence...'.²⁵ This observation has also been confirmed by our field work.²⁶ In some cases only one animal survived in an entire herd. This was mainly so because the B.S.A.Co. had put a stop to the Ila and Tonga raids which had provided a large number of cattle in Bulozhi. The animals which were already in the territory and among the Ila were being reduced in numbers by the cattle trade, cattle diseases and theft by the herdsmen and the cattle enumerators. The great reductions in royal cattle severely compromised the political and economic role of the animals.

Cattle belonging to prominent people seem to have suffered the same fate, such that at the close of our study period, cattle ownership could not be associated with political position.

During the period 1948 to 1986 Mafisa increasingly assumed economic importance to the commoners because of the need to manure gardens and the fear of losing all animals in case of an attack by a cattle disease, among other factors. In the 1940s Gluckman observed that milk was sold to the urban centres in Bulozhi and the money went to the owner of the cattle.²⁷ The sale of milk with the proceeds reverting to the owner of the cattle even happened in the case of cattle in Mafisa.²⁸ Prior to the 1940s milk formed part of the payment for herding Mafisa cattle. However, it would be expected that the herdsman got part of the money realized from the sale of milk; and not all cattle-owners claimed the money realized from the sale of milk.

Mafisa was originally the preserve of the aristocratic families. With expanded opportunities made available by labour migration and the trade in cattle, the less fortunate members of the society were able to acquire cattle and get involved in Mafisa. There were some wealth differences among the participants in Mafisa. The well-to-do, those who had gone out for work at one time, or those who were able to accumulate cattle in the village by herding other

people's cattle were in the forefront of giving Mafisa cattle, as a way of showing their high status by having a number of dependants looking after their animals. In this way, what took place among the Ila also took place among the Lozi. Fielder observed that there was a tendency among the wealthy Ila to lend out many animals through an institution called Mashishe,²⁹ similar to Mafisa.

In 1985 the Lealui royal establishment asked the Lozi to donate cattle to replenish the royal herds. The project was intended to revive the royal herds. This move by the the royalty could be seen as an effort to try and and resuscitate the Litunga's political position using cattle. By 1986 some Lozi had started donating animals, though it has not been possible to raise the numbers envisaged.³⁰ The expected donors had been reluctant to donate animals. Because of the small numbers of the animals donated, they have not been widely dispersed as projected earlier, but are herded together near Lealui royal village.

The practice of Mafisa was one of the factors leading to a reversal of fortunes and the widening of the distribution of cattle in Bulozhi. Generally, the aristocratic families who had large numbers of cattle at the turn of the century now have few animals. Some informants argued that some big cattle-owners in Bulozhi

are former herdsmen of aristocratic families. Through payment for their services and hiding or stealing animals, these former herdsmen are wealthy cattle-owners and they too give out cattle in Mafisa. Also sectors of society which were not initially involved in Mafisa are now involved.

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CONCLUSION

Our argument in this study has been that the institution of Mafisa has undergone significant change since the late Nineteenth Century. This change was brought about by a number of factors. The study showed that Mafisa was practised in Bulozhi during the reign of Yeta I. Since Yeta I ruled Bulozhi before groups such as the Mbunda and Kololo arrived in Bulozhi, we concluded that Mafisa was an authentic Lozi institution. This was further corroborated by the fact that most cattle owning people such as the Ila, Nguni, Sotho, Tswana, Nuer, and Swazi had some kind of cattle lending similar to Mafisa in Bulozhi. This that each cattle-owning society evolved a system through which it managed its cattle.

First and foremost, Mafisa was practised in Bulozhi because of the inhospitable environment. An important environmental factor which influenced the practice of Mafisa in Bulozhi was the uneven distribution of pastures.

The coming of B.S.A.Co. rule in 1900 affected the Lozi cattle economy. The B.S.A.Co. put an end to the Lozi raids on the Ila and related peoples. This move by the B.S.A.Co. meant that Lozi cattle could not be replenished from any region outside Bulozhi and as such the Litunga's ability to distribute cattle was greatly reduced.

