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تحتوي النسخة الإلكترونية على معلومات إضافية ونصوص وصور بدقة عالية تسمح بإمكانية تكبيرها ومطالعتها بسهولة.

"مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي

المؤسسة المالكة	المكتبة البريطانية: أوراق خاصة وسجلات من مكتب الهند
المرجع	Mss Eur F111/30
التاريخ/ التواريخ	١٨٨٩-١٨٩٢ (ميلادي)
لغة الكتابة	الإنجليزية في اللاتينية
الحجم والشكل	ملف واحد (٦٦٨ ورقة)
حق النشر	المُلكية العامة

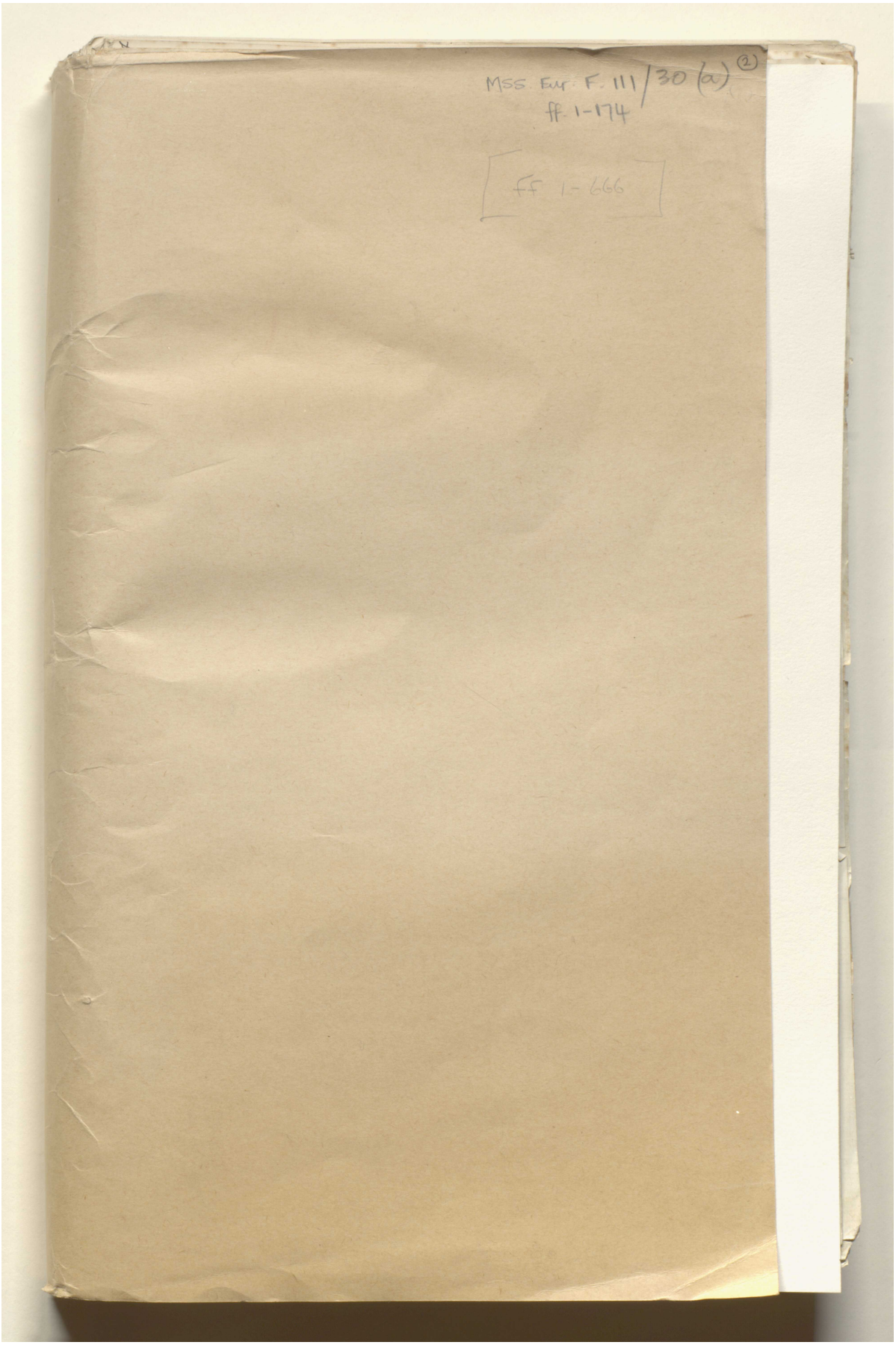
حول هذا السجلّ

يحتوي هذا الملف على أقسام من مخطوطة بخط اليد لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" بقلم جورج ناثانيال كرزون. تأتي هذه الأوراق كجزء من المسودة الكاملة للكتاب المكتوبة بخط اليد، والتي تُشكل أرقام الاستدعاء Mss Eur F111/30 إلى Mss Eur F111/32. النسخة المطبوعة من الكتاب، والتي نُشرت في سنة ١٨٩٢، موجودة في الملف الذي يحمل رقم الاستدعاء Mss Eur F111/33.

تتناول الأوراق الموجودة في هذا الملف التاريخ القديم والحديث لبلاد فارس وجغرافيتها وسياساتها الاجتماعية والداخلية خلال أواخر القرن التاسع عشر، عندما كان يعيش هناك جورج كرزون مؤقتًا. تناقش المخطوطة أيضًا الوجود الروسي والبريطاني في بلاد فارس وآراء الكاتب حول الاستراتيجيات الخاصة بهذين البلدين من أجل النفوذ في البلاد. وبالإضافة إلى ذلك، تتضمن الأوراق بعض كتابات جورج كرزون عن سفره أثناء وجوده في بلاد فارس.

ملصق على بعض الأوراق قصاصات من صحيفة "التايمز". هذه القصاصات تتألف من مقتطفات من الكتاب الذي كان من المزمع نشره "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" وقد نُشرت في الصحيفة في الفترة من ١٨٨٩-١٨٩٠.

مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [أمامي] (١/١٣٥٥)



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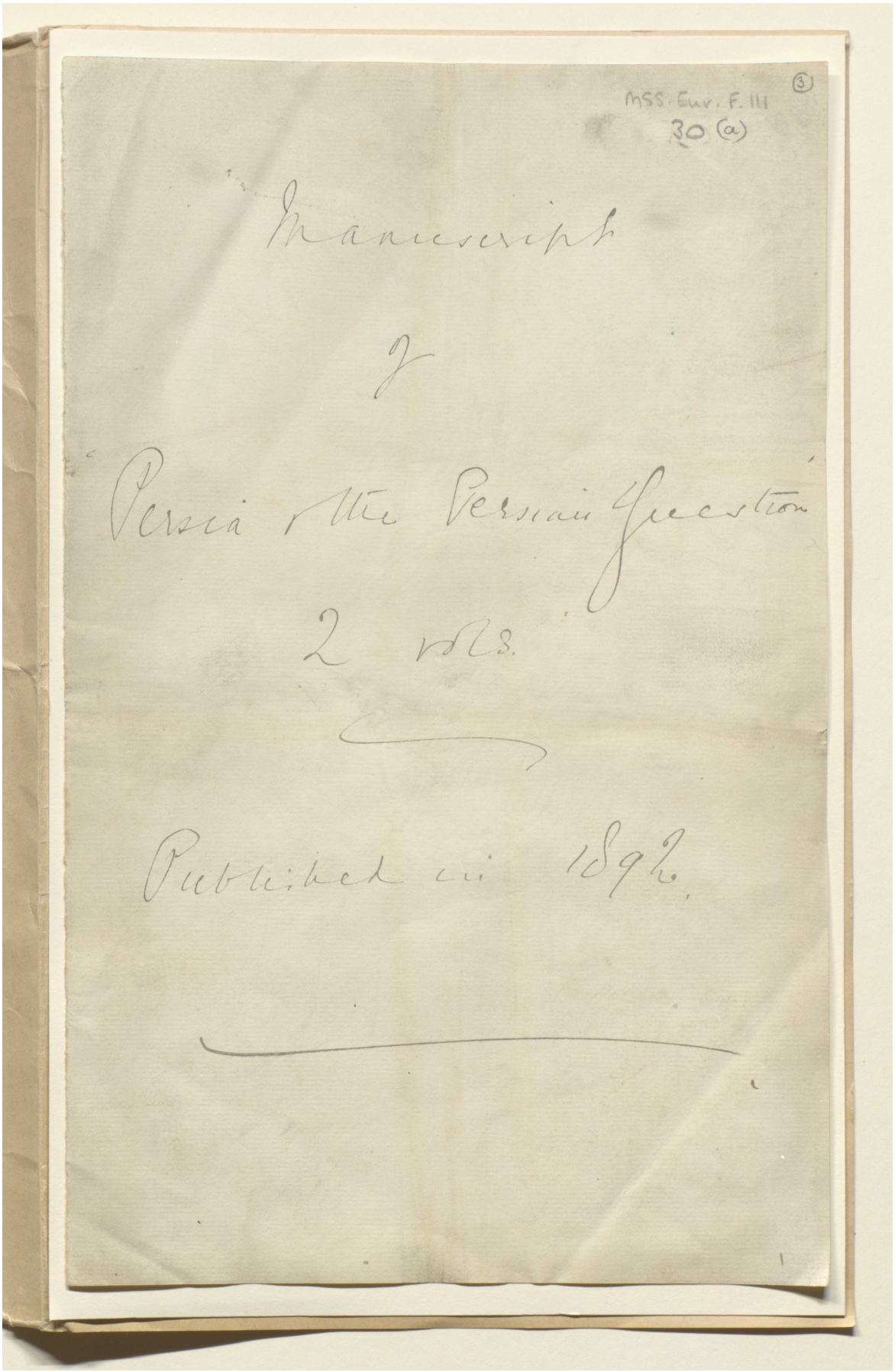
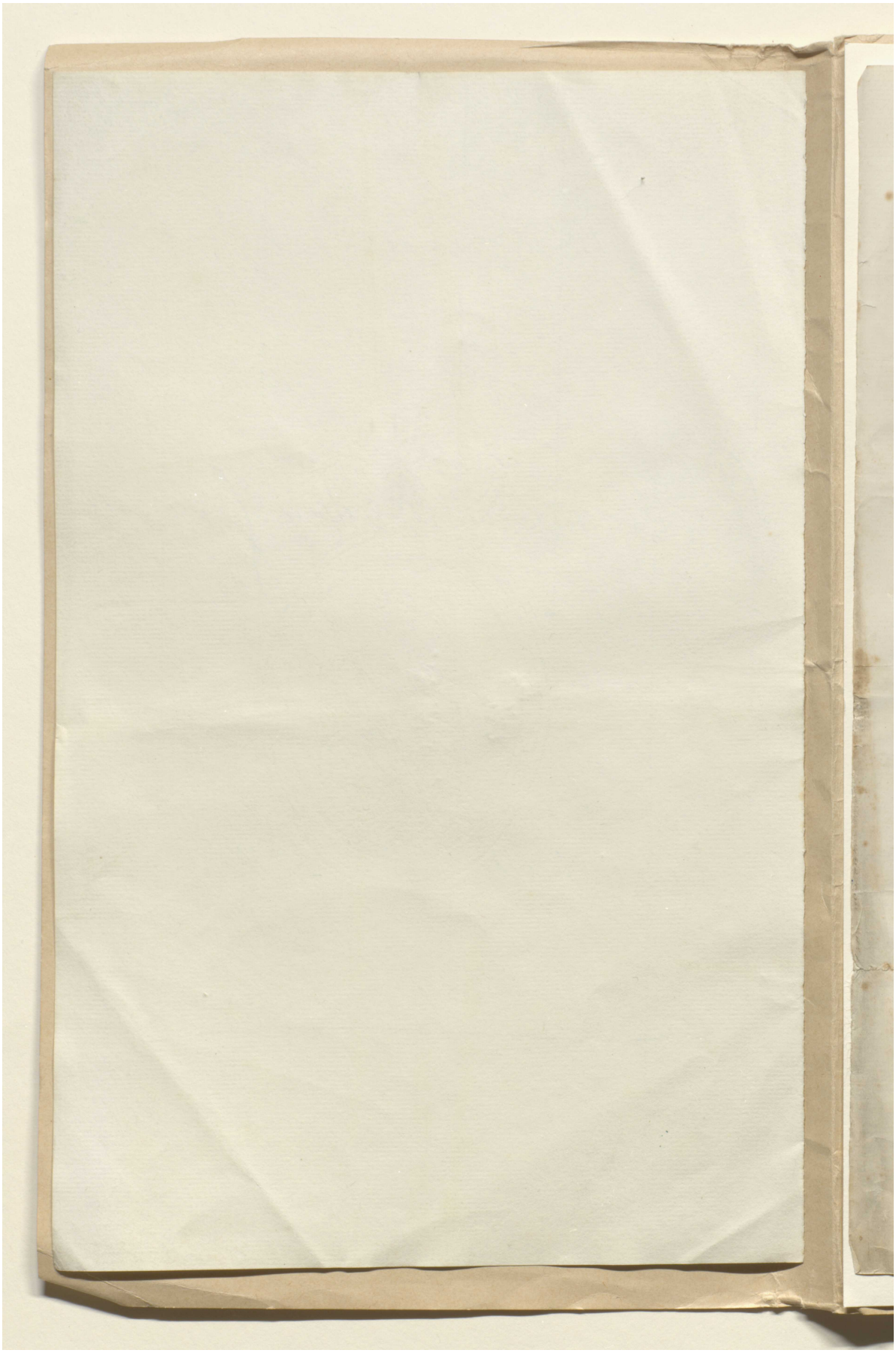
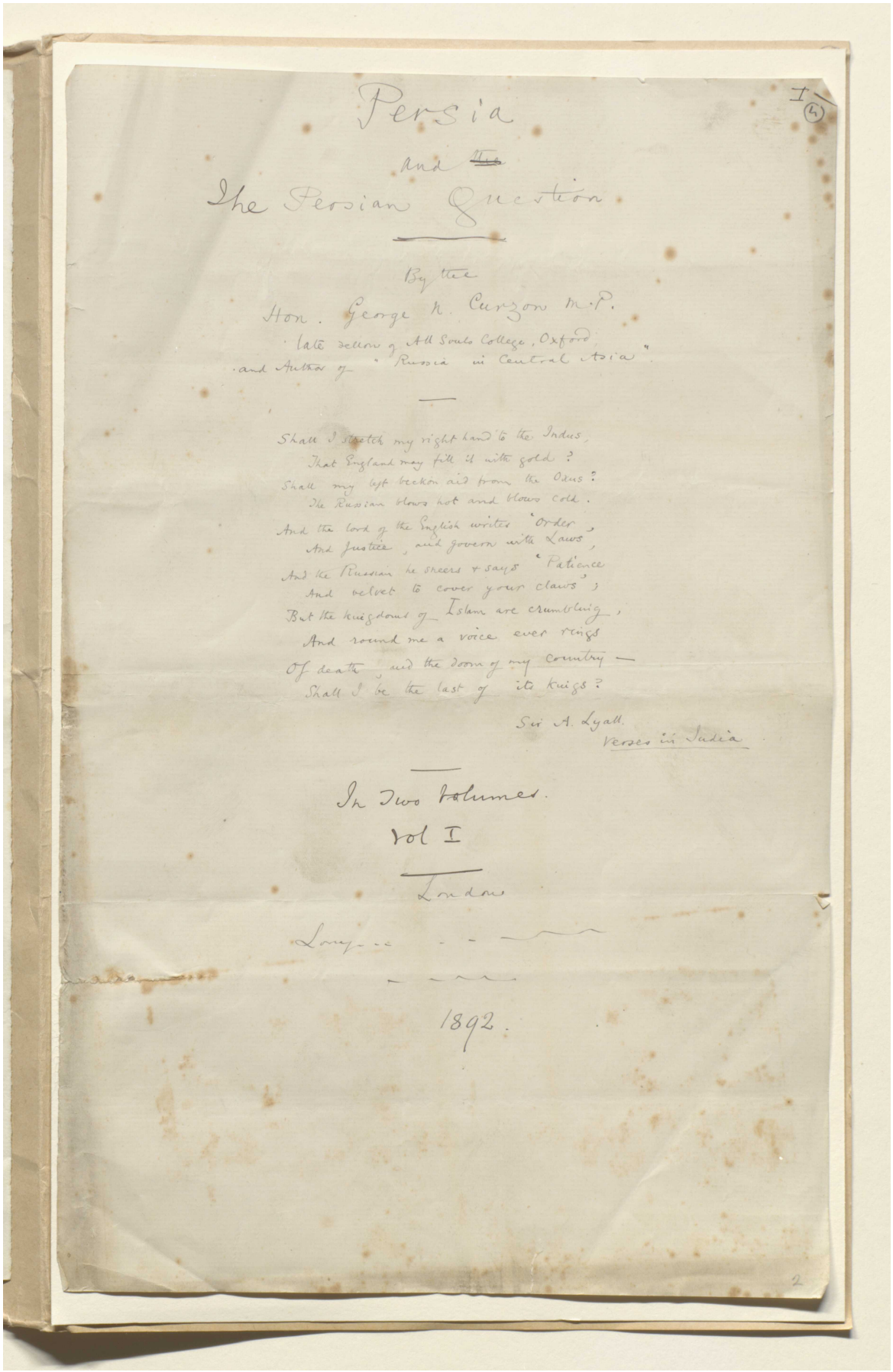
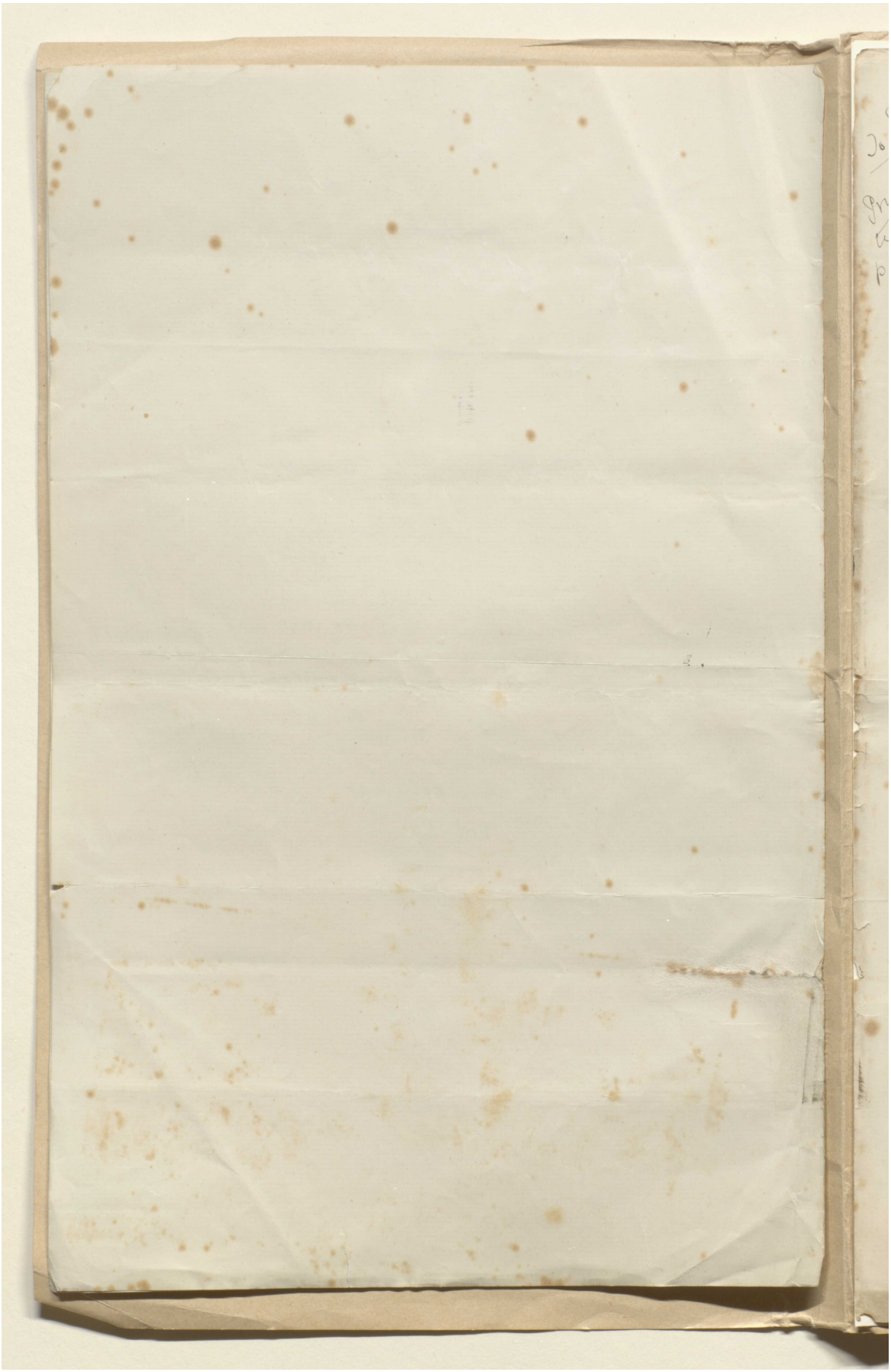
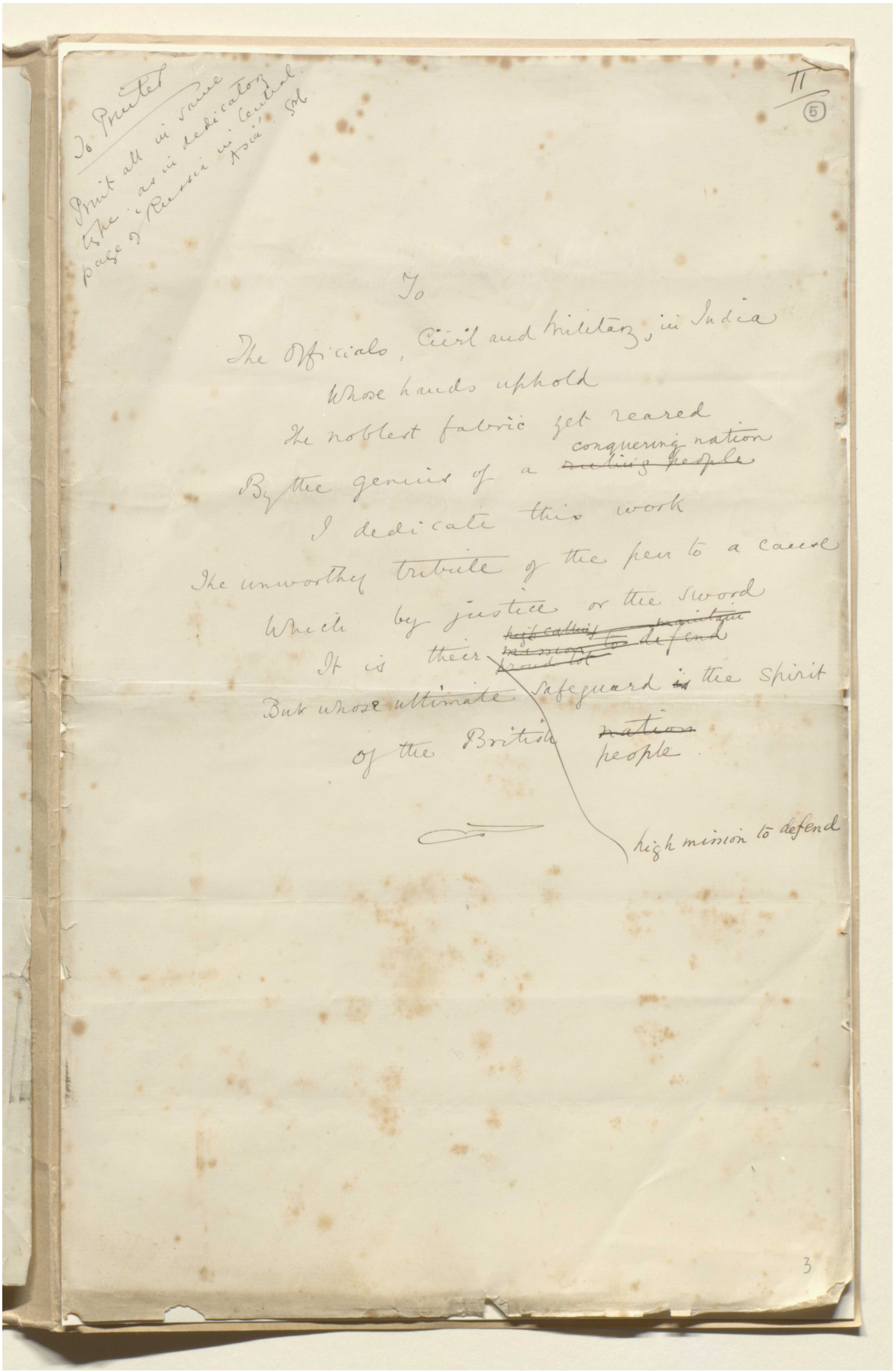

MSS. Eur. F. 111
30 (a)
Manuscript
of
Persia & the Persian Question
2 vols.
Published in 1892.



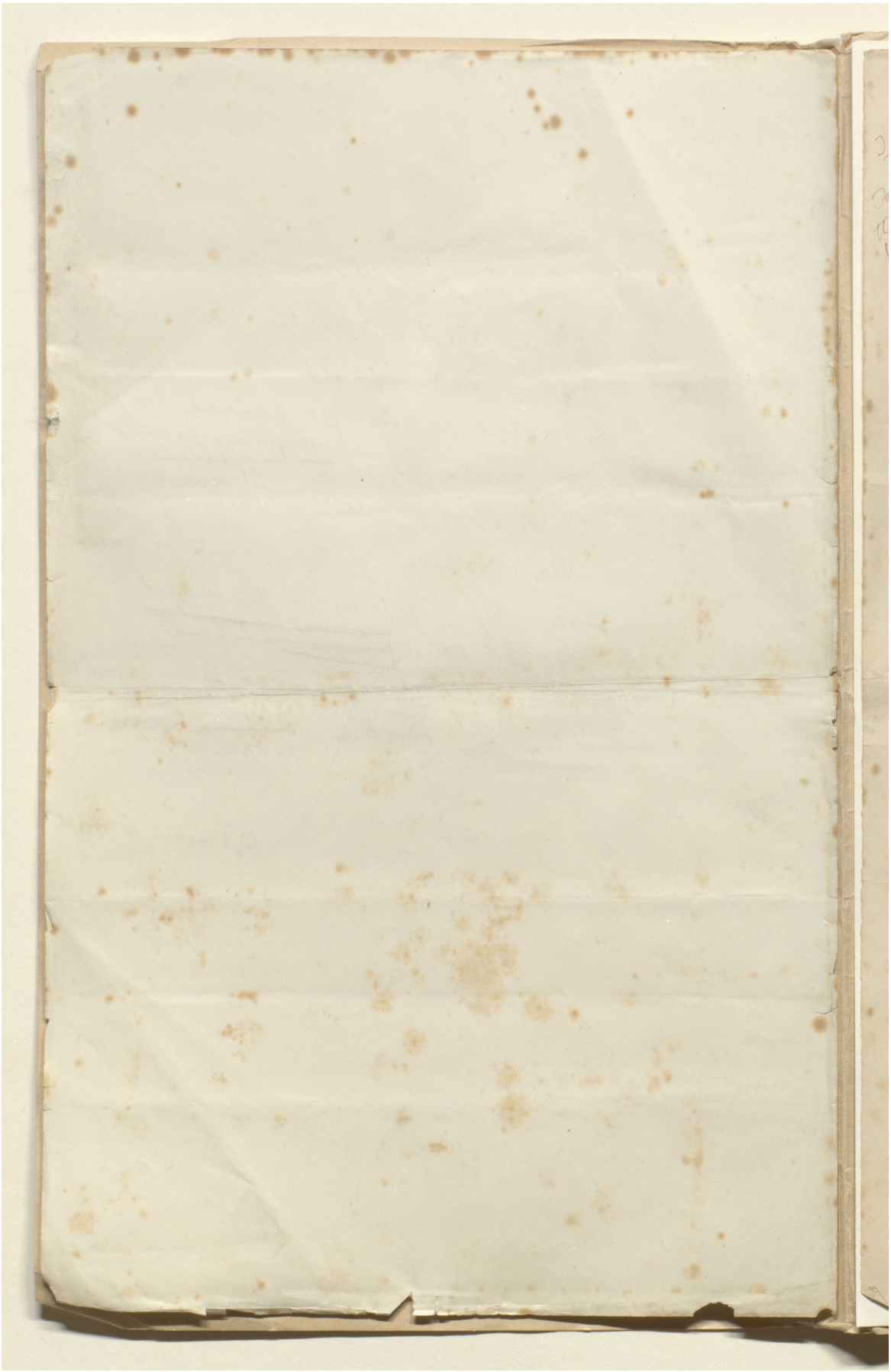

Persia
and
The Persian Question
By the
Hon. George N. Curzon M.P.
late fellow of All Souls College, Oxford
and Author of "Russia in Central Asia"
Shall I stretch my right hand to the Indus,
That England may fill it with gold?
Shall my left beckon aid from the Oxus?
The Russian blows hot and blows cold.
And the lord of the English writes 'Order',
And justice, and govern with Laws,
And the Russian he sneers & says 'Patience
And velvet to cover your claws';
But the kingdoms of Islam are crumbling,
And round me a voice ever rings
Of death, and the doom of my country —
Shall I be the last of its kings?
Sir A. Lyall.
Verses in India
In Two Volumes.
Vol I
London
1892.

مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٤ظ] (١٣٥٥/٦)




To
The Officials, Civil and Military, in India
Whose hands uphold
The noblest fabric yet reared
By the genius of a conquering nation
I dedicate this work
The unworthy tribute of the pen to a cause
Which by justice or the sword
It is their high mission to defend
But whose ultimate safeguard is the spirit
of the British people
high mission to defend

مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٥ظ] (١٣٥٥/٨)



المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة
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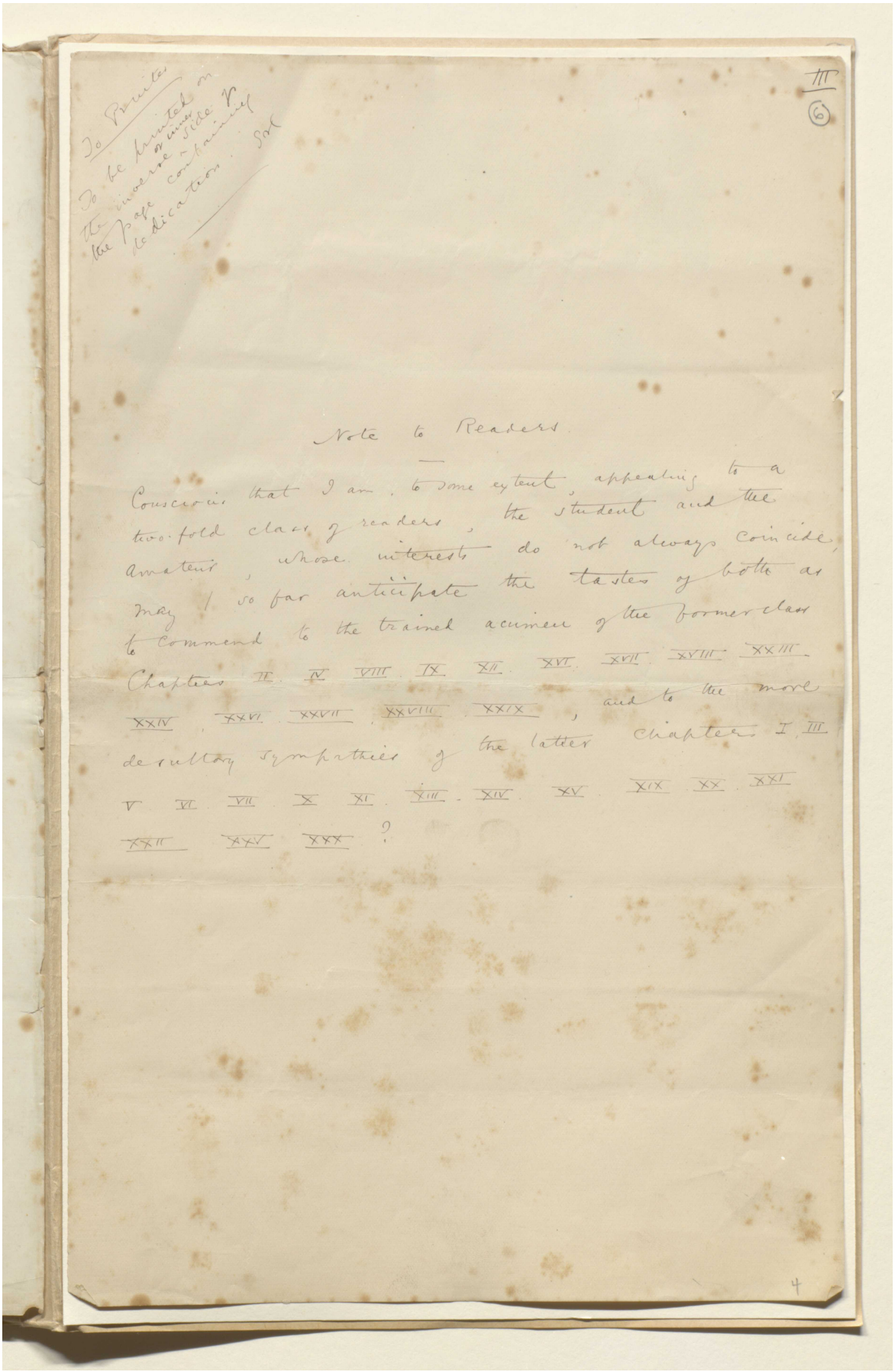


To Printer
To be printed on the inverse or inner side of the page containing dedication. Sol

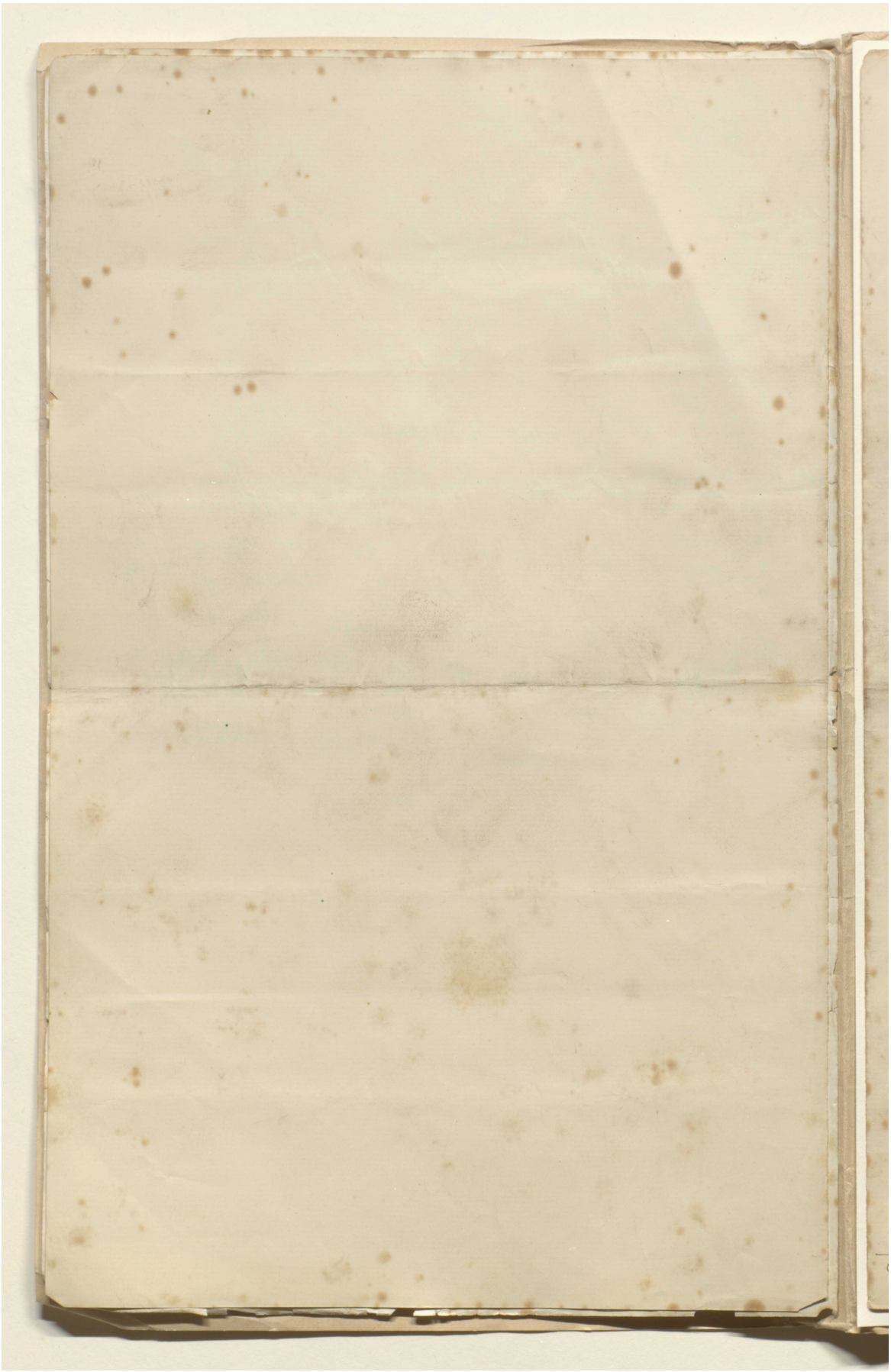
III
(6)

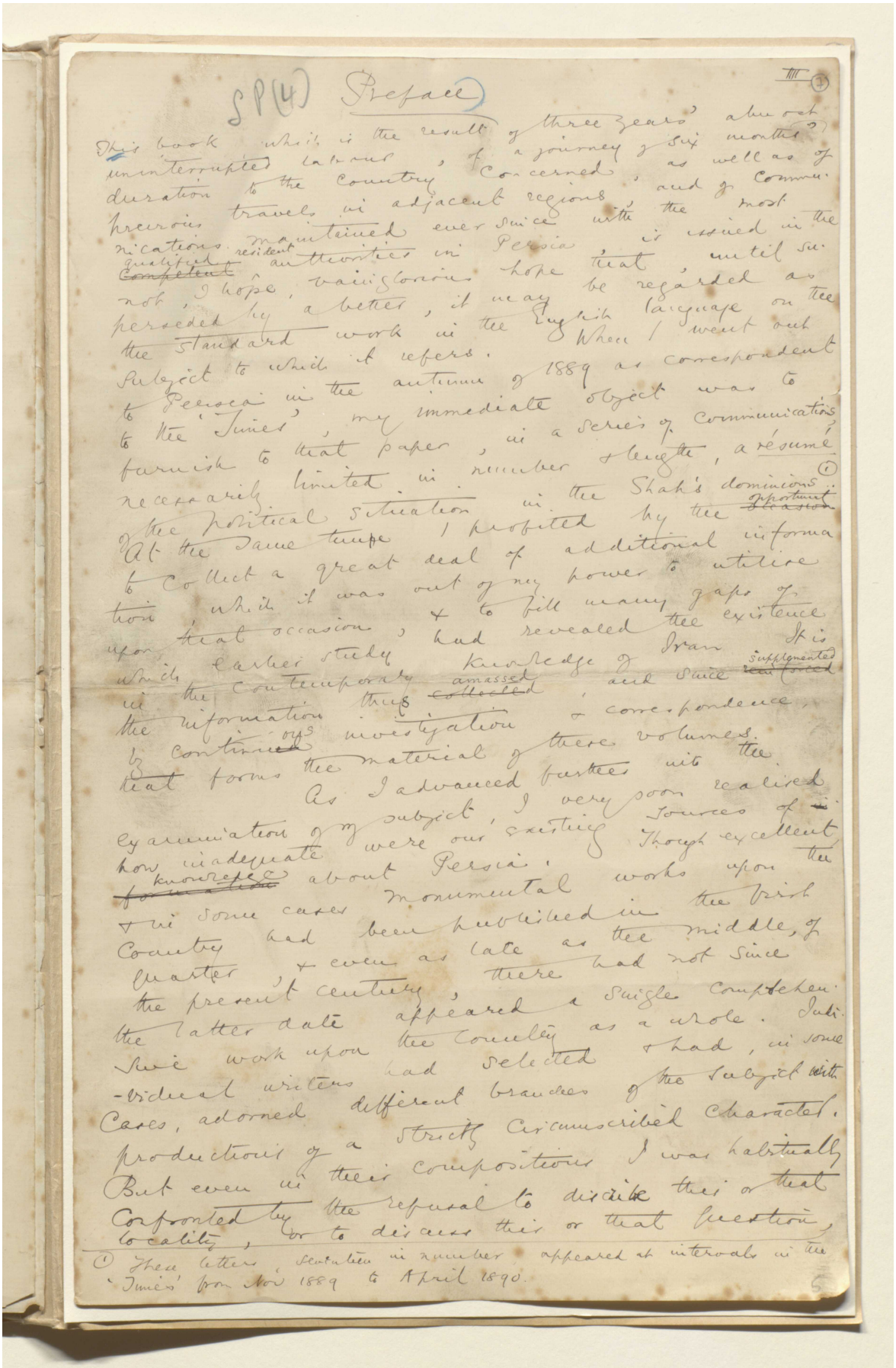
Note to Readers.

Conscious that I am, to some extent, appealing to a two-fold class of readers, the student and the amateur, whose interests do not always coincide, may I so far anticipate the tastes of both as to commend to the trained acumen of the former class Chapters II. IV. VIII. IX. XII. XVI. XVII. XVIII. XXIII. XXIV. XXVI. XXVII. XXVIII. XXIX, and to the more desultory sympathies of the latter Chapters I, III, V. VI. VII. X. XI. XIII. XIV. XV. XIX. XX. XXI. XXII. XXV. XXX ?

4

مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٦ظ] (١٣٥٥/١٠)





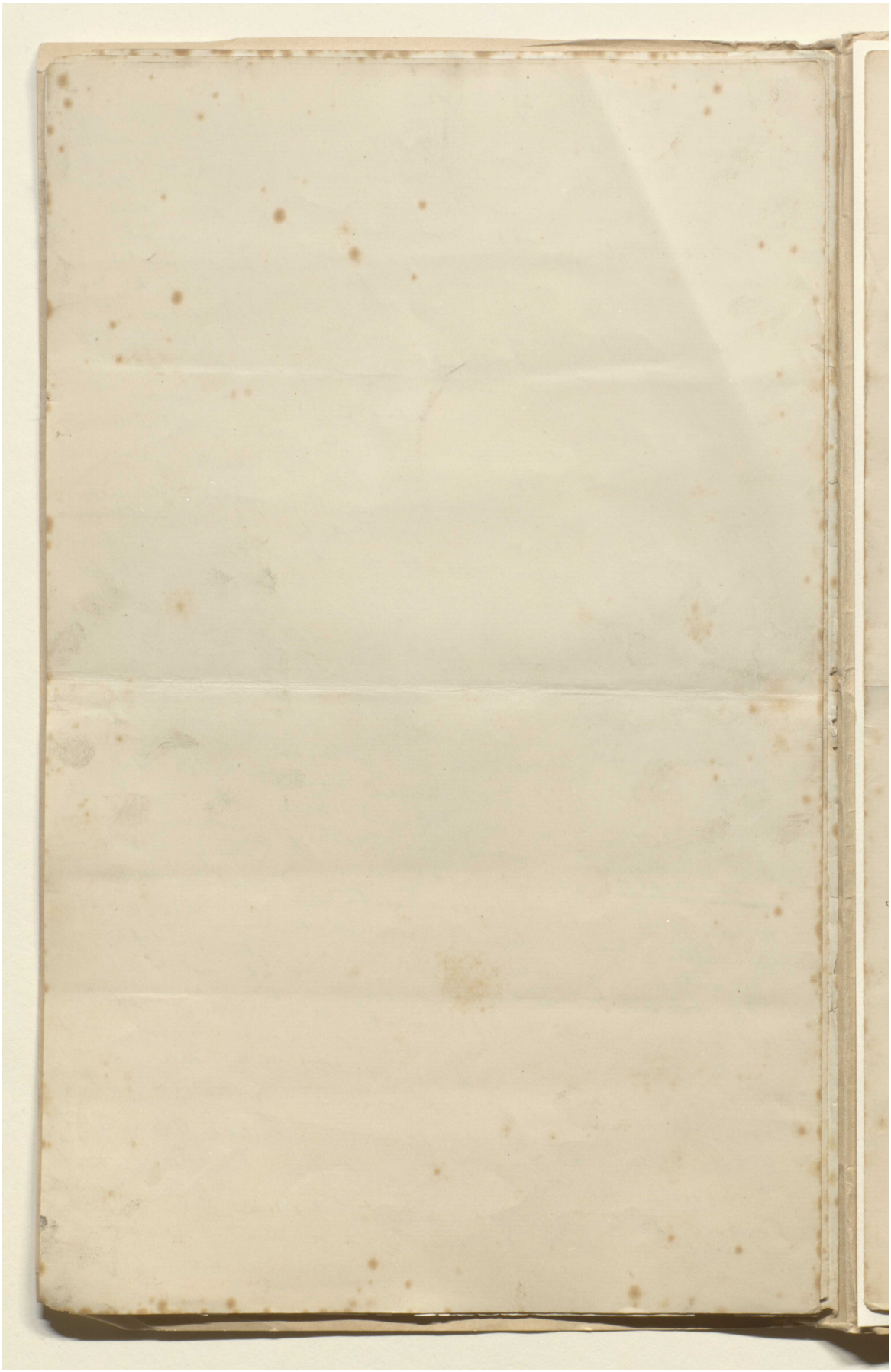
SP(4) Preface

This book which is the result of three years' almost uninterrupted labour, of a journey of six months' duration to the country concerned, as well as of previous travels in adjacent regions, and of communications maintained ever since with the most qualified resident authorities in Persia, is issued in the not, I hope, vainglorious hope that, until superseded by a better, it may be regarded as the standard work in the English language on the subject to which it refers. When I went out to Persia in the autumn of 1889 as correspondent to the 'Times', my immediate object was to furnish to that paper, in a series of communications necessarily limited in number & length, a résumé of the political situation in the Shah's dominions. At the same time I profited by the opportune occasion to collect a great deal of additional information which it was out of my power to utilise upon that occasion, & to fill many gaps of which earlier study & knowledge of Iran had revealed the existence in the contemporary information thus collected, and since supplemented & reinforced by continuous investigation & correspondence, that forms the material of these volumes.

As I advanced further into the examination of my subject, I very soon realised how inadequate were our existing sources of information about Persia. Though excellent & in some cases monumental works upon the country had been published in the Irish quarter & even as late as the middle, of the present century, there had not since the latter date appeared a single comprehensive work upon the country as a whole. Individual writers had selected & had, in some cases, adorned different branches of the subject with productions of a strictly circumscribed character. But even in their compositions I was habitually confronted by the refusal to discuss this or that locality, or to discuss this or that question,

① These letters, seventeen in number, appeared at intervals in the 'Times' from Nov 1889 to April 1890.

مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٧ظ] (١٣٥٥/١٢)



المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة

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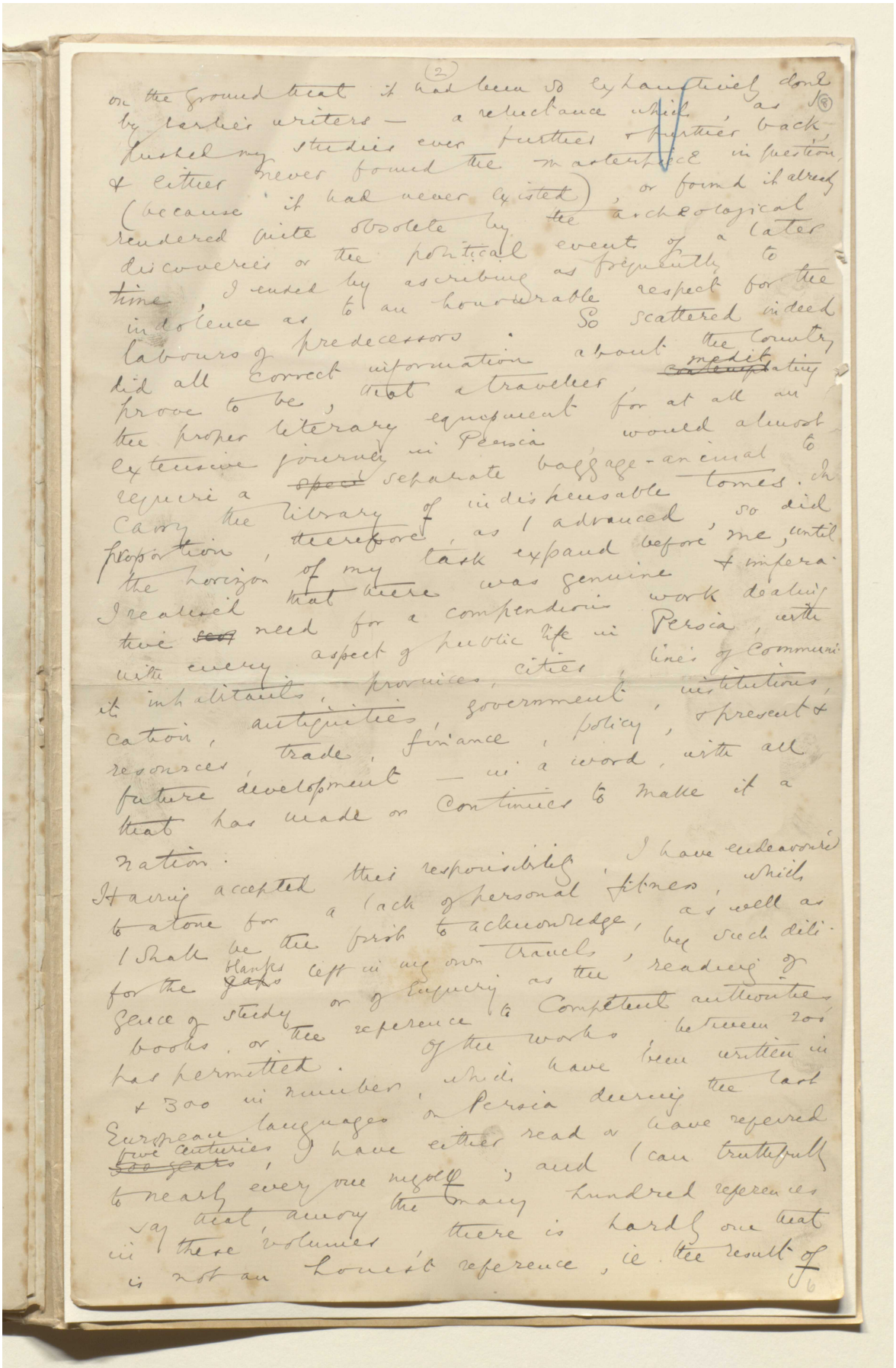

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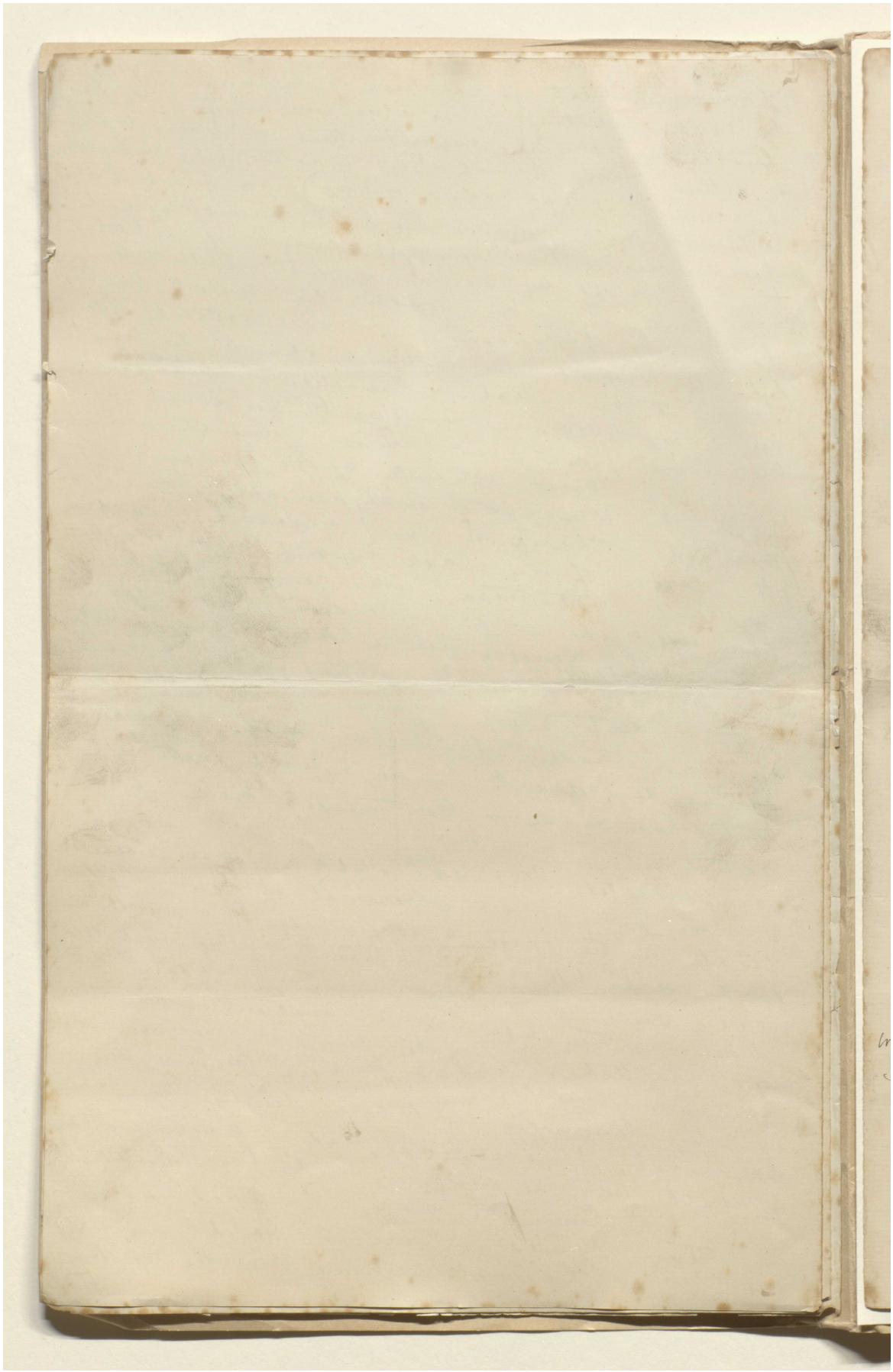

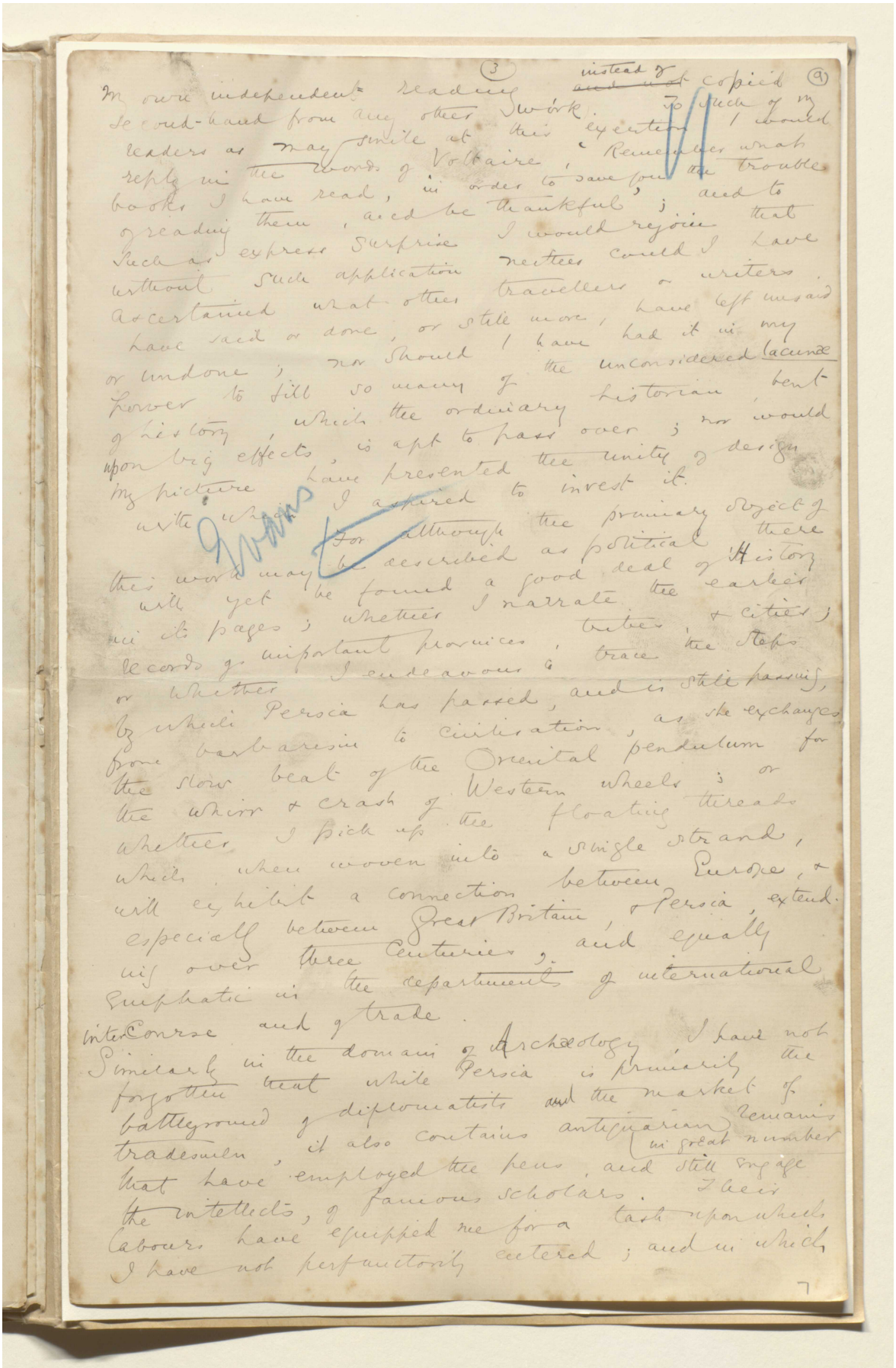

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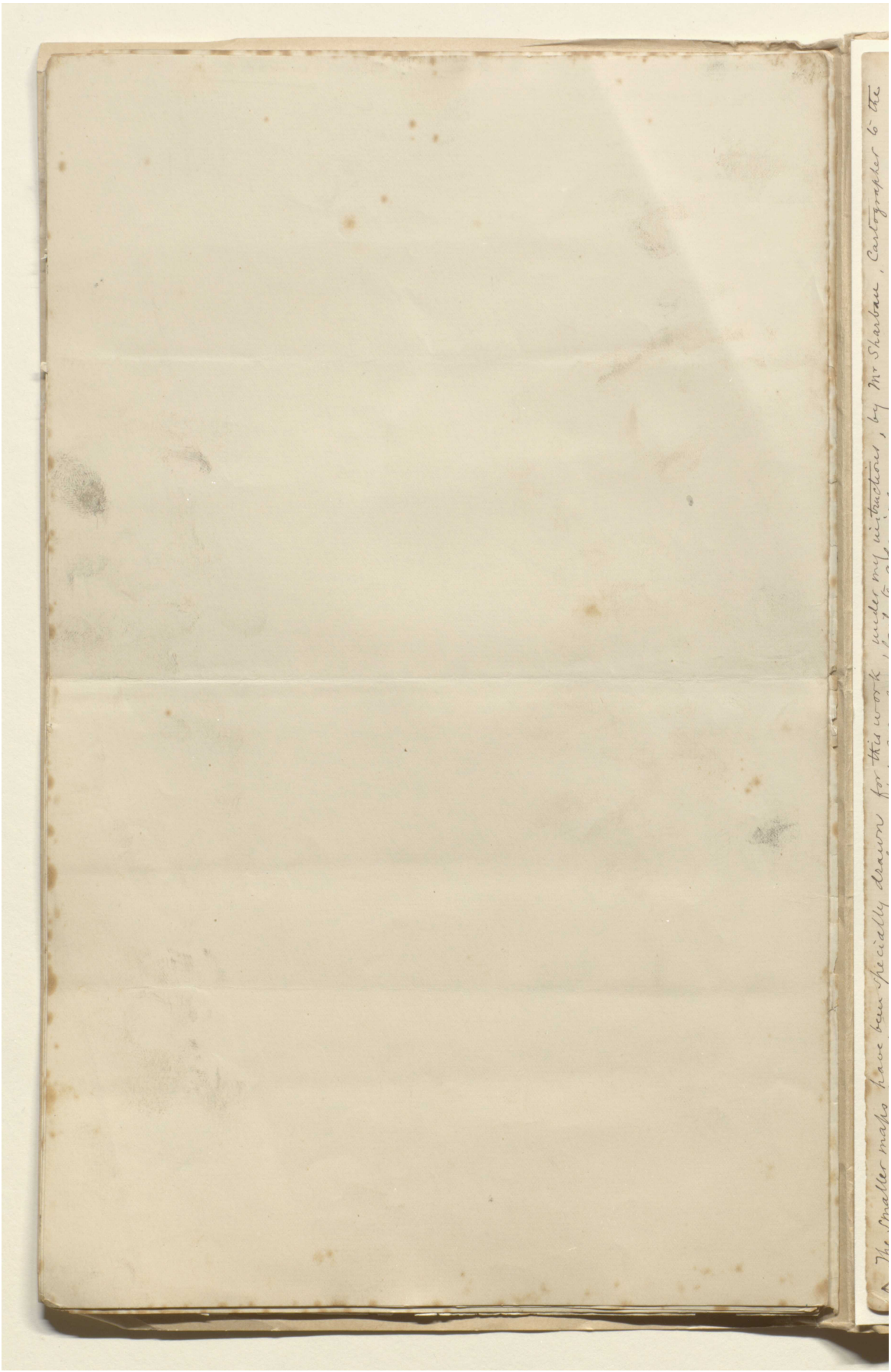
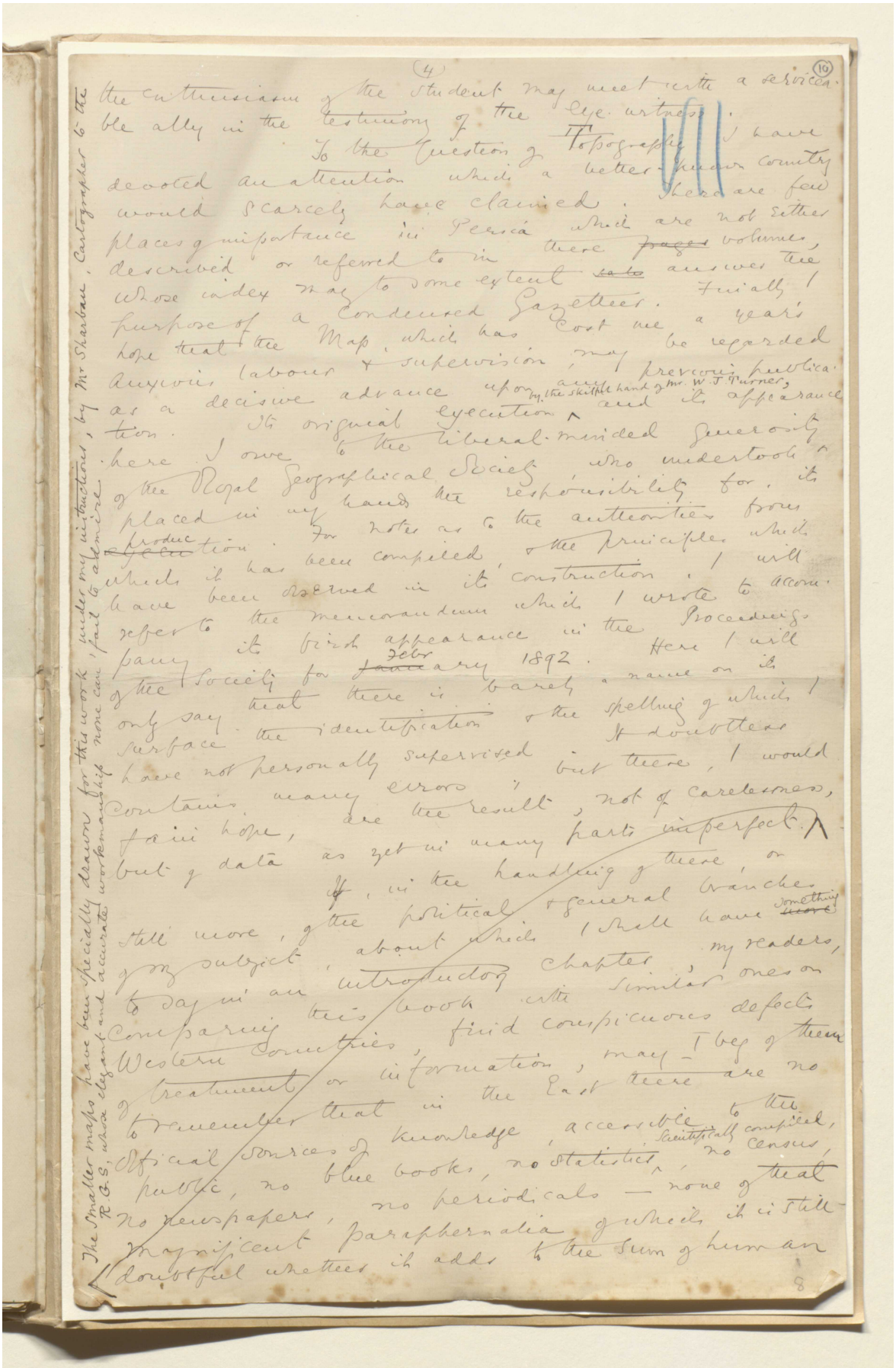
مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٩ظ] (١٣٥٥/١٦)





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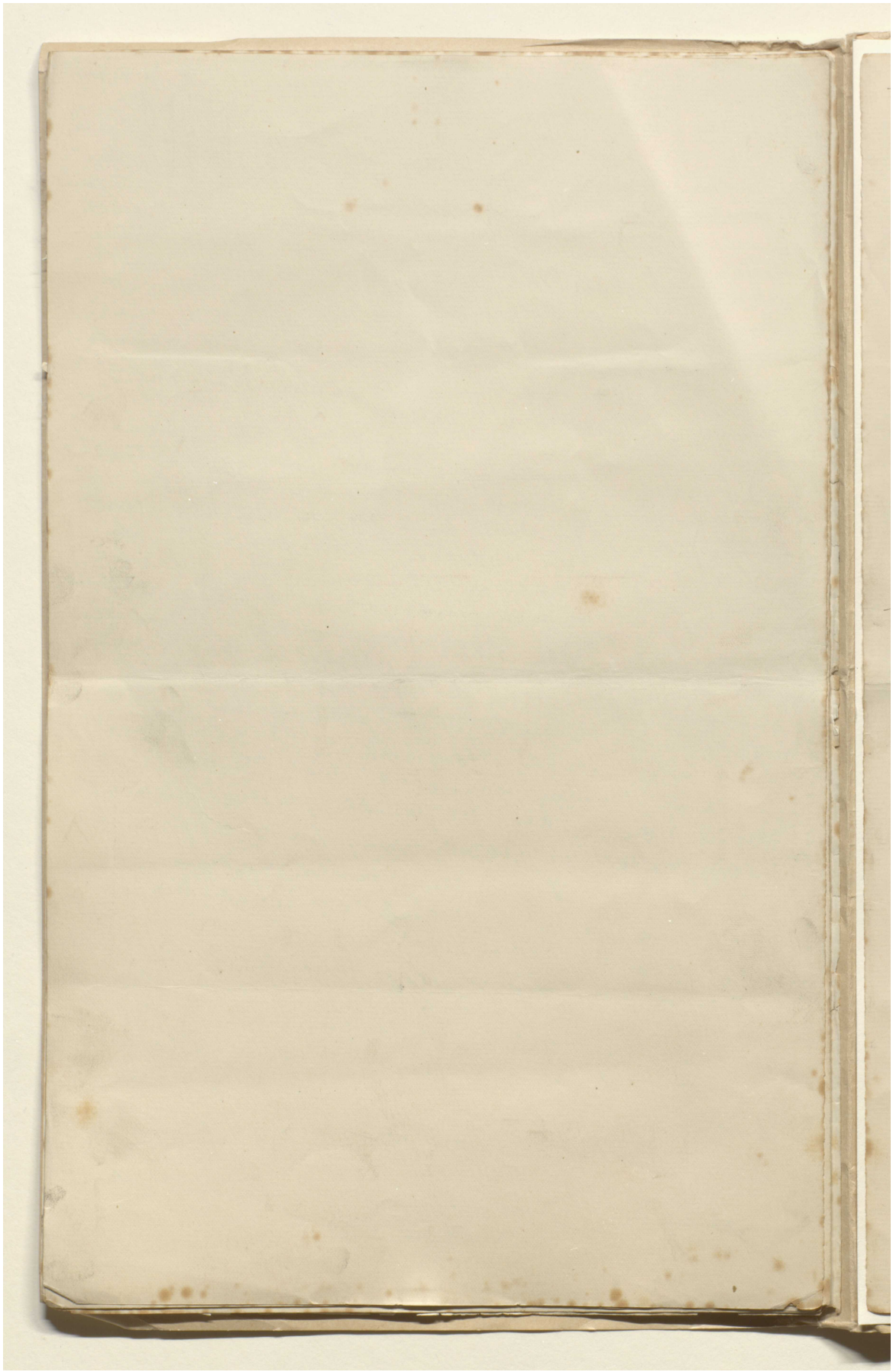

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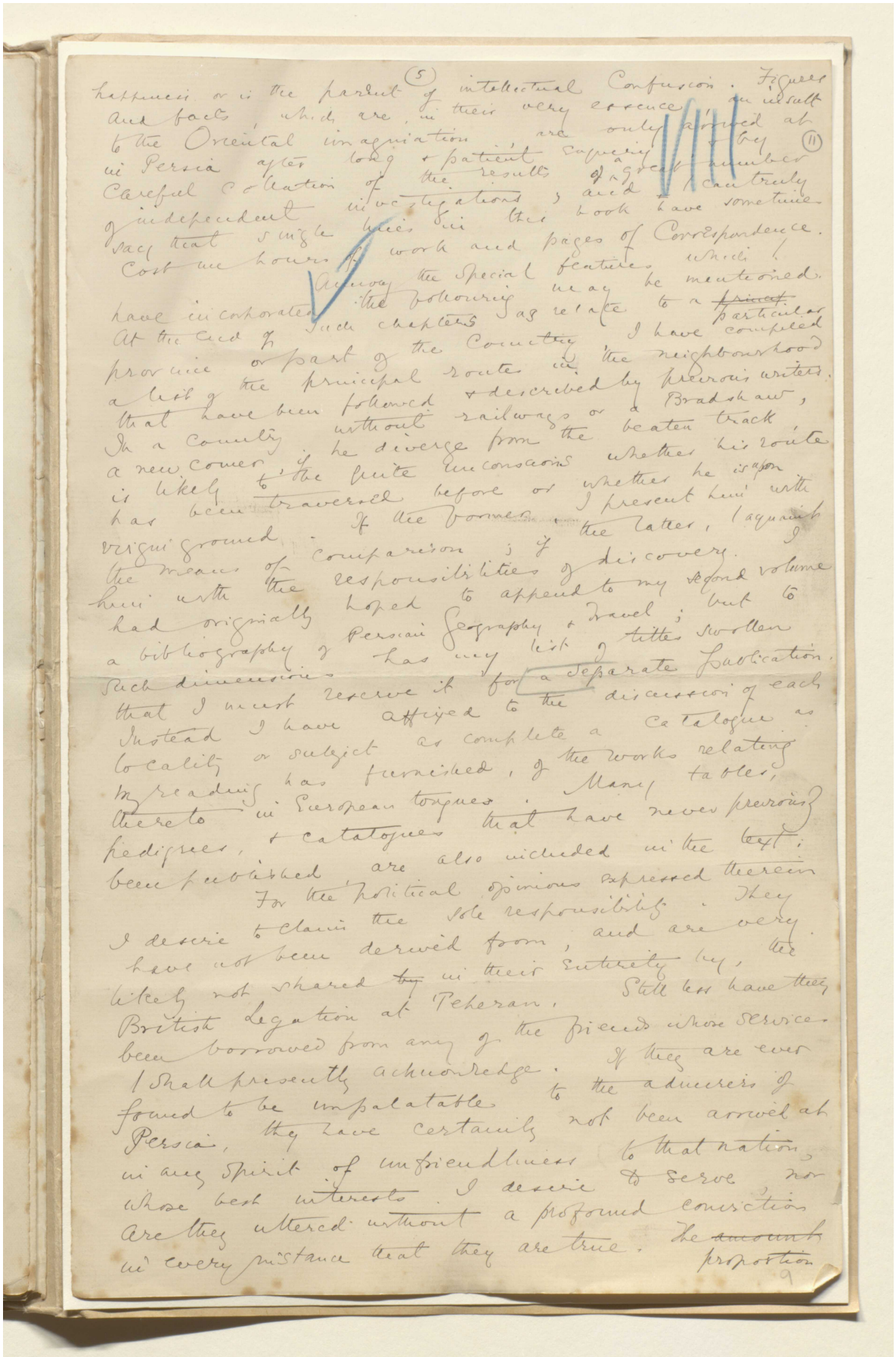

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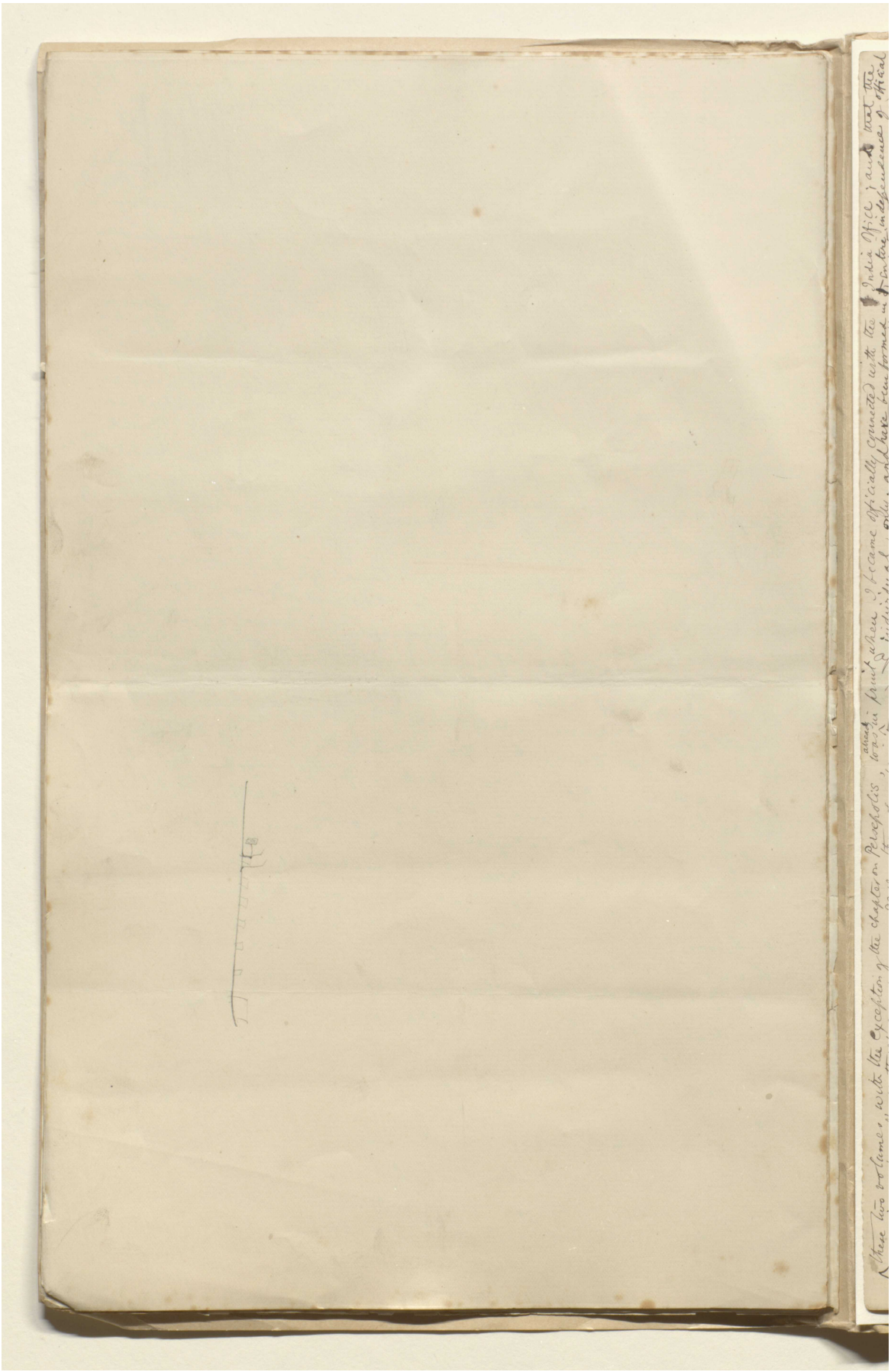

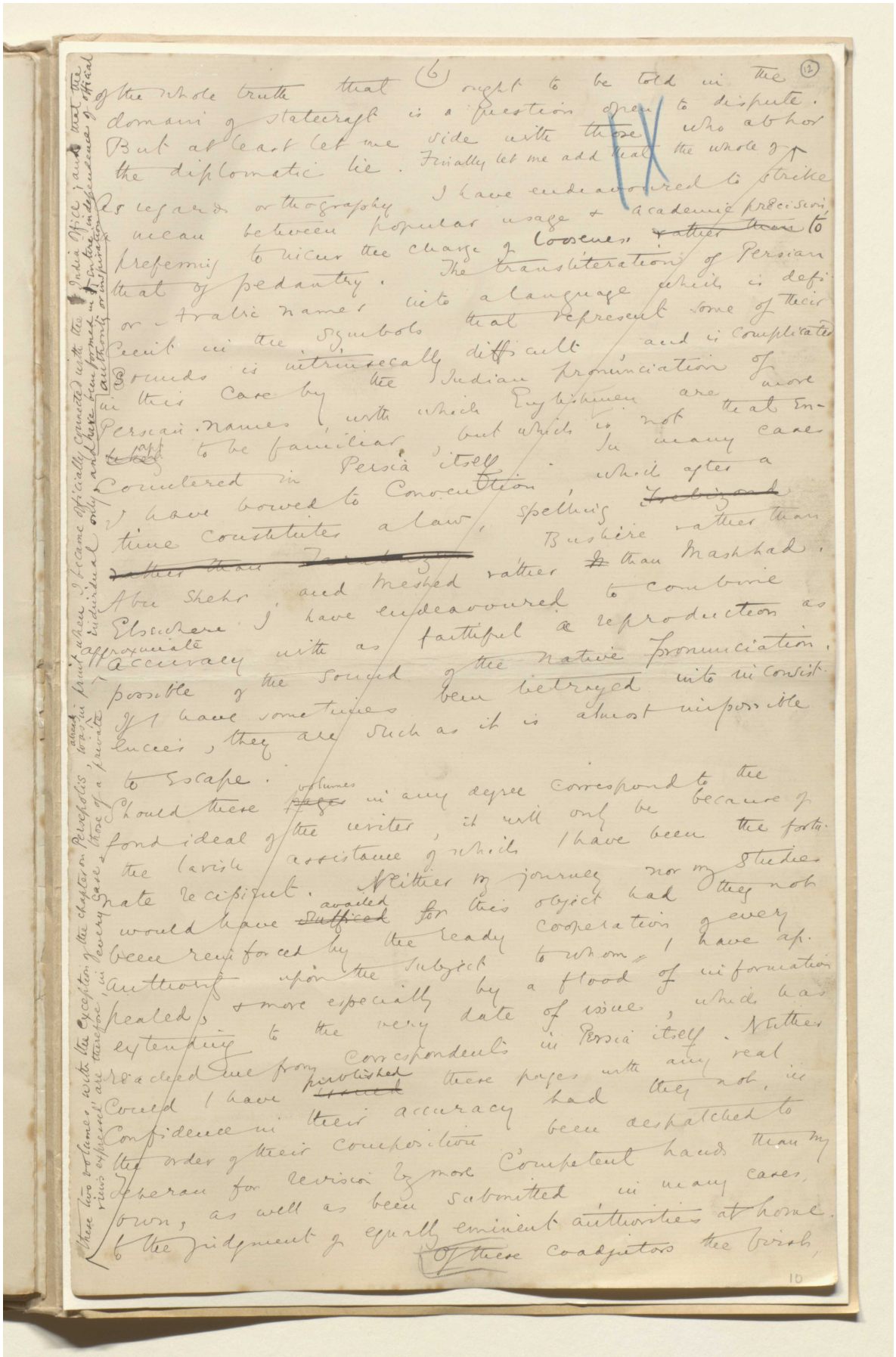

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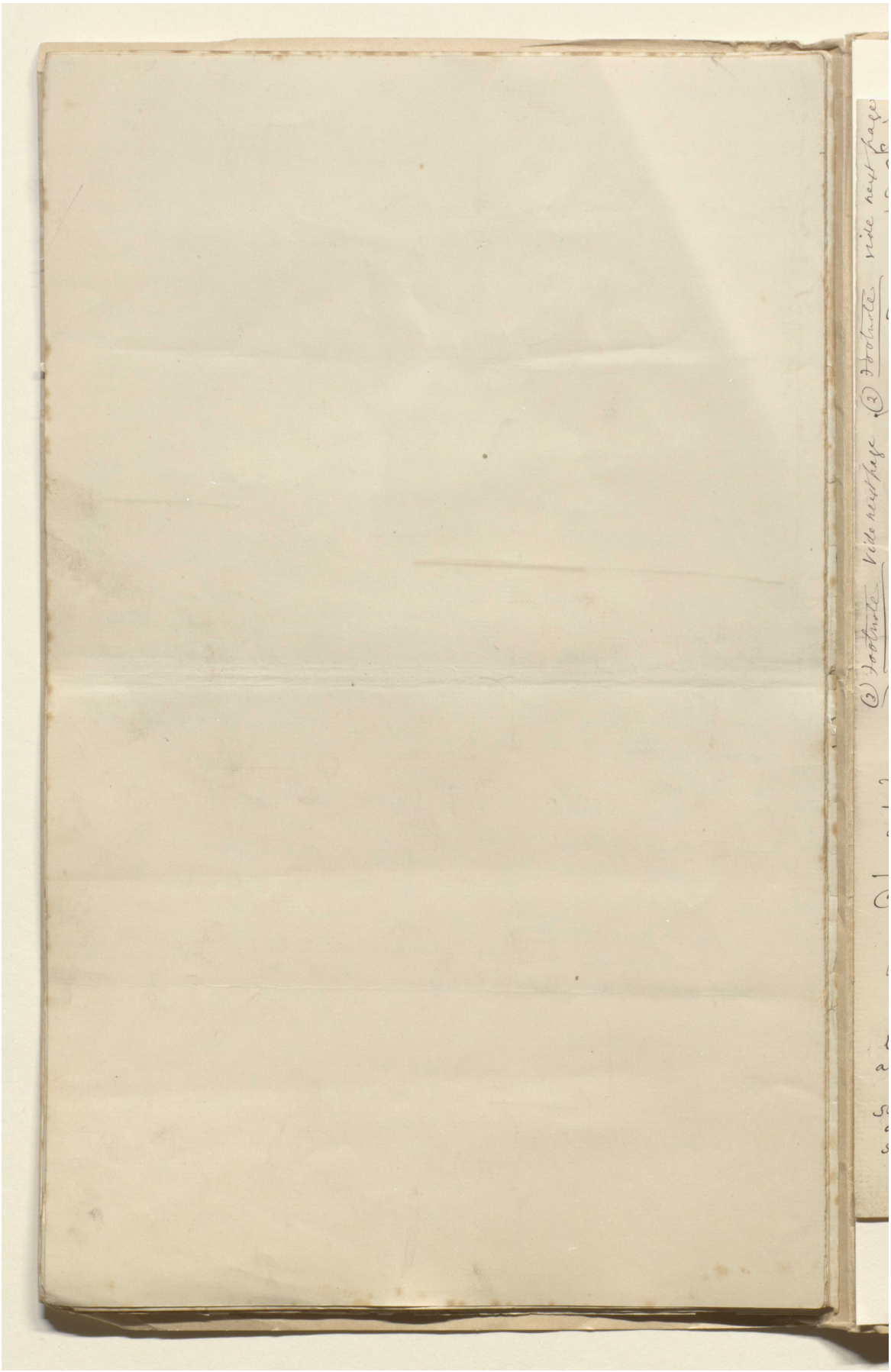

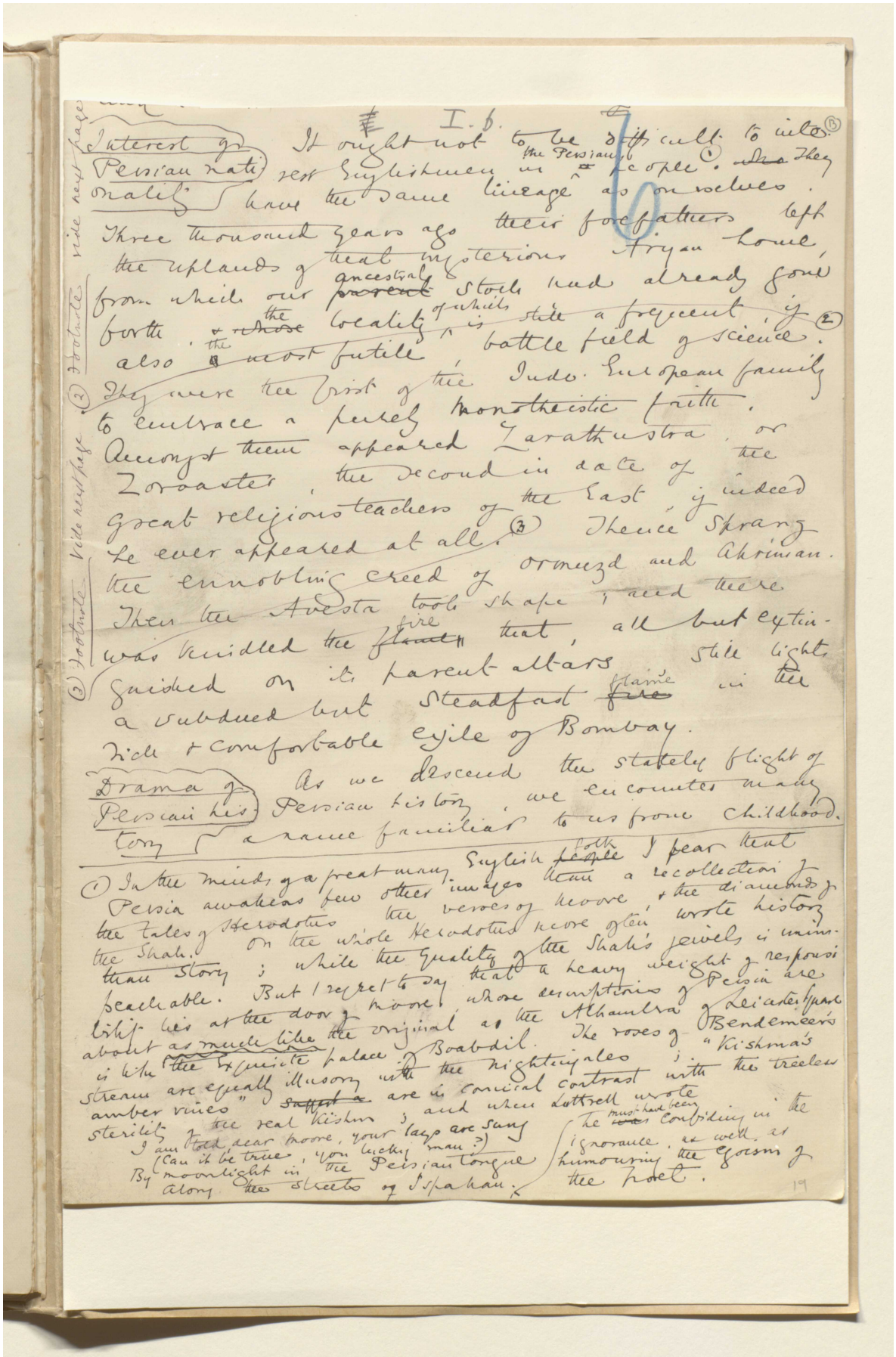

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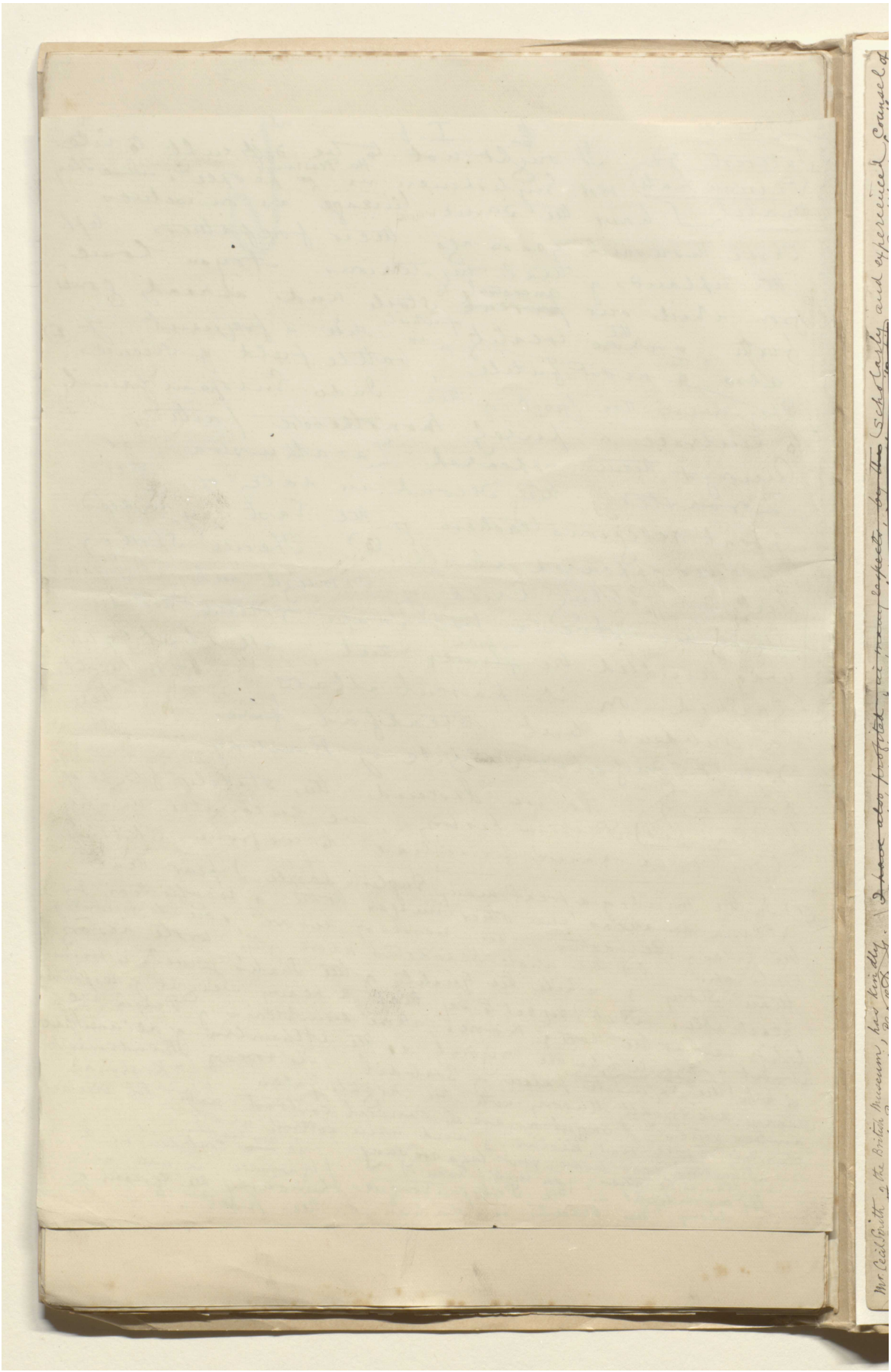

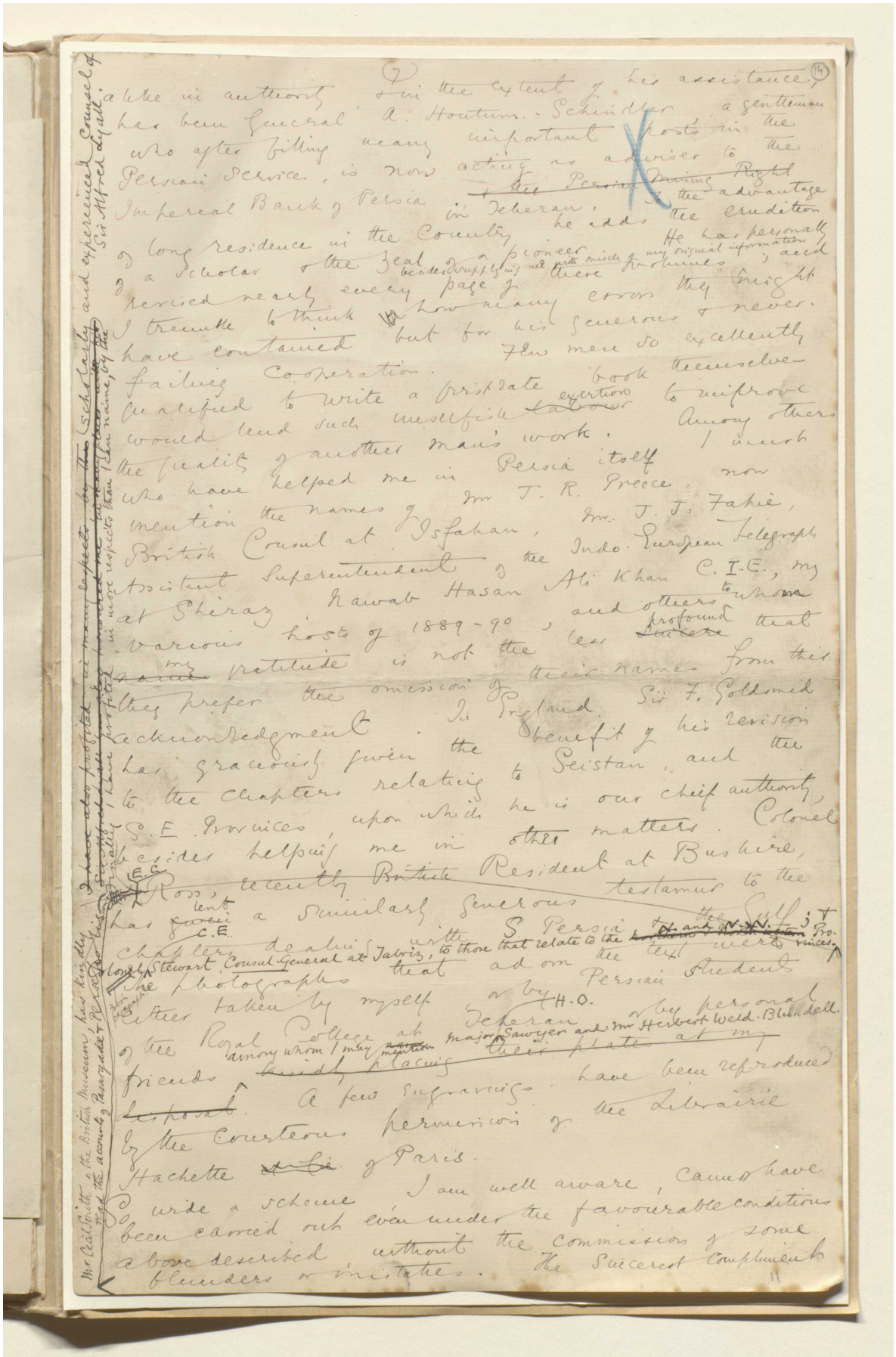

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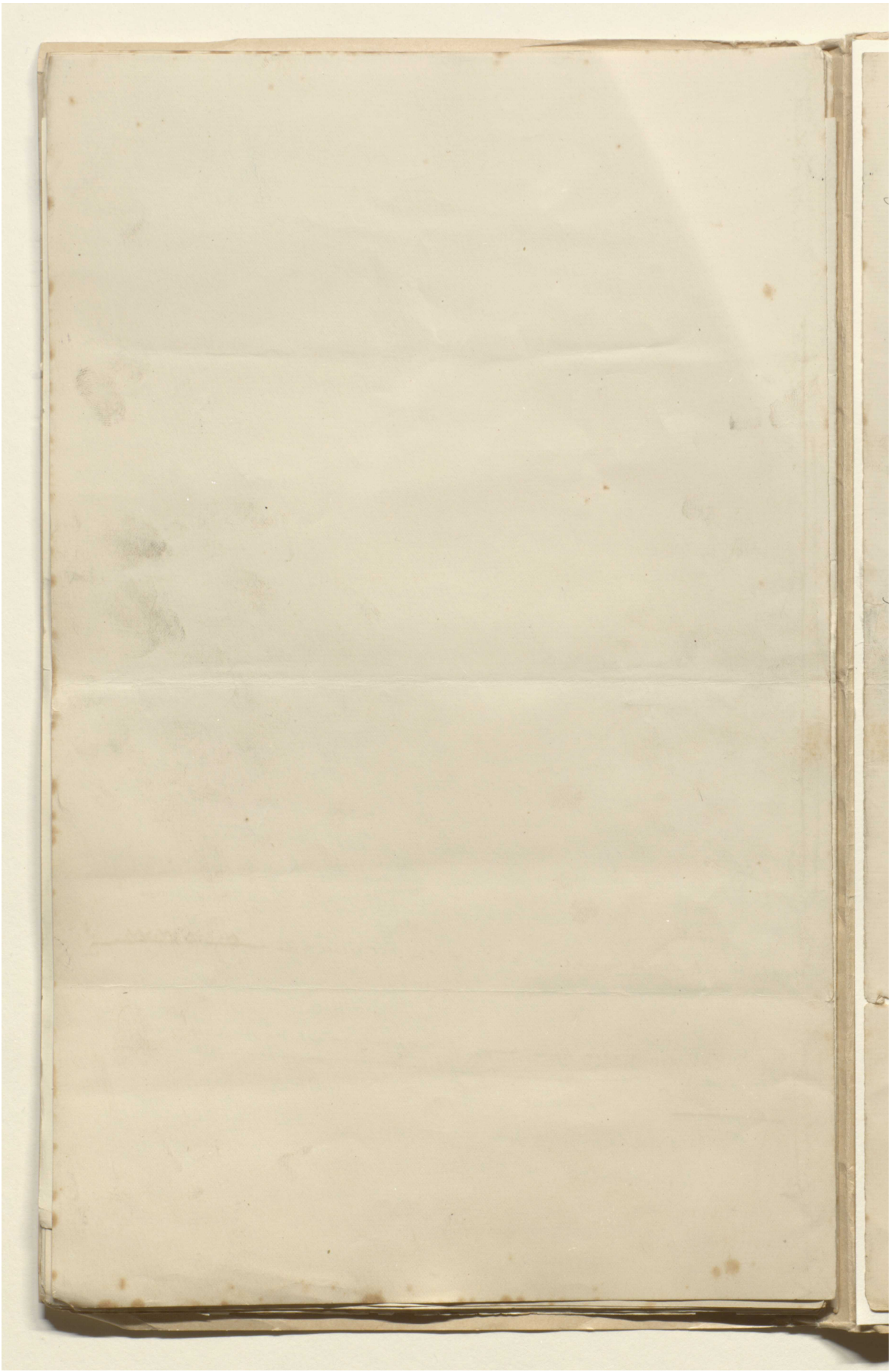

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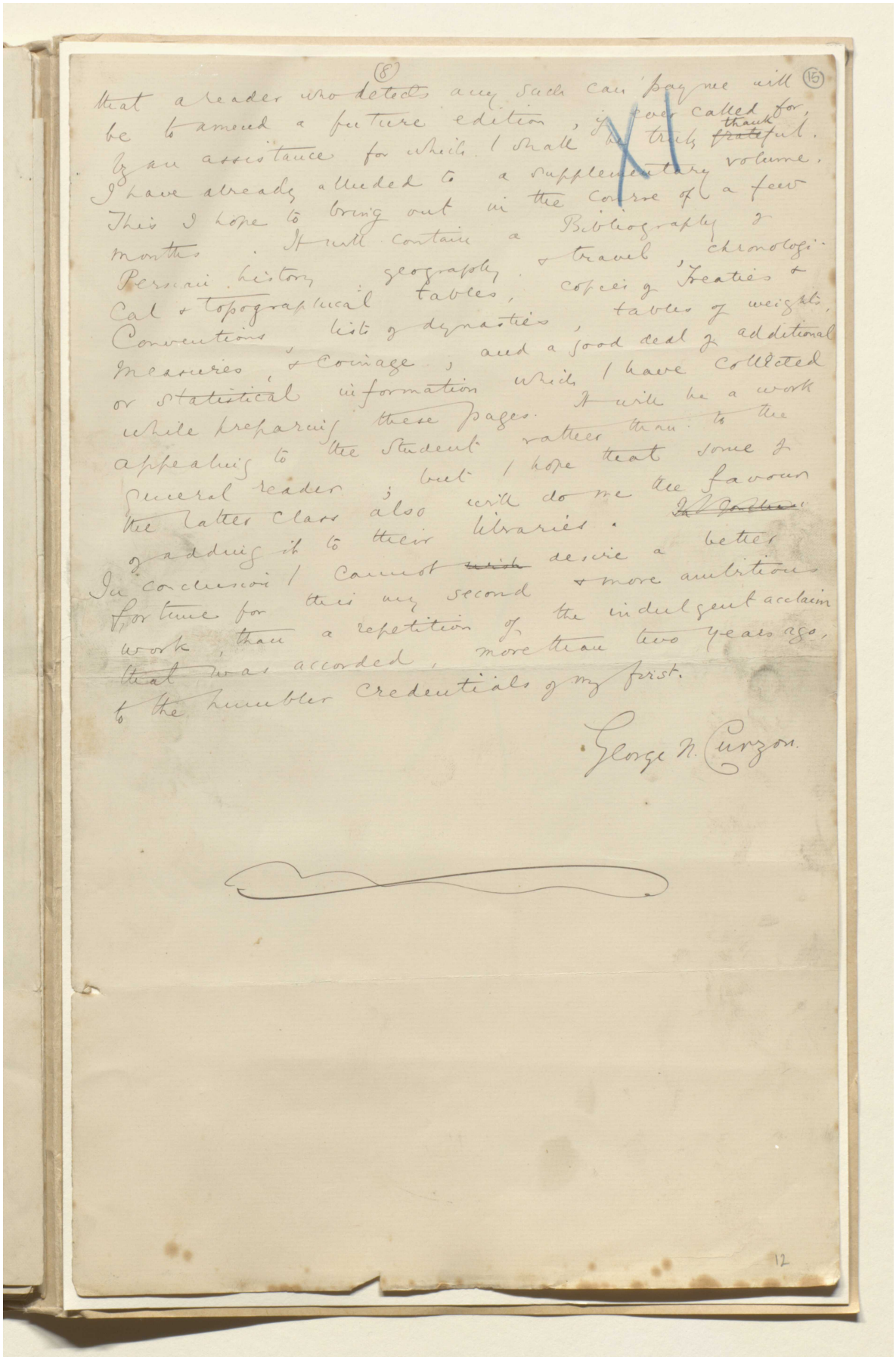
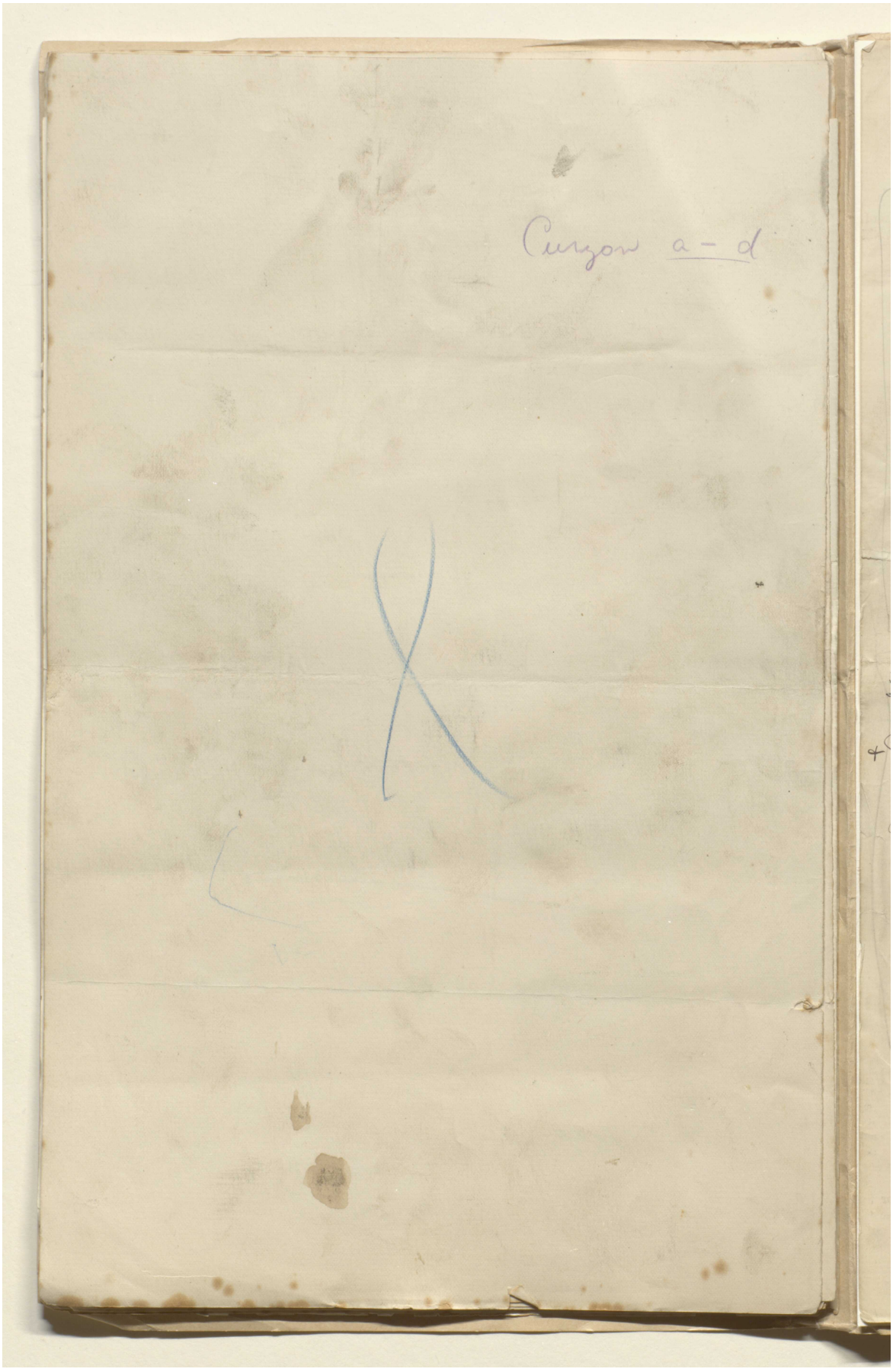


that a reader who detects any such can pay me will be to amend a future edition, if ever called for, by an assistance for which I shall be truly ~~grateful~~ thankful. I have already alluded to a supplementary volume. This I hope to bring out in the course of a few months. It will contain a Bibliography of Persian history, geography & travel, chronological & topographical tables, copies of Treaties & Conventions, lists of dynasties, tables of weights, measures, & coinage; and a good deal of additional or statistical information which I have collected while preparing these pages. It will be a work appealing to the student rather than to the general reader; but I hope that some of the latter class also will do me the favour of adding it to their libraries. ~~In conclusion~~ In conclusion I cannot ~~wish~~ desire a better fortune for this my second & more ambitious work, than a repetition of the indulgent acclaim that was accorded, more than two years ago, to the humbler credentials of my first.

George N. Curzon.

12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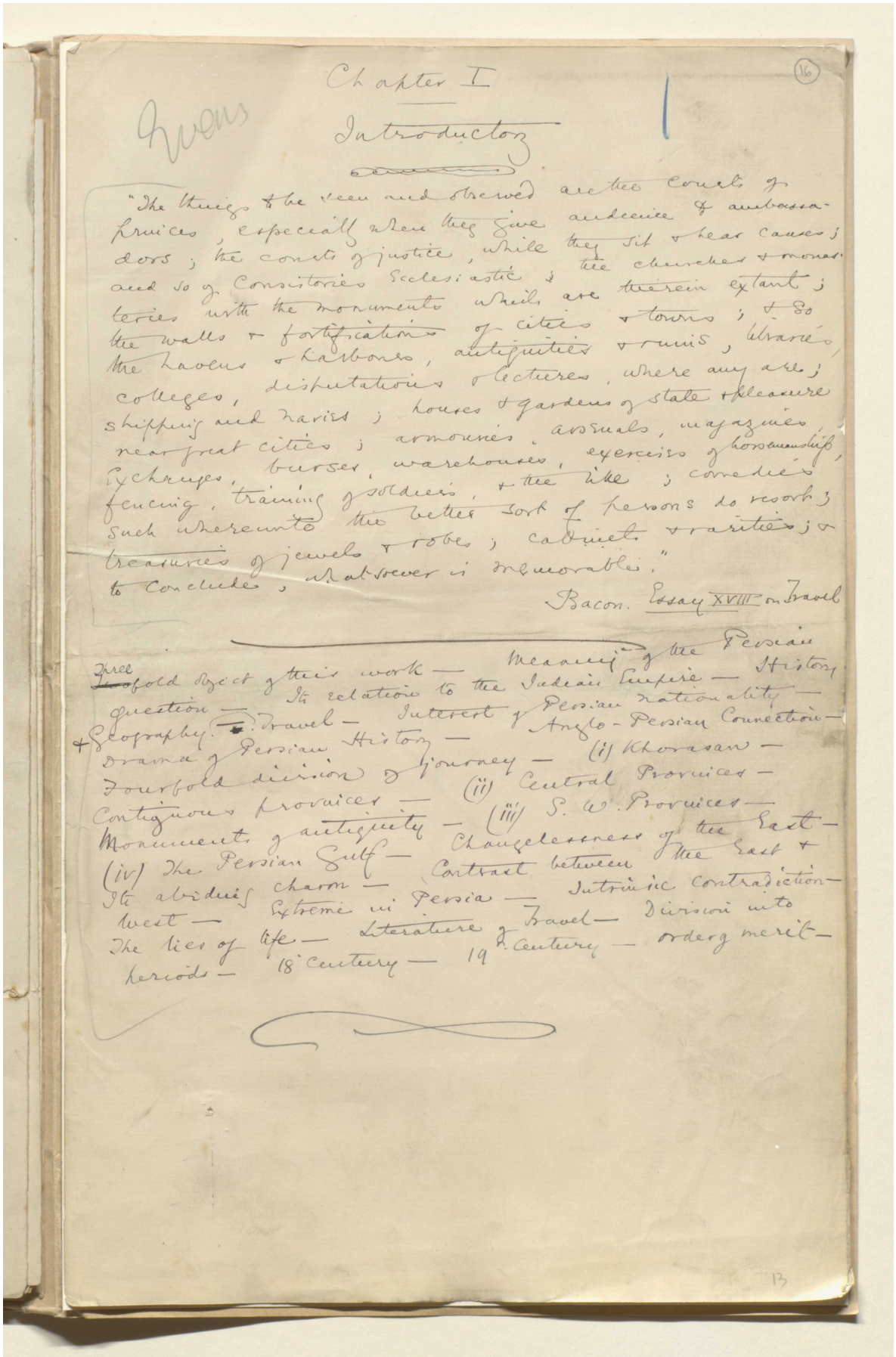


Chapter I

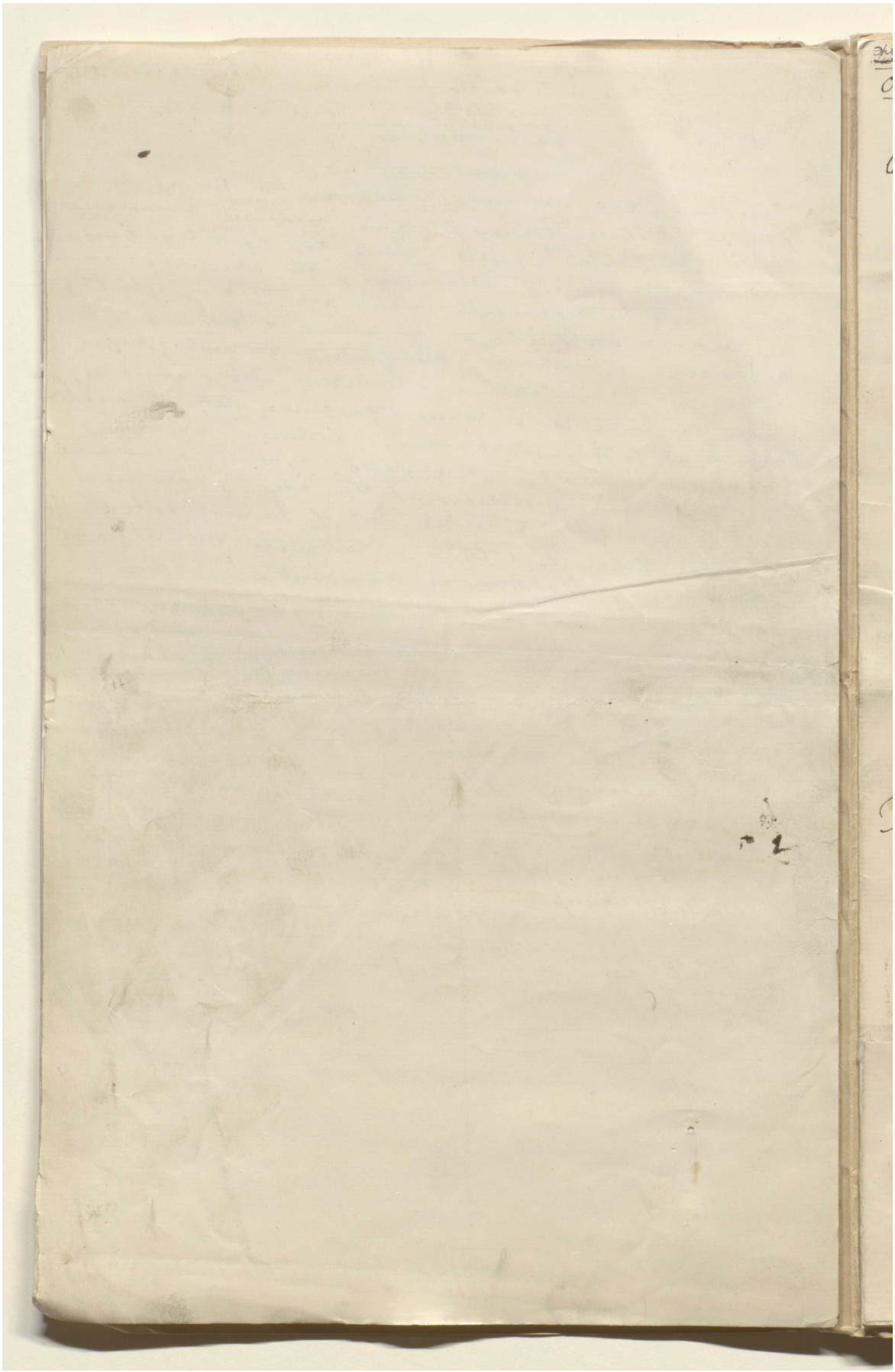
Introductory

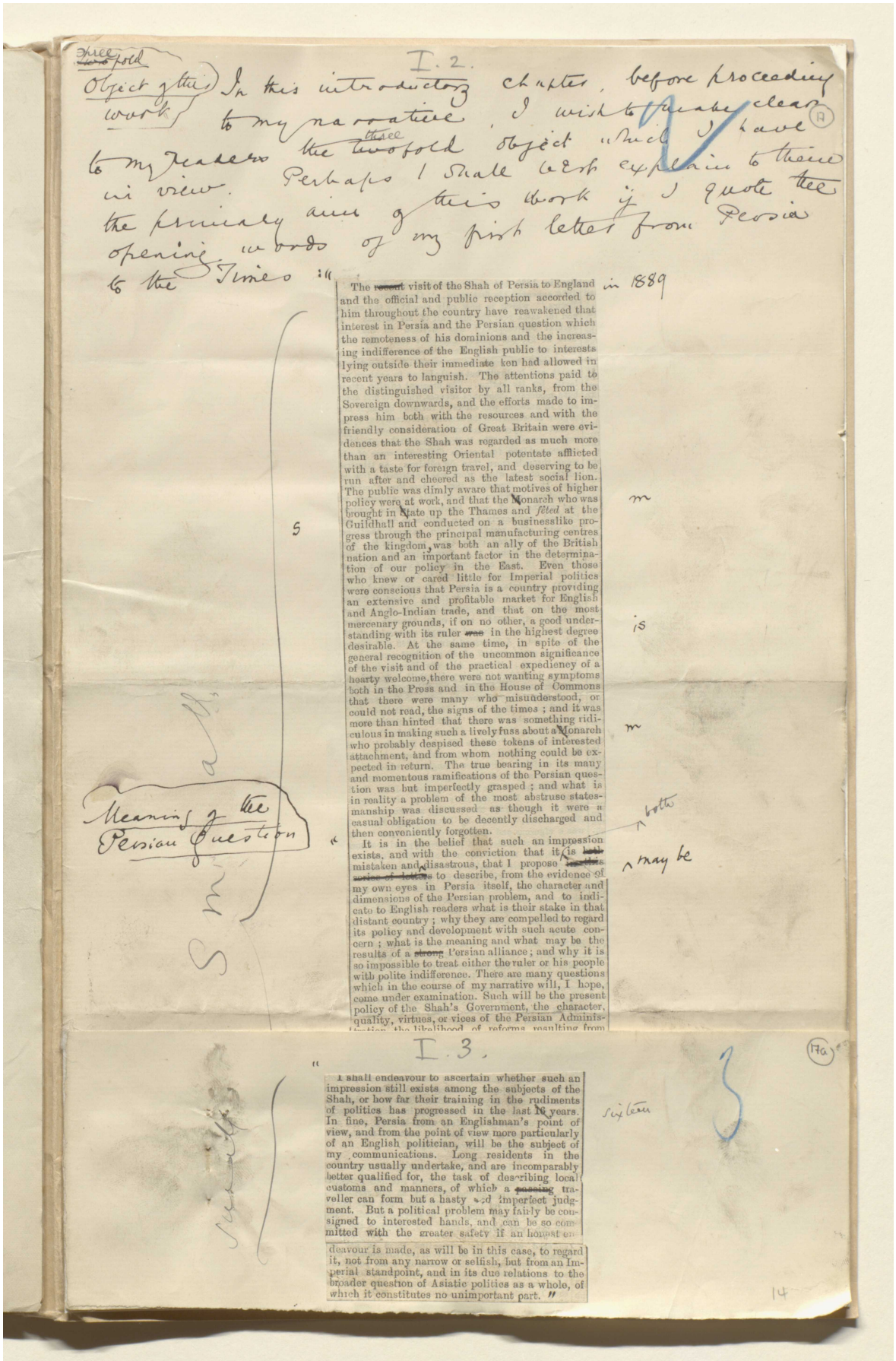
"The things to be seen and observed are the Courts of Princes, especially when they give audience & ambassadors; the courts of justice, while they sit & hear causes; and so of Consistories Ecclesiastic; the churches & monasteries with the monuments which are therein extant; the walls & fortifications of cities & towns; & so the havens & harbours, antiquities & ruins, libraries, colleges, disputations & lectures, where any are; shipping and navies; houses & gardens of state & pleasure near great cities; armouries, assuals, magazines, exchanges, burses, warehouses, exercises of horsemanship, fencing, training of soldiers, & the like; comedies such whereunto the better sort of persons do resort; treasuries of jewels & robes; cabinets & rarities; & to conclude, whatsoever is memorable."

Bacon. Essay XVIII on Travel

Free

Threefold Object of this work — Measuring of the Persian Question — Its relation to the Indian Empire — History & Geography — Travel — Interest of Persian nationality — Drama of Persian History — Anglo-Persian Connection — Fourfold division of Journey — (i) Khorasaan — Contiguous provinces — (ii) Central Provinces — Monuments of antiquity — (iii) S. W. Provinces — (iv) The Persian Gulf — Changelessness of the East — Its alluring charm — Contrast between East & West — Extreme in Persia — Intrinsic contradiction — The ties of life — Literature & Travel — Division into periods — 18th Century — 19th Century — orders merit —





I. 2.

Three-fold Object of this work

In this introductory chapter, before proceeding to my narrative, I wish to make clear to my readers the threefold object which I have in view. Perhaps I shall best explain to them the principal aim of this work if I quote the opening words of my first letter from Persia to the Times:—

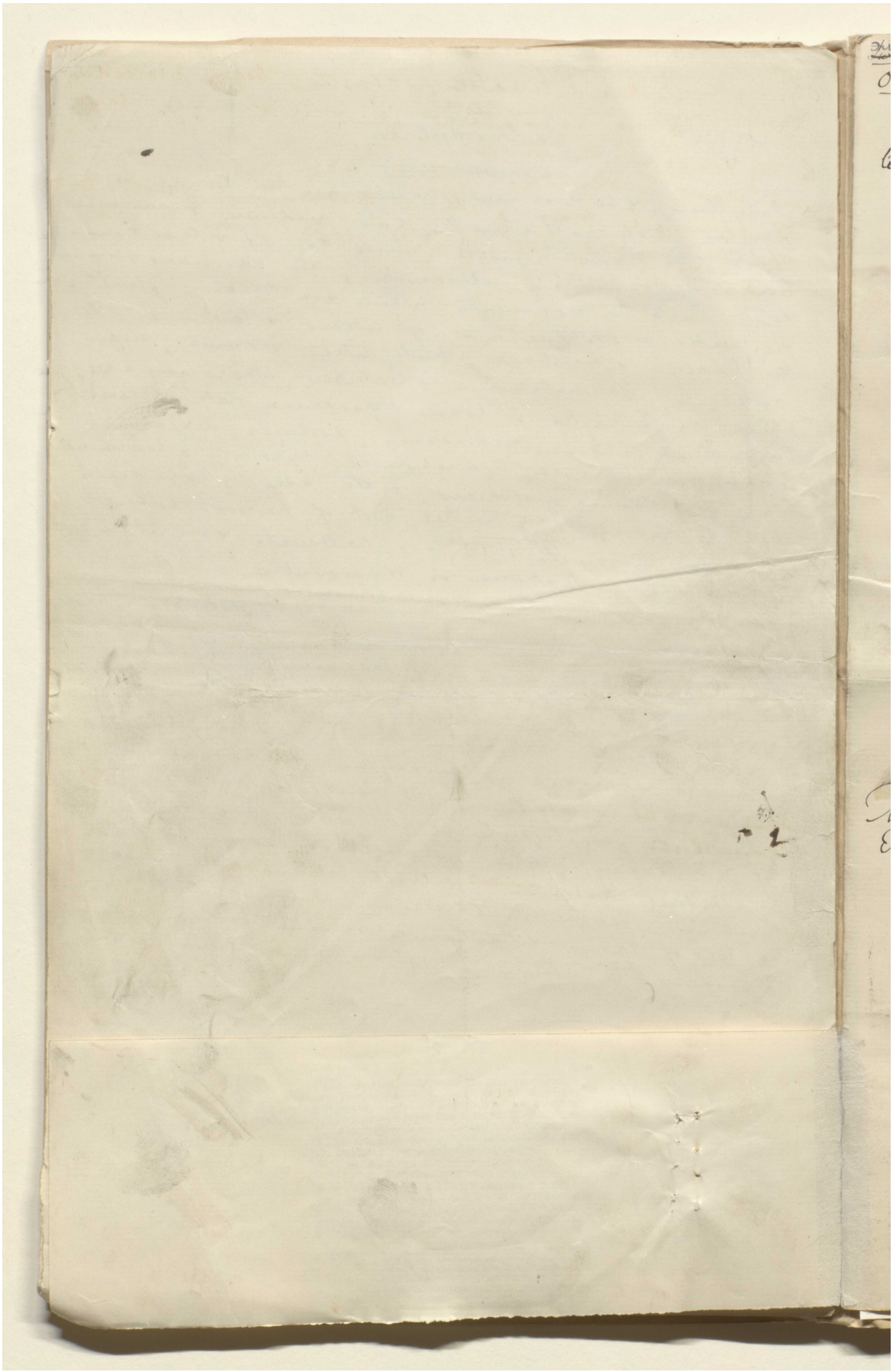
"The recent visit of the Shah of Persia to England in 1889 and the official and public reception accorded to him throughout the country have reawakened that interest in Persia and the Persian question which the remoteness of his dominions and the increasing indifference of the English public to interests lying outside their immediate ken had allowed in recent years to languish. The attentions paid to the distinguished visitor by all ranks, from the Sovereign downwards, and the efforts made to impress him both with the resources and with the friendly consideration of Great Britain were evidences that the Shah was regarded as much more than an interesting Oriental potentate afflicted with a taste for foreign travel, and deserving to be run after and cheered as the latest social lion. The public was dimly aware that motives of higher policy were at work, and that the Monarch who was brought in State up the Thames and *fêted* at the Guildhall and conducted on a businesslike progress through the principal manufacturing centres of the kingdom, was both an ally of the British nation and an important factor in the determination of our policy in the East. Even those who knew or cared little for Imperial politics were conscious that Persia is a country providing an extensive and profitable market for English and Anglo-Indian trade, and that on the most mercenary grounds, if on no other, a good understanding with its ruler was in the highest degree desirable. At the same time, in spite of the general recognition of the uncommon significance of the visit and of the practical expediency of a hearty welcome, there were not wanting symptoms both in the Press and in the House of Commons that there were many who misunderstood, or could not read, the signs of the times; and it was more than hinted that there was something ridiculous in making such a lively fuss about a Monarch who probably despised these tokens of interested attachment, and from whom nothing could be expected in return. The true bearing in its many and momentous ramifications of the Persian question was but imperfectly grasped; and what is in reality a problem of the most abstruse statesmanship was discussed as though it were a casual obligation to be decently discharged and then conveniently forgotten.

It is in the belief that such an impression exists, and with the conviction that it is both mistaken and disastrous, that I propose in a series of letters to describe, from the evidence of my own eyes in Persia itself, the character and dimensions of the Persian problem, and to indicate to English readers what is their stake in that distant country; why they are compelled to regard its policy and development with such acute concern; what is the meaning and what may be the results of a strong Persian alliance; and why it is so impossible to treat either the ruler or his people with polite indifference. There are many questions which in the course of my narrative will, I hope, come under examination. Such will be the present policy of the Shah's Government, the character, quality, virtues, or vices of the Persian Administration, the likelihood of reforms resulting from

Meaning of the Persian Question

I. 3.

"I shall endeavour to ascertain whether such an impression still exists among the subjects of the Shah, or how far their training in the rudiments of politics has progressed in the last 16 years. In fine, Persia from an Englishman's point of view, and from the point of view more particularly of an English politician, will be the subject of my communications. Long residents in the country usually undertake, and are incomparably better qualified for, the task of describing local customs and manners, of which a passing traveller can form but a hasty and imperfect judgment. But a political problem may fairly be consigned to interested hands, and can be so committed with the greater safety if an honest endeavour is made, as will be in this case, to regard it, not from any narrow or selfish, but from an Imperial standpoint, and in its due relations to the broader question of Asiatic politics as a whole, of which it constitutes no unimportant part."



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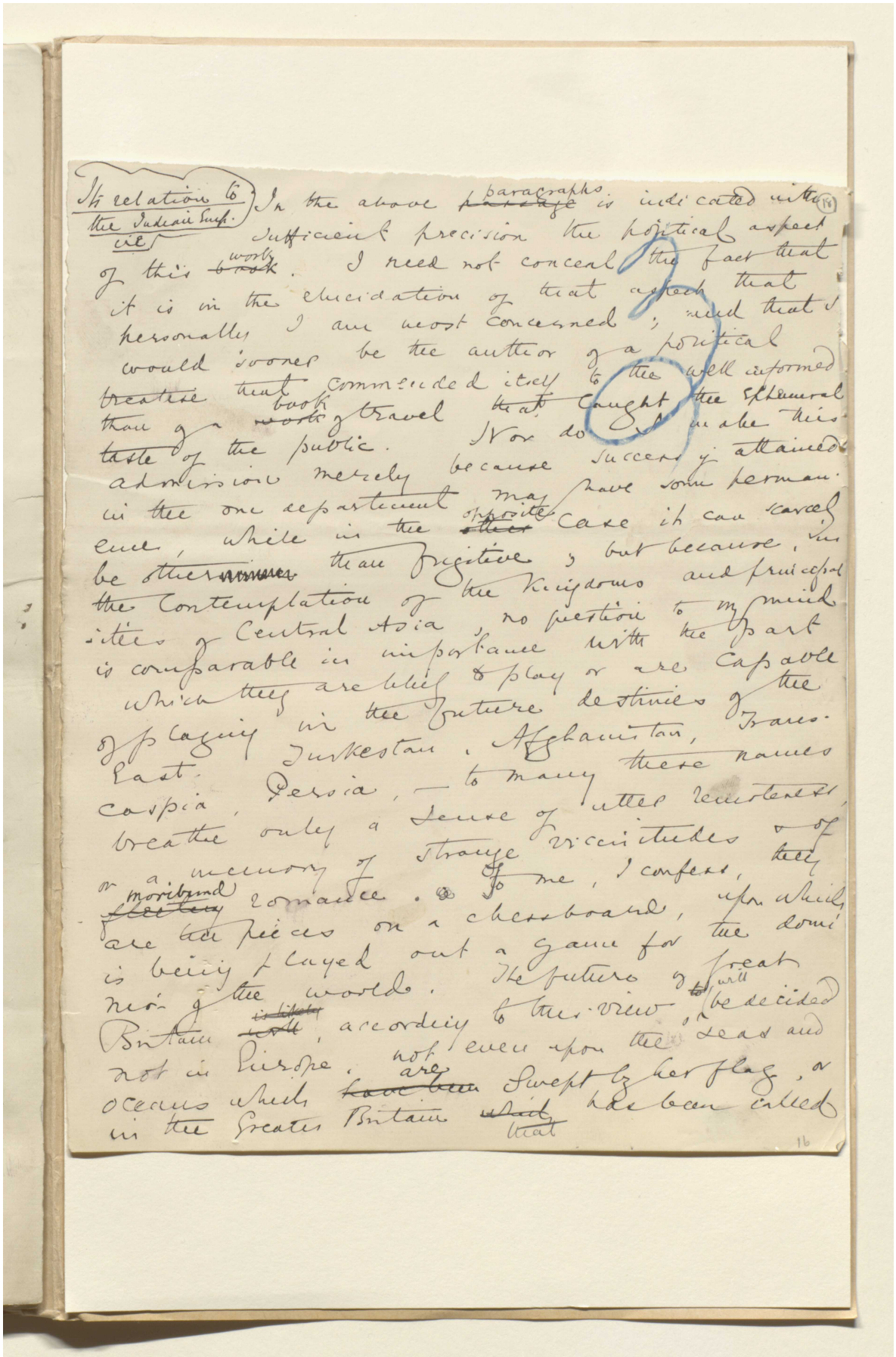

In relation to the Indian Empire

In the above paragraphs is indicated with sufficient precision the political aspect of this work. I need not conceal the fact that it is in the elucidation of that aspect that personally I am most concerned; and that I would sooner be the author of a political treatise that commended itself to the well informed than a work of travel that caught the ephemeral taste of the public. Nor do I make this admission merely because success is attained in the one department and may have some permanence, while in the opposite case it can scarcely be otherwise than fugitive; but because, in the contemplation of the Kingdoms and principalities of Central Asia, no question to my mind is comparable in importance with the part which they are likely to play or are capable of playing in the future destinies of the East. Turkestan, Afghanistan, Persia, Baluchistan, the Caspian, — to many these names breathe only a sense of utter remoteness, or a memory of strange vicissitudes of moribund romance. To me, I confess, they are the pieces on a chessboard, upon which is being played out a game for the dominion of the world. The future of Great Britain, accordingly to this view, will be decided not in Europe, not even upon the seas and oceans which are swept by her flag, but in the Greater Britain that has been called

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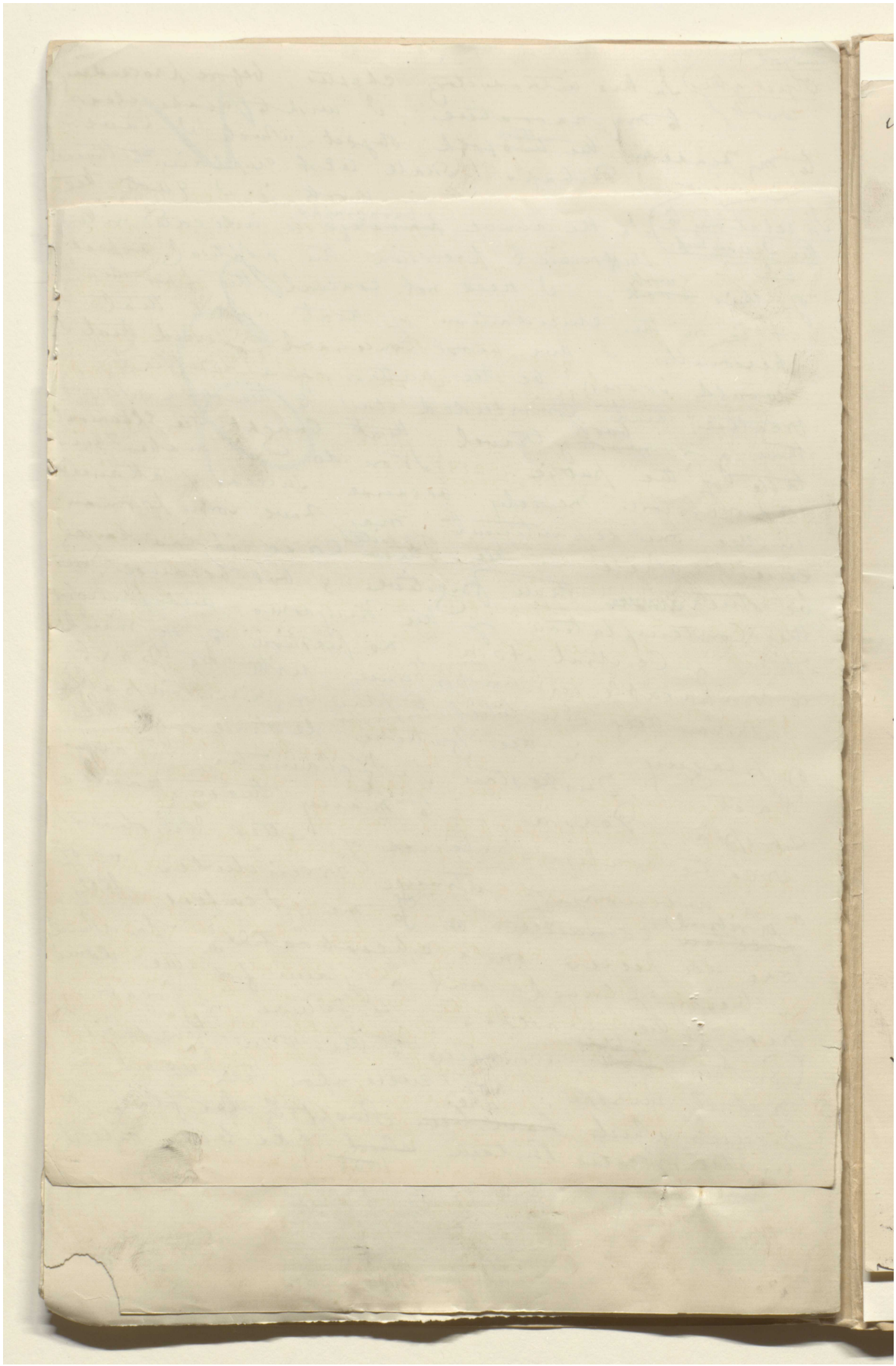

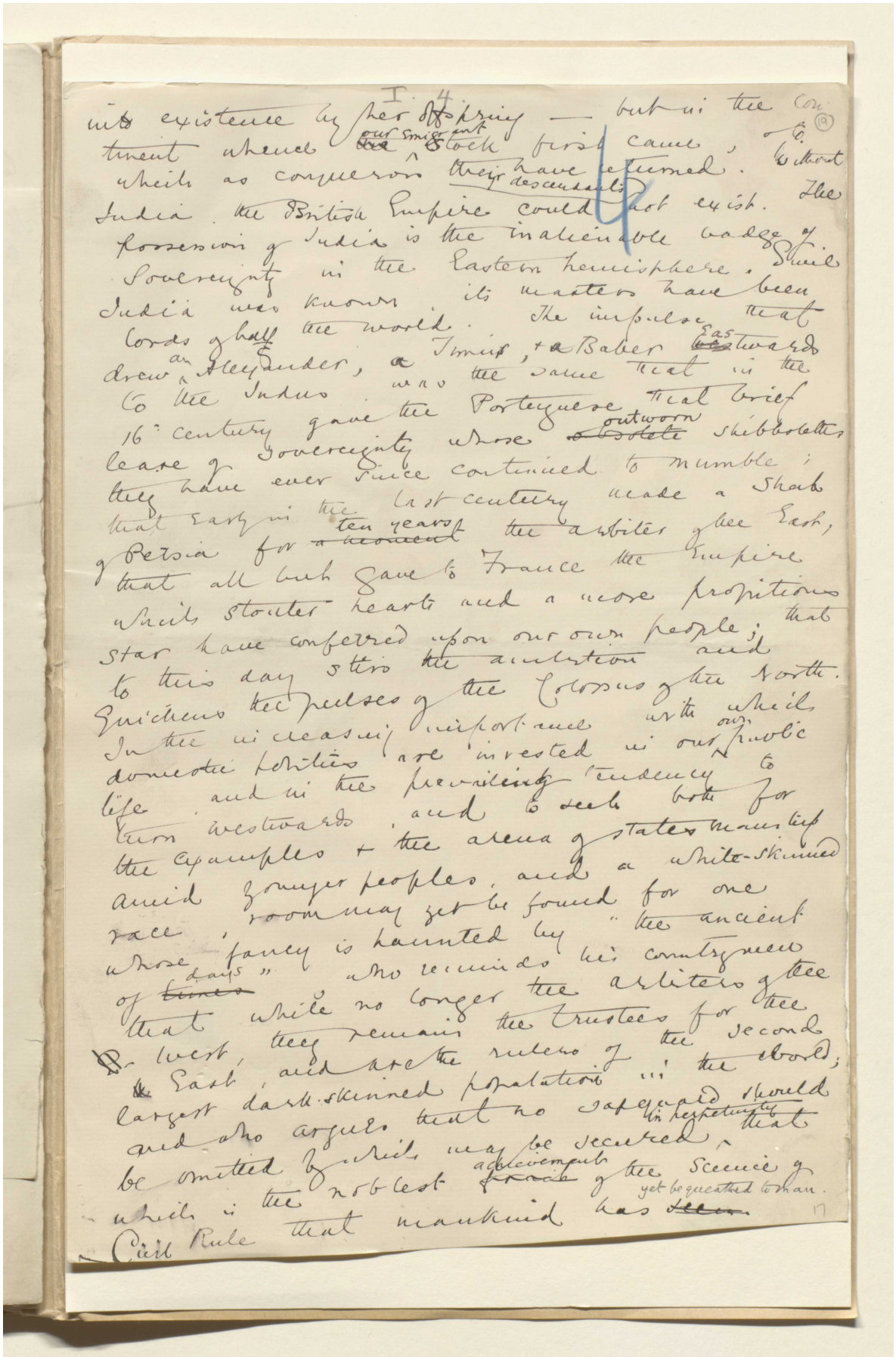

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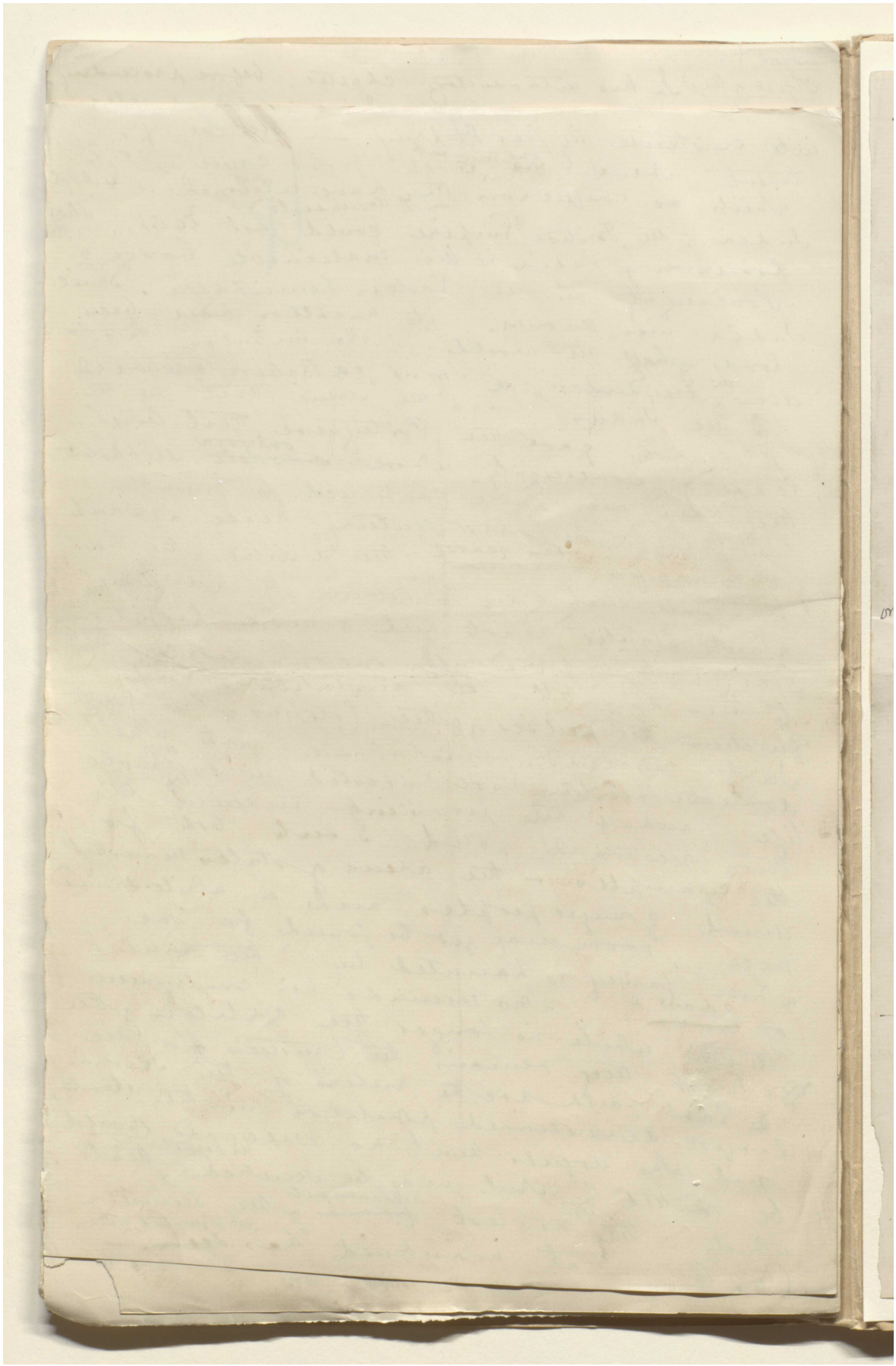

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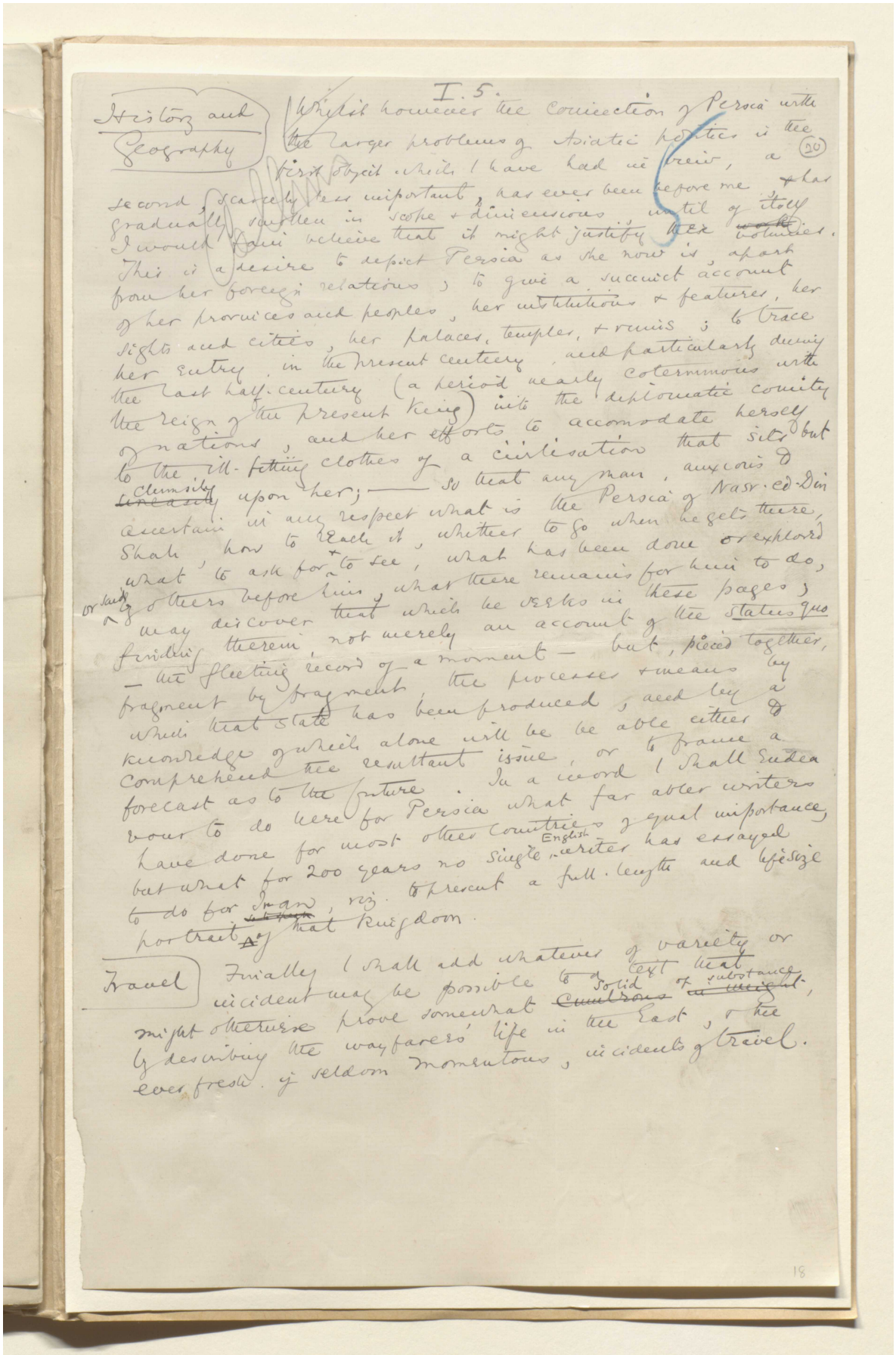

I. 5.

History and Geography

Whilst however the connection of Persia with the larger problems of Asiatic politics is the first object which I have had in view, a second, scarcely less important, has ever been before me, & has gradually swollen in scope & dimensions until of itself I would fain believe that it might justify these ~~work~~ volumes. This is a desire to depict Persia as she now is, apart from her foreign relations; to give a succinct account of her provinces and peoples, her institutions & features, her sights and cities, her palaces, temples, & ruins; to trace her entry in the present century, and particularly during the last half-century (a period nearly coterminous with the reign of the present King) into the diplomatic comity of nations, and her efforts to accomodate herself to the ill-fitting clothes of a civilisation that sits but ~~uneasily~~ clumsily upon her; — so that any man, anxious to ascertain in any respect what is the Persia of Nasr-ed-Din Shah, how to reach it, whither to go when he gets there, what to ask for & to see, what has been done or explored or said of others before him, what there remains for him to do, may discover that which he seeks in these pages; finding therein, not merely an account of the status quo — the fleeting record of a moment — but, pieced together, fragment by fragment, the processes & means by which that state has been produced, and by a knowledge of which alone will be be able either to comprehend the resultant issue, or to frame a forecast as to the future. In a word I shall endeavour to do here for Persia what far abler writers have done for most other countries of equal importance, but what for 200 years no single English writer has essayed to do for Iran, viz. to present a full-length and life-size portrait of that kingdom.

Travel

Finally I shall add whatever of variety or incident may be possible to a text that might otherwise prove somewhat ~~cumbrous~~ solid of substance ~~in weight~~, by describing the wayfarers' life in the East, & the ever fresh, if seldom momentous, incidents of travel.

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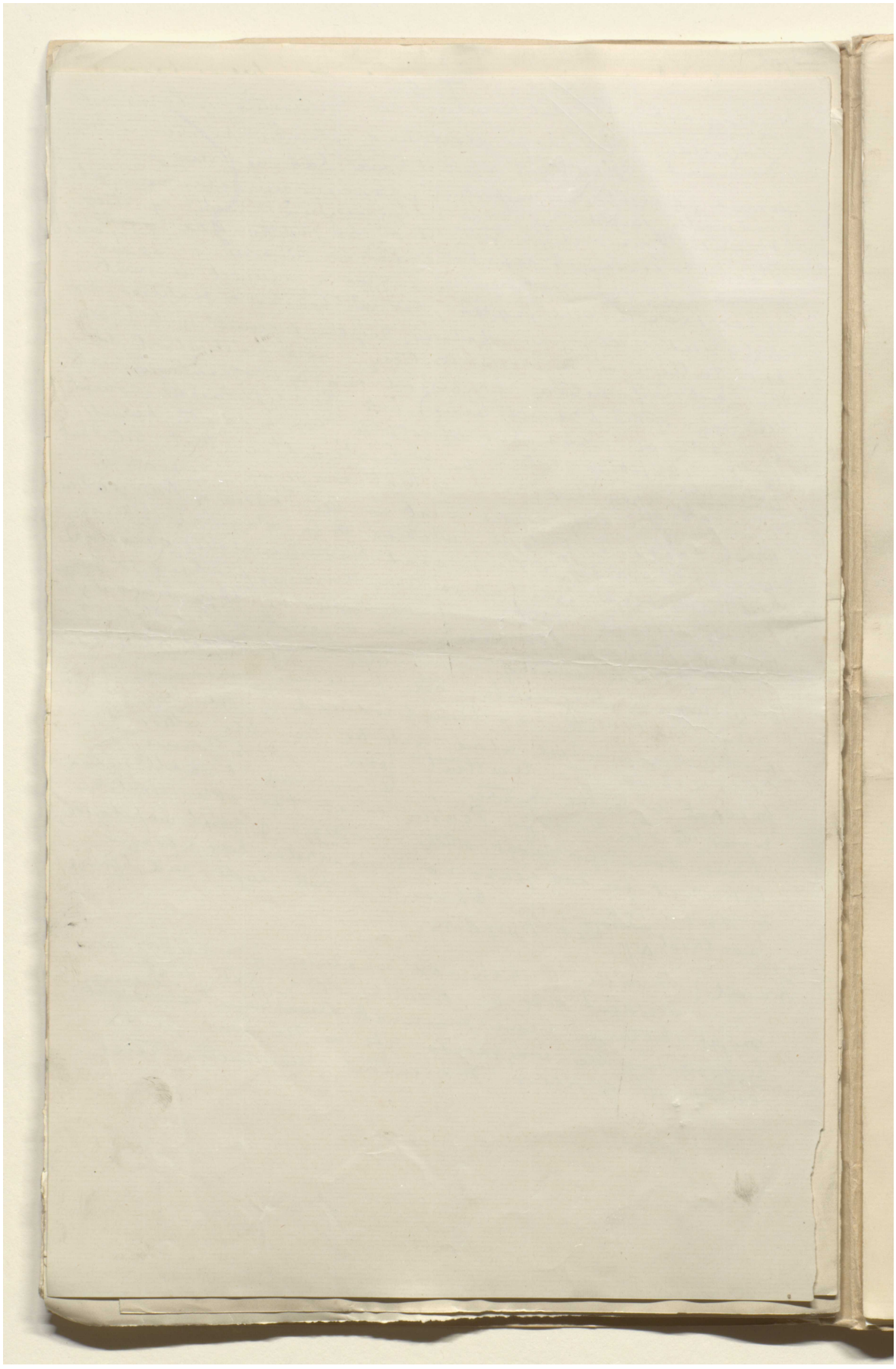

I. 7.

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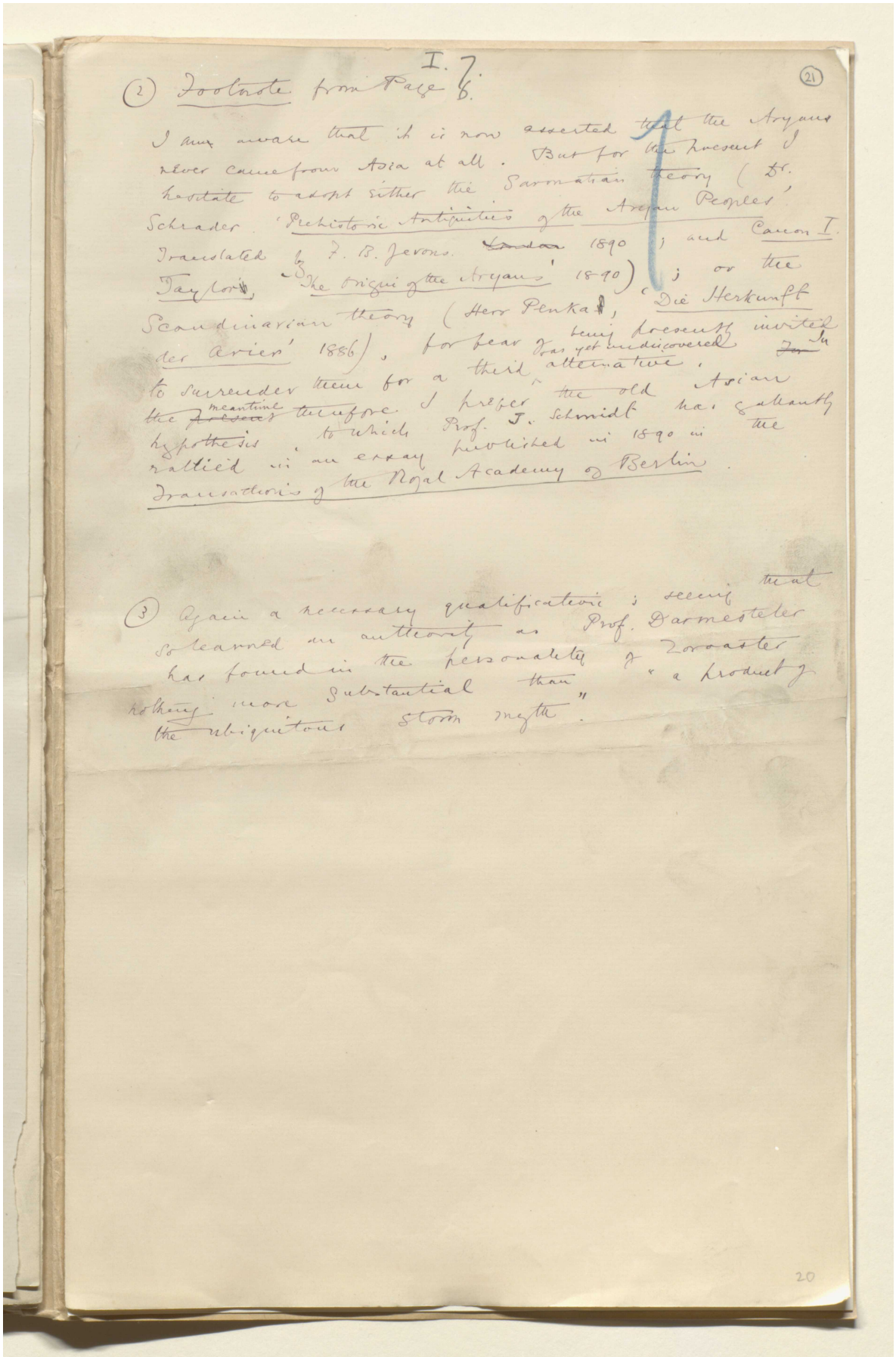
(2) Footnote from Page 8.



I am aware that it is now asserted that the Aryans never came from Asia at all. But for the present I hesitate to adopt either the Sarmatian theory (Dr. Schrader 'Prehistoric Antiquities of the Aryan Peoples' Translated by F. B. Jevons. ~~London~~ 1890; and Canon I. Taylor, 'The Origin of the Aryans' 1890); or the Scandinavian theory (Herr Penka, 'Die Herkunft der Arier' 1886), for fear of being presently invited to surrender them for a third as yet undiscovered alternative. In the ~~present~~ meantime therefore I prefer the old Asian hypothesis, to which Prof. J. Schmidt has gallantly rallied in an essay published in 1890 in the Transactions of the Royal Academy of Berlin.

(3) Again a necessary qualification; seeing that so learned an authority as Prof. Darmesteter has found in the personality of Zoroaster nothing more substantial than "a product of the ubiquitous storm myth".

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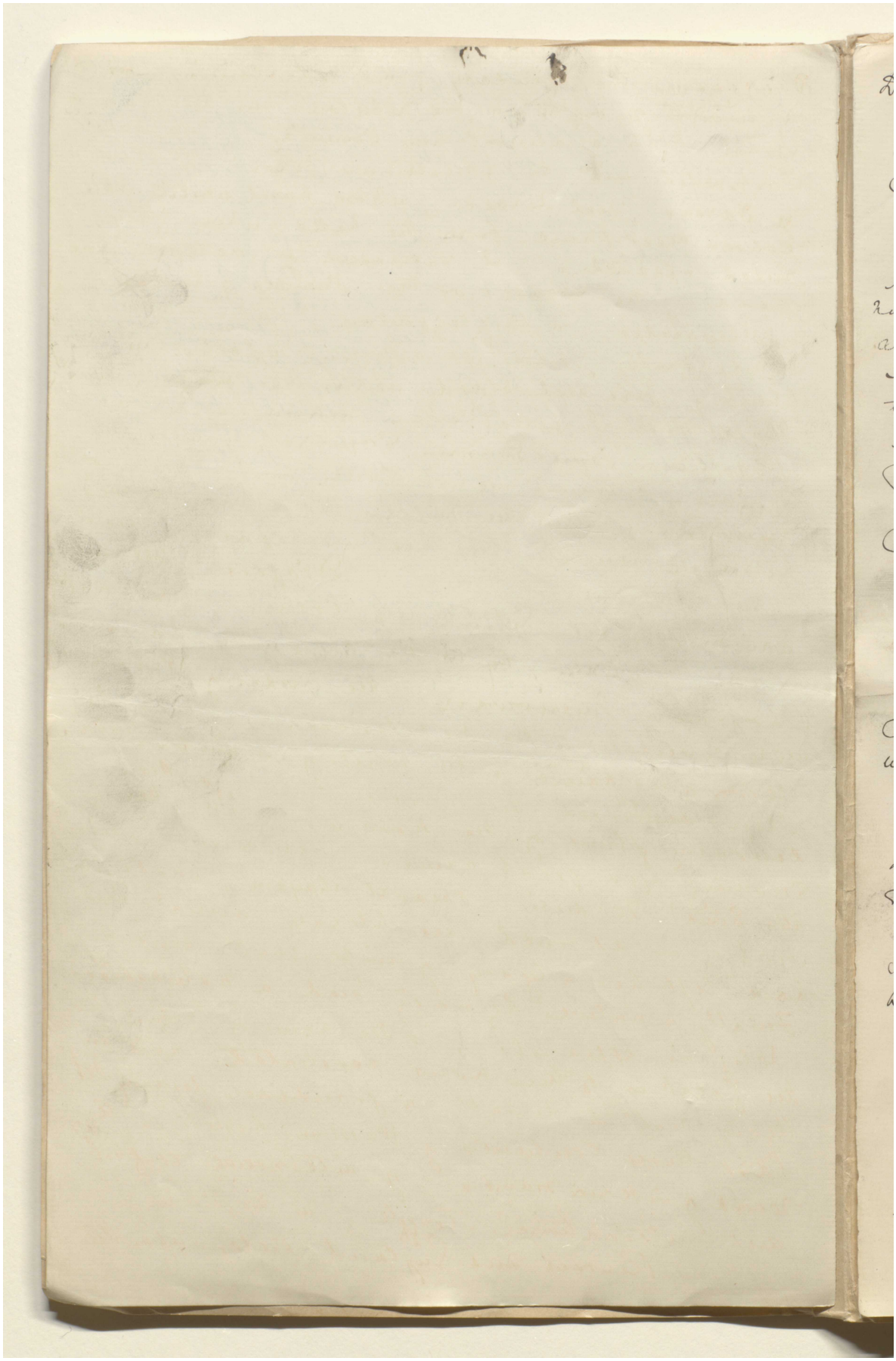

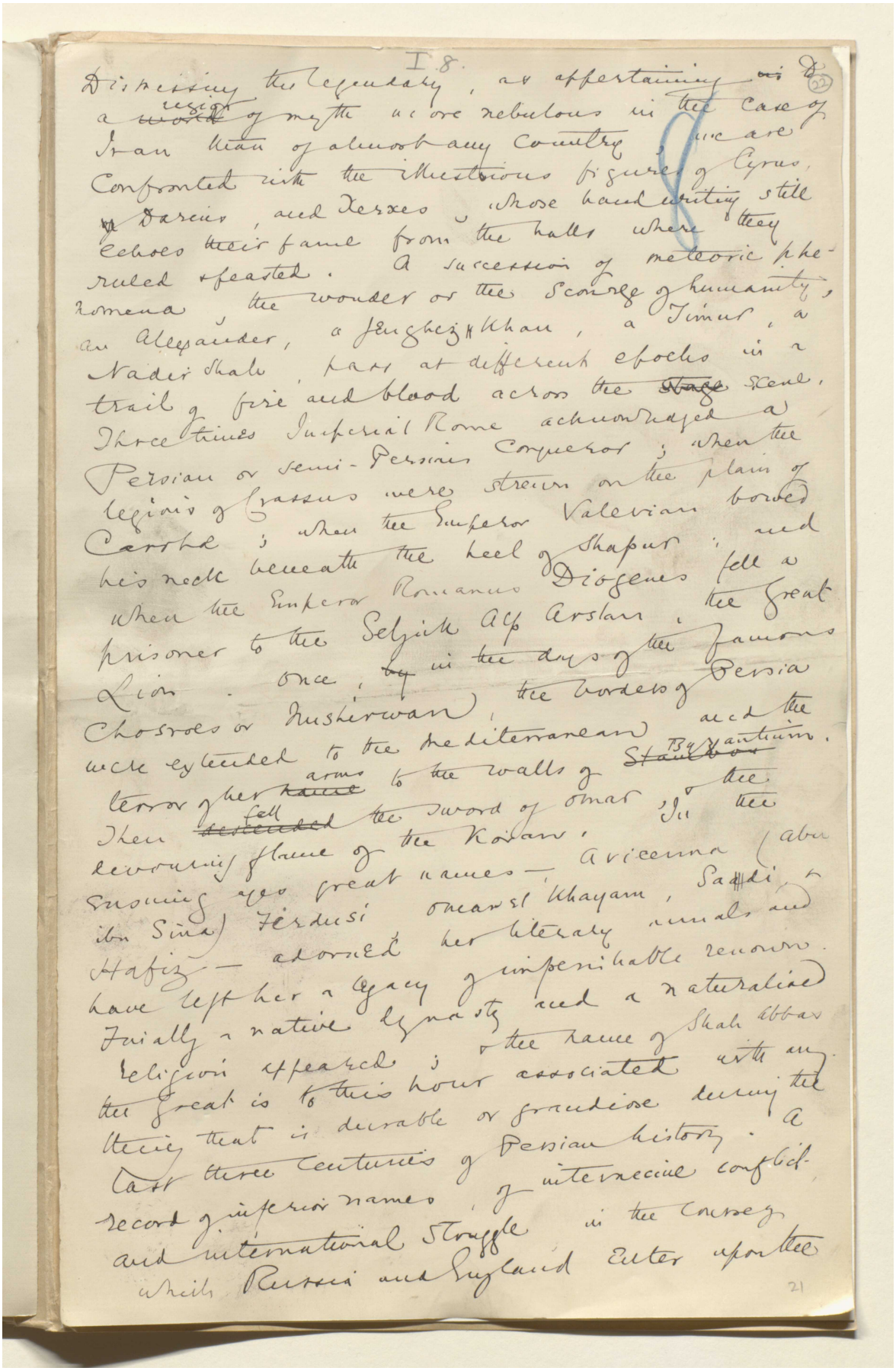

I. 8.

Dismissing the legendary, as appertaining ~~in~~ to a ~~world~~ region of myth we are nebulous in the case of Iran than of almost any country, we are confronted with the illustrious figures of Cyrus, Darius, and Xerxes, whose handwriting still echoes their fame from the halls where they ruled & feasted. A succession of meteoric phenomena, the wonder or the scourge of humanity, an Alexander, a Jenghiz Khan, a Timur, a Nadir Shah, pass at different epochs in a trail of fire and blood across the ~~stage~~ scene. Three times Imperial Rome acknowledged a Persian or semi-Persian conqueror; when the legions of Crassus were strewn on the plain of Carrhae; when the Emperor Valerian bowed his neck beneath the heel of Shapur; and when the Emperor Romanus Diogenes fell a prisoner to the Seljuk Alp Arslan, the Great Lion. Once, ~~by~~ in the days of the famous Chosroes or Nusherwan, the borders of Persia were extended to the Mediterranean and the terror of her ~~name~~ arms to the walls of ~~Stambul~~ Byzantium. Then ~~descended~~ fell the sword of Omar, & the devouring flame of the Koran. In the ensuing ages great names — Avicenna (abu ibn Sina) Ferdusi, Omar el Khayam, Saadi, & Hafiz — adorned her literary annals and have left her a legacy of imperishable renown. Finally a native dynasty and a naturalised religion appeared; & the name of Shah Abbas the Great is to this hour associated with anything that is durable or grandiose during the last three centuries of Persian history. A record of inferior names, of internecine conflict, and international struggle in the course of which Russia and England enter upon the

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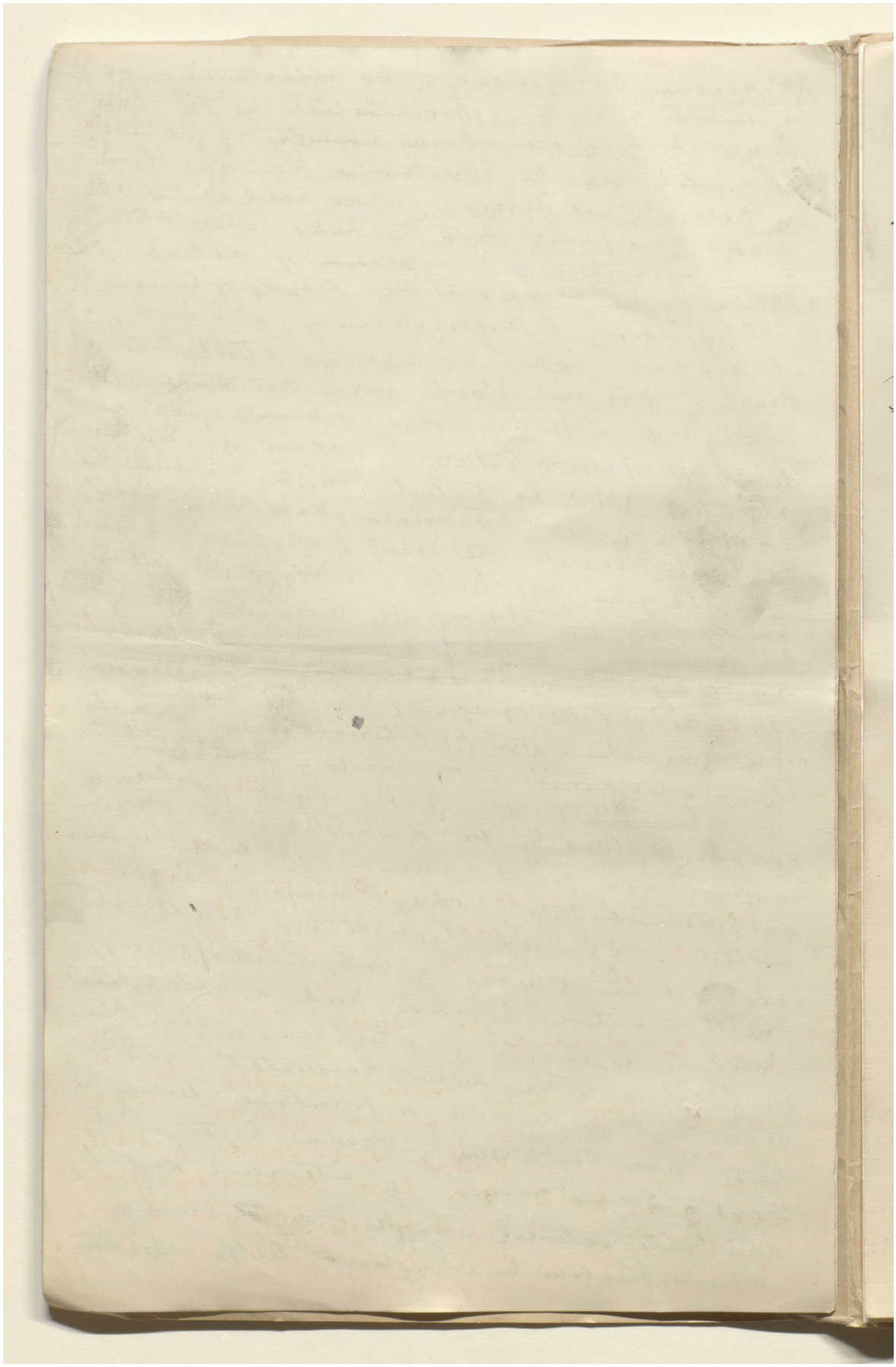

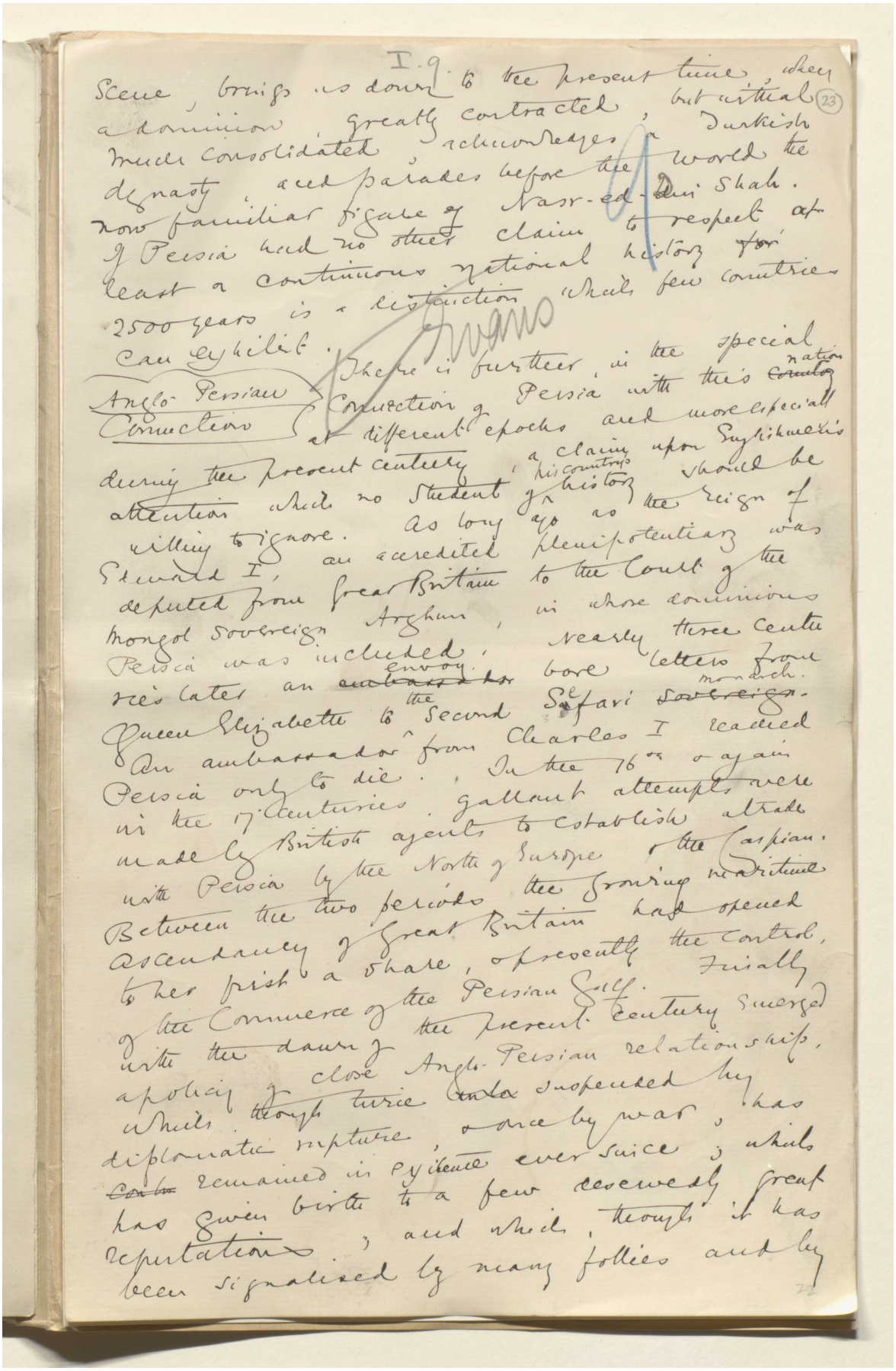

I. 9

Scene, brings us down to the present time, when
a dominion greatly contracted, but virtual (23)
much consolidated, acknowledges a Turkish
dynasty, and parades before the world the
now familiar figure of Nasr-ed-Din Shah.
If Persia had no other claim to respect at
least a continuous national history for
2500 years is a distinction which few countries
can exhibit.

Anglo-Persian Connections

There is further, in the special connection of Persia with this nation at different epochs and more especially during the present century, a claim upon English attention which no student of this country's history should be willing to ignore. As long ago as the reign of Edward I, an accredited plenipotentiary was deputed from Great Britain to the Court of the Mongol Sovereign Arghun, in whose dominions Persia was included. Nearly three centuries later an envoy bore letters from Queen Elizabeth to the Second Safavi monarch. An ambassador from Charles I reached Persia only to die. In the 17th century again in the 17th centuries gallant attempts were made by British agents to establish a trade with Persia by the North of Europe & the Caspian. Between the two periods the growing maritime ascendancy of Great Britain had opened to her first a share, & presently the control of the Commerce of the Persian Gulf. Finally with the dawn of the present century emerged a policy of close Anglo-Persian relationship, which though twice (only) suspended by diplomatic rupture, & once by war, has remained in existence ever since; which has given birth to a few deservedly great reputations, and which, though it has been signalized by many follies and by

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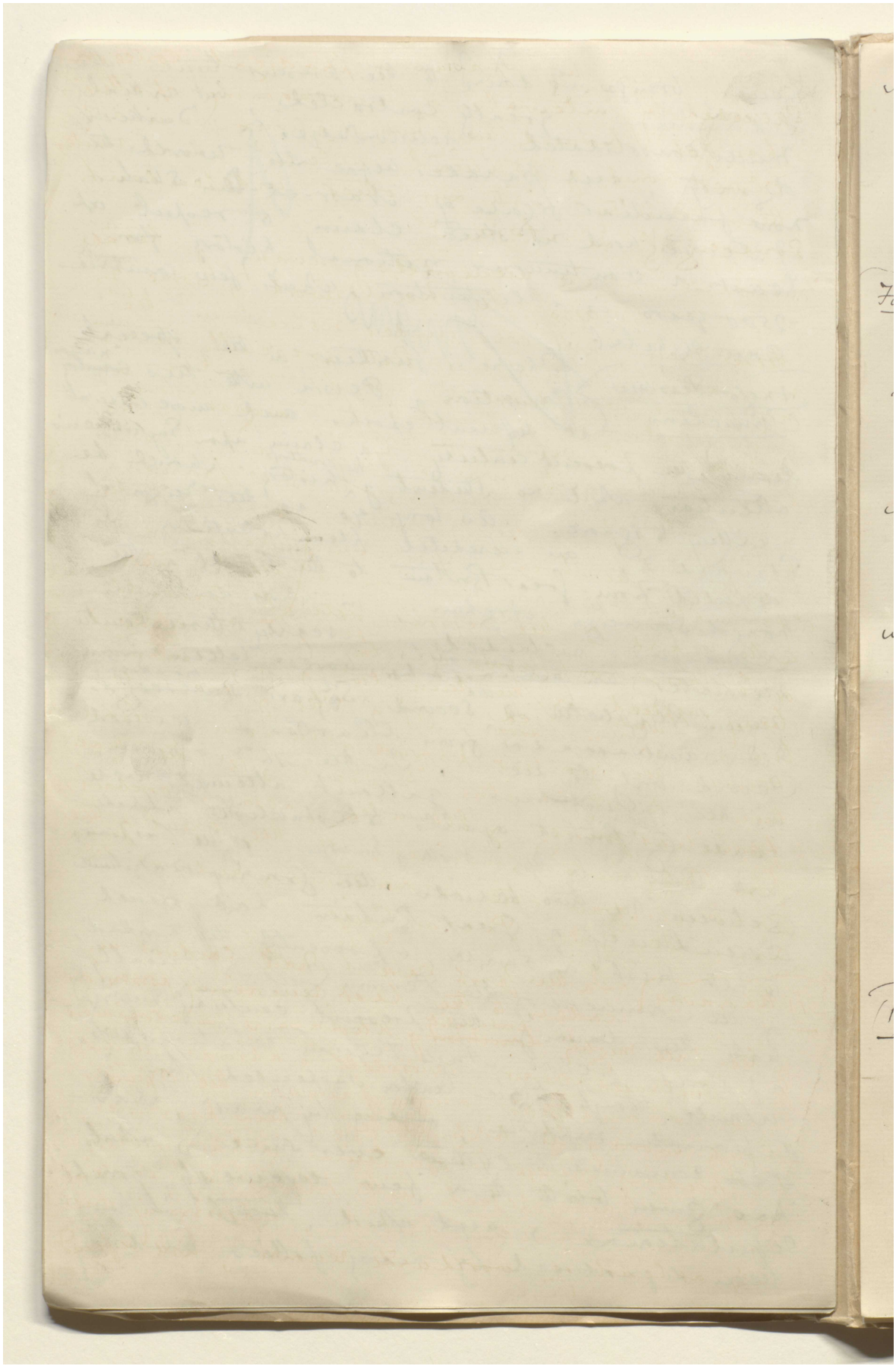

I. 10.

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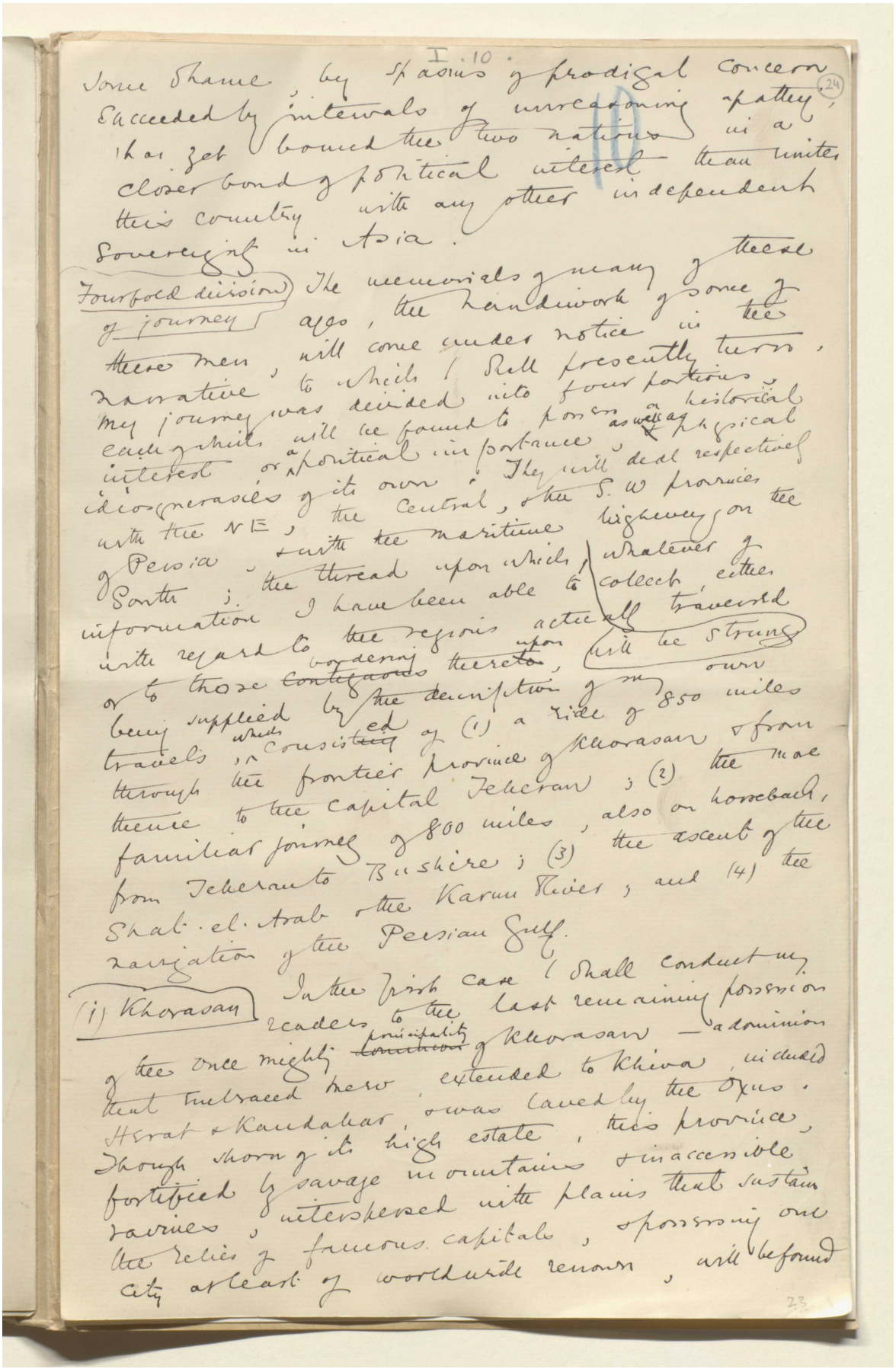

some shame, by spasms of prodigal concern succeeded by intervals of unreasoning apathy, has yet bound the two nations in a closer bond of political interest than unites this country with any other independent sovereignty in Asia.

Fourfold division of journey

The memorials of many of these ages, the handiwork of some of these men, will come under notice in the narrative to which I shall presently turn. My journey was divided into four portions, each of which will be found to possess a historical interest or a political importance, as well as physical idiosyncrasies of its own. They will deal respectively with the NE, the Central, & the S.W provinces of Persia, & with the maritime highway on the South; the thread upon which, whatever of information I have been able to collect, either with regard to the regions actually traversed or to those ~~contiguous~~ bordering ~~thereto~~ upon, will be strung being supplied by the description of my own travels, which consisted of (1) a ride of 850 miles through the frontier province of Khorasan & from thence to the capital Teheran; (2) the more familiar journey of 800 miles, also on horseback, from Teheran to Bushire; (3) the ascent of the Shat-el-Arab & the Karun River; and (4) the navigation of the Persian Gulf.

(i) Khorasan

In the first case I shall conduct my readers to the last remaining possession of the once mighty ~~dominion~~ principality of Khorasan — a dominion that embraced Merv, extended to Khiva, included Herat & Kandahar, & was laved by the Oxus. Though shorn of its high estate, this province, fortified by savage mountains & inaccessible ravines, interspersed with plains that sustain the relics of famous capitals, & possessing one city at least of worldwide renown, will be found

23

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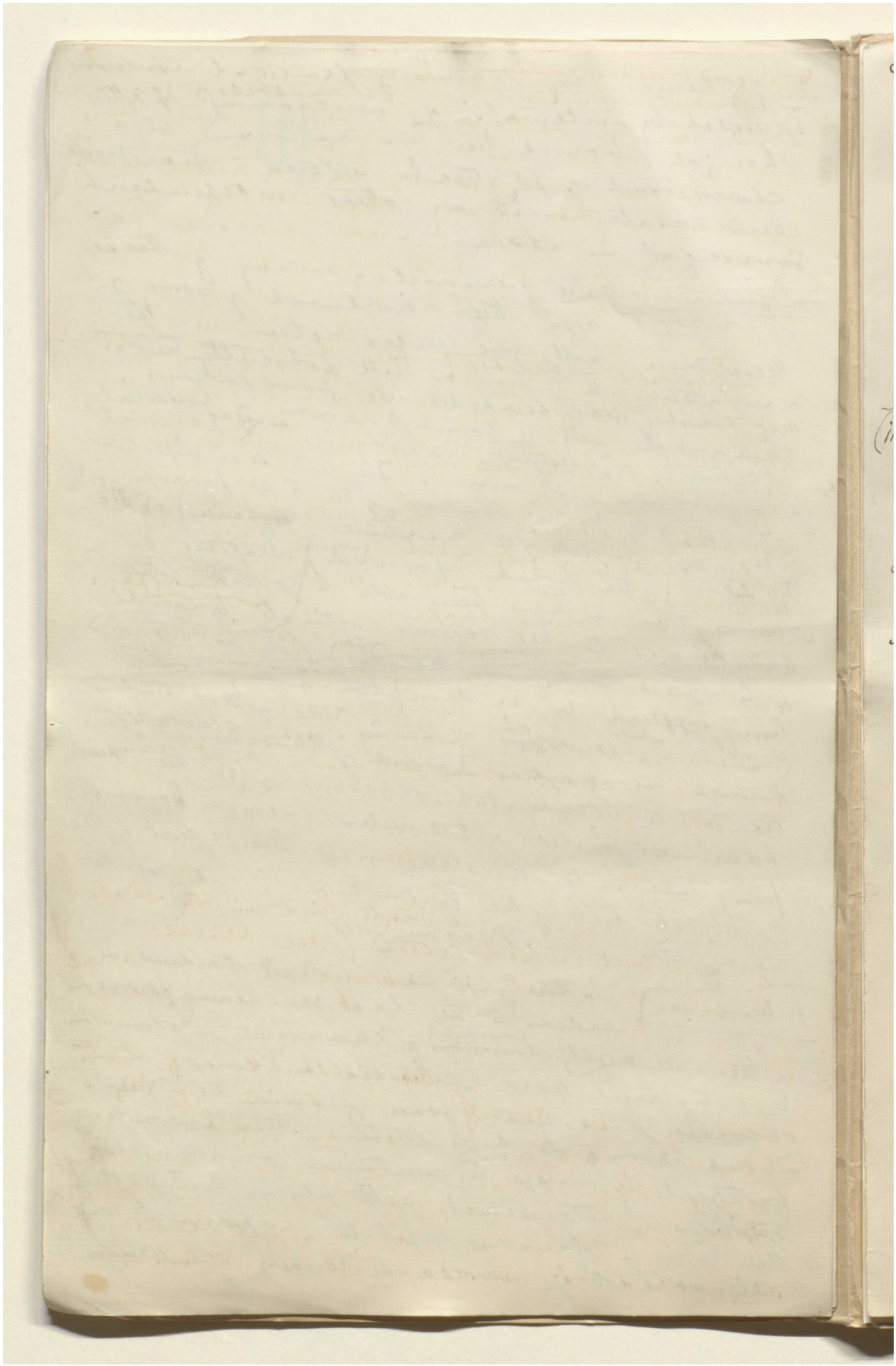

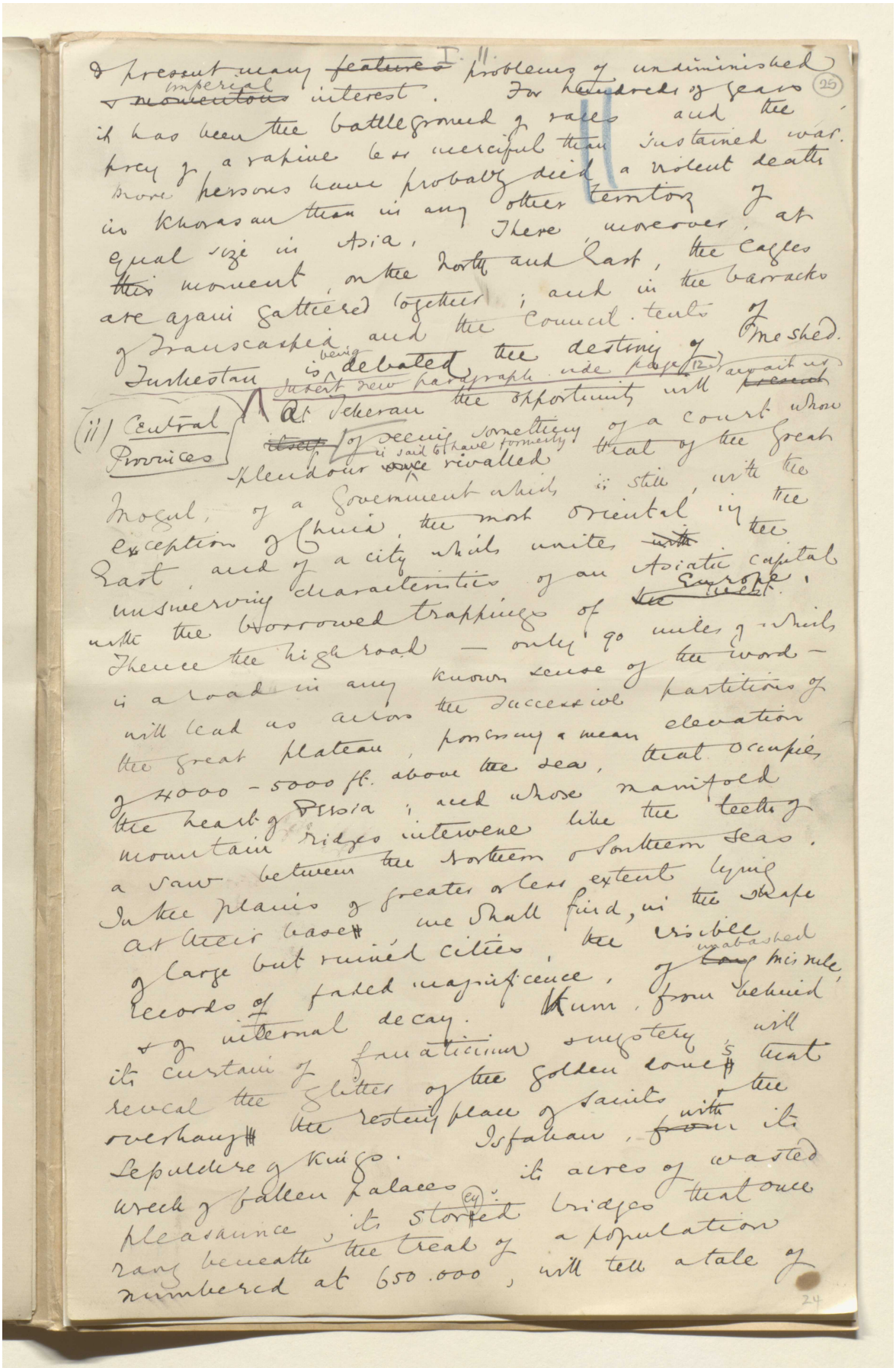

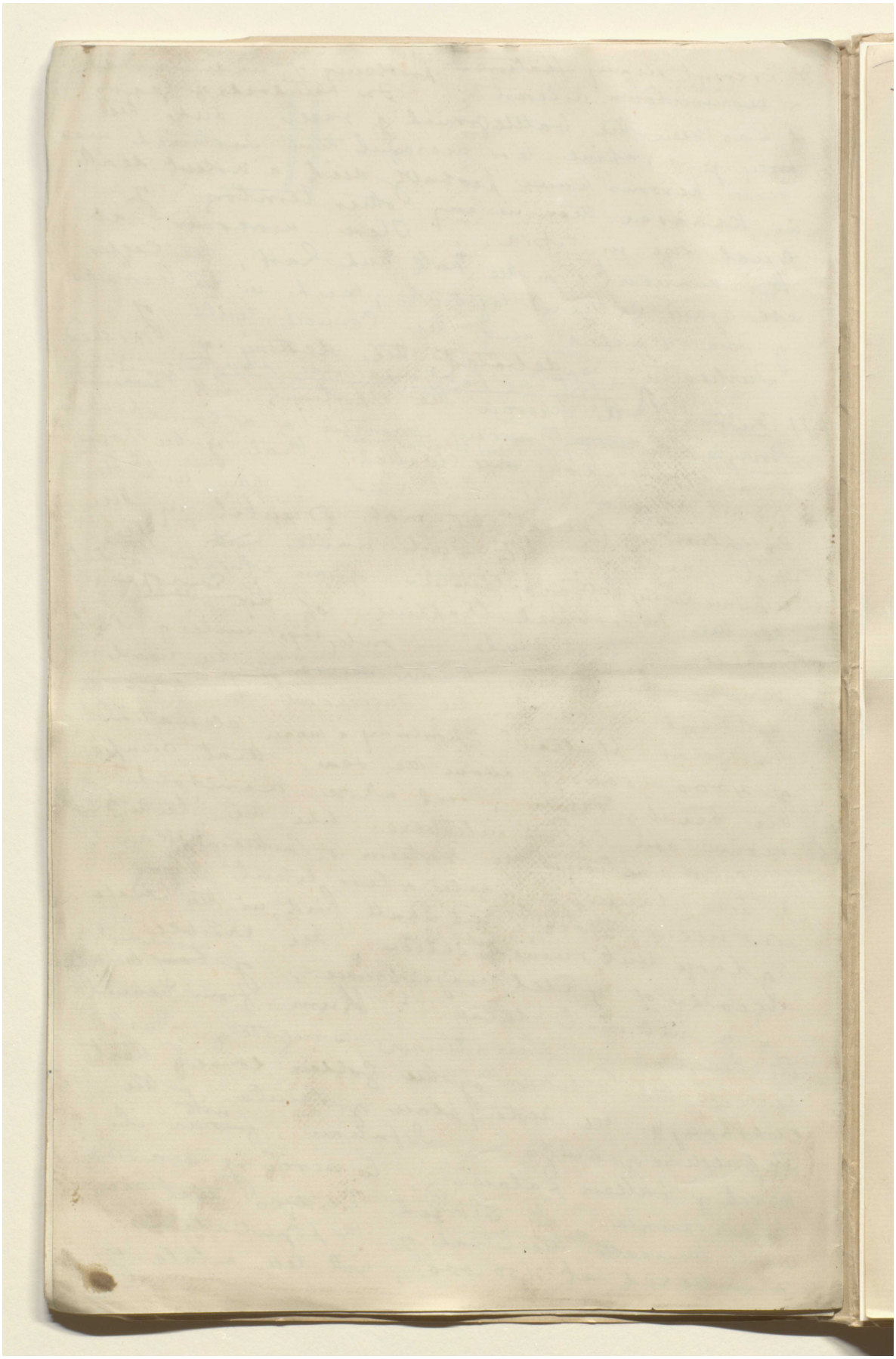

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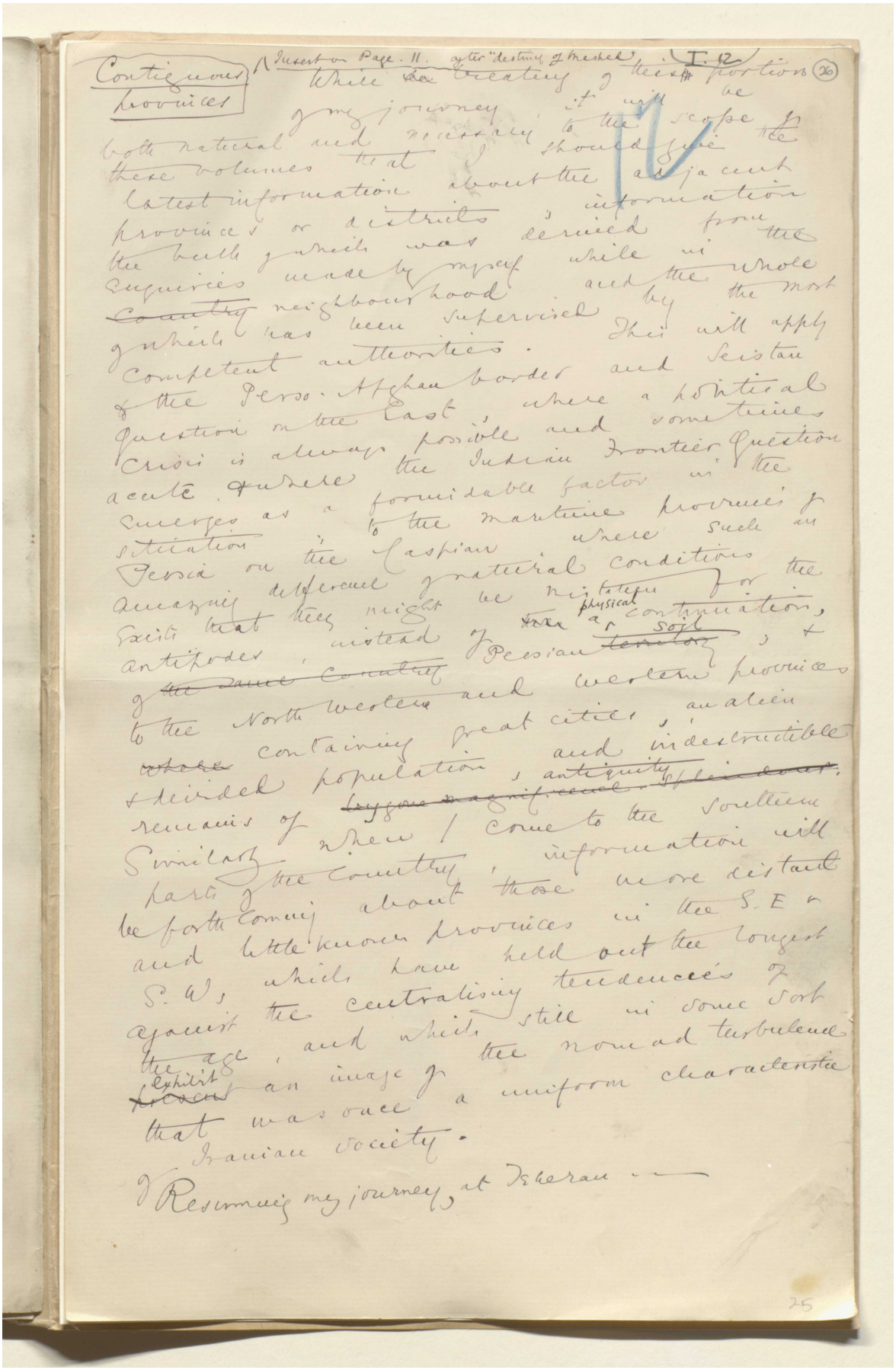

Contiguous Provinces

(Insert on Page 11. after "destiny of Meshed")

While thus treating of these portions (26) of my journey, it will be both natural and necessary to the scope of these volumes that I should give the latest information about the adjacent provinces or districts; information the bulk of which was derived from the enquiries made by myself while in the whole country neighbourhood and the most of which has been supervised by the most competent authorities. This will apply to the Persо-Afghan border and Seistan & the Persо-Afghan boundary question in the East, where a political crisis is always possible and sometimes acute, & where the Indian Frontier Question emerges as a formidable factor in the situation; to the maritime provinces of Persia on the Caspian where such an amazing difference of natural conditions exists that they might be mistaken for the antipodes, instead of Persian contiguous; & to the North western and western provinces containing great cities, an alien & divided population, and indestructible remains of [illegible] antiquity. Similarly when I come to the Southern parts of the country, information will be forthcoming about those more distant and little known provinces in the S.E. & S.W., which have held out the longest against the centralising tendencies of the age, and which still in some sort exhibit an image of the nomad turbulence that was once a uniform characteristic of Iranian society.

Resuming my journey, at Teheran —

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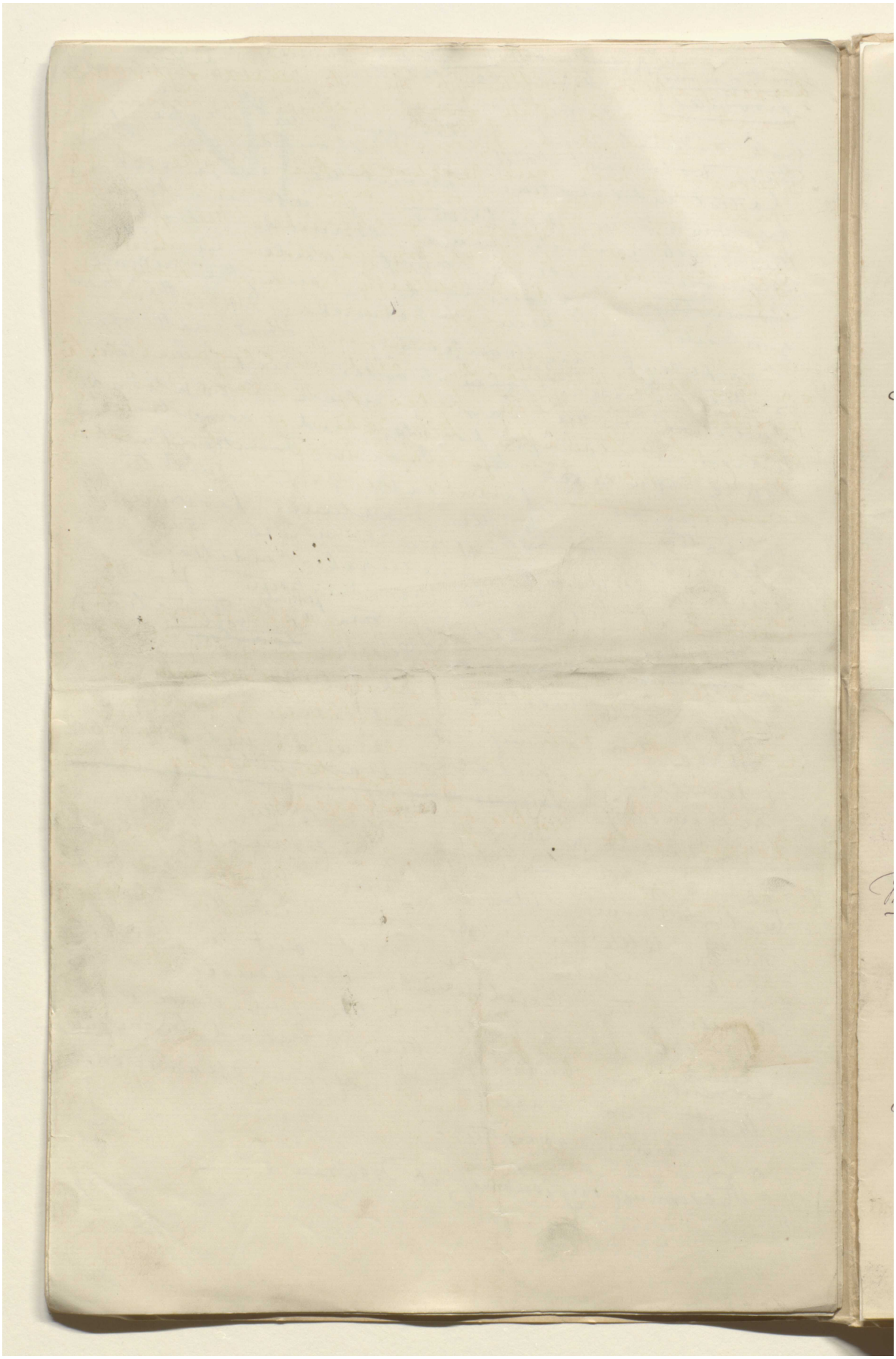

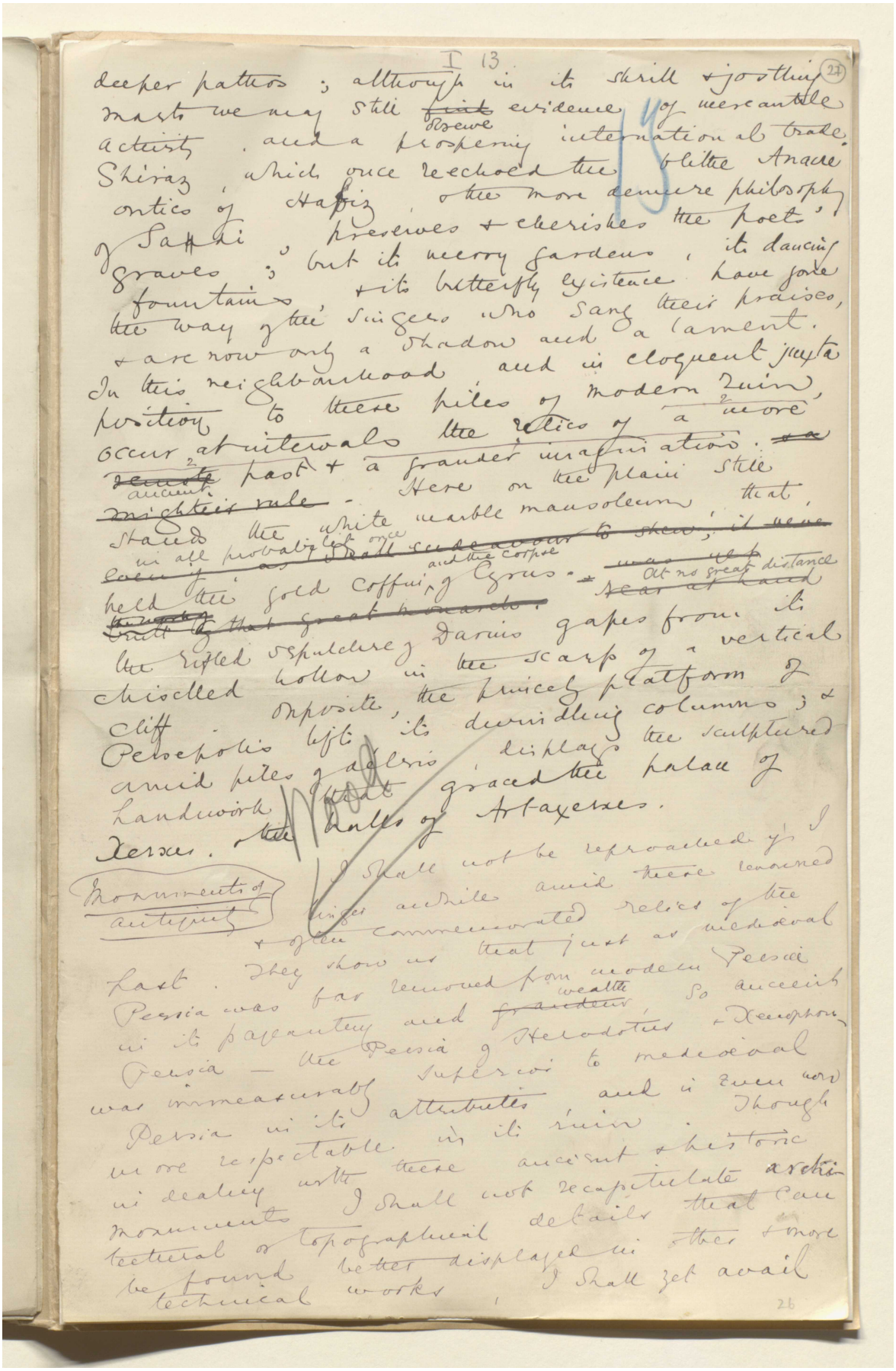

I 13

(27)

deeper pathos; although in its skrill & jostling marts we may still ~~find~~ observe evidence of mercantile activity, and a prospering international trade. Shiraz, which once reechoed the blithe Anacreontics of Hafiz, & the more demure philosophy of Saadi, preserves & cherishes the poets' graves; but its merry gardens, its dancing fountains, & its butterfly existence have gone the way of the singers who sang their praises, & are now only a shadow and a lament. In this neighbourhood and in eloquent juxtaposition to these piles of modern ruin, occur at intervals the relics of a more ~~remote~~ ancient past & a grander imagination. ~~& a mightier rule~~. Here on the plain still stands the white marble mausoleum that, in all probability once ~~even if as shall endeavour to shew, it never~~ held the gold coffin and the corpse of Cyrus. ~~was not~~ ~~Near at hand~~ At no great distance ~~the work of that great monarch.~~ the rifled sepulchre of Darius gapes from its chiselled hollow in the scarp of a vertical cliff. Opposite, the princely platform of Persepolis lifts its dwindling columns; & amid piles of débris displays the sculptured handwork that graced the palace of Xerxes, & the halls of Artaxerxes.

Monuments of antiquity

I shall not be reproached if I linger awhile amid these renowned & often commemorated relics of the past. They show us that just as mediaeval Persia was far removed from modern Persia in its pageantry and ~~grandeur~~ wealth, so ancient Persia — the Persia of Herodotus & Xenophon — was immeasurably superior to mediaeval Persia in its attributes, and is even now more respectable in its ruin. Though in dealing with these ancient & historic monuments I shall not recapitulate architectural or topographical details that can be found better displayed in other & more technical works, I shall yet avail

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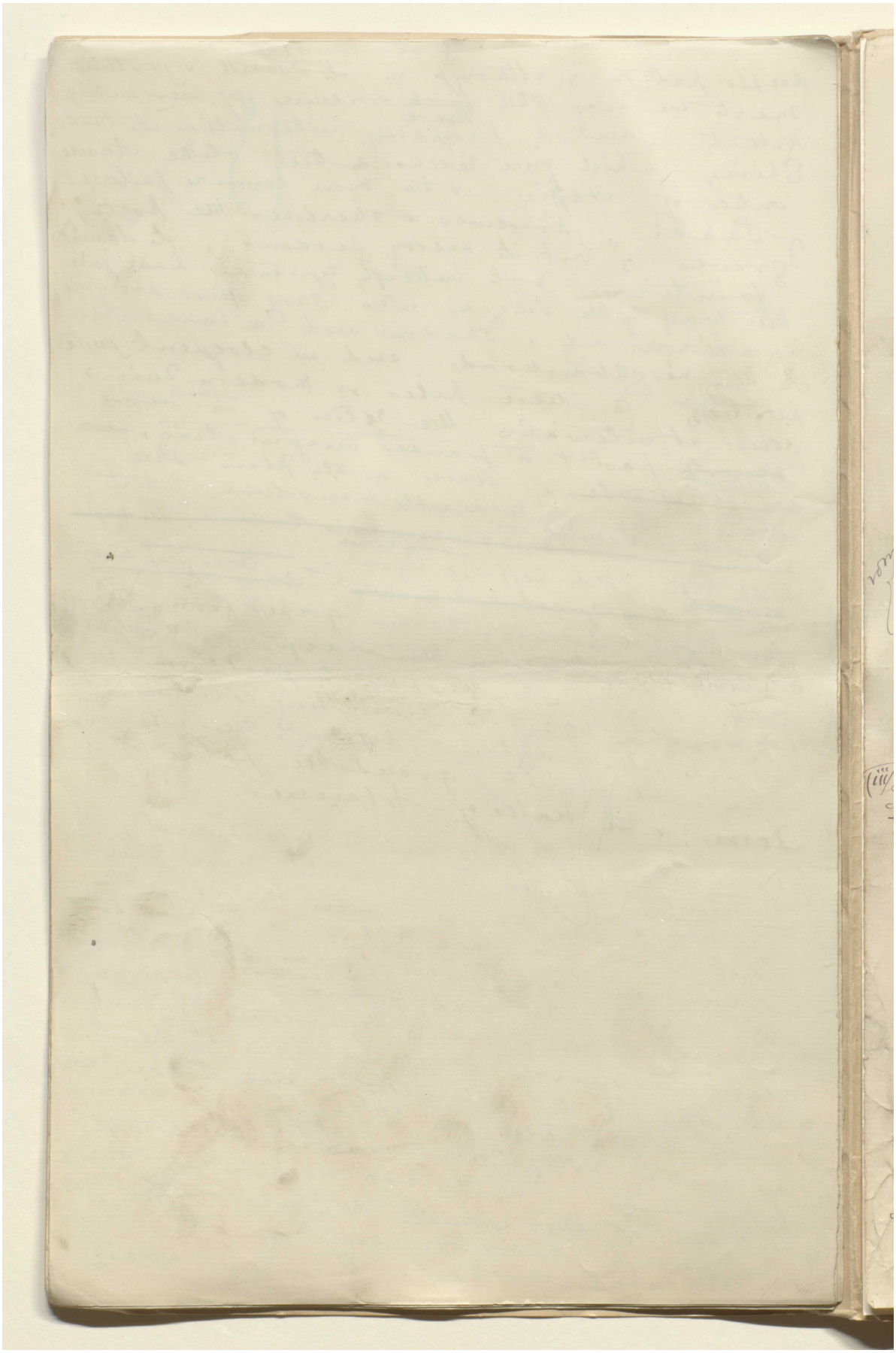

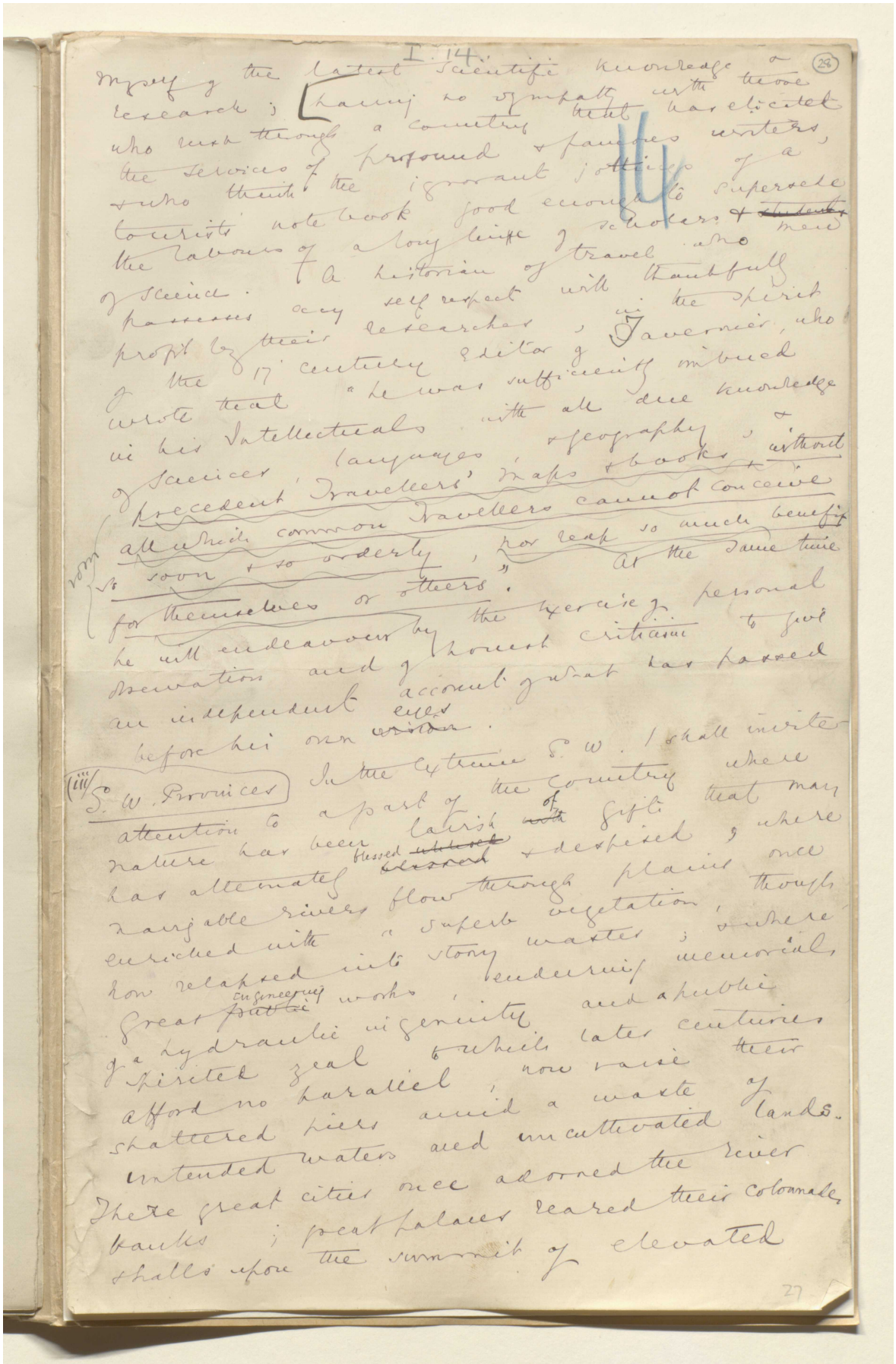

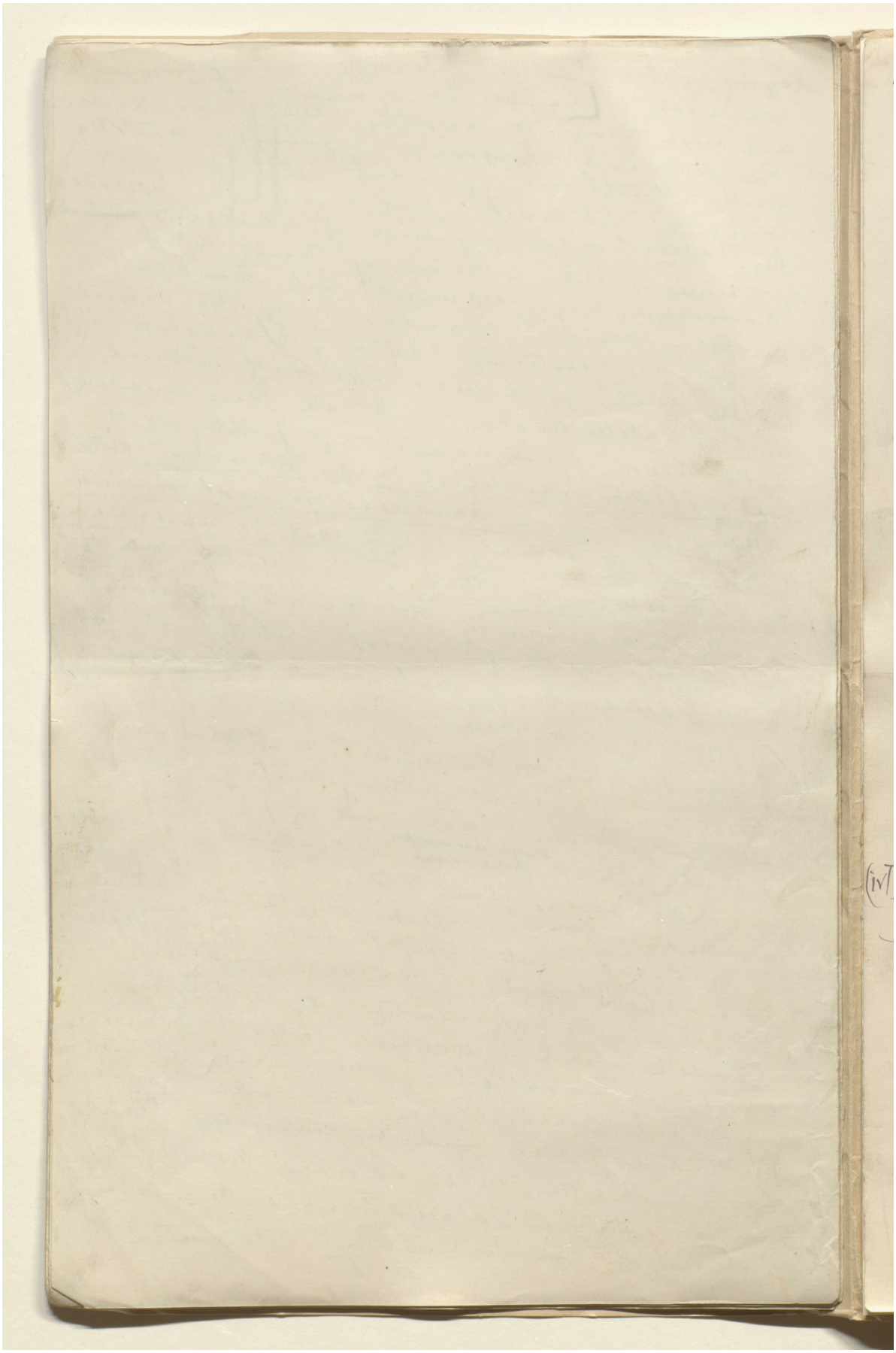

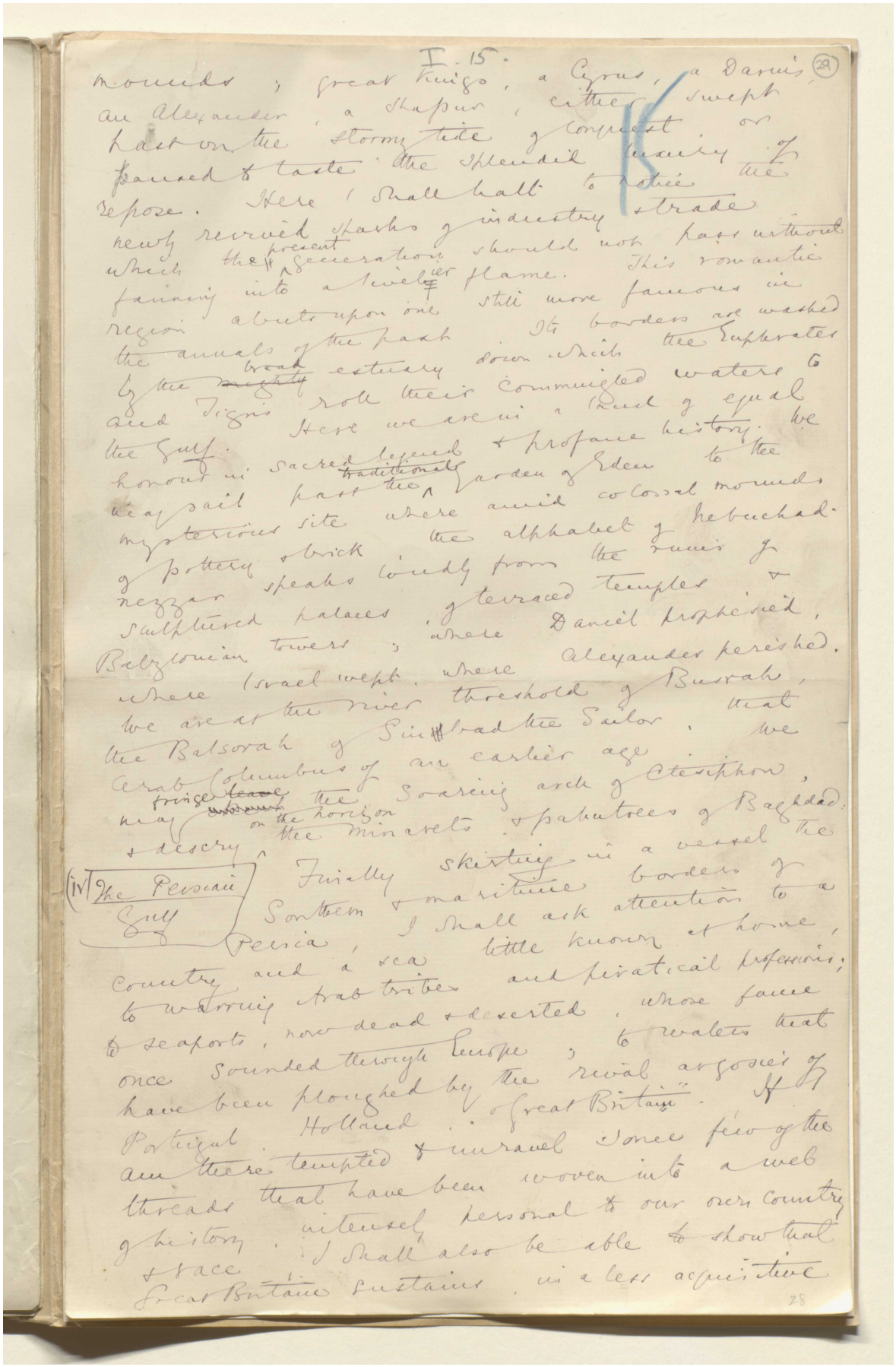

I. 15. (29)

mounds; great kings, a Cyrus, a Darius, an Alexander, a Shapur, either swept past on the stormy tide of conquest or paused to taste the splendid luxury of repose. Here I shall halt to notice the newly revived sparks of industry & trade which the present generation should not pass without fanning into a livelier flame. This romantic region abuts upon one still more famous in the annals of the past. Its borders are washed by the ~~mighty~~ broad estuary down which the Euphrates and Tigris roll their commingled waters to the Gulf. Here we are in a land of equal honour in sacred legend & profane history. We may sail past the traditional garden of Eden to the mysterious site where amid colossal mounds of pottery & brick the alphabet of Nebuchadnezzar speaks loudly from the ruins of sculptured palaces, of terraced temples & Babylonian towers; where Daniel prophesied, where Israel wept, where Alexander perished. We are at the river threshold of Bussrah, the Balsorah of Sinbad the Sailor, that Arab Columbus of an earlier age. We may fringe ~~leave~~ ~~[illegible]~~ the soaring arch of Ctesiphon, & descry on the horizon the minarets & palm trees of Baghdad.

(iv) The Persian Gulf

Finally skirting in a vessel the Southern & maritime borders of Persia, I shall ask attention to a country and a sea little known at home, to warring Arab tribes and piratical professions; to seaports, now dead & deserted, whose fame once sounded through Europe; to waters that have been ploughed by the rival argosies of Portugal, Holland, & Great Britain. If I am there tempted & unravel some few of the threads that have been woven into a web of history, intensely personal to our own country & race, I shall also be able to show that Great Britain sustains, in a less acquisitive

28

المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة
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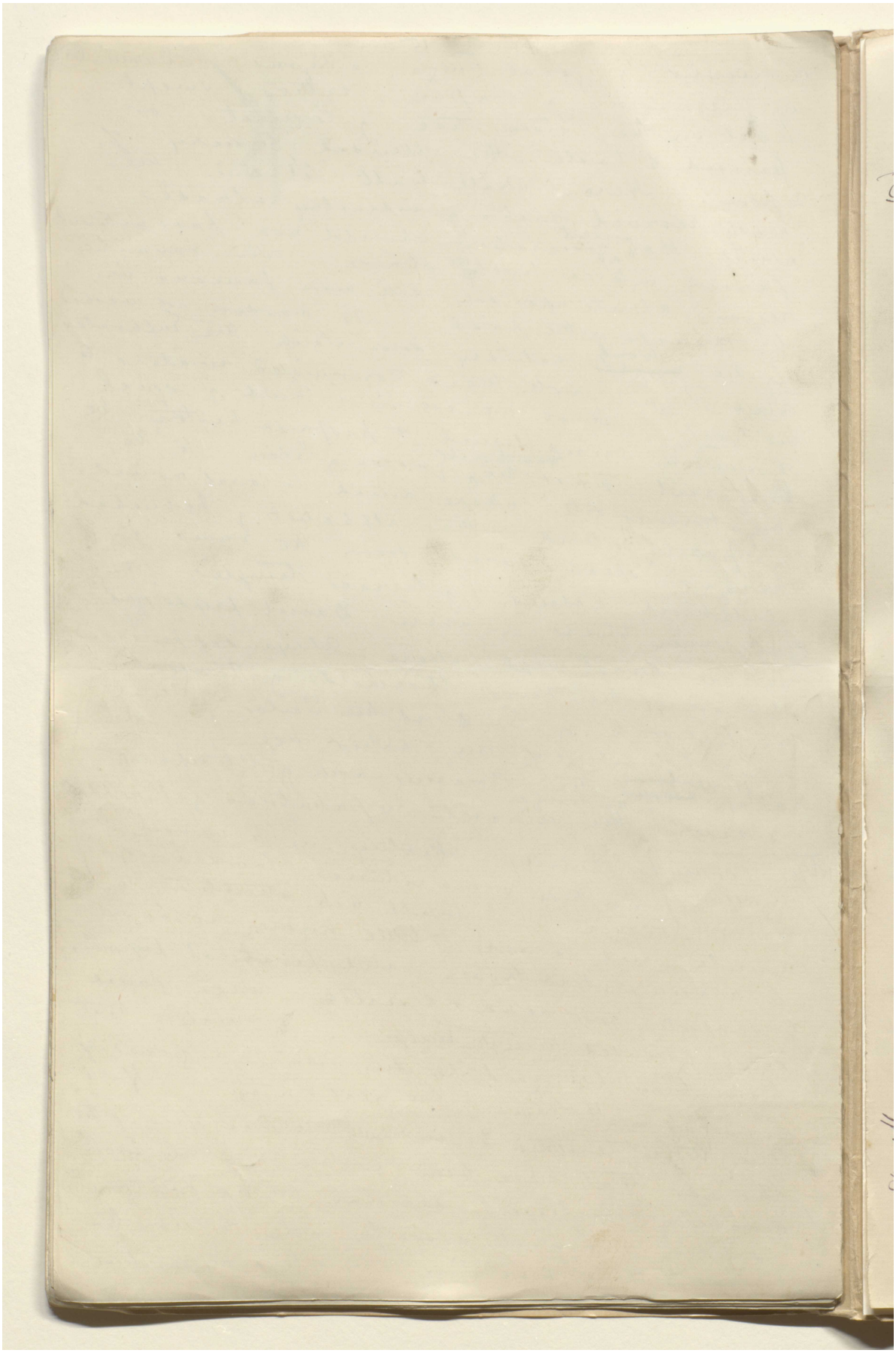
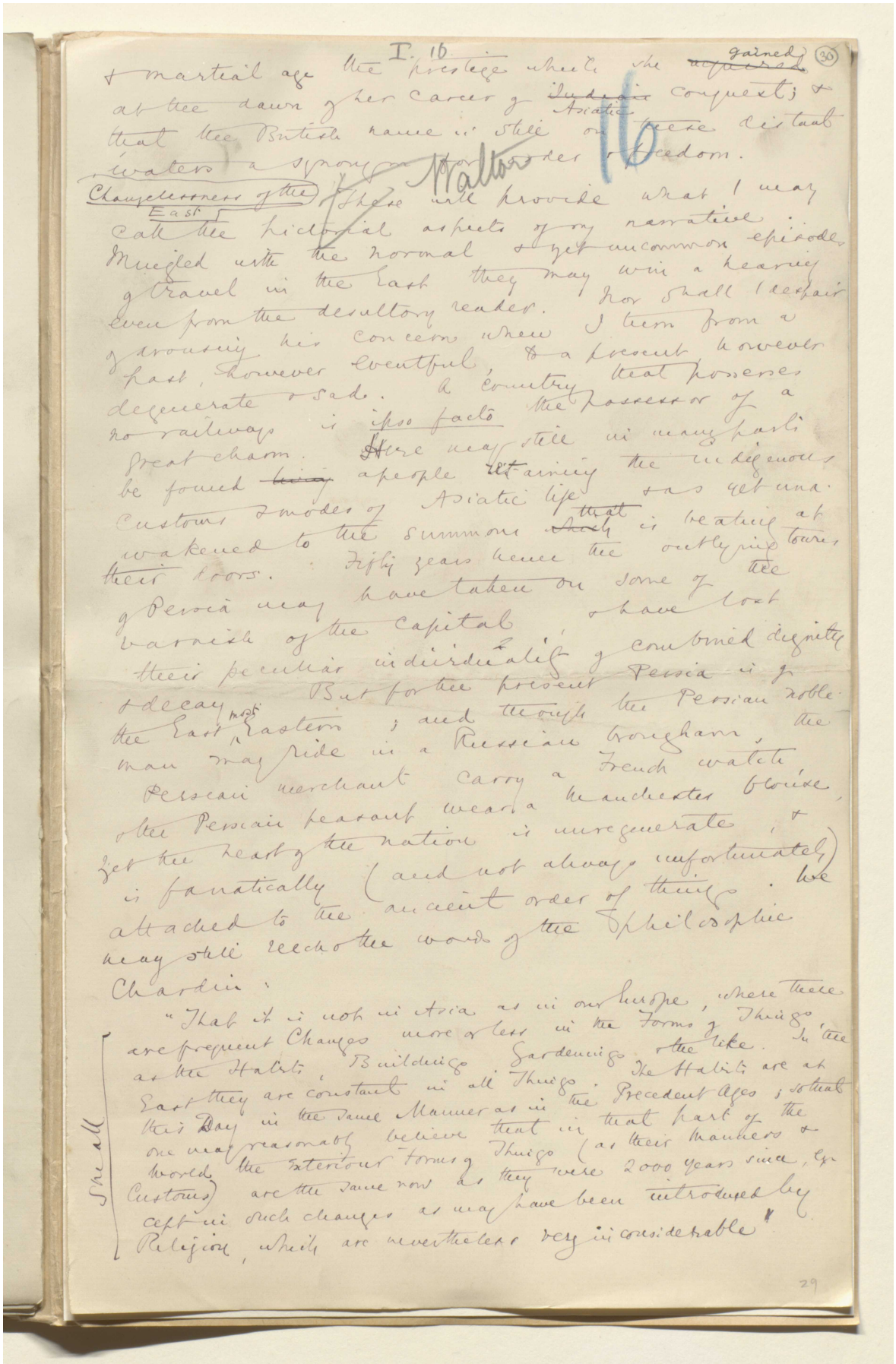
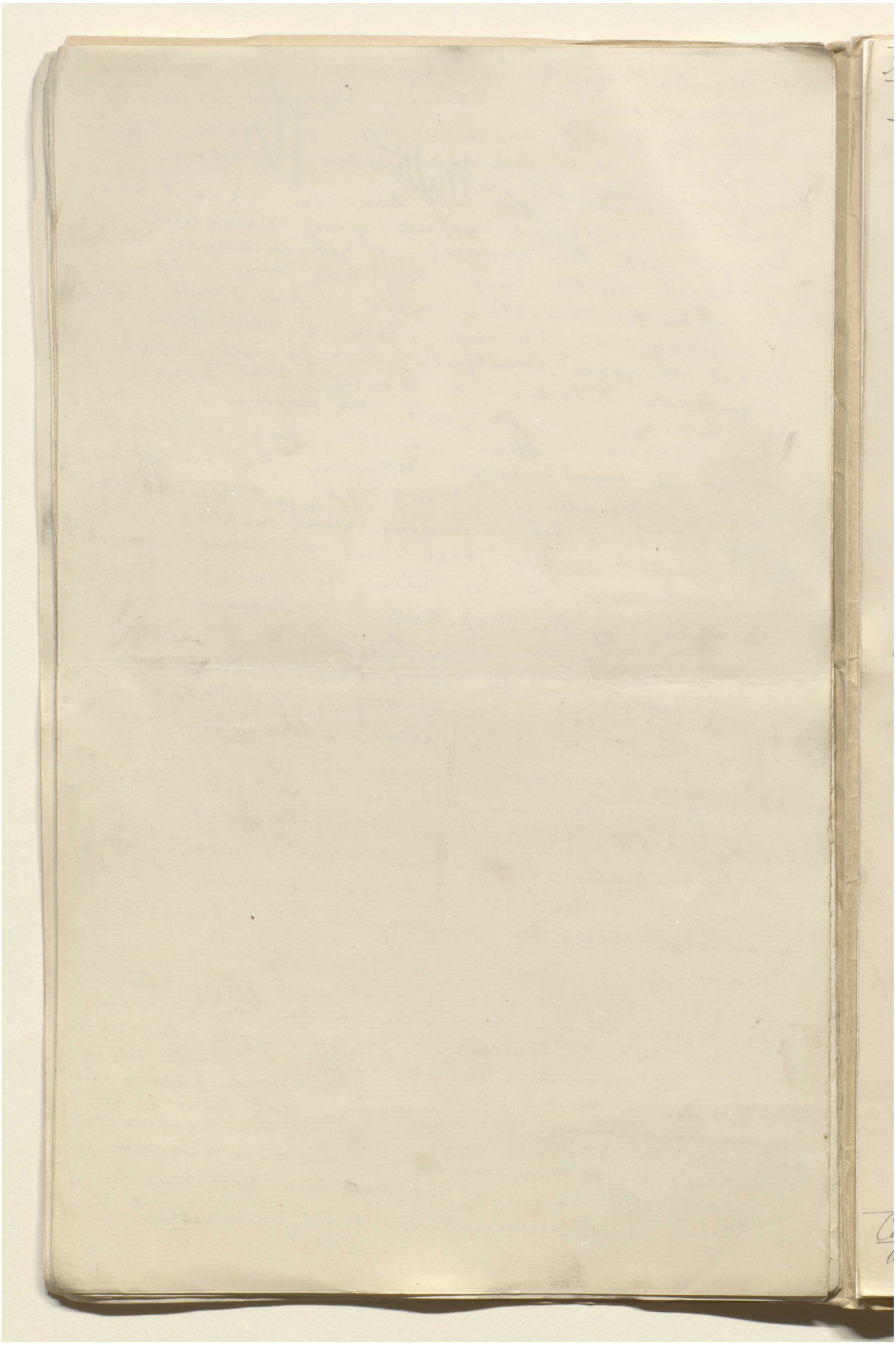
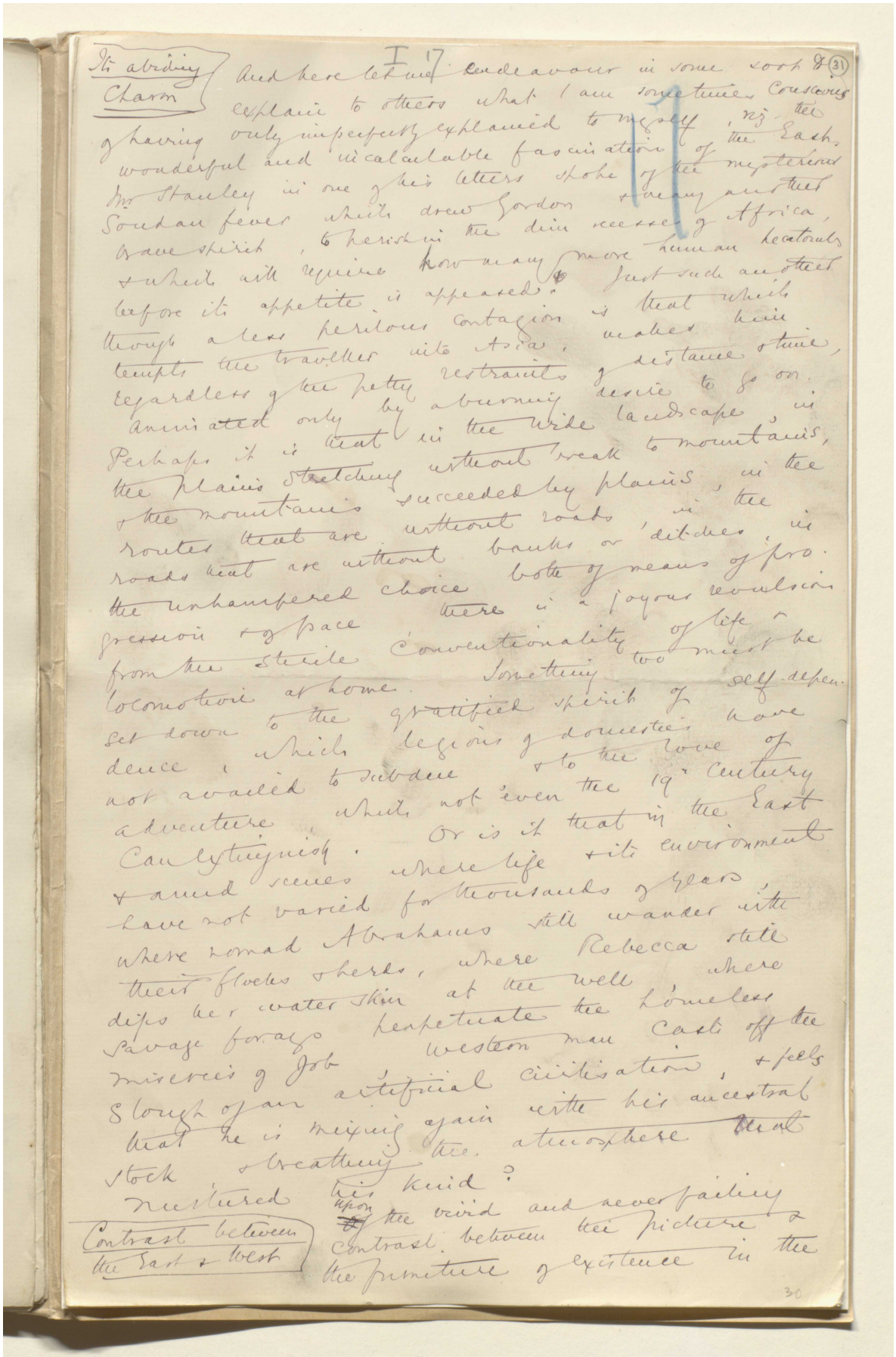
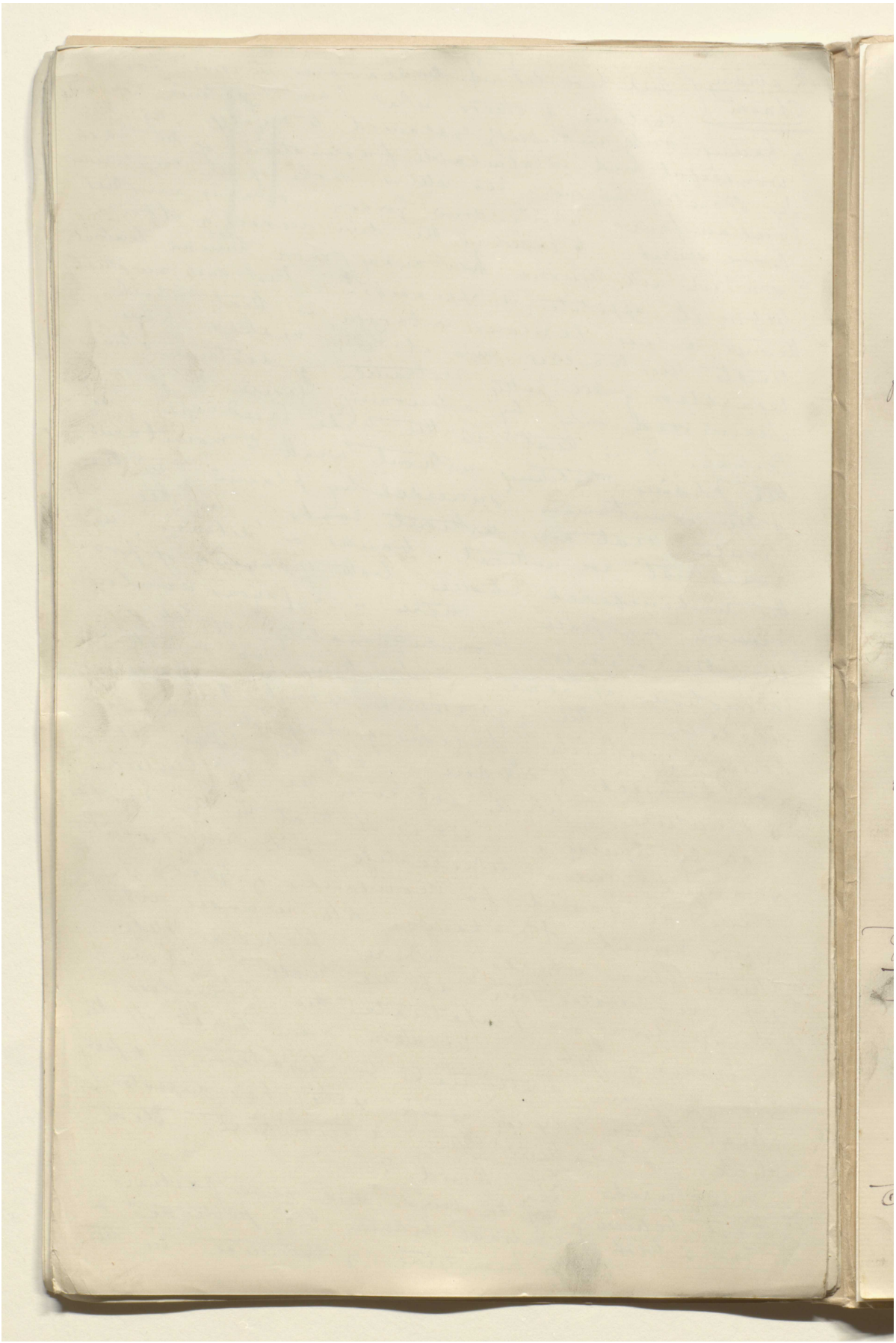
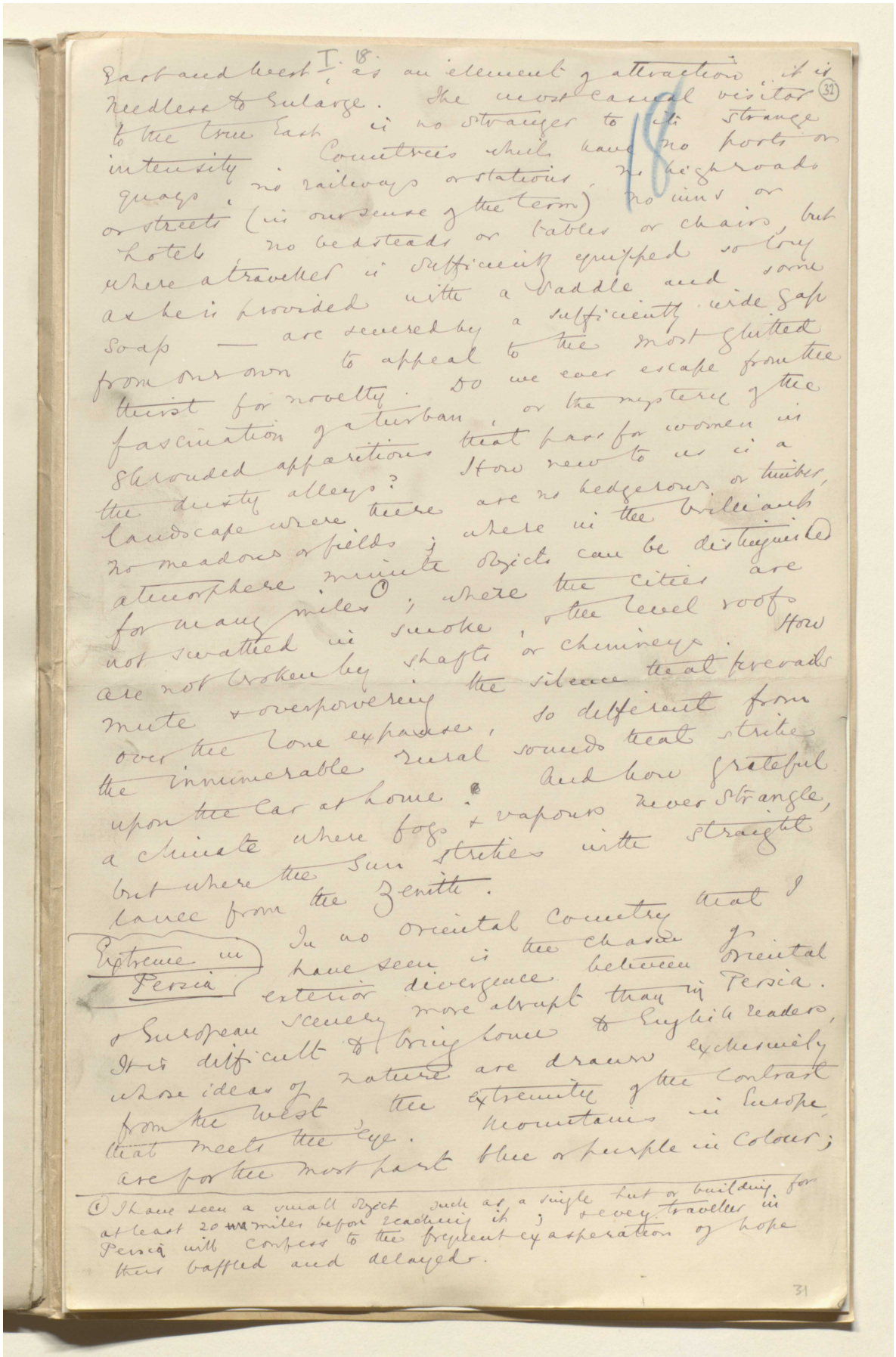












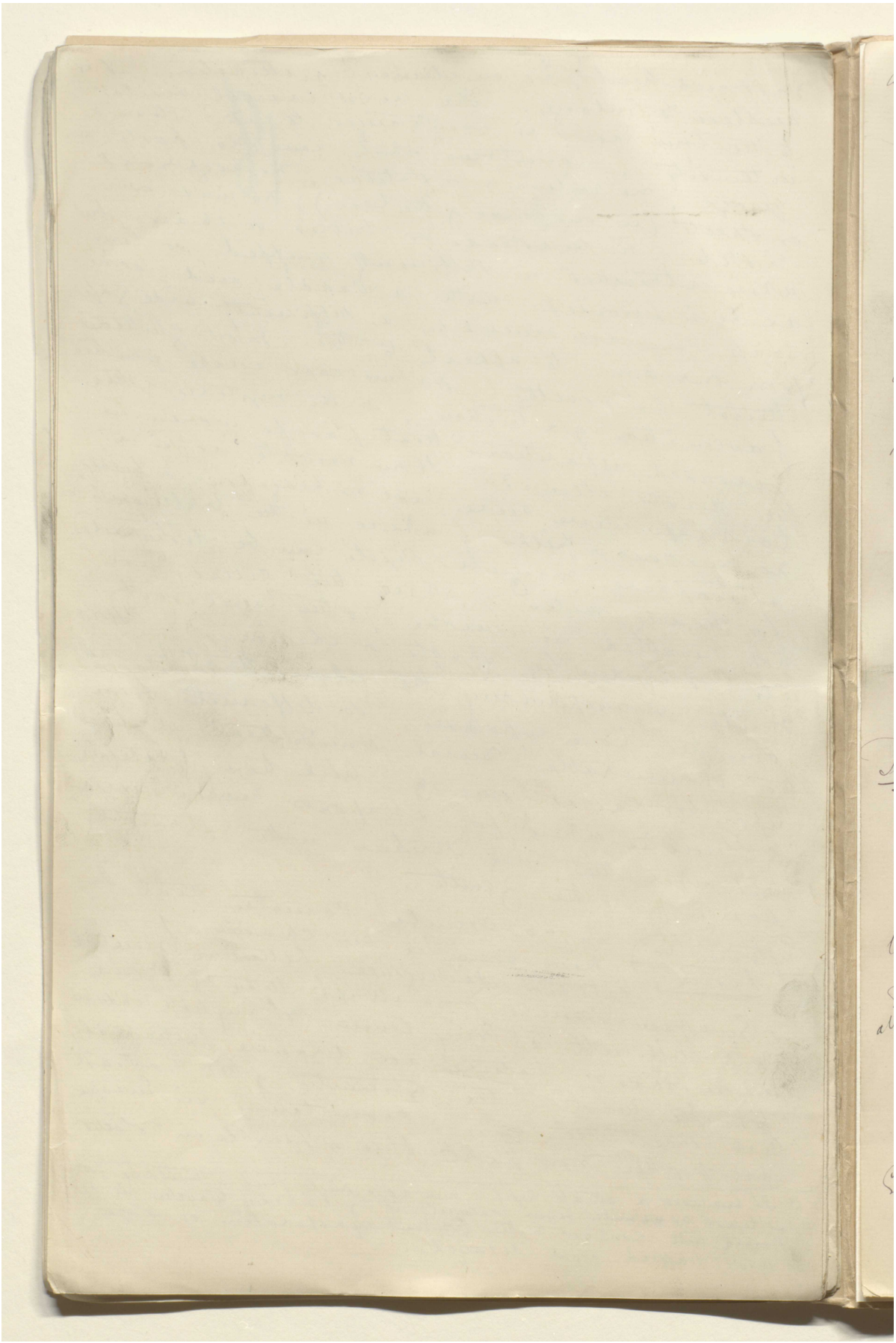
East and West I. 18. as an element of attraction it is needless to enlarge. The most casual visitor (32) to the true East is no stranger to its strange intensity. Countries which have no ports or quays, no railways or stations, no highroads or streets (in our sense of the term) no inns or hotels no bedsteads or tables or chairs, but where a traveller is sufficiently equipped so long as he is provided with a saddle and some soap — are severed by a sufficiently wide gap from our own to appeal to the most glutted thirst for novelty. Do we ever escape from the fascination of a turban, or the mystery of the shrouded apparitions that pass for women in the dusty alleys? How new to us is a landscape where there are no hedgerows or timber, no meadows or fields; where in the brilliant atmosphere minute objects can be distinguished for many miles (1); where the cities are not swathed in smoke, & the level roofs are not broken by shafts or chimneys. How mute & overpowering the silence that prevails over the lone expanse, so different from the innumerable rural sounds that strike upon the ear at home! And how grateful a climate where fogs & vapours never strangle, but where the sun strikes with straight lance from the Zenith.

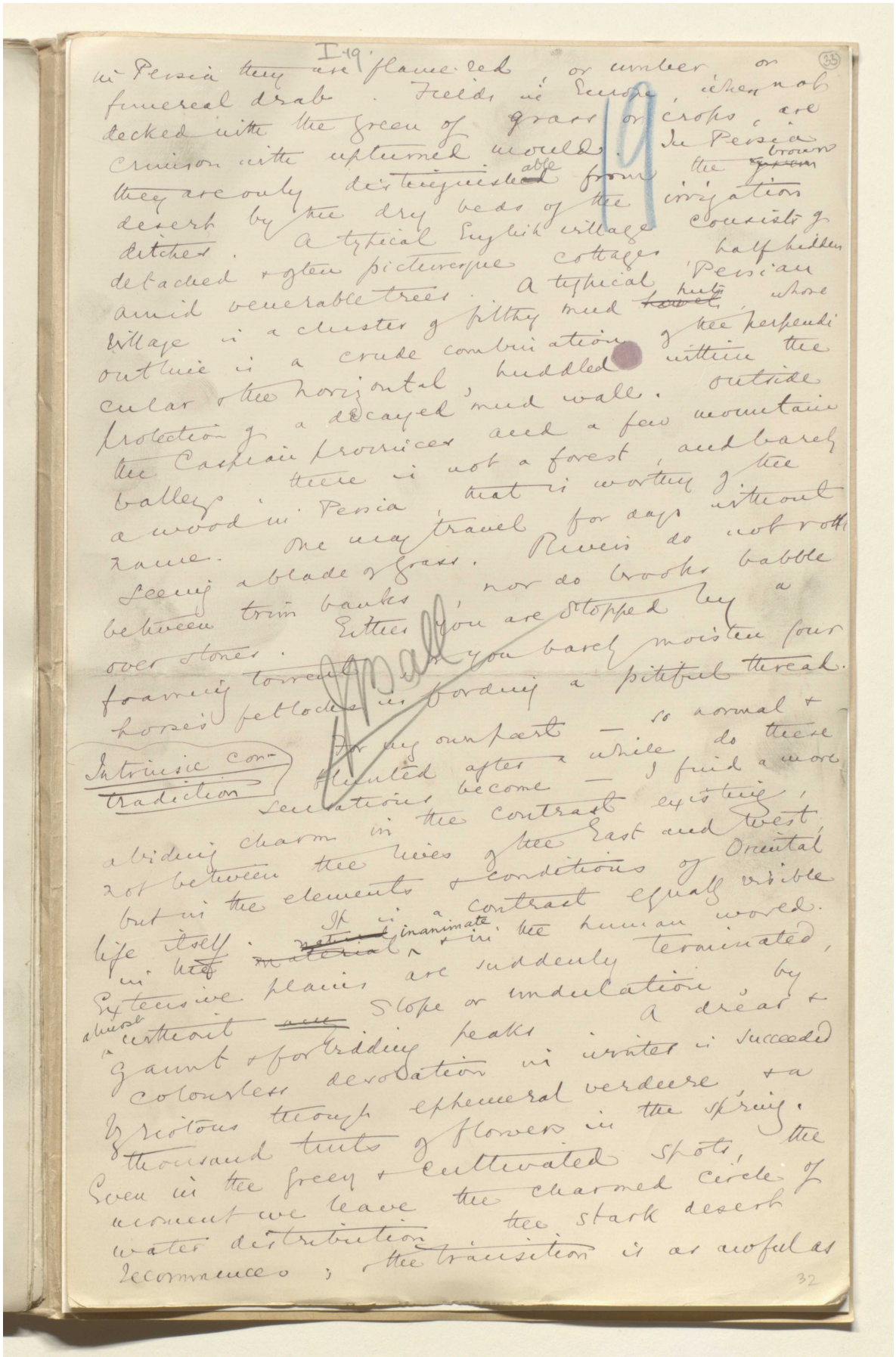
Extreme in Persia

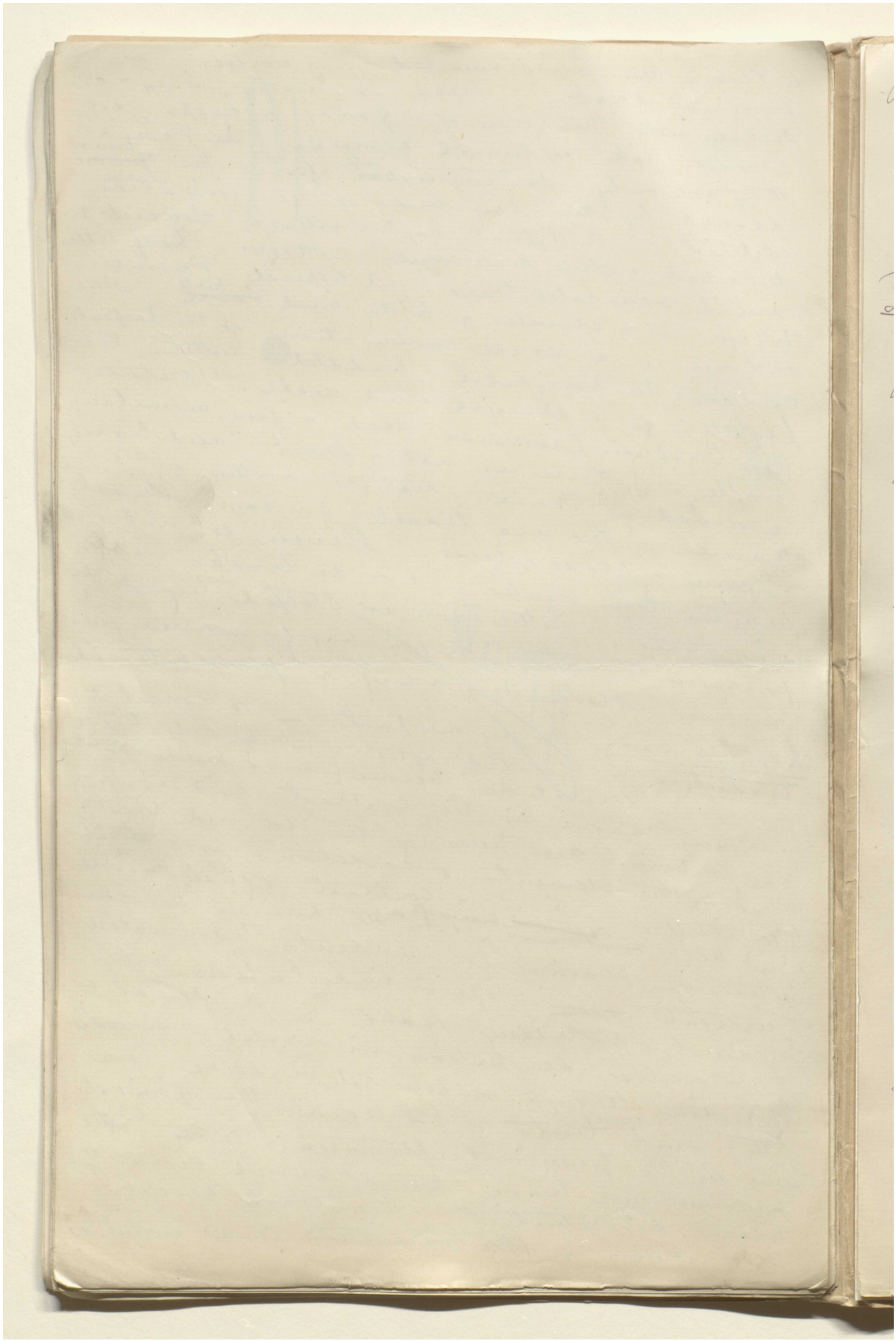
In no Oriental country that I have seen is the chasm of exterior divergence between Oriental & European scenery more abrupt than in Persia. It is difficult to bring home to English readers, whose ideas of nature are drawn exclusively from the West, the extremity of the contrast that meets the eye. Mountains in Europe are for the most part blue or purple in colour;

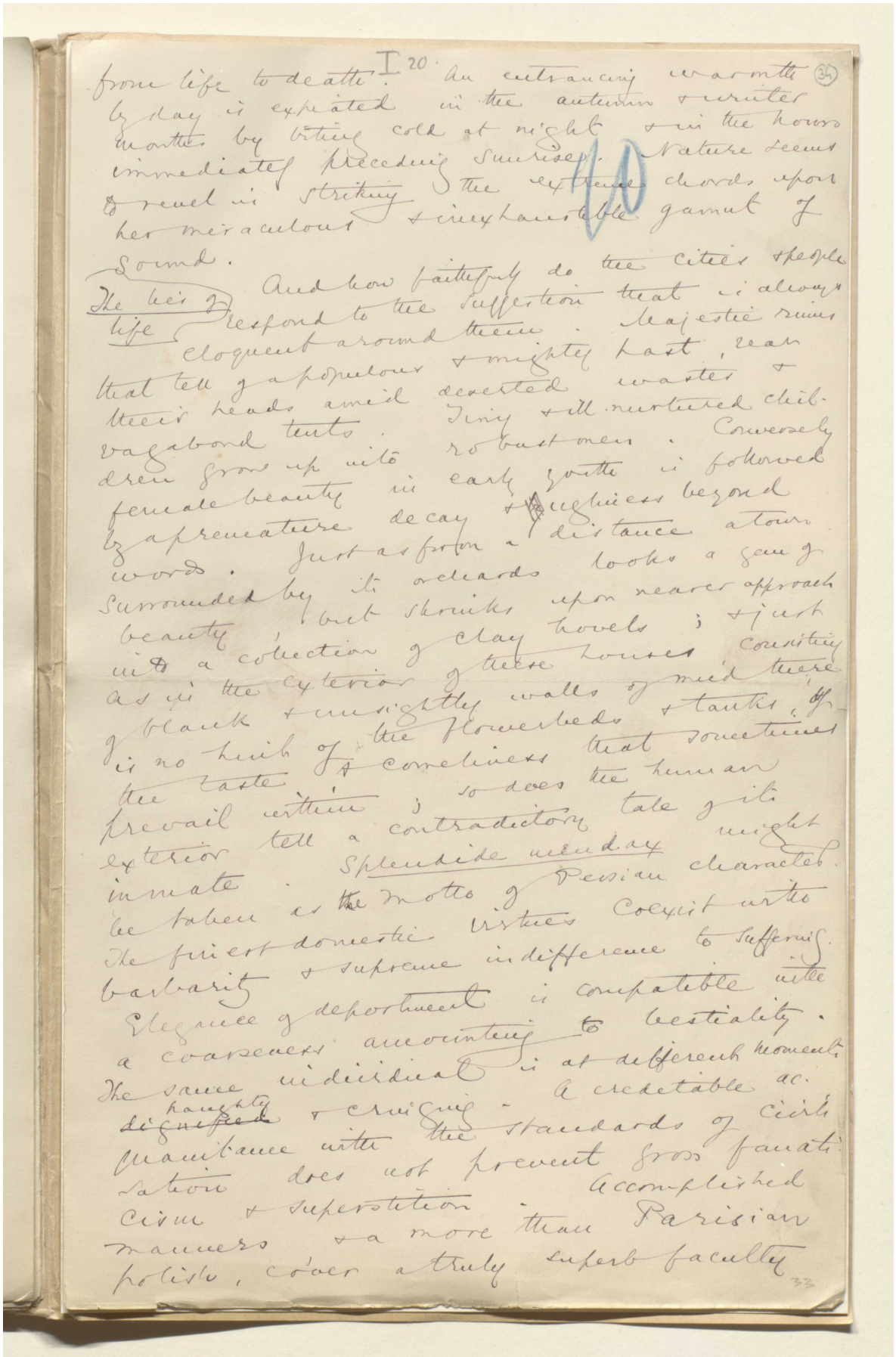
(1) I have seen a small object such as a single hut or building for at least 20 miles before reaching it; & every traveller in Persia will confess to the frequent exasperation of hope thus baffled and delayed.

31

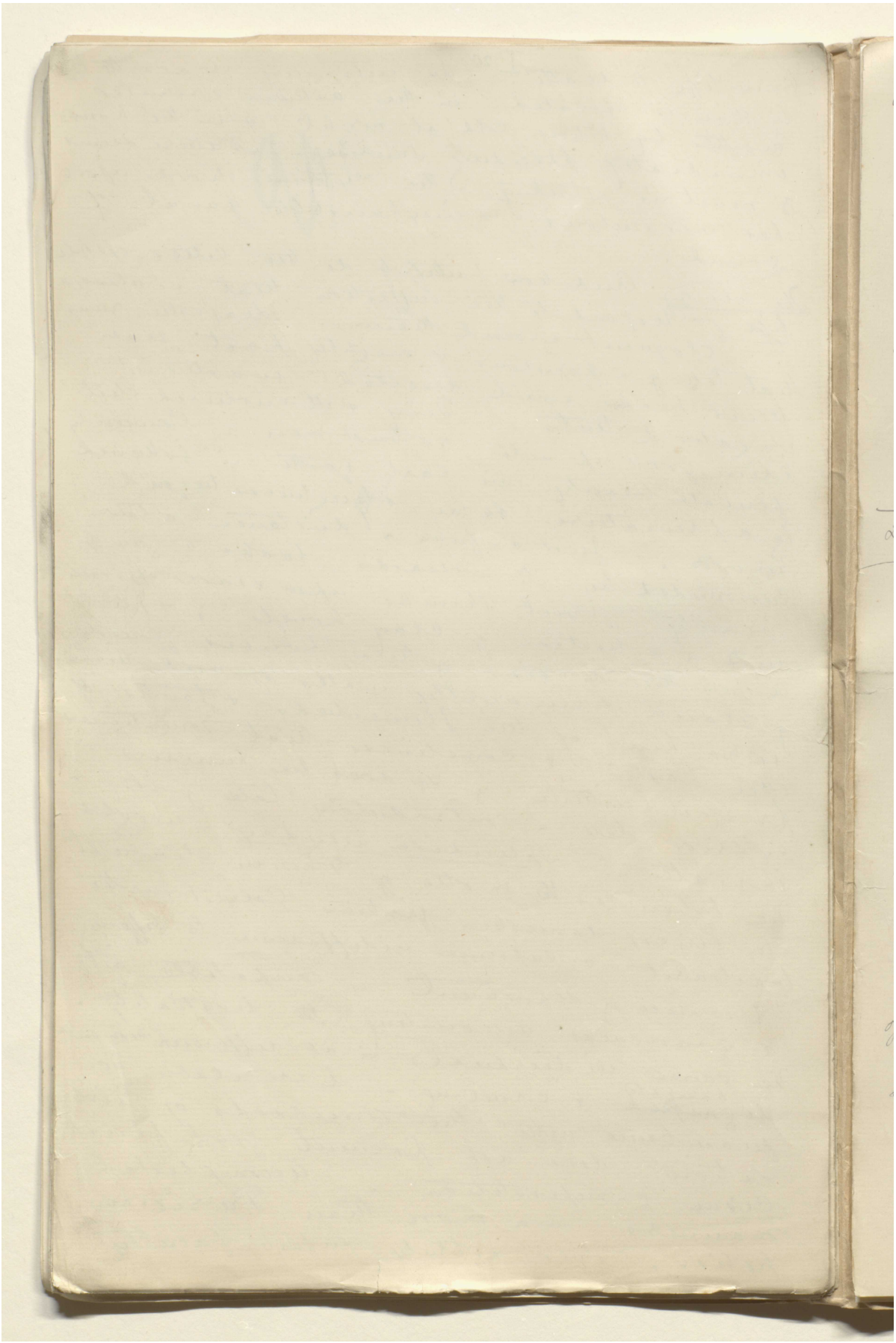


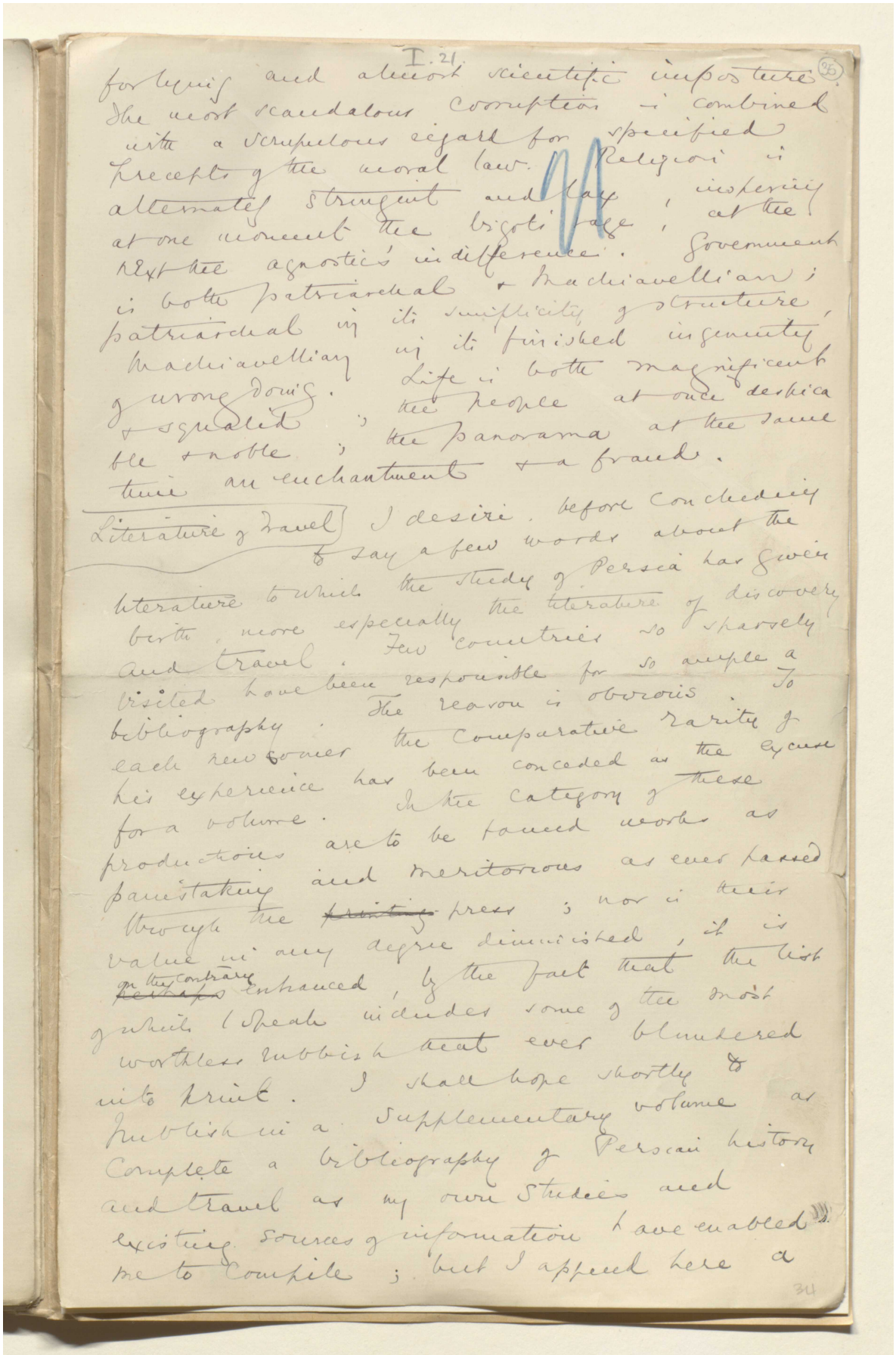






مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٣٤ظ] (١٣٥٥/٦٨)





I. 21

for lying and almost scientific imposture. The most scandalous corruption is combined with a scrupulous regard for specified precepts of the moral law. Religion is alternately stringent and lax, inspiring at one moment the bigot rage, at the next the agnostic indifference. Government is both patriarchal & Machiavellian; patriarchal in its simplicity & structure, Machiavellian in its finished ingenuity & wrong doing. Life is both magnificent & squalid; the people at once despica ble & noble; the panorama at the same time an enchantment & a fraud.

Literature & Travel I desire, before concluding to say a few words about the literature to which the study of Persia has given birth, more especially the literature of discovery and travel. Few countries so sparsely visited have been responsible for so ample a bibliography. The reason is obvious. To each newcomer the comparative rarity & his experience has been conceded as the excuse for a volume. In the category of these productions are to be found works as painstaking and meritorious as ever passed through the ~~printing~~ press; nor is their value in any degree diminished, it is ~~on the contrary~~ enhanced, by the fact that the list in which I speak includes some of the most worthless rubbish that ever blundered into print. I shall hope shortly to publish in a Supplementary volume as complete a bibliography of Persian history and travel as my own studies and existing sources of information have enabled me to compile; but I append here a

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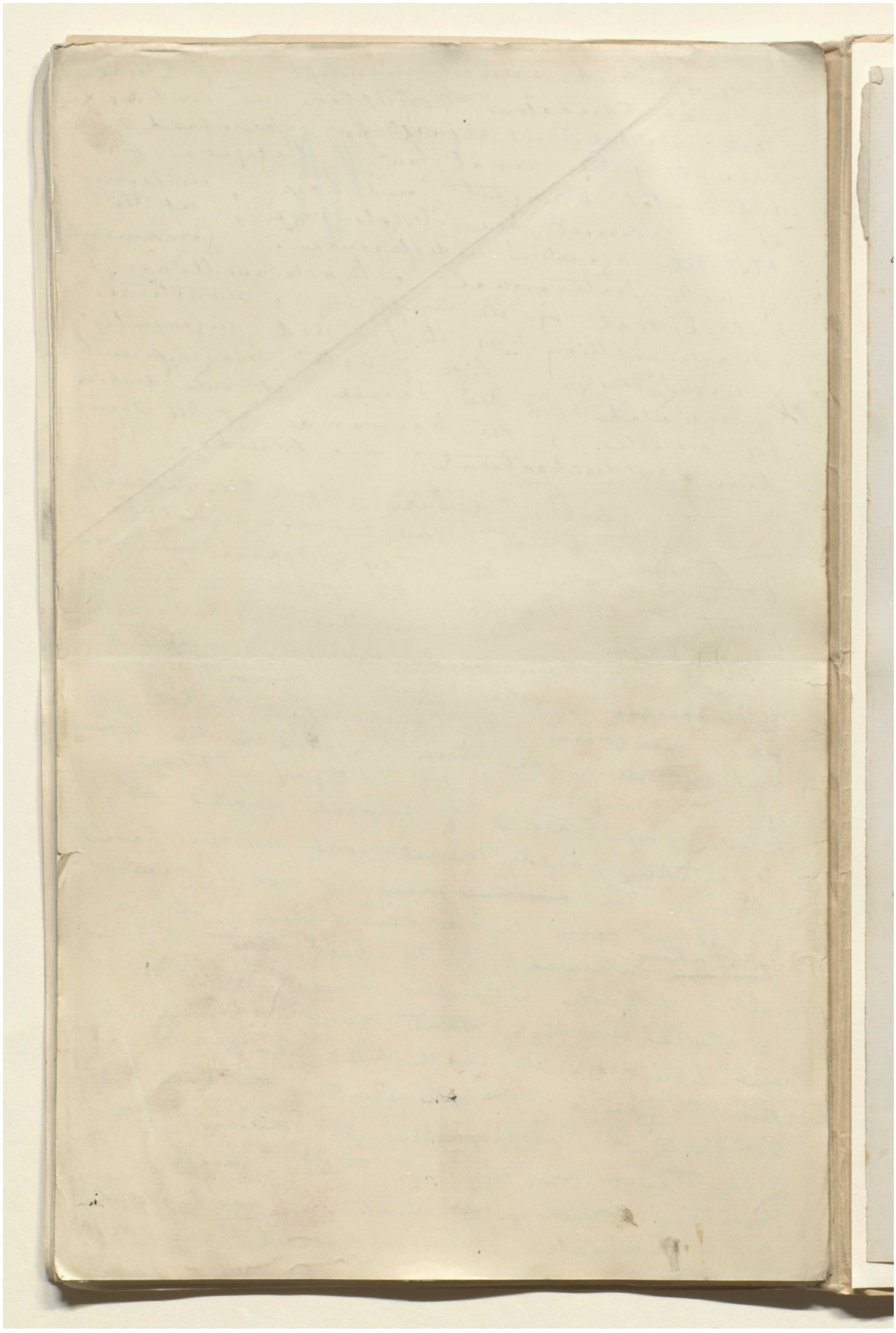

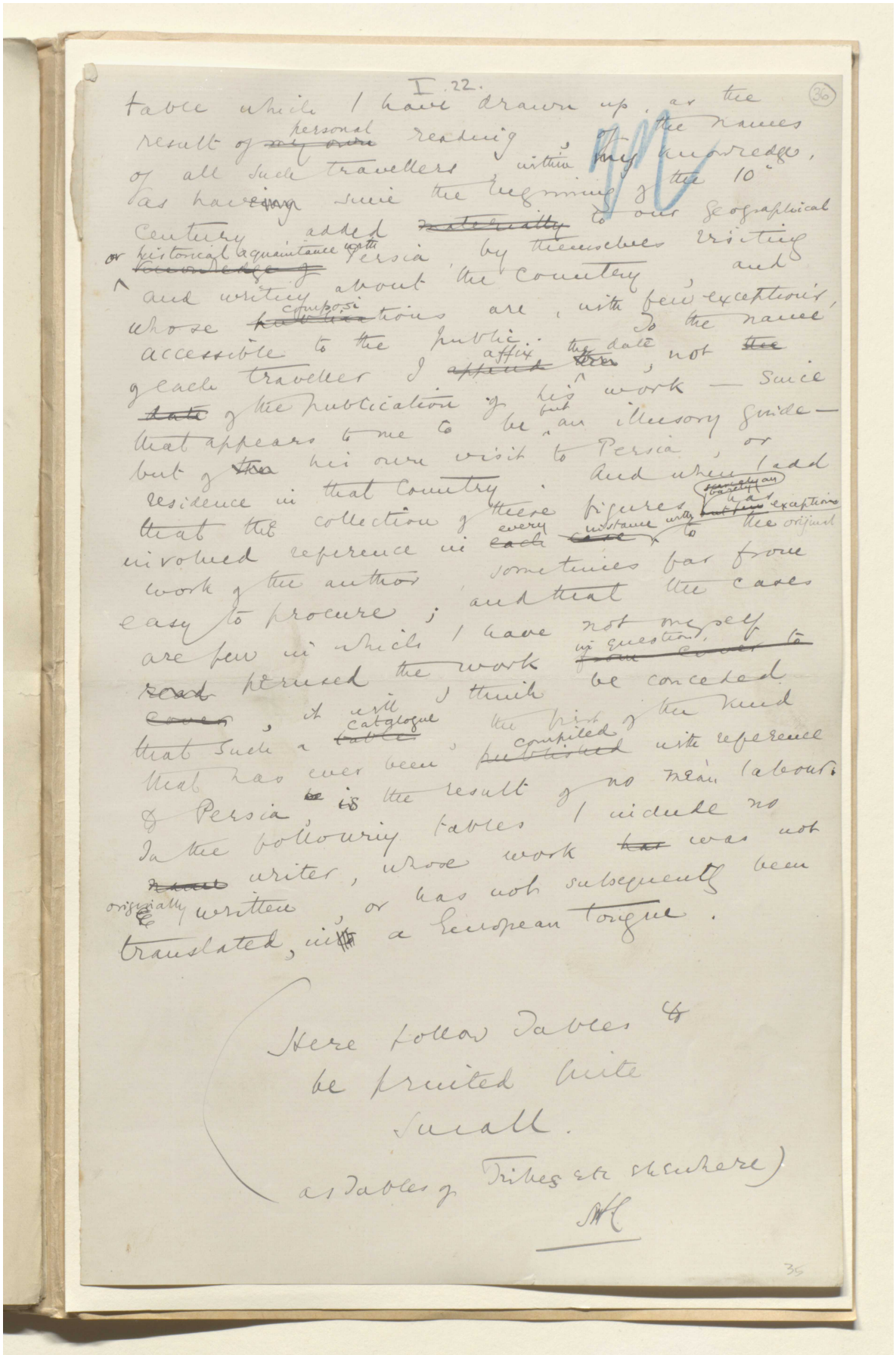

I. 22.

(36)

table which I have drawn up, as the result of ~~my own~~ personal reading, of the names of all such travellers within my knowledge, as having since the beginning of the 10th century added ~~materially~~ to our geographical or historical acquaintance with ~~knowledge of~~ Persia by themselves visiting and writing about the country, and whose ~~publications~~ compositions are, with few exceptions, accessible to the public. To the name of each traveller I ~~append~~ affix the date ~~then~~, not ~~the date~~ of the publication of his work — since that appears to me to be but an illusory guide — but of ~~the~~ his own visit to Persia, or residence in that country. And when I add that the collection of these figures ~~but few~~ (surely an barely) has involved reference in ~~each case~~ every instance with exceptions to the original work of the author, sometimes far from easy to procure; and that the cases are few in which I have not myself ~~read~~ perused the work in question, ~~from cover to cover~~, it will I think be conceded that such a ~~table~~ catalogue, the first of the kind that has ever been ~~published~~ compiled with reference to Persia, ~~be~~ is the result of no mean labour. In the following tables I include no ~~name~~ writer, whose work ~~has~~ was not originally written, or has not subsequently been translated, in ~~the~~ a European tongue.

Here follow Tables to be printed quite small.

(as Tables of Tribes etc elsewhere)

SHC

35

المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة
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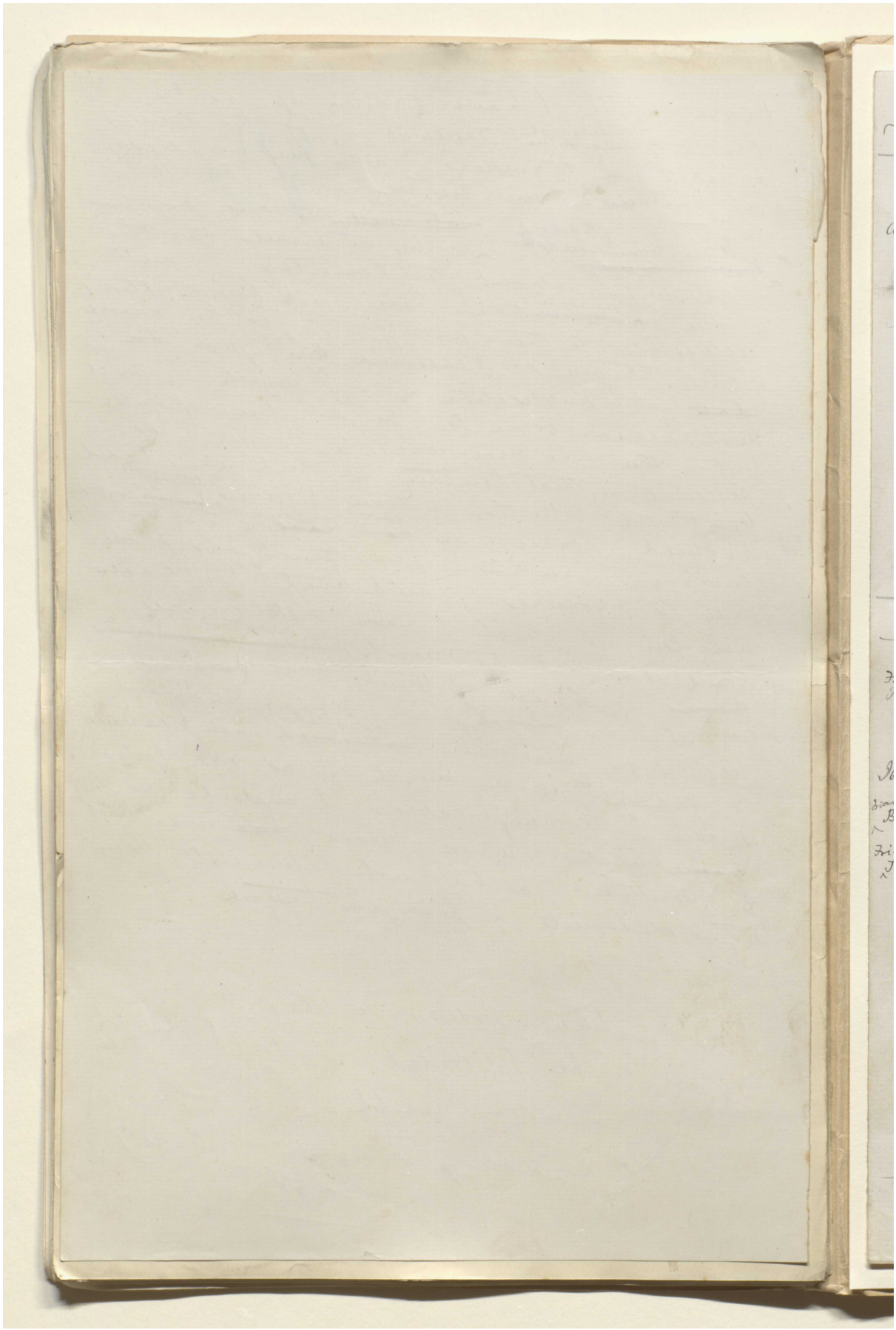
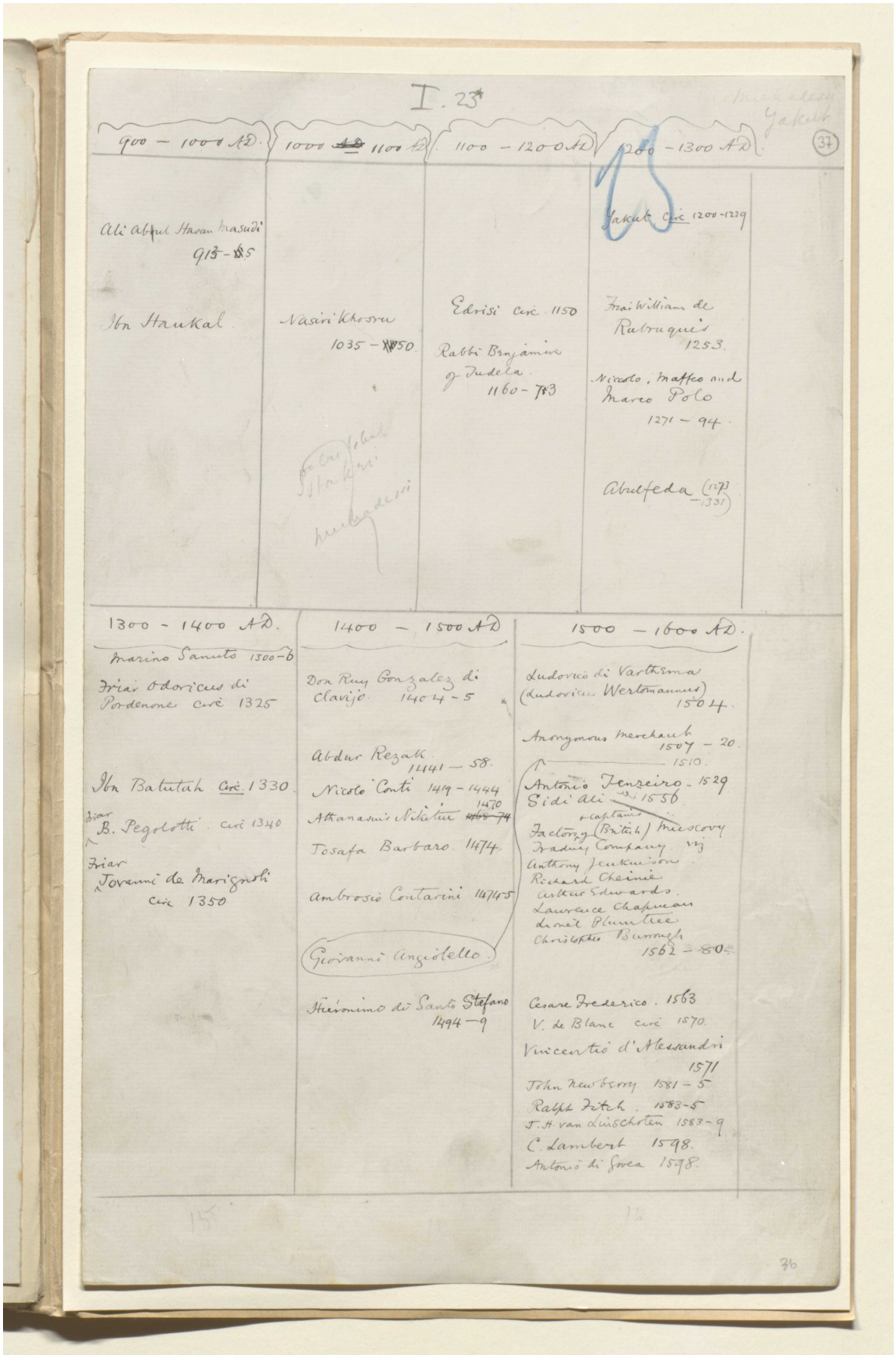
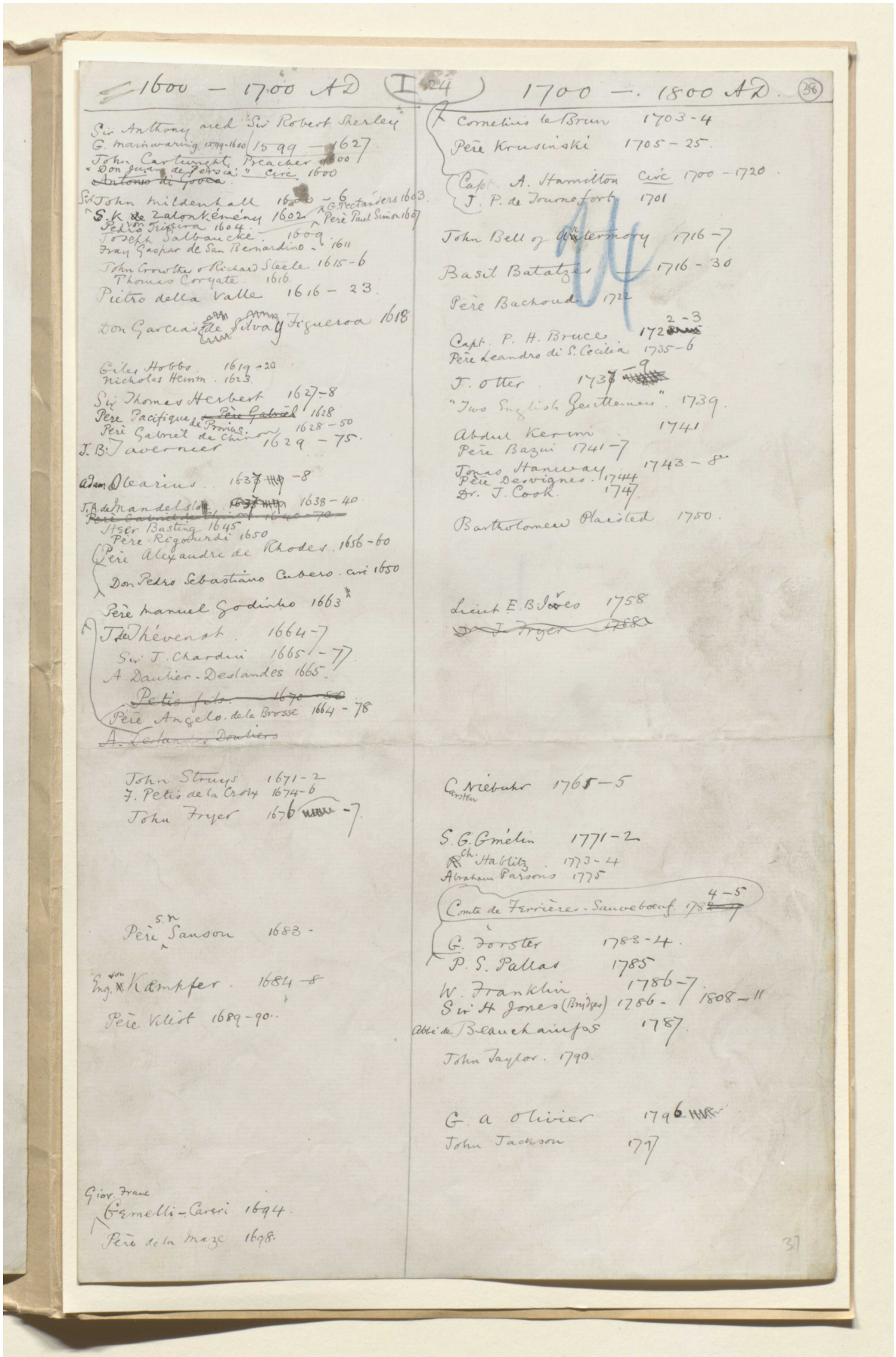
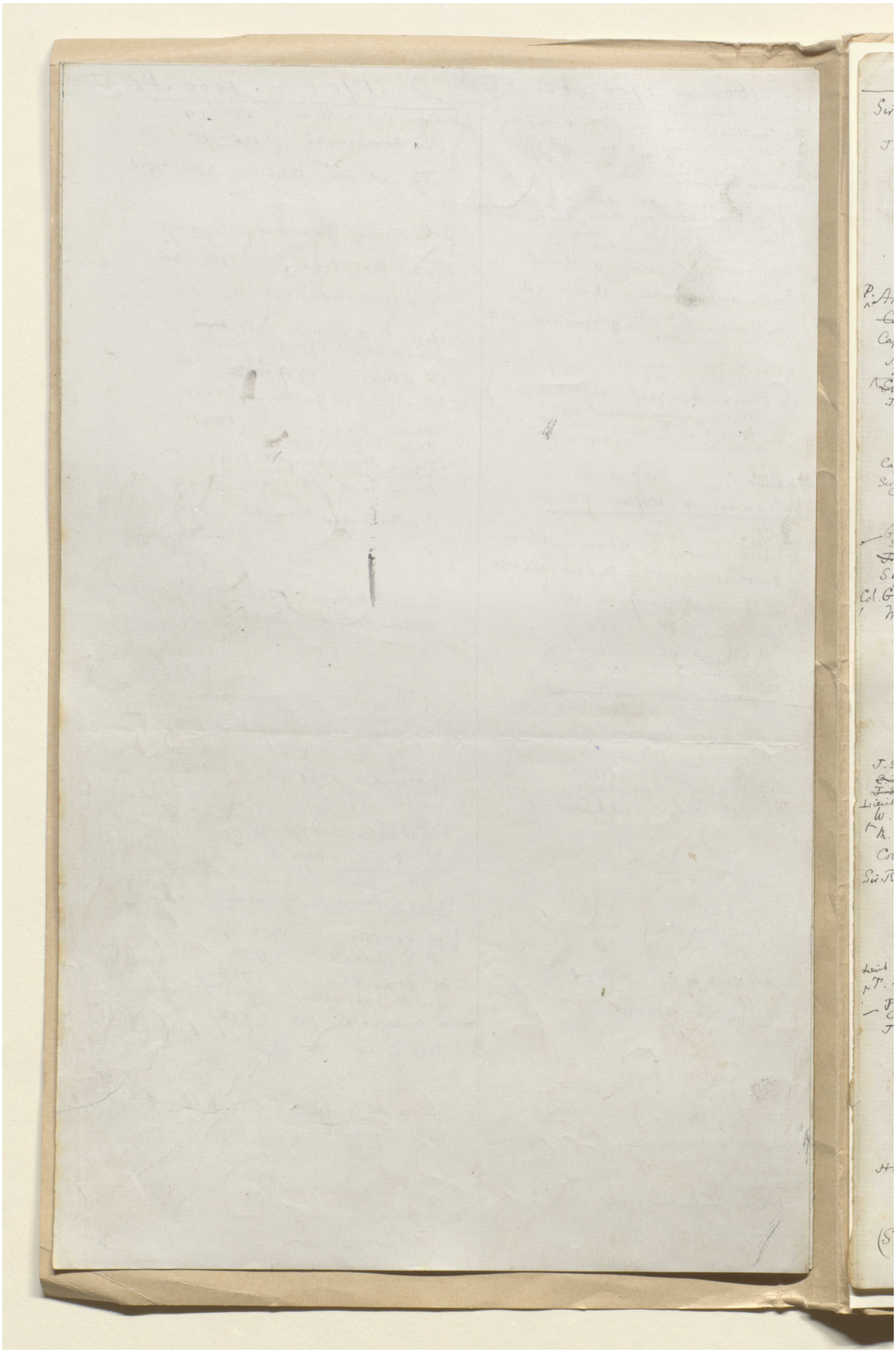
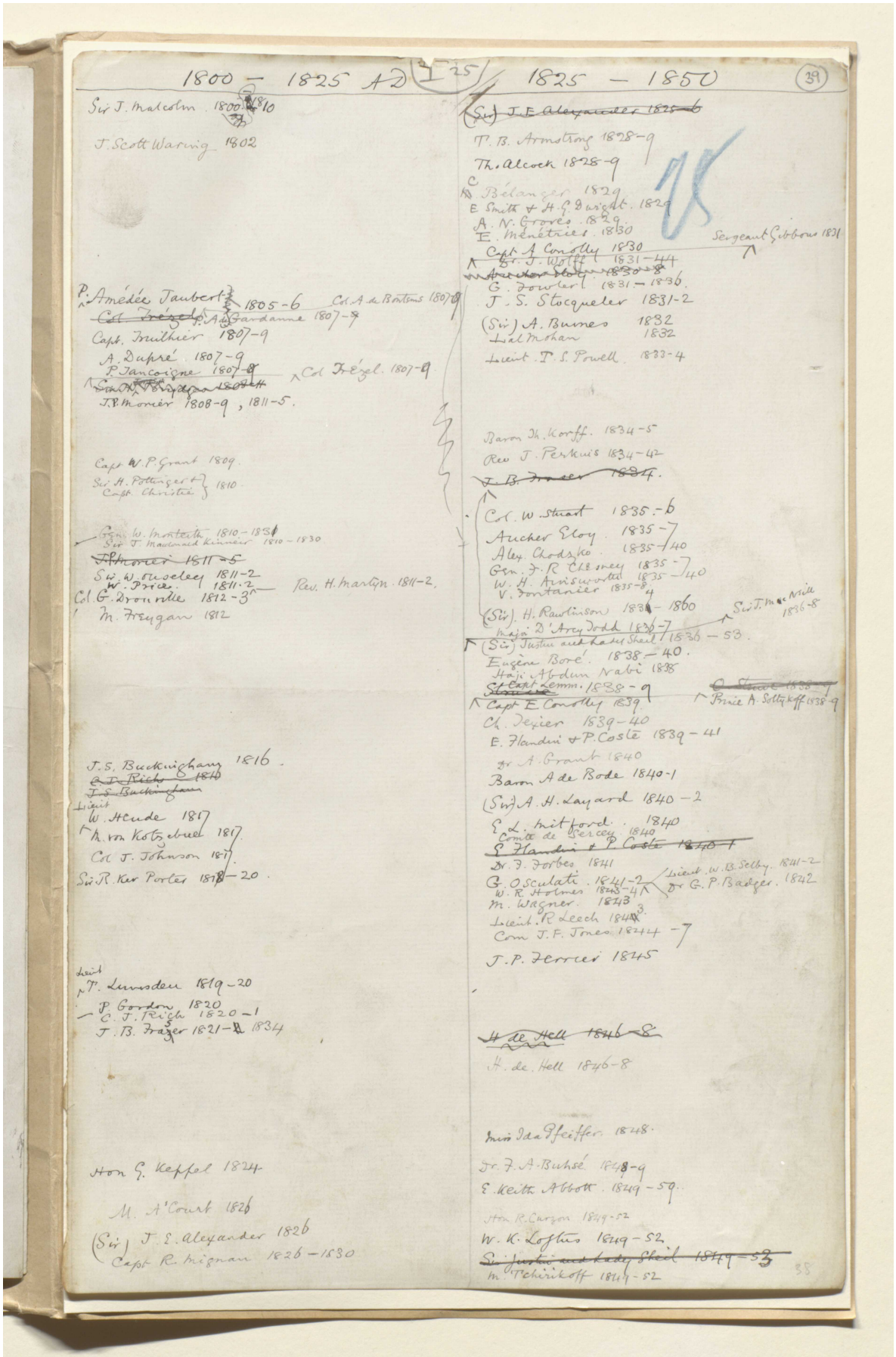



I. 23*
900 – 1000 A.D.
1000 – 1100 A.D.
1100 – 1200 A.D.
1200 – 1300 A.D.
37
Ali Abul Hasan Masudi
913 – 965
Ibn Haukal
Nasiri Khosru
1035 – 1050
Edrisi circ. 1150
Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela
1160 – 1173
Yakut circ. 1200-1229
Frai William de Rubruquis
1253.
Nicolo, Maffeo and Marco Polo
1271 – 94.
Abulfeda (1273 – 1331)
1300 – 1400 A.D.
Marino Sanuto 1300-6
Friar Odoricus di Pordenone circ. 1325
Ibn Batutah circ. 1330.
Friar B. Pegolotti circ. 1340
Friar Jovanni de Marignolli circ. 1350
1400 – 1500 A.D.
Don Ruy Gonzalez di Clavijo 1404-5
Abdur Rezak 1441 – 58.
Nicolo Conti 1419 – 1444
Athanasius Nikitin 1470 – 74
Josafa Barbaro 1474.
Ambrosio Contarini 1474-5
Giovanni Angiolello.
Hieronimo di Santo Stefano 1494 – 9
1500 – 1600 A.D.
Ludovico di Varthema (Ludovicus Wertomannus) 1504.
Anonymous merchant 1507 – 20.
1510.
Antonio Tenreiro – 1529
Sidi Ali – 1556
captain
Factory (British) Muscovy Trading Company
Anthony Jenkinson
Richard Chaimé
Arthur Edwards.
Lawrence Chapman
Daniel Plumtree
Christopher Burrough
1561 – 80.
Cesare Frederico. 1563
V. de Blanc circ. 1570.
Vincentio d'Alessandri 1571
John Newberry 1581 – 5
Ralph Fitch. 1583-5
J. H. van Linschoten 1583 – 9
C. Lambert 1598.
Antonio di Sousa 1598.

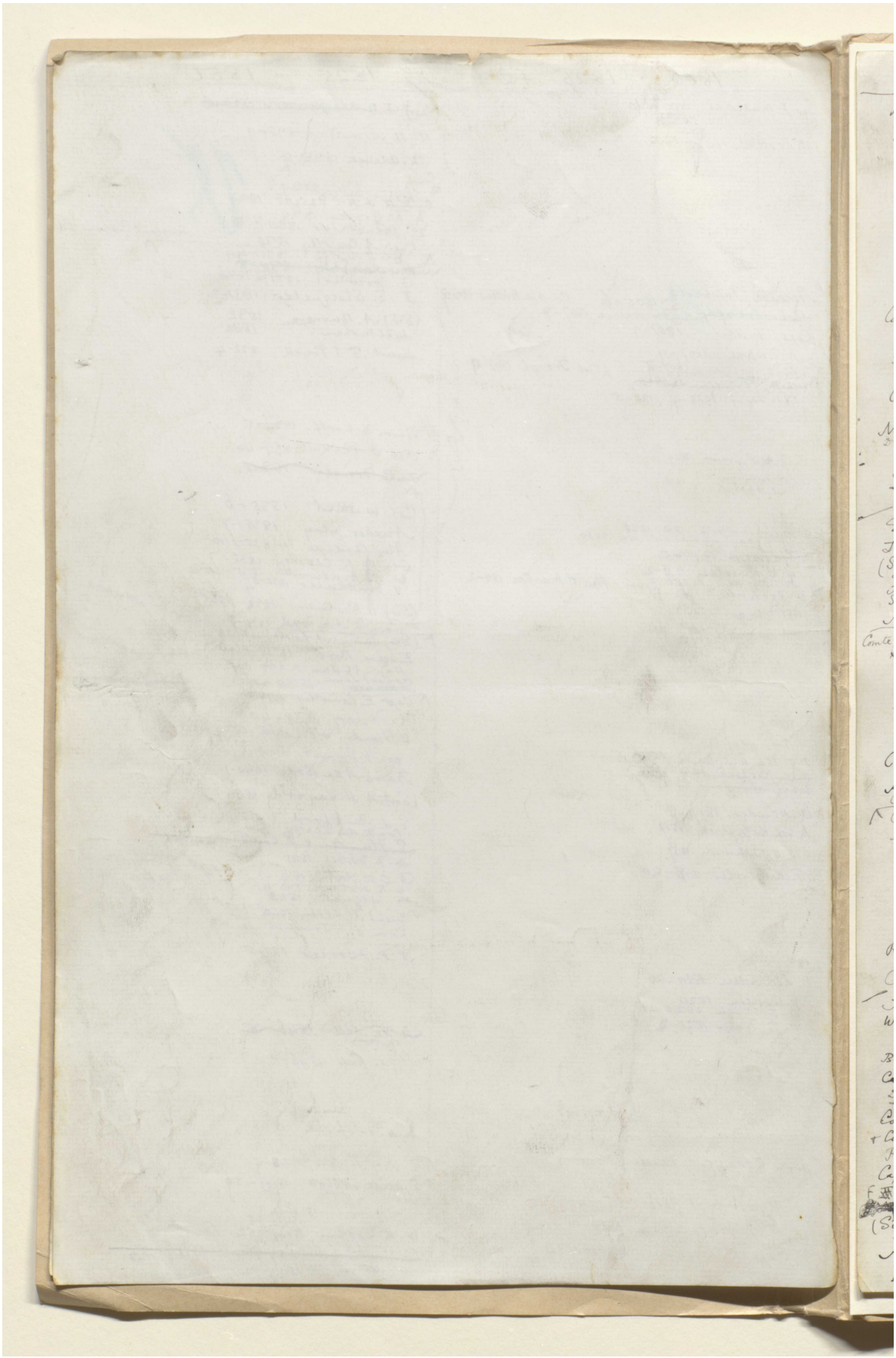



1600 – 1700 AD
1700 – 1800 AD




1800 – 1825
1825 – 1850
39
Sir J. Malcolm 1800
J. Scott Waring 1802
P. Amédée Jaubert 1805-6
Capt. Truilhier 1807-9
A. Dupré 1807-9
P. Jaucoigne 1807-8
J.B. Monier 1808-9, 1811-5.
Capt W.P. Grant 1809
Sir A. Pottinger
Capt. Christie 1810
Gen. W. Monteith 1810-1834
Sir J. Macdonald Kinneir 1810-1830
S.W. Woodley 1811-2
W. Price 1811-2
Col G. Drouville 1812-3
M. Freygan 1812
J.S. Buckingham 1816
W. Heude 1817
M. von Kotzebue 1817
Col J. Johnson 1817
Sir R. Ker Porter 1818-20
T. Lumsden 1819-20
P. Gordon 1820
C.J. Rich 1820-1
J.B. Fraser 1821-1834
Hon C. Keppel 1824
M. A'Court 1826
(Sir) J.E. Alexander 1826
Capt R. Mignan 1826-1830
T.B. Armstrong 1828-9
Th. Alcock 1828-9
C. Bélanger 1829
E. Smith & H.G. Wright 1829
A.N. Groves 1829
E. Ménétriés 1830
Capt A. Conolly 1830
Sergeant Gibbons 1831
Lt. J. Wolff 1831-44
G. Fowler 1831-1836
J.S. Stocqueler 1831-2
(Sir) A. Burnes 1832
Lal Mohan 1832
Lieut T.S. Powell 1833-4
Baron Th. Koreff 1834-5
Rev J. Perkins 1834-42
Col. W. Stuart 1835-6
Archer Cloy 1835-7
Alex. Chodzko 1835-40
Gen. J.R. Chesney 1835-40
W.H. Ainsworth 1835-6
V. Fontanier 1835-6
(Sir) H. Rawlinson 1836-1860
Major D'Arcy Todd 1836-7
Eugène Boré 1838-40
Haji Abdun Nabi 1838
Capt Lemm. 1838-9
Capt E. Conolly 1839
Ch. Texier 1839-40
E. Flandin & P. Coste 1839-41
Dr A. Grant 1840
Baron A de Bode 1840-1
(Sir) A.H. Layard 1840-2
S.L. Mitford 1840
Comte de Sercey 1840
Dr J. Forbes 1841
G. Osculati 1841-2
W.R. Holmes 1840-41
M. Wagner 1843
Lieut R. Leech 1844
Com J.F. Jones 1844-7
J.P. Ferrier 1845
H. de Hell 1846-8
Miss Ida Pfeiffer 1848
Dr J.A. Buhse 1848-9
E. Keith Abbott 1849-59
Hon R. Curzon 1849-52
W.K. Loftus 1849-52
M. Tchirikoff 1849-52
Lieut W.B. Selby 1841-2
Dr G.P. Badger 1842
Prince A. Soltykoff 1838-9
Sir J. Mc Neill 1836-8

مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٣٩ظ] (١٣٥٥/٧٨)



1850 — 1875 AD (I 26) 1875 — 1890 AD (40)

R. B. Binning 1851
J. Berezin 1851

Czarnotta 1852-3

Conte J. A. de Gobineau 1855-8

Sir J. Outram 1857
Capt C. H. Hunt 1857
Capt C. Clerk 1857-73.

N. de Khanikoff 1858.
Dr O. Blau. 1858.
E. Duhousset 1860.
R. G. Watson circ. 1860.
~~Sir Lewis Pelly circ 1~~
J. Osmaston. 1860
M. de Blocqueville 1860
E. B. Eastwick 1860-2
Dr H. Brugsch 1860-1
J. Ussher. 1861
(Sir) F. Goldsmid 1861-72
F. de Filippi 1862
Sir Lewis Pelly. circ 1862-5.
Arm. Vambéry. 1863-3
(Sir) O. St John 1864-1872
Comte J. de Rochechouart 1864-6.
D. W. Marsh 1864
F. Méchin 1865
Viscount Pollington 1865
Dr C. Haussknecht 1865-9
Dr J. E. Polak. 1865-82
Major B. Lovett 1866-81
C. J. Wills 1866-81
A. H. Mounsey 1866-7
Col E. C. Ross 1867-1890
G. Melgunof 1868.
H. Garnier. 1868
D. W. Freshfield 1867

Rev. E. L. Cutts 1870
Col. Euan Smith 1870-72
J. Bassett 1871-85
W. Brittlebank 1872

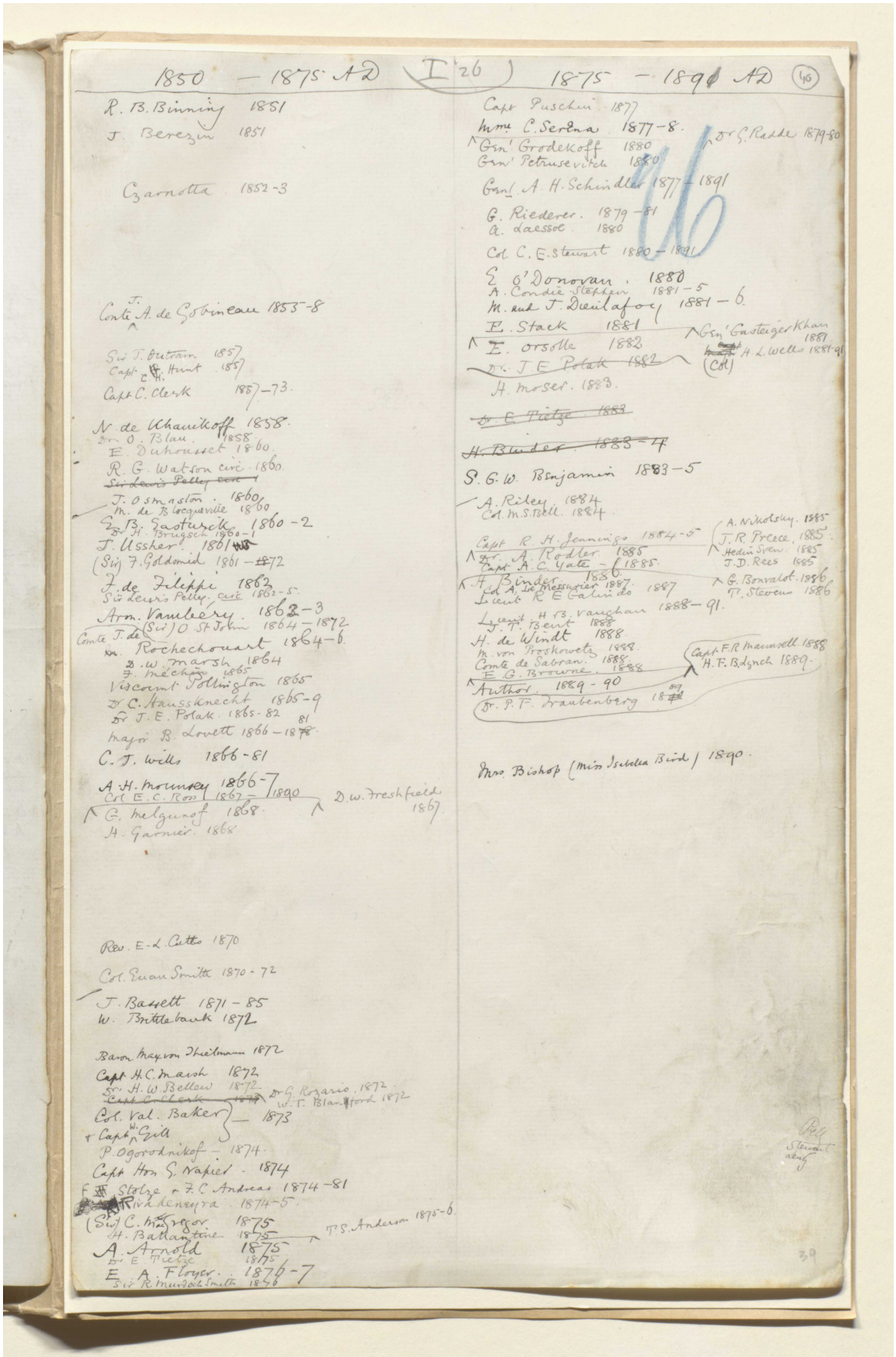
Baron Max von Thielmann 1872
Capt H. C. Marsh 1872
Dr H. W. Bellew 1872
~~Capt C. Clerk 1873~~
Dr G. Rozario. 1872
W. T. Blanford 1872
Col. Val. Baker } — 1873
+ Capt W. Gill }
P. Ogorodnikof — 1874.
Capt Hon G. Napier. 1874
F. Stolze + F. C. Andreas 1874-81
Rivadeneyra 1874-5.
(Sir) C. MacGregor 1875
H. Ballantine 1875
T. S. Anderson 1875-6.
A. Arnold 1875
Dr E. Tietze 1875
E. A. Floyer. 1876-7
Sir R. Murdoch Smith 1876

Capt Puschin 1877
Mme C. Serena 1877-8.
Gen' Grodekoff 1880
Gen' Petrusevitch 1880
Dr G. Radde 1879-80
Genl A. H. Schindler 1877-1891
G. Riederer. 1879-81
A. Laessoe 1880
Col C. E. Stewart 1880-1891
E. O'Donovan. 1880
A. Condie Stephen 1881-5
M. and J. Dieulafoy 1881-6.
E. Stack 1881
E. Orsolle 1882
Gen' Gasteiger Khan 1881
~~Capt~~ H. L. Wells 1881-91
(Col)
~~Dr J. E. Polak 1882~~
H. Moser. 1883.
~~Dr E. Tietze 1883~~
~~H. Binder 1883-4~~
S. G. W. Benjamin 1883-5
A. Riley. 1884
Col. M. S. Bell. 1884
Capt R. H. Jennings 1884-5
Dr A. Rodler 1885
Capt A. C. Yate — 1885.
A. Nikolsky. 1885
J. R. Preece. 1885.
Hedin Sven. 1885
J. D. Rees 1885
H. Binder. 1886
Col A. Le Messurier 1887
Lieut R. E. Galindo 1887
G. Bonvalot. 1886
T. Stevens 1886
Lieut H. B. Vaughan 1888-91.
J. T. Bent 1888
H. de Windt 1888
M. von Proskowetz 1888.
Comte de Sabran. 1888.
E. G. Browne. 1888
Author. 1889-90
Dr P. F. Traubenberg 1889
Capt F. R. Maunsell. 1888
H. F. B. Lynch 1889.

Mrs Bishop (Miss Isabella Bird) 1890.

