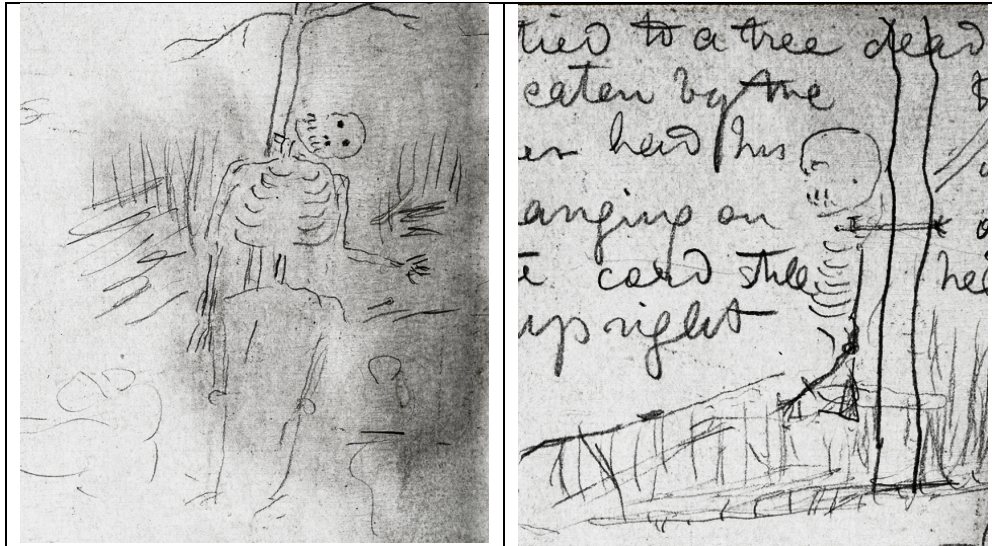


Press Embargo: Wednesday 24 June 2015, 11:30am GMT



‘This is the slave route ...’

Technology brings to light David Livingstone’s harrowing accounts of the East African slave-trade atrocities in the mid-nineteenth century

In 1866, David Livingstone, the Victorian explorer, found himself travelling on the African slave route. The stark words and sketches that describe the horror of the ‘slave grave’ are published today in their original format by *Livingstone Online*, adding a new page of history to the world’s largest collection of in-the-field letters and diaries of the most famous nineteenth-century British explorer in Africa.

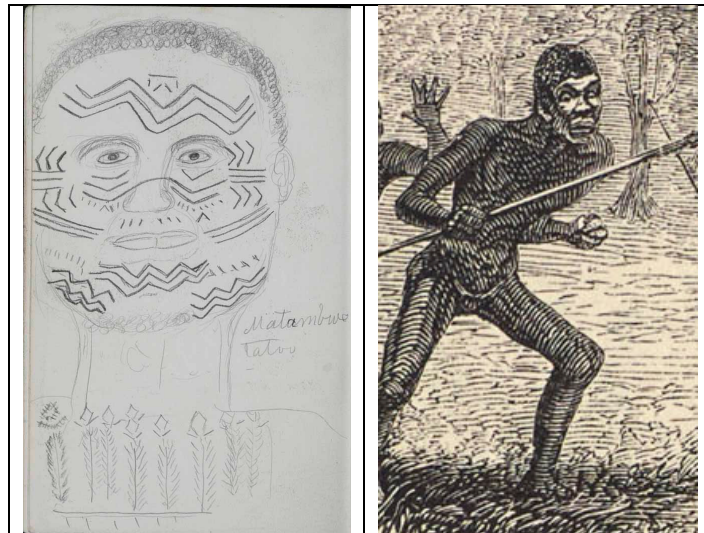
In his field diary Livingstone writes:

This is the slave route. [...] It is astonishing to see the numbers of taming sticks lying on the side of the path, taken off when the poor victim became hopeless of escape. [...] Here is the] spectacle of a woman tied by her neck to a tree and dead; [another] slave tied to a tree, dead and putrid, and partly eaten by the hyenas. Yet another slave had his or her head hanging on one side, but the cord still held the [dead] body upright. [...] We assert the guiltiness of those who sell as well as those who buy slaves, who in great part are destroyed before they reach their destination.

Dr. Adrian Wisnicki, Director of *Livingstone Online*, Assistant Professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Glasgow, says: ‘It is heart-breaking to read Livingstone’s eye-witness accounts and to see his simple stark images of brutality and death. In his determination to reveal the true horror of the East African slave trade, he became the nineteenth-century equivalent of a modern war reporter. Undaunted by the intense heat and humidity, by the

stench of rotting corpses, and by the ever-present threat of attack in this war-torn zone, he captured a harrowing vision of what we would now call “human trafficking.”

Importantly, Livingstone’s field diary sketches demonstrate how well he understood the individuality of people he encountered. A comparison between his authentic field-diary sketch of a tattooed African (left, below) conveys a reality that is far removed from the more polished and stereotypical images (right, below) that illustrated his published work.



