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## Political No. 124 of 1873, Forwarding Copies of Correspondence Regarding the Particulars of a Cruise of Her Majesty's Ship

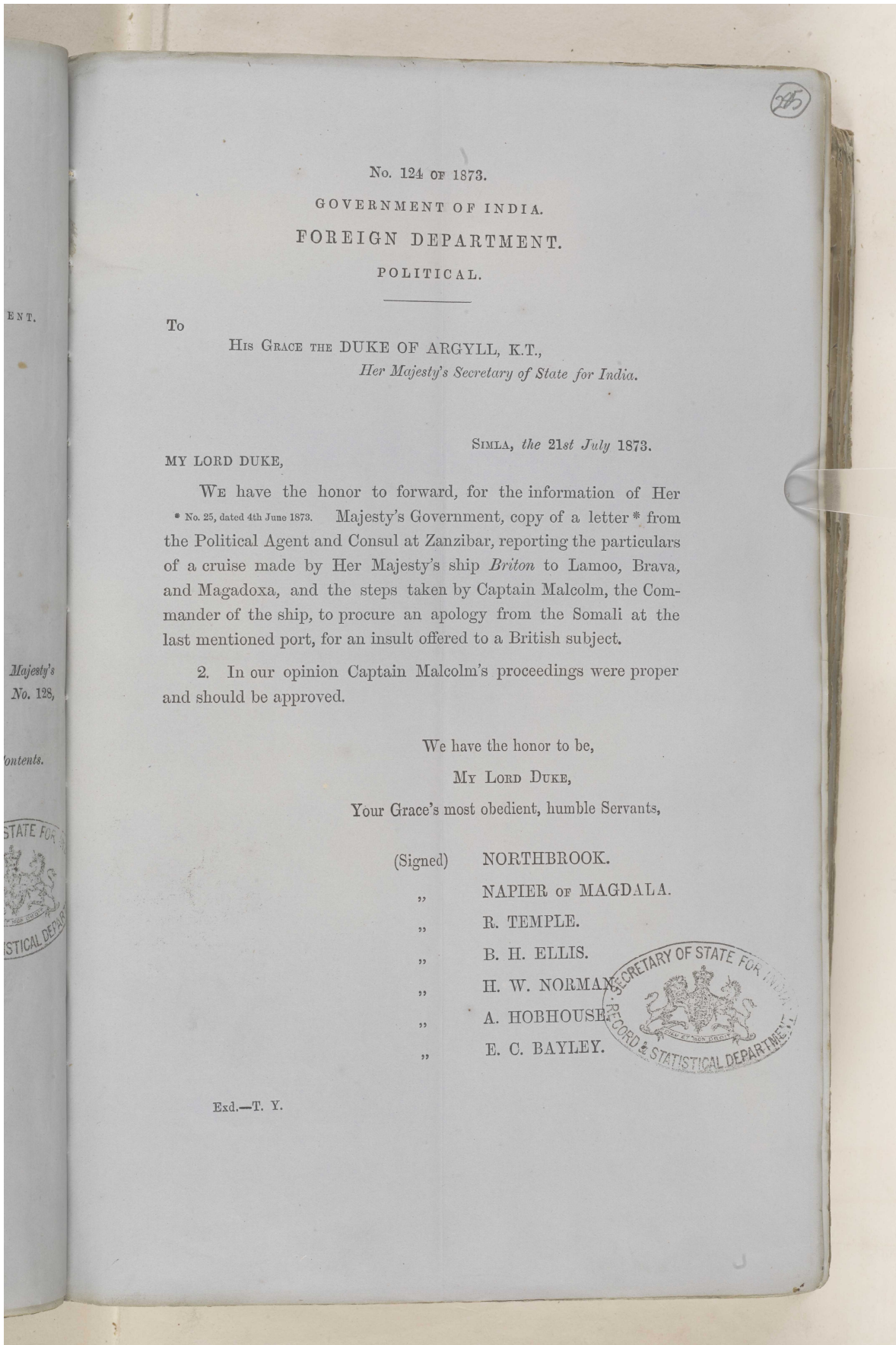
<b>Holding Institution</b>	British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers
<b>Reference</b>	IOR/L/PS/6/110, ff 285-290
<b>Date(s)</b>	21 Jul 1873-21 Aug 1873 (CE, Gregorian)
<b>Written in</b>	English in Latin
<b>Extent and Format</b>	1 item (8 folios)
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### About this record

This item consists of copies of a Political Despatch from the Government of India's Foreign Department to the Secretary of State for India, dated 21 July 1873 and received by the India Office's Political Department on 21 August 1873, forwarding copies of a letter from the Political Agent and Consul at Zanzibar regarding the particulars of a cruise of Her Majesty's ship *Briton* to Lamoo [Lamu], Brava, and Magadoxa [Mogadishu], and steps taken by Captain Malcolm to procure an apology from a Somali at Magadoxa, for reportedly insulting a British subject.

Political No. 124 of 1873, Forwarding Copies of Correspondence Regarding the  
Particulars of a Cruise of Her Majesty's Ship Britonto Lamoo, Brava, and  
Magadoxa [285r] (1/16)



No. 124 OF 1873.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.  
FOREIGN DEPARTMENT.  
POLITICAL.

To  
HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF ARGYLL, K.T.,  
*Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India.*

SIMLA, *the 21st July 1873.*

MY LORD DUKE,

WE have the honor to forward, for the information of Her  
\* No. 25, dated 4th June 1873. Majesty's Government, copy of a letter\* from  
the Political Agent and Consul at Zanzibar, reporting the particulars  
of a cruise made by Her Majesty's ship *Briton* to Lamoo, Brava,  
and Magadoxa, and the steps taken by Captain Malcolm, the Com-  
mander of the ship, to procure an apology from the Somali at the  
last mentioned port, for an insult offered to a British subject.

