In July 1869, David Livingstone left the village of Ujiji on the eastern shore of Lake Tanganyika and set out to explore what he believed to be the western line of drainage of the Nile River.

His course took him into the eastern part of the present day Democratic Republic of the Congo.

To make the journey, Livingstone traveled with Mohammad Bogharib, an Arab trader, whom Livingstone considered a friend and with whom he had traveled previously.

The party reached Bambarre, a small Congolese village and base or Arab trading activity, on 21 September 1869.

From here, Livingstone hoped to carry on westward to the Lualaba and Lomami Rivers, which he hope would prove to be two of the main branches of the Nile (1870h:XVIII, 1870i:XLI).

Instead, despite two sustained attempts to leave the village over the next year, circumstances compelled Livingstone to stay in Bambarre until 16 February 1871.