Pelly
Stewart
aeng

39



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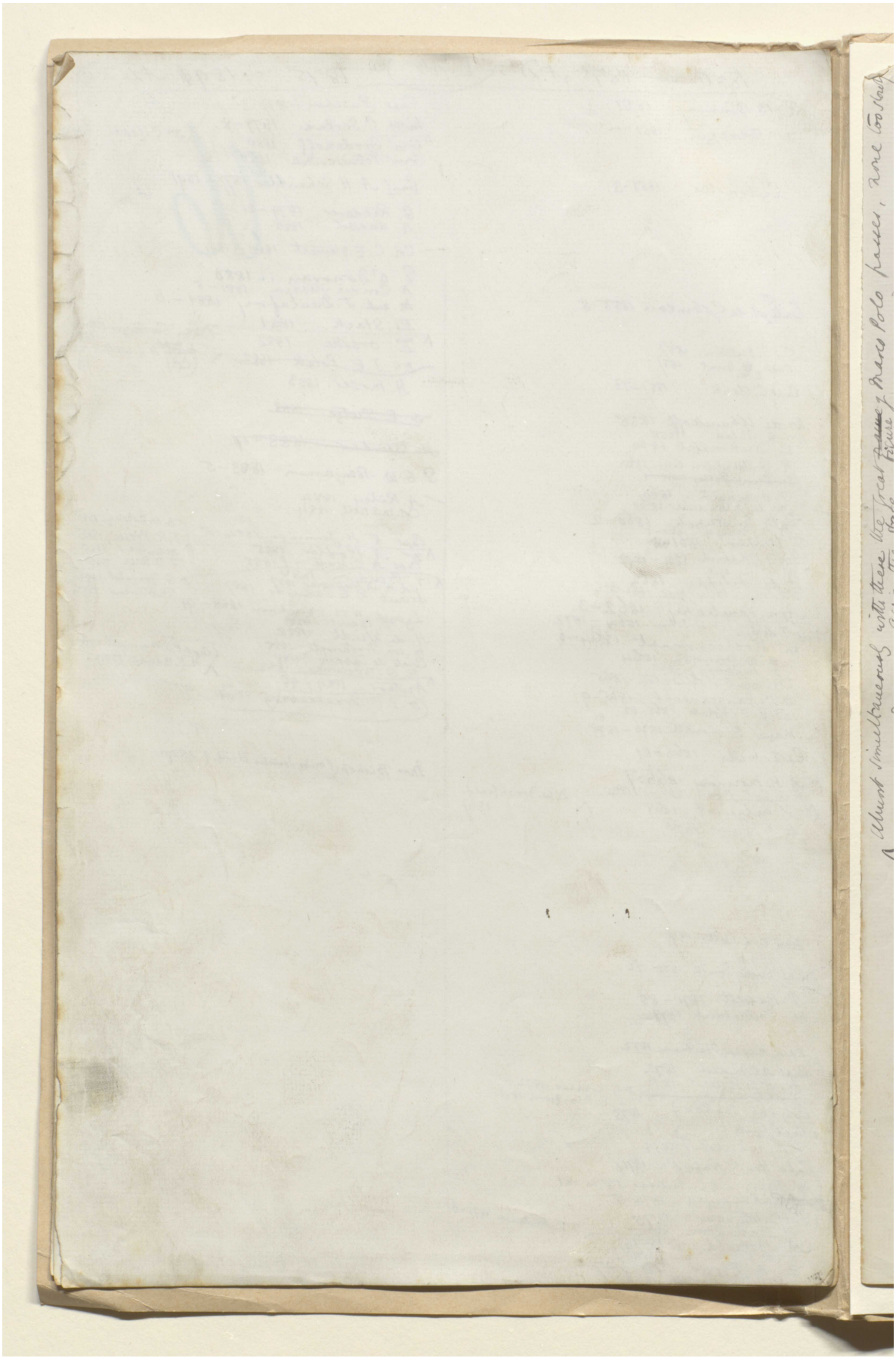
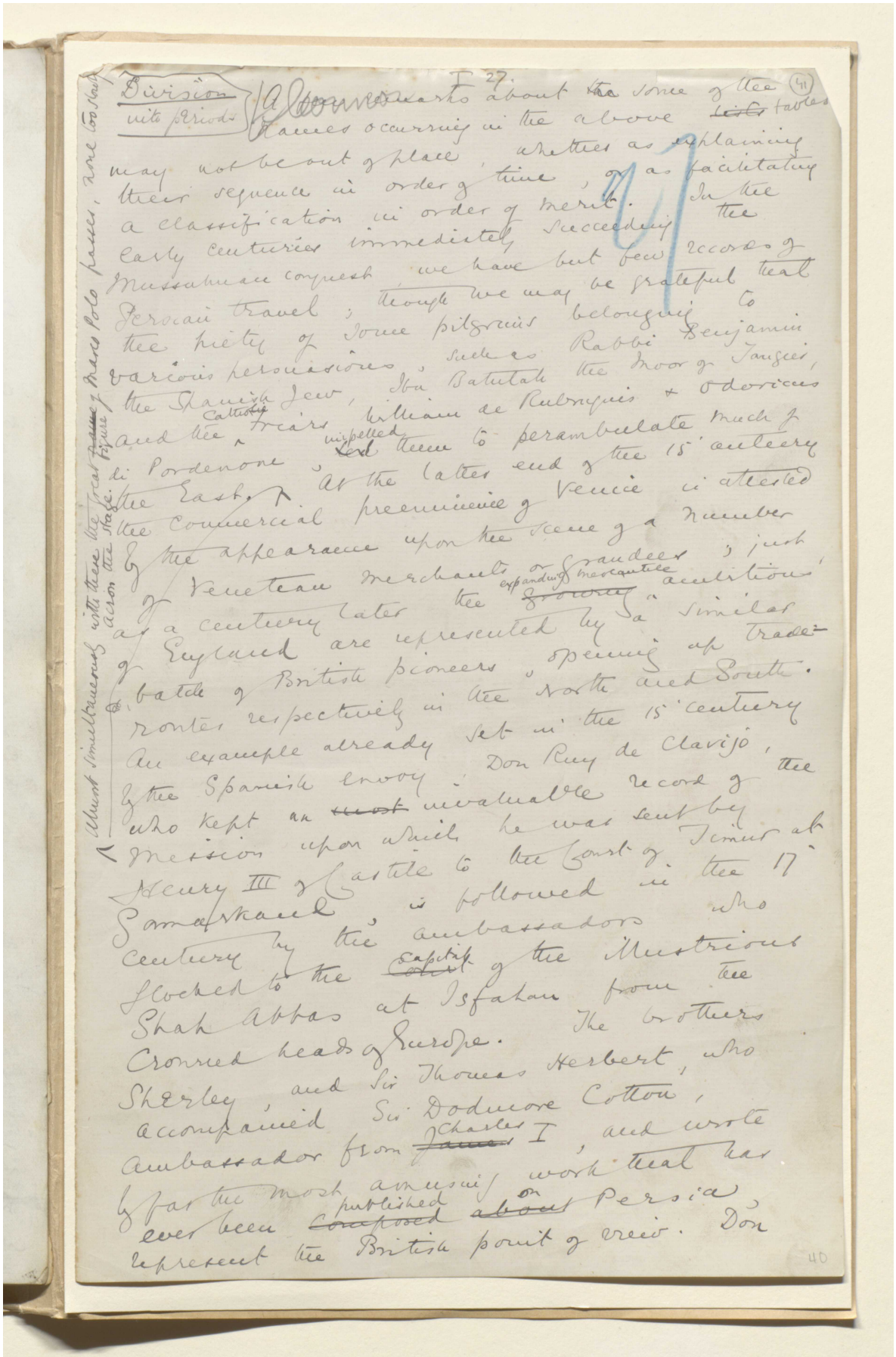
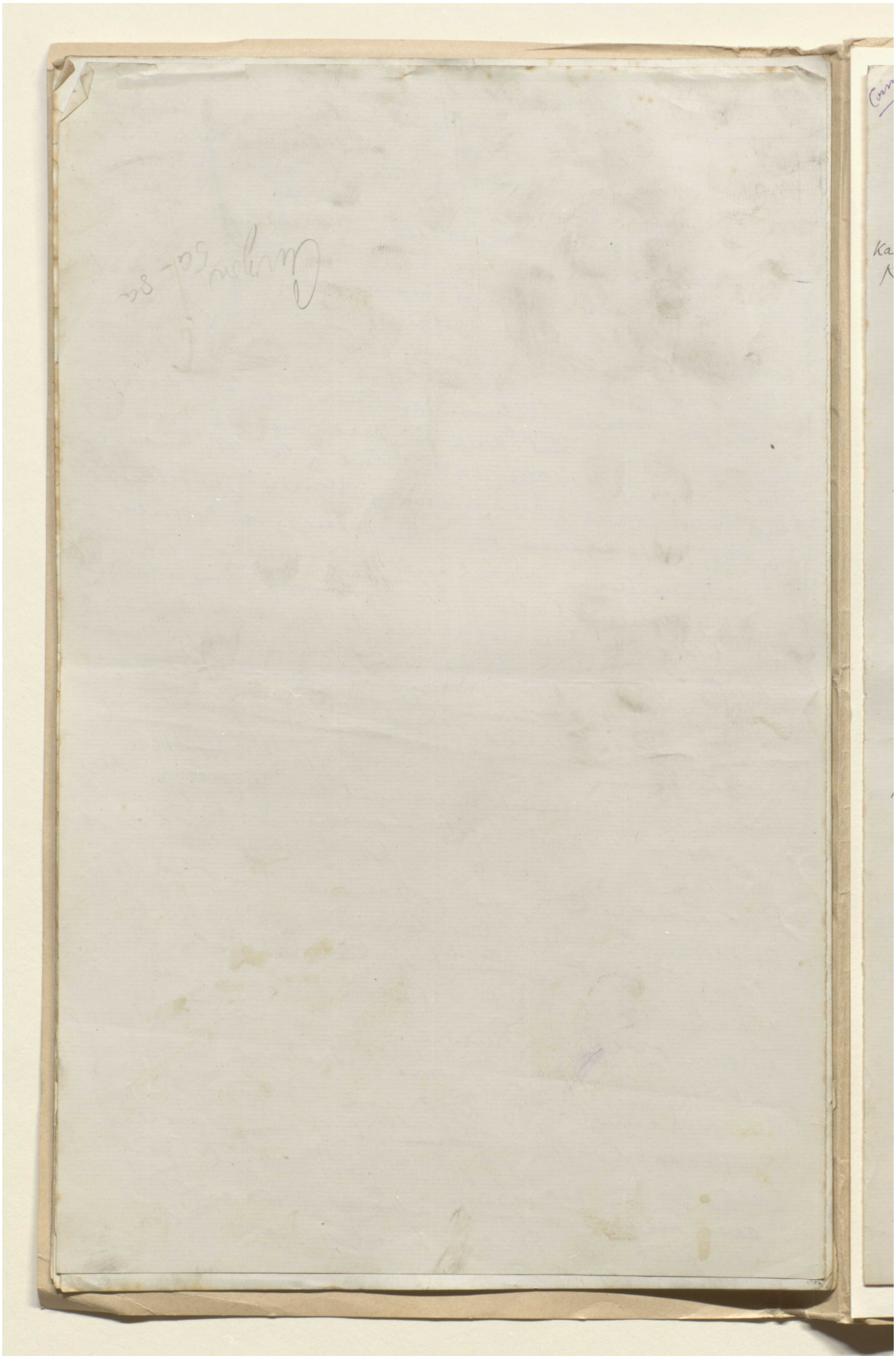
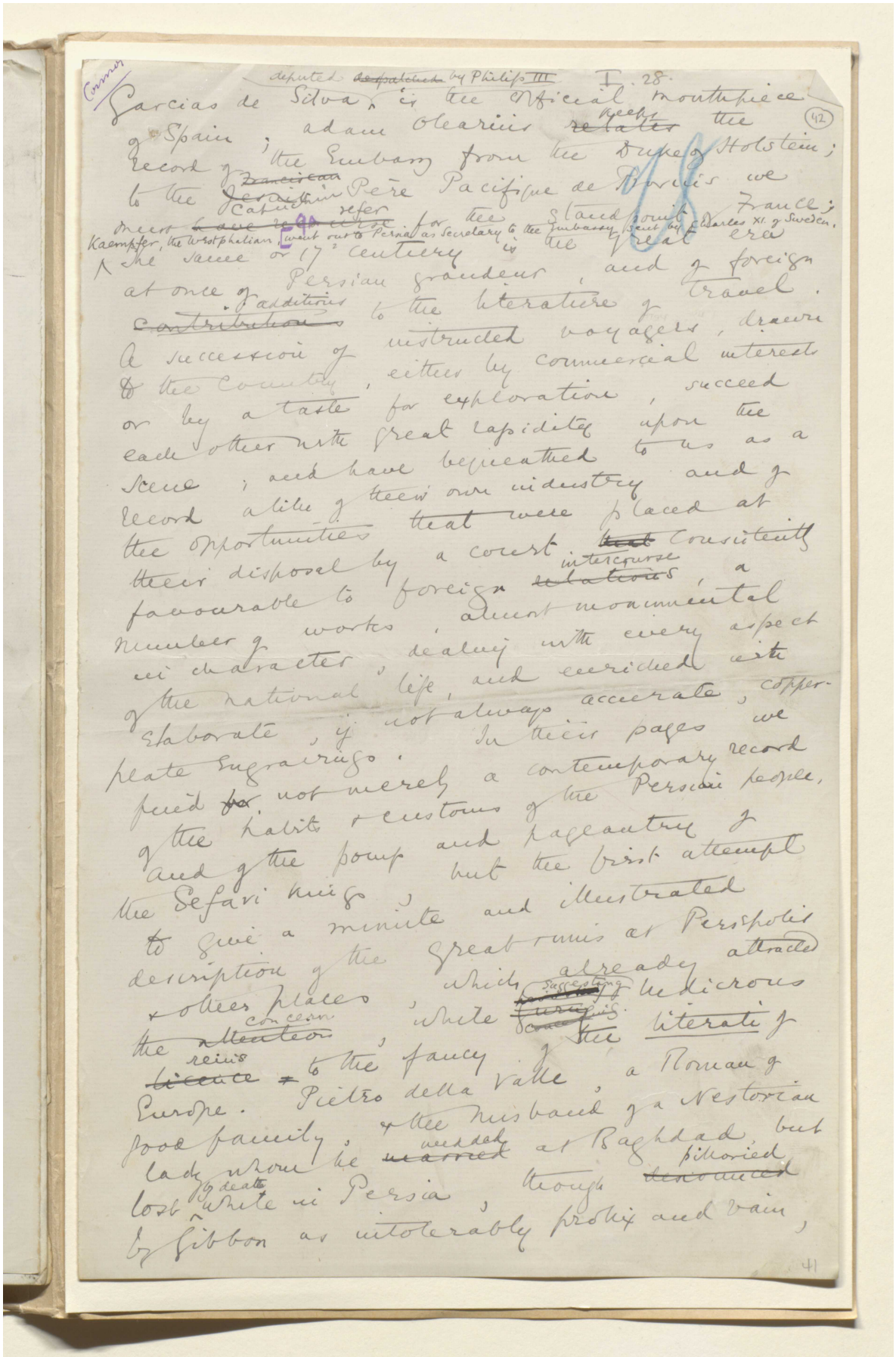
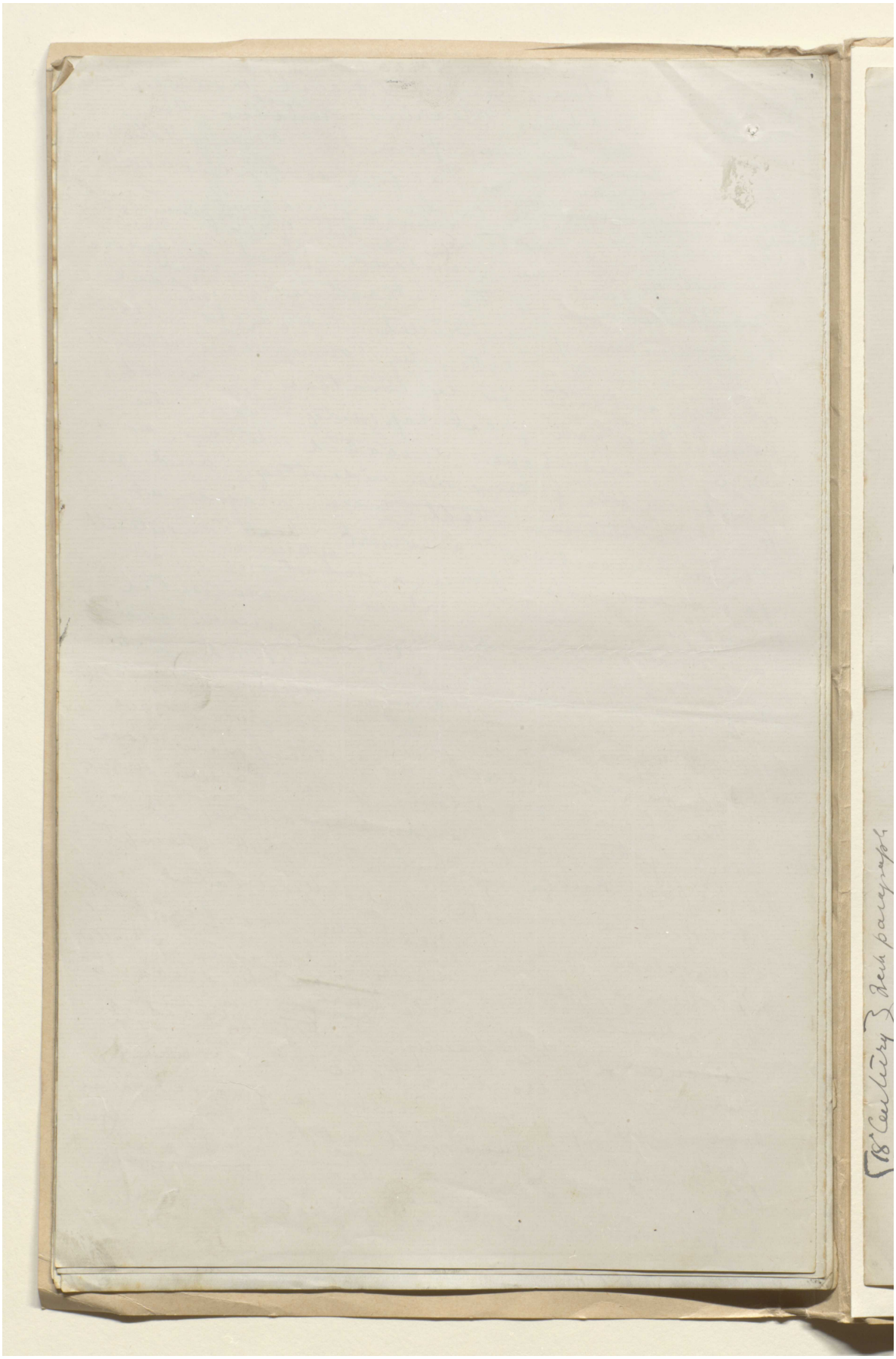
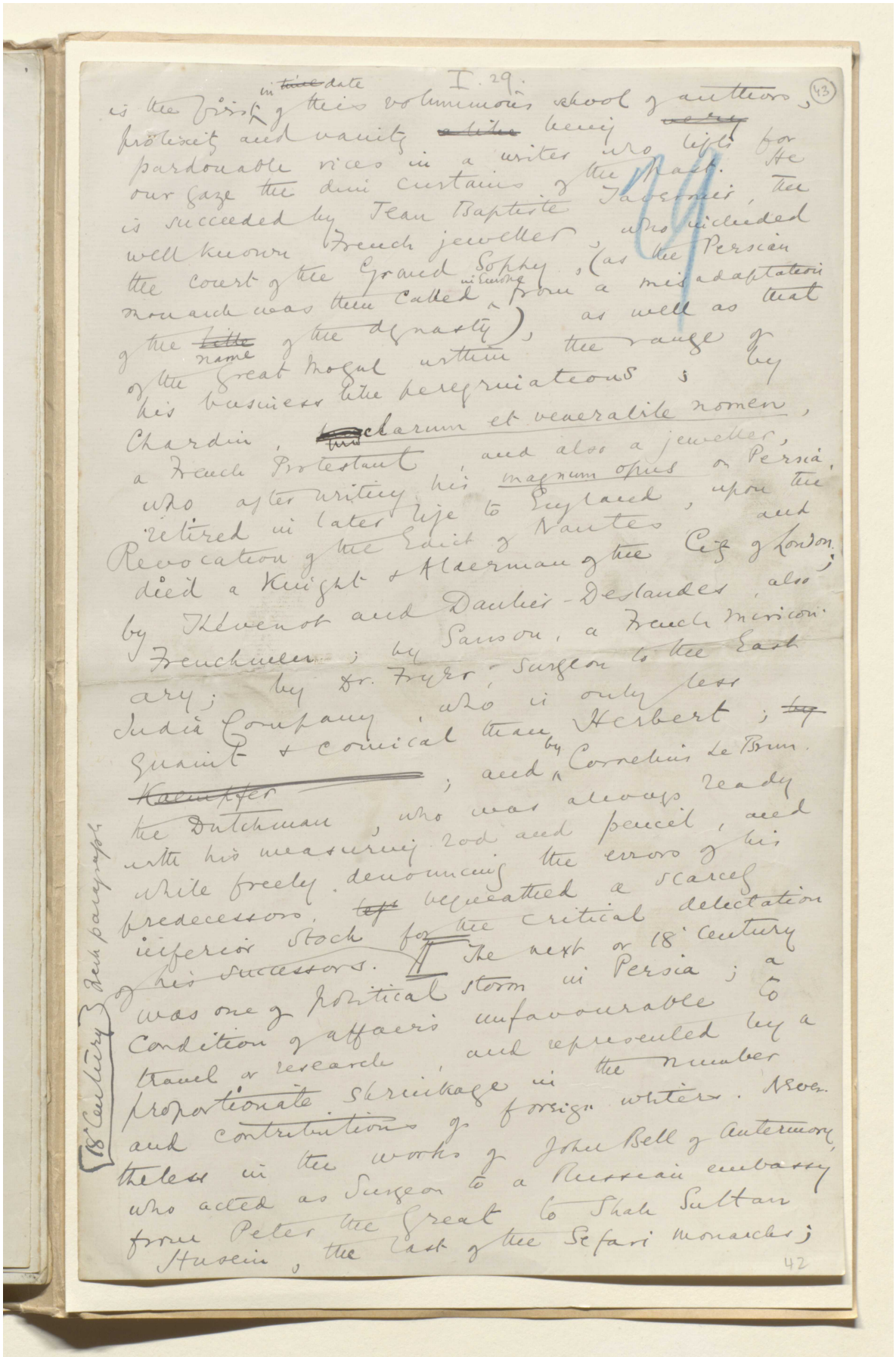




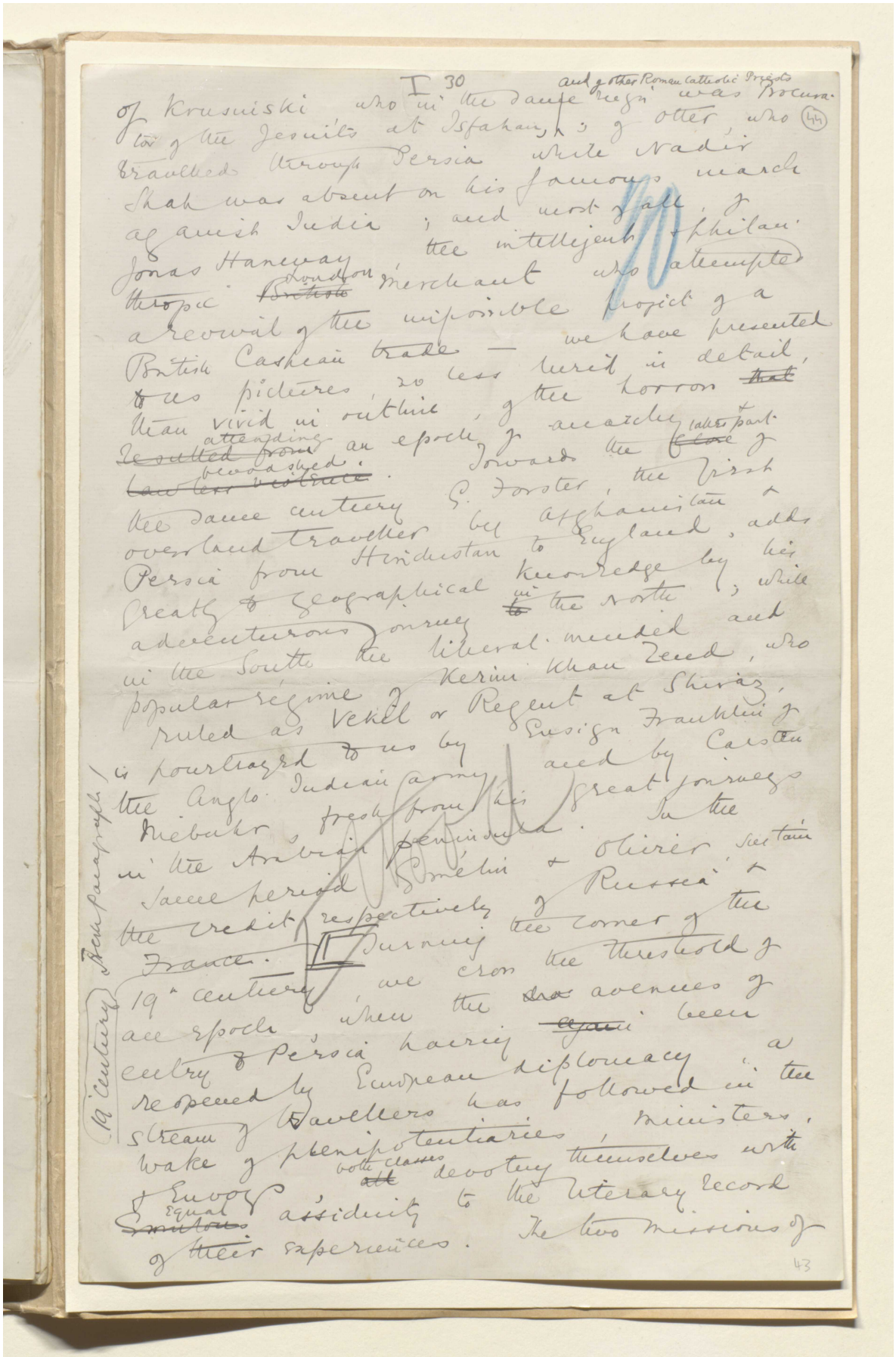




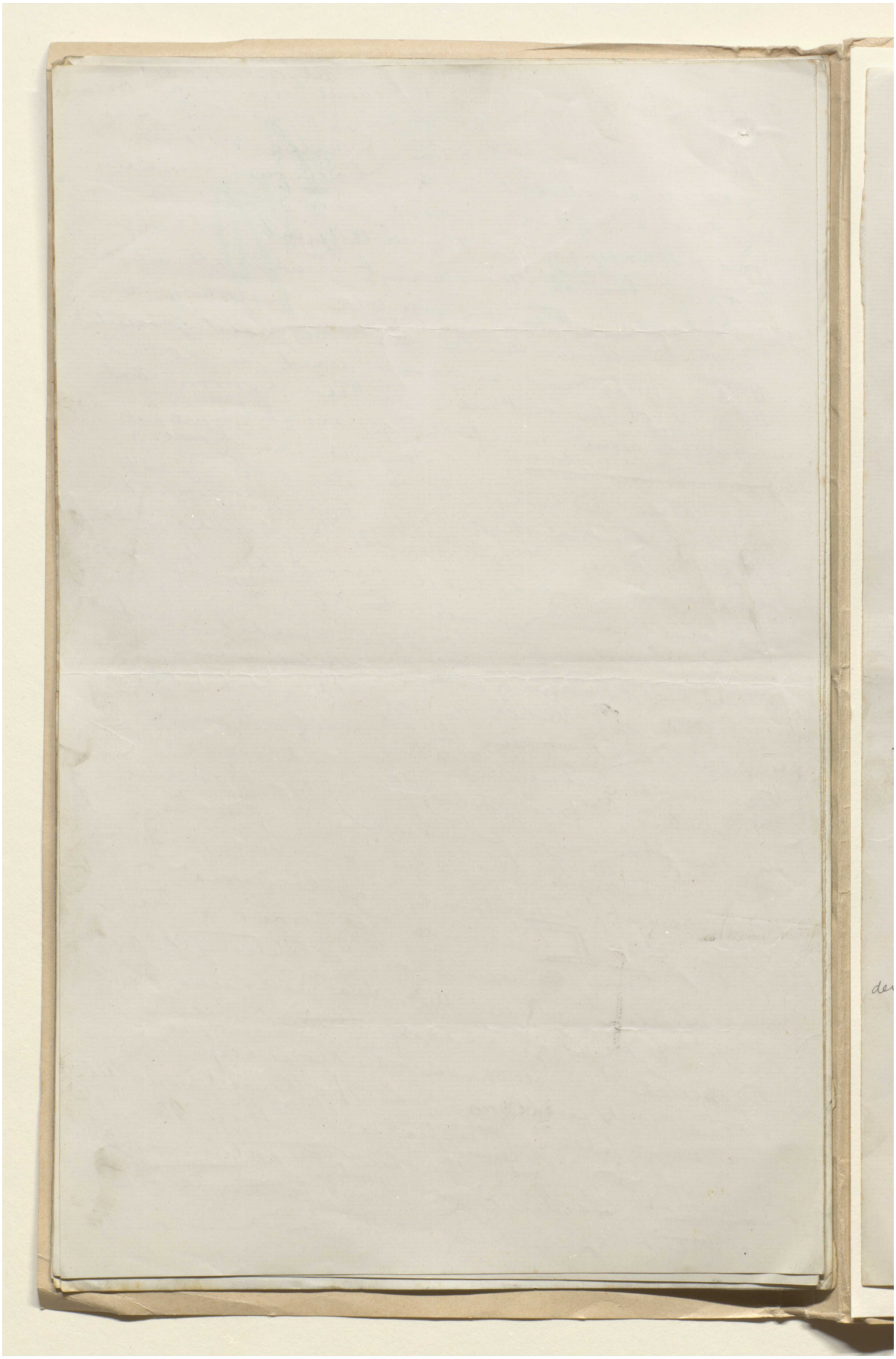








مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٤٤ظ] (١٣٥٥/٨٨)



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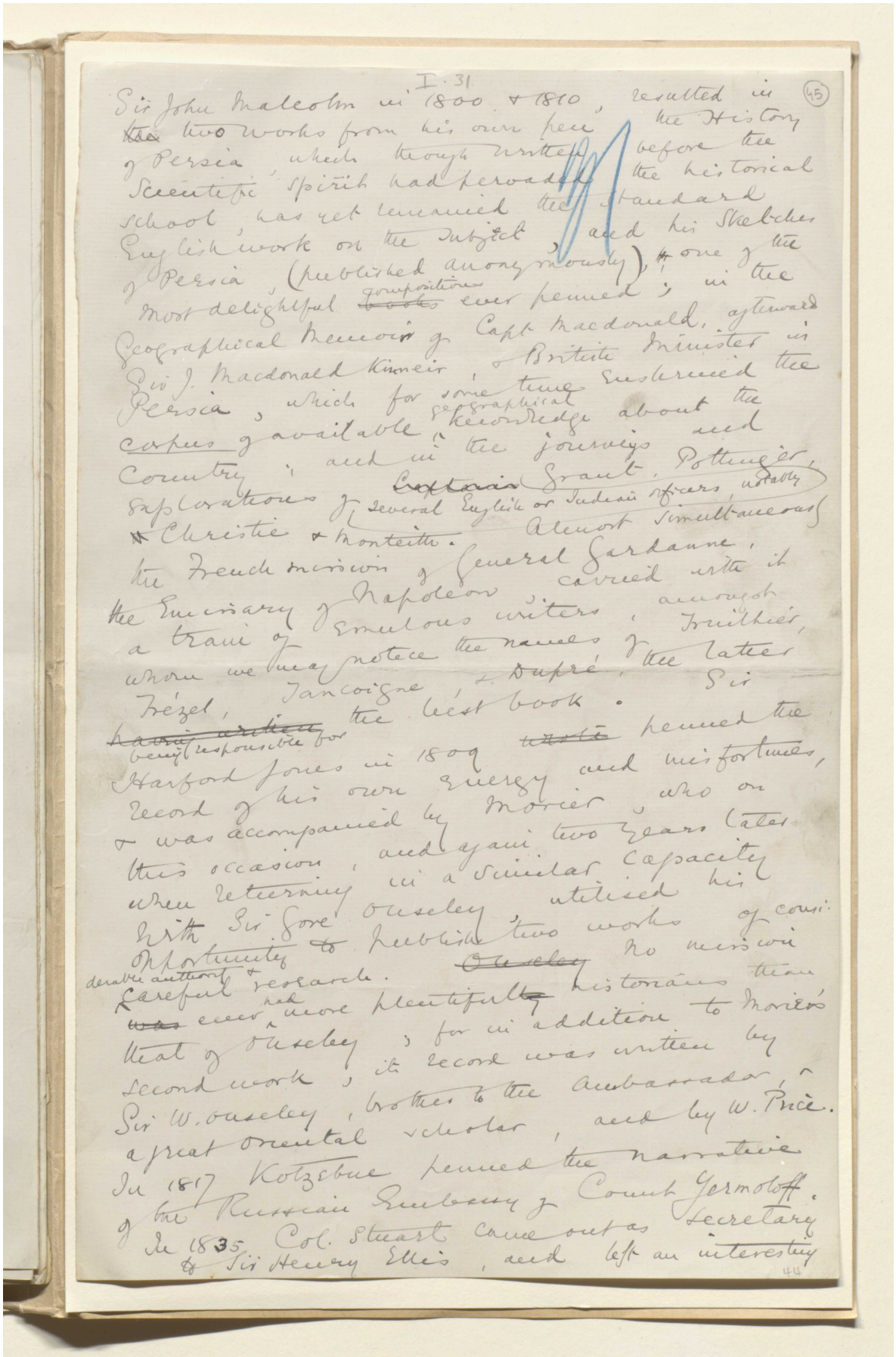

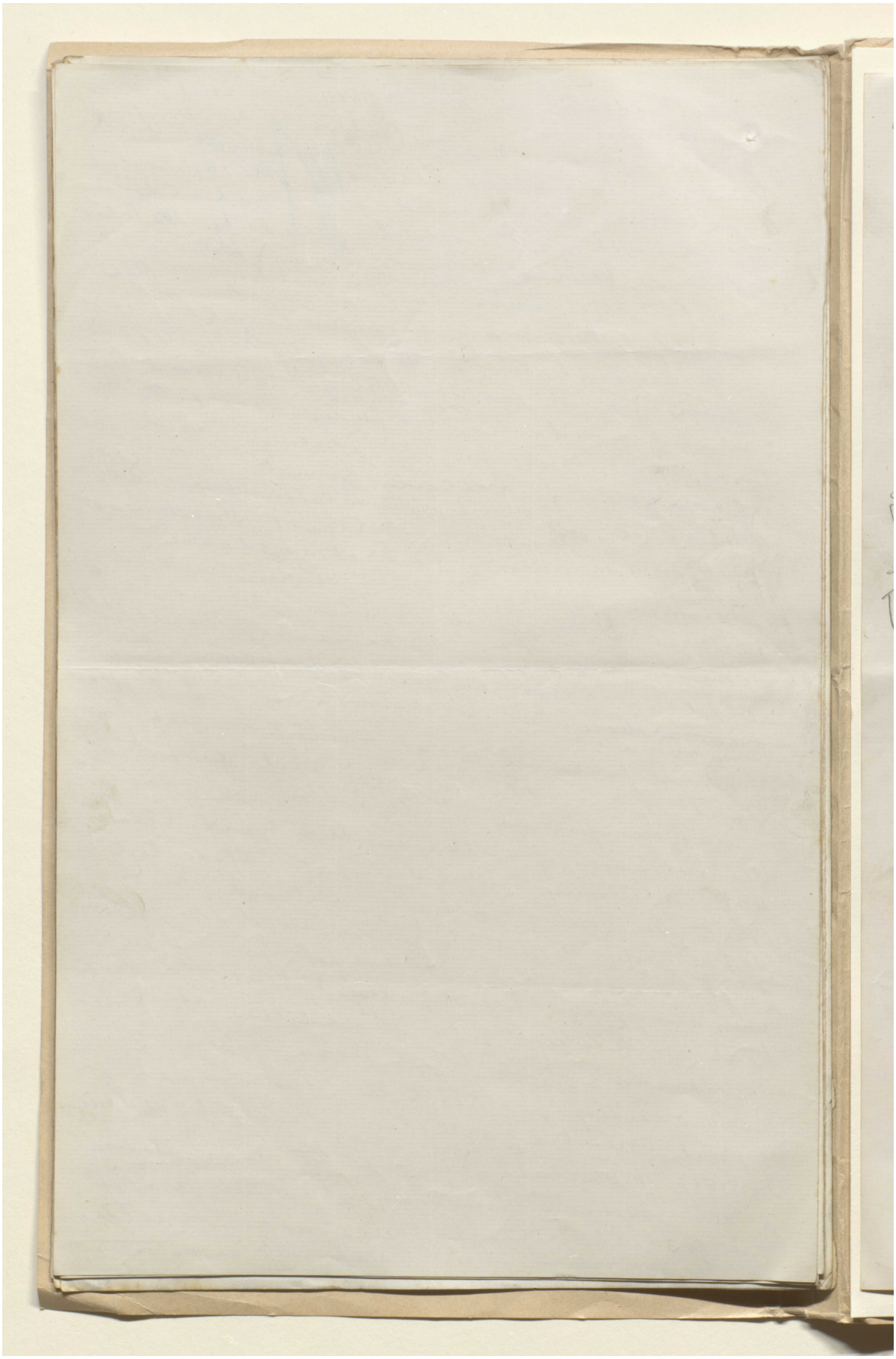

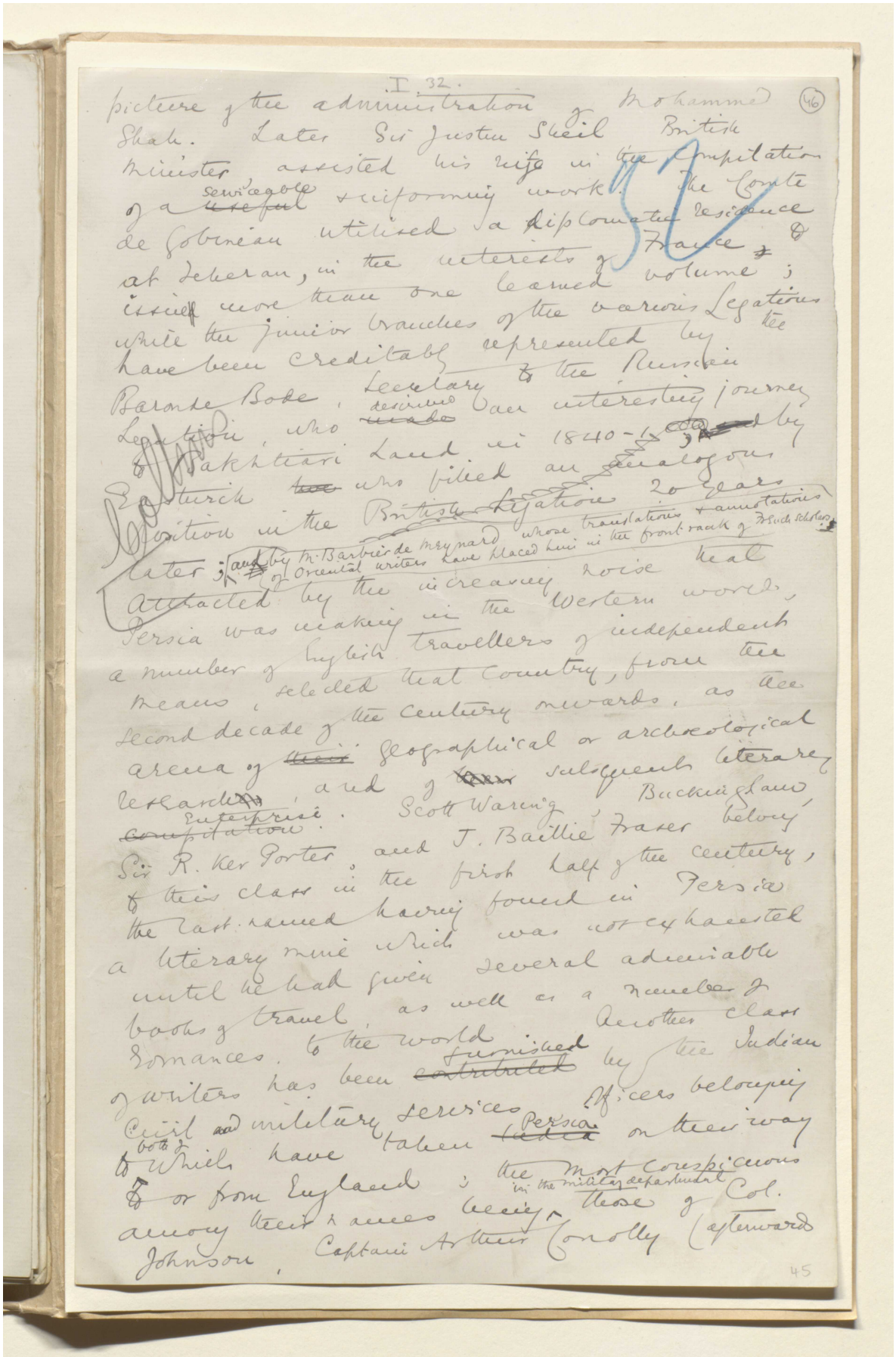

I. 32.

(46)

picture of the administration of Mohammed Shah. Later Sir Justin Sheil British Minister assisted his wife in the compilation of a ~~useful~~ serviceable & informing work. The Comte de Gobineau utilised a diplomatic residence at Teheran, in the interests of France & issued more than one learned volume; while the junior branches of the various Legations have been creditably represented by the Baronde Bode, Secretary to the Russian Legation, who ~~made~~ described an interesting journey to Bakhtiari Land in 1840-1, ~~and~~ by Eastwick ~~who~~ who filled an analogous position in the British Legation 20 years later; and by M. Barbier de Meynard whose translations & annotations of Oriental writers have placed him in the front rank of French scholars. Attracted by the increasing noise that Persia was making in the Western world, a number of English travellers of independent means, selected that country, from the second decade of the century onwards, as the arena of ~~their~~ geographical or archaeological research, and of ~~their~~ subsequent literary ~~compilation~~ enterprise. Scott Waring, Buckingham, Sir R. Ker Porter, and J. Baillie Fraser belong to this class in the first half of the century, the last named having found in Persia a literary mine which was not exhausted until he had given several admirable books of travel, as well as a number of romances, to the world. Another class of writers has been ~~contributed~~ furnished by the Indian Civil and military services. Officers belonging to both of which have taken ~~India~~ Persia on their way to or from England; the most conspicuous among their names being in the military department those of Col. Johnson, Captain Arthur Conolly (afterwards

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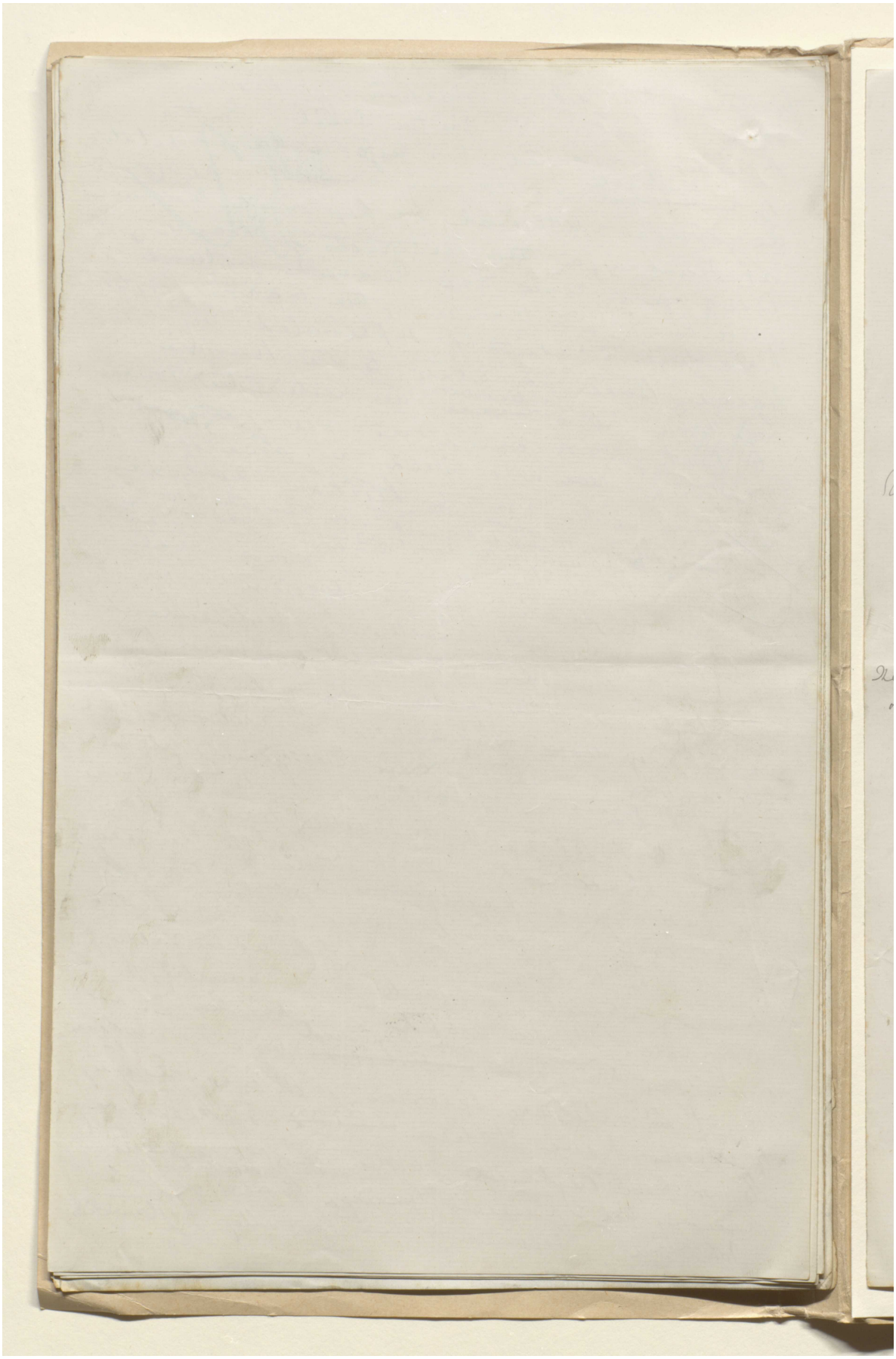

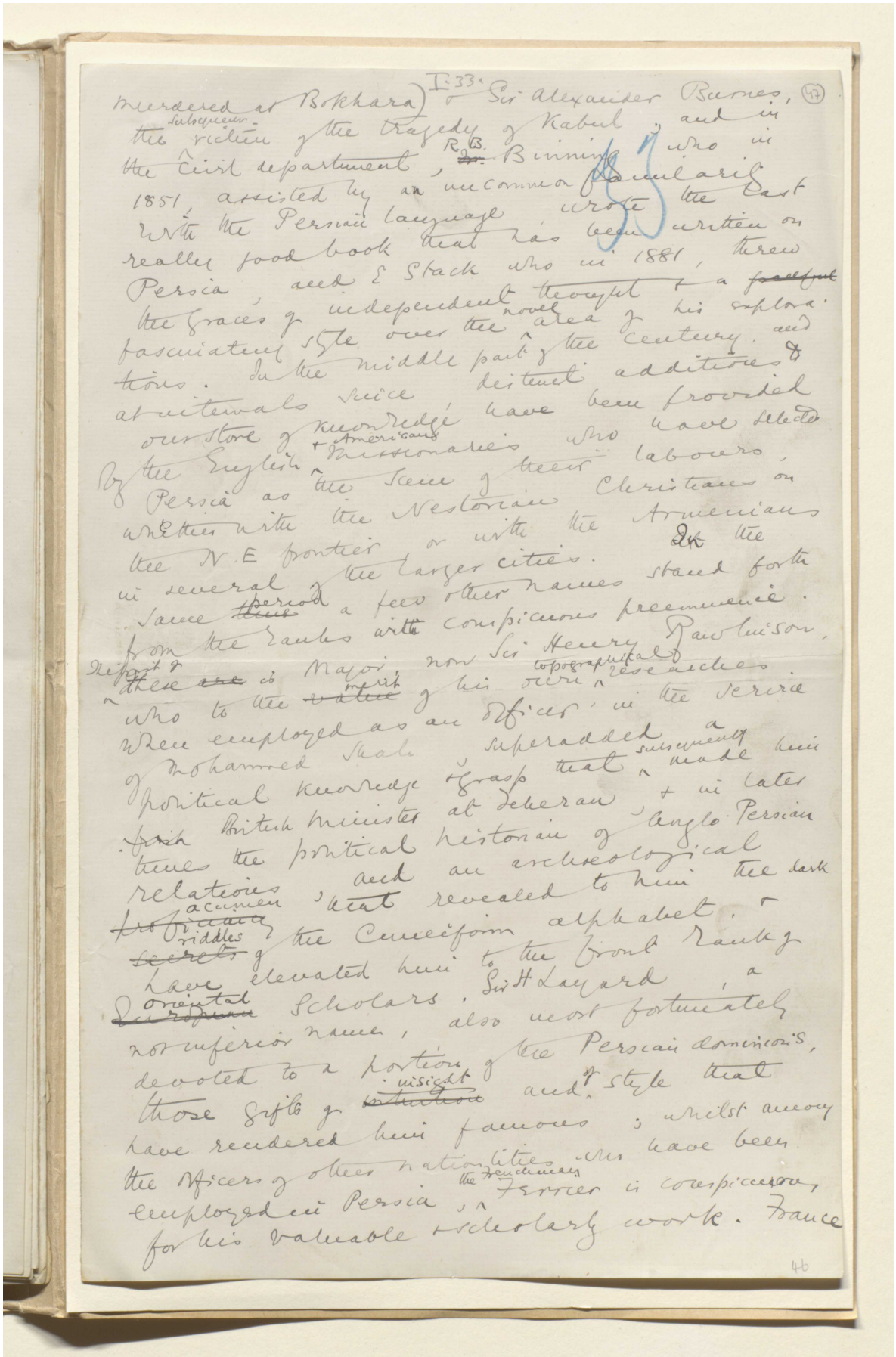

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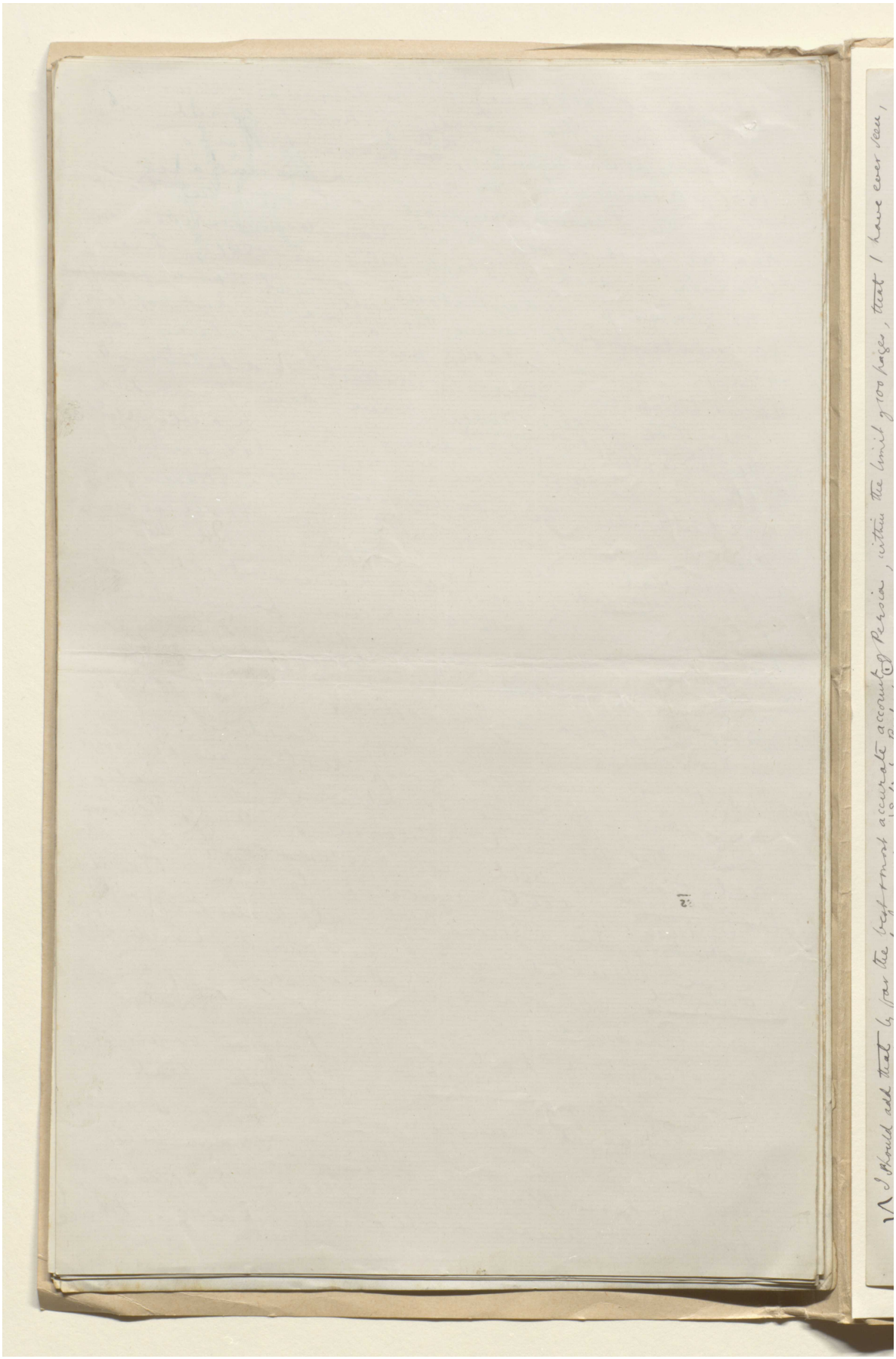

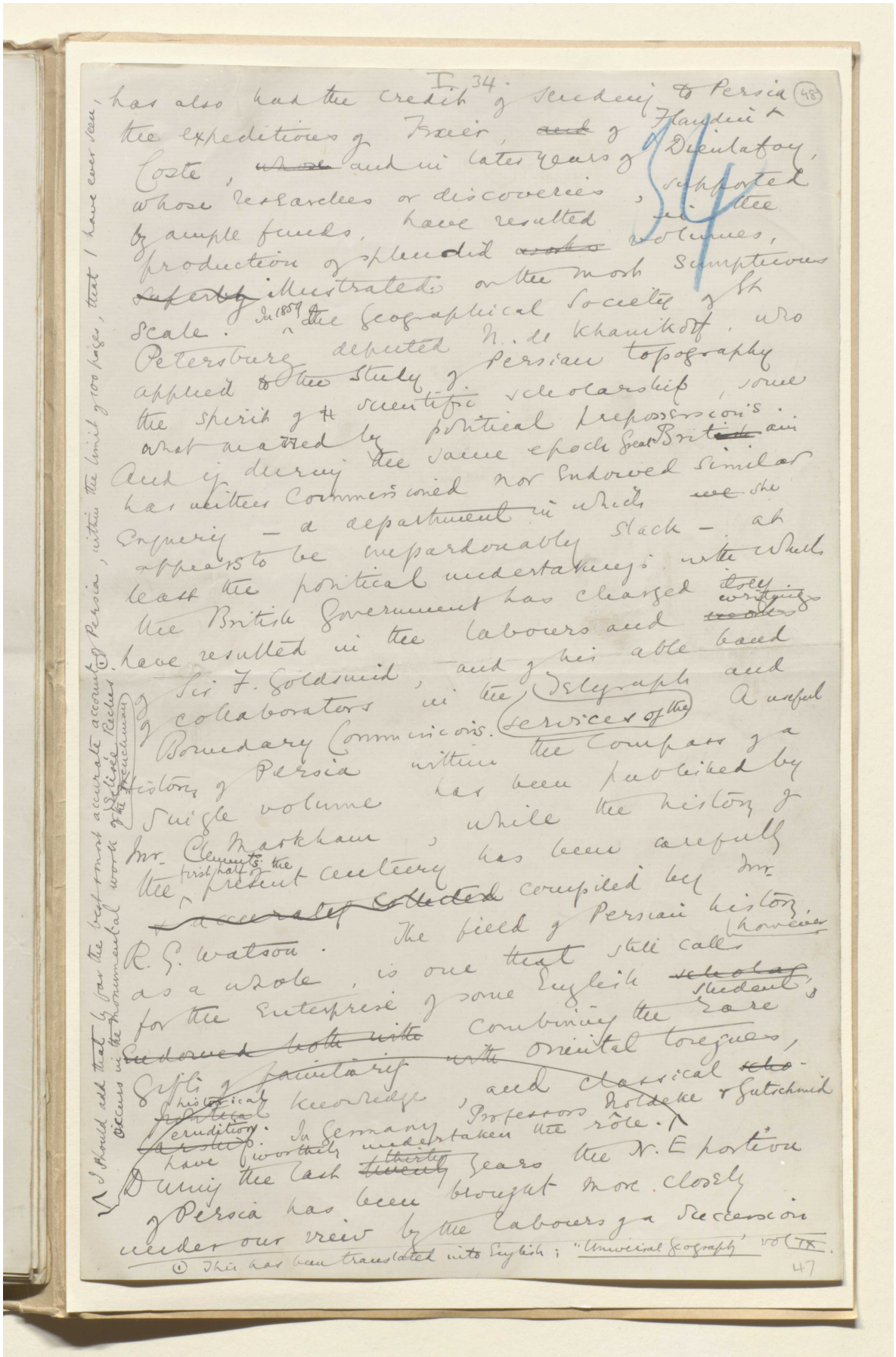



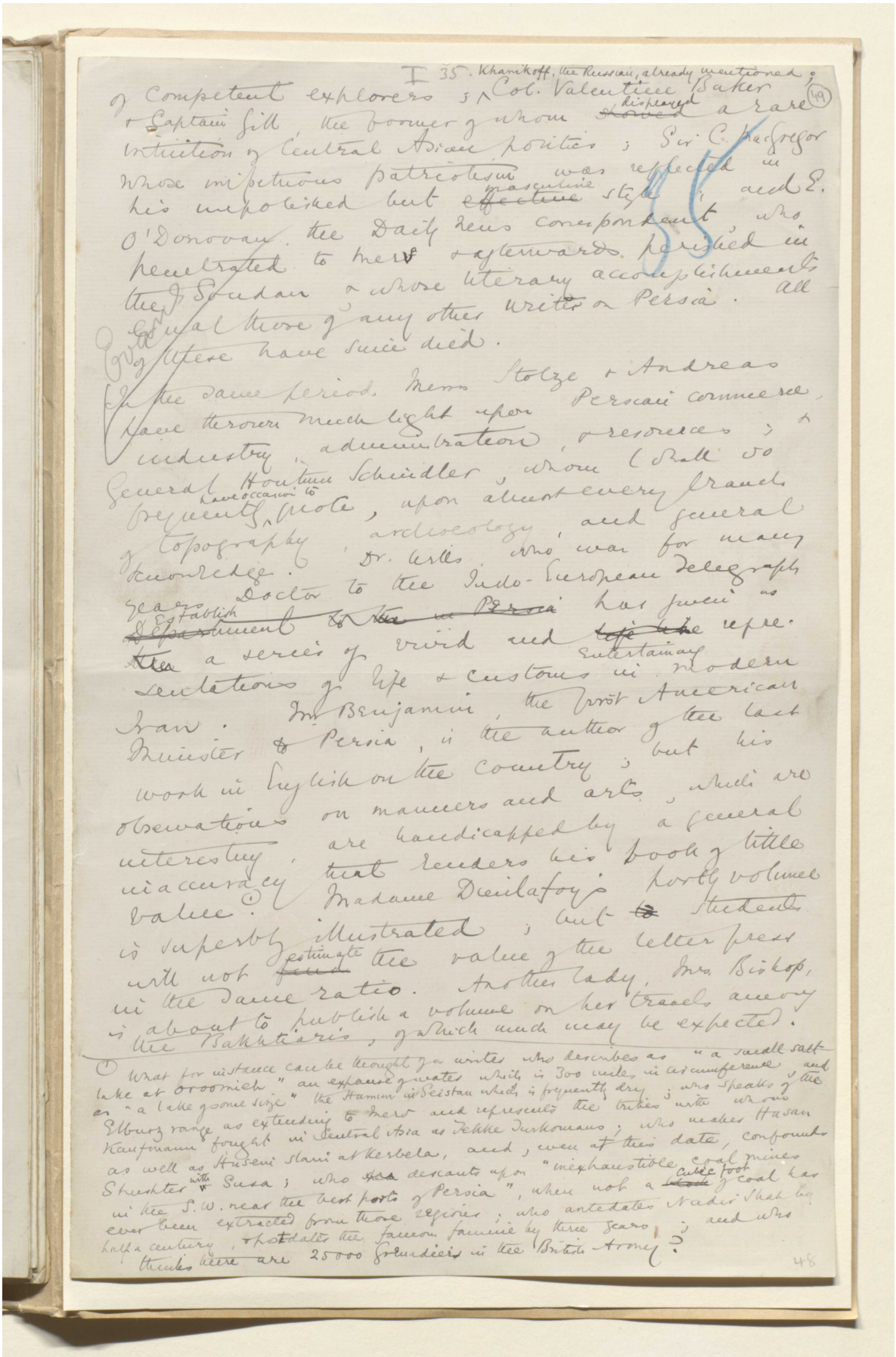

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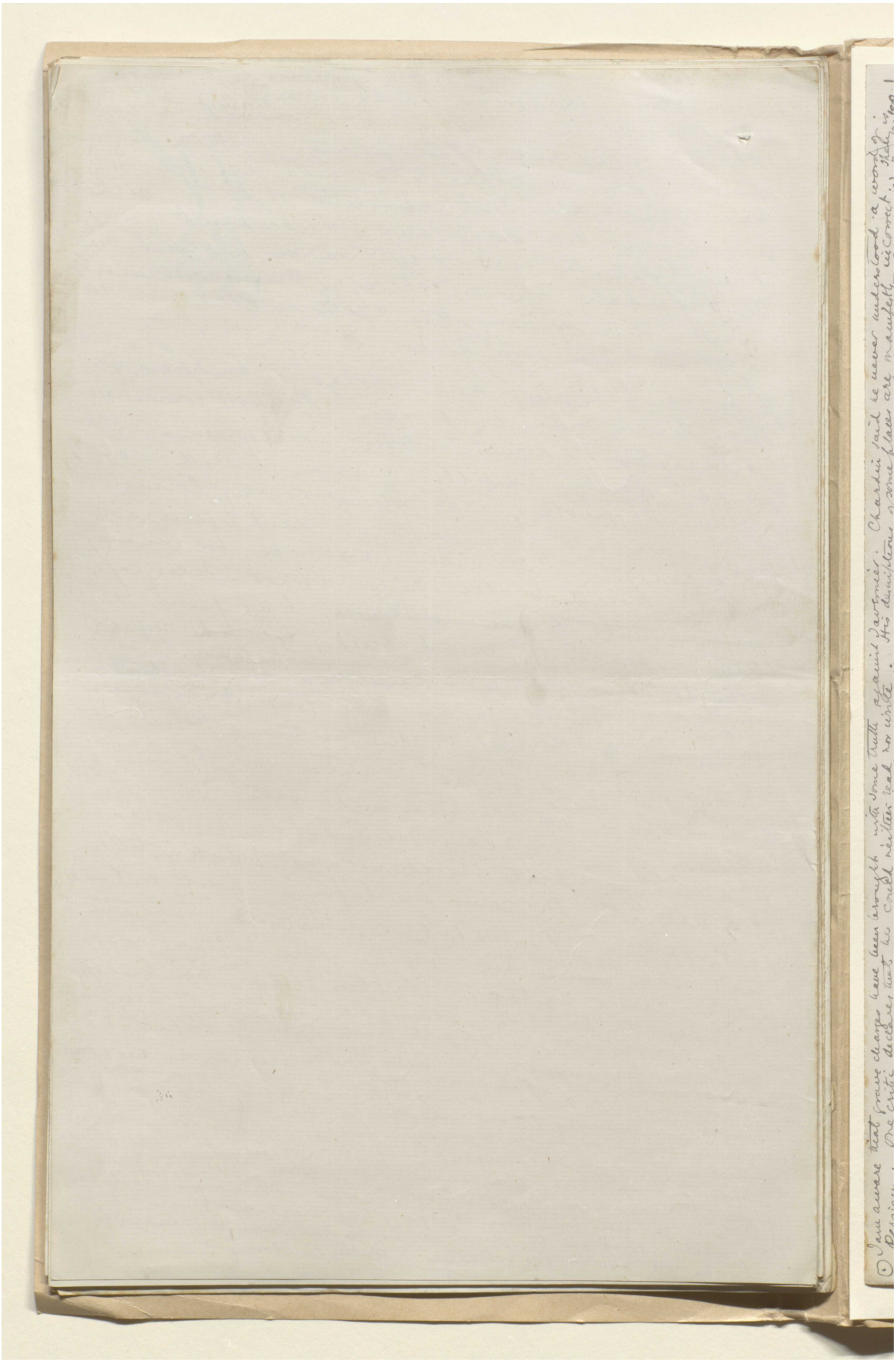

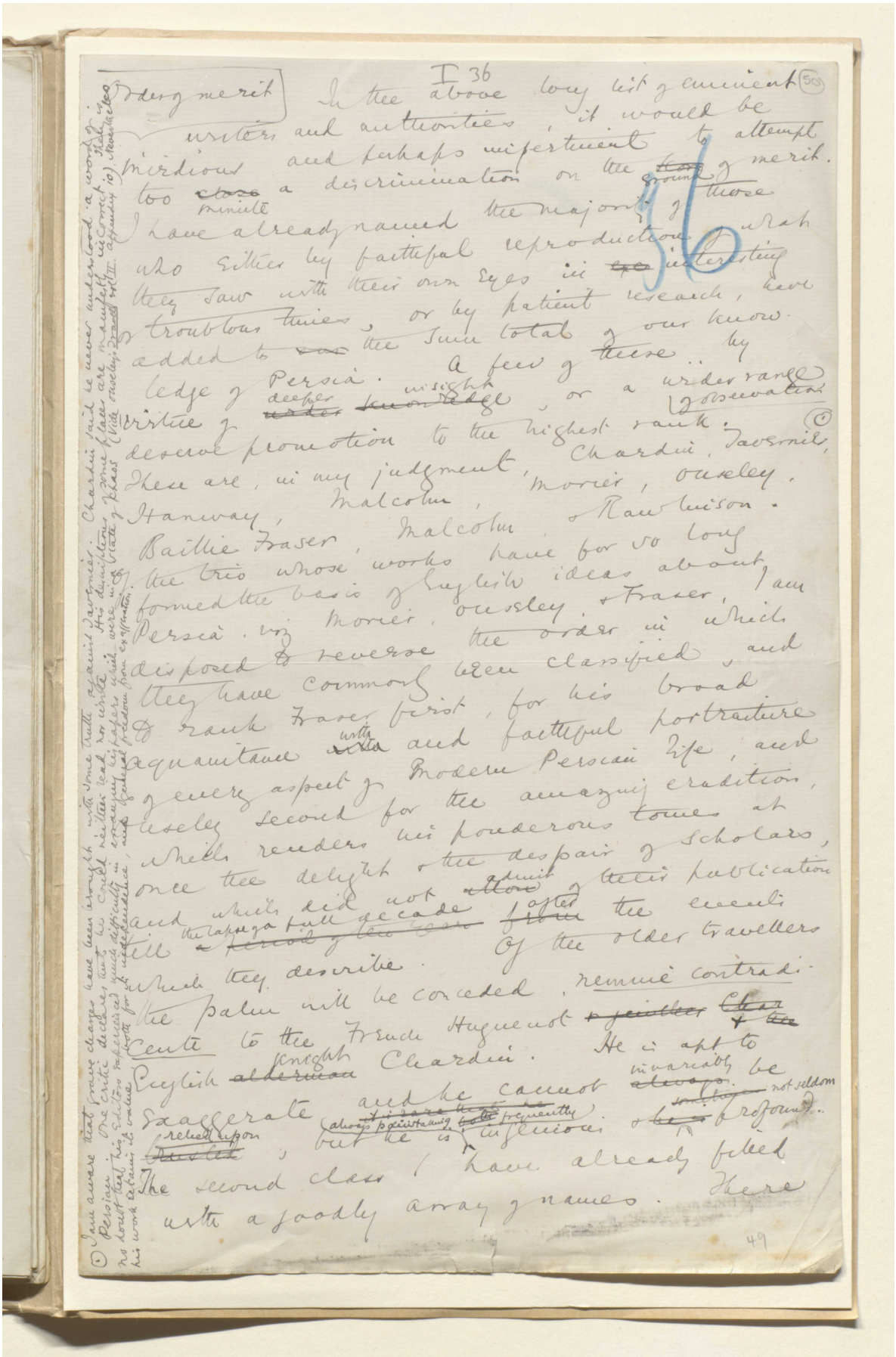



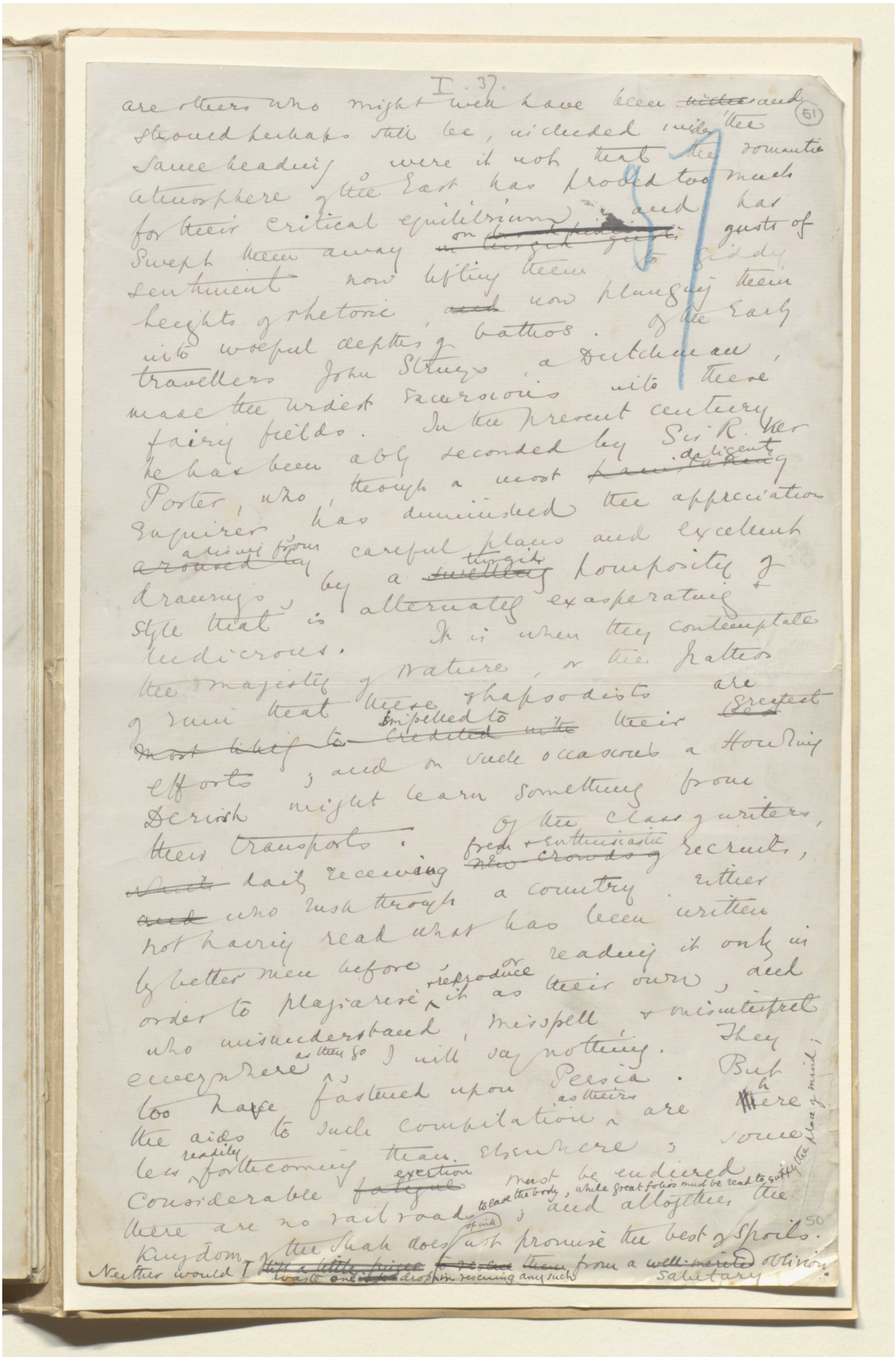

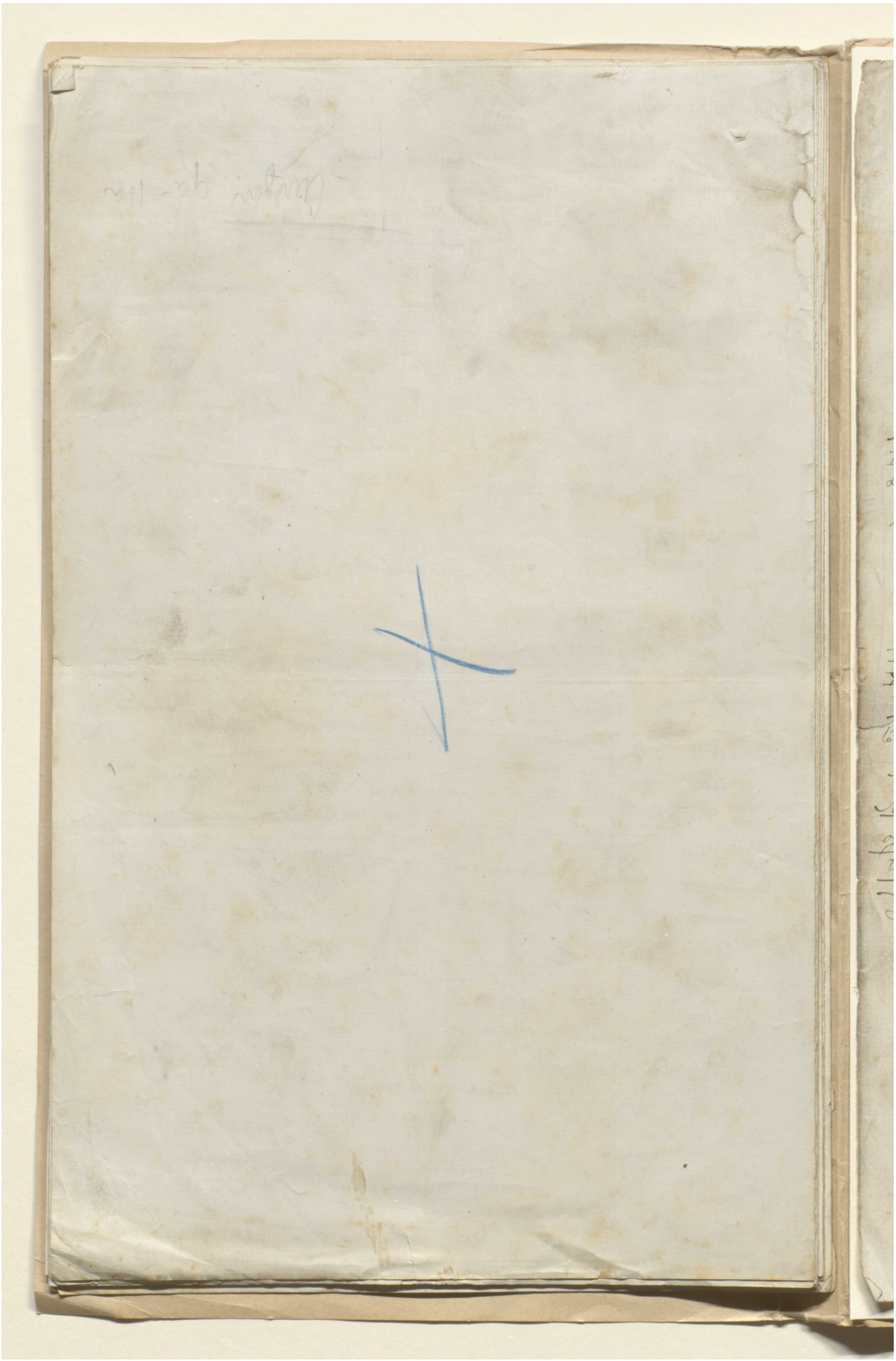

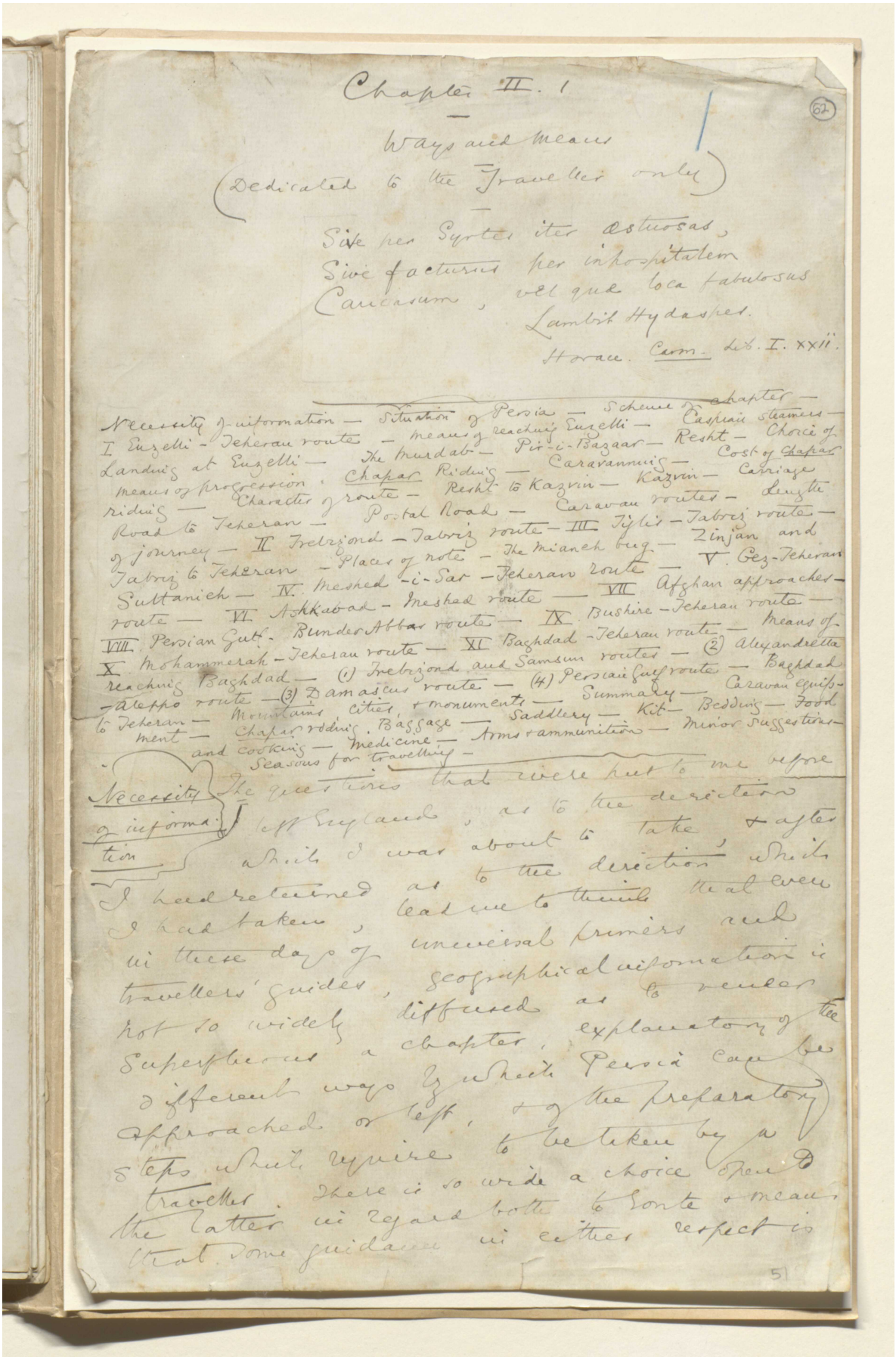

Chapter II. 1

Ways and means

(Dedicated to the Traveller only)

Sive per Syrtes iter æstuosas,
Sive facturus per inhospitalem
Caucasum, vel quæ loca fabulosus
Lambit Hydaspes.

Horace. Carm. Lib. I. XXII.

Necessity of information — Situation of Persia — Scheme of chapter — I Enzelli - Teheran route — means of reaching Enzelli — Caspian steamers — Landing at Enzelli — The Murdab — Pir-i-Bazaar — Resht — Choice of means of progression — Chapar Ridings — Caravanning — Cost of Chapar ridings — Character of route — Resht to Kazvin — Kazvin — Carriage Road to Teheran — Postal Road — Caravan routes — Length of journey — II Trebizond - Tabriz route — III Tiflis - Tabriz route — Tabriz to Teheran — Places of note — The Mianeh bug — Zinjan and Sultanieh — IV. Meshed-i-Sar - Teheran route — V. Gez-Teheran route — VI. Askkabad - Meshed route — VII Afghan approaches — VIII. Persian Gulf - Bunder Abbas route — IX. Bushire - Teheran route — Means of reaching Baghdad — (1) Trebizond and Samsun routes — (2) Alexandretta - Aleppo route — (3) Damascus route — (4) Persian Gulf route — Baghdad to Teheran — Mountains, cities, & monuments — Summary — Caravan equipment — Chapar ridings. Baggage — Saddlery — Kit — Beddings — Food and cooking — Medicine — Arms & ammunition — Minor suggestions — Seasons for travelling —

Necessity of information

The questions that were put to me before I left England, as to the direction which I was about to take & after I had returned as to the direction which I had taken, lead me to think that even in these days of universal primers and travellers' guides, geographical information is not so widely diffused as to render superfluous a chapter, explanatory of the different ways in which Persia can be approached or left, & of the preparatory steps which require to be taken by a traveller. There is so wide a choice open to the latter in regard both to route & means that some guidance in either respect is

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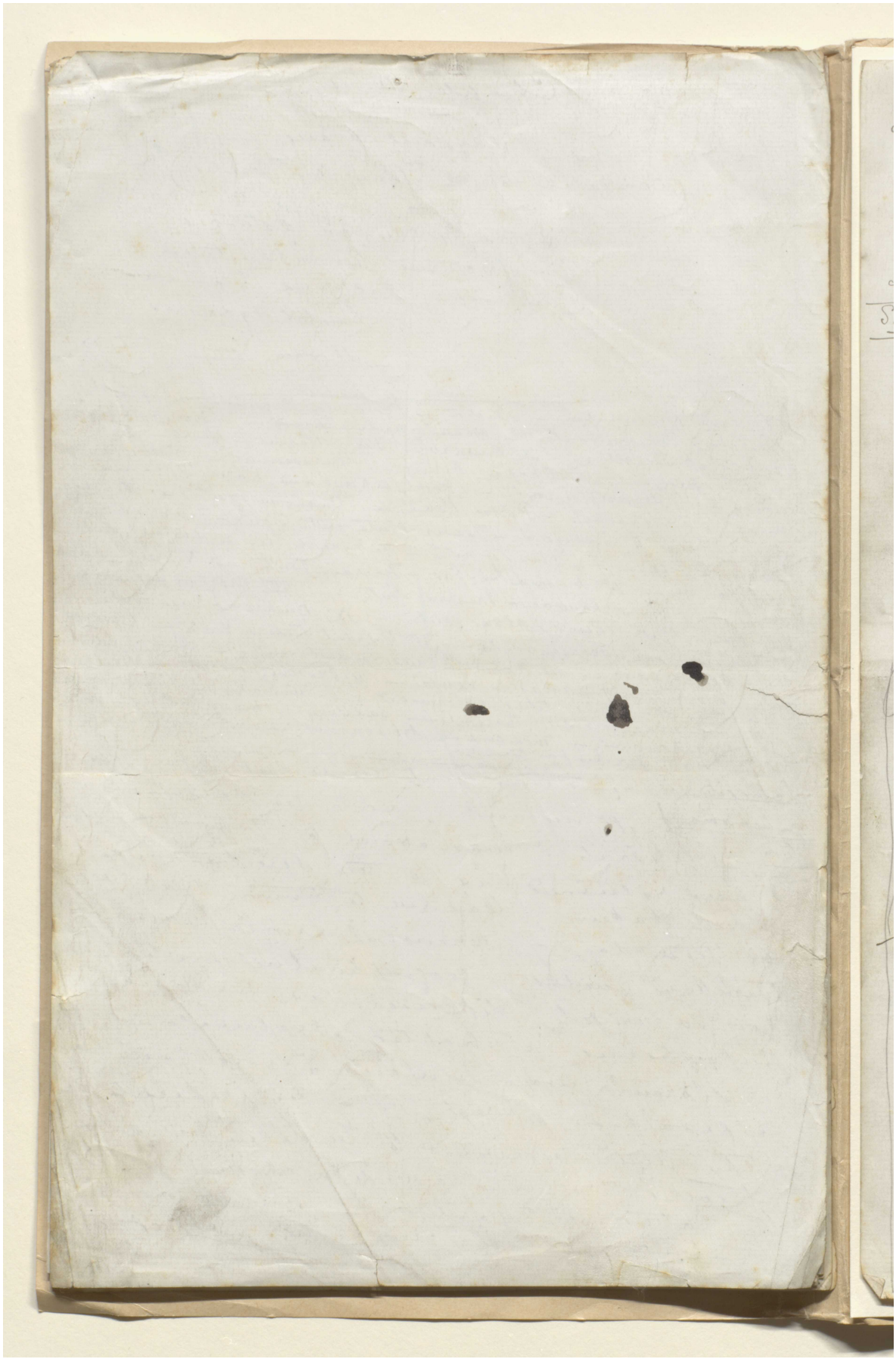

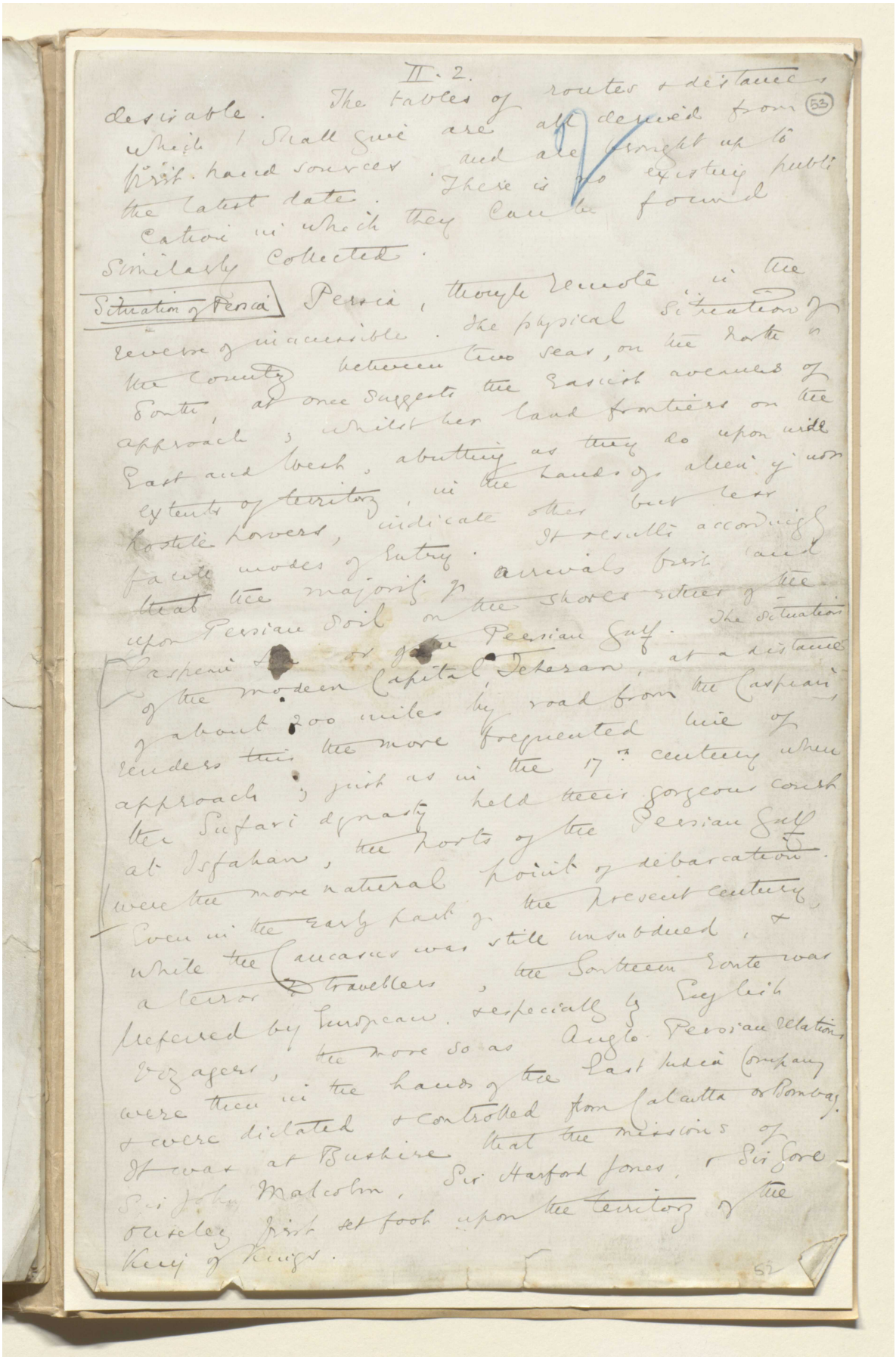

desirable. The tables of routes & distances which I shall give are all derived from first hand sources and are brought up to the latest date. There is no existing publication in which they can be found similarly collected.

Situation of Persia. Persia, though remote in the reverse of inaccessible. The physical situation of the country between two seas, on the North & South, at once suggests the easiest avenues of approach; whilst her land frontiers on the East and West, abutting as they do upon wide extents of territory in the hands of alien & non hostile powers, indicate other but less facile modes of entry. It results accordingly that the majority of arrivals first land upon Persian soil on the shores either of the Caspian Sea or of the Persian Gulf. The situation of the modern Capital, Teheran, at a distance of about 200 miles by road from the Caspian, renders this the more frequented line of approach; just as in the 17th century when the Sufari dynasty held their gorgeous court at Isfahan, the ports of the Persian Gulf were the more natural point of debarcation. Even in the early part of the present century, while the Caucasus was still unsubdued, & a terror to travellers, the Southern route was preferred by European, & especially by English voyagers, the more so as Anglo-Persian relations were then in the hands of the East India Company & were dictated & controlled from Calcutta or Bombay. It was at Bushire that the missions of Sir John Malcolm, Sir Harford Jones, & Sir Gore Ouseley first set foot upon the territory of the King of Kings.

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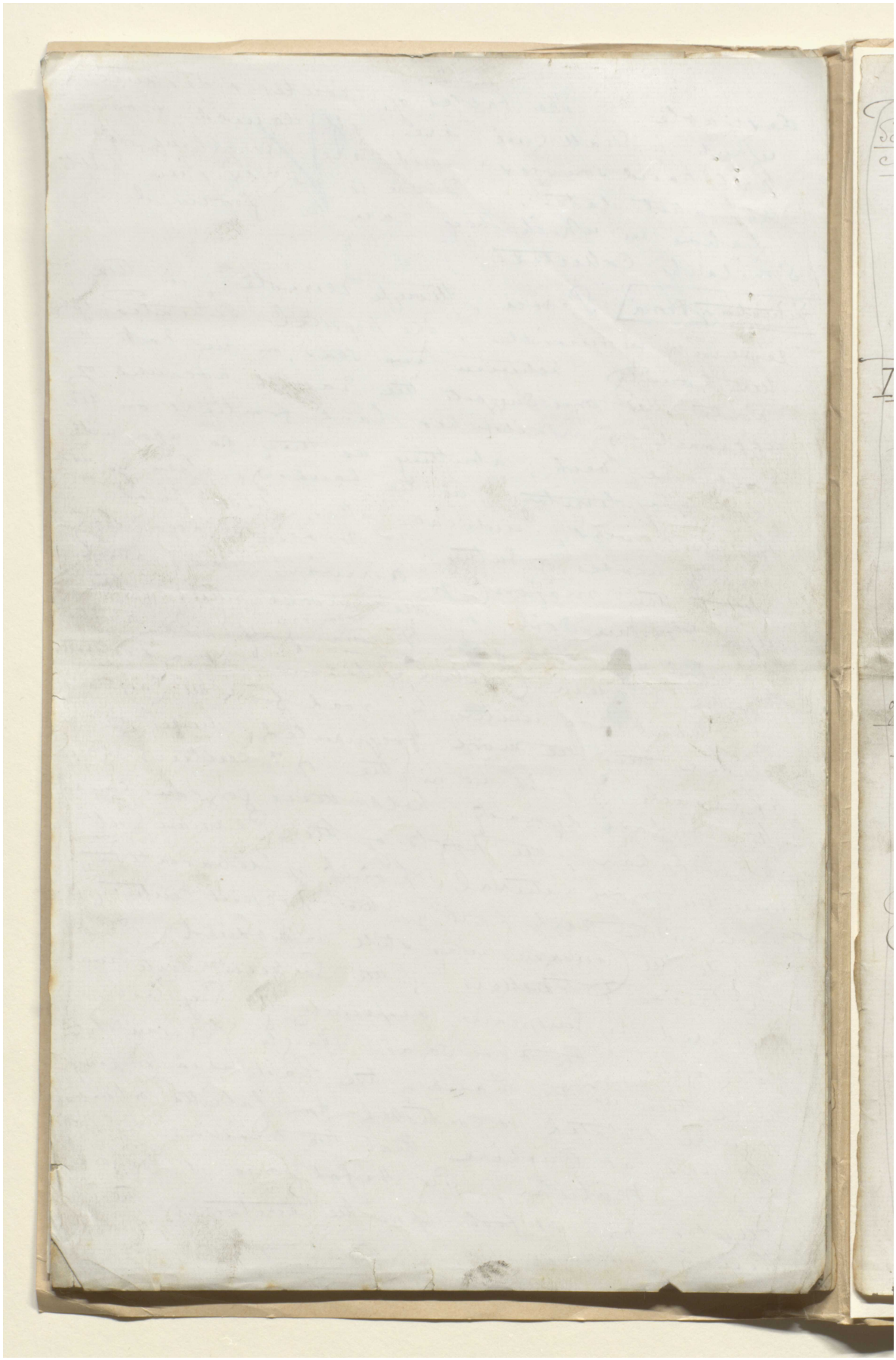

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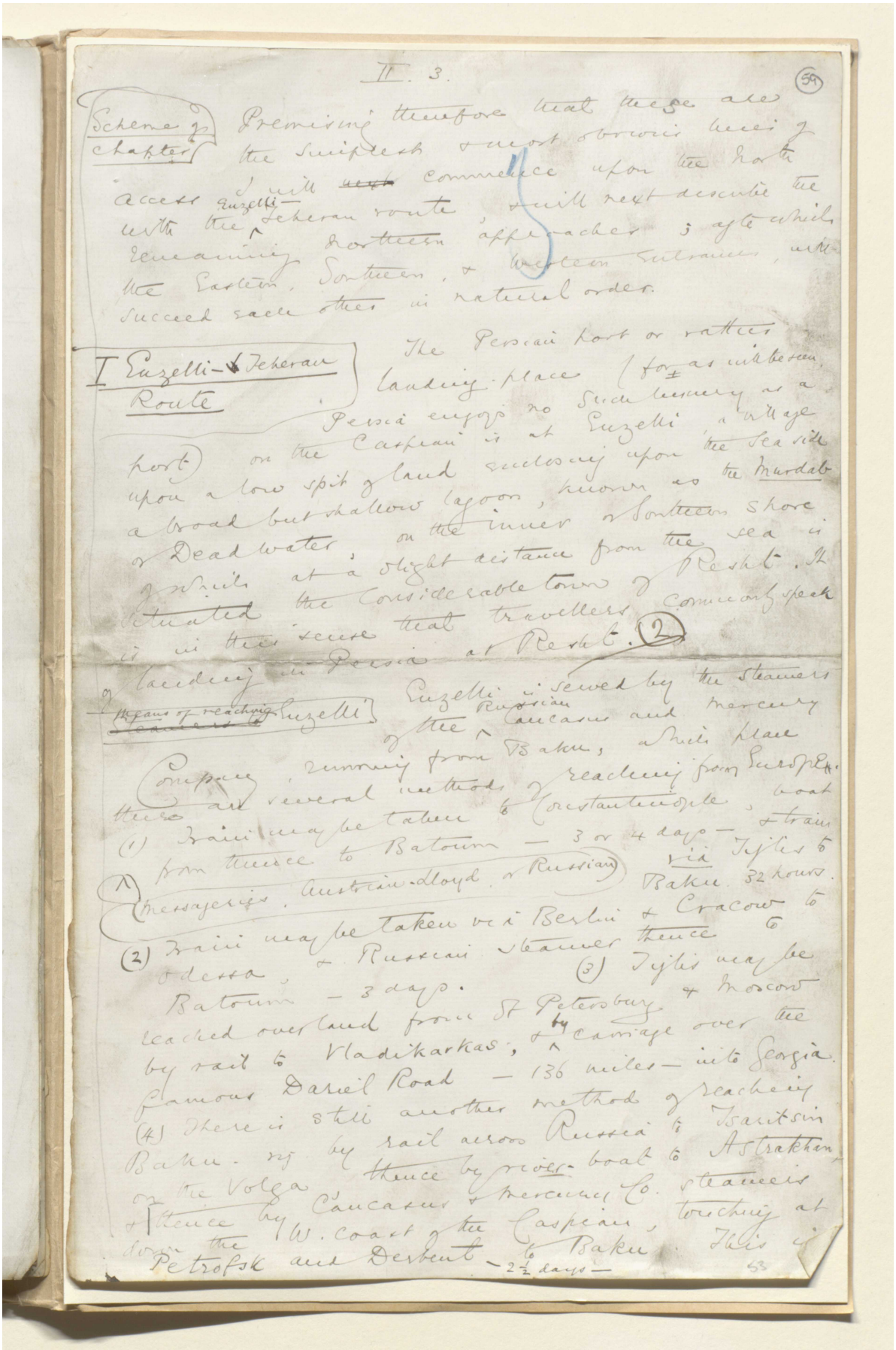

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Scheme of chapter

Premising therefore that these are the simplest & most obvious lines of access I will ~~next~~ commence upon the North with the Enzelli-Teheran route, & will next describe the remaining Northern approaches; after which the Eastern, Southern, & Western entrances, will succeed each other in natural order.

I Enzelli-Teheran Route

The Persian port or rather landing-place (for as will be seen, Persia enjoys no such luxury as a port) on the Caspian is at Enzelli, a village upon a low spit of land enclosing upon the sea side a broad but shallow lagoon, known as the Murdab or Dead water, on the inner or Southern shore of which at a slight distance from the sea is situated the considerable town of Resht. It is in this sense that travellers commonly speak of landing in Persia at Resht. (2)

Means of reaching Enzelli

Enzelli is served by the steamers of the Russian Caucasus and Mercury Company running from Baku, which place there are several methods of reaching from Europe.

(1) Train may be taken to Constantinople, boat from thence to Batoum — 3 or 4 days — & train via Tiflis to Baku. 32 hours.

(Messageries, Austrian-Lloyd, or Russian)

(2) Train may be taken via Berlin & Cracow to Odessa, & Russian steamer thence to Batoum — 3 days.

(3) Tiflis may be reached overland from St Petersburg & Moscow by rail to Vladikarkas, & by carriage over the famous Dariel Road — 136 miles — into Georgia.

(4) There is still another method of reaching Baku. viz. by rail across Russia to Tsaritsin on the Volga, thence by river-boat to Astrakhan, & thence by Caucasus & Mercury Co. steamers down the W. coast of the Caspian, touching at Petrofsk and Derbent to Baku. This is — 2½ days —

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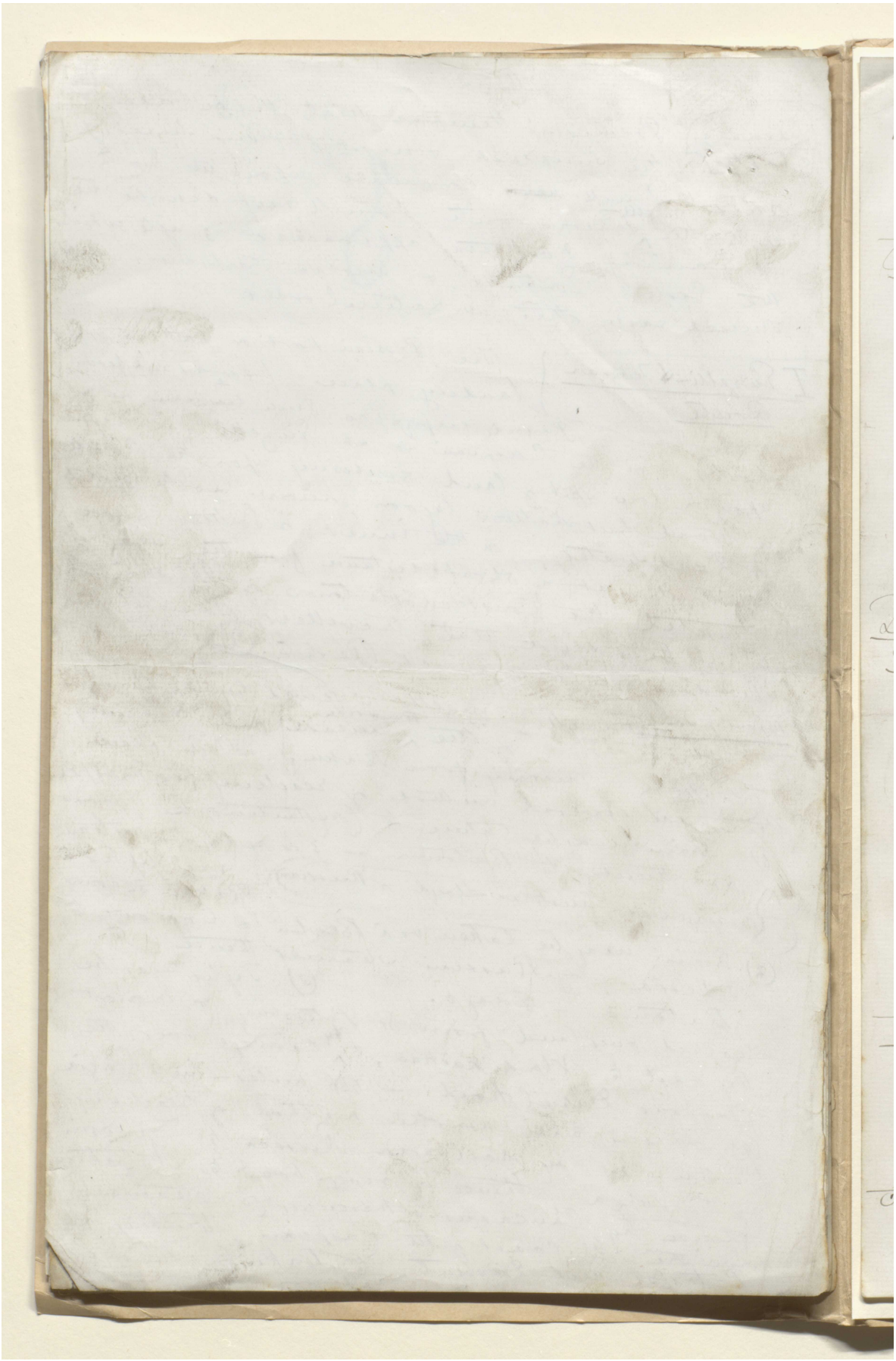

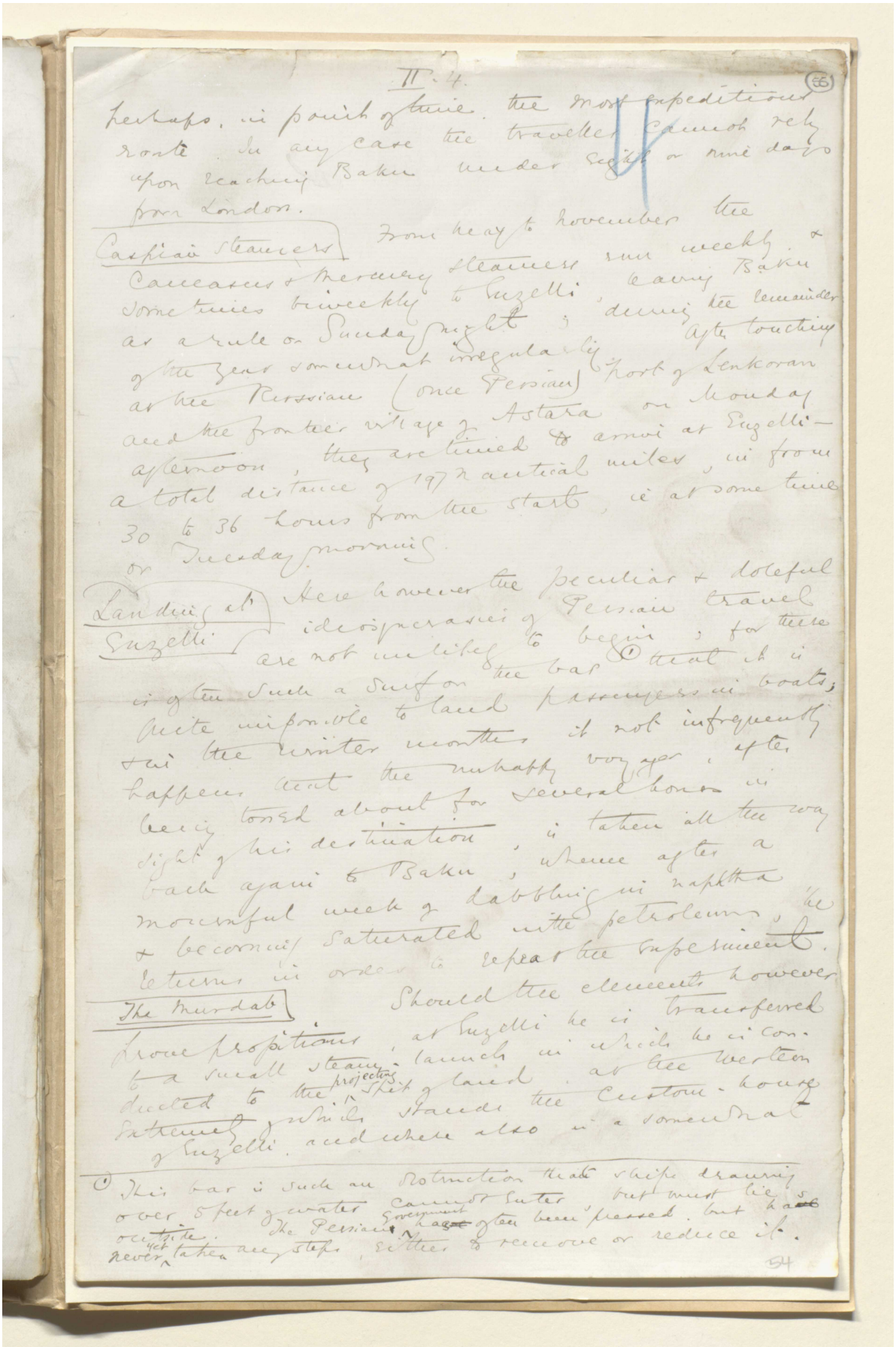

II. 4.

perhaps, in point of time, the most expeditious route. In any case the traveller cannot rely upon reaching Baku under eight or nine days from London.

Caspian Steamers

From May to November the Caucasus & Mercury steamers run weekly, sometimes bi-weekly to Enzelli, leaving Baku as a rule on Sunday night; during the remainder of the year somewhat irregularly. After touching at the Russian (once Persian) and the frontier village of Astara on Monday afternoon, they are timed to arrive at Enzelli— a total distance of 197 nautical miles, in from 30 to 36 hours from the start, i.e. at some time on Tuesday morning.

Landing at Enzelli

Here however the peculiar & doleful idiosyncrasies of Persian travel are not unlikely to begin; for there is often such a surf on the bar[1] that it is quite impossible to land passengers in boats; & in the winter months, it not infrequently happens that the unhappy voyager, after being tossed about for several hours in sight of his destination, is taken all the way back again to Baku, whence after a mournful week of dabbling in naphtha & becoming saturated with petroleum, he returns in order to repeat the experiment.

The Murdab

Should the elements however favour proceedings, at Enzelli he is transferred to a small steam launch in which he is conducted to the projecting spit of land, at the western extremity of which stands the Custom-house of Enzelli, and where also is a commodious

[1] This bar is such an obstruction that ships drawing over 5 feet of water cannot enter, but must lie outside. The Persian Government has often been pressed, but has yet taken any steps either to remove or reduce it.

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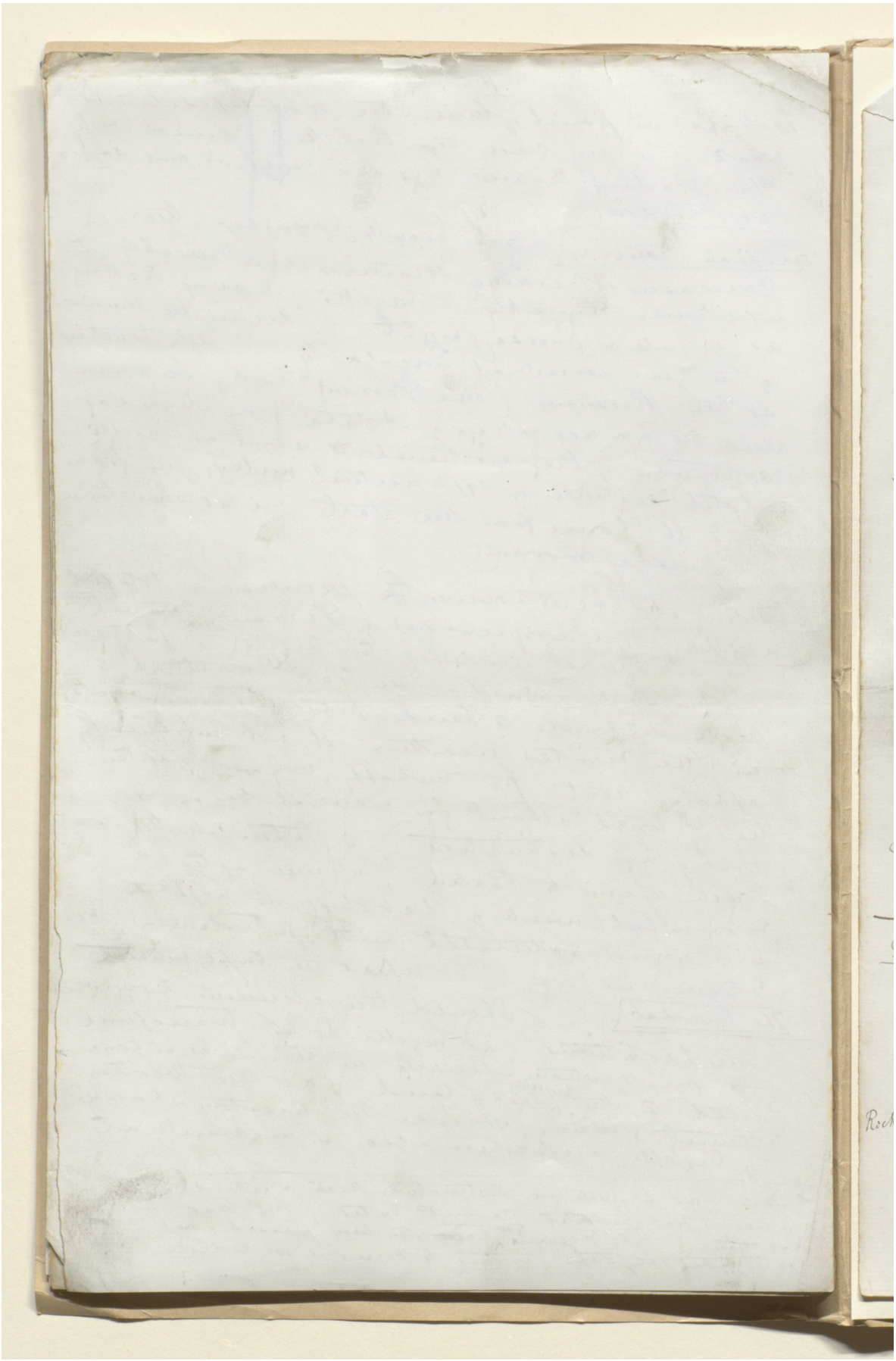

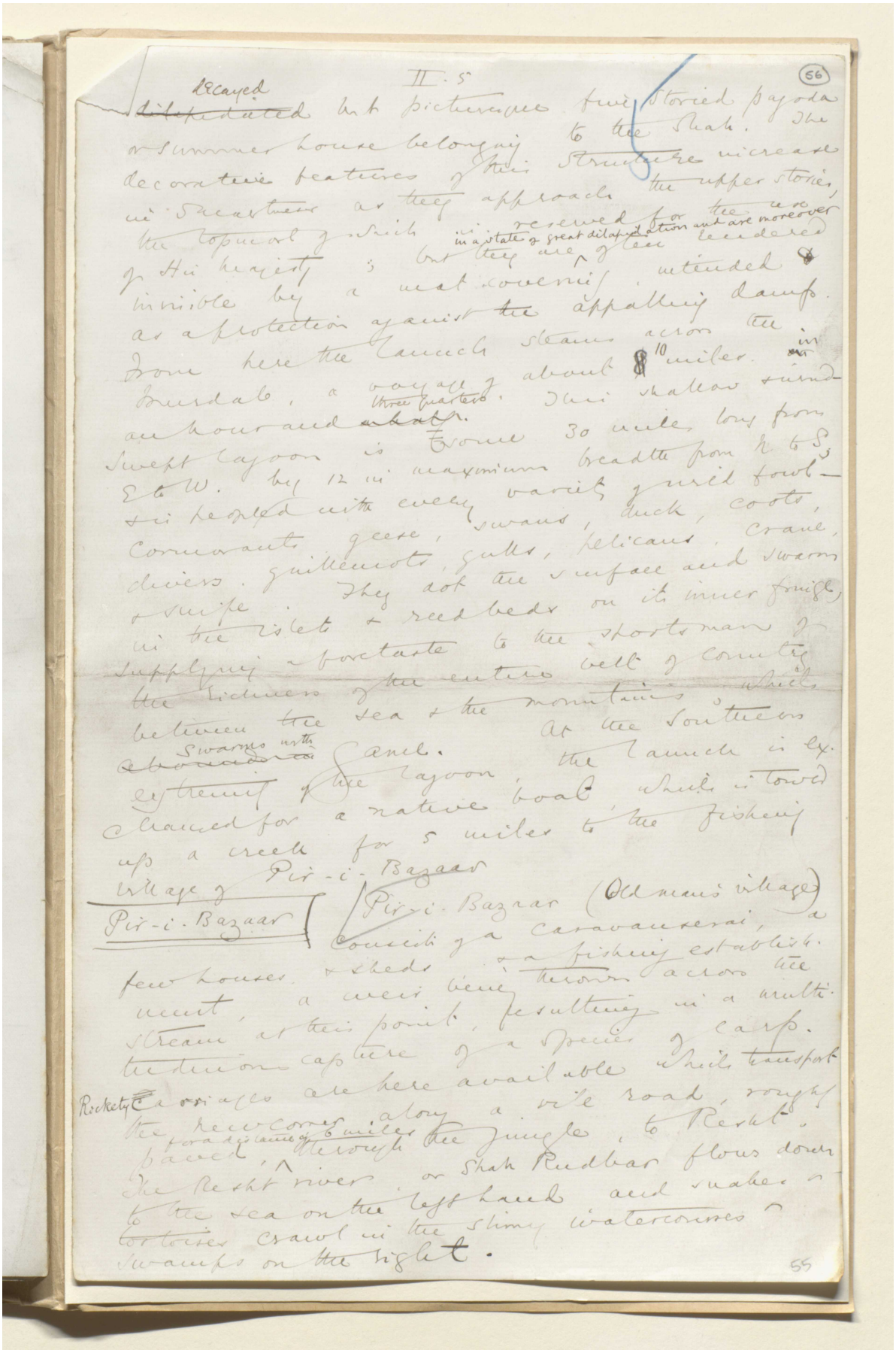

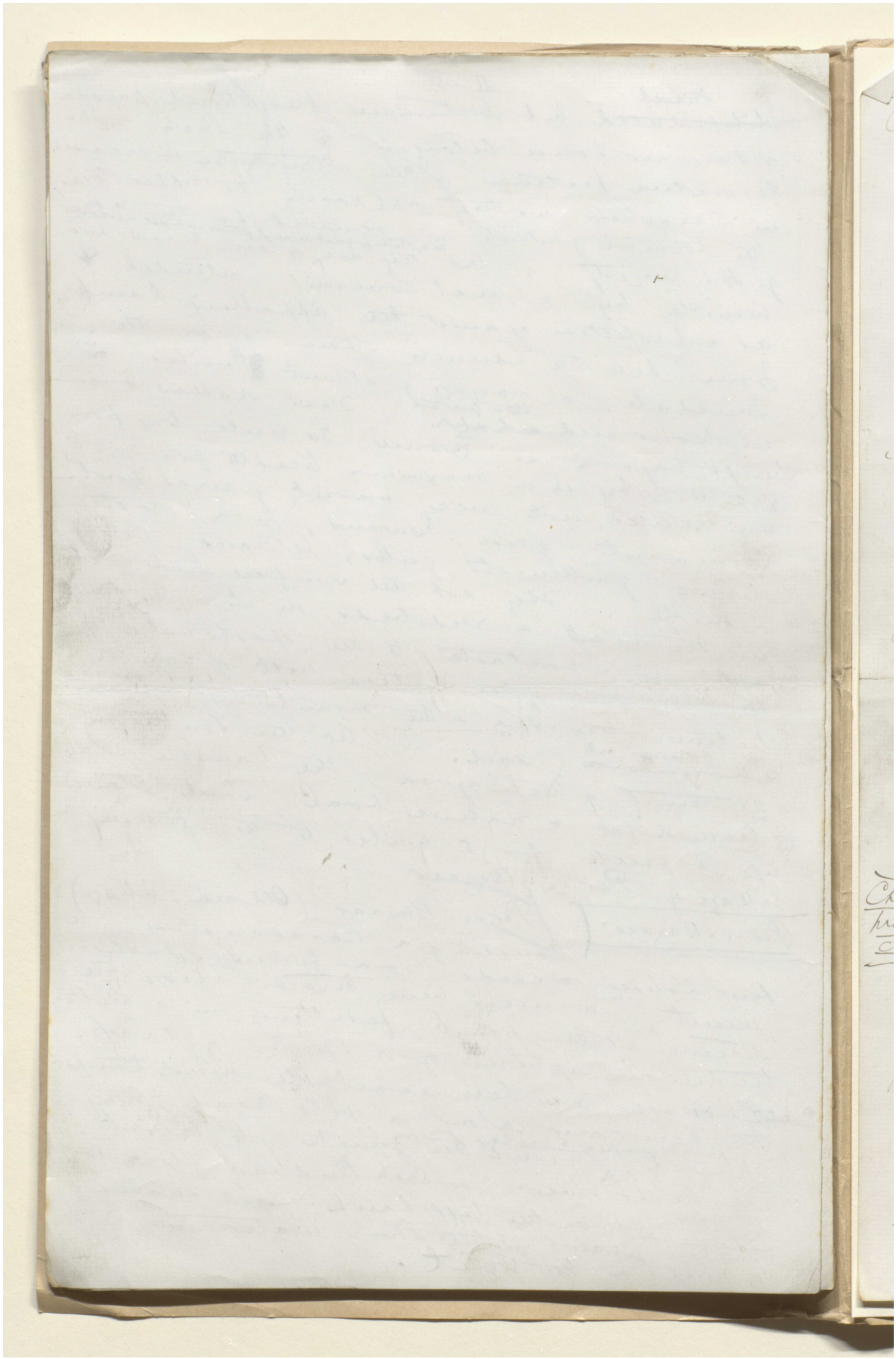

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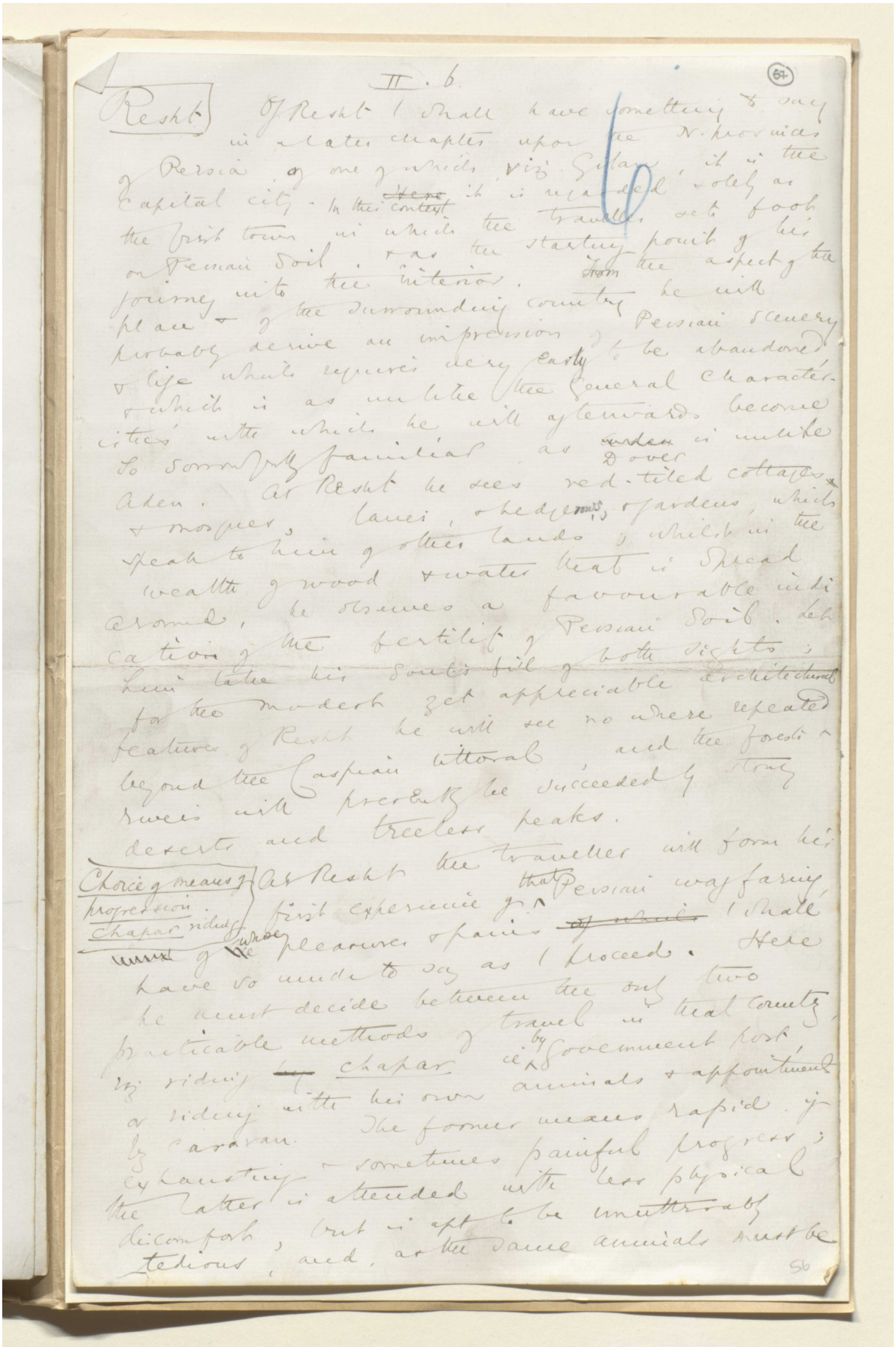
Resht



Of Resht I shall have something to say in a later chapter upon the N. provinces of Persia, of one of which, viz. Gilan, it is the capital city. In this context it is regarded solely as the first town in which the traveller sets foot on Persian soil, & as the starting point of his journey into the interior. From the aspect of the place & of the surrounding country he will probably derive an impression of Persian scenery & life which requires very easily to be abandoned & which is as unlike the general characteristics with which he will afterwards become so sorrowfully familiar, as Dover is unlike Aden. At Resht he sees red-tiled cottages & mosques, lanes, & hedgerows, & gardens, which speak to him of other lands; & whilst in the wealth of wood & water that is spread around, he observes a favourable indication of the fertility of Persian soil. Let him take his soul's fill of both sights; for the modest yet appreciable architectural features of Resht he will see no where repeated beyond the Caspian littoral, and the forests & rivers will presently be succeeded by stony deserts and treeless peaks.

Choice of means of progression. Chapar riding

At Resht the traveller will form his first experience of that Persian wayfaring of whose pleasures & pains I shall have so much to say as I proceed. Here he must decide between the only two practicable methods of travel in that country, viz. riding by chapar, ie by government post, or riding with his own animals & appointment by caravan. The former means rapid, if exhausting & sometimes painful progress; the latter is attended with less physical discomfort, but is apt to be unutterably tedious, and, as the same animals must be

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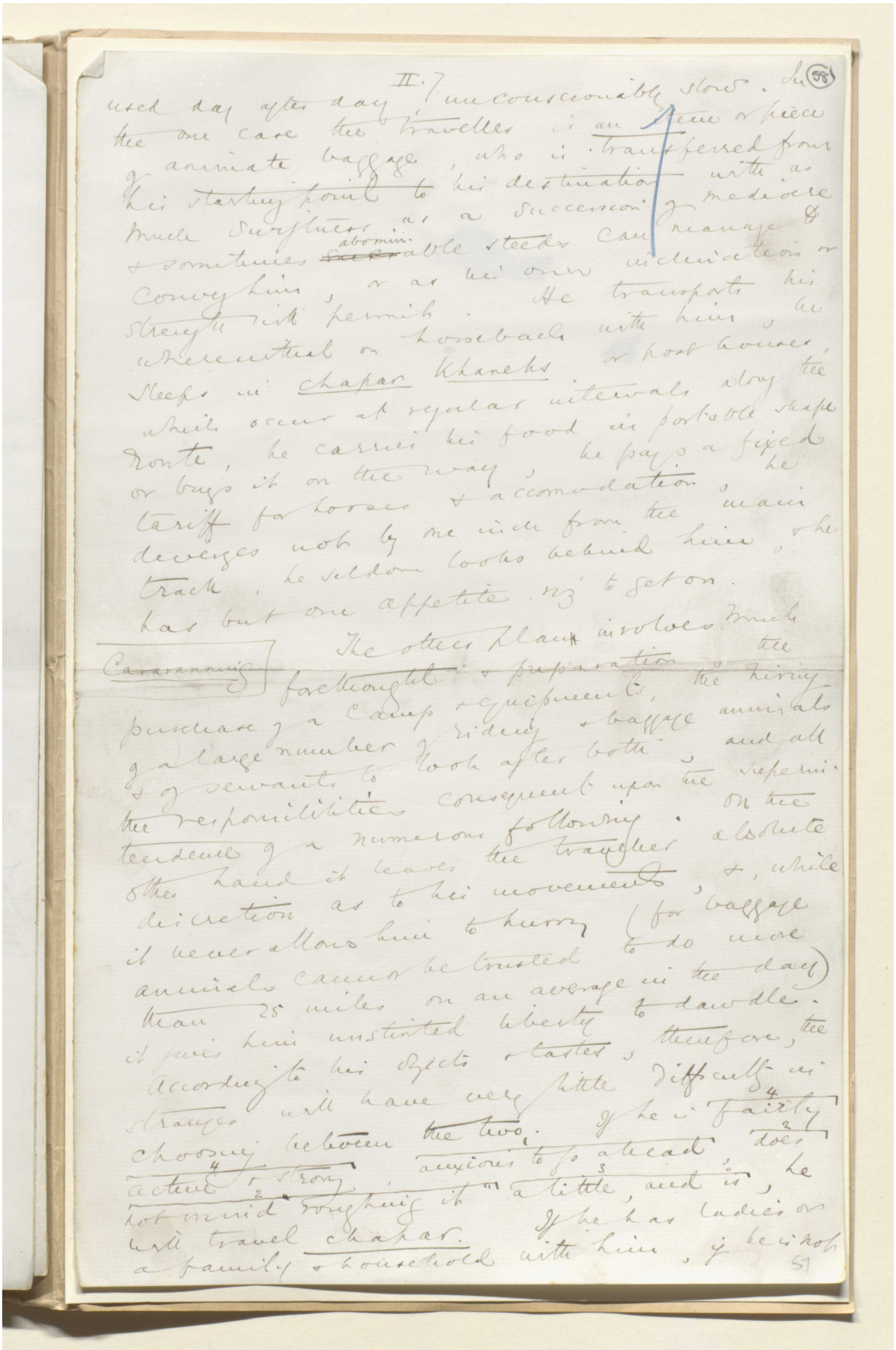

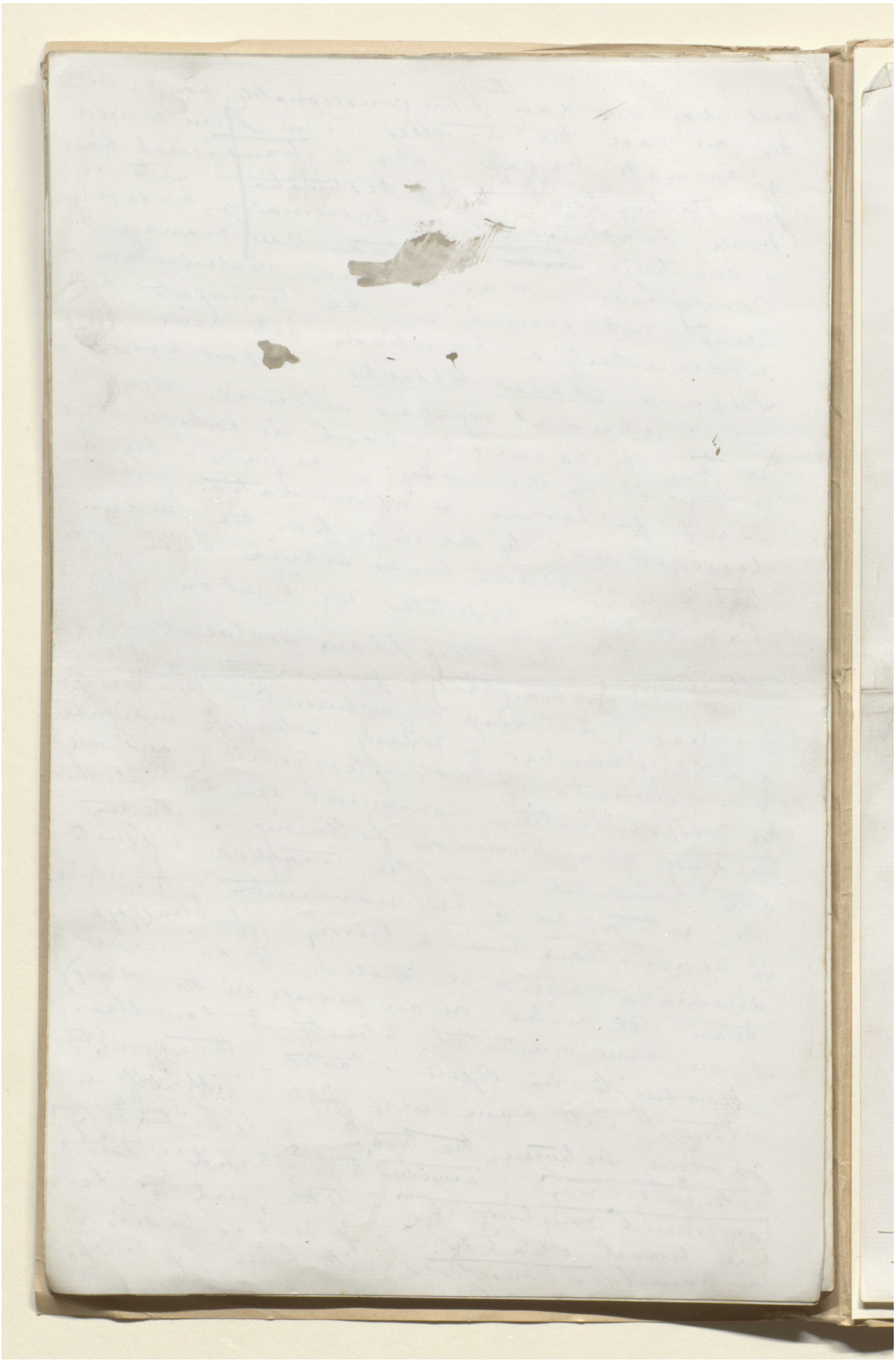

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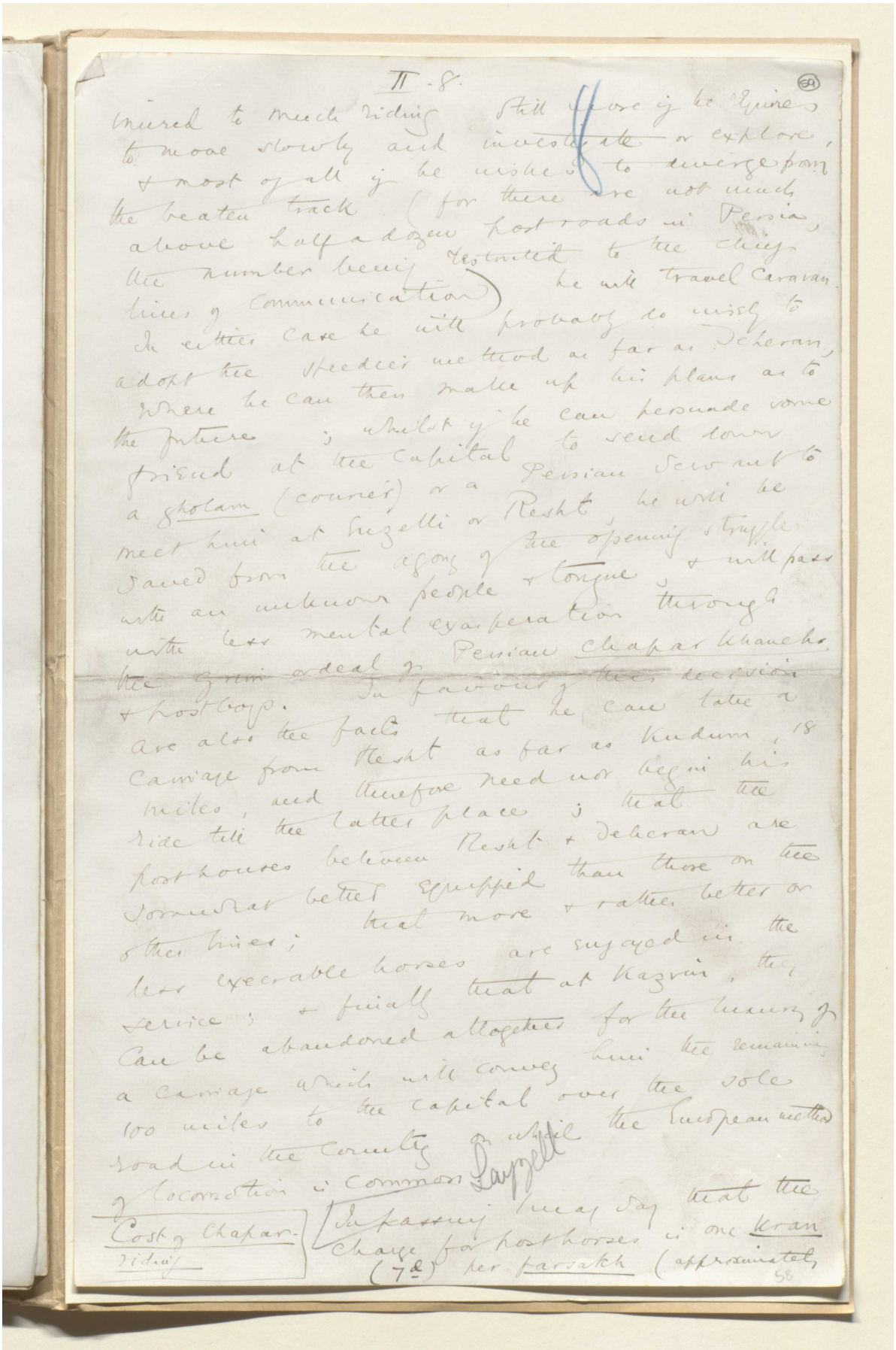

inured to much riding. Still more if he requires to move slowly and investigate or explore, & most of all if he wishes to diverge from the beaten track (for there are not much above half a dozen post roads in Persia, the number being restricted to the chief lines of communication) he will travel Caravan. In either case he will probably do wisely to adopt the speedier method as far as Deheran, where he can then make up his plans as to the future; whilst if he can persuade some friend at the capital to send down a gholam (courier) or a Persian servant to meet him at Enzelli or Resht, he will be saved from the agony of the opening struggle with an unknown people & tongue, & will pass with less mental exasperation through the grim ordeal of Persian chapar khanehs & postboys. In favour of this decision are also the facts that he can take a carriage from Resht as far as Kudum, 18 miles, and therefore need not begin his ride till the latter place; that the post houses between Resht & Deheran are somewhat better equipped than those on the other lines; that more & rather better or less execrable horses are engaged in the service; & finally that at Kazvin, they can be abandoned altogether for the luxury of a carriage which will convey him the remaining 100 miles to the capital over the sole road in the country on which the European method of locomotion is common. Layzell

Cost of Chapar-riding

In passing I may say that the charge for post horses is one kran (7d) per farsakh (approximately

58

المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة
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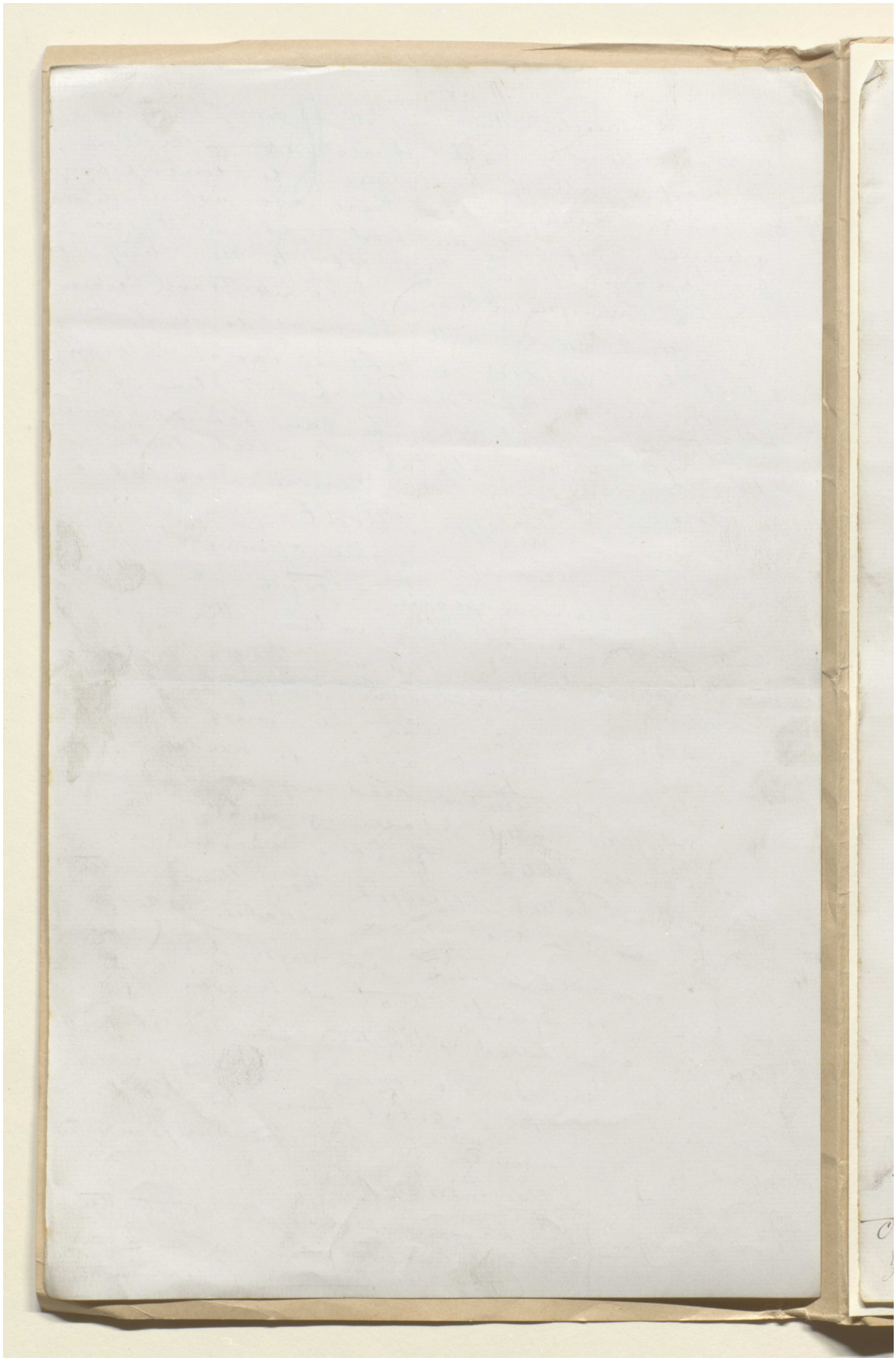

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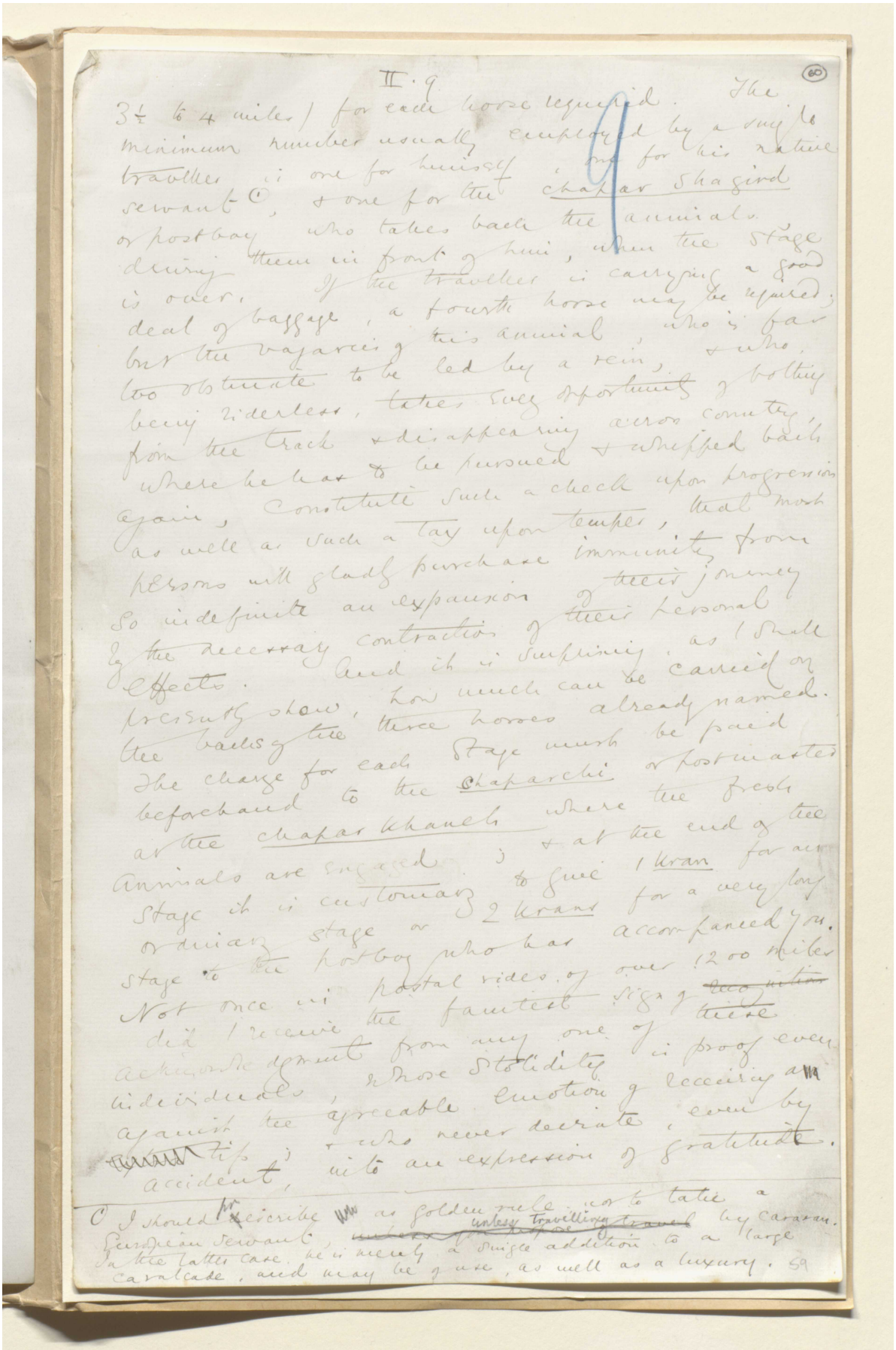
مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٦٠و] (١٣٥٥/١١٩)



3½ to 4 miles) for each horse required. The minimum number usually employed by a single traveller is one for himself, one for his native servant (1), & one for the chapar shagird or postboy who takes back the animals driving them in front of him, when the stage is over. If the traveller is carrying a good deal of baggage, a fourth horse may be required; but the vagaries of this animal, who is far too obstinate to be led by a rein, & who, being riderless, takes every opportunity of bolting from the track & disappearing across country, where he has to be pursued & whipped back again, constitute such a check upon progression as well as such a tax upon temper, that most persons will gladly purchase immunity from so indefinite an expansion of their journey by the necessary contraction of their personal effects. And it is surprising, as I shall presently show, how much can be carried on the backs of the three horses already named. The charge for each stage must be paid beforehand to the chaparchi or postmaster at the chapar khaneh where the fresh animals are engaged; & at the end of the stage it is customary to give 1 kran for an ordinary stage or 2 krans for a very long stage to the postboy who has accompanied you. Not once in postal rides of over 1200 miles did I receive the faintest sign of ~~recognition~~ acknowledgment from any one of these individuals, whose stolidity is proof even against the agreeable emotion of receiving a ~~[illegible]~~ tip; & who never deviate, even by accident, into an expression of gratitude.

(1) I should prescribe as golden rule, not to take a European servant, ~~unless you propose of travel~~ unless travelling by caravan. In the latter case, he is merely a single addition to a large cavalcade, and may be of use, as well as a luxury. 59

المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة
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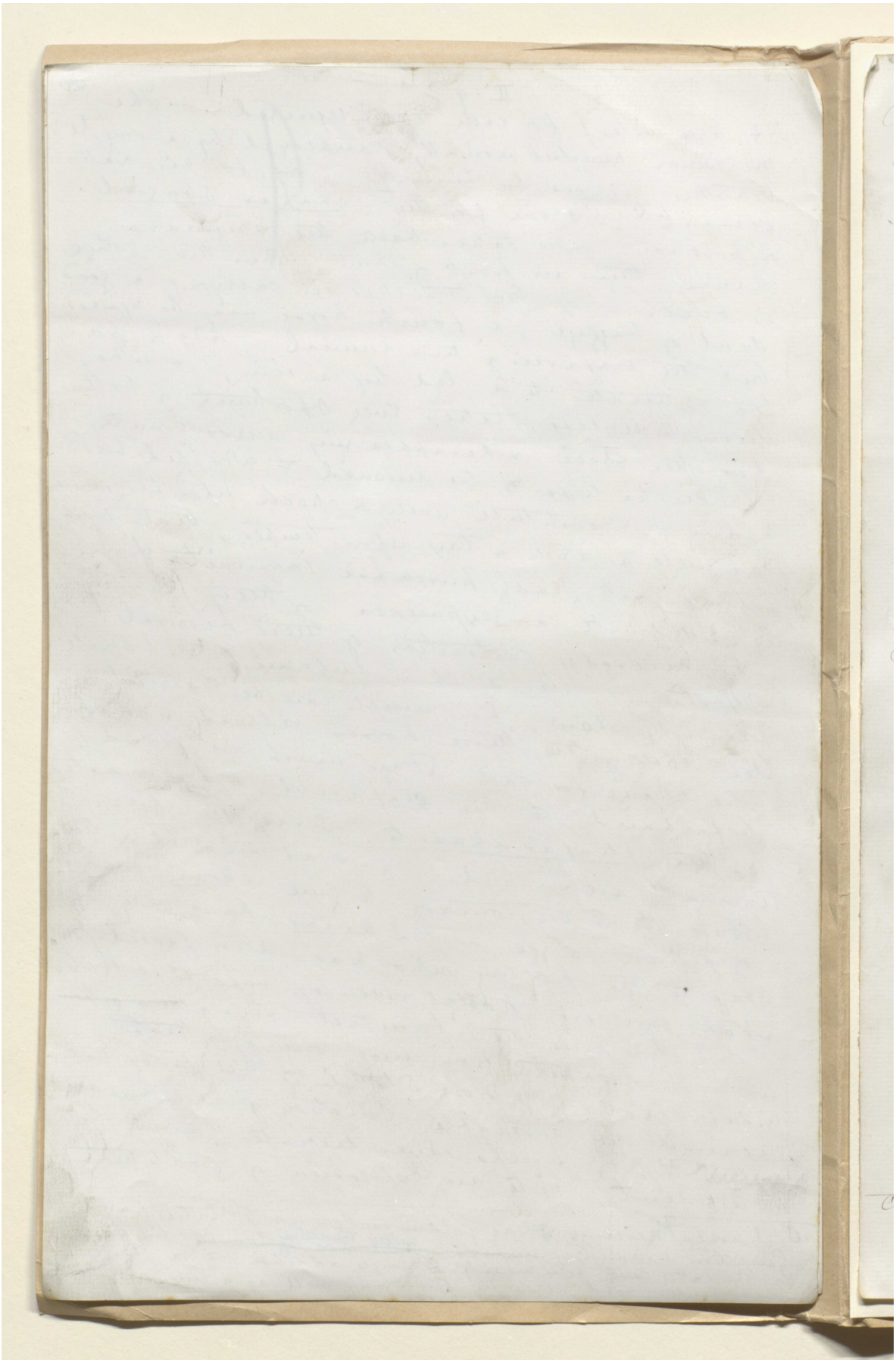

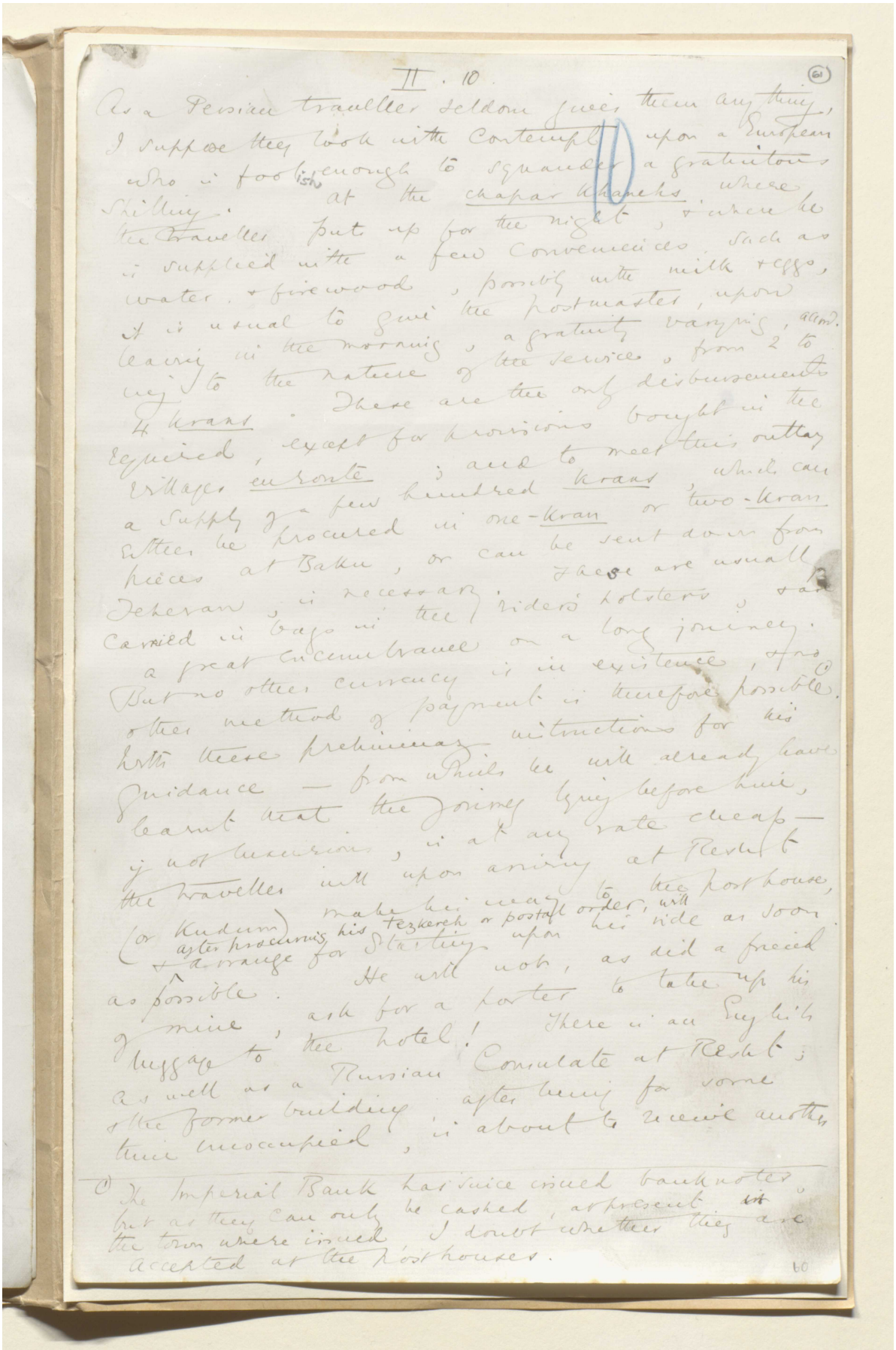

As a Persian traveller seldom gives them anything, I suppose they look with contempt upon a European who is foolish enough to squander a gratuitous shilling. At the chapar khaneh where the traveller puts up for the night, & where he is supplied with a few conveniences, such as water, & firewood, possibly with milk & eggs, it is usual to give the postmaster, upon leaving in the morning, a gratuity varying, accordingly to the nature of the service, from 2 to 4 krans. These are the only disbursements required, except for provisions bought in the villages en route; and to meet this outlay a supply of a few hundred krans, which can either be procured in one-kran or two-kran pieces at Baku, or can be sent down from Teheran, is necessary. These are usually carried in bags in the rider's holsters, & are a great encumbrance on a long journey. But no other currency is in existence, & no other method of payment is therefore possible.[1] With these preliminary instructions for his guidance — from which he will already have learnt that the journey lying before him, if not luxurious, is at any rate cheap — the traveller will upon arriving at Resht (or Kudum) make his way to the post house, after procuring his tezkereh or postal order, will & arrange for starting upon his ride as soon as possible. He will not, as did a friend of mine, ask for a porter to take up his luggage to the hotel! There is an English as well as a Russian Consulate at Resht; & the former building, after being for some time unoccupied, is about to receive another

[1] The Imperial Bank has since issued banknotes, but as they can only be cashed, at present in the town where issued, I doubt whether they are accepted at the post houses.

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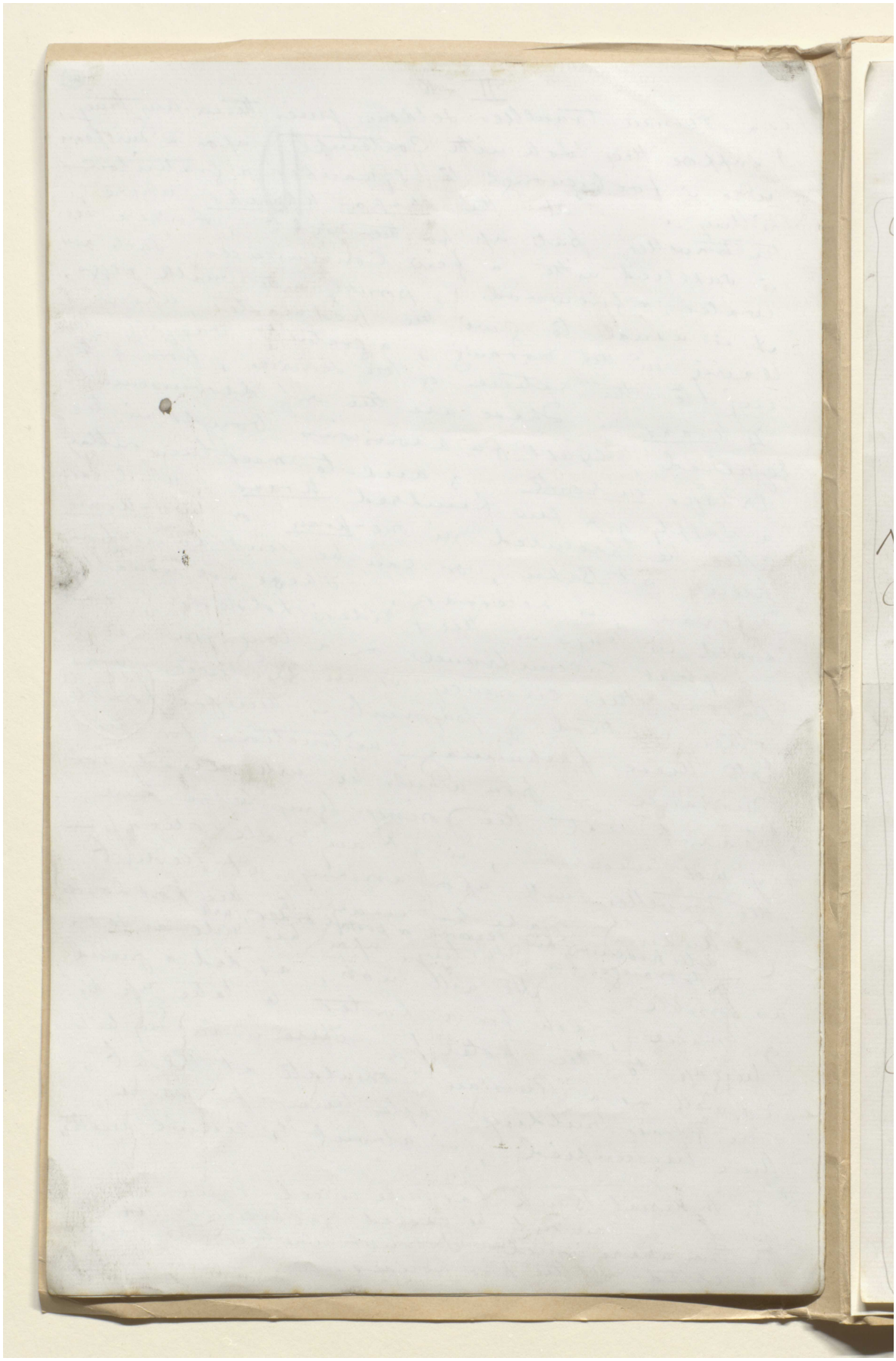
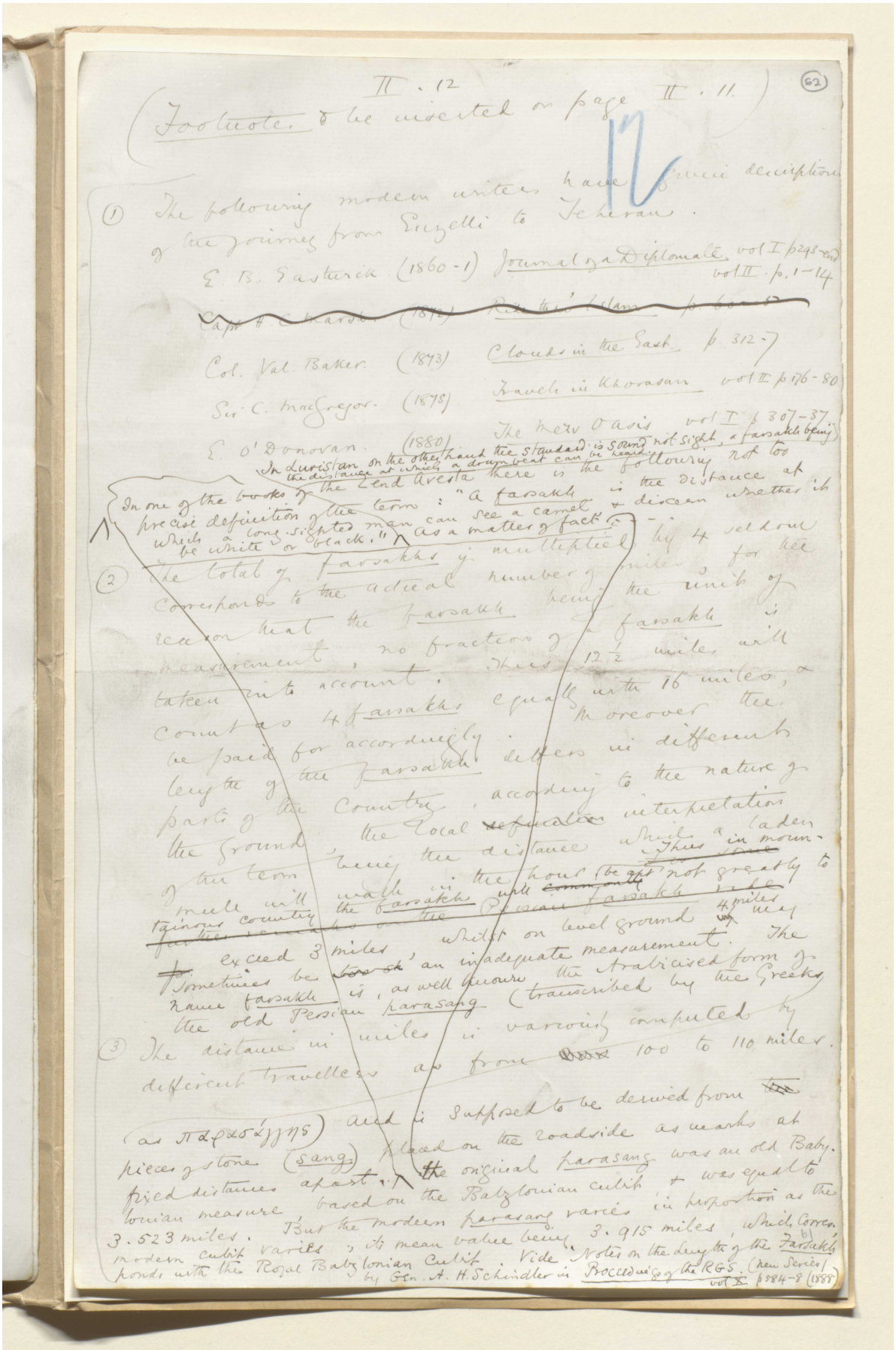
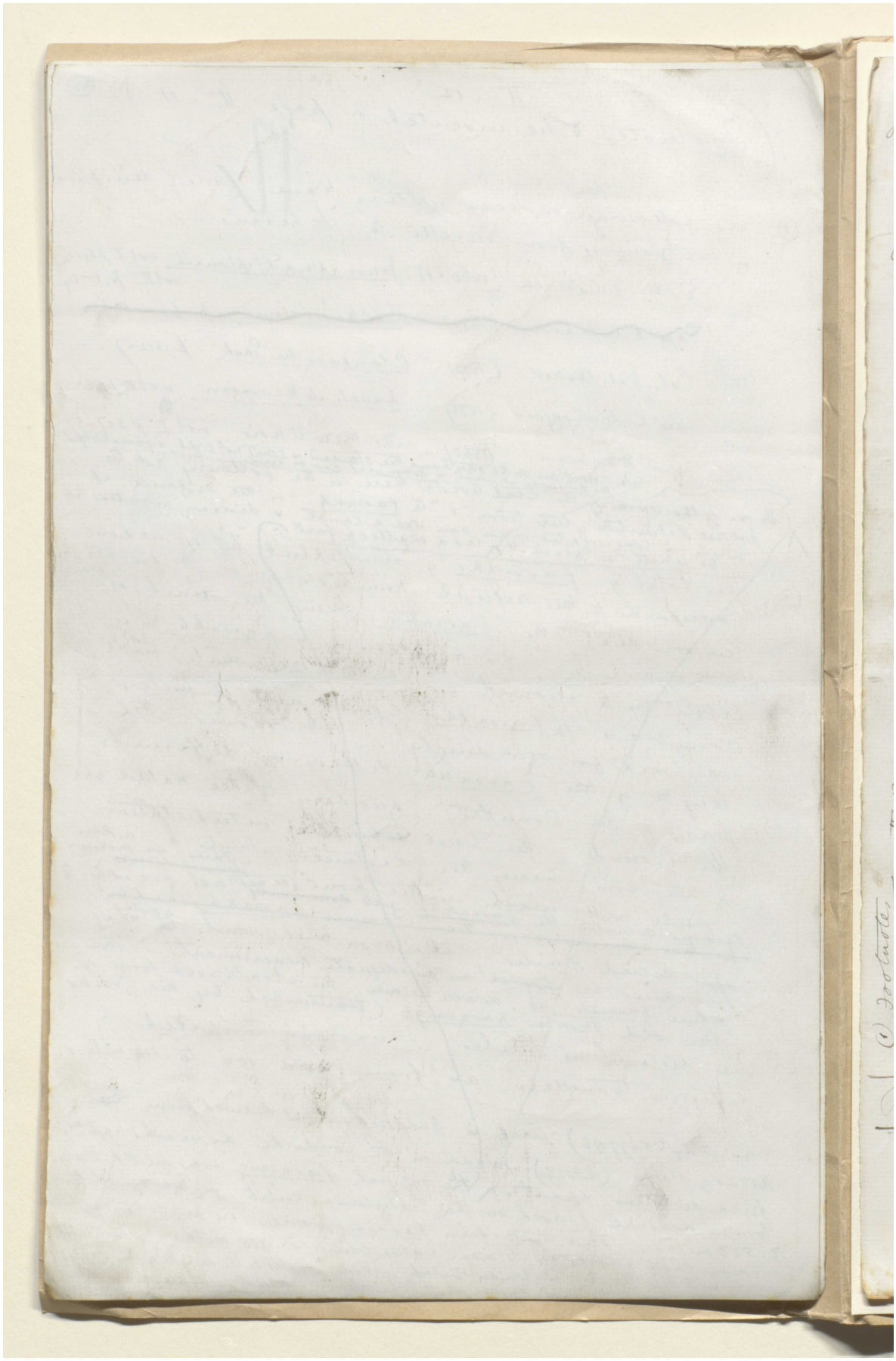
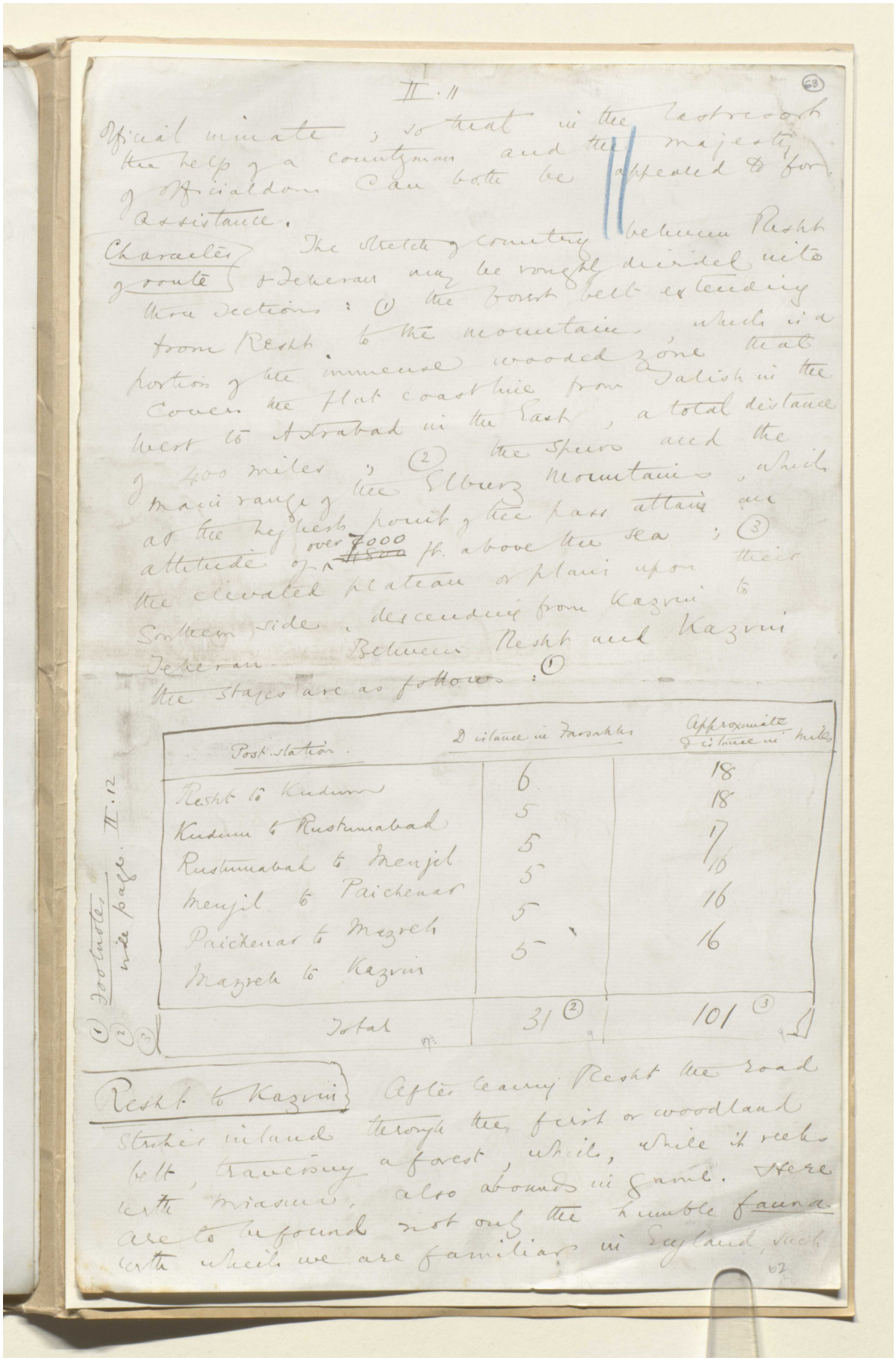








II. 11

(23)

Official minute ; so that in the last resort the help of a countryman and the majesty of Officialdom can both be appealed to for assistance.

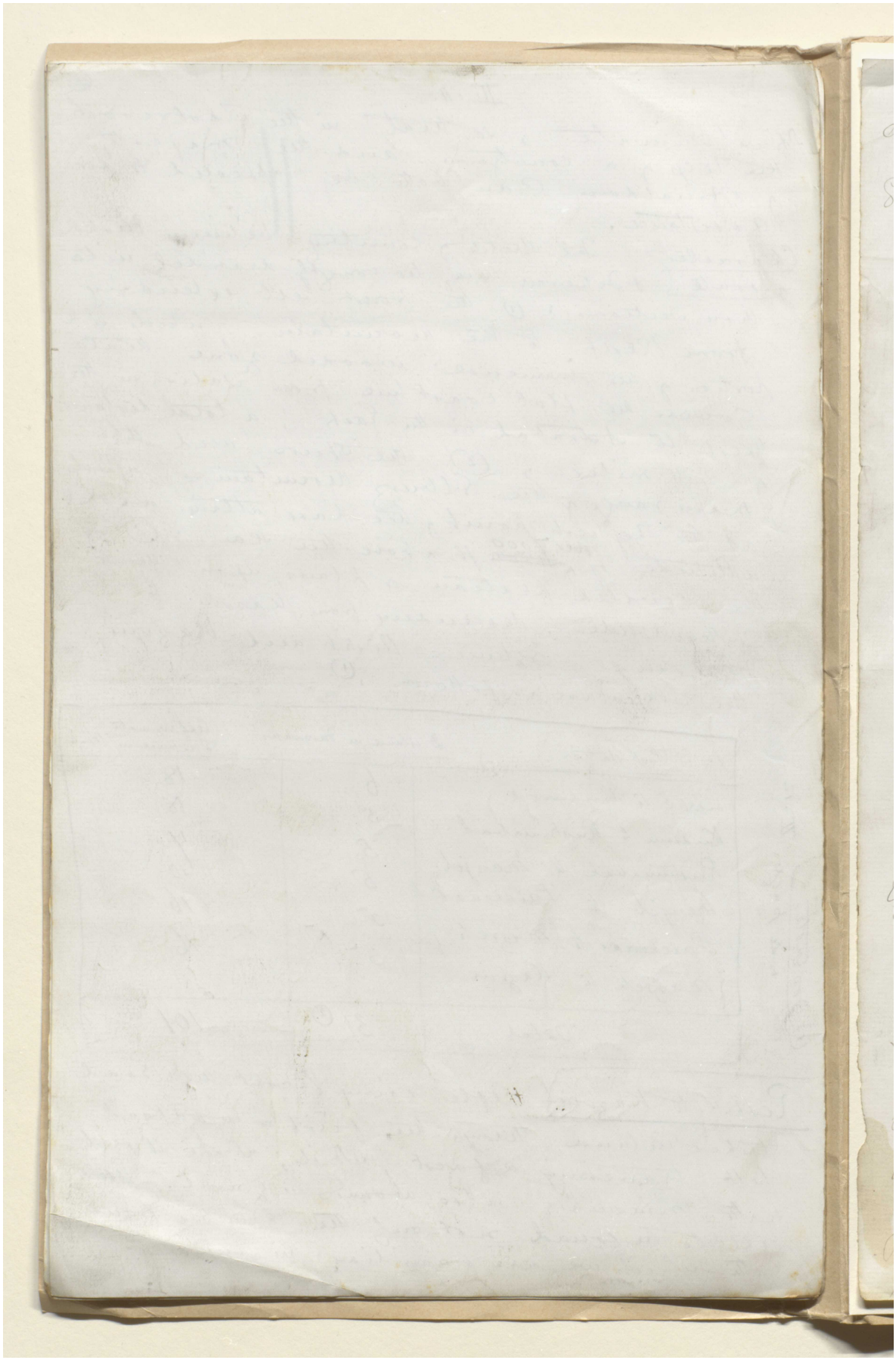
Character of route } The stretch of country between Resht & Tehran may be roughly divided into three sections : (1) the forest belt extending from Resht to the mountains, which is a portion of the immense wooded zone that covers the flat coast line from Talish in the West to Astrabad in the East, a total distance of 400 miles ; (2) the Spurs and the main range of the Elburz mountains, which at the highest point of the pass attain an altitude of over ~~7000~~ 8000 ft. above the sea ; (3) the elevated plateau or plain upon their Southern side, descending from Kazvin to Tehran.

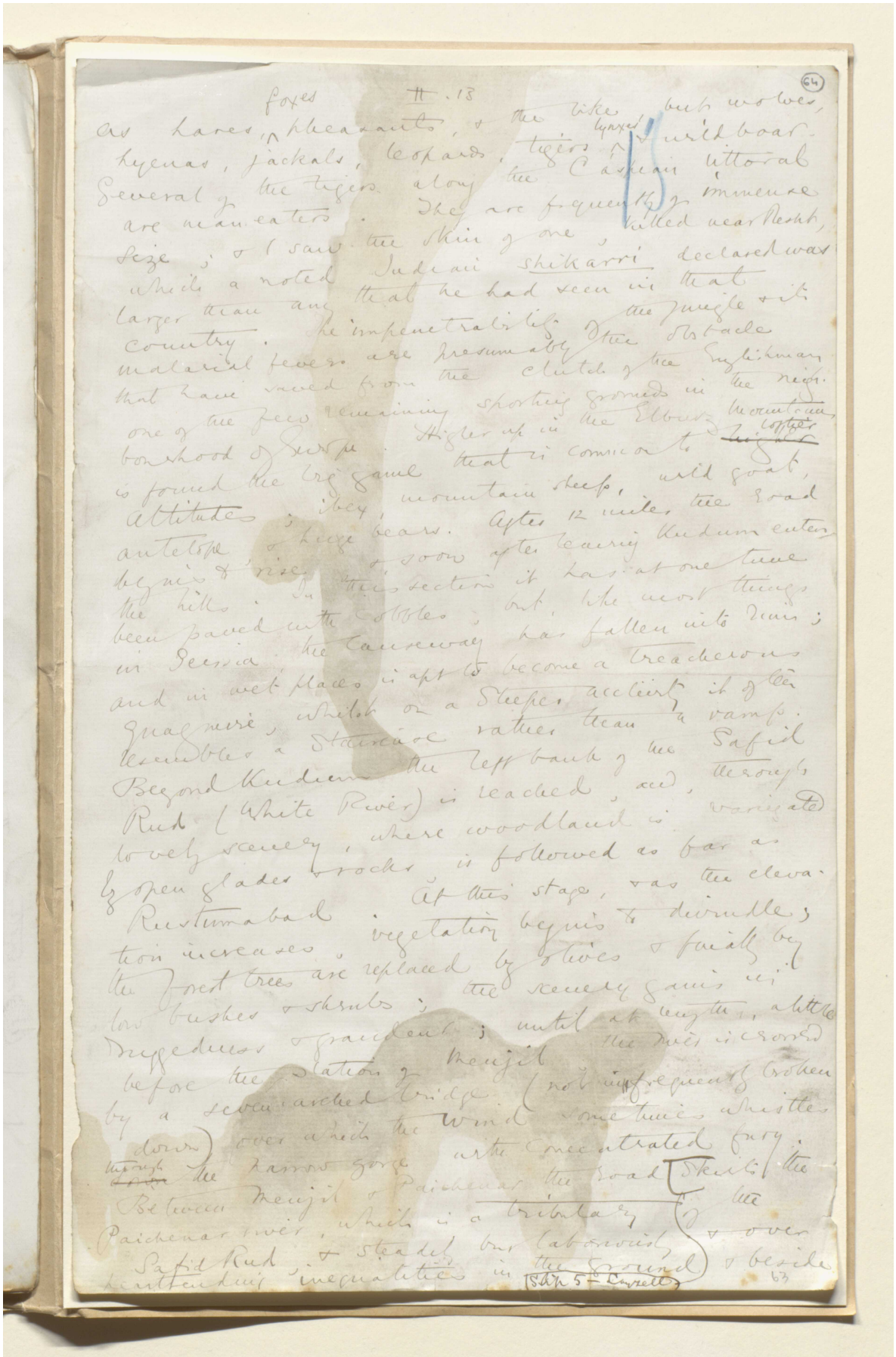
Between Resht and Kazvin the stages are as follows : (1)

Post Station.	Distance in Farsakhs	Approximate Distance in miles.
Resht to Kudum	6	18
Kudum to Rustumabad	5	18
Rustumabad to Menjil	5	17
Menjil to Paichenar	5	16
Paichenar to Mazreh	5	16
Mazreh to Kazvin		
Total	31 (2)	101 (3)

(1) (2) (3) Footnote, see page II. 12

Resht to Kazvin } After leaving Resht the road strikes inland through the first or woodland belt, traversing a forest, which, while it reeks with miasma, also abounds in game. Here are to be found not only the humble fauna with which we are familiar in England, such





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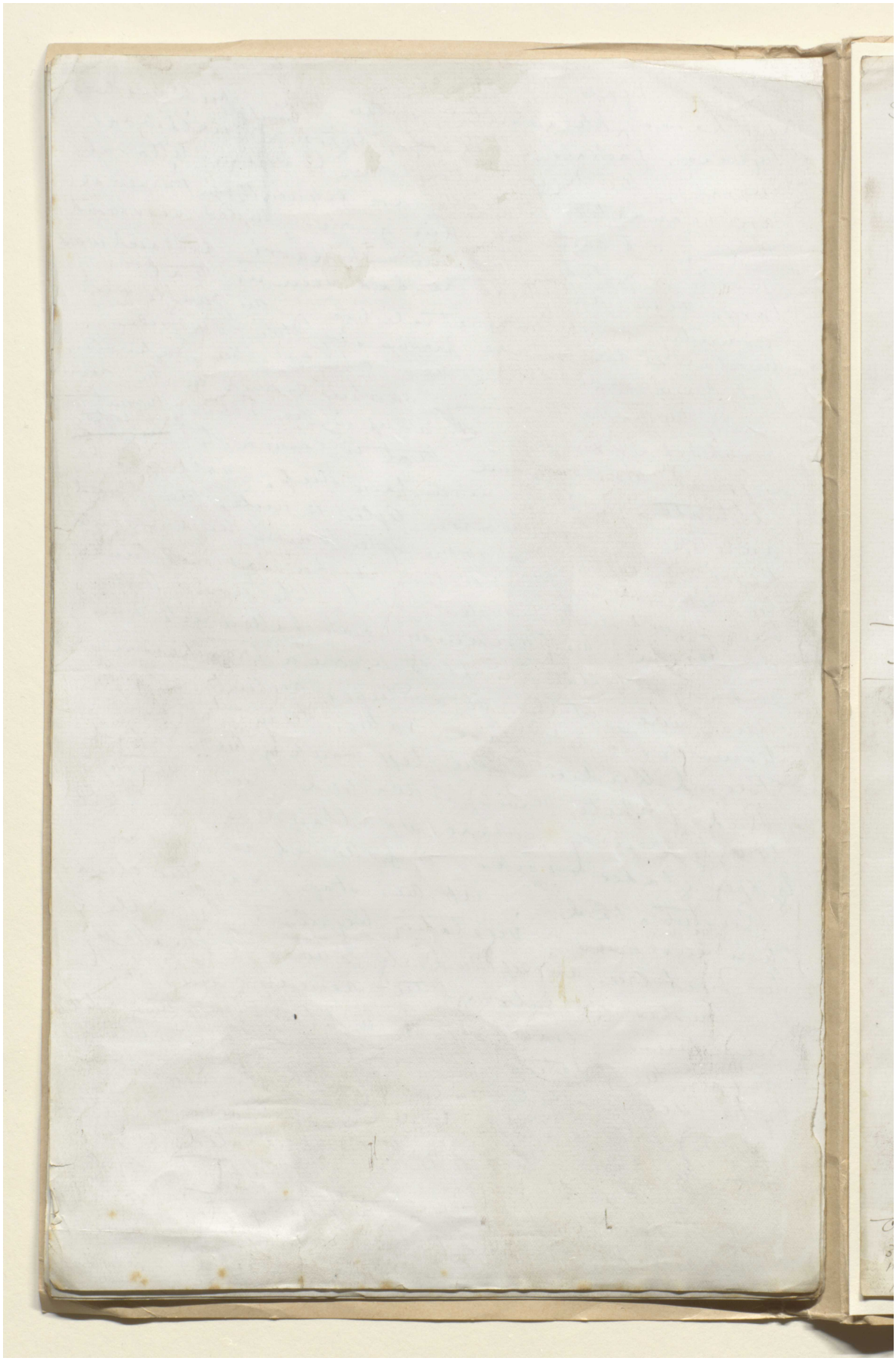

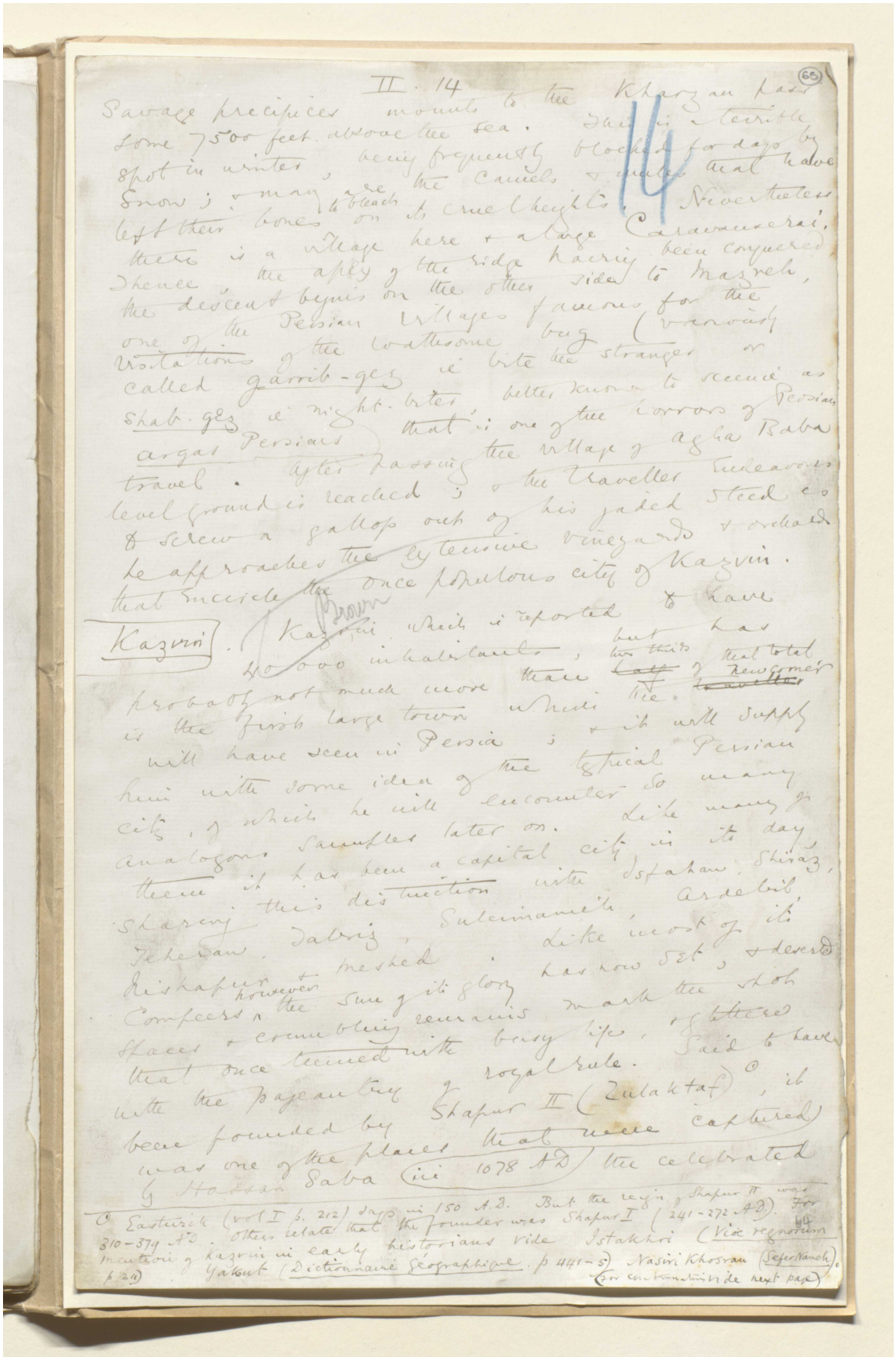

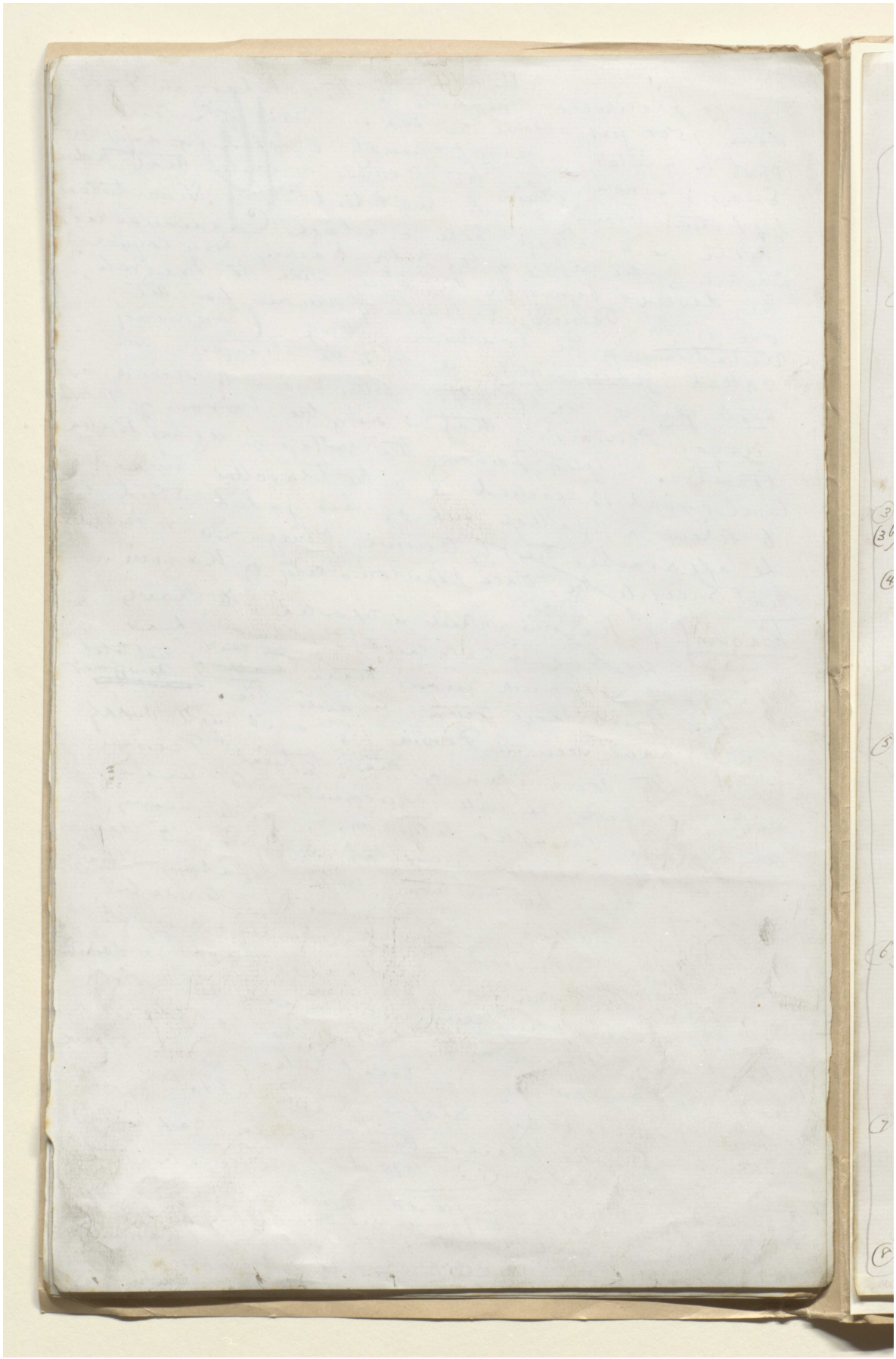

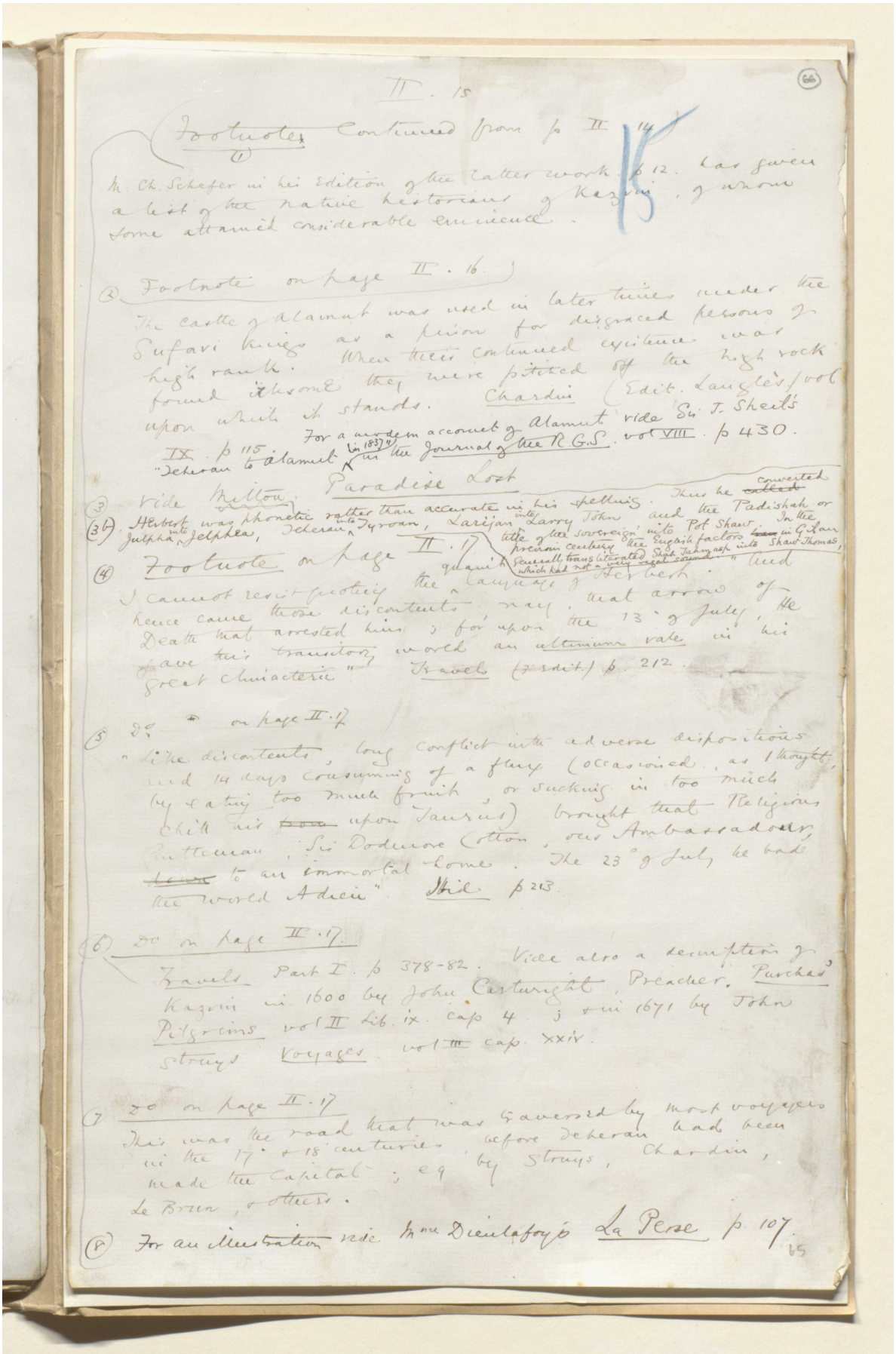

II. 15

Footnote (1) Continued from p II. 14

M. Ch. Schefer in his Edition of the latter work p 12. has given a list of the native historians of Kazvin, I whom some attained considerable eminence.

(2) Footnote on page II. 16.

The castle of Alamut was used in later times under the Sufavi kings as a prison for disgraced persons of high rank. When these continued existence was found irksome they were pitched off the high rock upon which it stands. Chardin (Edit. Langlès/vol IX. p 115 "Teheran to Alamut" For a modern account of Alamut vide Sr. I. Sheil's in 1837 in the Journal of the R.G.S. vol VIII. p 430.

(3) Vide Milton. Paradise Lost

(3b) Herbert was phonetic rather than accurate in his spellings. Thus he converted Julpha into Jelphlea, Teheran into Tyroan, Larijan into Larry John and the Padishah or title of the Sovereign into Pot Shaw. In the previous century the English factors in Gilan generally translitterated Shah Jahan as Shaw Thomas, which had not a very [illegible] sound.

(4) Footnote on page II. 17

I cannot resist quoting the language of Herbert. Hence came those discontents, nay, that arrow of Death that arrested him; for upon the 13th of July, He gave this transitory world an ultimum vale in his great climacteric" Travels (2nd edit.) p 212.

(5) Do * on page II. 17

"like discontents, long conflict with adverse dispositions and 14 days consuming of a flux (occasioned, as I thought, by eating too much fruit, or sucking in too much chill air upon Taurus) brought that Religious Patteman, Sir Dodmore Cotton, our Ambassador, to an immortal home. The 23d of July he bade the world Adieu" Ibid p 213.

(6) Do on page II. 17

Travels Part I. p 378-82. Vide also a description of Kazvin in 1600 by John Casturight, Preacher. Purchas Pilgrims vol II Lib. ix. cap 4; in 1671 by John Strays Voyages vol III cap. xxiv.

(7) Do on page II. 17

This was the road that was traversed by most voyagers in the 17th & 18th centuries, before Teheran had been made the Capital; eg by Strays, Chardin, Le Brun, & others.

(8) For an illustration vide Mme Dieulafoy's La Perse p 107.

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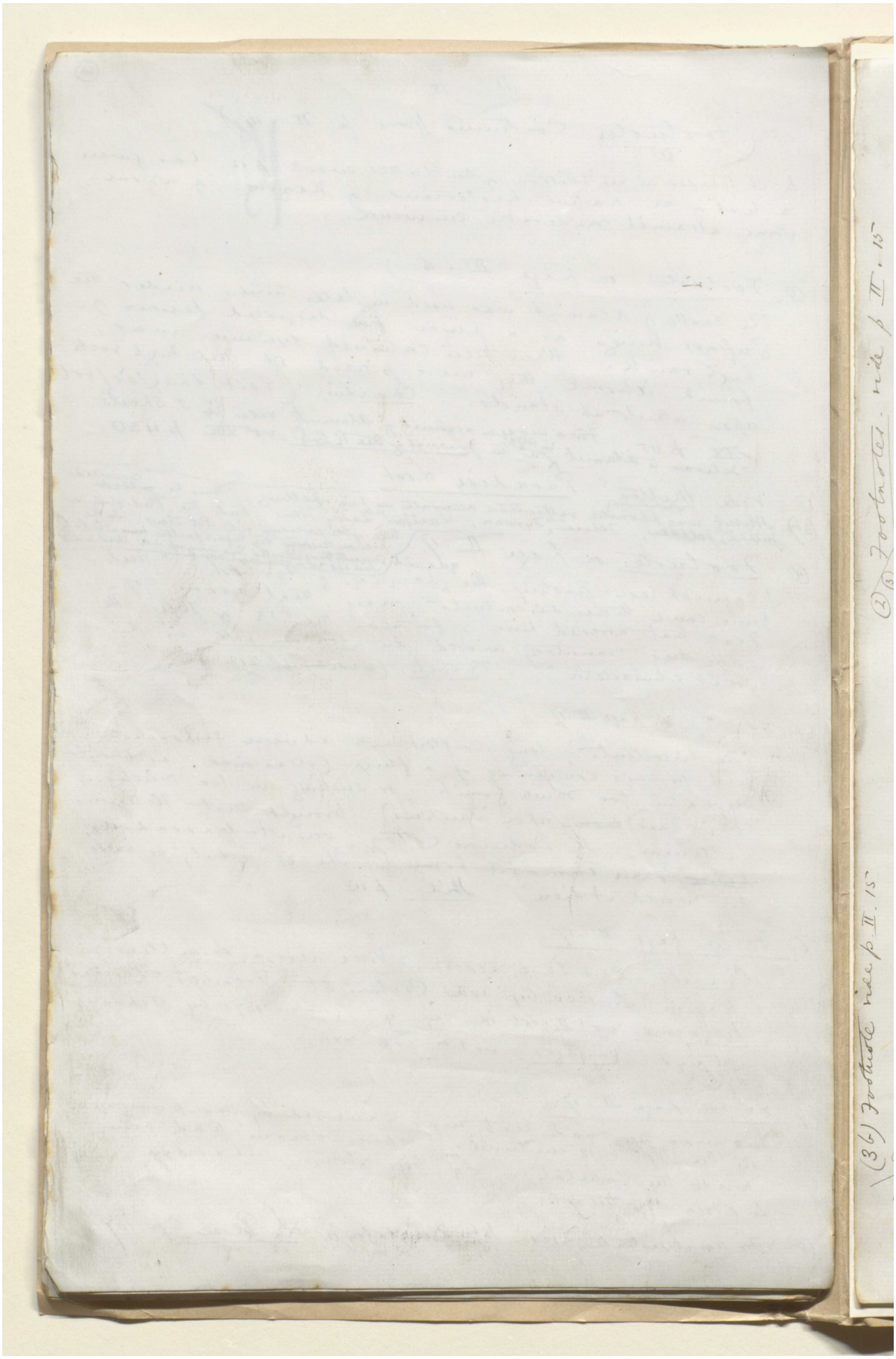
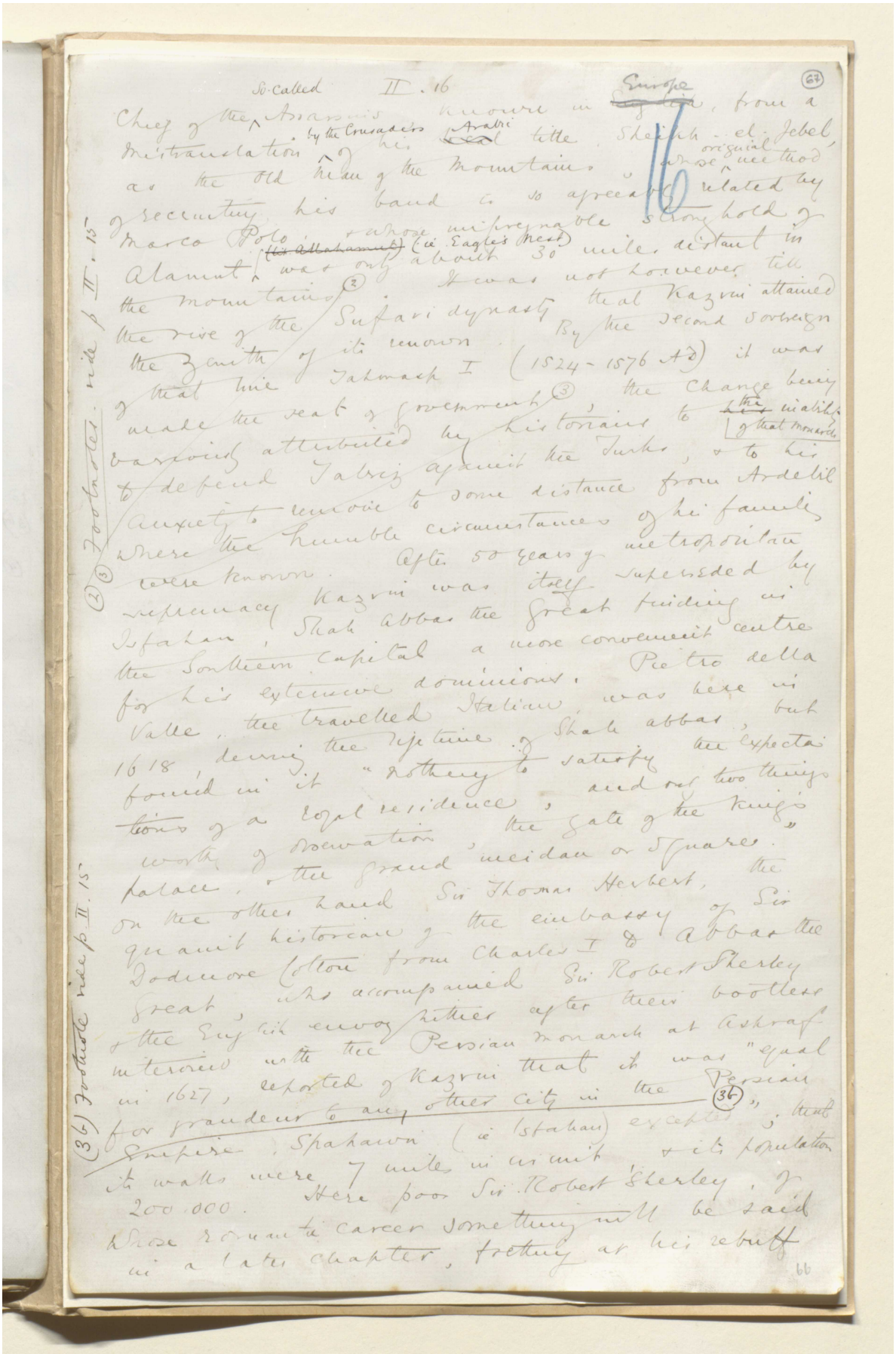
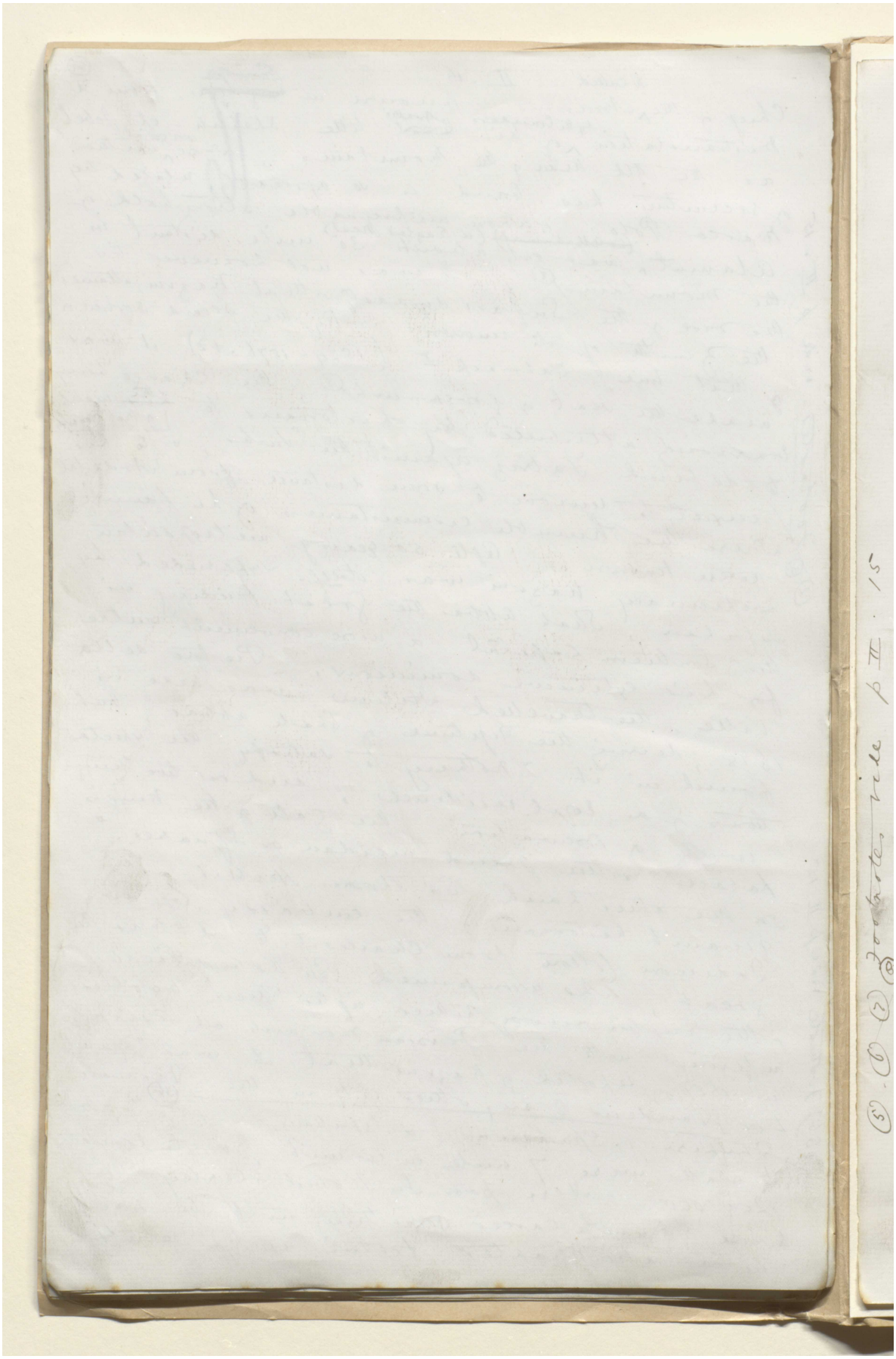
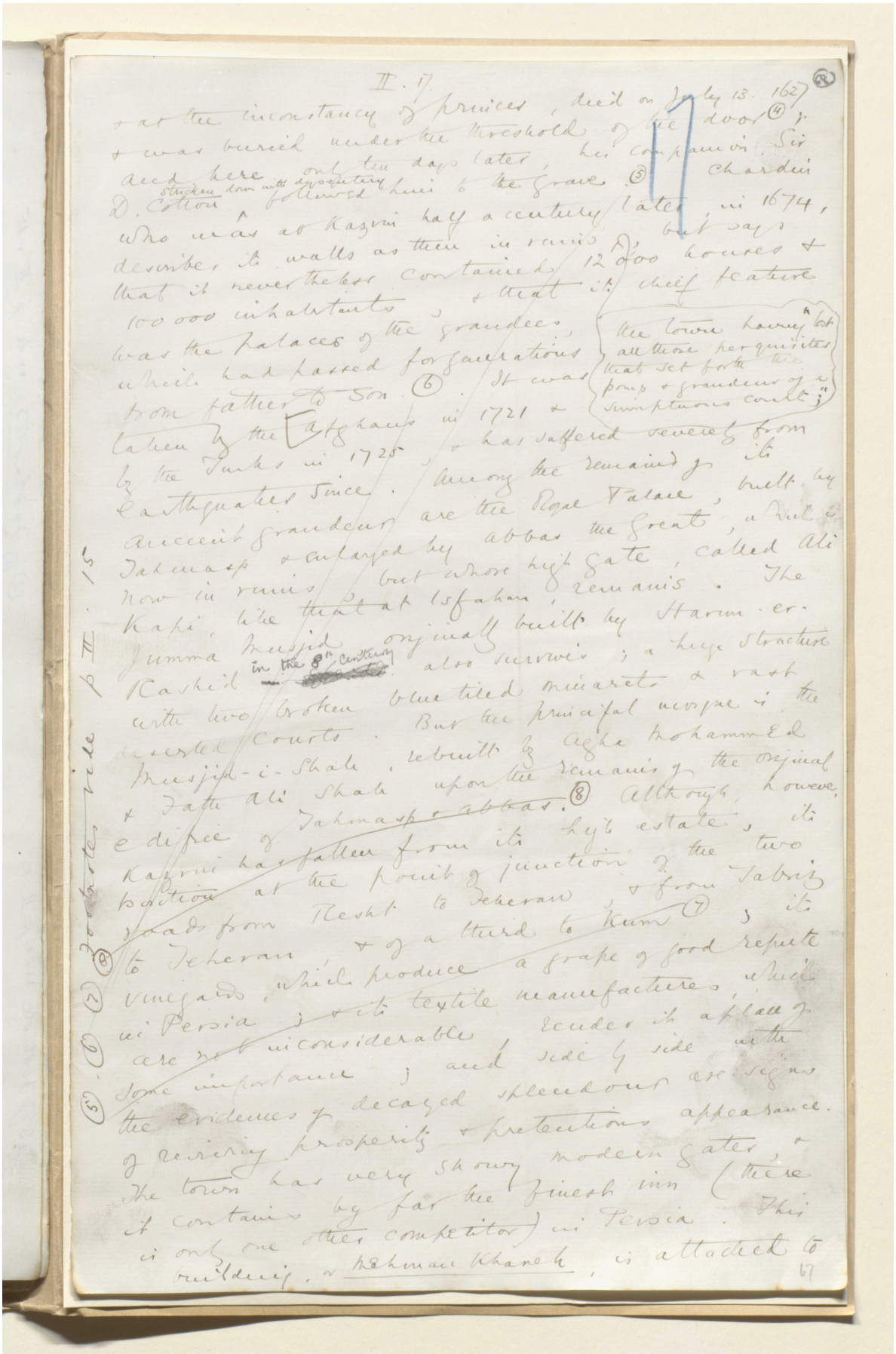
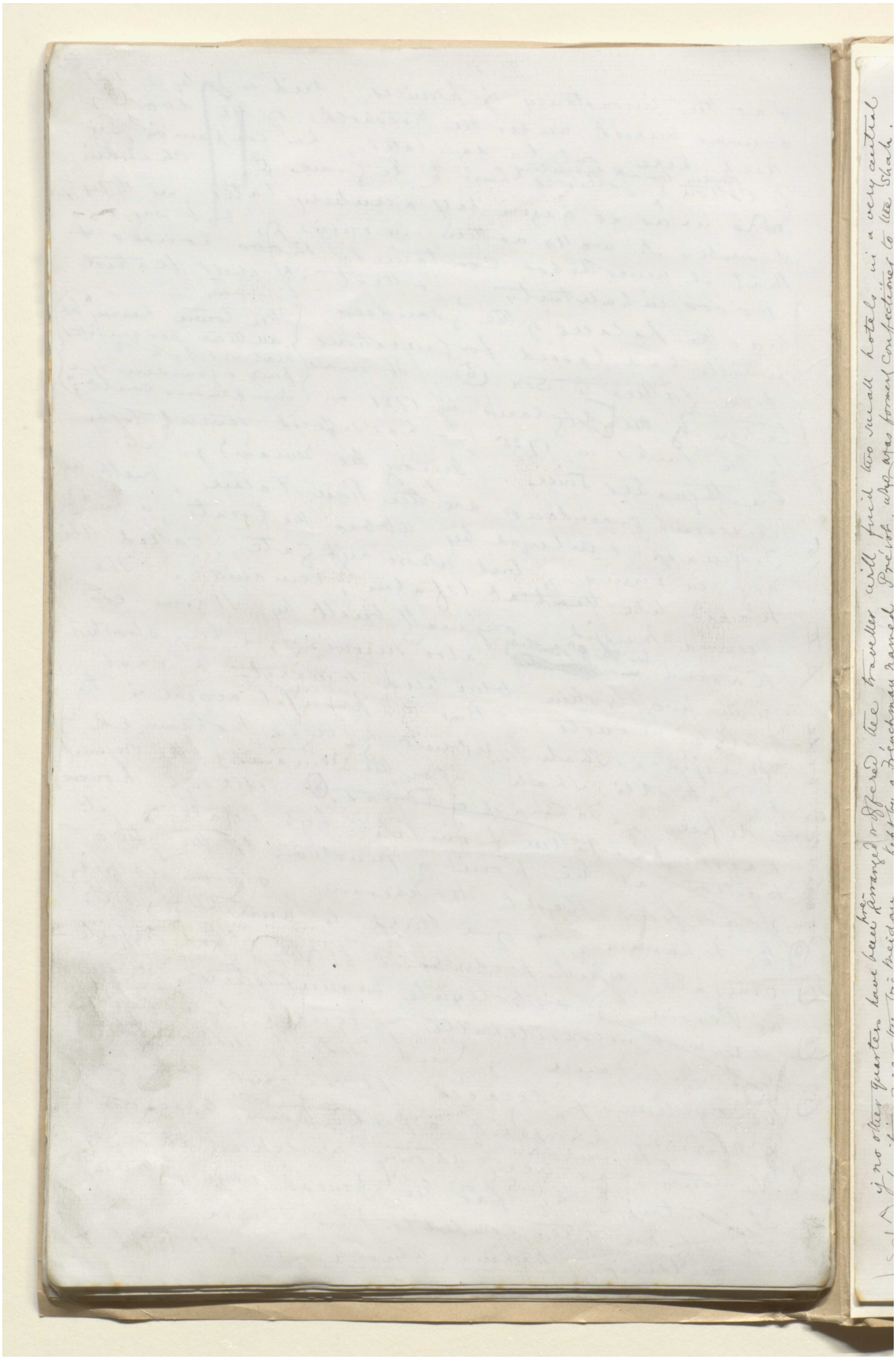


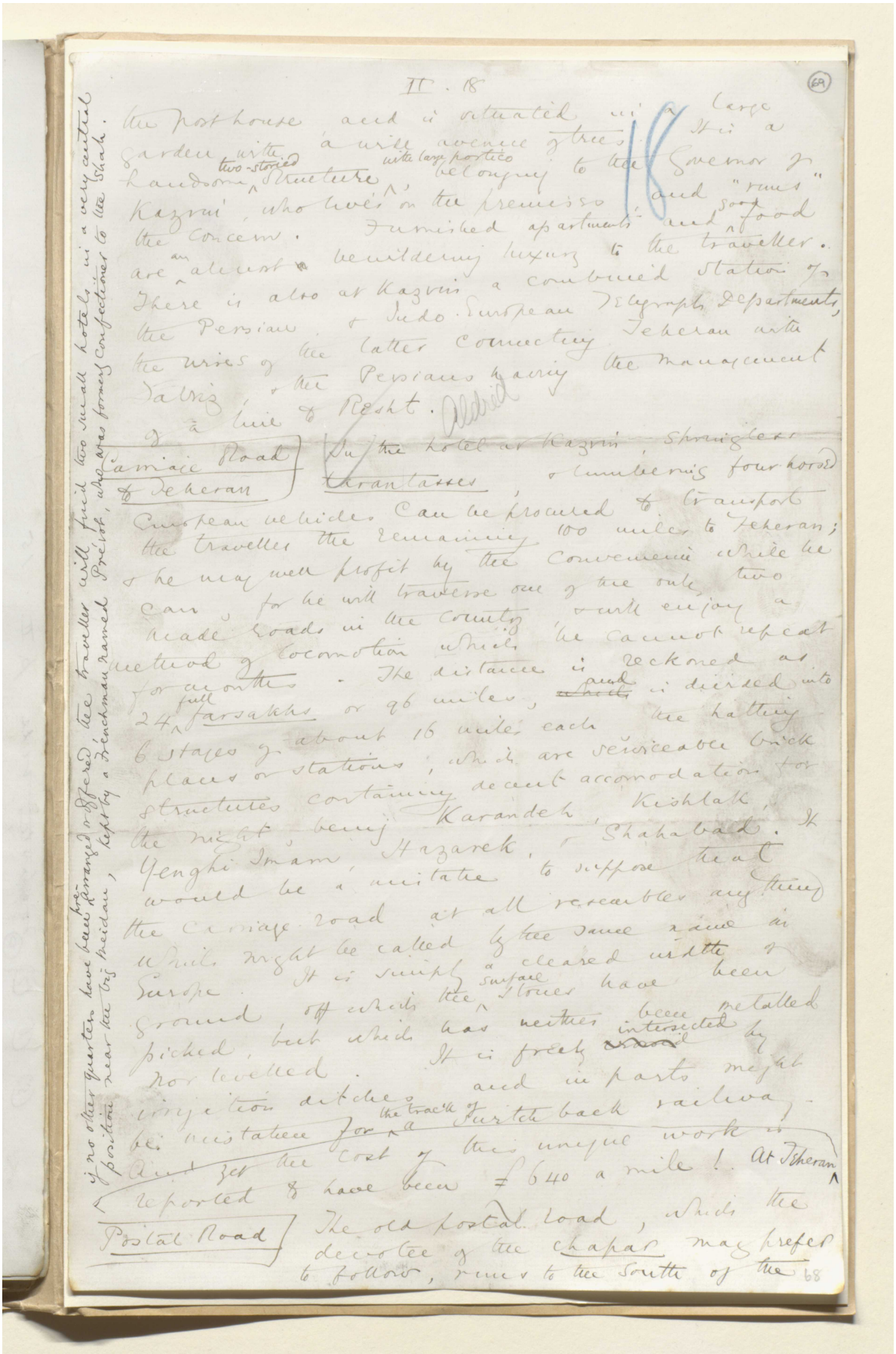








مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٦٩و] (١٣٥٥/١٣٧)



the post house and is situated in a large garden with a wide avenue of trees. It is a handsome two-storied structure with large portico, belonging to the Governor of Kazvin, who lives on the premises, and "runs" the concern. Furnished apartments and good food are an almost bewildering luxury to the traveller. There is also at Kazvin a combined station of the Persian & Indo-European Telegraph Departments, the wires of the latter connecting Teheran with Tabriz, & the Persians having the management of a line to Resht. Aldrich

Carriage Road to Teheran

In the hotel at Kazvin, springless tarantasses, & lumbering four-horsed European vehicles can be procured to transport the traveller the remaining 100 miles to Teheran; & he may well profit by the convenience while he can, for he will traverse one of the only two made roads in the country, & will enjoy a method of locomotion which he cannot repeat for months. The distance is reckoned as 24 full farsakhs or 96 miles, ~~which~~ and is divided into 6 stages of about 16 miles each, the halting places or stations, which are serviceable brick structures containing decent accomodation for the night, being Karandeh, Kishlak, Yenghi Imam, Hazarek, & Shahabad. It would be a mistake to suppose that the carriage road at all resembles anything which might be called by the same name in Europe. It is simply a cleared width of ground, off which the surface stones have been picked, but which has neither been metalled nor levelled. It is freely ~~[illegible]~~ intersected by irrigation ditches, and in parts might be mistaken for the track of a switch back railway. And yet the cost of this unique work is reported to have been £640 a mile! At Teheran

Postal Road

The old postal road, which the devotee of the chapar may prefer to follow, runs to the south of the

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if no other quarters have been pre-arranged or offered, the traveller will find two small hotels in a very central position near the big Meidan, kept by a Frenchman named Prévot, who was formerly confectioner to the Shah.

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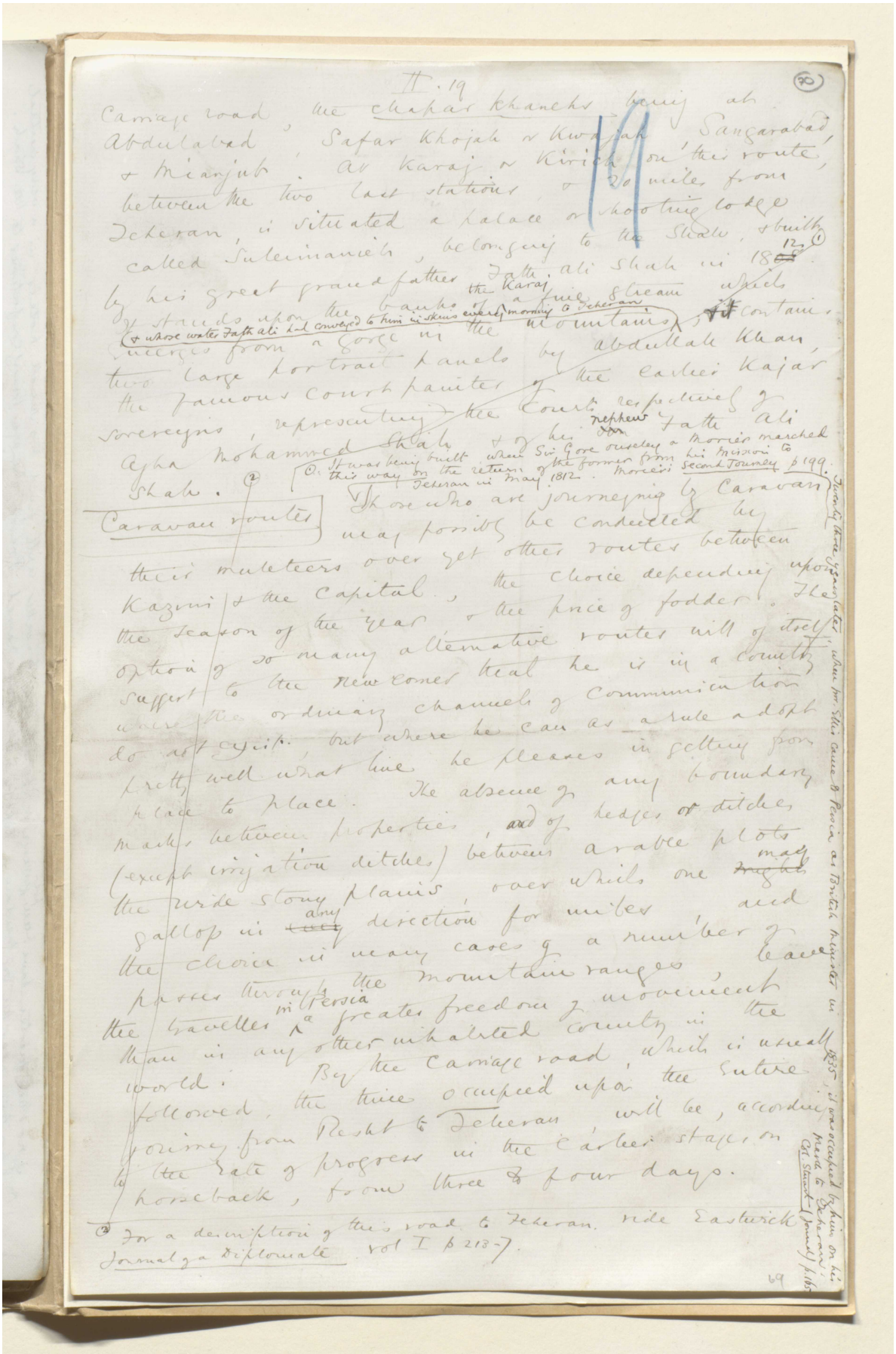
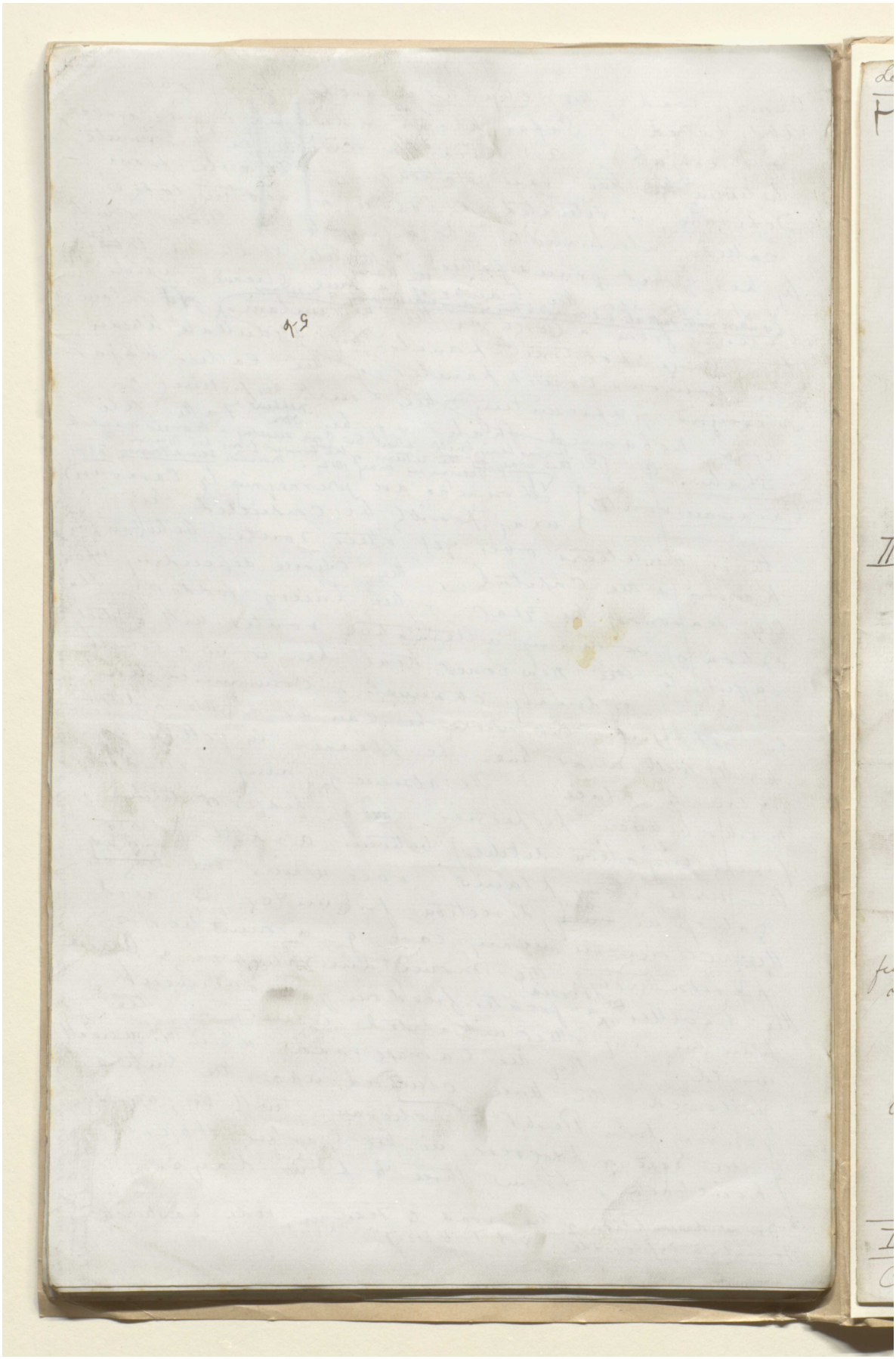
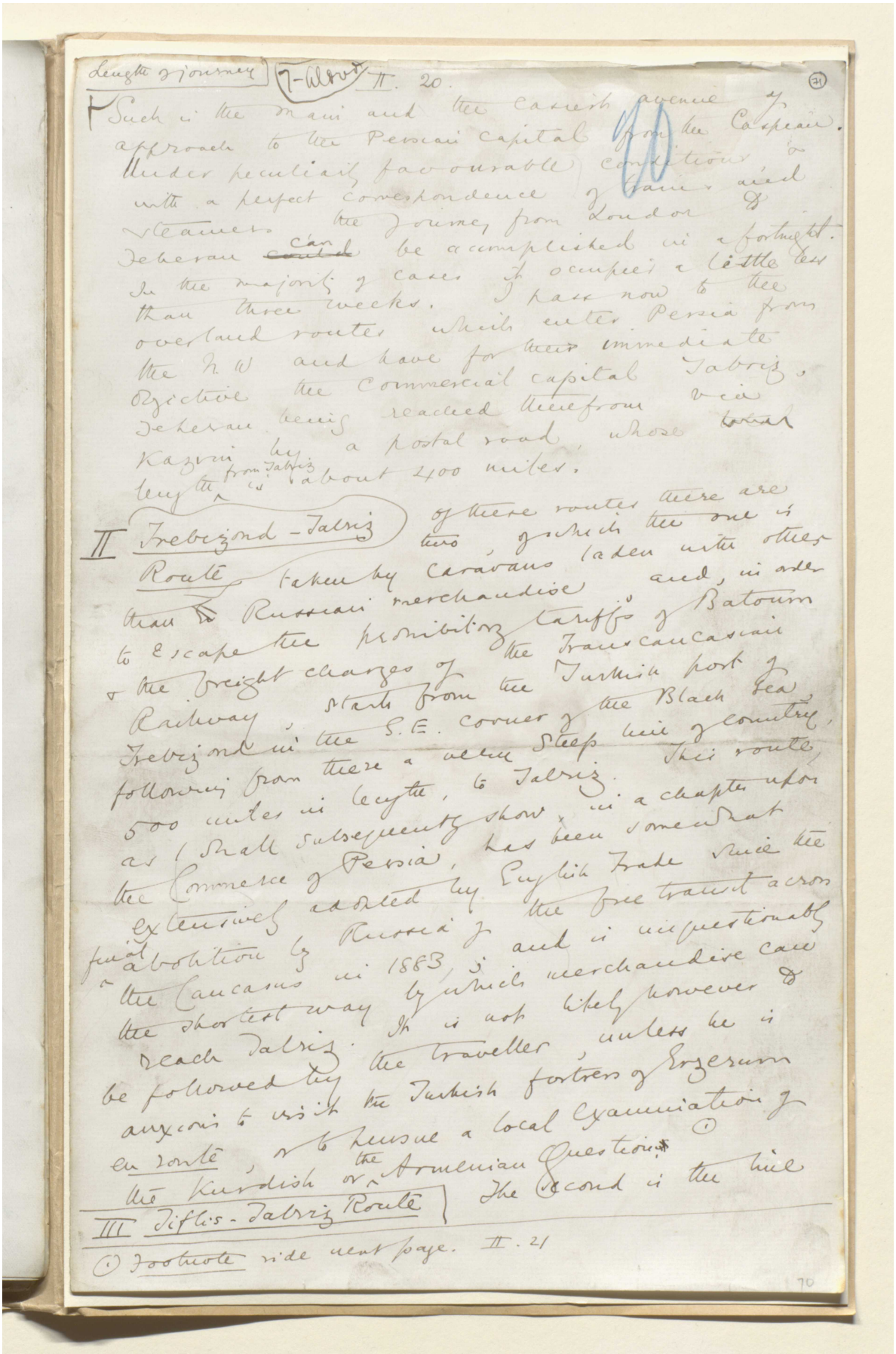




Length of journey | 7-Alvor | II. 20. | (71)



Such is the main and the easiest avenue of approach to the Persian capital from the Caspian. Under peculiarly favourable conditions & with a perfect correspondence of trains and steamers the journey from London to Teheran can be accomplished in a fortnight. In the majority of cases it occupies a little less than three weeks. I pass now to the overland routes which enter Persia from the N.W. and have for their immediate objective the commercial capital Tabriz, Teheran being reached therefrom via Kazvin by a postal road, whose total length from Tabriz is about 400 miles.

II Trebizond - Tabriz Route. Of these routes there are two, of which the one is taken by caravans laden with other than Russian merchandise and, in order to escape the prohibitory tariffs of Batoum & the freight charges of the Transcaucasian Railway, starts from the Turkish port of Trebizond in the S.E. corner of the Black Sea, following from there a very steep line of country, 500 miles in length, to Tabriz. This route, as I shall subsequently show, in a chapter upon the Commerce of Persia, has been somewhat extensively adopted by English trade since the final abolition by Russia of the free transit across the Caucasus in 1883, and is unquestionably the shortest way by which merchandise can reach Tabriz. It is not likely however to be followed by the traveller, unless he is anxious to visit the Turkish fortress of Erzerum en route, or to pursue a local examination of the Kurdish or the Armenian Question.(1)

III Tiflis - Tabriz Route. The second is the line

(1) Footnote vide next page. II. 21

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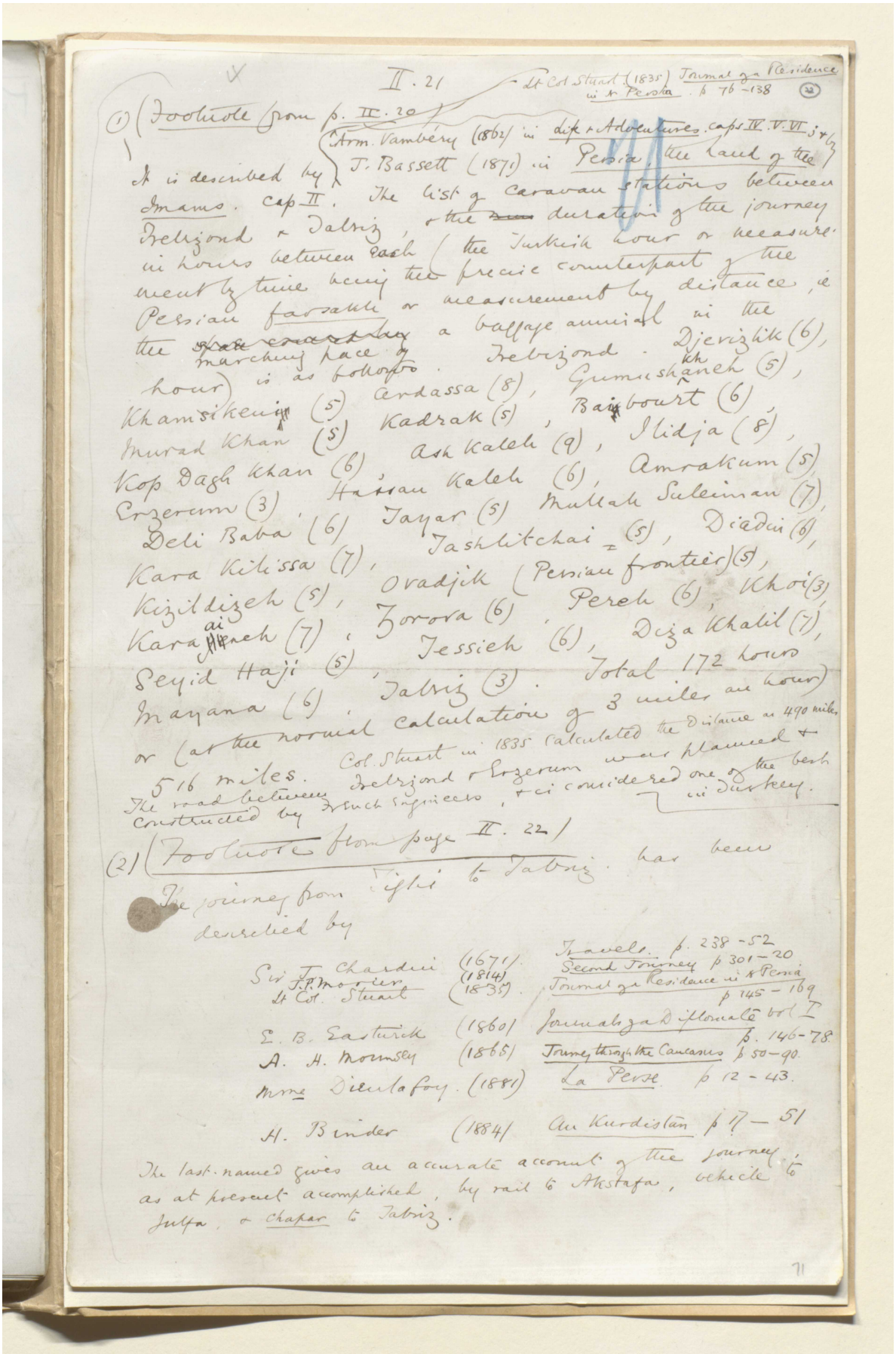
II. 21

Lt Col Stuart (1835) Journal of a Residence in N Persia. p 76-138



(1) (Footnote from p. II. 20)

It is described by Arm. Vambéry (1862) in Life & Adventures. caps IV. V. VI; & by J. Bassett (1871) in Persia, the Land of the Imams. cap II. The list of caravan stations between Trebizond & Tabriz, & the duration of the journey in hours between each (the Turkish hour or measurement by time being the precise counterpart of the Persian farsakh or measurement by distance, i.e. the marching pace of a baggage animal in the hour) is as follows. Trebizond. Djevizlik (6), Khamsikeni (5) Ardassa (8), Gumushkhaneh (5), Murad Khan (5) Kadrak (5), Baibourt (6), Kop Dagh Khan (6), Ash Kaleh (9), Ilidja (8), Erzerum (3), Hassan Kaleh (6), Amrakum (5), Deli Baba (6) Tayar (5) Mullah Suleiman (7), Kara Kilissa (7), Tashlitchai (5), Diadin (6), Kizildizeh (5), Ovadjik (Persian frontier) (5), Karaaineh (7), Zorova (6), Pereh (6), Khoi (3), Seyid Haji (5), Tessieh (6), Diza Khalil (7), Mayana (6), Tabriz (3). Total 172 hours or (at the normal calculation of 3 miles an hour) 516 miles. Col. Stuart in 1835 calculated the distance as 490 miles. The road between Trebizond & Erzerum was planned & constructed by French engineers, & is considered one of the best in Turkey.

(2) (Footnote from page II. 22)

The journey from Tiflis to Tabriz has been described by

Sir J. Chardin	(1671)	Travels. p. 238-52
J. P. Morier	(1814)	Second Journey p 301-20
Lt Col. Stuart	(1835)	Journal of a Residence in N Persia p 145-169
E. B. Eastwick	(1860)	Journals of a Diplomate vol I p. 146-78
A. H. Mounsey	(1865)	Journey through the Caucasus p 50-90
Mme Dieulafoy	(1881)	La Perse p 12-43
H. Binder	(1884)	Au Kurdistan p 17-51

The last named gives an accurate account of the journey as at present accomplished, by rail to Akstafa, vehicle to Julfa, & chapar to Tabriz.

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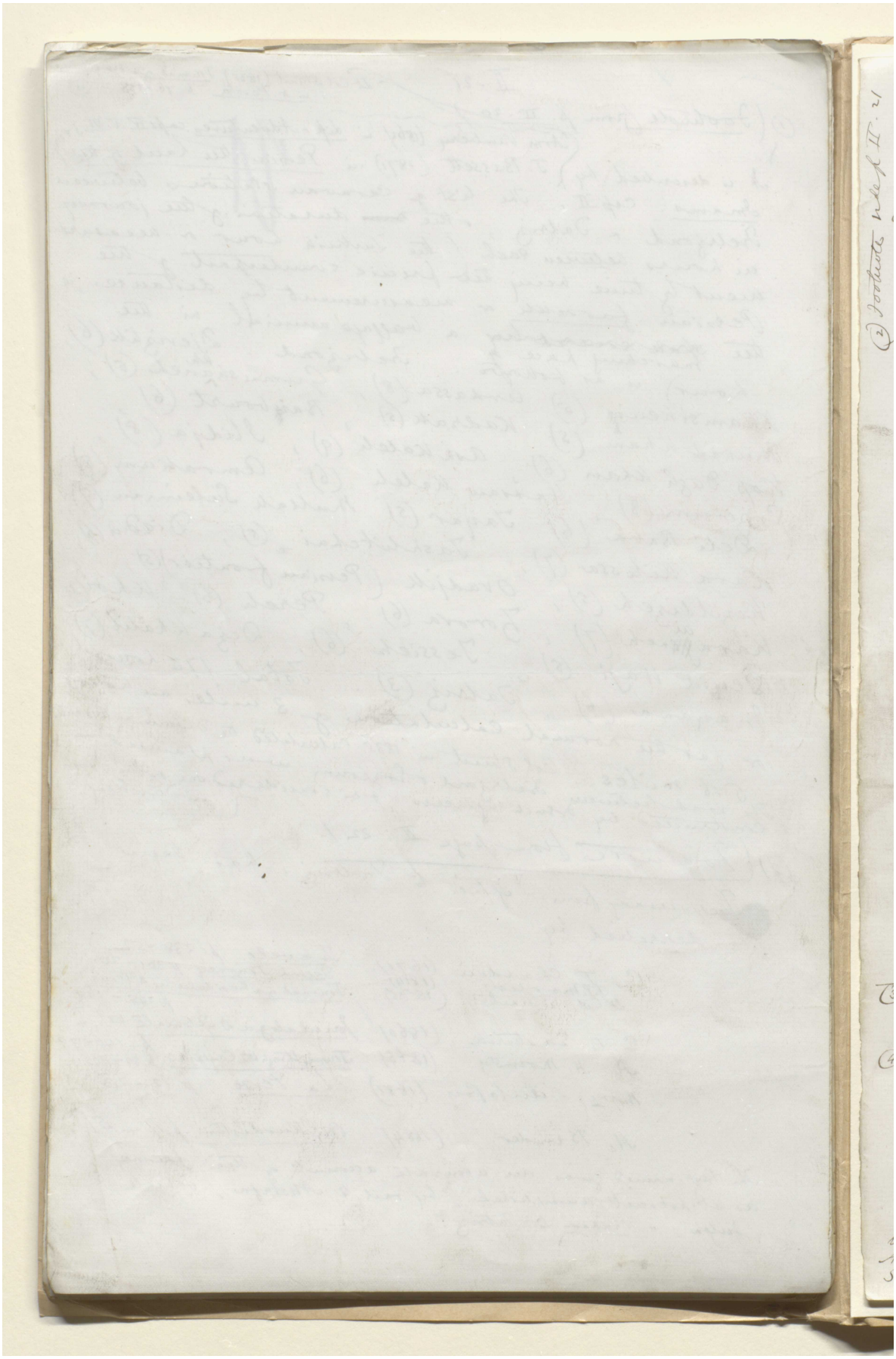
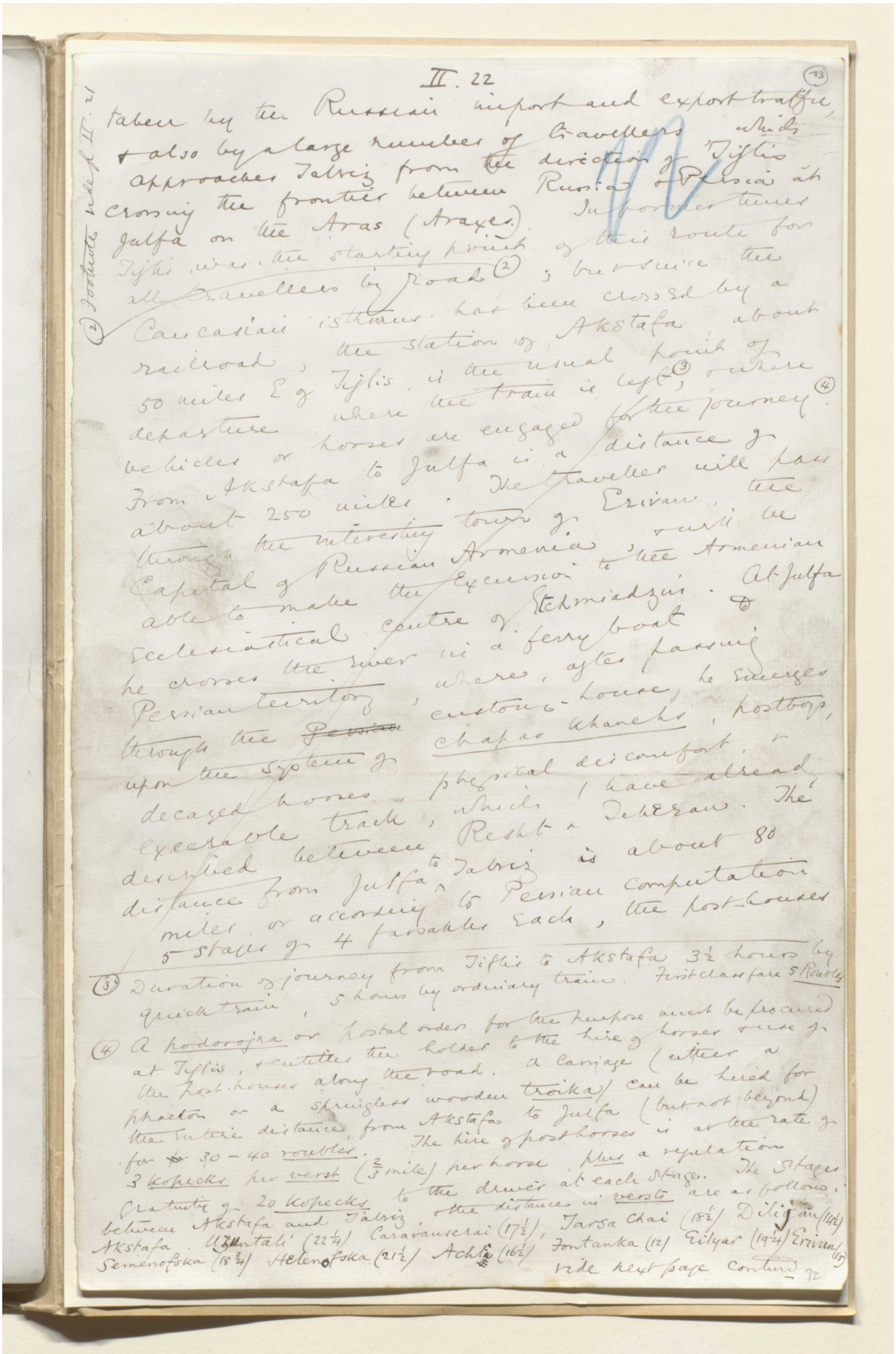


مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٧٣و] (١٣٥٥/١٤٥)

(73)



taken by the Russian import and export traffic, & also by a large number of travellers which approaches Tabriz from the direction of Tiflis crossing the frontier between Russia & Persia at Julfa on the Aras (Araxes). In former times Tiflis was the starting point of this route for all travellers by road (2); but since the Caucasian isthmus has been crossed by a railroad, the station of Akstafa about 50 miles E of Tiflis is the usual point of departure where the train is left (3), & where vehicles or horses are engaged for the journey (4). From Akstafa to Julfa is a distance of about 250 miles. The traveller will pass through the interesting town of Erivan, the Capital of Russian Armenia, & will be able to make the excursion to the Armenian ecclesiastical centre of Etchmiadzin. At Julfa he crosses the river in a ferry boat to Persian territory, where, after passing through the ~~Persian~~ custom-house, he emerges upon the system of chapar khaneh, postboys, decayed horses, physical discomfort, & execrable track, which I have already described between Resht & Teheran. The distance from Julfa to Tabriz is about 80 miles or according to Persian computation 5 stages of 4 farsakhs each, the post-houses

(2) Footnote vide p II. 21

(3) Duration of journey from Tiflis to Akstafa 3½ hours by quick train, 5 hours by ordinary train. First class fare 5 Roubles

(4) A podorojna or postal order for the purpose must be procured at Tiflis, & entitles the holder to the hire of horses & use of the post-houses along the road. A carriage (either a phaeton or a springless wooden troika) can be hired for the entire distance from Akstafa to Julfa (but not beyond) for ~~#~~ 30 – 40 roubles. The hire of post horses is at the rate of 3 kopecks per verst (⅔ mile) per horse, plus a regulation gratuity of 20 kopecks to the driver at each stage. The stages between Akstafa and Tabriz, & the distances in versts are as follows: Akstafa, Uzuntali (22¼) Caravanserai (17½), Tarsa Chai (18½) Diligan (14½) Semenofska (18¾) Helenofska (21½) Achta (16½) Fontanka (12) Eilyar (19¼) Erivan (15)

vide next page contd

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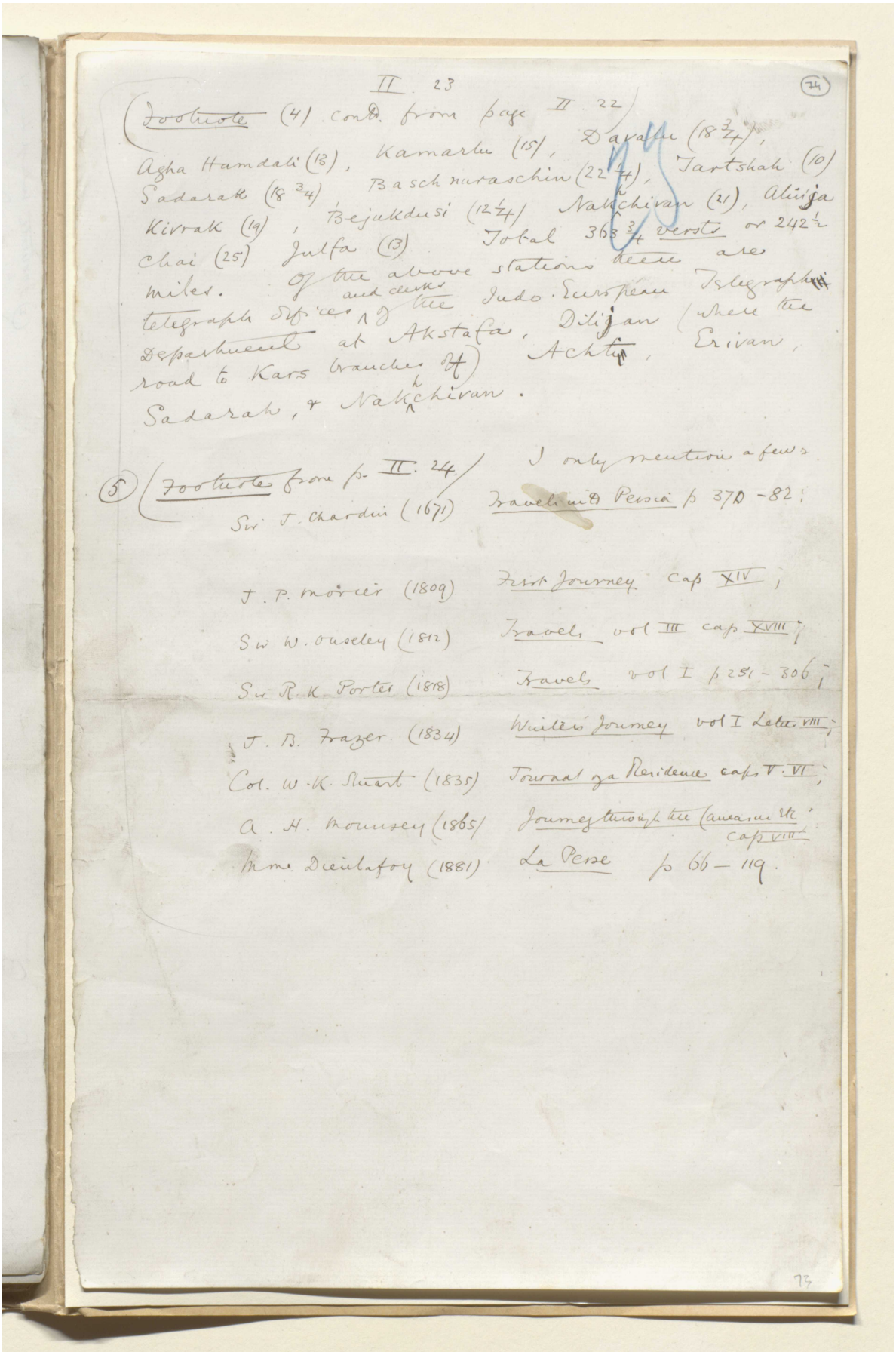

II. 23 (24)

Footnote (4) contd. from page II. 22

Agha Hamdali (13), Kamarlu (15), Davalu (18 3/4), Sadarak (18 3/4) Baschuraschin (22 1/4), Tartshah (10) Kirrak (19), Bejukdusi (12 1/4) Nakchivan (21), Alidja chai (25) Julfa (13) Total 368 3/4 versts or 242 1/2 miles. Of the above stations those are telegraph Offices and the Department at Akstafa, Dilijan (where the road to Kars branches off) Achty, Erivan, Sadarah, & Nakchivan.

(5) Footnote from p. II. 24

Sir J. Chardin (1671) I only mention a few:
Travels in Persia p 370-82;

J. P. Morier (1809) First Journey Cap XIV;
Sir W. Ouseley (1812) Travels vol III cap XVIII;
Sir R. K. Porter (1818) Travels vol I p 251-306;
J. B. Fraser. (1834) Winter's Journey vol I Letter VIII;
Col. W. K. Stuart (1835) Journal of a Residence caps V-VI;
A. H. Mounsey (1865) Journey through the Caucasus &c caps VIII
Mme Dieulafoy (1881) La Perse p 66-119.

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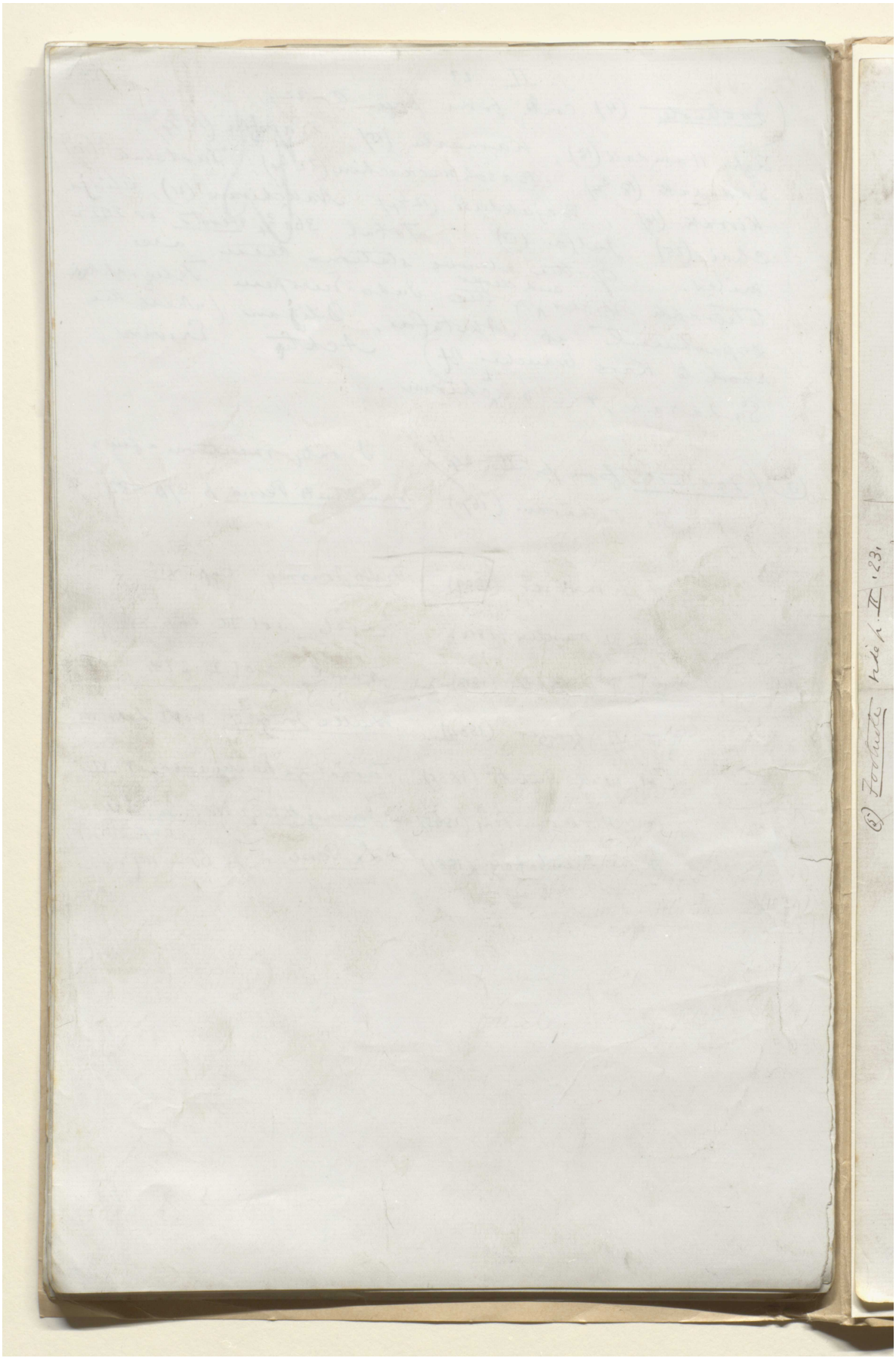

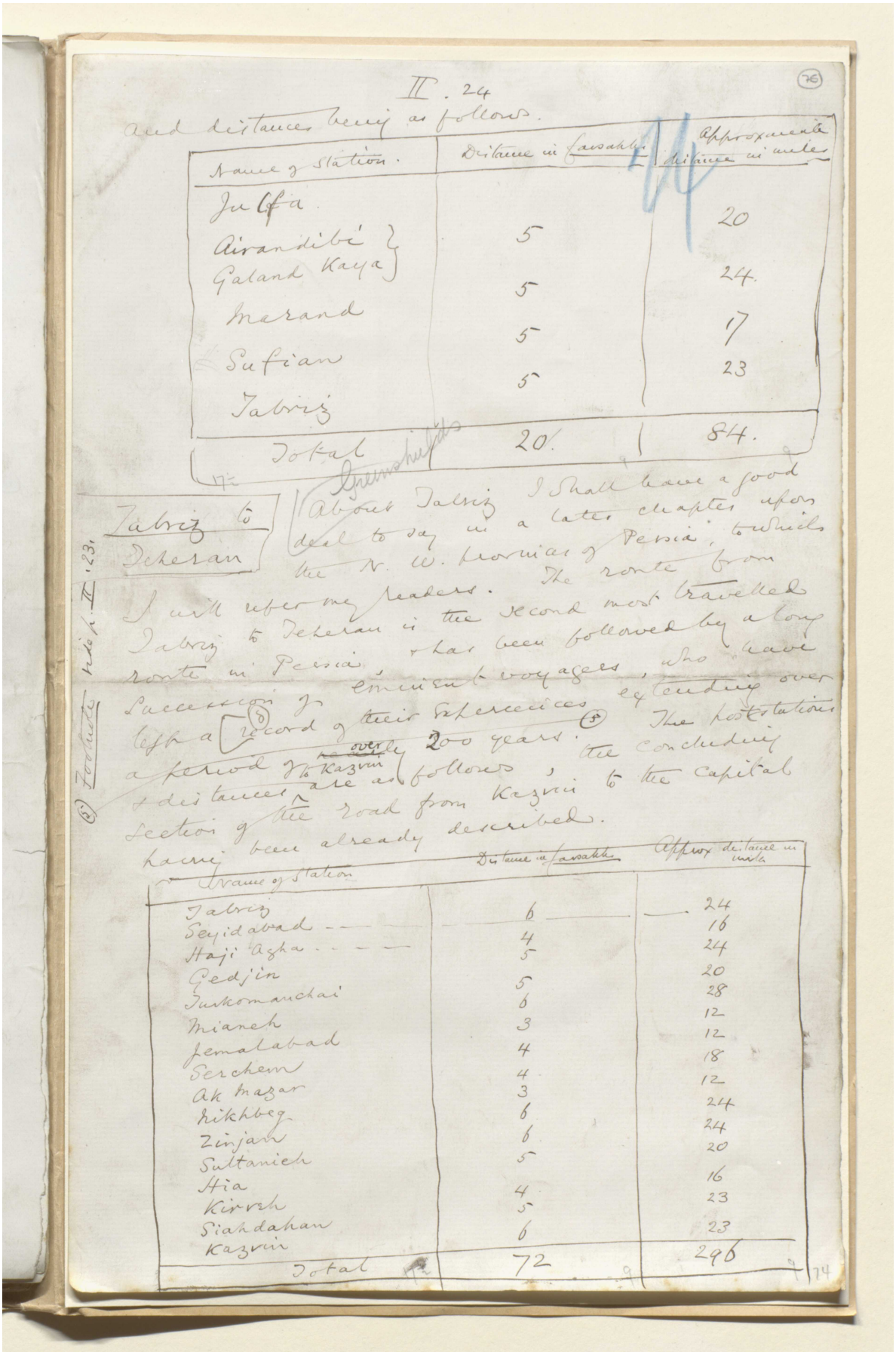

II. 24

(75)

and distances hence as follows.

Name of station.	Distance in farsakhs	Approximate distance in miles
Julfa		
Airandibé / Galand Kaya	5	20
Marand	5	24
Sufian	5	17
Tabriz	5	23
Total	20	84.

Tabriz to Teheran

About Tabriz I shall have a good deal to say in a later chapter upon the N. W. Provinces of Persia, to which I will refer my readers. The route from Tabriz to Teheran is the second most travelled route in Persia, & has been followed by a long succession of eminent voyagers, who have left a record of their experiences extending over a period of nearly 200 years. The post-stations & distances are as follows, the concluding section of the road from Kazvin to the capital having been already described.

Name of station	Distance in farsakhs	Approx. distance in miles
Tabriz	6	24
Seyidabad	4	16
Haji Agha	5	24
Gedjin	5	20
Turkomanchai	6	28
Mianeh	3	12
Jemalabad	4	12
Serchem	4	18
Ak Mazar	3	12
Rikhbeg	6	24
Zinjan	6	24
Sultanieh	5	20
Hia	4	16
Kirveh	5	23
Siahdahan	6	23
Kazvin		
Total	72	296

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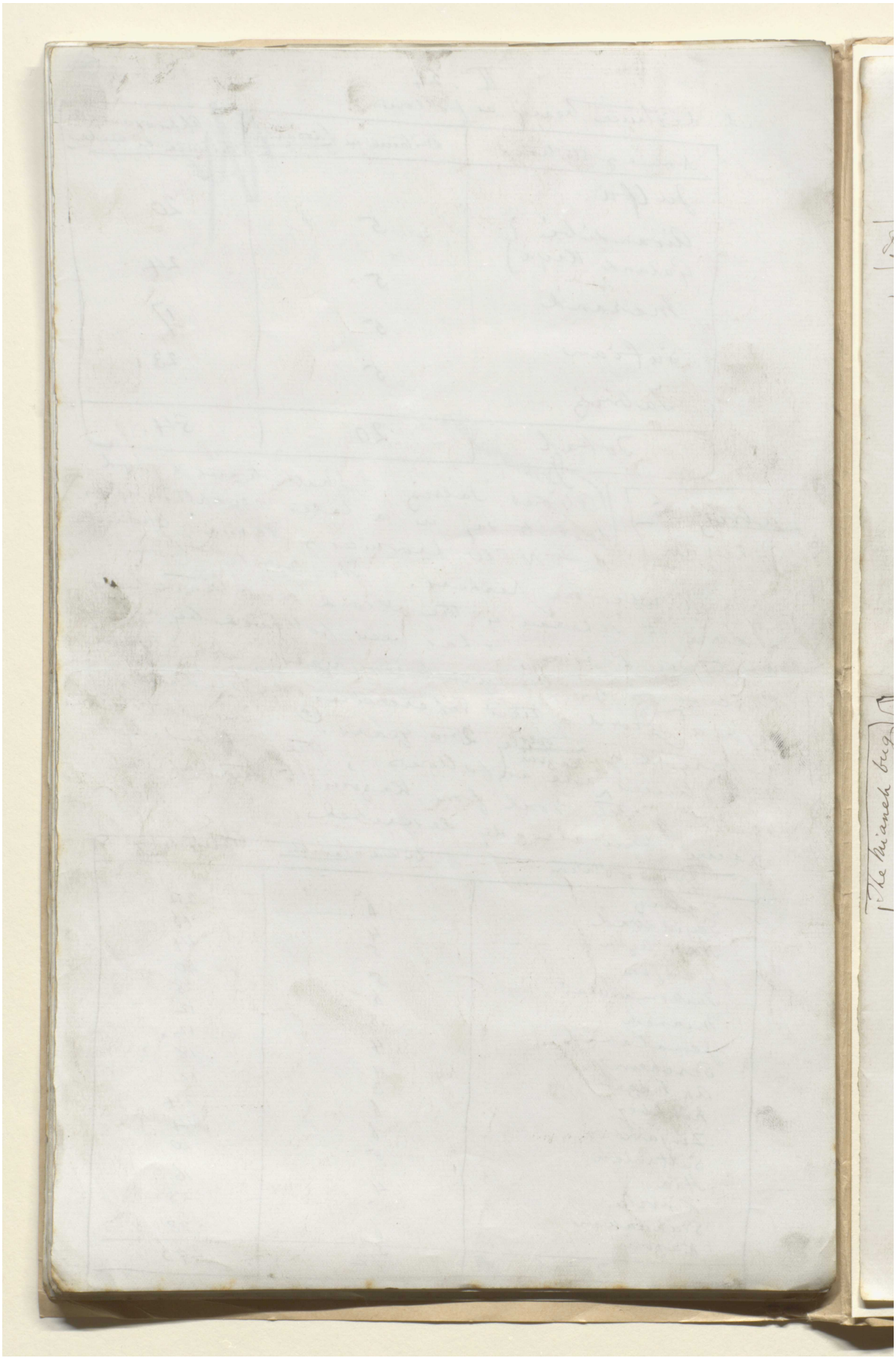

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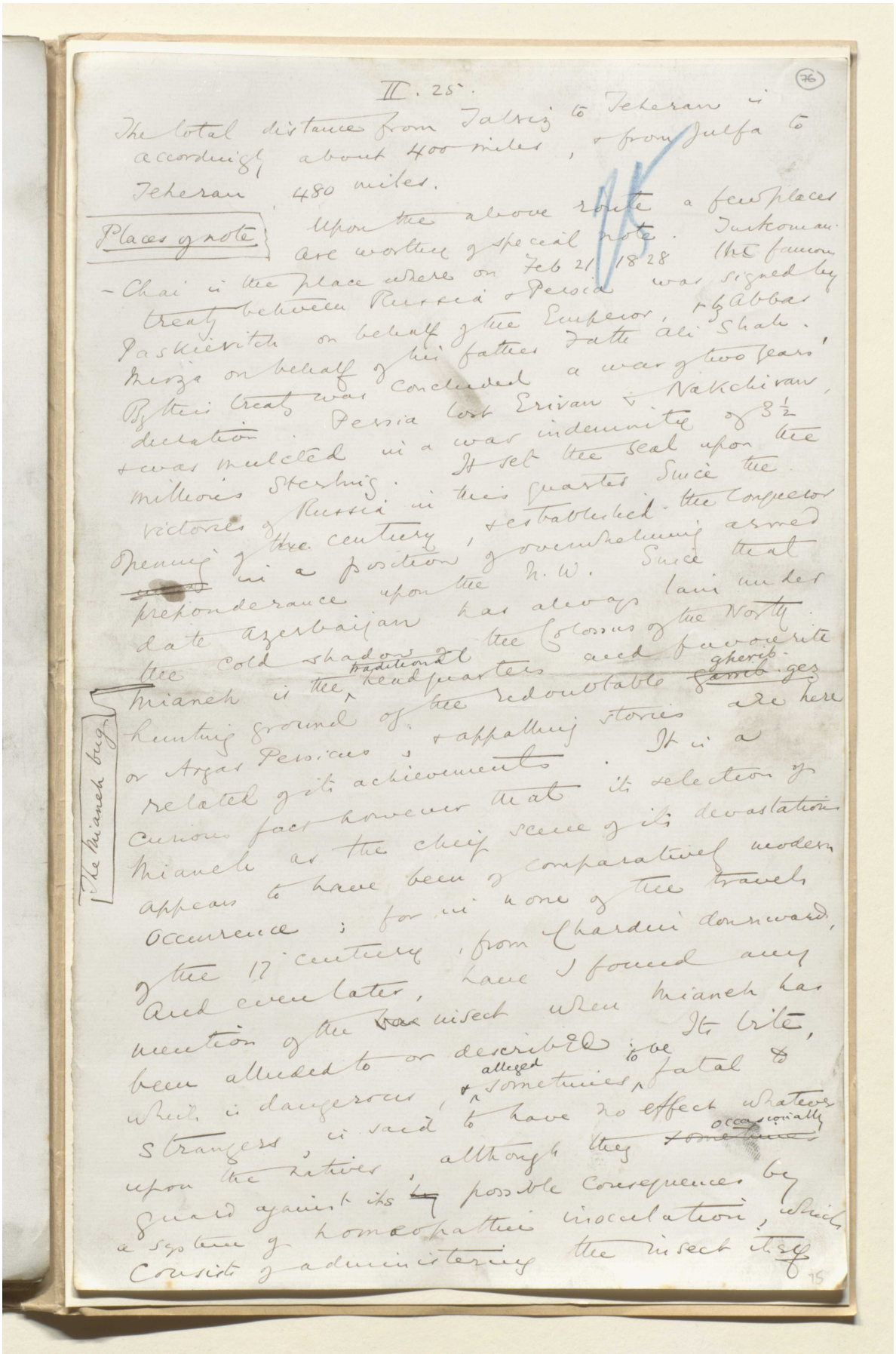

II. 25.

The total distance from Tabriz to Teheran is accordingly about 400 miles, & from Julfa to Teheran 480 miles.

Places of note

Upon the above route a few places are worthy of special note. Turkoman-Chai is the place where on Feb 21 1828 the famous treaty between Russia & Persia was signed by Paskievitch on behalf of the Emperor, & by Abbas Mirza on behalf of his father Fath Ali Shah. By this treaty was concluded a war of two years' duration. Persia lost Erivan & Nakchivan, & was mulcted in a war indemnity of 3½ millions sterling. It set the seal upon the victories of Russia in this quarter since the opening of the century, & established the conqueror in a position of overwhelming armed preponderance upon the N.W. Since that date Azerbaijan has always lain under the cold shadow of the Colossus of the North.

The Mianeh bugs

Mianeh is the traditional headquarters and favourite hunting ground of the redoubtable gherib-gez or Argas Persicus, & appalling stories are here related of its achievements. It is a curious fact however that its selection of Mianeh as the chief scene of its devastations appears to have been of comparatively modern occurrence; for in none of the travels of the 17 century, from Chardin downward, and even later, have I found any mention of the insect when Mianeh has been alluded to or described. Its bite, which is dangerous, & alleged sometimes to be fatal to strangers, is said to have no effect whatever upon the natives, although they occasionally guard against its possible consequences by a system of homeopathic inoculation, which consists of administering the insect itself

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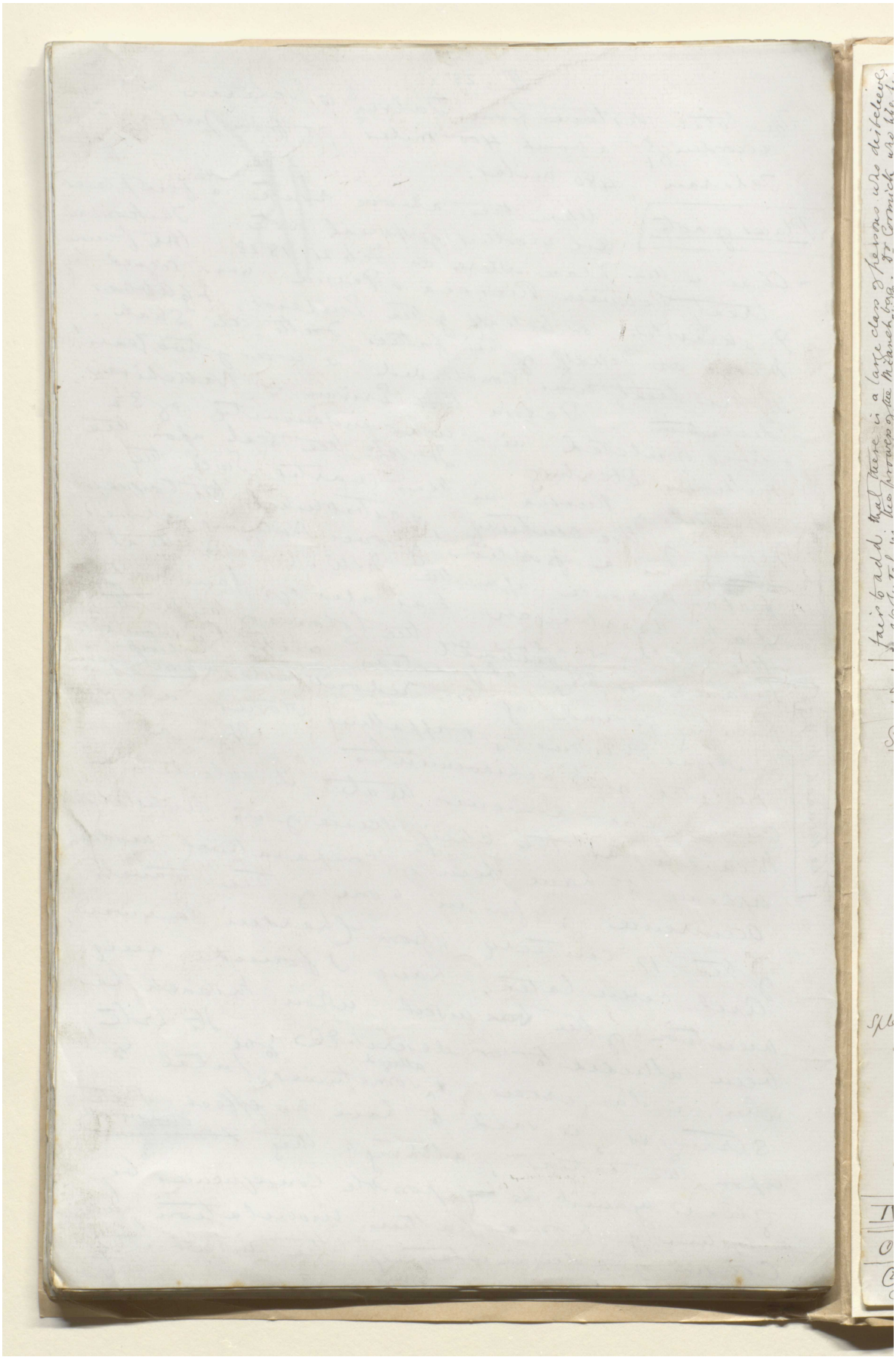

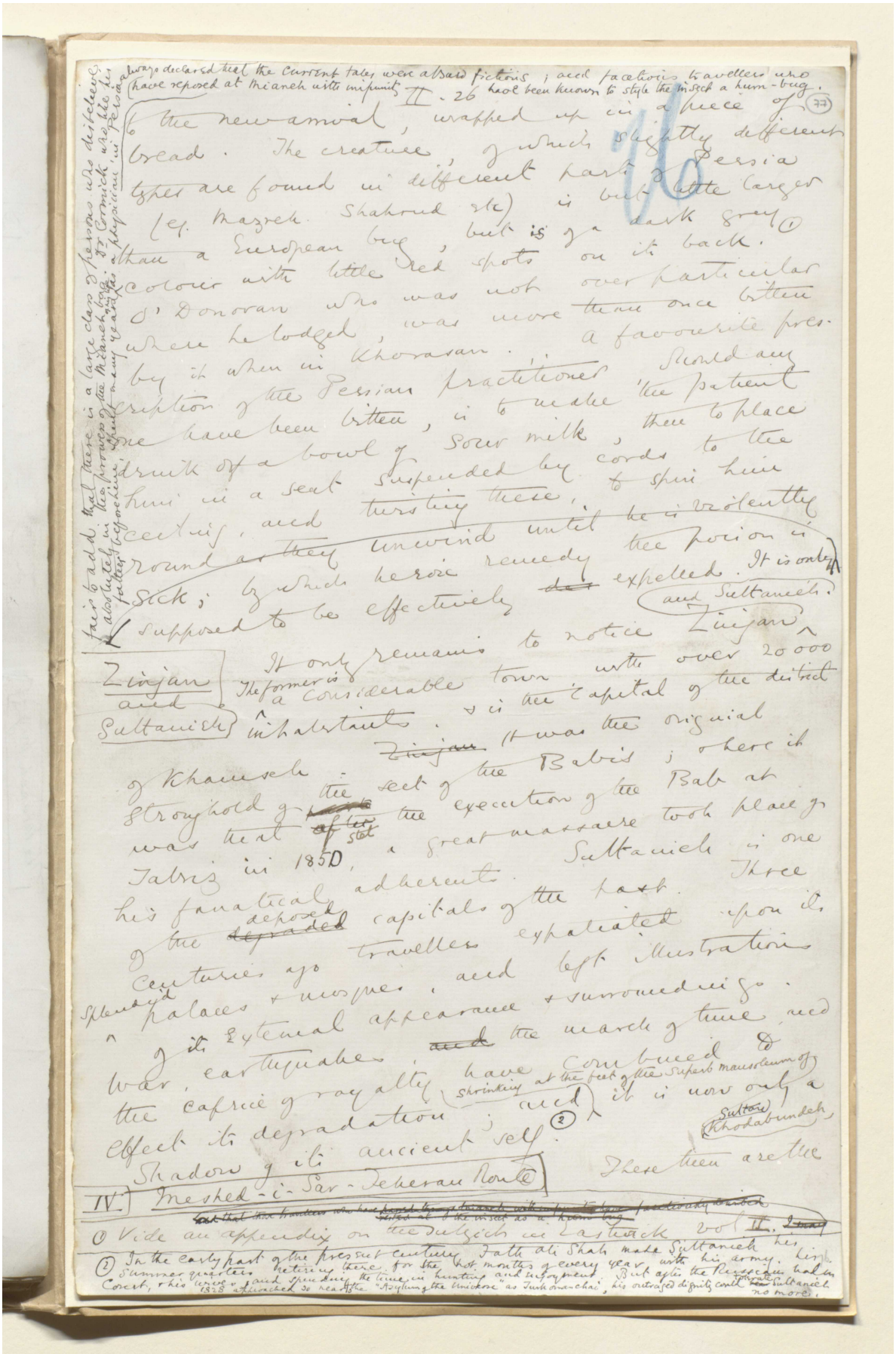

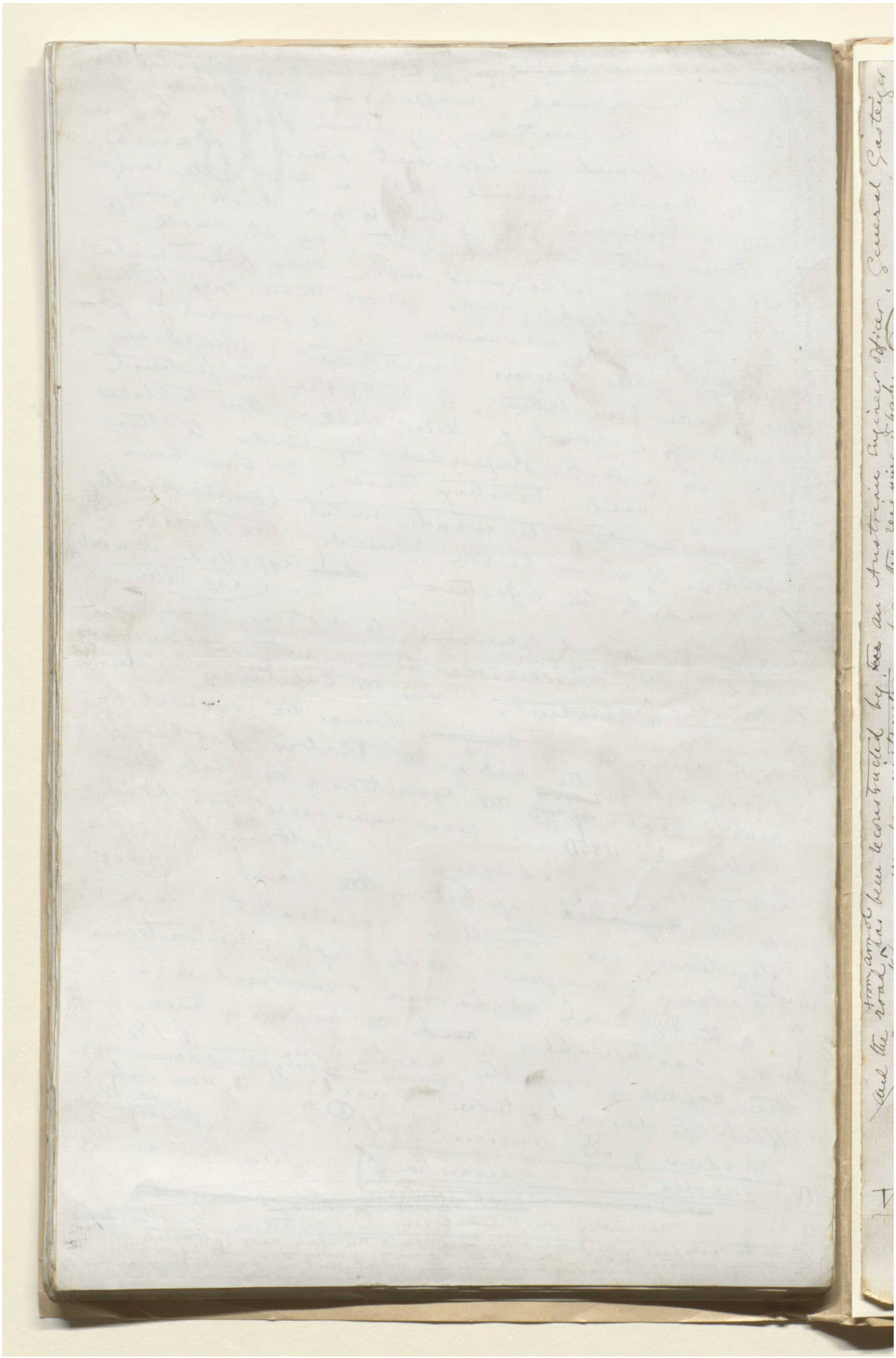

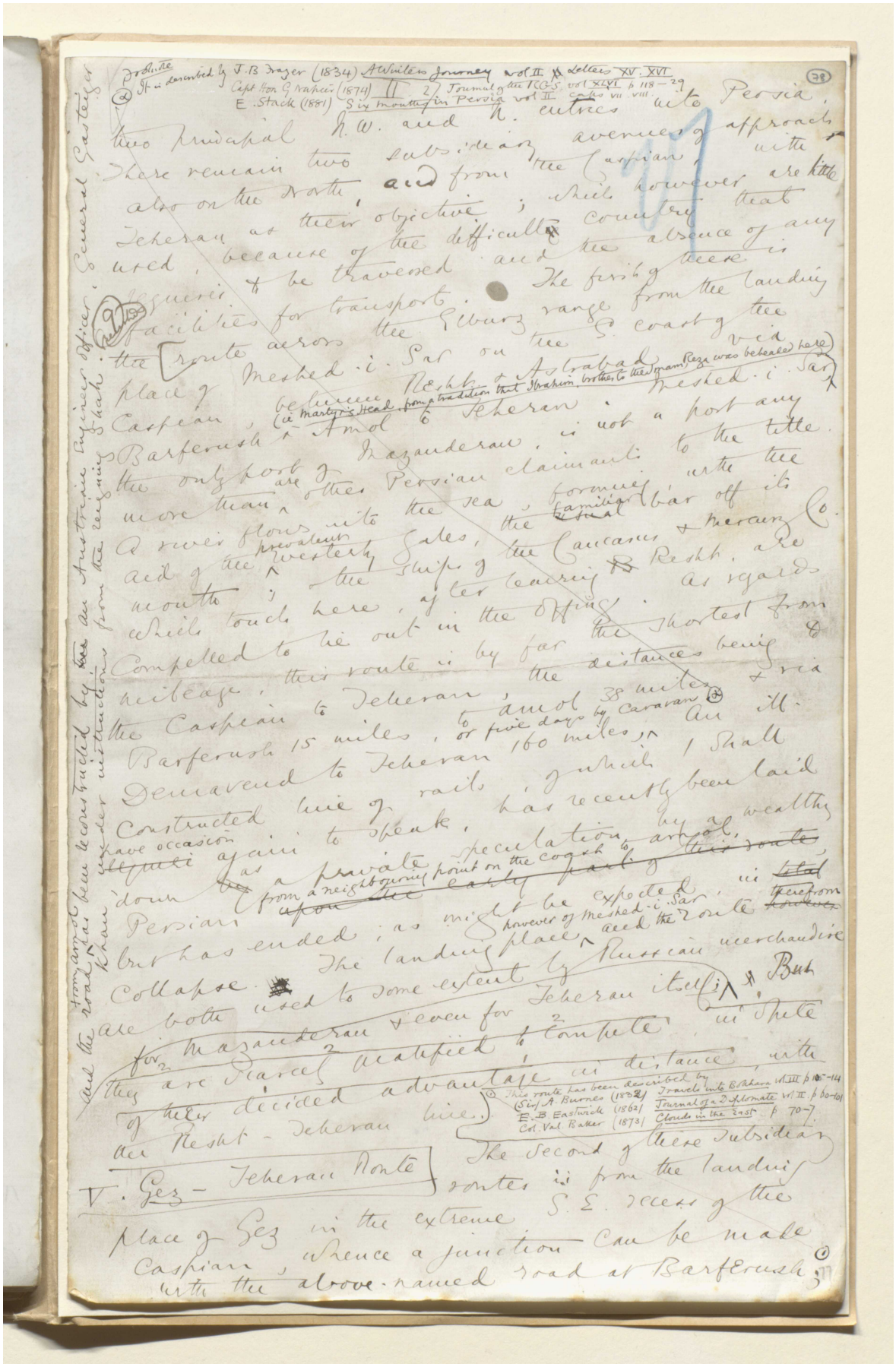

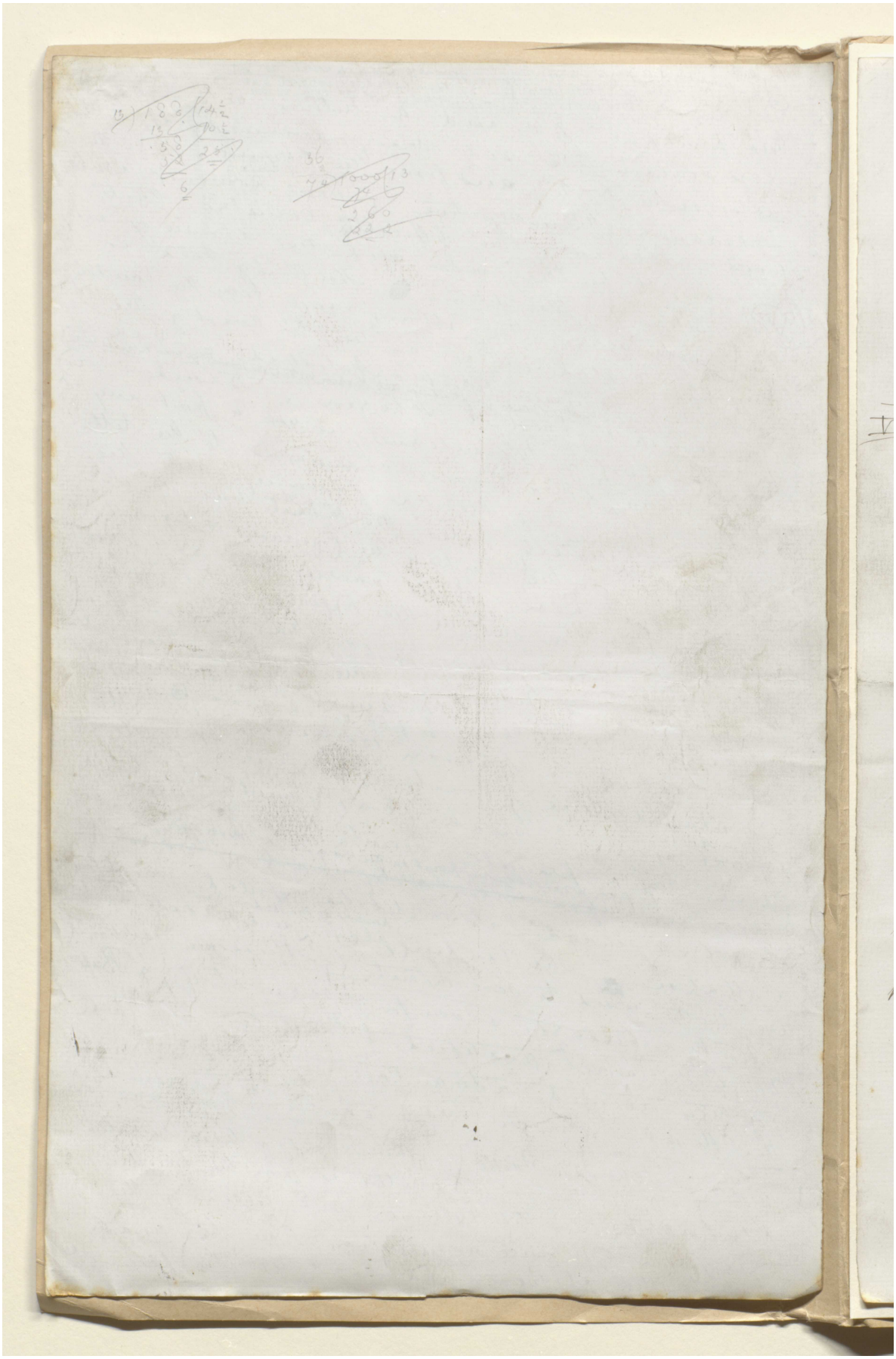

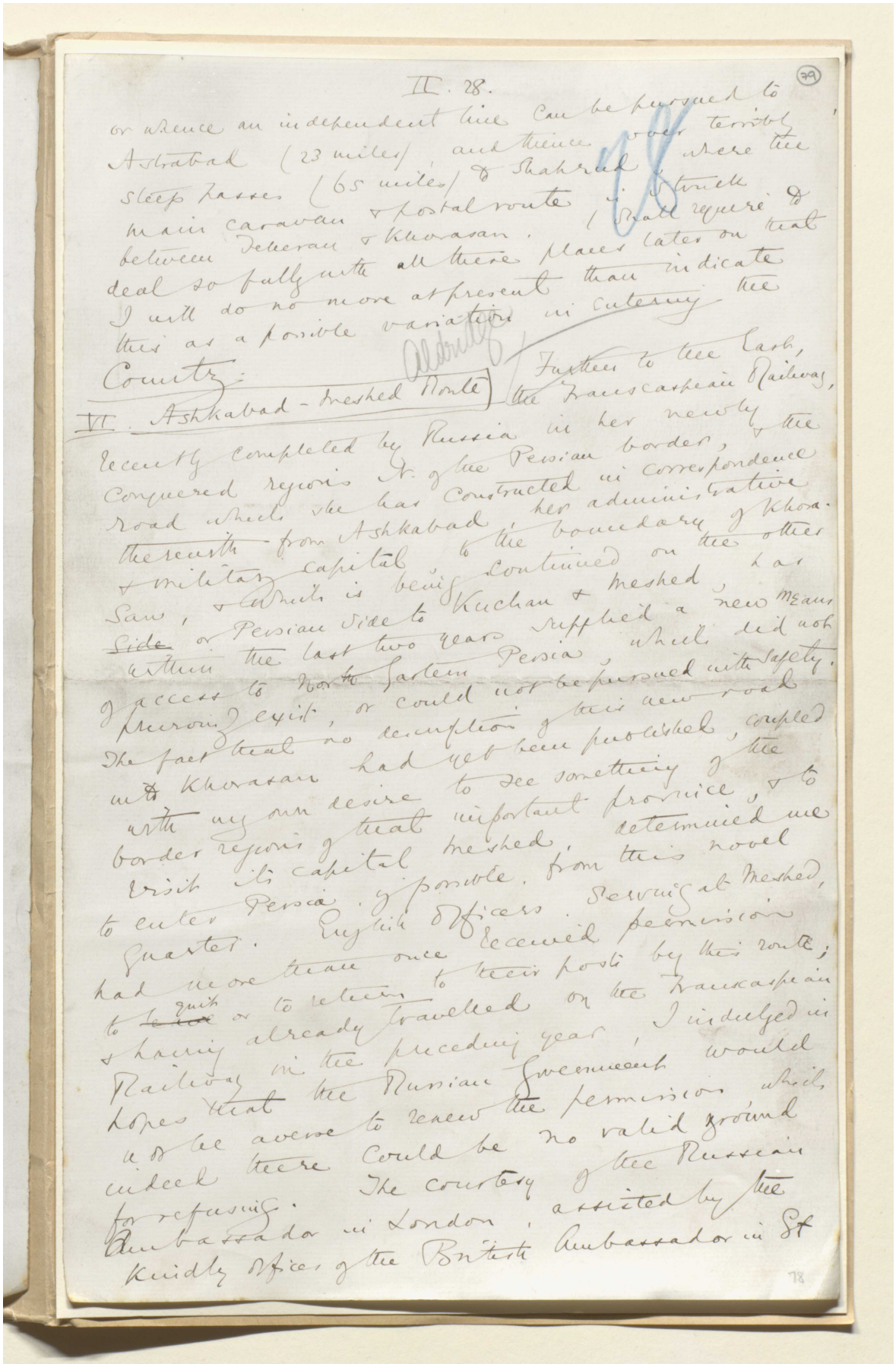

II. 28.

or whence an independent line can be pursued to Asfrabad (23 miles), and thence over terrible sleep passes (65 miles) to Shahrud, where the main caravan & postal route between Teheran & Khorasan. I shall require to deal so fully with all these places later on that I will do no more at present than indicate this as a possible variation in entering the Country.

VII. Ashkabad - Meshed Route

Further to the East, the Transcaspian Railway, recently completed by Russia in her newly conquered regions N. of the Persian border, the result of which she has constructed in correspondence road which she has constructed in correspondence therewith from Ashkabad, her administrative & military capital to the boundary of Khorassan, & which is being continued on the other Side of Persian Side to Kuchan & Meshed, last Saw, within the last two years supplied a new means of access to North Eastern Persia, which did not previously exist, or could not be pursued with safety. The fact that no description of this new road with Khorassan had yet been published, coupled with my own desire to see something of the border regions of that important province, & to visit its capital Meshed, determined me to enter Persia, if possible, from this novel Quarter. English Officers serving at Meshed, had more than once received permission to quit or to return to their posts by this route; & having already travelled on the Transcaspian Railway in the preceding year, I indulged in hopes that the Russian Government would not be averse to renew the permission which, indeed, there could be no valid ground for refusing. The courtesy of the Russian Ambassador in London, assisted by the kindly Offices of the British Ambassador in St

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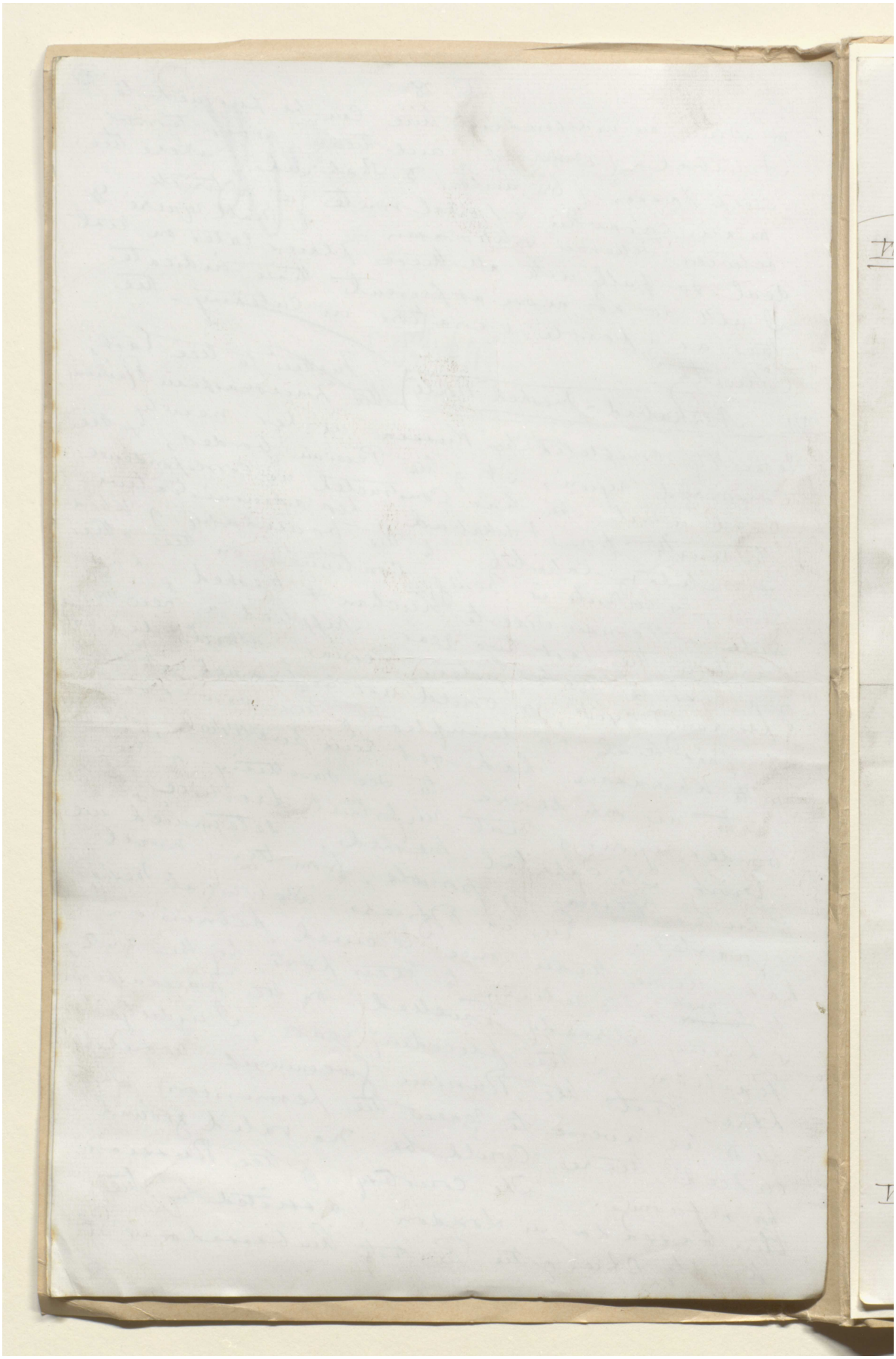

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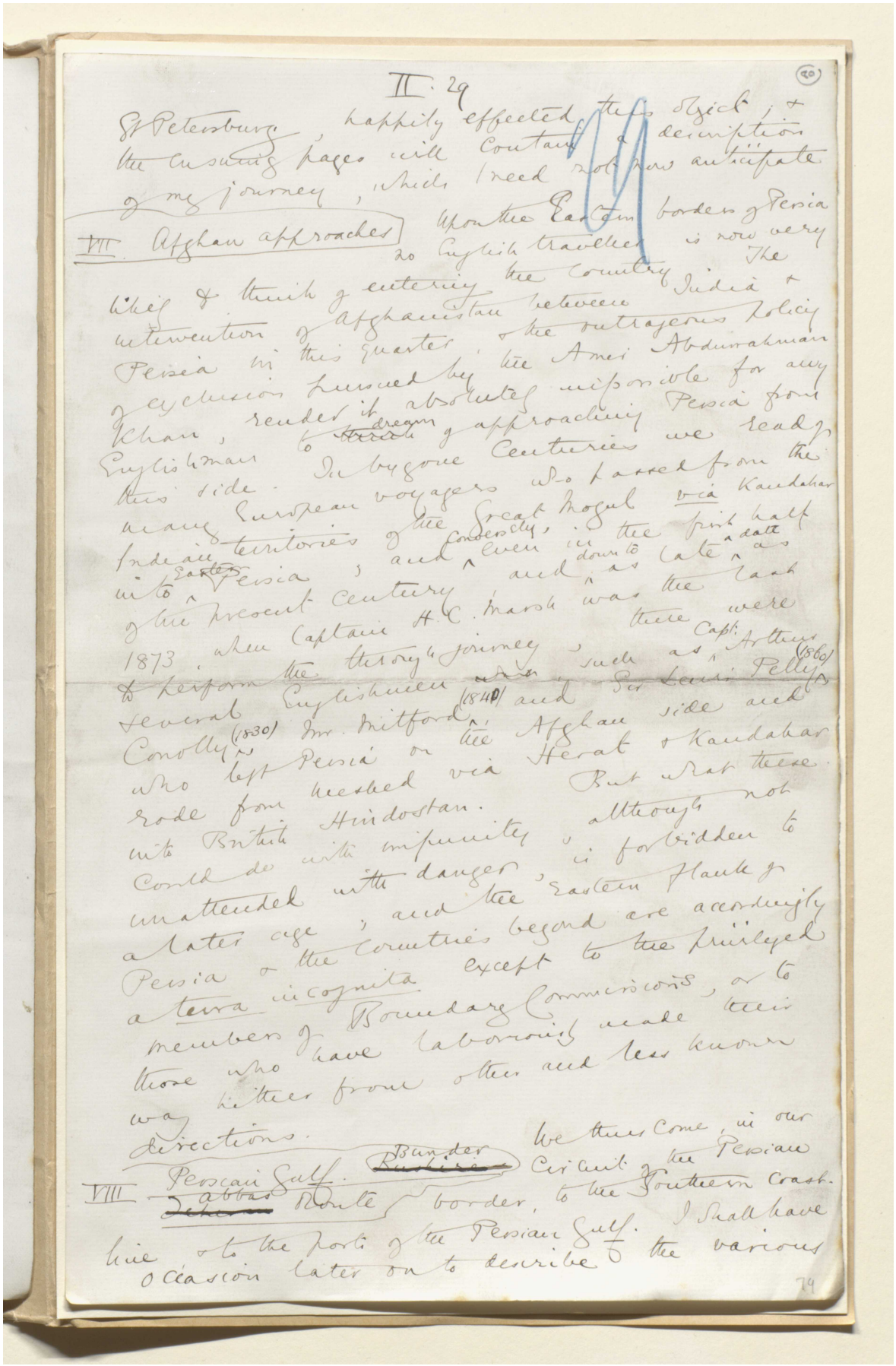

II. 29

St Petersburg, happily effected this object; & the ensuing pages will contain a description of my journey, which I need not now anticipate.

VII. Afghan approaches. Upon the Eastern borders of Persia no English traveller is now very likely to think of entering the country. The intervention of Afghanistan between India & Persia in this quarter, & the outrageous policy of exclusion pursued by the Amir Abdurrahman Khan, render it absolutely impossible for any Englishman to ~~think~~ dream of approaching Persia from this side. In bygone centuries we read of many European voyagers who passed from the Indian territories of the Great Mogul via Kandahar into Eastern Persia; and conversely, even in the first half of the present century, and down to as late a date as 1873, when Captain H. C. Marsh was the last to perform the through journey, there were several Englishmen ~~who~~, such as Capt. Arthur Conolly (1830), Mr. Mitford (1840), and Sir Lewis Pelly (1860), who left Persia on the Afghan side and rode from Meshed via Herat & Kandahar into British Hindostan. But what these could do with impunity, although not unattended with danger, is forbidden to a later age; and the Eastern flank of Persia & the countries beyond are accordingly a terra incognita except to the privileged members of Boundary Commissions, or to those who have laboriously made their way hither from other and less known directions.

VIII. Persian Gulf. ~~Bushire~~ Bunder ~~Deheran~~ Abbas Route. We thus come, in our circuit of the Persian border, to the Southern coast-line & to the ports of the Persian Gulf. I shall have occasion later on to describe the various

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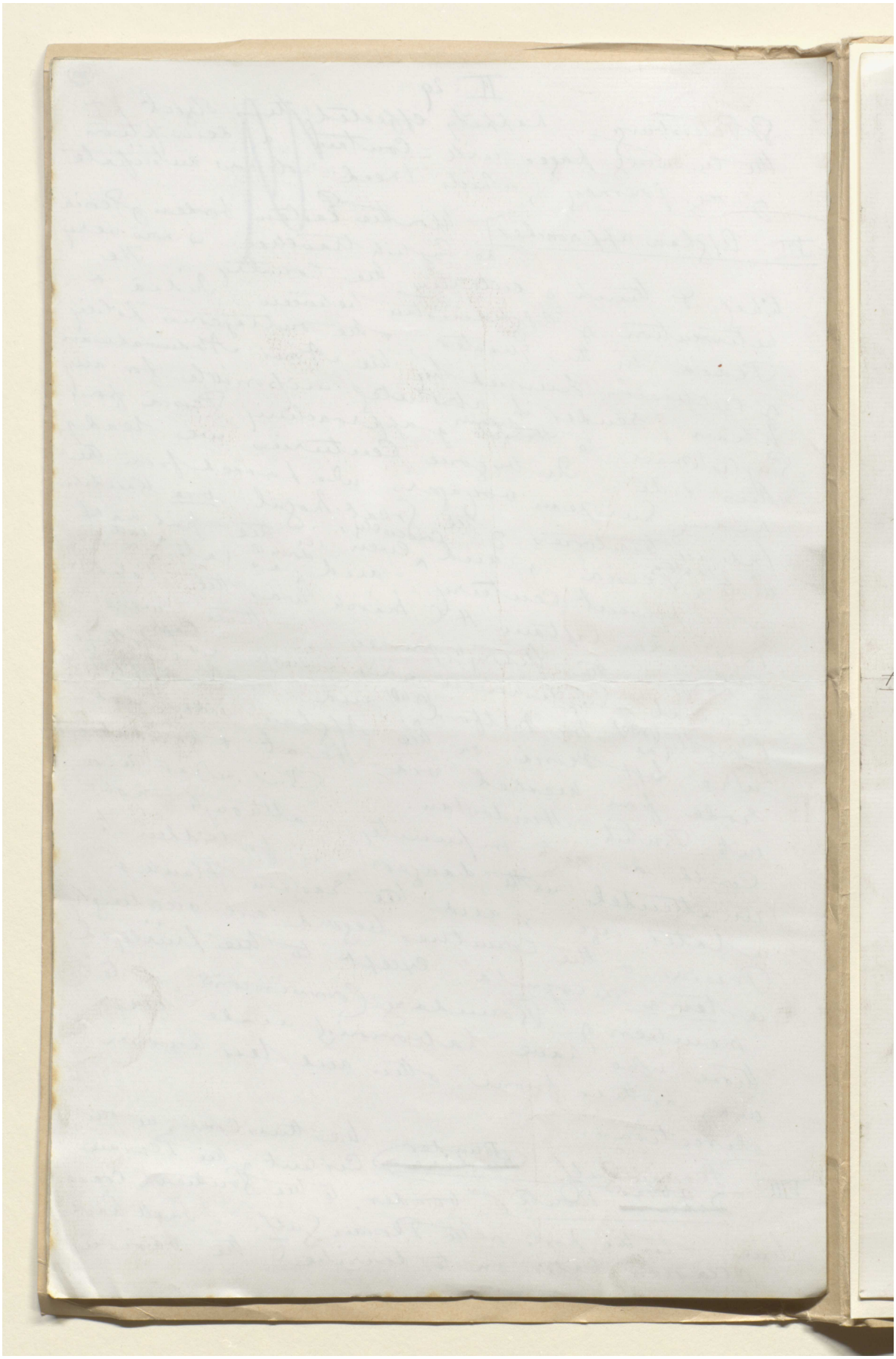

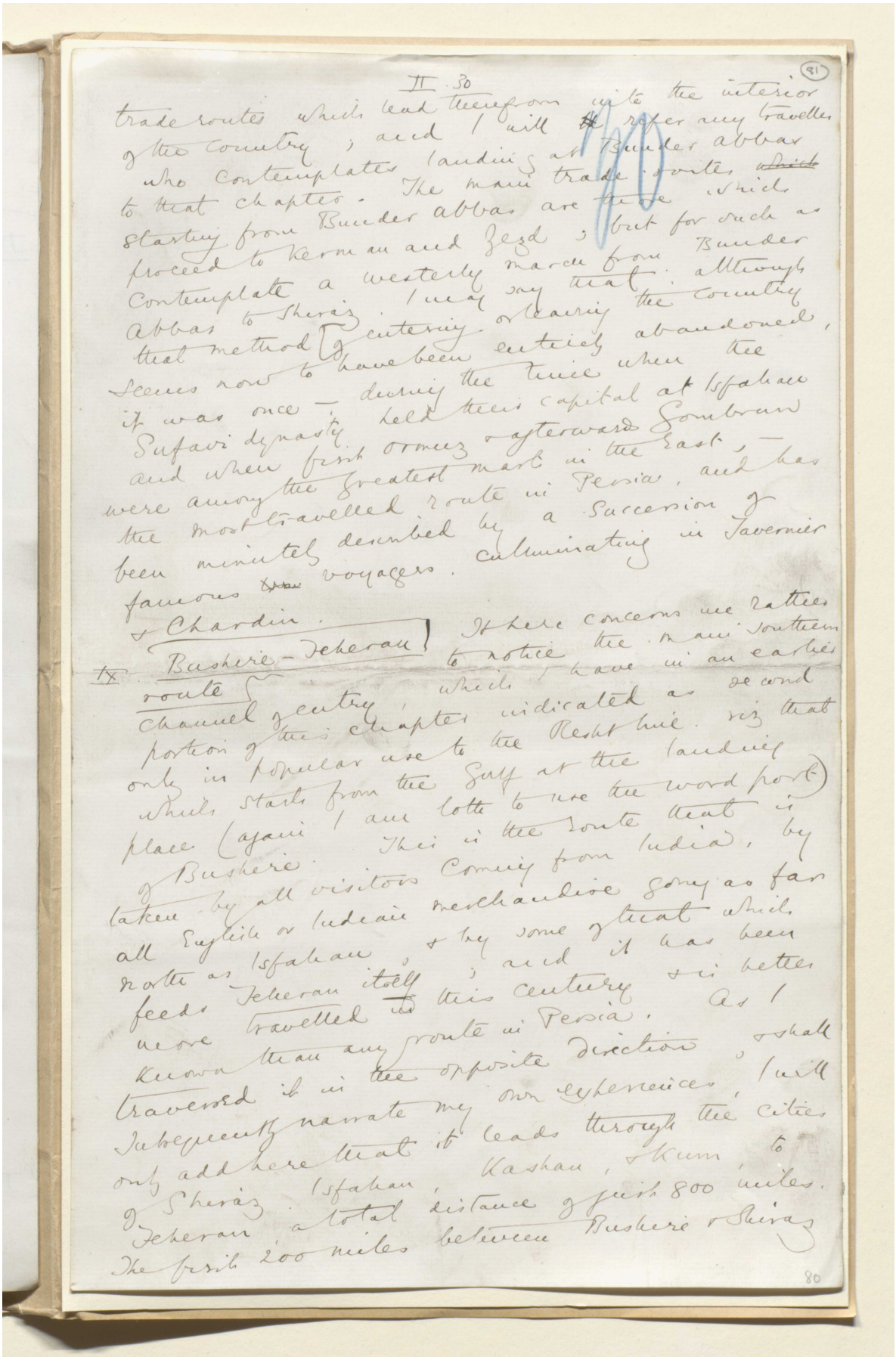

II. 30

trade routes which lead therefrom into the interior of the country; and I will refer any traveller who contemplates landing at Bunder abbas to that chapter. The main trade routes which starting from Bunder abbas are three in number proceed to Kerman and Yezd; but for such as contemplate a westerly march from Bunder abbas to Sheraz I may say that although that method of entering or leaving the country seems now to have been entirely abandoned, it was once — during the time when the Sufavi dynasty held their capital at Isfahan and when first Ormuz afterwards Gombroon were among the greatest marts in the East, — the most travelled route in Persia, and has been minutely described by a succession of famous voyagers culminating in Tavernier & Chardin.

IX Bushire-Teheran route

It here concerns me rather to notice the main southern channel of entry which I have in an earlier portion of this chapter indicated as second only in popular use to the Resht line. viz that which starts from the Gulf at the landing place (ajani I am loth to use the word port) of Bushire. This is the route that is taken by all visitors coming from India, by all English or Indian merchandize going as far north as Isfahan, & by some of that which feeds Teheran itself; and it has been more travelled in this century & is better known than any route in Persia. As I traversed it in the opposite direction, & shall subsequently narrate my own experiences, I will only add here that it leads through the cities of Sheraz, Isfahan, Kashan, & Kum, to Teheran a total distance of just 800 miles. The first 200 miles between Bushire & Sheraz

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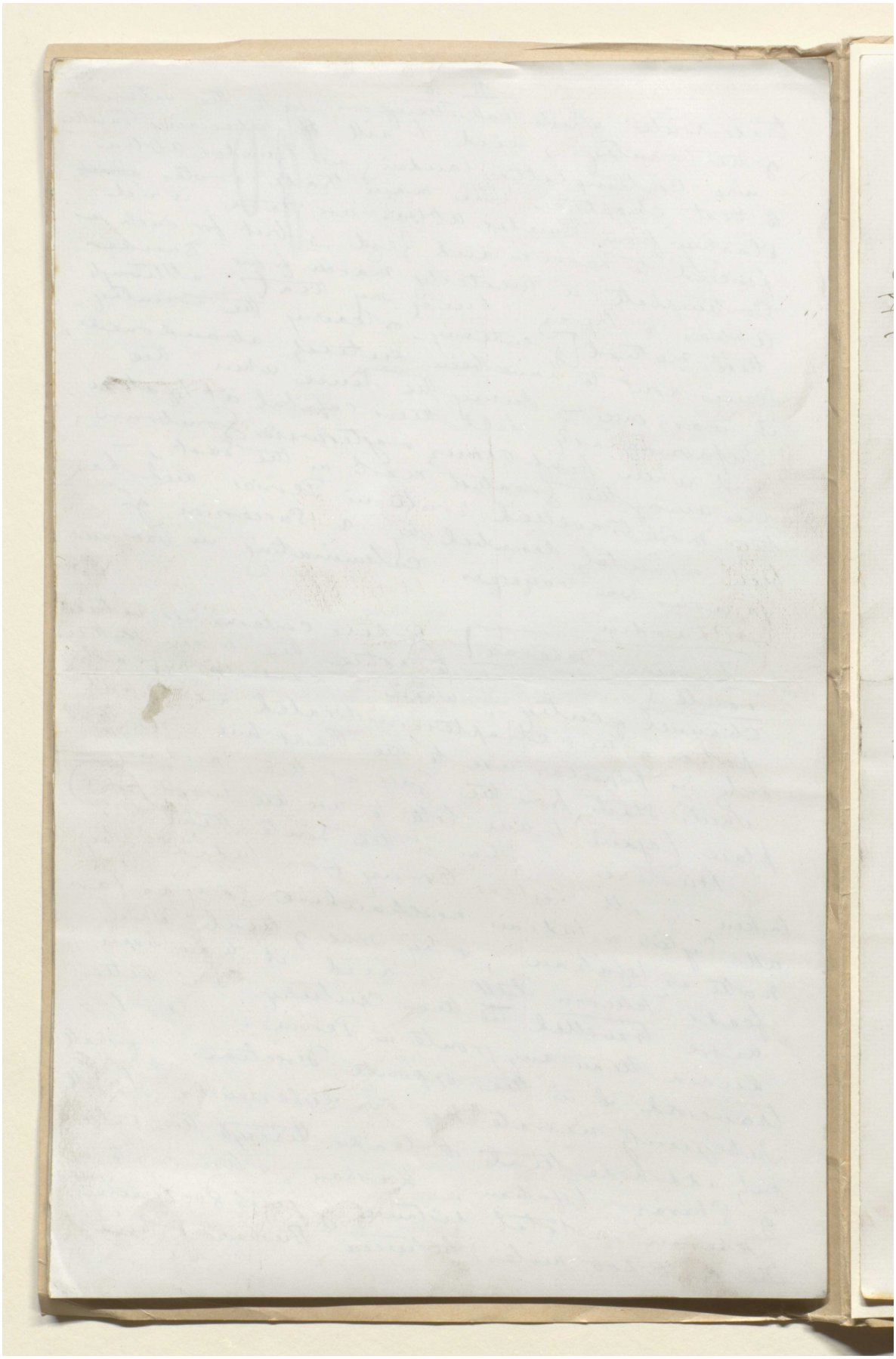

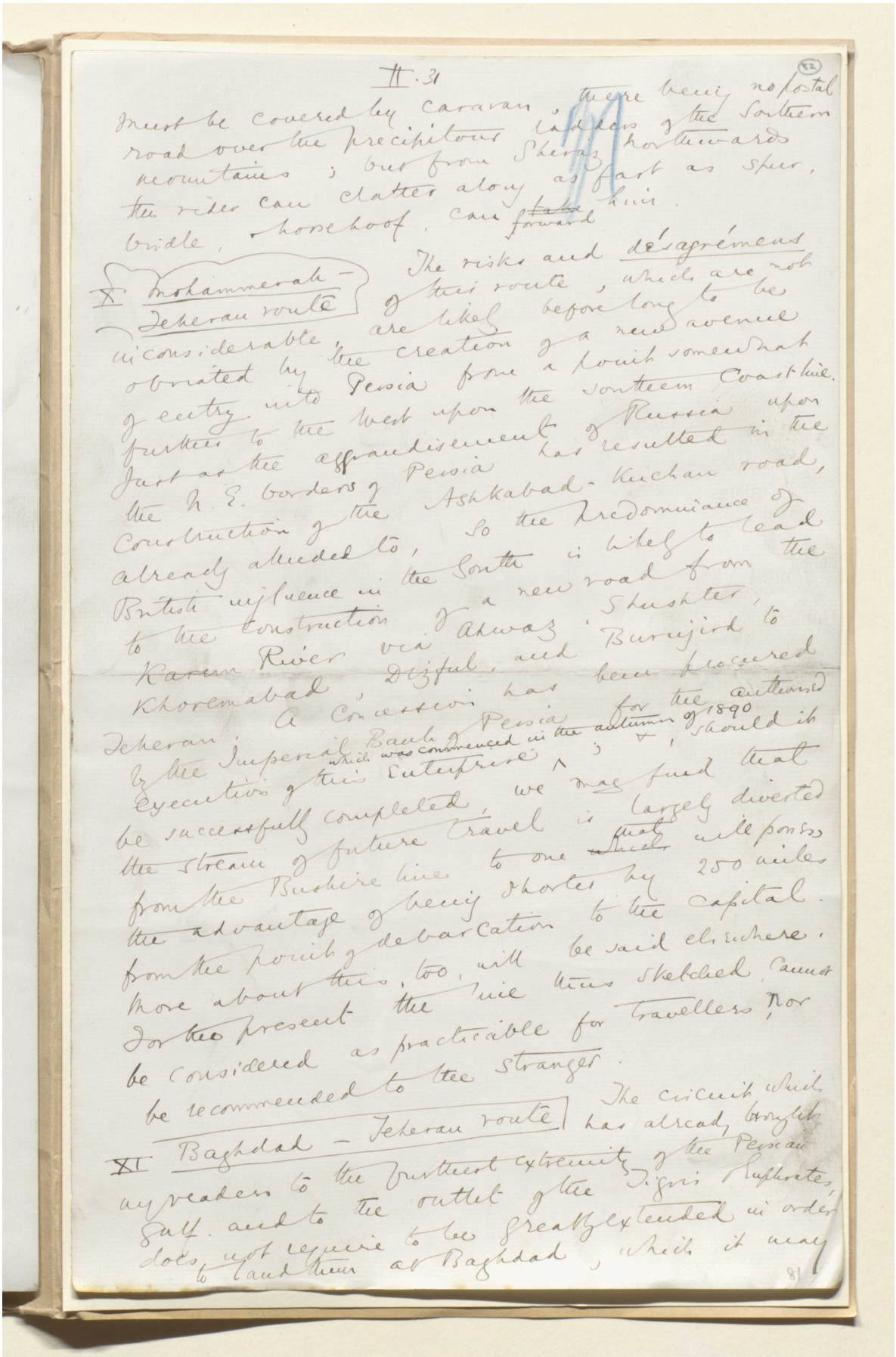

II. 31

must be covered by caravan, there being no postal road over the precipitous ridges of the Southern mountains; but from Shiraz northwards the rider can clatter along as fast as spur, bridle, horse-hoof can take him forward.

X Mohammerah – Teheran route

The risks and désagréments of this route, which are not inconsiderable, are likely before long to be obviated by the creation of a new avenue of entry into Persia from a point somewhat further to the west upon the Southern Coast line. Just as the aggrandisement of Russia upon the N. E. borders of Persia has resulted in the construction of the Ashkabad-Kuchan road, already alluded to, so the predominance of British influence in the South is likely to lead to the construction of a new road from Karun River via Ahwaz, Shushter, Khoremabad, Dizful, and Burujird to Teheran. A concession has been procured by the Imperial Bank of Persia for the authorised execution of this enterprise, which was commenced in the autumn of 1890, should it be successfully completed, we may find that the stream of future travel is largely diverted from the Bushire line to one which will possess the advantage of being shorter by 250 miles from the point of debarcation to the capital. More about this, too, will be said elsewhere. For the present the line here sketched cannot be considered as practicable for travellers, nor be recommended to the stranger.

XI Baghdad – Teheran route

The circuit which has already brought my readers to the furthest extremity of the Persian Gulf, and to the outlet of the Tigris & Euphrates, does not require to be greatly extended in order to land them at Baghdad, which it may

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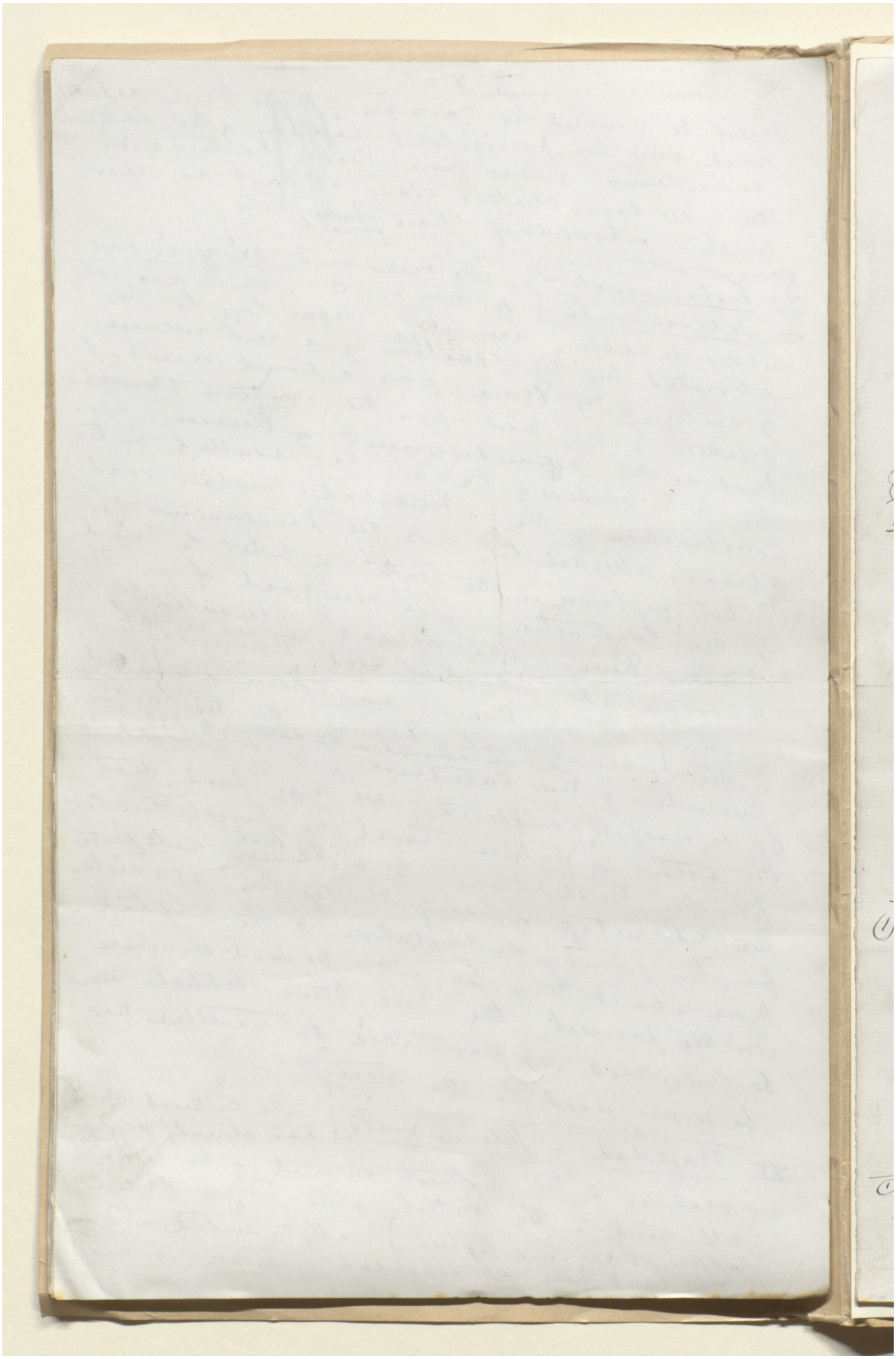

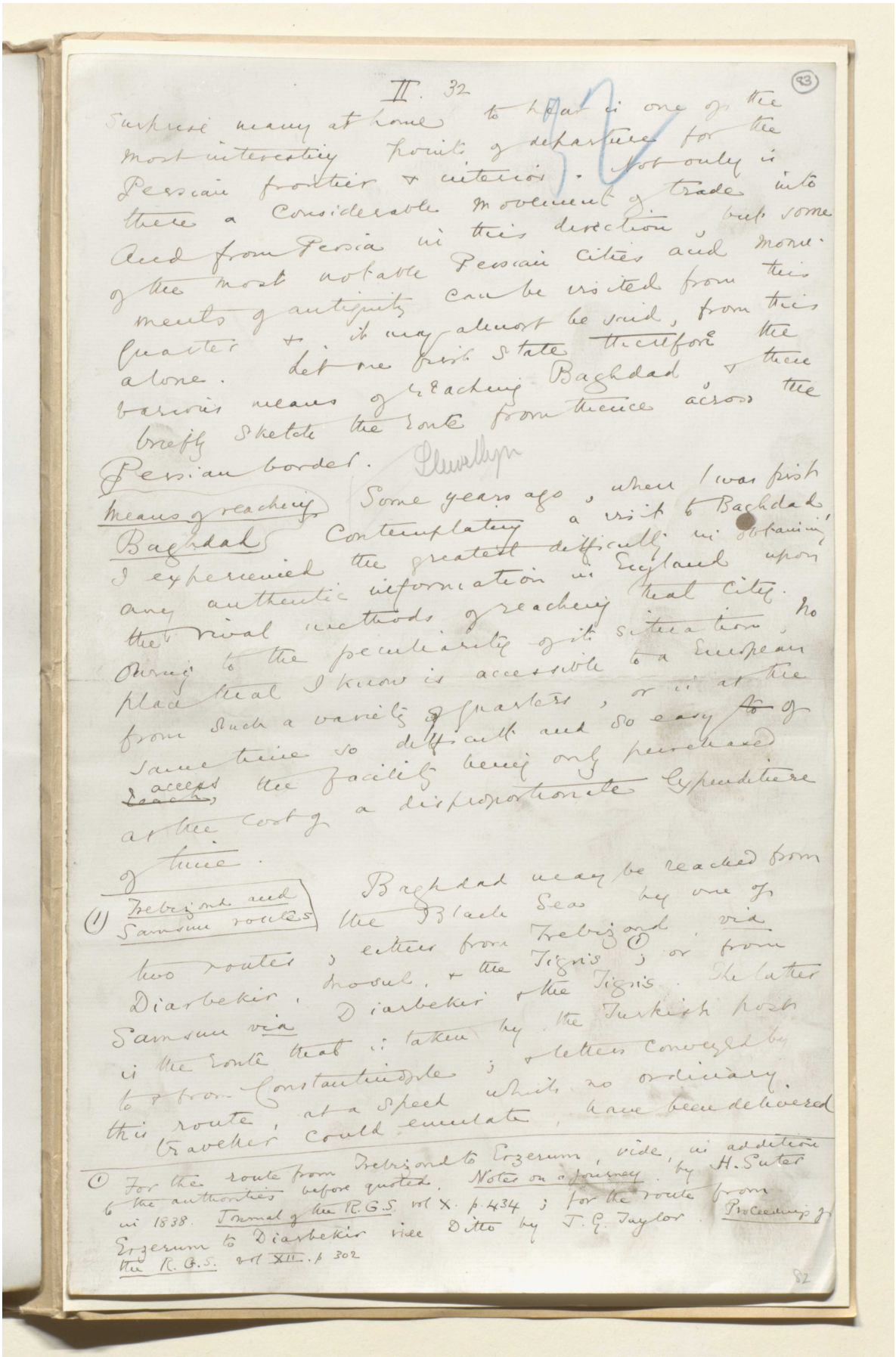

II. 32 (83)

Turkish army at home to that is one of the most interesting points of departure for the Persian frontier & interior. Not only is there a considerable movement of trade into and from Persia in this direction, but some of the most notable Persian cities and monuments of antiquity can be visited from this quarter &, it may almost be said, from this alone. Let me first state therefore the various means of reaching Baghdad & then briefly sketch the route from thence across the Persian border.

Means of reaching Baghdad

Some years ago, when I was first contemplating a visit to Baghdad, I experienced the greatest difficulty in obtaining any authentic information in England upon the rival methods of reaching that city. Owing to the peculiarity of its situation, from such a variety of quarters, or if at the same time so difficult and so easy of access, the facility being only purchased at the cost of a disproportionate expenditure of time.

(1) Trebizond and Samsun routes

Baghdad may be reached from the Black Sea by one of two routes; either from Trebizond, via Diarbekir, Mosul, & the Tigris; or from Samsun via Diarbekir & the Tigris. The latter is the route that is taken by the Turkish mails to & from Constantinople; & letters conveyed by this route, at a speed which no ordinary traveller could emulate, have been delivered

(1) For the route from Trebizond to Erzerum, vide, in addition to the authorities before quoted, Notes on a journey in 1838. Journal of the R.G.S. vol X. p. 434; for the route from Erzerum to Diarbekir vide Ditto by J. G. Taylor. Proceedings of the R.G.S. vol XII. p 302

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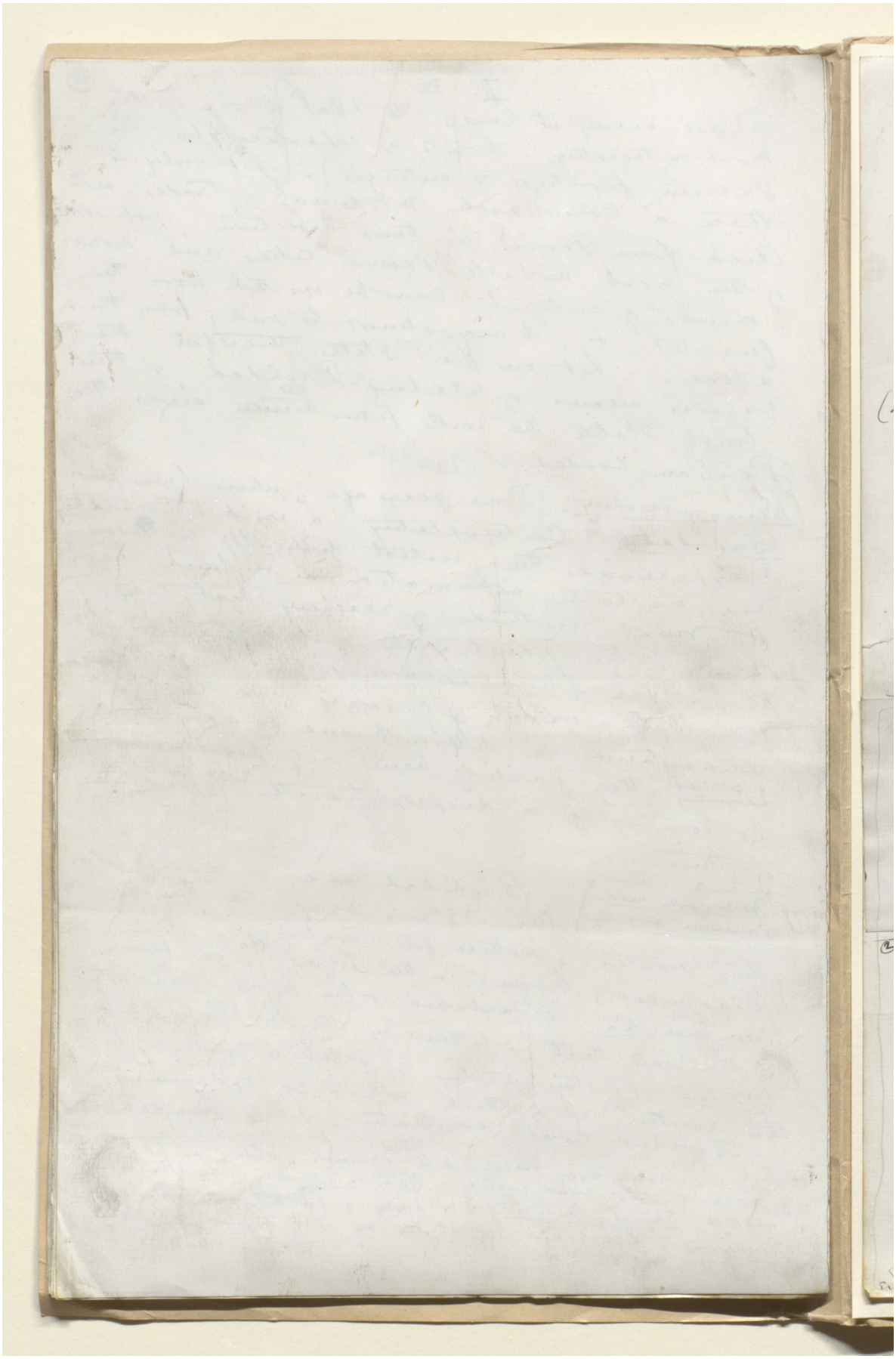

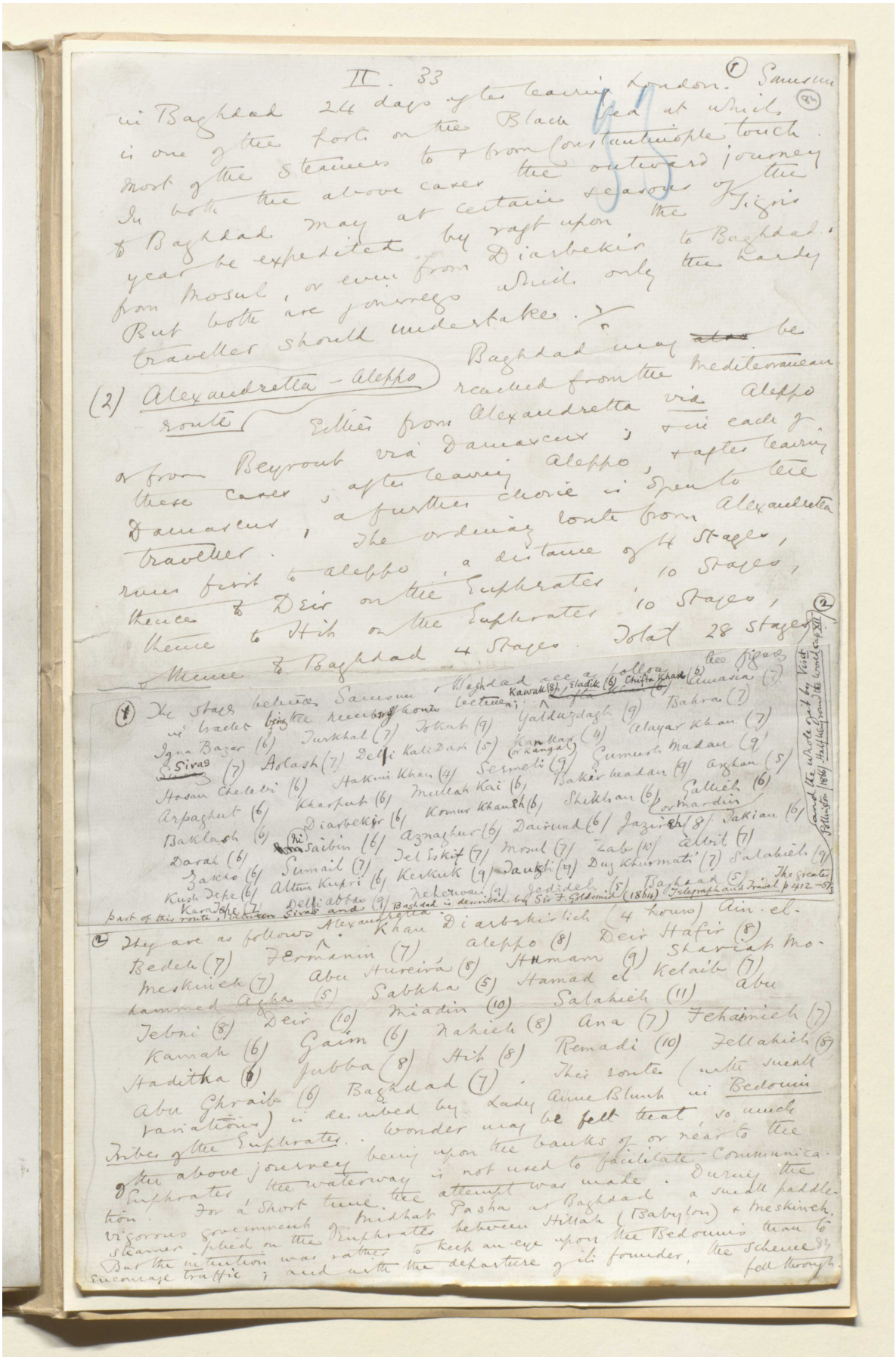



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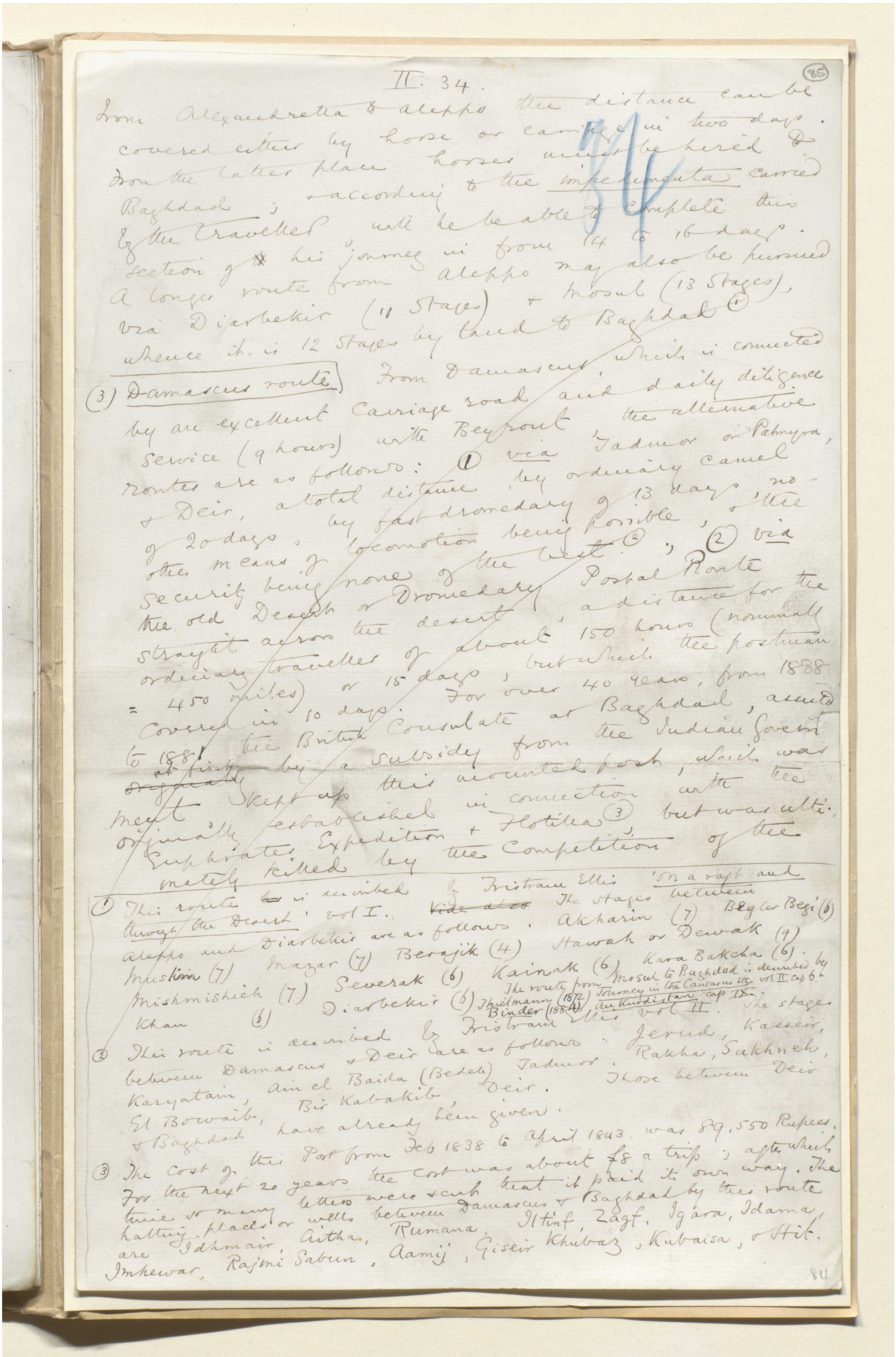

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II. 34.

From Alexandretta to Aleppo the distance can be covered either by horse or carriage in two days. From the latter place horses must be hired to Baghdad; & according to the impedimenta carried by the traveller will he be able to complete this section of his journey in from 14 to 16 days. A longer route from Aleppo may also be pursued via Diarbekir (11 Stages) & Mosul (13 Stages), whence it is 12 Stages by land to Baghdad (1)

(3) Damascus route. From Damascus, which is connected by an excellent carriage road and daily diligence service (9 hours) with Beyrout, the alternative routes are as follows: (1) via Tadmor or Palmyra, & Deir, a total distance by ordinary camel of 20 days, by fast dromedary of 13 days, no other means of locomotion being possible, & the security being none of the best (2); (2) via the old Desert or Dromedary Postal Route straight across the desert, a distance for the ordinary traveller of about 150 hours (nominally = 450 miles) or 15 days, but which the postman covered in 10 days. For over 40 years, from 1838 to 1881 the British Consulate at Baghdad, assisted at first by a subsidy from the Indian Government ~~originally~~ kept up this mounted post, which was originally established in connection with the Euphrates Expedition & Flotilla (3), but was ultimately killed by the Competition of the

(1) This route is described by Tristram Ellis 'On a raft and through the Desert' vol I. ~~Vide also~~ The stages between Aleppo and Diarbekir are as follows: Akharin (7) Begler Begi (6) Muslim (7) Mazar (7) Berajik (4) Hawah or Dewak (9) Mishmishieh (7) Severak (6) Kainak (6) Kara Bakcha (6) Khan (6) Diarbekir (6) The route from Mosul to Baghdad is described by Thielmann (1872) Journey in the Caucasus etc vol II cap 6. Binder (1884) An Kurdistan cap IX.

(2) This route is described by Tristram Ellis vol II. The stages between Damascus & Deir are as follows: Jerud, Kasseir, Karyatain, Ain el Baida (Bedeh) Tadmor, Rakha, Sukhneh, El Bowaib, Bir Kabakib, Deir. Those between Deir & Baghdad have already been given.

(3) The cost of this Post from Feb 1838 to April 1843 was 89,550 Rupees. For the next 20 years the cost was about £8 a trip; after which time so many letters were sent that it paid its own way. The halting places or wells between Damascus & Baghdad by this route are Idhmair, Aitha, Rumana, Iltinf, Zagf, Igara, Idama, Imhewar, Rajmi Sabun, Aamij, Giseir Khubaz, Kubaisa, & Hit.

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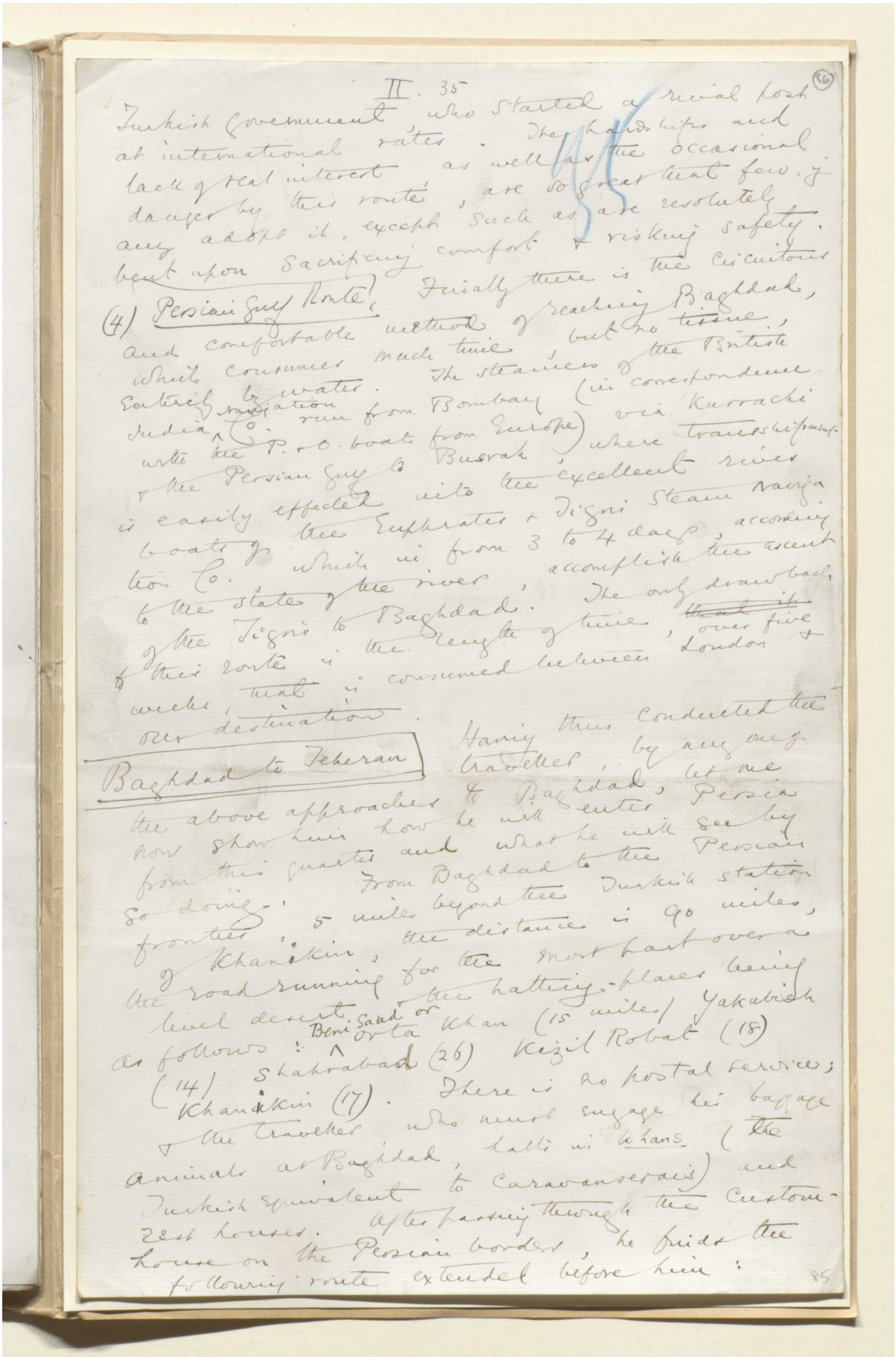
مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٨٦و] (١٣٥٥/١٧١)



II. 35

Turkish Government, who started a rival post at international rates. The hardships and lack of real interest as well as the occasional danger by this route, are so great that few, if any adopt it, except such as are resolutely bent upon sacrificing comfort & risking safety.

(4) Persian Gulf Route. Finally there is the circuitous and comfortable method of reaching Baghdad, which consumes much time, but no tissue, entirely by water. The steamers of the British India Navigation Co. run from Bombay (in correspondence with the P. & O. boats from Europe) via Kurrachi & the Persian Gulf to Busrah, where transshipment is easily effected into the excellent river boats of the Euphrates & Tigris Steam Navigation Co. which in from 3 to 4 days, according to the state of the river, accomplish the ascent of the Tigris to Baghdad. The only drawback of this route is the length of time, ~~that it~~ over five weeks, that is consumed between London & our destination.

Baghdad to Teheran

Having thus conducted the traveller, by any one of the above approaches to Baghdad, let me now show him how he will enter Persia from this quarter and what he will see by so doing. From Baghdad to the Persian frontier, 5 miles beyond the Turkish station of Khanikin, the distance is 90 miles, the road running for the most part over a level desert, & the halting-places being as follows: Beni Saad or Orta Khan (15 miles) Yakubieh (14) Shahrabad (26) Kizil Robat (18) Khanikin (17). There is no postal service; & the traveller who must engage his baggage animals at Baghdad, halts in khans (the Turkish equivalent to Caravanserais) and zest houses. After passing through the custom-house on the Persian border, he finds the following route extended before him:

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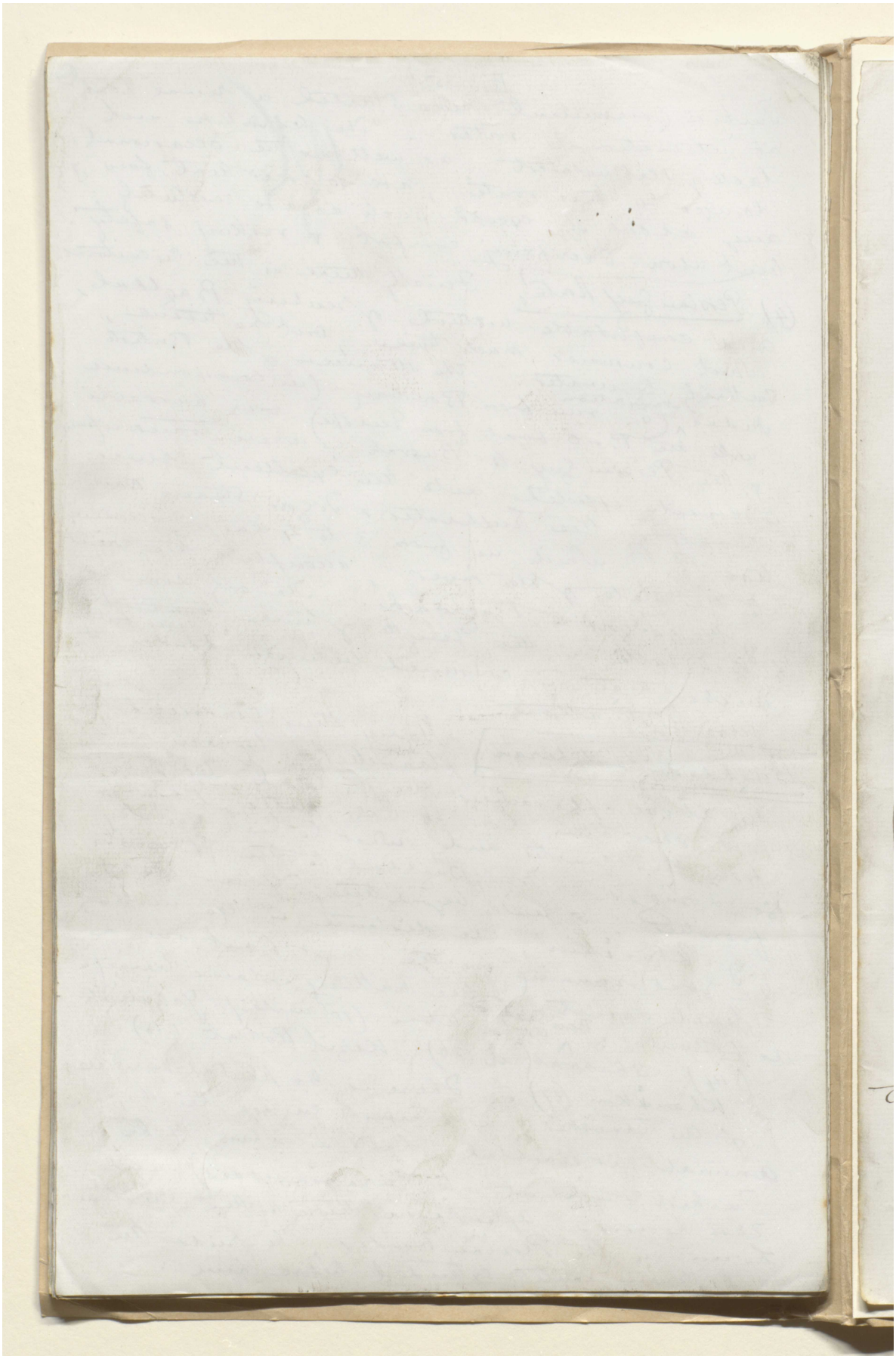

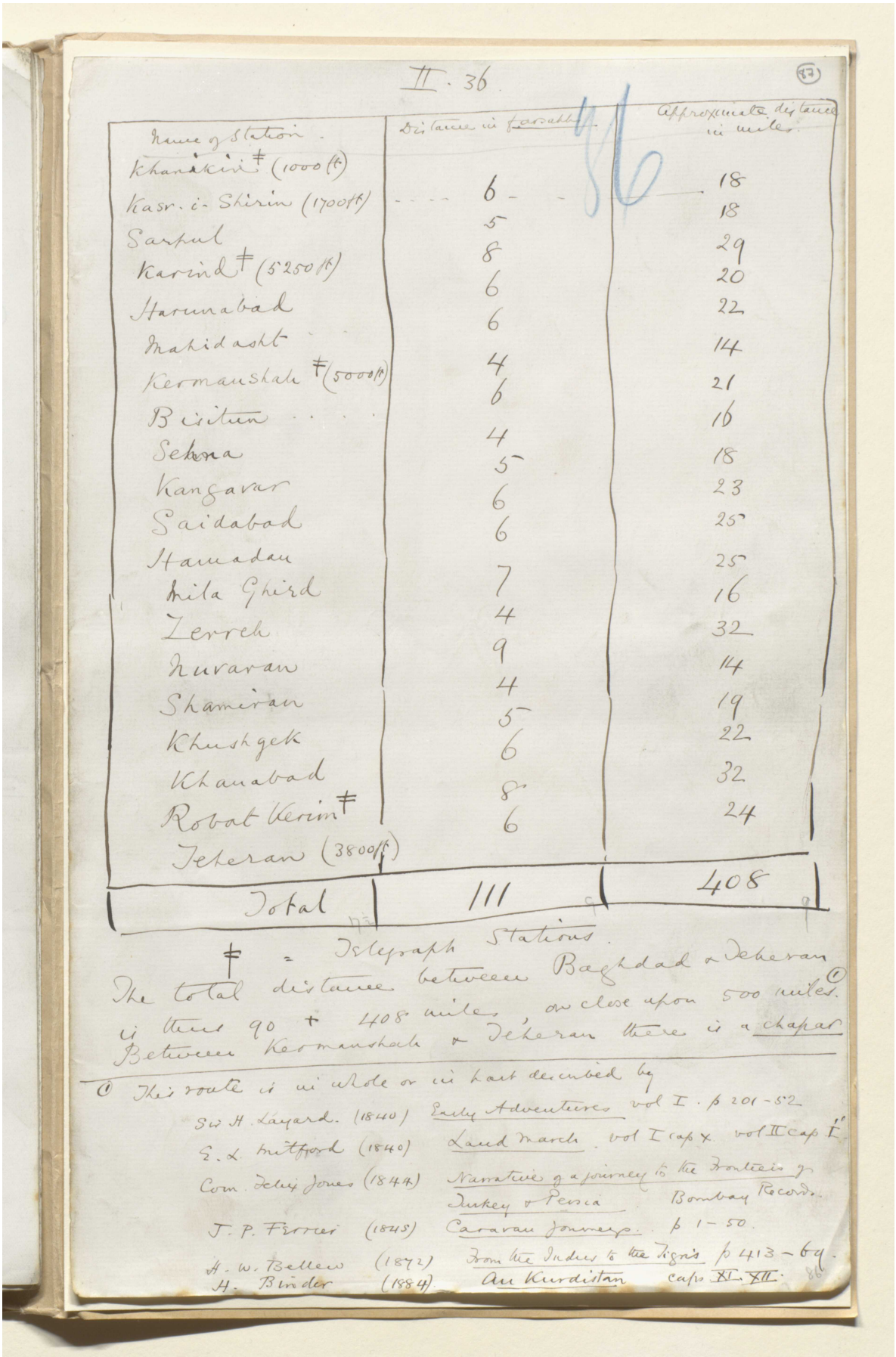

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Name of Station.	Distance in farsakhs.	Approximate distance in miles.
Khanakin ‡ (1000 ft.)		
Kasr-i-Shirin (1700 ft.)	6	18
Sarpul	5	18
Karind ‡ (5250 ft.)	8	29
Harunabad	6	20
Mahidasht	6	22
Kermanshah ‡ (5000 ft.)	4	14
Bisitun	6	21
Sehna	4	16
Kangavar	5	18
Saidabad	6	23
Hamadan	6	25
Mila Gherd	7	25
Zerreh	4	16
Kuraran	9	32
Shamiran	4	14
Khushgek	5	19
Khanabad	6	22
Robat Kerim ‡	8	32
Teheran (3800 ft.)	6	24
Total	111	408

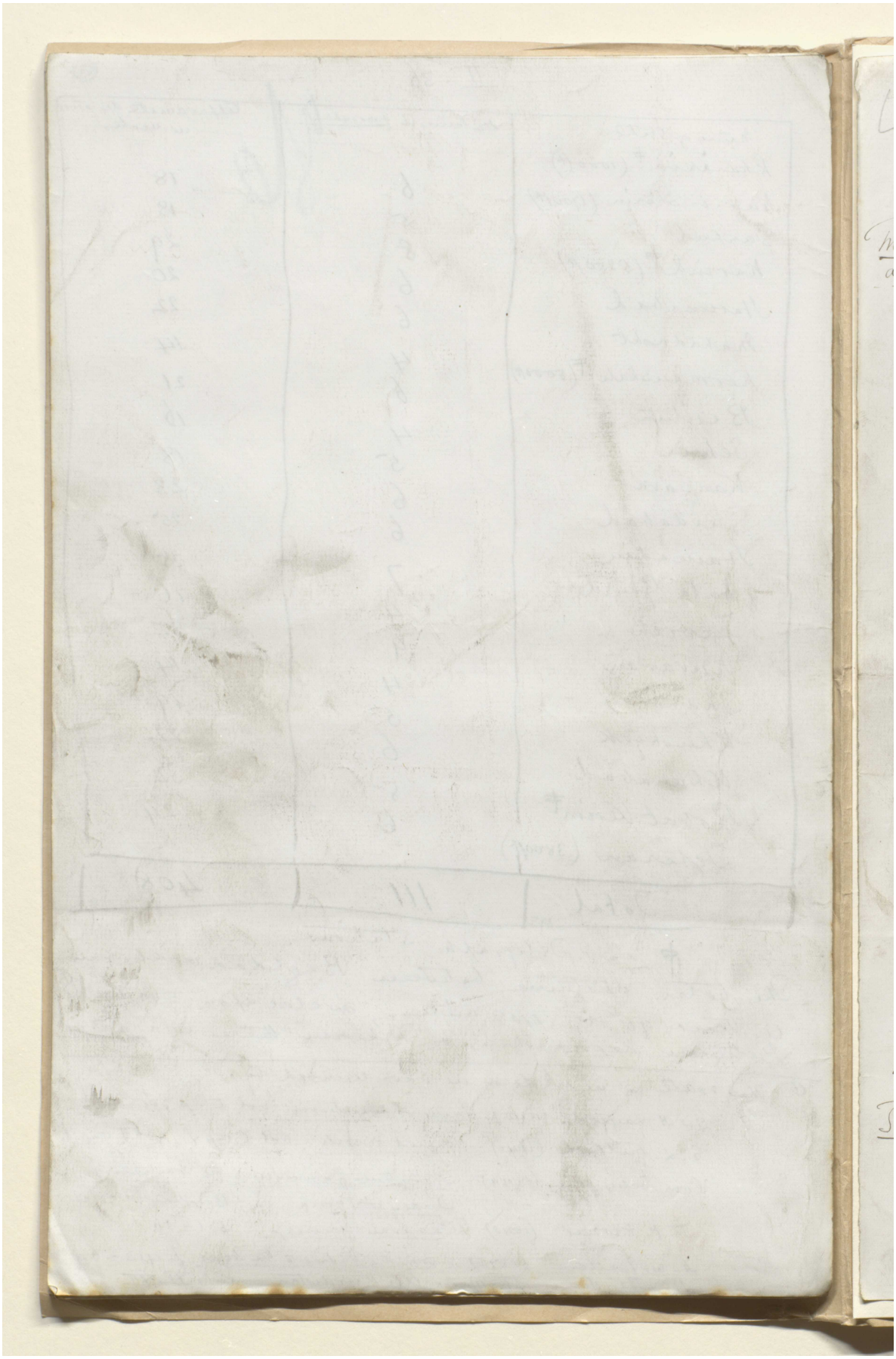
‡ = Telegraph Stations.

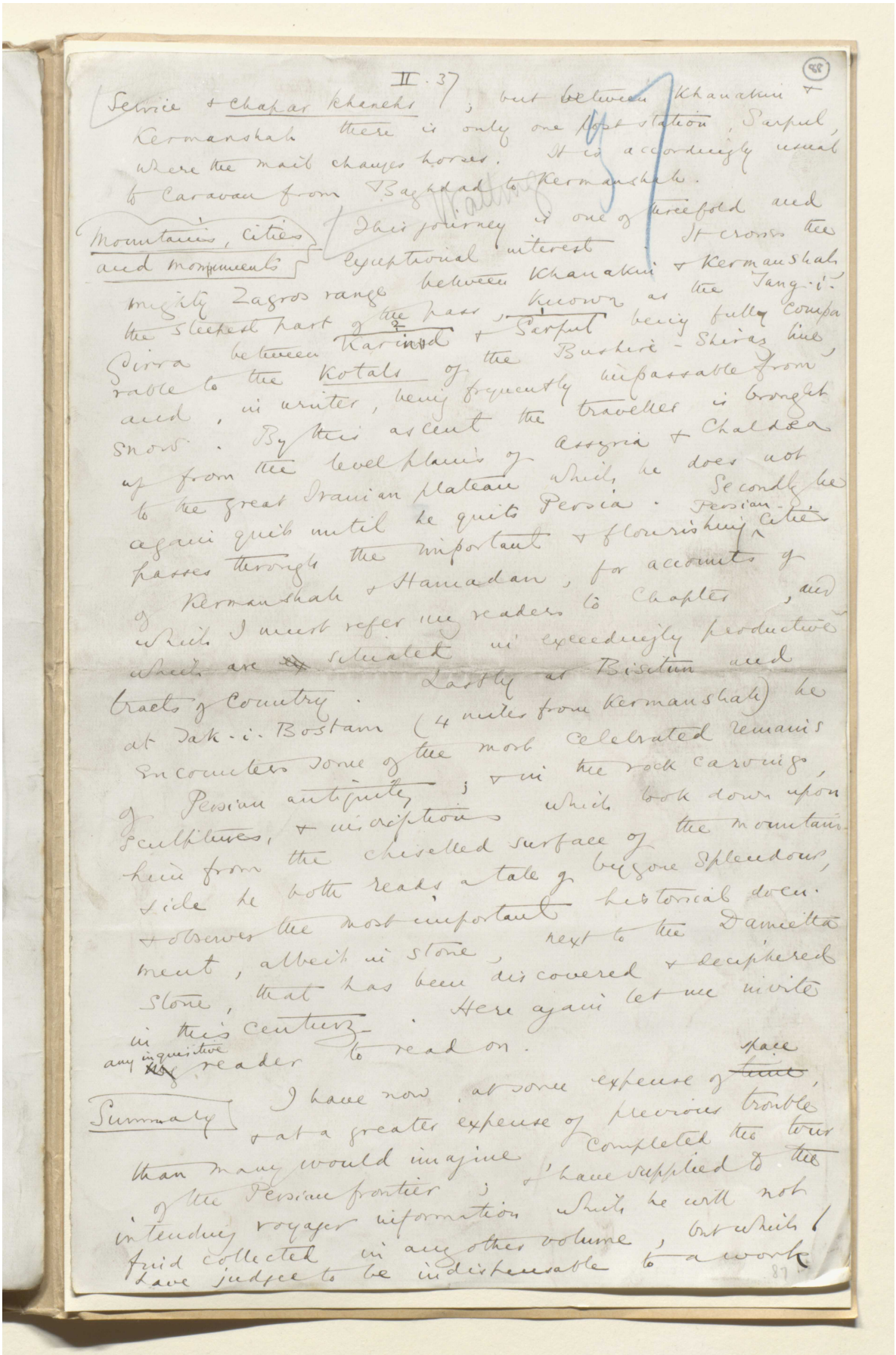
The total distance between Baghdad & Teheran is thus 90 + 408 miles, or close upon 500 miles. (1)

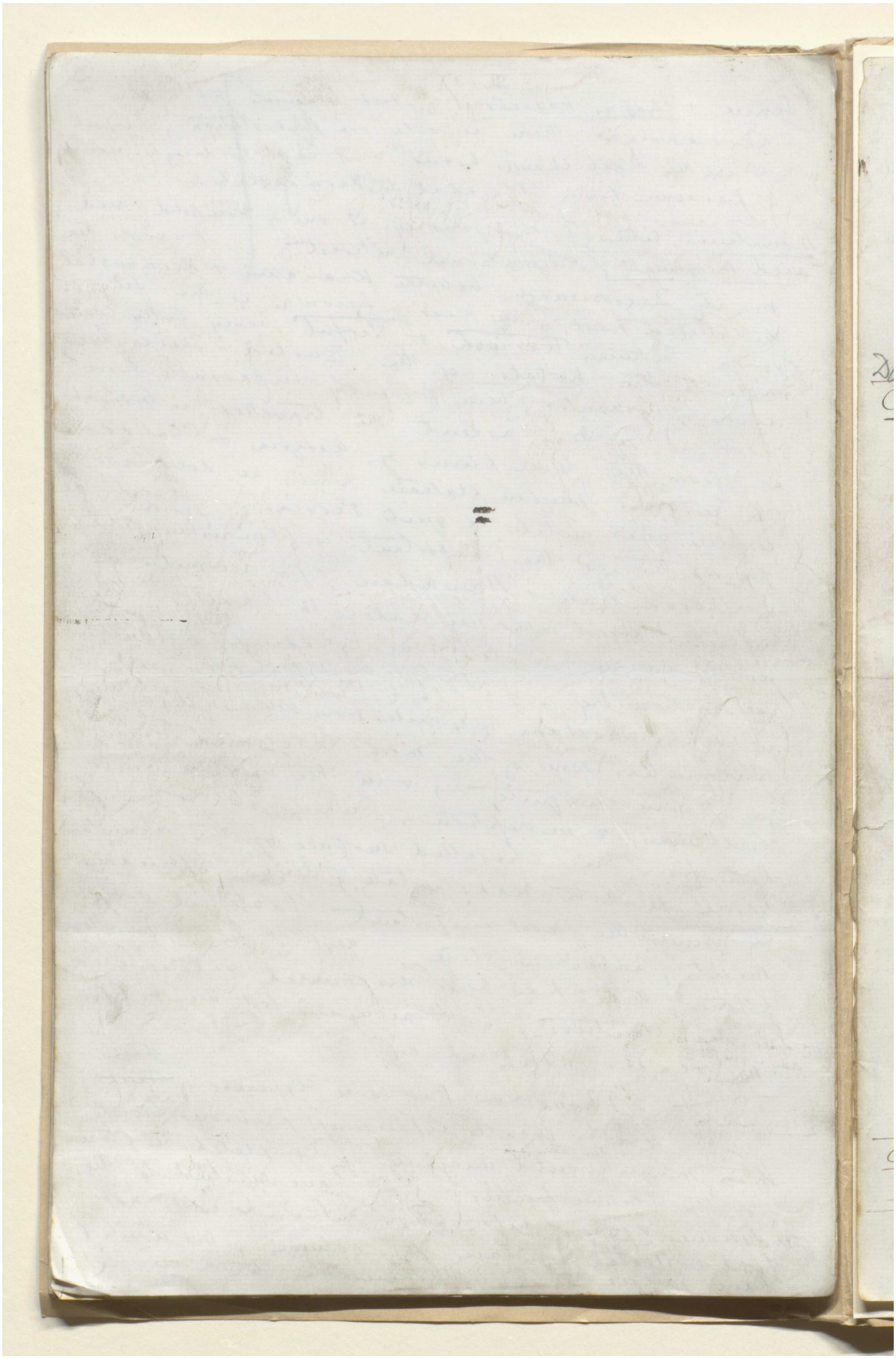
Between Kermanshah & Teheran there is a chapar

(1) This route is in whole or in part described by

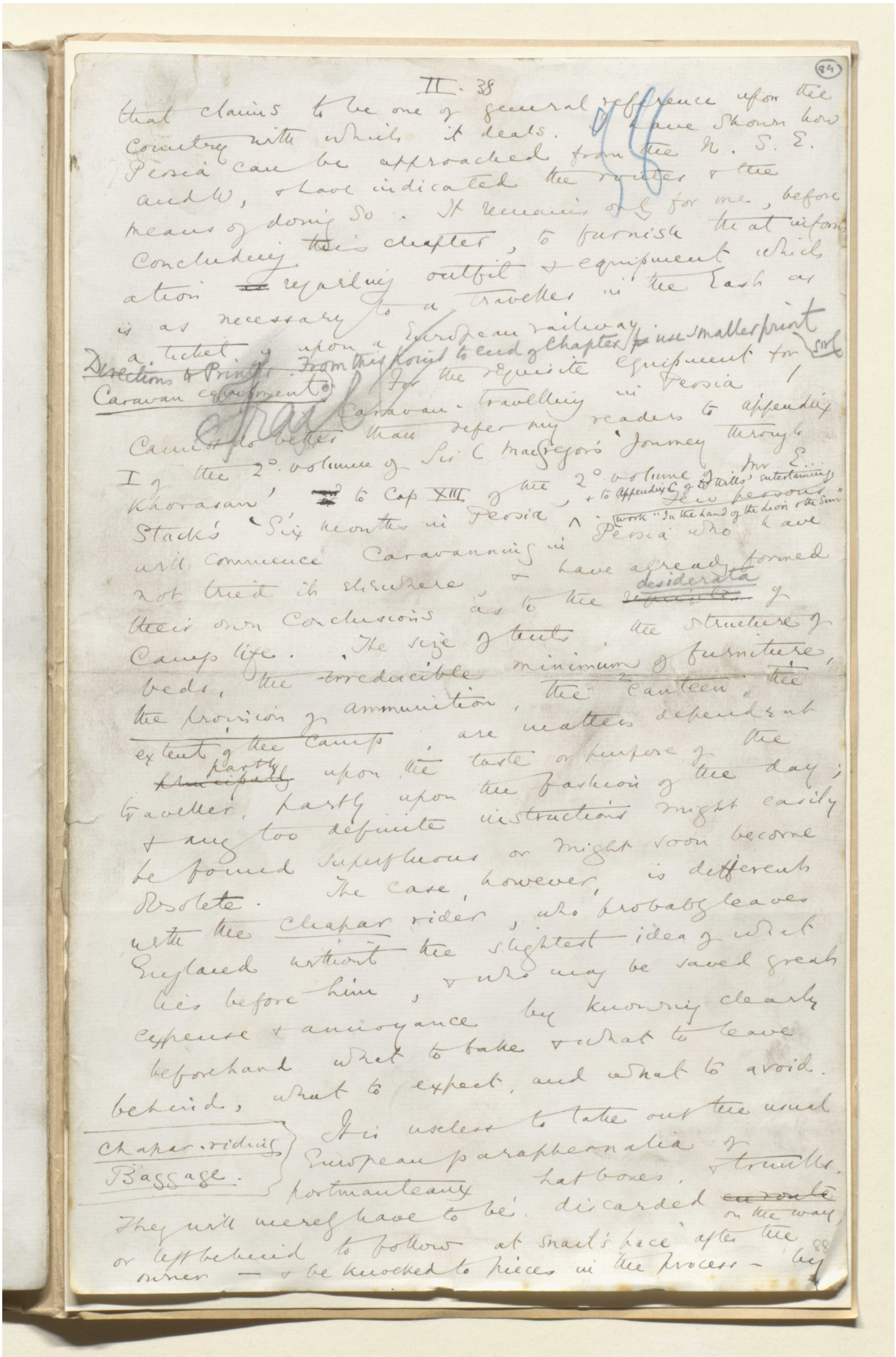
Sir H. Layard. (1840) Early Adventures vol I. p 201-52
E. L. Mitford (1840) Land march. vol I cap X. vol II cap I'
Com. Felix Jones (1844) Narrative of a journey to the frontiers of Turkey & Persia Bombay Records.
J. P. Ferrier (1845) Caravan Journeys. p 1-50.
A. W. Bellew (1872) From the Indus to the Tigris p 413-64.
H. Binder (1884) Au Kurdistan caps XI-XII.







مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٨٩و] (١٣٥٥/١٧٧)



that claims to be one of general reference upon the country with which it deals. I have shown how Persia can be approached from the N. S. E. and W, & have indicated the routes & the means of doing so. It remains only for me, before concluding this chapter, to furnish that information ~~as~~ regarding outfit & equipment which is as necessary to a traveller in the East as a ticket is upon a European railway.

Directions to Printer. From this point to end of chapter use smaller print

Caravan equipment. For the requisite equipment for Caravan travelling in Persia I cannot do better than refer my readers to appendix I of the 2°. volume of Sir C. MacGregor's 'Journey through Khorasan', ~~&~~ to Cap XIII of the 2°. volume of Mr E. Stack's 'Six months in Persia', & to Appendix C of Dr Wills' entertaining work "In the land of the Lion & the Sun". Few persons will commence Caravanning in Persia who have not tried it elsewhere, & have already formed their own conclusions as to the ~~requisites~~ desiderata of camp life. The size of tents, the structure of beds, the irreducible minimum of furniture, the provision of ammunition, the canteen, the extent of the camp, are matters dependent ~~principally~~ partly upon the taste or purpose of the traveller, partly upon the fashion of the day; & any too definite instructions might easily be found superfluous or might soon become obsolete. The case, however, is different with the Chapar rider, who probably leaves England without the slightest idea of what lies before him, & who may be saved great expense & annoyance by knowing clearly beforehand what to take & what to leave behind, what to expect, and what to avoid.

Chapar riding Baggage. It is useless to take out the usual European paraphernalia of portmanteaux, hat boxes, & trunks. They will merely have to be discarded ~~en route~~ on the way, or left behind to follow at snail's pace after the owner — & be knocked to pieces in the process — by

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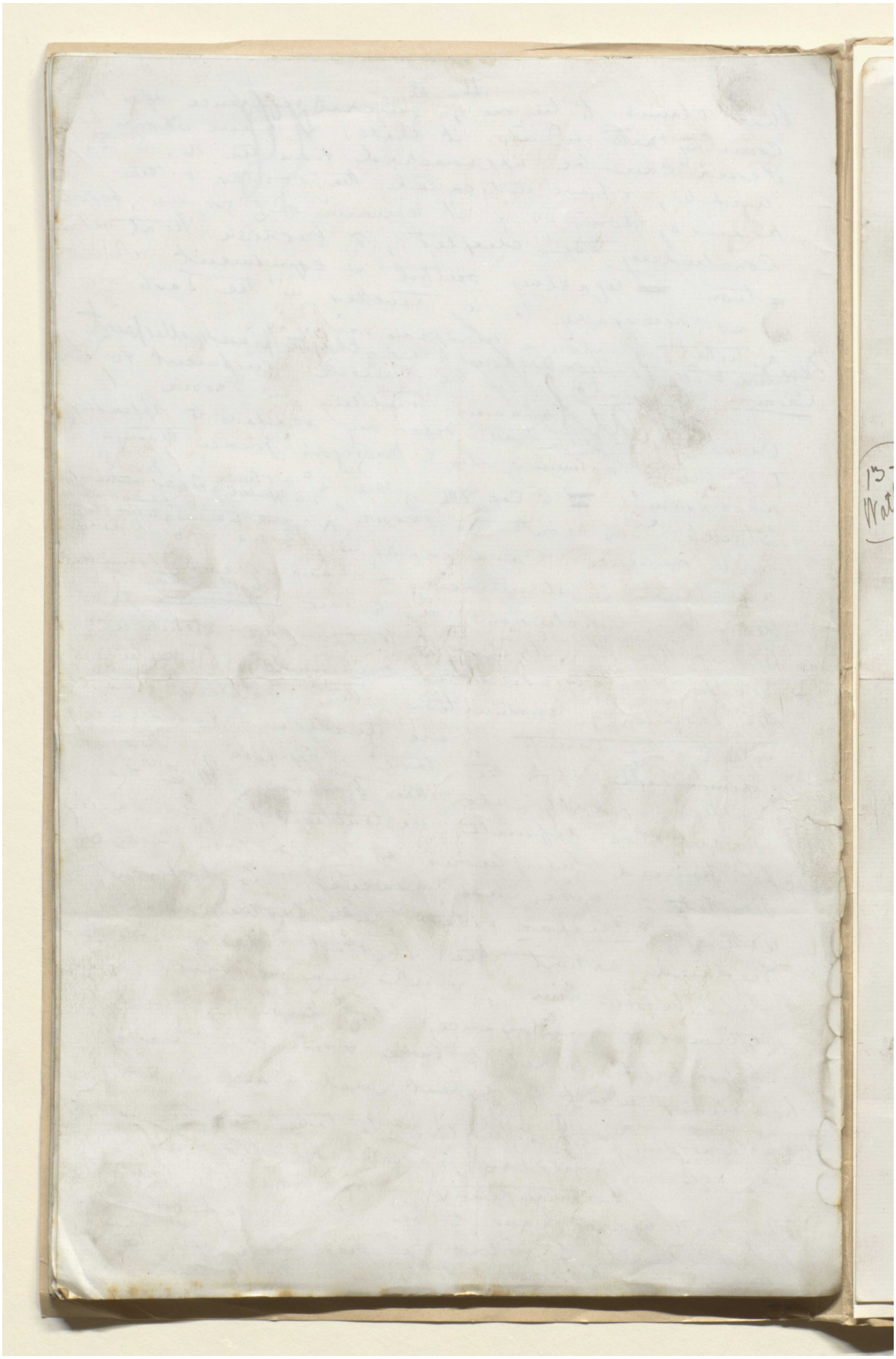

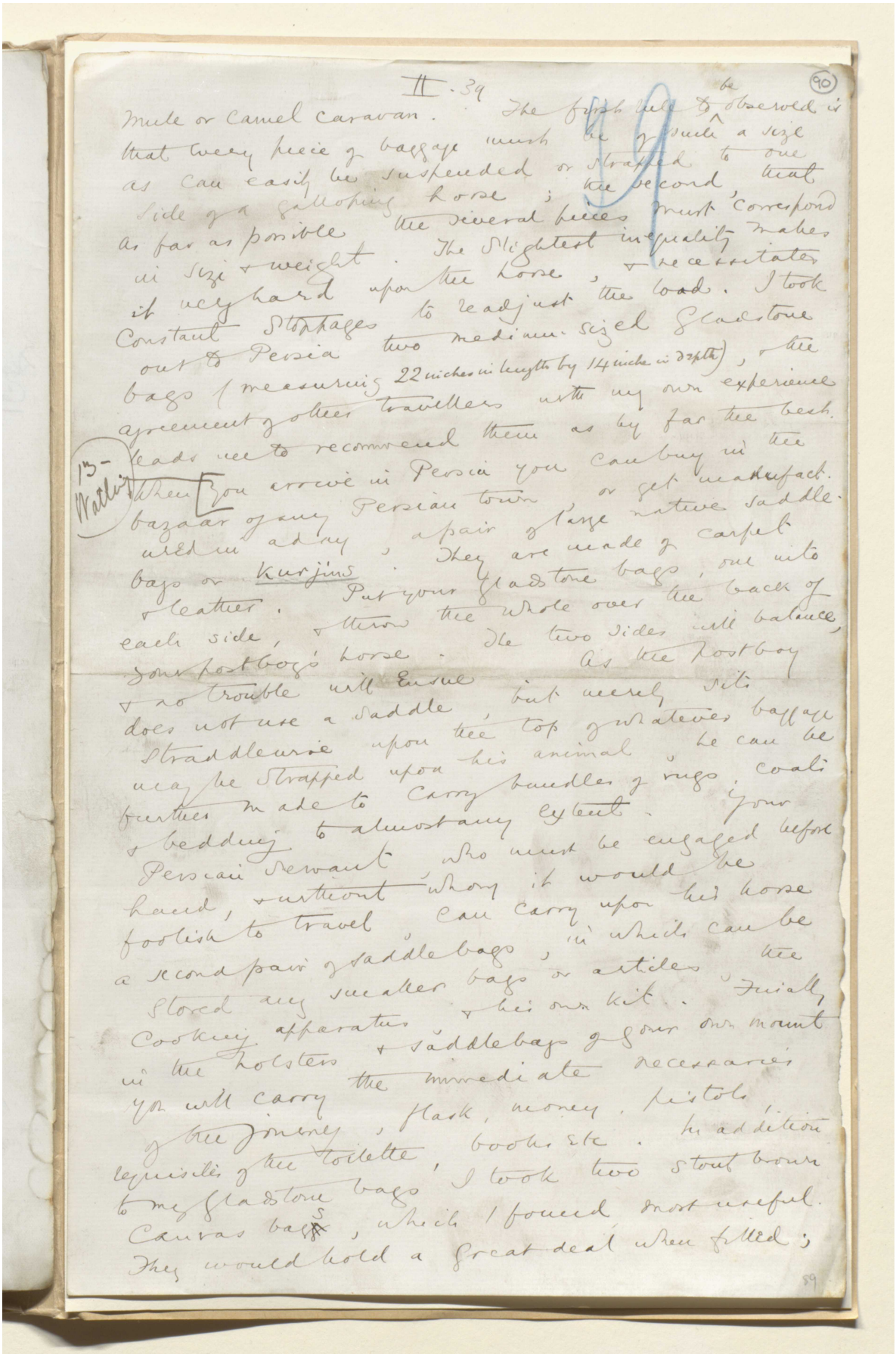

II. 39 (90)

Mule or Camel Caravan. The first rule to be observed is that every piece of baggage must be of such a size as can easily be suspended or strapped to one side of a galloping horse; the second, that the several pieces must correspond as far as possible in size & weight. The slightest inequality makes it very hard upon the horse, & necessitates Constant Stoppages to readjust the load. I took out to Persia two medium sized Gladstone bags (measuring 22 inches in length by 14 inches in depth), & the agreement of other travellers with my own experience leads me to recommend them as by far the best. When you arrive in Persia you can buy in the bazaar of any Persian town, or get manufactured to order, a pair of large native saddle-bags or Kurjins. They are made of carpet & leather. Put your Gladstone bags, one into each side, & throw the whole over the back of your postboy's horse. As the two sides will balance, no trouble will ensue. As the postboy does not use a saddle, but merely sits Straddlewise upon the top of whatever baggage may be strapped upon his animal, he can be further made to carry bundles of rugs, coats, & bedding to almost any extent. Your Persian Servant, who must be engaged before hand, & without whom it would be foolish to travel, can carry upon his horse a second pair of saddlebags, in which can be stored any smaller bags or articles of his own kit. Finally, Cooking apparatus & saddlebags of your own mount in the holsters you will carry the immediate necessaries of the journey, flask, money, pistols, requisites of the toilette, books etc. In addition to my Gladstone bags I took two stout brown Canvas bags, which I found most useful. They would hold a great deal when filled;

13-March

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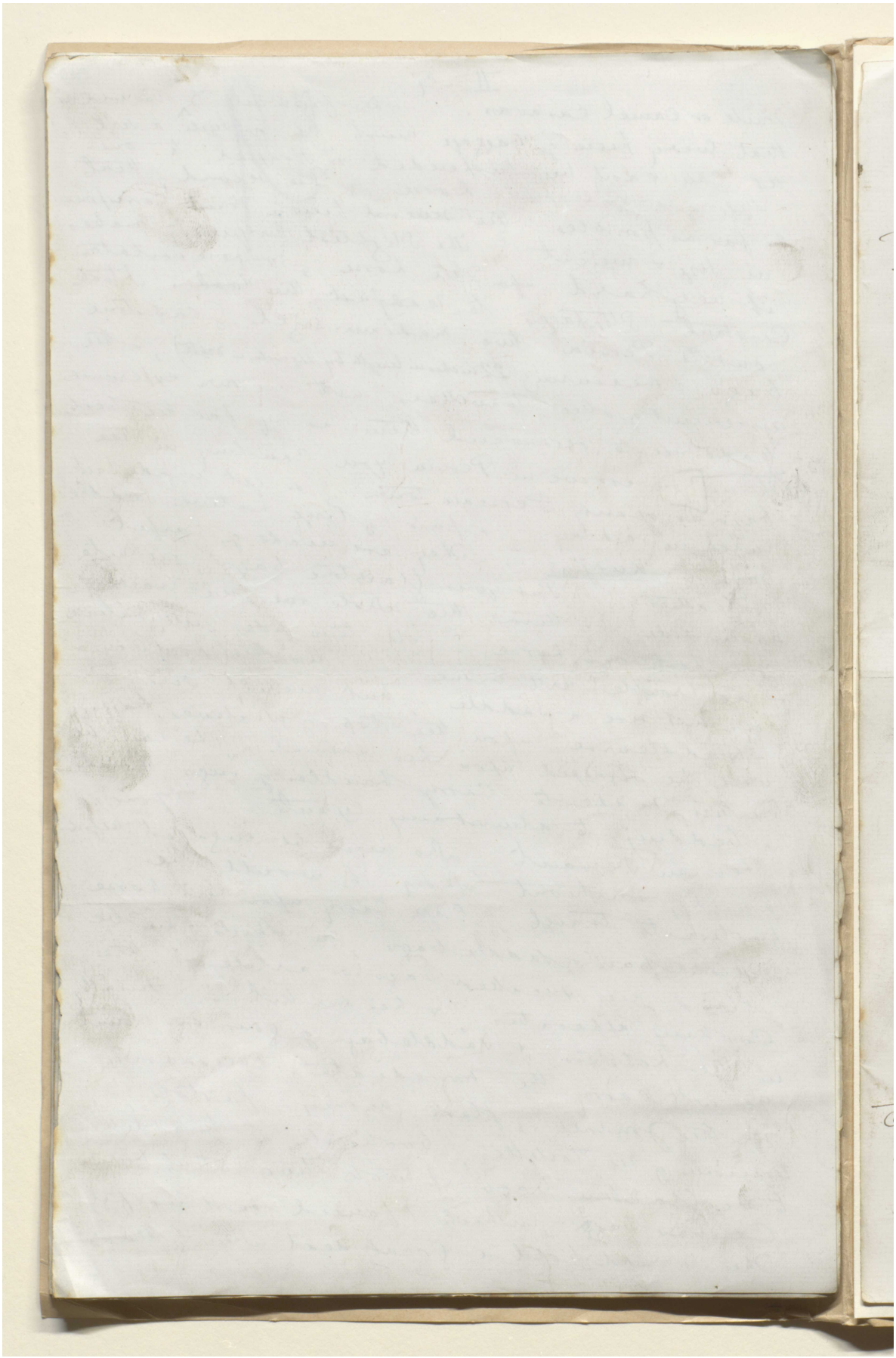

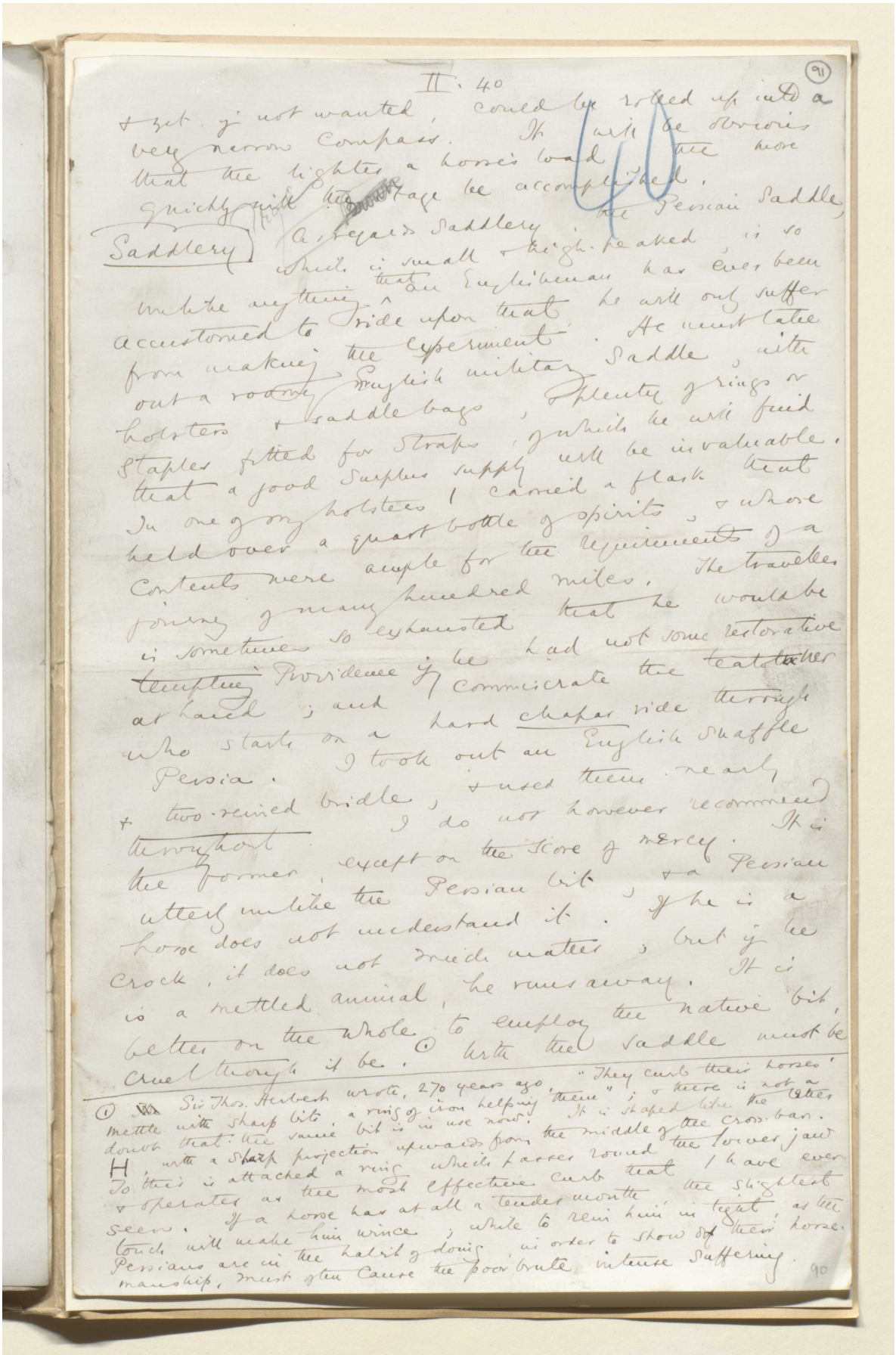

II. 40 (91)

Saddlery

& yet if not wanted, could be rolled up into a very narrow compass. It will be seen that the lighter a horse's load the more quickly will the stage be accomplished.

As regards Saddlery, the Persian Saddle, which is small & high-peaked, is so unlike anything that an Englishman has ever been accustomed to ride upon that he will only suffer from making the experiment. He must take out a roomy English military Saddle, with holsters & saddle bags, plenty of rings & staples fitted for straps, which he will find that a good Surplus supply will be invaluable. In one of my holsters I carried a flask that held over a quart bottle of spirits, & whose contents were ample for the requirements of a journey of many hundred miles. The traveller is sometimes so exhausted that he would be tempted Providence if he had not some restorative at hand; and I do not however recommend who starts on a hard chapar ride through Persia. I took out an English Shaffle & two-reined bridle, & used them nearly throughout. It is the former, except on the score of mercy. uttery unlike the Persian bit, & a Persian horse does not understand it. If he is a crock, it does not much matter; but if he is a mettled animal, he runs away. It is better on the whole, to employ the native bit, cruel though it be. ① With the Saddle must be

① Sir Thos. Herbert wrote, 270 years ago, "They curb their horses' mettle with sharp bits, a ring of iron helping them"; & there is not a doubt that the same bit is in use now. It is shaped like the letter H with a sharp projection upwards from the middle of the cross-bar. To this is attached a ring which passes round the lower jaw & operates as the most effective curb that I have ever seen. If a horse has at all a tender mouth the slightest touch will make him wince; while to rein him in tight, as the Persians are in the habit of doing, in order to show off their horsemanship, must often cause the poor brute intense suffering.

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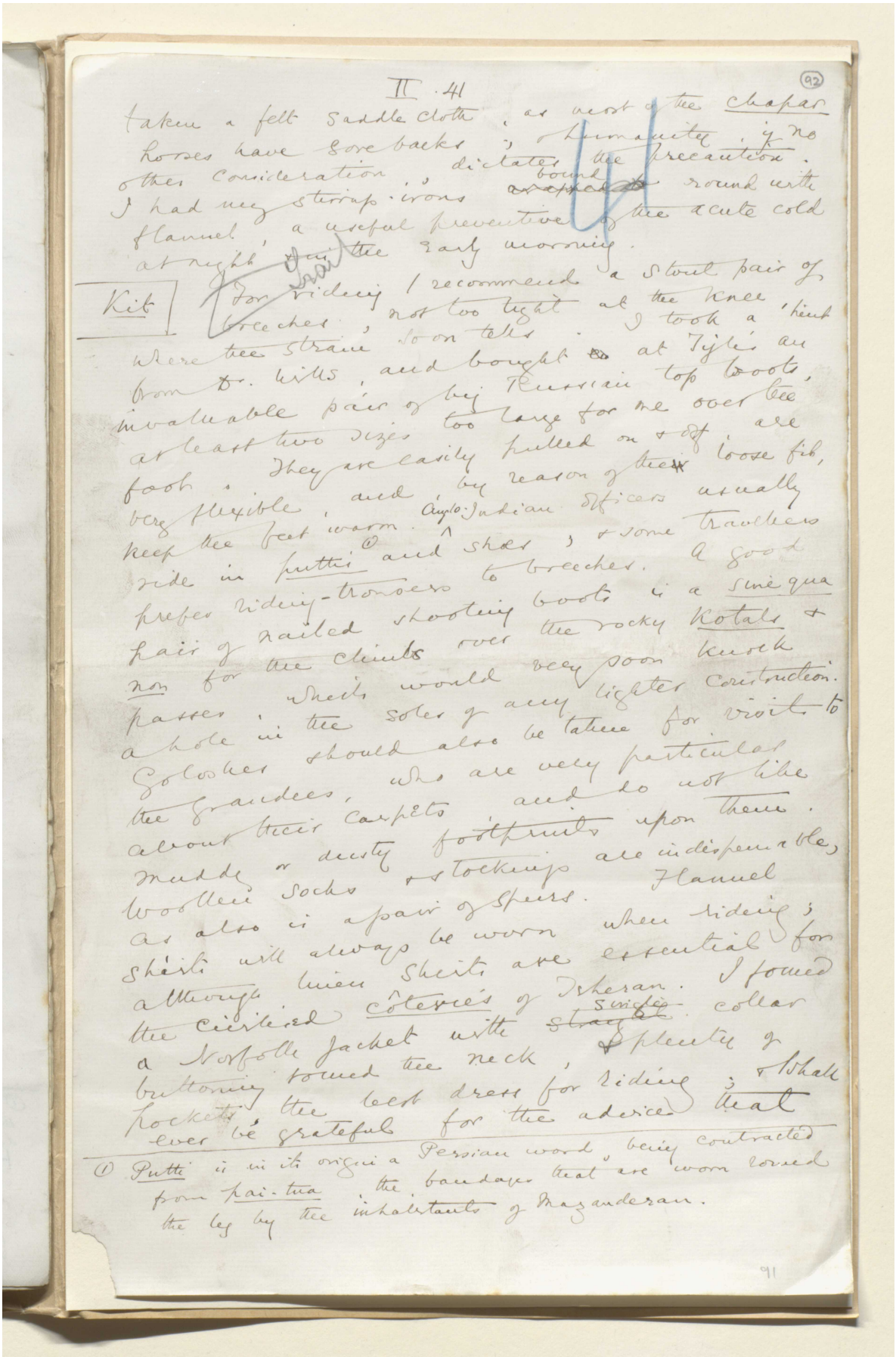

taken a felt saddle cloth, as most of the chapar horses have sore backs; & humanity, if no other consideration, dictates the precaution. I had my stirrup-irons ~~wrapped~~ bound round with flannel, a useful preventive of the acute cold at night, & in the early morning.