2. In our opinion Captain Malcolm's proceedings were proper  
and should be approved.

We have the honor to be,

MY LORD DUKE,

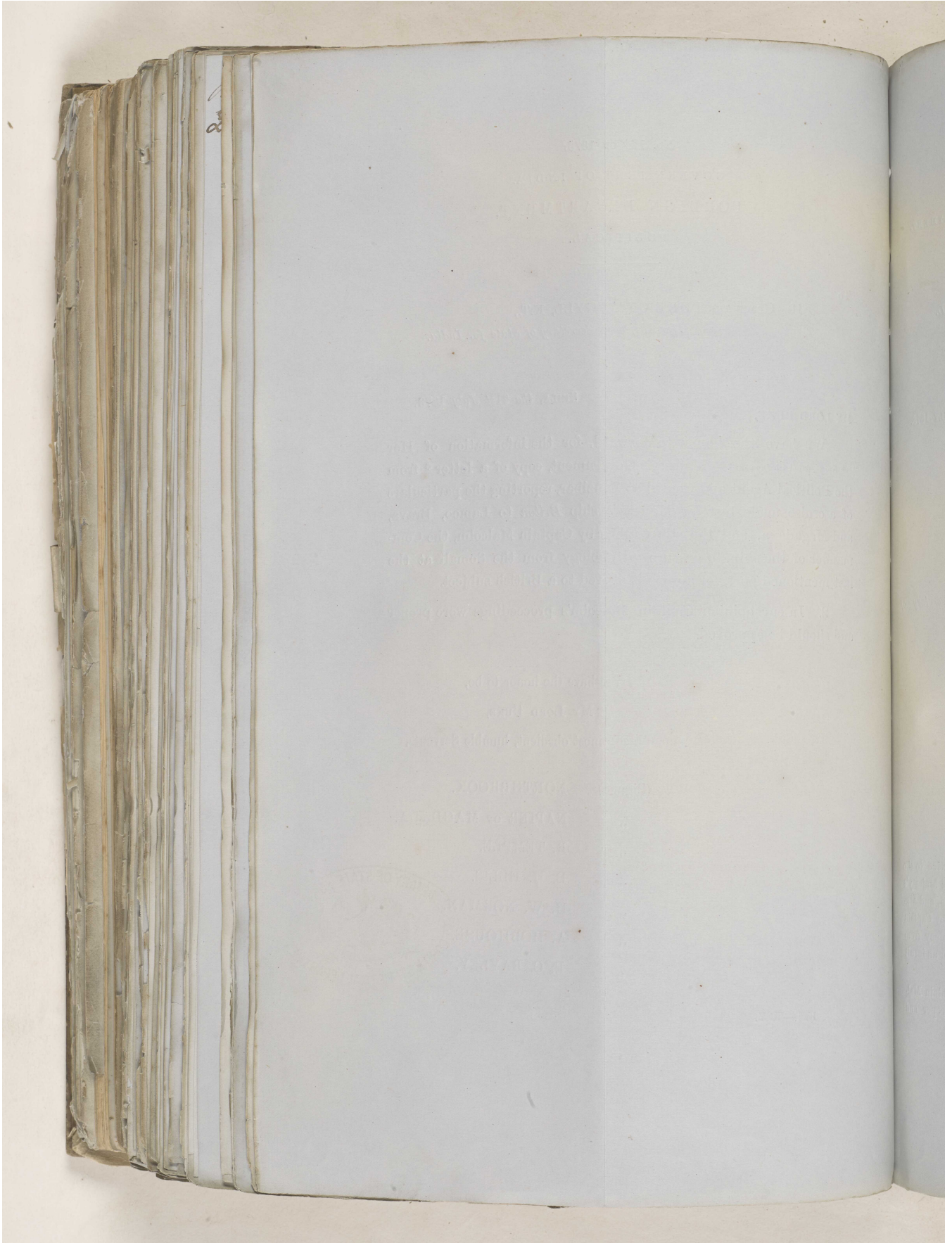
Your Grace's most obedient, humble Servants,

(Signed) NORTHBROOK.  
" NAPIER OF MAGDALA.  
" R. TEMPLE.  
" B. H. ELLIS.  
" H. W. NORMAN.  
" A. HOBHOUSE.  
" E. C. BAYLEY.

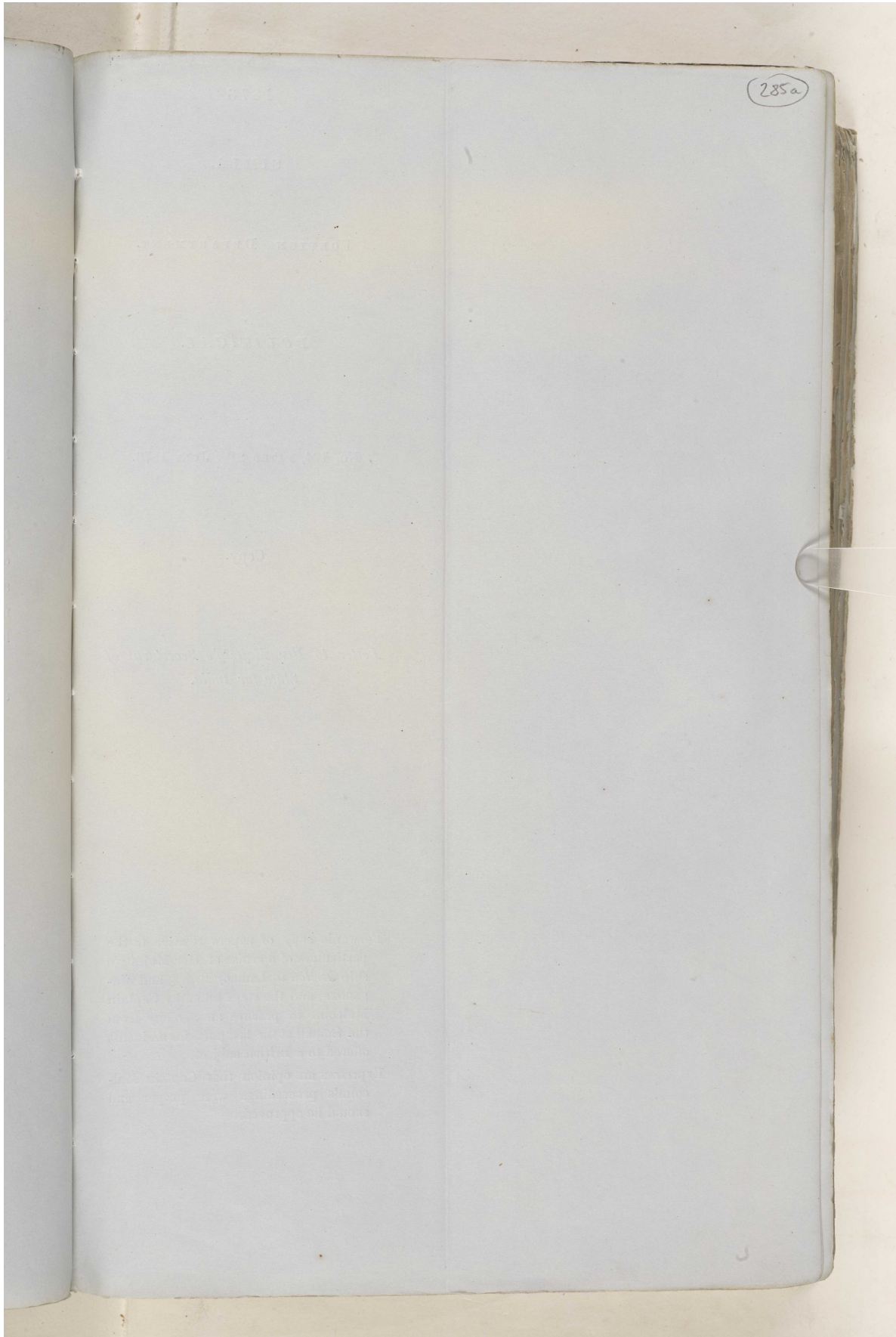
Exd.—T. Y.



