

# WILEY



---

Majwara's Account of the Last Journey and Death of Dr. Livingstone

Author(s): Frederick Holmwood

Source: *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, 1873 - 1874, Vol. 18, No. 3 (1873 - 1874), pp. 244-246

Published by: Wiley on behalf of The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers)

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1799786>

---

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

Wiley and The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of London*

Society that, at the earliest possible moment, all the letters and other papers at their disposal should be made available to the public through the Society's 'Proceedings,' and as early a day as possible would be fixed for the reading of some of the more prominent letters.

Rev. Dr. BADGER asked what amount the Government had placed at the disposal of the Society to meet the expenses of the funeral.

The PRESIDENT said that the sum was one which the Government had every reason to expect would be ample for the purpose; but, if it should prove insufficient, he was quite sure that there would be no shortcomings on the part of the Government, and that whatever was required would be supplied.

The following letter was read:—

1.—*Majwara's Account of the Last Journey and Death of Dr. Livingstone.*

By F. HOLMWOOD, H.B.M. Consulate, Zanzibar.

"MY DEAR SIR BARTLE,—

"Zanzibar, March 12th, 1874.

"No doubt you will hear from several interested in Dr. Livingstone; but, as I do not feel sure that any one has thoroughly examined the men who came down with his remains, I briefly summarize what I have been able to glean from a careful cross-examination of Majwara, who was always at his side during his last days, and Susi, as well as the Nassik boys, have, generally, confirmed what he says. I enclose a small sketch map, merely giving my idea of the locality, and have added a dotted line to show his route during this last journey of his life.

"The party sent by Stanley left Unyanyembe with the Doctor about the end of August, 1872, and marched straight to the south of Lake Tanganyika, through Ufipa, crossing the Rungwa River, where they met with natural springs of boiling water, bubbling up high above the ground. On reaching the Chambezi, or Kambezi, River, they crossed it about a week's journey from Lake Bemba, also crossing a large feeder; but, by Susi's advice, Livingstone again turned northward, and recrossed the Kambezi, or Luapula, as he then called it, just before it entered the lake.

"He could not, however, keep close to the north shore of Lake Bemba, owing to the numerous creeks and streams, which were hidden in forests of high grass and rushes. After making a détour, he again struck the lake at a village, where he got canoes across to an island in the centre, called Matipa. Here the shores on either hand were not visible, and the Doctor was put to great straits by the natives declining to let him use their canoes to cross to the opposite shore. He therefore seized seven canoes by force, and when the natives made a show of resistance, he fired his pistol over their heads, after which they ceased to obstruct him. Crossing the lake diagonally, he arrived in a long valley, and the rains having now set in fully, the caravan had to wade, rather than

walk, constantly crossing blind streams, and, in fact, owing to the high rushes and grass, hardly being able to distinguish at times the land, or rather what was generally dry land, from the lake.

"Dr. Livingstone had been weak and ailing since leaving Unyanyembe, and when passing through the country of Ukabende, at the south-west of the lake, he told Majwara (the boy given him by Stanley, who is now in my service) that he felt unable to go on with his work, but should try and cross the hills to Katanga [Katanda?], and there rest, endeavouring to buy ivory, which in all this country is very cheap (three yards of merikani buying a slave or a tusk), and returning to Ujiji through Manyema to recruit and reorganise.

"But as he approached the northern part of Bisa (a very large country), arriving in the Province of Ulala, he first had to take to riding a donkey, and then suffer himself to be carried on a kitanda (native bedstead), which at first went much against the grain.

"During this time he never allowed the boy Majwara to leave him, and he then told that faithful and honest fellow that he should never cross the high hills to Katanda.

"He called for Susi, and asked how far it was to the Luapula, and, on his answering 'three days,' remarked, 'he should never see *his* river again.'

"On arriving at Ilala, the capital of the district, where Kitambo the sultan lived, the party were refused permission to stay, and they carried Livingstone three hours' march back towards Kabende. Here they erected for him a rude hut and fence, and he would not allow any to approach him for the remaining days of his life except Majwara and Susi, except that every morning they were all desired to come to the door and say 'good morning.'

"During these few days he was in great pain, and could keep nothing, even for a moment, on his stomach. He lost his sight so far as hardly to be able to distinguish when a light was kindled, and gradually sank during the night of the 4th May, 1873.

"Only Majwara was present when he died, and he is unable to say when he ceased to breathe.

"Susi, hearing that he was dead, told Jacob Wainwright to make a note in the Doctor's diary of the things found by him. Wainwright was not quite certain as to the day of the month, and as Susi told him the Doctor had last written the day before, and he found this entry to be dated 27th April, he wrote 28th April, but on comparing his own diary on arrival at Unyanyembe he found it to be the 4th of May; and this is confirmed by Majwara, who says Livingstone was unable to write for the last four or five days of his

life. I fancy the spot where Livingstone died is about  $11^{\circ}25'$  s. and  $27^{\circ}$  E.; but, of course, the whole of this is subject to correction, and, although I have spent many hours in finding it all out, the Doctor's diary may show it to be very imperfect.

"I fear you will find this a very unconnected narration, but my apology must be that the Consul-General is not well, and the other Assistant absent on duty, and there is much work for me to do. Mr. Arthur Laing has been entrusted with the charge of the remains and diaries, which latter he has been instructed to hand to Lord Derby.

"Trusting that you are in the enjoyment of good health, and with great respect,

"Believe me, dear Sir Bartle,

"Your most obedient servant,

"FREDERICK HOLMWOOD.

"*To the Right Hon. Sir Bartle Frere, K.C.B., G.C.S.I., &c., &c.,*

"*President of the Royal Geographical Society.*"

MR. A. LAING (who accompanied the remains from Zanzibar to Suez) said he had had many opportunities of conversing with Jacob Wainwright, one of the Nassik boys sent up by Stanley from the coast to meet Livingstone, and his story confirmed what Mr. Holmwood had written. Jacob Wainwright said that the Doctor paid great attention to his boys, and was very much beloved by all of them. When any of them were sick, he would wait a day or two until they were able to move on; but, when the boys saw that he was failing, he would not allow them to wait for him, but, at first, rode on a donkey, and, when unable to undergo even that fatigue, was carried in a kitanda. Jacob Wainwright writes and speaks English very well, and has kept a full diary from the time of Livingstone's death to the arrival of the body at Zanzibar.

The following paper was then read by the author:—

## 2.—*On the Valley of the Ili and the Water-System of Russian Turkistan.*

By ASHTON W. DILKE.

THE shape of the valley of the Ili, like that of the present Khanate of Kokan, which it resembles very closely, is eminently calculated to make it play a very important part in the development of Russian Turkistan. At present the political situation of the country prevents the Russians from paying such attention to it as they probably will when some arrangement has been made with the Chinese; for, as yet, the Russians only consider themselves as holding Kuldja with the view of restoring it to the Chinese, if the latter ever regain their footing in Kashgar or the neighbouring parts of Mongolia, which is very doubtful. The natural frontier seems to be the watershed of the Ili, which is one of the Seven Rivers which give their name to the country, and which is cut off from the remainder of