

Fragment of 1870 Field Diary, 17, 24 August 1870

David Livingstone

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org), 2017

[0001]

for the isolation in which they live
The head of Moenekuss is said to be
preserved in a pot in his house
and all public matters are gravely

[0002]

communicated to it as if his spirit
dwelt therein - His body was eaten
The flesh removed from the head
and eaten too - His fathers head is
said to be kept also

[0003]

The foregoing refers to Bambarre
alone - In other districts graves shew
that sepulture is customary - Here no
grave appears - Some admit the

[0004]

existence of the practice here - others
deny it - In the Metamba country
and adjacent to Lualaba - a quarrel with
a wife often ends in the husband killing
her and eating her heart mixed up

[0005]

in a huge mess of goats flesh -
This has the charm character - fingers
are taken as charms in other parts
In Bambarre alone is the depraved

[0006]

taste the motive for cannibalism

[0007]

On 17th August 1870 Monamyembo
the chief who was punished by M Bogharib
lately came bring two goats - One
he gave to Muhamad the other to
Moenekus' son acknowledging
that he had killed his elder brother

[0008]

He had killed eleven persons over
in our absence
at Luamo - in addition to those
killed in villages on our SE when
we were away - It transpired
that †Kandahara brother of old
Moenekuss whose village is

[0009]

near this - killed 3 women & a child and
that a ^ trading man came over from Kasangangazi
and was murdered too for no reason but
to eat his body - Muhamad ordered old
Tanda hara to [...]bring ten goats and take

[0010]

them over to Kasangangazi to pay
for the murdered [...]man - When they
tell of each other's deeds they disclose
a horrid state of bloodthirsty callousness

[0011]

People over hill NNE of this killed a
person out hoeing - if a cultivator is alone
he is almost sure of being slain.

Some said that people in the vicinity
or hyaenas stole the buried dead, but
Posho's wife died and in Wanyamesi

[0012]

fashion was thrown out of camp un[-]
buried - Muhamad threatened an attack if
Manyema did not cease exhuming the
dead - it was effectual - neither men nor
hyaenas touched her though exposed now
for seven days 24th August 1870

[0013]

When the rains ceased in June
I wished to go Northwards along the
Lualaba & buy a canoe but my
attendants professed fear of the water
I then promised not to buy a canoe

[0014]

but this elicited that they were determined
not to go at all - the head Arabs told
me that they were in the habit of going
to the women whose husbands were
away and getting food and spending
the night with them - They then

[0015]

refused rations - not understanding
why I enquired the reason = they replied
that the beads were not enough - the
Arabs said "they are about to desert" &
'that is a slave custom["] -

[0016]

I spo[...]ke long to them advising them
earnestly not to desert & lose all their
arrears of pay - - But on going out
from me one called out "Who
will he get to carry his

[0017]

things" - then a loud ["]Ha ha ha["] to make

me hear it. On telling them that Seyed
Majid had punished those who deserted
Speke & the consul would certainly be
angry to hear that I had been thrown
away by them in the middle of the cannibal

[0018]

country where I could get no carriers
as the Manyema will not go to the next
village - Simon said "give me a bit
of paper to tell that I am a very bad
boy" - This was supposed to be witty
& he added [""]let Seyed Majid chain

[0019]

me - beat me - shoot me' I want to go to Lualaba
Abram said the others intended to throw down my
bundles & run away in the forest - "He was tired
with seven years work" These two are the bring [...] Katomba at whose voice they trembled spel[...]

