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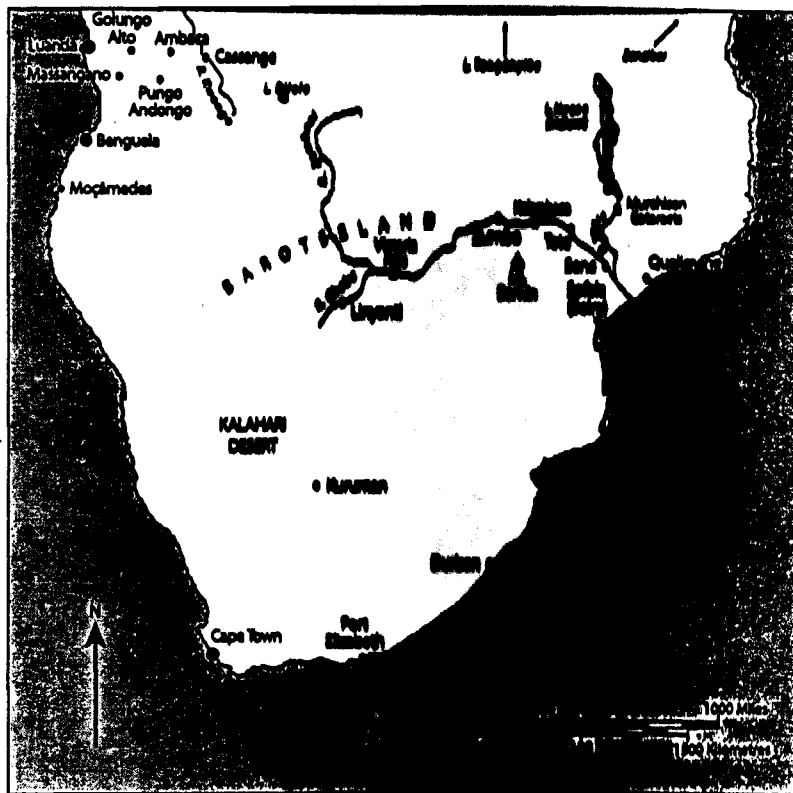
David Livingstone, Africa and the Portuguese

by Clive Willis

Two hundred years ago, Central and Southern Africa – ‘Bantu’ Africa – knew only two colonisers, the British, who, in 1795 had seized Cape Colony from the Dutch² and the Portuguese, who since the sixteenth century had occupied two coastal strips, one on the West and one on the East. The Western strip, which grew to be Angola, was based largely on Luanda and Benguela and stretched no further east than Cassange, on the Rive Kwango, a major tributary of the River Congo. The Eastern strip, in due course Mozambique, was centred on Quelimane and Sofula (Beira) and extended inland, along the lower Zambezi as far as Zumbo.

To the Portuguese mind set, the territory between the Western and Eastern strips was notionally Portuguese or, at the very least, within the Portuguese sphere of influence. The intermediate areas were regularly penetrated, if not so regularly traversed, by Afro-Portuguese traders called *pombeiros*. These *pombeiros* were blacks or half-castes, their commodities were mainly beeswax, gold, ivory and.....slaves.

The occupation of Cape Colony by the predatory British – in place of Dutch farmers - was cause for alarm among the Portuguese. Duly jolted, they dispatched expeditions to link their two coastal strips. Two military expeditions failed, but a *pombeiro* attempt was successful in the second decade of the nineteenth century, making its way South-eastwards from Cassange to Tete. After the independence of Brazil in 1822, there gradually developed the idea of a second Brazil in Africa, the celebrated *mapa-cor-de-rosa*, the ‘pink map’, linking West to East³. But the problem was resources. Portugal had been progressively impoverished by a series of debilitating events. I refer to the 1755 Lisbon earthquake, which at a conservative estimate killed some 15,000 people, deep ravages of the Peninsular War



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(Portugal for five years had been Wellington's cockpit) and the Civil War of the Two Brothers in the 1830s. All three had taken a heavy toll in lives and prosperity. Moreover, the Portuguese had signed up, since the seventeenth century, to disadvantageous commercial treaties first with the English and later with the British: this was the price of independence from Spain, as Almeida Garrett and others of Portugal's nineteenth century grimly remind us.⁴

The two Portuguese colonies had only tiny white populations composed of colonial officials, soldiers, farmer, traders, adventurers, convicts and exiles. Unlike the case of Brazil, there were hardly any white women, and the bulk of these were of easy virtue. Colonial families were almost invariably of mixed blood. It had also become a decadent society, the more so after the loss of the Jesuit missions in 1760. Into this world strode David Livingstone, one of the giants of the nineteenth century, but a greatly flawed giant for all of that.