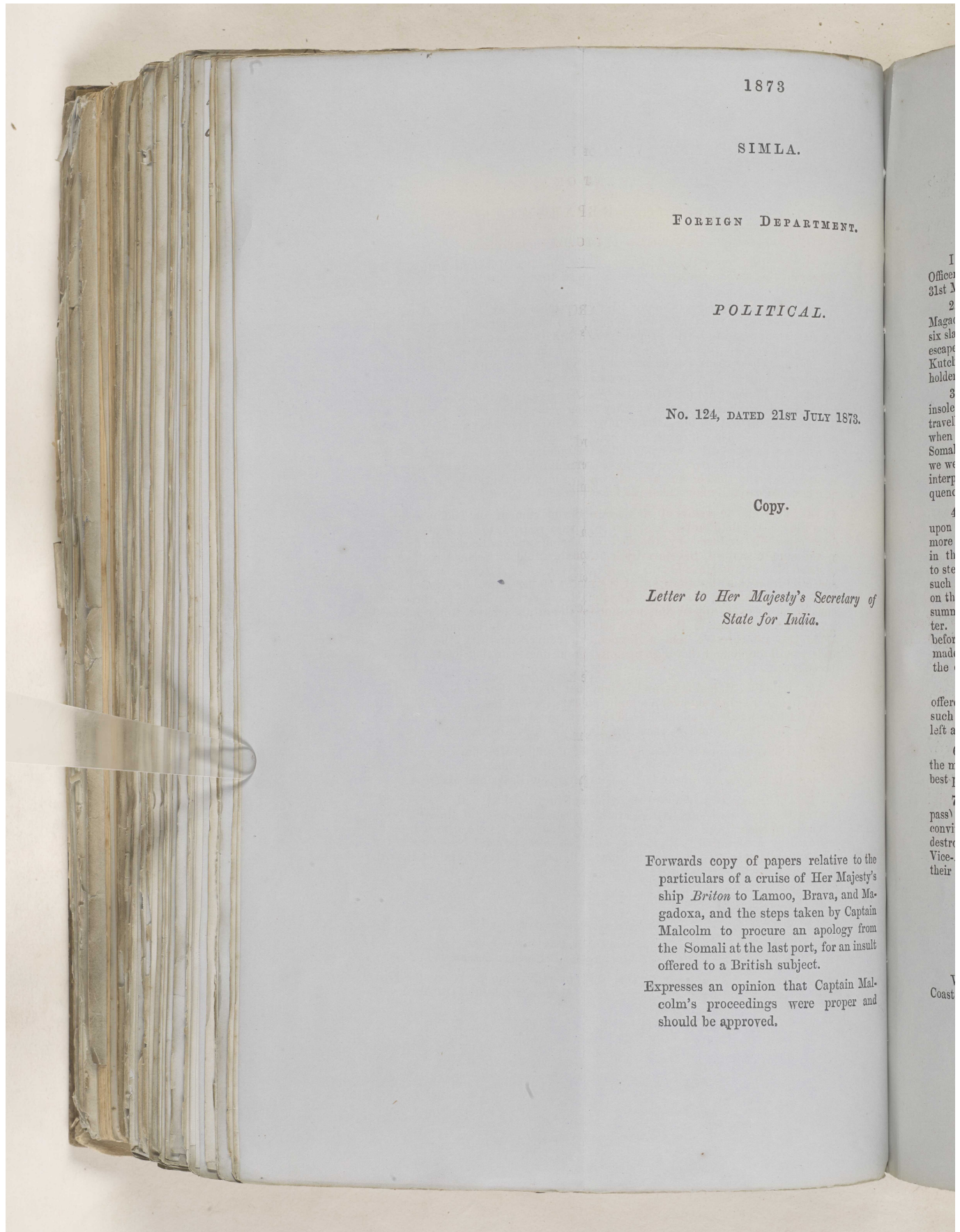
Political No. 124 of 1873, Forwarding Copies of Correspondence Regarding the  
Particulars of a Cruise of Her Majesty's Ship Britonto Lamoo, Brava, and  
Magadoxa [285r] (2/16)



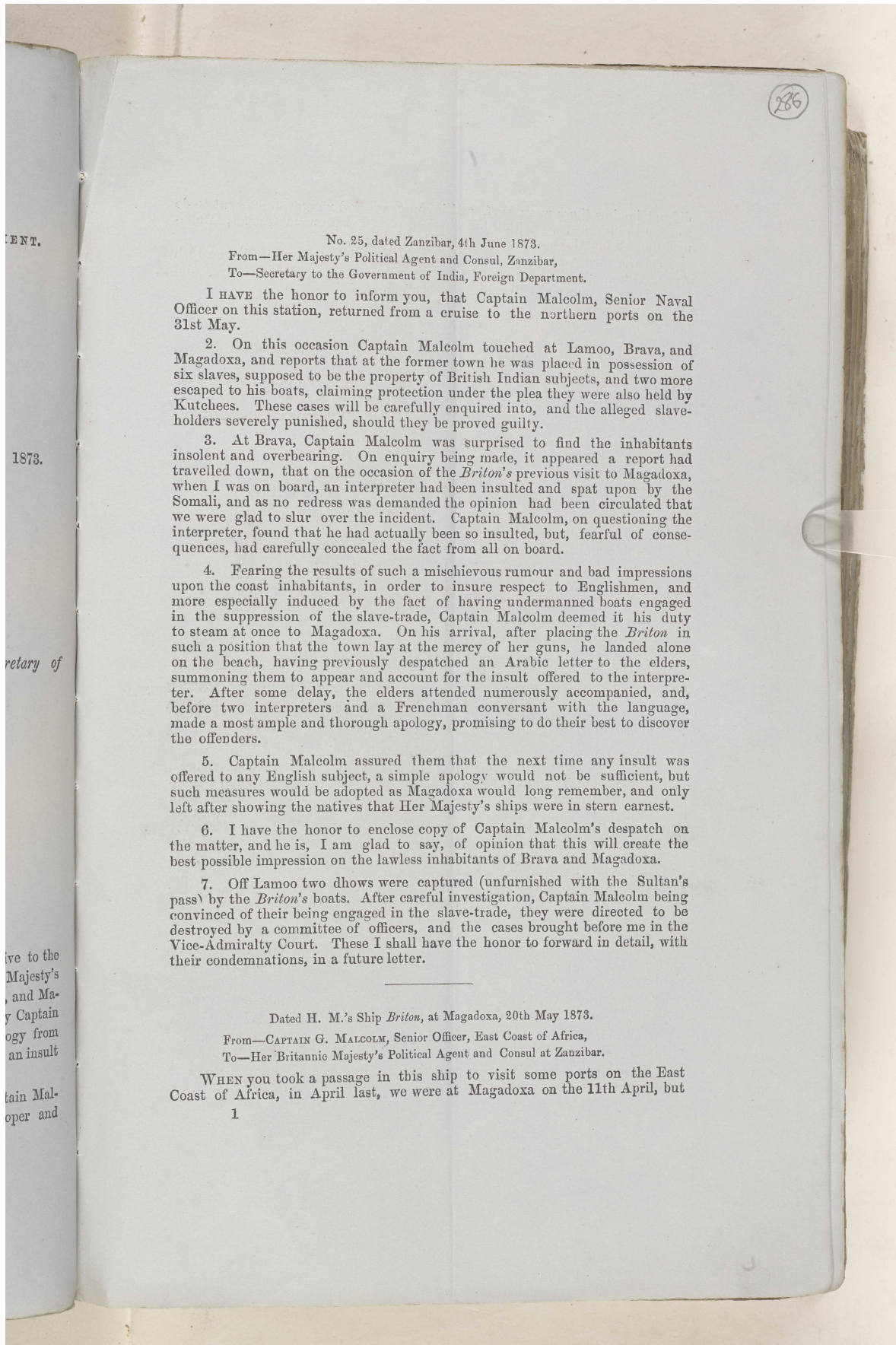
Political No. 124 of 1873, Forwarding Copies of Correspondence Regarding the  
Particulars of a Cruise of Her Majesty's Ship Britonto Lamoo, Brava, and  
Magadoxa [285av] (3/16)



Political No. 124 of 1873, Forwarding Copies of Correspondence Regarding the  
Particulars of a Cruise of Her Majesty's Ship Britonto Lamoo, Brava, and  
Magadoxa [285av] (4/16)



Political No. 124 of 1873, Forwarding Copies of Correspondence Regarding the  
Particulars of a Cruise of Her Majesty's Ship Britonto Lamoo, Brava, and  
Magadoxa [286r] (5/16)



ENT.

