



4 Makololo interregnum and the legacy of David Livingstone

From the 1820s to the 1860s, the name Makololo inspired a combination of fear, horror and reverence amongst peoples of the Kalahari between the Orange and Zambezi Rivers. Many Lozi people today, particularly historians and chiefs wear a rarely articulated but omnipresent psychological Makololo badge of identity, almost in the way of a medal. This is in spite of the fact that, according to all historical narratives, the Makololo, under their charismatic leader, Sibituane,¹ invaded the Lozi kingdom, occupying it and imposing their will for over thirty years before being spectacularly overthrown by a force of Lozis exiled to the north, in 1864.

While conventional Lozi history speaks of invasion, temporary domination and overthrow, there are few accounts of suffering or oppression endured under the Makololo yolk except in Caprivi. Furthermore, it is of great significance that the language imported by the Makololo, infused with many words and idioms of the Siluyana language of the Luyi, remained and became embedded after the "overthrow". Much of the organisational structure and customs of the Makololo were also permanentised after the restoration despite the apparent efforts of Lewanika to re-impose an autochthonous Lozi stamp on political organisation and traditional customs in Barotseland. Long-term political and cultural domination may result in a community adopting an alien language and culture by default as happened to the coloured communities of South Africa under the yolk of Afrikaner apartheid domination. Makololo rule, however, only lasted between 25 and 40 years, hardly long enough to become deeply engrained with the local population. Therefore, alternative explanations must be sought. The dichotomy between the concept of overthrow and rejectionism and the retention of an alien

¹ Various also spelt Sebetuane and Sebetwane. One account of the life of Sibituane is contained in D. F. Ellenberger, *History of the Basuto Ancient and Modern*, (Caxton, London, 1912), 305-330. Another fuller and perhaps more effusive version is told by Edwin W. Smith, "Sebetwane and the Makololo", *African Studies*, 15, 2 (1956), 49-74.



language and culture is clear to see but the obvious inconsistency embodied in this has not been properly tackled in the literature to date. The significance of this apparently contradictory dynamic is, nevertheless, very relevant to an adequate explanation and understanding of contemporary notions of Lozi citizenship and subjectivity. This chapter aims to explore the issue more fully.

From the same era, or more specifically from 1850-1860, the Scottish explorer and missionary, David Livingstone is fondly remembered by Lozis today as a beneficent influence on the Lozi nation despite the fact that this influence was really directed at the Makololo leadership and that he actually made only comparatively short visits to Barotseland around a hundred and fifty years ago. The legacy of warmth and positive feeling attributed to Livingstone is bound up with the construction of the contemporary Lozi nation, its cosmos, the signs and symbols of its culture and the face it seeks to portray to the outside world. And yet, Livingstone directed most of his energy whilst in Barotseland to the Makololo, the masters of the day and mediators of his progress, not to mention benefactor, victualler, securer and guarantor without whose help, Livingstone's star in Africa and Britain would not have shone so brightly. As Debenham points out, 'His visits being at a time when the Barotse people proper were under temporary subjugation to the Makololo, he did not pick them out as the well-defined people they were before and since...'² But Livingstone's commentary, his records, detailed observations, analysis and musings are absolutely essential to an understanding of the contradictory dynamics of the Makololo legacy. Livingstone tried to deal with the Makololo and Lozi (the Borotsi, later Barotse, as he called them) throughout as separate peoples, an aspect of the European colonial attempt to rationalise African peoples by tribalising them. Yet Livingstone realised that the Makololo comprised more than one people as will be seen and he was honest enough to admit that even in the midst of the Makololo

² F. Debenham, *The Way to Ilala: David Livingstone's Pilgrimage* (Longmans, Green and Co., London, 1955), p. 104.



interregnum when he was there, the boundaries between the two often became blurred and therein lies the key to understanding the aforementioned inconsistency. Without acknowledging the contribution of Livingstone, it is argued here, a true understanding of Lozi identity today could not be achieved

Arrival of Makololo influence

According to all historical narratives to date, Barotseland, or rather the Luyi state or nation, was invaded sometime between 1820 and 1840 by a branch of Basotho peoples that the Luyi originally referred to as the Akubu,³ later known as the Makololo, and was occupied by them until they were overthrown in 1864. This overthrow was apparently accompanied by great bloodshed with virtually every Makololo male being slain and the women only saved due to their attractiveness to Lozi men and young children for their usefulness in labour. This supposedly seminal event marks what is often referred to as the 'restoration' and the beginning of the second Lozi Kingdom.

The story of the Makololo, a composite horde brought together by the assimilation of groups conquered by the astute and charismatic Sibituane began around 1820 among the Bafokeng, a section of a Sotho group called the Patsa.⁴ Sibituane and his people migrated in stages from an area close to modern-day Lesotho as part of the dispersals referred to as the 'Difaqane' in south-eastern Africa, across the High Veldt, then west and north through present-day Botswana. Germond says it was the attention of the Amandebele (Matabele) of Mzilikaze that persuaded Sibituane of the need to move his people north: 'It was at this time... the dreaded Mosilikatse (another version of the name Mzilikaze) who forced Sebetuane to go towards the lake (Ngami).⁵ This stepped migration was articulated largely by war and the usurpation by the Makololo of existing

³ Information supplied by local Lozi historian Inengu Anayatele during interview October 14th 2002.

⁴ Smith, op. cit., p. 50.

⁵ R.C. Germond, *Chronicles of Basutoland: A Running Commentary of the Events of the Years 1830-1902 by the French Protestant Missionaries in Southern Africa* (Morija Sesuto Book Depot, Morija, Lesotho, 1967), p. 167-168



authority. The name Makololo only came about during the long migration north. One version has it that the name came about after Sibituane took a wife named Setlutlu of the Makollo people, a sub-section of the Batlokoa, who he had previously awarded to Lechae, one of his young commanders but who he was particularly enamoured with himself.⁶ It was this same wife who bore Sibituane's son Sekeletu who was later destined to succeed his father as Chief of the Makololo people and it was this same woman who Livingstone met at Naliele where Sibituane originally made his capital in Barotseland. From here, mostly referred to as Masekeletu, she was observed to have much influence over the commanders that Sibituane left in place in Bulozhi when he moved his capital south to Linyanti. The Makololo name crops up in another form elsewhere in Botswana. Chirenje refers to the first wife of the Bakwain chief Sebele who went by the appellation Machololelo, so the name seems to have a Tswana connection.⁷

Sibituane was renowned for his military capabilities and his leadership qualities. The very fact of so many victories for Sibituane over peoples who would have strongly resisted the transit of strangers through their lands suggests remarkable abilities. Sibituane's forces must have been considerable as the polities he challenged were known for their resilience and supported substantial populations. The Bamangwaketse, for instance, had never before been defeated in battle. Ellenberger attempts to explain this phenomenon, observing that 'other tribes contributed their quota, for he (Sibituane) defeated all the tribes he came across, without, however, seeking to take their country, but capturing their cattle, partly for food and partly to encourage their followers.'⁸ He also had a strategy of assimilating compliant, young, aspiring leaders from conquered peoples into the Kololo ranks. He was, reportedly, an inclusive leader, his

⁶ Ellenberger, op. cit., p. 307.

⁷ J.M. Chirenje, *A History of Northern Botswana 1850-1910* (Associated Universities Press, Cranbury, NJ, and London, 1977), pp. 237-238.

⁸ Ellenberger, p. 308.



strategies including the taking of wives and the making of appointments from the most outstanding among the vanquished groups under his jurisdiction, particularly the most promising young men who were trained and groomed for leadership.⁹ Livingstone described 'Kwenane, one of Sebetwane's indunas, apparently of Lozi stock...'¹⁰ This led to considerable respect for Sibituane and the Makololo system of rule.¹¹ As the missionary Adolph Jalla who wrote his history of the Barotse nation almost completely from the information passed to him by Lewanika and his senior Indunas who were present during Makololo rule, observed:

*Sibitwane himself was very kind to everybody, even to the poor people. Strangers were always hospitably received by him. Nevertheless he always expected and received the respect due to such a powerful chief as he was. When strangers are (sic) returned to their homes, they would say of him: 'He has a heart! He is wise!' As a result, the Barotse, the Batoka and all the other tribes continued to surrender to him. All were received and some were even given positions of importance.*¹²

It contrasted with the unadulterated terror inspired by the Matabele, a popular name given by the Shona to the amaNdebele or amaKumalo, an Nguni-speaking group organised as a military state under their warrior chief, Mzilikaze. This terror, it is suggested by Dickson, was partly due to the bloodthirsty devastation wreaked by the Matabele warriors upon whose undivided loyalty, allegiance and obedience their chief could rely.¹³ The Matabele, however, did not assimilate other groups as did the Makololo. During the middle decades of the nineteenth century, the Matabele terrorised virtually all other groups in

⁹ Ellenberger, *History of the Basuto*, 319.

¹⁰ I. Schapera (ed.), *Livingstone's Private Journals 1851-1853* (Chatto and Windus, London, 1960), pp. 28-29.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Jalla, *History...* op.cit., p. 26.

¹³ M. Dickson, *Beloved Partner: Mary Moffat of Kuruman* (Kuruman Moffat Mission Trust, Kuruman, 1989 [originally published by Gollancz, London in 1974]), p. 95.



central southern Africa between the High Veldt and the Kafue, having also migrated north from South Africa under pressure from both Boers and the amaZulu of Shaka from who Mzilikazi had broken away.¹⁴ The respect that arose between the Makololo and their new Lozi subjects undoubtedly contributed to their joint ability to withstand the onslaught of Matabele impis sent by Mzilikazi, an enemy that Sibituane had had to contend with throughout the trek from Lesotho and who settled in present-day western Zimbabwe, the northern part of which was said to have been previously plundered by the Lozi Litunga, Ngombala.¹⁵ This respect was largely premised on Makololo military skills and the specialist productive skills of the various peoples who made up the Lozi nation.

The direction of Makololo infiltration of the Lozi sphere of influence was from the south, where most major threats as well as opportunities were later perceived by the Lozi to originate. The original Luyi treated the south with great negativity even though it was from the west that their early enemies came (the Andonyi or Wiko). The Zambezi flows from north to south through Barotseland, bifurcating the Lozi kingdom and, states Lisimba,

*According to Lozi belief, the southward flow of the Zambezi symbolises the natural movement of everything in the world. All good things are supposed to originate from the north whereas the south...is reminiscent of a disposal facility.*¹⁶

Thus, until the arrival of European missionaries and traders from the south from the middle of the nineteenth century, there was a positive psychic flow from north to south. The river flowed from the north, clean and clear, and acted as a disposal facility, depositing Lozi waste somewhere to the south. From

¹⁴ W.H.J. Rangeley, 'The Makololo of Dr. Livingstone' *The Nyasaland Journal*, 10, 1 (1957), p. 60.

¹⁵ Mainga, *Bulozi under the Luyana Kings*, 70.