The dispersal of royal cattle had an important

political function. Lewanika, like Moshoeshoe used his great numbers of cattle to bind people to himself. The coming of the cattle trade affected the political role of the royal herds, for they were being reduced in numbers through cattle sales. However, the cattle trade was not sharply antagonistic to Mafisa, though it led to some important changes. One remarkable change was the increase in the number of cattle thefts, which forced the Litungas to brand and count their cattle. Lewanika's reaction to cattle thefts was different from that of Khama. Lewanika brought royal herds under his more direct control, while Khama on the other hand renounced his rights to royal cattle and built his own private herds.

Before 1900 cattle herding was a very prestigious occupation, because there were few more rewarding occupations. One who looked after Mafisa cattle could be given land to utilize and many Lozi acquired land in this manner. This was important in a region where good land was limited. Payment of an animal to the herdsman was institutionalised, which could lead a herdsman to start his own herd.

Changes brought about by the coming of colonial rule to Bulozhi affected the place cattle had occupied in the Lozi economy. Control of reproduction of Lozi society through the control of women was first done through the

hoe because of the importance it occupied in the traditional economy. The increase of cattle in Bulozhi through raids and the commercial value which was attached to them by the cattle trade made them become an instrument of controlling women through Lobola in Lozi society.

Cattle diseases encouraged the practice of the Mafisa System: more especially the ravages of Bovine Pleuro Pneumonia in 1915 which claimed large numbers of cattle in Bulozhi. From this outbreak, cattle-owners learnt that it was an insurance of some stock to survive in the event of an outbreak of a cattle epidemic if cattle were distributed in Mafisa.

The increased involvement of the Lozi in labour migration especially after 1915 opened new avenues for them. Many commoners came to own cattle and placed them in Mafisa as well. Labour migration therefore enabled commoners to become involved in Mafisa and made them not depend on the Litunga for cattle. Connected to this was the urbanisation of some members of Lozi society who also placed their cattle in Mafisa. From another dimension urbanisation led to changes in the rules which governed Mafisa relationships. In the 1940s with many small urban centres having sprung up in Bulozhi, some cattle-owners demanded that the herdsman sold the milk to the urban centres and the owner of the cattle got the the proceeds. Yet traditionally, milk formed part of

the payment for herding Mafisa cattle. Also, while it has been the practice to pay an animal to a herdsman, in the last period of our study it became evident that some herdsman preferred a cash payment to cattle.

While the Litunga was the biggest cattle-owner in the early part of our study period, this was not the case at the end of our period of study. The ending of Lozi raids for cattle, the incidence of cattle diseases, cattle thefts and the cattle trade were some of the reasons which made the Litunga's stocks to decline. The colonial and post colonial government undermined the Litunga's political influence, but he struggled to maintain it through the continued dispersal of cattle to his subjects. This means that the dispersed cattle had only a symbolic value, for they were of little political significance. However, this did not deter the Litunga. As late as 1986, he still had cattle dispersed in Bulozhi, though their numbers were small. Actually, maintainance of Mafisa seems to have been the Litunga's preoccupation. This explains his appeal to the Lozi to donate animals for the formation of a 'national herd', which would have been dispersed had many animals been donated. In the past the Litunga's cattle were mainly acquired through raids, now only appeals for donations can be made.

Until about the 1950s the distribution of cattle

ownership in Bulozhi was very uneven, a very large percentage of the cattle belonged to the aristocratic families. A combination of the factors already noted led to a reversal of fortunes. Those who were rich in cattle at the turn of the century were no longer rich by 1986, **whereas** some of the herdsmen who had herded Mafisa and some ex-migrants were rich cattle-owners by 1986.

Mafisa did not come to an end because it was able to adapt itself. Mafisa's resilience made it survive up to 1986. While originally it mainly served political purposes, with change in the Lozi economy Mafisa increasingly came to serve an economic function. Cattle were dispersed more for economic than political considerations. More importantly Mafisa was not in sharp conflict with the cattle trade mainly because the cattle taken in Mafisa were mostly young female breeding stock. Moreover, even the colonial government encouraged Mafisa as a way of making some animals survive when pastures were poor in one area and as a safeguard against the loss of all cattle in case of an epidemic. Since the post-colonial government did not fight against the practice of Mafisa, the institution still survives to this day, albeit in a changed form.