‘Any other Western traveler would have fled the scenes of brutality,’ Wisnicki adds. ‘But Livingstone was no ordinary explorer. A Victorian polymath, he was a physician and surgeon by training; a geographer and missionary by trade; and an abolitionist by conviction of conscience. He dedicated more than 30 years of his life to Africa, to traveling among African people – often through war-torn zones – learning local languages and customs, and studying local medical techniques. He recorded everything he saw in meticulous detail.’

This year *Livingstone Online* (<http://livingstoneonline.org>) celebrates its 10th anniversary. After a two-year international collaboration involving over 20 specialists, the site now contains 7,500 original images of Livingstone manuscripts and will increase to 12,000 images by 2016. There is additionally a stunning collection of illustrative images that demonstrate the modernity and prescience of Livingstone’s passion for freedom and equality. The site also includes comprehensive outreach materials for students aged 9-13. The project team will mark the anniversary with a lecture at the National Library of Scotland today at 2pm.

‘For years,’ says Wisnicki, ‘scholars have debated whether Livingstone was a champion of Africans or a forerunner of the worst period in the history of the British Empire and its part in the “Scramble for Africa.” The truth is that history is an imprecise art and attempts to make such distinctions can be highly misleading. Our site takes a different approach. It provides an unvarnished insight into the historical reality of Livingstone’s Africa. *Livingstone Online* brings the public into direct contact with the celebrated traveller’s original words and images, as he recorded his impressions in the field. Livingstone is an important part of our shared global heritage. Now the public can experience his original written legacy first hand.’

Dr Isabel Bruce, Chair of the David Livingstone Trust, said "*Livingstone Online*'s pioneering work is making the explorer's manuscripts accessible – and available as a free global resource – for the first time since they were written in the mid-nineteenth century. The newest phase of *Livingstone Online* coincides with our award of a £3.5m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. We plan to transform the museum on the site of Livingstone's birthplace in Blantyre into an exciting new visitor attraction and research centre."

Ends

PRESS BRIEFING: National Library of Scotland (Edinburgh), Boardroom, 24 June at 11:30am. Reserve a place: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XR3X9CJ>

For further information contact:

- Dr Adrian S Wisnicki, Director, Livingstone Online, 07847 679 866 (UK number, 21 June to 27 June); at all other times +1 724-762-1242 (US number), awisnicki@yahoo.com
- Bryan Christie, Press and External Relations, National Library of Scotland, 0131 623 3738, b.christie@nls.uk
- **Free Public Event:** 'The New Livingstone Online' 24 June, 2-3pm, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh; booking: <https://auth.nls.uk/events/>

Notes to Editors

Press page: <http://www.livingstoneonline.ucl.ac.uk/materials.html>

Press page also includes the following materials:

1. **Images for Download (Hi-res and Low-res)** <http://tinyurl.com/oukxko8>
2. **Top 10 Things You Might Not Know About David Livingstone** <http://tinyurl.com/q3aeq69>
3. **Top 10 Memorable Quotations from David Livingstone** <http://tinyurl.com/or5khdK>
4. **Livingstone Online Fact Sheet** <http://tinyurl.com/nc6ujoc>
5. **David Livingstone Trust Fact Sheet** <http://tinyurl.com/onm7pk5>

Livingstone Online leadership

- Adrian S. Wisnicki, Director (University of Nebraska-Lincoln; also Honorary Research Fellow, University of Glasgow)
- Chris Lawrence, Director Emeritus (University College London)
- Megan Ward, Associate Director (Oregon State University)
- Kate Simpson, Project Scholar & Director of Outreach (Edinburgh Napier University)

The David Livingstone Trust/David Livingstone Centre: The David Livingstone Trust (DLT) was entrusted in 1930 with the ownership of the David Livingstone Centre at Blantyre, which includes the Listed Building of his birth, surrounding parkland, and the 2,000 piece David Livingstone collection. DLT is charged through its constitutional documents with keeping alive the name and memory of

David Livingstone at the site of his birth by making it available to the public, and providing an interesting, educational and enjoyable cultural experience.

Paragraph on National Library of Scotland: The National Library of Scotland is a major European research library and one of the world's leading centres for the study of Scotland and the Scots - an information treasure trove for Scotland's knowledge, history and culture. The Library's collections are of world-class importance. Key areas include digital material, rare books, manuscripts, maps, music, moving image and sound, official publications, business information, science and technology, and the modern and foreign collections. The Library holds more than 24 million items including seven million manuscripts, 700 years of maps, 400,000 music items and over 32,000 films. Every week it collects 5,000 new items. Around 80% of these are received free of charge in terms of Legal Deposit legislation.

Project sponsor: The project would not have been possible without the generous funding provided by the US National Endowment for the Humanities (<http://www.neh.gov>).

Digital publisher: The UCLA Digital Library Program (<http://digital2.library.ucla.edu/mission.html>), the publisher of the diary, coordinates the management and delivery of digital content in support of the UCLA Library's mission.