

Letter to Roderick I. Murchison, 20 August 1854

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Loanda 20th August

1854

Sir Roderick Impey Murchison

Sir

The enclosed
is a sketch of my route from the town of
Sekeletu to Loanda viz. down the Chobe and
up the Zambesi and Leeba in canoes. Then
through a portion of the Balonda country
to Cassange the farthest inland station of
the Portuguese, and thence to this city
on oxback. It is intended to be supplemental
to a letter which I lately transmitted through
Commander Bedingfield. And a mere
glance will enable you to perceive
that Loanda is a well watered country.
To me it appeared remarkably so
in consequence of passing through it
during the rainy season. But though
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the streams were much swollen I believe
that all ~~these~~ [the streams] put down in the map
are perennial, for they were invariably
furnished with rustic bridges, and the
water though not extending far beyond
the banks submerged these structures
several feet deep. The close proximity,
(not more than 8 or 10 miles in some
instances) of streams flowing in totally
different directions through a level
country, excited my surprise. [Begin] ~~And not until~~ [Only when] we reached the declivity
which forms the valley of Cassangé
could I conceive why all [the rivers] that flowed
North, North East or North West, ran in
much deeper vallies than those
which followed an opposite course.

The slopes down to the feeders of the
Casai and Quango are more than
500 yards long and pretty steep, while
the beds of the branches of the Leeba
are never more than ten yards

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below the level of the surrounding country.
The whole valley of Cassange seems to have
been a work of denudation, for on
all sides the declivity presents the same
geological peculiarities, viz. a covering
of brown haematite, mixed with quartz
pebbles, lying upon bright-red friable
clay slate. This, differing only in hard-
ness and paleness of colour continues
to the bottom; but towards the centre
of the valley, it takes the form of
argillaceous schist. A detached
mountain, 7 or 8 miles S.S.W. of
Cassange, called Kasala, and having
perpendicular sides all round, possesses
the same structure. I regret much
having no instruments to measure
the elevations of these parts, but
after ascending again at Tala Mungongo,
we appeared to descend again all
the way to Ambaca, where we met
primitive and secondary rocks.

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the latter containing metals. Fever
prevented me from doing more in
that quarter than ascertaining the
Latitudes of different points along
the road. they are put down in
black pencil and if I am successful
in my observations for the Longitude
while retracing my steps, I shall
take the liberty of forwarding [the results] to you
from Cassangé. the marks in
red pencil are intended to shew the
parts noted on the information of
others who, however, possessed no
means of ascertaining their true positions

Again apologizing for troubling
you with my communications

I am, Sir

Your most Faithful

Servant.

David Livingston