[0020]

in [...]ly & they said they would go but seeing
[...][tha]t he did nothing again refused - The knowledge
that I wont punish as the Arabs do is the
[...][r]eason on their desertion - the murders
they committed at Kabuire dest[...][ro]yed what

[0021]

little of moral nature they possessed - I would
not have brought them from Ujiji as the deterioration
was then visible in stealing from me to pay their
prostitutes but Thani behaved so strangely to
my packet of letters, refusing it - than send

[0022]

it back "because he did not know the contents"
I feared its destruction and then I should be
waiting for other men from Zanzibar in vain
I therefore strained my utmost to finish up
up my work with what I had

[0023]

But now these worthless slaves had me
at their mercy & wished to be masters - to take
what beads they chose and go or remain just
as it suited their fancy - they thought that

[0024]

I did not know where they got food and when
declaring their rations of beads too small they
bought grass cloth clothing, knives spears
and dainties - With three Susi - Chuma

[0025]

and Gardner I set off - intending to join M-
Bogharib or Josuf on Lualaba - We went
with three deputies from the head Arabs &
their slaves - but they hated me & tried to get

[0026]

away from me - I however kept up and
on the fourth day passed through nine villages
destroyed by the worthies who did not wish
me to see more of their work - Then

[0027]

met with Mohamad Bogharib & Josuph coming
back from Kasongo's - I slept at a village
a little way from them & was met in morning
with the news that a man of the party which

[0028]

eschewed any company had been stabbed by
night in revenge for the slaughter of relatives
& burning of nine villages - Mohamad
refused to engage in a wholesale manner

[0029]

to revenge the dead one and seeing that I had no friend & only three people I turned back - the mud was grievous & as I waded it all my feet were torn to pieces and irritable

[0030]

eating ulcers begun which have disabled me ever since - I now spoke with my friend Muhamad and he offered to go with me to see Lualaba from Luamo - but

[0031]

I explained that merely to see & measure its depth would not do - I must see whither it went - This would require a number of his people in lieu of my deserters & to take

[0032]

them away from his ivory trade which at present is like gold digging - I^{\wedge} must make amends & I offered him two thousands Rupees & a gun worth seven hundred

[0033]

Rs. 2700 in all on £270. He agreed & should he enable me to finish up my work in one trip down Lualaba & round to Lualaba West it would be a great favour - The severe

[0034]

Pneumonia in Marungu - the choleraic complaint in Manyema & now irritable ulcers warn me to retire while life lasts - Muhamads people went North & East & West

[0035]

from Kasongo's - 16 Marches North = - 10 D° West - and 4 D° E. & SE. - The average march

was 6½ hours say 12' about 200' North & W
Lat. of Kasongo say 4° South - they may

[0036]

have reached 1°-2°S. They were now in the
Balegga country & turned - It was all
dense forest - never saw ^ the sun except when
at a village & then the villages were [...]

[0037]

apart People very fond of sheep which
they call Ngombe or ox - tusks never used -
They went off to where an elephant had formerly
been killed & brought the tusks rotted and eaten

[0038]

or gnawed by "Dezi" a Rodent probably the
aulo candatus swindermanus - Three ^ large rivers
were crossed breast & chin deep - In one
they were five hours and a man in a

[0039]

small canoe went ahead sounding for water
capable of being waded - much water & mud
in the forest = This report makes me thankful
I did not go for I should have seen nothing -
and been worn out by fatigue & mud

[0040]

The river of the Metunda had black water
and 2 hours to cross it - breast deep
R Mohungu = breast deep -
R of Mbite also large

crossed about
40 smaller rivers

[0041]

All along Lualaba & Metambe the sheep

ar[...e hairy dewlaps = no wool = Tartar
breed? small thin tails -

[0042]

a broad belt of meadowland with no
trees lies along Lualaba - Beyond that it
is all dense forest. and trees so large
one lying across path is breast high
clearances exist only around villages

[0043]

People very expert smiths and
weavers of the "Lamba" - make fine large
spears knives and needles = Market-
places called "Soko" - numerous all
along Lualaba - To these the Barua

[0044]

of the other bank come daily in large
canoes bringing grass cloth, salt, flour,
cassava, fowls - goats - pigs & slaves =
Women beautiful with straight noses
and well clothed When the men

[0045]

of districts are at war the women take
their goods to market as if at peace and
are never molested - all are very keen
traders buying one thing with another &
changing back again and any gain
made is one of the enjoyments of life -

[0046]

I knew that my people hoped to be
fed by Muhamad Bogharib when
we left the camp at Mamohela
but he told them that he would not
have them - This took them aback -
but they went & lifted his ivory