No. 25, dated Zanzibar, 4th June 1873.

From—Her Majesty's Political Agent and Consul, Zanzibar,

To—Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department.

I HAVE the honor to inform you, that Captain Malcolm, Senior Naval Officer on this station, returned from a cruise to the northern ports on the 31st May.

2. On this occasion Captain Malcolm touched at Lamoo, Brava, and Magadoxa, and reports that at the former town he was placed in possession of six slaves, supposed to be the property of British Indian subjects, and two more escaped to his boats, claiming protection under the plea they were also held by Kutchees. These cases will be carefully enquired into, and the alleged slaveholders severely punished, should they be proved guilty.

1873.

3. At Brava, Captain Malcolm was surprised to find the inhabitants insolent and overbearing. On enquiry being made, it appeared a report had travelled down, that on the occasion of the *Briton's* previous visit to Magadoxa, when I was on board, an interpreter had been insulted and spat upon by the Somali, and as no redress was demanded the opinion had been circulated that we were glad to slur over the incident. Captain Malcolm, on questioning the interpreter, found that he had actually been so insulted, but, fearful of consequences, had carefully concealed the fact from all on board.

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4. Fearing the results of such a mischievous rumour and bad impressions upon the coast inhabitants, in order to insure respect to Englishmen, and more especially induced by the fact of having undermanned boats engaged in the suppression of the slave-trade, Captain Malcolm deemed it his duty to steam at once to Magadoxa. On his arrival, after placing the *Briton* in such a position that the town lay at the mercy of her guns, he landed alone on the beach, having previously despatched an Arabic letter to the elders, summoning them to appear and account for the insult offered to the interpreter. After some delay, the elders attended numerously accompanied, and, before two interpreters and a Frenchman conversant with the language, made a most ample and thorough apology, promising to do their best to discover the offenders.

5. Captain Malcolm assured them that the next time any insult was offered to any English subject, a simple apology would not be sufficient, but such measures would be adopted as Magadoxa would long remember, and only left after showing the natives that Her Majesty's ships were in stern earnest.

6. I have the honor to enclose copy of Captain Malcolm's despatch on the matter, and he is, I am glad to say, of opinion that this will create the best possible impression on the lawless inhabitants of Brava and Magadoxa.

7. Off Lamoo two dhows were captured (unfurnished with the Sultan's pass) by the *Briton's* boats. After careful investigation, Captain Malcolm being convinced of their being engaged in the slave-trade, they were directed to be destroyed by a committee of officers, and the cases brought before me in the Vice-Admiralty Court. These I shall have the honor to forward in detail, with their condemnations, in a future letter.

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Majesty's  
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y Captain  
ogy from  
an insult

Dated H. M.'s Ship *Briton*, at Magadoxa, 20th May 1873.

From—CAPTAIN G. MALCOLM, Senior Officer, East Coast of Africa,  
To—Her Britannic Majesty's Political Agent and Consul at Zanzibar.

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oper and

WHEN you took a passage in this ship to visit some ports on the East Coast of Africa, in April last, we were at Magadoxa on the 11th April, but

Political No. 124 of 1873, Forwarding Copies of Correspondence Regarding the Particulars of a Cruise of Her Majesty's Ship Britonto Lamoo, Brava, and Magadoxa [286v] (6/16)

did not land as there was a surf, and because we had no encouragement to do so from the people; we neither heard nor suspected that our messenger, Mahomed bin Ali bin Hassan, had been insulted.

On the 13th April, we touched at Brava, remaining there until the 15th April. I am right when I say that we were struck with the civility and friendliness, almost cordiality, of our reception.

2. When I arrived at Brava, on the 18th May, Lieutenant John E. Blaxland informed me that the people were not friendly, almost threatening, in their demeanour. On going on shore I remarked the change, was informed that the Chiefs and people of Magadoxa were boasting that they had not allowed us to land, and had spat upon and defiled the messenger of the English. I saw a headman from Magadoxa, who said such was the report on the Coast. I then asked Mahomed bin Ali bin Hassan if they had spat on him and insulted him; he said it was true, but had not told me as he did not wish to make a quarrel.

3. I felt, if I allowed this to pass, no white man's life would be safe amongst the Somali, or Benhadi, as they are sometimes termed; that our boats might be attacked and a serious conflict might occur; as amongst these Somalis, who are treacherous and full of cupidity, allowing an insult to pass unnoticed is sure to lead to further and greater insults being offered; in fact this is almost an axiom and applies to other countries besides that of Benhadi.

I, therefore, determined, as my cruising for the suppression of the slave-trade would admit of it, to go to Magadoxa and settle the affair on the spot.

4. On my way up I wrote the letter for Iman Mahomed, of Magadoxa, a copy of which I enclose.

As there is some difficulty in writing English so as to make the meaning clear to a Native mind, I have had to use the expressions I thought the Imam could best understand, which I think he did.

5. On arriving at Magadoxa I took up a position as close to the principal gate and the Imam's house, consistent with safety to the ship that I could, and sent a cutter manned and armed under Lieutenant Arthur S. Phillpotts to land Mahomed bin Ali bin Hassan, telling the latter to let the Imam and the head-man know that this was not a formality but a demand; it would be wisest earnestly to weigh before refusing compliance.

