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### **‘Muscat. Report of the possessions of His Highness the Imaum.’**

<b>Holding Institution</b>	British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers
<b>Reference</b>	IOR/F/4/2121/100026
<b>Date(s)</b>	9 Dec 1843-27 Nov 1844 (CE, Gregorian)
<b>Written in</b>	English in Latin
<b>Extent and Format</b>	1 item (10 folios)
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#### **About this record**

This item consists of copies of correspondence, minutes, and consultations cited in, or enclosed with, a political letter from the Government of Bombay [Mumbai]. The correspondents are the Government of Bombay and Captain Atkins Hamerton, Her Majesty's Consul and the Honourable Company's Agent in the Dominions of His Highness the Imaum [Imam] of Muscat. The political letter, of which this item is an enclosure, can be found in IOR/F/4/2121/100024.

The item concerns a request by the Government of India for a report on the history of Britain's relations with the states on the Arabian coast of the Persian Gulf, and contains a report on the Imam of Muscat and the territories belonging to him, produced by Captain Hamerton, and related correspondence.

The item contains a table of contents (f 331), and the title page (f 330) contains the following references: 'P C [Previous Communication] 5061, Coll. 5, Vol. 3', 'D/t 29/46', 'Collection No. 3 of No. 18' and 'Examiner's Office'.

PC 5061  
Vol. 5  
Vol. 3  
100 076  
M/29/46

Collection N<sup>o</sup>. 3 of N<sup>o</sup>. 18.

N<sup>o</sup>. 1762.

Bombay  
Political Department.

Letter from, dated 22<sup>o</sup>. February 1845.

Muscat.

Report of the possession of  
His Highness the Imaum.