Kit

For riding I recommend a stout pair of breeches, not too tight at the knee, where the strain soon tells. I took a hint from Dr. Wills, and bought at Tyler's an invaluable pair of big Russian top boots, at least two sizes too large for me over the foot. They are easily pulled on & off, are very flexible, and by reason of their loose fit, keep the feet warm. Anglo-Indian officers usually ride in puttis[1] and shoes, & some travellers prefer riding-trousers to breeches. A good pair of nailed shooting boots is a sine qua non for the climbs over the rocky kotals & passes, which would very soon knock a hole in the soles of any lighter construction. Goloshes should also be taken for visits to the grandees, who are very particular about their carpets, and do not like muddy or dusty footprints upon them. Woollen socks & stockings are indispensable, as also is a pair of spurs. Flannel shirts will always be worn when riding; although linen shirts are essential for the civilised côteries of Teheran. I found a Norfolk jacket with ~~straight~~ single collar buttoning round the neck, & plenty of pockets, the best dress for riding; & I shall ever be grateful for the advice that

(1) Putti is in its origin a Persian word, being contracted from pai-tua, the bandages that are worn round the leg by the inhabitants of Mazanderan.

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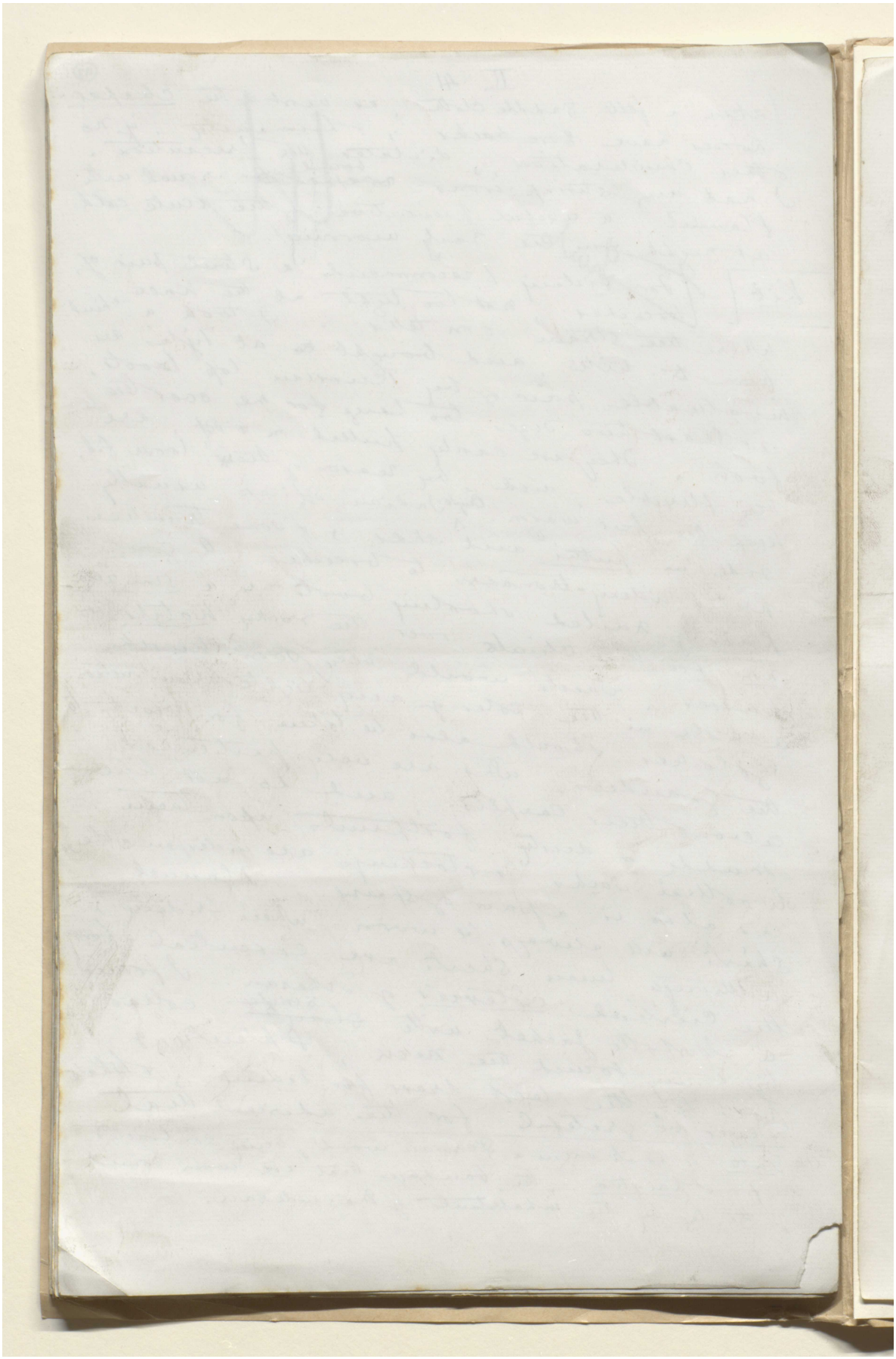

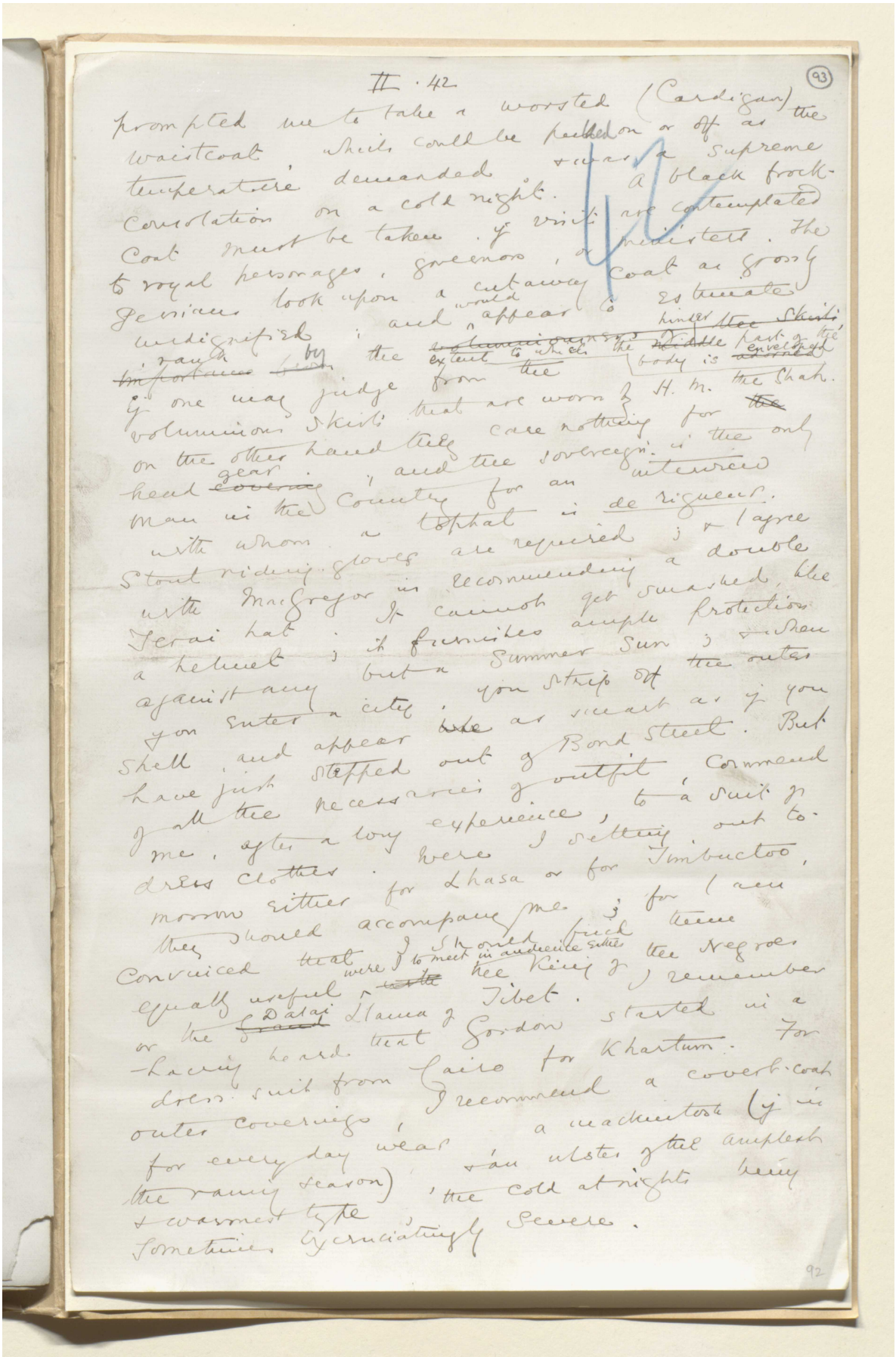

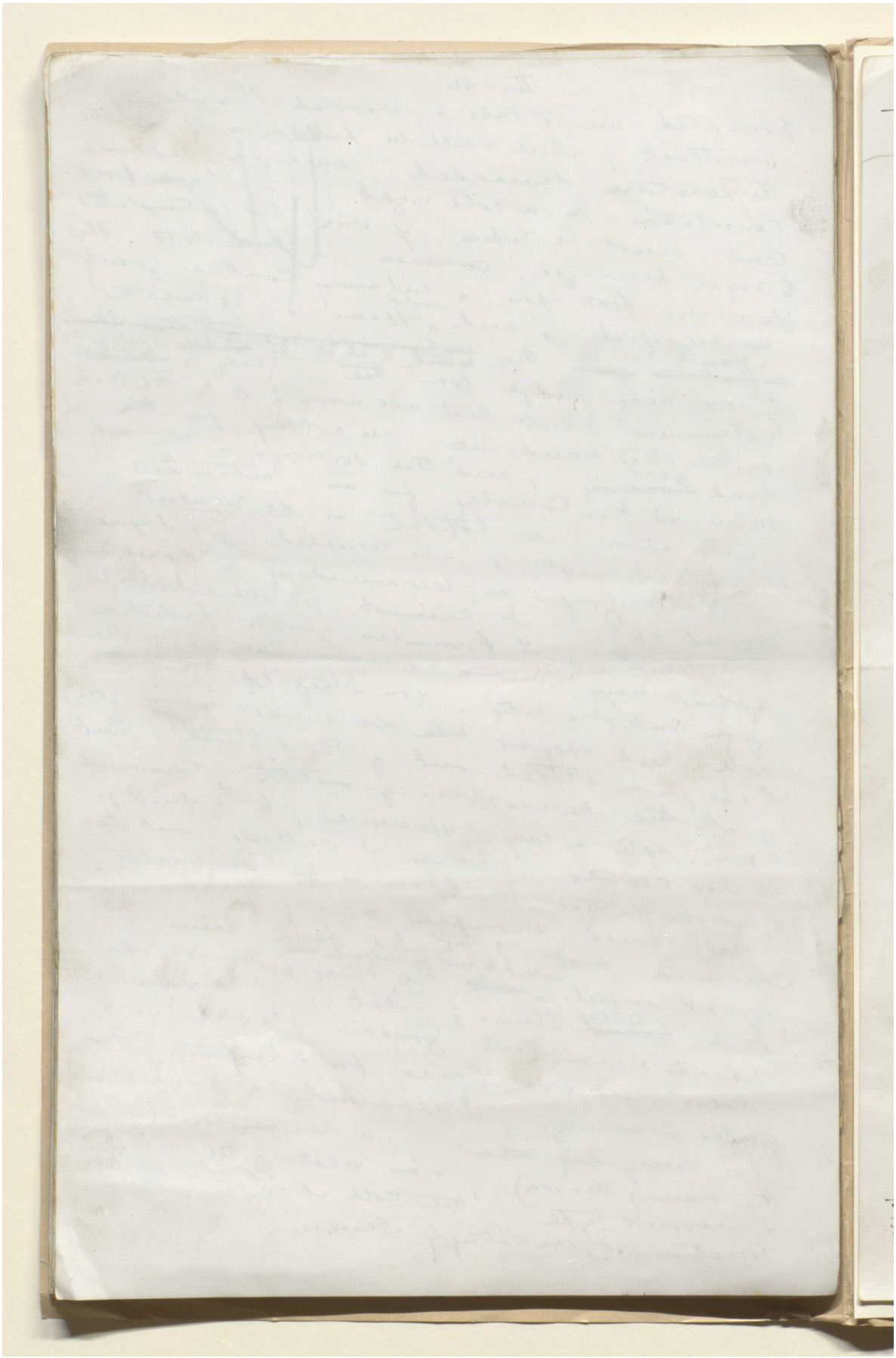

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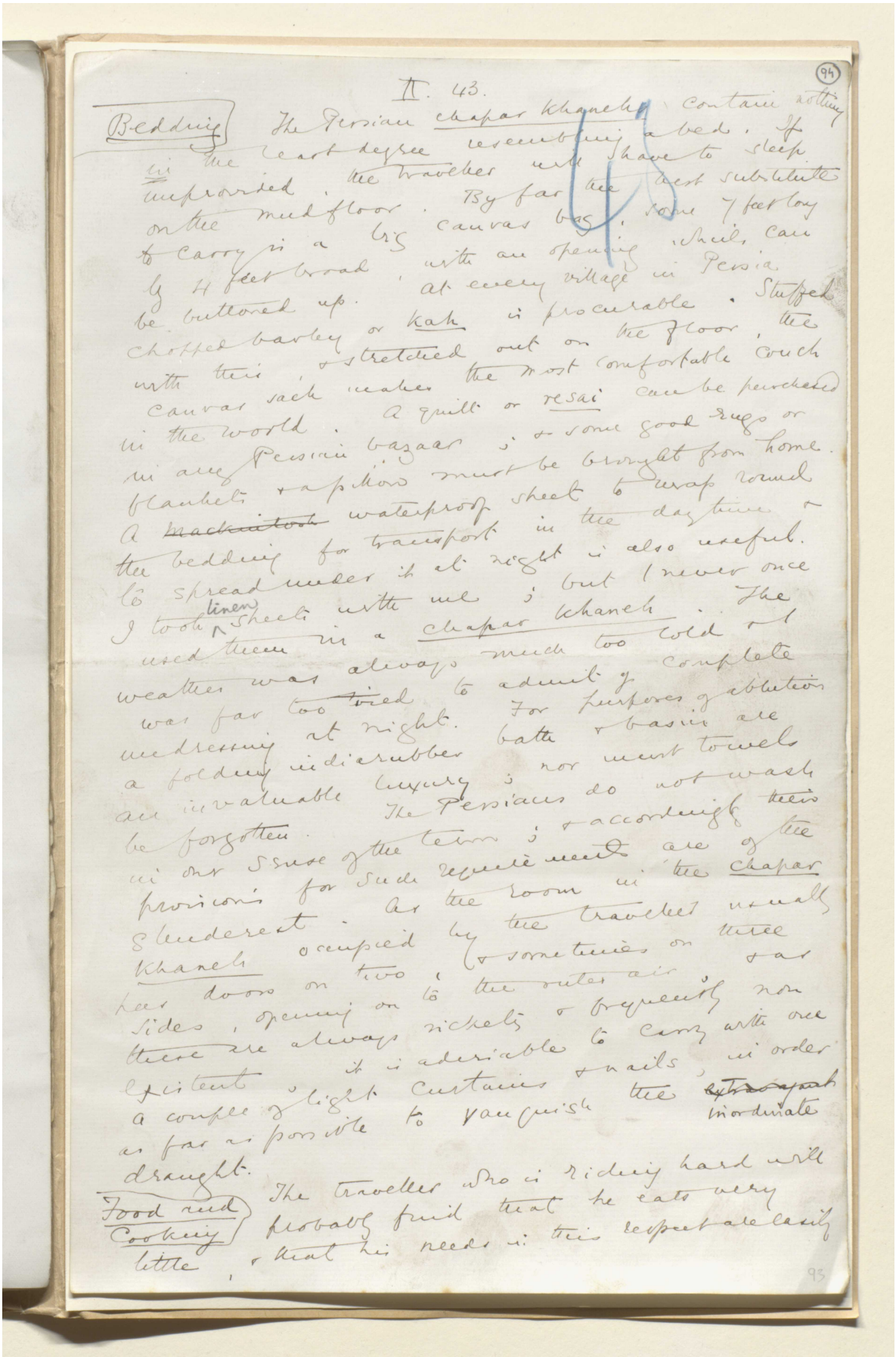

Bedding The Persian chapar khaneh contain nothing in the least degree resembling a bed. If unprovided the traveller will have to sleep on the mud floor. By far the best substitute to carry is a big canvas bag, some 7 feet long by 4 feet broad, with an opening which can be buttoned up. At every village in Persia chopped barley or kah is procurable. Stuffed with this, & stretched out on the floor, the canvas sack makes the most comfortable couch in the world. A quilt or resai can be purchased in any Persian bazaar; & some good rugs or blankets & a pillow must be brought from home. A ~~Mackintosh~~ waterproof sheet to wrap round the bedding for transport in the day time & to spread under it at night is also useful. I took linen sheets with me; but I never once used them in a chapar khaneh. The weather was always much too cold & I was far too tired to admit of complete undressing at night. For purposes of ablution a folding indiarubber bath & basin are an invaluable luxury; nor must towels be forgotten. The Persians do not wash in our sense of the term; & accordingly their provisions for such requirements are of the slenderest. As the room in the chapar khaneh occupied by the traveller usually has doors on two, & sometimes on three sides, opening on to the outer air, & as these are always rickety & frequently non existent, it is advisable to carry with one a couple of light curtains & nails, in order as far as possible to vanquish the ~~extravagant~~ inordinate draught.

Food and Cooking The traveller who is riding hard will probably find that he eats very little, & that his needs in this respect are easily

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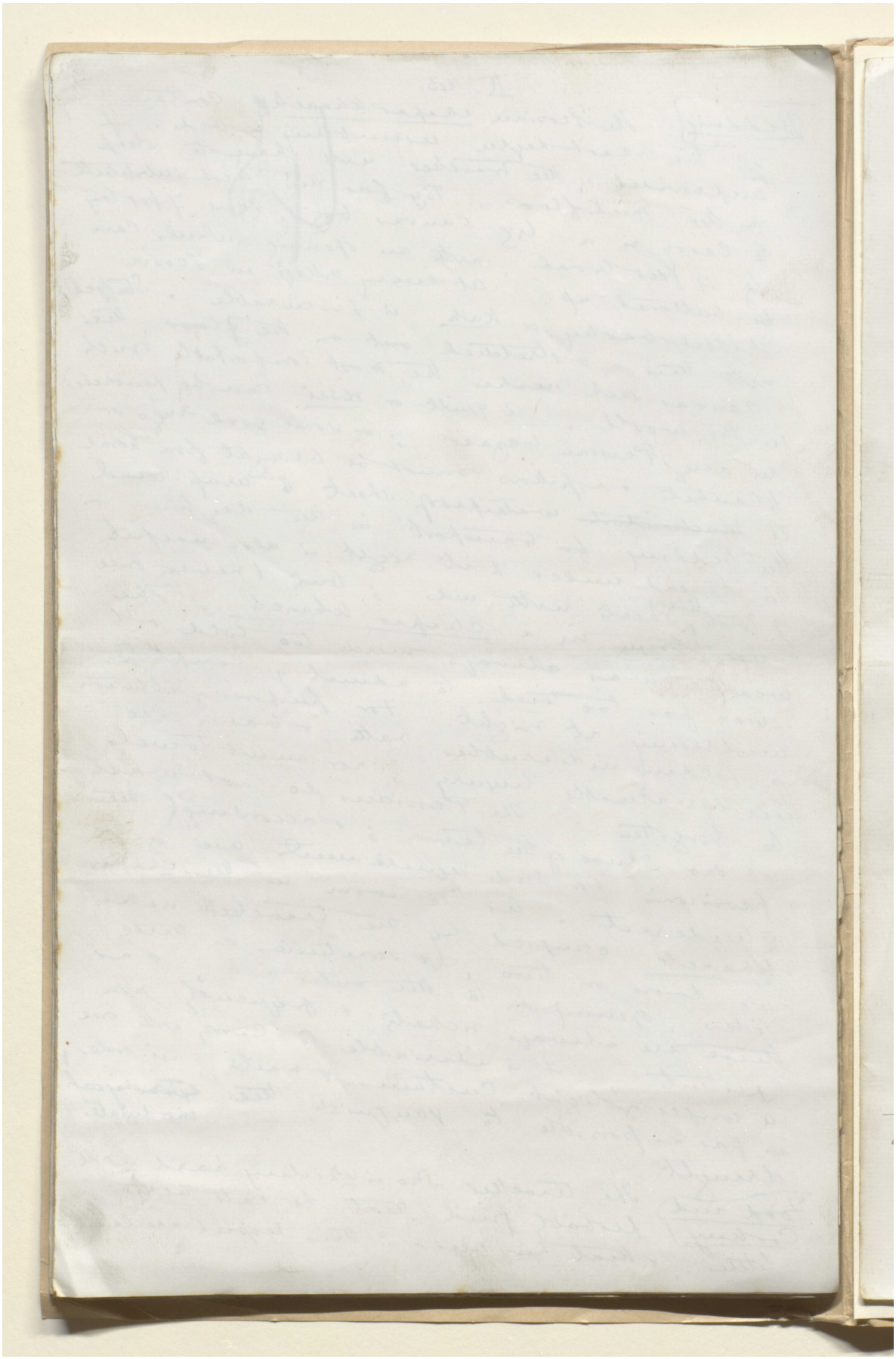
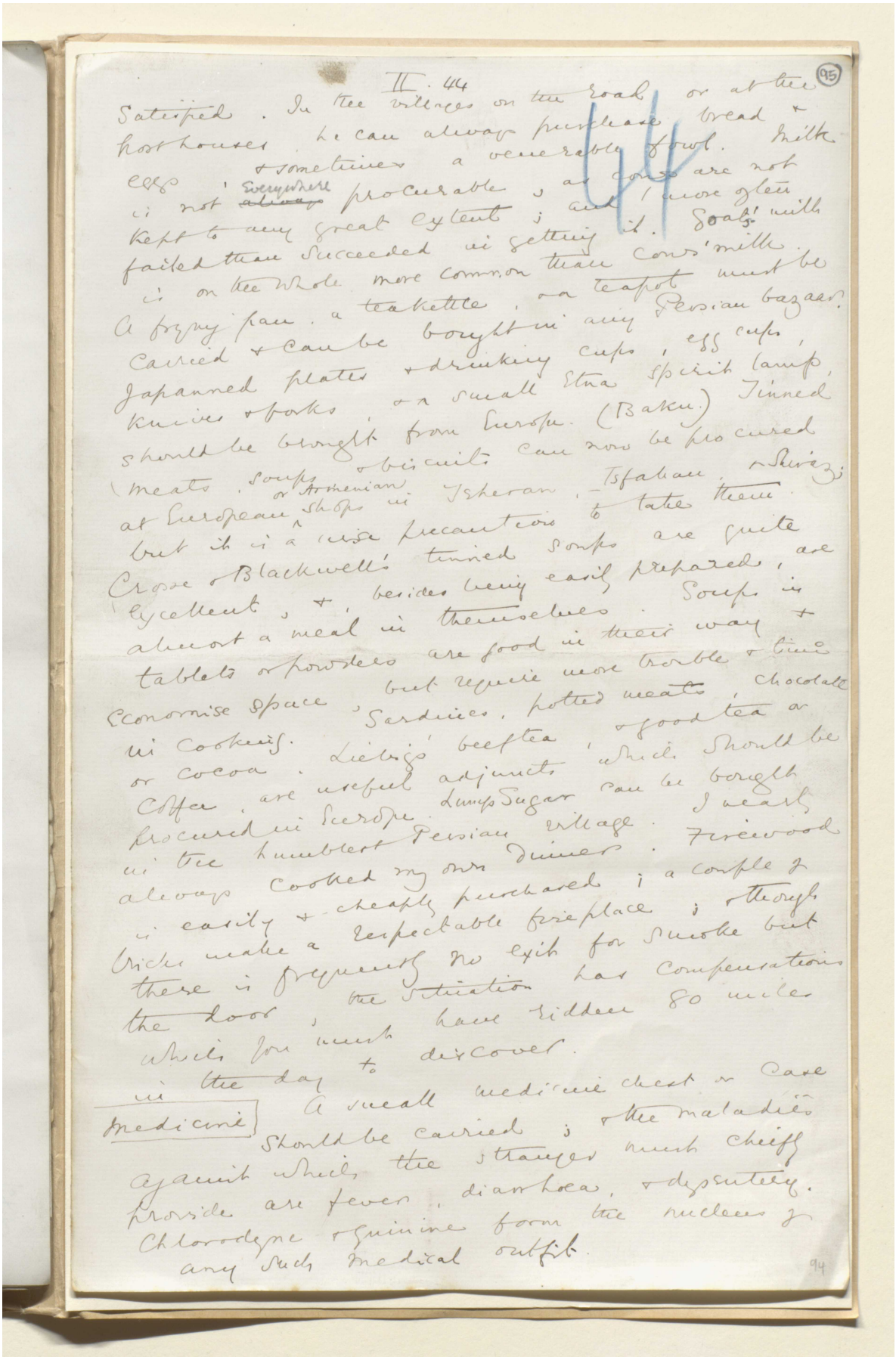


مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٩٥و] (١٣٥٥/١٨٩)



Satisfied. In the villages on the road or at the
post houses he can always purchase bread &
eggs, & sometimes a venerable fowl. Milk
is not ~~always~~ everywhere procurable, as cows are not
kept to any great extent; and I more often
failed than succeeded in getting it. Goats' milk
is on the whole more common than cows' milk.
A frying pan, a teakettle, & a teapot must be
carried & can be bought in any Persian bazaar.
Japanned plates & drinking cups, egg cups,
knives & forks, & a small Etna spirit lamp,
should be brought from Europe. (Baku.) Tinned
meats, soups & biscuits can now be procured
at European or Armenian shops in Teheran, Isfahan, & Shiraz;
but it is a wise precaution to take them.
Crosse & Blackwell's tinned soups are quite
excellent, & besides being easily prepared, are
almost a meal in themselves. Soups in
tablets or powders are good in their way &
economise space, but require more trouble & time
in cooking. Sardines, potted meats, chocolate
or cocoa, Liebig's beeftea, & good tea or
coffee, are useful adjuncts which should be
procured in Europe. Lump Sugar can be bought
in the humblest Persian village. I nearly
always cooked my own dinner. Firewood
is easily & cheaply purchased; a couple of
bricks make a respectable fireplace; & though
there is frequently no exit for smoke but
the door, the situation has compensations
which you must have ridden 80 miles
in the day to discover.

Medicine

A small medicine chest or case
should be carried; & the maladies
against which the stranger must chiefly
provide are fever, diarrhoea, & dysentery.
Chlorodyne & quinine form the nucleus of
any such medical outfit.

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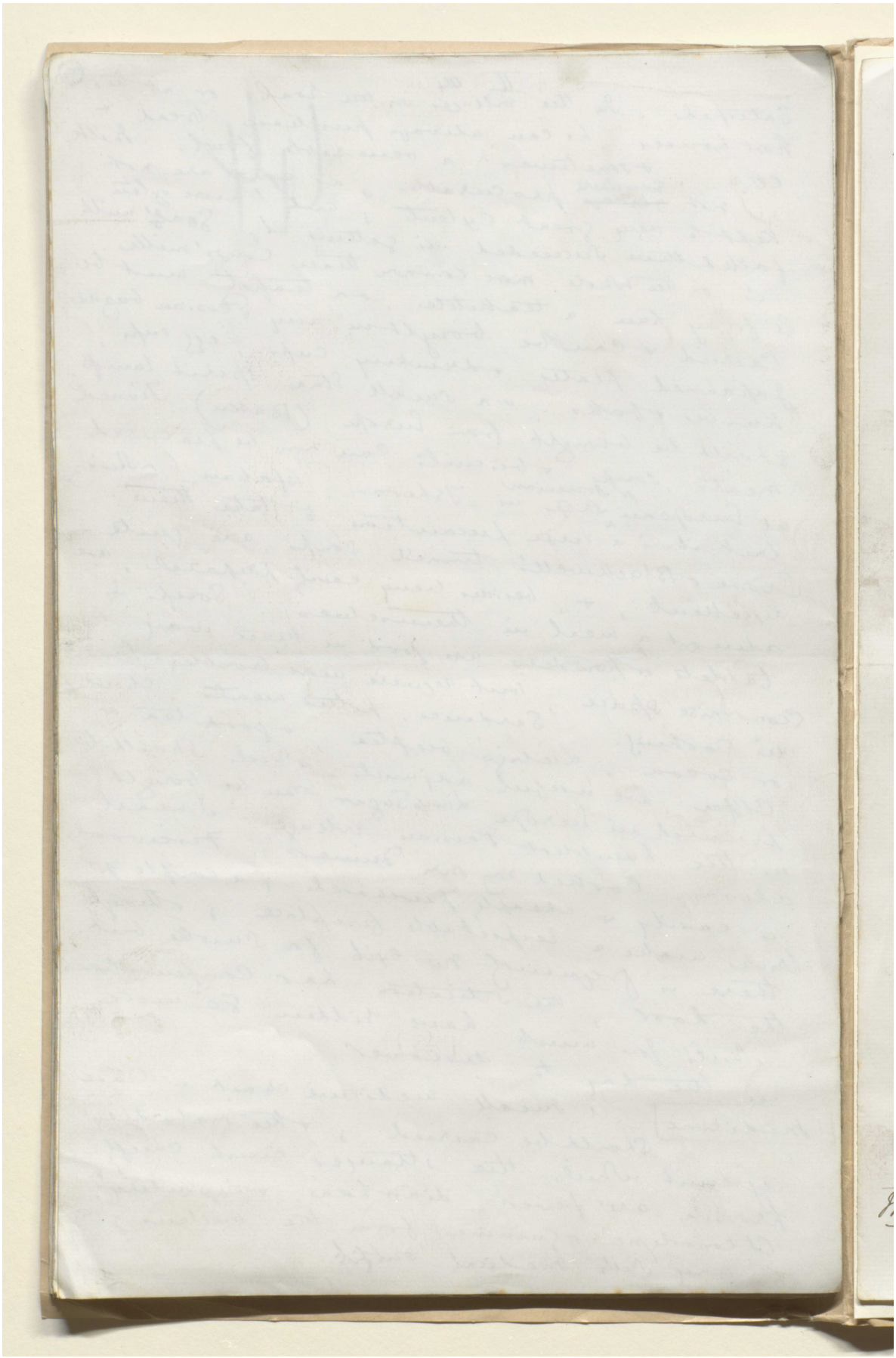

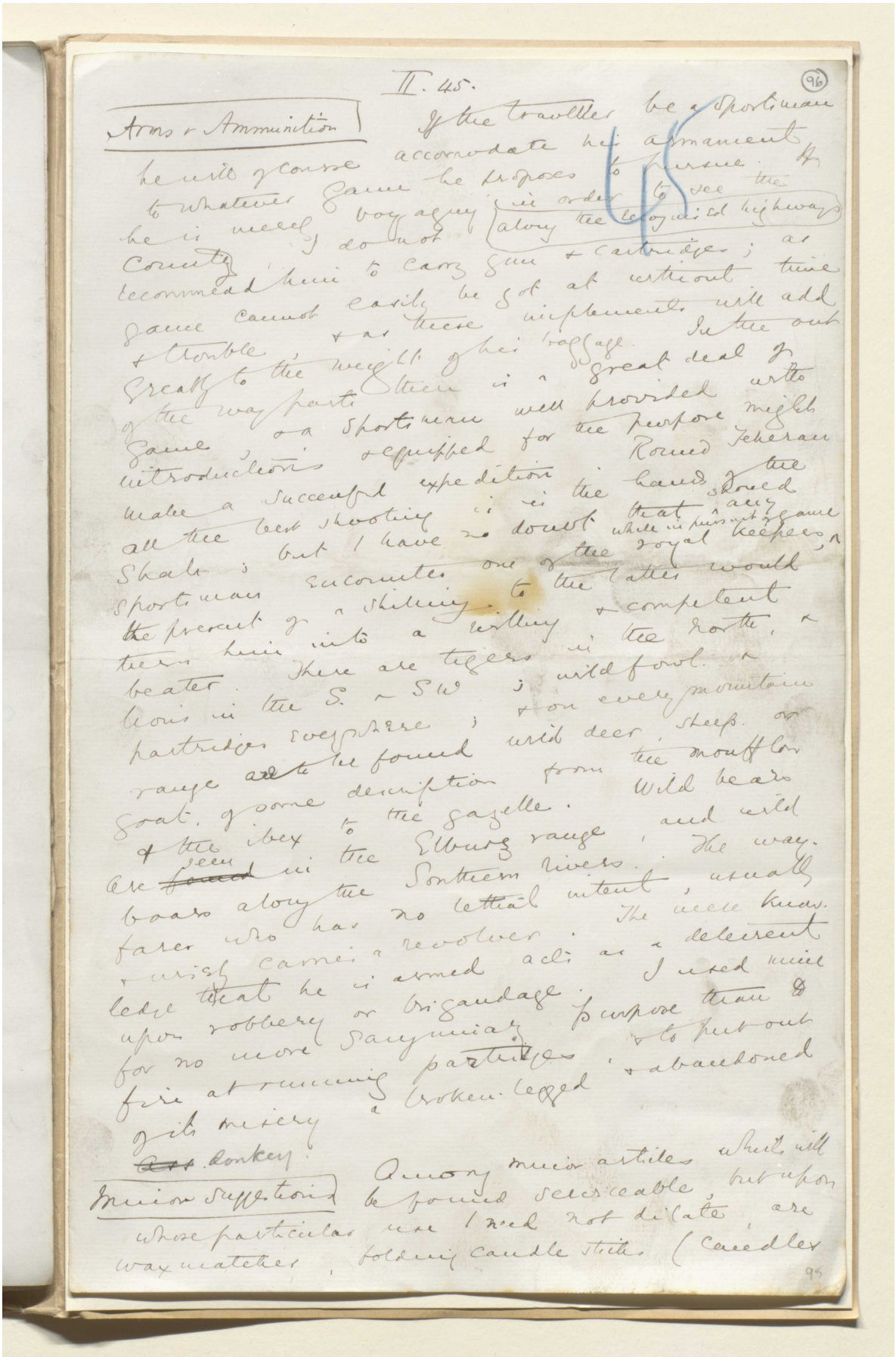

II. 45.

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Arms & Ammunition

If the traveller be a Sportsman he will of course accomodate his armament to whatever game he proposes to pursue. If he is merely voyaging in order to see the country, I do not (along the recognised highways) recommend him to carry gun & cartridges; as game cannot easily be got at without time & trouble, & as these implements will add greatly to the weight of his baggage. In the out of the way parts there is a great deal of game, & a Sportsman well provided with introductions & equipped for the purpose might make a successful expedition. Round Teheran all the best shooting is in the hands of the Shah; but I have no doubt that any Sportsman encounters one of the royal keepers, while in pursuit of game, the present of a shilling to the latter would turn him into a willing & competent beater. There are tigers in the North, & lions in the S. & SW; wild fowl & partridges everywhere; & on every mountain range ~~are~~ to be found wild deer, sheep or goat, of some description from the mouflon & the ibex to the gazelle. Wild bears are ~~found~~ seen in the Elburz range, and wild boars along the Southern rivers. The way-farer who has no lethal intent, usually & wisely carries a revolver. The mere knowledge that he is armed acts as a deterrent upon robbery or brigandage. I used mine for no more sanguinary purpose than to fire at running partridges, & to put out of its misery a broken-legged & abandoned ~~ass~~ donkey.

Minor suggestions

Among minor articles which will be found serviceable, but upon whose particular use I need not dilate, are wax matches, folding candle sticks (candles

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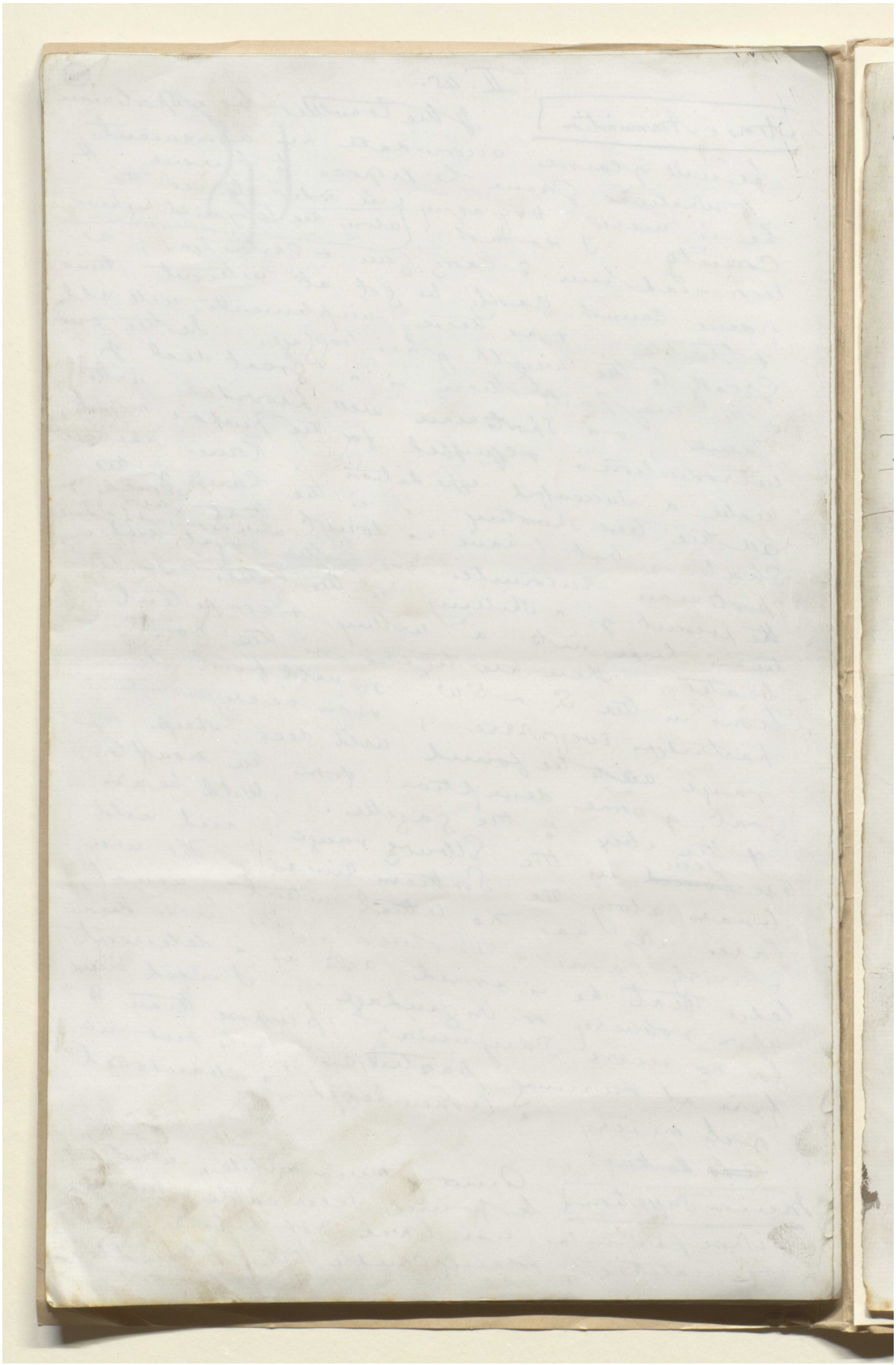

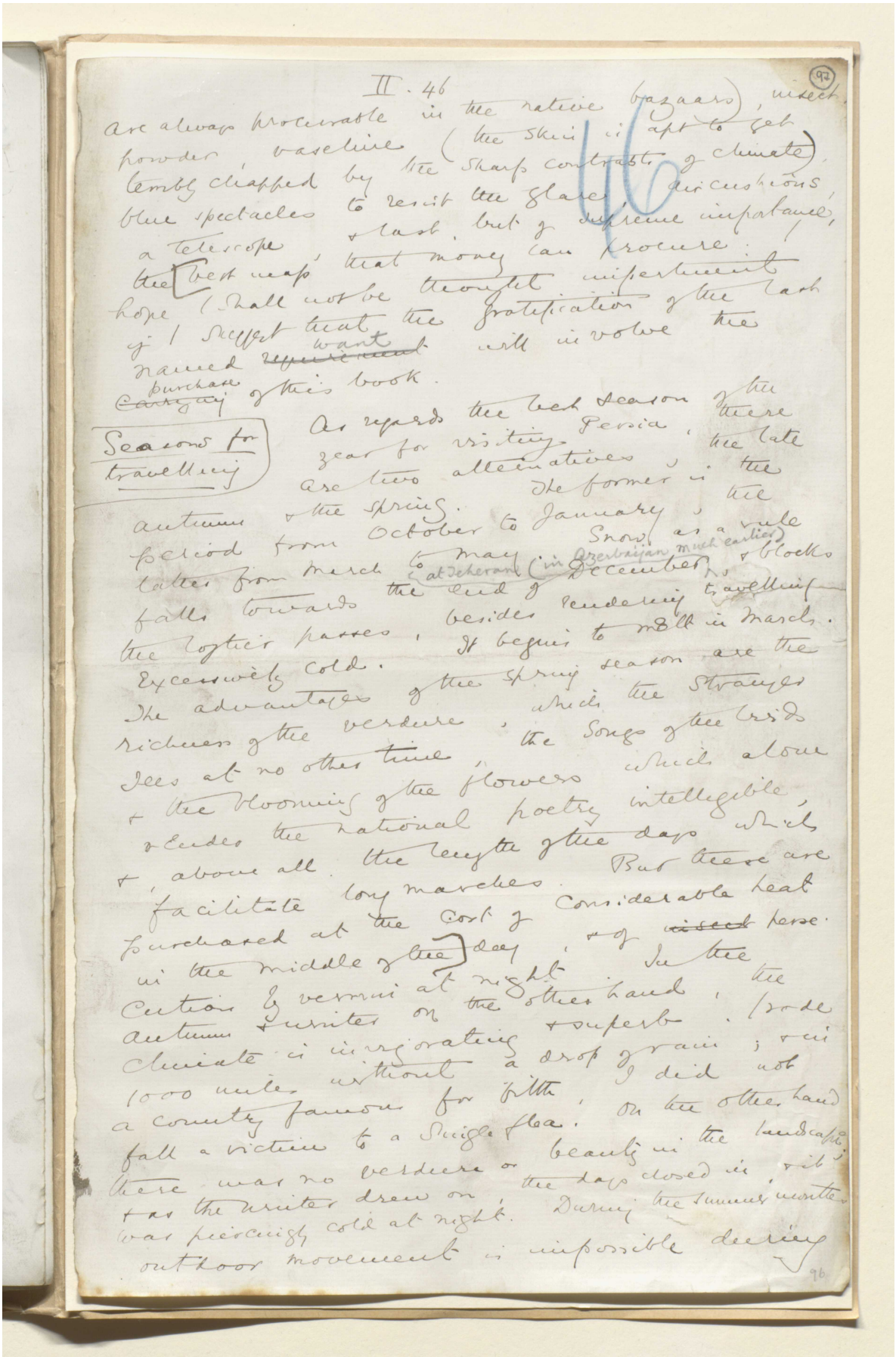

are always procurable in the native bazaars), insect powder, vaseline (the skin is apt to get terribly chapped by the sharp contrasts of climate), blue spectacles to resist the glare, air cushions, a telescope, & last, but of supreme importance, the best map that money can procure. I hope I shall not be thought impertinent if I suggest that the gratification of the last named ~~requirement~~ want will involve the ~~carrying~~ purchase of this book.

Seasons for travelling

As regards the best season of the year for visiting Persia, there are two alternatives, the late autumn & the spring. The former is the period from October to January, the latter from March to May. Snow, as a rule falls towards the end of December (at Teheran (in Azerbaijan much earlier)), & blocks the loftier passes, besides rendering travelling excessively cold. It begins to melt in March. The advantages of the spring season are the richness of the verdure, which the stranger sees at no other time, the songs of the birds & the blooming of the flowers which alone render the national poetry intelligible, & above all the length of the days which facilitate long marches. But these are purchased at the cost of considerable heat in the middle of the day, & of ~~insect~~ persecution by vermin at night. In the autumn & winter on the other hand, the climate is invigorating & superb. I rode 1000 miles without a drop of rain; & in a country famous for filth, I did not fall a victim to a single flea. On the other hand there was no verdure or beauty in the landscape; & as the winter drew on, the days closed in, & it was piercingly cold at night. During the summer months outdoor movement is impossible during

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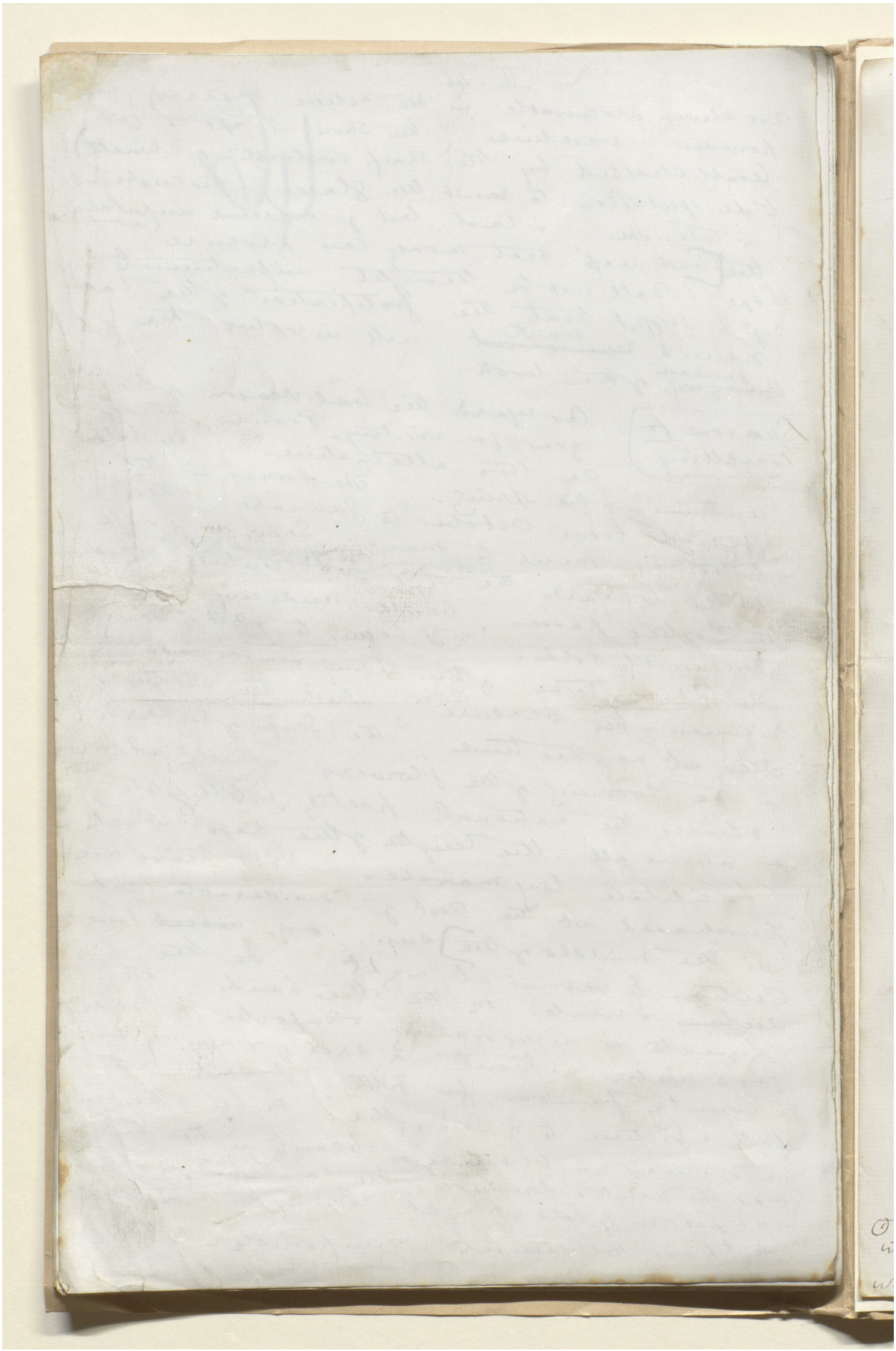

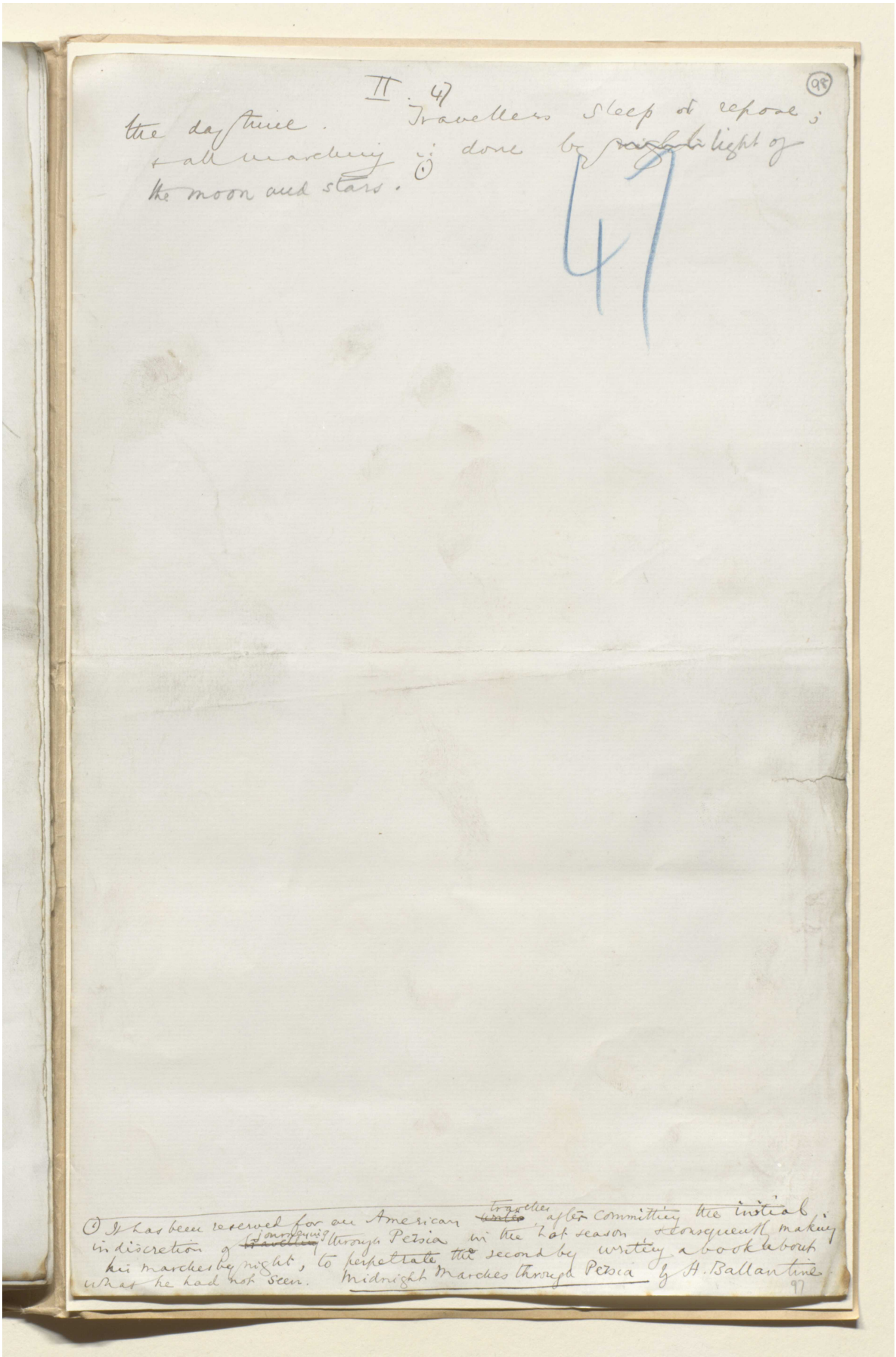

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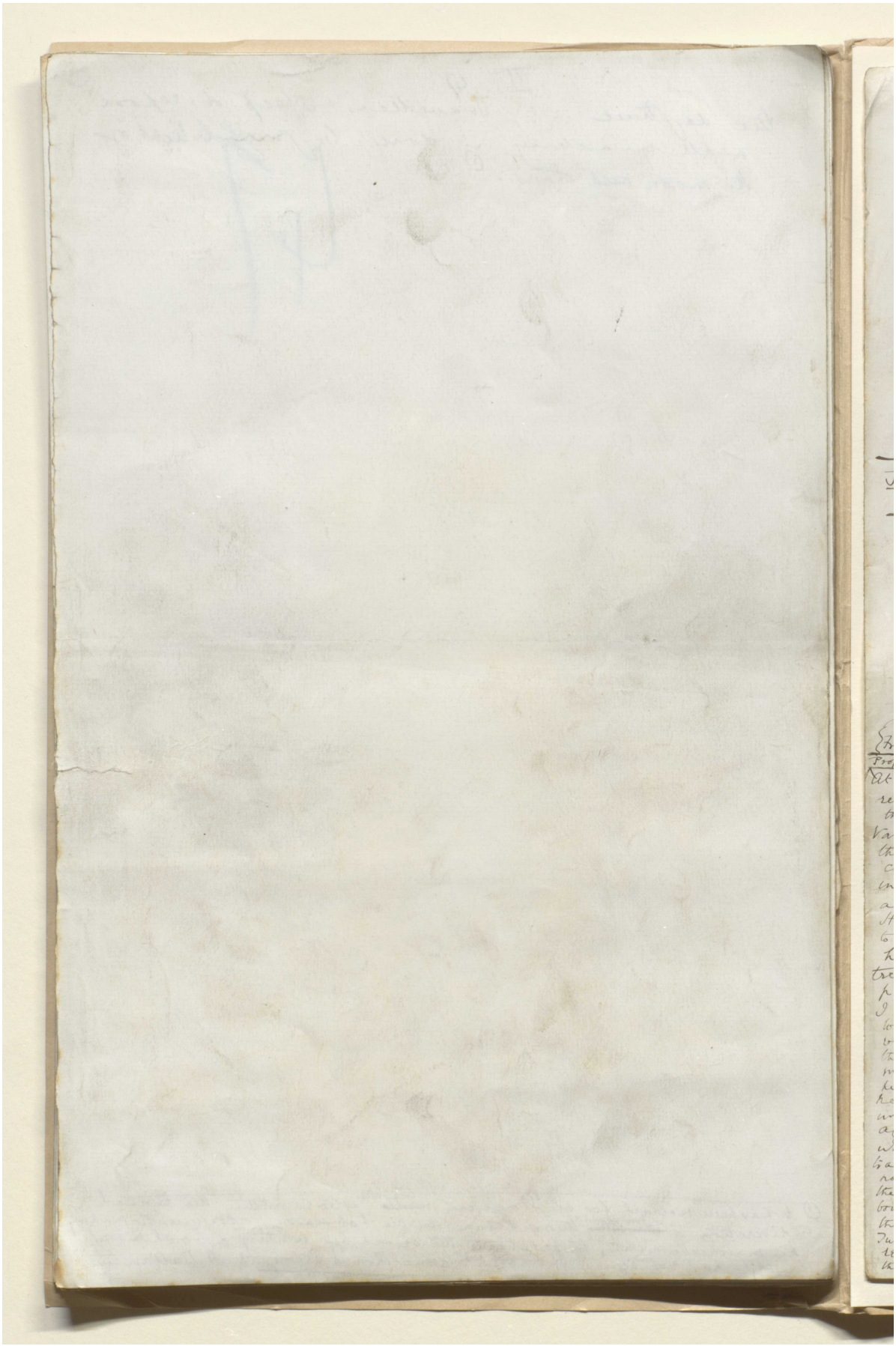

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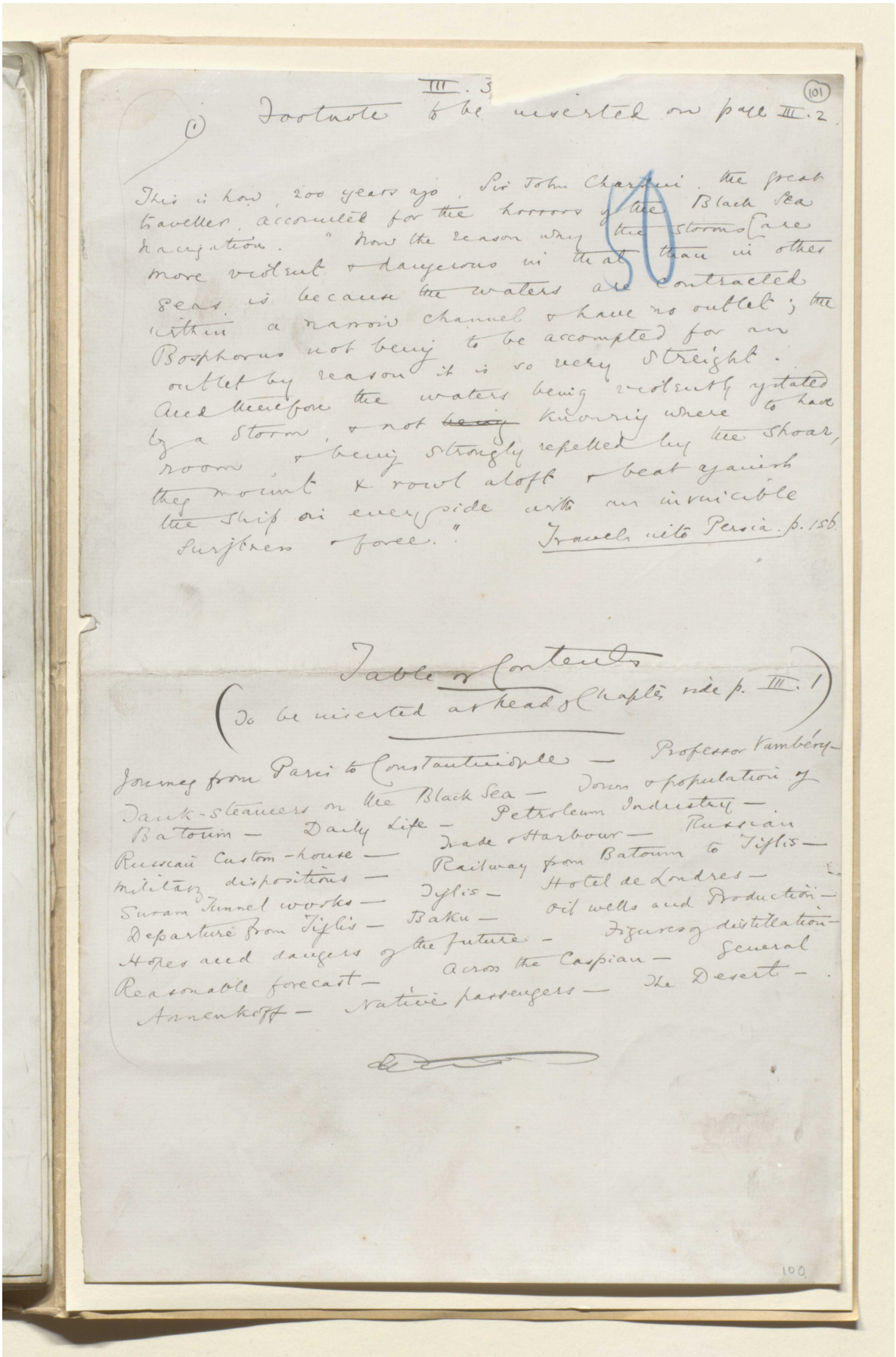

III. 3 (101)

(1) Footnote to be inserted on page III. 2.

This is how, 200 years ago, Sir John Chardin, the great traveller, accounted for the horrors of the Black Sea navigation. "How the reason why the storms are more violent & dangerous in that than in other seas, is because the waters are contracted within a narrow channel & have no outlet; the Bosphorus not being to be accounted for an outlet by reason it is so very streight. And therefore the waters being violently agitated by a storm, & not being easily where to have room, & being strongly repelled by the shoar, they mount & roul aloft & beat against the ship on every side with an invincible surprizes & force." Travels into Persia. p. 156.

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(To be inserted at head of Chapter, vide p. III. 1)

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Bank-steamers on the Black Sea — Town & population of
Batoum — Daily Life — Petroleum Industry —
Russian Custom-house — Trade & Harbour — Russian
military dispositions — Railway from Batoum to Tiflis —
Suram Tunnel works — Tiflis — Hotel de Londres —
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Hopes and dangers of the future — Figures of distillation —
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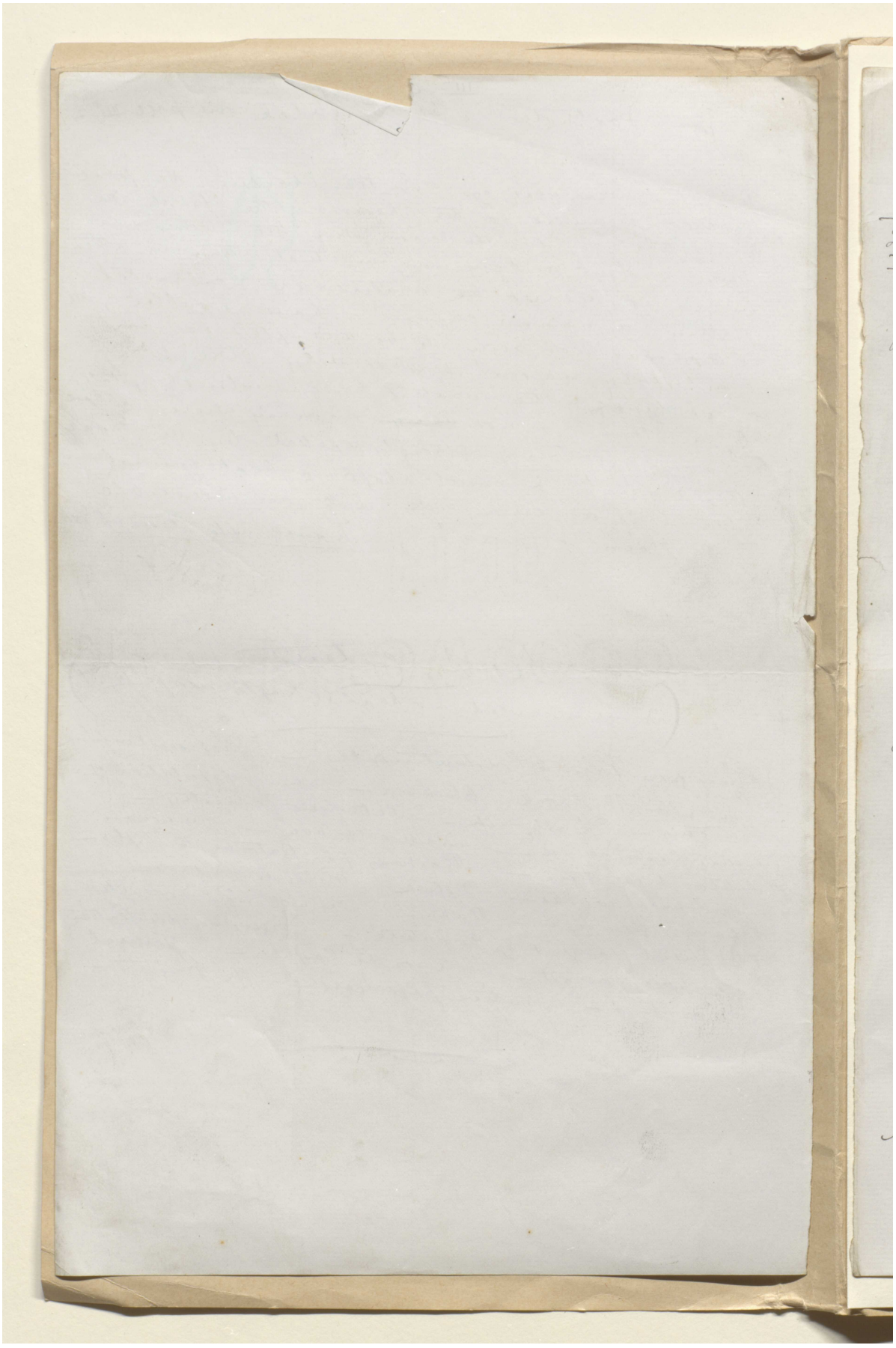

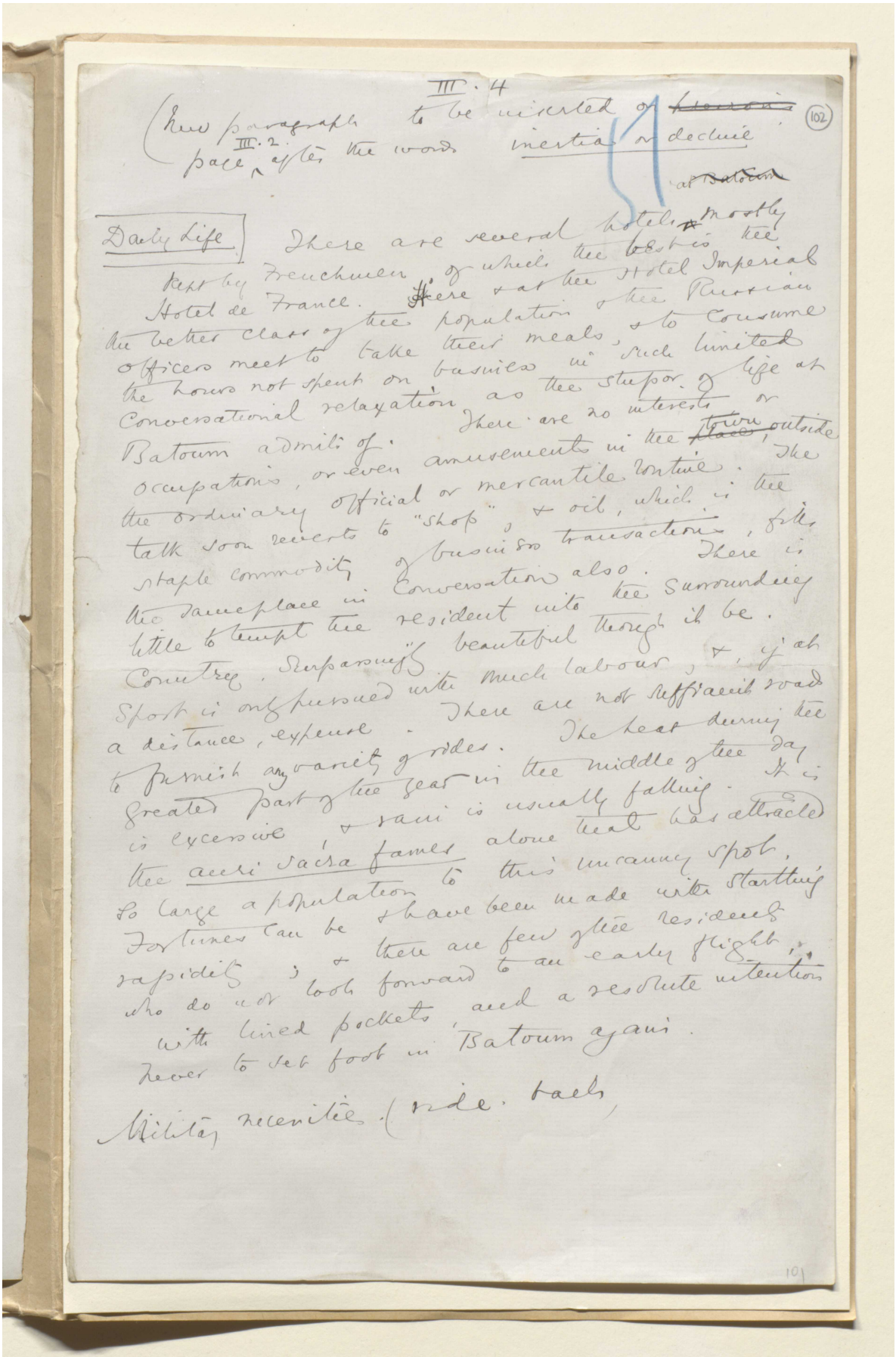

III. 4

(New paragraph to be inserted on ~~[illegible]~~ page III. 2 after the words inertia or decline

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Daily Life

There are several hotels at ~~Batoum~~ mostly kept by Frenchmen, of which the best is the Hotel de France. Here & at the Hotel Imperial the better class of the population & the Russian officers meet to take their meals, & to consume the hours not spent on business in such limited conversational relaxation as the stupor of life at Batoum admits of. There are no interests or occupations, or even amusements in the ~~place~~ town, outside the ordinary official or mercantile routine. The talk soon reverts to "shop", & oil, which is the staple commodity of business transactions, fills the same place in conversation also. There is little to tempt the resident into the surrounding country, surpassingly beautiful though it be. Sport is only pursued with much labour, & if at a distance, expense. There are not sufficient roads to furnish any variety of rides. The heat during the greater part of the year in the middle of the day is excessive, & rain is usually falling. It is the auri sacra fames alone that has attracted so large a population to this uncanny spot. Fortunes can be & have been made with startling rapidity; & there are few of the residents who do not look forward to an early flight, with lined pockets, and a resolute intention never to set foot in Batoum again.

Military necessities (vide. back,

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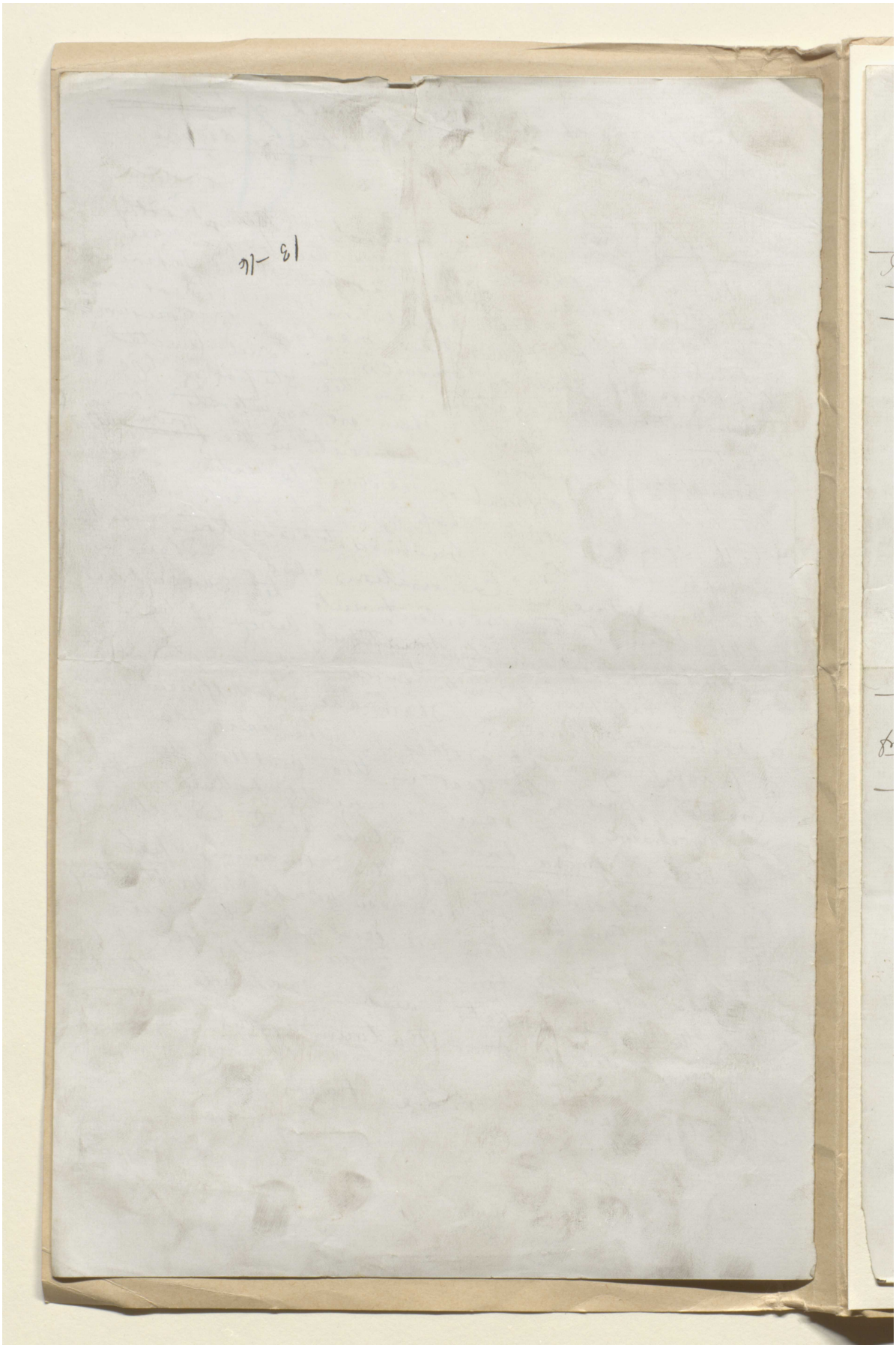

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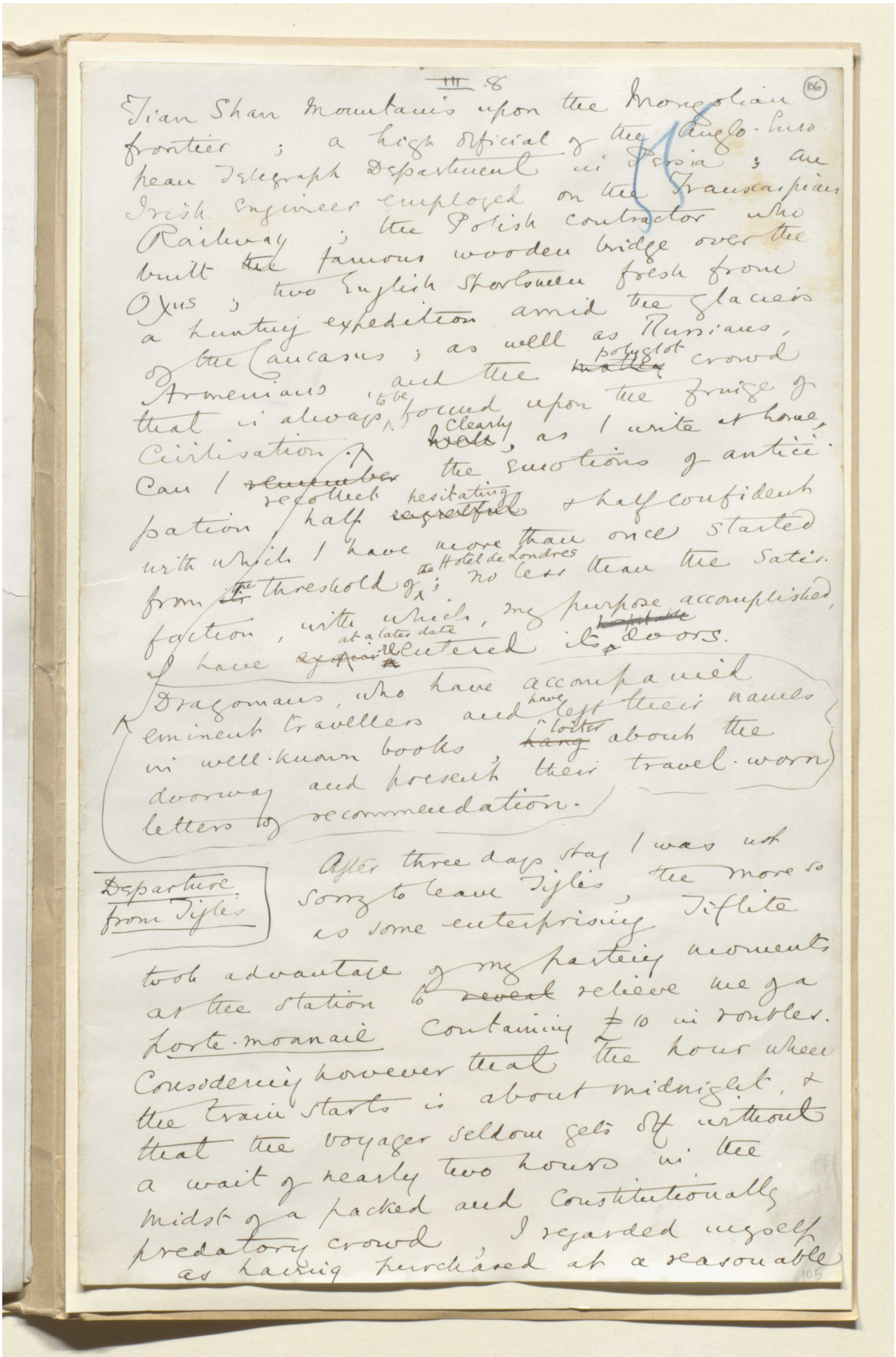
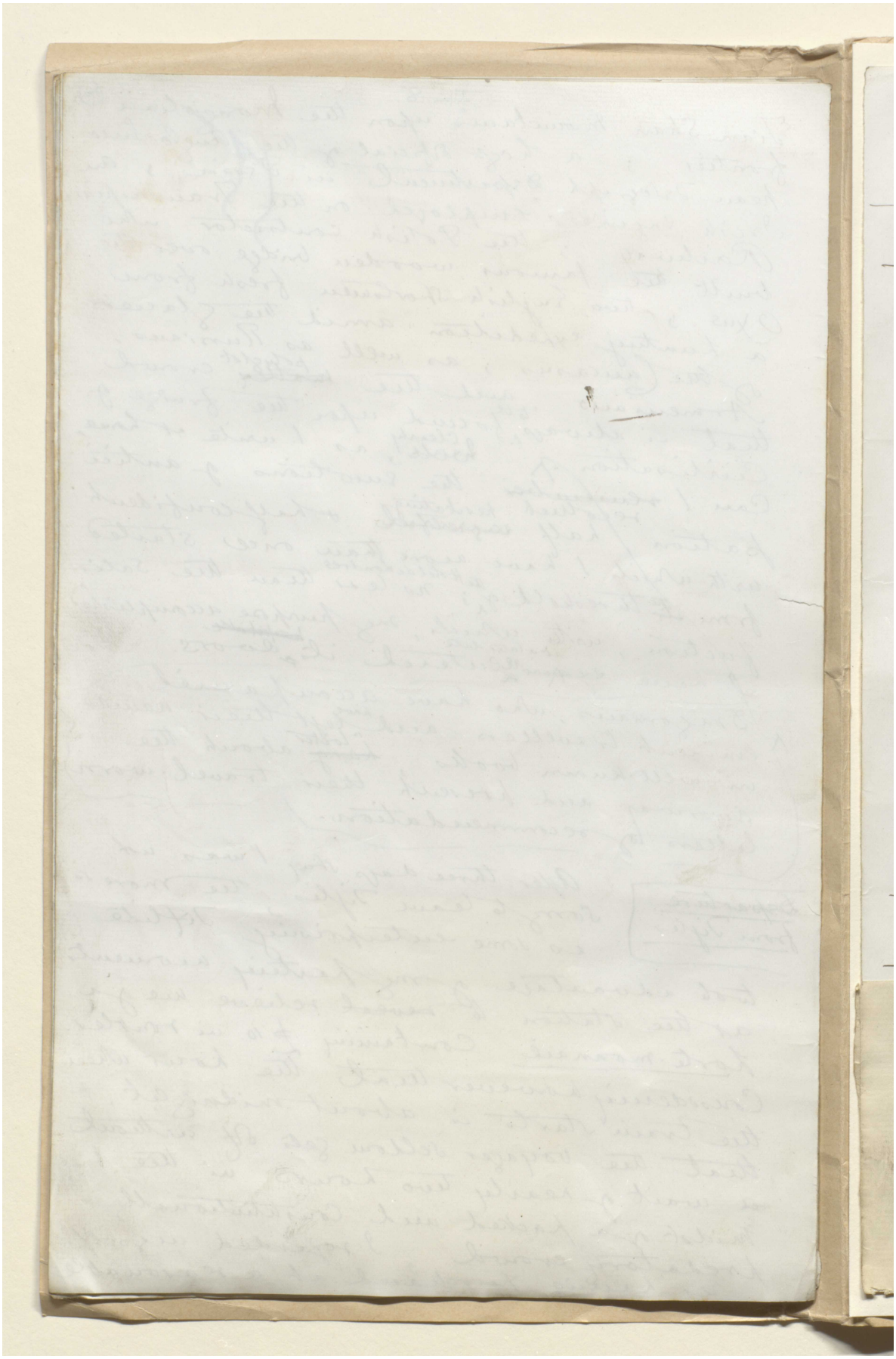


Tian Shan mountains upon the Mongolian frontier; a high official of the Anglo-Persian Telegraph Department in Persia; an Irish engineer employed on the Transcaspian Railway; the Polish contractor who built the famous wooden bridge over the Oxus; two English sportsmen fresh from a hunting expedition amid the glaciers of the Caucasus; as well as Russians, Armenians and the polyglot crowd that is always found upon the fringe of civilisation. Can I remember clearly, as I write at home, the emotions of anticipation with which I have more than once started half regretfully & half confidently from the threshold of the Hôtel de Londres; no less than the satisfaction, with which, my purpose accomplished, at a later date I have entered its doors.

Dragomans, who have accompanied eminent travellers and have left their names in well-known books, I later on about the doorway and present their travel-worn letters of recommendation.

Departure from Tiflis

After three days stay I was not sorry to leave Tiflis, the more so as some enterprising Tiflite took advantage of my parting moments at the station to relieve me of a forte-monnaie containing £10 in roubles. Consideringly however that the hour when the train starts is about midnight, & that the voyager seldom gets off without a wait of nearly two hours in the midst of a packed and constitutionally predatory crowd I regarded myself as having purchased at a reasonable



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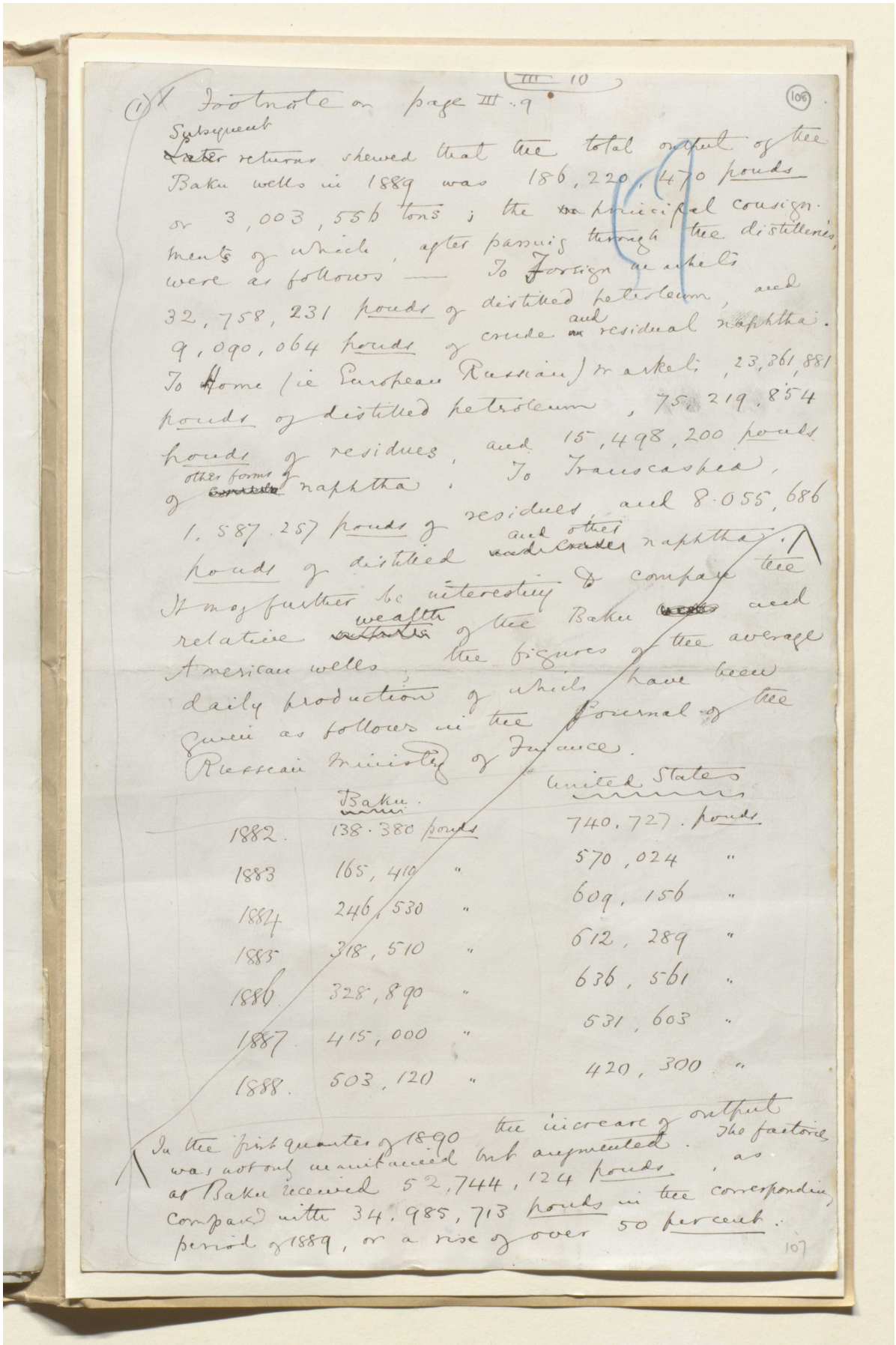

(1) Footnote on page III. 9 (III 10) (106)

Subsequent returns shewed that the total output of the Baku wells in 1889 was 186,220,470 pounds or 3,003,556 tons; the principal consignments of which, after passing through the distilleries, were as follows —

To Foreign markets, 32,758,231 pounds of distilled petroleum, and 9,090,064 pounds of crude and residual naphtha.

To Home (ie European Russian) markets, 23,861,881 pounds of distilled petroleum, 75,219,854 pounds of residues, and 15,498,200 pounds of other forms of naphtha;

To Transcaspia, 1,587,257 pounds of residues, and 8,055,686 pounds of distilled and other crudes naphtha.

It may further be interesting to compare the relative wealth of the Baku and American wells, the figures of the average daily production of which have been given as follows in the Journal of the Russian Ministry of Finance.

	Baku.	United States
1882.	138,380 pounds	740,727. pounds
1883	165,410 "	570,024 "
1884	246,530 "	609,156 "
1885	318,510 "	612,289 "
1886	328,890 "	636,561 "
1887	415,000 "	531,603 "
1888.	503,120 "	420,300 "

In the first quarter of 1890 the increase of output was not only maintained but augmented. The factories at Baku received 52,744,124 pounds, as compared with 34,985,713 pounds in the corresponding period of 1889, or a rise of over 50 per cent.

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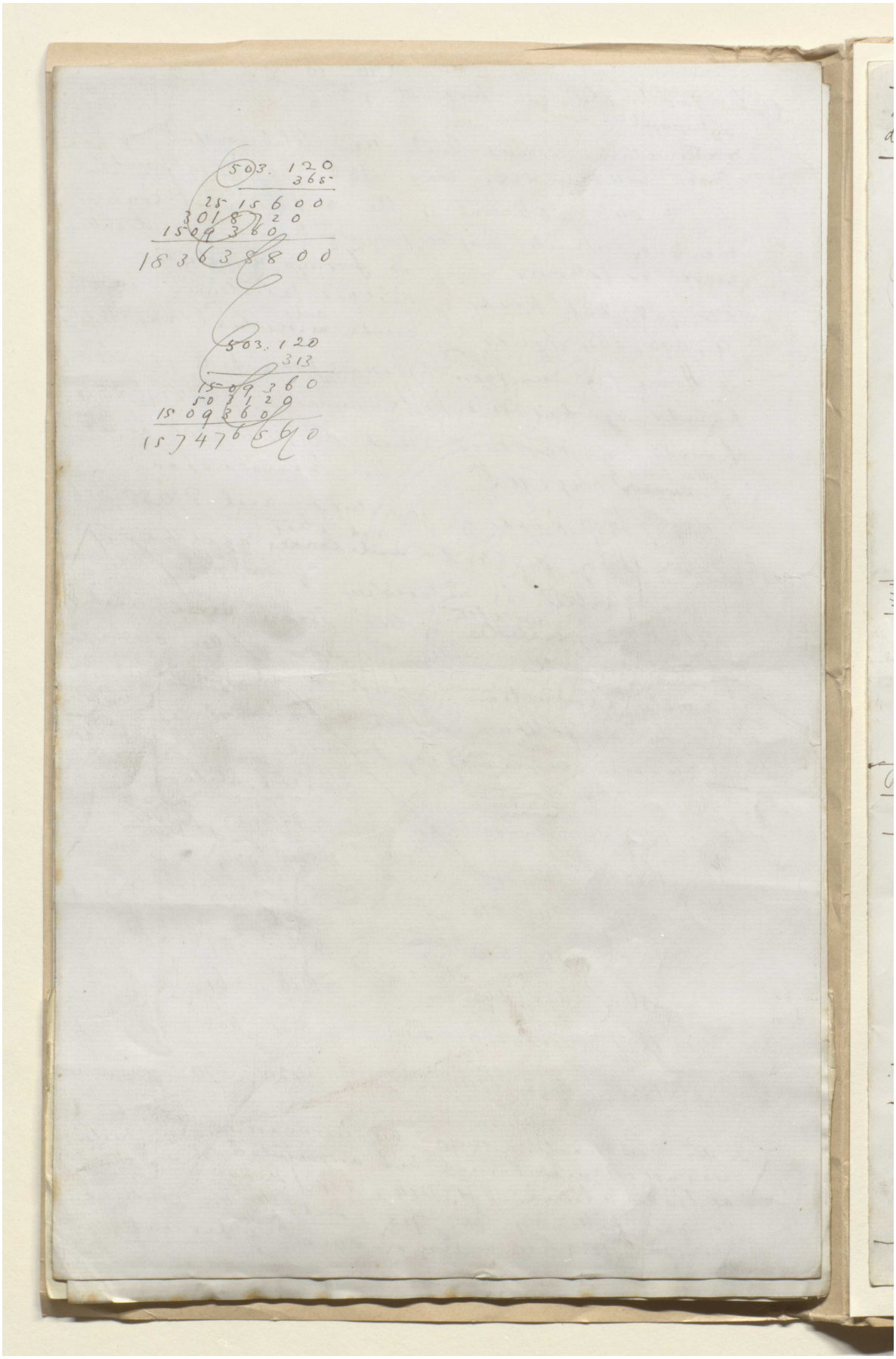

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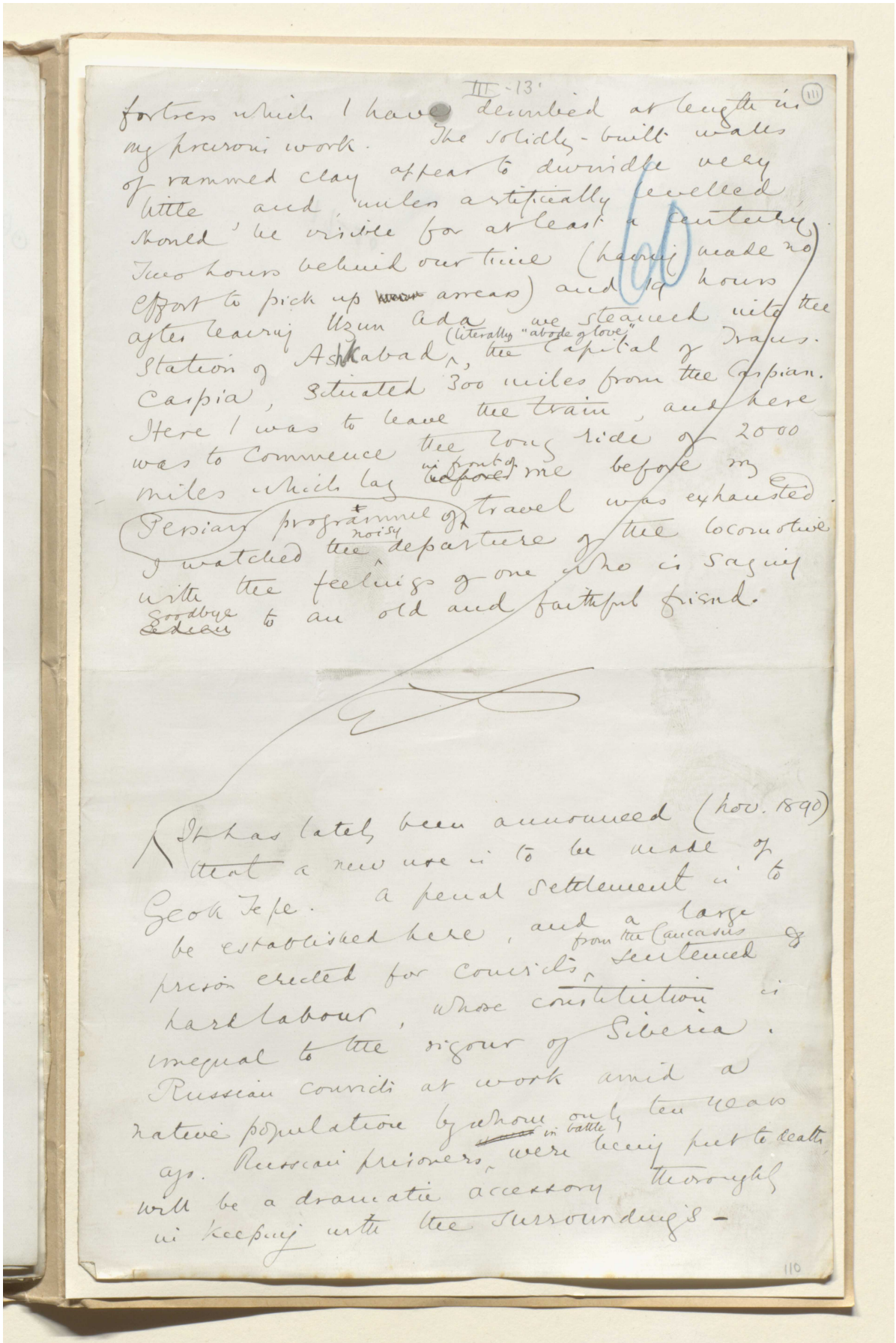

III-13

fortress which I have described at length in my previous work. The solidly-built walls of rammed clay appear to dwindle very little and, unless artificially levelled, should be visible for at least a century. Two hours behind our time (having made no effort to pick up lost areas) and 19 hours after leaving Uzun Ada (literally "abode of love") we steamed into the Station of Ashkabad, the capital of Trans-Caspia, situated 300 miles from the Caspian. Here I was to leave the train, and here was to commence the long ride of 2000 miles which lay before me before my Persian programme of travel was exhausted. I watched the noisy departure of the locomotive with the feelings of one who is saying Goodbye to an old and faithful friend.

It has lately been announced (Nov. 1890) that a new one is to be made to Geok Tepe. a penal Settlement is to be established here, and a large prison erected for convicts from the Caucasus sentenced to hard labour, whose constitution is unequal to the rigour of Siberia. Russian convicts at work amid a native population by whom only ten years in battle Russian prisoners, were lately put to death, will be a dramatic accessory thoroughly in keeping with the surroundings -

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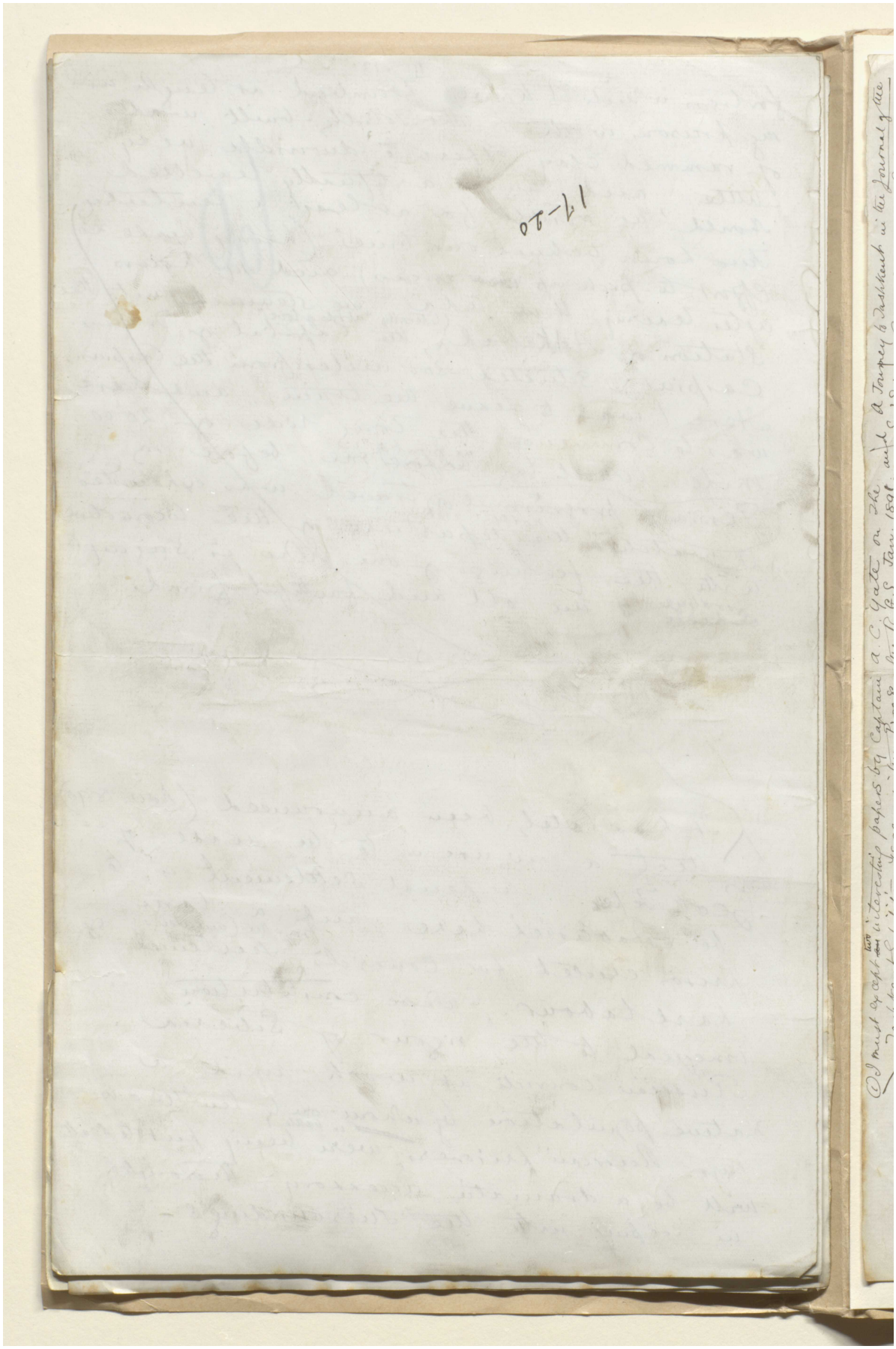

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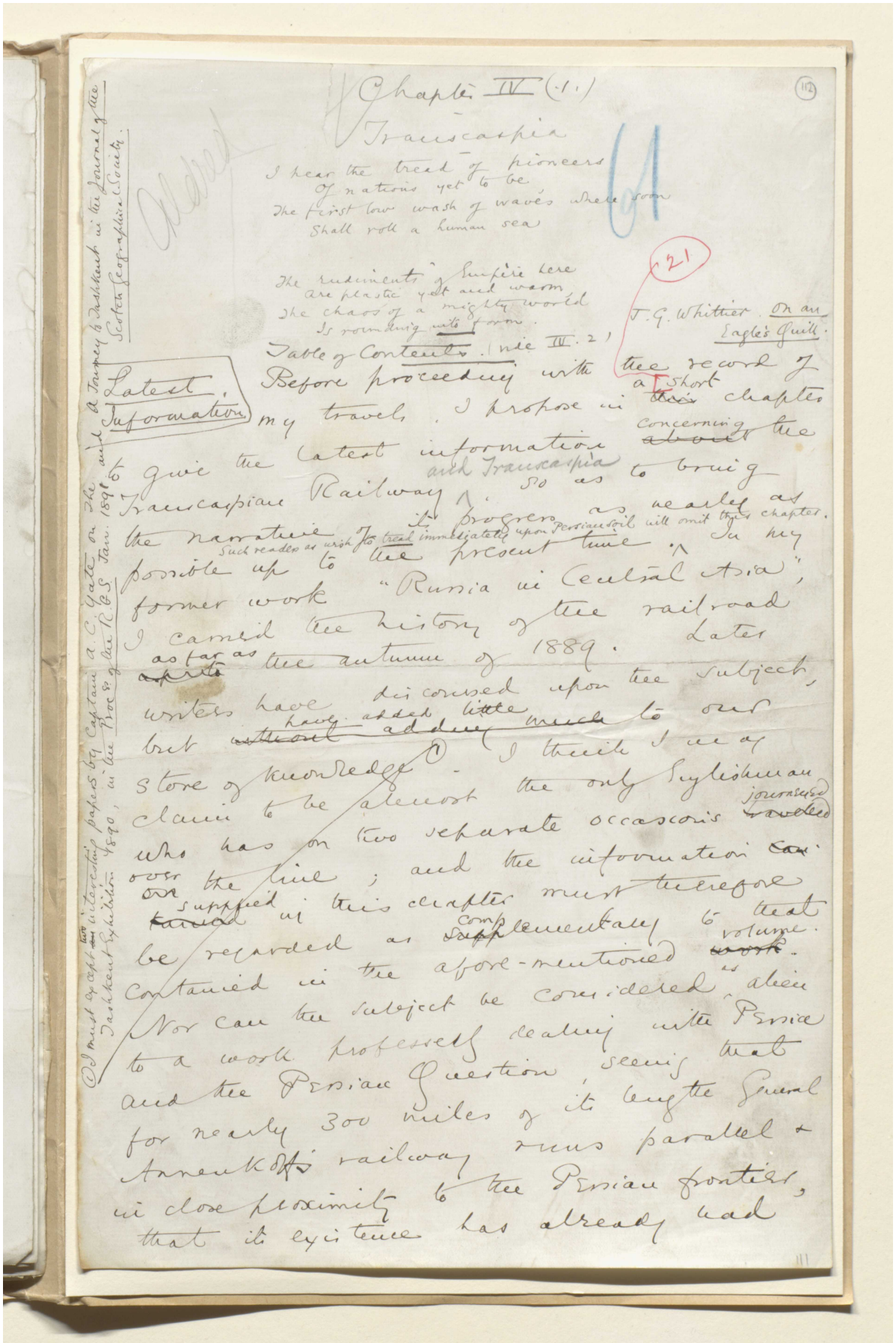

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Chapter IV (1.)

Transcaspia

I hear the tread of pioneers
Of nations yet to be,
The first low wash of waves where soon
Shall roll a human sea

The rudiments of Empire here
Are plastic yet and warm,
The chaos of a mighty world
Is rounding into form.

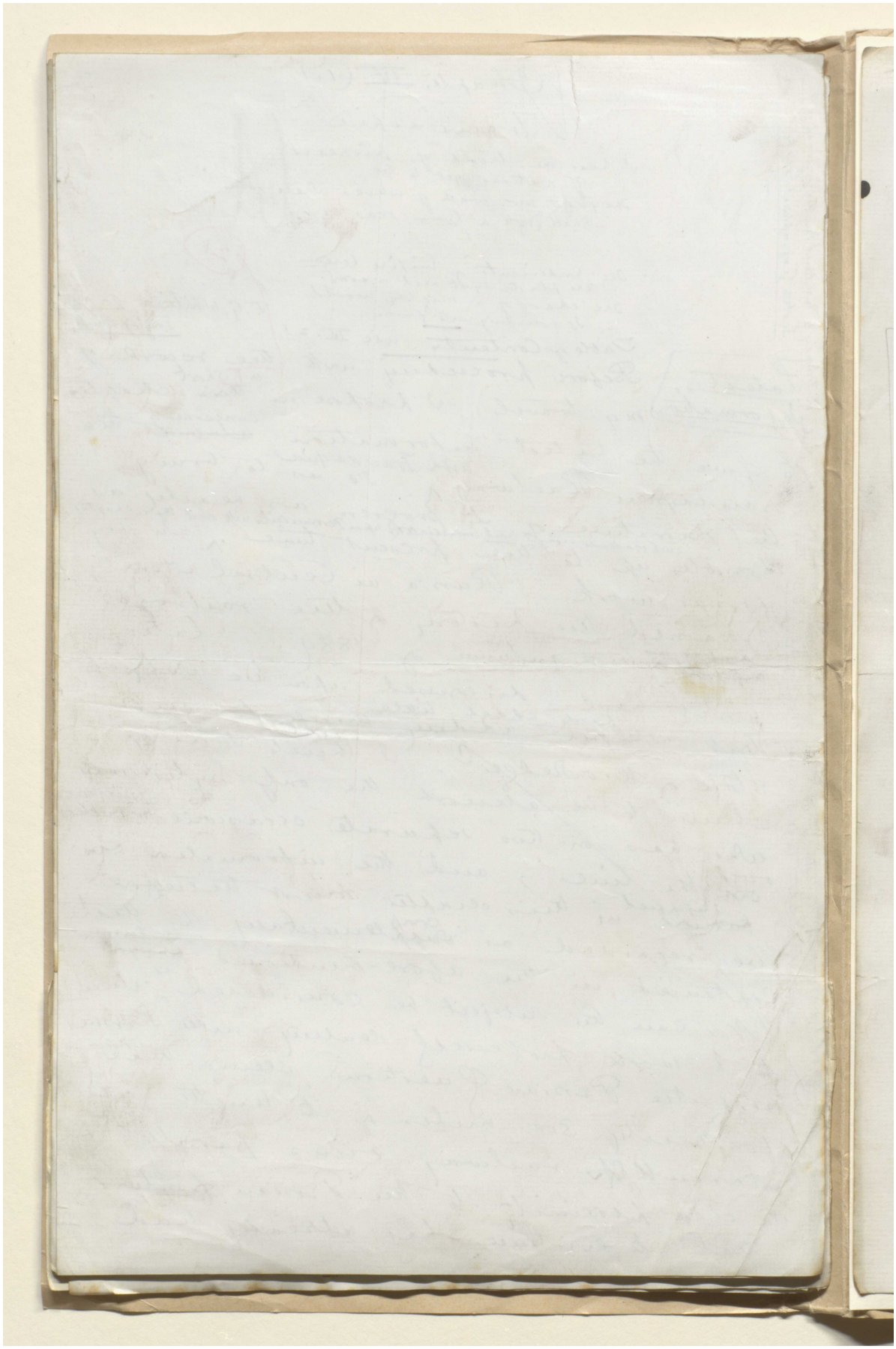
J. G. Whittier. On an Eagle's Quill.

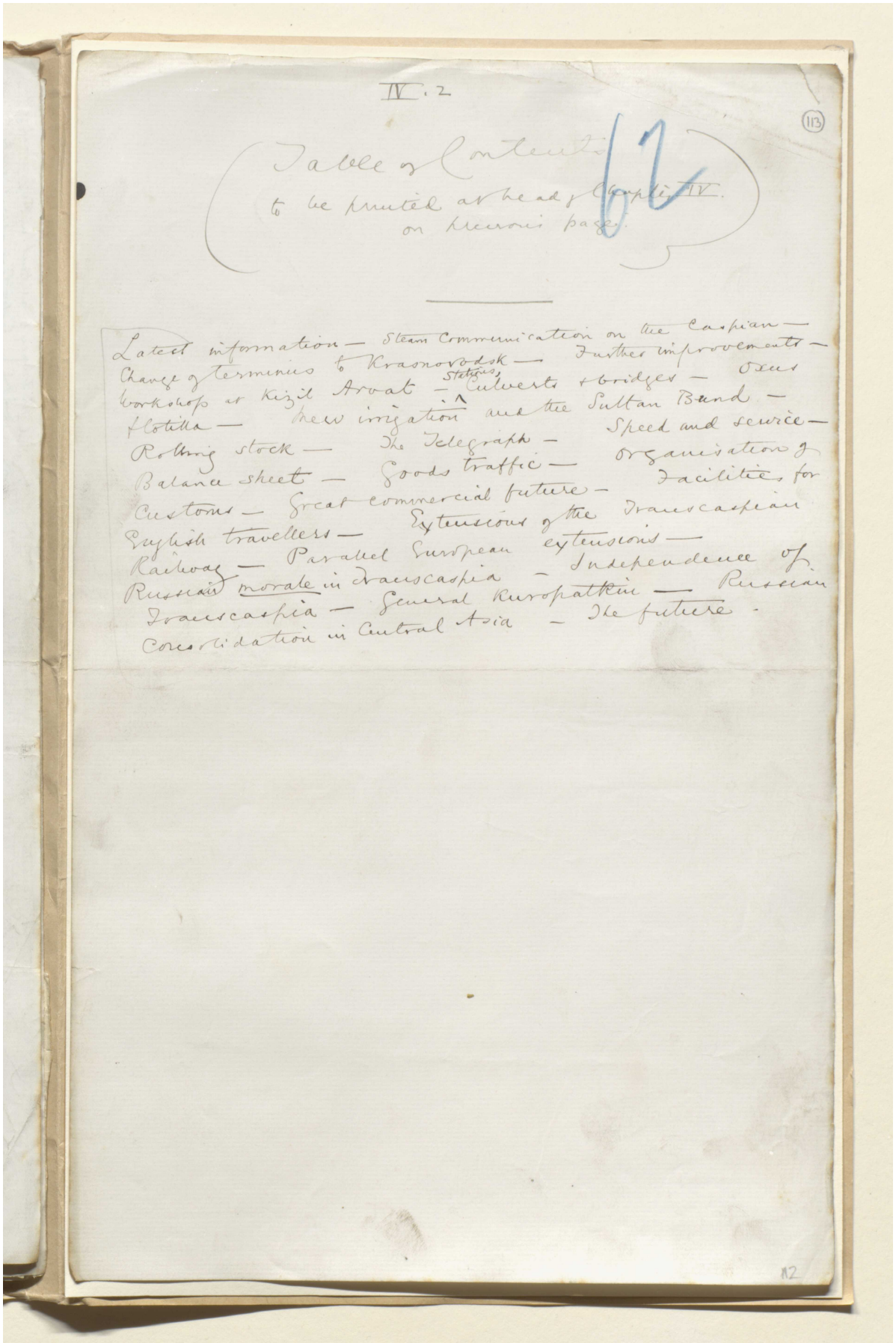
Table of Contents. (vide IV. 2)

Latest Information

Before proceeding with the record of my travels, I propose in a short chapter to give the latest information concerning the Transcaspian Railway and Transcaspia, so as to bring the narrative of its progress as nearly as possible up to the present time. Such readers as wish to tread immediately upon Persian soil will omit this chapter. In my former work "Russia in Central Asia", I carried the history of the railroad as far as the autumn of 1889. Later writers have discussed upon the subject, but have added little to our store of knowledge (1). I think I may claim to be almost the only Englishman who has on two separate occasions journeyed over the line; and the information supplied in this chapter must therefore be regarded as complementary to that contained in the afore-mentioned volume. Nor can the subject be considered as alien to a work professedly dealing with Persia and the Persian Question, seeing that for nearly 300 miles of its length General Annenkoff's railway runs parallel & in close proximity to the Persian frontier, that its existence has already had

(1) I must except two interesting papers by Captain A. C. Yate on the Tashkent Exhibition 1890, in the Proc. of the R. G. S. Jan. 1891 and A Journey to Tashkent in the Journal of the Scotch Geographical Society.





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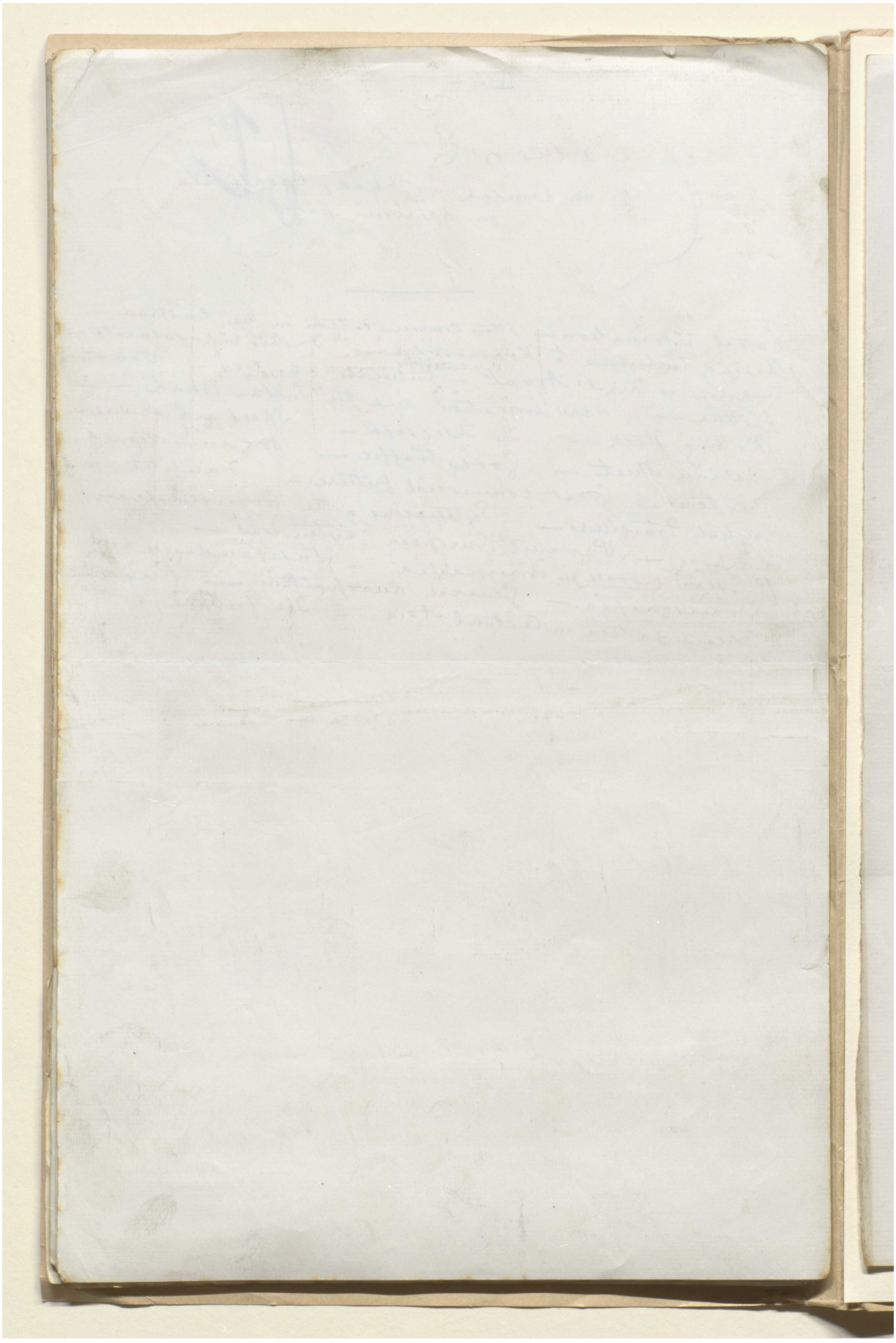
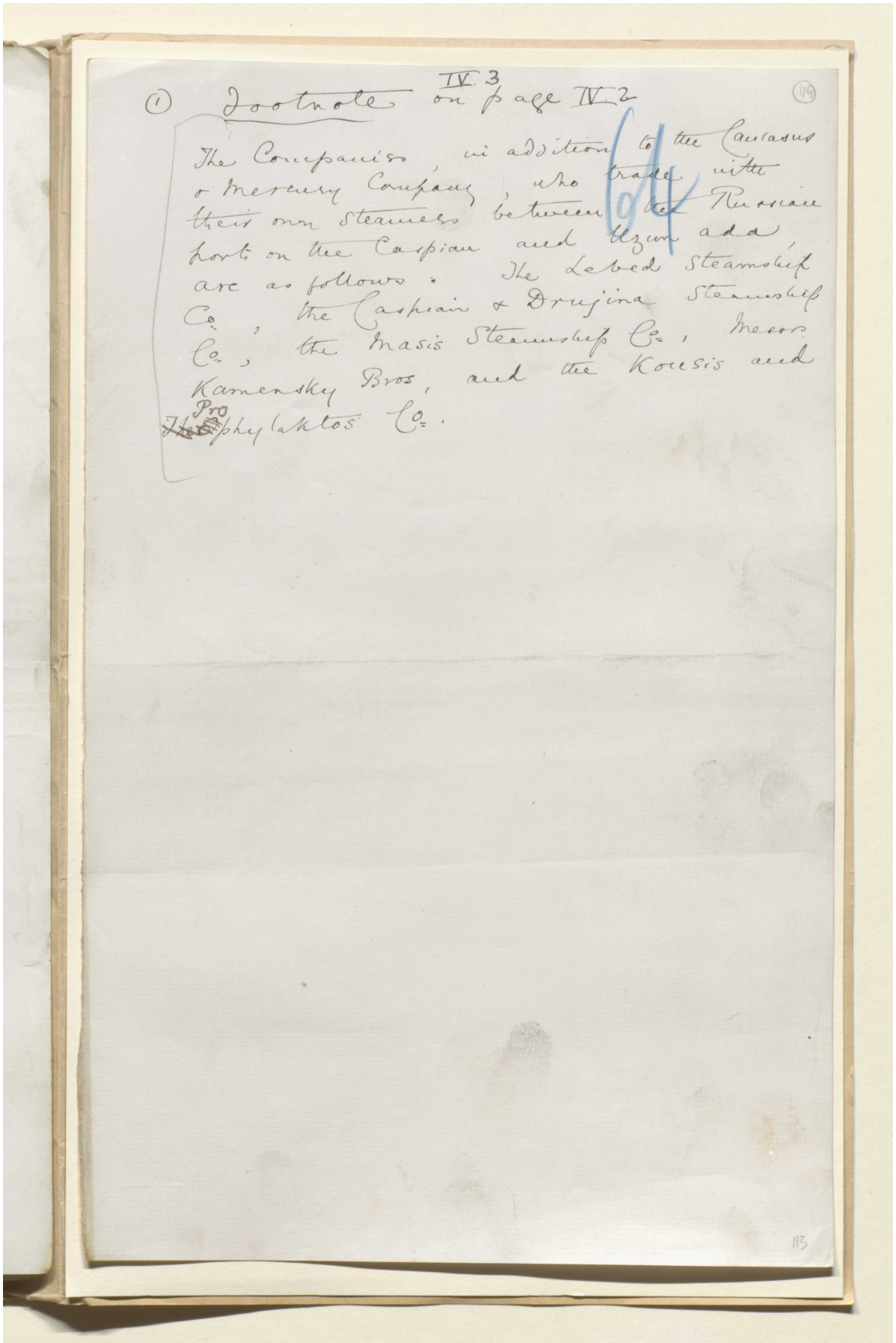
workshop at Kizil Arvat — Culverts & bridges — Oxus
flotilla — new irrigation and the Sultan Band —
Rolling stock — The Telegraph — Speed and service —
Balance sheet — Goods traffic — organisation &
Customs — Great commercial future — facilities for
English travellers — Extensions of the Transcaspian
Railway — Parallel European extensions —
Russian morale in Transcaspia — Independence of
Transcaspia — General Kuropatkin — Russian
Consolidation in Central Asia — the future.





(1) Footnote IV. 3 on page IV. 2

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The Companies, in addition to the Caucasus & Mercury Company, who trade with their own steamers between the Russian ports on the Caspian and Uzun ada, are as follows: The Lebed Steamship Co., the Caspian & Drujina Steamship Co., the Masis Steamship Co., Messrs Kamensky Bros, and the Kousis and Pro Phylaktos Co.

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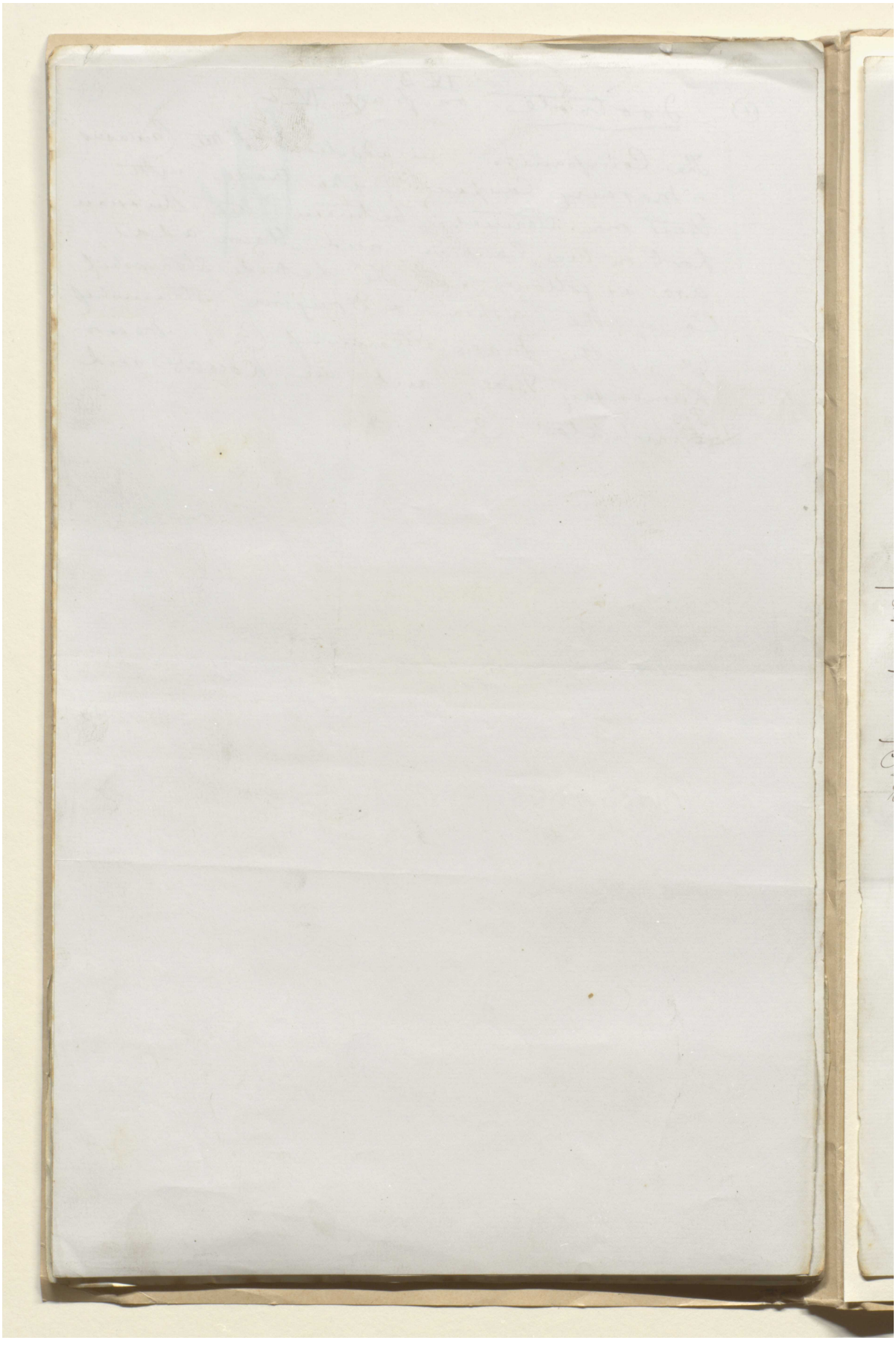

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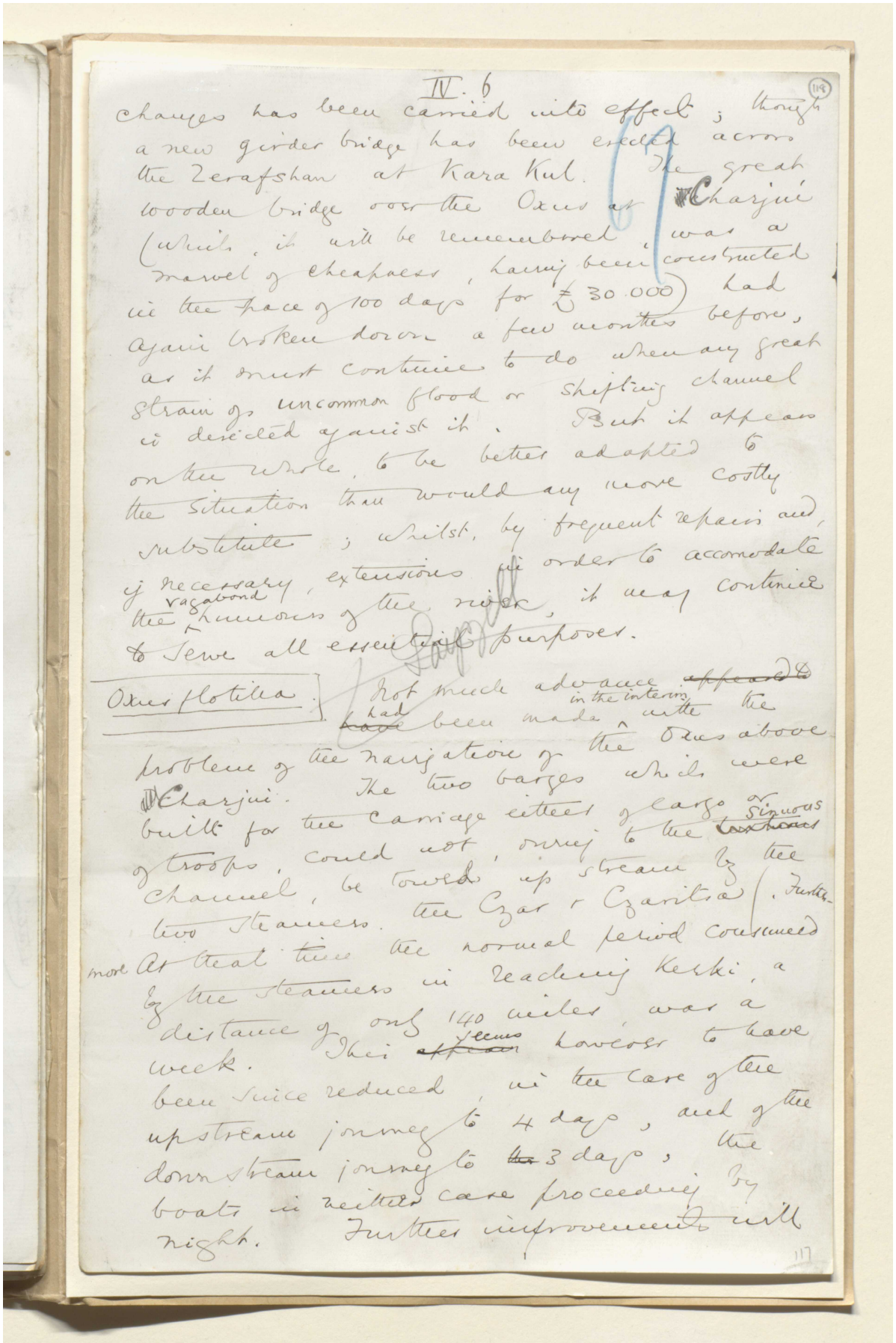

changes has been carried into effect; though a new girder bridge has been erected across the Zerafshan at Kara Kul. The great wooden bridge over the Oxus at Charjui (which, it will be remembered, was a marvel of cheapness, having been constructed in the space of 100 days for £30.000) had again broken down a few months before, as it must continue to do when any great strain of uncommon flood or shifting channel is directed against it. But it appears on the whole, to be better adapted to the situation than would any more costly substitute; whilst, by frequent repairs and, if necessary, extensions in order to accomodate the vagabond humours of the river, it may continue to serve all essential purposes.

Oxus flotilla. Not much advance ~~appeared to~~ ~~have~~ had been made in the interim with the problem of the navigation of the Oxus above Charjui. The two barges which were built for the carriage either of cargo or of troops, could not, owing to the ~~[illegible]~~ sinuous channel, be towed up stream by the two steamers, the Czar & Czaritsa. Furthermore at that time the normal period consumed by the steamers in reaching Kerki, a distance of only 140 miles, was a week. This ~~appears~~ seems however to have been since reduced, in the case of the upstream journey to 4 days, and of the downstream journey to ~~the~~ 3 days; the boats in neither case proceeding by night. Further improvements will

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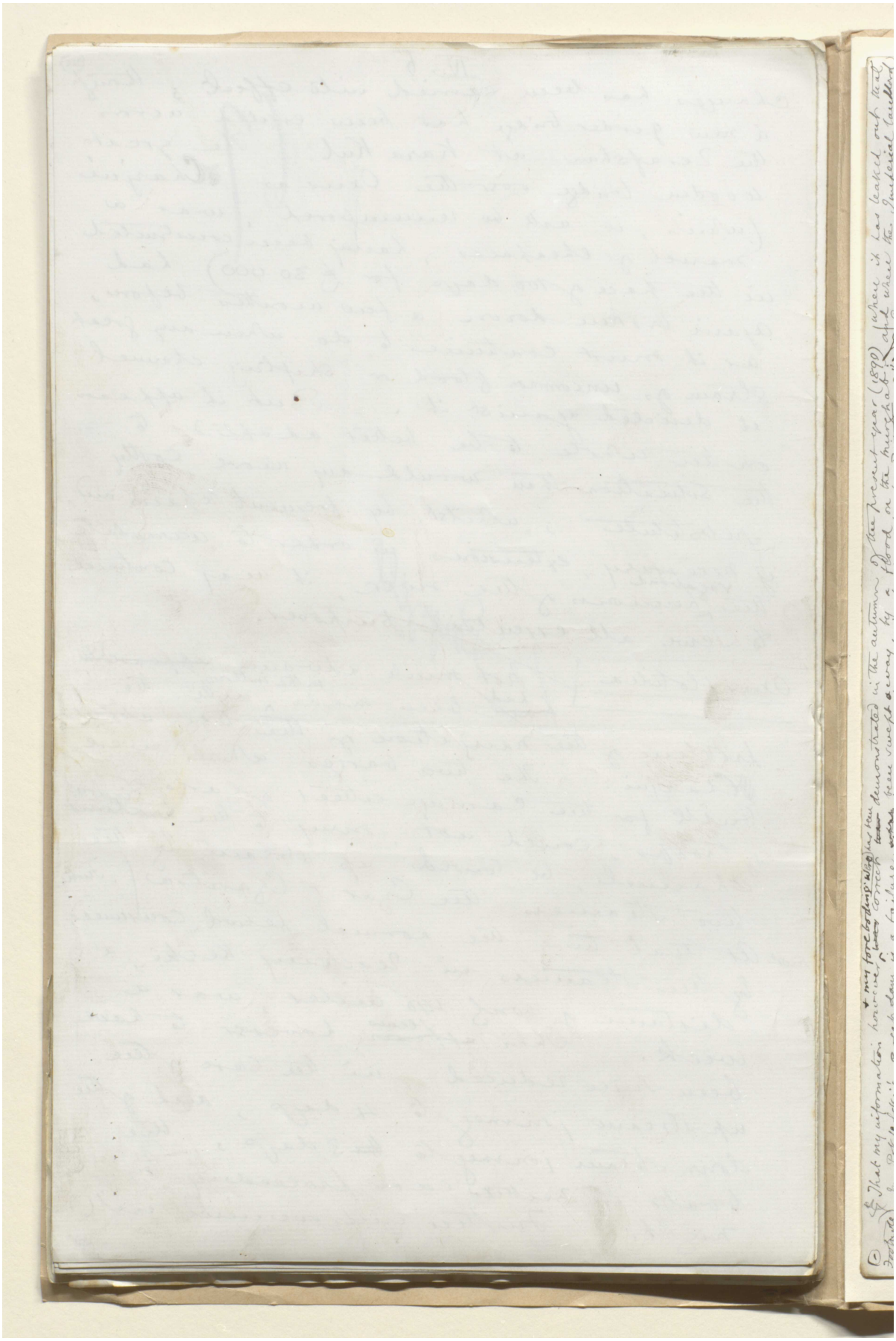

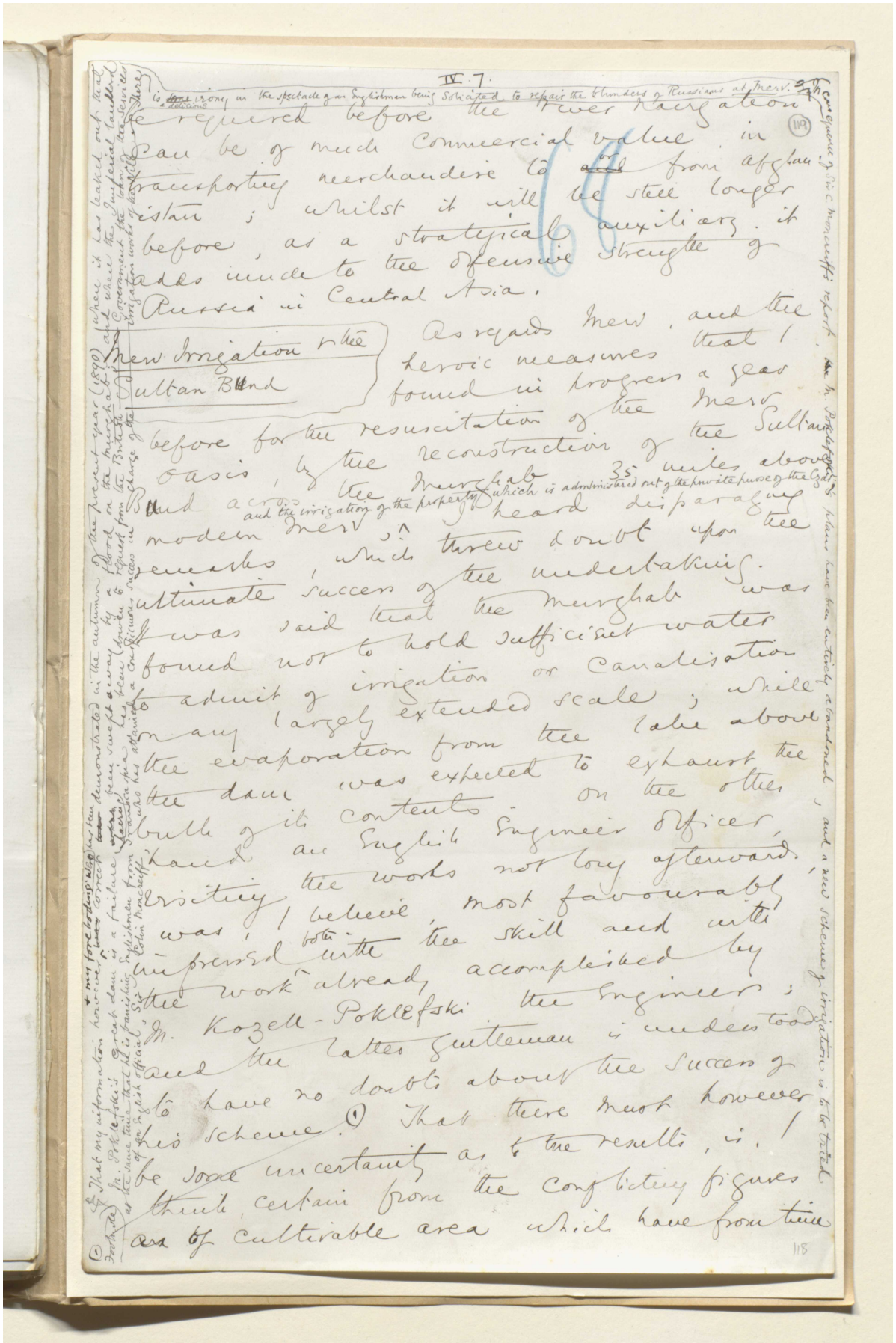

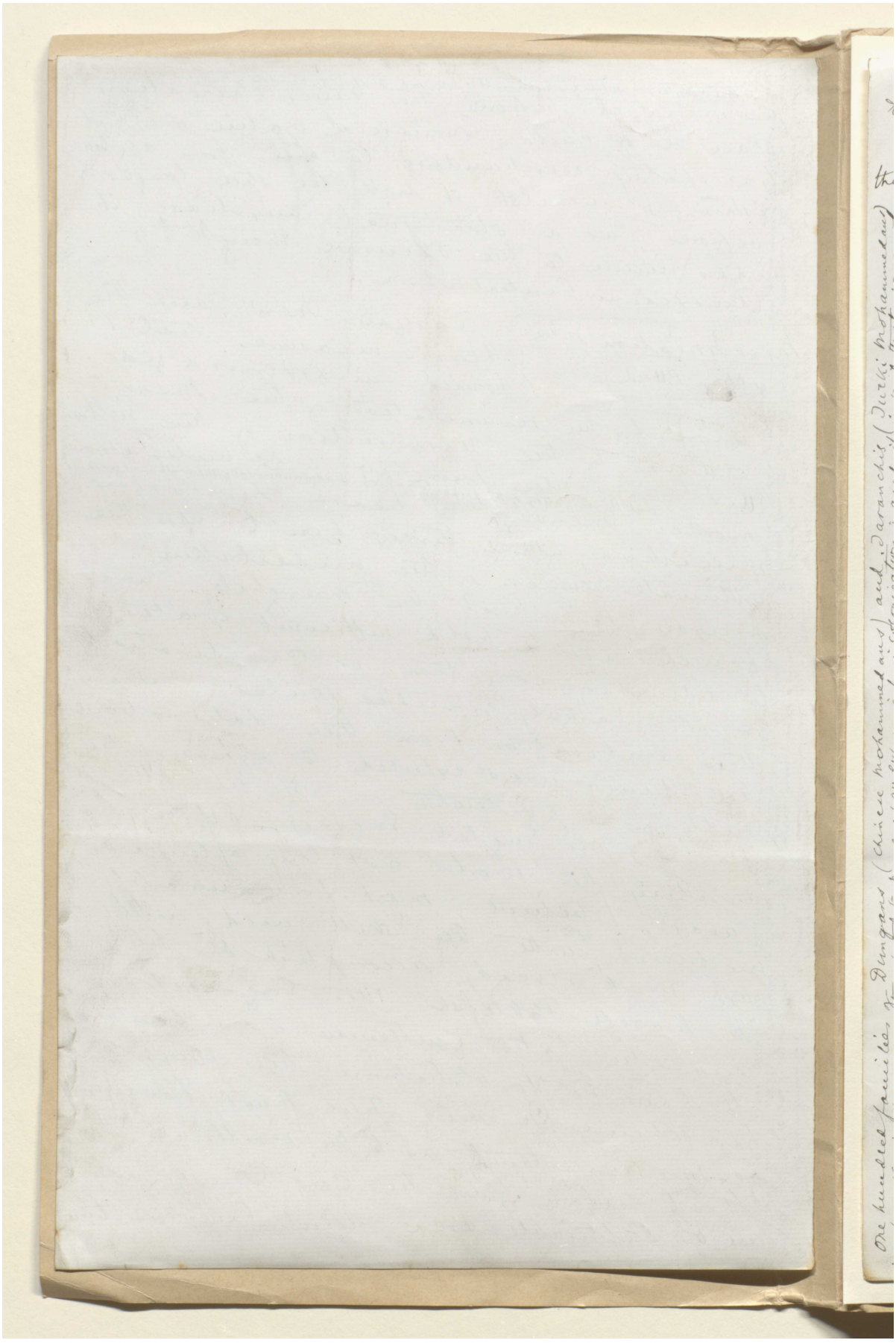

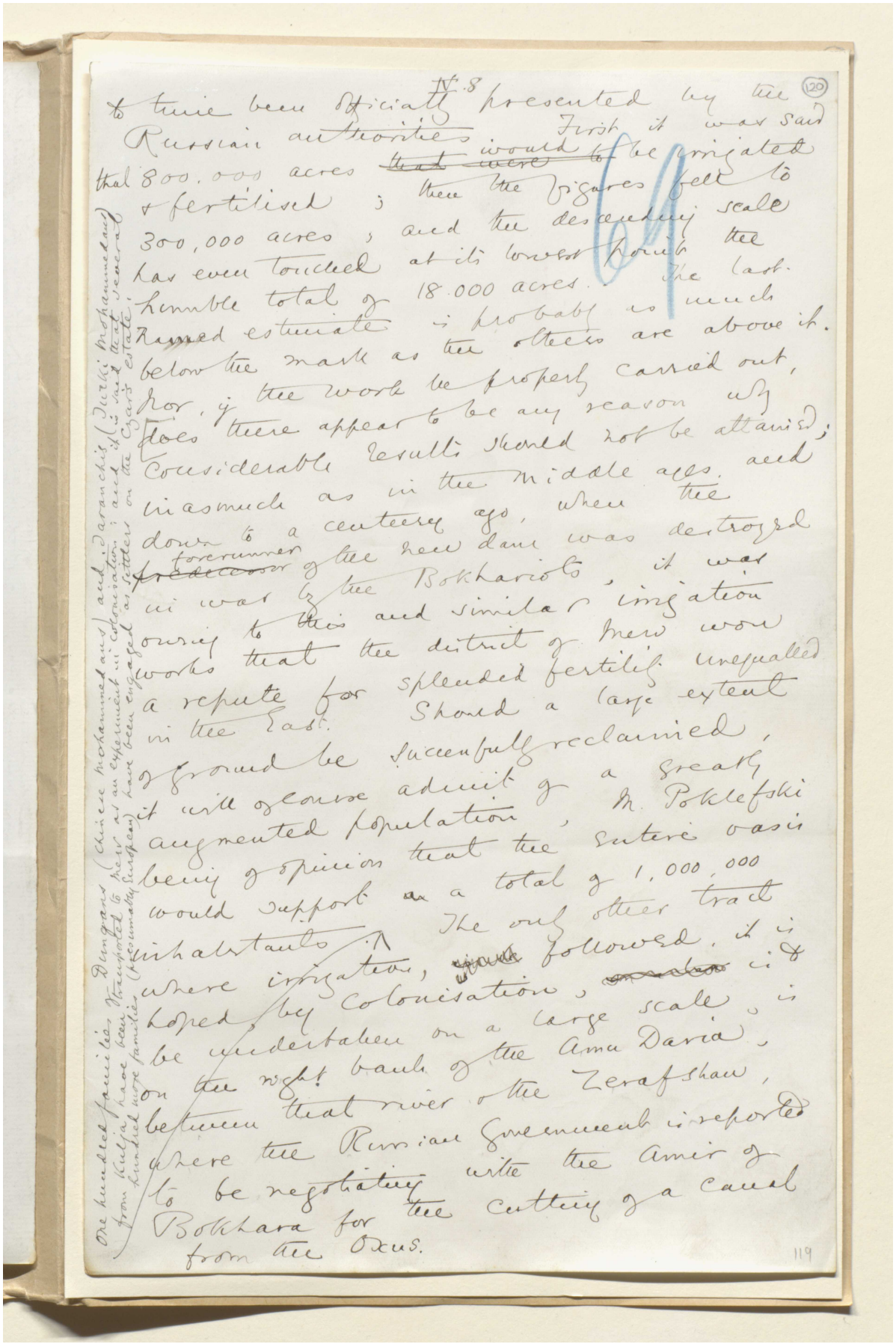

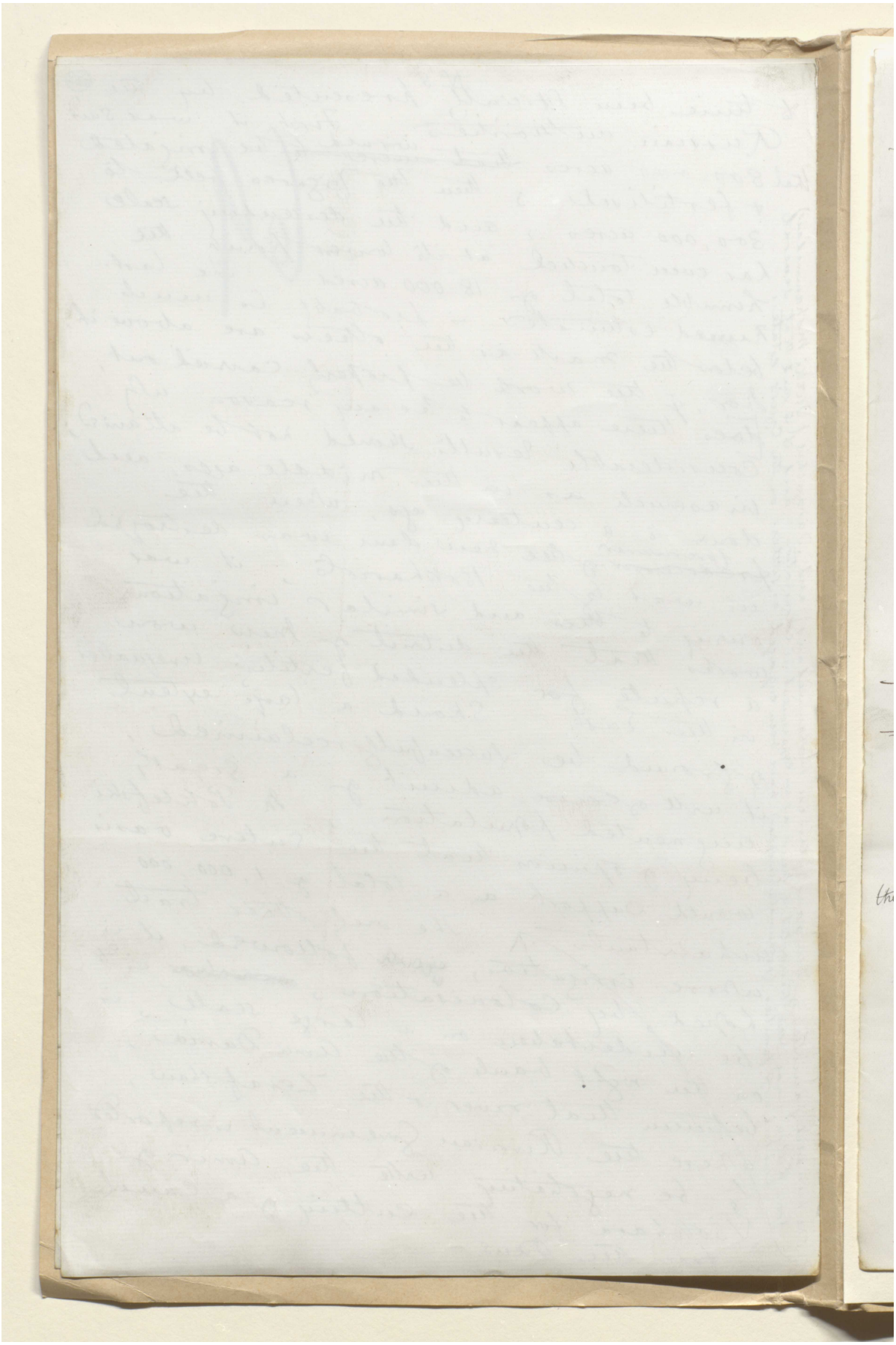

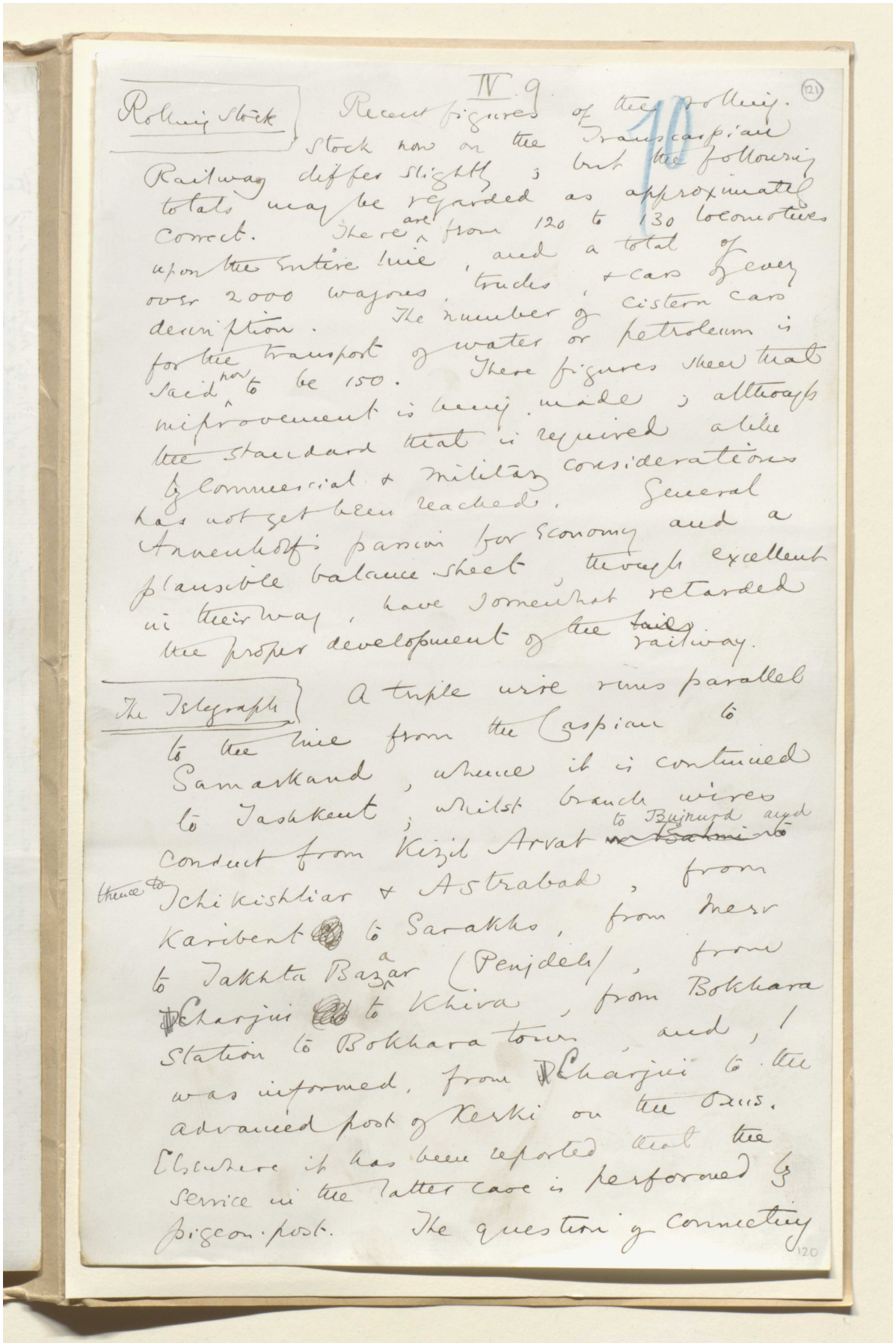

IV. 9

(121)

Rolling Stock

Recent figures of the Rolling Stock now on the Transcaspian Railway differ slightly; but the following totals may be regarded as approximately correct. There are from 120 to 130 locomotives upon the entire line, and a total of over 2000 wagons, trucks, & cars of every description. The number of cistern cars for the transport of water or petroleum is said now to be 150. These figures show that improvement is being made; although the standard that is required alike by commercial & military considerations has not yet been reached. General Annenkoff's passion for economy and a plausible balance sheet, though excellent in their way, have somewhat retarded the proper development of the railway.

The Telegraph

A triple wire runs parallel to the line from the Caspian to Samarkand, whence it is continued to Tashkent; whilst branch wires conduct from Kizil Arvat ~~to Bokhara~~ to Bujnurd and thence to Ichikishliar & Astrabad, from Karibent to Sarakhs, from Merv to Takhta Bazar (Penjdeh), from Charjui to Khiva, from Bokhara Station to Bokhara town, and, I was informed, from Charjui to the advanced post of Kerki on the Oxus. Elsewhere it has been reported that the service in the latter case is performed by pigeon-post. The question of connecting

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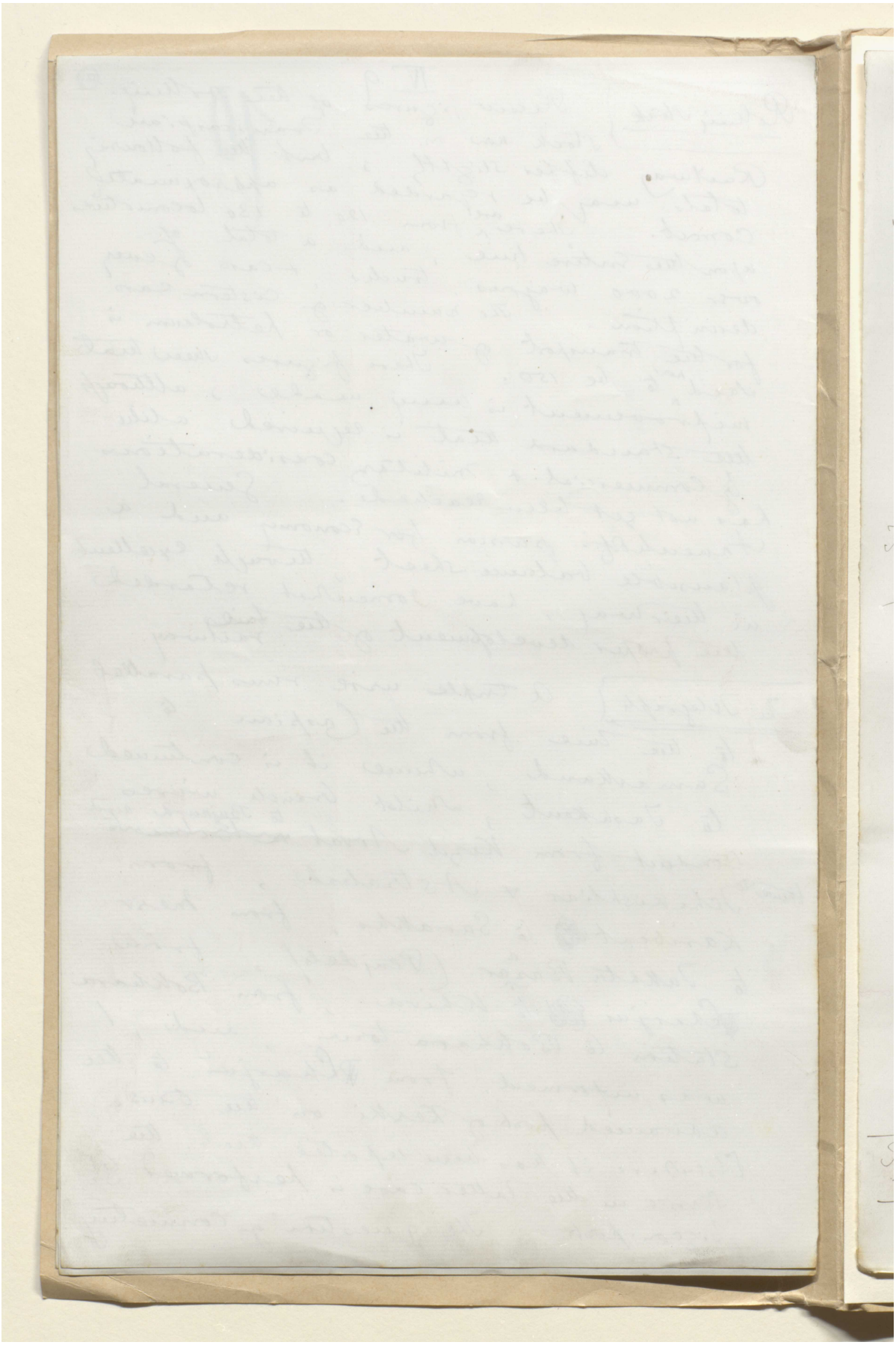

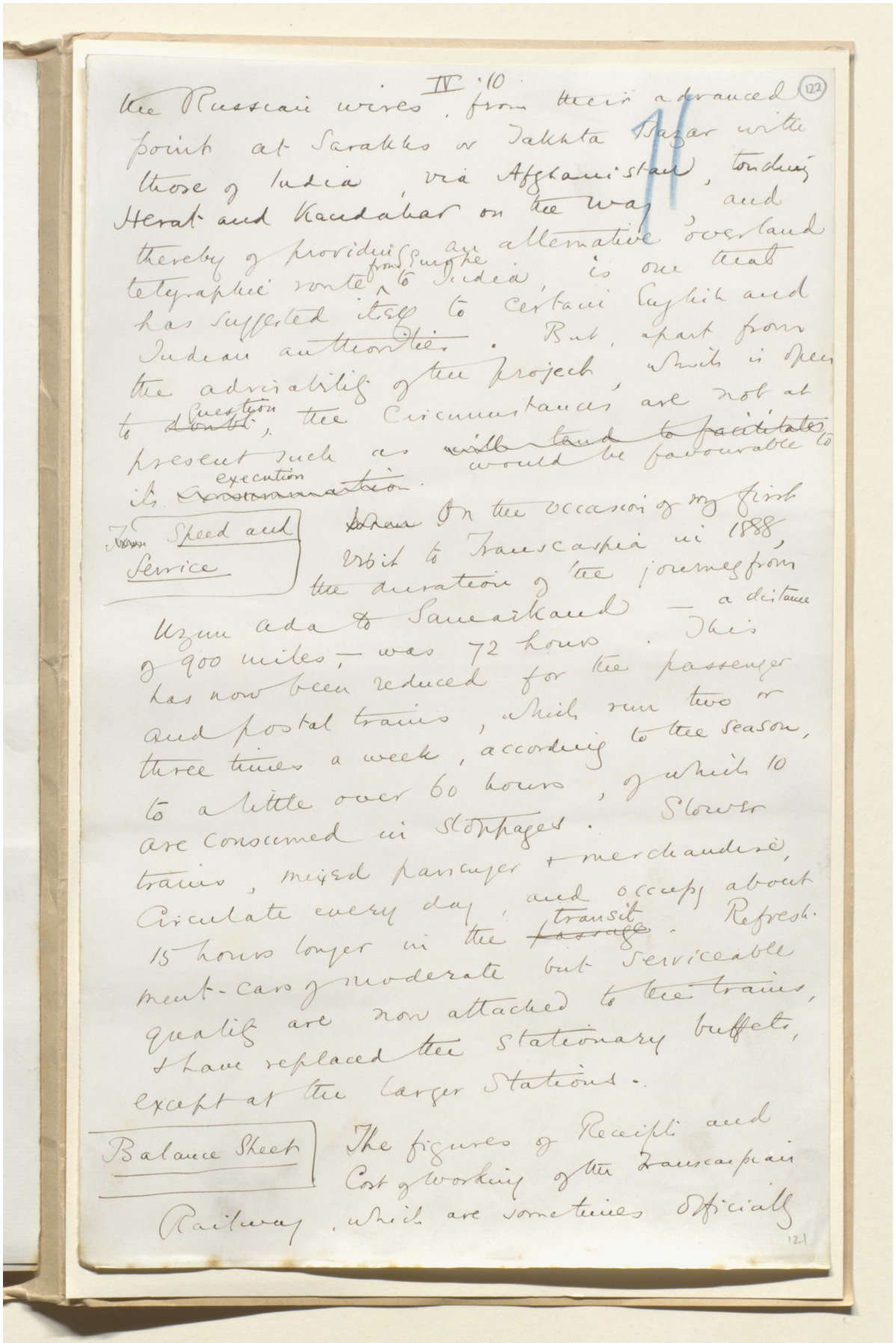

IV 10 (122)

the Russian wires, from their advanced point at Sarakhs or Takhta Bazar with those of India, via Afghanistan, touching Herat and Kandahar on the way, and thereby of providing an alternative overland telegraphic route from Europe to India, is one that has suggested itself to certain English and Indian authorities. But, apart from the advisability of the project, which is open to question, the circumstances are not at present such as would be favourable to its execution.

Speed and Service

On the occasion of my first visit to Transcaspia in 1888, the duration of the journey from Uzun Ada to Samarkand — a distance of 900 miles — was 72 hours. This has now been reduced for the passenger and postal trains, which run two or three times a week, according to the season, to a little over 60 hours, of which 10 are consumed in stoppages. Slower trains, mixed passenger + merchandise, circulate every day, and occupy about 15 hours longer in the transit. Refreshment-cars of moderate but serviceable quality are now attached to the trains, & have replaced the stationary buffets, except at the larger stations.

Balance Sheet

The figures of Receipts and Cost of working of the Transcaspian Railway, which are sometimes officially

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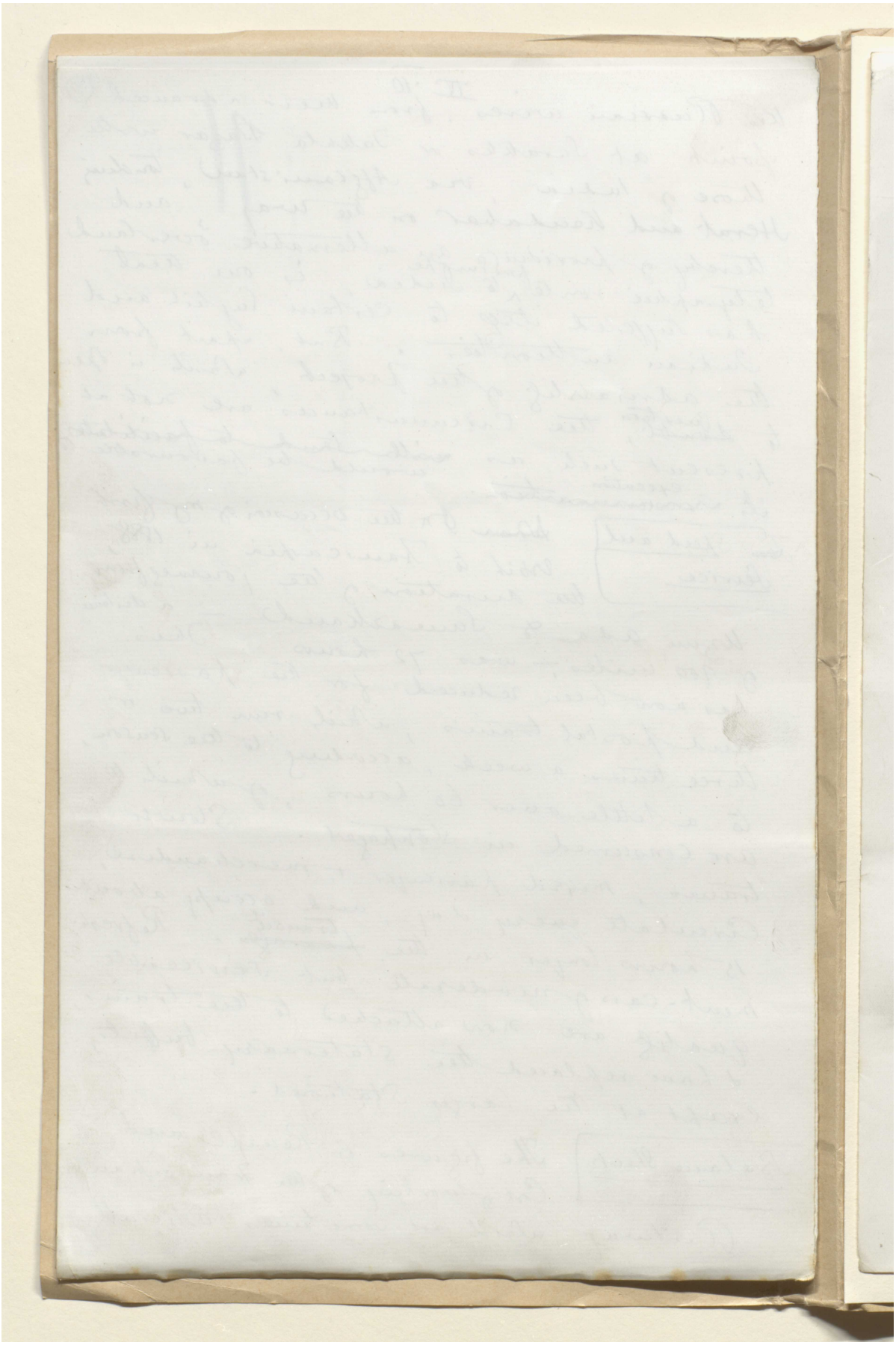

IV. 11

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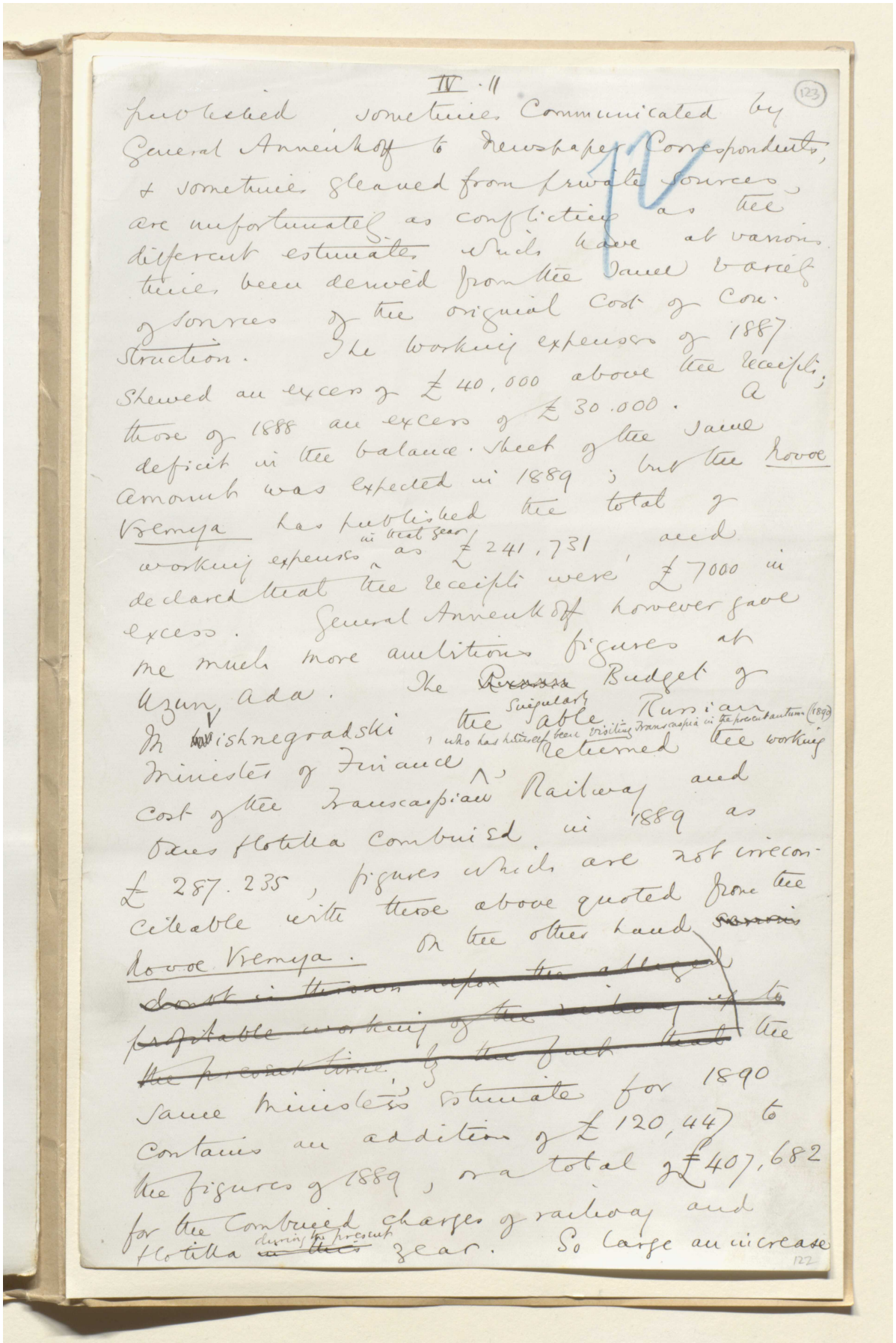

published sometimes communicated by General Annenkoff to Newspaper Correspondents, & sometimes gleaned from private sources, are unfortunately as conflicting as the different estimates which have at various times been derived from the same variety of sources of the original cost of construction. The working expenses of 1887 shewed an excess of £40,000 above the receipts; those of 1888 an excess of £30.000. A deficit in the balance sheet of the same amount was expected in 1889; but the Novoe Vremya has published the total of working expenses in that year as £241,731, and declared that the receipts were £7000 in excess. General Annenkoff however gave me much more ambitious figures at Uzun Ada. The ~~Russian~~ Budget of M. Vishnegradski, the singularly able Russian Minister of Finance, who has himself been visiting Transcaspia in the present autumn (1890), returned the working cost of the Transcaspian Railway and Oxus flotilla combined in 1889 as £287.235, figures which are not irreconcileable with those above quoted from the Novoe Vremya. On the other hand ~~[illegible]~~ ~~doubt is thrown upon the alleged profitable working of the railway up to the present time by the fact that~~ the same Minister's estimate for 1890 contains an addition of £120,447 to the figures of 1889, or a total of £407,682 for the combined charges of railway and flotilla during the present ~~in this~~ year. So large an increase

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المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة
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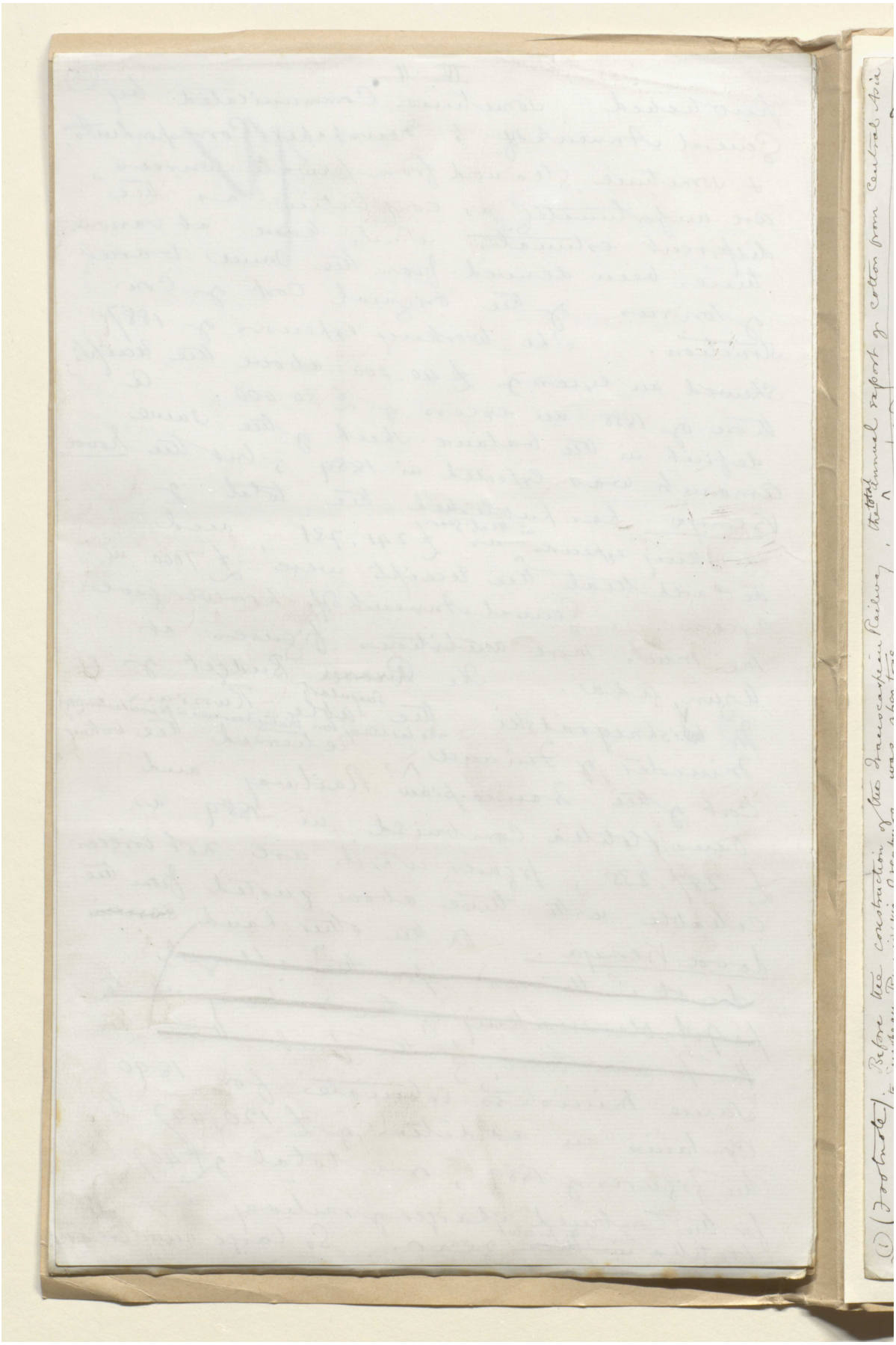
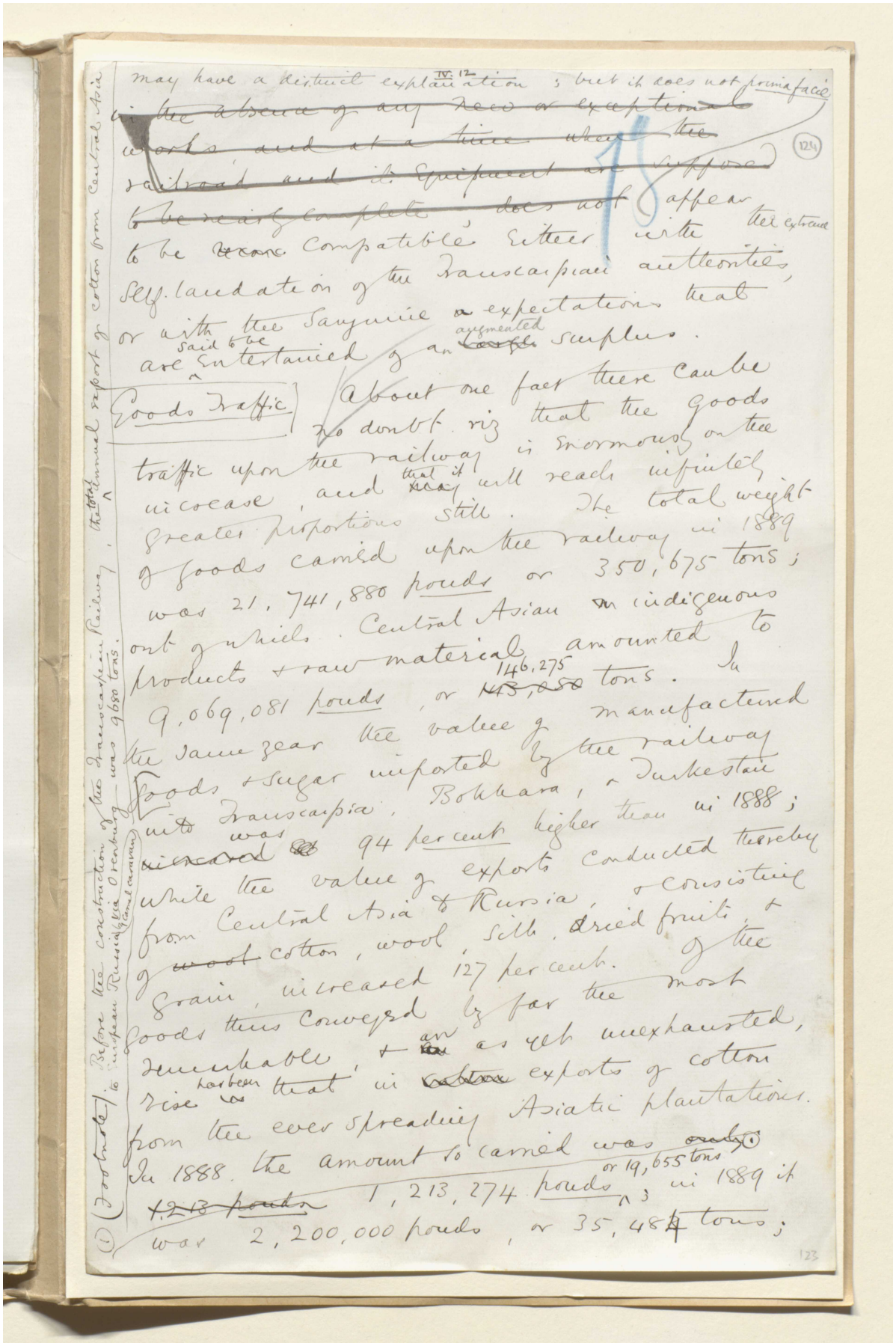


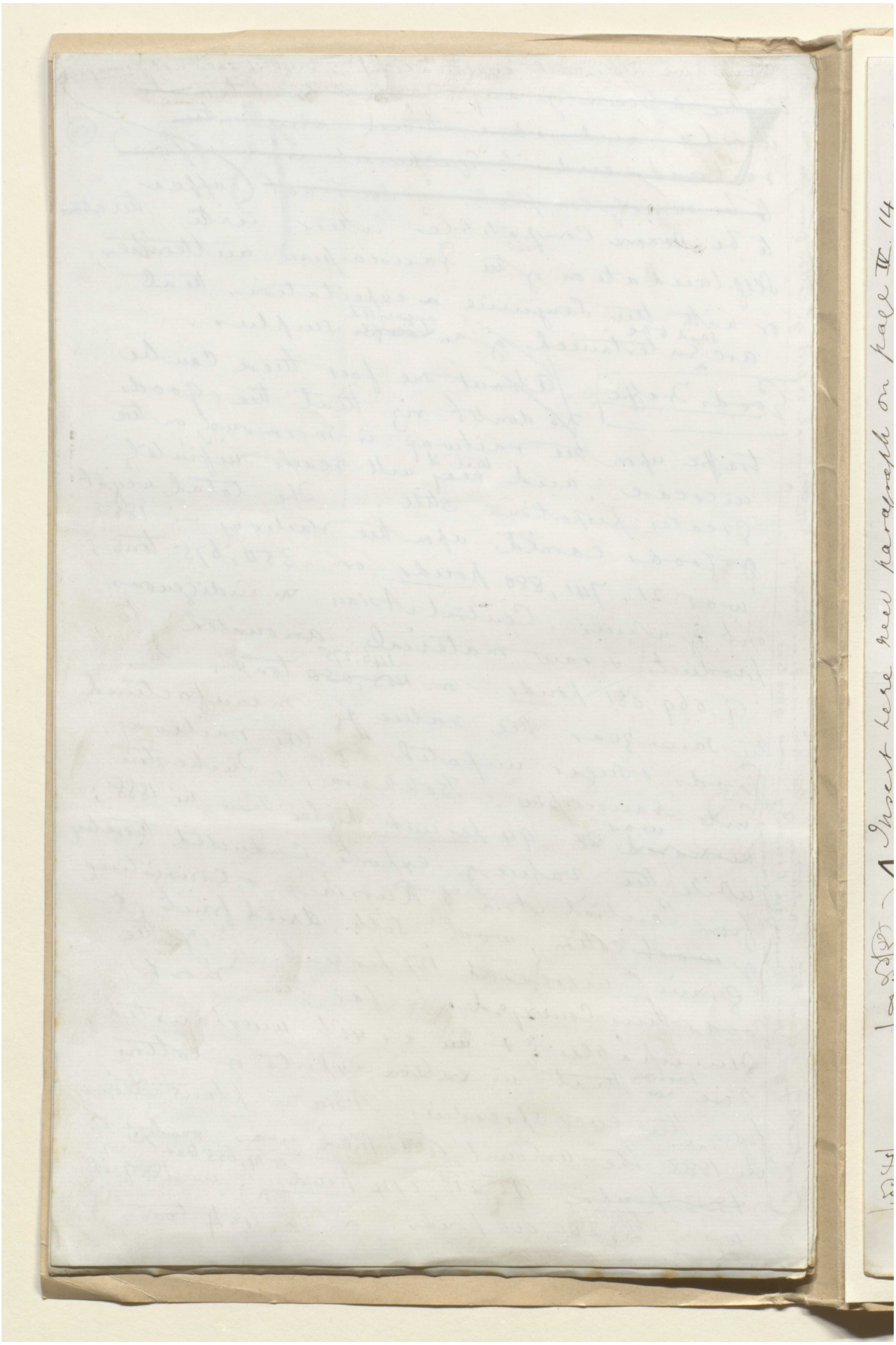


may have a distinct explanation IV. 12 ; but it does not prima facie
~~in the absence of any new or exceptional~~
~~works and at a time when the~~
~~railroad and its equipment are supposed~~
~~to be nearly complete~~ does not appear
to be compatible either with the extreme
Self-laudation of the Transcaspian authorities,
or with the sanguine expectations that
are entertained of an augmented surplus.

Goods Traffic

About one fact there can be
no doubt viz that the goods
traffic upon the railway is enormously on the
increase, and that it will reach infinitely
greater proportions still. The total weight
of goods carried upon the railway in 1889
was 21,741,880 pouds or 350,675 tons;
one quarter of which Central Asian or indigenous
products & raw material amounted to
9,069,081 pouds, or 146,275 tons. In
the same year the value of manufactured
goods & sugar imported by the railway
into Transcaspia, Bokhara, & Turkestan
was 94 per cent higher than in 1888;
while the value of exports conducted thereby
from Central Asia & Russia, consisting
of cotton, wool, silk, dried fruits &
grain, increased 127 per cent. Of the
goods thus conveyed by far the most
remarkable, & as yet unexhausted,
are the exports of cotton
from the ever spreading Asiatic plantations.
In 1888 the amount so carried was
1,213,274 pouds or 19,655 tons; in 1889 it
was 2,200,000 pouds, or 35,484 tons;

(1) Before the construction of the Transcaspian Railway, the total annual export of cotton from Central Asia to European Russia via Orenburg was 9,680 tons.



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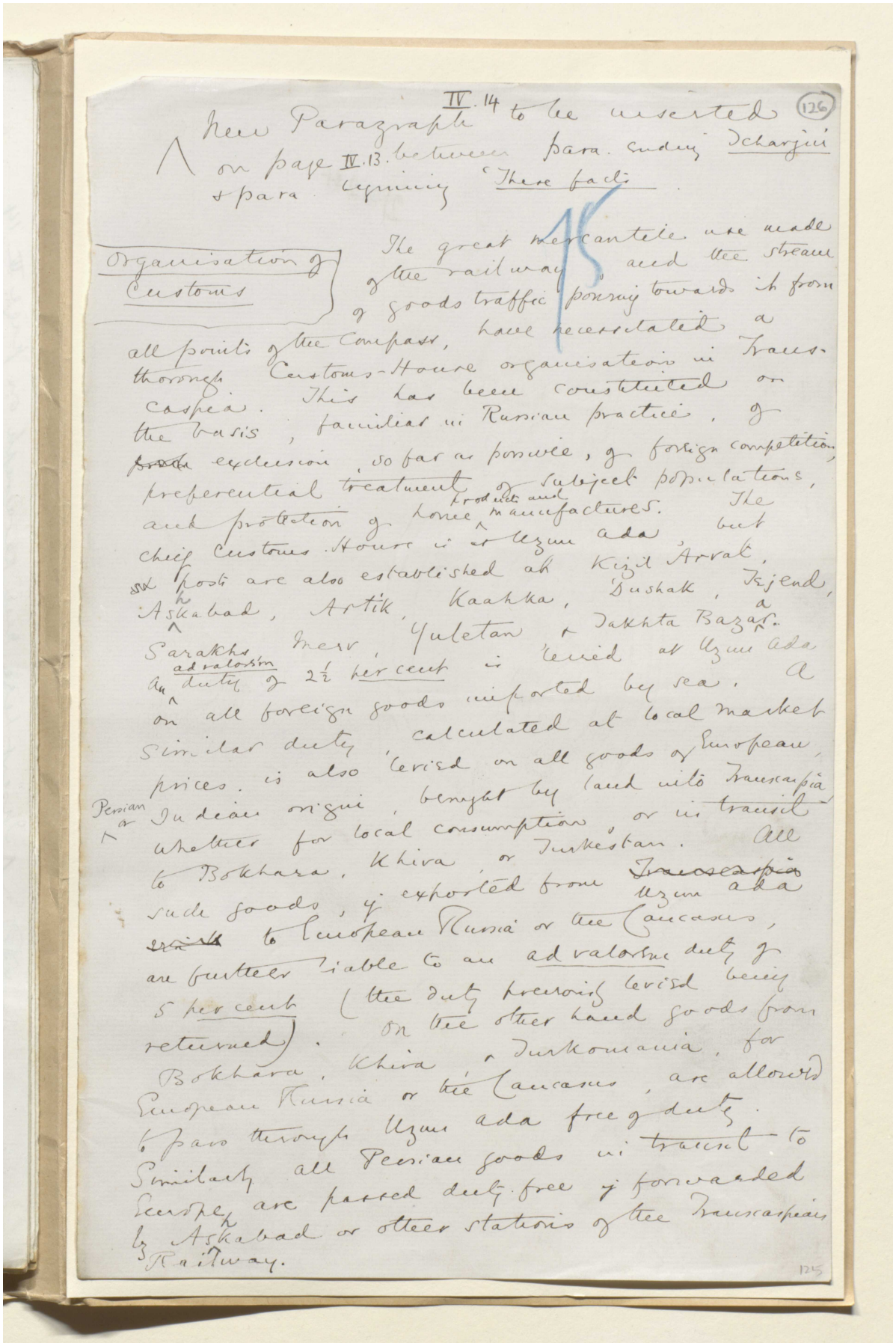

New Paragraph IV.14 to be inserted on page IV.13 between para. ending Icharjui & para. beginning 'These facts'.

15

Organisation of Customs

The great mercantile use made of the railway, and the stream of goods traffic pouring towards it from all points of the compass, have necessitated a thorough Customs-House organisation in Transcaspia. This has been constituted on the basis, familiar in Russian practice, of ~~[illegible]~~ exclusion, so far as possible, of foreign competition, preferential treatment of subject populations, and protection of home products and manufactures. The chief Customs House is at Uzun Ada, but ~~six~~ posts are also established at Kizil Arvat, Askhabad, Artik, Kaahka, Dushak, Tejend, Sarakhs, Merv, Yuletan & Takhta Bazar. An ad valorem duty of 2½ per cent is levied at Uzun Ada on all foreign goods imported by sea. A similar duty, calculated at local market prices, is also levied on all goods of European, Persian or Indian origin, brought by land into Transcaspia, whether for local consumption, or in transit to Bokhara, Khiva, or Turkestan. All such goods, if exported from ~~Transcaspia~~ Uzun Ada ~~[illegible]~~ to European Russia or the Caucasus, are further liable to an ad valorem duty of 5 per cent (the duty previously levied being returned). On the other hand goods from Bokhara, Khiva, & Turkomania, for European Russia or the Caucasus, are allowed to pass through Uzun Ada free of duty. Similarly all Persian goods in transit to Europe are passed duty-free if forwarded by Askhabad or other stations of the Transcaspian Railway.

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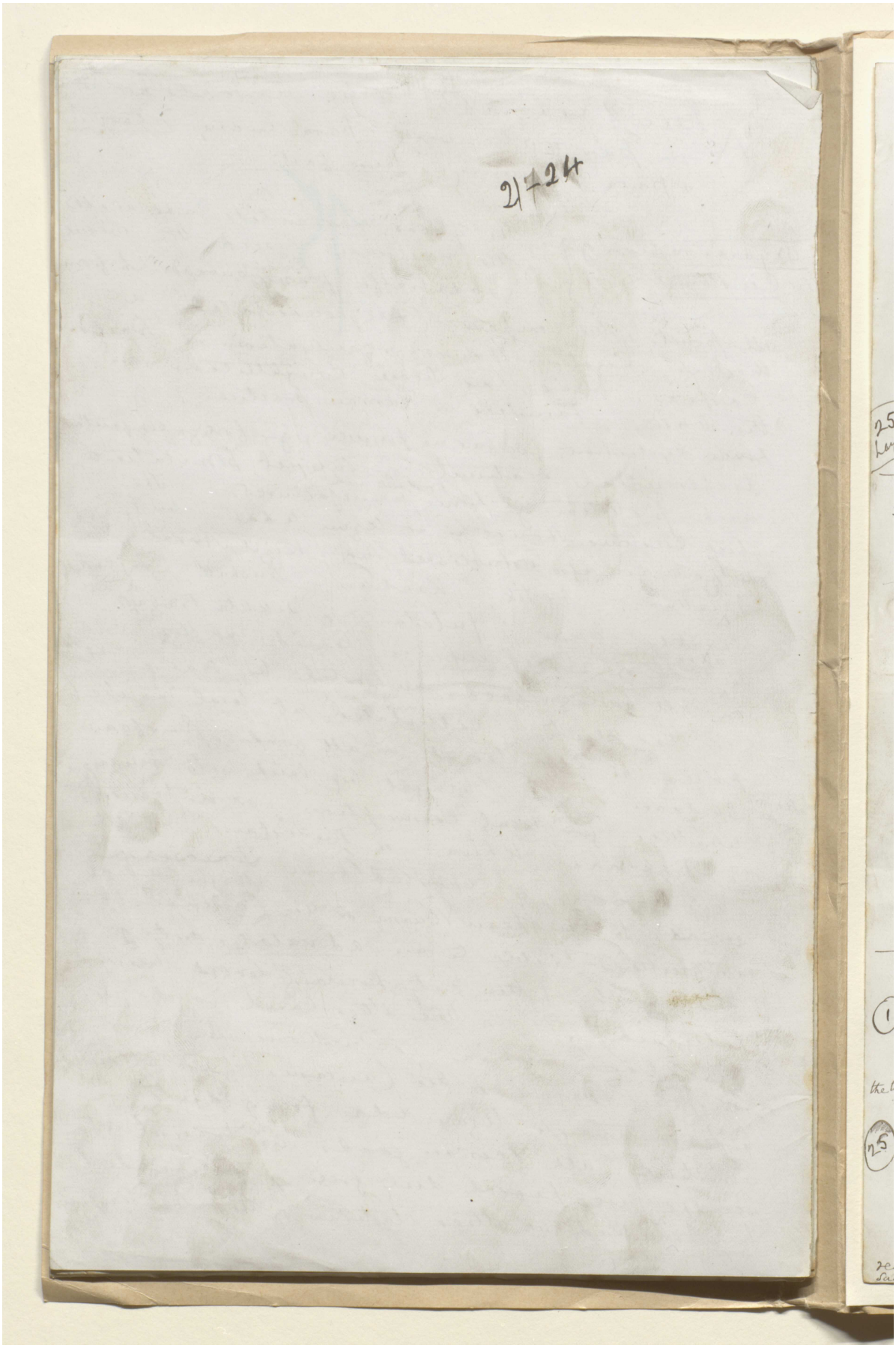
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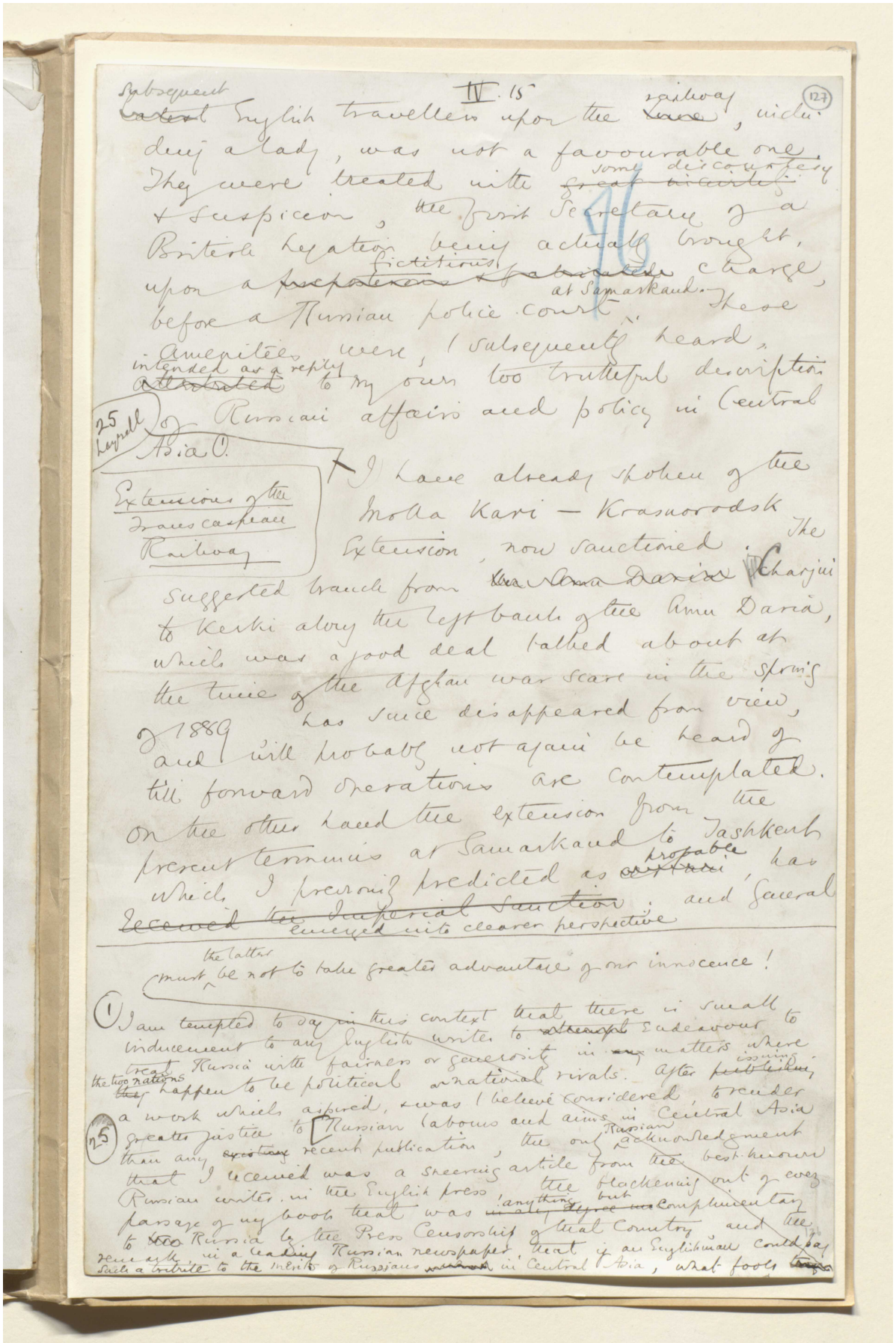

IV. 15 (127)

Subsequent English travellers upon the railway, including a lady, was not a favourable one. They were treated with some discourtesy & suspicion, the first Secretary of a British Legation being actually brought, upon a fictitious charge, before a Russian police court at Samarkand. These amenities were, I subsequently heard, intended as a reply to my own too truthful description of Russian affairs and policy in Central Asia.

25 Layrell

Extensions of the Transcaspian Railway

I have already spoken of the Molla Kari – Krasnorodsk Extension, now sanctioned. The suggested branch from Charjui to Kerki along the left bank of the Amu Daria, which was a good deal talked about at the time of the Afghan war scare in the spring of 1889 has since disappeared from view, and will probably not again be heard of till forward operations are contemplated. On the other hand the extension from the present terminus at Samarkand to Tashkent which I previously predicted as probable, has emerged into clearer perspective and General

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must the latter be not to take greater advantage of our innocence!

(1) I am tempted to say in this context that there is small inducement to any English writer to endeavour to treat Russia with fairness or generosity in matters where the two nations happen to be political or national rivals. After issuing a work which aspired, & was I believe considered, to render greater justice to Russian labours and aims in Central Asia than any recent publication, the only Russian acknowledgment that I received was a sneering article from the best known Russian writer in the English press, the blackening out of every passage of my book that was anything but complimentary to Russia by the Press Censorship of that Country, and the remark, in a leading Russian newspaper, that if an Englishman could say such a tribute to the merits of Russians in Central Asia, what fools

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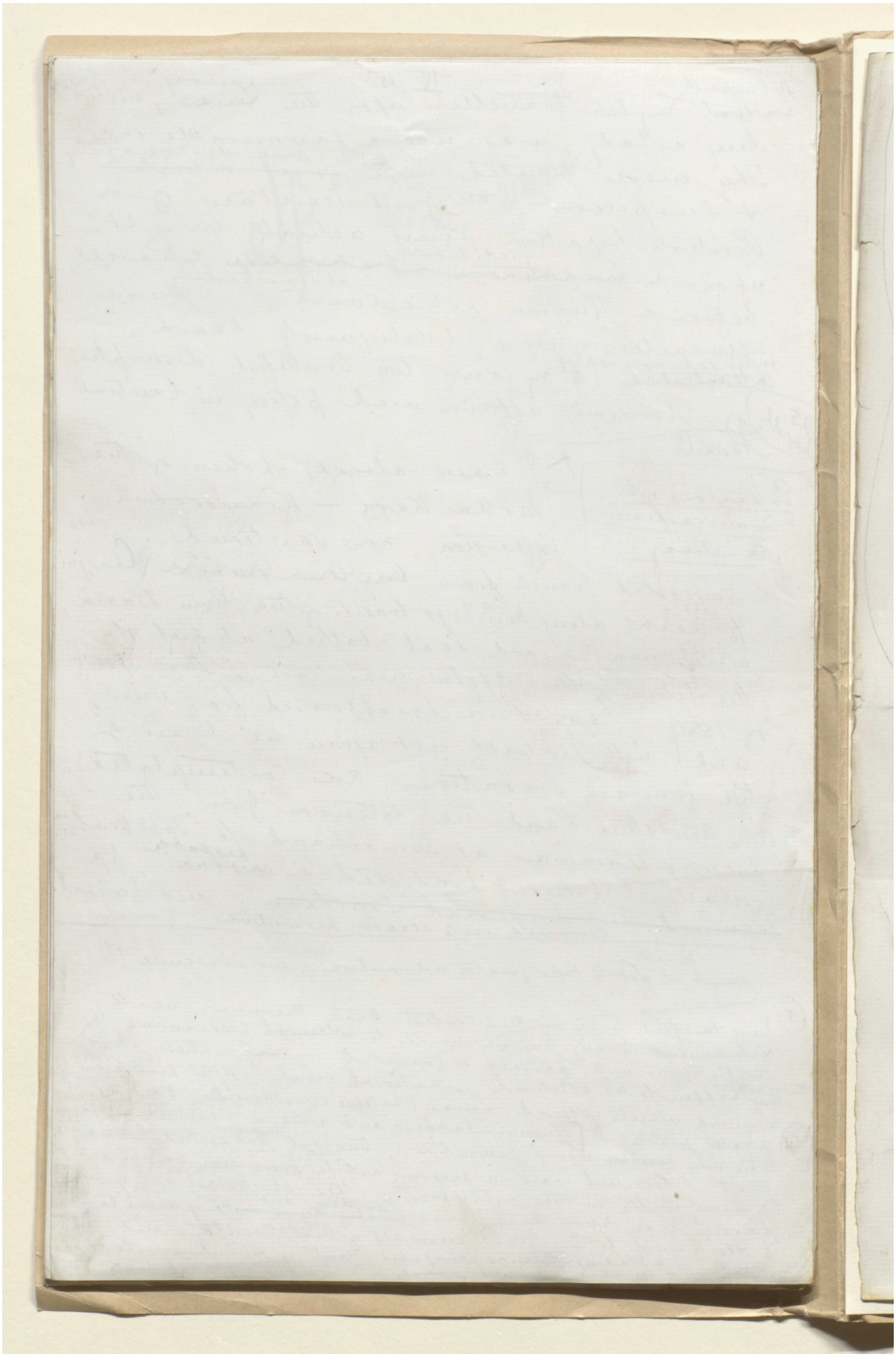

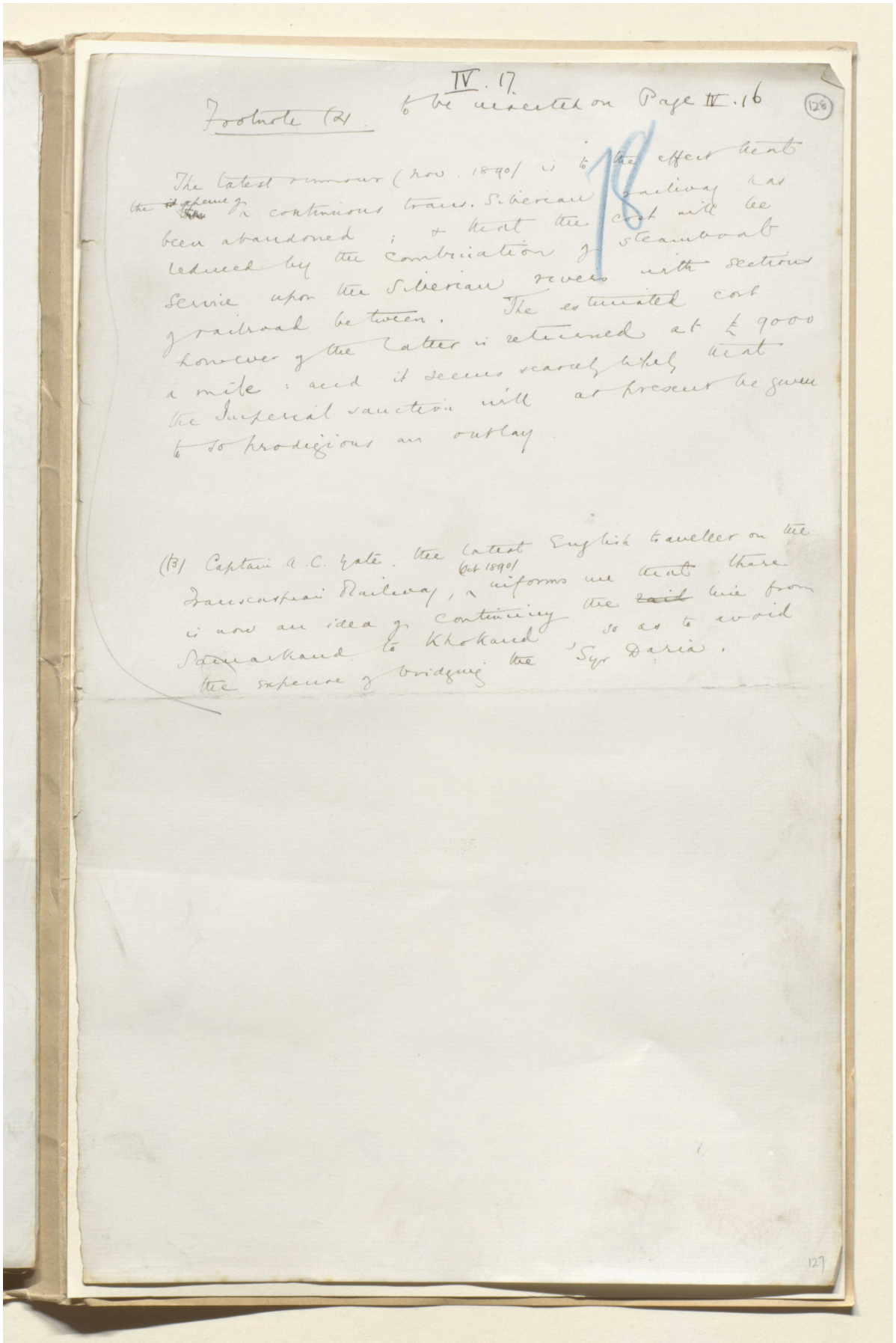

IV. 17.

Footnote (12) to be inserted on Page IV. 16

(128)

The latest rumour (Nov. 1890) is to the effect that the scheme of a continuous trans-Siberian railway has been abandoned; & that the cost will be reduced by the combination of steamboat service upon the Siberian rivers with sections of railroad between. The estimated cost however of the latter is returned at £9000 a mile: and it seems scarcely likely that the Imperial sanction will at present be given to so prodigious an outlay.

(13) Captain A.C. Yate, the latest English traveller on the Transcaspian Railway, (Oct 1890) informs me that there is now an idea of continuing the said line from Samarkand to Khokand so as to avoid the expense of bridging the Syr Daria.

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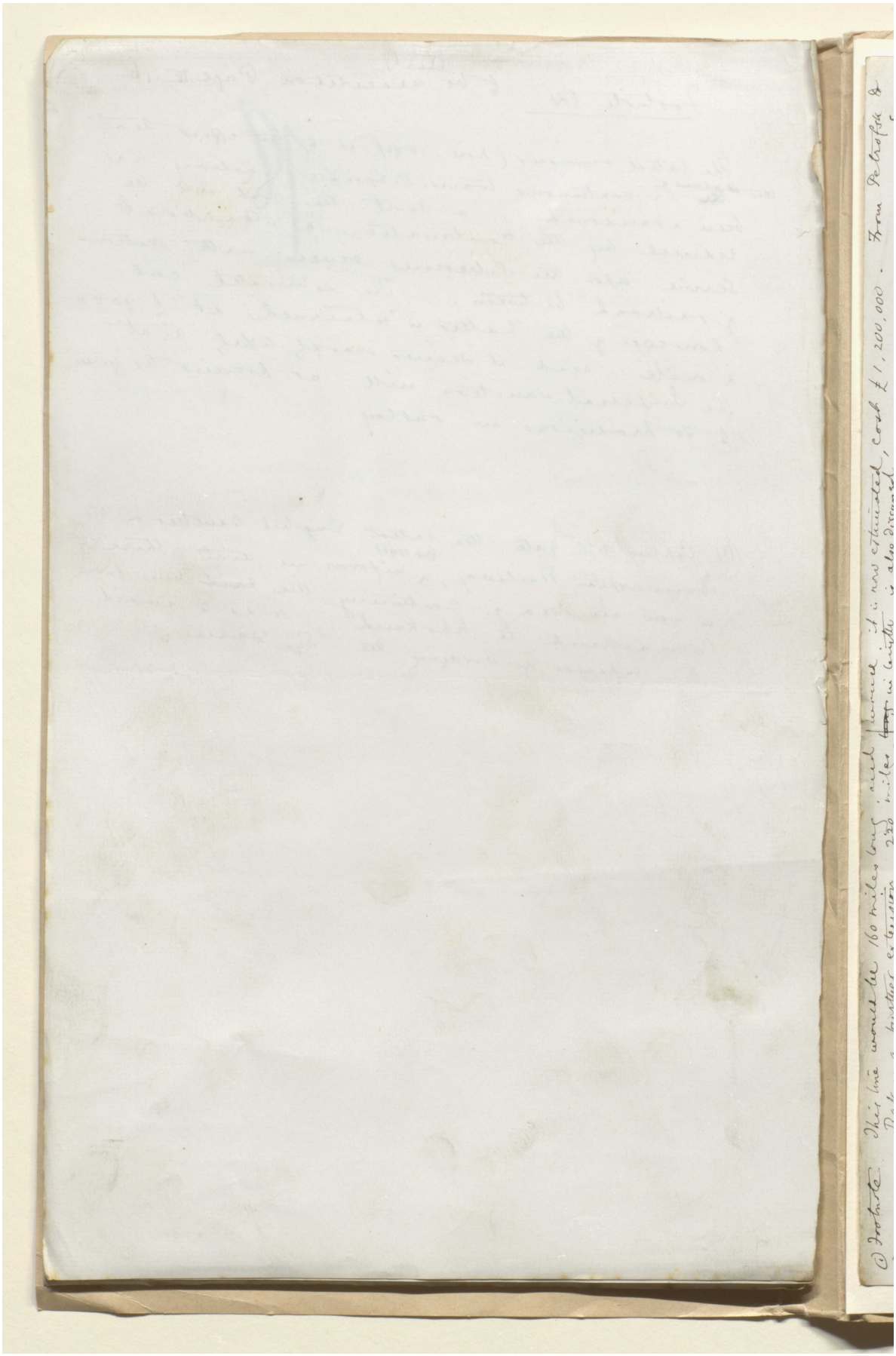

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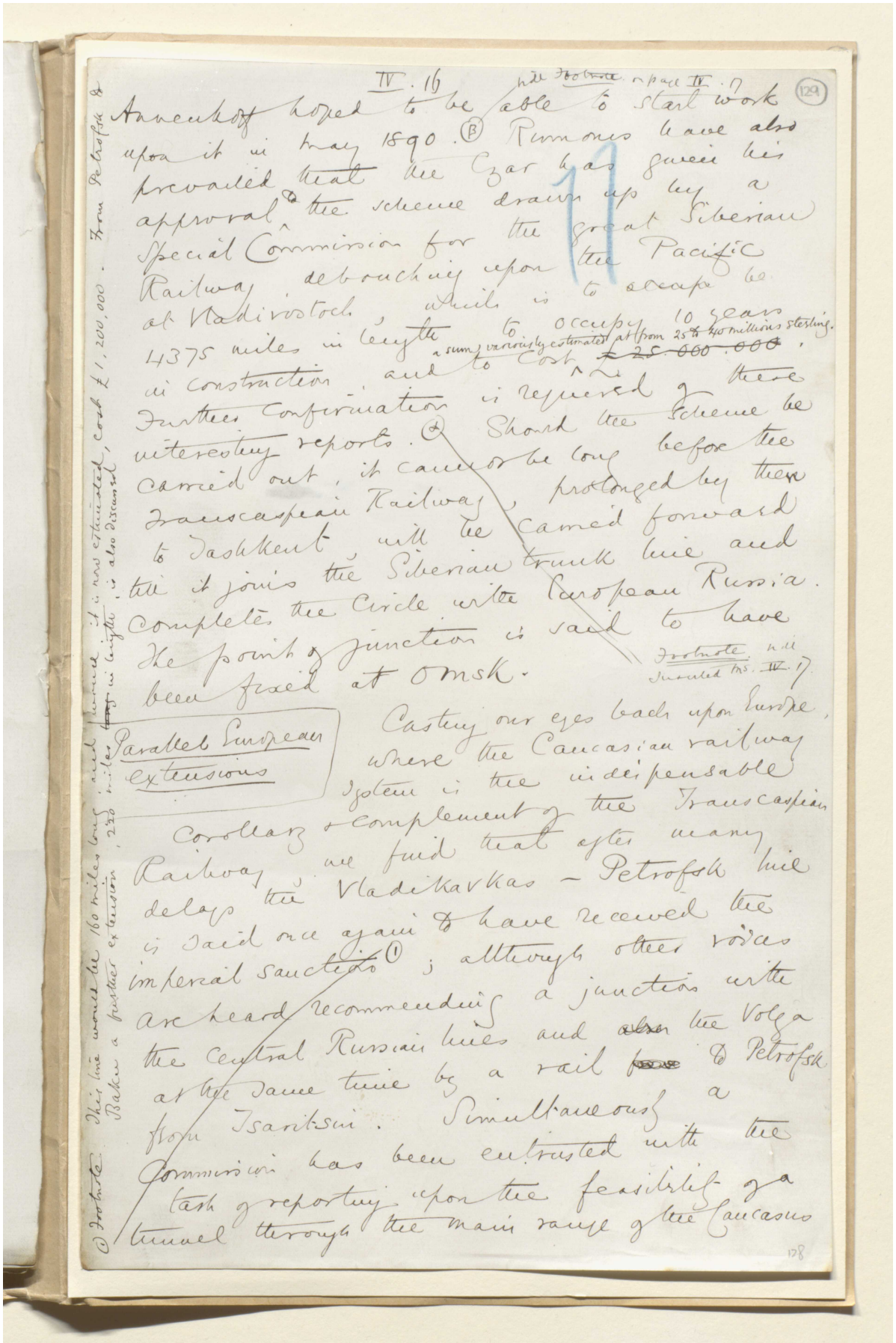
IV. 16 (129)



Annenkoff hoped to be able to start work upon it in May 1890. (B) Rumours have also prevailed that the Czar has given his approval to the scheme drawn up by a Special Commission for the great Siberian Railway debouching upon the Pacific at Vladivostock, which is to occupy 10 years in construction and to cost a sum variously estimated at from 25 to 40 millions sterling. ~~£ 25.000.000~~. Further confirmation is required of these interesting reports. (C) Should the scheme be carried out, it cannot be long before the Transcaspian Railway, prolonged by them to Tashkent, will be carried forward till it joins the Siberian trunk line and completes the circle with European Russia. The point of junction is said to have been fixed at Omsk.

Footnote. Will insulted MS. IV. 17

Parallel European extensions

Casting our eyes back upon Europe, where the Caucasian railway system is the indispensable corollary & complement of the Transcaspian Railway, we find that after many delays the Vladikavkas – Petrofsk line is said once again to have received the imperial sanction (1); although other voices are heard recommending a junction with the central Russian lines and ~~also~~ the Volga at the same time by a rail ~~[illegible]~~ to Petrofsk from Tsaritsin. Simultaneously a Commission has been entrusted with the task of reporting upon the feasibility of a tunnel through the main range of the Caucasus

(1) Footnote. This line would be 160 miles long, and would it is now estimated, cost £1,200,000. From Petrofsk & Baku a further extension, 220 miles ~~long~~ in length, is also discussed.

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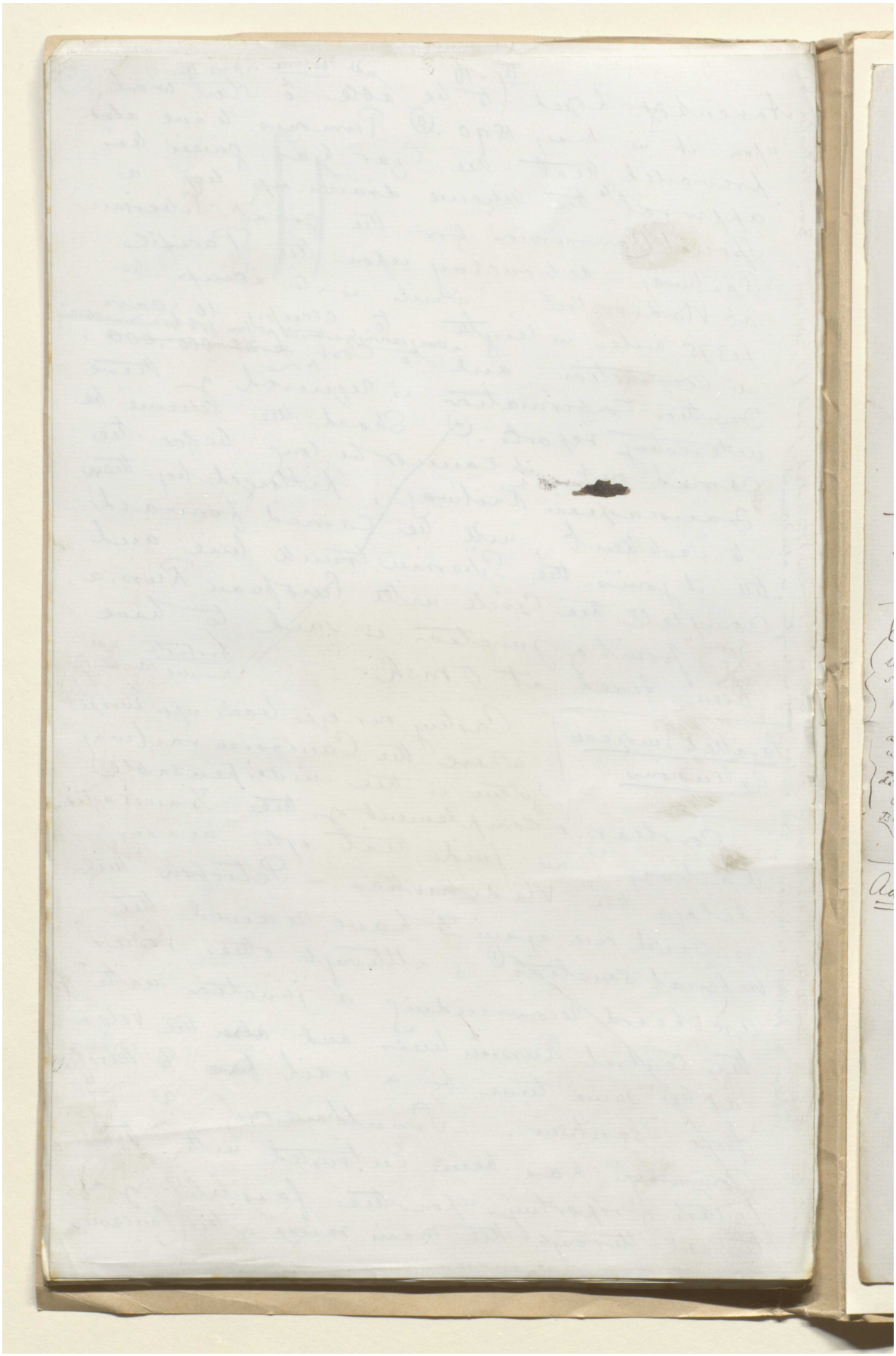

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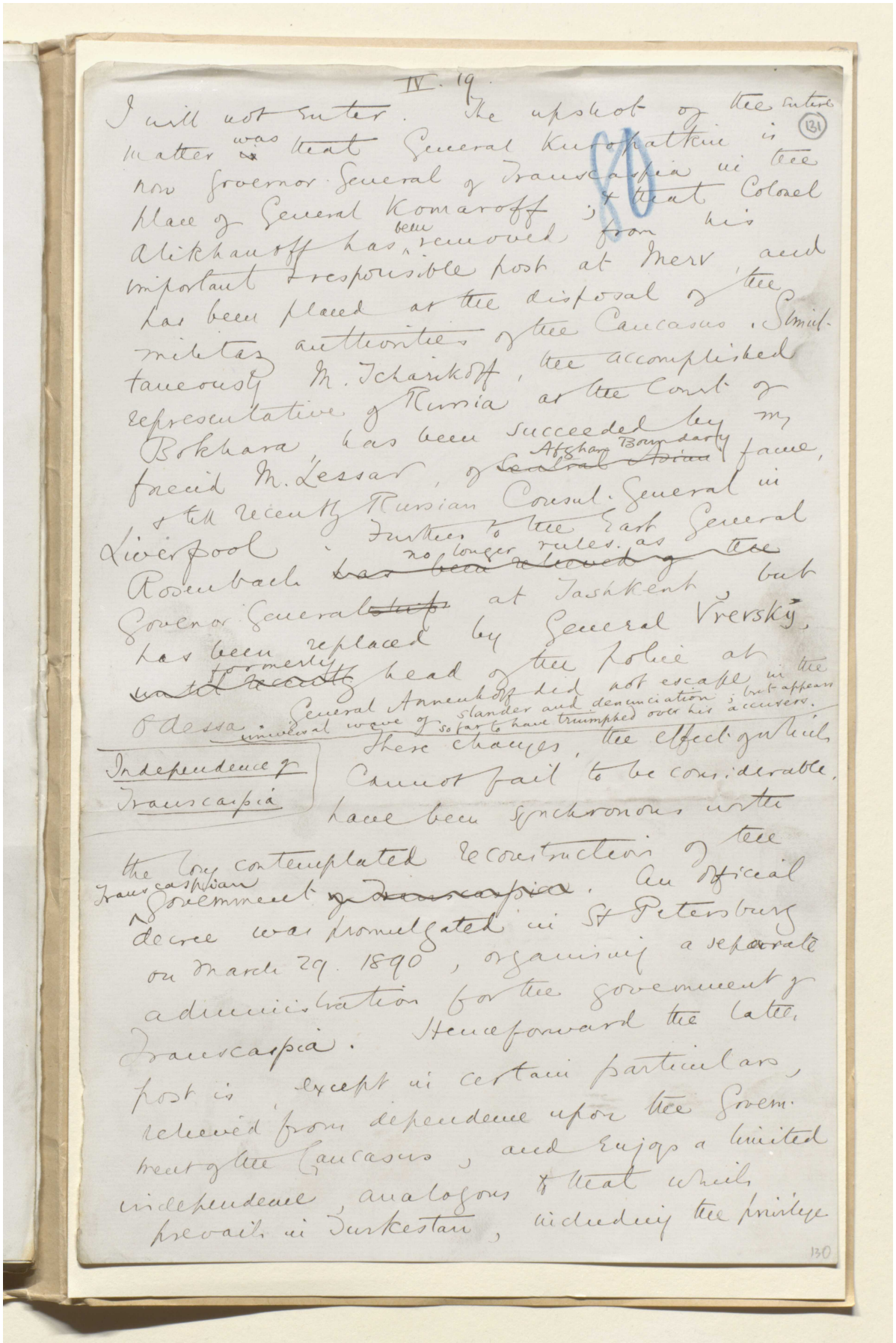

IV. 19.

I will not enter. The upshot of the future matter was that General Kuropatkin is now Governor General of Transcaspia in the place of General Komaroff; & that Colonel Alikhanoff has been removed from his important & responsible post at Merv, and has been placed at the disposal of the military authorities of the Caucasus. Simultaneously M. Tcharikoff, the accomplished representative of Russia at the Court of Bokhara, has been succeeded by my friend M. Lessar, of Afghan Boundary fame, & till recently Russian Consul General in Liverpool. Further to the East General Rosenbach no longer rules as Governor General at Tashkent, but has been replaced by General Vrevsky, formerly head of the police at Odessa. General Annenkoff did not escape in the universal wave of slander and denunciation; but appears so far to have triumphed over his accusers.

These changes, the effect of which cannot fail to be considerable, have been synchronous with the long contemplated reconstruction of the Transcaspian Government. An official decree was promulgated in St Petersburg on March 29. 1890, organising a separate administration for the government of Transcaspia. Henceforward the latter post is exempt in certain particulars, released from dependence upon the Governor of the Caucasus, and enjoys a limited independence, analogous to that which prevails in Turkestan, including the privilege

Independence of Transcaspia



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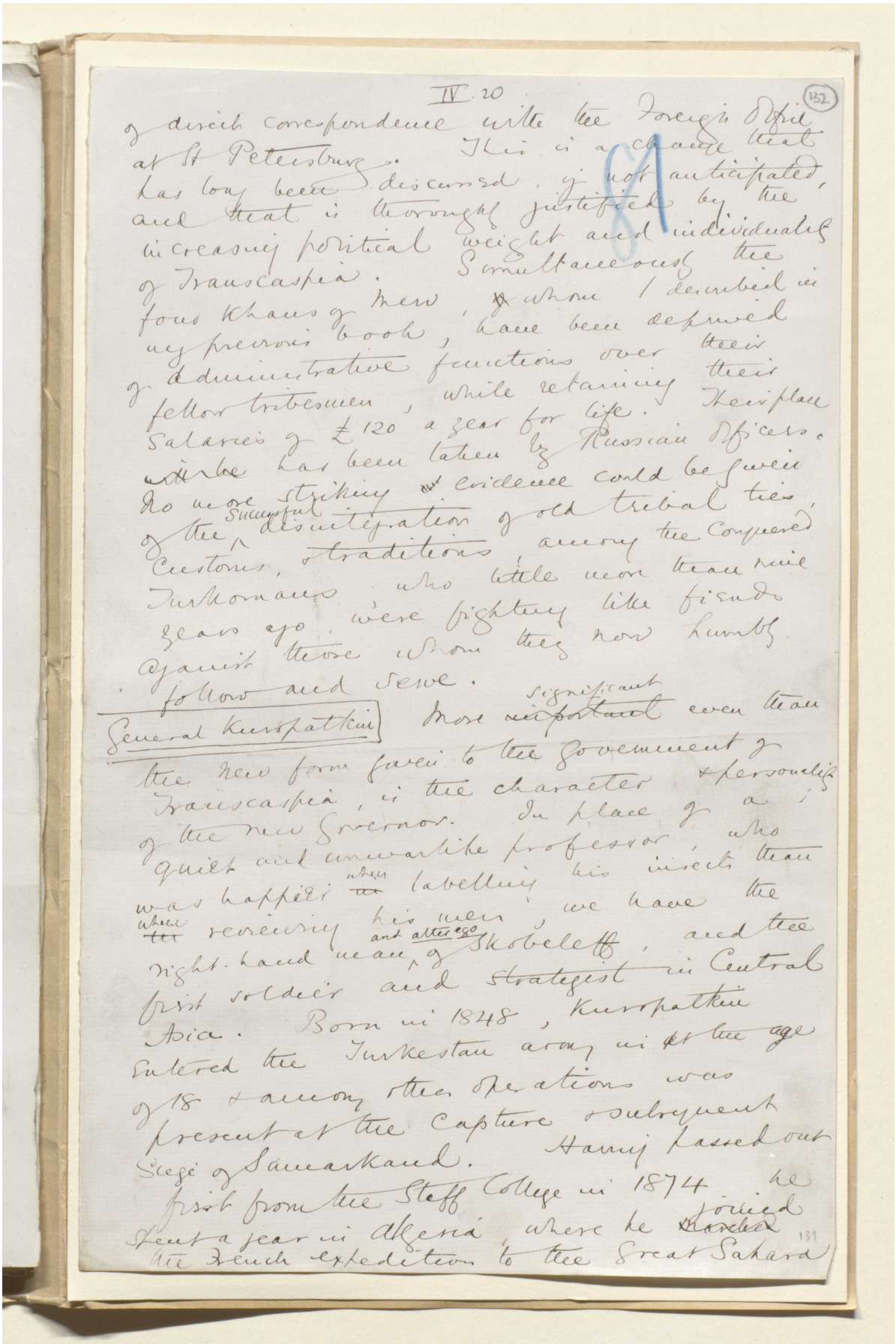

IV. 20

(132)

of such correspondence with the Foreign Office at St Petersburg. This is a change that has long been discussed, if not anticipated, and that is thoroughly justified by the increasing political weight and individuality of Transcaspia. Simultaneously the four Khans of new, whom I described in my previous book, have been deprived of administrative functions over their fellow tribesmen, while retaining their salaries of £120 a year for life. Their place has been taken by Russian officers. No more striking evidence could be given of the successful disintegration of old tribal ties, customs, traditions among the Conquered Turkomans who little more than nine years ago were fighting like fiends against those whom they now humbly follow and serve.

General Kuropatkin

More significant even than the new form given to the government of Transcaspia, is the character & personality of the new Governor. In place of a quiet and unwarlike professor, who was happier labelling his insects than receiving his men and attachés, we have the right-hand man of Skobeleff, and the first soldier and strategist in Central Asia. Born in 1848, Kuropatkin entered the Turkestan army in the age of 18 & among other operations was present at the capture & subsequent siege of Samarkand. Having passed out first from the Staff College in 1874 he spent a year in Algeria where he joined the French expedition to the Great Sahara

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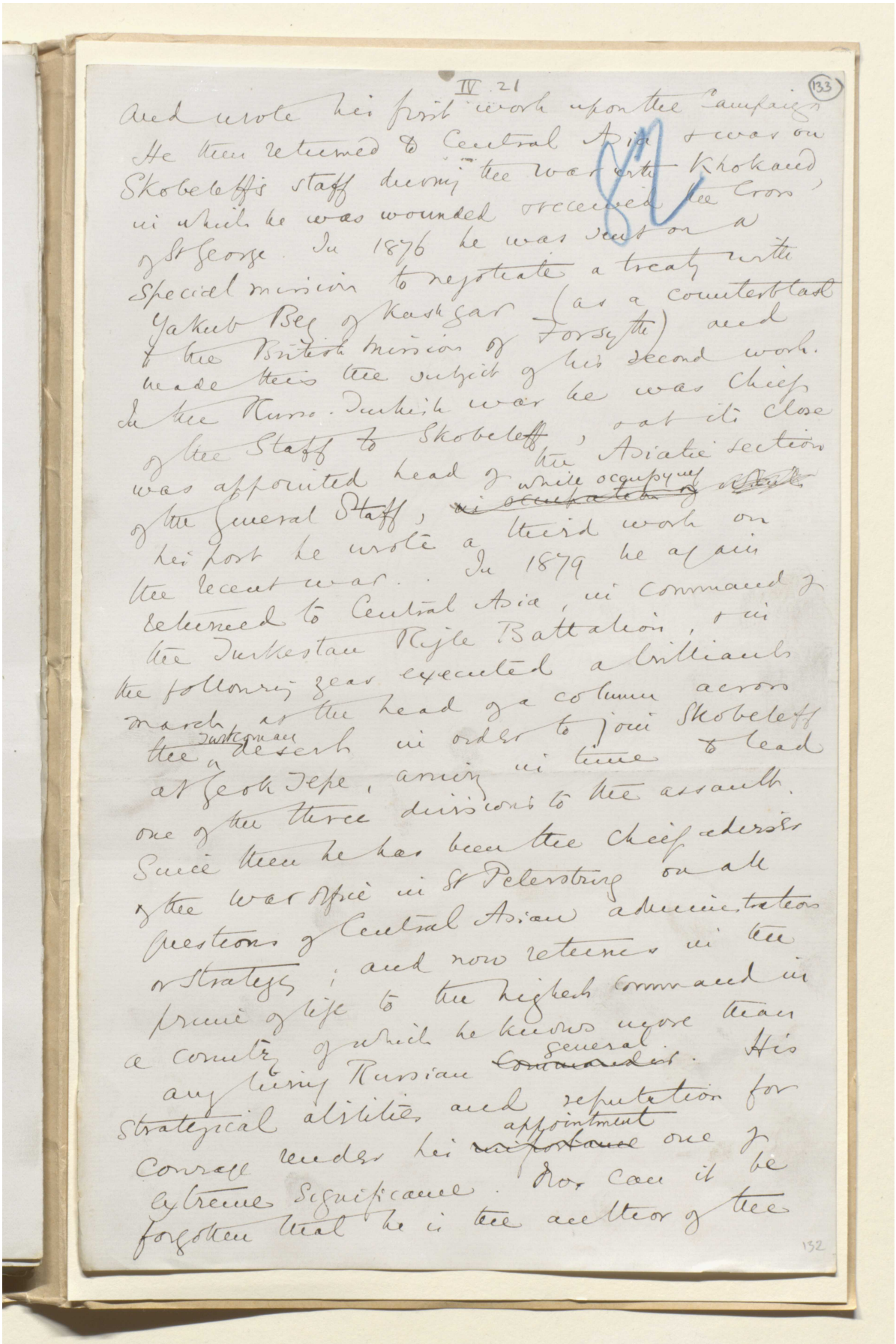



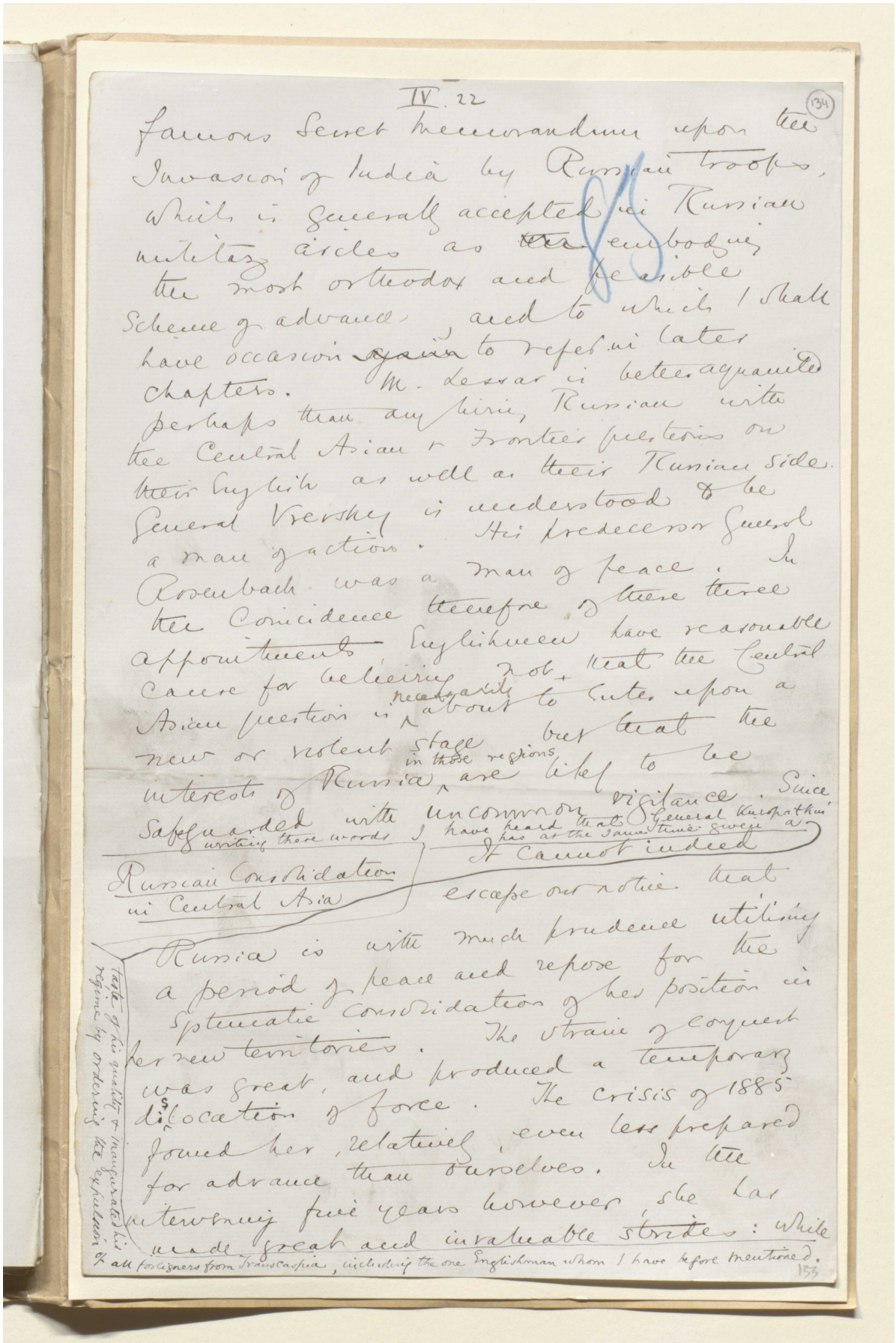

IV. 22

(134)

famous Secret Memorandum upon the Invasion of India by Russian troops, which is generally accepted in Russian military circles as ~~the~~ embodying the most orthodox and feasible scheme of advance, and to which I shall have occasion ~~again~~ to refer in later chapters. M. Lessar is better acquainted perhaps than any living Russian with the Central Asian & Frontier questions on their English as well as their Russian side. General Vrevsky is understood to be a man of action. His predecessor General Rosenbach was a man of peace. In the coincidence therefore of these three appointments Englishmen have reasonable cause for believing not that the Central Asian question is necessarily about to enter upon a new or violent stage but that the interests of Russia in those regions are likely to be safeguarded with uncommon vigilance. Since writing these words I have heard that General Kuropatkin has at the same time given a

Russian Consolidation in Central Asia

It cannot indeed escape our notice that Russia is with much prudence utilising a period of peace and repose for the systematic consolidation of her position in her new territories. The strain of conquest was great, and produced a temporary dislocation of force. The crisis of 1885 found her, relatively, even less prepared for advance than ourselves. In the intervening five years however, she has made great and invaluable strides: while

taste of his quality & inaugurated his régime by ordering the expulsion of all foreigners from Transcaspia, including the one Englishman whom I have before mentioned.

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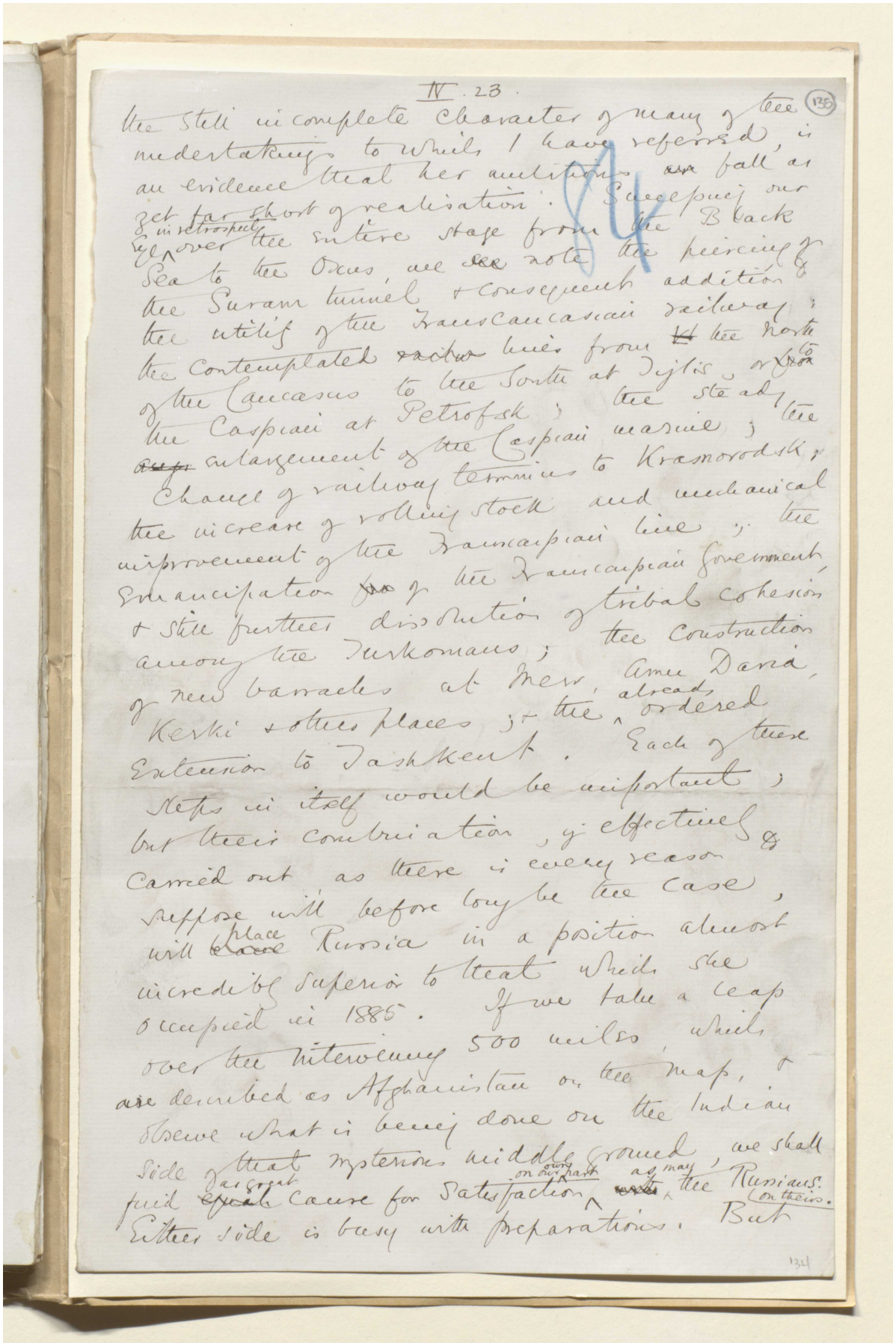

IV. 23.

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the still incomplete character of many of the undertakings to which I have referred, is an evidence that her ambitions fall as yet far short of realisation. Sweeping our eyes over the entire stage from the Black Sea to the Oxus, we note the piercing of the Suram tunnel & consequent addition to the utility of the Transcaucasian railway; the contemplated railway lines from the north of the Caucasus to the South at Djulfa, & from the Caspian at Petrofsk; the steady enlargement of the Caspian marine; change of railway terminus to Krasnovodsk; the increase of rolling stock and mechanical improvement of the Transcaspian line; the emancipation of the Transcaspian Government, & the further dissolution of tribal cohesion among the Turkomans; the construction of new barracks at Merv, Amu Darya, Kerki & other places; the already ordered Extension to Tashkent. Each of these steps in itself would be important; but their combination, & effectively & carried out as there is every reason to suppose will before long be the case, will place Russia in a position almost incredibly superior to that which she occupied in 1885. If we take a leap over the intervening 500 miles, which are denoted as Afghanistan on the map, & observe what is being done on the Indian side of that mysterious middle ground, we shall find great cause for satisfaction on their part as may the Russians on theirs. Either side is busy with preparations. But

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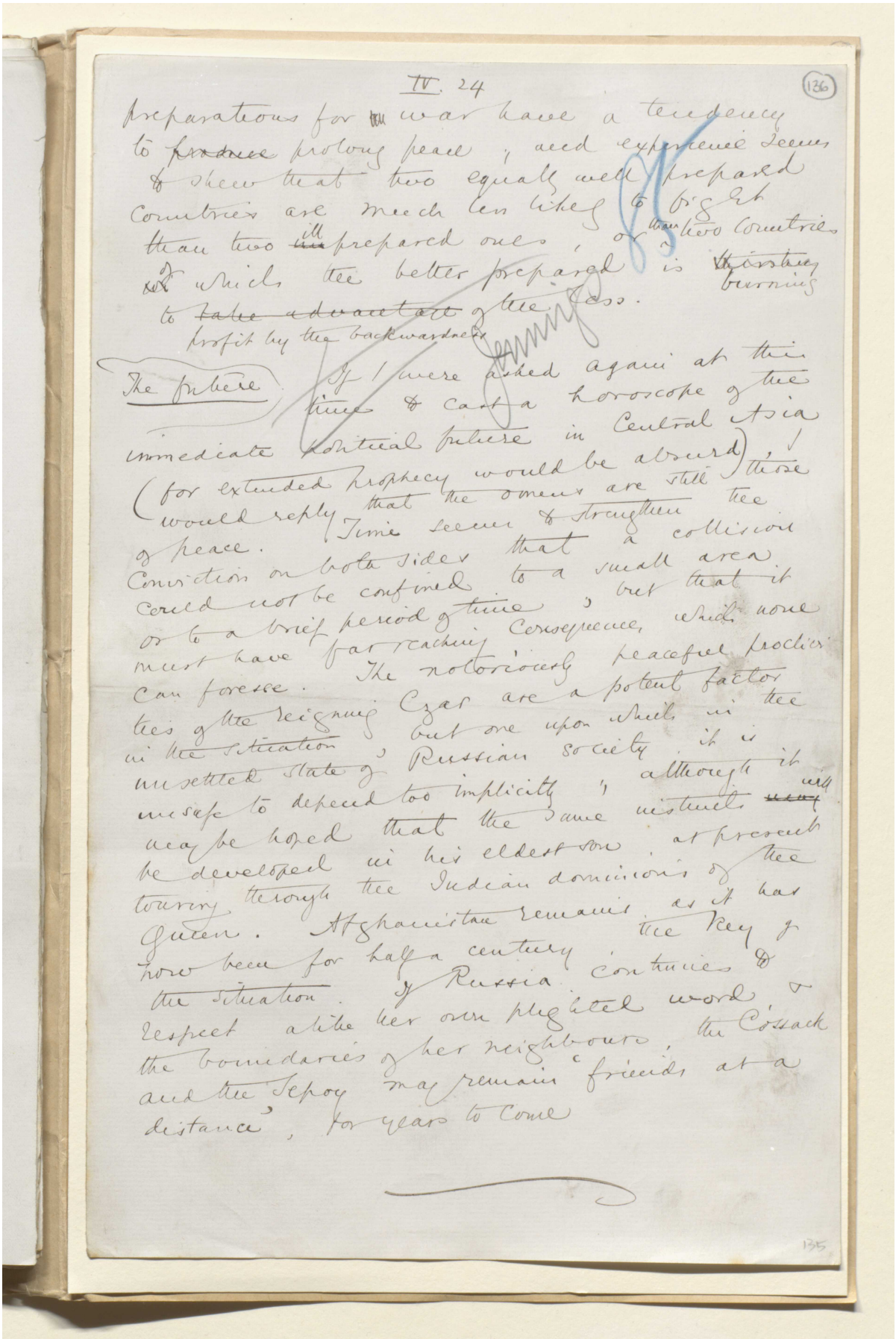

IV. 24

(136)

preparations for war have a tendency to ~~produce~~ prolong peace, and experience seems to shew that two equally well prepared countries are much less likely to fight than two ill prepared ones, or than two countries of which the better prepared is ~~thirsting~~ burning to ~~take advantage~~ profit by the backwardness of the less.

Jennings

The future

If I were asked again at this time to cast a horoscope of the immediate political future in Central Asia (for extended prophecy would be absurd), I would reply that the omens are still those of peace. Time seems to strengthen the conviction on both sides that a collision could not be confined to a small area or to a brief period of time, but that it must have far reaching consequences which none can foresee. The notoriously peaceful proclivities of the reigning Czar are a potent factor in the situation, but one upon which in the unsettled state of Russian society it is unsafe to depend too implicitly, although it may be hoped that the same instincts will be developed in his eldest son, at present touring through the Indian dominions of the Queen. Afghanistan remains as it has now been for half a century the key of the situation. If Russia continues to respect alike her own plighted word & the boundaries of her neighbours, the Cossack and the Sepoy may remain 'friends at a distance', for years to come

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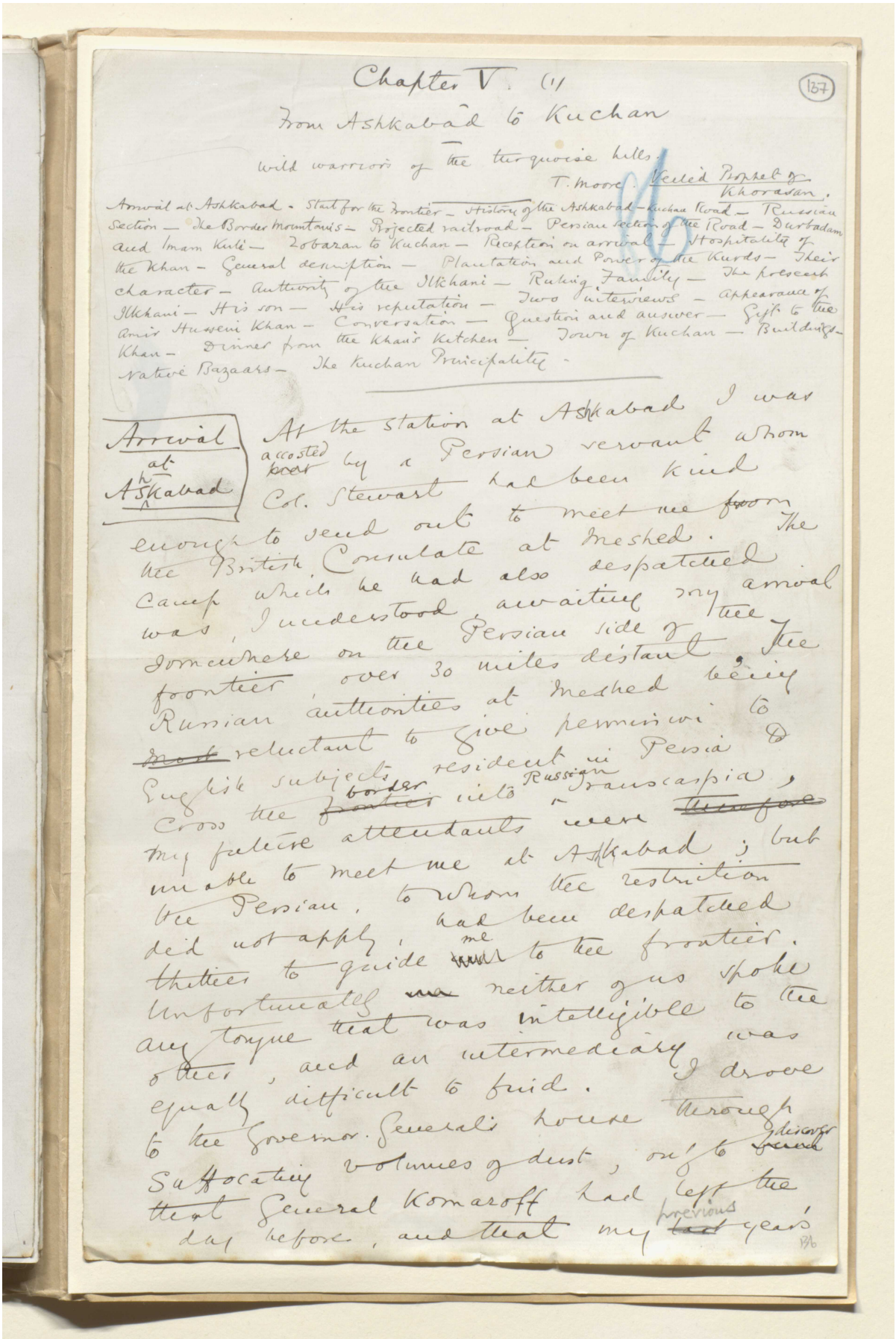

Chapter V. (1)

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From Ashkabad to Kuchan

wild warriors of the turquoise hills.
T. Moore. Veiled Prophet of Khorassan.

Arrival at Ashkabad - Start for the frontier - History of the Ashkabad-Kuchan Road - Russian Section - The Border mountains - Projected railroad - Persian section of the Road - Durbadam and Imam Kuli - Zobaran to Kuchan - Reception on arrival - Hospitality of the Khan - General description - Plantation and Power of the Kurds - Their character - Authority of the Ilkhani - Ruling Family - The present Ilkhani - His son - His reputation - Two interviews - Appearance of Amir Hussein Khan - Conversation - Question and answer - Gift to the Khan - Dinner from the Khan's kitchen - Town of Kuchan - Buildings - Native Bazaars - The Kuchan Principality.

Arrival at Ashkabad

At the station at Ashkabad I was accosted by a Persian servant whom Col. Stewart had been kind enough to send out to meet me from the British Consulate at Meshed. The Camp which he had also despatched was, I understood awaiting my arrival somewhere on the Persian side of the frontier, over 30 miles distant, the Russian authorities at Meshed being reluctant to give permission to English subjects resident in Persia to cross the border into Russian Transcaspia; my Persian attendants were therefore unable to meet me at Ashkabad; but the Persian, to whom the restriction did not apply, had been despatched thither to guide me to the frontier. Unfortunately neither of us spoke any tongue that was intelligible to the other, and an intermediary was equally difficult to find. I drove to the Governor-General's house through suffocating volumes of dust, only to find that General Komaroff had left the day before, and that my previous years

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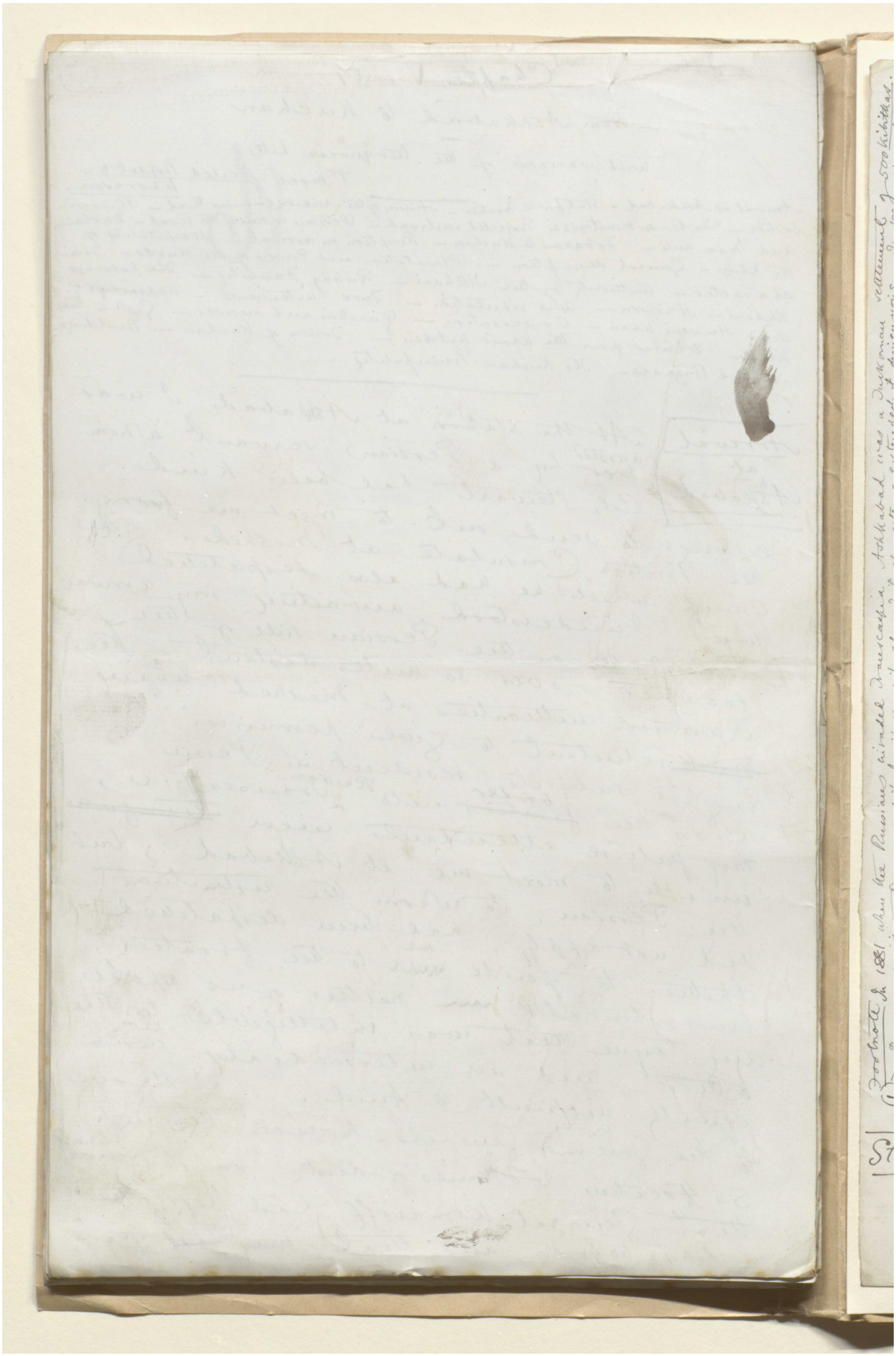

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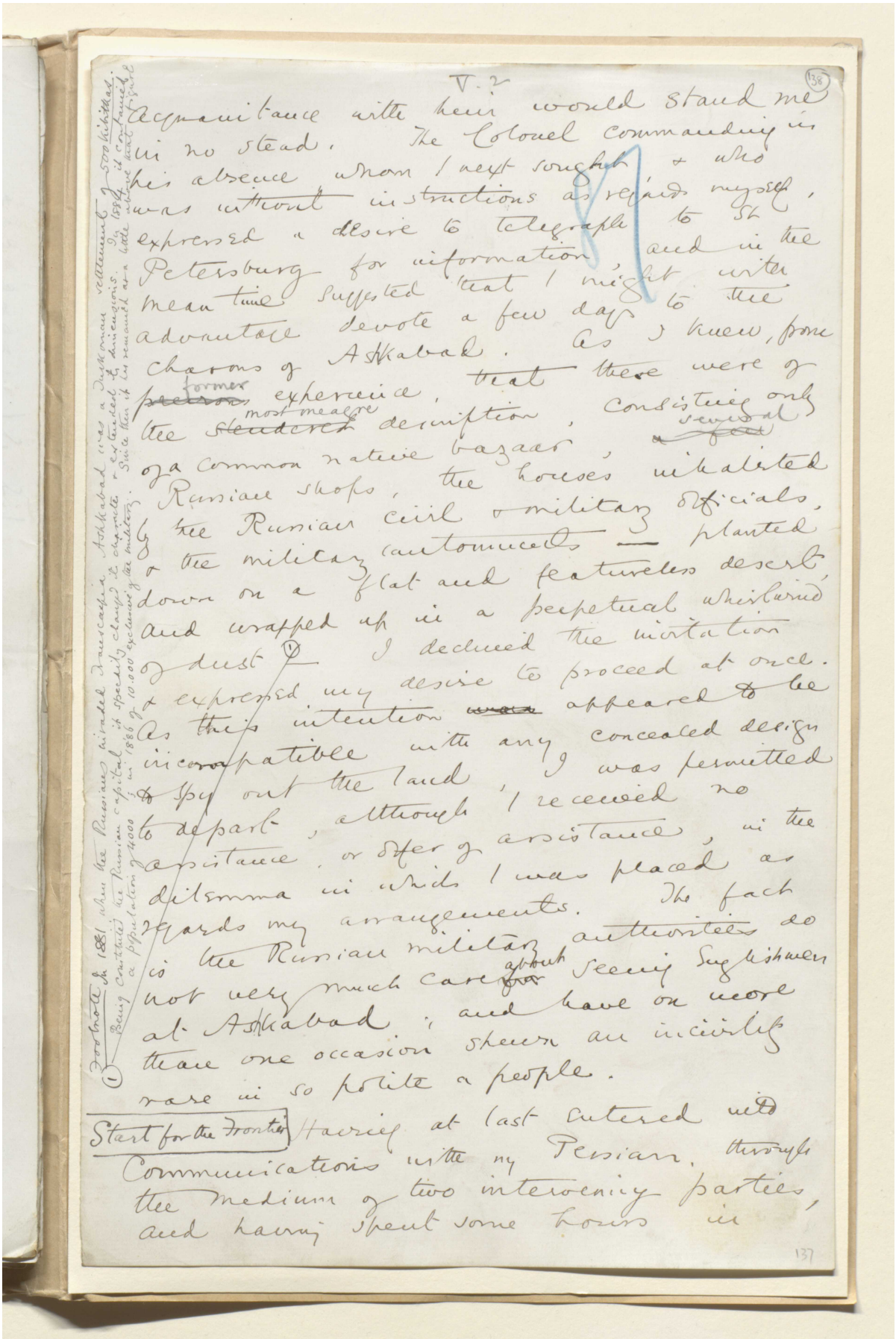

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V. 2

(138)

acquaintance with him would stand me in no stead. The Colonel commanding in his absence whom I next sought & who was without instructions as regards myself, expressed a desire to telegraph to St Petersburg for information, and in the mean time suggested that I might with advantage devote a few days to the charms of Ashkabad. As I knew, from ~~previous~~ former experience, that there were of the ~~slendered~~ most meagre description, consisting only of a common native bazaar, ~~a few~~ several Russian shops, the houses inhabited by the Russian civil & military officials, & the military cantonments — planted down on a flat and featureless desert, and wrapped up in a perpetual whirlwind of dust (1) I declined the invitation & expressed my desire to proceed at once. As this intention ~~was~~ appeared to be incompatible with any concealed design to spy out the land, I was permitted to depart, although I received no assistance, or offer of assistance, in the dilemma in which I was placed as regards my arrangements. The fact is the Russian military authorities do not very much care ~~for~~ about seeing Englishmen at Ashkabad; and have on more than one occasion shewn an incivility rare in so polite a people.

Start for the Frontier

Having at last entered into communications with my Persian, through the medium of two intervening parties, and having spent some hours in

(1) Footnote In 1881 when the Russians invaded Transcaspia Ashkabad was a Turkoman settlement of 500 kibitkas. Being constituted the Russian capital it speedily changed its character & extended its dimensions. In 1884 it contained a population of 4000; in 1886 of 10.000 exclusive of the military. Since then it has remained as a little above that figure

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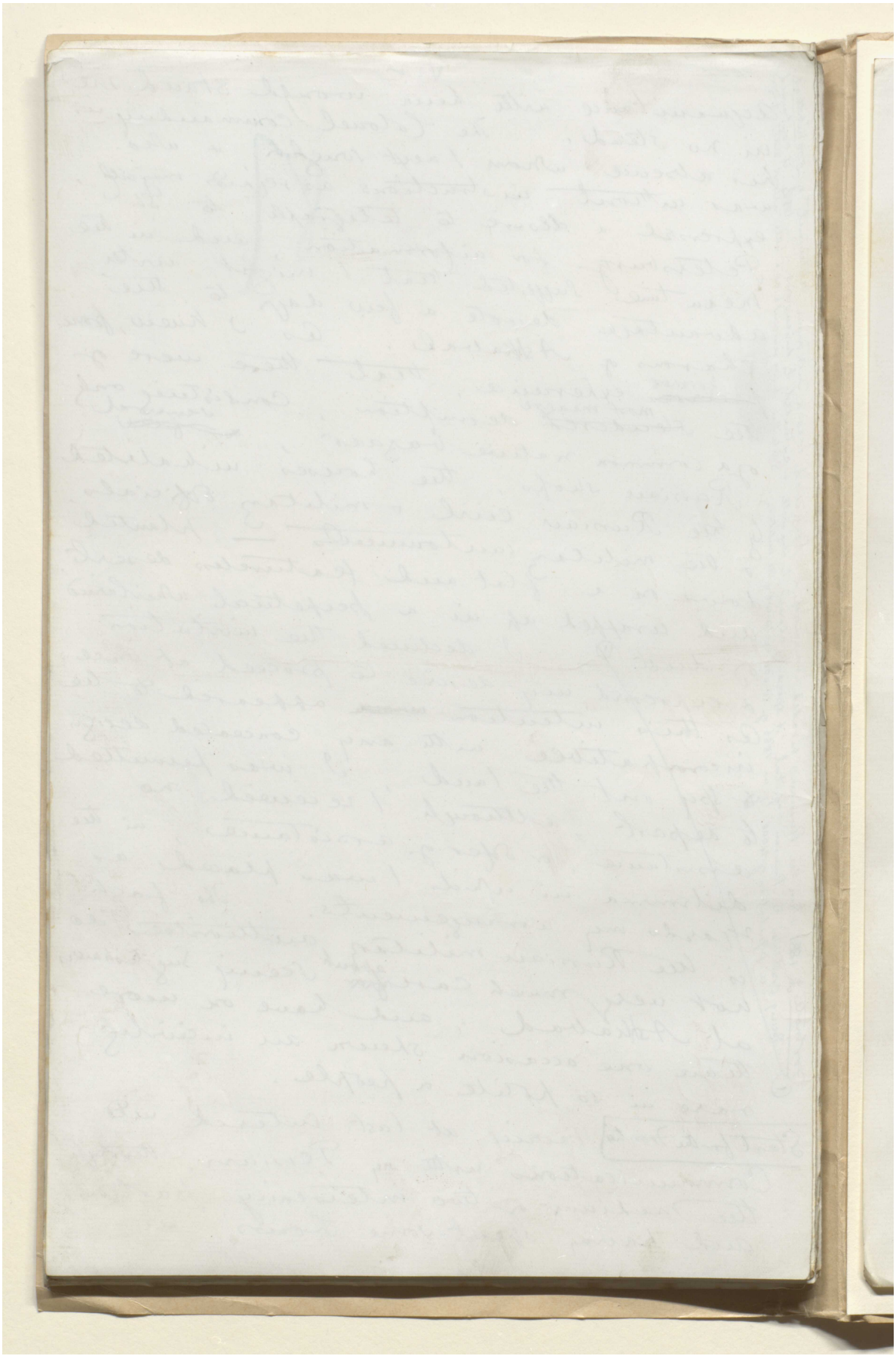

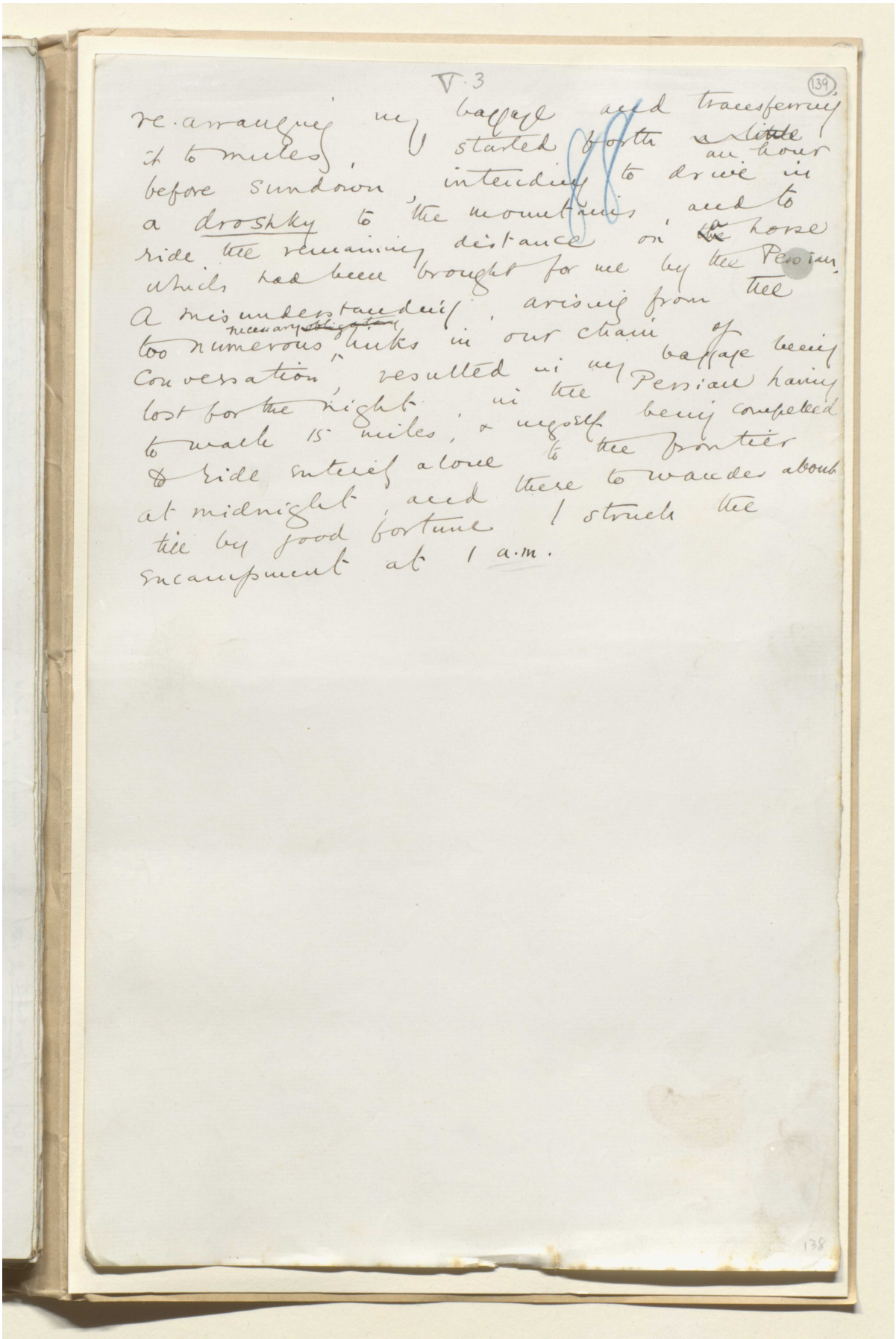

V.3

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re-arranging my baggage and transferring it to mules, I started forth a little an hour before sundown, intending to drive in a droshky to the mountains, and to ride the remaining distance on the horse which had been brought for me by the Persian. A misunderstanding, arising from the too numerous links in our chain of conversation, resulted in my baggage being lost for the night: in the Persian having to walk 15 miles, & myself being compelled to ride onward alone to the frontier at midnight, and there to wander about till by good fortune I struck the encampment at 1 a.m.

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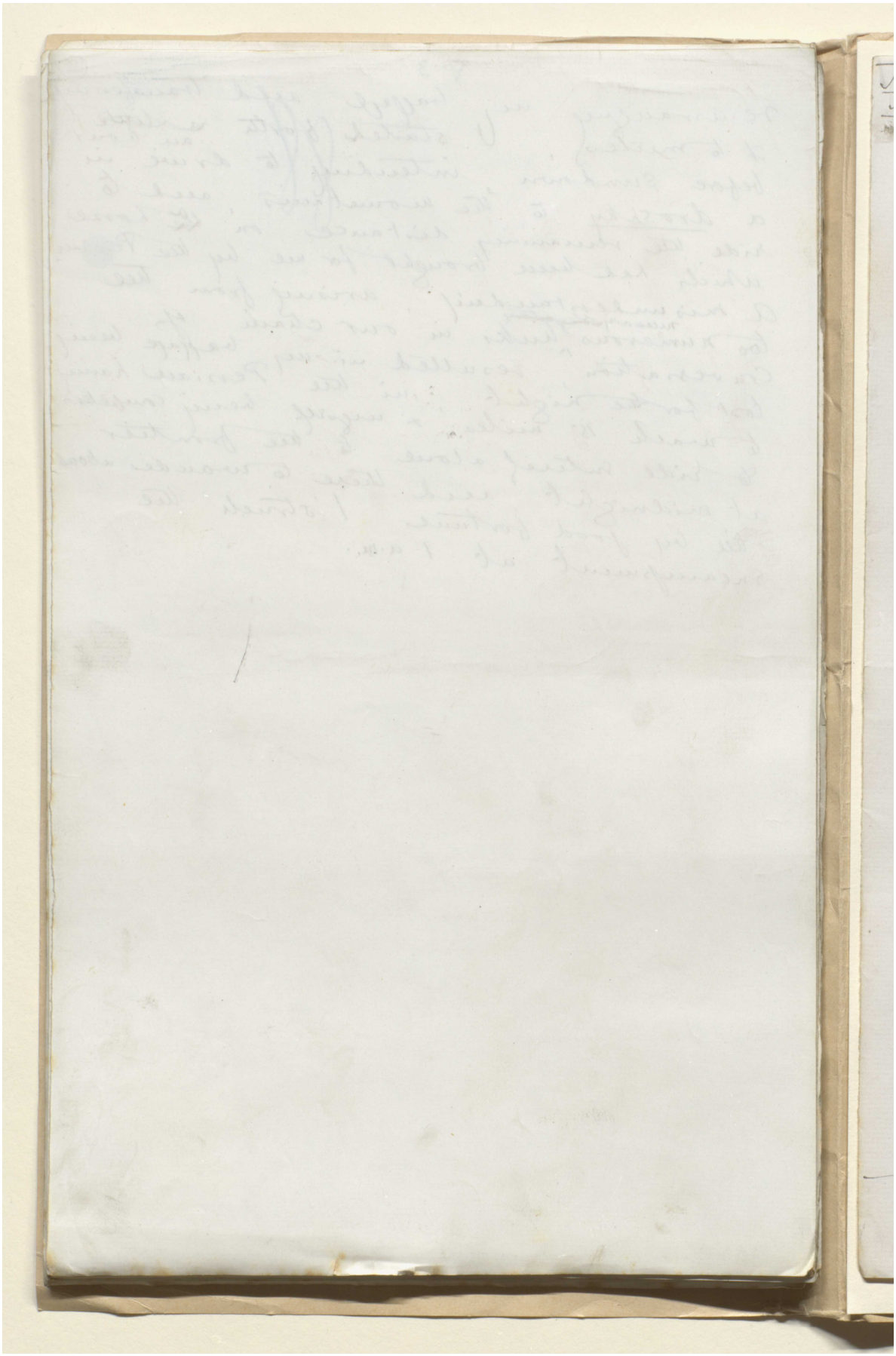

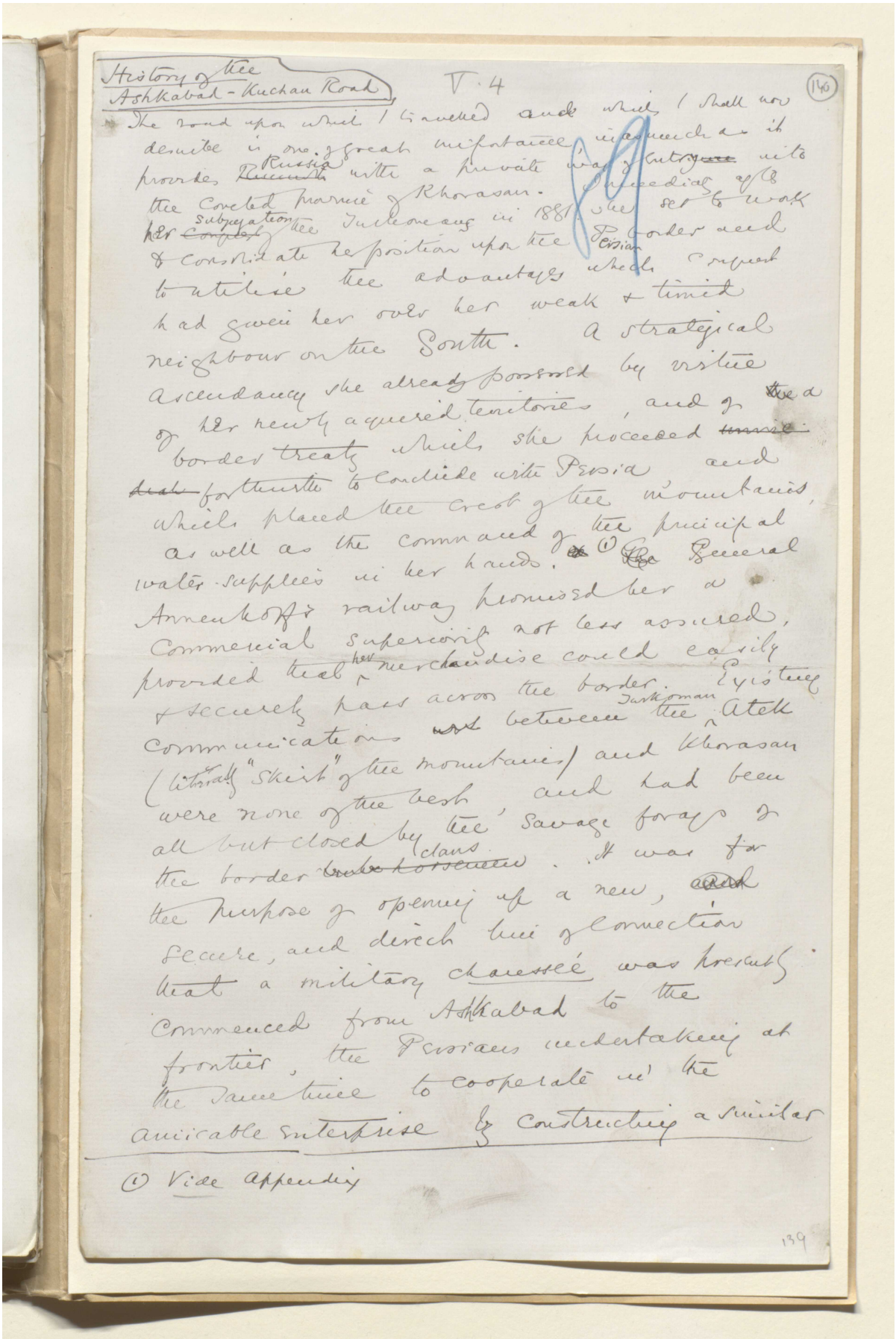

History of the Ashkabad - Kuchan Road

V. 4

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The road upon which I travelled and which I shall now describe is one of great importance, inasmuch as it provides Russia with a private way of entry into the coveted province of Khorasan. Immediately after her subjugation of the Turkomans in 1881 she set to work & consolidate her position upon the Persian border and to utilise the advantages which conquest had given her over her weak & timid neighbour on the South. A strategical ascendancy she already possessed by virtue of her newly acquired territories, and of a border treaty which she proceeded forthwith to conclude with Persia and which placed the crest of the mountains, as well as the command of the principal water supplies in her hands.(1) General Annenkoff's railway promised her a commercial superiority not less assured, provided that her merchandise could easily & securely pass across the border. Existing communications between the Turkoman Atek (literally "skirt" of the mountains) and Khorasan were none of the best, and had been all but closed by the savage forays of the border clans. It was for the purpose of opening up a new, secure, and direct line of connection that a military chaussée was presently commenced from Ashkabad to the frontier, the Persians undertaking at the same time to cooperate in the amicable enterprise by constructing a similar

(1) Vide appendix

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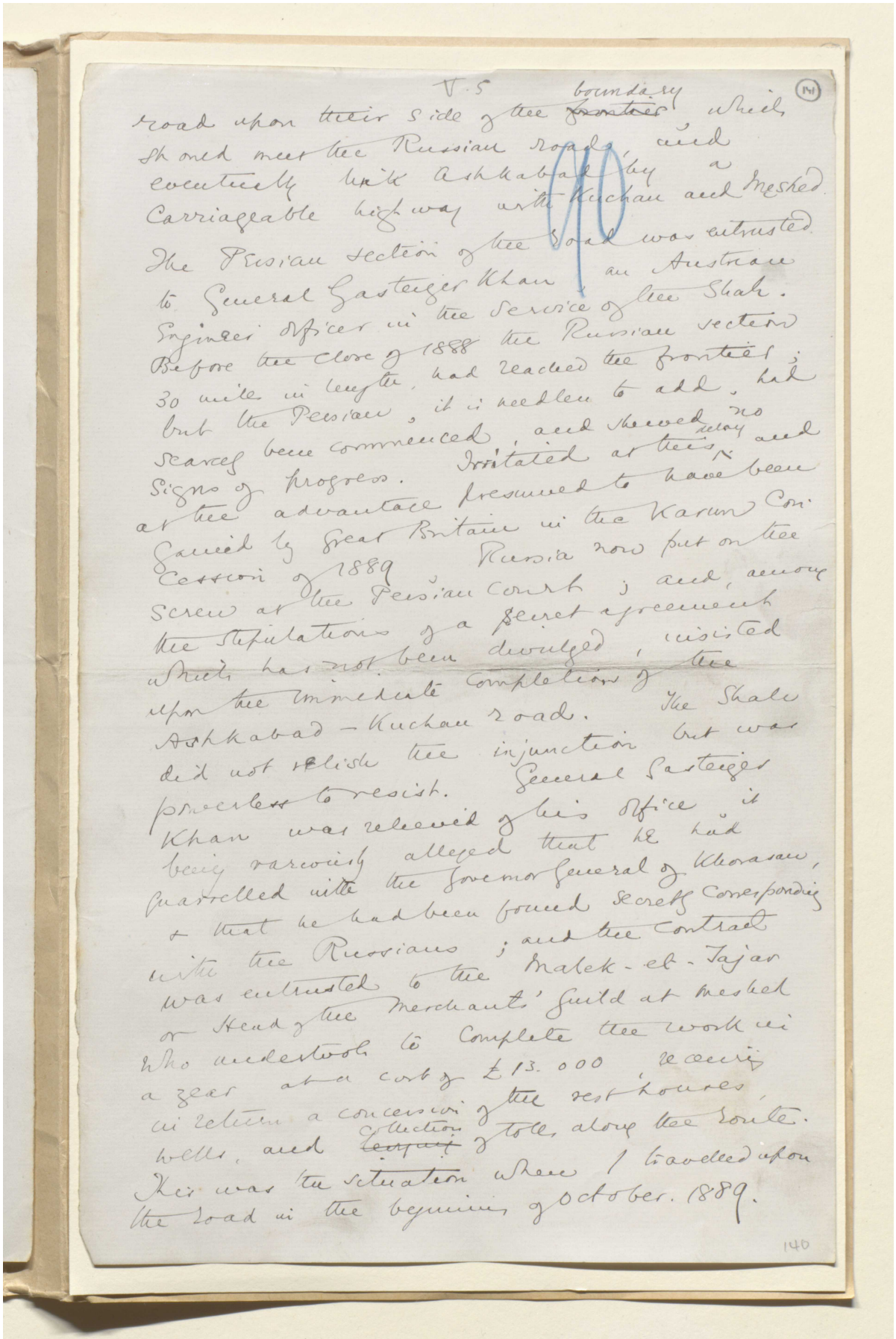

V.S boundary
road upon their side of the ~~frontier~~ which
should meet the Russian road, and
eventually link Ashkabad by a
Carriageable highway with Kuchan and Meshed
The Persian section of the road was entrusted
to General Gasteiger Khan an Austrian
Engineer Officer in the Service of the Shah.
Before the close of 1888 the Russian section
30 miles in length, had reached the frontier;
but the Persian, it is needless to add, had
scarcely been commenced, and showed no
Signs of progress. Irritated at this delay and
at the advantage presumed to have been
gained by Great Britain in the Karun Con-
cession of 1889 Russia now put on the
screw at the Persian court; and, among
the stipulations of a secret agreement
which has not been divulged, insisted
upon the immediate completion of the
Ashkabad – Kuchan road. The Shah
did not relish the injunction but was
powerless to resist. General Gasteiger
Khan was relieved of his office, it
being variously alleged that he had
quarrelled with the Governor General of Khorasan,
& that he had been found Secretly Corresponding
with the Russians; and the contract
was entrusted to the Malek-el-Tajar
or Head of the Merchants' Guild at Meshed
who undertook to Complete the work in
a year at a cost of £13.000 receiving
in return a concession of the rest houses,
wells, and ~~toll~~ collection of tolls along the route.
Kelat was the situation where I travelled upon
the road in the beginning of October. 1889.

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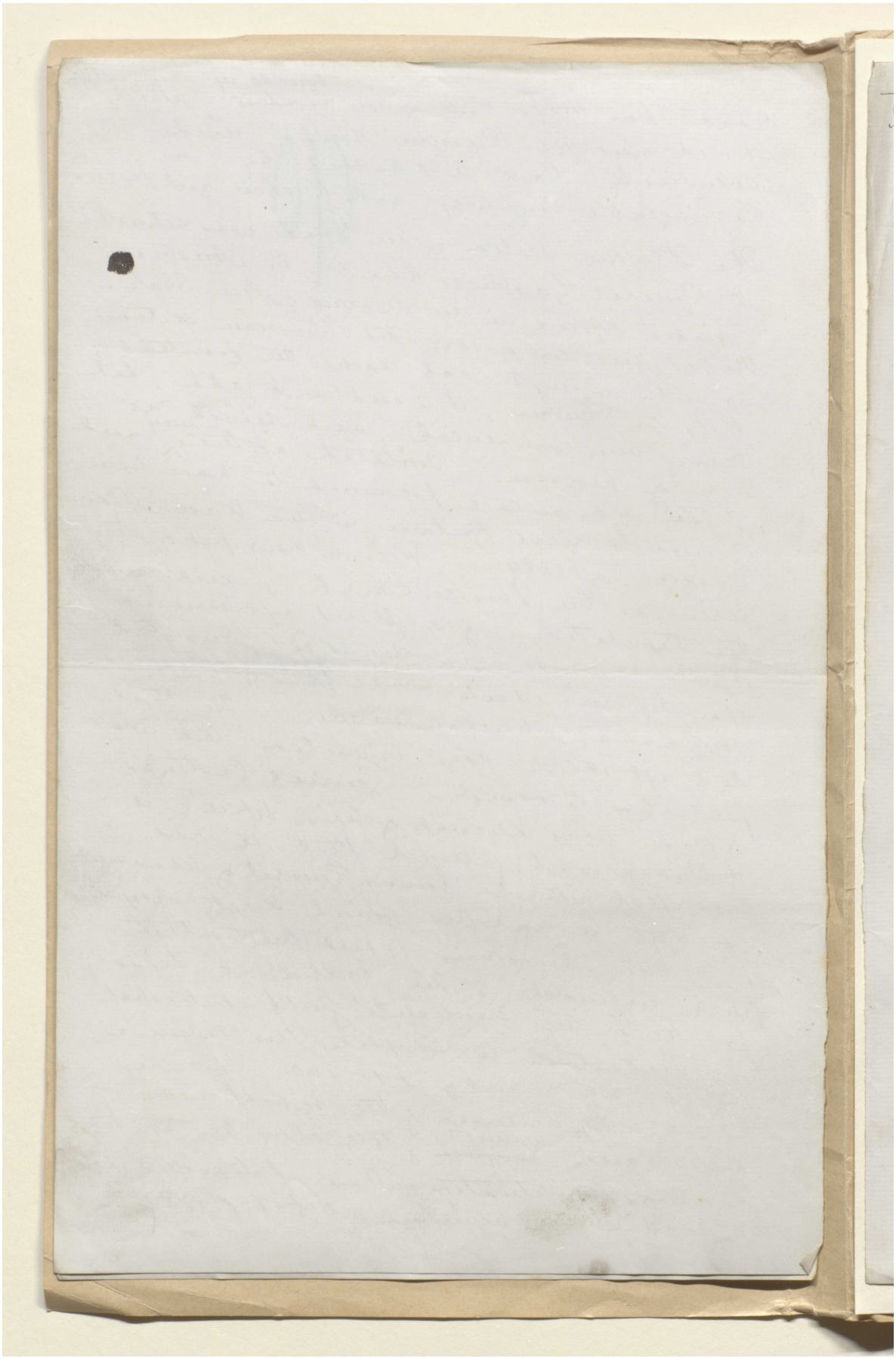

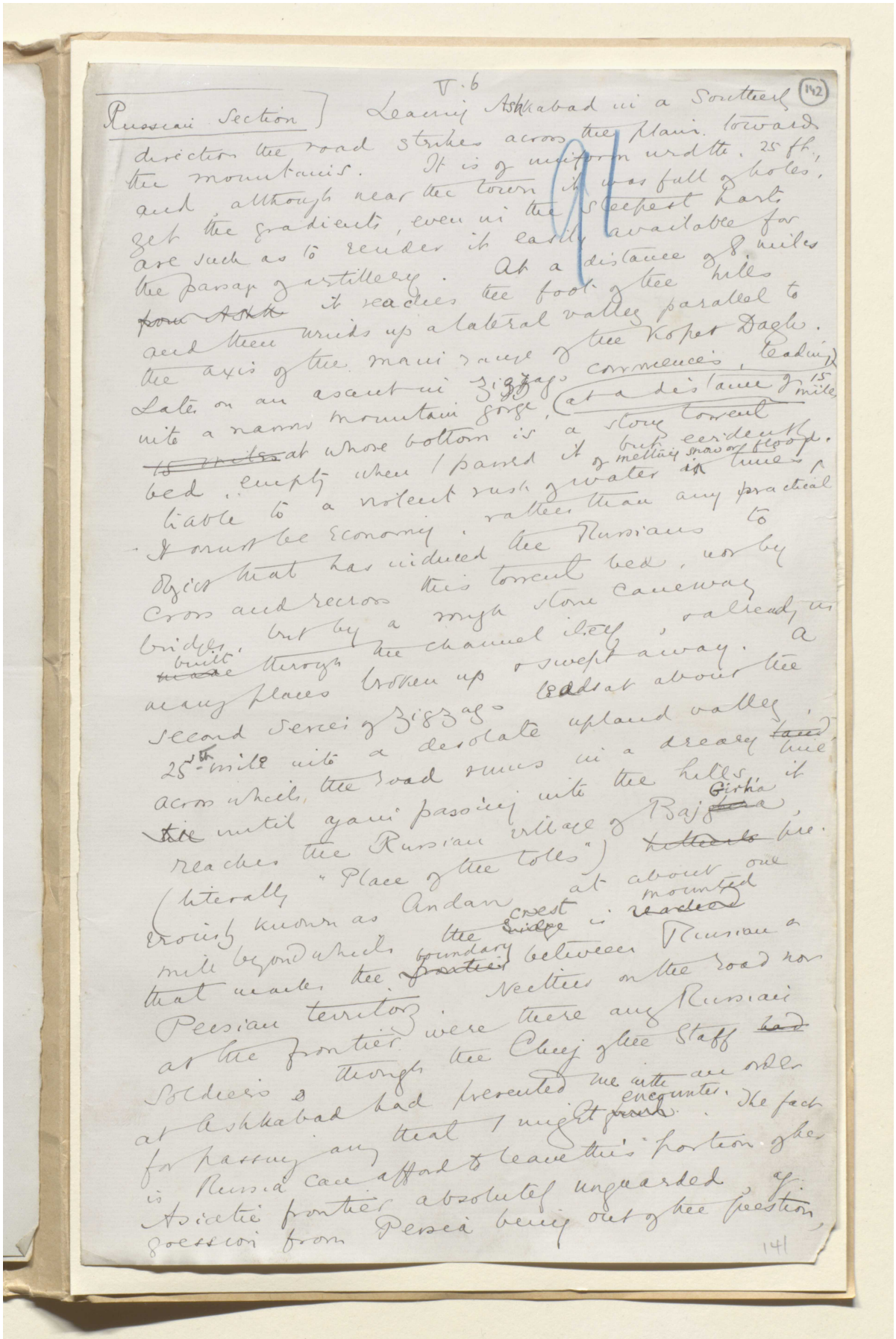

V.6

(142)

Russian Section] Leaving Ashkabad in a Southerly direction the road strikes across the plain towards the mountains. It is of uniform width, 25 ft., and, although near the town it was full of holes, yet the gradients, even in the steepest parts are such as to render it easily available for the passage of artillery. At a distance of 8 miles ~~from Ashk~~ it reaches the foot of the hills and then winds up a lateral valley parallel to the axis of the main range of the Kopet Dagh. Later on an ascent in Zigzags commences, leading into a narrow mountain gorge, (at a distance of 15 miles ~~15 miles~~ at whose bottom is a stony torrent bed, empty when I passed it but evidently liable to a violent rush of water in times of melting snow or flood. It must be economy rather than any practical object that has induced the Russians to cross and recross this torrent bed, nor by bridges, but by a rough stone caneway built ~~made~~ through the channel itself, & already in many places broken up & swept away. A second series of Zigzags leads at about the 25th mile into a desolate upland valley across which the road runs in a dreary ~~land~~ line ~~tie~~ until again passing into the hills it reaches the Russian village of Bajgirha ~~[illegible]~~ (literally "Place of the tolls") ~~[illegible]~~ previously known as Andan at about one mile beyond which the crest ~~ridge~~ is ~~reached~~ mounted that marks the boundary ~~frontier~~ between Russian & Persian territory. Neither on the road nor at the frontier were there any Russian soldiers & though the Chief of the Staff ~~had~~ at Ashkabad had presented me with an order for passing any that I might ~~[illegible]~~ encounter. The fact is Russia can afford to leave this portion of her Asiatic frontier absolutely unguarded, aggression from Persia being out of the question,

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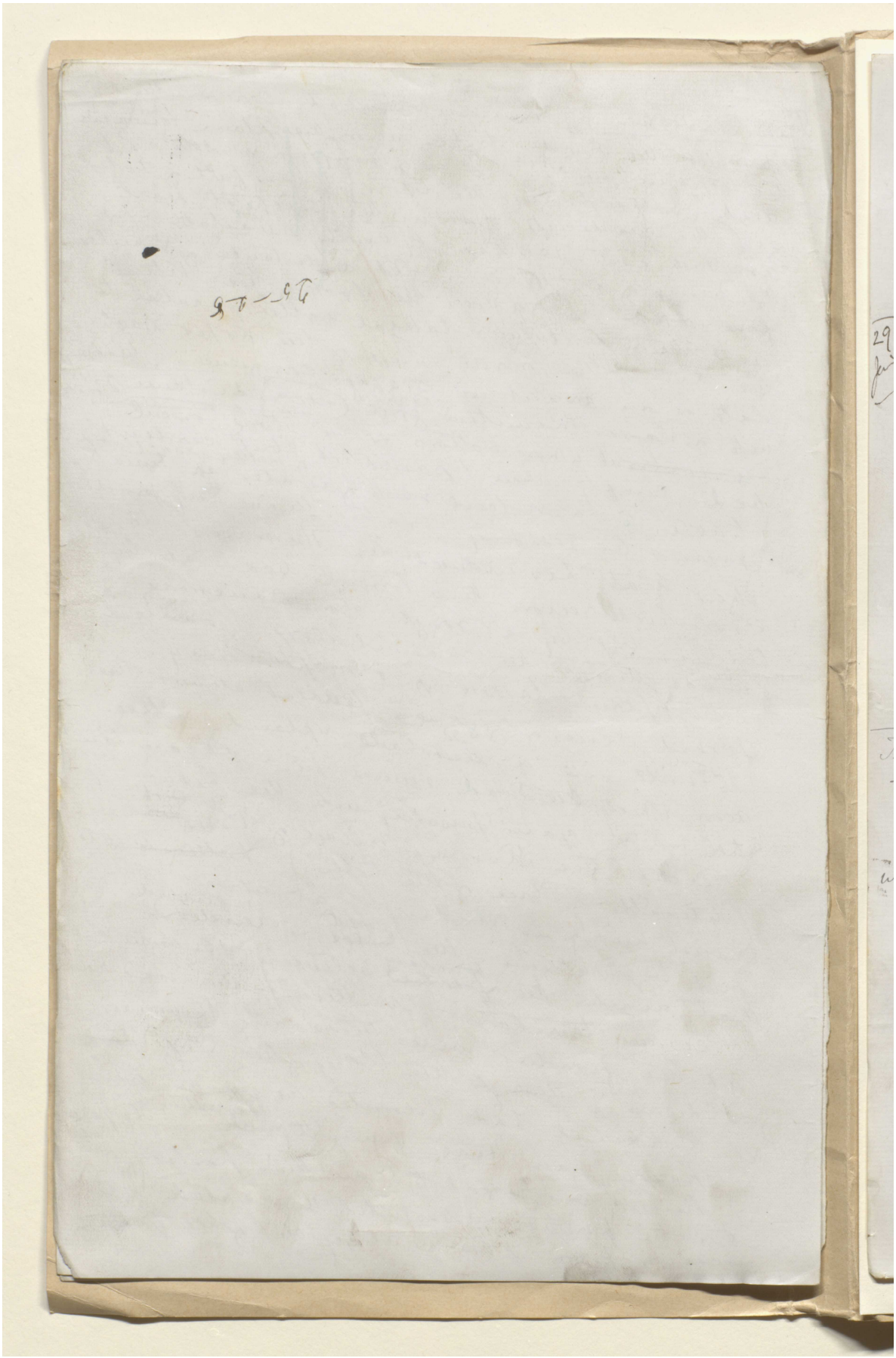

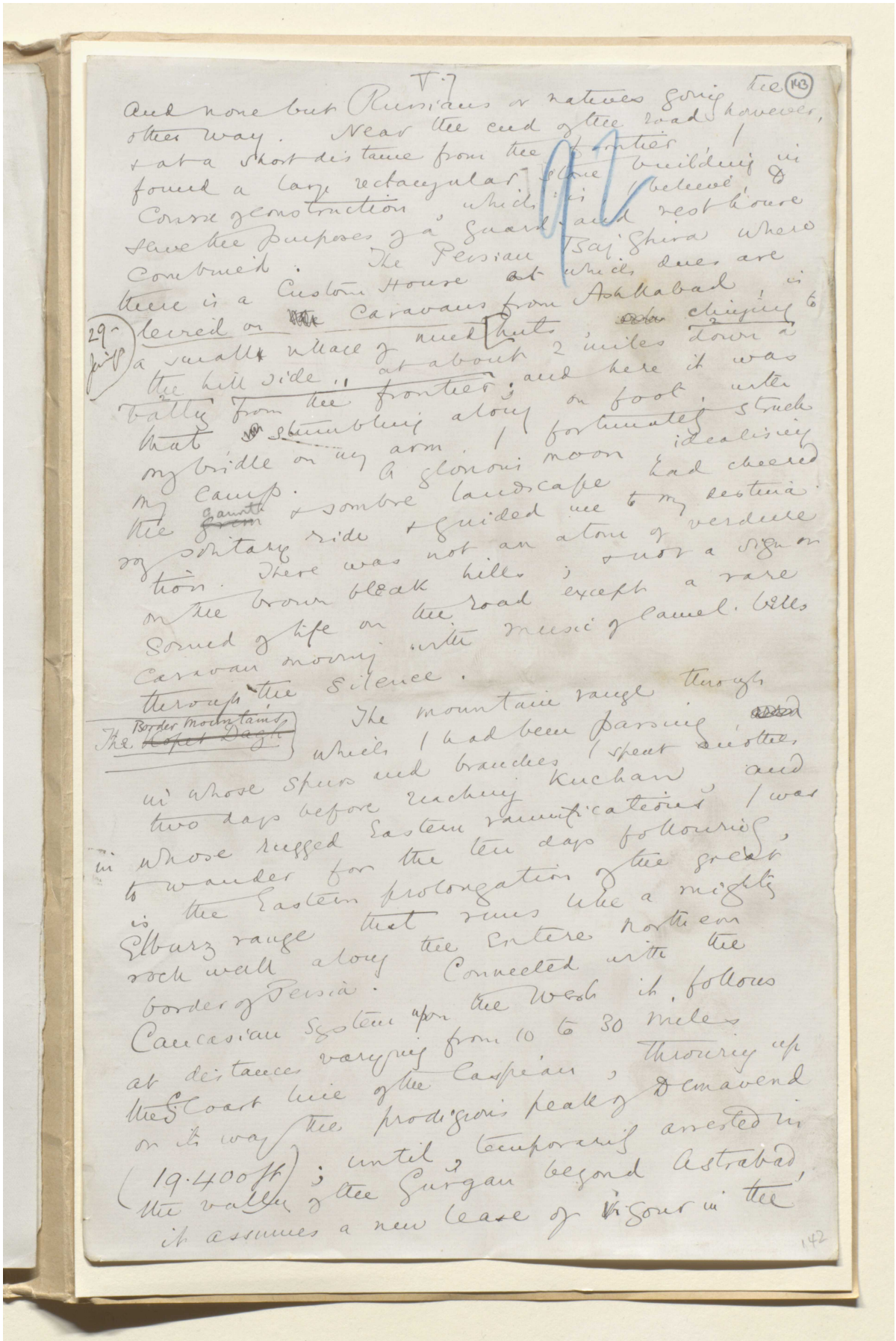

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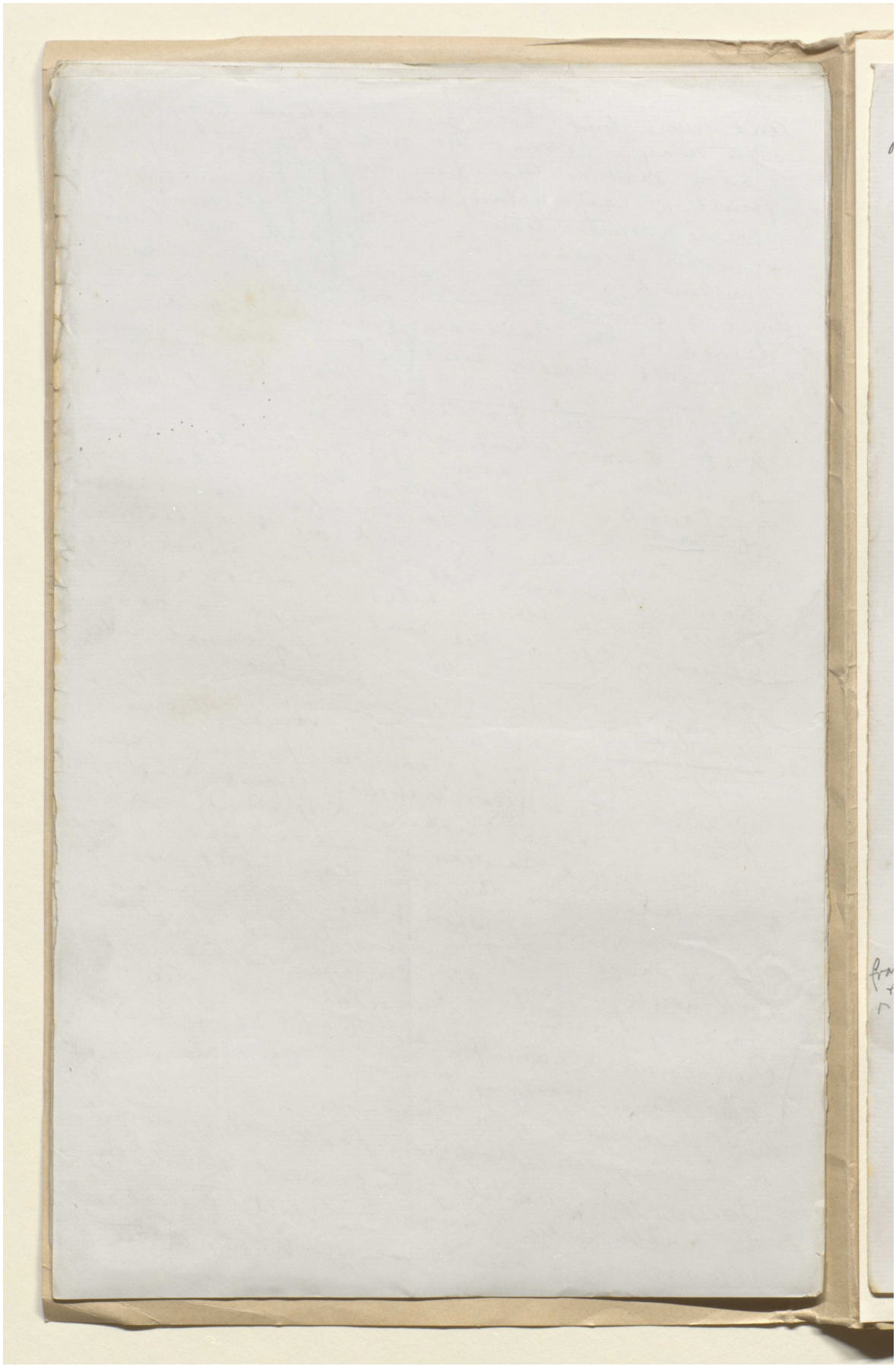

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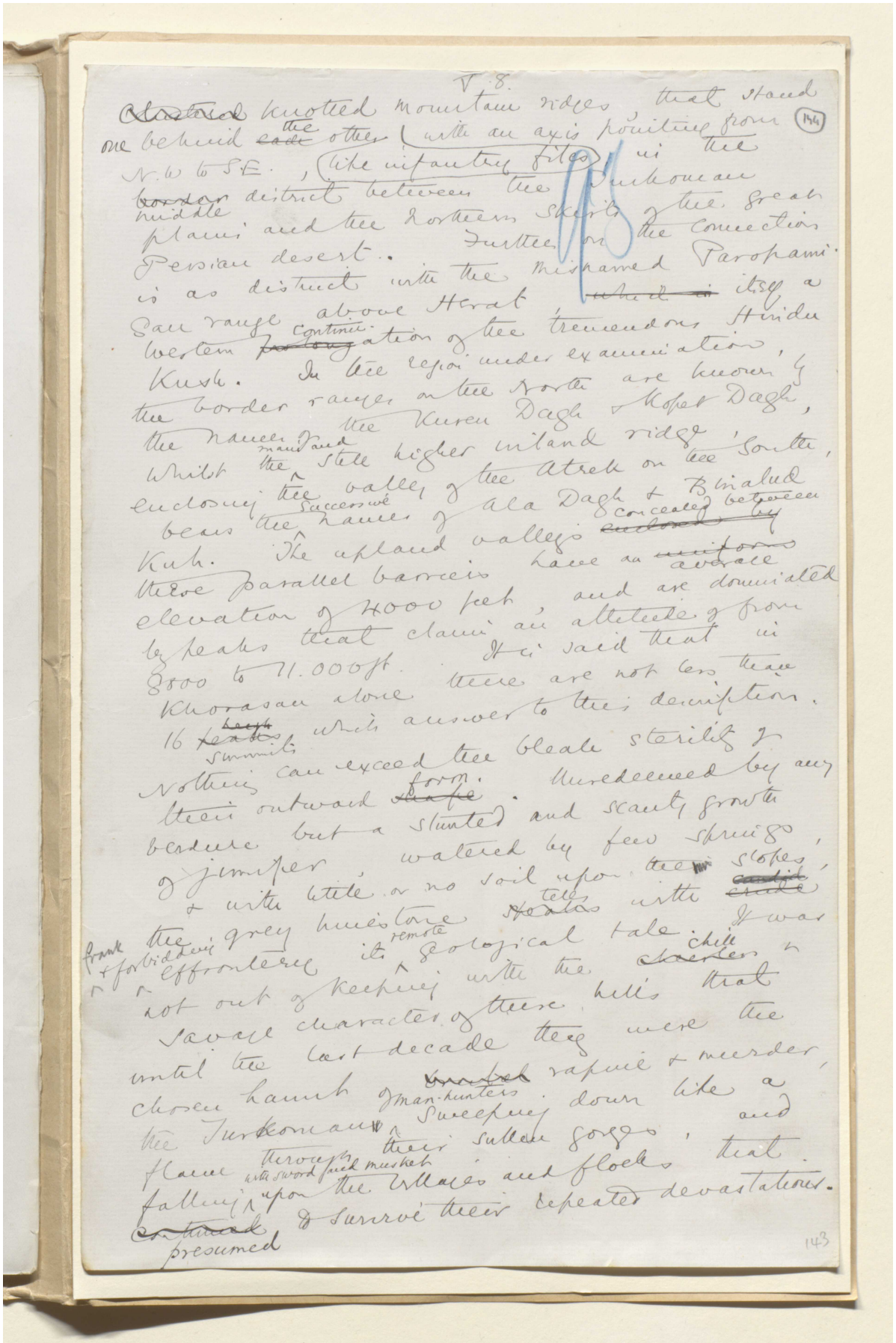

V. 8.

~~Clustered~~ knotted mountain ridges that stand one behind ~~each~~ the other (with an axis pointing from N.W. to S.E., like infantry files) in the ~~border~~ middle district between the Turkoman plains and the Northern skirts of the great Persian desert. Further on the connection is as distinct with the misnamed Paropamisan range above Herat, ~~which is~~ itself a western ~~prolong~~ continuation of the tremendous Hindu Kush. In the region under examination, the border ranges on the North are known by the names of the Kuren Dagh & Kopet Dagh, whilst the main and still higher inland ridge, enclosing the valley of the Atrek on the South, bears the successive names of Ala Dagh & Binalud Kuh. The upland valleys ~~enclosed by~~ concealed between these parallel barriers have an ~~uniform~~ average elevation of 4000 feet, and are dominated by peaks that claim an altitude of from 8800 to 11.000 ft. It is said that in Khorasan alone there are not less than 16 ~~heads~~ summits which answer to this description. Nothing can exceed the bleak sterility of their outward ~~shape~~ form. Unredeemed by any verdure but a stunted and scanty growth of juniper, watered by few springs, & with little or no soil upon the slopes, the grey limestone ~~peaks~~ tells with ~~candid~~ ~~crude~~ frank & forbidding effrontery its remote geological tale. It was not out of keeping with the ~~chaotic~~ chill & savage character of these hills that until the last decade they were the chosen haunt of ~~brutal~~ man-hunters rapine & murder, the Turkomans sweeping down like a flame through their sullen gorges, and falling with sword and musket upon the villages and flocks that ~~continued~~ presumed to survive their repeated devastations.

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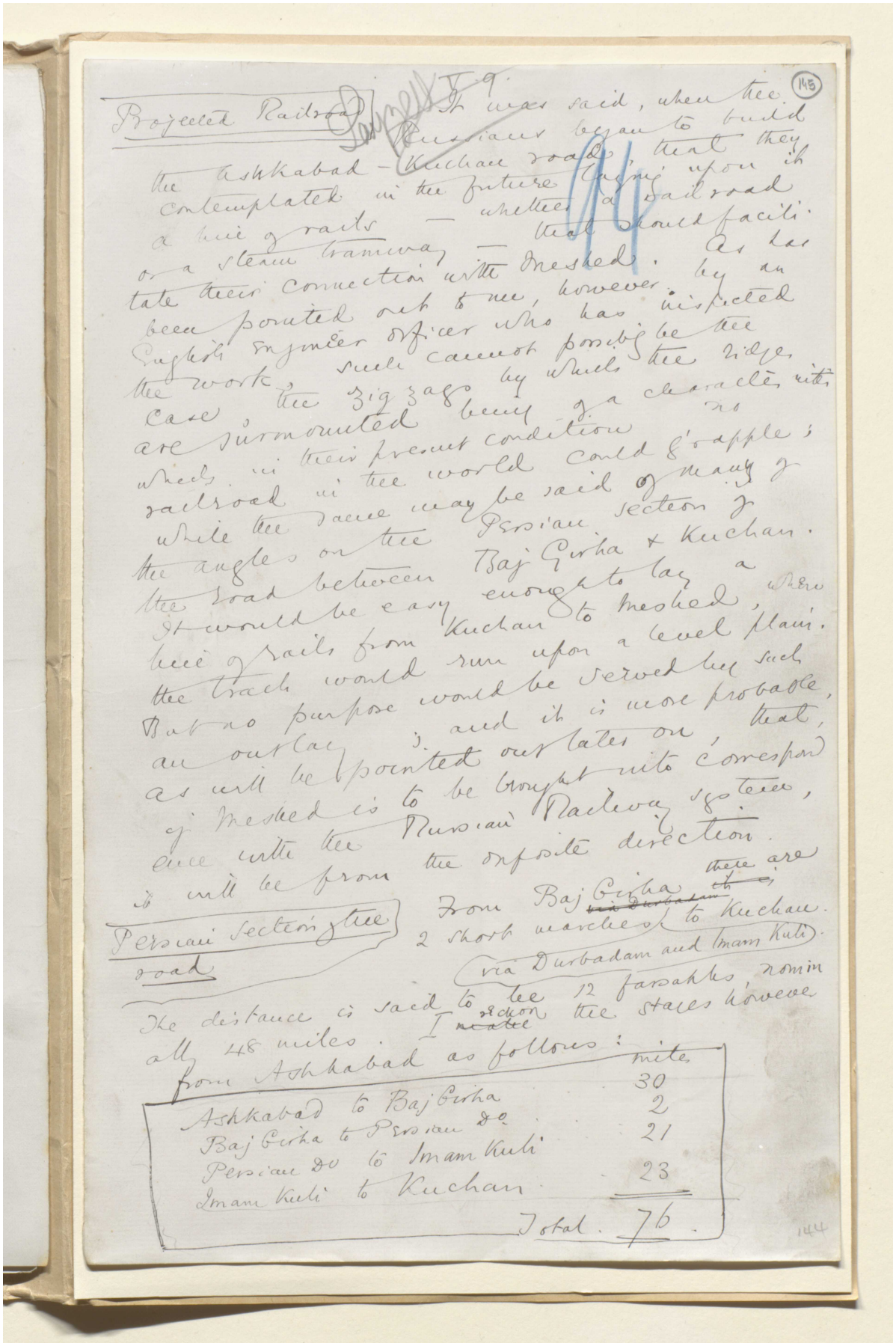

Projected Railroad

It was said, when the Russians began to build the Ashkabad-Kuchan road, that they contemplated in the future laying upon it a line of rails — whether a railroad or a steam tramway — that should facilitate their connection with Meshed. As has been pointed out to me, however, by an English engineer officer who has inspected the work, such cannot possibly be the case, the zigzags by which the ridges are surmounted being of a character with which in their present condition no railroad in the world could grapple; while the same may be said of many of the angles on the Persian section of the road between Baj Girha & Kuchan. It would be easy enough to lay a line of rails from Kuchan to Meshed, where the track would run upon a level plain. But no purpose would be served by such an outlay; and it is more probable, as will be pointed out later on, that, if Meshed is to be brought into correspondence with the Russian Railway system, it will be from the opposite direction.

Persian section of the road

From Baj Girha ~~via Durbadam~~ there are 2 short marches to Kuchan. (via Durbadam and Imam Kuli).

The distance is said to be 12 farsakhs, nominally 48 miles. I ~~make~~ reckon the stages however from Ashkabad as follows:

	miles
Ashkabad to Baj Girha	30
Baj Girha to Persian do	2
Persian do to Imam Kuli	21
Imam Kuli to Kuchan	23
Total	76

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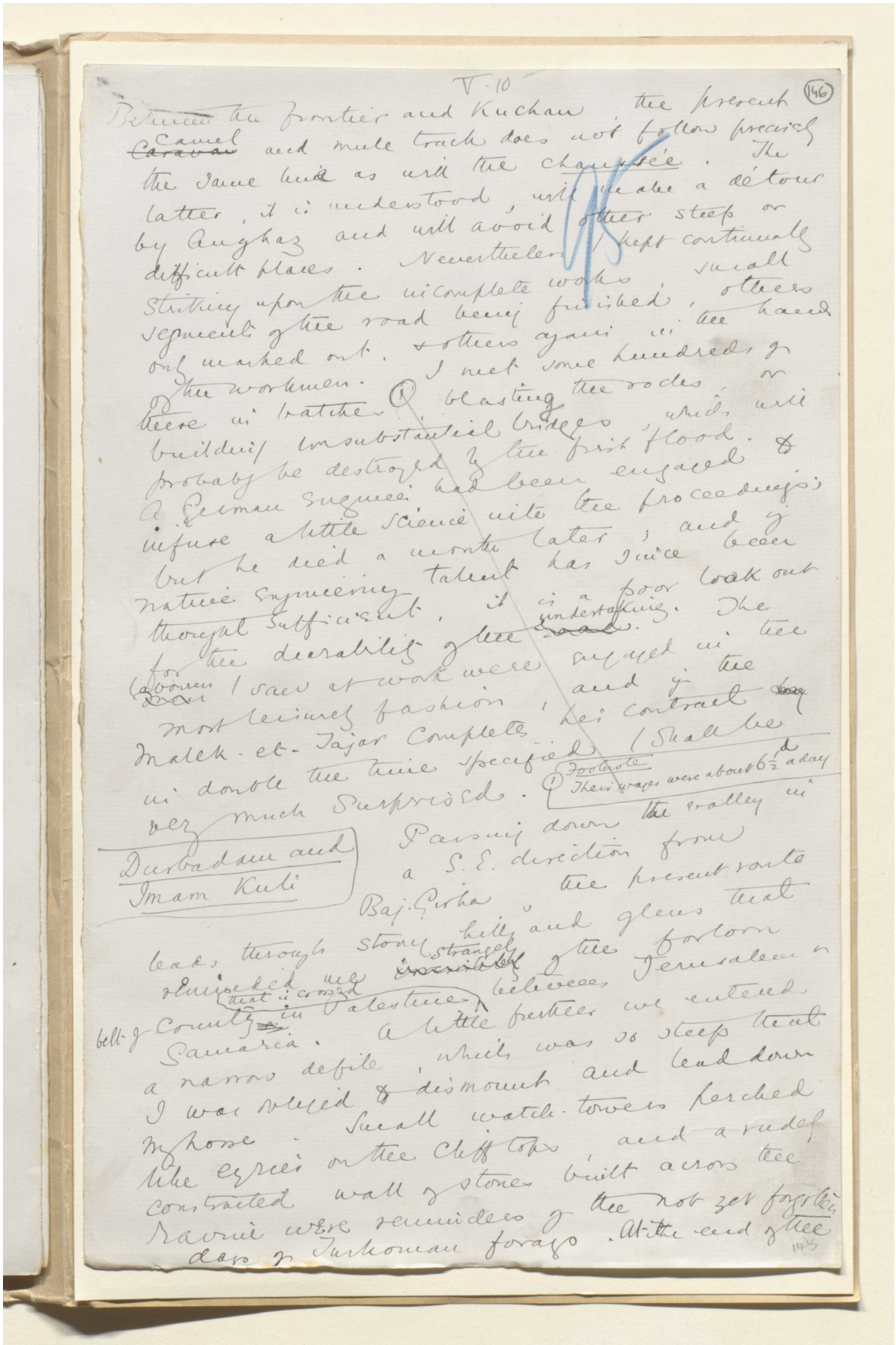

V-10

(146)

Between the frontier and Kuchan, the present ~~Caravan~~ camel and mule track does not follow precisely the same line as will the chaussée. The latter, it is understood, will make a détour by Aughaz and will avoid other steep or difficult places. Nevertheless I kept continually striking upon the incomplete works, small segments of the road being finished, others only marked out, & others again in the hands of the workmen. I met some hundreds of these in batches (1) blasting the rocks, or building unsubstantial bridges, which will probably be destroyed by the first flood. & A German engineer had been engaged to infuse a little science into the proceedings; but he died a month later; and if native engineering talent has since been thought sufficient, it is a poor look out for the durability of the ~~road~~ undertaking. The ~~[illegible]~~ labourers I saw at work were engaged in the most leisurely fashion, and if the Malek-et-Tajar completes his contract ~~[illegible]~~ in double the time specified (shall be very much surprised.

(1) Footnote: Their wages were about 6½d a day

Durbadam and Imam Kuli

Passing down the valley in a S.E. direction from Baj-Girha, the present route leads through stony hills and glens that reminded me ~~[illegible]~~ strangely of the forlorn belt of country that is crossed in Palestine between Jerusalem & Samaria. A little further we entered a narrow defile, which was so steep that I was obliged to dismount and lead down my horse. Small watch-towers perched like eyries on the cliff tops, and a rudely constructed wall of stones built across the ravine were reminders of the not yet forgotten days of Turkoman forays. At the end of the

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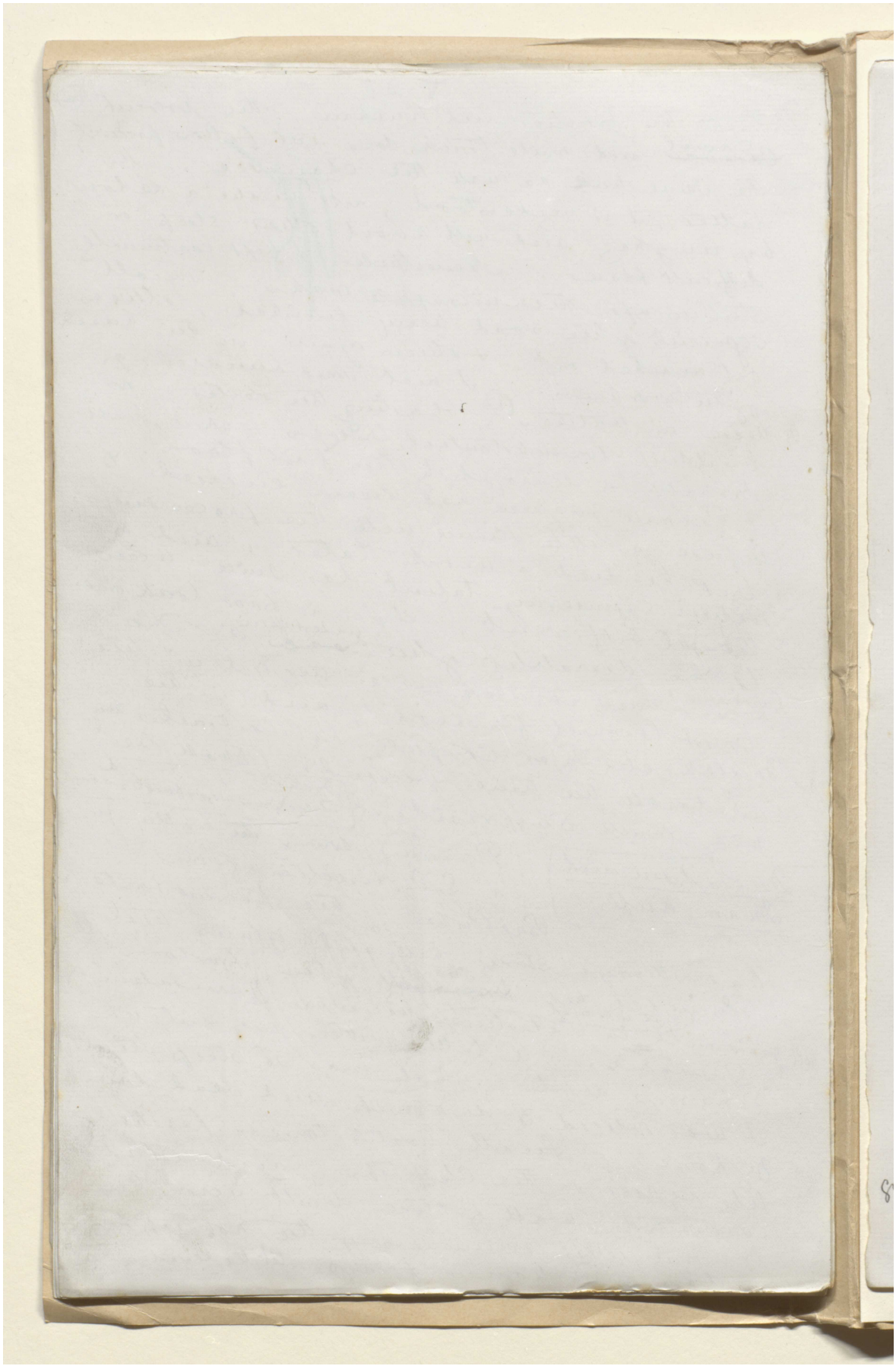

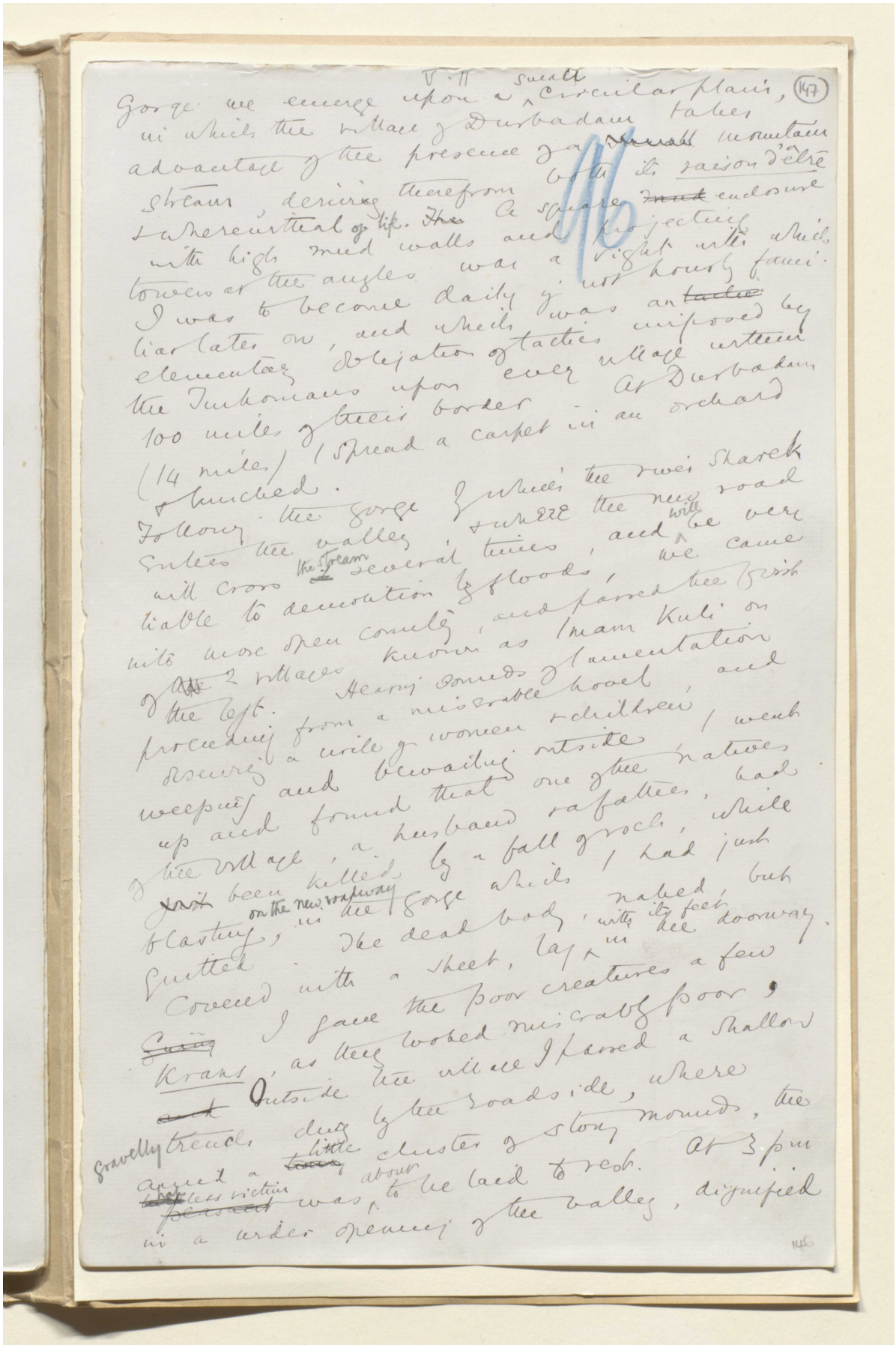



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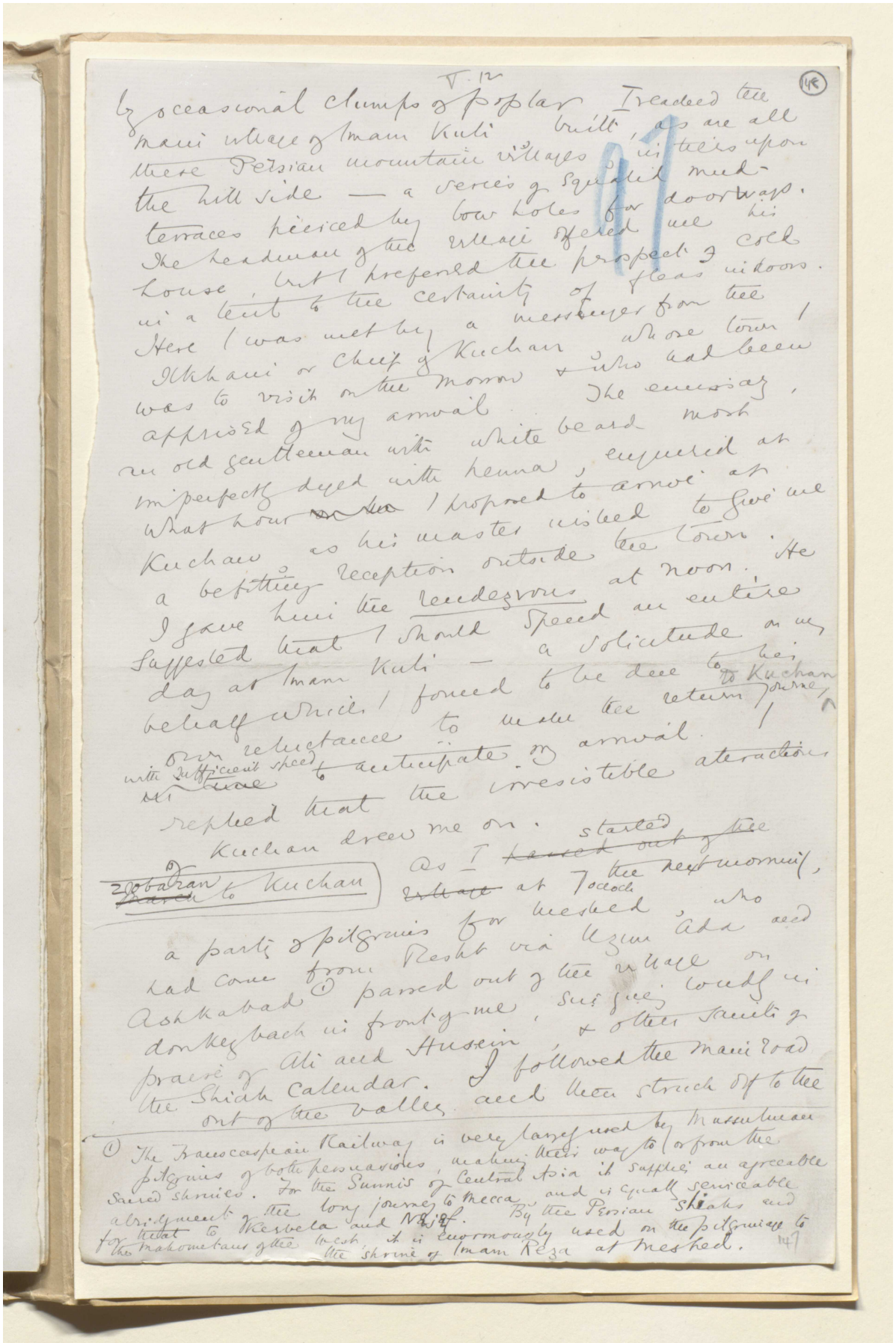
V. 12

(148)



by occasional clumps of poplar. I reached the main village of Imam Kuli built, as are all these Persian mountain villages, in tiers upon the hill side — a series of squalid mud-terraces pierced by low holes for doorways. The headman of the village offered me his house, but I preferred the prospect of cold in a tent to the certainty of fleas indoors. Here I was met by a messenger from the Ilkhani or Chief of Kuchan whose town I was to visit on the morrow & who had been apprised of my arrival. The emissary, an old gentleman with white beard most imperfectly dyed with henna, enquired at what hour ~~on the~~ I proposed to arrive at Kuchan as his master wished to give me a befitting reception outside the town. I gave him the rendezvous at noon. He suggested that I should spend an entire day at Imam Kuli — a solicitude on my behalf which I found to be due to his own reluctance to make the return to Kuchan journey with sufficient speed ~~in time~~ to anticipate my arrival. I replied that the irresistible attractions of Kuchan drew me on.

Zobaran ~~March~~ to Kuchan

As I ~~passed out of the village~~ started at 7 o'clock the next morning, a party of pilgrims for Meshed, who had come from Resht via Uzun Ada and Ashkabad (1) passed out of the village on donkeybach in front of me, singing loudly in praise of Ali and Husein, & other saints of the Shiah Calendar. I followed the main road out of the valley and then struck off to the

(1) The Transcaspian Railway is very largely used by Mussulman pilgrims of both persuasions, making their way to or from the sacred shrines. For the Sunnis of Central Asia it supplies an agreeable abridgment of the long journey to Mecca, and is equally serviceable for that to Kerbela and Nejef. By the Persian Shiahs and the Mahometans of the West, it is enormously used on the pilgrimage to the shrine of Imam Reza at Meshed.

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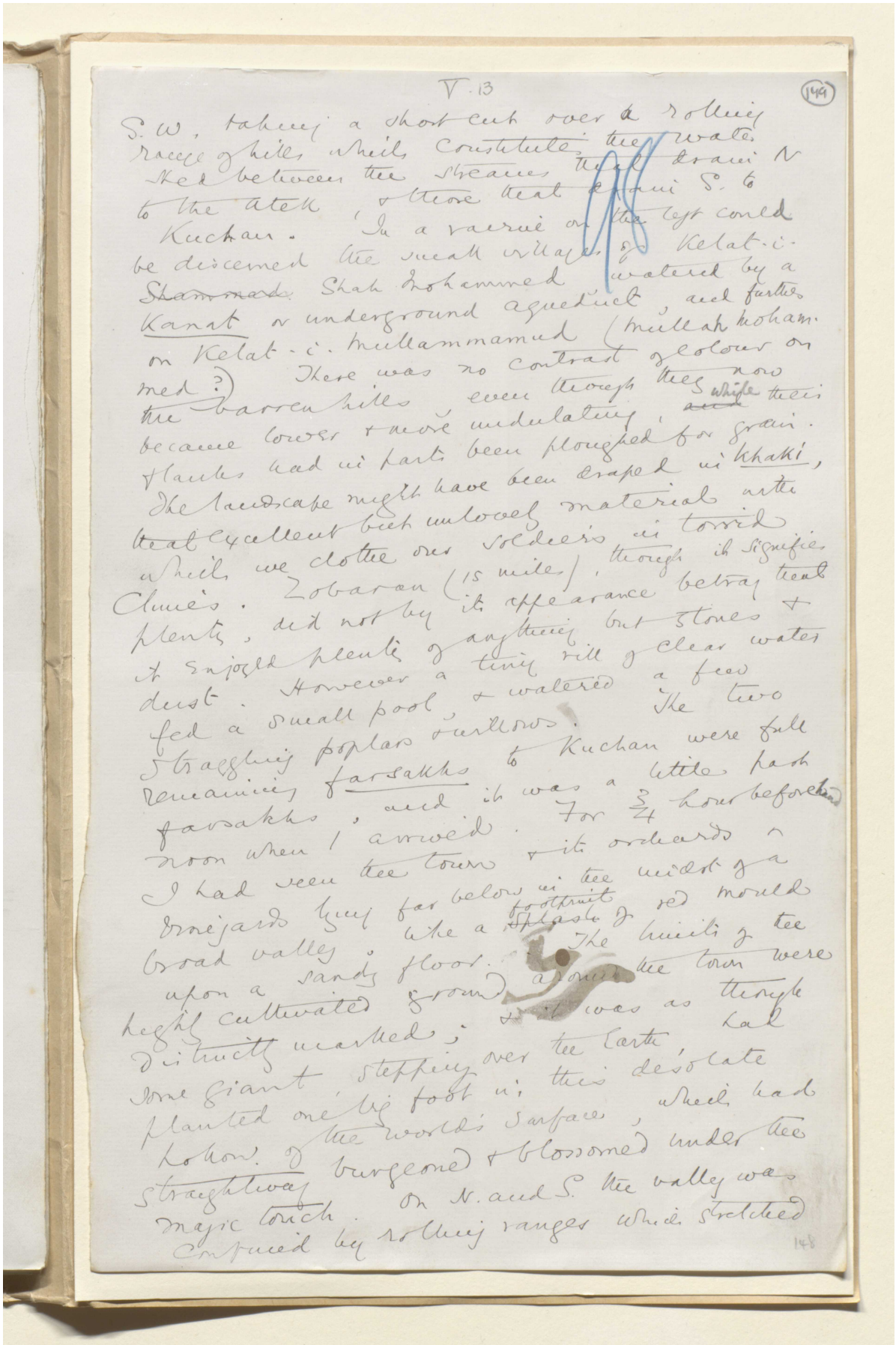

V. 13

(149)

S.W., taking a short cut over a rolling range of hills which constitutes the water shed between the streams that drain N to the Atek, & those that drain S. to Kuchan. In a ravine on the left could be discerned the small villages of Kelat-i-~~Shammad~~ Shah Mohammed watered by a Kanat or underground aqueduct, and further on Kelat-i-Mullammamud (Mullah Mohammed?) There was no contrast of colour on the barren hills, even though they now became lower & more undulating, ~~and~~ while their flanks had in parts been ploughed for grain. The landscape might have been draped in Khaki, that excellent but unlovely material with which we clothe our soldiers in torrid climes. Zobaran (15 miles), though it signifies plenty, did not by its appearance betray that it enjoyed plenty of anything but stones & dust. However a tiny rill of clear water fed a small pool, & watered a few straggling poplars & willows. The two remaining farsakhs to Kuchan were full farsakhs, and it was a little past noon when I arrived. For ¾ hour beforehand I had seen the town & its orchards & vineyards lying far below in the midst of a broad valley, like a ~~splash~~ footprint of red mould upon a sandy floor. The limits of the highly cultivated ground around the town were distinctly marked; & it was as though some giant stepping over the earth had planted one big foot in this desolate hollow of the world's surface, which had straightway burgeoned & blossomed under the magic touch. On N. and S. the valley was confined by rolling ranges which stretched

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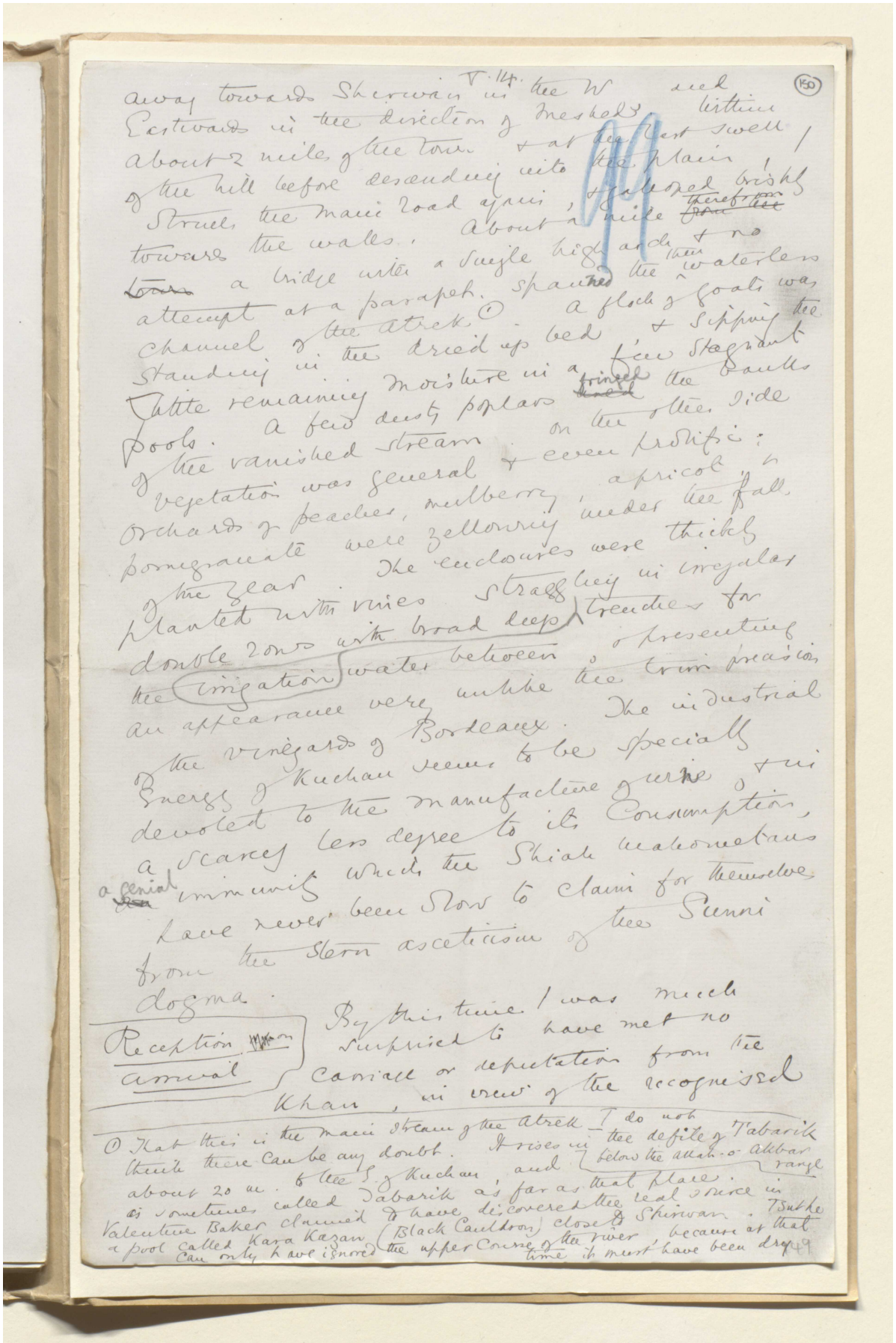

V. 14. (150)

away towards Shirwan in the W and Eastwards in the direction of Meshed. Within about 2 miles of the town & at the last swell of the hill before descending into the plain, struck the main road again, & galloped briskly towards the walls. About a mile therefrom a bridge with a single high arch & no attempt at a parapet spanned the then waterless channel of the Atrek.① A flock of goats was standing in the dried up bed & sipping the little remaining moisture in a few stagnant pools. A few dusty poplars fringed the banks of the vanished stream. On the other side vegetation was general & even prolific: orchards of peaches, mulberry, apricot & pomegranate were yellowing under the fall of the year. The enclosures were thickly planted with vines straggling in irregular double rows with broad deep trenches for the irrigation water between, & presenting an appearance very unlike the trim precision of the vineyards of Bordeaux. The industrial energy of Kuchan seems to be specially devoted to the manufacture of wine, & in a scarcely less degree to its consumption, a genial immunity which the Shiah mahometans have never been slow to claim for themselves from the stern asceticism of the Sunni dogma.

Reception on arrival

By this time I was much surprised to have met no carriage or deputation from the Khan, in view of the recognised

① That this is the main stream of the Atrek I do not think there can be any doubt. It rises in the defile of Tabarik about 20 m. to the S. of Kuchan, and below the Allah-o-Akbar range is sometimes called Tabarik as far as that place. Valentine Baker claimed to have discovered the real source in a pool called Kara Kazan (Black Cauldron) close to Shirwan. But he can only have ignored the upper course of the river, because at that time it must have been dry.

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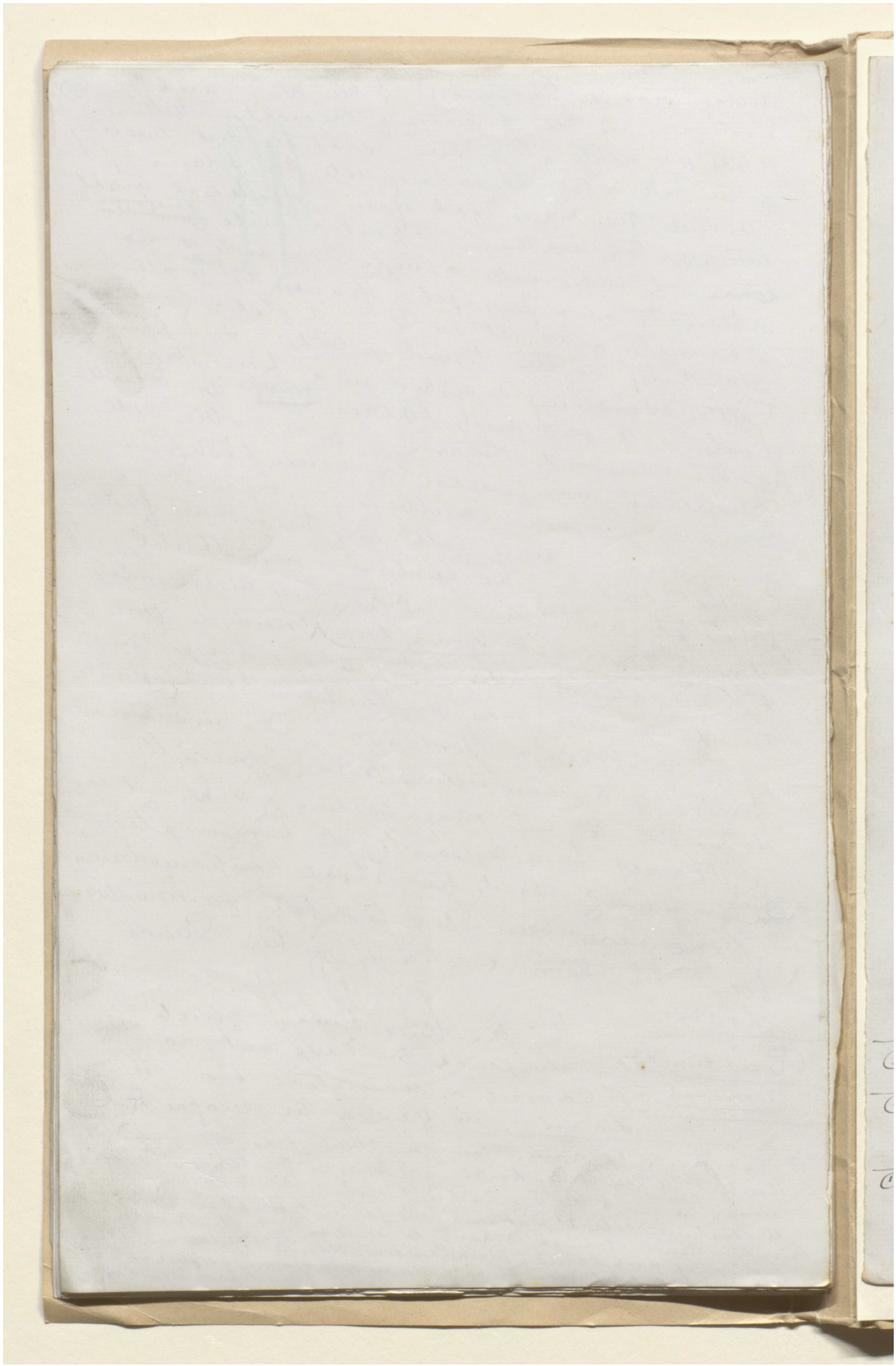

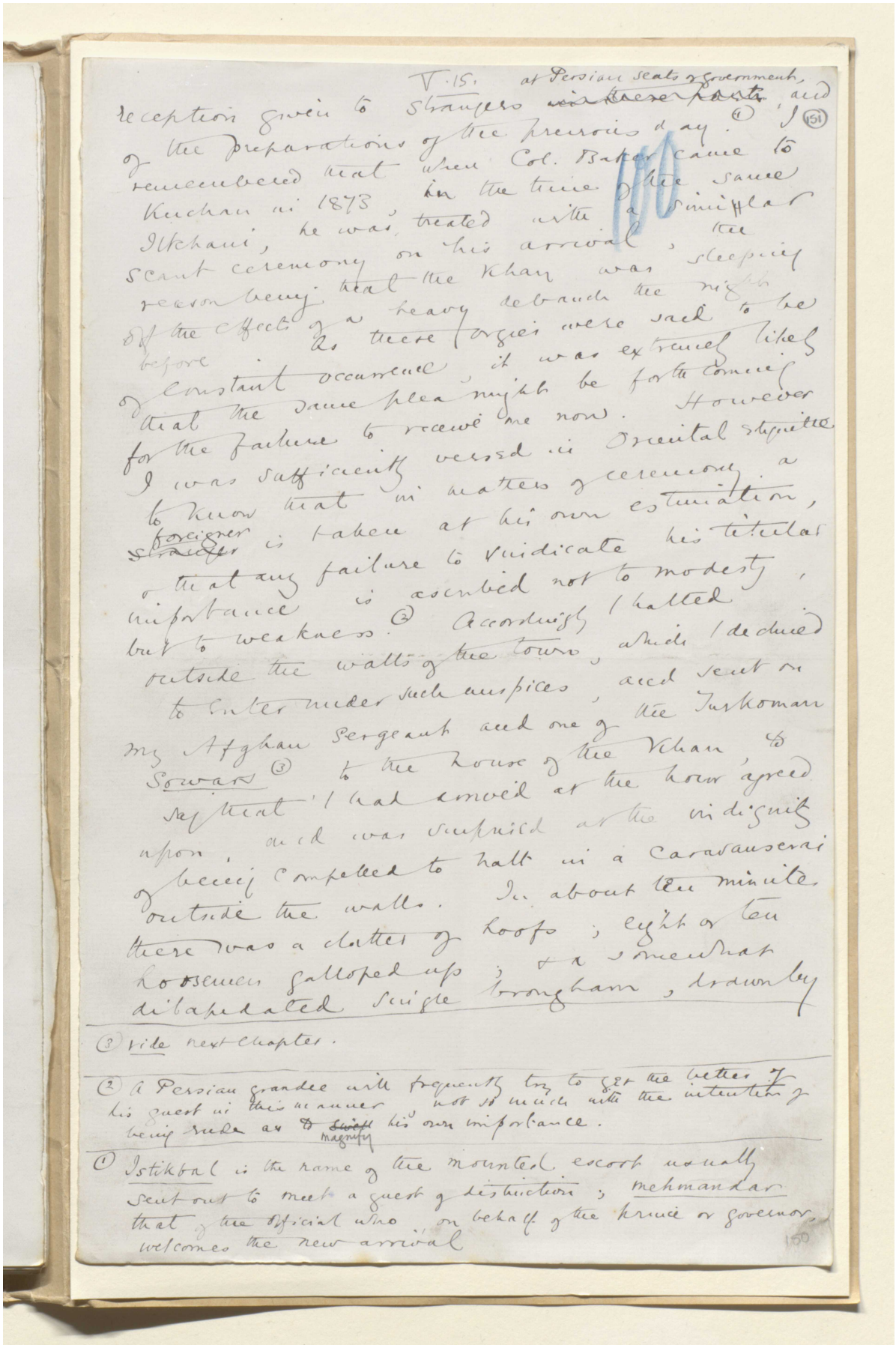

V. 15.

reception given to strangers at Persian seats of government, ~~in these parts~~, and of the preparations of the previous day.① I remembered that when Col. Baker came to Kuchan in 1873, in the time of the same Ilkhani, he was treated with a similar scant ceremony on his arrival, the reason being that the Khan was sleeping off the effects of a heavy debauch the night before. As these orgies were said to be of constant occurrence, it was extremely likely that the same plea might be forthcoming for the failure to receive me now. However I was sufficiently versed in Oriental etiquette to know that in matters of ceremony a ~~stranger~~ foreigner is taken at his own estimation, & that any failure to vindicate his titular importance is ascribed not to modesty, but to weakness.② Accordingly I halted outside the walls of the town, which I declined to enter under such auspices, and sent on my Afghan Sergeant and one of the Turkoman Sowars③ to the house of the Khan, to say that I had arrived at the hour agreed upon, and was surprised at the indignity of being compelled to halt in a Caravanserai outside the walls. In about ten minutes there was a clatter of hoofs; eight or ten horsemen galloped up; & a somewhat dilapidated single brougham, drawn by

③ vide next chapter.

② A Persian grandee will frequently try to get the better of his guest in this manner not so much with the intention of being rude as to ~~swell~~ magnify his own importance.

① Istikbal is the name of the mounted escort usually sent out to meet a guest of distinction; mehmandar that of the official who, on behalf of the prince or governor, welcomes the new arrival

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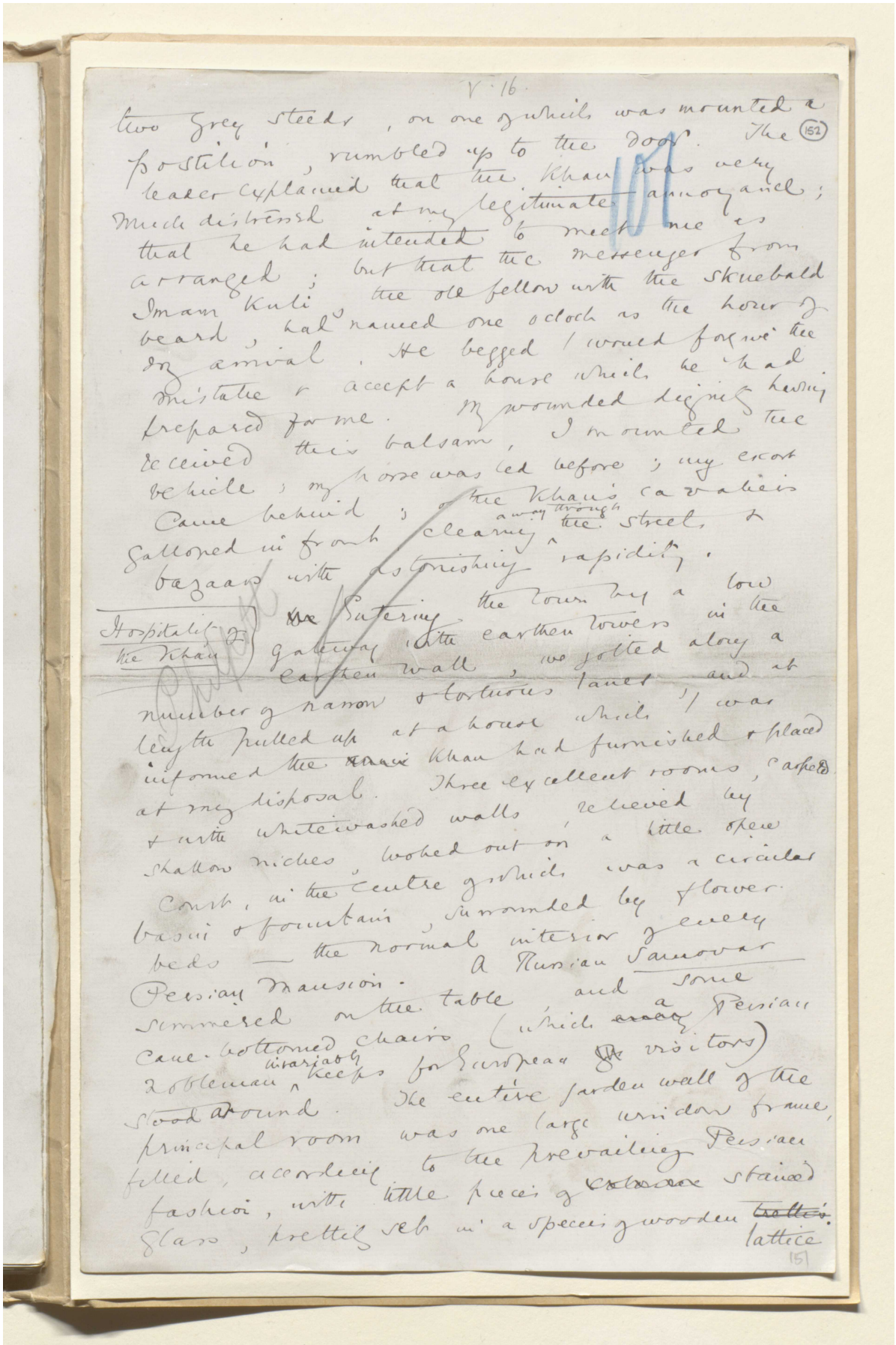

V. 16.

two grey steeds, on one of which was mounted a postilion, rumbled up to the door. The (152)
leader explained that the Khan was very much distressed at my legitimate annoyance; that he had intended to meet me as arranged; but that the messenger from Imam Kuli the old fellow with the skewbald beard, had named one o'clock as the hour of my arrival. He begged I would forgive the mistake & accept a house which he had prepared for me. My wounded leg being received their balsam, I mounted the vehicle; my horse was led before; my escort came behind; & the Khan's cavaliers galloped in front clearing away through the street, & bazaars with astonishing rapidity.

Hospitality of the Khan

Entering the town by a low gateway in the earthen towers in the earthen wall, we jolted along a number of narrow & tortuous lanes and at length pulled up at a house which I was informed the Khan had furnished & placed at my disposal. Three excellent rooms, carpeted & with whitewashed walls, relieved by shallow niches, looked out on a little open court, in the centre of which was a circular basin & fountain, surrounded by flower beds — the normal interior of every Persian mansion. A Russian samovar simmered on the table and some cane-bottomed chairs (which a Persian nobleman always keeps for European visitors) stood around. The entire garden wall of the principal room was one large window frame, filled, according to the prevailing Persian fashion, with little pieces of coloured stained glass, prettily set in a species of wooden lattice.