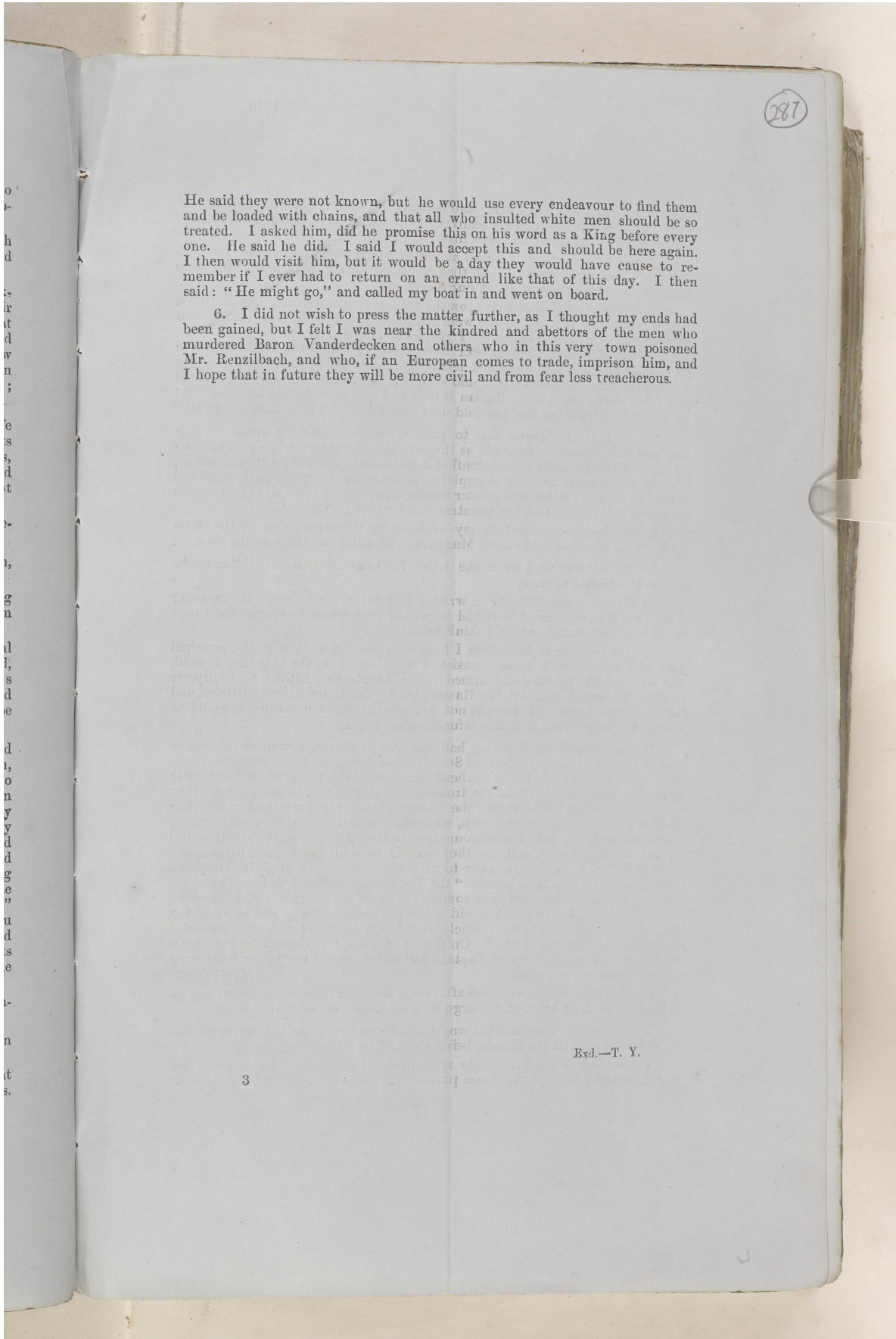
When I considered that they had had time to decide, I went to the strand myself so soon as a party of armed Somali came down. I landed amongst them, making the boat lay off; two of the head-men were of this party, and wanted me to go and see the Imam. I said the Imam must come to me to ask pardon; then another party with the brother of the Imam and some other relations came; they said he was at the gate of the town, waiting for me. I replied they all know my conditions, and the Imam must come here to the water's edge to me; they had gloried in insulting us, and now they should as publicly demand pardon, and promise in future to behave better to all white men, as we intended stopping these insults. They then urged: "the Imam only remains at the gate of the town, to prevent the people from coming out and your life might be in danger." I replied: "if I feared you I would not come alone amongst you to make you ask pardon, and to the beach publicly; the Imam and all of you shall come and there you will hear my terms." On this they said: "A Captain always visits an Imam." I replied: "this Captain will not do it, and the Imam must come to him to the water's edge."

On this they went away, and after some time the Imam came down, accompanied by his chief men, and a large body of people armed with spears, &c.

I told him the same as what was contained in the letter, the interpretation of Mahomed bin Ali bin Hassan being checked by others and myself.

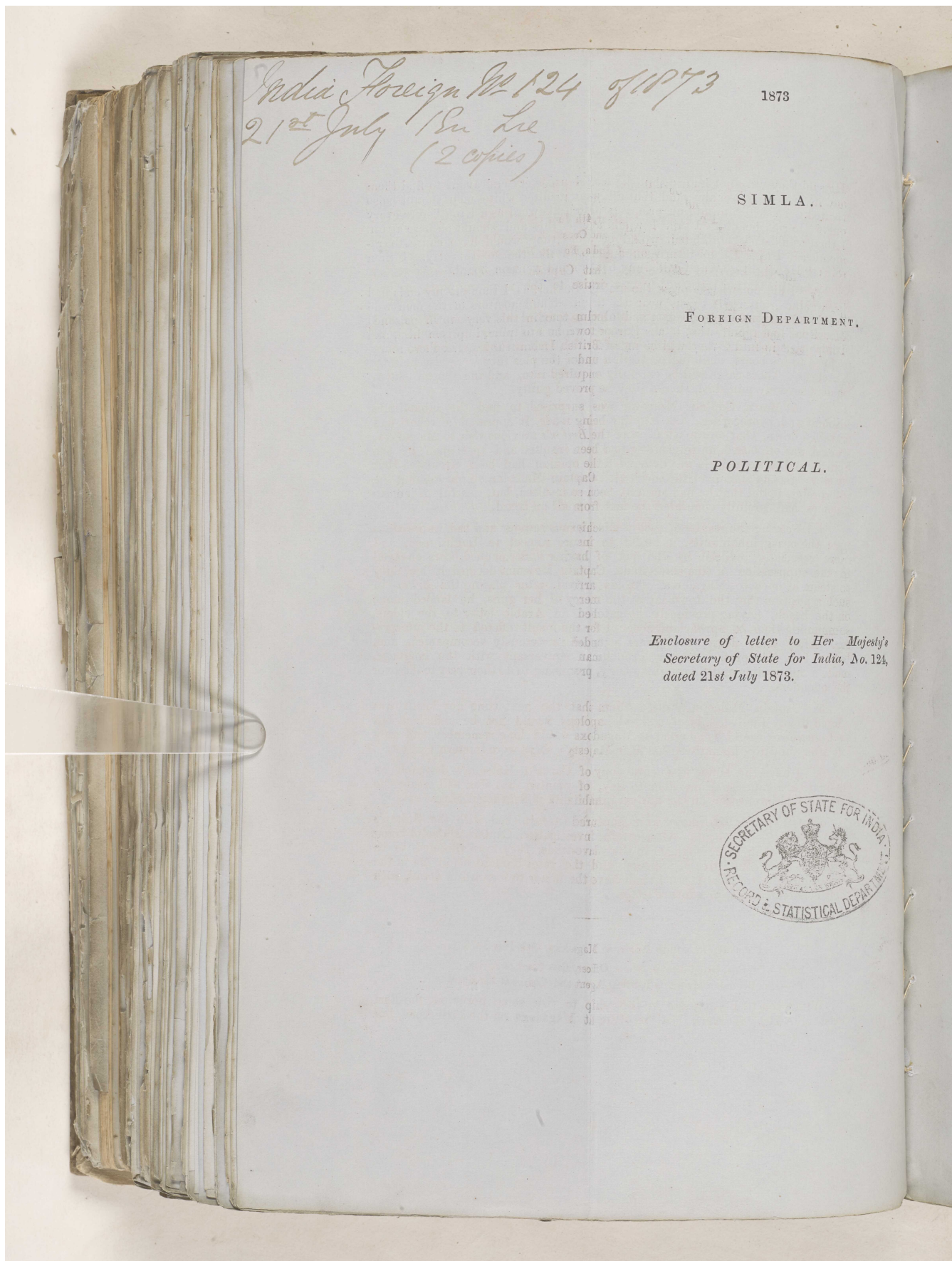
He publicly before his people apologised. I demanded the men who spat on my messengers to punish them publicly on the beach before all the Somalis.