Examiner's Office

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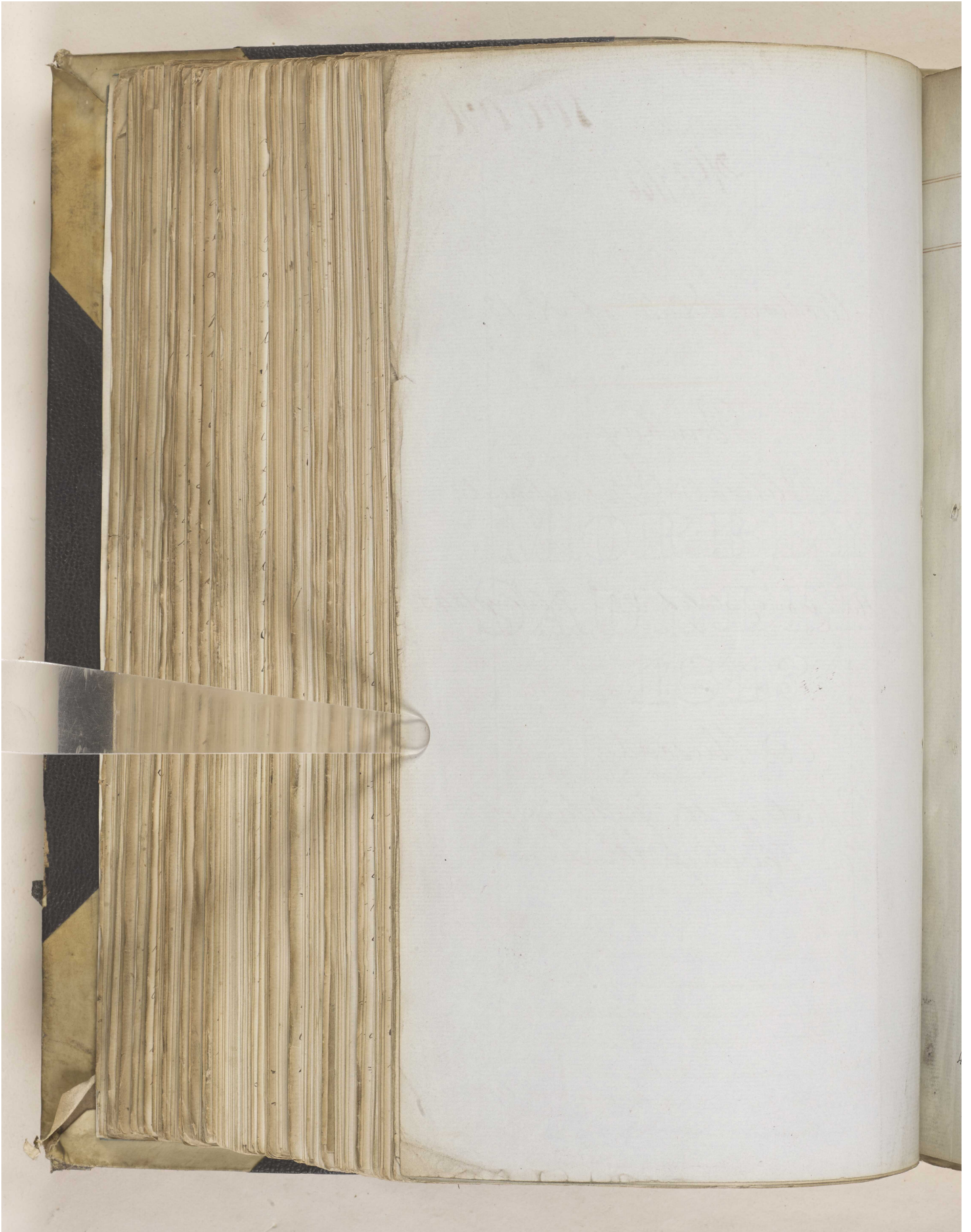
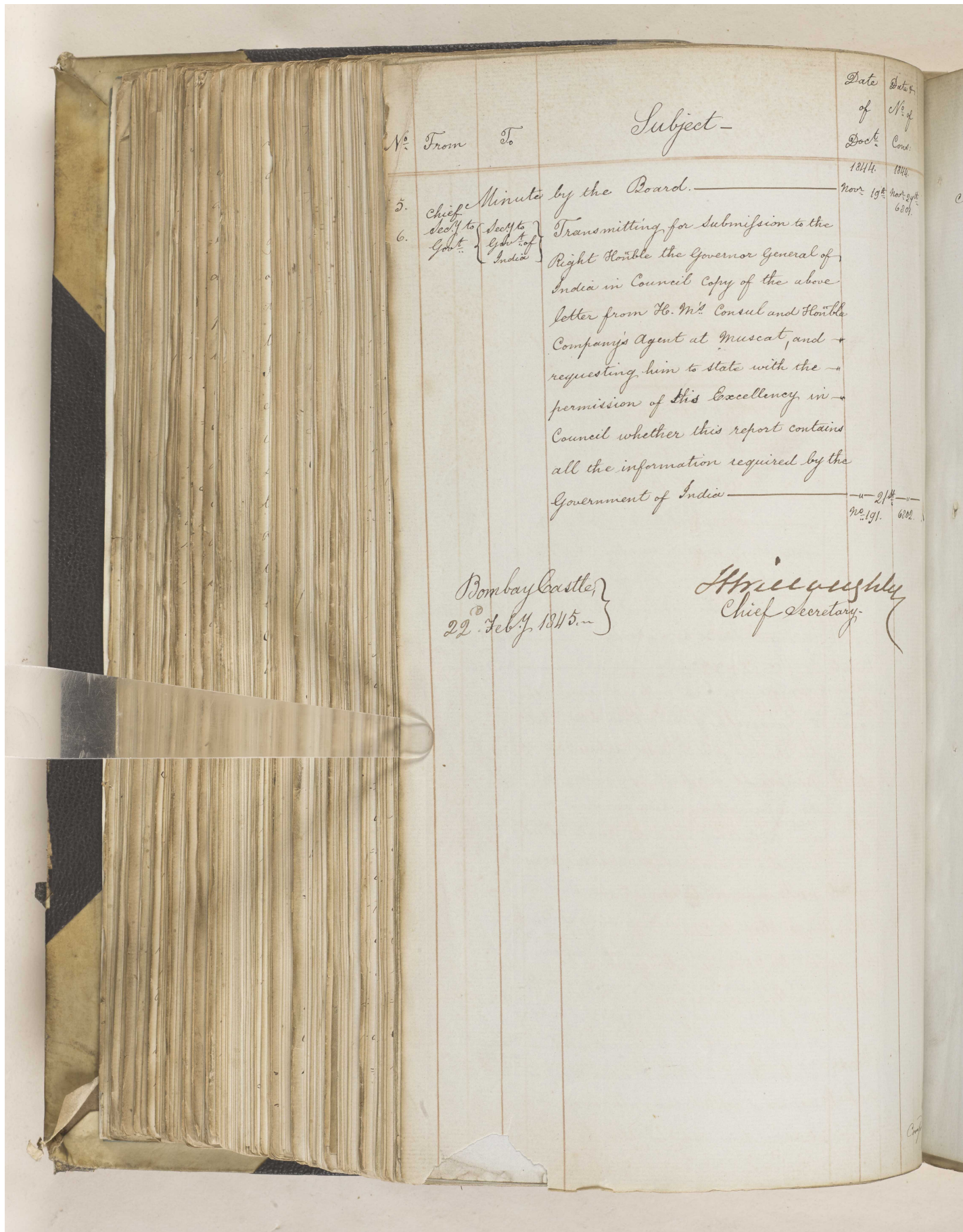


