

DAVID LIVINGSTONE, UNESCO, AND NATION-BUILDING IN 19TH-21ST-CENTURY SCOTLAND AND EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA¹

Philip Gooding
McGill University

ABSTRACT

This article assesses the role of David Livingstone (1813-73), a Scottish missionary, in nation-building efforts in Scotland and parts of the western Indian Ocean World. It begins by establishing the ways in which he became central to Scottish national, British imperial, Christian missionary, and abolitionist movements in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. It then examines why, despite these ‘colonialist’ associations, he remains central to some aspects of nation-building in present-day Tanzania and Malawi. The key focus in this context are these two nations’ respective applications to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to have museums and landmarks that centre Livingstone in their histories recognised as World Heritage sites. In so doing, it draws on regional concerns within the nations themselves, the prerogatives behind UNESCO’s activities on the African continent, and ongoing relationships between Scotland and (especially) Malawi. Despite current social movements that are increasingly vocal and critical of figures associated with colonialism, Livingstone remains revered and central to the nation among many in Scotland and East and Central Africa.

¹ This article was first presented as “The slave trade and UNESCO: David Livingstone’s problematic legacy in East and Central Africa” at a conference entitled, *Celts in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean Worlds*, held at the Indian Ocean World Centre, McGill University on 23-5 May 2019. Thank you to everyone at the conference for their engagement and for their input, as well as to two anonymous reviewers for their comments. The research for this article was funded by both the Wolfson Foundation and by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. This article is written by the current Associate Editor of the *JIOSWS*. He recused himself from all aspects of the review process for this article and the remainder of the special feature in which it is contained. Thank you to the members of the Managing Editing team for taking over roles that would otherwise have been reserved for the Associate Editor in the production of this article and special feature.

INTRODUCTION

'Lake Tanganyika, a place of romance and mystery, could well be a Scottish loch, give or take the odd banana tree.'
Michael Palin²

A lot of ink has been spilled on the subject of David Livingstone (1813-73), and a lot of construction material has been put together to commemorate him.³ Much of what has been produced from an academic standpoint has been highly valuable, not least the historical work produced in the last decade during and after the *Livingstone 200* celebrations in 2013, and through the ongoing *Livingstone Online* project.⁴ However, a great deal of what has been written and constructed since the end of his life has neglected some of his problematic legacies, such as his associations with colonial rule in Africa. Like the statue built in his honour in Glasgow, the streets named after him in Dar es Salaam and Edinburgh, and the towns named after him and parts of his life in Malawi and Zambia (to name a very small few monuments and dedications), they strictly venerate him. He is frequently portrayed as a hero and a leader, bringing 'civilisation' to nineteenth-century East and Central Africa.⁵ Because of the prominence of these narratives in popular understandings of Livingstone, history and hagiography are frequently blurred.

Livingstone's biography is well-known – much more so than those of the other Scots referred to in this special feature. *Livingstone Online* contains an open-access article-length history of Livingstone's life that likely will neither be bettered for concision nor detail.⁶ It thus does not bear repeating in any great length here, apart from to note the specific ways his life weaved from Scotland to East and Central Africa in the western Indian Ocean World (IOW) – the focus of this article. He was born in 1813 in Blantyre, which was, at the time, a growing and industrialising town 13 kilometres south of

² BBC, *Pole to Pole: Episode 6 – Plains and Boats and Trains*, dir. Roger Mills and Clem Vallence (1992).

³ One might refer to the troves of writing on Livingstone as representative of "a major biographical industry." John M. MacKenzie, "David Livingstone and the worldly after-life: Imperialism and Nationalism in Africa," in *David Livingstone and the Victorian Encounter with Africa*, ed. John M. MacKenzie (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1996), 230.

⁴ For outputs related to the *Livingstone 200* project, see, for example: *African Research & Documentation*, 120 (2012). For *Livingstone Online*, see: <https://www.livingstoneonline.org/> [accessed: 18 June 2020].

⁵ Any number of texts could be cited here. One particularly glaring and relatively recent example frames a whole chapter around the idea of Livingstone being a 'Great Leader of Africans.' See: Meriel Buxton, *David Livingstone* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001), 88-98.

⁶ Justin D. Livingstone, "Livingstone's life & expeditions," in *Livingstone Online*, eds. Adrian S. Wisnicki and Megan Ward (College Park: University of Maryland Libraries, 2015), Web: <http://livingstoneonline.org/uuid/node/76ab1aa0-2bf4-4c42-adf7-c8c4ee960236> [accessed: 18 June 2020]. Equally useful though often harder to find is: Tim Jeal, "David Livingstone: A brief biographical account," in *David Livingstone and the Victorian Encounter*, 11-78.

Glasgow. As a child, he worked in Blantyre's cotton mills while also receiving an education from his employer, exposing him to the intellectual and educational climate characteristic of late or even post-Enlightenment Scotland.⁷ As an adult, he joined the London Missionary Society (LMS), and set off for Cape Colony, in present-day South Africa (1841-52). Subsequently, he travelled independently around much of East and Central Africa, notably up the Zambezi River and around Lake Malawi (1858-64) and around parts of present-day western Tanzania, Zambia, and eastern Democratic of Congo (1866-73). Among other things, his motivations were an anti-slavery ideology and bringing the so-called 'three C's' to Africa: Commerce, Christianity, and civilisation.⁸ He died in a village now called Chipundu in present-day northern Zambia in 1873.

The intention of this article is to examine the shifting ways that Livingstone has been linked with concepts of nationhood, up to the present. Aspects of this broader topic have been analysed before – his relationship to Scottish identity in the late nineteenth century, his relationship to missionary activity in the same period, and his relationship to colonialism in the first half of the twentieth century. A key thread that pervades the initial analysis in this article is the history of sites that commemorate Livingstone, such as the statues, museums, and towns described above. Such sites have elsewhere been considered central to national and imperial projects.⁹ Dorothy O. Helly additionally argues that 'maintaining [such] memorials to *Livingstone* in East and Central Africa then became further justification for British Imperialism.'¹⁰ This thread on museums and other commemorative sites supports the core of the original material for this article, which analyses Tanzania's and Malawi's applications to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), made in 2006 and 2011 respectively, which centre Livingstone in their nations' histories and promote sites that commemorate him to gain world heritage status. It then draws on a *longue durée* perspective, the explosion of 'slavery tourism,' and analysis of the ongoing Scotland-Malawi relationship

⁷ George Shepperson, "David Livingstone 1813-1873: A centenary assessment," *The Geographic Journal*, 139, 2 (1973), 210; Cairns Craig, "Empire of intellect: The Scottish Enlightenment and Scotland's intellectual migrants", in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Scotland and the British Empire*, eds. John M. MacKenzie and T.M. Devine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 84-117.

⁸ For a summary, see: Dorothy O. Helly, *Livingstone's Legacy: Horace Waller and Victorian Mythmaking* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1987), 223-4.

⁹ John M. MacKenzie, *Museums and Empire: Natural history, human cultures and colonial identities* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 6; Sarah Longhair, "Projections of empire: The architecture of colonial museums in East Africa," in Stephanie Barczewski and Martin Farr, *The MacKenzie Moment an Imperial History: Essays in honour of John M. MacKenzie* (Cham, CH: Palgrave MacMillan, 2019), 97.

¹⁰ Helly, *Livingstone's Legacy*, 225. Emphasis added.