Political No. 124 of 1873, Forwarding Copies of Correspondence Regarding the Particulars of a Cruise of Her Majesty's Ship Britonto Lamoo, Brava, and Magadoxa [287r] (7/16)

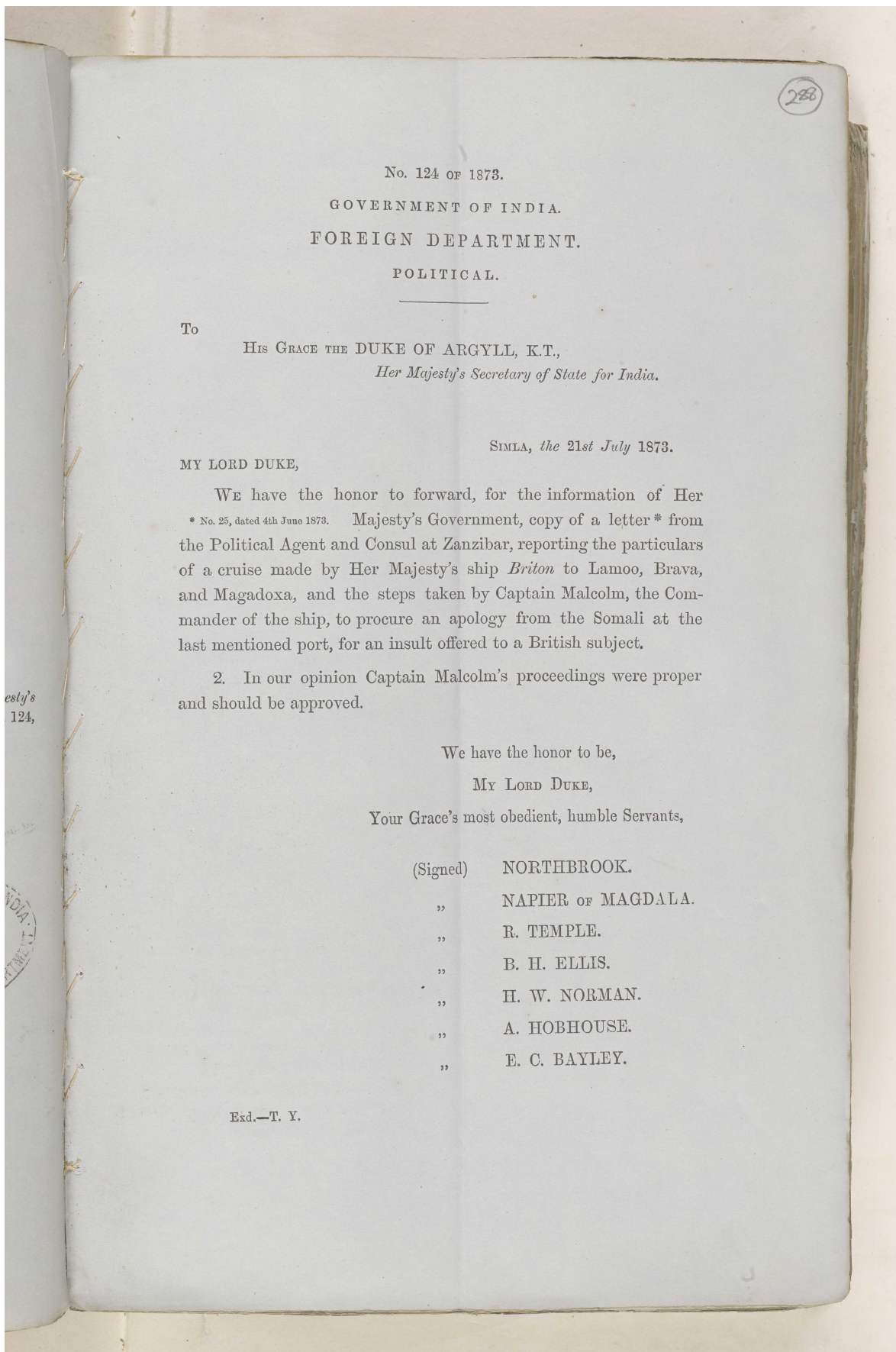




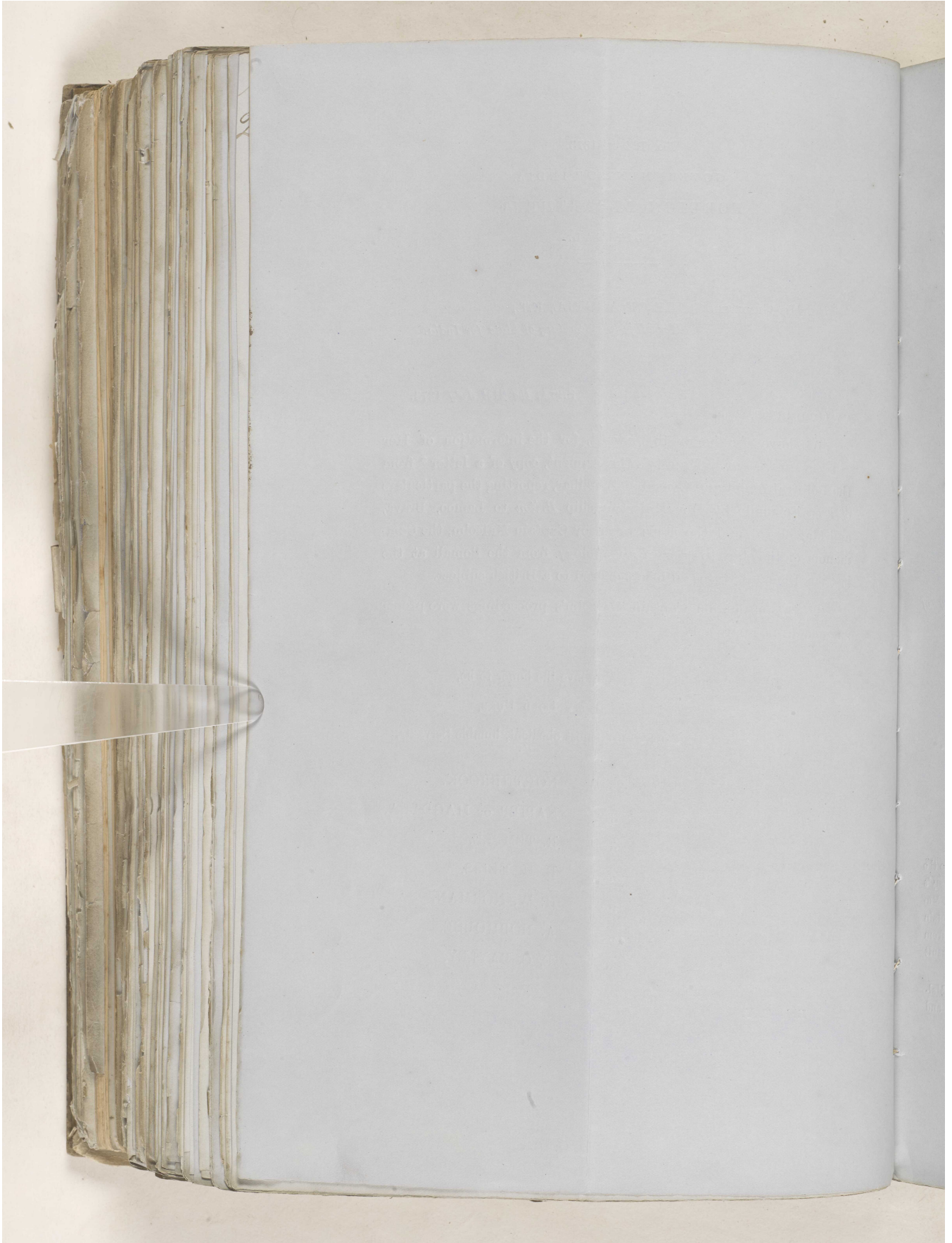
Political No. 124 of 1873, Forwarding Copies of Correspondence Regarding the  
Particulars of a Cruise of Her Majesty's Ship Britonto Lamoo, Brava, and  
Magadoxa [287v] (8/16)