Table of Contents—

N <sup>o</sup> .	From	To	Subject—	Date of Doc <sup>t</sup> .	Date of N <sup>o</sup> of Consul.
<i>Muscat—</i>					
<i>Report of the possession of H. H. the Imaum—</i>					
1.	H. M. Consul & H. C. Agent Muscat	Secy to Gov <sup>t</sup>	Acknowledges receipt of several circular letters from the Government in the Political Department, and with reference to the Report called for in the Government circular N <sup>o</sup> 2458 of 1813, states that neither himself nor Highness the Imaum possess any records from which the information therein required, could be collected	1813. Dec <sup>r</sup> 9 <sup>th</sup>	1814. Mar <sup>ch</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> 1573.
2.			Minute by the Board.	no date	1574.
3.	Chief Secy	H. M. Consul & H. C. Agent Muscat	Informing him with reference to the 2 <sup>d</sup> paragraph of the above letter that he should frame and submit to Government a report containing all the information which he may be able to collect upon the points alluded to in the Government Circular N <sup>o</sup> 2458 of 1814. informing him at the same time that a concise history of Zanzibar, its climate, form of Government, population, trade, and products, and other items of intelligence would be very acceptable to Government	1814 Mar <sup>ch</sup> 15 <sup>th</sup> no 852.	" " 1375.
4.	H. M. Consul & H. C. Agent Muscat	Chief Secy	Submitting a Report upon the possessions of H. H. the Imaum of Muscat.	Sept 1 <sup>st</sup>	" 24 <sup>th</sup> 6800.



Extract Bombay Political

N<sup>o</sup> 1.

Consultation 20<sup>th</sup> March 1844.  
N<sup>o</sup> 34 of 1843.

N<sup>o</sup> 1573, From Captain A. Hamerton.

Her Majesty's Consul & Hon<sup>ble</sup> Company's Agent  
in the dominions of the Imaum of Muscat.  
To, J. P. Willoughby, Esquire.

Secretary to Government - Bombay.

Pol. Departt.

Sir,

Dated Zanzibar 9<sup>th</sup> December 1843.

I have the honor to report the receipt of the  
undermentioned Circulars in this Department.

N<sup>o</sup> 1458 of 1843.