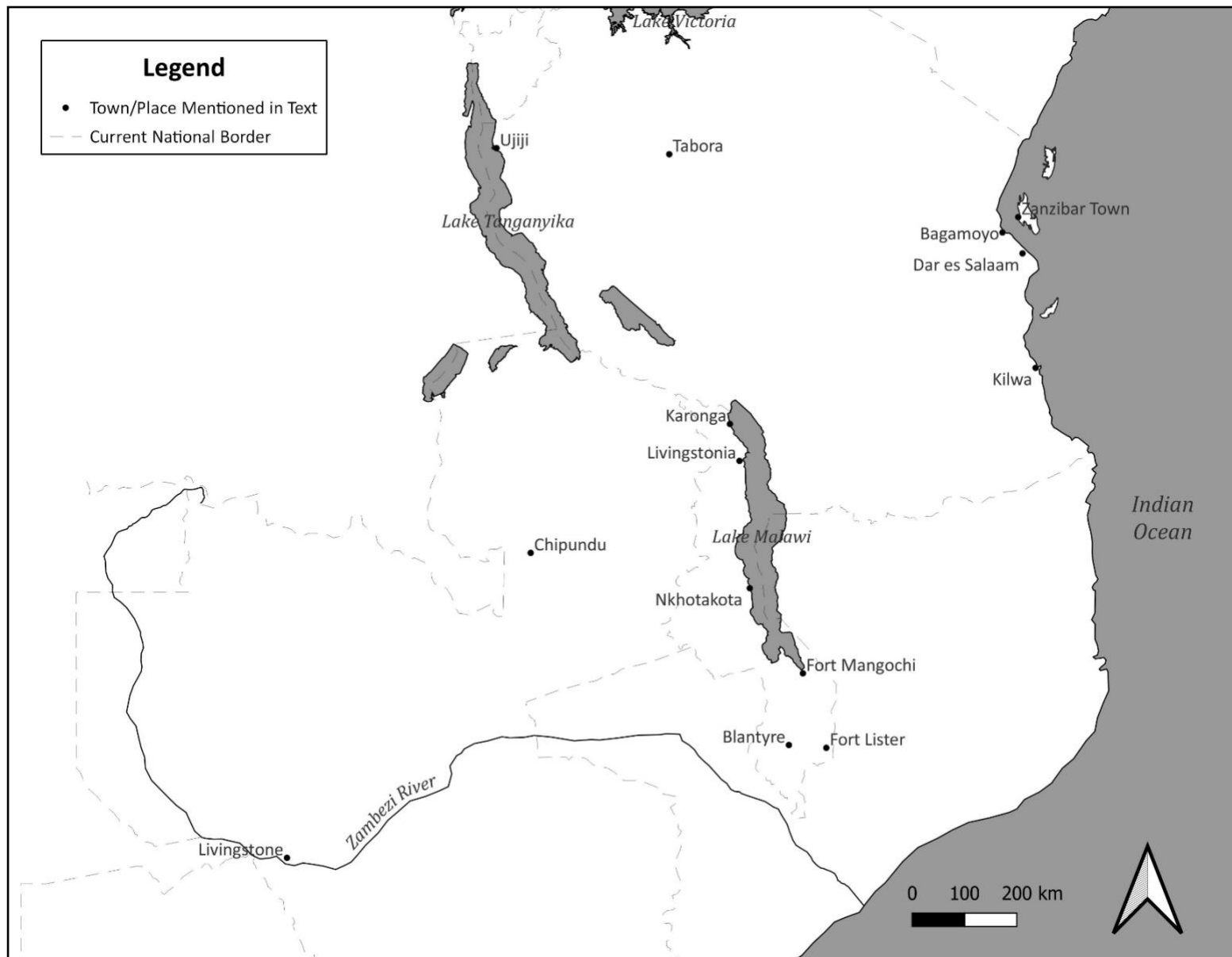


Fig. 1. Map of the places in East and Central Africa that are mentioned in-text. Drawn by the author.

to contextualise these applications, and to explore how and why present-day East and Central African governments might want to promote Livingstone, despite his associations with colonial rule.

This article additionally builds on recent scholarship that is critical of UNESCO's imprint in Tanzania. Jonathon Glassman, Stephen Fabian, and Jan Lindström have noted several problematic features of sites associated with UNESCO located in Zanzibar (Glassman) and Bagamoyo, Tanzania (Fabian and Lindström).¹¹ Their works reflect broader scholarly critiques of the Tanzanian government (or more specifically, its Department of Antiquities, with whom responsibility for Tanzania's cultural heritage lies) which argue that it 'perpetuate[s] practices that ignore local voices and participation' in making sites of cultural heritage.¹² This article contributes to this scholarship by analysing Tanzania's 2006 application in its entirety, taking into account not just Bagamoyo and Zanzibar, but also sites in Tabora and Ujiji (both in west-central Tanzania), and putting this analysis into conversation with similar patterns in Malawi. While Livingstone is commemorated in Bagamoyo (and in Zanzibar), he is not so central to the narrative portrayed there as he is in Tabora, Ujiji, and Malawi. In these latter places, he is inscribed on the titles and names of sites seeking commemoration. Thus, a regional rather than site-focused perspective to the applications necessitates a reflection on Livingstone's legacies as a core feature of the UNESCO applications under review.

The opening quotation to this article is a throwaway comment made by Michael Palin, an English entertainer, for the purposes of engaging a casual, Western audience in the late twentieth century. The longer clip from which it is taken is of the genre of materials that continues to venerate Livingstone. It opens with a close-up shot of a white plinth, which gradually angles upwards, towards heaven, to read 'David Livingstone,' indicating that it was constructed in his honour. It does this to the sound of organ music, more commonly heard in a church. Palin then sombrely, in the manner of a sermon, reads an extract from Henry Morton Stanley's account of his meeting with Livingstone in Ujiji, Tanzania on the northeastern shore of Lake Tanganyika, in 1871. It finishes with Palin doffing his cap to models of the two of them inside the nearby museum (called the

¹¹ Jonathon Glassman, "Racial violence, universal history, and echoes of abolition in twentieth-century Zanzibar," in *Abolitionism and Imperialism in Britain, Africa, and the Atlantic*, ed. Derek Peterson (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2010), 175-206; Steven Fabian, "East Africa's Gorée: Slave trade and slave tourism in Bagamoyo, Tanzania," *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des études africaines*, 47, 1 (2013), 95-114; Jan Lindström, *Muted Memories: Heritage-making, Bagamoyo, and the East African caravan trade* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2019), esp. 1-7.

¹² Peter R. Schmidt and Elgidius B. Ichumbaki, "Is there hope for heritage in former British colonies in eastern Africa? A view from Tanzania," *Journal of African Cultural Heritage Studies*, 2, 1 (2020), 32.

Livingstone Memorial Museum). The clip was hardly meant as serious analysis. Nevertheless, it points to a thread that is followed in the remainder of this article. Apart from a vague aesthetic similarity between Scotland's lochs and East Africa's Great Lakes, this article examines how Livingstone's life and legacy show linkages between Scottish and western IOW conceptions of nationhood, past and present.



Fig 2. The white plinth at Ujiji's *Livingstone Memorial Museum*, in front of which Michael Palin made his 'sermon.' The words 'David Livingstone' are faded at the top of the plinth. The plaque on the bottom right reads, 'Under the mango tree which then stood here Henry M. Stanley met David Livingstone, 10 November 1871.' Taken by the author, October 2013.