APPENDIX I

AN OVERVIEW OF SOME HERDING ARRANGEMENTS,
INDICATING THE TRANSFER OF BENEFITS AND
DECISION-MAKING POWERS

TYPE OF HERDING ARRANGEMENT					
	Herdsmen Mulisana	Caretaker/ Mulisana	Caretaker/ Relative	Mafisa Partner	Imutongo
Type of Contract	Wage employ- ment	Short-term herding: Transhuma nce for manure	Long-term herding: Caretaking for relatives	Mafisa	Likomu Za Mbuwa for Litunga (royal herds)
Duration	Monthly renewa- able	3-4 months	undeter- mined	From 3 years onwards	Over generations
Reward	K40-K100	-	Optional Calf	Calves depend- ing on terms of agree- ment)	Calves (yearly-)
<u>Benefits</u>					
Milk	little	Sometimes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Manure	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Traction	-	Sometimes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Meat	Sometimes	Sometimes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Social use	-	-	Sometimes	Some- times?	Yes?
Slaughter	-	-	-	-	Sometimes

APPENDIX I CONT'D

	Herdsman	Caretaker/	Caretaker/	Mafisa	Imutongo
<u>DECISIONS</u>					
Grazing	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Transhumance	-	?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Treatment	-	?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mafisa	-	-	Yes in consultation with Owner	-	?
Disposal	-	-	-	-	Could dissuade owner

Adapted from M. Beerling 'Alienation of Cattle', p.87.

APPENDIX II

ETHNIC TERMINOLOGY

GLOSSARY OF VERNACULAR TERMS USED

Imutongo	- Herdsman of royal cattle.
Induna	- A member of the group of administrative officers in the Lozi governmental set up.
Kufunda	- The taking away of someone's property without the knowledge of the owner, but with the knowledge of a third party.
Kuwa Kuwa	- Lozi cattle enumerators.
Litunga	- The Paramount Chief of the Lozi.
Lobolo	- Bride price/Bride wealth.
Mafisa	- Entrusting of livestock with someone else.
Masa	- Lakes
Mulena Mukwae	- Chieftainness.
Mulisana	- Herdsman
Zambuwa	- Royal herds.

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The oral sources were not tape recorded. The following information is provided for each informant.

1. Name
2. Date of interview
3. Place of interview
4. District

The following informants were interviewed in a group.

	Name	Date	Place	District
1.	Ngambela M. Mumbuna	5-12-89	Lealui	Mongu
2.	Induna Ingu Latangu	5-12-89	Lealui	Mongu
3.	Induna Mutakela	5-12-89	Lealui	Mongu
4.	Induna Mubonda	5-12-89	Lealui	Mongu
5.	Induna Noyoo	5-12-89	Lealui	Mongu
6.	Induna Namunda	5-12-89	Lealui	Mongu
7.	Induna Munyinda	5-12-89	Lealui	Mongu
8.	Mwana Mulena Kaiko	5-12-89	Lealui	Mongu

The below informants were interviewed individually.

9.	S. Mwibeya	24-11-89	Naende	Mongu
10.	M. Mwibeya	24-11-89	Naende	Mongu
11.	S. Nasilele	24-11-89	Liomboko	Mongu
12.	M. Nalungwana	24-11-89	Katoya	Mongu

	Name	Date	Place	District
13.	G. Mubita	26-11-89	Malengwa	Mongu
14.	M. Kozo	26-11-89	Malengwa	Mongu
15.	P. Mufalali	11-11-89	Malionwa	Senanga
16.	M. Tnambao	14-11-89	Muoyo	Senanga
17.	A. Mutonga	13-11-89	Kanangelelo	Senanga
18.	M. Akakulu	12-11-89	Kanangelelo	Senanga
19.	S. Kapanda	12-11-89	Limbwa	Senanga
20.	B.N.K. Susiku	12-11-89	Nangomba	Senanga
21.	A. Naluca	13-11-89	Malala	Senanga
22.	L. Neta	14-11-89	Muoyo	Senanga
23.	L. Lubinda	14-11-89	Ilutondo	Senanga
24.	G.Mwanañono	15-11-89	Mukukutu/ Nasiwayo	Senanga
25.	G.M. Nasando	8-11-89	Mapungu	Kalabo
26.	P. Munalula	8-11-89	Mapungu	Kalabo
27.	S.M. Liamba	4-11-89	Lusaka	Lusaka
28.	M. Mulobela	5-03-90	Lusaka	Lusaka
29.	Dr. A.J. Sutherland	23-04-90	Lusaka	Lusaka

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