David Livingstone was born in 1813 in Blantyre, near Glasgow, into a devout, Calvinist and desperately poor family, but one that read avidly. Self-taught, both in natural history and in Latin, he earned the qualifications necessary to become both physician and Congregational preacher. Adopted by the London Missionary Society as a medical missionary, he sailed to Cape Colony in 1838, aged 25. On the voyage the Captain taught him how to use a quadrant and how to calculate one's position by the stars. This ability was to prove invaluable in Livingstone's later superb charting of Central and Southern Africa.

From Cape Colony Livingstone travelled due north for 700 miles, by ox-wagon, to join fellow Scot, the Reverend Robert Moffat, at his mission station at Kuruman. This was located among the Tswana ethnic group, the principal inhabitants of what is now Botswana. Kuruman was located at the most northerly point of missionary endeavour in that vast region of Southern Africa. Beyond it, to the north, lay the almost waterless Kalahari Desert.

Livingstone possessed a rough charm, though scant ability as a preacher. Yet he had an iron determination that bordered on

arrogant obsession. He was convinced of a major divine calling, which pushed him to the limits of physical endurance and led him, as we shall see, cruelly to neglect his wife and children. Despite being a devout Christian, he had no grasp whatsoever that 'charity begins at home'. Rather he was horrified at the widespread polygamy of the Africans. As Moffat had made no converts for five years, Livingstone made forays to the north, with a view to establishing his own mission station. On one journey he reached the kraal of a certain chief, named Sechele, and succeeded in curing Sechele's son of dysentery. This led to Sechele's conversion and to his renunciation of all his wives after the first one. Sechele was the only convert Livingstone ever made. Even so, Sechele eventually lapsed into his former polygamy. Meanwhile, Livingstone had married Moffat's daughter Mary and by 1849 had sired three children.

Livingstone must have shuddered and squirmed whenever he read Matthew 23.15:

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you traverse sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.

So much for Sechele, Livingstone's one and only proselyte – and a lapsed one at that! Yet, on Sechele's recommendation, Livingstone was now attracted by the idea of seeking out the Kololo tribe who lived 600 miles to the North, on the other side of the Kalahari Desert. The Kololo inhabited an area named Linyanti, close to the upper Zambezi. Linyanti forms part of a greater region known to historians as Barotseland, essentially the geographical space between Angola and modern Mozambique.

Livingstone made two abortive attempts to cross the Kalahari by ox-wagon in 1849 and 1850. Almost unbelievably, on his second attempt, his party included his children, aged four, three and one, and his wife Mary, who was five months pregnant. Badly bitten by mosquitoes, the two older children went down with malaria. Shortly after their forced return to base, Mary gave birth to their

fourth child, then suffered a stroke and temporary facial paralysis. The baby died of pneumonia within days, but Livingstone learnt nothing from this tragedy. To him all that mattered was the 'kingdom and glory' of his God.⁵

In April of the following year, 1851, the family set out again in their ox-wagon. Again Mary was pregnant. Again the children suffered. But at last they reached the swampy area of Linyanti and the Kololo tribe. The real breakthrough, however, came in August, when Livingstone made his way along the Chobe river to the mighty Zambezi, 500 yards wide even in the dry season.

At this point, Livingstone reached an amazing decision – he resolved to journey onwards in a north-westerly direction to the west coast of Luanda, a little matter of a further 1800 miles. But Mary now gave birth to a son. So Livingstone then took a further decision: he would first take his family back to Cape Town, itself a seven month trek of 1500 miles. From there he shipped them all back to the United Kingdom: they lived in Dickensian penury until he rejoined them in December 1856, more than four years later. His income from the London Missionary Society was a paltry £100 per annum. If we reflect how, in the closely contemporaneous *Barchester Towers*, Anthony Trollope describes the grinding poverty, on £400 a year, of the Reverend Quiverful and his ample family, then the plight of Mary and her children becomes unimaginable.

One may well wonder why Livingstone had set his heart extending his African journeys to Luanda, when his original plan had been to found his mission station among the friendly Kololo. The answer is that, on his 1851 journey, he had noted that the slave trade had now penetrated Central Africa, indeed, on Livingstone's estimation, it had done so only a year before, in 1850 (MC, pp 176-77). Members of the Mbari ethnic group, from what is now Central Angola, were trading Manchester cotton goods for slaves. On occasion, they were accompanied by half-caste Afro-Portuguese *pombeiros*, who were trading muskets, also for slaves. Among the Portuguese, Livingstone claims to have spotted the celebrated António da Silva Porto, to whom we shall return (MC, pp 177, 183,

249 and n 4). Suddenly the die was cast: Livingstone's projected trek to Luanda was to be a fact-finding mission, to assess this commerce in human beings, though it had significant geographical and scientific purposes as well.