LIVINGSTONE, SCOTLAND, COLONIALISM, AND BEYOND

Livingstone was martyred by his death.¹³ After his African companions, James Chuma and Abdullah Susi, carried his corpse to the East African coast, he was taken in a coffin to Southampton harbour, where he was received with ‘all the pomp and ceremony of a Victorian state funeral,’ before being buried in Westminster Abbey next to several British ‘national heroes.’¹⁴ Subsequently, missionaries, officials, and sculptors rushed to commemorate him. Such efforts were especially apparent in Scotland and East and Central Africa. A few striking examples among many include the bronze statue sculpted in 1875-9 by famed sculptor John Mossman (1817-90) in George Square, Glasgow (it now stands in Glasgow’s Cathedral Square); the Scottish National Memorial to David Livingstone Trust (now known as the *David Livingstone Centre*), which opened in 1929 in the mills of Livingstone’s birth and childhood; and the founding of the towns of Blantyre, in what later became colonial Nyasaland (present-day Malawi) in 1876, and Livingstone in Northern Rhodesia (present-day Zambia) in 1905.¹⁵ After his death, objects made or named in his honour became constant reminders of his life.¹⁶

In Scotland, this process may be analysed in terms of nation building. John M. MacKenzie described a process in which Scottish conceptions of identity and place went from primarily local – divided by, for example, clan, region, and highland/lowland – in the eighteenth century, to one that was increasingly national by the second half of the nineteenth century.¹⁷ There were many facets to this process, most of which do not bear repeating here. But, as the Scottish intellectual literature of the era demonstrates, much of the new-found confidence in Scottish politics and identity was focused on individuals, such as Livingstone, and empire. Indeed, Richard Finlay, among others, argues that empire was central to evolving ideas of Scottish nation in this period and provided a wider

¹³ See: Justin D. Livingstone, “A “body” of evidence: The posthumous presentation of David Livingstone,” *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 40, 1 (2012), 1-24; John M. MacKenzie, “David Livingstone: The construction of a myth,” in *Sermons and Battle Hymns: Protestant culture in modern Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), 24-42; Felix Driver, “David Livingstone and the culture of exploration in mid-Victorian Britain,” in *David Livingstone and the Victorian Encounter*, 111; Tim Barringer, “Fabricating Africa: Livingstone and the visual image,” in *David Livingstone and the Victorian Encounter*, 194-5.

¹⁴ Buxton, *David Livingstone*, 178; Esther Breitenbach, *Empire and Scottish Society: The impact of foreign missions at home, c.1790 to c.1914* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 156.

¹⁵ For fuller (though incomplete) lists, see: MacKenzie, “David Livingstone: The construction of a myth,” 36-8; MacKenzie, “David Livingstone and the worldly after-life,” 203-4.

¹⁶ The editing and publication of Livingstone’s ‘last journals’ were also crucial to this process. See: Helly, *Livingstone’s Legacy*, 64-222.

¹⁷ John M. MacKenzie, “Empire and national identities the case of Scotland,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 8 (1998).

outlet for constructions of Scotland that complicated or challenged the country's clearly subordinate place within the domestic British Union.¹⁸ Biographies and descriptions of Livingstone's and other Scots' (as distinct from those of other British national identities) contributions to the imperial project abounded.¹⁹ In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Livingstone was positioned as a 'great Scot,' or even the 'archetypal Scot,' or the 'classic Scots exemplar.'²⁰ Statues, museums, and streets bearing his name were a key facet of emergent national identity.

Veneration for Livingstone also had significant effects on the western IOW. His Christian beliefs, his anti-slavery agenda, and his journeys in East and Central Africa inspired a resurgence of missionary activity, especially in the regions in which he travelled.²¹ Indeed, mission activity in East and Central Africa in the last quarter of the nineteenth century was part of an abolitionist crusade, with missionaries presenting themselves as the redeemers of Africans against the exploitation of Arab Muslims – a highly racialised and problematic paradigm which nevertheless found resonance among European publics.²² This context enabled Scottish civic society to participate in moral campaigns in locations and geographies seen of international, even global significance. The Free Church of Scotland established missions at what they called Blantyre and Livingstonia in present-day Malawi, and the LMS (to which Livingstone formerly belonged) established a station at Ujiji, where he was famously 'found' by journalist Henry Morton Stanley in 1871.²³ In choosing Ujiji as a location, Joseph Mullens, the LMS' foreign secretary, explicitly cited Livingstone's attachments to the town, and thus

¹⁸ Richard J. Finlay, "The rise and fall of popular imperialism in Scotland, 1850–1950," *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 113 (1997), 13-21

¹⁹ MacKenzie, "Irish, Scottish, Welsh and English Worlds? A four-nation approach to the history of the British empire," *History Compass*, 6, 5 (2008), 1248-9; MacKenzie, "The construction of a myth," 33

²⁰ Breitenbach, *Empire and Scottish Society*, 156; MacKenzie, "The construction of a myth," 36; Andrew C. Ross, *David Livingstone: Mission and Empire* (London: Humbledon and London, 2002), 1; MacKenzie, "Empire and national identities," 224; Angus Calder, "Livingstone, self-help and Scotland," in *David Livingstone and the Victorian Encounter*, 88-9.

²¹ Breitenbach, *Empire and Scottish Society*, 156; Joanna Lewis, "Empires of sentiment; intimacies from death: David Livingstone and African slavery 'at the heart of the nation,'" *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 43, 2 (2015), 210-37; Helly, *Livingstone's Legacy*, m225

²² T.C. McCaskie, 'Cultural encounters: Britain and Africa in the nineteenth century,' in *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. III, The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Andrew Porter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 686; Paul Kollman "Christianity and abolition in Africa," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History* (2021), 1-31.

²³ For information on the Free Church of Scotland's activities and their contexts in East and Central Africa, see: Breitenbach, *Empire and Scottish Society*, 156-7; Andrew C. Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi* (Mzuzu, Malawi: Luviri Press, 2018); Kenneth R. Ross, *Malawi and Scotland: Together in the talking place since 1859* (Mzuzu, Malawi: Mzuni Press, 2013), 23-53; MacKenzie, "David Livingstone and the worldly after-life," 210-12.

also the town's symbolic importance to future proselytization.²⁴ In the late nineteenth century, Scottish identity, missionary activity, abolitionism, and images of Livingstone became inextricably intertwined.²⁵

In Africa, missionaries, many of them Scottish, were soon followed by the tentacles of the British Empire. The African context stands out somewhat against the wider IOW here, in that the missionary frontier 'ran ahead' of that of the colonial.²⁶ Thinking about this pattern in wider context, the closest comparables are the Pacific islands; not the wider IOW.²⁷ This timeline in the African context partly explains Livingstone's close association with colonial rule in some Africanist scholarship. Yet there is a deeper continuum here as well. As with missionary motivations, Livingstone's anti-slavery agenda and the three C's were central to the ideological justifications of colonial rule.²⁸ British imperialists claimed to want to 'civilise' and bring 'commerce' to Africa in the mould of Livingstone's core tenets, and in so doing made Livingstone into an 'imperial hero' (and not just a Scottish or missionary one).²⁹ This ideology persisted despite the fact that colonial rule (British and others) restricted African commercial activities, which had been expanding rapidly during the second half of the nineteenth century. As Jonas Fossli Gjersø argues, 'the annexation of East Africa... formed a continuum, a natural consequence of Britain's self-proclaimed 'civilising mission' rooted in the Livingstonian tenets of 'commerce, Christianity and civilisation.'"³⁰

The association between Livingstone and colonial rule has been core to revisionist examinations of his life and legacy, especially in the last thirty-or-so years. In serious academic analyses (thus excluding hagiographies dressed up as biographies), any admiration for his travels, 'discoveries,' and influences on modern medicine are usually qualified against an unease with his ideologies and legacies, as well as the legacies of

²⁴ Joseph Mullens, *London Missionary Society: Proposed mission at Ujiji, on Lake Tanganyika, Central Africa: Minute and memorandum* (London: Printed for the use of the Directors only, 1876). For more on the centrality of Livingstone to the work of the LMS in the late nineteenth century, see: Driver, "David Livingstone and the culture of exploration," 115-6. The LMS' Ujiji mission was short-lived. Unable to convert the town's inhabitants to Christianity, many of whom were new converts to Islam, they abandoned it in favour of other sites around Lake Tanganyika in 1883. For more on Islamic influence on the shores of nineteenth-century Lake Tanganyika, see: Philip Gooding, "Islam in the interior of precolonial East Africa: Evidence from Lake Tanganyika," *The Journal of African History*, 60, 2 (2019), 191-208.