¹⁶ Mukumbuta Lisimba, *Lozi Names in Language and Culture* (Libreville, 2000), 146.



the north, the original Lozi groups are thought to have migrated and from the south, the traditional enemies of the Lozi originated. In addition, prior to the arrival of the Makololo, the chiefs of the south of Buluzi (Lwambi) often competed with the north (Namuso) for dominance and the Chiefs scattered around the periphery of the kingdom often exercised great autonomy and proved difficult to control.¹⁷ The invasion of the Lozi kingdom by the Makololo also began in the south although actual occupation was enacted from the east. The Matabele also threatened from south of the Zambezi and, from the arrival of the Makololo, both they and the Lozi looked primarily to the south for threats to the kingdom. However, the Makololo also came from the south and it is the contention of this study that as the boundaries between Makololo and Lozi became somewhat blurred as the nineteenth century wore on and the previous antipathy for anything from the south changed. Livingstone also appeared from the south as did later traders who became crucial to the trade in ivory for the Lozi as well as missionaries following in the footsteps of Livingstone who were to have such an impact on cultural life. Thus, it might be said that the positive gravitational pull of the south for the Lozi in the twentieth century, which came to haunt Kenneth Kaunda in the 1960s, originated with the arrival of the Makololo in the 1820s.

Sibituane first arrived at the borders of the Lozi kingdom after defeating Moremi of the Tawana on the banks of the Linyanti River where the latter had fled with his people. Here Sibituane remained for two years before his Tawana captives absconded and Sibituane roamed north east to the tip of Impalira Island near Kazungula, the traditional crossing point of the Zambezi. This helps to explain his otherwise surprising choice of Linyanti around 1849-1850 to set up a

¹⁷ Sesheke, meaning white sand, is situated on the Zambian side of the Zambezi where the river forms the border between Namibia (Caprivi) and Zambia (Barotseland). It has referred to a number of places over the years. Livingstone gave the name to the Zambezi when he first saw the river. A settlement called Sesheke first came to prominence under the Makololo. Its location changed at least once during the course of the second Lozi kingdom and was renamed Mwandi an popular Luyana place-name. Today's Sesheke is located approximately 50km west of Mwandi and a short distance from the Zambezi due to the drying up of a lagoon to which previously connected the town to the main river.



final capital after moving from Naliele to await Livingstone. It was an area he already knew and might expect visitors to arrive at from the south as he had done. After arriving at this eastern extremity of present-day Caprivi, Sibusane did not follow the Zambezi west and north but instead moved directly north on to the healthier highlands of the Batoka, where he pacified and incorporated large bodies into his regiments,¹⁸ and to the lands of the much less easily pacified Ila (Mashukulumbwe) whose forces were only defeated after a battle lasting three days and nights.¹⁹ Shortly after settling at Kapoli near Kalomo, Sibusane was also attacked by impis of Mzilikaze and on hearing of the lush plains of Bulozhi where large herds of healthy cattle grazed (the Batoka variety being somewhat smaller in stature) turned west to and entered the Bulozhi floodplain close to Namushakende, where he met and fought the forces of Mubukawanu, a son of Mulambwa, who had hurriedly mobilised Lozi forces to meet him.

These forces were, according to many reports, a ragtag bunch of 'southerners' exhausted after their recent successful struggle with the forces of the 'north' under another son of Mulambwa, Silumelume, over domination of the whole of Barotseland. Because of the bad feelings that still existed between north and south, the leadership of the 'north' had refused to help out Mubukwanu in the Lozi hour of need. It had been a classic north-south struggle that left the nation weakened just at the time of the arrival of the fitter and more battle-hardened Makololo led by a wise military strategist. In truth it was no contest and after a few battles the Lozi forces were completely routed although total subjugation of Barotseland took around five years to complete. Sibusane made his capital at Naliele but moved south again to Linyanti (present-day Sangwali) in Caprivi where he met Livingstone and Oswell in 1851.²⁰ From here in the elbow of the River Linyanti, which was for much of the year a swamp,

¹⁸ Rangeley, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

¹⁹ E. W. Smith and A.M. Dale, *The Ila-Speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* New Edition, Vol.1 (University Books, New York, 1968), p. 29.

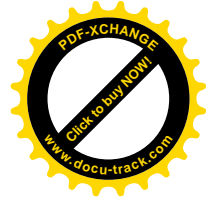
²⁰ Although his first Barotse capital had been Naliele in the heart of the floodplain, to which his body was returned after his death in Caprivi.



protection was afforded in the form of an environmental buffer zone in the event of attack from the south, in particular from the Matabele. This same environment also became the 'Achilles Heel' of the Makololo who, like the Europeans to follow, suffered greatly from multifarious afflictions and fevers associated with the swampland around the river.

Livingstone and Sibituane appear to have got on famously. The former's travelling companion, Oswell, was also present as Sibituane regaled the two with his life story. It is from Livingstone and Oswell that a large proportion of the life and progress of Sibituane and the Makololo are learnt.²¹ Unfortunately for Livingstone and indeed the Makololo and Lozi nations, Sibituane died soon after meeting Livingstone. In his *Missionary Travels* Livingstone ascribed Sibituane's death to sickness brought on by inflammation of the lungs but another story that Livingstone omitted is that Sibituane's sudden sickness followed a fall from a horse called Scarab that Livingstone had brought north with his expedition. This horse had reminded Sibituane of his younger years on the veldt and he had insisted on riding it at Linyanti taking ever tighter turns until he came off and landed badly. Maybe this excited the chest injury previously referred to. Livingstone did not treat the Makololo chief because, he says, of possible accusations of having caused the death, but Livingstone was devastated at the loss of an African chief, whose honesty, strength of purpose, flexibility, and pragmatism he admired greatly. Livingstone as missionary had quickly perceived that with Sibituane, there existed an opportunity to set up a mission station in a land that he had heard was fertile and productive and where the 'heathen' could be converted into Christians with the aid of a wise and strong chief who would co-operate. Although of a completely alien culture, Livingstone surely saw in Sibituane and the reverence and respect he commanded with he was perceived

²¹ Livingstone's account of time spent with Sibituane and his observations of the Makololo chief are contained in his *Missionary Travels*, pp. 83-90. Oswell's fuller account of the conversations between Livingstone and Sibituane are found in W.E. Oswell, *William Cotton Oswell Hunter and Explorer, the Story of his Life* 2 Volumes (Heinemann, London, 1900)



amongst all the peoples he had conquered or made treaties of peace and co-operation with, a little of what Livingstone aspired to for himself. As the latter opined:

He was decidedly the best specimen of a native chief I have ever met. I never felt so much grieved by the loss of a black man before; and it was impossible not to follow him in thought into the world of which he had just heard before he was called away, and to realise somewhat of the feelings of those who pray for the dead.²²

And in a letter to his family in Scotland:

I never felt so sorry for the death of a black man before. He became quite frank with us, and placed confidence in our good intentions at once. I still feel sorry...²³

The eulogies were not confined to Livingstone. 30 years later, the French missionary Coillard's carpenter Waddell was to note what his Lozi apprentices told him – that 'Sebituane was a wise ruler as well as a warrior. The land prospered under his sway!²⁴ To Luyi people too, there was a sense of admiration for this warrior who also possessed great leadership skills, an admiration that has been passed down to the present day: 'Sibituane...was one of the greatest Africans who has ever lived. ...I can say that Sibituane, by receiving Livingstone,

²² Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, op. cit., p. 90.

²³ I. Schapera (ed.), *David Livingstone: Family Letters 1841-1856 Volume Two 1849-1856* (Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, 1975 [Reprint of original 1959 edition published by Chatto and Windrush]), p. 144.

²⁴ M.A. MacConnachie *An Artisan Missionary on the Zambezi: Being the Life Story of William Thomson Waddell* (Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, Edinburgh, 1910), p. 59.



gave Christianity to his people... The Lozis should honour... the name of Sibituane'.²⁵

Sibituane appeared ready to give the sort of welcome to Livingstone that Lewanika, to a lesser extent, was prepared to give to the anglophile French missionary Coillard 35 years later. Why should this have been so? Clearly Sibituane was acutely aware of the presence of an expanding white European influence on the continent, that this influence fell into differing camps and that its inexorable spread presented both threats and opportunities that would need to be confronted by an African leader. Firstly, the Boers who Sibituane had had a painful and hostile encounter with, assisted by the Griquas, were extending the Trek-Boer frontier at the expense of various peoples in present-day Botswana. This destructive (as far as Africans were concerned) influence seemed determined to plunder Africa's land for itself and gave no quarter for the indigenous population except as its slaves. Livingstone also, had had a number of unfriendly encounters with the Boers between 1846 and 1850.²⁶ Livingstone, in turn, was perceived as a sympathiser with African interests and causes and, therefore, like his British counterparts at the Cape, hostile to the mongrel tribe, part white and at this time part coloured, known collectively as Boers or Afrikaners. The year after his meeting with Sibituane, Livingstone was to suffer losses at the hands of the Boers when his station and belongings at Kolobeng were sacked.²⁷

Secondly, there were the Portuguese from the west coast and their Ovimbundu and mixed race proxies loosely referred to as 'Mambari',²⁸

²⁵ William Simapuka, Standard VI pupil of Namwianga village Kalomo district, quoted from essay published by Livingstone Mail, 20th October 1941 as part of a literature competition, copies held in Livingstone Museum, examined October 30, 2002.

²⁶ J.W. Parsons, *The Livingstones at Kolobeng 1847-1852* (The Botswana Society and Pula Press, Gaborone), pp. 43-44 and 87-88.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 143-146.

²⁸ This term was used to refer to all African and mixed race traders from the west. As their main interest was in the recruitment of slaves by any means, they inspired a mixture of fear and suspicion in southern



representatives of whom were certainly thought to have been visiting the Lovale people, north of the Lozi kingdom from the time of Mulambwa.²⁹ When Livingstone and Oswell visited Sesheke 'Morantsiane (name given to a Sesheke chief to the present day), the principal person... shewed us also three English guns which they had procured from the Bajoko... who are either bastard or true Portuguese (here Oswell must have been referring to the Mambari)... they gave about thirty captives for them'.³⁰ Given the physical difficulties of accessing Buluzi and the surrounding areas due to higher floods and wetness up to the middle of the nineteenth century, it is conceivable that the Portuguese deliberately circumvented Barotseland to the north to avoid what must have seemed like formidable physical barriers. The term Mambari was used to refer to all African and mixed race traders from the west. As their main interest was in the recruitment of slaves by any means, they inspired a mixture of fear and suspicion in southern central Africa. The Portuguese at the coast were generally the eventual purchasers of this human commodity, and this affected the way they were perceived. Thus their value to the Makololo was confined to the trading of largely English-made clothes, and, most particularly, guns, in exchange for young male slaves after previously having had no success with the Lozi king Mulambwa who had appreciated the value of labour for Barotseland's system of economic production rather more greatly than the Makololo.

