

**Finding Livingstone:**  
**An Examination of the Reputation of Dr. David Livingstone**

**By Adalyn Stretcher**

Submitted to Professors Alexander Kitroeff and Linda Gerstein  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements of  
History 400: Senior Thesis Seminar

**April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

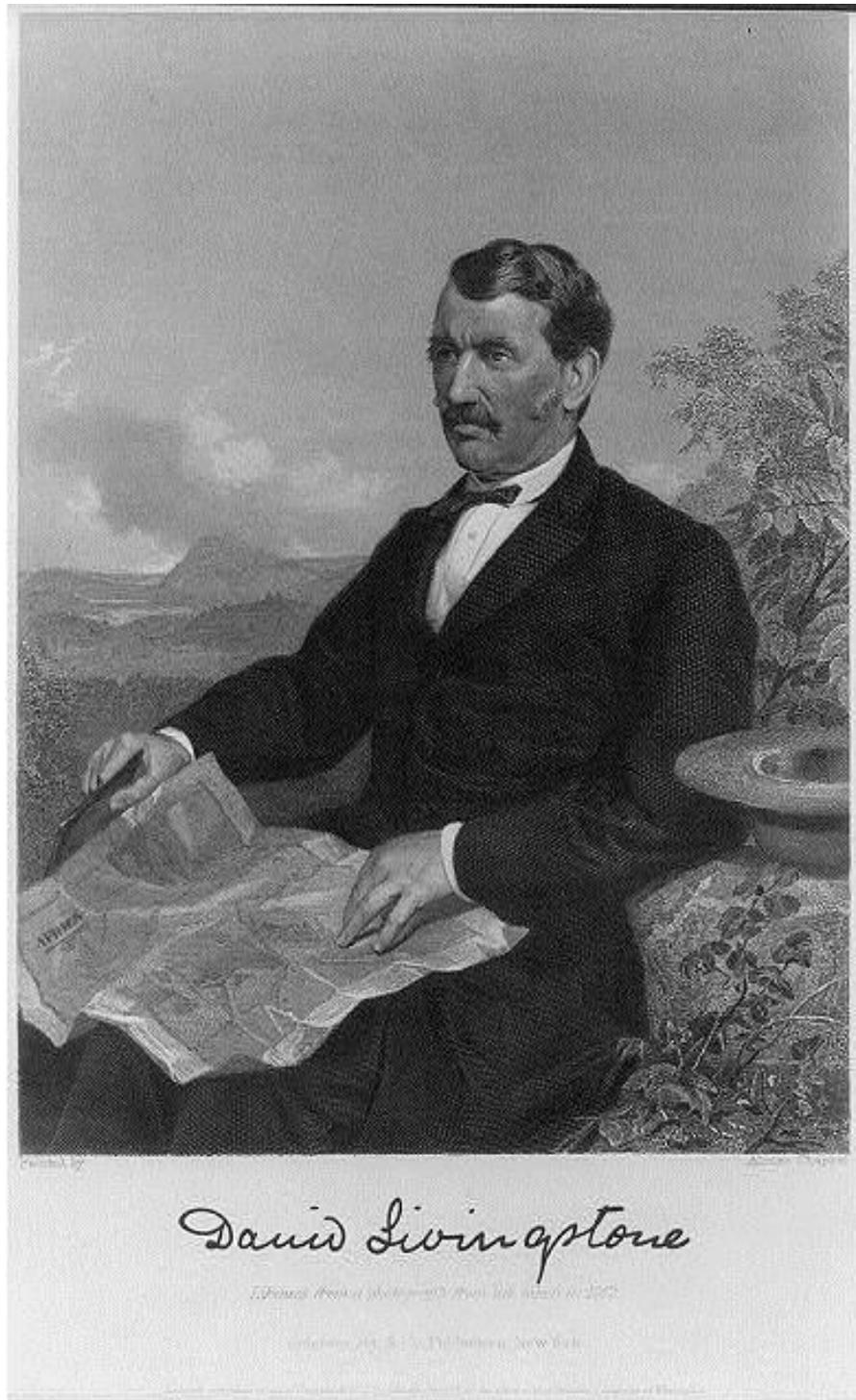


Fig 1: Portrait of David Livingstone holding map of Africa Painted by Alonzo Chappel, “David Livingstone, three-quarter length portrait, seated, facing left, holding map of Africa,” (New York: Johnson Fry & Co. Publishers, c1872.) Library of Congress. Miscellaneous Items in High Demand. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/92521093/> (accessed April 10, 2015).

## **Abstract**

Dr. David Livingstone, a nineteenth-century Scottish missionary doctor and government-commissioned explorer, is popularly known as a self-sacrificing Victorian hero who tirelessly devoted his life to working in Southern, Eastern, and Central Africa. Since Livingstone's death in 1873, scholars have analyzed the famous missionary's life by delving into topics such as his fascinating travels, his medical and scientific discoveries, and his personal faith and political views. Informing this scholarship is the extensive documentation left by Livingstone, who intentionally provided his own accounts of his life and work as a means of crafting his reputation. This thesis seeks to examine Livingstone's life and to explore the ways in which the doctor's reputation was intentionally constructed over the course of his lifetime. This thesis argues that Livingstone, with the help of several key individuals, successfully crafted an overall positive reputation through the emphasis of certain aspects of his identity, political ideology, and observations.

## **Acknowledgements**

When I began this project, one of my advisors, Professor Alexander Kitroeff, warned me, “This is not a solo project.” Over and over again, his sage words have proved true. I owe a great debt of gratitude to a number of individuals. Firstly, I want to thank my advisors, Professor Kitroeff and Professor Linda Gerstein for their patience, advice, and support. They not only helped guide me throughout the process of this thesis, they also provided me with excellent conversations which reminded me why I fell in love with History in the first place. Secondly, I would like to thank my friends, Mia Rybeck and Margaret Stretcher, for their tireless editing of my thesis. Their perspectives were invaluable. Finally, I would like to thank the QuestBridge organization and Haverford College for extending to me the opportunity and generous resources to complete my undergraduate degree; these past four years have been a tremendous gift that I will not soon forget.

Table of Contents

**LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....1**

**TIMELINE OF THE LIFE AND CAREER OF DAVID LIVINGSTONE.....2**

**INTRODUCTION.....3**

**I. 1813-1840: LIVINGSTONE’S CHILDHOOD AND MEDICAL EDUCATION.....10**

**II. 1841-1856: LIVINGSTONE’S ARRIVAL IN AFRICA AND FIRST FOURTEEN  
YEARS OF MISSION.....19**

**III. 1856-1858: LIVINGSTONE’S RETURN TO ENGLAND AND THE PUBLICATION  
OF *MISSIONARY TRAVELS*.....27**

**IV. 1858-1866: THE ZAMBESI EXPEDITION AND ITS CHALLENGE TO  
LIVINGSTONE’S REPUTATION.....43**

**V. 1866-1873: LIVINGSTONE’S FINAL JOURNEYS.....60**

**CONCLUSION.....78**

**BIBLIOGRAPHY.....81**

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS:

Figure 1: Portrait of David Livingstone holding map of Africa Painted by Alonzo Chappel, “David Livingstone, three-quarter length portrait, seated, facing left, holding map of Africa,” (New York: Johnson Fry & Co. Publishers, c1872.) Library of Congress. Miscellaneous Items in High Demand. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/92521093/> (accessed April 10, 2015).

Figure 2: Map of Livingstone’s Transcontinental Journey. Tim Jeal, *Livingstone* Rev. ed. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013. 120.

Figure 3: Map of The Zambesi Expedition Tim Jeal, *Livingstone* Rev. ed. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013. 205.

Fig. 4: Map of Livingstone’s Last Journeys. Tim Jeal, *Livingstone* Rev. ed. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013. 33.

## TIMELINE OF THE LIFE AND CAREER OF DAVID LIVINGSTONE

- March 19, 1813:** David Livingstone was born in Blantyre, Scotland
- 1838-1840:** Livingstone attended Charing Cross Hospital Medical School
- March 1841:** Livingstone arrived in Cape Town, South Africa
- 1841-1856:** Livingstone began his work on the African continent.
- 1856-1858:** Livingstone returned to London as a national hero; during this time he wrote his first book, *Missionary Travels* (1857) and spoke out about his experiences and his anti-slave trade views.
- 1858-1864:** Livingstone underwent the “Zambesi Expedition,” an officially commissioned trip by the British Foreign Office to see the resources and navigability of the Zambezi River.
- 1864-1866:** After the Zambesi Expedition failed, the government recalled Livingstone back to London; during this period Livingstone, along with his brother Charles, wrote and published his second book, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and Its Tributaries* (1866)
- 1866-1873:** Livingstone received an official commission to return to Africa where he spent his final years exploring the region around Lake Tanganyika in East Africa. His main goal was to find the source of the Nile.
- 1865-October 1871:** Livingstone lost contact with the outside world while his health declined.
- November 1871:** Henry Morton Stanley, a *New York Herald* journalist, “found” Livingstone in Nyangwe, just west of Lake Tanganyika. According to Stanley, he greeted Livingstone with the now-famous phrase, “Dr. Livingstone, I presume?”
- May 1, 1873:** Livingstone passed away in the village at Ulala in present-day Zambia. He died from malaria and internal bleeding. His heart was buried under a tree at a site that is now the Livingstone Memorial. Soon after, body was sent to Britain for burial at the Westminster Abbey.

## INTRODUCTION

Known for advancing the “Civilizing Mission” in Southern, Eastern, and Central Africa, missionary and explorer Dr. David Livingstone has gone down in history as an heroic, Scottish icon and an emblematic missionary doctor. For over a century abundant scholarship has sought to chronicle the fascinating life of Livingstone, but few of these scholars have engaged critically with the ways in which the doctor’s reputation was created and retooled over the course of his lifetime. Thus, this thesis will seek to examine Livingstone’s life and explore the ways in which his reputation was intentionally constructed. Through the careful emphasis of certain elements of his identity, such as his working class background and his anti-slavery political views, Livingstone successfully crafted and nurtured an overall positive public perception of his life and work as a saintly missionary doctor and a dedicated government-commissioned explorer.

Several key individuals aided Livingstone in the construction of his reputation over the course of his lifetime. Some of these individuals, like publisher John Murray and journalist Henry Morton Stanley, would help Livingstone navigate the power of the press through careful media attention and the publication of the doctor’s books. Other such as Royal Geography Society President Sir Roderick Murchison or British Foreign Office Secretary Lord Clarendon, would help the doctor to secure financial assistance and legitimacy. Often these individuals would realize the potential benefits of aiding the doctor, such as financial gain or increased legitimacy for their respective identities or organizations. It is essential, then, that the motivations of these individuals are carefully considered in regards to their working with Livingstone.

A proper analysis of Livingstone's life and career cannot overlook the historical and political climates within which the doctor was situated. For the British Empire the nineteenth century was a time motivated by an imperialistic agenda, and the missionary doctors often provided necessary groundwork for colonial authorities to later enter into areas that were deemed "uncivilized" or "savage" and usurp land and resources from native peoples. Thus, in his efforts to help Africans, Livingstone was complicit in the colonization of many parts of the African continent and the oppression that colonization would later bring. While it is important to recognize the overall picture in which Livingstone operated in order to understand the source of some of his viewpoints and assumptions, the focus of this thesis is not imperialism or Livingstone's understanding of and implementation of imperialistic attitudes. Instead, this thesis examines relevant aspects of Livingstone's life with the explicit goal of determining how he effectively shaped an overall popular reputation for himself.

In the examination of the construction of Livingstone's reputation, this thesis will follow a chronological approach, beginning with Livingstone's birth and ending with the delivery and reception of his body to Britain. "Chapter I: Livingstone's Childhood and Medical Education" details the doctor's humble origins, his call into missions, and his medical training; in addition to providing essential contextual information, this section is also key to understanding Livingstone's perceptions of his upbringing and identity as well as his initial motivations for working on the African continent. "Chapter II: Livingstone's Arrival in Africa and First Fourteen Years of Mission" serves to examine the doctor's initial perceptions of the African continent and the peoples with whom he interacted. Special emphasis is given to Livingstone's interactions with the Bechuanas, a Bantu-speaking South African tribe living in the Botswana region. Livingstone's interactions with the Bechuana peoples would complicate the doctor's views on

missions' work and conversion tactics, as will be further discussed in the section. "Chapter III: Livingstone's Return to England and the Publication of *Missionary Travels*" engages with the doctor's time back on the European continent during which Livingstone's interactions with the public, including a speaking tour and the publication of his first book, would be a powerful force in whetting the public's appetite for positive, heroic Victorian figures. This phase would be crucial for Livingstone in gaining both public and governmental support.

The final two chapters cover the shift in Livingstone's career from missionary to explorer. "Chapter IV: The Zambesi Expedition and Its Challenge To Livingstone's Reputation" details the commissioning and implementation of the expedition that would temporarily mar Livingstone's reputation; the challenges that the expedition faced, as well as Livingstone's failure to overcome those difficulties, are examined. The final chapter, "Chapter V: Livingstone's Final Journeys," discusses the doctor's valiant attempt to redeem his reputation through his last phase of work on the African continent and an expedition to find the source of the Nile; it is in this chapter that Henry Morton Stanley comes onto the scene, perhaps demonstrating the most intentional and controversial of all individuals in crafting Livingstone's reputation. The section concludes with a description of the process of Livingstone's burial, and the implications of the tremendously emotional public reaction following the doctor's death.

### **i. Literary Review**

The existing literature on David Livingstone is extensive, but the sources utilized in this thesis can be divided into three categories; firstly, there are scholars that approach Livingstone as a laudable, heroic figure; secondly, there are scholars that approach Livingstone more critically

and examine his complex motivations; thirdly, there is work that utilizes Livingstone as a lens into examining broader themes.

From the first category this thesis has been influenced by authors Lawrence Dristas' *Zambesi: David Livingstone and Expeditionary Science in Africa*, Meriel Buxton's *David Livingstone*, and W.H G. Blaikie's *The Personal Life of David Livingstone*. Each of these authors examine different aspects of Livingstone: Dristas focuses on Livingstone's expedition in Zambesi, Buxton focuses on Livingstone's career in terms of Victorian Christianity, and Blaikie, author of the first biography of Livingstone, gives a nineteenth century account of the doctor's life. The works from this category provide important contextual information as well as the popular reasoning for why Livingstone has been hailed as a heroic figure.

From the second category of sources, the thesis has been influenced by Clare Pettitt's *Dr. Livingstone, I Presume?* Dorothy O. Helly's *Livingstone's Legacy*, Andrew Ross' *David Livingstone: Mission and Empire*, and Tim Jeal's *Livingstone*. Pettitt examines Livingstone's utilization of media attention, Helly details Livingstone's relationship with Horace Waller and the publication of the *Last Journals*, and both Ross and Jeal provide extensive biographies of the doctor. Helly's critical approach to Livingstone's relationship with Waller was invaluable for Chapter V of this thesis. Pettitt's analysis of the popularization of the phrase "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?" provides contextual information about the media's relationship with Livingstone and his reputation. The biographies written by historians Ross and Jeal are the works used most frequently throughout this thesis because they provide excellent contextualization and analysis of Livingstone's life and career.

In regards to the third category of literature relating to Livingstone, this thesis has been influenced by Megan Vaughan's *Curing Their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness*, G.C Cook's "Doctor David Livingstone FRS (1813-1873): "The Fever" and other medical problems of mid-nineteenth century Africa," and Karen Flint's *Healing Tradition: African Medicine, Cultural Exchange, and Competition in South Africa, 1820-1948s*. This group represents the literature that does not primarily focus on Livingstone; instead, these scholars use different aspects of Livingstone's life in order to speak to broader themes and topics. Vaughan and Flint mention Livingstone in their description and analysis of colonial interactions with African medicine, and Cook writes about Livingstone in regards to prevalent diseases in Africa during the nineteenth century. The authors grouped in this category have provided specific, medical information and perspective for this thesis.

## **ii. Description of Evidence**

Dr. David Livingstone was quite intentional about making certain that his life was well-documented; the doctor, himself, authored three books, thousands of journal entries, and thousands of letters. The ample amounts of documentation provide both an opportunity and a challenge for scholarship on the doctor's life. Since it would take many years to analyze all of Livingstone's works, this thesis contains only a selection of the doctor's works. This selection, however, has been carefully chosen, and contains samples from each of the source genres: books, journals, and letters. In specific, this thesis contains selections from each of Livingstone's books, two of his journals, and numerous letters.

The books that Livingstone wrote help to demonstrate how Livingstone intentionally engaged with the public's perception of his life and career since they are the refined, retrospective accounts of different aspects of Livingstone's career. The first book that

Livingstone authored, *Missionary Travels*, was published in 1857. Livingstone wrote this mixture of analysis and story-telling after exploring the interior of Africa for sixteen years. Since Livingstone wrote this work during the middle of his lifetime, this book provides an excellent opportunity to examine both Livingstone's retrospective look at his career and life, as well as his vision for the rest of his work in Africa. Livingstone's second book, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi*, was published in 1865 after Livingstone returned to Britain for the second time. This book was written as a reaction to the failed expedition, and served as the doctor's attempt to explain what had gone wrong and to redeem the trip in the eyes of his readership. The third book that this thesis has used is the last of Livingstone's books, *The Life & African Explorations of David Livingstone*, which was published in 1874 one year after the doctor's death. This book was finished during the last days of Livingstone's life with the help of journalist, Henry Morton Stanley. It contains Livingstone's final recounting of his many adventures in Africa over the course of his three decade long service.

Similarly to Livingstone's books, the published versions of Livingstone's journals also provide examples of how Livingstone's reputation was carefully crafted; the original journals were edited prior to publication. Despite these edits, the journals still contain slightly more colorful and controversial information with the doctor's immediate reactions of events. This thesis uses Livingstone's journal entries to examine specific moments when Livingstone details his political ideologies in a more unfiltered manner. The journal entries also provide examples of Livingstone's difficulties interacting with other people, most evidently when he describes difficulties during his final journeys.

The third genre of primary sources this thesis has examined are some of Livingstone's letters. Livingstone wrote letters throughout his time in Africa to many different people such as

his mentor, Sir Risdon Bennett, his friend and colleague, Sir John Kirk, and his family. In general, the observations found in these letters provide the language and framework Livingstone used to understand the African continent and peoples with whom he interacted. The letters also provide evidence for the ways in which Livingstone sought the assistance or support of different individuals in the course of attempting to achieve his vision and secure his reputation.