²⁵ See also: Helly, *Livingstone's Legacy*, 225-7.

²⁶ MacKenzie, "David Livingstone and the worldly after-life," 213-5.

²⁷ John Barker, "Where the missionary frontier ran ahead of empire," in *Missions and Empire*, ed. Norman Etherington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 86-106.

²⁸ See also: Driver, "David Livingstone and the culture of exploration," 118-9; Helly, *Livingstone's Legacy*, 223-60.

²⁹ MacKenzie, "The construction of a myth," 25-7; MacKenzie, "David Livingstone and the worldly after-life," 208.

³⁰ Jonas Fossli Gjersø, "The Scramble for East Africa: British motives reconsidered, 1884-5," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 43, 5 (2015), 853.

colonial rule. It is widely acknowledged that the ‘civilising mission,’ and by association the three C’s, were intrinsically racist – labelling Africans as uncivilised and in need of redeeming from ‘Arab’ Muslims and teaching from white Anglo-Americans.³¹ Indeed, Livingstone’s own writings frequently dehumanised Africans, filled as they are with highly racialised language.³² If Livingstone was a Scottish, missionary, abolitionist, and imperial ‘hero’ from his death and during the colonial period, then, since the end of the twentieth century, how he is remembered and thought about is now much more ambiguous – even contradictory.³³

Yet, the ‘problematic’ aspects of Livingstone’s legacy in current discourses have hardly limited the proliferation of structures and schemes to commemorate him. Statues of Livingstone built after his death and during the colonial period – in Scotland and Africa, as well as in several other colonial and settler spaces – have not (yet) been subject to the same campaigns against them as those of other figures associated with imperialism, such as Henry Morton Stanley and Cecil Rhodes.³⁴ Additionally, at the time of writing, the *David Livingstone Centre* in Blantyre is closed for a £6.3 million refurbishment, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic Environment Scotland, and the Scottish Government.³⁵ For the time being at least, Livingstone has largely been kept out of popular and activist discourses that have sought to dismantle sites meant to venerate people associated with racialisation and colonialism. Indeed, some sites dedicated to Livingstone continue to be heavily promoted.

Moreover, the Scottish government continues to use Livingstone’s name to project its image to the wider world, especially to Malawi. For example, in 2013-14, the Scottish government awarded two sets of scholarships worth a total of £200,000 (roughly \$350,000 CAD) to Malawian Masters’ students, respectively called the *David Livingstone*

³¹ Valentin-Yves Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, philosophy, and the order of knowledge* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 98-134.

³² See, for example: David Livingstone, *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 Publishers, 1866); 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*, ed. Horace Waller, 2 Vols. (London: John Murray, 1874). For closer analysis of this, see: MacKenzie, “David Livingstone and the worldly after-life,” 215.

³³ See: John M. MacKenzie, “David Livingstone – Prophet or patron saint of imperialism in Africa: Myths and misconceptions,” *Scottish Geographical Journal*, 129, 3-4 (2013), 277-91.

³⁴ Or, at least they have not been since the period of decolonisation. For an example of destruction to a monument dedicated to Livingstone in 1948 in what is now Zambia, see: Joanna Lewis, *Empire of Sentiment: The death of Livingstone and the myth of Victorian imperialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 207. It should be noted that, unlike the contemporary movements against statues of colonial figures, this may not have been an act of protest. The man who confessed to the act was judged by the colonial government to have had ‘no motive whatsoever.’

³⁵ Visit Lanarkshire, “David Livingstone Centre: The David Livingstone Centre is currently closed for refurbishment”: <https://www.visitlanarkshire.com/things-to-see-and-do/david-livingstone-centre/> [accessed: 18 June 2020].

Bicentenary Scholarship Programme and the *Scotland-Malawi Livingstone Scholarship Programme*.³⁶ These scholarships were part of Scotland's 'Malawi Development Programme,' which began in 2005. At the launch of a new round of funding within the programme in 2018, Scotland's International Development Minister cited Scotland and Malawi's 'shared history, stretching back more than 150 years to the travels of Dr. Livingstone.'³⁷ He made no mention of Livingstone's relationship to colonialism or its legacies. Clearly, Scotland remains invested in propagating an interpretation of Livingstone's influence that does not take into account recent perspectives and which is directly at odds with the willingness to critically reassess the colonial histories of other prominent Scots, such as Henry Dundas or James Watt.³⁸

Perhaps more surprising, though, are the ongoing projects in East and Central Africa that continue to celebrate Livingstone. Apart from the towns and cities that maintain their colonial names (despite the changes in the names of their nations after independence), several museums and plaques whose origins lie in the colonial era remain in place and continue to receive investment. Most striking here are Tanzania and Malawi's recent applications to UNESCO for world heritage status for their projects, respectively entitled *The Central Slave and Ivory Trade Route* and the *Malawi Slave Routes and Dr. Livingstone Trail*. As will be seen in the following analysis, these applications centre Livingstone in these nations' histories, and they portray him in a light that reflects more closely Scottish, abolitionist, missionary, and imperial discourses that date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries than recent scholarly work, which is much more critical. Positive, almost hagiographical, depictions of Livingstone continue to link Scotland and parts of the western IOW.

³⁶ David Hope-Jones, "Scotland-Malawi Livingstone Scholarship Programme: Public announcement of successful candidates," 15 Aug. 2014: https://www.scotland-malawipartnership.org/files/7814/4533/6610/Livingstone_Scholarships_Round_Two_ANNOUNCEMENT_with_new_logo.pdf [accessed: 18 June 2020].

³⁷ Scottish Government, "Malawi Development Programme," 14 Aug. 2018: <https://news.gov.scot/news/malawi-development-programme> [accessed: 18 June 2020].

³⁸ For more examples of the Scottish government recently promoting the image and legacy of David Livingstone, see: John M. MacKenzie, "2013: The year of David Livingstone," *African Research & Documentation*, 120 (2012); Stephen Mullen, "Henry Dundas: A 'Great Delayer' of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade," *Scottish Historical Review*, 100 (2021), 218–48; David Philip Miller, "Depicting Watt: Contextualism, myopia and the long view: The life and legend of James Watt: collaboration, natural philosophy, and the improvement of the steam engine," *Metascience*, (2020), 380; "James Watt and Slavery in Scotland," *History Workshop Online* (2020): <https://www.historyworkshop.org.uk/james-watt-and-slavery-in-scotland/> [accessed: 4 Oct. 2021].

TANZANIA'S AND MALAWI'S UNESCO APPLICATIONS FOR WORLD HERITAGE STATUS

Two features permeate both Tanzania and Malawi's applications to UNESCO for their sites to have world heritage status. Firstly, they both centre Livingstone in their nations' nineteenth-century histories, while portraying him in a positive, almost heroic, light. Secondly, they centre slavery, the slave trade, and abolition. These discourses are, of course, not mutually exclusive. Livingstone had a staunchly anti-slavery agenda, and so his entry into what are now Tanzania and Malawi is portrayed as an early beginning towards the end of slavery and, by association, the beginning of 'freedom' in both nations' histories. In this sense, he is almost portrayed as an 'anti-colonial' hero, rather than just a hero of the bygone imperialists.³⁹ Both applications are listed in UNESCO's 'Tentative List,' meaning that they have yet to receive final adjudications. Summaries of both are freely available on the UNESCO website.⁴⁰ Unfortunately for researchers, the full contents of the applications are not accessible. Information from the summaries is supplemented in the following discussion by my own observations gained during my visit to the sites mentioned in Tanzania's application in October-December 2013.