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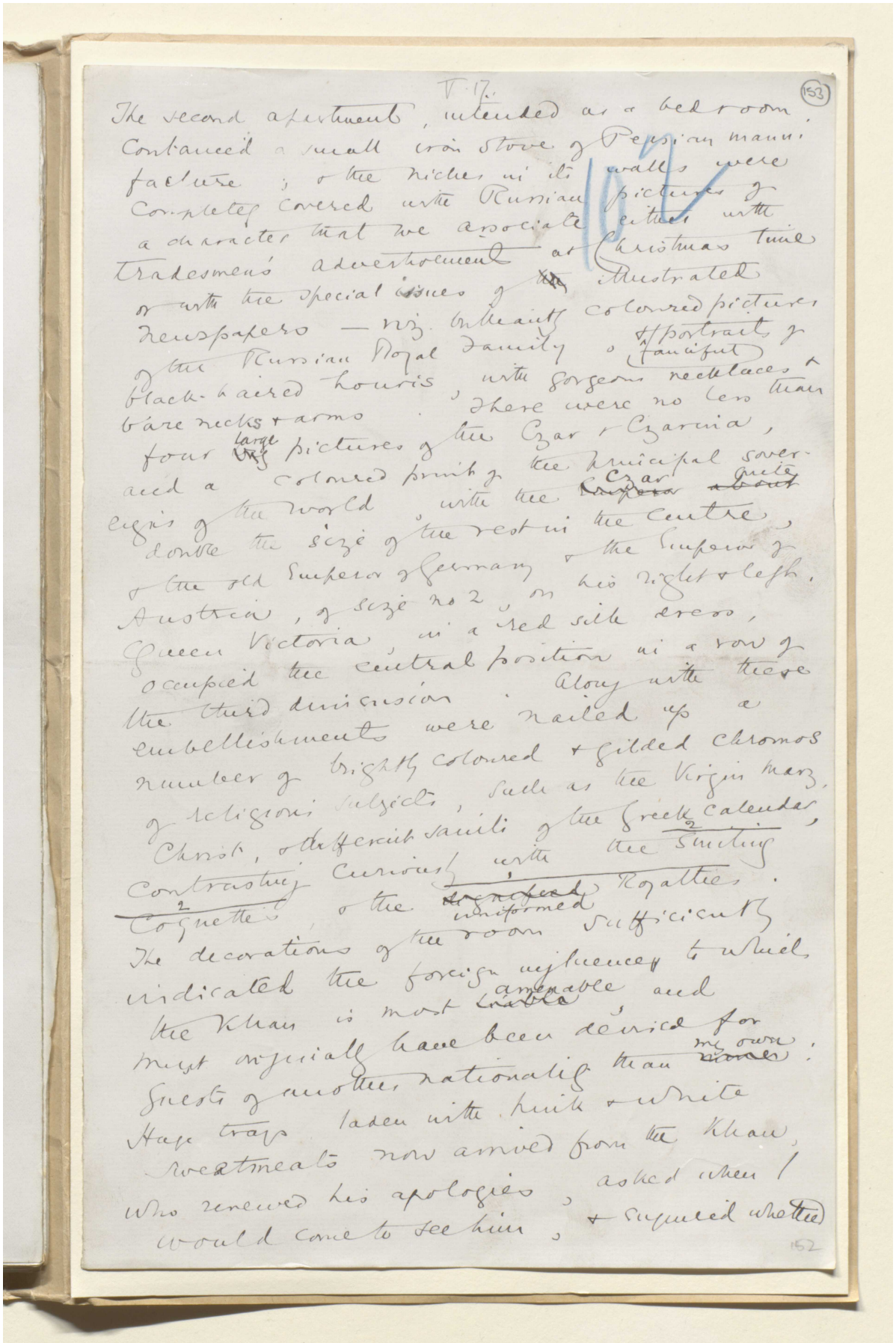

V. 17.

(153)

The second apartment, intended as a bedroom, contained a small iron stove of Persian manufacture; & the niches in its walls were completely covered with Russian pictures of a character that we associate either with tradesmen's advertisement at Christmas time or with the special issues of illustrated newspapers — viz. brilliantly coloured pictures of the Russian Royal Family & portraits of black-haired houris, with gorgeous necklaces & bare necks & arms. There were no less than four large pictures of the Czar & Czarina, and a coloured print of the principal sovereigns of the world, with the Czar quite double the size of the rest in the centre, & the old Emperor of Germany & the Emperor of Austria, of size no 2, on his right & left. Queen Victoria, in a red silk dress, occupied the central position in a row of the third dimension. Along with these embellishments were nailed up a number of brightly coloured & gilded chromos of religious subjects, such as the Virgin Mary, Christ, & different saints of the Greek calendar, contrasting curiously with the smiling coquettes & the uniformed Royalties. The decorations of the room sufficiently indicated the foreign influences to which the Khan is most amenable, and must originally have been devised for guests of another nationality than my own. Huge trays laden with pink & white sweetmeats now arrived from the Khan, who renewed his apologies, asked when I would come to see him, & enquired whether

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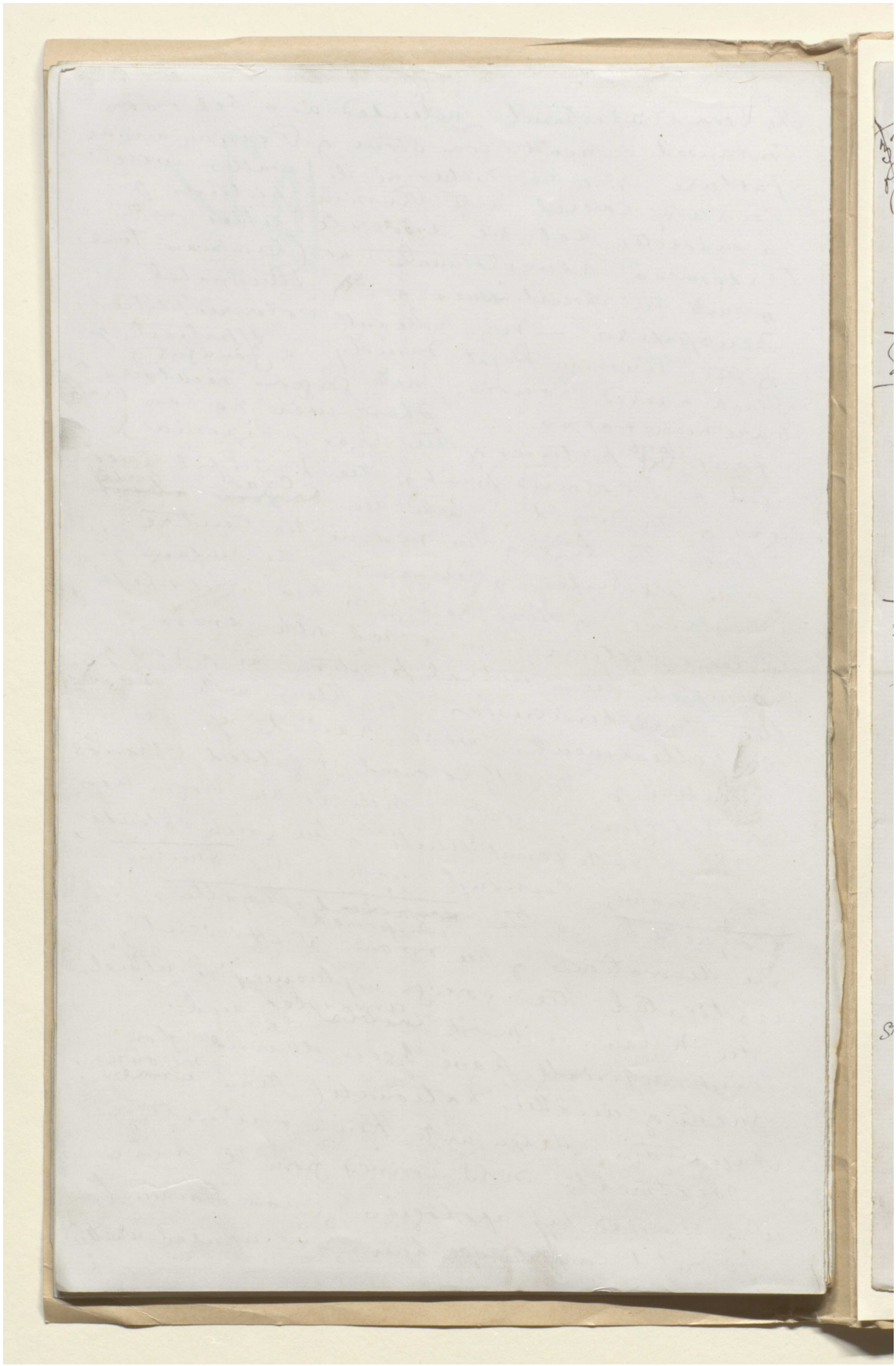
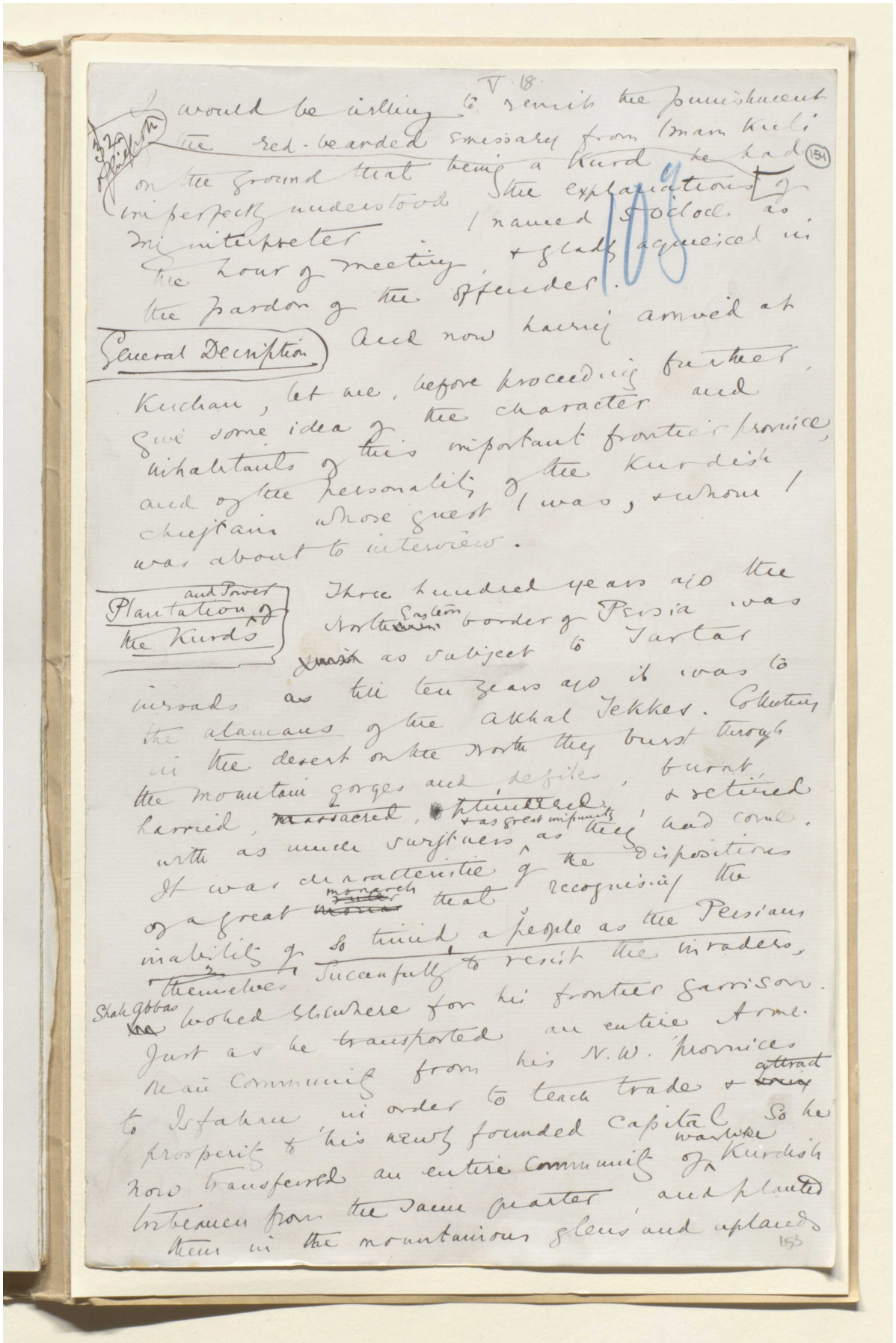


V. 18.

32 Ghiefish



I would be willing to remit the punishment of the red-bearded emissary from Imam Kuli on the ground that being a Kurd he had imperfectly understood the explanations of my interpreter I named 5 o'clock as the hour of meeting, & gladly acquiesced in the pardon of the offender.

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General Description

And now having arrived at Kuchan, let me, before proceeding further, give some idea of the character and inhabitants of this important frontier province, and of the personality of the Kurdish chieftain whose guest I was, & whom I was about to interview.

Plantation and Power of the Kurds

Three hundred years ago the North Eastern border of Persia was as subject to Tartar inroads as till ten years ago it was to the alamans of the Akhal Tekkes. Collecting in the desert on the North they burst through the mountain gorges and defiles, burnt, harried, massacred, plundered, & retired with as much swiftness & as great impunity as they had come. It was characteristic of the dispositions of a great monarch that recognising the inability of so timid a people as the Persians themselves successfully to resist the invaders, Shah Abbas looked elsewhere for his frontier garrison. Just as he transported an entire Armenian community from his N.W. provinces to Isfahan in order to teach trade & attract prosperity to his newly founded capital, so he now transferred an entire community of warlike Kurdish tribesmen from the same quarter, and planted them in the mountainous glens and uplands

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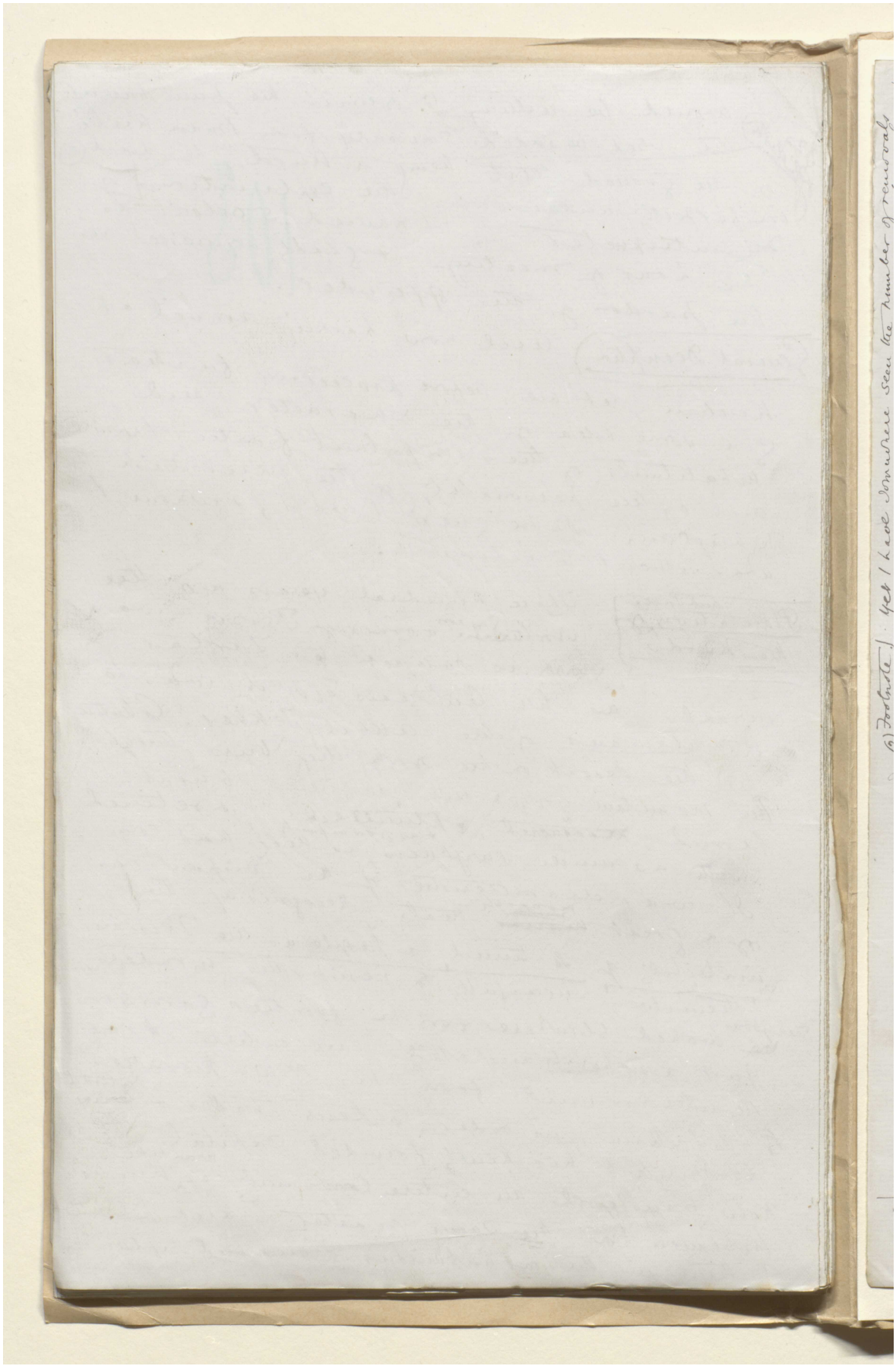

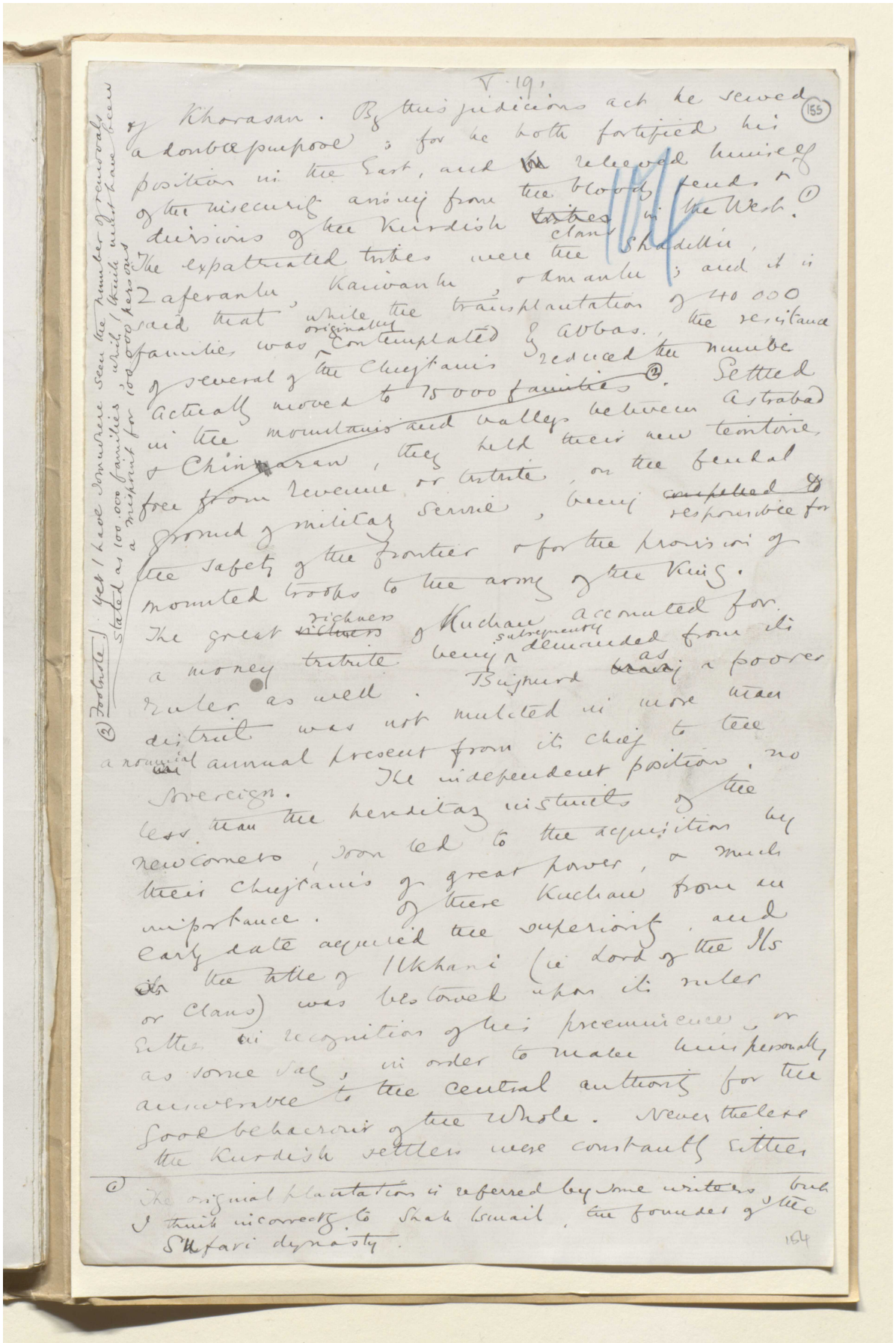

V. 19.

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of Khorasan. By this judicious act he served a double purpose; for he both fortified his position in the East, and ~~he~~ relieved himself of the insecurity arising from the bloody feuds & divisions of the Kurdish ~~tribes~~ clans in the West.(1) The expatriated tribes were the Shadillu, Zaferanlu, Kaiwanlu, & Amanlu; and it is said that while the transplantation of 40 000 families was originally contemplated by Abbas, the resistance of several of the Chieftains reduced the number actually moved to 15 000 families(2). Settled in the mountains and valleys between Astrabad & Chinaran, they held their new territories free from revenue or tribute, on the feudal ground of military service, being ~~compelled to~~ responsible for the safety of the frontier & for the provision of mounted troops to the army of the King. The great ~~richness~~ richness of Kuchan accounted for a money ~~tribute~~ being subsequently demanded from its ruler as well. Bujnurd ~~being~~ as a poorer district was not mulcted in more than a nominal annual present from its chief to the Sovereign. The independent position, no less than the hereditary instincts of the newcomers, soon led to the acquisition by their Chieftains of great power, & much importance. Of these Kuchan from an early date acquired the superiority, and ~~its~~ the title of Ilkhani (ie Lord of the Ils or Clans) was bestowed upon its ruler either in recognition of his preeminence, or as some say, in order to make him personally answerable to the central authority for the good behaviour of the whole. Nevertheless the Kurdish settlers were constantly either

(1) The original plantation is referred by some writers, but I think incorrectly to Shah Ismail, the founder of the Sufari dynasty.

(2) Footnote. Yet I have somewhere seen the number of removals stated as 100.000 families, which I think must have been a misprint for 100.000 persons.

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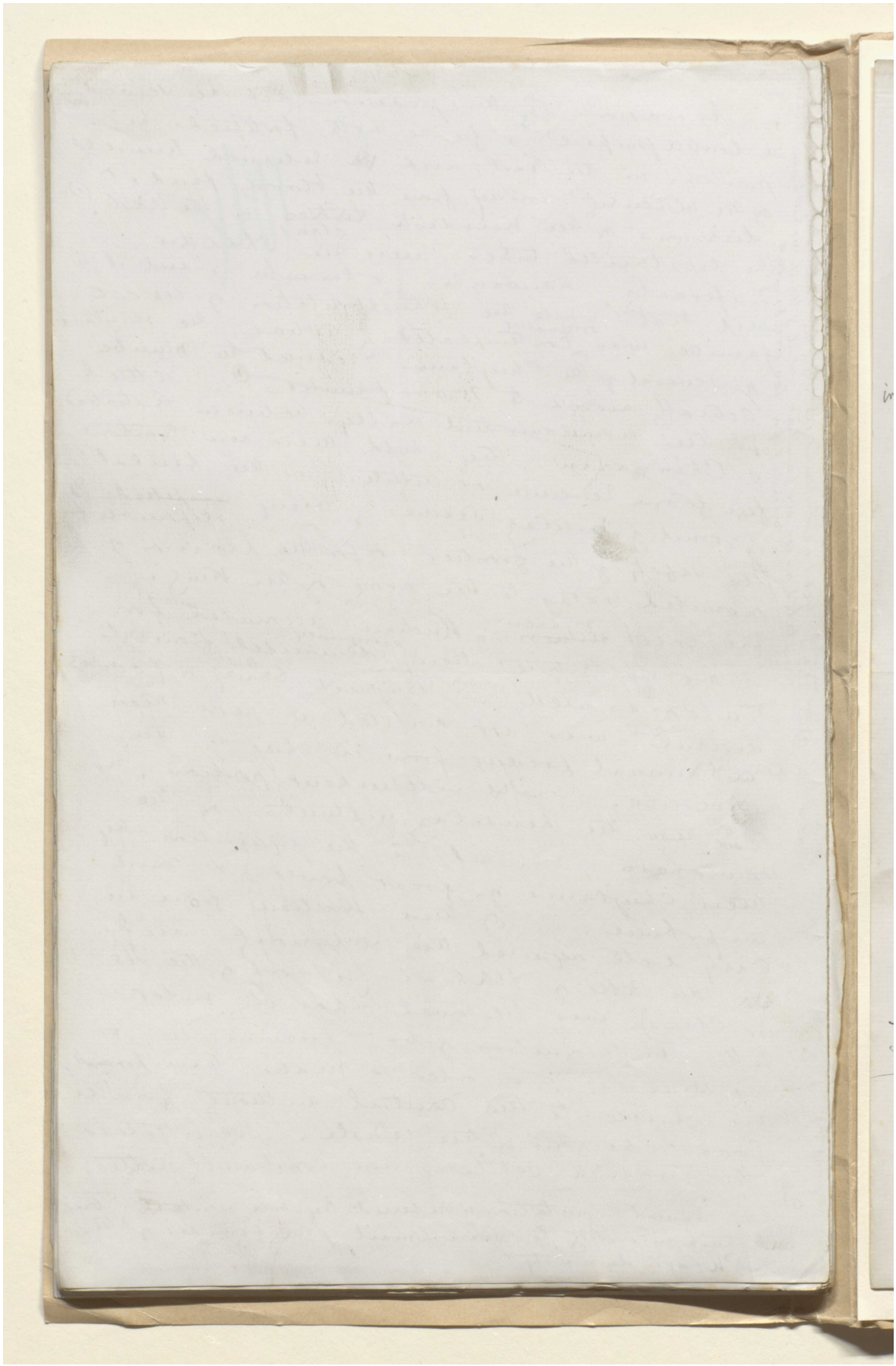
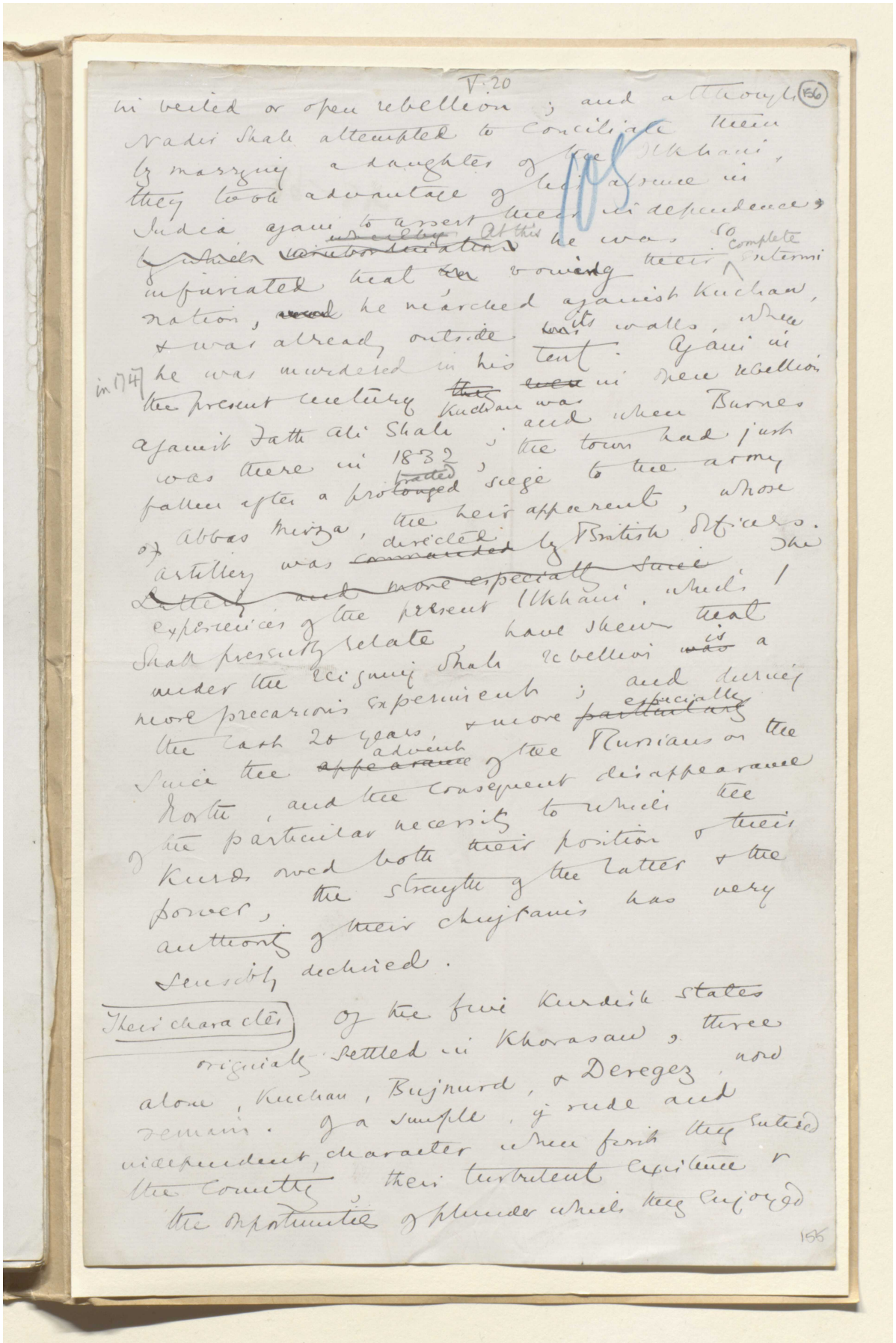
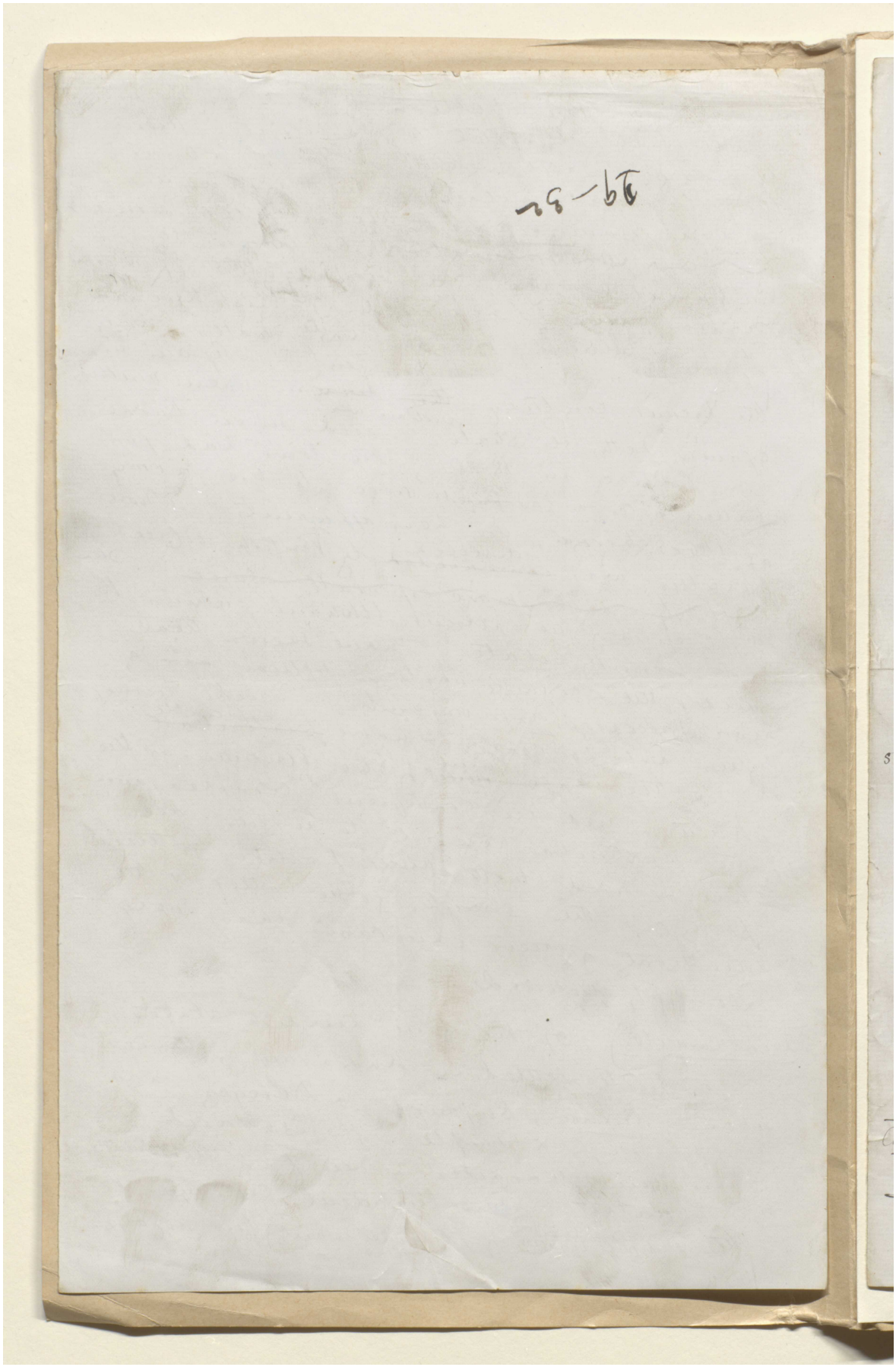
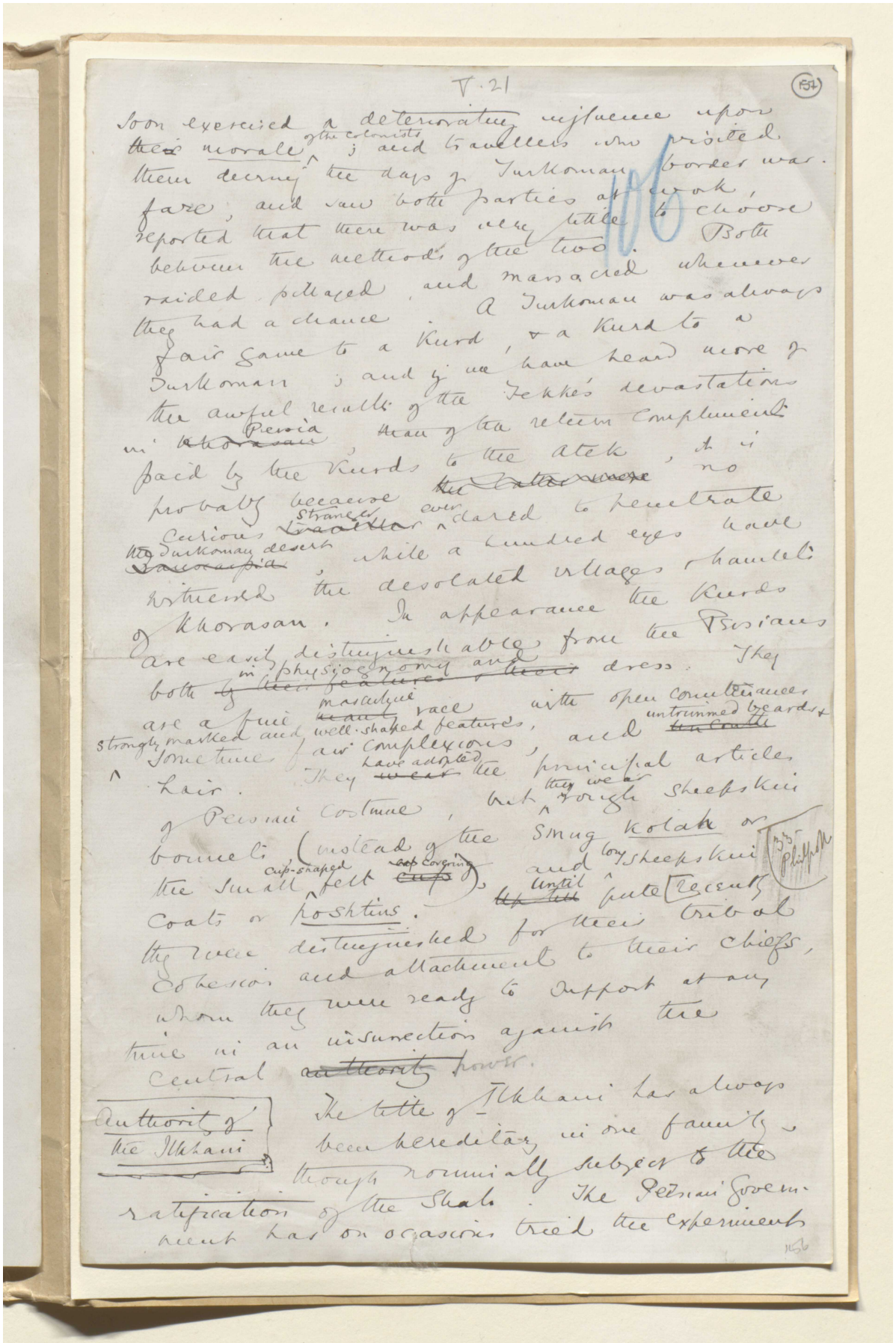








V. 21

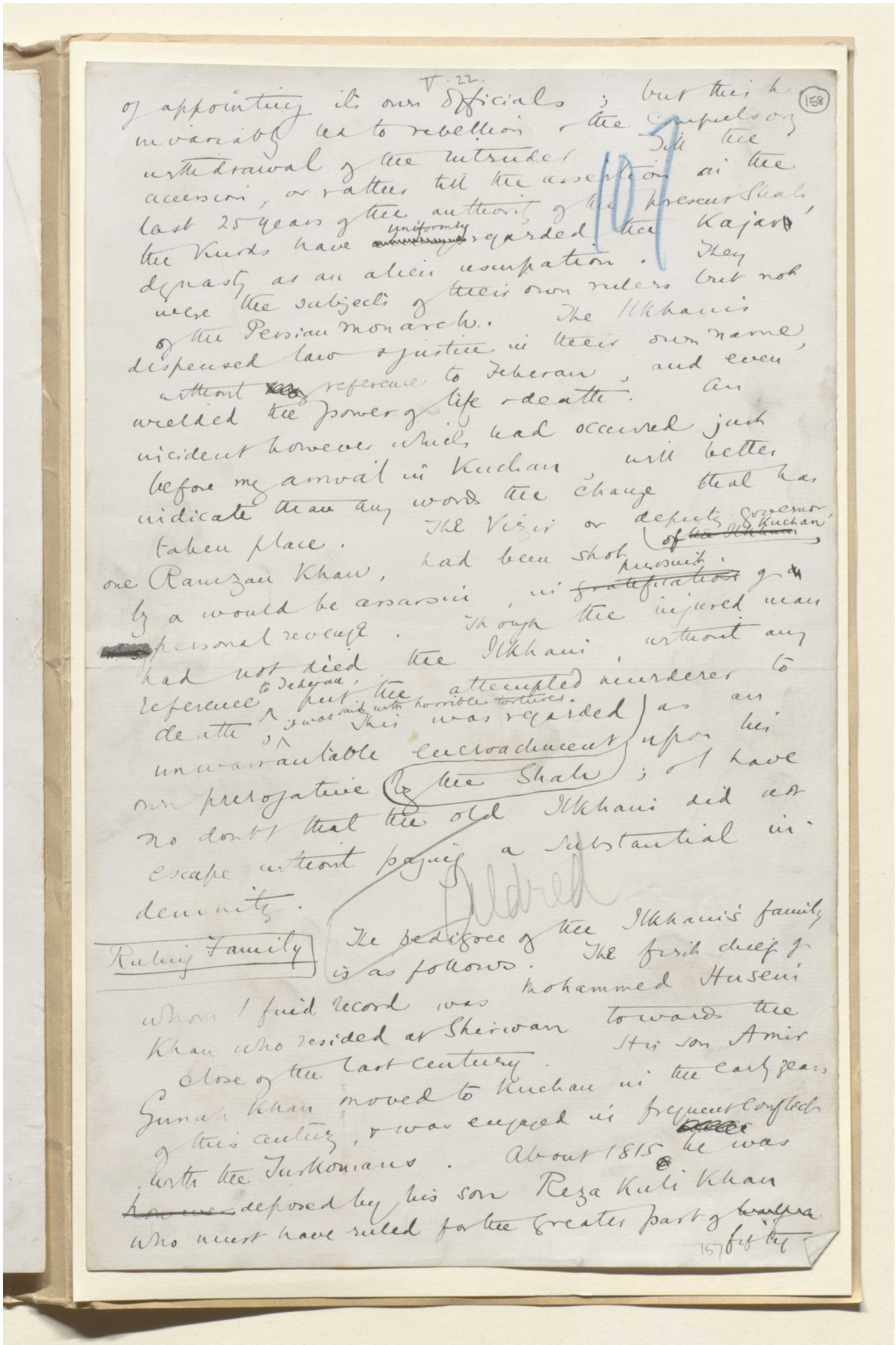
(157)

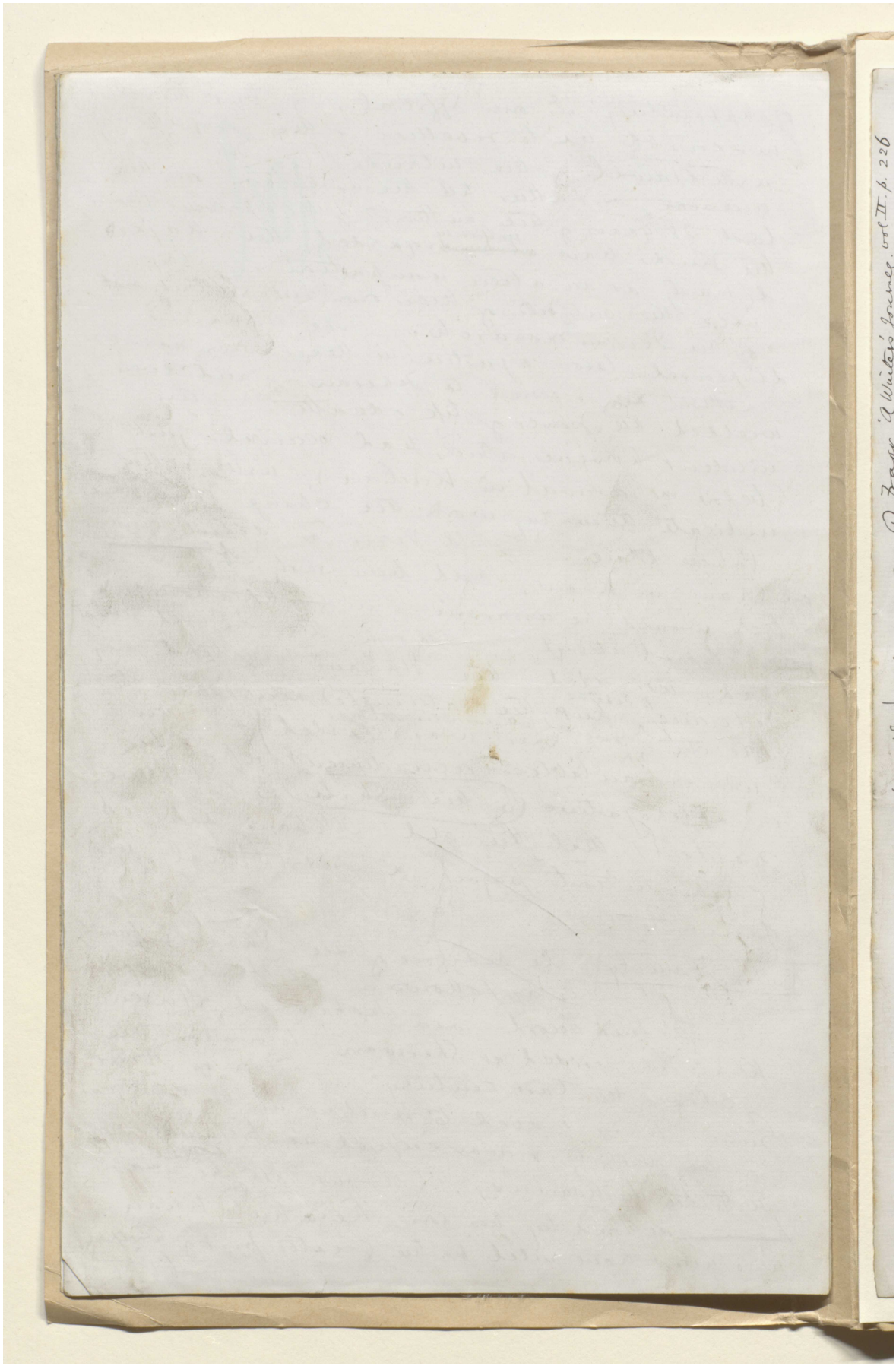
soon exercised a deteriorating influence upon their morale of the colonists; and travellers who visited them during the days of Turkoman border warfare, and saw both parties at work, reported that there was very little to choose between the methods of the two. Both raided, pillaged, and massacred whenever they had a chance. A Turkoman was always fair game to a Kurd, & a Kurd to a Turkoman; and if we have heard more of the awful results of the Tekke's devastations in Persia than of the return compliments paid by the Kurds to the Atek, it is probably because no curious stranger ever dared to penetrate the Turkoman desert, while a hundred eyes have witnessed the desolated villages & hamlets of Khorasan. In appearance the Kurds are easily distinguishable from the Persians both in physiognomy and dress. They are a fine masculine race with open countenances strongly marked and well-shaped features, sometimes fair complexions, and untrimmed beards & hair. They have adopted the principal articles of Persian costume, but they wear rough sheepskin bonnets (instead of the smug kolah or the small cup-shaped felt covering), and long sheepskin coats or poshtins. Until quite recently they were distinguished for their tribal cohesion and attachment to their chiefs, whom they were ready to support at any time in an insurrection against the central power.

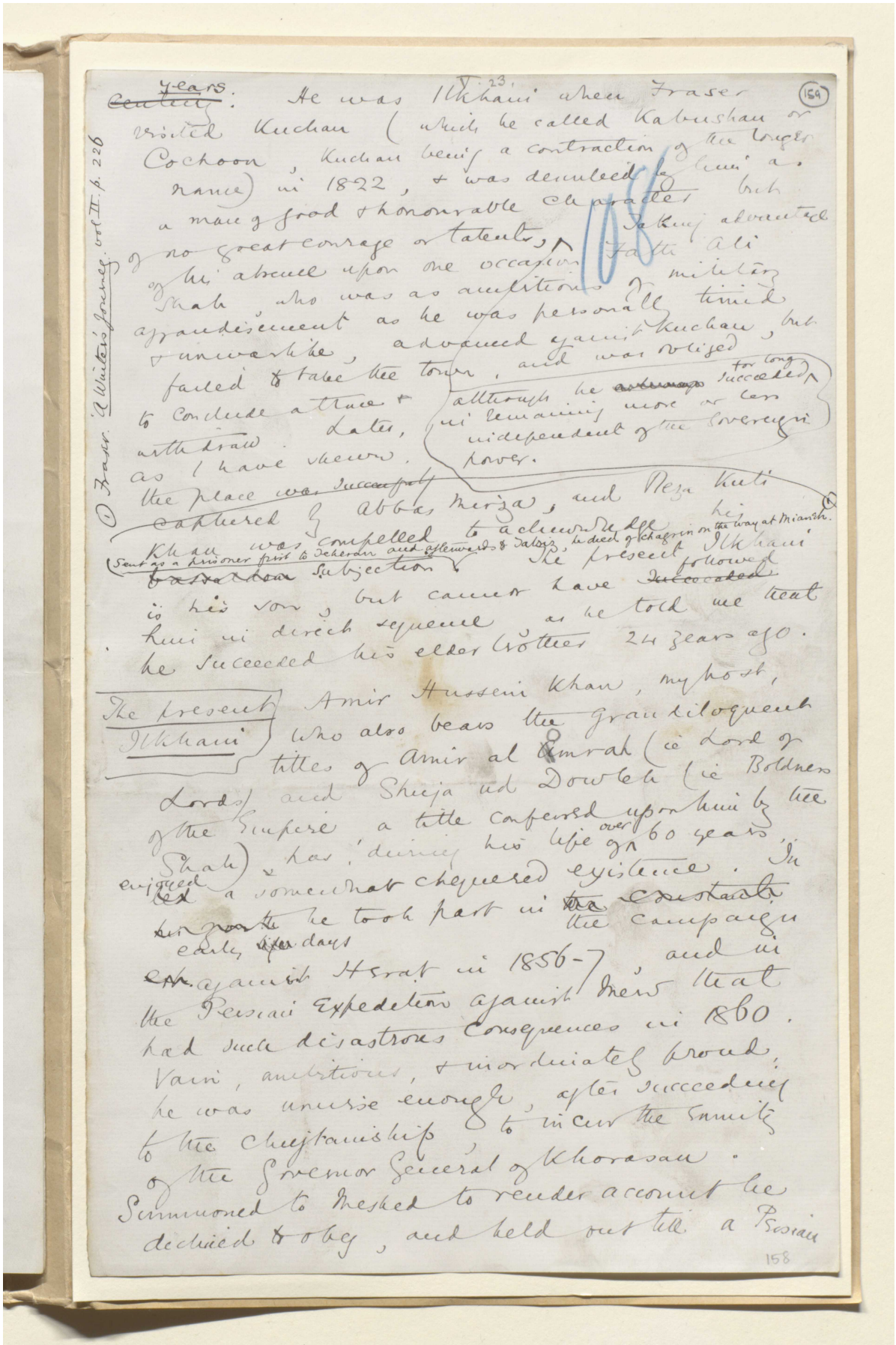
Authority of the Ilkhani

The title of Ilkhani has always been hereditary in one family, though nominally subject to the ratification of the Shah. The Persian Government has on occasions tried the experiment









V. 23. (159)

~~Century~~ years: He was Ilkhani when Fraser visited Kuchan (which he called Kabushan or Cochoon, Kuchan being a contraction of the longer name) in 1822, & was described by him as a man of good & honourable character but of no great courage or talents, taking advantage of his absence upon one occasion Fath Ali Shah, who was as ambitious of military agrandisement as he was personally timid & unwarlike, advanced against Kuchan, but failed to take the town, and was obliged to conclude a truce & withdraw. Later, as I have shewn, the place was successfully captured by Abbas Mirza, and Reza Kuli Khan was compelled to acknowledge his ~~bassaldom~~ subjection (Sent as a prisoner first to Teheran and afterwards to Tabriz, he died of chagrin on the way at Miandh.) The present Ilkhani is his son, but cannot have ~~succeeded~~ followed him in direct sequence as he told me that he succeeded his elder brother 24 years ago.

(1) Fraser. 'A Winter's Journey' vol II. p. 226

The present Ilkhani

Amir Hussein Khan, my host, who also bears the grandiloquent titles of Amir al Omrah (ie Lord of Lords) and Shuja ud Dowleh (ie Boldness of the Empire, a title conferred upon him by the Shah) has, during his life of over 60 years, enjoyed a somewhat chequered existence. In ~~his youth~~ he took part in ~~the constant~~ the campaign early ~~life~~ days ~~ex~~ against Herat in 1856-7, and in the Persian Expedition against Mew that had such disastrous consequences in 1860. Vain, ambitious, & inordinately proud, he was unwise enough, after succeeding to the Chieftainship, to incur the enmity of the Governor General of Khorasan. Summoned to Meshed to render account he declined to obey, and held out till a Persian

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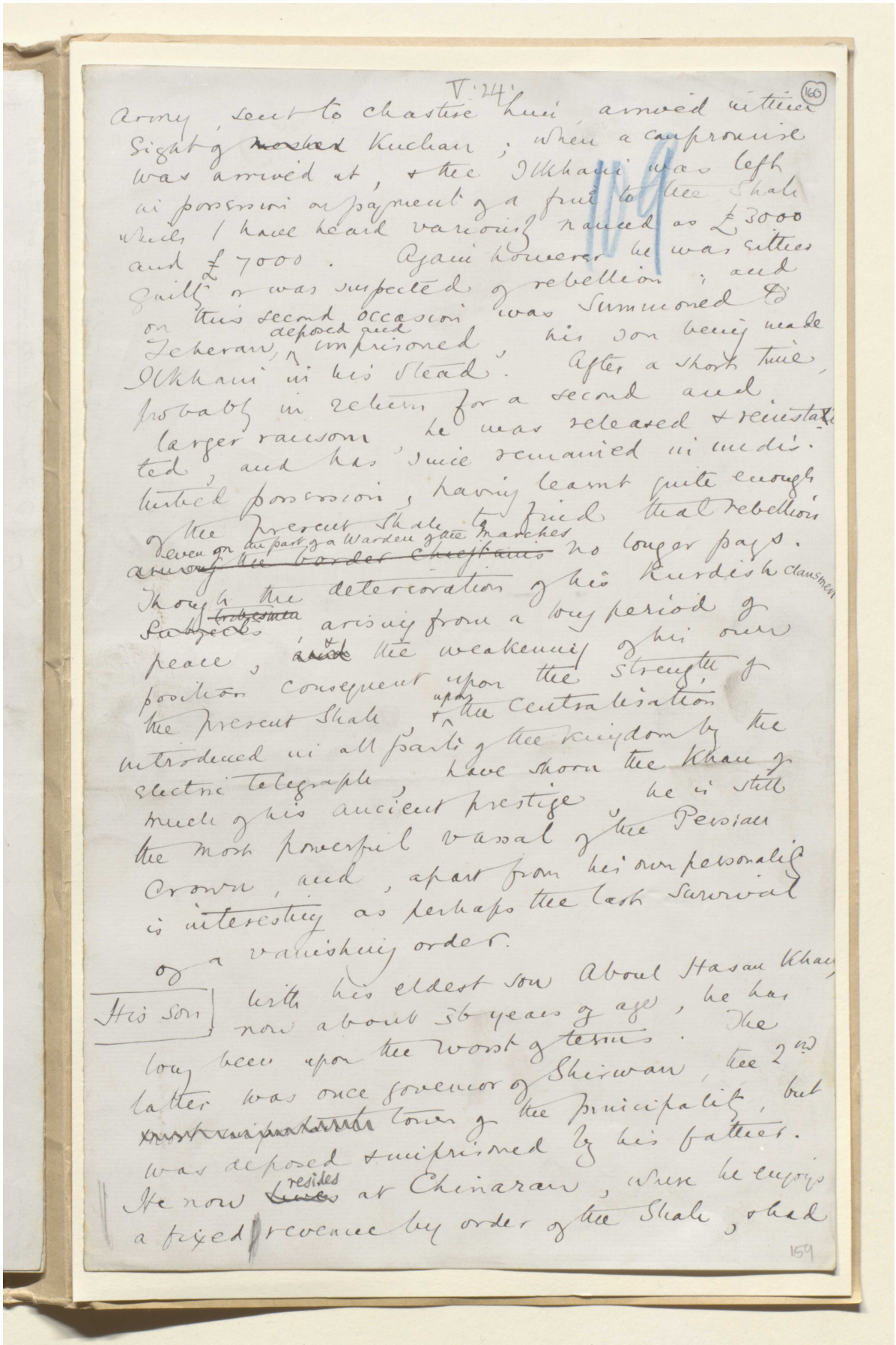
V. 24. (160)



army, sent to chastise him, arrived within
sight of ~~[illegible]~~ Kuchan; when a compromise
was arrived at, & the Ilkhani was left
in possession on payment of a fine to the Shah
which I have heard variously named as £3000
and £7000. Again however he was either
guilty or was suspected of rebellion; and
on this second occasion was summoned to
Teheran, deposed and imprisoned, his son being made
Ilkhani in his stead. After a short time,
probably in return for a second and
larger ransom, he was released & reinstated,
and has since remained in undisturbed
possession, having learnt quite enough
of the present Shah to find that rebellion
~~among the border chieftains~~ even on the part of a Warden of the Marches no longer pays.
Though the deterioration of his Kurdish clansmen
~~subjects~~ ~~tribesmen~~ arising from a long period of
peace, ~~and~~ & the weakening of his own
position consequent upon the strength of
the present Shah, & upon the centralisation
introduced in all parts of the kingdom by the
electric telegraph, have shorn the Khan of
much of his ancient prestige, he is still
the most powerful vassal of the Persian
Crown, and, apart from his own personality
is interesting as perhaps the last survival
of a vanishing order.

His son

With his eldest son Aboul Hasan Khan,
now about 36 years of age, he has
long been upon the worst of terms. The
latter was once governor of Shirwan, the 2nd
~~[illegible]~~ town of the principality, but
was deposed & imprisoned by his father.
He now ~~lives~~ resides at Chinaran, where he enjoys
a fixed revenue by order of the Shah, & had

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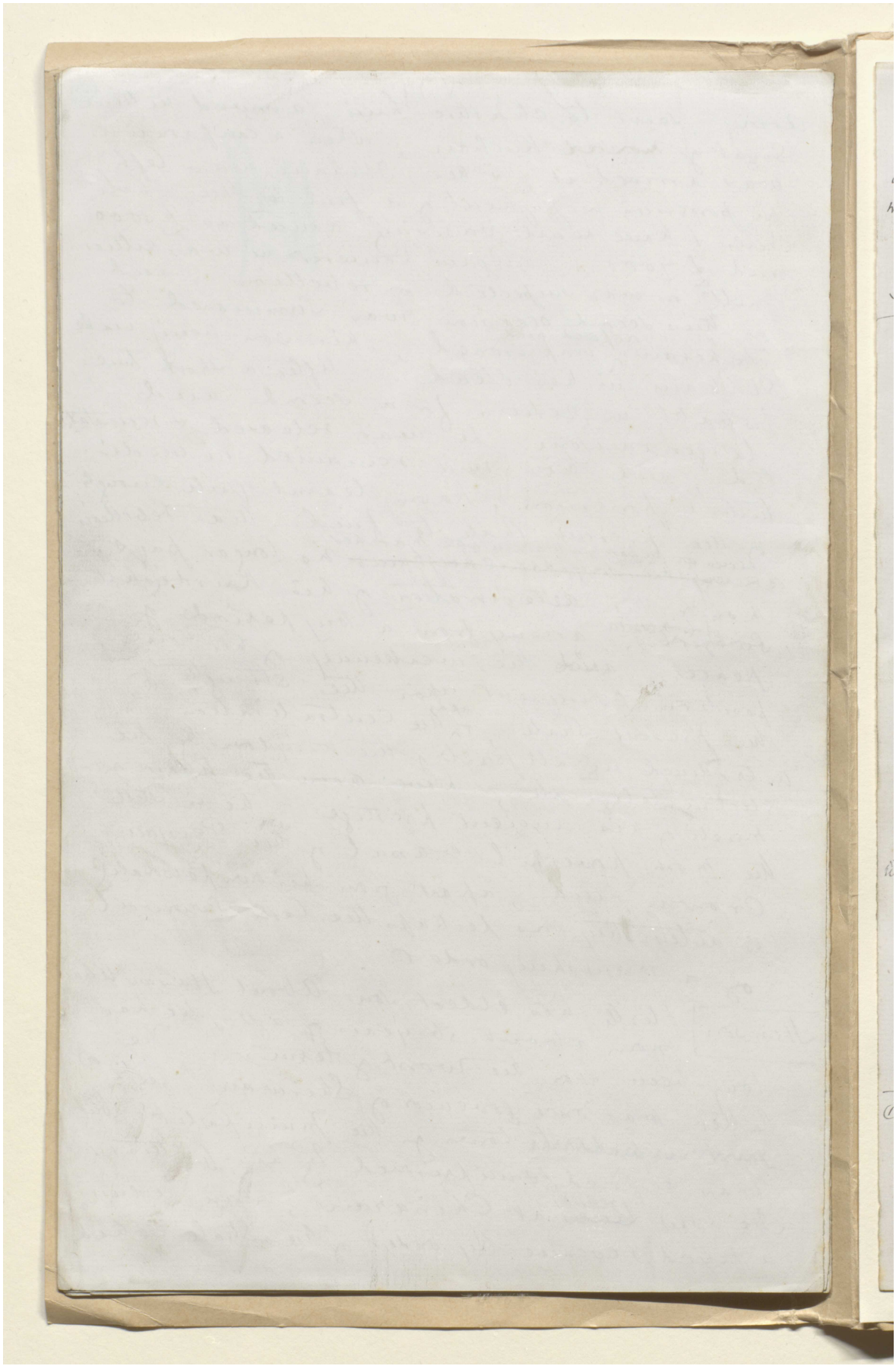

V. 25.

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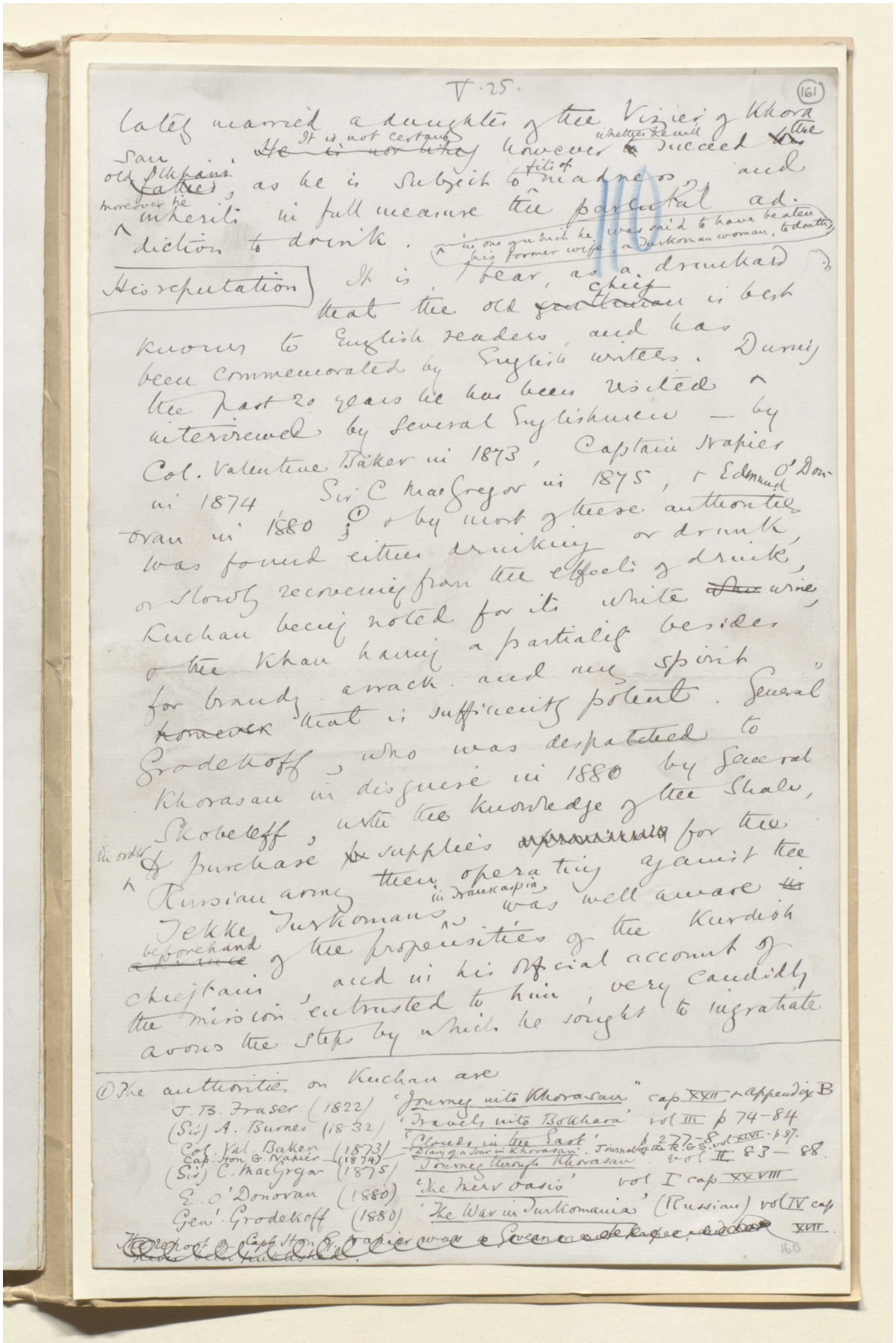

lately married a daughter of the Vizier of Khorasan. ~~He is not likely~~ It is not certain however whether he will succeed ~~to~~ the old Khan's ~~father~~, as he is subject to fits of madness, and moreover he inherits in full measure the parental addiction to drink. (in one of which he was said to have beaten his former wife, a Turkoman woman, to death)

His reputation

It is, I bear, as a drunkard that the old ~~gentleman~~ chief is best known to English readers, and has been commemorated by English writers. During the past 20 years he has been visited interviewed by several Englishmen — by Col. Valentine Baker in 1873, Captain Napier in 1874, Sir C MacGregor in 1875, & Edmund O'Donovan in 1880; ① & by most of these authorities was found either drinking or drunk, or slowly recovering from the effects of drink, Kuchan being noted for its white ~~[illegible]~~ wine, & the Khan having a partiality besides for brandy, arrack, and any spirit ~~however~~ that is sufficiently potent. General Grodekoff, who was despatched to Khorasan in disguise in 1880 by General Skobeleff, with the knowledge of the Shah, in order to purchase ~~[illegible]~~ supplies ~~[illegible]~~ for the Russian army then operating against the Tekke Turkomans in Transcaspia, was well aware ~~in~~ beforehand ~~advance~~ of the propensities of the Kurdish chieftain, and in his official account of the mission entrusted to him, very candidly avows the steps by which he sought to ingratiate

① The authorities on Kuchan are
J. B. Fraser (1822) 'Journey into Khorasan' cap XXII & appendix B
(Sir) A. Burnes (1832) 'Travels into Bokhara' vol III p 74–84
Col. Val. Baker (1873) 'Clouds in the East' p 277–8
Cap. Hon G. Napier (1874) 'Diary of a Tour in Khorasan' Journal of the R.G.S. vol XLVI – p. 87.
(Sir) C. MacGregor (1875) 'Journey through Khorasan' vol II 83–88.
E. O'Donovan (1880) 'The Merv Oasis' vol I cap XXVIII
Gen'l Grodekoff (1880) 'The War in Turkomania' (Russian) vol IV cap XVII.
~~The report of Capt. Hon G. Napier was a Government paper, and [illegible] never been published.~~

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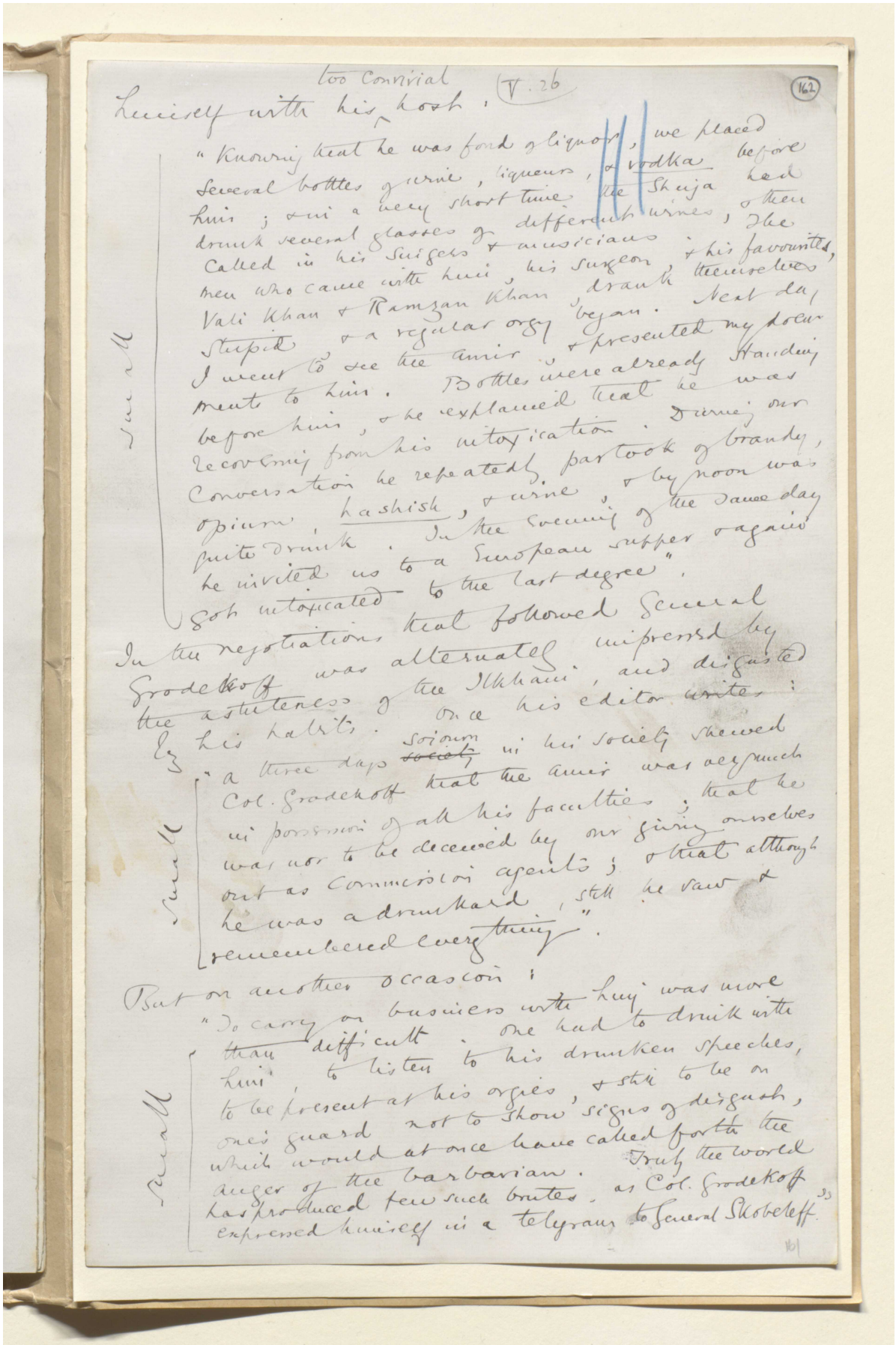


too convivial (V. 26) (162)

himself with his host.

"Knowing that he was fond of liquor, we placed several bottles of wine, liqueurs, & vodka before him; & in a very short time the Shuja had drunk several glasses of different wines, & then called in his singers & musicians. Then the Vali Khan & Ramzan Khan, & his favourites, who came with him, his surgeon, drank themselves stupid & a regular orgy began. Next day I went to see the Amir, & presented my douceur sent to him. Bottles were already standing before him, & he explained that he was recovering from his intoxication. During our conversation he repeatedly partook of brandy, opium, hashish, & wine, & by noon was quite drunk. In the evening of the same day he invited us to a European supper again & got intoxicated to the last degree".

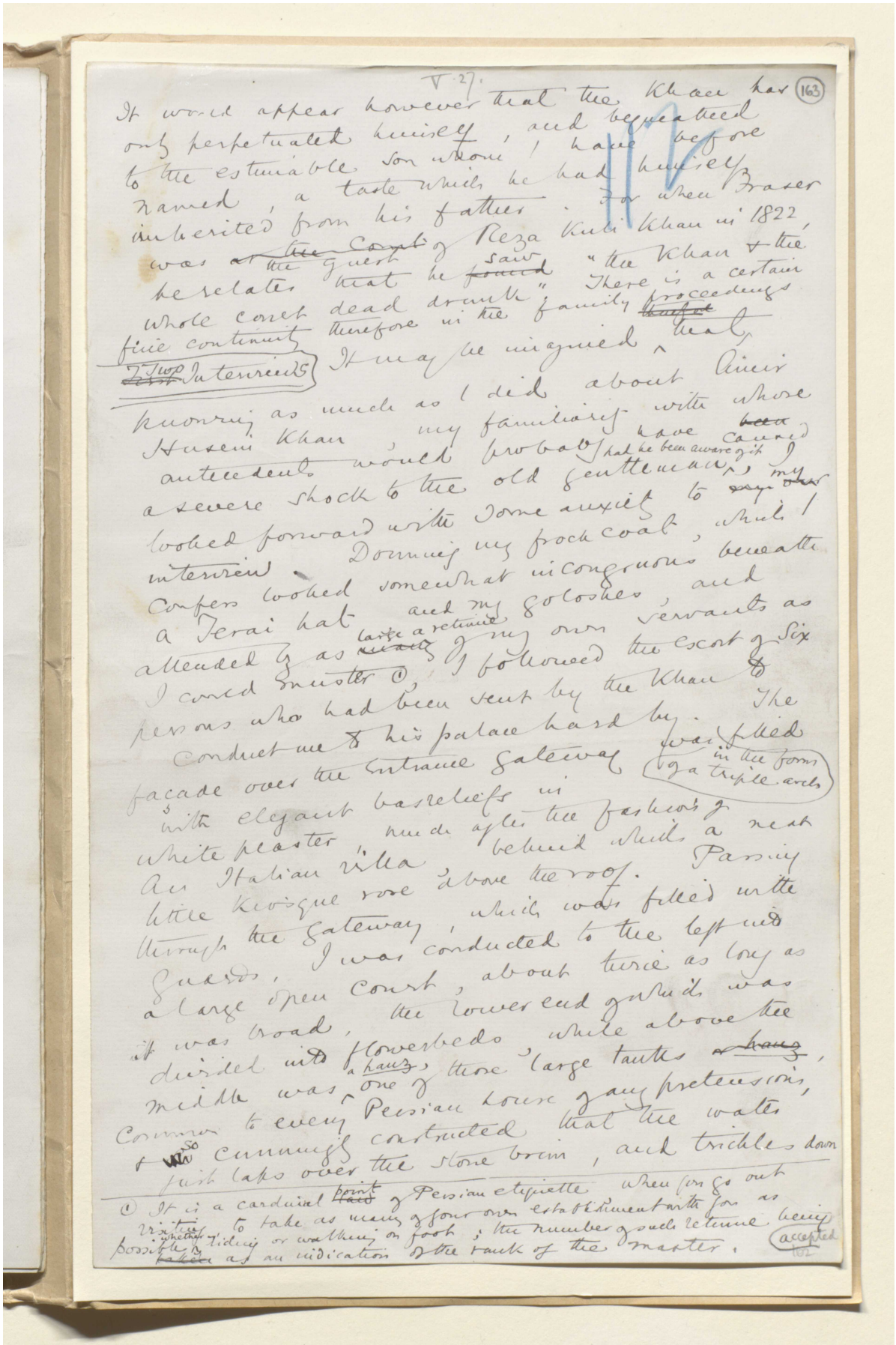
In the negotiations that followed General Grodekoff was alternately impressed by the astuteness of the Ilkhani, and disgusted by his habits. Once his editor writes:

"a three days soiour ~~social~~ in his society showed Col. Grodekoff that the Amir was very much in possession of all his faculties; that he was not to be deceived by our giving ourselves out as Commission agents; & that although he was a drunkard, still he saw & remembered everything".

But on another occasion:

"To carry on business with him was more than difficult. One had to drink with him, to listen to his drunken speeches, to be present at his orgies, & still to be on one's guard not to show signs of disgust, which would at once have called forth the anger of the barbarian. Truly the world has produced few such brutes, as Col. Grodekoff expressed himself in a telegram to General Skobeleff.





V. 27.

(163)

It would appear however that the Khan has only perpetuated himself, and bequeathed to the estimable son whom I have before named, a taste which he had himself inherited from his father. For when Fraser was ~~at the Court~~ the guest of Reza Kuli Khan in 1822, he relates that he ~~found~~ saw "the Khan & the whole court dead drunk". There is a certain fine continuity therefore in the family ~~[illegible]~~ proceedings.

~~First~~ Two Interviews

It may be imagined that, knowing as much as I did about Amir Husein Khan, my familiarity with whose antecedents would probably have ~~been~~ caused a severe shock to the old gentleman, had he been aware of it, I looked forward with some anxiety to ~~my~~ my interview. Donning my frock coat, which I confess looked somewhat incongruous beneath a Terai hat and my goloshes, and attended by as ~~many~~ large a retinue of my own servants as I could muster ①, I followed the escort of six persons who had been sent by the Khan to conduct me to his palace hard by. The façade over the entrance gateway was filled in the form of a triple arch with elegant bas reliefs in white plaster, much after the fashion of an Italian villa, behind which a neat little kiosque rose above the roof. Passing through the gateway, which was filled with guards, I was conducted to the left into a large open court, about twice as long as it was broad, the lower end of which was divided into flowerbeds, while above the middle was a hauz, one of those large tanks ~~or hauz~~, common to every Persian house of any pretensions, & ~~[illegible]~~ so cunningly constructed that the water just laps over the stone brim, and trickles down

① It is a cardinal ~~law~~ point of Persian etiquette when you go out visiting to take as many of your own establishment with you as possible whether riding or walking on foot; the number of such retinue being ~~taken~~ accepted as an indication of the rank of the master.

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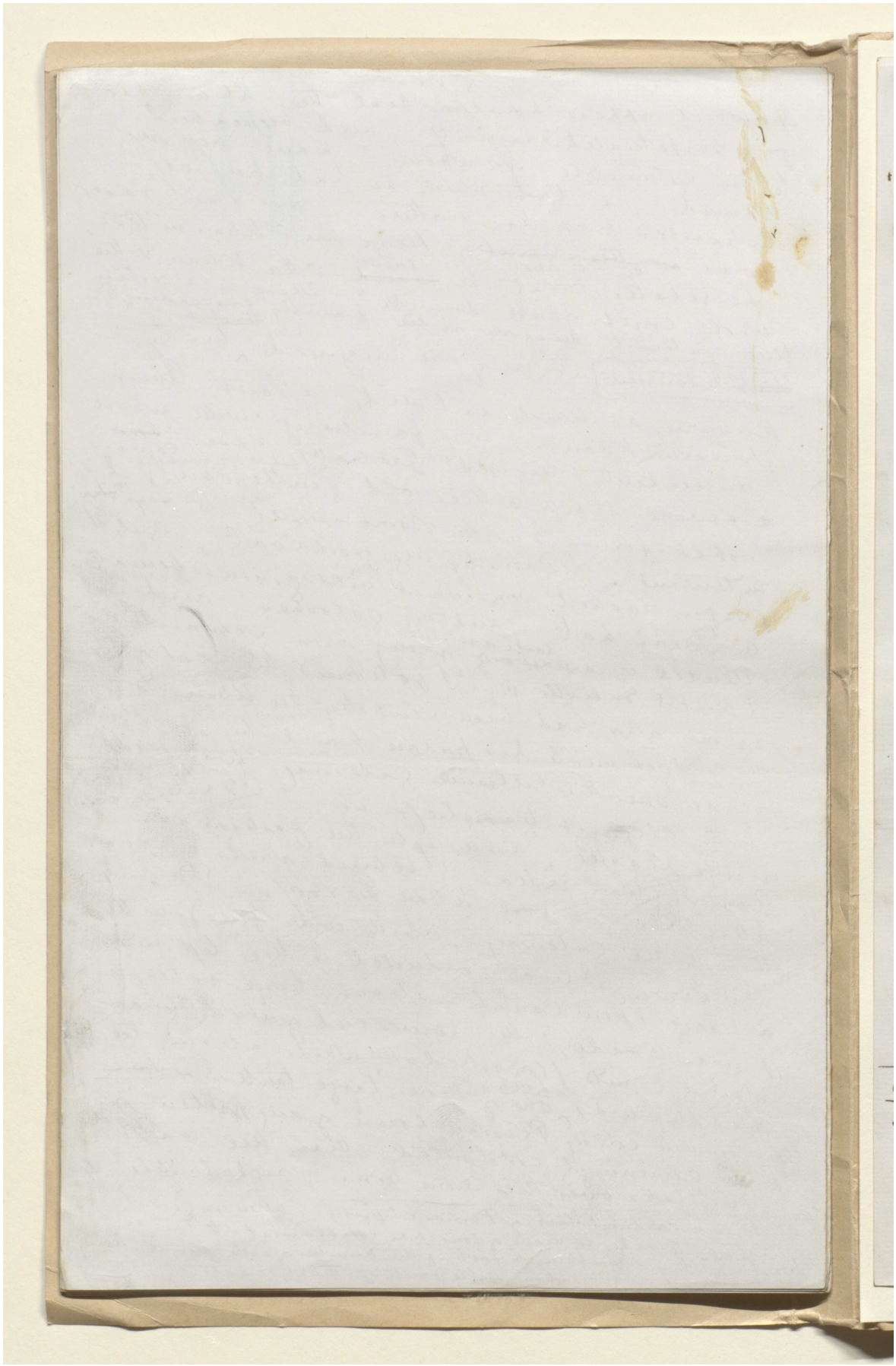

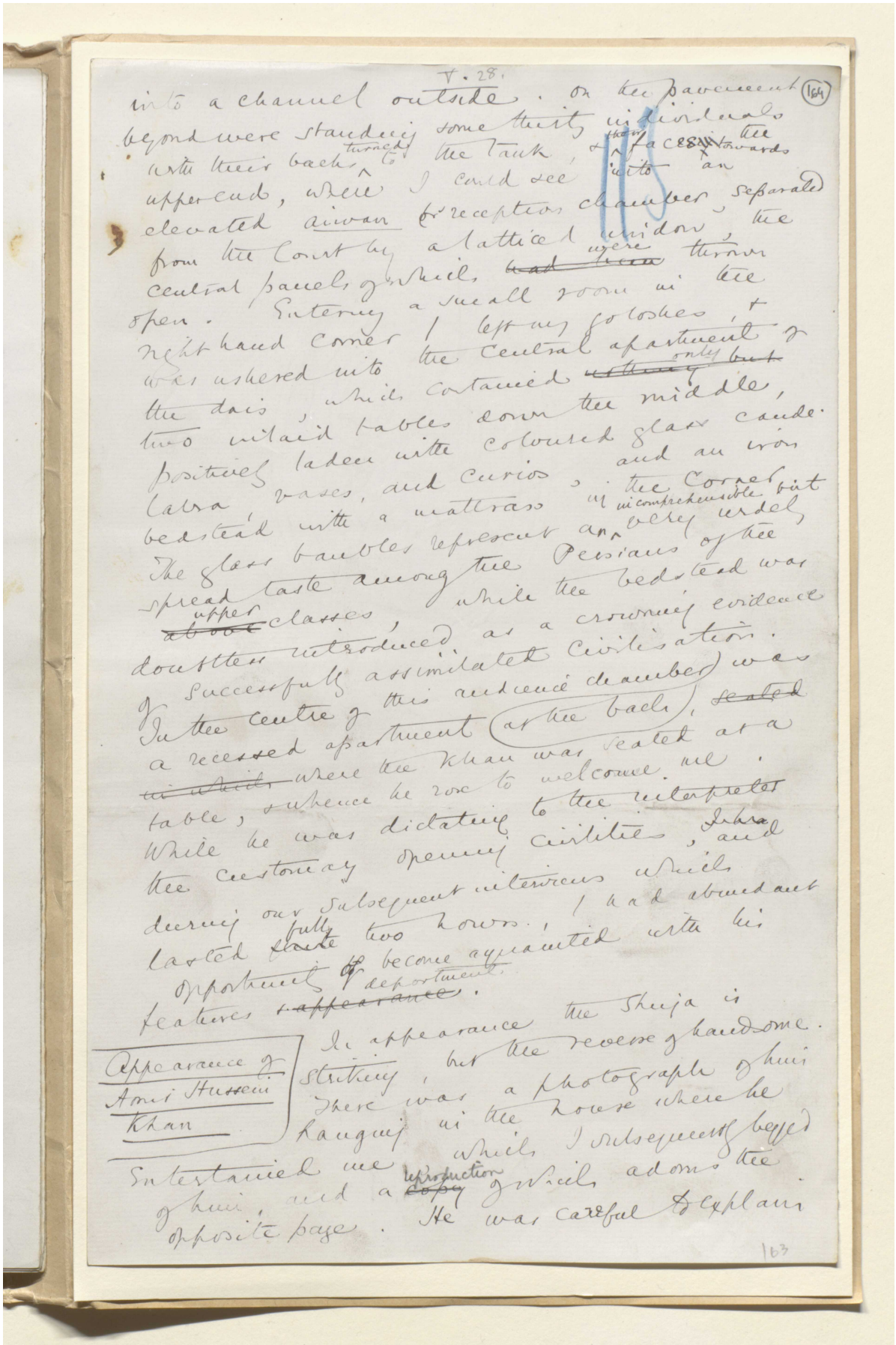

V. 28.

into a channel outside. On the pavement (164)
beyond were standing some thirty individuals
with their backs turned to the tank, their faces towards
upper end, where I could see into an
elevated aiwan for reception chamber, separated
from the Court by a lattice window, the
central panels of which were thrown
open. Entering a small room in the
right hand corner I left my goloshes, &
was ushered into the central apartment &
the dais, which contained only but
two inlaid tables down the middle,
positively laden with coloured glass candelabra, vases, and curios, and an iron
bedstead with a mattress in the corner but
The glass baubles represent an utterly incomprehensible order,
spread taste among the Persians of the
upper classes, while the bedstead was
doubtless introduced as a crowning evidence
of successful assimilated civilisation.
In the centre of this reduced chamber) was
a recessed apartment (at the back), seated
in which where the Khan was seated at a
table, whence he rose to welcome me.
While he was dictating to the interpreter
the customary opening civilities, Jabra
during our subsequent interviews which
lasted fully two hours, I had abundant
opportunity of becoming acquainted with his
features & deportment.

Appearance of Amir Hussein Khan

In appearance the Sheja is
striking, but the reverse of handsome.
There was a photograph of him
hanging in the house where he
entertained me which I subsequently begged
of him, and a reproduction of which adorns the
opposite page. He was careful to explain

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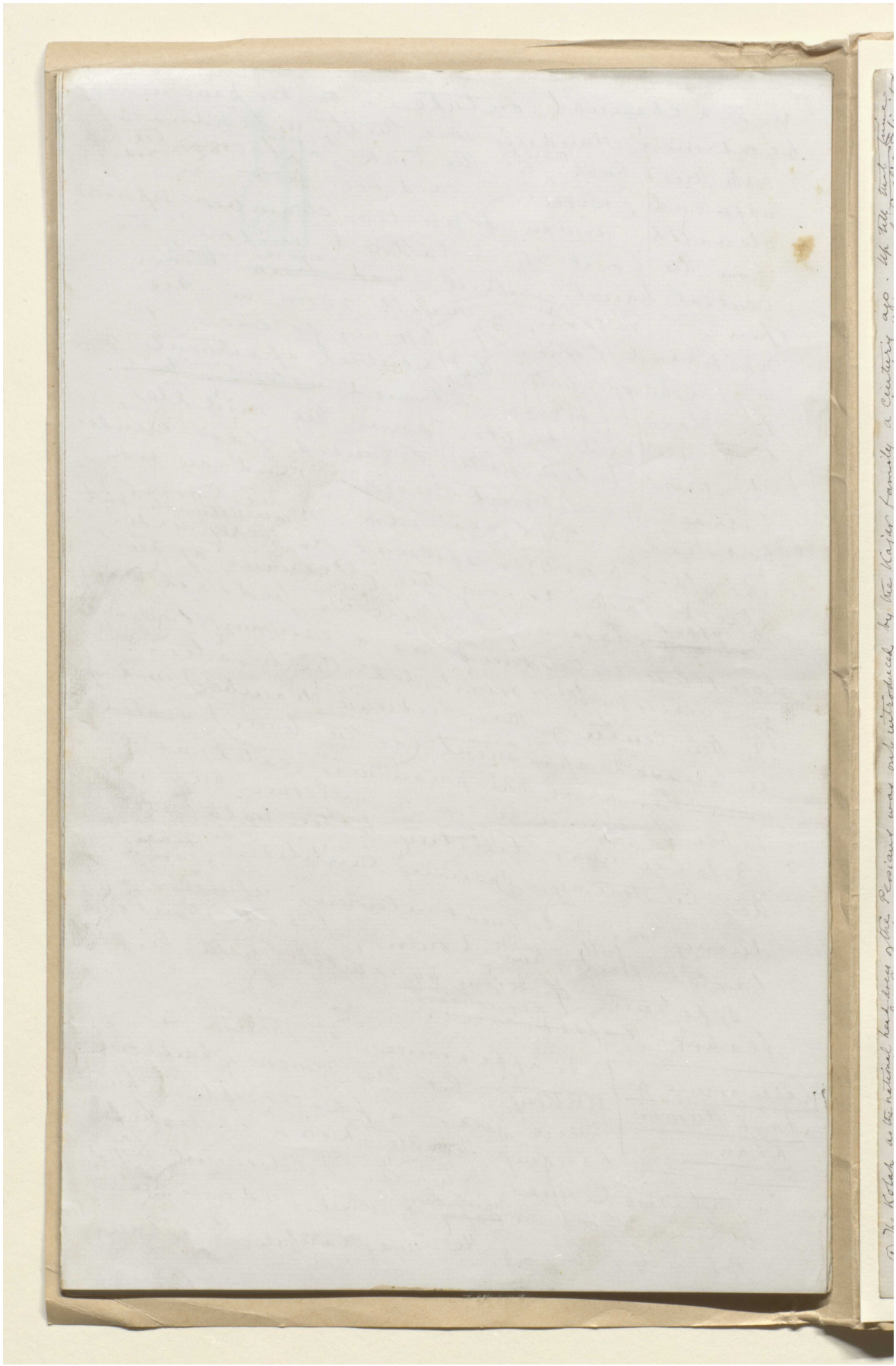
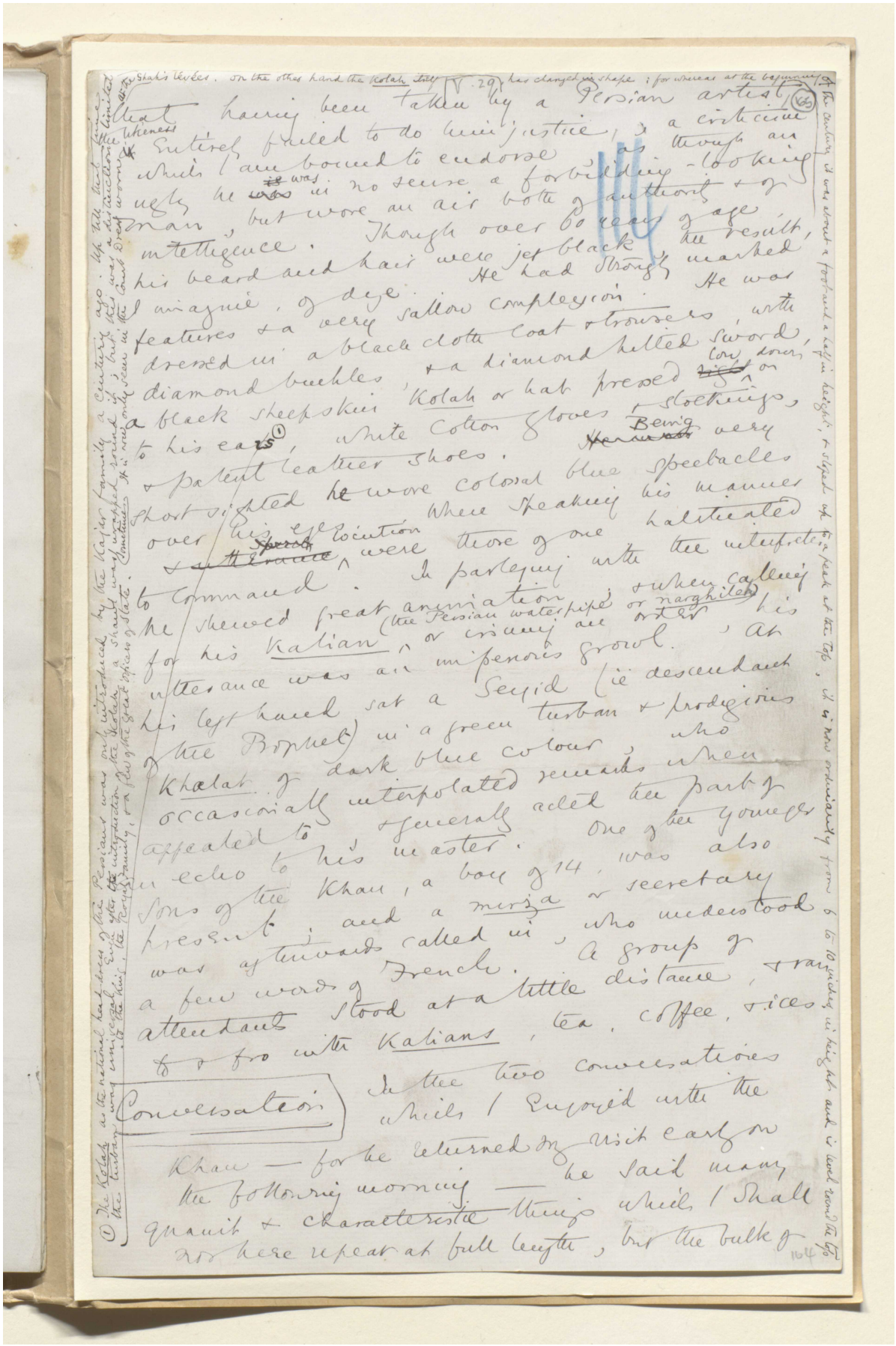
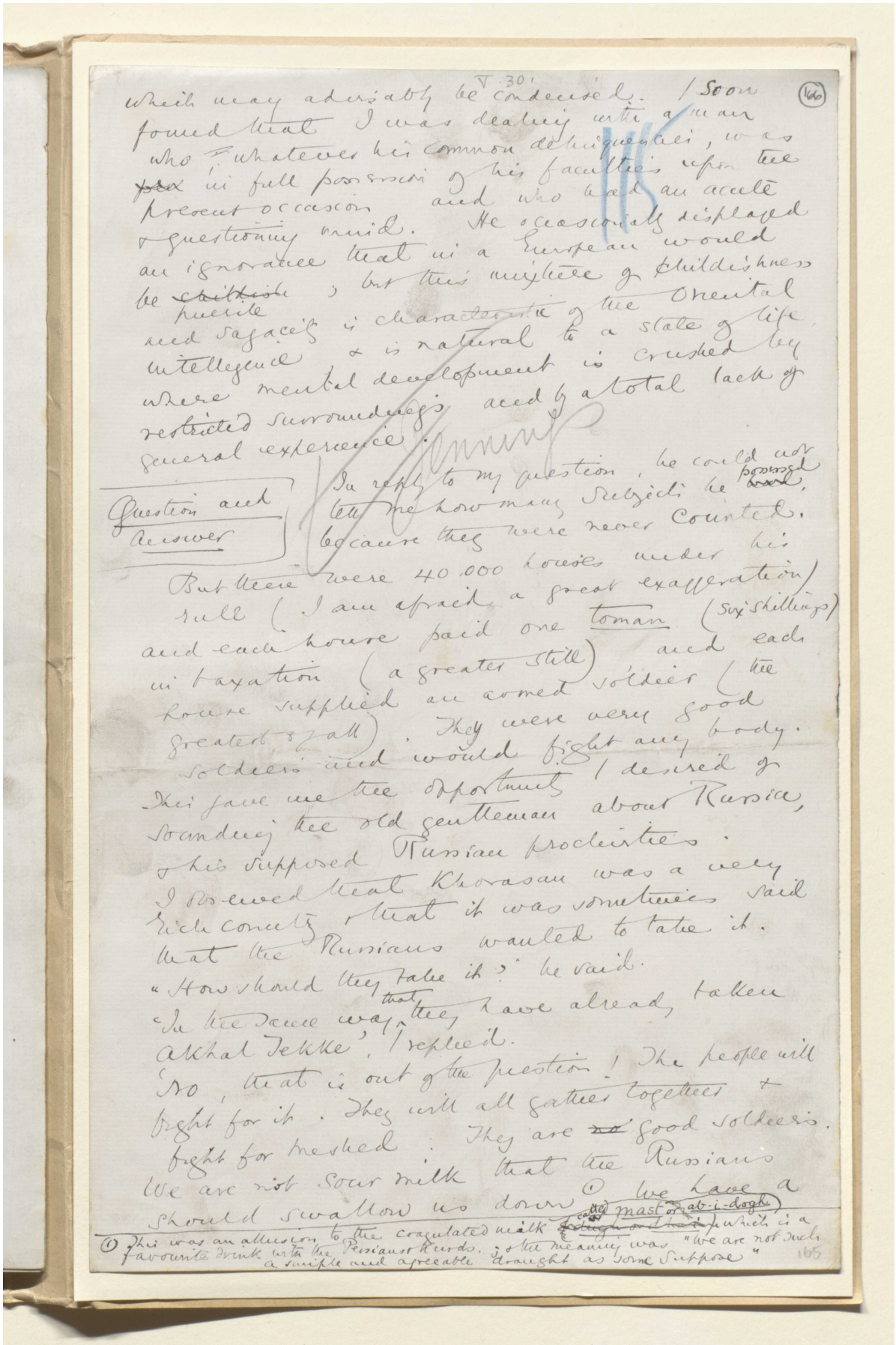






V. 30

(166)



which may advisably be condensed. I soon found that I was dealing with a man who, whatever his common delinquencies, was in full possession of his faculties upon the present occasion and who had an acute & questioning mind. He occasionally displayed an ignorance that in a European would be ~~childish~~ puerile; but this mixture of childishness and sagacity is characteristic of the Oriental intelligence & is natural to a state of life where mental development is crushed by restricted surroundings and by a total lack of general experience.

Question and Answer

In reply to my question, he could not tell me how many subjects he possessed, because they were never counted. But there were 40,000 houses under his rule (I am afraid a great exaggeration) and each house paid one toman (six shillings) in taxation (a greater still) and each house supplied an armed soldier (the greatest of all). They were very good soldiers and would fight any body. This gave me the opportunity I desired of sounding the old gentleman about Russia, & his supposed Russian proclivities. I observed that Khorasan was a very rich country, & that it was sometimes said that the Russians wanted to take it. "How should they take it?" he said. "In the same way that they have already taken Akhal Tekke", I replied. "No, that is out of the question! The people will fight for it. They will all gather together & fight for Meshed. They are ~~no~~ good soldiers. We are not sour milk that the Russians should swallow us down ① We have a

① This was an allusion to the coagulated milk called mast or ab-i-dogh which is a favourite drink with the Persians & Kurds. & the meaning was "we are not such a simple and agreeable draught as some suppose"

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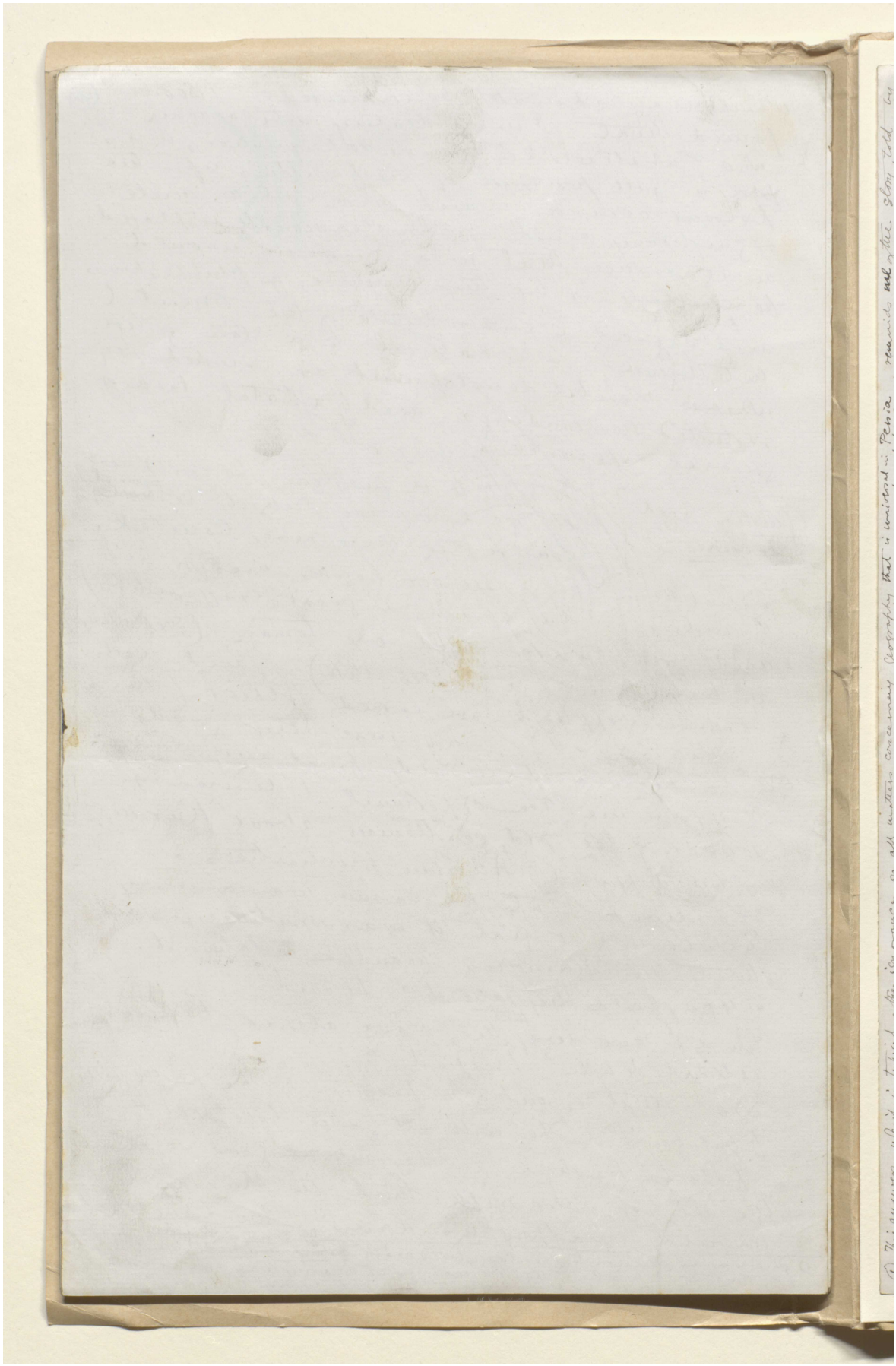

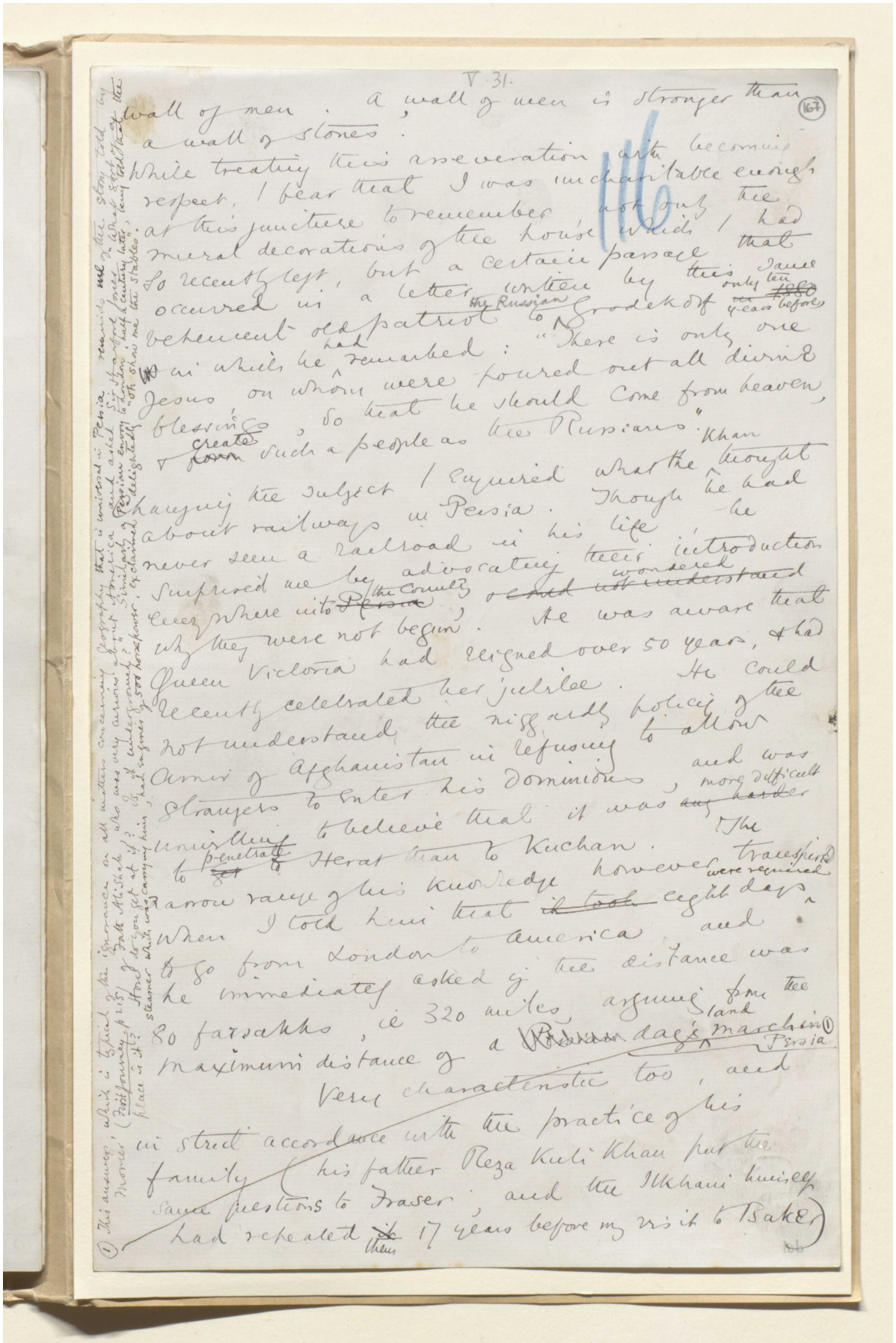



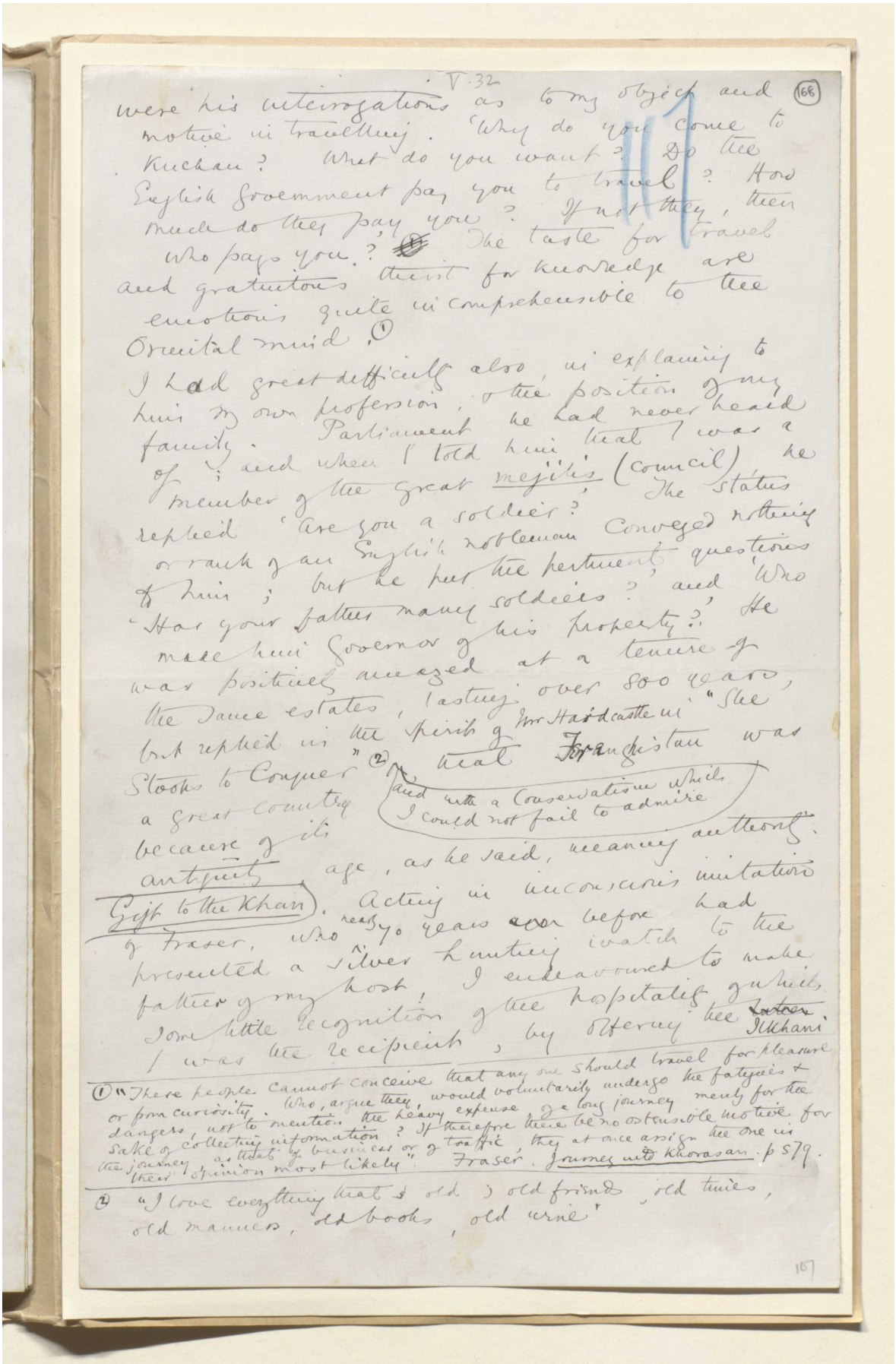

V.32 (168)

were his interrogations as to my object and motive in travelling. 'Why do you come to Kuchan? What do you want? Do the English Government pay you to travel? How much do they pay you? If not they, then who pays you?' The taste for travel and gratuitous thirst for knowledge are emotions quite incomprehensible to the Oriental mind.(1)

I had great difficulty also, in explaining to him my own profession, & the position of my family. Parliament he had never heard of; and when I told him that I was a member of the great mejilis (council) he replied 'Are you a soldier?' The status or rank of an English nobleman conveyed nothing to him; but he put the pertinent questions 'Has your father many soldiers?' and 'Who made him Governor of his property?' He was positively amazed at a tenure of the same estates, lasting over 800 years, but replied in the spirit of Mr Hardcastle in "She Stooks to Conquer"(2) and with a Conservatism which I could not fail to admire that Franghistan was a great country because of its antiquity, age, as he said, meaning authority. Gift to the Khan. Acting in unconscious imitation of Fraser, who nearly 70 years ~~ago~~ before had presented a silver hunting watch to the father of my host, I endeavoured to make some little recognition of the hospitality of which I was the recipient, by offering the ~~Latter~~ Ilkhani

(1) "These people cannot conceive that any one should travel for pleasure or from curiosity. Who, argue they, would voluntarily undergo the fatigues & dangers, not to mention the heavy expense of a long journey merely for the sake of collecting information? If therefore there be no ostensible motive for the journey, as that of business or of traffic, they at once assign the one in their opinion most likely". Fraser. Journey into Khorasan. p 579.

(2) "I love everything that's old; old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wine"

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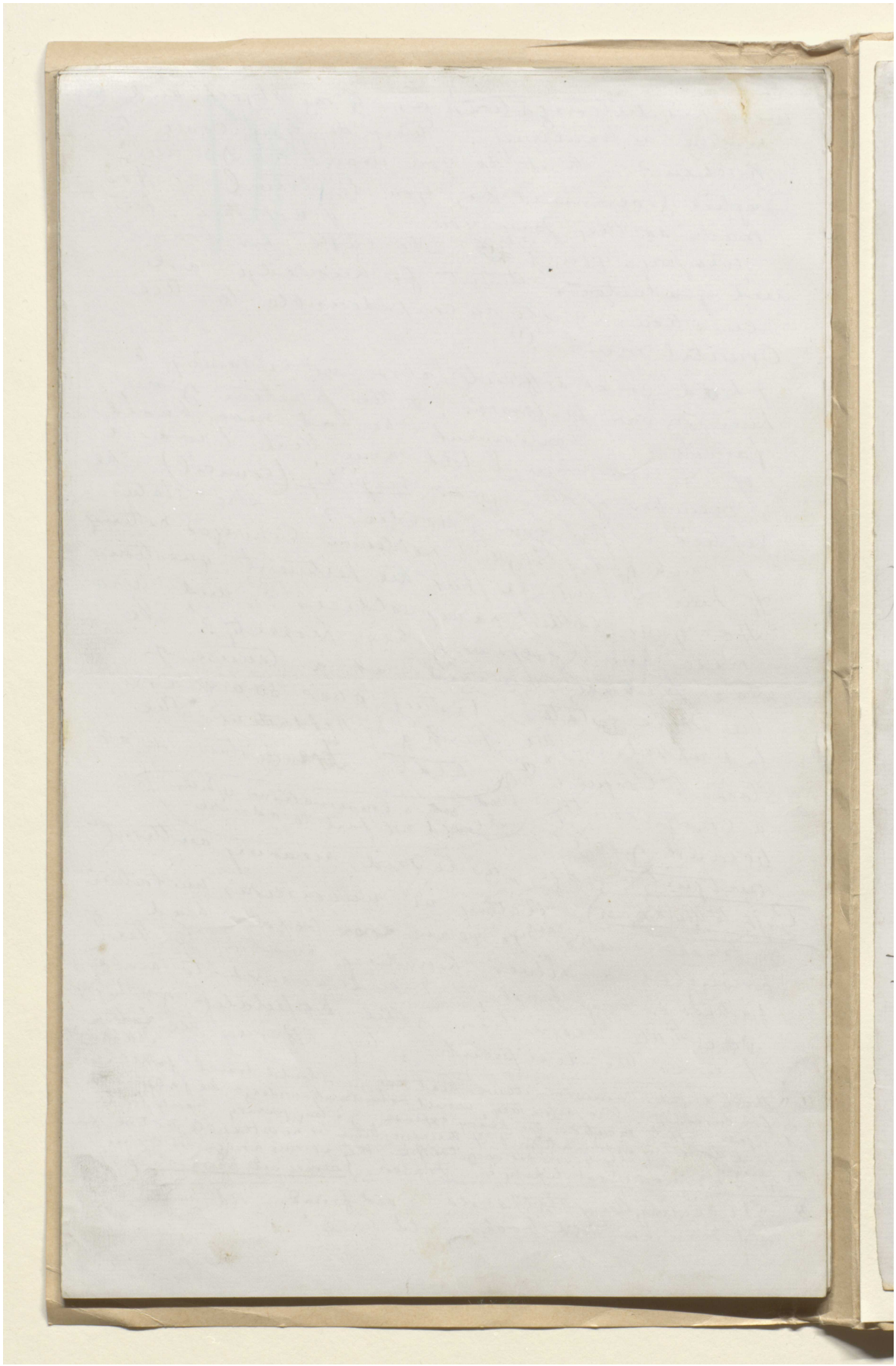

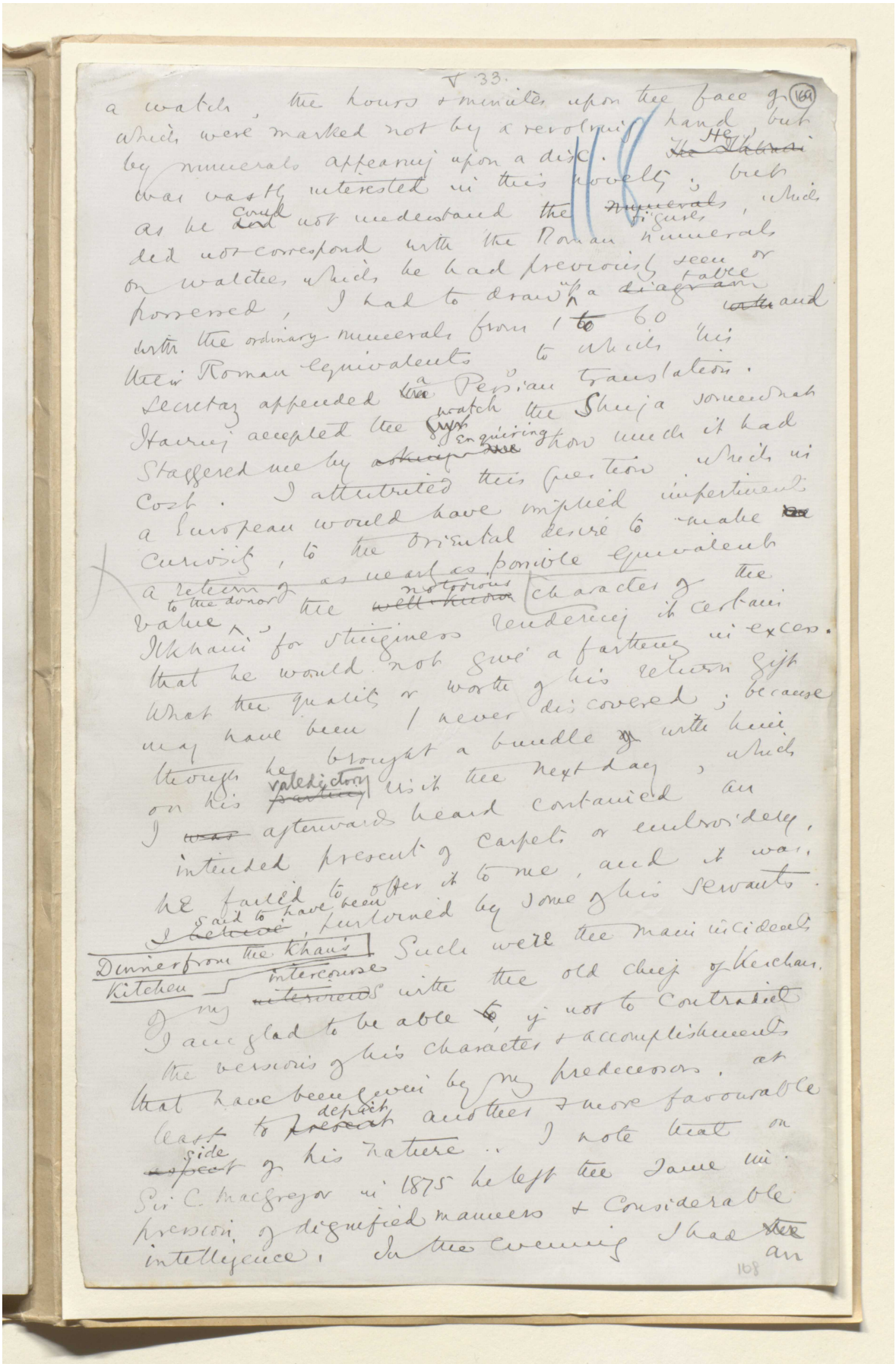

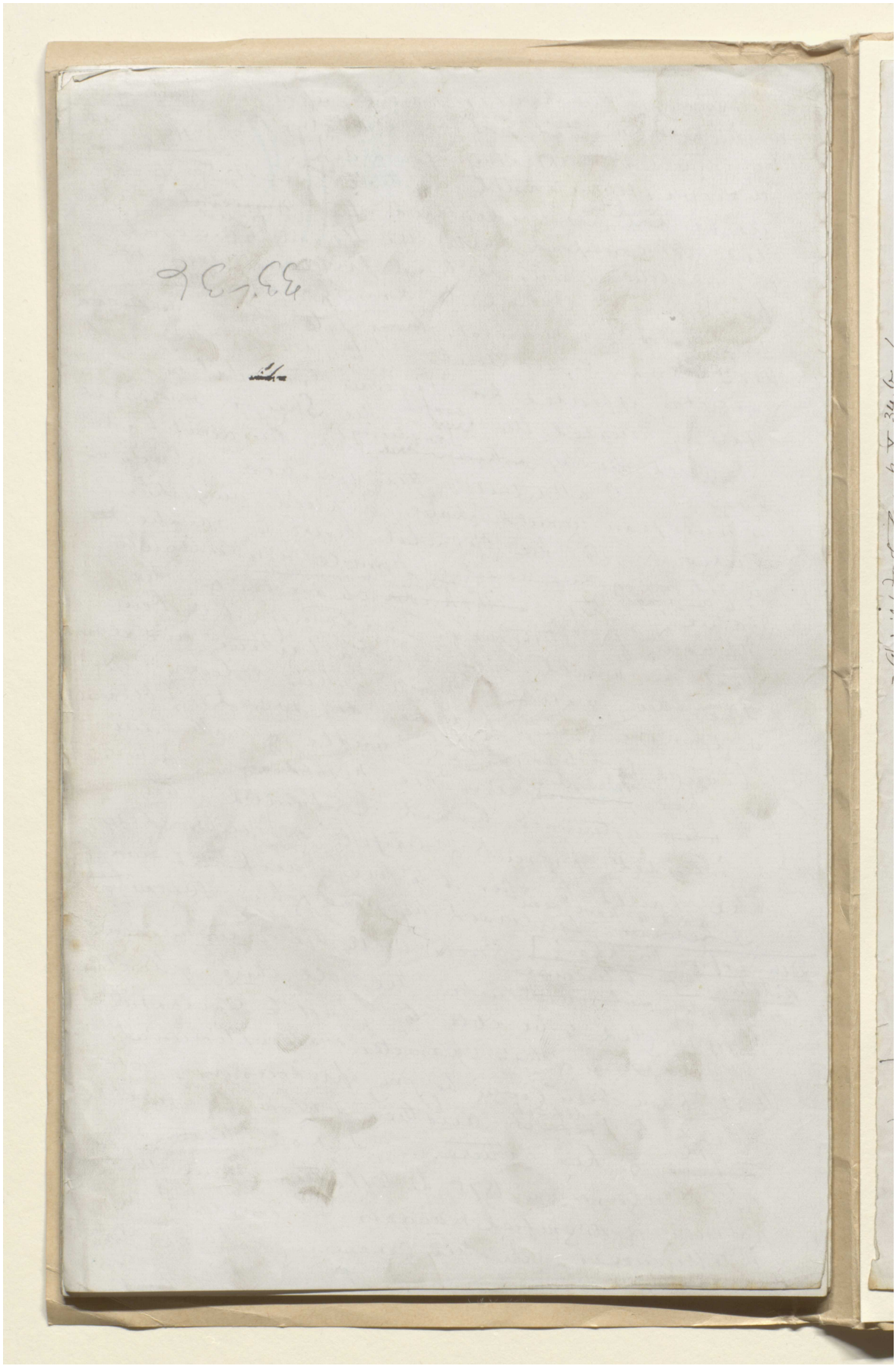

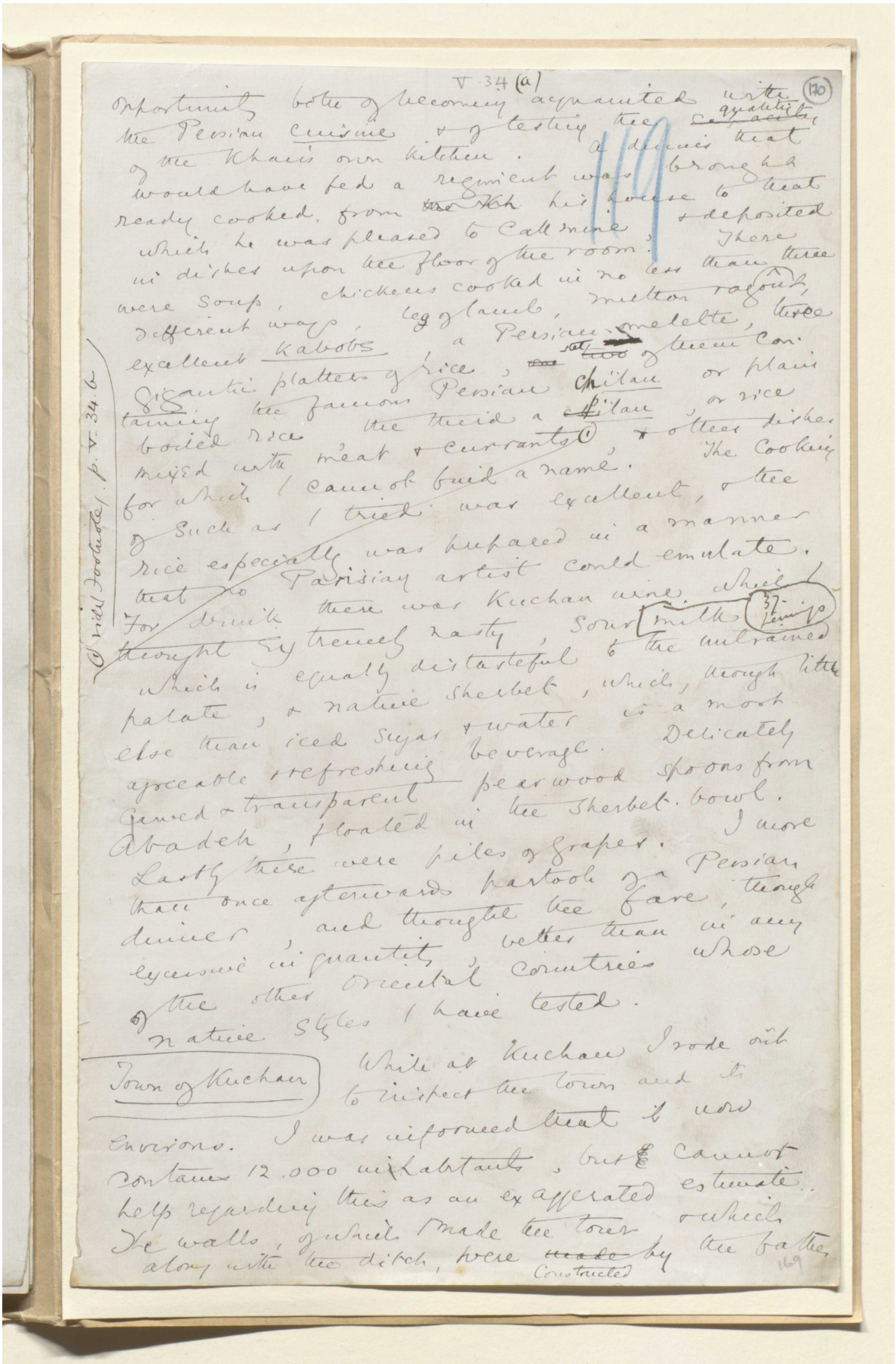

V. 34 (a) (170)

opportunity both of becoming acquainted with the Persian cuisine & of testing the ~~capacity~~ quality of the Khan's own kitchen. A dinner that would have fed a regiment was brought ready cooked from ~~the Kh~~ his house to that which he was pleased to call mine, & deposited in dishes upon the floor of the room. There were soup, chickens cooked in no less than three different ways, leg of lamb, mutton ragout, excellent kabobs, a Persian omelette, three gigantic platters of rice, ~~one~~ set ~~two~~ of them containing the famous Persian chilau or plain boiled rice, the third a ~~c~~pilau, or rice mixed with meat & currants(1), & other dishes for which I cannot find a name. The cooking of such as I tried was excellent, & the rice especially was prepared in a manner that no Parisian artist could emulate. For drink there was Kuchan wine, which I thought extremely nasty, sour milk (37 Jennings) which is equally distasteful to the untrained palate, & native sherbet, which, though little else than iced sugar & water is a most agreeable & refreshing beverage. Delicately carved & transparent pearwood spoons from Abadeh, floated in the sherbet bowl. Lastly there were piles of grapes. I more than once afterwards partook of a Persian dinner, and thought the fare, though excessive in quantity, better than in any of the other Oriental countries whose native styles I have tested.

(1) vide Footnote, p. V. 34 b

Town of Kuchan

While at Kuchan I rode out to inspect the town and its environs. I was informed that it now contains 12,000 inhabitants, but I cannot help regarding this as an exaggerated estimate. The walls, of which I made the tour & which along with the ditch, were ~~made~~ constructed by the father

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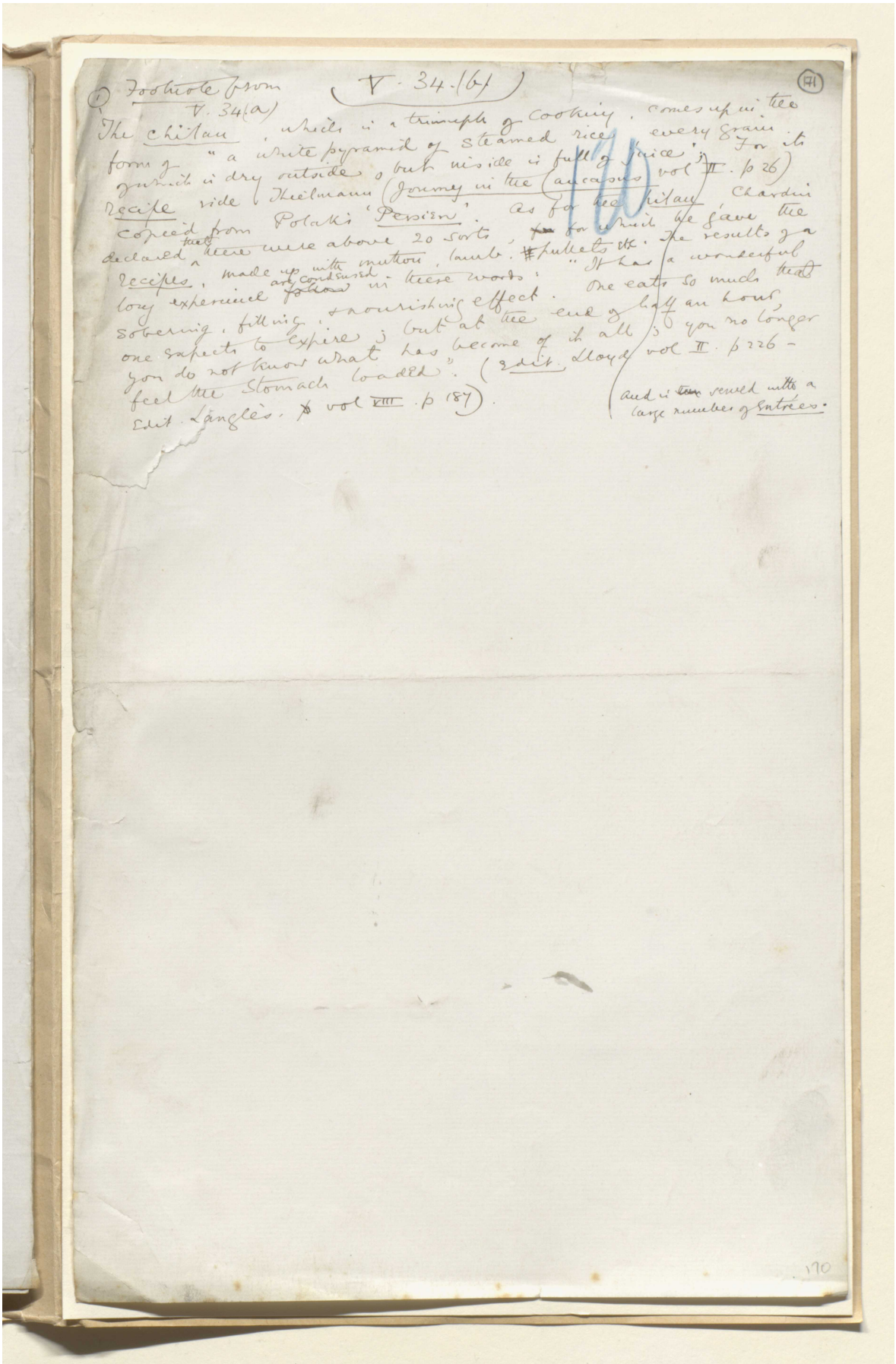

(1) Footnote from V. 34(a) (V. 34.(b)) (171)

The chilau, which is a triumph of cooking, comes up in the form of "a white pyramid of steamed rice, every grain of which is dry outside, but inside is full of juice"; For its recipe vide Thielmann (Journey in the Caucasus vol II. p 26) copied from Polak's 'Persien'. As for the pilau, Chardin declared that there were above 20 sorts, for which he gave the recipes, made up with mutton, lamb, pullets etc. The results of a long experience are condensed in these words: "It has a wonderful sobering, filling, & nourishing effect. One eats so much that one expects to expire; but at the end of half an hour, you do not know what has become of it all; you no longer feel the stomach loaded". (Edit. Lloyd vol II. p 226 - Edit. Langlès. vol VIII. p 187).

And is served with a large number of entrées.

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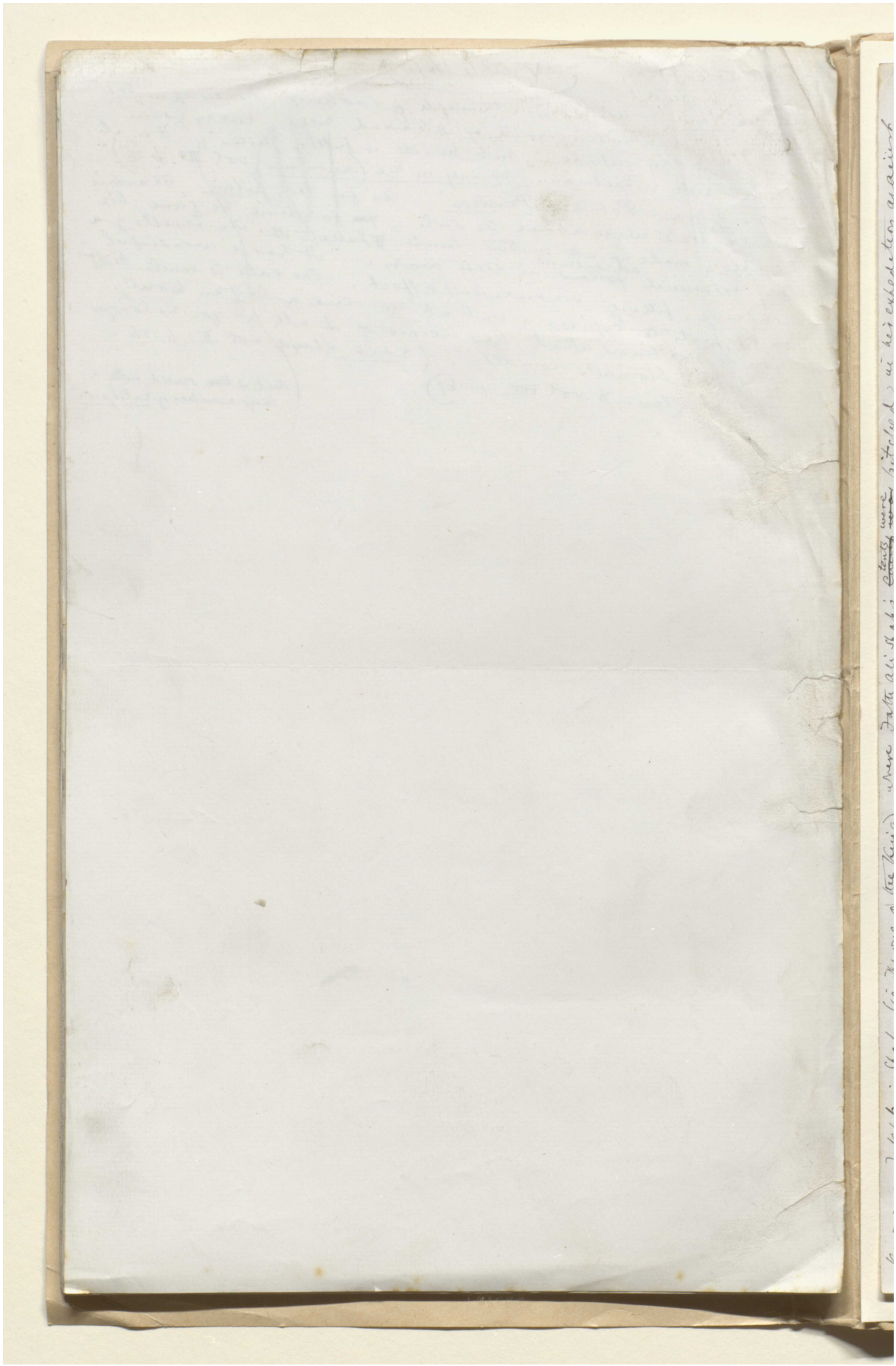

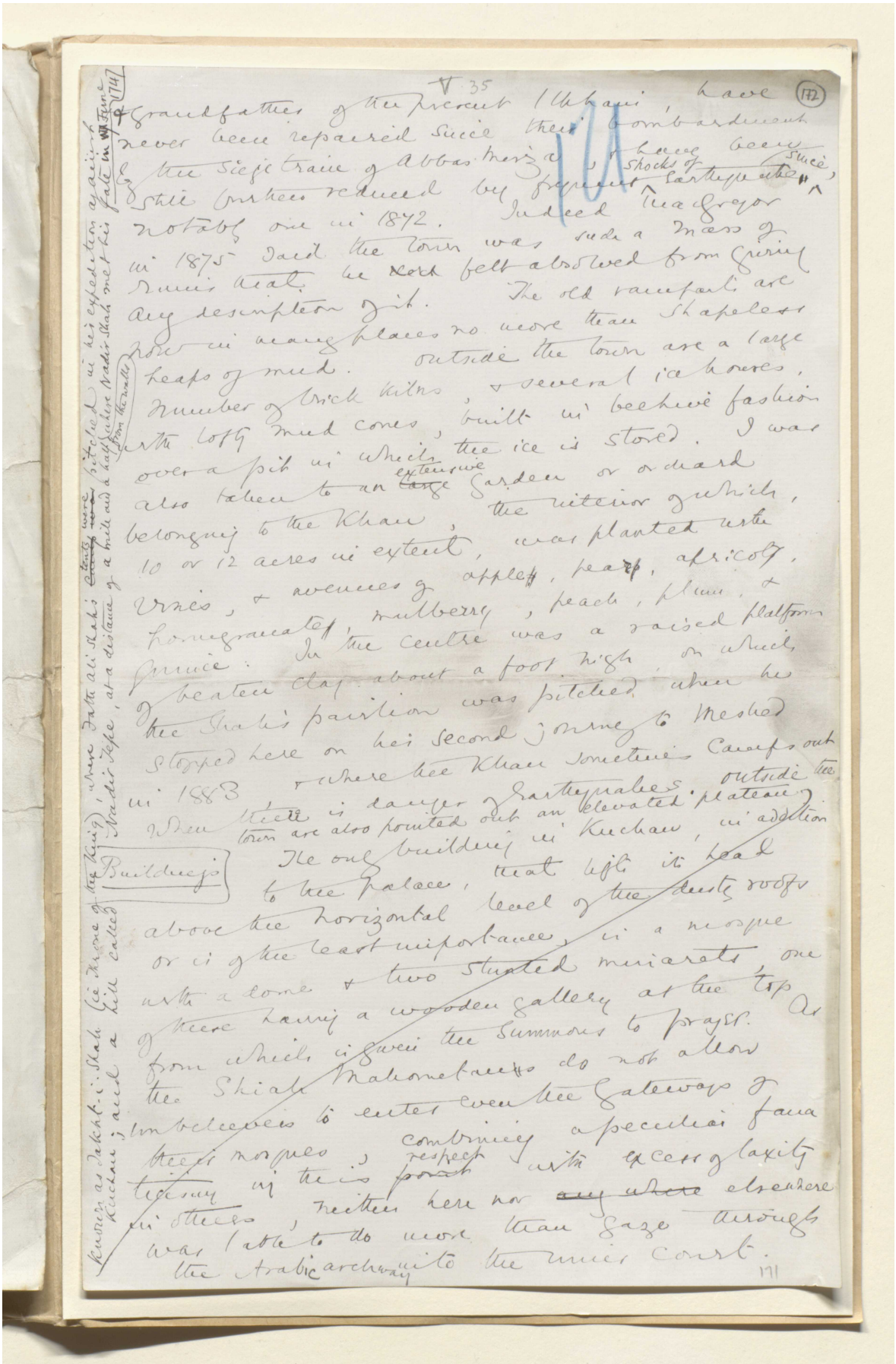

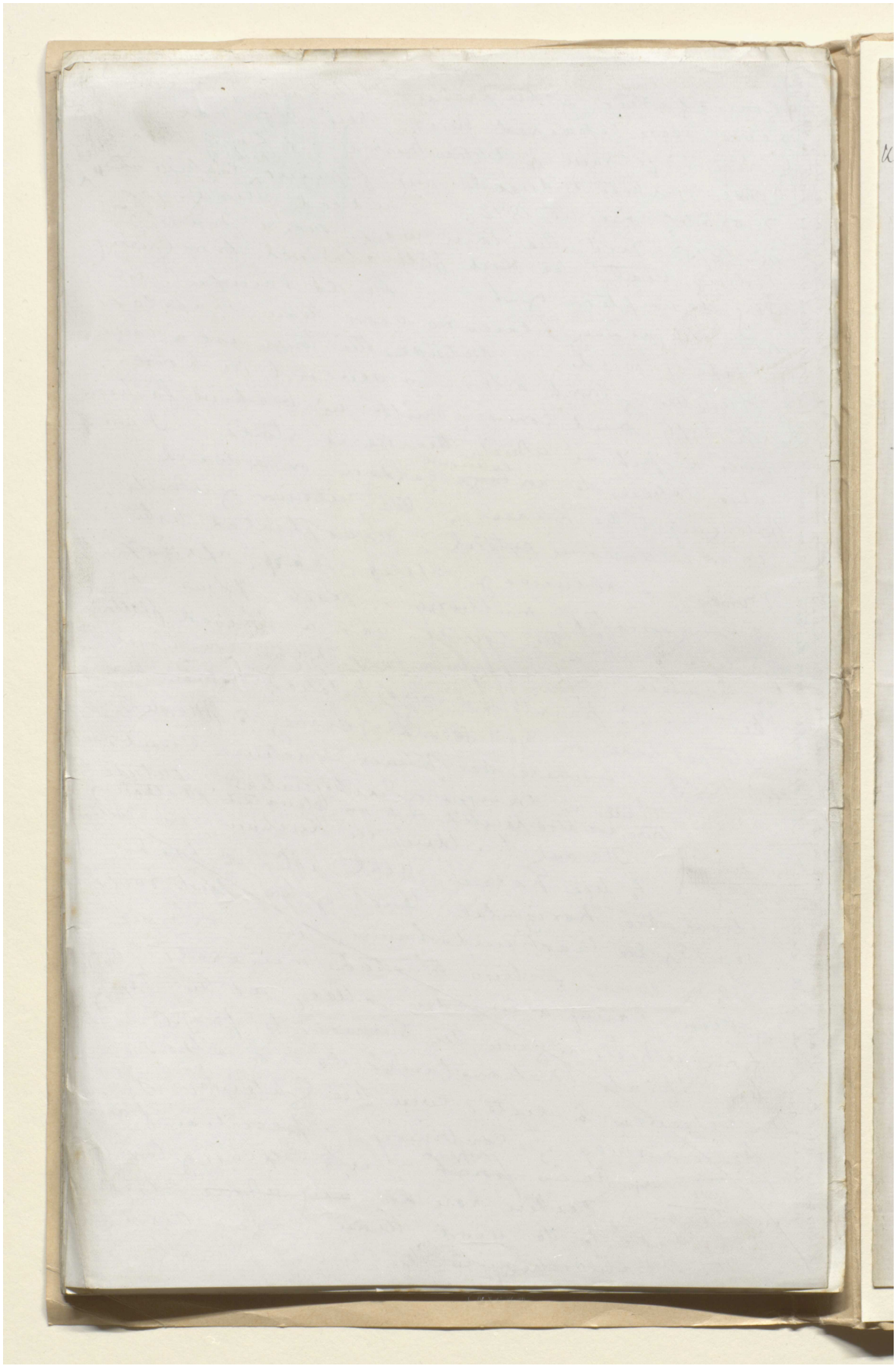

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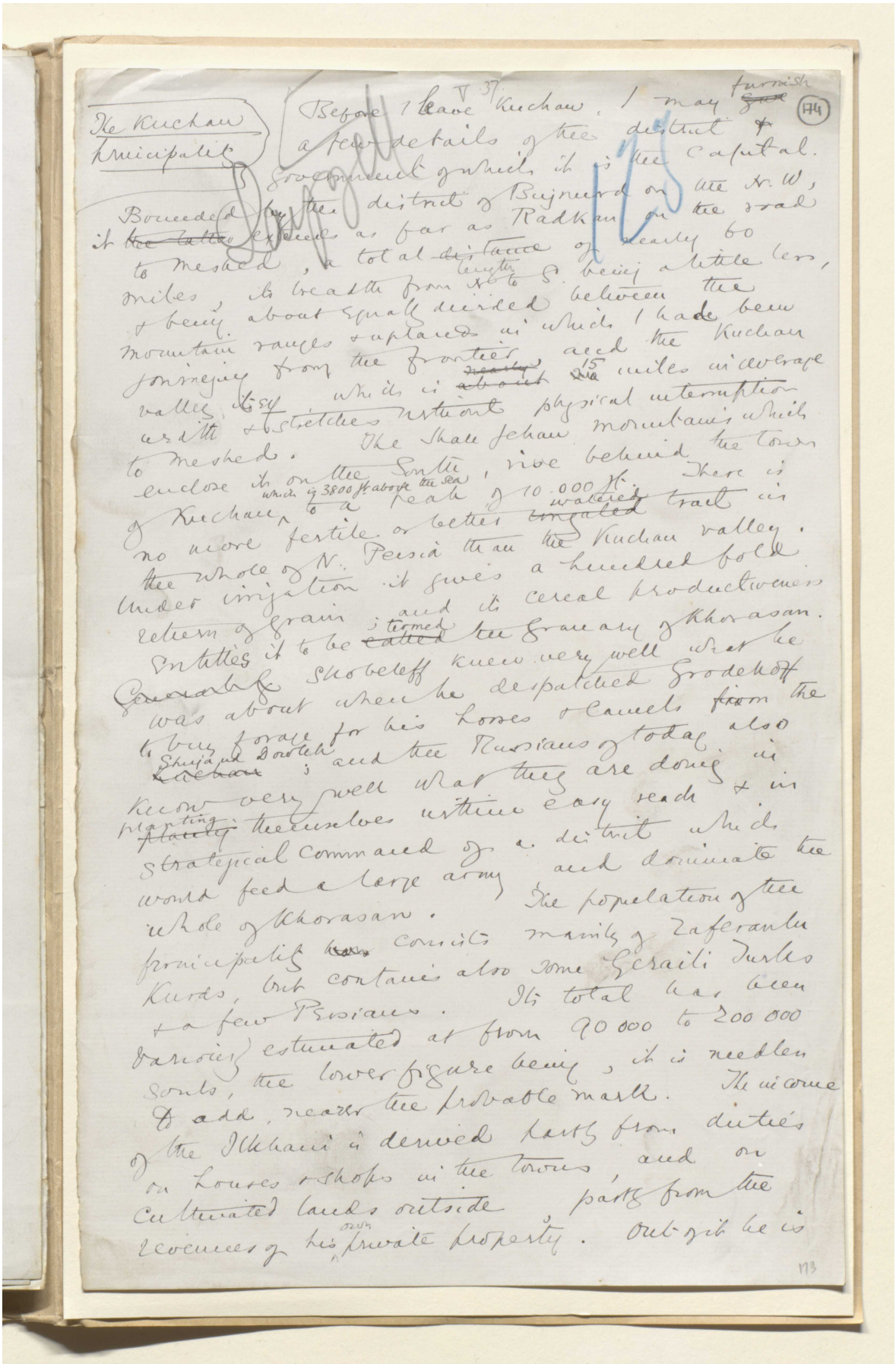

The Kuchan Municipality

Before I leave Kuchan, I may furnish a few details of this district & Government which it is the Capital.

Bounded by the district of Bujnurd on the N.W, it extends as far as Radkan on the road to Meshed, a total distance of nearly 60 miles, its breadth from N. to S. being a little less, & being about equally divided between the mountain ranges & uplands in which I have been journeying from the frontier and the Kuchan valley which is about 15 miles in average width & stretches without physical interruption to Meshed. The Shah Jehan mountains which enclose it on the South, rise behind the town of Kuchan to a peak of 10,000 ft. which is 3800 ft above the sea. There is no more fertile or better watered tract in the whole of N. Persia than the Kuchan valley. Under irrigation it gives a hundred fold return of grain; and its cereal productiveness entitles it to be called the Granary of Khorasan. Generally Shobeleff knew very well what he was about when he despatched Grodekoff to buy forage for his horses & camels from the Kuchan district; and the Russians of today also know very well what they are doing in planting themselves within easy reach & in strategical command of a district which would feed a large army and dominate the whole of Khorasan.

The population of this principality consists mainly of Zaferanlu Kurds, but contains also some Geraili Turks & a few Persians. Its total has been variously estimated at from 90 000 to 200 000 souls, the lower figure being, it is needless to add, nearer the probable mark. The income of the Ilkhani is derived partly from duties on Looms & shops in the towns, and on cultivated lands outside, partly from the revenues of his own private property. Outside he is



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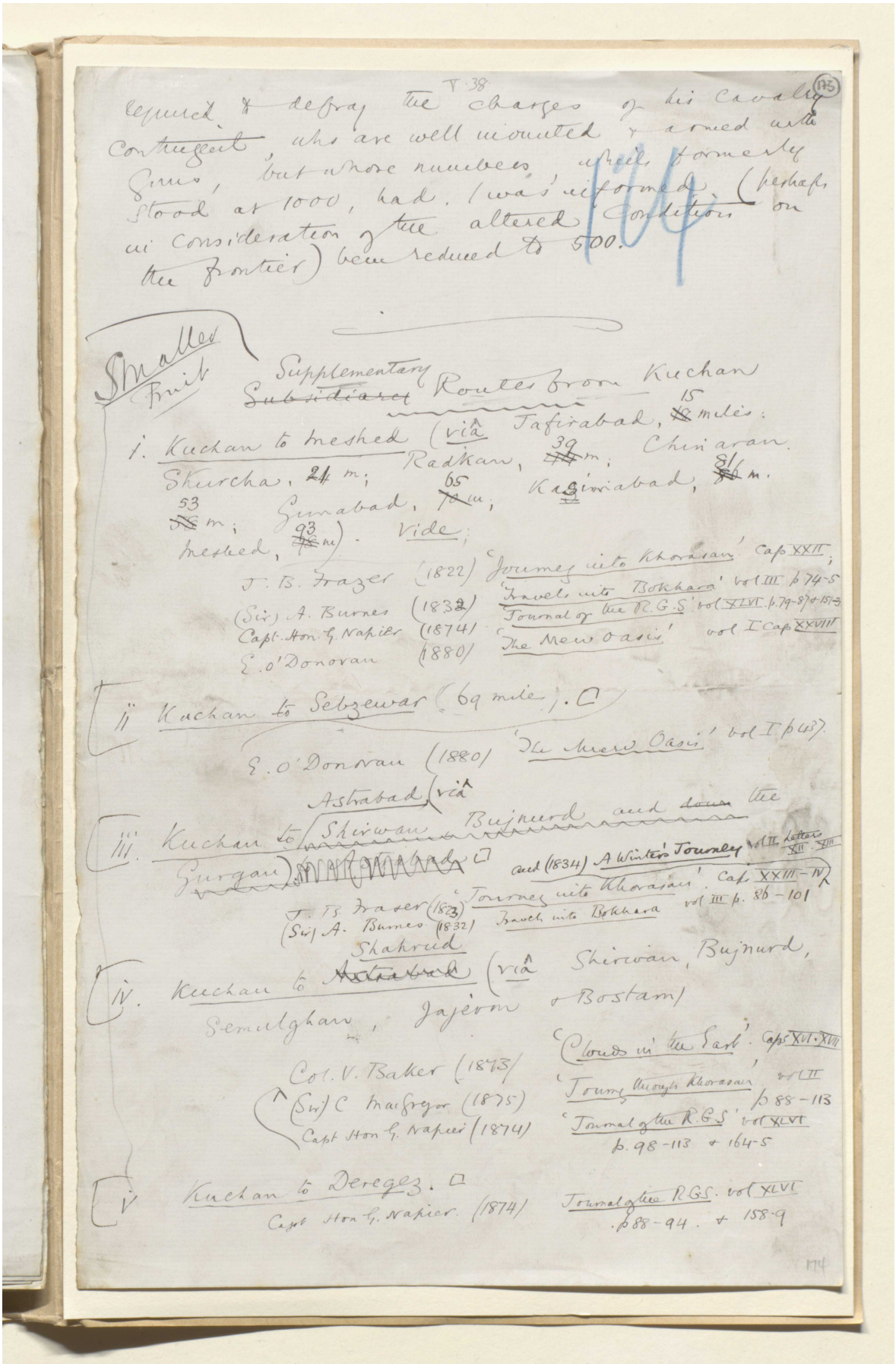

V. 38 (175)

required to defray the charges of his cavalry contingent, who are well mounted & armed with guns, but whose numbers, which formerly stood at 1000, had, I was informed, (perhaps in consideration of the altered condition on the frontier) been reduced to 500.

Smaller Fruit

Supplementary ~~Subsidiary~~ Routes from Kuchan

i. Kuchan to Meshed (viâ Tafirabad, 15 miles; Shurcha, 21 m; Radkan, 39 m; Chinaran, 53 m; Gunabad, 65 m; Kasimabad, 81 m; Meshed, 93 m). Vide;

J. B. Frazer (1822) 'Journey into Khorasan' Cap XXII;
(Sir) A. Burnes (1832) 'Travels into Bokhara' vol III p 74-5
Capt. Hon. G. Napier (1874) 'Journal of the R.G.S.' vol XLVI. p. 79-87 & 151-3
E. O'Donovan (1880) 'The New Oasis' vol I Cap XXVIII

ii. Kuchan to Sebzewar (69 miles). □

E. O'Donovan (1880) 'The New Oasis' vol I p 437.

iii. Kuchan to Astrabad (viâ Shirwan, Bujnurd and ~~down~~ the Gurgan) ~~[illegible]~~ □

J. B. Fraser (1823) 'Journey into Khorasan' Cap XXIII-IV and (1834) A Winter's Journey vol II Letters XII-XIII
(Sir) A. Burnes (1832) Travels into Bokhara vol III p. 86-101

iv. Kuchan to ~~Astrabad~~ Shahrud (viâ Shirwan, Bujnurd, Semulghan, Jajerm & Bostam)

Col. V. Baker (1873) 'Clouds in the East' Caps XVI-XVII
(Sir) C. MacGregor (1875) 'Journey through Khorasan' vol II p 88-113
Capt Hon G. Napier (1874) 'Journal of the R.G.S.' vol XLVI p. 98-113 & 164-5

v. Kuchan to Deregez. □

Capt Hon G. Napier (1874) Journal of the R.G.S. vol XLVI p 88-94. & 158-9

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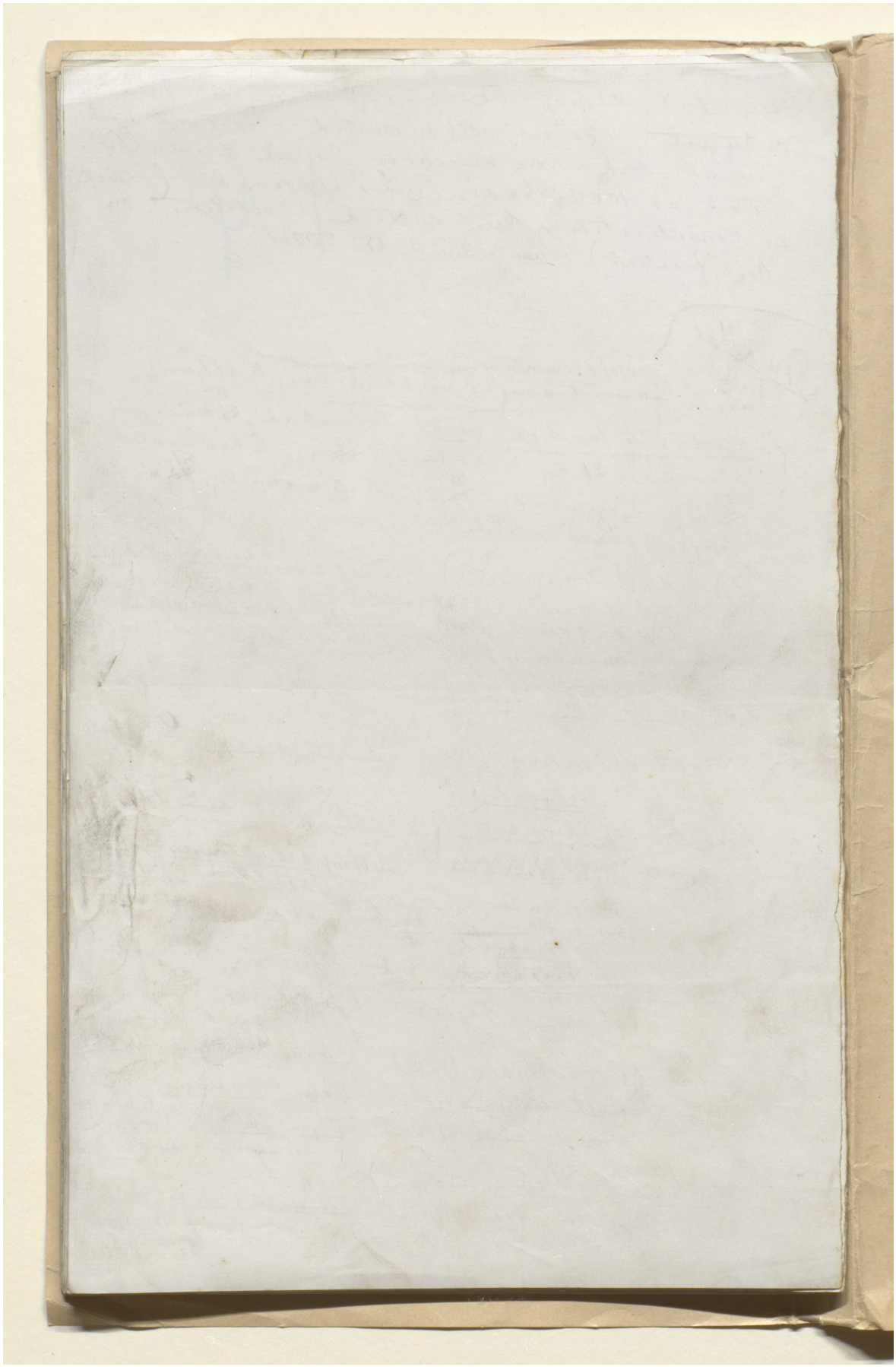

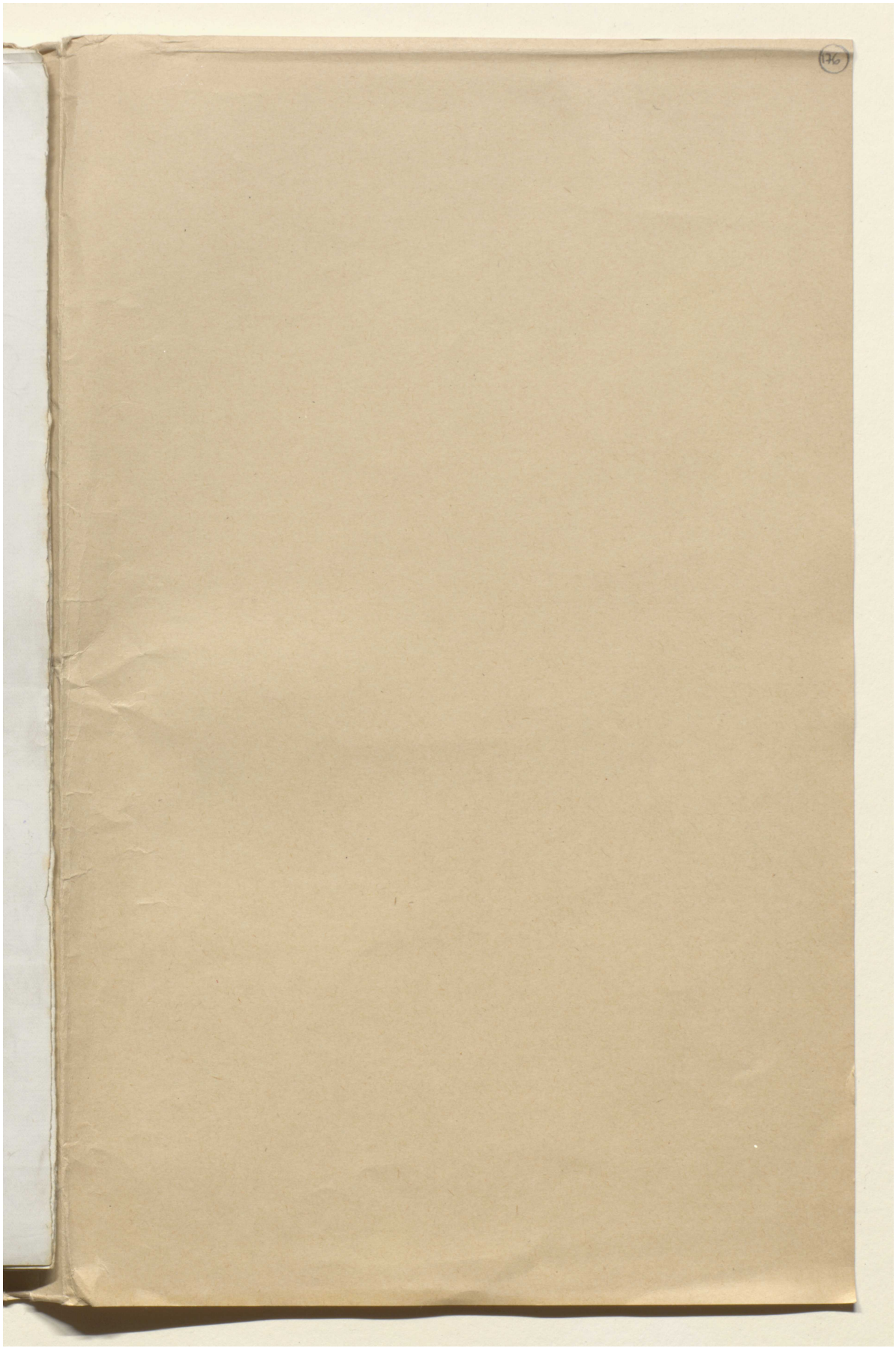

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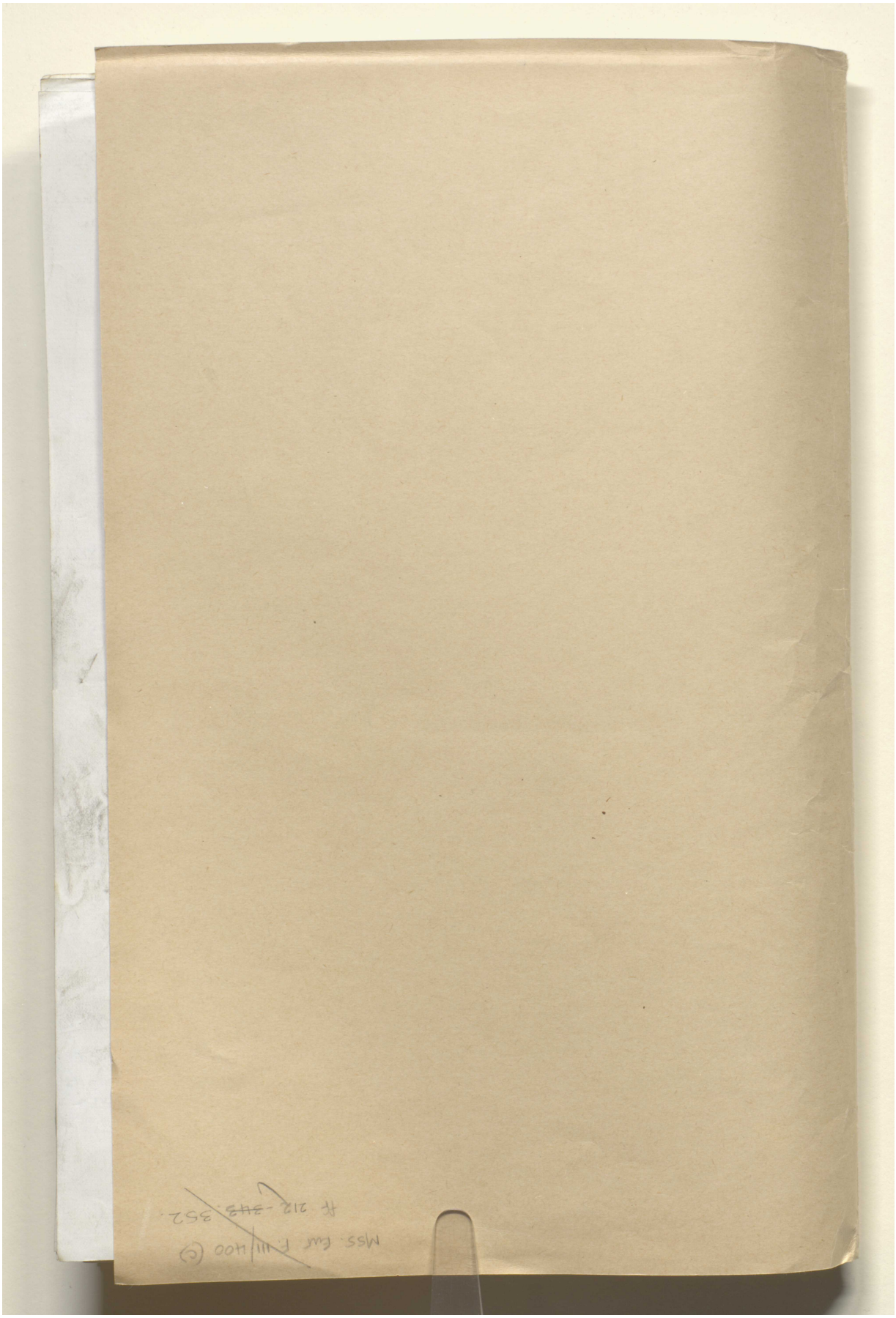

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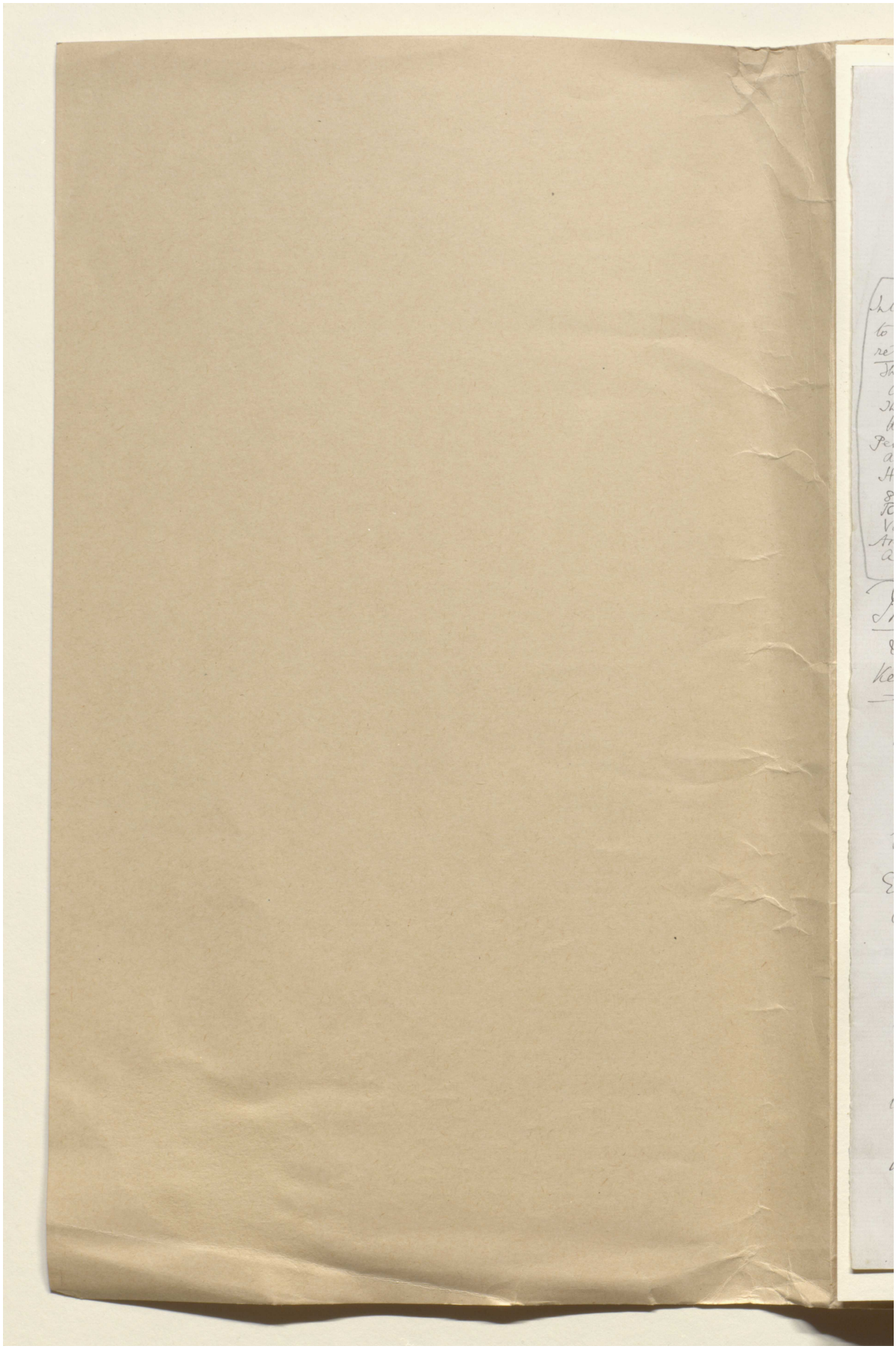

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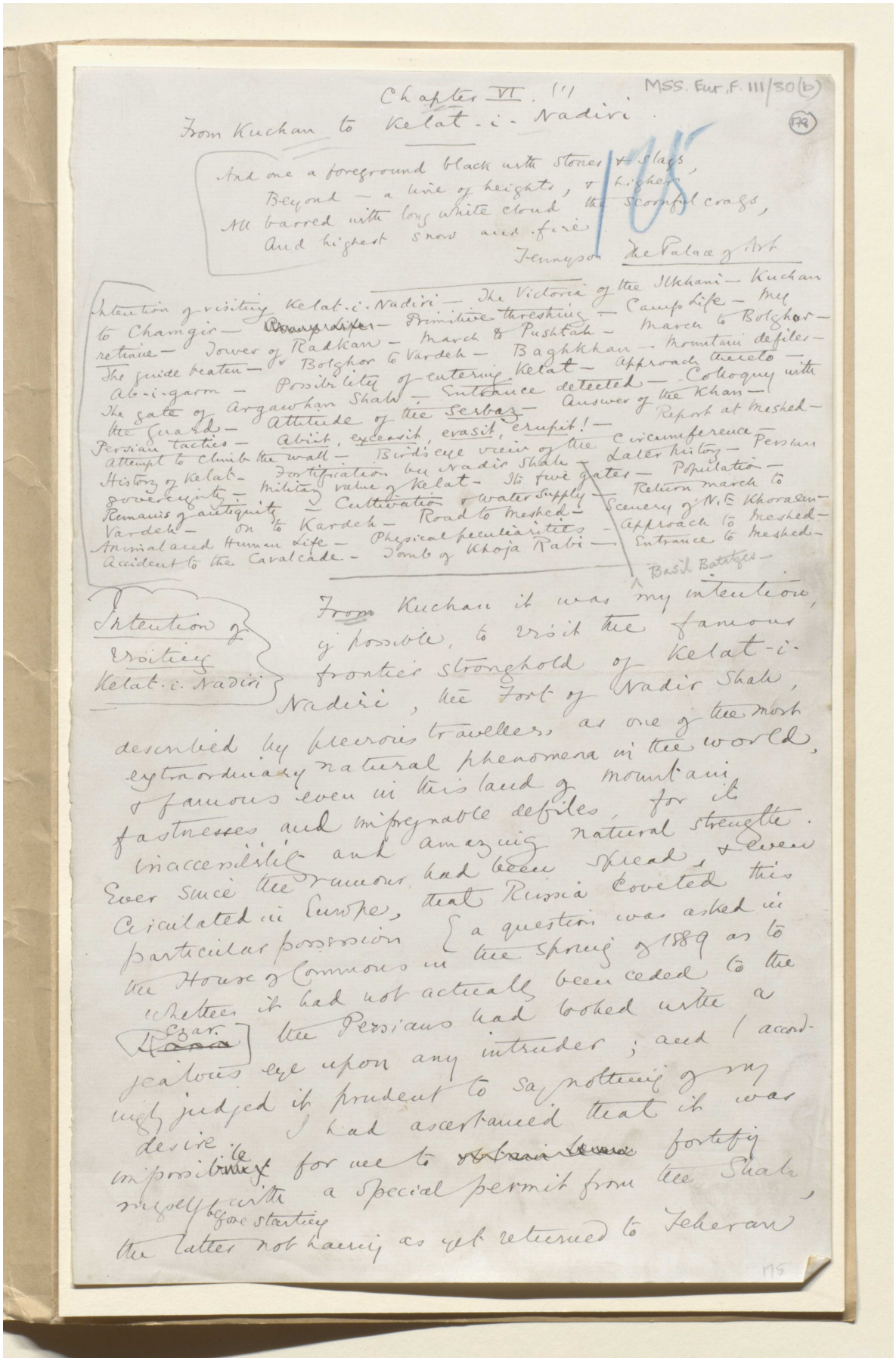

MSS. Eur. F. 111/30(b)

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Chapter VI. (1)

From Kuchan to Kelat-i-Nadiri.

And one a foreground black with stones & slags,
Beyond — a line of heights, & higher
All barred with long white cloud the scornful crags,
And highest snow and fire.

Tennyson The Palace of Art

Intention of visiting Kelat-i-Nadiri — The Victoria of the Ilkhani — Kuchan to Chamgir — ~~[illegible]~~ — Primitive threshing — Camp Life — My retinue — Tower of Radkan — March to Pushtah — March to Bolghor — The guide beaten — Bolghor to Vardeh — Baghkhan — Mountain defiles — Ab-i-garm — Possibility of entering Kelat — Approach thereto — The gate of Argawhan Shah — Entrance detected — Colloquy with the Guard — Attitude of the Serbaz — Answer of the Khan — Persian tactics — Abiit, excessit, evasit, erupit! — Report at Meshed — attempt to climb the wall — Bird's eye view of the Circumference — History of Kelat — Fortification by Nadir Shah — Later history — Persian sovereignty — Military value of Kelat — Its five gates — Population — Remains of antiquity — Cultivation & water supply — Return march to Vardeh — On to Kardeh — Road to Meshed — Scenery of N.E. Khorasan — Animal and Human Life — Physical peculiarities — Approach to Meshed — Accident to the Cavalcade — Tomb of Khoja Rabi — Entrance to Meshed — Basil Batatzes —

Intention of visiting Kelat-i-Nadiri

From Kuchan it was my intention, if possible, to visit the famous frontier stronghold of Kelat-i-Nadiri, the Fort of Nadir Shah, described by previous travellers as one of the most extraordinary natural phenomena in the world, & famous even in this land of mountain fastnesses and impregnable defiles, for its inaccessibility and amazing natural strength. Ever since the rumour had been spread, & even circulated in Europe, that Russia coveted this particular possession [a question was asked in the House of Commons in the spring of 1889 as to whether it had not actually been ceded to the ~~[illegible]~~ Czar] the Persians had looked with a jealous eye upon any intruder; and I accordingly judged it prudent to say nothing of my desire. I had ascertained that it was impossible for me to ~~[illegible]~~ fortify myself before starting with a special permit from the Shah, the latter not having as yet returned to Teheran

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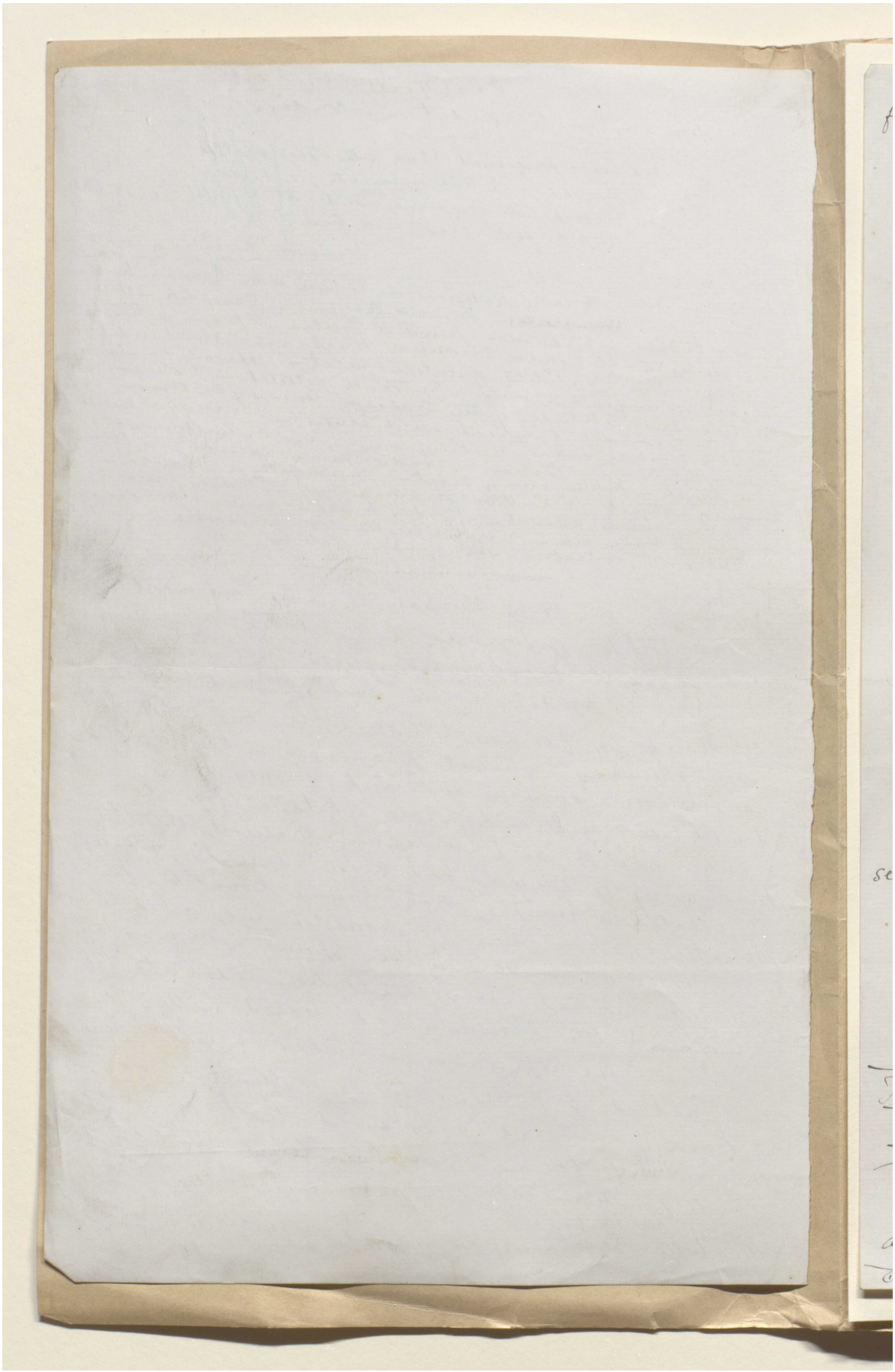
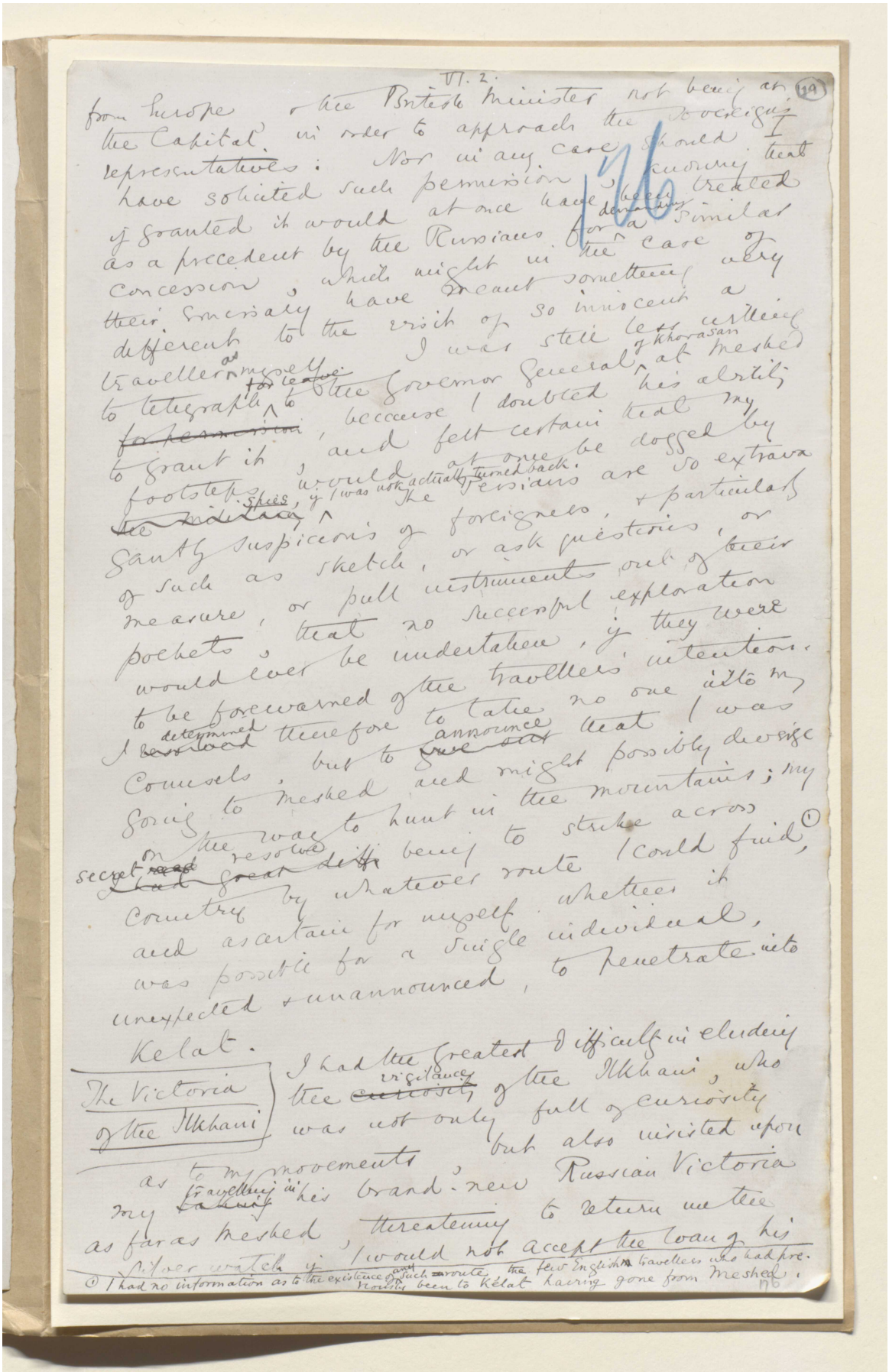


مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [١٧٩و] (١٣٥٥/٣٥٧)

VI. 2.

(19)



from Europe & the British Minister not being at the Capital in order to approach the Sovereign's representatives: Nor in any case should I have solicited such permission, knowing that if granted it would at once have been treated as a precedent by the Russians for demanding a similar concession, which might in the case of their Emissary have meant something very different to the visit of so innocent a traveller as myself. I was still less willing to telegraph for leave to the Governor General of Khorasan at Meshed ~~for permission~~, because I doubted his ability to grant it, and felt certain that my footsteps would at once be dogged by ~~the military~~ spies, if I was not actually turned back. The Persians are so extravagantly suspicious of foreigners, & particularly of such as sketch, or ask questions, or measure, or pull instruments out of their pockets, that no successful exploration would ever be undertaken, if they were to be forewarned of the traveller's intention. I ~~resolved~~ determined therefore to take no one into my counsels, but to ~~give out~~ announce that I was going to Meshed and might possibly diverge on the way to hunt in the mountains; my secret ~~and~~ resolve ~~I had great diff~~ being to strike across country by whatever route I could find,[1] and ascertain for myself whether it was possible for a single individual, unexpected & unannounced, to penetrate into Kelat.

The Victoria of the Ilkhani

I had the greatest difficulty in eluding the ~~curiosity~~ vigilance of the Ilkhani, who was not only full of curiosity as to my movements, but also insisted upon my ~~taking~~ travelling in his brand-new Russian Victoria as far as Meshed, threatening to return me the silver watch if I would not accept the loan of his

[1] I had no information as to the existence of any such route, the few English travellers who had previously been to Kelat having gone from Meshed.

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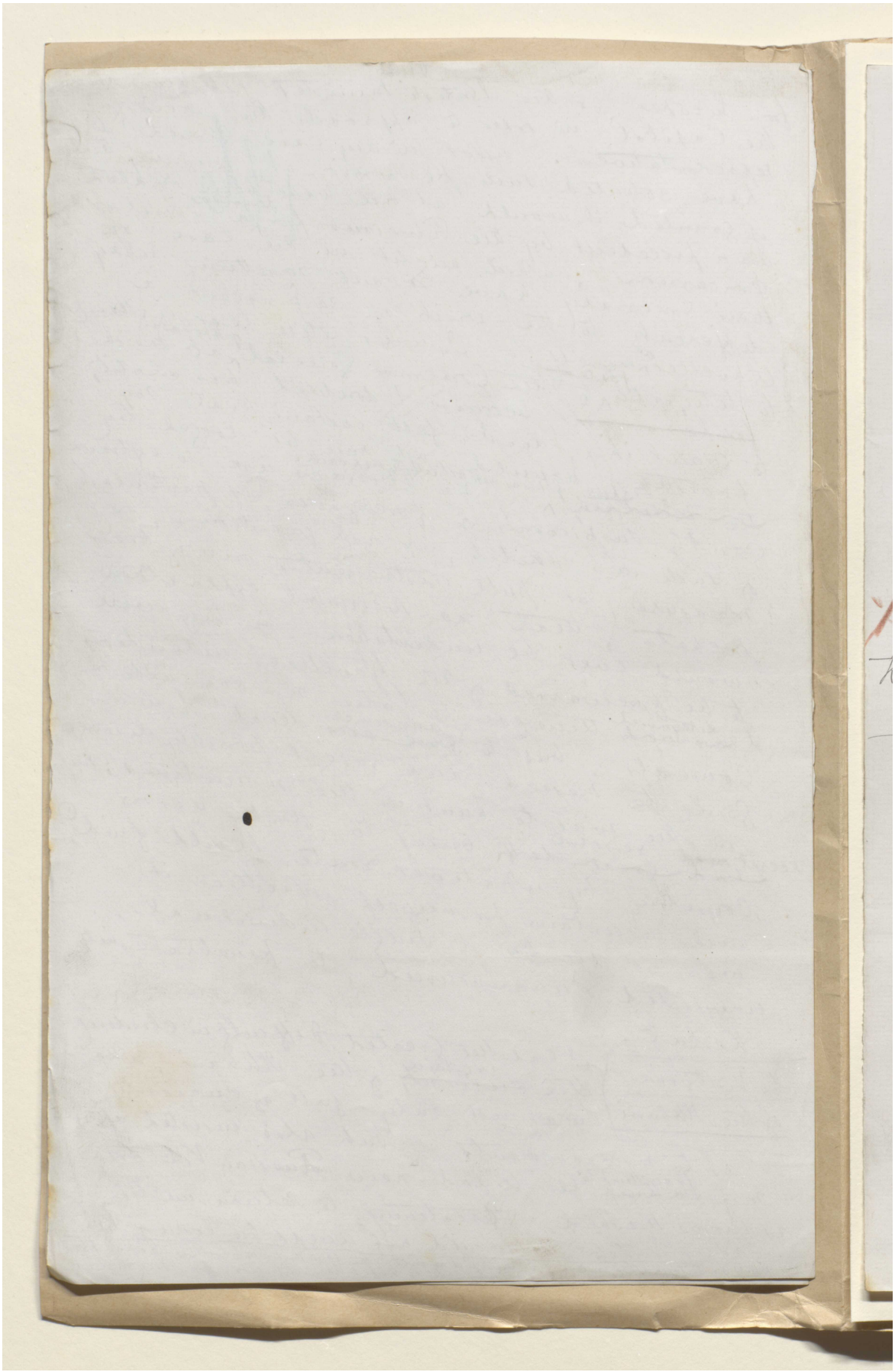

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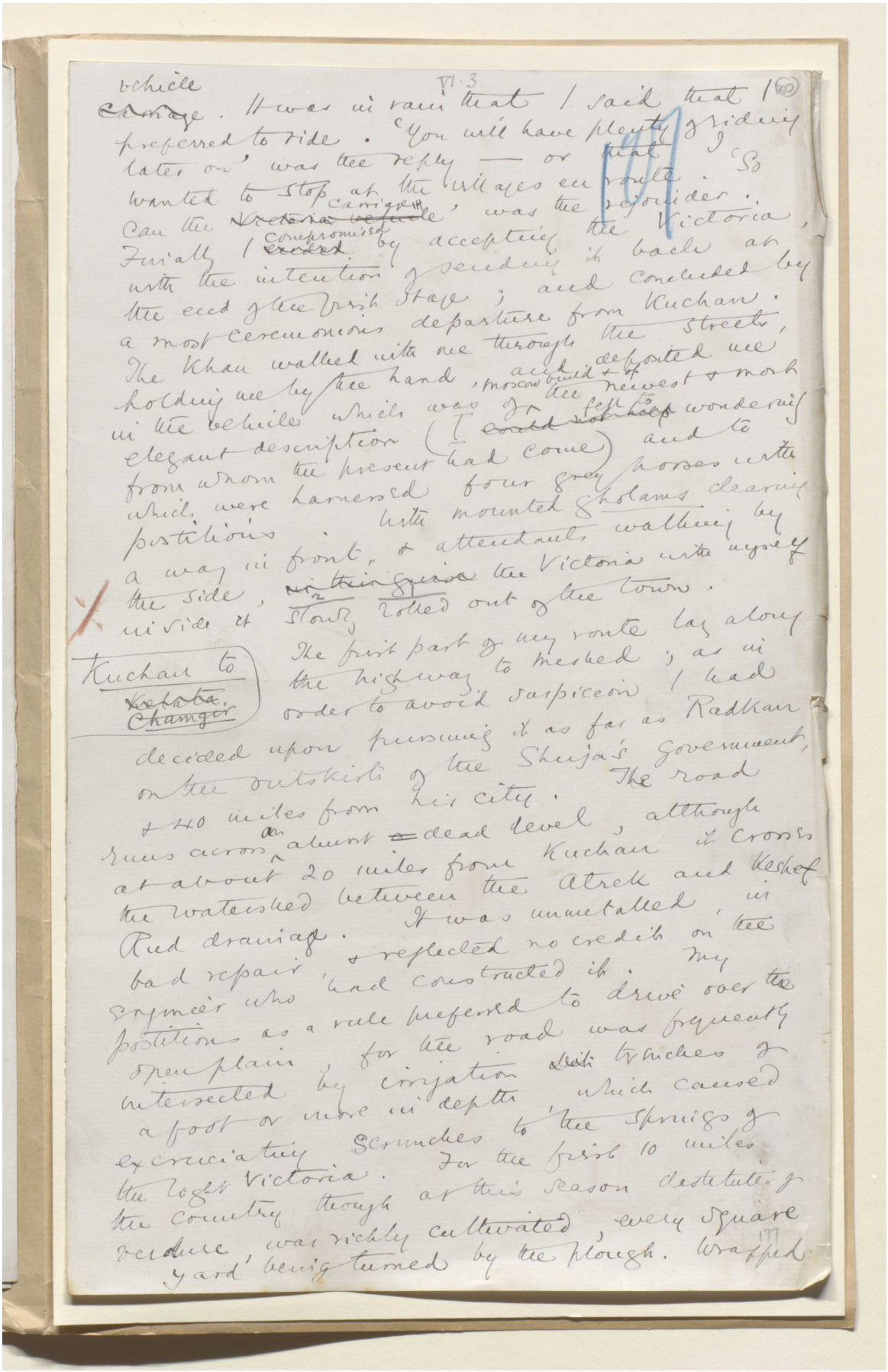

vehicle ~~carriage~~. It was in vain that I said that I preferred to ride. 'You will have plenty of riding later on' was the reply — or that I wanted to stop at the villages en route. 'So can the ~~Victoria vehicle~~ carriage' was the rejoinder. Finally I ~~ended~~ compromised by accepting the Victoria, with the intention of sending it back at the end of the first stage; and concluded by a most ceremonious departure from Kuchan. The Khan walked with me through the streets, holding me by the hand, and deposited me in the vehicle which was of Moscow build & of the newest & most elegant description (I ~~could not help~~ fell to wondering from whom the present had come) and to which were harnessed four grey horses with postilions. With mounted gholams clearing a way in front, & attendants walking by the side, ~~in this guise~~ the Victoria with myself inside it slowly rolled out of the town.

Kuchan to ~~Kelata~~ Chamgir

The first part of my route lay along the highway to Meshed; as in order to avoid suspicion I had decided upon pursuing it as far as Radkan on the outskirts of the Shuja's Government, & 40 miles from his city. The road runs across an almost ~~a~~ dead level, although at about 20 miles from Kuchan it crosses the watershed between the Atrek and Keshef Rud drainage. It was unmetalled, in bad repair, & reflected no credit on the engineer who had constructed it. My postilions as a rule preferred to drive over the open plain, for the road was frequently intersected by irrigation ~~dis~~ trenches of a foot or more in depth which caused excruciating scrunches to the springs of the light Victoria. For the first 10 miles the country though at this season destitute of verdure, was richly cultivated, every square yard being turned by the plough. Wrapped

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VI. 4

(4)

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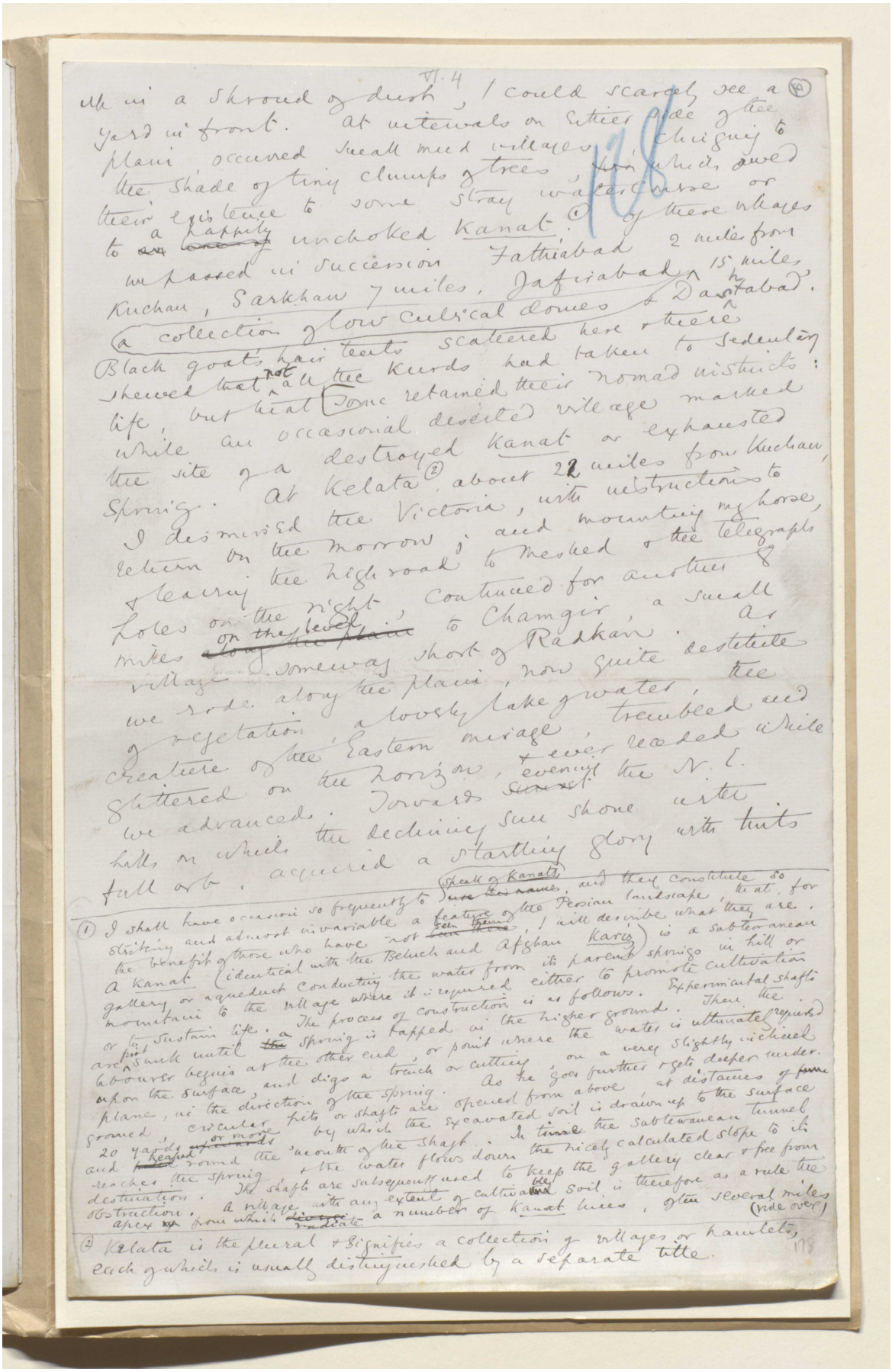

up in a shroud of dust, I could scarcely see a yard in front. At intervals on either side of the plain occurred small mud villages, clinging to the shade of tiny clumps of trees, for which owed their existence to some stray watercourse or to a happily unchoked Kanat.(1) Of these villages we passed in succession Fathiabad 2 miles from Kuchan, Sarkhan 7 miles, Jafirabad 15 miles, a collection of low cubical domes & Dashtabad. Black goat's hair tents scattered here & there shewed that not all the Kurds had taken to sedentary life, but that some retained their nomad instincts: while an occasional deserted village marked the site of a destroyed Kanat or exhausted spring. At Kelata(2), about 22 miles from Kuchan, I dismissed the Victoria, with instructions to return on the morrow; and mounting my horse, & leaving the high road to Meshed & the telegraph poles on the right, continued for another 8 miles on the level to Chamgir, a small village somewhat short of Radkan. As we rode along the plain, now quite destitute of vegetation, a lovely lake of water, the creature of the Eastern mirage, trembled and glittered on the horizon, & ever receded while we advanced. Towards evening the N.E. hills on which the declining sun shone with full orb, acquired a startling glory with tints

(1) I shall have occasion so frequently to speak of Kanats, and they constitute so striking and almost invariable a feature of the Persian landscape, that, for the benefit of those who have not seen them, I will describe what they are. A Kanat (identical with the Beluch and Afghan Kariz) is a subterranean gallery or aqueduct conducting the water from its parent springs in hill or mountain to the village where it is required either to promote cultivation or to sustain life. The process of construction is as follows. Experimental shafts are first sunk until a spring is tapped in the higher ground. Then the labourer begins at the other end, or point where the water is ultimately required upon the surface, and digs a trench or cutting, on a very slightly inclined plane, in the direction of the spring. As he goes further & gets deeper under ground, circular pits or shafts are opened from above, at distances of 20 yards or more, by which the excavated soil is drawn up to the surface and heaped round the mouth of the shaft. In time the subterranean tunnel reaches the spring, & the water flows down the nicely calculated slope to its destination. The shafts are subsequently used to keep the gallery clear & free from obstruction. A village with any extent of cultivable soil is therefore as a rule the apex from which radiate a number of Kanat lines, often several miles (vide over)

(2) Kelata is the plural & signifies a collection of villages or hamlets, each of which is usually distinguished by a separate title.

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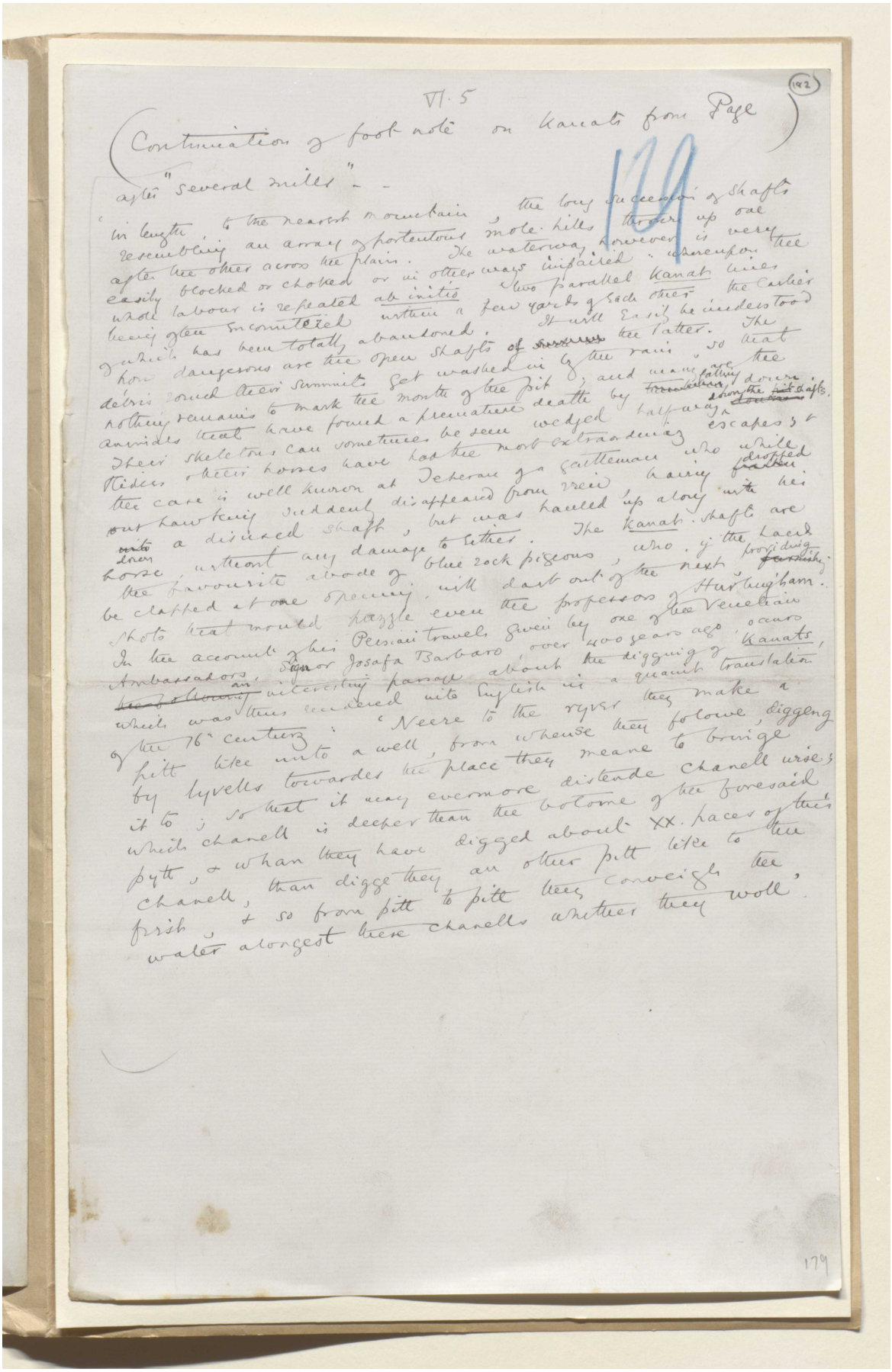

VI. 5

(Continuation of foot note on Kanats from Page 129)

after "several miles" - -

'in length, to the nearest mountain, the long succession of shafts resembling an array of portentous mole-hills thrown up one after the other across the plain. The waterway, however, is very easily blocked or choked or in other ways impaired: whereupon the whole labour is repeated ab initio two parallel Kanat lines being often encountered within a few yards of each other the earlier of which has been totally abandoned. It will easily be understood how dangerous are the open shafts of ~~[illegible]~~ the latter. The débris round their summits get washed in by the rain, so that nothing remains to mark the mouth of the pit; and many are the animals that have found a premature death by ~~[illegible]~~ falling down ~~[illegible]~~ down the ~~pit~~ shafts. Their skeletons can sometimes be seen wedged half-way. Riders & their horses have had the most extraordinary escapes; & the case is well known at Teheran of a gentleman who while out hawking suddenly disappeared from view, having ~~[illegible]~~ dropped ~~into~~ down a disused shaft, but was hauled up along with his horse, without any damage to either. The Kanat shafts are the favourite abode of blue rock pigeons, who, if the hand be clapped at one opening, will dart out of the next, providing ~~furnishing~~ shots that would puzzle even the professors of Hurlingham. In the account of his Persian travels given by one of the Venetian Ambassadors, Signor Josafa Barbaro, over 400 years ago, occurs ~~the following~~ an interesting passage about the digging of Kanats, which was thus rendered into English in a quaint translation of the 16th century: 'Neere to the ryver they make a pitt like unto a well, from whense they folowe, diggeng by lyvells towardes the place they meane to bringe it to; so that it may evermore distende chanell wise; which chanell is deeper than the bolome of the foresaid pytt, & whan they have digged about XX. paces of this chanell, than digge they an other pitt like to the first, & so from pitt to pitt they conveigh the water alongest these chanells whither they woll'.

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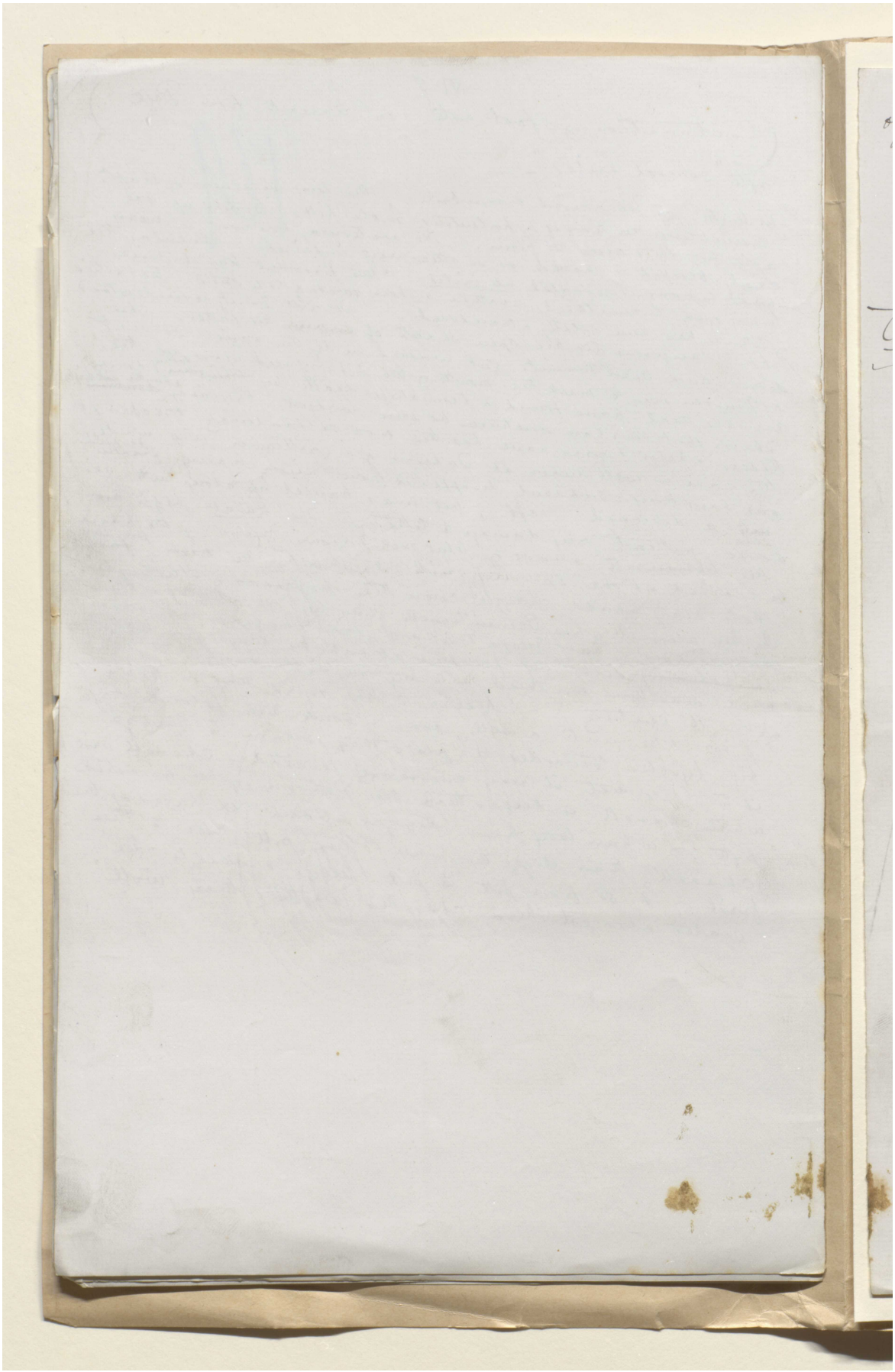
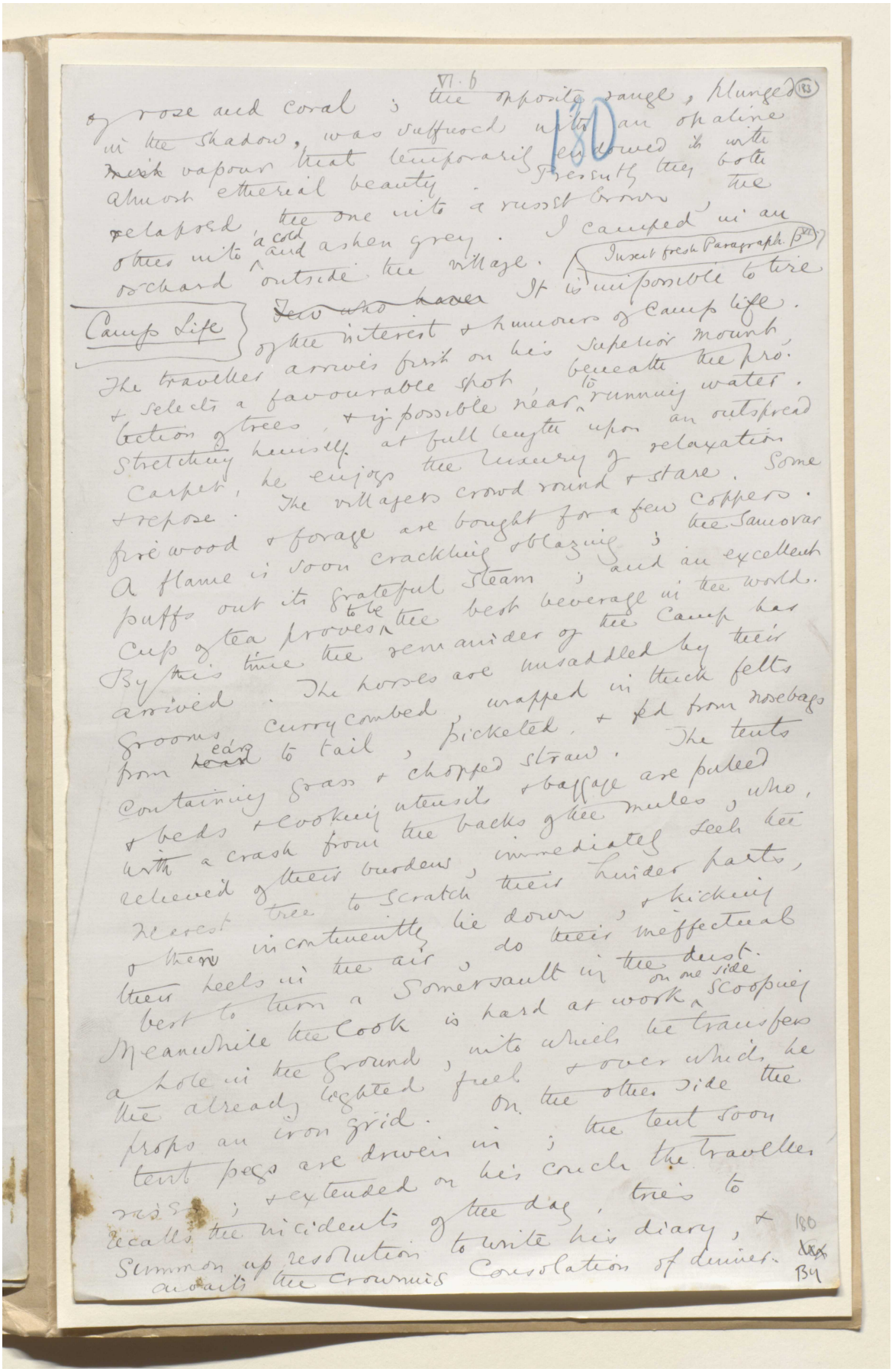


VI. 6 (183) 180



of rose and coral; the opposite range, plunged in the shadow, was suffused with an opaline ~~mish~~ vapour that temporarily endowed it with almost etherial beauty. Presently they both relapsed, the one into a russet brown, the other into a cold and ashen grey. I camped in an orchard outside the village. (Insert fresh Paragraph. β XI)

Camp Life

~~Few who have~~ It is impossible to tire of the interest & humours of Camp life. The traveller arrives first on his superior mount, & selects a favourable spot, beneath the protection of trees, & if possible near to running water. Stretching himself at full length upon an outspread carpet, he enjoys the luxury of relaxation & repose. The villagers crowd round & stare. Some firewood & forage are bought for a few coppers. A flame is soon crackling & blazing; the Samovar puffs out its grateful steam; and an excellent cup of tea proves to be the best beverage in the world. By this time the remainder of the Camp has arrived. The horses are unsaddled by their grooms, curry combed, wrapped in thick felts from ~~head~~ ears to tail, picketed, & fed from nosebags containing grass & chopped straw. The tents & beds & cooking utensils & baggage are pulled with a crash from the backs of the mules, who, relieved of their burdens, immediately seek the nearest tree to scratch their hinder parts, & then incontinently lie down, & kicking their heels in the air, do their ineffectual best to turn a somersault in the dust. Meanwhile the cook is hard at work on one side scooping a hole in the ground, into which he transfers the already lighted fuel & over which he props an iron grid. On the other side the tent pegs are driven in; the tent soon rises; & extended on his couch the traveller recalls the incidents of the day, tries to summon up resolution to write his diary, & awaits the crowning consolation of dinner.

180 ~~XXX~~ By

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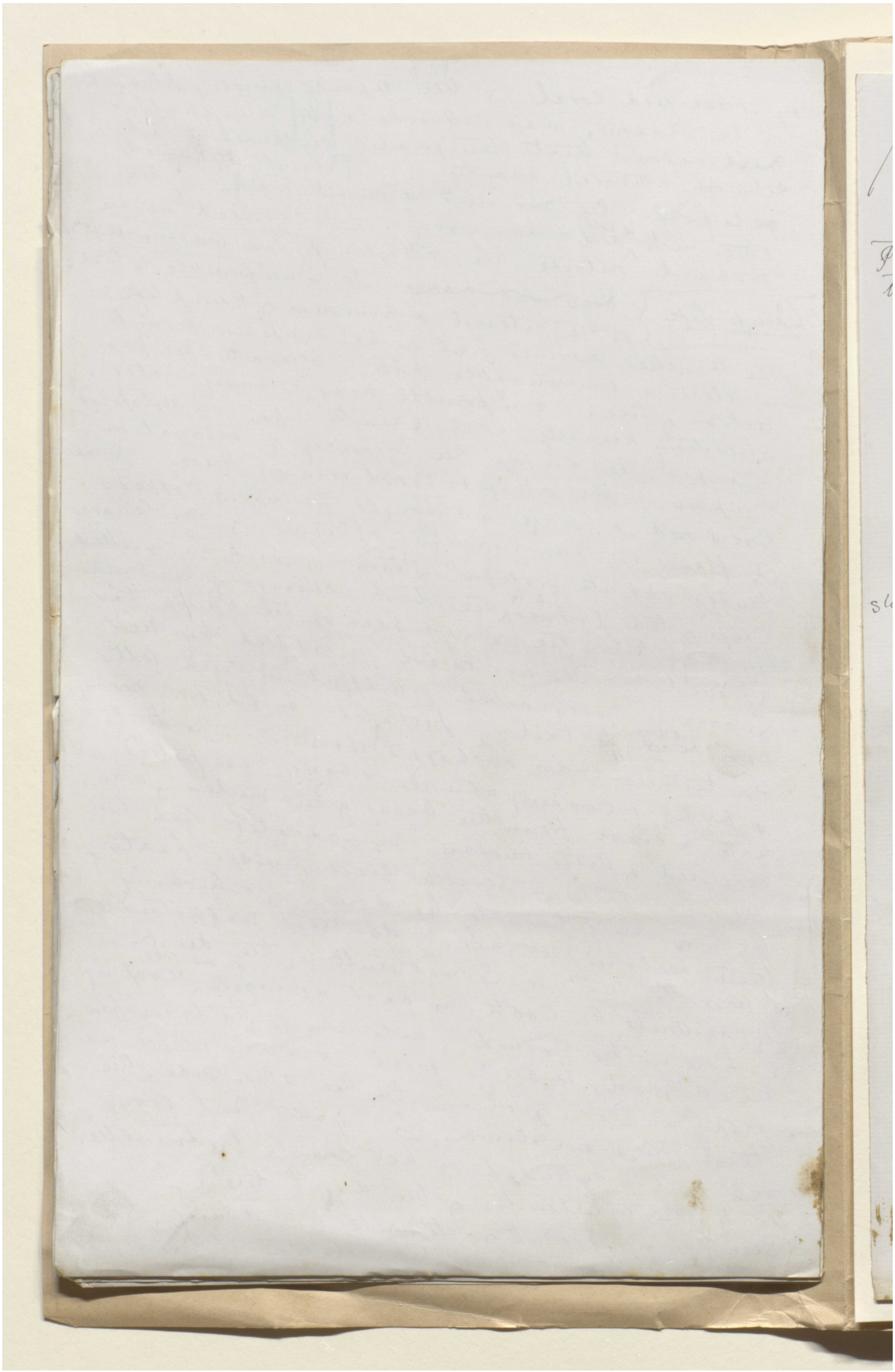

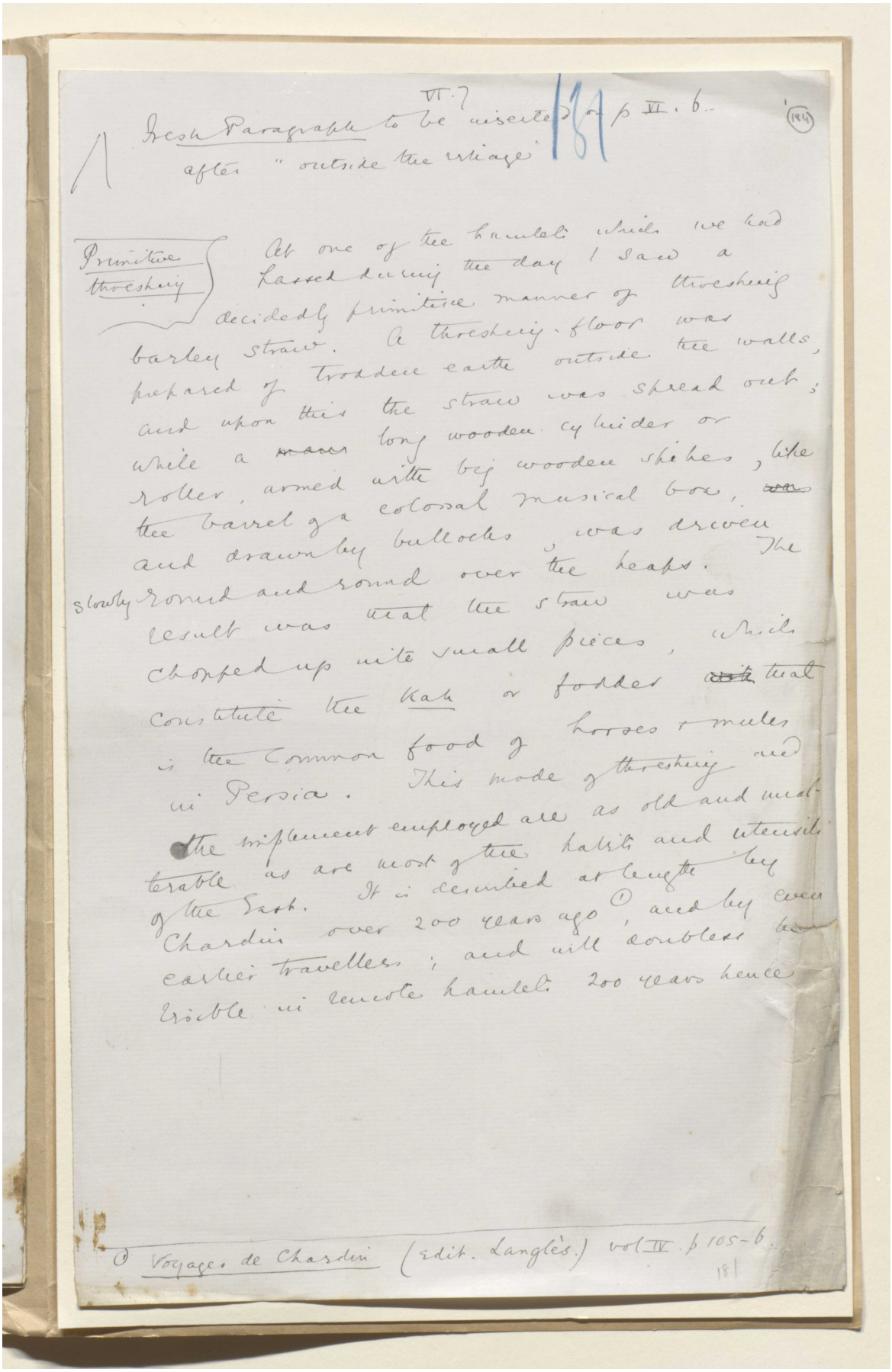

VI. 7

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(184)

Fresh Paragraph to be inserted on p VI. 6.
after "outside the village"

Primitive threshing

At one of the hamlets which we had passed during the day I saw a decidedly primitive manner of threshing barley straw. A threshing-floor was prepared of trodden earth outside the walls, and upon this the straw was spread out; while a ~~man~~ long wooden cylinder or roller, armed with big wooden spikes, like the barrel of a colossal musical box, ~~was~~ and drawn by bullocks, was driven slowly round and round over the heaps. The result was that the straw was chopped up into small pieces, which constitute the Kah or fodder ~~with~~ that is the common food of horses & mules in Persia. This mode of threshing and the implement employed are as old and unalterable as are most of the habits and utensils of the East. It is described at length by Chardin over 200 years ago (1), and by even earlier travellers; and will doubtless be visible in remote hamlets 200 years hence

(1) Voyages de Chardin (edit. Langlès.) vol IV. p 105-6.

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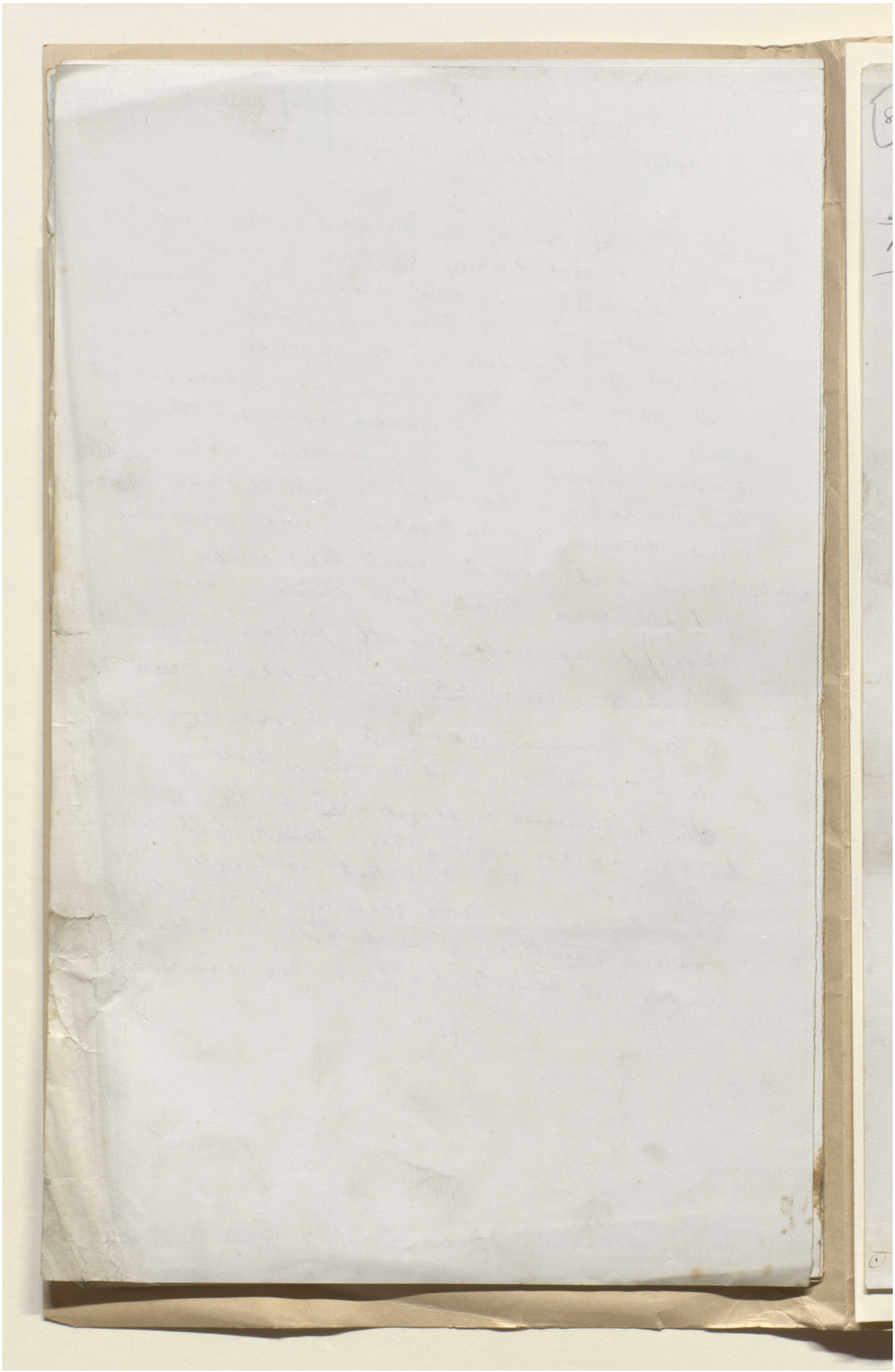
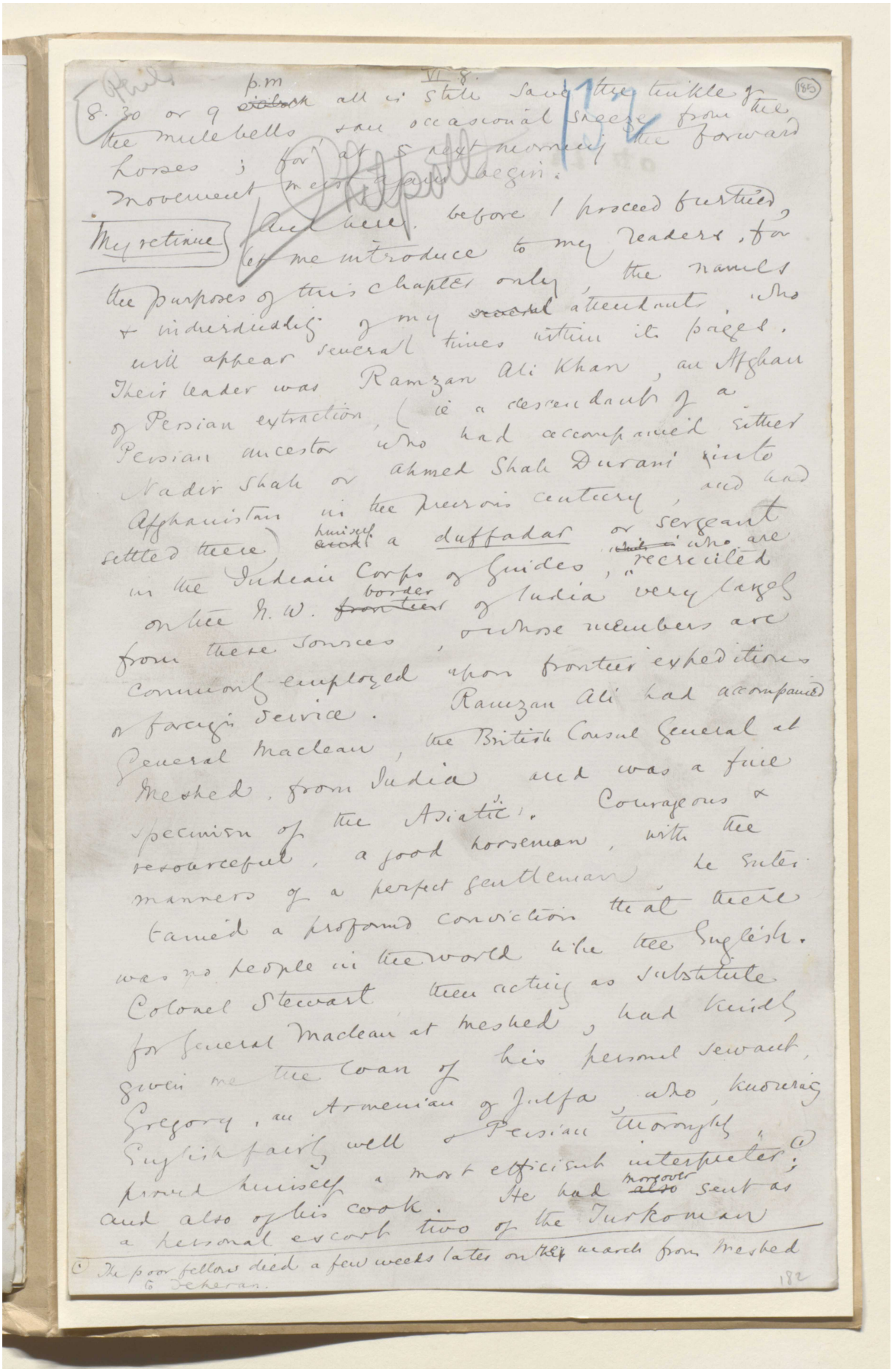


مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [١٨٥و] (١٣٥٥/٣٦٩)

(185)

VI 8.



8.30 or 9 p.m. all is still save the tinkle of the mule bells, an occasional sneeze from the horses; for at 5 next morning the forward movement must again begin.

My retinue

And here, before I proceed further, let me introduce to my readers, for the purposes of this chapter only, the names & individuality of my attendants, who will appear several times within its pages. Their leader was Ramzan Ali Khan, an Afghan of Persian extraction, (ie a descendant of a Persian ancestor who had accompanied either Nadir Shah or Ahmed Shah Durani into Afghanistan in the previous century, and had settled there) himself a duffadar or sergeant in the Indian Corps of Guides, who are recruited on the N.W. border of India very largely from these sources, & whose members are commonly employed upon frontier expeditions or foreign service. Ramzan Ali had accompanied General Maclean, the British Consul General at Meshed, from India and was a fine specimen of the Asiatic. Courageous & resourceful, a good horseman, with the manners of a perfect gentleman, he entertained a profound conviction that there was no people in the world like the English. Colonel Stewart then acting as substitute for General Maclean at Meshed, had kindly given me the loan of his personal servant, Gregory, an Armenian of Julfa, who, knowing English fairly well & Persian thoroughly, proved himself a most efficient interpreter;(1) and also of his cook. He had moreover sent as a personal escort two of the Turkoman

(1) The poor fellow died a few weeks later on the march from Meshed to Teheran.

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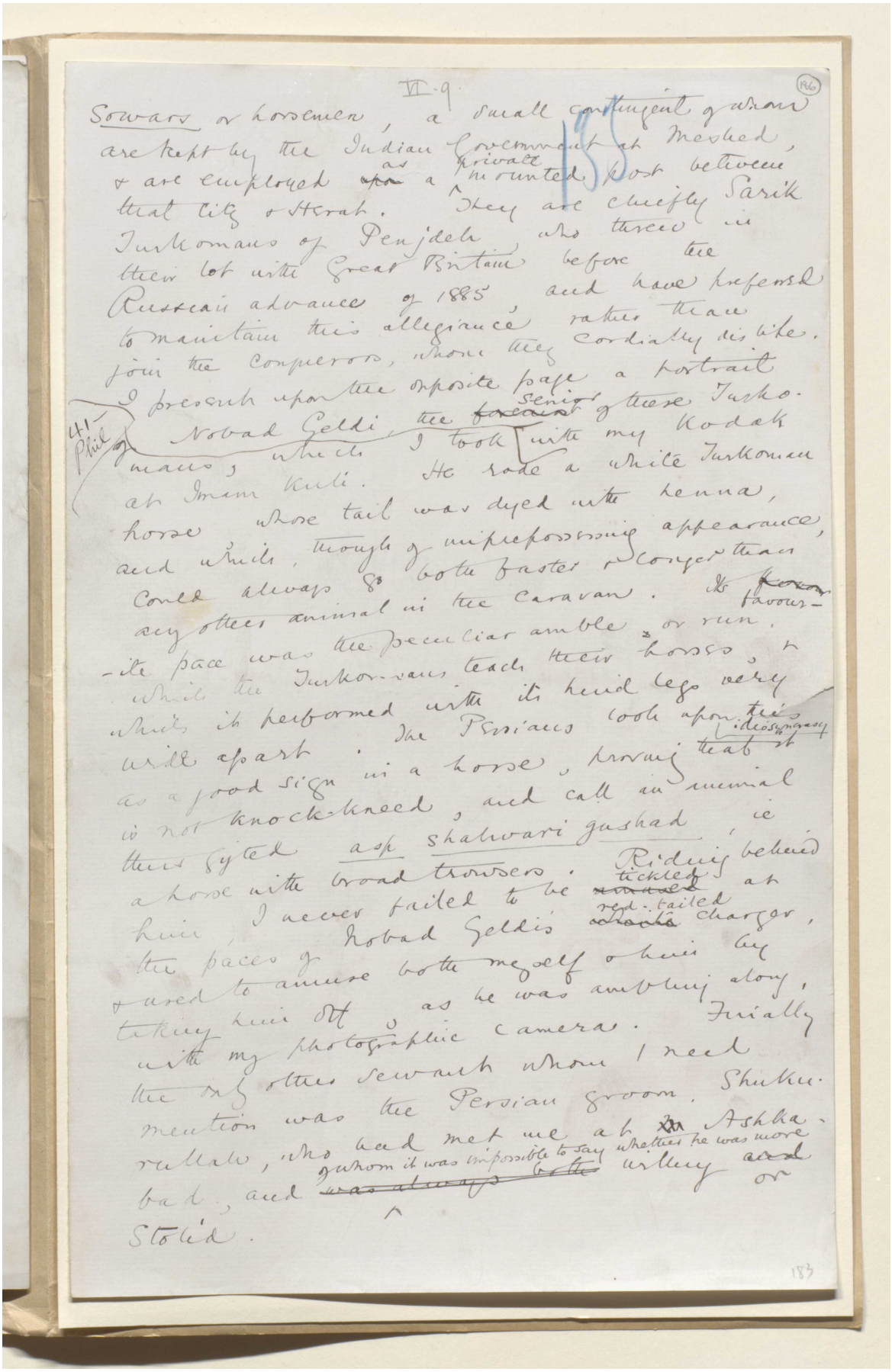
37-40

VI.9

186



Sowars or horsemen, a small contingent of whom are kept by the Indian Government at Meshed, & are employed ~~upon~~ as a private mounted post between that city & Herat. They are chiefly Sarik Turkomans of Penjdeh who threw in their lot with Great Britain before the Russian advance of 1885, and have preferred to maintain this allegiance rather than join the conquerors, whom they cordially dislike. I present upon the opposite page a portrait of Nobad Geldi, the ~~foremost~~ senior of these Turkomans, which I took with my Kodak at Imam Kuli. He rode a white Turkoman horse whose tail was dyed with henna, and which, though of unprepossessing appearance, could always go both faster & longer than any other animal in the caravan. Its ~~favour~~ favourite pace was the peculiar amble, or run, which the Turkomans teach their horses, & which it performed with its hind legs very wide apart. The Persians look upon this as a good sign in a horse, proving that it is not knock-kneed, and call an animal thus gifted asp shalwari gushad, ie a horse with broad trousers. Riding behind him, I never failed to be ~~amused~~ tickled at the paces of Nobad Geldi's ~~white~~ red-tailed charger, & used to amuse both myself & him by taking him off, as he was ambling along, with my photographic camera. Finally the only other servant whom I need mention was the Persian groom, Shukurullah, who had met me at ~~Ashk~~ Ashkabad, and ~~was always both~~ of whom it was impossible to say whether he was more willing ~~and~~ or stolid.

41 Phil

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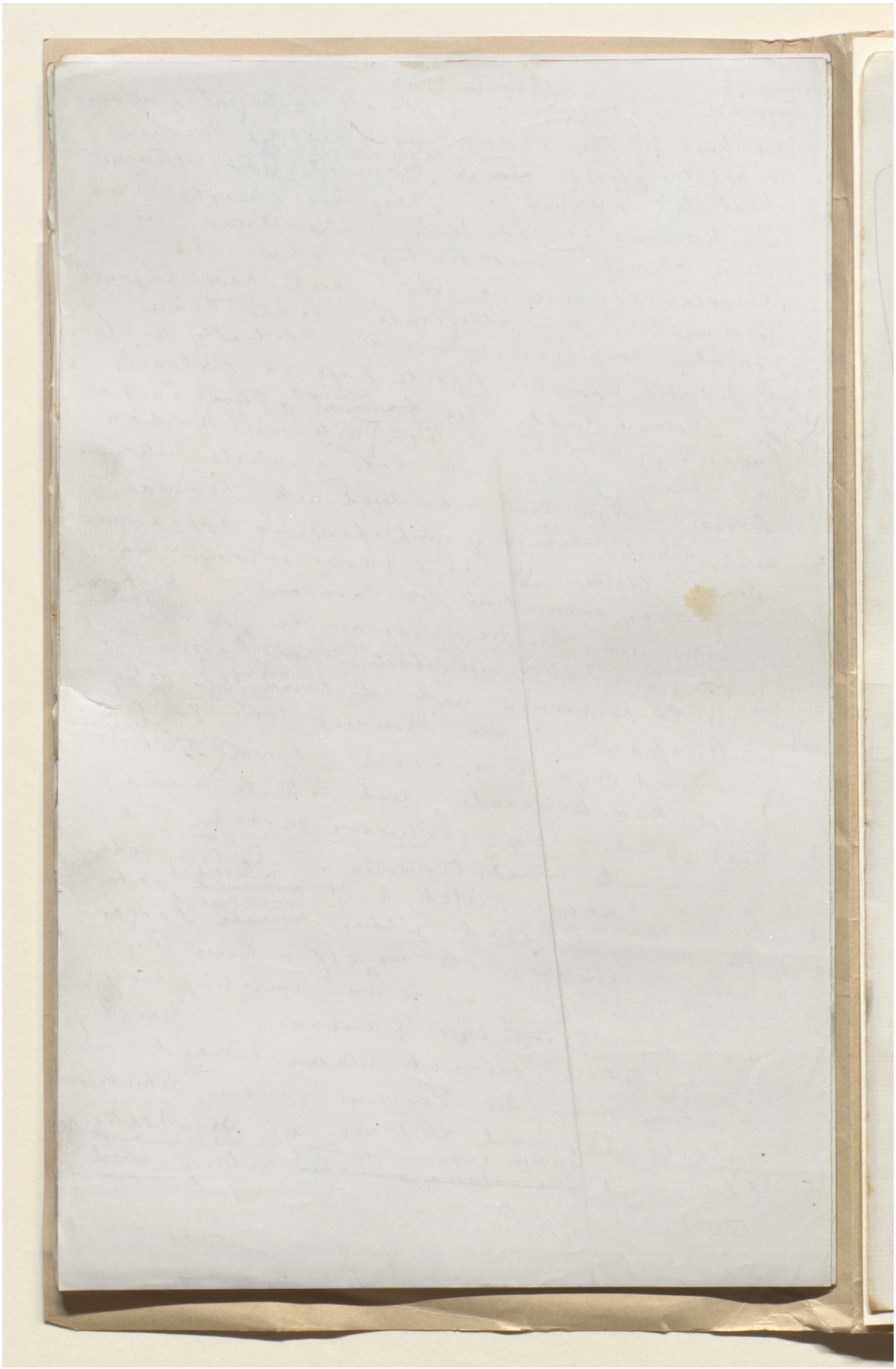

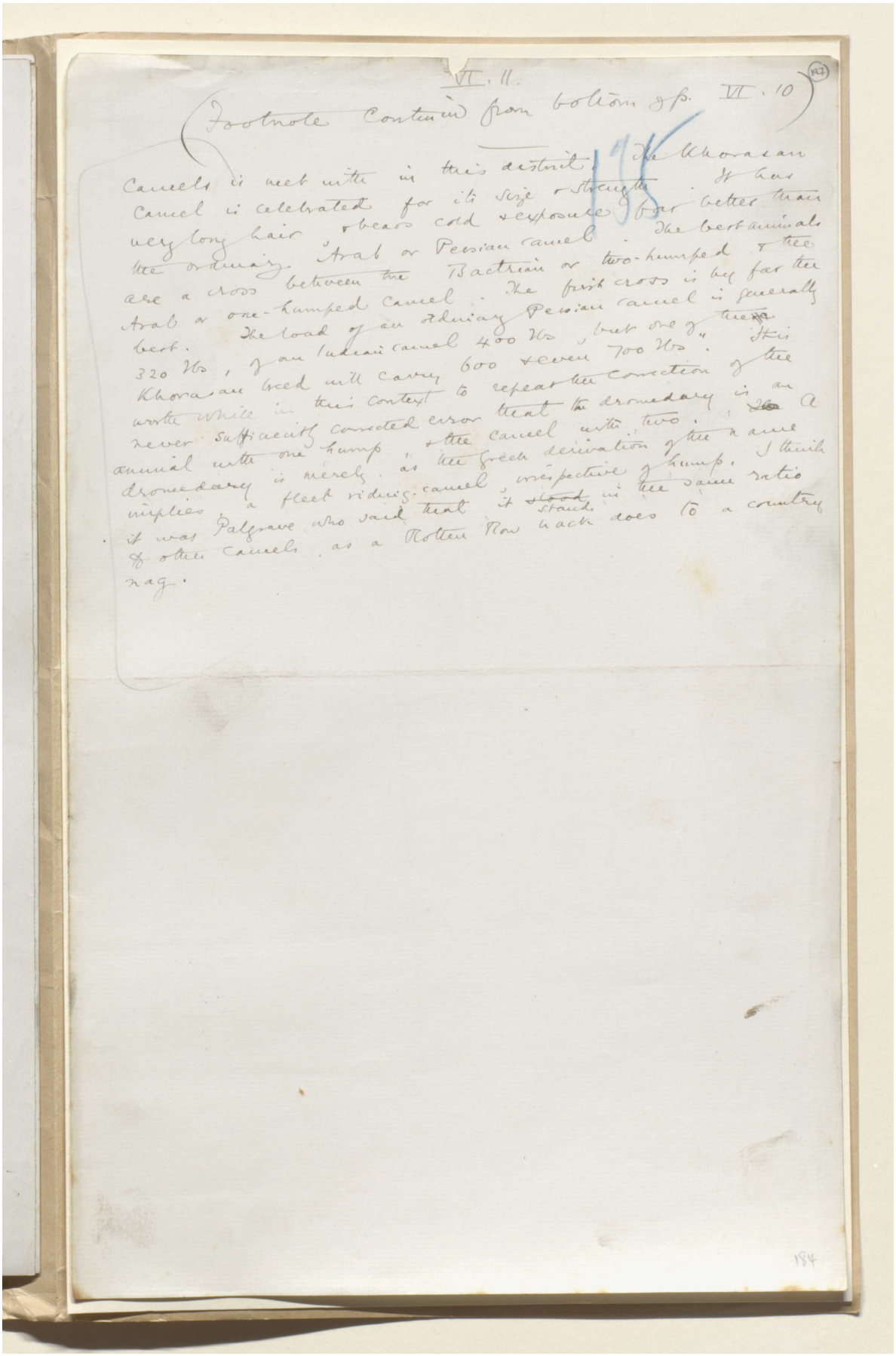

VI. 11.

(Footnote Continued from bottom of p. VI. 10

Camels is met with in this district. The Khorasan Camel is celebrated for its size & strength. It has very long hair & bears cold & exposure far better than the ordinary Arab or Persian camel. The best animals are a cross between the Bactrian or two-humped & the Arab or one-humped Camel. The first cross is by far the best. The load of an ordinary Persian camel is generally 320 lbs, & an Indian camel 400 lbs, but one of the Khorasan breed will carry 600 & even 700 lbs. It is worth while in this context to repeat the correction of the never sufficiently corrected error that the dromedary is an animal with one hump & the camel with two, whereas the dromedary is merely, as the Greek derivation of the name implies a fleet riding-camel, irrespective of hump. I think it was Palgrave who said that it stands in the same ratio of other camels as a Rotten Row hack does to a country nag.

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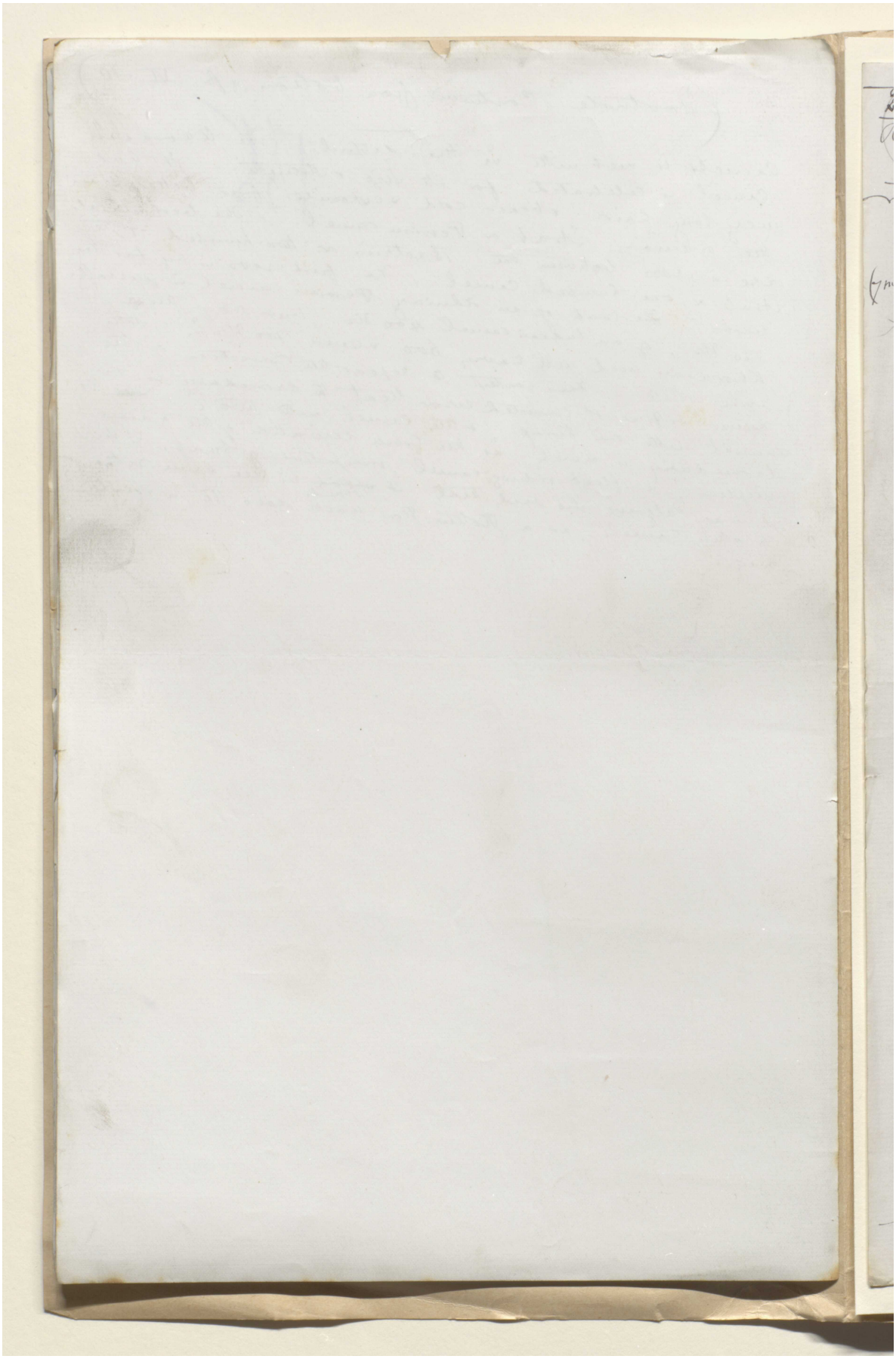

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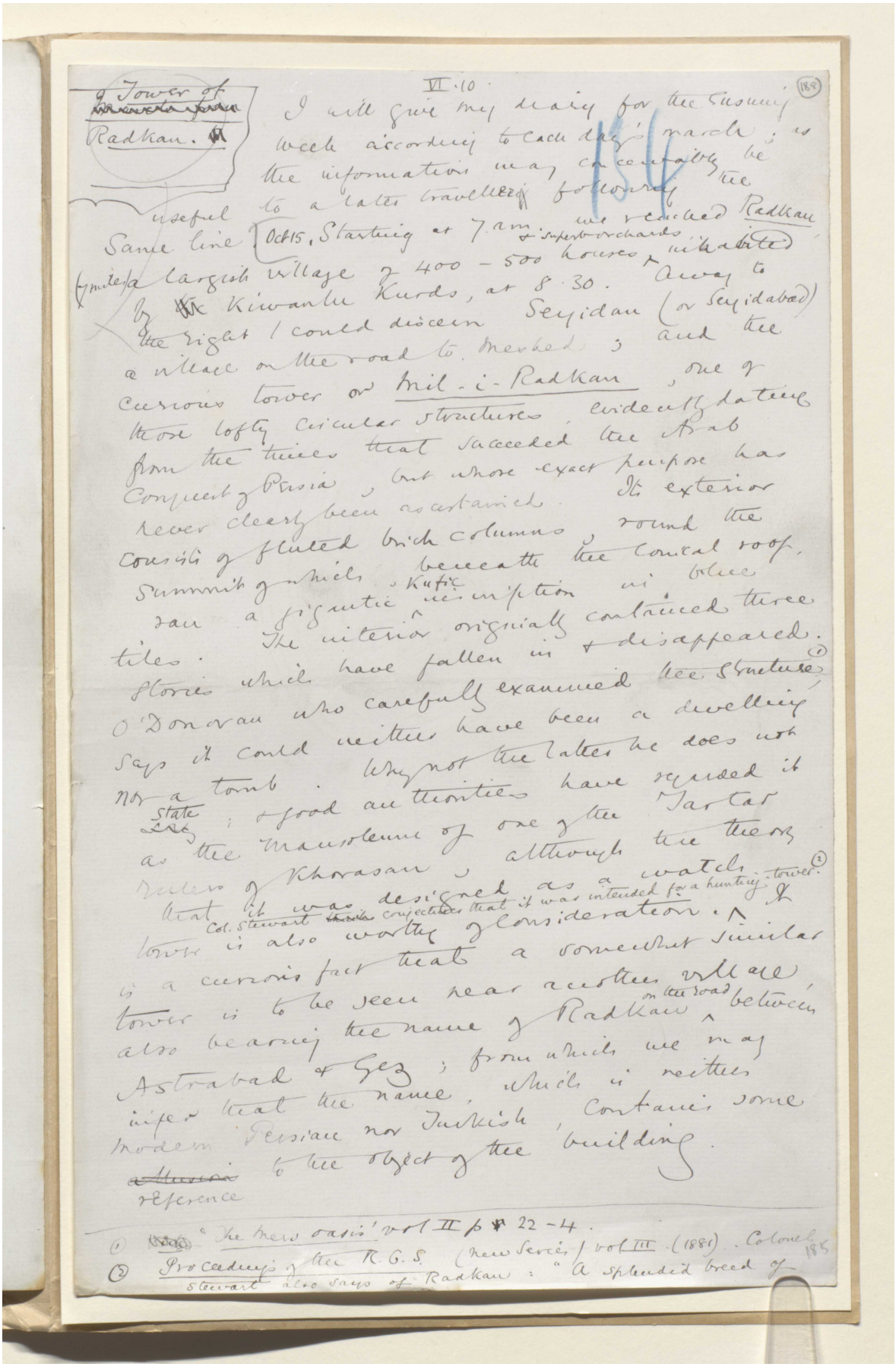

Tower of Radkan.

VI.10

I will give my diary for the ensuing week according to each day's march; as the information may conceivably be useful to a later traveller following the same line. Oct 15, Starting at 7 am we reached Radkan (7 miles) a largish village of 400 – 500 houses & superb orchards, inhabited by Kiwanlu Kurds, at 8.30. Away to the right I could discern Seyidan (or Seyidabad) a village on the road to Meshed; and the curious tower or Mil-i-Radkan, one of those lofty circular structures, evidently dating from the times that succeeded the Arab Conquest of Persia, but whose exact purpose has never clearly been ascertained. Its exterior consists of fluted brick columns, round the summit of which, beneath the conical roof, ran a gigantic Kufic inscription in blue tiles. The interior originally contained three stories which have fallen in & disappeared. O'Donovan who carefully examined the structure,[1] says it could neither have been a dwelling nor a tomb. Why not the latter he does not state; & good authorities have regarded it as the mausoleum of one of the Tartar rulers of Khorasan, although the theory that it was designed as a watch tower is also worthy of consideration. Col. Stewart conjectures that it was intended for a hunting-tower.[2] It is a curious fact that a somewhat similar tower is to be seen near another village also bearing the name of Radkan on the road between Astrabad & Gez; from which we may infer that the name, which is neither modern Persian nor Turkish, contains some reference to the object of the building.

(1) "The mere oasis" vol II p 22-4.

(2) Proceedings of the R.G.S. (New Series) vol III (1881). Colonel Stewart also says of Radkan: "A splendid breed of

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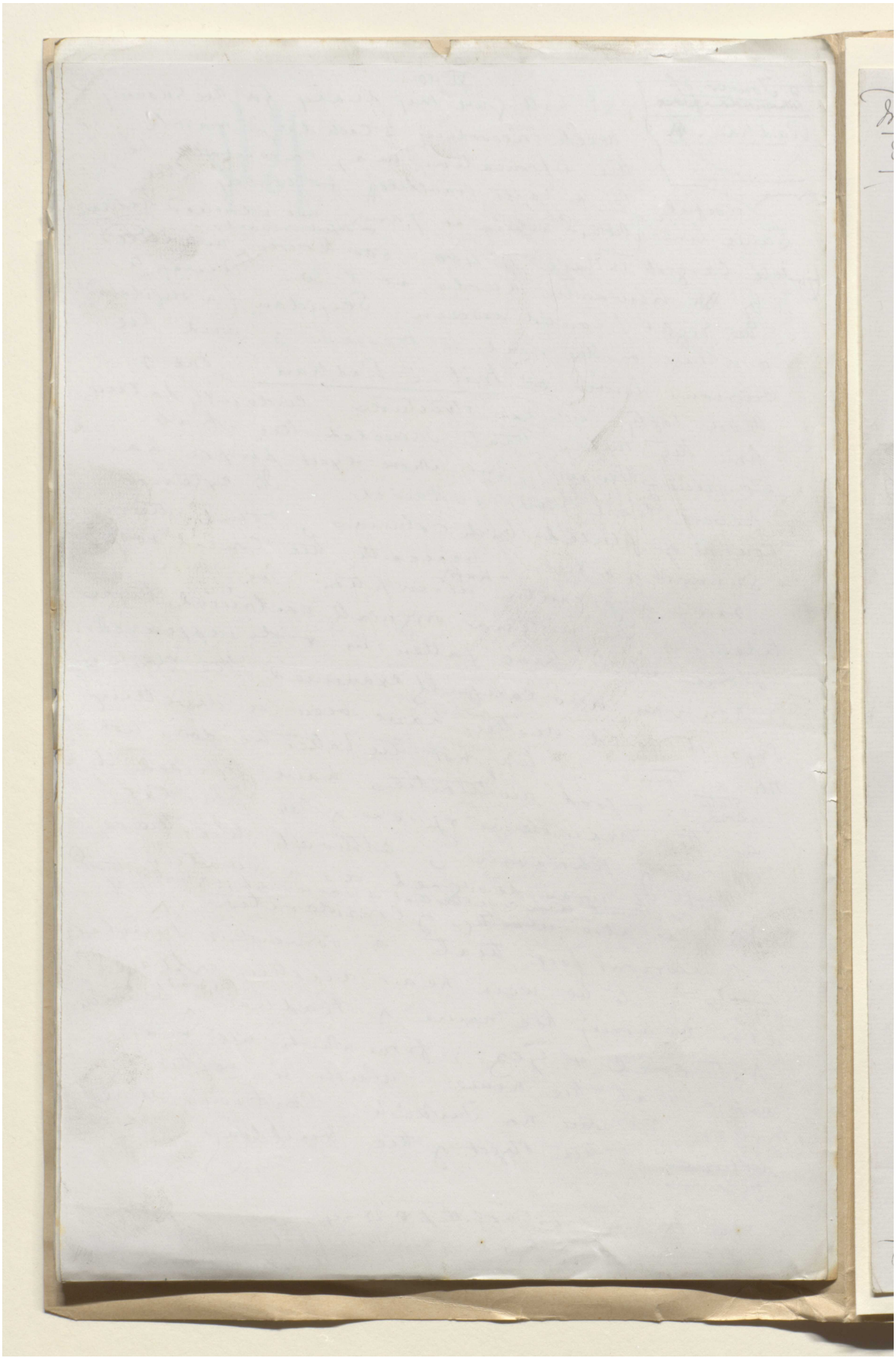

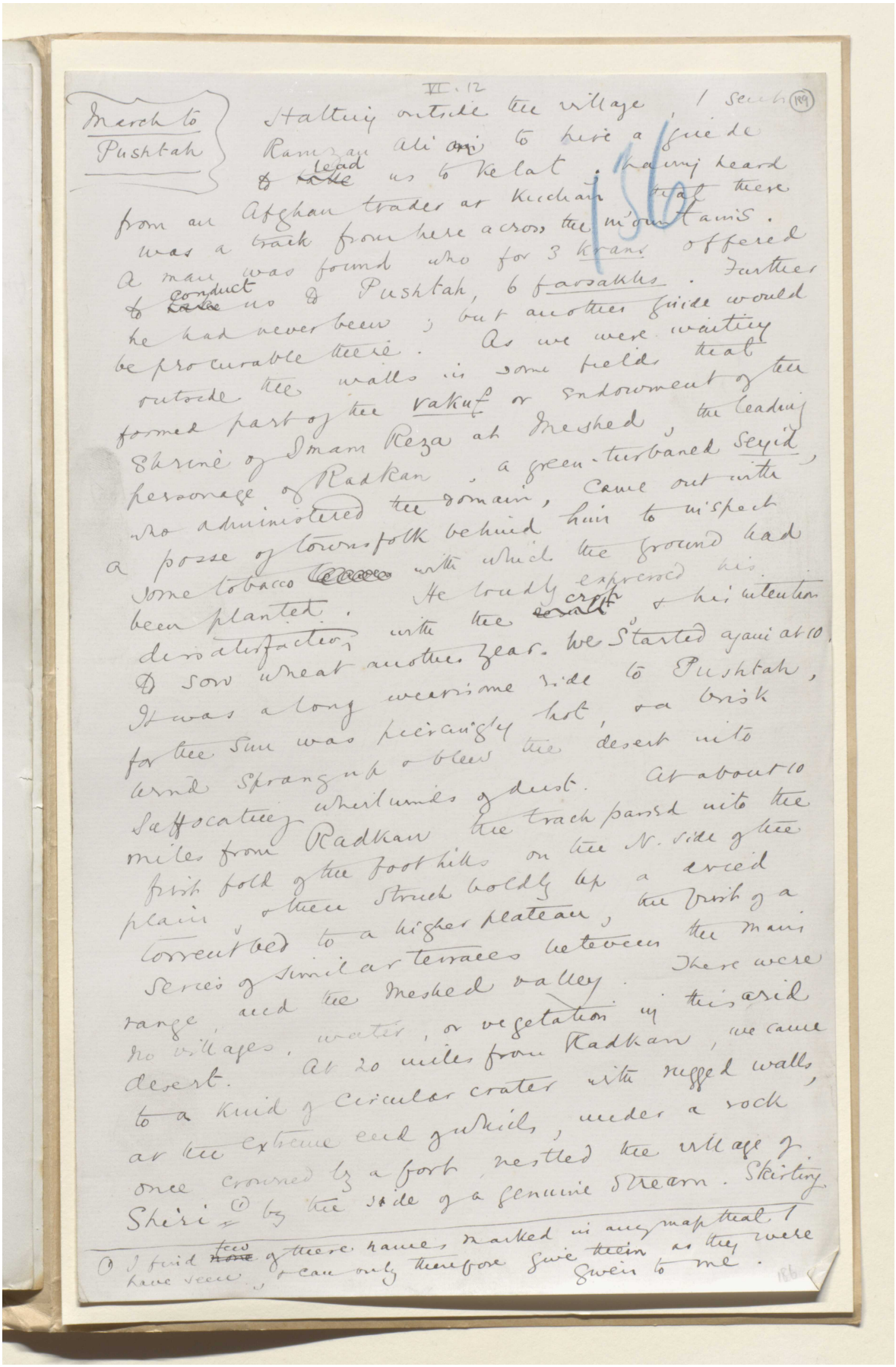

VI. 12

March to Pushtah

Halting outside the village, I sent (189) Ramzan Ali ~~on~~ to hire a guide to ~~take~~ lead us to Kelat; having heard from an Afghan trader at Kuchan that there was a track from here across the mountains. A man was found who for 3 krans offered to ~~take~~ conduct us to Pushtah, 6 farsakhs. Further he had never been; but another guide would be procurable there. As we were waiting outside the walls in some fields that formed part of the vakuf or endowment of the Shrine of Imam Reza at Meshed, the leading personage of Radkan, a green-turbaned Seyid, who administered the domain, came out with a posse of townsfolk behind him to inspect some tobacco ~~[illegible]~~ with which the ground had been planted. He loudly expressed his dissatisfaction with the ~~[illegible]~~ crop & his intention to sow wheat another year. We started again at 10. It was a long wearisome ride to Pushtah, for the sun was piercingly hot, & a brisk wind sprang up & blew the desert into suffocating whirlwinds of dust. At about 10 miles from Radkan the track passed into the first fold of the foothills on the N. side of the plain, & then struck boldly up a dried torrent bed to a higher plateau, the first of a series of similar terraces between the main range and the Meshed valley. There were no villages, water, or vegetation in this arid desert. At 20 miles from Radkan, we came to a kind of circular crater with rugged walls, at the extreme end of which, under a rock once crowned by a fort, nestled the village of Shiri (1) by the side of a genuine stream. Skirting

(1) I find ~~none~~ few of these names marked in any map that I have seen, & can only therefore give them as they were given to me.

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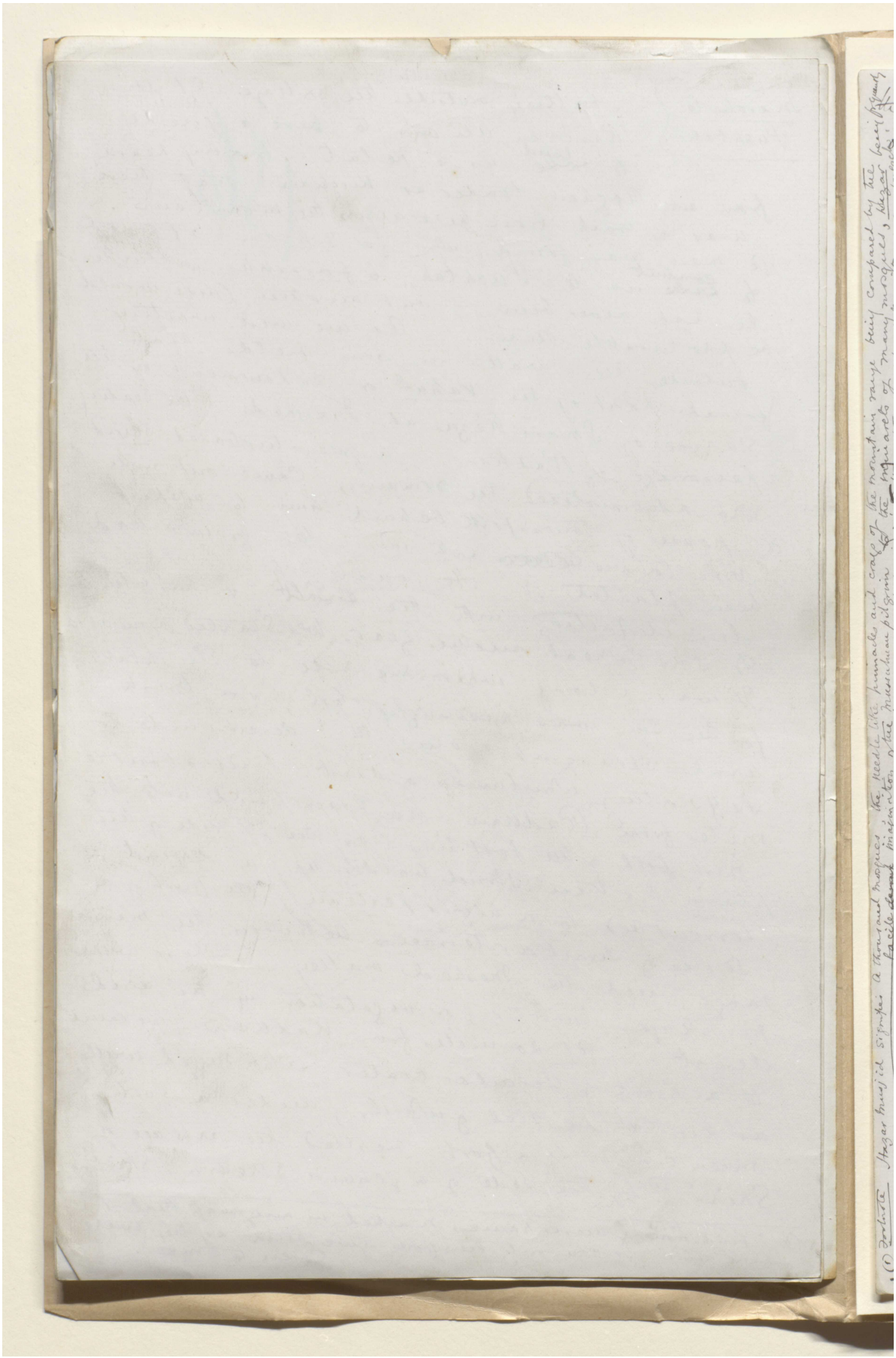

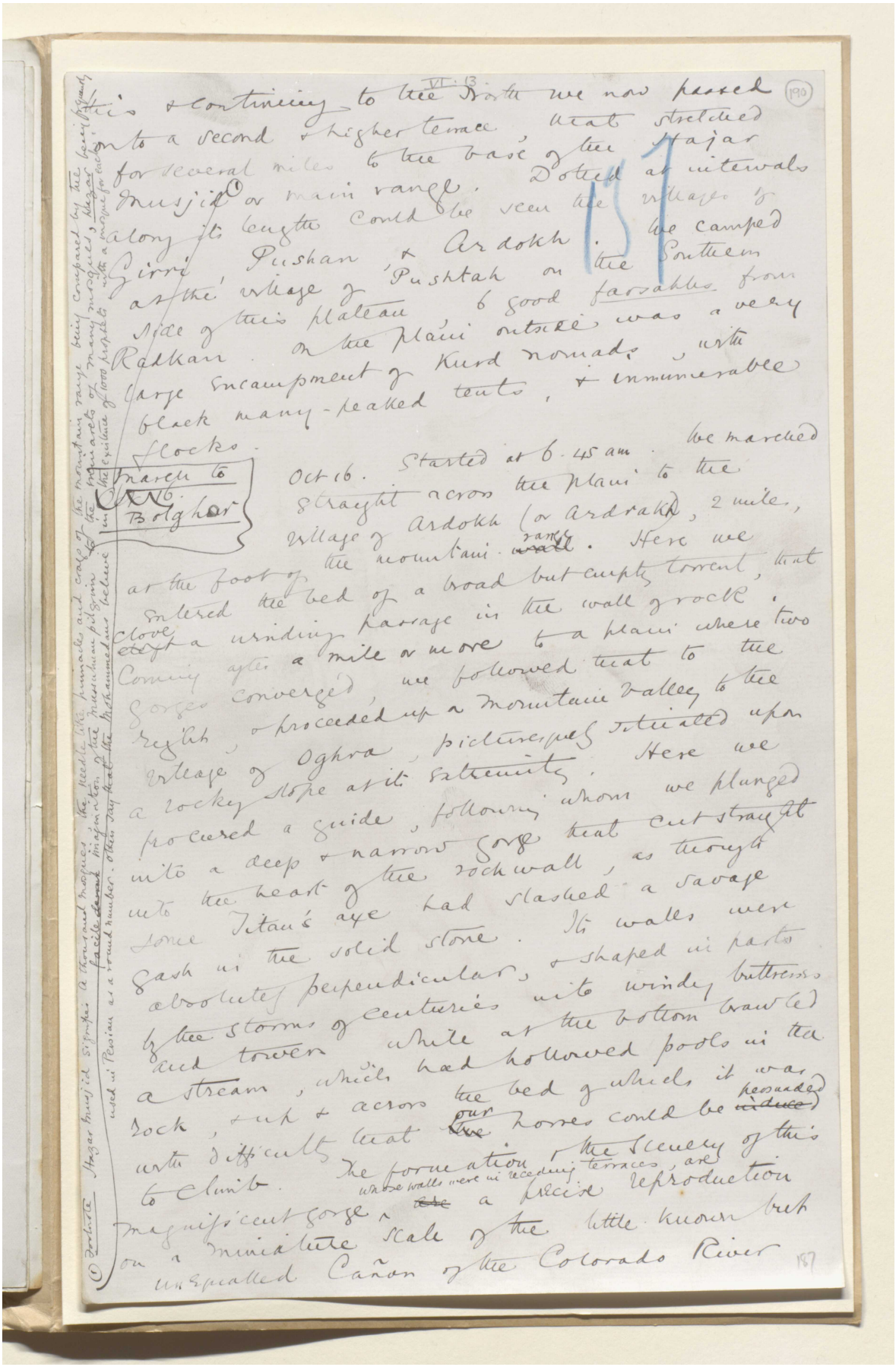

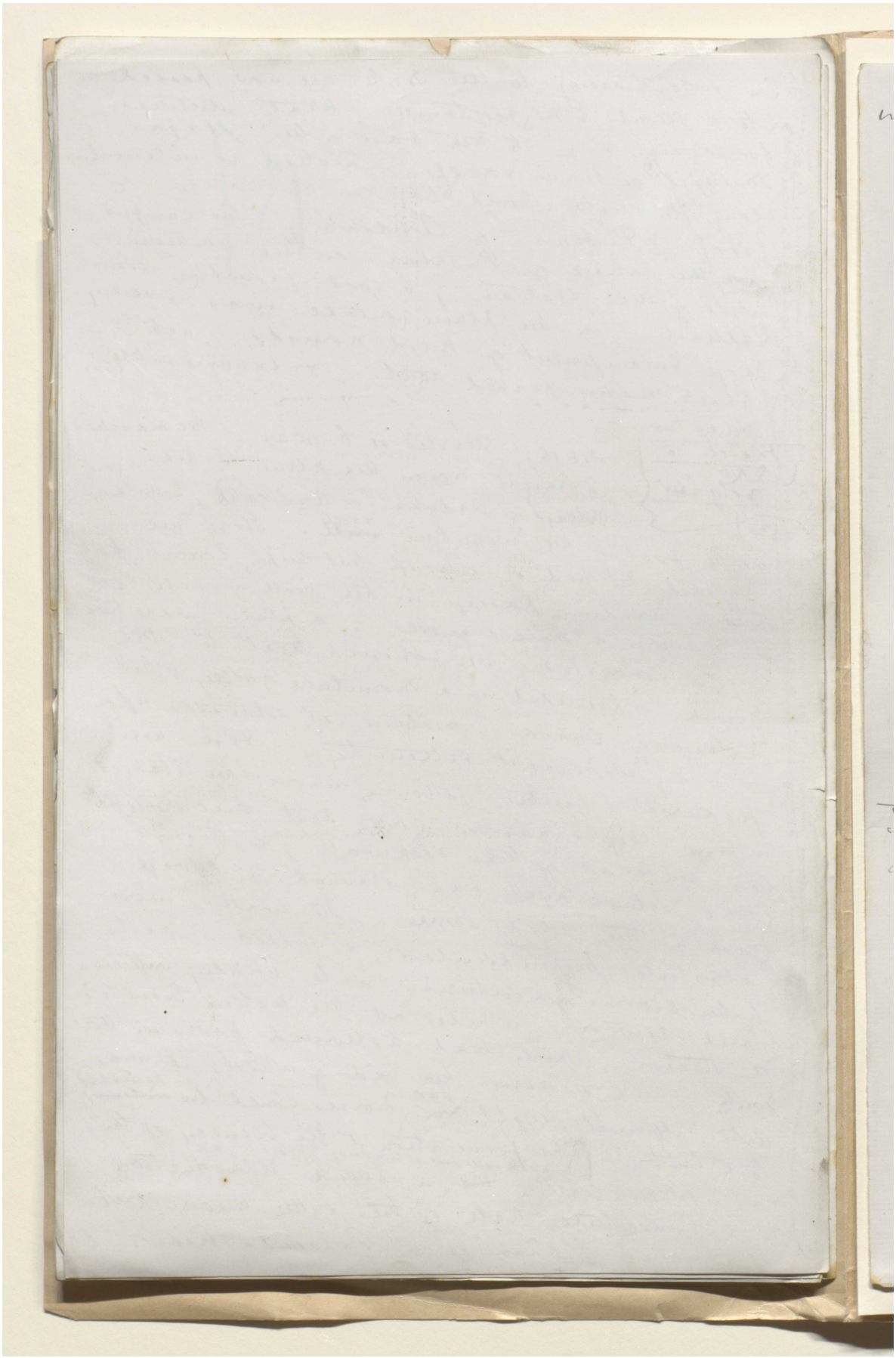

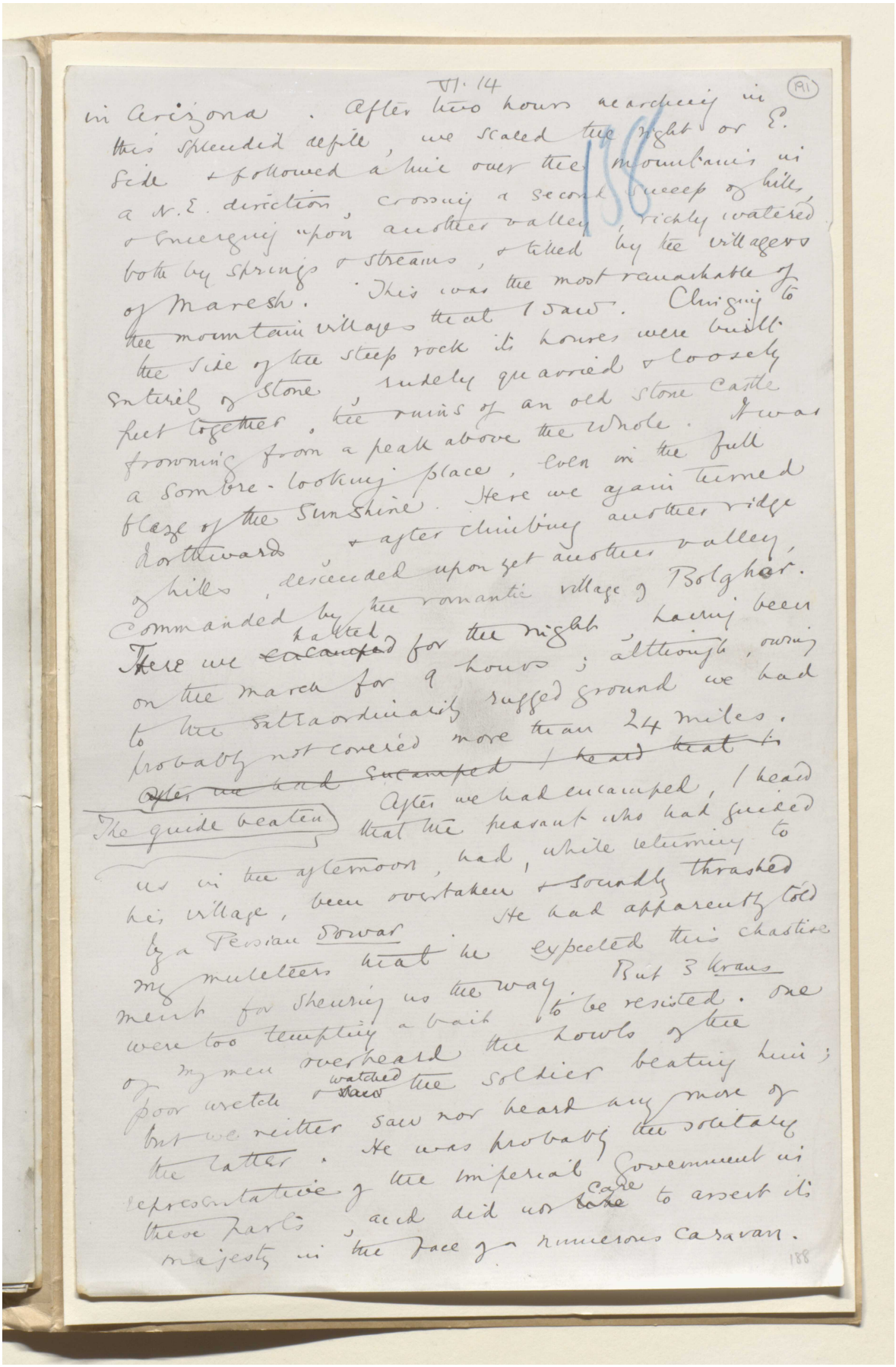

VI. 14

(91)

in Arizona. After two hours searching in this splendid defile, we scaled the right or E. side & followed a line over the mountains in a N.E. direction, crossing a second sweep of hills & emerging upon another valley, richly watered both by springs & streams, & tilled by the villagers of Maresh. This was the most remarkable of the mountain villages that I saw. Clinging to the side of the steep rock its houses were built entirely of stone, rudely quarried & loosely fitted together, the ruins of an old stone castle frowning from a peak above the whole. It was a sombre-looking place, even in the full blaze of the sunshine. Here we again turned Northwards & after climbing another ridge of hills, descended upon yet another valley, commanded by the romantic village of Bolghar. Here we halted for the night, having been on the march for 9 hours; although, owing to the extraordinarily ruffled ground we had probably not covered more than 24 miles.

~~After we had encamped I heard~~

The guide beaten

As we had encamped, I heard us in the afternoon, had, while returning to that the peasant who had guided his village, been overtaken & soundly thrashed by a Persian Sowar. He had apparently told my muleteers that he expected this chastisement for showing us the way. But 3 krans were too tempting a bait to be resisted. One of my men overheard the howls of the poor wretch & watched the soldier beating him; but we neither saw nor heard any more of the latter. He was probably the solitary representative of the Imperial Government in these parts, & did not care to assert its majesty in the face of a numerous caravan.

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المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة
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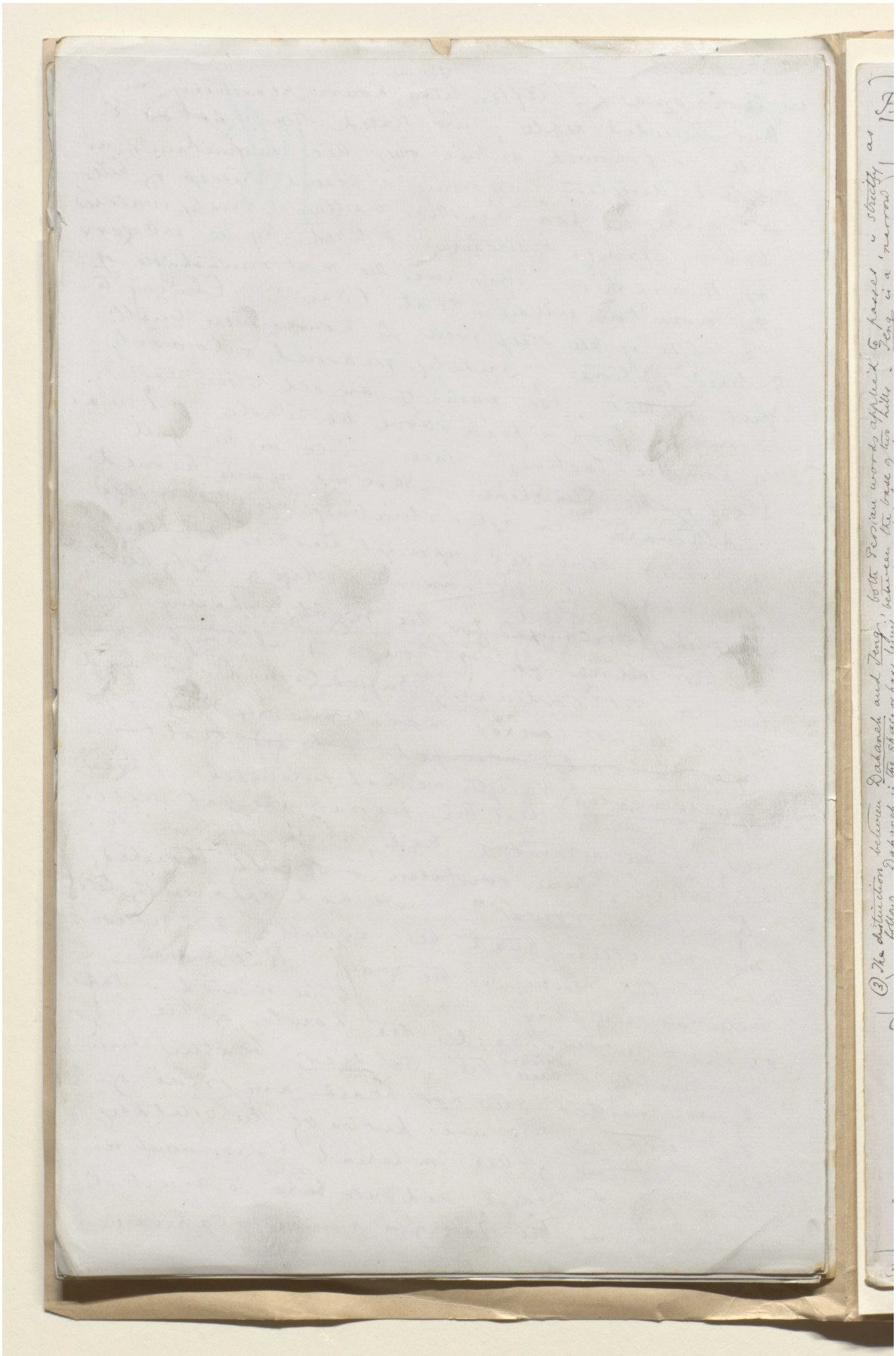
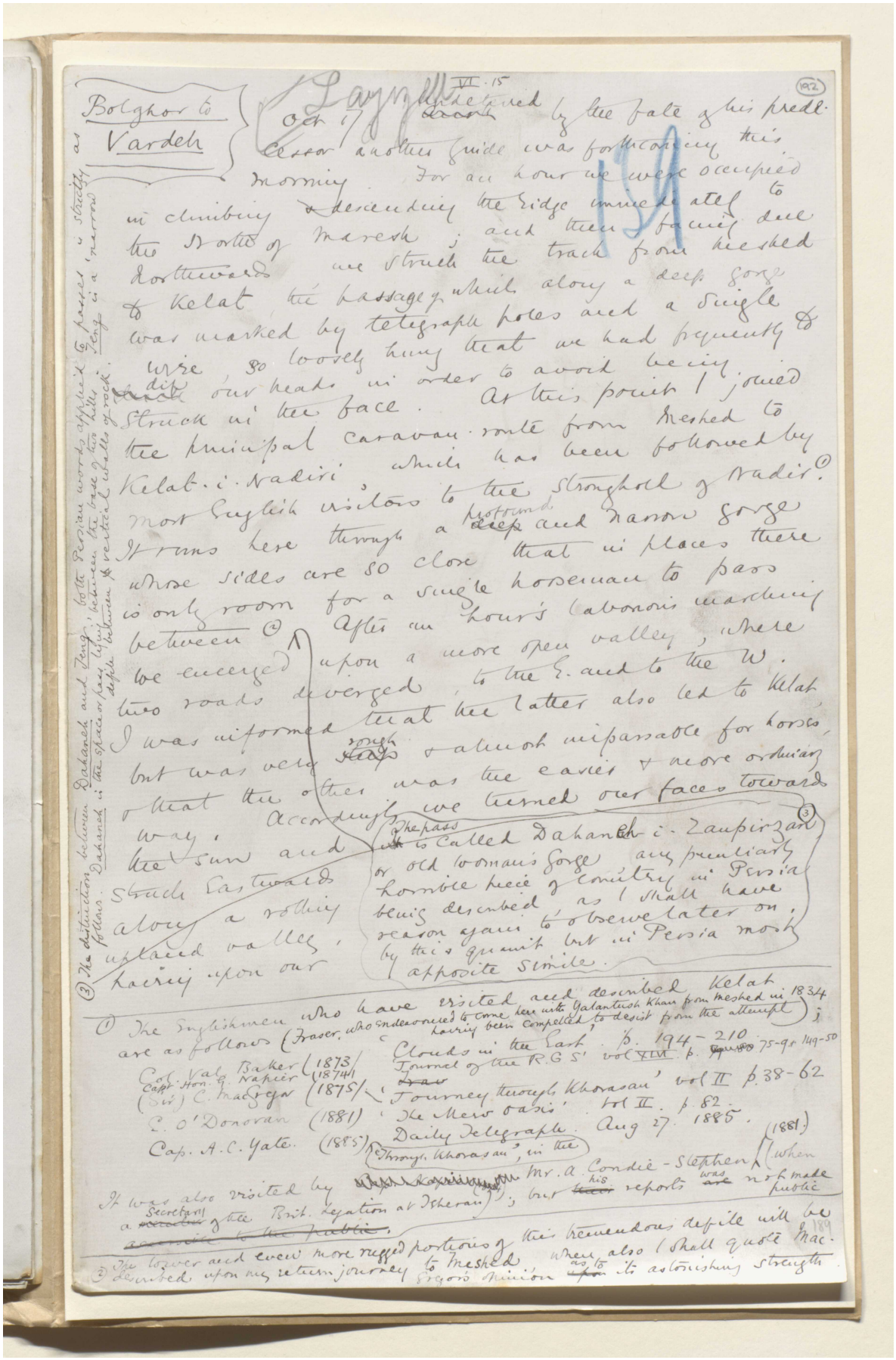
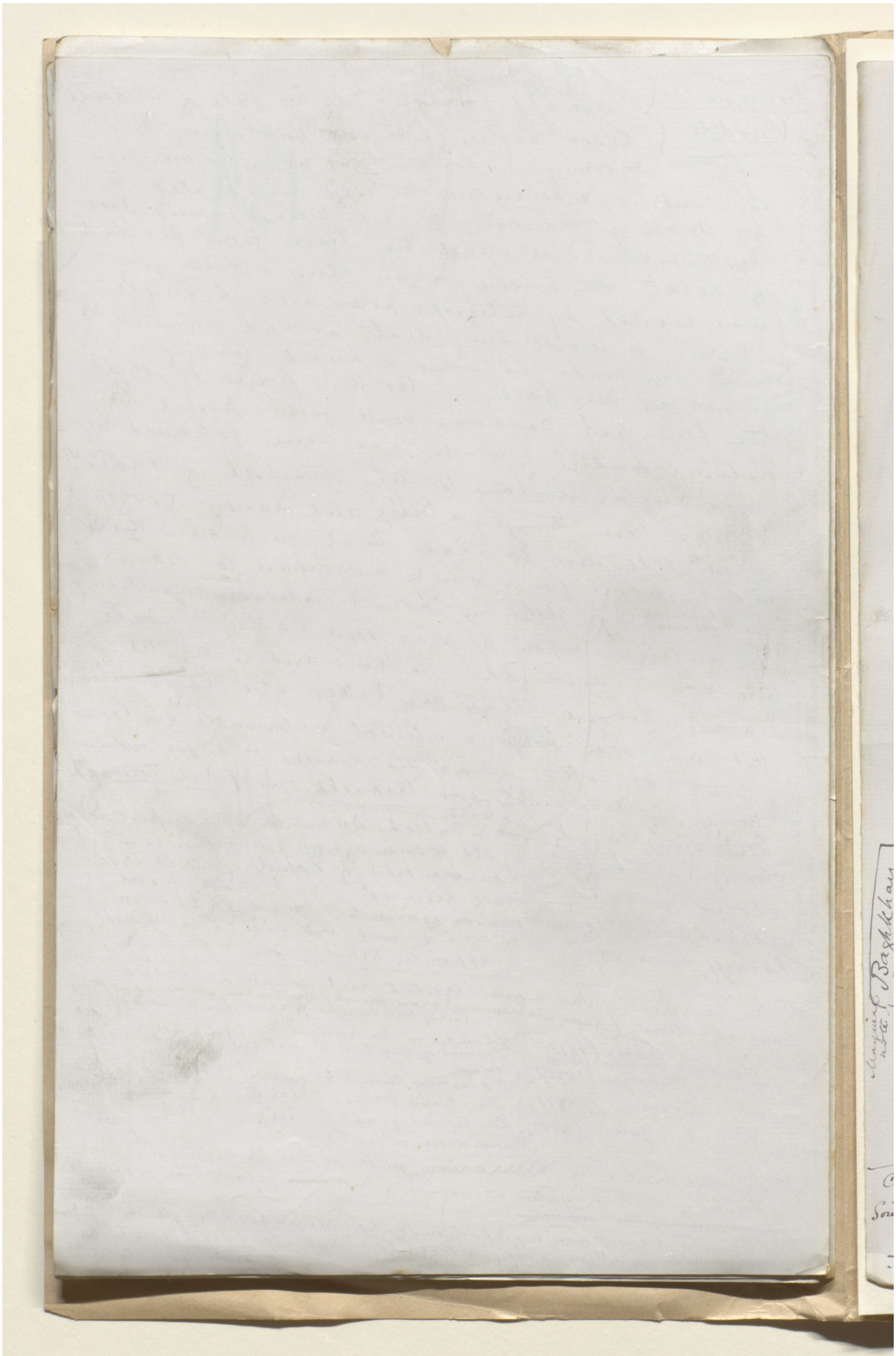
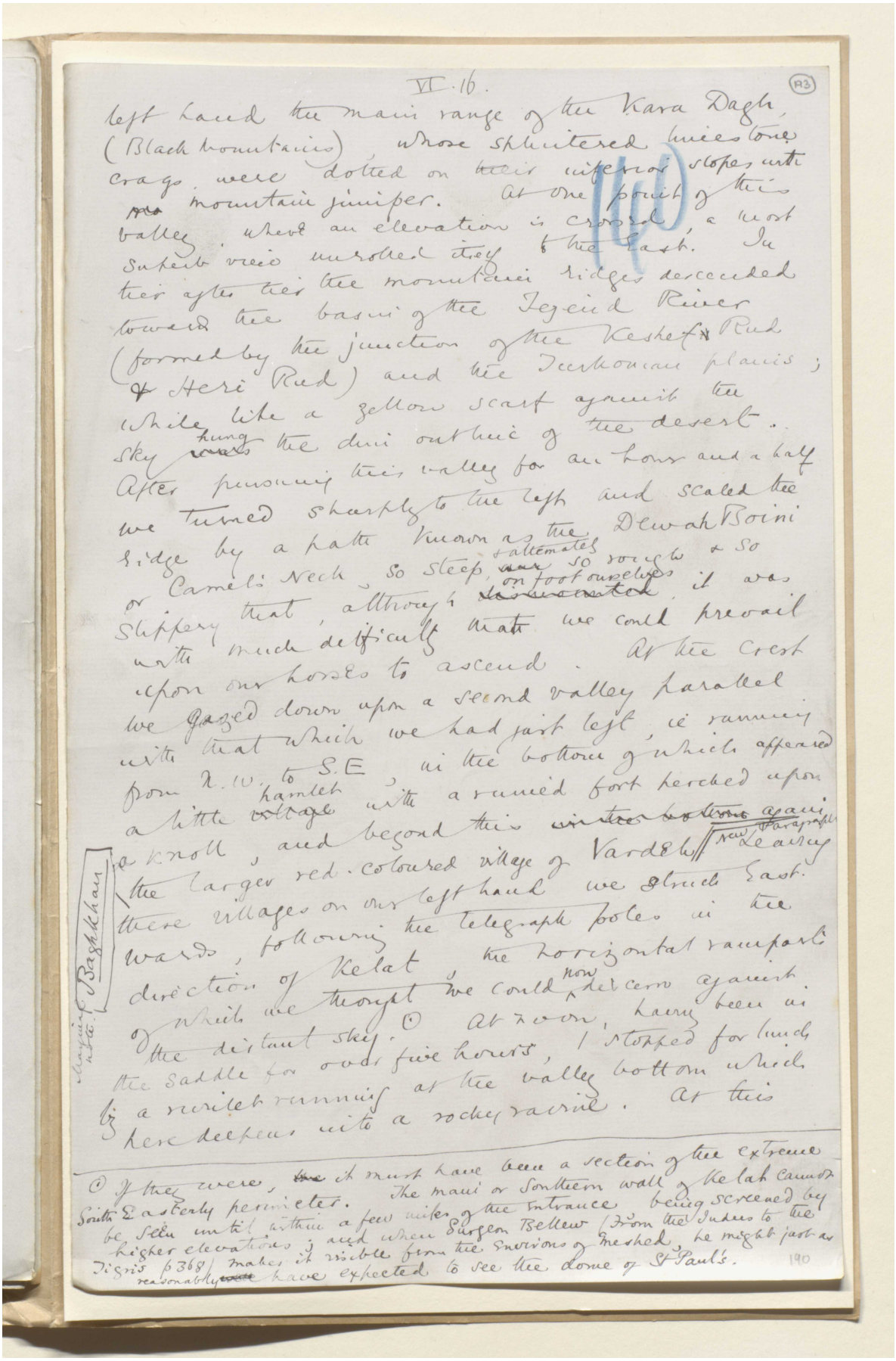






VI. 16.

(193)



left hand the main range of the Kara Dagh, (Black Mountains) whose splintered limestone crags were dotted on their inferior slopes with mountain juniper. At one point of this valley, where an elevation is crossed, a most superb view unrolled itself to the East. In tier after tier the mountain ridges descended towards the basin of the Tejend River (formed by the junction of the Keshef Rud & Heri Rud) and the Turkoman plains; while like a yellow scarf against the sky hung the dim outline of the desert. After pursuing this valley for an hour and a half we turned sharply to the left and scaled the ridge by a path known as the Dewah Boini or Camel's Neck, so steep, & alternately so rough & so slippery that, although on foot ourselves, it was with much difficulty that we could prevail upon our horses to ascend. At the crest we gazed down upon a second valley parallel with that which we had just left, ie running from N.W. to S.E., in the bottom of which appeared a little hamlet with a ruined fort perched upon a knoll, and beyond this again the larger red-coloured village of Vardeh. New Paragraph Leaving these villages on our left hand we struck East-wards, following the telegraph poles in the direction of Kelat, the horizontal ramparts of which we thought we could now discern against the distant sky.① At noon, having been in the saddle for over five hours, I stopped for lunch by a rivulet running at the valley bottom which here deepens into a rocky ravine. At this

Maymaf Baghkhan note.

① If they were, it must have been a section of the extreme South Easterly perimeter. The main or Southern wall of Kelat cannot be seen until within a few miles of the entrance being screened by higher elevations; and when Surgeon Bellew (From the Indus to the Tigris p 368) makes it visible from the environs of Meshed, he might just as reasonably have expected to see the dome of St Paul's.

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المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة
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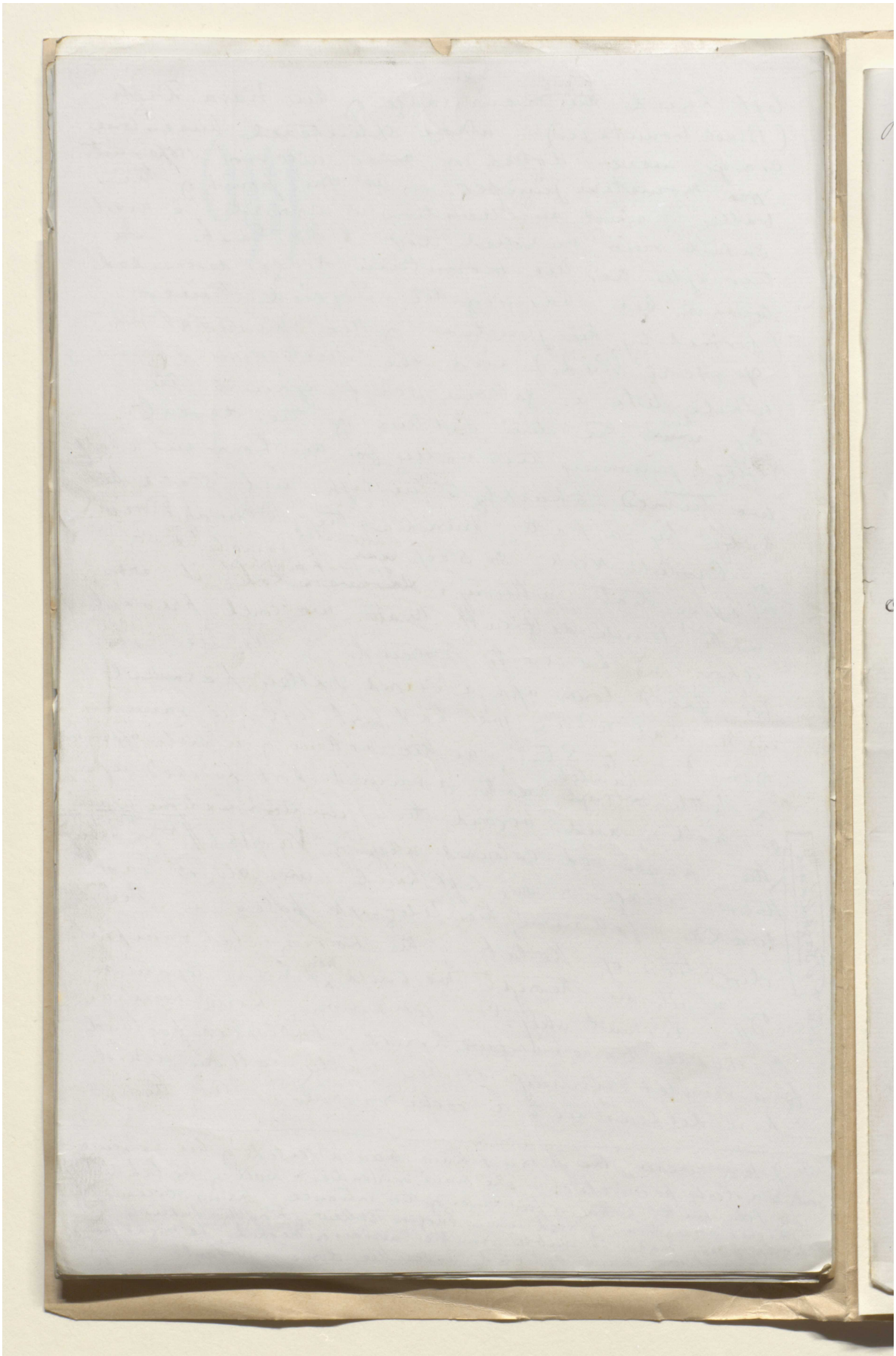

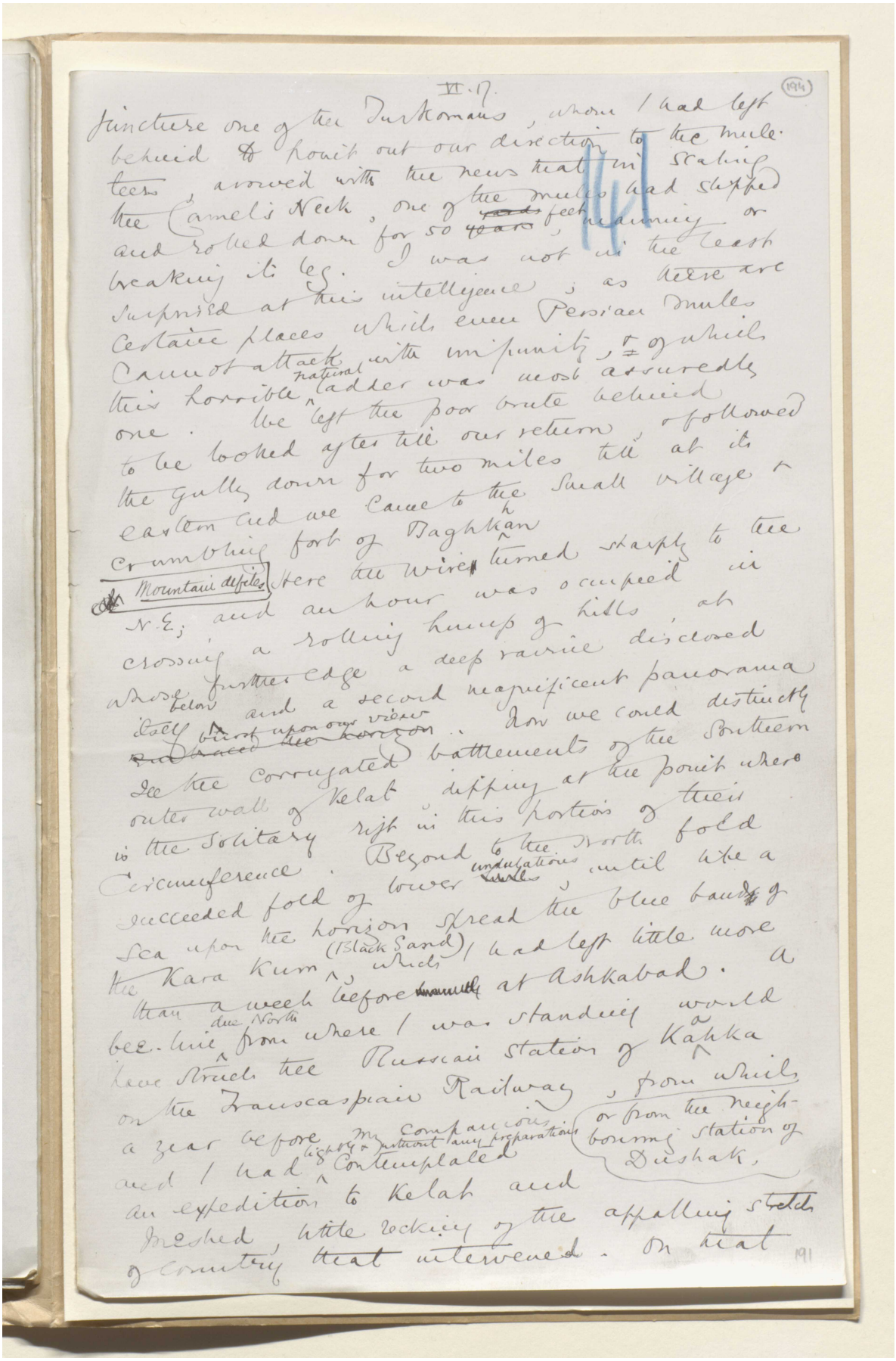

VI. 17.

(194)

juncture one of the Turkomans, whom I had left behind to watch out our direction to the mule-teers, arrived with the news that in making the Camel's Neck, one of the mules had slipped and rolled down for 50 feet, meaning or breaking it's leg. I was not in the least surprised at this intelligence; as there are certain places which even Persian mules cannot attack with impunity, of which this horrible natural ladder was most assuredly one. We left the poor brute behind to be looked after till our return, & followed the gully down for two miles till at its easton end we came to the small village & crumbling fort of Baghkan

Mountain defiles

Here the wire turned sharply to the N.E; and an hour was occupied in crossing a rolling hump of hills, at whose further edge a deep ravine disclosed itself below and a second magnificent panorama burst upon our vision. Now we could distinctly see the corrugated battlements of the Southern outer wall of Kelat dipping at the point where it is the solitary right in this portion of their circumference. Beyond to the North fold succeeded fold of lower undulations until like a sea upon the horizon spread the blue band of the Kara Kum (Black Sand) which I had left little more than a week before at Ashkabad. A bee-line due North from where I was standing would lead straight the Russian station of Kahka on the Transcaspian Railway, from which a year before my companions and I had contemplated an expedition to Kelat and Meshed, little reckoning of the appalling stretch of country that intervened. On that

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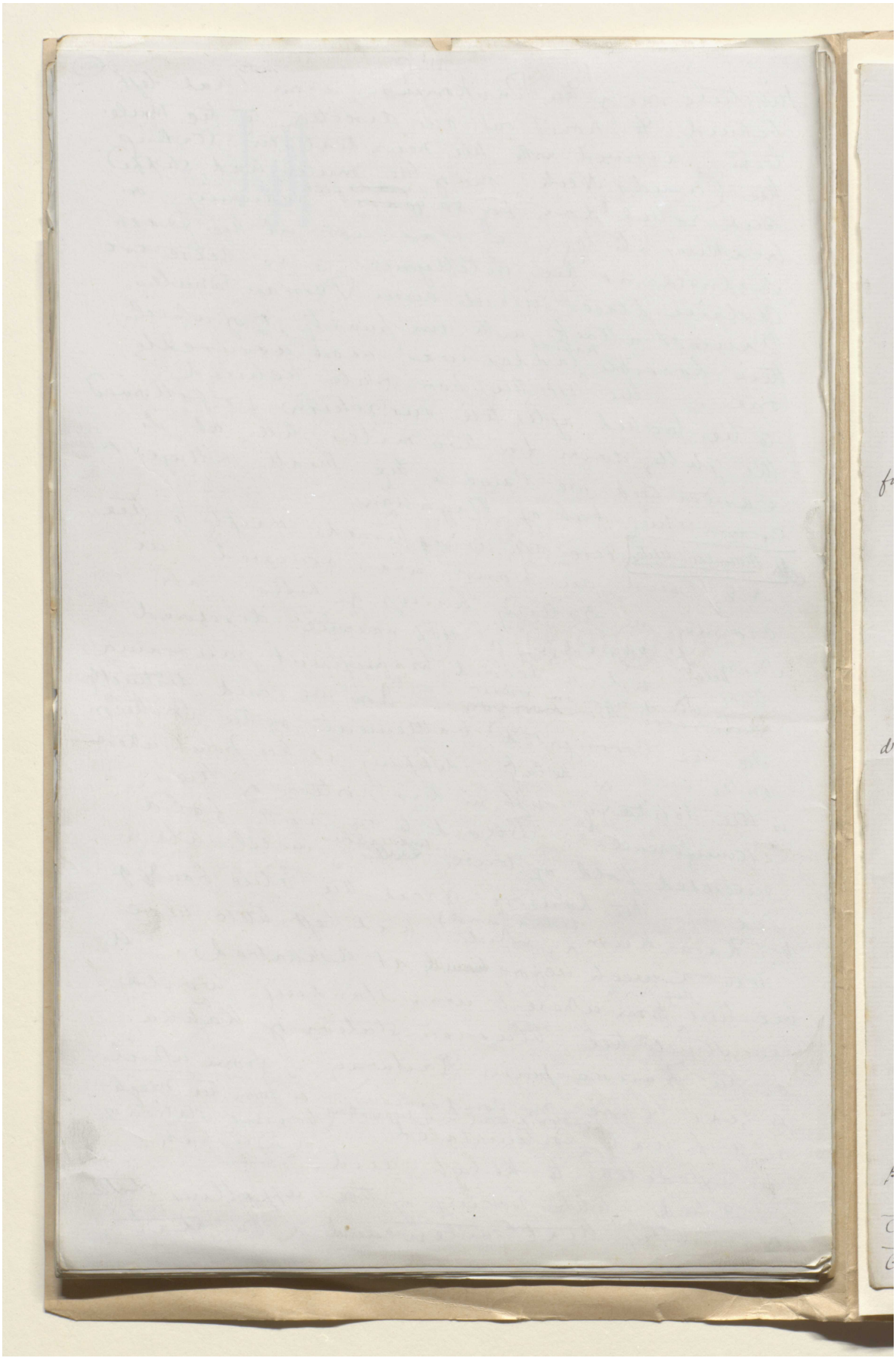

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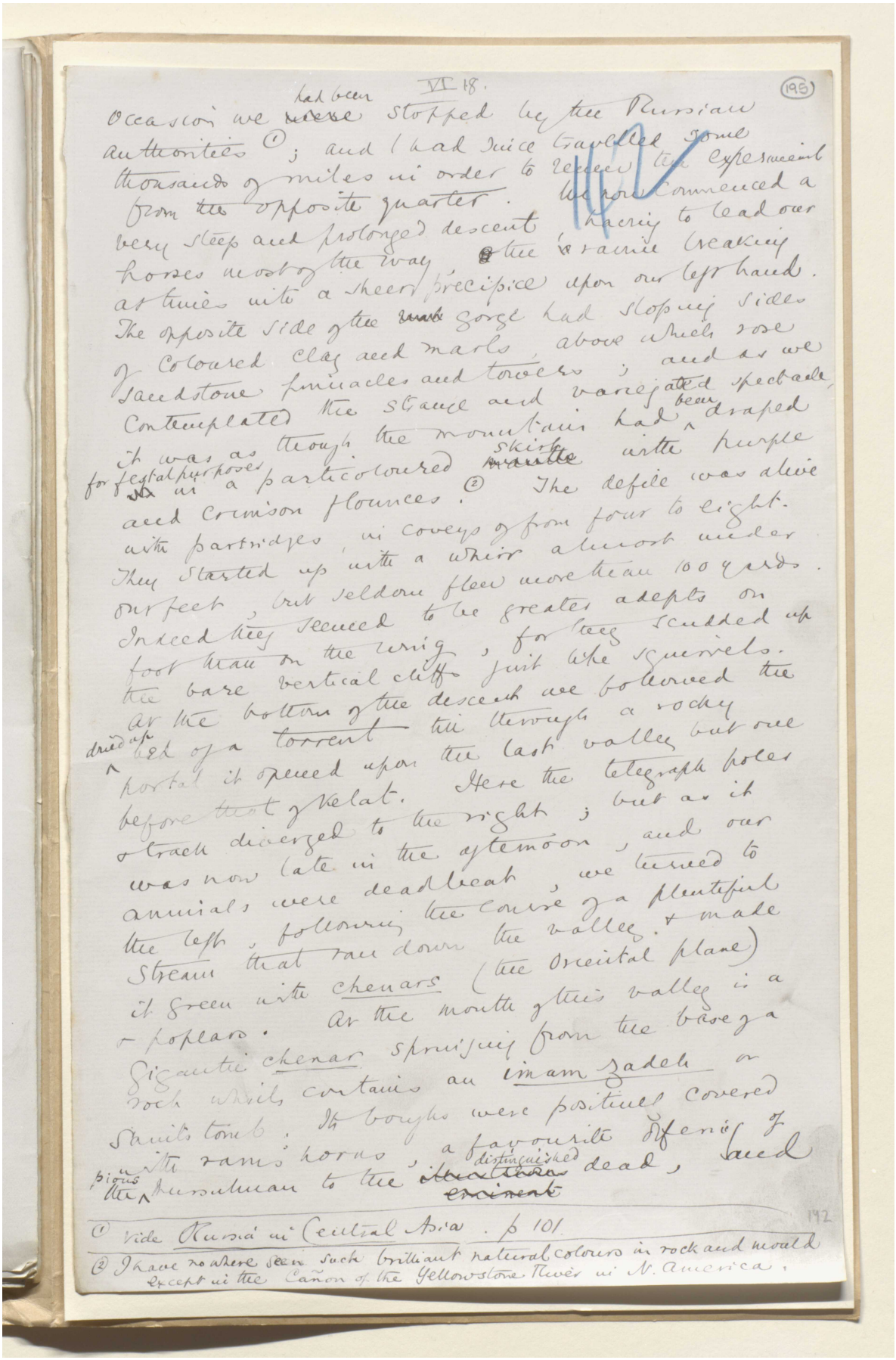

Occasion we ~~were~~ had been stopped by the Russian authorities ①; and I had since travelled some thousands of miles in order to renew the experiment from the opposite quarter. We now commenced a very steep and prolonged descent, having to lead our horses most of the way, the ravine breaking at times into a sheer precipice upon our left hand. The opposite side of the ~~[illegible]~~ gorge had sloping sides of coloured clay and marls, above which rose sandstone pinnacles and towers; and as we contemplated the strange and variegated spectacle, it was as though the mountain had been draped for festal purposes in a particoloured ~~mantle~~ skirt with purple and crimson flounces. ② The defile was alive with partridges, in coveys of from four to eight. They started up with a whirr almost under our feet, but seldom flew more than 100 yards. Indeed they seemed to be greater adepts on foot than on the wing, for they scudded up the bare vertical cliffs just like squirrels. At the bottom of the descent we followed the dried up bed of a torrent till through a rocky portal it opened upon the last valley but one before that of Kelat. Here the telegraph poles & track diverged to the right; but as it was now late in the afternoon, and our animals were dead beat, we turned to the left, following the course of a plentiful stream that ran down the valley & made it green with chenars (the Oriental plane) & poplars. At the mouth of this valley is a gigantic chenar springing from the base of a rock which contains an imam zadeh or saint's tomb. Its boughs were positively covered with rams' horns, a favourite offering of the pious Mussulman to the ~~[illegible]~~ distinguished dead, and

① Vide Russia in Central Asia. p 101.

② I have nowhere seen such brilliant natural colours in rock and mould except in the Cañon of the Yellowstone River in N. America.



المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة

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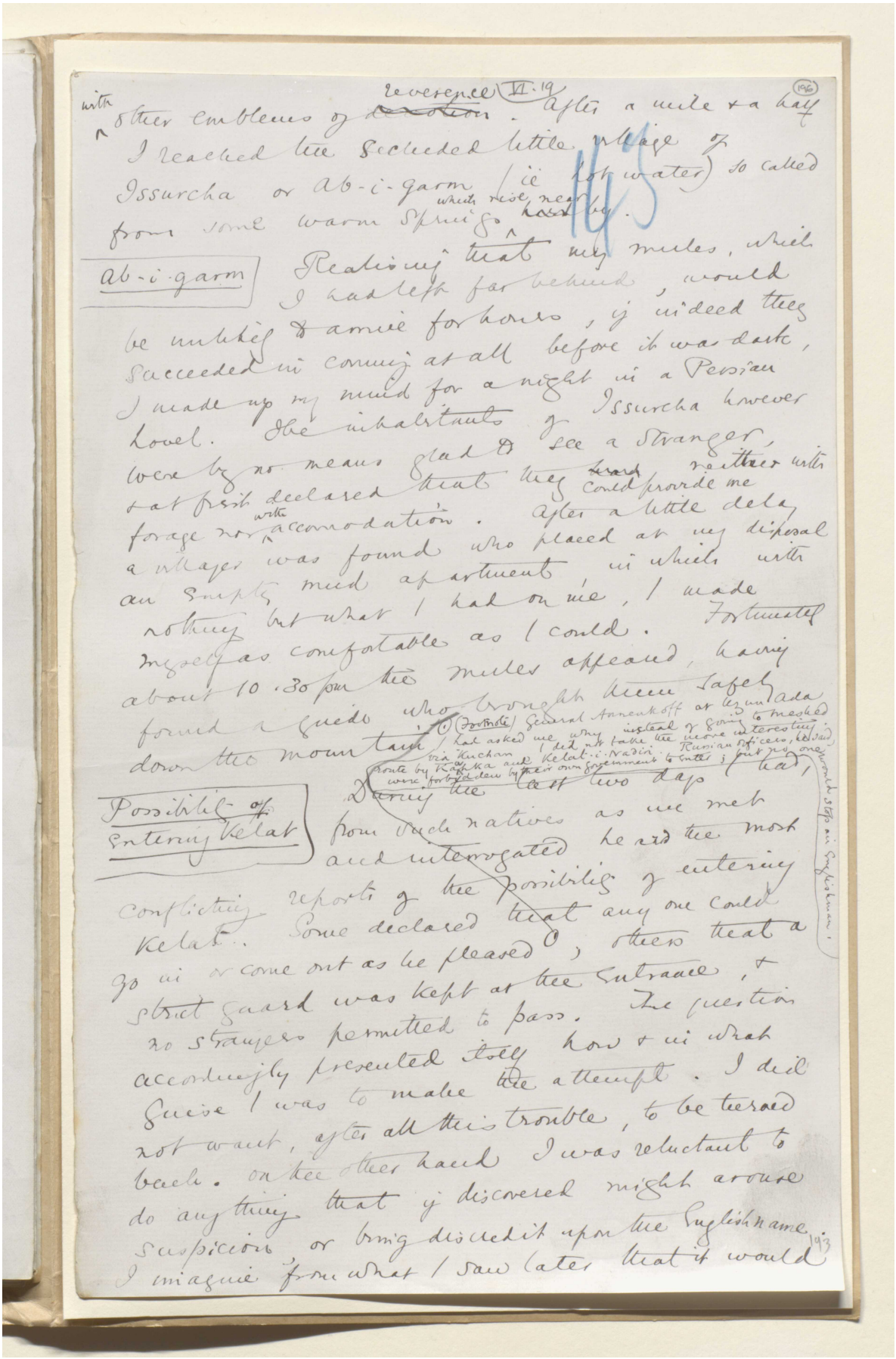

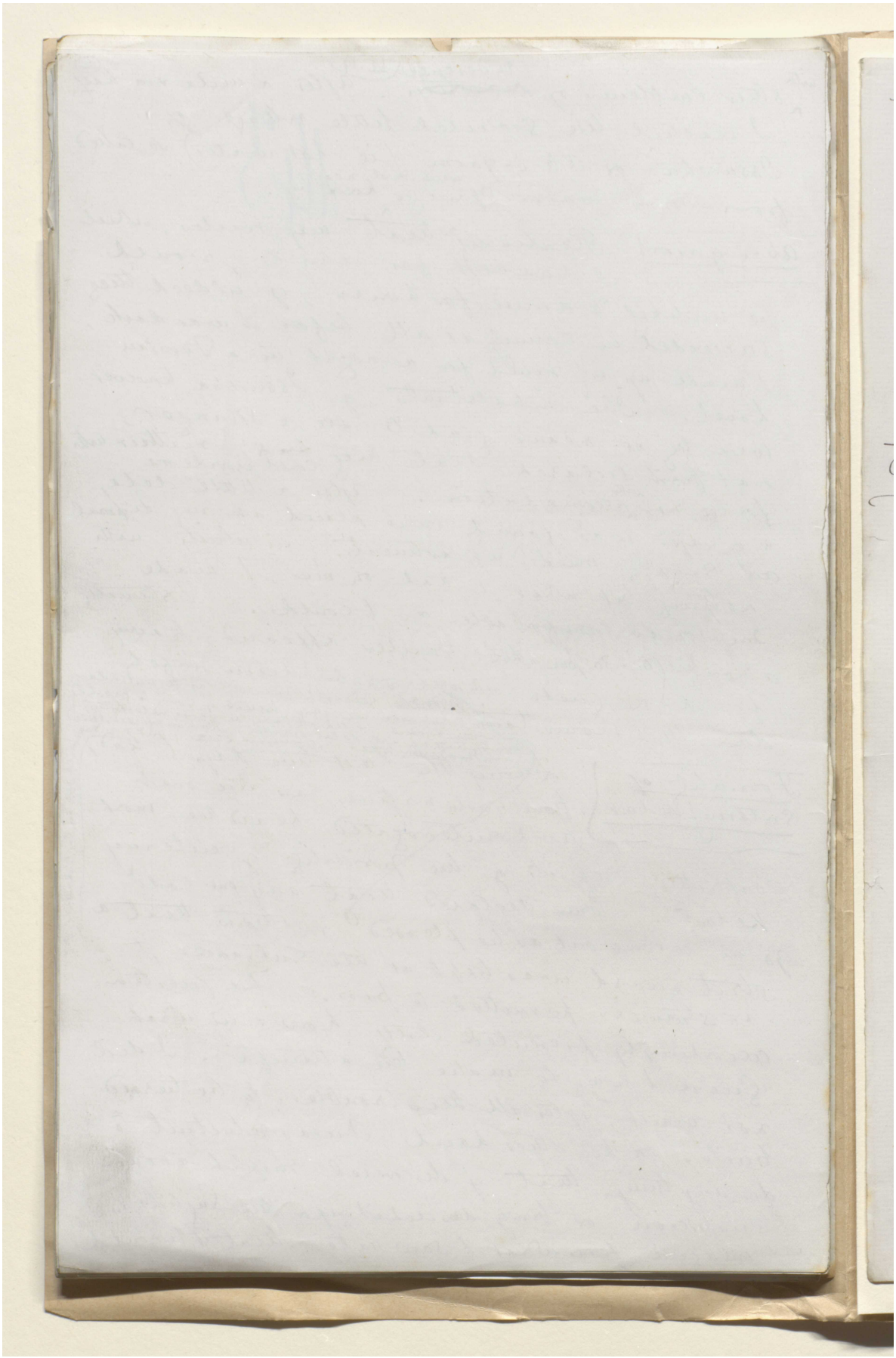

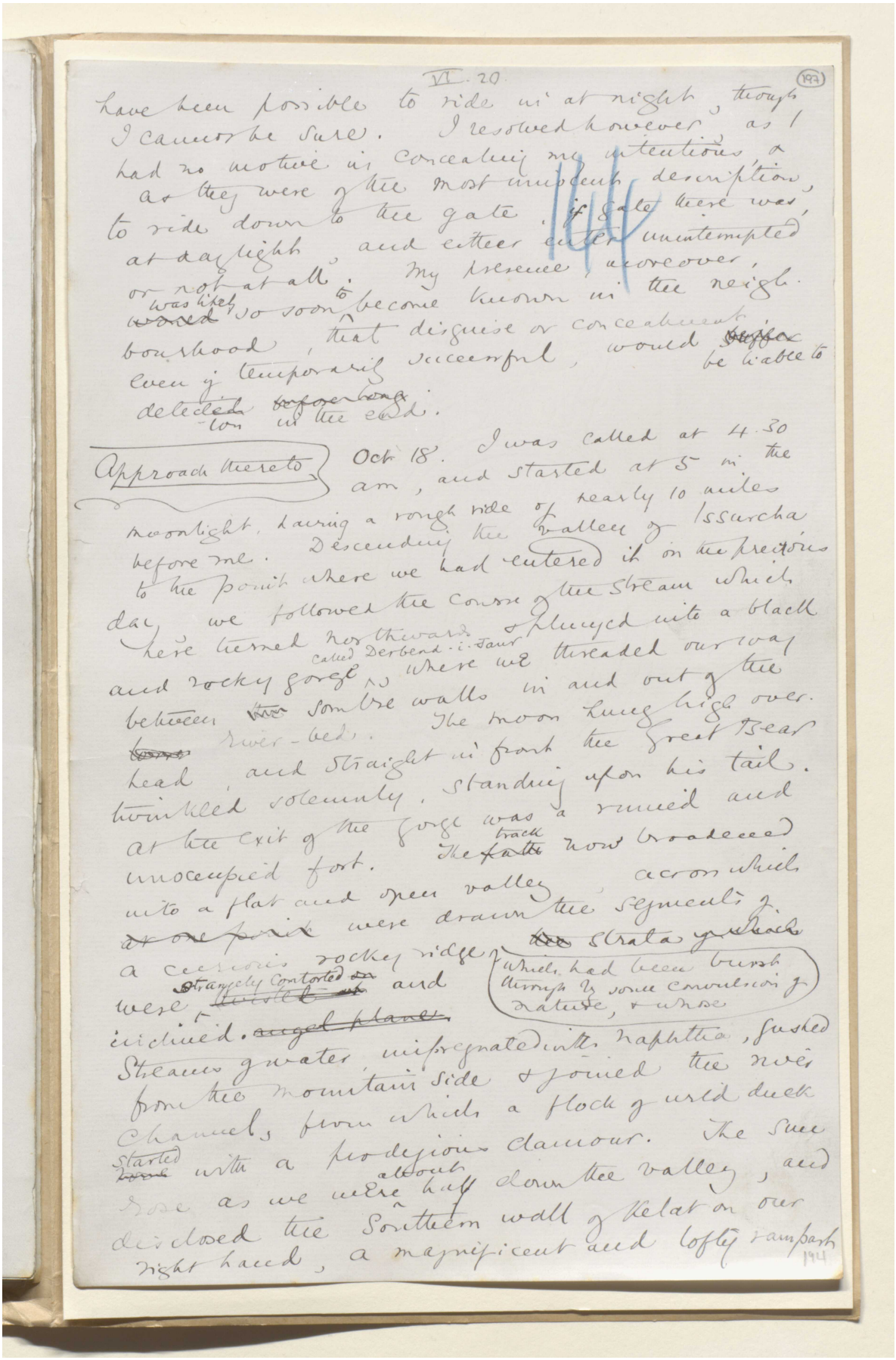

VI. 20. (197)

have been possible to ride in at night, though I cannot be sure. I resolved however, as I had no motive in concealing my intentions, & as they were of the most innocent description, to ride down to the gate, if gate there was, at daylight, and either enter uninterrupted or not at all. My presence, moreover, was likely so soon to become known in the neighbourhood, that disguise or concealment, even if temporarily successful, would be liable to detection in the end.

Approach thereto

Oct 18. I was called at 4.30 am, and started at 5 in the moonlight, having a rough ride of nearly 10 miles before me. Descending the valley of Issurcha to the point where we had entered it on the previous day, we followed the course of the stream which here turned northwards & plunged into a black and rocky gorge called Derbend-i-Jaur, where we threaded our way between sombre walls in and out of the river-bed. The moon hung high over head, and straight in front the Great Bear twinkled solemnly, standing upon his tail. At the exit of the gorge was a ruined and unoccupied fort. The track now broadened into a flat and open valley, across which were drawn the segments of a curious rocky ridge, which had been burst through by some convulsion of nature, & whose strata were strangely contorted and inclined. Streams of water, impregnated with naphtha, gushed from the mountain side & joined the river channel, from which a flock of wild duck started with a prodigious clamour. The sun rose as we were about half down the valley, and disclosed the southern wall of Kelat on our right hand, a magnificent and lofty rampart

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المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة

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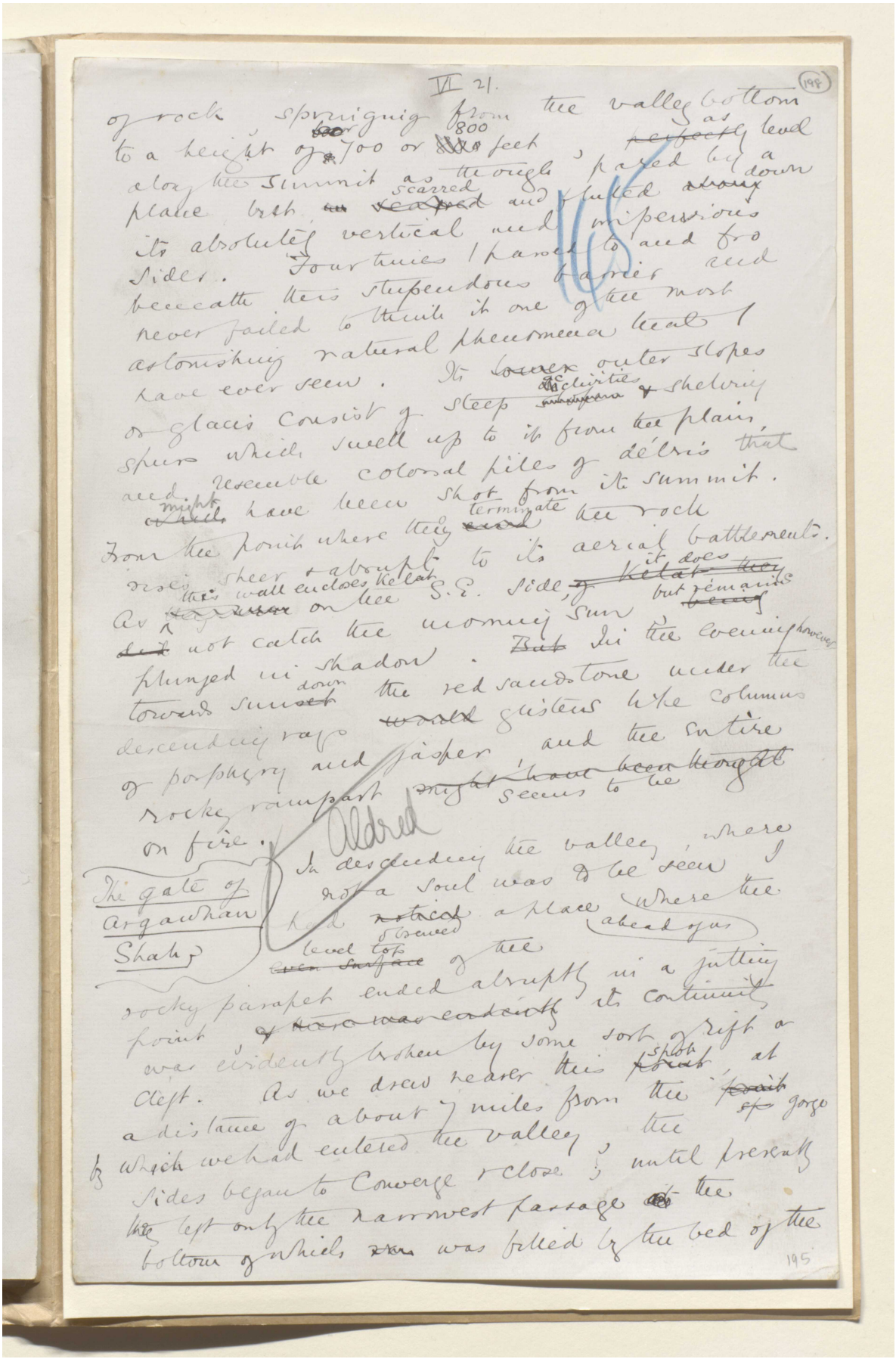

VI 21. (198)

of rock springing from the valley bottom to a height of 700 or 800 feet, as level along the summit as though pared by a plane but scarred and fluted down its absolutely vertical and impervious sides. Four times I passed to and fro beneath this stupendous barrier and never failed to think it one of the most astonishing natural phenomena that I have ever seen. Its outer slopes or glacis consist of steep activities & shelving spurs which swell up to it from the plain, and resemble colossal piles of débris that might have been shot from its summit. From the point where they terminate the rock rises sheer & abrupt to its aerial battlements. As this wall encloses Kelat on the S.E. side, it does not catch the morning sun but remains plunged in shadow. In the evening however towards sun down the red sandstone under the descending rays glistens like columns of porphyry and jasper, and the entire rocky rampart seems to be on fire.

Aldred

The gate of Argawhan Shah

In descending the valley, where not a soul was to be seen I had observed a place where the level top of the rocky parapet ended abruptly in a jutting point, its continuity was evidently broken by some sort of rift or cleft. As we drew nearer this spot, at a distance of about 7 miles from the gorge by which we had entered the valley, the sides began to converge & close; until presently the left only the narrowest passage the bottom of which was filled by the bed of the

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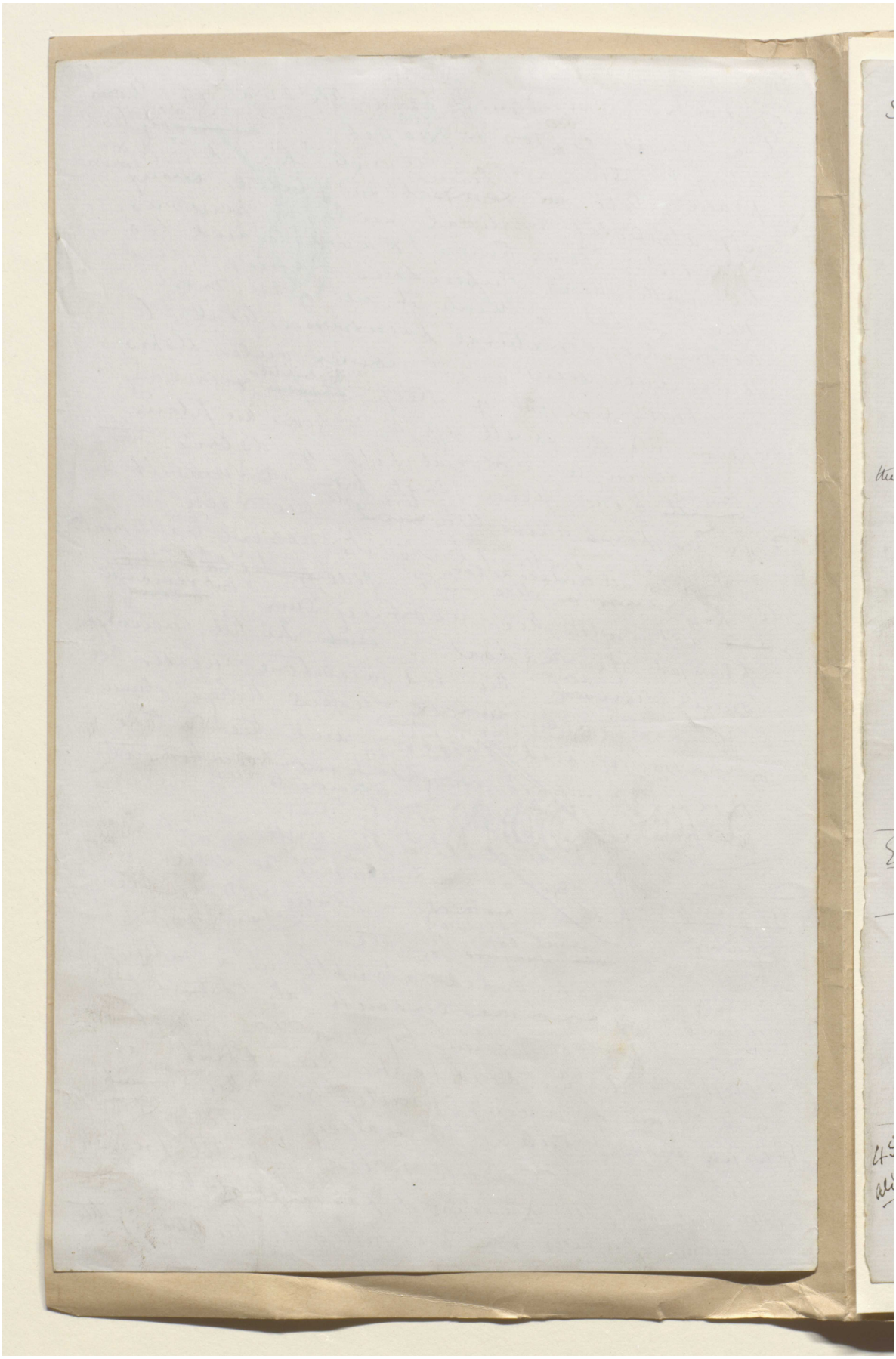

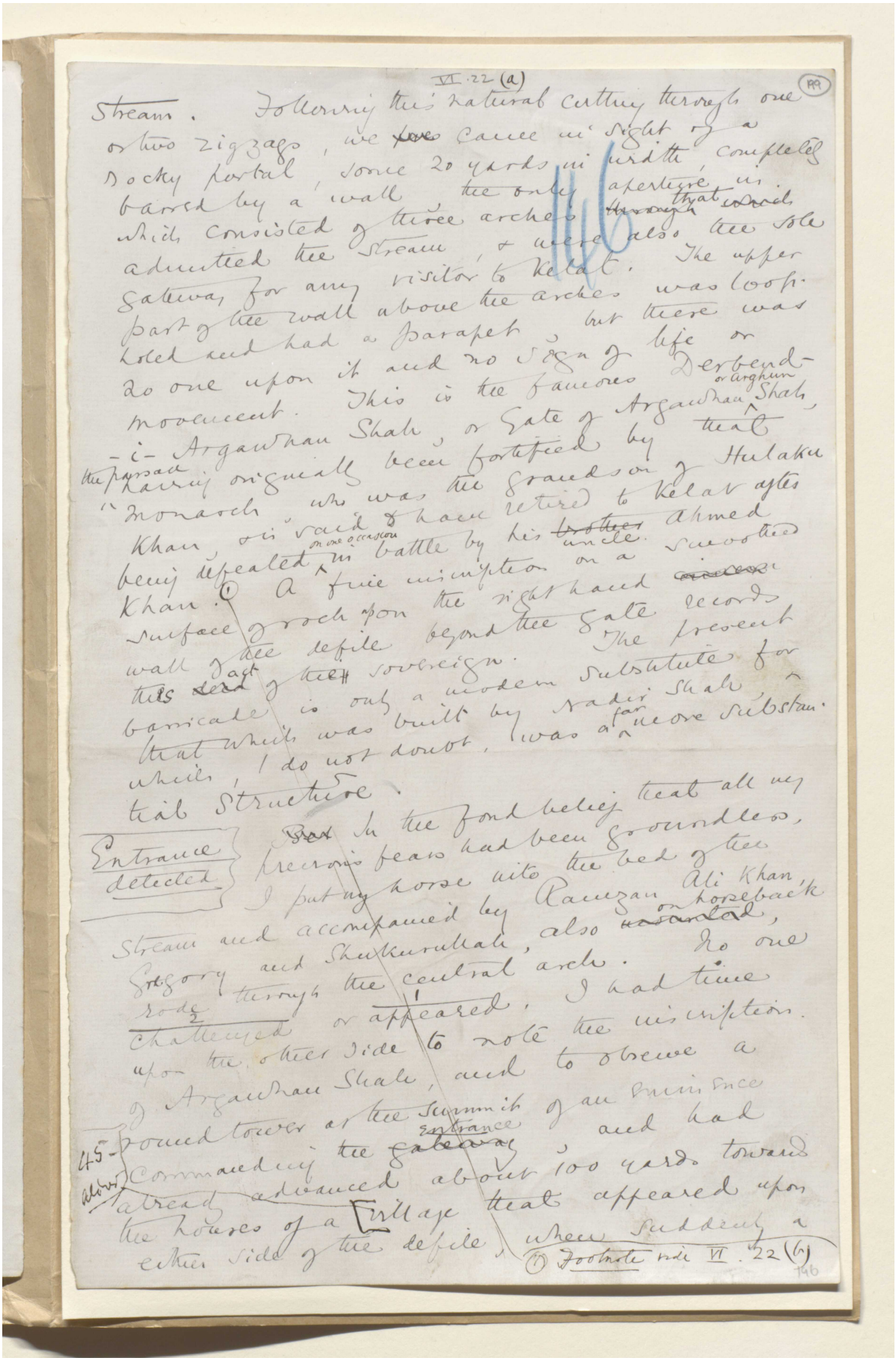

VI. 22 (a)

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Stream. Following this natural cutting through one or two zigzags, we ~~[illegible]~~ came in sight of a rocky portal, some 20 yards in width, completely barred by a wall, the only aperture in which consisted of three arches ~~through which~~ that admitted the stream, & were also the sole gateway for any visitor to Kelat. The upper part of the wall above the arches was loop-holed and had a parapet, but there was no one upon it and no sign of life or movement. This is the famous Derbend-i-Argawhan Shah, or Gate of Argawhan or Arghun Shah, the pursue having originally been fortified by that "Monarch, who was the grandson of Hulaku Khan, & is said to have retired to Kelat after being defeated on one occasion in battle by his ~~brother~~ uncle Ahmed Khan.(1) A fine inscription on a smoothed surface of rock upon the right hand ~~[illegible]~~ wall of the defile beyond the gate records this ~~[illegible]~~ act of the sovereign. The present barricade is only a modern substitute for that which was built by Nadir Shah, which, I do not doubt, was a far more substantial structure.

Entrance detected

~~But~~ In the fond belief that all my previous fears had been groundless, I put my horse into the bed of the stream and accompanied by Ramzan Ali Khan, Gregory and Shukurullah, also ~~[illegible]~~ on horseback, rode through the central arch. No one challenged or appeared, I had time upon the other side to note the inscription of Argawhan Shah, and to observe a round tower at the summit of an eminence commanding the ~~gateway~~ entrance, and had already advanced about 100 yards towards the houses of a village that appeared upon either side of the defile, when suddenly a

45 - above

(1) Footnote side VI. 22 (b)

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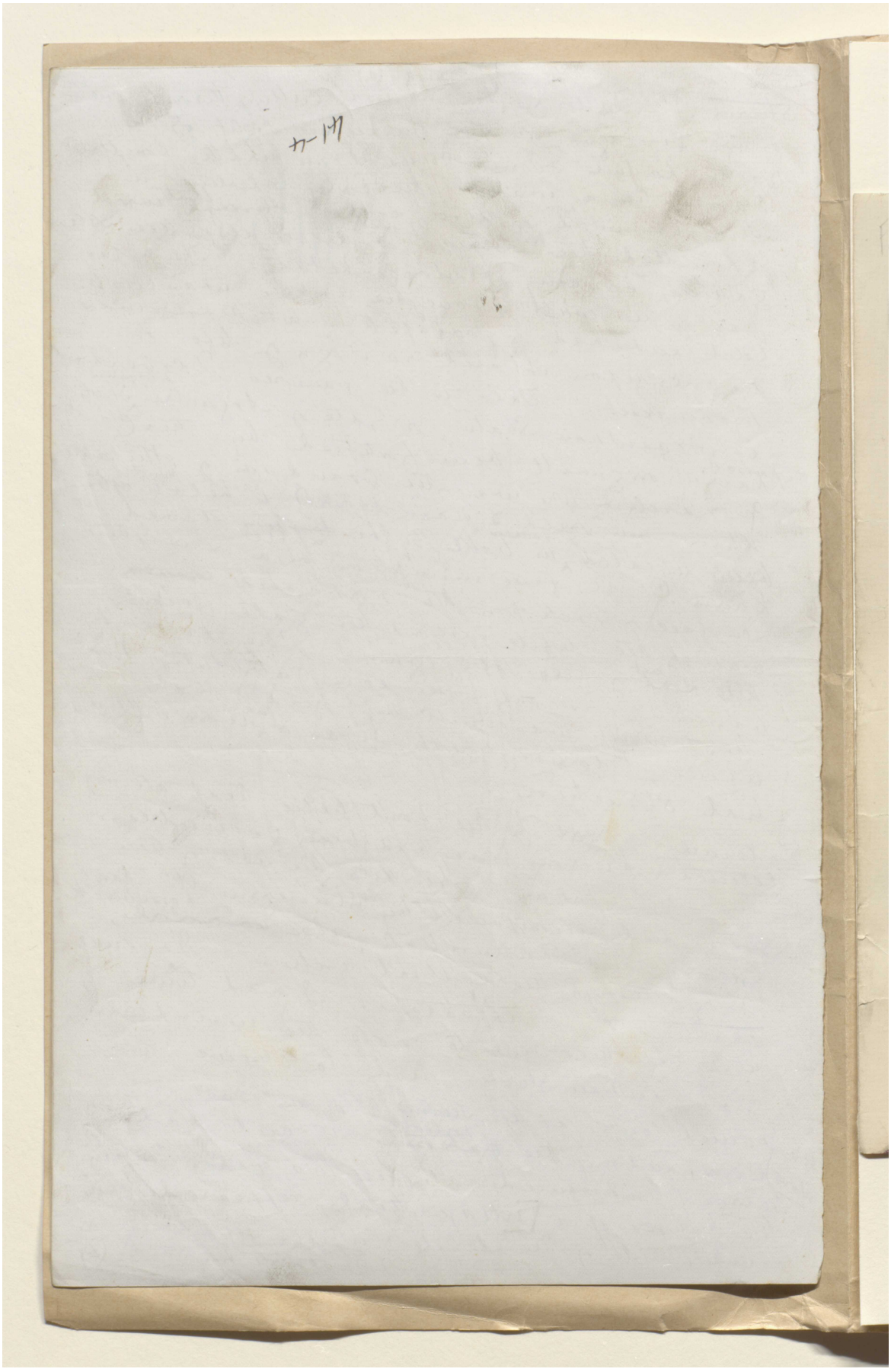

Footnote

VI. 22 (b)

(200)

This monarch, called by the Persians Argawhan Shah (1284–1290 A.D.) but more commonly spoken of as Arghun Khan was the remarkable man, to whom Marco Polo was sent by Kubla Khan from China ~~with~~ in charge of a Tartar bride, who opened diplomatic intercourse with the sovereigns of Europe, including King Edward I, & who like his father Abaka Khan was almost a Christian, and degraded the Musulmans from all public office.

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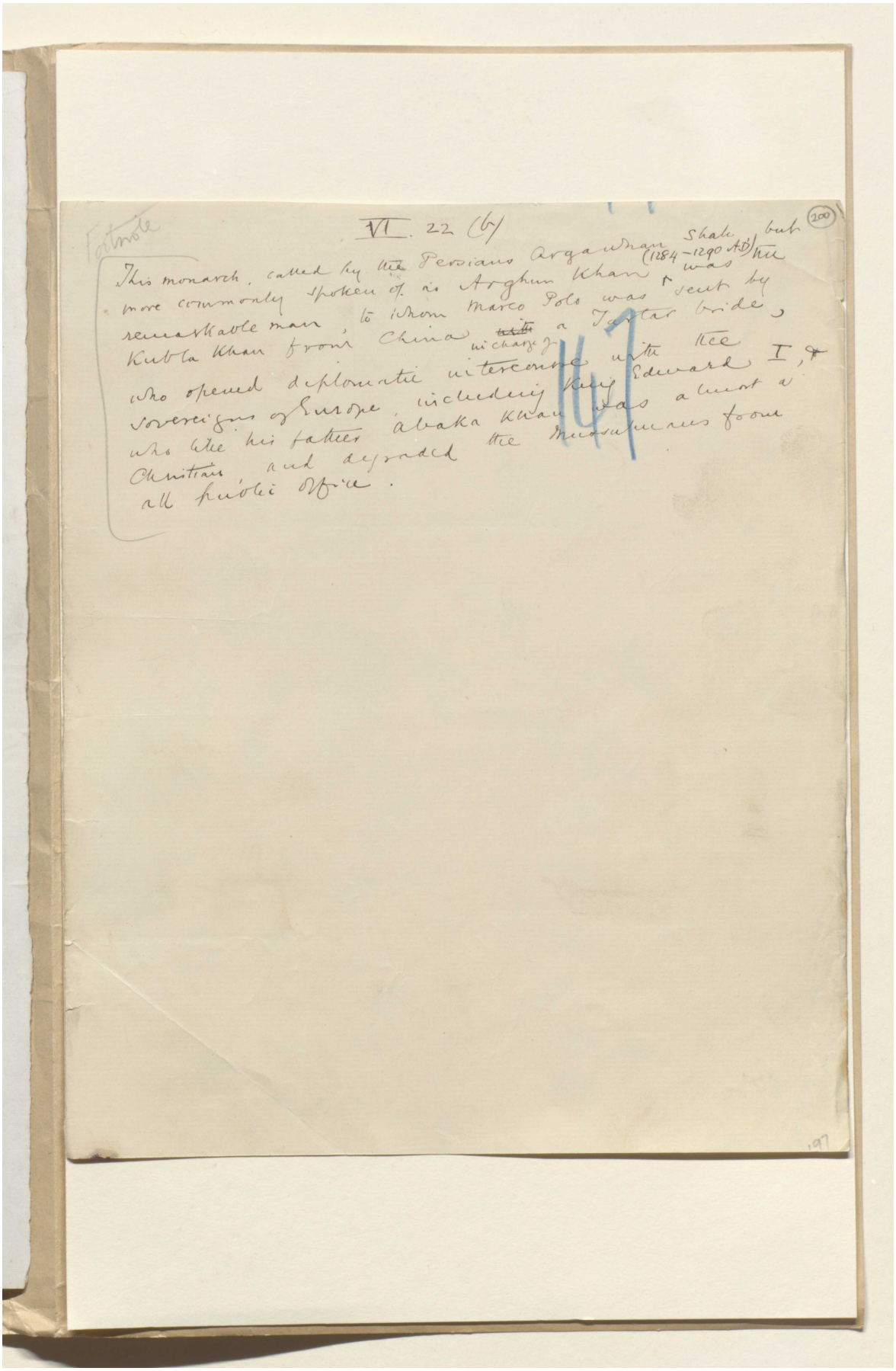



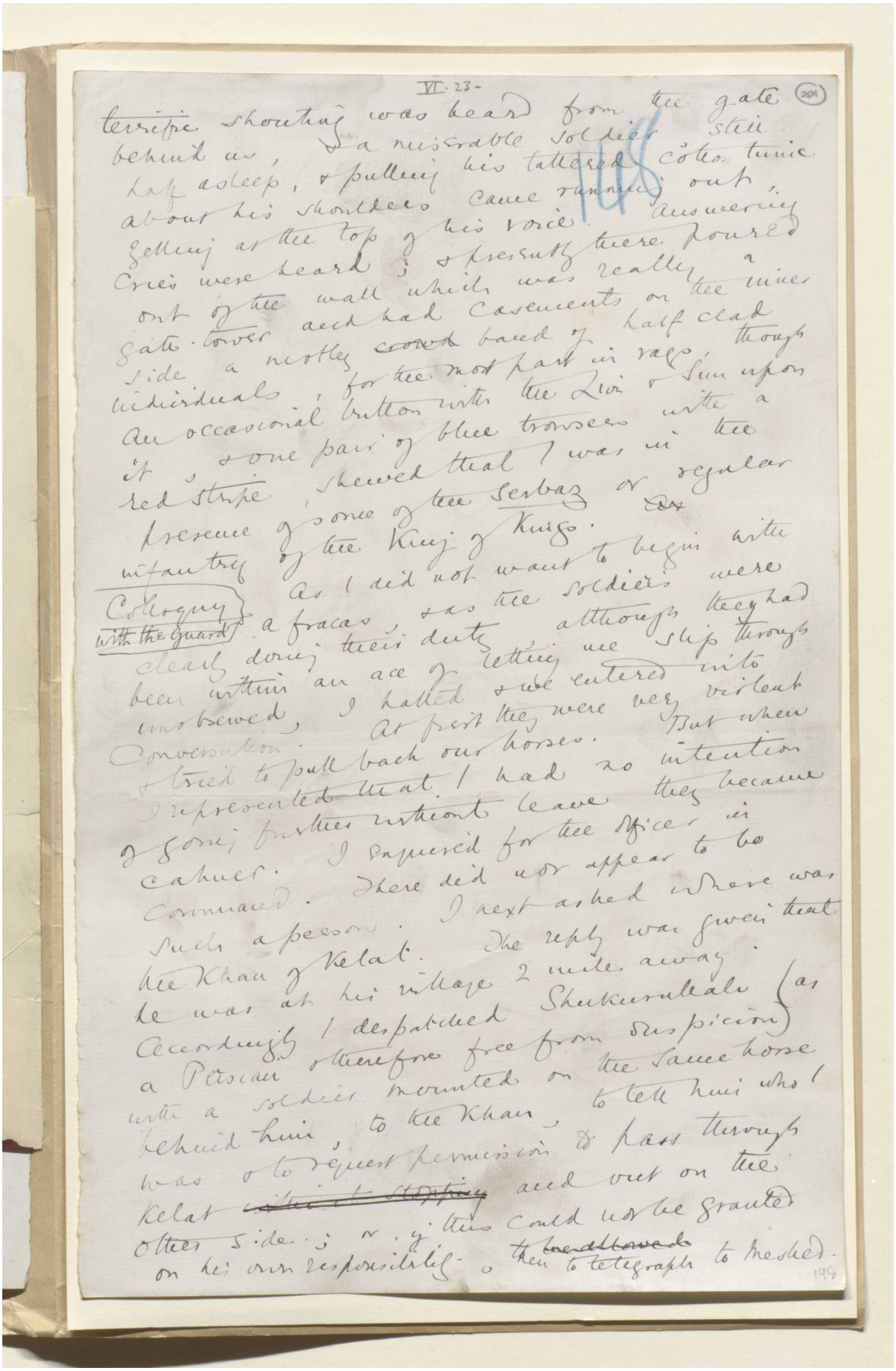

VI. 23-

201

terrific shouting was heard from the gate behind us, & a miserable soldier still half asleep, & pulling his tattered cotton tunic about his shoulders came running out, yelling at the top of his voice. Answering cries were heard; & presently there poured out of the wall which was really a gate-tower and had casements on the side a motley crowd band of half clad individuals, for the most part in rags, though an occasional button with the Lion & Sun upon it, & one pair of blue trousers with a red stripe, shewed that I was in the presence of some of the Sarbaz or regular infantry of the King of Kings.

Colloquy with the Guard

As I did not want to begin with a fracas, & as the soldiers were clearly doing their duty although they had been within an ace of letting me slip through unobserved, I halted & we entered into conversation. At first they were very violent & tried to pull back our horses. But when I represented that I had no intention of going further without leave they became calmer. I enquired for the Officer in Command. There did not appear to be such a person. I next asked where was the Khan of Kelat. The reply was given that he was at his village 2 miles away. Accordingly I despatched Shekurullah (as a Persian therefore free from suspicion) with a soldier mounted on the same horse behind him, to the Khan, to ask him who I was & to request permission to pass through Kelat without stopping and out on the other side; or, if this could not be granted on his own responsibility, then to telegraph to Mashed.

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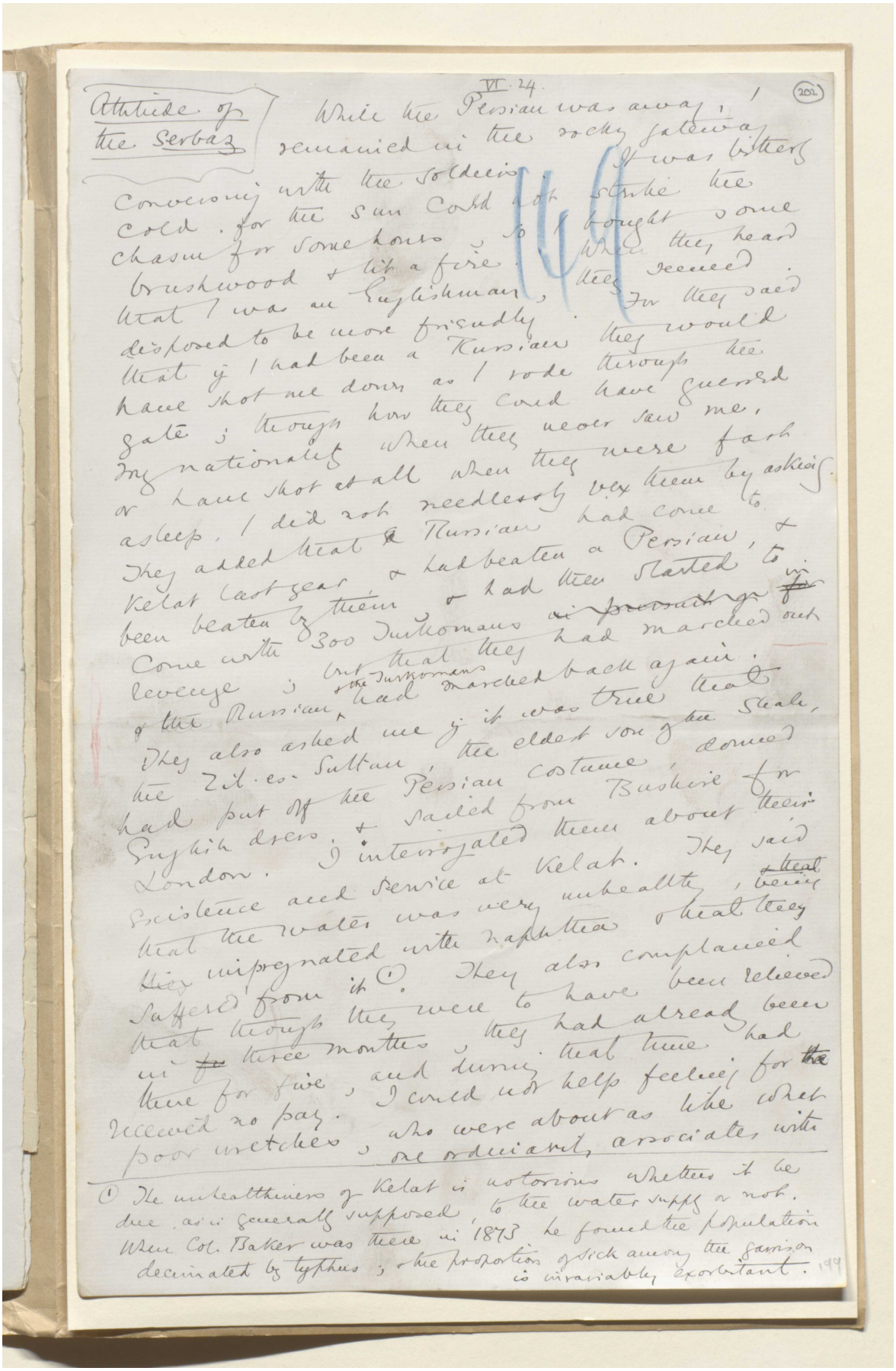

VI. 24.

(202)

Attitude of the Serbaz

While the Persian was away, I remained in the rocky gateway conversing with the soldiers. It was bitterly cold, for the sun could not strike the chasm for some hours, so I bought some brushwood & lit a fire. When they heard that I was an Englishman, they seemed disposed to be more friendly. For they said that if I had been a Russian they would have shot me down as I rode through the gate; though how they could have guessed my nationality when they never saw me, or have shot at all when they were fast asleep, I did not needlessly vex them by asking. They added that a Russian had come to Kelat last year, & had beaten a Persian, & been beaten by them, & had then started to come with 300 Turkomans ~~in pursuit of~~ in revenge; but that they had marched out & the Russian & the Turkomans had marched back again. They also asked me if it was true that the Zil-es-Sultan, the eldest son of the Shah, had put off the Persian costume, donned English dress, & sailed from Bushire for London. I interrogated them about their existence and service at Kelat. They said that the water was very unhealthy, ~~& that~~ being impregnated with naphtha & that they suffered from it (1). They also complained that though they were to have been relieved in ~~for~~ three months, they had already been there for five, and during that time had received no pay. I could not help feeling for the poor wretches, who were about as like what one ordinarily associates with

(1) The unhealthiness of Kelat is notorious whether it be due, as is generally supposed, to the water supply or not. When Col. Baker was there in 1873 he found the population decimated by typhus; & the proportion of sick among the garrison is invariably exorbitant.

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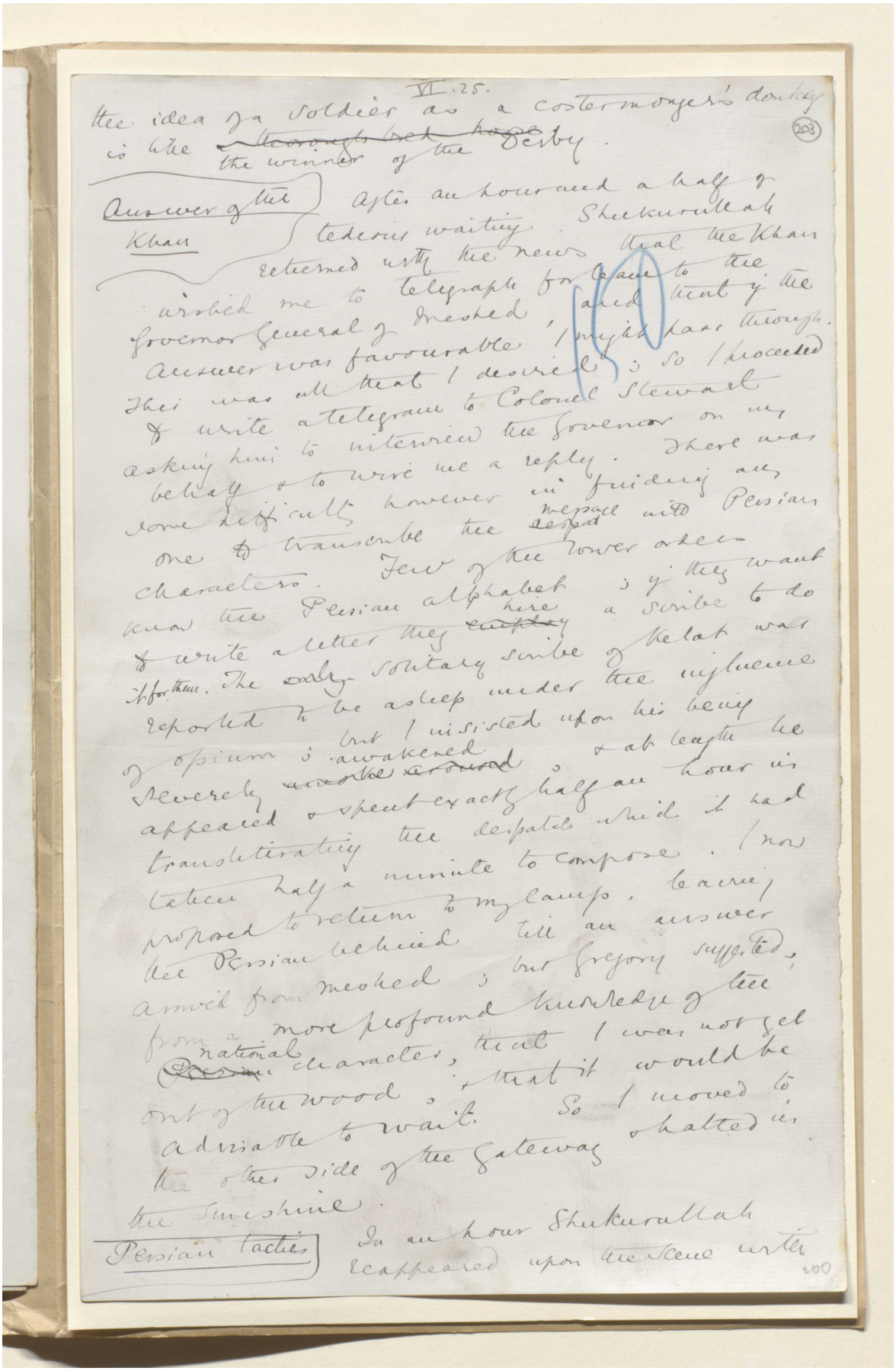

VI. 25.

the idea of a soldier as a costermonger's donkey is like ~~a thoroughbred horse~~ the winner of the Derby.