## **I. 1813-1840: LIVINGSTONE'S CHILDHOOD AND MEDICAL EDUCATION**

Livingstone's reputation cannot be separated from his upbringing. The context in which Livingstone was raised was not only a point of pride for the doctor, himself, it was also an important aspect of how the public would frame his life and work for years to come.<sup>1</sup> When recounting his upbringing, Livingstone would focus on several key elements in order to ensure that people would view him as an upstanding individual who had overcome great odds. All of these factors would later influence his work ethic in Africa as a missionary and doctor on the African continent, and he would become known as a tough task-master among some of his fellow traveling companions. Four key elements are consistently emphasized by Livingstone when recounting his early life: his working class background, his religious upbringing, his valuing of his family history, and his early love of nature.

### **i. Birth, Childhood, and Relevant Family History**

David Livingstone was born March 19, 1813 in the small mill town of Blantyre in southern Scotland.<sup>2</sup> Hailing from a small town would later aid Livingstone in his mission work, as Helly argues, "During [Livingstone's] youth, Blantyre numbered some two thousand people...making it only twice the size of the large village of Chief Mataka...which was visited by Livingstone in 1866. The scale of Livingstone's Scottish surroundings as a boy...was in some ways not enormously different from that of the African world in which he spent the larger part of

---

<sup>1</sup> John A. S. Beard, "What motivated Dr. David Livingstone (1813-73) in his work in Africa?" *Journal of Medical Biography* 17, no. 2 (2009): 95.

<sup>2</sup>William Garden Blaikie. *The personal life of David Livingstone, chiefly from his unpublished journals and correspondence in the possession of his family*. (New York, Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1895), 10.

his adult life.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, Livingstone’s life began in a rural, industrial village under the guidance of his parents, Neil and Agnes.

Livingstone’s father, Neil, was named after his father before him; due to the potato famine, Neil Sr., a Highland Scot, had migrated from Ulva to the Lowlands in 1792.<sup>4</sup> The family had settled in Blantyre, where Neil Sr. worked with a local cotton mill.<sup>5</sup> Neil Jr. decided to work for a local tailor instead of continuing his father’s work with the mills, and it was in this line of work that Neil met Agnes, whom he married in 1810.<sup>6</sup> Neil Jr. later became restless with tailoring and switched professions in order to become a salesman and door-to-door missionary.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately work as salesman was not sufficient for the financial needs of the Livingstone family, consequently, it was necessary for young David Livingstone to work in the local cotton mill.

At the mills, David learned at a young age to work hard in order to contribute to his family’s finances.<sup>8</sup> At the age of ten he began working first as a piecer in the cotton mill and later worked as a spinner.<sup>9</sup> Meriel Buxton describes these workdays as commonly lasting fourteen hours with a mere half hour break for breakfast and an hour for lunch.<sup>10</sup> From quite a young age Livingstone was by no means unaccustomed to hard physical labor.

---

<sup>3</sup> Dorothy O. Helly, *Livingstone’s Legacy*, (Athens, Ohio and London: Ohio University Press, 1987), 8.

<sup>4</sup> Andrew Ross. *David Livingstone: Mission and Empire*. (London: Hambledon and London, 2002), 2.

<sup>5</sup> Tim Jeal. *Livingstone* Rev. ed. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013), 7

<sup>6</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 3.

<sup>7</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 3-4.

<sup>8</sup> Although the working conditions faced by Livingstone were harsh, it is interesting to note that he was fortunate to begin work at the age of ten whereas it was not uncommon for poor children to begin working at as early as six years old. For more on the conditions Livingstone faced in the mill, see Meriel Buxton, *David Livingstone*, (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 3-4.

<sup>9</sup> Helly, *Livingstone’s Legacy*, 8.

<sup>10</sup> Buxton, *David Livingstone*, 1.

In addition to learning the value of a hard day's work, Livingstone also received a basic, formal education at the local village school. He received his early religious education at the first church his family regularly attended, the Established Presbyterian Church of Scotland (the Kirk).<sup>11</sup> Faith was a priority for his family, and David was not exempt from this passion. One such example marking David's interest in faith is that at age nine he was given a New Testament as a reward for memorizing the 119<sup>th</sup> Psalm and repeating twice with merely five errors.<sup>12</sup> Critical engagement with religious thinking was important to Livingstone and his father, and in 1832, due to doctrinal disputes pertaining to Calvinism and limited atonement, the Livingstone family switched churches and began attending the Independent church in Hamilton.<sup>13</sup> It was to be in this new church that Livingstone would receive his call in 1834 to become a medical missionary.<sup>14</sup>

Livingstone's upbringing was also deeply influenced by his family's history. Livingstone's grandfather, Neil Sr. had migrated from Ulva in order to find work and sustenance for the Livingstone family. Neil Sr.'s identity as a Highlander was an important aspect of the Livingstone family's history, and Neil Sr. would often tell stories about his own father's death as a member of the Highland army in the battle of Culloden in 1746.<sup>15</sup> The Highlander identity would be much less accepted among the people with whom the Livingstone family lived, as Andrew Ross describes, "Livingstone was, after all, fully aware that his own great-grandfather had been a member of a tribal society which... had been seen by Lowland Scots and the English

---

<sup>11</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 4.

<sup>12</sup> Blaikie, *The personal life of David Livingstone*, 11.

<sup>13</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 5-6.

<sup>14</sup> Buxton, *David Livingstone*, xv.

<sup>15</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 1.

as ‘degraded’ and ‘savage.’”<sup>16</sup> Despite the discrimination that Gaelic culture faced, Livingstone cherished his grandfather’s heritage and stories.

Livingstone’s perceptions of his grandfather’s heritage later impacted his view of the Africans, whom many other European colonists felt were inferior or savage. Ross explains, “Many thousands of men and women in Scotland at that time and in the same situation rejected that past as something backward and primitive. In stark contrast, he treasured it. It provides a clue to his ability sympathize with and to enter into the different African societies with which he later came into contact with.”<sup>17</sup> By relying on his perceptions of his grandfather’s experience as a “primitive,” Livingstone could somewhat enter into a space of understanding of the Imperialistic othering of African cultures. This gave Livingstone a more nuanced perspective and a personal, familial reference point in which to contextualize the oppressive viewpoints he would later encounter.

Even the experience of listening to oral histories would later prove to influence Livingstone in his interactions with African cultures. In his accounts, Livingstone connected his grandfather to Africa in this way, “As a boy I remember listening to him with delight, for his memory was stored with a never-ending stock of stories, many of which were wonderfully like those I have since heard while sitting by the African evening fires.”<sup>18</sup> Livingstone was not only familiar with the tradition of oral histories, but he was also fond of the practice of storytelling as it had a near and dear place to him. This further provided him with a positive predisposition

---

<sup>16</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 74.

<sup>17</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 2.

<sup>18</sup> David Livingstone and Henry Morton Stanley. *The Live & African Explorations of David Livingstone* Rev. Ed. (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2002), 28.

through which to view an integral part of numerous African cultures: storytelling as a form of historical narrative.

## ii. Livingstone's Early Interest in Nature

Livingstone also began to unknowingly prepare for his future career by participating in mini-explorations of his local surroundings. It is a well-documented fact that Livingstone had a lifelong love affair with nature. From early on in his life, Livingstone took an interest in the study of the local flora and fauna around his home in Scotland. In his monograph *David Livingstone: Mission and Empire*, Andrew Ross details Livingstone's love of nature and quotes Livingstone as writing, "I had the guidance of a book on the plants of Lanarkshire, by Patrick. Limited as my time was, I found opportunities to scour the whole countryside, 'collecting samples.'"<sup>19</sup> This fascination with nature and the collecting of samples proved essential in Livingstone's later work in Africa wherein he continued to scour the local areas he found himself in and intently study the flora and fauna of those surrounding areas. Ross discusses this in an account of Livingstone's first journey through the Kalahari desert. In regards to Livingstone's descriptions, Ross surmises, "No other European traveler in southern and central Africa in this period commented on the fauna and flora in such detail or with such scientifically trained accuracy of observation."<sup>20</sup> This study soon would prove essential to the advancement of the doctor's medical literacy when Livingstone used his skills in the study of botany to make a list of all the local plants that Africans used to produce medicine.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*, (London, 1857). 11, quoted in Ross. *David Livingstone*, 8.

<sup>20</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone mission and empire*, 85.

<sup>21</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone mission and empire*, 106.

This fascination with nature is something that was clearly important to Livingstone in his own perception of his childhood. At the end of his life, David Livingstone and his traveling companion, Henry Morton Stanley, described the young Livingstone's love of nature in their book, *The Life and African Explorations of David Livingstone*: "He [Livingstone] found time to make many excursions into the country round about his home, whereby his practical knowledge of botany and also of geology, to which he gave much attention, was greatly extended."<sup>22</sup> Throughout his lifetime, Livingstone would seek to establish himself as a legitimate scholar in the eyes of the public and the eyes of other professionals. He did not want to be seen as an amateur explorer or an ignorant missionary; his identity as a man of science would be essential to his perceptions of self.

### **iii. Missions' Calling and Medical Training**

At the age of twenty-one, Livingstone felt called into medical missions when he read a pamphlet from German missionary Karl Gutzlaff.<sup>23</sup> Although he initially felt drawn to work in China, Livingstone was eventually persuaded by the then famous missionary Robert Moffat, to pursue missions' work in Africa instead.<sup>24</sup> As he began his studies, Livingstone was struck by the realization that religion and science were not completely separate disciplines; Beard explains this realization by writing, "Also of great pertinence... is the development of an unquenchable thirst for knowledge and the realization that religion and science (and medicine) could happily coexist."<sup>25</sup> With this framework in mind, Livingstone got to work studying the medical and

---

<sup>22</sup>Livingstone and Stanley. *The Live & African Explorations of David Livingstone*, 35.

<sup>23</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone mission and empire*, 9.

<sup>24</sup> Moffat later became Livingstone's father-in-law. For more on their initial meeting and interaction, see Jeal. *Livingstone* 21-26.

<sup>25</sup> Beard, "What motivated Dr. David Livingstone," 95.

religious disciplines of his day while acknowledging the interactions between those two disciplines.

He began at Anderson's College in Glasgow and later applied to the London Missionary Society in October of 1837.<sup>26</sup> He continued his course of study at the British and Foreign Medical School in London and did most of his clinical training at Charing Cross Hospital under the supervision of his lifelong mentor, Sir Risdon Bennett.<sup>27</sup> Livingstone studied hard and passed the exam of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons in Glasgow on November 15, 1840.<sup>28</sup>

Due to the fact that Livingstone received his medical training prior to the advancement of The Germ Theory, Livingstone would have garnered a medical understanding that was still heavily influenced by Hippocratic theories. Thus throughout his writings he refers to the environment (i.e. the wind, sun, earth, hot versus cold weather, and dry versus wet weather) as well as the temperament of peoples (i.e. melancholic, choleric, sanguine, and phlegmatic) as the underlying causes of disease and the venues through which treatment should be implemented. Meriel Buxton discusses the limitations of the medical knowledge that Livingstone would have received during his time at University in this way:

There were no biochemical or pathological laboratories to aid in diagnosis, and causes of diseases were not understood at all. There was no comprehension of the relevance of nutrition. In surgery, the most important skill was speed for there was no form of anesthesia. Antiseptics too were not discovered for another quarter of a century. The tools available for doctors to use to help their patients were extremely limited. Medical students were learning, together with such accurate knowledge as was available, a number of positively harmful techniques, for example dependence on bloodletting for the relief of pain and treatment of intestinal problems.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 10, 16.

<sup>27</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 21.

<sup>28</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 16.

<sup>29</sup> Buxton, *David Livingstone*, 11.

However, despite the limitations of the Hippocratic medical framework, Ross argues that Livingstone had a good background for his medical interactions in Africa: “While medical science was then only in an early stage of its development, so that the amount of what would be recognized now as good medical knowledge Livingstone received was limited, he was grounded very firmly in the scientific approach to nature. His youthful scientific curiosity... was now trained and disciplined.”<sup>30</sup> And Buxton further acknowledges the positive aspects of education that Livingstone received, “Livingstone continued to develop the scientific approach which was to stand him in such good stead, experimenting, double checking his results and making careful observations.”<sup>31</sup> One could argue the point that love of nature and scientific curiosity would thus prove to be the greatest tools that Livingstone took forward with him into his mission work in Africa. Not only would these tools help him in his understanding of the diseases he was to encounter on the African continent, but they would also aid him in his quest to understand and implement some of the natural remedies utilized by the African healers with whom Livingstone would work.

Another, often overlooked, connection between Livingstone’s medical training and his work in Africa is the underlying parallel between Christian missionary medicine and African healers’ medical practices. Markku Hokkanen makes this connection in his monograph *Medicine and Scottish Missionaries in the Northern Malawi Region 1875-1930: Quests for Health in Colonial Society*. Hokkanen explains that both African and Victorian medical systems connected spiritual, emotional, and physical health as important and interconnected aspects of health and

---

<sup>30</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone mission and empire*, 14.

<sup>31</sup> Buxton, *David Livingstone*, 11.

illness.<sup>32</sup> Thus, Livingstone's belief in the interactions between the spiritual and the physical would prove to aid him in his understanding of African medical systems.

Although not directly related to his medical career and training, during his training Livingstone also attended a public meeting on June 1, 1840 that forever changed the trajectory of his ideological framework. At this particular meeting, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton gave a speech on behalf of the Society for the Extinction of the Slave Trade; Livingstone was radically affected by this speech, in particular Buxton's desire to bring "Christianity, Commerce, and Civilization," to Africa in hopes of ending the slave trade.<sup>33</sup> Livingstone carried these principles, along with his medical training and missions' calling, with him into the heart of Africa as he undertook three decades of evangelism and exploration.

---

<sup>32</sup> Markku Hokkanen, *Scottish Missionaries in the Northern Malawi Region 1875-1930: Quests for Health in Colonial Society*, Lewiston, (Queenston, Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2007), 281-82.

<sup>33</sup> Buxton, *David Livingstone*, 19

## II. 1841-1856: LIVINGSTONE'S ARRIVAL IN AFRICA AND FIRST FOURTEEN YEARS OF MISSION

Shortly after finishing his medical training, Livingstone set out for Africa; in the final book of his lifetime, which he co-wrote with his friend, American journalist Henry Morton Stanley, Livingstone remarks that in 1840 he, "...sailed for that wonderful country which has become more and more interesting ever since."<sup>34</sup> Upon arrival, Livingstone then traveled north by ox wagon up to the mission station in Kuruman, which was run by the missionary who had so enthralled Livingstone earlier in his life, Robert Moffat.<sup>35</sup> Right away Livingstone began attentively observing and documenting his new surroundings.

### i. Initial Perceptions

Since Livingstone provided avid documentation of his travels and observations, the best way to understand the ways in which he perceived the African cultures and peoples with whom he interacted at the beginning of his mission is to look to his own pen. One such helpful source that provides Livingstone's frank observations is a letter that he wrote to his life-long mentor and friend, Sir Risdon Bennett.<sup>36</sup> Key to understanding his letters is to first address his many biases. Livingstone was a Western European man who came to Africa through a medical missions' board, the London Missions Society, during the nineteenth century. By the very nature of where Livingstone came from and why he was sent to Africa, it is already evident that the lens through which he saw the African peoples was shaped by imperialism and paternalism. This historical climate is addressed by Megan Vaughan in her discussion of the depiction of white doctors in the

---

<sup>34</sup> Livingstone and Stanley, *The Life & African Explorations of David Livingstone*, 37.

<sup>35</sup> Clare Pettitt, *Dr. Livingstone, I Presume? Missionaries, Journalists, Explorers, and the Empire* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 23.

<sup>36</sup> David Livingstone to James Risdon Bennett, December 22, 1841, accessed through Livingstone Online, <http://www.livingstoneonline.ucl.ac.uk/view/transcript.php?id=LP121>

African jungle. Vaughan writes, “In the late twentieth century... the European imagination is easily captured by the image of the white doctor in dark Africa... The white doctor stands confronting both the ‘nature’ and the ‘culture’ of the dark continent... Armed only with his faith and his medicine, he is stalked both by the animals of the bush and by men in animal skins.”<sup>37</sup> Livingstone’s mission took place situated inside of this colonial period within which the African peoples were seen as both exotic and inferior.

It is also necessary to contextualize the genre of Livingstone’s letters. Livingstone was one of many European missionaries in southern and eastern Africa during the nineteenth century. As Livingstone did, these other missionaries often kept journals or wrote letters documenting their missions. These missionaries’ writings, like Livingstone’s, contain observations of African culture, architecture, and customs. Rather than striving to objectively detail their findings, these missionaries analyzed their observations in terms of European society. It is important, therefore, to keep in mind when using the observations of these medical missionaries that their interpretations of African culture are heavily influenced by Western values, both in terms of morality and social structure.

In the letter to Bennett that Livingstone penned at the beginning of his first year in Africa, Livingstone details some of his preliminary observations of African peoples and their customs. These observations demonstrate Livingstone’s preconceptions as a white man and a Christian from Western Europe. Livingstone studied under Bennett during his time at the British Foreign Medical School, and Livingstone highly respected Bennett.<sup>38</sup> Livingstone sent home four known

---

<sup>37</sup> Megan Vaughan, *Curing their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness*, (Stanford, California: 1991), 1.

<sup>38</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 10, 16.

letters to Bennett; these letters contain numerous observations that Livingstone made about the flora and fauna he had observed, and the customs of the peoples with whom he interacted.

The earliest of these letters is postmarked for December 22, 1841. Livingstone had just reached the African continent nine months earlier in March. Upon his initial arrival, Livingstone had worked at the British mission base in Cape Town, South Africa. Never one to be stationary for very long, Livingstone began to travel northward. By December he had traveled 550 miles north of the Cape Town mission station and was then in the village of Kuruman. While in this village, Livingstone stayed among the Bechuanas peoples.

Livingstone had much to say about the Bechuanas; in his letter to Bennett, the doctor detailed accounts of the Bechuanas governmental structure, some of their religious and industrial customs, and one of their medical treatments. Livingstone is often candid and informal in his descriptions. For example, in his description of the Beuchanas' government, Livingstone writes about the nature of the chieftainship in this way, "...they are all under the feudal system of Government, the chieftainship is hereditary and although the chief is usually the greatest ass, & the most insignificant in appearance in the tribe the people pay a deference to him which is truly astonishing..." Coming from a country with a long, proud history of a constitutional monarchy and democracy, Livingstone considered the feudal system to be archaic and, thus, a sign of backwardness. This view is evident in his tone when he uses the term "greatest ass" to describe chiefs. Livingstone's understanding of the governmental system of the Bechuanas reflects his oversimplified perspective of these natives' traditions and is reflective of broader imperialistic attitudes that the British held toward people whom they deemed inferior.

