

Letter to George Grey, 10 May 1858

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[0001]

Steamer, Pearl 10th May

1858

Vocabularies

Sir

When I sent the vocabularies
to your Excellency by Mr Moffat
I was unable to write and
explain that the larger volume
contains the Sichuana tongue
chiefly, but I had begun
to put in the dialect of The
Barotse immediately after
the Sichuana thus "Sichuana =
= serotse = English - I did this
partly because it was easier
to translate the Serotse into
Sichuana, but chiefly because
I had no paper to make another
vocabulary.

Towards the end of the
volume there are several
dialects tabulated for comparason
[0002]

The Bayeiye here on the R. Zouga -
Teoghe - chobe &c the Bashubia
lived at Sesheéke and along the Leambye
the Barotse in the valley of that name
the Balojazi and Ambonda far to the
N.N.W. of that point.

In the calico covers there is
a number of Angolese words the
dialect being termed Bunda or
Ambunda. I think I made a
mistake in marking them
as Serotse. D^r Bleek will be
able to detect which is which

by comparing them with the
words in the tables in the
larger volume, and noting a
form of swearing which I
could not understand but was
told it was equal to "by the
holy sacraments." Then we
have some of the Londa or
Lunda dialect - spoken by the
Balonda - there are also Tette words.
[0003]

I am sorry the whole is so imperfect.
The Sichuana contains most of the
words in common use but by no
means the whole language. We are
perpetually picking up new words
and even in the short period of
my absence in England I see by
the parts of the bible brought down
by M^r Moffat that he has gathered
a good many that I never heard
Should you deem the matter sent
worth printing my companions
would be very thankful for
copies in order to aid them in
acquiring the language, and
having begged for them I feel
as if the way was paved for
hinting that an interleaved
copy for myself would be
about as civil a thing as you
could do - The number of
blank leaves being proportioned
to the frequency of the initial
sounds - in mo - li - &c - and the
[0004]

deficiencies in some of the dialects.
If I had the Sichuana so printed
as to allow corresponding words
to be put in Londa - Maravi - &c &c
on the same line in the interleaved
page I think I could ~~put~~ collect
as many words as have served
to translate bible in the course of
two years.

As I am in the way of begging
may I ask your Excellency to
get M^r Moffat to go over the
analysis and add or expunge what

may be necessary. I wrote it six
years ago and had no time to
revise. One form of the verb
for instance, I have not ~~in~~ put in
at all. And others may be erroneous
My aim was to shew the simplicity
of the structure of the language
not to make a grammar

I am &c.

David Livingstone