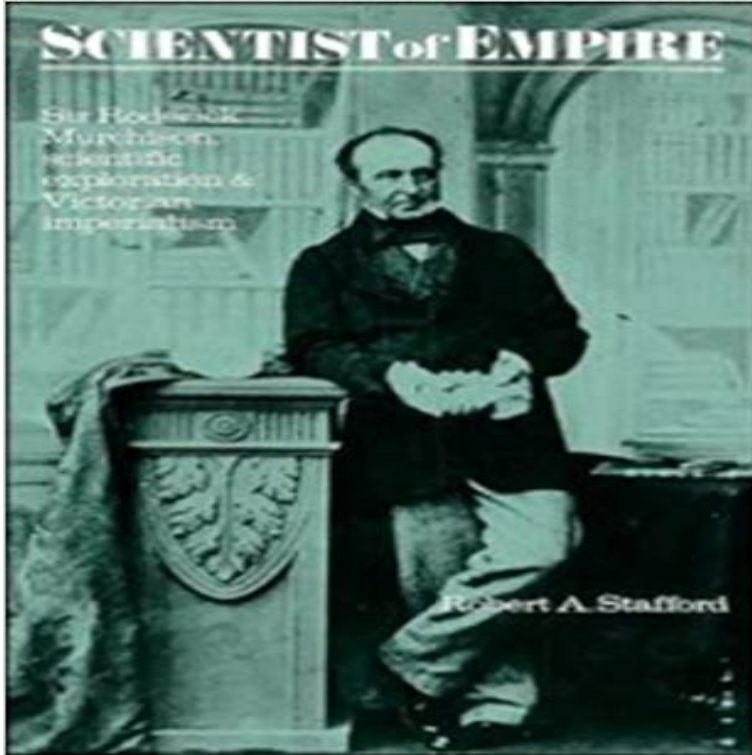


## Scientist of Empire: Sir Roderick Murchison, Scientific Exploration and Victorian Imperialism



Sir Roderick Murchison's life and work is investigated in this study as a bargain struck between science and the forces of imperialism in mid-Victorian Britain. It illuminates the broader, and still present, intimacy between science and government.

More than any contemporary, Murchison (1792-1871) emerged as the eminent Victorian who sold science to the Imperial government, on the grounds of utility as much as prestige. By the end of his life the map of the world and its powers looked very different; and throughout this world there were two dozen discoveries named after Murchison himself. A giant of the imperial age, Murchison's career was tied intimately to the expansion of the political, economic and scientific realm of the British Empire. He was a founding father of geological science and geographical exploration, president of the Royal Geographical Society and Director-General of the Geological Survey. His identification of the Silurian system in geology--and subsequent prediction of the location of economic riches--is as notable as his patronage of David Livingstone and other figures of Victorian exploration.

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