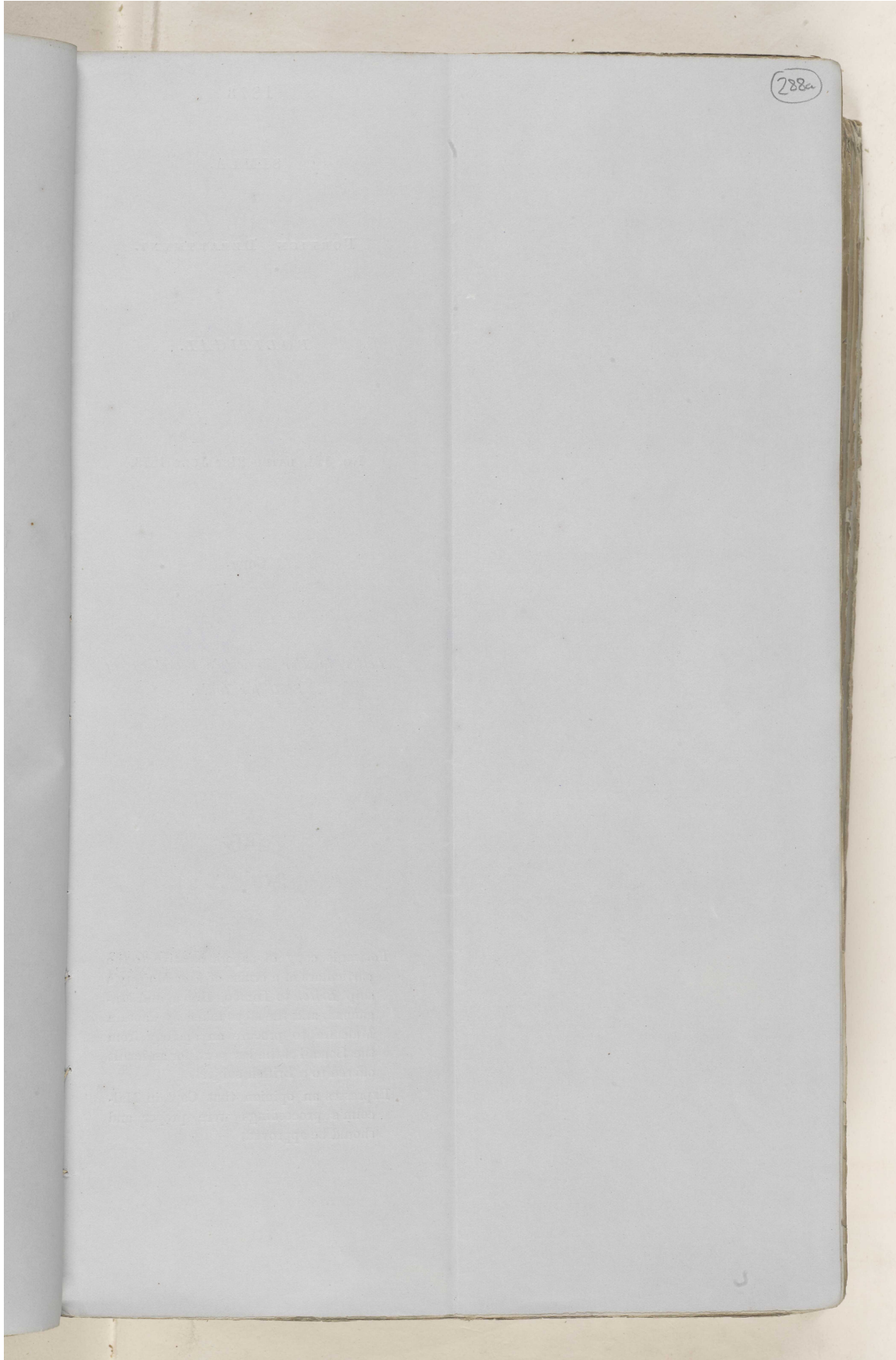
Political No. 124 of 1873, Forwarding Copies of Correspondence Regarding the  
Particulars of a Cruise of Her Majesty's Ship Britonto Lamoo, Brava, and  
Magadoxa [288r] (9/16)



Political No. 124 of 1873, Forwarding Copies of Correspondence Regarding the  
Particulars of a Cruise of Her Majesty's Ship Britonto Lamoo, Brava, and  
Magadoxa [288v] (10/16)



Political No. 124 of 1873, Forwarding Copies of Correspondence Regarding the  
Particulars of a Cruise of Her Majesty's Ship Britonto Lamoo, Brava, and  
Magadoxa [288ar] (11/16)



Political No. 124 of 1873, Forwarding Copies of Correspondence Regarding the  
Particulars of a Cruise of Her Majesty's Ship Briton to Lamoo, Brava, and  
Magadoxa [288av] (12/16)

1873

SIMLA.

FOREIGN DEPARTMENT.

POLITICAL.

No. 124, DATED 21ST JULY 1873.

Copy.

*Letter to Her Majesty's Secretary of  
State for India.*



Forwards copy of papers relative to the particulars of a cruise of Her Majesty's ship *Briton* to Lamoo, Brava, and Magadoxa, and the steps taken by Captain Malcolm to procure an apology from the Somali at the last port, for an insult offered to a British subject.

Expresses an opinion that Captain Malcolm's proceedings were proper and should be approved.

Political No. 124 of 1873, Forwarding Copies of Correspondence Regarding the Particulars of a Cruise of Her Majesty's Ship Britonto Lamoo, Brava, and Magadoxa [289r] (13/16)

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No. 25, dated Zanzibar, 4th June 1873.

From—Her Majesty's Political Agent and Consul, Zanzibar,  
To—Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department.

I HAVE the honor to inform you, that Captain Malcolm, Senior Naval Officer on this station, returned from a cruise to the northern ports on the 31st May.

2. On this occasion Captain Malcolm touched at Lamoo, Brava, and Magadoxa, and reports that at the former town he was placed in possession of six slaves, supposed to be the property of British Indian subjects, and two more escaped to his boats, claiming protection under the plea they were also held by Kutchees. These cases will be carefully enquired into, and the alleged slaveholders severely punished, should they be proved guilty.

3. At Brava, Captain Malcolm was surprised to find the inhabitants insolent and overbearing. On enquiry being made, it appeared a report had travelled down, that on the occasion of the *Briton's* previous visit to Magadoxa, when I was on board, an interpreter had been insulted and spat upon by the Somali, and as no redress was demanded the opinion had been circulated that we were glad to slur over the incident. Captain Malcolm, on questioning the interpreter, found that he had actually been so insulted, but, fearful of consequences, had carefully concealed the fact from all on board.

4. Fearing the results of such a mischievous rumour and bad impressions upon the coast inhabitants, in order to insure respect to Englishmen, and more especially induced by the fact of having undermanned boats engaged in the suppression of the slave-trade, Captain Malcolm deemed it his duty to steam at once to Magadoxa. On his arrival, after placing the *Briton* in such a position that the town lay at the mercy of her guns, he landed alone on the beach, having previously despatched an Arabic letter to the elders, summoning them to appear and account for the insult offered to the interpreter. After some delay, the elders attended numerously accompanied, and, before two interpreters and a Frenchman conversant with the language, made a most ample and thorough apology, promising to do their best to discover the offenders.