[0047]

for him and when a parley was thus brought about talked him over saying that they would go to me & do all I desired - never came - but as no one else would take them I gave them three loads to go to Bambarre

[0048]

There they told Muhamad that I would not give them their beads & They did not like to steal - They were now trying to get his food by lies - I invited them 3 times to come & take beads but having supplies of food from the camp

[0049]

women they hoped to get the upper hand with me and take what they liked by refusing to carry or work Mohamad spoke long to them but speaking mildly makes them images that the spokesman is afraid fo them - They

[0050]

they kept away from my work & would fain join Muhamad's but he wont have them - I gave beads to all but the two ringleaders - their conduct looks as if a quarrel had taken place between us but no such

[0051]

excuse have they - on leaving Nassick African Asylum where they had been clothed fed & taught for years they sent an anonymous note to me abusing all the teachers & complaining of

[0052]

bad treatment - They were sent to their own
people but had all been slaves and
remained with me only to escape being
made to work again - If the freed men
in America turn out well it
will be because they were taught

[0053]

to work - These might either work play
or do nothing at Nassick & not one of
them could handle a tool = they hoped
for long to get back to a life of idleness
and such as they described would have

[0054]

any English boys - the teacher feared
that if punished for idleness they
would run away & bring discredit
on the Asylum They were of the lowest
or criminal class in Africa

[0055]

and boasted in my hearing that
when fed to the full they stole pigs - kept
& fattened them with their extra food
them ^at the school & killed & eat them
When returning to Bambarre the
people of Moenemokia came to fight as

[0056]

they were drunk & fled as soon as they
saw resistance - no danger of being
turned up ^ on made my good boys rush
off unbidden & capture women &
goats - another case occurred &

[0057]

off they ran but captured only fowls
and tobacco - two of them have captives
now bound in their possession
I am powerless as they have left

me and think that they may do as
they like and the Manyema are

[0058]

bad is the song - their badness consists
in being dreadfully afraid of guns
and the Arabs can do just as they
like with them and their goods - If
spears alone were used the Manyema

[0059]

would be considered brave for they fear
no one though he has many spears
They tell us truly "that were it not for
our guns not one of us would return"
to our own country". Moenemokia
killed 2 Arab agents & took their guns

[0060]

This success led to their asserting
in answer to the remonstrances of the
women "We shall take their goats guns
and women from them" The chief in
reporting the matter to Moenemgor at
Luamo said the Englishman told

[0061]

my people to go away as he did not
like fighting but my men were filled
with "malofu" or palm toddy & refused
["]to their hurt" Elsewhere they
made regular preparation to have a

[0062]

fight with Dugumbe's people just to
see who was strongest. They with their
spears & wooden shields or the Arabs
with what in derision they called tobacco
pipes (guns) They killed eight or nine Arabs.

[0063]

The Manyema villages are situated on slopes - often on the spurs of mountains for the sake of quick drainage - The streets run nearly East & West to catch the full influence of the Sun - The huts

[0064]

are of a square form = the walls being of well beaten clay - they are well supplied with firewood piled up on shelves along the walls inside - This is the women's work thatch of leaves or grass - low in the roof and still lower by each housewife

[0065]

having from 20 to 30 neatly made baskets and as many earthen pots hung to the ceiling - A raised platform of clay is the sleeping place - a fire at its side gives light & heat - while a wall

[0066]

screens it from the middle compartment another wall divides off a private room for stores - the villages are very numerous a clump of them forms a district with its headman - It is usually isolated from

[0067]

every other - nothing would induce men to go into next district - they came 5 or 6 miles through the intervening forest then after civilly inviting us to come back by the same route on our return

[0068]

went back - fear of being killed & eaten was the reason assigned or simply they were at war with their next neighbours

no traders seem ever to have come in
before this - Barua brought copper

[0069]

and skins for tusks and the Babira
& Baguha coarse beads - The Bavira
are now enraged at seeing Ujjians
pass into their ivory field - and
no wonder - They took the tusks

[0070]

which cost them a few strings of beads
and recieved weight for weight in beads
thick brass wire & loads of calico

To be copied into Journal

David Livingstone