

Sir Alexander Johnston an Wilhelm von Humboldt, 05.05.1831

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|157r|

19 Great Cumberland Place

5. May 1831

My dear Sir.

[a] I have not recently troubled you with a letter from myself because I have always informed [D^f Rosen](#) to whom you had written upon the same subject as you had done to me all I had the pleasure of doing in executing your wishes & in enabling [Rosen](#) to procure the information you were desirous of procuring from [M.^{rs} Metcalf](#) & [Sir Robert Farquhar](#)'s brother the present [Sir Thomas Farquhar](#) who is executor to his late brother & has charge of all his papers.

[M.^{rs} Metcalf](#), by my desire, sent me the collections relative to the Madagascar language which had been made by [her late husband](#) while a |157v| missionary on that Island & I gave them immediately to [D^f Rosen](#) to forward them to you which he tells me he has done. When you have done with them you will oblige me by returning them to her as she is a poor woman & is anxious to try & publish them. Perhaps you could be of some use to her in getting them published in Germany – her idea is that she would wish to have them published for the benefit of the children of [her late husband](#) who are, I understand, left in bad circumstances.

By My desire & [Sir Thomas Farquhar](#) laid open to [D^f Rosen](#) for you the whole of [his brothers](#) papers relative to Madagascar & its different languages & anthems |158r| <him> to make such notes as you might desire. I looked upon this as a favor on the part of [Sir Thomas Farquhar](#) as it appears that [his brother](#) died in debt & that the executors are anxious to know what you think as to the probability were they to publish, the Madagascar Grammar or Dictionary, of their being able to make any profit of it for the Estate.

[Sir Charles <Colville>](#) has written to me lately from the [Mauritius](#) telling me that he shall be most happy to execute any commands you may send him & that he will

a) |Editor| Oben links auf der Seite die Ergänzung von Johnstons Hand: "I return you the enclosed copies you sent me some time ago."

exert all his influence in Madagascar in procuring for you any further information you may wish to |158v| procure from that Island on the subject of the different languages which prevail amongst its different inhabitants.

Let me know if you want any information about the languages which prevail amongst the people of New South Wales or Van Diemens land as [Sir Edward Parry](#) the distinguished North Pole Navigator is there in an office of considerable importance & being a very intimate friend of mine, will be happy to be of any use hence to you.

I am glad to see [Madame De Bülow](#) & her children so well. [Lady Johnston](#) & my daughters desire |159r| to be most kindly remembered to you, &

I am with great esteem & regard My dear Baron

Most truly yours

Alex.^r Johnston

I was looking the other day along with [Col. George FitzClarence](#)^[b] eldest son of [the present king](#) at your portrait ~~an-~~ which was painted by [Lawrence](#)^[c]. It is hung up now in the large room in Buckingham Palace & very much admired as a strong likeness of you. The body however must be altered as it does <not> resemble so much as the head.

|159v|

His Excellency

Baron William Humboldt

etc. etc.

Berlin

AJohnston

b) |Editor| Fehlstelle durch Öffnen des Briefes.

c) |Editor| Zum Porträt Humboldts s. Gustav Friedrich Waagen (1837): *Kunstwerke und Künstler in England und Paris. Erster Theil*, Berlin: Nicolaische Buchhandlung, S. 167 f. Vgl. auch den Antwortbrief Humboldts vom Juli 1831. [FZ]