— " 1870 A — " —

— " 1882 A — " —

— " 1842 — " —

— " 2458 — " —

— " 2472 — " —

2. With reference to the report called for in Cir-  
cular 2458 of 1843 I beg to state for the information  
of the Hon<sup>ble</sup> the Governor in Council, that I pos-  
sess no records whatever, from which I could col-  
lect the information required to draw up such a  
report as I conceive to be what is required, His  
Highness the Imaum has no records whatever  
he never kept any - it appears to me that accounts  
of our early connexions with the Sultan of Oman  
are to be found in the Office of the Resident in the  
Persian Gulf, but all the information I now  
possess or can collect, I will forward to Govt. but  
I cannot consider it to be the kind of report which

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If any is required.

Zanzibar,  
9<sup>th</sup> Dec: 1843.

I have the honor to be Yea  
(Signed) A. Hamerton  
Consul Captain  
H. M. & H. C. Agent in the Dominions  
of the Imaum of Muscat.

N. 2.

Minute by the Honorable the Governor concurred  
in by the Honorable Messrs Crawford & Reid. No. 1574  
without date.

1. Captain Hamerton should be directed to frame and submit to Govt, a report containing all the information he may be able to collect upon the points alluded to in the Government letter to which this is a reply; He may at the same time be informed that the Resident in the Persian Gulf has been directed to submit the information required by the Government of India, as regards the Chiefs whose possessions are situated within the range of his Political Control.

2. A concise history of Zanzibar, its climate, form of Government, population, trade, products, and other items of information, would be very acceptable.

(Signed) G. Arthur.

— J. H. Crawford.

— L. R. Reid.

From

No. 852 of 1844.  
No. 1575. From J. P. Willoughby, Esquire,  
Chief Secretary to Government,  
To Captain A. Hamerton.  
H. M. Consul and the H. C. Agent in the Dominion  
of H. H. the Imaum of Muscat.  
Zanzibar.  
Dated 15<sup>th</sup> March 1844.

Sir,

I am directed by the Honorable the  
Governor in Council to acknowledge the receipt of  
your letter No. 34 dated the 9<sup>th</sup> of December 1843,  
and with reference to the 2<sup>nd</sup> para: to inform you that  
you should frame and submit to Government, a  
report containing all the information which you  
may be able to collect upon the points alluded to  
in my Circular letter No. 2458 dated the 13<sup>th</sup> of  
October last.

2. The Governor in Council at the  
same time desires me to inform you that the  
President in the Persian Gulf has been instructed  
to furnish the information required by the Govt.  
of India, as regards the Chiefs whose possessions  
are situated within the range of his Political  
Control.

3. A concise history of Zanzibar  
its climate, form of Government, population, —  
trade, products and — other items of information  
will

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will be very acceptable to the Honorable the  
Governor in Council.

Bombay castle,  
15<sup>th</sup> March 1844. } I have the honor to be  
(Signed) J. P. Willoughby  
Chief Secretary.

Shelton  
Esq.

Extract Bombay Political

N<sup>o</sup> Consultation 27<sup>th</sup> Nov: 1844.  
N<sup>o</sup> 22 of 1844.

N<sup>o</sup> 5800. From Captain A. Hamerton.

Her Majesty's Consul & Hon<sup>ble</sup> Company's Agent

in the dominions of the Imaum of Muscat.

To, J. P. Willoughby, Esquire.

Chief Secretary to Govt. - Bombay

Pol. Dept.

Dated Zanzibar 5<sup>th</sup> Sept: 1844.

Sir,

I have the honor to forward for the  
perusal of the Honorable the Governor in Council -  
the accompanying Report on the Affairs of the Imaum  
of Muscat as directed in your letter N<sup>o</sup> 852 of the 15<sup>th</sup>  
March last.

I have the honor to be Y<sup>rs</sup>

Zanzibar,  
5<sup>th</sup> Sept: 1844.

/Signed/ A. Hamerton, Capt:  
H. M. Consul & H. C. Agent in the  
dominions of the Imaum of Muscat

The Imaum of Muscat.

Our friendly relations with the present Sul-  
tan of Oman, Saïd bin Sultan, commonly called  
the Imaum of Muskat may be said to have existed  
since the year 1803, when His Highness the Imaum,  
on the murder of his maternal Uncle, Saïf bin Bada,  
at the fort of Birha commenced his reign.

