

## Letter to Roderick I. Murchison, 20 August 1854

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Loanda 20<sup>th</sup> 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 Only when] ~~And~~ ~~not-until~~ 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 Leebe  
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