Later on in Livingstone's letter, he is also critical of an important manufacturing custom of the Bechuanas; certain groups of the Bechuanas peoples' economies relied heavily on the creation and use of metal tools. While mining for the metal, the peoples participated in various rituals. Livingstone introduces these rituals as "superstitions." After describing the ritual, Livingstone then describes the process of metal working by the Bechuanas as being, "...just in that state Old Tubal Cain left it..." This Old Tubal-Cain is a reference to a descendant of Cain, a Biblical character from Genesis IV, verse twenty-two; after murdering his brother, Abel, God had cursed Cain and set him to wander the earth. One popular legend that surfaced was that the descendants of Cain became smiths of metalwork.<sup>39</sup> This reference demonstrates a comparison in Livingstone's mind of the peoples of Africa with the peoples of the book of Genesis. This provides further reinforcement for the argument that Livingstone saw the African peoples as "backward," because of the lens through which he was viewing the peoples.

However also found within this correspondence is a manifestation of Livingstone's respect for African patients whom he interacted with through his medical practices. Livingstone was particularly impressed by the toughness and courage of African patients in the face of great pain and difficult surgical procedures, for which he had no anesthesia. In a letter to his mentor, James Risdon Bennett, Livingstone recounted, "But in any operation even the women sit unmoved. I have been quite astonished again & again at their calmness. In cutting out a tumour an inch in diameter they sit & talk as if they felt nothing. "A man like me never cries" they say "they are children who cry" it is a fact the men never cry." Thus, Livingstone began not only examining the African peoples but he also began reframing his own framework and underlying assumptions, a process which would continue for the rest of his lifetime.

---

<sup>39</sup> Ann Finnin. *The Forge of Tubal Cain*. (Pendraig Publishing: Sunland, CA. 2008). 38-51.

## **ii. Livingstone's Critique of European medicine and Encounters with Tsetse flies and Malaria**

As his mission continued, Livingstone's view of African medical traditions began to be complemented by his critiquing of European medical practices within the African continent. For example, when Livingstone suffered was attacked by a lion in February of 1844, he preferred the treatment of African evangelists, Paul and Mebalwe, over his own medical colleague, Roger Edwards.<sup>40</sup> Livingstone also recorded examples of his frustration with European ignorance in regards to African culture. In another letter to Sir Bennett, Livingstone heavily criticized a colonial doctor's inadequate treatment for a woman suffering from respiratory inflammation; Livingstone cited the colonial doctor's lack of understanding of the African climate for the doctor's failure. He quipped, "...the medical men in the colony having about as much knowledge of this climate as the planet of Mars..."<sup>41</sup>

At the same time that Livingstone was growing in his frustrations with European medical practitioners, he was also beginning to encounter the diseases with which he would struggle for the remainder of his time in Africa. The first disease which wrought havoc upon Livingstone's explorations was that which was caused by the tsetse fly. In contrast to the ill effects of the other diseases Livingstone would encounter, the tsetse flies had no negative impact upon humans. Their bites did, however, inflict terrible damage upon cattle and oxen. Livingstone experienced this firsthand when he traveled through the interior for the first time and into the Makololo province in April of 1850. Upon arrival at the village, chief Sebituane informed Livingstone that,

---

<sup>40</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 48.

<sup>41</sup> David Livingstone to James Risdon Bennett, December 26, 1845, accessed through Livingstone Online, <http://www.livingstoneonline.ucl.ac.uk/view/transcript.php?id=LP115>

“Your cattle are all bitten by the tsetse, and will certainly die...”<sup>42</sup> Being early in his mission work, Livingstone was slow to believe the African chief. Livingstone remarks, “We, in our ignorance, then thought that as so few tsetse had bitten them [the cattle], no great mischief would follow.”<sup>43</sup> The chief’s cautions were later confirmed when all the cattle fell ill and died. Fortunately for Livingstone and his fellow travelers, the chief proved gracious enough to furnish the exploration with new oxen and supplies.

This situation impacted Livingstone and drove him to begin researching the nefarious little creatures that could so quickly take down his exploration. He observed the reality that the African peoples had been living with for many years and noticed that, due to the tsetse flies, “Many large tribes on the Zambesi can keep no domestic animals except the goat...”<sup>44</sup> Due to his stubbornness, this lesson further confirmed to Livingstone the importance of accepting the wisdom and understanding of the local peoples in regards to their own climates and situations.

The second disease that Livingstone grappled with was malaria, also commonly referred to as the “African fever” by Europeans. This was the most significant disease to afflict Livingstone in his thirty years on the African continent. Despite his later respect for the illness, Livingstone initially acted unimpressed towards the disease and unsympathetic towards the victims it claimed. Buxton writes of Livingstone’s perceptions of malaria that, “For years [Livingstone] mocked all those with malaria, which he described as bilious attacks rather than fever, and laughed openly at George [Fleming]’s anxiety that they would all die.”<sup>45</sup> This initial mockery turned to a much more empathetic understanding once the doctor, himself, was afflicted

---

<sup>42</sup> Livingstone and Stanley, *The Live & African Explorations of David Livingstone*, 74.

<sup>43</sup> Livingstone and Stanley, *The Live & African Explorations of David Livingstone*, 74.

<sup>44</sup> Livingstone and Stanley, *The Live & African Explorations of David Livingstone*, 85.

<sup>45</sup> Buxton, *David Livingstone*, 79.

with the African fever. He was first affected in May of 1853, and in that year alone he had eight attacks of the fever he initially mocked.<sup>46</sup>

Malaria continued to plague the Doctor on his travels. In his search to understand the fever, he relied on his medical training. He surmised that a man of a low-spirited nature would die sooner from the disease than that of a man with a melancholic temperament.<sup>47</sup> However when he later recounted that causation, he also importantly noted that “Myriads of mosquitoes showed, as probably they always do, the presence of malaria.”<sup>48</sup> It would take another thirty years before science and medical research caught up to those observations.

In the meantime, Livingstone concocted a remedy for malaria which was subsequently named the “Livingstone Rouser.” Beard writes, “The ‘rouser’ consisted of resin, jalap (from the root of the convolvulaceous plant *Ipomoea 25urge*) and calomel (8 grains each) mixed with rhubarb and quinine (4 grains each). A dose of 10–20 grains was administered, until the ears began to ring.”<sup>49</sup> Basing his initial idea off of the work of Dr. James McWilliams’ *Medical history of the expedition of the niger during the years 1841-2*, Livingstone began researching and experimenting with the concoction shortly after his bouts with the disease in 1853, and he administered the treatment to his traveling party throughout his time in Africa.<sup>50</sup> This drug

---

<sup>46</sup> Buxton, *David Livingstone*, 79.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> David and Charles Livingstone, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and Its Tributaries: And of the Discovery of the Lakes Shirwa and Nyassa. 1858-1864*, Africa, Central: 1865, p 368 quoted in “David Livingstone’s Life.” *David Livingstone’s Life*. N.p., n.d. Web. 7 May 2014.  
<http://www.livingstoneonline.ucl.ac.uk/biog>

<sup>49</sup> Beard, “What motivated Dr. David Livingstone,” 98.

<sup>50</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 14-15.

cocktail proved particularly efficacious, and began to be marketed by the pharmaceutical company Burroughs and Wellcome in tablet form up until 1930.<sup>51</sup>

A final note in regards to specific diseases and treatments that Livingstone worked with during his time in Africa can be found in the area of Ophthalmology. He carefully observed that there was a causal link from a grain-based diet to vision problems.<sup>52</sup> This is an area of study which is still widely researched today.

---

<sup>51</sup> Beard, "What motivated Dr. David Livingstone," 98.

<sup>52</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 14-15.

### III. 1856-1858: LIVINGSTONE'S RETURN TO ENGLAND AND THE PUBLICATION OF *MISSIONARY TRAVELS*

After sixteen years of missions' work and exploration in the interior of Africa, a new phase in Livingstone's life was dawning. The year 1856 marked both the end of the first portion of Livingstone's mission in Africa as well as the opening of a new section in the famous missionary's life during which he would return to Britain and publish his first book, *Missionary Travels*. In doing so, Livingstone would effectively dominate the public's perspective on his work in Africa by providing them with a sensationalized account of his life and work thus far. Livingstone would be greatly assisted by British publisher John Murray, who would guide the doctor in using *Missionary Travels* to carefully build upon his reputation.

Prior to returning to London, Livingstone first completed a transcontinental trek that had been years in the making. Livingstone had set out from Cape Town on June 8<sup>th</sup>, 1852 and, four adventure filled years later, Livingstone and his travel party arrived in Quilemane, Mozambique on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1856.<sup>53</sup> After the completion of this journey, Livingstone and his companions could proudly claim they accomplished a 1,200 mile transcontinental journey across Africa.

---

<sup>53</sup> Some authors also use the alternate spelling of Quiliman. Ross, *David Livingstone*, 79, 107; Pettitt, *Dr. Livingstone, I Presume?* 30.

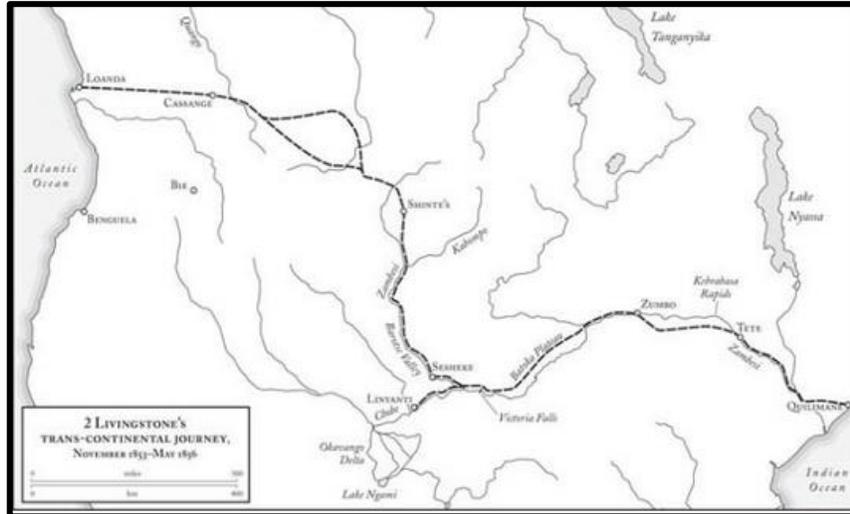


Fig 2: Map of Livingstone’s Transcontinental Journey. Tim Jeal, *Livingstone* Rev. ed. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013. 120.

Shortly thereafter, Livingstone firmly decided to return to Britain, but by this time the lengthy journey had taken its toll on the party. Livingstone and his companions were forced to move slowly due to numerous attacks of malaria, malnutrition, and extreme fatigue.<sup>54</sup> Their party remained in Quilemane for six weeks recovering from their strenuous travels as well as awaiting the arrival of a ship that would begin the transportation of Livingstone back to Europe; finally on April 22<sup>nd</sup> Livingstone and his dear friend and translator, Sekwebu, boarded HMS *Frolic* and set sail on the first leg of their journey to England.<sup>55</sup> Unfortunately, right away the trip proved to be too much for Sekwebu, Buxton recounts, “The poor man, so sensible, tactful and resourceful as they crossed Africa, found the sea terrifying...Livingstone would not allow the officers to put him [Sekwebu] in chains, terrified lest the poor man should think he had been entrapped into slavery. But his freedom was of little benefit to him for eventually he flung himself overboard

<sup>54</sup> Buxton, *David Livingstone*, 96.

<sup>55</sup> Ross, *David Livingston*, 107.

and drowned.”<sup>56</sup> In addition to this tragedy, the remainder of Livingstone’s trip was also fraught with difficulty. He fell ill in Mauritius and had to spend several weeks recovering before boarding *Candida* and traveling to Egypt. Thereafter, Livingstone boarded the steamer that would take him on the final leg of the journey, *England*, but the ship suffered damage in the Mediterranean. Rather than continue on to London, Livingstone had to instead sail to Marseille and take a train and a ferry to finally arrive in Dover.<sup>57</sup> Despite tremendous difficulty and personal tragedy, Livingstone at last met up with his wife, Mary, at the Southampton docks on December 12, 1856.<sup>58</sup> Four years and eight months had passed since the last time the couple had seen each other, and upon their reunification Mary gave David a poem to express the overwhelming emotions that the moment brought for her, as this excerpt demonstrates:

A hundred thousand welcomes! How my heart is gushing o’er  
With the love and joy and wonder thus to see you face your face once more.  
How did I live without you these long long years of woe?  
It seems as if ‘twould kill me to be parted from you now.<sup>59</sup>

### **i. Public Perception of Livingstone**

Mary was not the only one who was pleased to see Livingstone; his arrival had also been long awaited by an active readership of British citizens who had followed, with great interest, the newspaper accounts of Livingstone’s travels. Ross explains that this readership was available because of the aftermath of the British public’s disgust upon reading reports of the horrors of the Crimean War in 1854-56; Ross argues, “A significant part of this increasing public interest, to some extent a reaction to the gloom produced by the news of war, was a thirst for stories about

---

<sup>56</sup> Buxton, *David Livingstone*, 97.

<sup>57</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 107.

<sup>58</sup> Pettitt, *Dr. Livingstone, I Presume?* 31.

<sup>59</sup> Buxton, *David Livingstone*, 99.

heroes and heroines.”<sup>60</sup> The adventures of Livingstone, as well as other missionaries and travelers, provided the British public with the stories they so craved. Livingstone would provide an adequate remedy to this craving through his stories of encountering African peoples and observing their different customs, traversing uncharted lands, and overcoming tremendous difficulties in order to promote Christian and Western values.

A central figure in creating this interested readership, in both Britain and the United States, was the President of the Royal Geographical Society, Sir Roderick Murchison. Murchison had begun raising awareness about Livingstone on August 8, 1854 when he made comments to the *New York Times* regarding the first leg of Livingstone’s transcontinental journey wherein Livingstone traveled from Cape Town to the western coast of Africa (arriving in Loanda, the capital of present-day Angola); Murchison declared the trip was “the greatest triumph of geographical research which has been effected in our times.”<sup>61</sup> Murchison effectively whetted the public’s appetite and helped establish a readership base who felt personally involved and concerned for Livingstone’s well-being.

The importance of print in determining the public’s perception of Livingstone’s character and mission did not diminish when he arrived in England. Another genre, the “expeditionary narrative,” was essential for setting the tone for a traveler when he or she was on the home front; Louise Henderson explains that the expeditionary narrative “...was presented as the explorer’s eyewitness account of things that the general public could not hope to encounter for themselves. These exploration narratives were then subjected to intense scrutiny by a whole range of readers,

---

<sup>60</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 109.

<sup>61</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 110.

each with their own specific expectations.”<sup>62</sup> The importance of the crafting of these narratives was well known to publishers, and Livingstone began to be courted by numerous offers for help in crafting his story. One such publisher who had been particularly persuasive was John Murray, hailed as one of the best geographical publishers of the day; Murray agreed to not only foot the costs of production but he also requested only one-third of the profits and gave Livingstone a two thousand guinea advance upon publication.<sup>63</sup> This was quite a comfortable amount of money considering that one guinea was the equivalent of just over £1 and the average annual income in London was £27 in 1857.<sup>64</sup> Livingstone agreed to Murray’s generous and persistent offers, and in January of 1857,<sup>65</sup> Livingstone set to writing the book that would not only establish his popularity as a traveler and a missionary but would also be the beginning of the public esteeming Livingstone as a legend.

## ii. Overview of *Missionary Travels*

*Missionary Travels* is a collection of Livingstone’s field journal entries composed in a format that is a mixture of story-telling and personal reflections and analysis. Pettitt thoroughly describes the format of the famous account when she writes, “*Missionary Travels* is a curious amalgam of heroic adventure story, scientific observation, anthropological encounter, quest narrative and campaign literature, and it is liberally illustrated with engravings.”<sup>66</sup> Livingstone wrote the first edition in six months, and it comes to 800 pages and about 250,000 words.<sup>67</sup> It begins with a brief dedication to Sir Robert Murchison, a move which reflects the careful

---

<sup>62</sup> Louise Henderson. “Everyone Will Die Laughing’: John Murray and the Publication of David Livingstone’s *Missionary Travels*,” published by Livingstone Online

<sup>63</sup> Henderson. “Everyone Will Die Laughing’”

<sup>64</sup> Pettitt, *Dr. Livingstone, I Presume?* 32.

<sup>65</sup> Pettitt, *Dr. Livingstone, I Presume?* 32.

<sup>66</sup> Pettitt, *Dr. Livingstone, I Presume?* 35.

<sup>67</sup> Buxton, *David Livingstone*, 104.

calculation of Livingstone and Murray in setting the tone of the book and establishing Livingstone's credibility. Henderson argues this point when she writes, "The dedication to Murchison...enabled Livingstone to publicly make a claim about his character, his professional ability and the value of his text while, at the same time, appearing humble."<sup>68</sup> In associating his work and writing with the respectable and scientifically hailed Murchison, Livingstone was demonstrating to readers that his book was one which could be entertaining while remaining trustworthy.

The rest of the book is organized somewhat chronologically. The introduction offers the reader a sense of Livingstone's reflections on his personal history and childhood. He opens this section with a modest disclaimer, "My own inclination would lead me to say as little as possible about myself; but several friends...have suggested that, as the reader likes to know something about the author, a short account of his origin and early life would lend additional interest to this book. Such is my excuse for the following egotism..."<sup>69</sup> This style of humility and accessibility is common throughout the book and helps craft Livingstone as a likeable character. The overview that Livingstone offers the reader of his upbringing is also portrayed in story-book manner. For example, when describing his mother he writes, "The earliest recollection of my mother recalls a picture so often seen among the Scottish poor – that of the anxious housewife striving to make both ends meet."<sup>70</sup> Livingstone's tone transforms the common details of his past into a remarkable tale of rags to riches. Livingstone also expresses pride in his upbringing when

---

<sup>68</sup> Henderson. "Everyone Will Die Laughing"

<sup>69</sup> David Livingstone. *Missionary Travels in South Africa Vol. 1 : Including a Sketch of Sixteen Years' Residence in the Interior of Africa*. (Santa Barbara, CA, USA: Narrative Press, 2001). ProQuest ebrary. Web. 17 February 2015. 4.