A note on the African slave trade will provide the context. A pre-existent trade in slaves had been discovered by the Portuguese in the fifteenth century. The decision to adopt it for their own use is enduringly illustrated by the slave market building that still stands on the sea front in Lagos in the Algarve, not many yards behind the celebrated statue of Henry the Navigator, whose deep involvement from 1441 is no secret. Other nations followed suit, especially England, Spain and France. The transatlantic trade became the key to the development of the plantations and mines of the New World. Estimates of the numbers vary considerably. For me, the leading perpetrators were Portugal and the United Kingdom: the Portuguese (and Brazilians) seem to have transported over four and a half million slaves to the Americas, the British (and North Americans) some three million. France and Spain transported well over one million⁶ The cities of Bristol and Liverpool grew fat on this sickening commercial diet.

Then, spearheaded by William Wilberforce in 1807, the British Parliament voted for abolition. One of the two leading poachers now became the leading gamekeeper, as the British Navy set about patrolling the Atlantic. If the British could no longer trade in slaves, then nobody else was to be allowed to either. In a sense this rather prefigures the British onslaught on colonialism after the loss of India in 1947, once again catching Portugal out of step. Though slavery and colonialism are both heinous, in the case of slavery one cannot resist the feeling that there lingered a whiff of imperialist hypocrisy and that this became a stench by the time of Lord Salisbury's infamous Ultimatum of 1890, to which we shall return.

At all events, the Portuguese abolished the slave trade in 1835, under the outstanding leadership of the Marquis Sá de Bandeira. After a further three decades of *portarios* (parliamentary

decrees) slavery itself was finally banned in 1869, again at the instigation of the same remarkable liberal statesman.⁷ Formal abolitions of this kind were often honoured in the breach. It is worth noting that it had taken until 1834 for slavery to be totally abolished in the British Empire. Not that abolition was entirely altruistic or humanitarian: it often costs more to keep slaves than to pay wages....

Let us return to our narrative. While in Cape Town in 1852, Livingstone seized the opportunity to receive lessons in astronomy and cartography from the chance presence there of Thomas Maclear, the Astronomer Royal. Such was the fortunate catalyst that made Livingstone the remarkable geographer of Southern Central Africa. Maclear was amazed at the speed of Livingstone's capacity for grasping a subject.

Armed with letters of introduction from the Portuguese Consul, Alfredo Duprat, Livingstone departed from Cape Town in June 1852 and left Kuruman in December.⁸ Thus began his first major, indeed his greatest, expedition, a 6000 mile trek that was to take him to Luanda, then back inland to the upper Zambezi, to Victoria Falls and finally along the lower Zambezi through the Portuguese settlements of Tete and Sena, till he reached the Indian Ocean at Quelimane in May 1856. It was an enterprise lasting almost four years, and it laid the basis for his fame. Its repercussions were massive, in a variety of ways, and not least for the Portuguese.

When Livingstone's ox-wagon again reached Linyanti in May 1853, he received a huge welcome from several thousand Kololo and their eighteen-year-old chieftain Sekeletu. Yet, despite this reception, he made no converts. As a missionary he was hopeless. He had none of the magical appeal associated with the highly successful Jesuit, Saint Francis Xavier, the 'Apostle of the Indies'. Yet, oddly, Livingstone was a fine linguist, while the Spaniard was not. However, like many nineteenth century evangelists, our Scotsman obsessively used the Old Testament as a means of teaching Christianity. For example, his lantern slides of Abraham's planned ritual sacrifice of his only son Isaac (Genesis 22)

only produced screams of horror and caused his listeners to run away.⁹

In 1853 Livingstone found that the slave trade, noted two years earlier, was thrusting ever deeper into Barotseland. In a second encounter with *pombeiros* (the Afro-Portuguese traders) he confirmed that they were, for once, led by a man from Oporto, António da Silva Porto, whom Livingstone had seen in Linyanti two years earlier. He had already learned of Silva Porto's reputation as a slave trader, and this was later confirmed when Sekeletu, the Kololo chief, saw two men and a woman made captive by Silva Porto's party (*MC* p 257, *PJ*, p 277). Livingstone finally met Silva Porto at the latter's stockade in July. On the presentation of Duprat's letter of recommendation, Porto invited him to dinner and made him a gift of two Dutch cheeses.