Saïf bin Bada had been appointed regent during  
the Imaum's minority; together with Her late Highness,

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the Print Ml Imaum - the present Imaum's Aunt -  
 on the death of His Highness's Father - Sultan bin  
 Ahmed - bin Ml Imaum - who was murdered in  
 1802 in the Khareah in the Persian Gulf; by the  
 Wahabee pirates of Ras el Khymah - Her  
 Highness the Print Ml Imaum having dis-  
 covered that the Regent Saif bin Bede en-  
 tertained hopes of being able to set aside the  
 boy Saif / the present Imaum / - and to usurp  
 the government of Oman, and to do which he  
 was assured of aid from many of the Chiefs of  
 Oman, and who were said to be favorably dis-  
 posed in favor of the Wahabee tenets of Moha-  
 medanism - then spread and spreading over  
 the whole of Southern Arabia - Her Highness  
 the Print Ml Imaum conceived it - necessary to  
 remove the head of the conspiracy formed against  
 her nephew, the present Imaum - well knowing  
 that Saif bin Bede having tasted the sweets of  
 power - was not to be trusted; whatever engage-  
 - ments he might enter into - and that he would  
 be unwilling to relinquish the charge he professed,  
 and resign the government he held <sup>in</sup> trust to  
 the present Imaum - then a boy, sixteen years  
 old; although the <sup>time</sup> for him so to do had arrived.  
 Her Highness therefore under a firm convic-  
 tion that while Saif bin Bede lived - her  
 nephew's situation was precarious - determined  
 to murder him - and which was accomplished  
 at

at the Fort of Birka in Oman - after a conference<sup>5</sup>  
with the principal Chiefs - His Highness the  
Princ. Al Imaum - caused his nephew the pre-  
sent Imaum to stab his Uncle Saif bin Bede,  
as he was going down a stair case - whose  
feeling his nephew's dagger; attempted to escape  
by flight - but all having been prepared he  
was pursued, and put to death by persons  
who were ready stationed for the purpose.

Much discontent was subsequently evinced  
by many of the Chiefs of Oman - who on the  
death of Saif bin Bede, soon saw that  
they had lost much they hoped to have ob-  
tained - and have ever since been inimi-  
cally disposed to the government of the Imaum  
and in many cases have entirely thrown off  
their allegiance to Muskat - for a number of  
years, matters were patched up by negotiations  
and periodical presents made to the Chiefs of in-  
fluence - and thus continued to progress until  
at length the power of the Chiefs became  
dangerous to the existence of the Muscat  
Government - when His Highness the Imaum  
obtained in 1820 and again in 1822, the  
assistance of the English - and his powerful  
and inveterate foes; the pirates of Ras al Hiy-  
mah, and the Beni abo Hafsun, and Beni  
ba Abi tribes of Southern Arabia were sub-  
dued - and the turbulent Chiefs of Oman  
(335) intimidated

intimidated and His Highness the Imaum was enabled to enjoy comparative security in Oman and turn his attention to his African possessions; from which he had heretofore obtained but a small share of Revenue - derived from Zanzibar and its dependancies; His Highness found the natives at many places on the coast of Africa inclined to resist his authority - particularly at Mombassa His Highness failed to subdue the Chiefs of this place although almost at war with them from 1827 - until 1837 when the Chiefs were invited under a promise of security to their persons - to go on board one of the Imaum's ships of war at Mombassa; to negotiate and enter into a final arrangement of matters - when on a preconcerted signal they were seized, and taken away in irons most of the inhabitants then retired in disgust into the interior since which time the Imaum keeps a garrison of one hundred soldiers in the fort. During the time the attention of the Imaum was directed towards his African possessions - conspiracy and rebellion were being matured in Arabia - Haemood bin Azam at present called the Chief of Sahar the Imaum's cousin; took possession of the fort of Ristock - the capital of Oman - and where the Imaum had resided for centuries although