<sup>70</sup> Livingstone. *Missionary Travels*, 7.

he summarizes his childhood experiences by explaining the lasting impact that his working class background rendered on him:

Looking back now on that life of toil, I can not but feel thankful that it formed such a material part of my early education; and, were it possible, I should like to begin life over again in the same lowly style, and to pass through the same hardy training...Time and travel have not effaced the feelings of respect I imbibed for the humble inhabitants of my native village. For morality, honesty, and intelligence, they were, in general, good specimens of the Scottish poor.<sup>71</sup>

Thus, Livingstone's descriptions of his childhood go beyond simple description and become influenced by meaning-making. Livingstone's analysis of his past ascribes values and substance to his memories, which are in turn used as a tool to encourage readers to view Livingstone in an iconic and idealized way. Pettitt summarizes this effect: "Dubbed 'the Good Doctor', Livingstone was a hero who had pulled himself up by his bootstraps – a self-made man of the kind that Victorians particularly admired."<sup>72</sup> *Missionary Travels*, itself, served as a tool through which Livingstone, with the help of Murray, was able to further propagate the public's perception of his upbringing as being an incredible piece of the greater story of the legend of Livingstone.

### **iii. *Missionary Travels* and retrospective value ascription**

As *Missionary Travels* continues, it unveils Livingstone's sixteen years of travel and mission work in Africa. Throughout the descriptions of Livingstone's interactions and reactions, numerous examples of retrospective value ascription can be found; with the passage of time at his disposal, Livingstone is able to assert retrospective analyses upon his past experiences and he utilizes this to his advantage. One example of this value ascription is found at the opening of Livingstone's chapter titled, "The Bakwain Country," where he begins the section by claiming,

---

<sup>71</sup> Livingstone. *Missionary Travels*, 10.

<sup>72</sup> Pettitt, *Dr. Livingstone, I Presume?* 36.

“I started for the interior by going round to Algoa Bay, and soon proceeded inland, and have spent the following sixteen years of my life, namely, from 1840 to 1856, in medical and missionary labors there without cost to the inhabitants.”<sup>73</sup> This overview and opening serves to both amaze the reader by the sheer number of years of service, as well as state Livingstone’s assertion that his work was, in no way, negative towards the Africa native peoples.

As *Missionary Travels* is read with a critical eye and an understanding of its purpose in establishing Livingstone’s reputation, a close reading of the book unveils examples where Livingstone ascribes value by portraying himself as surprisingly open-minded in three categories: the African people, the African customs, and the African environment. This open-mindedness is evident when comparing some of Livingstone’s claims to those of his contemporaries.

The first category in which Livingstone expresses a relatively open-minded interpretation is in regards to the African people. Elaine Freedgood notes this by arguing, “Livingstone’s account ...lacks the sense of pervasive evil that is conventional in mid-century accounts of Africa. In the typical writings of nineteenth-century missionaries, for example, the savagery of Africans was played up as much as possible...”<sup>74</sup> Where Livingstone’s contemporaries often saw and described African natives as inferior, Livingstone was comparatively more open-minded in his interpretations of the native peoples with whom he interacted. This atypically open style can be seen in Livingstone’s description of his interactions with the Bakwains, a Bechuanaland tribe located in present-day Botswana. Livingstone arrived among the Bakwain in 1842, only one year after his arrival in Africa. He befriended the Bakwain chief, Sechele, and positively describes

---

<sup>73</sup> Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, 12.

<sup>74</sup> Elaine Freedgood, *Victorian Writing about Risk: Imagining a Safe England in a Dangerous World*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). 141.

their relationship by writing, “I was from the first struck by his intelligence, and by the marked manner in which we both felt drawn to each other.”<sup>75</sup> Sechele was very curious regarding Livingstone’s customs and preaching; over the course of many questions and conversations, the chief agreed to convert to Christianity and be baptized.<sup>76</sup> According to Livingstone, there was a mutual sense of respect and appreciation between himself and the chief. Rather than dismissing the African chief as inferior or “savage,” Livingstone develops a friendship with Sechele.

Livingstone’s open-minded approach regarding African peoples can also be found in his first encounter with the importance of rain. Shortly after the conversion of his friend, Sechele, a drought began to plague the Bakwains’ land. The natives assumed that the relationship of these events was not coincidental, and in *Missionary Travels* Livingstone recorded their concerns about the drought:

Bakwains believed that there must be some connection between the presence of God’s Word in their town and these successive and distressing droughts, they looked with no good will at the church bell, but still they invariably treated us with kindness and respect. I am not aware of ever having had an enemy in the tribe. The only avowed cause of dislike was expressed by a very influential and sensible man, the uncle of Sechele. “We like you as well as if you had been born among us; you are the only white man we can become familiar with (thoaela); but we wish you to give up that everlasting preaching and praying; we can not become familiar with that at all. You see we never get rain, while those tribes who never pray as we do obtain abundance.”<sup>77</sup>

In accordance with his respect for the African peoples, Livingstone does not regard the Bakwains as hostile or backward for resenting his presence, and his possible connection with the drought; rather he records their concerns in a way that demonstrates his admiration toward the Bakwains. Freedgood comments on Livingstone’s reaction by writing, “...Livingstone has neither remedy nor homily to offer Sechele’s uncle. Rather, he seems to find it extraordinary and laudatory that the Bakwains have treated him with “kindness and respect” in spite of his

---

<sup>75</sup> Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, 19.

<sup>76</sup> Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, 22, 25.

<sup>77</sup> Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, 23 cited in Freedgood, *Victorian Writing about Risk*, 143.

unfortunate confluence of events that cannot help but seem causally related to those we are suffering...”<sup>78</sup> Although Livingstone could have chosen to portray the natives as ridiculous, ignorant, or childish, as his contemporaries often did, Livingstone approaches the concerns of the native peoples in a more respectful manner.

The example of Livingstone’s interpretation of the importance of rain and the figure of the rain doctor further demonstrates his open-minded approach in terms of African customs. This respect is evident in a discussion of a commonly found dialogue between a rain doctor and a medical doctor which Livingstone chooses to include in *Missionary Travels* as a means for giving his western audience some a context for understanding this African custom. He prefaces the dialogue by reminding the reader that in order to understand the rain doctor culture and mentality, “...we must place ourselves in their position, and believe, as they do, that all medicines act by a mysterious charm.”<sup>79</sup> Though one might expect Livingstone’s dialogue to favor the medical doctor, it is actually written in a way that demonstrates the logical positions of both parties. The dialogue concludes with an assertion by the rain doctor of the similarities between European medicine and rain medicine:

Other tribes place medicines about our country to prevent the rain, so that we may be dispersed by hunger, and go to them, and augment their power. We must dissolve their charms by our medicines...WE do not despise those things which you possess, though we are ignorant of them. We don’t understand your book, yet we don’t despise it. YOU ought not to despise our little knowledge, though you are ignorant of it... I use my medicines, and you employ yours; we are both doctors, and doctors are not deceivers. You give a patient medicine. Sometimes God is pleased to heal him by means of your medicine; sometimes not – he dies. When he is cured, you take the credit of what God does. I do the same. Sometimes God grants us rain, sometimes not. When he does, we take the credit of the charm. When a patient dies, you don’t give up trust in your medicine, neither do I when rain fails. If you wish me to leave off my medicines, why continue your own?<sup>80</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> Freedgood, *Victorian Writing about Risk*, 143.

<sup>79</sup> Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, 30.

<sup>80</sup> Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, 30-31.

This respectful explanation of native views and customs is accompanied by a description of one of the rain doctor's remedies. Livingstone explains that the doctor takes a bulbous root, pounds it, and administers a cold infusion to a sheep; in five minutes the sheep convulses and dies and then a remainder of the bulb that was administered is burned; Livingstone describes the results as rather drastic: "...rain follows in a day or two. The inference is obvious. Were we as much harassed by droughts, the logic would be irresistible in England in 1857."<sup>81</sup> His valuing of this practice, and admittance that it would be useful in England if the same circumstances were present, demonstrates Livingstone's respectful engagement with the ideas and customs of the natives.

In stark contrast to Livingstone's approach to the Bakwains' rain customs, are the approaches of two of Livingstone's contemporaries, Robert Moffat and Robert Hamilton. Robert Moffat, who was Livingstone's father-in-law, was a missionary from Scotland who was commissioned to go to the Southern African region through the London Missionary Society. He worked in that region from 1817 until 1870.<sup>82</sup> As has been formerly mentioned, Moffat was one of Livingstone's childhood heroes. Whereas Livingstone approached the rain doctor aspect of African culture with an open mind, Moffat had a rather different interpretation of the custom. In a letter to his parents he wrote:

A strange fellow of a rainmaker, a foreigner, in the beginning of the summer arrested their attention so as to gain considerable applause, but he, as well as his votaries, have been justly rewarded, for the providence of God seems to have frowned on their superstition, and in place of a country 'inundated', a distressing drought has been experienced up to the present day.<sup>83</sup>

---

<sup>81</sup> Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, 28-29.

<sup>82</sup> David J. Deane. *Robert Moffat: The Missionary Hero of Kuruman*, (New York, Chicago, Toronto: Publishers of Evangelical Literature, 2005). 27, 141

<sup>83</sup> Robert Moffat, 6 February 1827 in Isaac Schapera. *Apprenticeship at Kuruman, being the journals and letters of Robert and Mary Moffat 1820-1828*. (London: Chatto and Windus, 1951), 233. Cited in G.H

Moffat's position toward the rainmaker (another commonly used term for a rain doctor) is one of judgment and condemnation. He clearly states his belief that the drought is a result of God's disdain on the African natives' custom and that the "distressing drought" was a divine consequence that the natives had brought upon themselves. This claim reflects a fundamentally different view of the African peoples and their culture than the outlook that Livingstone demonstrates. Where Livingstone espouses respect and curiosity, Moffat expresses contempt.

Similarly to Moffat, Robert Hamilton provides an example of one of Livingstone's contemporaries who arrived at a very different conclusion regarding the underlying causes of the drought. Hamilton was also a missionary in the Southern African region, and he worked fervently to try to establish and maintain the Kuruman station in Northern South Africa during the nineteenth century.<sup>84</sup> Hamilton arrived in Lattakoo, South Africa in 1816 and worked at Kuruman until his death in 1852.<sup>85</sup> Hamilton, echoing Moffat's views, wrote in 1834 about his distinct understanding of the cause of the drought:

The Lord hath visited this land again with a long and great drought, we had only one heavy rain in October, almost none since, so that much native corn is lost and almost every green thing is burnt up by that sun, man and beast are suffering greatly. And the inhabitants are suffering greatly for want of the fruit of the field. This is not to be wondered at when the great body of the people reject the great salvation.<sup>86</sup>

Hamilton essentially believes that God is inflicting the drought as a punishment upon the Africans for their refusal of the Gospel that he and his fellow missionaries were preaching. Hamilton's emphasis on the rejection of the Gospel demonstrates a different set of priorities than

---

Endfield and D.J. Nash. "Drought, desiccation and discourse: missionary correspondence and nineteenth century climate change in central Southern Africa." *Geographical Journal* 168 (2002): .38-39.

<sup>84</sup> Rev. J. Mackenzie, "Bechwanaland and the Bechwana Tribes" in *The Sunday Home* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1883). 438.

<sup>85</sup> Deane. *Robert Moffat*, 51, 114.

<sup>86</sup> LMS C 14-2-F, Hamilton, Kuruman, 31 January 1834 in Endfield and Nash, "Drought, Desiccation and Discourse," 38-39.

those of Livingstone. Hamilton, as well as Moffat, ascribed more of a religious causation to the tragic situation, but Livingstone is a man of science. In their article, “Drought, Desiccation and Discourse,” Endfield and Nash discuss Moffat, Hamilton, and Livingstone’s perceptions of the drought and the possible motivations behind these perceptions. They explain Livingstone’s views by writing, “Livingstone’s suggestion was, however, rooted in personal observation rather than any moral or religious philosophy...it was his geomorphological sensitivity that set him apart from missionary colleagues...”<sup>87</sup> According to Endfield and Nash, Livingstone assessed the drought, first and foremost, as a man looking for observable causation rather than as a consequence of divergent religious beliefs. This set him apart from his contemporaries, but it also reflects his markedly different approach to the natives’ customs in general.

The third, and final, category in which Livingstone’s open-minded approach manifests itself is in his observations about the environment wherein he challenges the common colonial attitude of superiority over the African natives and obsession with exotification of Africa. In her article, “Sensationalising Africa: British Medical Impressions of Sub-Saharan Africa, 1890-1939,” Anna Crozier explains the typical tactic used by British travelers and missionaries in their writings about African medicine and disease. She writes, “...the colonial doctor in Africa defined himself primarily through the exoticism of his new location.”<sup>88</sup> Whereas the typical colonial doctor focused on marking the differences between the Western world and African cultures, Livingstone often attempted to situate himself in terms of his own understanding; his emphasis compared his environmental observations to his lived experiences and often drew upon the commonalities. Pettitt provides examples of this style: “When he [Livingstone] noticed little

---

<sup>87</sup> Endfield and Nash, “Drought, Desiccation and Discourse,” 39.

<sup>88</sup> Anna Crozier, “Sensationalising Africa: British Medical Impressions of Sub-Saharan Africa, 1890-1939,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 35 no.3 (2007): 399.

piles of sticks by the wayside in Africa...he remarked upon how they were stacked up ‘cairn fashion’<sup>89</sup>... almost every river he encounters in Africa is compared somewhat improbably to the Clyde...’<sup>90</sup> Livingstone uses his own framework to situate the environment that he was exploring, which further reflects his distinct perspective as compared to other missionary doctors.

#### **iv. Reception and Impact of *Missionary Travels***

The public’s reception of *Missionary Travels* was quite incredible, allowing Livingstone’s crafting of his experiences and his character to make its way into the hearts and homes of the numerous British and American readers; by June of 1858, 28,000 copies had been sold.<sup>91</sup> This is especially remarkable considering the book’s retail price was slightly expensive at the retail price of one guinea.<sup>92</sup> For comparison, Charles Darwin’s *Origins of Species*, published November 24, 1859, was sold at a retail price of 15 shillings, thus only three-fourths the price of *Missionary Travels*.<sup>93</sup> In addition to the wide consumption of the full book, many readers were also exposed to sections of Livingstone’s book in quarterly and monthly journals in Britain and America.<sup>94</sup>

Not only was Livingstone’s book popular among the masses, but it was also resulted in an increase in the popularity of Livingstone, the person, among other well-known Victorian

---

<sup>89</sup> Carin is derived from the Scottish Gaelic word càrn; it is a heap of stones set in a conical form and can be used to denote a place of some significance, such as a trail or a spot of remembrance. John Jamieson, *An Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language Vol. 1* (University Press, 1808). 115.

<sup>90</sup> Pettitt, *Dr. Livingstone I Presume?* 21.

<sup>91</sup> Helly, *Livingstone’s Legacy*, 28.

<sup>92</sup> As aforementioned, one guinea was the equivalent of just over £1 and the average annual income in London was £27 in 1857. Pettitt, *Dr. Livingstone, I Presume?* 32.

<sup>93</sup> Adrian J. Desmond and James Richard Moore, *Darwin*, (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994), 476

<sup>94</sup> Pettitt, *Dr. Livingstone, I Presume?* 35.

figures; these accolades furthered the popularity of Livingstone, himself, as well as *Missionary Travels* over the years following its publication. Florence Nightingale drew a comparison between Livingstone and John the Baptist effectively casting him as both saintly and exciting.<sup>95</sup> Charles Dickens wrote in an 1865 letter about the Morant Bay Rebellion, "...missionaries, who (Livingstone always excepted) are perfect nuisances, and leave every place worse than they found it."<sup>96</sup> Dickens also wrote positively in his review of *Missionary Travels*, "I have been following a narrative of great dangers and trials, encountered in a good cause, by as honest and courageous a man as ever lived."<sup>97</sup> These Victorian celebrities' appreciation for Livingstone reflects the growth of his own celebrity status.

After publishing his book, Livingstone's popularity increased when he delivered several key speeches and lectures while he remained in Britain. He spoke in Cambridge, Dublin, Manchester, Glasgow, Oxford, Leeds, Liverpool, Dundee, Halifax, Birmingham, and in Blantyre.<sup>98</sup> One such speech that is often cited occurred in a lecture that Livingstone gave in the Senate House of the University of Cambridge on December 4<sup>th</sup>, 1857 in which he shouted a directive at the audience:

I beg to direct your attention to Africa. I know that in a few years I shall be cut off in a country, which is now open; do not let it be shut again! I go back to Africa to try to make an open path for commerce and Christianity; do you carry out the work which I have begun. I leave it with you.<sup>99</sup>

Emotional and engaging speeches like this one aided in affirming the legend that Livingstone was seeking to propagate about himself and his mission. His entire persona and

---

<sup>95</sup> Pettit, *Dr. Livingstone, I Presume?* 36.,

<sup>96</sup> *The Letters of Charles Dickens, 1856-58* (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1999). 11: 115-6. Cited in Angelia Poon, *Enacting Englishness in the Victorian Period: Colonialism and the Politics of Performance* (Hampshire, England: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2008), 104.

<sup>97</sup> Charles Dickens *Household Words* January 1858, in Buxton, *David Livingstone*, 105.

<sup>98</sup> Buxton, *David Livingstone*, 106.

<sup>99</sup> *Dr. Livingstone's Cambridge Lectures*, 168. In Ross, *David Livingstone*, 121.

reputation began to become intertwined. Livingstone was well aware of this reputation, as Helly comments, "...he set out to use it [his reputation] for the goal to which he now dedicated himself...ending this "open sore" in the heart of Africa...Once Livingstone the man was gone, Livingstone the Victorian hero provided the ideological bridge which interpreted British intervention in African...as a national duty, the just use of great national power for humanitarian ends."<sup>100</sup> By this "open sore" Livingstone was referring to the slave trade; ever the doctor, Livingstone utilized the metaphor to explain the painful and raw nature of the institution which he sought to overcome through establishing commerce among the African natives.

After completing the publication and promotion of his book as well as his lecture tour throughout Britain, Livingstone was ready to return to Africa and continue his part in the closure of the "open sore" he so vehemently denounced. In this next phase, he would return as an explorer commissioned by the British government, rather than a missions' society, and his reputation would take some difficult blows.

---

<sup>100</sup> Helly, *Livingstone's Legacy*, 28.