Tanzania submitted its application, *The Central Slave and Ivory Trade Route*, through its Antiquities department in 2006. It focuses on six sites existing sites, but gives special attention to Bagamoyo, Tabora, and Ujiji. These three towns are all located on the Tanzanian mainland: Bagamoyo on its east coast; Tabora just west of its geographical centre; and Ujiji on its western extremity. These were the three principal towns on the 'central caravan route' that linked the interior of the East African mainland with the wider IOW global economy during the nineteenth century.⁴¹ Ivory was the major export in this context. Traders from both the East African interior and its coastal regions (the latter were often of mixed African and Omani ancestry) acquired ivory in regions in the East African interior through trading and various mechanisms of tax, tribute, and violence. They then

³⁹ Lindström, *Muted Memories*, 81-2.

⁴⁰ UNESCO, "The Central Slave and Ivory Route": <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/2095/> [accessed: 18 June 2020]; UNESCO, "Malawi Slave Routes and Dr. David Livingstone Trail": <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5603/> [accessed: 18 June 2020].

⁴¹ Abdul Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory in Zanzibar: Integration of an East African commercial empire into the world economy, 1770-1873* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1987), 172-90; Stephen Rockel, *Carriers of Culture: Labor on the road in nineteenth-century East Africa* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2006), 135.

carried (and employed others to carry) ivory to the coast and on to Zanzibar, before it was traded for manufacture in regions as distant as Gujarat and Kutch, Britain, and the USA.⁴²

Livingstone visited Ujiji in 1869 and 1871, and Tabora in 1872. Also, after his death, his body was kept for one night in Bagamoyo in 1874 on its way to London, by way of Zanzibar and Southampton. These visits are remembered through the sites that commemorate him in these towns. In Ujiji, Tanzania's UNESCO application centres on the *Livingstone Memorial Museum*, described above through the commentary on Michael Palin's account. Memorials to Livingstone in this compound date from 1916, with the construction of a concrete bench around the mango tree under which Stanley and Livingstone allegedly met in 1871. Since then, memorials have included an obelisk and a plinth – the latter being the site of Palin's filming (see *Fig. 2*).⁴³ The museum is a much more recent innovation, receiving its latest renovation in the 2000s, although its location is clearly influenced by the existence of memorials dating from the colonial period. Apart from the models of Livingstone and Stanley described by Palin in the early 1990s, it now also contains details about Livingstone's travels, information on the peoples of present-day west-central Tanzania, and descriptions of the nineteenth-century slave and ivory trades.

The aspects of Tanzania's application that focus on Tabora centre on *Livingstone's Tembe*, another museum, which is actually located in Kwihara, about eight kilometres from Tabora's centre. Livingstone is said to have rented this building from a prominent trader when he stayed in Tabora in 1872 (*tembe* generally refers to a square-walled, flat-roofed house, commonly adopted by nineteenth-century coastal traders).⁴⁴ The museum contains maps, pictures, and objects that date from the nineteenth century, as well as several newspaper articles from the *New York Herald* and *Daily Telegraph* with copies of letters from and references to Livingstone and Stanley. Preservation of this site began in the 1936 under British colonial rule, by which time the *tembe* was falling into disrepair. The British restored it to its nineteenth-century dimensions, demolishing more recent additions and re-installing demolished walls, attempting to make it reflect as closely as possible the building as it was when Livingstone stayed there (although the end result

⁴² See: Philip Gooding, "The ivory trade and political power in nineteenth-century East Africa," in *Animal Trade Histories in the Indian Ocean World*, eds. Martha Chaiklin, Philip Gooding, and Gwyn Campbell (Cham: Palgrave, 2020).

⁴³ C.H.B. Grant, "The Livingstone-Stanley memorials in Africa," *The Geographical Journal*, 79, 4 (1932), 318-9.

⁴⁴ Wayne McKim, 'House types in Tanzania: A century of change,' *Journal of Cultural Geography*, 6, 1 (1985), 62.

almost certainly reflected imperial expectations as much as past realities).⁴⁵ The dimensions and its purpose as a site commemorating Livingstone have remained constant ever since.⁴⁶



Fig 3. Section of a display in *Livingstone's Tembe* in Kwihara, near Tabora. The image is an artistic impression of Livingstone's arrival in present-day Chipundu, where he died, in 1873. Taken by the author in October 2013.

⁴⁵ F. Longland, "A Note on the Tembe at Kwihara, Tabora," *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, 1 (1936), 84-6; R.B. Richardson, "Livingstone's *Tembe* at Kwihara, Tabora," *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, 9 (1940), 68. For analysis of colonial conservation and museum practices in wider view, see: Longhair, "Projections of empire," 100, 104.

⁴⁶ I have been informed that further information on the reconstruction of the *tembe* at Kwihara is available in the Tanzania National Archives in Dar es Salaam. I have not yet, however, gained access to this material.

The aspects of Tanzania's application pertaining to Bagamoyo centre on the *caravan serai*, the old market, and the Catholic Historic Museum. Conservation efforts date from the colonial era and have become increasingly intertwined with depictions of the history of the slave trade over time.⁴⁷ The town is now portrayed as a “place of memory” for human suffering and humiliation caused by slavery and the slave trade.⁴⁸ Livingstone is prominent in the grounds of the Catholic Historic Museum. The largest tower of the old church, which has gone through several renovations since its original construction in 1872, is the site where Livingstone was interred for one night in 1874 and is named in his honour. Despite never visiting Bagamoyo alive, Livingstone remains a feature of how the town's nineteenth-century history is disseminated through its museums, and through Tanzania's *Central Slave and Ivory Trade Route* application for UNESCO world heritage status.

Malawi submitted its *Malawi Slave Routes and Dr. Livingstone Trail* application to UNESCO through the Malawi National Commission for UNESCO in 2011.⁴⁹ It focuses on four main sites: Karonga, Nkhotakota, Fort Mangochi, and Fort Lister. Unlike the Tanzanian application, Livingstone was alive when he visited all the places mentioned. He visited the regions around Karonga in 1861, Nkhotakota in 1861 and 1864, and Fort Mangochi and Fort Lister in 1859. Slave trades from these regions to the East African coast were prominent at different times during the nineteenth century, though they did not reach their zenith around Karonga, for example, until after Livingstone had departed. Enslaved people were taken to East African ports, such as Kilwa, for embarkation to Zanzibar, and then, if they were not demanded domestically, they were taken mostly onto the Arabian Peninsula. Although ivory was a significant export, especially through Karonga, this long-distance slave trade was much more central to this region's history than it was to the region around the central caravan route, where ivory was more prominent throughout.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Lindström, *Muted Memories*, 21-38; Elgidius B. Ichumbaki, “A history of conservation of built heritage sites of the Swahili coast in Tanzania,” *African Historical Review*, 48, 2 (2016), 56-61.

⁴⁸ UNESCO “The Central Slave and Ivory Route.” See also: Daniel T. Rhodes, “History, materialization, and presentation of slavery in Tanzania,” *Journal of African Diaspora Archaeology & Heritage*, 7, 2 (2018), 173-4; Lindström, *Muted Memories*, 18-19.

⁴⁹ UNESCO, “Malawi Slave Routes and Dr. David Livingstone Trail.”

⁵⁰ Harry W. Langworth, “Swahili influence in the area between Lake Malawi and the Luangwa River,” *African Historical Studies*, 4, 3 (1971), 575-602; Edward A. Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves in East Africa: Changing patterns of international trade to the later nineteenth century* (London: Heinemann, 1975), 209-63; Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices & Ivory*, 158-64.