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 although His Highness the Imaum at two different times undertook expeditions against his Cousin - he both times failed to effect any thing of consequence, the Chiefs and their followers who were bound to aid and assist their own Prince. His Highness the Imaum, basely deserted his cause and refused to fight against Hamood, telling the Imaum, that the right to the Chieftainship of Ristock and its dependancies on the part of Hamood bin Azan, was quite as good as that of His Highness and that they could not fight against Hamood who has maintained his position since 1835 - this affair hurt the Imaum's pride, and greatly circumscribed his influence, and lessened his dignity in Oman - His Highness expended in money on the two expeditions against Hamood bin Azan in giving presents to the Chiefs above three hundred thousand dollars - which they treacherously took and deserted him -

The Country subject to Ristock and Salhar is perhaps the finest part of Oman, but the revenue derived from all the Country under the Control of Hamood is inconsiderable - most of the Chiefs pay nothing - which was agreed to in consideration of their aiding him to wrest the Country from the Imaum - yet the Arabs are content, every one lives as he wishes - all have sufficient for their wants, which are but few

few- they are almost in the state of the Bedaw  
/Bedawin/

His Highness the Imaum derives  
a revenue of about two hundred and fifty  
thousand dollars from Muskat and its de-  
pendancies /in money/ but he derives other  
and great advantages from Oman; such as  
being able to allot farms and ~~state~~ <sup>d</sup> groves  
to persons for their maintenance; and whom  
he is bound to support. all Arab Chieftains  
are thus situated. -

Muskat surpasses all places  
in Arabia for the security of life and property  
afforded by His Highness the Imaum to the  
native merchants of all creeds, and of all countries,  
who reside or resort there for commercial  
purposes- and also for the great courtesy ob-  
served by the Imaum's authorities to all strangers  
who for any purpose visit the Country; in the  
<sup>Bayhays?</sup> Bayhays at Muskat are to be found. almost  
every thing in the way of provisions- the exports  
are wheats, Flies, Alses, a few horses, dates and  
Salt- and the imports comprise all the necessaries  
of life-

With respect to the Island of Zanzibar  
and the Imaum's African possessions- it is only  
of late years that His Highness appears to have  
estimated their great value; in fact the trade on  
the Coast of Africa subject to the Imaum may  
be

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 be considered, as not yet fully developed the  
 principal Articles of Merchandize to be pro-  
 cured are, Gum Copal, Glandes, Horra, Bares wax,  
 Tallow- Corn, (the yowance of India) Oil seeds-  
 some timber- and slaves- About twenty or  
 thousand of whom are yearly brought to  
 Zanzibar and from thirteen to fifteen thou-  
 sand reexported to supply the Red sea, Ara-  
 bian, Persian Gulf, and Indian Markets,  
 the Coast of Africa is in most places <sup>very</sup> ~~were~~  
 unhealthy for Europeans. all the Articles  
 are brought from the Imaum's possessions  
 on the coast of Africa on native craft to  
 Zanzibar and sold to European, American  
 and native merchants; the chief Articles  
 of export the produce of the Islands of  
 Zanzibar and Pemba, are cloves- Cocoa-  
 nuts, and ~~rice~~ long, Sugar is likely to be-  
 come a principal Article- that grown on  
 the Island is said to be of a very fine quality  
 but it will require some time before the people  
 of Zanzibar who are the least energetic, and  
 on the whole the meanest description of people  
 perhaps in any Country- will cultivate and  
 manufacture Sugar- the resident Arabs, and the  
 breed between the Arab and the African are  
 truly a miserable class- they affect a sort of  
 pride and are much addicted to indolence,  
 and the most revolting and abominable vices,  
 and (337)



and have no regard whatever for truth - and as long as they can procure slaves at a cheap rate to cultivate their cloves, from which they derive great profit little is expected from them. No base act tarnishes the character of a Zanzibari.