#### **IV. 1858-1866: THE ZAMBESI EXPEDITION AND ITS CHALLENGE TO LIVINGSTONE'S REPUTATION**

At the same time that Livingstone had been working on *Missionary Travels*, he was also in the midst of establishing the context and objectives for the next phase of his work on the African continent. He had a grand, idealistic vision for this upcoming chapter of his life's work, which he outlined in several of his lectures while on his 1857 speaking tour. One such speech was at a town hall meeting in Cambridge on December 5, where Livingstone eloquently explained his objectives for what would become the tumultuous "Zambesi expedition:"

My object in Africa is not only the elevation of man, but that the country might be so opened that man might see the need of his soul's salvation. I propose in my next expedition to visit the Zambesi, and propitiate the different chiefs along its banks, endeavoring to induce them to cultivate cotton, and to abolish the slave-trade: already they trade in ivory and gold-dust, and are anxious to extend their commercial operations. There is thus a probability of their interests being linked with ours, and thus the elevation of the African would be the result...<sup>101</sup>

Inherent in these plans was the false assumption that the Zambesi River would prove to be a navigable waterway, and that the river would become a lucrative medium for the commercialization of the interior of central Africa. Unbeknownst to Livingstone were the insurmountable challenges that he and his famous expedition would encounter; these difficulties would deeply challenge Livingstone's legacy as a hero. This section will discuss the struggles Livingstone faced starting with his transition from being a missionary to being a government-commissioned explorer, then moving into an overview and description of the expedition itself, and finally concluding with an analysis of Livingstone's reaction to the expedition as found in his second book, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi*.

---

<sup>101</sup> Blaikie, *Personal Life of David Livingstone*, 227-228.

## **i. Livingstone's Careful Career Transition from Missionary to Explorer**

Before the planning of the Zambesi expedition could begin, Livingstone needed to switch career paths from a missionary to an explorer without ruffling the public's view of his reputation which he had secured and nurtured in the first portion of his career. This movement was largely motivated by a conflict that had been several years in the making between Livingstone and the group which had originally commissioned him to go to the African continent: the London Missionary Society (LMS). The eventual falling out with the LMS was caused by two main conflicts: differing views on conversion tactics and Livingstone's covert seeking of a government position. First, the tension between the LMS and Livingstone was caused by Livingstone's growing belief that effective missions' work comprised primarily of corporate change rather than individual conversions. This view was one that Livingstone had begun to develop early on in his missions' work where he continuously cited the famous "three C's" that came to define his viewpoint, "Commerce, Christianity, and Civilization."<sup>102</sup> Even though the official separation between Livingstone and the LMS happened in 1858, Tim Jeal cites discord between Livingstone and the LMS as early as 1853, "...in September that year he [Livingstone] had told his family that, 'if the Society should object [to his plans] I would consider it my duty to withdraw from it.'<sup>103</sup> Despite the tenuous relationship between the famous missionary and the Society, the LMS did not publicly dismiss Livingstone until the end of his furlough in London, and the public face of the parting was made to look amiable. This was, in part, due to the financial strain facing the LMS, as George Seaver writes, "The Society's deficit in 1855 was due to the fact that the Crimean War had drained all that the benevolent public could spare for the

---

<sup>102</sup> GC Cook, "Doctor David Livingstone FRS (1813-1873: "the fever" and other medical problems of the mid-nineteenth century Africa," *Journal of Medical Biography* 1994; 2: 33.

<sup>103</sup> David Livingstone to Mr. and Mrs. Neil Livingstone. 30.9.53, *David Livingstone: Family Letters 1841-1856*, ed. I. Schapera, (London, 1959) vol. 2, 228. Cited in Jeal, *Livingstone*, 167.

relief of misery and suffering...”<sup>104</sup> Thus as a result of their benevolence, at the end of 1856, the LMS found themselves in debt. It is no coincidence that this debt was overcome in the year that Livingstone had gone on his lecture tour: “When in May 1857 Livingstone spoke at the annual meeting he was received “with overwhelming demonstrations of good-will, and the stimulus of his presence was so great as to create another forward movement of the Society’s operations.”<sup>105</sup> As he was helping LMS to regain their financial stability, Livingstone continued to have several meetings with the directors of the LMS over the course of the spring of 1857. These meetings focused on Livingstone’s future and the plans he foresaw taking place in the areas he had explored.<sup>106</sup>

The second cause of the conflict between the LMS and the doctor derived in the secret job hunt that Livingstone had been undertaking. Despite the seemingly harmonious public relationship between the doctor and LMS, in reality Livingstone was aware that the likelihood of another partnership with the Society was quite low due to the fundamental disagreement surrounding the most effective way to evangelize. With this knowledge in hand, Livingstone had proceeded forward with an alternate plan for employment. Due to the fact that this move away from Christian missions could negatively impact the public’s perception of his work, the missionary had been perceptive of the need to confidentially and carefully navigate this difficult relationship between the Society and himself. He knew that his probable departure from the LMS would have financial repercussions for his work and his family, since throughout his travels he had remained financially dependent upon LMS’s provisions.<sup>107</sup> He had consequently been

---

<sup>104</sup> George Seaver, *David Livingstone: His Life and His Letters*, (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1957), 272

<sup>105</sup> R. J. Campbell, *Livingstone* (Benn, 1929), 234 cited in Seaver, *David Livingstone*, 272.

<sup>106</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, 169-171.

<sup>107</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, 167-168.

secretly preparing for this reality as early as May of 1856 when he had written a letter notifying Sir Roderick Murchison of the possibility of cutting ties with the LMS: “I suspect I am to be sent somewhere else, but will prefer dissolving my connection with the Society and follow out my own plans as a private Christian.”<sup>108</sup> Murchison had responded by not only helping Livingstone to secure the publication of *Missionary Travels*, as has been discussed in chapter two of this thesis, but also he began the process that would ensure Livingstone a position under the British government by arranging a meeting between Livingstone and the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Clarendon.<sup>109</sup> Livingstone had cleverly prepared for this meeting by writing Clarendon, on five different occasions, to outline a small proposal for technical equipment to help him promote agricultural development for the Kololo peoples.<sup>110</sup> This proposal would evolve into what is now known as the “Zambesi expedition.”

## **ii. Overview of the Expedition: Commission and Preparation**

Livingstone’s crafty job hunt ended with his release from LMS in October of 1857 and the successful official commissioning of the Zambesi expedition. This commission took place on December 11, 1857 when the Chancellor of Exchequer, Sir George Cornwall Lewis, announced before the House of Commons that £5000 was to be set aside to finance a government expedition of the Zambesi valley.<sup>111</sup> Soon after, preparations for the trip were underway. However, the evolution of the planning of the expedition was a process marked by key differences in vision between Livingstone and the Foreign office.

---

<sup>108</sup> David Livingstone to Robert Murchison 5.8.56, *The Zambesi Expedition of David Livingstone 1858-1863*, ed J.P.R. Wallis (London, 1956) (1), xviii. Cited in Jeal, *Livingstone*, 167- 168.

<sup>109</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, 168.

<sup>110</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 124.

<sup>111</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 124.

The primary dispute between Livingstone and the Foreign office centered on the size of the traveling party, but this specific disagreement reflected an overall different understanding between the doctor and the Foreign office in terms of what all the expedition would entail. The government ministers originally suggested that the Royal Navy should be ultimately responsible for the technical and logistical details of the project, and they, therefore, appointed the Board Admiralty's chief hydrographer, Captain John Washington, to draw up plans for the expedition.<sup>112</sup> Washington envisioned a massive operation and proposed that two hundred officers should accompany Livingstone and himself on the expedition.<sup>113</sup> This was more than Livingstone could handle, so he intervened on January 7, 1858 by writing another letter to Clarendon; Livingstone suggested an alternate plan where six carefully selected Europeans would accompany him on the expedition: Norman Bedingfeld, a naval commander and ship captain; John Kirk, a botanist and medical doctor; Richard Thornton, a mining geologist; Thomas Baines, a storekeeper and artist; George Rae, a ship engineer, and Charles Livingstone, Livingstone's younger brother who would serve as a general assistant.<sup>114</sup> In addition to these six men, Livingstone would also bring along his wife, Mary, and their youngest son, Oswald.<sup>115</sup> Livingstone's plan ultimately won the ministers over; Ross argues that Livingstone's plan was persuasive because the proposed size of his crew was still large enough to be effective and yet still small enough to not provoke the Portuguese—who had laid claim to the Zambesi valley

---

<sup>112</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 126.

<sup>113</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 126.

<sup>114</sup> NLS, MS 10780 (6), Livingstone to Clarendon, 7 January 1858 cited in Ross, *David Livingstone*, 126. See Ross, *David Livingstone*, 129-133, for a more in-depth description of the personnel that Livingstone chose as well as the probable reasoning behind each of his selections.

<sup>115</sup> Buxton, *David Livingstone*, 110. Shortly after setting sail for Africa, Mary realized that she was pregnant and ended up staying in Cape Town while Livingstone continued on with the expedition. She and Oswald would not be able to reunite with Livingstone until 1862.

since the 1530s.<sup>116</sup> The Portuguese settlers would be a source of trouble for Livingstone later in the course of the expedition, largely due to Livingstone's unintentional entrance into a conflict zone between Portuguese governmental forces and groups of Ngoni people, whom the Portuguese referred to as *Landeens*.<sup>117</sup> Livingstone's own misunderstanding of the relationship between the Portuguese and the *Landeens* would lead him to conclude that the Portuguese officials were complicit in the African slave trade.

After the decision had been made regarding the size and members of the expedition party, an agenda was established. The official plan for the expedition would include key objections to be completed within a set timeline. The first objective would be for the team to arrive at the delta of the Zambesi, and they were to then move quickly to the Bakota highlands; upon arriving at the highlands, the group was supposed to set up an iron house and establish cotton gins and sugar mills while simultaneously planting crops. They were also commended to explore the countryside surrounding the highlands and extensively document their findings. At the end of two years, the group would return to the coast whereupon the British government would decide whether or not to extend the trip.<sup>118</sup>

### **iii. Overview of the Expedition: Implementation and Difficulties**

This downscaling of the size of the immediate expedition party did not prevent the trip from being an enormous endeavor. Its implementation would require extensive cooperation across various groups. Consequently, simultaneous to the departure of Livingstone and his traveling companions from Liverpool on the steamship *Pearl* on March 10, 1858, several

---

<sup>116</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 126 and Lawrence Dristas, *Zambesi: David Livingstone and Expeditionary Science in Africa* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 6.

<sup>117</sup> Dristas, *Zambesi*, 3, 9.

<sup>118</sup> For an extensive descriptive of this outline of the expedition's objectives, see Dristas, *Zambesi*, 11-12.

corresponding tasks were also initiated.<sup>119</sup> Lawrence Dristas outlines a list of the contributions from many different fields that would be continually necessary for a successful expedition:

Politicians and men of science wrote letters of instruction for members of the Expedition. Naval officers and ships provided logistical support at the coast and surveyed the Zambezi delta. British diplomats placated Portuguese fears that the Expedition possessed ulterior motives to extend British power into an area that had been within Portuguese influence since the early sixteenth century. Politically, the project required bureaucratic moves within Parliament, the Foreign Office and the Admiralty. The Treasury, of course, had to be convinced that the expenditure was appropriate. Numerous scientific societies were involved in aiding the selection of members and analyzing specimens and data. Steamships were built on the Mersey and Clyde to be used for transport on the Zambezi.<sup>120</sup>

This monumental organization of tasks and individuals would be the source of constant strife for Livingstone and his companions throughout the next six years. Thus, one of the major sources of difficulty for the expedition was the incessant necessity for communication among the members of these various parties involved in the expedition. These frustrations would often manifest as fights between Livingstone and his immediate companions, especially Blaines and Bedingfeld, which would consequently reflect Livingstone's inadequacies as a leader.<sup>121</sup>

Livingstone's heated disagreements with Bedingfeld were closely related to the unsuitability of the vessels which had been purposed for the expedition. There were two ships which were used throughout the trip, the *Ma-Robert* (the Tswana name for Mary Livingstone), which was a smaller, lighter ship that was assembled upon the expedition's arrival, and the *Pearl*, which was the larger steamer that made the long journey to transport the group to Cape Town.<sup>122</sup> The crafters of *Ma-Roberts* had utilized new, experimental steel, thinking that it would make the ship lighter and swifter, but it also resulted in a ship that was extremely vulnerable and

---

<sup>119</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone* 199.

<sup>120</sup> Dristas, *Zambesi*

<sup>121</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 131,136.

<sup>122</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 136.

became damaged quite often.<sup>123</sup> Dristas explains that there was a lot riding on the success of these steam ships, “The boats were an integral part of the Expedition and symbols of its success or failure. The explorers pinned their hopes on the ability to use steam power to proceed quickly through unhealthy swamps in order to unravel the mysteries beyond.”<sup>124</sup> Thus, when considering the extent to which the travel party would have been relying on the steamers, the growing frustration between Livingstone and Bedingfeld becomes more explicable. This conflict resulted first in a shouting match between Livingstone and Bedingfeld, and later escalated into the naval officer’s refusal to obey Livingstone’s orders.<sup>125</sup>

There were several other fronts on which Bedingfeld and Livingstone experienced conflicts. Ross explains, “...Bedingfeld’s ostentatious piety, strict sabbatarianism and insistence on shooting birds for fun rather than food all contributed to the conflict between the two men [Bedingfeld and Livingstone].”<sup>126</sup> Due to the disagreements both in terms of the steam ships and in terms of Bedingfeld’s personal habits, Bedingfeld eventually resigned from the expedition in July 1858.<sup>127</sup>

The other member of the party with whom Livingstone had extreme disagreements was Thomas Baines. Baines was originally recruited on a recommendation from the Royal Geographic Society.<sup>128</sup> Livingstone was continually critical of Baines, often inexplicably so, and would frequently accuse Baines of theft, which ultimately resulted in Baines’ dishonorable dismissal in early 1860.<sup>129</sup> Scholars differ in their understanding of what motivated the doctor to

---

<sup>123</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 137.

<sup>124</sup> Dristas, *Zambesi*, 91.

<sup>125</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 136-137.

<sup>126</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 137.

<sup>127</sup> Dristas, *Zambesi*, 11.

<sup>128</sup> Buxton, *David Livingstone*, 113.

<sup>129</sup> Dristas, *Zambesi*, 14-15.

dislike Baines; Ross argues that it could have been due to Baines' history of being involved in warfare against the Xhosa. Ross problematizes the dominant scholarship on Livingstone's distrust of Baines by writing, "The wonder is not how such a well-qualified person so soon fell into Livingstone's bad books and was dismissed [from] the expedition, but how such a hater of the Exeter Hall and killer of Xhosa warriors (whom Livingstone deemed as worthy of admiration...) was appointed to the expedition at all."<sup>130</sup> Jeal argues that Livingstone's distrust of Baines was primarily due to Charles Livingstone's personal opinions about Baines, which were based on personality rather than actual wrong doing.<sup>131</sup>

Livingstone's difficult relationships with Baines and Bedingfeld provide lenses into the doctor's overall struggle to lead the European team. Jeal argues that ultimately, Livingstone, himself was the weakest link in the party. Jeal writes, "...his [Livingstone's] weakness would not be physical. He would simply prove a disastrous leader. Had the British Government thought about it, a man who had just passed four years entirely without European company was hardly an ideal person to lead, live, and work with six other men in claustrophobic proximity."<sup>132</sup> The four years which Jeal is referring to would be 1852-1856 – the years in which Livingstone prepared for and executed his transcontinental journey. Jeal argues that by the time Livingstone had returned to London in 1857, his ability to lead a group of Europeans had been compromised. Jeal goes on to argue that this inability was largely situated in Livingstone's fundamentally different approach to Europeans and Africans; he writes, "[Livingstone] had always been limitlessly patient with Africans but had never missed an opportunity to condemn weakness or stupidity in

---

<sup>130</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 132.

<sup>131</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, 228.

<sup>132</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, 201.

Europeans.”<sup>133</sup> This hypercritical attitude towards Europeans is evident in the aforementioned tenuous interactions that Livingstone had between himself and Baines and Bedingfeld.

Whereas in the cases of Baines and Bedingfeld Livingstone’s ineffective leadership manifested itself in the form of overreactions to tension, in the case of Livingstone’s younger brother, Charles, his shortcoming would be a lack of intervention. From the outset, Charles seemed a strange pick, considering his lack of experience. He also had certain personality quirks that would cause other team members to dislike him, as Kirk’s diary critiques, “He [Charles] has never had anyone under him and is awkward and ungracious in his dealings.”<sup>134</sup> Despite Kirk’s misgivings about Charles, Livingstone did little to curb the obnoxious habits of his brother. When the party was delayed by the slow moving of Charles, Thornton, and Baines, Livingstone firmly reprimanded everyone except his brother.<sup>135</sup> This partiality added fuel to the flame of division that had already been facing the expedition.

In addition to problems with asserting himself as an effective leader, another constant source of difficulty for Livingstone throughout the expedition was combating disease. On May 13, 1858 Livingstone suffered from a severe attack of dysentery, on which he remarked in a journal, “Nothing can exceed the discomfort and pain when one is obliged to hold on with all his might to prevent being pitched off the closet.”<sup>136</sup> In addition to attacks of dysentery, malaria would also resurface during this period of the Livingstone’s life. His team’s first bouts with the deadly fever were almost directly after the expedition’s arrival at the Zambesi in 1858; the first

---

<sup>133</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, 201.

<sup>134</sup> Coupland, *Kirk*, 131. Cited in Buxton, *David Livingstone*, 111.

<sup>135</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, 212.

<sup>136</sup> *The Zambesi Expedition of David Livingstone 1858-1863*, ed. JPR Wallis (London: Chatto and Windus, 1956) vol. 1, 6. cited in Jeal, *Livingstone*, 205

to be afflicted were Charles and Baines.<sup>137</sup> The fever would also become a problem for Thornton and Kirk in late 1859; Thornton's bout with malaria was accompanied by extreme sores and boils.<sup>138</sup> Two years later, in November of 1861, malaria would be the cause of death for a ship carpenter that had joined the expedition that same year.<sup>139</sup> The most tragic way that malaria affected Livingstone happened on April 27, 1862 when Livingstone's wife, Mary, succumbed to the fever after a severe six day struggle with the vicious disease.<sup>140</sup>

---

<sup>137</sup> GC Cook, "Dr. David Livingstone," 36.

<sup>138</sup> Buxton, *David Livingstone*, 120. And Jeal, *Livingstone*, 228.

<sup>139</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 176.

<sup>140</sup> Blaikie, *Personal Life of David Livingstone*, 292-93.