(203)

Answer of the Khan

After an hour and a half of tedious waiting, Shukurullah returned with the news that the Khan wished me to telegraph for leave to the Governor General of Meshed, and that if the answer was favourable I might pass through. This was all that I desired; so I proceeded to write a telegram to Colonel Stewart asking him to interview the Governor on my behalf & to wire me a reply. There was some difficulty however in finding any one to transcribe the ~~despatch~~ message into Persian characters. Few of the lower orders know the Persian alphabet; if they want to write a letter they ~~employ~~ hire a scribe to do it for them. The ~~only~~ solitary scribe of Kelat was reported to be asleep under the influence of opium; but I insisted upon his being severely ~~awoke aroused~~ awakened, & at length he appeared & spent exactly half an hour in transliterating the despatch which it had taken half a minute to compose. I now proposed to return to my camp, leaving the Persian behind till an answer arrived from Meshed; but Gregory suggested, from a more profound knowledge of the ~~Persian~~ national character, that I was not yet out of the wood; & that it would be advisable to wait. So I moved to the other side of the gateway & halted in the sunshine.

Persian tactics

In an hour Shukurullah reappeared upon the scene with

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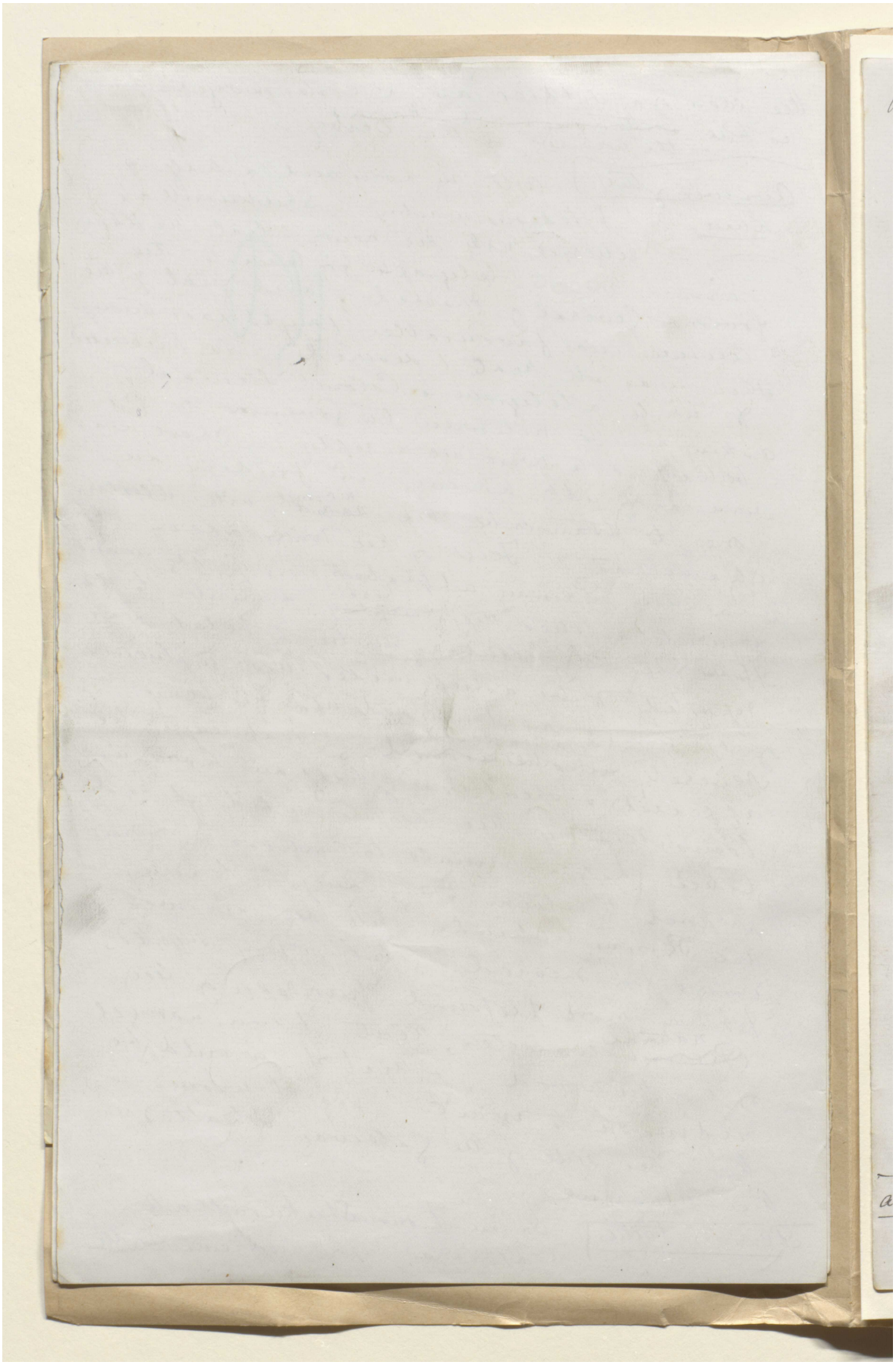

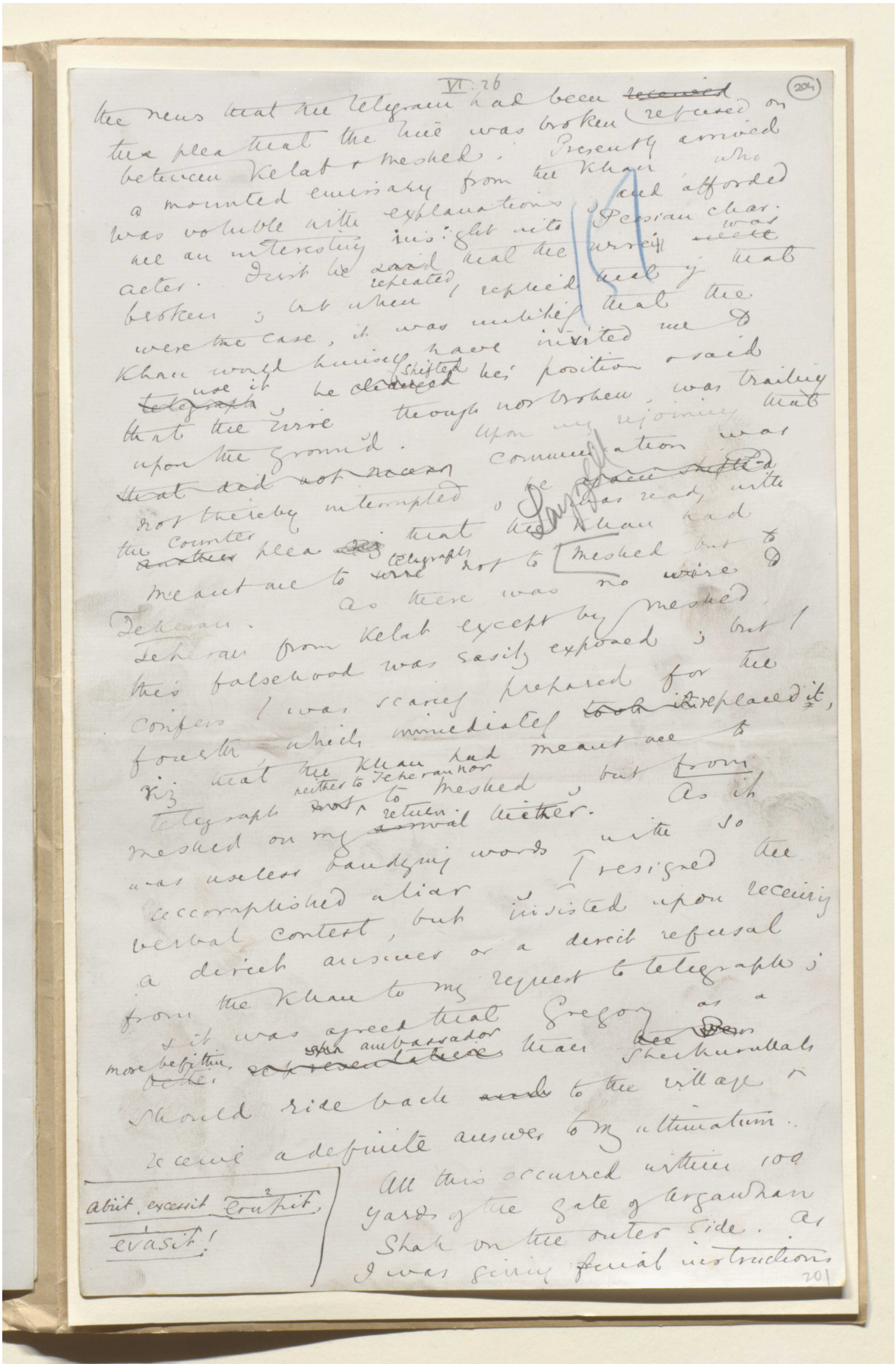



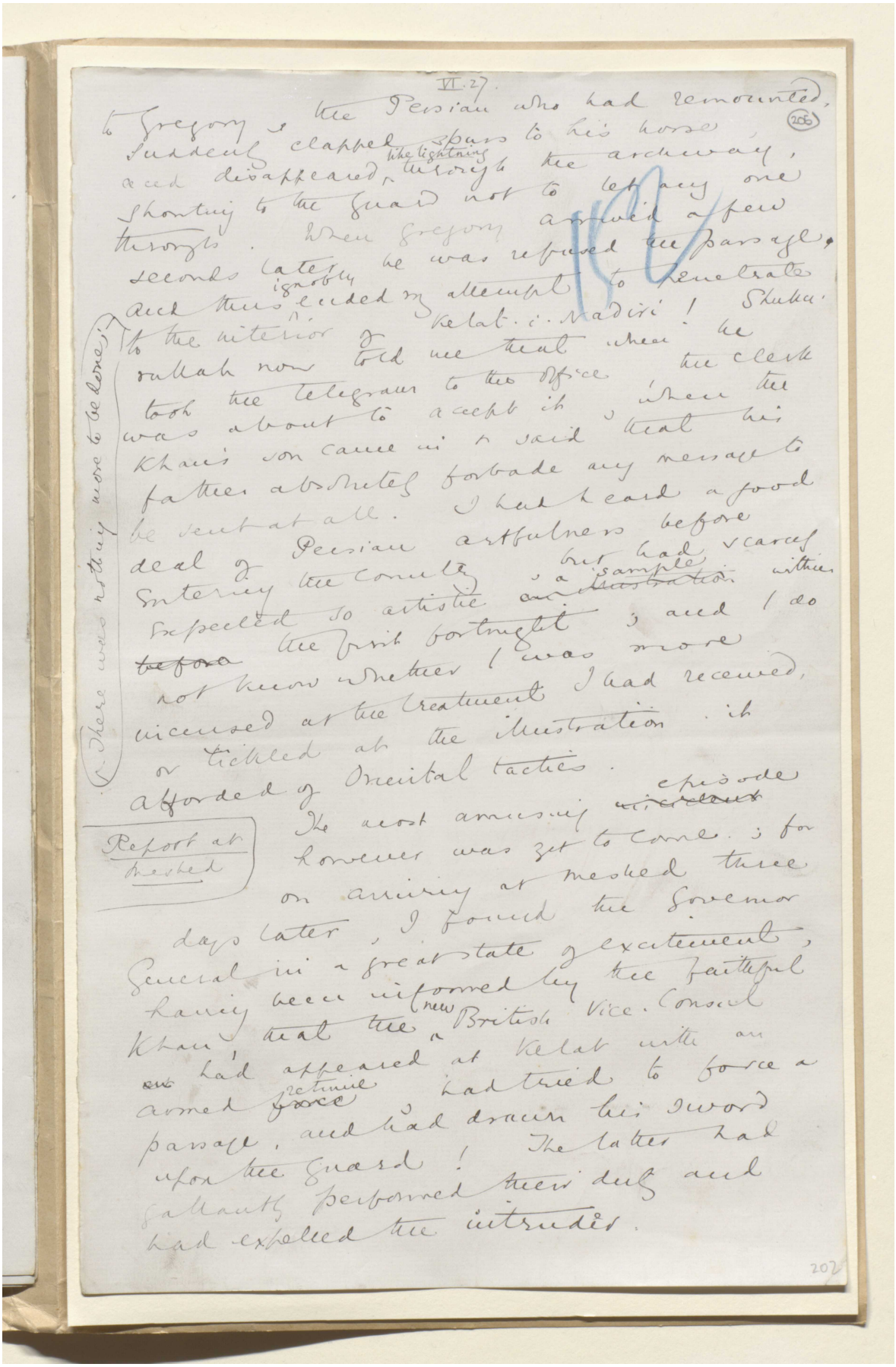

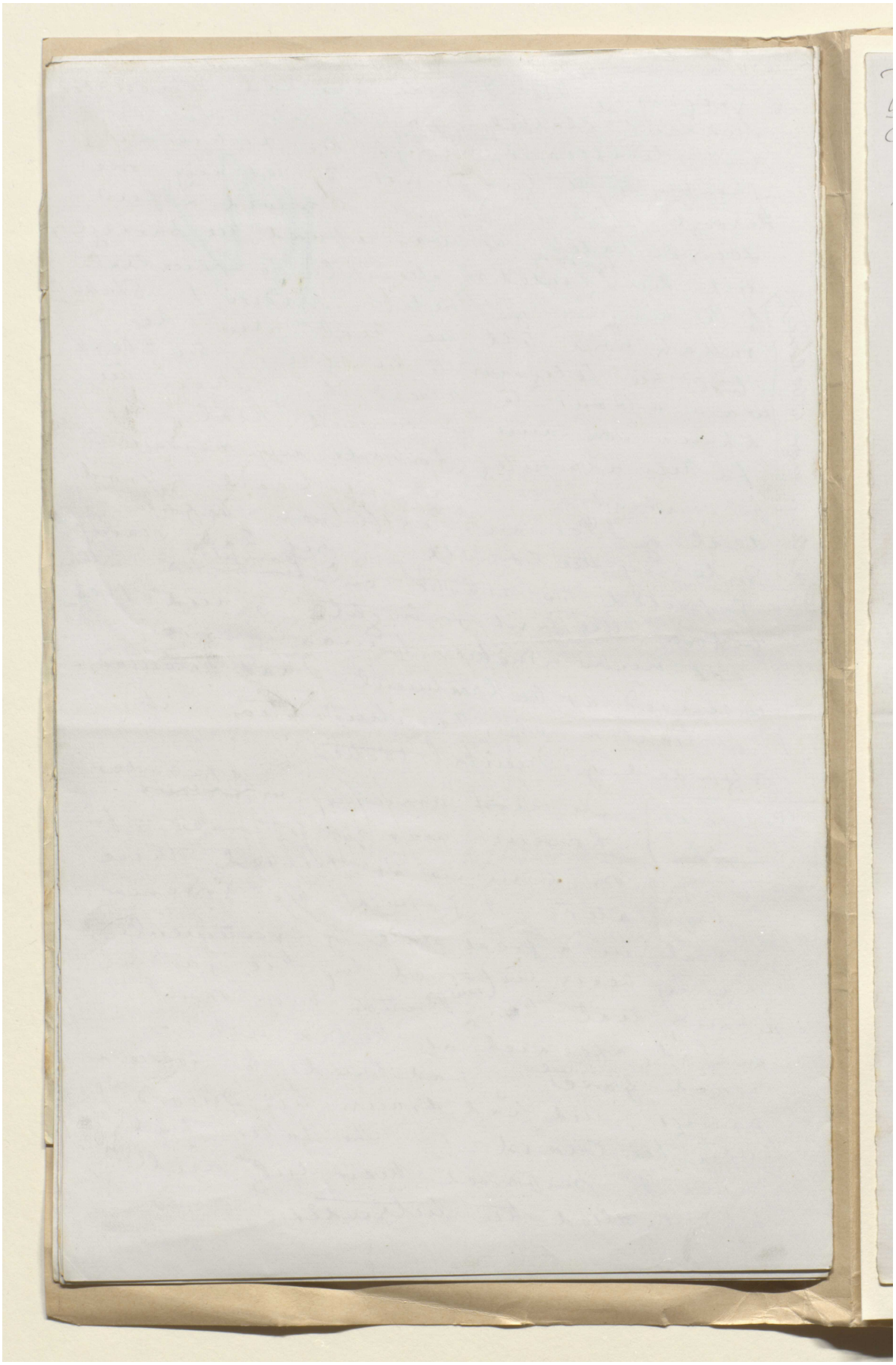

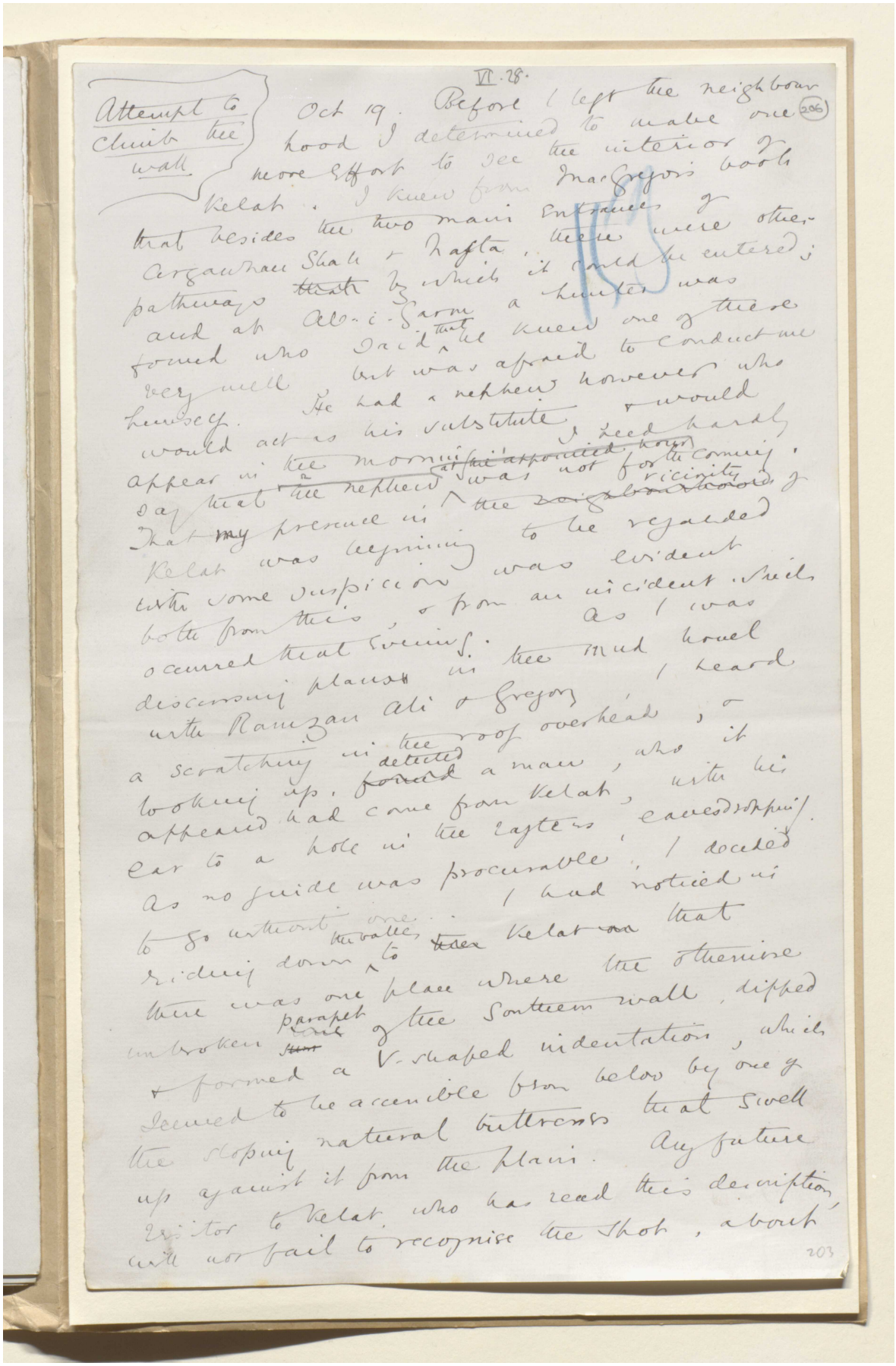

VI. 28.

Attempt to climb the wall

Oct 19. Before I left the neighbourhood I determined to make one more effort to see the interior of Kelat. I knew from MacGregor's book that besides the two main entrances of Argawhan Shah & Nafta, there were other pathways ~~that~~ by which it could be entered; and at Ab-i-Garm a hunter was found who said that he knew one of these very well but was afraid to conduct me himself. He had a nephew however who would act as his substitute & would appear in the morning. I need hardly say that the nephew at ~~the appointed hour~~ was not forthcoming. That ~~my~~ presence in the ~~neighbourhood~~ vicinity of Kelat was beginning to be regarded with some suspicion was evident both from this, & from an incident which occurred that evening. As I was discussing plans in the mud hovel with Ramzan Ali & Gregory, I heard a scratching in the roof overhead, & looking up, ~~found~~ detected a man, who it appeared had come from Kelat, with his ear to a hole in the rafters, eavesdropping. As no guide was procurable, I decided to go without one. I had noticed in riding down the valley to ~~the~~ Kelat ~~on~~ that there was one place where the otherwise unbroken ~~sum~~ parapet of the southern wall, dipped & formed a V-shaped indentation, which seemed to be accessible from below by one of the sloping natural buttresses that swell up against it from the plain. Any future visitor to Kelat, who has read this description, will not fail to recognise the spot, about

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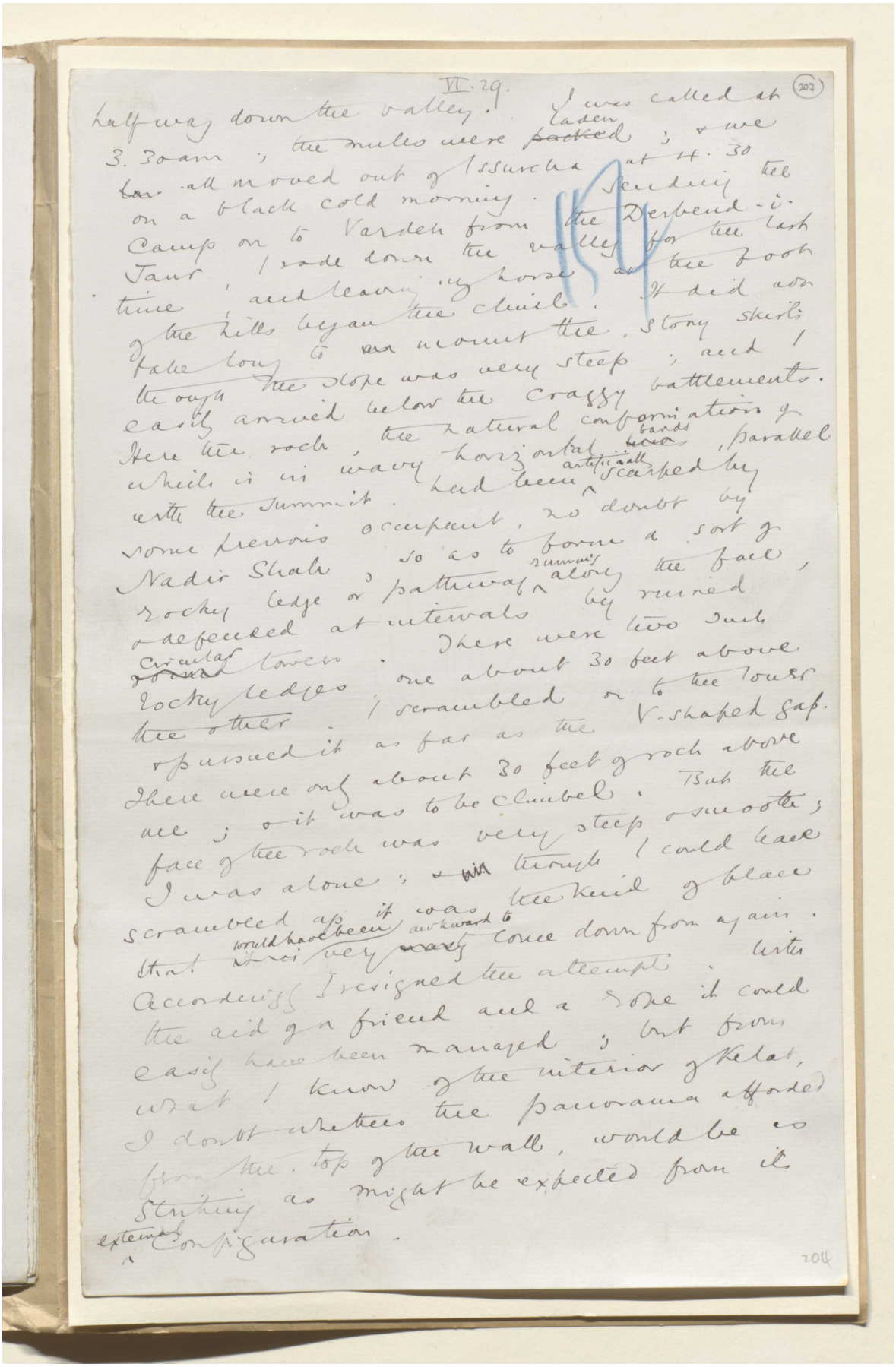
VI. 29. (207)



half way down the valley. I was called at 3.30 am; the mules were ~~packed~~ laden; & we ~~[illegible]~~ all moved out of Issurcha at 4.30 on a black cold morning. Sending the Camp on to Vardeh from the Derbend-i-Taur, I rode down the valley for the last time, and leaving my horse at the foot of the hills began the climb. It did not take long to ~~[illegible]~~ mount the stony skirts though the slope was very steep; and I easily arrived below the craggy battlements. Here the rock, the natural conformation of which is in wavy horizontal ~~[illegible]~~ bands, parallel with the summit, had been artificially scarped by some previous occupant, no doubt by Nadir Shah, so as to form a sort of rocky ledge or pathway running along the face, & defended at intervals by ruined ~~round~~ circular towers. There were two such rocky ledges, one about 30 feet above the other. I scrambled on to the lower & pursued it as far as the V-shaped gap. There were only about 30 feet of rock above me; & it was to be climbed. But the face of the rock was very steep & smooth; I was alone; & ~~[illegible]~~ though I could have scrambled up it was the kind of place that ~~it is~~ would have been very ~~[illegible]~~ awkward to come down from again. Accordingly I resigned the attempt. With the aid of a friend and a rope it could easily have been managed; but from what I know of the interior of Kelat, I doubt whether the panorama afforded from the top of the wall, would be as striking as might be expected from its external configuration.

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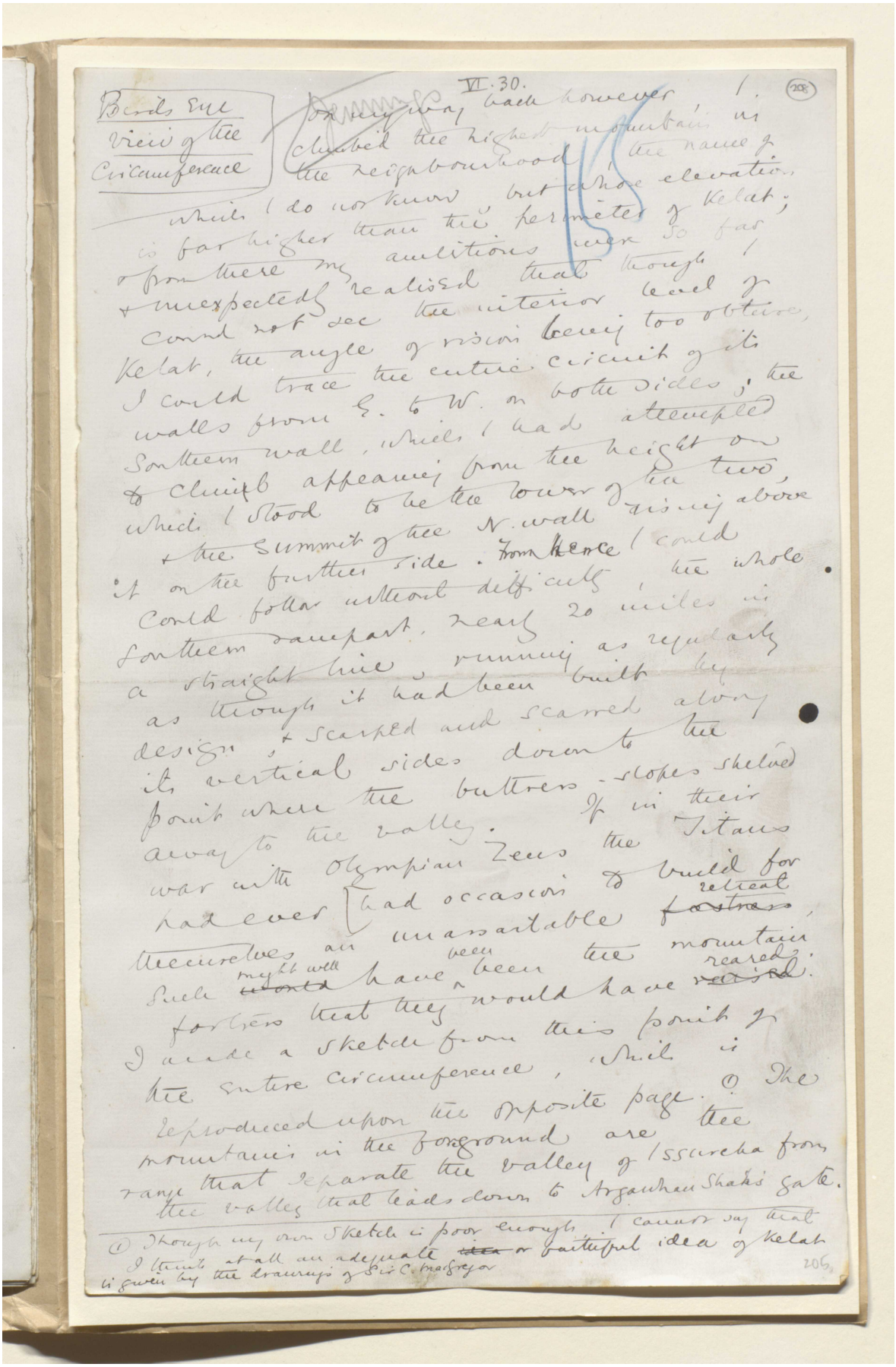

Birds eye view of the Circumference

VI. 30.

On my way back however I climbed the highest mountain in the neighbourhood, the name of which I do not know, but whose elevation is far higher than the perimeter of Kelat; & from there my ambitions were so far unexpectedly realised that though I could not see the interior level of Kelat, the angle of vision being too obtuse, I could trace the entire circuit of its walls from E. to W. on both sides; the Southern wall, which I had attempted to climb appeared from the height on which I stood to be the lower of the two, & the summit of the N. wall rising above it on the further side. From hence I could follow without difficulty the whole Southern rampart, nearly 20 miles in a straight line, running as regularly as though it had been built by design, & scarped and scarred always its vertical sides down to the point where the buttress-slopes shelved away to the valley. If in their war with Olympian Zeus the Titans had ever had occasion to build for retreat themselves an unassailable fastness, such might well have been the mountain fortress that they would have reared. I made a sketch from this point of the entire circumference, which is reproduced upon the opposite page. ① The mountains in the foreground are those that separate the valley of Issureka from the valley that leads down to Arganan Shahi's gate.

① Though my own sketch is poor enough, I cannot say that I think it at all an adequate & faithful idea of Kelat as given by the drawings of Sir C. Macgregor

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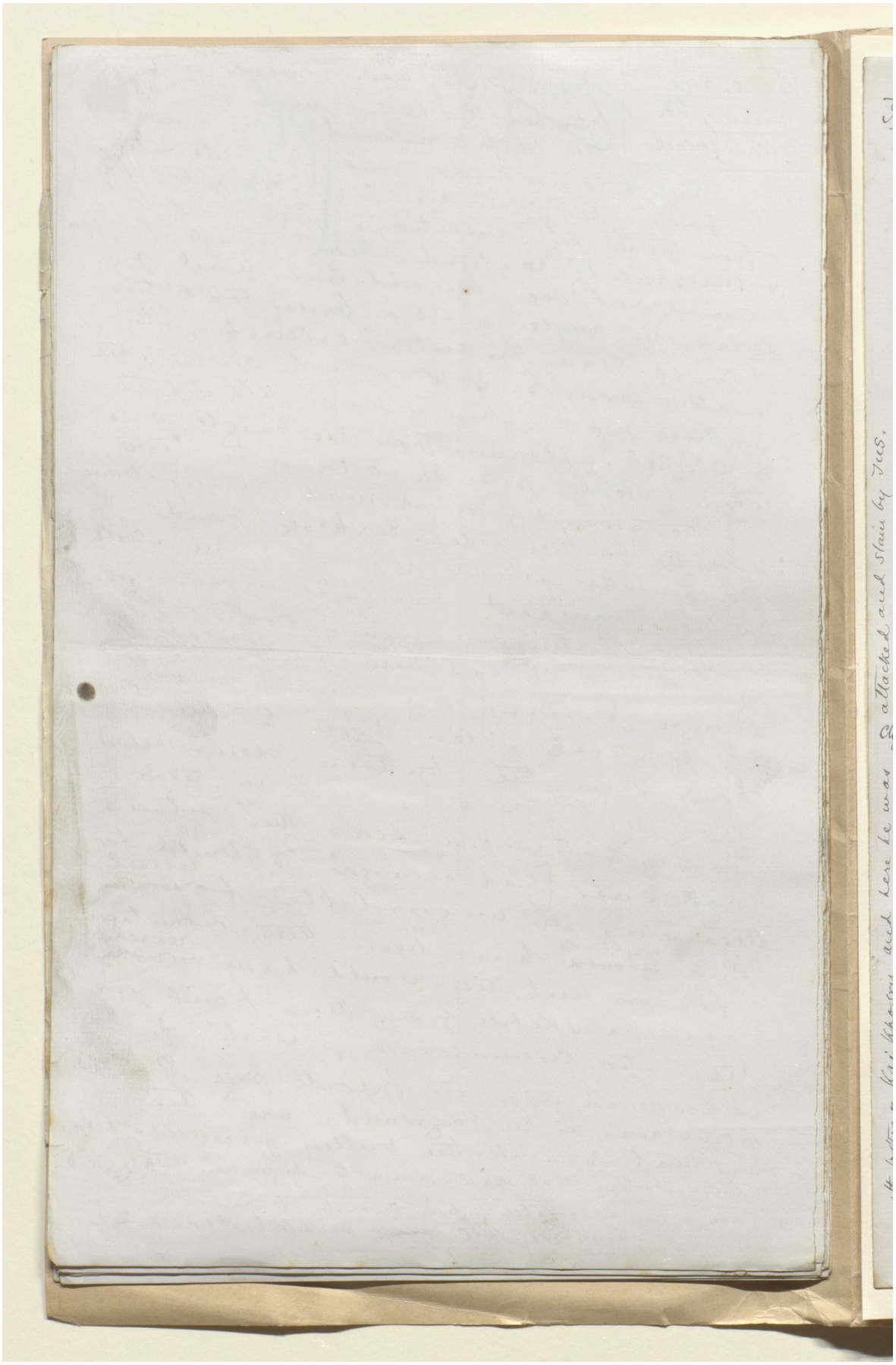

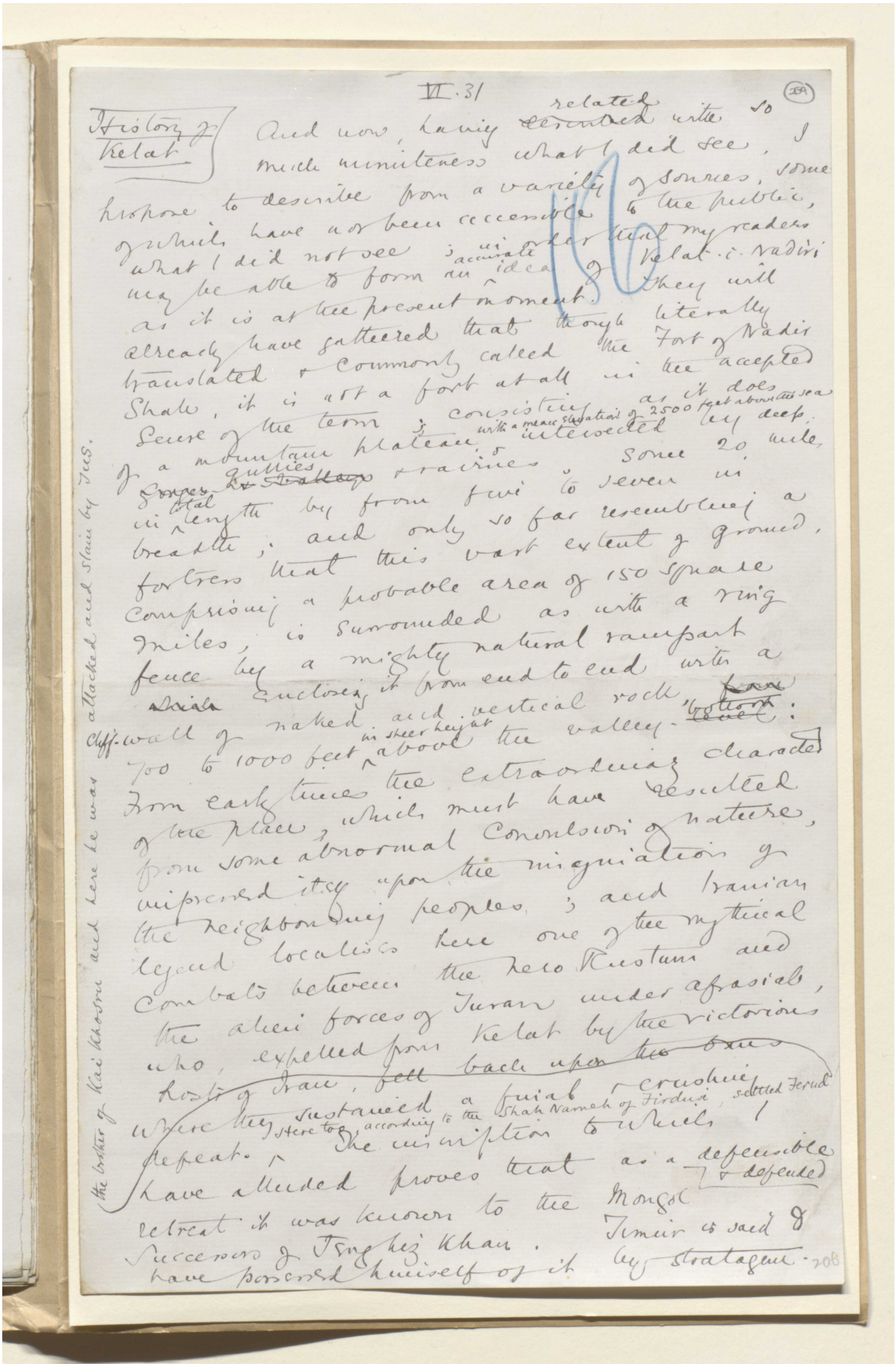

VI. 31

(209)

History of Kelat

And now, having ~~described~~ related with so much minuteness what I did see, I propose to describe from a variety of sources, some of which have not been accessible to the public, what I did not see; in order that my readers may be able to form an accurate idea of Kelat-i-Nadiri as it is at the present moment. They will already have gathered that though literally translated & commonly called the Fort of Nadir Shah, it is not a fort at all in the accepted sense of the term; consisting as it does of a mountain plateau with a mean elevation of 2500 feet above the sea intersected by deep gullies & ~~valleys~~ & ravines. Some 20 miles in total length by from five to seven in breadth; and only so far resembling a fortress that this vast extent of ground, comprising a probable area of 150 square miles, is surrounded as with a ring fence by a mighty natural rampart ~~which~~ enclosing it from end to end with a cliff-wall of naked and vertical rock, ~~from~~ 700 to 1000 feet in sheer height above the valley-bottom ~~level~~: From early times the extraordinary character of the place, which must have resulted from some abnormal convulsion of nature, impressed itself upon the imagination of the neighbouring peoples; and Iranian legend localises here one of the mythical combats between the hero Rustum and the alien forces of Turan under Afrasiab, who, expelled from Kelat by the victorious hosts of Iran, fell back upon the ~~bans~~ where they sustained a final & crushing defeat. Here too, according to the Shah Nameh of Firdusi, settled Ferud the brother of Kai Khosru and here he was attacked and slain by Jus. The inscription to which I have alluded proves that as a defensible & defended retreat it was known to the Mongol successors of Tenghiz Khan. Timur is said to have possessed himself of it by stratagem.

٤١٧

المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة

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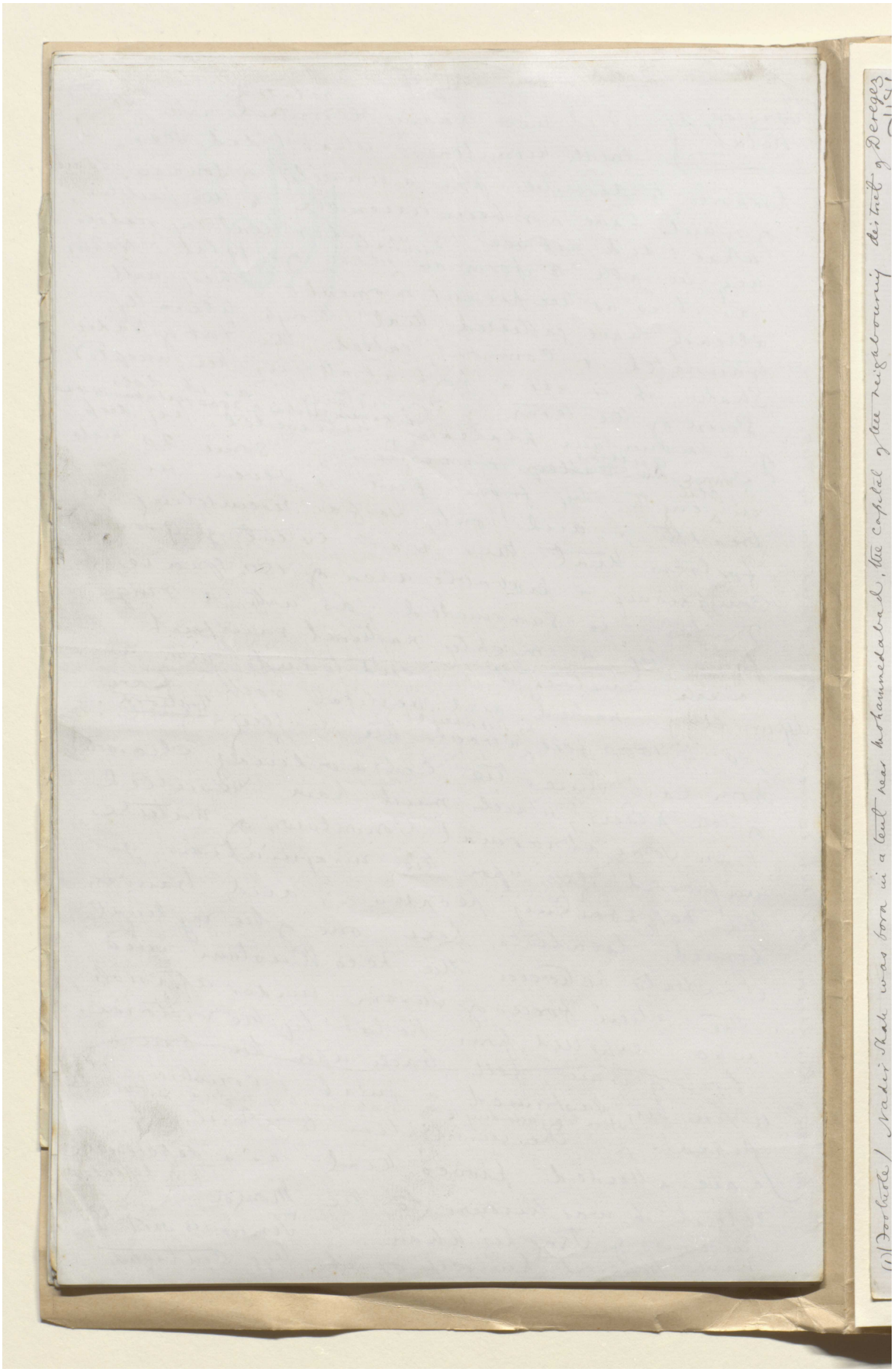

مكتبة قطر الوطنية
Qatar National Library

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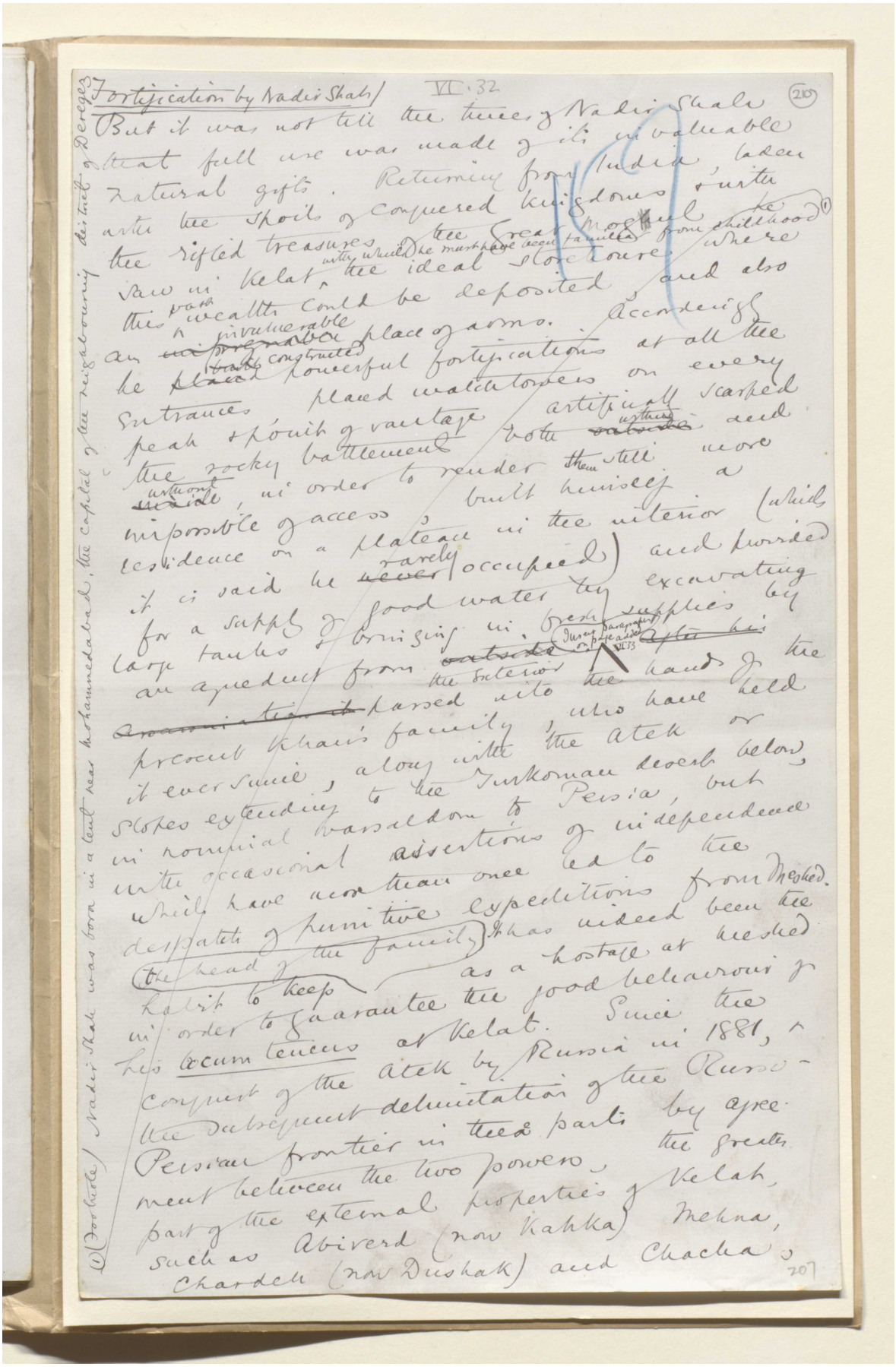

Fortification by Nadir Shah) VI.32 (210)

But it was not till the times of Nadir Shah that full use was made of its invaluable natural gifts. Returning from India, laden with the spoils of conquered kingdoms & with the rifled treasures of the Great Moghul, he saw in Kelat, with which he must have been familiar from childhood (1), the ideal storehouse where this vast wealth could be deposited, and also an invulnerable place of arms. Accordingly he ~~placed~~ built constructed powerful fortifications at all the entrances, placed watchtowers on every peak & point of vantage, artificially scarped the rocky battlements both ~~outside~~ within and without ~~inside~~, in order to render them still more impossible of access, built himself a residence on a plateau in the interior (which it is said he ~~never~~ rarely occupied) and provided for a supply of good water by excavating large tanks & bringing in fresh supplies by an aqueduct from ~~outside~~ the interior (Insert paragraph on page added VI.33) ~~after his~~ ~~examination it~~ passed into the hands of the present Khan's family, who have held it ever since, along with the Atek or slopes extending to the Turkoman desert below, in nominal vassaldom to Persia, but with occasional assertions of independence which have more than once led to the despatch of punitive expeditions from Meshed. (the head of the family) It has indeed been the habit to keep as a hostage at Meshed in order to guarantee the good behaviour of his locum tenens at Kelat. Since the conquest of the Atek by Russia in 1881, & the subsequent delimitation of the Russo-Persian frontier in these parts by agreement between the two powers, the greater part of the external properties of Kelat, such as Abiverd (now Kahka) Mehna, Chardeh (now Dushak) and Chacha,

(1) (Footnote) Nadir Shah was born in a tent near Mohammedabad, the capital of the neighbouring district of Deregez

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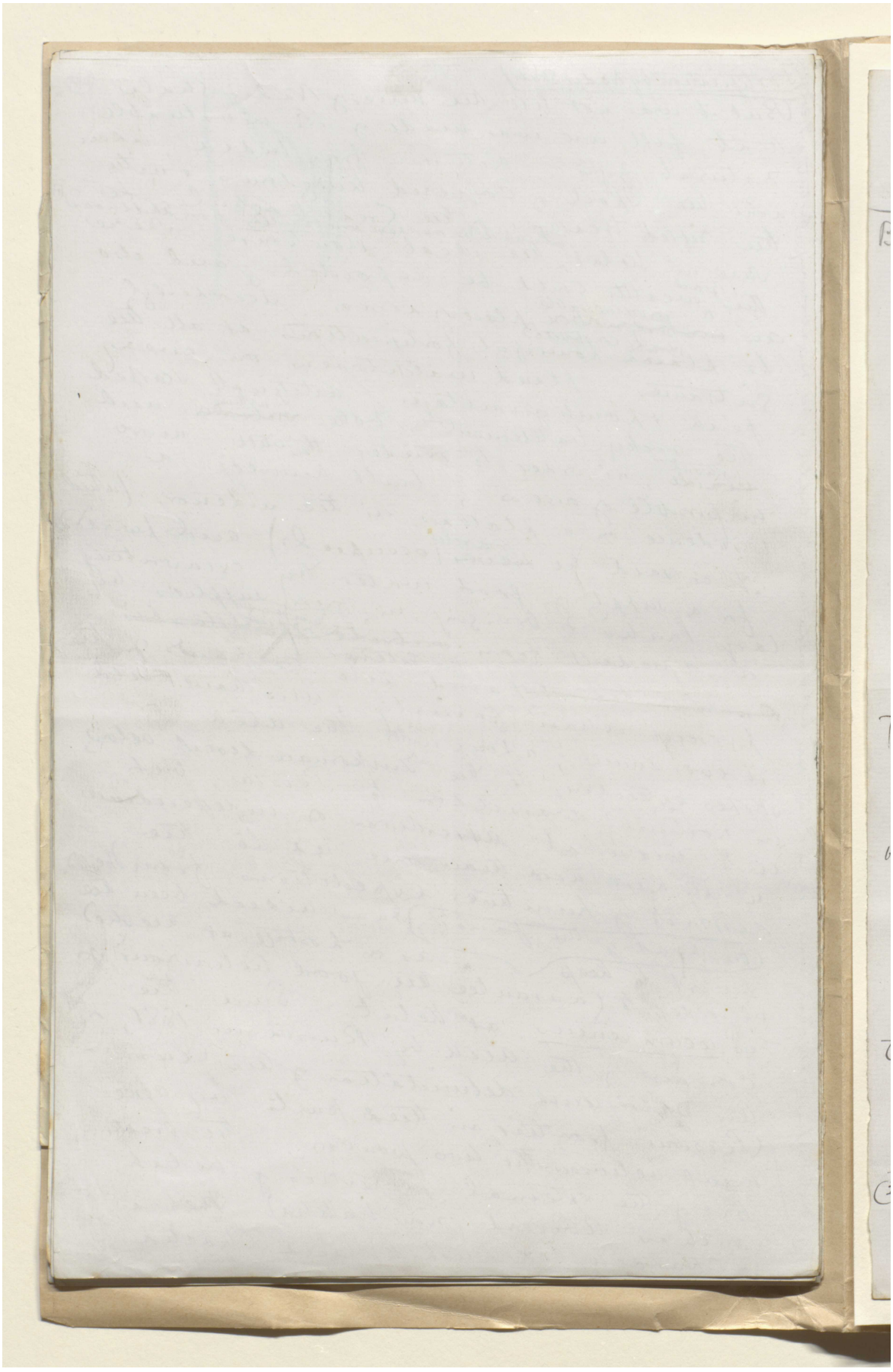

مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٢١١و] (١٣٥٥/٤٢١)

VI 33.

Fresh ~~Paragraph~~ paragraph ~~words~~ to be inserted on page VI. 32 after the words 'from the exterior'. ~~in continuation of the same paragraph~~ (211)

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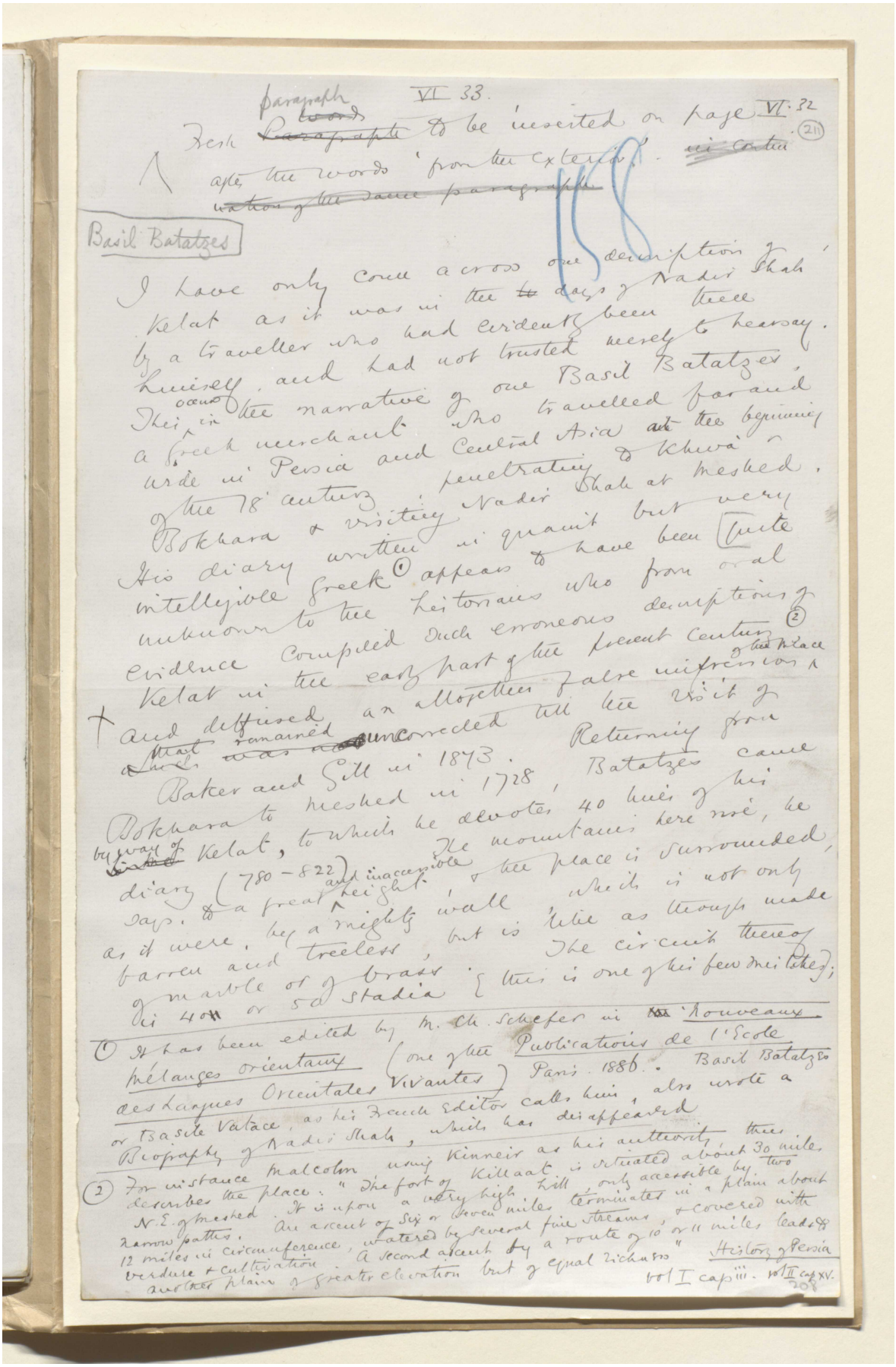

Basil Batatzes

I have only come across one description of Kelat as it was in the ~~to~~ days of Nadir Shah by a traveller who had evidently been there himself, and had not trusted merely to hearsay. This occurs in the narrative of one Basil Batatzes, a Greek merchant who travelled far and wide in Persia and Central Asia at the beginning of the 18 century, penetrating to Khwa Bokhara & visiting Nadir Shah at Meshed. His diary written in quaint but very intelligible Greek (1) appears to have been quite unknown to the historians who from oral evidence compiled such erroneous descriptions of Kelat in the early part of the present century (2) and diffused an altogether false impression of the place that remained uncorrected till the visit of Baker and Gill in 1873. Returning from Bokhara to Meshed in 1728, Batatzes came by way of Kelat, to which he devotes 40 lines of his diary (780–822). The mountains here rise, he says, to a great and inaccessible height, & the place is surrounded, as it were, by a mighty wall, which is not only barren and treeless, but is like as though made of marble or of brass. The circuit thereof is 40 or 50 stadia [this is one of his few mistakes];

(1) It has been edited by M. Ch. Schefer in 'Nouveaux Mélanges orientaux' (one of the Publications de l'Ecole des Langues Orientales Vivantes) Paris. 1886. Basil Batatzes or Basile Vatace, as his French Editor calls him, also wrote a Biography of Nadir Shah, which has disappeared.

(2) For instance Malcolm, using Kinneir as his authority, thus describes the place: "The fort of Killaat is situated about 30 miles N.E. of Meshed. It is upon a very high hill, only accessible by two narrow paths. An ascent of six or seven miles terminates in a plain about 12 miles in circumference, watered by several fine streams, & covered with verdure & cultivation. A second ascent by a route of 10 or 11 miles leads to another plain of greater elevation but of equal richness" History of Persia vol I cap iii. vol II cap XV.

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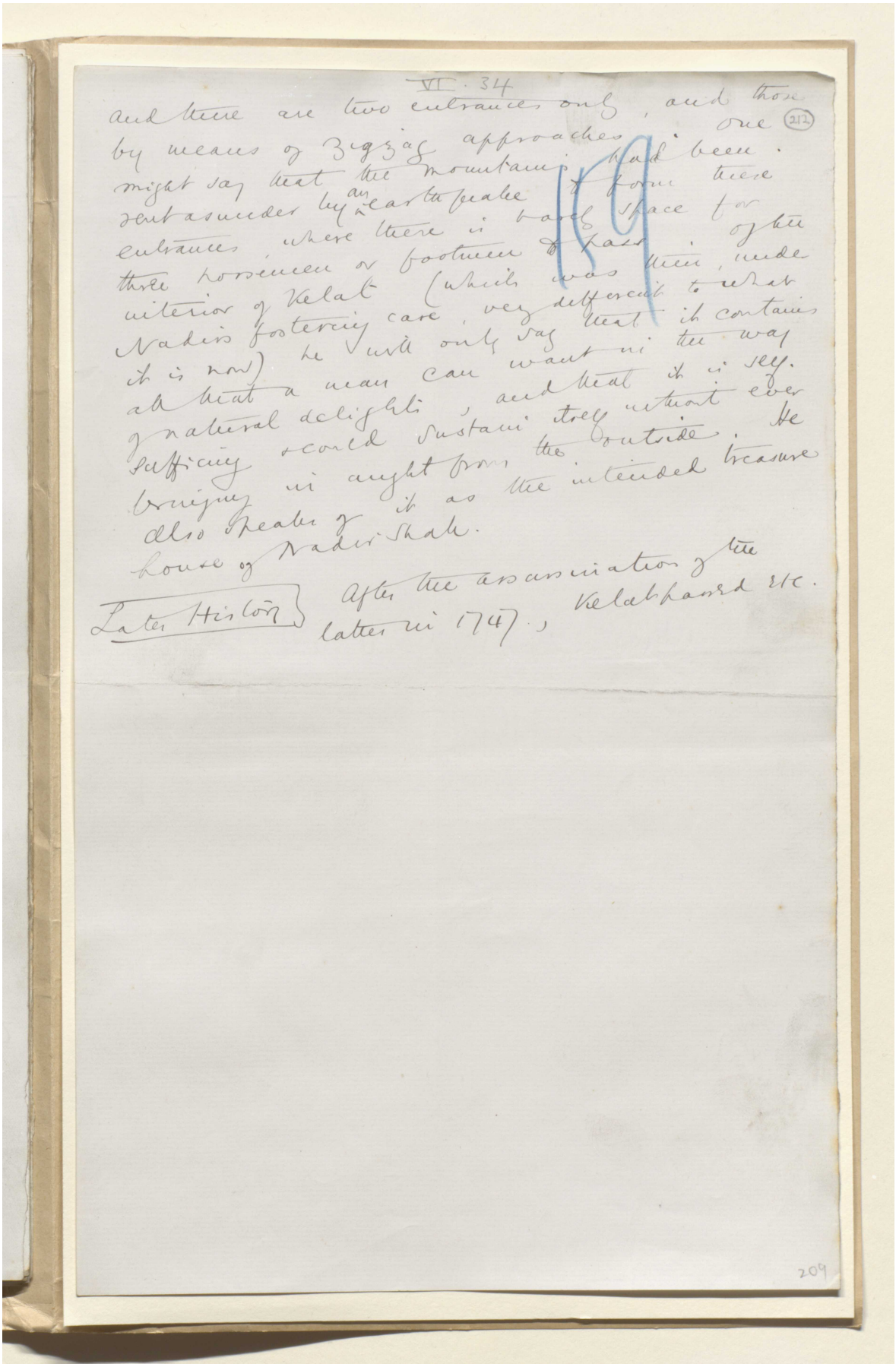

VI. 34

and there are two entrances only, and those
by means of Zigzag approaches. One 212
might say that the mountains had been
rent asunder by an earthquake to form these
entrances, where there is barely space for
three horsemen or footmen to pass. The
interior of Kelat (which was then, under
Nadir's fostering care, very different to what
it is now) he could only say that it contains
all that a man can want in the way
of natural delights, and that it is self-
sufficing, could sustain itself without ever
bringing in aught from the outside. He
also speaks of it as the intended treasure
house of Nadir Shah.

Later History After the assassination of the latter in 1747, Kelat passed etc.

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المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة

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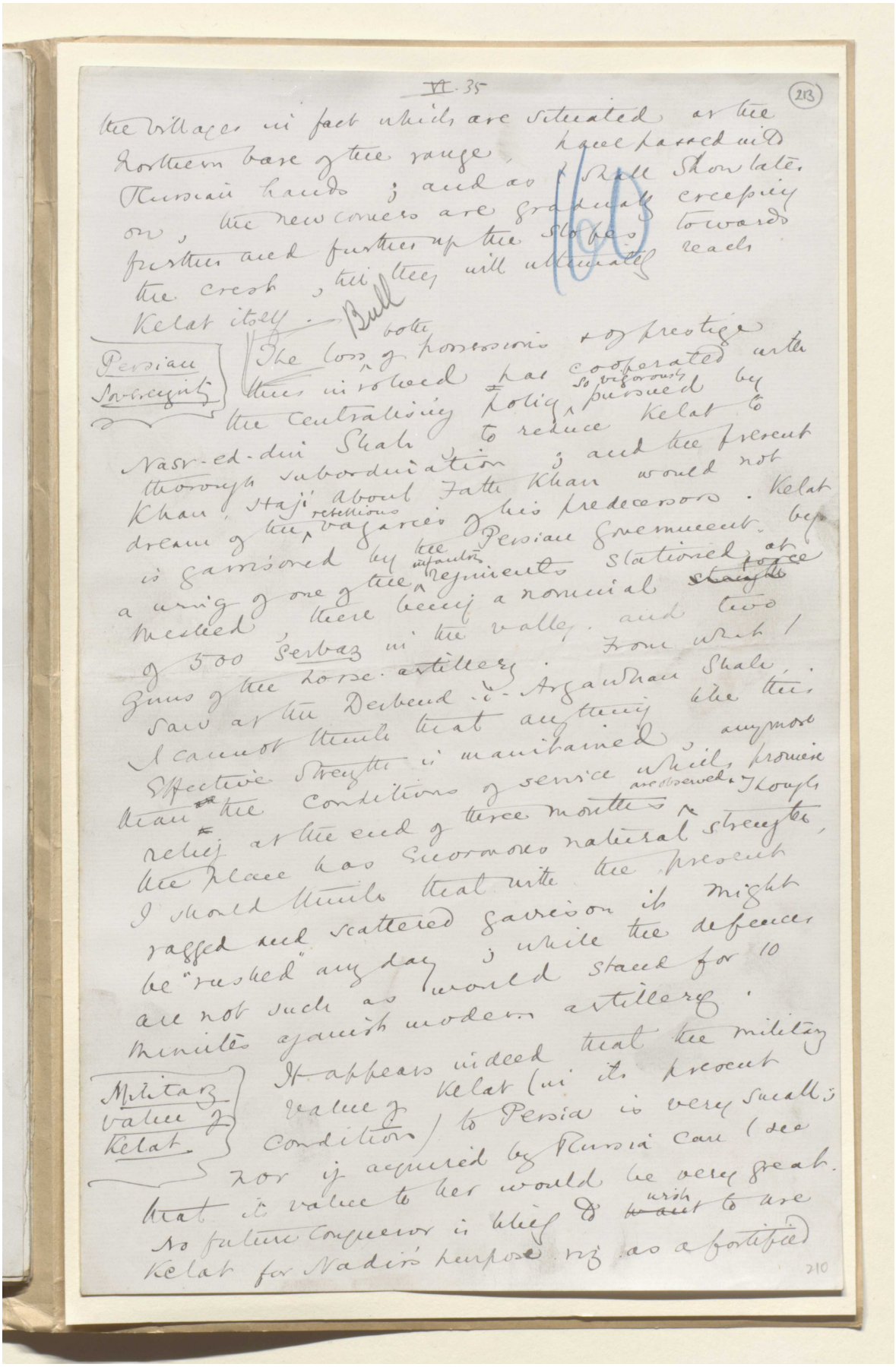

VI. 35

(213)

the villages in fact which are situated at the northern base of the range, have passed into Russian hands; and as I shall show later on, the new comers are gradually creeping further and further up the slopes towards the crest, till they will ultimately reach Kelat itself.

Persian Sovereignty

The loss of both possessions & of prestige thus involved has cooperated with the centralising policy so vigorously pursued by Nasr-ed-din Shah to reduce Kelat to thorough subordination; and the present Khan, Haji Aboul Fath Khan would not dream of the rebellious vagaries of his predecessors. Kelat is garrisoned by the Persian Government by a wing of one of the infantry regiments stationed at Meshed, there being a nominal force of 500 Serbaz in the valley, and two guns of the horse-artillery. From what I saw at the Derbend-i-Arghawan Shah, I cannot think that anything like this effective strength is maintained, anymore than the conditions of service which promise relief at the end of three months are observed. Though the place has enormous natural strength, I should think that with the present ragged and scattered garrison it might be "rushed" any day; while the defences are not such as would stand for 10 minutes against modern artillery.

Military value of Kelat

It appears indeed that the military value of Kelat (in its present condition) to Persia is very small; nor if acquired by Russia can I see that its value to her would be very great. No future conqueror is likely to wish to use Kelat for Nadir's purpose viz as a fortified

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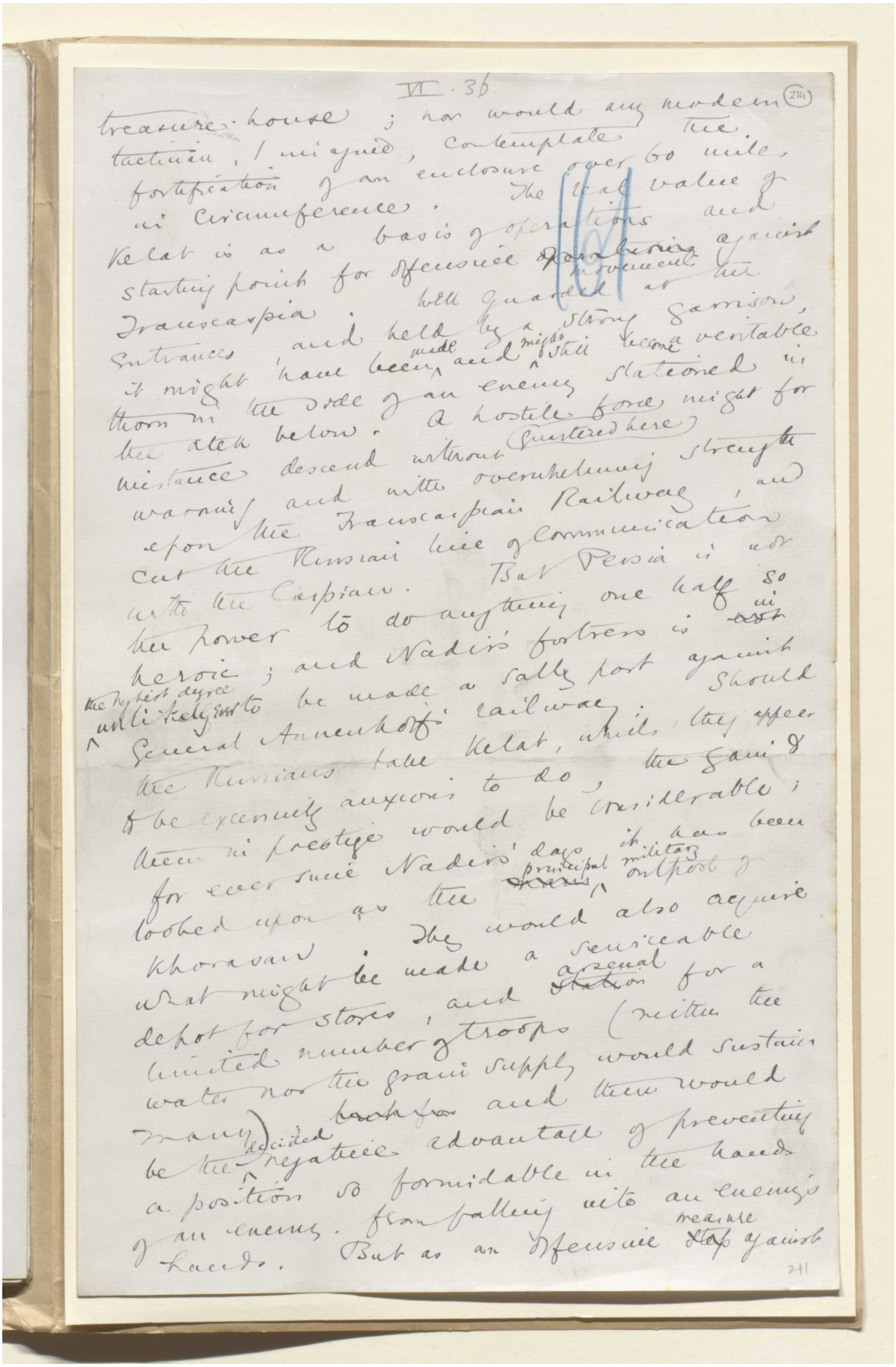
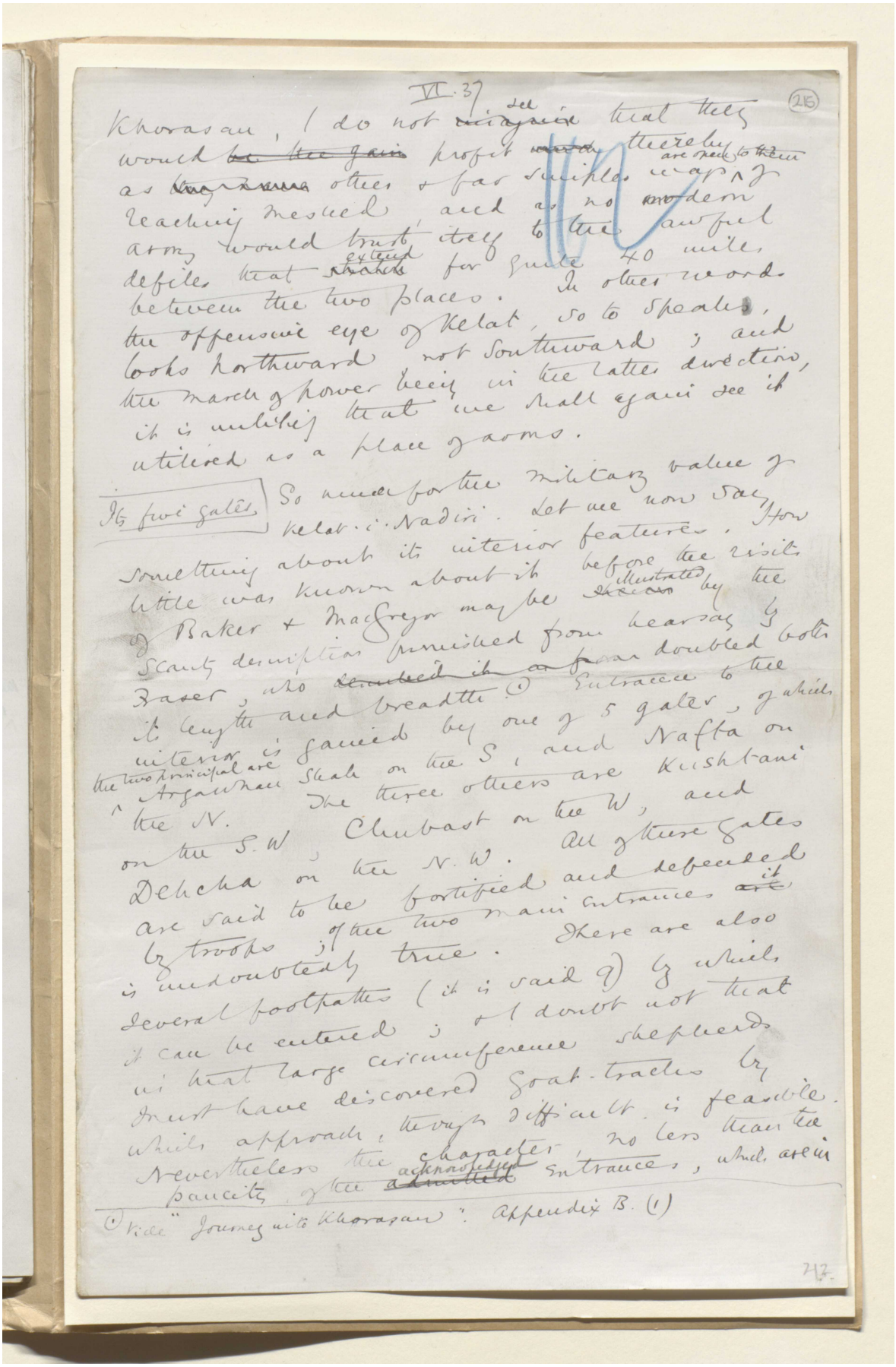




VI. 37

(215)



Khorasan, I do not ~~imagine~~ see that they would ~~be the gain~~ profit ~~[illegible]~~ thereby as ~~[illegible]~~ others & far simpler ways are open to them of reaching Meshed, and as no modern army would trust itself to the awful defiles that ~~[illegible]~~ extend for quite 40 miles between the two places. In other words the offensive eye of Kelat, so to speaks, looks northward not southward; and the march of power being in the latter direction, it is unlikely that we shall again see it utilised as a place of arms.

Its five gates

So much for the military value of Kelat-i-Nadiri. Let me now say something about its interior features. How little was known about it before the visits of Baker & MacGregor may be illustrated by the scanty description furnished from hearsay by Fraser, who ~~doubled it as from~~ doubled both its length and breadth.(1) Entrance to the interior is gained by one of 5 gates, of which the two principal are Argawhan Shah on the S, and Nafta on the N. The three others are Kushtani on the S.W, Chubast on the W, and Dehcha on the N.W. All of these gates are said to be fortified and defended by troops; of the two main entrances ~~are~~ it is undoubtedly true. There are also several footpaths (it is said 9) by which it can be entered; & I doubt not that in that large circumference shepherds must have discovered goat-tracks by which approach, though difficult, is feasible. Nevertheless the character, no less than the paucity of the ~~admitted~~ acknowledged entrances, which are in

(1) Vide "Journey into Khorasan". Appendix B. (1)

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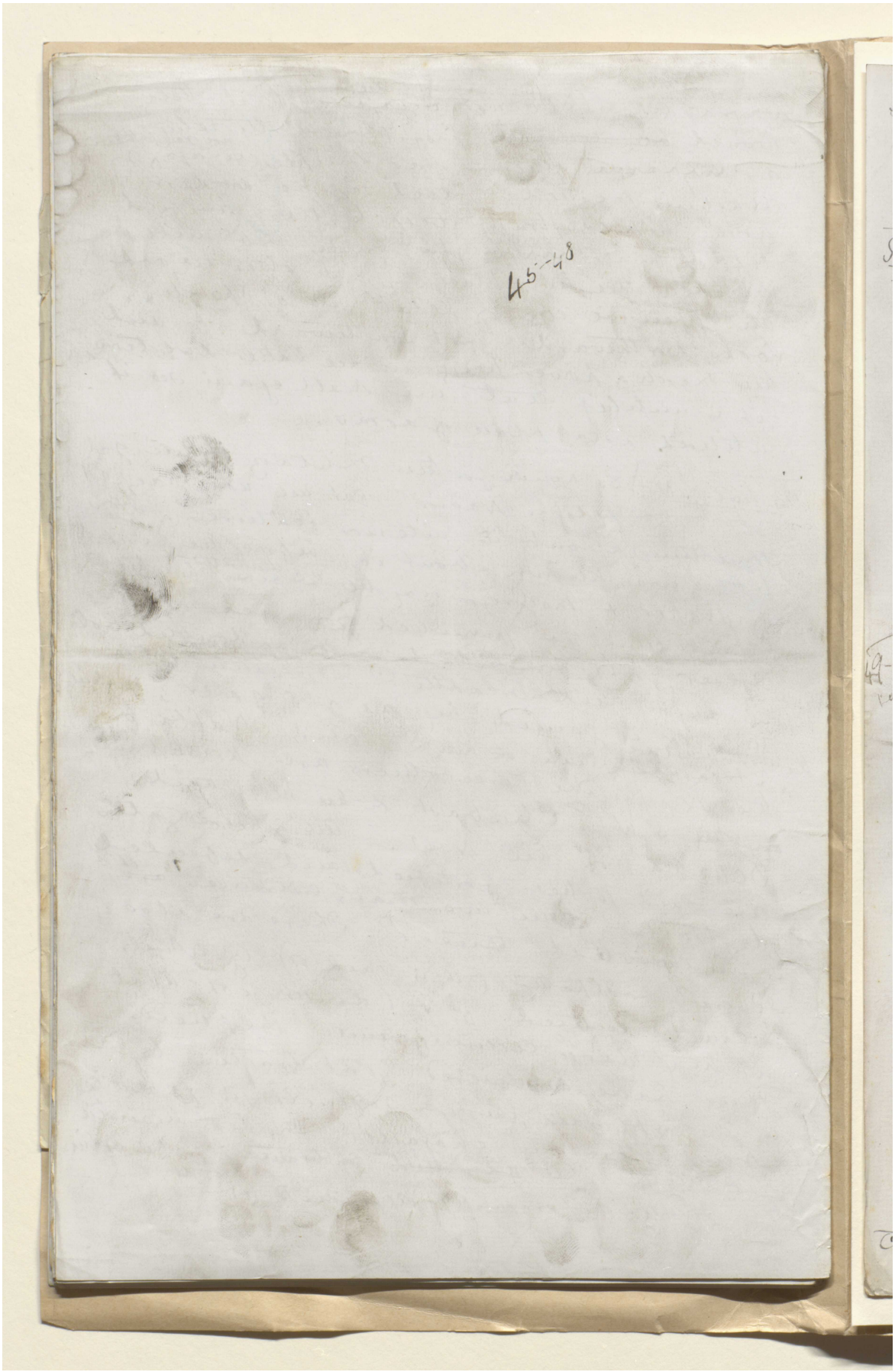

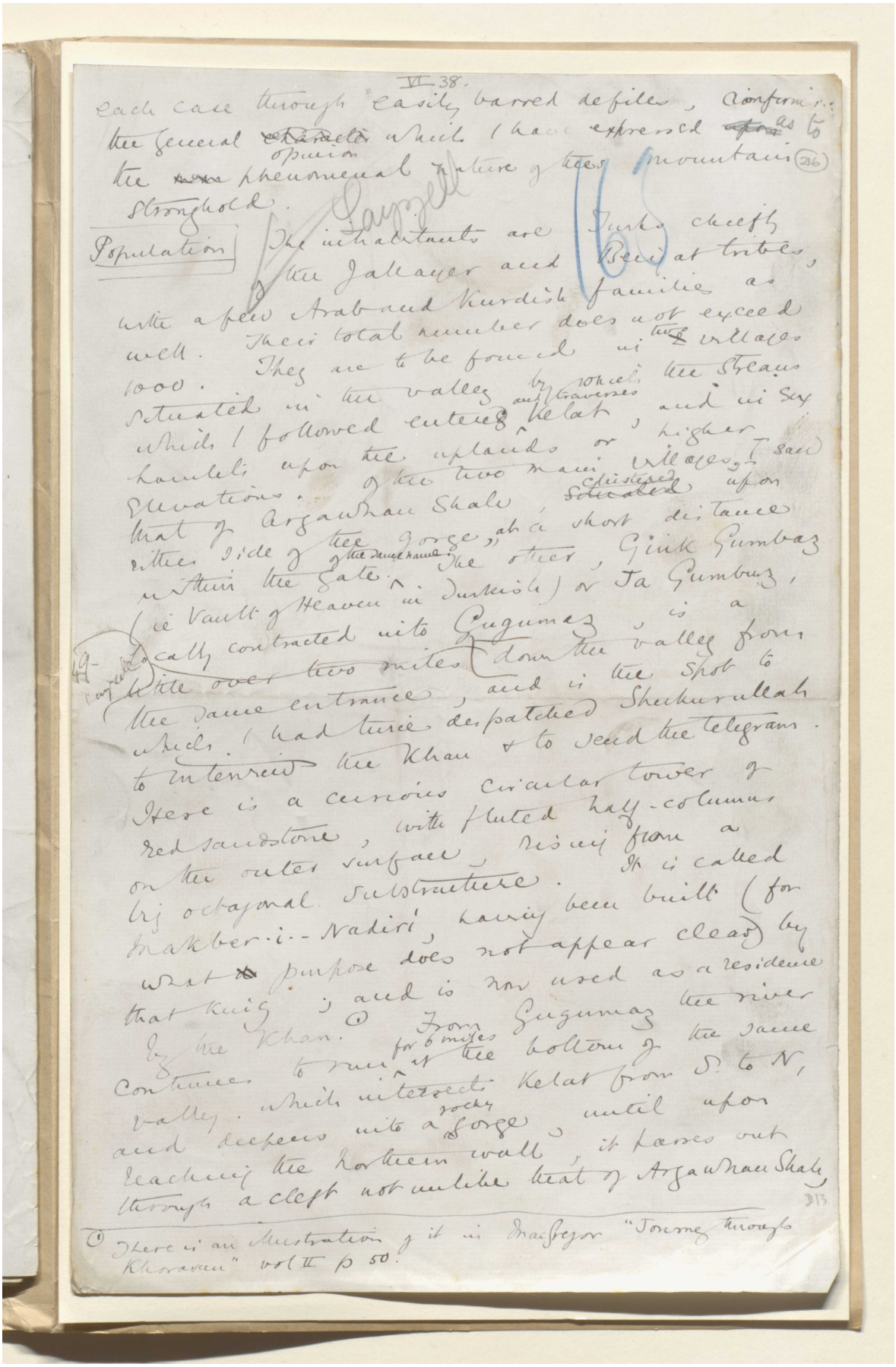

VI 38.

each case through easily barred defiles, confirming the general ~~character~~ opinion which I have expressed ~~upon~~ as to the ~~[illegible]~~ phenomenal nature of this mountain stronghold. (216)

Sayzell

Population

The inhabitants are Turks chiefly of the Jallayer and Beirat tribes, with a few Arab and Kurdish families as well. Their total number does not exceed 1000. They are to be found in two villages situated in the valley by which the streams which I followed entered and traverses Kelat, and in six hamlets upon the uplands or higher elevations. Of the two main villages, I saw that of Argawhan Shah, ~~situated~~ clustered upon either side of the gorge, at a short distance within the gate of the same name. The other, Gink Gumbaz (ie Vault of Heaven in Turkish) or Ta Gumbuz, locally contracted into Gugumaz, is a little over two miles down the valley from the same entrance, and is the spot to which I had twice despatched Shukurullah to interview the Khan & to send the telegrams. (49- Sayzell)

Here is a curious circular tower of red sandstone, with fluted half-columns on the outer surface, rising from a big octagonal substructure. It is called Makber-i-Nadiri, having been built (for what ~~[illegible]~~ purpose does not appear clear) by that king; and is now used as a residence by the Khan.① From Gugumaz the river continues to run for 6 miles at the bottom of the same valley, which intersects Kelat from S. to N, and deepens into a rocky gorge, until upon reaching the northern wall, it passes out through a cleft not unlike that of Argawhan Shah,

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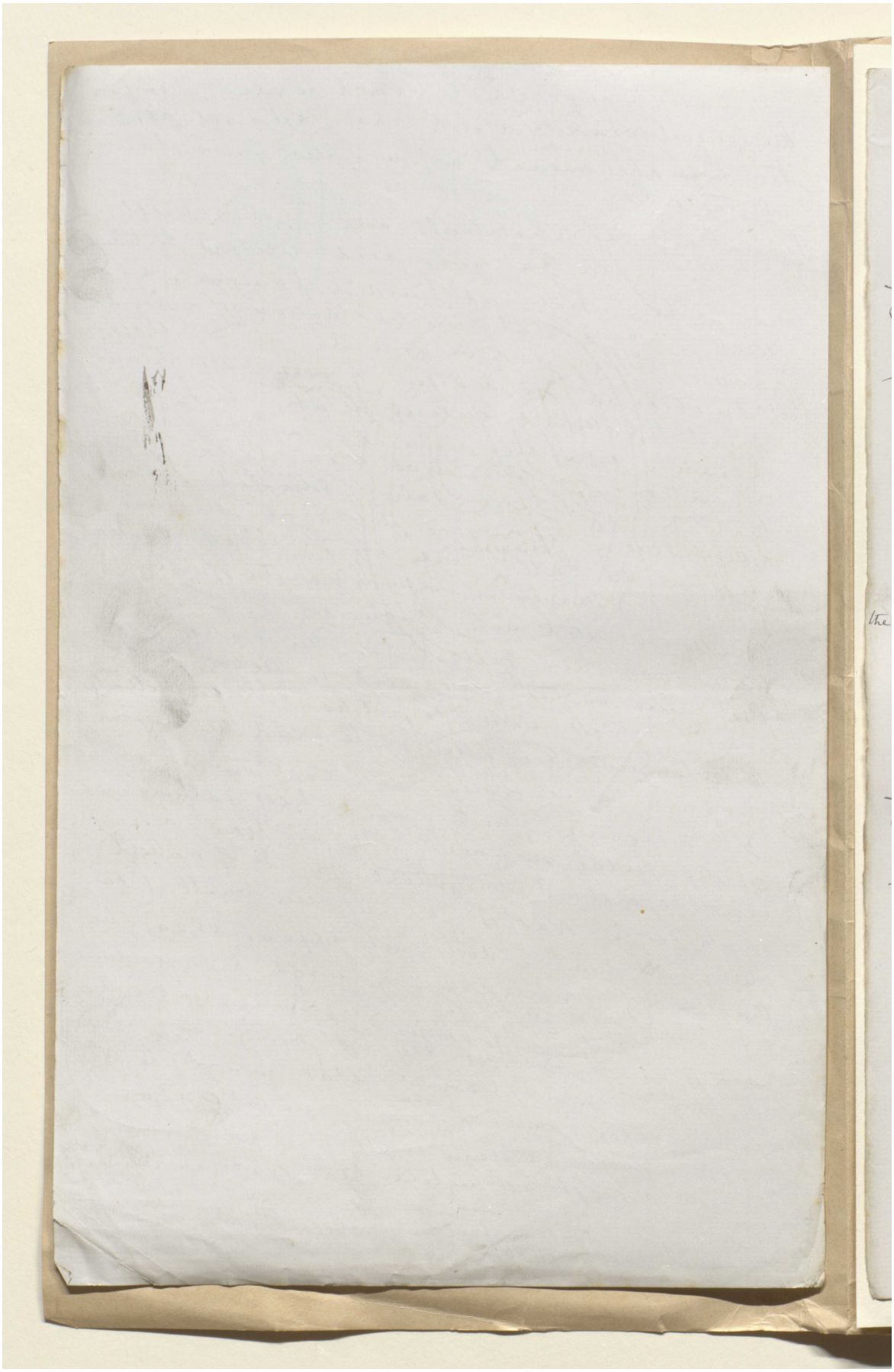
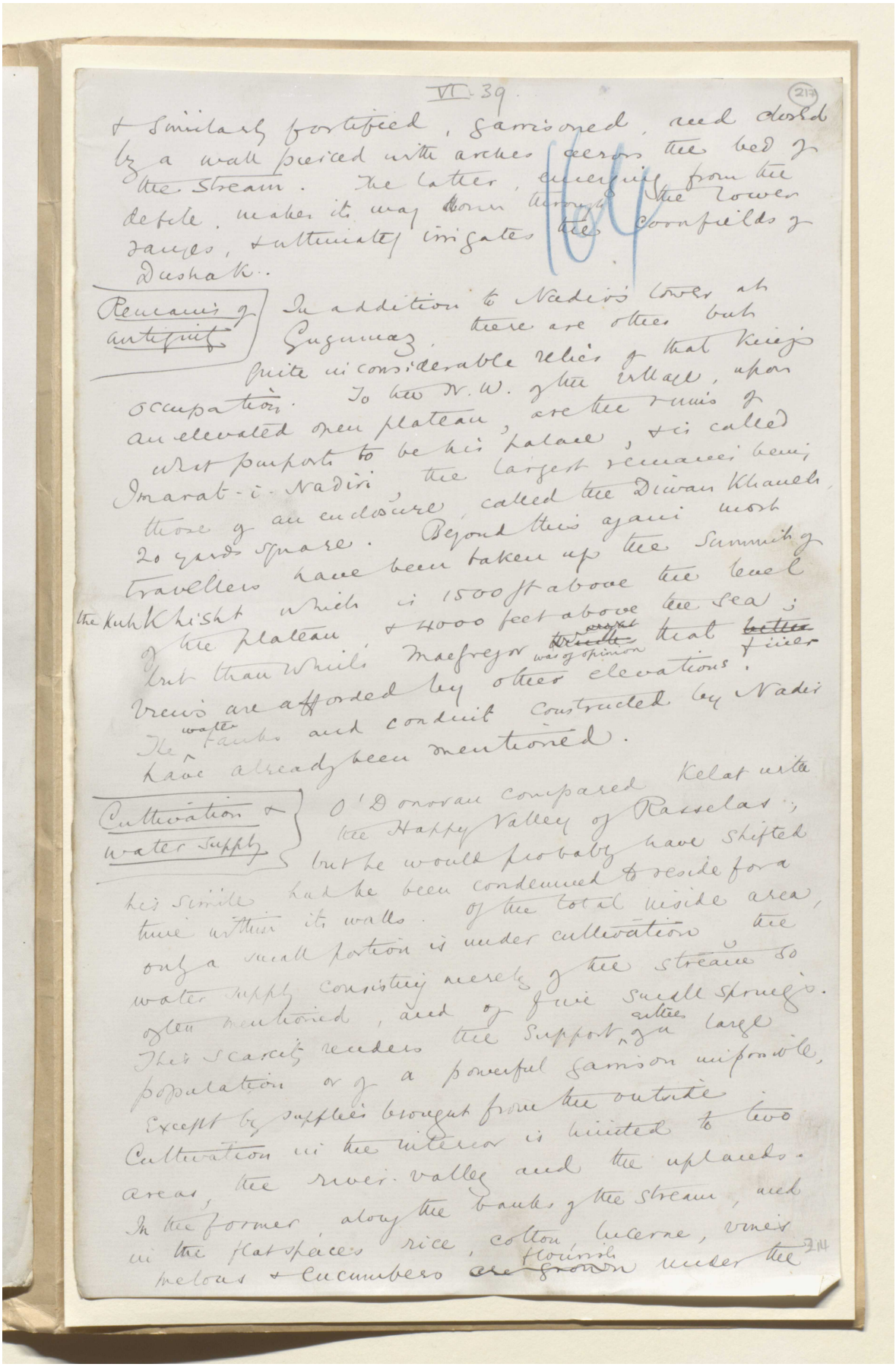
① There is an illustration of it in MacGregor "Journey through Khorasan" vol II p 50.





VI. 39.

(217)

& similarly fortified, garrisoned, and closed by a wall pierced with arches across the bed of the stream. The latter, emerging from the defile, makes its way down through the lower gorges, & ultimately irrigates the cornfields of Dushak.

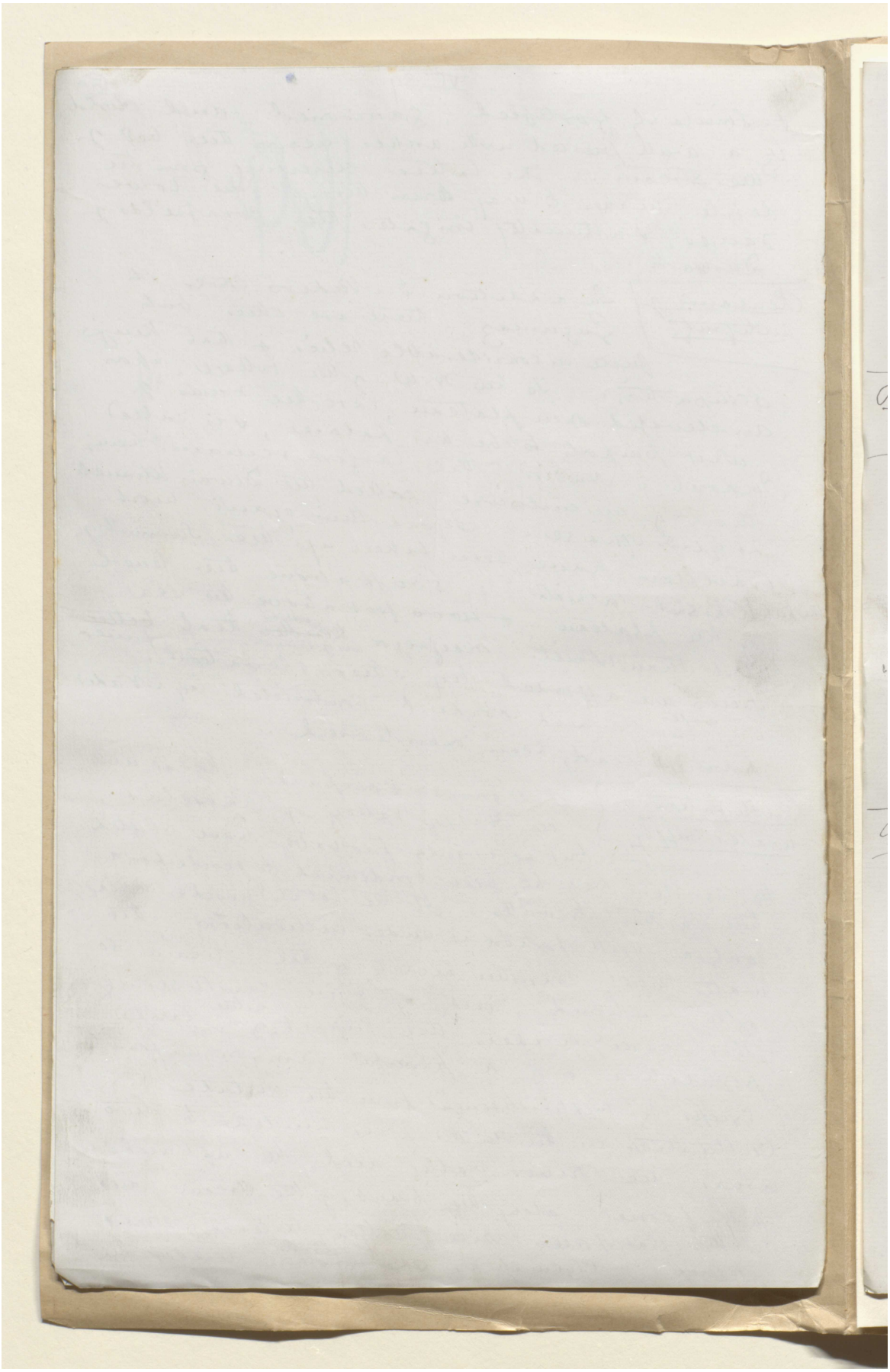
Remains of antiquity

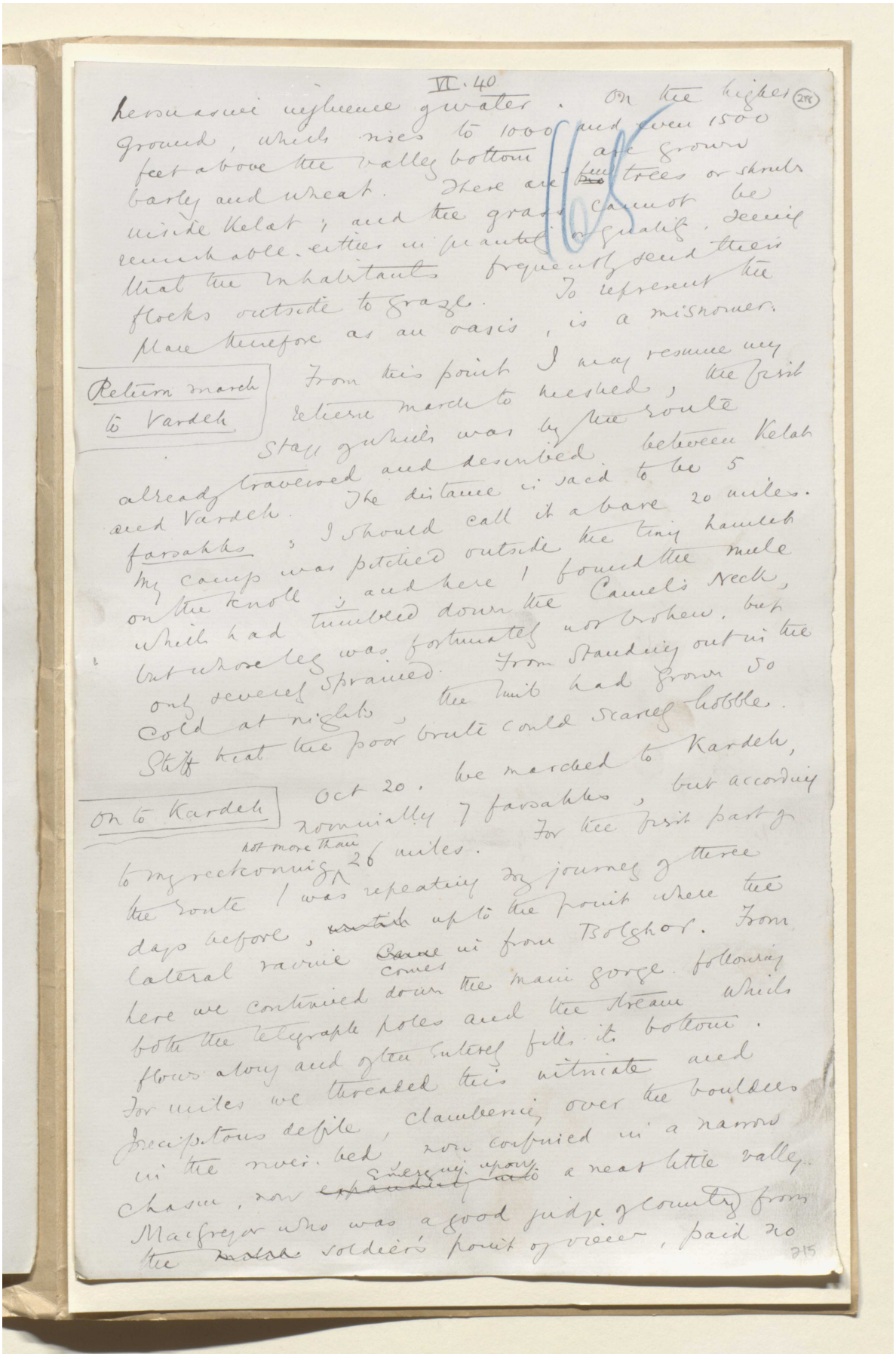
In addition to Nadir's tower at Sugunaz, there are other but quite inconsiderable relics of that King's occupation. To the N.W. of the village, upon an elevated open plateau, are the ruins of what purports to be his palace, & is called Imarat-i-Nadiri, the largest remains being those of an enclosure, called the Diwan Khaneh, 20 yards square. Beyond this again most travellers have been taken up the Sammit of the Kuh Chisht which is 1500 ft above the level of the plateau, & 4000 feet above the sea; but than which Macgregor was of opinion that better views are afforded by other elevations.

The water tanks and conduit constructed by Nadir have already been mentioned.

Cultivation & water supply

O'Donovan compared Kelat with the Happy Valley of Rasselas; but he would probably have shifted his similie had he been condemned to reside for a time within its walls. Of the total inside area, only a small portion is under cultivation, the water supply consisting merely of the streams so often mentioned, and of five small springs. This scarcity renders the support of a large population or of a powerful garrison impossible, except by supplies brought from the outside. Cultivation in the interior is limited to two areas, the river valley and the uplands. In the former, along the banks of the stream, and in the flat spaces, rice, cotton, lucerne, vines, melons & cucumbers are grown, under the





VI. 40

hereabouts influence groundwater. On the higher ground, which rises to 1000 and even 1500 feet above the valley bottom are grown barley and wheat. There are few trees or shrubs inside Kelat; and the grass cannot be remarkable either in quantity or quality, seeing that the inhabitants frequently send their flocks outside to graze. To represent the place therefore as an oasis, is a misnomer.

Return march to Kardeh

From this point I may resume my return march to Meshed, the first stage of which was by the route already traversed and described between Kelat and Kardeh. The distance is said to be 5 farsakhs; I should call it a bare 20 miles. My camp was pitched outside the tiny hamlet on the knoll; and here I found the mule which had tumbled down the Camel's Neck, but whose leg was fortunately not broken, but only severely sprained. From standing out in the cold at night, the limb had grown so stiff that the poor brute could scarcely hobble.

On to Kardeh

Oct 20. We marched to Kardeh, nominally 7 farsakhs, but accordg to my reckoning not more than 26 miles. For the first part of the route I was repeating my journey of three days before, until up to the point where the lateral ravine came in from Bolghor. From here we continued down the main gorge, following both the telegraph poles and the stream which flows along and often entirely fills its bottom. For miles we threaded this intricate and precipitous defile, clambering over the boulders in the river bed, now confined in a narrow chasm, now emerging upon a neat little valley. Macgregor who was a good judge of country from the soldier's point of view, paid no

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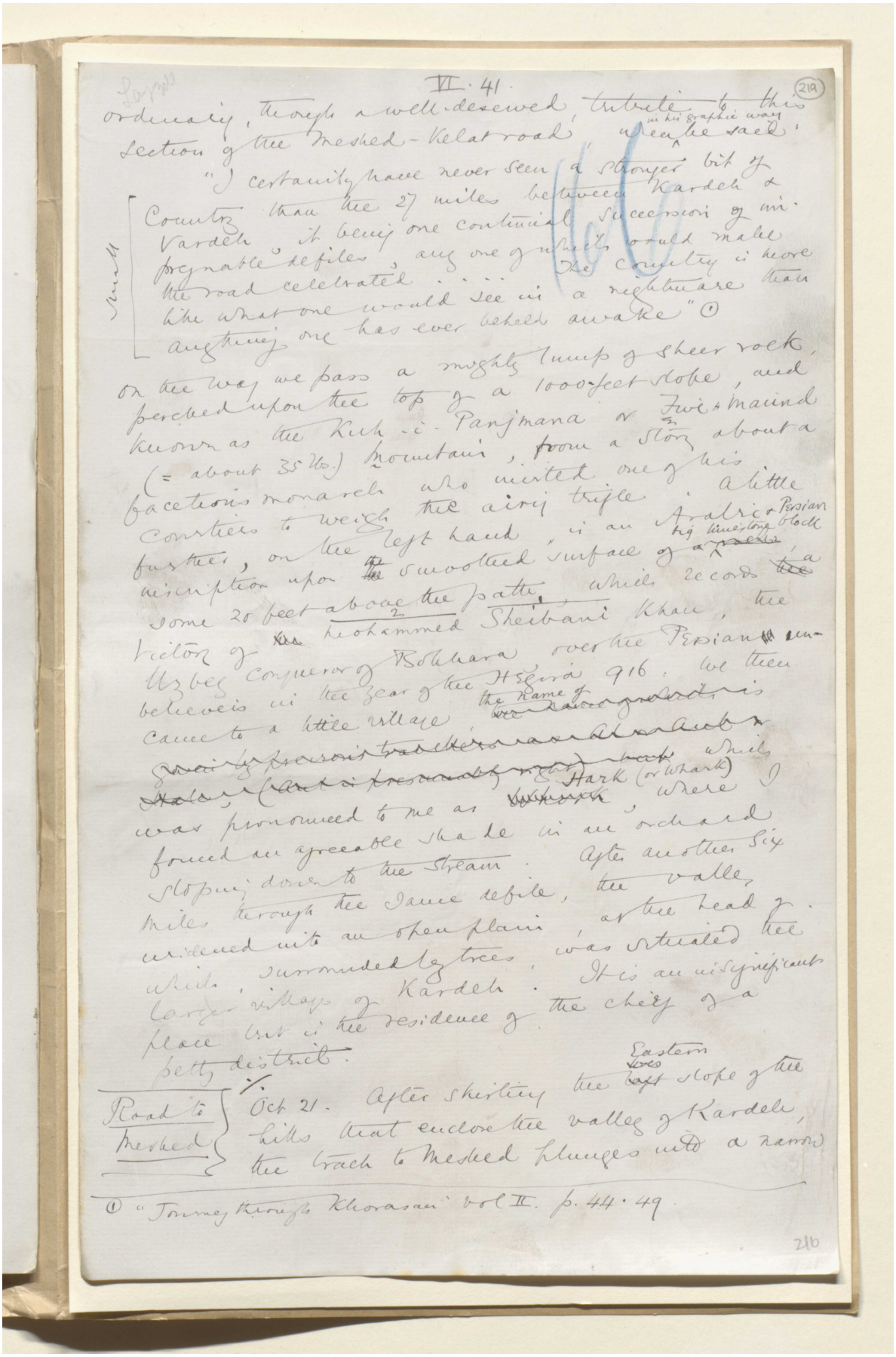
مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٢١٩و] (١٣٥٥/٤٣٧)

VI. 41. (219)



ordinary, though a well-deserved tribute to this section of the Meshed-Kelat road, when in his graphic way he said:

"I certainly have never seen a stronger bit of country than the 27 miles between Kardeh & Vardeh, it being one continual succession of impregnable defiles, any one of which would make the road celebrated ... The country is more like what one would see in a nightmare than anything one has ever beheld awake" ①

Small

On the way we pass a mighty lump of sheer rock, perched upon the top of a 1000-feet slope, and known as the Kuh-i-Panjmana or Five-Maund (= about 35 lbs.) Mountain, from a story about a facetious monarch who invited one of his courtiers to weigh the airy trifle. A little further, on the left hand, is an Arabic & Persian inscription upon the smoothed surface of a big limestone block some 20 feet above the path, which records a victory of Mohammed Sheibani Khan, the Uzbeg conqueror of Bokhara over the Persian unbelievers in the year of the Hegira 916. We then came to a little village the name of which was pronounced to me as Hark (or Whark), where I found an agreeable shade in an orchard sloping down to the stream. After another six miles through the same defile, the valley widened into an open plain, at the head of which, surrounded by trees, was situated the larger village of Kardeh. It is an insignificant place but is the residence of the chief of a petty district.

Road to Meshed

Oct 21. After skirting the Eastern slope of the hills that enclose the valley of Kardeh, the track to Meshed plunges into a narrow

① "Journey through Khorasan" vol II. p. 44-49.

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المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة
اعرض على مكتبة قطر الرقمية: http://www.qdl.qa/العربية/archive/81055/vdc_100080522489.0x000026



هذه الصفحة لا يمكن إتاحتها نظرًا لضوابط متعلقة بحقوق النشر أوحماية البيانات.

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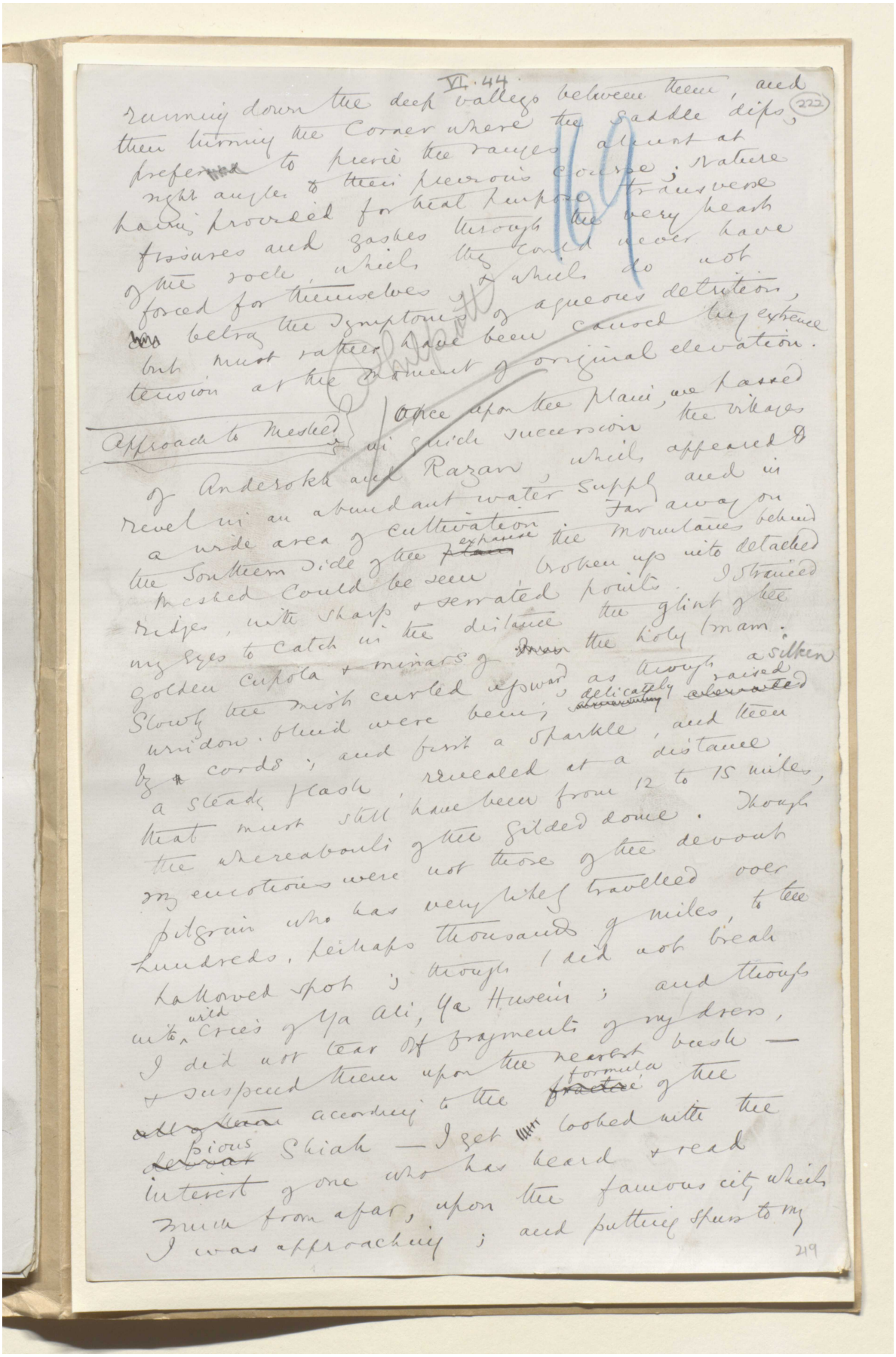



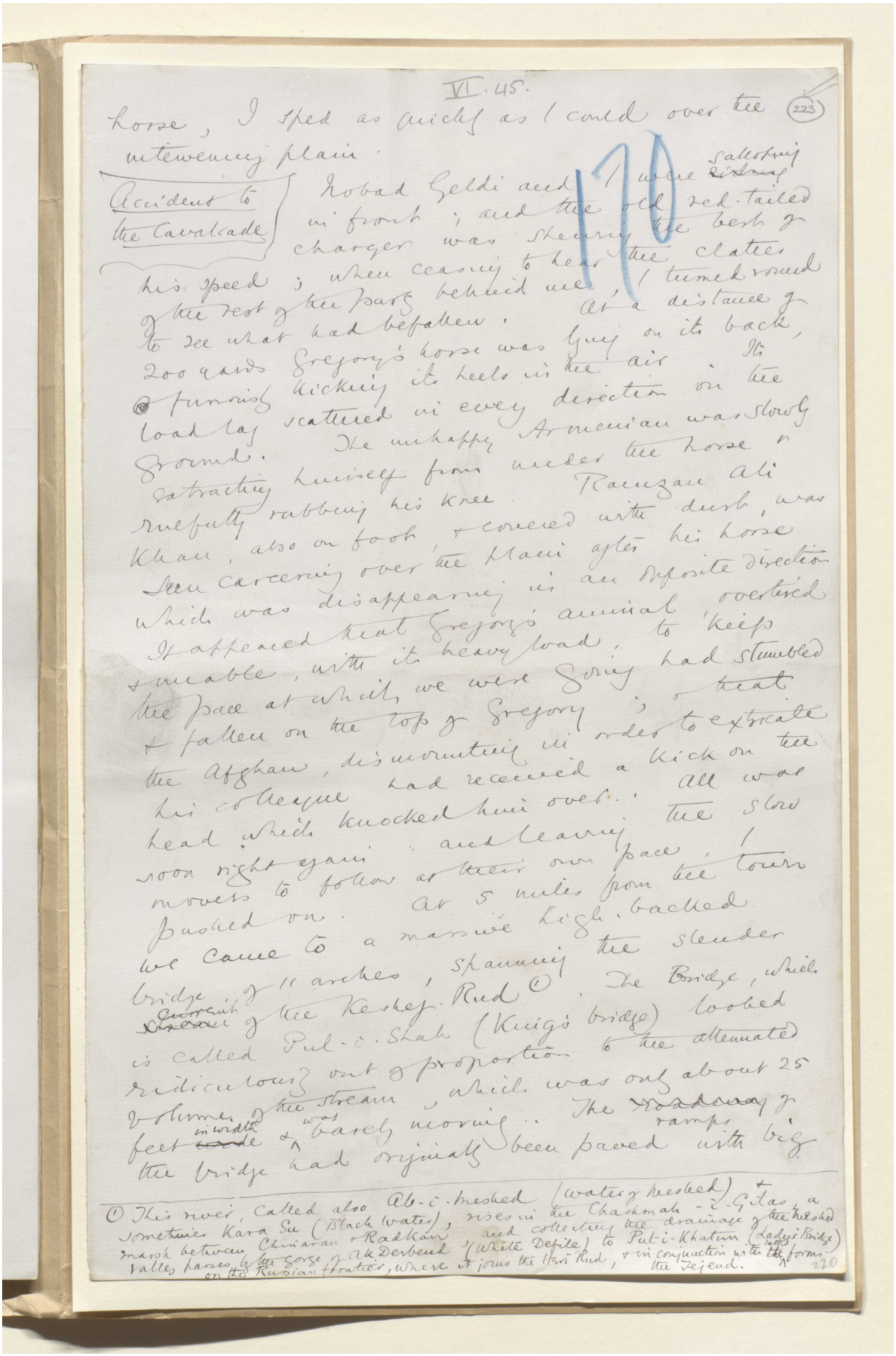

VI. 45.

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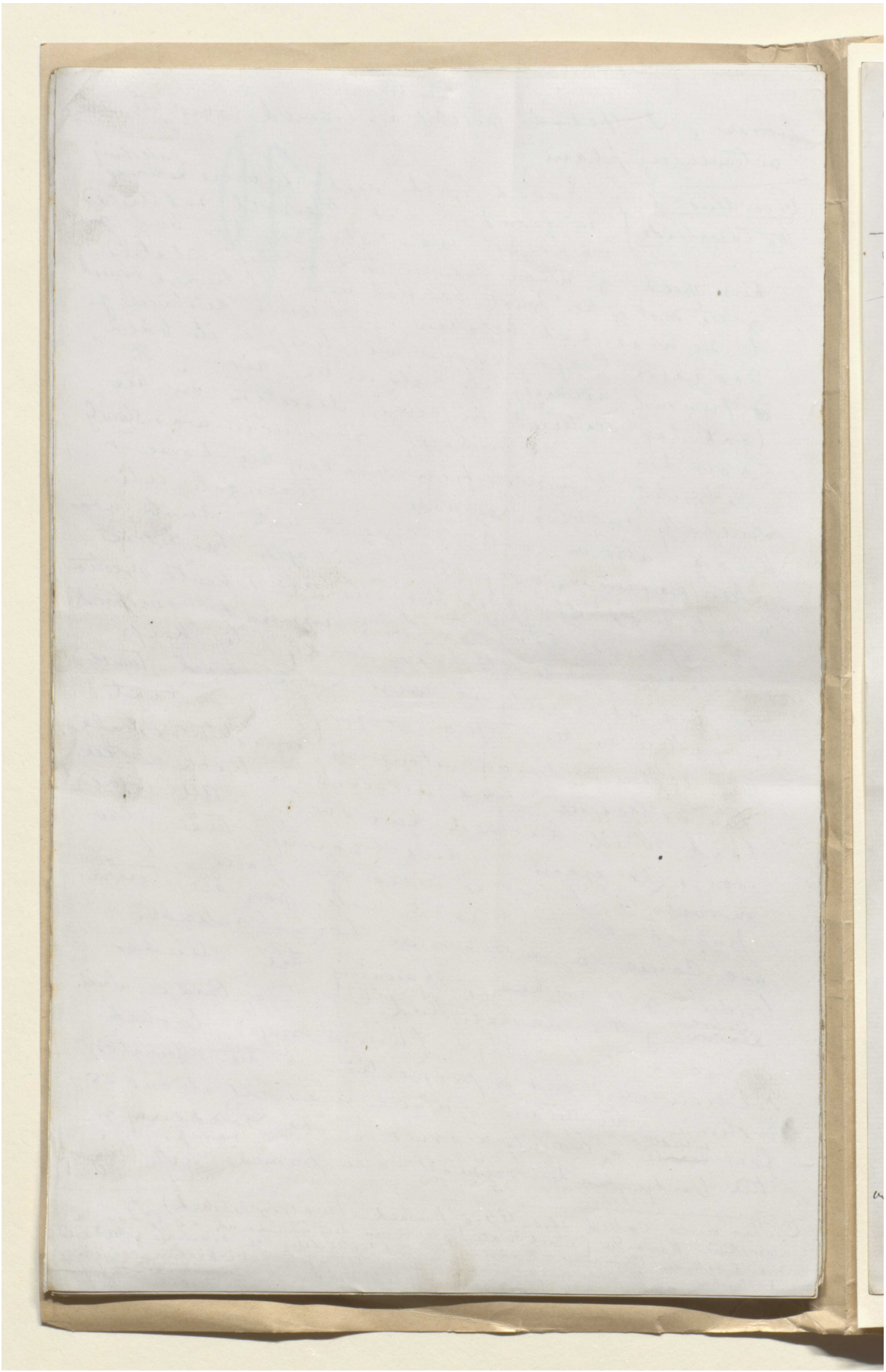
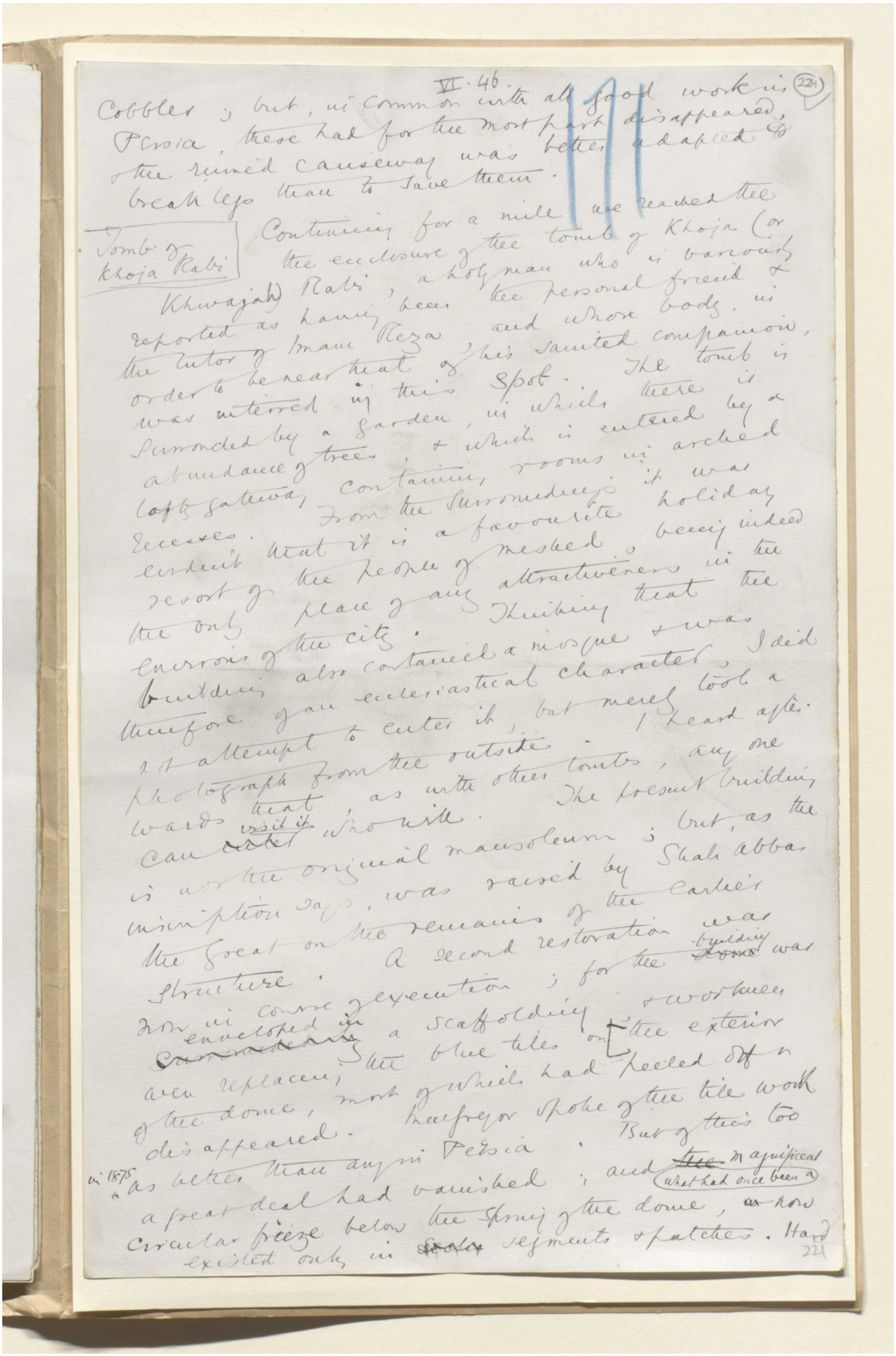
horse, I sped as quickly as I could over the intervening plain.

Accident to the Cavalcade

Robad Geldi and I were riding in front; and the old red-tailed charger was showing the best of his speed; when ceasing to hear the clatter of the rest of the party behind me, I turned round to see what had befallen. At a distance of 200 yards Gregory's horse was lying on its back, & furiously kicking its heels in the air. Its load lay scattered in every direction on the ground. The unhappy Armenian was slowly extricating himself from under the horse & ruefully rubbing his knee. Ramzan Ali Khan, also on foot, & covered with dust, was seen careering over the plain after his horse which was disappearing in an opposite direction. It appeared that Gregory's animal overlooked & unable, with its heavy load, to keep the pace at which we were going, had stumbled & fallen on the top of Gregory, & that the Afghan, dismounting in order to extricate his colleague had received a kick on the head which knocked him over. All was soon right again: and leaving the slow movers to follow at their own pace, I pushed on. At 5 miles from the tower we came to a massive high-backed bridge of 11 arches, spanning the slender current of the Kashef-Rud ①. The Bridge, which is called Pul-i-Shah (King's bridge) looked ridiculously out of proportion to the attenuated volume of the stream, which was only about 25 feet in width & barely moving. The ramps of the bridge had originally been paved with big

① This river, called also Ab-i-meshed (water of meshed) & sometimes Kara Su (Black water), rises in the Chashmah-i-Gilas, a marsh between Chinaran & Radkan, and collecting the drainage of the meshed valleys passes by the gorge Ak Derbend (White Defile) to Pul-i-Khatun (Lady's Bridge) on the Russian frontier, where it joins the Hari Rud, & in conjunction with the former the Tejend. 220





VI. 46 (224)

Cobbles; but, in common with all good work in Persia, these had for the most part disappeared, & the ruined causeway was better adapted to break legs than to save them.

Tomb of Khoja Rabi

Continuing for a mile we reached the enclosure of the tomb of Khoja (or Khwajah) Rabi, a holy man who is variously reported as having been the personal friend & the tutor of Imam Reza, and whose body, in order to be near that of his sainted companion, was interred in this spot. The tomb is surrounded by a garden, in which there is abundance of trees, & which is entered by a lofty gateway containing rooms in arched recesses. From the surroundings it was evident that it is a favourite holiday resort of the people of Meshed, being indeed the only place of any attractiveness in the environs of the city. Thinking that the building also contained a mosque & was therefore of an ecclesiastical character, I did not attempt to enter it, but merely took a photograph from the outside. I heard afterwards that, as with other tombs, any one can ~~enter~~ visit it who will. The present building is not the original mausoleum; but, as the inscription says, was raised by Shah Abbas the Great on the remains of the earlier structure. A second restoration was now in course of execution; for the ~~dome~~ building was ~~surrounded~~ enveloped in a scaffolding & workmen were replacing the blue tiles on the exterior of the dome, most of which had peeled off & disappeared. Macgregor spoke of the tile work in 1875 as better than any in Persia. But of this too a great deal had vanished; and ~~the~~ magnificent circular frieze below the spring of the dome, ~~as~~ now (what had once been a) existed only in ~~scale~~ segments & patches. Hard

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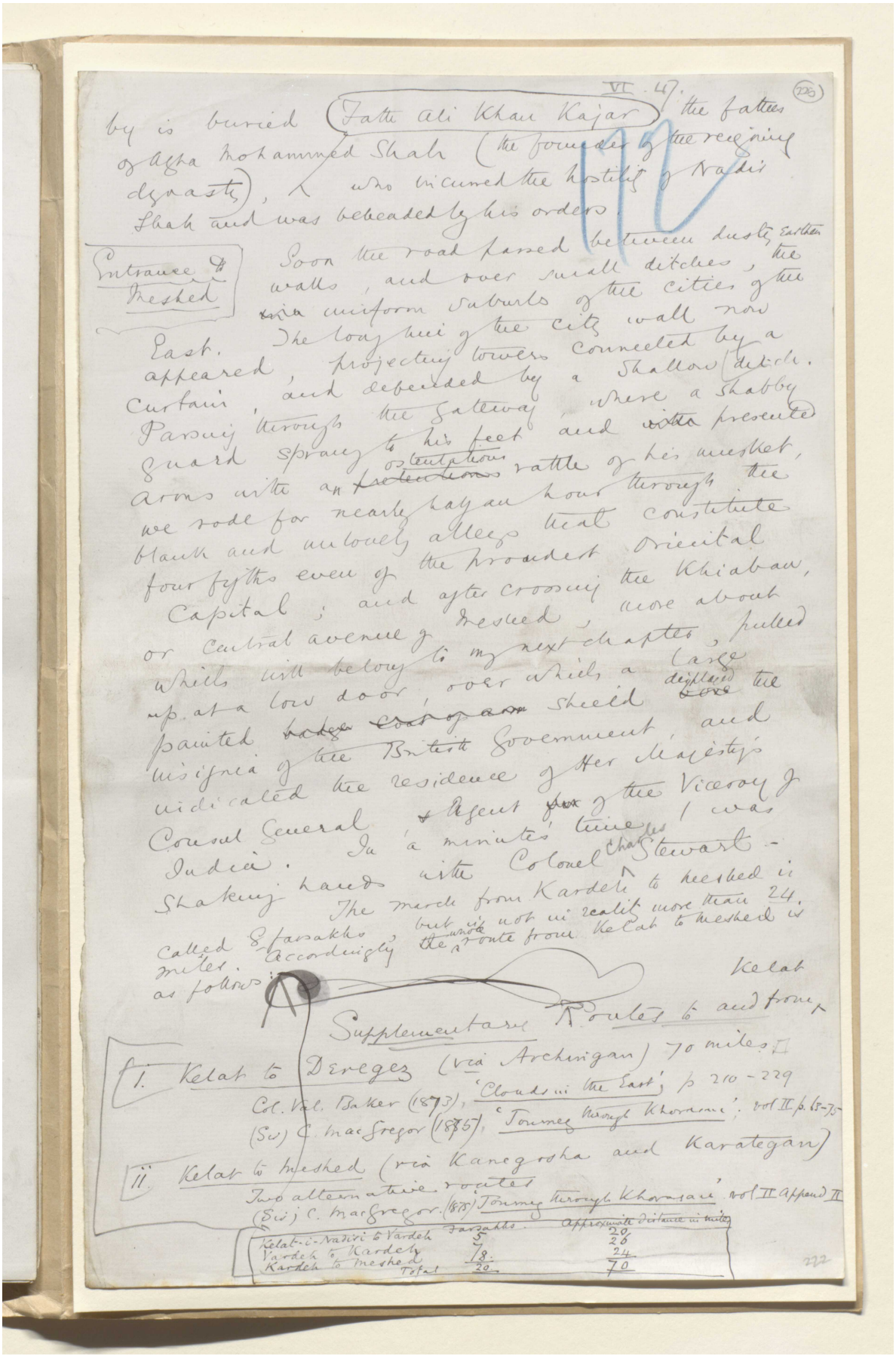
المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة

اعرض على مكتبة قطر الرقمية: http://www.qdl.qa/العربية/archive/81055/vdc_100080522489.0x000031

مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٢٢٥و] (١٣٥٥/٤٤٩)



by is buried (Fath Ali Khan Kajar) the father of Agha Mohammed Shah (the founder of the reigning dynasty), who incurred the hostility of Nadir Shah and was beheaded by his orders.

Entrance to Meshed

Soon the road passed between dusty earthen walls, and over small ditches, the uniform suburbs of the cities of the East. The long line of the city wall now appeared, projecting towers connected by a curtain, and defended by a shallow ditch. Passing through the gateway, where a shabby guard sprang to his feet and presented arms with an ostentatious rattle of his musket, we rode for nearly half an hour through the blank and unlovely alleys that constitute four fifths even of the proudest Oriental Capital; and after crossing the Khiaban, or central avenue of Meshed, more about which will belong to my next chapter, pulled up at a low door, over which a large painted shield displayed the insignia of the British Government, and indicated the residence of Her Majesty's Consul General & Agent of the Viceroy of India. In a minute's time I was shaking hands with Colonel Charles Stewart.

The march from Kardeh to Meshed is called 8 farsakhs, but is not in reality more than 24 miles. Accordingly the whole route from Kelat to Meshed is as follows:

Supplementary Routes to and from Kelat

I. Kelat to Deregez (via Archingan) 70 miles.
Col. Val. Baker (1873), 'Clouds in the East', p 210-229
(Sir) C. MacGregor (1875), 'Tourney through Khorasan', vol II p. 63-75

II. Kelat to Meshed (via Kanegosha and Karategan)
Two alternative routes
(Sir) C. MacGregor. (1875) 'Tourney through Khorasan' vol II Append II

	Farsakhs.	Approximate distance in miles
Kelat-i-Nadiri to Vardeh	5	20
Vardeh to Kardeh	7	26
Kardeh to Meshed	8	24
Total	20	70

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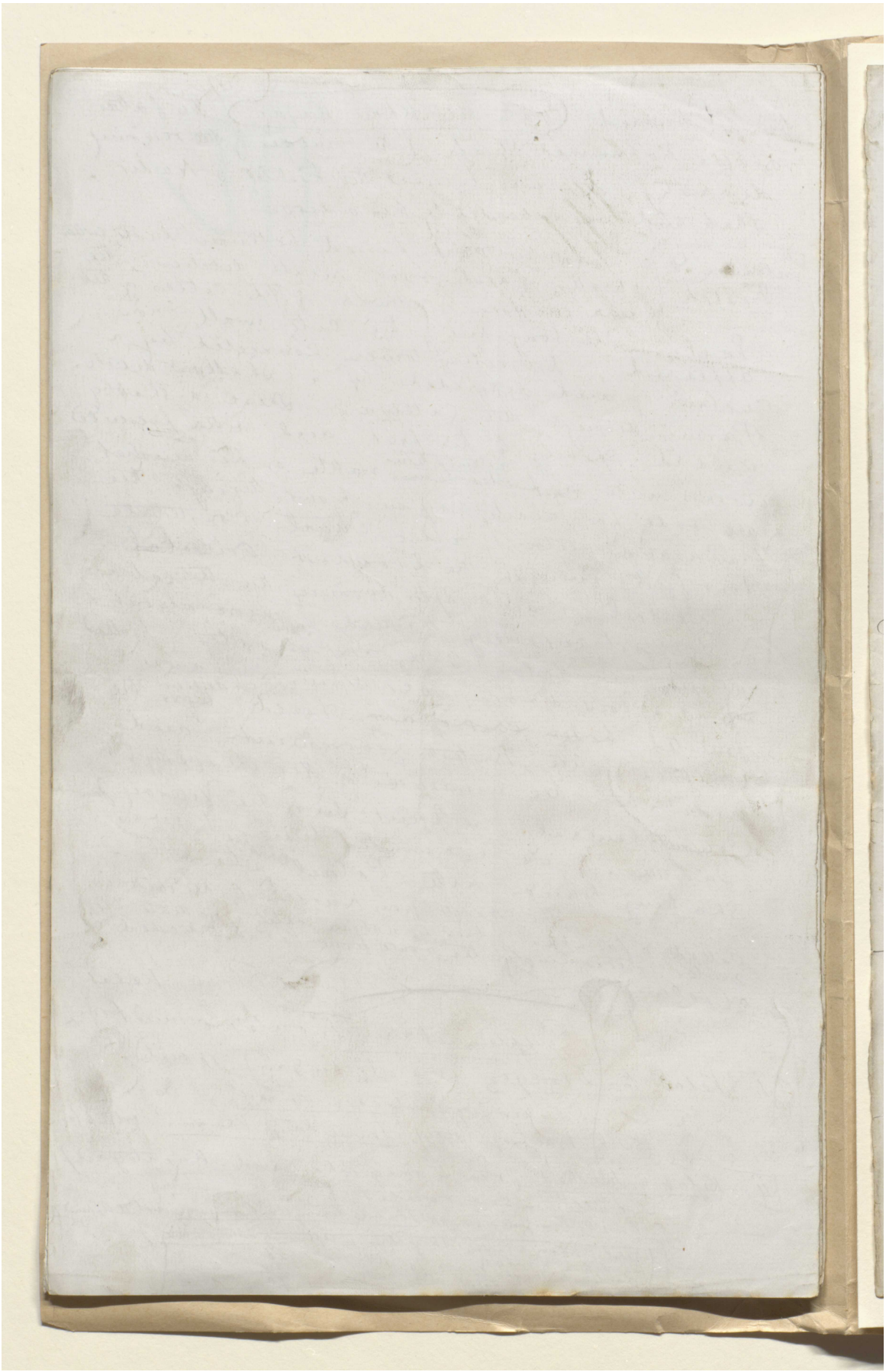
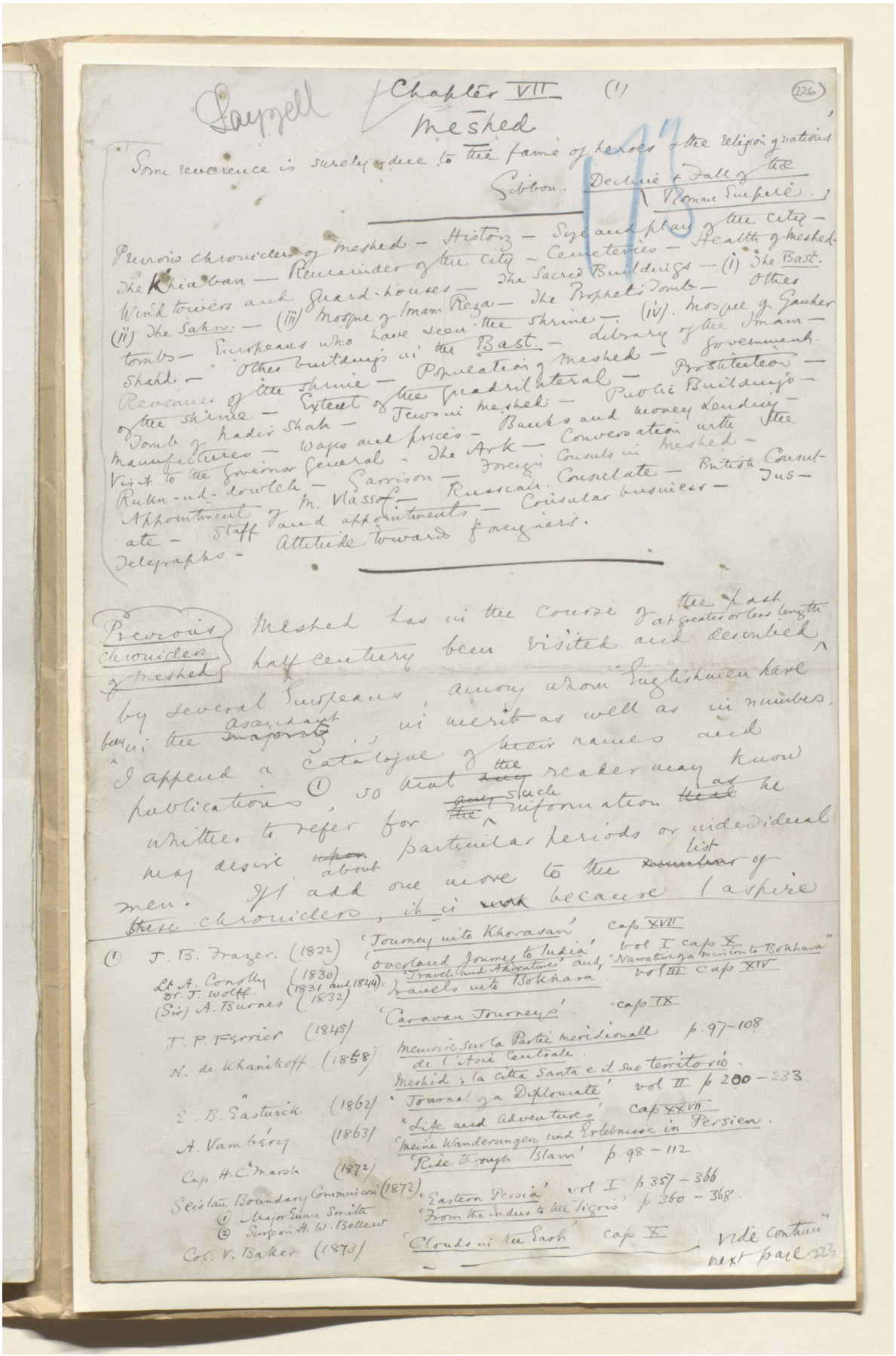




Sayyell

Chapter VII (1) (226)

Meshed

"Some reverence is surely due to the fame of heroes & the religion of nations"

Gibbon. Decline & Fall of the Roman Empire.

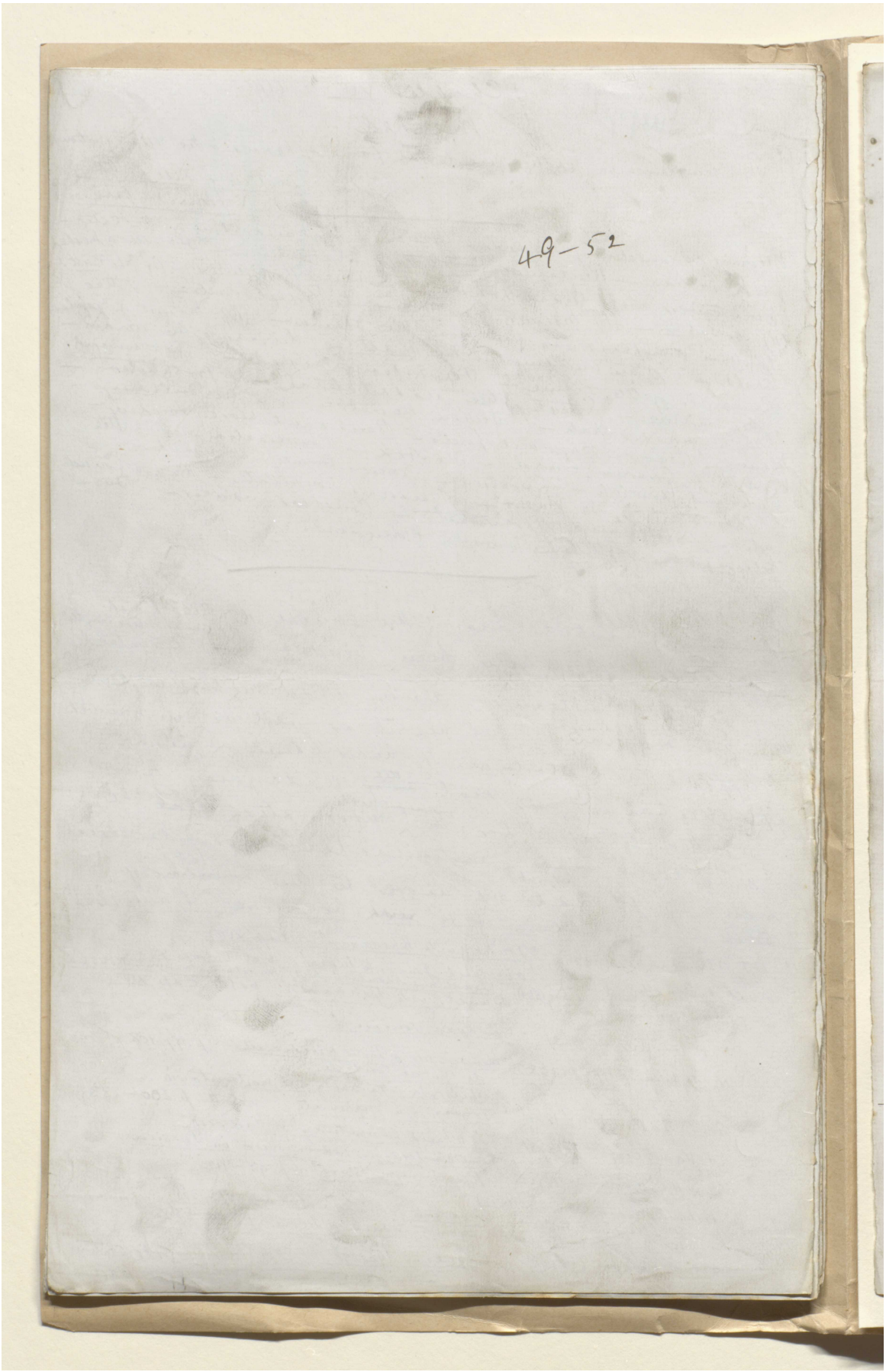
Previous chroniclers of Meshed — History — Size and plan of the city — The Khiaban — Remainder of the city — Cemeteries — Health of Meshed — Wind towers and Guard-houses — The Sacred Buildings — (i) The Bast. (ii) The Sahn. — (iii) Mosque of Imam Reza — The Prophet's Tomb — Other tombs — Europeans who have seen the shrine — (iv). Mosque of Gauher Shahd — Other buildings in the Bast. — Library of the Imam — Revenues of the shrine — Population of Meshed — Government of the shrine — Extent of the quadrilateral — Prostitution — Tomb of Nadir Shah — Jews in Meshed — Public Buildings — Manufactures — Wages and prices — Banks and money lending — Visit to the Governor General — The Ark — Conversation with the Rukn-ud-dowleh — Garrison — Foreign Consuls in Meshed — Appointment of M. Vlassof — Russian Consulate — British Consulate — Staff and appointments — Consular business — Jus — Telegraphs — Attitude towards foreigners.

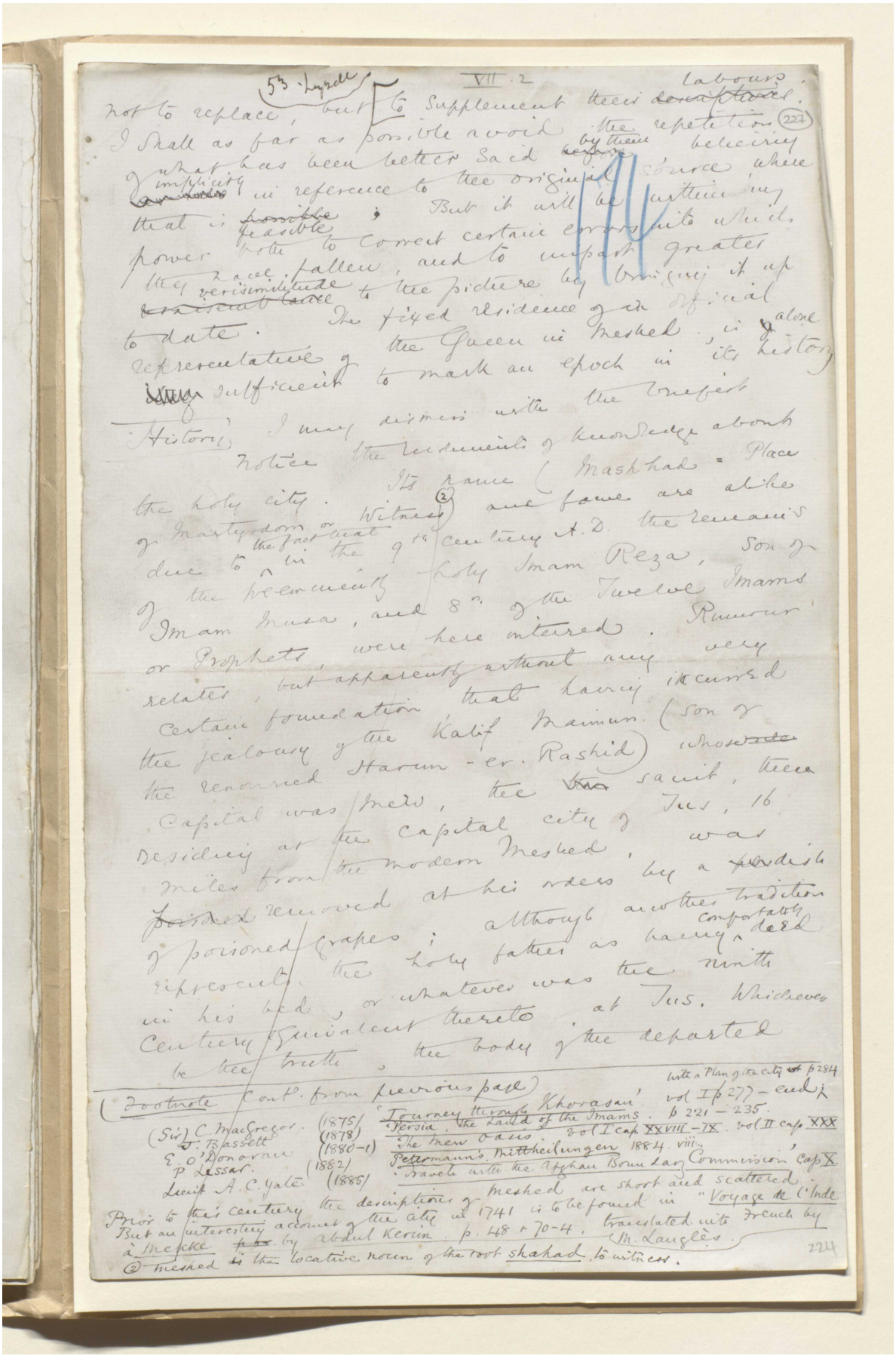
Previous chroniclers of Meshed

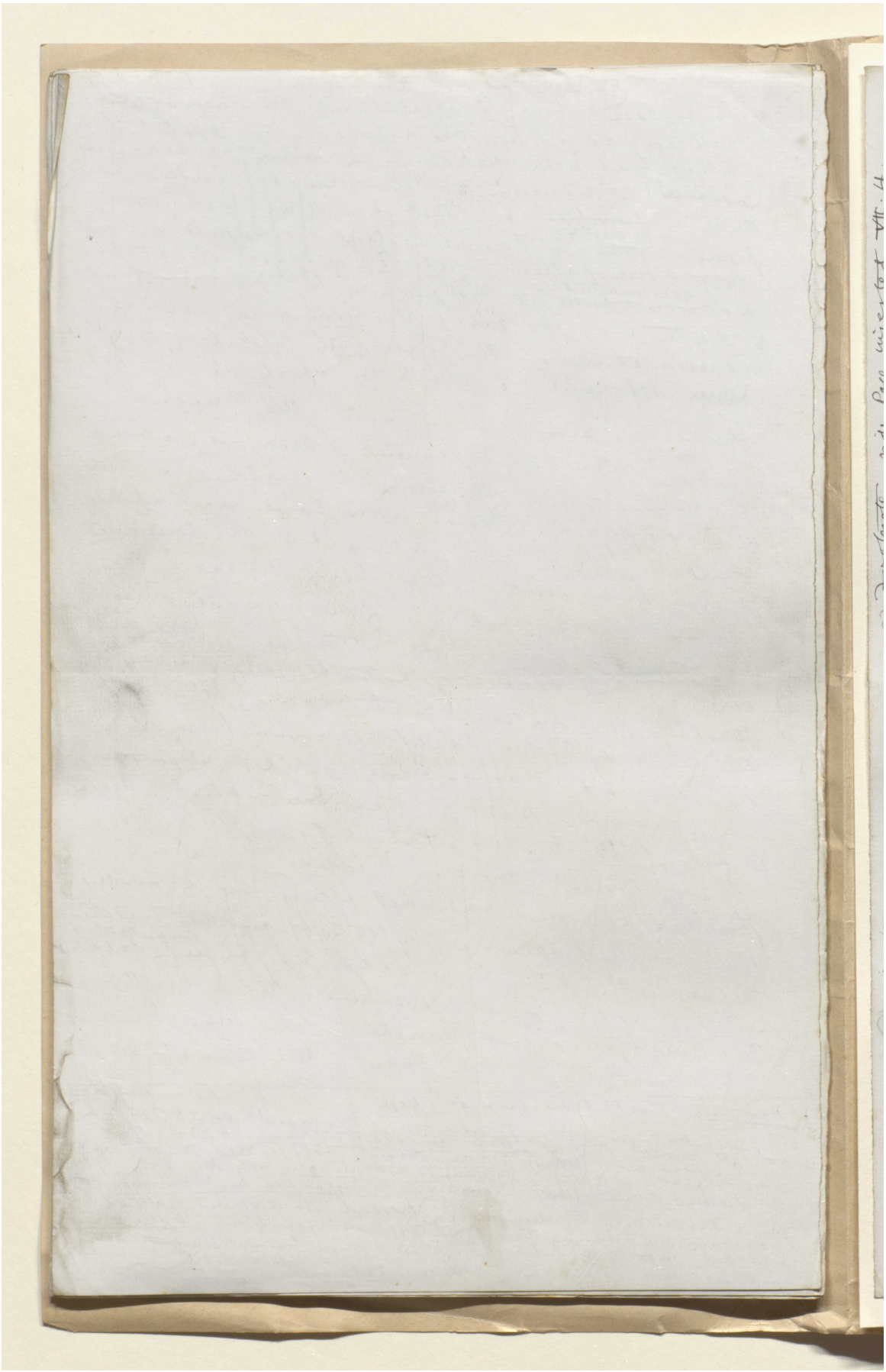
Meshed has in the course of the past half century been visited and described at greater or less length by several Europeans, among whom Englishmen have been in the ~~majority~~ ascendant, in merit as well as in numbers. I append a catalogue of their names and publications (1), so that ~~any~~ the reader may know whither to refer for ~~the~~ such information ~~that~~ as he may desire ~~upon~~ about particular periods or individual men. If I add one more to the ~~number~~ list of these chroniclers, it is ~~not~~ because I aspire

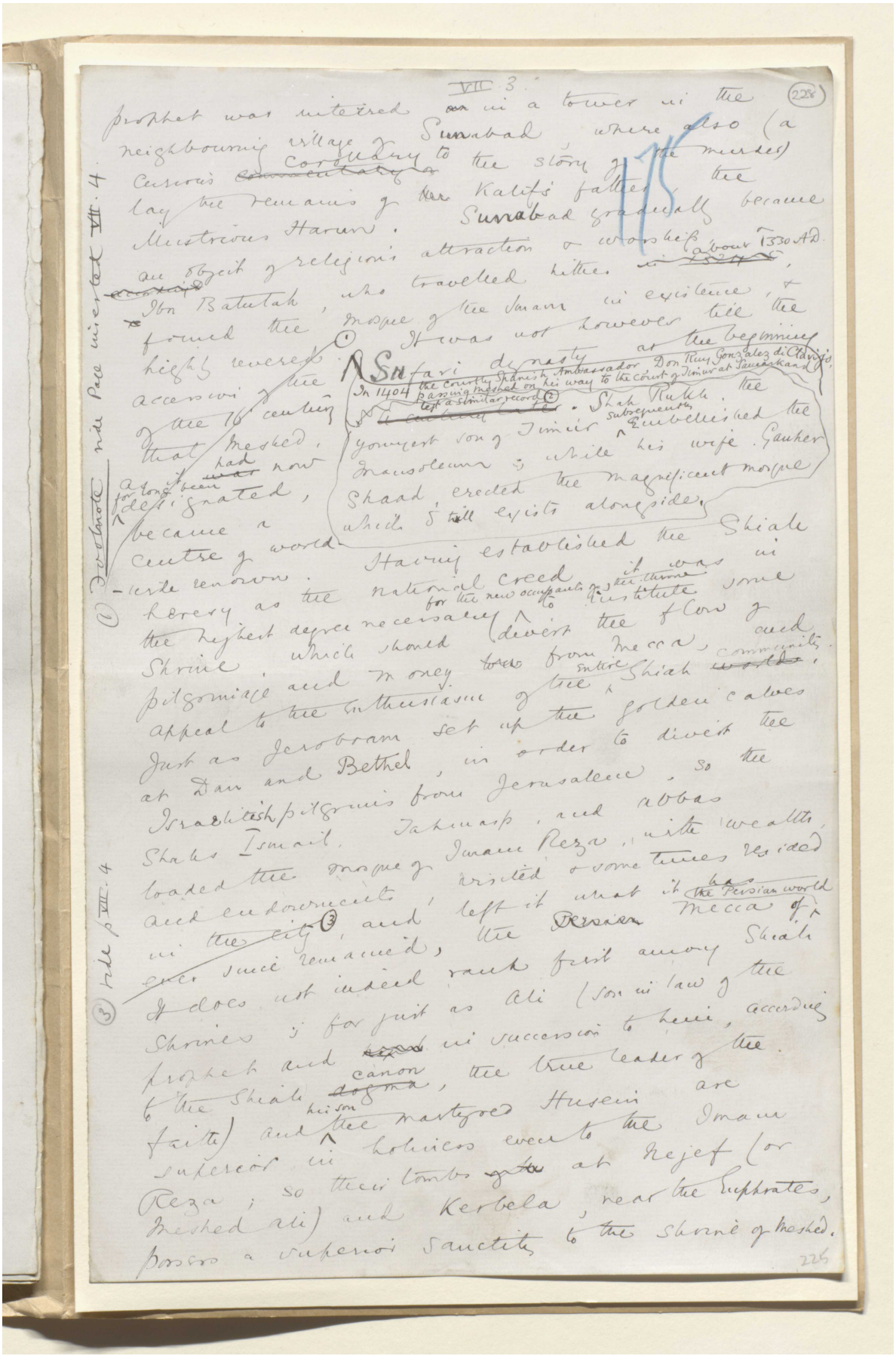
(1) J. B. Frazer. (1822) 'Journey into Khorasan' cap XVII
'Overland Journey to India' vol I cap X
Lt A. Conolly (1830) 'Travels and Adventures' and 'Narrative of a mission to Bokhara'
Dr. J. Wolff (1831 and 1844) 'Travels into Bokhara' vol III cap XIV
(Sir) A. Burnes (1832) 'Caravan Journeys' cap IX
J. P. Ferrier (1845) Memoire sur la Partie meridionale de l'Asie Centrale p. 97–108
N. de Khanikoff (1858) Meshid; la citta Santa e il suo territorio.
E. B. Eastwick (1862) 'Journal of a Diplomate' vol II p 200–233.
A. Vambéry (1863) 'Life and Adventures' cap XXVII
'Meine Wanderungen und Erlebnisse in Persien.
Cap H. C. Marsh (1872) 'Ride through Islam' p. 98–112
Seistan Boundary Commission (1872) 'Eastern Persia' vol I p 357–366
(1) Major Euan Smith 'From the Indus to the Tigris' p 360–368.
(2) Surgeon H. W. Bellew
Col. V. Baker (1873) 'Clouds in the Earth' cap X

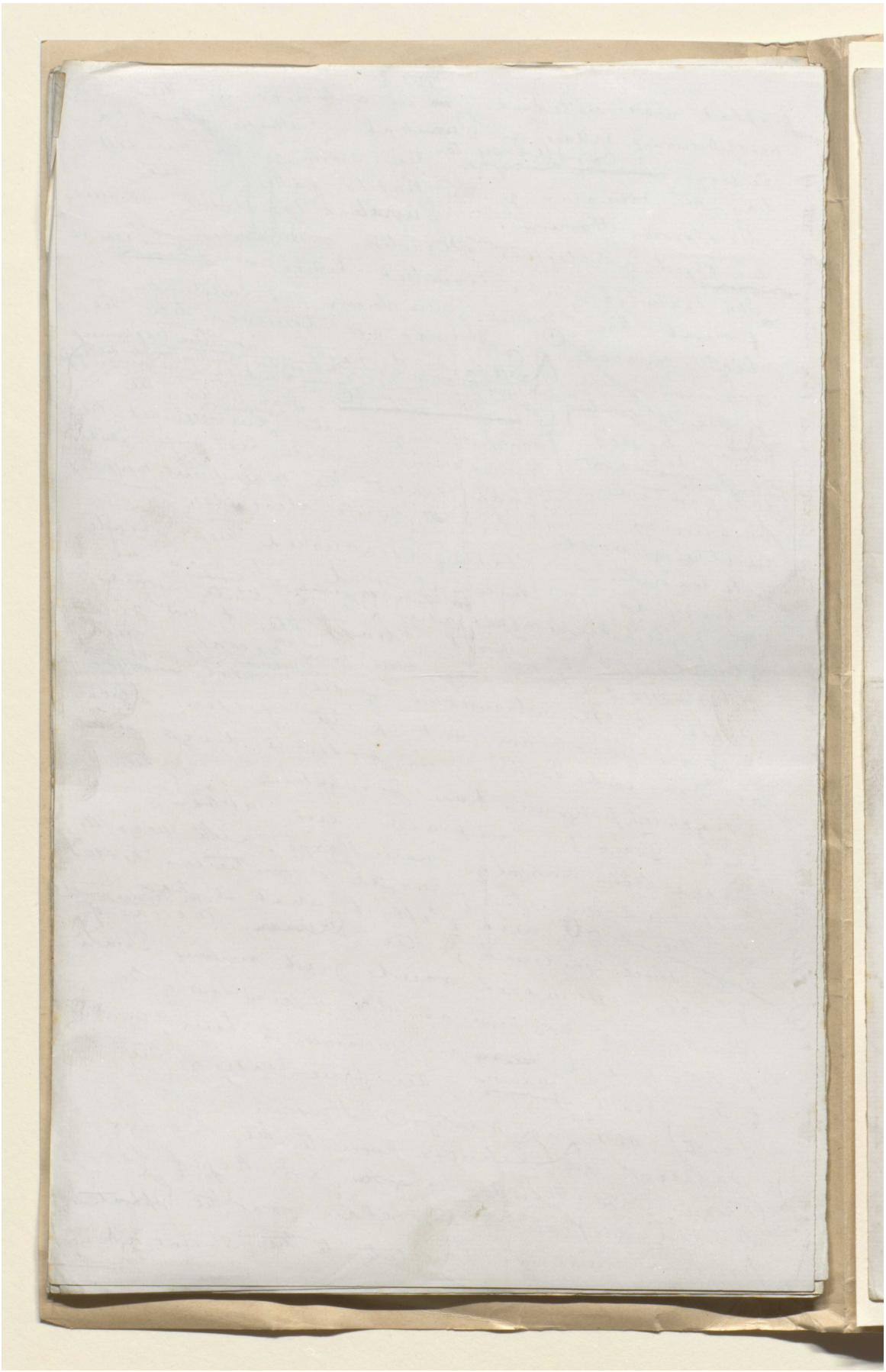
vide continue next page 223

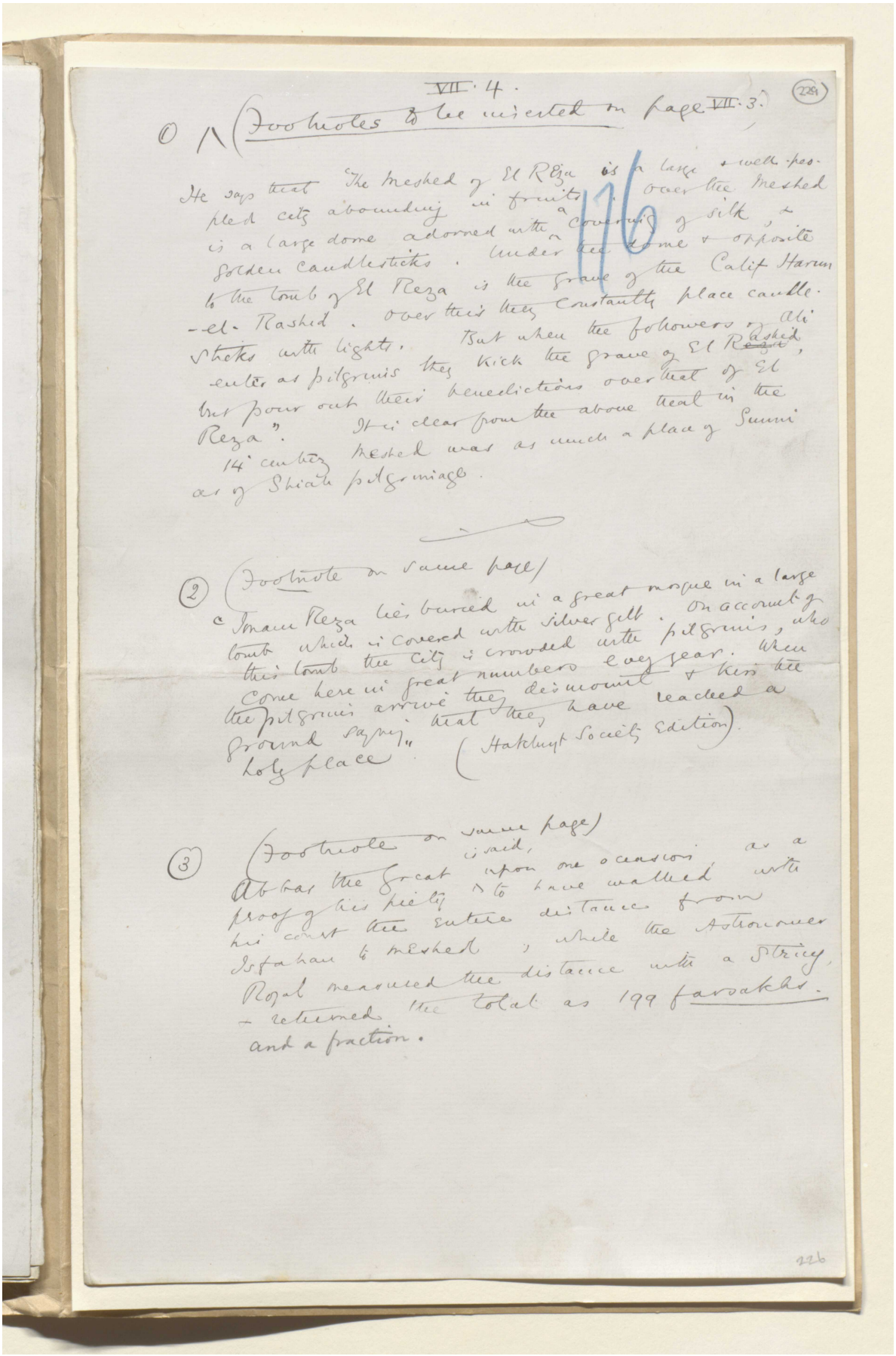

49-52











VII. 4.

(Footnotes to be inserted on page VII. 3.)

(1) He says that "The meshed of El Reza is a large & well-peopled city abounding in fruits. Over the meshed is a large dome adorned with a covering of silk, & golden candlesticks. Under the dome & opposite to the tomb of El Reza is the grave of the Calif Haroun-el-Rashed. Over this they constantly place candlesticks with lights. But when the followers of Ali enter as pilgrims they kick the grave of El Rashed, but pour out their benedictions over that of El Reza". It is clear from the above that in the 14th century meshed was as much a place of Sunni as of Shiah pilgrimage.

(2) (Footnote on same page)

"Imam Reza lies buried in a great mosque in a large town which is covered with silver cells. On account of this tomb the city is crowded with pilgrims, who come here in great numbers every year. When the pilgrims arrive they dismount & kiss the ground saying that they have reached a Holy place". (Hakluyt Society Edition).

(3) (Footnote on same page)

Abbas the Great upon one occasion, as a proof of his piety is said, to have walked with his court the entire distance from Isfahan to meshed, while the Astronomer Royal measured the distance with a String, & returned the total as 199 farsakhs and a fraction.

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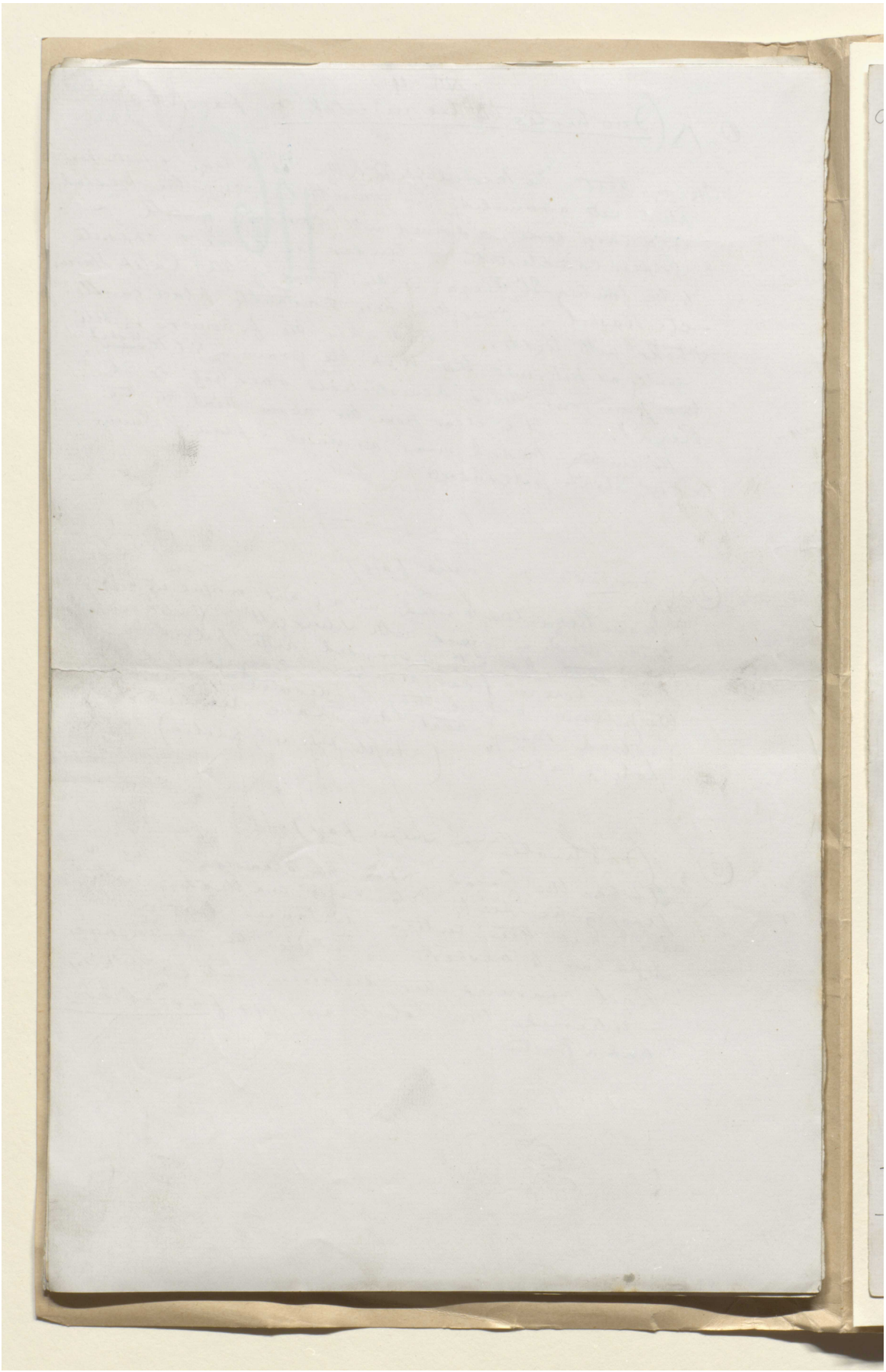
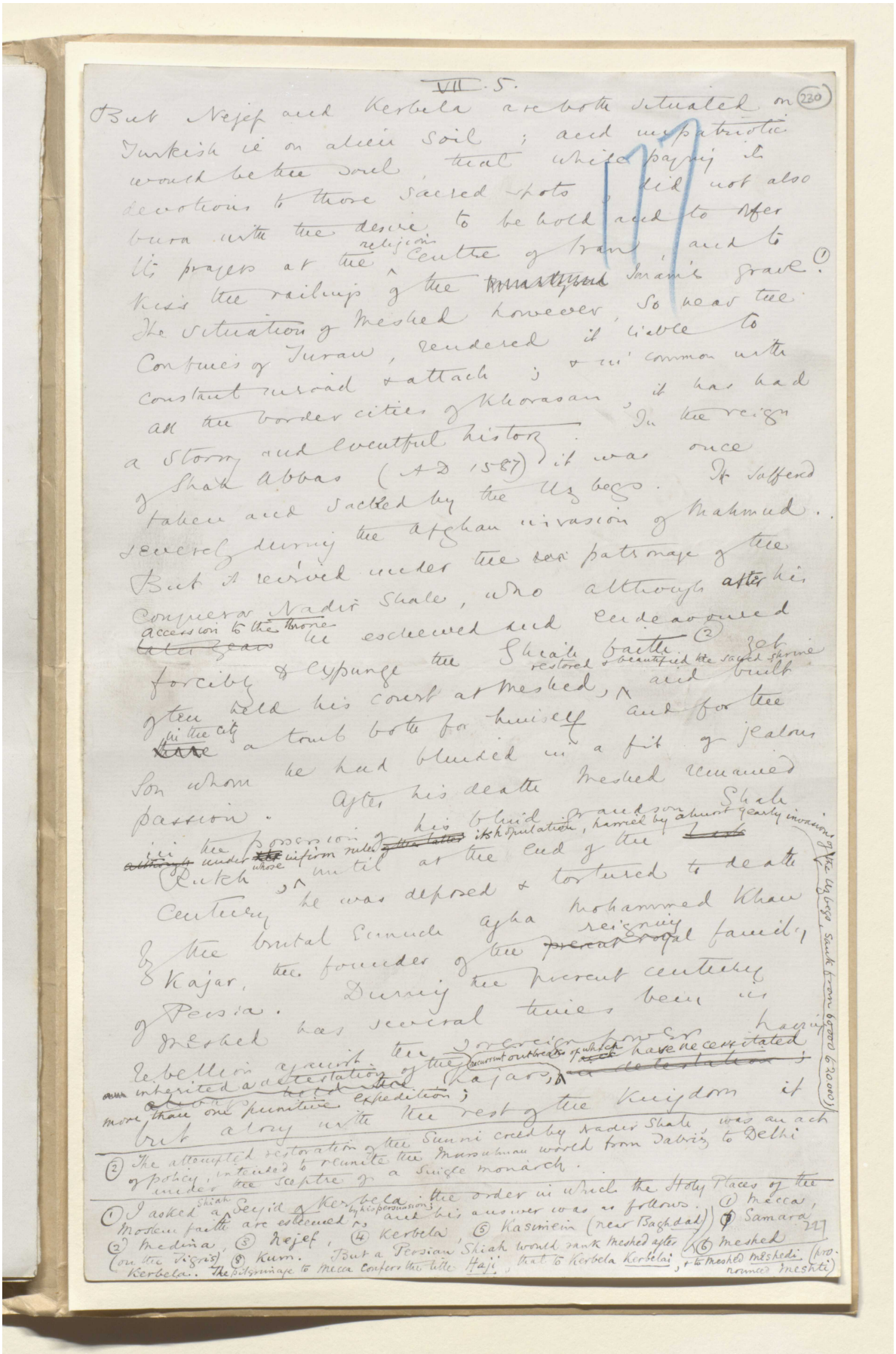
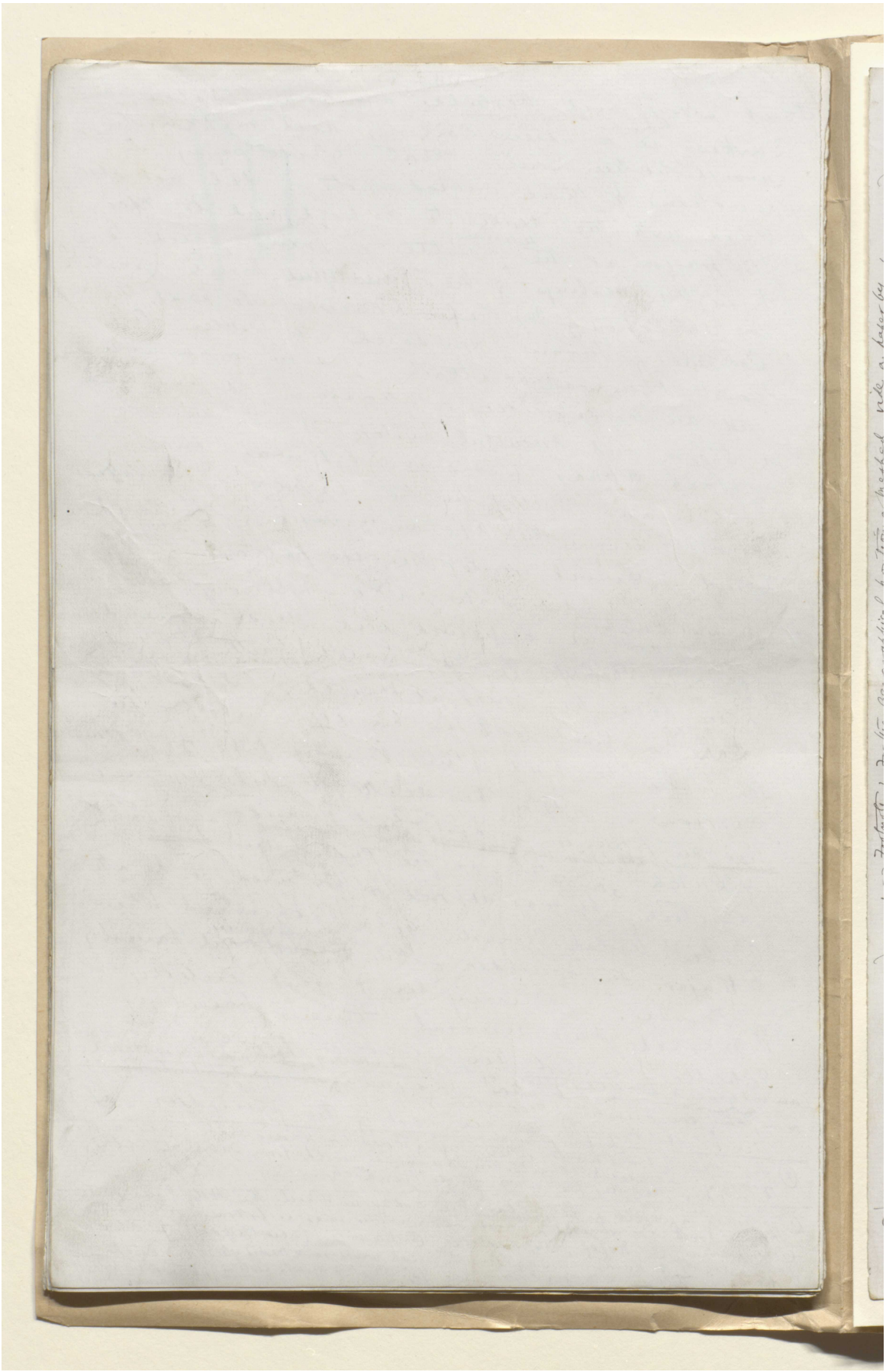
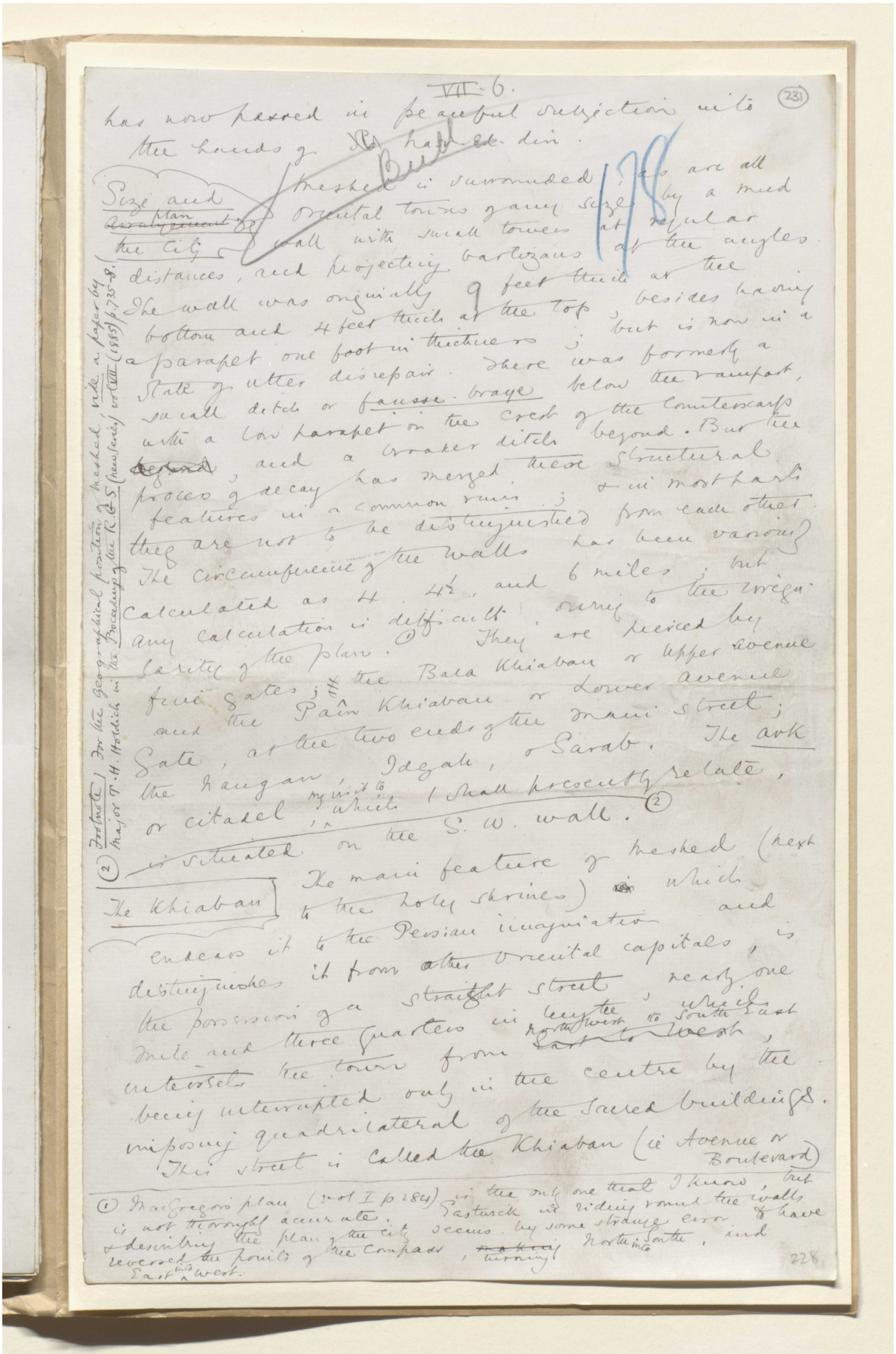






مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٢٣١و] (١٣٥٥/٤٦١)



VII-6.

(231)

has now passed in peaceful subjection into the hands of Nasr-ed-din.

Size and ~~arrangement~~ plan of the city

Meshed is surrounded, as are all Oriental towns of any size by a mud wall with small towers at regular distances, and projecting bartizans at the angles. The wall was originally 9 feet thick at the bottom and 4 feet thick at the top, besides having a parapet one foot in thickness; but is now in a state of utter disrepair. There was formerly a small ditch or fausse-braye below the rampart, with a low parapet on the crest of the counterscarp ~~beyond~~, and a broader ditch beyond. But the process of decay has merged these structural features in a common ruin; & in most parts they are not to be distinguished from each other. The circumference of the walls has been variously calculated as 4, 4½, and 6 miles; but any calculation is difficult, owing to the irregularity of the plan.(1) They are pierced by fine gates; the Bala Khiaban or Upper avenue and the Pain Khiaban or Lower avenue Gate, at the two ends of the main street; the Nangan, Idgah, or Sarab. The ark or citadel, my visit to which I shall presently relate, is situated on the S. W. wall.(2)

The Khiaban

The main feature of Meshed (next to the holy shrines) which endears it to the Persian imagination and distinguishes it from other Oriental capitals, is the possession of a straight street, nearly one mile and three quarters in length, which intersects the town from North West to South East, ~~East to West~~, being interrupted only in the centre by the imposing quadrilateral of the sacred buildings. This street is called the Khiaban (ie Avenue or Boulevard)

(1) MacGregor's plan (vol I p 284) is the only one that I know, but is not thoroughly accurate. Eastwick in riding round the walls & describing the plan of the city seems by some strange error to have reversed the points of the compass, ~~making~~ turning North into South, and East into West.

(2) Footnote: For the geographical position of Meshed, vide a paper by Major T. H. Holdich in the Proceedings of the R.G.S. (new series) vol VII (1885) p. 735-8.

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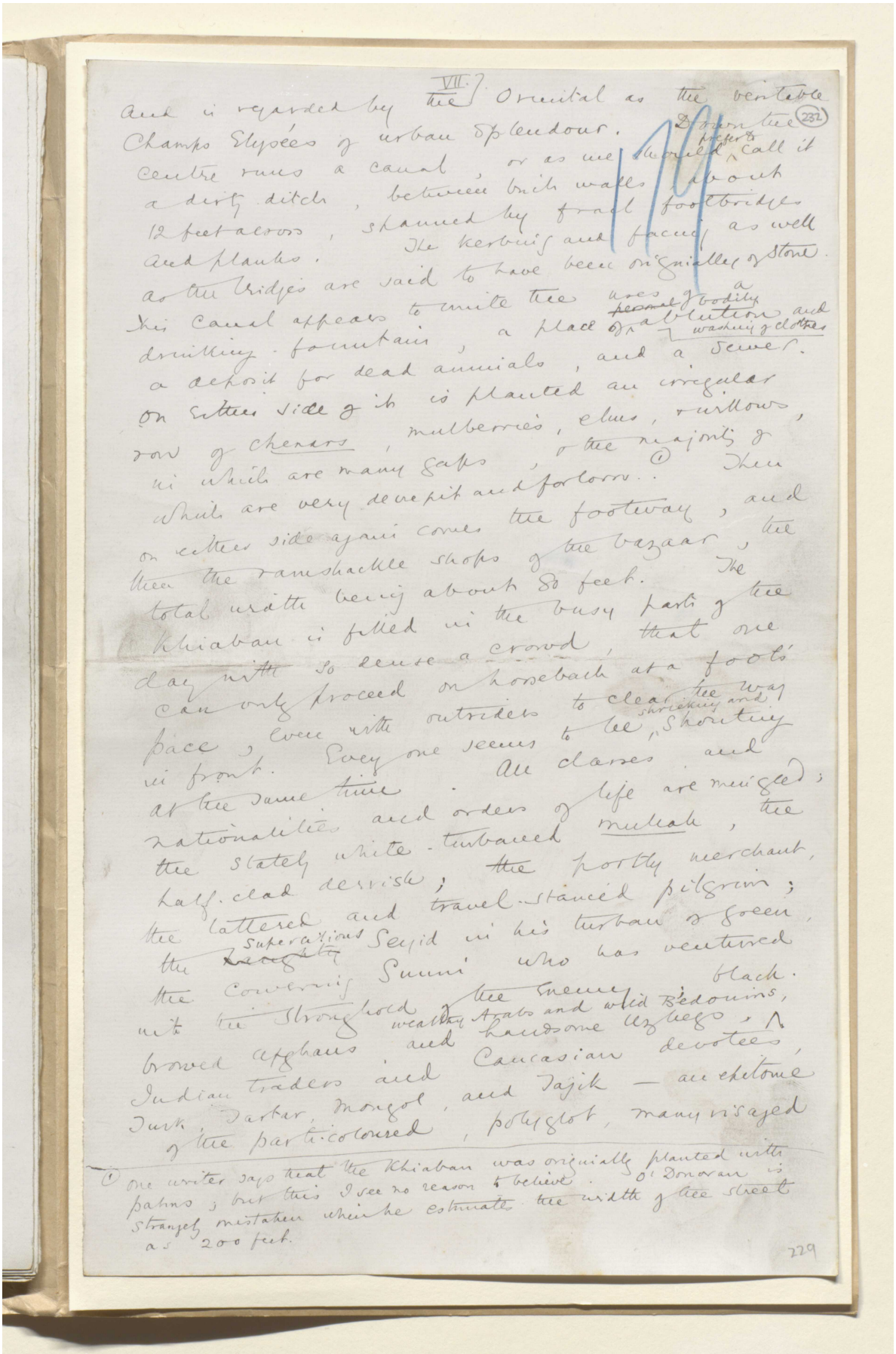

VII.

And is regarded by the Oriental as the ventable Champs Elysées of urban splendour. Down the (232) centre runs a canal, or as we should call it a dirty ditch, between brick walls about 12 feet across, spanned by frail footbridges and planks. The kerbing and facing as well as the bridges are said to have been originally of stone. The canal appears to unite the uses of a drinking-fountain, a place for bodily ablution and washing clothes, a deposit for dead animals, and a sewer. On either side of it is planted an irregular row of chenars, mulberries, elms, willows, in which are many gaps, & the majority of which are very decrepit and forlorn. (1) Then on either side again comes the footway, and then the ramshackle shops of the bazaar, the total width being about 80 feet. The Khiaban is filled in the busy parts of the day with so dense a crowd, that one can only proceed on horseback at a foot's pace, even with outriders to clear the way in front. Every one seems to be shouting and at the same time. All classes and nationalities and orders of life are mingled; the stately white-turbaned mullah, the portly merchant, half-clad dervish; the travel-stained pilgrim; the tattered and superstitious Seyid in his turban of green, the contemptuous Sunni who has ventured into the stronghold of the enemy, black-browed Afghans, wealthy Arabs and wild Bedouins, Indian traders and handsome Usbeg, Caucasian devotees, Turk, Tartar, Mongol, and Tajik — an epitome of the parti-coloured, polyglot, many visaged

(1) One writer says that the Khiaban was originally planted with palms; but this I see no reason to believe. O'Donovan is strangely mistaken when he estimates the width of the street as 200 feet.

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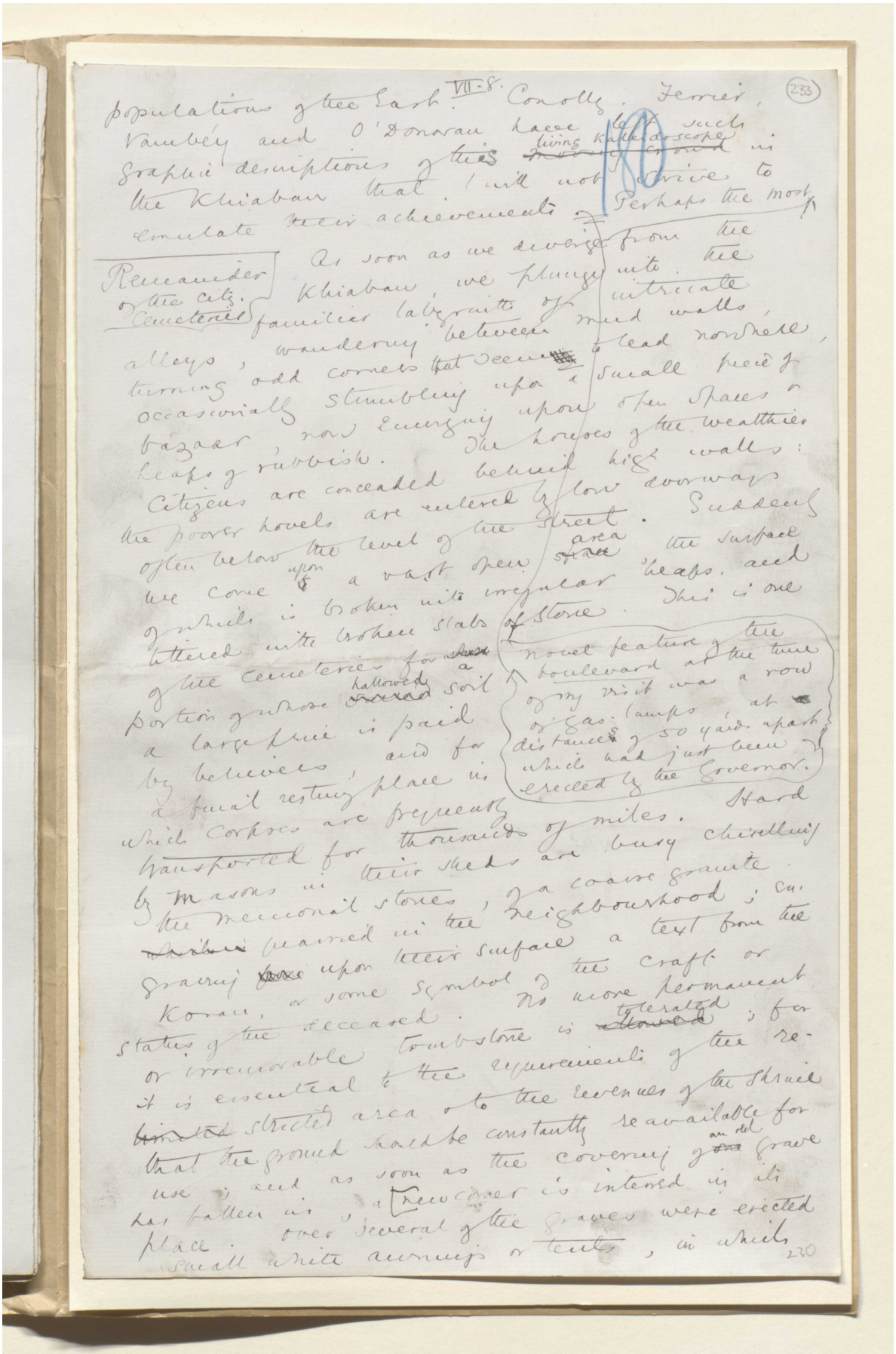
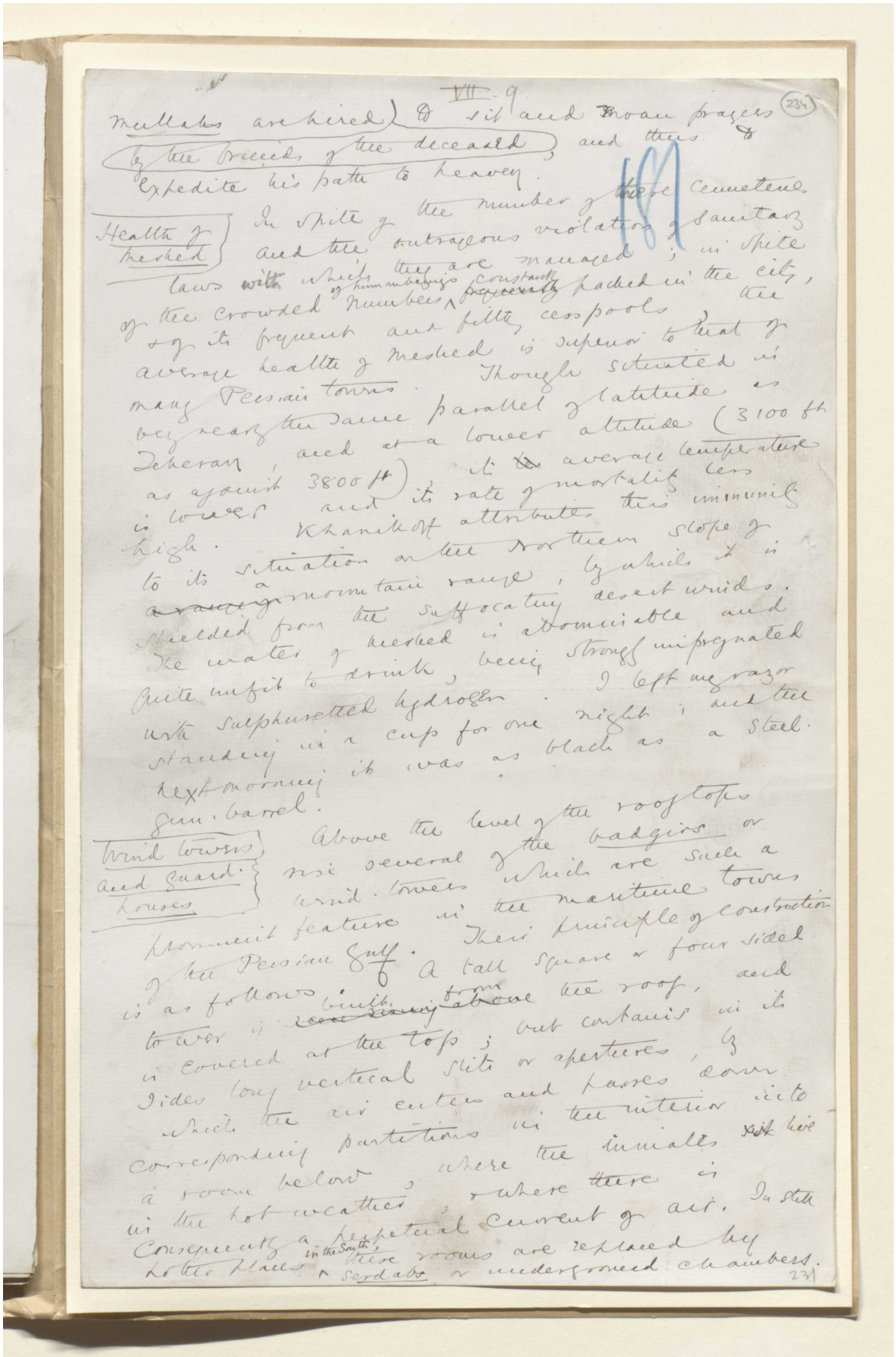




VII. 9 (234)



mullahs are hired) to sit and moan prayers by the friends of the deceased, and thus to expedite his path to heaven.

Health of Meshed

In spite of the number of these cemeteries and the outrageous violation of sanitary laws with which they are managed; in spite of the crowded numbers of human beings constantly packed in the city, & of its frequent and filthy cesspools, the average health of Meshed is superior to that of many Persian towns. Though situated in very nearly the same parallel of latitude as Teheran, and at a lower altitude (3100 ft as against 3800 ft) its average temperature is lower and its rate of mortality less high. Khanikoff attributes this immunity to its situation on the northern slope of a mountain range, by which it is shielded from the suffocating desert winds. The water of Meshed is abominable and quite unfit to drink, being strongly impregnated with sulphuretted hydrogen. I left my razor standing in a cup for one night; and the next morning it was as black as a steel gun-barrel.

Wind towers and guard-houses

Above the level of the roof tops rise several of the badgirs or wind-towers which are such a prominent feature in the maritime towns of the Persian Gulf. Their principle of construction is as follows. A tall square or four sided tower is built from the roof, and is covered at the top; but contains in its sides long vertical slits or apertures, by which the air enters and passes down corresponding partitions in the interior into a room below, where the inmates live in the hot weather, & where there is consequently a perpetual current of air. In still hotter places in the South, these rooms are replaced by serdabs or underground chambers.

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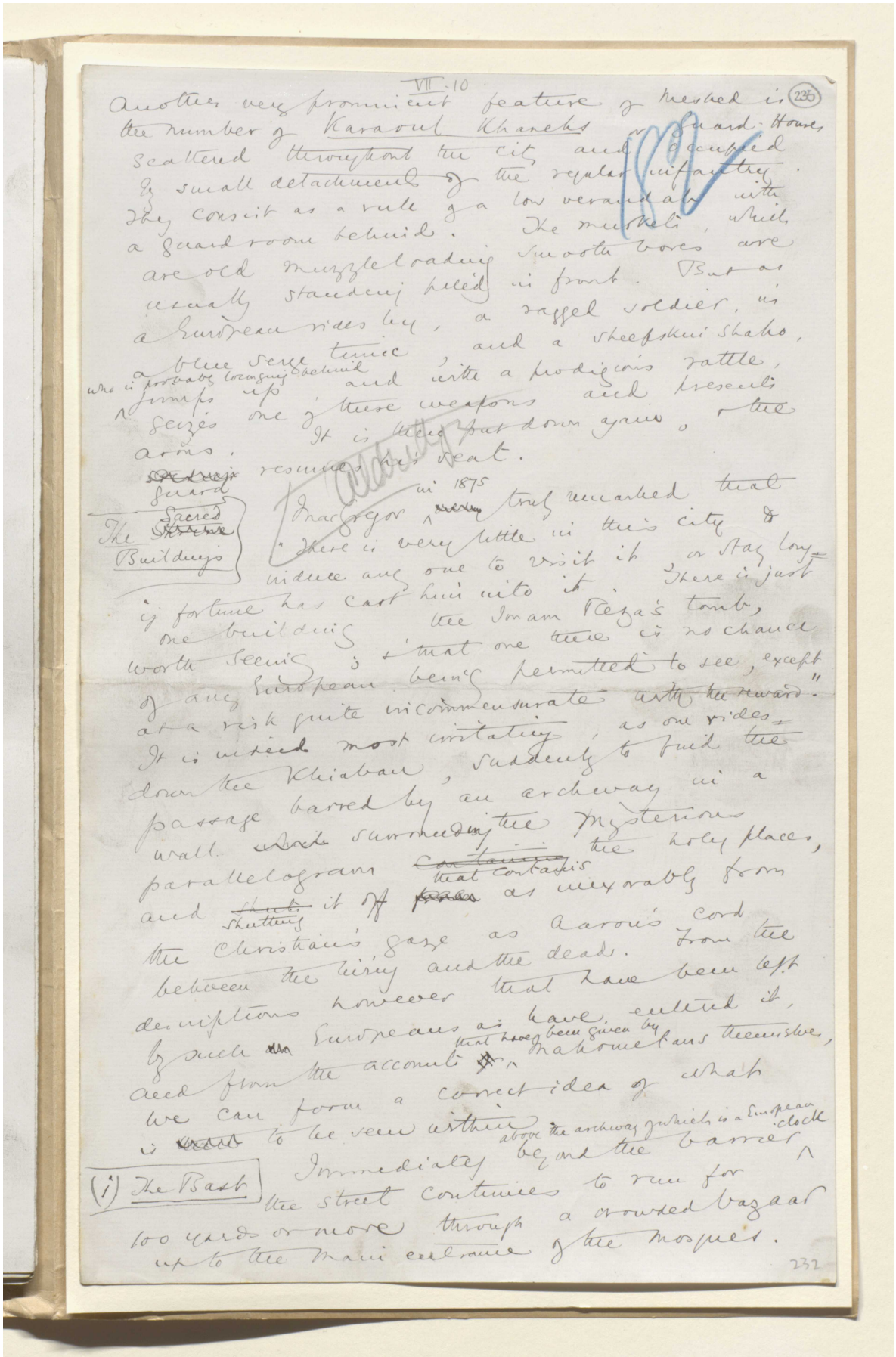

VII.-10

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Another very prominent feature of Meshed is the number of Karaoul Khanehs or Guard-Houses, scattered throughout the city and occupied by small detachments of the regular infantry. They consist as a rule of a low verandah with a guard room behind. The muskets, which are old muzzle loading smooth bores are usually standing piled in front. But as a European rides by, a ragged soldier, in a blue serge tunic and a sheepskin shako, who is probably lounging sacked jumps up and with a prodigious rattle, seizes one of these weapons and presents the arms. It is then put down again, & the resumes his seat.

The Sacred Buildings

In 1875 MacGregor truly remarked that "there is very little in this city to induce any one to visit it or stay long if fortune has cast him into it. There is just one building worth seeing, the Imam Reza's tomb, & that one there is no chance of any European being permitted to see, except at a risk quite incommensurate with the reward." It is indeed most irritating, as one rides down the Khiaban, suddenly to find the passage barred by an archway in a wall surmounted by the Mysterious parallelograms that contain the holy places, and shutting it off as impenetrably from the Christian's gaze as Aaron's cord between the living and the dead. From the descriptions by such Europeans as have entered it, however that have been given by Mahomedans themselves, we can form a correct idea of what is to be seen within. above the archway, which is a European clock

(1) The Bast

Immediately beyond the barrier the street continues to run for 500 yards or more through a crowded bazaar up to the main entrance of the mosque.

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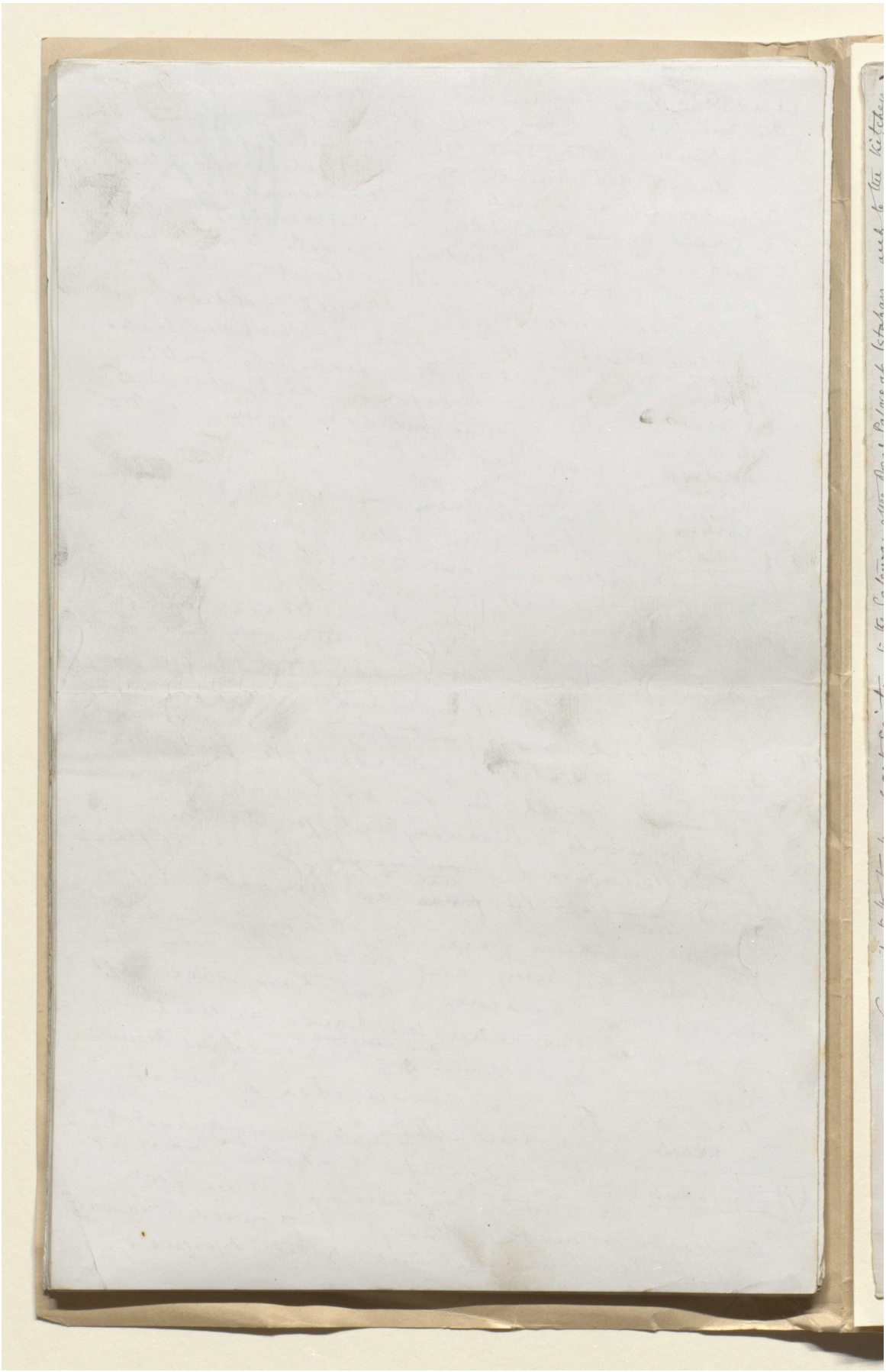

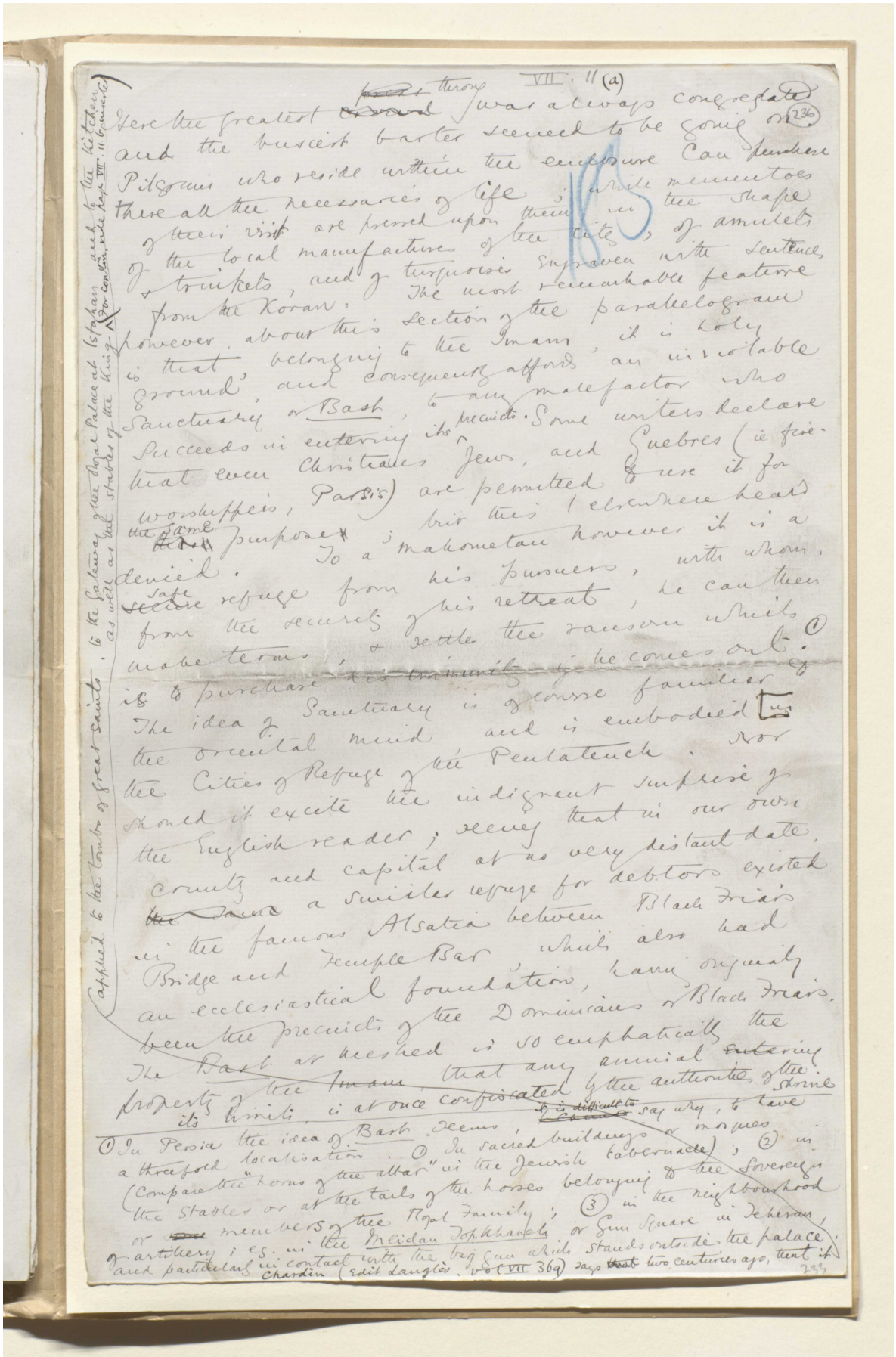

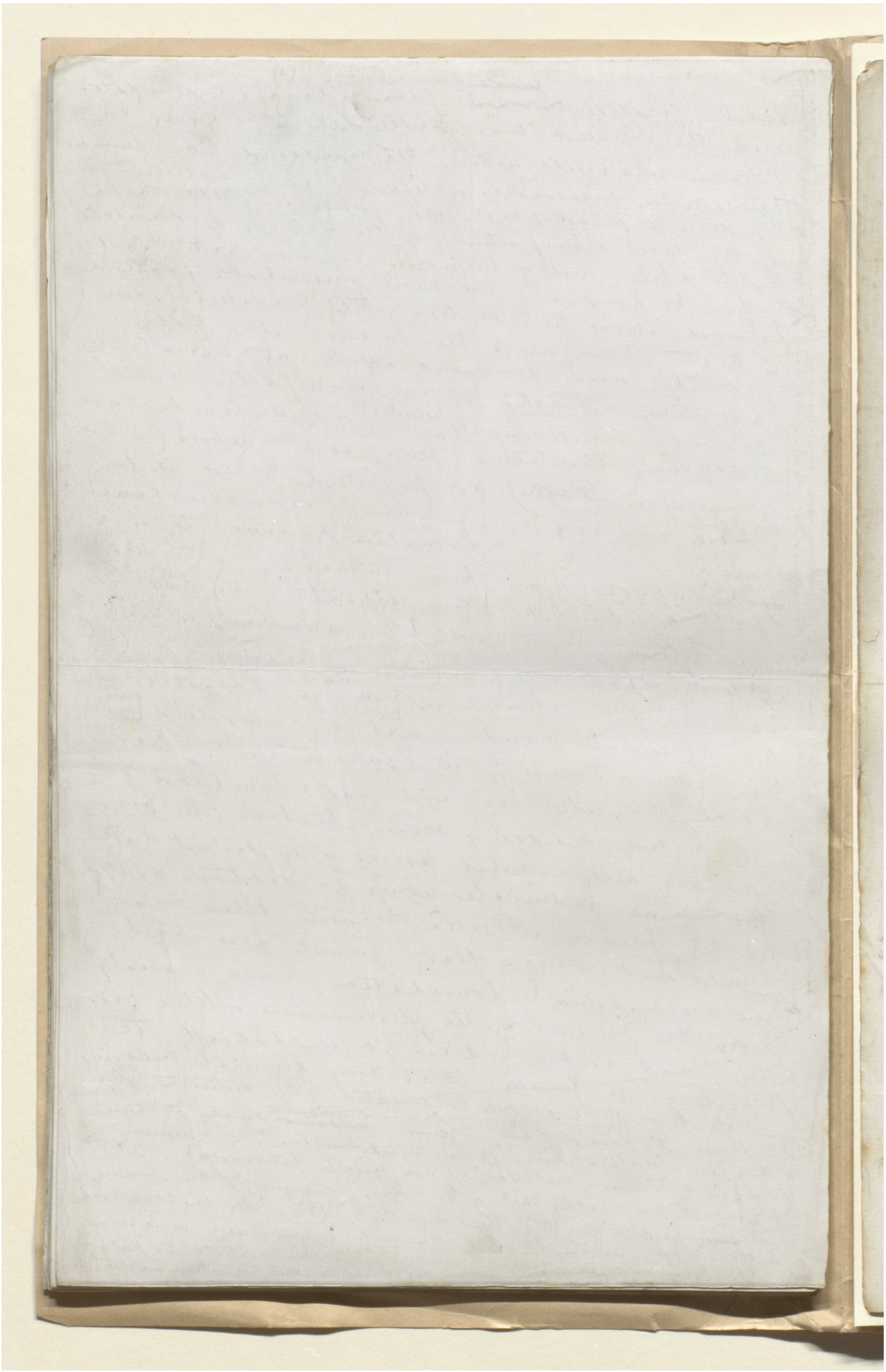

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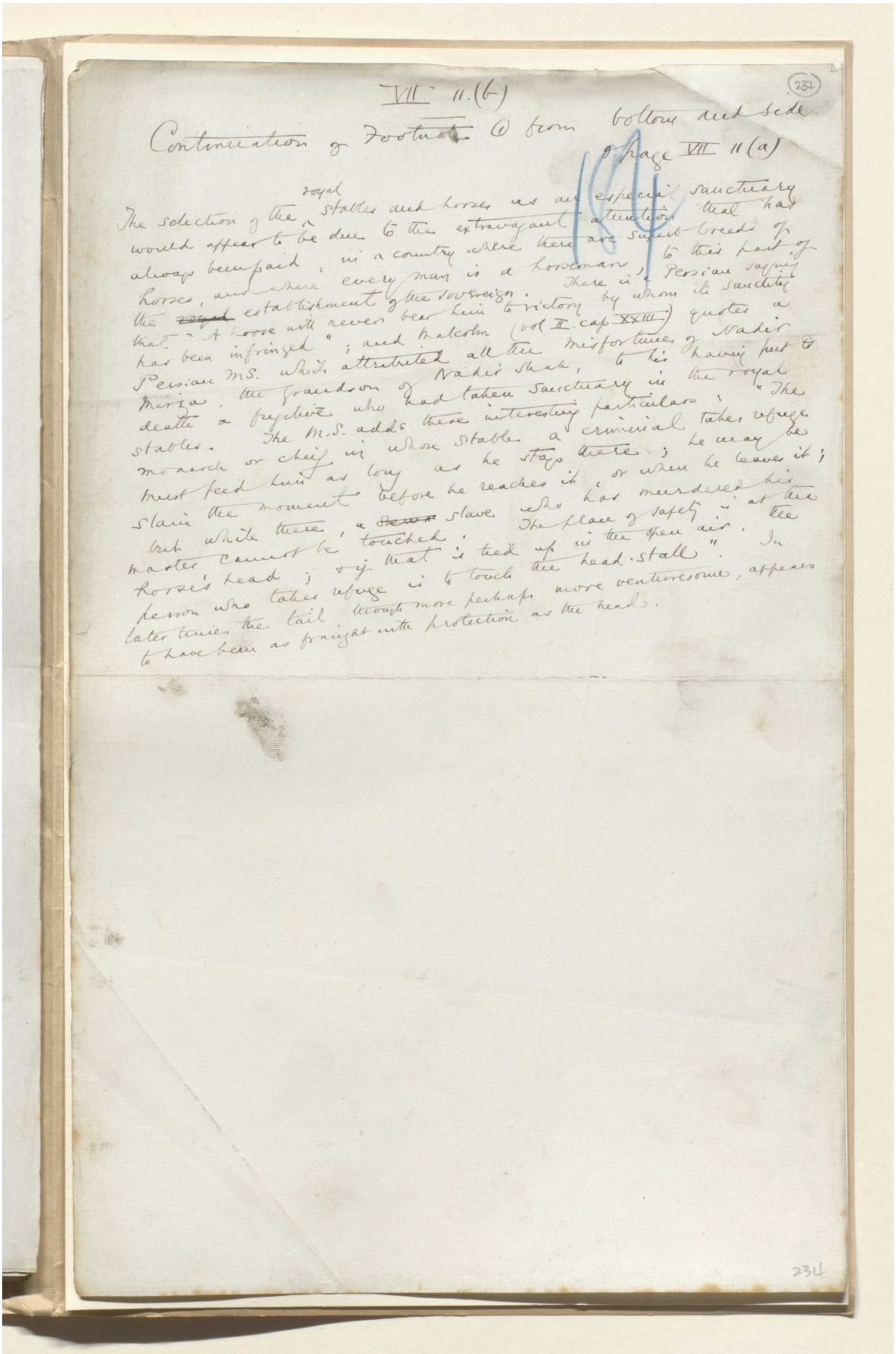

(237)

VII 11.(b)

Continuation of Footnote ① from bottom and side of page VII 11(a)

The selection of the royal stables and horses as an especial sanctuary would appear to be due to the extravagant attention that has always been paid, in a country where there are superb breeds of horses, and where every man is a horseman, to this part of the ~~royal~~ establishment of the sovereign. There is a Persian saying that "A horse will never bear him to victory by whom its sanctity has been infringed"; and Malcolm (vol II. cap XXIII) quotes a Persian MS. which attributed all the misfortunes of Nadir Mirza, the grandson of Nadir Shah, to his having put to death a fugitive who had taken sanctuary in the royal stables. The M.S. adds these interesting particulars: "The monarch or chief in whose stable a criminal takes refuge must feed him as long as he stays there; he may be slain the moment before he reaches it, or when he leaves it; but while there, a ~~[illegible]~~ slave who has murdered his master cannot be touched. The place of safety is at the horse's head; & if that is tied up in the open air, the person who takes refuge is to touch the head-stall". In later times the tail, though more perhaps more venturesome, appears to have been as fraught with protection as the head.

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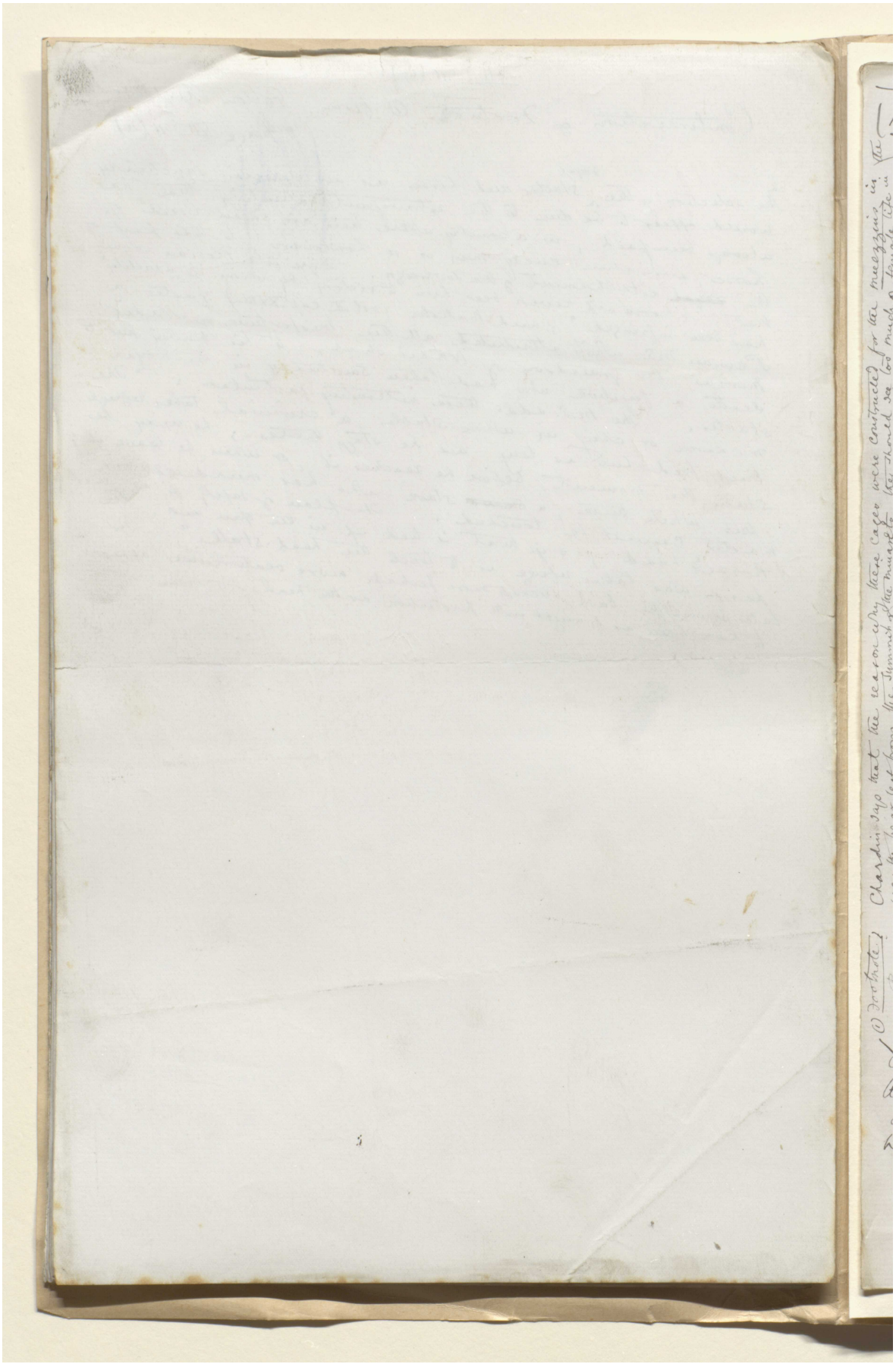

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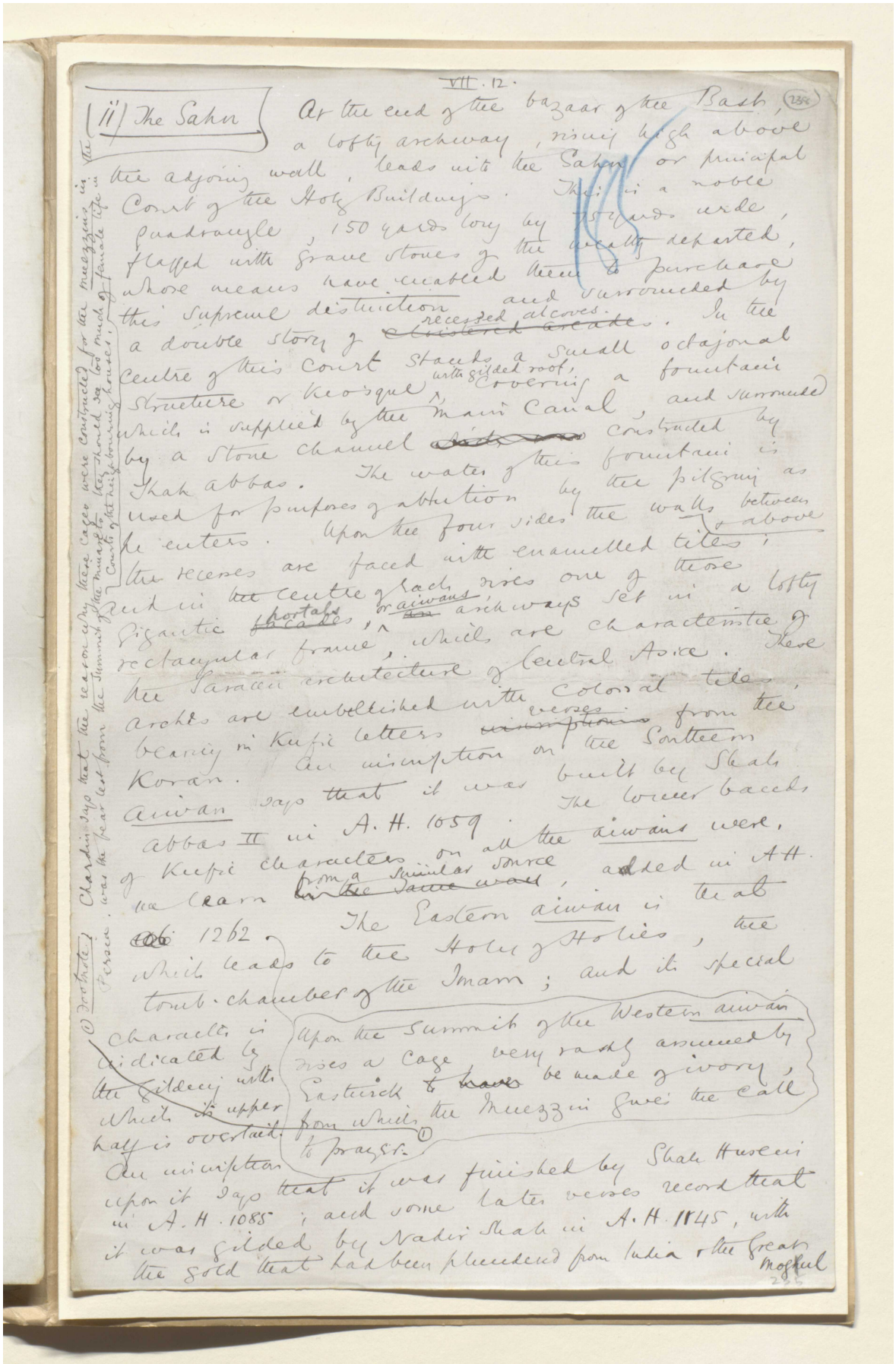

VII. 12.

(ii) The Sahn

At the end of the bazaar of the Bash, a lofty archway, rising high above the adjoining wall, leads into the Sahn or principal Court of the Holy Buildings. This is a noble quadrangle, 150 yards long by 120 wide, flagged with grave stones of the dead departed, whose means have enabled them to purchase this Supreme distinction and surrounded by a double story of ~~cloistered arcades~~ recessed alcoves. In the centre of this Court stands a small octagonal Structure or Kiosque with gilded roof, covering a fountain which is supplied by the main Canal, and surrounded by a stone channel constructed by Shah abbas. The water of this fountain is used for purposes of ablution by the pilgrim as he enters. Upon the four sides the walls between the recesses are faced with enamelled tiles; but in the centre of each rises one of those gigantic ~~portals~~ iwans, arch-ways set in a lofty rectangular frame, which are characteristic of the Saracen architecture of Central Asia. These arches are embellished with coloured tiles, bearing in Kufic letters from the Koran. An inscription on the Southern iwan says that it was built by Shah abbas II in A.H. 1059. The lower facade of the Chahar Sú (Northgate) Persian. Chardin says that the reason why these cages were constructed for the muezzins in the Summit of the Minarets (the Shah's Court of Justice) was the fear lest from the lower roofs of the houses

of Kufic characters on all the iwans were, we learn from a similar source, added in A.H. 1262. The Eastern iwan is that which leads to the Holy of Holies, the tomb-chamber of the Imam; and its special characteristic is indicated by the gilded ~~arch~~ which is upper half is overlaid. An inscription upon it says that it was finished by Shah Hussein in A.H. 1088; and some later verses record that it was gilded by Nadir Shah in A.H. 1145, with the gold that had been plundered from India the Great Mogul

Upon the summit of the Western iwan rises a cage very rarely assumed by Easterick to be made of ivory, from which the Muezzin give the call to prayer.

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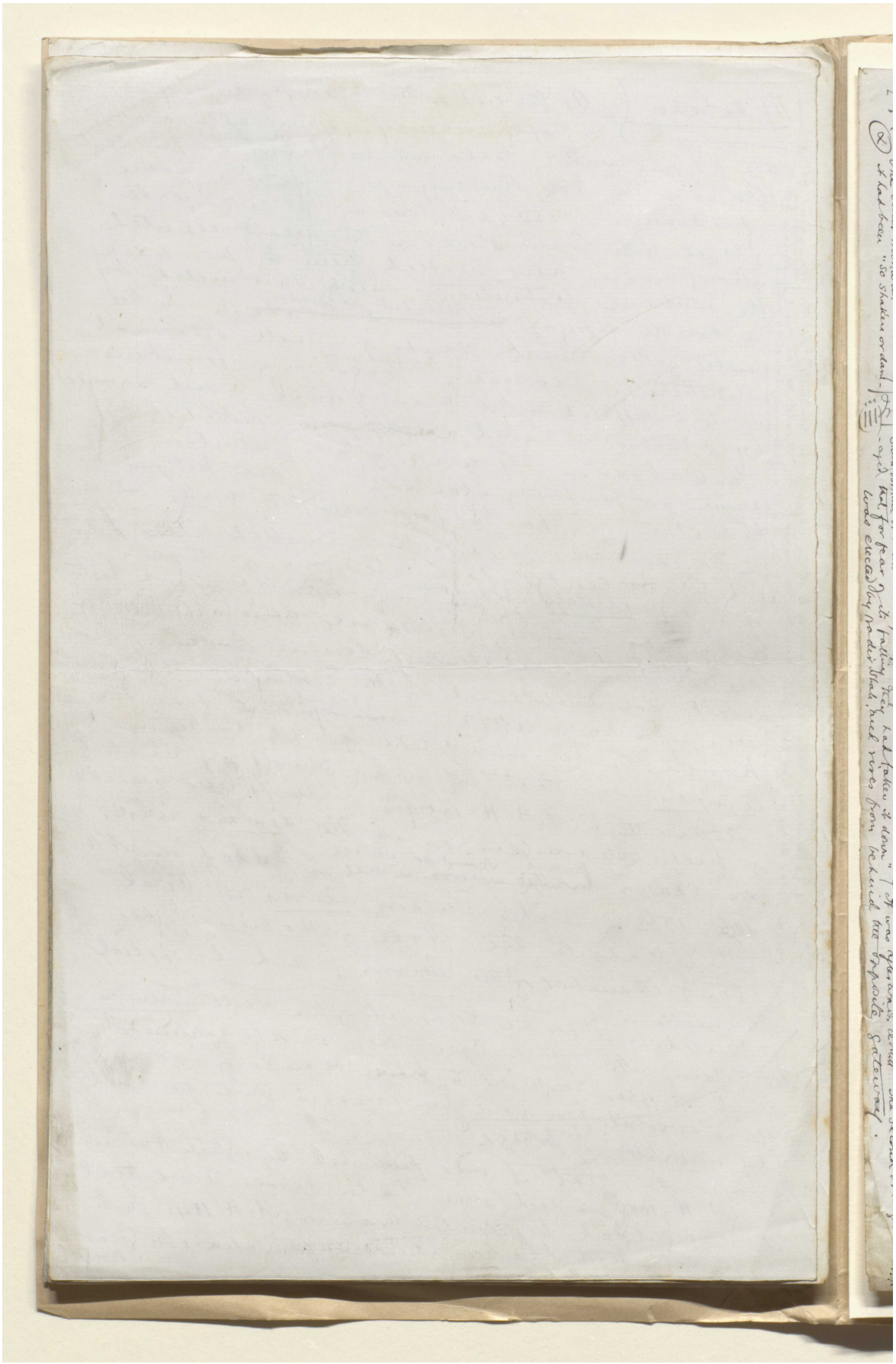
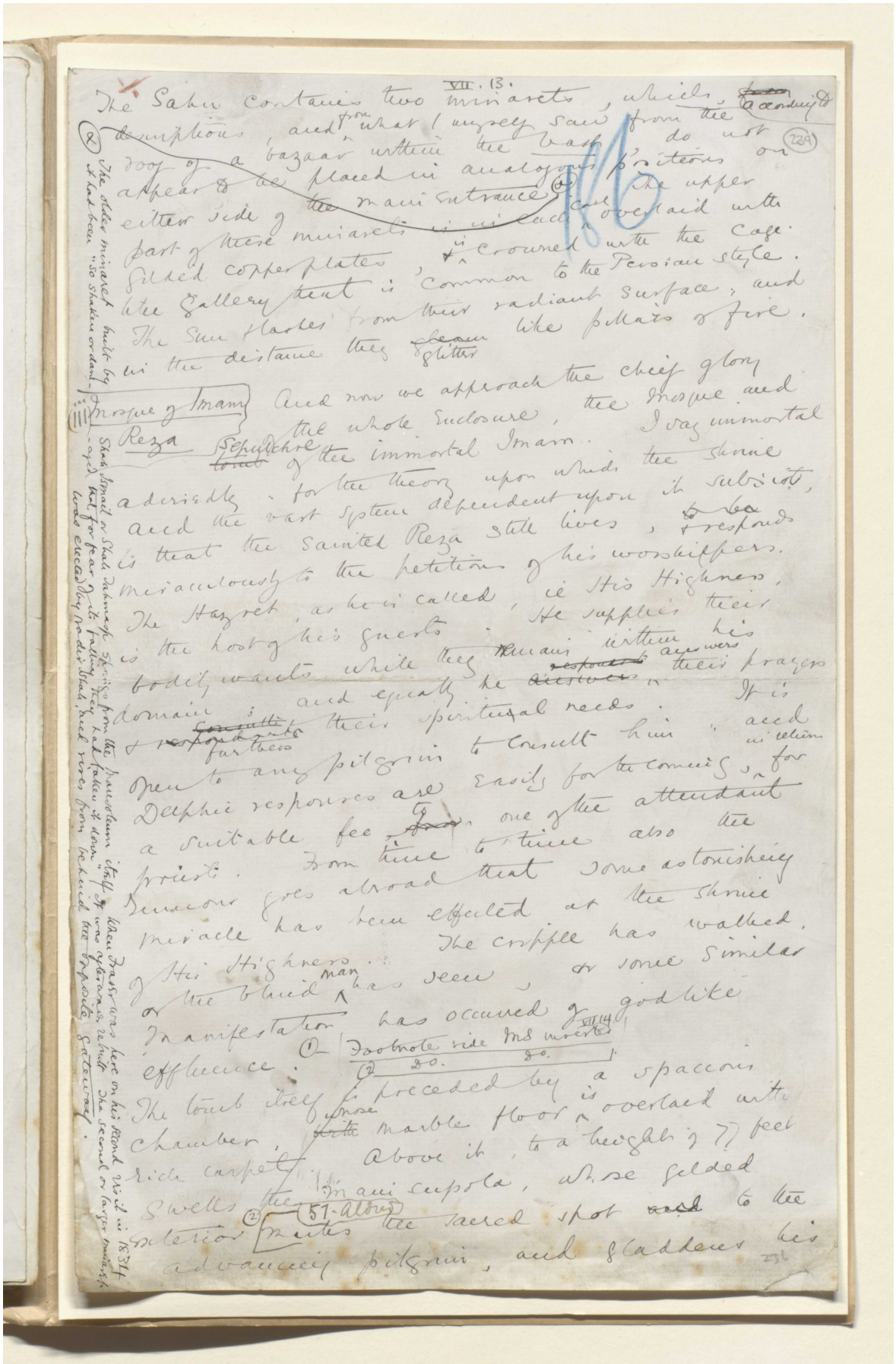
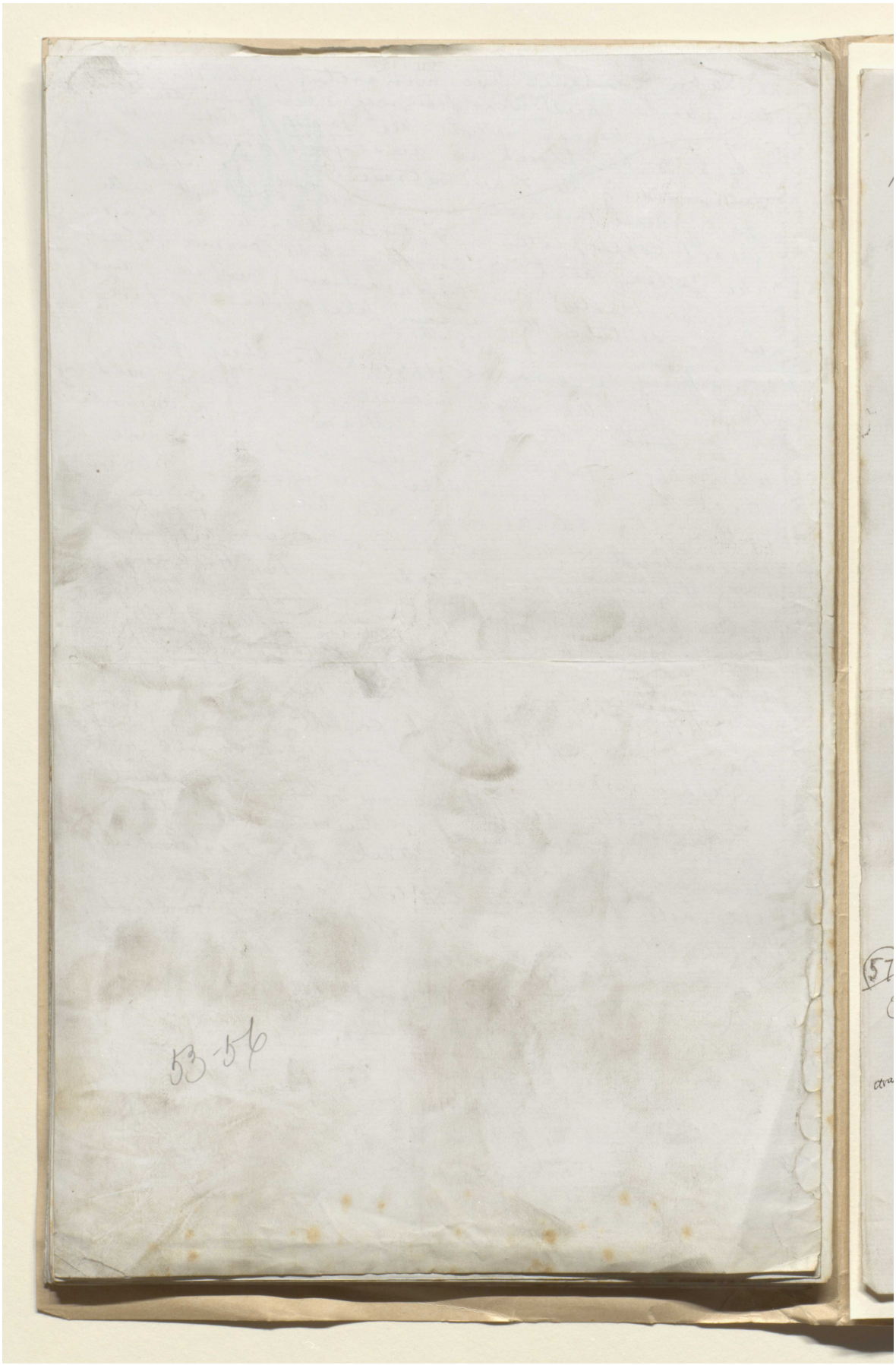
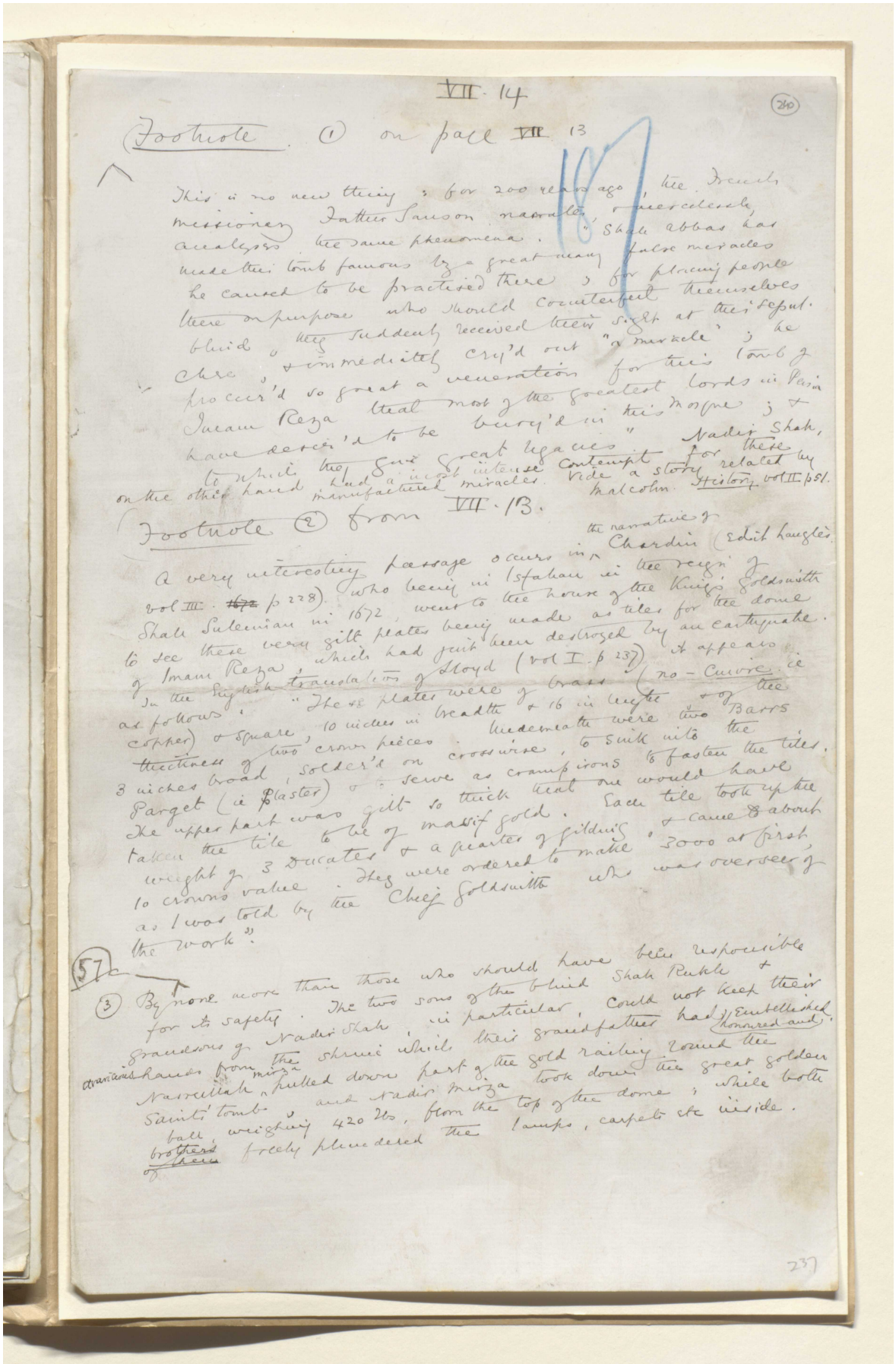





53-54

مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٢٤٠و] (١٣٥٥/٤٧٩)



VII. 14

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Footnote (1) on page VII 13

This is no new thing; for 200 years ago, the French missionary Father Sanson narrates, & mercilessly analyses the same phenomena. "Shah Abbas has made this tomb famous by a great many false miracles he caused to be practised there; for placing people there on purpose who should counterfeit themselves blind, they suddenly received their sight at this sepulchre, & immediately cry'd out "a miracle"; he procur'd so great a veneration for this tomb of Imam Reza that most of the greatest lords in Persia have desir'd to be bury'd in this Mosque; & to which they give great legacies." Nadir Shah, on the other hand had a most intense contempt for these manufactured miracles. Vide a story related by Malcolm. History, vol II p 51.

Footnote (2) from VII. 13.

A very interesting passage occurs in the narrative of Chardin (Edit Langlès vol III. ~~1672~~ p 228). Who being in Isfahan in the reign of Shah Suleiman in 1672, went to the house of the King's Goldsmith to see these very gilt plates being made as tiles for the dome of Imam Reza, which had just been destroyed by an earthquake. In the English translation of Lloyd (vol I. p 237) it appears as follows: "These plates were of brass (no-Cuivre. ie copper) & square, 10 inches in breadth & 16 in length & of the thickness of two crown pieces. Underneath were two Barrs 3 inches broad, solder'd on crosswise, to sink into the Parget (ie Plaster) & to serve as crampirons to fasten the tiles. The upper part was gilt so thick that one would have taken the tile to be of massif gold. Each tile took up the weight of 3 Ducates & a quarter of gilding, & came to about 10 crowns value. They were ordered to make 3000 at first, as I was told by the Chief Goldsmith who was overseer of the work".

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(3) By none more than those who should have been responsible for its safety. The two sons of the blind Shah Rukh & grandsons of Nadir Shah, in particular, could not keep their avaricious hands from the shrine which their grandfather had honoured and embellished. Nasrullah Mirza pulled down part of the gold railing round the Saint's tomb, and Nadir Mirza took down the great golden ball, weighing 420 lbs, from the top of the dome; while both brothers of them freely plundered the lamps, carpets etc inside.

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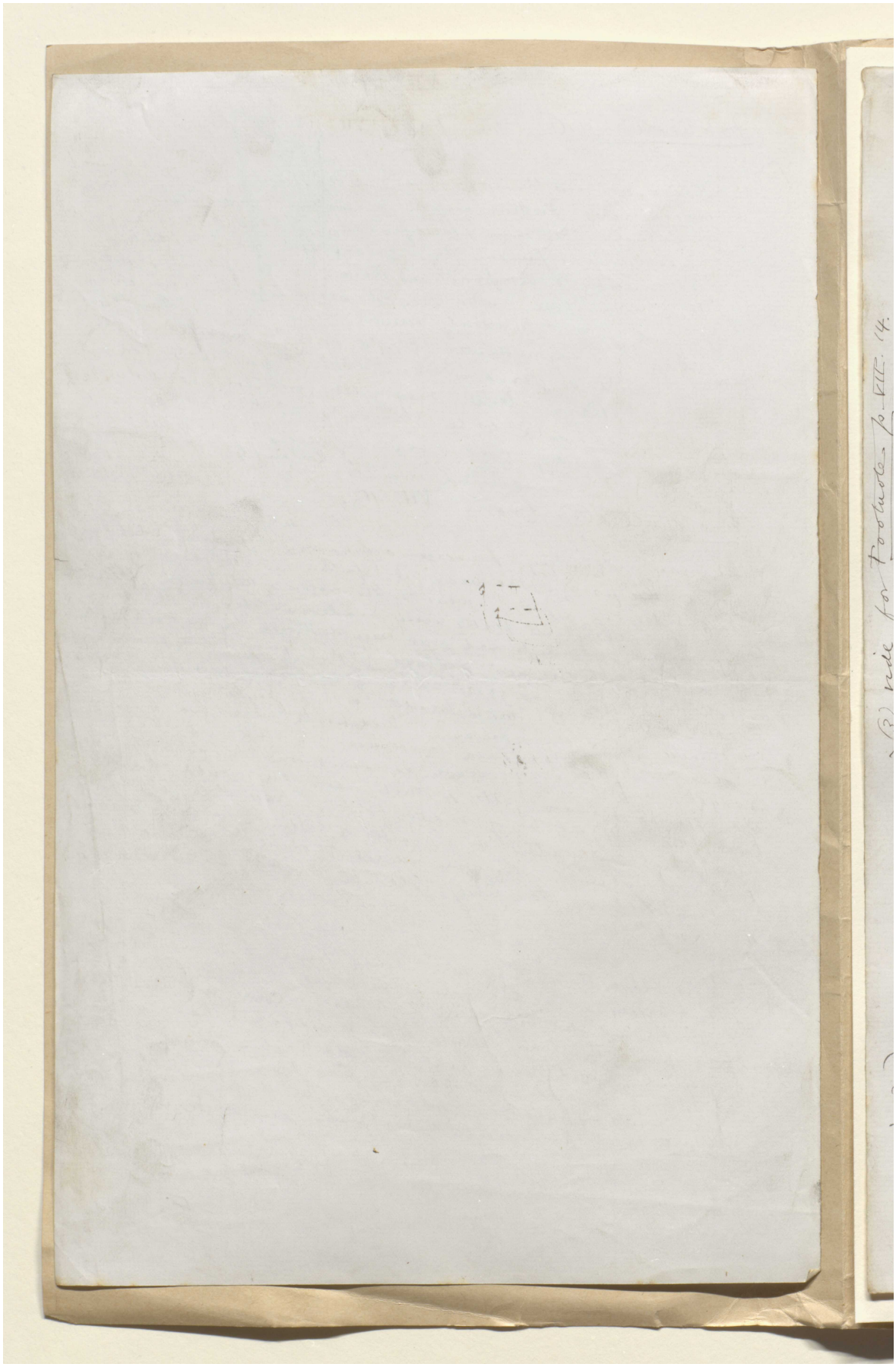
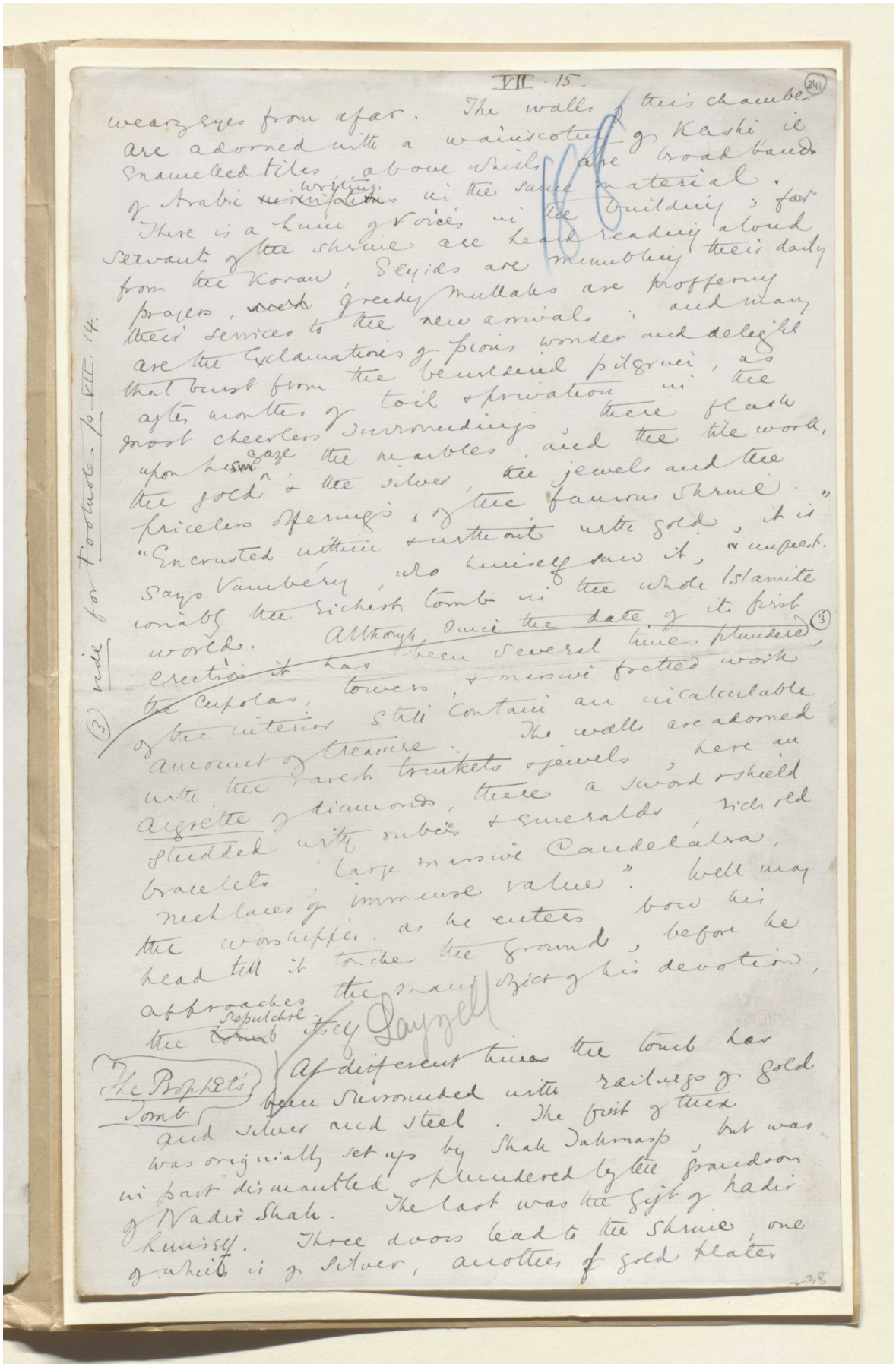


مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٢٤١و] (١٣٥٥/٤٨١)

VII. 15. (241)



wearz eyes from afar. The walls of this chamber are adorned with a wainscoting of Kashi ie enamelled tiles, above which are broad bands of Arabic writing in the same material. There is a hum of voices in the building; for servants of the shrine are heard reading aloud from the Koran, Seyids are mumbling their daily prayers, greedy mullahs are proffering their services to the new arrivals; and many are the exclamations of pious wonder and delight that burst from the bewildered pilgrim, as after months of toil & privation in the most cheerless surroundings, there flash upon his gaze the marbles, and the tile work, the gold & the silver, the jewels and the priceless offerings of the famous shrine. "Encrusted within & without with gold, it is" says Vambéry, who himself saw it, "unquestionably the richest tomb in the whole Islamite world. Although since the date of its first erection it has been several times plundered (3), the cupolas, towers & massive fretted work of the interior still contain an incalculable amount of treasure. The walls are adorned with the rarest trinkets & jewels, here an aigrette of diamonds, there a sword & shield studded with rubies & emeralds, rich old bracelets, large massive Candelabra, nechlaces of immense value". Well may the worshipper, as he enters, bow his head till it touches the ground, before he approaches the main object of his devotion, the sepulchre itself.

(3) vide for Footnote p. VII. 14.

The Prophet's Tomb

Layzell

At different times the tomb has been surrounded with railings of gold and silver and steel. The first of these was originally set up by Shah Tahmasp, but was in part dismantled & plundered by the grandson of Nadir Shah. The last was the gift of Nadir himself. Three doors lead to the shrine, one of which is of silver, another of gold plates

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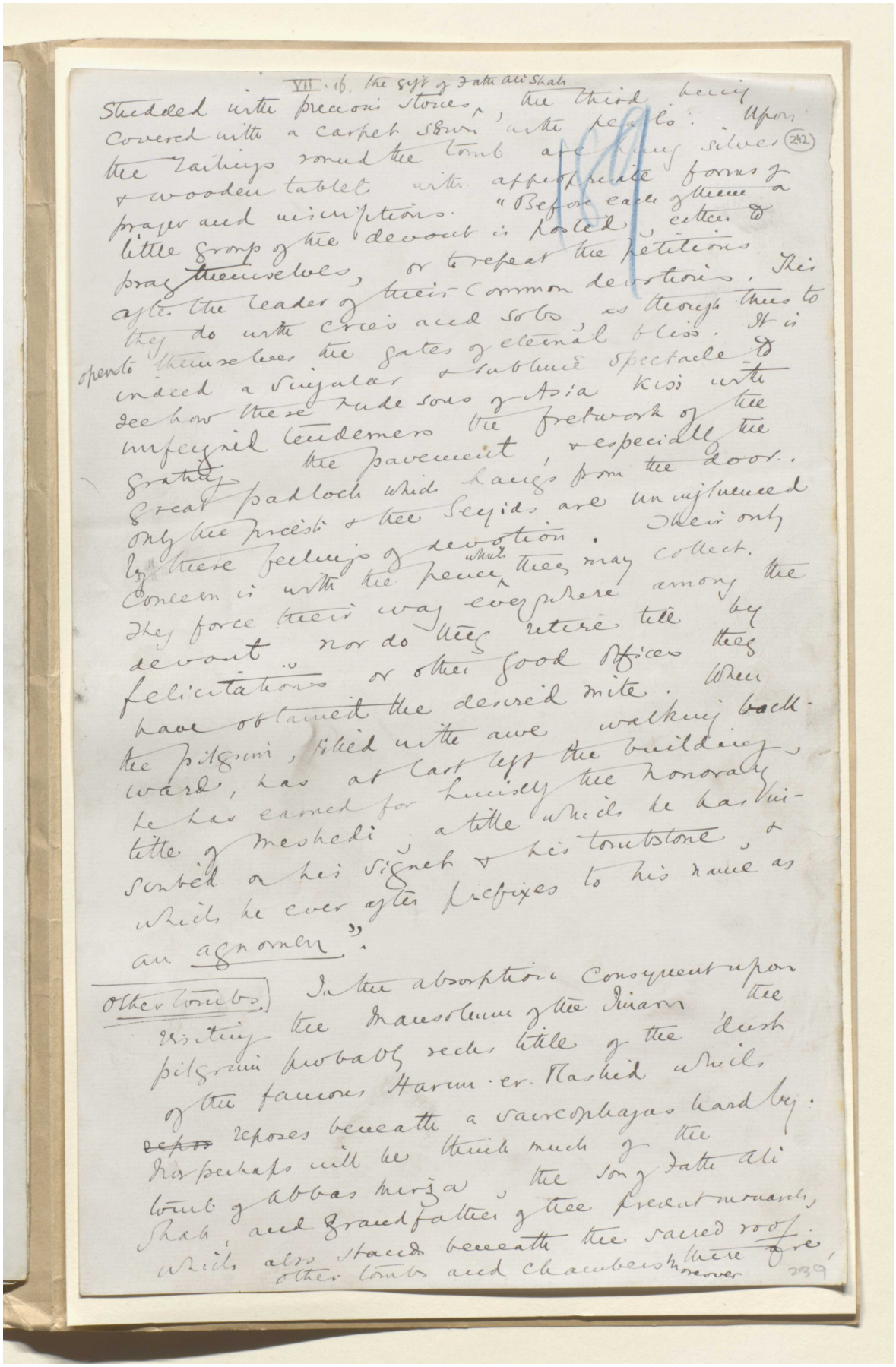
VII. 16. the gift of Fath Ali Shah



Studded with precious stones, the third being covered with a carpet sown with pearls. Upon the railings round the tomb are hung silver & wooden tablets with appropriate forms of prayer and inscriptions. "Before each of them a little group of the devout is posted, either to pray themselves, or to repeat the petitions after the leader of their common devotions. This they do with cries and sobs, as though thus to open to themselves the gates of eternal bliss. It is indeed a singular & sublime spectacle to see how these rude sons of Asia kiss with unfeigned tenderness the fretwork of the grating, the pavement, & especially the great padlock which hangs from the door. Only the priests & the Seyids are uninfluenced by these feelings of devotion. Their only concern is with the pence which they may collect. They force their way everywhere among the devout, nor do they retire till by felicitations or other good offices they have obtained the desired mite. When the pilgrim, filled with awe walking backward, has at last left the building, he has earned for himself the honorary title of Meshedi, a title which he has inscribed on his signet & his tombstone, & which he ever after prefixes to his name as an agnomen".

Other tombs. In the absorption consequent upon visiting the Mausoleum of the Imam the pilgrim probably recks little of the dust of the famous Harun-er-Rashid which ~~repos~~ reposes beneath a sarcophagus hard by. Nor perhaps will he think much of the tomb of Abbas Mirza, the son of Fath Ali Shah, and grandfather of the present monarch, which also stands beneath the sacred roof. Other tombs and chambers moreover there are,

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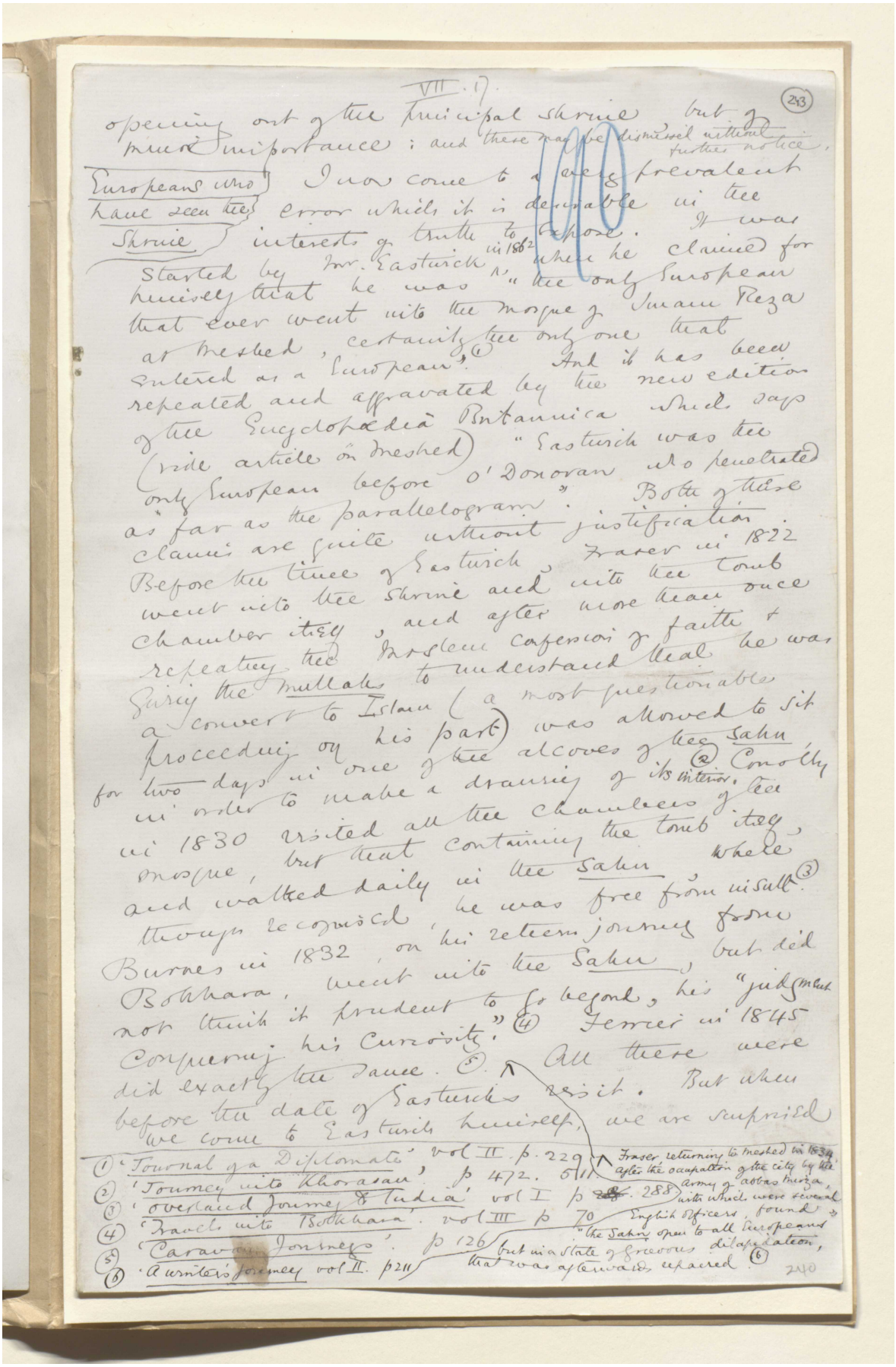

VII. 17.

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opening out of the principal shrine but of minor importance; and these may be dismissed without further notice.

Europeans who have seen the Shrine

I now come to a very prevalent error which it is desirable in the interests of truth to expose. It was started by Mr. Eastwick in 1862 when he claimed for himself that he was "the only European that ever went into the mosque of Imam Reza at Meshed, certainly the only one that entered as a European".(1) And it has been repeated and aggravated by the new edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica which says (vide article on Meshed) "Eastwick was the only European before O'Donovan who penetrated as far as the parallelogram". Both of these claims are quite without justification. Before the time of Eastwick, Fraser in 1822 went into the shrine and into the tomb chamber itself, and after more than once repeating the Moslem confession of faith & giving the mullahs to understand that he was a convert to Islam (a most questionable proceeding on his part) was allowed to sit for two days in one of the alcoves of the Sahn in order to make a drawing of its interior.(2) Conolly in 1830 visited all the chambers of the mosque, but that containing the tomb itself, and walked daily in the Sahn where though recognised, he was free from insult.(3) Burnes in 1832, on his return journey from Bokhara, went into the Sahn, but did not think it prudent to go beyond, his "judgment conquering his curiosity".(4) Ferrier in 1845 did exactly the same.(5) All these were before the date of Eastwick's visit. But when we come to Eastwick himself, we are surprised

(1) 'Journal of a Diplomate' vol II. p. 229.
(2) 'Journey into Khorasan' p 472. 511.
(3) 'Overland Journey to India' vol I p ~~288~~. 288.
(4) 'Travels into Bokhara'. vol III p 70
(5) 'Caravan Journeys'. p 126
(6) 'A winter's journey vol II. p211

Fraser, returning to Meshed in 1834 after the occupation of the city by the army of Abbas Mirza, with which were several English officers, found "the Sahn open to all Europeans but in a state of grievous dilapidation, that was afterwards repaired.(6)

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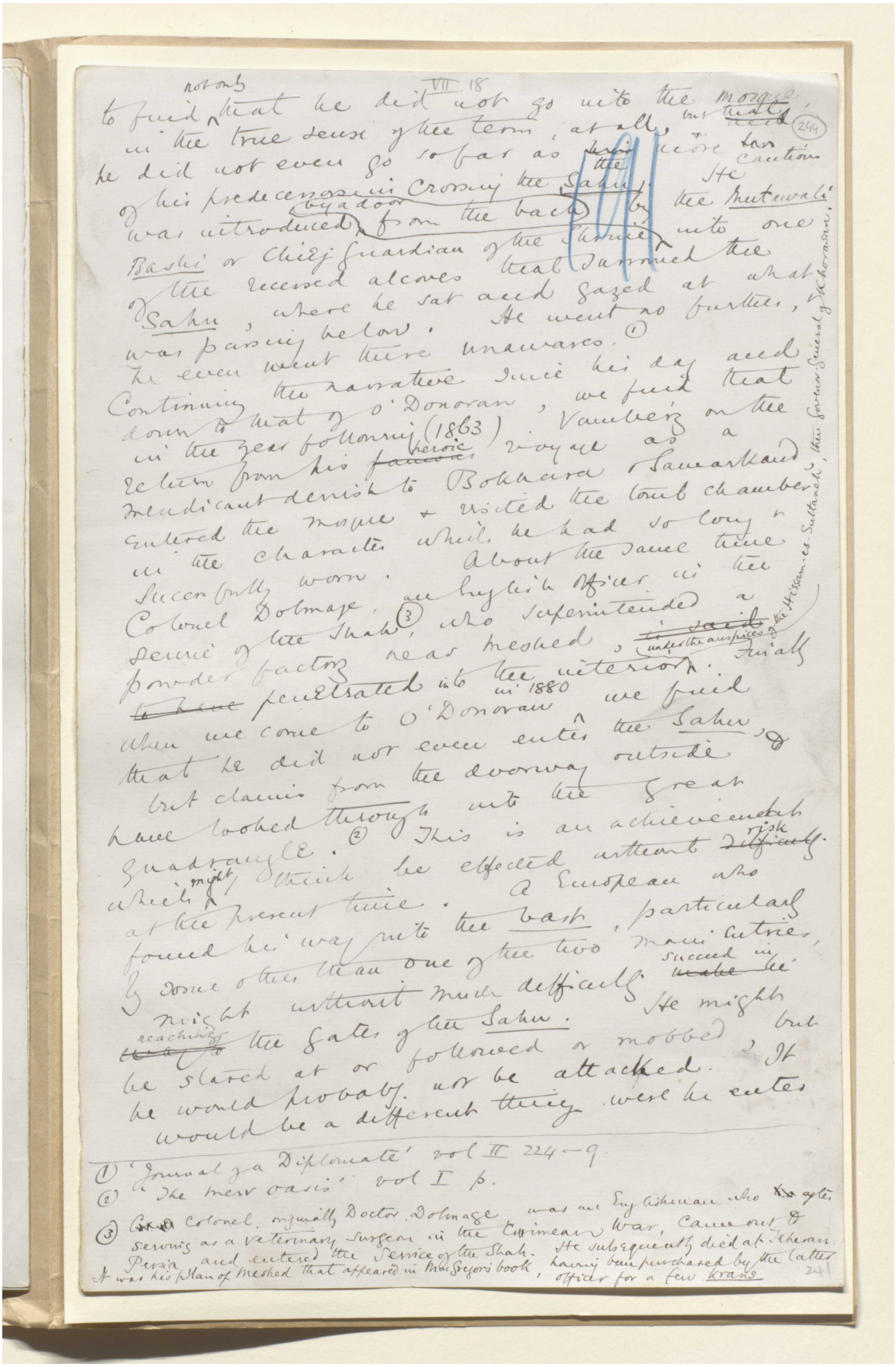

VII 18

to find not only that he did not go into the mosque, in the true sense of the term, at all, but that he did not even go so far as the more cautious of his predecessors in crossing the Sahn. He was introduced by a door from the back by the Mutawali Bashi or Chief Guardian of the Shrine into one of the recessed alcoves that surrounded the Sahn, where he sat and gazed at what was passing below. He went no further, he even went there unawares.(1)

Continuing the narrative since his day and down to that of O'Donovan, we find that in the year following (1863) Vambéry on the return from his heroic voyage as a mendicant dervish to Bokhara & Samarkand, entered the mosque & visited the tomb chamber in the character which he had so long & successfully worn. About the same time Colonel Dolmage, an English officer in the service of the Shah,(3) who superintended a powder factory near Meshed, under the auspices of the Hissam-es-Sultaneh, then Governor-General of Khorasan, penetrated into the interior. Finally when we come to O'Donovan in 1880 we find that he did not even enter the Sahn, but claims from the doorway outside have looked through into the great quadrangle.(2) This is an achievement which might think be effected without risk at the present time. A European who found his way into the bast, particularly by some other than one of the two main entries, might without much difficulty succeed in reaching the gates of the Sahn. He might be stared at or followed or mobbed, but he would probably not be attacked. It would be a different thing were he enter

(1) 'Journal of a Diplomate' vol II 224–9.
(2) 'The New Oasis' vol I p.
(3) Colonel, originally Doctor Dolmage, was an Englishman who after serving as a veterinary surgeon in the Crimean War, came out to Persia and entered the service of the Shah. He subsequently died at Teheran. It was his plan of Meshed that appeared in MacGregor's book, having been purchased by the latter officer for a few krans

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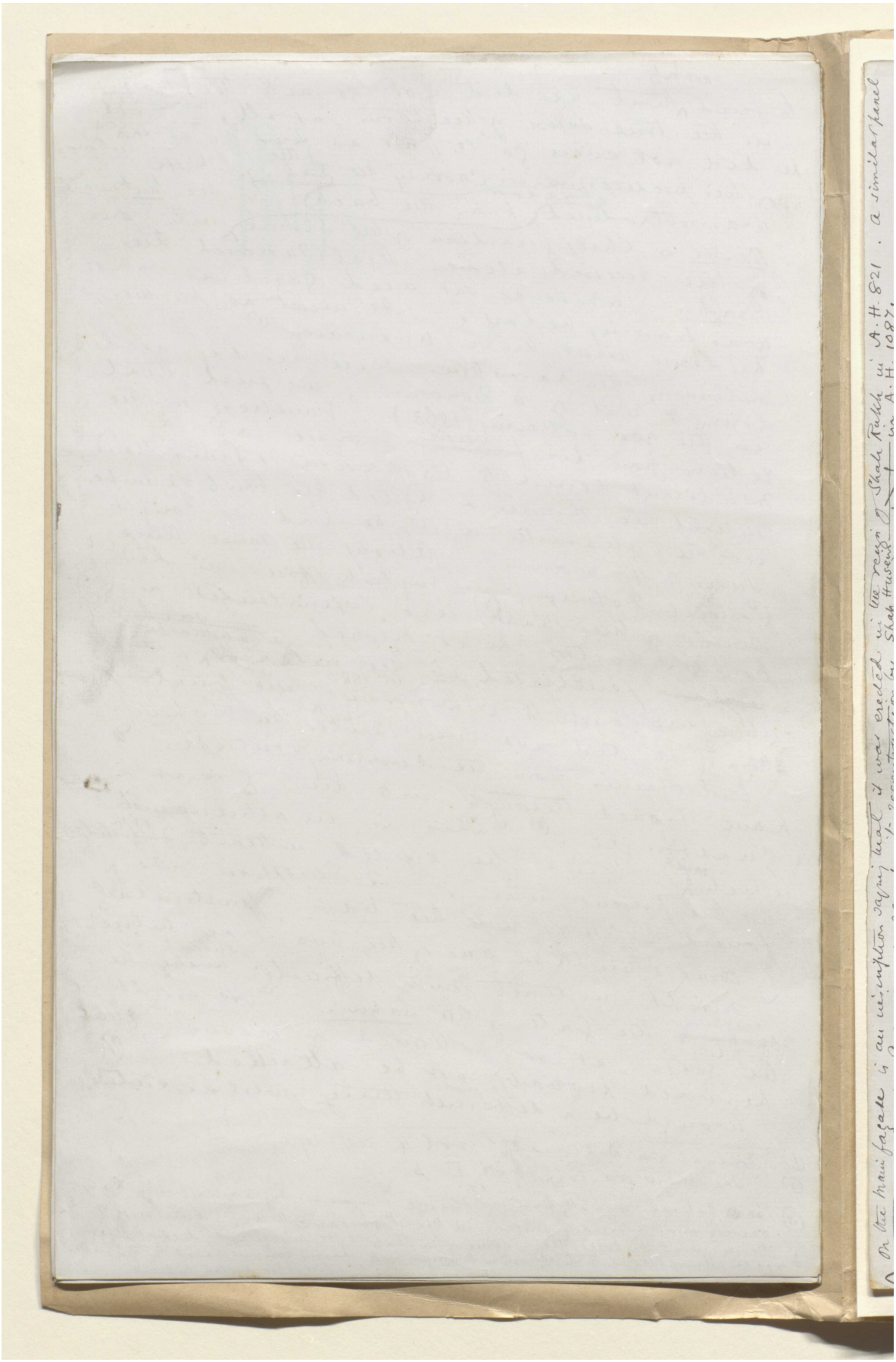
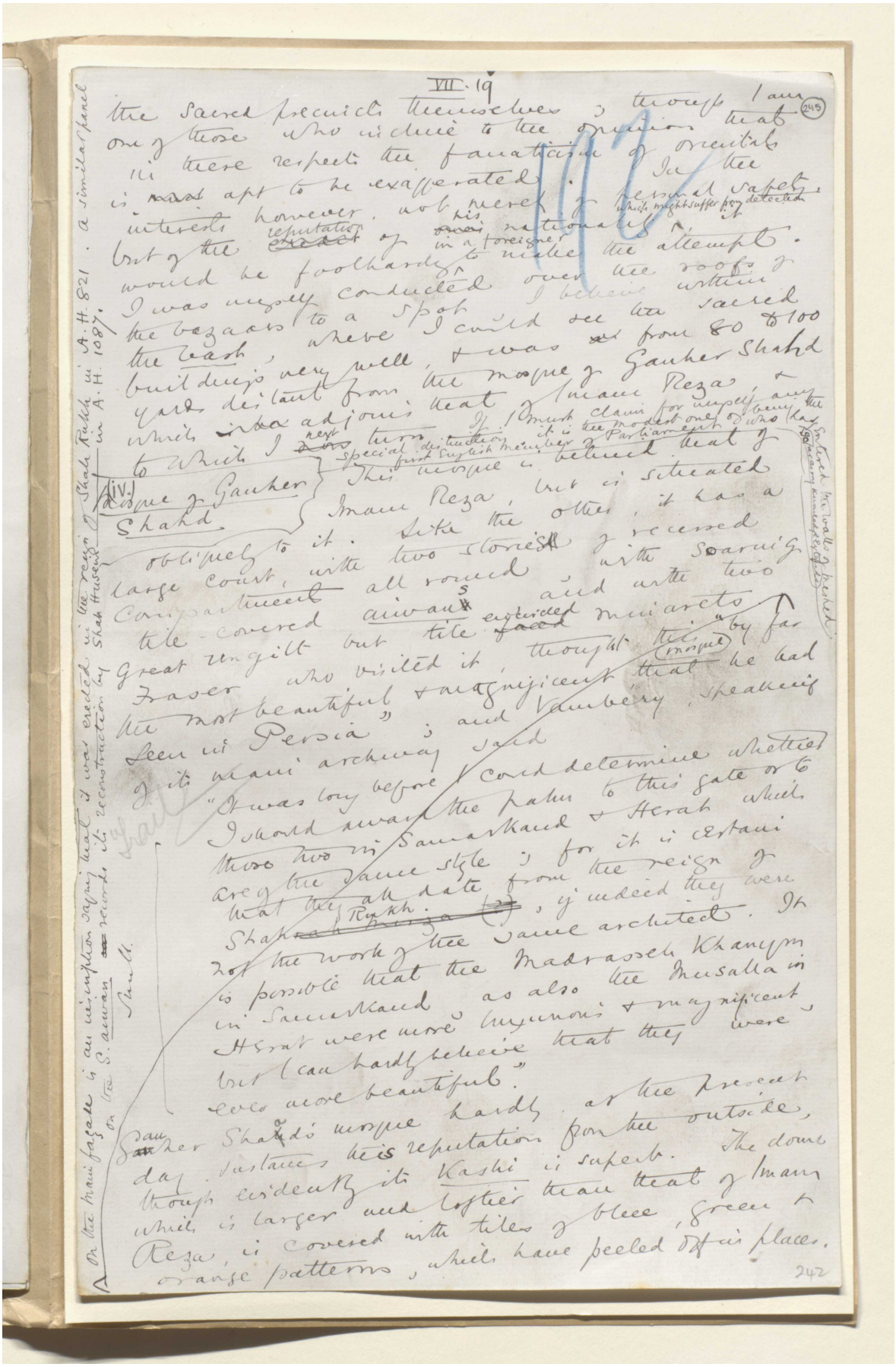
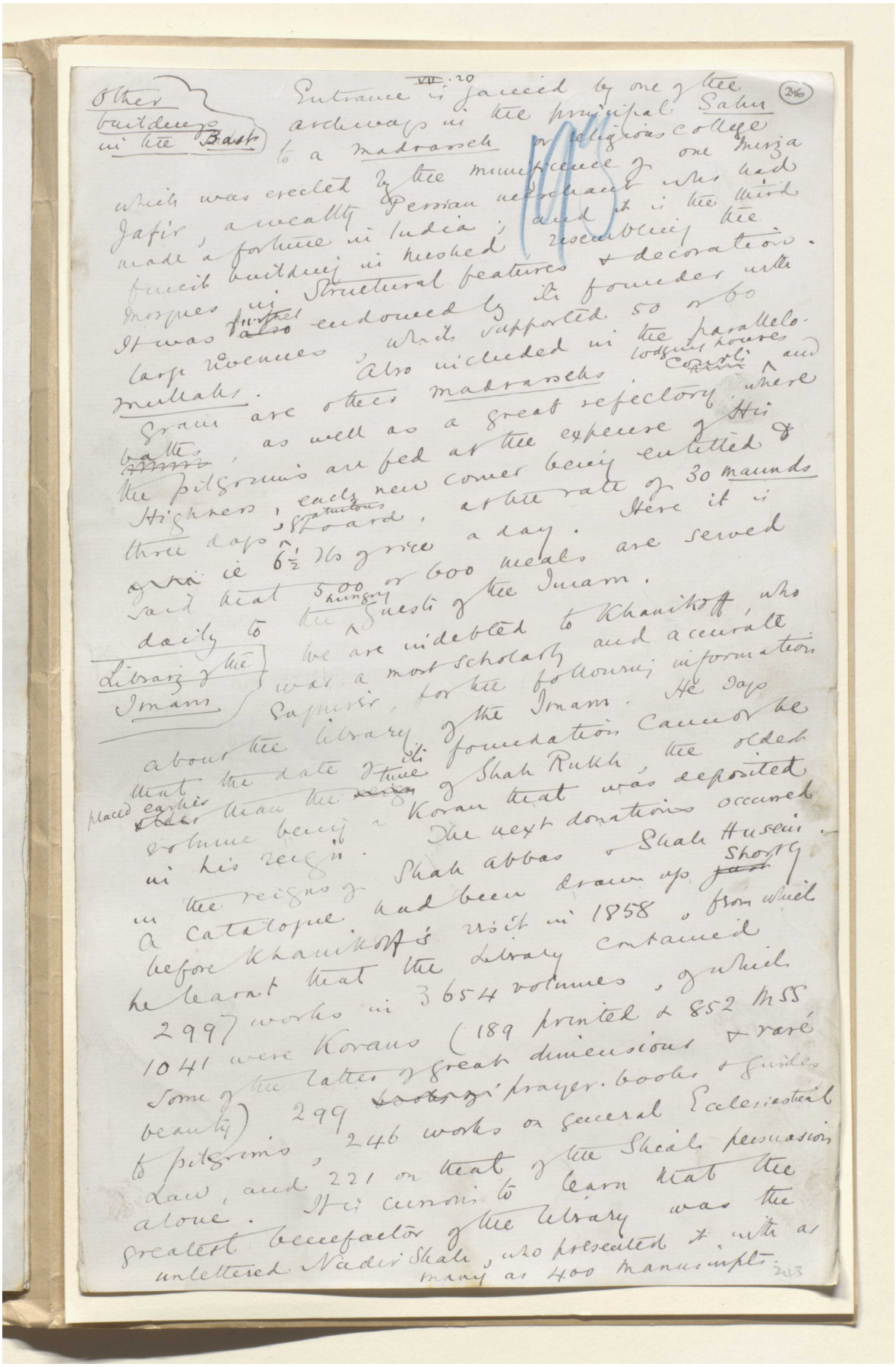


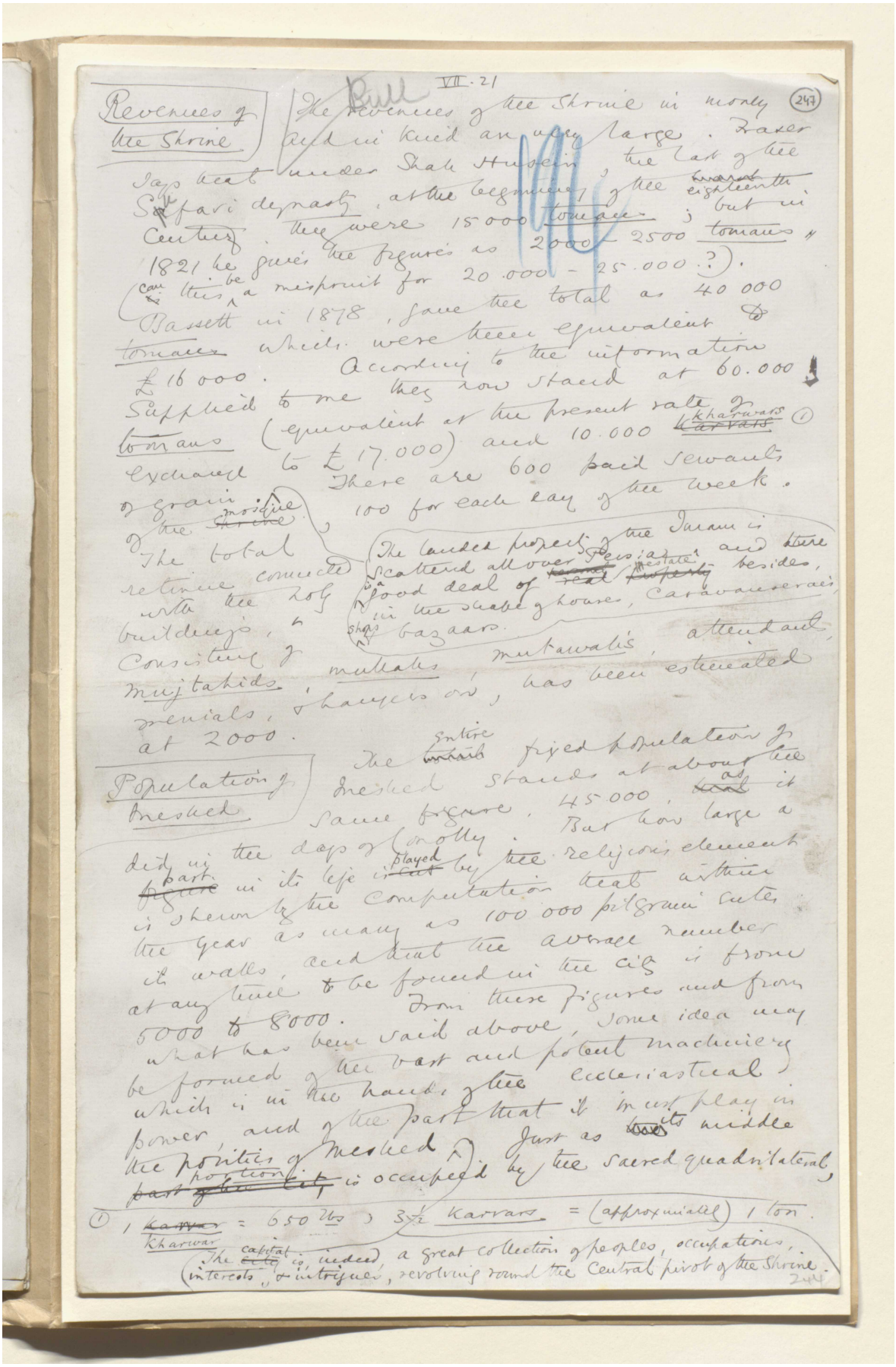








مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٢٤٧و] (١٣٥٥/٤٩٣)



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Revenues of the Shrine

The revenues of the Shrine in money and in kind are very large. Fraser says that under Shah Husein, the last of the Safari dynasty, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, they were 15000 tomans; but in 1821 he gives the figures as 2000 - 2500 tomans (can this be a misprint for 20.000 - 25.000?). Bassett in 1878, gave the total as 40 000 tomans which were then equivalent to £16 000. According to the information supplied to me they now stand at 60.000 tomans (equivalent at the present rate of exchange to £17.000) and 10.000 kharwars (1) of grain. There are 600 paid servants of the mosque, 100 for each day of the week. The total retinue connected with the holy buildings, consisting of mujtahids, mullahs, mutawalis, attendants, menials, & hangers on, has been estimated at 2000.

The landed property of the Imam is scattered all over Persia, and there is a good deal of real estate besides, in the shape of houses, caravanserais, shops & bazaars.

Population of Meshed

The entire fixed population of Meshed stands at about the same figure, 45.000, as it did in the days of Conolly. But how large a part in its life is played by the religious element is shewn by the computation that within the year as many as 100 000 pilgrims enter its walls, and that the average number at any time to be found in the city is from 5000 to 8000. From these figures and from what has been said above, some idea may be formed of the vast and potent machinery which is in the hands of the ecclesiastical power, and of the part that it must play in the politics of Meshed. Just as its middle portion is occupied by the sacred quadrilateral,

(1) 1 Kharwar = 650 lbs; 3½ Karvars = (approximately) 1 ton.

The capital is, indeed, a great collection of peoples, occupations, interests, & intrigues, revolving round the central pivot of the Shrine.

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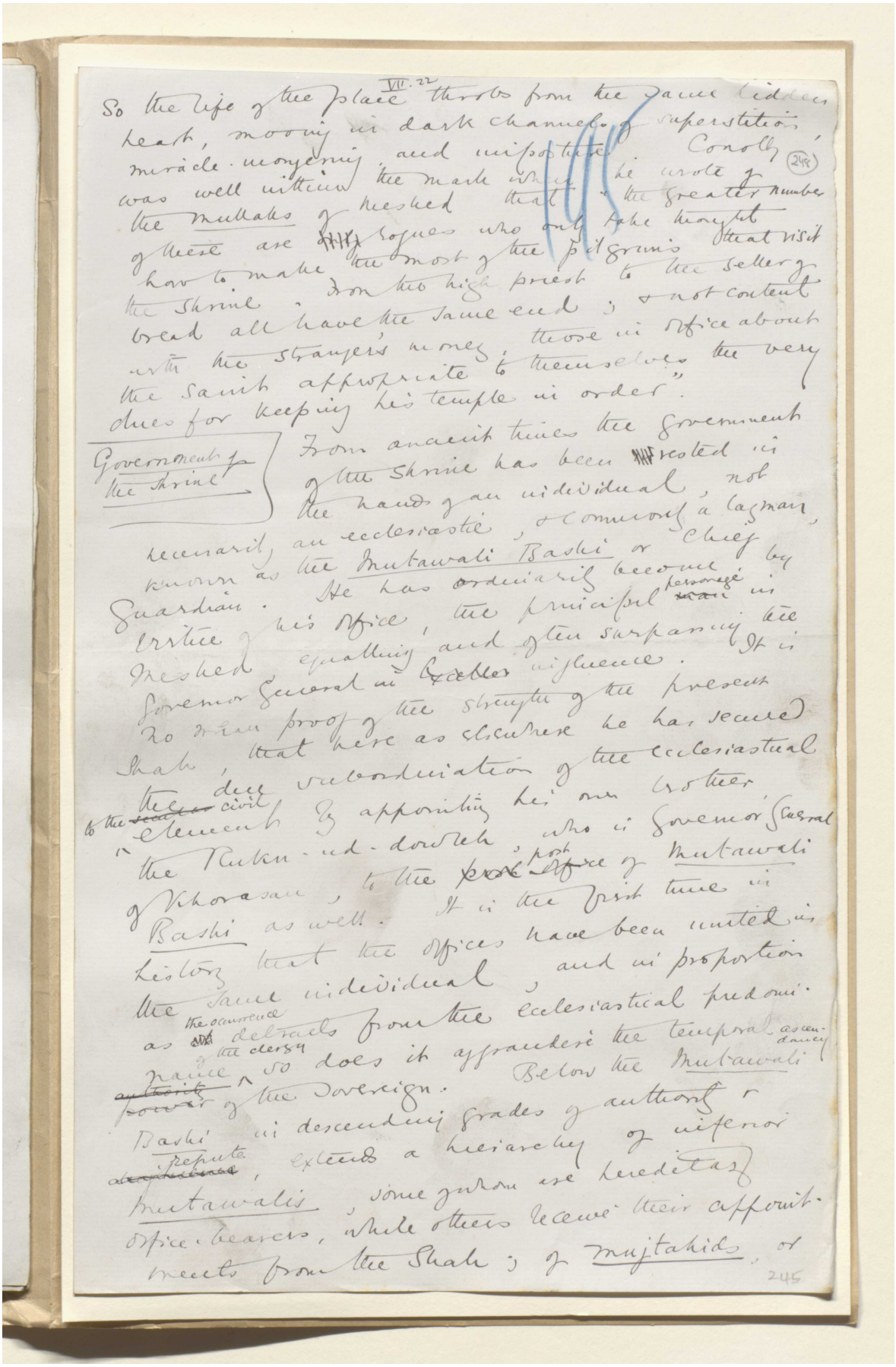
مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٢٤٨و] (١٣٥٥/٤٩٥)

VII. 22



So the life of the place throbs from the same hidden heart, mooring in dark channels of superstition, miracle-mongering, and imposture. Conolly was well within the mark when he wrote of the mullahs of Meshed that "the greater number of these are rogues who only take thought how to make the most of the pilgrims that visit the Shrine. From the high priest to the seller of bread all have the same end; & not content with the stranger's money, those in office about the saint appropriate to themselves the very dues for keeping his temple in order".

Government of the Shrine

From ancient times the government of the Shrine has been rested in the hands of an individual, not necessarily an ecclesiastic, & commonly a layman, known as the Mutawali Bashi or Chief Guardian. He has ordinarily become by virtue of his office, the principal personage in Meshed, equalling and often surpassing the Governor General in ~~Excellence~~ influence. It is no mean proof of the strength of the present Shah, that here as elsewhere he has secured the due subordination of the ecclesiastical to the civil element by appointing his own brother, the Rukn-ud-dowleh, who is Governor General of Khorasan, to the post of Mutawali Bashi as well. It is the first time in history that the offices have been united in the same individual, and in proportion as the occurrence of the clergy detracts from the ecclesiastical predominance, so does it aggrandise the temporal ascendancy of the sovereign. Below the Mutawali Bashi in descending grades of authority & repute, extends a hierarchy of inferior Mutawalis, some of whom are hereditary office-bearers, while others receive their appointments from the Shah; of Mujtahids, or

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المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة
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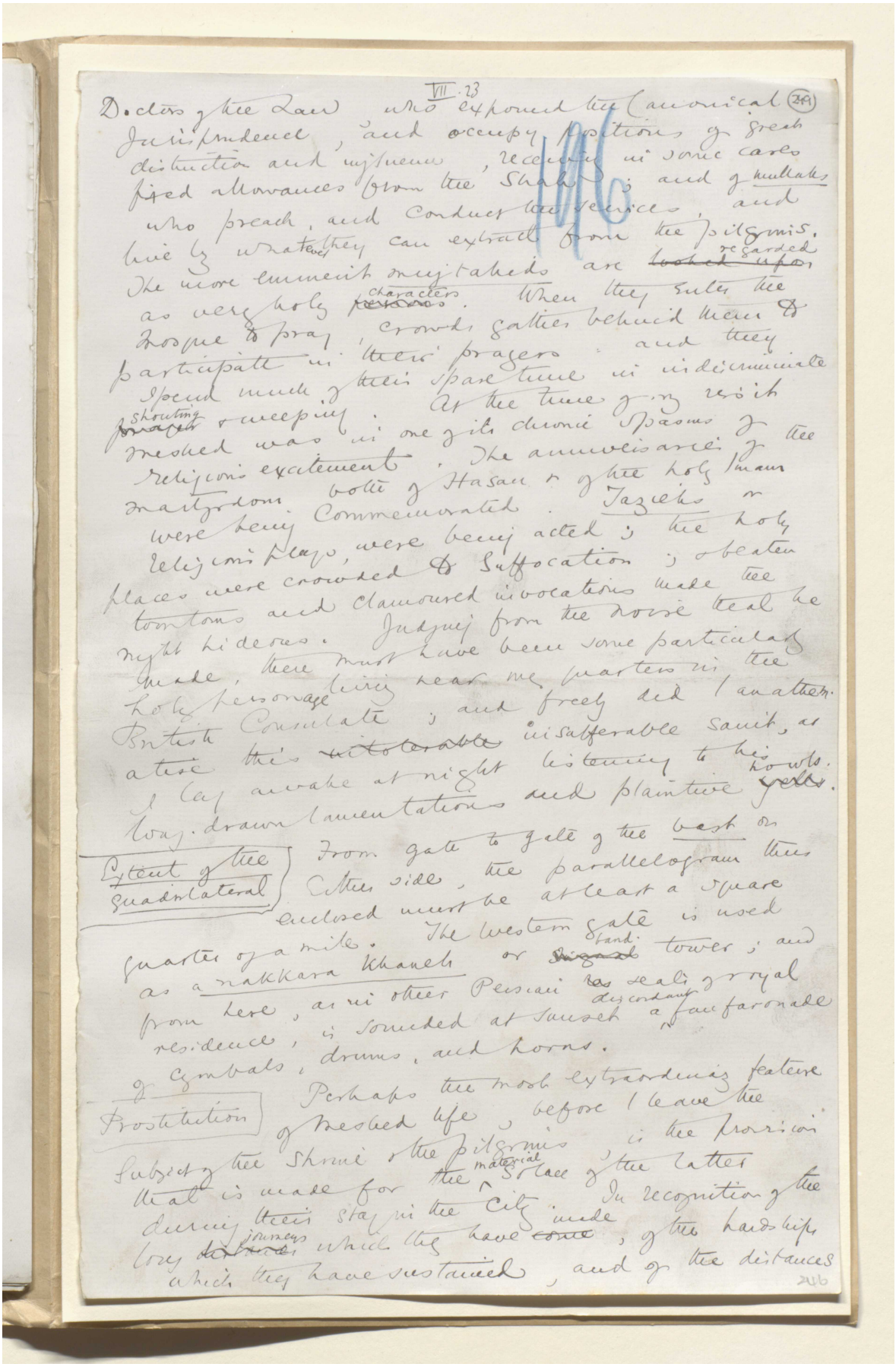

VII. 23

(249)

Doctors of the Law who expound the Canonical Jurisprudence, and occupy positions of great distinction and influence, receiving in some cases fixed allowances from the Shah; and of mullahs who preach, and conduct the services, and live by whatever they can extract from the pilgrims. The more eminent mujtahids are ~~looked upon~~ regarded as very holy ~~persons~~ characters. When they enter the Mosque to pray, crowds gather behind them to participate in their prayers; and they spend much of their spare time in indiscriminate ~~prayer~~ shouting & weeping. At the time of my visit Meshed was in one of its chronic spasms of religious excitement. The anniversaries of the martyrdom both of Hasan & of the holy Imam were being commemorated. Taziehs or religious plays, were being acted; the holy places were crowded to suffocation; & beaten tomtoms and clamoured invocations made the night hideous. Judging from the noise that he made, there must have been some particularly holy personage living near my quarters in the British Consulate; and freely did I anathematise this ~~intolerable~~ insufferable saint, as I lay awake at night listening to his long-drawn lamentations and plaintive ~~yells~~ howls.

Extent of the quadrilateral

From gate to gate of the bast on either side, the parallelogram thus enclosed must be at least a square quarter of a mile. The western gate is used as a nakkara khaneh or ~~signal~~ band tower; and from here, as in other Persian ~~as~~ seats of royal residence, is sounded at sunset a discordant fanfaronade of cymbals, drums, and horns.

Prostitution

Perhaps the most extraordinary feature of Meshed life, before I leave the subject of the shrine & the pilgrims, is the provision that is made for the material solace of the latter during their stay in the city. In recognition of the long ~~distances~~ journeys which they have ~~come~~ made, of the hardships which they have sustained, and of the distances

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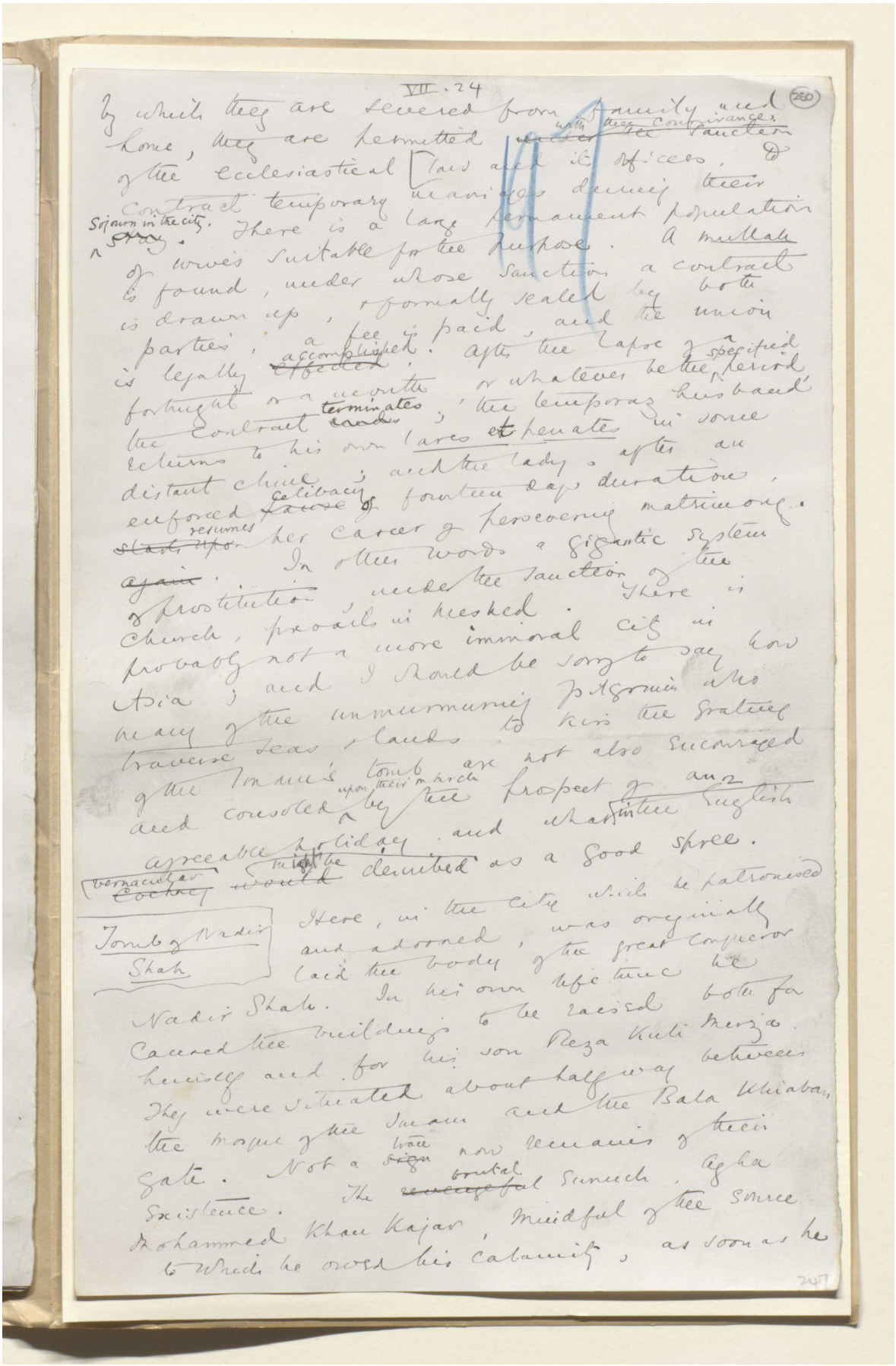



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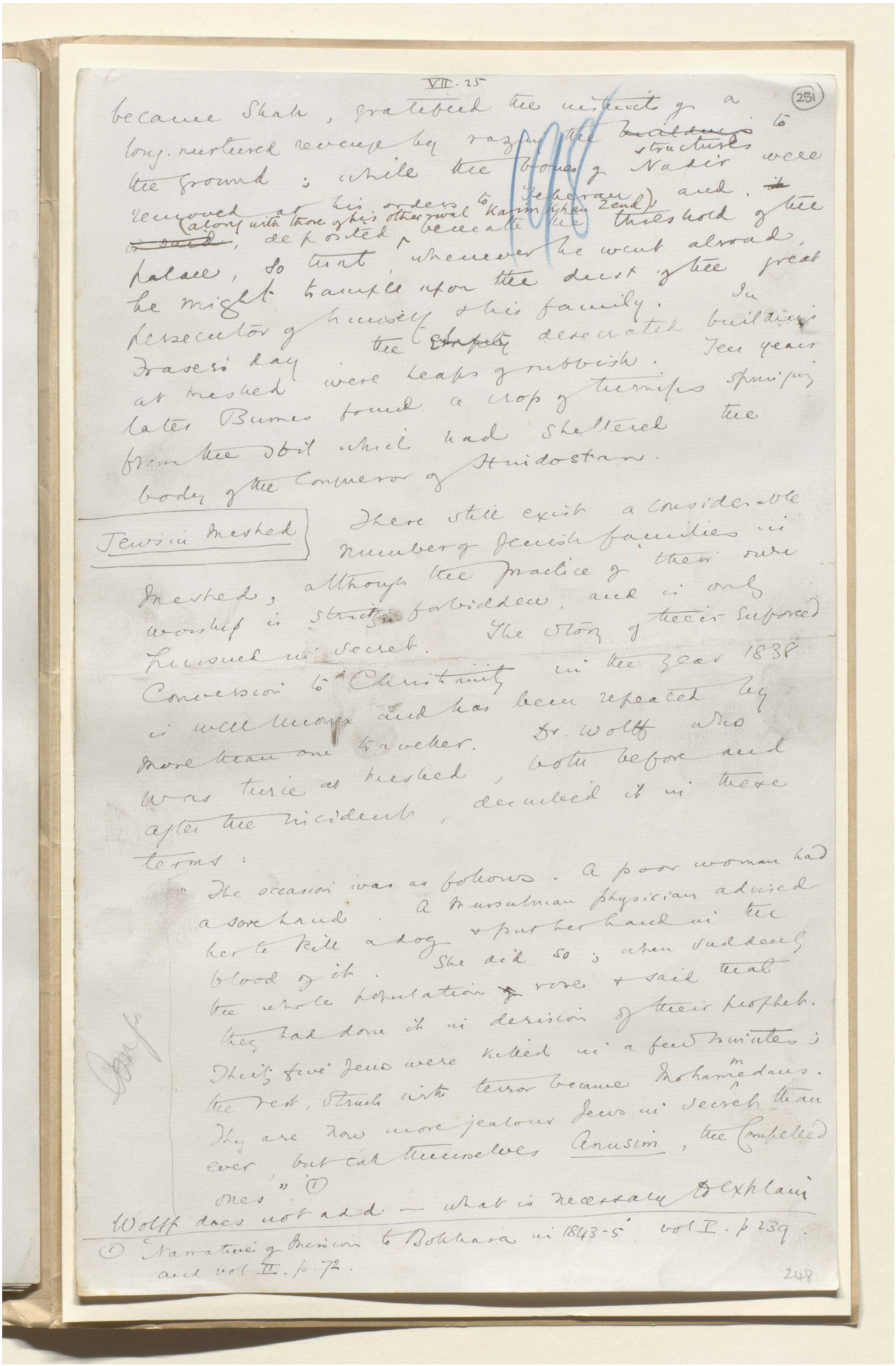

VII. 25

(251)

became Shah, gratified the instinct of a long-nurtured revenge by razing the ~~buildings~~ structures to the ground; while the bones of Nadir were removed at his orders to Teheran (along with those of his other rival Karim Khan Zend), and ~~it~~ ~~is said~~, deposited beneath the threshold of the palace, so that, whenever he went abroad, he might trample upon the dust of the great persecutor of himself & his family. In Fraser's day the ~~[illegible]~~ desecrated buildings at Meshed were heaps of rubbish. Ten years later Burnes found a crop of turnips springing from the soil which had sheltered the body of the Conqueror of Hindostan.

Jews in Meshed

There still exist a considerable number of Jewish families in Meshed, although the practice of their own worship is strictly forbidden, and is only pursued in secret. The story of their enforced Conversion to Christianity in the year 1838 is well known and has been repeated by more than one traveller. Dr. Wolff who was twice at Meshed, both before and after the incident, described it in these terms:

"The occasion was as follows. A poor woman had a sore hand. A Mussulman physician advised her to kill a dog & put her hand in the blood of it. She did so; when suddenly the whole population rose & said that they had done it in derision of their prophet. Thirty five Jews were killed in a few minutes; the rest, struck with terror became Mohammedans. They are now more jealous Jews in secret than ever, but call themselves Anusim, the Compelled ones." (1)

Wolff does not add — what is necessary to explain

(1) Narrative of Mission to Bokhara in 1843-5. vol I. p 239. and vol II. p. 72.

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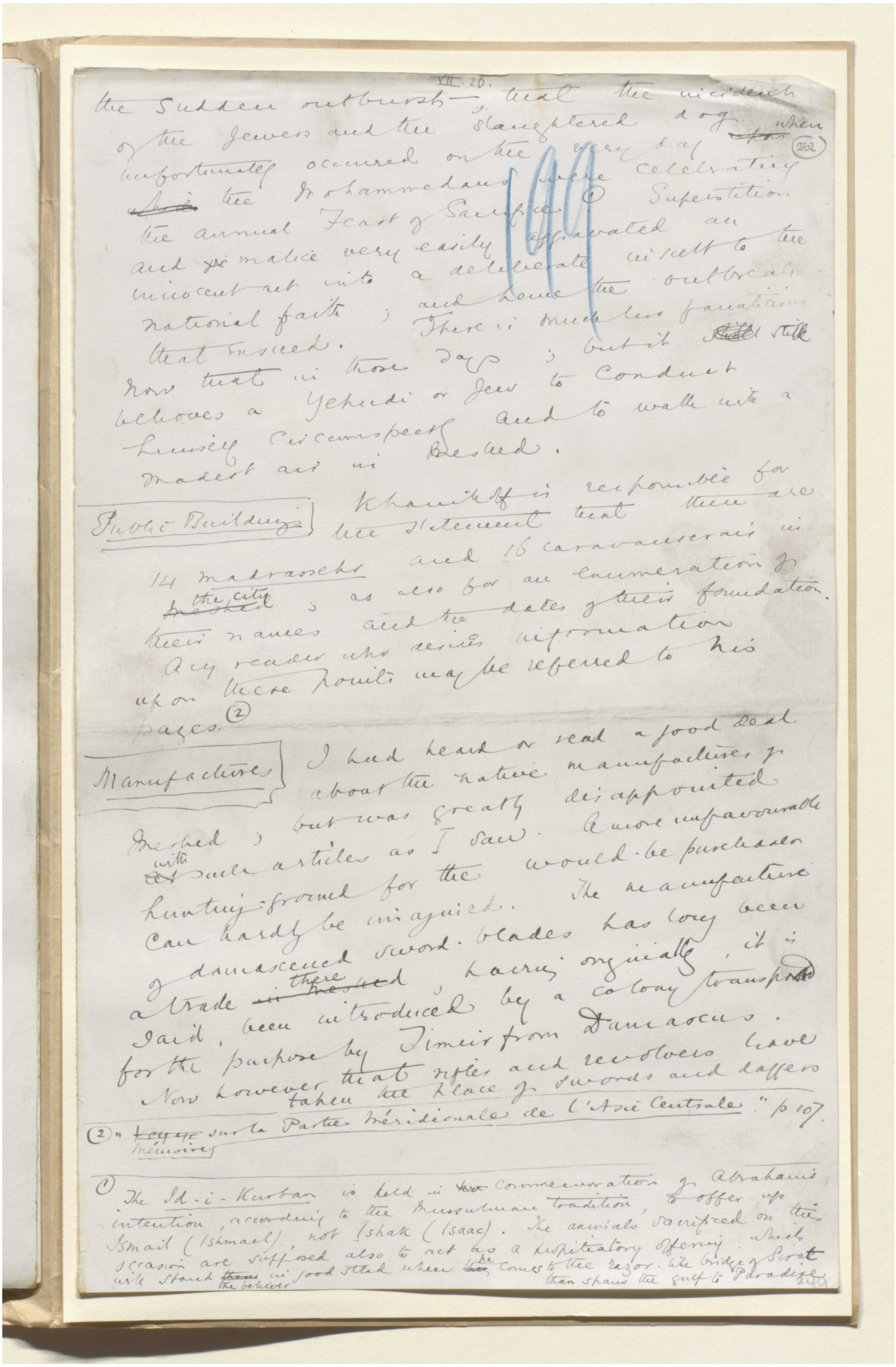
مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٢٥٢و] (١٣٥٥/٥٠٣)



the sudden outburst, that the incident of the Jewess and the slaughtered dog ~~upon~~ when unfortunately occurred on the very day ~~while~~ the Mohammedans were celebrating the annual Feast of Sacrifice (1). Superstition and ~~xx~~ malice very easily aggravated an innocent act into a deliberate insult to the national faith; and hence the outbreak that ensued. There is much less fanaticism now that in those days; but it ~~still~~ still behoves a Yehudi or Jew to conduct himself circumspectly and to walk with a modest air in Meshed.

Public Buildings Khanikoff is responsible for the statement that there are 14 madrassehs and 16 caravanserais in ~~Meshed~~ the city; as also for an enumeration of their names and the dates of their foundation. Any reader who desires information upon these points may be referred to his pages. (2)

Manufactures I had heard or read a good deal about the native manufactures of Meshed; but was greatly disappointed ~~at~~ with such articles as I saw. A more unfavourable hunting-ground for the would-be purchaser can hardly be imagined. The manufacture of damascened sword-blades has long been a trade ~~in Meshed~~ there, having originally, it is said, been introduced by a colony transported for the purpose by Timur from Damascus. Now however that rifles and revolvers have taken the place of swords and daffers

(2) "~~Voyage~~ Mémoires sur la Partie Méridionale de l'Asie Centrale." p 107.

(1) The Id-i-Kurban is held in ~~the~~ commemoration of Abraham's intention, according to the Mussulman tradition, to offer up Ismail (Ishmael), not Ishak (Isaac). The animals sacrificed on this occasion are supposed also to act as a propitiatory offering, which will stand ~~them~~ the believer in good stead when ~~the~~ he comes to the razor-like bridge of Sirat than spans the gulf to Paradise.

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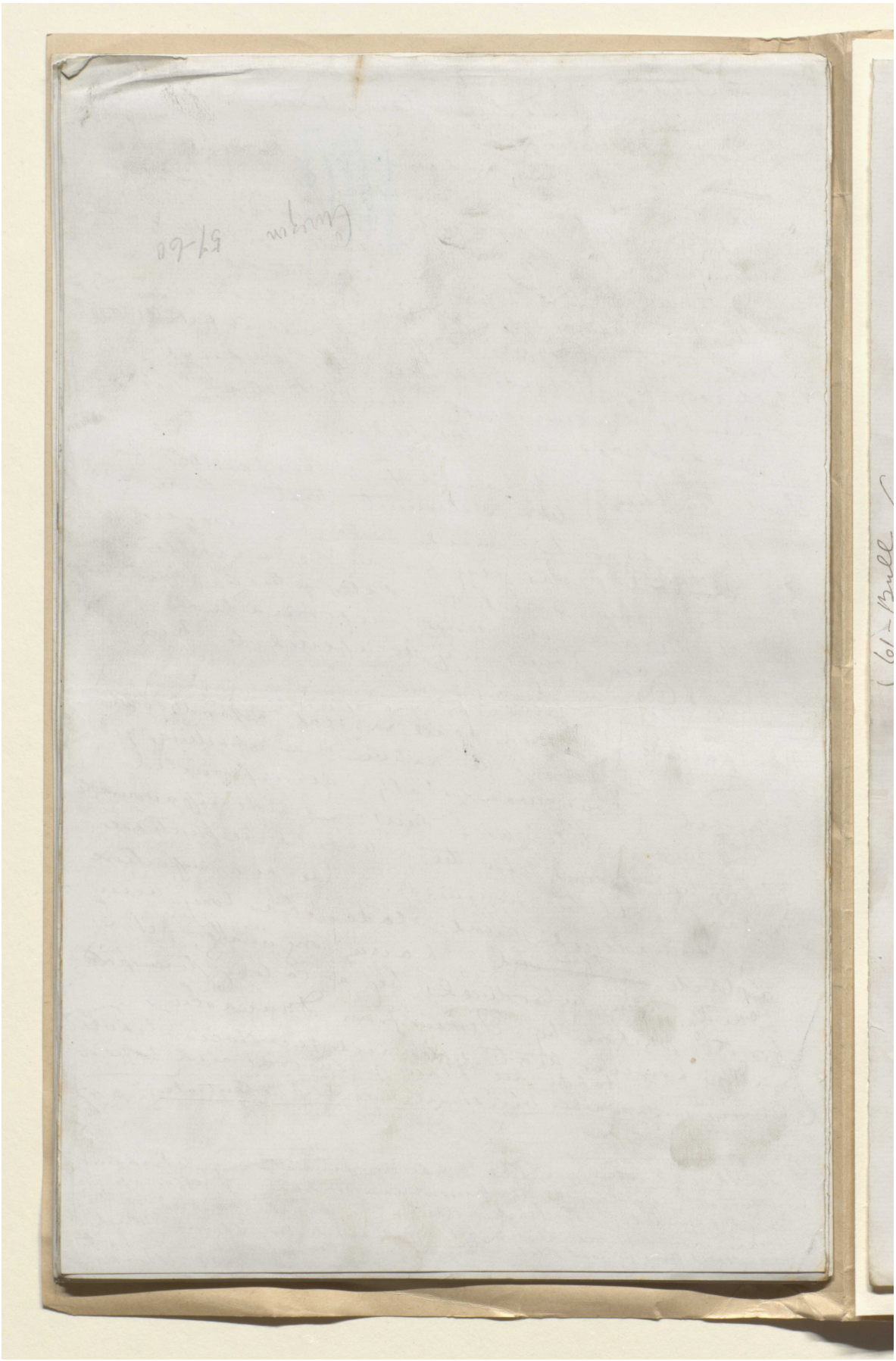
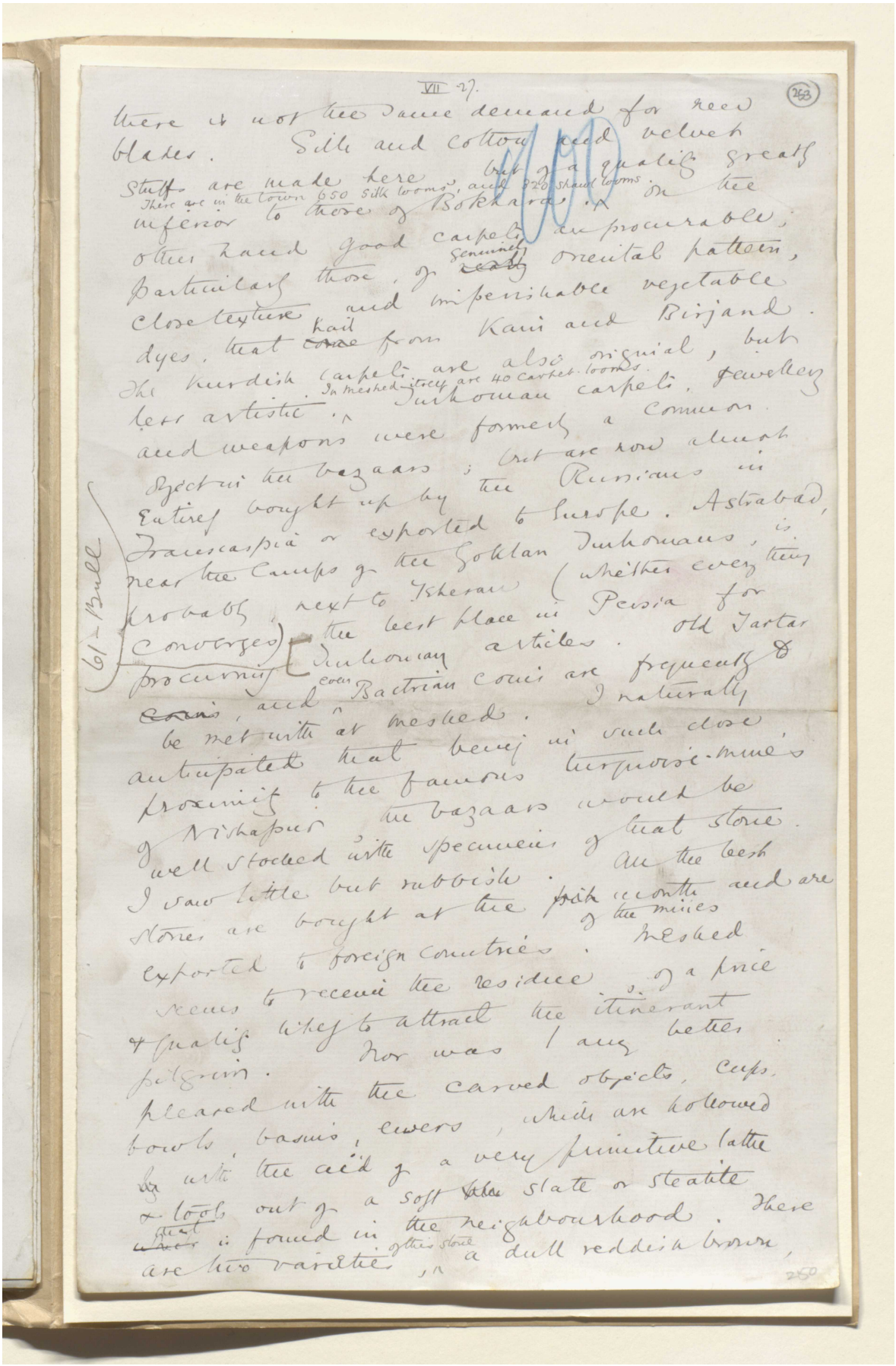


VII 27.

(253)



there is not the same demand for new blades. Silk and cotton and velvet stuffs are made here, but of a quality greatly inferior to those of Bokhara. There are in the town 650 silk looms, and 320 shawl looms. On the other hand good carpets are procurable; particularly those of genuinely oriental pattern, close texture and imperishable vegetable dyes, that hail from Kain and Birjand. The Kurdish carpets are also original, but less artistic. In meshed itself are 40 carpet-looms. Turkoman carpets, jewellery and weapons were formerly a common object in the bazaars; but are now almost entirely bought up by the Russians in Transcaspia or exported to Europe. Astrabad, near the camps of the Goklan Turkomans, is probably next to Teheran (whether every thing converges) the best place in Persia for procuring Turkoman articles. Old Tartar coins, and even Bactrian coins are frequently to be met with at meshed. I naturally anticipated that being in such close proximity to the famous turquoise-mines of Nishapur the bazaars would be well stocked with specimens of that stone. I saw little but rubbish. All the best stones are bought at the pit month and are exported to foreign countries. Meshed seems to receive the residue of a price & quality likely to attract the itinerant pilgrim. Nor was I any better pleased with the carved objects, cups, bowls, basins, ewers, which are hollowed by with the aid of a very primitive lathe & tools out of a soft slate or steatite that is found in the neighbourhood. There are two varieties of this stone, a dull reddish brown,

61 - Bull

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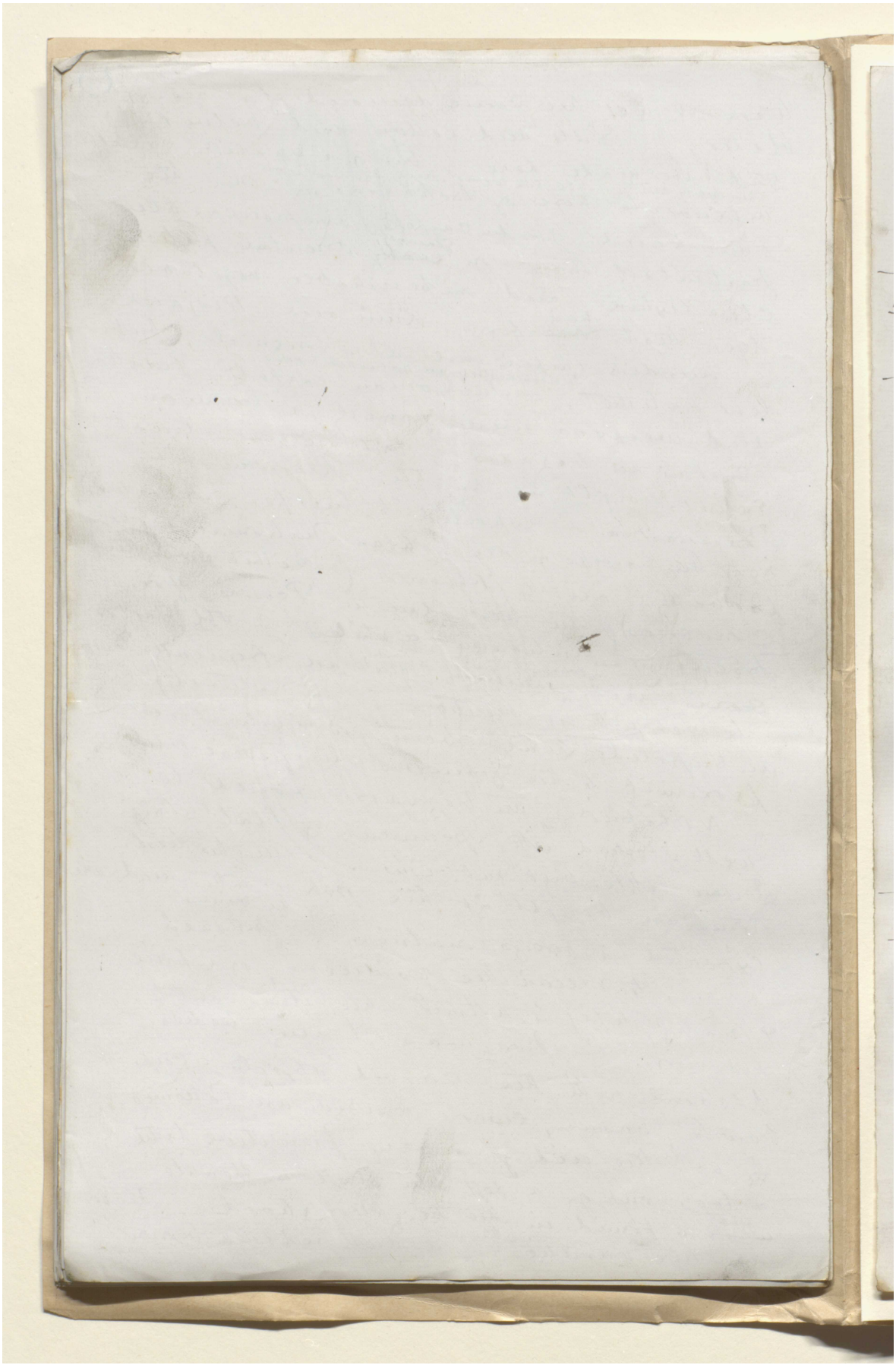

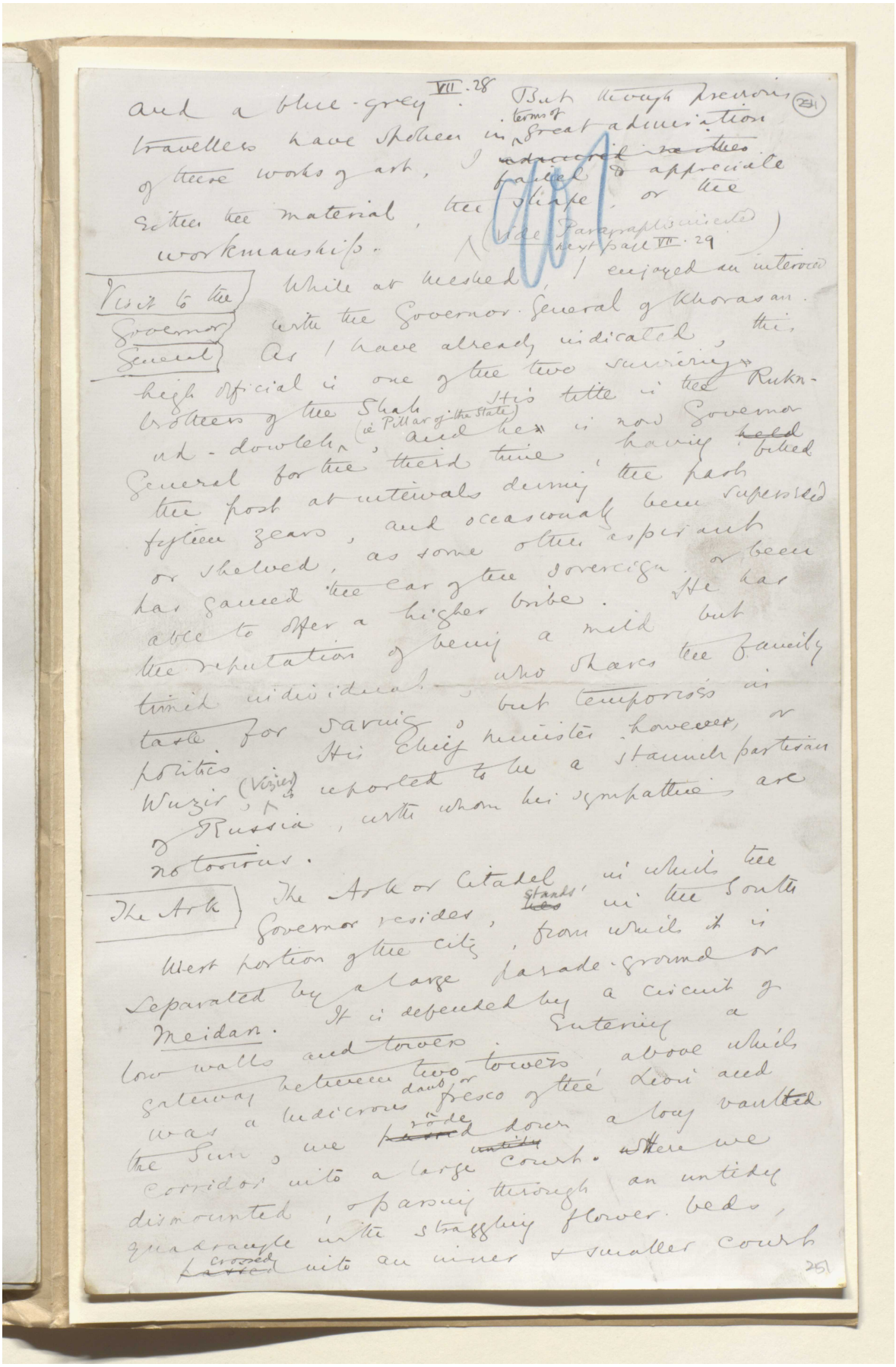

and a blue-grey. VII. 28 But though previous travellers have spoken in terms of great admiration of these works of art, I failed to appreciate either the material, the shape, or the workmanship. (vide Paragraph inserted next page VII. 29)

Visit to the Governor General

While at Meshed, I enjoyed an interview with the Governor-General of Khorasan. As I have already indicated, this high official is one of the two surviving brothers of the Shah. His title is the Rukn-ud-dowleh (i.e. Pillar of the State), and he is now Governor General for the third time, having filled the post at intervals during the past fifteen years, and occasionally been superseded or shelved, as some other aspirant has gained the ear of the sovereign, or been able to offer a higher bribe. He has the reputation of being a mild but timid individual, who shares the family taste for saving, but temporises in politics. His chief minister, however, or Wuzir (Vizier), is reported to be a staunch partisan of Russia, with whom his sympathies are notorious.

The Ark

The Ark or Citadel, in which the Governor resides, stands in the South West portion of the city, from which it is separated by a large parade-ground or Meidan. It is defended by a circuit of low walls and towers. Entering a gateway between two towers, above which was a ludicrous daub or fresco of the Lion and the Sun, we rode down a long vaulted corridor into a large court. Where we dismounted, & passing through an untidy quadrangle with straggling flower beds, crossed into an inner & smaller court

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المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة
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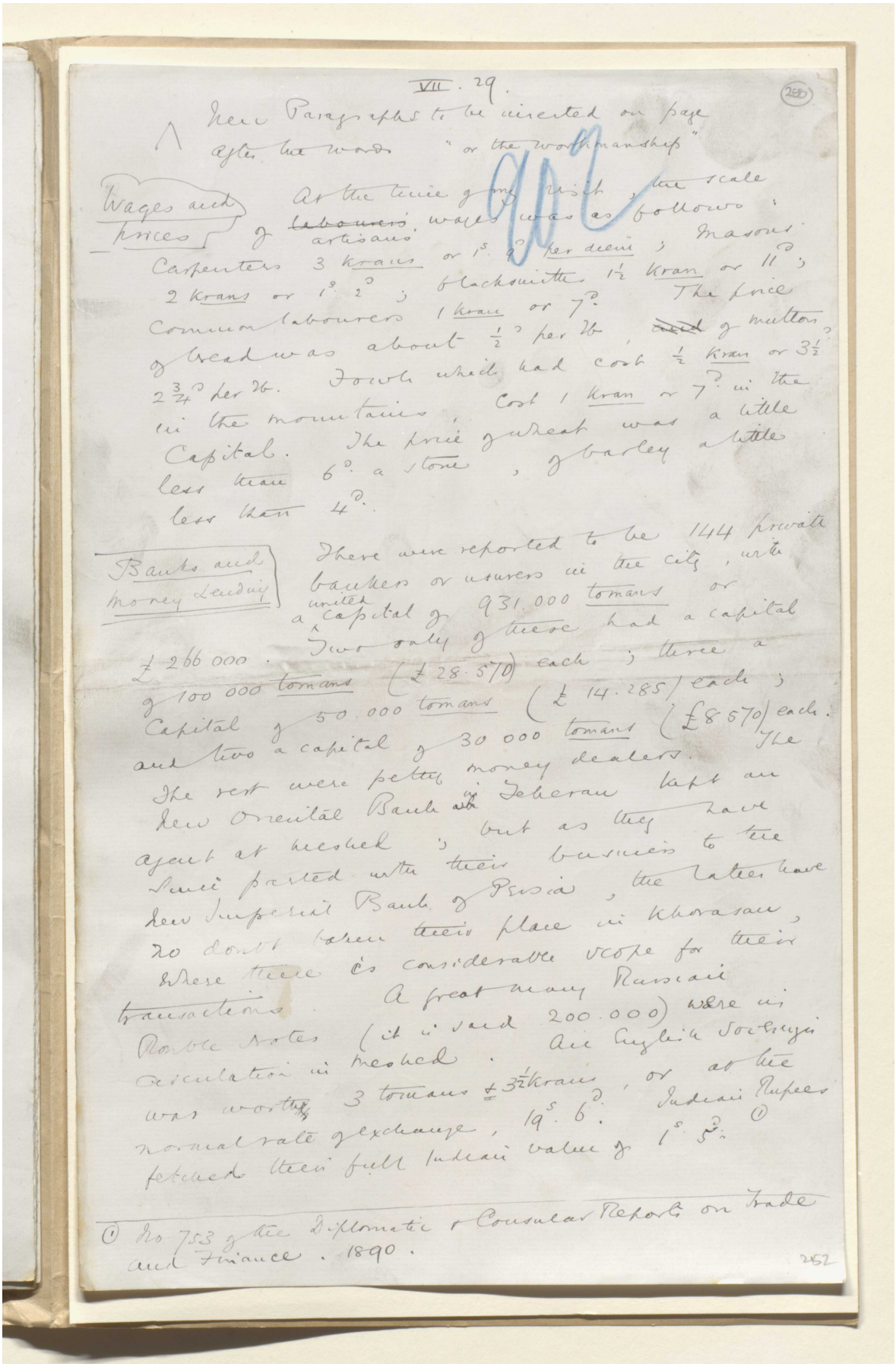
VII. 29.

(250)

New Paragraphs to be inserted on page after the words "or the workmanship"



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Wages and prices

At the time of my visit, the scale of ~~labourers'~~ artisans' wages was as follows: Carpenters 3 krans or 1s. 9d. per diem; Masons 2 krans or 1s. 2d.; Blacksmiths 1½ kran or 11d.; Common labourers 1 kran or 7d. The price of bread was about ½d. per lb., ~~and~~ of mutton 2¾d. per lb. Fowls which had cost ½ kran or 3½d. in the mountains, cost 1 kran or 7d. in the Capital. The price of wheat was a little less than 6d. a stone, of barley a little less than 4d.

Banks and money Lending

There were reported to be 144 private bankers or usurers in the city, with a united capital of 931.000 tomans or £266 000. Two only of these had a capital of 100 000 tomans (£28.570) each; three a capital of 50.000 tomans (£14.285) each; and two a capital of 30 000 tomans (£8 570) each. The rest were petty money dealers. The New Oriental Bank in Teheran kept an agent at Meshed; but as they have since parted with their business to the New Imperial Bank of Persia, the latter have no doubt taken their place in Khorasan, where there is considerable scope for their transactions. A great many Russian Rouble Notes (it is said 200.000) were in circulation in Meshed. An English Sovereign was worth 3 tomans ± 3½ krans, or at the normal rate of exchange, 19s. 6d. Indian Rupees fetched their full Indian value of 1s. 5d.[1]

[1] No. 753 of the Diplomatic & Consular Reports on Trade and Finance. 1890.

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مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٢٥٦و] (١٣٥٥/٥١١)

VII-30

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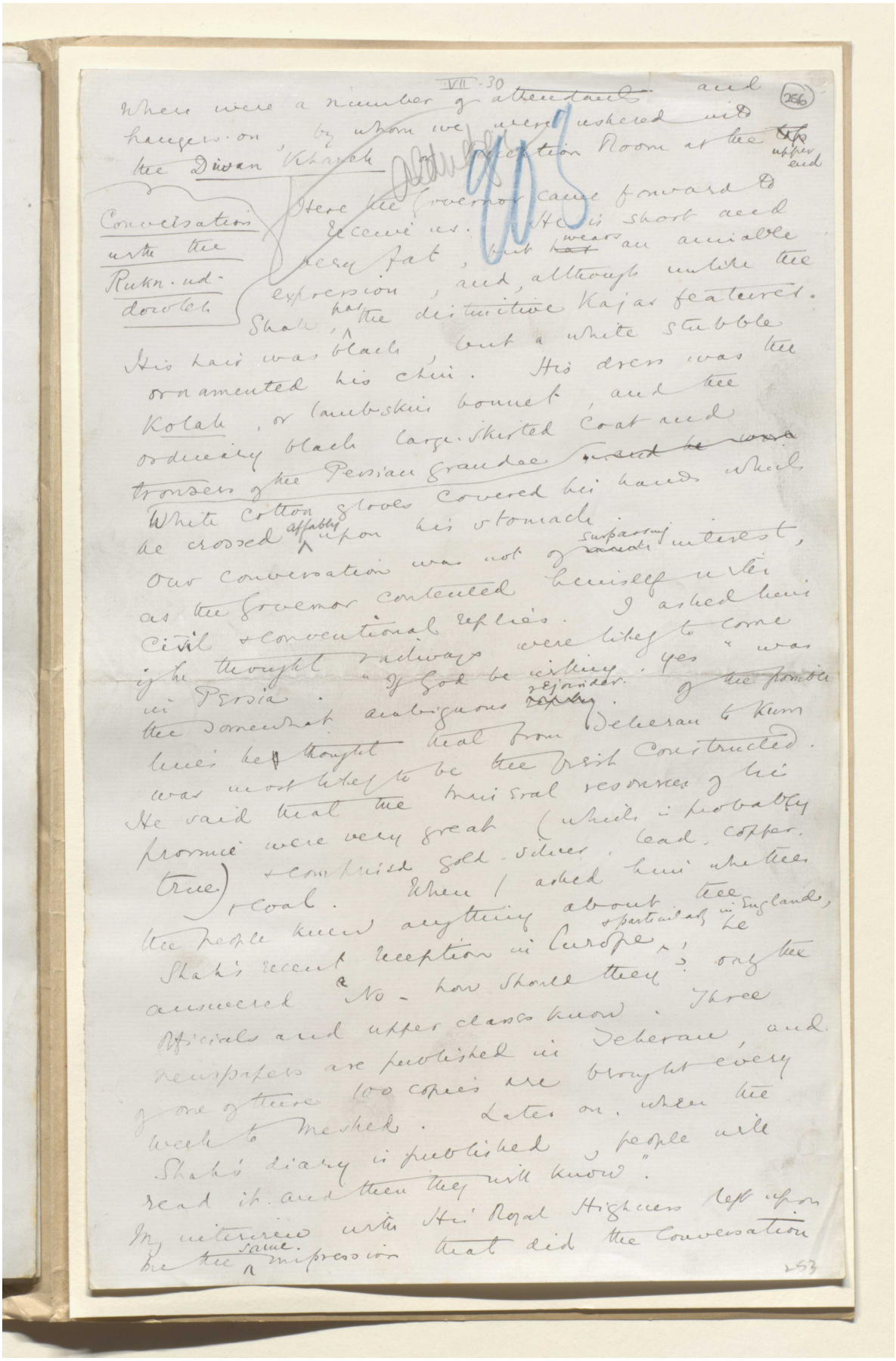
Where were a number of attendants and hangers-on, by whom we were ushered into the Diwan Khaneh or Reception Room at the upper end



Conversation with the Rukn-ud-dowleh

Here the Governor came forward to receive us. He is short and very fat, but wears an amiable expression, and, although unlike the Shah, has the distinctive Kajar features. His hair was black, but a white stubble ornamented his chin. His dress was the Kolah, or lambskin bonnet, and the ordinary black large-skirted coat and trousers of the Persian grandee. White cotton gloves covered his hands which he crossed affably upon his stomach.

Our conversation was not of surpassing interest, as the Governor contented himself with civil & conventional replies. I asked him if he thought railways were likely to come in Persia. "If God be willing, yes" was the somewhat ambiguous rejoinder. Of the possible lines he thought that from Teheran to Kum was most likely to be the first constructed. He said that the mineral resources of his province were very great (which is probably true) & comprised gold-silver, lead, copper, & coal. When I asked him whether the people knew anything about the Shah's recent reception in Europe, & particularly in England, he answered "No - how should they? only the officials and upper classes know. Three newspapers are published in Teheran, and of one of these 100 copies are brought every week to Meshed. Later on, when the Shah's diary is published, people will read it and then they will know".

My interview with His Royal Highness left upon me the same impression that did the conversation

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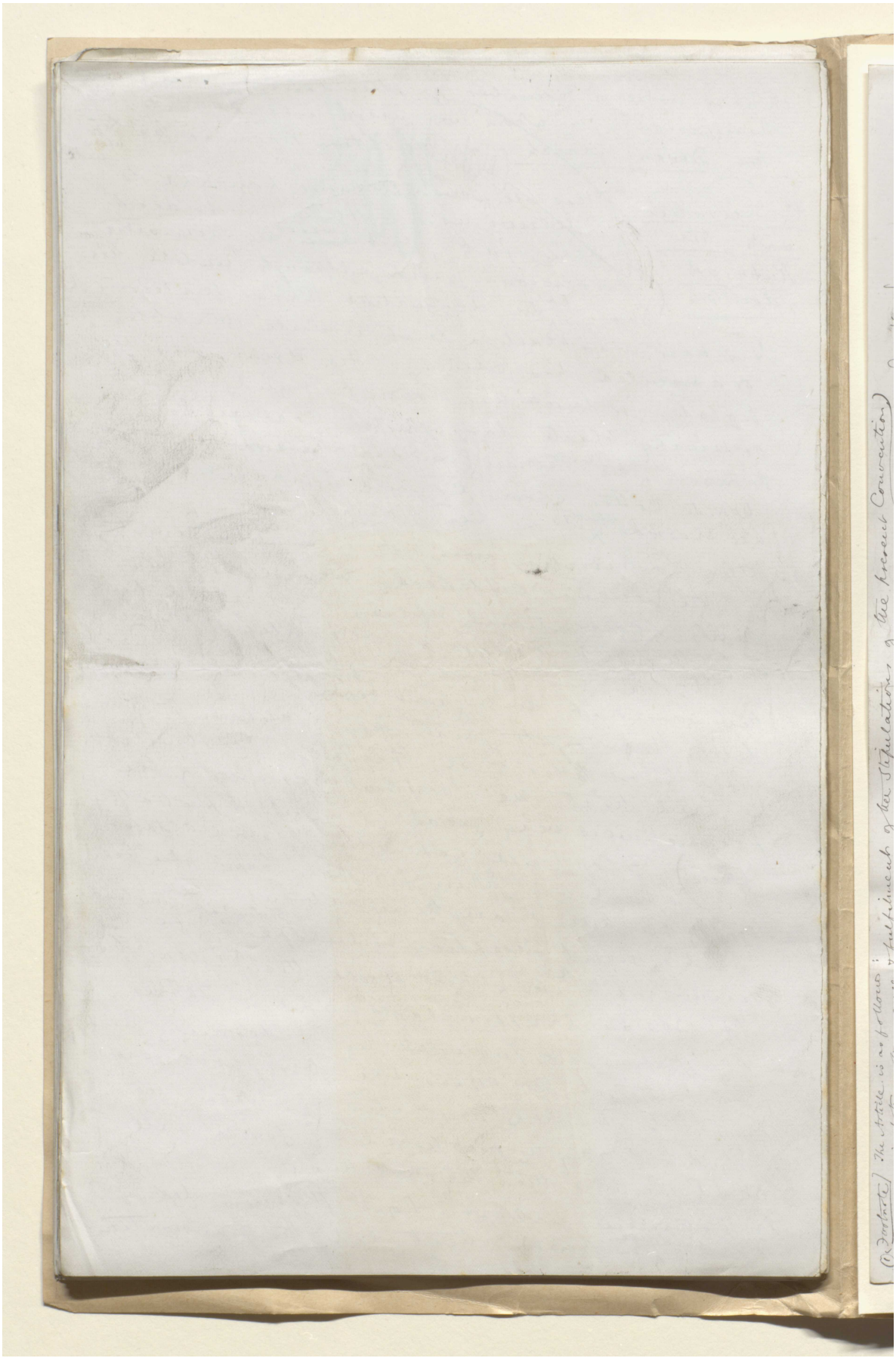

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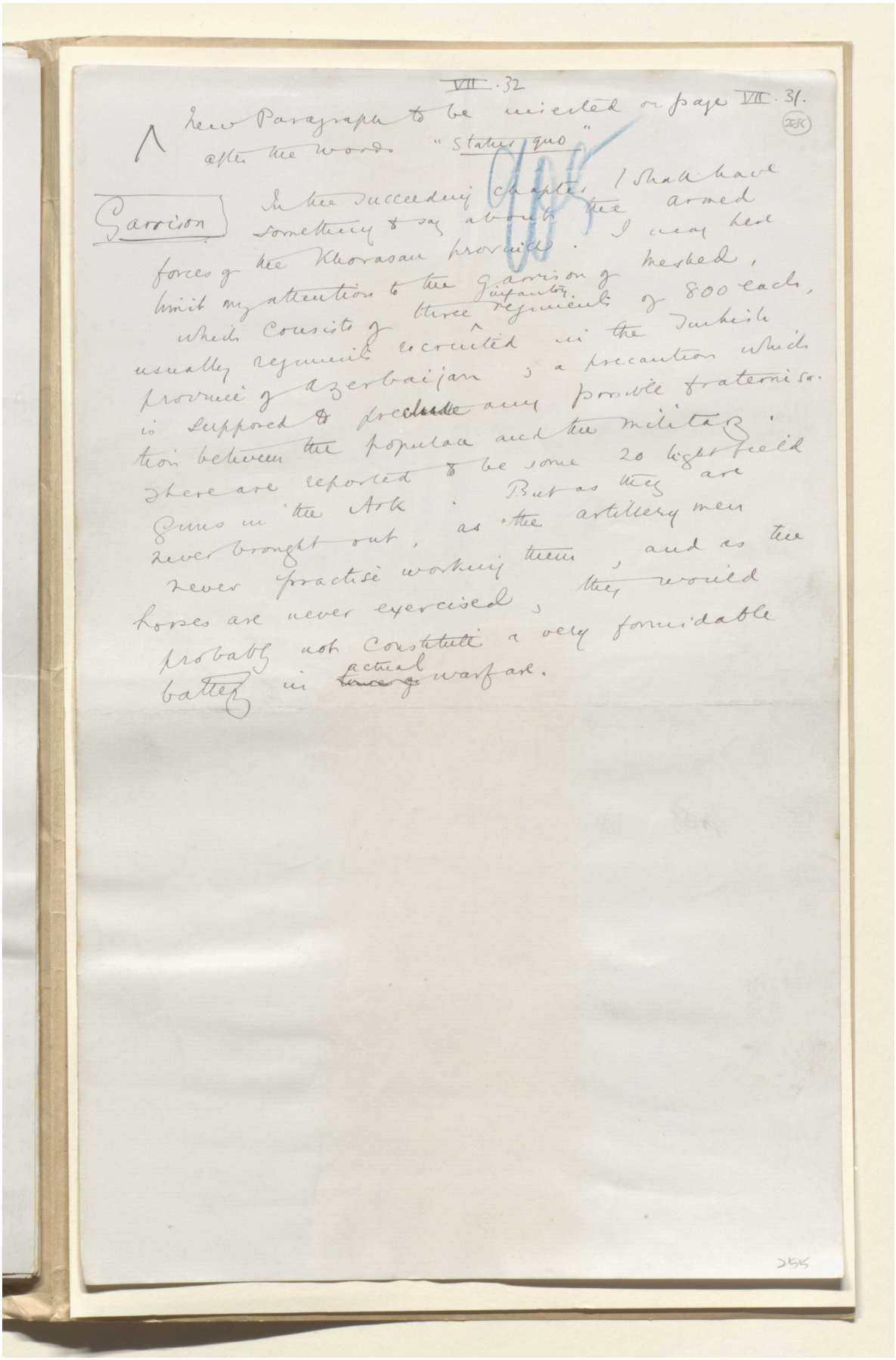

VII. 32

A New Paragraph to be inserted on page VII. 31. after the words "Status quo"

Garrison

In the succeeding chapter, I shall have something to say about the armed forces of the Khorasan province. I may here limit my attention to the garrison of Meshed, which consists of three regiments of infantry of 800 each, usually regiments recruited in the Turkish province of Azerbaijan; a precaution which is supposed to preclude any possible fraternisation between the populace and the military. There are reported to be some 20 light field guns in the Ark. But as they are never brought out, as the artillery men never practise working them, and as the horses are never exercised, they would probably not constitute a very formidable battery in actual warfare.



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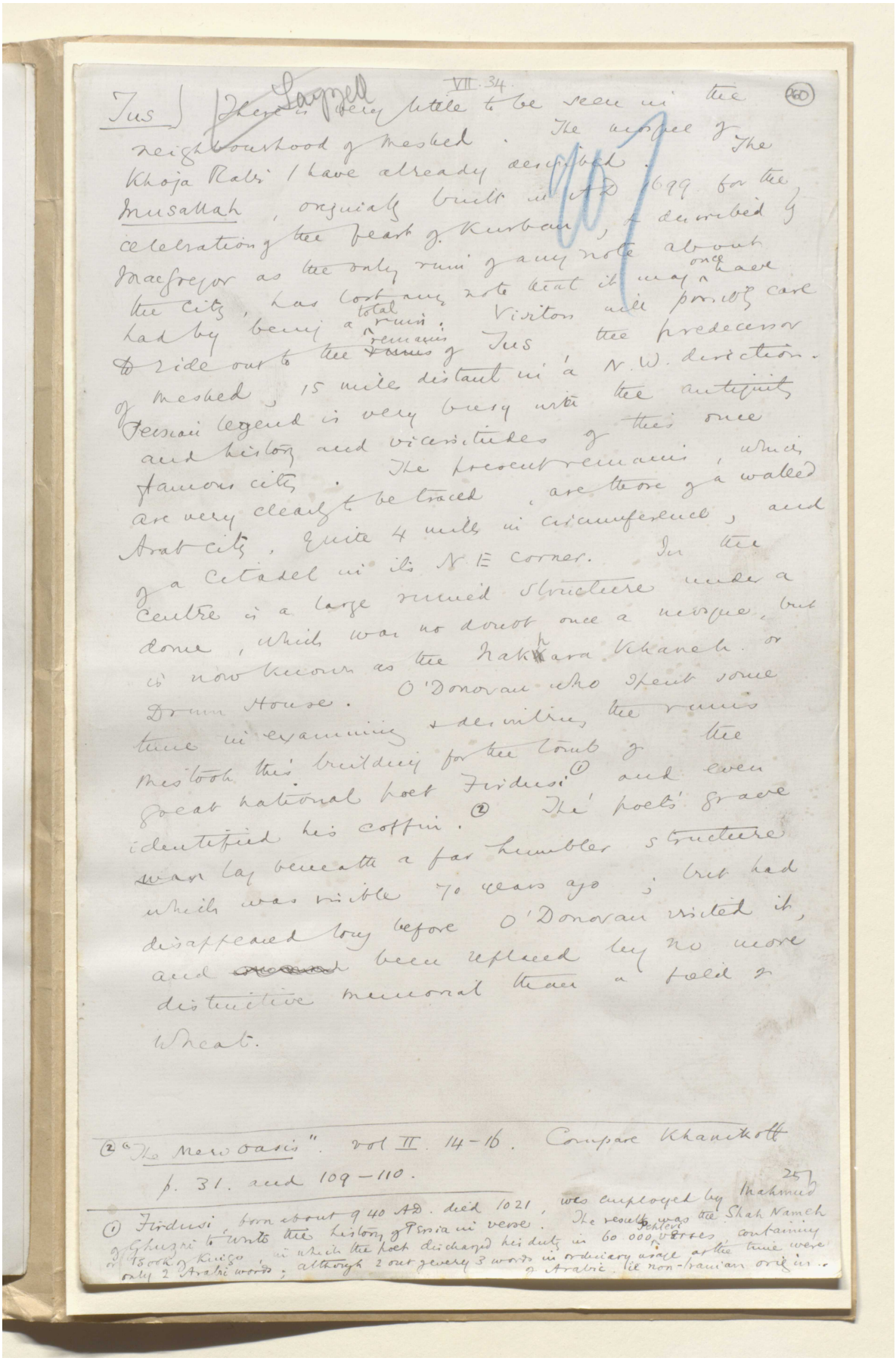

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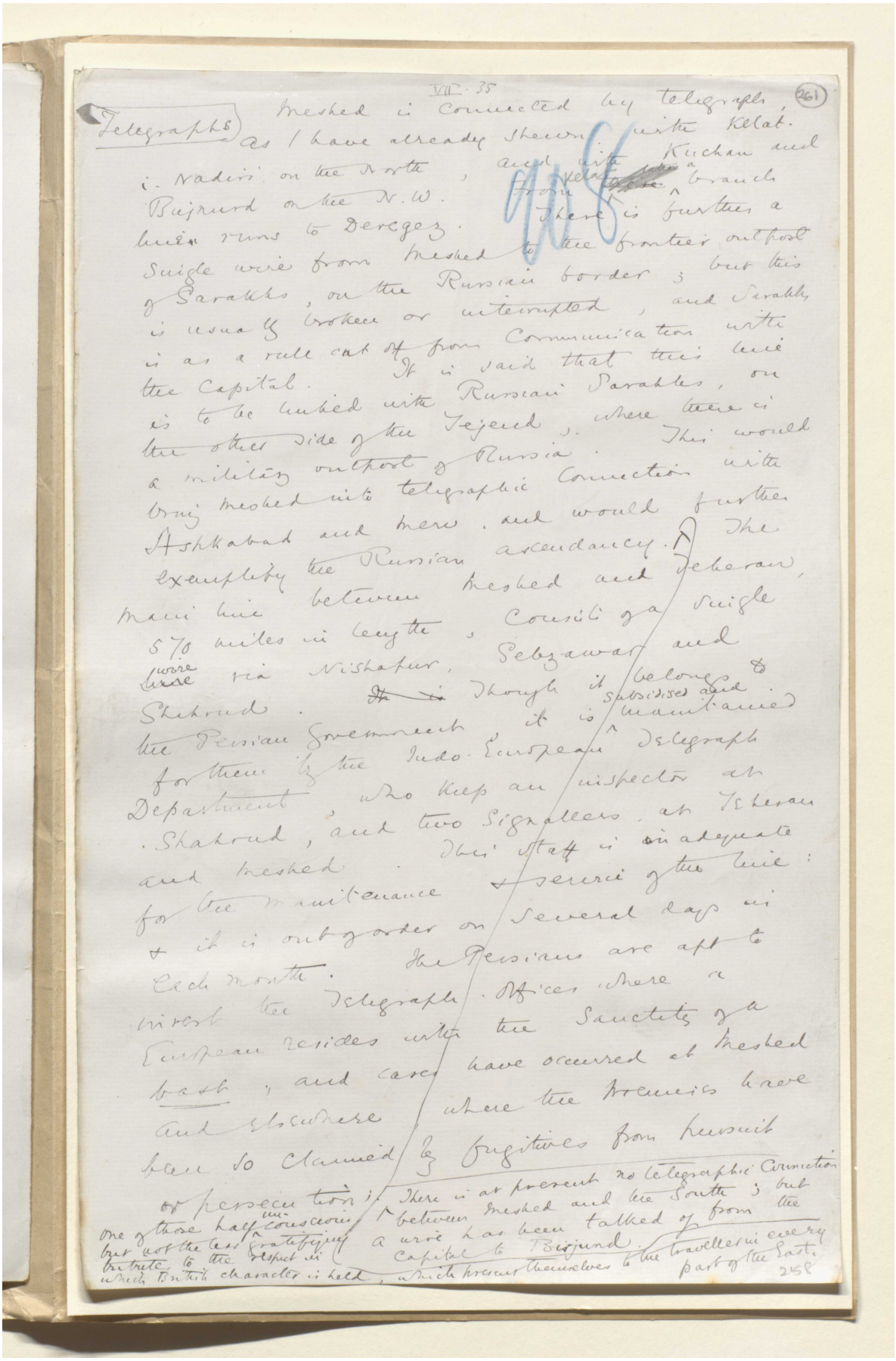
Tus) Lagrell VII. 34. (260)

There is very little to be seen in the neighbourhood of Meshed. The mosque of Khoja Rabi I have already described. The Musallah, originally built in AD 1699 for the celebration of the feast of Kurban, & described by MacGregor as the only ruin of any note about the city, has lost any note that it may once have had by being a total ruin. Visitors will possibly care to ride out to the remains of Tus, the predecessor of Meshed, 15 miles distant in a N.W. direction. Persian legend is very busy with the antiquity and history and vicissitudes of this once famous city. The present remains, which are very clearly to be traced, are those of a walled Arab city, quite 4 miles in circumference, and of a citadel in its N.E. corner. In the centre is a large ruined structure under a dome, which was no doubt once a mosque, but is now known as the Nakhara Khaneh or Drum House. O'Donovan who spent some time in examining & describing the ruins mistook this building for the tomb of the great national poet Firdusi (1) and even identified his coffin. (2) The poet's grave was lay beneath a far humbler structure which was visible 70 years ago; but had disappeared long before O'Donovan visited it, and ~~[illegible]~~ been replaced by no more distinctive memorial than a field of wheat.