Referring to Silva Porto in his book *Missionary Travels*, Livingstone reflected that Silva Porto 'if not a real Portuguese [at least] had European hair' (*MT*, p 218). Naturally, the *tripeiro* Silva Porto, a white man, was incandescent when he read this!¹⁰ Livingstone was keen to claim that he, Livingstone, was the first European to explore the upper Zambezi, and that Silva Porto was a half-caste. The latter told Livingstone that he was on a mission from the Governor of Benguela to reach Portuguese East Africa overland (*PJ*, p 207). In the event, Silva Porto fell ill and withdrew, but his party, led by the half-caste João da Silva, did reach the Indian Ocean, and well before Livingstone did.¹¹ Indeed, as I mentioned earlier, there was a previous crossing, fully documented, by two black *pombeiros*, Pedro João Baptista and Amaro José, who journeyed from Cassange to Tete and back again in the period 1802-1814. Moreover, the botanical and pharmacological scholar Garcia da Orta, writing in 1563, claimed that a Portuguese priest had made the journey in the middle of the sixteenth century.¹² Unrecorded crossings by *pombeiros* must have taken place for years, but Livingstone was determined to claim that he was the first white European to complete a fully documented crossing from coast to coast. That achievement is certainly his, but he was quite unfair in his dismissive approach to the Afro-Portuguese (*MT*, p 435).

Resolved not to be associated with Silva Porto and his slave-running, Livingstone left Linyanti for Luanda in November 1853. He was accompanied by 27 companions, namely Sekeletu, the young chief of the Kololo, and 26 of his subjects as the expedition's bearers. Three major hazards of this gruelling trek were malaria-bearing mosquitoes, tsetse flies, that carried the dreaded sleeping sickness, and impure water, that inflicted dysentery. The number 27 becomes significant again, for this is the number of times that Livingstone was struck down by malaria, repeated vomiting and dysentery on his 600-mile journey. Many times he had to be nursed back to health, not only by his faithful Kololo, but also, be it noted, by the hospitable Portuguese. Death frequently stared him in the face. Unsurprisingly, the dysentery also promoted the scourge of haemorrhoids.

The expedition at first travelled by canoe up the upper Zambezi, then broke away via the small lake of Dilolo, notable for its position at the heart of a massive plateau. On that plateau rise the headwaters not only of the Zambezi, but indeed, of sundry tributaries of the Congo. Livingstone was the first to map this area of rivers that discharged into both the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, and he did so with impressive detail and accuracy. Hereabouts his party often encountered *pombeiros*, heading for Central Africa, armed with Portuguese muskets and bearing Manchester cloth and salt, to trade these for beeswax.

Livingstone's intrepid expedition encountered a further hazard, the hostile Chokwe tribe from the Luanda ethnic group, prominent in Eastern Angola. To avoid conflict, Livingstone's party often travelled only at night. At last, in April 1854, they reached territory under clear Portuguese control, once they crossed the River Kwongo. Harassed by musket-carrying Chokwe, they were rescued and ferried across by a small platoon of half-caste Portuguese soldiers commanded by a half-caste sergeant, one Cipriano de Abreu.

The good sergeant escorted them to his compound of 'neat, square houses', and. At once, there began the long sequence of

welcome and generosity that Livingstone experienced wherever he encountered the Portuguese. Duprat's letters paved the way, but Livingstone was struck by the 'genuine kindness' of Abreu and sundry others on his route to Luanda. Abreu not only offered Livingstone dinner, but for several days 'he quite bared his garden feeding us', as well as slaughtering an ox (*MT*, pp 366-7).

Livingstone noted that these mixed blood Portuguese could all 'read and write with ease' and owned tracts of lives of the saints, but neither 'Cipriano nor his companions knew what the bible was.' But, then, less than twenty years earlier, George Borrow, in his *The Bible in Spain*, has observed much the same in the Portuguese towns of Sintra and Évora, finding no Bibles and very little literacy.¹³

Similar generosity to that of the worthy sergeant was experienced from white officers at Cassange, namely from Major da Silva Rego and Captain António Rodrigues Neves, among others. There Livingstone was 'arrayed in decent clothing' and was 'deeply grateful' for the 'disinterested kindness' that he received (*MT*, pp 368-9). And so hospitality continued to be showered on Livingstone at every stop on the way to Luanda: at Ambaca by Major Arsénio do Carpo and at Golungo Alto (*MT*, p 386). At Ambaca Livingstone was again astonished by how so many of the indigenous population, the *ambaquistas*, could read and write. This was the enduring legacy of the Jesuits, expelled by the dictator Pombal more than 90 years earlier. Livingstone regretted, however, that the Jesuits had not given these people the Bible (*MT*, p 382).¹⁴

Livingstone wrote, with all due praise, of 'the universal hospitality of the Portuguese', which he found 'most gratifying, as it was unexpected (...), I remember it all with a glow of gratitude' (*MT*, p 383). But, as we shall see, just as Livingstone seems to have discarded the old saw that 'charity begins at home' (with its roots in Saint Paul's first epistle to Timothy (V,4) he also readily ignored the precept not 'to bite the hand that feeds you'.