Finally there were the likes of Livingstone and Robert Moffat, pioneers of English influence in central southern Africa,³¹ who had developed something of a reputation for their spiritual and magical prowess (this included medical and technological skills) and their knowledge of the world, some of which they seemed prepared to introduce to the African peoples with whom they stayed.

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²⁹ Schapera (ed.), *Livingstone's Private Journals 1851-1853...*, op. cit., p. 41.

³⁰ Oswell, op. cit., p. 252

³¹ Robert Moffat who developed the mission station at Kuruman and befriended and ministered to Mzilikaze of the Matabele. Both Moffat and Livingstone were Scottish but even today, Livingstone is referred to in Barotseland as being of 'English origin.'



For African chiefs, this knowledge, predictions and advice they could offer about the outside world enabled some, such as Livingstone, to achieve the status of master diviners or seers. This led to some competition for their attention amongst different groups in southern central Africa and the apparent reluctance of many chiefs to allow missionaries to pass through when it was plain that they were planning to invest their knowledge and skills with other peoples who the former were often in competition with.

As already indicated, Sibuane was, like Livingstone, a pragmatist. When Livingstone arrived at Linyanti, he estimated Sibuane to be about 45 years of age although he was almost certainly older.³² The fact that the latter was prepared to go to great lengths to assist Livingstone's passage to Caprivi, including the sending of messages of goodwill and pleas for assistance to chiefs in Livingstone's path, suggests an urgent need felt by Sibuane. He regaled Livingstone and Oswell on the first night after their arrival with what appears to have been his full life story and made it clear that he wished to settle with his people in the Upper Zambezi Valley and surrounding area (his warriors having already indicated a lack of interest in removing from Barotseland). He was also tired of war and fighting and, according to Livingstone, viewed this early intercourse with the latter and Oswell as a precursor to obtaining 'sleep' (peace), partly by the acquisition of firearms,³³ which had been used to such deadly effect against the Makololo by the Griquas and Boers. Meanwhile, the Makololo's only threat came from the Matabele chief Mzilikaze, with whom Livingstone's father-in-law, Moffat was on very good terms having made a favourable impact during his first visit to Matabeleland in 1829-30.³⁴

Had Sibuane lived, it is likely that the relationship of mutual admiration and trust enjoyed by Moffat and Mzilikaze would have been repeated between

³² Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, op. cit., p.84.

³³ Schapera (ed.), *Livingstones Private Journals 1851-1853...*, op. cit., p. 39.

³⁴ Attested to by Dickson, op. cit., pp. 96-97 and .



Livingstone and Sibusane, the one difference being that the restless Livingstone would inevitably still have moved on in pursuance of fame and career. It is often suggested that the help later afforded to Livingstone by Sibusane's son, Sekeletu, and the lack of assistance afforded to the Helmore-Price expedition described below, was due to the notion that Livingstone's familial relationship to the Matabele chief would prevent further attacks on the Makololo by that group.³⁵ It seems reasonable to suggest that this notion was first propagated by Sibusane who must have passed on the strategy to his closest confidants including Sekeletu, who by all accounts lacked the foresight of his father. In the English missionaries, Sibusane surely saw, in addition to the aforementioned magical and spiritual talents and skills, the opportunity to secure the peace for himself and his people to settle and develop other means of wealth-creation to raiding and pillaging. Thus in Moffat and later in Livingstone, the seeds of British influence and the strangely enduring affectation of 'Britishness', still recognisable in the Lozi national consciousness today, was born.

With the death of its creator, the empire of Sibusane started to unfold. At his untimely and unanticipated departure for the afterlife, Sibusane's daughter Mamochisane was appointed successor in accordance with her father's wishes.³⁶ Clearly Sibusane had felt that the interests and future well-being of his cosmopolitan empire would be better served by a woman at this juncture and not by any of his sons or other male relatives, a perception that turned out to be a wise one. Alternatively, it could also have been that he had no sons of pure Sotho blood. It was Mamochisane, whose permission was sought and received from her home in the heart of Buluzi, who allowed Livingstone and Oswell to continue their travel and explorations in Caprivi and Barotseland. However, both were soon to leave and by the time of Livingstone's return in May 1853,

³⁵ For example, M. Gluckman, 'As men are everywhere else' *The Listener*, September 22 1955, p. 460 and R. Sampson, *The Man with a Toothbrush in his Hat: The Story and Times of George Copp Westbeech in Central Africa* (Multimedia Publications, Lusaka, 1972), p. 14.

Debenham, op. cit., p. 177

³⁶ Schapera (ed.), *Livingstone's Private Journals 1851-1853...*, op. cit., p. 29.



Mamochisane had stepped down in favour of her half-brother and son of Setlutlu of the Makollo, Sekeletu. Setlutlu, who is mostly referred to by Livingstone in *Missionary Travels* as MaSekeletu exerted much influence from Naliele over other male contenders for the chiefship of the Makololo such as Mbololo and was still living when Arnot went to stay in 1882.³⁷ This trend of powerful women exerting influence was very much in keeping with Luyi and later Lozi tradition. Mamochisane, meanwhile, had stepped down in favour of her unwilling half-brother Sekeletu, according to Livingstone due to the unacceptable conditions of the job imposed on her including the frequent taking and changing of husbands in order for none to get ideas beyond his station.

Sekeletu, who Livingstone estimated at only eighteen years of age on his visit in 1853,³⁸ was an unwilling aspirant to the chiefship of the Makololo for the very good reason that there were older, more determined competitors, particularly his half-brother Mpepe and uncle, Mbololo. These two already exerted considerable influence in Barotseland proper where they had command over the extensive productive capacity of Buluzi. Indeed, Livingstone claims to have prevented an attempt on Sekeletu's life by Mpepe which subsequently led to the death of the latter, an event that Livingstone only faintly protested at.³⁹ Sekeletu would only permit Livingstone to travel to Buluzi in his company, even after the death of Mpepe and, seeing that this was Sekeletu's first journey there after his appointment, it seems fair to suggest he was still very much afraid of being attacked and killed; Livingstone's presence affording some degree of protection.

³⁷ Baker, op. cit., p. 101.

³⁸ Livingstone, *Missionary Travels...*, op. cit., p. 178

³⁹ Schapera (ed.) op.cit., p. 220.



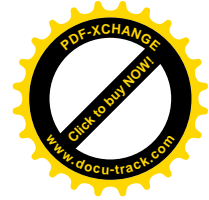
It is suggested elsewhere that Sekeletu's reasons for remaining close to the unhealthy marshes and swamps of Linyanti,⁴⁰ was primarily a preventative measure in the event of further attack by the Matabele impis of Mzilikaze. Yet, should the Matabele have wanted to continue their incursions, they would have been more likely to have gained access by crossing to Impalira island from what is now Kasane in Botswana and travelling south west through Caprivi on drier well worn paths or by crossing the Zambezi at Kazungula like most travellers and attacking Caprivi-Sesheke from there before going on to Bulozhi. This study contends rather that a large part of the explanation for Sekeletu's reluctance to leave the apparently unhealthy living environment at Linyanti was the ongoing dangers and threats perceived to exist to Sekeletu's authority amongst contenders and their followers based in Bulozhi. The bloody struggles between Sekeletu's confidant and close associate Mamili and his uncle Mbololo that ensued after Sekeletu's death in 1863 gives credence to these fears. Nonetheless, Sekeletu retained power for twelve years and it was only really due to ill-health (he is thought to have died from leprosy) that the power he inherited indirectly from his father really waned. Livingstone noted on his final visit in late 1860, that the Lozi princes, including Sepopa, Sebeso, Litia and his son, Lubosi, had left the Makololo headquarters for the north once Sekeletu's powers had become enfeebled.⁴¹ This was a portent of events to follow. It seems likely that Livingstone would have realised the implications for the remaining dynasty of Sbituane of the demise of Sekeletu and his frustration at the failure of the latter to move to the healthier highlands was all too apparent.

The Helmore-Price débâcle

During the reign of Sekeletu, an event occurred of the utmost import to the way in which both the Makololo and indeed Livingstone were to be perceived

⁴⁰ Sekeletu's capital, also known as Linyanti at the time, was built at the site of the present day village of Malengalenga.

⁴¹ Livingstone, D. and C. *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambezi and its Tributaries* (John Murray, London, 1865), p.272.



by the outside world up to the present day. This was the catastrophe which befell the Helmore-Price expedition appointed by the London Missionary Society (LMS) to follow in Livingstone's footsteps and set up a mission station amongst the Makololo that became the subject of legend long after the its demise.⁴² Caught up in the enthusiasm aroused by Livingstone's reception in London on his return there in at the end of 1856 and partly on account of his urging, the LMS decided to approve two new missions, one to the Matabele, prompted by Livingstone's father-in-law, Robert Moffat, and one to the Makololo, without waiting for an expected report from the more experienced Moffat on the prospects for success of such a mission.⁴³ Holway Helmore, who had long experience of missionary work at Lekhatlong, was appointed in 1858 to lead the expedition, assisted by Roger Price and John Mackenzie. Somehow, whether from Livingstone's prompting it is not clear, the impression had been created that Livingstone would assist the expedition by meeting it at Linyanti and would use his good offices to get the new mission off to a good start with the Makololo. Livingstone, meanwhile, resigned from the LMS at the end of July 1857,⁴⁴ and, according to Kilby, had distanced himself from the Society's new project, finding no time in his full schedule of writing and speech making to offer assistance or advice.⁴⁵

Livingstone left England in March 1858 for Quelimane to take up a new position as British consul there and conduct a new expedition up the Zambezi, partly to return some Makololo carriers sent to assist him to the east coast by Sekeletu in 1855 and partly to discover new avenues for trade, commerce and

⁴² A good account of the Helmore-Price missionary expedition which inveighs quite strongly against Livingstone is contained in S.E. Kilby *No Cross Marks the spot* (Galamena Press, Southend-on-Sea, 2001). Another valuable interpretation of events that takes a more open-handed approach is that of M.I. Slater, *Isabella Price, Pioneer* (The Livingstone Press, London, 1931). Kilby is a descendent of Helmore and Slater of Price. Other worthwhile accounts and analysis are contained in a study of Roger Price by missionary and anthropologist Edwin W. Smith in his *Great Lion of Bechuanaland: The Life and Times of Roger Price, Missionary* (Independent Press for the London Missionary Society, London, 1957), pp. 20-135 and in C. Northcott, *Robert Moffat: Pioneer in Africa 1817-1870* (Lutterworth Press, London, 1961), pp. 296-308.

⁴³ Seaver, op. cit., p. 310.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 296.

⁴⁵ Kilby, op. cit., p. 74.