(2) "The Mero Oasis". vol II. 14-16. Compare Khanikoff p. 31. and 109-110.

(1) Firdusi, born about 940 AD. died 1021, was employed by Mahmud of Ghuzni to write the history of Persia in verse. The result was the Shah Nameh or Book of Kings, in which the poet discharged his duty in 60 000 Pehlevi verses containing only 2 Arabic words; although 2 out of every 3 words in ordinary usage at the time were of Arabic, i.e. non-Iranian origin.





VII. 35

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Telegraphs

Meshed is connected by telegraph, as I have already shewn, with Kelat-i-Nadiri on the North, and with Kuchan and Bujnurd on the N.W. From Kelat a branch line runs to Deregez. There is further a single wire from Meshed to the frontier outpost of Sarakhs, on the Russian border; but this is usually broken or interrupted, and Sarakhs is as a rule cut off from communication with the Capital. It is said that this line is to be linked with Russian Sarakhs, on the other side of the Tejend, where there is a military outpost of Russia. This would bring Meshed into telegraphic connection with Ashkabad and Merv, and would further exemplify the Russian ascendancy. The main line between Meshed and Teheran, 570 miles in length, consists of a single wire via Nishapur, Sebzawar and Shahrud. Though it belongs to the Persian Government, it is subsidised and maintained for them by the Indo-European Telegraph Department, who keep an inspector at Shahrud, and two signallers at Teheran and Meshed. This staff is inadequate for the maintenance & service of the line: & it is out of order on several days in each month. The Persians are apt to invest the Telegraph Offices where a European resides with the sanctity of a bast, and cases have occurred at Meshed and elsewhere where the premises have been so claimed by fugitives from pursuit or persecution; There is at present no telegraphic connection between Meshed and the South; but a wire has been talked of from the Capital to Birjund.

One of those half unconscious but not the less gratifying tribute to the respect in which British character is held, which present themselves to the traveller in every part of the East.

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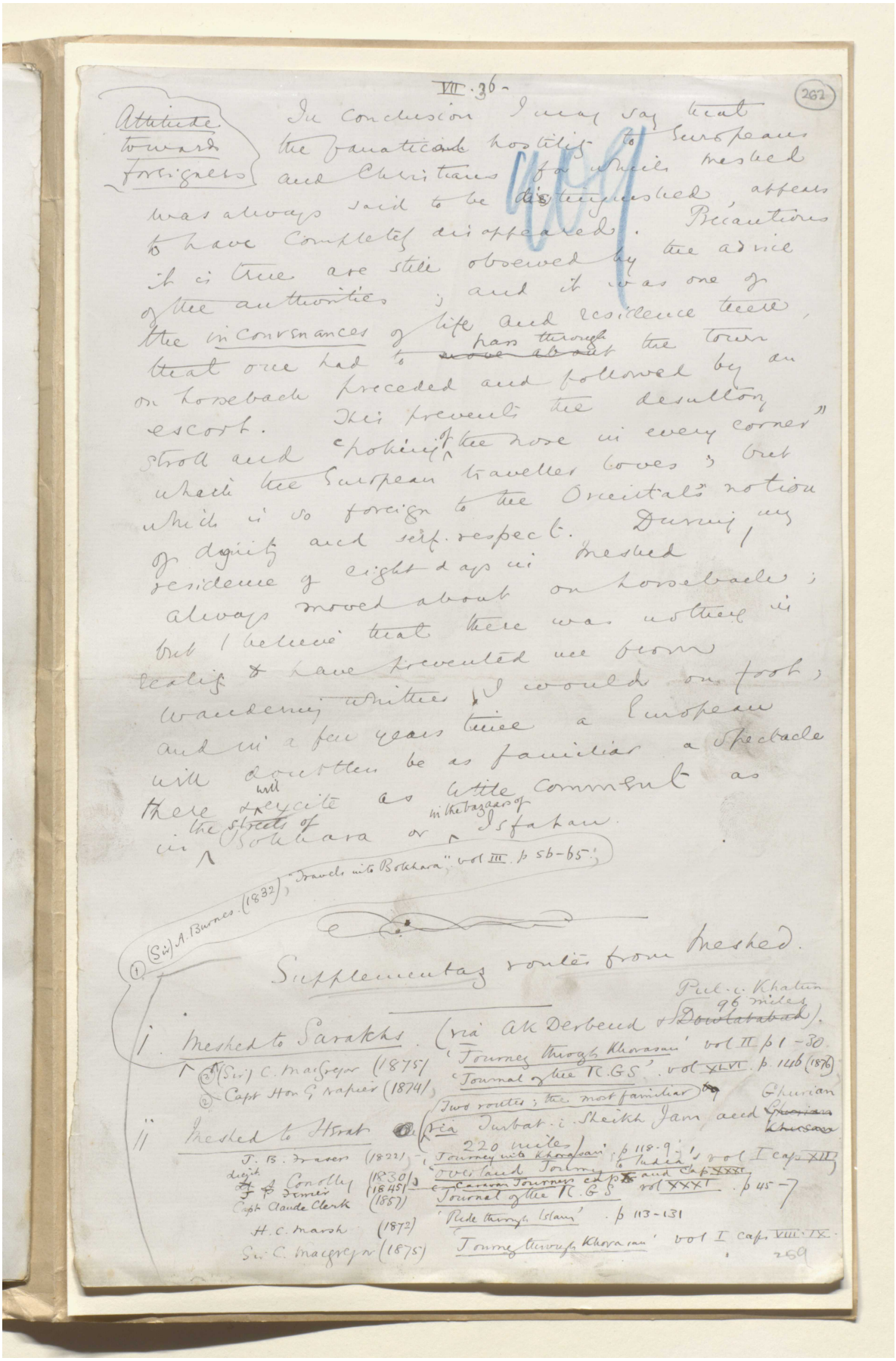

Attitude towards foreigners

In conclusion I may say that the fanatical hostility to Europeans and Christians for which Meshed was always said to be distinguished, appears to have completely disappeared. Precautions it is true are still observed by the advice of the authorities; and it was one of the inconvenances of life and residence there, that one had to ~~move about~~ pass through the town on horseback preceded and followed by an escort. This prevents the desultory stroll and "poking of the nose in every corner" which the European traveller loves; but which is so foreign to the Oriental's notion of dignity and self-respect. During my residence of eight days in Meshed always moved about on horseback; but I believe that there was nothing in reality & have prevented me from wandering whither I would on foot; and in a few years time a European will doubtless be as familiar a spectacle there & will excite as little comment as in the streets of Bokhara or in the bazaars of Isfahan.

(1) (Sir) A. Burnes (1832), "Travels into Bokhara", vol III. p 56-65.

Supplementary routes from Meshed.

i. Meshed to Sarakhs. (via Ak Derbend & ~~Dowlatabad~~ Pul-i-Khatun 96 miles).

(2) (Sir) C. MacGregor (1875) 'Journey through Khorasan' vol II p 1-30.

(2) Capt Hon G Napier (1874) 'Journal of the R.G.S.' vol XLVI. p. 146 (1876)

ii Meshed to Herat (Two routes; the most familiar via Turbat-i-Sheikh Jam and Ghurian ~~Ghurian Khorasan~~ 220 miles)

J. B. Fraser (1822) 'Journey into Khorasan' p 118-9.

Lieut. A. Conolly (1830) 'Overland Journey to India' vol I caps XII

J. P. Ferrier (1845) 'Caravan Journey' caps X and Cap XXXI

Capt Claude Clerk (1857) 'Journal of the R.G.S.' vol XXXI. p 45-7

H. C. Marsh (1872) 'Ride through Islam' p 113-131

Sir C. MacGregor (1875) 'Journey through Khorasan' vol I caps VIII-IX.

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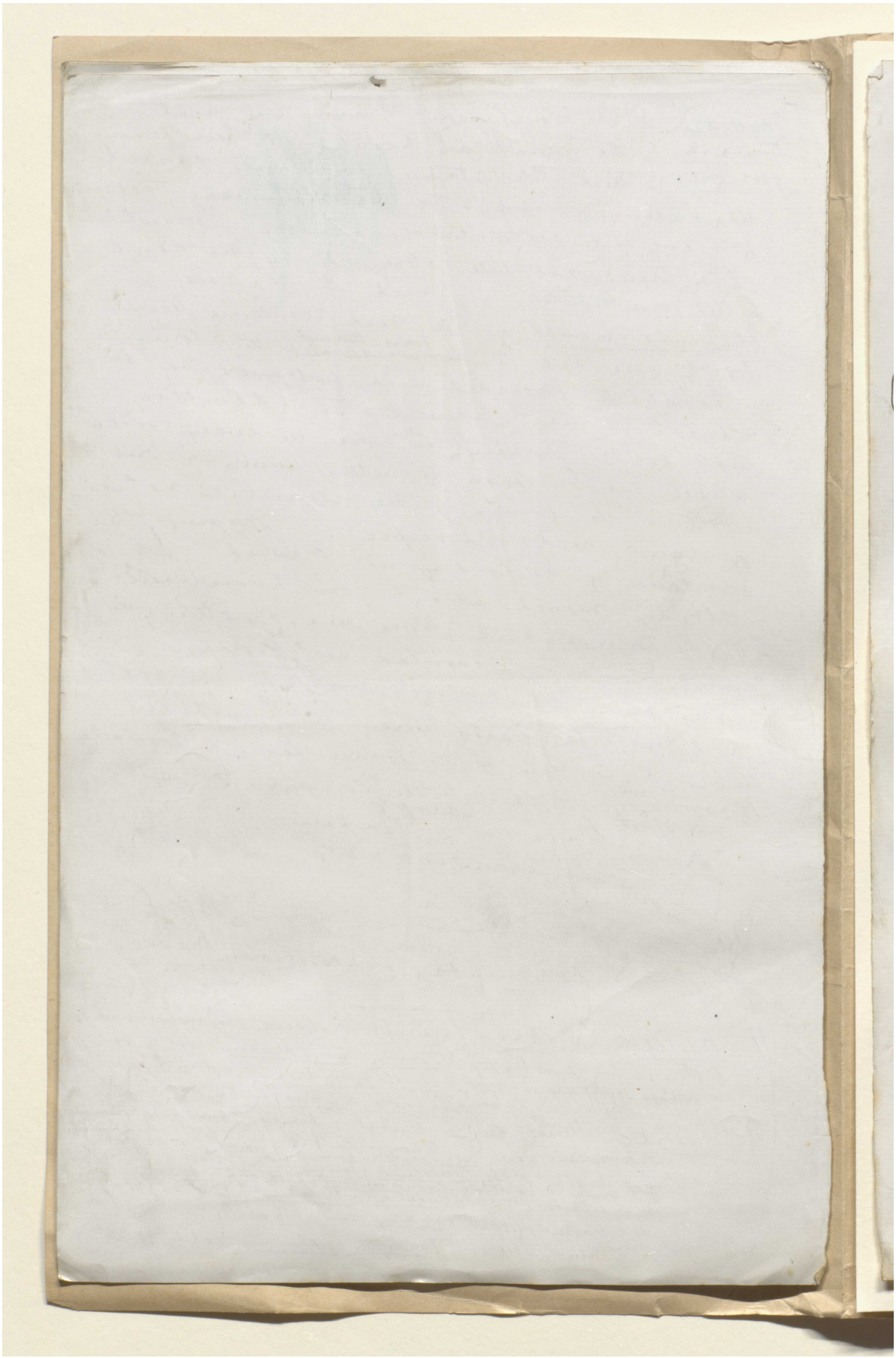

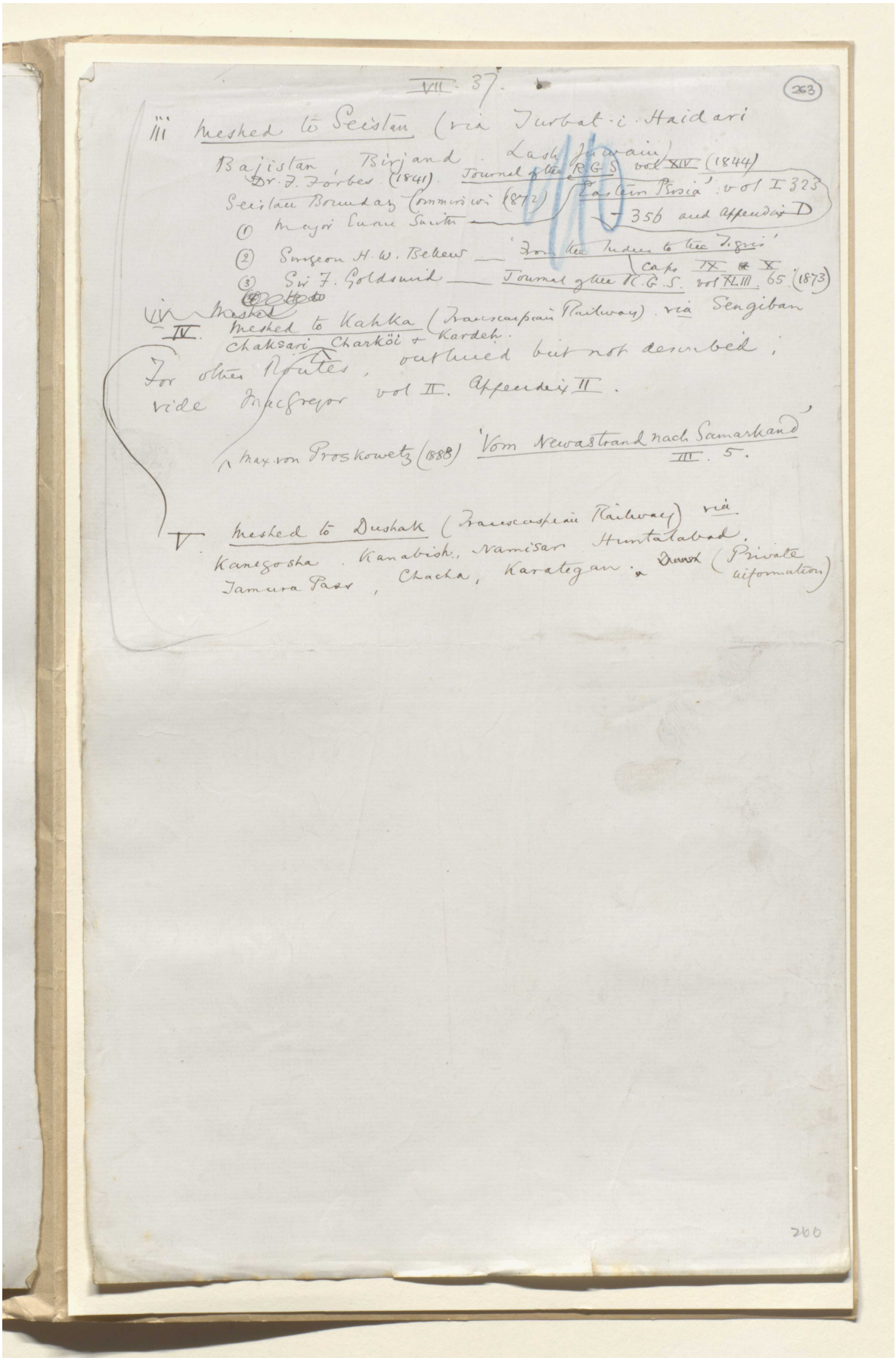
VII. 37.
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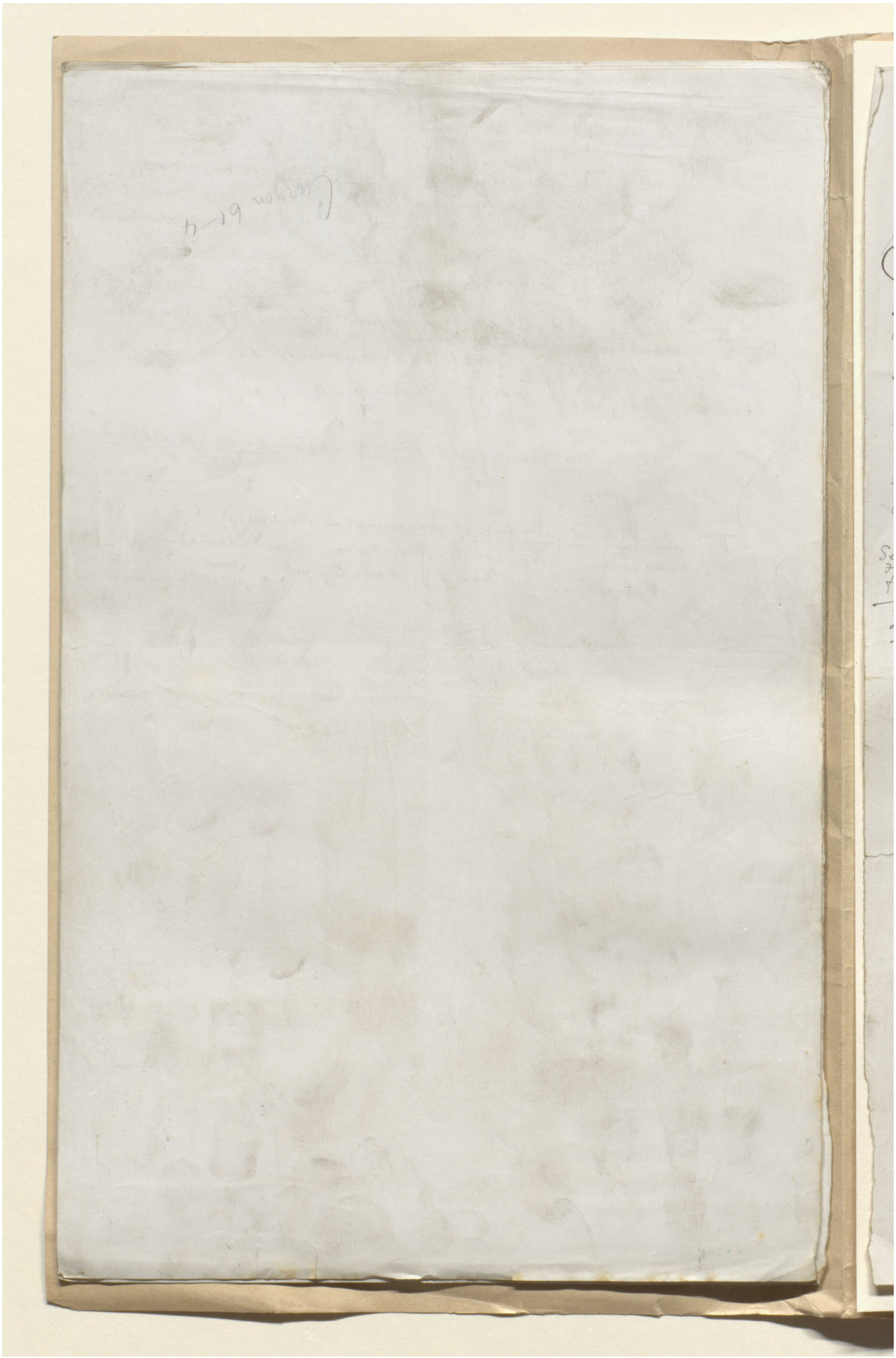
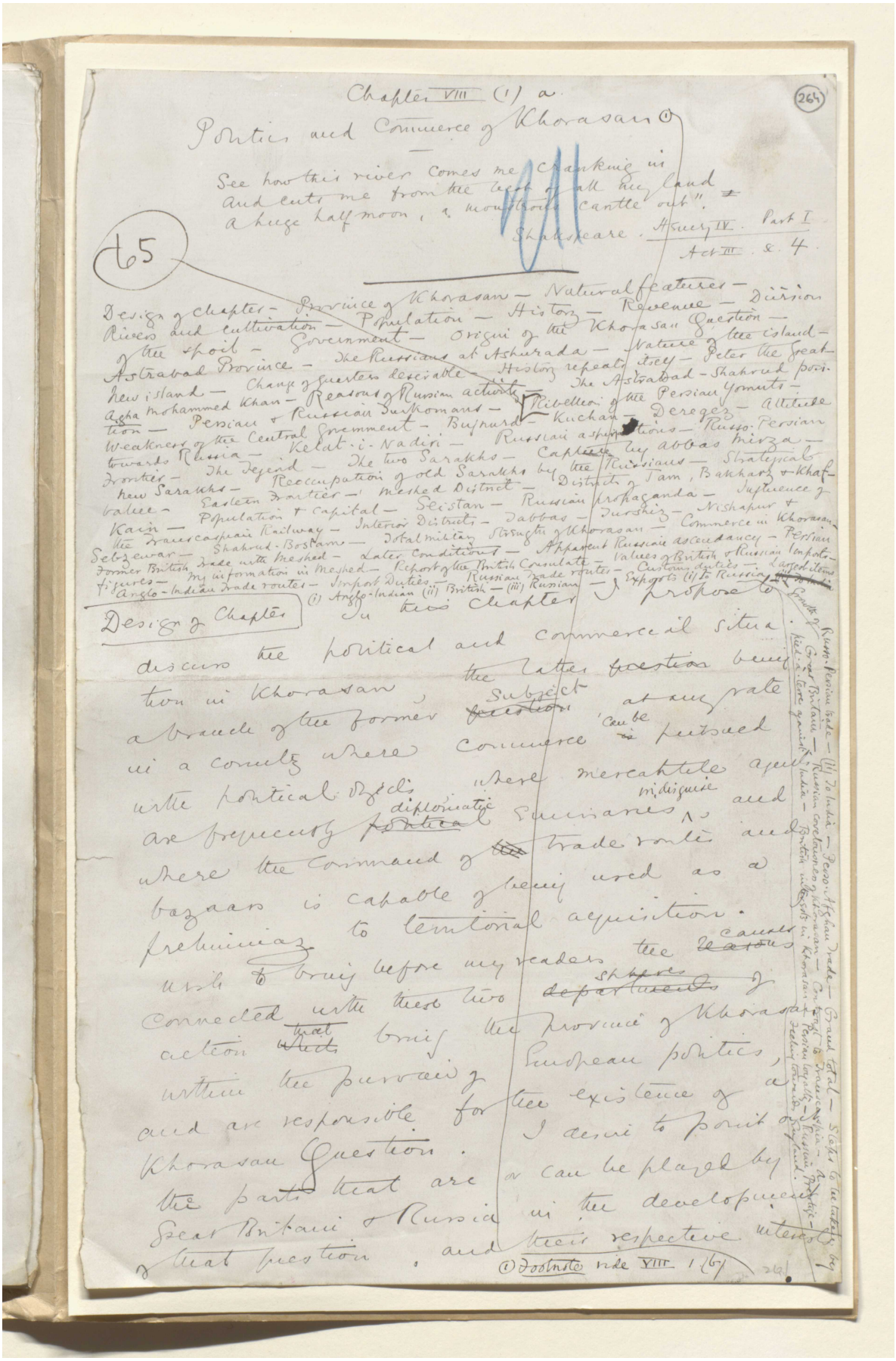
III Meshed to Seistan (via Turbat-i-Haidari
Bajistan, Birjand. Lash Juwain
Journal plus R.G.S. vol XIV (1844)
Dr. J. Forbes (1841)
Seistan Boundary Commission (1872) 'Eastern Persia' vol I 323
① Major Euan Smith — 356 and Appendix D
② Surgeon H. W. Bellew — 'From the Indus to the Tigris'
③ Sir F. Goldsmid — Journal plus R.G.S. vol XLIII. 65 (1873)
Caps IX & X
IV Meshed to Kahka (Transcaspian Railway) via Sengiban
Chahsari Charköi & Kardeh.
For other Routes, outlined but not described;
vide Macgregor vol II. Appendix II.
Max von Proskowetz (1888) 'Vom Newastrand nach Samarkand'
III. 5.
V Meshed to Dushak (Transcaspian Railway) via
Kanegosha. Kanabish, Namisar Huntalabad,
Jamura Pass, Chacha, Karatigan & Dusak (Private information)
260





Chapter VIII (1) a.

Politics and Commerce of Khorasan (1)

264

See how this river comes me cranking in
And cuts me from the best of all my land
A huge half-moon, a monstrous cantle out".
Shakespeare. Henry IV. Part I
Act III. s. 4.

65

Design of chapters – Province of Khorasan – Natural features – Division
Rivers and cultivation – Population – History – Revenue – Division
of the spoil – Government – Origin of the Khorasan Question –
Astrabad Province – The Russians at Ashurada – Nature of the island –
New island – Change of quarters desirable – History repeats itself – Peter the Great
Agha Mohammed Khan – Reasons of Russian activity – The Astrabad-Shahrud poss.
tion – Persian & Russian Turkomans – Rebellion of the Persian Yomuts –
Weakness of the Central Government – Bujnurd – Kuchan – Dereguz – Attitude
towards Russia – Kelat-i-Nadiri – Russian aspirations – Russo-Persian
Frontier – The Tejend – The two Sarakhs – Captured by Abbas Mirza –
New Sarakhs – Reoccupation of old Sarakhs by the Russians – Strategical
value – Eastern Frontier – Meshed District – Districts of Jam, Bakharz & Khaf –
Kain – Population & Capital – Seistan – Russian propaganda – Influence of
the Transcaspian Railway – Interior Districts – Dabbas – Turshiz – Nishapur &
Sebzewar – Shahrud-Bostam – Total military strength of Khorasan – Commerce in Khorasan
former British trade with Meshed – Later conditions – Apparent Russian ascendancy – Persian
figures – My information in Meshed – Report of the British Consulate – Values of British & Russian Imports –
Anglo-Indian trade routes – Import Duties – Russian trade routes – Customs duties – Exports (i) to Russia

(1) Anglo-Indian (ii) British – (iii) Russian

Design of Chapter

In this chapter I propose to discuss the political and commercial situation in Khorasan, the latter question being a branch of the former subject in a country where commerce can be pursued with political objects at any rate as frequently as diplomatic where mercantile agents, Midijanie and Sowcars, trade routes and bazaars is capable of being used as a preliminary to territorial acquisition. I wish to bring before my readers the causes connected with these two spheres of action that which brings the province of Khorasan within European politics, and are responsible for the existence of Khorasan Question. I desire to point out the part that are or can be played by Great Britain & Russia in the development of that question, and their respective interests

(1) Footnote vide VIII 1/67

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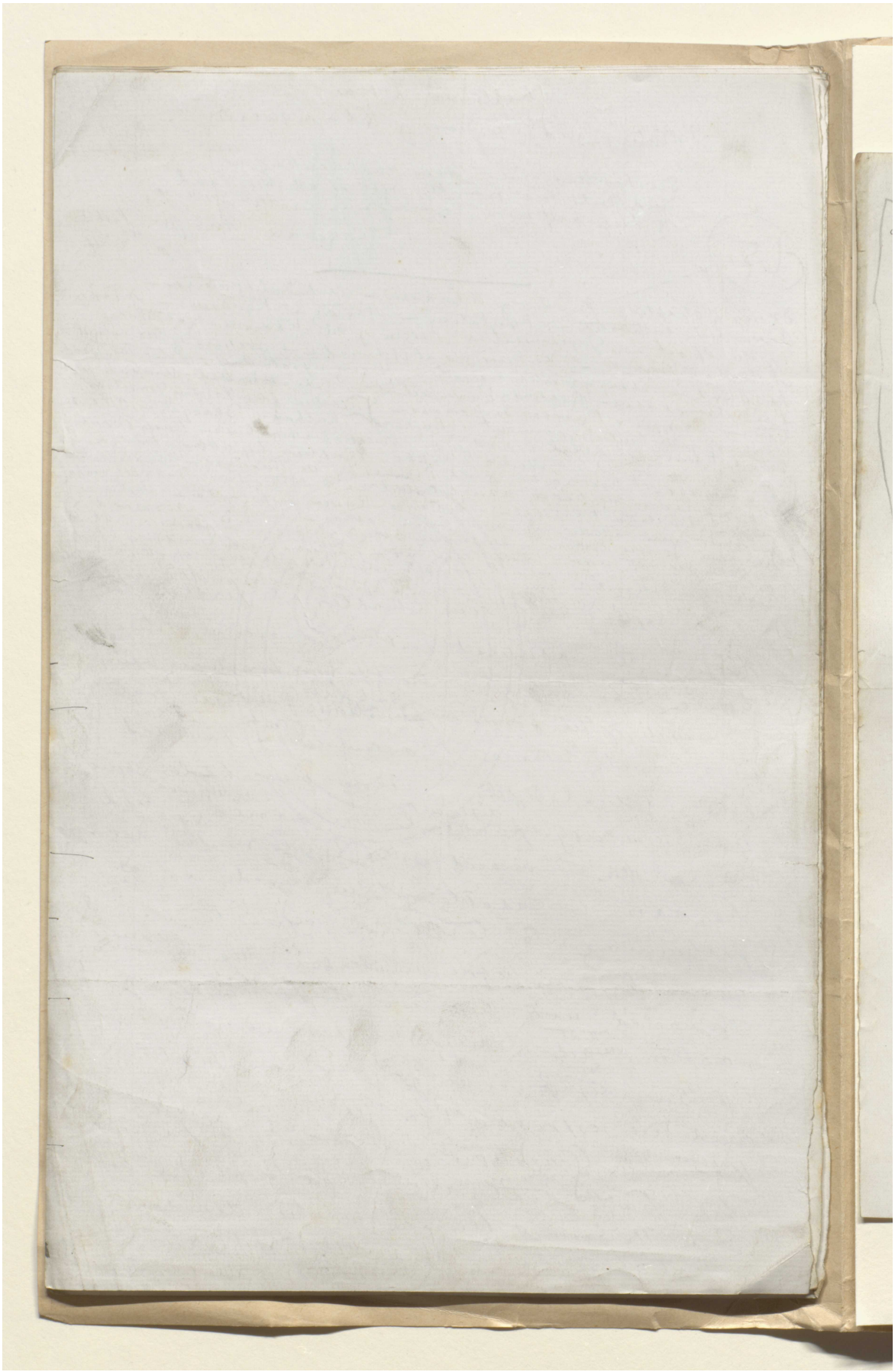

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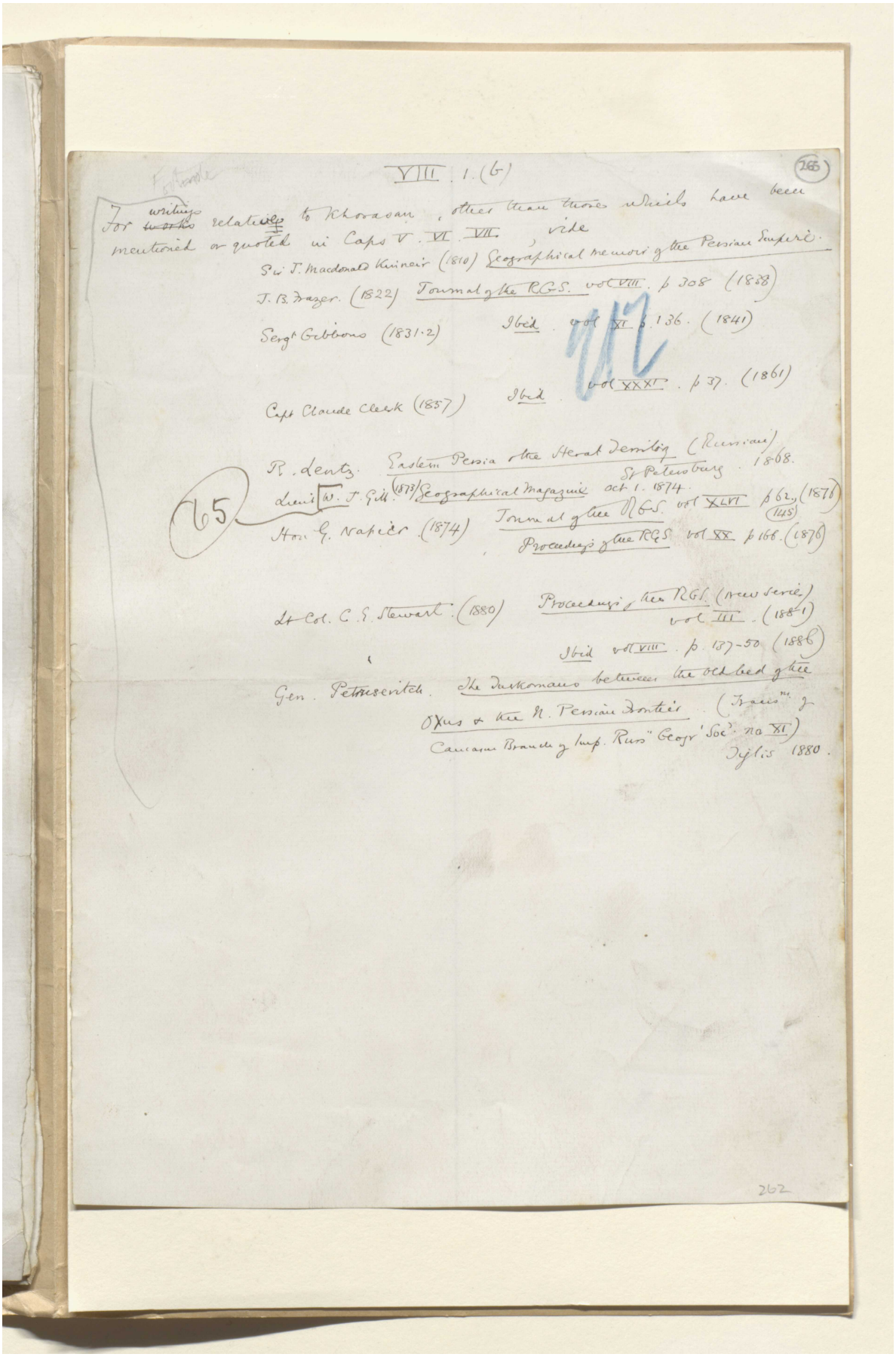
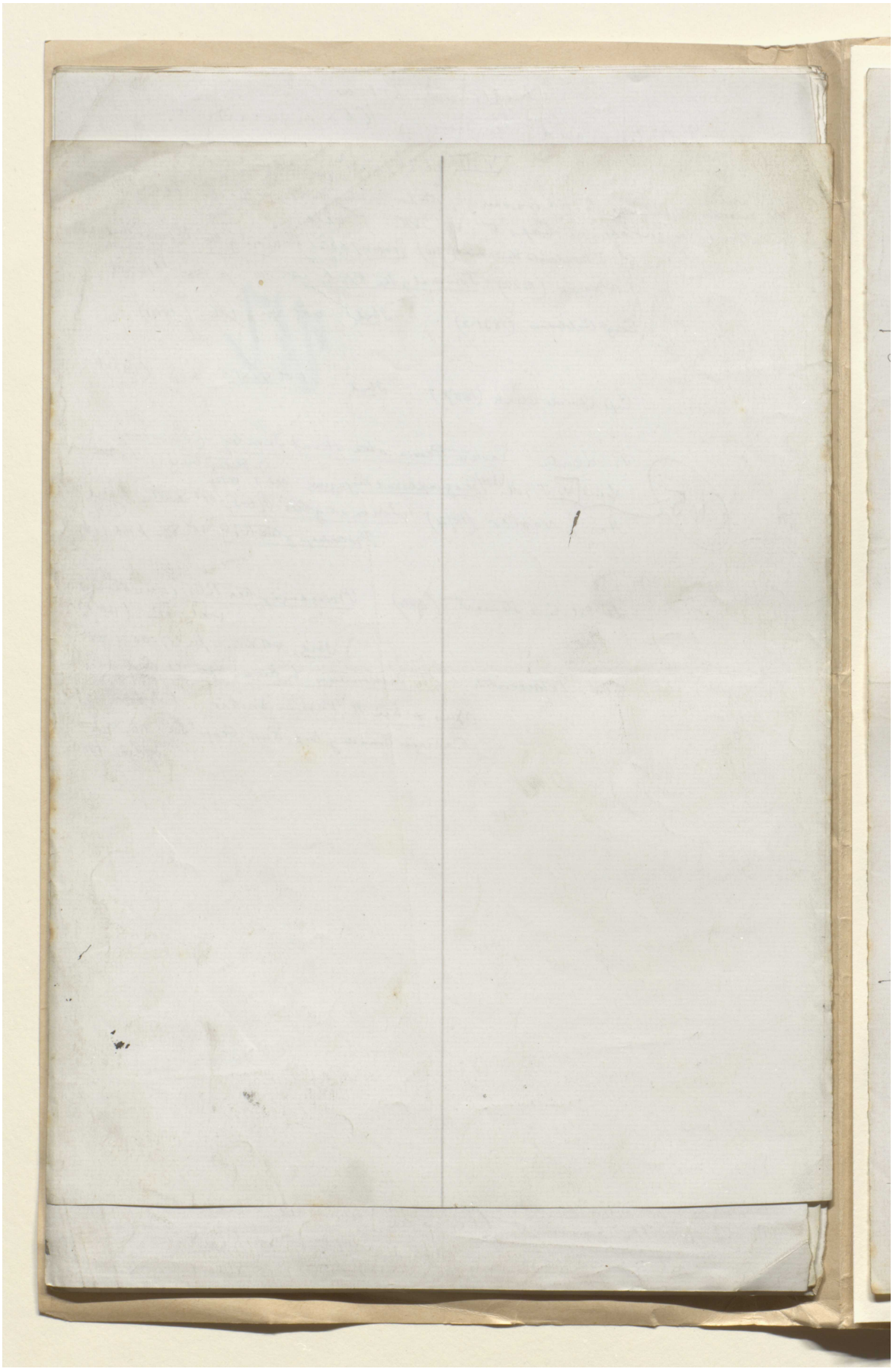

VIII. 1. (6)
265
For writings relating to Khorasan, other than those which have been mentioned or quoted in Caps V. VI. VII. vide
Sir J. Macdonald Kinneir (1810) Geographical memoir of the Persian Empire.
J. B. Fraser. (1822) Journal of the RGS. vol VIII. p 308 (1838)
Serg.t Gibbons (1831-2) Ibid. vol XI. p 136. (1841)
Capt Claude Clerk (1857) Ibid. vol XXXI. p 37. (1861)
R. Lentz. Eastern Persia thro Herat Demitzg (Russian) St Petersburg. 1868.
Lieut W. J. Gill. (1873) Geographical Magazine oct 1. 1874.
Hon G. Napier (1874) Journal of the RGS. vol XLVI p 62, (1876) (1145)
Proceedings of the RGS vol XX p 166. (1876)
Lt Col. C. S. Stewart. (1880) Proceedings of the RGS. (new series) vol III. (1881)
Ibid vol VIII. p. 187-90 (1886)
Gen. Petrusevitch. The Turkomans between the old bed of the Oxus & the N. Persian frontier. (Trans.ns of Caucasus Branch of Imp. Russ. Geogr. Soc. no XI) Tiflis 1880.
262



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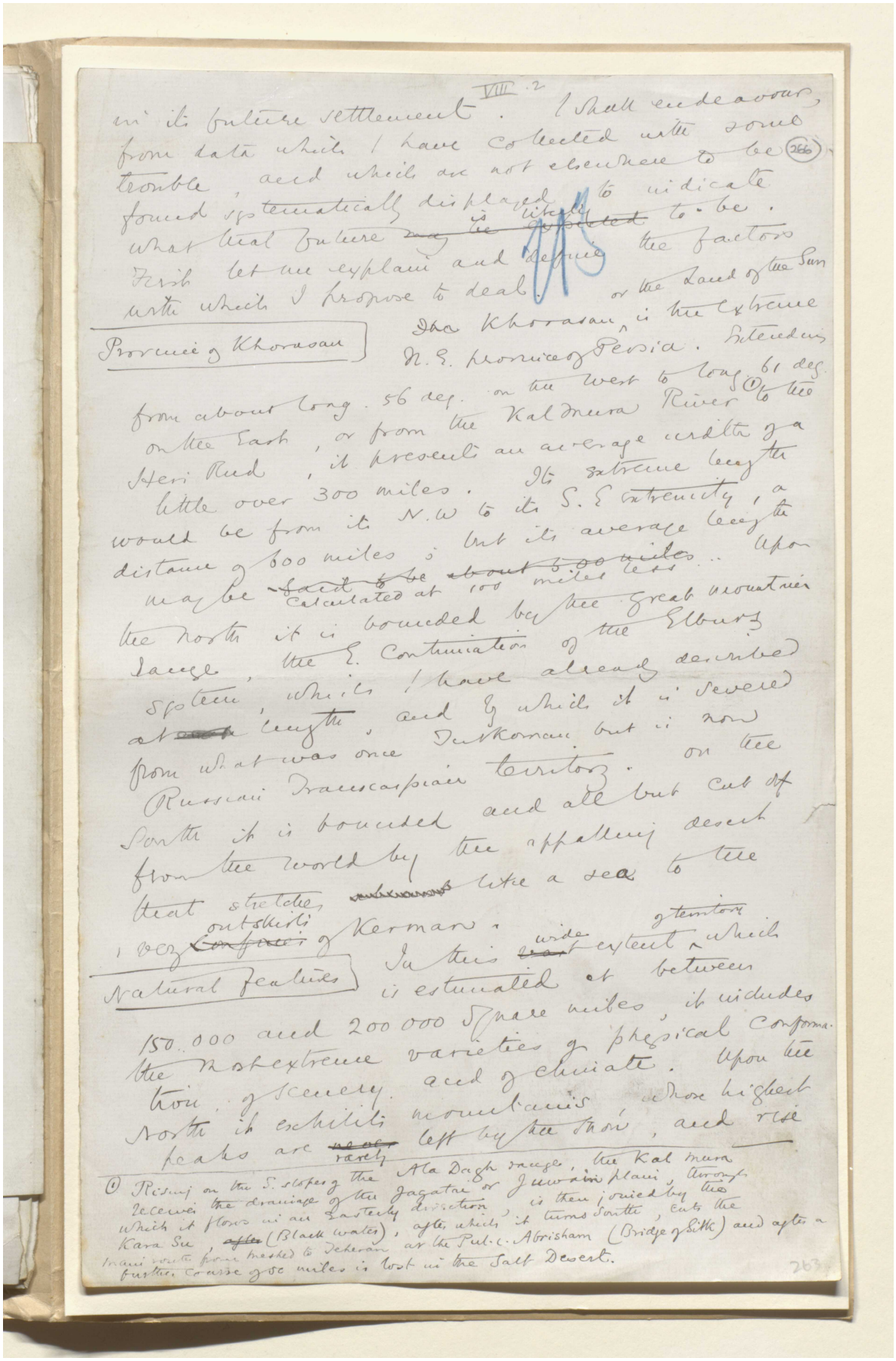

VIII. 2

in its future settlement. I shall endeavour, from data which I have collected with some trouble, and which are not elsewhere to be found systematically displayed, to indicate what that future may be. (266)

First let me explain and define the factors with which I propose to deal.

Province of Khorasan

The Khorasan, or the Land of the Sun, is the extreme N.E. province of Persia. Extending from about long. 56 deg. on the west to long. 61 deg. on the East, or from the Kal mura River to the Heri Rud, it presents an average width of a little over 300 miles. Its extreme length would be from its N.W to its S.E extremity, a distance of 600 miles; but its average length may be ~~said to be about 500 miles~~ calculated at 100 miles less. Upon the north it is bounded by the great mountain range, the E. continuation of the Elburz system, which I have already described at ~~such~~ length, and to which it is severed from what was once Turkoman but is now Russian Transcaspian territory. On the South it is bounded and all but cut off from the world by the appalling desert that stretches ~~unbroken~~ like a sea to the outskirts of Kerman.

Natural features

In this ~~vast~~ wide extent of territory which is estimated at between 150.000 and 200 000 Square miles, it includes the most extreme varieties of physical conformation of scenery and of climate. Upon the North it exhibits mountains whose highest peaks are ~~never~~ rarely left by the snow, and rise

① Rising on the S. slopes of the Ala Dagh range, the Kal mura receives the drainage of the Jagatai or Juwain plain, through which it flows in an Easterly direction, is then joined by the Kara Su, ~~after~~ (Black water), after which it turns South, cuts the main route from Meshed to Teheran at the Pul-i-Abrisham (Bridge of Silk) and after a further course of 60 miles is lost in the Salt Desert.

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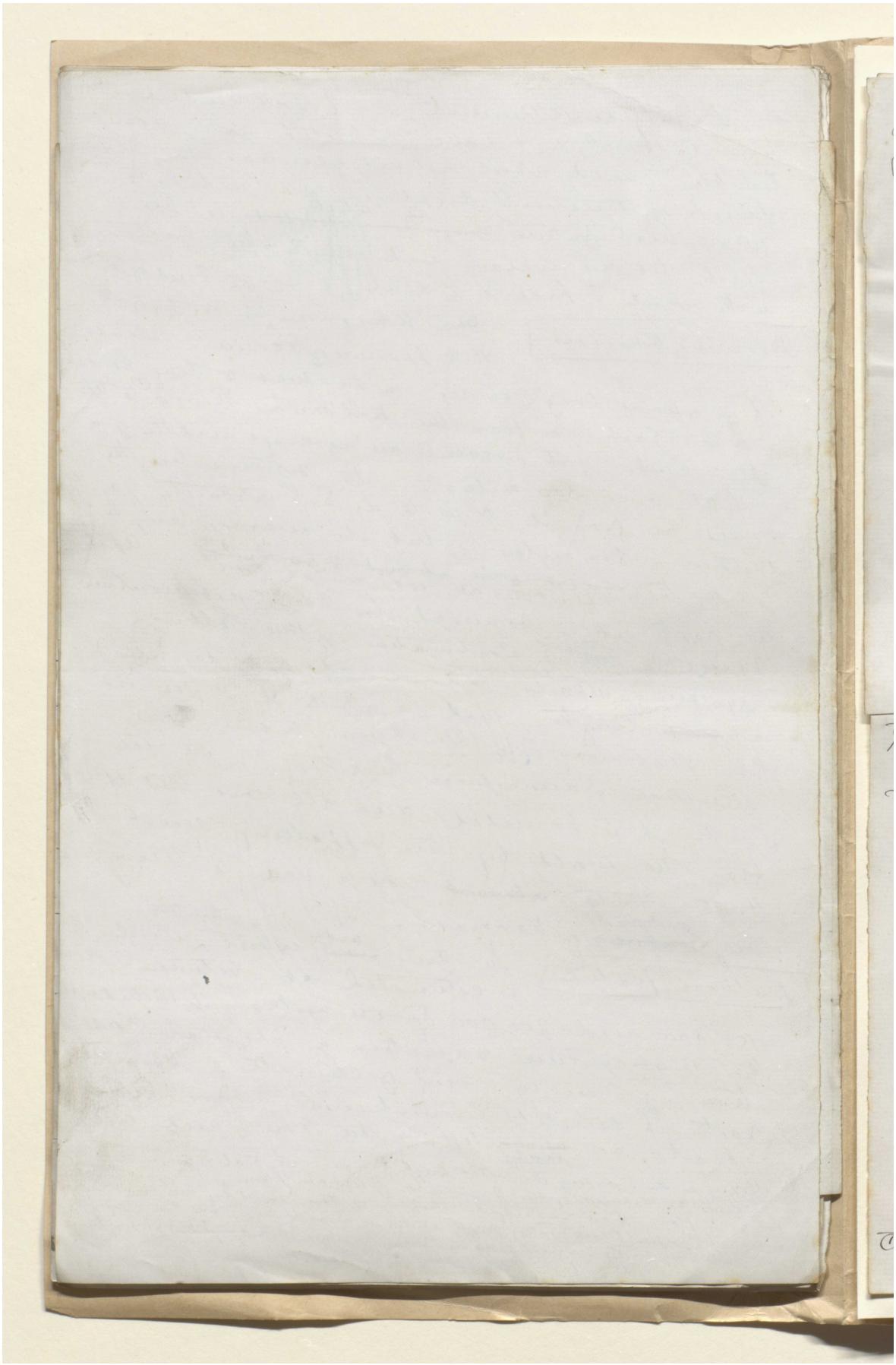

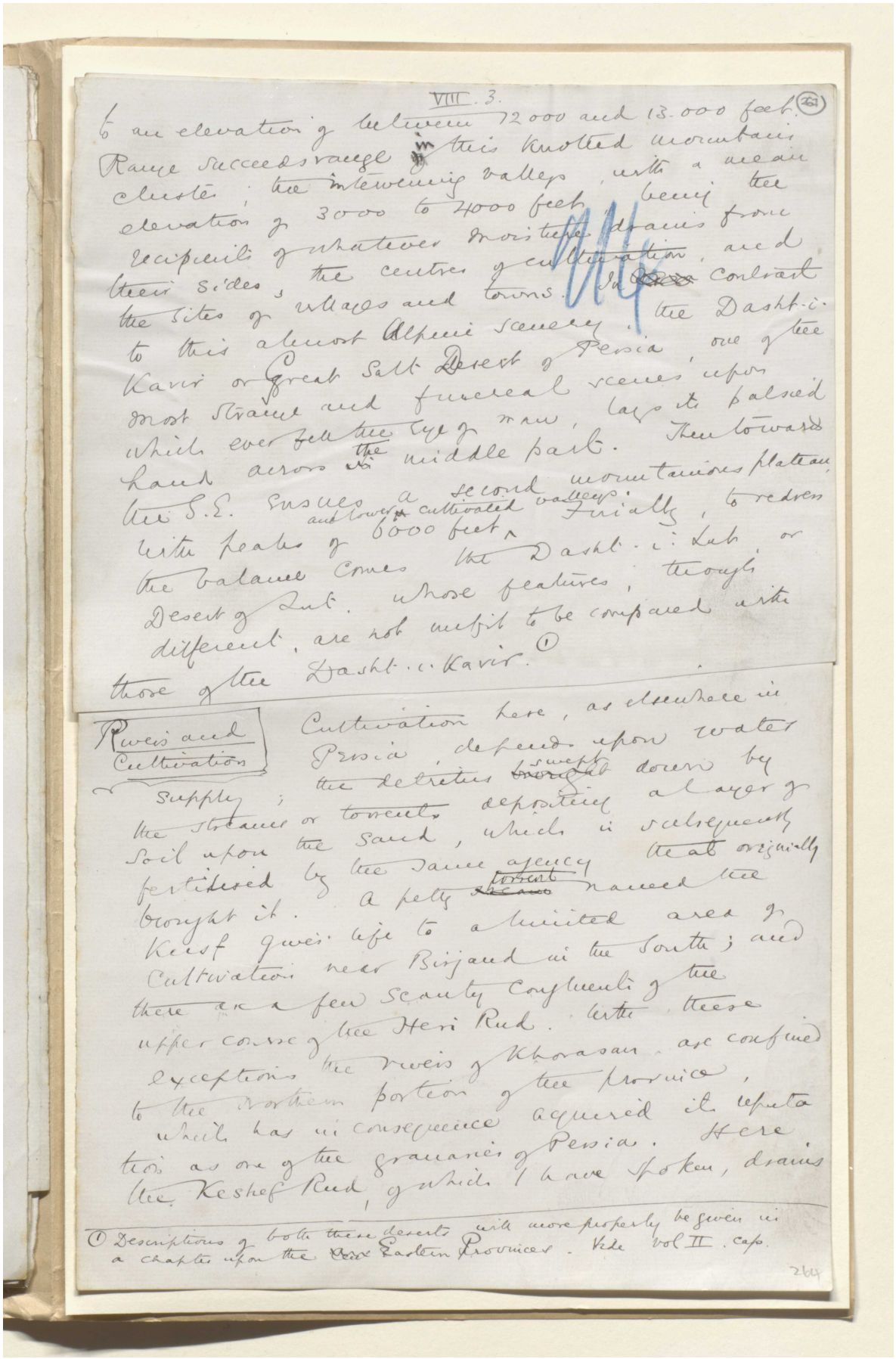

VIII. 3.

of an elevation of between 12000 and 13.000 feet. Range succeeds range in this knotted mountain cluster; the intervening valleys, with a mean elevation of 3000 to 4000 feet, being the recipients of whatever moisture drains from their sides, the centres of cultivation, and the sites of villages and towns. In contrast to this almost Alpine scenery, the Dasht-i-Kavir or Great Salt Desert of Persia, one of the most strange and funereal scenes upon which ever fell the eye of man, lays its palsied hand across the middle part. Then towards the S.E. ensues a second mountainous plateau, with peaks of 6000 feet, and lower cultivated valleys. Finally, to redress the balance comes the Dasht-i-Lut or Desert of Lut, whose features, though different, are not unfit to be compared with those of the Dasht-i-Kavir. (1)

Rivers and Cultivation

Cultivation here, as elsewhere in Persia, depends upon water supply; the detritus swept down by the streams or torrents deposited a layer of soil upon the sand, which is subsequently fertilised by the same agency that originally brought it. A petty torrent named the Kesf gives life to a limited area of cultivation near Birjand in the south; and there are a few scanty confluents of the upper course of the Heri Rud. With these exceptions the rivers of Khorasan are confined to the northern portion of the province, which has in consequence acquired its reputation as one of the granaries of Persia. Here the Keshef Rud, of which I have spoken, drains

(1) Descriptions of both these deserts will more properly be given in a chapter upon the Persian Eastern Provinces. Vide Vol II. Cap.

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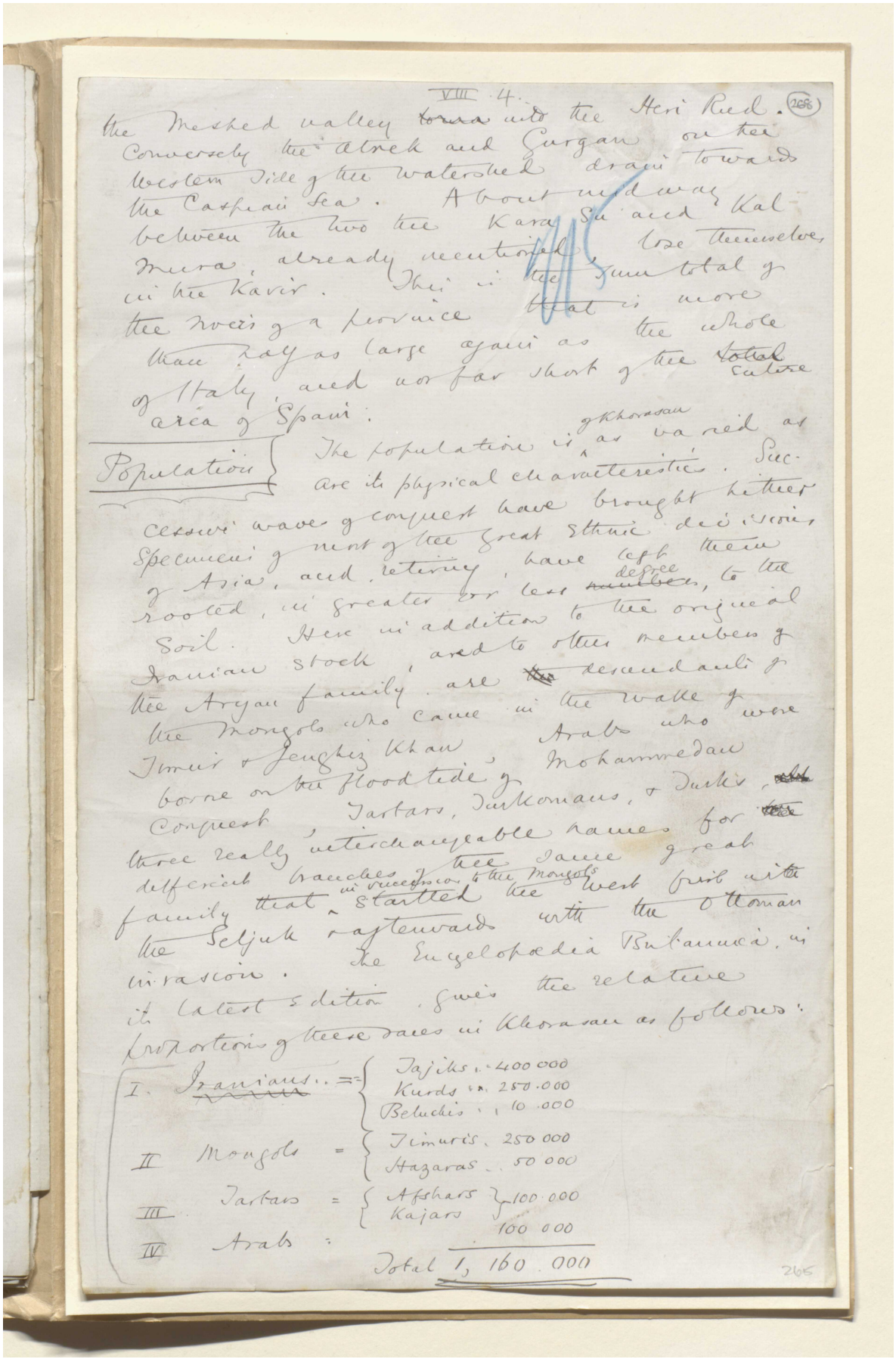

the Meshed valley ~~torna~~ into the Heri Rud. Conversely the Atrek and Gurgan on the western side of the watershed drain towards the Caspian Sea. About midway between the two the Kara Su and Kal Mura, already mentioned, lose themselves in the Kavir. This is the sum total of the rivers of a province that is more than half as large again as the whole of Italy, and not far short of the ~~total~~ entire area of Spain.

Population The population is of Khorasan as varied as are its physical characteristics. Successive waves of conquest have brought hither specimens of most of the great ethnic divisions of Asia, and, retiring, have left them rooted, in greater or less ~~numbers~~ degree, to the soil. Here in addition to the original Iranian stock, and to other members of the Aryan family, are ~~the~~ descendants of the Mongols who came in the wake of Timur & Jenghiz Khan, Arabs who were borne on the flood tide of Mohammedan conquest, Tartars, Turkomans, & Turks, ~~all~~ three really interchangeable names for ~~the~~ different branches of the same great family that in succession to the Mongols startled the West first with the Seljuk & afterwards with the Ottoman invasion. The Encyclopaedia Britannica, in its latest edition, gives the relative proportions of these races in Khorasan as follows:

I.	Iranians	Tajiks	400 000
		Kurds	250.000
		Beluchis	10.000
II	Mongols	Timuris	250 000
		Hazaras	50 000
III	Tartars	Afshars, Kajars	100.000
IV	Arabs		100 000
		Total	1,160.000

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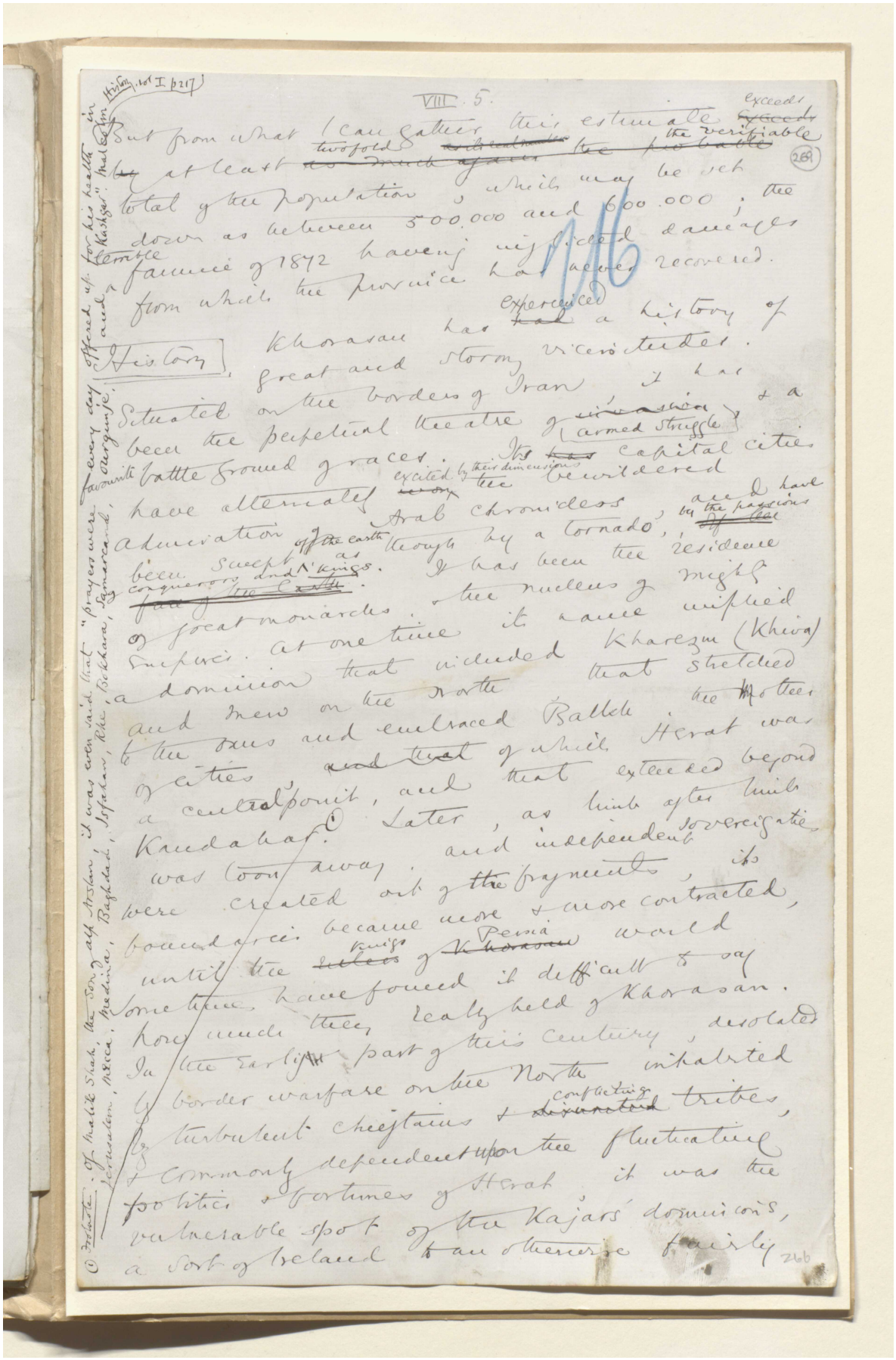



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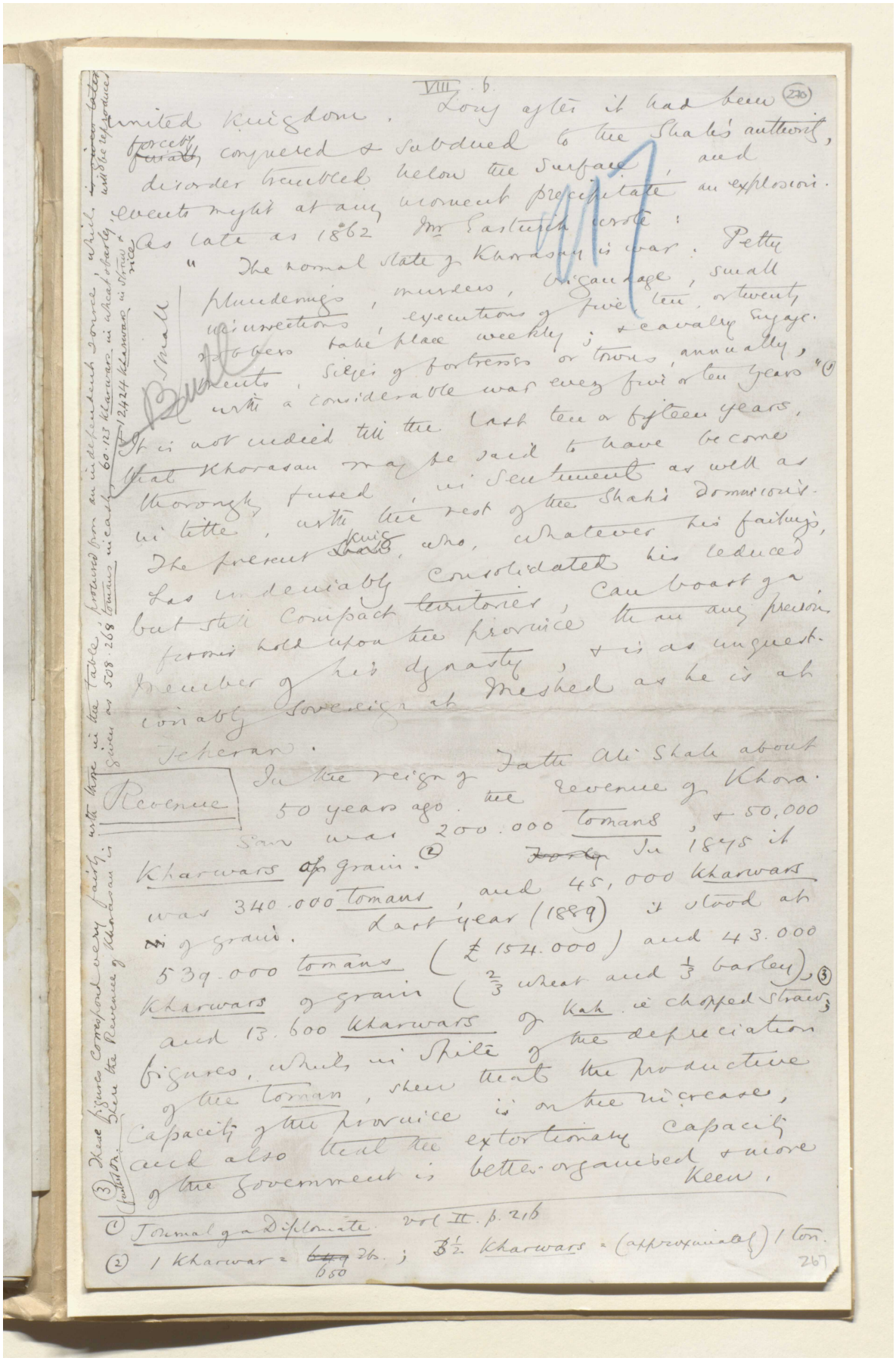

VIII. b.

Long after it had been (270)
forcibly conquered & subdued to the Shah's authority,
united Kingdom,
disorder bubbled below the surface, and
events might at any moment precipitate an explosion.
As late as 1862 Mr Eastwick wrote:
" The normal state of Khorasan is war. Petty
plunderings, murders, brigandage, small
insurrections, executions of five ten, or twenty
robbers take place weekly; + cavalry sieges
ments, sieges of fortresses or towns annually,
with a considerable war every five or ten years "(1)
It is not indeed till the last ten or fifteen years,
that Khorasan may be said to have become
thoroughly fused in sentiment as well as
in title, with the rest of the Shah's dominions.
The present Shah, who, whatever his failings,
has undeniably consolidated his reduced
but still compact territories, can boast a
firmer hold upon the province than any previous
member of his dynasty, + is as unquestionably
sovereign at Meshed as he is at
Teheran.

Revenue

In the reign of Fatte Ali Shah about
50 years ago the revenue of Khorasan
was 200.000 tomans, + 50,000 Kharwars of grain. (2)
In 1845 it
was 340.000 tomans, and 45,000 Kharwars
of grain. Last year (1889) it stood at
539.000 tomans (£ 154.000) and 43.000
Kharwars of grain (⅔ wheat and ⅓ barley), (3)
and 13.600 Kharwars of kah i.e chopped straw;
figures, which in spite of the depreciation
of the toman, show that the productive
capacity of the province is on the increase,
and also that the extortionate capacity
of the Government is better organised + more
keen.

(3) These figures correspond very fairly with those in the Table, printed from an independent source, which gives the Revenue of Khorasan in 1874 as 508.268 tomans or 60.123 Kharwars, in which the Province is stated to contain 24.244 Villages.

(1) Journal of a Diplomate vol II. p. 216
(2) 1 Kharwar = 650 lbs.; 3½ Kharwars = (approximately) 1 ton.

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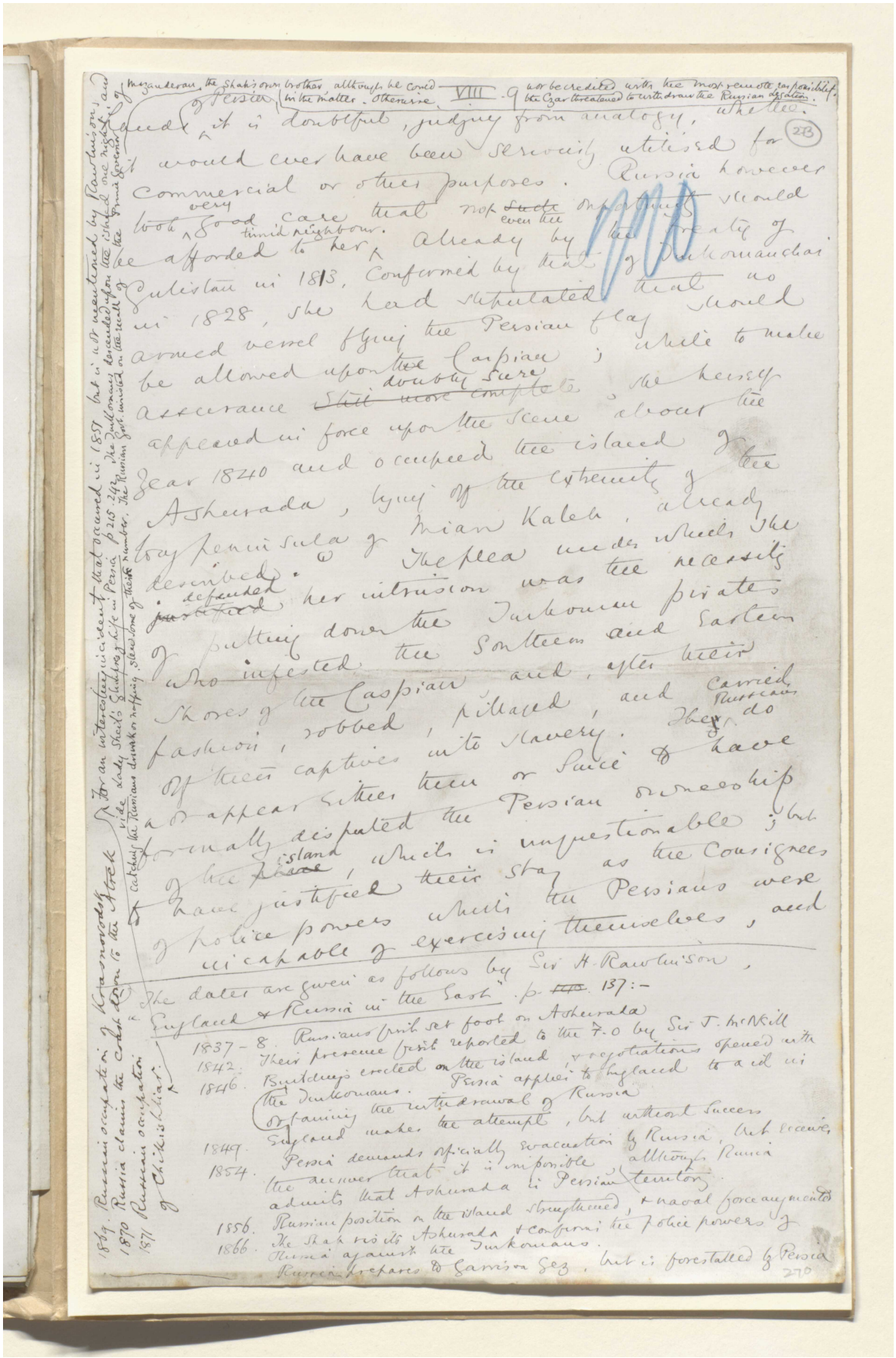



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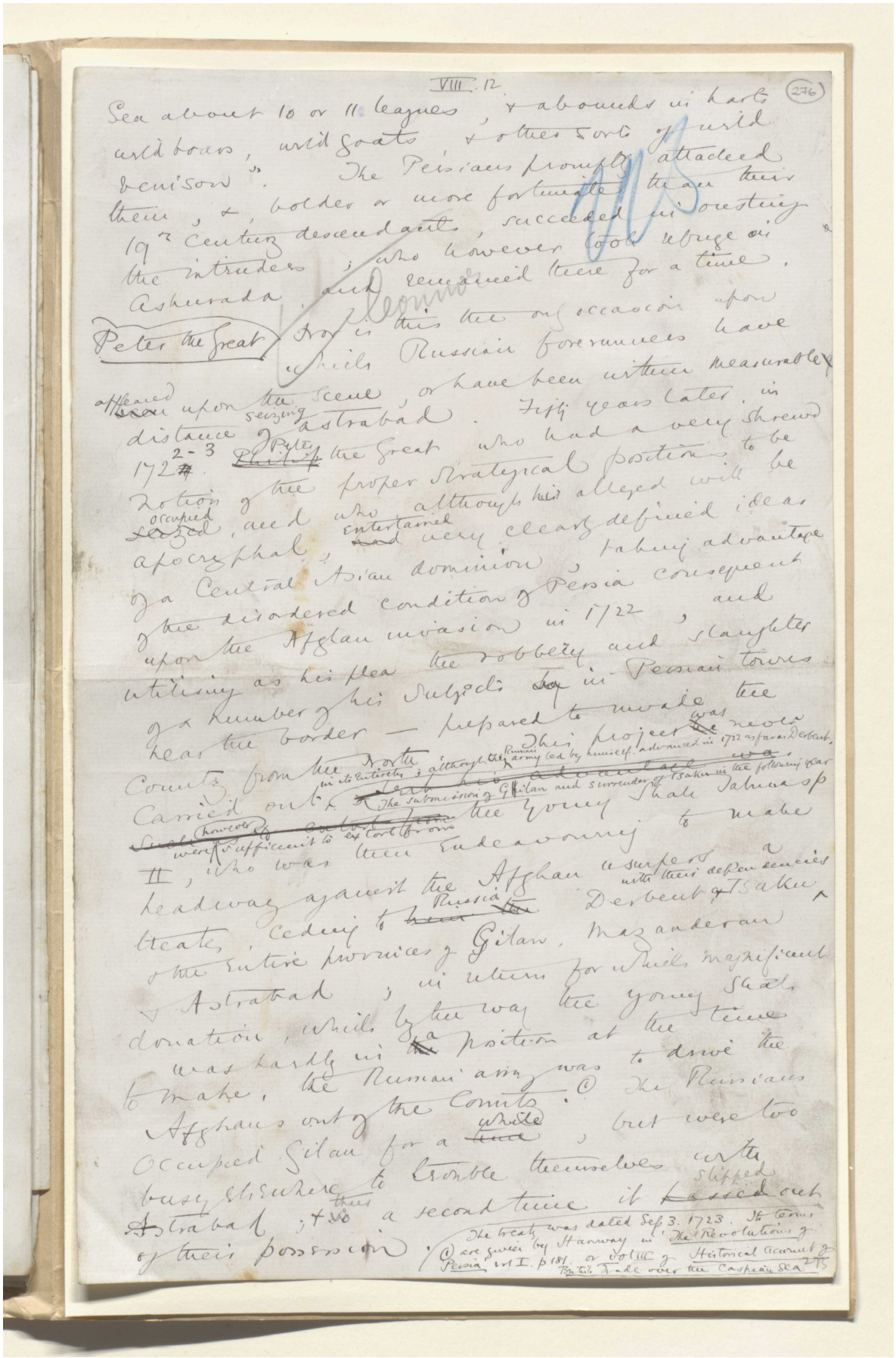
مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٢٧٦و] (١٣٥٥/٥٥١)



Sea about 10 or 11 leagues, & abounds in harts wild boars, wild goats & other sorts of wild venison". The Persians promptly attacked them, & bolder or more fortunate than their 19th century descendants, succeeded in ousting the intruders; who however took refuge in Ashurada, and remained there for a time.

Peter the Great

Nor is this the only occasion upon which Russian forerunners have appeared upon the scene, or have been within measurable distance of seizing Astrabad. Fifty years later, in 1722-3 Peter the Great who had a very shrewd notion of the proper strategical positions to be occupied, and who, although his alleged will be apocryphal, entertained very clearly defined ideas of a Central Asian dominion, taking advantage of the disordered condition of Persia consequent upon the Afghan invasion in 1722, and utilising as his plea the robbery and slaughter of a number of his subjects in Persian towns near the border — prepared to invade the Counts from the North. This project was never carried out in its entirety; although the Russian army led by himself advanced in 1722 as far as Derbent. The submission of Gilan and surrender of Tsaku in the following year were however sufficient to extort from the young Shah Tahmasp II, who was then endeavouring to make headway against the Afghan usurpers a treaty, ceding to Russia Derbent & Tsaku with their dependencies & the entire provinces of Gilan, Mazanderan & Astrabad; in return for which magnificent donation, which by the way the young Shah was hardly in a position at the time to make, the Russian army was to drive the Afghans out of the Counts. (1) The Russians occupied Gilan for a while, but were too busy elsewhere to trouble themselves with Astrabad; & thus a second time it slipped out of their possession.

(1) The treaty was dated Sep 3. 1723. Its terms are given by Hanway in "The Revolutions of Persia" vol I. p 181. or vol III of Historical Account of British Trade over the Caspian Sea 275

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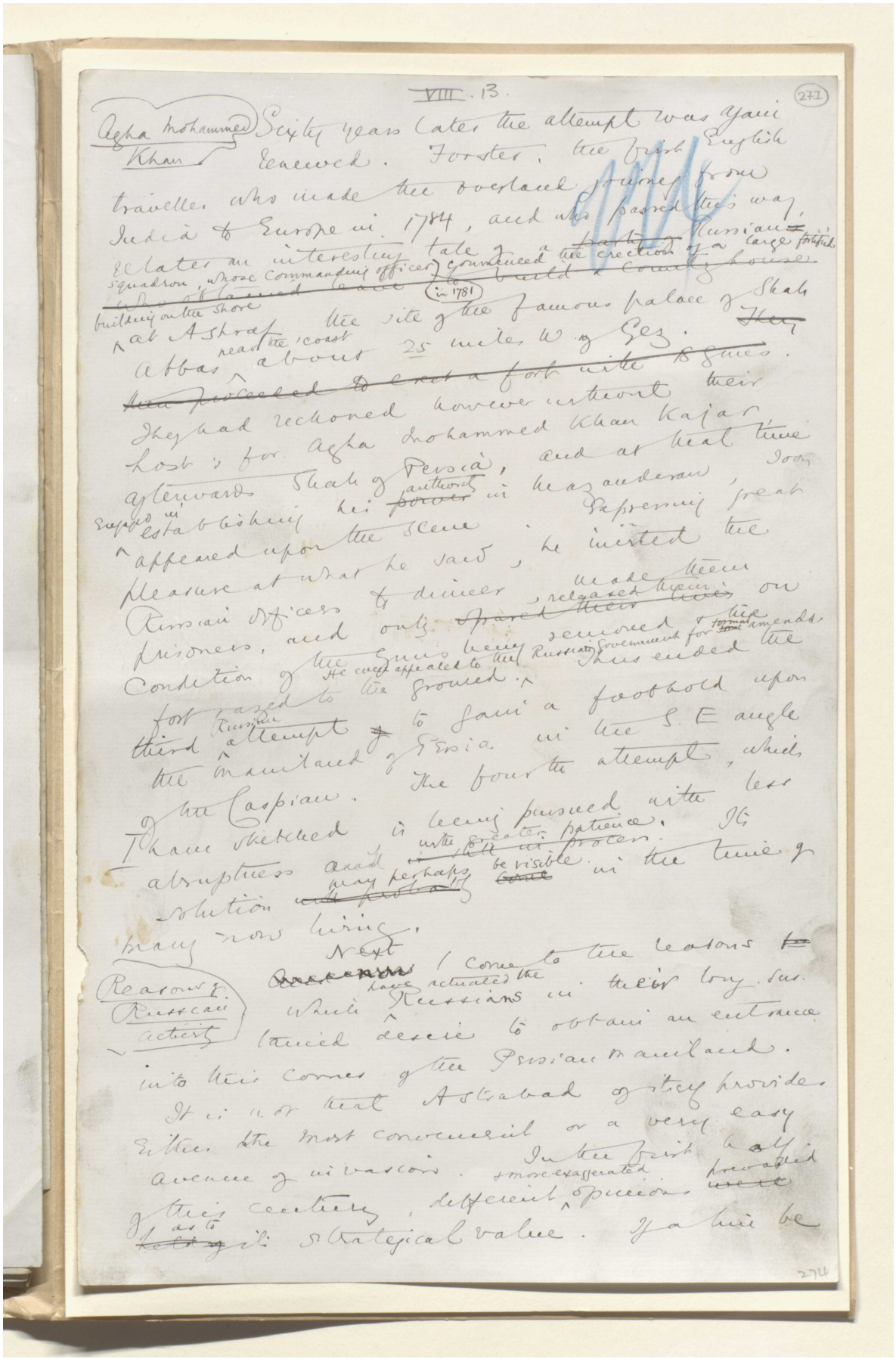

VIII. 13.

(271)

Agha Mohammed Khan

Sixty years later the attempt was again renewed. Forster, the first English traveller who made the overland journey from India to Europe in 1784, and who passed this way, relates an interesting tale of a ~~party of~~ Russian squadron, whose commanding officer ~~obtained leave to build a country house~~ commenced the erection of a large fortified building on the shore (in 1781) at Ashraf, the site of the famous palace of Shah Abbas near the coast about 25 miles W. of Gez. ~~They then proceeded to erect a fort with 18 guns.~~ They had reckoned however without their host; for Agha Mohammed Khan Kajar afterwards Shah of Persia, and at that time engaged in establishing his ~~power~~ authority in Mazanderan, soon appeared upon the scene. Expressing great pleasure at what he saw, he invited the Russian officers to dinner, made them prisoners, and only ~~spared their lives~~ released them on condition of the guns being removed & the fort raised to the ground. He even appealed to the Russian Government for formal amends. Thus ended the third Russian attempt to gain a foothold upon the Mainland of Persia in the S.E. angle of the Caspian. The fourth attempt, which I have sketched, is being pursued with less abruptness and with greater patience. Its solution may perhaps be visible in the time of many now living.

Reasons of Russian activity

Next ~~Anecdotes~~ I come to the reasons which have actuated the Russians in their long sustained desire to obtain an entrance into this corner of the Persian Mainland. It is not that Astrabad of itself provides either the most convenient or a very easy avenue of invasion. In the first half of this century, different & more exaggerated opinions prevailed ~~were held~~ as to its strategical value. If a line be

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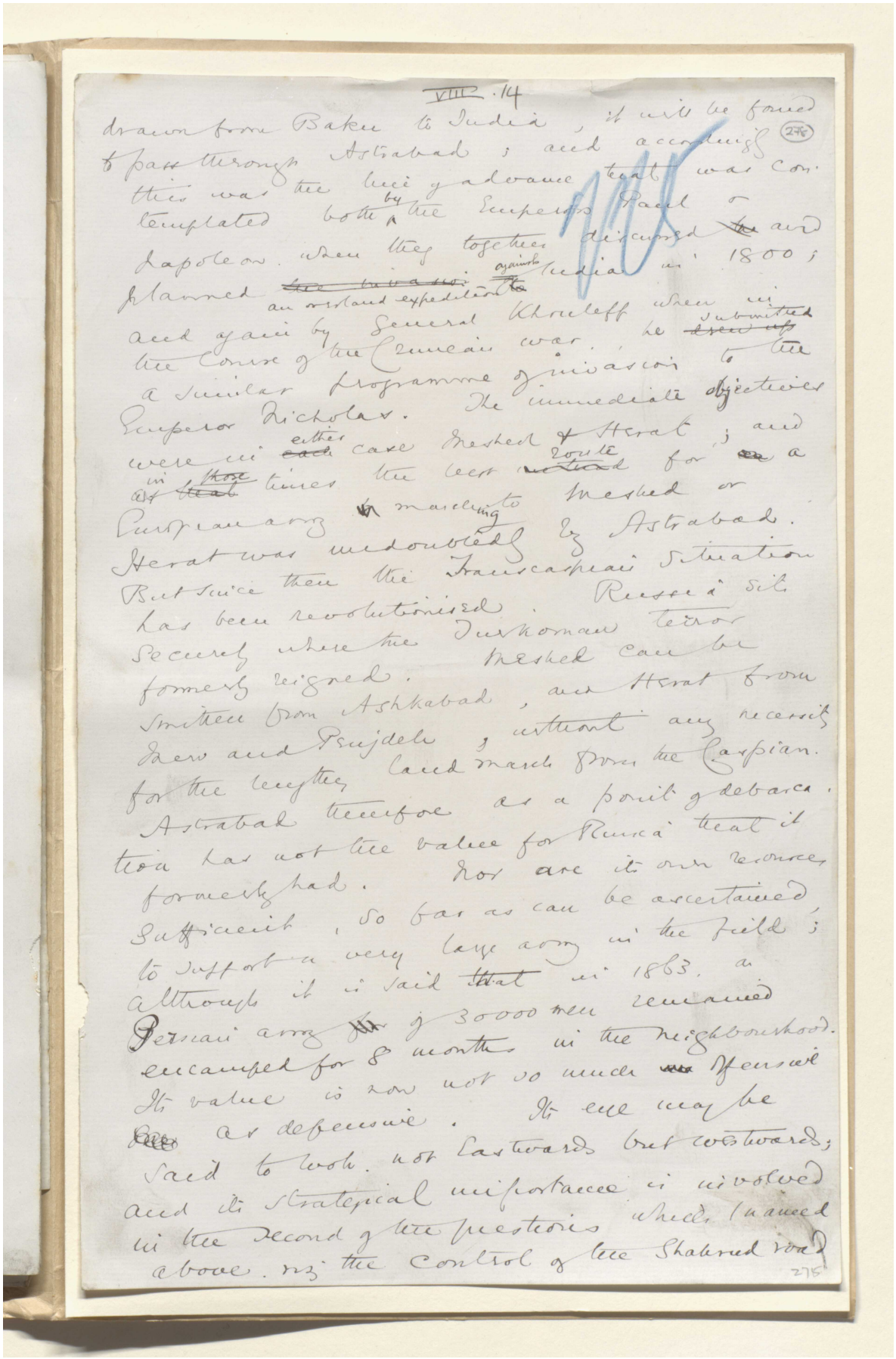

VIII. 14

drawn from Baku to India, it will be found to pass through Astrabad; and accordingly this was the line of advance that was contemplated both by the Emperors Paul & Napoleon when they together discussed and planned an overland expedition against India in 1800; and again by General Khouleff when in the course of the Crimean war, he submitted a similar programme of invasion to the Emperor Nicholas. The immediate objectives were in either case Meshed & Herat; and in those times the best route for a European army marching to Meshed or Herat was undoubtedly by Astrabad. But since then the Transcaspian situation has been revolutionised. Russia sits securely where the Turkoman terror formerly reigned. Meshed can be smitten from Ashkabad, and Herat from New and Penjdeh, without any necessity for the lengthy land march from the Caspian. Astrabad therefore as a point of debarcation has not the value for Russia that it formerly had. Nor are its own resources sufficient, so far as can be ascertained, to support a very large army in the field; although it is said that in 1863, a Persian army of 30000 men remained encamped for 8 months in the neighbourhood. Its value is now not so much offensive as defensive. Its eye may be said to look not Eastwards but westwards; and its strategical importance is involved in the second of the questions which I named above, viz the control of the Shahrud road

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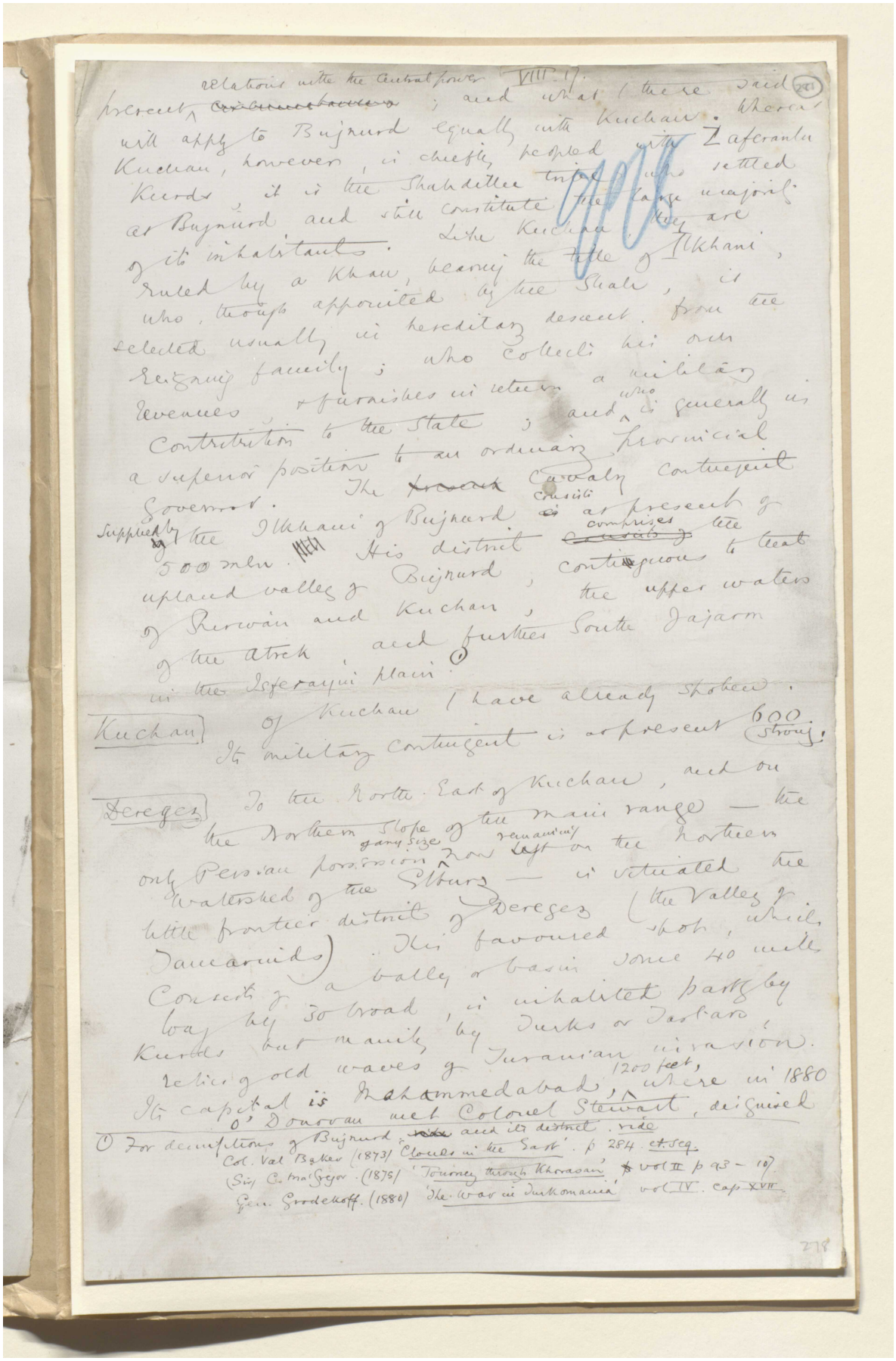



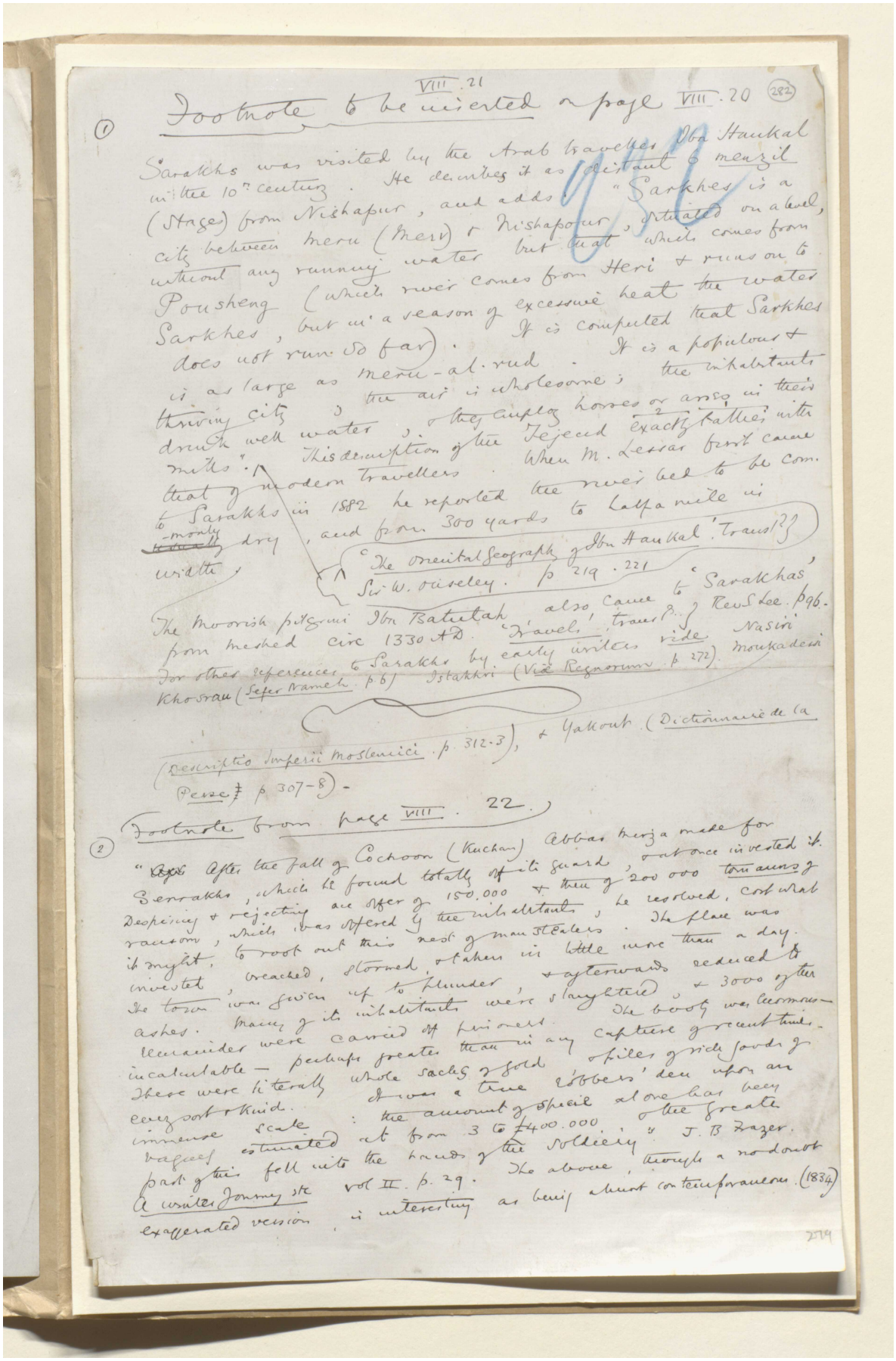

VIII. 21

(1) Footnote to be inserted on page VIII. 20 (282)

Sarakhs was visited by the Arab traveller Ibn Haukal in the 10th century. He describes it as distant 6 menzil (Stages) from Nishapur, and adds: "Sarkhes is a city between Meru (Merv) & Nishapour, situated on a level, without any running water but that which comes from Pousheng (which river comes from Heri & runs on to Sarkhes, but in a season of excessive heat the water does not run so far). It is computed that Sarkhes is as large as Meru-al-rud. It is a populous & thriving city; the air is wholesome; the inhabitants drink well water, & they employ horses or asses in their mills". This description of the Tejend exactly tallies with that of modern travellers. When M. Lessar first came to Sarakhs in 1882 he reported the river bed to be commonly dry, and from 300 yards to half a mile in width.

'The Oriental Geography of Ibn Haukal'. Transl. Sir W. Ouseley. p. 219. 221

The Moorish pilgrim Ibn Batutah also came to 'Sarakhas' from Meshed circ 1330 A.D. 'Travels', transl. Rev. S. Lee. p. 96. For other references to Sarakhs by early writers vide Nasiri Khosrau (Sefer Nameh. p. 6) Istakhri (Viæ Regnorum. p. 272). Moukadessi (Descriptio Imperii Moslemici. p. 312-3), & Yakout (Dictionnaire de la Perse. p. 307-8).

(2) Footnote from page VIII. 22.

"After the fall of Cochoon (Kuchan) Abbas Mirza made for Serrakhs, which he found totally off its guard, & at once invested it. Despising & rejecting an offer of 150,000 & then of 200 000 tomauns of ransom, which was offered by the inhabitants, he resolved, cost what it might, to root out this nest of man stealers. The place was invested, breached, stormed, & taken in little more than a day. The town was given up to plunder, & afterwards reduced to ashes. Many of its inhabitants were slaughtered, & 3000 of the remainder were carried off prisoners. The booty was enormous — incalculable — perhaps greater than in any capture of recent times. These were literally whole sacks of gold & piles of rich goods of every sort & kind. It was a true robbers' den upon an immense scale: the amount of specie alone has been vaguely estimated at from 3 to £400.000, & the greater part of this fell into the hands of the soldiery". J. B. Frazer. A winter Journey etc vol II. p. 29. The above, though a no doubt exaggerated version, is interesting as being almost contemporaneous. (1834)

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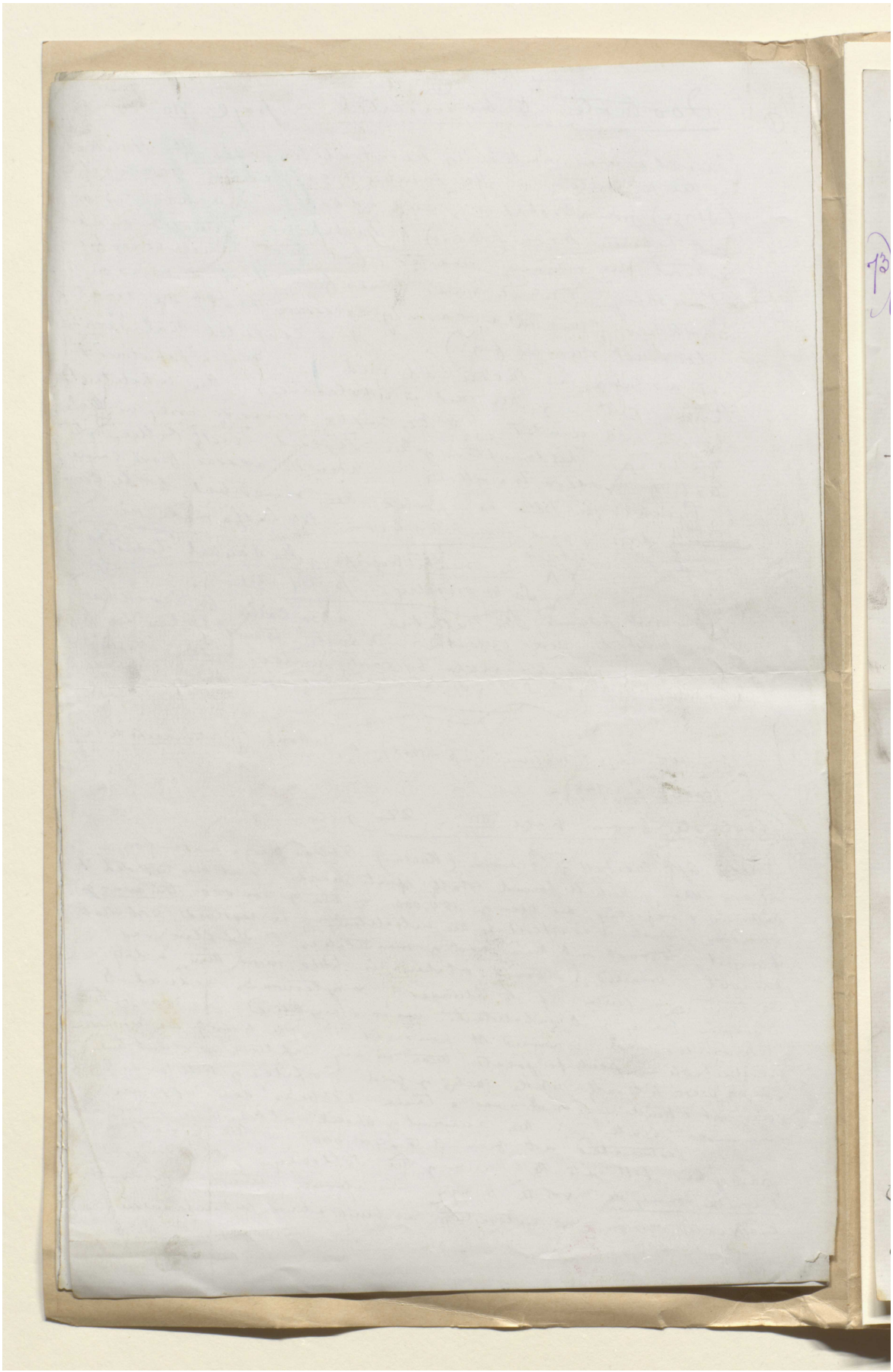
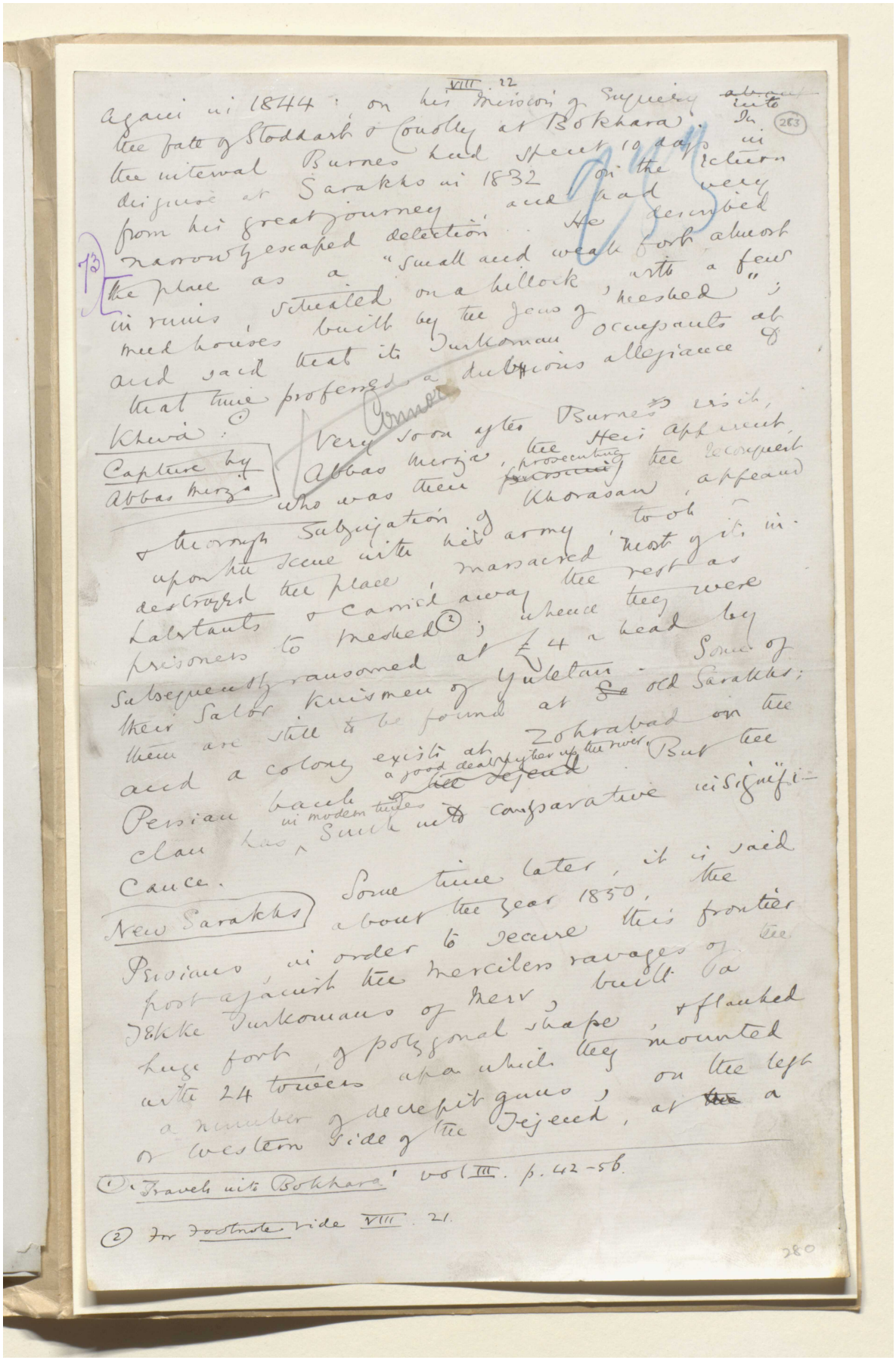


مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٢٨٣و] (١٣٥٥/٥٦٥)

VIII. 22



again in 1844: on his mission of enquiry ~~about~~ into the fate of Stoddart & Conolly at Bokhara. In the interval Burnes had spent 10 days in disguise at Sarakhs in 1832 on the return from his great journey, and had very narrowly escaped detection. He described the place as a "small and weak fort almost in ruins, situated on a hillock, with a few mud houses built by the Jews of Meshed"; and said that its Turkoman occupants at that time professed a dubious allegiance to Khiva.[1]

Capture by Abbas Mirza

Very soon after Burnes's visit, Abbas Mirza, the Heir apparent, who was then ~~[illegible]~~ prosecuting the reconquest & thorough subjugation of Khorasan, appeared upon the scene with his army, took & destroyed the place, massacred most of its inhabitants & carried away the rest as prisoners to Meshed[2]; whence they were subsequently ransomed at £4 a head by their Salor kinsmen of Yuletan. Some of them are still to be found at ~~So~~ old Sarakhs; and a colony exists at Zohrabad on the Persian bank ~~of the Tejend~~ a good deal higher up the river. But the clan has in modern times sunk into comparative insignificance.

New Sarakhs

Some time later, it is said about the year 1850, the Persians, in order to secure this frontier post against the merciless ravages of the Tekke Turkomans of Merv, built a huge fort, of polygonal shape, & flanked with 24 towers upon which they mounted a number of decrepit guns, on the left or western side of the Tejend, at ~~the~~ a

(1) 'Travels into Bokhara' vol III. p. 42-56.

(2) For footnote vide VIII. 21.

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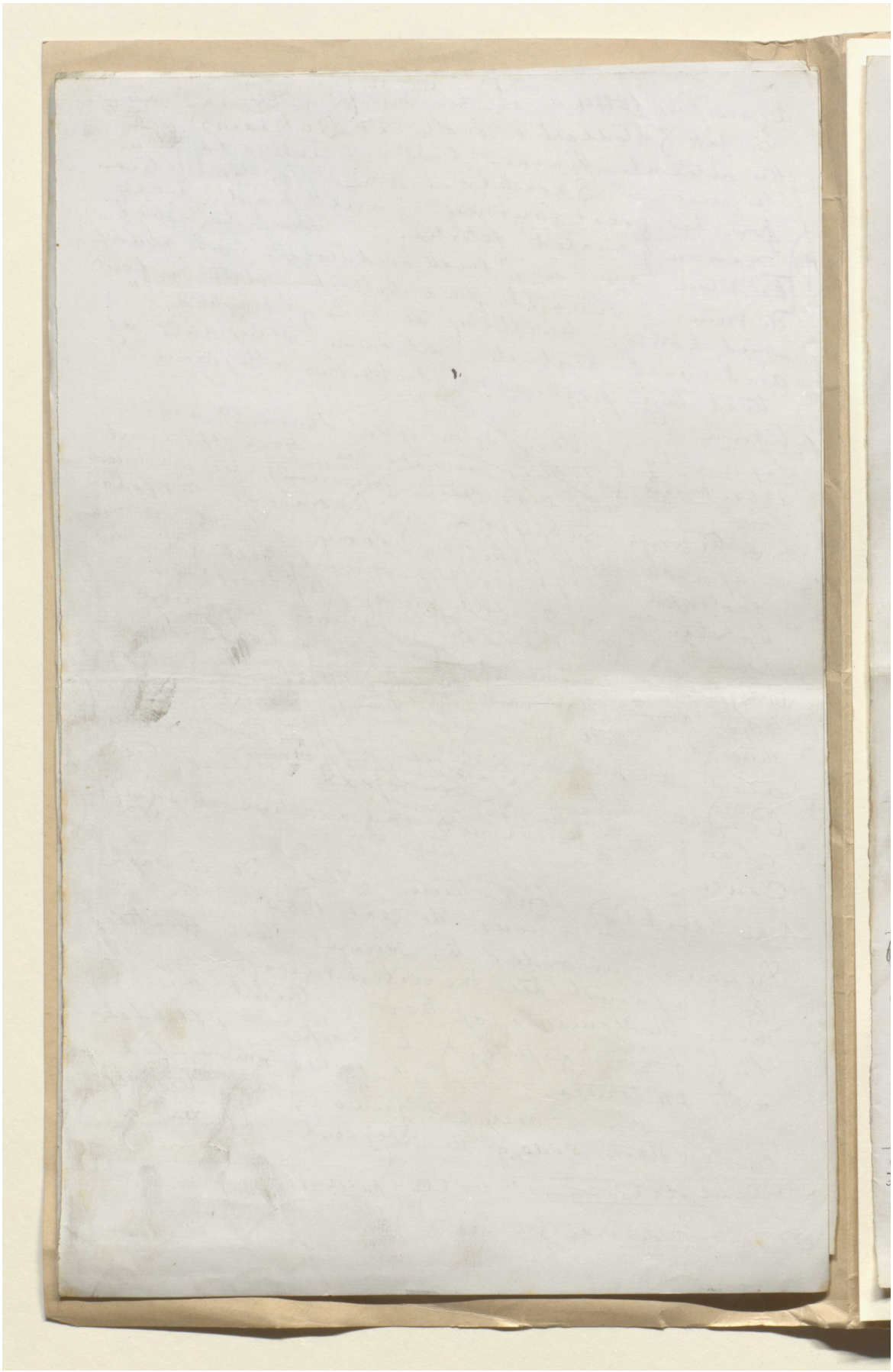

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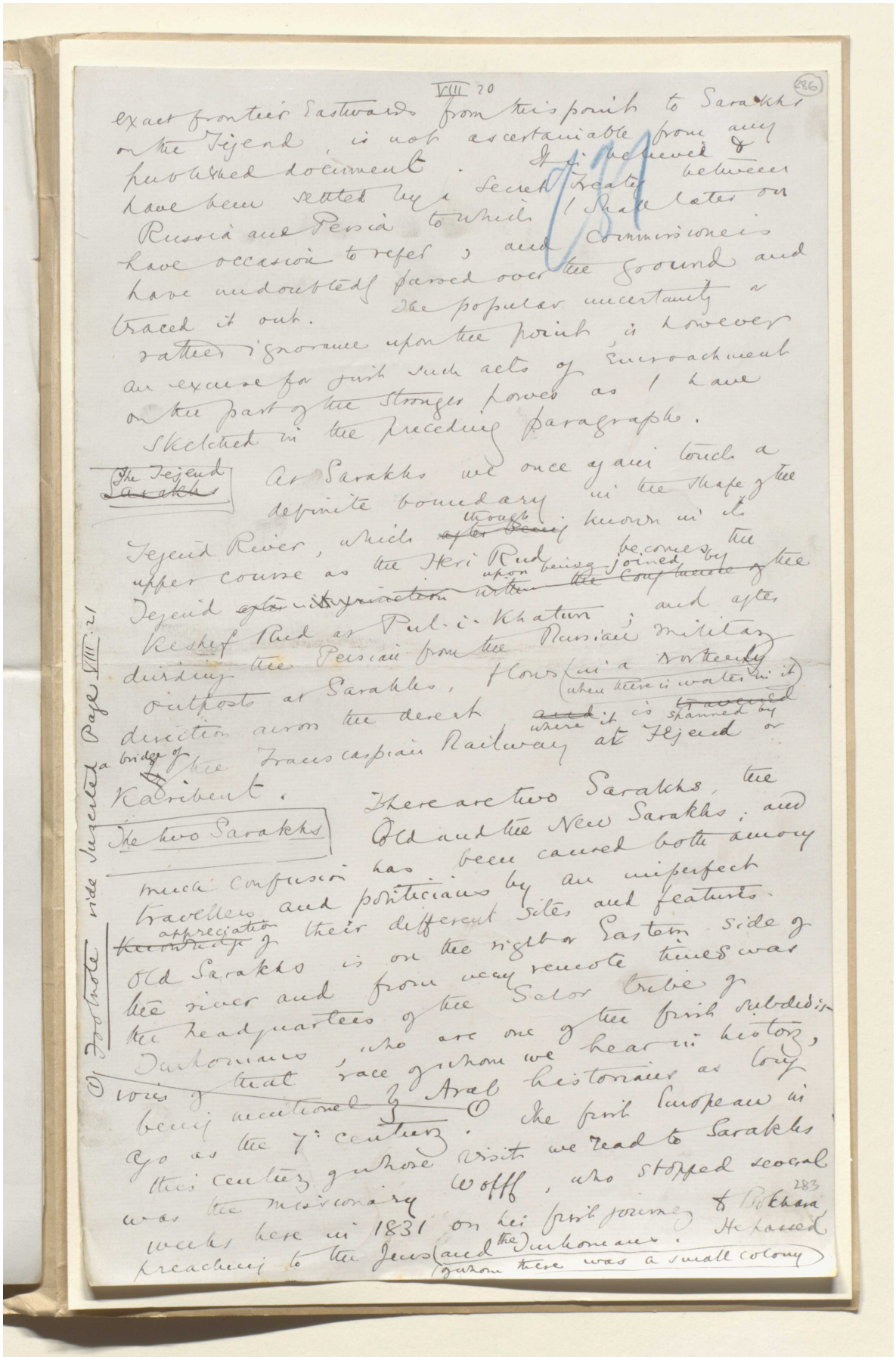

VIII 20 (286)

exact frontier Eastwards from this point to Sarakhs on the Tejend, is not ascertainable from any published document. It is believed & have been settled by a Secret Treaty between Russia and Persia to which I shall later on have occasion to refer; and Commissioners have undoubtedly passed over the ground and traced it out. The popular uncertainty or rather ignorance upon the point is however an excuse for just such acts of Encroachment on the part of the stronger power as I have sketched in the preceding paragraph.

The Tejend ~~Sarakhs~~

At Sarakhs we once again touch a definite boundary in the shape of the Tejend River, which ~~after being~~ though known in its upper course as the Heri Rud becomes the Tejend ~~after its junction within the Confluence of~~ upon being joined by the Keshef Rud at Pul-i-Khatun; and after dividing the Persian from the Russian military outposts at Sarakhs, flows (in a northerly direction across the desert, ~~and~~ where it is ~~traversed~~ spanned by a bridge of the Transcaspian Railway at Tejend or Karibent. (when there is water in it)

The two Sarakhs

There are two Sarakhs, the Old and the New Sarakhs; and much confusion has been caused both among travellers and politicians by an imperfect ~~knowledge~~ appreciation of their different sites and features. Old Sarakhs is on the right or Eastern side of the river and from very remote times was the headquarters of the Salor tribe of Turkomans, who are one of the first subdivisions of that race of whom we hear in history, being mentioned by Arab historians as long ago as the 7th century. (1) The first European in this century of whose visit we read to Sarakhs was the missionary Wolff, who stopped several weeks here in 1831 on his first journey to Bokhara preaching to the Jews (and the Turkomans. He passed (of whom there was a small colony

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(1) Footnote ride Inserted Page VIII 21

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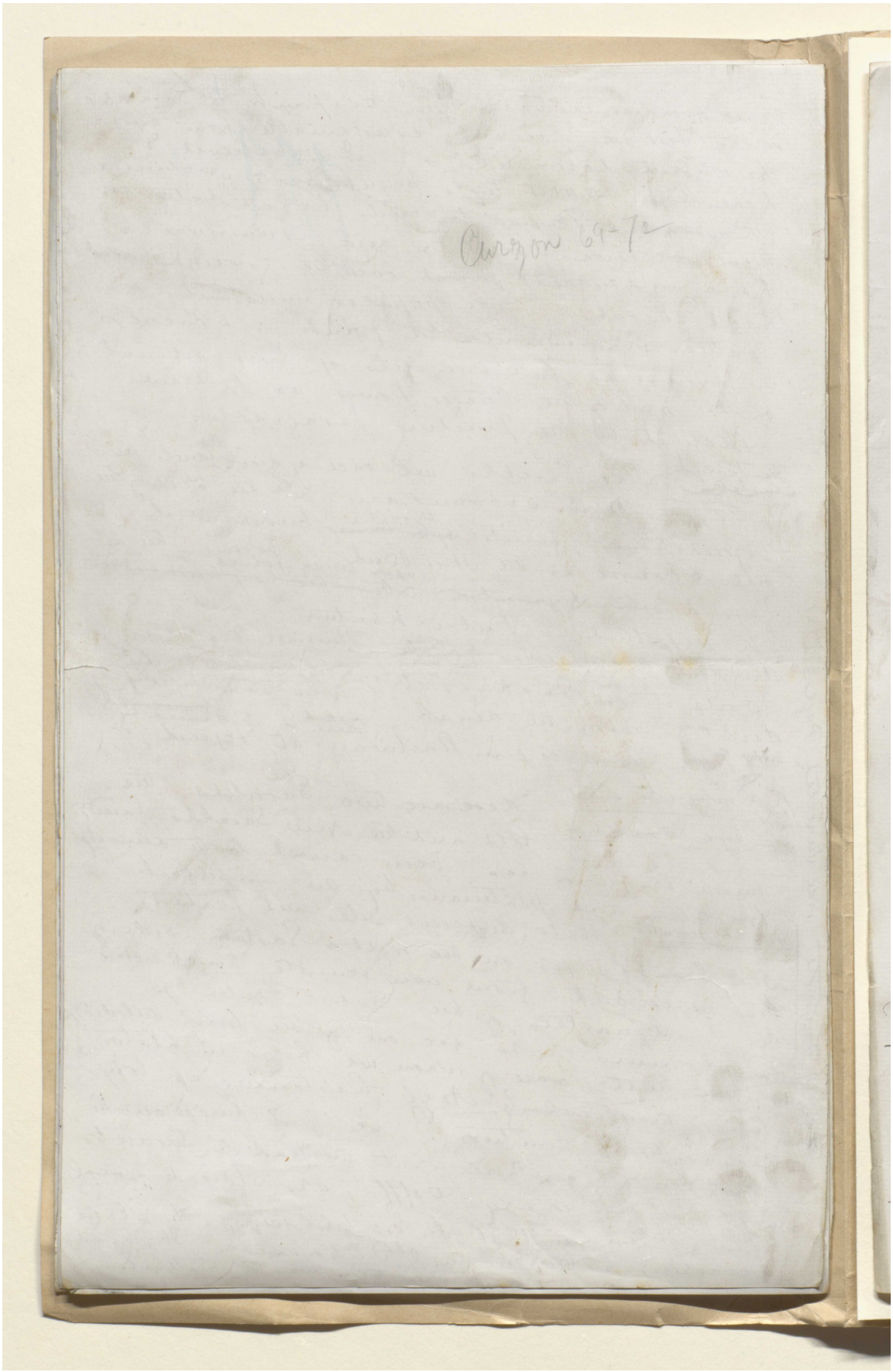
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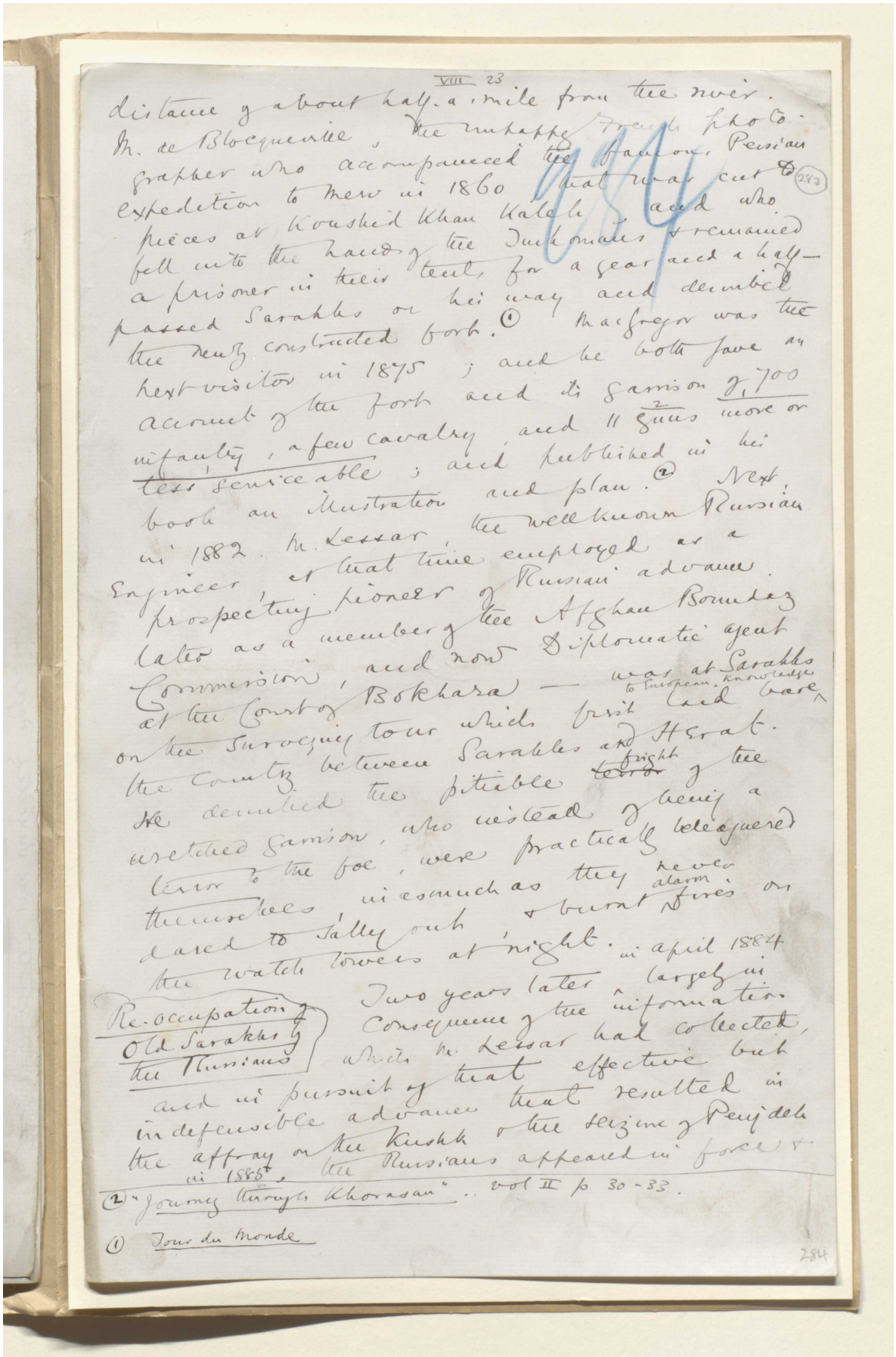

VIII 23

distance of about half a mile from the river. M. de Blocqueville, the unhappy French photographer who accompanied the famous Persian expedition to Merv in 1860, that was cut to pieces at Koushid Khan Kaleh, and who fell into the hands of the Turkomans & remained a prisoner in their tents for a year and a half — passed Sarakhs on his way and described the newly constructed fort.① MacGregor was the next visitor in 1875; and he both gave an account of the fort and its garrison of 700 infantry, a few cavalry, and 11 guns more or less serviceable; and published in his book an illustration and plan.② Next, in 1882, M. Lessar, the well known Russian Engineer, at that time employed as a prospecting pioneer of Russian advance, later as a member of the Afghan Boundary Commission, and now Diplomatic agent at the Court of Bokhara — was at Sarakhs on the surveying tour which first laid bare to European knowledge the country between Sarakhs and Herat. He described the pitiable ~~terror~~ fright of the wretched garrison, who instead of being a terror to the foe, were practically beleaguered themselves, inasmuch as they never dared to sally out & burnt alarm fires on the watch towers at night.

Re-occupation of Old Sarakhs by the Russians

Two years later in April 1884 largely in consequence of the information which M. Lessar had collected, and in pursuit of that effective but indefensible advance that resulted in the affray on the Kushk & the seizure of Penjdeh in 1885, the Russians appeared in force &

② "Journey through Khorasan". vol II p. 30-33.

① Tour du Monde

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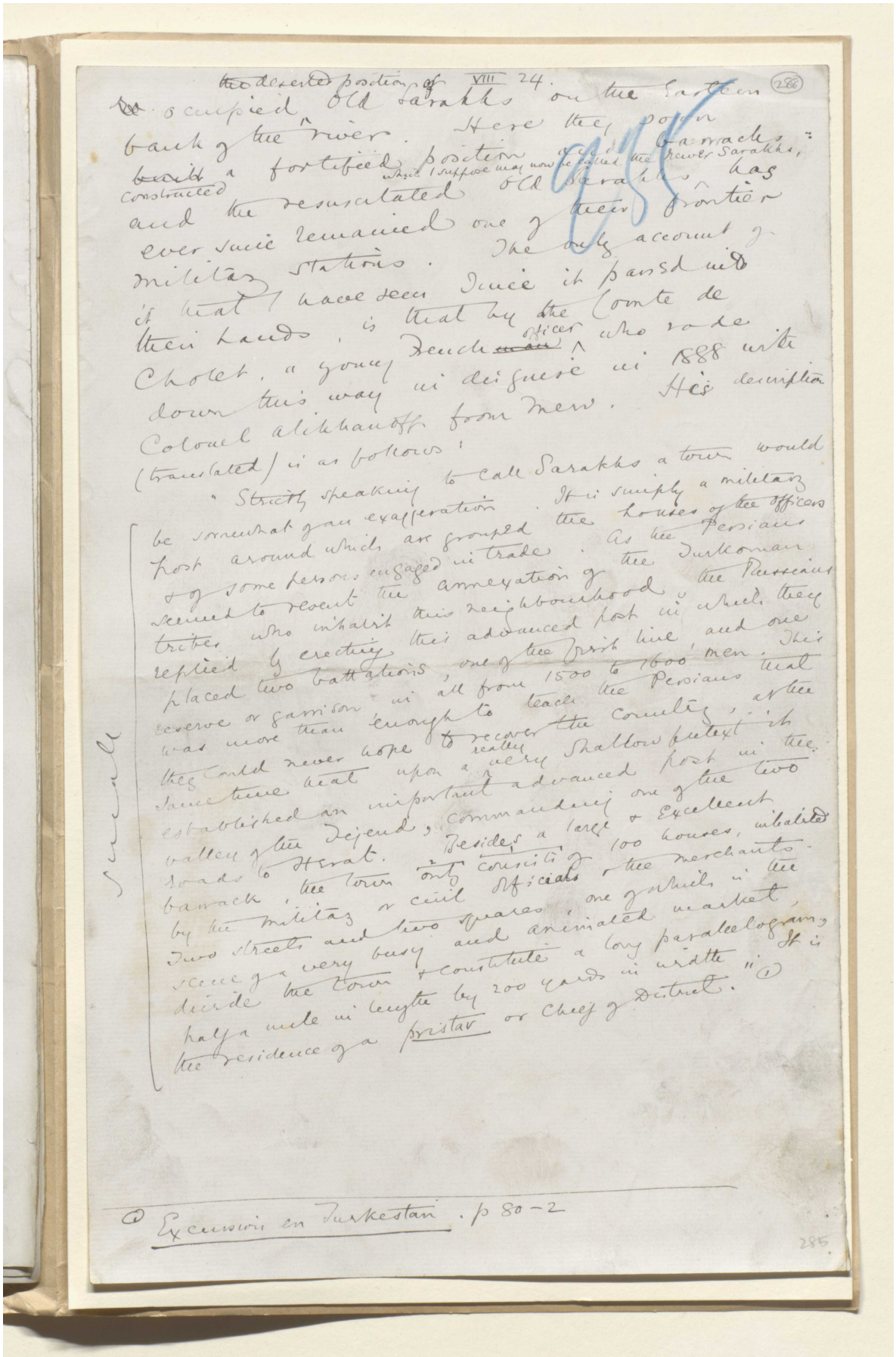
VIII 24. (286)



~~the~~ occupied the deserted position of Old Sarakhs on the Eastern bank of the river. Here they soon ~~built~~ constructed a fortified position and barracks: which I suppose may now be called the Newer Sarakhs, and the resuscitated Old Sarakhs has ever since remained one of their frontier military stations. The only account of it that I have seen since it passed into their hands, is that by the Comte de Cholet, a young French ~~man~~ officer who rode down this way in disguise in 1888 with Colonel Alikhanoff from Merv. His description (translated) is as follows:

"Strictly speaking to call Sarakhs a town would be somewhat of an exaggeration. It is simply a military post around which are grouped the houses of the officers & of some persons engaged in trade. As the Persians seemed to resent the annexation of the Turkoman tribes who inhabit this neighbourhood, the Russians replied by erecting this advanced post in which they placed two battalions, one of the first line, and one reserve or garrison in all from 1500 to 1600 men. This was more than enough to teach the Persians that they could never hope to recover the country, at the same time that upon a really very shallow pretext it established an important advanced post in the valley of the Tejend, commanding one of the two roads to Herat. Besides a large & excellent barrack, the town only consists of 100 houses, inhabited by the military or civil officials & the merchants. Two streets and two squares, one of which is the scene of a very busy and animated market, divide the town & constitute a long parallelogram, half a mile in length by 200 yards in width. It is the residence of a pristav or Chief of District."(1)

Small

(1) Excursion en Turkestan. p 80-2

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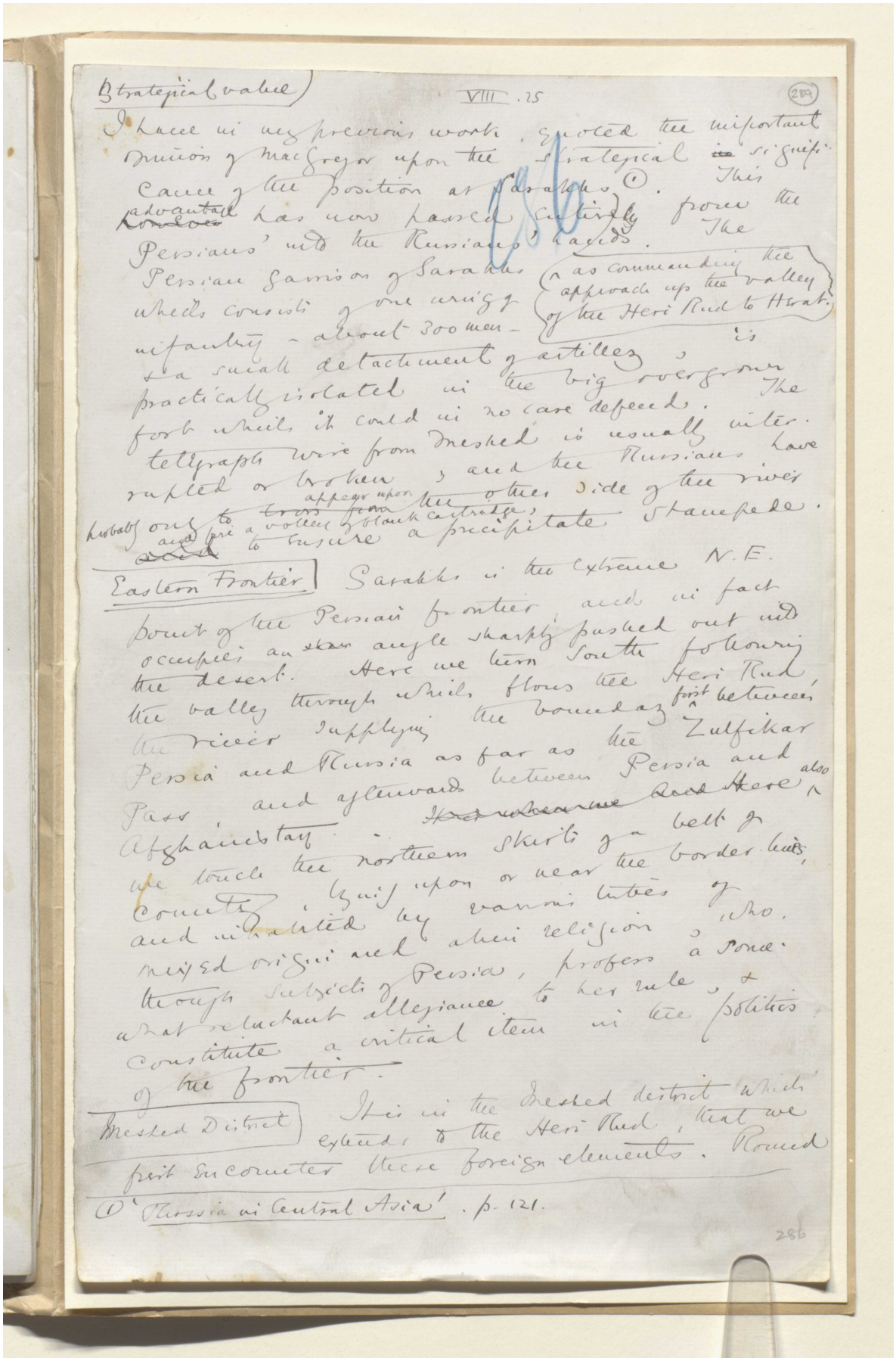

Strategical value) VIII. 25 (289)

I have in my previous work, quoted the important opinion of MacGregor upon the strategical ~~in~~ significance of the position at Sarakhs (1). This ~~however~~ advantage has now passed entirely from the Persians' into the Russians' hands. The Persian garrison of Sarakhs (as commanding the approach up the valley of the Heri Rud to Herat.) which consists of one wing of infantry - about 300 men - & a small detachment of artillery, is practically isolated in the big overgrown fort which it could in no case defend. The telegraph wire from Meshed is usually interrupted or broken, and the Russians have probably only to ~~cross from~~ appear upon the other side of the river and fire a volley of blank cartridge, ~~and~~ to ensure a precipitate stampede.

Eastern Frontier | Sarakhs is the extreme N.E. point of the Persian frontier, and in fact occupies an ~~star~~ angle sharply pushed out into the desert. Here we turn South following the valley through which flows the Heri Rud, the river supplying the boundary first between Persia and Russia as far as the Zulfikar Pass, and afterwards between Persia and Afghanistan. ~~Here where we~~ ~~and~~ Here also we touch the northern skirts of a belt of country, lying upon or near the border lines, and inhabited by various tribes of mixed origin and alien religion, who, though subjects of Persia, profess a somewhat reluctant allegiance to her rule, & constitute a critical item in the politics of the frontier.

Meshed District | It is in the Meshed district which extends to the Heri Rud, that we first encounter these foreign elements. Round

(1) 'Russia in Central Asia'. p. 121.

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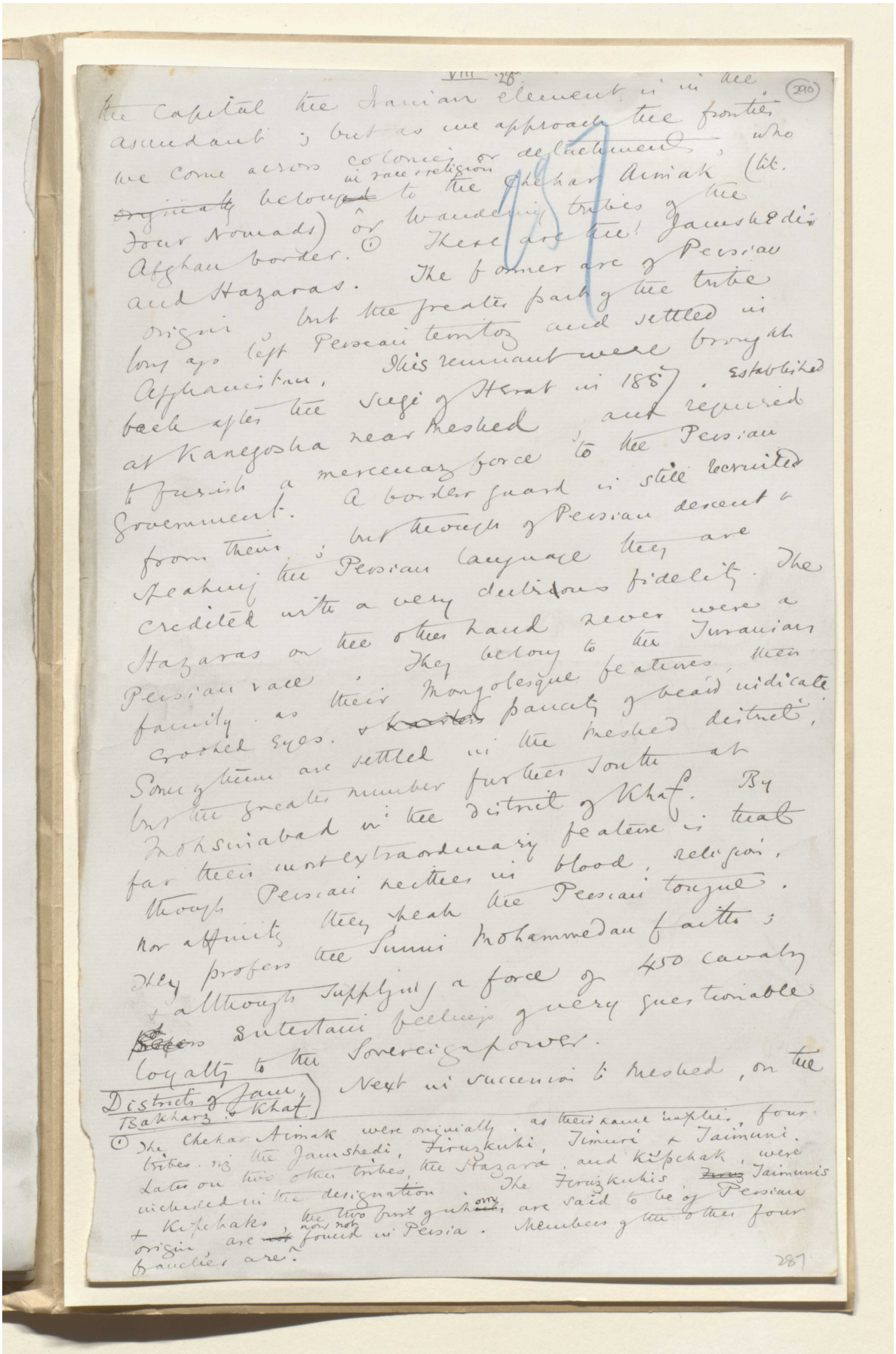

the Capital the Iranian element is in the
ascendant; but as we approach the frontier
we come across colonies or detachments, who
in race & religion belong to the Chehar Aimak (lit.
Four Nomads) or wandering tribes of the
Afghan border. ① These are the Jamshedis
and Hazaras. The former are of Persian
origin but the greater part of the tribe
long ago left Persian territory and settled in
Afghanistan, this remnant were brought
back after the siege of Herat in 1857, established
at Kanegosha near Meshed and required
to furnish a mercenary force to the Persian
Government. A border guard is still recruited
from them; but through Persian descent &
speaking the Persian language they are
credited with a very dubious fidelity. The
Hazaras on the other hand never were a
Persian race, as their Mongolesque features, their
family. They belong to the Turanian
crooked eyes & scanty beard indicate.
Some few are settled in the Meshed district,
but the greater number further South at
Mohsenabad in the district of Khaf. By
far their most extraordinary feature is that
though Persian neither in blood, religion,
nor affinity they speak the Persian tongue.
They profess the Sunni Mohammedan faith;
although supplying a force of 450 cavalry
Sistanis become very questionable
loyalty to the Sovereign power.
Next in succession to Meshed, on the
District of Jam,
Bakharz & Khaf.

① The Chekar Aimak were originally, as their name implies, four
tribes, viz the Jamshedi, Firuzkuhi, Timuri & Taimani.
Later on two other tribes, the Hazara, and Kipchak, were
included in the designation. The Firuzkuhis, Taimunis
& Kipchaks, the two first only, are said to be of Persian
origin, are not found in Persia. Members of the other four
tribes are.

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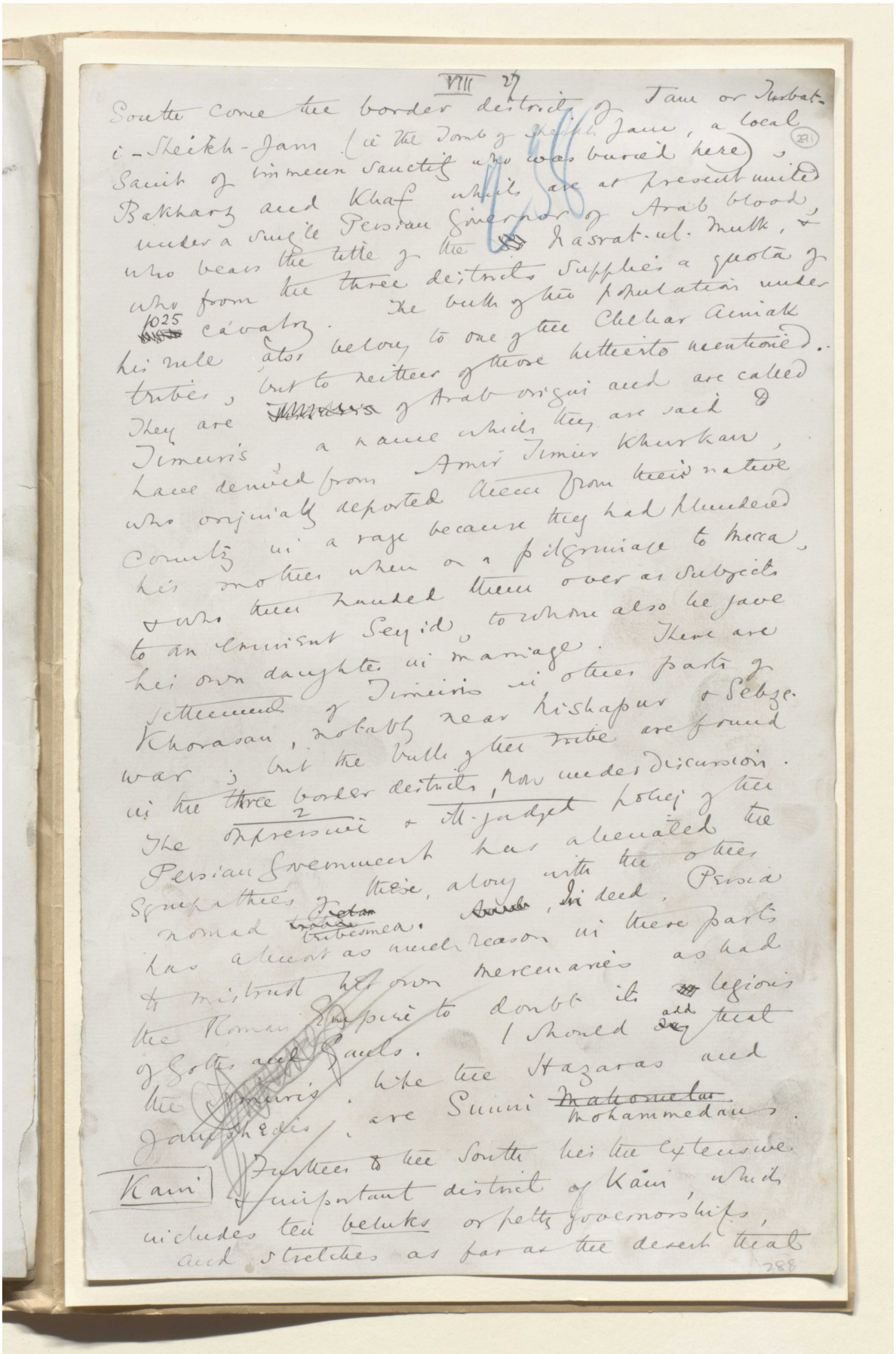



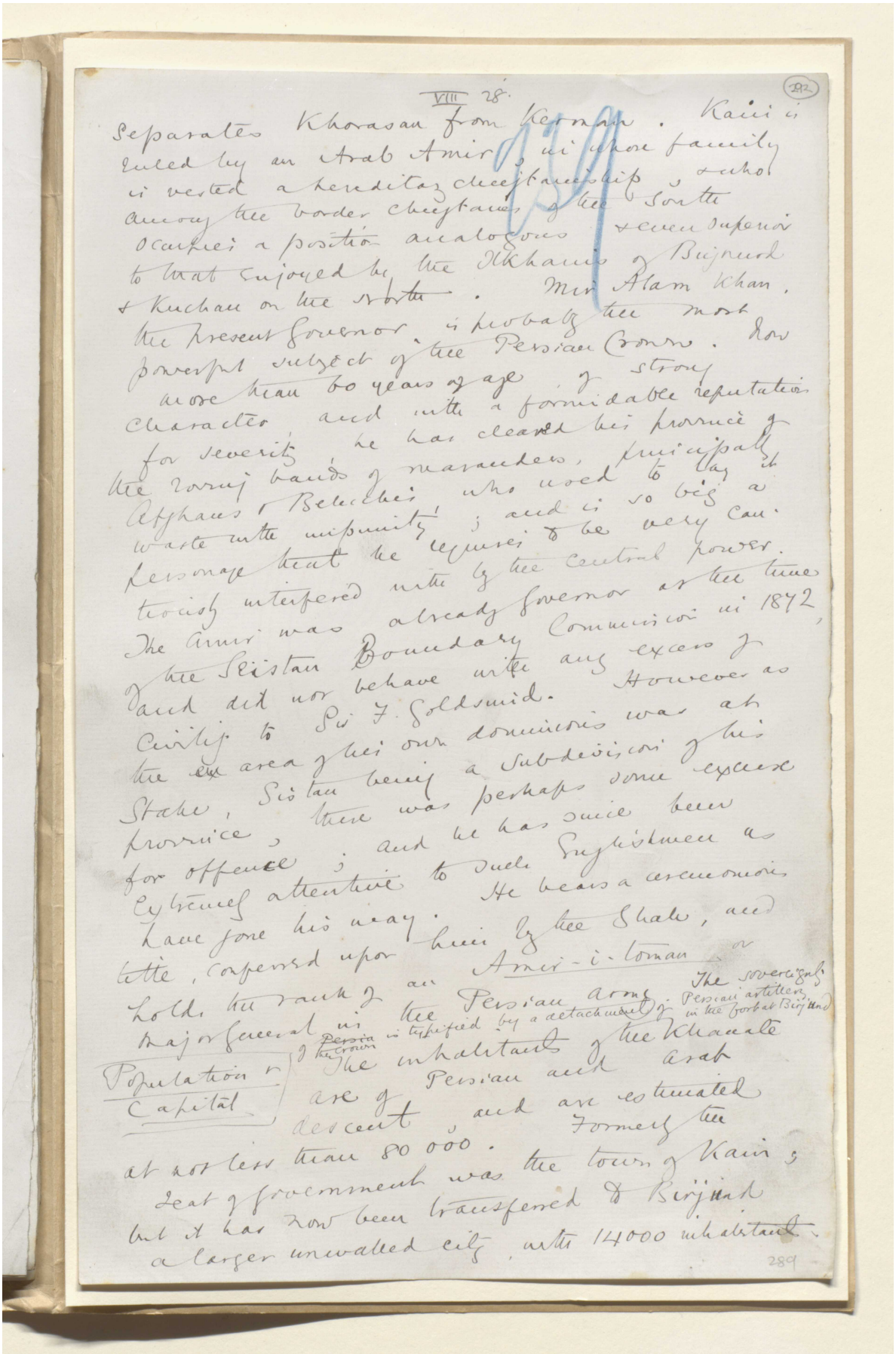

VIII 28. (292)

Separates Khorasan from Kerman. Kain is ruled by an Arab Amir, in whose family is vested a hereditary chieftainship, & who among the border chieftains of the South occupies a position analogous & even superior to that enjoyed by the Ilkhanis of Birjund & Kuchan on the North. Mir Alam Khan, the present Governor, is probably the most powerful subject of the Persian Crown. Now more than 60 years of age, of strong character, and with a formidable reputation for severity, he has cleared his province of the roving bands of marauders, principally Afghans & Beluchis, who used to lay it waste with impunity; and is so big a personage that he requires to be very cautiously interfered with by the central power. The Amir was already Governor at the time of the Seistan Boundary Commission in 1872, and did not behave with any excess of civility to Sir F. Goldsmid. However as the area of his own dominions was at Stake, Sistan being a subdivision of his province, there was perhaps some excuse for offence; and he has since been extremely attentive to such Englishmen as have gone his way. He bears a ceremonious title, conferred upon him by the Shah, and holds the rank of an Amir-i-toman or Major General in the Persian army. The sovereignty of the Crown is typified by a detachment of Persian artillery in the fort at Birjund.

Population & Capital

The inhabitants of the Khanate are of Persian and Arab descent, and are estimated at not less than 80 000. Formerly the seat of government was the town of Kain; but it has now been transferred to Birjund a larger unwalled city, with 14000 inhabitants.

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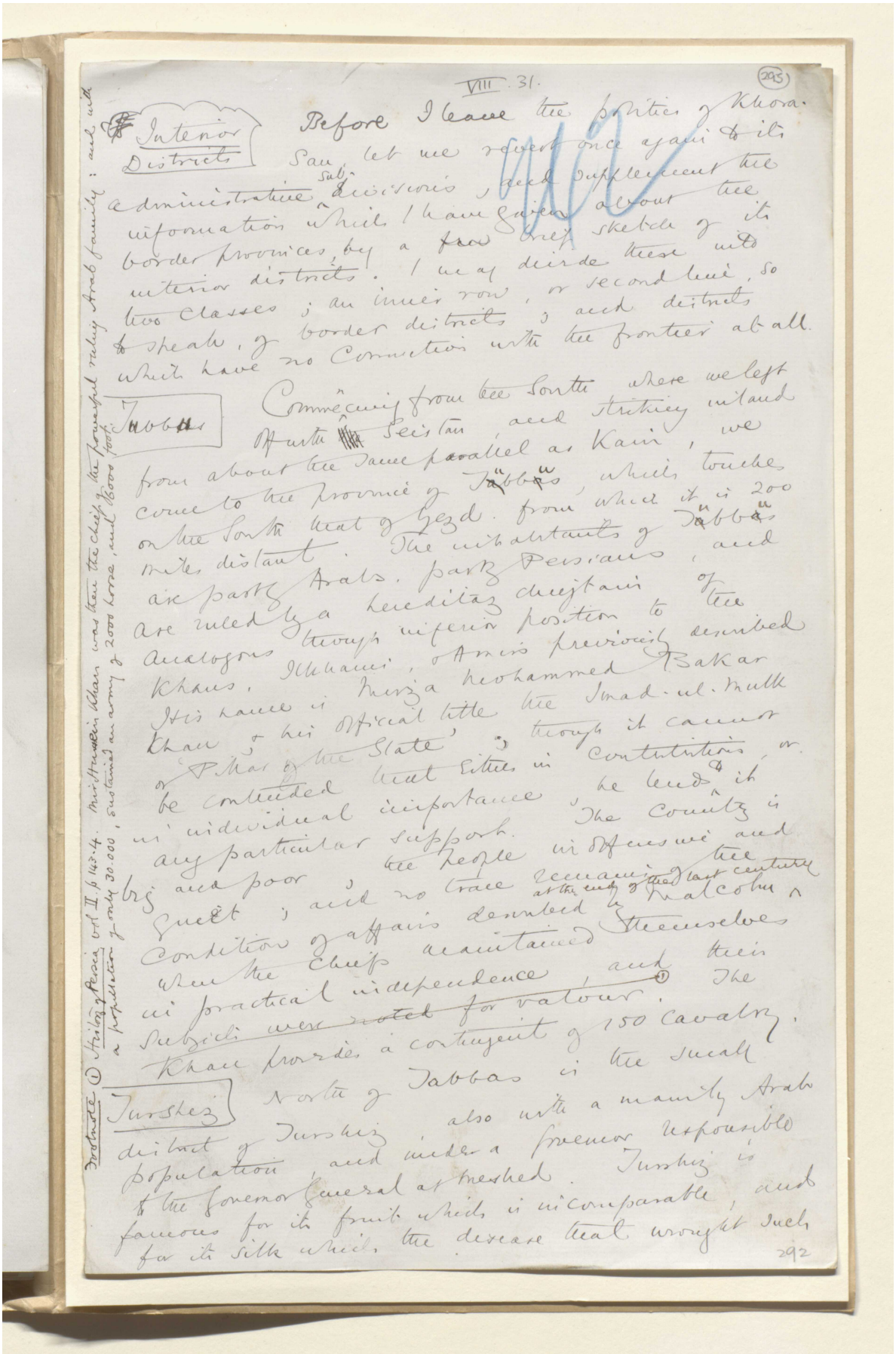

VIII. 31. (295)

Interior Districts

Before I leave the politics of Khorasan, let me revert once again to its administrative subdivisions, and supplement the information which I have given about the border provinces, by a few brief sketch of its interior districts. I may divide these into two classes; an inner row, or second line, so to speak, of border districts; and districts which have no connection with the frontier at all.

Tabbas

Commencing from the South where we left off with Seistan, and striking inland from about the same parallel as Kain, we come to the province of Tabbas, which touches on the South that of Yezd, from which it is 200 miles distant. The inhabitants of Tabbas are partly Arabs, partly Persians, and are ruled by a hereditary chieftain of analogous though inferior position to the Khans. Ilkhani, or Amirs previously described. His name is Mirza Mohammed Bakar Khan, & his official title the Imad-ul-Mulk or 'Pillar of the State', though it cannot be contended that either in contributions, or in individual importance, he lends it any particular support. The country is big and poor, the people inoffensive and quiet; and no trace remains of the condition of affairs described at the end of the last century by Malcolm when the chiefs maintained themselves in practical independence, and their subjects were noted for valour.(1) The Khan provides a contingent of 150 cavalry.

Turshiz

North of Tabbas is the small district of Turshiz also with a mainly Arab population, and under a governor responsible to the Governor General at Meshed. Turshiz is famous for its fruit which is incomparable, and for its silk which the disease that wrought such

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Footnote (1) History of Persia vol II. p 143-4. Mir Hussein Khan was then the chief of the powerful ruling Arab family; and with a population of only 30.000, sustained an army of 2000 horse, and 6000 foot.

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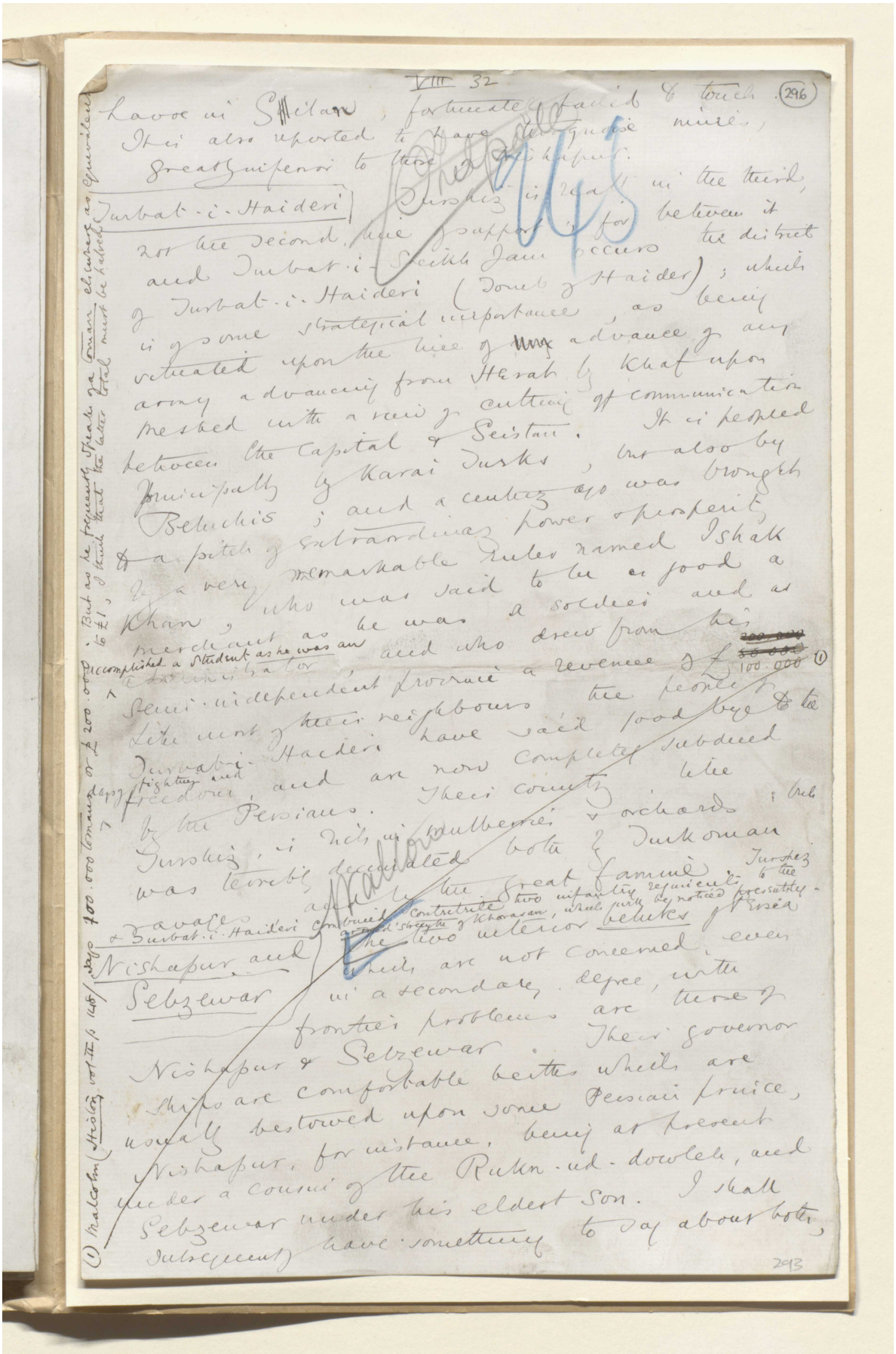

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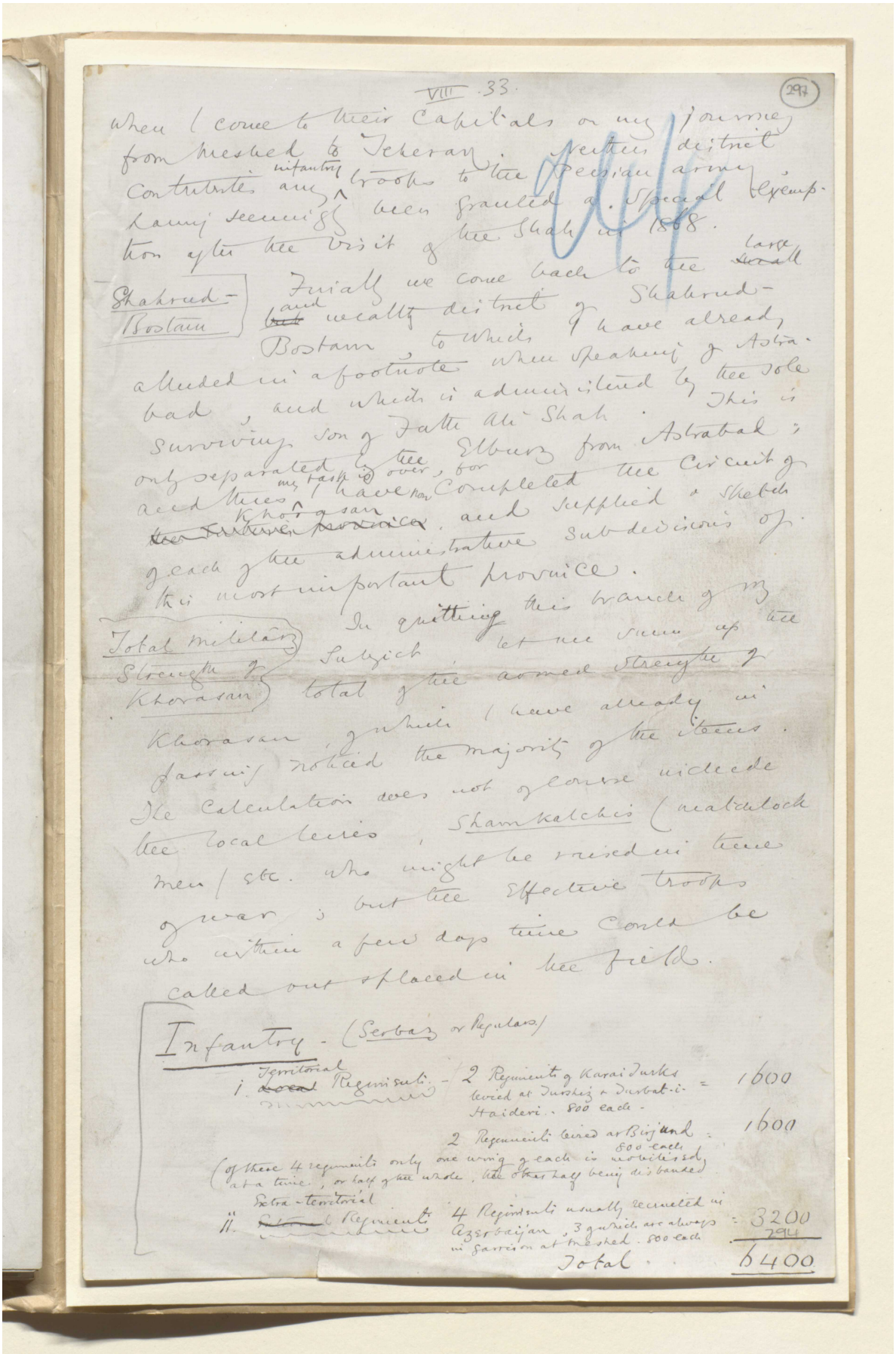
VIII. 33. (297)



when I come to their Capitals on my journey from Meshed to Teheran. Neither district contributes any infantry troops to the Persian army, having seemingly been granted a special exemption after the visit of the Shah in 1868.

Shahrud-Bostam

Finally we come back to the large and wealthy district of Shahrud-Bostam, to which I have already alluded in a footnote when speaking of Astrabad, and which is administered by the sole surviving son of Fath Ali Shah. This is only separated by the Elburz from Astrabad; and thus my task is over, for I have now completed the circuit of Khorasan, and supplied a sketch of each of the administrative subdivisions of this most important province.

Total Military Strength of Khorasan

In quitting this branch of my subject let me sum up the total of the armed strength of Khorasan, of which I have already in passing noticed the majority of the items. The calculation does not of course include the local leiras, Shamkalchis (matchlock men) etc. who might be raised in time of war; but the effective troops who within a few days time could be called out & placed in the field.

Infantry - (Serbaz or Regulars)

i. Territorial Regiments -	2 Regiments of Karai Turks levied at Turshiz & Turbat-i-Haideri. 800 each -	= 1600
	2 Regiments levied at Birjand 800 each	= 1600
(of these 4 regiments only one wing of each is mobilised at a time, or half of the whole, the other half being disbanded)		
ii. Extra-territorial Regiments	4 Regiments usually recruited in Azerbaijan, 3 of which are always in garrison at Meshed. 800 each	= 3200
		294
	Total	6400

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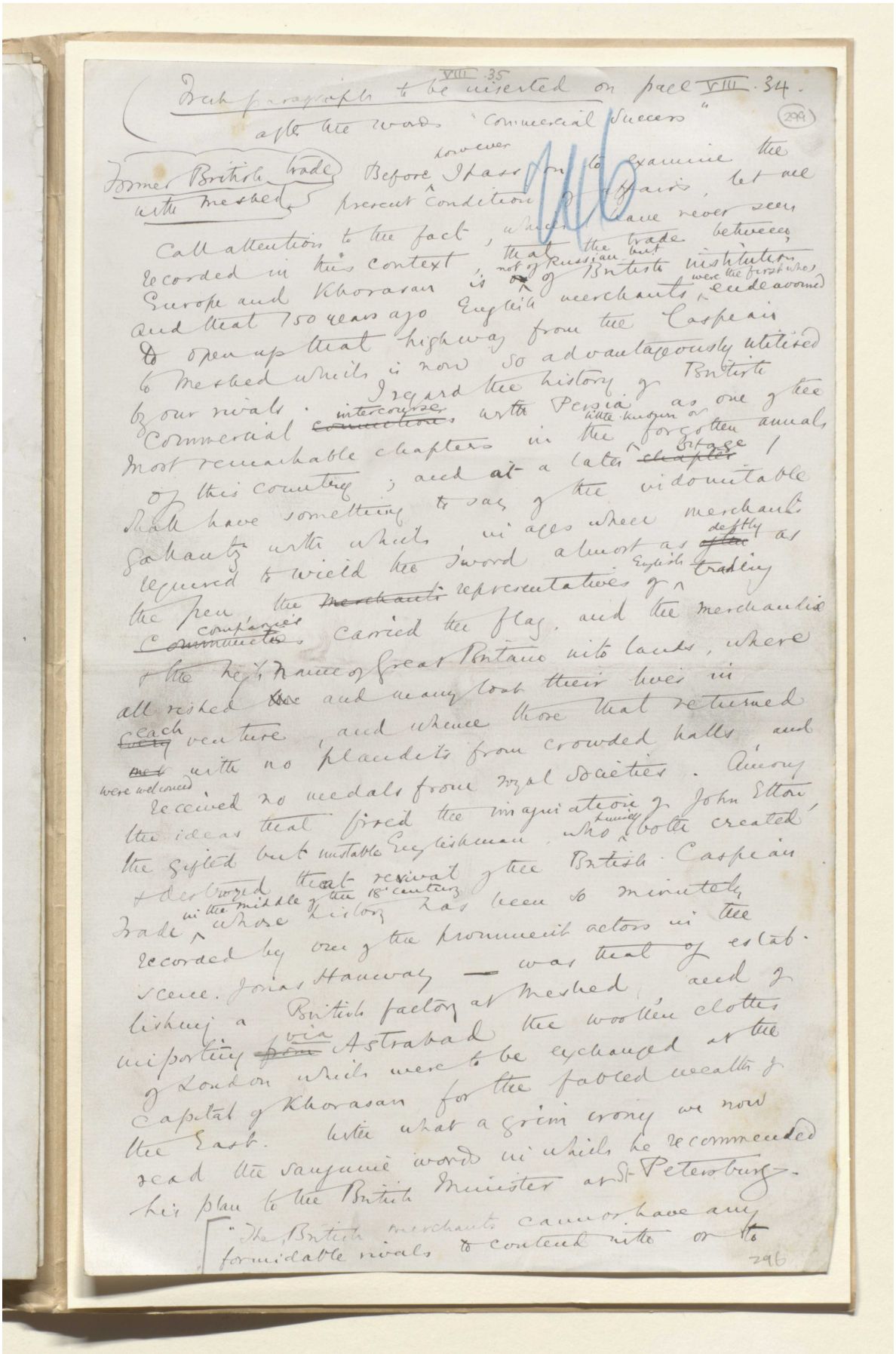

VIII. 35

Fresh paragraph to be inserted on page VIII. 34.
after the words "Commercial Success"

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Former British trade with Meshed

Before however I pass on to examine the present condition of affairs, let me call attention to the fact, which I have never seen recorded in this context, that the trade between Europe and Khorasan is not of Russian but of British institution, and that 150 years ago English merchants were the first who endeavoured to open up that highway from the Caspian to Meshed which is now so advantageously utilised by our rivals. I regard the history of British commercial intercourse with Persia as one of the most remarkable chapters in the little known or forgotten annals of this country; and at a later stage I shall have something to say of the indomitable gallantry with which, in ages when merchants required to wield the sword almost as deftly as the pen, the representatives of English trading companies carried the flag, and the merchandise & the high name of Great Britain into lands, where all risked and many lost their lives in each venture, and whence those that returned were welcomed with no plaudits from crowded halls and received no medals from royal societies. Among the ideas that fired the imagination of John Elton, the gifted but unstable Englishman, who himself both created & destroyed that revival of the British Caspian trade in the middle of the 18th century whose history has been so minutely recorded by one of the prominent actors in the scene. Jonas Hanway — was that of establishing a British factory at Meshed, and of importing via Astrabad the woollen clothes of London which were to be exchanged at the capital of Khorasan for the fabled wealth of the East. With what a grim irony we now read the sanguine words in which he recommended his plan to the British Minister at St. Petersburg.

"The British merchants cannot have any formidable rivals to contend with or to

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مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٣٠٠و] (١٣٥٥/٥٩٩)

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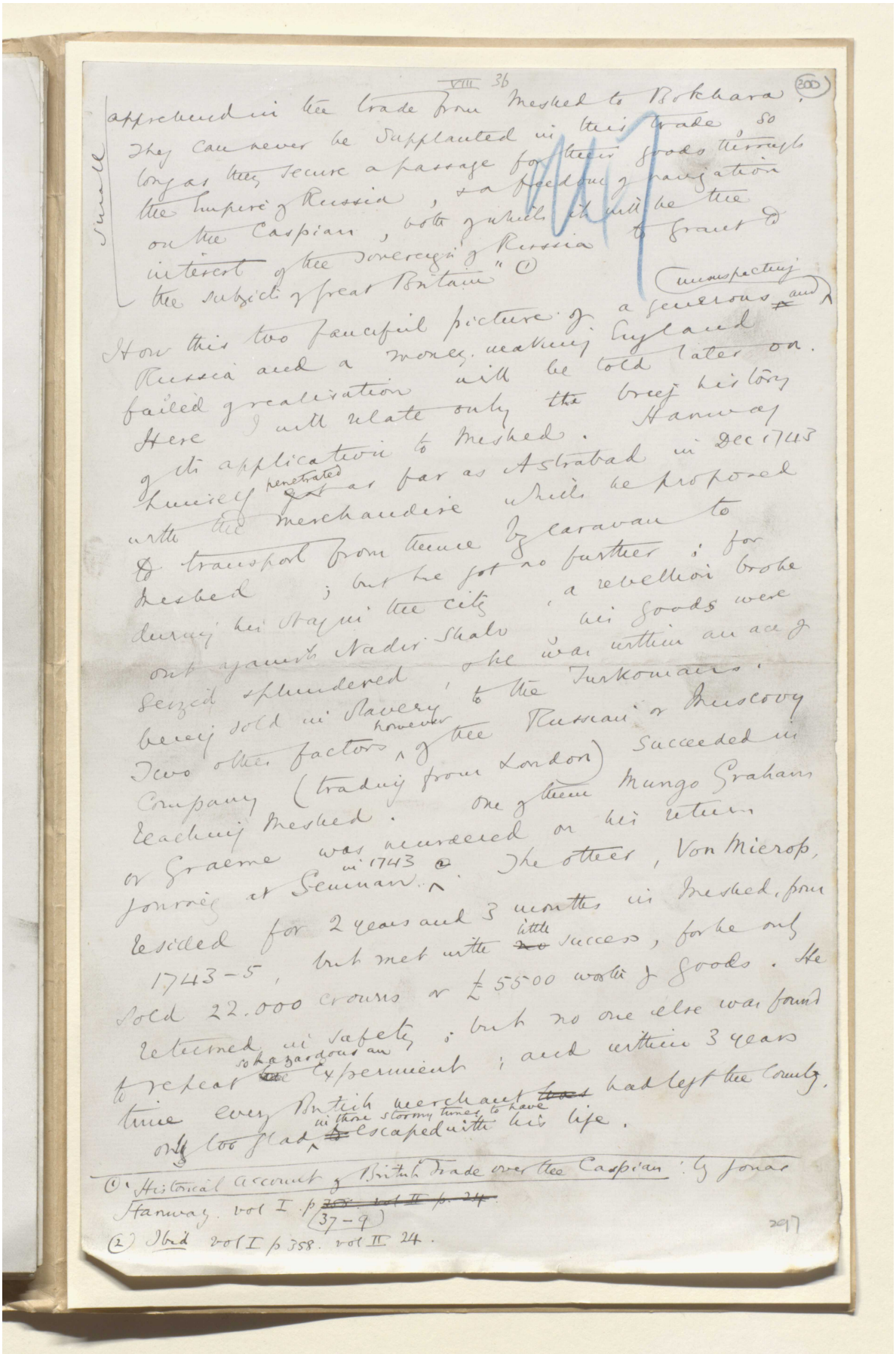

apprehend in the trade from Meshed to Bokhara; They can never be supplanted in this trade so long as they secure a passage for their goods through the Empire of Russia, & a freedom of navigation on the Caspian, both of which it will be the interest of the Sovereign of Russia to grant to the subjects of great Britain" (1)

How this two fanciful picture of a generous (unsuspecting) and Russia and a money-making England failed of realisation will be told later on. Here I will relate only the brief history of its application to Meshed. Hanway himself penetrated as far as Astrabad in Dec 1743 with the merchandise which he proposed to transport from thence by caravan to Meshed; but he got no further; for during his stay in the city, a rebellion broke out against Nadir Shah, his goods were seized, plundered, & he was within an ace of being sold in slavery to the Turkomans. Two other factors, however, of the Russian or Muscovy Company (trading from London) succeeded in reaching Meshed. One of them Mungo Graham or Graeme was murdered on his return journey at Semnan in 1743 (2). The other, Von Mierop, resided for 2 years and 3 months in Meshed, from 1743-5, but met with little success, for he only sold 22.000 crowns or £5500 worth of goods. He returned in safety; but no one else was found to repeat so hazardous an experiment; and within 3 years time every British merchant had left the country, only too glad in those stormy times to have escaped with his life.

(1) Historical account of British trade over the Caspian: by Jonas Hanway. vol I. p. ~~358. vol II p. 24~~ (37-9)

(2) Ibid vol I p 358. vol II 24.

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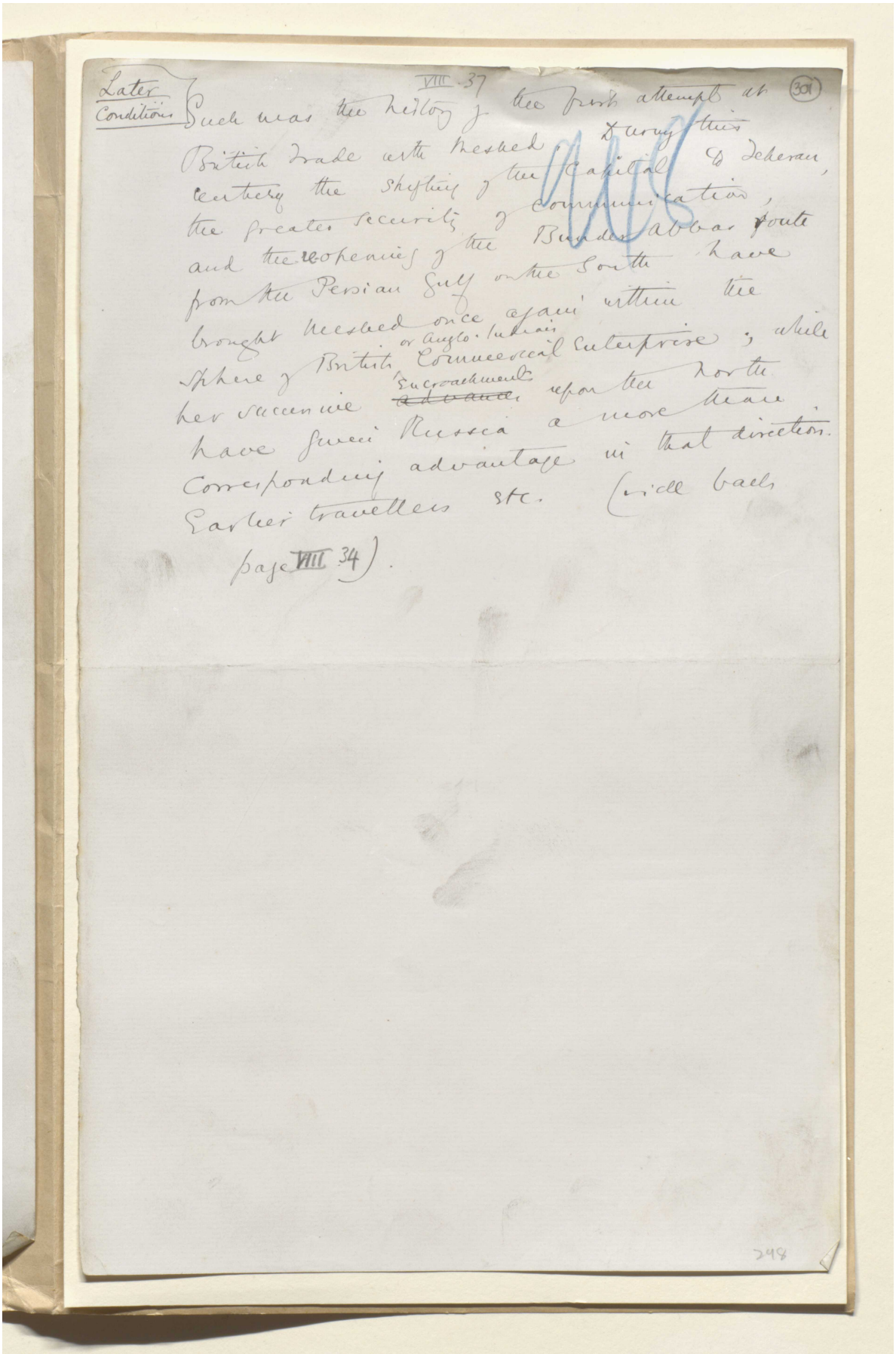
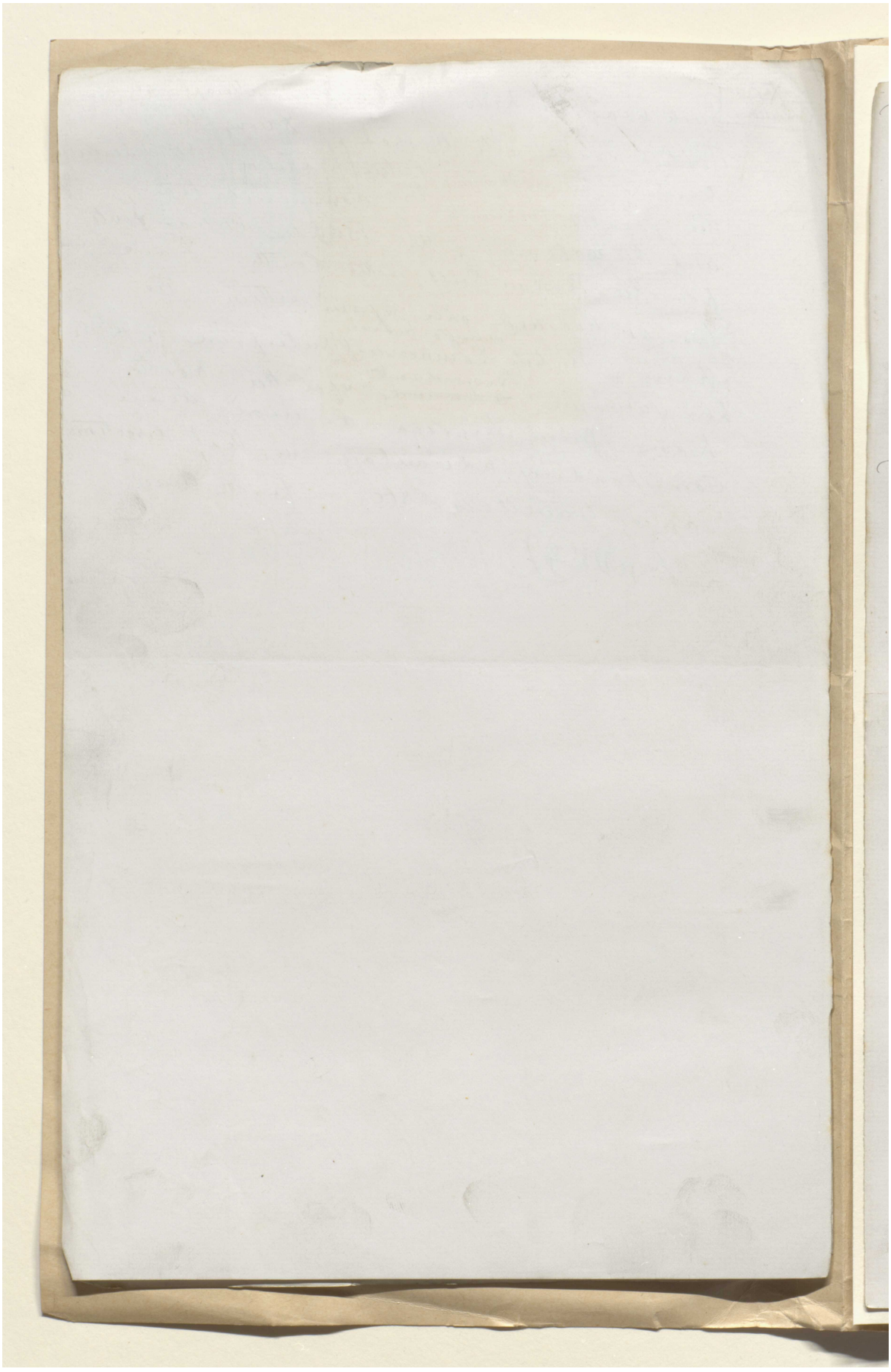


Later Conditions

VIII. 37 (301)

Such was the history of the first attempt of British trade with Meshed during the century the shifting of the Capital of Teheran, the greater security of communication, and the openness of the Bunder Abbas route from the Persian Gulf on the South have brought Meshed once again within the sphere of British Commercial or Anglo-Indian enterprise; while her succession encroachments upon the North have given Russia a more than corresponding advantage in that direction. Earlier travellers etc. (vide back page VIII. 34).



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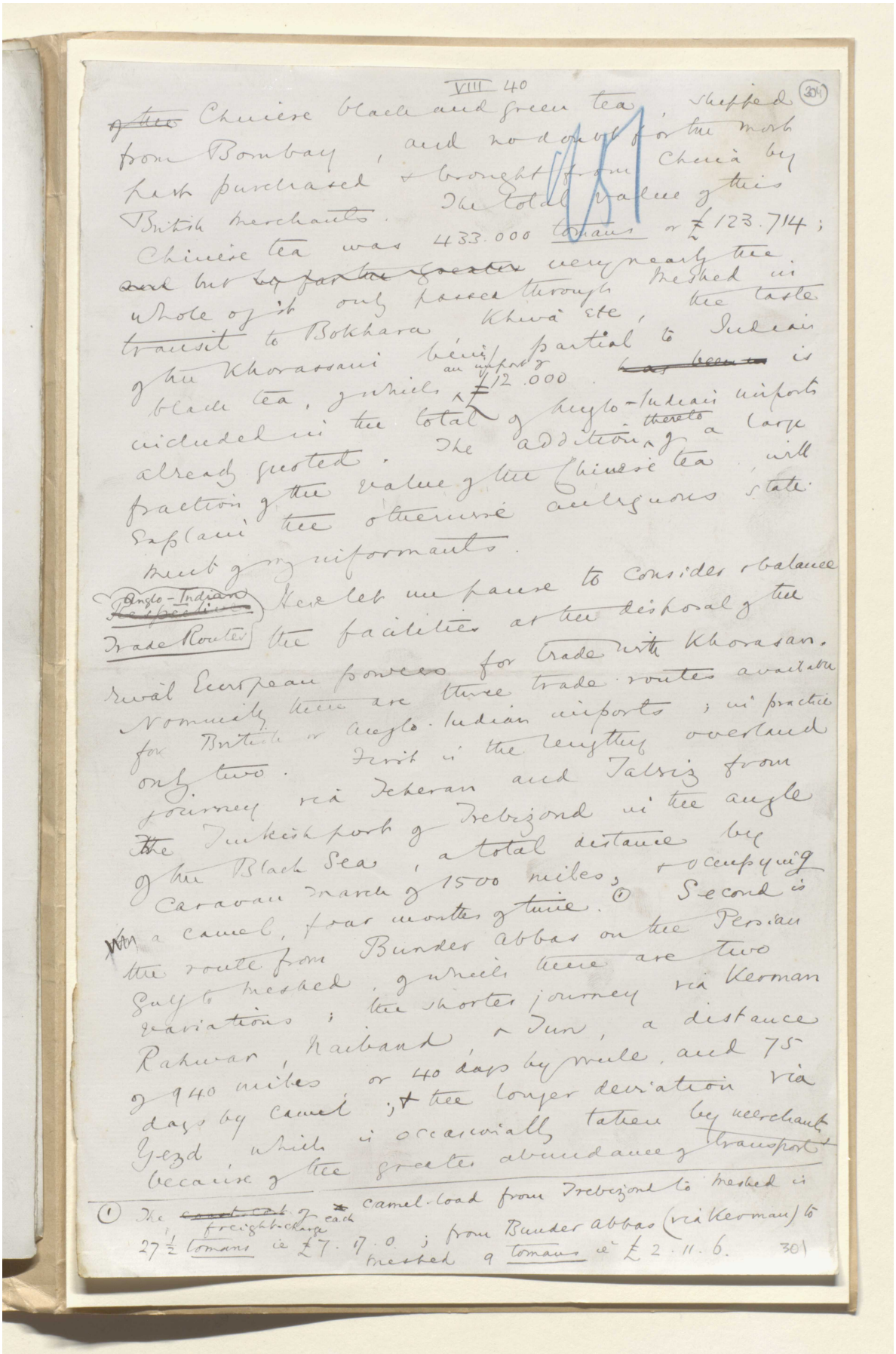

VIII 40

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~~the~~ Chinese black and green tea, shipped from Bombay, and no doubt for the most part purchased & brought from China by British merchants. The total value of this Chinese tea was 433.000 tomans or £123.714; ~~and but by far the greater~~ very nearly the whole of it only passed through Meshed in transit to Bokhara, Khiva etc, the taste of the Khorassani being partial to Indian black tea, which is an import of £12.000. ~~has been to~~ included in the total of Anglo-Indian imports already quoted. The addition thereto of a large fraction of the value of the Chinese tea will explain the otherwise ambiguous statements of my informants.

Anglo-Indian Trade Routes

Here let us pause to consider the balance of the facilities at the disposal of the rival European powers for trade with Khorasan. Nominally there are three trade routes available for British & Anglo-Indian imports; in practice only two. First is the lengthy overland journey via Teheran and Tabriz from the Turkish port of Trebizond in the angle of the Black Sea, a total distance by caravan march of 1500 miles, & occupying a camel, four months of time. ① Second is the route from Bunder abbas on the Persian Gulf to Meshed, which there are two variations; the shorter journey via Kerman Rahwar, Rabard, & Dun, a distance of 940 miles or 40 days by mule, and 75 days by camel; & the longer deviation via Yezd which is occasionally taken by merchants because of the greater abundance of transport

① The ~~cost of~~ freight-charge of each camel-load from Trebizond to Meshed is 27½ tomans is £7.17.0; from Bunder abbas (via Kerman) to Meshed 9 tomans is £2.11.6.

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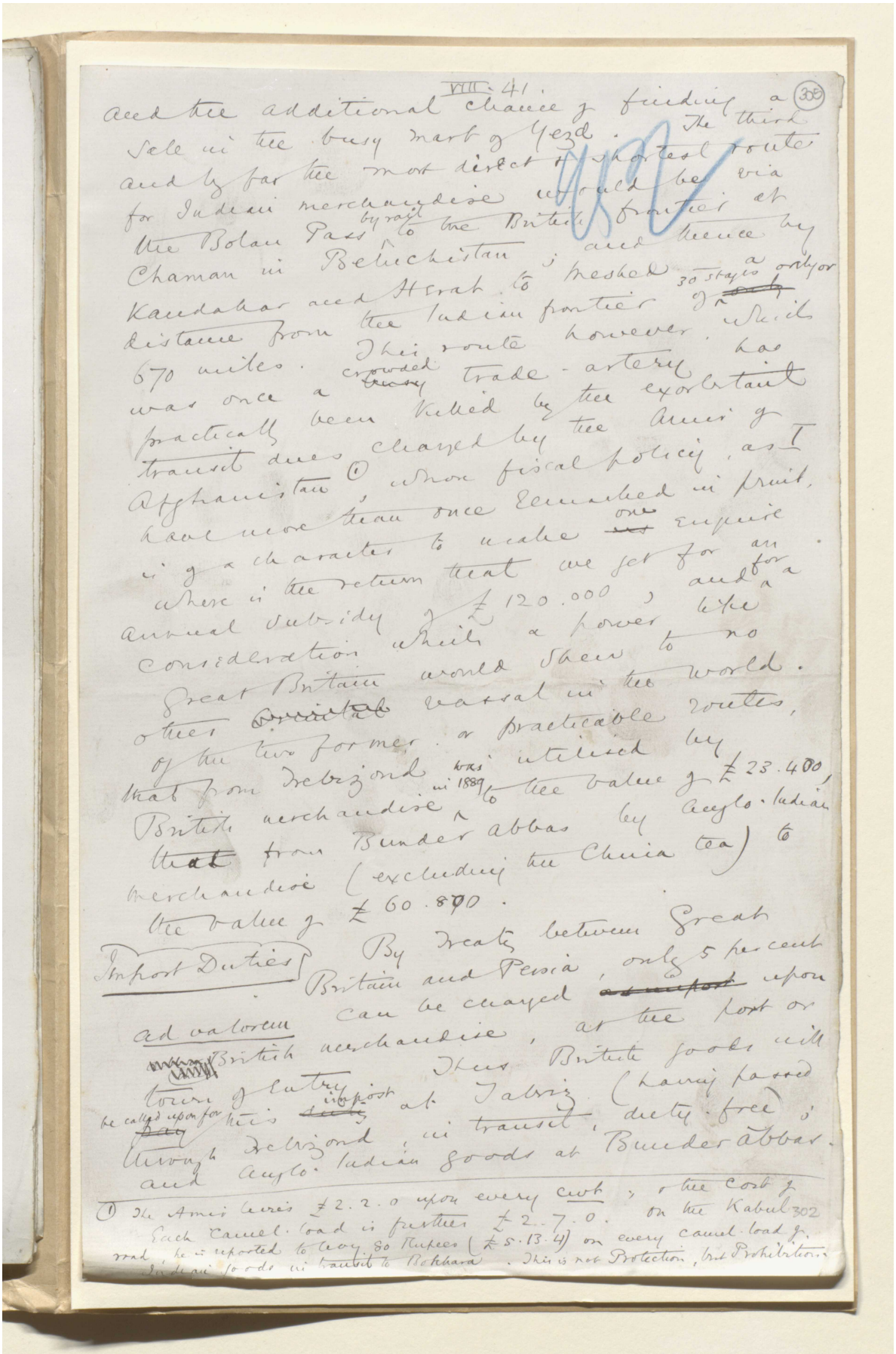

VIII. 41 (305)

and the additional chance of finding a sale in the busy mart of Yezd. The third and by far the most direct & shortest route for Indian merchandise would be via the Bolan Pass by rail to the British frontier at Chaman in Beluchistan; and thence by Kandahar and Herat to Meshed a distance from the Indian frontier of 30 stages only or 670 miles. This route however, which was once a crowded trade-artery has practically been killed by the exorbitant transit dues charged by the Amir of Afghanistan (1), whose fiscal policy, as I have more than once remarked in print, is of a character to make one enquire where is the return that we get for an annual subsidy of £120.000, and for a consideration which a power like Great Britain would shew to no other vassal in the world. Of the two former or practicable routes, that from Trebizond was utilised by British merchandise in 1889 to the value of £23.400, that from Bunder abbas by Anglo-Indian merchandise (excluding the China tea) to the value of £60.800.

Import Duties

By treaty between Great Britain and Persia, only 5 per cent ad valorem can be charged upon British merchandise, at the port or town of entry. Thus British goods will be called upon for this impost at Tabriz (having passed through Trebizond, in transit, duty-free); and Anglo-Indian goods at Bunder abbas.

(1) The Amir levies £2.2.0 upon every cwt, & the cost of each camel-load is further £2.7.0. On the Kabul road, he is reported to levy 80 Rupees (£5.13.4) on every camel-load of Indian goods in transit to Bokhara. This is not Protection, but Prohibition.

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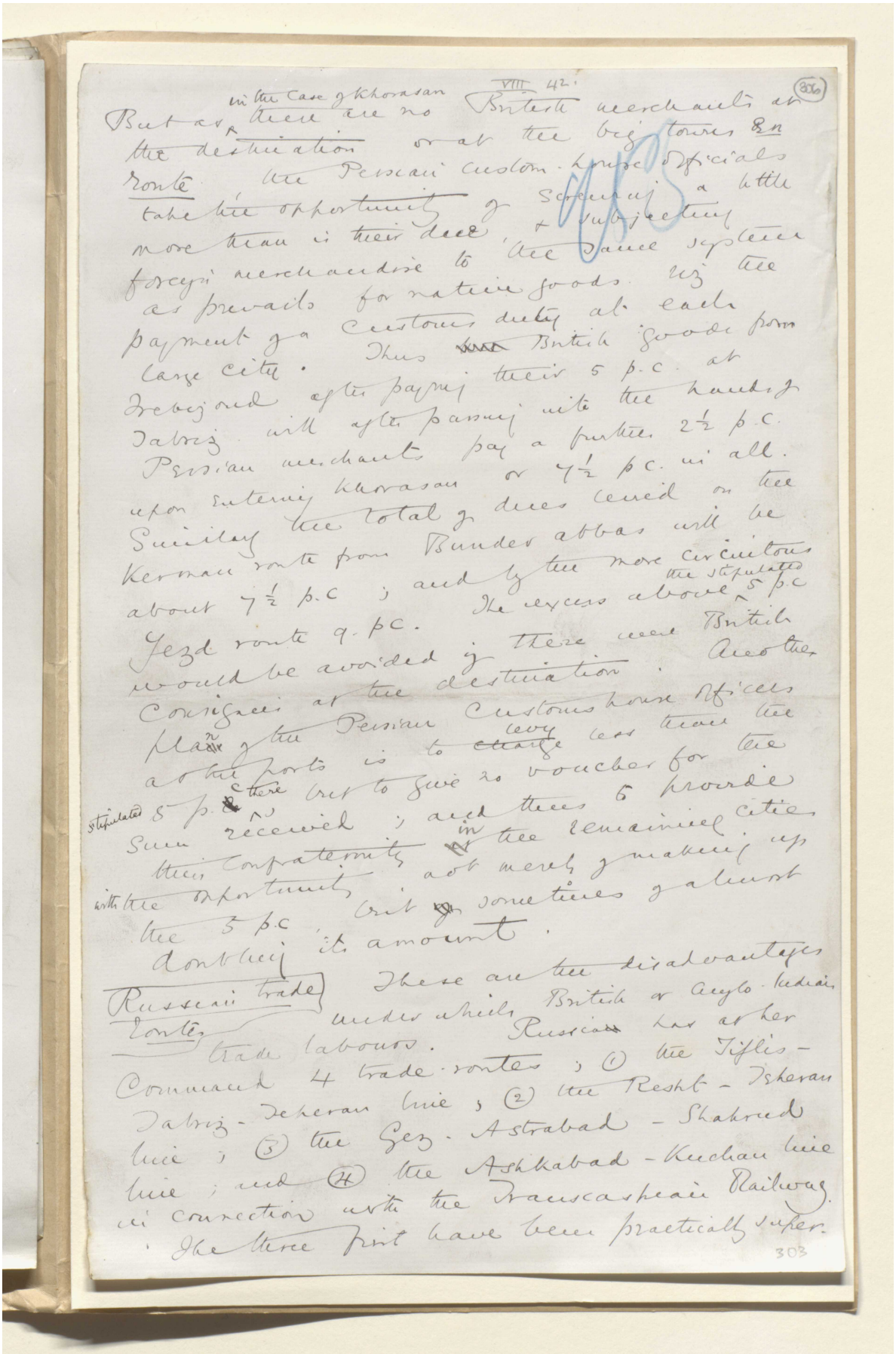
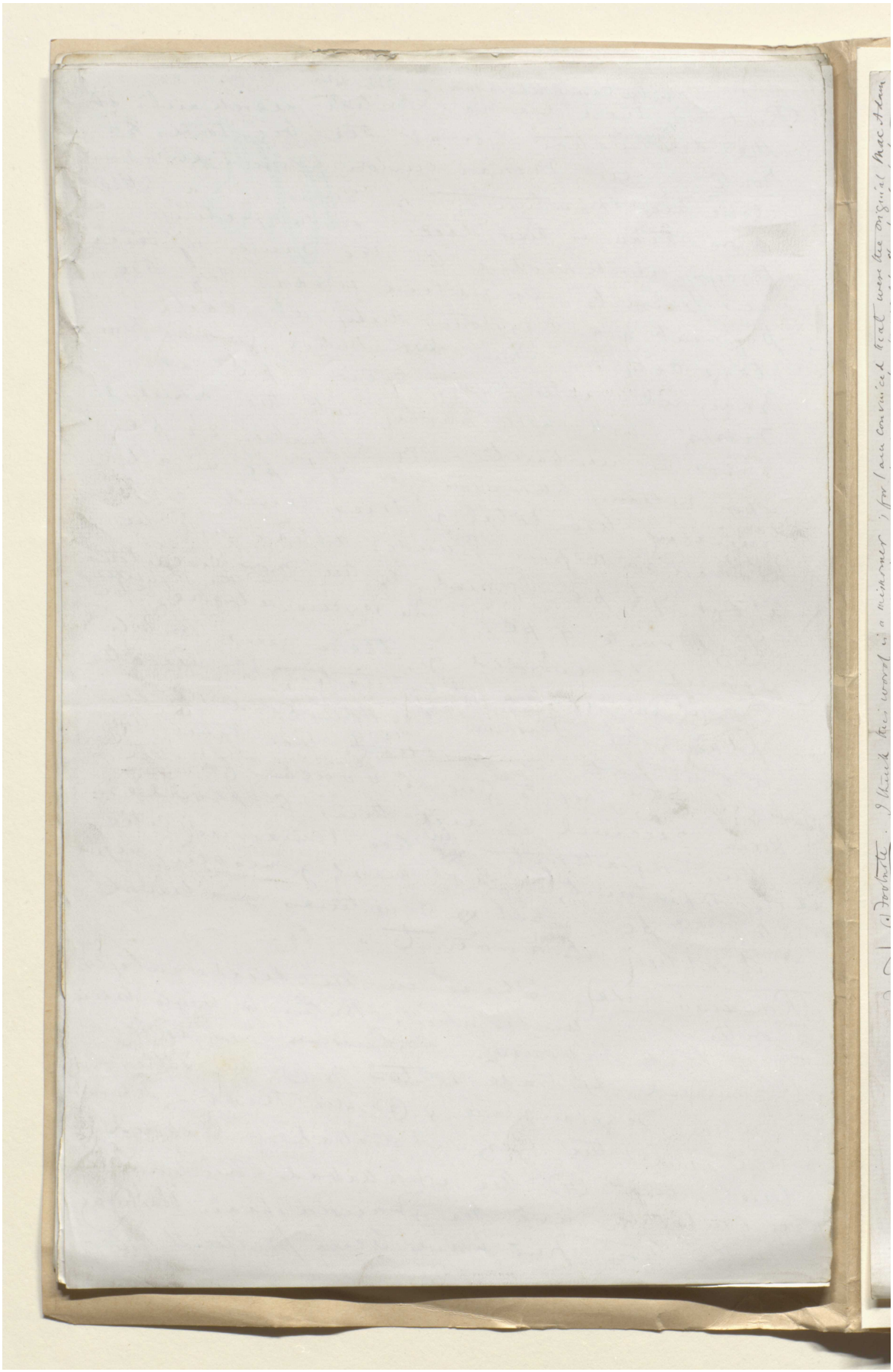
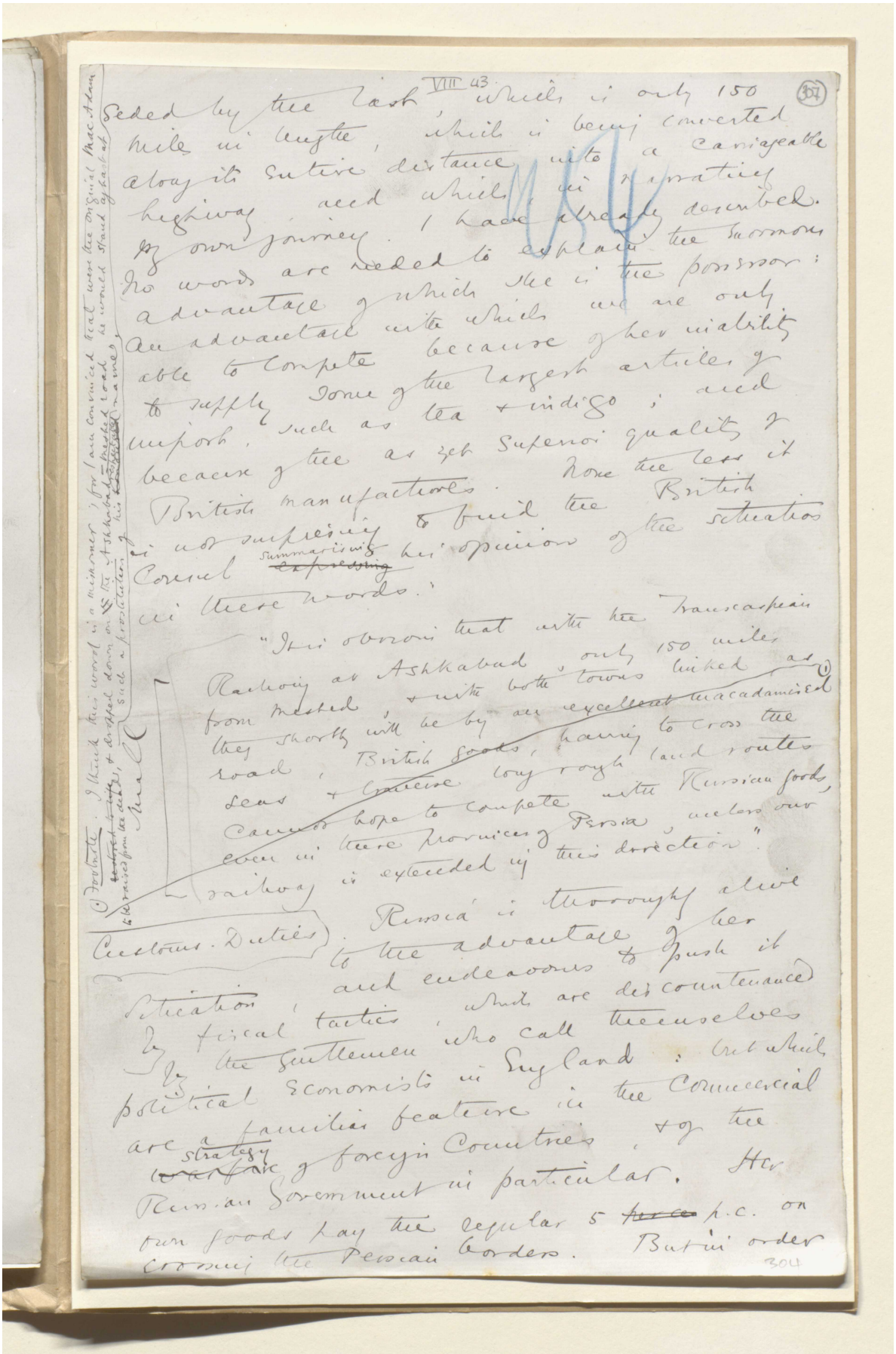
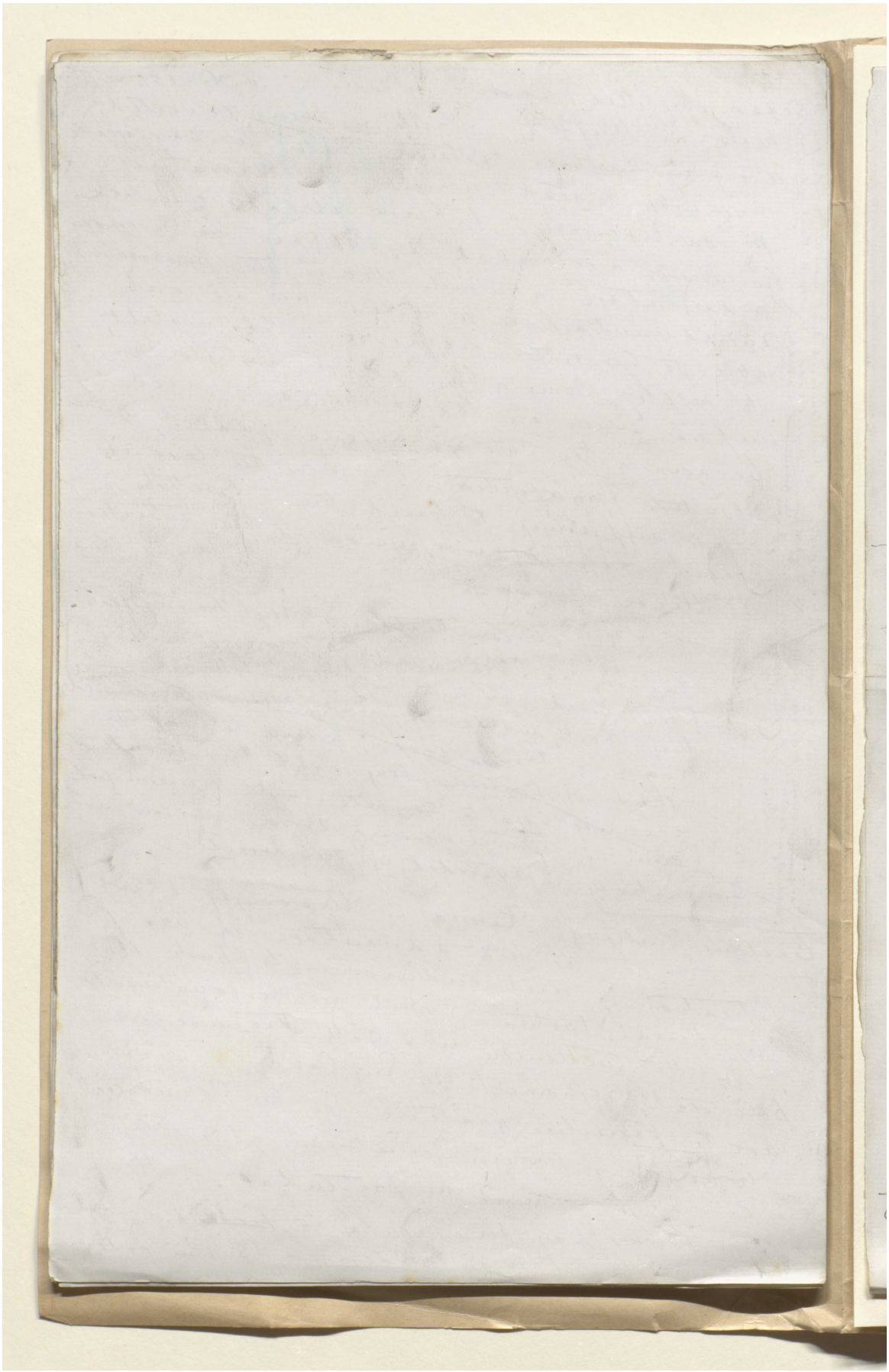


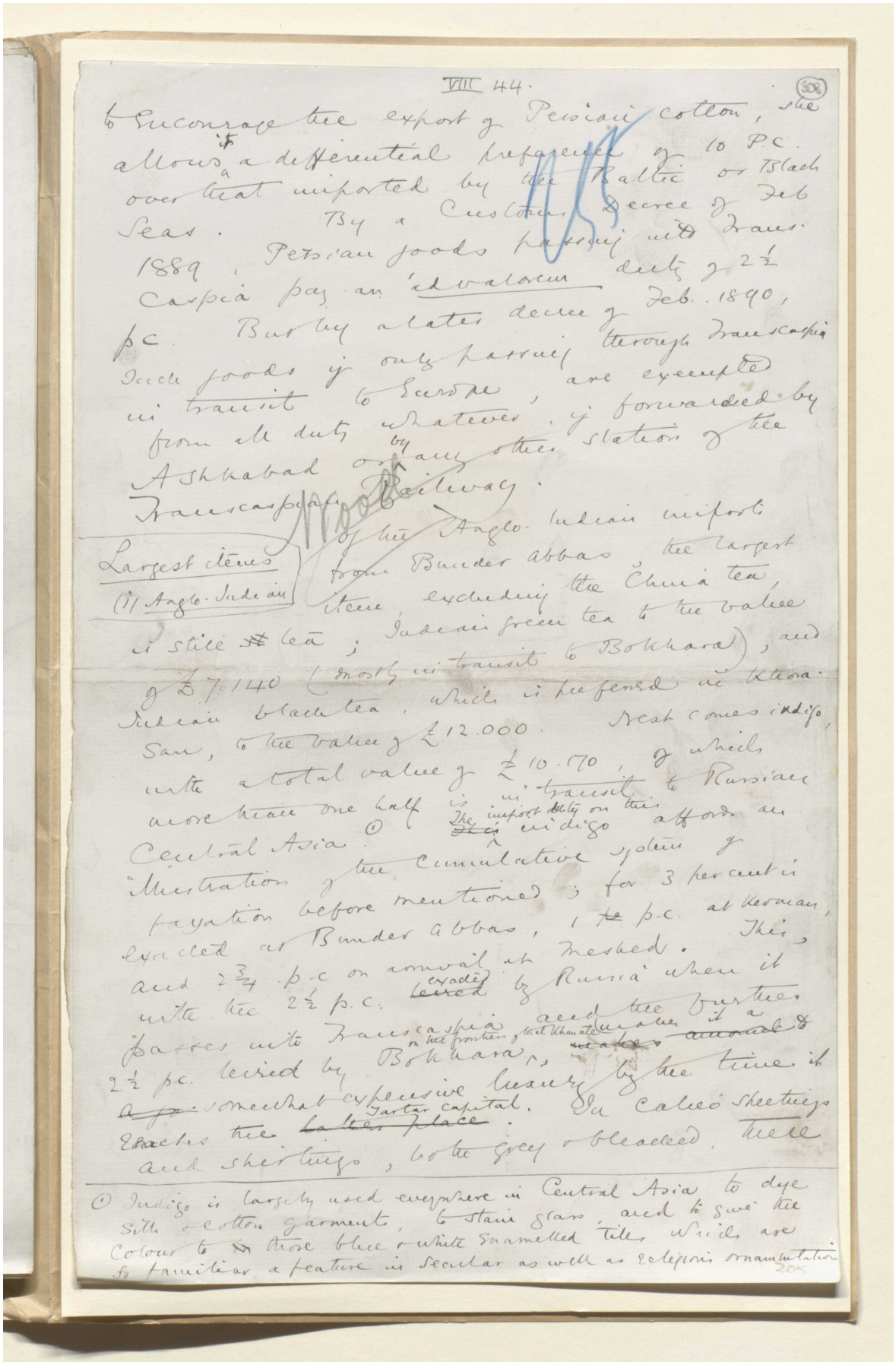






VIII 44.

(308)



to encourage the export of Persian cotton, she allows it a differential preference of 10 P.C. over that imported by the Baltic or Black Seas. By a Customs Decree of Feb 1889, Persian goods passing into Trans-Caspia pay an 'ad valorem' duty of 2½ p.c. But by a later decree of Feb. 1890, such goods if only passing through Transcaspia in transit to Europe, are exempted from all duty whatever, if forwarded by Ashkabad or by any other station of the Transcaspian Railway.

Largest items (1) Anglo-Indian

Of the Anglo-Indian imports from Bunder abbas, the largest item, excluding the China tea, is still tea; Indian green tea to the value of £7.140 (mostly in transit to Bokhara), and Indian black tea, which is preferred in Khorasan, to the value of £12.000. Next comes indigo, with a total value of £10.170, of which more than one half is in transit to Russian Central Asia. ① The import duty on this indigo affords an illustration of the cumulative system of taxation before mentioned; for 3 per cent is exacted at Bunder abbas, 1 p.c. at Kerman, and 2¾ p.c on arrival at Meshed. This, with the 2½ p.c. exacted by Russia when it passes into Transcaspia and the further 2½ p.c. levied by Bokhara on the frontiers of that Khanate, makes it a somewhat expensive luxury by the time it reaches the Tartar capital. In calico sheetings and shirtings, both grey & bleached, there

① Indigo is largely used everywhere in Central Asia to dye silk & cotton garments, to stain glass, and to give the colour to those blue & white enamelled tiles which are so familiar a feature in secular as well as religious ornamentation.

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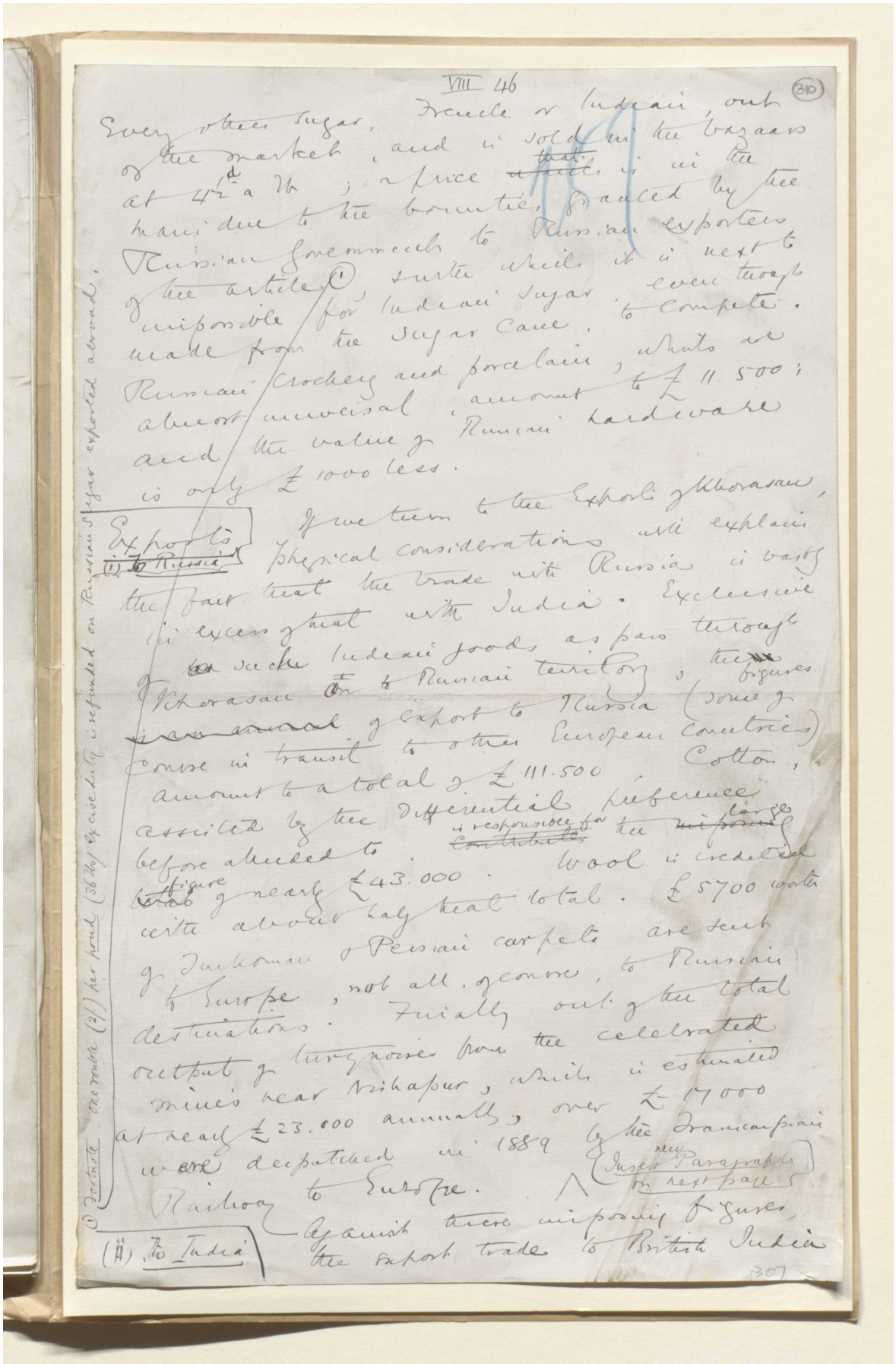

Every other sugar, French or Indian, out of the market, and is sold in the bazaars at 4½d a lb; a price that is in the main due to the bounties granted by the Russian Government to Russian exporters of the article (1), with which it is next to impossible for Indian sugar, even though made from the sugar cane, to compete. Russian crockery and porcelain, which are almost universal, amount to £11.500; and the value of Russian hardware is only £1000 less.

Exports (i) To Russia

If we turn to the Exports of Khorasan, physical considerations will explain the fact that the trade with Russia is vastly in excess of that with India. Exclusive of such Indian goods as pass through Khorasan on to Russian territory, the figures of export to Russia (some of course in transit to other European countries) amount to a total of £111.500. Cotton, assisted by the differential preference before alluded to, is responsible for the large figure of nearly £43.000. Wool is credited with about half that total. £5700 worth of Turkoman & Persian carpets are sent to Europe, not all, of course, to Russian destinations. Finally out of the total output of turquoises from the celebrated mines near Nishapur, which is estimated at nearly £23.000 annually, over £17000 were despatched in 1889 by the Transcaspian Railway to Europe. (Insert new Paragraph on next page)

(ii) To India

Against these imposing figures, the export trade to British India

(1) Footnote. One rouble (2/-) per pound (36 lbs) excise duty is refunded on Russian sugar exported abroad.

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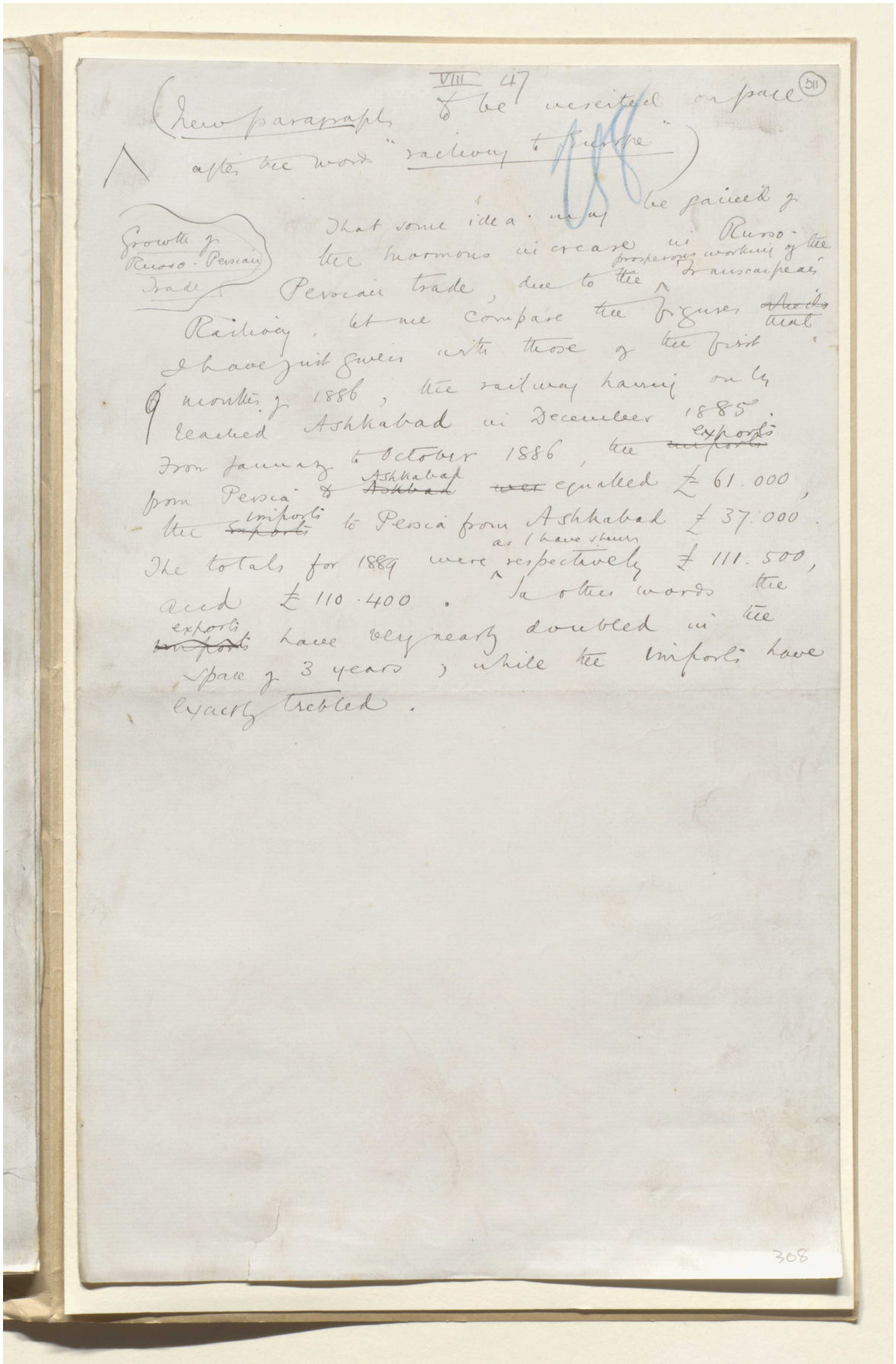

VIII 47

(new paragraph to be inserted on page 211 after the word "railway to Europe")

Growth of Russo-Persian Trade

That some idea may be gained of the enormous increase in Russo-Persian trade, due to the prosperous working of the Railway, let me compare the figures that I have just given with those of the first 9 months of 1886, the railway having only reached Ashkabad in December 1885. From January to October 1886, the exports from Persia to Ashkabad equalled £ 61.000, the imports from Ashkabad to Persia £ 37.000. The totals for 1889 were respectively £ 111.500, and £ 110.400. In other words the exports have very nearly doubled in the space of 3 years, while the imports have exactly trebled.

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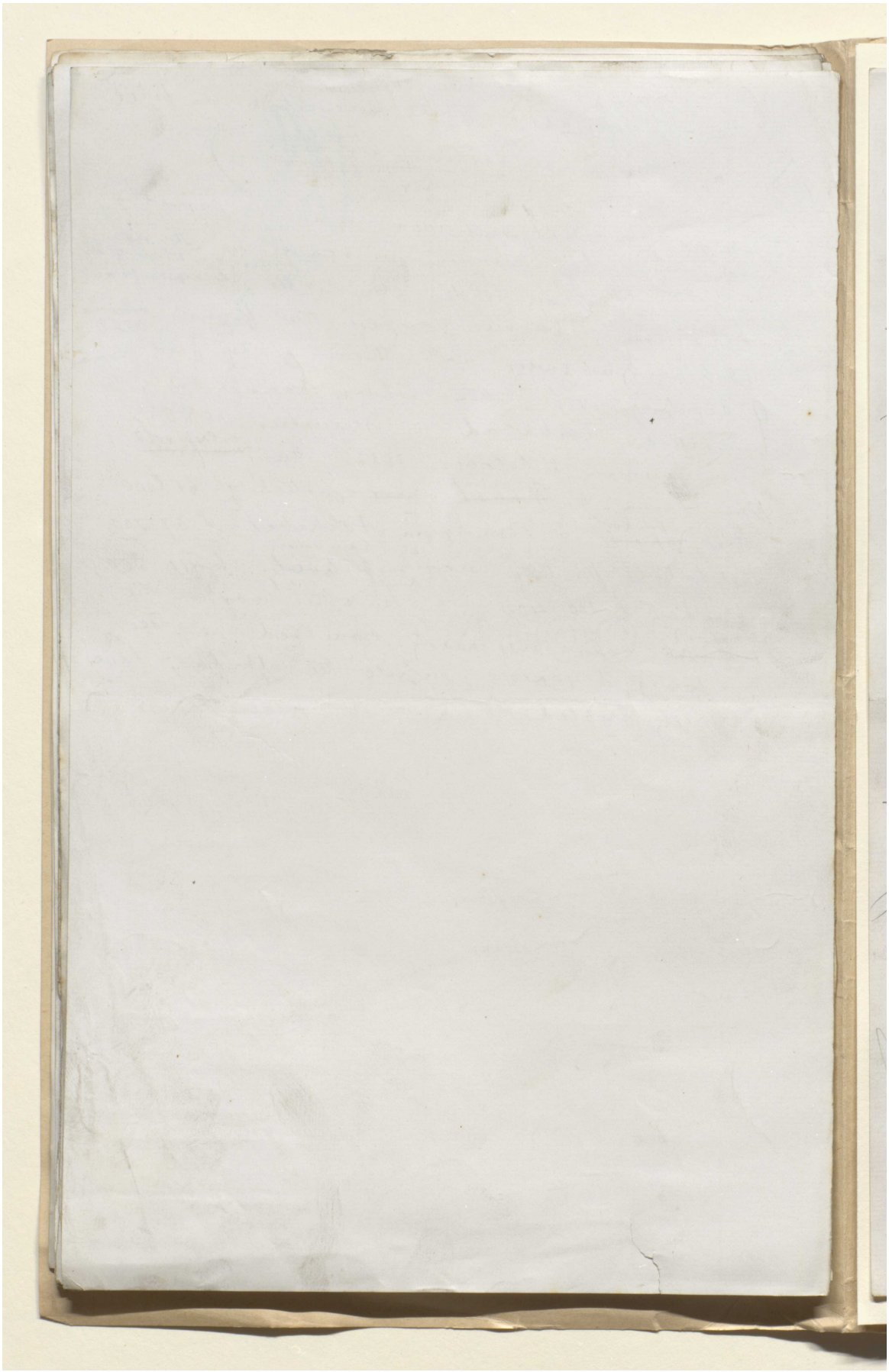

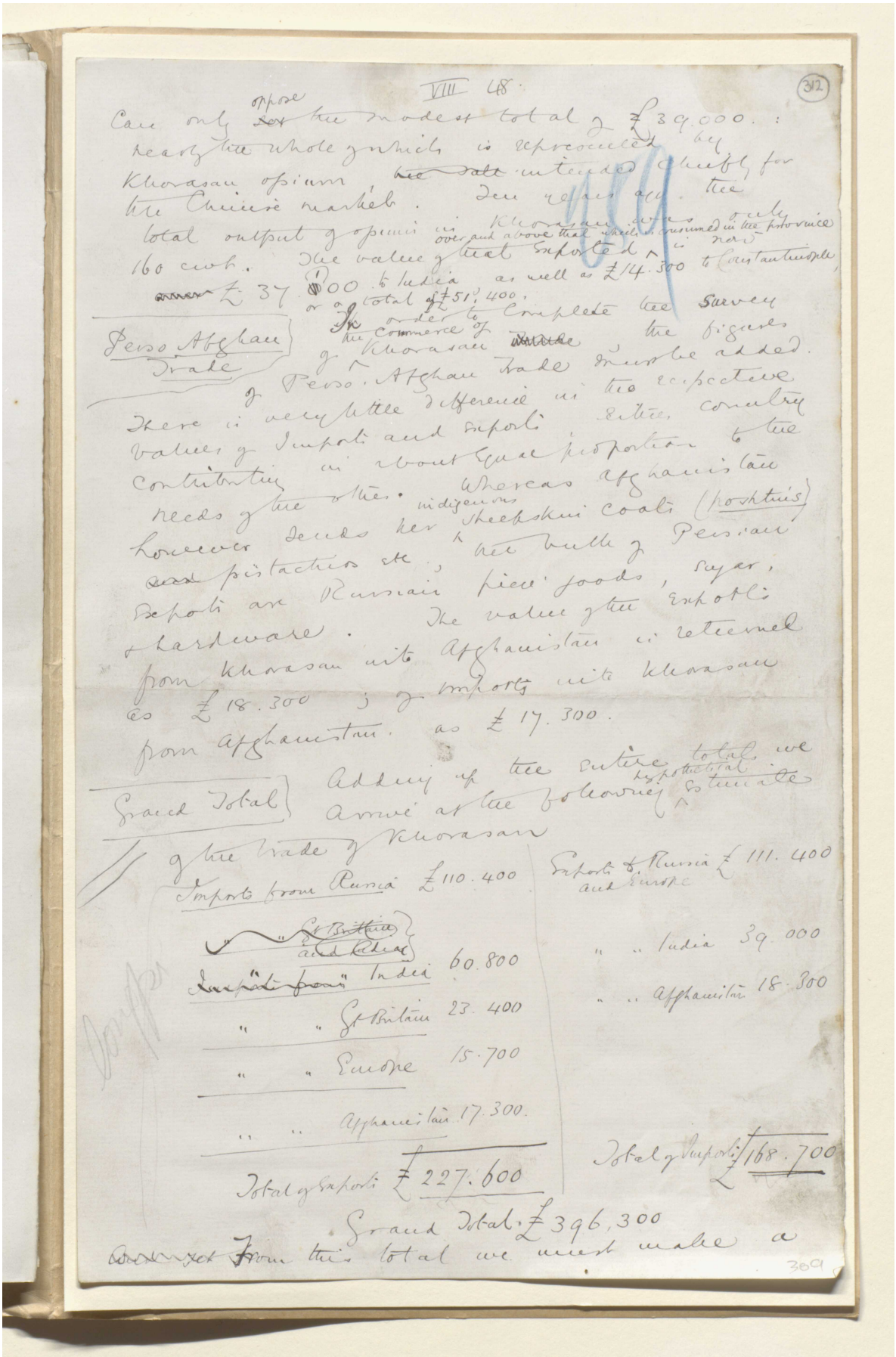

VIII 48.

(312)

Can only oppose the modest total of £39.000: nearly the whole of which is represented by Khorasan opium, intended chiefly for the Chinese market. Ten years ago the total output of opium in Khorasan was only 160 cwt. The value of that exported over and above that which is consumed in the province is now £37.100 to India as well as £14.300 to Constantinople, or a total of £51.400.

Perso Afghan Trade

In order to complete the survey of the commerce of Khorasan the figures of Perso-Afghan trade must be added. There is very little difference in the respective values of Imports and Exports either country contributing in about equal proportion to the needs of the other. Whereas Afghanistan however sends her indigenous sheepskin coats (poshtins) pistachios etc., the bulk of Persian Exports are Russian piece goods, sugar, & hardware. The value of the Exports from Khorasan into Afghanistan is returned as £18.300; of Imports into Khorasan from Afghanistan as £17.300.

Grand Total

Adding up the entire totals we arrive at the following hypothetical estimate of the trade of Khorasan

Imports from Russia	£110.400	Exports to Russia and Europe	£111.400
" " Gt Britain and India		" " India	39.000
" " India	60.800	" " Afghanistan	18.300
" " Gt Britain	23.400		
" " Europe	15.700		
" " Afghanistan	17.300		
Total of Exports	£227.600	Total of Imports	£168.700

Grand Total £396,300

From this total we must make a

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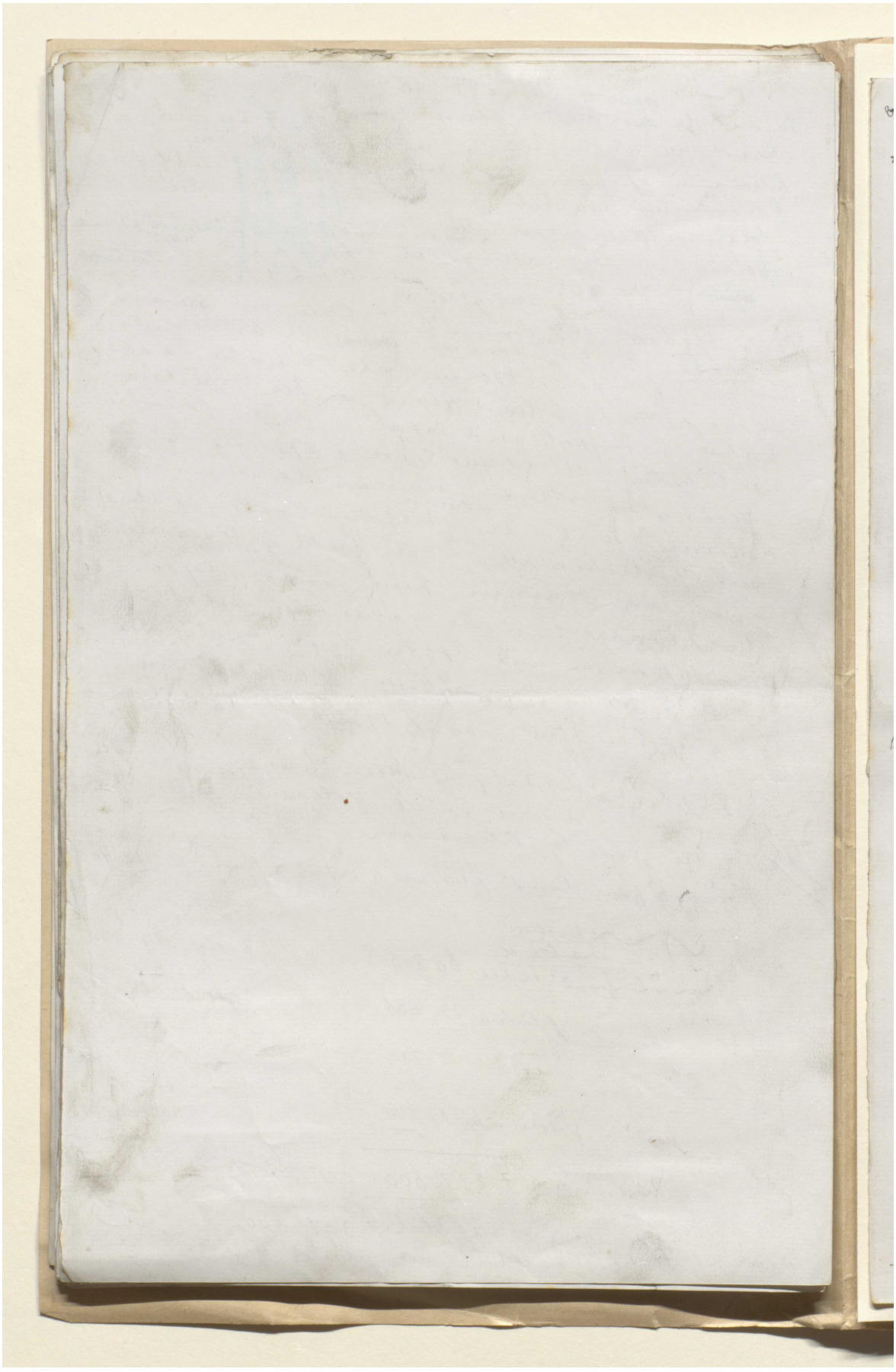
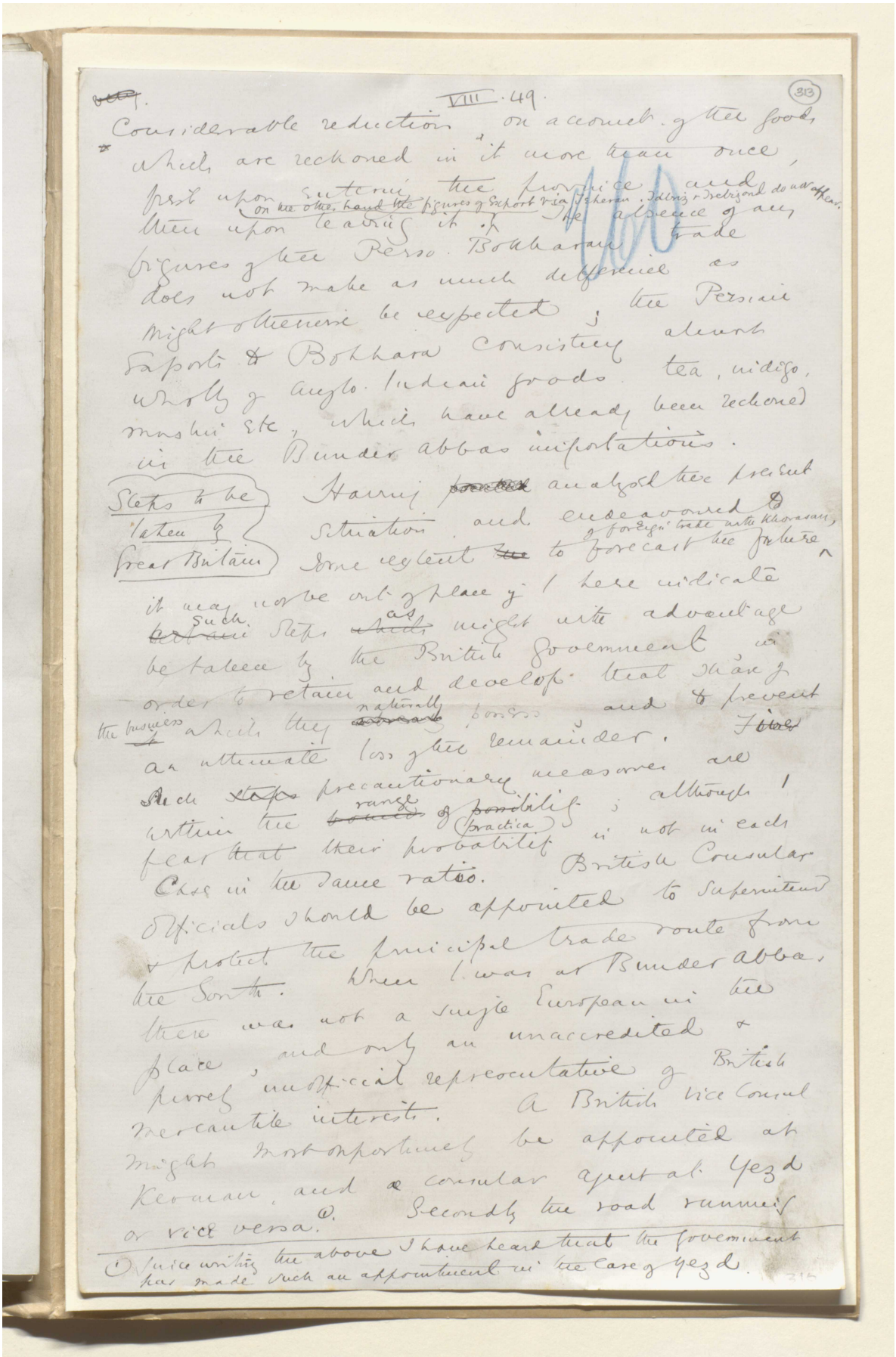




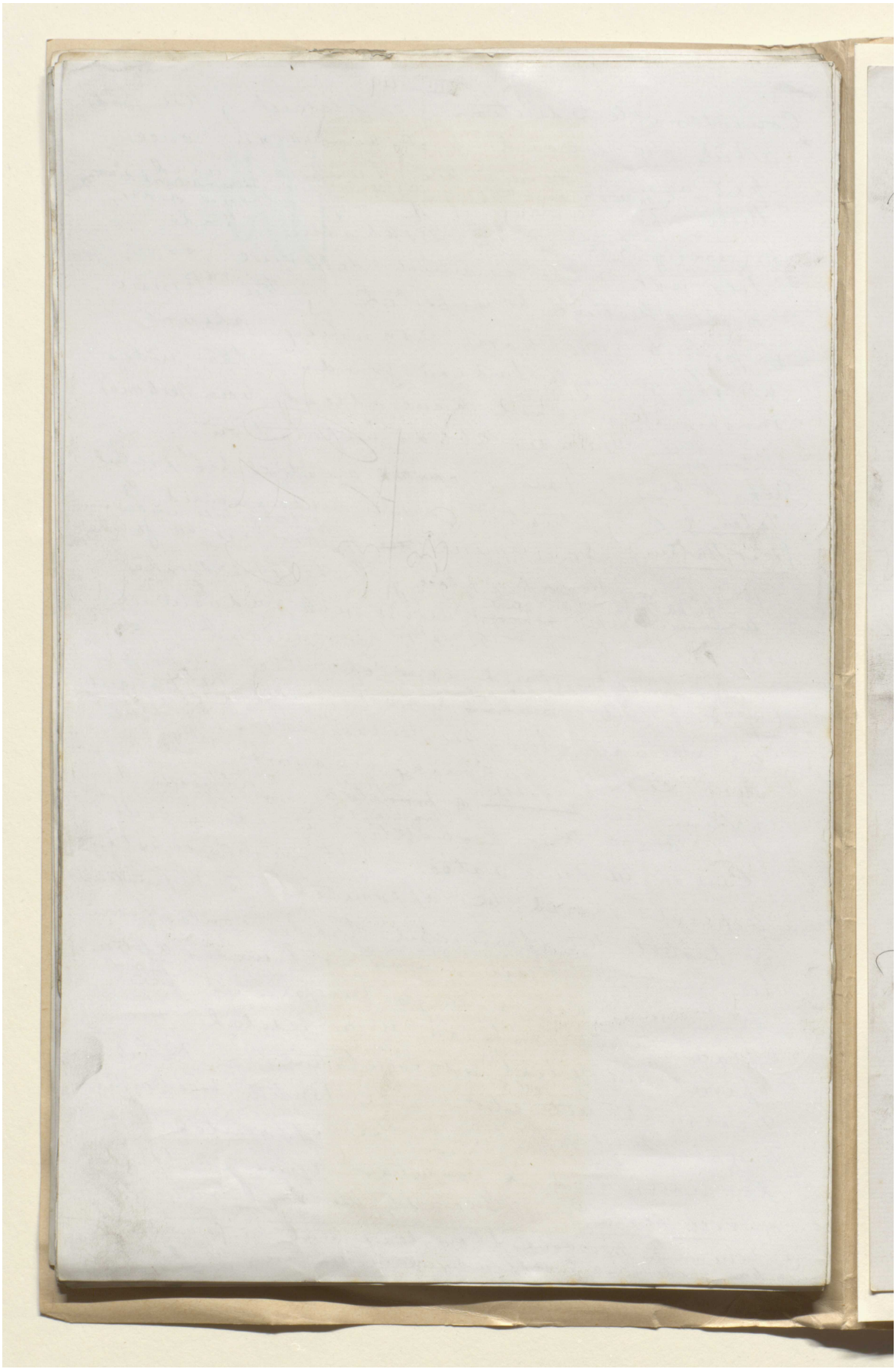
VIII. 49. (313)

Considerable reduction on account of the goods which are reckoned in it more than once, first upon entering the province and then upon leaving it. On the other hand the figures of Export via Teheran, Tabriz & Trebizond do not appear. The absence of any figures of the Perso-Bokharan trade does not make as much difference as might otherwise be expected; the Persian Saports & Bokhara consisting almost wholly of Anglo-Indian goods, tea, indigo, muslin etc, which have already been reckoned in the Bunder Abbas importations.

Steps to be taken by Great Britain

Having analysed the present situation and endeavoured to some extent to forecast the future of foreign trade with Khorasan, it may not be out of place if I here indicate such steps as might with advantage be taken by the British Government in order to retain and develop that share of the business which they naturally possess and to prevent an ultimate loss of the remainder. Such precautionary measures are within the range of practica; although I fear that their probability is not in each case in the same ratio. British Consular Officials should be appointed to superintend & protect the principal trade route from the South. When I was at Bunder Abbas there was not a single European in the place, and only an unaccredited & purely unofficial representative of British mercantile interests. A British Vice Consul might most opportunely be appointed at Kerman, and a consular agent at Yezd or vice versa.(1) Secondly the road running

(1) Since writing the above I have heard that the Government has made such an appointment in the case of Yezd.



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VIII. 54.

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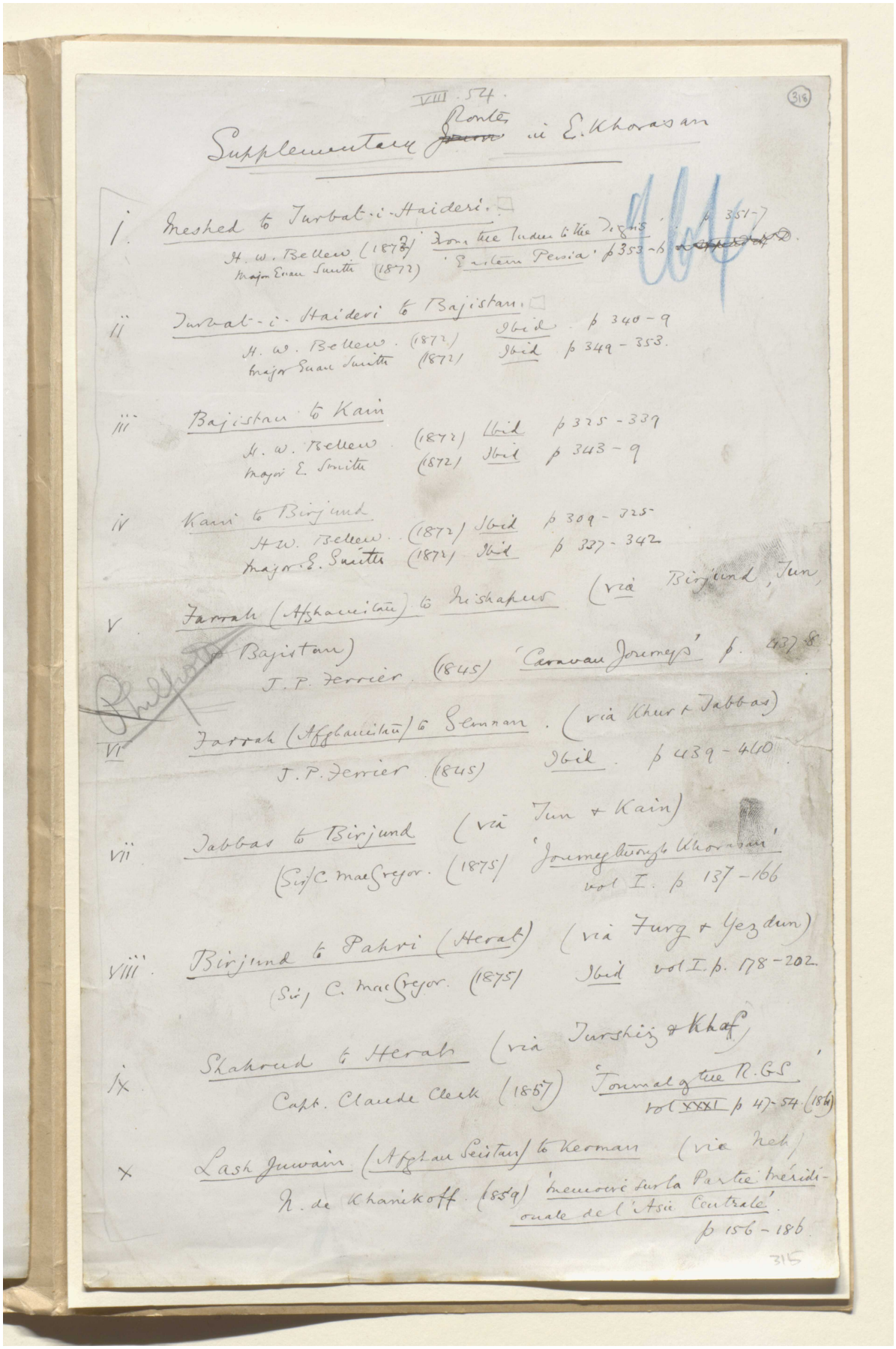
Supplementary ~~Journ~~ Routes in E. Khorasan



i. Meshed to Turbat-i-Haideri.
H. W. Bellew (1872) 'From the Indus to the Tigris' p 351-7
Major Euan Smith (1872) 'Eastern Persia' p 353-6

ii. Turbat-i-Haideri to Bajistan.
H. W. Bellew (1872) Ibid p 340-9
Major Euan Smith (1872) Ibid p 349-353.

iii. Bajistan to Kain
H. W. Bellew (1872) Ibid p 325-339
Major E. Smith (1872) Ibid p 343-9

iv. Kain to Birjund
H. W. Bellew (1872) Ibid p 309-325
Major E. Smith (1872) Ibid p 337-342

v. Farrah (Afghanistan) to Nishapur (via Birjund, Tun, & Bajistan)
J. P. Ferrier (1845) 'Caravan Journeys' p. 437-8

vi. Farrah (Afghanistan) to Semnan. (via Khur & Tabbas)
J. P. Ferrier (1845) Ibid p 439-440

vii. Tabbas to Birjund (via Tun & Kain)
(Sir) C. MacGregor. (1875) 'Journey through Khorasan' vol I. p 137-166

viii. Birjund to Pahri (Herat) (via Furg & Yezdun)
(Sir) C. MacGregor. (1875) Ibid vol I. p. 178-202.

ix. Shahrud to Herat (via Turshiz & Khaf)
Capt. Claude Clerk (1857) 'Journal of the R.G.S.' vol XXXI p 47-54 (1861)

x. Lash Juwain (Afghan Seistan) to Kerman (via Neh)
N. de Khanikoff (1859) 'Memoire sur la Partie Méridionale de l'Asie Centrale' p 156-186

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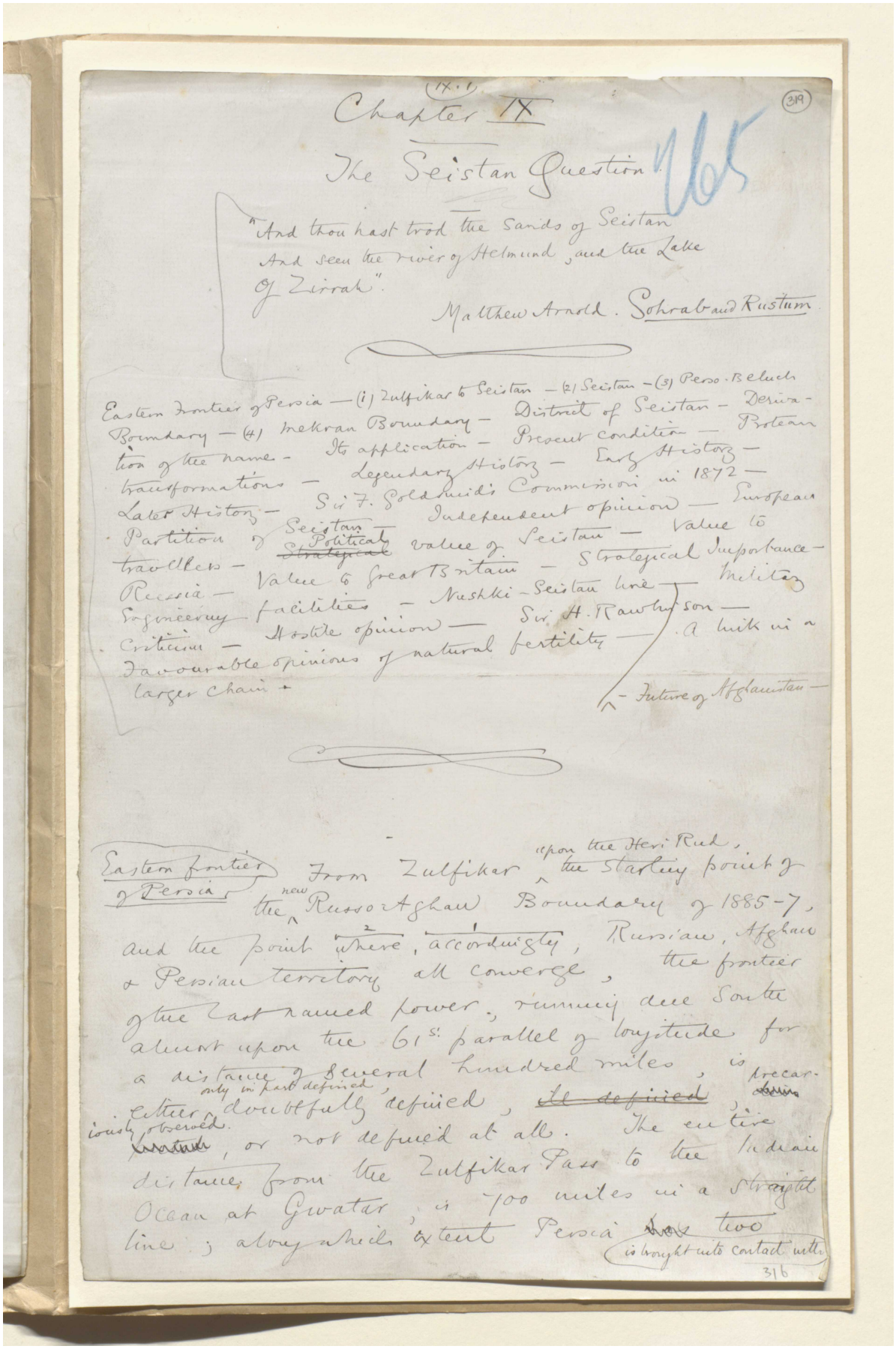

Chapter IX

The Seistan Question

"And thou hast trod the Sands of Seistan
And seen the river of Helmund, and the Lake
Of Zirrah".

Matthew Arnold. Sohrab and Rustum

Eastern frontier of Persia — (1) Zulfikar to Seistan — (2) Seistan — (3) Perso-Beluch Boundary — (4) Mekran Boundary — District of Seistan — Derivation of the name — Its application — Present condition — Protean transformations — Legendary History — Early History — Later History — Sir F. Goldsmid's Commission in 1872 — Partition of Seistan — Independent opinion — European travellers — Political value of Seistan — Value to Russia — Value to Great Britain — Strategical Importance — Engineering facilities — Nushki-Seistan line — Military Criticism — Hostile opinion — Sir H. Rawlinson — Favourable opinions of natural fertility — A link in a larger chain — Future of Afghanistan —

Eastern frontier of Persia

From Zulfikar upon the Heri Rud, the starting point of the new Russo-Afghan Boundary of 1885-7, and the point where, accordingly, Russian, Afghan & Persian territory all converge, the frontier of the last named power, running due South almost upon the 61st parallel of longitude for a distance of several hundred miles, is precariously observed. either doubtfully defined, ill defined, only in part defined, or not defined at all. The entire distance from the Zulfikar Pass to the Indian Ocean at Gwatar, is 700 miles in a straight line; along which extent Persia two is brought into contact with

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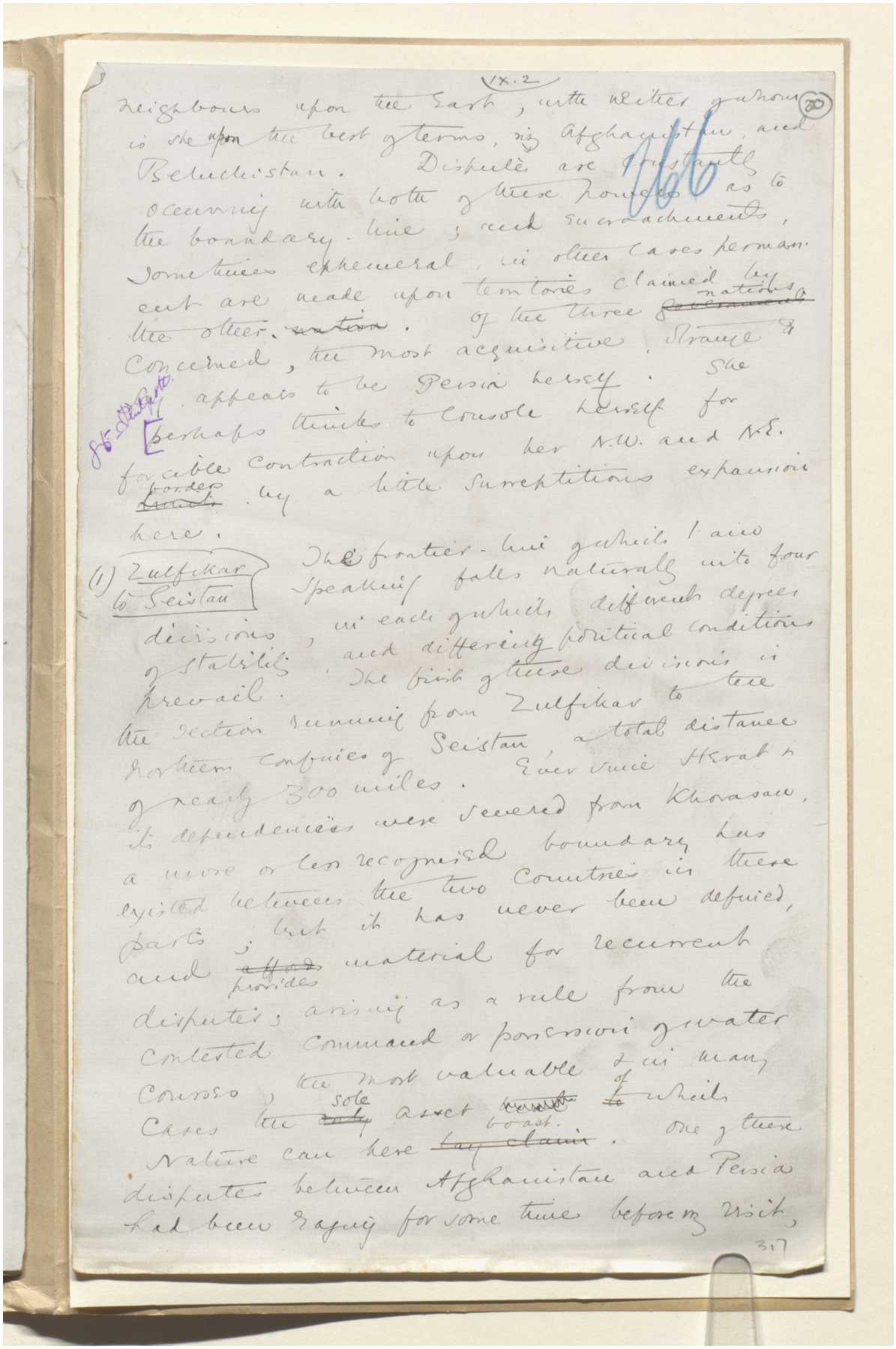

IX.2

(30)

neighbours upon the East, with neither of whom is she upon the best of terms, viz Afghanistan, and Beluchistan. Disputes are constantly occurring with both of these powers as to the boundary line; and encroachments, sometimes ephemeral, in other cases permanent are made upon territories claimed by the other ~~nation~~. Of the three ~~governments~~ nations concerned, the most acquisitive, strange & appears to be Persia herself. She perhaps thinks to console herself for forcible contraction upon her N.W. and N.E. ~~limits~~ borders by a little surreptitious expansion here.

(1) Zulfikar to Seistan

The frontier-line of which I am speaking falls naturally into four divisions, in each of which different degrees of stability and differing political conditions prevail. The first of these divisions is the section running from Zulfikar to the northern confines of Seistan, a total distance of nearly 300 miles. Ever since Herat & its dependencies were severed from Khorasan, a more or less recognised boundary has existed between the two countries in these parts; but it has never been defined, and ~~affords~~ provides material for recurrent disputes; arising as a rule from the contested command or possession of water courses, the most valuable & in many cases the ~~only~~ sole asset ~~[illegible]~~ of which Nature can here ~~lay claim~~ boast. One of these disputes between Afghanistan and Persia had been raging for some time before my visit,

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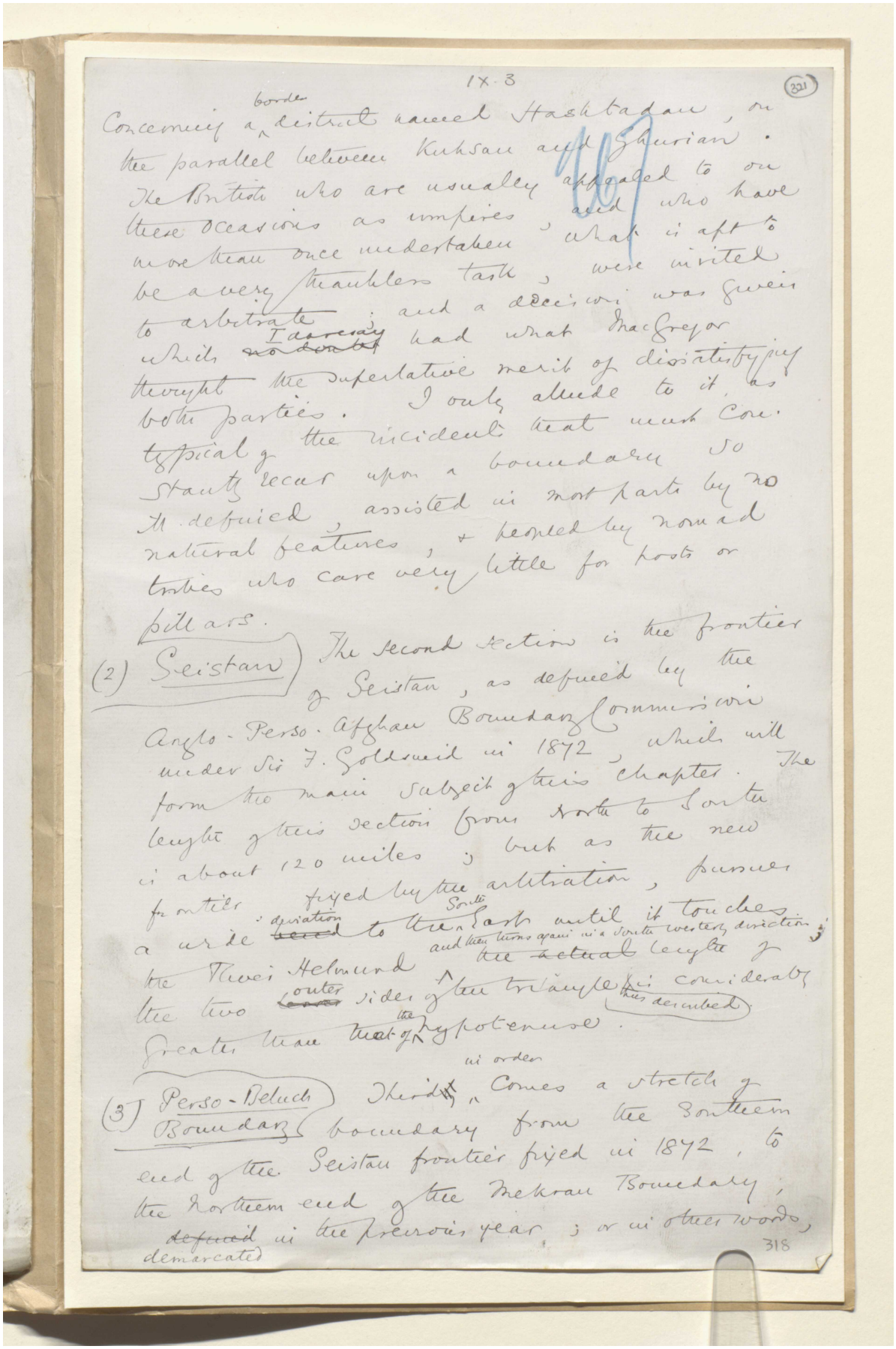

IX. 3

(321)

Concerning a border district named Hashtadan, on the parallel between Kuhsan and Ghurian. The British who are usually appealed to on these occasions as umpires, and who have more than once undertaken what is apt to be a very thankless task, were invited to arbitrate; and a decision was given which ~~no doubt~~ I daresay had what MacGregor thought the superlative merit of dissatisfying both parties. I only allude to it, as typical of the incidents that must constantly recur upon a boundary so ill defined, assisted in most parts by no natural features, & peopled by nomad tribes who care very little for posts or pillars.

(2) Seistan The second section is the frontier of Seistan, as defined by the Anglo-Perso-Afghan Boundary Commission under Sir F. Goldsmid in 1872, which will form the main subject of this chapter. The length of this section from North to South is about 120 miles; but as the new frontier fixed by the arbitration, pursues a wide ~~bend~~ deviation to the South East until it touches the River Helmund and then turns again in a South westerly direction; the ~~actual~~ length of the two ~~lower~~ outer sides of the triangle thus described is considerably greater than that of the hypotenuse.

(3) Perso-Beluch Boundary Third in order comes a stretch of boundary from the Southern end of the Seistan frontier fixed in 1872, to the Northern end of the Mekran Boundary; ~~defined~~ demarcated in the previous year; or in other words,

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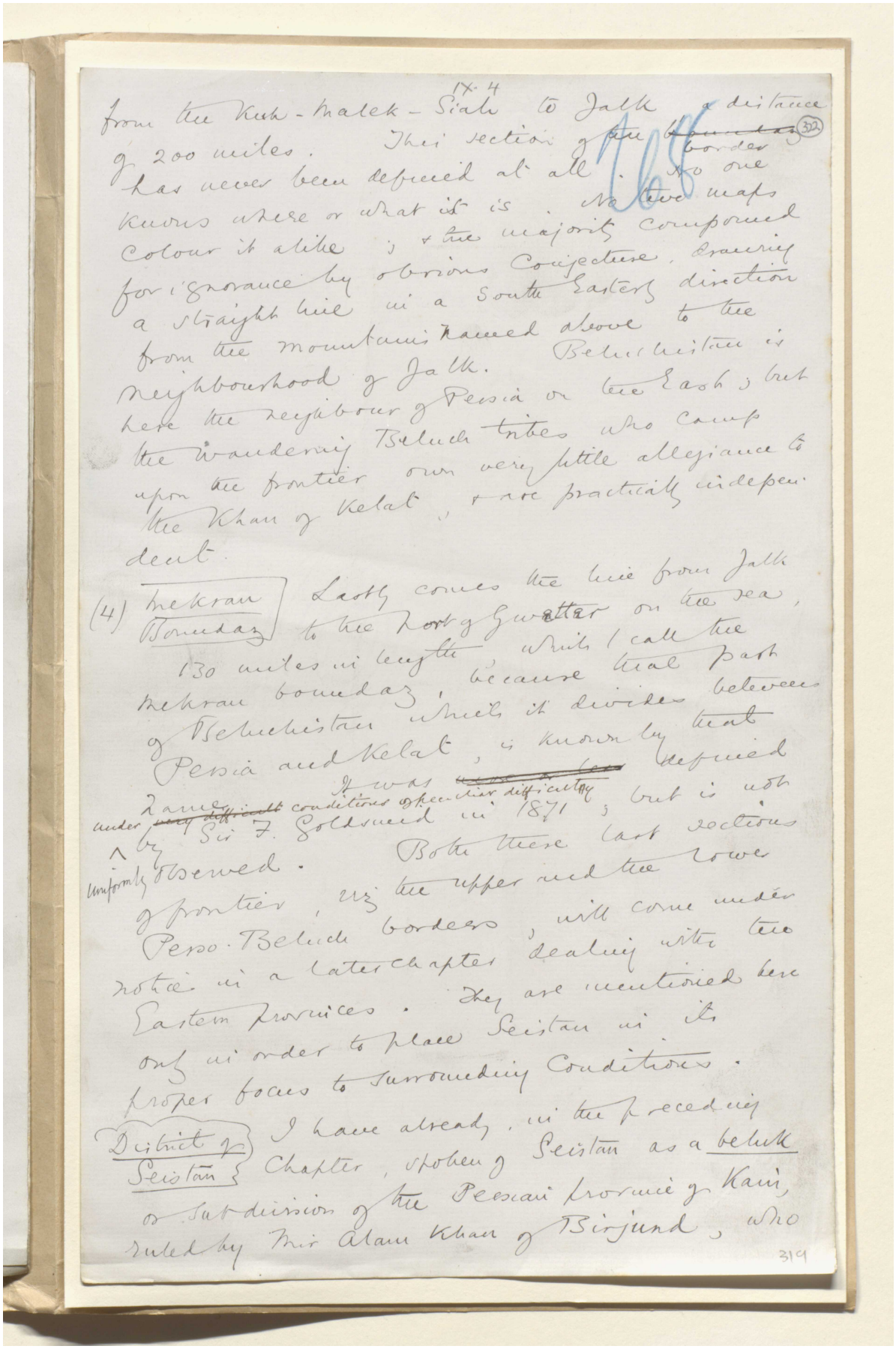
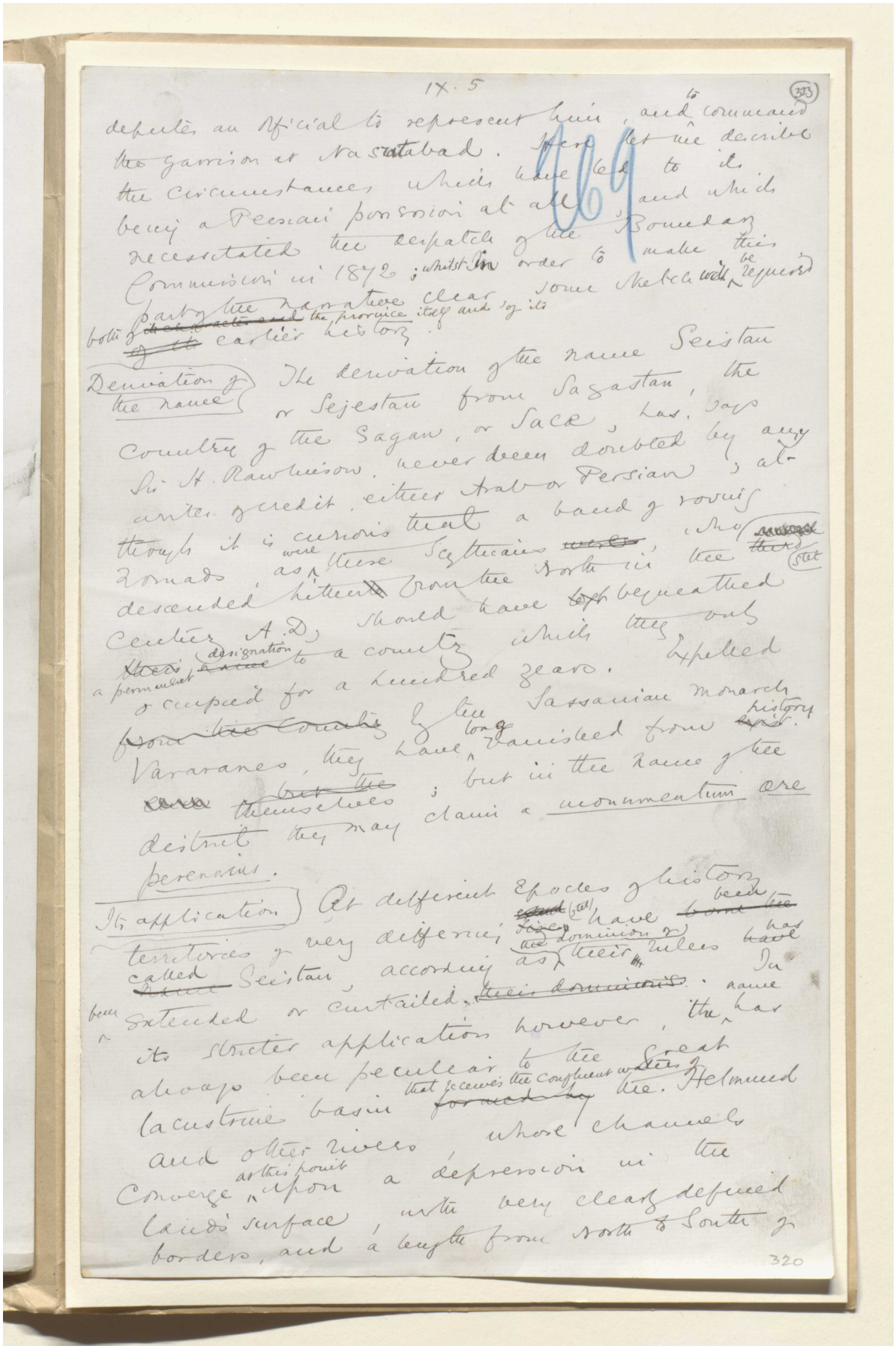


from the Kuh-i-Malek-Siah to Jalk a distance of 200 miles. This section of the border has never been defined at all. No one knows where or what it is. We have maps colour it alike; & the majority compound for ignorance by obvious conjecture, drawing a straight line in a South Eastern direction from the mountains named above to the neighbourhood of Jalk. Beluchistan is here the neighbour of Persia on the East; but the wandering Beluch tribes who camp upon the frontier owe very little allegiance to the Khan of Kelat, & are practically independent.

(4) Mekran Boundary. Lastly comes the line from Jalk to the Port of Gwattar on the sea, 130 miles in length, which I call the Mekran boundary, because that part of Beluchistan which it divides between Persia and Kelat, is known by that name. It was a peculiar difficulty under which Sir F. Goldsmid in 1871, but is now uniformly observed. Both these last sections of frontier, viz the upper and the lower Perso-Beluch borders, will come under notice in a later chapter dealing with the Eastern Provinces. They are mentioned here only in order to place Seistan in its proper focus to surrounding Conditions.

District of Seistan. I have already, in the preceding Chapter, spoken of Seistan as a Beluch or Sub-division of the Persian province of Kain, ruled by Mir Alam Khan of Birjand, who





IX. 5

(323)

deputes an official to represent him, and to command the garrison at Nasratabad. Here let me describe the circumstances which have led to its being a Persian possession at all, and which necessitated the despatch of the Boundary Commission in 1872; whilst in order to make this part of the narrative clear, some sketch will be required both of the province itself and of its earlier history.

Derivation of the name

The derivation of the name Seistan or Sejestan from Sagastan, the country of the Sagan, or Sacæ, has, says Sir H. Rawlinson, never been doubted by any writer of credit, either Arab or Persian; although it is curious that a band of roving nomads, as were these Scythians, who descended hither from the North in the Centre A.D., should have bequeathed a permanent designation to a country which they only occupied for a hundred years. Expelled by the Sassanian monarch Vararanes, they have long vanished from history; but in the name of the themselves district they may claim a monumentum ære perennius.

Its application

At different Epochs of history territories of very differing sizes have been called Seistan, according as their rulers have been extended or curtailed. In its stricter application however, the name has always been peculiar to the great lacustrine basin that receives the confluent waters of the Helmund and other rivers, whose channels converge at this point upon a depression in the land's surface, with very clearly defined borders, and a length from North to South of

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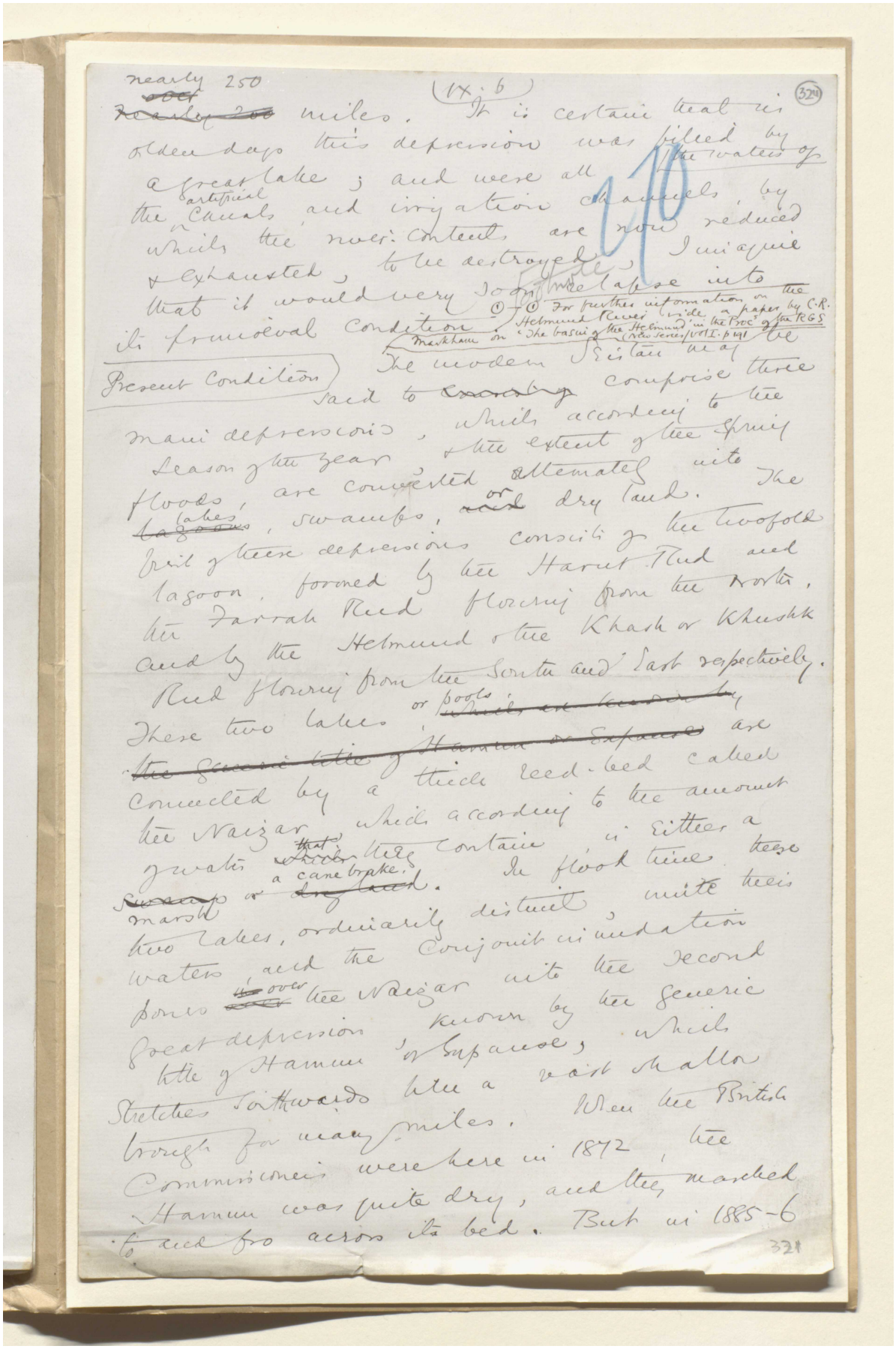

nearly 250 (IX. 6) (324)

~~nearly 200~~ miles. It is certain that in olden days this depression was filled by a great lake; and were all the waters of the artificial canals and irrigation channels, by which the river contents are now reduced & exhausted, to be destroyed, I imagine that it would very soon relapse into its primeval condition.

① — ① For further information on the Helmund River vide a paper by C.R. Markham on 'The basin of the Helmund' in the Proc. of the RGS (New Series) Vol I. p 191

Present Condition

The modern Seistan may be said to ~~[illegible]~~ comprise three main depressions, which according to the season of the year, & the extent of the spring floods, are converted alternately into ~~lagoons~~ lakes, swamps, ~~and~~ or dry land. The first of these depressions consists of the twofold lagoon, formed by the Harut Rud and the Farrah Rud flowing from the North, and by the Helmund & the Khash or Khushk Rud flowing from the South and East respectively. These two lakes or pools ~~which are known by the generic title of Hamun or Expanse~~ are connected by a thick reed-bed called the Naizar, which according to the amount of water that they contain is either a ~~swamp~~ marsh or a cane brake ~~dry land~~. In flood time these two lakes, ordinarily distinct, unite their waters, and the conjoint inundation pours ~~over~~ over the Naizar into the second great depression known by the generic title of Hamun or Expanse, which stretches southwards like a vast shallow trough for many miles. When the British Commissioners were here in 1872, the Hamun was quite dry, and they marched to and fro across its bed. But in 1885-6

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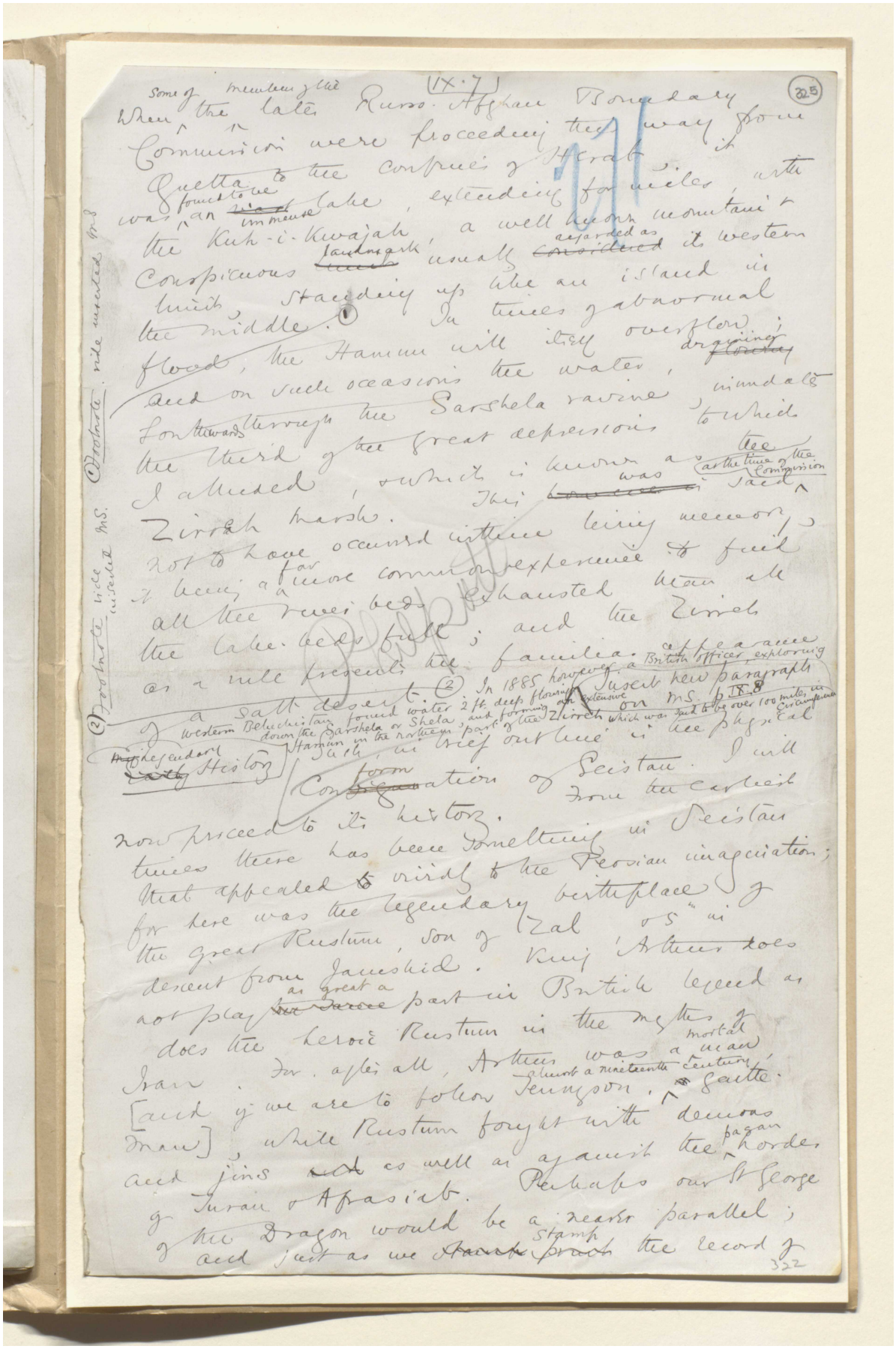
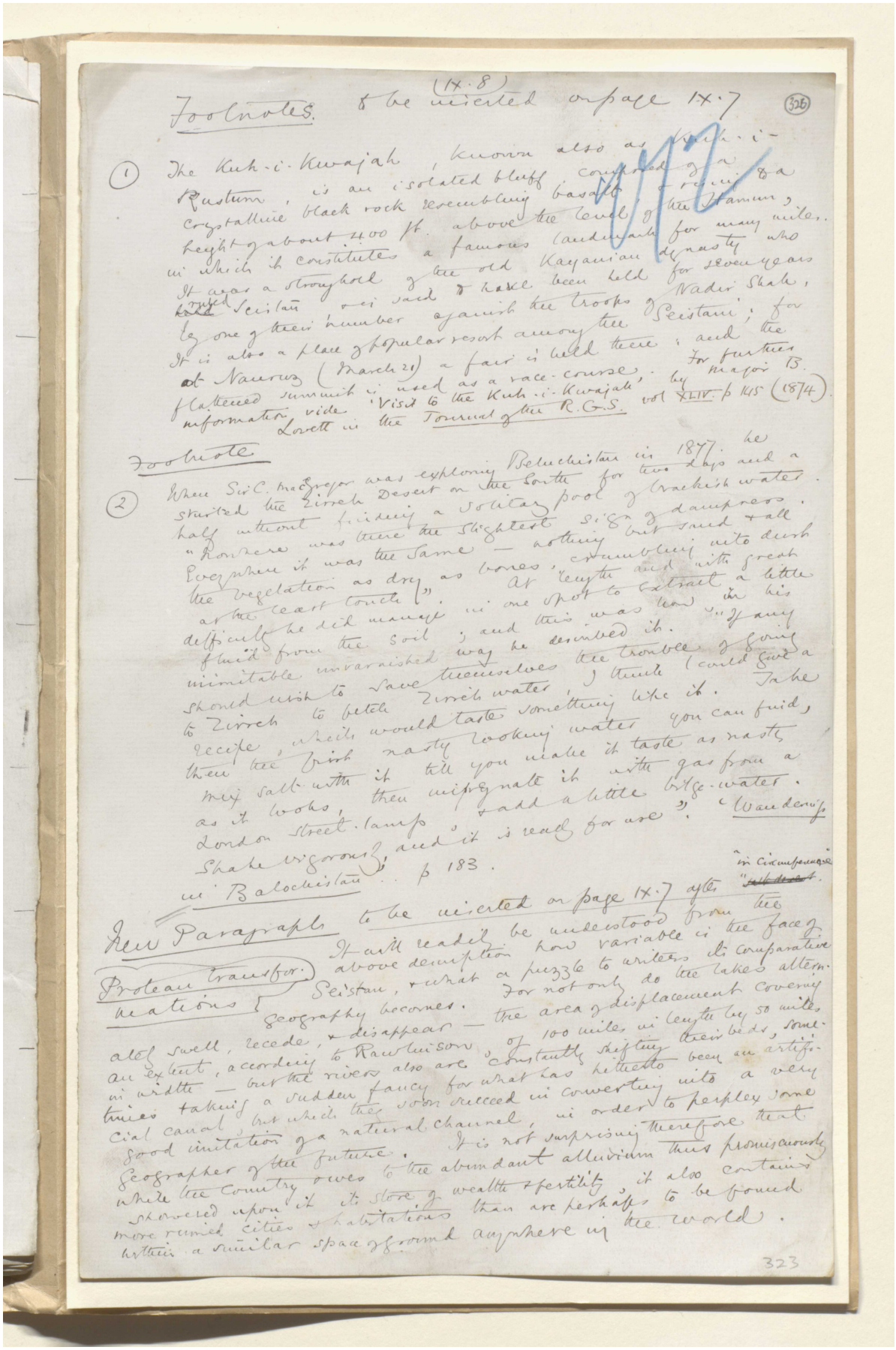




(IX.8)



Footnotes. to be inserted on page IX.7 (326)

(1) The Kuh-i-Kwajah, known also as Kuh-i-Rustum, is an isolated bluff, composed of a crystalline black rock resembling basalt & rising to a height of about 400 ft. above the level of the Hamun, in which it constitutes a famous landmark for many miles. It was a stronghold of the old Kayanian dynasty who ruled Seistan & is said to have been held for seven years by one of their number against the troops of Nadir Shah. It is also a place of popular resort among the Seistani; for at Nauruz (March 21) a fair is held there; and the flattened summit is used as a race-course. For further information vide 'Visit to the Kuh-i-Kwajah' by Major B. Lovett in the Journal of the R.G.S. vol XLIV. p 145 (1874).

Footnote

(2) When Sir C. MacGregor was exploring Beluchistan in 1877, he started the Zirreh Desert on the South for two days and a half without finding a solitary pool of brackish water. "Nowhere was there the slightest sign of dampness. Everywhere it was the same — nothing but sand & all the vegetation as dry as bones, crumbling into dust at the least touch". At length and with great difficulty he did manage in one spot to extract a little fluid from the soil; and this was how in his inimitable unvarnished way he described it. "If any should wish to save themselves the trouble of going to Zirreh to fetch Zirreh water, I think I could give a recipe, which would taste something like it. Take then the first nasty looking water you can find, mix salt with it till you make it taste as nasty as it looks, then impregnate it with gas from a London street-lamp, & add a little bilge-water. Shake vigorously, and it is ready for use". 'Wandering in Balochistan' p 183.

New Paragraph to be inserted on page IX.7 after "in circumference" ~~[illegible]~~.

Protean transformations

It will readily be understood from the above description how variable is the face of Seistan, & what a puzzle to writers its comparative geography becomes. For not only do the lakes alternately swell, recede, & disappear — the area of displacement covering an extent, according to Rawlinson, of 100 miles in length by 50 miles in width — but the rivers also are constantly shifting their beds, sometimes taking a sudden fancy for what has hitherto been an artificial canal, but which they soon succeed in converting into a very good imitation of a natural channel, in order to perplex some Geographer of the future. It is not surprising therefore that while the country owes to the abundant alluvium thus promiscuously showered upon it its store of wealth & fertility, it also contains more ruined cities & habitations than are perhaps to be found within a similar space of ground anywhere in the world.

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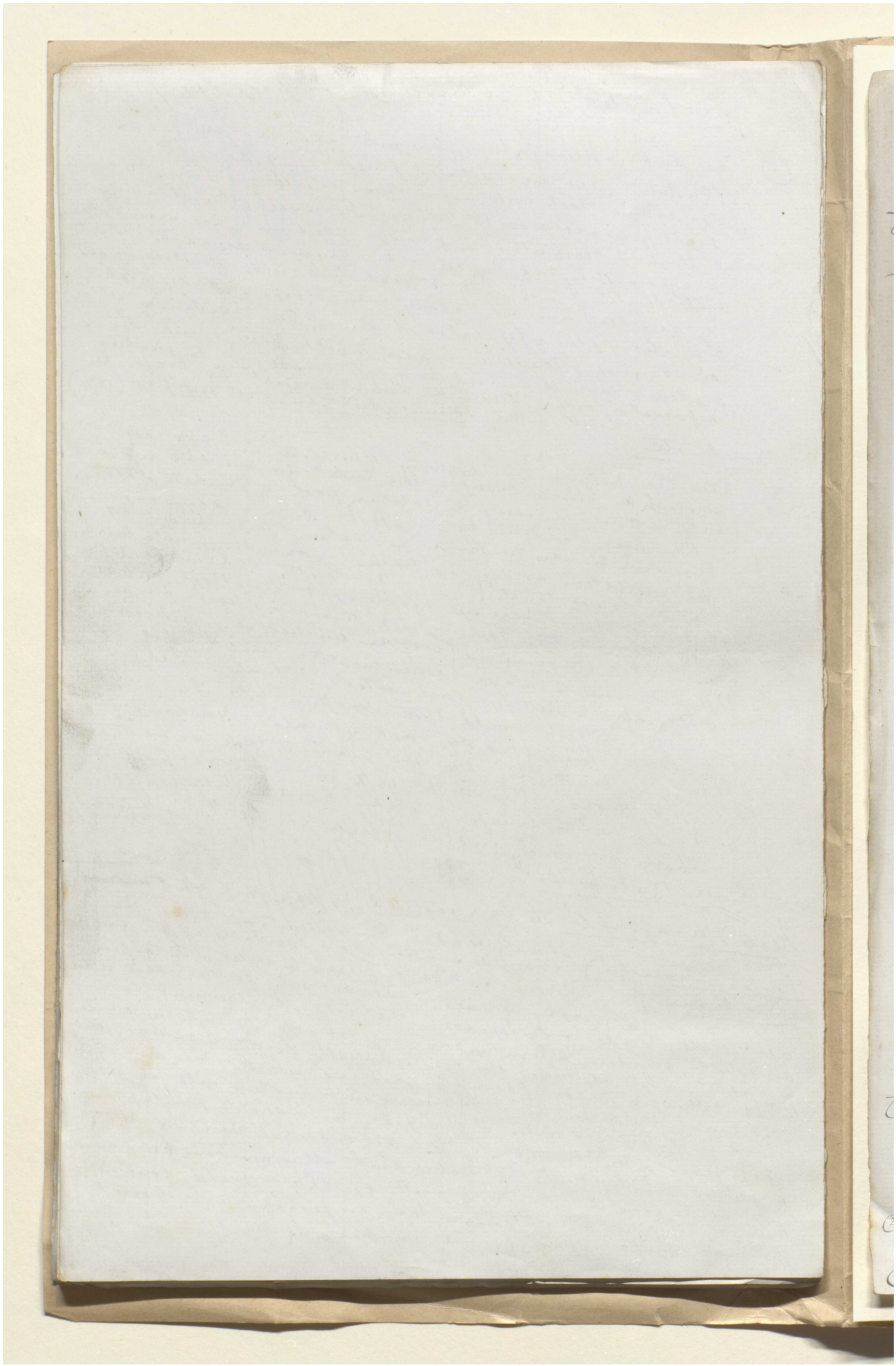
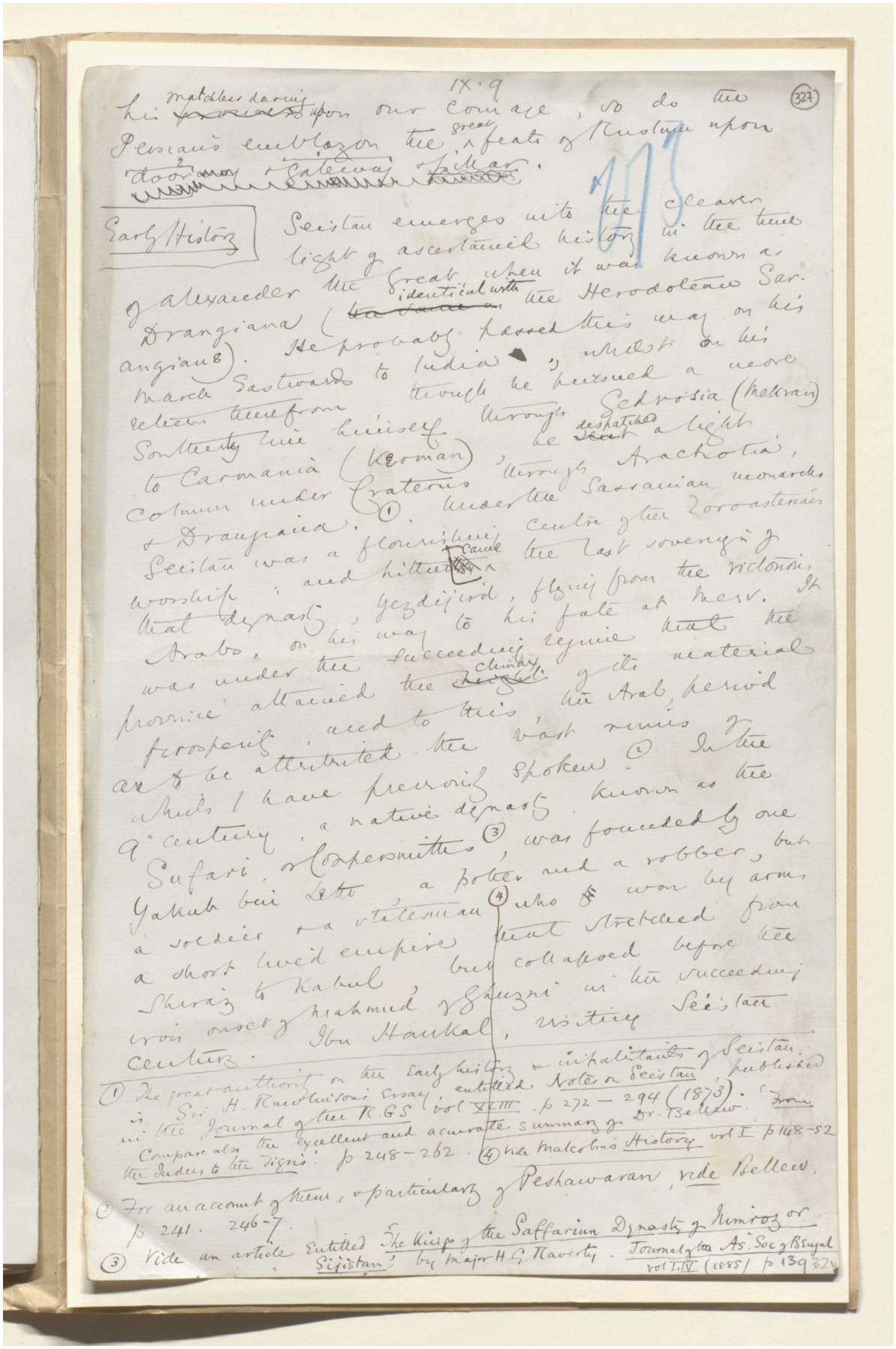




IX·9

(327)

hi Matchless daring upon our Conrage, so do the Persians emblazon the great feats of Rustum upon door Gateway of pillar.

Early History

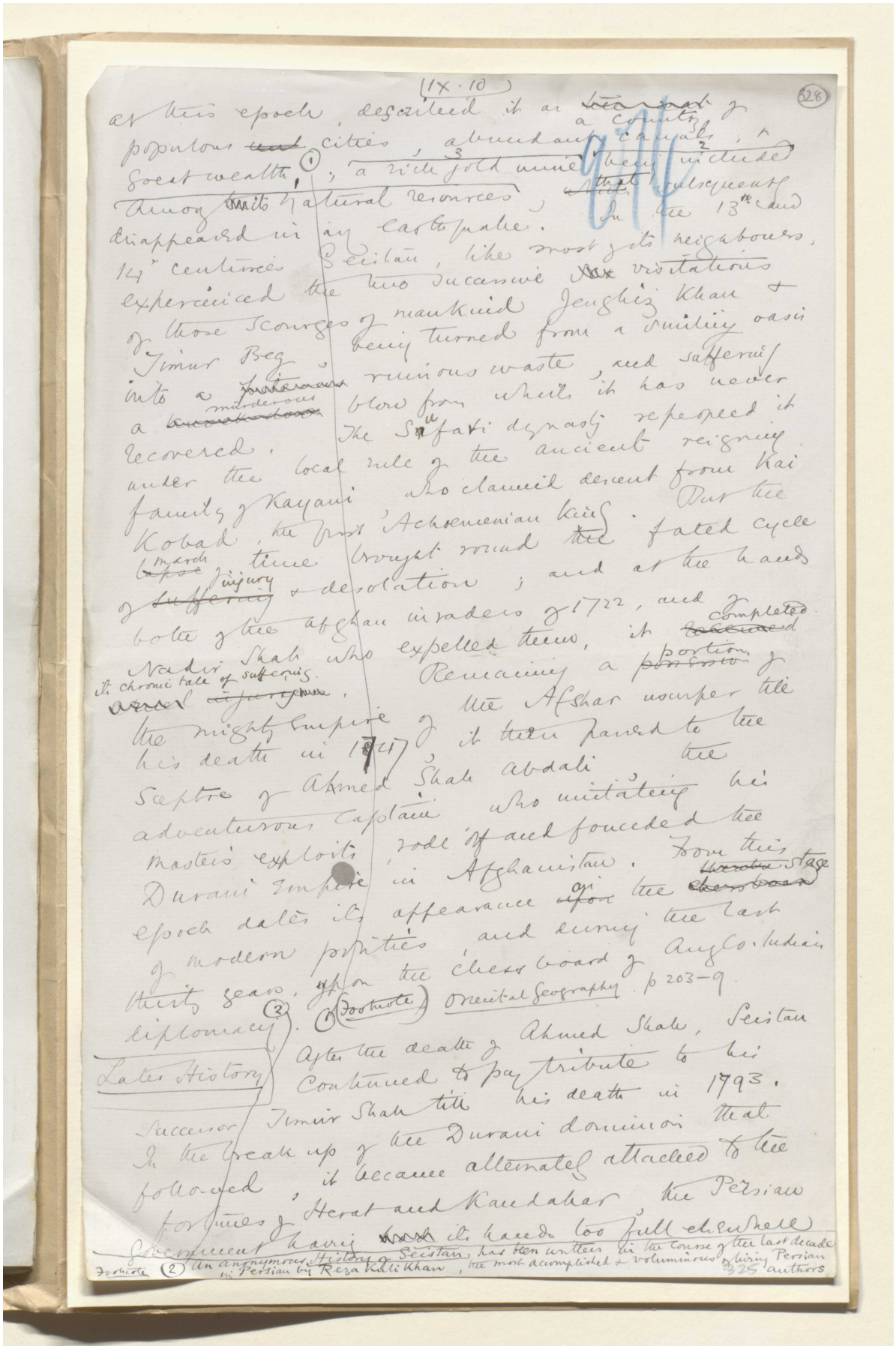
Seistan emerges into the clearer light of ascertained history in the time of Alexander the Great when it was known as Drangiana (identical with the Herodotean Sarangians). He probably passed this way on his march Eastwards to India, whilst on his return therefrom Seleucus Nicator himself through Sedrosia (Mekran) Southerly line to Carmania (Kerman), he detached a light column under Craterus (1) through Arachotia, & Drangiana. Under the Sassanian monarchs Seistan was a flourishing centre of the Zoroastrian worship, and hither came the last sovereign of that dynasty, Yezdijird, flying from the victorious Arabs, on his way to his fate at Merv. It was under the succeeding reign that the province attained the climax of its material prosperity, and to this, the Arab period are to be attributed the vast ruins of which I have previously spoken. (2) In the 9th century a native dynasty known as the Saffari, or Coppersmiths, (3) was founded by one Yakub bin Leis a potter and a robber, but a soldier & a statesman (4) who by arms established from a short lived empire that stretched from Shiraz to Kabul, but collapsed before the invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni in the succeeding century. Ibn Haukal, visiting Seistan

(1) The great authority on the early history & inhabitants of Seistan is Sir H. Rawlinson's Essay entitled Notes on Seistan, published in the Journal of the R.G.S. vol XXXIII. p 272 – 294 (1873). Compare also the excellent and accurate summary of Dr. Bellew from the Indus to the Tigris' p 248–262. (4) vide Malcolm's History vol I. p 148-52

(2) For an account of them, & particulars of Peshawaran, vide Bellew p 241. 246-7.

(3) Vide an article Entitled 'The Kings of the Saffarian Dynasty of Kumroz or Sijistan' by Major H.G. Raverty. Journal of the As. Soc. of Bengal vol I.IV (1885) p 139-221





(IX.10)

(328)

at this epoch, described it as a country of populous cities, abundant canals, a great wealth,(1); a rich gold mine being included among its natural resources, that subsequently disappeared in an earthquake. In the 13th and 14th centuries Seistan, like most of its neighbours, experienced the two successive visitations of those scourges of mankind Jenghiz Khan & Timur Beg, being turned from a smiling oasis into a ruinous waste, and suffering a murderous blow from which it has never recovered. The Sufavi dynasty repeopled it under the local rule of the ancient reigning family of Kayani who claimed descent from Kai Kobad, the first Achaemenian king. But the march of time brought round the fated cycle of injury & desolation; and at the hands both of the Afghan invaders of 1722, and of Nadir Shah who expelled them, it completed its chronic tale of suffering. Remaining a portion of the mighty empire of the Afshar usurper till his death in 1747, it then passed to the sceptre of Ahmed Shah Abdali, the adventurous captain who imitating his master's exploits, rode off and founded the Durani Empire in Afghanistan. From this epoch dates its appearance on the stage of modern politics and during the last thirty years, upon the chess board of Anglo-Indian diplomacy.(2)

(1) (Footnote) Oriental Geography p 203-9.

Later History

After the death of Ahmed Shah, Seistan continued to pay tribute to his successor Timur Shah till his death in 1793. In the break up of the Durani dominion that followed, it became alternately attached to the fortunes of Herat and Kandahar, the Persian government having its hands too full elsewhere

Footnote (2) An anonymous History of Seistan, has been written in the course of the last decade in Persian by Reza Kuli Khan, the most accomplished & voluminous of living Persian authors

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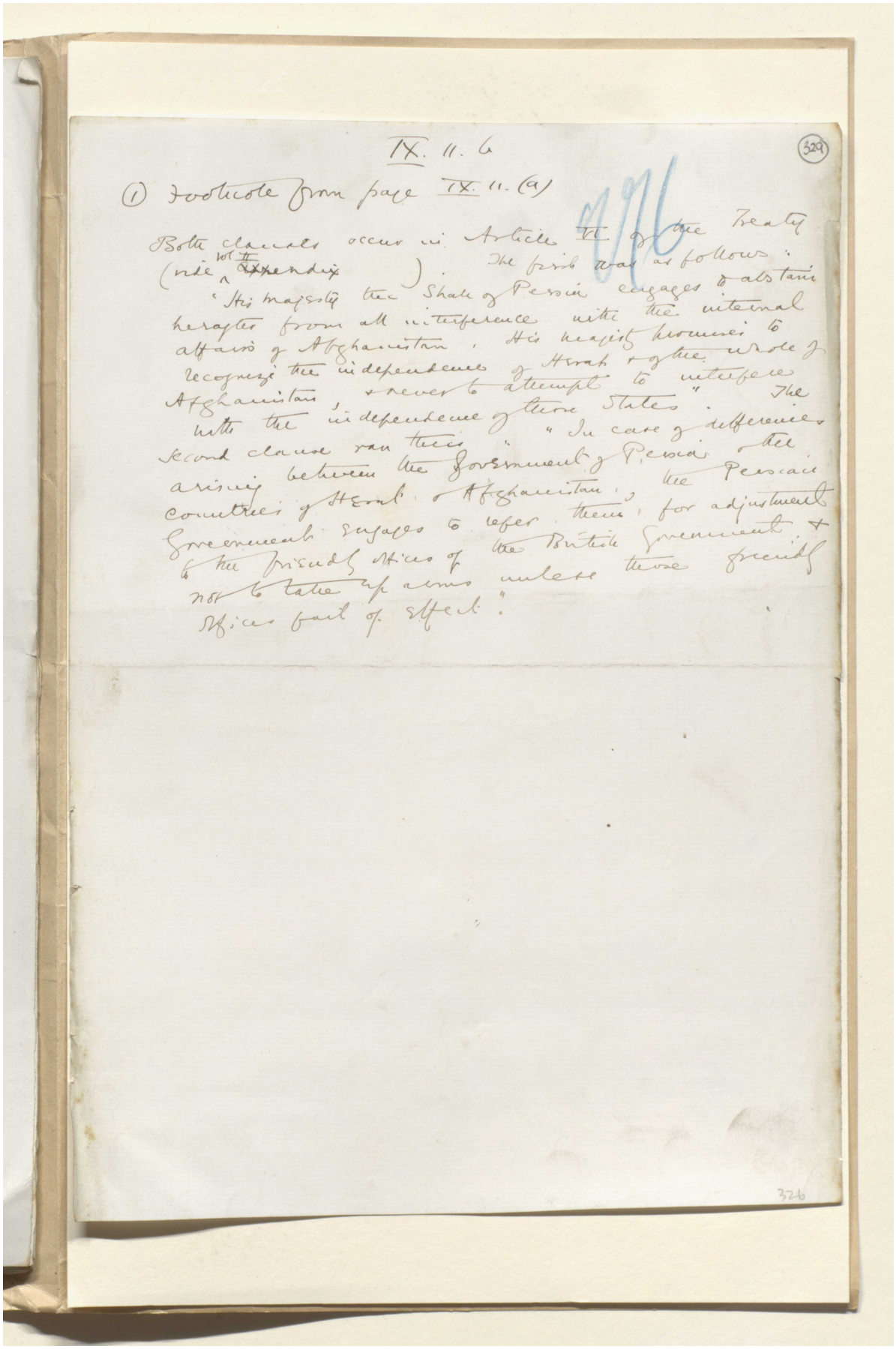

IX. 11. 6

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(1) Footnote from page IX. 11. (a)

Both clauses occur in Article VI of the Treaty (vide Vol II Appendix). The first was as follows:
"His majesty the Shah of Persia engages to abstain hereafter from all interference with the internal affairs of Afghanistan. His majesty likewise to recognize the independence of Herat & the whole of Afghanistan, & never to attempt to interfere with the independence of those States." The second clause ran thus: "In case of differences arising between the Government of Persia & the countries of Herat & Afghanistan, the Persian Government engages to refer them for adjustment to the friendly offices of the British Government & not to take up arms unless those friendly offices fail of effect."

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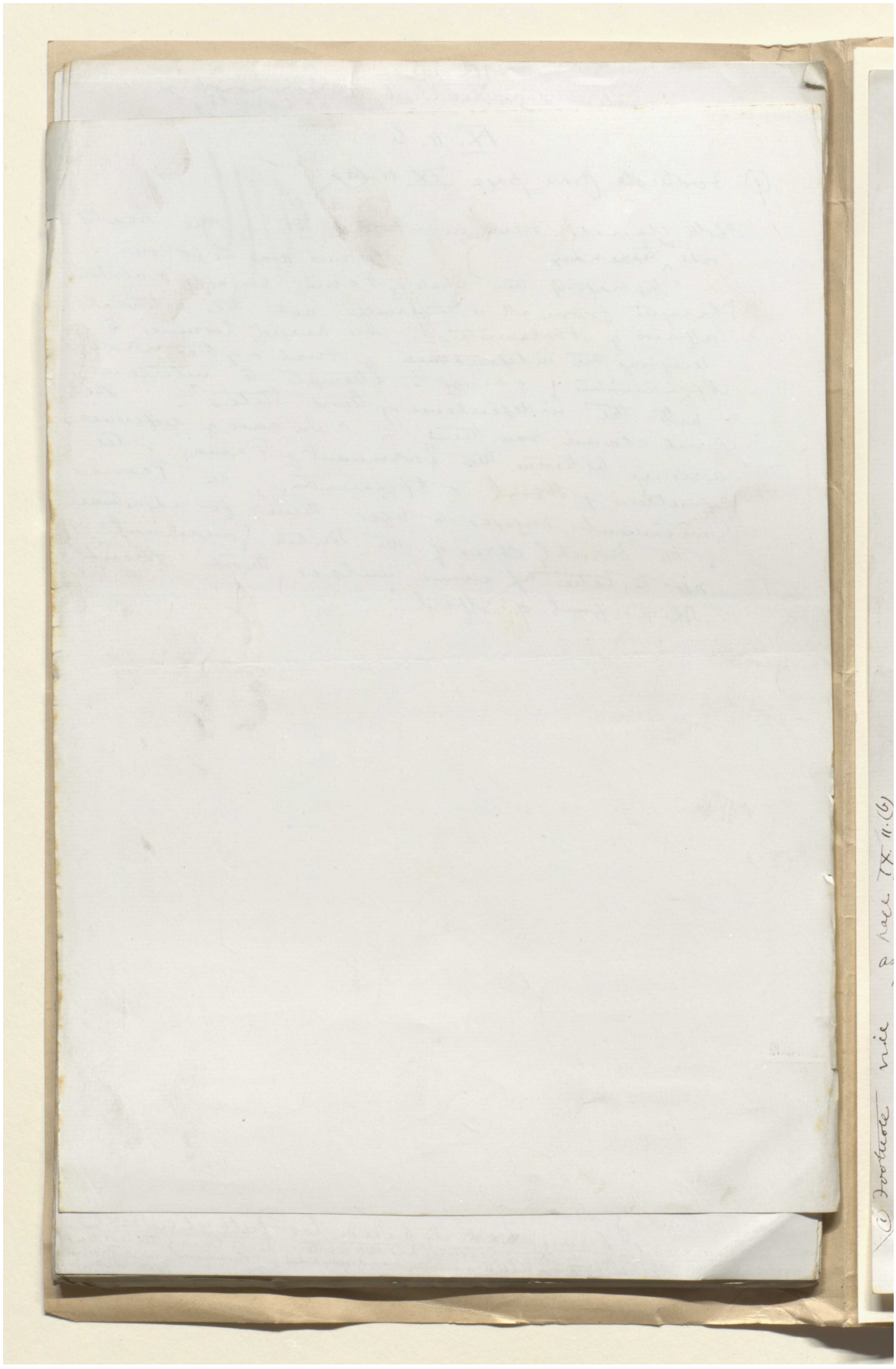

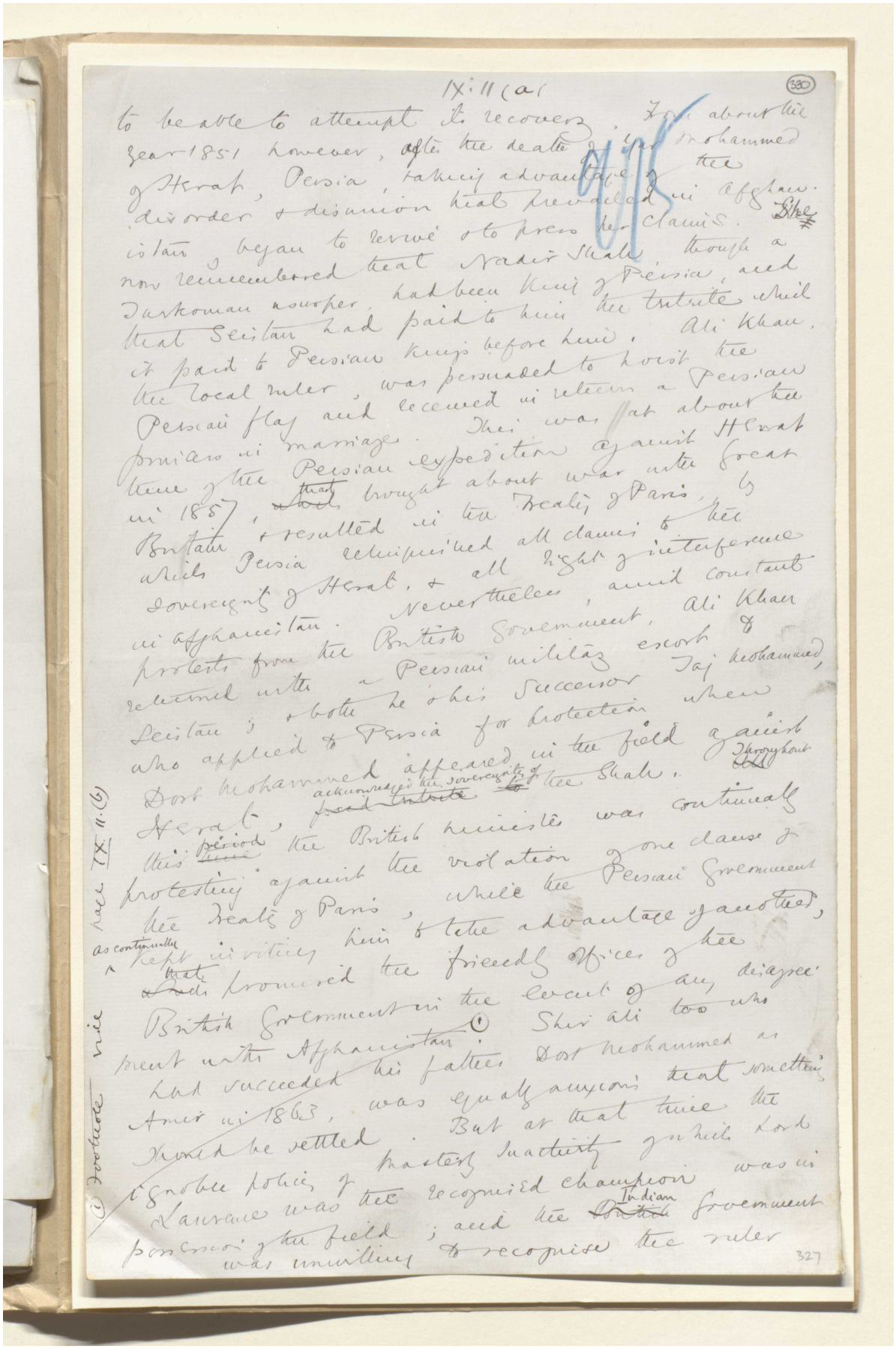

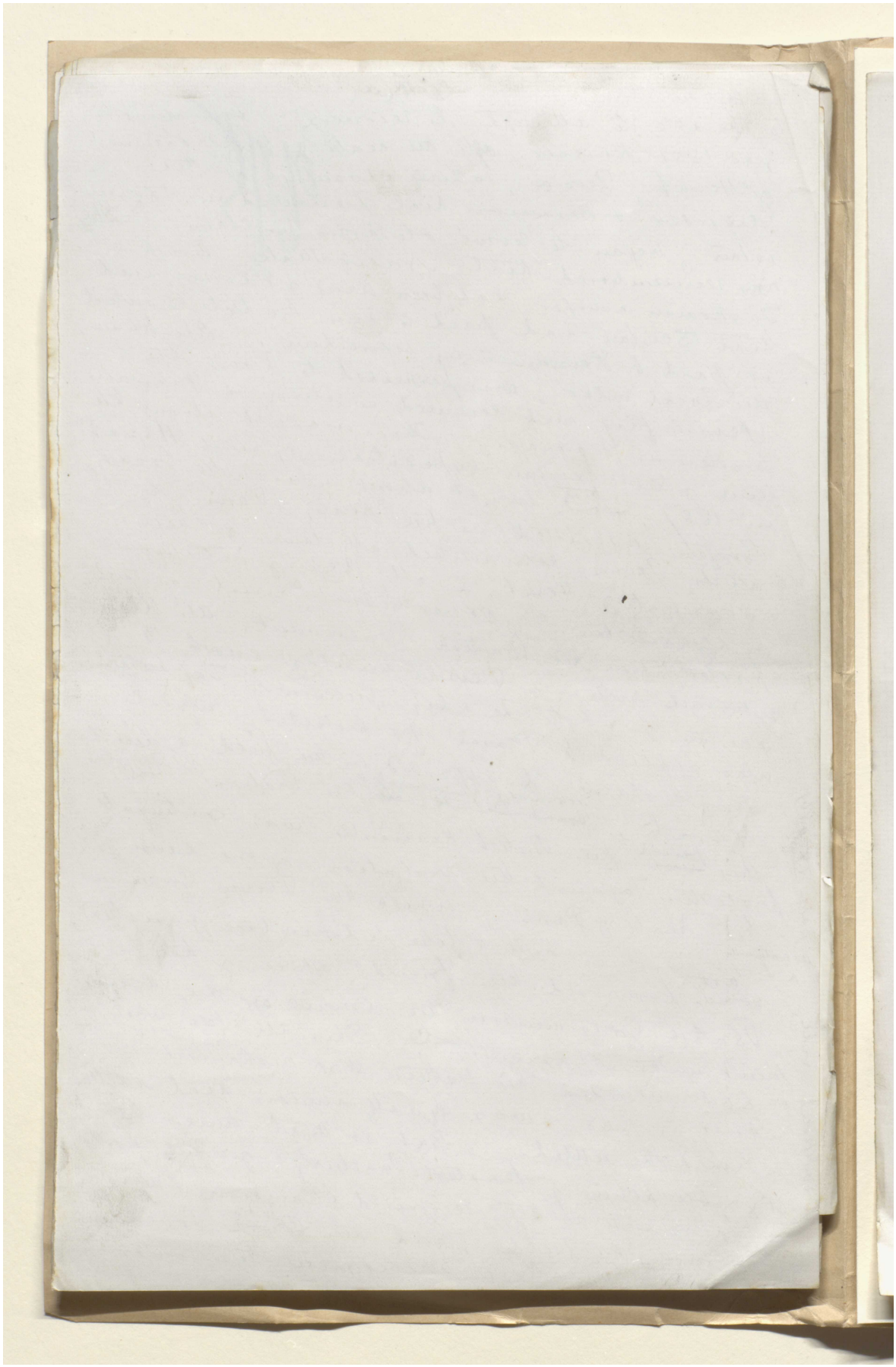

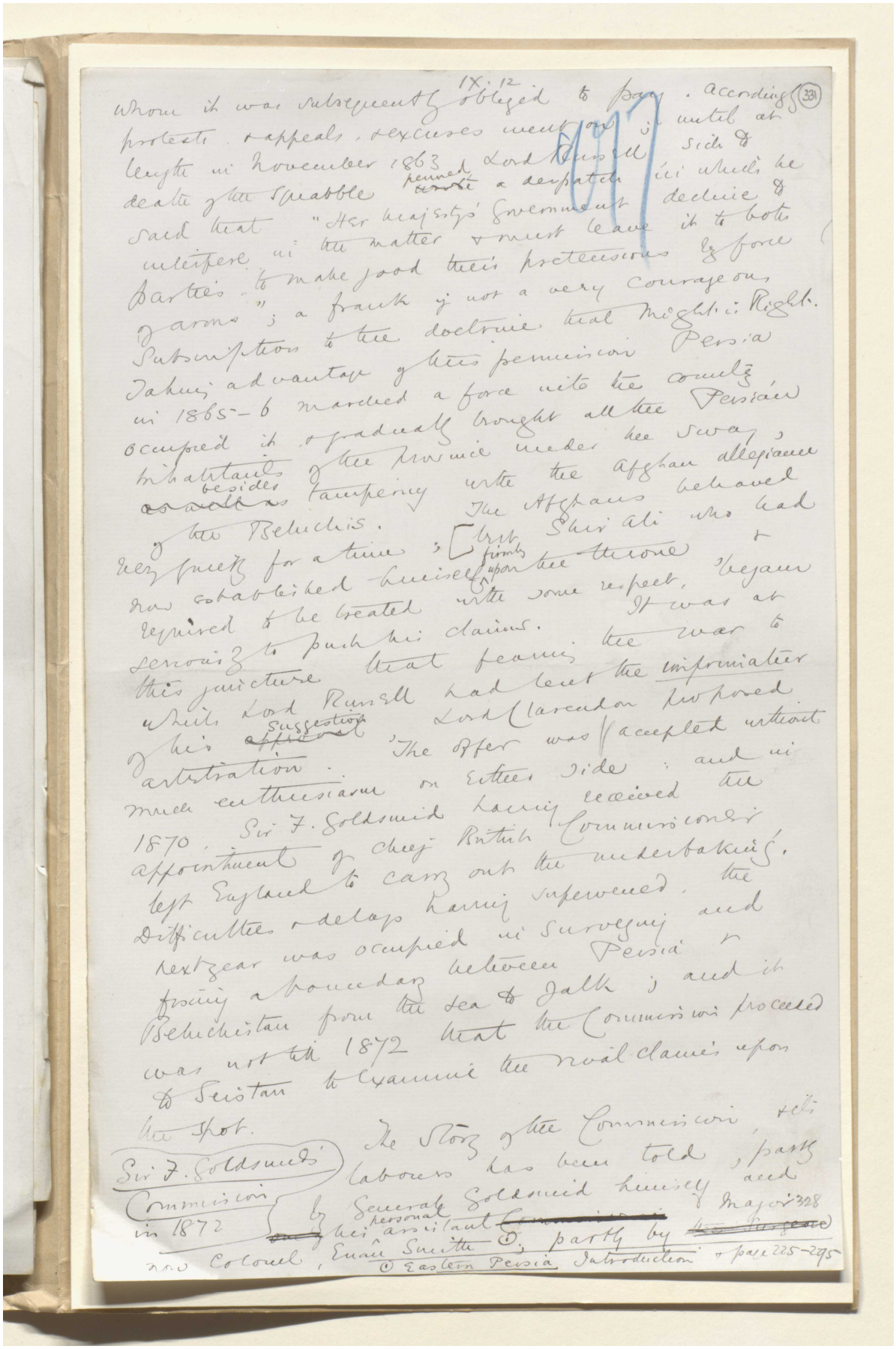



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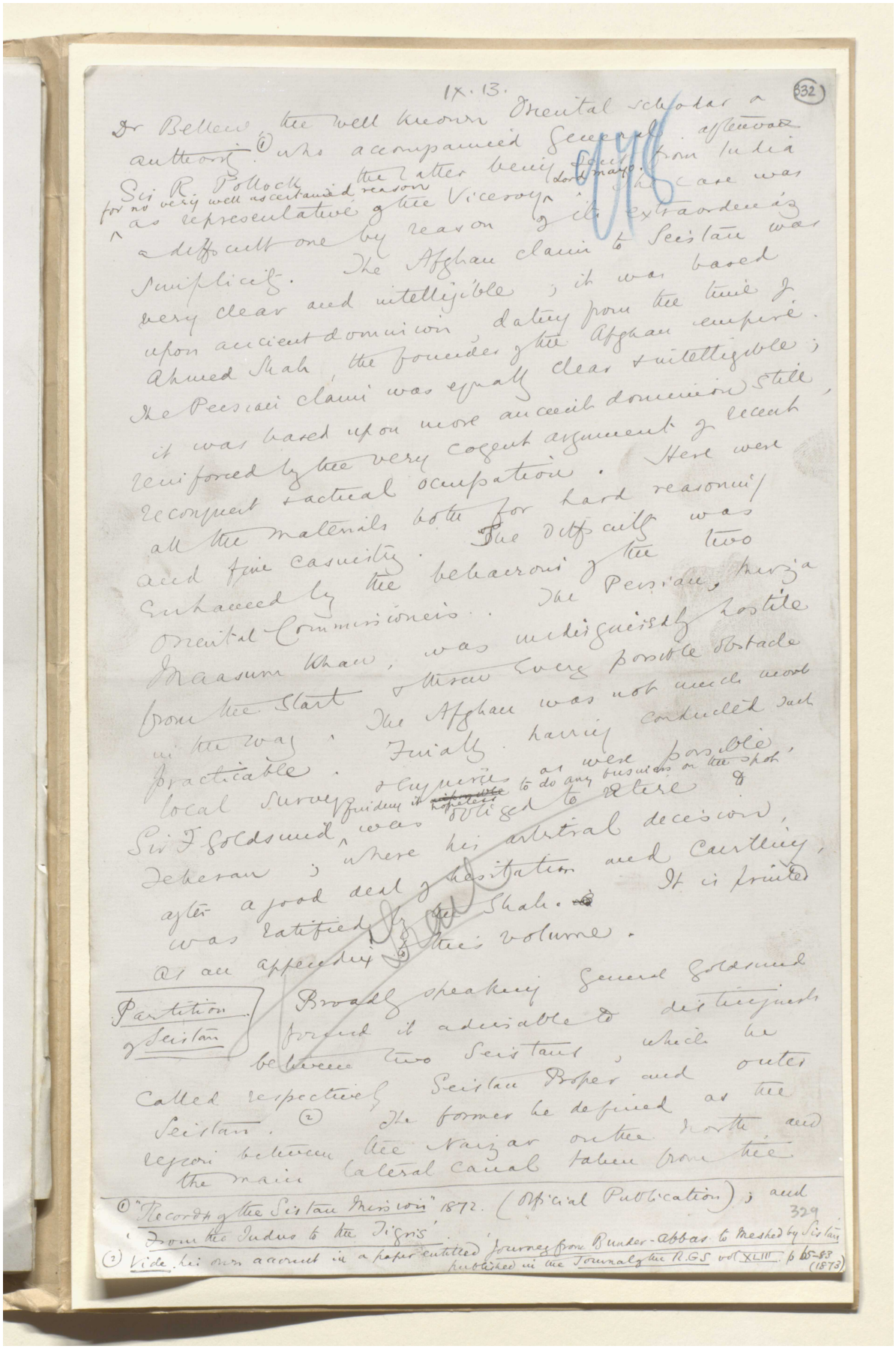
IX. 13.

(332)



Dr Bellew, the well known Oriental scholar & authority (1) who accompanied General afterwards Sir R. Pollock, the latter being sent from India for no very well ascertained reason as representative of the Viceroy (Lord Mayo). The case was a difficult one by reason of its extraordinary simplicity. The Afghan claim to Seistan was very clear and intelligible; it was based upon ancient dominion, dating from the time of Ahmed Shah, the founder of the Afghan empire. The Persian claim was equally clear & intelligible; it was based upon more ancient dominion still, reinforced by the very cogent argument of recent reconquest & actual occupation. Here were all the materials both for hard reasoning and fine casuistry. The difficulty was enhanced by the behaviour of the two Oriental Commissioners. The Persian, Mirza Maasum Khan, was undisguisedly hostile from the start & threw every possible obstacle in the way. The Afghan was not much more practicable. Finally, having conducted such local survey & enquiries as were possible, Sir F. Goldsmid, finding it ~~impossible~~ hopeless to do any business on the spot, was obliged to retire to Teheran; where his arbitral decision, after a good deal of hesitation and cavilling, was ratified by the Shah. It is printed as an appendix to this volume.

Partition of Seistan

Broadly speaking General Goldsmid found it advisable to distinguish between two Seistans, which he called respectively Seistan Proper and outer Seistan. (2) The former he defined as the region between the Naizar on the North and the main lateral canal taken from the

(1) "Record of the Sistan Mission" 1872. (Official Publication); and 'From the Indus to the Tigris'.

(2) Vide his own account in a paper entitled 'Journey from Bunder-Abbas to Meshed by Sistan' published in the Journal of the R.G.S. vol XLIII. p 65-83 (1873)

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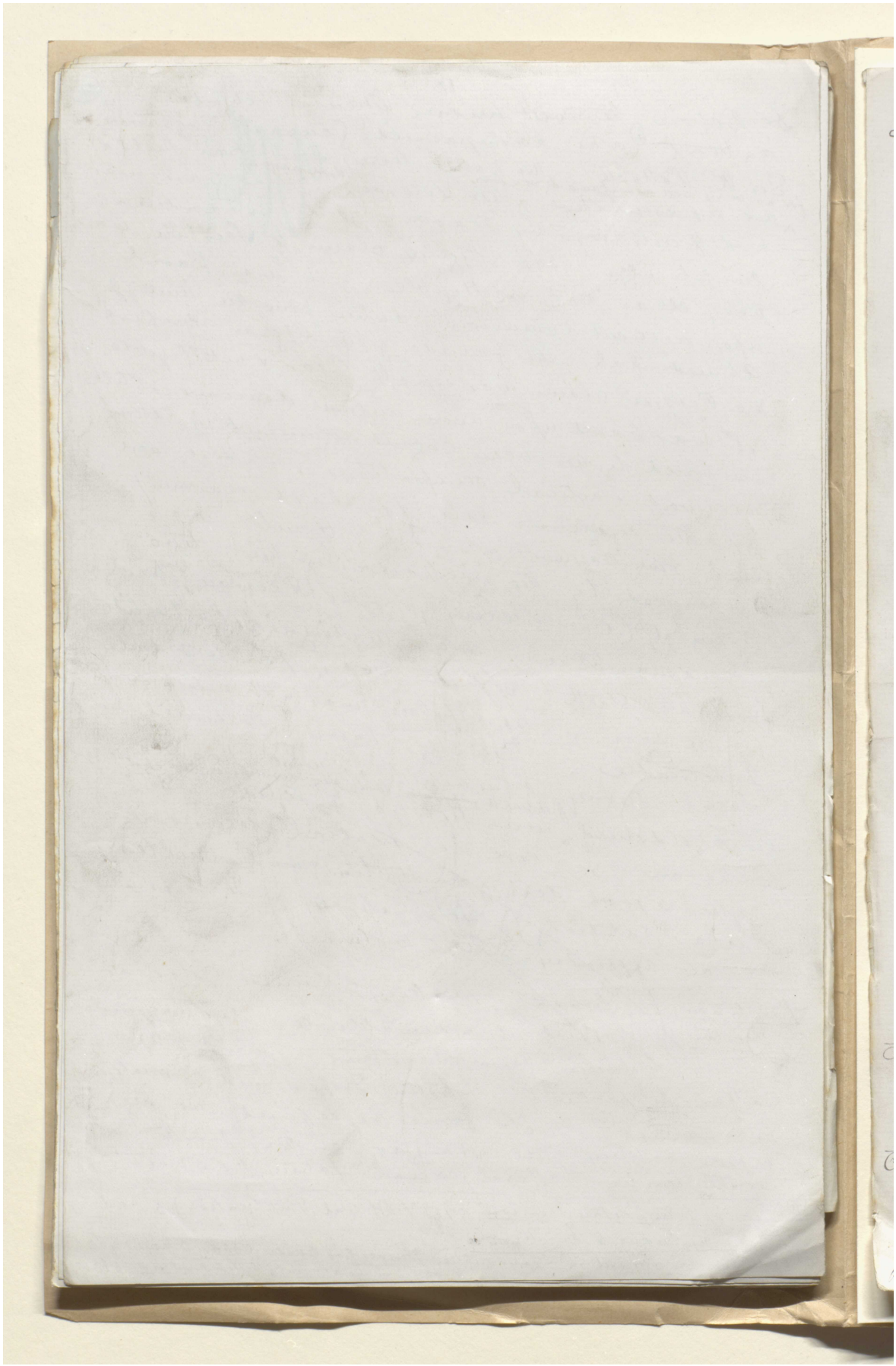

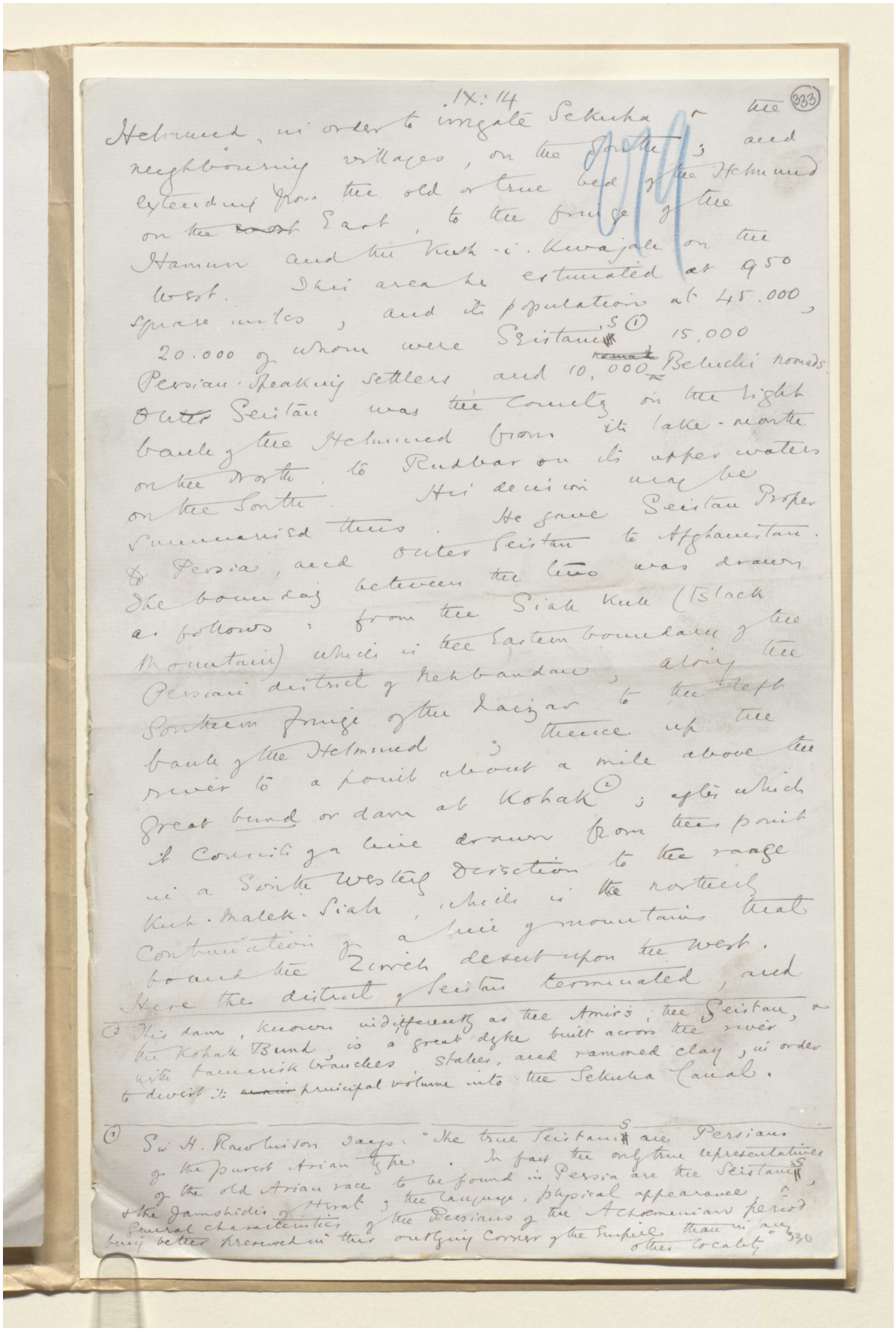

IX. 14

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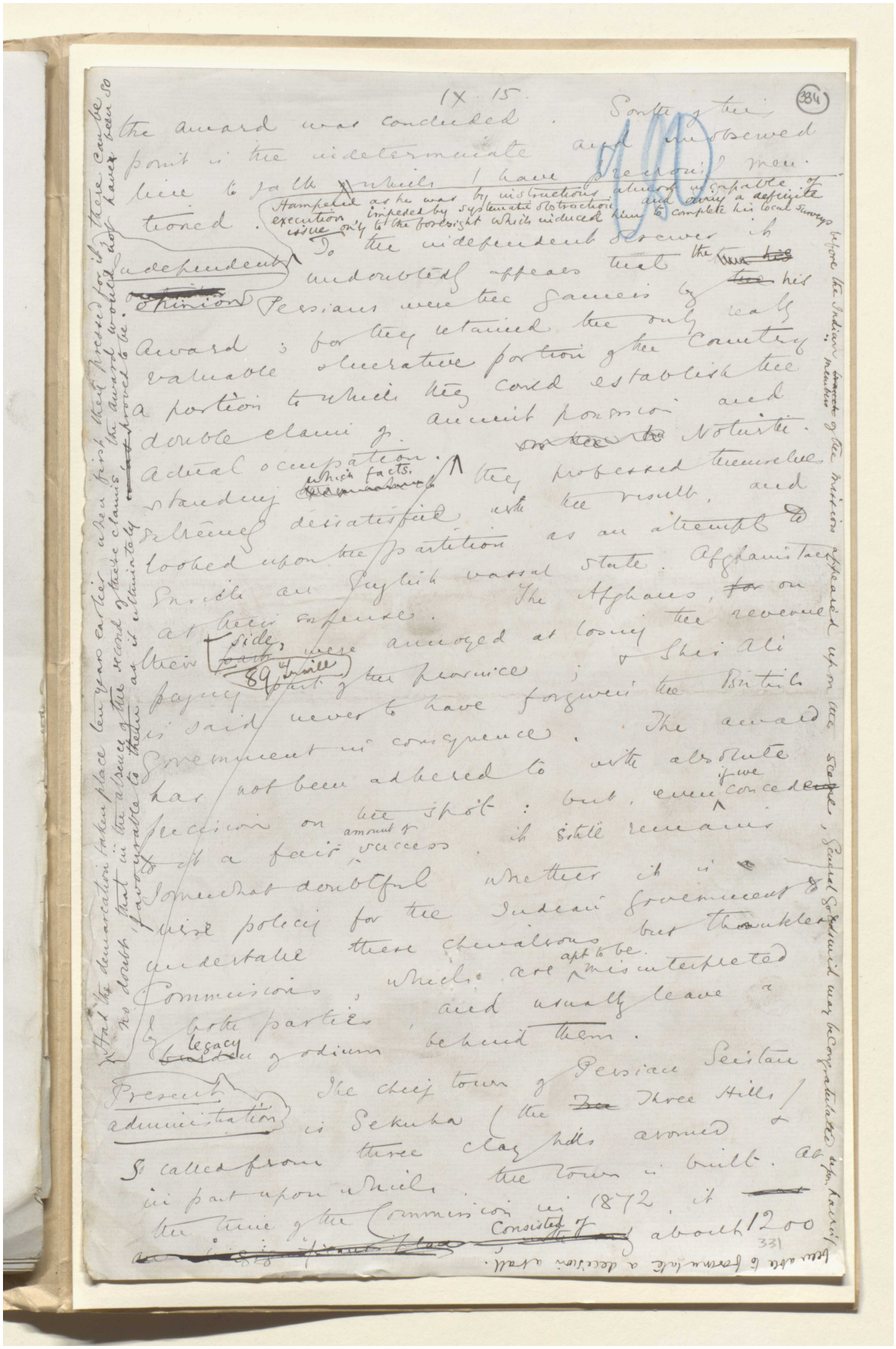
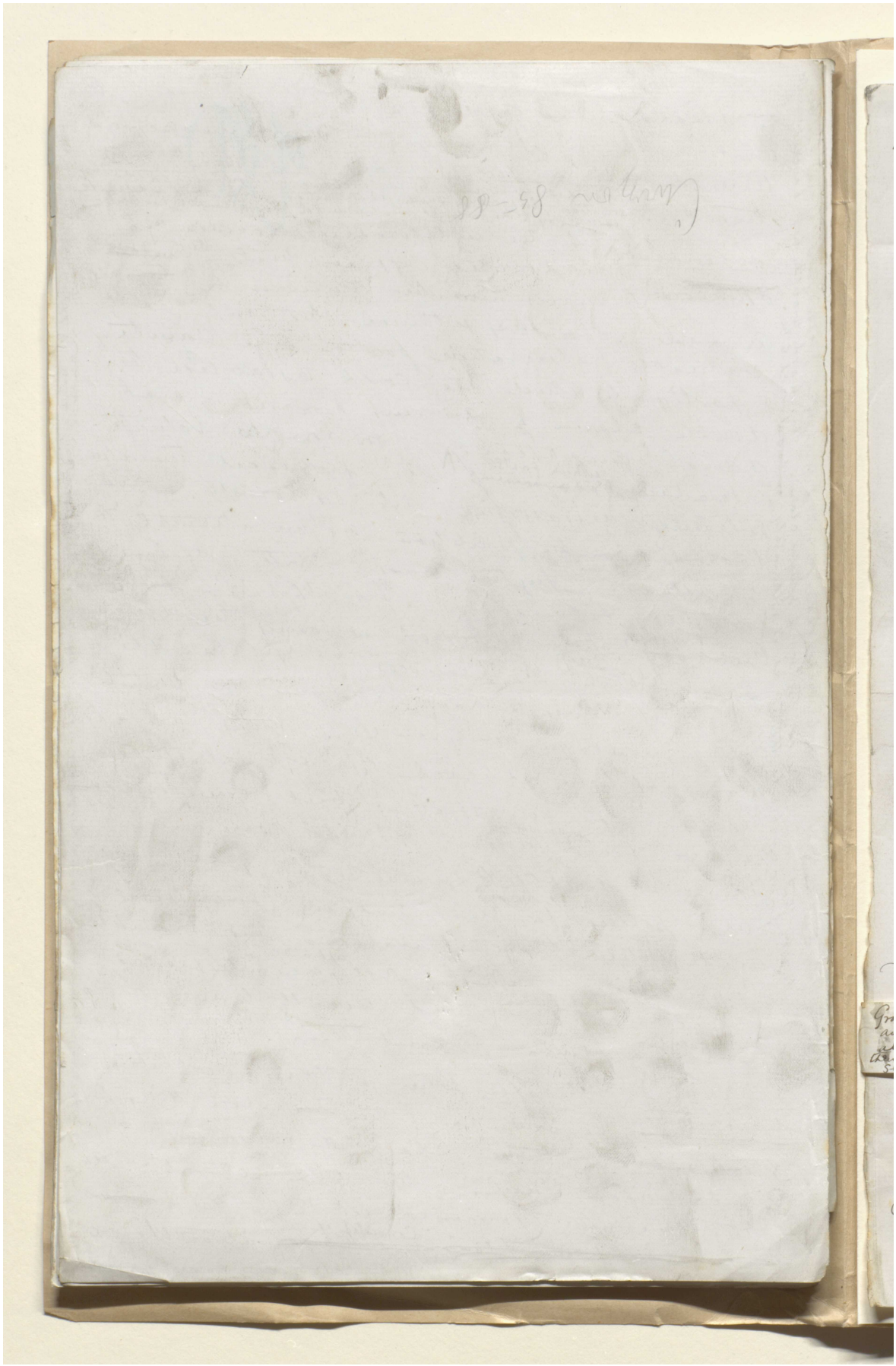
Helmund, in order to irrigate Sekuha and neighbouring villages, on the South; and extending from the old or true bed of the Helmund on the East, to the fringe of the Hamun and the Kuh-i-Khwajah on the West. This area be estimated at 950 square miles, and its population at 45.000, 20.000 of whom were Seistanis (1) 15,000 Persian-Speaking settlers and 10,000 Beluchi nomads. Outer Seistan was the country on the right bank of the Helmund from its lake-mouths on the North, to Rudbar on its upper waters on the South. Her decision may be summarised thus. He gave Seistan Proper to Persia, and Outer Seistan to Afghanistan. The boundary between the two was drawn as follows: from the Siah Kuh (Black Mountain) which is the Eastern boundary of the Persian district of Nehbandan, along the Southern fringe of the Daizar to the North bank of the Helmund; thence up the river to a point about a mile above the great bund or dam at Kohak (2); after which it Council ga line drawn from this point in a South Westerly direction to the range Kuh-i-Malek-Siah, which is the northern Continuation of a line of mountains that bound the Zirreh depression upon the West. Here the district of Seistan terminated, and

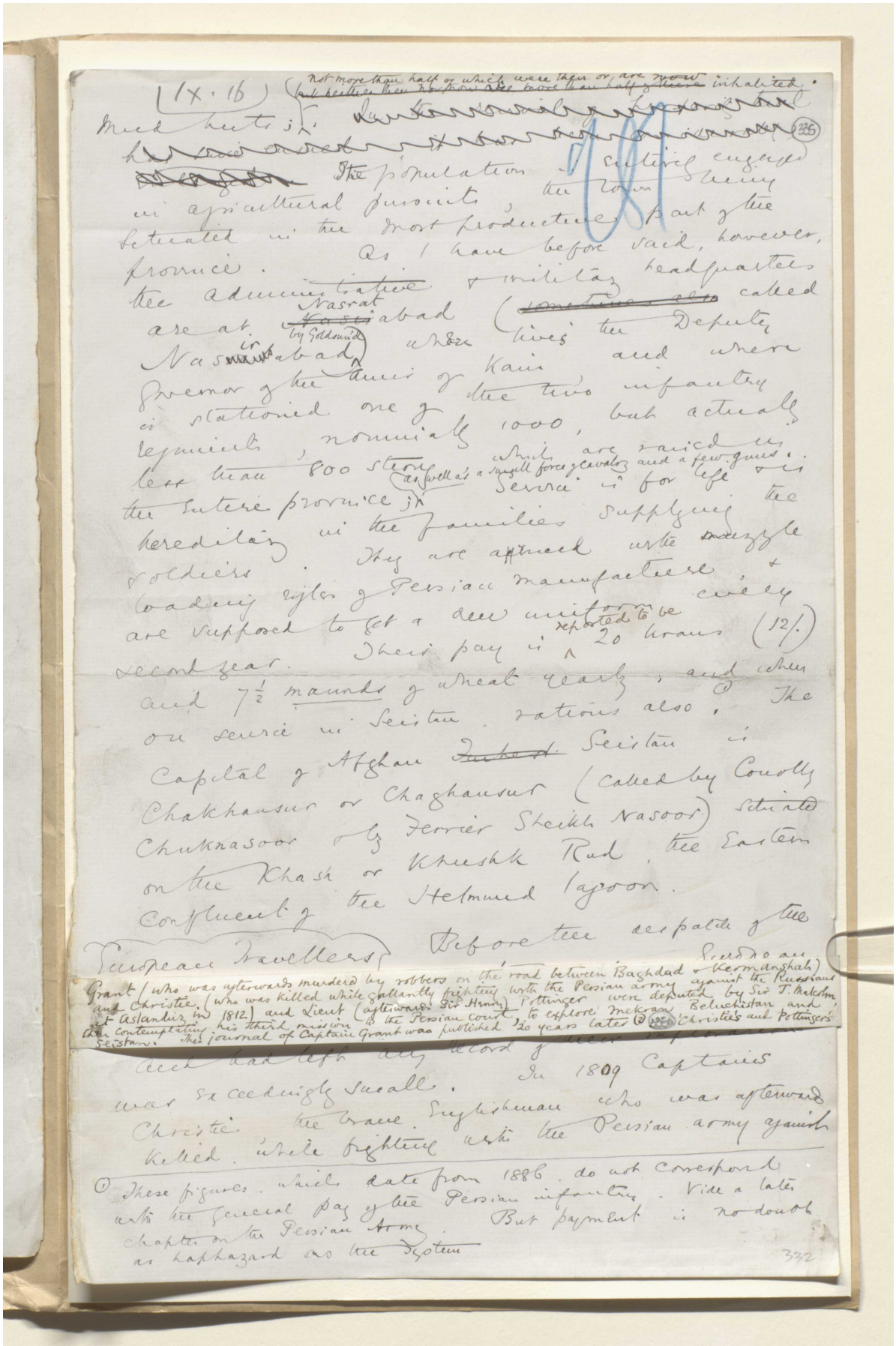
(2) His dam, known indifferently as the Amir's, the Seistan, or the Kohak Bund, is a great dyke built across the river with numerous branches, stakes, and rammed clay, in order to divert its principal volume into the Sekuha Canal.

(1) Sir H. Rawlinson says: "The true Seistanis are Persians of the purest Arian type. In fact the only true representatives of the old Arian race to be found in Persia are the Seistanis, & the Jamshidis of Herat; the language, physical appearance, & general characteristics of the Peesians of the Achæmenian period have been better preserved in this outlying corner of the Empire than in any other locality." 330











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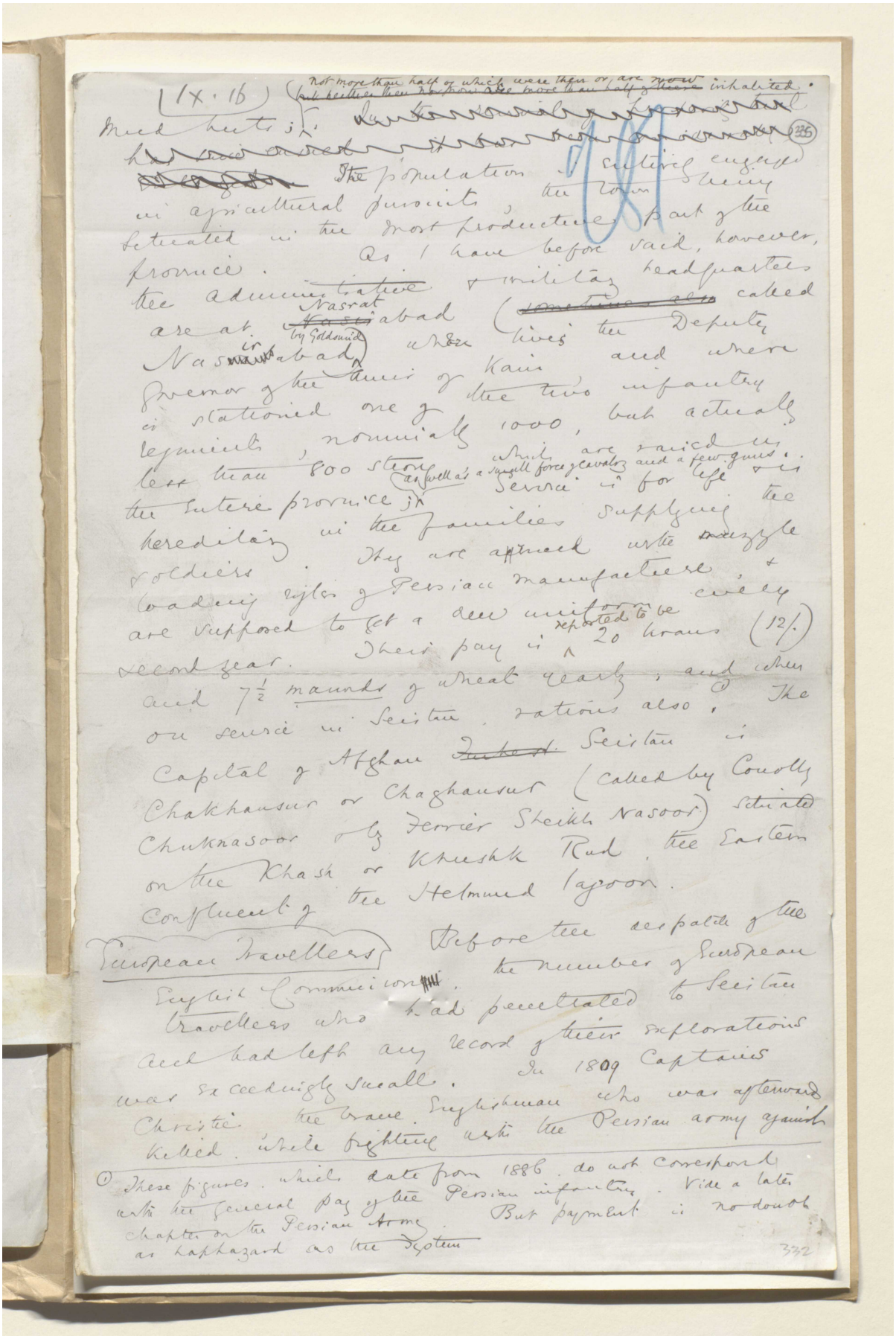

(IX. 16) (not more than half of which were then or are now ~~but neither then nor now are more than half of these~~ inhabited.

Mud huts; ~~[illegible]~~ (335)

~~[illegible]~~ The population is entirely engaged in agricultural pursuits, the town being situated in the most productive part of the province. As I have before said, however, the administrative & military headquarters are at ~~Nasir~~ Nasratabad (~~sometimes also~~ called Nasirabad by Goldsmid) where lives the Deputy Governor of the Amir of Kain and where is stationed one of the two infantry regiments, nominally 1000, but actually less than 800 strong, which are raised in the entire province; as well as a small force of cavalry and a few guns. Service is for life & is hereditary in the families supplying the soldiers. They are armed with muzzle loading rifles of Persian manufacture, & are supposed to get a new uniform every second year. Their pay is reported to be 20 krans (12/-) and 7½ maunds of wheat yearly, and when on service in Seistan, rations also.[1] The Capital of Afghan ~~[illegible]~~ Seistan is Chakhansur or Chaghansur (called by Conolly Chuknasoor & by Ferrier Sheikh Nasoor) situated on the Khash or Khushk Rud, the Eastern confluent of the Helmund lagoon.