Fig. 4. “Livingstone Tower” in at the Old Holy Ghost Church in Bagamoyo, first built in 1872. Inside the archway is a plaque with an inscription, part of which reads: ‘In this tower the body of the late Dr. David Livingstone was rested for one night from 24th to 25th of February 1874 before being transported to London. This tower is also known as Livingstone tower due to the fact that his body was rested here for a while.’ Taken by the author in October 2013.

Museums and individual sites of commemoration for Livingstone are less prominent in Malawi's application than they are in Tanzania's. Malawi's application instead focuses on old buildings, many of which are in ruins, such as Forts Mangochi and Lister. Both these forts were built in the early colonial era for the purposes of combatting the slave trade and colonial administration. Livingstone is seen as central to the earlier history, as evidenced from his position in the application's title. He is portrayed as a witness to the slave trade and as someone who attempted to stop it. In Nkhotakota, for example, he is credited with negotiating a treaty between Chief Jumbe and nearby Chewa chiefs 'to stop [the] slave trade and hostilities.'⁵¹ Even though Jumbe and the chiefs soon reneged on these alleged promises (Livingstone's account is the only one we have of them), Livingstone is portrayed as an early anti-slavery 'hero' in Malawian history. His actions are then seen to have provided the ideological basis on which colonial rulers ended the slave trade.



Fig. 5. Guardroom and armoury inside Fort Manochi. By Tim Cowley - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=36429112> [Uploaded: 1 Oct. 2014; accessed: 21 Sep. 2021]

⁵¹ UNESCO, "Malawi Slave Routes and Dr. David Livingstone Trail."

Clearly, Livingstone is portrayed as central to both these applications, and, more broadly, to Tanzanian and Malawian history. Moreover, his writing and his legacies are dealt with in an uncritical light, so that what these applications seek to tell resembles much more closely Scottish national, imperial, abolitionist, and missionary narratives that date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries than more recent critiques. This applies even when it comes to colonialism and structures associated with colonial rule (such as museums, commemorative sites, and forts that date from that era), which are associated only with the end of the slave trade, and not with the oppression that was inherent in them. To this end, both applications are a little ‘fast and loose’ with their depiction of the histories they seek to tell. In both, the slave trade is given undue prominence, when a more empirically grounded commercial history would give more weight to the ivory trade. This is especially true in the history of present-day Tanzania, in which a long-distance slave trade between the deep interior and the coast was a minimal affair (this is notwithstanding the existence of other long-distance slave trades across different interior regions and to different parts of the coast).⁵² Even so, an emphasis on the slave trade serves to elevate Livingstone in East and Central African history as an anti-slavery pioneer who sought the region’s ‘freedom’ through the three C’s.

What explains the enduring positive images of Livingstone in East and Central Africa, as evidenced by Tanzania and Malawi’s applications to UNESCO? Why do they focus on sites that date from the colonial era, including museums built in that era?⁵³ Having gained independence in the early 1960s, it might be expected that the new nation-states would seek to distance themselves from figures associated with colonial rule in the construction of a new ‘national’ identity.⁵⁴ This expectation might apply especially to Tanzania, where the newly independent government of the 1960s promoted indigenous cultural phenomena, such as the Swahili language and the concept of *ujamaa* (Swahili: familyhood) as part of the nation building process.⁵⁵ The ideology of Malawi’s post-independence government, meanwhile, remained closely intertwined with aspects of Scottish culture, its leader being educated in a Scottish mission in colonial Nyasaland and then steeped in Scottish Presbyterianism during his training as a medical doctor in

⁵² Fabian, “East Africa’s Gorée,” 97; Philip Gooding, “Slavery, ‘respectability,’ and being ‘freeborn’ on the shores of Lake Tanganyika,” *Slavery and Abolition*, 40, 1 (2019), 149-50; Alexandra Celia Kelly, *Consuming Ivory: Mercantile legacies of East Africa and New England* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2021), 155.

⁵³ For more on the continuity of colonial museum buildings in East Africa, see: Longhair, “Projections of empire,” 97-120.

⁵⁴ Berny Sèbe, “From postcolonialism to cosmopolitan nation-building? British and French imperial heroes in twenty-first-century Africa,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 42, 5 (2014), 949.

⁵⁵ Philip Gooding, “History, politics, and culture in Central Tanzania,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History* (2019), 16.

Edinburgh in the 1930s-40s.⁵⁶ Yet, there are further, more contemporary contexts in which these applications can be understood, namely, regional efforts to commemorate the past, UNESCO's wider aims on the African continent, and ongoing relations between East and Central Africa and the wider world – especially Scotland. The following analysis deals with these contexts in turn, starting with the regional, before moving onto the continental, and then the global.⁵⁷

TANZANIA'S AND MALAWI'S UNESCO APPLICATIONS IN REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

A regional perspective is particularly useful for understanding Tanzania's application. This is because Zanzibar, a semi-autonomous island around 30 kilometres from the Tanzanian mainland, has already had success with a UNESCO application. Since 2000, Zanzibar's Stone Town has been recognised as a UNESCO world heritage site, and many of its most important buildings date from the nineteenth century.⁵⁸ At that time, Zanzibar was the destination for goods, such as ivory, taken on the central caravan route spanning present-day mainland Tanzania via Bagamoyo, Tabora, and Ujiji, and for goods taken on southern routes via northern parts of present-day Malawi, which included slaves. Just as in Tanzania and Malawi's more recent applications, the slave trade features more prominently than the ivory trade in UNESCO's description of the Zanzibar Stone Town. Livingstone is also mentioned as an opponent of slavery who visited Zanzibar, and his name is inscribed on Zanzibar's landscape through the naming of buildings in his honour.⁵⁹

Jonathon Glassman has already taken issue with how the history of the slave trade is told in sites central to Zanzibar's UNESCO world heritage status.⁶⁰ He most notably disagreed with stories told at the 'slave market church' (a church built on the site of a former slave market) in which it is said that Arab (Omani) slave traders kept African slaves in dungeons, and routinely whipped, killed, and left them to die of suffocation. He

⁵⁶ T. Jack Thompson, "Presbyterians and politics in Malawi: A century of interaction," *The Round Table*, 94, 382 (2005), 581-4; Ross, *Malawi and Scotland*, 228-9.

⁵⁷ See also: Schmidt and Ichumbaki, "Is there hope for heritage," 26-51; John Giblin, "Heritage and the use of the past in East Africa," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History* (2018), 1-32. These articles discuss the institutional continuities between colonial and postcolonial eras that govern cultural heritage in Tanzania and the wider East African region.

⁵⁸ UNESCO, "Stone Town of Zanzibar": <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/173/> [accessed: 18 June 2020].

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Glassman, "Racial violence, universal history," 175-206.

rightly contended that there are no credible sources that support this version of history.⁶¹ Glassman primarily traced the roots of these stories to Zanzibari post-revolutionary politics. The 1964 revolution was led by an African-majority party that overthrew the Omani Sultanate. Perpetuating the idea of brutal Omani slave traders enslaving Africans in the deeper past thus serves to justify the revolution. But colonial-era discourse also plays a role here as well.⁶² The leaders of the revolution were also those who were most exposed to colonial and mission education. They were thus well-accustomed to European colonial-era abolitionist ideologies, within which Livingstone and missionary motivations were key factors. Thus, the ‘African’ origins of the Zanzibar revolution were in some ways tied to colonial discourses vis-à-vis Livingstone.