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Dated H. M.'s Ship *Briton*, at Magadoxa, 20th May 1873.

From—CAPTAIN G. MALCOLM, Senior Officer, East Coast of Africa,  
To—Her Britannic Majesty's Political Agent and Consul at Zanzibar.

WHEN you took a passage in this ship to visit some ports on the East Coast of Africa, in April last, we were at Magadoxa on the 11th April, but

Political No. 124 of 1873, Forwarding Copies of Correspondence Regarding the Particulars of a Cruise of Her Majesty's Ship Britonto Lamoo, Brava, and Magadoxa [289v] (14/16)

did not land as there was a surf, and because we had no encouragement to do so from the people; we neither heard nor suspected that our messenger, Mahomed bin Ali bin Hassan, had been insulted.

On the 13th April, we touched at Brava, remaining there until the 15th April. I am right when I say that we were struck with the civility and friendliness, almost cordiality, of our reception.

2. When I arrived at Brava, on the 18th May, Lieutenant John E. Blaxland informed me that the people were not friendly, almost threatening, in their demeanour. On going on shore I remarked the change, was informed that the Chiefs and people of Magadoxa were boasting that they had not allowed us to land, and had spat upon and defiled the messenger of the English. I saw a headman from Magadoxa, who said such was the report on the Coast. I then asked Mahomed bin Ali bin Hassan if they had spat on him and insulted him; he said it was true, but had not told me as he did not wish to make a quarrel.

3. I felt, if I allowed this to pass, no white man's life would be safe amongst the Somali, or Benhadi, as they are sometimes termed; that our boats might be attacked and a serious conflict might occur; as amongst these Somalis, who are treacherous and full of cupidity, allowing an insult to pass unnoticed is sure to lead to further and greater insults being offered; in fact this is almost an axiom and applies to other countries besides that of Benhadi.

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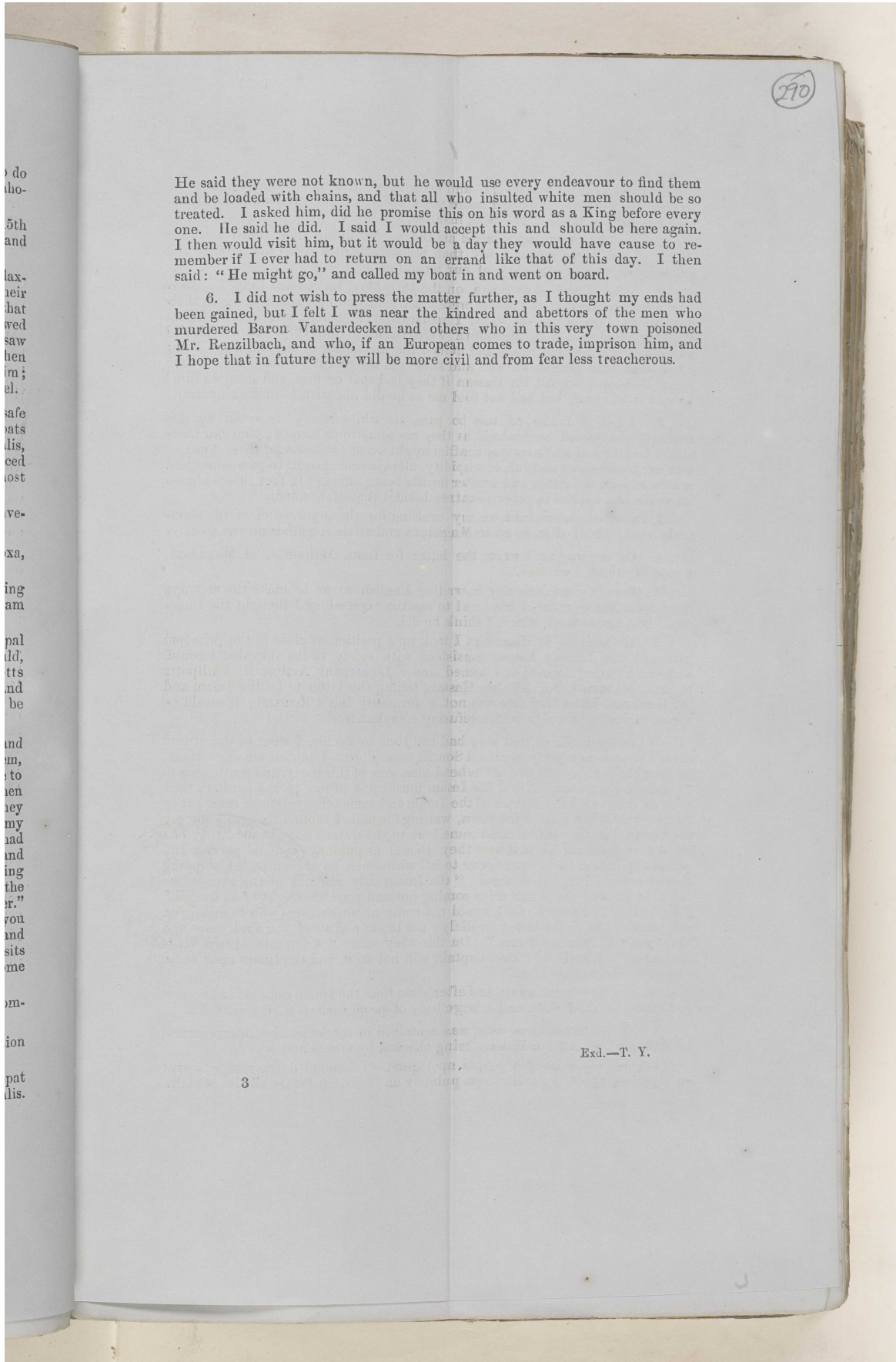
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On this they went away, and after some time the Imam came down, accompanied by his chief men, and a large body of people armed with spears, &c.

I told him the same as what was contained in the letter, the interpretation of Mahomed bin Ali bin Hassan being checked by others and myself.

He publicly before his people apologised. I demanded the men who spat on my messengers to punish them publicly on the beach before all the Somalis.

Political No. 124 of 1873, Forwarding Copies of Correspondence Regarding the Particulars of a Cruise of Her Majesty's Ship Britonto Lamoo, Brava, and Magadoxa [290r] (15/16)



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He said they were not known, but he would use every endeavour to find them and be loaded with chains, and that all who insulted white men should be so treated. I asked him, did he promise this on his word as a King before every one. He said he did. I said I would accept this and should be here again. I then would visit him, but it would be a day they would have cause to remember if I ever had to return on an errand like that of this day. I then said: "He might go," and called my boat in and went on board.

6. I did not wish to press the matter further, as I thought my ends had been gained, but I felt I was near the kindred and abettors of the men who murdered Baron Vanderdecken and others who in this very town poisoned Mr. Renzilbach, and who, if an European comes to trade, imprison him, and I hope that in future they will be more civil and from fear less treacherous.

Exd.—T. Y.



Political No. 124 of 1873, Forwarding Copies of Correspondence Regarding the  
Particulars of a Cruise of Her Majesty's Ship Britonto Lamoo, Brava, and  
Magadoxa [290v] (16/16)