European Travellers. Before the despatch of the English Commission, the number of European travellers who had penetrated to Seistan and had left any record of their explorations was exceedingly small. In 1809 Captains Christie, the brave Englishman who was afterwards killed while fighting with the Persian army against

[1] These figures, which date from 1886, do not correspond with the general pay of the Persian infantry. Vide a later chapter on the Persian Army. But payment is no doubt as haphazard as the system

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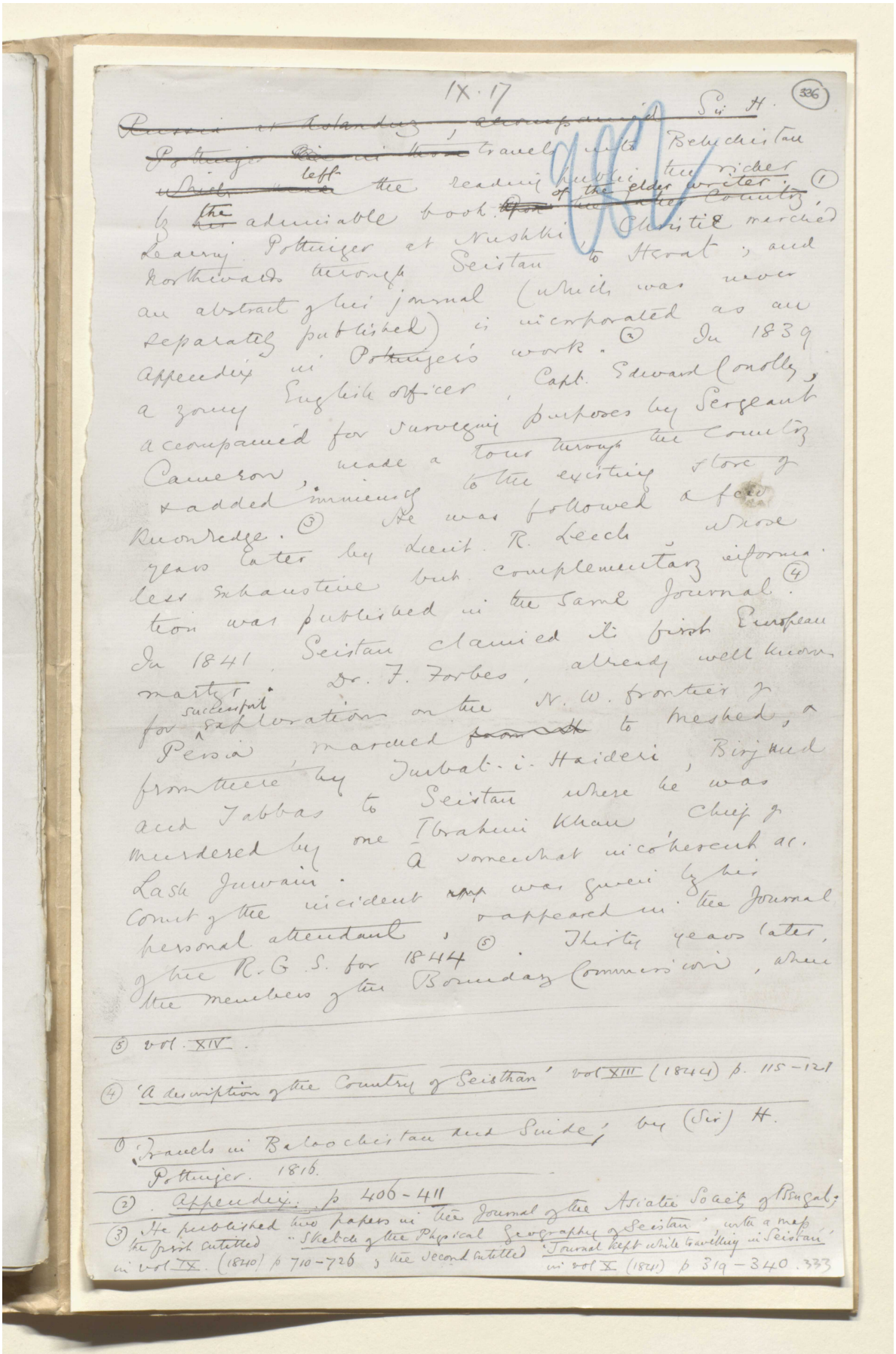
مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٣٣٦و] (١٣٥٥/٦٧٣)



IX. 17 (336)

~~Russia at Astandaz, accompanied~~ Sir H. ~~Pottinger~~ ~~[illegible]~~ travels into Beluchistan ~~which~~ ~~[illegible]~~ left the reading public the richer by ~~his~~ the admirable book ~~[illegible]~~ of the elder writer. (1) Leaving Pottinger at Nushki, Christie marched northwards through Seistan to Herat; and an abstract of his journal (which was never separately published) is incorporated as an appendix in Pottinger's work. (2) In 1839 a young English officer, Capt. Edward Conolly, accompanied for surveying purposes by Sergeant Cameron, made a tour through the country & added immensely to the existing store of knowledge. (3) He was followed a few years later by Lieut. R. Leech whose less exhaustive but complementary information was published in the same Journal. (4) In 1841 Seistan claimed its first European martyr, Dr. F. Forbes, already well known for successful exploration on the N. W. frontier of Persia, marched ~~[illegible]~~ to Meshed, & from there by Turbat-i-Haideri, Birjund and Tabbas to Seistan where he was murdered by one Ibrahim Khan, Chief of Lash Juwain. A somewhat incoherent account of the incident ~~[illegible]~~ was given by his personal attendant, & appeared in the Journal of the R. G. S. for 1844 (5). Thirty years later, the members of the Boundary Commission, when

(5) vol. XIV.

(4) 'A description of the Country of Seisthan' vol XIII (1844) p. 115-121

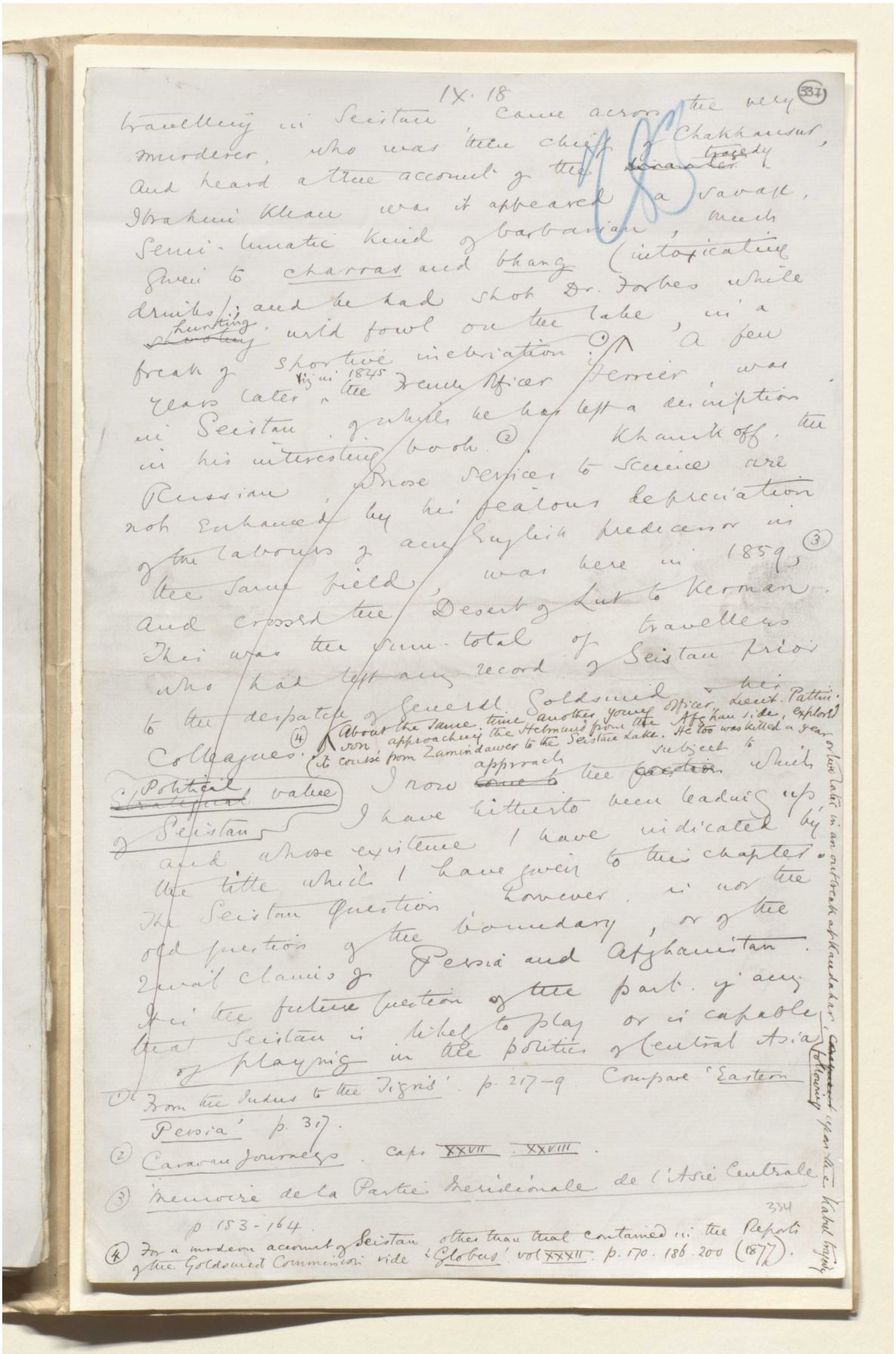
(1) 'Travels in Baloochistan and Sinde', by (Sir) H. Pottinger. 1816.

(2) Appendix. p 406-411

(3) He published two papers in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal; the first entitled "Sketch of the Physical Geography of Seistan", with a map in vol IX. (1840) p 710-726; the second entitled 'Journal kept while travelling in Seistan' in vol X (1841) p 319-340. 333



مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٣٣٧و] (١٣٥٥/٦٧٥)



IX. 18 (337)

travelling in Seistan came across the very murderer, who was then chief of Chakhansur, and heard a true account of the ~~disaster~~ tragedy. Ibrahim Khan was it appeared a savage, semi-lunatic kind of barbarian, much given to charras and bhang (intoxicating drinks); and he had shot Dr. Forbes while ~~shooting~~ hunting wild fowl on the lake, in a freak of sportive inebriation.(1) A few years later, viz in 1845 the French Officer Ferrier was in Seistan, of which he has left a description in his interesting book.(2) Khanikoff, the Russian, whose services to science are not enhanced by his jealous depreciation of the labours of any English predecessor in the same field, was here in 1859,(3) and crossed the Desert of Lut to Kerman. This was the sum-total of travellers who had left any record of Seistan prior to the despatch of General Goldsmid & his Colleagues.(4) About the same time another young officer, Lieut. Pattinson, approaching the Helmund from the Afghan side, explored its course from Zamindawer to the Seistan Lake. He too was killed a year or two later in an outbreak at Kandahar, following upon the Kabul tragedy.

Political ~~Strategical~~ value of Seistan

I now approach ~~come to~~ the subject to ~~question~~ which I have hitherto been leading up and whose existence I have indicated by the title which I have given to this chapter. The Seistan Question, however, is not the old question of the boundary, or of the rival claims of Persia and Afghanistan. It is the future question of the part, if any that Seistan is likely to play or is capable of playing in the politics of Central Asia.

(1) From the Indus to the Tigris. p. 217-9. Compare 'Eastern Persia' p. 317.

(2) Caravan Journeys. Caps XXVII. XXVIII.

(3) Memoire de la Partie Meridionale de l'Asie Centrale p. 153-164.

(4) For a modern account of Seistan other than that contained in the Reports of the Goldsmid Commission vide 'Globus' vol XXXII. p. 170. 186. 200 (1877).

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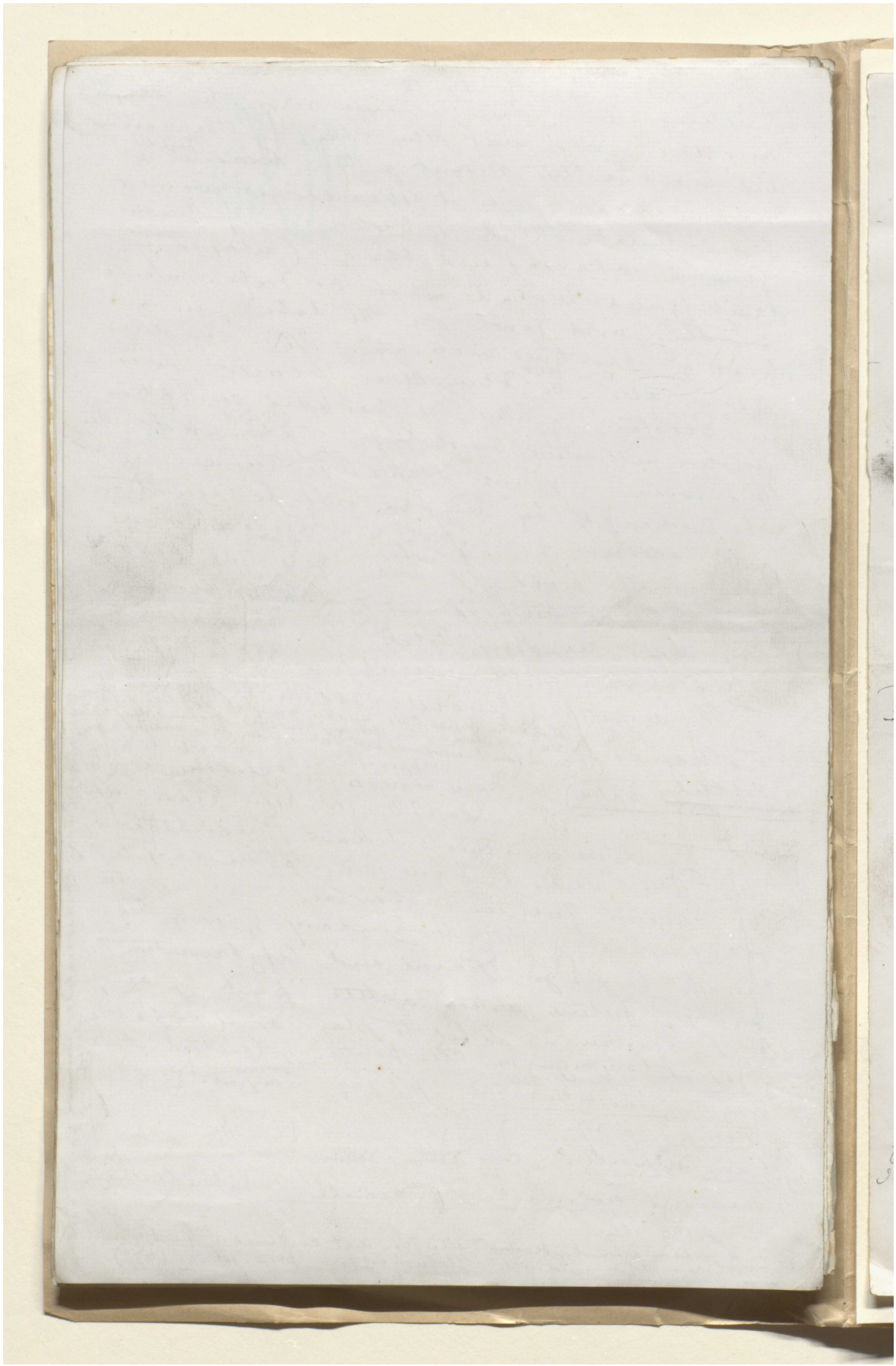

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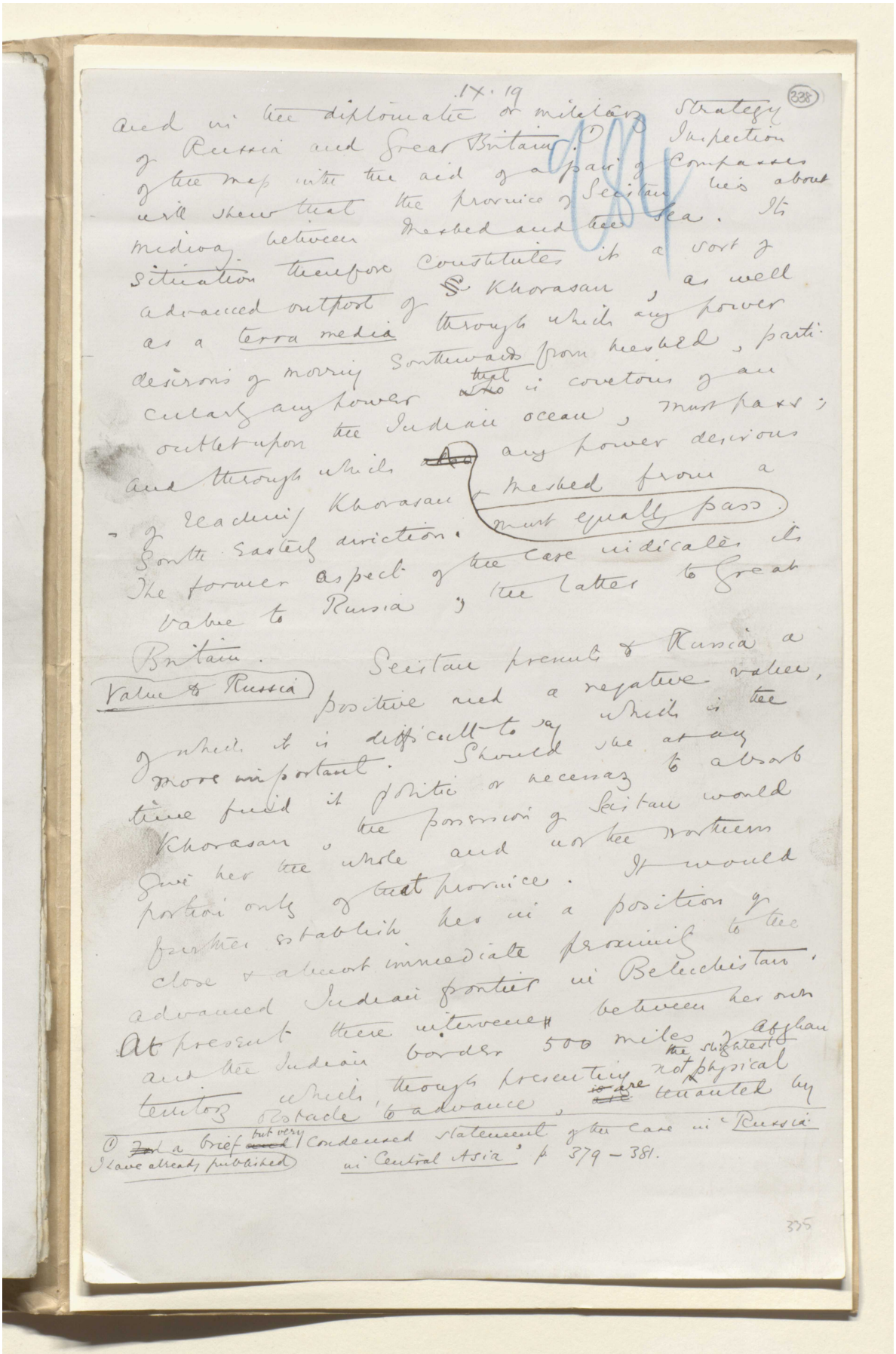

IX. 19

(338)

and in the diplomatic or military strategy of Russia and Great Britain.(1) Inspection of the map with the aid of a pair of compasses will shew that the province of Seistan lies about midway between Meshed and the sea. Its situation therefore constitutes it a sort of advanced outpost of Khorasan, as well as a terra media through which any power desirous of moving southwards from Meshed, particularly any power that is covetous of an outlet upon the Indian ocean, must pass; and through which any power desirous of reaching Khorasan & Meshed from a South Easterly direction must equally pass. The former aspect of the case indicates its value to Russia; the latter to Great Britain.

Value to Russia

Seistan presents to Russia a positive and a negative value, of which it is difficult to say which is the more important. Should she at any time find it politic or necessary to absorb Khorasan, the possession of Seistan would give her the whole and not the northern portion only of that province. It would further establish her in a position of close & almost immediate proximity to the advanced Indian frontier in Beluchistan. At present there intervene between her own and the Indian border 500 miles of Afghan territory which, though presenting not the slightest physical obstacle to advance, are tenanted by

(1) a brief but very condensed statement of the case in "Russia in Central Asia" p. 379 – 381. I have already published

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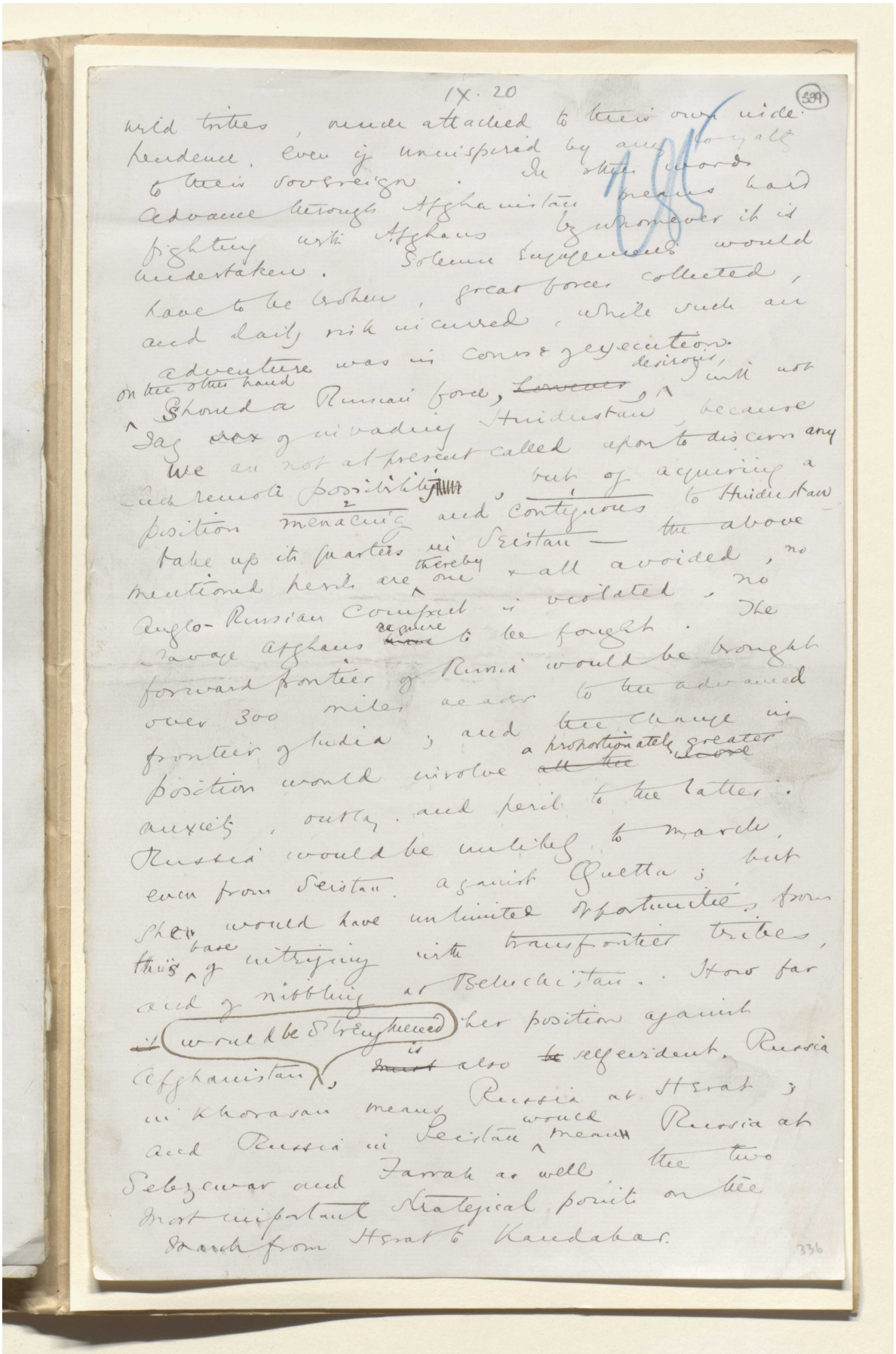

IX. 20

(339)

wild tribes, much attached to their own independence, even if uninspired by any loyalty to their sovereign. In other words advance through Afghanistan means hard fighting with Afghans by whomever it is undertaken. Solemn engagements would have to be broken, great forces collected, and daily risk incurred, while such an adventure was in course of execution.

On the other hand should a Russian force, ~~however~~ desirous, I will not say ~~sex~~ of invading Hindustan, because we are not at present called upon to discern any such remote possibility, but of acquiring a position menacing and contiguous to Hindustan, take up its quarters in Seistan — the above mentioned perils are thereby one & all avoided, no Anglo-Russian compact is violated, no savage Afghans require ~~have~~ to be fought. The forward frontier of Russia would be brought over 300 miles nearer to the advanced frontier of India; and the change in position would involve a proportionately greater ~~all the~~ ~~more~~ anxiety, outlay and peril to the latter. Russia would be unlikely to march, even from Seistan, against Quetta; but she would have unlimited opportunities from this base of intriguing with transfrontier tribes, and of nibbling at Beluchistan. How far ~~it~~ would be strengthened her position against Afghanistan, ~~must~~ is also ~~be~~ self-evident. Russia in Khorasan means Russia at Herat; and Russia in Seistan would mean Russia at Sebzewar and Farrah as well, the two most important strategical points on the march from Herat to Kandahar.

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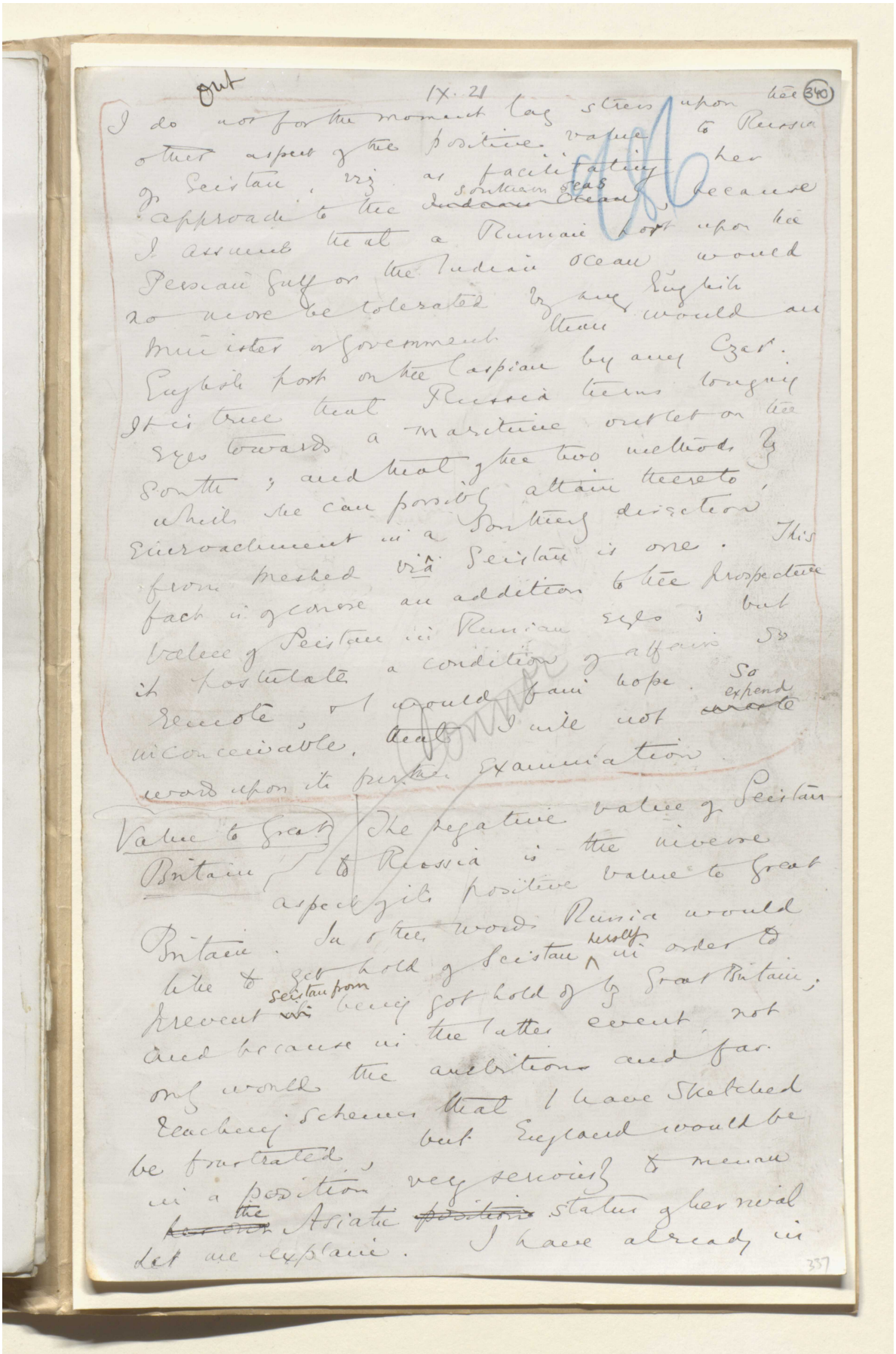



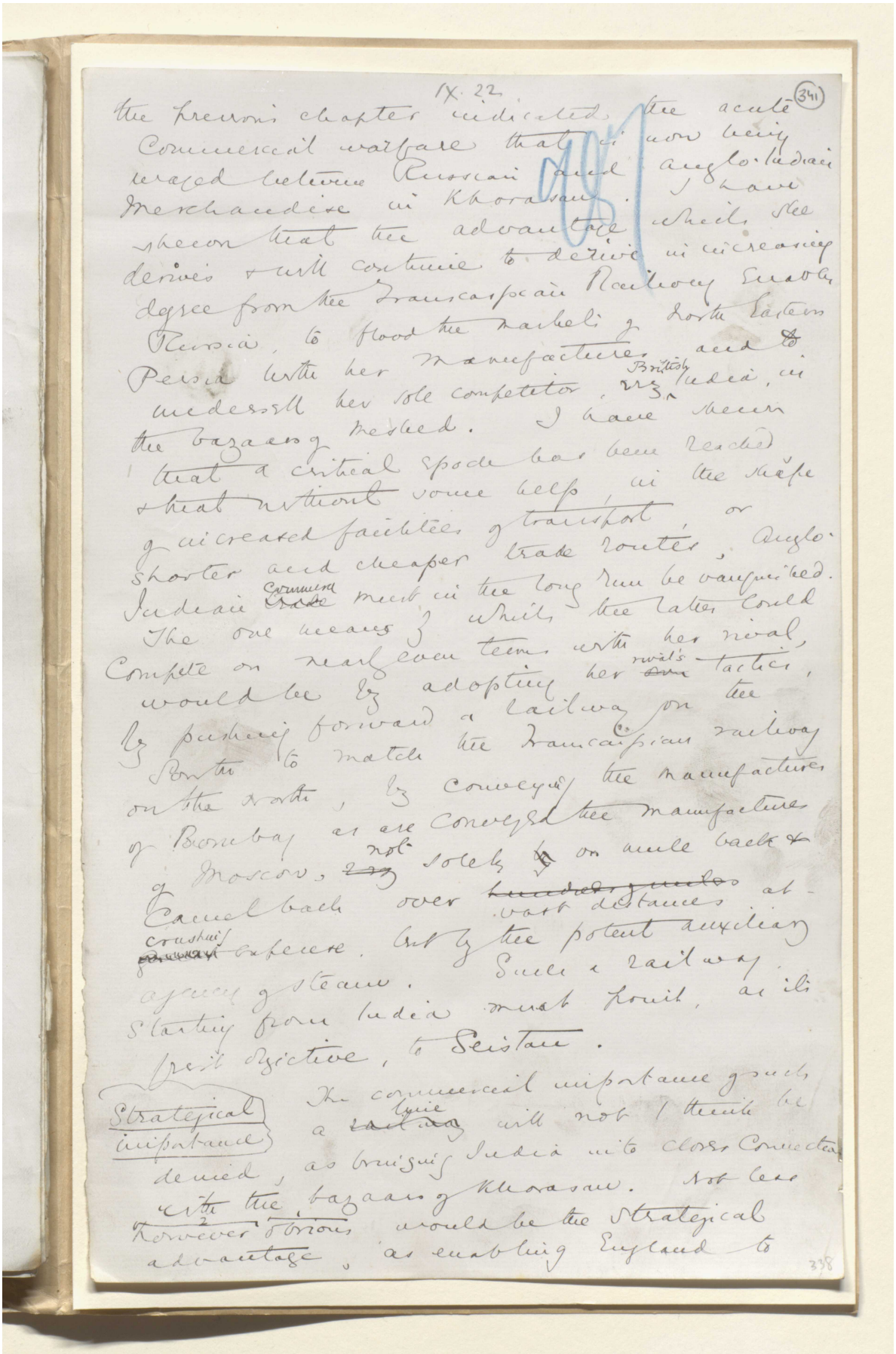

IX. 22

(341)

the previous chapter indicated the acute Commercial warfare that is now being waged between Russian and Anglo-Indian Merchandise in Khorasan. I have shewn that the advantage which she derives & will continue to derive in increasing degree from the Transcaspian Railway enables Russia, to flood the markets of North Eastern Persia with her manufactures, and to undersell her sole competitor, viz British India, in the bazaars of Meshed. I have shewn that a critical epoch has been reached & that without some help, in the shape of increased facilities of transport, or shorter and cheaper trade routes, Anglo-Indian Commerce must in the long run be vanquished. The one means of which the latter could compete on nearly even terms with her rival, would be by adopting her rival's tactics, by pushing forward a railway on the South to match the Transcaspian railway on the North, by conveying the manufactures of Bombay as are conveyed the manufactures of Moscow, not solely on mule back & camel back over vast distances at crushing expense, but by the potent auxiliary agency of steam. Such a railway, starting from India must point, as its first objective, to Seistan.

Strategical importance

The commercial importance of such a line will not I think be denied, as bringing India into closer connection with the bazaars of Khorasan. Not less however obvious would be the strategical advantage, as enabling England to

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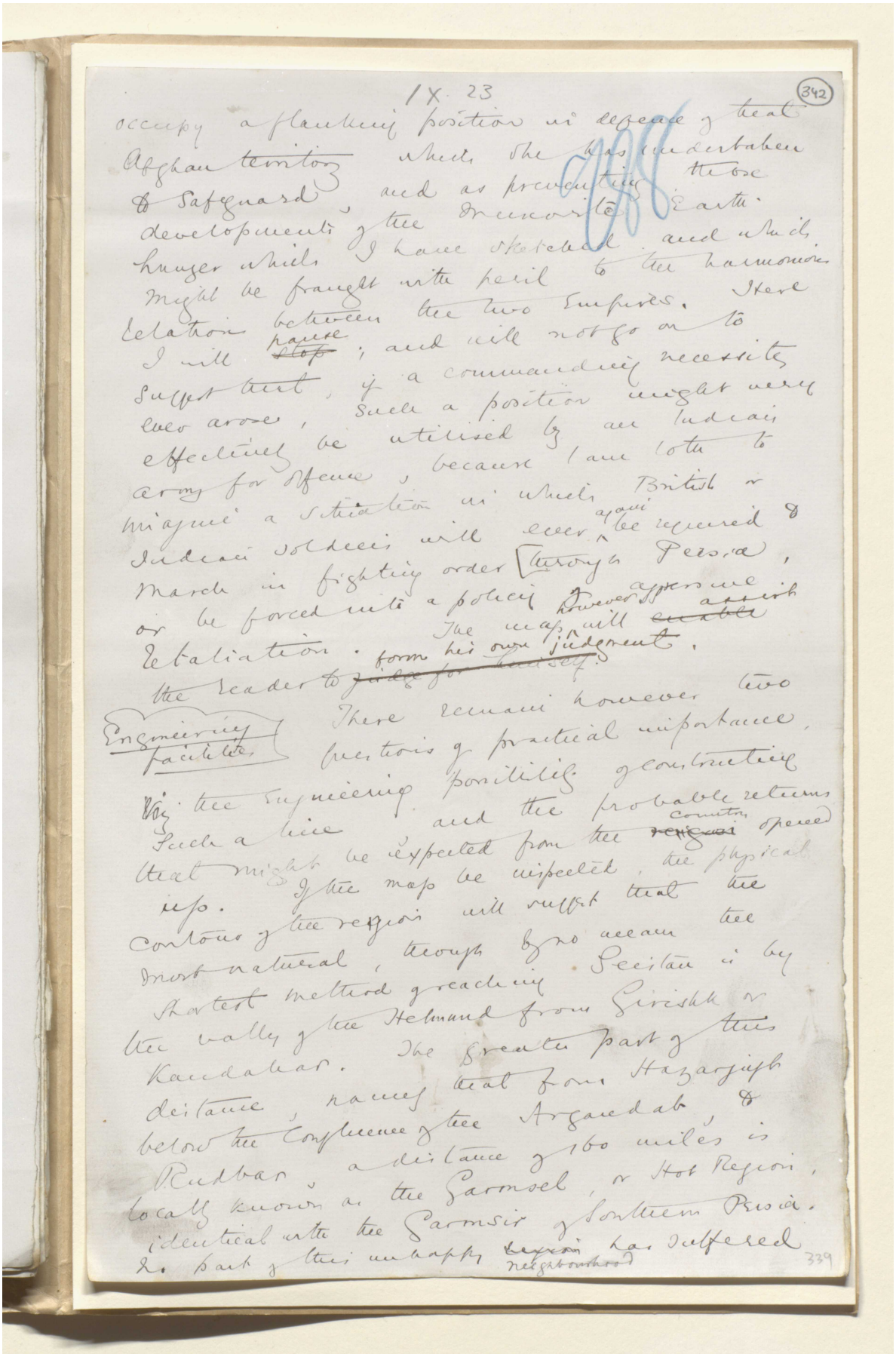

IX. 23

(342)

occupy a flanking position in defence of that Afghan territory which she has undertaken to safeguard, and as preventing those developments of the Muscovite Earth hunger which I have sketched and which might be fraught with peril to the harmonious relation between the two Empires. Here I will ~~stop~~ pause; and will not go on to suggest that, if a commanding necessity ever arose, such a position might very effectively be utilised by an Indian army for offence, because I am loth to imagine a situation in which British or Indian soldiers will ever again be required to march in fighting order through Persia, or be forced into a policy of aggressive retaliation. The map however will ~~enable~~ assist the reader to ~~judge for himself~~ form his own judgment.

Engineering facilities

There remain however two questions of practical importance, viz. the engineering possibility of constructing such a line and the probable returns that might be expected from the ~~region~~ country opened up. If the map be inspected, the physical contour of the region will suggest that the most natural, though by no means the shortest method of reaching Seistan is by the valley of the Helmund from Girishk or Kandahar. The greater part of this distance, namely that from Hazarjuft below the confluence of the Argandab, to Rudbar, a distance of 160 miles is locally known as the Garmsel, or Hot Region, identical with the Garmsir of Southern Persia. No part of this unhappy ~~region~~ neighbourhood has suffered

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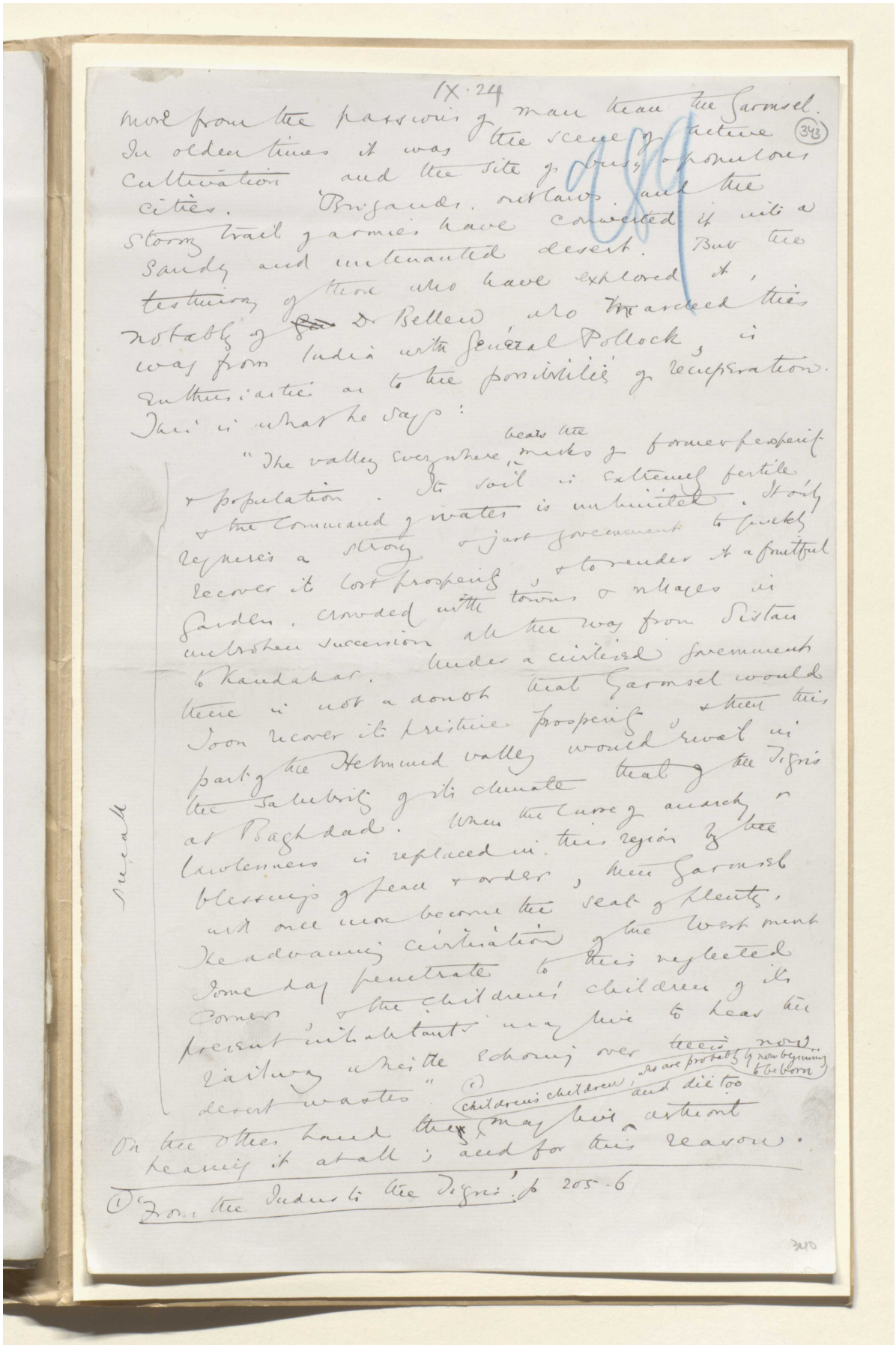

IX·24

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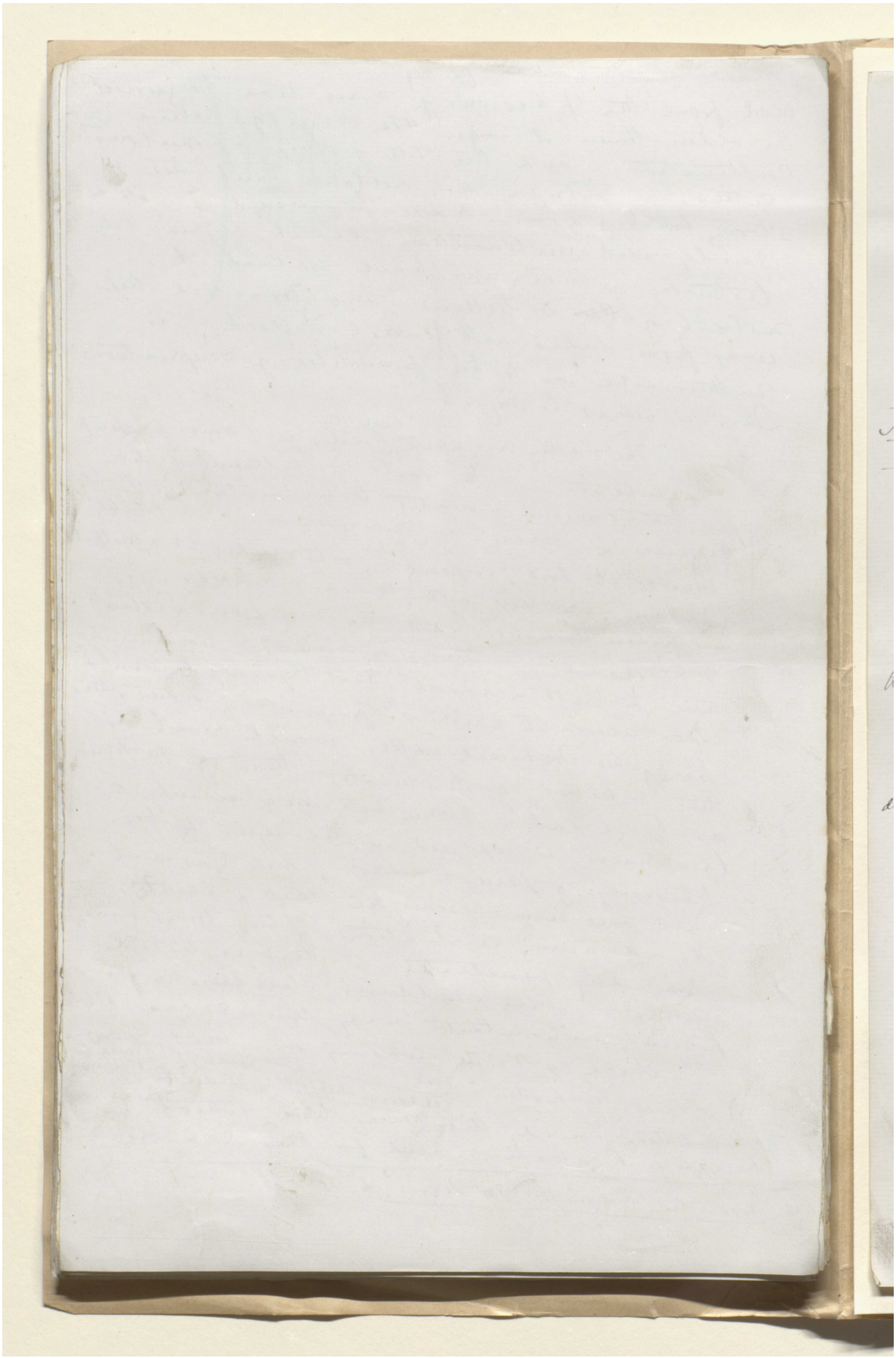
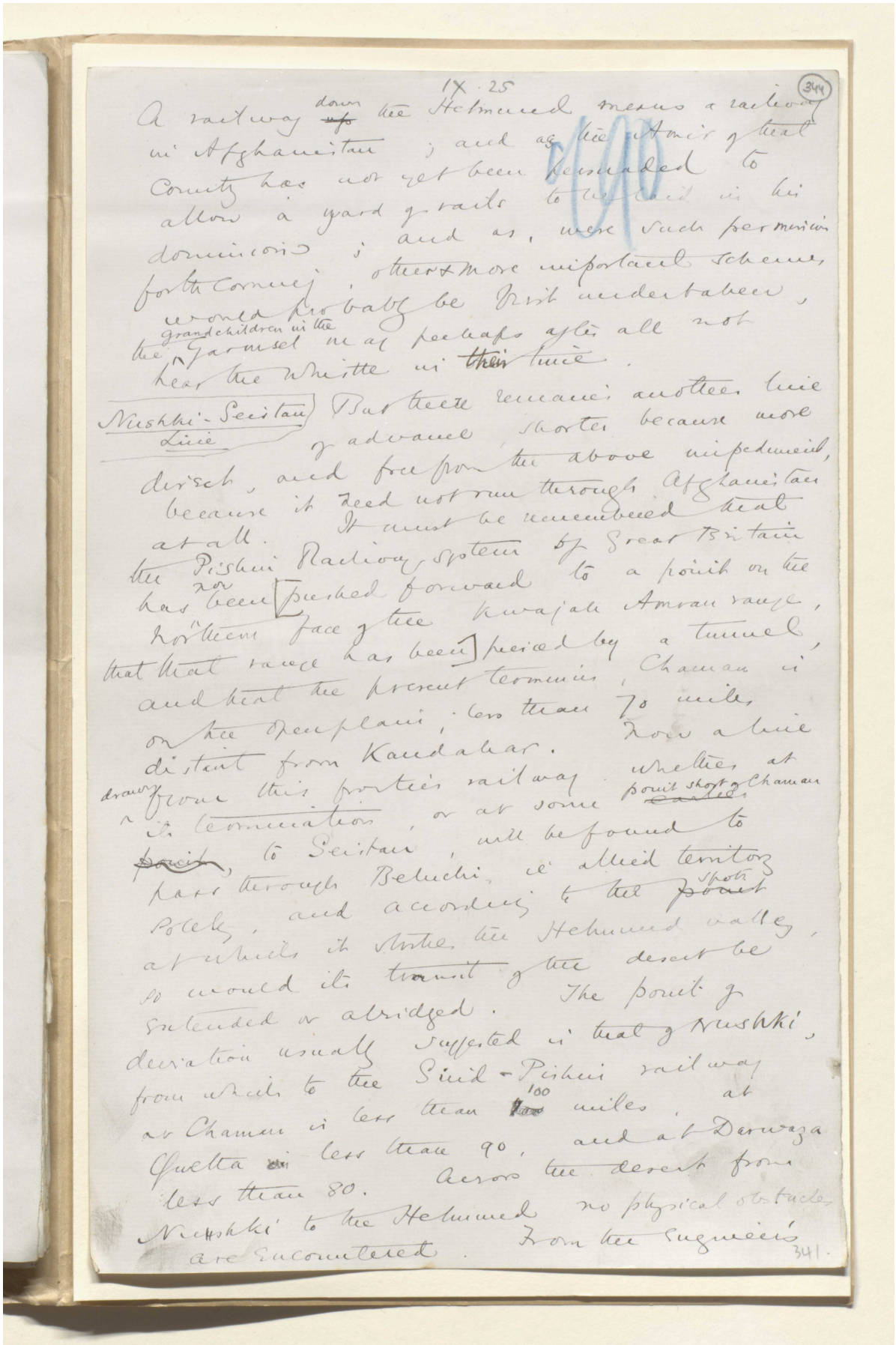
more from the passions of man than the Garmsel. In olden times it was the scene of active cultivation and the site of busy & populous cities. Brigands, outlaws, and the storm trail of armies have converted it into a sandy and untenanted desert. But the testimony of those who have explored it, notably of ~~Gen~~ Dr Bellew, who marched this way from India with General Pollock, is enthusiastic as to the possibilities of recuperation. This is what he says:

"The valley everywhere bears the marks of former prosperity & population. Its soil is extremely fertile & the command of water is unlimited. It only requires a strong & just government to quickly recover its lost prosperity, & to render it a fruitful garden, crowded with towns & villages in unbroken succession all the way from Sistan to Kandahar. Under a civilised government there is not a doubt that Garmsel would soon recover its pristine prosperity, & then this part of the Helmund valley would rival in the salubrity of its climate that of the Tigris at Baghdad. When the curse of anarchy & lawlessness is replaced in this region by the blessings of peace & order, then Garmsel will once more become the seat of plenty. The advancing civilisation of the West must some day penetrate to this neglected corner, & the children's children of its present inhabitants may live to hear the railway whistle echoing over these now desert wastes" (1)

On the other hand they may live and die too without hearing it at all; and for this reason.

(1) 'From the Indus to the Tigris' p 205-6





IX. 25

(344)

A railway down the Helmund means a railway in Afghanistan; and as the Amir of that County has not yet been persuaded to allow a yard of rails to be laid in his dominions; and as, were such permission forthcoming, other & more important schemes would probably be first undertaken, the grandchildren in the Garmsel may perhaps after all not hear the whistle in their time.

Nushki-Seistan Line

But there remains another line of advance, shorter because more direct, and free from the above impediment, because it need not run through Afghanistan at all. It must be remembered that the Pishin Railway system of Great Britain has not been [pushed forward to a point on the northern face of the Kwajah Amran range, that that range has been] pierced by a tunnel, and that the present terminus, Chaman is on the open plain, less than 70 miles distant from Kandahar. Now a line drawn from this frontier railway, whether at its termination, or at some point short of Chaman to Seistan, will be found to pass through Beluchi, ie allied territory solely, and according to the spots at which it strikes the Helmund valley, so would its transit of the desert be extended or abridged. The point of deviation usually suggested is that of Nushki, from which to the Sind-Pishin railway at Chaman is less than 100 miles, at Quetta less than 90, and at Darwaza less than 80. Across the desert from Nushki to the Helmund no physical obstacles are encountered. From the engineers

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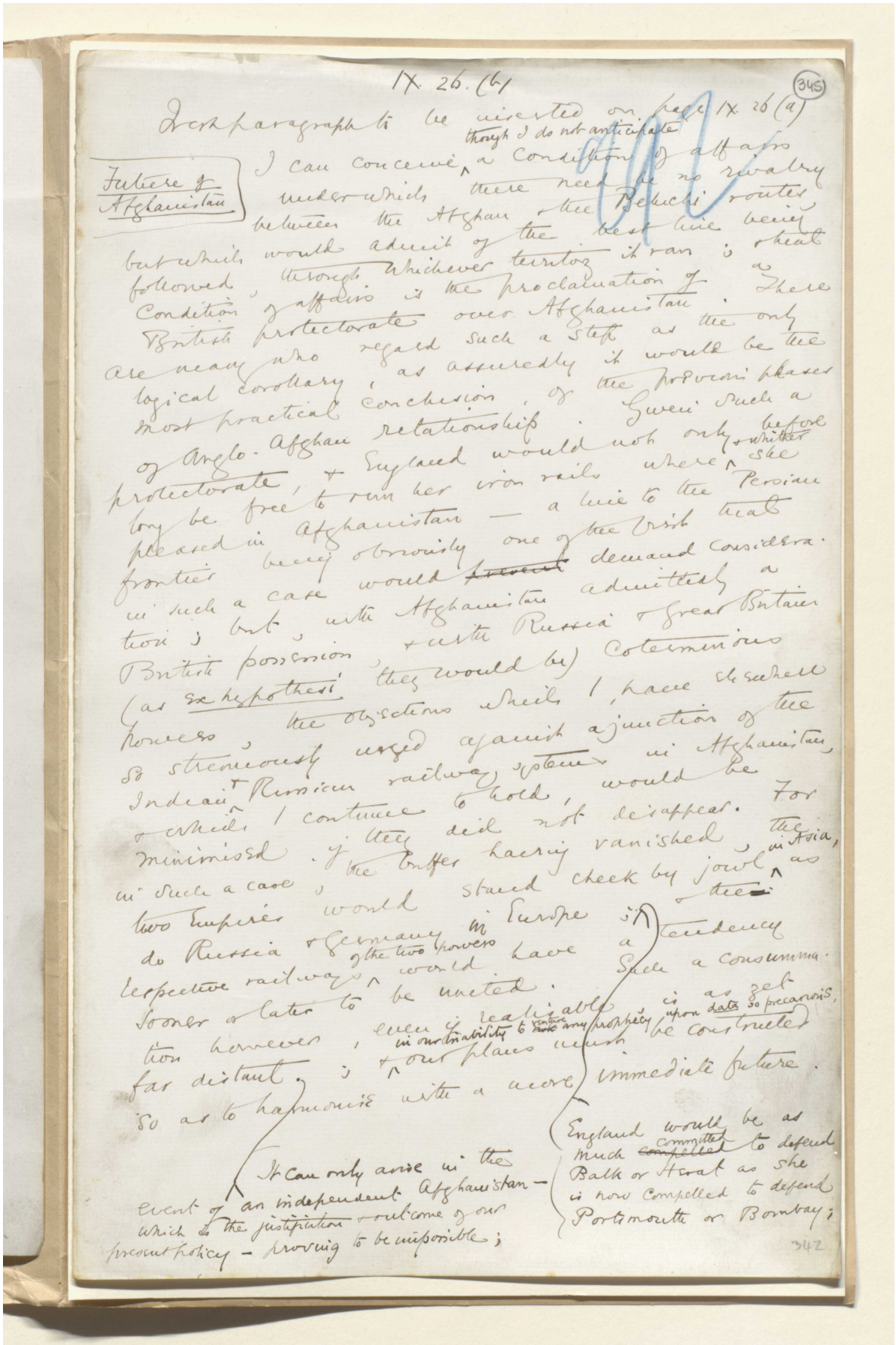

IX. 26. (b)

(345)

Fresh paragraph to be inserted on page IX. 26 (a)

Future of Afghanistan

I can conceive, though I do not anticipate, a condition of affairs under which there need be no rivalry between the Afghan & the Beluchi routes, but which would admit of the best line being followed, through whichever territory it ran; & that condition of affairs is the proclamation of a British protectorate over Afghanistan. There are many who regard such a step as the only logical corollary, as assuredly it would be the most practical conclusion, of the previous phases of Anglo-Afghan relationship. Given such a protectorate, & England would not only before long be free to run her iron rails where & whither she pleased in Afghanistan — a line to the Persian frontier being obviously one of the first that in such a case would ~~prevent~~ demand consideration; but, with Afghanistan admittedly a British possession, & with Russia & Great Britain (as ex hypothesi they would be) coterminous powers, the objections which I have elsewhere so strenuously urged against a junction of the Indian & Russian railway systems in Afghanistan, & which I continue to hold, would be minimised if they did not disappear. For in such a case, the buffer having vanished, the two Empires would stand cheek by jowl in Asia, as do Russia & Germany in Europe; & the respective railways of the two powers would have a tendency sooner or later to be united. Such a consummation however, even if realisable, is as yet far distant; & in our inability to venture ~~ask~~ any prophecy upon data so precarious, our plans must be constructed so as to harmonise with a more immediate future.

It can only arise in the event of an independent Afghanistan — which is the justification & outcome of our present policy — proving to be impossible;

England would be as much ~~compelled~~ committed to defend Balk or Herat as she is now compelled to defend Portsmouth or Bombay;

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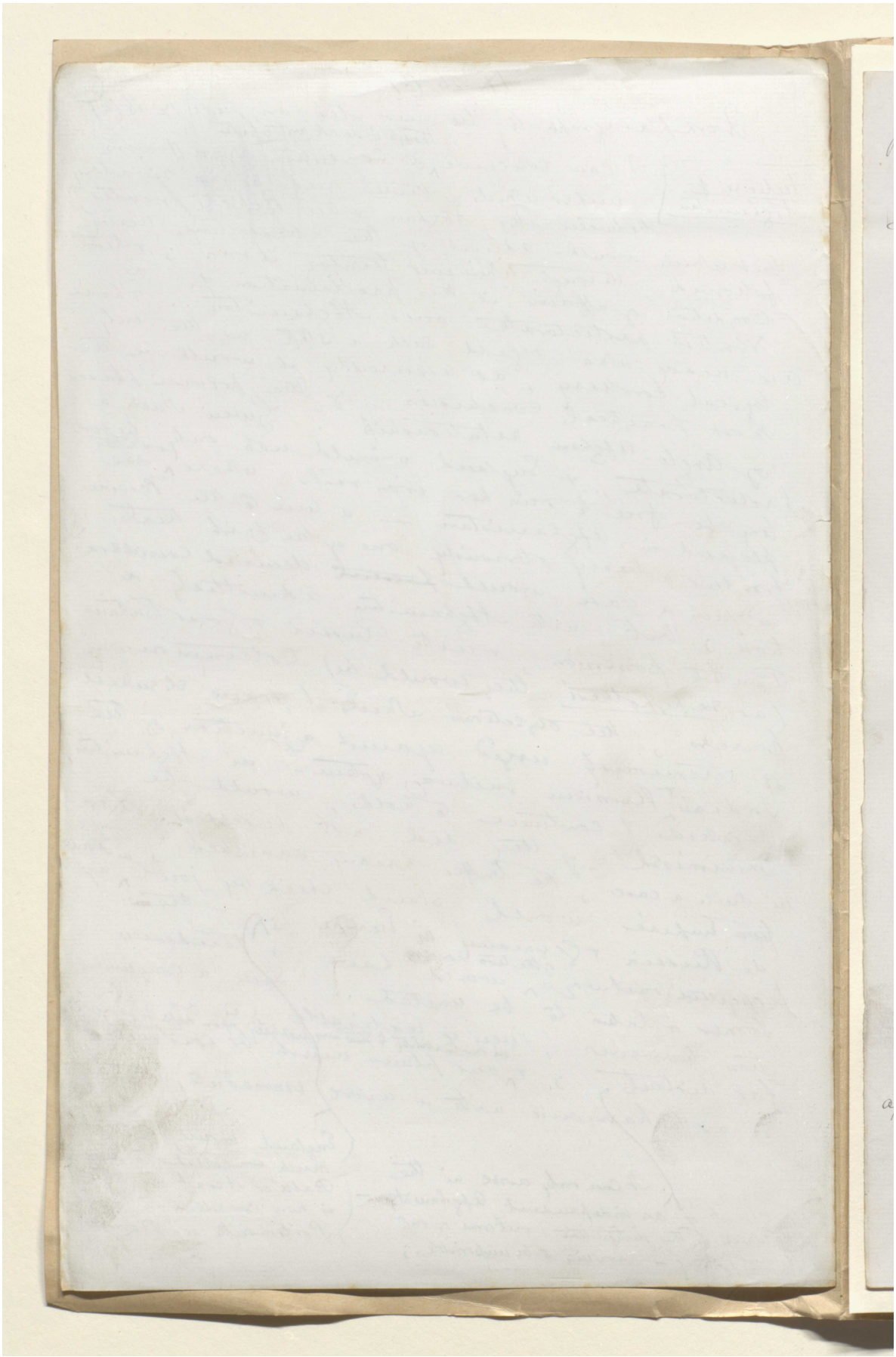

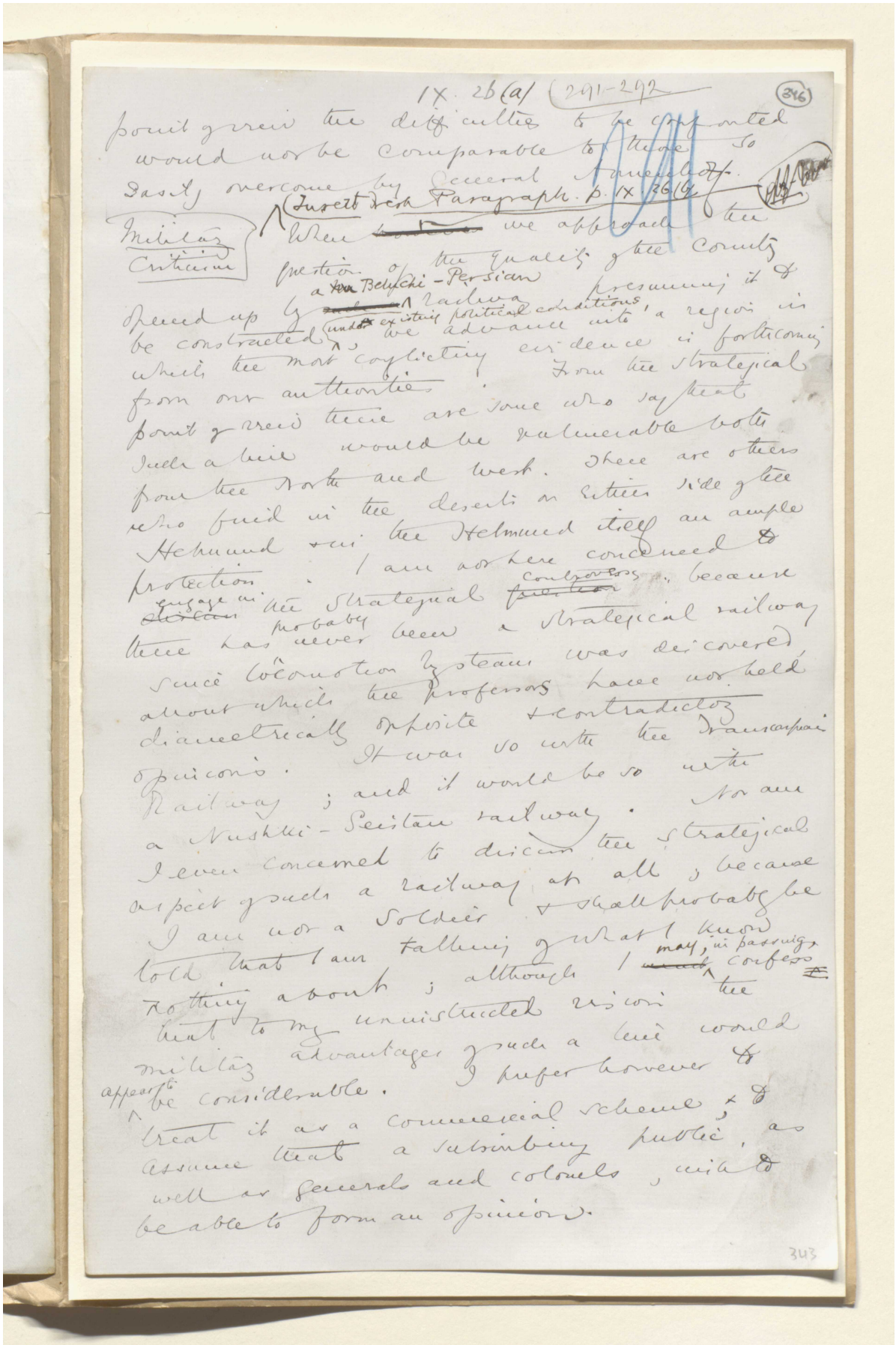



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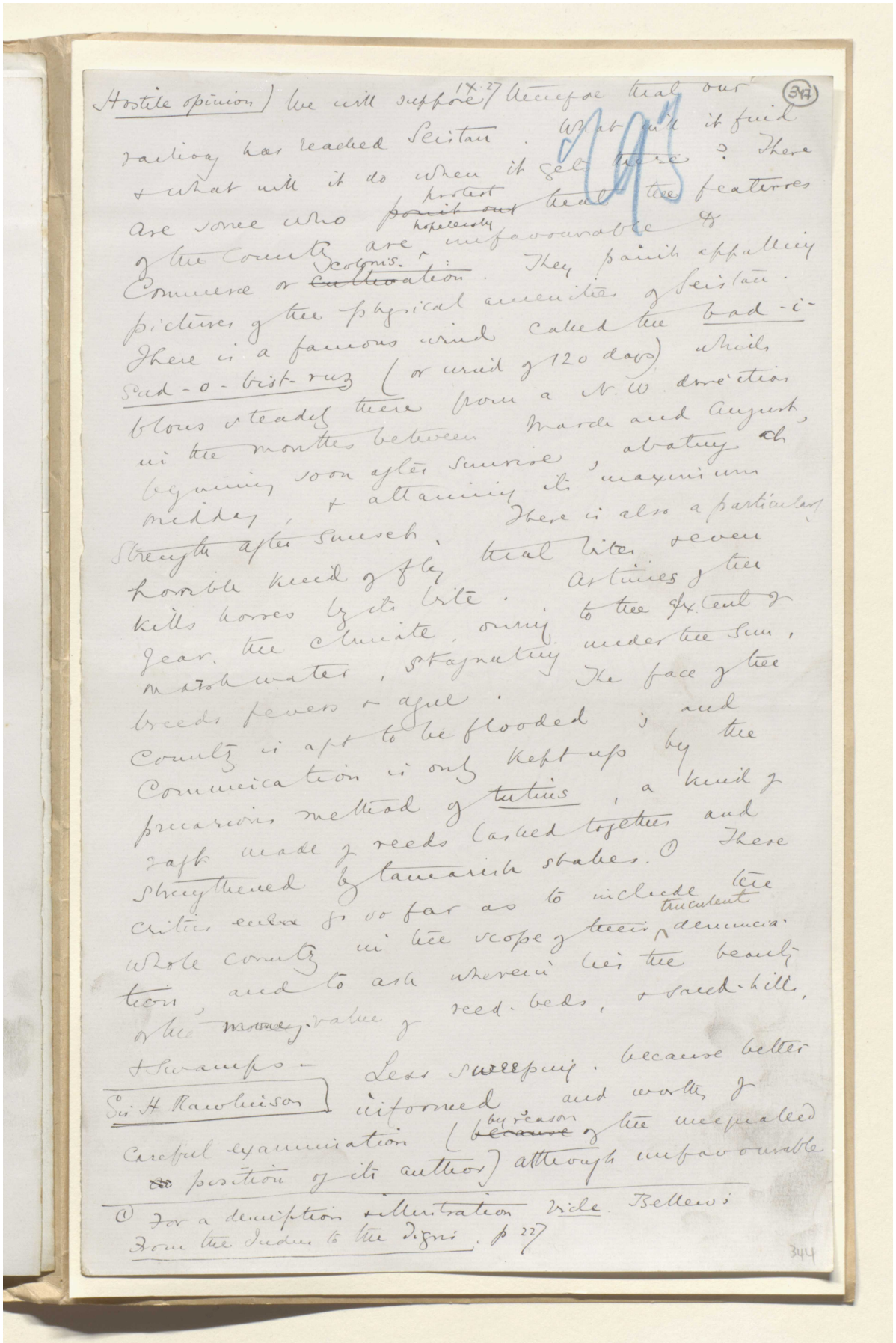

Hostile opinion) We will suppose 1X.27 therefore that our railway has reached Seistan. What will it find & what will it do when it gets there? There are some who ~~point out~~ protest that the features of the country are hopelessly unfavourable to Commerce or ~~cultivation~~ colonis. They paint appalling pictures of the physical amenities of Seistan. There is a famous wind called the bad-i-sad-o-bist-ruz (or wind of 120 days) which blows steadily there from a N.W. direction in the months between March and August, beginning soon after sunrise, abating ch midday, & attaining its maximum strength after sunset. There is also a particularly horrible kind of fly that bites & even kills horses by its bite. At times of the year the climate, owing to the extent of marsh water, stagnating under the sun, breeds fevers & ague. The face of the country is apt to be flooded; and communication is only kept up by the precarious method of tutins, a kind of raft made of reeds lashed together and strengthened by tamarisk stakes.① These critics even go so far as to include the whole country in the scope of their truculent denunciation, and to ask wherein lies the beauty or the ~~money~~ value of reed-beds, & sand-hills, & swamps. Less sweeping, because better informed and worthy of careful examination (~~because~~ by reason of the unequalled position of its author) although unfavourable

Sir H. Rawlinson

① For a description & illustration vide Bellew's From the Indus to the Tigris, p 227

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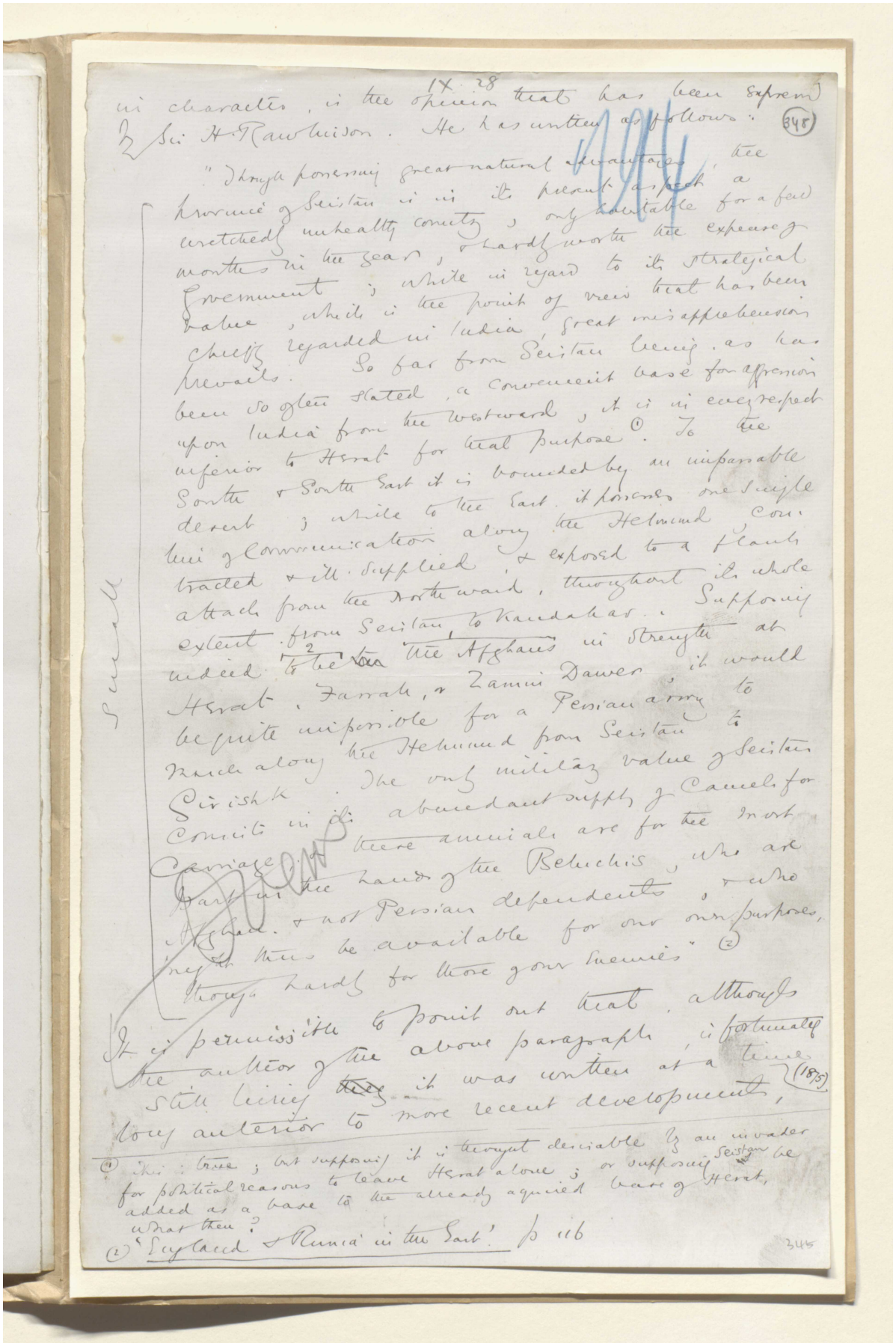
IX. 28



in character, is the opinion that has been expressed by Sir H. Rawlinson. He has written as follows: (348)

"Though possessing great natural advantages, the province of Seistan is in its present aspect a wretchedly unhealthy country, only habitable for a few months in the year, & hardly worth the expense of Government; while in regard to its strategical value, which is the point of view that has been chiefly regarded in India, great misapprehension prevails. So far from Seistan being, as has been so often stated, a convenient base for aggression upon India from the westward, it is in every respect inferior to Herat for that purpose (1). To the South & South East it is bounded by an impassable desert; while to the East it possesses one single line of communication along the Helmund, contracted & ill-supplied, & exposed to a flank attack from the northward, throughout its whole extent from Seistan to Kandahar. Supposing indeed to be the Afghans in strength at Herat, Farrah, or Zamin Dawer, it would be quite impossible for a Persian army to march along the Helmund from Seistan to Girishk. The only military value of Seistan consists in its abundant supply of Camels for Carriage. These animals are for the most part in the hands of the Beluchis, who are Afghan & not Persian dependents, & who might thus be available for our own purposes, though hardly for those of our enemies" (2)

It is permissible to point out that, although the author of the above paragraph, is fortunately still living, it was written at a time long anterior to more recent developments, (1875)

(1) This is true; but supposing it is thought desirable by an invader for political reasons to leave Herat alone; or supposing Seistan be added as a base to the already acquired base of Herat, what then?

(2) 'England & Russia in the East' p 116

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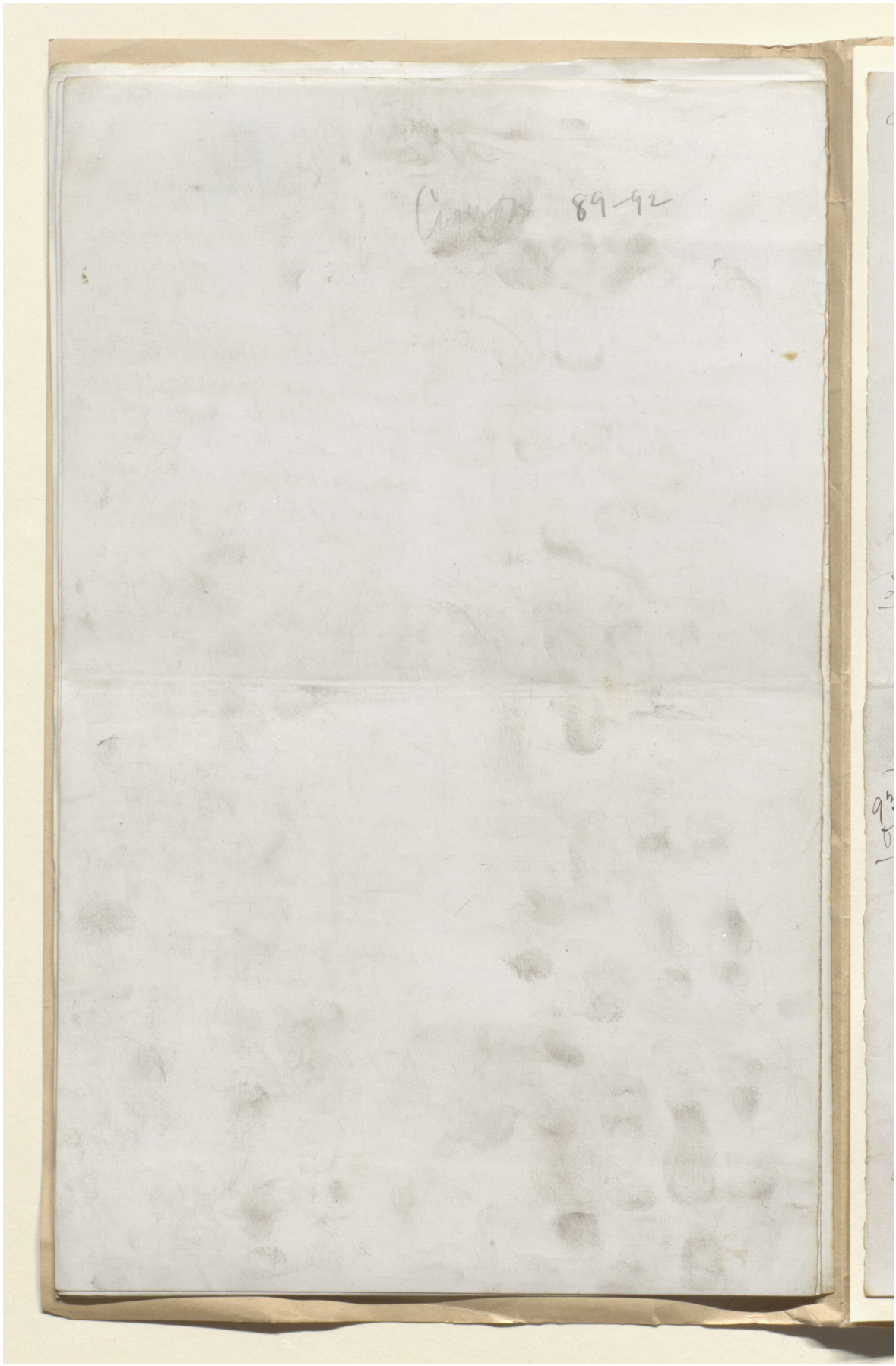
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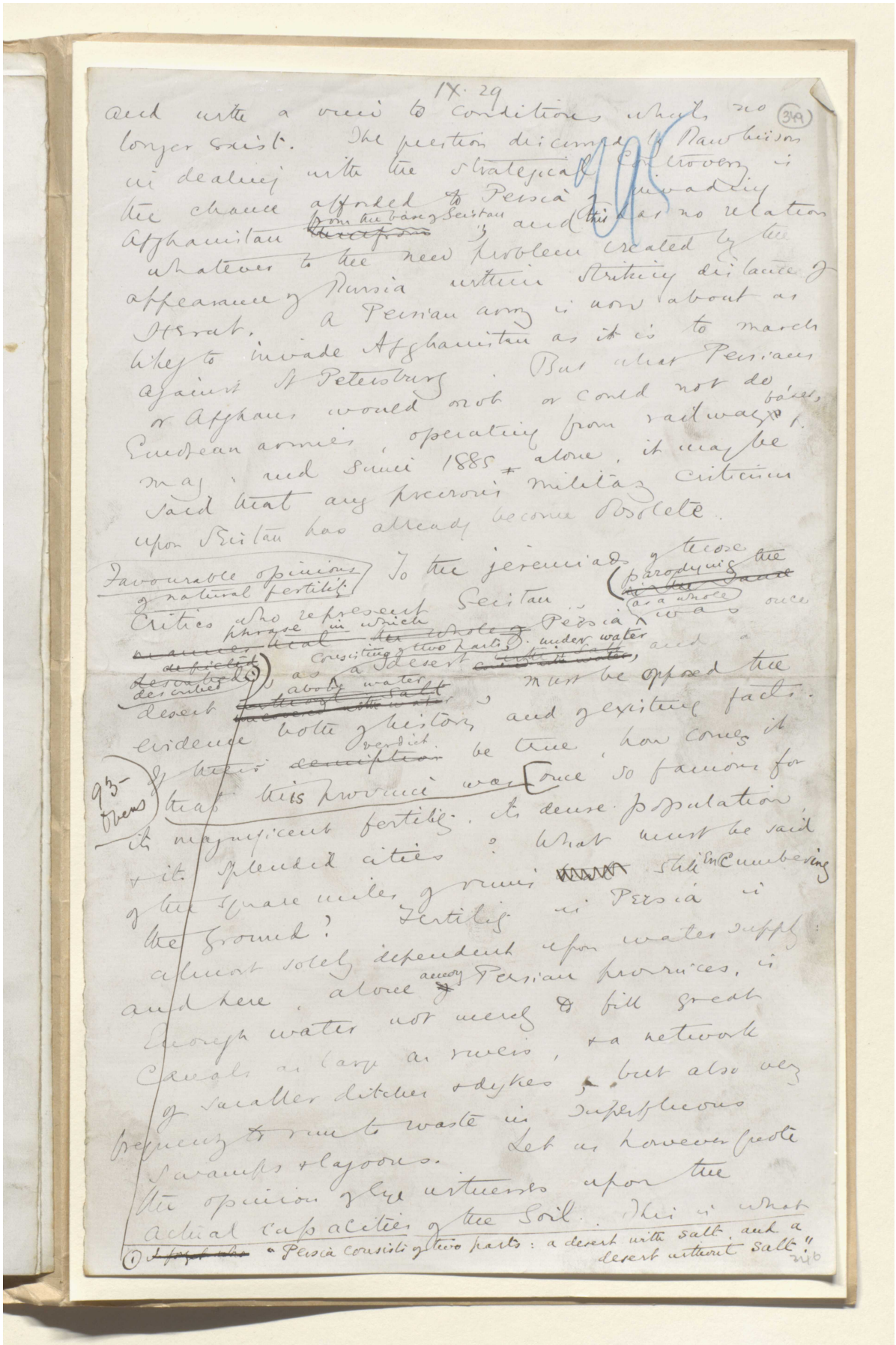



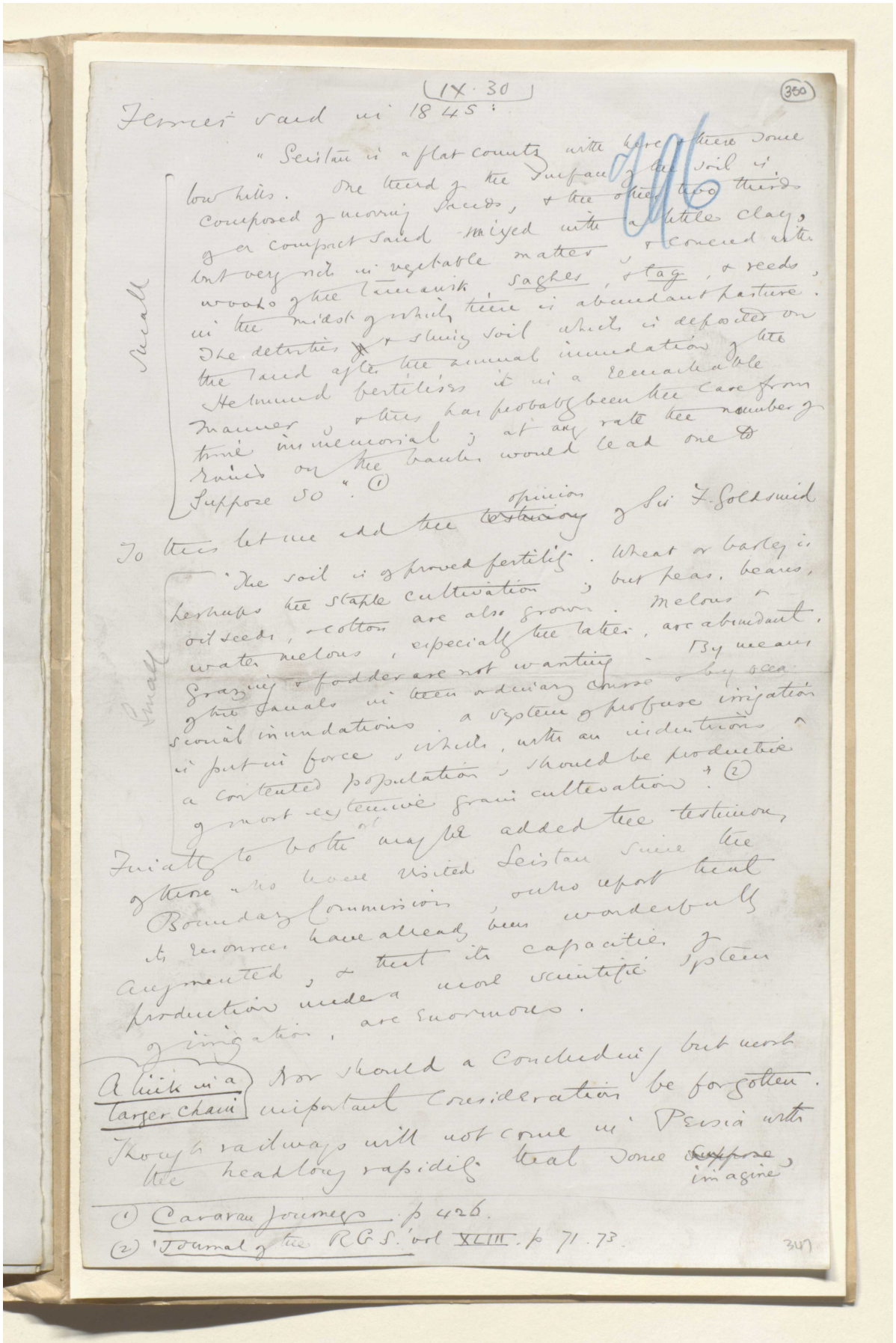

(IX·30)

(350)

Ferrier said in 1845:

"Seistan is a flat country with here & there some low hills. The level & the surface of the soil is composed of various sands, & the other two thirds of a compact sand mixed with a little clay, but very rich in vegetable matter, & covered with woods of the tamarisk, sages, & tag, & reeds, in the midst of which there is abundant pasture. The detritus & slimy soil which is deposited on the land after the annual inundation of the Helmund fertilises it in a remarkable manner, & this has probably been the case from time immemorial; at any rate the number of ruins on the banks would lead one to suppose so." (1)

To this let me add the opinion of Sir F. Goldsmid

"The soil is of proved fertility. Wheat & barley, perhaps the staple cultivation; but peas, beans, oil seeds, cotton are also grown. Melons & water melons, especially the latter, are abundant. Grazing & fodder are not wanting. By means of the canals in their ordinary course & by occasional inundations a system of profuse irrigation is put in force, which, with an industrious & contented population, should be productive of most extensive grain cultivation." (2)

Finally to both may be added the testimony of those who have visited Seistan since the Boundary Commission, who report that its resources have already been wonderfully augmented, & that its capacities of production under a more scientific system of irrigation, are enormous.

A link in a larger chain

Nor should a concluding but most important consideration be forgotten. Though railways will not come in Persia with the headlong rapidity that some suppose, imagine,

(1) Caravan journeys p 426.
(2) Journal of the RGS. vol XLIII. p 71-73.

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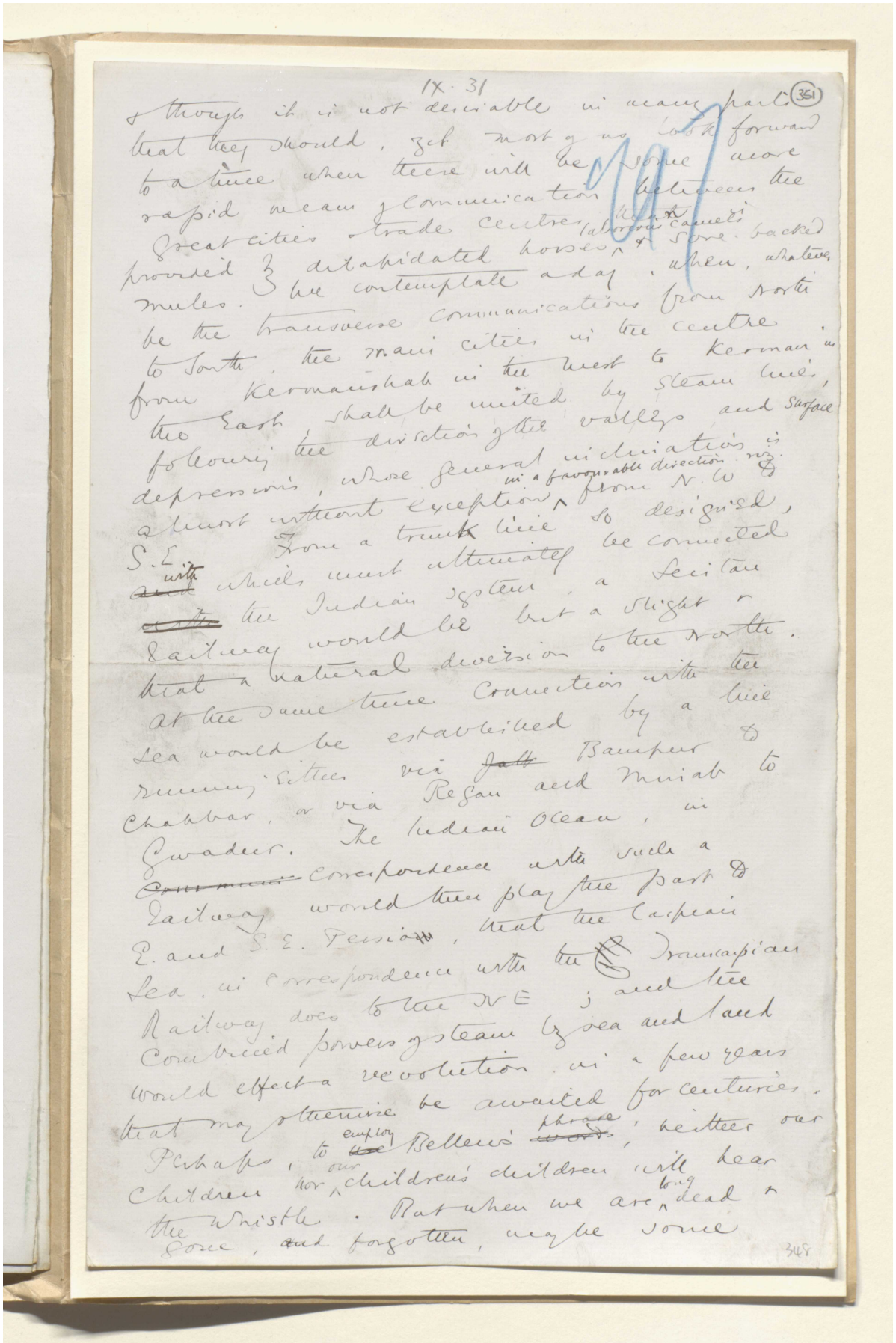

IX. 31

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& though it is not desirable in many parts that they should, yet most of us look forward to a time when there will be some more rapid means of communication between the great cities & trade centres than provided by dilapidated horses, laborious camels & sore-backed mules. We contemplate a day, when, whatever be the transverse communications from North to South, the main cities in the centre from Kermanshah in the West to Kerman in the East shall be united by steam lines, following the direction of the valleys and surface depressions, whose general inclination is almost without exception in a favourable direction viz. from N.W. to S.E. From a trunk line so designed, with which must ultimately be connected the Indian system, a Seistan Railway would be but a slight & that a natural diversion to the North. At the same time connection with the sea would be established by a line running either via Bampur to Chabbar, or via Regan and Minab to Gwadur. The Indian Ocean, in correspondence with such a Railway would then play the part to E. and S.E. Persia, that the Caspian Sea, in correspondence with the Transcaspian Railway does to the NE; and the combined powers of steam by sea and land would effect a revolution in a few years that may otherwise be awaited for centuries. Perhaps, to employ Bellew's phrase, neither our children nor our children's children will hear the whistle. But when we are long dead & gone, and forgotten, maybe some

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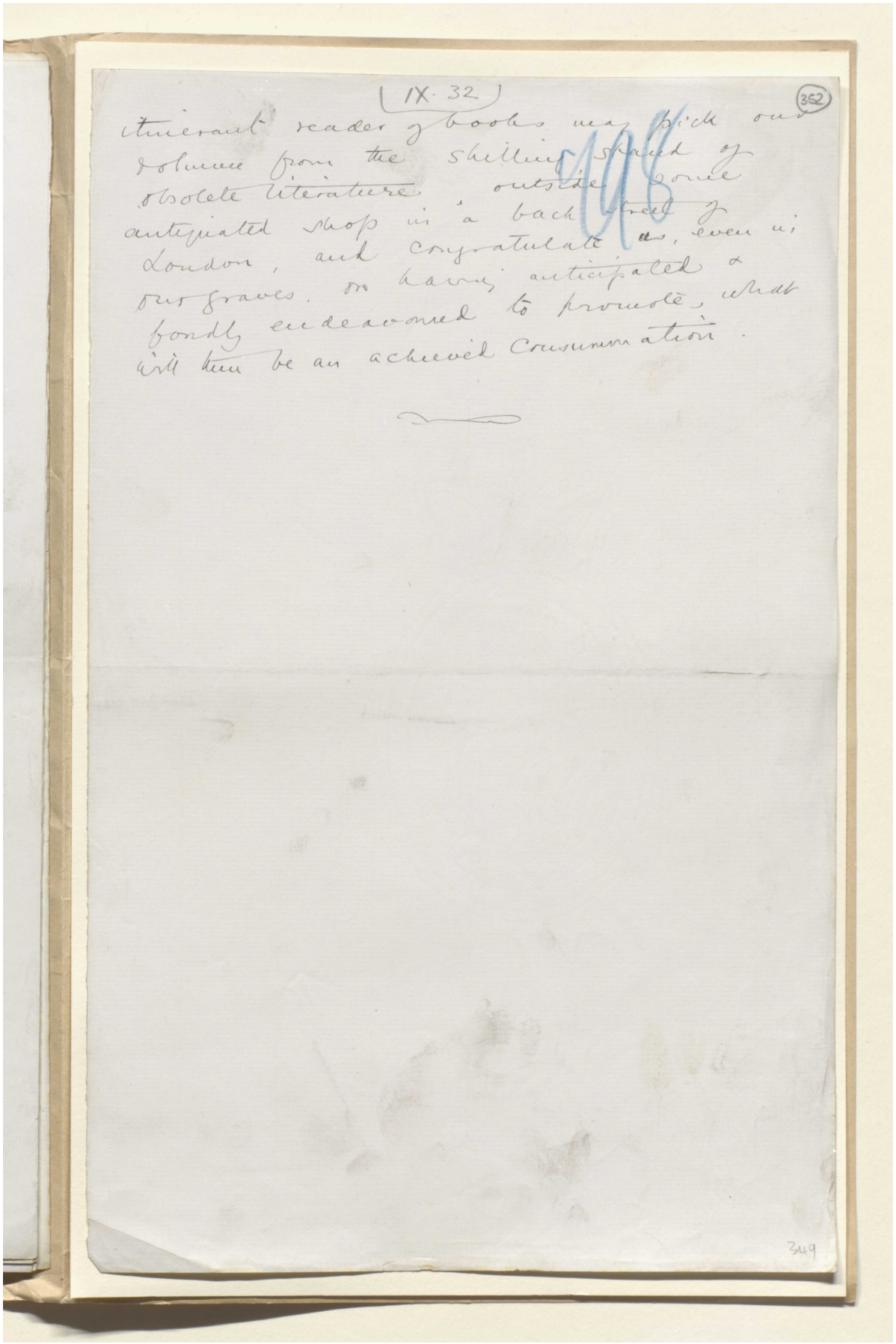
(IX. 32)
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itinerant reader of books may pick out
volume from the shilling shelf of
obsolete literature, outside some
antiquated shop in a back street of
London, and congratulate us, even in
our graves, on having anticipated a
fondly endeavoured to promote, what
will then be an achieved Consummation.
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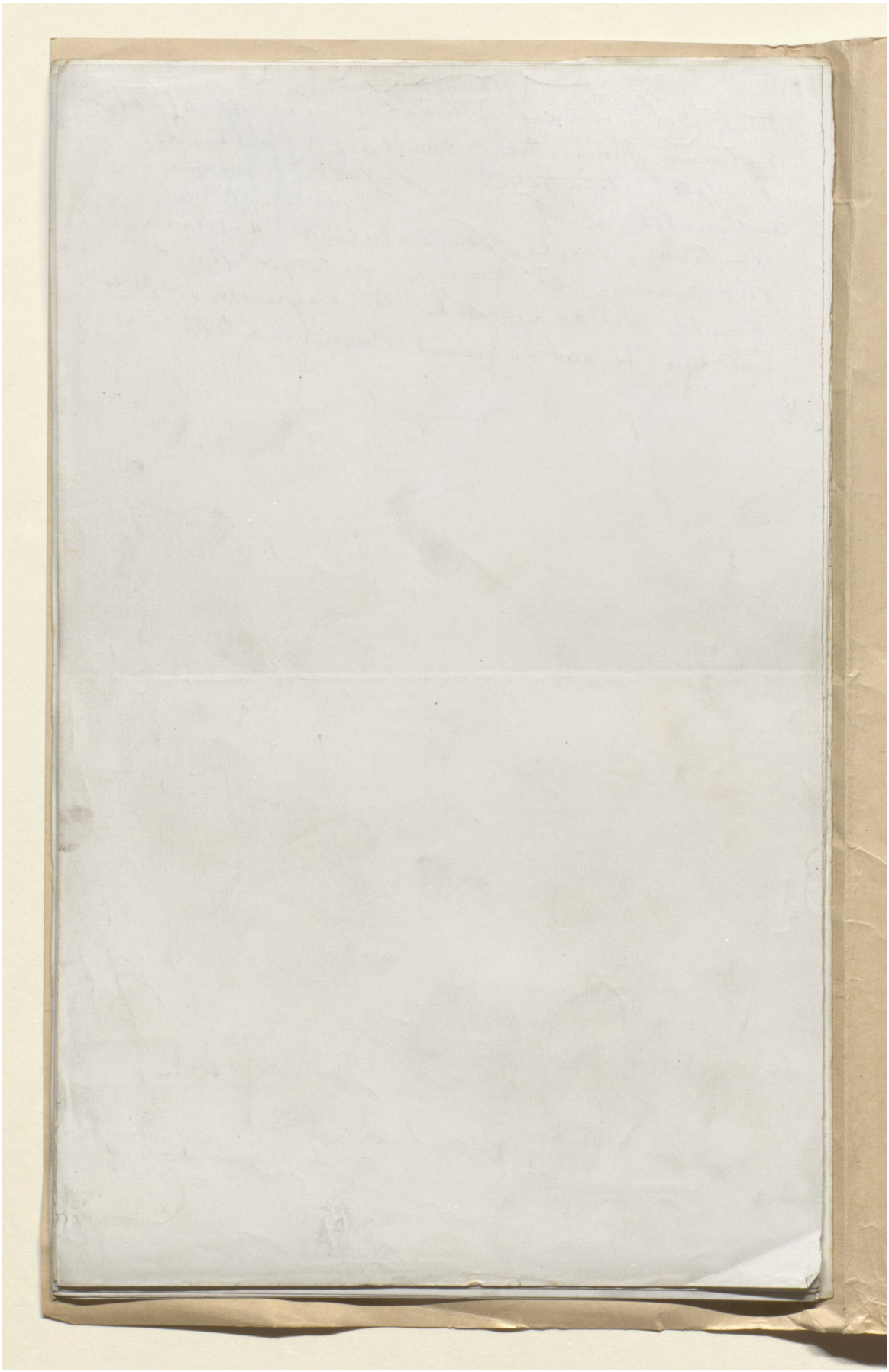

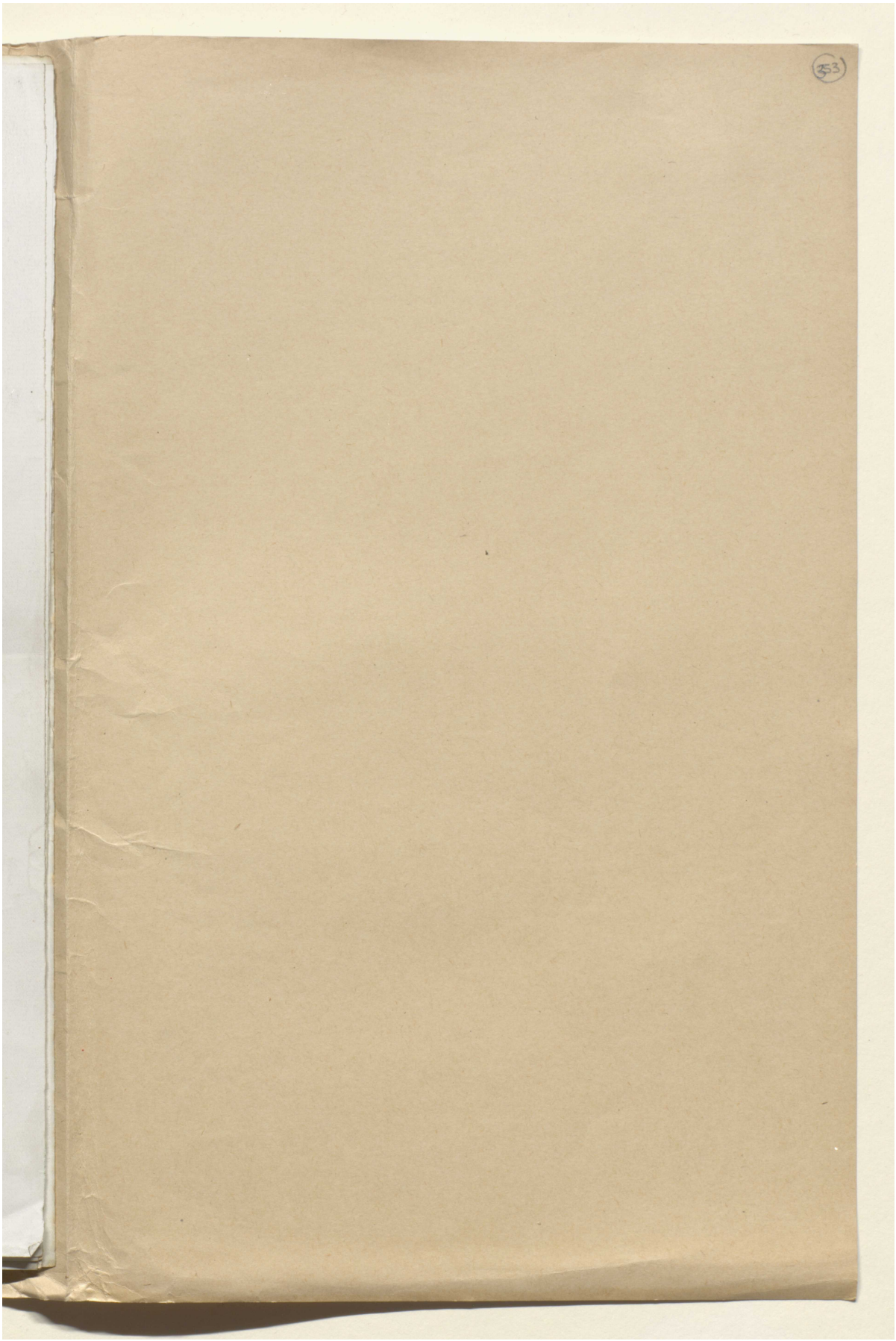
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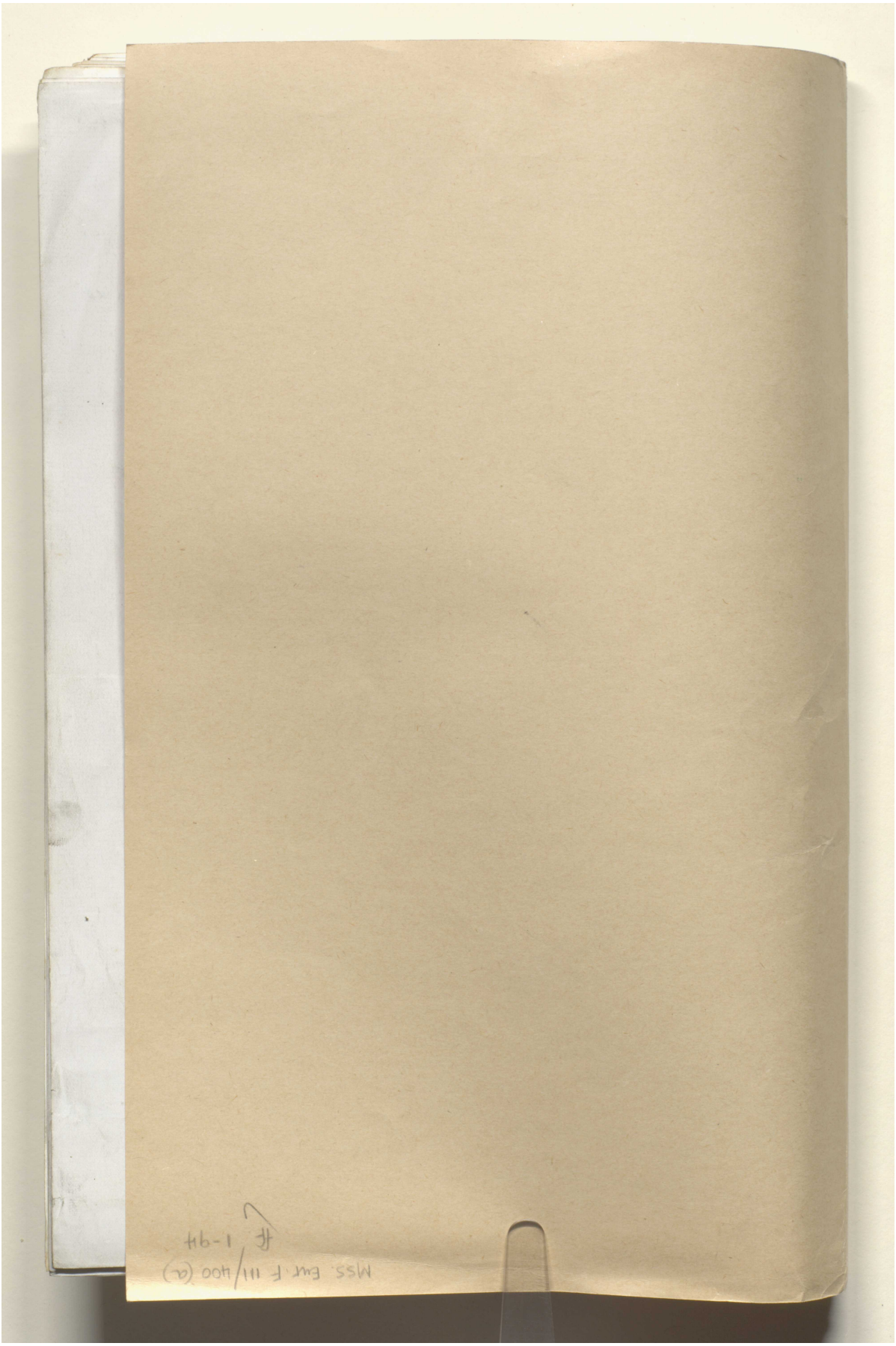

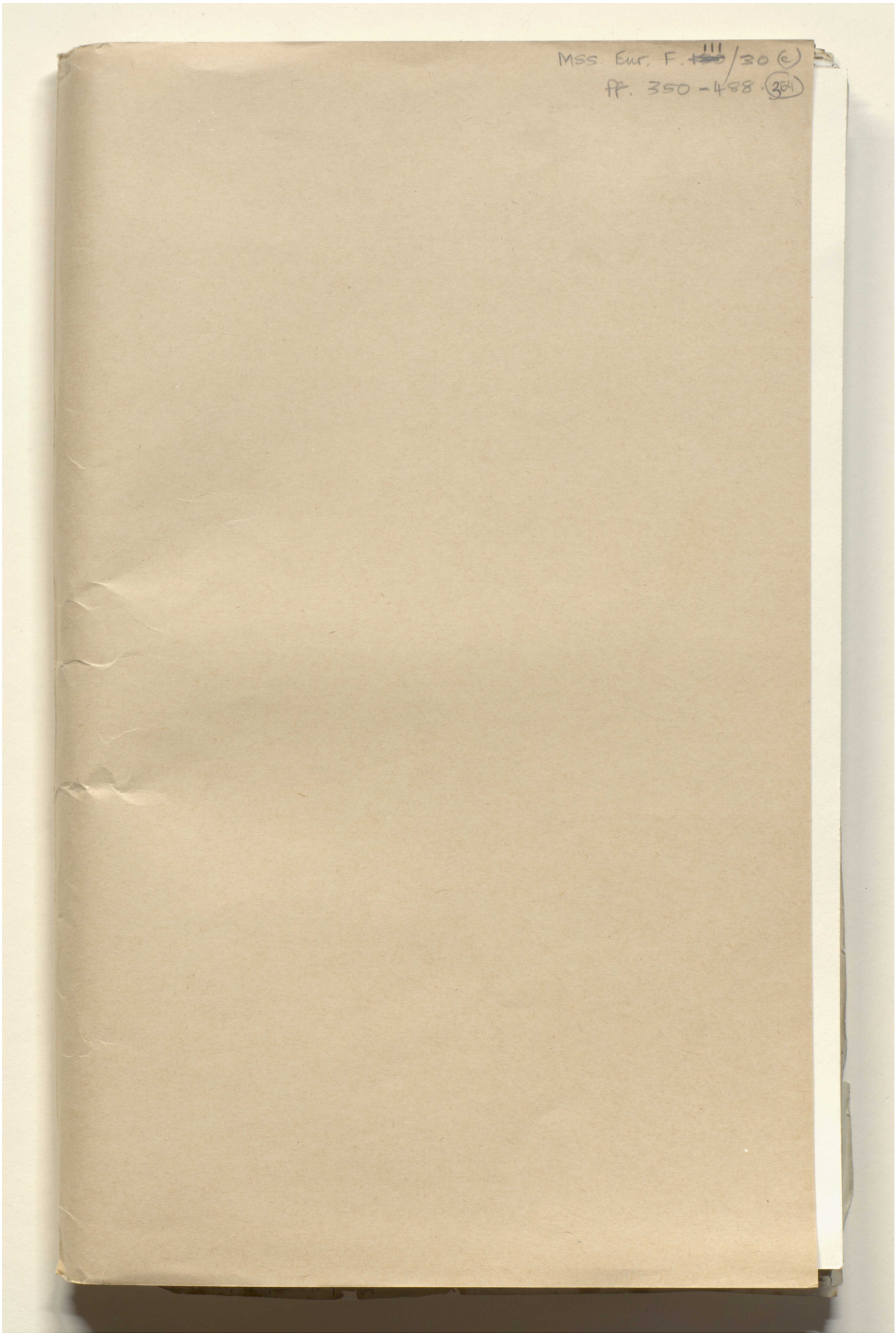
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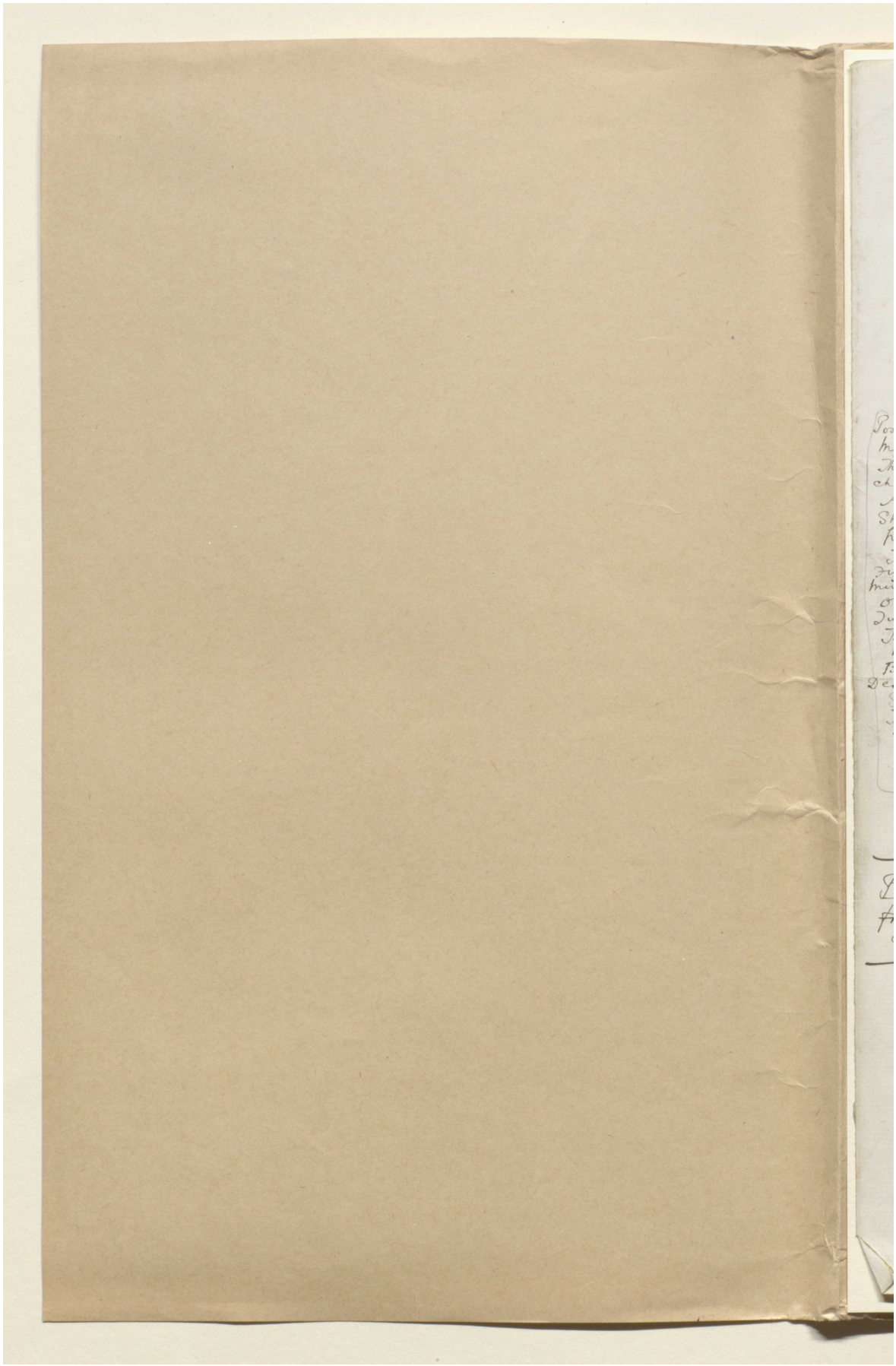

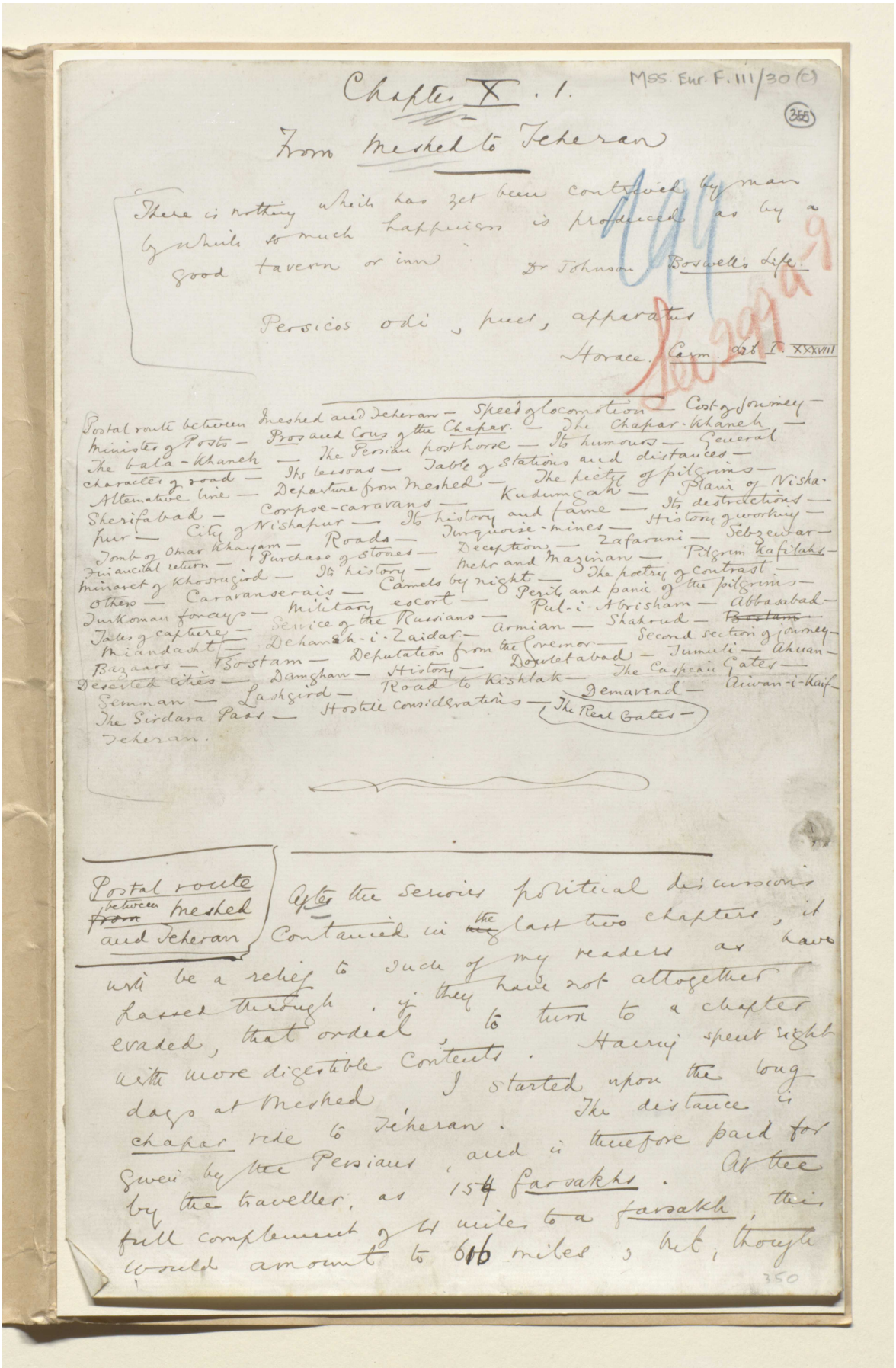

Chapter X. 1.

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From Meshed to Teheran

There is nothing which has yet been contrived by man by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn

Dr Johnson Boswell's Life.

Persicos odi, puer, apparatus

Horace. Carm. lib. I. XXXVIII

Postal route between Meshed and Teheran — Speed of locomotion — Cost of journey — Minister of Posts — Post and Cous of the Chapar — The Chapar-Khaneh — The bala-Khaneh — The Persian post horse — Its humours — General character of road — Its lessons — Table of stations and distances — Alternative line — Departure from Meshed — The pretty pilgrims — Sherifabad — Corpse-caravans — Kudum Gah — Plain of Nishapur — City of Nishapur — Its history and fame — Its destructions — Tomb of Omar Khayam — Roads — Turquoise-mines — History & working — Financial return — Purchase of stones — Deception — Zafarani — Sebzewar — Minaret of Khosrugird — Its history — Mehr and Mazinan — Pilgrim kafilahs — Others — Caravanserais — Camels by night — The poetry of contrast — Turkoman forays — Military escort — Peril and panic of the pilgrims — Tales of capture — Service of the Russians — Pul-i-Abrisham — Abbasabad — Miandasht — Dehanah-i-Zaidar — Armian — Shahrud — Bostam — Bazaars — Bostam — Deputation from the Governor — Second section of journey — Deserted cities — Damghan — History — Doulet abad — Jumeli — Akhwan — Semnan — Lashgird — Road to Kishlak — The Caspian Gates — The Sirdara Pass — Hostile considerations — Demavend — Kiwan-i-Kaif — Teheran. (The Real Gates —

Postal route between Meshed and Teheran

After the serious political discussions contained in the last two chapters, it will be a relief to such of my readers as have passed through it, if they have not altogether evaded, that ordeal, to turn to a chapter with more digestible contents. Having spent eight days at Meshed I started upon the long chapar ride to Teheran. The distance is given by the Persians, and is therefore paid for by the traveller, as 154 farsakhs. At the full complement of 4 miles to a farsakh this would amount to 616 miles; but, though

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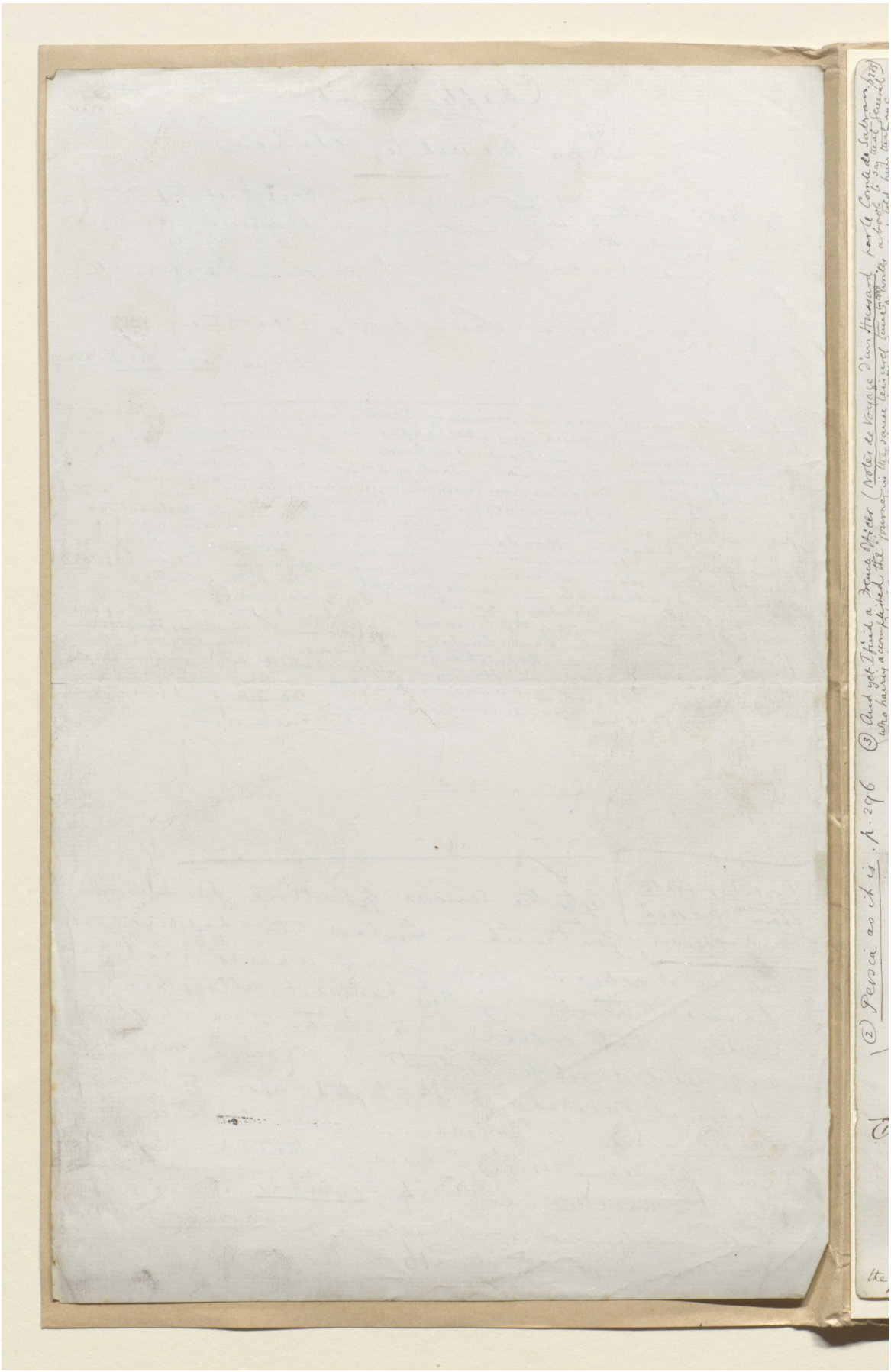

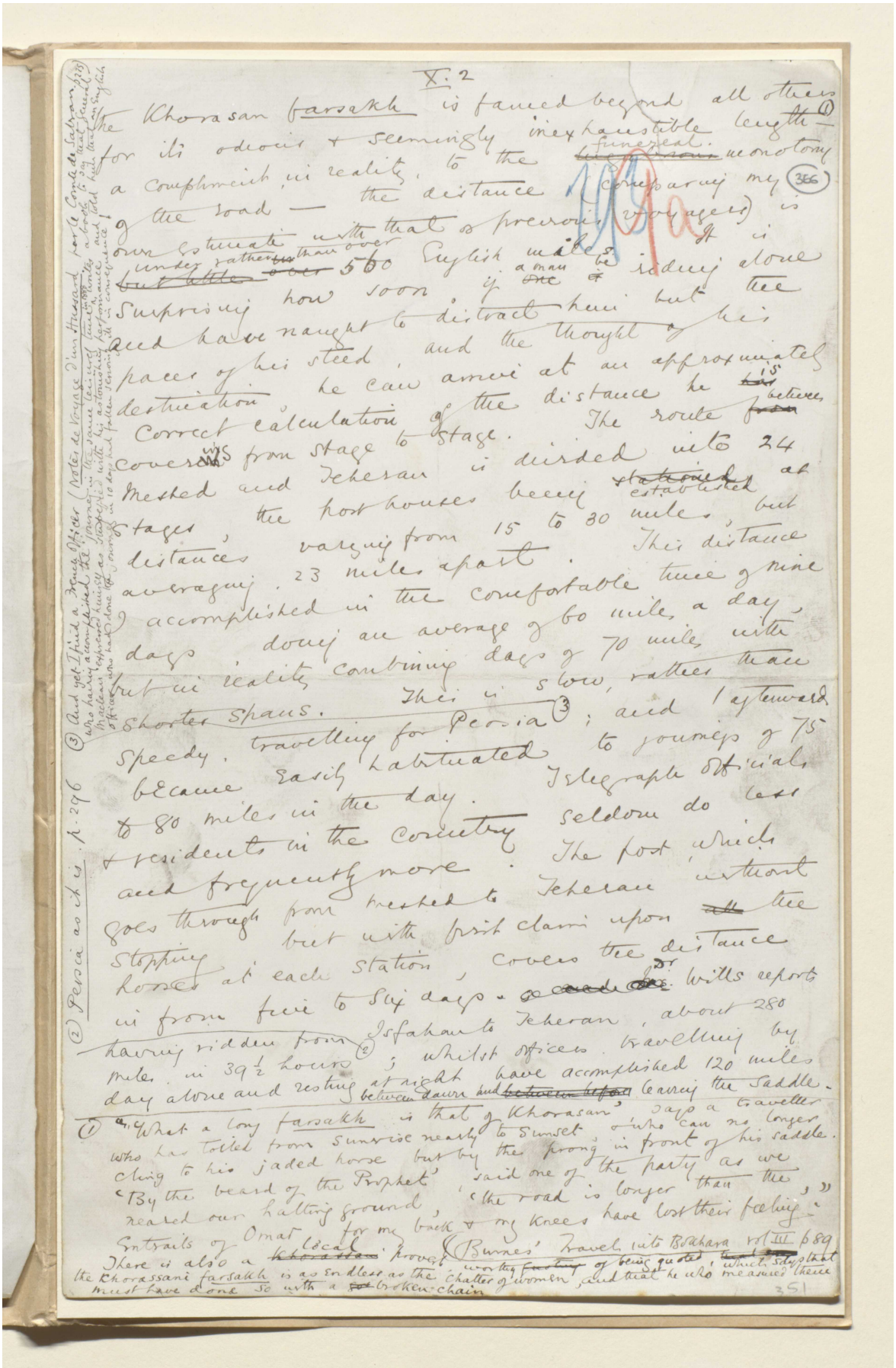

X. 2

The Khorasan farsakh is famed beyond all others for its odour & seemingly inexhaustible length — a compliment in reality, to the funereal monotony of the road — the distance (compared my (356) under estimate with that of previous travellers) is rather than over 500 English miles. It is but little Surprising how soon, if a man be riding alone & have naught to distract him but the paces of his steed, and the thought of his destination, he can arrive at an approximately correct calculation of the distance he is covering from stage to stage. The route from Meshed and Teheran is divided into 24 stages, the post houses being established at distances varying from 15 to 30 miles, but averaging 23 miles apart. This distance accomplished in the comfortable time of nine days doing an average of 60 miles a day, but in reality combining days of 70 miles, with shorter spans. This is slow, rather than speedy, travelling for Persia (3); and I afterwards became easily habituated to journeys of 75 to 80 miles in the day. Telegraph officials & residents in the country seldom do less and frequently more. The post, which goes through from Meshed to Teheran without stopping but with fresh claim upon the horses at each station, covers the distance in from five to six days. Wills reports having ridden from Isfahan to Teheran, about 280 miles, in 39½ hours (2); whilst officers travelling by day alone and resting at night between Saavi and Kishon have accomplished 120 miles carrying the saddle.

(1) "What a long farsakh is that of Khorasan," says a traveller who has toiled from sunrise nearly to sunset, "who can no longer cling to his jaded horse but by the prong in front of his saddle. 'By the beard of the Prophet,' said one of the party as we reared our halting ground, 'the road is longer than the entrails of Omar for my back & my knees have lost their feeling.'" (Burnes' Travels into Bokhara vol III p 89)

There is also a local Khorassan proverb, worthy of being quoted, which says that the Khorassani farsakh is as endless as the chatter of women, and that he who measures them must have done so with a broken chain.

(1) Persia as it is p. 296

(2) And yet I find a Field Officer (Notes de Voyage d'un Officier qui a fait la campagne de Sabraon) who having accomplished the journey in the space of 36 hours, and 120 miles, and [illegible] Macleans opinion as to the [illegible] of Persian messengers, who has done [illegible]

(3)

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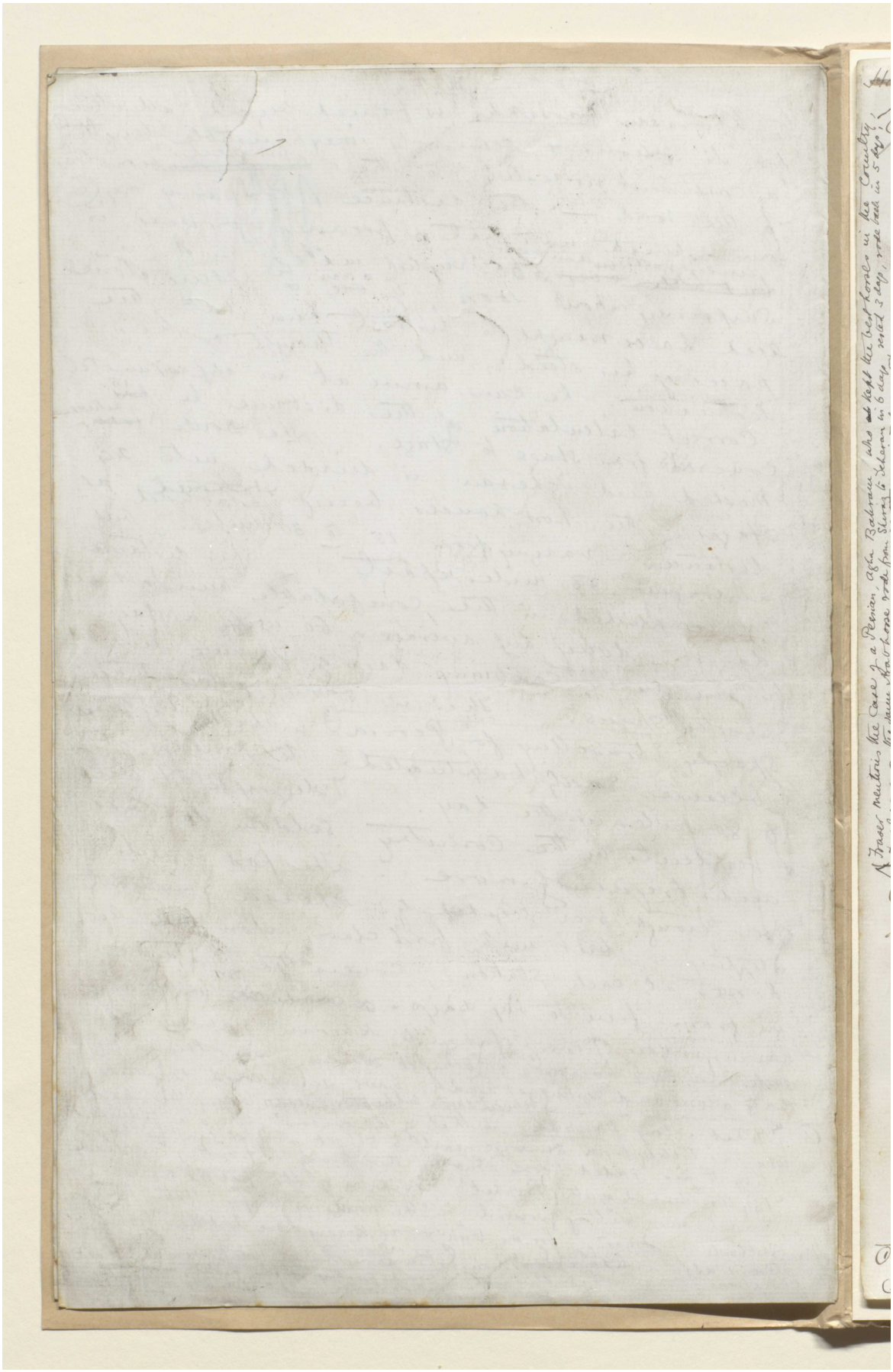
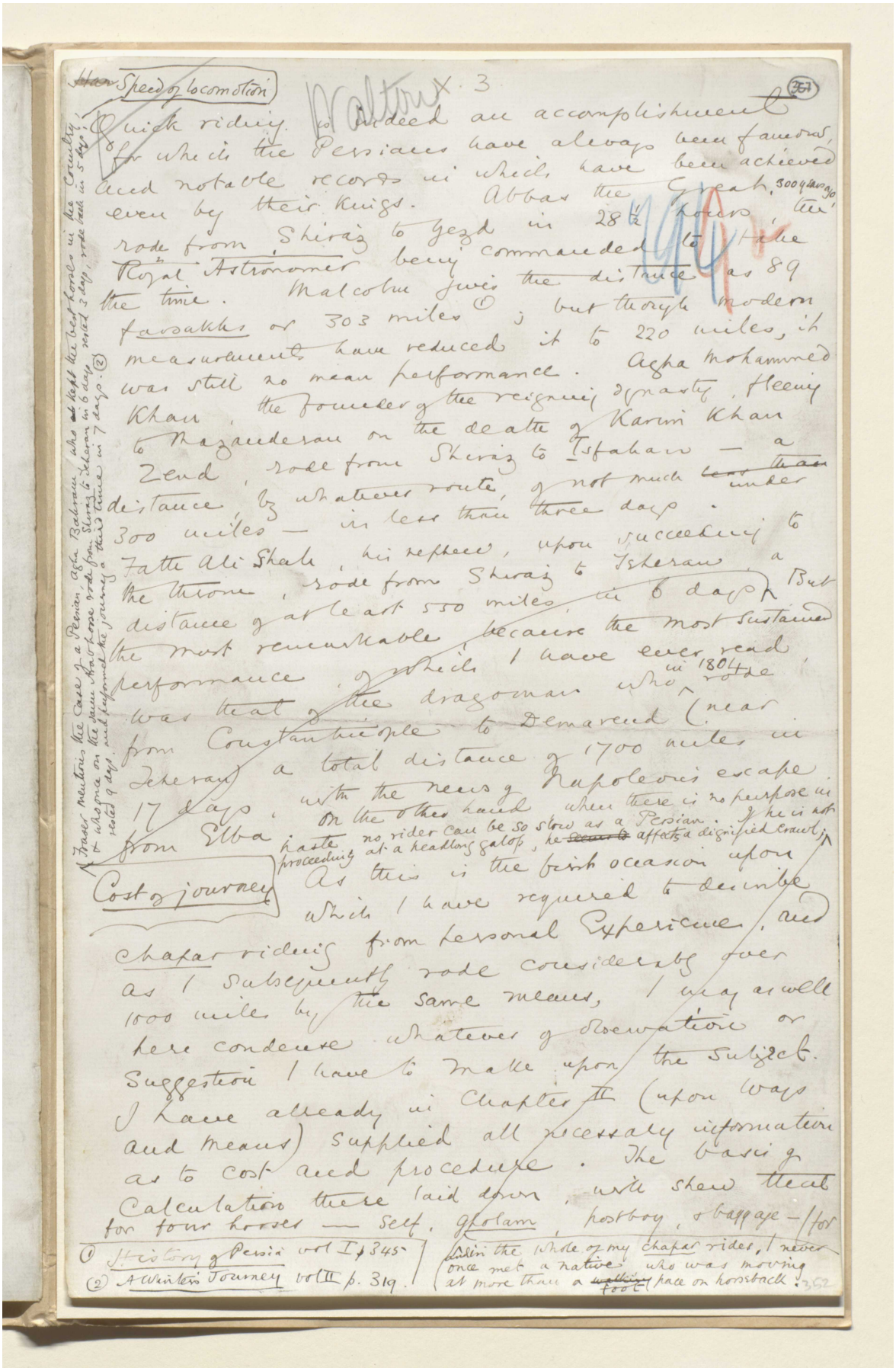


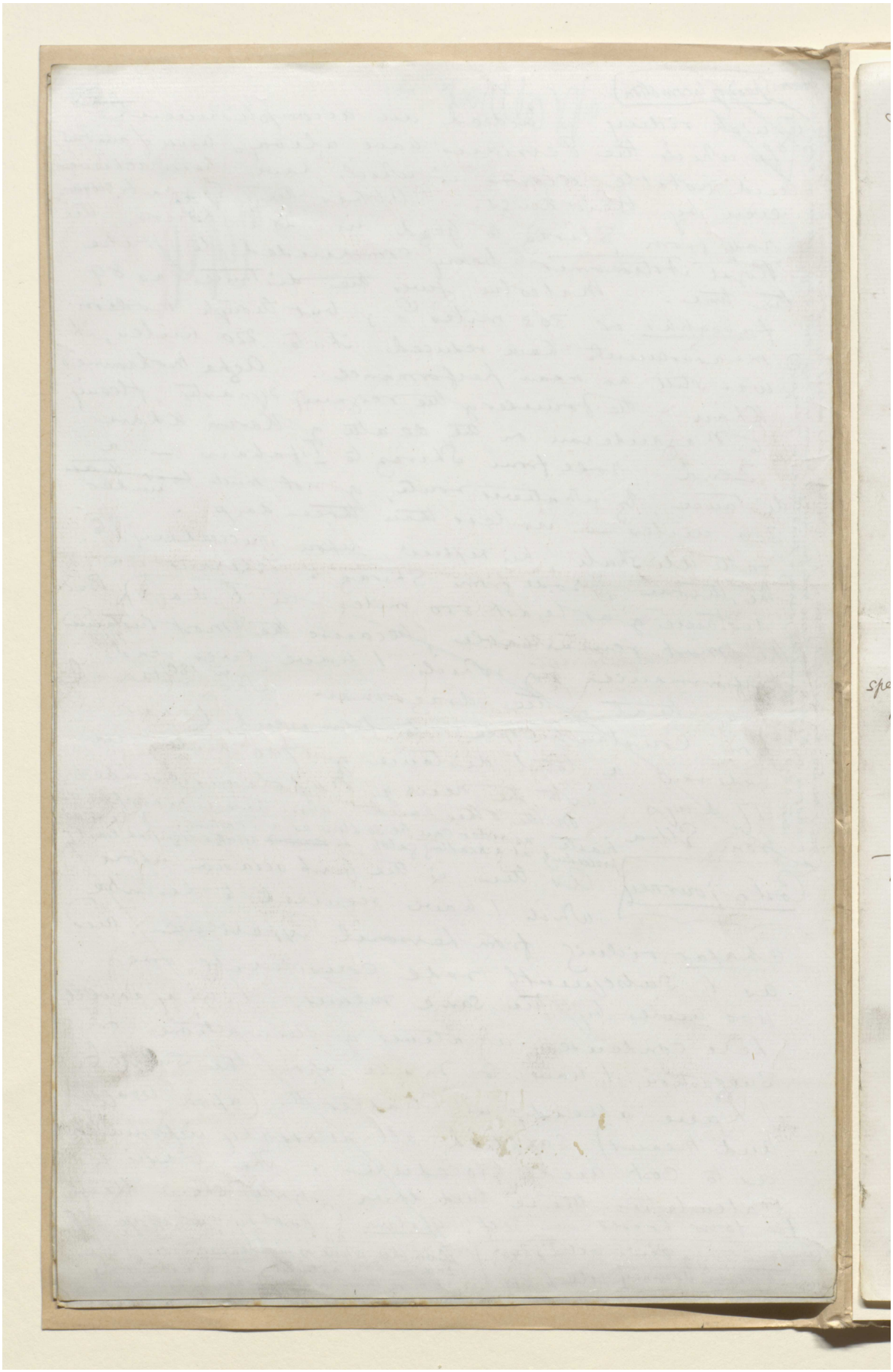


Speed of locomotion

Quick riding. Indeed an accomplishment for which the Persians have always been famous, and notable records in which have been achieved even by their Kings. Abbas the Great, 300 years ago rode from Shiraz to Yezd in 28½ hours, the Royal Astronomer being commanded to ride the same distance in 89 hours. Malcolm gives the distance as 303 miles ①; but though modern measurements have reduced it to 220 miles, it was still a mean performance. Agha Mohammed Khan, the founder of the reigning dynasty, fleeing to Mazanderan on the death of Karim Khan Zend, rode from Shiraz to Isfahan — a distance, by whatever route, of not much under 300 miles — in less than three days. Fatte Ali Shah, his nephew, upon succeeding to the throne, rode from Shiraz to Teheran, a distance of at least 550 miles, in 6 days. But the most remarkable, because the most sustained performance, of which I have ever read, was that of the dragoman who in 1804 rode from Constantinople to Demavend (near Teheran) a total distance of 1700 miles in 17 days, with the news of Napoleon's escape from Elba. On the other hand when there is no purpose in haste, no rider can be so slow as a Persian. If he is not proceeding at a headlong gallop, he affects a dignified crawl; and [illegible] ② As this is the first occasion upon which I have required to describe Chapar riding from personal experience, and as I subsequently rode considerably over 1000 miles by the same means, I may as well here condense whatever observations or suggestions I have to make upon the subject. I have already in Chapter III (upon ways and means) supplied all necessary information as to cost and procedure. The basis of calculation there laid down, will show that for four horses — self, ghulam, postboy, & baggage — for [illegible] the whole of my chapar rides, I never once met a native who was moving at more than a walking pace on horseback.

Fraser mentions the case of a Persian, Agha Baharan, who rode from Shiraz to Teheran in 6 days, and Wagner on the same road from Shiraz to Teheran in 7 days. ①

① History of Persia vol I p 345
② A Winter's Journey vol II p. 319.



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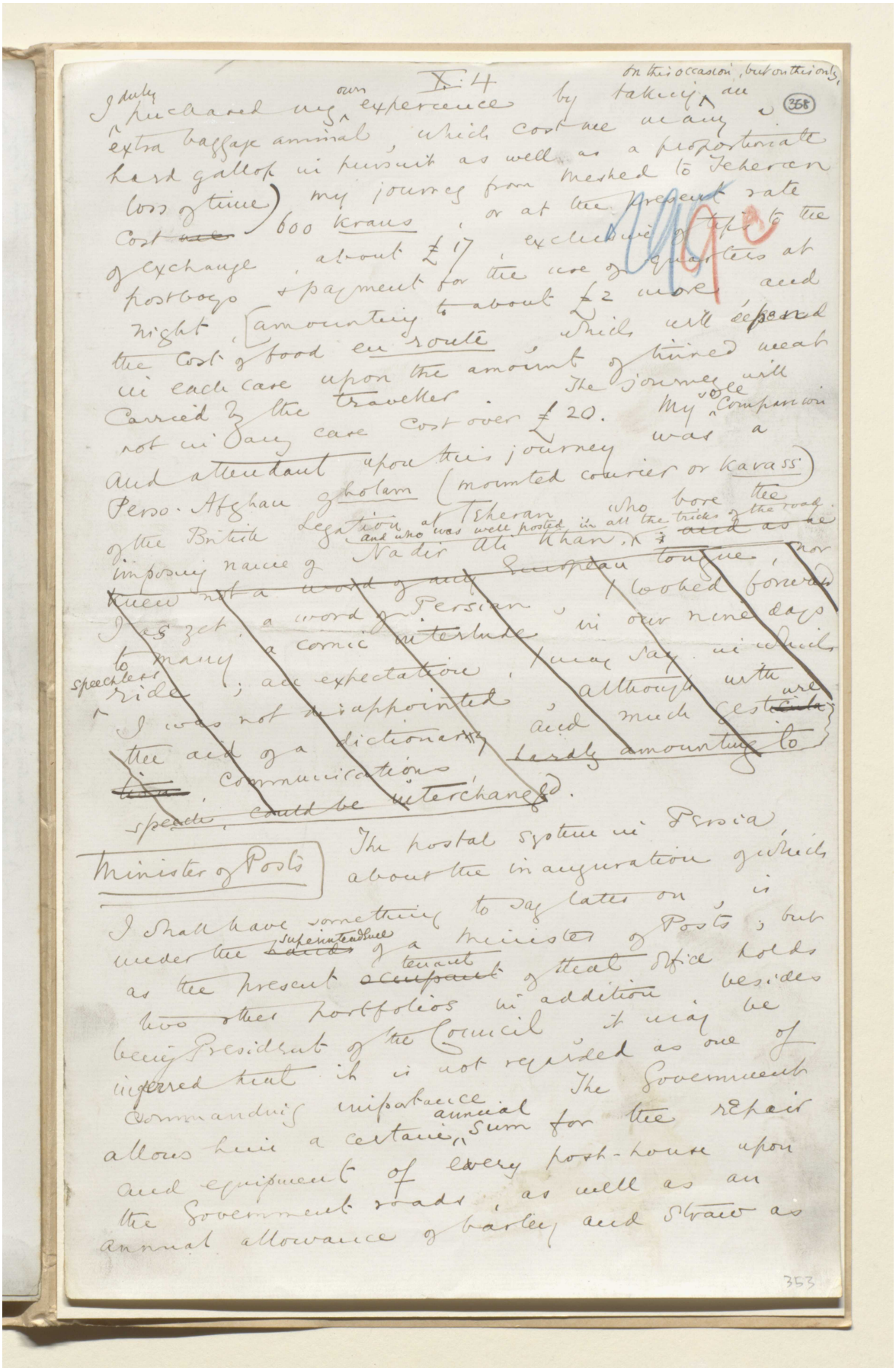

I duly purchased my own experience by taking on this occasion, but on this only, an extra baggage animal, which cost me many a hard gallop in pursuit as well as a proportionate loss of time) my journey from Meshed to Teheran cost ~~me~~ 600 krans, or at the present rate of exchange about £17, exclusive of tips to the postboys & payment for the use of quarters at night, [amounting to about £2 more, and the cost of food en route, which will depend in each case upon the amount of tinned meat carried by the traveller. The journey will not in any case cost over £20. My sole companion and attendant upon this journey was a Perso-Afghan gholam (mounted courier or kavass) of the British Legation at Teheran, who bore the imposing name of Nadir Ali Khan, and who was well posted in all the tricks of the road; ~~and as he knew not a word of any European tongue, nor I as yet a word of Persian, I looked forward to many a comic interlude in our nine days speechless ride; an expectation, I may say in which I was not disappointed, although with the aid of a dictionary and much gesture communications hardly amounting to speech, could be interchanged.~~

Minister of Posts

The postal system in Persia, about the inauguration of which I shall have something to say later on, is under the ~~hands~~ superintendence of a Minister of Posts; but as the present ~~occupant~~ tenant of that office holds two other portfolios in addition besides being President of the Council, it may be inferred that it is not regarded as one of commanding importance. The Government allows him a certain annual sum for the repair and equipment of every post-house upon the Government roads, as well as an annual allowance of barley and straw as

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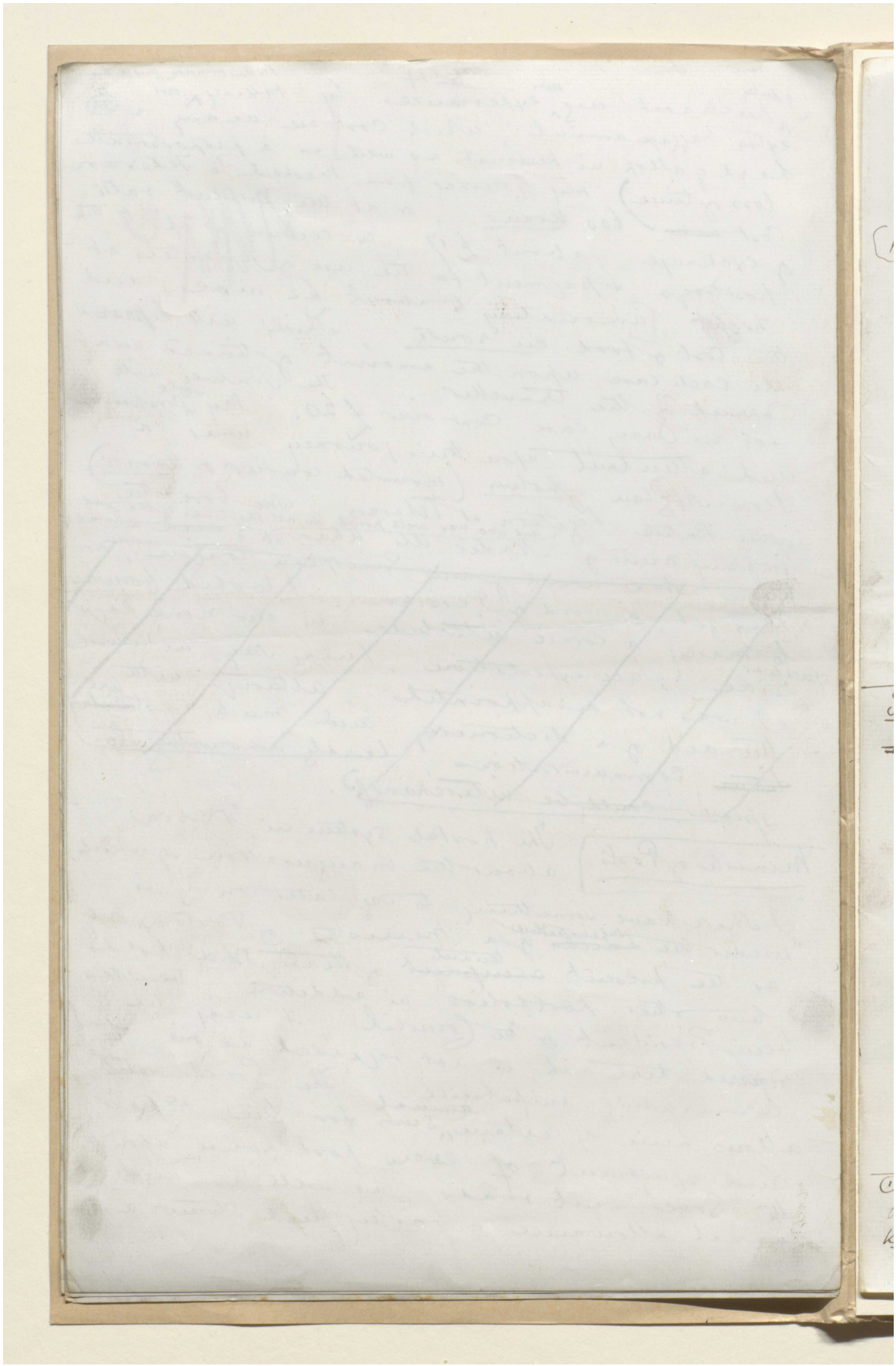

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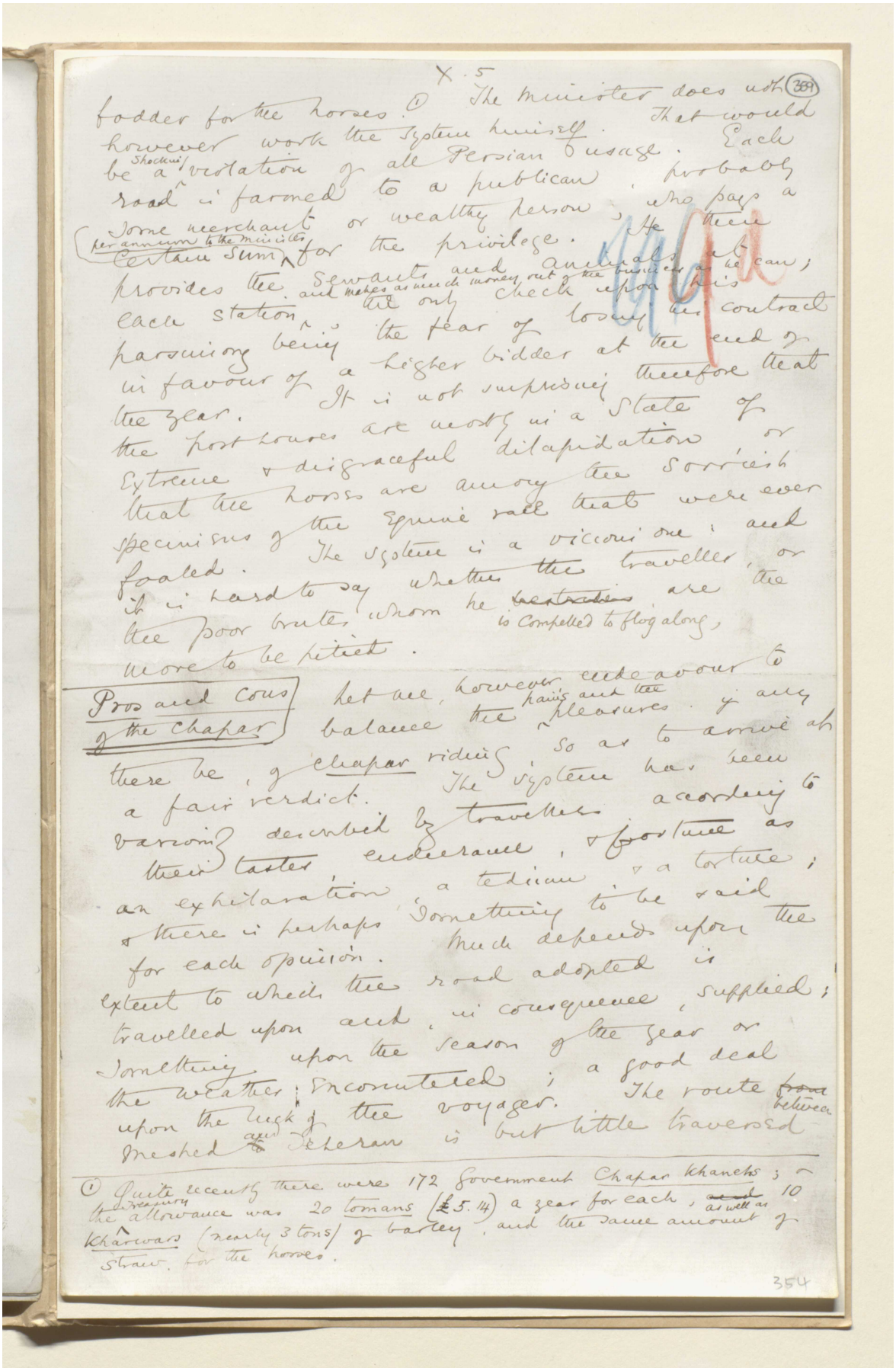

fodder for the horses.① The minister does not however work the system himself. That would be a shocking violation of all Persian usage. Each road is farmed to a publican, probably some merchant or wealthy person, who pays a certain sum (per annum to the minister) for the privilege. He then provides the servants and animals at each station, and makes as much money out of the business as he can; the only check upon his parsimony being the fear of losing his contract in favour of a higher bidder at the end of the year. It is not surprising therefore that the post houses are mostly in a state of extreme & disgraceful dilapidation, or that the horses are among the sorriest specimens of the equine race that were ever foaled. The system is a vicious one; and it is hard to say whether the traveller, or the poor brutes whom he ~~[illegible]~~ is compelled to flog along, are the more to be pitied.

Pros and cons of the chapar

Let me, however, endeavour to balance the pains and the pleasures, if any there be, of chapar riding, so as to arrive at a fair verdict. The system has been variously described by travellers according to their tastes, endurance, & fortune as an exhilaration, a tedium, & a torture; & there is perhaps something to be said for each opinion. Much depends upon the extent to which the road adopted is travelled upon and, in consequence, supplied; something upon the season of the year or the weather encountered; a good deal upon the luck of the voyager. The route ~~from~~ between Meshed ~~to~~ and Teheran is but little traversed

① Quite recently there were 172 Government Chapar khanehs; & the treasury allowance was 20 tomans (£5.14) a year for each, ~~and~~ as well as 10 khârwars (nearly 3 tons) of barley, and the same amount of straw, for the horses.

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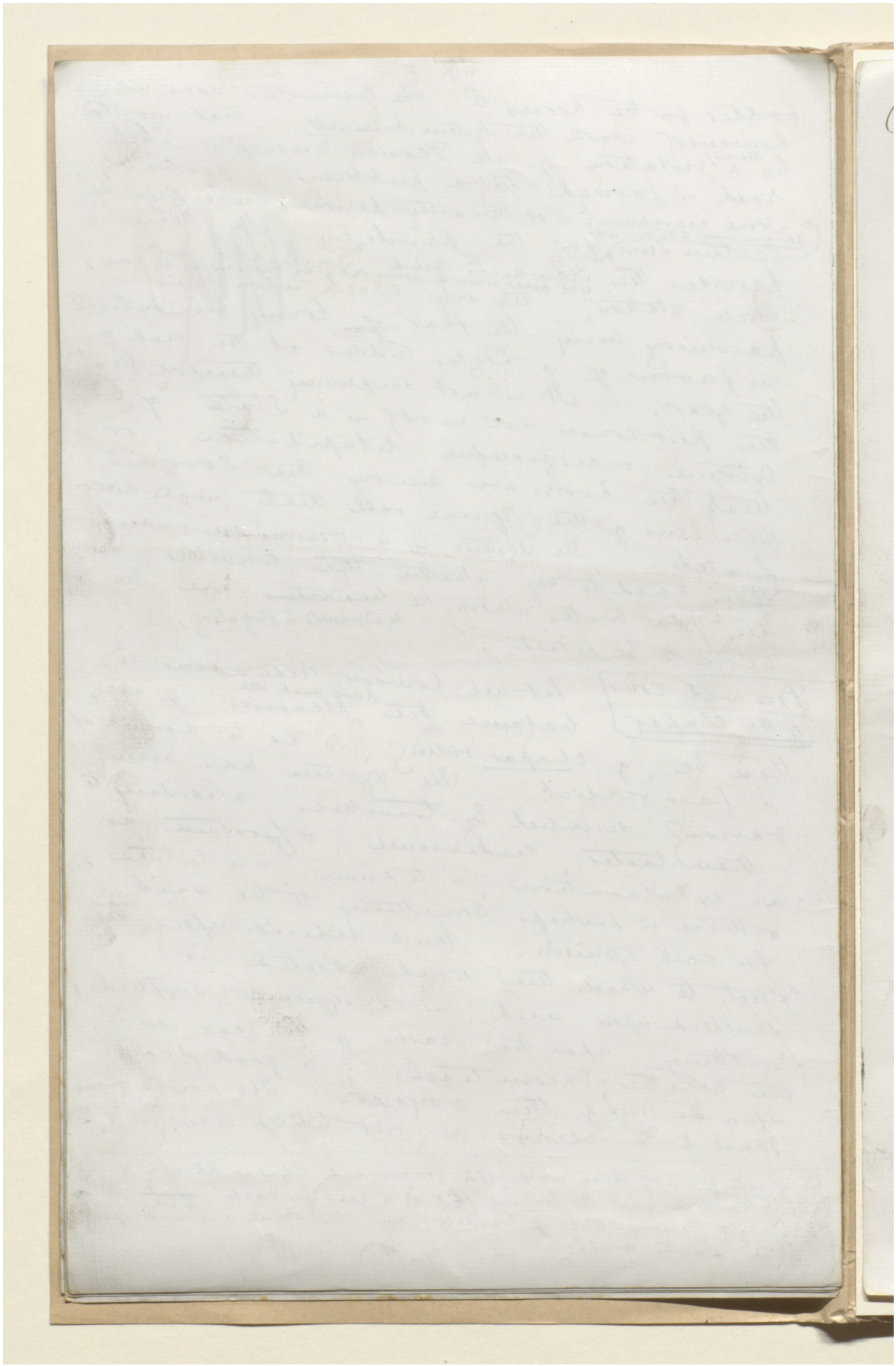

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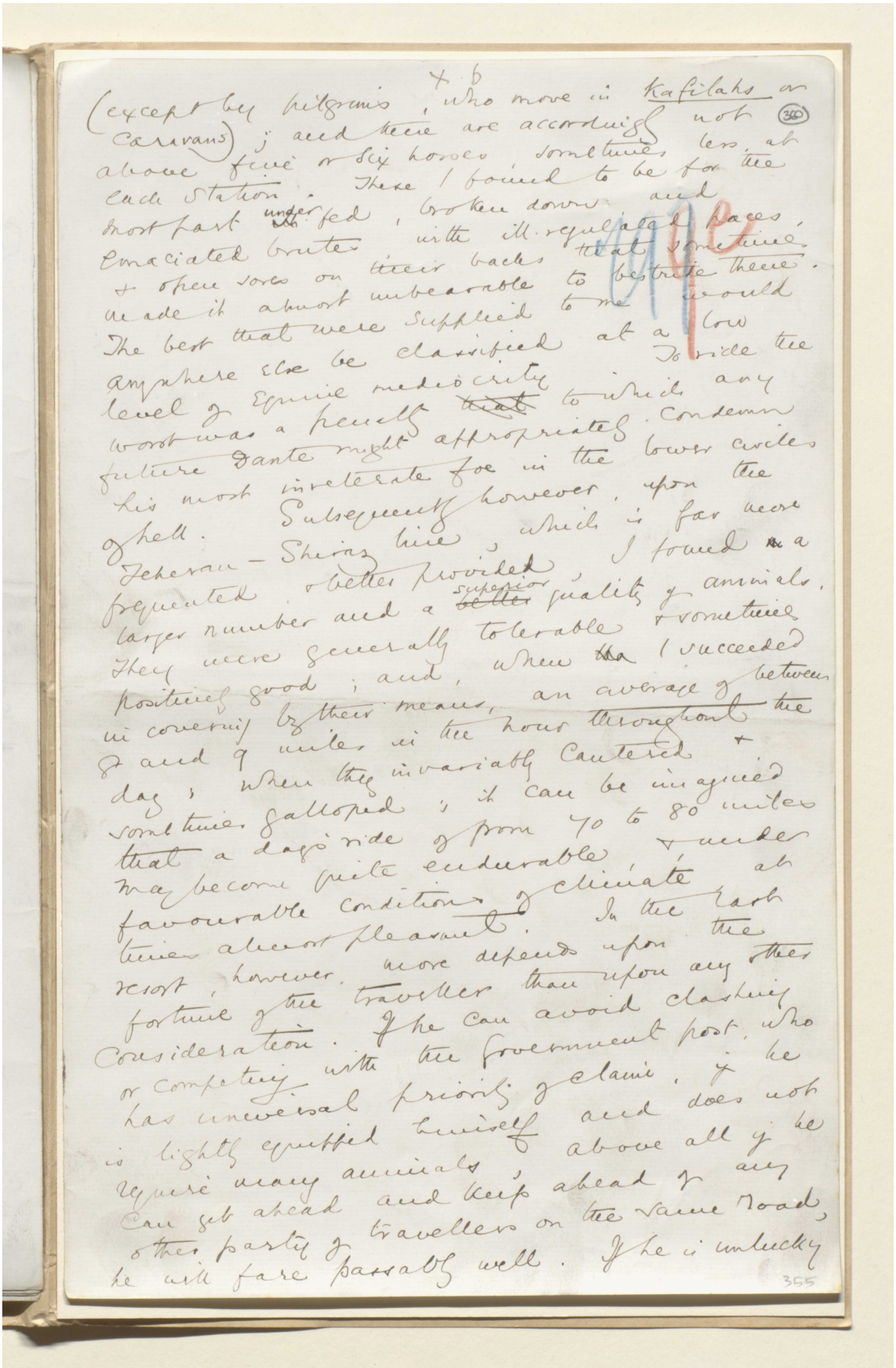

(except by pilgrims, who move in Kafilahs or Caravans); and there are accordingly not above five or six horses, sometimes less, at each station. These I found to be for the most part under fed, broken down and emaciated brutes with ill-regulated paces, & open sores on their backs that sometimes made it almost unbearable to bestride them. The best that were supplied to me would anywhere else be classified at a low level of Equine mediocrity. To ride the worst was a penalty ~~that~~ to which any future Dante might appropriately condemn his most inveterate foe in the lower circles of hell. Subsequently however, upon the Teheran-Shiraz line, which is far more frequented & better provided, I found a larger number and a ~~better~~ superior quality of animals. They were generally tolerable & sometimes positively good; and, when ~~the~~ I succeeded in covering by their means, an average of between 8 and 9 miles in the hour throughout the day; when they invariably cantered & sometimes galloped; it can be imagined that a day's ride of from 70 to 80 miles may become quite endurable, & under favourable conditions of climate at times almost pleasant. In the last resort, however, more depends upon the fortune of the traveller than upon any other consideration. If he can avoid clashing or competing with the Government post, who has universal priority of claim, if he is lightly equipped himself and does not require many animals, above all if he can get ahead and keep ahead of any other party of travellers on the same road, he will fare passably well. If he is unlucky

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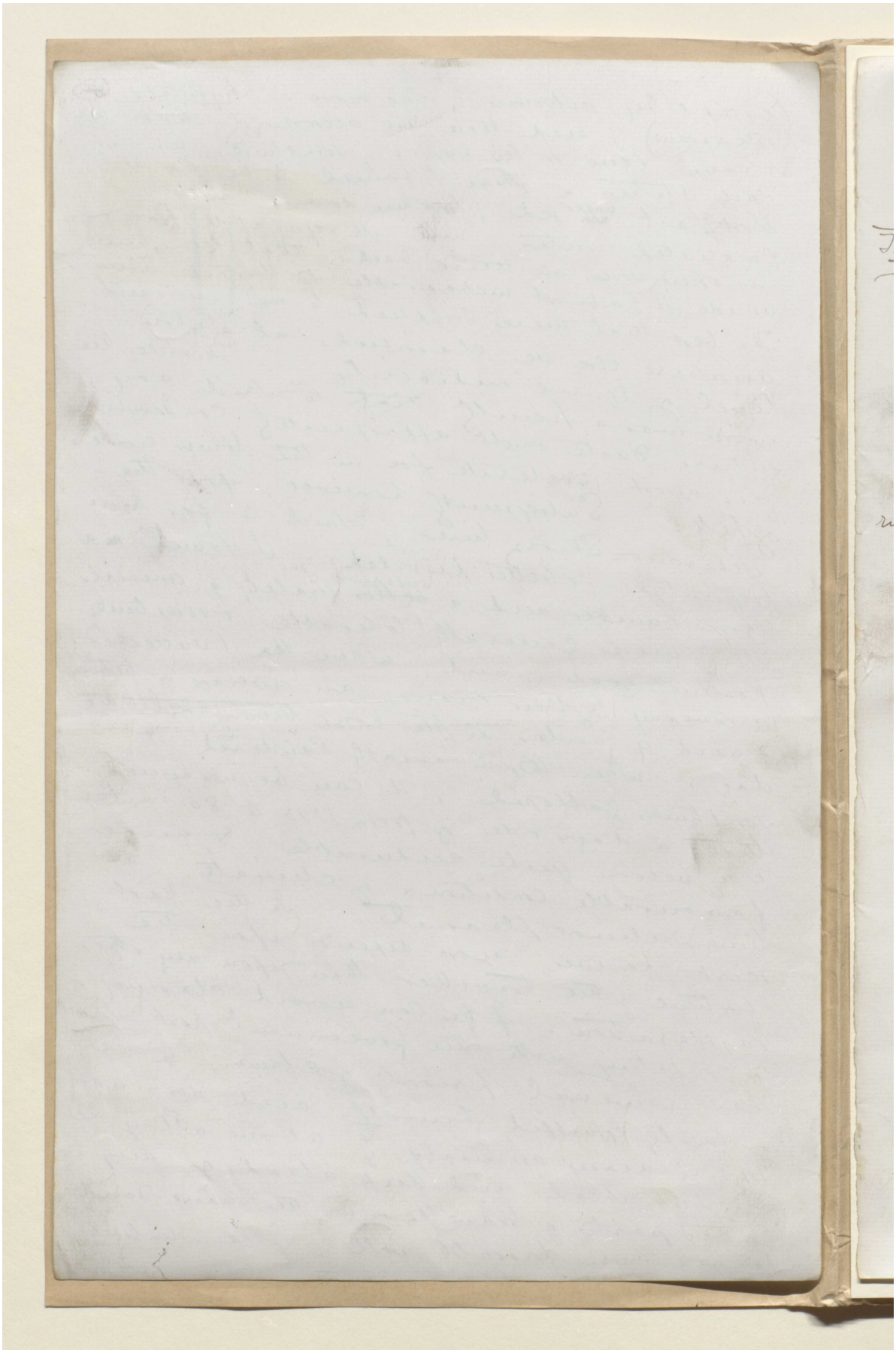

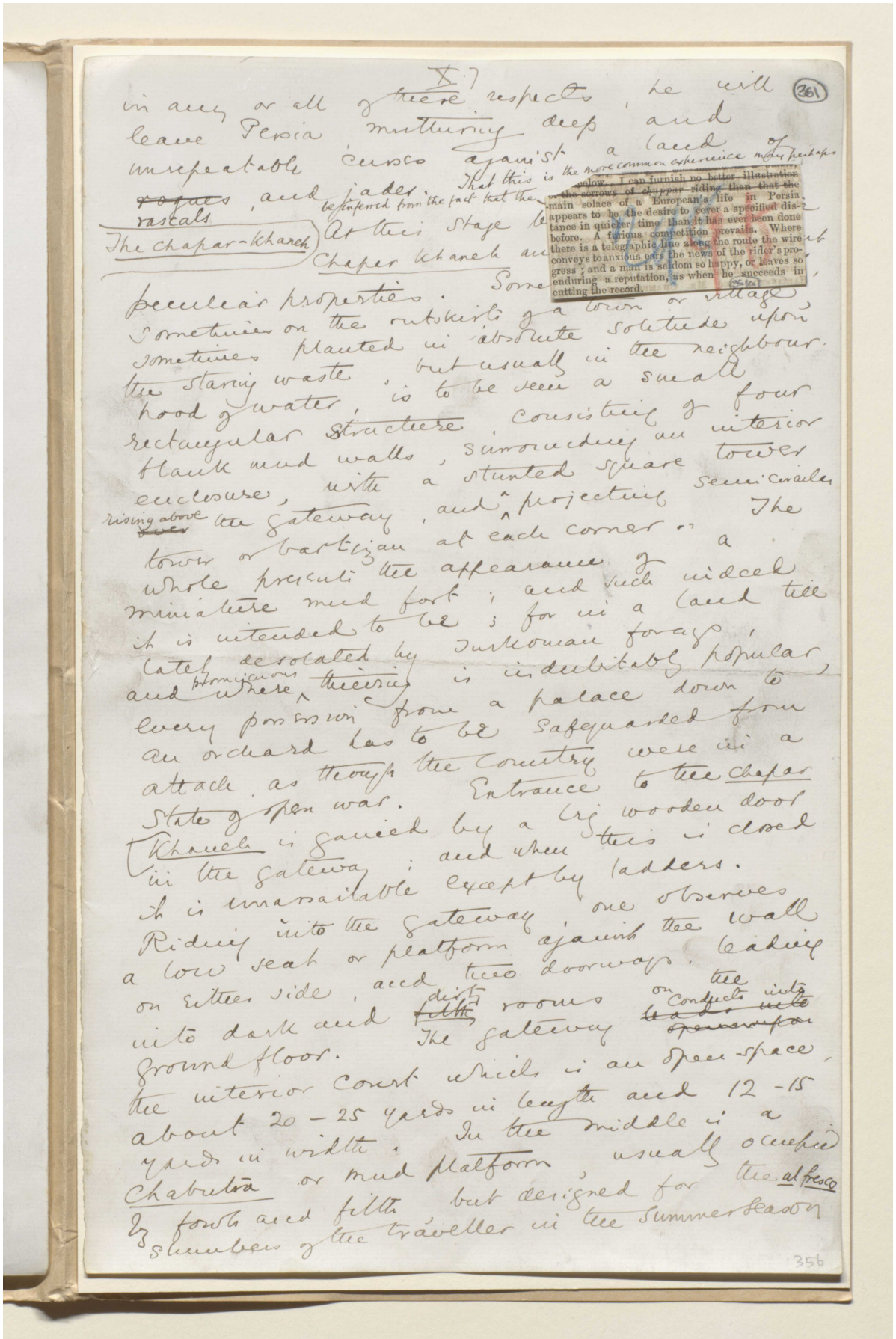

in any or all of these respects, he will leave Persia muttering deep and unrepeatable curses against [illegible] rascals, and [illegible] jader, [illegible] by the fact that the [illegible]

The chapar-khaneh

At this stage [illegible] Chaper khaneh and [illegible]

[illegible] peculiar properties. Sometimes on the outskirts of a town or village sometimes planted in absolute solitude upon the stony waste, but usually in the neighbourhood of water, is to be seen a small rectangular structure, consisting of four blank mud walls, surrounding an interior enclosure, with a stunted square tower rising above the gateway, and semi-circular projecting towers or bartizan at each corner. The whole presents the appearance of a miniature mud fort; and such indeed it is intended to be; for in a land [illegible] desolated by Turkoman foray, and where thieving is indubitably popular, every possession from a palace down to an orchard has to be safeguarded from attack, as though the country were in a state of open war. Entrance to the chaper khaneh is gained by a [illegible] wooden door in the gateway; this is closed and when it is inaccessible except by ladders. Riding into the gateway one observes a low seat or platform against the wall on either side, and two doorways, on the one into dark and dirty rooms, on the other into the ground floor. The gateway conducts into the interior court which is an open space, about 20–25 yards in length and 12–15 yards in width. In the middle is a Chabutra or mud platform, usually occupied by [illegible] and filth, but designed for the al fresco slumbers of the traveller in the summer season.

The more common experience may perhaps be illustrated by the following. I can furnish no better illustration of the sorrows of chuppar riding than that the main solace of a European's life in Persia appears to be the desire to cover a specified distance in quicker time than it has ever been done before. A furious competition prevails. Where there is a telegraphic line along the route the wire conveys to anxious ears the news of the rider's progress; and a man is seldom so happy, or leaves so enduring a reputation, as when he succeeds in cutting the record.

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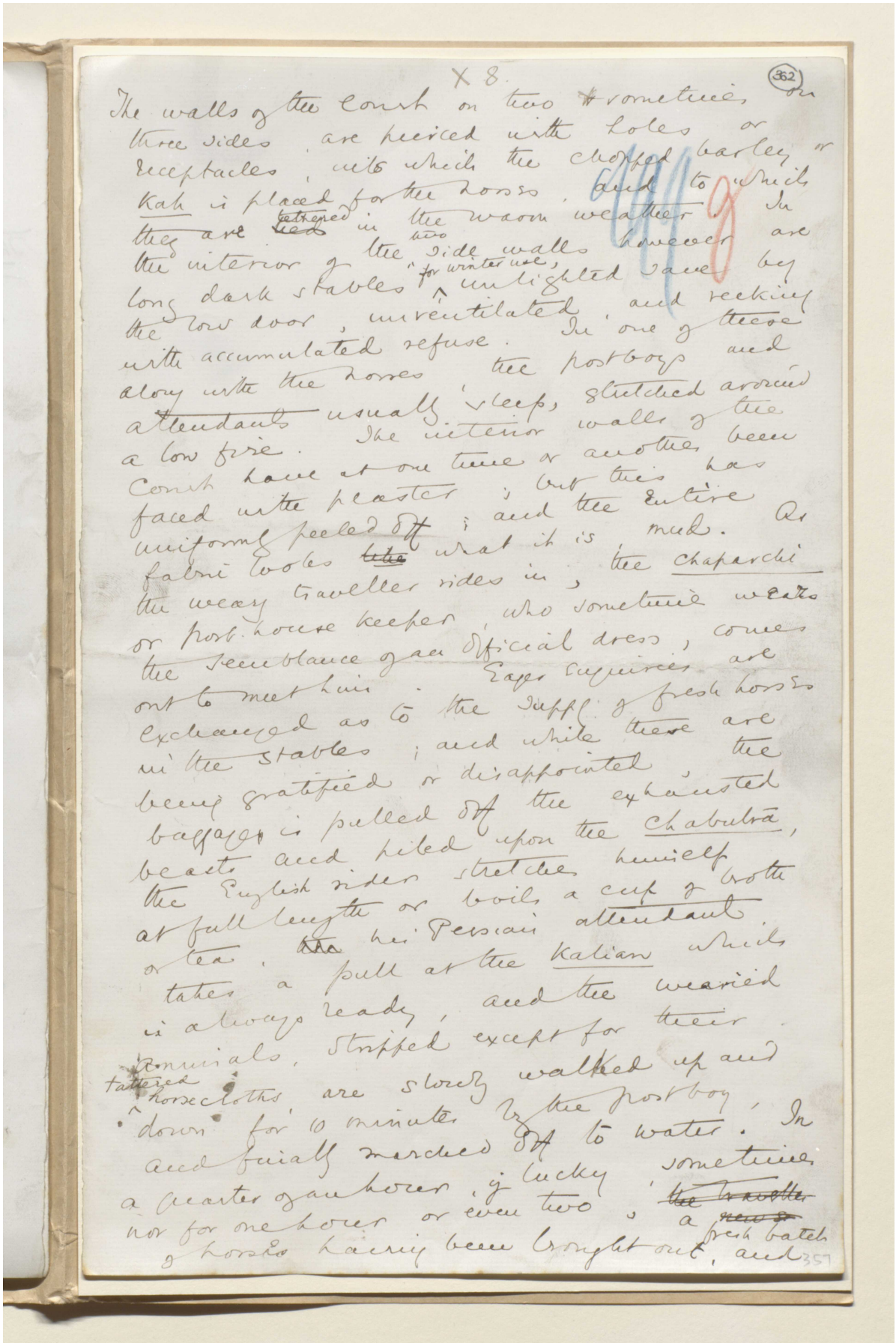

X 8.

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The walls of the Court on two sometimes on three sides are pierced with holes or receptacles, into which the chopped barley or Kah is placed for the horses, and to which they are tethered in the warm weather. In the interior of the two side walls however are long dark stables for winter use, unlighted save by the low door, unventilated, and reeking with accumulated refuse. In one of these along with the horses the postboys and attendants usually sleep, stretched around a low fire. The interior walls of the Court have at one time or another been faced with plaster; but this has uniformly peeled off; and the entire fabric looks what it is, mud. As the weary traveller rides in, the Chaparchi or post-house keeper, who sometimes wears the semblance of an official dress, comes out to meet him. Eager enquiries are exchanged as to the supply of fresh horses in the stables; and while these are being gratified or disappointed, the baggage is pulled off the exhausted beasts and piled upon the Chabutra, the English rider stretches himself at full length or boils a cup of broth or tea, his Persian attendant takes a pull at the Kalian which is always ready, and the wearied animals, stripped except for their tattered horsecloths, are slowly walked up and down for 10 minutes by the postboy, and finally marched off to water. In a quarter of an hour, if lucky, sometimes nor for one hour or even two, a fresh batch of horses having been brought out, and

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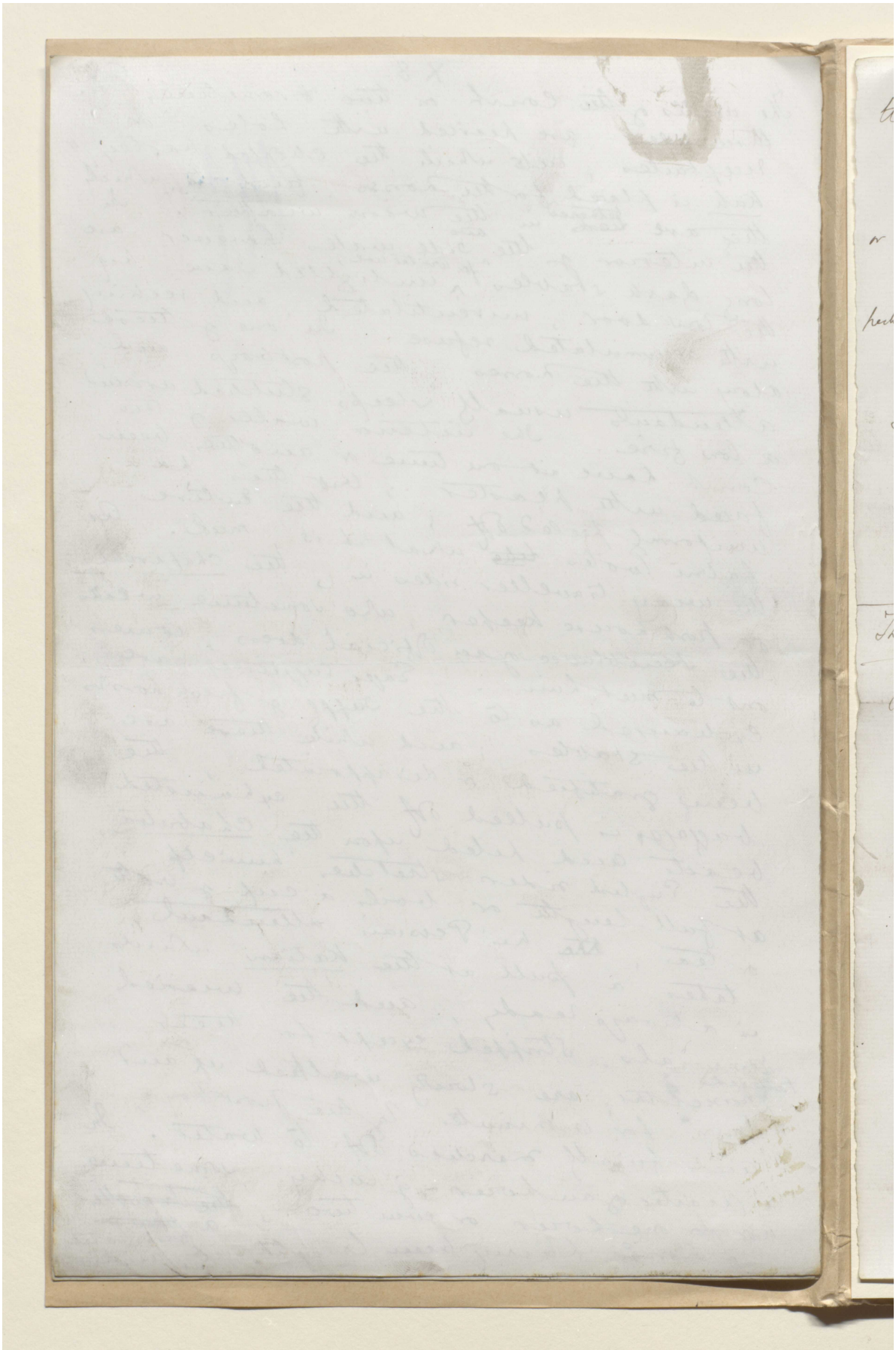

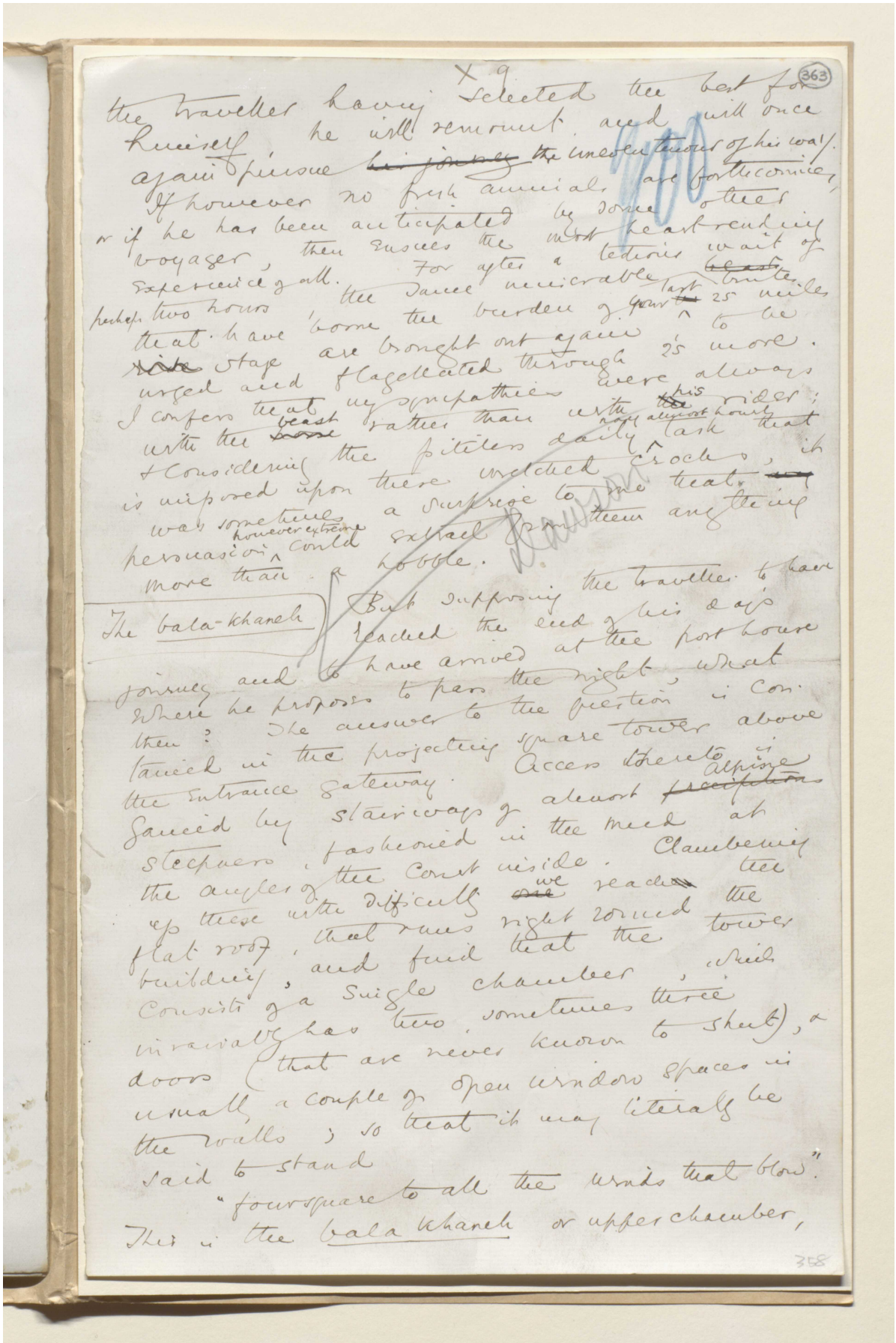

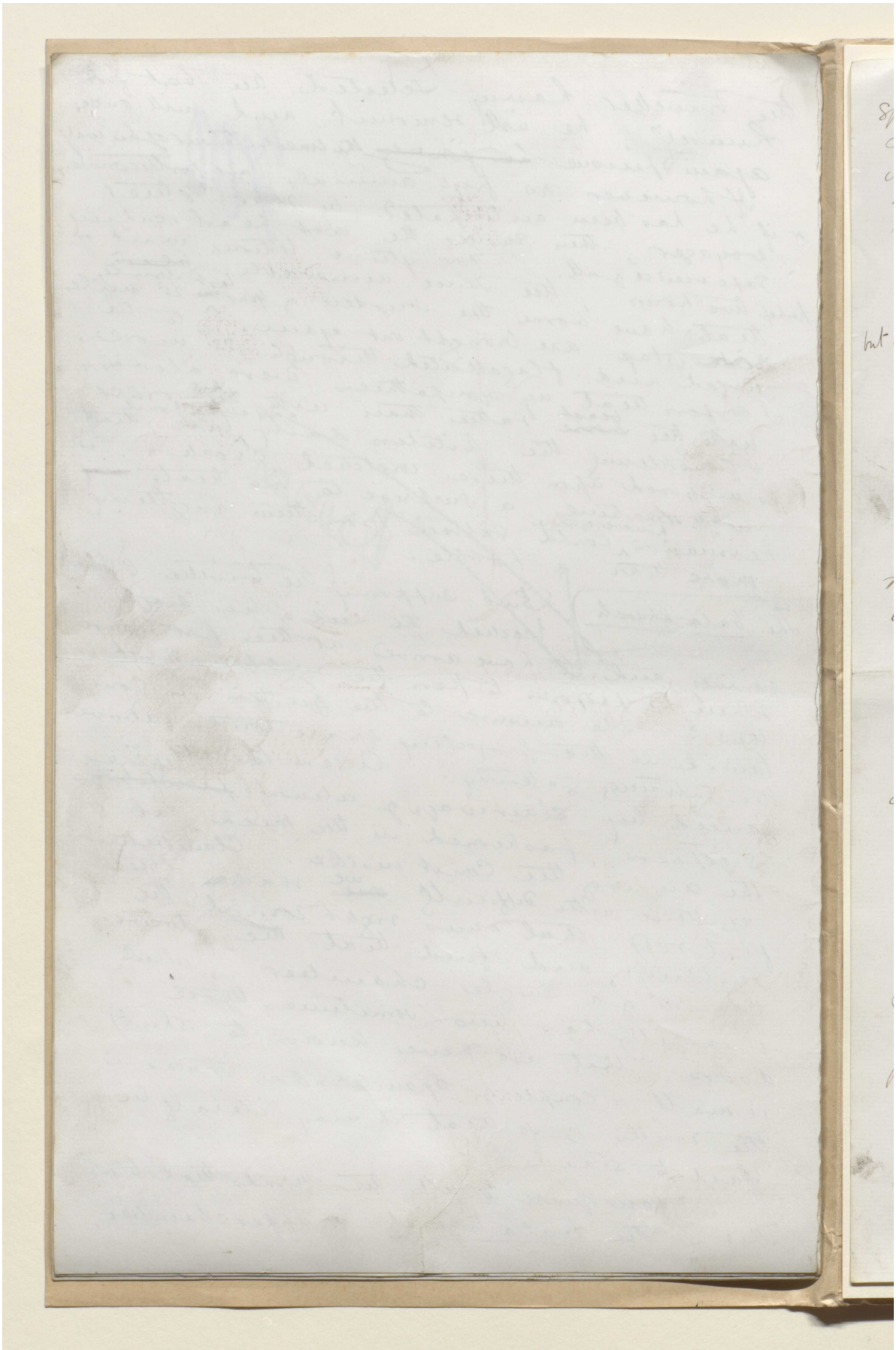

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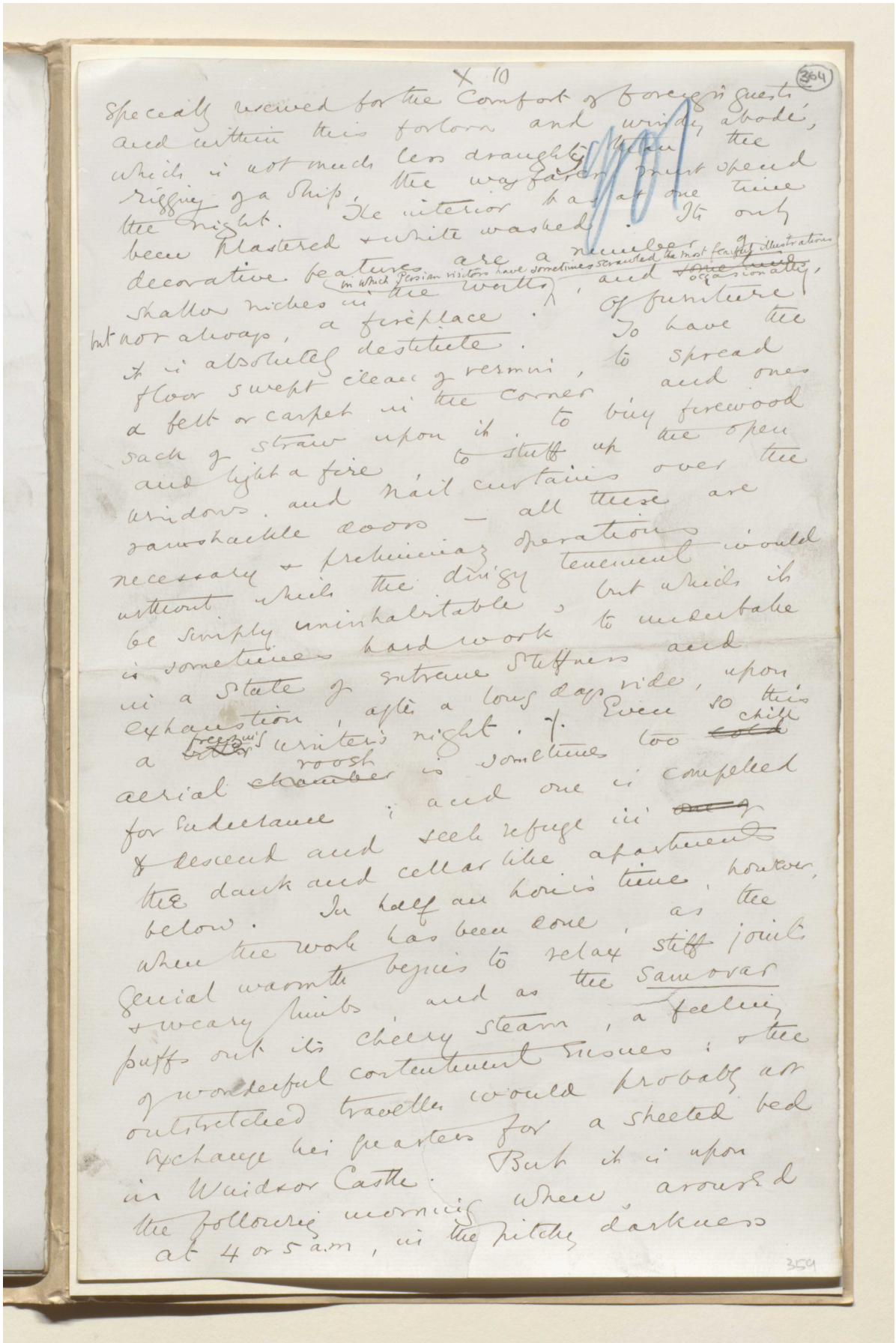

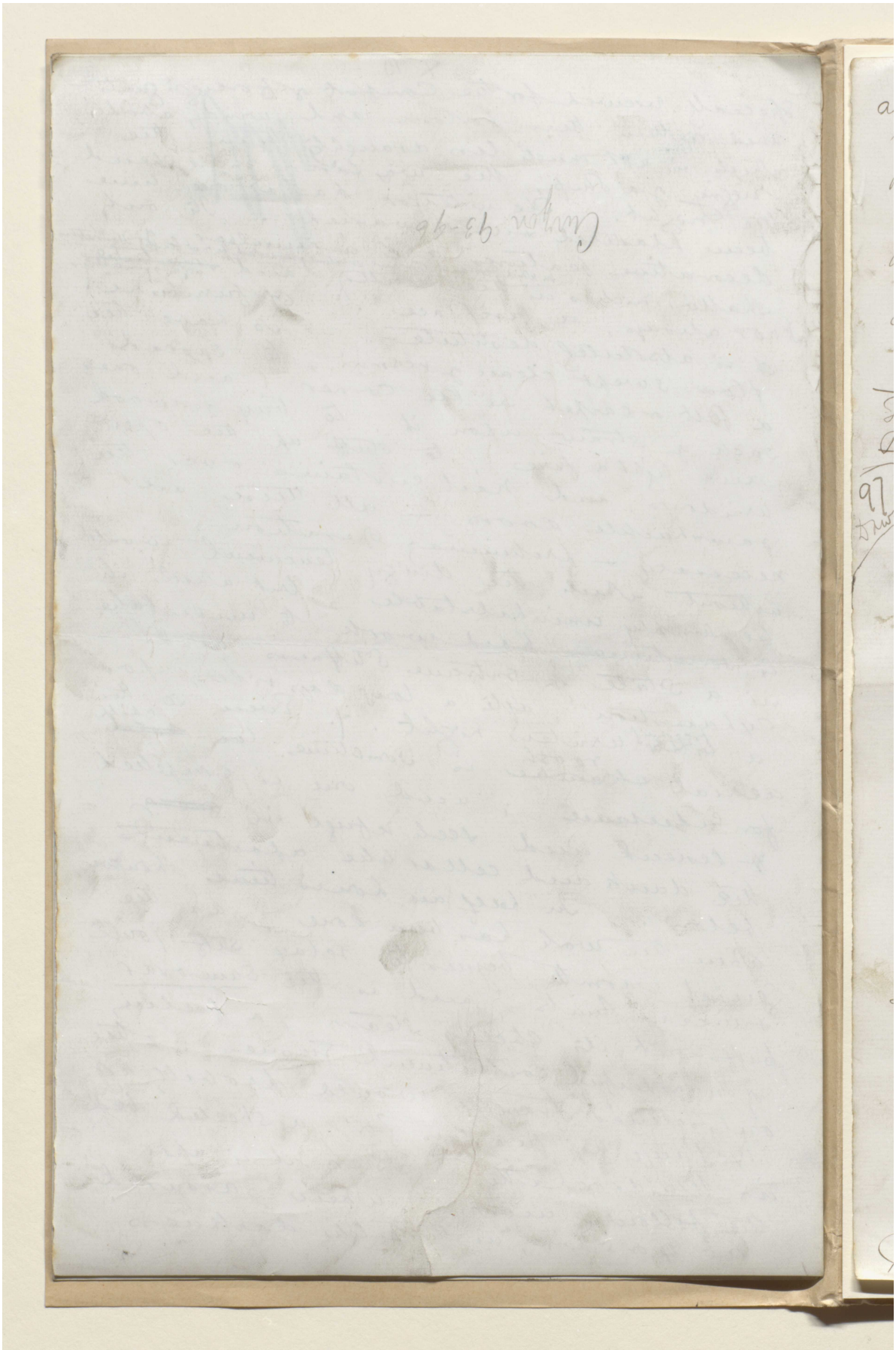

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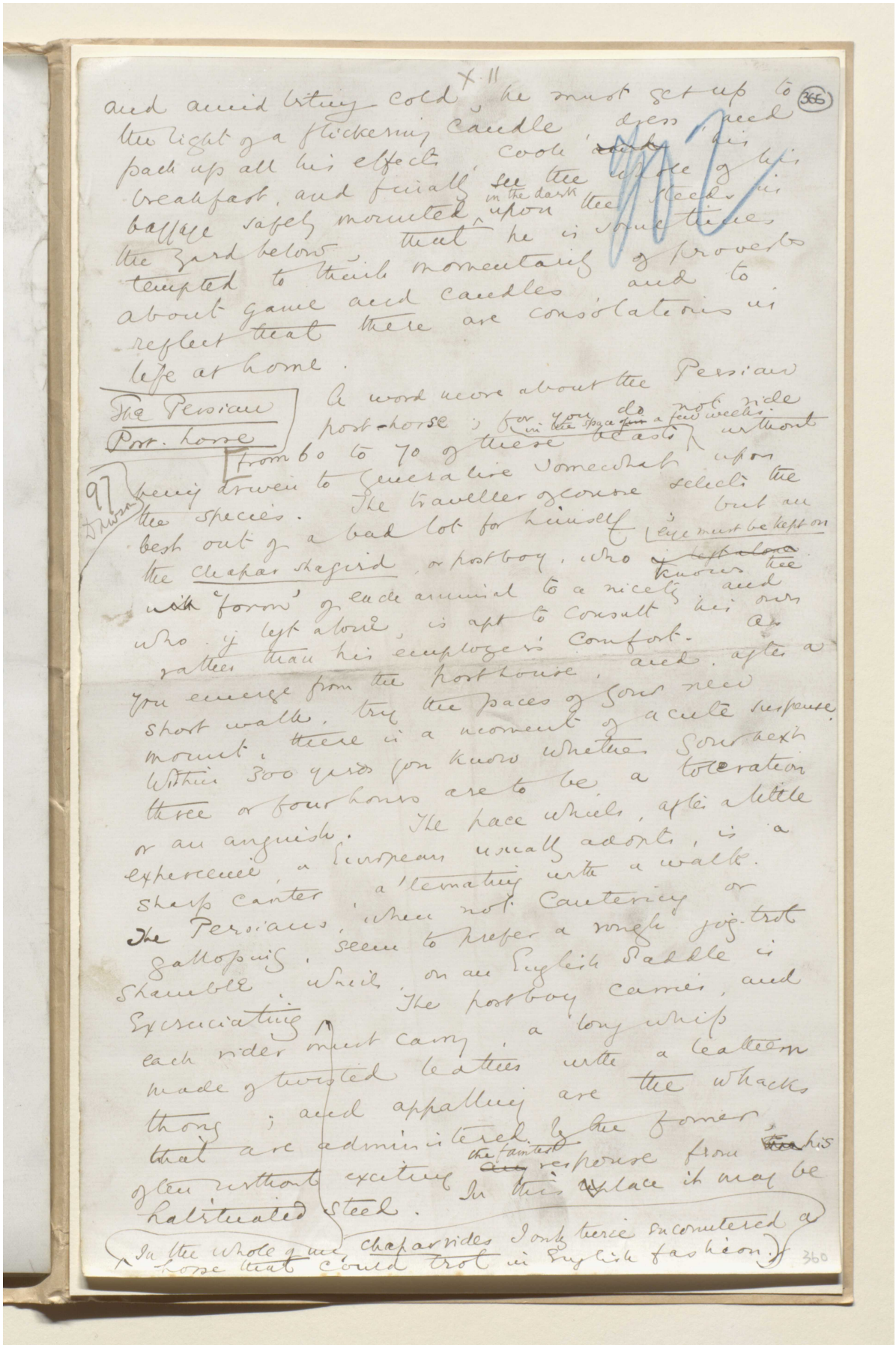

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X.11

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and amid biting cold, he must get up to the light of a flickering candle, dress and pack up all his effects, cook his breakfast, and finally see the whole of his baggage safely mounted in the dark upon the steeds in the yard below, that he is sometimes tempted to think momentarily of proverbs about game and candles and to reflect that there are consolations in life at home.

The Persian Post-horse

A word more about the Persian post-horse; for you do not ride from 60 to 70 of these beasts in the space of a few weeks without being driven to generalise somewhat upon the species. The traveller of course selects the best out of a bad lot for himself; but an eye must be kept on the chapar shagird, or postboy, who knows the "form" of each animal to a nicety and who, if left alone, is apt to consult his own rather than his employer's comfort. As you emerge from the post house, and, after a short walk, try the paces of your new mount, there is a moment of acute suspense. Within 300 yards you know whether your next three or four hours are to be a toleration or an anguish. The pace which, after a little experience, a European usually adopts, is a sharp canter, alternating with a walk. The Persians, when not cantering or galloping, seem to prefer a rough jog-trot shamble, which, on an English saddle is excruciating. The postboy carries, and each rider must carry, a long whip made of twisted leather with a leathern thong; and appalling are the whacks that are administered by the former, often without exciting the faintest response from his habituated steed. In this place it may be

97 Dawson

(In the whole of my chapar rides I only twice encountered a horse that could trot in English fashion.)

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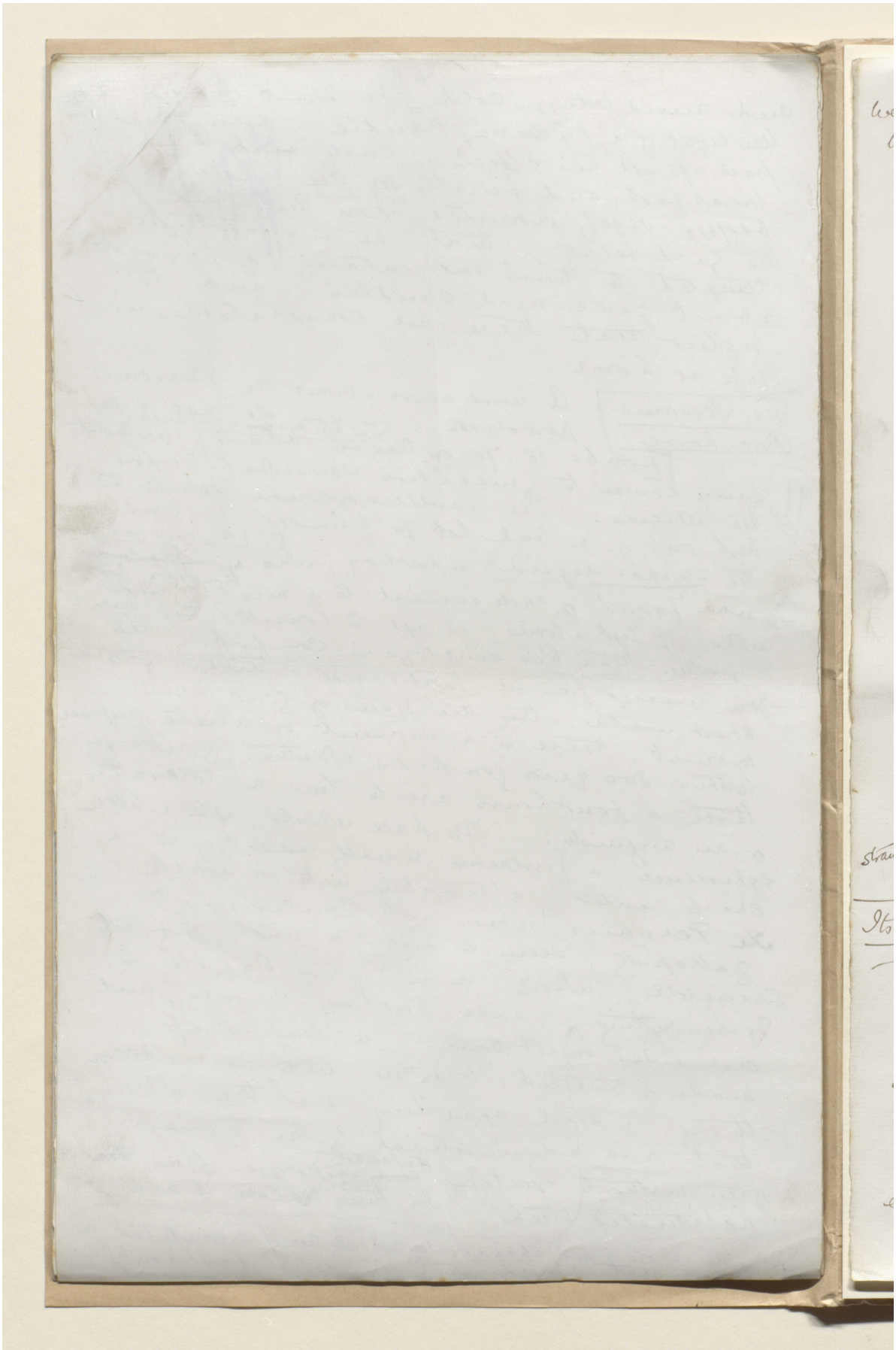

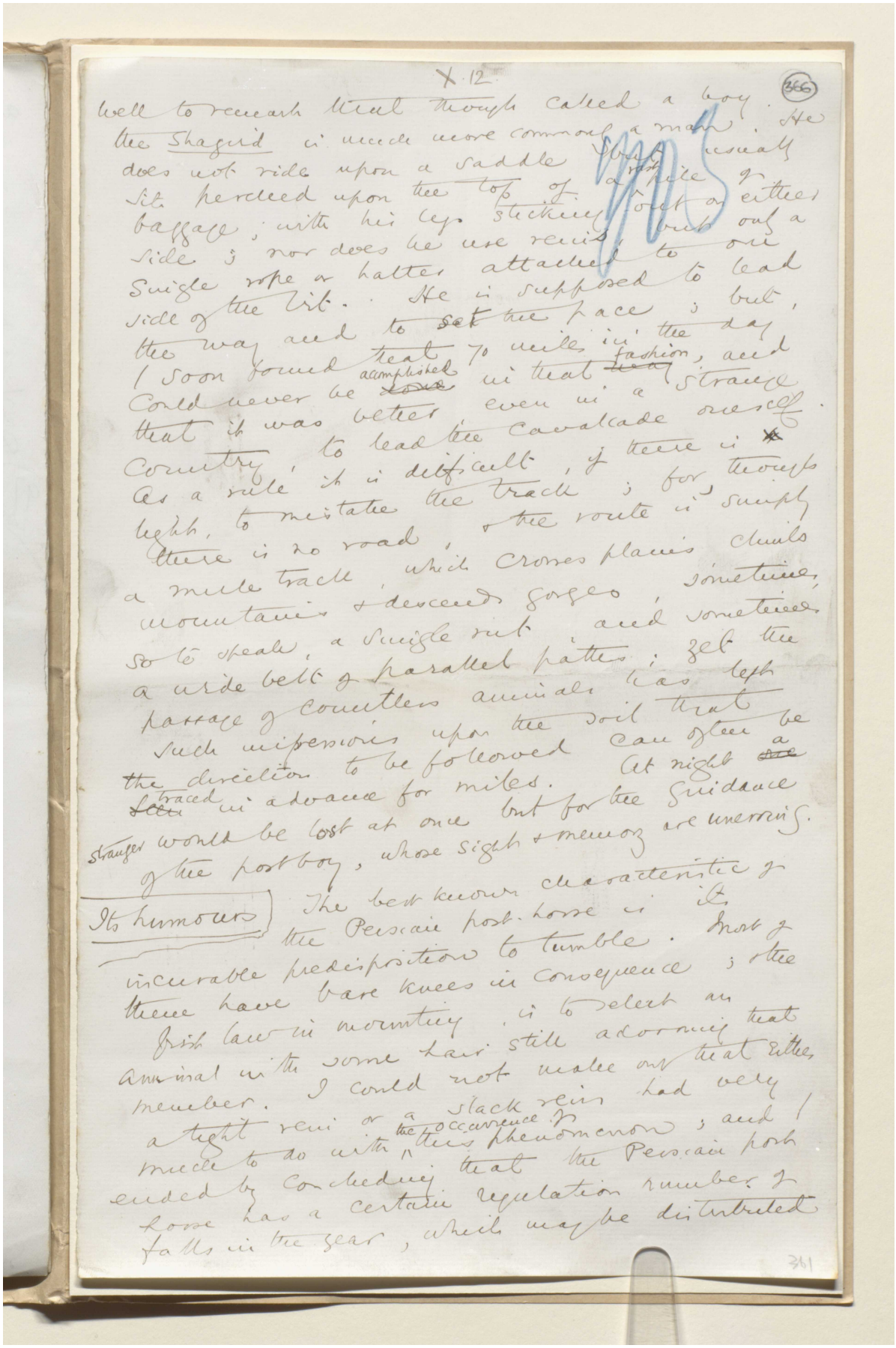

X 12

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well to remark that though called a boy. The
the Shagird is much more commonly a man. He
does not ride upon a saddle but usually
sits perched upon the top of a pile of
baggage; with his legs sticking out on either
side; nor does he use rein, but only a
single rope or halter attached to one
side of the bit. He is supposed to lead
the way and to set the pace; but,
I soon found that 70 miles in the day
could never be accomplished in that fashion, and
that it was better even in a strange
country, to lead the cavalcade oneself.
As a rule it is difficult, if there is
light, to mistake the track; for though
there is no road, the route is simply
a mule track, which crosses plains, clouds
mountains & descends gorges, sometimes,
so to speak, a single rut, and sometimes
a wide belt of parallel paths; yet the
passage of countless animals has left
such impressions upon the soil that
the direction to be followed can often be
traced in advance for miles. At night a
stranger would be lost at once but for the guidance
of the postboy, whose sight & memory are unerring.

Its humours

The best known characteristic of
the Persian post-horse is its
incurable predisposition to tumble. Most of
them have bare knees in consequence; the
first law in mountain is to select an
animal with some hair still adorning that
member. I could not make out that either
a tight rein or a slack rein had any
thing to do with the occurrence of
this phenomenon; and I
ended by concluding that the Persian post
horse has a certain regulation number of
falls in the year, which may be distributed

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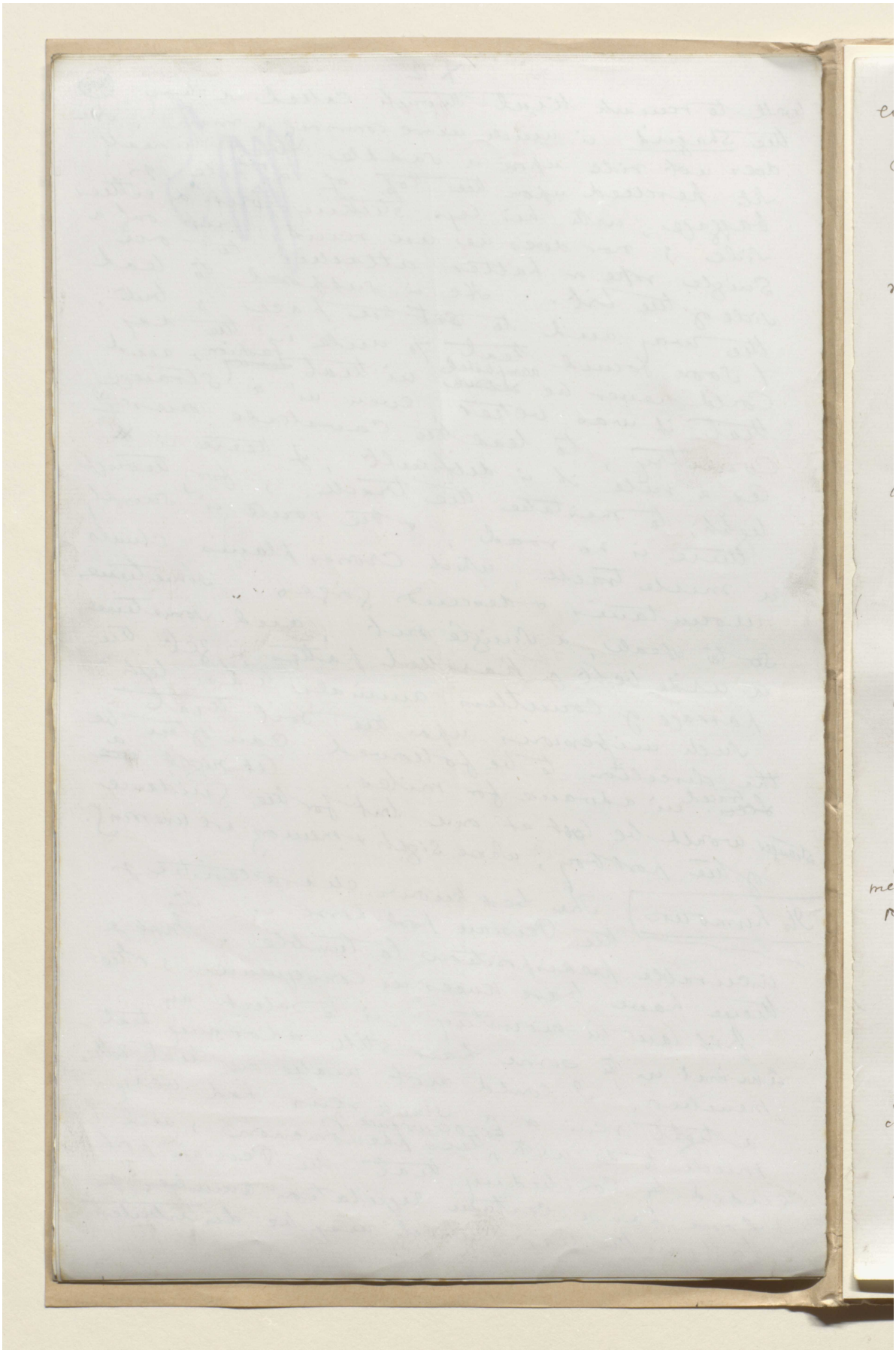

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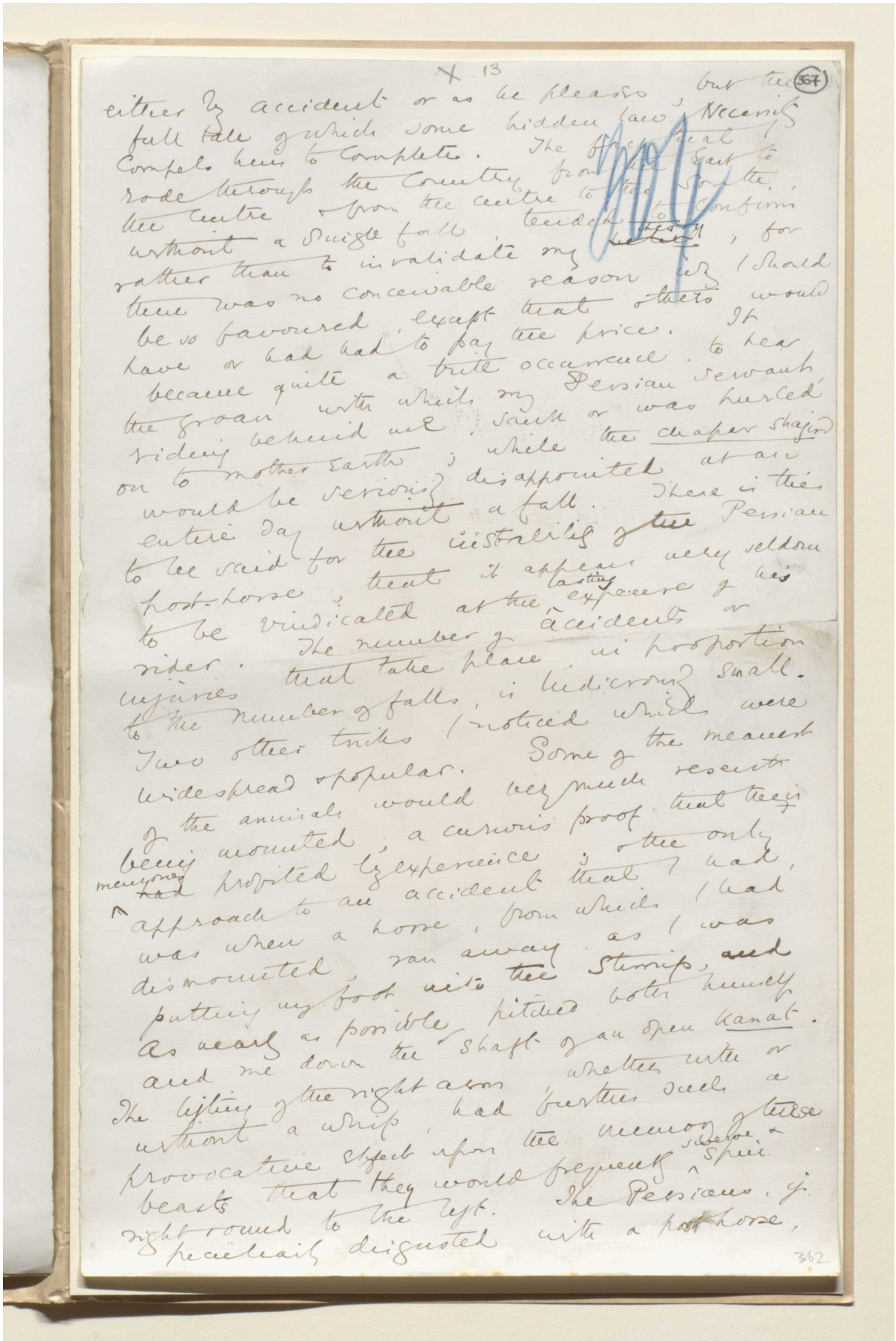

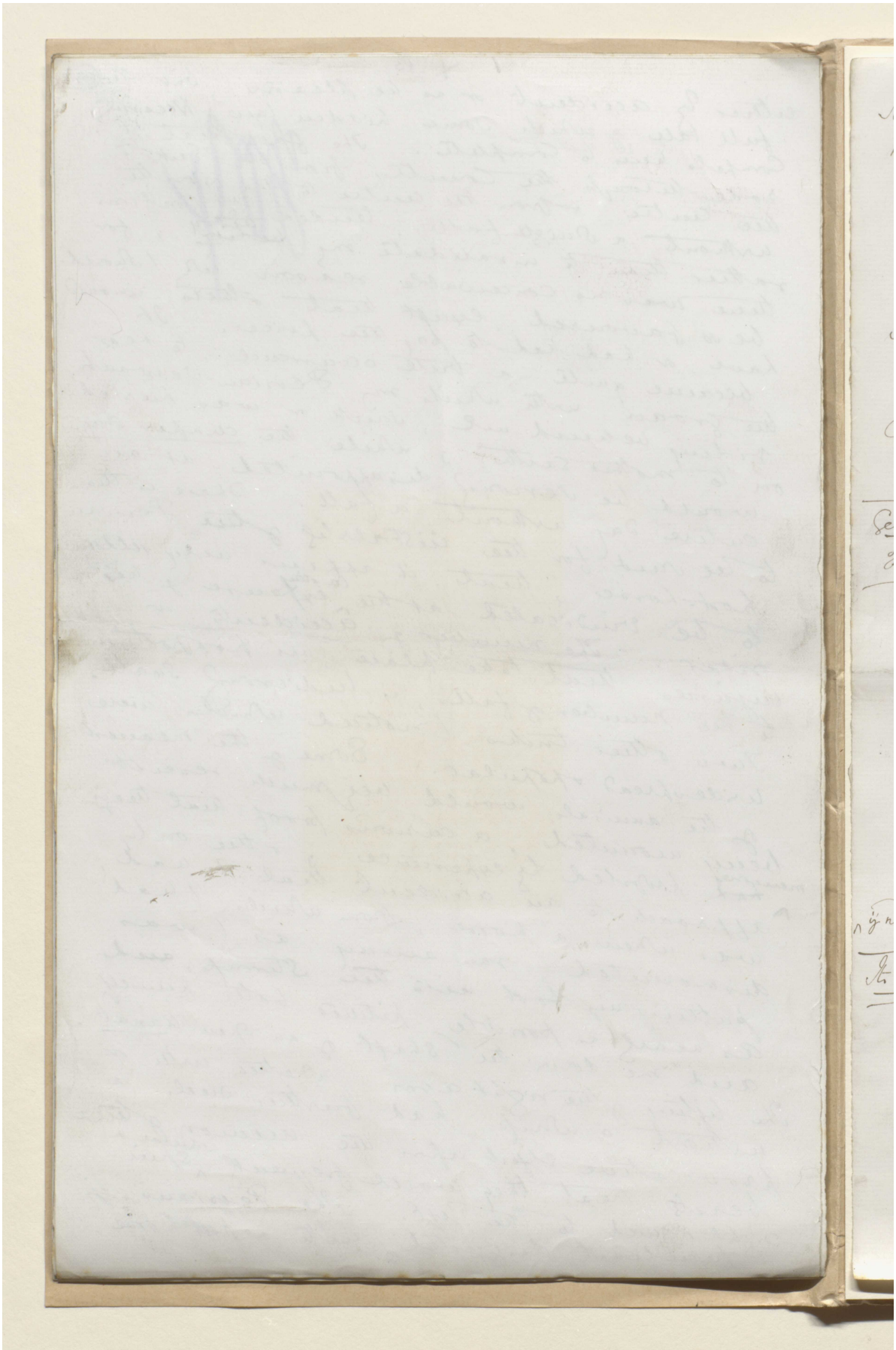

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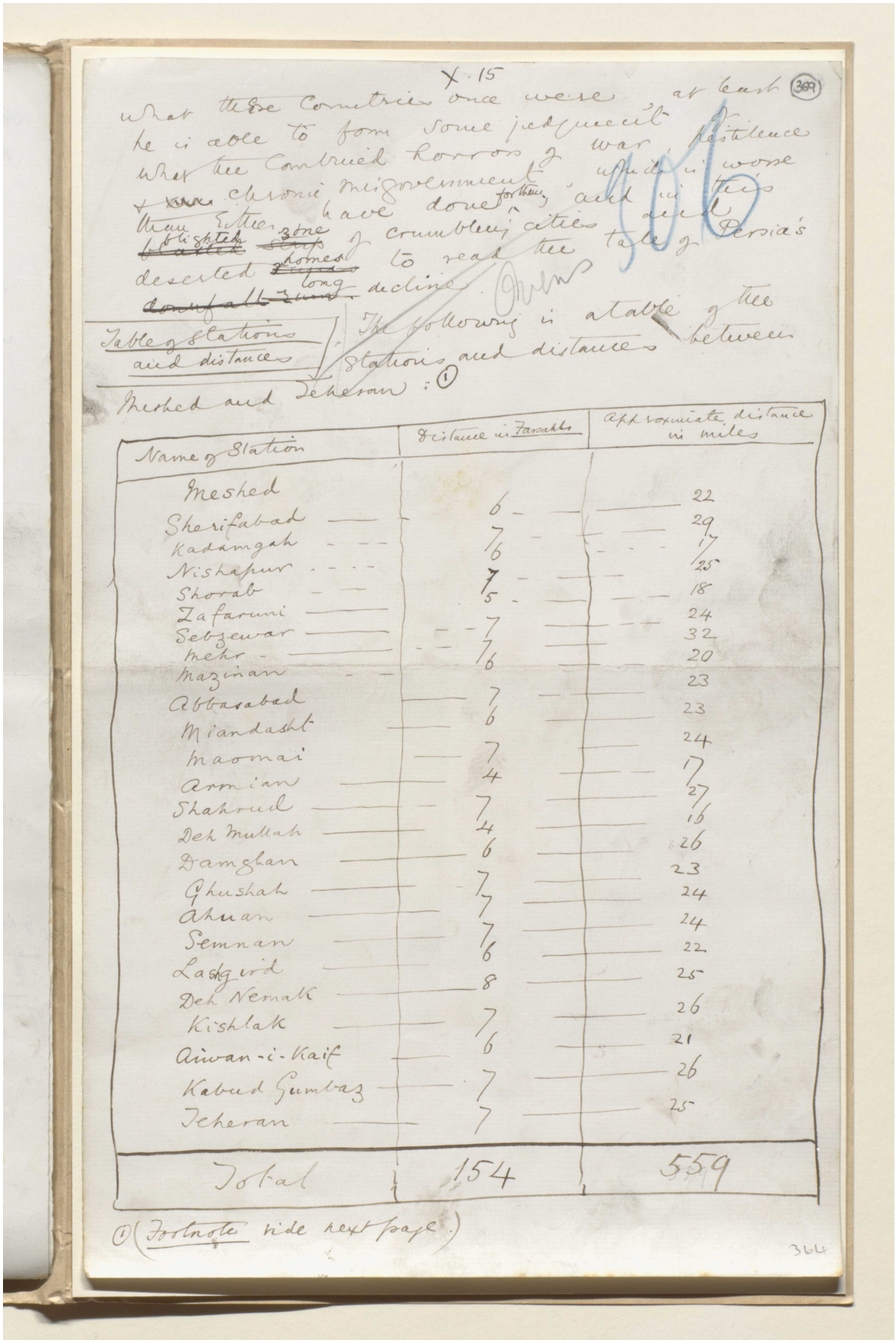
X. 15

(369)



What these Countries once were, at least he is able to form some judgment of what the combined horrors of war, pestilence & chronic misgovernment, which is worse than either, have done for them, and in this blighted zone of crumbling cities and deserted homes to read the tale of Persia's long decline.

Owens

Table of Stations and distances

The following is a table of the stations and distances between Meshed and Teheran: (1)

Name of Station	Distance in Farsahks	Approximate distance in miles
Meshed		
Sherifabad	6	22
Kadamgah	7	29
Nishapur	6	17
Shorab	7	25
Zafaruni	5	18
Sebzewar	7	24
Mehr	7	32
Mazinan	6	20
Abbasabad	7	23
Miandasht	6	23
Maomai	7	24
Armian	4	17
Shahrud	7	27
Deh Mullah	4	16
Damghan	6	26
Ghushah	7	23
Ahuan	7	24
Semnan	7	24
Lashgird	6	22
Deh Nemak	8	25
Kishlak	7	26
Aiwan-i-Kaif	6	21
Kabud Gumbaz	7	26
Teheran	7	25
Total	154	559

(1) (Footnote vide next page.)

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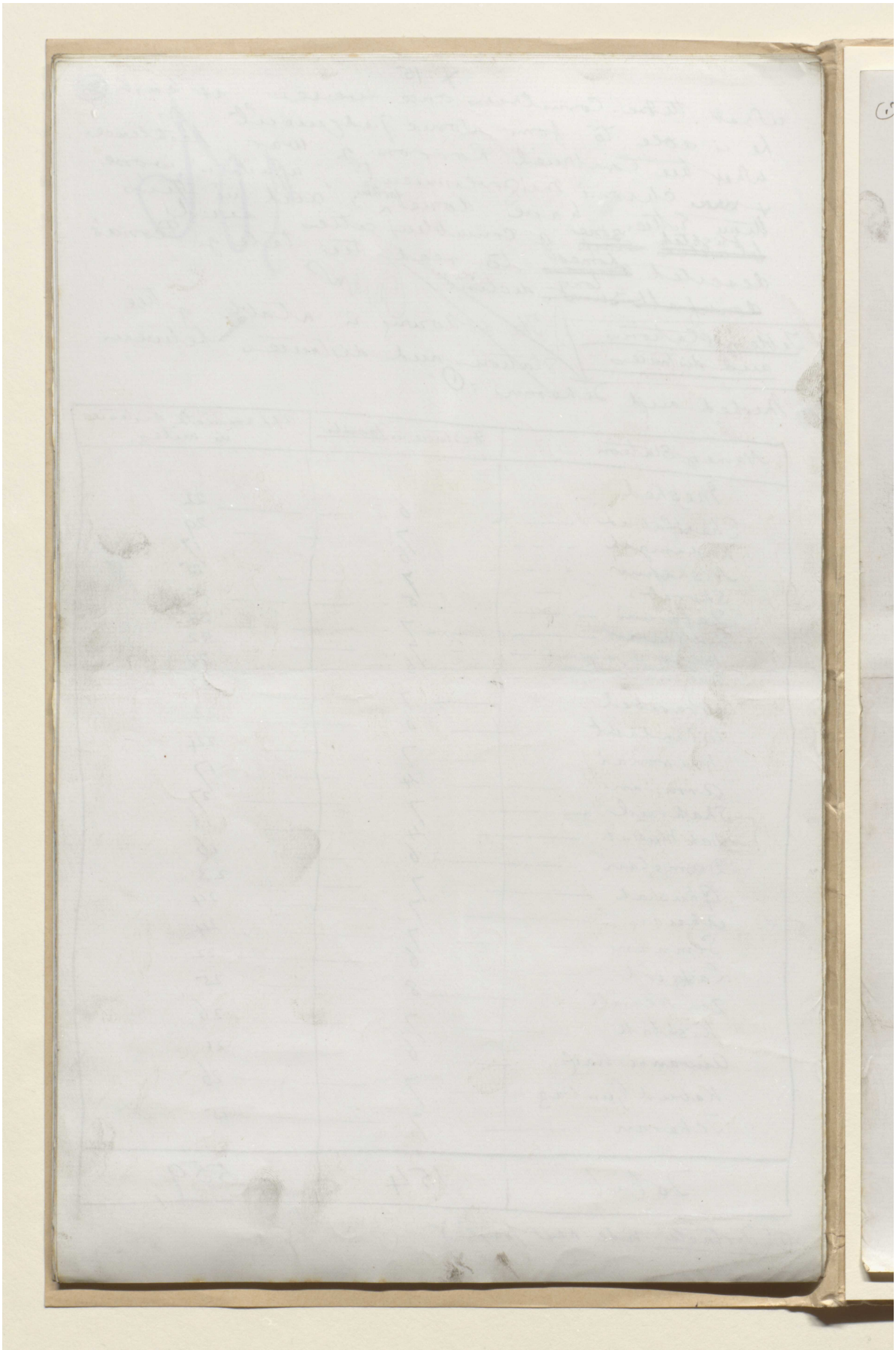

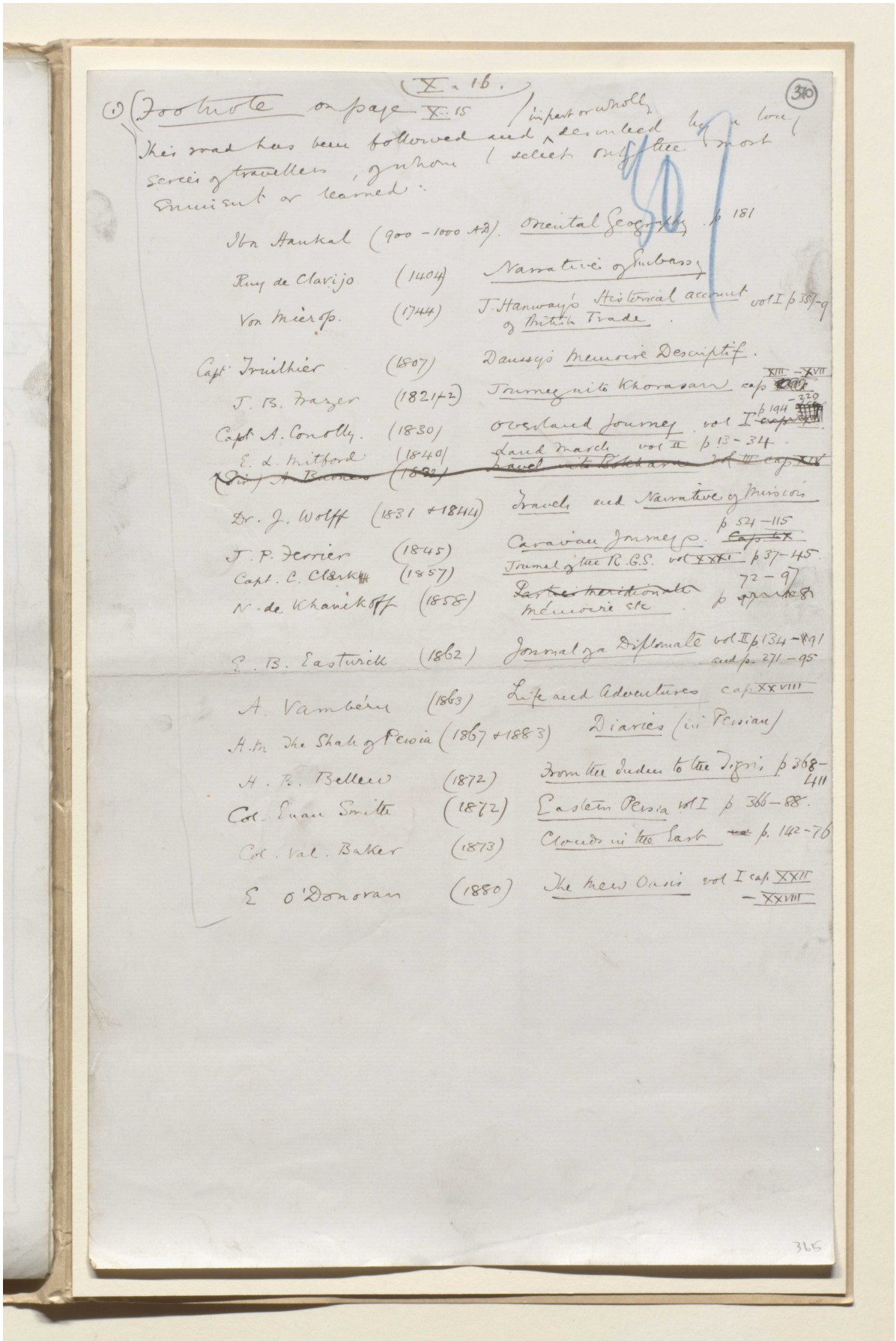

X. 16.

(1) Footnote on page X. 15 / important or whole, I have followed and ~~descended~~ learned the route of these several travellers, from whom I select only the most eminent or learned:

Ibn Haukal	(900 – 1000 AD)	Oriental Geography p. 181
Ruy de Clavijo	(1404)	Narrative of Embassy
Von Mierop.	(1744)	J. Hanway's Historical account of British Trade vol I p 38-9
Capt. Truilhier	(1807)	Dussy's Memoire Descriptif.
J. B. Fraser	(1821-2)	Journey into Khorasan cap ~~XIII~~ – XVII
Capt. A. Conolly.	(1830)	Overland Journey vol I ~~cap~~ p 194 – 220
E. L. Mitford	(1840)	Land March vol II p 13 – 34.
~~Dr. J. Perkins~~	(1842)	~~Travels in Kurdistan~~ vol II ~~cap XII~~
Dr. J. Wolff	(1831 + 1844)	Travels and Narrative of Missions
J. P. Ferrier	(1845)	Caravan Journey &c. p 521 – 115 ~~Caps XX~~
Capt. C. Clarke	(1857)	Journal of the R.G.S. vol ~~XXXI~~ p 37 – 45.
N. de Khanikoff	(1858)	Partie meridionale Memoire etc. p 72 – 9 ~~appendix~~
J. B. Eastwick	(1862)	Journal of a Diplomate vol II p 134 – 191 and p. 271 – 95
A. Vambéry	(1863)	Life and Adventures cap XXVIII
H.M. The Shah of Persia	(1867 + 1883)	Diaries (in Persian)
H. F. Belleew	(1872)	From the Indus to the Tigris, p 368 – 411
Col. Euan Smith	(1872)	Eastern Persia vol I p 366 – 88.
Col. Val. Baker	(1873)	Clouds in the East ~~–~~ p. 142 – 76
E. O'Donovan	(1880)	The new Oasis vol I cap XXII – XXVIII

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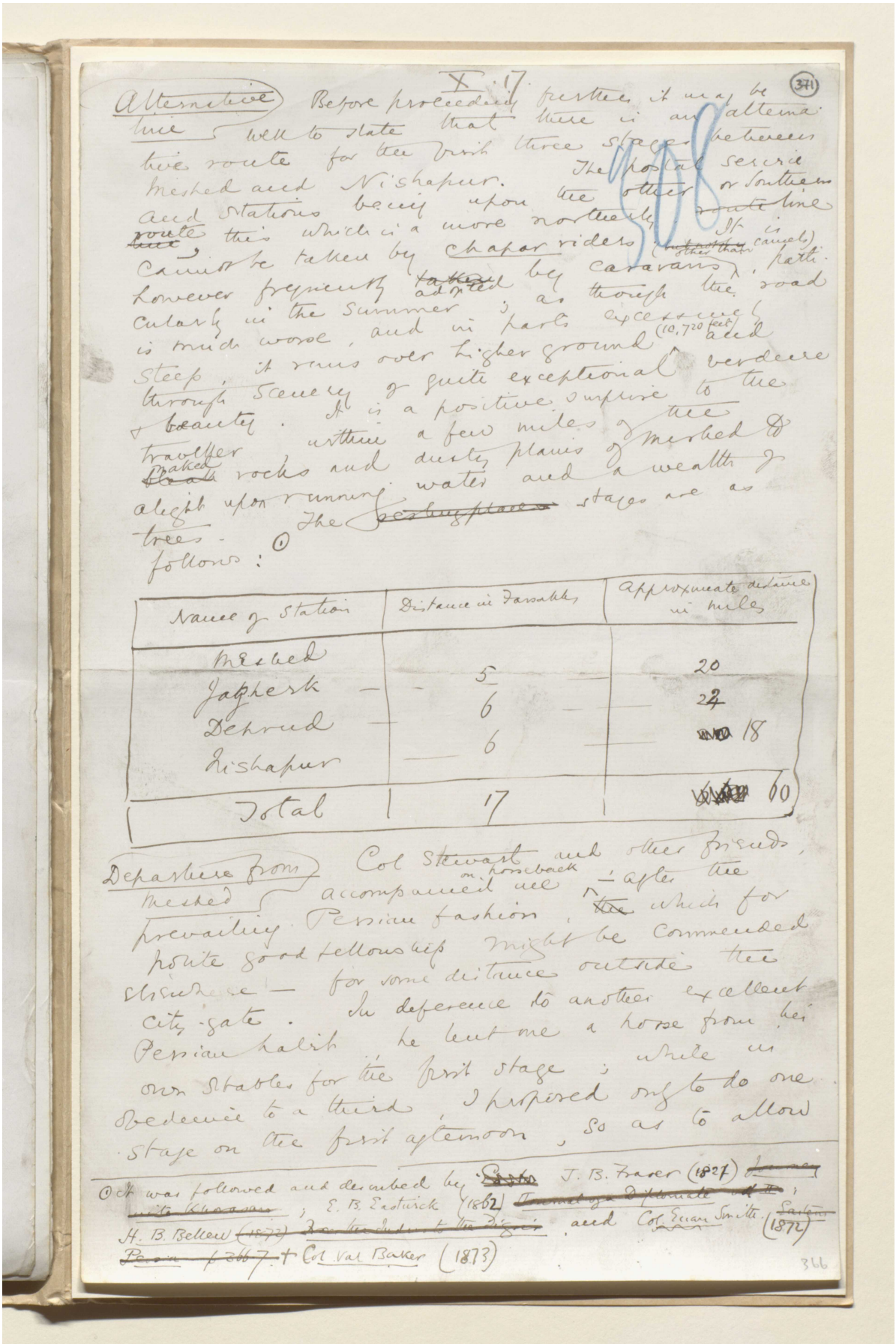

X. 17

(371)

Alternative line

Before proceeding further it may be well to state that there is an alternative route for the first three stages between Meshed and Nishapur. The postal service and stations being upon the other or Southern ~~route~~ line ~~line~~, this which is a more northerly ~~route~~ line cannot be taken by chapar riders (~~but not by~~ other than camels). It is however frequently ~~taken~~ adopted by caravans, particularly in the summer; as though the road is much worse, and in parts excessively steep, it runs over higher ground (10,720 feet) and through scenery of quite exceptional verdure & beauty. It is a positive surprise to the traveller within a few miles of the ~~bleak~~ naked rocks and dusty plains of Meshed to alight upon running water and a wealth of trees. The ~~resting places~~ stages are as follows: ①

Name of Station	Distance in Farsakhs	Approximate distance in miles
Meshed		
Jaghersk	5	20
Dehrud	6	22
Nishapur	6	18
Total	17	60

Departure from Meshed

Col Stewart and other friends, accompanied me on horseback — after the prevailing Persian fashion, ~~the~~ which for polite good fellowship might be commended elsewhere — for some distance outside the city-gate. In deference to another excellent Persian habit he lent me a horse from his own stables for the first stage; while in obedience to a third, I proposed only to do one stage on the first afternoon, so as to allow

① It was followed and described by ~~[illegible]~~ J. B. Fraser (1827) ~~[illegible]~~; E. B. Eastwick (1862) ~~[illegible]~~; H. B. Bellew ~~(1872)~~ ~~[illegible]~~, and Col. Euan Smith. ~~Eastern Persia p 366~~ + Col. Val Baker (1873)

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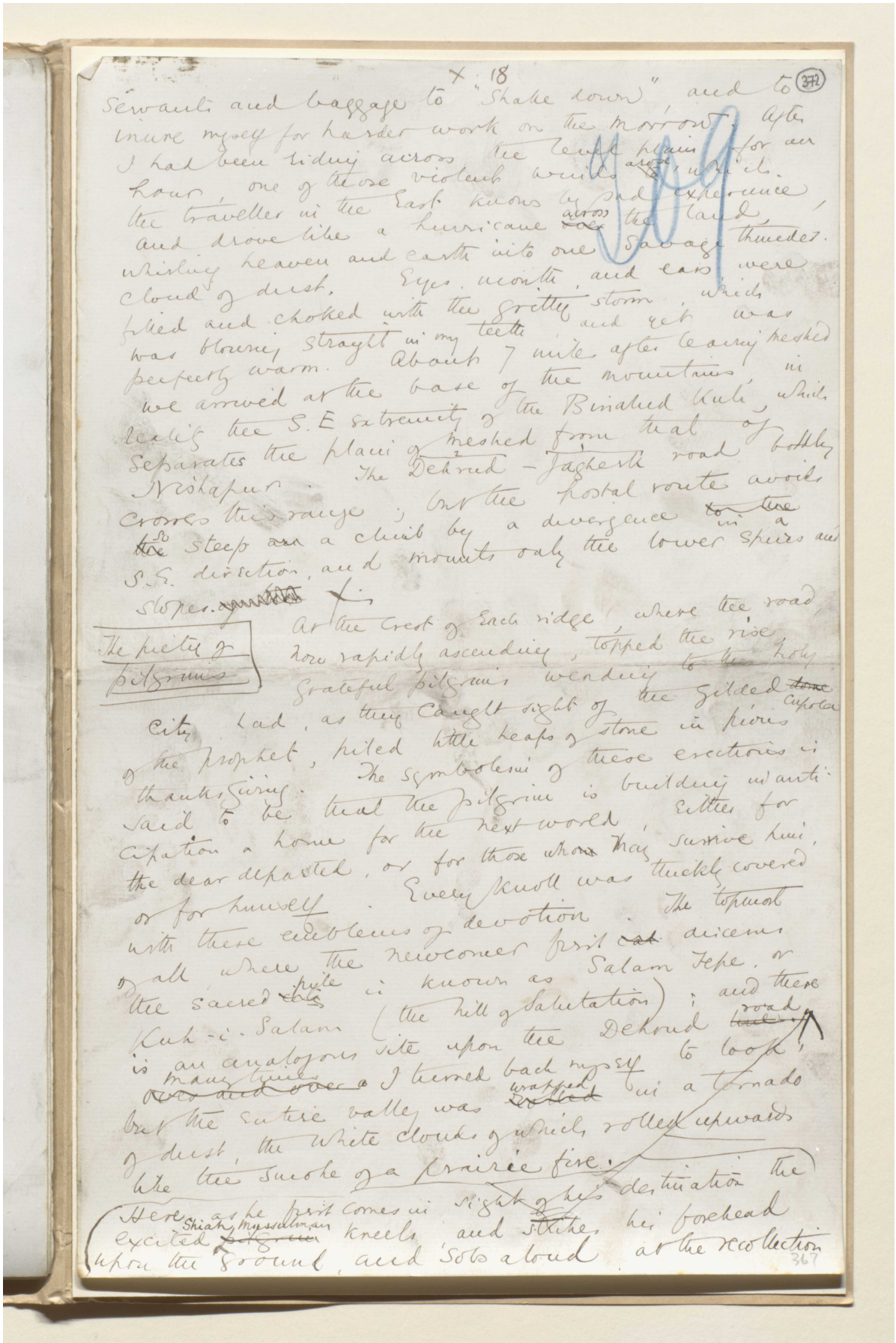

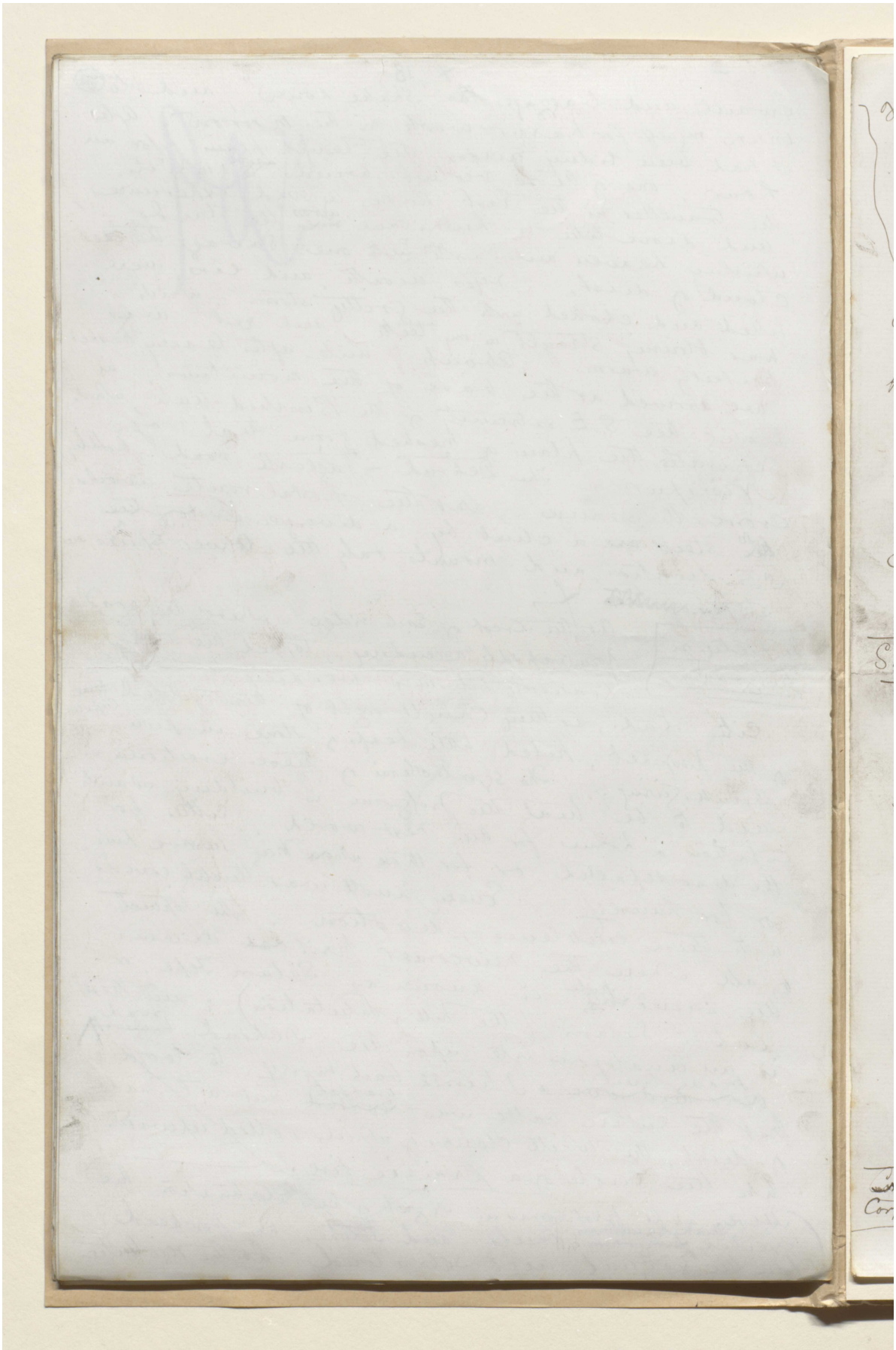

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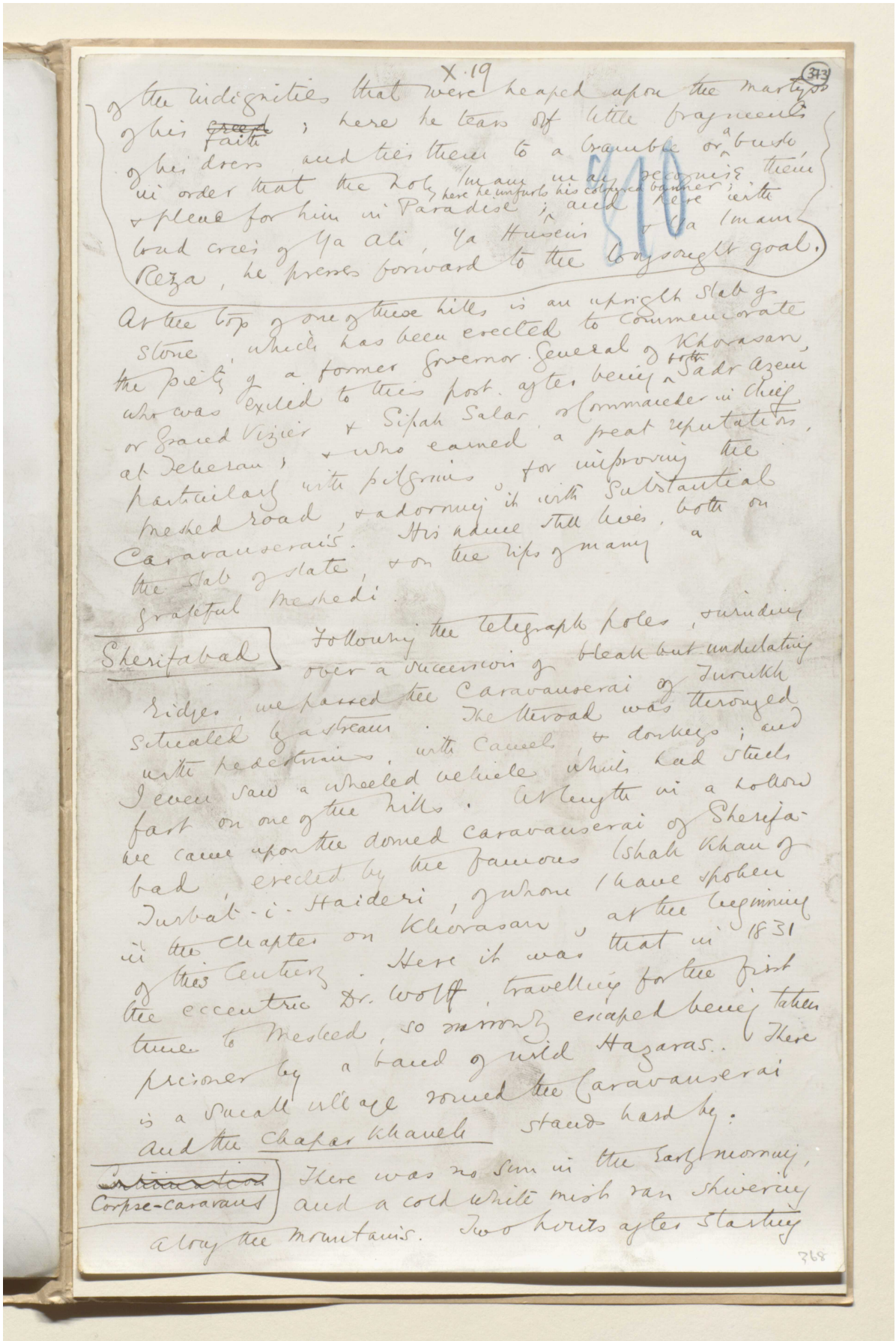

X.19 (373)

of the indignities that were heaped upon the martyrs of his ~~creed~~ faith; here he tears off little fragments of his dress and ties them to a bramble or a bush in order that the holy Imam may recognise them & plead for him in Paradise; here he unfurls his coloured banner; and here with loud cries of Ya Ali, Ya Husein & Ya Imam Reza, he presses forward to the longsought goal.

At the top of one of these hills is an upright slab of stone, which has been erected to commemorate the piety of a former Governor-General of Khorasan, who was exiled to this post, after being both Sadr Azem or Grand Vizier & Sipah Salar or Commander in Chief at Teheran; & who earned a great reputation, particularly with pilgrims, for improving the Meshed road, & adorning it with substantial Caravanserais. His name still lives, both on the slab of slate, & on the lips of many a grateful Meshedi.

Sherifabad

Following the telegraph poles, & winding over a succession of bleak but undulating ridges, we passed the Caravanserai of Turukh situated by a stream. The throad was thronged with pedestrians, with camels & donkeys; and I even saw a wheeled vehicle which had stuck fast on one of the hills. At length in a hollow we came upon the domed Caravanserai of Sherifabad, erected by the famous Ishak Khan of Turbat-i-Haideri, of whom I have spoken in the chapter on Khorasan, at the beginning of this century. Here it was that in 1831 the eccentric Dr. Wolff, travelling for the first time to Meshed, so narrowly escaped being taken prisoner by a band of wild Hazaras. There is a small village round the Caravanserai and the Chapar Khaneh stands hard by.

~~Intimation~~ Corpse-caravans

There was no sun in the early morning, and a cold white mist ran shivering along the mountains. Two hours after starting

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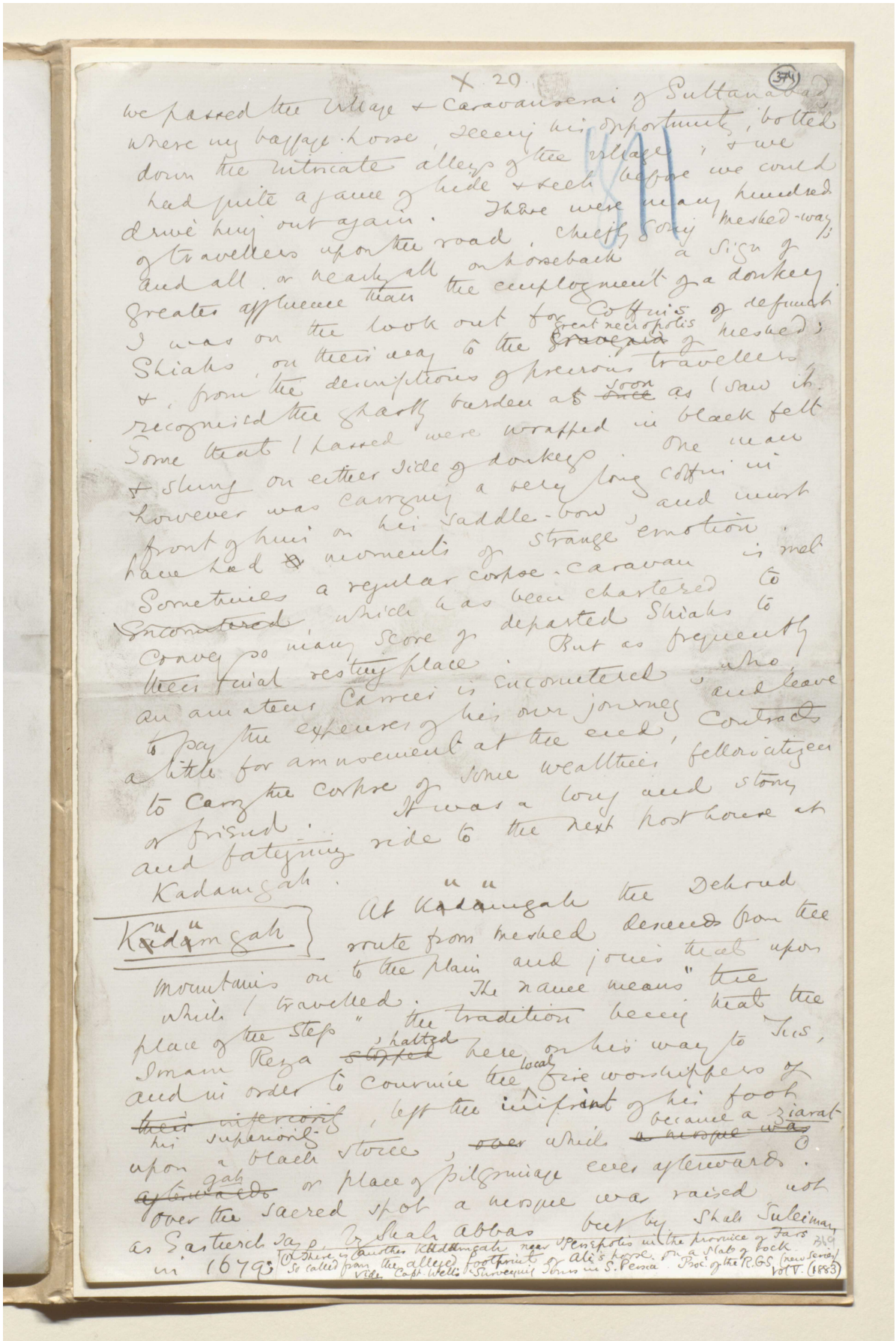


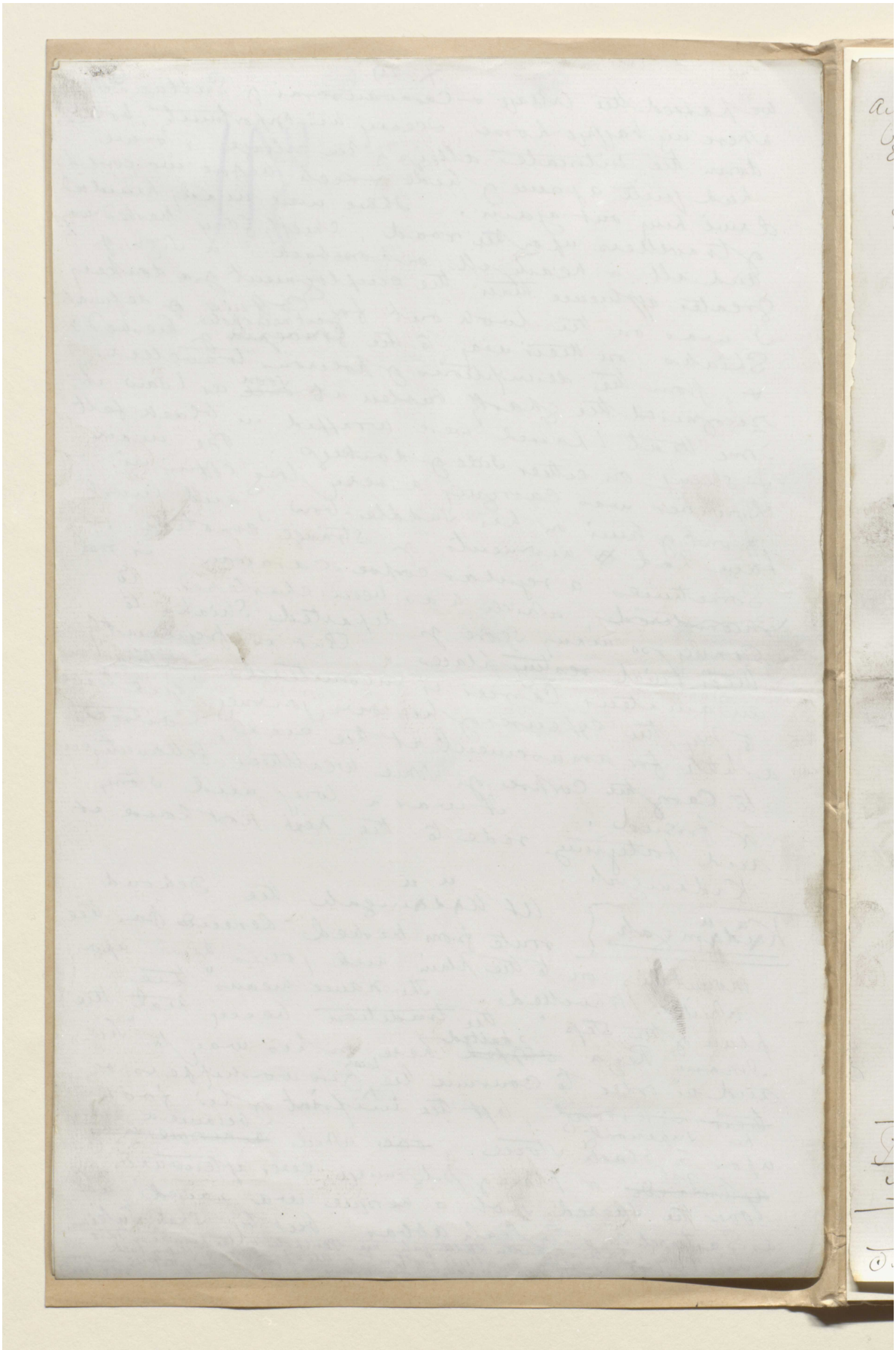
X. 20. (374)

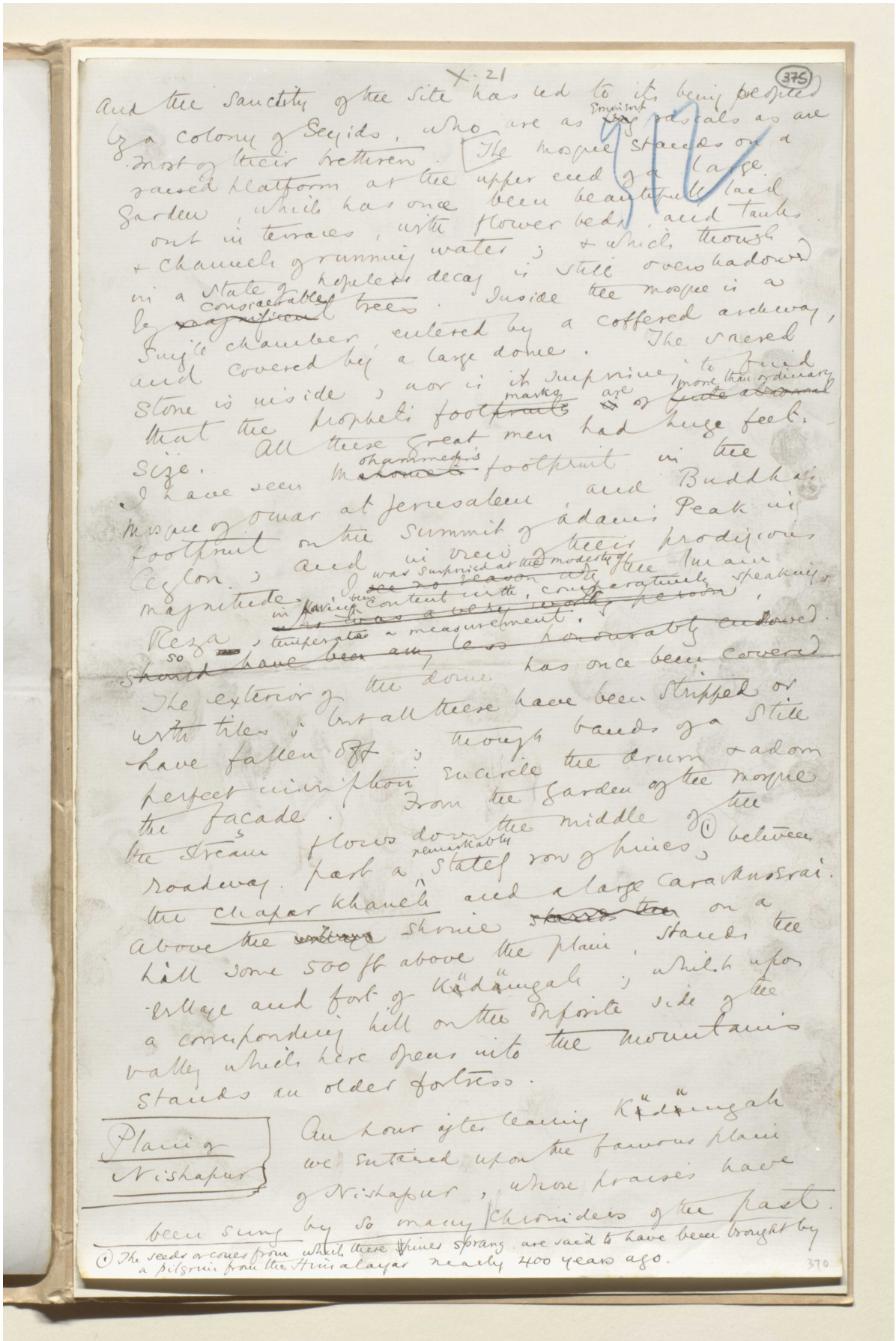
we passed the village & Caravanserai of Sultanabad where my baggage horse, seeing his opportunity, bolted down the intricate alleys of the village, & we had quite a game of hide & seek before we could drive him out again. There were many hundreds of travellers upon the road, chiefly going Meshed-way; and all or nearly all on horseback a sign of greater affluence than the employment of a donkey. I was on the look out for coffins of defunct Shiahs, on their way to the ~~Gravenia~~ great necropolis of Meshed; & from the descriptions of previous travellers recognised the ghastly burden as ~~once~~ soon as I saw it. Some that I passed were wrapped in black felt & slung on either side of donkeys. One man however was carrying a very long coffin in front of him on his saddle-bow, and must have had ~~a~~ moments of strange emotion. Sometimes a regular corpse-caravan is met ~~Encountered~~ which has been chartered to convey so many score of departed Shiahs to their final resting place. But as frequently an amateur carrier is encountered, who to pay the expenses of his own journey and leave a little for amusement at the end, contracts to carry the corpse of some wealthier fellow citizen or friend. It was a long and stormy and fatiguing ride to the next post house at Kadamgah.

Kudumgah

At Kudumgah the Dehrud route from Meshed descends from the mountains on to the plain and joins that upon which I travelled. The name means "the place of the Step" the tradition being that the Imam Reza ~~stopped~~ halted here on his way to Tus, and in order to convince the local fire worshippers of ~~their inferiority~~ his superiority, left the imprint of his foot upon a black stone, ~~over~~ which ~~a mosque was~~ became a ziarat ~~afterwards~~ gah or place of pilgrimage ever afterwards. Over the sacred spot a mosque was raised not as Eastwick says, by Shah Abbas but by Shah Suleiman in 1679.

(1) There is another Kudumgah near Persepolis in the province of Fars so called from the alleged footprint of Ali's horse on a slab of rock. Vide Capt. Wells "Surveying Tours in S. Persia" Proc. of the R.G.S. (new series) Vol V. (1883) 369





X.21

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And the sanctity of the site has led to its being peopled by a colony of Seyids, who are as ~~arrogant~~ insolent & as are most of their brethren. The mosque stands on a raised platform at the upper end of a large garden, which has once been beautifully laid out in terraces, with flower beds and tanks & channels of running water; & which, though in a state of hopeless decay is still overshadowed by ~~magnificent~~ conservable trees. Inside the mosque is a huge chamber, entered by a coffered archway, and covered by a large dome. The sacred stone is inside, nor is its supreme ~~interest~~ to Buddhists ~~that~~ the Prophet's footprints are ~~or~~ more than ordinary ~~abnormal~~ size. All these great men had huge feet. I have seen Mohammed's footprint in the Mosque of Omar at Jerusalem and Buddha's footprint on the summit of Adam's Peak in Ceylon; and in each of these I was surprised at the modesty of their ~~magnitude~~ ~~I see no reason why~~ ~~in having~~ ~~but~~ content with, comparatively speaking, ~~as long a body~~ ~~worthy person~~, Reza, temperate ~~a measurement~~. ~~so should have been~~ ~~as less honourably endowed~~.

The exterior of the dome has once been covered with tiles; but all these have been stripped or have fallen off; through bands of a Stile perfect inscription encircle the drum & adorn the facade. From the garden of the mosque the stream flows down the middle of the roadway, past a ~~statel~~ row of ~~pines~~ ~~remarkable~~ (1) between the ~~chapar~~ khaneh and a large Caravanserai. Above the ~~village~~ shrine ~~stands the~~ on a hill some 500 ft above the plain, stands the village and fort of Kadamgah; which upon a corresponding hill on the opposite side of the valley where here opens into the mountains stands an older fortress.

Plain of Nishapur

An hour after leaving Kadamgah we entered upon the famous plain of Nishapur, whose praises have been sung by so many Chroniclers of the past.

(1) The seeds or cones from which these pines sprang are said to have been brought by a pilgrim from the Himalayas nearly 400 years ago.

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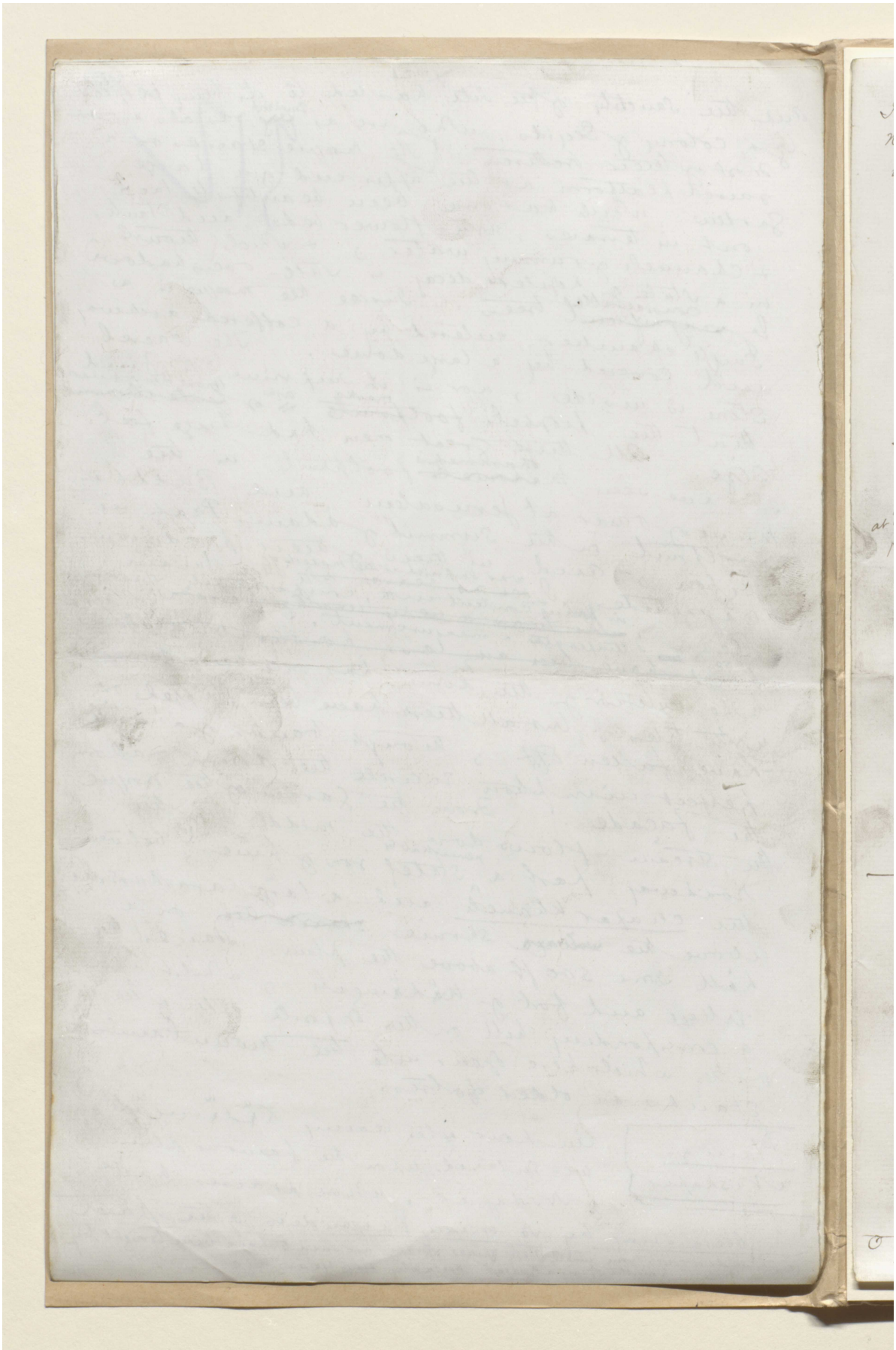

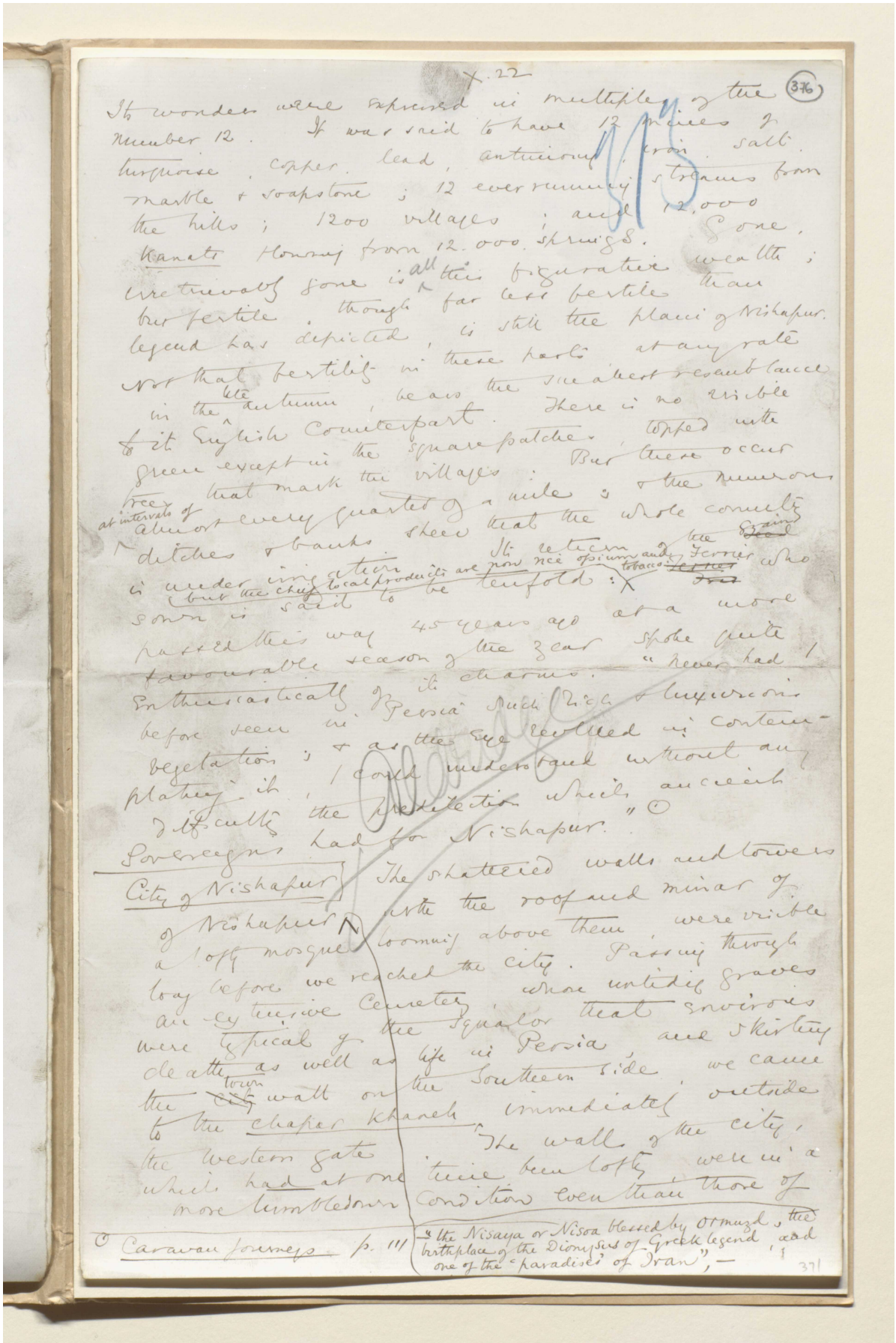

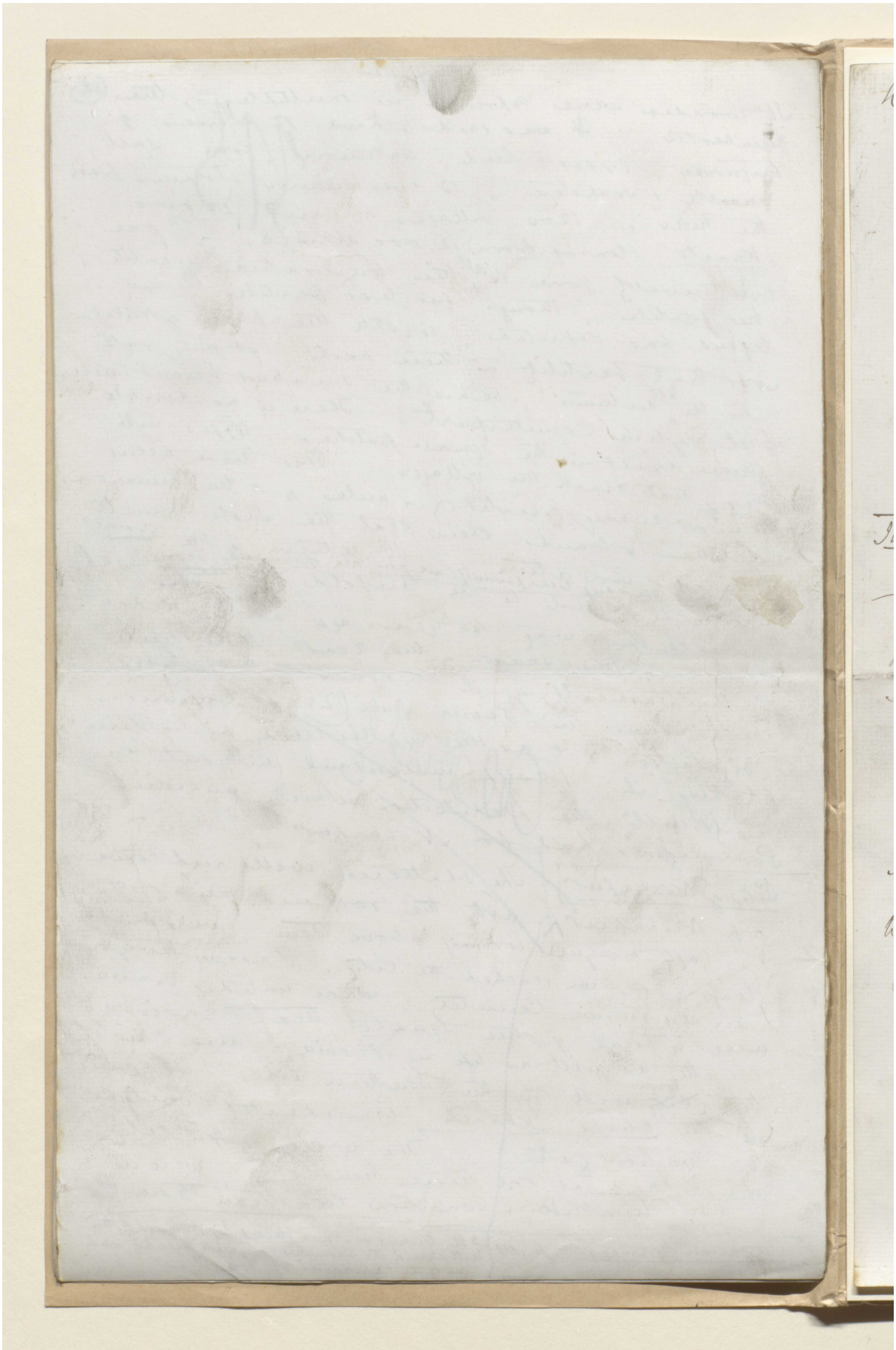

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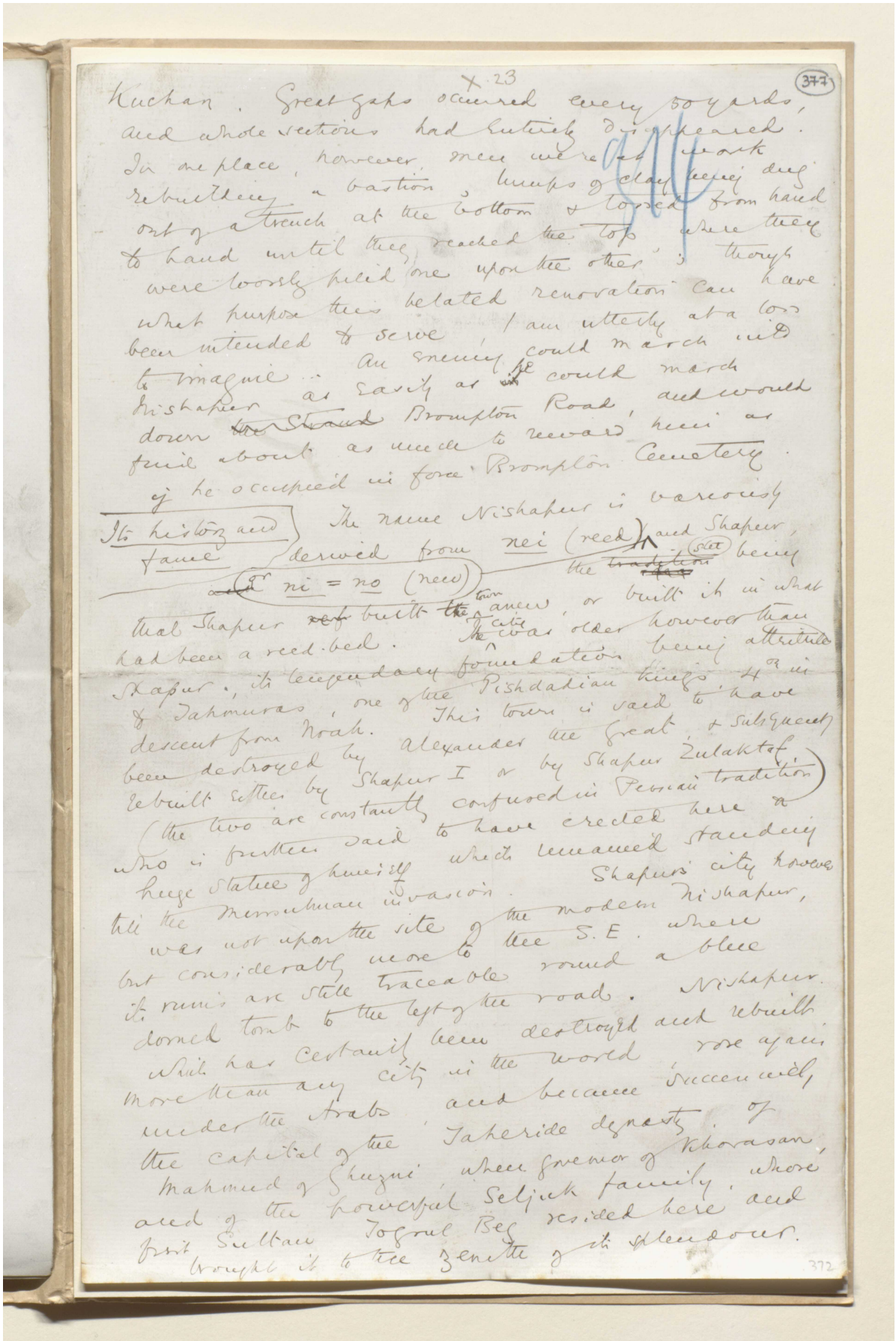

Kuchan. Great gaps occurred every 50 yards, and whole sections had entirely disappeared. In one place, however, men were at work rebuilding a bastion, lumps of clay being dug out of a trench at the bottom & tossed from hand to hand until they reached the top, where they were loosely piled one upon the other; though what purpose this belated renovation can have been intended to serve, I am utterly at a loss to imagine. An enemy could march into Nishapur as easily as he could march down ~~the Strand~~ Brompton Road, and would find about as much to reward him as if he occupied in force Brompton Cemetery.

Its history and fame

The name Nishapur is variously derived from nei (reed) and Shapur, or ni = no (new) the ~~tradition~~ (site) being that Shapur ~~ref~~ built ~~the~~ town anew, or built it in what had been a reed-bed. The city was older however than Shapur, its legendary foundation being attributed to Jahmuras, one of the Pishdadian kings, 4th in descent from Noah. This town is said to have been destroyed by Alexander the Great, & subsequently rebuilt either by Shapur I or by Shapur Zulaktaf (the two are constantly confused in Persian tradition) who is further said to have erected here a huge statue of himself which remained standing till the Mussulman invasion. Shapur's city however was not upon the site of the modern Nishapur, but considerably more to the S.E. where its ruins are still traceable round a blue domed tomb to the left of the road. Nishapur which has certainly been destroyed and rebuilt more than any city in the world, rose again under the Arabs, and became successively the capital of the Taheride dynasty of Mahmud of Ghuzni, when governor of Khorasan, and of the powerful Seljuk family, whose first Sultan Togrul Beg resided here and brought it to the zenith of its splendour.

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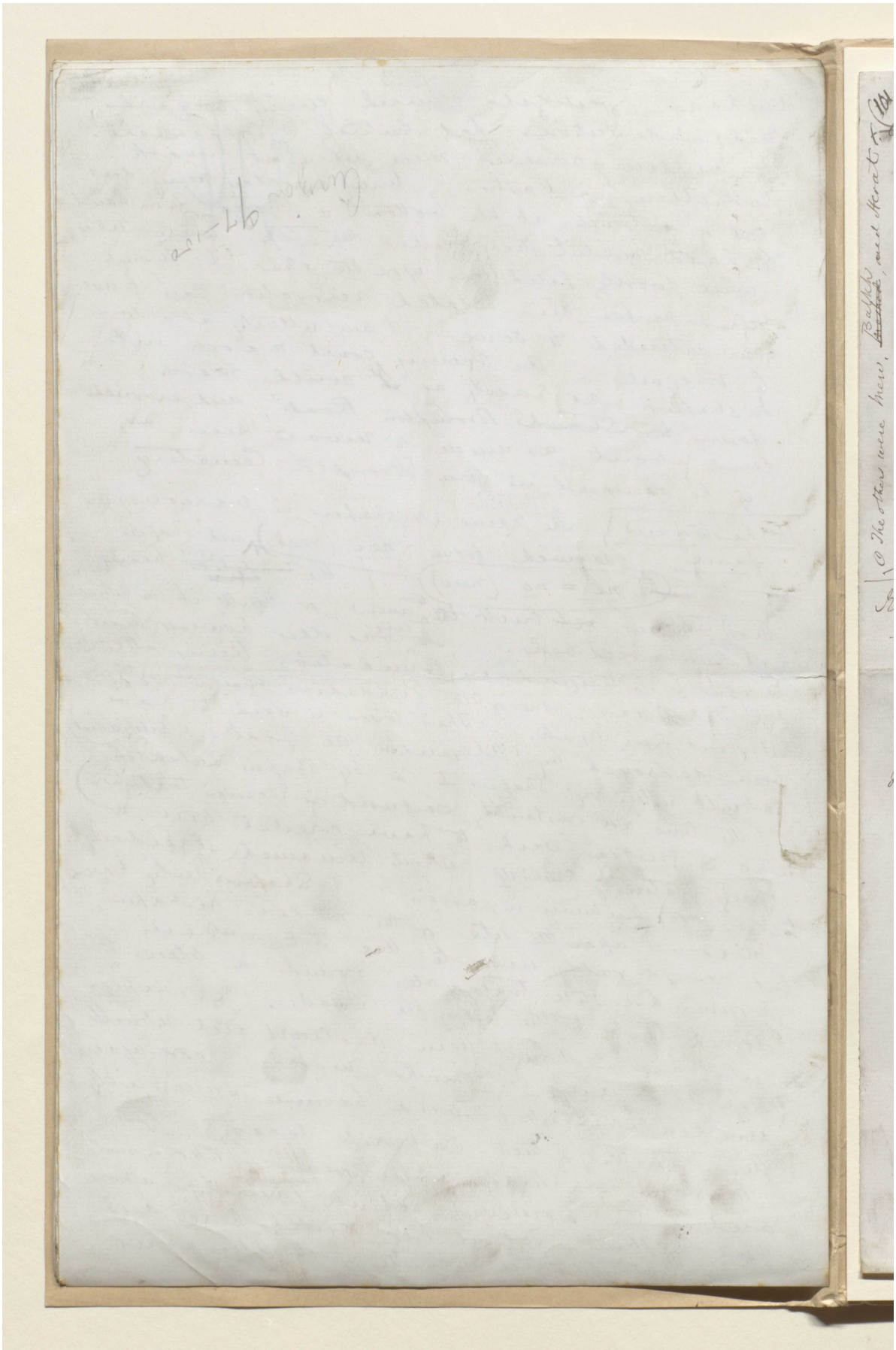

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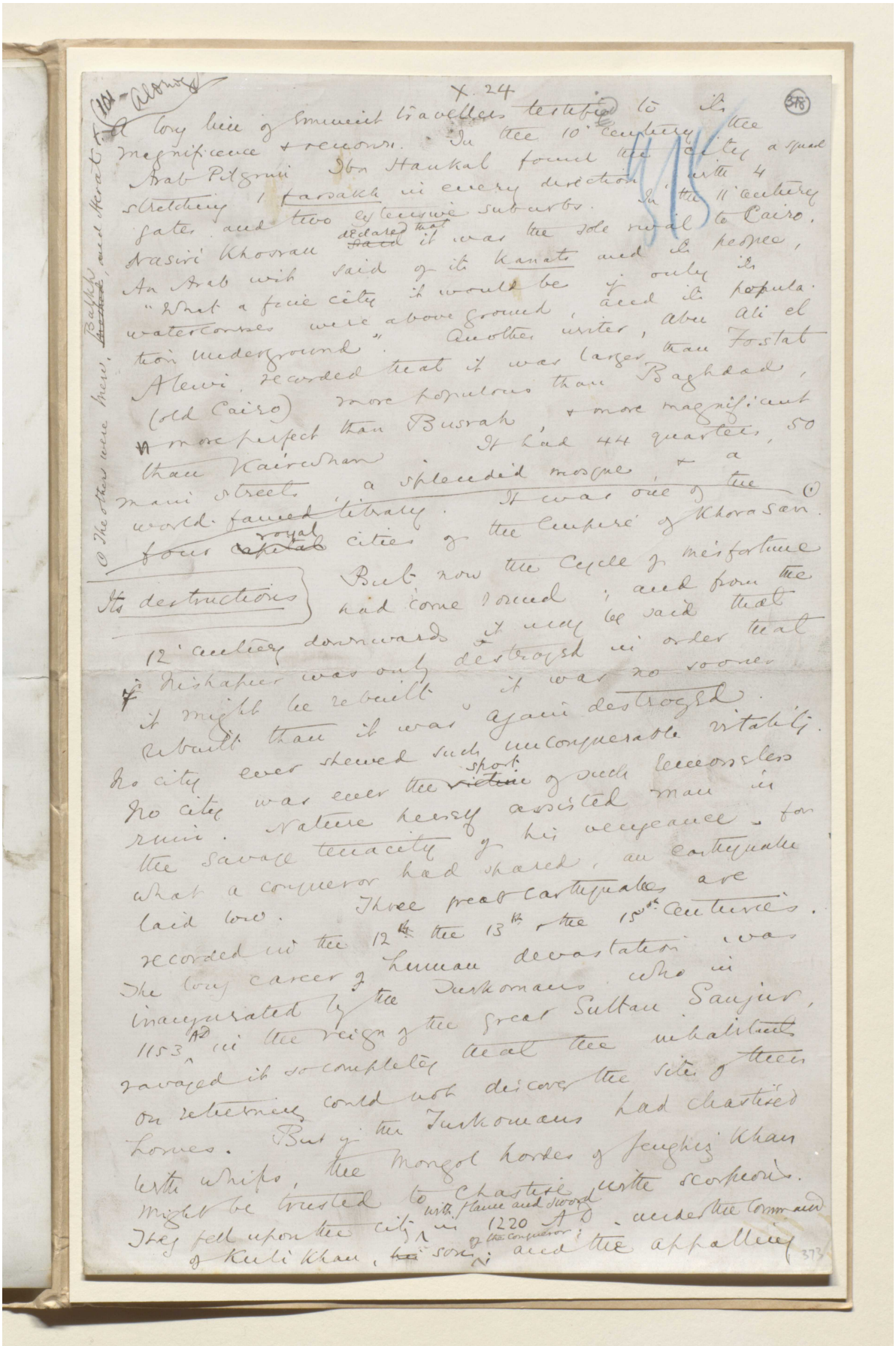

X. 24

(378)

A long line of eminent travellers testified to its magnificence & renown. In the 10th century the Arab Pilgrim Ibn Haukal found the city a squad stretching 1 farsakh in every direction, with 4 gates and two extensive suburbs. In the 11th century Nasiri Khosrau declared that it was the sole rival to Cairo. An Arab wit said of its kanats and its people, "What a fine city it would be if only its watercourses were above ground, and its population underground". Another writer, Abu Ali el Alewi, recorded that it was larger than Fostat (old Cairo) more populous than Baghdad, more perfect than Busrah, & more magnificent than Kairwhan. It had 44 quarters, 50 main streets, a splendid mosque, & a world-famed library. It was one of the four royal cities of the Empire of Khorasan. (1)

(1) The others were Mew, Balkh, and Herat.

Its destructions

But now the cycle of misfortune had come round; and from the 12th century downwards it may be said that Nishapur was only destroyed in order that it might be rebuilt, it was no sooner rebuilt than it was again destroyed. No city ever shewed such unconquerable vitality. No city was ever the sport of such remorseless ruin. Nature herself assisted man in the savage tenacity of his vengeance, for what a conqueror had spared, an earthquake laid low. Three great earthquakes are recorded in the 12th the 13th & the 15th centuries. The long career of human devastation was inaugurated by the Turkomans, who in 1153 AD in the reign of the great Sultan Sanjur, ravaged it so completely that the inhabitants on returning could not discover the site of their homes. But if the Turkomans had chastised with whips, the Mongol hordes of Jenghiz Khan might be trusted to chastise with scorpions. They fell upon the city with flame and sword in 1220 AD under the command of Kuli Khan, son of the conqueror; and the appalling

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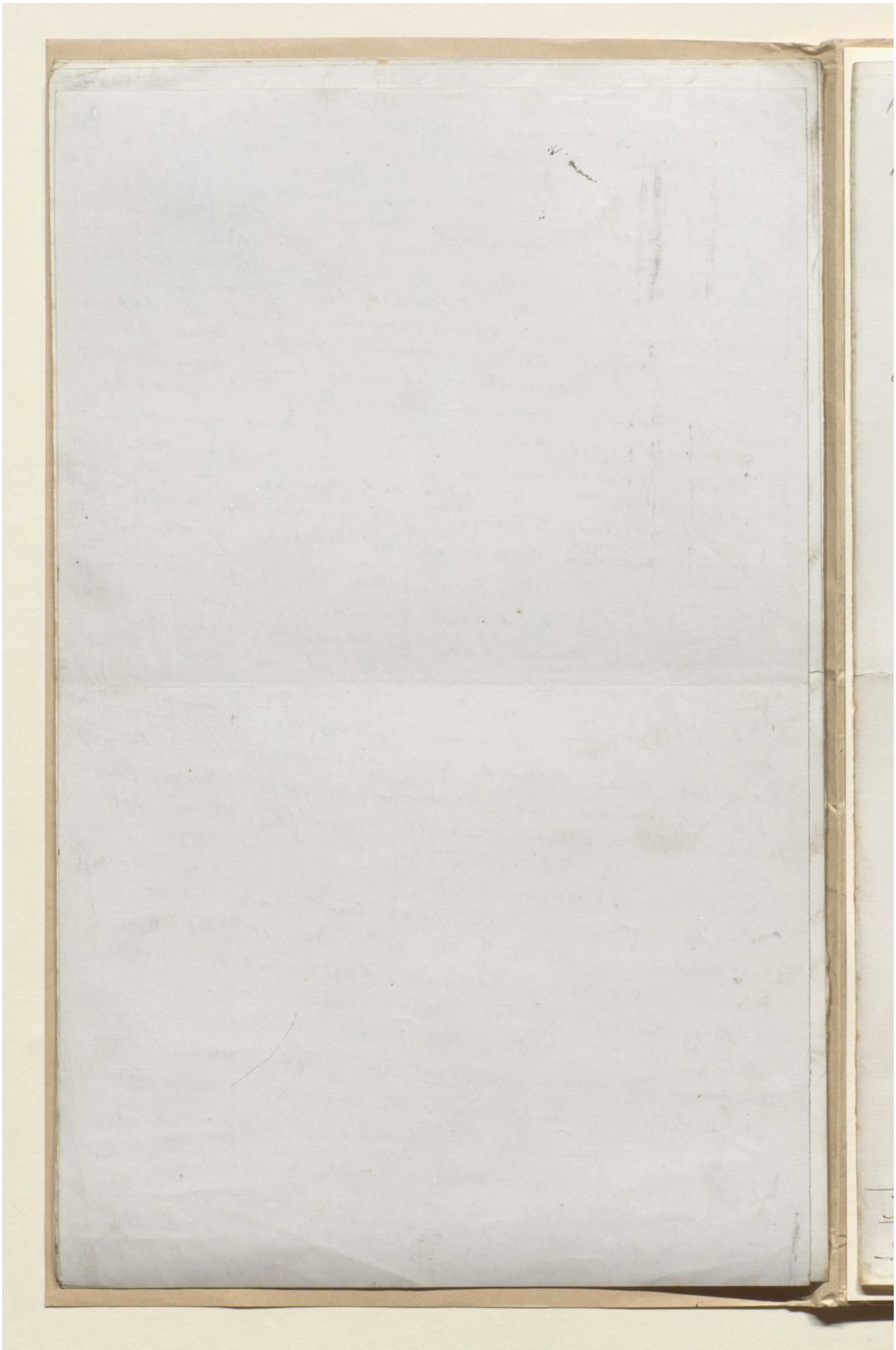

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X. 25

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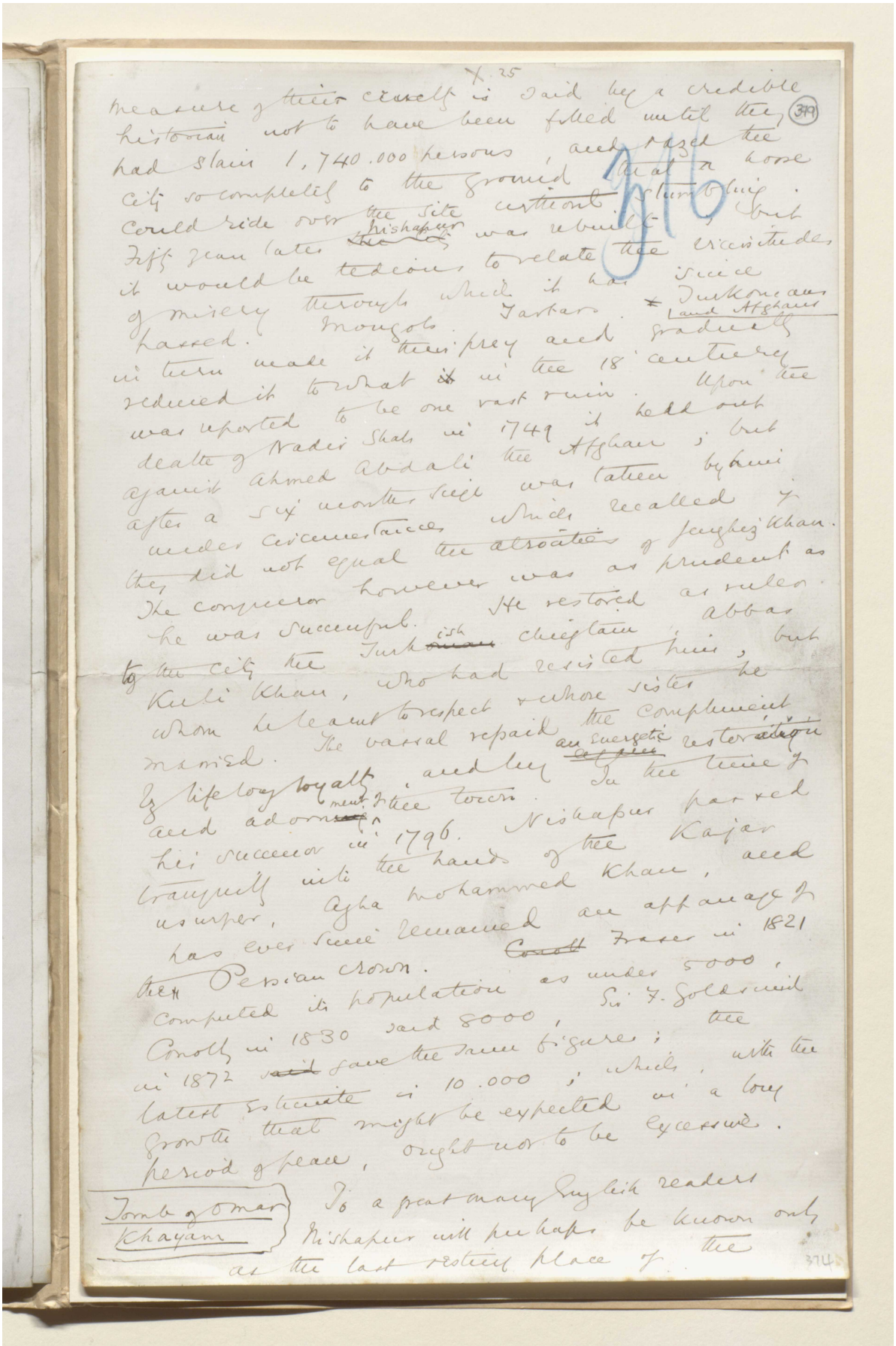

measure of their cruelty is said by a credible historian not to have been filled until they had slain 1,740.000 persons, and razed the city so completely to the ground that a horse could ride over the site without stumbling. Fifty years later Nishapur was rebuilt, but it would be tedious to relate the vicissitudes of misery through which it has since passed. Mongols, Tartars, * Turkomans and Afghans in turn made it their prey and gradually reduced it to what in the 18 century was reported to be one vast ruin. Upon the death of Nadir Shah in 1749 it held out against Ahmed Abdali the Afghan; but after a six months' siege was taken by him under circumstances which recalled if they did not equal the atrocities of Jenghiz Khan. The conqueror however was as prudent as he was successful. He restored as ruler to the city the Turkish chieftain Abbas Kuli Khan, who had resisted him, but whom he learnt to respect & whose sister he married. The vassal repaid the compliment by lifelong loyalty, and by an energetic restoration and adornment of the town. In the time of his successor in 1796, Nishapur passed tranquilly into the hands of the Kajar usurper, Agha Mohammed Khan, and has ever since remained an appanage of the Persian crown. Fraser in 1821 computed its population as under 5000, Conolly in 1830 said 8000, Sir F. Goldsmid in 1872 gave the same figure; the latest estimate is 10.000; which, with the growth that might be expected in a long period of peace, ought not to be excessive.

Tomb of Omar Khayam

To a great many English readers Nishapur will perhaps be known only as the last resting place of the

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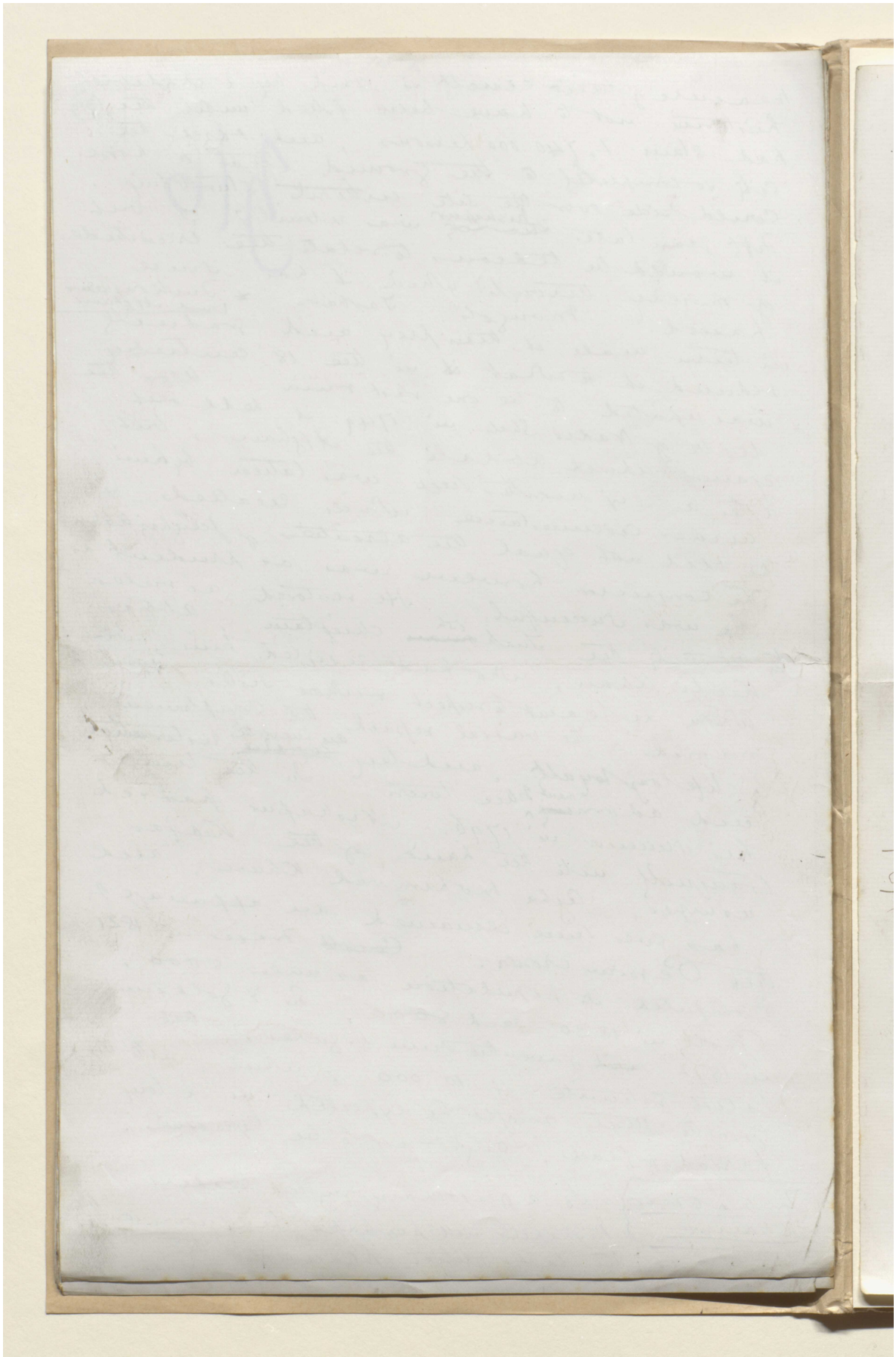
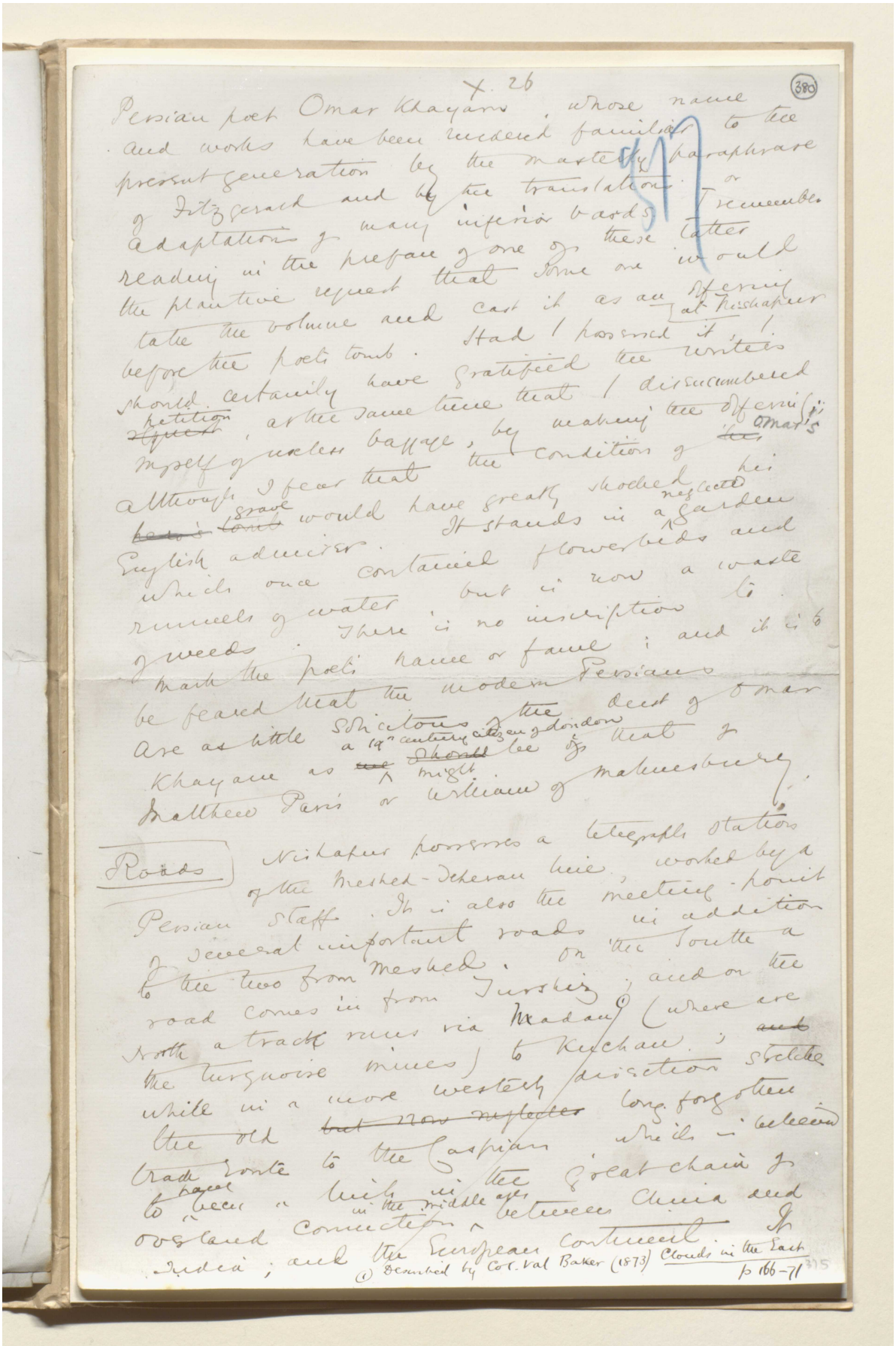




X. 26

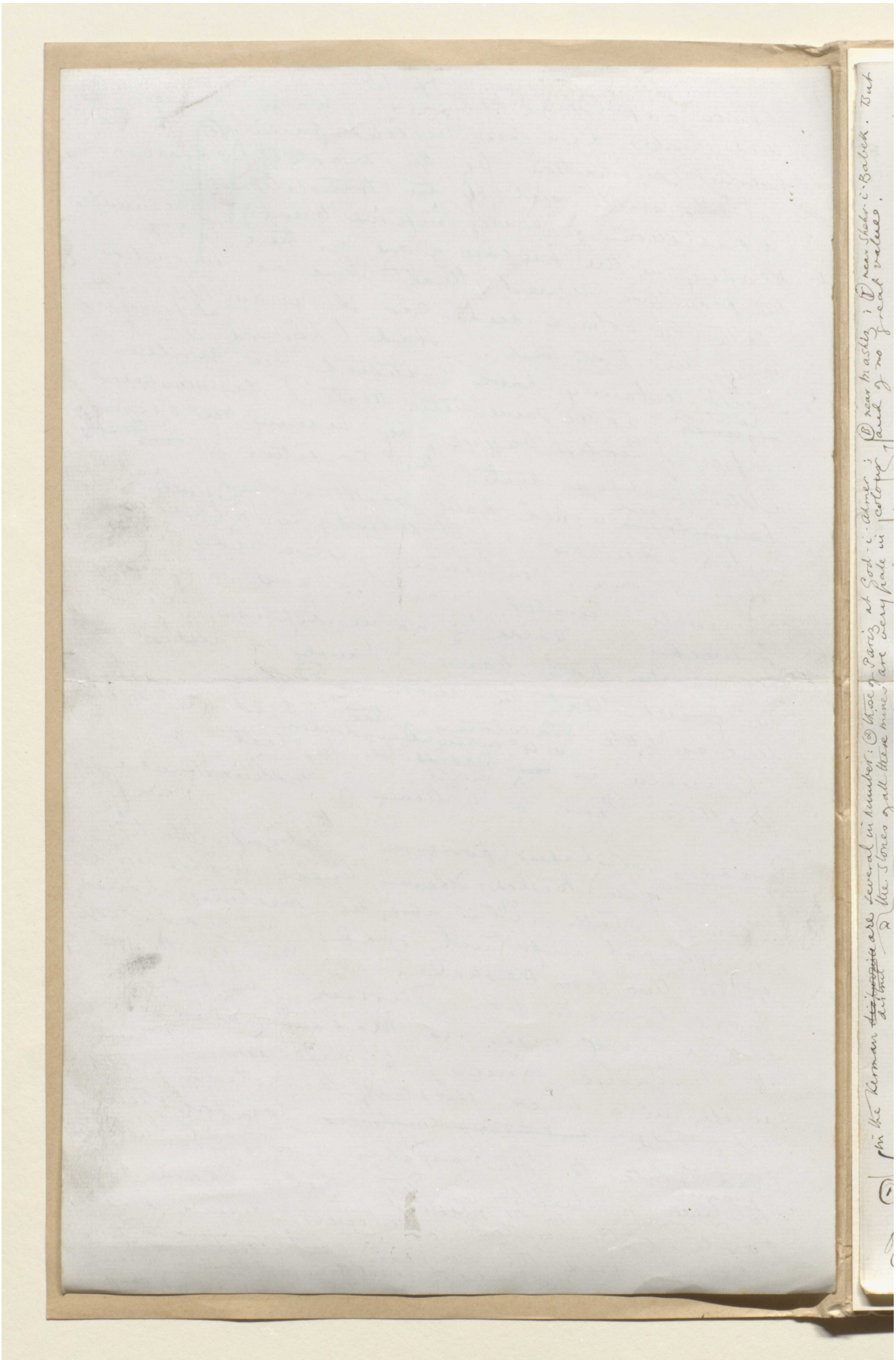
(380)

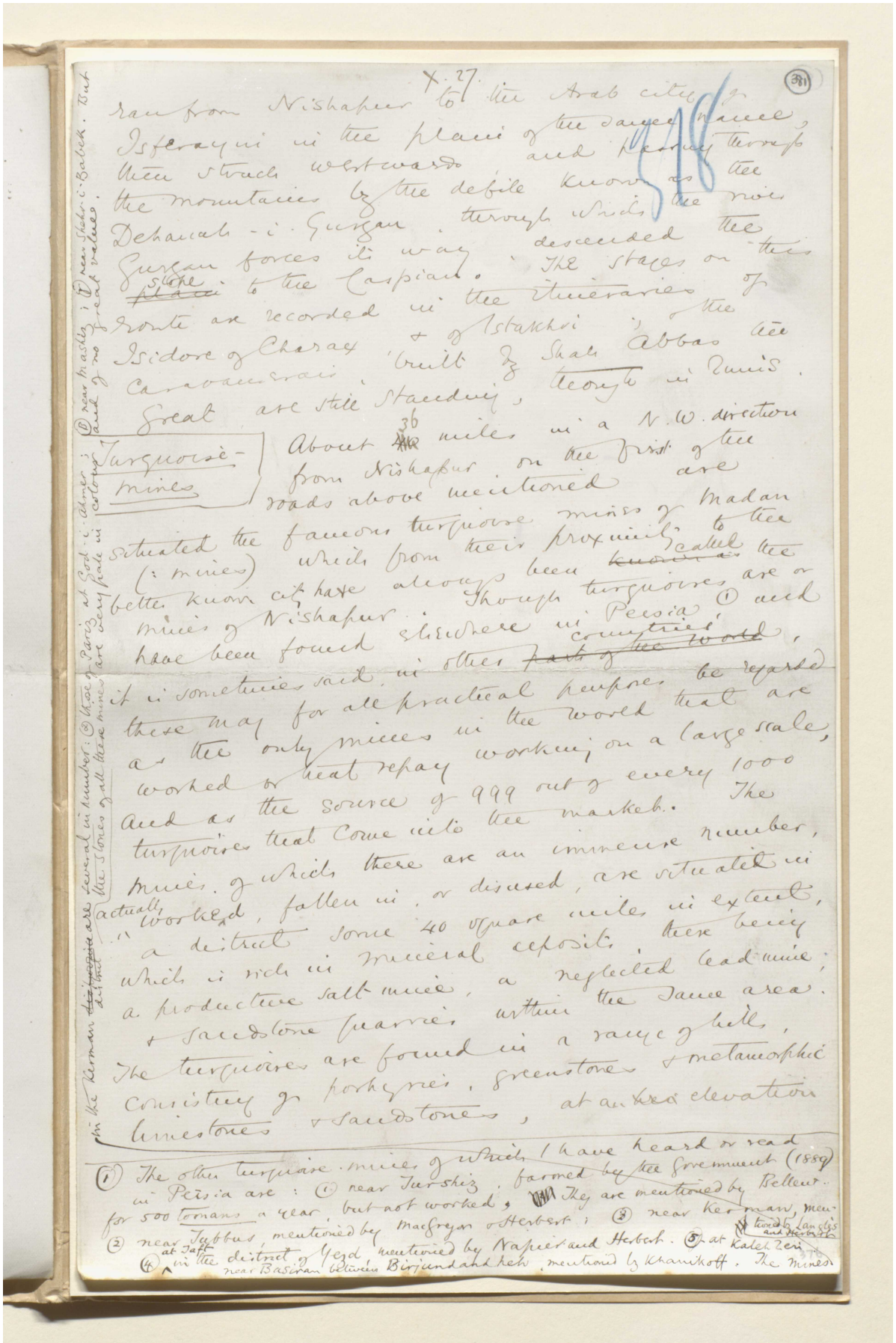
Persian poet Omar Khayam, whose name and works have been rendered familiar to the present generation by the masterly paraphrase of Fitzgerald and by the translations or adaptations of many inferior bards. I remember reading in the preface of one of these latter the plaintive request that some one would take the volume and cast it as an offering at Nishapur before the poet's tomb. Had I possessed it, I should certainly have gratified the writer's petition, at the same time that I disencumbered myself of useless baggage, by making the offering; although I fear that the condition of Omar's grave would have greatly shocked his English admirer. It stands in a neglected garden which once contained flowerbeds and runnels of water but is now a waste of weeds. There is no inscription to mark the poet's name or fame; and it is to be feared that the modern Persians are as little solicitous of the dust of Omar Khayam as a 19th century citizen of London might be of that of Matthew Paris or William of Malmesbury.

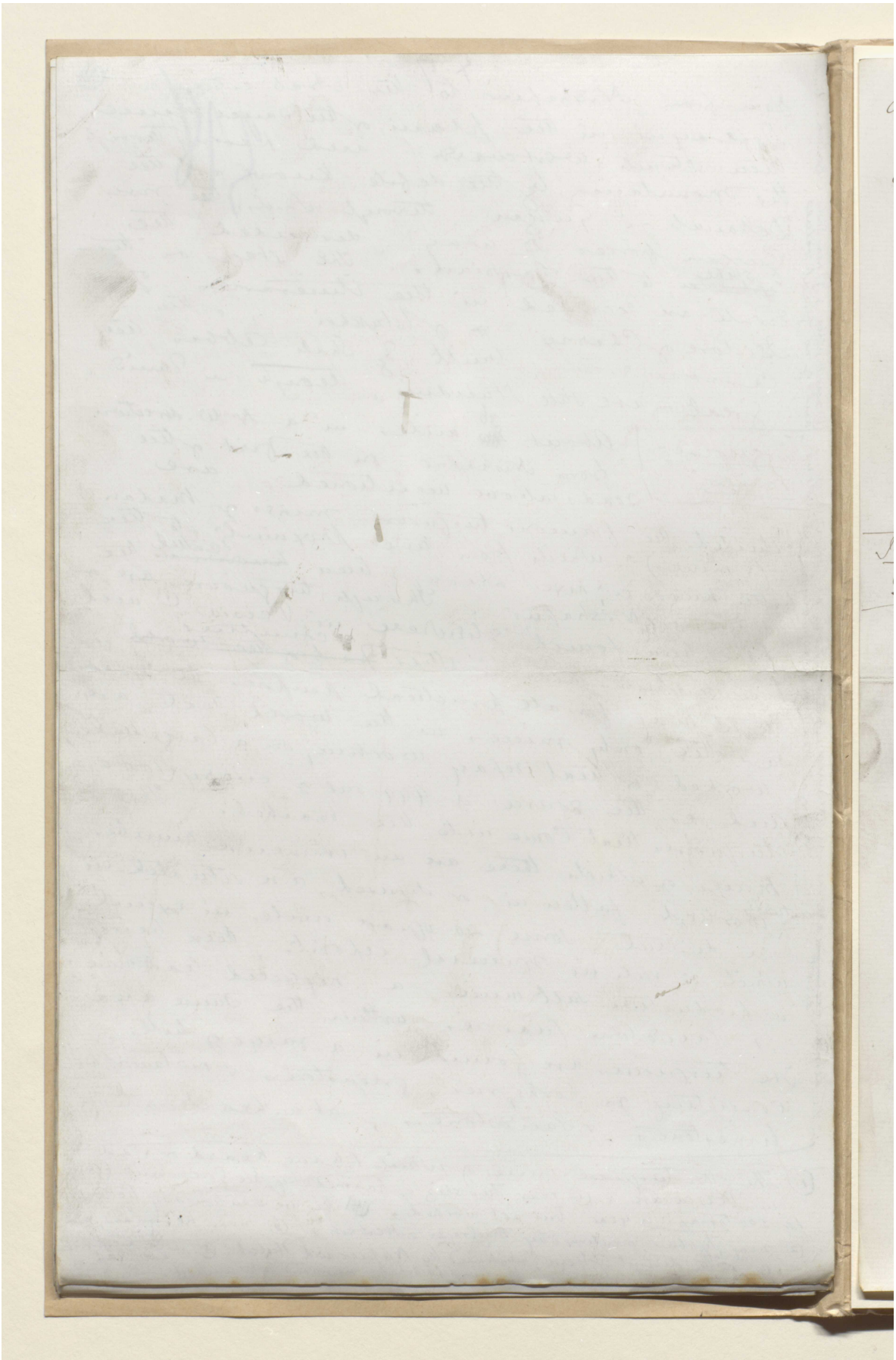
Roads

Nishapur possesses a telegraph station of the Meshed-Teheran line, worked by a Persian staff. It is also the meeting-point of several important roads in addition to the two from Meshed. On the South a road comes in from Turshiz; and on the North a track runs via Madan[1] (where are the turquoise mines) to Kuchan; while in a more westerly direction stretches the old long forgotten track route to the Caspian which is believed to have been a link in the great chain of overland connection in the middle ages between China and India; and the European continent. It

(1) Described by Col. Val Baker (1873) Clouds in the East p 166-71







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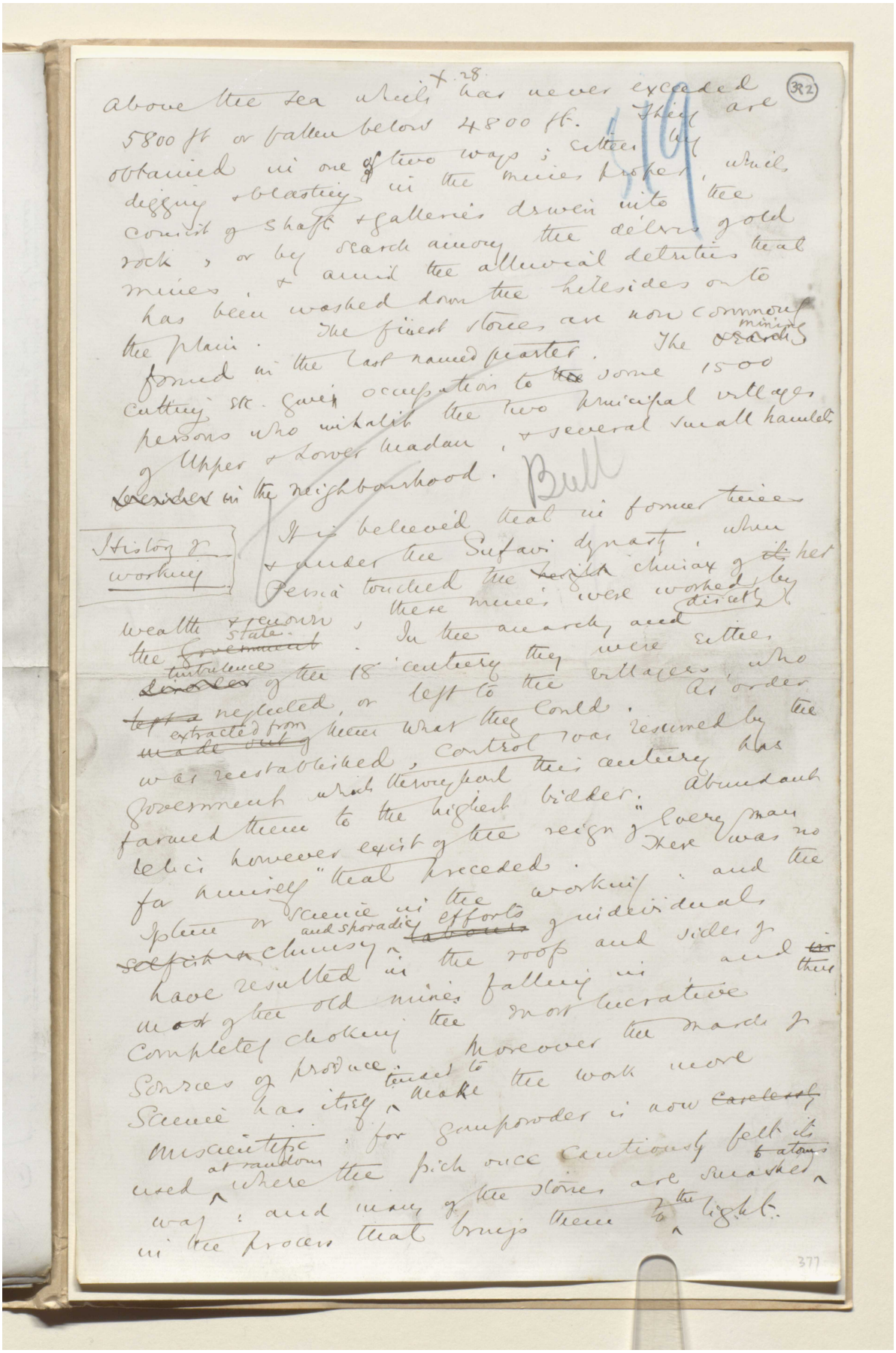

above the sea which has never exceeded 5800 ft or fallen below 4800 ft. They are obtained in one of two ways; either by digging & blasting in the mines proper, which consist of shafts & galleries driven into the rock, or by search among the débris of old mines, & amid the alluvial detritus that has been washed down the hillsides on to the plain. The finest stones are now commonly found in the last named quarter. The mining cutting etc. gives occupation to some 1500 persons who inhabit the two principal villages of Upper & Lower Madan, & several small hamlets in the neighbourhood.

Bull

History of working

It is believed that in former times & under the Sufavi dynasty, when Persia touched the chimax of her wealth & renown, these mines were worked directly by the state. In the anarchy and turbulence of the 18 century they were either neglected, or left to the villagers, who extracted from them what they could. As order was reestablished, control was resumed by the government which throughout this century has farmed them to the highest bidder. Abundant relics however exist of the reign of "Every man for himself" that preceded. There was no system or science in the working; and the chimsy and sporadic efforts of individuals have resulted in the roof and sides of most of the old mines falling in and thus completely choking the most lucrative sources of produce. Moreover the march of science has itself tended to make the work more miscientific; for gunpowder is now used at random where the pick once cautiously felt its way; and many of the stones are smashed to atoms in the process that brings them to the light.

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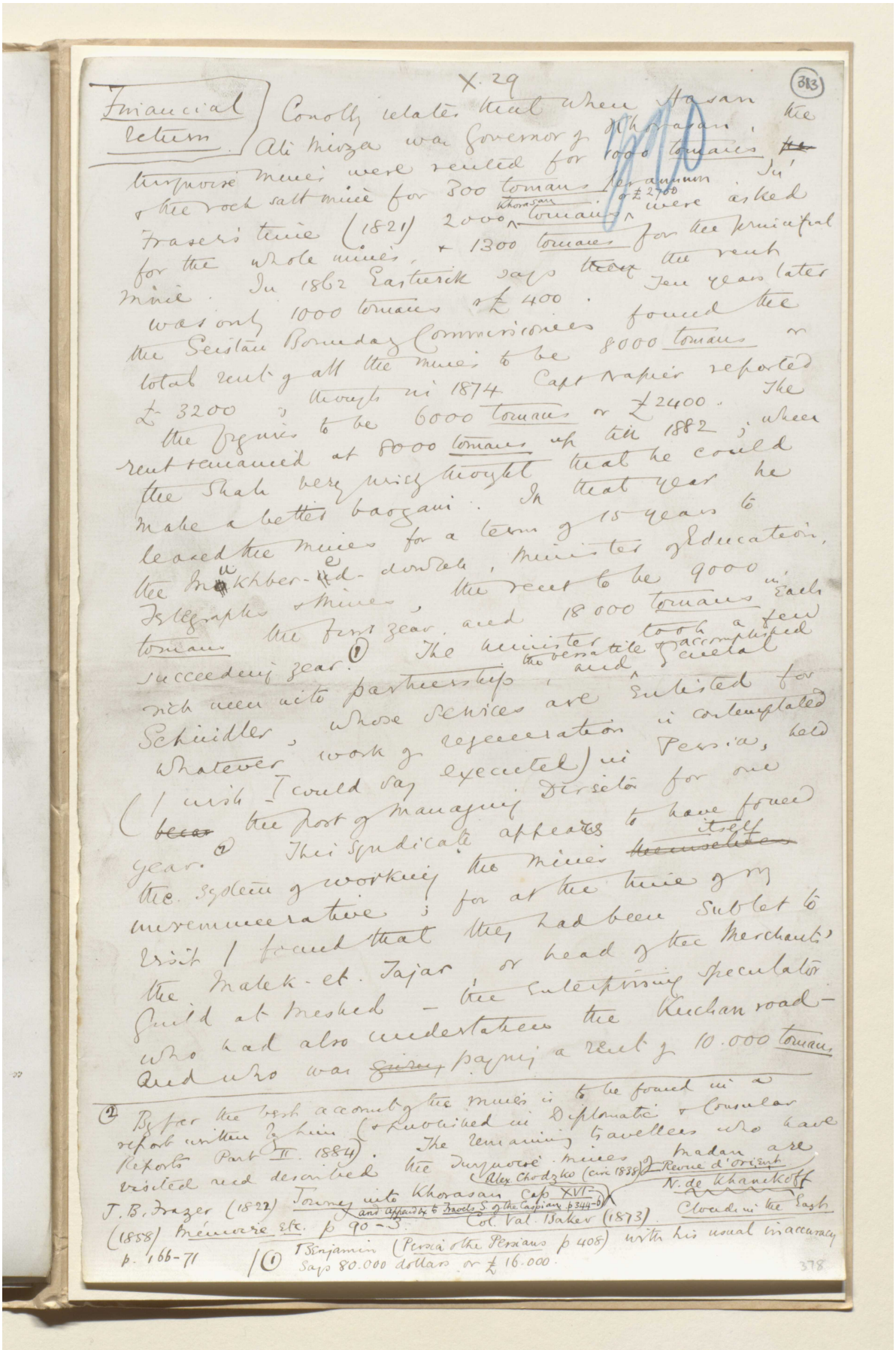

X. 29

(383)

Financial Return

Conolly relates that when Hasan Ali Mirza was Governor of Khorasan, the turquoise mines were rented for 1000 tomans, & the rock salt mine for 300 tomans per annum. In Fraser's time (1821) 2000 Khorasan tomans or £2700 were asked for the whole mines, & 1300 tomans for the principal mine. In 1862 Eastwick says the rent was only 1000 tomans or £400. Ten years later the Seistan Boundary Commissioners found the total rent of all the mines to be 8000 tomans or £3200, though in 1874 Capt Napier reported the figures to be 6000 tomans or £2400. The rent remained at 8000 tomans up till 1882; when the Shah very wisely thought that he could make a better bargain. In that year he leased the mines for a term of 15 years to the Mukhber-ed-dowleh, Minister of Education, Telegraphs & Mines, the rent to be 9000 tomans the first year, and 18000 tomans in each succeeding year.(1) The minister took a few rich men into partnership, the versatile & accomplished and genial Schindler, whose services are enlisted for whatever work of regeneration is contemplated (I wish I could say executed) in Persia, held the post of managing Director for one year.(2) This syndicate appears to have found the system of working the mines itself unremunerative; for at the time of my visit I found that they had been sublet to the Malek-et-Tajar, or head of the Merchants' Guild at Meshed — the enterprising speculator who had also undertaken the Kuchan road — and who was paying a rent of 10.000 tomans

(2) By far the best account of the mines is to be found in a report written by him (& published in Diplomatic & Consular Reports Part II. 1884). The remaining travellers who have visited and described the turquoise mines of Madan are J. B. Fraser (1822) Journey into Khorasan Cap XVI — and appendix to Travels S. of the Caspian p 344-6 Alex Chodzko (circ 1838) Revue d'Orient N. de Khanikoff (1858) Mémoire etc. p 90-3. Col. Val. Baker (1873) Clouds in the East p. 166-71

(1) T Benjamin (Persia & the Persians p 408) with his usual inaccuracy says 80.000 dollars or £16.000.

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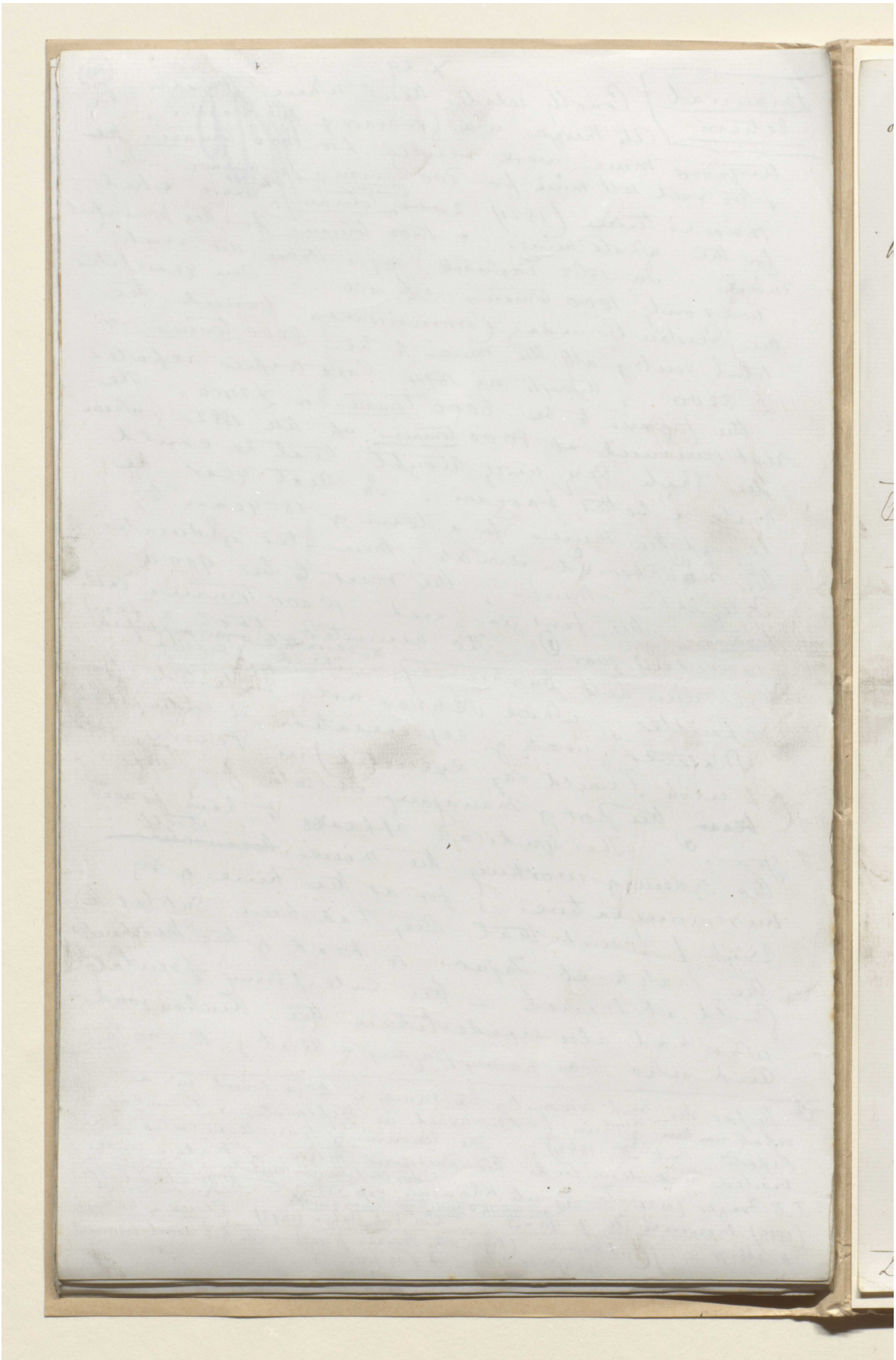

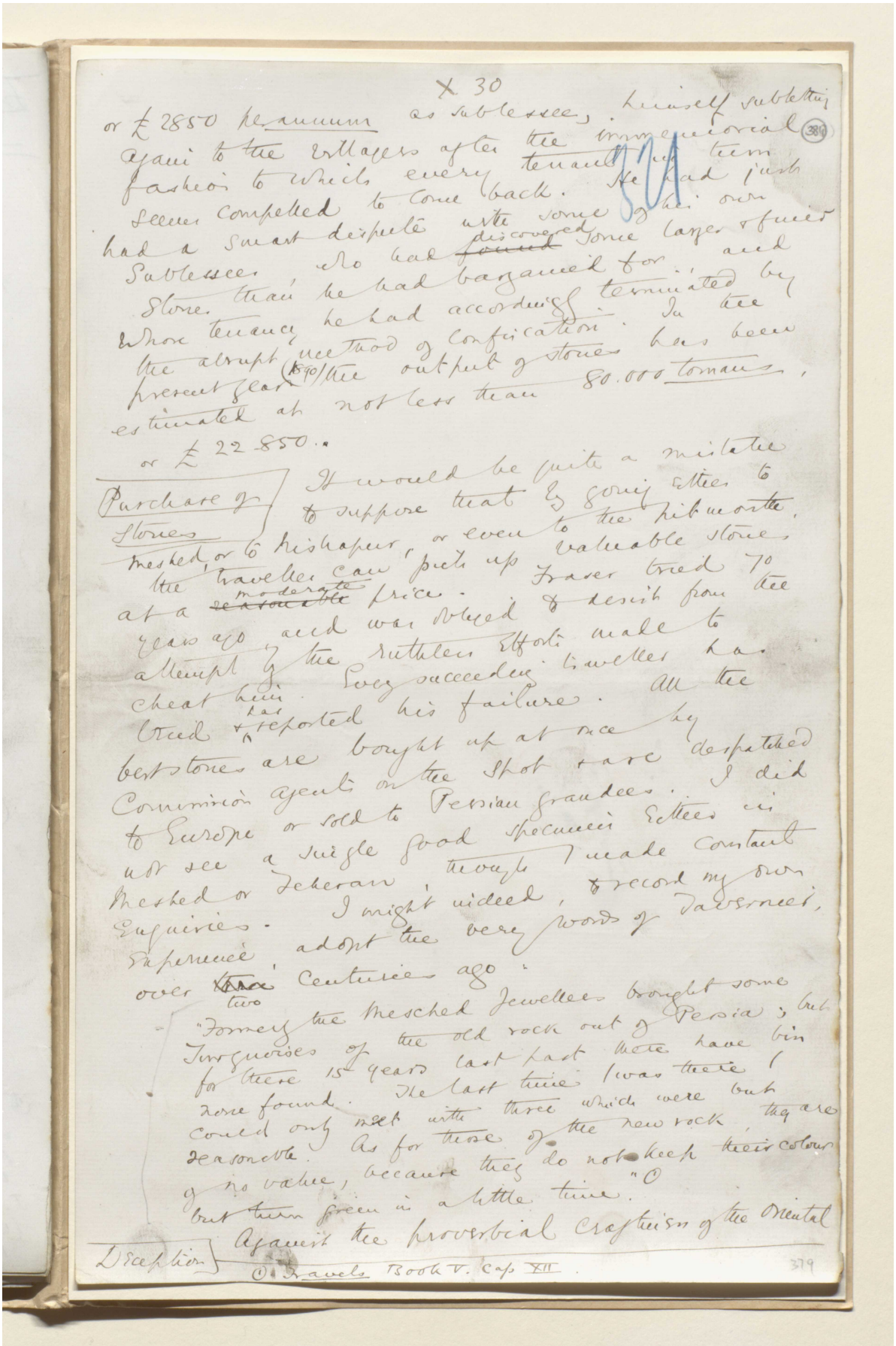

X 30

or £2850 per annum as sublessee, himself subletting again to the villagers after the immemorial fashion to which every tenant has been compelled to come back. He had just had a smart dispute with some of his own Sublessees who had found some layer of finer stone than he had bargained for and whose tenancy he had accordingly terminated by the abrupt method of confiscation. In the present year (1890) the output of stones has been estimated at not less than 80.000 tomans, or £22.850.

Purchase of Stones

It would be quite a mistake to suppose that by going either to Meshed or to Nishapur, or even to the Kirmanite, the traveller can pick up valuable stones at a moderate price. Fraser tried 70 years ago and was foiled & desist from the attempt by the ruthless efforts made to cheat him. Every traveller has tried & reported his failure. All the best stones are bought up at once by Commission agents on the spot & are despatched to Europe or sold to Persian grandees. I did not see a single good specimen either in Meshed or Teheran though I made constant Enquiries. I might indeed, & record my own experience, adopt the very words of Tavernier, over two Centuries ago:

"Formerly the Meshed Jewellers brought some turquoises of the old rock out of Persia; but for these 15 years last past there have been none found. The last time I was there I could only meet with three which were but reasonable. As for those of the new rock, they are of no value, because they do not keep their colour but turn green in a little time."©

Description

Against the proverbial Craftiness of the Oriental

© Travels Book V. Cap XII.

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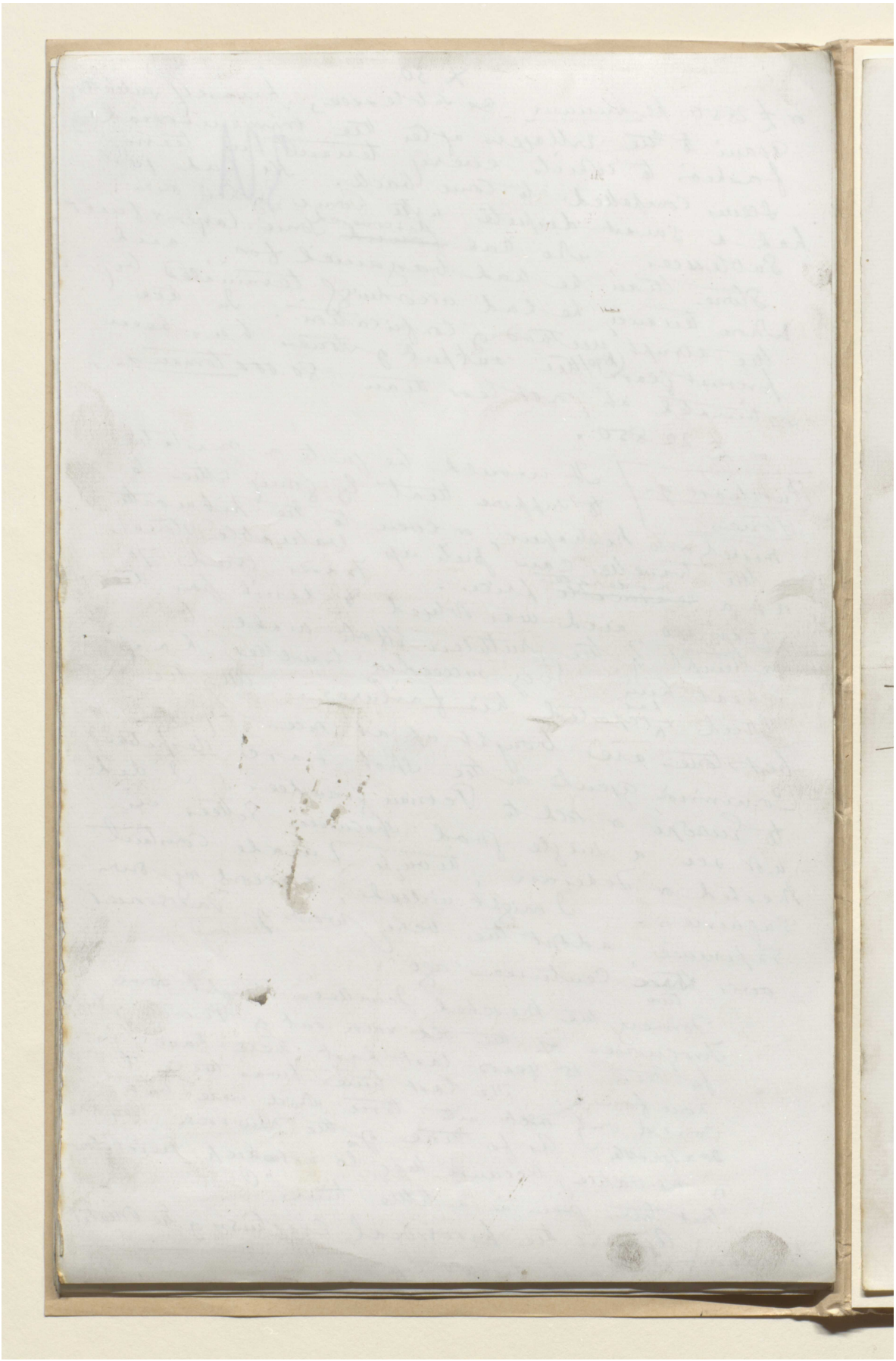

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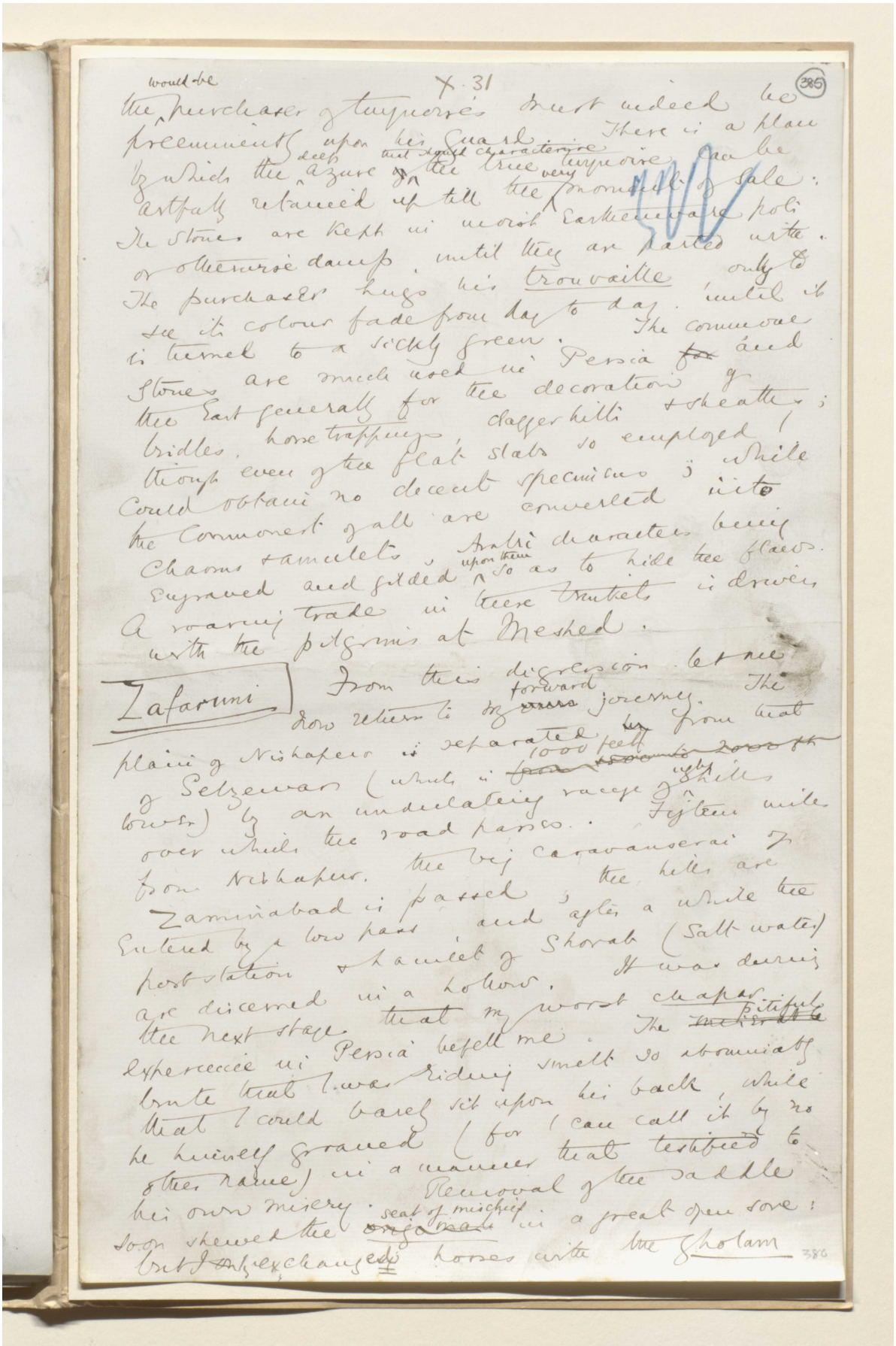

the would-be purchaser of turquoises must indeed be preeminently upon his guard. There is a plan by which the deep azure that should characterise the true turquoise can be artfully retained up till the very moment of sale: The stones are kept in moist earthenware pots or otherwise damp, until they are parted with. The purchaser hugs his trouvaille only to see its colour fade from day to day, until it is turned to a sickly green. The common stones are much used in Persia and the East generally for the decoration of bridles, horse trappings, dagger hilts & sheaths; though even of the flat slabs so employed I could obtain no decent specimens; while the commonest of all are converted into charms & amulets, Arabic characters being engraved and gilded upon them so as to hide the flaws. A roaring trade in these trinkets is driven with the pilgrims at Meshed.

Zafaruni

From this digression let me now return to my forward journey. The plain of Nishapur is separated from that of Selzewar (which is 1000 feet lower) by an undulating range of ugly hills over which the road passes. Fifteen miles from Nishapur, the big caravanserai of Zaminabad is passed; the hills are entered by a low pass and after a while the post station & hamlet of Shorab (Salt water) are discerned in a hollow. It was during the next stage that my worst chapar experience in Persia befell me. The pitiful brute that I was riding smelt so abominably that I could barely sit upon his back, while he himself groaned (for I can call it by no other name) in a manner that testified to his own misery. Removal of the saddle soon shewed the seat of mischief in a great open sore: but I only exchanged horses with the Gholam

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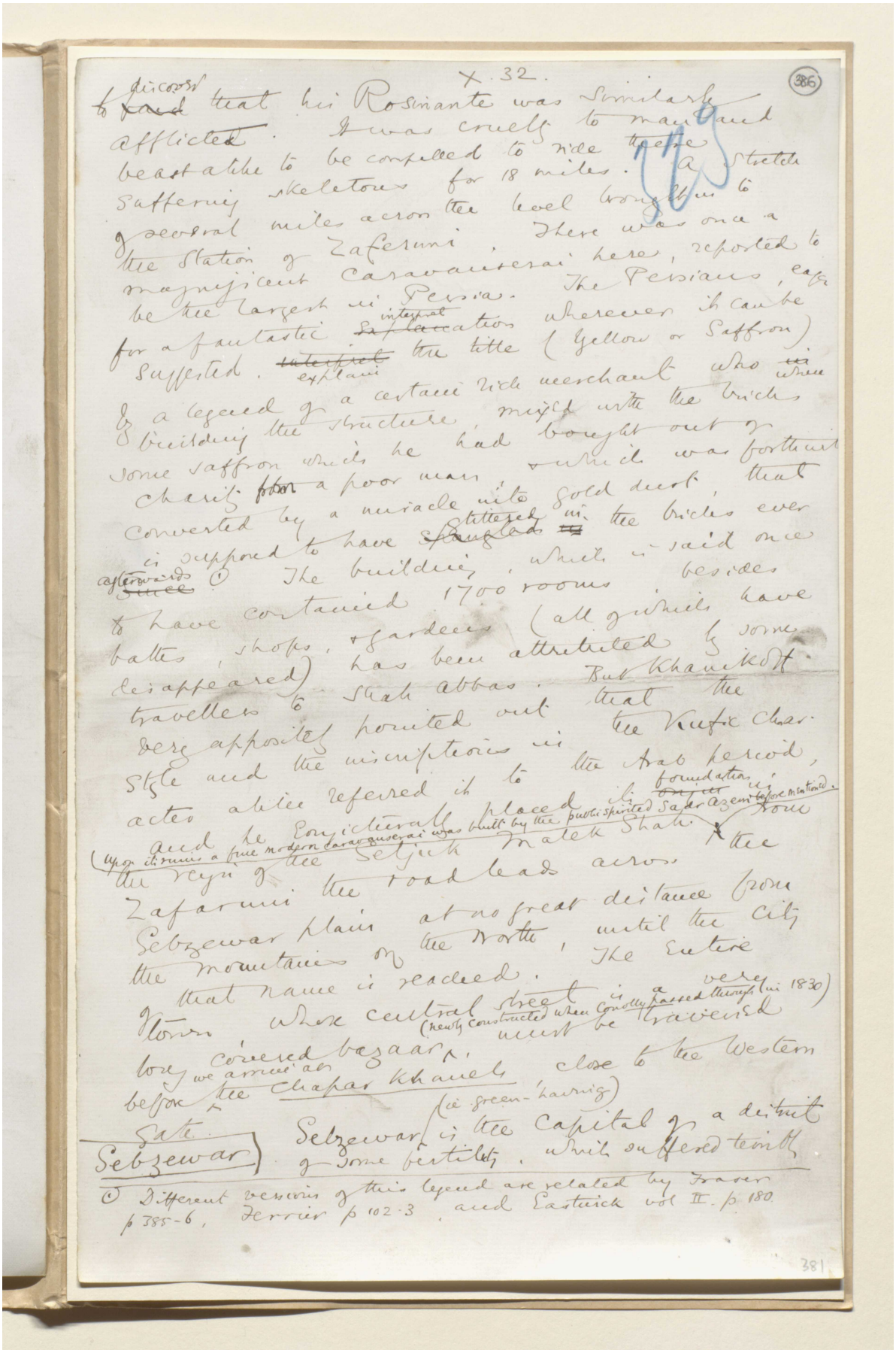

X. 32.

(386)

to discover that his Rosinante was similarly afflicted. It was cruelty to man and beast alike to be compelled to ride these suffering skeletons for 18 miles. A stretch of several miles across the level brought us to the station of Zaferuni. There was once a magnificent Caravanserai here, reported to be the largest in Persia. The Persians, eager for a fantastic interpretation wherever it can be suggested, explain the title (Yellow or Saffron) by a legend of a certain rich merchant who when building the structure, mixed with the bricks some saffron which he had bought out of charity from a poor man, & which was forthwith converted by a miracle into gold dust, that is supposed to have glittered in the bricks ever afterwards (1). The building, which is said once to have contained 1700 rooms besides baths, shops, & gardens (all of which have disappeared) has been attributed by some travellers to Shah Abbas. But Khanikoff very appositely pointed out that the style and the inscriptions in the Kufic Character alike referred it to the Arab period, and he conjecturally placed its foundation in the reign of the Seljuk Malek Shah. (Upon its ruins a fine modern Caravanserai was built by the public spirited Sadr Azem before mentioned.) From Zafaruni the road leads across the Sebzewar plain at no great distance from the mountains on the North, until the city of that name is reached. The entire town whose central street is a very long covered bazaar (newly constructed when Conolly passed through in 1830) must be traversed before we arrive at the Chapar Khaneh close to the Western gate.