Christianity. The Helmore and Price arrived at Cape Town in August 1858 to commence the long trek to the Zambezi stopping off at Moffat's mission station at Kuruman along the way. Against advice, Helmore decided to take his wife and two of their children. Price followed suit while Mackenzie decided to remain behind in Kuruman until his own wife had given birth. The journey, in summer, to the Zambezi from Kuruman was to prove extremely exhausting with the party suffering from severe dehydration and loss of animals as they crossed very arid parts of the Kalahari Desert. Indeed they were very lucky to arrive alive on February 13th 1860 at the banks of the Linyanti River where they were apparently ignored for some days by the Makololo on the other side. Eventually Sekeletu sent across for them and their wagons were dismantled and ferried across two branches of the Linyanti River for onward transport to Sekeletu's capital at present-day Malengalenga.

Here the Helmore-Price party commenced to become very sick and tried unsuccessfully to persuade Sekeletu to allow them to move to healthier ground nearer the Victoria Falls. Communications were not helped by two major factors. Unlike Livingstone, no European in the party, with the exception of Helmore, could speak a word of the Sesotho language. Even worse, neither Livingstone nor his wife Mary were amongst the party.⁴⁶ As Price himself recorded, 'The King and his people were very much enraged at his (Livingstone's) non-arrival.'⁴⁷ Livingstone had parted from Sekeletu last in November 1855 provisioned, staffed and loaded with ivory to use as currency by the latter for an expedition to the east coast. Livingstone's retinue consisted of 114 men who he left at Quelimane, 100 km. north of the mouth of the Zambezi while he went home to fame and some fortune in England. Thus, Livingstone had been away from Linyanti for some four years and three months when Helmore and Price arrived. Since his departure, several white men had visited Caprivi and Barotseland and none had

⁴⁶ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

⁴⁷ Quoted by Slater, *op. cit.*, p. 162.



any information to impart on Livingstone's whereabouts.⁴⁸ Sekeletu's patience may have been wearing a little thin. Meanwhile, Sekeletu's position of influence over the rest of Barotseland north of Sesheke remained precarious not least as a result of his increasing incapacitation due to sickness. In the journal she kept before her death, Isabella Price also records that the Makololo in Caprivi did absolutely no work but employed what she refers to as the Makalaka to serve them.⁴⁹ These, it seems, unlike in the rest of Barotseland, were held in servitude. Makalala was a derogatory term applied to all conquered peoples but in this case it must have referred to the Mayeyi who were an unassertive people living in the area prior to the arrival of either the Lozi or Makololo and often treated in a subordinate way by other groups such as the Tawana. It would appear that Sekeletu and the remaining pure-bred Makololo in Caprivi were becoming unpopular in a way that would never have occurred during the reign of his father, Sibituane.

Soon, members of Helmore's party started dying. First to succumb was Price's Bechuana leader, then Helmore's son followed by the Prices' baby, another of Helmore's children, a girl, a Tswana teacher they had taken along then the Helmores themselves. Eight in all died before Price took the decision to leave for the south as soon as possible in order to save himself, his wife and the remaining two Helmore children. Sekeletu, Price claims, was less than helpful and demanded most of the remaining supplies brought by the party. What was not handed over was taken in the night. Thus Price finally escaped with the remainder of the party, one wagon and little else other than the clothes they wore. Isabella Price expired on the trek south while Roger Price and the remaining Helmore children were saved by the hospitality of Lechulatebe who ensured that the third leader of the party, Mackenzie, who was now heading north to join the others, was brought to Price and the two returned to Kuruman

⁴⁸ Slater, *op. cit.*, p.143.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.141.



with a horrified Roger Moffat who had also ventured north on a rescue mission after hearing reports of the disaster.

The whole project had been a disaster and recriminations soon started flying. Unsurprisingly most of the blame was heaped on the shoulders of the Makololo chief, Sekeletu, particularly by Price.⁵⁰ Livingstone comes in for considerable criticism from all quarters for having encouraged the expedition in the first place and failing to be on hand to smooth relations with the Makololo., but most criticism levelled at Livingstone is for the callous and off-hand way in which he dismissed the rumours of poisoning and appeared to exonerate the Makololo, particularly his benefactor, Sekeletu, appearing to believe everything the latter told him.⁵¹ Helmore is criticised for having insisted on taking families into desert and fever areas in the hot summer without any idea of the way this would slow down progress and put everyone's lives at risk.⁵² Moffat was blamed for not raising the doubts that he harboured about the readiness of the Makololo for a new missionary expedition and, as an experienced trekker himself, not having insisted the party included a wagon purely for the carriage of food and water.⁵³ Price, it seems, disliked Sekeletu and made it obvious.⁵⁴ He also showed poor judgement when dealing with local people; he even admitted to having pulled even pulling a pistol at one time in his anger. The Makololo accused him of much more to Livingstone. The impact of the disaster was to soil the reputation of the Makololo. It is an event that is still talked about in Caprivi; most older people in the region have heard of the event, particularly in the region of Malengalenga and Sangwali.

Rather more significant for the purposes of this work is what happened when Livingstone finally reached Sesheke where Sekeletu had moved to in

⁵⁰ Smith, *Great Lion...*, op. cit., p. 119

⁵¹ Kilby, op. cit., pp. 178-190, Seaver, op. cit., p. 377

⁵² Northcott, C. op. cit., p. 297.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 296-297.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 305.



Helmores old wagon from which he rarely emerged in August 1860. Livingstone, it is said, remonstrated most strongly with Sekeletu for his poor treatment of the Helmore-Price expedition (not something he admitted to in public),⁵⁵ and told the chief that he would be punished by God for the mistreatment of His servants. Meanwhile Livingstone and Kirk, his travelling companion of the day, tended to Sibituane's leprosy (although both doubted the accuracy of this diagnosis of Sekeletu's ailment),⁵⁶ which appeared to improve while they were there. However, once Livingstone had departed again, the condition deteriorated and Sekeletu died in 1863. From that point onwards, Livingstone achieved mythical status amongst the Lozi and indeed other groups as a truly powerful deity who could intercede with his God to bring down punishment on those he considered to have done wrong. In this case the story goes that Sekeletu offended the God of the white Englishman and Livingstone himself was able to call up the wrath of that God which is why Sekeletu died and the Makololo are no more. As Waddell recorded in the 1880s, Livingstone's reported forecast of divine punishment was:

...a prophecy speedily fulfilled. On the death of Sekeletu... quarrels ensued and the Makololo were massacred to a man. Christians among the Bechuanas and Bamangwatos put the question "Where are now the powerful Makololo? Has not God avenged the death of his servants?"⁵⁷

Price also used the term 'divine punishment' to describe what he referred to as the destruction of the Makololo and he went on to minister in Botswana for a further 40 years.⁵⁸ Even today, this power attributed to Livingstone is still talked

⁵⁵ Jalla, *History: Traditions and Legends...*, op. cit., p. 32.

⁵⁶ Seaver, op. cit., p. 371.

⁵⁷ MacConnachie, op. cit., p. 61.

⁵⁸ Smith, *Great Lion...*, p. 135.



about.⁵⁹ Of course it is a useful way to try to reinforce the idea of 'overthrow' of the Makololo as a power holding the Lozi nation in check which Lozi royals and historians have employed to great effect with Europeans who wrote on Lozi history over the years. It also sanctified the memory of Livingstone in Lozi mythology.

As to the truth of what led to disaster, the poisoning theory was really set in train by local people, the Mayeyi, who told Price that Sekeletu had poisoned the beer and ox and later told Chapman the same thing.⁶⁰ Price promoted this theory volubly in Cape Town insisting at the time that they had all been poisoned by Sekeletu by his sending adulterated beer and an ox to them,⁶¹ a theory confirmed by a bushman returning from the area in a conversation with Mackenzie.⁶² He would not accept the alternative and rather more obvious explanation that, having arrived physically exhausted in the middle of a fever-ridden area, that it was fever that had picked them off so mercilessly, although he is said to have changed his mind in later years.⁶³ But there are four factors worth mentioning here; one, that the concept of natural death was unknown in these parts at the time, therefore magic, bewitching, poisoning or some other dark art were often employed to explain otherwise unexplainable deaths, a factor referred to by Slater.⁶⁴ Secondly, Sekeletu was reportedly as baffled as everyone else by the way these white Europeans appeared on his doorstep and almost immediately commenced dying, not at all what he had been expecting of missionaries after the remarkable Livingstone and his proven magical skills. So concerned for the health of the ladies was he that he sent nursemaids to assist

⁵⁹ Conversations recorded in meetings of Indunas held to discuss history of Lozi for this work in the Cashandi of the Litunga la Mboela, Mokwae Makwibi in Muoyo, August 2001, recalled the way that Livingstone had demonstrated the power of the Christian God in punishing the Makololo.

⁶⁰ Kilby, op. cit., p. 280-281 and J. Chapman, *Travels in the Interior of South Africa Volume 2* (London), p. 61.

⁶¹ Kilby, op. cit., pp. 280-281 and Smith, *Great Lion...*, op. cit., pp. 416-417.

⁶² Smith, *Great Lion...*, op. cit., p. 111.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 416.

⁶⁴ Slater, op. cit., p. 165



both Anne Helmore and Isabella Price.⁶⁵ Thirdly, while Sekeletu was undoubtedly disappointed with the failure of Livingstone to appear, it seems unlikely that, knowing how closely connected the Helmore-Price expedition was to Livingstone and that they were expecting to meet the great man at Linyanti any time, he would have deliberately set about wrecking his reputation in this way. After all, Sekeletu would have been unlikely to damage the good offices he enjoyed with the one man he perceived as being capable of securing his safety. A counter-theory to this is that many Mambari were in the vicinity at the time who desirous of an elimination of missionary and therefore, anti-slaving influence advised the impressionable Sekeletu against a warm reception of the party. Finally, the whole party were in a very weak state on arrival at Linyanti, and immediately exposed to the mosquitoes of the swamps.

Slater and Rangeley says the Makololo themselves were suffering badly from fever at the time,⁶⁶ that even Sekeletu was down with the sickness and that it had been a particularly bad year for harvests and there was a serious shortage of food and other supplies. Price, in his address to a Congregational Church audience in Cape Town claimed the opposite and objected strongly to Livingstone's allegations that Helmore and particularly he, Price had behaved poorly to Sekeletu and the Makololo and that Price had simply not liked the chief, therefore, his interpretation of events was somewhat coloured by this. Whatever the truth, it was an event that, henceforward, had a strong bearing on the way the Makololo were viewed externally, that Livingstone and the later white missionaries would be perceived internally and indeed, that the British would be perceived generally in the future.

*We Mayeyi know well of the Helmore-Price. We keep their memory here.
They were treated badly by Sekeletu and the Makololo. We too, were*

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 144.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 138 and Rangeley, op. cit., p. 63-64.



*treated badly by Sekeletu who was a bad chief who killed many of our people in a terrible way and sold our children to the Mambari. We were his slaves. White people should not blame us but come and settle amongst us and bring development that has been given to other tribes. We have suffered all these years because of what happened to Monare's (Livingstone's) people. Even now, foreigners from Namibia treat us as their slaves.*⁶⁷

Clearly there are other undercurrents flowing through the above statement but interpretations of the events of 1860 still seem to be impacting on the way local people, in Caprivi at least, identify their predicament in the world today.