Livingstone arrived in Luanda in late April 1854 very, very weary from dysentery and malaria and very close to death.¹⁵ For

seven weeks he did not even have the energy to pick up a pen. He was housed in the home of the one English inhabitant, Edmund Gabriel, Her Majesty's Government's Commissioner for the suppression of the transatlantic slave trade. Operated by Portuguese and Brazilians, most of it had been effected from the barracoons of Benguela,¹⁶ but by 1854 the number of slaves transported from Angola to the Americas had slumped and 'numbered less than a couple of hundred'.¹⁷ Anglo Portuguese treaties, British naval patrols and Brazil's own abolition of the trade (in 1850) had seen to that.¹⁸ An upsurge in legitimate commerce in Angola greatly pleased Livingstone, as he noted diversification into corn and cotton, sugarcane and coffee plantations, as well as an increasing exportation of palm oil and beeswax.¹⁹ These recent developments indicated that Angolan decadence was being replaced by 'a modest spirit of change and progress.'²⁰

As he gradually recovered, the Luanda experienced by Livingstone was a 'city' of some 12,000 inhabitants, mainly people of colour. It has no bookshop but did have a bishop (also the acting governor) and a handful of priests (*MT*, p 426). Livingstone was still troubled by the internal trade in slaves, operated not only by many *pombeiros*, but also by army officers from their forts to eke out their wretched and irregular pay (*MT*, p 396).²¹ Livingstone was harsher in this matter in his private correspondence (e.g. *MC* p 264) than in his book *Missionary Travels*.²² Nevertheless, in this book he states that 'the Portuguese home government has not generally received the credit for sincerity in suppressing the slave trade which I conceive to be its due' (*MT*, pp 429-30). However his attitude was later to harden towards the Portuguese.

As for the bishop-governor, Livingstone found him to be highly intelligent, benign and, indeed, more ecumenical than Livingstone could ever be: 'he compared the various sects of Christians, in their way to heaven, to a number of individuals choosing to pass down different streets of Luanda to one of the churches - all would arrive at the same point as last' (*MT*, p 394).

At the bishop's instigation, Livingstone was supplied with twenty more bearers for the journey to East Africa, while local merchants showered gifts on the party, including a complete colonel's outfit for Sekeletu. With characteristic obstinacy Livingstone had turned down the offer of a free passage to England on a British ship, thus rejecting the opportunity to be reunited with his family.

As the expedition journeyed eastwards through Massangano, Pungo Andongo and Cassange, benevolence, hospitality and healing continued to be Livingstone's portion. He stayed some weeks at Lungo Andongo, recovering from fever and working on his maps. He wrote warmly about the wealthy Colonel António Pires (*MT*, p 423) and was puzzled that the colonel's slaves were 'like free servants' (*MT*, p 424). After Cassange he fell ill again and was restored from his worst ever attack of rheumatic fever by a half-caste *pombeiro*, one Senhor Pascoal (*MT*, p 445). The application of leeches worked, at least temporarily.

Reaching Linyanti again, in September 1855, Livingstone was one more given a rousing welcome, but he was greatly perturbed to find increasing numbers of Arab slave traders from Zanzibar. There he also found much complimentary mail from the United Kingdom. Throughout this great exhibition Livingstone maintained a lengthy correspondence, mainly with the London Missionary Society, receiving mail as well as dispatching it. His post offices, as it were, were at Linyanti, Luanda, Cassange, Tete and Quelimane. Portuguese officialdom took charge of the last four, but faithful Kololo couriers operated the Linyanti links.

Livingstone had by now begun to cherish the ambition to establish in Barotseland 'a mission station which should also be a centre for farmers and traders'.²³ This, he hoped, would lead to the spread of Christianity and to the end of ignorance and fear. It would displace the anachronistic *pombeiro* system, which, now, from east and from west was 'reaching right across the continent'.²⁴ As Malyn Newitt reminds us in his seminal *A History of Mozambique*, 'the whole of Livingstone's route had passed through country already

penetrated by the trade of the Afro-Portuguese'.²⁵ Whereas the Portuguese view was that the whole of the interior from Angola to Mozambique lay within their legitimate sphere of influence and interest, their great tactical error was to admit that they had little or no control over the slave trade in that interior.²⁶ On Britain's behalf Livingstone was preparing to throw down his gage.