Tanzania’s latest application for world heritage status extends these paradigms in space and discourse, while also building on the mainland’s own history of missionisation, colonisation, and nation-building. Zanzibar’s economic rise in the nineteenth century was inextricably tied to conditions on the central caravan route across present-day mainland Tanzania. It thus follows that Tanzania’s latest application should emphasise the importance of the slave trade, just as it is in Zanzibar. Indeed, as in Zanzibar, ‘Arabs’ are blamed for the slave trade in Tanzania’s latest application.⁶³ However, even though Livingstone is mentioned in UNESCO’s description of Zanzibar’s Stone Town, he is significantly more prominent at the sites in Bagamoyo, Tabora, and Ujiji. This may partly be explained by the relative absence of other historical buildings in these latter towns, certainly when compared to Zanzibar’s Stone Town. The sites commemorating Livingstone in Bagamoyo, Tabora, and Ujiji are some of the oldest objects or buildings in them. Analysis of these sites alongside the UNESCO-accredited sites in Zanzibar stresses the centrality of ‘Livingstonian’ ideologies underpinning mission activity, colonial rule, and modern national representations of the past in East and Central Africa, notwithstanding the distinct role played by post-revolutionary politics in Zanzibar.

⁶¹ Ibid., 178-9. See also: Rhodes, “History, materialization, and presentation,” 178-185.

⁶² Glassman, “Racial violence, universal history,” 182-3; Rhodes, “History, materialization, and presentation,” 166.

⁶³ UNESCO, “The Central Slave and Ivory Route.” For critiques, see: Rhodes, “History, materialization, and presentation,” 169; Kelly, *Consuming Ivory*, 151, 158; Lindström, *Muted Memories*, 65-7.

TANZANIA'S AND MALAWI'S UNESCO APPLICATIONS IN CONTINENTAL PERSPECTIVE

A perspective on Tanzania and Malawi's UNESCO applications from the wider African continent hinges on UNESCO's prerogatives and African nations' responses to them. In 1994, UNESCO created a mandate to establish commemorative sites of slavery and slave trades for public history through its *Slave Route Project: Resistance, Liberty, Heritage*. Since then, 'slavery tourism' has grown in prominence throughout the Global South, especially in Africa. It initially focused on the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and it centred on sites such as Senegal's *House of Slaves* in Gorée, Ghana's *Slave Castles* in Cape Coast and El Mina, and Benin's *Slave Route* in Ouidah. However, more recently, the *Slave Route Project* has encouraged applications from other regions, including from East and Central Africa. Tanzania and Malawi's applications represent responses to this call.⁶⁴ Emphasising the importance of the slave trade in an application increases their chances of approval, which in turn could result in much needed investment in tourist infrastructure and the promise of additional income from tourists.⁶⁵

Analysis of the UNESCO-approved West African sites shows that applications' emphasis on the slave trade may come at the expense of historical empiricism. For example, UNESCO continues to list Gorée, Senegal, as 'the largest slave-trading centre on the African coast,' even though it has long been known that its significance in the trans-Atlantic slave trade was minimal.⁶⁶ Gorée was largely a commercial centre for 'non-human' commodities, and there were much more prominent slave sites further north and south. These sites, though, do not have lasting buildings from the era of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and so have less symbolic potential. Ghana's 'slave castles,' meanwhile, have been whitewashed, and the door facing the Atlantic Ocean has been labelled with a sign saying, 'door of no return.' Such labels are meant to elucidate emotional responses, as visitors contemplate how the enslaved felt as they exited through the door – they are, of course, new additions.⁶⁷ No mention is made of the significant modifications the castles went through in the last 200 years, which, for example, turned them into colonial

⁶⁴ Rhodes, "History, materialization, and presentation," 167; Kelly, *Consuming Ivory*, 160-1. For a broader critique of UNESCO's role at a site covered in this article, see: Lindström, *Muted Memories*, Part I.

⁶⁵ Ichumbaki, "A history of conservation," 61.

⁶⁶ UNESCO, "Island of Gorée": <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/26> [accessed: 18 June 2020]; Fabian, "East Africa's Gorée," 96; H-Africa, "Goree and the Atlantic Slave Trade," 2 August 1995: <https://networks.h-net.org/node/28765/pages/31923/goree-and-atlantic-slave-trade> [accessed: 18 June 2020].

⁶⁷ Bayo Holsey, "Slavery tourism: Representing a difficult history in Ghana," in *The Oxford Handbook of Public History*, eds. Paula Hamilton and James B. Gardner (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 486-7.

administrative buildings. Under UNESCO's slave routes project, therefore, buildings with complex histories are re-imagined in ways that tie them solely to the slave trade. Tanzania and Malawi have sought to do likewise.⁶⁸

Inserting Livingstone into this narrative serves additional purposes. As Bayo Holsey has argued, 'slavery tourism' has often tried to provide a cathartic experience for visitors.⁶⁹ The guides at Ghanaian slave castles do this by asking visitors to pass through the 'door of no return,' and to turn around and look up at the doorway they just passed through to see a sign saying, 'door of return.' This is meant to symbolise that African Americans are welcome to return to Ghana, giving them a sense that the suffering that resulted from the trans-Atlantic slave trade has finally been prevailed over.⁷⁰ And thus, Livingstone's presence in Tanzania and Malawi's UNESCO applications serves a similar purpose for Euro-American tourists and local Christians.⁷¹ Visitors are invited to reflect on the man as a figurehead in East and Central African history who shed light on the slave trade and began the fight against it. They are not urged to think about Livingstone's, missionaries', and other Europeans' role in slave trades or their relationship to colonial oppression and its legacies. Thus, a non-critical approach to Livingstone's life and legacy is necessary to create catharsis to its fullest extent. It should be noted here that visitors to West African sites of commemoration for the slave trade are rarely invited to dwell on the legacies of inequality and racism from the slave trade either. Portraying Livingstone as a 'hero' follows patterns aimed at creating catharsis that are consistent with other UNESCO *Slave Route Project* sites elsewhere in Africa.

TANZANIA AND MALAWI'S UNESCO APPLICATIONS IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

A global perspective on Tanzania and Malawi's UNESCO applications necessitates returning to Scotland and the wider UK's recent and ongoing links with East and Central Africa. This especially applies to Malawi, which, since 2005, has been the focus of Scotland's 'Malawi Development Programme,' and whose students have been the recipients of scholarships named after David Livingstone and funded by the Scottish government. In Scotland, the origins of the Malawi Development Programme lie in attempts to build a global brand in the context of devolution since 1999. Malawi, with its

⁶⁸ See also: Fabian, "East Africa's Gorée," 95-114; Lindström, *Muted Memories*, 1; Kelly, *Consuming Ivory*, 161-5.

⁶⁹ Holsey, "Slavery Tourism," 485-6.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 486-7. See also: Sandra L. Richards, "What is to be remembered?: Tourism to Ghana's slave castle-dungeons," *Theatre Journal*, 57, 4 (2005), 617-38.

⁷¹ See also: Lindström, *Muted Memories*, 76-7.

‘historic’ links to Livingstone and its contemporaneous return to multi-party politics, represented a willing and viable partner.⁷² Additionally, the 2013 *Livingstone 200* celebrations, which commemorated 200 years since Livingstone’s birth, doubled as a forum to increase diplomatic and commercial links between Malawi and Scotland. As part of the celebrations, Dr. Joyce Banda, then President of Malawi, laid a wreath at the site of Livingstone’s tomb in Westminster Abbey, addressed the Scottish Parliament, visited the *David Livingstone Centre* in Blantyre, and attended a church service with Scotland’s then First Minister, Alex Salmond. In 2013, celebrating Livingstone became central to the Scotland-Malawi relationship.