The 'overthrow'

Virtually all writers up to the present day have attempted to impose a cut-off point at which the Makololo were overthrown by the Lozi and during which, all the Makololo men were slain and the women, greatly admired amongst the Lozi for their light skins and plump figures, distributed amongst Lozi men for wives.⁶⁸ The way that some of these accounts have been written are breathtaking in their naivety. Gibbons, for example says that 'The fateful night arrived, and when the sun rose, with the exception of one small band, every Makololo man, throughout the length and breadth of the land, lay stiff and cold',⁶⁹ suggesting that an order to kill the Makololo could have been passed throughout the entirety of Barotseland and Caprivi in one night. And, while killings almost certainly took

⁶⁷ Conversation recorded during meeting in Malengalenga Kuta, Caprivi, 07-09-2001 while obtaining authority to visit gravesites in vicinity.

⁶⁸ For example, the Czech ethnographer, Emil Holub writing in the 1870s in E. Holub, *Seven Years in South Africa* (London, 1881), 143-144, Frederick .S. Amot in his diary of 1881, quoted in Ernest Baker, *The Life and Explorations of Frederick Stanley Amot*, (London, 1921), 64 and 81, F.C. Selous, 'Twenty years in Zambesia', *Geographical Journal*, 4, 1, p. 302, and A. St H. Gibbons, *Africa from North to South through Marotseland*, Volume I, (London, 1904) 150-151 and M. Fisch, *The Caprivi Strip during the German Colonial Period 1890-1914* (Out of Africa, Windhoek, 1999), p. 51. A notable exception is Kabunda Kayongo, *Reciprocity and Interdependence: The Rise and Fall of the Kololo Empire in the 19th Century* (Lund, 1987).

⁶⁹ Gibbons, op. cit., p. 150.



place due to the number of times an account crops up, the logic for this apparent ethnic cleansing is not so clear-cut.⁷⁰

As previously stated, on the death of Sibituane in 1851, his daughter Mamochisane was appointed Chief according to her father's wishes but that she quickly handed over power to her brother Sekeletu.⁷¹ After the death of Sibituane, the whole nature of Makololo rule was to change. Sekeletu confined himself with a group of diehard pure-bed Sotho supporters to Caprivi and Sesheke districts, a far less productive region than Buluzi, hence the well-being of the Makololo suffered considerably due to poverty and disease although raiding did continue to a lesser extent than under Sibituane. Rangeley asserts that the Makololo, despite being fever-stricken, still managed to retain the obedience of the Batoka, Lozi, Subia, Banyai and Ila (Mashukulumbwe) among others.⁷² But this is too general a statement. Different factions among the Makololo, with the assistance of others, retained dominance over other groups and it is unlikely that the old core in Caprivi had much dominance over the north of Buluzi during the latter half of Sekeletu's reign. It is significant that the Makololo first raided the Ila but the Lozi continued to do so under the rule of both Sipopa and Lubosi-Lewanika.

The Nkoya historian Shimunika describes separate attacks on the Nkoya peoples, east of Buluzi by armies of Sekeletu and Mbololo, both described as 'Mwene (chief) of the Kololo'.⁷³ Meanwhile, then, other remnants of the old Sotho dynasty of Sibituane were preparing to vie for control of power. As Sekeletu and the Caprivi-Sesheke Makololo weakened, so the strain on the original local population (Subia, Yeyi) increased. This would also be when the

⁷⁰ Although it was certainly the case for a group of pure Makololo who fled south to the *Bamangwato*, see T.M. Morgan, *Eleven Years in Central South Africa* (London, 1872), 355.

⁷¹ D. Livingstone, 'Explorations into the Interior of Africa', *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, 24, XIX (1854), 293 and *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa* (London 1857), 179-184.

⁷² Rangeley, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

⁷³ Quoted in W. van Binsbergen, *Tears of Rain: Ethnicity and History in Central western Zambia*, (Kegan Paul, London, 1992), p. 384-385 and 391.



Lozi princes left the area for the north and a reunion with the Lukwakwa faction of Lozi exiles. They were not the only ones to leave. Rangely notes that other notable Makololo, sent to Livingstone at Shupanga, lower down the Zambezi, to collect medicines for the treatment of Sekeletu, refused to return and stayed with another band of Makololo who devolved from the group of bearers who had assisted Livingstone in 1855-6.⁷⁴ Thus, on the one hand the scene was set for internal strife involving the Sibituane's descendents and, on the other, for the so-called 'overthrow' of the Makololo.

Thomas Baines, who was exploring south of the Chobe at the time heard in March 1862 that Sekeletu 'is now suffering from a leprosy which is causing his extremities to rot away and must shortly bring him to a painful and miserable end'.⁷⁵ Yet these reports must have been exaggerated because the Makololo chief only died in August 1863, probably of leprosy or eczema for which Livingstone and Kirk had, with some effect, been treated him.⁷⁶ On the death of Sekeletu 'many of his people have dispersed, and the rest have received a message from Moselekatse (Mzilikaze), desiring them to put their kraals in order, for the country is his and he is coming to it'.⁷⁷ In the absence of a leader with the stature of Sebetuane, one can but imagine the chaos and panic in Sesheke that would have followed the arrival of such a message from the Matabele King who was feared by all peoples in the region. After bitter fighting, Sekeletu was succeeded in turn by two of his uncles; first Mamile, who was thought to have bewitched Sekeletu; and then Mbololo, who became very unpopular due to his reputation for cruelty and who was overthrown by a force led by a Lozi contingent from the north in August 1864. This, according to conventional historiography, marks the end of the Makololo period, the 'Restoration' of the

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 76.

⁷⁵ T. Baines, *Explorations in South-West Africa* (Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts and Green, London, 1864), p. 417

⁷⁶ D. Livingstone, 'Extract from Despatches of Dr. David Livingstone 1858-1861', *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, 3 (1861), p. 292.

⁷⁷ Baines, op. cit., p. 449



Lozi monarchy and the start of the 'Second Kingdom' as the Lozi prince Sipopa, a son of Mubukwanu and grandson of Mulambwa, was invited to take over the Kingship.⁷⁸

It is also when the aforementioned massacre of all the Makololo men is supposed to have occurred. However, it is known that the Makololo had intermarried extensively with that section of the Lozi population who had remained in the valley. It is also known that two of the Lozi kings who followed what has been termed the "Makololo interregnum", Sipopa and his nephew Lubosi (pronounced 'Luboshi' and later to become known as Lewanika 'the uniter'), spent most of their formative years in the courts of Sibituane and Sekeletu and were both admired and respected until the infighting that took place at the end of Sekeletu's reign when they escaped to the north. Lubosi also developed a strong friendship with Litali,⁷⁹ a son of Sekeletu and, as already stated, is thought to have been present at the meetings of Livingstone with Sekeletu; the Lozi prince, Sipopa, almost certainly having been there.⁸⁰

During the time of the 'overthrow', many Makololo escaped, some moving south to the hoped-for sanctuary of Lecholatebe of the Tawana, who having old scores to settle with the Makololo of Sekeletu, promptly had them killed. Others went south east to Matabeleland where they were, perhaps unexpectedly, given sanctuary, while a third contingent fled eastward along the Zambezi to the lands of the Tonga where they were received and later met by Morgan in the late 1860s.⁸¹ The point here is that these Sotho Makololo were easy to identify physically being '...of that dark-yellow or coffee-and-milk colour, of which the

⁷⁸ Jalla, 'History: Traditions and Legends...' op. cit., p. 33.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 41.

⁸⁰ Sipopa (also known as Lutangu) was a son of the former Lozi King, Mubukwanu, ruler of the south of Buluzi, based at Nalolo whose fight with his brother Silumelume, ruler of the north, for overall control of the Lozi kingdom after the death of their father, Mulambwa, led to the weakness that allowed the Makololo to subsume the Luyi kingdom so easily

⁸¹ T.M. Morgan, *Eleven Years in Central South Africa* [2nd Edition], (Frank Cass, London, 1971 [originally published by John Snow, London, 1872]), p. 100.



Makololo are so proud, because it distinguishes them considerably from the black tribes on the rivers.⁸² As far as the rest of the Makololo, of many mixed groups assimilated by Sibusane, who had, it is contended here, largely merged into the host populations of Barotseland, it is unlikely that their menfolk were all killed. Jalla, who as previously explained gleaned all his history from Lozi royal and elite respondents, describes the tensions that arose between those Lozi who had acquiesced to Makololo rule (and wanted to replace Mbololo with Litali, the aforementioned son of Sekeletu and childhood friend of Lubosi-Lewanika), and those who had not (principally from Lukwakwa and Nyengo).⁸³ He also reports that it was a Makololo who was sent north to inform Sipopa of the successful overthrow of Mbololo.⁸⁴ Lozi society assimilated them and the customs and language they brought with them. Indeed some Lozi contenders for power later accused Sipopa of retaining the customs of the Makololo.⁸⁵ Yet it was Sipopa and his faction who prevailed. Thus, the dichotomy of rejectionist overthrow and the retention of language and customs become less inconsistent and more explainable.

The centrality of Caprivi and Sesheke to Makololo rule

What is clear from this period is that Caprivi and Sesheke districts, previously conquered and subordinated by the Luyi prince Mwanambinje and King Ngombala, became the pivot of decision making of the Makololo polity. Livingstone narrates that the population of Linyanti during his visit in 1853 was some 6-7,000,⁸⁶ a figure inconceivable today when even the odd thousand comprising the entire population of a group of villages in the area find it hard to subsist. Clearly, an enormous amount of tribute must have flowed in to support the population during the heyday of Makololo rule supplemented by the proceeds

⁸² Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, op. cit., p. 179.

⁸³ Jalla, op. cit., p. 35.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, op. cit., p. 178



of raids. In effect, all of Barotseland was ruled from this region for a good many years under the Makololo and was again later, in the latter years of the Lozi King Sipopa's rule.⁸⁷ Eric Flint illuminates also how, under the Makololo, Linyanti and Sesheke became the hub of trade, particularly in ivory, between Barotseland and traders from the west and east coasts of Africa as well as from the south.⁸⁸ It was also primarily in Caprivi that the Lozi (actually a name given to the Luyi peoples by the Makololo) drew most Makololo blood. A telling extract from Holub, sojourning at the court of Sipopa just ten years later in 1874, recounts the version ruling at the Lozi court at that time in Sesheke:

The discords that sprung up amongst the people during his reign (Sekeletu's) opened the way for the vanquished Marutse (Lozi) tribe to resume arms against them (the Makololo), and that with such success that after several battles the Makololos residing between the Chobe and the Zambesi, already decimated by disease, were reduced to two men and some boys, while their male population south of the Chobe, who had numbered more than 2000, were in like manner brought down to a mere handful.⁸⁹

Despite the demise of the Makololo, Caprivi-Sesheke was never to lose its strategic and economic importance to Lozi rulers even when it had been excised from the main kingdom by colonial machinations in 1890. Gluckman observed:

Only after the Kololo invasion did they (the Lozi Kings) maintain a full administrative staff of Lozi at Sesheke...The Lozi had no need to administer tightly their provinces, it was warlike incursions and the coming

⁸⁷ Including a portion of Sipopa's reign.