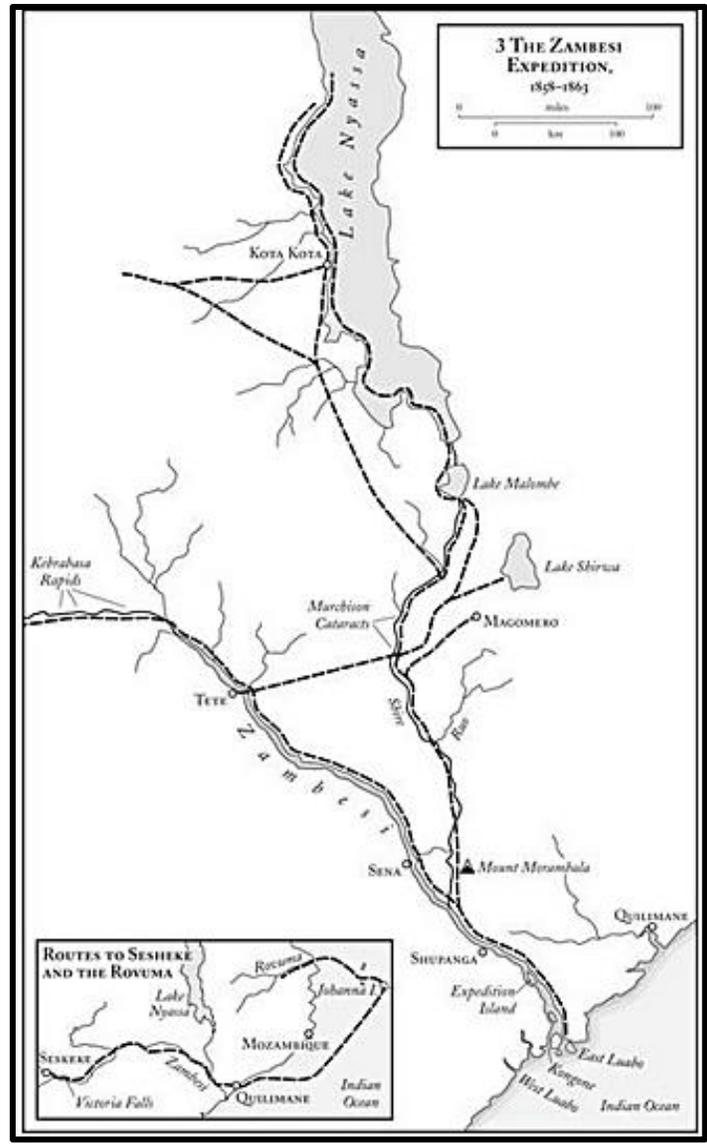


Fig. 3: Map of The Zambesi Expedition Tim Jeal, *Livingstone* Rev. ed. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013. 205.

Not only did the expedition suffer from the difficulties of leadership, disease, and inadequate equipment, but the penultimate disappointment the expedition faced would soon be evident when they realized that the Zambesi was non-navigable. Livingstone was somewhat aware of this possibility early on in the mission when the expedition had reached Kebrabasa, a place of vicious rapids. When Livingstone reached this point in the waterway, he wrote in his

journal, “Things look dark for our enterprise. This Kebrabasa is what I never expected. No hint of its nature ever reached my ears.”<sup>141</sup> Despite the probable reality that these rapids would render the Zambesi non-navigable, Livingstone reasoned that rocks could be blasted which would allow strong steamers to still get through the waterway.<sup>142</sup> As the journey continued, however, a Makololo revealed knowledge of another rapid further up the river which was even more extreme than Kebrabasa; Livingstone and Kirk continued onward to confirm the native’s claim, and on December 2 1858 the doctor and his faithful companion discovered a thirty foot tall waterfall, firmly establishing the impossibility of steamers using the river as a waterway.<sup>143</sup>

Rather than accept defeat, Livingstone looked to an alternate route, the Shire. His expedition would spend December 1858-November 1859 attempting to map out the Shire, all in vain due to an increasingly vexed relationship between Livingstone, the Portuguese authorities who had control of the Shire highlands, and the Arab slave traders who also dwelled in the surrounding area.<sup>144</sup> Livingstone tried persistently to get the British government to aid him in his goal by establishing a colony in the highland; Jeal explains the impossibility Livingstone faced in trying to persuade the Foreign office in this way, “...Livingstone could neither present the slave trade as sufficiently horrific to justify direct government action, nor could he depict the Shire Highlands as a safe and stable area where colonists would have a real opportunity to prosper.”<sup>145</sup> Although Livingstone failed to convince the government, he quickly realized had another option: the establishment of a religious settlement in the Shire highlands by a group of people who Livingstone had already deeply influenced.

---

<sup>141</sup> *The Zambesi Expedition*, vol. 1, 63. Cited in Jean, *Livingstone*, 212.

<sup>142</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, 213.

<sup>143</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, 213-14.

<sup>144</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, 220.

<sup>145</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, 223.

Due to the success of his 1857 lectures at Cambridge and Oxford, there had been a group of young men who had traveled to Africa as a response to Livingstone's inspirational charge. A contingent from this group, the Universities Mission (UMCA), was convinced by Livingstone to move from the Cape Town area to the Shire Highlands in early 1861; Livingstone was hopeful that if this religious settlement was successful, then it would eventually become a British colony. Ross explains Livingstone's vision for the UMCA settlement, "This new Anglican mission, it appeared to Livingstone, could become the core round which the colony might develop in the Shire highlands and so initiate the spread of the Gospel, check the slave trade and begin the economic development of the region."<sup>146</sup> Included with this request that the UMCA move to the highlands, Livingstone also provided the group a warning that the slave trade was present in the area and that there could be tension between the UMCA and the Arab slave traders.<sup>147</sup> Despite these warnings, the UMCA, led by Bishop Charles F. Mackenzie, arrived in the Shire highlands in January with a new steamer courtesy of the British Foreign office, the *Pioneer*; this final extension of government official goodwill was to be the last gift that the expedition would receive.<sup>148</sup> The UMCA would be the source of more controversy for Livingstone due to their refusal to listen to his warnings. Livingstone had reminded Bishop Mackenzie to not provoke the surrounding tribes over land, especially the Ajawa; this refusal sadly resulted in Mackenzie's death during a skirmish with the natives.<sup>149</sup>

Since access to the Shire was not yet fully available, Livingstone turned to the third, and final, waterway which the expedition would attempt to secure: the Rovuma. Unfortunately the waterway was ultimately deemed ineffective; Livingstone had originally predicted that the trip

---

<sup>146</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 151.

<sup>147</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, 235.

<sup>148</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 169.

<sup>149</sup> Blaikie, *Personal Life of David Livingstone*, 294.

from the mouth of the Rovuma to the open sea would take twenty-one days, but due to unforeseen difficulties the trip took ten weeks.<sup>150</sup> With only Livingstone, Charles, and Kirk remaining, the expedition would conclude at the end of 1863 with the final acceptance of their failure to find a suitable waterway.<sup>151</sup>

After six years of difficulty and strife, the remaining members of the expedition returned to London on July 20, 1864, where they received no welcoming party or celebration. They were instead met with a frustrated government, and a discontented public. Livingstone was well aware that his reputation had taken a heavy hit. Therefore, Livingstone would spend the next two years writing his second book: *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries*.<sup>152</sup>

#### **iv. Livingstone's Recounting and Reframing of the Expedition**

As he had when he returned on his first trip home, Livingstone immediately set out to write a book about his travels. Unlike *Missionary Travels*, which was ultimately purposed to reaffirm Livingstone as a public hero, Livingstone's second book, co-written with his brother, Charles, was an obvious attempt to salvage his reputation, which had taken a heavy hit from the failed expedition. The book, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi*, was written and published shortly after Livingstone's return to London in 1866. The book's purpose is evident as early as the preface, where the doctor immediately begins to pull readers back into what his original mission had been: an effort to continue his life's mission of ending the African slave trade. He writes, "It has been my object in this work to give as clear an account as I was able of tracts of country previously unexplored...and to bring before my countrymen...the misery entailed by the slave-trade in its inland phases—a subject on which I and my companions are the

---

<sup>150</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 170.

<sup>151</sup> Dristas, *Zambesi*, 18-19.

<sup>152</sup> Dristas, *Zambesi*, 20.

first who had any opportunities of forming a judgement.”<sup>153</sup> This reframing is intended to distract from the knowledge that the readers undoubtedly had regarding the actual outcome of the expedition. It sets the tone for Livingstone’s book as an attempt to regain his reputation as a hero.

In addition to attempting to remind readers of the original goals of the expedition, Livingstone also tries to shift blame in order to allay negative public perceptions of his reputation. He does this by also including in the preface a long explanation of the political inabilities of the Portuguese in East Africa:

They [the African natives in Mozambique] have never been subdued, and, being a fine energetic race, would readily enter into commercial treaties with foreigners, were it not for the false assertion of power by which the Portuguese, with the tacit consent of European governments, shut them out from commerce and every civilizing influence. This Portuguese pretense to dominion is the curse of the negro race on the East Coast of Africa...<sup>154</sup>

Throughout the remainder of his book, Livingstone continues to critique the involvement of the Portuguese in the interior of Africa, despite strict warnings that the minister of the Foreign office, Lord John Russell, had given to Livingstone charging him to stop criticizing the Portuguese and to stop framing them as actively encouraging the slave trade.<sup>155</sup> Livingstone’s stubbornness and continued assertion of the wrongdoings of the Portuguese angered many British officials, including Prince Albert whose cousin was the King of Portugal.<sup>156</sup>

Another clever tactic that Livingstone utilized in his book to attempt to shift the public’s focus away from his trip’s failures was to omit certain things. Perhaps the most notable of these omissions is that of his companions’ names. Throughout his book, Livingstone refuses to

---

<sup>153</sup> David Livingstone and Charles Livingstone, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and Its Tributaries: And of the Discovery of the Lakes Shirwa and Nyassa, 1858-1864*. (London: John Murray, 1865), v.

<sup>154</sup> David and Charles Livingstone, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and Its Tributaries*, ix-x.

<sup>155</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, 283.

<sup>156</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, 279.

mention Bedingfeld and Baines, the members of his party who had caused him the most frustration.<sup>157</sup> In fact, Livingstone does not even give credit to Baines for his illustrations, which the doctor utilized in *Narrative*.<sup>158</sup> This is largely due to the aforementioned difficulties that these members posed to Livingstone's leadership style. It is noteworthy that, although Livingstone re-writes Baines and Bedingfeld out of the story because of the problems that they caused him, and although Charles was also the source of division among the team members, Charles' presence is not only included in the story, but is explicitly enlisted to provide assistance in the authorship of the book.

---

<sup>157</sup> Buxton, *David Livingstone*, 120.

<sup>158</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, 230.

## V. 1866-1873: LIVINGSTONE'S FINAL JOURNEYS

Although there was controversy about the Zambesi expedition which might have negatively affected Livingstone's reputation, he refused to let his reputation be primarily characterized by that failure. Upon the completion of *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi*, Livingstone once again attempted to petition the British government for assistance on another mission. This time, rather than try to convince the Foreign Office of the potential of an alternate waterway, Livingstone decided to promote the importance of a task that held deep historical importance: the finding of the mouth of the Nile. Livingstone was not alone in his fascination with the Nile, as Pettitt explains, "For these Victorians, Africa was as much a mythical realm as a 'real' continent and the quest narratives they produced were imbued with the mythical sense of time travel – as if, in tracing the source of the Nile with Herodotus's description as a guide, they were journeying back to the beginnings of civilization."<sup>159</sup> Livingstone sought to capitalize on this Victorian fascination and gain a government commission.

Livingstone argued for the political necessity of finding the mouth of the Nile by linking it back to ending the slave trade. This is not surprising since one of Livingstone's main goals, throughout his lifetime, was to convince the British government of the atrocities of the slave trade and of the need for the British to intervene. While he was seeking this government endorsement, Livingstone wrote to a friend, "The Nile sources are valuable only as a means of enabling me to open my mouth with power among men. It is this power which I hope to apply to remedy an enormous evil. Men may think I covet fame, but I make it a rule not to read aught

---

<sup>159</sup> Pettitt, *Dr. Livingstone, I Presume?* 44

written in my praise.”<sup>160</sup> This “enormous evil” which Livingstone refers to is the African slave trade. In expressing his desire to continue to combat slavery, Livingstone was both being a man of principle as well as a man of political awareness. He knew that he had fallen out of grace with the Foreign Office, and his dedication to combating the slave trade was his way of continuing to advocate his relevance to a wary audience. This final task would also serve as Livingstone’s attempt to redefine his legacy, as R.C. Bridges comments, “...as his expedition progressed, Livingstone was increasingly harassed by a sense of failure of all his plans for Africa; the discovery of the Nile sources was one task at least that he might accomplish before he died.”<sup>161</sup> Thus, with this personal motivation to redeem his legacy to the future, Livingstone argued, once more, for the importance of exploration as a tool towards British intervention in the African slave trade.

Livingstone’s effort to convince the government of the merit of his plan was somewhat successful. He received the commission from the Foreign Office as well as £500 and the honorary rank of Consul.<sup>162</sup> This was a paltry sum compared to the £5000 that Livingstone had received when he set out on the Zambesi expedition.<sup>163</sup> The Foreign Office was obviously hesitant to invest any more money into Livingstone’s plans, considering that they had lost around £50,000 by the end of the Zambesi expedition.<sup>164</sup> Along with the small funding and the governmental title, Livingstone was also directed by the government to stay out of Portuguese

---

<sup>160</sup> F. Debenham *The Way to Ilala: David Livingstone’s Pilgrimage*, (London, 1955). 293-4 cited in Jeal, *Livingstone*, 289

<sup>161</sup> R.C. Bridges, “The Sponsorship and Financing of Livingstone’s Last Journey” *African Historical Studies*, 1:1 (1968), 87.

<sup>162</sup> Helly, *Livingstone’s Legacy*, 176.

<sup>163</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 125.

<sup>164</sup> Bridges, “The Sponsorship and Financing of Livingstone’s Last Journey” 82. There is disagreement among scholars about the meaning of this small amount of funding; some argue that Livingstone had fallen out of grace with the Foreign Office but others argue that the government gave a small sum because they did not think the journey would take very long. For more on this discussion, see Bridges, “The Sponsorship and Financing of Livingstone’s Last Journey” 89-90.

territory; the official commission read that Livingstone was allowed to traverse “in the territories of Africa not subject to the authority of the King of Portugal or the King of Abyssinia or the Viceroy of Egypt.”<sup>165</sup> This directive was in response to Livingstone’s extreme dislike towards the Portuguese authorities in East Africa, as he had outlined in his second book, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi*.

Although the funding from the government was quite low, the doctor would also receive £500 from the Royal Geographical Society; but even the Society had their reservations about the post-Zambesi expedition Livingstone, and they provided the money only along with advice and guidelines, much to Livingstone’s dismay.<sup>166</sup> Blaikie records these new strains on Livingstone’s relationship with the Society by writing, “The Geographical Society coupled their contribution with some instructions as to observations and reports which seemed to Dr. Livingstone needlessly stringent, and which certainly ruffled his relation to the Society.”<sup>167</sup> Considering Blaikie’s extremely forgiving and positive approach to Livingstone’s life, the usage of the phrases “needlessly stringent” and “ruffled” can be assumed to be a light way of expressing Livingstone’s true feelings toward the Geographical Society’s trepidation. This is especially indicative of the rough spot that Livingstone found himself in since he had previously referred to the President of the Geographical Society, Sir Roderick Murchison, as “the best friend I ever had.”<sup>168</sup> Even his best friend was struggling to put full faith in the doctor’s dreams for the African continent.

---

<sup>165</sup> Russell to Livingstone, 28 March 1865, F.O. 84/1249. Cited in Bridges, “The Sponsorship and Financing of Livingstone’s Last Journey,” 83.

<sup>166</sup> Helly, *Livingstone’s Legacy*, 175.

<sup>167</sup> Blaikie, *Personal Life of David Livingstone*, 359.

<sup>168</sup> Committee Minutes 31 January 1865, *Royal Geographical Society Archives*, London. Cited in Bridges, “The Sponsorship and Financing of Livingstone’s Last Journey,” 84.

Livingstone, aware of his precarious position in the eyes of his sponsors, proceeded forth on his final mission after securing the commission and funding. He set sail on August 13, 1865 from London to Bombay. While in Bombay, Livingstone picked up supplies and several African servants, including the three Africans who would stick with him for the rest of his lifetime: Chuma, Susi, and Amoda.<sup>169</sup> From Bombay the party sailed first to Zanzibar where they gathered more crew members and waited for another ship, HMS *Penguin*.<sup>170</sup> Livingstone and his traveling party of thirteen Sepoys, ten Johanna men, nine Nassick boys, two Shupanga men, and two Waiyau men arrived on the Eastern coast of Africa, in modern day Tanzania, on March 19, 1866, for what would be the final chapter of Livingstone's travels.<sup>171</sup> Over the course of these final seven years, Livingstone's travels would continue to be filled with difficulty and strife, similarly to the Zambesi expedition. Unlike the Zambesi expedition, however, these final journeys would not increase the negative public perception of Livingstone's career and character. Instead, during this period Livingstone would reinvent his legacy with the help of three main players: Musa, Henry Morton Stanley, and Horace Waller. In order to understand the importance of each of these individuals, this section will begin with a brief overview of the beginning of Livingstone's final journeys and the difficulties he faced during those travels. Then Musa will be discussed as a driving force that, unintentionally, opened the opportunity for Livingstone to adjust his legacy. The second player, Stanley, would help Livingstone to use that opportunity through Stanley's own mixed motives and shrewd abilities. The third player, Horace Waller, was Livingstone's friend and the editor of the *Last Journals*; he will be discussed as an important agent in confirming Livingstone's redeemed public perception and the consequent consumption of the narrative that Livingstone was an heroic Victorian missionary and explorer.

---

<sup>169</sup> Pettitt, *Dr. Livingstone, I Presume?* 44.

<sup>170</sup> Blaikie, *Personal Life of David Livingstone*, 370.

<sup>171</sup> Blaikie, *Personal Life of David Livingstone*, 370.