The nature of this relationship is elucidated in comments made by Banda herself. During her visit to the *David Livingstone Centre*, she stated:

My visit to this historical country [Scotland] seeks to deepen the relationship between Malawi and Scotland since Dr Livingstone visited our country [Malawi]. I am looking forward to engaging the Scottish people on matters of trade, investment, and development, which Dr Livingstone aspired to achieve.⁷³

Banda’s statement was part of a wider appeal for more overseas investment in Malawi (styled as Livingstone’s ‘adopted country’) and came days after Salmond announced a £4.9 million (roughly \$8.3 million CAD) investment in 15 projects run by Scottish organisations there.⁷⁴ Given Malawi’s need for overseas investment and Scotland’s continual promotion of Livingstone’s name, Malawi’s politicians have no material interest in evaluating his life and legacies in a critical light – even if they wanted to. Indeed, it is more logical to reinterpret Livingstone’s three-C ideology as a call for ‘development’ – ‘commerce,’ at least, is popularly associated with development in the present (even if one can be critical of this discourse). In a globalised world characterised by economic inequality between nations, East and Central African policy makers lack the institutional

⁷² For more details, see: Ross, *Malawi and Scotland*, 197-217.

⁷³ “Malawi president Joyce Banda marks David Livingstone birth,” *BBC*, 18 March 2013: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-21820886> [accessed: 18 June 2020]; “Livingstone’s memory: Malawi leader visits Blantyre,” *The Scotsman*, 18 March 2013: <https://www.scotsman.com/news/world/livingstones-memory-malawi-leader-visits-blantyre-1584786> [accessed: 18 June 2020].

⁷⁴ Sèbe, “From postcolonialism to cosmopolitan nation-building?,” 947; “David Livingstone’s bicentenary marked by appeal from Malawi,” *The Guardian*, 19 March 2013: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/mar/19/david-livingstone-bicentenary-appeal-malawi> [accessed: 18 June 2020]; “Livingstone’s memory: Malawi leader visits Blantyre.”



Fig. 6. Dr. Joyce Banda, President of the Republic of Malawi, with Alex Salmond, First Minister of Scotland, in Blantyre, Scotland in 2013. By Scottish Government - President of Malawi visits Scotland, CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=99448429> [Uploaded: 17 Mar 2013; accessed: 21 Sep. 2013]

space to contest narratives about Livingstone that venerate him. The UNESCO applications, which centre a positive image of Livingstone in their construction, are also partly a reflection of this small institutional space.

This is not to doubt the sincerity of many East and Central Africans' veneration for Livingstone, especially in Malawi. Also during the *Livingstone 200* celebrations, Banda stated that Livingstone is 'adored by many Africans, particularly Malawians, who view him as a reformer and a liberator.'⁷⁵ This is particularly true of Malawi Christians, who represent around 80% of Malawi's population. In 2013, Malawi scholar and clergyman James Tengatenga discussed Livingstone in terms of him being his and other Malawi Christians' 'ancestor,' and as a key figure in the founding of the Christian population of

⁷⁵ "Malawi leader to address Scottish Parliament, seek more British aid," *The Nyasa Times*, 17 Mar. 2013, cited in: Sèbe, "From postcolonialism to cosmopolitan nation-building?," 949.

Malawi.⁷⁶ He then went on to describe those of Livingstone’s legacies that he saw as having ‘relevance for Malawi today,’ which included his links to medicine and exploration, as well as his advocacy.⁷⁷ As such, he positioned Livingstone and his legacies as crucial to Malawi’s development in the present and future. Thus, if Livingstone was central to an emergent Scottish sense of nationhood in the late nineteenth century, for many – especially Christian – Malawians, he has become central to their own sense of nationhood in the twenty-first. Scotland’s continued projection of Livingstone in its relationship with the wider world further reinforces this trend.



Fig. 7. Dr. Joyce Banda speaking in Blantyre, Scotland during the Livingstone 200 celebrations in 2013. By Scottish Government - President of Malawi visits Scotland, CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=99448432> [Uploaded: 17 Mar. 2013; accessed: 21 Sep. 2021]

⁷⁶ James Tengatenga, “Dr. Livingstone, I presume? The legacy of Dr. David Livingstone,” *The Society of Malawi Journal*, 66, 1 (2013), 3-4.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 21.

Somewhat similar patterns pervade the Tanzanian case, although they do not apply to the same extent. It is likely that the museums cited are aimed at domestic Christians as much as they are to foreign tourists.⁷⁸ However, Livingstone appears to have a less prominent place in national discourses in Tanzania than in Malawi. This may partly be explained by the influence of Tanzania's sizable Muslim minority, which represent around 30% of the national population (Christians represent just over 60%). Indeed, for example, the *Livingstone Memorial Museum* in Ujiji is situated in the middle of a vibrant Muslim community. My own research into Lake Tanganyika's nineteenth-century history showed that many of Ujiji's current inhabitants directly and vehemently contest the historical narratives portrayed in the museum.⁷⁹ Ideas of the 'Arab slave trade' do not align with the community's memory of the nineteenth century, and the museum represents a significant example of Tanzanian 'official' heritage not responding to a local community's needs and initiatives.⁸⁰ Additionally, the Scottish government has not sought a close relationship with Tanzania as it has with Malawi, which may be related to Livingstone's briefer visits there. Thus, 'global' factors underpinning UNESCO applications may not apply in Tanzania to the same extent as they do in Malawi. Even so, regional and continental factors, described above, help to maintain Livingstone in a prominent place in its museums.

CONCLUSION

So much has been written on David Livingstone over the years, not least in the last decade, that it may be surprising to some readers that anyone has found anything new to say. It is hoped that this article is not considered one that merely follows the same old tropes that portray Livingstone either as 'advocate' for Africans or as classic imperialist.⁸¹ Rather, this article has attempted to show the ways in which, after his death, representations of Livingstone have been used in 'nation-building' processes. Recent research has made Livingstone's importance to these processes clear in late-nineteenth-century Scotland, as well as in relation to missionary activities, abolitionist ideologies, and European imperialism. Perhaps the reason that more can be written on Livingstone is that he remains

⁷⁸ Sèbe, "From postcolonialism to cosmopolitan," 949.

⁷⁹ See, especially: Philip Gooding, *On the Frontiers of the Indian Ocean World: A history of Lake Tanganyika, c.1830-1890* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming), Ch. 1.

⁸⁰ Gooding, "Slavery, 'respectability' and being 'freeborn'," 149-51; Schmidt and Ichumbaki, "Is there hope for heritage," 26-51

⁸¹ For a critique of this paradigm from a scholar who comes down more favourably on Livingstone's legacy than most, see: Tengtenga, "Dr. Livingstone, I presume," 1-3.

vital to some of these processes in the present, not only in Scotland, but also in East and Central Africa. Thus, this article builds on the paradigms laid out by historians of Scotland and empire by showing the ways in which Livingstone is also being construed as central to aspects of Tanzania's and Malawi's conceptions of nationhood in the present.

The key lens of analysis in this context has been these two nations' respective applications to UNESCO for world heritage status for sites that commemorate Livingstone through museums, buildings, and trails. Both projects stress the importance of the slave trade in their nations' nineteenth-century histories, and they position Livingstone as central to its end. Neither trend is supported by serious historical analysis. However, there are several factors that help to explain the prominence of positive images of Livingstone in these two nations' projects. Enduring legacies from colonial education and abolitionist ideologies, the prerogatives of UNESCO and its *Slave Routes Project*, global inequality between nations, Scotland's ongoing projection of its role in the wider world using Livingstone's image, and genuine admiration for Livingstone amongst some African Christian populations are likely contributing factors. Livingstone, regardless of what many critical historians have written about him in the last 30-or-so years, remains a figure of reverence and central to the nation to many in Scotland and East and Central Africa.