The imports into Zanzibar are piece goods, coarse Cottons - Woollen cloth - Muskets - beads, brass wire, Iron, earthenware, hardware, glass, rice, wheat, soap, and candles - in small quantities and fancy Articles - The Customs are farmed to a Banian, who pays His Highness about one hundred fifty five thousand dollars a year. There are about five hundred Banians at Zanzibar and the Imaum's ports on the Coast of Africa and between <sup>the</sup> and seven hundred Indian Mohomedans who are the Chief traders -

The climate of Zanzibar on the Coast is not unhealthy for Europeans but it is impossible for white men to live in the interior of the Island - the vegetation is rank and appears always to be going on, and generally fever contracted in the interior is fatal to Europeans. All fruits and vegetables which grows in tropical climates thrive well, the damp during the South-west Monsoon is extraordinary - the heat is not at any time of the year oppressive - it certainly would not be considered so by people accustomed to the heats of India, it is remarkable that although there does not exist

exist any thing like a police - the crimes of murder  
and robbery are very rare - petty thefts are fre-  
quent; there are five persons authorized to ad-  
minister justice - but as in most native courts the  
best evidence a man can produce in support of  
his innocence is to be found in his own pocket,  
from which if a man cannot produce his evi-  
dence he is sure to be found guilty - from His  
Highness the Imaum alone can a poor man ob-  
tain justice & is most truly the poor man's friend,  
he wishes to do good to all the Imaum has no-  
thing like an army, nor has he seamen, Officers  
or navigators for his ships, His Highness  
has twelve sons - and a vast number of his  
daughters - only four of his sons are grown up -  
Said Hlial 28 - Said Thurwane 26, Said  
Khalid 26, and Said Mohamed 18 years old - the  
Imaum's eldest son Said Hlial is the most in-  
telligent of all his sons - but the Imaum intends  
to banish him from his territories - he wishes  
his son Said Thurwane to succeed to his Ara-  
bian, and his son Said to his African posses-  
sions - it is the general opinion that when it  
pleases God to call His Highness there will most  
likely be a civil war - and never will his do-  
minions be under so benevolent and liberal  
a prince, or one who has tried to fulfill the  
engagements he has entered into with Europeans

oo

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as his Highness Saud Saud has. -

Zanzibar, }  
5<sup>th</sup> Sep. 1844 } /Signed/ A. Hamerton, Captain  
H. M. Consul & H. C. Agt. in the  
Dominions of the Imaum of Muskat.

N. 5.

Minutes by the Honorable the Governor N. 801  
concurred in by His Excellency the Commander  
in Chief and the Honble. Mr. Crawford,  
dated 19<sup>th</sup> November 1844.

Copy to be forwarded to the Govt.  
of India, with a request that we may be informed,  
if this report contains all the information required  
by that authority.

19<sup>th</sup> Nov.

/Signed/ G. Arthur.  
- J. W. Mahon.  
- J. H. Crawford.

N. 6.

N. 191 of 1844. Political Dept.  
From J. P. Milloughby, Esquire.  
Chief Secretary to Government.  
To, J. Currie, Esquire.  
Secretary to the Govt. of India.

Office 1530  
N. 1802.

Dated 21<sup>st</sup> Nov. 1844.

Sir, I am directed by the Honorable the  
Governor in Council to transmit to you for sub-  
mission to the Right Honorable the Governor  
General of India in Council, copy of a letter from  
Captain Hamerton dated the 5<sup>th</sup> September last

N.

N<sup>o</sup> 22, submitting a report upon the possessions  
of His Highness the Imaum of Muscat, and to  
request that you will be pleased, with the per-  
mission of His Excellency in Council, to state  
if this report contains all the information  
required in Mr. Under Secretary Edwards'  
communication dated the 9<sup>th</sup> September 1844.

I have the honor to be Sir

Bombay Castle,  
at  
21. Nov. 1844.

/signed/ J. P. Willoughby  
Chief Secretary.

True Extract -

J. P. Willoughby  
Chief Secy.

1801

1802

1802

Copied by  
H. de Varnha  
E. M. M. M. M.

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'Muscat. Report of the possessions of His Highness the Imaum.' [339v] (20/20)

