This approach runs counter to an analytical trend that has been gaining in momentum since the 1970s and 80s, following on the pioneering work of historian Roy Bridges (1973, 1977, 1987, etc.).

Put simply, the work of Bridges and others in his wak advocates for returning to the original field notes and other such sources of explorers and travelers like Livingston.

Such scholarship argues that these unabridges sources need to be read alongside more revised and/or published materials in order to develop the most comprehesnive critical understanding of encounters in the field.

This approach has gained traction not only in terms of more traditional “analogue” scholarship, such as the recent publication of the lavisly illustrated volume on Explorers’ Sketchbooks (Lewis-Jones and Herbert 2016), but also in the digital humanities via such projects as Olive Schreiner Letters Online, Livingstone Online, and, of course, the Livingstone Spectral Imaging Project.

Each of these latter projects focuses and indeed capitalizes on the fact that digital practices and international collaboration now make access to the relevant archival materials easier than ever before.

In some of his foundational pieces, Bridges outlines the variety of revisionary stages through which such archival materials passed and the complexities in differentiating among those stages (see, especially, 1977:3-4).

He also highlights the heterogenous nature of the contents of the earliest stage manusceripts and, most importantly, suggests that the earliest stages contain the most direct information from informants, “what the explorer *heard*” (1987:181, italics in original).

Of such original records, Bridges indicates, “Livingstone’s notebooks are the most important example” (1987:181).