

## Letter to Thomas Maclear, 29 September 1853

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[0001]

Town of Sekeletu, Linyanti 29<sup>th</sup> September

1853

Thomas Maclear Esq<sup>re</sup>

My Dear Sir

Enclosed you will percieve a mass of manuscripts with which I take the liberty to trouble you. The faggot contains observations made at different parts of the country and I venture to send them such as they are because you mentioned that you preferred such to those which have passed through the adulterating process of an African calculation. If you read them backwards like Hebrew viz. beginning with the fifth or sixth page[sheet] I shal feel obliged for then you will be able to see the reason why I sent such poor things as those made from the Bamangwato Northwards I found or thought I found that our Longitudes of last journey were all wrong, our waggon stand instead of being in  $26^{\circ}$  is not more than  $23^{\circ} 48'$  or  $50'$ . But I have not so much confidence in my calculations as to assert this without serious misgivings. When I found that the Boers had destroyed my celestial map - I set off to work on the Lunars and persevered untill I think I have mastered the methods given in Thomson's Tables perfectly, I made many obsevationes between Kuruman and this but working with the inverting telescope chiefly I placed no value on them. My chief aim was to acquire as much facility with it as with the small telescope, I have succeeded in this too, but when i found out longitudes were wrong I felt nsorry I had not written down all my observations. Those I have put down are from the Bamangwato Northwards and were made in trying to work with the sextant fixed on a stand with a movable joint. they are very precise but the time required to get the mercury into the right position in turning from one object to another, and above all this difficulty of getting the instrument adjusted to the different angles in which Lunars are observed rendered this effort after many trials abortive. I thought however that you may be able to make something of them, perhaps determine whether the Long. of the Bamangwato is right. I worked out many here before coming to the conclusion that  $26^{\circ}$  was wrong, and a new idea has lately entered my head which makes me fear that M<sup>r</sup> Morton may be right after all. [...]

[0002] [...]

[0003] [...]

One of the slave merchants wished me to go westward in his company. He was as kind to me when I was up at the Barotse as he could be, influenced probably by a letter from the chevalier Du Pratt. but the sight of gangs of poor wretches in chains was so much against the grain I resolved to proceed alone He could speak no language, but Portuguese. We managed to make a jargon. I caught all the owrds resembling latin added other Latin terms to these and when very much at a loss stuck in some big rough Dutch word to eke out the sentence. It is so wonderful how soon one believes he understands what is said, Cumming thought he could speak Sechuana when he knew about four words. I have heard him call out "Rhinoceros" when he wanted his servant to beat the oxen and he thought he must be understood because the whip was made of rhinoceros skin. Pardon this gossip and

Believe me yours

most Truly

David Livingston

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