After a considerable rest period, our Scotsman left Linyanti for the East in November 1855. His party of Kololo tribesmen had now swelled to 114. They paddled down the River Chobe and then joined the upper reaches of the Zambezi, reaching the staggering sight of the vast waterfall known as *Mosi-oa-tunya*, 'the smoke that thunders,' in mid-November. Livingstone duly named it after his Queen. Niagara can be tucked, a mere dwarf, very snugly into one corner of it. Victoria Falls is one of the world's greatest marvels, and Livingstone was undoubtedly the first European to behold it. For sheer majesty it may be outstripped by the panoramic Iguacu cataracts on the River Paraná, at the meeting of Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina – certainly that is my own preference. Though Livingstone was the first European to pass that way, it must be emphasised that Afro-Portuguese traders had known these routes for many, many years.²⁷

Livingstone was still 600 miles from Tete, the most westerly Portuguese garrison in East Africa. Progress was not made by a march along then North bank. Once again, Livingstone observed that Manchester calicoes were already being brought along the Zambezi by *pombeiros* from Mozambican ports. In early 1856 he came upon a ruined church and then the abandoned Portuguese settlement and trading post of Zumbo (abandoned in fact only from 1836 to 1862).²⁸ Zumbo had been the last of the Portuguese fairs (especially gold fairs) that Jesuits, Dominicans and Afro-Portuguese had established in much of what is now the high veld of northern Zimbabwe. They had been set up as early as the sixteenth century and had particularly flourished in the seventeenth.²⁹ In *Os Lusíadas* (X, 93) and in a sonnet Camões mentions the martyrdom in 1561, near the modern Mount Darwin, of the Jesuit Gonçalo da Silveira. After Zumbo the party crossed south of the Zambezi and away from it to take a shorter

route to Tete, thus, fatally and disastrously, as we shall see, failing to witness the Kebrasa rapids (now the site of the mighty Cabora Bassa dam).

Livingstone arrived in an emaciated condition at Tete, but once more the Portuguese officials showered hospitality on him, led by their commandant Major Tito Araújo Sicard. This continued to be his experience through Mozambique where the 'disinterested kindness' (*MT*, p 653) of the Portuguese paralleled in every way that received in Angola. Sicard led the way by providing Livingstone with new clothes and provisions and by supplying a canoe for the final stages through Sena to Quelimane. As for the Kololo, they were given land to cultivate and proceeded no further. In May 1856 Livingstone completed his 6000-mile trek at Quelimane, just short of four years after leaving Cape Town. After his experience in Angola, where he had felt that slavery was in recession, he had now come upon 'an even more disastrous slaving system feeding plantations on the lower Zambezi valley and in the Mozambique coastlands'.³⁰

At Quelimane Livingstone was the recipient of further Portuguese hospitality from Colonel Galdino José Nunes (*MC*, p 3319), recovering his health in the colonel's house till, in July, he caught a British naval vessel to Egypt, before crossing to Cairo (the Suez Canal did not open for another thirteen years!). Boarding a second ship there, he reached the United Kingdom in December, to a massive reception and many honours, especially from the Royal Geographical Society, not to mention the London Missionary Society and other sundry bodies. 'Public ignorance of Portuguese discoveries made Livingstone's achievement seem all the more remarkable'.³¹

In a letter to *The Times* of 24th December 1856 he was very sanguine about the Portuguese abandoning the slave trade for true commerce, and particularly in West Africa. Subsequently, Livingstone was awarded the Freedom of the Cities of London and Glasgow, while his book *Missionary Travels* (1857) became a remarkable bestseller. Reunited with his family, he was able at last to rescue them from their four years of penury and misery. Mary had never doubted him, wrote him an exuberant poem beginning with the

words '100,000 welcomes' and bore him no grudge, clear evidence of a nobler disposition than his!

Livingstone was now called upon to give public lectures up and down England and Scotland, including the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. He now inveighed mightily and increasingly against the internal slave trade, thus biting the hand that had fed and nursed him. Though no great orator (quite the reverse, in fact) his talks created an enthusiasm for Africa previously never felt by the British.

The shouted peroration of his address in the Senate House at Cambridge brought the audience to its feet and led to the foundation of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa (UMCA, the universities being Oxford, Cambridge, Dublin and Durham). The celebrated Scramble for Africa, the *Corrida para a África*, was about to begin, and to the detriment of the Portuguese, with France, Germany and Belgium all pitching in as well.

The London Missionary Society now decided that it could no longer afford him, not least because of his wretched conversion record. However, the financial support of the Foreign Office, plus the backing of UMCA and an audience with Queen Victoria led to his setting up his second expedition, cushioned by his own newfound wealth. He told the Foreign Secretary that his plan was 'to make the Zambezi path for commerce in an Interior and thus end the slave trade'.³² He also wrote to a Cambridge professor that his ultimate goal was to plant 'an English [i.e. British - odd language for a Scot!] colony in the healthy highlands of Central Africa.'³³ But this was what the Portuguese government was by now grimly suspecting. The Portuguese authorities were decidedly cool, though scrupulously correct, when, in 1858, at the start of his second expedition, Livingstone was appointed consul at Quelimane, which city he regarded as a hell-hole 'built solely for the sake of carrying on the salve-trade' (*NE*, p 445). The Portuguese insisted that his authority did not extend up the Zambezi. Their coolness was intensified as it became progressively clearer to them that Livingstone, while still in the United Kingdom, had been growing increasingly vitriolic about

slavery in Portuguese East Africa. This time there was no equivalent of Deprat's letters.

