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Letters from William Digges Latouche to the Court of Directors

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Reference	IOR/L/PS/9/76/12
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Written in	English in Latin
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About this record

A copy of a letter from William Digges Latouche, Resident at Bussora [Basra], to the Court of Directors for Affairs of the United Company of Merchants of England trading to the East Indies [East India Company], dated 15 June 1781. Subjects covered include:

- Arrangements for the passage of various East India Company employees from Bussora towards India and related movements of ships in the Gulf
- The activities of the Basha [Sulaymān Pāshā Āl Kabīr, Governor of Baghdad], including his order of gallivat ships from Bombay [Mumbai] and reinforcement of Bussora
- News of the capture of Dutch colonies in the Caribbean, which Latouche has forwarded to Bombay
- News from Bombay regarding English ships
- Intelligence from Madras [Chennai] regarding the movement of French ships and the conflict [Second Anglo-Mysore War, 1780-1784] with Heyder Ally [Haydar 'Alī, Ruler of Mysore].

A duplicate of the same letter can be found in IOR/L/PS/9/76/12.

Attached to the letter is part of another letter from Latouche to the Court of Directors dated 27 June 1781.
It covers:

- Intelligence from the Coromandel coast concerning French movements and the conflict with Heyder Ally
- The movements of ships.

The remainder of this letter can be found in IOR/L/PS/9/76/15. The full letter can be found in IOR/L/PS/9/76/20.

①
/ Duplicate /

For
The Honble the Court of Directors
for Affairs of the Honble United
Company of Merchants of England
trading to the East Indies,

Honble Gentlemen,

Your last Address, as if foregoing
Duplicate, was dated the 1st and 14th May.

The same Day M^r James Woolley
arrived from Bagdat and delivered me Your Orders in his and
Major Comraund Lawre of the 30th November - the Latter on account
ill Health did not accompany M^r Woolley from Aleppo.

Your Honor's Orders by M^r Woolley
to the Commander of any of your Vessels being directed in the same
Manner as those by Mess^{rs} Jervis and Smyth, I gave him, at his
Request, a Letter to the same purpose as to those Gentlemen, and the
17th he proceeded in a Dow to Muscat - but as I daily expected the
Arrival of Mess^{rs} Denfield and Seton from Aleppo, I desired the
Commander to wait some Days at Muscat, or Bushire for them.

The 25th Mess^{rs} Denfield, Seton, Comraund
and Stuart arrived from Aleppo, and delivered me your Honor several
Orders regarding them dated likewise the 30th November.

I had prepared a Dow for carrying
these Gentlemen to Muscat, but receiving a Advice of the Arrival of
an English Vessel at Bushire, and considering the Uncertainty of
their procuring a Conveyance from Muscat, the 27th I dispatched a
Letter to the Resident at their Request to desire that he would Charter
her up in order that she might afford them a Passage to India.

Two Days afterwards the Peter, Captain
Morris arrived from Surat, but last from Bushire, with a Cargo
of

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of Price Goods, Indigo &c^o, and departed with Mess^{rs}. Benfield, Seton, Courau and Stuart the 7th, which was as soon as her Cargo could be laded, and a proper Quantity of Ballast shipped on board her - they are to pay Eight Thousand Rupees for their Passage on board the Vessel, and Two Thousand for their Table.

Considering her short Stay at Bussora, considering also that she is not to remain at Bushire, more than 3 Days at furthest, and that she is not to touch at Muscat, from all which the Owner must suffer a Disadvantage in Point of returning Freight; considering likewise that the Passage by Country Vessels, if practicable, would probably have cost as much, if not more; and that more Expedition, and greater Safety may be expected in the Detoy I am in hopes that your Honors will join me in Opinion, that the Terms on which she was engaged, were very moderate.

At the Basha's particular Desire, signified by the Mudsalem, I wrote a Letter under the 17th Ultimo, to the Commanders of any of Your Honor's Vessels bound to Bussora, directing them to give Convey thither to the two Turkish Ketches, now lying at Muscat, provided the Service they were on would admit thereof, and having Accounts of their Success having proceeded to the Assistance of the Suraum's Sons at Muscat, having Reason also to imagine that, contrary to my Expectation, Mess^{rs}. Irwin and Smyth would not meet the Mercury before their Arrival there, the 30th I dispatched another Letter to the Commanders countermanding my former Letter, wherein I desired them to put on board the Tows which carried those Gentlemen, and M^r. Woolley, Part of Your Honors Warrants - at the same Time I wrote to M^r. Woolley to inform him that he had no Occasion to wait at Muscat as he intended for Mess^{rs}. Benfield and Seton.