⁸⁸ E. Flint, 'Trade and Politics in Barotseland during the Kololo Period' *Journal of African History*, 11, 1 (1970), pp. 83-84. Flint speaks of Caprivi in this article as the 'southern triangle'.

⁸⁹ Holub, *Seven Years in South Africa*, 143.



*of Whites from the south which caused them to continue the Kololo administration at Sesheke.*⁹⁰

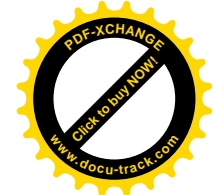
Today, Lozi historians and indeed most Lozi people in Zambia are acutely aware of their Makololo connections and equally of the fact that the Kingdom was ruled from Caprivi and later Sesheke. In 2002, it was even claimed by certain members of the Barotse Royal Establishment at Mwandu (old Sesheke) that the royal centre there was second in importance only to the present capital Lealui/Limulunga and that it was convention for the resident prince there to succeed to the Litungaship, an issue that caused some discomfort in the royal capital.⁹¹ The claim was probably mischievous but the point was being made that serious authority had rested in the far south. Oddly, in Caprivi today, the seat of power of the Makololo, few local historians are able to provide accounts of the Makololo and what reminders there are such as burial sites are not tended as they surely would be if they were in Zambia. This, it is argued later, is partly because of differing European colonialisms and differing levels of development but it is also due to the enduring bitter feelings held by local people at their mistreatment while under the Makololo yolk, a mistreatment not shared to the same extent in Buluzi to the north.

The legacy of Makololo rule

So what does the story of the Makololo interregnum provide in terms of understanding notions of Lozi citizenship and subjectivity today? First of all, we know that Lozis recall being invaded by the Makololo but this, they say, was the nation's own fault seeing as it was split and riven by faction-fighting along the lines of the old north-south divide. A situation of weakness occurred, as is so

⁹⁰ Gluckman, 'Economy of the Central Barotse Plain', 96.

⁹¹ This arose while the writer was conducting field research Aug–Nov 2002 when the Prince at Mwandu was celebrating 25 years of Chiefship there. According to Lozi tradition, Nalolo/Muoyo, as capital of the southern kingdom is second in importance after Lealui/Limulunga, followed by Libonda, which was the first recognised capital of the Luyi. Both of these centres have, however, since the late nineteenth century, been ruled by women reducing their potential to challenge authority at the capital.



often the case, in the aftermath of the death of a strong and charismatic leader as Mulambwa must have been to have reigned for fifty odd years. Thus it was easy for Sibuane and his horde to invade Barotseland at this time. The Lozi nation split into three as mentioned above. Two portions, Nyengo and Lukwakwa, left the Barotse geographical stage whilst the third stayed on and 'worked with' the administration of Sibuane. It would appear that many Lozis did not find Makololo suzerainty insufferable as there are no recorded rebellions or uprisings. This is not to say that Sibuane did not find it necessary to harass and attack the Lukwakwa faction, the more outspoken of the two groups which left Buluzi after the arrival of the Makololo. And indeed it was from Lukwakwa that the overthrow of the Makololo took place. Nyengo, it seems, sat on the sidelines a little and, significantly, was not perceived as a threat by Sibuane or Sekeletu and did not share in power after the 'overthrow.'

Asked to explain the apparent passivity with which Lozis accepted Makololo rule, the more defensive local historians will say that the domination and control of the Makololo regime was too severe to be challenged. The more sanguine admit that, on the whole, life during Makololo rule, under Sibuane at least, whilst disciplined, was orderly and peaceful, something it certainly had not been prior to the arrival of the Makololo. It also appears likely that Lozi and Makololo worked together to repulse the Matabele threat. Plus, it is quite clear that, when Makololo rule became intolerable in the aftermath of the death of Sekeletu, Lozis quickly mobilised under the leadership of royal princes who had spent time in the Makololo courts although the overthrow was said to have been driven by the Lukwakwa faction but this time supported from within Buluzi. True, the purebred Makololo men were said to have been weakened by the environment of Barotseland, but presumably, had a Makololo leader of the calibre and strength of personality of Sibuane emerged after the death of Sekeletu, it seems unlikely that such a violent overthrow would have taken place. Significantly, the leader of the revolution, Sipopa, or Lutangu as he was earlier



known, had been a Lozi prince in the Makololo court in Caprivi. Only during the sickness of Sekeletu, probably in 1859, had he left for Lukwakwa.

The way in which Lozi nationalist historians interpret the Makololo interregnum is indicative of the need to preserve certain elements that form a common theme throughout this work. Most are quite happy to admit that the kingdom was in turmoil and chaos after the death of Mulambwa. The civil wars that took place left the kingdom weak and vulnerable. Therefore it was not difficult for the Makololo chief Sibituane to overcome them. Then, while some found it impossible to stay under domination and left for Nyengo and Lukwakwa, others, it is alleged, *allowed* the Makololo to rule while this was in Lozi interests. Then, when things became untenable, the Makololo were overthrown. The important aspect here is the notion of being in control or when not in control, this being seen as a temporary aberration, a deviation from the norm that is quickly put right at an appropriate time.

Where this study is at variance with the accepted histories provided by Europeans and Lozi historians alike is the implied cut-off between Makololo rule and the restoration of the Lozi kingdom together with implicit Lozi values and customs. As implied earlier, the Makololo had ceased to consist of a single group long before their arrival in Barotseland. They were, in effect, a mongrel horde, much as a result of the aforementioned deliberate policy of assimilation undertaken by Sibituane. Livingstone stated clearly that

'the Makololo were composed of a great number of other tribes... The nucleus of the whole were Basuto, who came with Sebituane from a comparatively cold and hilly region in the south. When he conquered various tribes of the Bechuanas, such as Bakwains, Bangwaketze, Bamangwato, Batauana etc, he incorporated the young of these tribes into his own stock. Great mortality by fever having taken place in the



original stock, he wisely adopted the same plan of absorption on a large scale with the Makalaka (Lozi and other groups resident in Caprivi and other parts of Barotseland).⁹²

Nettleton, in his study of the Tawana also describes how,

While the Makololo held the Batawana in subjection there was intermarriage between the two races and today (1926) there are members of the Batawana who bear the tribal marks of the Basuto and some of them have a great deal of Basuto or Sekololo blood in their veins. They are regarded with some sort of suspicion by the pure Batawana and are sometimes called "Baloi" ('foreigner').⁹³

The original light-skinned Bafokeng were in the minority and dying out fast by the mid 1850s. We know that several Lozi princes were captured by Sibusane, yet these do not appear to have been held against their will:

So we found him with even the sons of the chiefs of the Barotse closely attached to his person; and they say to this day, if anything else but natural death had assailed their father, every one of them would have laid down his life in his defence. One reason for their strong affection was their emancipation by the decree of Sibusane, "all are children of the chief".⁹⁴

Mubukwanu, who fought and was defeated by Sibusane on a number of occasions, turns up in Smith's narrative, receiving the submission of the amaZulu

⁹² Livingstone, *Missionary Travels...*, op. cit., p. 197.

⁹³ G.E. Nettleton, 'History of the Batawana tribe up to 1926: Ngamiland District', pp. 8-9, National Archives and Records of Botswana, Gaborone, paper originally prepared for the Colonial Office by Nettleton while he was Resident Magistrate at Maun, 17th April 1926, later revised as part of 'History of the Ngamiland Tribes up to 1926', published in *Bantu Studies*, 8 (1934).

⁹⁴ Livingstone, *Missionary Travels...*, op. cit., p. 197



chief, Nxabe who had been attempting to defeat Sibituane. This suggests a degree of co-operation that existed after the imposition of undisputed Makololo rule amongst those Lozi who did not go into exile at Lukwakwa and Nyengo. We also know from Livingstone that Imasiku, chief among the Lukwakwa exiles, expressed a desire for peace and alliance with the Makololo,⁹⁵ although his main interest in Livingstone was probably the latter's potential value as a mediator both between his Lukwakwa faction and that of his brother Imbwa at the Nyengo as well as with the Makololo leadership to the south. On the death of Sekeletu, who as all seem to suggest, did not have the leadership qualities of his father, yet still commanded enough respect to remain in power for twelve years, an unhappy interlude of strife and infighting took place between the remaining purely Makololo contenders for power. This resulted in the temporary rise to power of first, Mamili, and then Mbololo amidst considerable bloodshed. Meanwhile, the Lozi princes Litia, Sebeso and Sipopa had taken their leave of Sekeletu during the latter's sickness when a general incapacity seemed to take hold of the Makololo leadership in the south with Sekeletu moving to Sesheke where Livingstone found him in 1860 suffering from either leprosy or a severe form of eczema. Here was a golden opportunity to rest power from the remaining Sotho minority.

The Lozi prince Sipopa (Lutangu) was brought to power in 1864 after forces from the Lukawakwa faction under the leadership of Njekwa stormed the Makololo strongholds in the south and presumably had put to death the remaining pure Makololo who could have in any way threatened the establishment of the new order. Sipopa was invited to take the Kingship after victory was obtained. This is when the infamous slaying of every Makololo men took place. But how would it have been possible to weed out who was Makololo and who was not. Even when the Makololo arrived in Barotseland they appeared as considerably more than just Basuto peoples as already demonstrated. By

⁹⁵ Livingstone, *Missionary Travels...*, op. cit., p. 277.



1864, there would have been precious few of purely Sotho blood. The Makololo had been producing children with Lozi women since the 1830s. The aforementioned Lozi princes had been brought up in the Makololo courts at Linyanti and Sesheke. Bonds of friendship had been formed. Certainly the children of previous chiefs were killed but this was standard practice amongst the Makololo at least and what we see after the restoration is a continuance of many of the customs and practices inherited from the Makololo including the use of the Makololo language which had been impregnated by many Siluyana terms. Thus, apart from a very few old guard Basotho, the Makololo, as the very mixed bag of peoples that they were on arrival in Barotseland, had effectively merged with the rump of the Lozi who had remained behind in the aftermath of their defeats by Sibituane. This can be the only reasonable explanation of the continuing use of Sikololo, later to be known as Silozi, one of the defining legacies of Makololo rule.