The six-year exhibition was an unmitigated disaster. Livingstone had ordered the construction of a series of lightweight, shallow-draughted steamboats to sail up the Zambezi and its tributaries. But he had reckoned without the blockade presented by the Kebrabasa rapids. Though accompanied by a team of fellow Britons with individual specialisms, he turned out to be a poor leader: the entire expedition was dogged by rows and dismissals.

A significant failure too was his appointment of his feckless and idle brother Charles, whom he soon described privately as 'useless'. The exhibition was frequently deserted by its African bearers and constantly beset by fever and disease; among others, fever led to the death of his long-suffering wife Mary and of a young bishop sent out by UMCA. Mary was only 40 years of age and had again been pregnant. Let me quote the searing comment of the Irish journalist Mary Russell: 'Mary Livingstone was forged on the anvil of wifely devotion, a life-convict branded both by her womanhood and by Christianity, and made to travel through what was undoubtedly, for her, a vale of tears'.³⁴ Quite so! Livingstone was shattered. But he pressed ahead, nevertheless.

At one point, the exhibition slogged on, on foot, beyond Kebrabasa and Victoria Falls, but eventually the decision was taken to backtrack and to seek to sail North up the Zambezi tributary, the River Shire, which led to Lake Nyasa (now Lake Malawi). Again the light steamboats were blocked, this time by the rapids that received Livingstone's appellation of the 'Murchison Cataracts'. Then Livingstone set in motion the protracted and exhausting process of dismantling one of the steamboats in order to carry it bodily past the rapids, then to re-assemble it and press on to Lake Malawi. This was seen by others as a crazy operation. It was not to be completed.

More significant than all the setbacks, however, was the scourge of the East African slave trade. Slavery as Livingstone encountered it in East Africa came under three headings. The first of

these was the *prazos*, the areas of land grants to powerful Afro-Portuguese families in the lower Zambezi valley. Livingstone was 'perplexed'³⁵ that Africans then voluntarily sold themselves to the *prazeiros*, the land-grant holders. By an odd hierarchical ladder, such slaves had the opportunity to have their own families, to own their own slaves and even to become richer than their masters: new slaves were, in a sense, indentured workers.

The second heading was that of Afro-Portuguese *pombeiros*, who were increasingly abandoning trade in ivory and gold for fulltime involvement in slave running. More and more they benefited from the routes that Livingstone himself was opening up – much to his dismay. They also struck deals with tribal chiefs, encouraging them to enslave members of other tribal groups. Worst among these was the infamous *prazeiro-cum-pombeiro*, one Mariano, whose ruthless butchery of women, children and the old – in effect those for whom he had no use – profoundly scandalised the expedition. Livingstone wrote with horror of the 'dead bodies [that] floated past us daily' and how the steamboat paddles 'had to be cleared of corpses, caught in the floats during the night'. (NE, pp 449-50) On one occasion the expedition attacked and liberated a slave caravan. This was the real 'heart of darkness' not the semi-racist fiction later portrayed by Joseph Conrad.

Our third heading was the new threat – and by far the greatest – that came from the North³⁶, the Arab and Swahili salvers of the Sultan of Zanzibar, who were now pouring into the area of Lake Malawi and down the Shire. Their captives were dispatched to the coasts and islands of the Indian Ocean, until British naval patrols intervened in the late 1860s and early 1870s.

Hampered by disease, hindered by unco-operative locals, harassed by brutal slavers, the expedition failed to establish any colony or mission station on either the Zambezi or the Shire. Livingstone finally abandoned his attempts in 1864. Deeply embittered, he now launched again into lambasting the Portuguese authorities, when his main thrust should have been against the Sultan. His animus against the Portuguese was, however,

increasingly disregarded by the British government, aware as it was of the steadfast efforts of Sá da Bandeira to turn things around, and embarrassed as it was by the fact that Queen Victoria's consort, Prince Albert, was cousin to the Portuguese king-consort, Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha (the erstwhile name of what is now the House of Windsor).

In 1865 Livingstone published his *Narrative* of his second expedition. This and the earlier *Missionary Travels* provoked a spirited riposte in 1867 from a Portuguese scholar, José de Lacerda, in a work entitled *Exame das Viagens do Doutor Livingstone*.³⁷ Lacerda made plain his suspicion that Livingstone was bent on wresting both trade and territory from the Portuguese. He provided extensive documentation to show that most of the terrain covered by Livingstone's two expeditions was well known to the *pombeiros*, who, after all, were Portuguese. Moreover, slavery was a widespread African reality and not simply a feature of those parts occupied or claimed by the Portuguese. Indeed, the Anti-Slavery Society continues to claim it as endemic in certain African countries even today.....