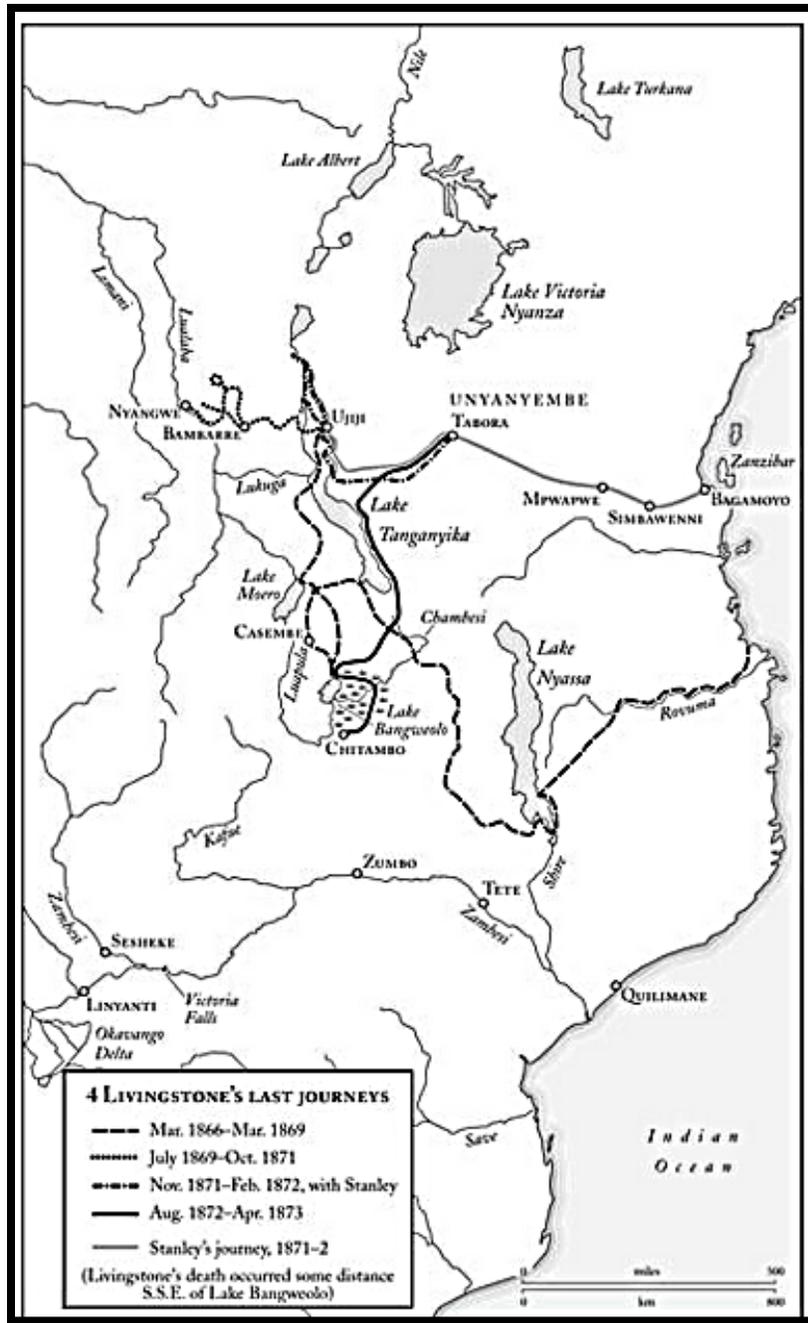


Fig. 4: Map of Livingstone's Last Journeys. Tim Jeal, *Livingstone* Rev. ed. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013. 33.

## **i. Early development and difficulties of Livingstone's final journeys**

As Livingstone began his final set of travels upon the African continent, he had two key objectives he needed to accomplish: first to ascend the Rovuma valley and second to travel north to Lake Tanganyika and secure more supplies at Ujiji.<sup>172</sup> In the course of completing his second objective, Livingstone would look to complete the specific explorative task that the Royal Geographical Society had laid out for him when they had contributed to his journey, namely to explore the watershed west of Lake Tanganyika. Despite Livingstone's strong dislike of the explicit directive from the Society, this area of exploration related closely to the doctor's overall mission of finding the mouth of the Nile. Ross explains this possibility when he writes, "Both Murchison and he [Livingstone] thought that the Nile might have its headwaters there rather than farther north, as Burton and Speke had suggested, but they also thought that possibly the sources of the Zambesi and Congo lay there."<sup>173</sup> Thus, while he was completing the exploration he had promised to do for the RGS, Livingstone would also be potentially fulfilling the overall goal of his journey. Namely, in securing the source of the Nile, Livingstone believed he would be able to bring commercialization to the African interior and more adequately convince the African peoples to create "legitimate commerce" with Europe through an open waterway.<sup>174</sup> If the trade of goods was perceived as profitable, Livingstone believed that this trade would deem the slave trade unnecessary.

---

<sup>172</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 202.

<sup>173</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 202. John Speke was ultimately correct about the origins of the mouth of the Nile; on July 30, 1858, he had claimed that the mouth lay in Lake Victoria, but he was unable to fully substantiate those claims due to a lack of surveying equipment. Five years later (1863) Samuel Baker, would claim Lake Albert was the origin of the Nile. Finally in an expedition in 1874-1877 Henry Morton Stanley established, once and for all, that Speke's original claim that the Nile originated out of Lake Victoria was correct. For more on the history of the discovery and expeditions behind the search for the mouth of the Nile, see Karl Paul Kollmann, *The Victoria Nyanza. The Land, the Races and their Customs, with Specimens of Some of the Dialects* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1899).

<sup>174</sup> For a more in-depth discussion of the origins of this political ideology see Helly, *Livingstone's Legacy*, 14-15.

Unfortunately as had been the case during the Zambesi expedition, Livingstone and his party would experience several difficulties and setbacks while trying to complete their objectives. The first of these difficulties would occur due to Livingstone's lack of communication with his full travel party. As he was attempting to ascend the heavily forested Rovuma valley, the doctor failed to adequately communicate with all of his travel party. This breakdown in communication became so severe that it would sometimes take up to three weeks for sections of Livingstone's traveling party to catch up to him.<sup>175</sup> These miscommunications did not help to redeem Livingstone's position as an able leader.

Another area of difficulty arose due to Livingstone's decision to reject the conventional means of travel, the caravan, and instead to experiment with a smaller, diverse group of animals including three buffaloes and a calf, six camels, four donkeys, and two mules.<sup>176</sup> Livingstone was hopeful that he could test whether some of these animals would be immune to the tsetse fly, but this experiment would soon be thwarted. As Livingstone ventured further into the Rovuma valley, his animals were overloaded with supplies and suffered from mistreatment at the hands of the doctor's companions.<sup>177</sup> Soon the animals were struggling, and Livingstone's party was forced to move at a slower pace. By May of 1866, Livingstone's scientific inquiry about various animals' potential immunities toward the tsetse fly had been compromised as one after the other of his animals died; due to the severe mistreatment, Livingstone was unable to determine whether or not tsetse flies had caused these deaths.<sup>178</sup> Regardless, the new lack of operative

---

<sup>175</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 203.

<sup>176</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, 303.

<sup>177</sup> Blaikie, *Personal Life of David Livingstone*, 374-75.

<sup>178</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, 304.

baggage animals had a drastic effect on the available supplies, and food scarcity started to become an issue.<sup>179</sup> Unrest among Livingstone's traveling party continued to build.

Mutiny became an ever-increasing possibility among Livingstone's party. From time to time this mutiny would be realized, as the end of May of 1866 when twenty-four porters refused to continue on the journey.<sup>180</sup> Although this defiance was a setback, Livingstone's response to the porters' refusal would demonstrate that he had learned from his disastrous leadership techniques during the Zambesi expedition. Rather than lash out in anger at the porters, Livingstone kept his calm and proceeded forward. Ross argues that Livingstone's treatment of his party members was relatively progressive; he expresses this argument by comparing Livingstone's approach to Richard Burton, a nineteenth century British explorer who had also set out to find the mouth of the Nile, whom Ross claims would have undoubtedly flogged and berated any mutinous members of his traveling party.<sup>181</sup> Jeal also describes Livingstone's reaction as set apart from his contemporaries: "Considering the disciplinary excesses of which almost every other explorer was guilty, Livingstone's forbearance was almost miraculous."<sup>182</sup> Livingstone's improved leadership skills allowed his group to endure through the food scarcity and the loss of the livestock and by July the party would reach Lake Nyassa.<sup>183</sup>

Despite the successful arrival at Lake Nyassa, more unrest would develop among the members of the party. The next two groups to depart would be the sepoys, who Livingstone forced to leave after they had admitted they were planning to murder one of the Nassick boys,

---

<sup>179</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 203.

<sup>180</sup> These porters had joined the traveling party after Livingstone had reached the mainland. Jeal, *Livingstone*, 305.

<sup>181</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 204.

<sup>182</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, 305.

<sup>183</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, 307.

and the ten Johanna men, who were afraid of being kidnapped by slave raiders.<sup>184</sup> Musa, the leader of these Johanna men, was quoted by Livingstone as saying, “I want to see my father, my mother, and my child at Johanna, I no want to be killed by Mazitu.”<sup>185</sup> Musa’s next actions after deserting the travelling party would forever impact the public’s relationship with the doctor’s life.

## ii. “Losing” Livingstone

Shortly after fearfully departing from Livingstone, Musa and the nine other Johanna men journeyed back to Zanzibar. In order to prevent being chided or shamed by the people they encountered who inquired about Livingstone’s whereabouts, Musa decided to present a fabricated tale of the journey. Buxton describes this tale and its reception: “...the men returned to Zanzibar with a carefully rehearsed tale of an attack by raiders in which Livingstone and all the Nassick boys were killed and all their possessions stolen... Long and sorrowful letters passed between [Kirk] and Murchison, reports appeared in *The Times*, and all his friends started to grieve.”<sup>186</sup> Exacerbating this myth of Livingstone’s death was the difficulty that the doctor faced in getting letters sent from the interior. While in Ujiji, Tanzania, Livingstone attempted to send forty-four letters, only one of which was actually delivered; the letter that reached its destination was a request for more supplies from Livingstone to John Kirk, who was in Zanzibar at the time.<sup>187</sup>

---

<sup>184</sup> Buxton, *David Livingstone*, 158.

<sup>185</sup> David Livingstone, *The Last Journals of David Livingstone in Central Africa, from 1865 to His Death: Continued by a Narrative of His Last Moments and Sufferings, Obtained from His Faithful Servants, Chuma and Susi*, (London: J. Murray, 1874), vol. 1, 15. Cited in Jeal, *Livingstone*, 310

<sup>186</sup> Buxton, *David Livingstone* 159.

<sup>187</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, 325.

### iii. “Finding” Livingstone

As the public commotion surrounding the loss of contact with Livingstone continued to grow, the western world waited in hopeful suspense to discover the fate of the Victorian hero. Henry Morton Stanley had been dispatched in 1869 by the *New York Herald* to attempt to locate Livingstone; he famously “found” Livingstone on October 28th, 1871. According to Livingstone, Stanley was a much needed figure at a time where the travelling party was in critical want:

But when my spirits were at their lowest ebb, the good Samaritan was close at hand...Bales of goods, baths of tin, huge kettles, cooking pots, tents &c, made me think ‘This must be a luxurious traveler and not one at his wits end like me.’ It was Henry Morton Stanley, the travelling correspondent of the *New York Herald*, sent by James Gordon Bennett, junior, at an expense of more than £4000, to obtain accurate information about Dr. Livingstone if living, and if dead to bring home my bones.<sup>188</sup>

Livingstone frames the encounter in terms of his own faith, and portrays Stanley as a Good Samaritan coming to the rescue of the weary travelers. Livingstone’s description emphasizes the material excess of Stanley’s caravan, perhaps because of the extreme lack of supplies that Livingstone had recently experienced. It is also noteworthy that Livingstone included the cost of Stanley’s expedition; this egregious amount stood in stark contrast to the funding which Livingstone himself had received for these final journeys. According to the popular recounting of this encounter, upon laying eyes on Livingstone Stanley inquired, “Dr. Livingstone, I presume?” Interesting, although this phrase became famous and is cited in popular recountings of Livingstone’s life, it can only be verified from Stanley’s account and is not in Livingstone’s recording of the event.<sup>189</sup> This is but one example of the how Stanley would manipulate Livingstone’s fame toward his own goals.

---

<sup>188</sup> Livingstone, *Last Journals*, vol. 2, 156.

<sup>189</sup> H. M. Stanley, *How I Found Livingstone*, 1872, 412 cited in “Livingstone, David (1813–1873),” A. D. Roberts in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford:

Immediately after completing his mission to find the doctor, Stanley wrote to the *New York Herald* of the success. This would feed the readership that had waited expectantly for news of Livingstone's fate, as Helly comments: "Eager public curiosity was fed by the publication of the sensational newspaper stories Stanley wrote for the *New York Herald* of his search and finding of the "lost" missionary hero. Stanley's dramatic prose describing the man and his adventures led to a resurgence of Livingstone's original popularity..."<sup>190</sup> Thus, the timely meeting of Stanley and Livingstone served to elevate both men's respective reputations in the eyes of the wider public. Livingstone would also use this newly established friendship as a means of forwarding his own goal of increasing public outcry against the African slave trade. Through Stanley, Livingstone's more radical views of African natives could be espoused in the *New York Herald*:

If a comparison were instituted, and Manyuema, taken at random, placed opposite say the members of the Anthropological Society of London, clad like them in kilts of grass cloth, I should like to take my place among the Manyuema, on the principle of preferring the company of my betters.<sup>191</sup>

Livingstone's provocative comments would have created quite a stir among the readers of the newspaper. His use of Stanley as a platform for creating that stir is indicative of the type of give and take relationship the two developed. Over the course of the next year, Stanley continued to accompany Livingstone on the strenuous journey around Lake Tanganyika, eventually parting ways with the doctor on March 14, 1872.<sup>192</sup> Due to the difficult nature of this journey, by the end of 1872 Livingstone's mental and physical health were both extremely damaged; despite the lack of evidence to validate his claims, Livingstone remained convinced, right up to his death, that

---

OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16803> (accessed March 31, 2015).

<sup>190</sup> Helly, *Livingstone's Legacy*, 26.

<sup>191</sup> H.M. Stanley, *The Finding of Dr. Livingstone* (London: John Camden Hotten, 1874 & 1875), 123.

<sup>192</sup> "Livingstone, David," Roberts, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed.

Lake Tanganyika would be the location of the four fountainheads of all the large rivers in Central Africa.<sup>193</sup>

Though they had already parted ways, in the months immediately following their time together, Stanley continued to capitalize on the Victorian missionary's prominence. In November of 1872, Stanley published his perspective on Livingstone in *How I Found Livingstone*. Through the course of the rest of his life, Stanley's relationship with Livingstone would stay as the moment that escalated his career; Stanley would go on more explorations after Livingstone's death, such as the 1874-1877 expedition to confirm whether Baker or Speke had been correct in where the mouth of the Nile originated.<sup>194</sup> Ultimately, Stanley would utilize his constructed fame to contribute to the controversial founding of the Congo Free State at the service of the Belgian King, Leopold II, as Jeal explains, "...while working for Leopold, he [Stanley] would not have realized that he was playing a major part in kick-starting the "Scramble for Africa."<sup>195</sup> However, despite the eventual controversial results of Stanley's time upon the African continent, it cannot be denied that his manipulation of finding Livingstone was a gift for the struggling legacy of the doctor; Stanley's clever ability to cater to newspaper readers with sensationalized accounts served to bolster the doctor's reputation among the American and British public. By the time Stanley had sailed to England on August 1, 1872 all the major newspapers in Britain were filled with stories about Livingstone; Jeal summarizes the topic which fascinated the readers as being important because "...a meeting between a journalist and a once-famous explorer, who had been

---

<sup>193</sup> Helly, *Livingstone's Legacy*, 24.

<sup>194</sup> For more see note 16.

<sup>195</sup> The Scramble for Africa is a term used to describe the 1884 Berlin Conference where several European countries, such as France, Belgium, Britain, and Germany divided up several regions of Africa among themselves for colonization. Jeal, *Livingstone*, 392-93.

seen by no member of his own race for five years, made an exceptionally good story.”<sup>196</sup> This “good story” would also be accompanied by the media’s reframing of Livingstone’s character; one example of this can be found in a description of Livingstone in the *Morning Post*: “To those who live at home at ease, it may well appear marvellous [sic] that any human being would voluntarily undergo the hardships suffered by Livingstone or undergo them and live to tell the tale.”<sup>197</sup> Through the course of being “lost” according to Musa and then “found” at the hands of Stanley, Livingstone’s legacy received new life.

After his travels with Stanley concluded, Livingstone persisted onward, ever bent on affirming his theory about the mouth of the Nile. Dysentery, malaria, and extreme fatigue took a terrible toll on the doctor’s health; by January of 1873 Livingstone became so weak that his travelling party could only cover one mile and a half each day, with the natives often needing to carry Livingstone because he was so ill.<sup>198</sup> These physical ailments began to negatively affect Livingstone’s mental state, and he began to obsess about the Nile and he wrote delirious accounts about his journey as if he had successfully accomplished his task of finding the mouth of the Nile.<sup>199</sup> By April 29, 1873 a very sick and frail Livingstone and his travelling companions reached the village of Chief Chitambo of the Ulala people in present-day Zambia.<sup>200</sup> Livingstone would die two days later from internal bleeding; he was famously found kneeling beside his bed, with his head in his pillow, which would lead many to argue that Livingstone had died while

---

<sup>196</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, 362.

<sup>197</sup> *Morning Post* July 8, 1972. Cited in Jeal, *Livingstone*, 362.

<sup>198</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, 371.

<sup>199</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, 373.

<sup>200</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 234.

praying.<sup>201</sup> This view substantiated the public perception of Livingstone as a saint-like figure who had tirelessly devoted over thirty years to working on the Africa continent.

#### **iv. Publication of Livingstone's Last Journals**

The public perception of Livingstone continued to be shaped shortly after his death. It is in this posthumous stage that the third, and final, figure that greatly impacted Livingstone's legacy came to the forefront: his friend and fellow missionary, Horace Waller. Waller's part in redefining the public's perceptions of the doctor would play a posthumous role. A little over a year after Livingstone's death, John Murray published *The Last Journals of David Livingstone, in Central Africa, from 1865 to his Death*. This publication would be widely consumed by the readership which had been so captivated by the dramatic events of the final years of Livingstone's life. The journals were a vital tool in establishing the lasting image of Livingstone and in finalizing the tone of his legacy. Helly explains the importance of these final journals in comparison to Stanley's influence:

The image of Livingstone the great missionary explorer that remained fixed upon public memory was of a gentle, saintly man who, in his relationships with Africans, embodied the highest ideals of human behavior. It was an image first made popular by the journalism of H.M. Stanley in 1872, but its final shape and legacy for which it became the symbol were given permanent form in the pages of Livingstone's *Last Journals*.<sup>202</sup>

Due to the powerful potential that these journals had in affecting Livingstone's legacy, it is not surprising that the editor behind the journals would be someone deeply and personally influenced by the doctor. The able and diligent hand behind the editing and structuring of Livingstone's last journals was a fellow British missionary, Horace Waller. In her monograph, *Livingstone's Legacy*, Helly writes extensively on the relationship between Waller and

---

<sup>201</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, 377.