The 9th Inst^o I received Accounts from Aleppo of M^r. John Sullivan's Arrival at Constantinople with Dispatches of his Intention of leaving that Place for Bussora, about the 28th April, and of his coming by the Way of Dierbeckier & Bagdat; I also received Advice from the Consul of the Capture of St. Cecilia and St. Martin; all which I immediately forwarded in a Letter to my Honble Superior at Bombay, which I dispatched by Boat to Bushire in Hopes of its arriving there, before the Detoy's Departure from thence.

By M^r. Woolley I forwarded to Bombay Your Packet for Calcutta delivered me by Mess^{rs}. Irwin and Smyth;

and

and by Mess^{rs} Benfield and Seton, Copies thereof, together with
the Packet to Madras. -

In my Letter to my Honble Superiors
of the 15th Ultimo, I informed them of the Receipt of the 50,000 Piastres
ordered from the Porte for the Payment of the Gallivats requested by
the Pacha, and of his being very solicitous for their being sent him
in the Course of the Year - I mentioned to them also, the friendly
Attention which he showed not only in the Dispatch to Constantinople
of the Copies of the Bombay Packet following Year, but in forwarding
M^r Woolley hither from Bagdat, and it is with Pleasure I observe
from a private Letter from the Honble the President of Bombay to me
dated the 18th February and received the 29th Ultimo, that the Gallivats
would be built immediately, and would be ready to leave Bombay in
October - within these few Days a Party of about 250 Men has arrived
from Bagdat for the Protection of Bushorah

In the Letter abovementioned is also the
following Paragraph 'The Superbs of 74 Guns and Eagle of 64 Guns
have been docked and cleaned; and the Eagle with the Coventry Frigate
and Chaser Schoop are now in Dock fitting, and will be out the 25th
Instant when the Bedford, Worcester and Shirelopp will go into
Dock and clean - It will be acceptable News in England, to know
that we can dock 74 Gun Ships - The Nymph Schoop the Admiral
sent to the Cape in October, and is expected here, by the 5th or 10th of April.

By a Letter from M^r Boddam at Surat
dated the 7th March, I am informed that he had received one from
Madras of the 1st February - that the French Squadron of 6 Ships of the
Line, and 3 Frigates which had appeared off Madras were then at
Pondicherry - that they had no Transports, nor any other Troops
than their Marines, of which it was not likely they could spare
many to Heyder Ally, though he should desire it - that Heyder
Ally had lost Caragoly (which a Detachment of our Army
took with great Intrepidity) and had been obliged to abandon the
Sieges of Wandewash and Valore - M^r Boddam adds that he seemed
to be assembling his whole Force, possibly with an Intention of
hazarding a Battle - that our Fleet under Sir Edward Hughes
was fitting out as fast as possible at Bombay, and it was hoped
would get away from thence in all March.

I inclose two Letters from Mess^{rs}
Benfield and Seton to the Honble Committee of Secresy, and

their

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LPS/9/76/12

Bussora
the 15th June 1781.

their Secretary; and am with the greatest Respect,
Honble Gentlemen
Your very faithful & obed^t humble servants
William Digges Latouche

Honble Gentlemen

With the foregoing Duplicate of my last Address, of the 15th Instant, I have the Pleasure to forward you the following Intelligence extracted from Letters from the Honble William Hovindy Esq^r dated Bombay the 7th April and received by Way of Muscat the 25th Instant.

He advises that the Lively Captain Forest who left England the 1st November, arriv'd at Mynges the 20th February - that according to an Extract from a Letter from a Letter from Captain Eddington dated at Patnamcotta the 25th February our Affairs on the Coromandel Coast had taken a very favorable Turn - that the French Fleet had left that Coast the Beginning of February and proceeded to the Islands - that the Detachment from Bengal was far advanced towards Madras - that Mr Stewart also writes from Goa the 29th March that it was the common Report there, that Hyder Ally distressed for Provisions, and harassed by General Coote, who had defeated him in several skirmishes, had been oblig'd to retire precipitately from the Carnatic - that he was discontented with the French for not bringing him Men - and that on their Side they wanted Money which he could not give them.

Mr Hovindy writes further that the Morning Star which sail'd from home the 5th March with Intelligence of the Departure of his Majesty's Ambassador from the Hague arriv'd at Bombay the 25th following - and that the Mercury was to have sail'd for this Place the 7th April but was detain'd for some Days, in the Hope of sending by her more authentic Accounts of the foregoing Intelligence from the Coromandel Coast.

According to Letters from Muscat of the 20th May, no English Vessel had arriv'd from India, but a Dutch Ship had brought thither from Batavia about 3000 Camisters

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