

**Wilhelm von Humboldt an Joseph
John Freeman, September 1830**

Handschrift: Grundlage der Edition: Berlin, SBBPK, Coll. ling. fol. 153, acc. 11070, Bl. 125r–126v

Druck: Humboldt 2017, S. 606f.

Nachweis: Mueller-Vollmer 1993, S. 345

Mattson 1980, Nr. 8277

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To M.^r Freemann *|sic|*, Esq.
Berlin, the September, 1830.

Sir,

I have received by the kindness <favor> of [Sir Charles Colville](#) the Analysis of some verses of the Holy Bible You have had the kindness to make for me, and I take the liberty, my dear Sir, to write You myself in order to return You my sincerest thanks for the great service You have rendered by this paper to my studies on foreign languages <the Malagasy language>. I cannot express You, how much You are promoting the comparative study of languages by the printings issuing from Your Missionary Press. I dare to say that the Malagasy language was almost unknown before Your publications. [Count Flacourts](#) and [M.^r Challan's Vocabularies](#) and [the Catechism of the first](#), the only important works on this language, were <are> so rare, that no writer on languages does quote them. I happily obtained a copy of both from the [Royal library](#) at [Paris](#) and I make my studies on the language by means of them and of Your translations. It is through the last <latter> only, that a more complete idea of the Grammar can be formed, [M.^r Chapeliers grammar](#) being very insufficient. This way of printing out the grammatical forms is ~~very~~ however very troublesome and ~~pre~~ precarious, and cannot be pursued with success without the assistance of some person quite intelligent of the language. This circumstance will perhaps, Sir, excuse me, if my taking the liberty of addressing to You a series of queries touching some of the most essential points of |125v| Malagasy Grammar. I should be very happy, if I could obtain, Sir, by Your favour a kind answer to the different questions contained in the enclosed papers and the rectification of my assertions in the points in which they may be erroneous. I have added an Analysis of five verses of St. Matthew in order that You may judge how far I have been able to penetrate in the ~~ve~~ very genius of the language and to

extricate myself out of its idioms. I take the liberty to recommend this analysis likewise to Your corrections and revises. You will <lastly> find likewise in the annexed papers an analysis of th a passage of [Count Flacourts Catechism](#). I suppose that You will be pleased to have a specimen of the dialect and orthography [Count Flacourt](#) made use of.

I am preparing a work on the Malayan languages to which stock the Malagasy language evidently belongs. This undertaking engages <constrains> me to compare the Malagasy words and Grammar to those of the other Malayan language. *|sic|*

I have likewise the intention to promote a reimpression of [Count Flacourt's](#) and [M.^r Challan's Vocabularies](#) <united in one body>, but I would be very glad to hear from You, Sir, if You do approve of this design. If You have the purpose to publish Yourself a copious Vocabulary in one or two years time, I should rather differ this reimpression.

It would be very precious for me to have all the printings which have issued from the Missionary press at [Tananarivo](#). I possess in this moment: The 1., Exodus. 20,1–17. 2., St. Matthew. 1,1–6,32. 3., [The whole gospel of St. Luke](#) and 4., [St. John](#). 5., [Ny fototry ny fianarany cet.](#) 6., [Ny anarany](#) *|126r|* [sy ny fombany cet.](#) You will, I hope, Sir, convince You by the frequent quotation of Your translations contained in the annual papers, that the specimens with which I was favoured by the benevolence of [Sir Charles Colville](#) did not remain unperused and unexamined in my hands. <hands, and that I spare no trouble in order to avail me of these precious and kind communications.>

I am with the most sincere gratitude and esteem,
Sir,