It is very pertinent that it was Sipopa, the Lozi prince who had been on such good terms with the Makololo hierarchy who was brought to the Kingship and not one of his peers from Nyengo or Lukwakwa. Sipopa took Sibituane's daughter and chosen successor, Mamochisane to wife after the restoration battle,⁹⁶ interpreted by Kilby as a symbol of new Lozi dominancy.⁹⁷ Perhaps, but Mamochisane was widely respected throughout Barotseland and Sipopa could well have simply been following a tradition that Sibituane and Sekeletu had followed whereby, when a chief had died, the wife or wives of the deceased were inherited and cared for by the new chief. In addition to this, Holub noted in 1876 that Sipopa's favourite wife was the Makololo Lunga and that his daughter had married a surviving Makololo man by the name of Manengo giving the lie to the assertion that all Makololo men had been killed.⁹⁸ Later on, Sipopa's

⁹⁶ John Mackenzie, *Ten Years North of the Orange River: A Story of Everyday Life and Work among the South African Tribes from 1859-1869* (Edmonton and Douglas, Edinburgh, 1871), p. 244.

⁹⁷ Kilby, op. cit., p.246.

⁹⁸ Holub, 'Seven Years in South Africa...Vol. II', op. cit., p. 221 and 228.



nephew, Lubosi, who was to take the Lozi kingdom on into the twentieth century, and his twin sister Matauka who was to rule the southern kingdom from Nalolo for some 40-50 years were other survivors who spent many years in the Makololo courts.

As previously stated, this work contends that the Makololo, varied people that they had become, had in the course of two generations, already largely merged with the host Lozi population, itself very varied due to considerable absorption of peoples over the preceding two centuries. With so much intermarriage, who could tell which young male was a Makololo and how this would have been defined? Certainly, the confusion proved too much for European writers such as Gibbons at the turn of the century who remarked that Chief Mamili of the southern portion of Caprivi, an Induna who had carried Livingstone's message of greeting to Sbituane had told him that only one Makololo had accompanied Livingstone to the Mozambique coast in 1855-6.⁹⁹ As previously indicated, Livingstone had said clearly there were 115. This was Gibbons confusing the original Sotho Makololo with the hordes of other groups assimilated by the Sbituane into the Makololo and largely now going by the name of their people's conqueror and new patron. More likely the males killed were the remnants of the pure-bred Sotho stock and any other men and their families who threatened the security of the new order which did indeed consist of a return to the Luyi dynasty existent at the death of the great King Mulambwa prior to the arrival of Sbituane.

The Lozi absorbed and learnt much of Makololo culture and political organisation and vice versa. That said, some aspects were never adopted, such as circumcision and matrilineal descent. Apart from the remaining dominant Sotho Makololo rump, the two communities appear to have lived in Buluzi largely

⁹⁹ A. St. H. Gibbons, 'Explorations in Marotselamd and Neighbouring Regions,' *Geographical Journal*, 17 (1901), p. 118.



in peace and harmony. So much of Makololo organisation and culture continued and exhibited itself in the Lozi nation of the twentieth century that it must be true to say that from Caprivi north to the junction of the Zambezi with the Kabompo, Makololo and Lozi became as one. Missionary Coillard, who had worked in Basutoland prior to moving to Barotseland, observed in 1878 that 'the Barotse are true Basuto'.¹⁰⁰ Of course, the two exiled remnants of the Lozi nation continued to exist as separate Luyi entities but it is significant that after the restoration in 1864, it was Lozi princes who had been groomed in the Makololo court of Sibituane and Sekeletu who took power and not those in Nyengo or Lukwakwa.

The aforementioned unspoken aura and respect that exists in Lozi circles today has been omnipresent since the days of the overthrow. The French missionary Coillard, who had read much of Livingstone's work cast some light on the issue when he noted with some surprise in 1878 that:

*All their (Lozi) chiefs have been the servants or slaves of Sebetoane and Sekeletu. It is from these Makololo potentates, of whom they always speak with affection and the highest respect, that they received their education, and formed their ideal of the dignity, manners and power of a sovereign. The warrior tribe of Barotsi, once subdued, had become the most devoted of all to the interests of the Makololo; and if Mpololo (Mbololo) the cousin and successor of Sekeletu had not shown himself so capriciously cruel, they would never have thought of revolting.*¹⁰¹

Again in 1885 Coillard noted that:

¹⁰⁰ Coillard, *On the threshold...*, op. cit., p. 59

¹⁰¹ Ibid.



The respect and esteem that the Barotse still have for their old masters is something extraordinary. A chief would not consider himself a chief, if he had not a Makololo for his first wife; and when you visit him, he never fails to introduce her to you. This explains how the Sesuto language has kept its pre-eminence in the country.¹⁰²

Coillard found that this enthusiasm extended to a desire amongst Lozi chiefs to receive and host the Basuto evangelists that he had brought with him from Basutoland. Even today, older Lozi in particular are always fascinated and enthusiastic to see photographs containing images of the first Basuto evangelist, Aaron. It is also worth noting that this writer found several men in Barotseland and Caprivi who claim or were perceived by others to be 'Makololo' today. Whilst the accuracy of their claimed ethnic lineage may be open to some scrutiny, it is significant if not ironic that people living in the midst of a previously conquered nation should choose or allow themselves to be perceived as members of the former unless there was an ambience attached to that nomenclature.

The legacy of Livingstone

The legacy of David Livingstone's interaction with the Makololo, the Lozi and the Upper Zambezi Valley is harder to define although equally tangible. Livingstone is remembered as the bringer of Christianity and a crusader against the evils of the slave trade associated with the Portuguese and their agents, the Mambari (whom were often referred to as Portuguese) from Angola. When Lozi historians speak about Livingstone, there is an ambience of goodness in the stories they tell of him. He became known variously as 'Nyaka' (doctor) and 'Munali' by which name he is largely remembered today. This word is a Luyana word meaning 'golden cob of maize', some say to signify the fact that he was, in so many respects like the Luyi themselves,¹⁰³ though his theory does not take

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 177.

¹⁰³ Information supplied by Lozi historian Inengu Ananyatele, see previous reference.



account of the fact that maize had not been consumed by the Lozi until the arrival of the Makololo. Meanwhile Munali became a name used as place names and for school etc. around Zambia. There is also the very clear reference to his Englishness, a badge of identity which Livingstone himself traded on. Indeed he seems to have played down the very nature of his native Scottishness and desired his children to be brought up without even a Scottish accent.¹⁰⁴ Yet Livingstone displayed much of the austere upbringing of his native land, the Clyde region of post-industrial revolution Scotland.

Livingstone was a remarkable man who created such a deep and lasting impression that his footprints amongst the Lozi are largely in the realm of myths as are those of famous kings, chiefs and warriors of the past. He was a scientist with a thirst for new knowledge, interested in botany, zoology, ornithology and anthropology quite apart from his profession as a doctor of medicine. Debenham describes Livingstone as an intense lover of nature: 'Even while a slave to his ambition he was laying all nature under tribute, finding everything he saw of absorbing interest.'¹⁰⁵ He was also an accomplished geographer capable of taking measurements with rudimentary equipment such as the width and depth of the Victoria Falls with amazing accuracy. He was an excellent recorder and notetaker leaving behind an unequalled and most valuable collection of observations of the Makololo, Lozi and others. A useful demonstration of this is the note Livingstone made in a letter to his family during his first short sojourn to Barotseland in 1851 of a conversation in which he was told of:

..boats of considerable size might sail on it [the Zambezi], for Seunturu [Mulambwa] (the chief whom Sebotoane expelled) built a boat of planks

¹⁰⁴ Debenham, op. cit., pp. 15-16 and Seaver, op. cit., pp 13-23.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 16.



*sewn together and roofed in with white cloth, which required 20 men to paddle it...*¹⁰⁶

Here, Livingstone was clearly being told about the *Nalikwanda*, the Lozi state barge traditionally constructed under the direction of succeeding Litungas since the earliest kings. It was used to transport the king during the time of Kuomboka when Lozi people left the Buluzi floodplain for the margins while the annual inundation brought by the Zambezi (which Livingstone observed would make the installation of a mission station in the plain impossible) was at its height. That Livingstone picked up and recorded this information is testament to his ability to hold conversations with local people that elicited valuable data. It also shows that he was able to converse freely with the Lozi while under Makololo domination. Meanwhile, it provides today the earliest recorded confirmation of a ceremony thought to date back to the time of the first Lozi king Mboo.

Still, like many explorers and missionaries of his time, Livingstone was a driven man with a giant sized ego, austere in many ways and not given to personal excess; yet he was prepared to sacrifice the stability of his family and family life on the altar of his ambition. With other Europeans and whites in general he was impatient, intemperate, unforgiving and often ill at ease unless they were his audience or promoters. This was the case most particularly on Livingstone's own stage, Africa, where he was never happier than when he was on the road, cut off from the stifling rigidity and constraints of mid-nineteenth century European society. With his own employers, the directors of the London Missionary Society who endured numerous intemperate tirades, Livingstone

¹⁰⁶ Contained in a letter to the Livingstone family written and sent from the banks of the 'Zouga' River, October 1851 in Schapera (ed.) op. cit., p. 149.



outraged and sometimes overplayed his hand to the point where relations became very strained.¹⁰⁷

With Africans by contrast, Livingstone appeared most relaxed, easy-going and cheerful, displaying an otherwise undeveloped sense of humour while showing a surprising flexibility with regard to practices that often offended his Christian missionary principles. Livingstone appeared to feel more at home with Africans than with his own kind. For sure there was definite chemistry between himself and Sbituane, whose passing Livingstone appeared to mourn so greatly.¹⁰⁸ There was also genuine affection for Sekeletu though Livingstone was the first to point out that the son possessed neither his father's charisma nor wisdom.¹⁰⁹ Livingstone appears to have respected strength and survival skills, and despised weakness in any quarter. As far as the Makololo were concerned, Livingstone's impression of them seemed rather contradictory. Sometimes, when speaking with the missionary gaze of his day he would refer to the difficulty he had in living with 'heathenism,' consisting of dancing, roaring, singing, jesting, anecdotes, grumbling, quarrelling and murdering of these children of nature,¹¹⁰ and to their depravity.¹¹¹ At other times, and presumably for a different audience he would note the Makololo's honesty,¹¹² generosity (to him),¹¹³ hospitality, and their being 'by far the most intelligent and enterprising of the tribes he had met.'¹¹⁴

In 1859, the explorer and adventurer, Andersson, whilst at the Okavango near Libebe, was told that 'a party of white men... the previous year... attacked the Ovaquangari nation (most likely the Tawana) and carried off much cattle,

¹⁰⁷ Seaver, op. cit., pp. 376-377.

¹⁰⁸ Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 90.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

¹¹¹ Seaver, p. 192.

¹¹² Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 308.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 493.

¹¹⁴ Seaver, op.cit., p. 373.



besides making captives of men women and children. The aggressors, however, were not white men but that scourge of central South Africa, the Makololo'. The outraged Andersson later accused Livingstone of naivety:

*...this tribe (the Makololo) have two faces for Dr Livingstone. There is no doubt he possesses great influence over them, a fact... proved by the very handsome manner in which they have treated and assisted him; and when that admirable man is on the spot... everything goes smoothly, but, I suspect... the old Swedish saw:- when the cat is away, the rats dance on the table – is at once verified.*¹¹⁵

Andersson muses that missionaries generally suffer from a blindness brought on by their calling and the drive to see only what they want to see in people to satisfy their spiritual cravings and the aspirations of their promoters, and clearly includes Livingstone in this category. Whilst he may have been right about Livingstone's apparent blindness to the excesses of the Makololo in his reporting this would not have been due to naivety. Livingstone was really very astute and interpreted well the disposition of the African peoples he interacted with. Rather he chose to overlook the excesses of the Makololo because they were his benefactors and helpers.