<sup>202</sup> Helly, *Livingstone's Legacy*, 27.

Livingstone, and how their connection influenced Livingstone's journal collection. Waller's background starkly contrasts Livingstone's background as a poor, Scottish boy who through hard work and determination became a well-known missionary and explorer. Waller was born in 1833, and he was raised in an affluent part of London, Tavistock Square; his father was a stockbroker and Waller was educated at the boarding school Eagle House in Hammersmith.<sup>203</sup> Similarly to Livingstone, however, Waller also felt a call to missions which radically changed the trajectory of his life; when Waller was 26, in May 1859, his life "turned upside down," according to Helly; he wrote to Bishop Mackenzie, a director of a Central Africa mission, in November of that same year, and the following year, in October 1860, Waller set out to Africa as a missionary in the highlands around Lake Malawi.<sup>204</sup>

Waller's life would again be affected when in the year after his arrival in Africa, in February of 1861, this new, budding missionary would meet the iconic David Livingstone during the Zambesi expedition; this meeting marked the beginning of a close, important friendship.<sup>205</sup> Throughout the rest of his lifetime, Waller would think of Livingstone as a hero. Waller remained in Africa for only two more years before returning to London, but up until Livingstone's death they kept in touch through letters.<sup>206</sup>

As he edited the *Last Journals*, Waller was extremely intentional about what to include. Pettitt explains Waller's motivations in this process as two-fold, "The editor... assiduously expunged anything that he thought might create an impression of the explorer as less than a manly and muscular Christian. Waller... wanted to promote both missionary work and

---

<sup>203</sup> Helly, *Livingstone's Legacy*, 11.

<sup>204</sup> Helly, *Livingstone's Legacy*, 13.

<sup>205</sup> Helly, *Livingstone's Legacy*, 13.

<sup>206</sup> Helly, *Livingstone's Legacy*, 32.

abolition.”<sup>207</sup> Thus Waller’s two main goals were to guard the perception of Livingstone, himself, and the perception of Livingstone’s work to abolish the slave trade. Waller would accomplish this task in 1874, after he was jointly asked by some of Livingstone’s children and by publisher John Murray to go over the extensive field entries that had been compiled after Livingstone’s death.<sup>208</sup>

Waller’s editorial process included three main tools for shaping Livingstone’s legacy: structure, Waller’s annotations, and omitted information. The first chapter of the second volume of *Last Journals* provides a helpful example for the first two tools of structure and editorial annotations. Structurally the book begins with a note from Waller, then the journal entries from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1869, and continues forward through the course of the rest of 1869 with journal entries paired with the illustrations “Uguha Head-dresses,” “Green Scum,” and “Catching Ants.” This pairing of text with illustrations demonstrates the growing need of the British readership to visualize and sensationalize traveler’s accounts. Waller was aware of the audience for which he was compiled the journals, and he structured them accordingly. The second tool, Waller’s annotations, can be seen in the first chapter’s opening. Rather than simply begin the chapter with Livingstone’s own words, Waller prefaces the section:

The new year opened badly enough, and from letters he wrote subsequently concerning the illness which now attacked him, we gather that it left evils behind, from which he never quite recovered. The following entries were made after he regained sufficient strength, but we see how short they necessarily were, and what labour it was to make the jottings which relate to his progress towards the western shore of Lake Tanganyika. He was not able at any time during this seizure to continue the minute maps of the country in his pocket-books, which for the first time fail here.<sup>209</sup>

---

<sup>207</sup> Pettitt, *Dr. Livingstone, I Presume?* 53.

<sup>208</sup> Helly, *Livingstone’s Legacy*, 83.

<sup>209</sup> Livingstone, *Last Journals*, vol. 2, 1.

Waller's framing of Livingstone's entries serves two main functions. Firstly it establishes the emotional tone of the section. Before even reading of his suffering, the readers are given the haunting image of a hero racked with an evil illness that would have a permanent effect on the doctor. Secondly, Waller gives the readers some context in which to place the entries both in terms of geography and in the course of Livingstone's life. Waller establishes that Livingstone is on the western shore of Lake Tanganyika, giving his readers the ability to place Livingstone on the map. Readers who were familiar with the goals of Livingstone's final journeys would have also been aware of the importance that the area surrounding Lake Tanganyika held for the doctor. Waller also precedes the section with the explanation of Livingstone's new lack of ability to draw the maps as he previously had, giving the readers the perspective that Livingstone was no longer the young, vivacious missionary explorer that he once was.

In order to demonstrate the third tool employed by Waller, omissions, Helly provides an analysis of the discrepancies between the original proof sheets of Livingstone's journals and Waller's published copy of the doctor's final journals. Helly explains numerous omissions Waller intentionally made in order to maintain his goals of creating an upstanding perception of Livingstone's life and work. According to Helly's research, the vast majority of Waller's omissions have to do with Livingstone's portrayal of certain people.<sup>210</sup> For example, in his field diary Livingstone would occasionally write disparagingly or harshly about the African natives who aided him. Helly explains that this is not uncommon among nineteenth century exploration parties and that harsh treatment of the natives could have varying motivations, "Threat of force or resort to it was used to stop porters from disputes over the relative weights of their loads, to punish attendants caught plundering the people among whom the caravan passed, to act as a

---

<sup>210</sup> Helly, *Livingstone's Legacy*, 161.

warning to other porters if one were caught stealing caravan supplies, or simply to push on weary men who preferred to stop and rest.”<sup>211</sup> Despite this threat or use of violence as normal within the context of other travel parties, Waller consciously chose to avoid including any violence that Livingstone afflicted upon his companions. In completing his objectives for the book, Waller could not risk losing the sympathy of his audience toward the Victorian hero.

To demonstrate Waller’s omission of violence, one example Helly discusses is the caning of the Nassick-trained attendant, Andrew Powell. Although the Livingstone’s Field Diary reads, “Andrew sulked because he got a blanket & bag only a few pounds more to his load than he liked – as it was a second offense – gave him twelve cuts with a rattan and told him that he might leave us and go to his own people as he had come to do but if he remained he must do what he was told.”<sup>212</sup> Not surprisingly, this journal entry cannot be in the published *Last Journals*. Waller chose to shield the readers from Livingstone’s violent episode in order to promote the view of Livingstone as a kind, gentle leader rather than a violent master. This careful editing demonstrates the efforts that Waller was willing to go in order to maintain the public’s perception of Livingstone’s reputation.

---

<sup>211</sup> Helly, *Livingstone Legacy*, 163.

<sup>212</sup> *David Livingstone: A Catalogue of Documents*. Compiled by G.W. Clendennen, assisted by I.C. Conningham (Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland for the David Livingstone Documentation Project, 1979), Field Diary 17. cited in Helly, *Livingstone’s Legacy*, 164.

## CONCLUSION

Perhaps above all other evidence, the events following Livingstone's death effectively demonstrate Livingstone's successful crafting of his reputation. After the doctor succumbed to his ailments on May 1, 1873 in Ulala, Livingstone's African companions chose to bury his heart under a nearby tree and to transport the doctor's body back to Britain.<sup>213</sup> In order to accomplish this tremendous feat, the villagers mummified Livingstone's body using salt, sunlight, and brandy, and then the doctor's traveling companions, Susi and Chuma, led a caravan to bring Livingstone's body back to the eastern coast.<sup>214</sup> This 1,500 mile long journey would take the caravan five months to complete, and during the course of the trip ten people would die from disease and one gun fight with a village along the way.<sup>215</sup> Despite the immensely challenging journey, Livingstone's faithful followers successfully arrived in Bagamoyo, Tanzania in February of 1874. Soon after, the H.M.S. *Vulture* carried Livingstone's body back to Britain, where an elaborate reception would meet the ship's arrival in Southampton.

The doctor's body would be met by crowds, the Mayor of Southampton, military band, and a twenty-one gun salute.<sup>216</sup> Despite all of this initial pomp and circumstance, an official identification of the body still needed to take place. This identification would happen at the hands of the Royal Geographical Society, who declared the body to be that of Livingstone through creative means: "After eleven months the features were unrecognizable, but the lump in the bone of the left humerus, which had been shattered by a lion nearly thirty years before, was perfect proof."<sup>217</sup> Following this positive identification, the official, government-sponsored

---

<sup>213</sup> Pettitt, *Dr. Livingstone, I Presume?*, 10.

<sup>214</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, 380.

<sup>215</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 236.

<sup>216</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, 382.

<sup>217</sup> Jeal, *Livingstone*, 382.

funeral occurred in Westminster Abbey on April 18, 1874, nearly one year after Livingstone's actual death.<sup>218</sup> The funeral crowd was enormous and the processional of carriages was led by the empty carriages of the Queen and the Prince of Wales.<sup>219</sup> A week after the funeral, The *London Illustrated News* ran a special report on the funeral which captures of interaction between Livingstone's burial and his reputation:

Probably if he [Livingstone] had been consulted, he would have preferred to be buried on the banks of one of the many rivers which he has discovered in Central Africa, and among the primitive negro races who barbarous as they are revered him as father, rather than in the historical abbey... But the public funeral of Saturday last, if not quite in harmony with the antecedents of the great explorer, was a becoming national tribute of respect to a man whose life was one long service to the cause of missionary enterprise, practical philanthropy, and scientific discovery.<sup>220</sup>

This news excerpt demonstrates the popular perception of what kind of a person Livingstone was believed to be. He was seen as a dedicated public and religious servant, and a man who had accomplished a great deal with his. He was said to be not only fond of the African peoples with whom he worked, but the report implies that the doctor preferred Africa over the frills of Europe. The report also speaks to the public's perception of Livingstone's relationship with the African natives; specifically, the report frames Livingstone in a paternal role.

The successful creation of a lasting, positive reputation for the doctor is also evident on his gravestone, which marks him as a man of three main roles: missionary, traveler, and philanthropist.<sup>221</sup> Etched into the stone are also the lasting impressions of the famous Livingstone:

For 30 years his life was spent in an unwearied effort to evangelize the native races, to explore the undiscovered secrets, to abolish the desolating slave trade, of Central Africa, where with his

---

<sup>218</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 237.

<sup>219</sup> Ross, *David Livingstone*, 237.

<sup>220</sup> 18 April 1874 *London Illustrated News* cited in Ross, *David Livingstone*, ix.

<sup>221</sup> Helly, *Livingstone's Legacy*, ii.

last words he wrote, “All I can add in my solitude is, may heaven’s rich blessing come down on every one, American, English, or Turk, who will help to heal this open sore of the world.”<sup>222</sup>

Livingstone would, undoubtedly, approve of this framing of his life’s work and the emphasis on his dedication to eliminate the African slave trade. Despite the temporary setbacks that could have marred the way people saw and remembered the doctor, ultimately through extensive documentation, careful publication, and the help of several key individuals, Livingstone’s reputation was constructed. Thus, even today the iconic doctor is remembered as a dedicated, saintly figure, and an example of how a young, poor boy could make a name for himself in the history books through hard work and service. Missing from this recounting are the difficulties and controversies present throughout the doctor’s life and career, but with the passing of time these negative elements have faded. All that remains is the image of the stoic, contemplative Dr. David Livingstone sitting in the African countryside among the people to whom he dedicated his life’s work.

---

<sup>222</sup> Helly, *Livingstone’s Legacy*, ii.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources:

“Catalogue of Letters.” Livingstone Online.

<http://www.livingstoneonline.ucl.ac.uk/catalogue/view.php> (accessed September 19, 2014).

Clendennen, G.W. and Cunningham, I.C., *David Livingstone: a catalogue of documents*  
Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland, 1979

I.C. Cunningham, *David Livingstone: a catalogue of documents: a supplement* Edinburgh:  
National Library of Scotland, 1985

Livingstone, David and Livingstone, Charles. *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and Its Tributaries: And of the Discovery of the Lakes Shirwa and Nyassa, 1858-1864*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1866.

Livingstone, David. *Missionary Travels in South Africa Vol. 1: Including a Sketch of Sixteen Years' Residence in the Interior of Africa*. Santa Barbara, CA, USA: Narrative Press, 2001. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 17 February 2015.

Livingstone, David. *The Last Journals of David Livingstone in Central Africa, from 1865 to His Death: Continued by a Narrative of His Last Moments and Sufferings, Obtained from His Faithful Servants, Chuma and Susi*, 2 vols. Edited by Horace Waller. London: J. Murray, 1874.

Livingstone, David. *The Life & African Explorations of David Livingstone: comprising all his extensive travels and discoveries: as detailed in his diary, reports, and letters, including his famous last journals: with maps and numerous illustrations*. St. Louis: Valley Publishing, 1874. Reprint, New York: Cooper Square Press, 2002.

Livingstone, David, and Schapera, Isaac. *Livingstone's Missionary Correspondence, 1841-1856*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961.

Livingstone, David, and Schapera, Isaac. *Livingstone's African Journal: 1853-1856. Vol. 2*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1963.

Livingstone, David, and Schapera, Isaac. *Livingstone's African Journal: 1853-1856. Vol. 1*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1963.

“Transcriptions and Images of Letters.” Livingstone Online.

<http://www.livingstoneonline.ucl.ac.uk/view/list.php> (accessed September 19, 2014).

## Secondary Sources:

Blaikie, William Garden. *The Personal Life of David Livingstone: chiefly from his unpublished journals and correspondence in the possession of his family*. New York, Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1895.

Beard, John A.S.. "What motivated Dr David Livingstone (1813-73) in his work in Africa?" *Journal of Medical Biography* 17 no.2 (2009): 95-99.

Bridges, R.C. "The Sponsorship and Financing of Livingstone's Last Journey." *African Historical Studies*, 1:1 (1968): 79-104.

Buxton, Meriel. *David Livingstone* New York: Palgrave, 2001.

Clendennen, G.W., and D.H. Simpson. "African Members of the Zambezi Expedition, 1861-1864: A Prosopographical Foray." *History in Africa* 12 (1985): 29-49.

Cook, G. C. "Doctor David Livingstone FRS (1813-1873): "The Fever" and other medical problems of mid-nineteenth century Africa," *Journal of Medical Biography*. 2:1, (Feb1994) 33-43.

Crozier, Anna. "Sensationalising Africa: British medical impressions of sub-Saharan Africa, 1890-1939." *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 35 no.3, (Sep 2007), 393-415.

"David Livingstone." Westminster Abbey. Accessed December 9, 2014.  
<http://www.westminster-abbey.org/our-history/people/david-livingstone>

*David Livingstone and the Victorian encounter with Africa*. London: National Portrait Gallery, 1996.

Deane, David J. *Robert Moffat: The Missionary Hero of Kuruman*, New York, Chicago, Toronto: Publishers of Evangelical Literature, 2005.

Desmond, Adrian J. and Moore, James Richard. *Darwin*, New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994.

Dritsas, Lawrence. "'Pilgrimage to Chipundu': Livingstone's Legacy among Scottish Missionaries in Northern Rhodesia/Zambia, 1950s -1970s." *Scottish Geographical Journal* 129 no.3-04 (2013): 243-257.

Dritsas, Lawrence. *Zambesi David Livingstone and Expeditionary Science in Africa*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2010.

Endfield, G.H and Nash, D.J. "Drought, desiccation and discourse: missionary correspondence and nineteenth century climate change in central Southern Africa." *Geographical Journal* 168, 33-47.

- Finnin, Ann. *The Forge of Tubal Cain*. Pendraig Publishing: Sunland, CA, 2008.
- Flint, Karen E. *Healing Traditions: African Medicine, Cultural Exchange, and Competition in South Africa, 1820-1948*, Athens: Ohio University Press and University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008.
- Freedgood, Elaine. *Victorian Writing about Risk: Imagining a Safe England in a Dangerous World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Helly, Dorothy O. *Livingstone's Legacy*, Athens, Ohio and London: Ohio University Press, 1987.
- Louise Henderson. "Everyone Will Die Laughing': John Murray and the Publication of David Livingstone's *Missionary Travels*," published by Livingstone Online.
- Hokkanen, Dr. Markku, "Imperial Networks, Colonial Bioprospecting and Burroughs Wellcome & Co.: The Case of Strophanthus Kombe from Malawi (1859–1915)." *Social History of Medicine* 25 no.3 (2012): 589-607.
- Hokkanen, Dr. Markku, *Scottish Missionaries in the Northern Malawi Region 1875-1930: Quests for Health in Colonial Society*, Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2007.
- Jamieson, John. *An Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language Vol. 1* University Press, 1808.
- Jeal, Tim. *Livingstone* Rev. ed. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013.
- Kalusa, Walima Tuesday. "Elders, Young Men, and David Livingstone's "Civilizing Mission": Revisiting the Disintegration of the Kololo Kingdom, 1851-1864." *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 42 no. 1 (2009): 55-80.
- Larner, A.J. "Dr. David Livingstone (1813-1873): some neurological observations." *Scottish medical journal* 53 no. 2 (2008): 35-37.
- Lutz, Jessie G. "Legacy of Karl Fridrich August Gutzlaff," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 24 no.3 (July 2000): 123-128.
- Mackenzie, Rev. J. "Bechwanaland and the Bechwana Tribes" in *The Sunday Home* Oxford: Oxford University, 1883. 438.
- "Mary Livingstone, Moffat." Mary Livingstone, Moffat. Accessed February 12, 2015. <http://www.livingstoneonline.ucl.ac.uk/companion.php?id=INDIV108>.
- Petrusic, Christopher. "Violence as Masculinity: David Livingstone's Radical Racial Politics in

- the Cape Colony and the Transvaal, 1845-1852." *International History Review* 26 no. 1 (2004): 20-55.
- Pettitt, Clare. *Dr. Livingstone, I Presume? Missionaries, Journalists, Explorers, and Empire* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007.
- Roberts, A. D.. "Livingstone, David (1813–1873)." A. D. Roberts in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford: OUP, 2004. Online ed., edited by Lawrence Goldman, January 2008.  
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16803> (accessed March 31, 2015).
- Ross, Andrew. *David Livingstone: Mission and Empire*. London: Hambledon and London, 2002.
- Seaver, George. *David Livingstone: His Life and His Letters*, New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1957.
- Vaughan, Megan. *Curing Their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1991.
- Wisnicki, Adrian S. "Livingstone's 1871 Field Diary." UCLA Library Digital Collections: David Livingstone, 1871 Field Diary. November 1, 2011. Accessed March 31, 2015.
- Witek, John W. "Karl Friedrich August Gutzlaff." Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Christianity Online. Accessed February 12, 2015.  
<http://www.bdconline.net/en/stories/g/gutzlaff-karl-friedrich-august.php>.