Livingstone was greatly troubled by Lacerda's assertions, namely that he 'was simply mapping Portuguese territory that they had not yet managed to do themselves'. He feared that Lacerda's view would 'be accepted by the British government and international community'³⁸ and that his fond hope of trade and Christianity in Africa were in jeopardy. His consequent attempts, in a series of letters and reports, to deny Portuguese achievements, were obviously 'foolish and misplaced.'³⁹

Sidelined increasingly, Livingstone now financed his own third and last expedition (1866-1873). This was into territory of East Africa to the north of that claimed by the Portuguese. He was thought lost until Henry Morgan Stanley presumed to 'find' him in 1871 at Ujiji on Lake Tanganyika. Ujiji was the epicentre of the slave trade operated from Zanzibar. The great man lived for only two years longer and died in Africa in 1873. Meanwhile, the indefatigable Sá da Bandeira had succeeded in stamping out the

worst of the slavery in Portuguese Africa. However, its unsavoury successor, the contract-labour system, involving the forced labour of so-called *vadios* (vagrants) carried on into living memory.

But Sá da Bandeira's efforts were too late. In vain, a further series of trans-African expeditions strained to link Portuguese West and East Africa,⁴⁰ Zumbo was re-occupied and growing numbers of troops were moved in. The 1884 Congress of Berlin saw the Portuguese desperately arguing that they had had some sort of presence for centuries, but the Germans and the British were unsympathetic. Livingstone's revelations had, in the end, convinced the British that they could make a better job of occupation. The final bitter outcome was Lord Salisbury's 1890 Ultimatum and the Pioneer Column of the predatory Cecil Rhodes in the same year. The Portuguese were told to make way for the British, intent on claiming territory from the Cape to Cairo. Might was right. Rhodesia was born. Anglo-Portuguese relations hit rock bottom. The 500-year-old Anglo-Portuguese alliance stood in the greatest peril. Silva Porto wrapped himself in a makeshift Portuguese flag and blew himself up. British residents in Portugal lived through a very threatening period. The Republican movement in Portugal fed greatly on the anger of the people, and the whole sorry business was a major factor in the downfall of the Portuguese monarchy in 1910.

Livingstone had enjoyed Portuguese help, healing and hospitality and had found an unfortunate if arguably, unavoidable way of repaying it. Some would say that he should never have compromised himself by accepting that hospitality. But otherwise it is doubtful whether he would have survived.

After his death loyal African friends buried his heart under an African tree. His bones lie in Westminster Abbey.

Listed here are abbreviations for Livingstone's works, as cited in the body of this paper. *MT*: David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa* (London: John Murray, 1857; *NE*: David and Charles Livingstone, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries* (London: John Murray, 1865); *PJ*: I. Schapera (ed.) *Livingstone's Private Journals, 1851-1853* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1960; *MC*: I. Schapera (ed) *Livingstone's Missionary Correspondence, 1841-1956* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1961).

² It returned briefly to the Dutch from 1803 to 1806.

³ See, especially, throughout Charles E. Novell, *The Rose-Coloured Map* (Lisbon: Junta de Investigações Científicas do Ultramar, 1982).

⁴ João Baptista da Silva Leitão de Almeida Garrett, *Portugal na Balança da Europa*, 3rd edn (Oporto: Chardron, 1884) pp 35, 186-87, 267-68 and throughout.

⁵ Elspeth Huxley, *Livingstone* (New York: Saturday Review Press, 1974), p 43

⁶ Hugh Thomas, *The Slave Trade, 1440-1870* (London: Picador, 1997), pp 805-06.

⁷ Note, for comparison, that the abolition of slavery came in the United States of America in 1862 (in the Confederate States not till 1865). Abolition in Brazil took place in 1888. As is well attested, slavery under other names continued in Portuguese Africa well into the twentieth century: 'tutelage', 'forced labour', 'obligatory labour', 'contract labour',. See James Duffy, *Portuguese Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp 150-173. The Angoloan writer, Óscar Ribau, in his autobiographical study, *Tudo Isto Aconteceu* (Luanda: Edição do autor, 1975) is quite specific in applying the term *escravos*, 'slaves' to such unfortunates in the first decade of the twentieth century (p 48).

⁸ Alfredo Duprat was a member of the Anglo-Portuguese Mixed Commission again the Slave Trade.

⁹ Huxley, p 62.

¹⁰ António F. da Silva Porto, *Viagens e Apontamentos de um Portuense em África* (Coimbra: Biblioteca Geral da Universidade de Coimbra, 1986) has sundry references to this and to the 1853 encounter. See also Duffy, *Portuguese Africa*, p 176, *Tim Joul Livingstone* (London: Book Club Associates, 1973) p 90, James Duffy, *Portugal In Africa* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1962), p 105.