In quieter reflection, Livingstone calls the Makololo 'just a strange mixture of good and evil – as men are everywhere else',¹¹⁶ and would admit that 'it would not be difficult to make these people appear excessively good or uncommonly bad'.¹¹⁷ In terms of his overall relationship with Africans, Livingstone was a pragmatist, keenly aware that Africans, particularly African leaders, were vital instruments in the quest to achieve his ambitions and that an inflexible attitude

¹¹⁵ C.J. Andersson, *The Okavango River: A Narrative of Travel, Exploration and Adventure* (Hurst and Blackett, London, 1861), pp. 194-195.

¹¹⁶ Gluckman, 'As men are everywhere else' op. cit., p. 461.

¹¹⁷ Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, op. cit., p. 510.



to these people would effectively stymie his chances of becoming successful or famous. So often Livingstone appears ambiguous in his attitude to African peoples, on the one part impatient, opinionated and arrogant and on the other, particularly where the evils of the slave trade were concerned, paternal and protective; he could also be respectful and even caring. This ambiguity perhaps reflects a component of Livingstone's true character, driving towards the apparently the apparently unattainable and prepared to gloss over or omit those aspects of his own behaviour and those who supported him while unhesitatingly condemning those he felt to be a risk to his life mission or the world's perception of him.

Africans generally treated him as they would a chief, a powerful doctor of medicine yes, but rather in the sense of a wizard, a magician, capable of what were to them, superhuman feats. For the Makololo and therefore for the restored Lozi kingdom as well, Livingstone set the standard by which all whites would be judged. According to Gluckman, Livingstone became a key figure in Makololo foreign policy.¹¹⁸ This seems fair but it is the contention here that he was also seen as having the potential to bring enrichment and development to the Makololo after he was able to prove the value of ivory at Luanda with Makololo witnesses. He became a mythological icon represented as a bringer of good to the nation and destroyer of evil. Prins picks up on this theme, remarking on how Livingstone was later explained in terms of magic and chiefship.¹¹⁹ The missionary F.S. Arnot, another Scotsman who was the first real missionary to the Lozi from 1882-4 and had admired Livingstone as a child (having met and played with Livingstone's own children), found the remembrance of Livingstone fresh in the memory of most who had been near to him: 'Although... more than 20 years since he was last seen there, yet the remembrance of him, his ways, his words, his physique, is as fresh as yesterday... Many of the older men had whole

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 459.

¹¹⁹ Prins, *op. cit.*, p. 192.



sermons of his off by heart.¹²⁰ So great was the reverence and the immediate comparisons made between himself and his illustrious predecessor that Arnot found the burden almost onerous: 'I being of the same nation, and no doubt having a national likeness to him, was called by the same name, Monare. This I at first resented...'¹²¹ Coillard also ruefully observed in 1878 that

*If some travellers have engraved their names on the rocks and tree trunks, he has engraved his in the very hearts of the heathen population of Central Africa. Wherever Livingstone has passed, the name Moruti (missionary) is a passport and a recommendation. Must I confess that I have been humiliated not a little to see myself fitted with a doctor's cap by these gentlemen of Sesheke? Whether I will or not, I am Nyaka (doctor), Livingstone's successor. Thus it is that the first missionary that comes by is invested with the boots of this giant.*¹²²

Thus it can well be imagined that part of Livingstone's affection for the Makololo was the awe in which he was held and the way he was looked up to practically everywhere he went, even if this tended to make him into a bit of a megalomaniac.

Yet like most driven people, Livingstone's time and patience for others lasted only as long as they were of use to him. Thus, once his *raison d'être* had moved to discovery of the source of the Nile and other missions not connected with Barotseland, Livingstone quickly lost interest in the Makololo as he had previously lost interest in the Bakwena at Kolobeng after the Boers wrecked his station there and the changing physical environment made missionary work

¹²⁰ E. Baker, *The Life and Explorations of Frederick Stanley Arnot* (Seeley, Service and Co., London, 1921), pp. 100-101.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Coillard, *On the Threshold...* *op. cit.*, p. 60.



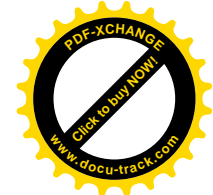
there unsustainable.¹²³ Gluckman goes further and accuses Livingstone of committing a breach of faith with the Makololo and that his own knowledge of this was responsible for his continuing crusades into previously unexplored and unhealthy areas that led to his own self-destruction.¹²⁴ This may be going too far as Livingstone had clearly moved on by the time of his foray to Lake Bangweolu and what he perceived to be the possible regions of the source of the Nile. Nevertheless, the flawed nature of Livingstone's manic ambition also caused him to overlook or distort other European interaction with Barotseland during the Makololo interregnum although, admittedly, the extent of this was limited mainly to traders. It is known that the Hungarian Laszlo Magyar, visited Linyanti in October 1852 and June 1853 in the hope of meeting Livingstone who, to the astonishment of Magyar, refused to see him despite the positive description of the Hungarian given to him by Sekeletu. Listowel conjectures on the possibility that Livingstone did not like the fact that Magyar had 'gone native by marrying a local lady and having children with her, a practice which Livingstone like many missionaries claimed to abhor. More likely, however is the alternative explanation that Livingstone wanted to be seen as the first European to travel from the Zambezi to the Atlantic coast and without the aid or advice of anyone.¹²⁵

Similarly Livingstone referred to the Portuguese trader and explorer Silva Porto who reached Linyanti and Barotseland in 1853 meeting and offering advice to Livingstone who chose to refer only to Mambari slave traders. This considerably insulted Porto who had travelled from the east to west coasts of central southern Africa half a decade before Livingstone, and was a long established personality in Angola, although the offence seems to have been

¹²³ I. Fletcher, 'David Livingstone: a short portrait of the great missionary-explorer', *Occasional Papers of the Rhodes-Livingstone Museum* No. 9 (Livingstone, 1950), p. 9.

¹²⁴ Gluckman, 'As men are everywhere', op. cit., p. 460.

¹²⁵ The story of Laszlo Magyar, his abortive attempts to meet Livingstone and speculation as to the likely explanation for this unfriendly behaviour are provided in J. Listowel, *The Other Livingstone* (Julian Friedmann Publishers, Lewes, 1974) pp. 129-131.



taken more at the suggestion that he was being categorised as an African than at the accusations of slave trading.¹²⁶ Listowel details other Portuguese visitors to Barotseland who were variously misrepresented by Livingstone as slave traders and Mambari, the general term for Africans and people of mixed blood from the Bihé area of Angola.¹²⁷ Nevertheless, the impact of these other visitors on the Makololo was minimal in comparison to that of the charismatic Livingstone.

The legacy of Livingstone can perhaps be judged most objectively through its lasting impact.

Thus it becomes pertinent to finally review what impacts the Makololo interregnum had on Lozi identity. These can be interpreted in the sense of a set of signs and symbols, badges that can be added to the aura of Lozi history as a mediating force in defining Lozi citizenship and subjectivity today. To be associated with the Makololo is partly to be associated with power and glory. To speak Silozi is to speak a unique language in the sub-region, associated with the south, South Africa, and the Sotho horde of Sibusane. It is a component of that which distinguishes the Lozi today from other groups in Zambia. The link with the south, in this case with the Sotho, is another aspect of the legacy. Post-independence leaders such as President Kenneth Kaunda portrayed Barotseland's links with South Africa purely in terms of links with apartheid and white hegemony but there is much more to Barotseland and the Lozi nation's links to the south than this. From 1928, the most dominant faith in Barotseland today, the New Apostolic Church, commenced its proselytism in Barotseland with the arrival of an apostle from the East London area of South Africa.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 126-128.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 123-124.



When discussing the possible future dissemination of this work, the present Litunga and his Ngambela expressed a deep interest in the links between the Lozi and Sotho and the desire that the fruits of this and other works concerning the history of the Lozi are communicated to the peoples and leadership of present-day Lesotho. Also stated was the desire to see further research on the origins of the Makololo carried out and communicated to the BRE. The Litunga, Lubosi II, was at pains to point out the historical ties between Barotseland and Lesotho. What this demonstrates is the fact that the Makololo connection is still held dear to heart by Kingship and elite in Barotseland and that the relationship between the Lozi and South Africa is far more deep-seated and Africa-centric than critics in the post-independence era have suggested.

Finally, this chapter has sought to demonstrate that, far from being destroyed, the influence of the Makololo and, implicitly, Livingstone, lived on into the second Lozi Kingdom both in person and in culture and organisation. Any doubt about that must surely be dispelled by the telling revelation by Lubosi-Lewanika in 1895 to Major Gibbons, sent by London to make a map of Barotseland, that he remembered Monare (Livingstone) from when he was a small boy and that after Gibbons had made it clear he was of the same ilk, 'all his suspicious little insinuations vanished, and he showed absolute confidence in me.'¹²⁸ The Luyi dynasty returned in 1864, and even if it was Makololo-trained kings that followed the 'overthrow', many perceived positive aspects of Makololo rule were retained as were most of the lands that extended the frontiers of Barotse influence (although, significantly, not that south of the Chobe). It is also contended here that Barotseland's particular interaction and relationship with European colonialism and enduring affection for Britain was originally set in train during the Makololo era. Previous writers have ascribed Lewanika's turn to the

¹²⁸ A. St H. Gibbons, 'A journey in the Marotse and Mashikolumbwe countries,' *The Geographical Journal*, 9, 2 (1897), pp. 130-131.



British for 'protection' to the influence of Khama of the Bamangwato,¹²⁹ Coillard,¹³⁰ and even to the trader Westbeeck who is described in more detail in the next chapter.¹³¹ Certainly, all of these had an impact but the trail really starts with the incredible rapport that grew between Sibituane and Livingstone, two strong and remarkable men of different worlds, who saw in each other the realisation of their own particular dreams and aspirations and left behind a joint legacy of influence still found among the Lozi today.

¹²⁹ Mainga op. cit., p. 132 and Roberts, op. cit., p. 159 and H.M. Hole, *The Passing of the Black Kings* (Philip Alan, London, 1932), p. 294.

¹³⁰ Mackintosh, *Coillard of the Zambezi*, pp. 383-384 and Prins, op. cit., pp. 216-220.

¹³¹ W.V. Brelsford, *Generation of Men: The European Pioneers of Northern Rhodesia* (Stuart Manning, Salisbury, 1965), pp. 15-16 and Sampson, op. cit., p. 99.