Sebzewar

Sebzewar (i.e. green-having) is the capital of a district of some fertility, which suffered terribly

(1) Different versions of this legend are related by Fraser p 385-6, Ferrier p 102-3, and Eastwick vol II. p 180.

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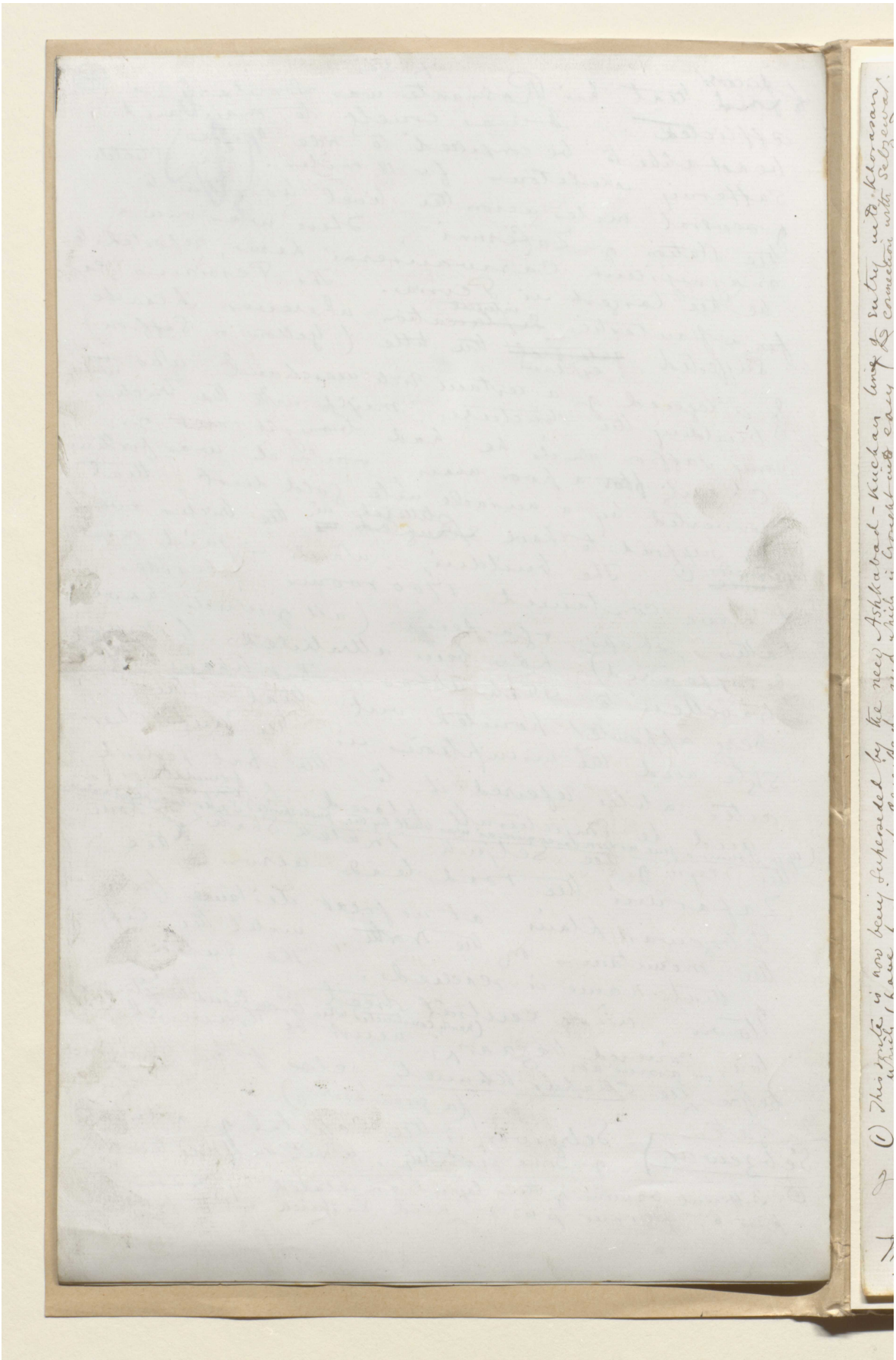

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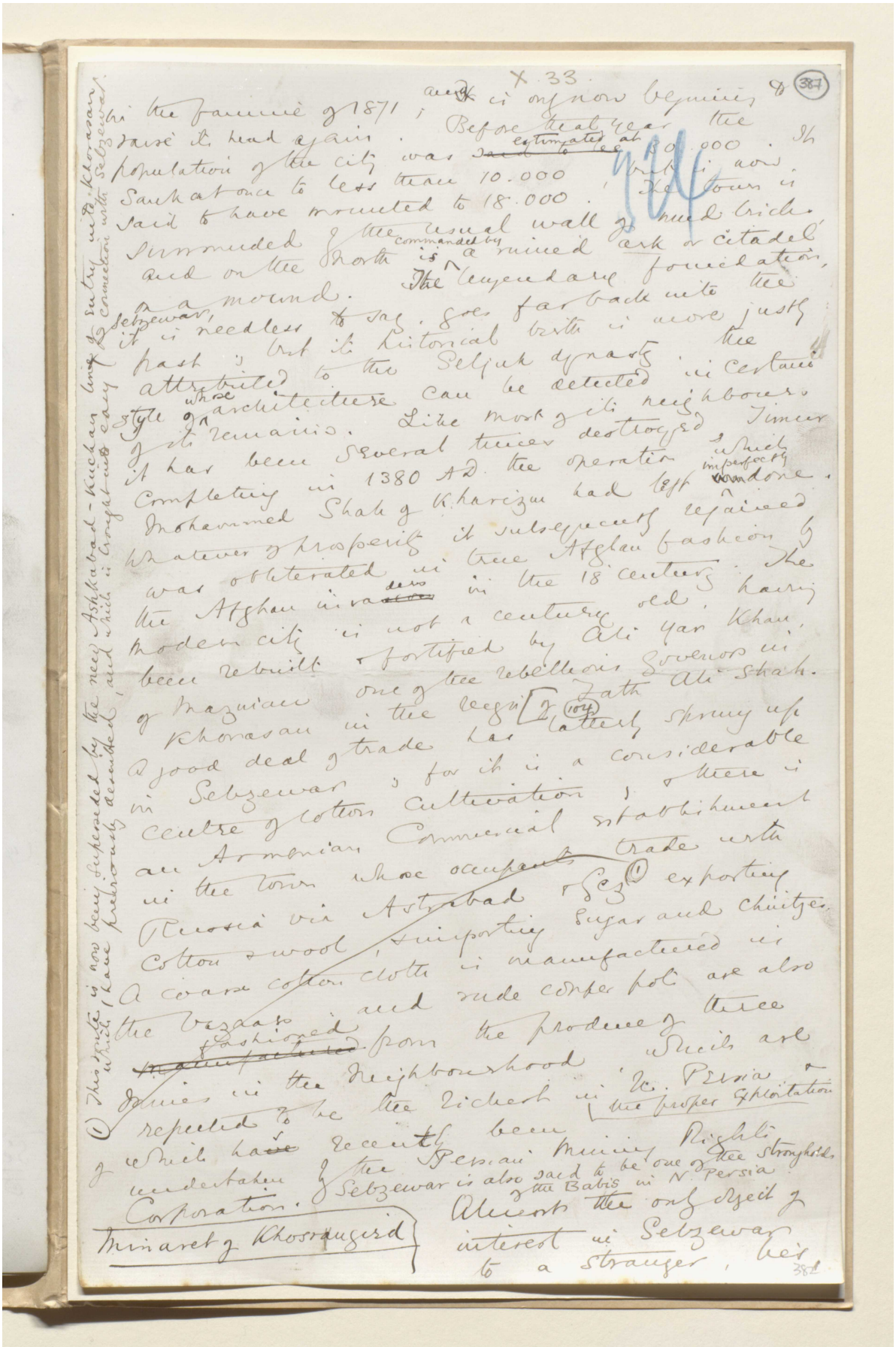

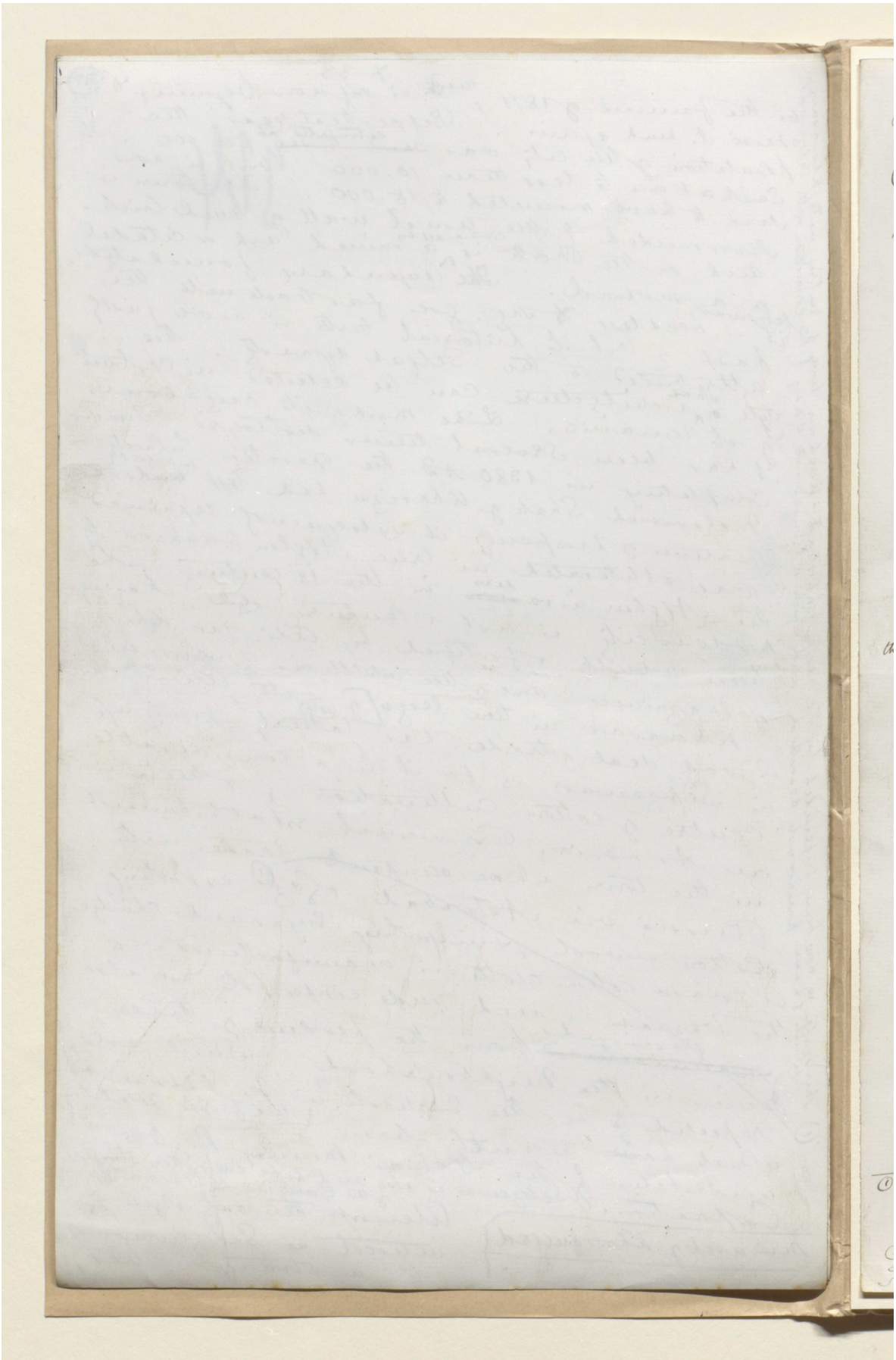

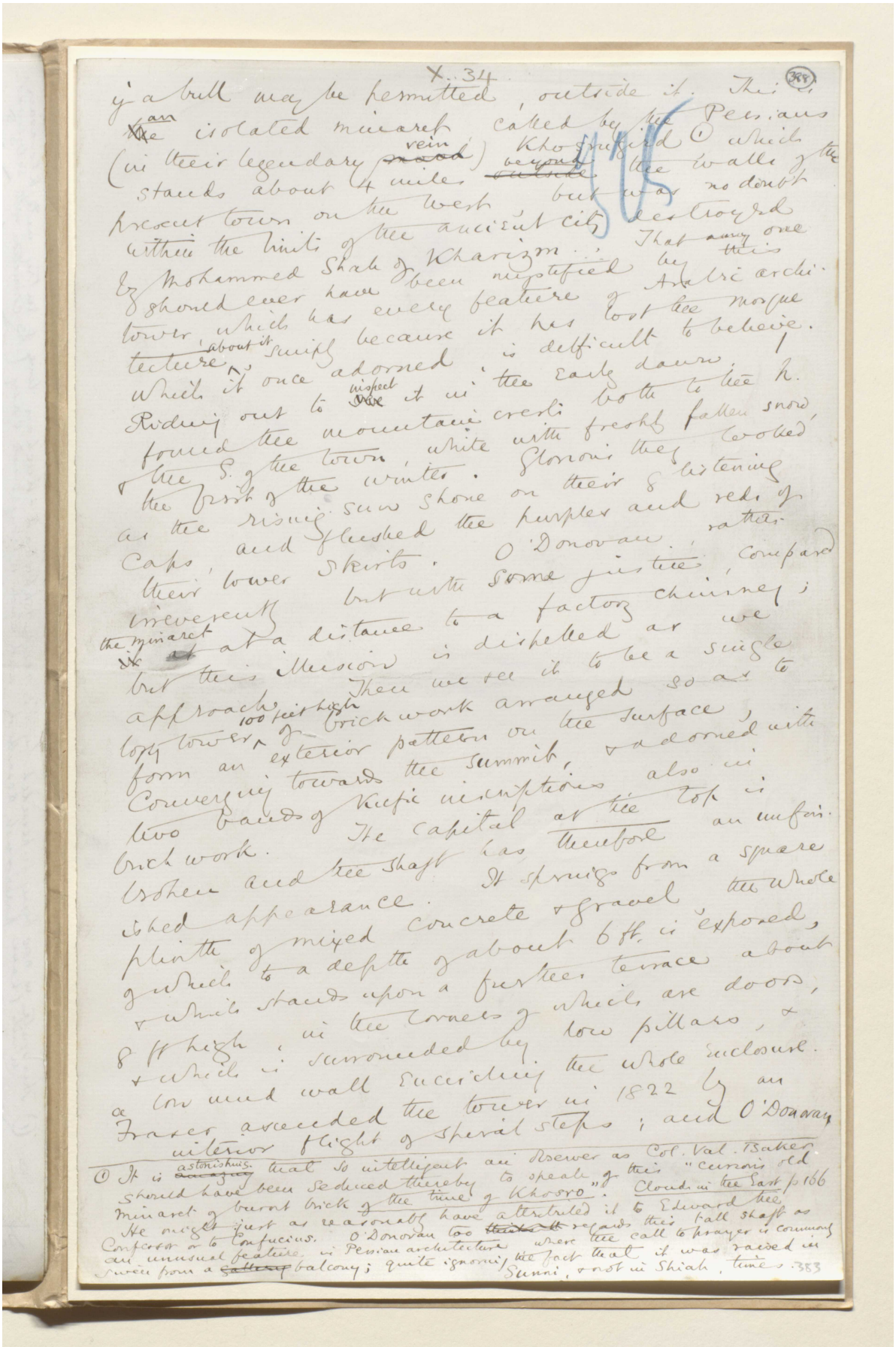

X. 34

388

y a bull may be permitted, outside it. The
the isolated minaret called by the Persians
(in their legendary vein) Kho-Sha-Gird ① which
stands about 4 miles beyond the walls of the
present town on the west, but in no doubt
within the limits of the ancient city destroyed
by Mohammed Shah of Kharizm. That any one
should ever have been misled by this
tower, which has every feature of Arabic archi-
tecture about it, simply because it has lost the mosque
which it once adorned, is difficult to believe.
Riding out to respect it in the early dawn,
found the mountains overlooking both to the N.
& the S. of the town, white with freshly fallen snow,
as the rising sun shone on their & listening
caps, and flushed the purples and reds of
their lower skirts. O'Donovan, rather
irreverently but with some justice, compared
the minaret at a distance to a factory chimney;
but this illusion is dispelled as we
approach. Then we see it to be a single
top tower of brick work arranged so as to
form an exterior pattern on the surface,
converging towards the summit, & adorned with
two bands of Kufic inscriptions also in
brick work. The capital at the top is
ushed and the shaft has therefore an unfin-
shed appearance. It springs from a square
plinth of mixed concrete & gravel the whole
which to a depth of about 6 ft is exposed,
& which stands upon a further terrace about
8 ft high: in the corners of which are doors,
& which is surrounded by low pillars, &
a low mud wall encircling the whole enclosure.
Fraser ascended the tower in 1822 by an
interior flight of spiral steps; and O'Donovan

① It is astonishing that so intelligent an observer as Col. Val. Baker should have been seduced thereby to speak of this "ceramic old minaret of burnt brick of the time of Khosro". Cloud in the East p 166
He might just as reasonably have attributed it to Edward the Confessor or to Confucius. O'Donovan too regards this tall shaft as an unusual feature in Persian architecture where the call to prayer is commonly given from a balcony; quite ignoring the fact that it was raised in Sunni, & not in Shiah, times. 383

المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة
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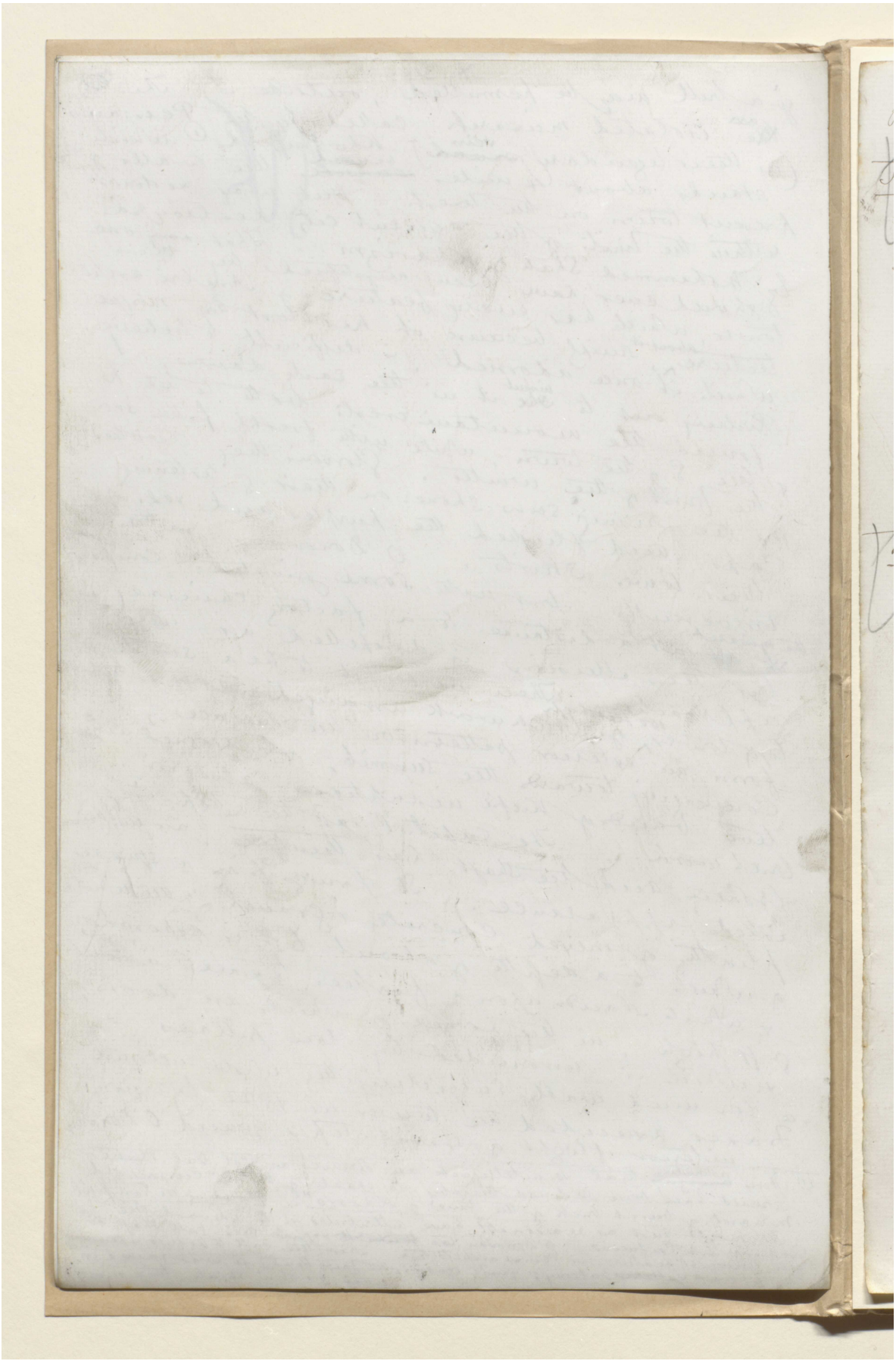

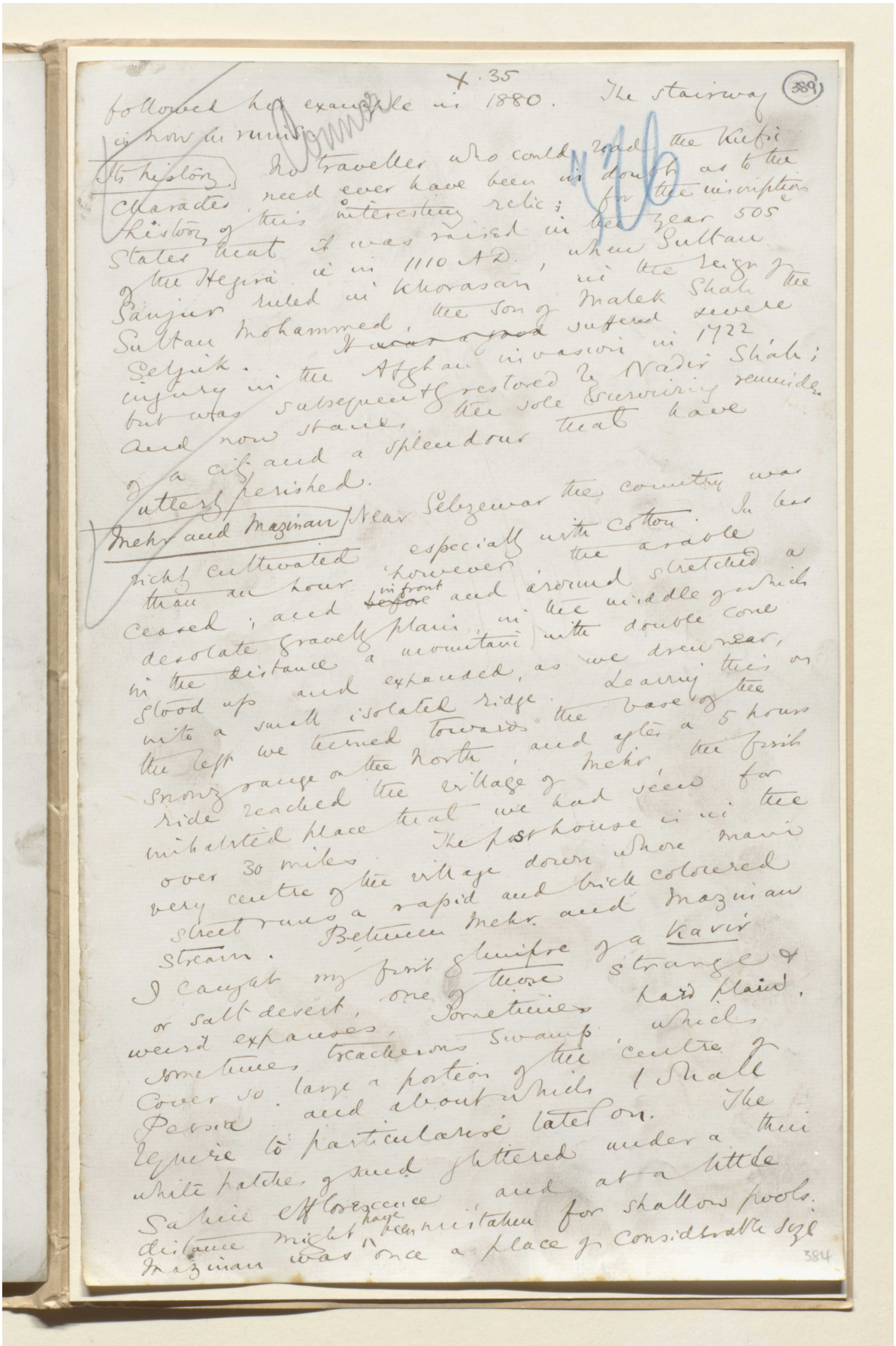

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X.35

(389)

followed his example in 1880. The stairway is now in ruins.

Its history. No traveller who could read the Kufic Character need ever have been in doubt as to the history of this interesting relic; for the inscription states that it was raised in the year 505 of the Hegira i.e. in 1110 A.D., when Sultan Sanjur ruled in Khorasan in the reign of Sultan Mohammed, the son of Malek Shah the Seljuk. It ~~was a good~~ suffered severe injury in the Afghan invasion in 1722 but was subsequently restored by Nadir Shah; and now stands the sole surviving reminder of a city and a splendour that have utterly perished.

Mehr and Mazinan. Near Sebzewar the country was richly cultivated especially with cotton. In less than an hour however the arable ceased; and ~~before~~ in front and around stretched a desolate gravelly plain in the middle of which in the distance a mountain with double cone stood up and expanded, as we drew near, into a small isolated ridge. Leaving this on the left we turned towards the base of the snowy range on the North, and after a 5 hours ride reached the village of Mehr, the first inhabited place that we had seen for over 30 miles. The post house is in the very centre of the village down whose main street runs a rapid and brick coloured stream. Between Mehr and Mazinan I caught my first glimpse of a Kavir or salt desert, one of those strange & weird expanses, sometimes hard plain, sometimes treacherous swamp, which cover so large a portion of the centre of Persia and about which I shall require to particularise later on. The white patches of sand glittered under a thin saline efflorescence and at a little distance might have been mistaken for shallow pools. Mazinan was once a place of considerable size

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المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة
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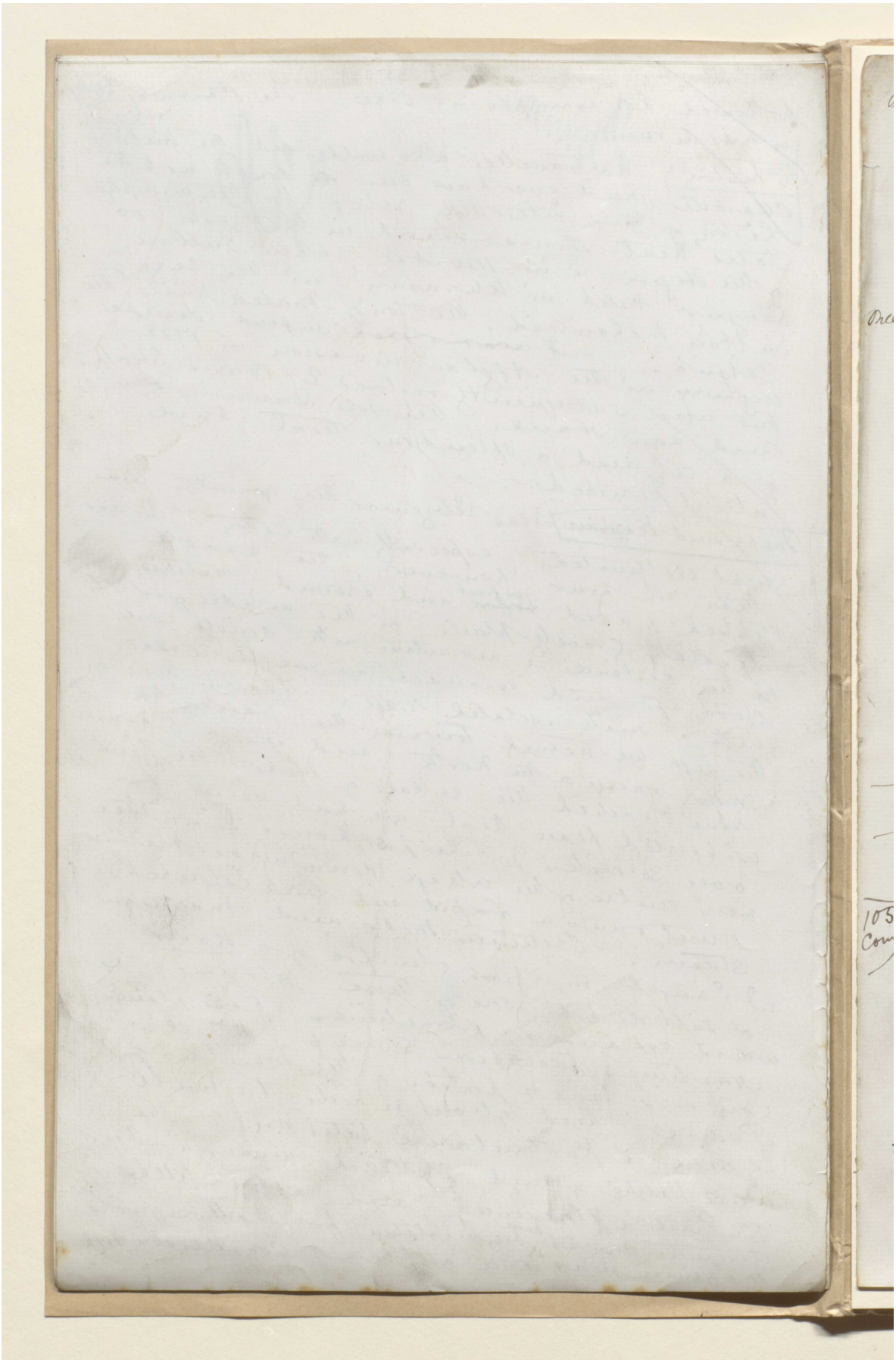

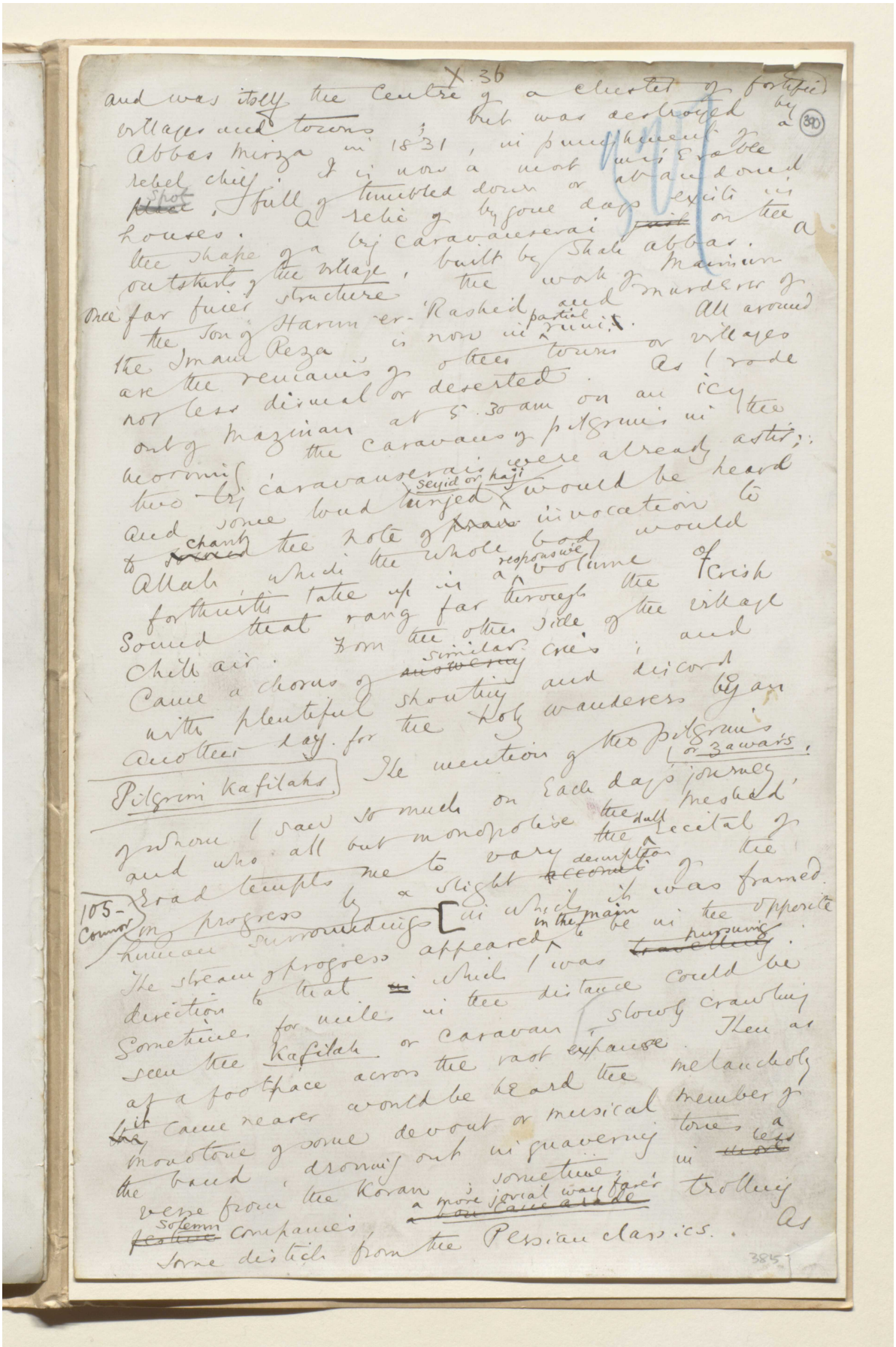

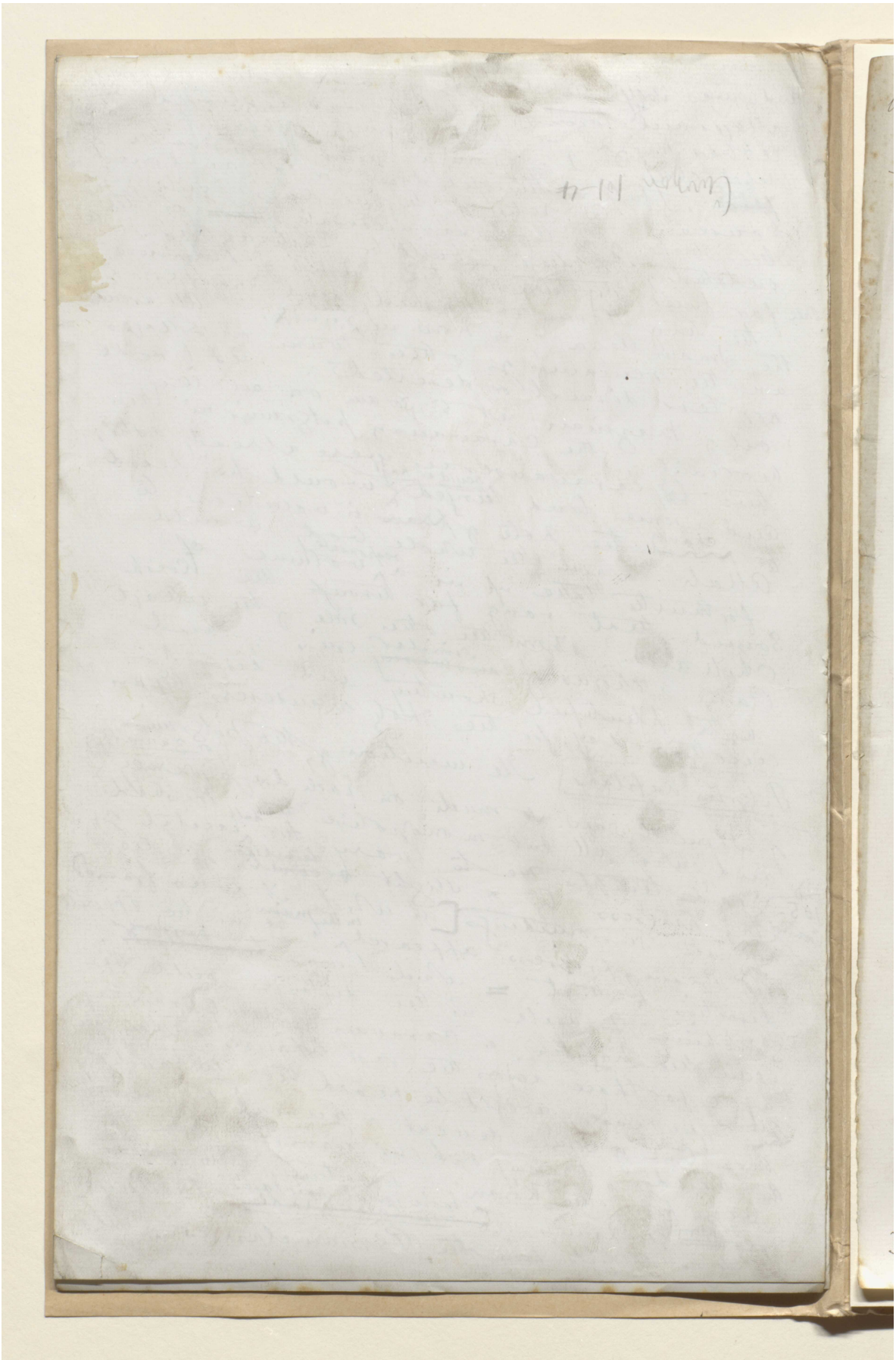

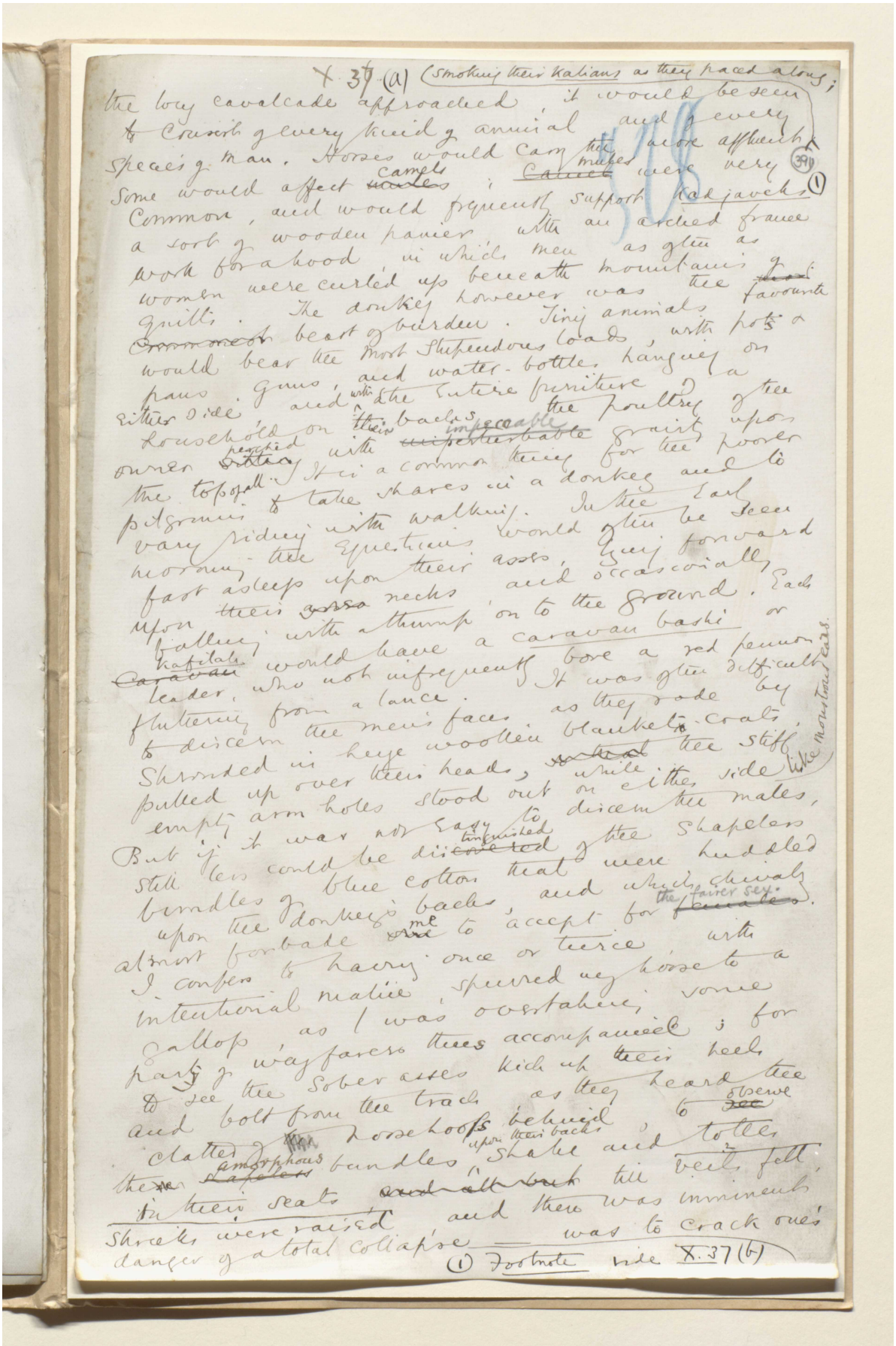

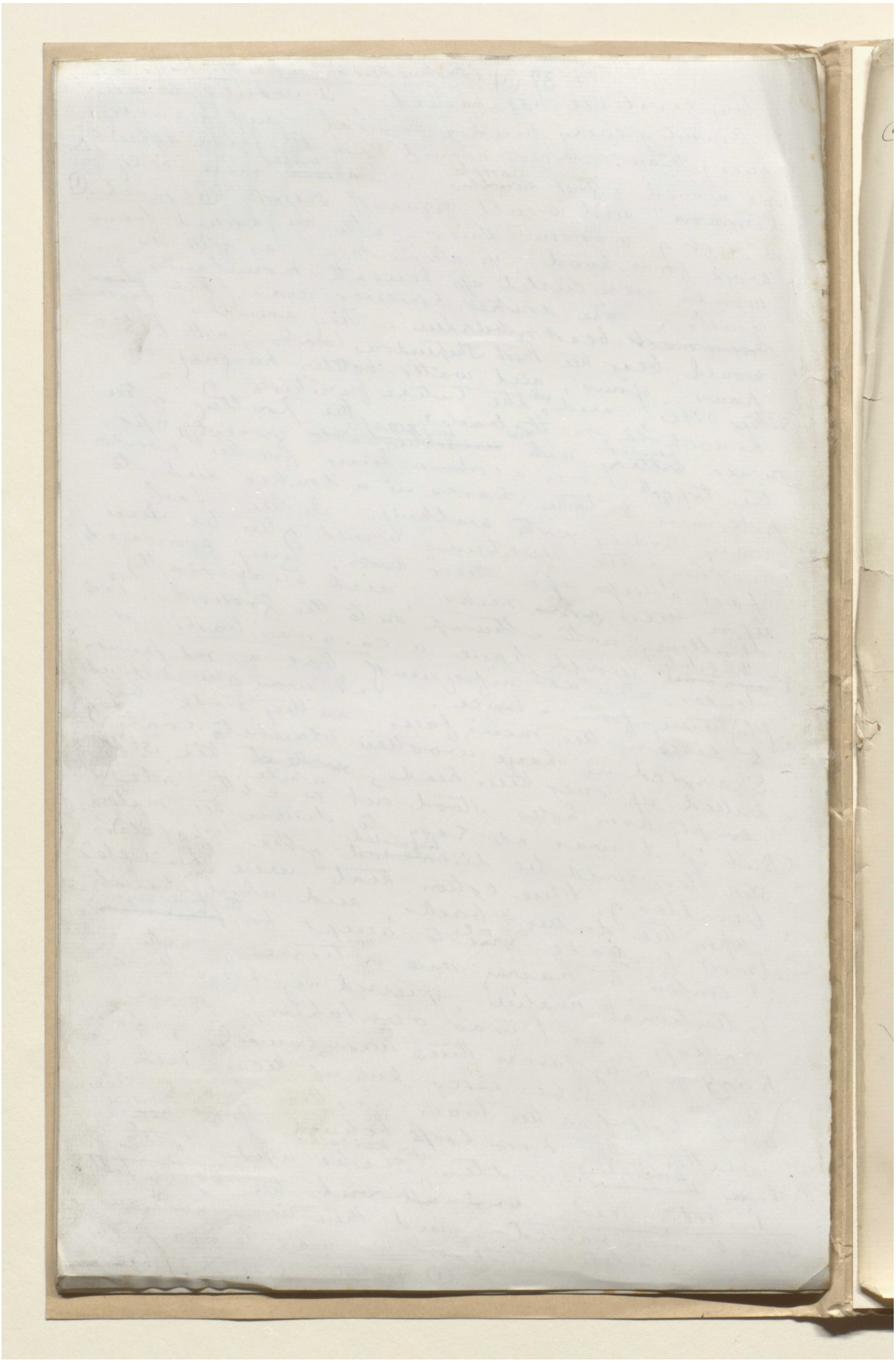

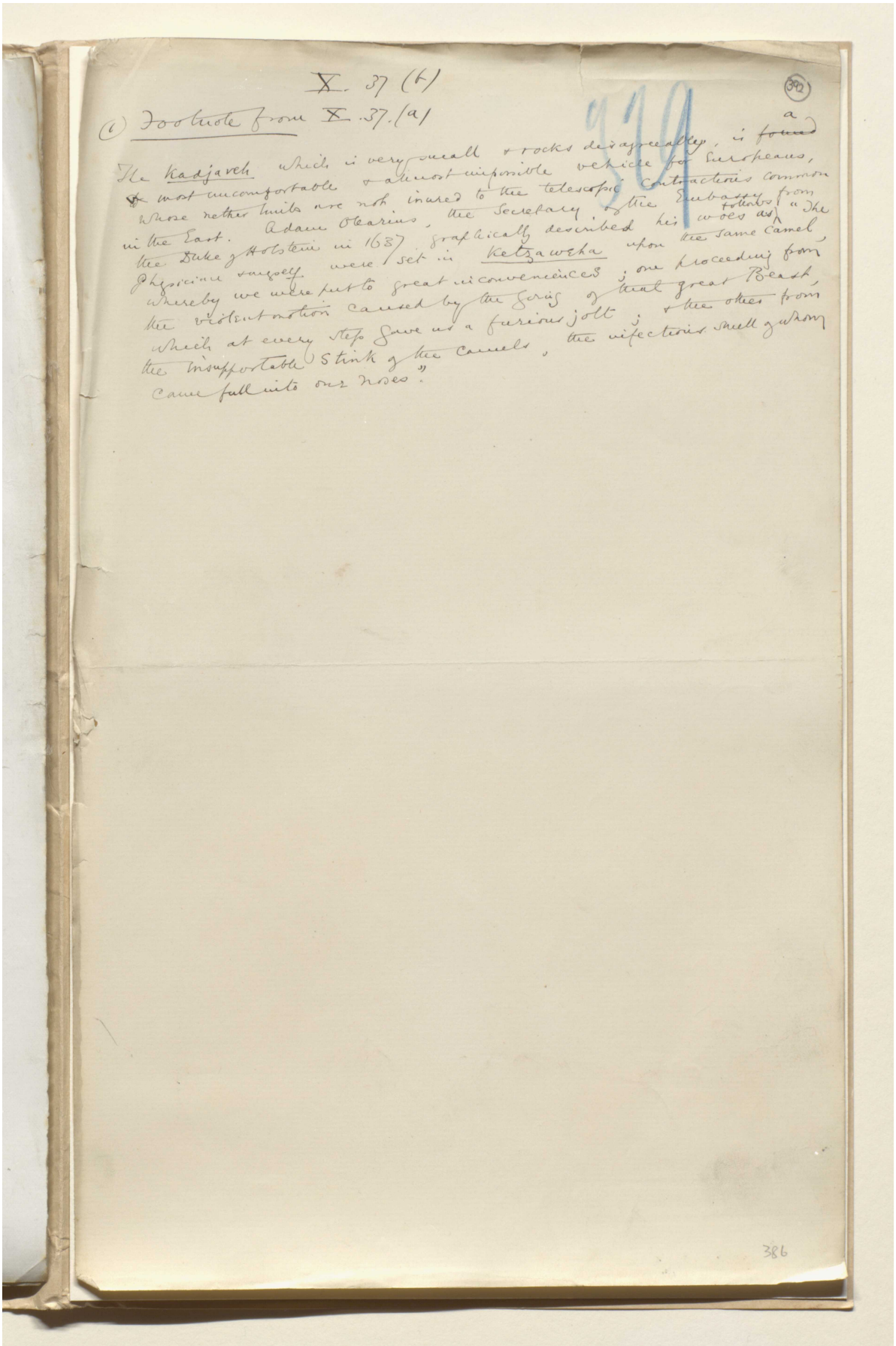

X. 37 (b)

(392)

(1) Footnote from X. 37. (a)

The Kadjaveh which is very small & rocks disagreeably, is a most uncomfortable & almost impossible vehicle for Europeans, whose nether limbs are not inured to the telescopic contractions common in the East. Adam Olearius, the Secretary of the Embassy from the Duke of Holstein in 1637, graphically described his woes as follows: "The Physician & myself were set in Ketzaweha upon the same camel, whereby we were put to great inconveniences; one proceeding from the violent motion caused by the going of that great Beast, which at every step gave us a furious jolt; & the other from the insupportable stink of the camels, the infectious smell of whom came full into our noses."

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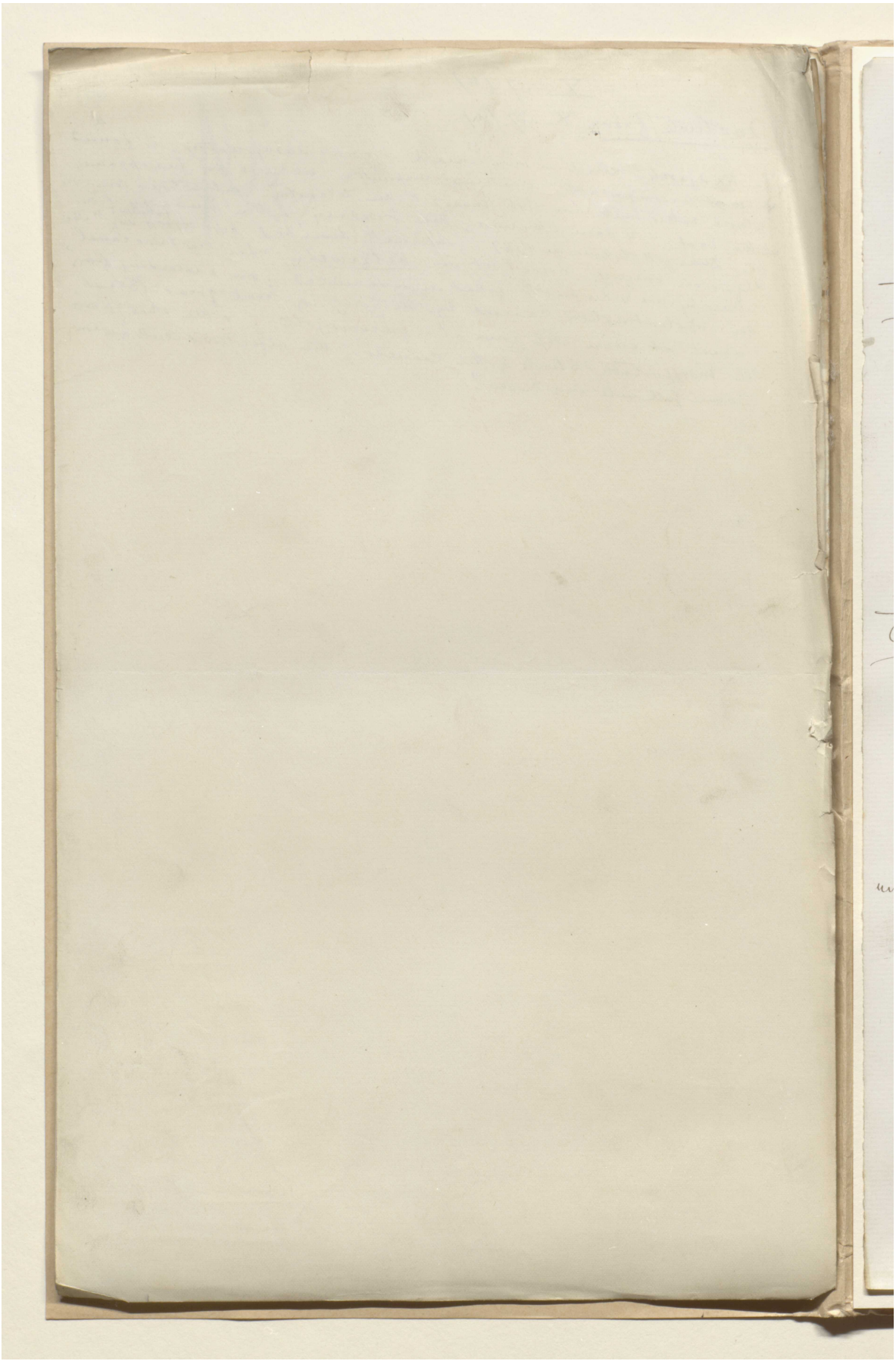
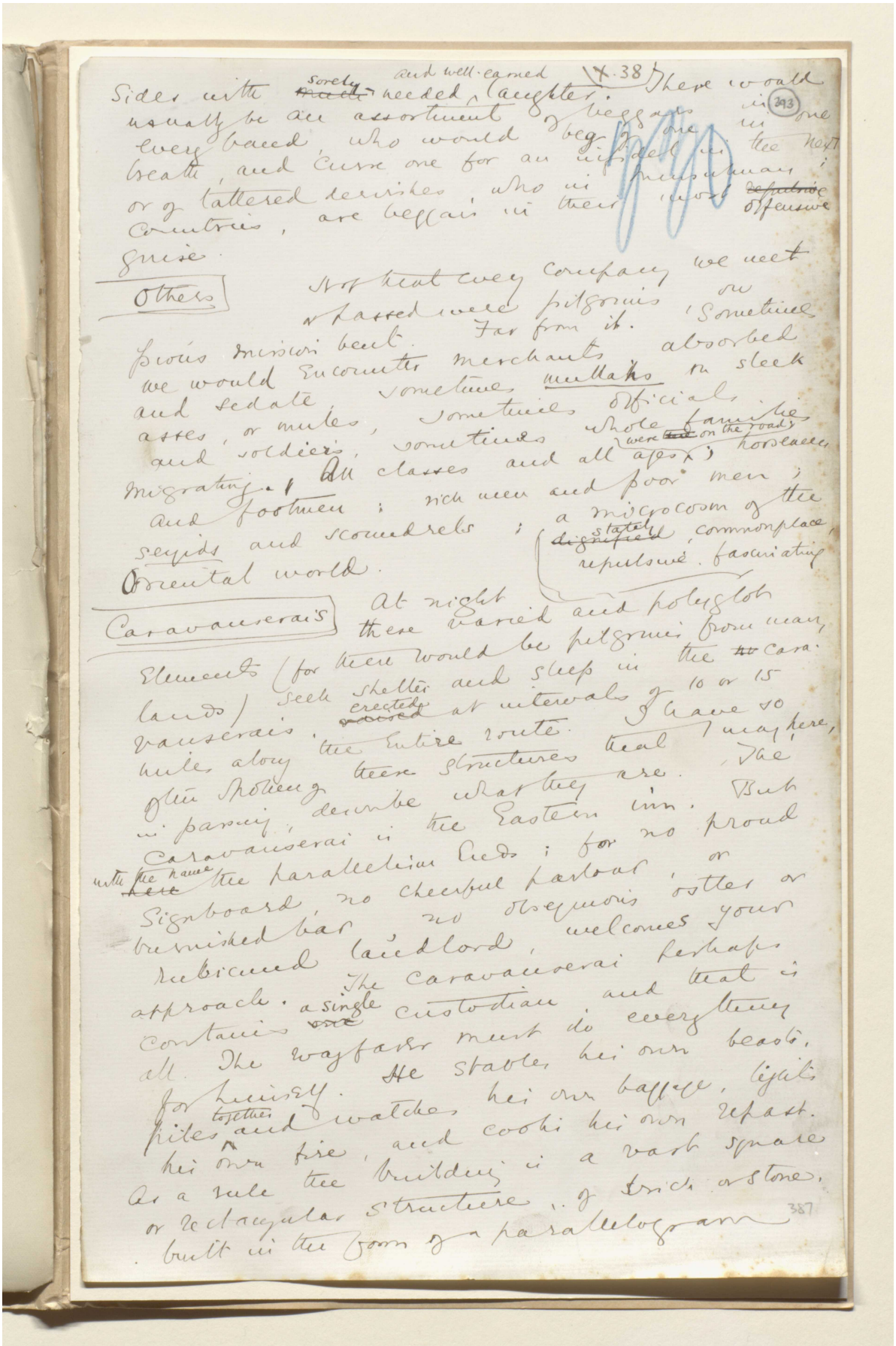
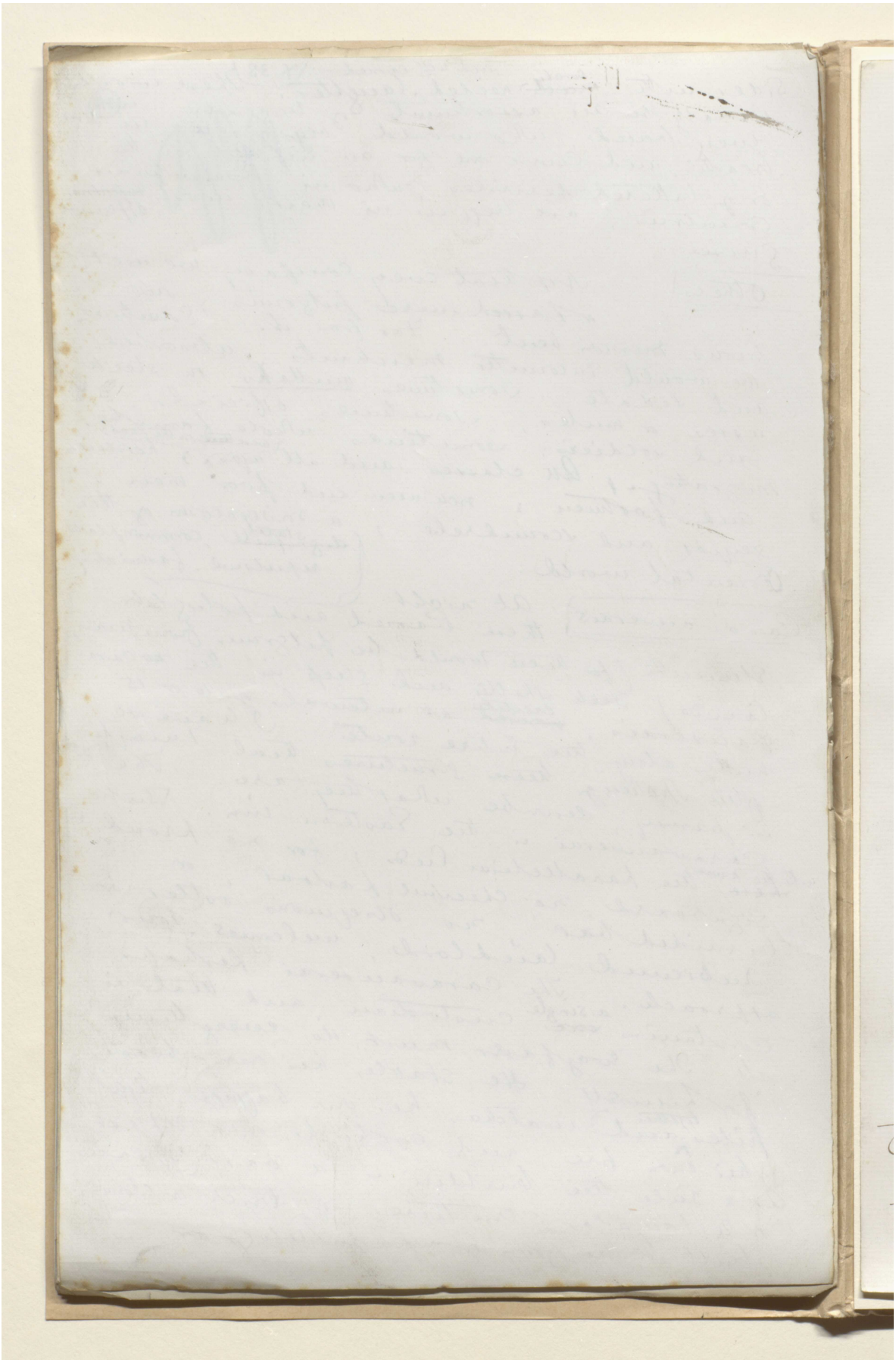


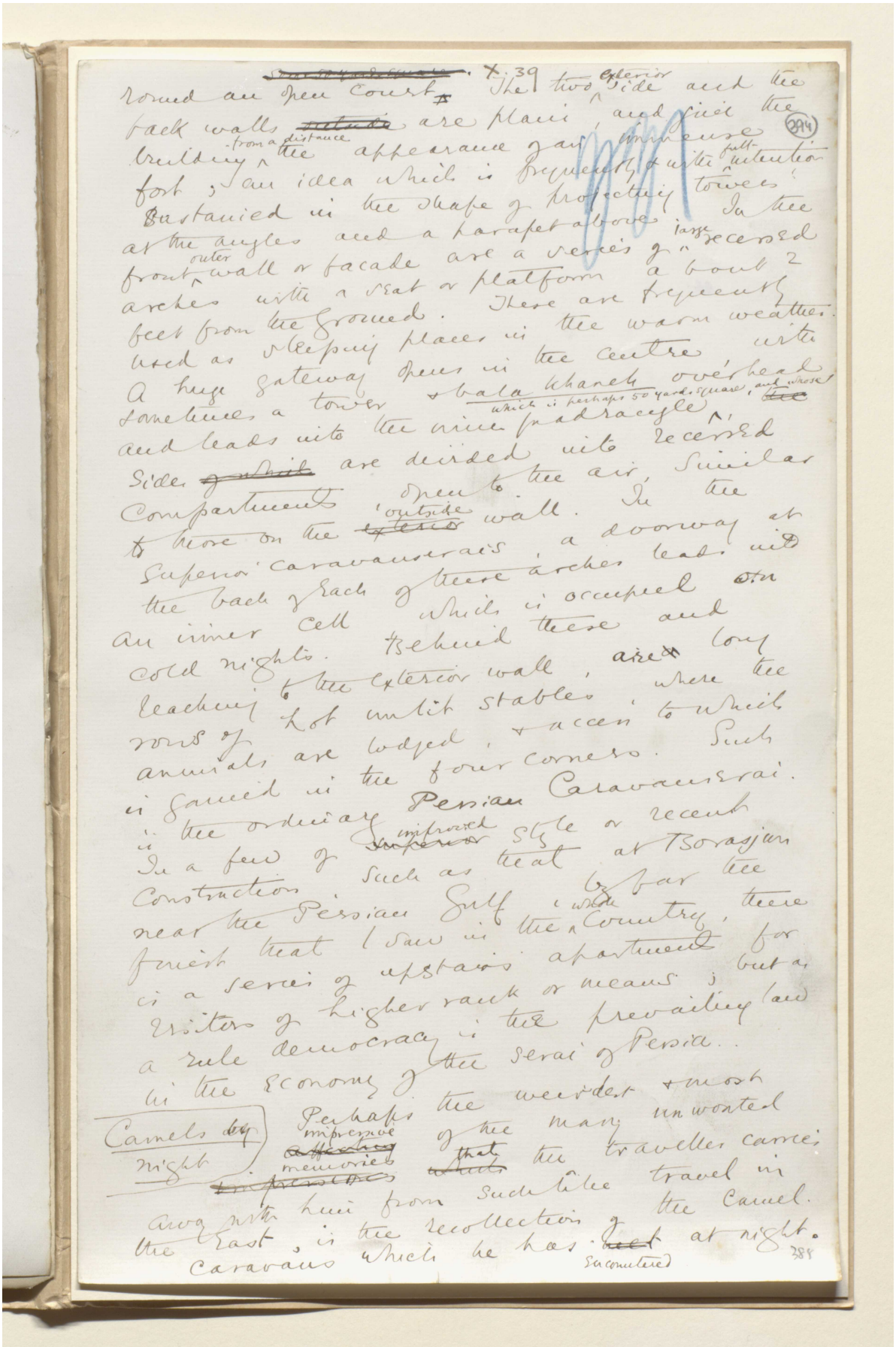


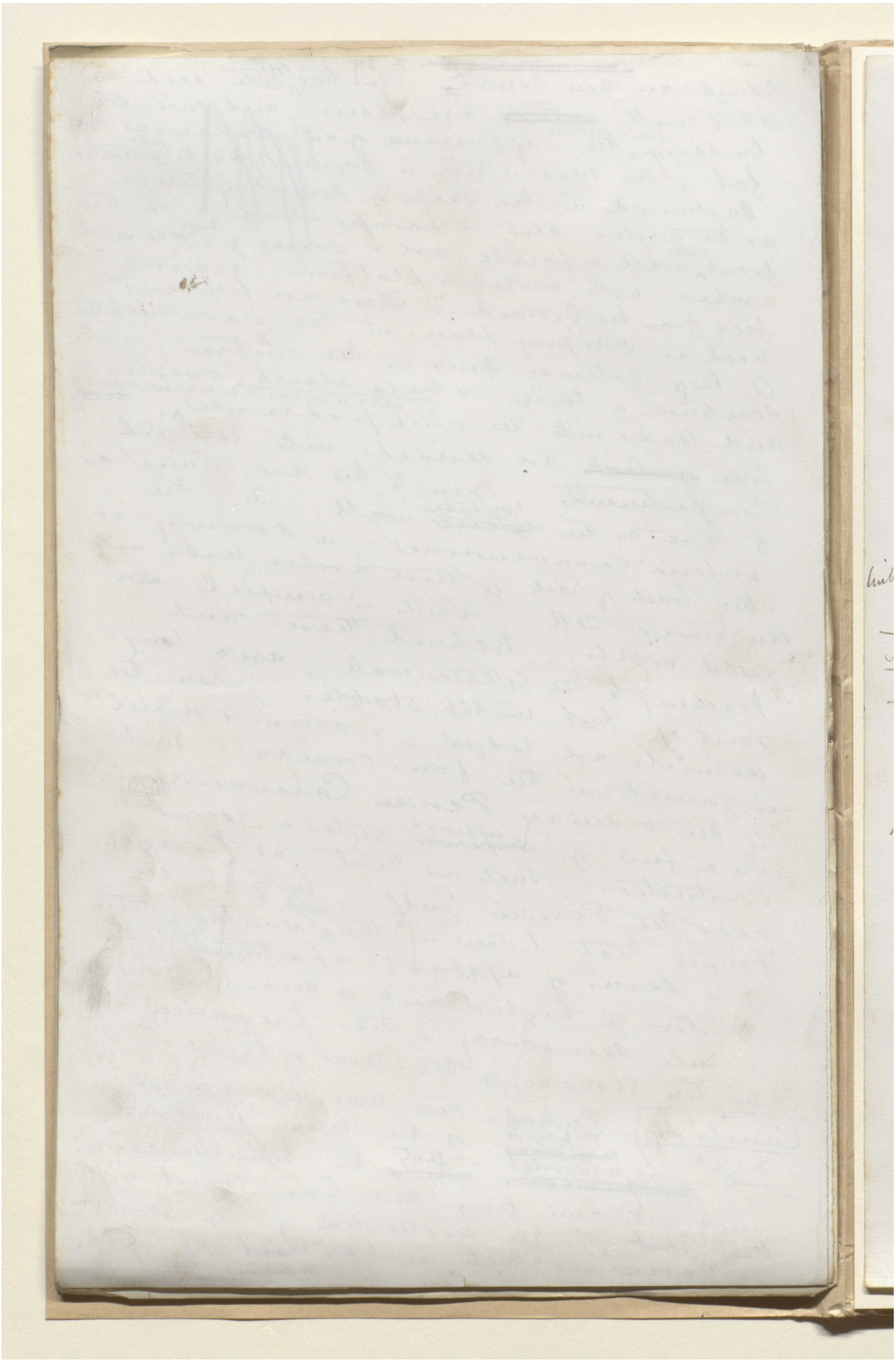
Sides with ~~much~~ sorely needed and well-earned laughter. (X.38) There would usually be an assortment of beggars in every band, who would beg of one in one breath, and curse one for an infidel in the next; or of tattered derivishes, who in Mussulman countries, are beggars in their most ~~repulsive~~ offensive guise. (393)

Others Not that every company we met or passed were pilgrims on pious mission bent. Far from it. Sometimes we would encounter merchants, absorbed and sedate, sometimes mullahs on sleek asses, or mules, sometimes officials and soldiers, sometimes whole families migrating. All classes and all ages were ~~the~~ on the road; horseman and footmen; rich men and poor men; seyids and scoundrels; a microcosm of the Oriental world. (~~dignified~~ stately, commonplace, repulsive, fascinating)

Caravanserais At night these varied and polyglot elements (for there would be pilgrims from many lands) seek shelter and sleep in the ~~to~~ caravanserais, ~~raised~~ erected at intervals of 10 or 15 miles along the entire route. I have so often spoken of these structures that I may here, in passing, describe what they are. The caravanserai is the Eastern inn. But with the name ~~here~~ the parallelism ends; for no proud signboard, no cheerful parlour, or burnished bar, no obsequious ostler or rubicund landlord, welcomes your approach. The caravanserai perhaps contains a single ~~one~~ custodian and that is all. The wayfarer must do everything for himself. He stables his own beasts, piles together and watches his own baggage, lights his own fire, and cooks his own repast. As a rule the building is a vast square or rectangular structure, of brick or stone, built in the form of a parallelogram. 387







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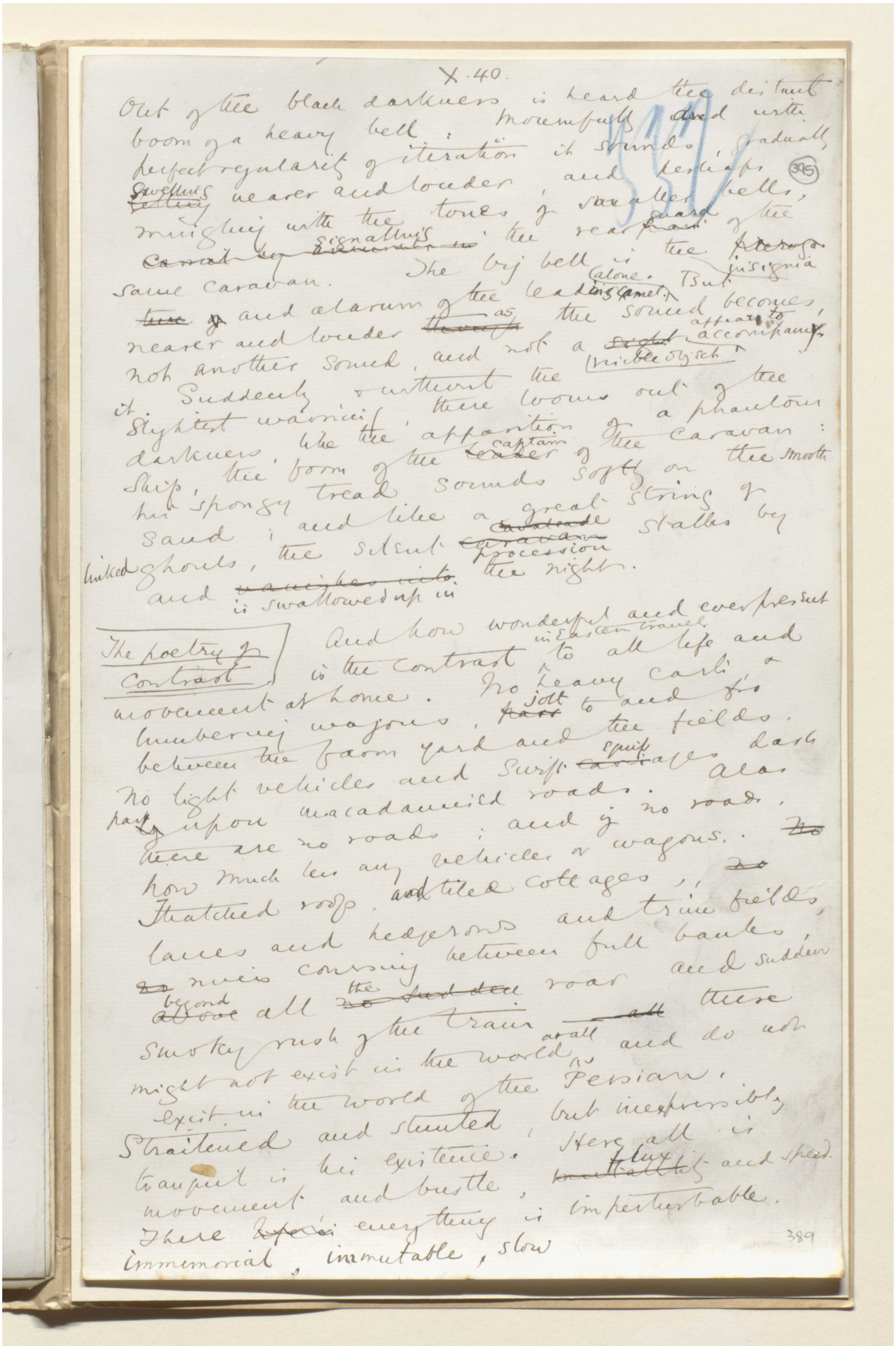

X.40.

Out of the black darkness is heard the distant boom of a heavy bell: mournfully and with perfect regularity of iteration it sounds, gradually swelling nearer and louder, and perhaps mingling with the tones of smaller bells, signalling the rear guard of the same caravan. The big bell is the insignia and alarum of the leading camel alone. But nearer and louder as the sound becomes, not another sound, and not a visible object appears to accompany it. Suddenly & without the slightest warning, there looms out of the darkness, like the apparition of a phantom ship, the form of the captain of the caravan: his spongy tread sounds softly on the smooth sand; and like a great string of linked ghouls, the silent procession stalks by and is swallowed up in the night.

The poetry of contrast

And how wonderful and ever present is the contrast in Eastern travel to all life and movement at home. No heavy carts & lumbering wagons, jolt to and fro between the farm yard and the fields. No light vehicles and swift equipages dash part upon macadamised roads. Alas there are no roads; and if no roads, how much less any vehicles or wagons. Thatched roofs, and tiled cottages, lanes and hedgerows and trim fields, rivers coursing between full banks, beyond all the roar and sudden smoky rush of the train these might not exist in the world at all and do not exist in the world of the Persian. Straitened and stunted, but inexpressibly tranquil is his existence. Here all is movement and bustle, flux and speed. There everything is imperturbable, immemorial, immutable, slow

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المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة
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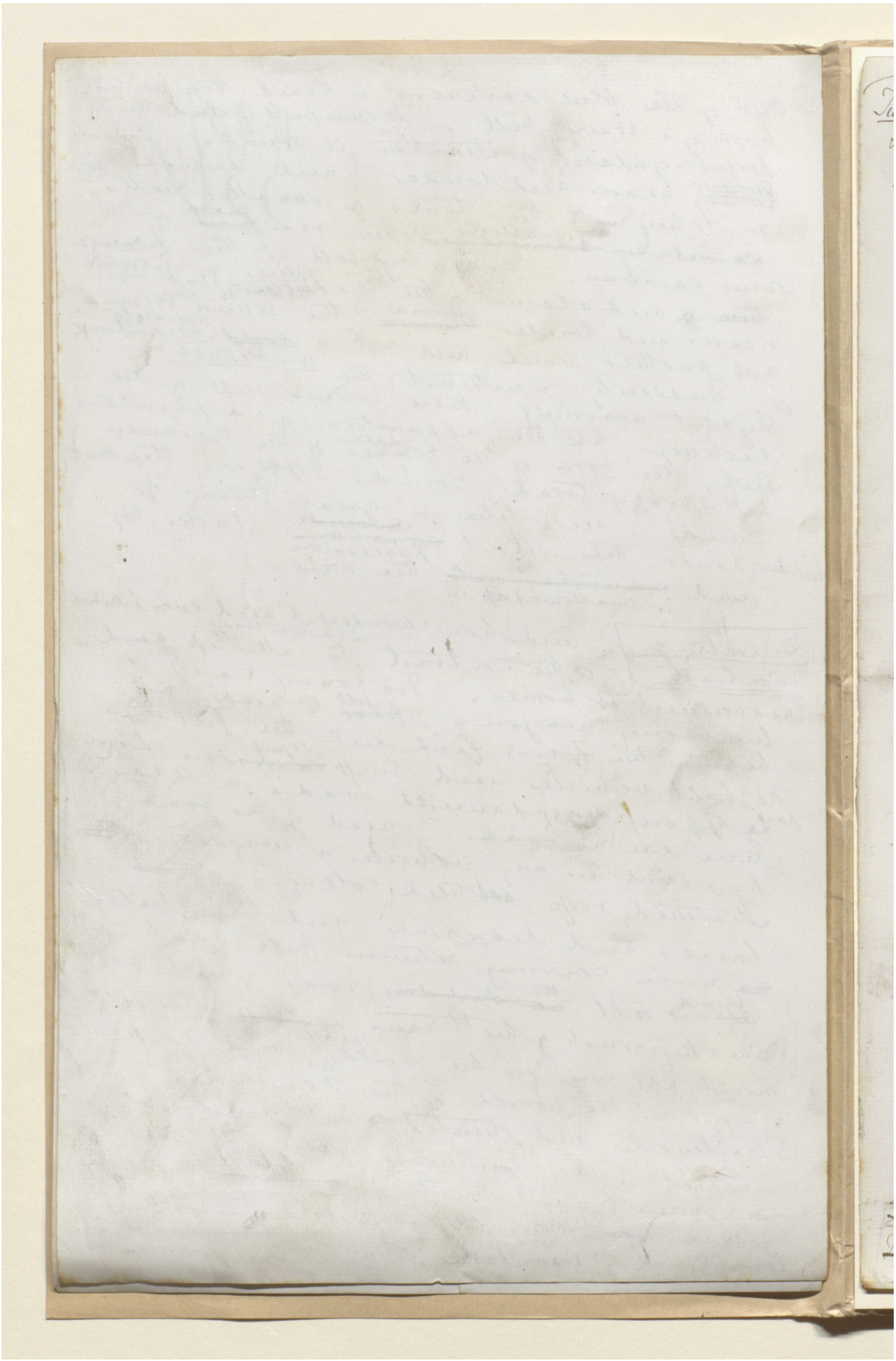

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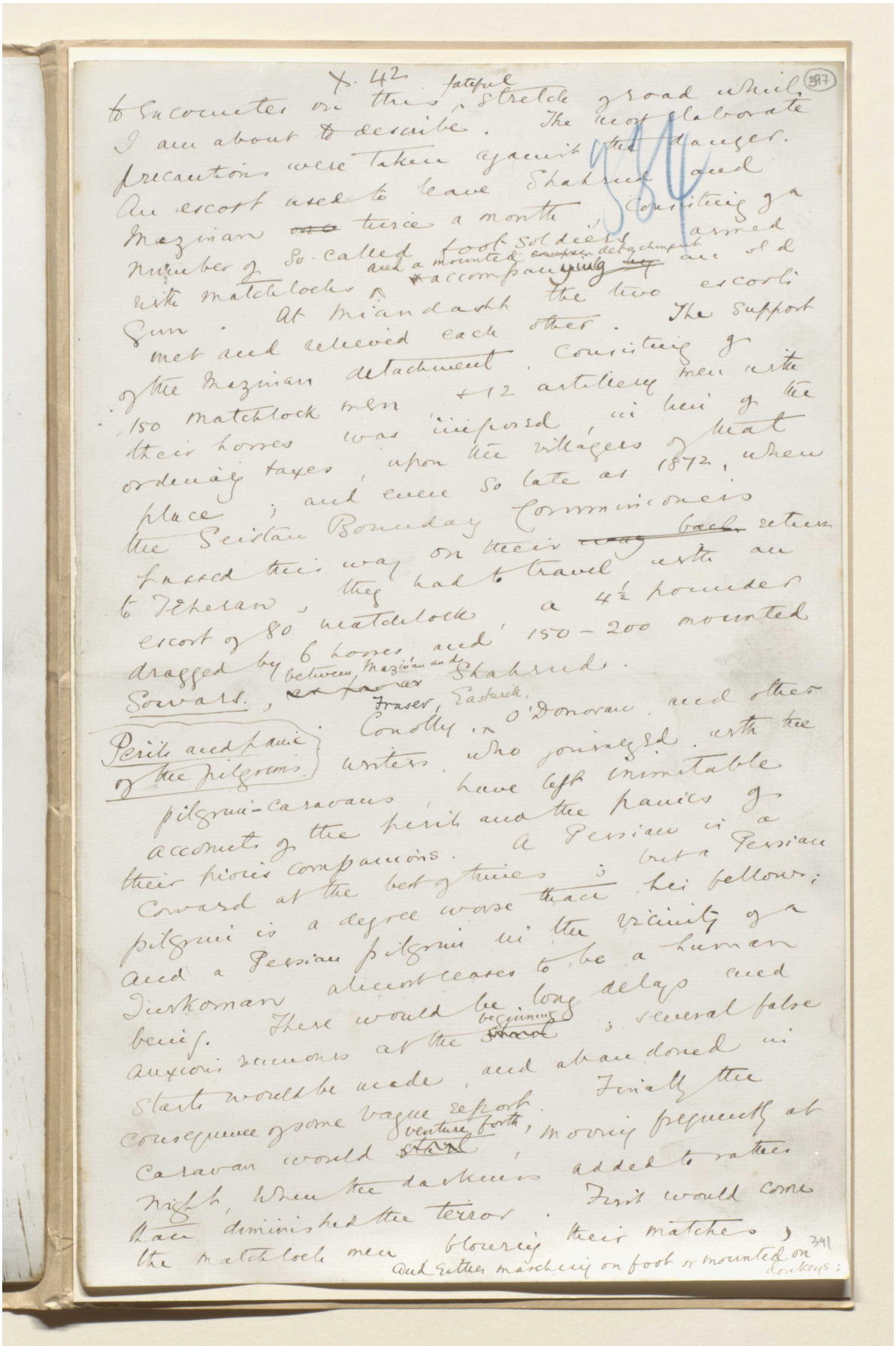

X. 42 (397)

to encounter on this fateful stretch of road which I am about to describe. The most elaborate precautions were taken against the danger. An escort used to leave Shahrud and Mazinan ~~one~~ twice a month, consisting of a number of so-called foot soldiers armed with matchlocks and a mounted ~~company~~ detachment accompanying ~~by~~ an old gun. At Miandasht the two escorts met and relieved each other. The support of the Mazinan detachment, consisting of 150 matchlock men + 12 artillery men with their horses was imposed, in lieu of the ordinary taxes, upon the villagers of that place; and even so late as 1872, when the Seistan Boundary Commissioners passed this way on their ~~way~~ back return to Teheran, they had to travel with an escort of 80 matchlock, a 4½ pounder dragged by 6 horses and 150-200 mounted Sowars, between Mazinan and Shahrud.

Perils and panic of the pilgrims.

Conolly, Fraser, Eastwick, O'Donovan, and other writers who journeyed with the pilgrim-caravans have left inimitable accounts of the perils and the panics of their pious companions. A Persian is a coward at the best of times; but a Persian pilgrim is a degree worse than his fellow; and a Persian pilgrim in the vicinity of a Turkoman almost ceases to be a human being. There would be long delays and anxious rumours at the ~~start~~ beginning; several false starts would be made, and abandoned in consequence of some vague report. Finally the caravan would ~~start~~ venture forth, moving frequently at night, when the darkness added to rather than diminished the terror. First would come the matchlock men blowing their matches, and either marching on foot or mounted on donkeys;

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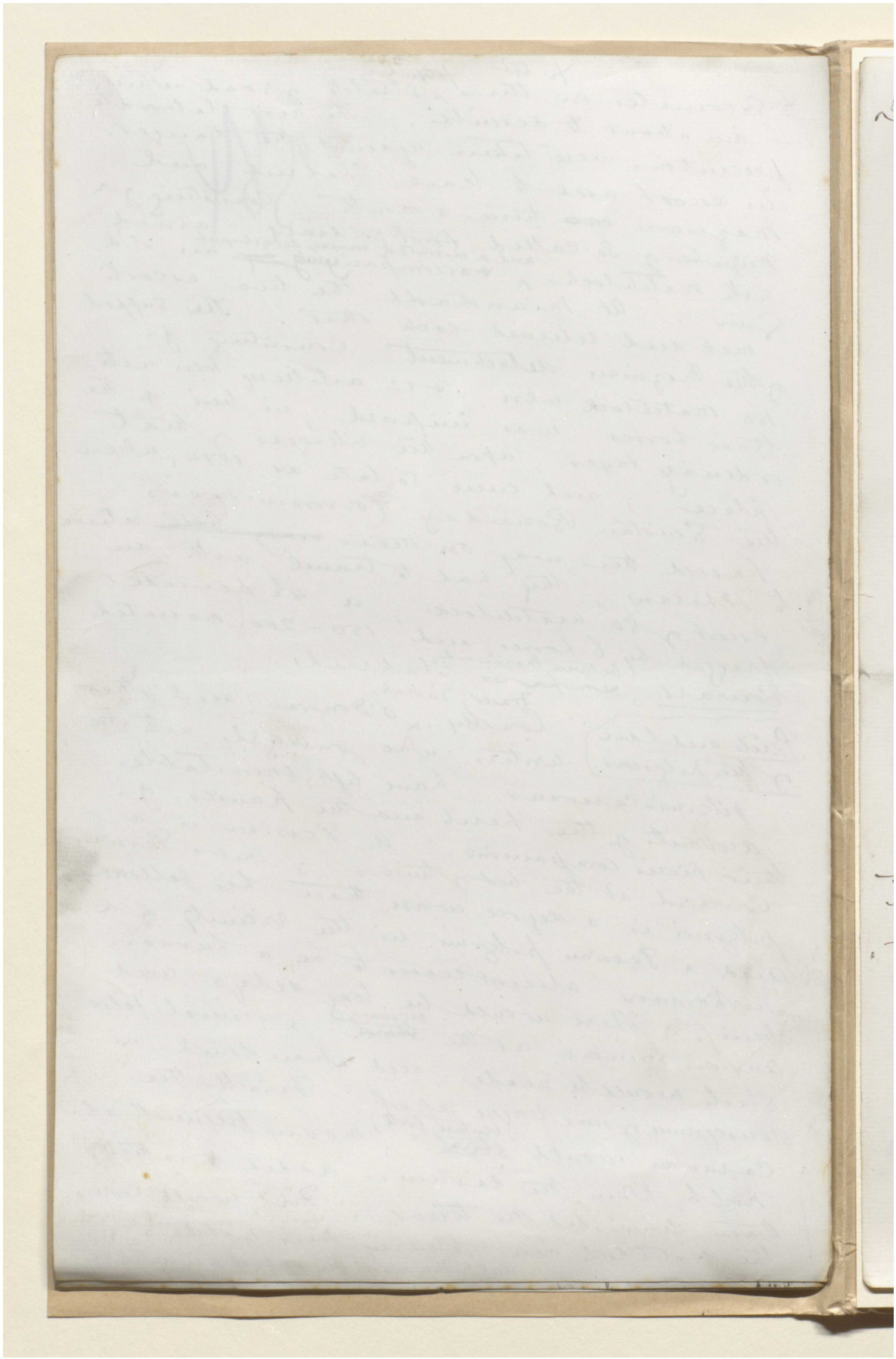

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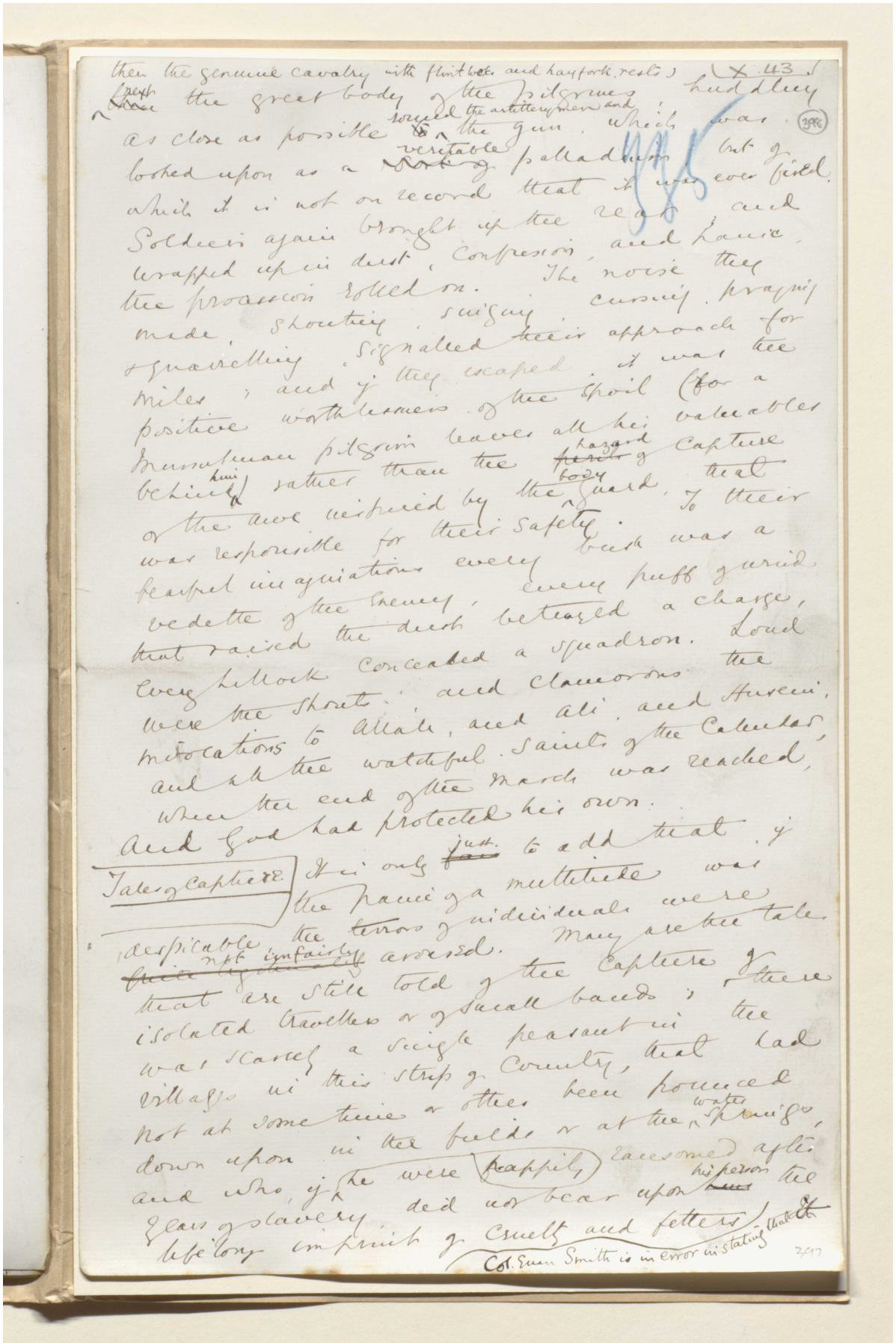

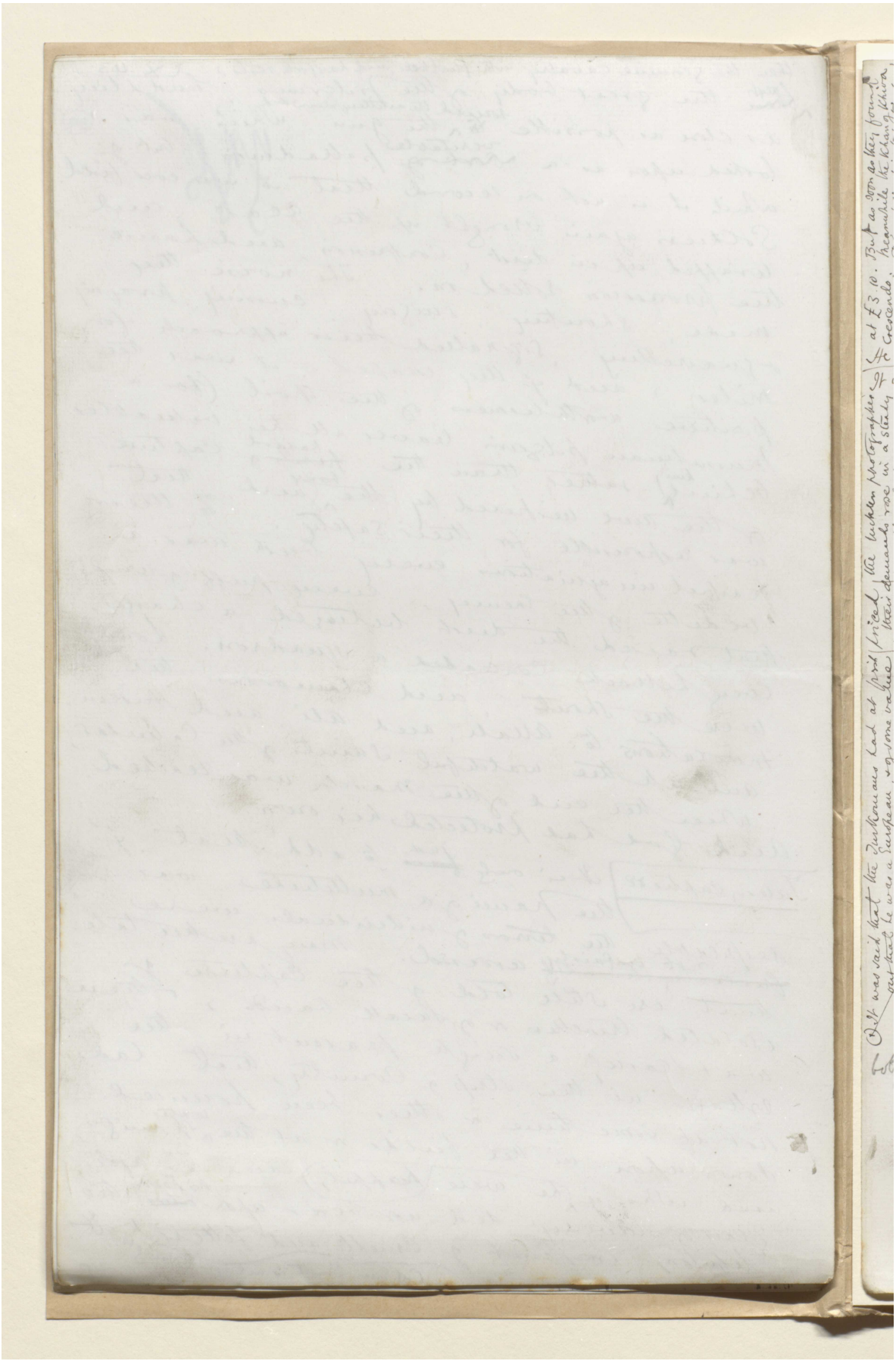

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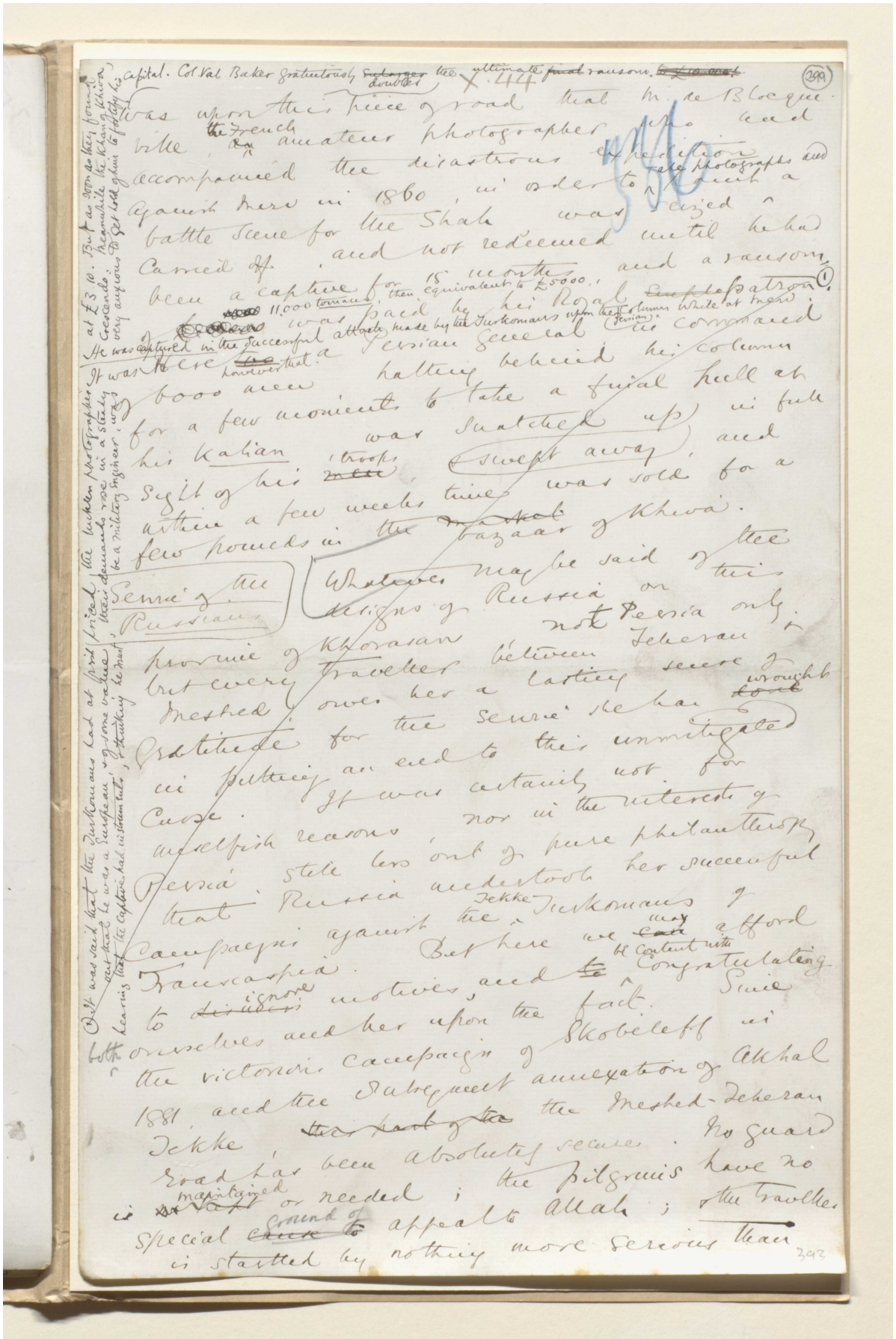

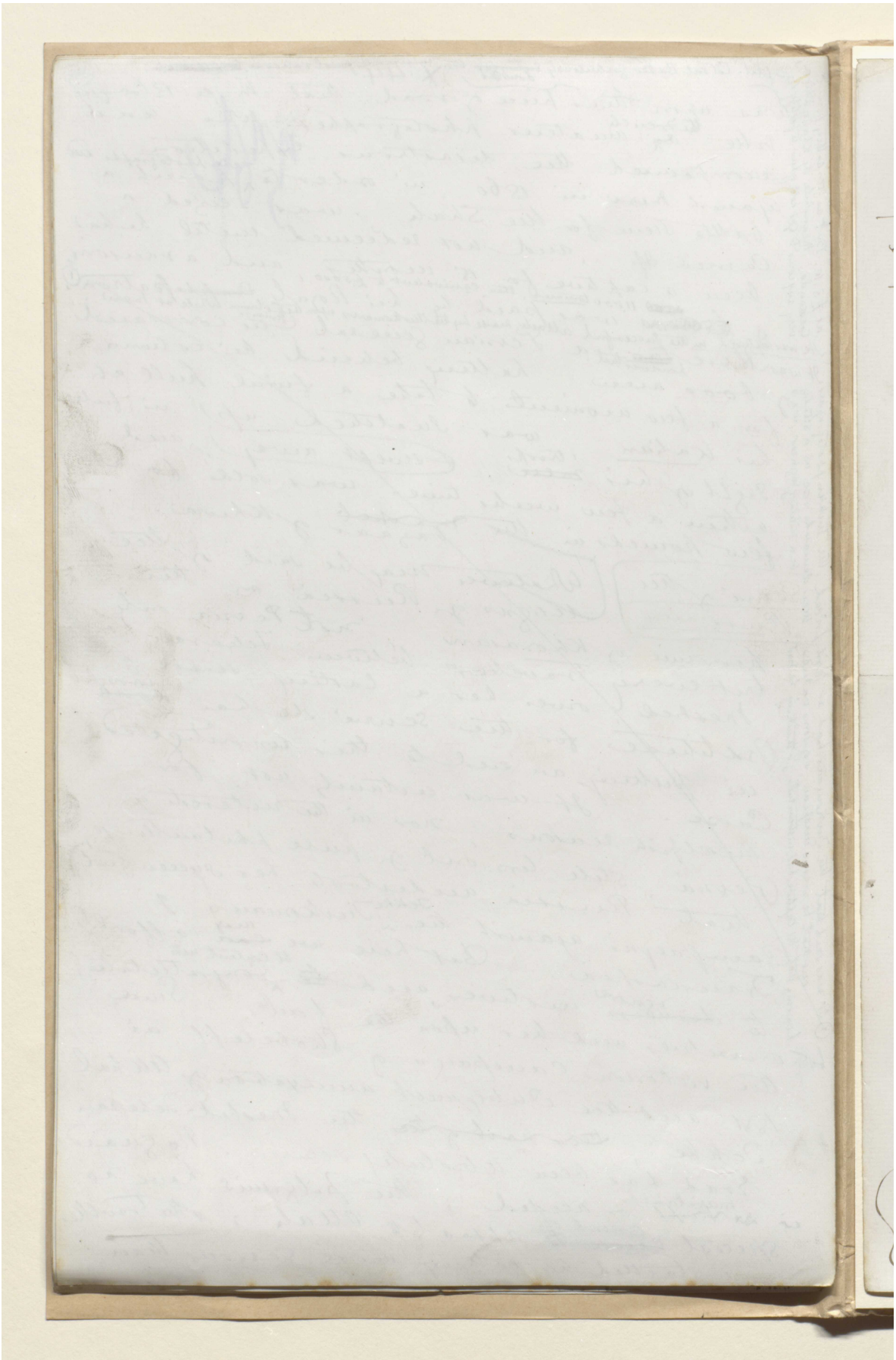

X.45

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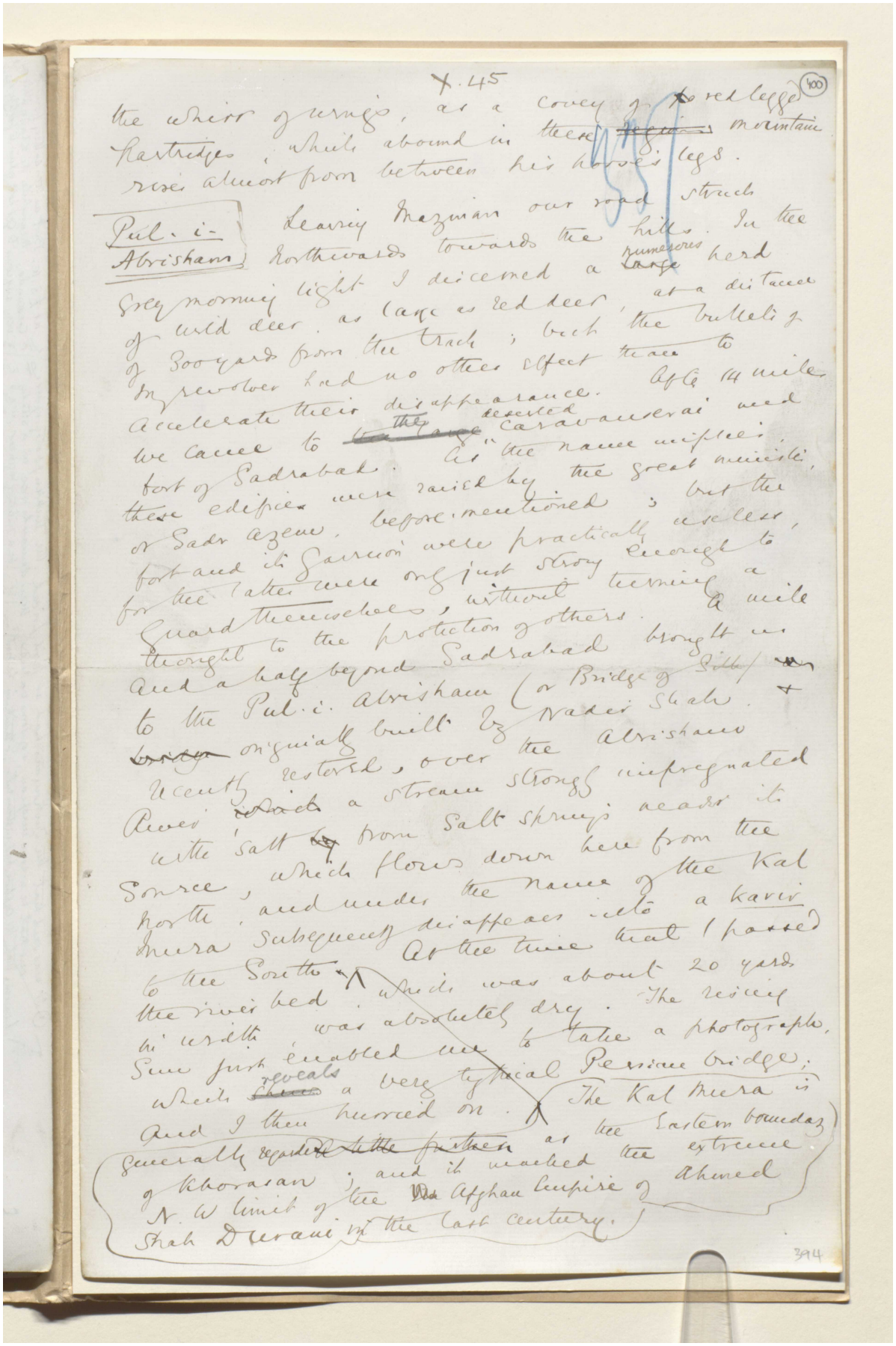

the whirr of wings, as a covey of red legged Partridges, which abound in these ~~regions~~ mountains rises almost from between his horse's legs.

Pul-i-Abrisham

Leaving Mazinan our road struck northwards towards the hills. In the grey morning light I discerned a ~~large~~ numerous herd of wild deer, as large as red deer, at a distance of 300 yards from the track; but the bullets of my revolver had no other effect than to accelerate their disappearance. After 14 miles we came to ~~the large~~ the deserted caravanserai and fort of Sadrabad. As the name implies, these edifices were raised by the great minister, or Sadr Azem, before mentioned; but the fort and its garrison were practically useless, for the latter were only just strong enough to guard themselves, without turning a thought to the protection of others. A mile and a half beyond Sadrabad brought us to the Pul-i-Abrisham (or Bridge of Sibb) ~~bridge~~ originally built by Nadir Shah, & recently restored, over the Abrisham River ~~which~~ a stream strongly impregnated with salt ~~by~~ from salt springs near its source, which flows down here from the north, and under the name of the Kal Mura subsequently disappears into a kavir to the South. At the time that I passed the river bed, which was about 20 yards in width, was absolutely dry. The rising sun just enabled me to take a photograph, which ~~shows~~ reveals a very typical Persian bridge; and I then hurried on. The Kal Mura is generally regarded ~~little further~~ as the Eastern boundary of Khorasan; and it marked the extreme N.W limit of the ~~Ma~~ Afghan Empire of Ahmed Shah Durani in the last century.

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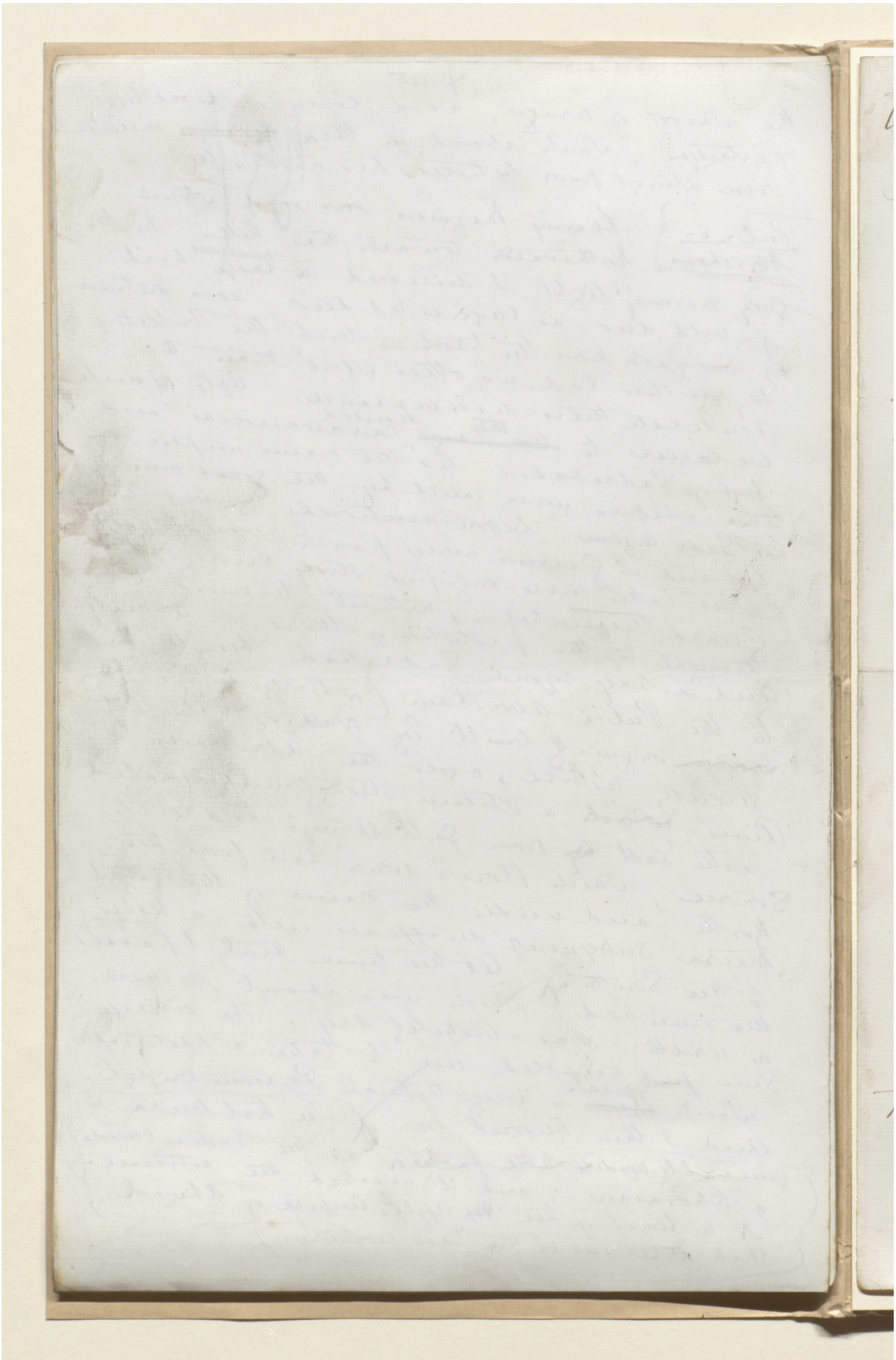
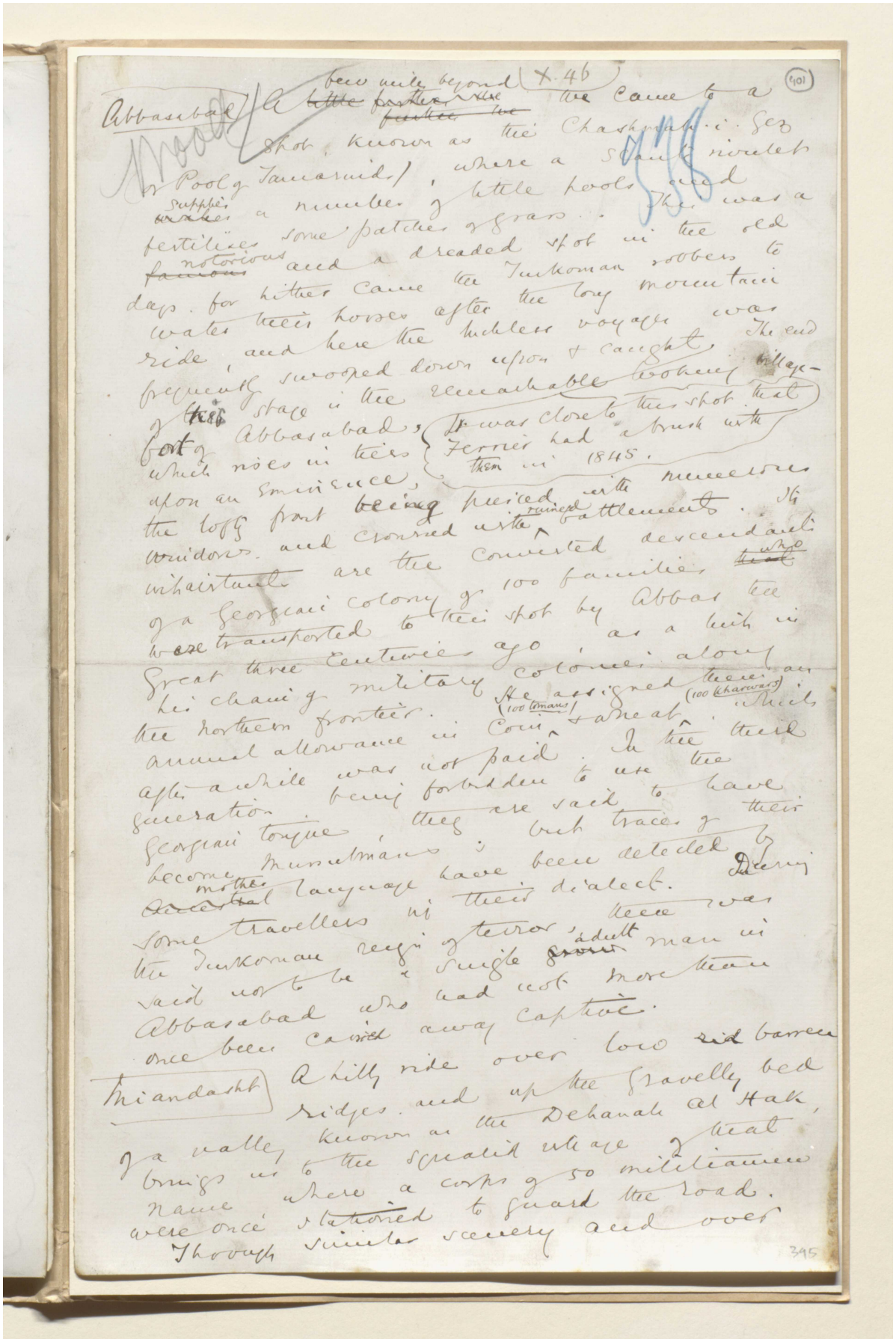
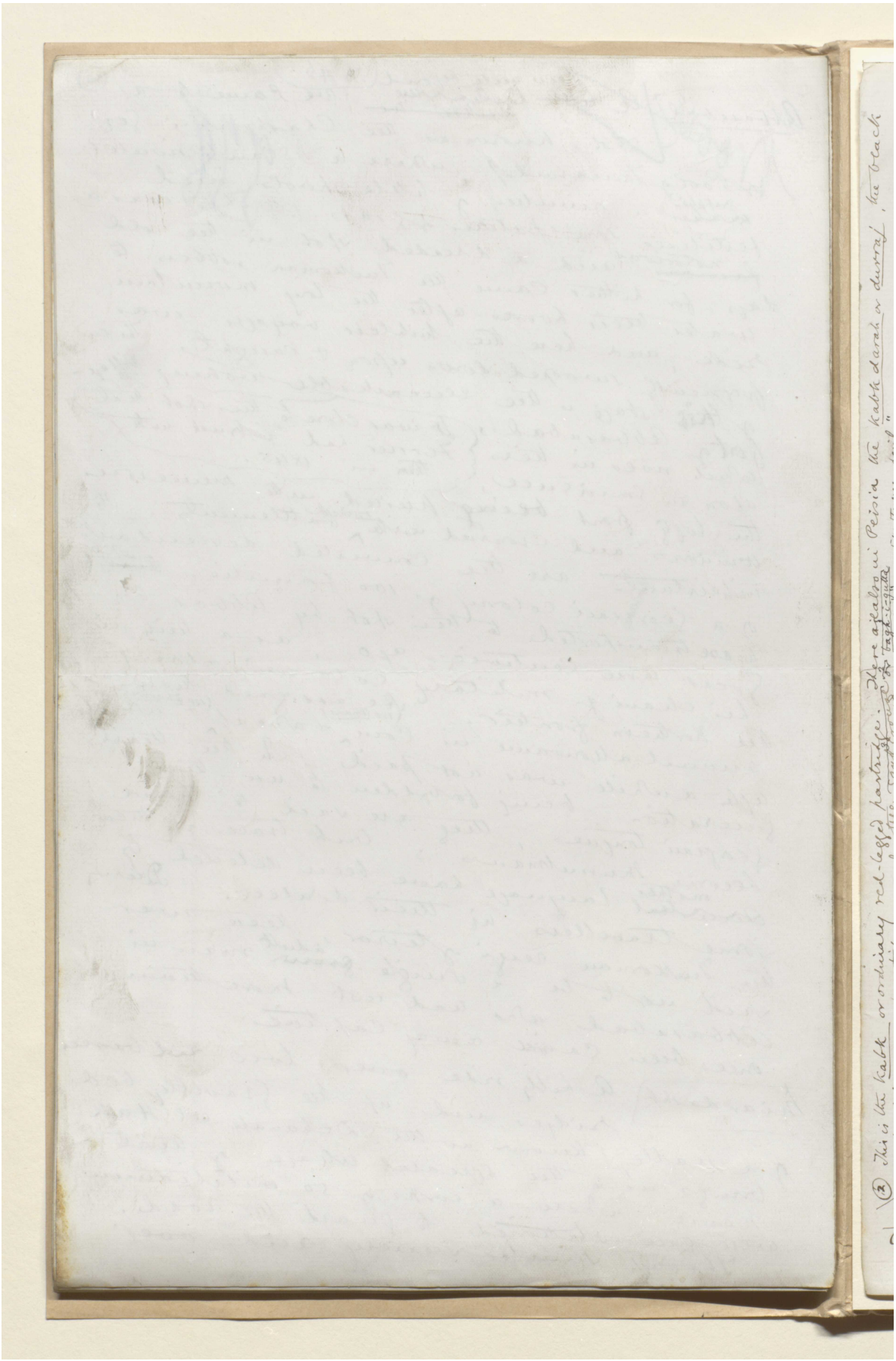
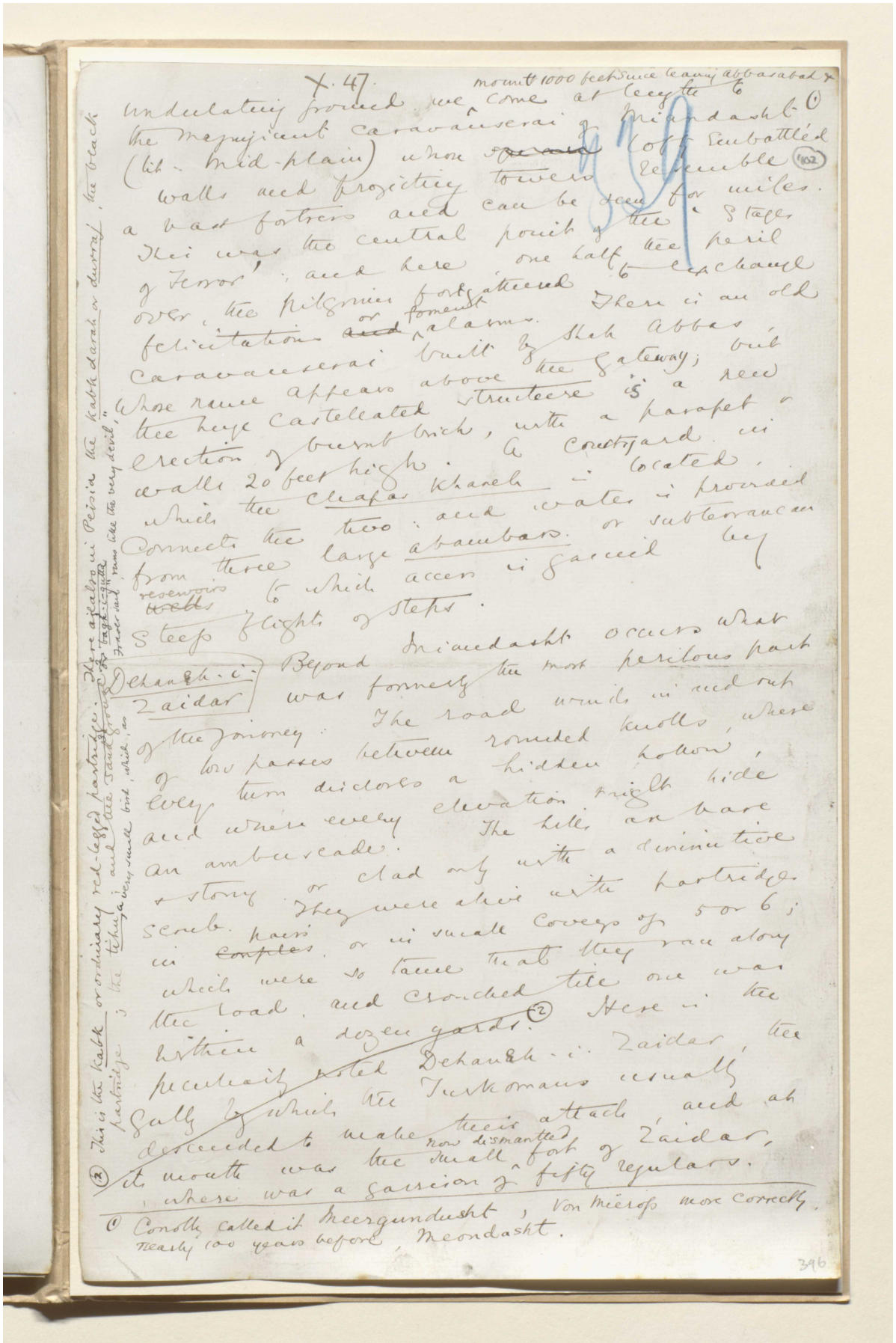
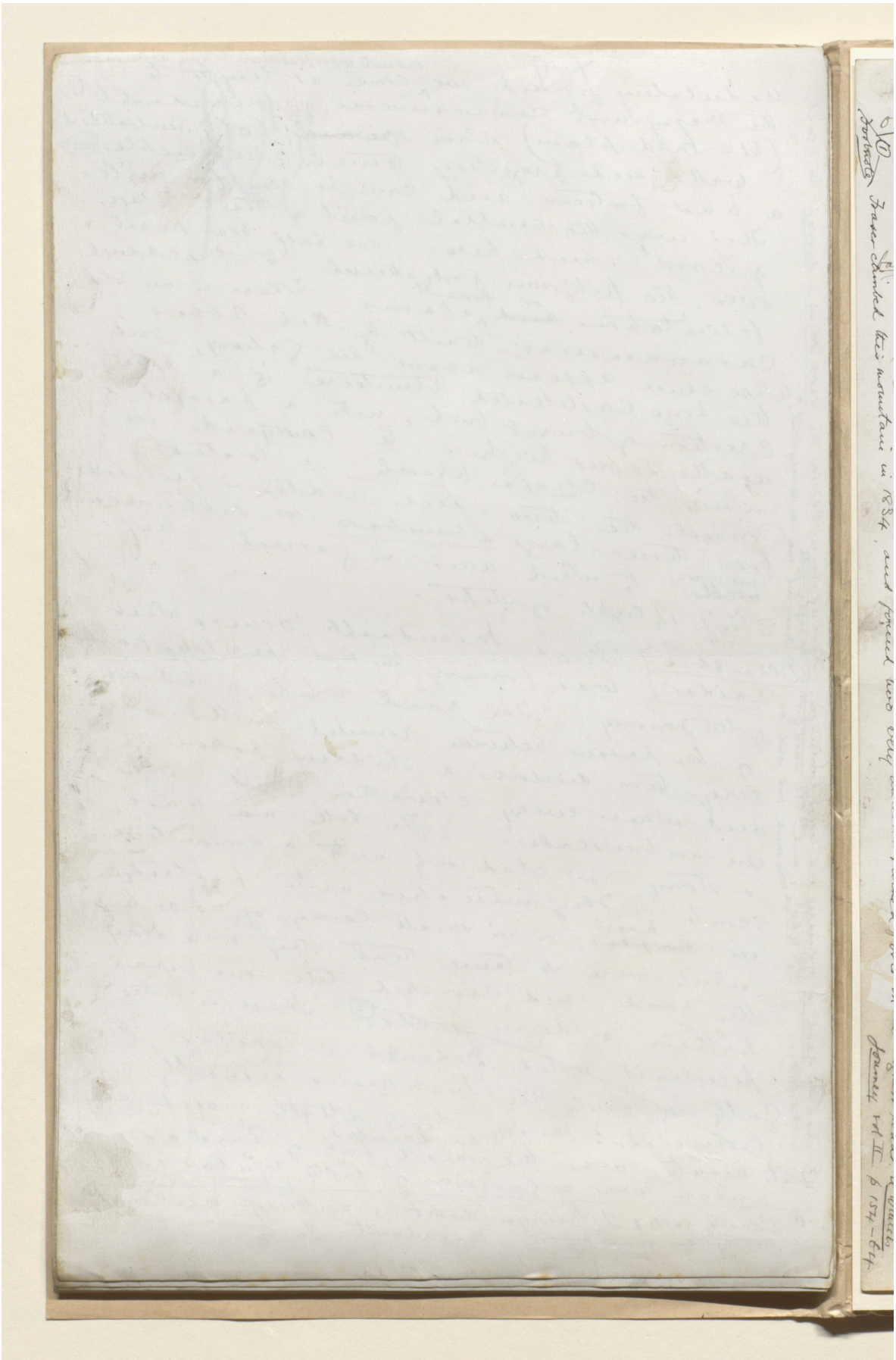
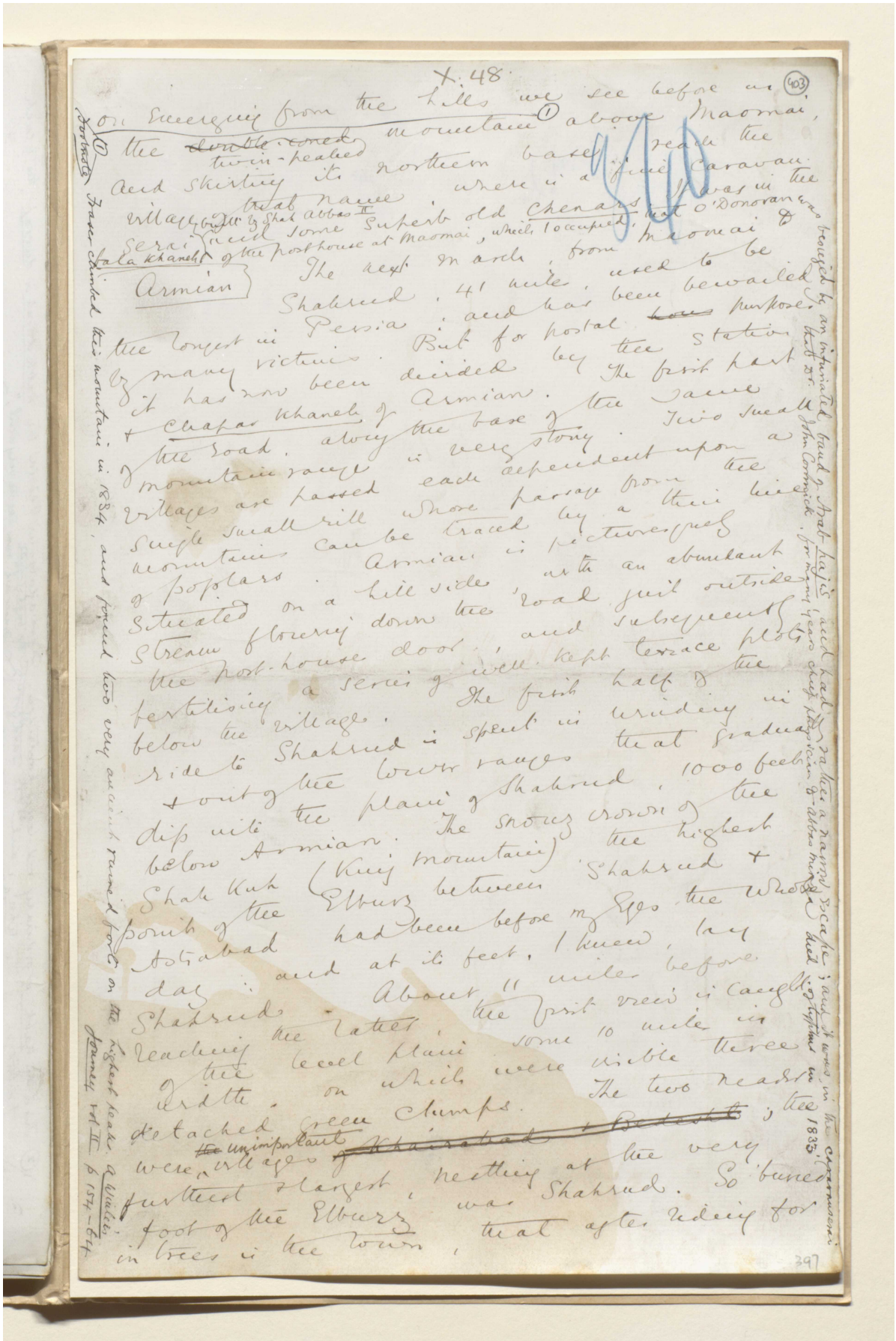


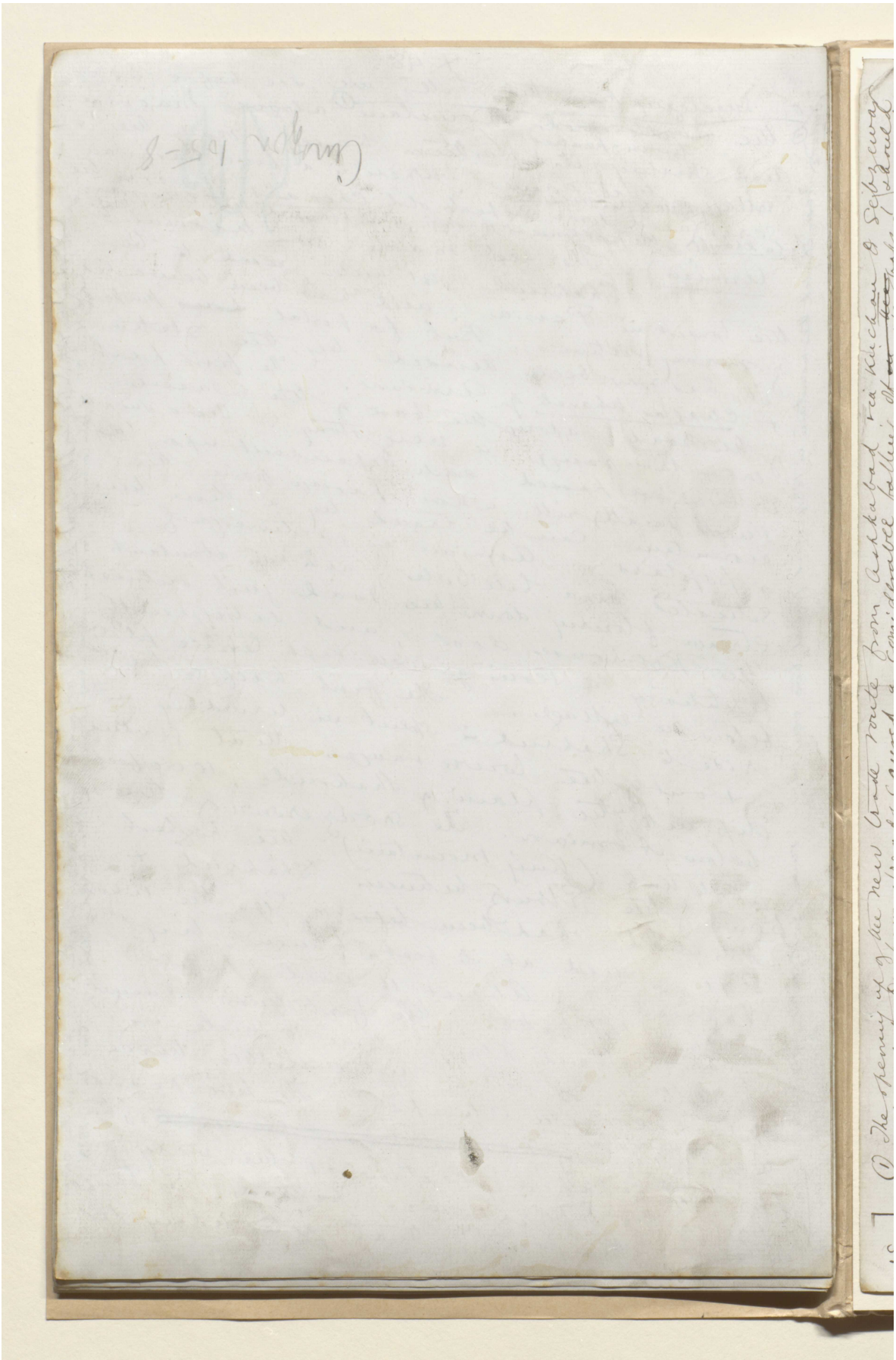


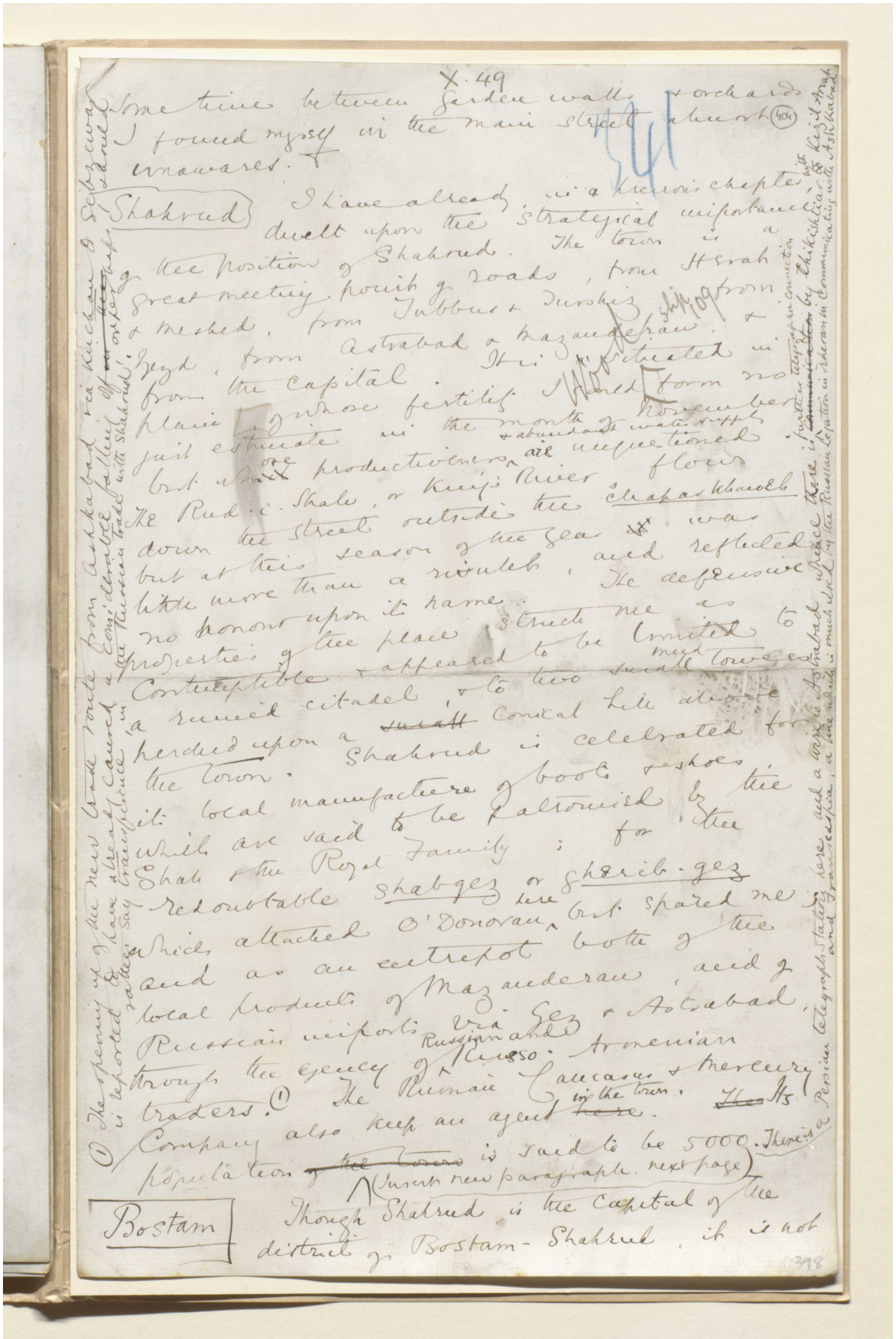


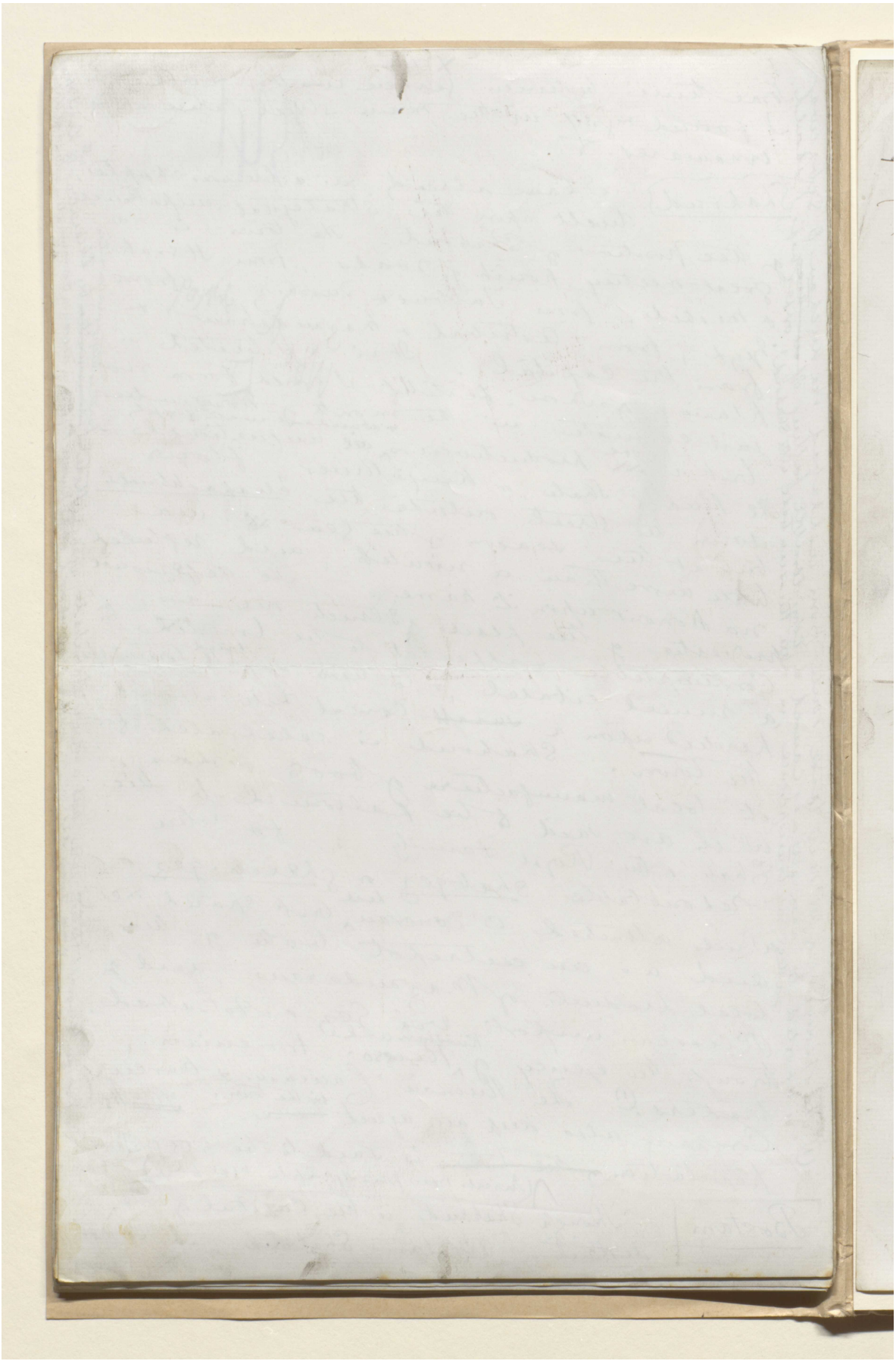




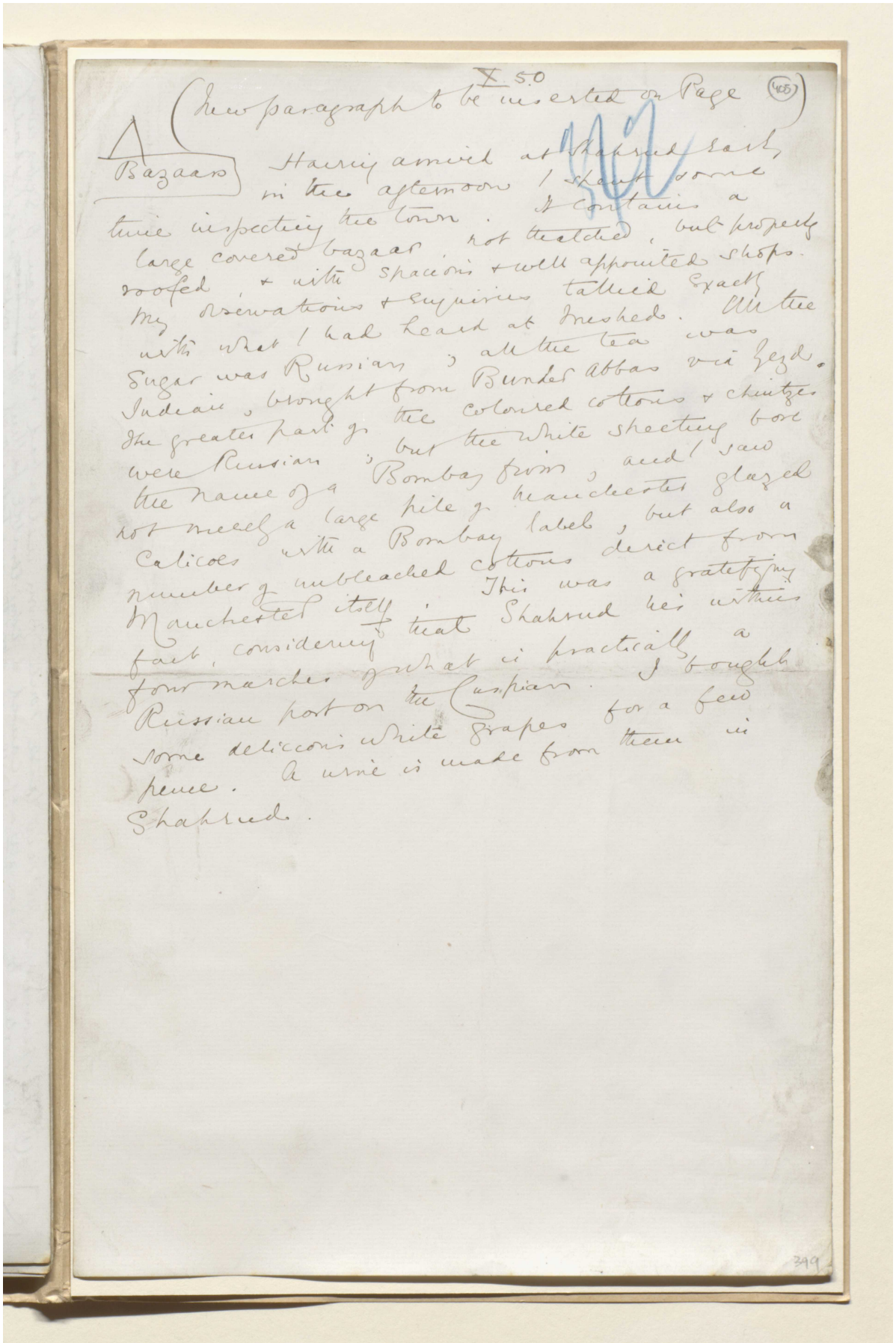








X 50

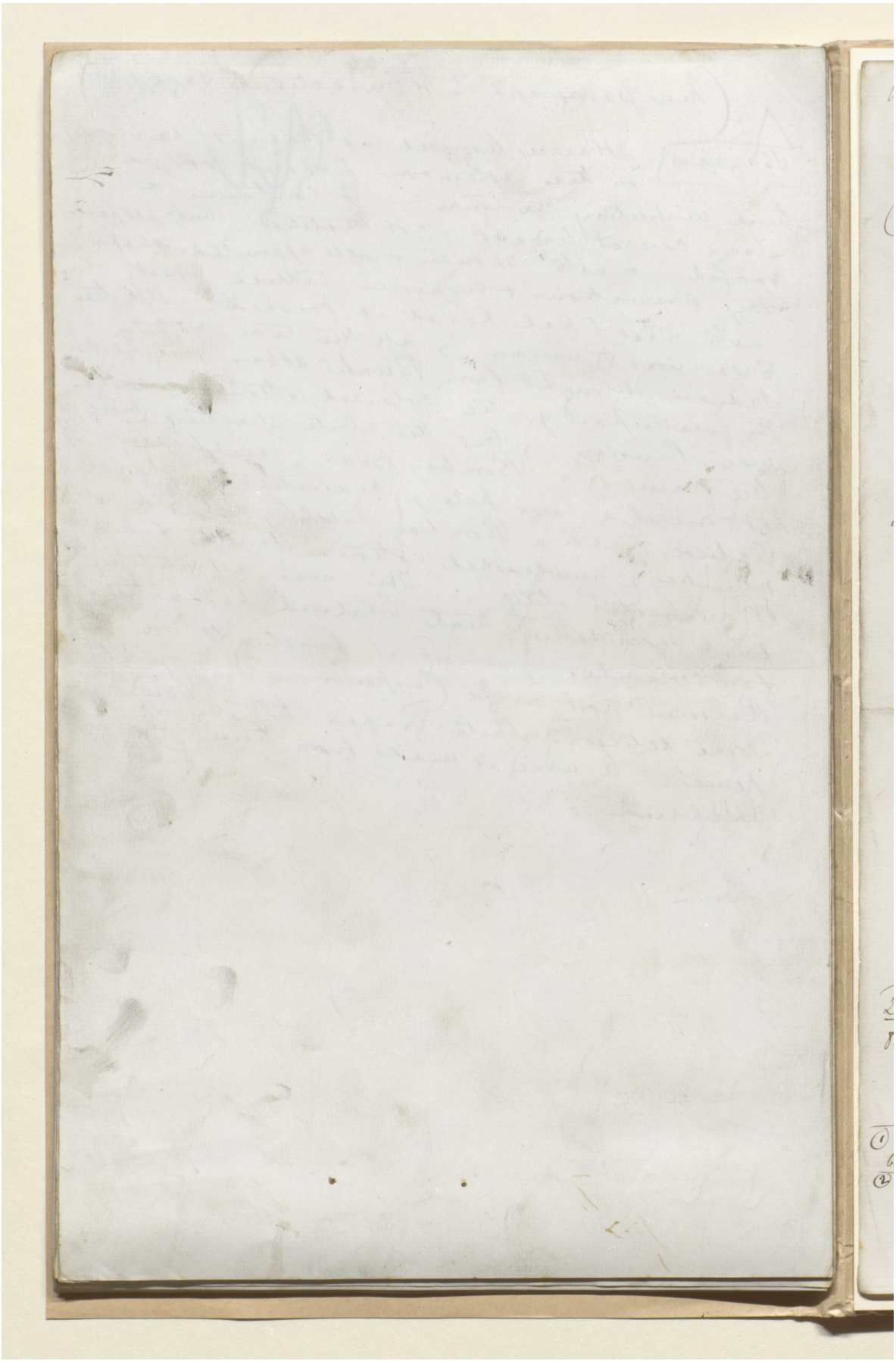


(New paragraph to be inserted on Page (405))

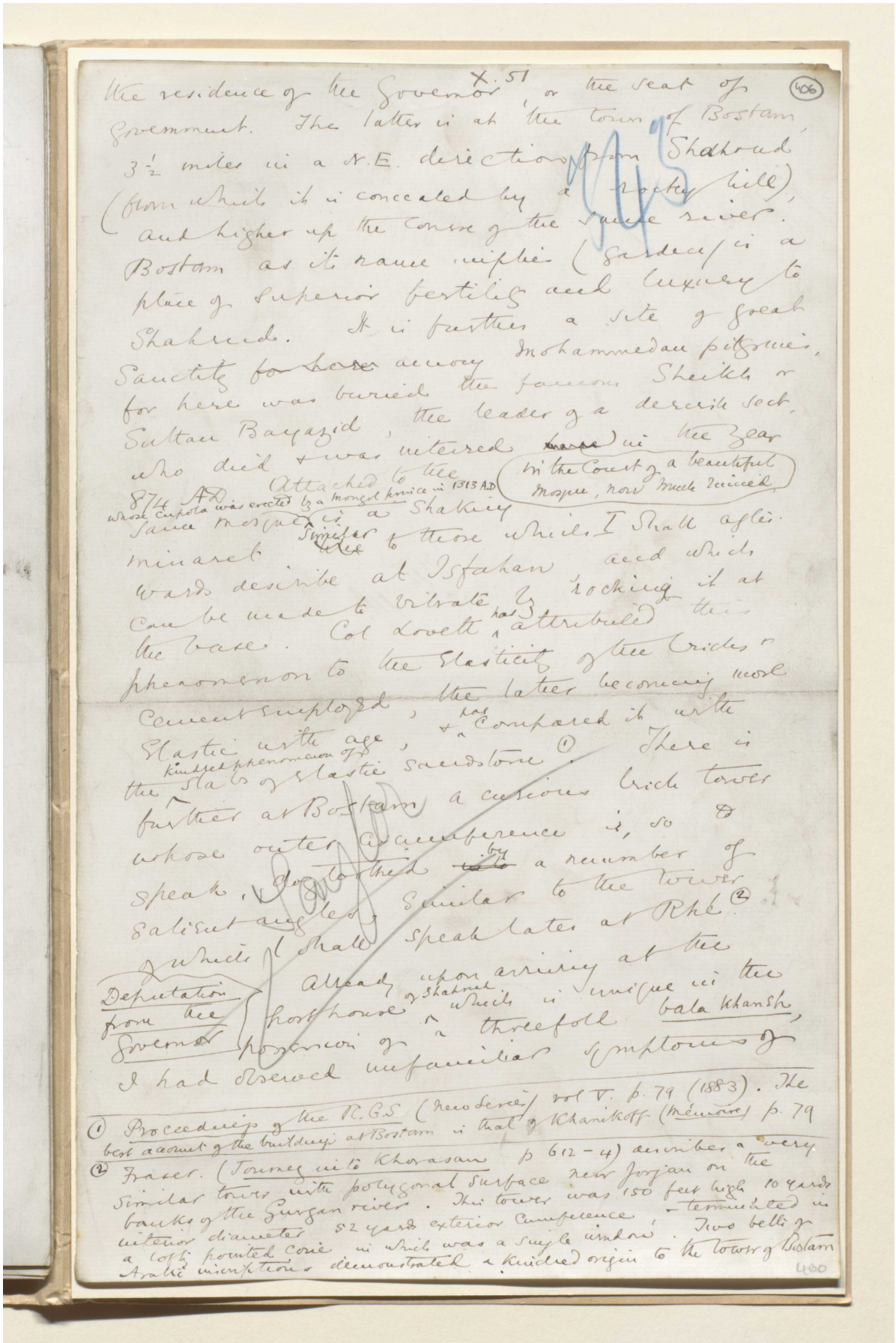
Bazaars

Having arrived at Shahrud early in the afternoon I spent some time inspecting the town. It contains a large covered bazaar, not thatched, but properly roofed, & with spacious & well appointed shops. My observations & enquiries tallied exactly with what I had heard at Meshed. All the sugar was Russian; all the tea was Indian, brought from Bunder Abbas via Yezd. The greater part of the coloured cottons & chintzes were Russian; but the white sheeting bore the name of a Bombay firm, and I saw not merely a large pile of Manchester glazed calicoes with a Bombay label, but also a number of unbleached cottons direct from Manchester itself. This was a gratifying fact, considering that Shahrud lies within four marches of what is practically a Russian port on the Caspian. I bought some delicious white grapes for a few pence. A wine is made from them in Shahrud.

399



X. 51 (406)



the residence of the Governor, or the seat of Government. The latter is at the town of Bostam, 3½ miles in a N.E. direction from Shahrud (from which it is concealed by a rocky hill), and higher up the course of the same river. Bostam as its name implies (garden) is a place of superior fertility and luxury to Shahrud. It is further a site of great sanctity ~~for here~~ among Mohammedan pilgrims, for here was buried the famous Sheikh or Sultan Bayazid, the leader of a derwish sect, who died & was interred ~~[illegible]~~ in the year 874 A.D. Attached to the same mosque (in the Court of a beautiful mosque, now much ruined) whose cupola was erected by a mongol prince in 1313 A.D. is a shaking minaret similar to those which I shall afterwards describe at Isfahan, and which can be made to vibrate by rocking it at the base. Col Lovett has attributed this phenomenon to the elasticity of the bricks & cement employed, the latter becoming more elastic with age, & has compared it with the kindred phenomenon of slabs of elastic sandstone (1). There is further at Bostam a curious brick tower whose outer circumference is, so to speak, doubtfully by a number of salient angles, similar to the tower of which I shall speak later at Rhé (2).

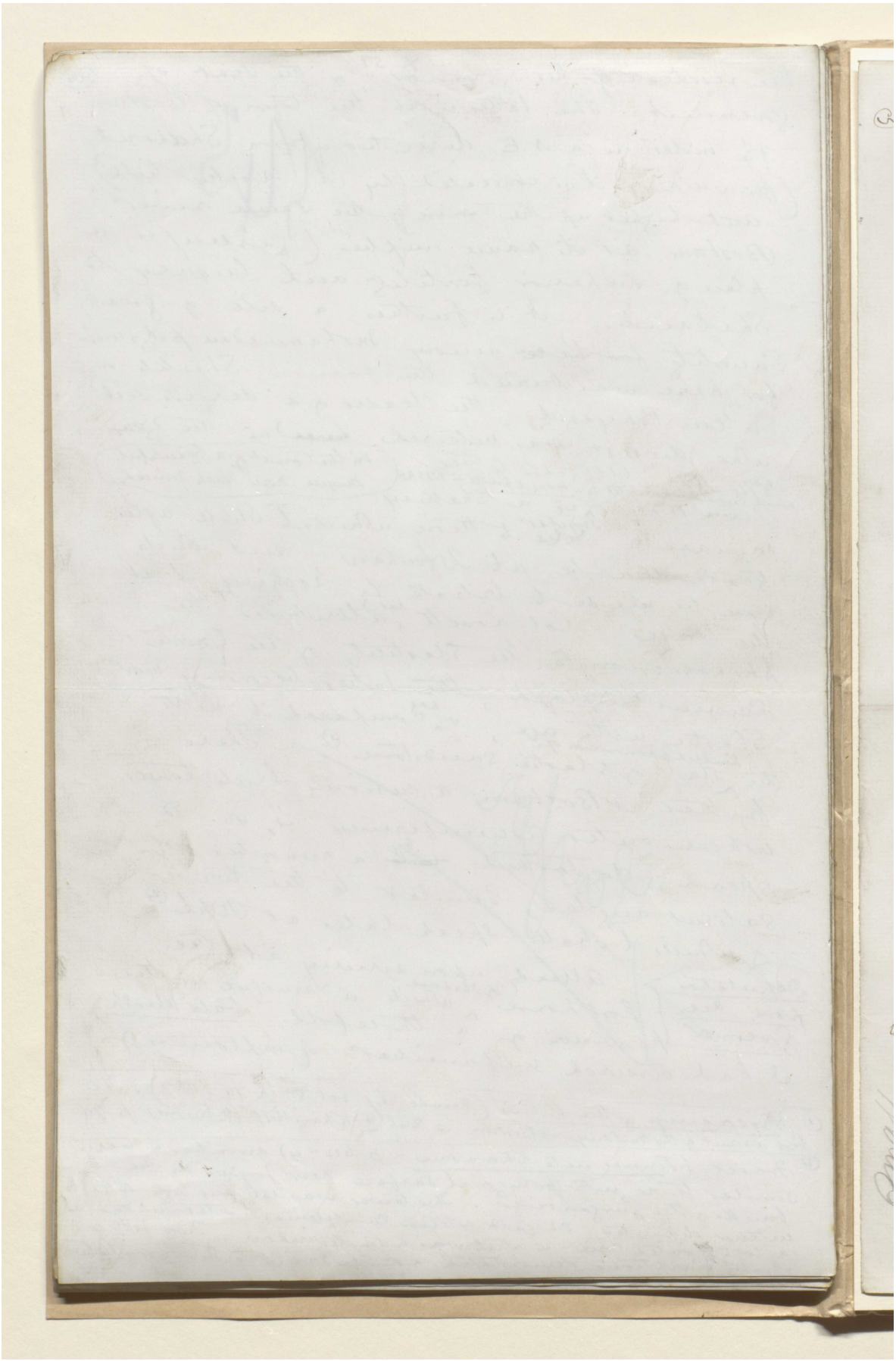
Deputation from the Governor

Already upon arriving at the post house of Shahrud which is unique in the possession of a threefold bala khansh, I had observed unfamiliar symptoms of

(1) Proceedings of the R.G.S. (New Series) vol V. p. 79 (1883). The best account of the buildings at Bostam is that of Khanikoff (Mémoire) p. 79

(2) Fraser. (Journey into Khorasan p 612-4) describes a very similar tower with polygonal surface near Jorjan on the banks of the Gurgan river. This tower was 150 feet high, 10 yards interior diameter, 52 yards exterior circumference, & terminated in a lofty pointed cone in which was a single window. Two belts of Arabic inscriptions demonstrated a kindred origin to the tower of Bostam

400



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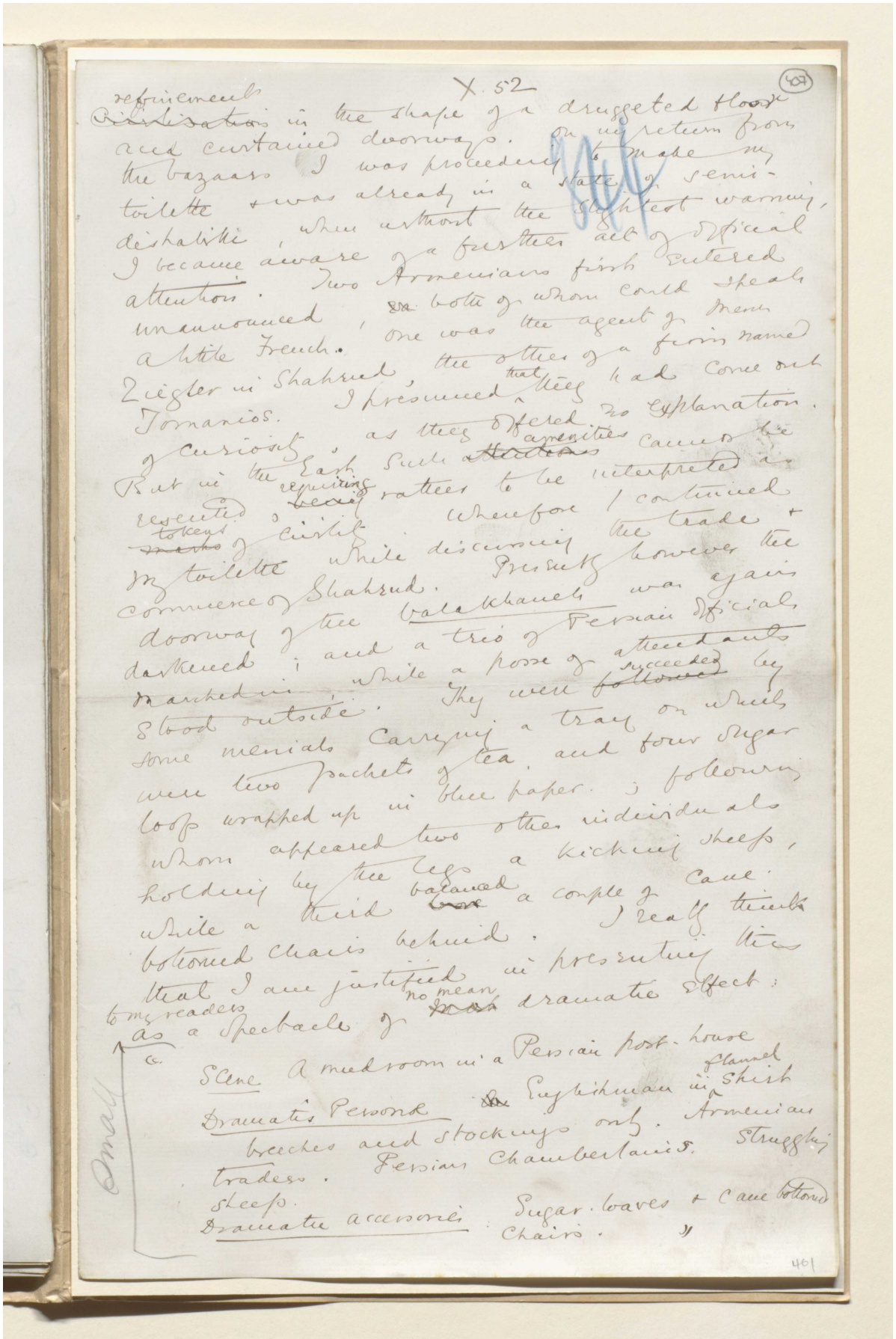

X. 52 (407)

refinements in the shape of a druggeted floor and curtained doorways. On my return from the bazaars I was proceeding to make my toilette & was already in a state of semi-dishabille, when without the slightest warning, I became aware of a further act of official attention. Two Armenians first entered unannounced, both of whom could speak a little French. One was the agent of Mesm Ziegler in Shahrud, the other of a firm named Tornanios. I presumed that they had come out of curiosity, as they offered no explanation. But in the East such amenities cannot be resented, requiring rather to be interpreted as tokens of civility. Whereof I continued my toilette while discussing the trade & commerce of Shahrud. Presently however the doorway of the Balakhaneh was again darkened; and a trio of Persian officials marched in, while a posse of attendants stood outside. They were succeeded by some menials carrying a tray on which were two packets of tea, and four sugar loaf wrapped up in blue paper; following whom appeared two other individuals holding by the legs a kicking sheep, while a third balanced a couple of cane bottomed chairs behind. I really think that I am justified in presenting this to my readers as a spectacle of no mean dramatic effect:

Scene A mud room in a Persian post-house

Dramatis Personae Englishman in flannel shirt breeches and stockings only. Armenian traders. Persian Chamberlains. Struggling sheep.

Dramatic accessories Sugar loaves & cane bottomed chairs.

Small

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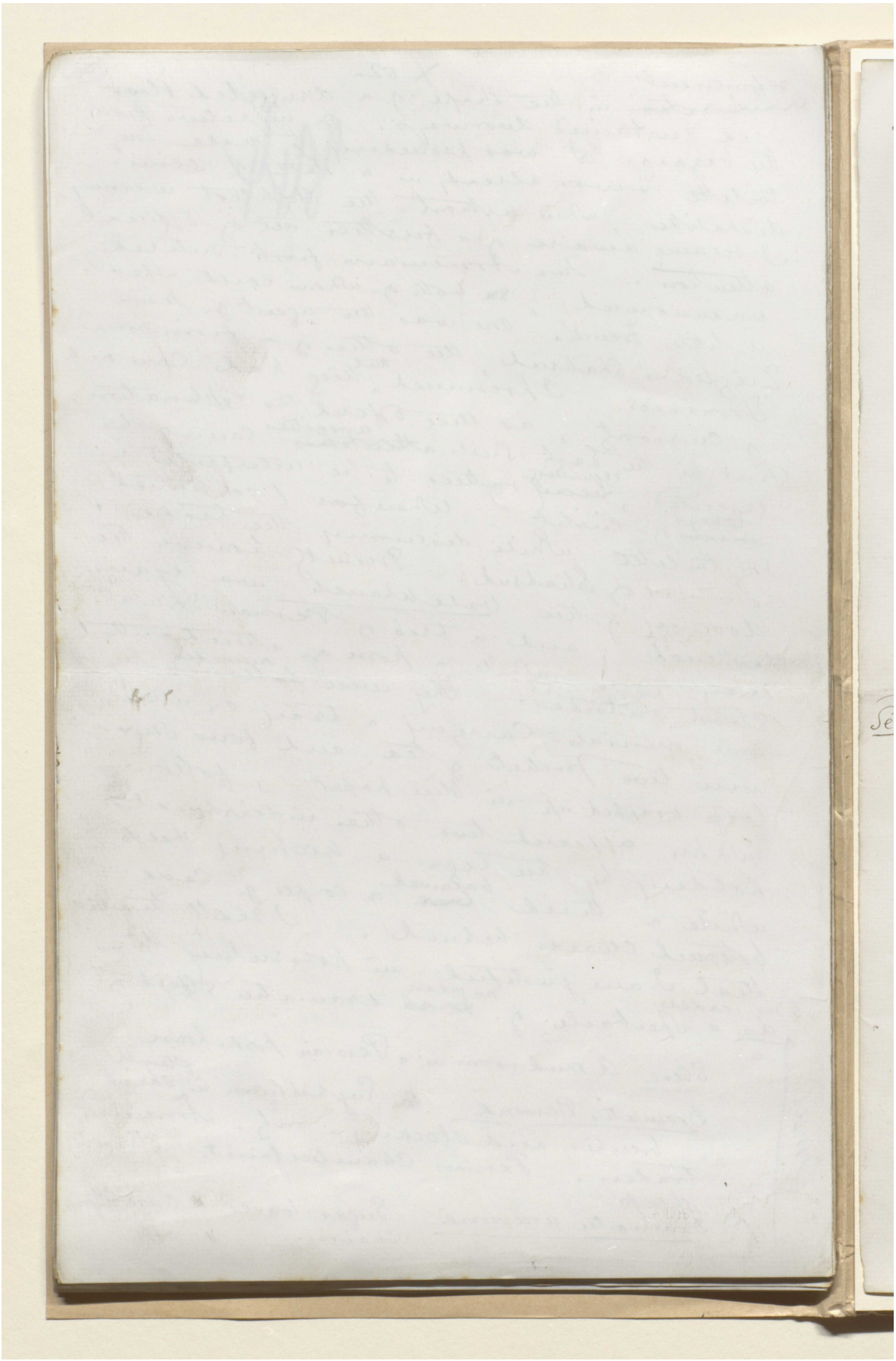

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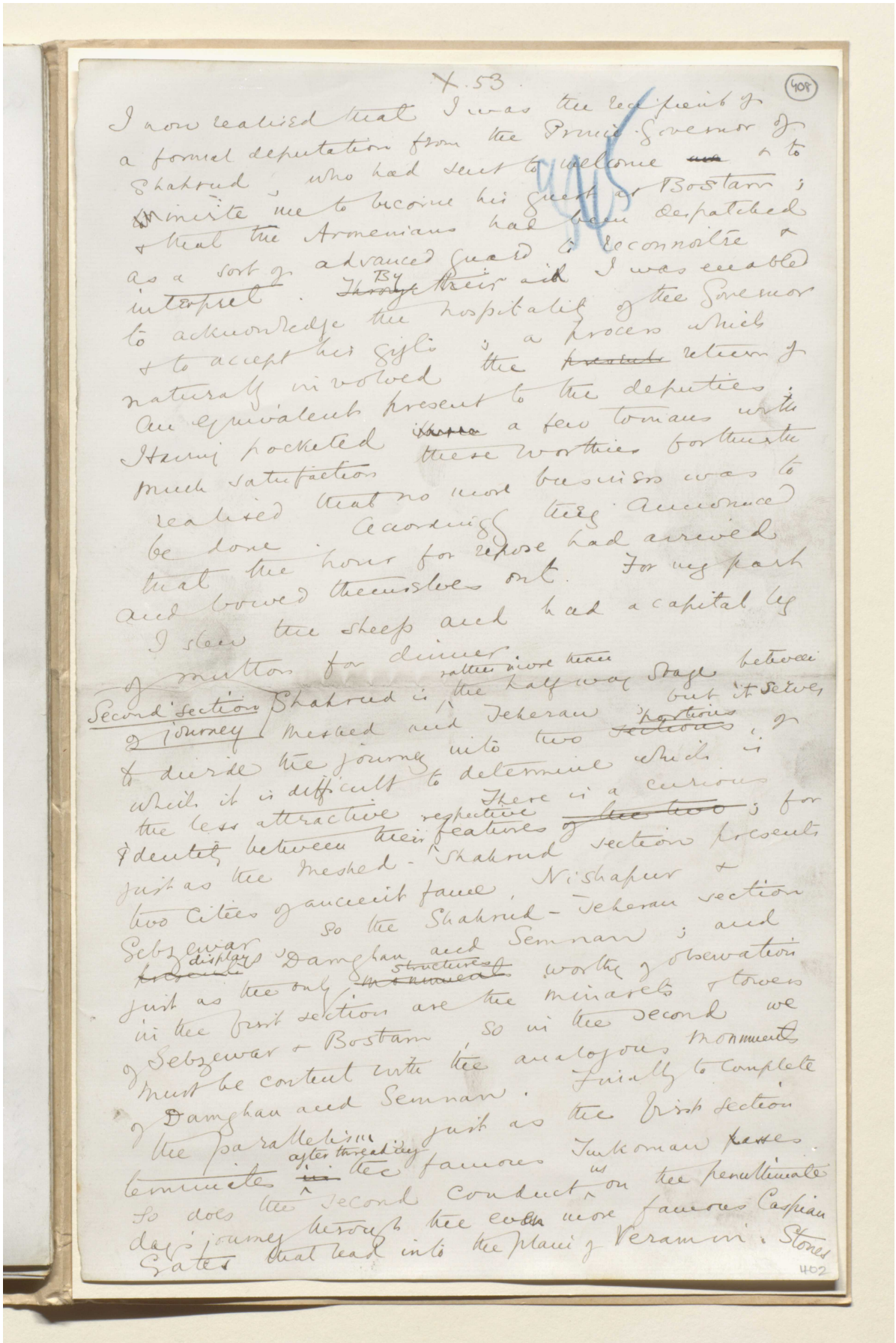

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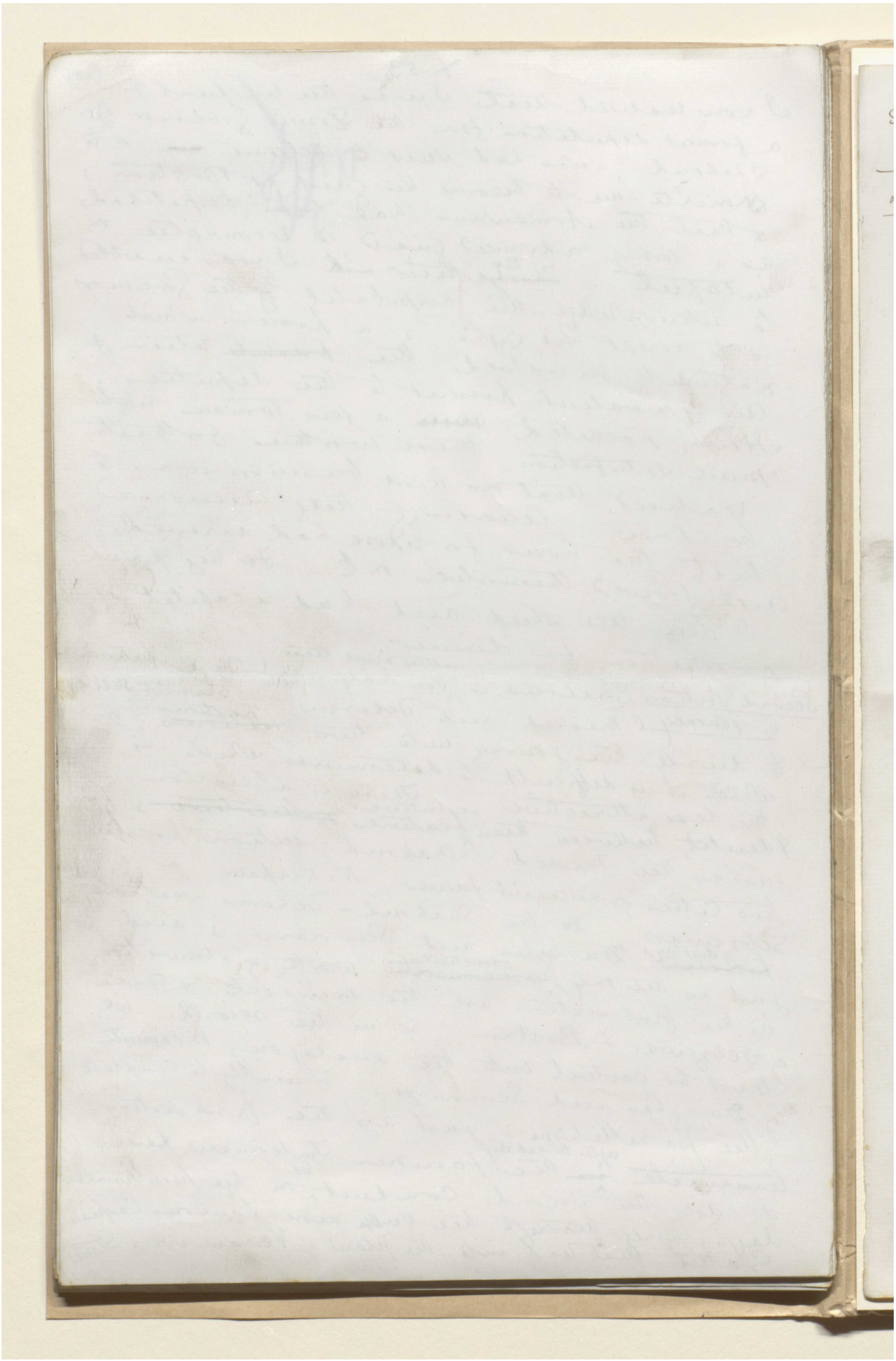

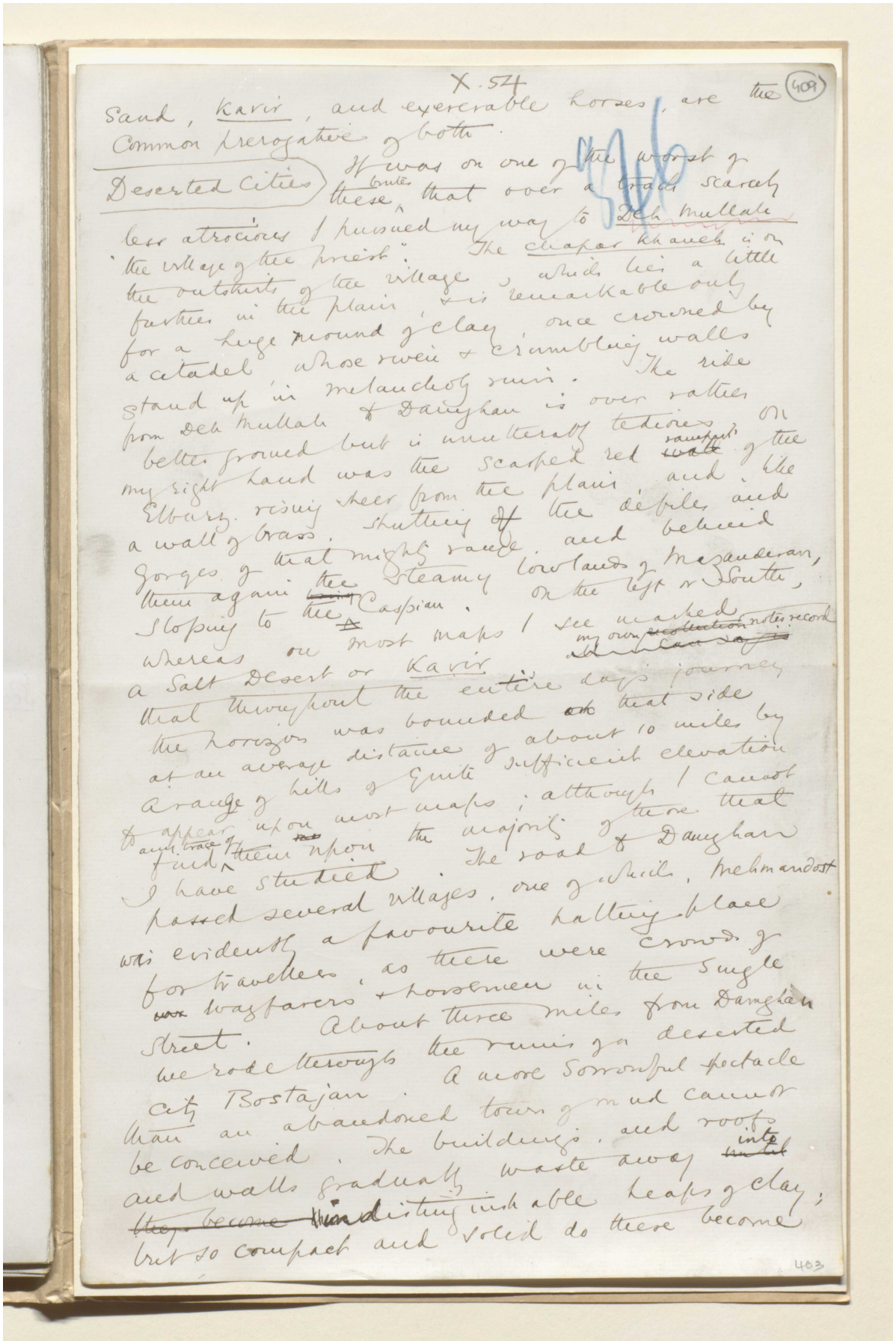

X.54 (409)

Sand, Kavir, and execrable horses, are the common prerogative of both.

Deserted Cities

It was on one of the worst of these brutes that over a track scarcely less atrocious I pursued my way to Deh Mullah "the village of the priest". The chapar khaneh is on the outskirts of the village, which lies a little further in the plain, & is remarkable only for a huge mound of clay, once crowned by a citadel whose riven & crumbling walls stand up in melancholy ruin. The ride from Deh Mullah to Damghan is over rather better ground but is unutterably tedious. On my right hand was the scarped red ~~wall~~ rampart of the Elburz rising sheer from the plain, and like a wall of brass, shutting off the defiles and gorges of that mighty range, and behind them again the steamy lowlands of Mazanderan, sloping to the Caspian. On the left or South, whereas on most maps I see marked a Salt Desert or Kavir, my own ~~recollection~~ notes record that throughout the entire day's journey the horizon was bounded ~~on~~ that side at an average distance of about 10 miles by a range of hills of quite sufficient elevation to appear upon most maps; although I cannot find any trace of them upon the majority of those that I have studied. The road to Damghan passed several villages, one of which, Mehmandost was evidently a favourite halting place for travellers, as there were crowds of ~~wax~~ wayfarers & horsemen in the single street. About three miles from Damghan we rode through the ruins of a deserted city Bostajan. A more sorrowful spectacle than an abandoned town of mud cannot be conceived. The buildings, and roofs and walls gradually waste away into ~~until~~ ~~they become~~ indistinguishable heaps of clay; but so compact and solid do these become

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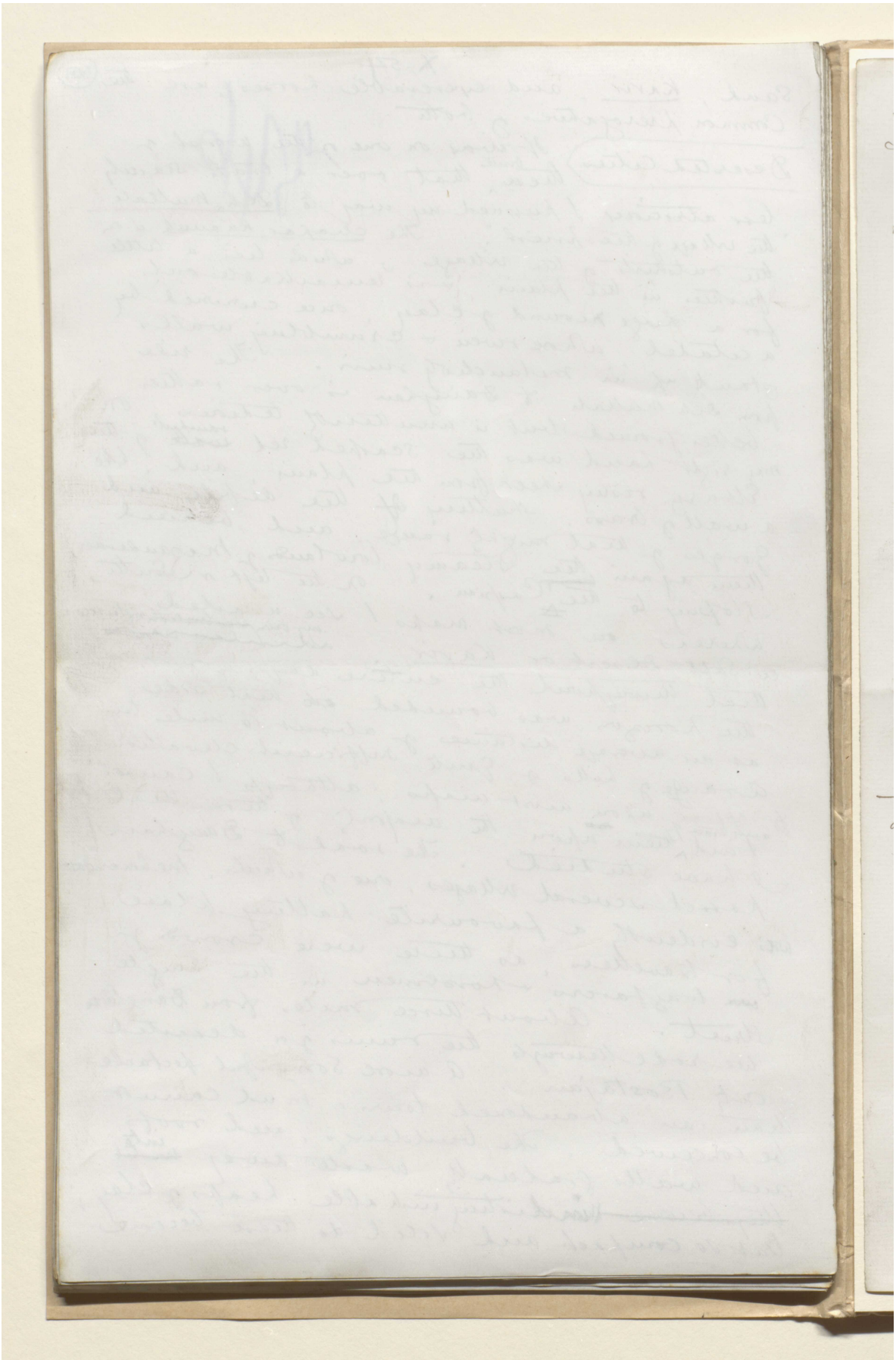

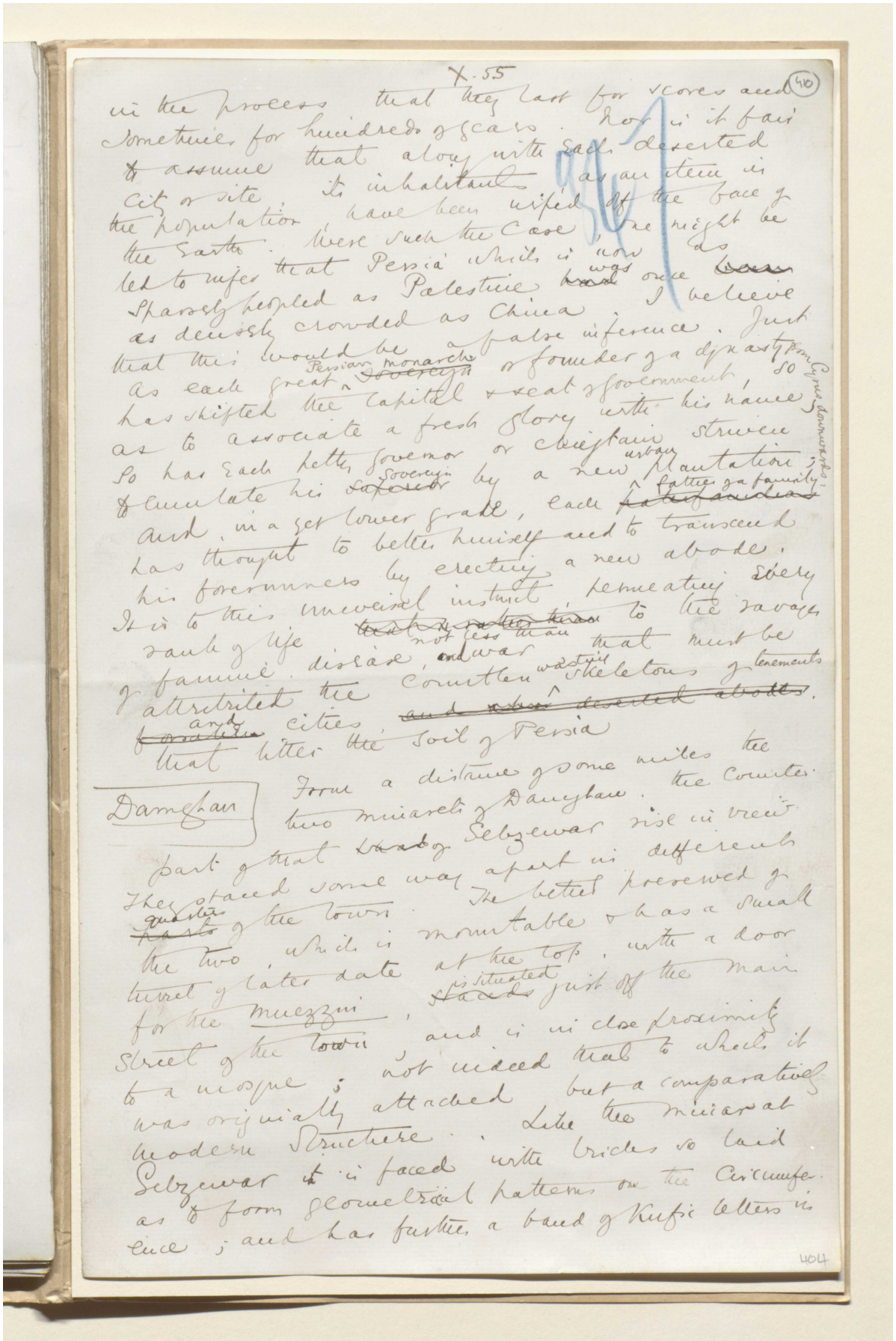

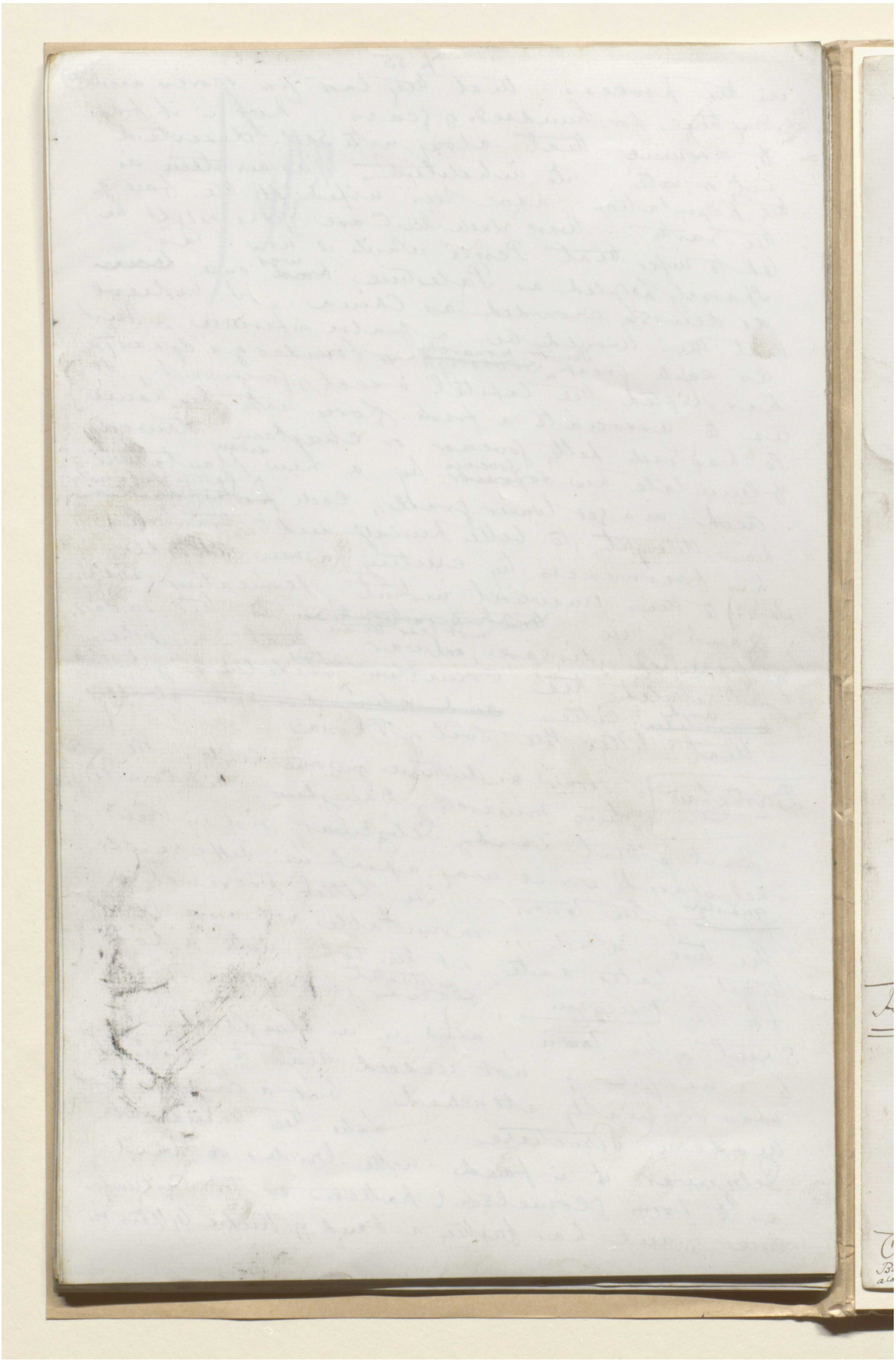

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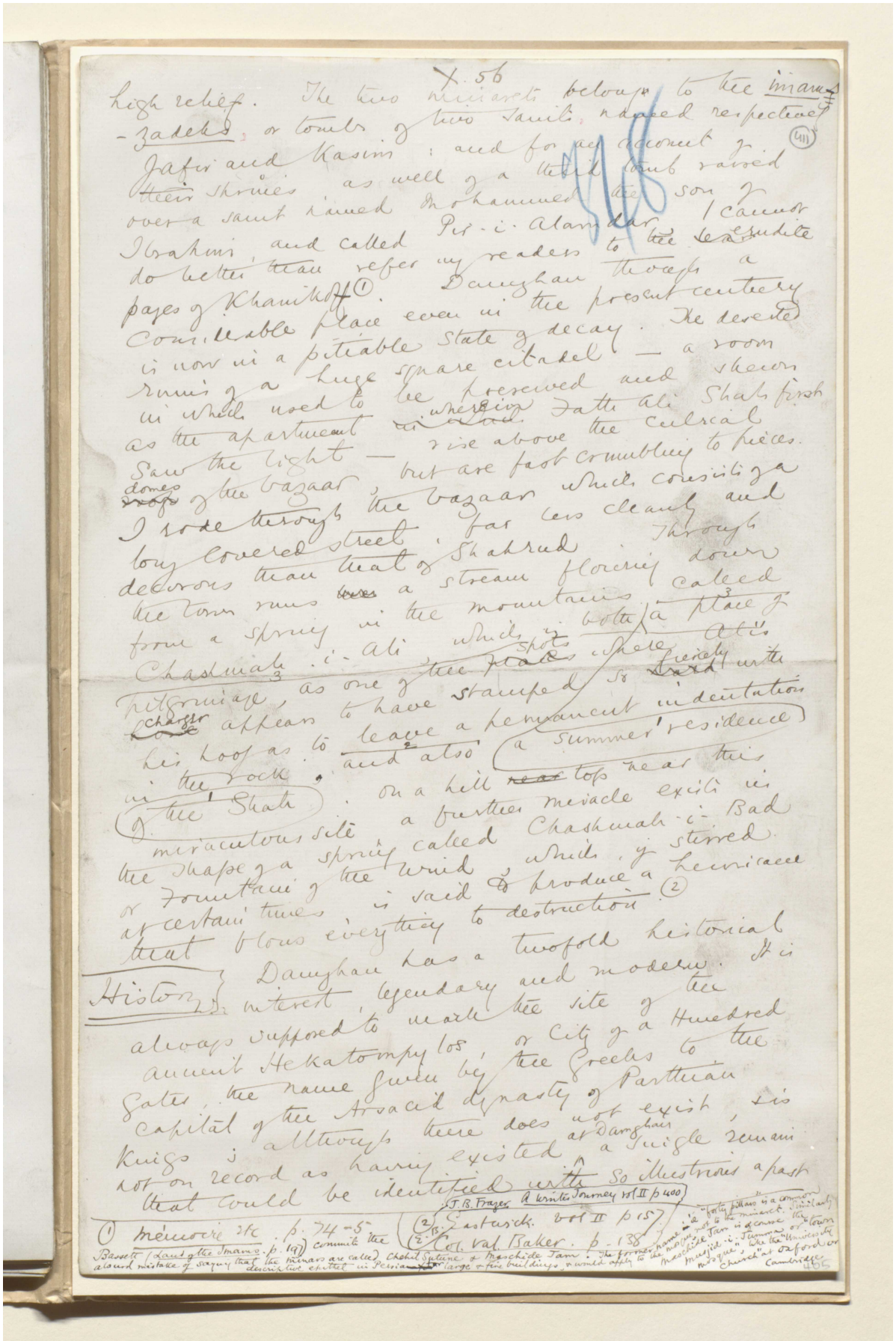
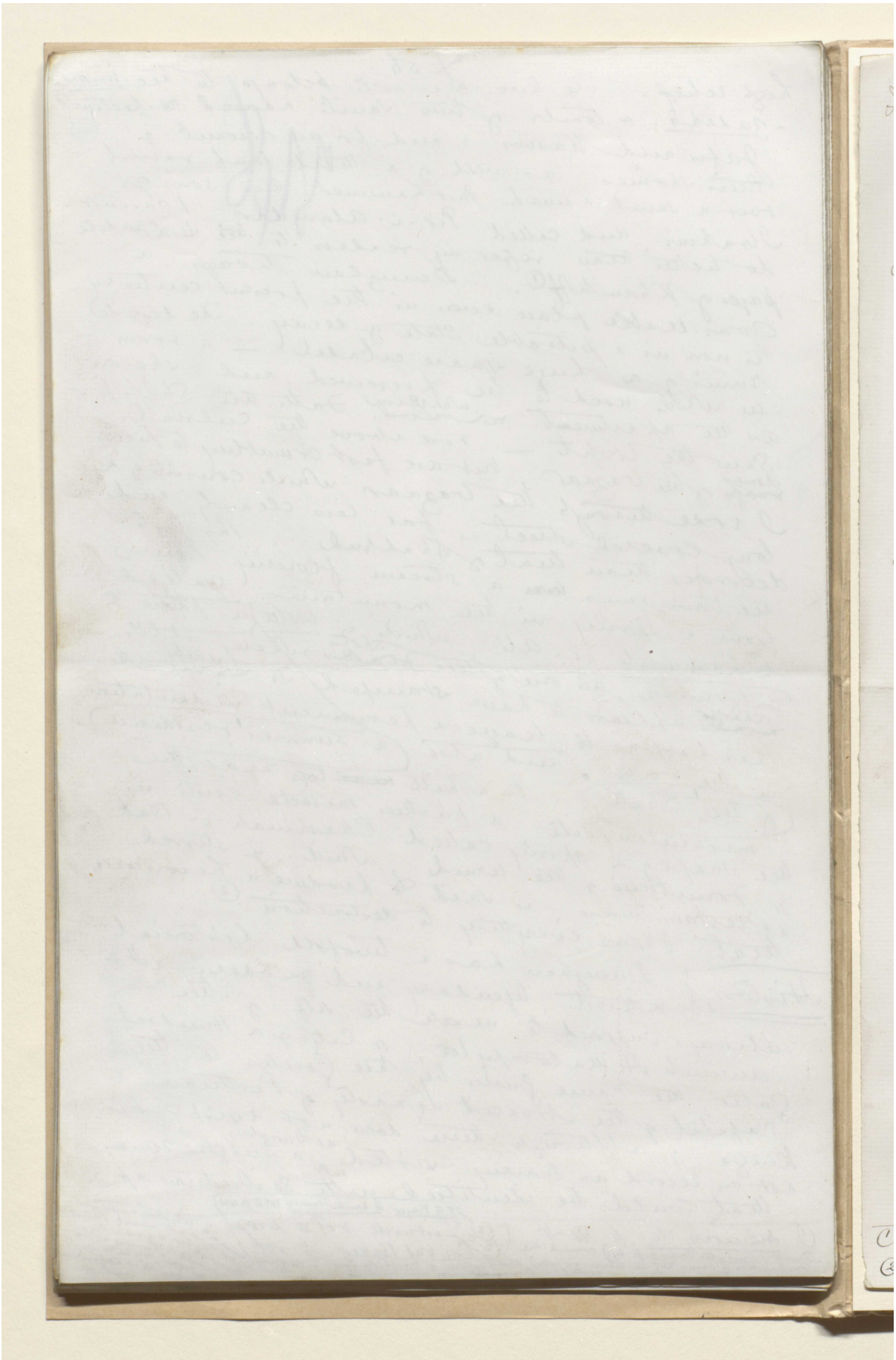


X. 56

high relief. The two minarets belong to the Imam-
-zadeh, or tomb of two Sunni reputed respectively
Jafar and Kasim: and for an account of
their shrines as well of a third tomb raised
over a saint named Mohammed the son of
Ibrahim, and called Pir-i-Alamdar I cannot
do better than refer my readers to the elaborate
pages of Khanikoff (1). Daughan though a
considerable place even in the present century
is now in a pitiable state of decay. The deserted
ruins of a huge square citadel — a room
in which used to be preserved and shewn
as the apartment wherein Fatteh Ali Shah first
saw the light — rise above the cubical
domes of the bazaar, but are fast crumbling to pieces.
I rode through the bazaar which consists of a
long covered street, far less cleanly and
decorous than that of Shahrud. Through
the town runs a stream flowing down
from a spring in the mountains, called
Chashmah-i-Ali which in both a place of
pilgrimage, as one of the rocks there bears
the appearance of the hoof of the horse of
Ali, and also (a summer residence
of the Shah). On a hill near this
miraculous site a further miracle exists in
the shape of a spring called Chashmah-i-Bad
or fountain of the wind, which is stirred
at certain times (it is said to produce a (2)
tempest that blows everything to destruction.

History. Daughan has a twofold historical
interest, legendary and modern. It is
always supposed to mark the site of the
ancient Hekatompylos, or City of a Hundred
Gates, the name given by the Greeks to the
capital of the Arsacid dynasty of Parthian
Kings: although there does not exist, so
far as I could ascertain, any evidence
not on record as having existed at Daughan
that could be identified with a single remain
of so illustrious a past.

(1) Mémoires &c. p. 74-5 (2) J. B. Fraser. A winter Journey vol II p 400
Basset (and the Imam. p. 141) commits the (2) Eastwick. vol II p 157
absurd mistake of saying that the minars are called Chehal Sutune & Meschide Jam. The former (2) Col. Val. Baker. p. 138
is a descriptive epithet in Persian for large & fine buildings, & would apply to the Meschide Jam. The latter name — i.e. "forty pillars" is a common Oriental name for the minaret. Similarly the Meschide Jam is a corruption of the town name — not to the minaret. The Meschide Jam is a corruption of the town mosque, i.e. "Jumma" the "Universal Mosque", i.e. "Jumma" like the "University Church" at Oxford or Cambridge.



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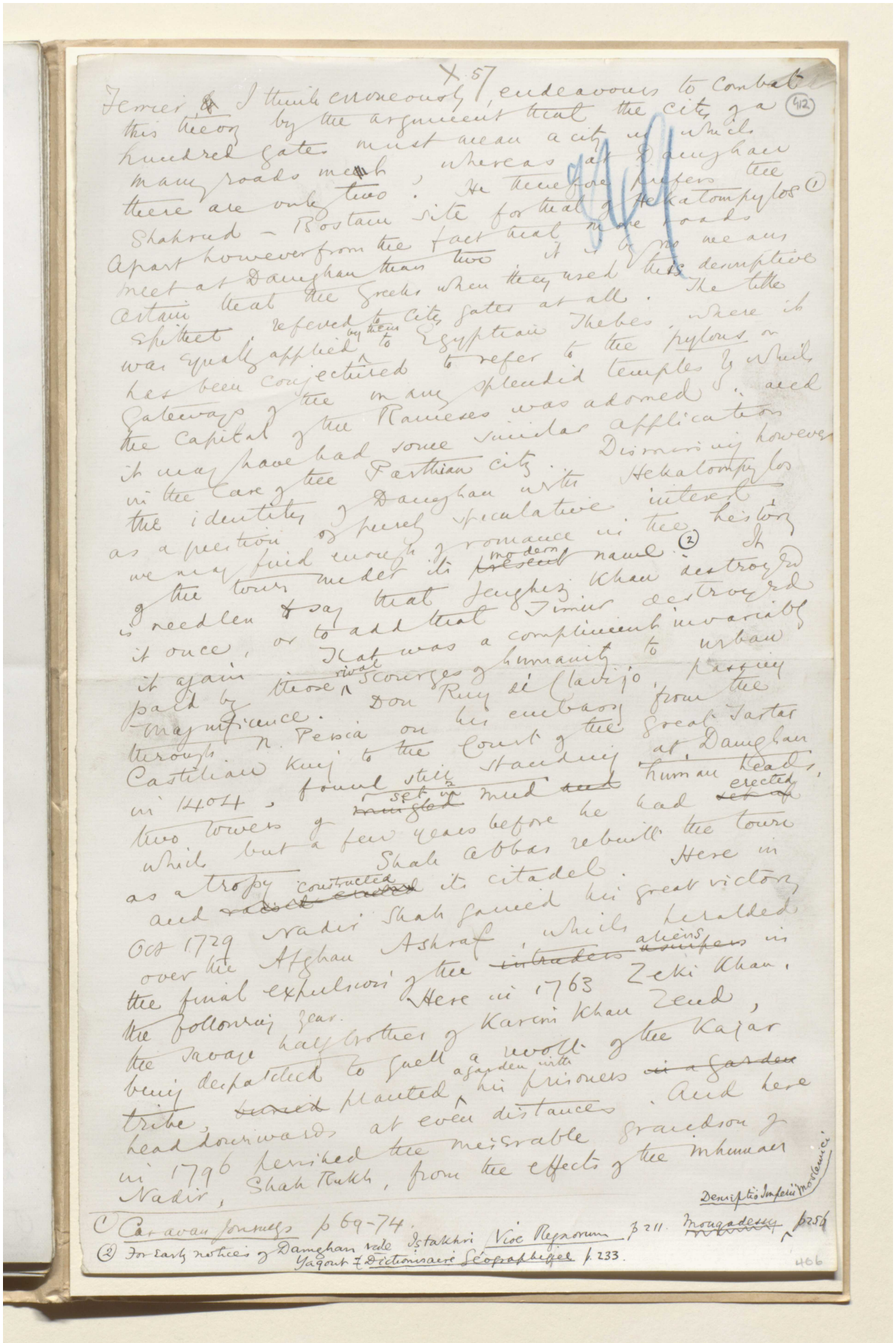
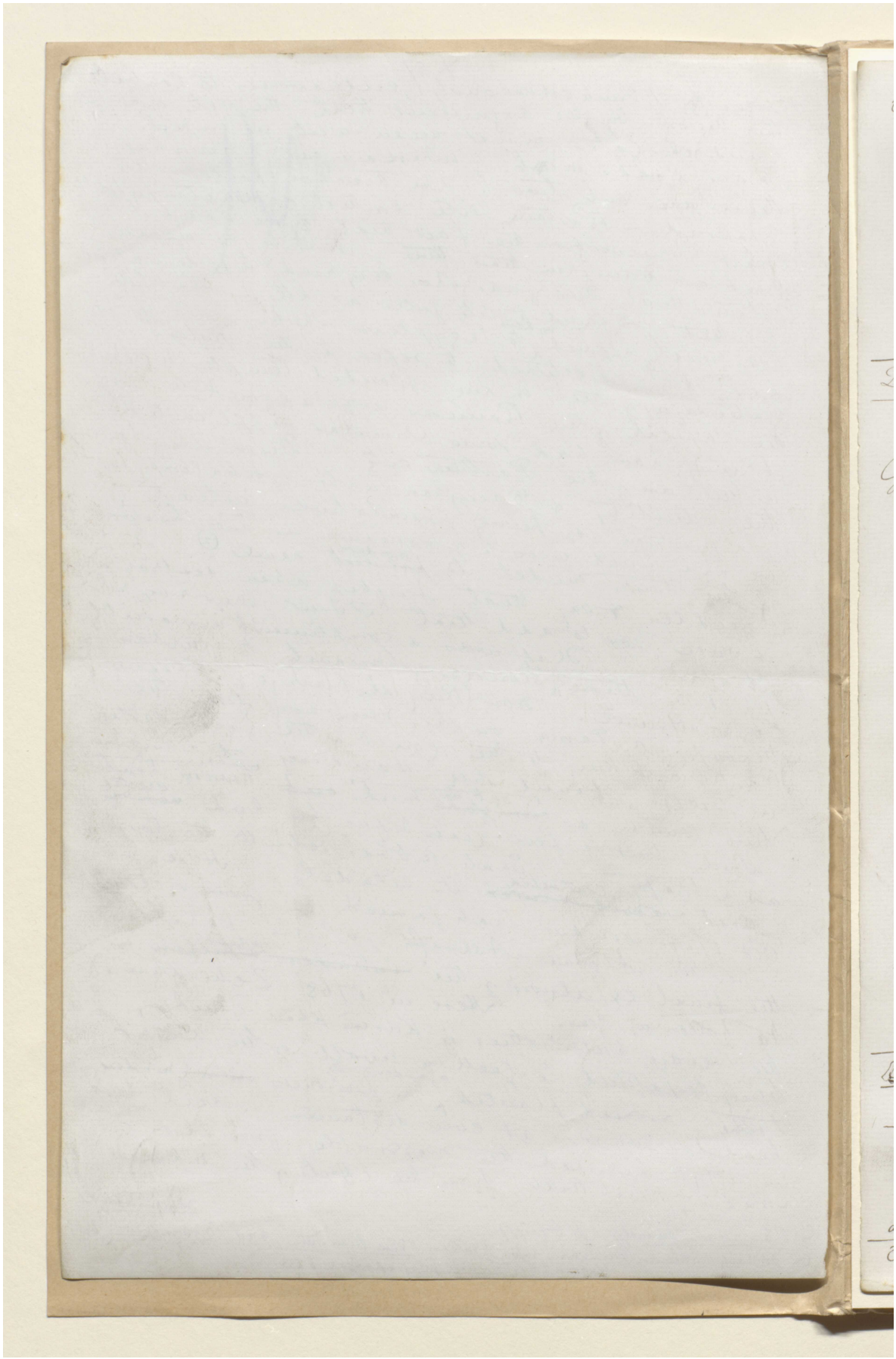
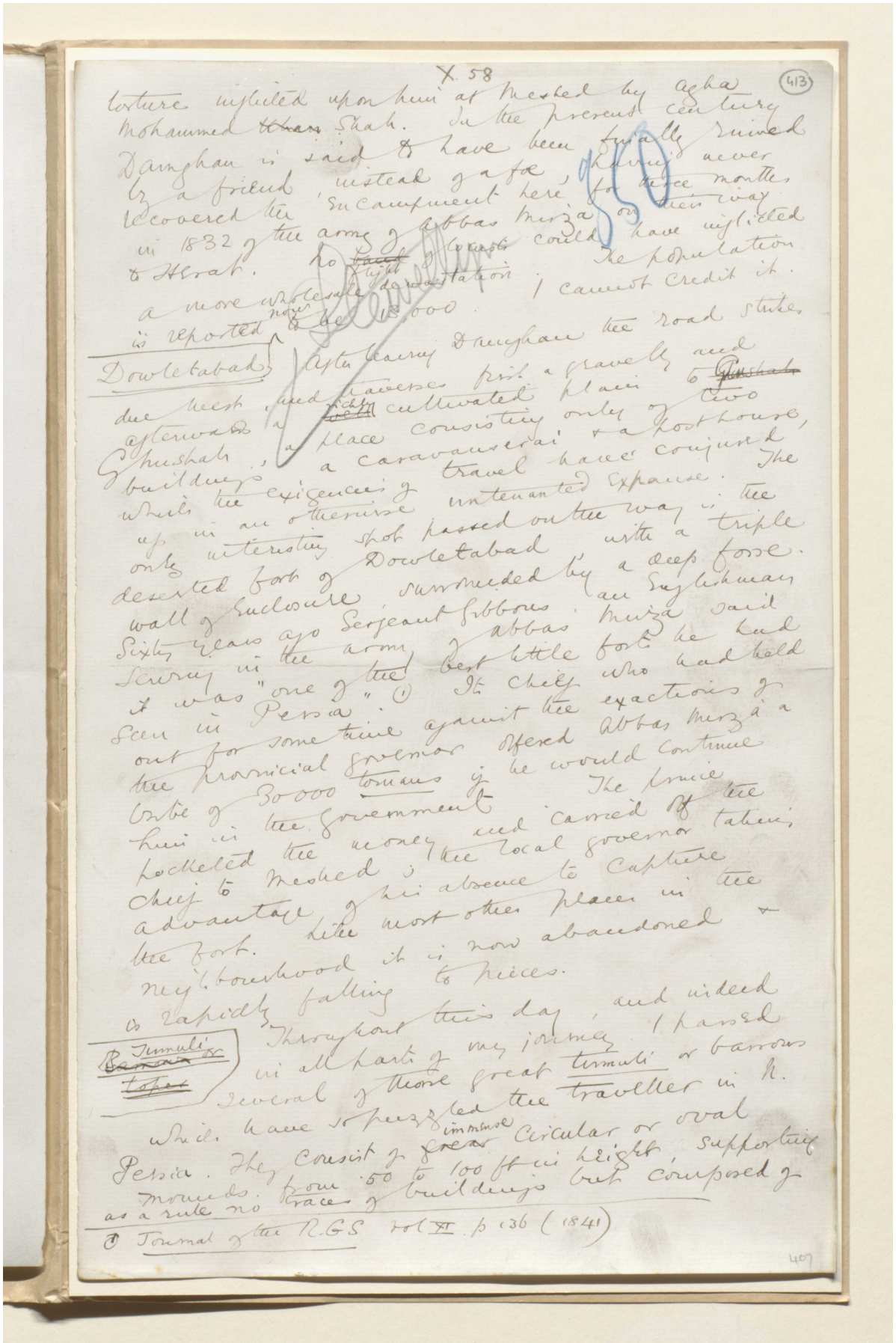






X. 58

(413)

torture inflicted upon him at Meshed by Agha Mohammed ~~Khan~~ Shah. In the present century Damghan is said to have been finally ruined by a friend, instead of a foe, having never recovered the encampment here for three months in 1832 of the army of Abbas Mirza on their way to Herat. No ~~band~~ of locusts could have inflicted a more wholesale devastation. The population is reported now to be 13,000. I cannot credit it.

Dowletabad

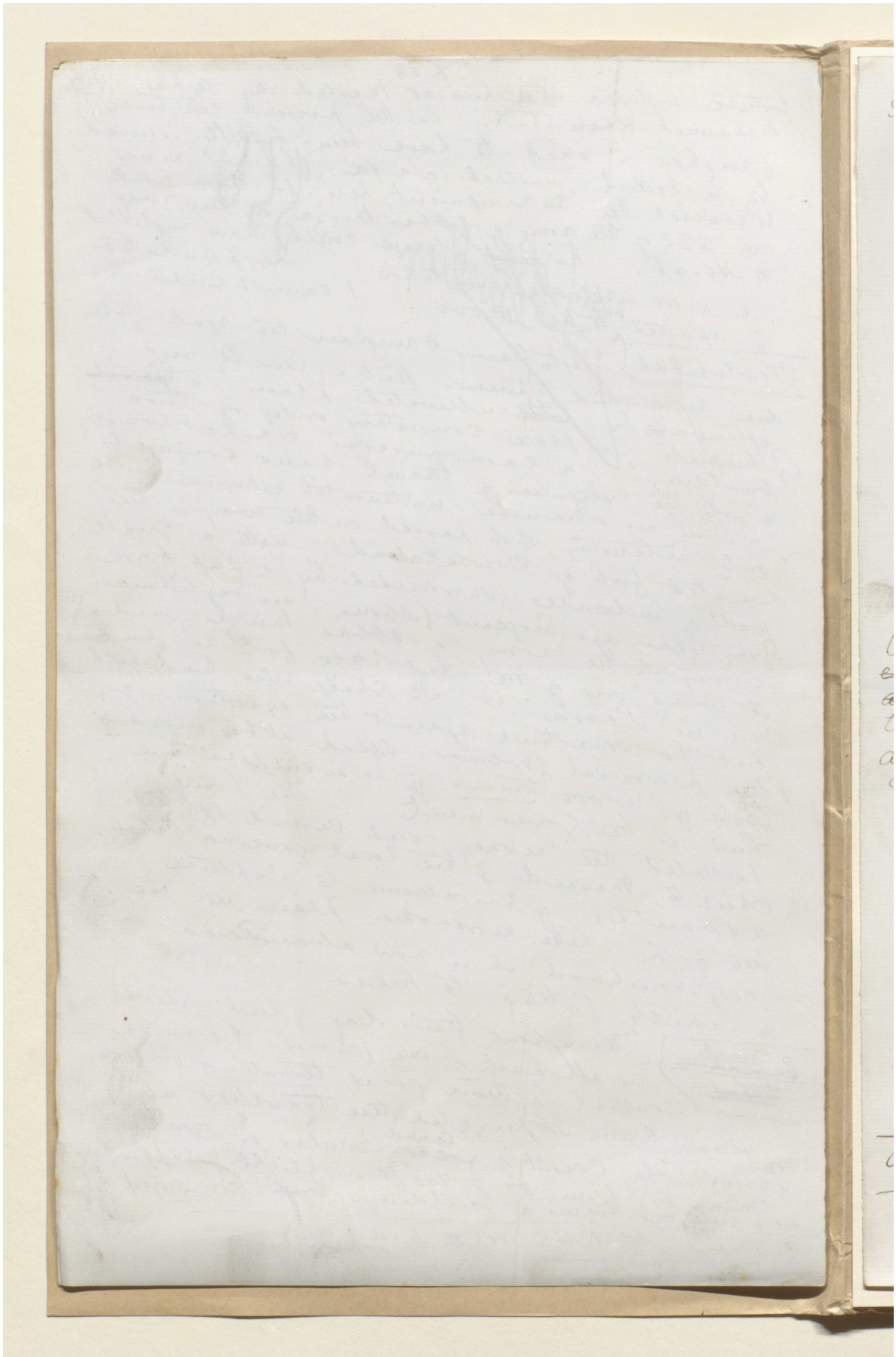
After leaving Damghan the road strikes due west, and traverses first a gravelly and afterwards a richly cultivated plain to ~~Ghushah~~ Ghushah, a place consisting only of two buildings, a caravanserai & a post house, which the exigencies of travel have conjured up in an otherwise untenanted expanse. The only interesting spot passed on the way is the deserted fort of Dowletabad with a triple wall of enclosure surrounded by a deep fosse. Sixty years ago Sergeant Gibbons, an Englishman serving in the army of Abbas Mirza said it was "one of the best little forts he had seen in Persia." (1) Its chief who had held out for some time against the exactions of the provincial governor offered Abbas Mirza a bribe of 30000 tomans if he would continue him in the government. The prince pocketed the money and carried off the chief to Meshed; the local governor taking advantage of his absence to capture the fort. Like most other places in the neighbourhood it is now abandoned & is rapidly falling to pieces.

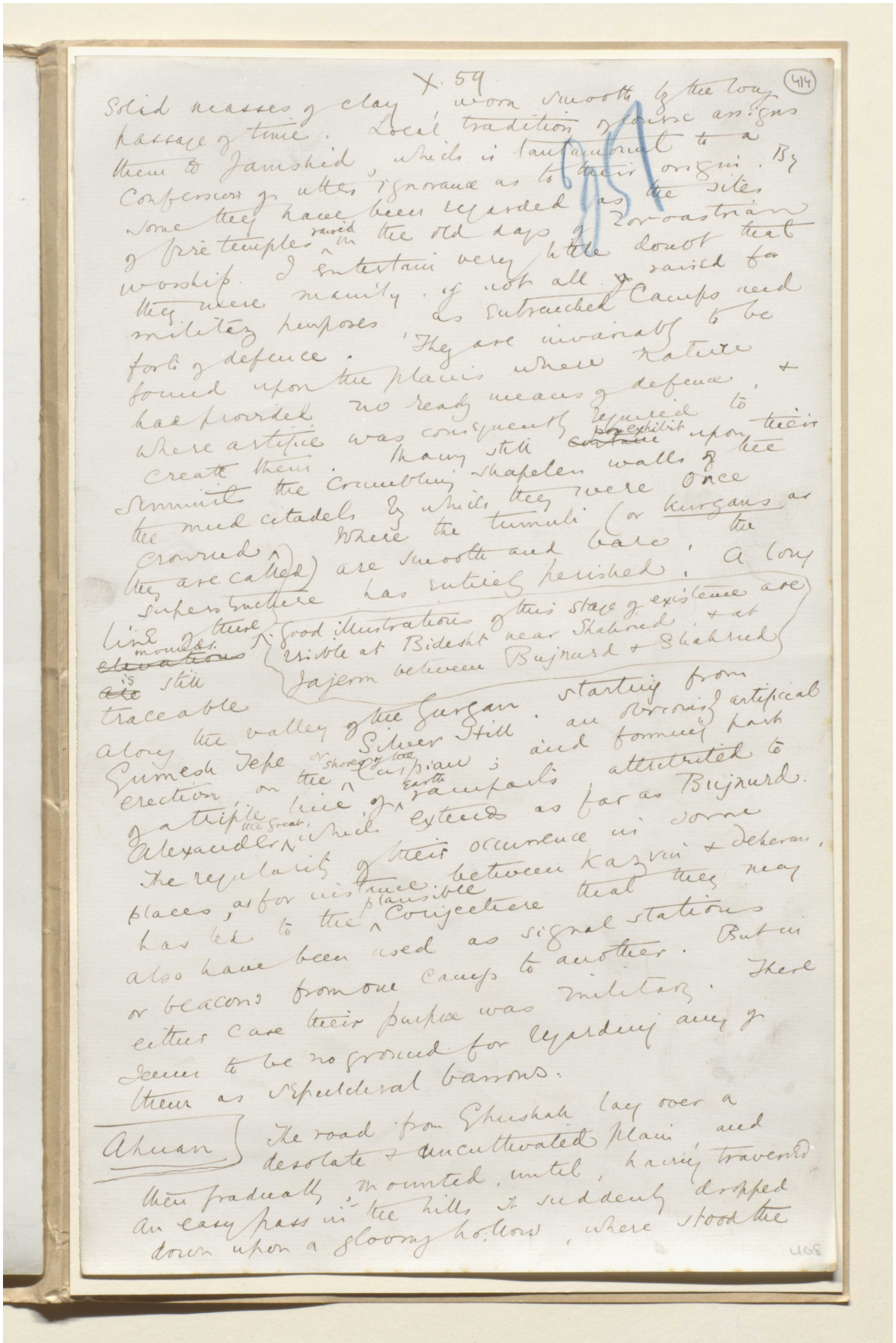
~~Barrows or topes~~ Tumuli

Throughout this day, and indeed in all parts of my journey, I passed several of those great tumuli or barrows which have so puzzled the traveller in N. Persia. They consist of ~~great~~ immense circular or oval mounds, from 50 to 100 ft in height, supporting as a rule no traces of buildings but composed of

(1) Journal of the R.G.S. vol XI. p 136 (1841)

407





X. 59 (414)

Solid masses of clay worn smooth by the long passage of time. Local tradition of course assigns them to Jamshid, which is tantamount to a confession of utter ignorance as to their origin. By some they have been regarded as the sites of fire temples raised in the old days of Zoroastrian worship. I entertain very little doubt that they were mainly, if not all, raised for military purposes, as entrenched camps and forts of defence. They are invariably to be found upon the plains where nature had provided no ready means of defence, & where artifice was consequently required to create them. Many still ~~contain~~ exhibit upon their summits the crumbling shapeless walls of the mud citadels by which they were once crowned. Where the tumuli (or kurgans as they are called) are smooth and bare, the superstructure has entirely perished. A long line of these ~~elevations~~ mounds ~~are~~ is still traceable along the valley of the Gurgan, starting from Gumesh Tepe or Silver Hill, an obviously artificial erection on the shores of the Caspian; and forming part of a triple line of earth ramparts attributed to Alexander the Great, which extends as far as Bujnurd. The regularity of their occurrence in some places, as for instance between Kazvin & Deheran, has led to the plausible conjecture that they may also have been used as signal stations or beacons from one camp to another. But in either case their purpose was military. There seems to be no ground for regarding any of them as sepulchral barrows.

Good illustrations of this stage of existence are visible at Bidesht near Shahrud & at Jajerm between Bujnurd & Shahrud

Ahuan

The road from Ghushah lay over a desolate & uncultivated plain, and then gradually mounted, until, having traversed an easy pass in the hills it suddenly dropped down upon a gloomy hollow, where stood the

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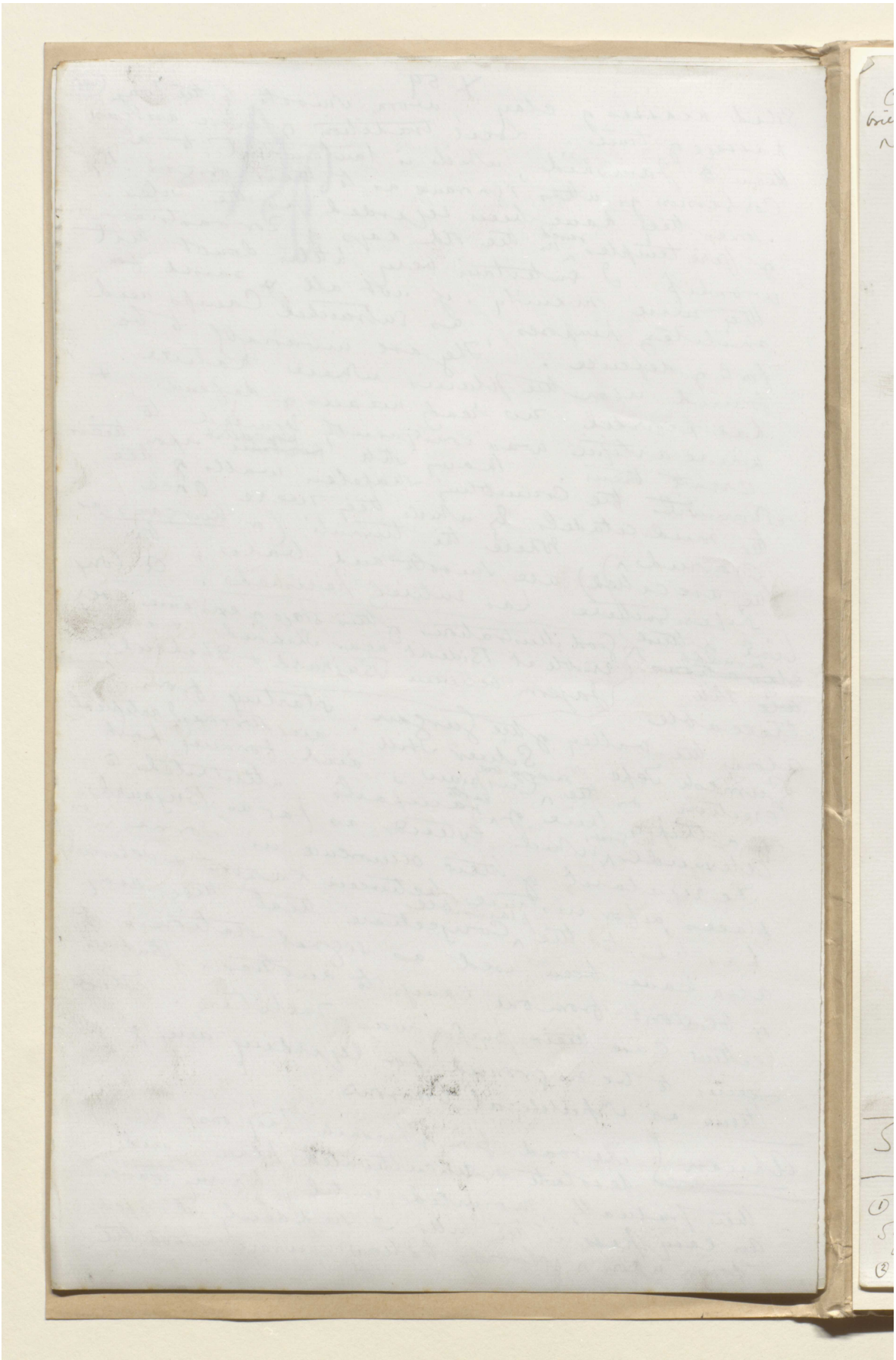

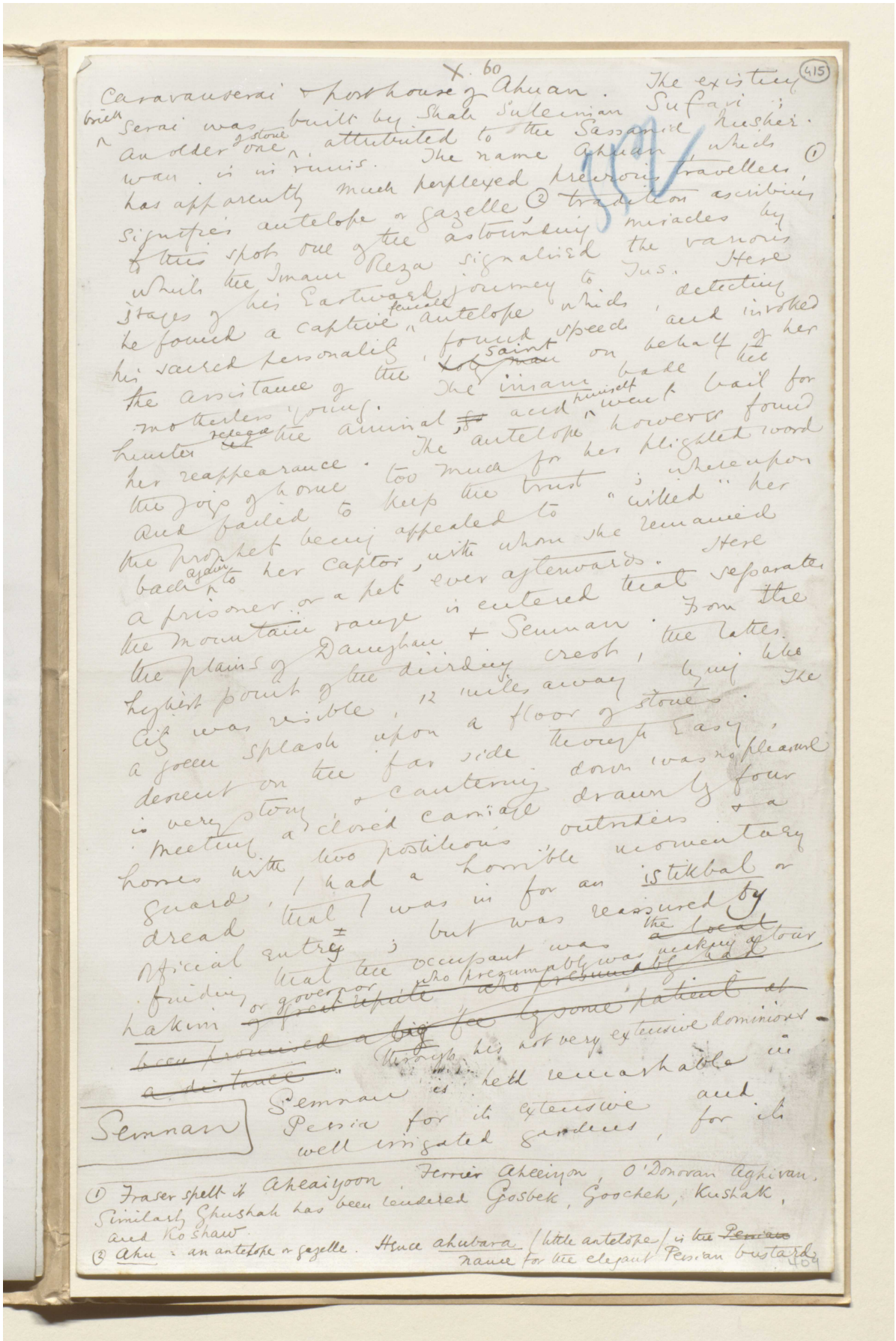

X. 60

415

Caravanserai = post house of Ahuan. The existing brick Serai was built by Shah Sulemian Safavi; a stone one attributed to the Sassanid Khusher. an older one was attributed to the Sassanid Khusher. ①
was is in ruins. The name Ahuan which has apparently much perplexed previous travellers, signifies antelope or gazelle ② tradition ascribing to this spot one of the astounding miracles by which the Imam Reza signalised the various stages of his Eastward journey to Jus. Here he found a captive female antelope which, detecting his sacred personality, found speech and invoked the assistance of the saint on behalf of her motherless young. The imam bade the hunter release the animal, & went himself bail for her reappearance. The antelope however found the joys of home too much for her plighted word and failed to keep the trust; whereupon the prophet being appealed to "willed" her back again to her captor, with whom she remained a prisoner or a pet ever afterwards. Here the mountain range is entered that separates the plains of Damghan + Semnan. From the highest point of the dividing crest, the latter city was visible, 12 miles away by the a green splash upon a floor of stones. The descent on the far side though easy, is very stony, a cautious down was no pleasure meeting a closed caravan drawn by four horses with two postilions outriders + a guard, I had a horrible momentary dread that I was in for an istikbal or official entry; but was reassured by finding that the occupant was merely a local hakim or governor who presumably was making a tour of inspection & had been promised a big fee by some distant at a distance" Thereby his not very extensive dominions is hell remarkable in

Semnan

Semnan Persia for its extensive and well irrigated gardens, for its

① Fraser spelt it Aheaiyoon. Ferrier Aheeiyon, O'Donovan Aghivan, Similarly Shushak has been rendered Gosbek, Goocheh, Kushak, and Ko shaw.

② Ahu = an antelope or gazelle. Hence ahubara / little antelope / is the Persian name for the elegant Persian bustard.

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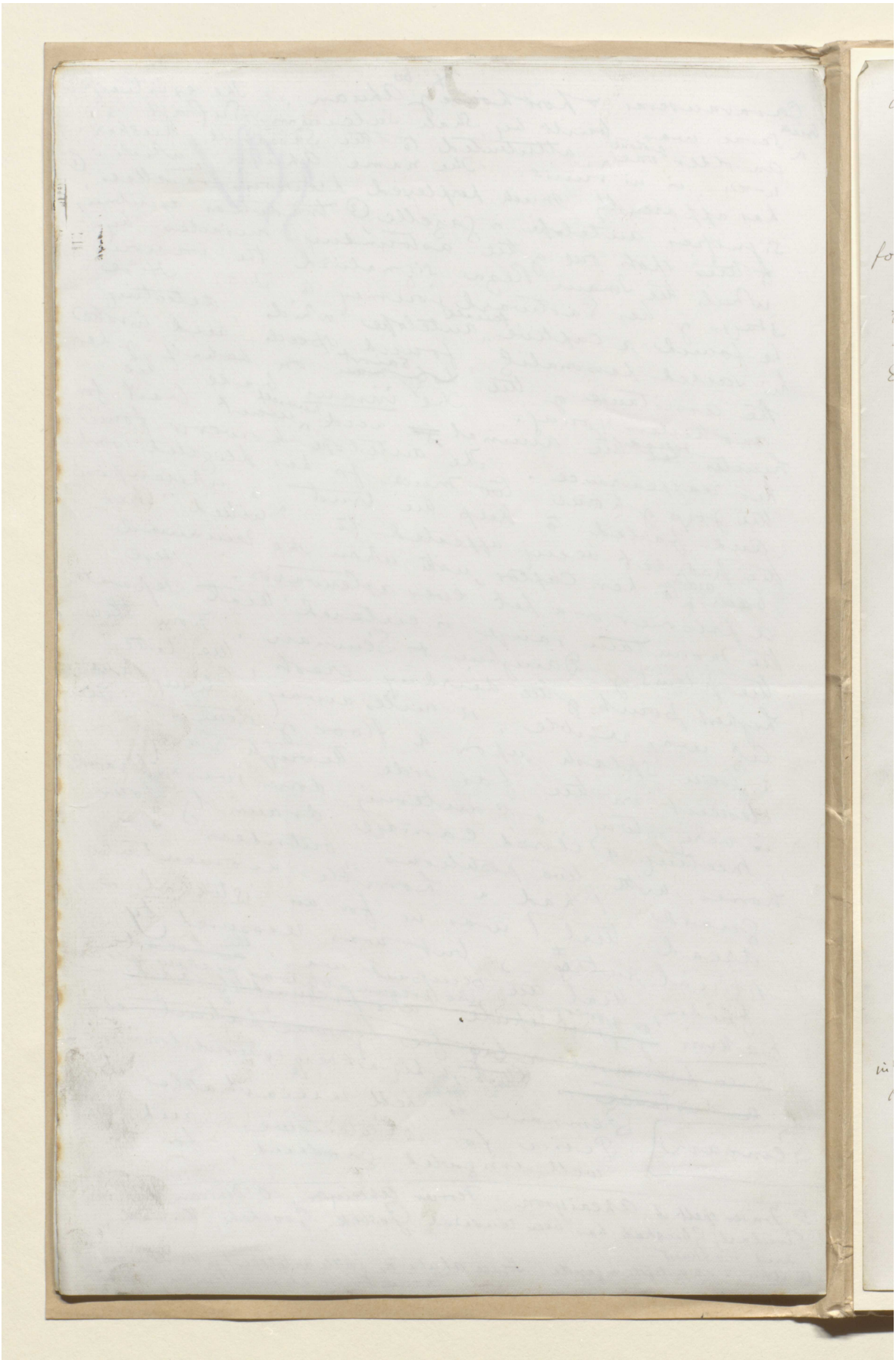

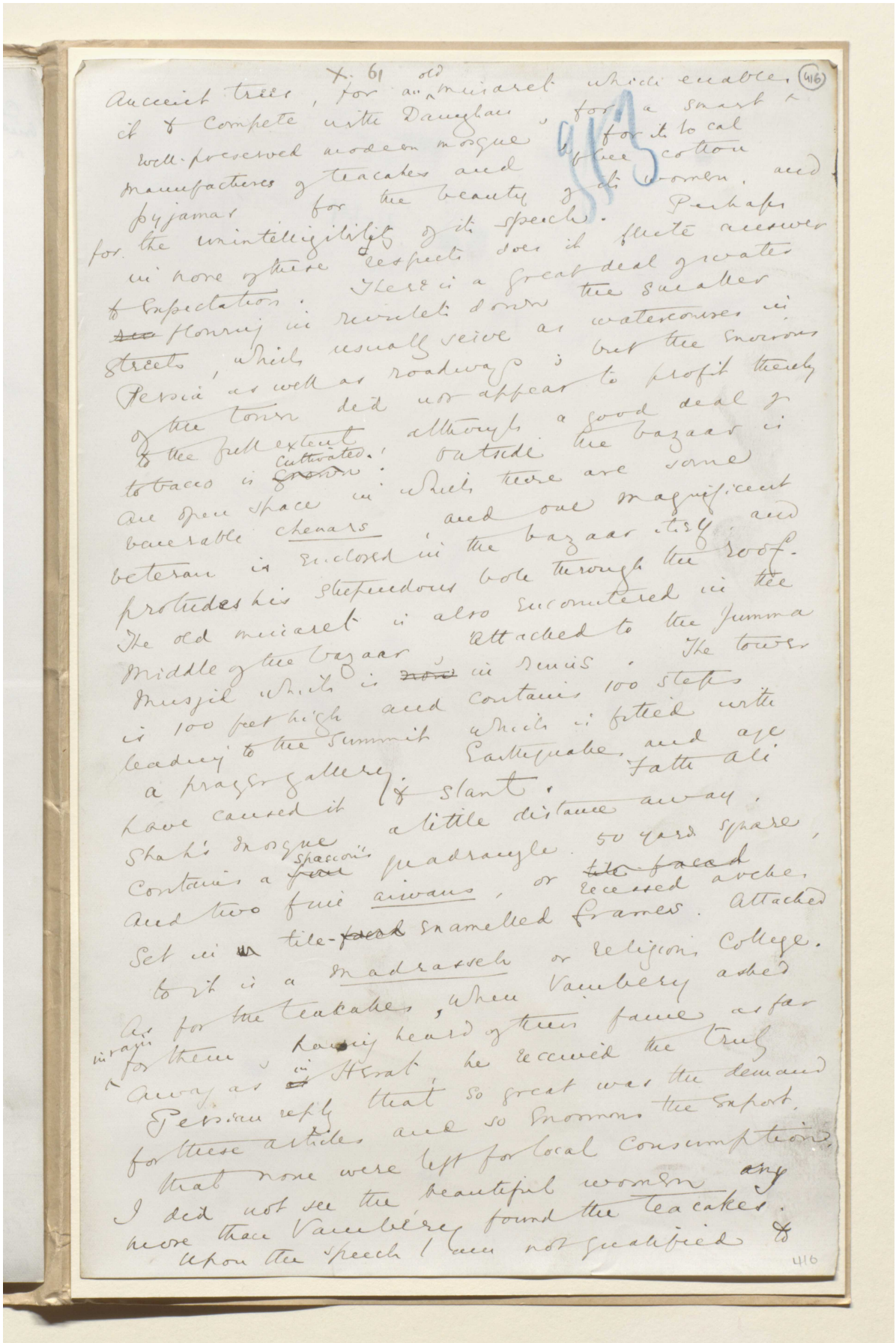

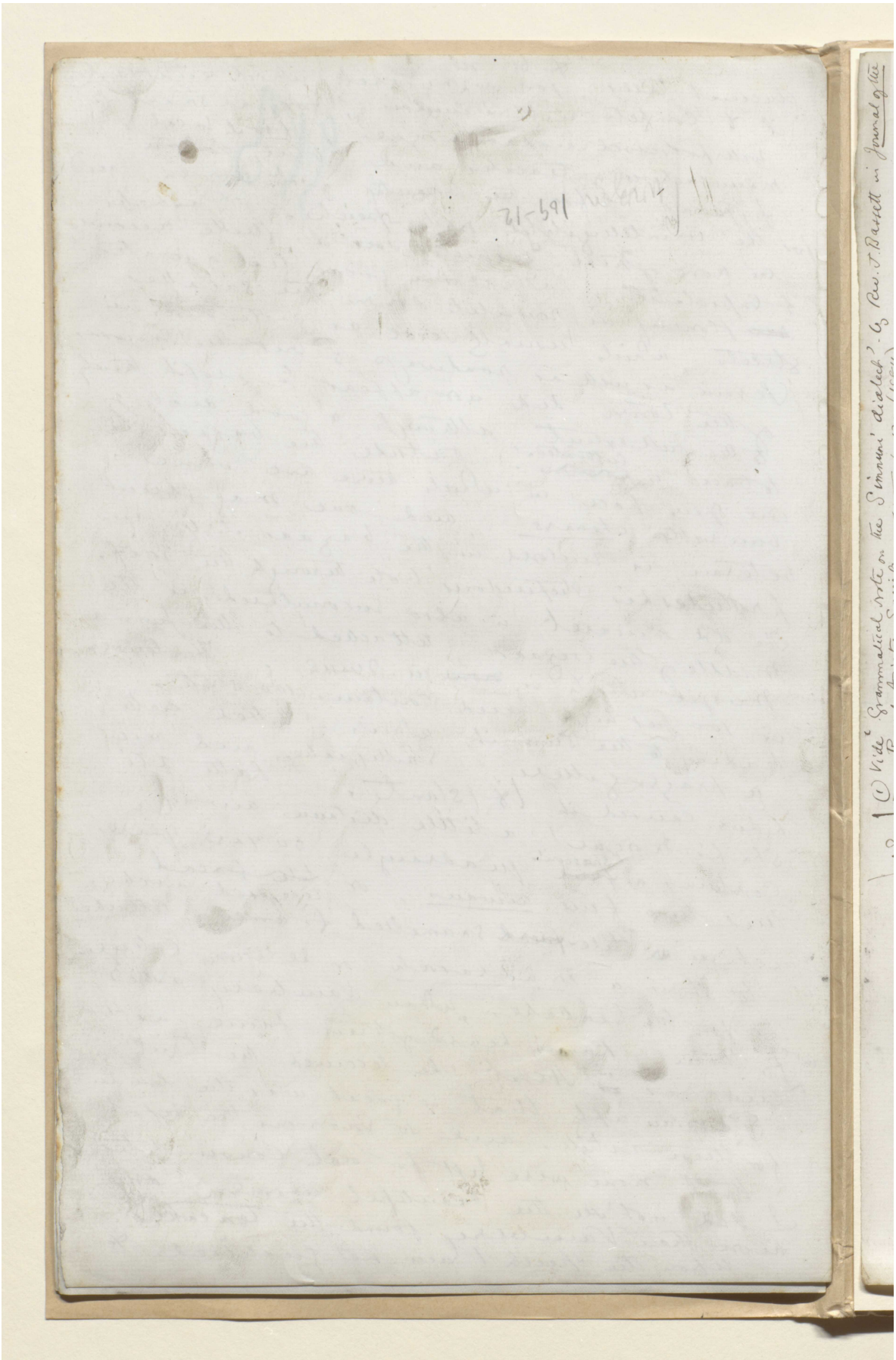

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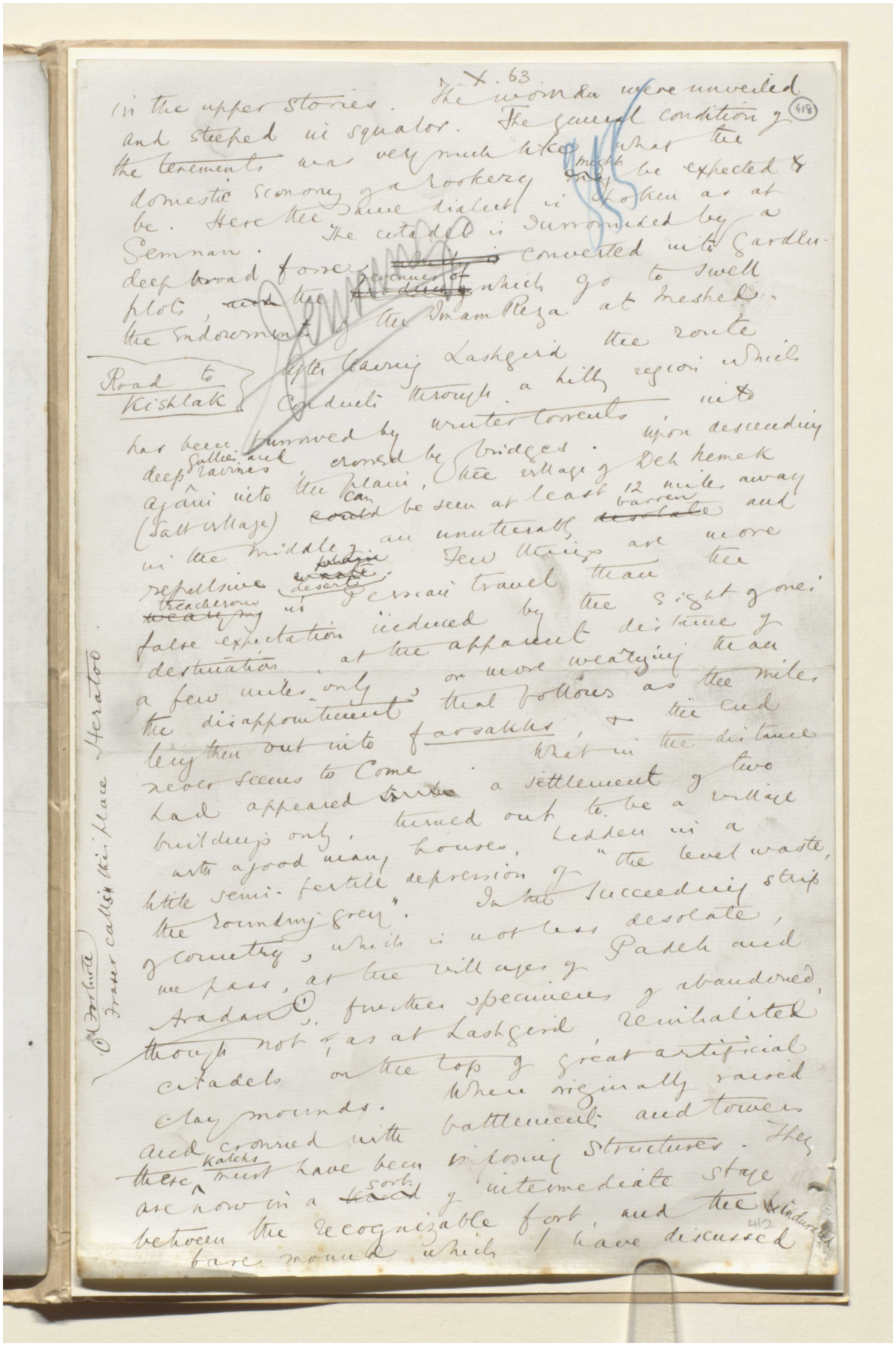

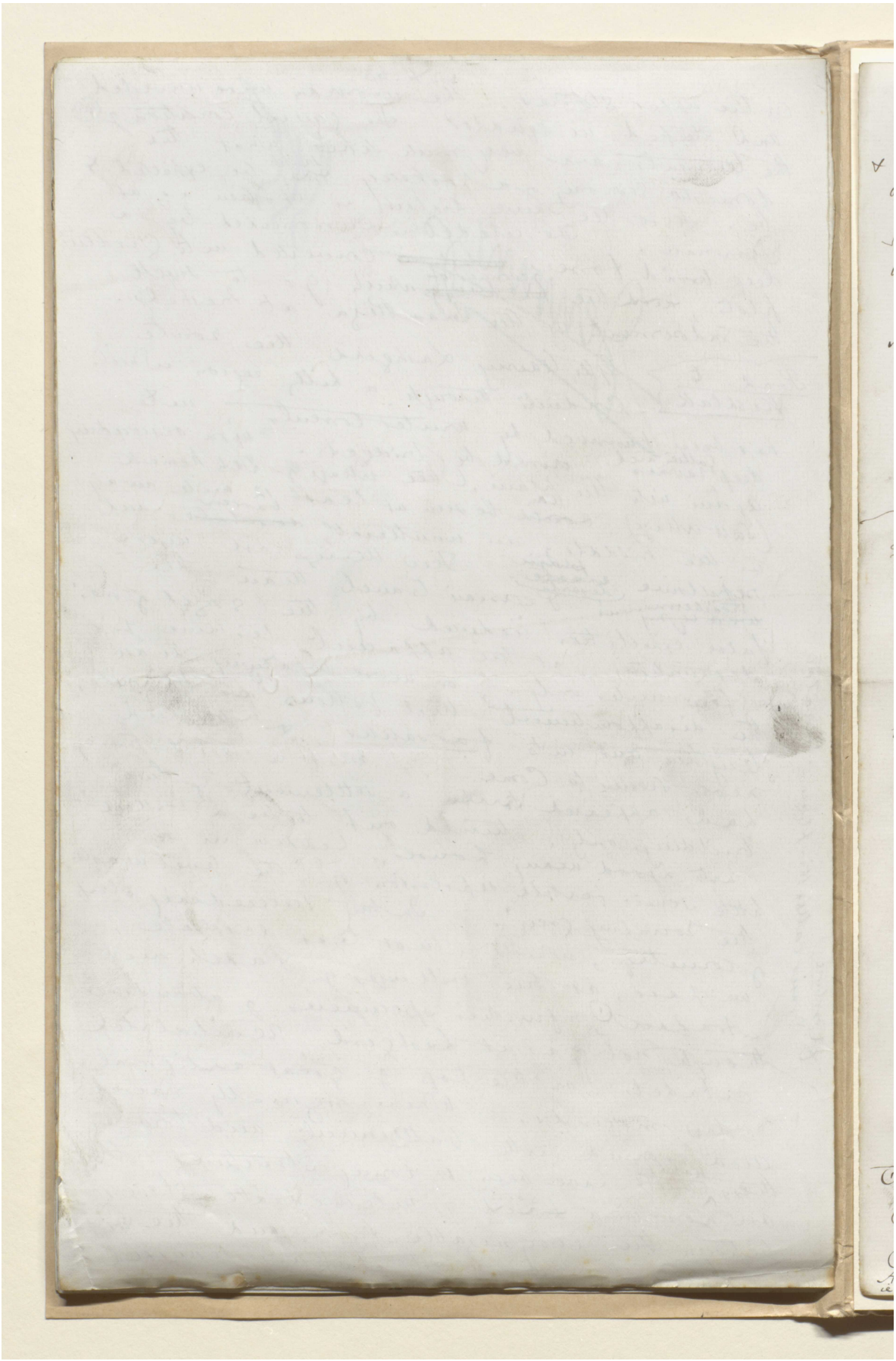

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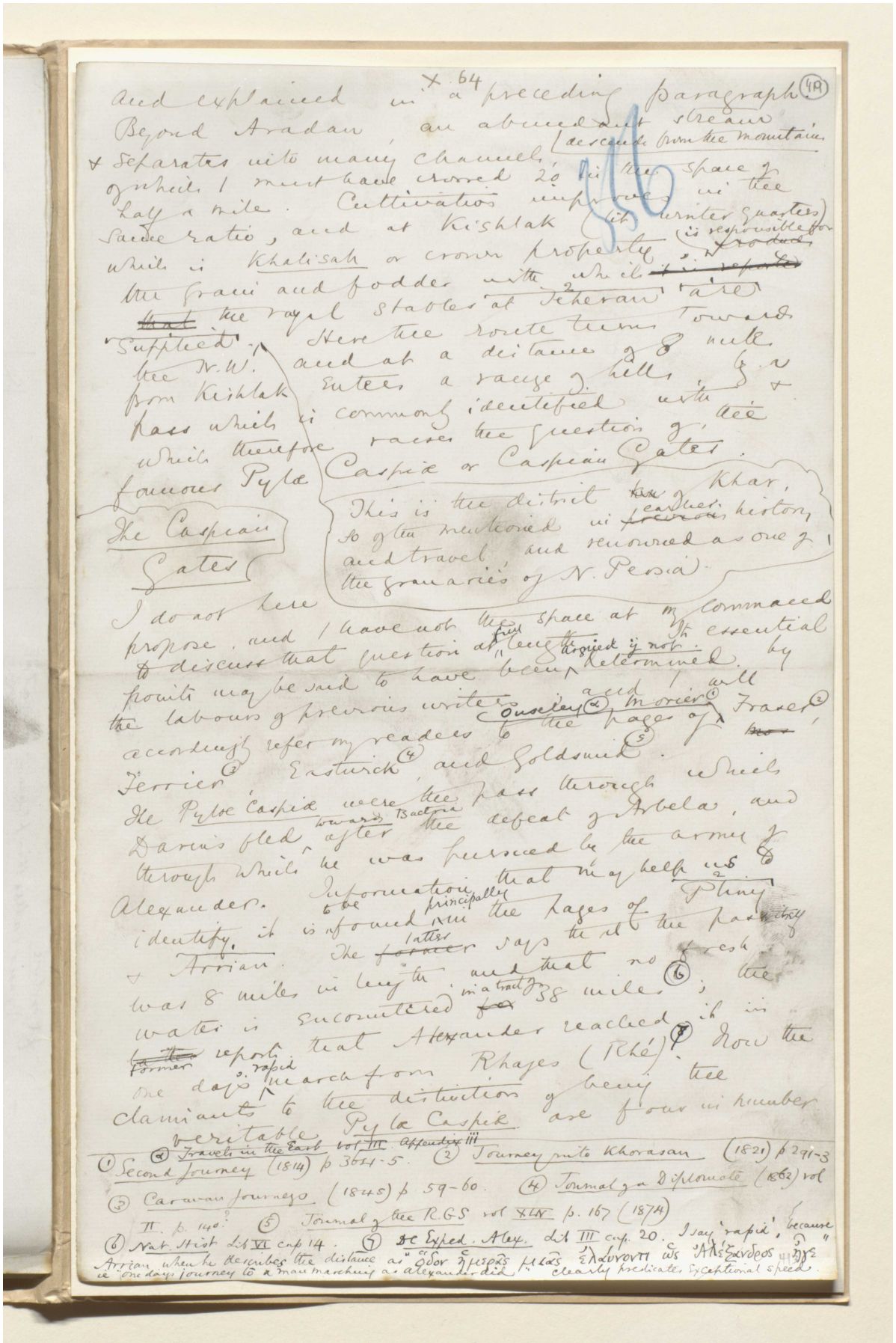
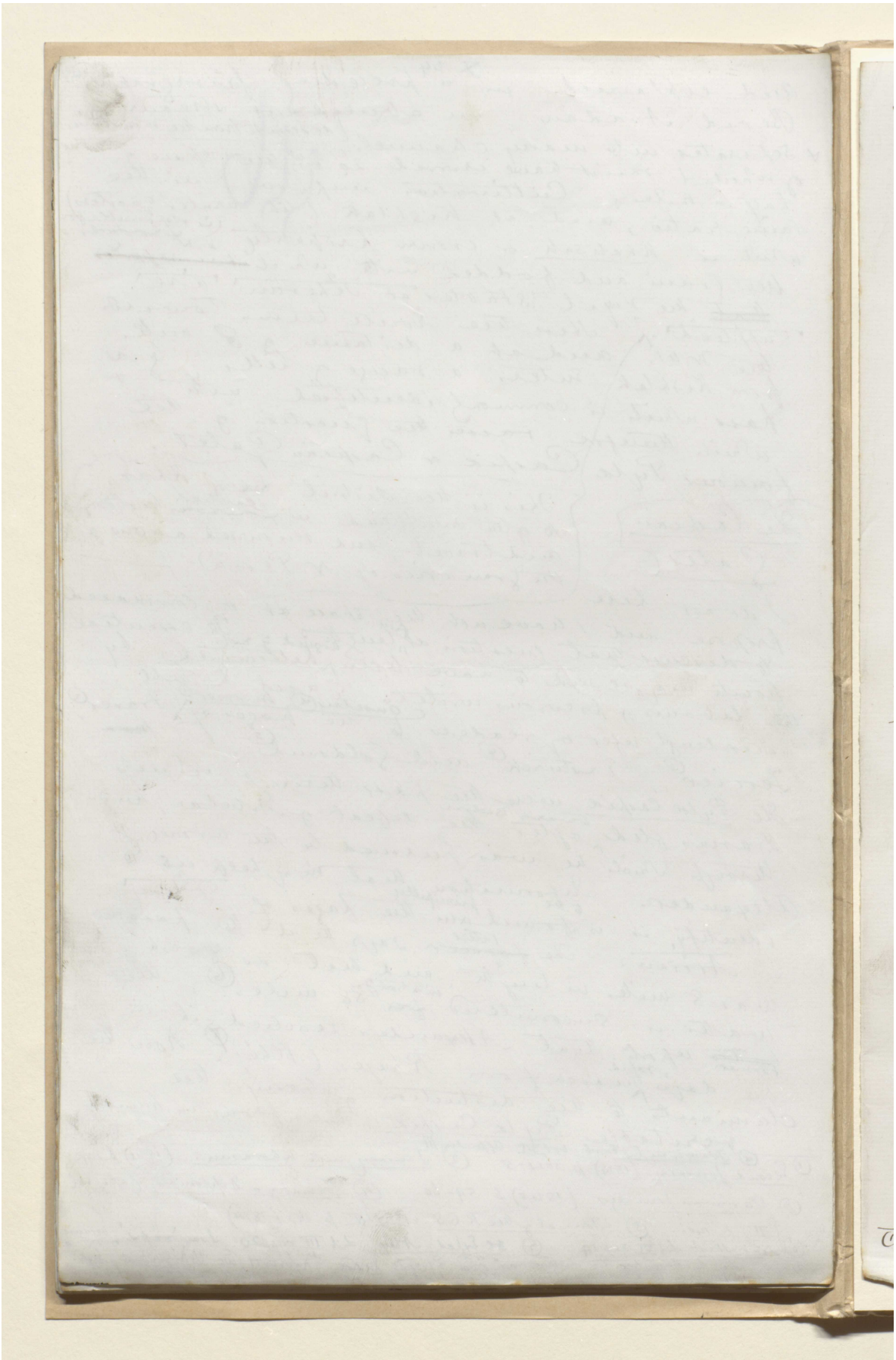
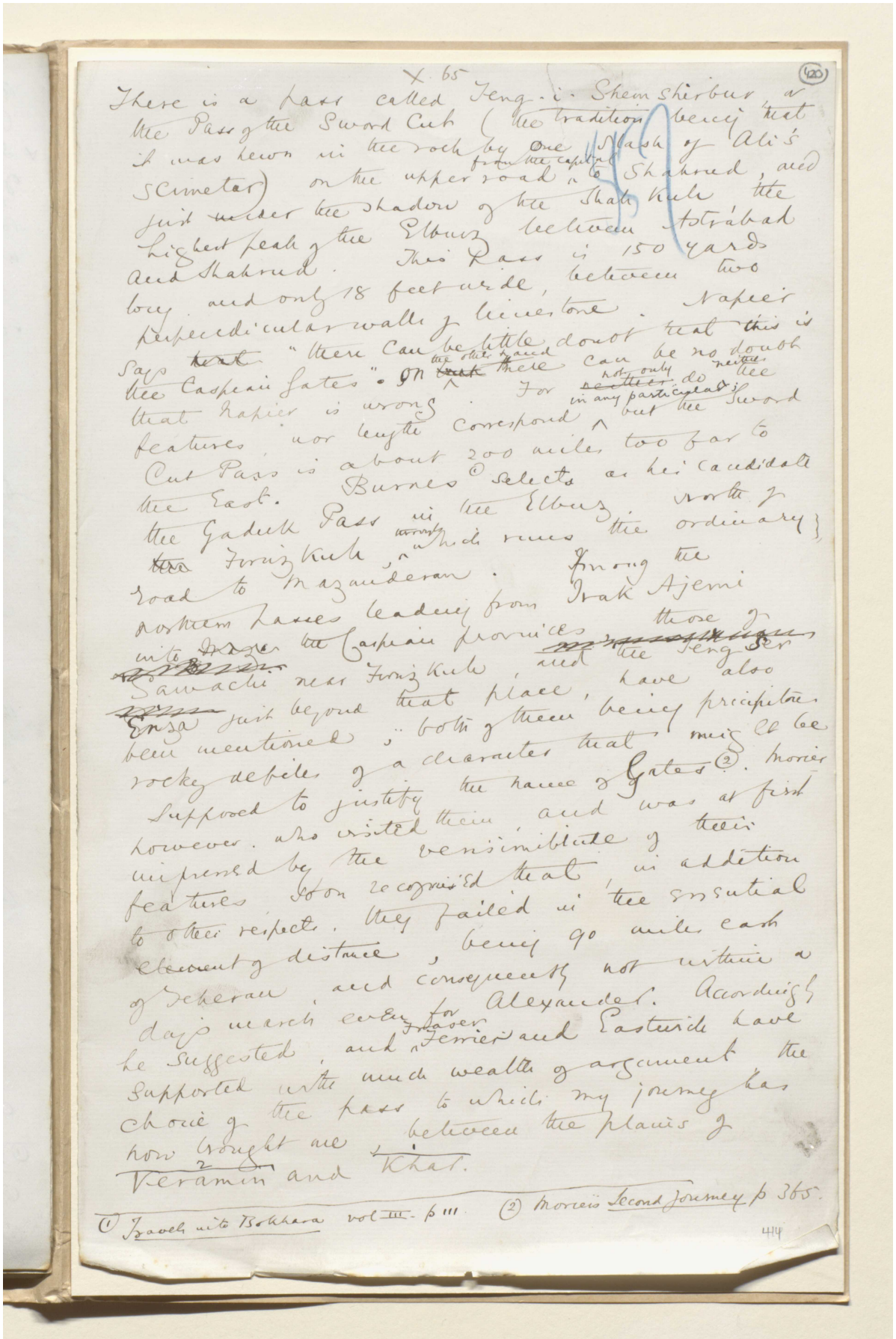




X. 65 (420)



There is a pass called Teng-i-Shemshirbur, or the Pass of the Sword Cut (the tradition being that it was hewn in the rock by one slash of Ali's scimetar) on the upper road from the capital to Shahrud, and just under the shadow of the Shah Kuh the highest peak of the Elburz between Astrabad and Shahrud. This pass is 150 yards long and only 18 feet wide, between two perpendicular walls of limestone. Napier says "there can be little doubt that this is the Caspian Gates". On the other hand there can be no doubt that Napier is wrong. For not only do neither features nor length correspond in any particular, but the Sword Cut Pass is about 200 miles too far to the East. Burnes[1] selects as his candidate the Gaduk Pass in the Elburz, north of Firuzkuh, through which runs the ordinary road to Mazanderan. Among the northern passes leading from Irak Ajemi into the Caspian provinces those of Sawachi near Firuzkuh and the Teng Ser Enza just beyond that place, have also been mentioned; both of them being precipitous rocky defiles of a character that might be supposed to justify the name of Gates[2]. Morier however, who visited them and was at first impressed by the verisimilitude of their features soon recognised that, in addition to other respects, they failed in the essential element of distance, being 90 miles east of Teheran and consequently not within a day's march even for Alexander. Accordingly he suggested, and Fraser, Ferrier and Eastwick have supported with much wealth of argument the choice of the pass to which my journey has now brought me, between the plains of Veramin and Khar.

(1) Travels into Bokhara vol III - p 111. (2) Morier's Second Journey p 365.

414

المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة
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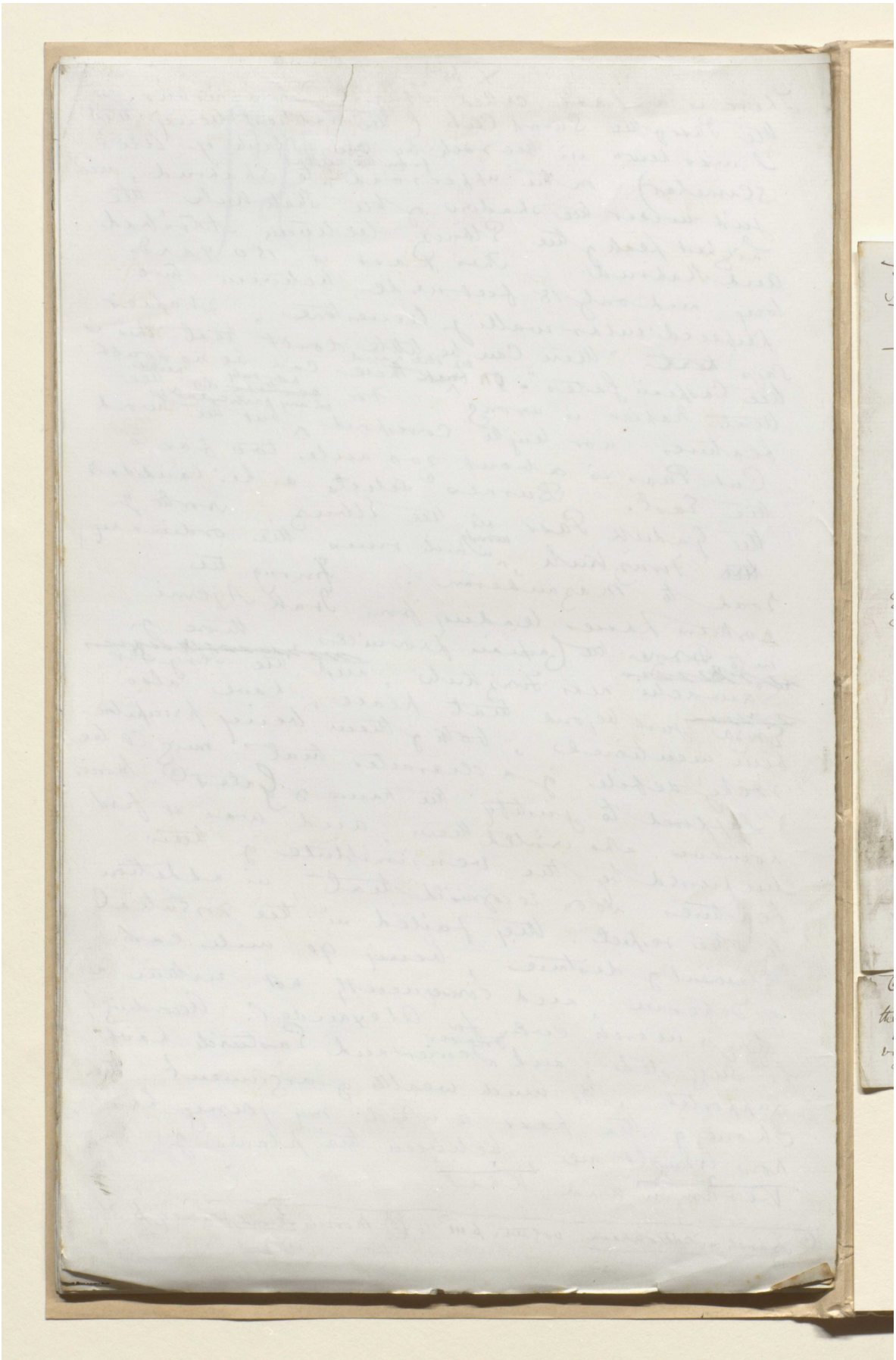

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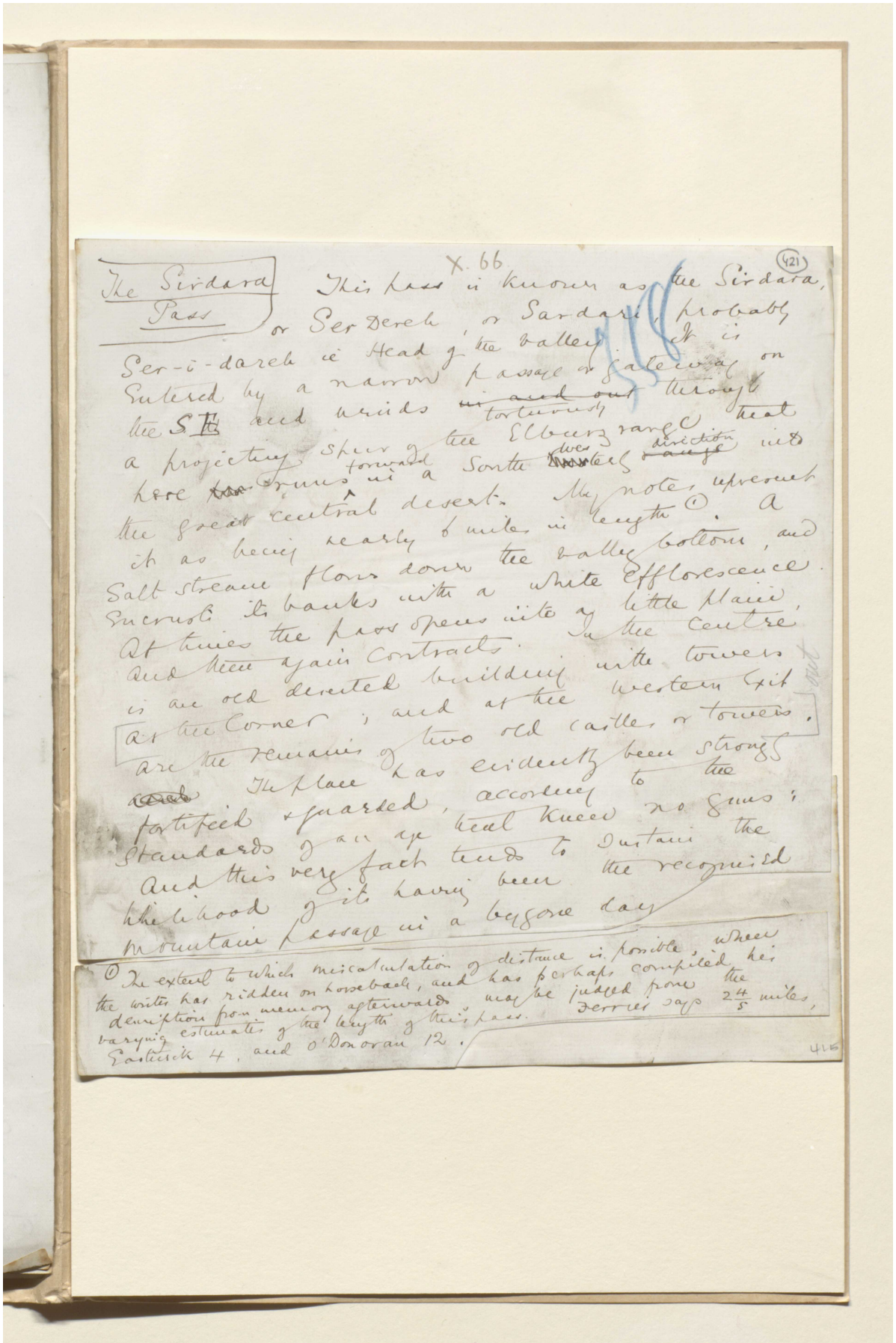
مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٤٢١و] (١٣٥٥/٨٤٤)



X. 66

(421)

The Sirdara Pass

This pass is known as the Sirdara, or Ser Dereh, or Sardari, probably Ser-i-dareh ie Head of the valley. It is entered by a narrow passage or gateway on the S.E. and winds ~~in and out~~ tortuously through a projecting spur of the Elburz range that here ~~[illegible]~~ runs forward in a South ~~[illegible]~~ westerly ~~range~~ direction into the great central desert. My notes represent it as being nearly 6 miles in length (1). A salt stream flows down the valley bottom, and encrusts its banks with a white efflorescence. At times the pass opens into a little plain, and then again contracts. In the centre is an old deserted building with towers at the corner; and at the western exit are the remains of two old castles or towers. ~~[illegible]~~ The place has evidently been strongly fortified & guarded, according to the standards of an age that knew no guns; and this very fact tends to sustain the likelihood of its having been the recognised mountain passage in a bygone day.

(1) The extent to which miscalculation of distance is possible, when the writer has ridden on horseback, and has perhaps compiled his description from memory afterwards, may be judged from the varying estimates of the length of this pass. Ferrier says $2\frac{4}{5}$ miles, Eastwick 4, and O'Donovan 12.

415

المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة
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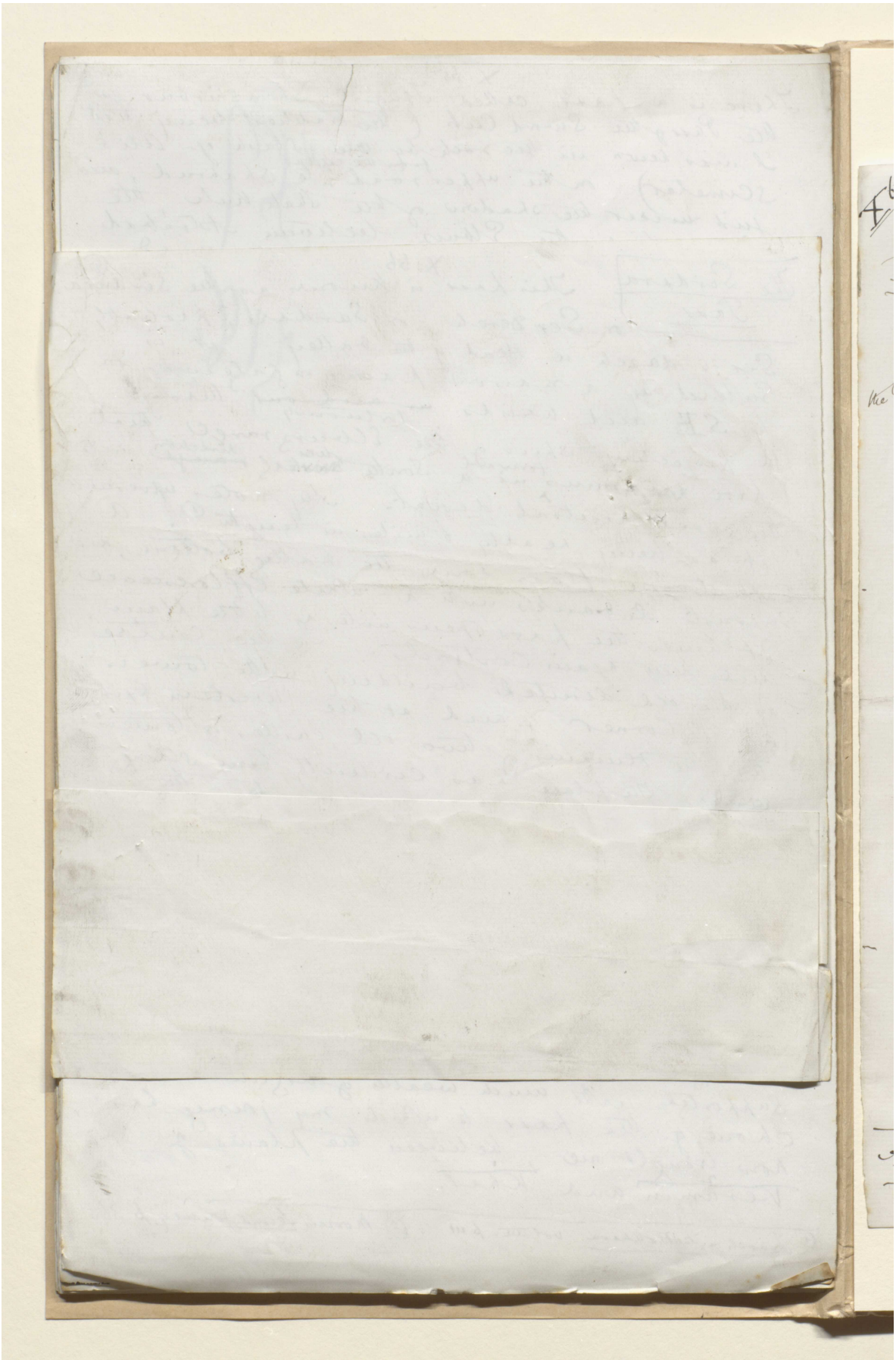

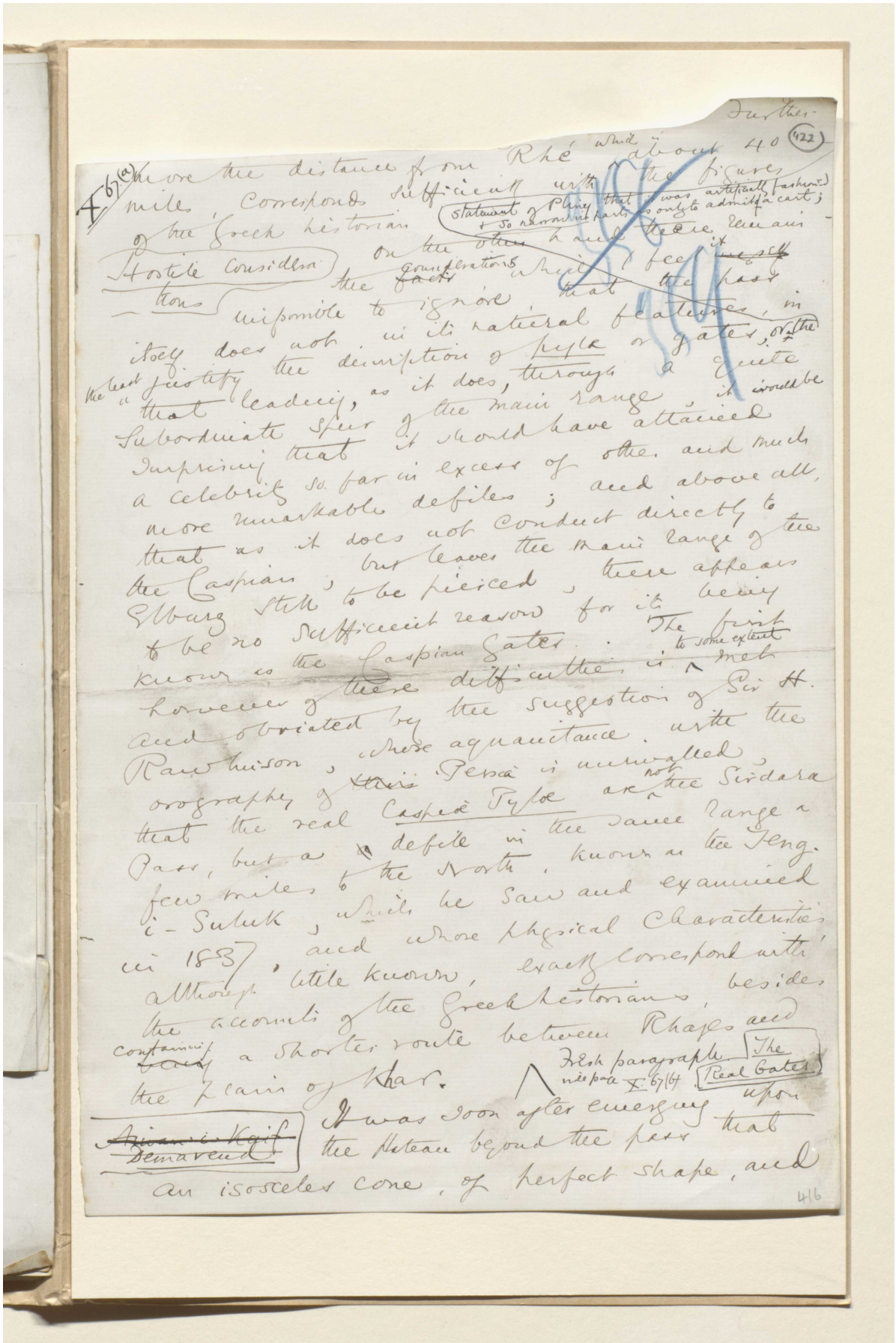

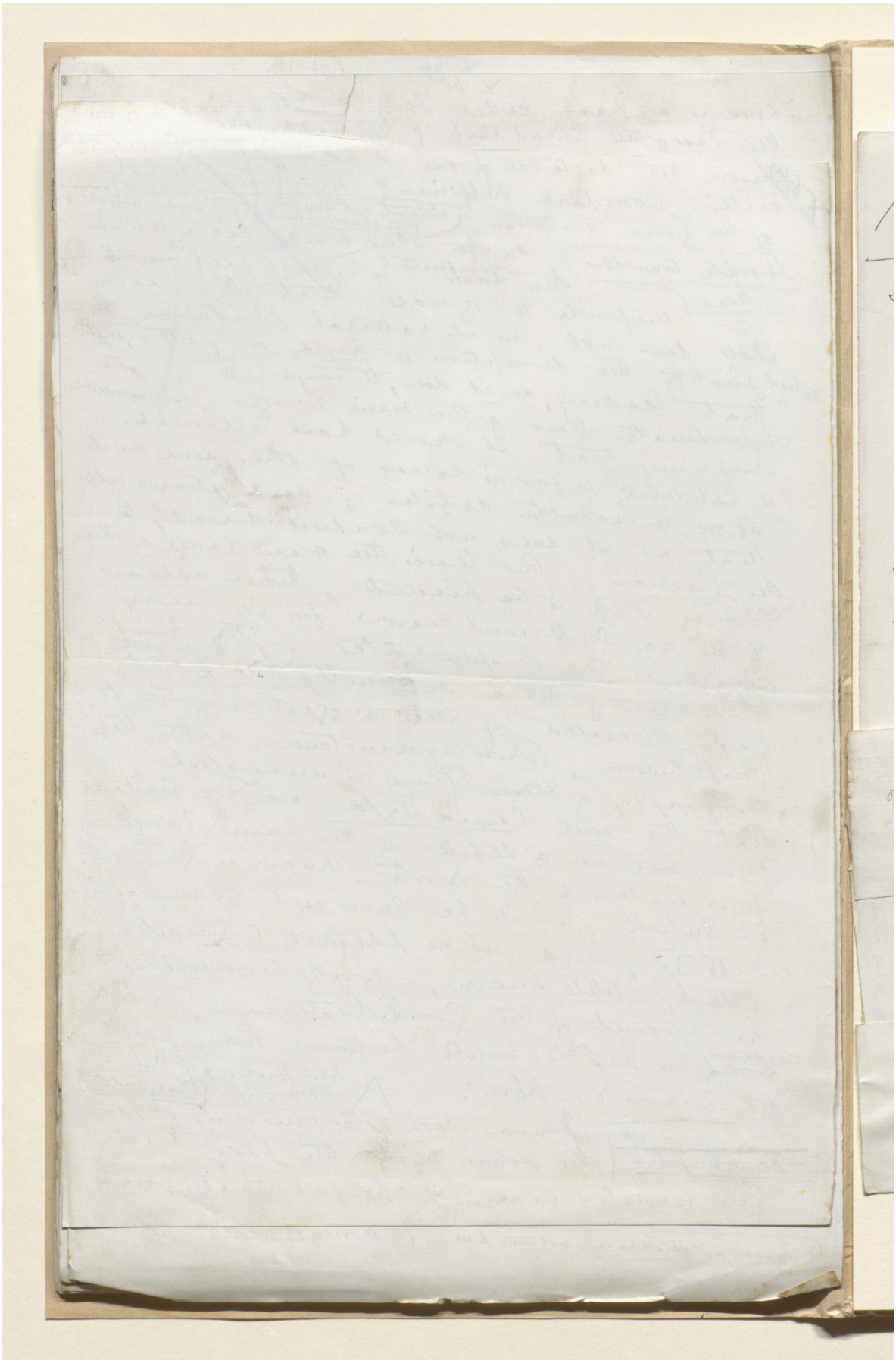

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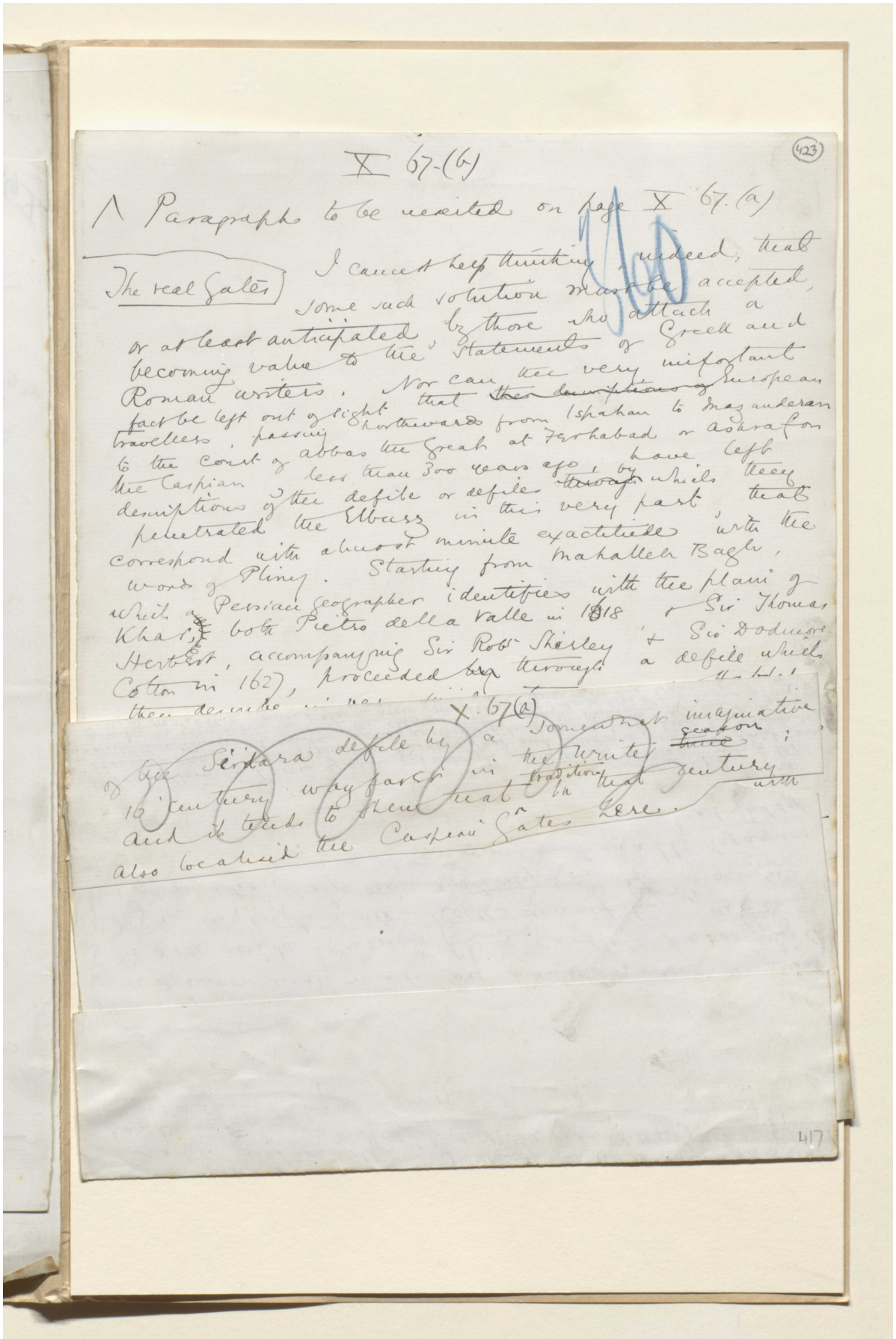
(423)

X 67-(b)

Paragraphs to be inserted on page X 67.(a)

The real Gates

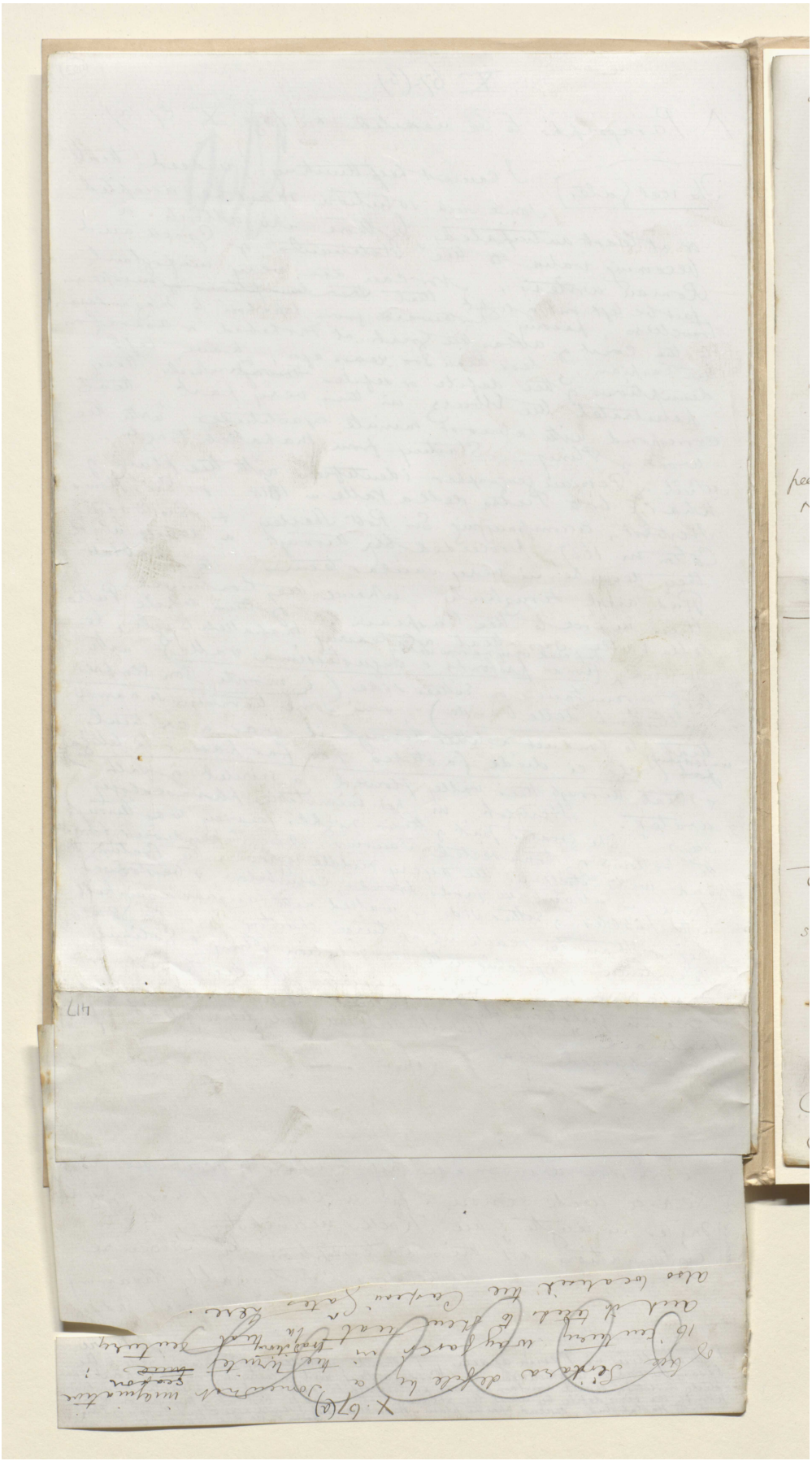


I cannot help thinking, indeed, that some such solution must be accepted, or at least anticipated, by those who attach a becoming value to the statements of Greek and Roman writers. Nor can the very important fact be left out of sight that ~~these descriptions of~~ European travellers, passing northwards from Ispahan to Mazanderan to the Court of Abbas the Great at Ferhabad or Ashraf on the Caspian less than 300 years ago, have left descriptions of the defile or defiles ~~through~~ by which they penetrated the Elburz in this very part, that correspond with almost minute exactitude with the words of Pliny. Starting from Mahalleh Bagh, which a Persian geographer identifies with the plain of Khar, both Pietro della Valle in 1618 & Sir Thomas Herbert, accompanying Sir Robt Shirley & Sir Dodmore Cotton in 1627, proceeded ~~by~~ through a defile which they describe [illegible]

X. 67(a)

of the Sirdara defile by a somewhat imaginative 16 century wayfarer in the winter ~~time~~ season; and it tends to shew that traditions in that century also localised the Caspian Gates here.

417



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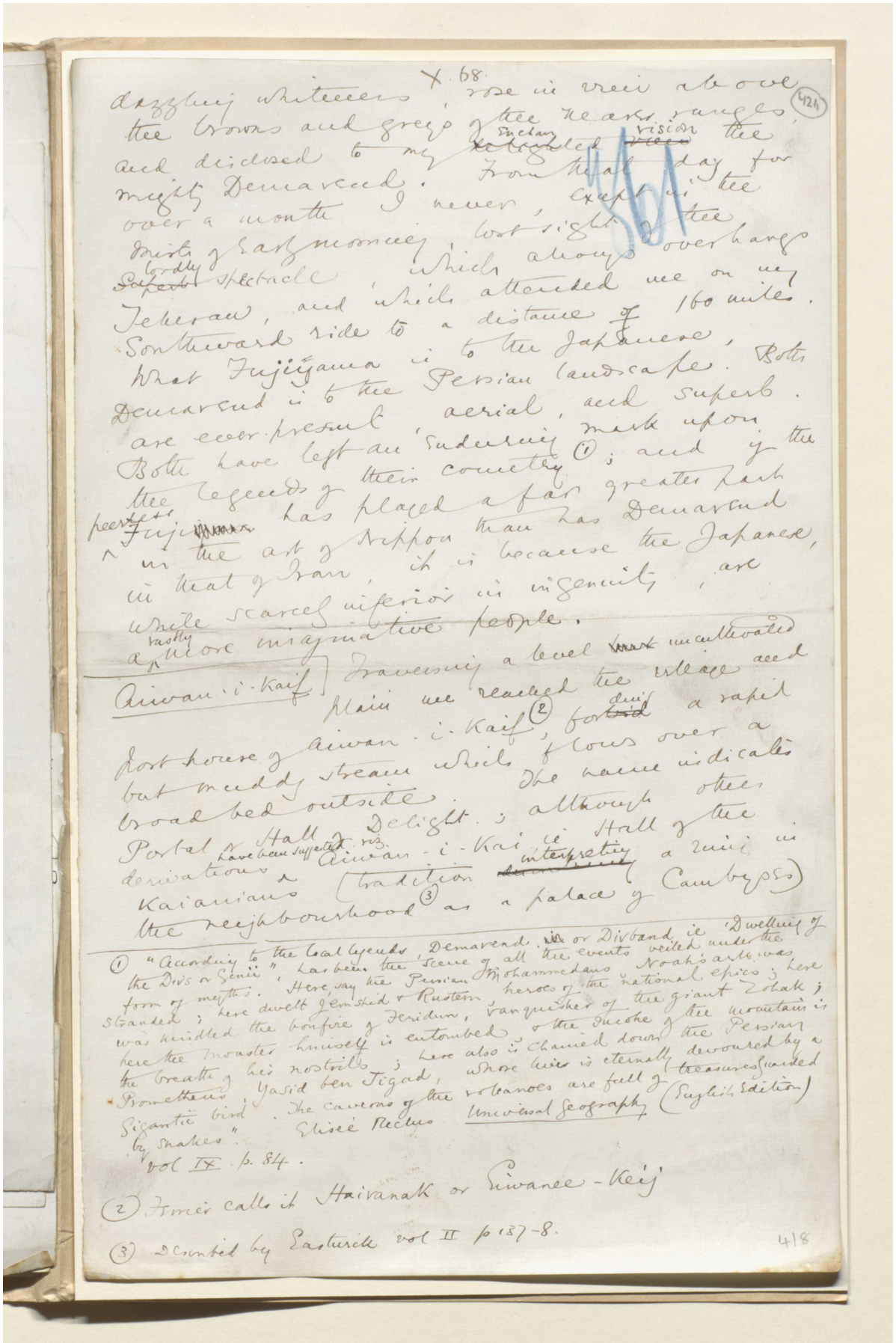
مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٤٢٤و] (١٣٥٥/٨٥٠)



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X. 68.

(424)

dazzling whiteness, rose in view above the browns and greys of the nearer ranges, and disclosed to my ~~delighted~~ enchanted ~~view~~ vision the mighty Demavend. From that day for over a month I never, except in the mists of early morning, lost sight of the ~~superb~~ lordly spectacle, which always overhangs Teheran, and which attended me on my Southward ride to a distance of 160 miles. What Fujiyama is to the Japanese, Demavend is to the Persian landscape. Both are ever-present, aerial, and superb. Both have left an enduring mark upon the legends of their country (1); and if the peerless Fuji has played a far greater part in the art of Nippon than has Demavend in that of Iran, it is because the Japanese, while scarcely inferior in ingenuity, are a vastly more imaginative people.

Aiwan-i-Kaif

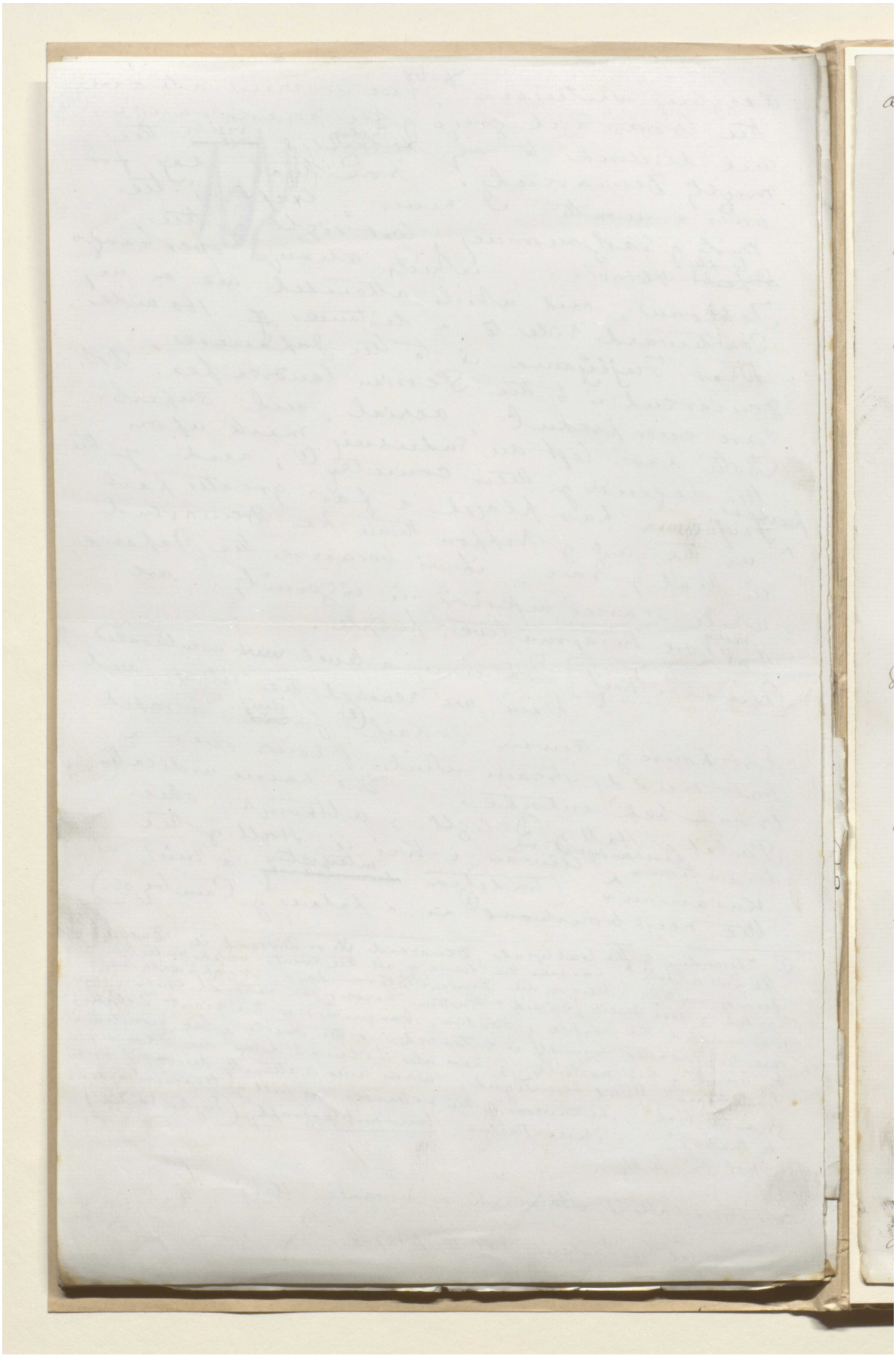
Traversing a level ~~[illegible]~~ uncultivated plain we reached the village and post house of Aiwan-i-Kaif (2), for ~~[illegible]~~ during a rapid but muddy stream which flows over a broad bed outside. The name indicates Portal or Hall of Delight; although other derivations have been suggested, viz. Aiwan-i-Kai ie Hall of the Kaianians (tradition ~~[illegible]~~ interpreting a ruin in the neighbourhood (3) as a palace of Cambyses)

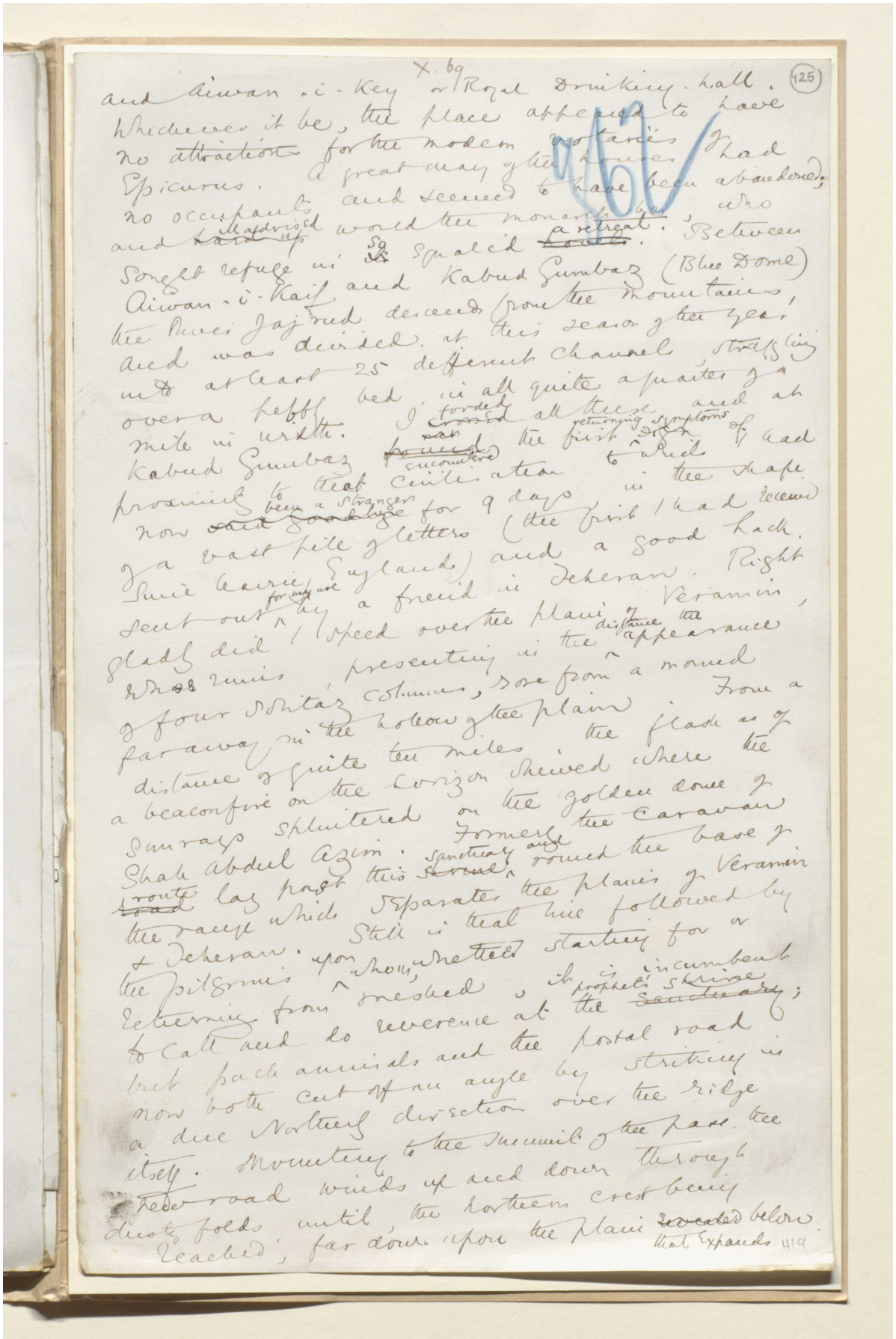
(1) "According to the local legends, Demavend ~~[illegible]~~ or Divband, ie 'Dwelling of the Divs or Genii', has been the scene of all the events veiled under the form of myths. Here, say the Persian Mohammedans, Noah's ark was stranded; here dwelt Jemshid & Rustem, heroes of the national epics; here was kindled the bonfire of Feridun, vanquisher of the giant Zohak; here the monster himself is entombed, & the smoke of the mountain is the breath of his nostrils; here also is chained down the Persian Prometheus, Yasid ben Jigad, whose liver is eternally devoured by a gigantic bird. The caverns of the volcanoes are full of treasures guarded by snakes". Elisée Reclus. Universal Geography (English Edition) vol IX. p. 84.

(2) Ferrier calls it Haivanak or Eiwanee-Keij

(3) Described by Eastwick vol II p 137-8.

418





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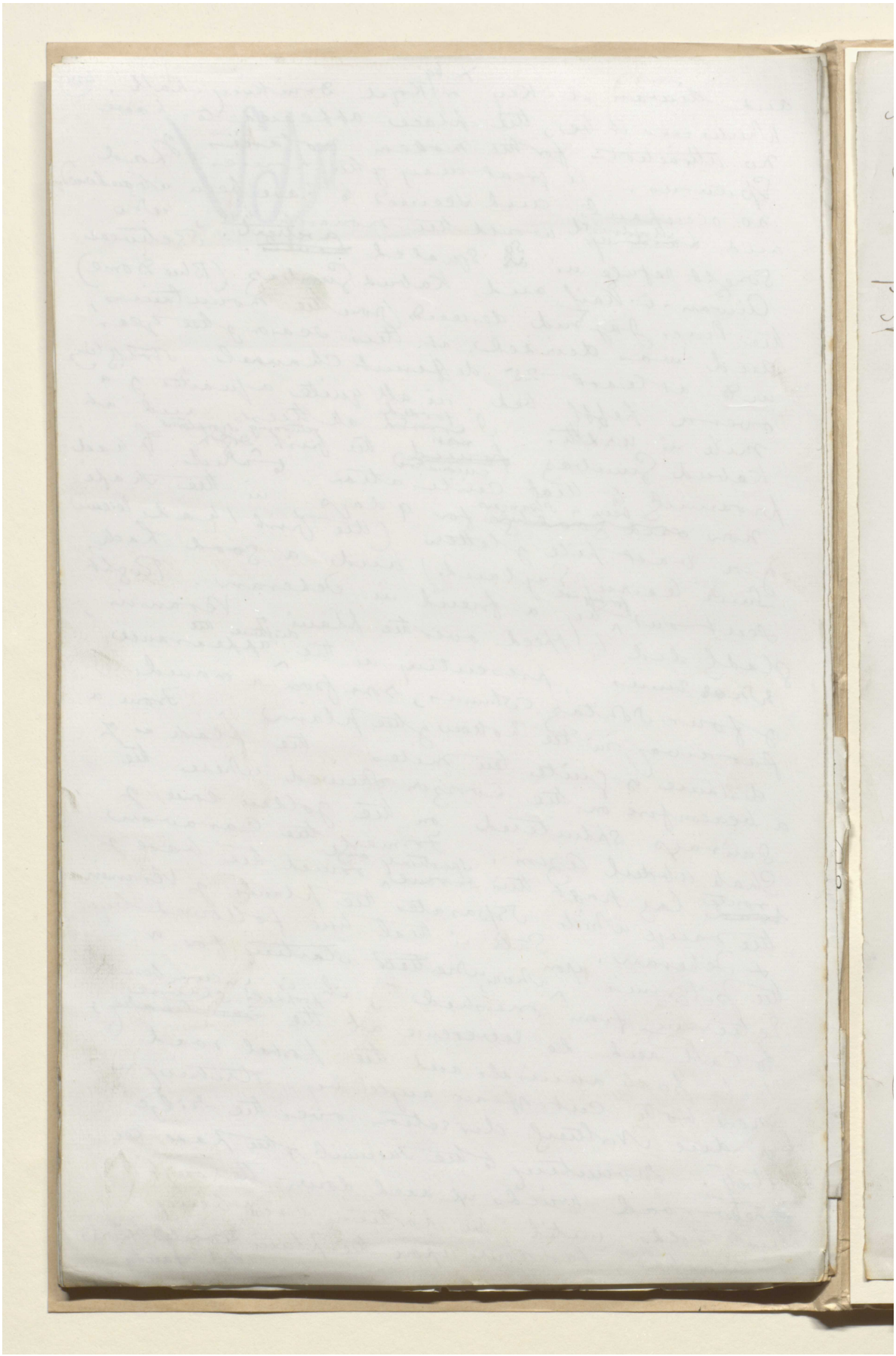

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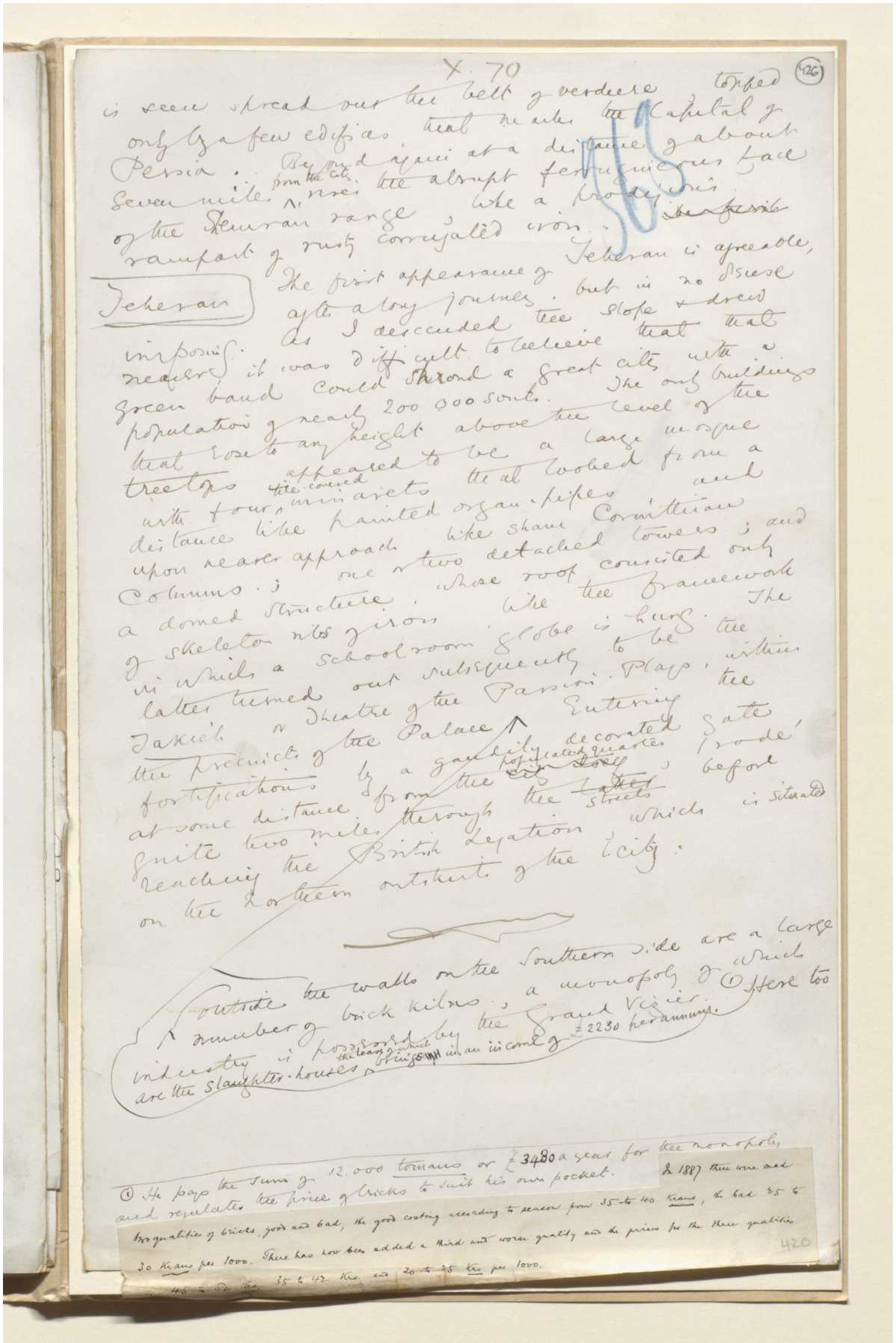

X. 70 (426)

is seen spread out the belt of verdure topped only by a few edifices that marks the Capital of Persia. Beyond again at a distance of about seven miles from the city, rises the abrupt ferruginous face of the Shemran range, like a prodigious rampart of rusty corrugated iron.

Teheran

The first appearance of Teheran is agreeable, after a long journey, but in no disease imposing. As I descended the slope & drew nearer it was difficult to believe that that green band could shroud a great city with a population of nearly 200 000 souls. The only buildings that rose to any height above the level of the treetops appeared to be a large mosque with four tile-covered minarets that looked from a distance like painted organ-pipes and upon nearer approach like sham Corinthian Columns; one or two detached towers; and a domed structure whose roof consisted only of skeleton ribs of iron like the framework in which a schoolroom globe is hung. The latter turned out subsequently to be the Takieh or Theatre of the Passion Plays, within the precincts of the Palace. Entering the fortifications by a gaudily decorated gate at some distance from the populated quarters, 'rode' quite two miles through the streets before reaching the British Legation which is situated on the northern outskirts of the city.

Outside the walls on the Southern side are a large number of brick kilns, a monopoly of which industry is possessed by the Grand Vizier. (1) Here too are the slaughter-houses, the lease of which brings in an income of £2230 per annum.

(1) He pays the sum of 12.000 tomans or £3480 a year for the monopoly and regulates the price of bricks to suit his own pocket. In 1887 there were made two qualities of bricks, good and bad, the good costing according to season from 35 to 40 Krans, the bad 25 to 30 Krans per 1000. There has now been added a third and worse quality and the prices for the three qualities [illegible] 45 to 52 Krs, 35 to 42 Krs. and 20 to 25 Krs per 1000.

420



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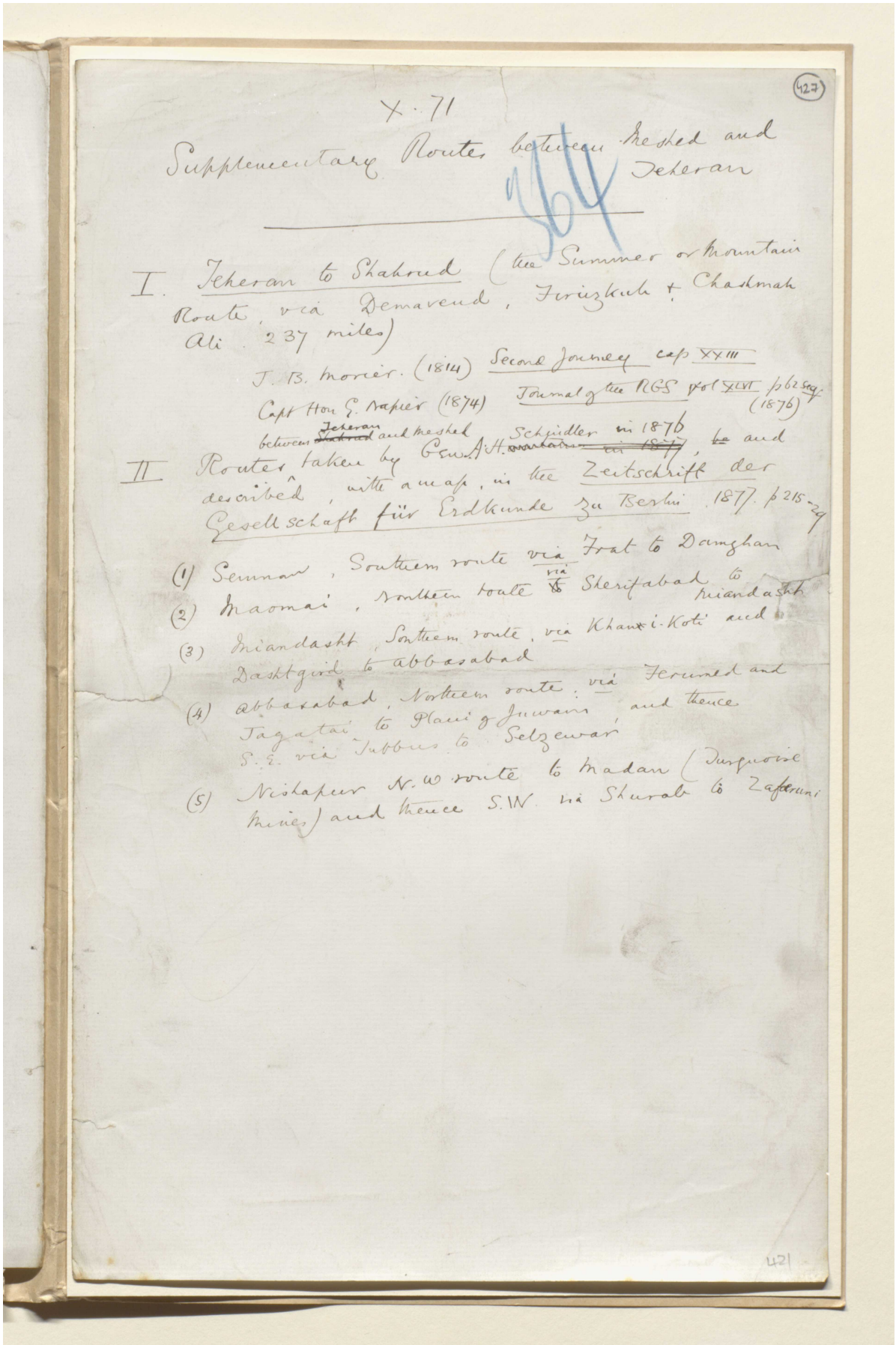
(427)

X. 71

Supplementary Routes between Meshed and Teheran



364

I. Teheran to Shahrud (the Summer or Mountain Route, via Demavend, Firuzkuh & Chashmah Ali. 237 miles)

J. B. Morier. (1814) Second Journey cap XXIII

Capt Hon G. Napier (1874) Journal of the RGS vol XLVI p 62 seq (1876)

II Routes between ~~Shahrud~~ Teheran and Meshed taken by Gen. A. H. Schindler in 1876 ~~in 1877~~, ~~be~~ and described, with a map, in the Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin. 1877. p 215-29

(1) Semnan, Southern route via Frat to Damghan

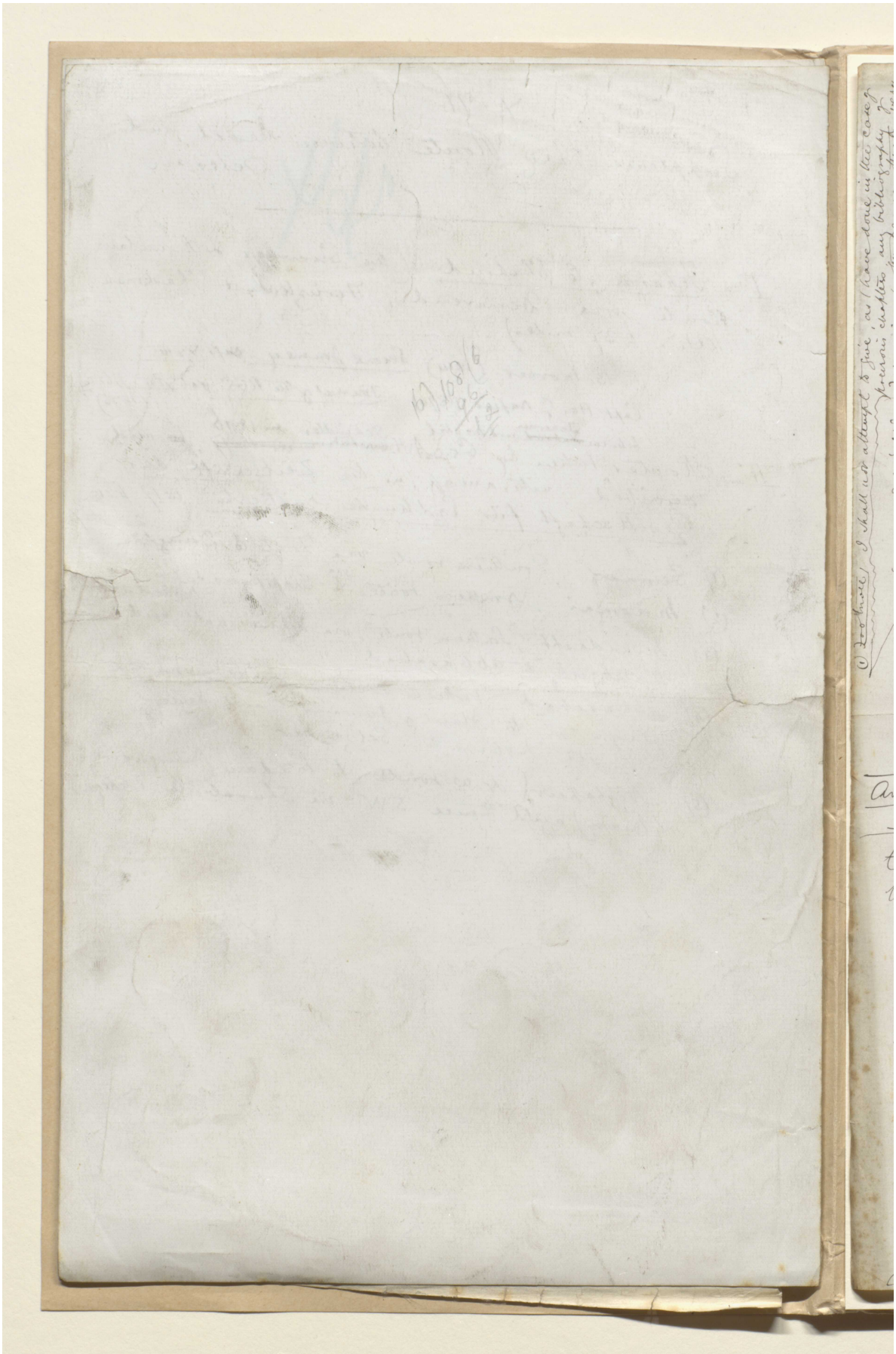
(2) Maomai, Northern route via Sherifabad to Miandasht

(3) Miandasht, Southern route, via Khan-i-Koti and Dashtgird to Abbasabad

(4) Abbasabad, Northern route, via Ferumed and Tagatai to Plain of Juwain, and thence S.E. via Tubbus to Selzewar

(5) Nishapur N.W. route to Madan (Turquoise Mines) and thence S.W. via Shurab to Zafaruni

421



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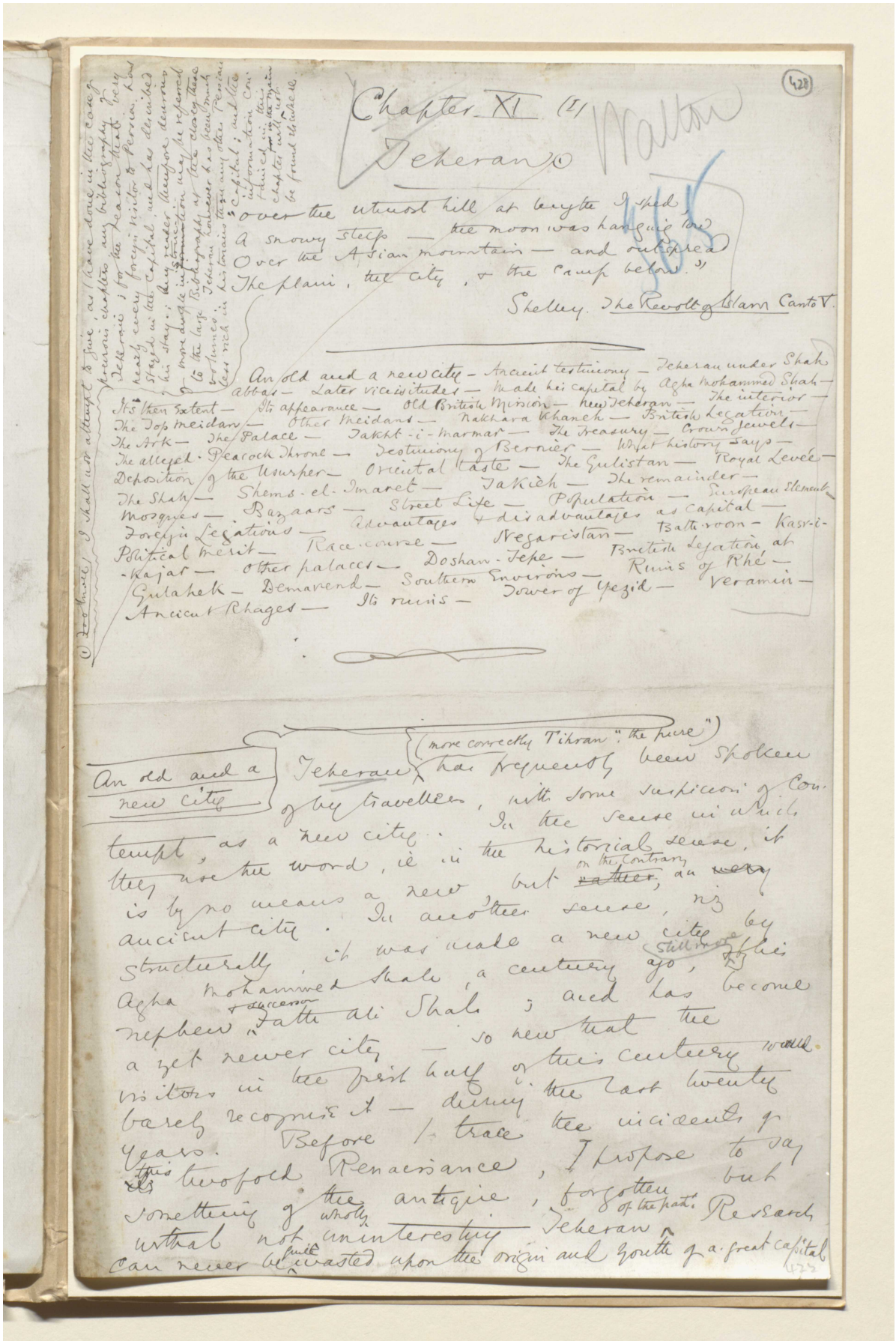


Chapter XI (I)

Teheran (1)

"over the utmost hill at beyrte I sped,
A snowy steep — the moon was hanging low
Over the Asian mountain — and outspread
The plain, the city, & the camp below."

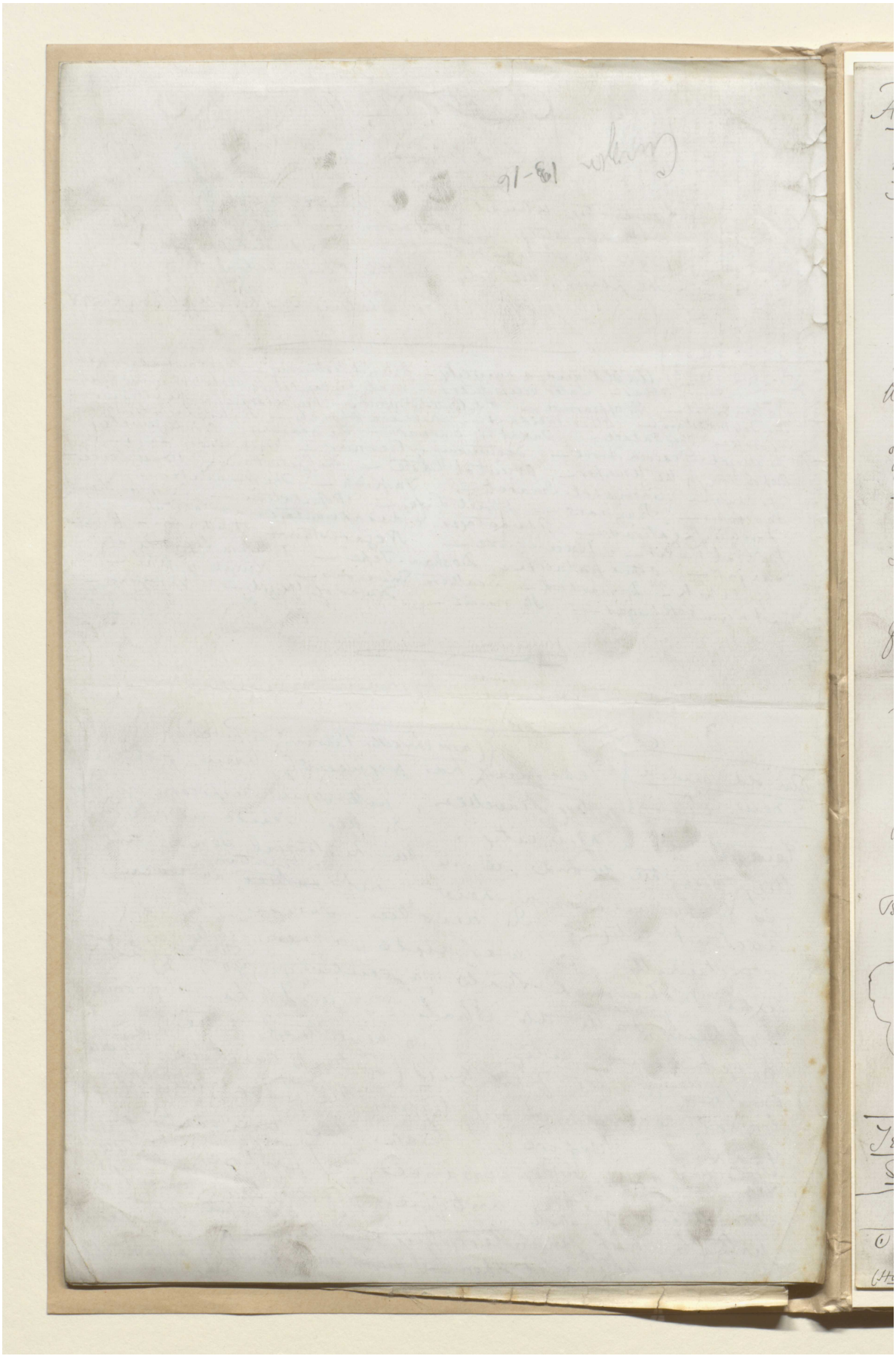
Shelley. The Revolt of Islam Canto V.

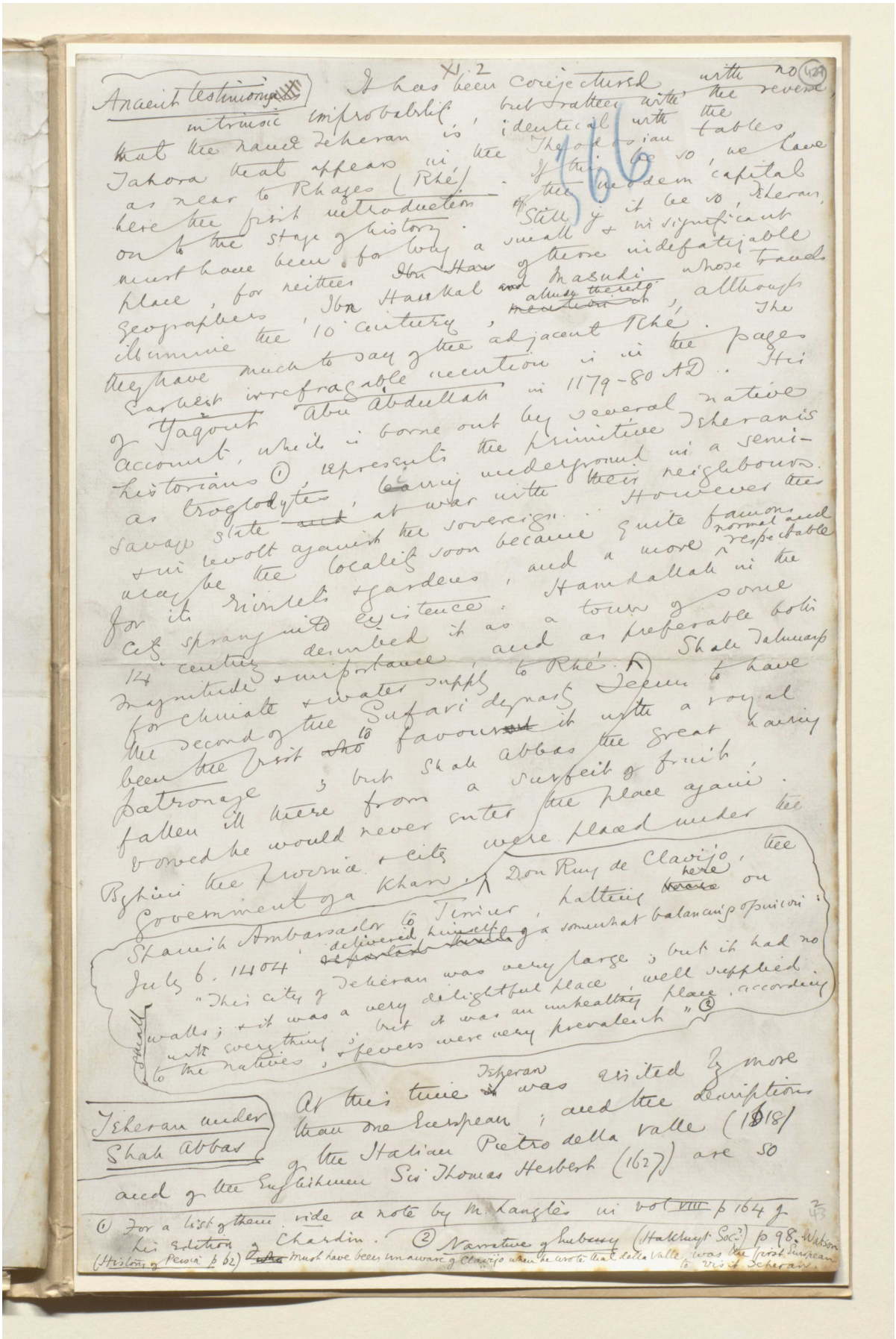
An old and a new city — Ancient testimony — Teheran under Shah Abbas — Later vicissitudes — made his capital by Agha Mohammed Shah — Its often extent — Its appearance — Old British Mission — new Teheran — The interior — The Top meidan — Other meidans — Nakhara Khaneh — British Legation — The Ark — The Palace — Takht-i-marmar — The Treasury — Crown Jewels — The alleged Peacock Throne — Testimony of Bernier — What history says — Deposition of the Usurper — Oriental taste — The Gulistan — Royal Levée — The Shah — Shems-el-Imaret — Takieh — The remainder — Mosques — Bazaars — Street Life — Population — European element — Foreign Legations — Advantages & disadvantages as Capital — Political merit — Race-course — Negarcistan — Tatteroon — Kasr-i-Kajar — other palaces — Doshan-Tepe — British Legation at Gulahek — Demavend — Southern Environs — Ruins of Rhé — Ancient Rhages — Its ruins — Tower of Yezid — Veramin —

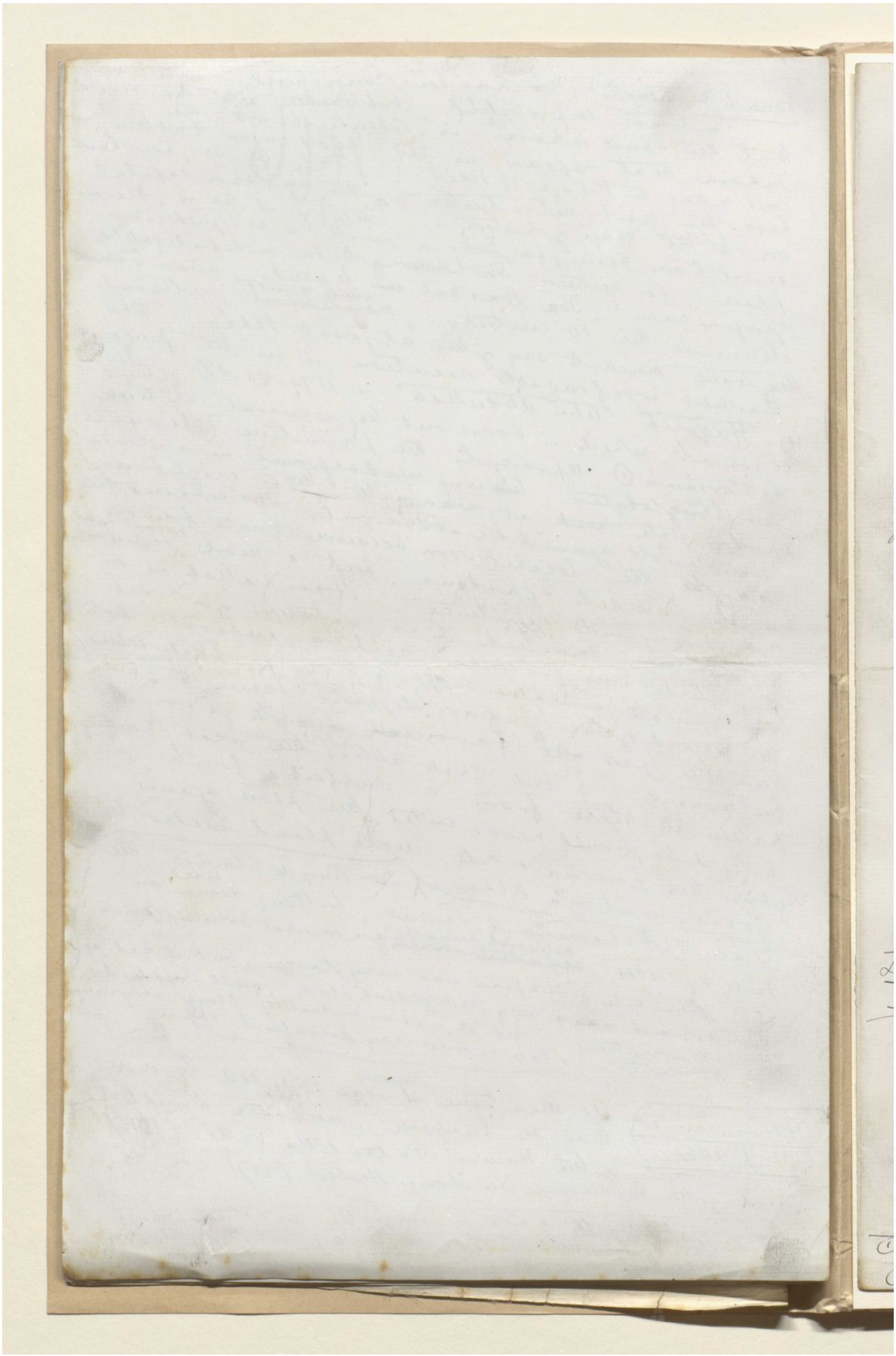
(1) Teheran. I shall not attempt to give, as I have done in the case of previous chapters, any bibliography of Teheran, for the reason that there is already in existence a large bibliography of Persia, which may be referred to for information on this subject; and also because the literature of the capital, as such, is not very extensive. Information may be found in the large bibliography of the whole country. Teheran, however, has been much described in the various other Persian books mentioned in the bibliography at the end of this volume.

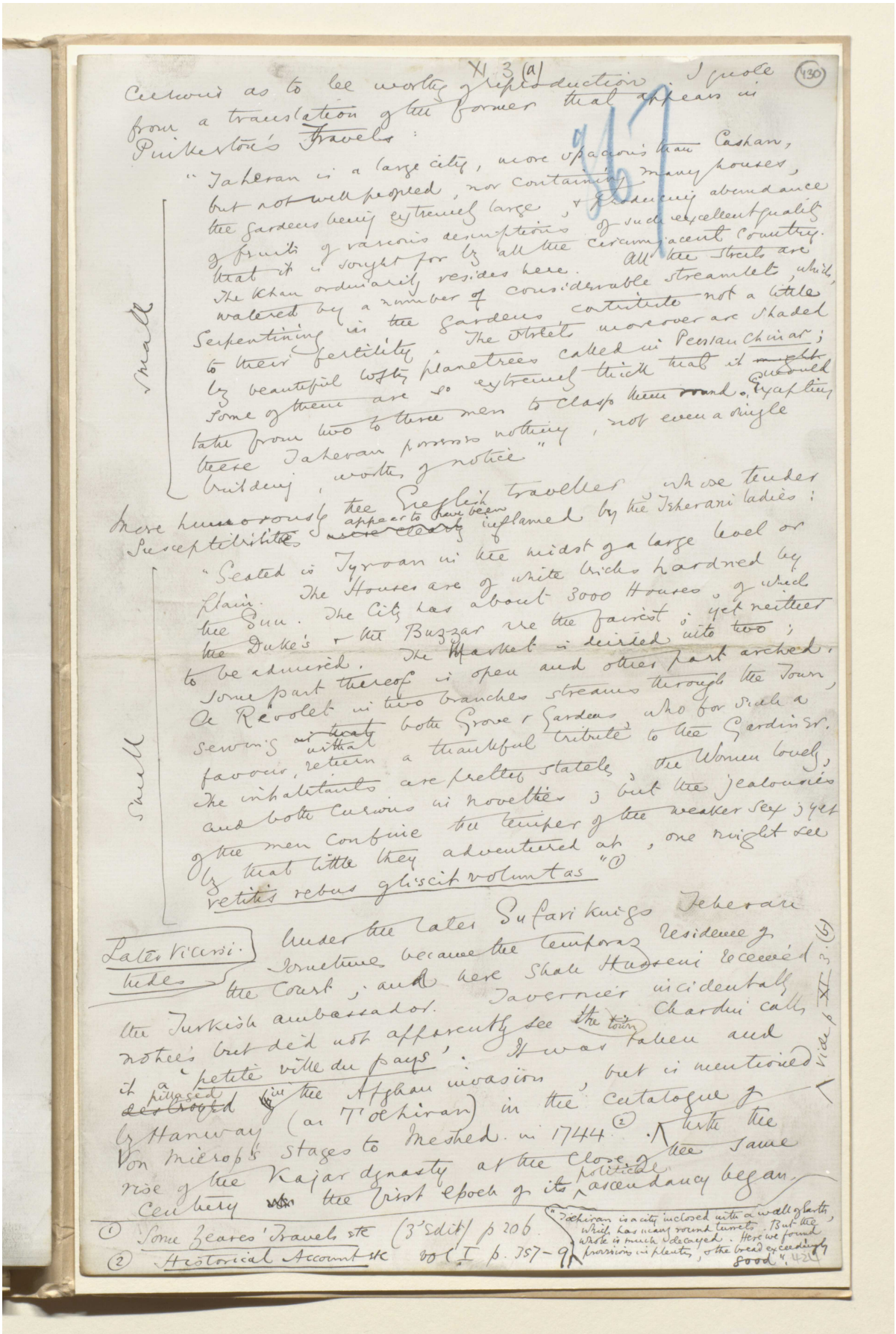
An old and a new city

Teheran (more correctly Tihran: "the pure") has frequently been spoken of by travellers, with some suspicion of contempt, as a new city. In the sense in which they use the word, it is the historical sense, it is by no means a new but on the contrary an ancient city. In another sense, as structurally, it was made a new city by Agha Mohammed Shah, a century ago, & his nephew & successor Fatte Ali Shah, and has become a yet newer city — so new that the visitors in the first half of this century would barely recognise it — during the last twenty years. Before I trace the incidents of this twofold Renaissance, I propose to say something of the antique, forgotten but wholly uninteresting history of the site & youth of a great capital which can never be quite wasted upon the origin and









Curious as to be worthy of reproduction I make from a translation of the former that appears in Pinkerton's Travels:

"Taheran is a large city, more spacious than Cashan, but not well peopled, nor containing many houses, the Gardens being extremely large, & producing abundance of fruits of various descriptions of such excellent quality that it is sought for by all the circumjacent Country. The Khan ordinarily resides here. All the Streets are watered by a number of considerable streamlets, which Serpentining in the Gardens contribute not a little to their fertility. The Street moreover are shaded by beautiful lofty planetrees called in Persian Chinar; some of them are so extremely thick that it requires five or six men to clasp them round. Captain Kotze from two to three men to clasp them round. Captain Kotze Taheran possess nothing, not even a single building, worthy of notice."

Small

More humorously the Sieur [illegible] appears to have been inflamed by the Teherani ladies' susceptibilities:

"Seated in Tyroan in the midst of a large level or plain. The Houses are of white bricks hardened by the Sun. The City has about 3000 Houses, of which the Duke's & the Buzzar are the fairest; yet neither to be admired. The Market is deified into two; some part thereof is open and other part arched; a Rivulet in two branches streams through the Town, serving both Grove & Gardens who for such a favour, return a thankful tribute to the Gardiner. The inhabitants are pretty stately, the Women lovely, and both curious in novelties; but the jealousies of the men confine the temper of the weaker sex; yet by that little they adventured ah, one might see

vetitis rebus gliscit voluntas"①

Small

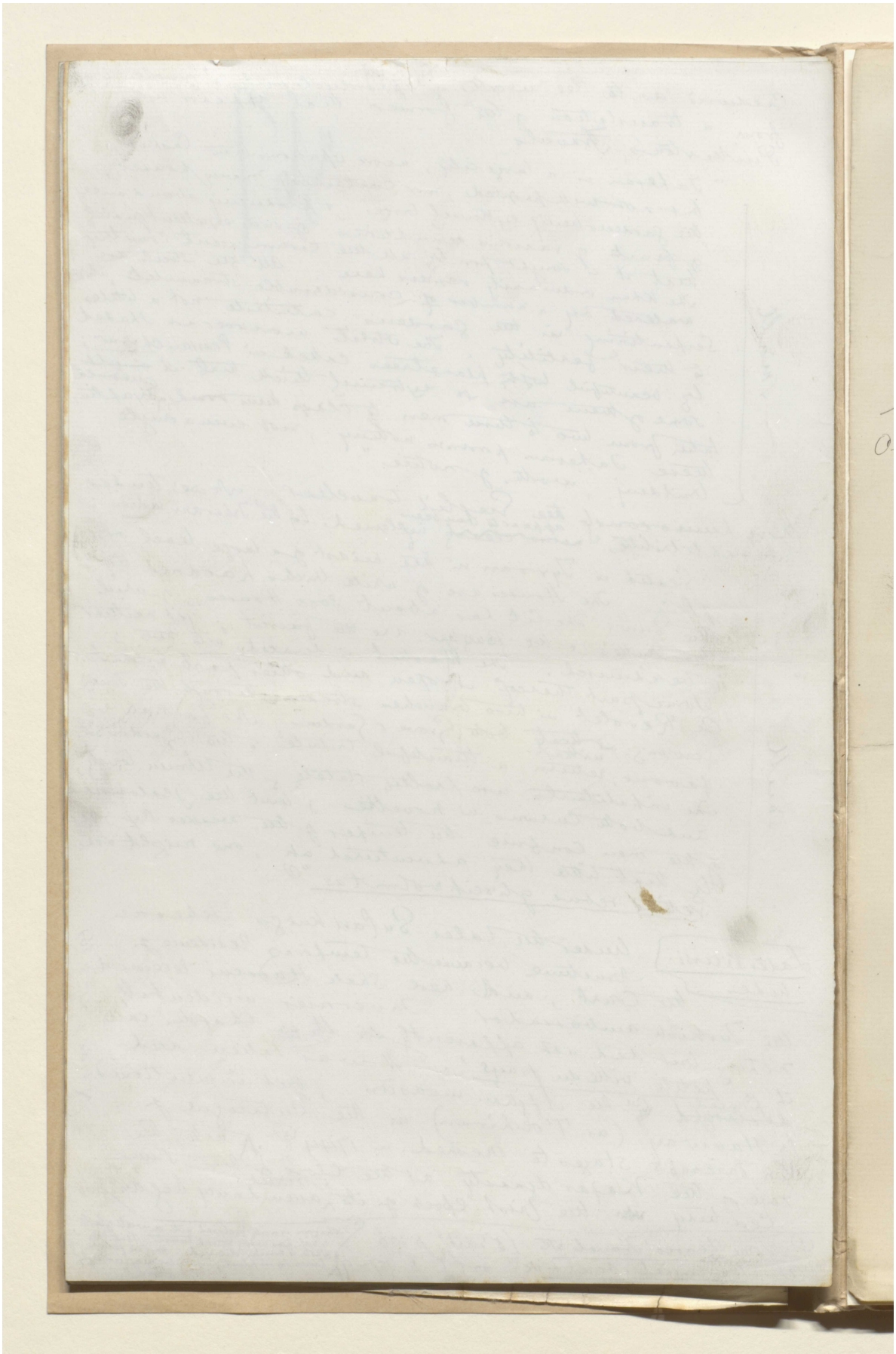
Later Vicissitudes

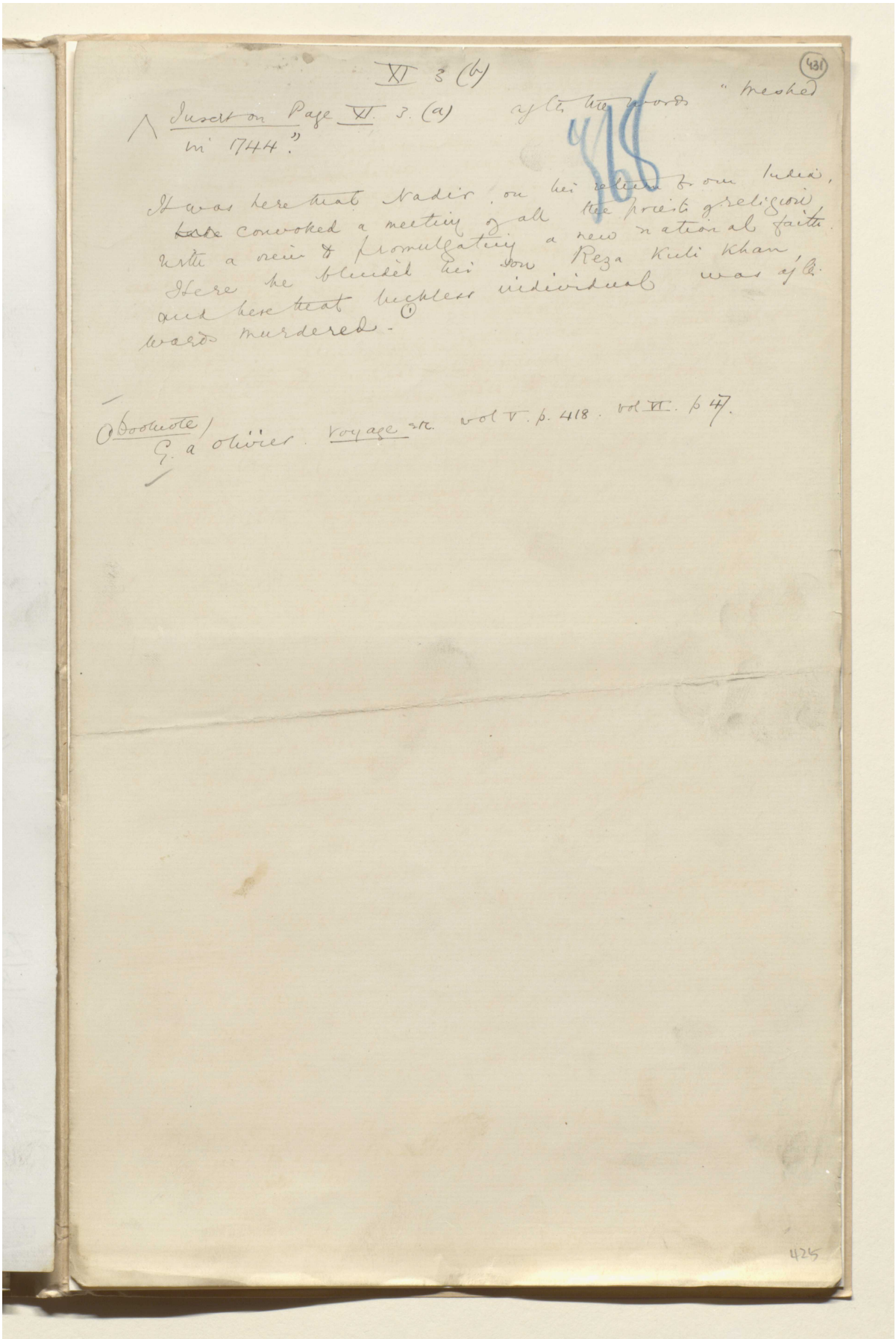
Under the later Sufavi kings Teheran sometime became the temporary residence of the Court; and here Shah Hussein received the Turkish ambassador. Tavernier incidentally notes but did not apparently see the town, which he called 'petite ville du pays'. It was taken and plundered in the Afghan invasion, but is mentioned by Hanway (as Tcherran) in the Catalogue of Von Mierop's stages to Meshed in 1744.② Under the rise of the Kajar dynasty at the close of the same Century the first epoch of its political ascendancy began.

"Tcherran is a city inclosed with a wall of earth, which has many round towers. But the whole is much decayed. Here we found provisions in plenty, & the bread exceeding good." V. 1. p. 420

① Some Yeares' Travels etc (3rd edit) p 206.
② Historical Account etc Vol I p. 357-9

Vide p. XI 3 (b)





المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة
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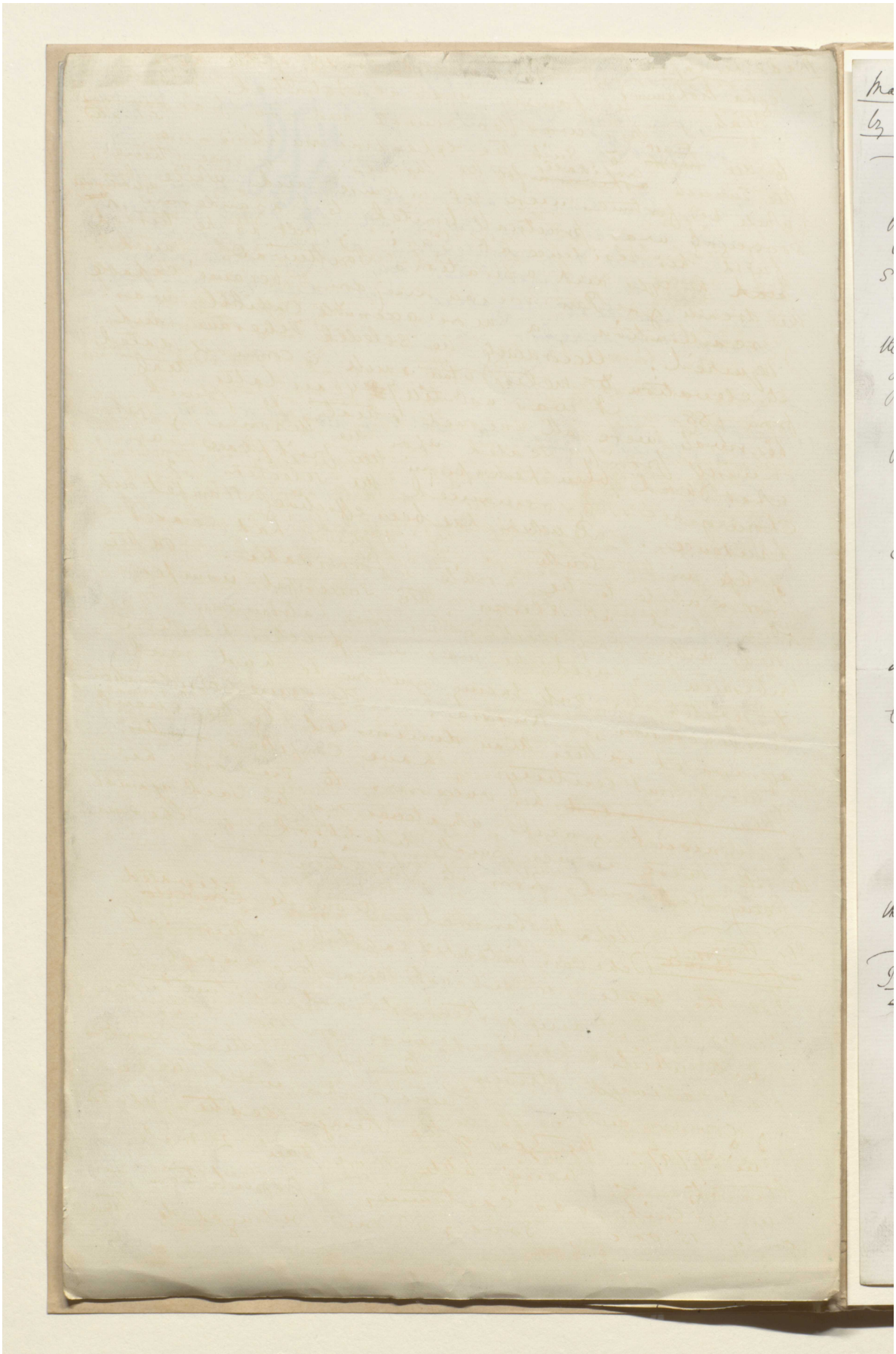

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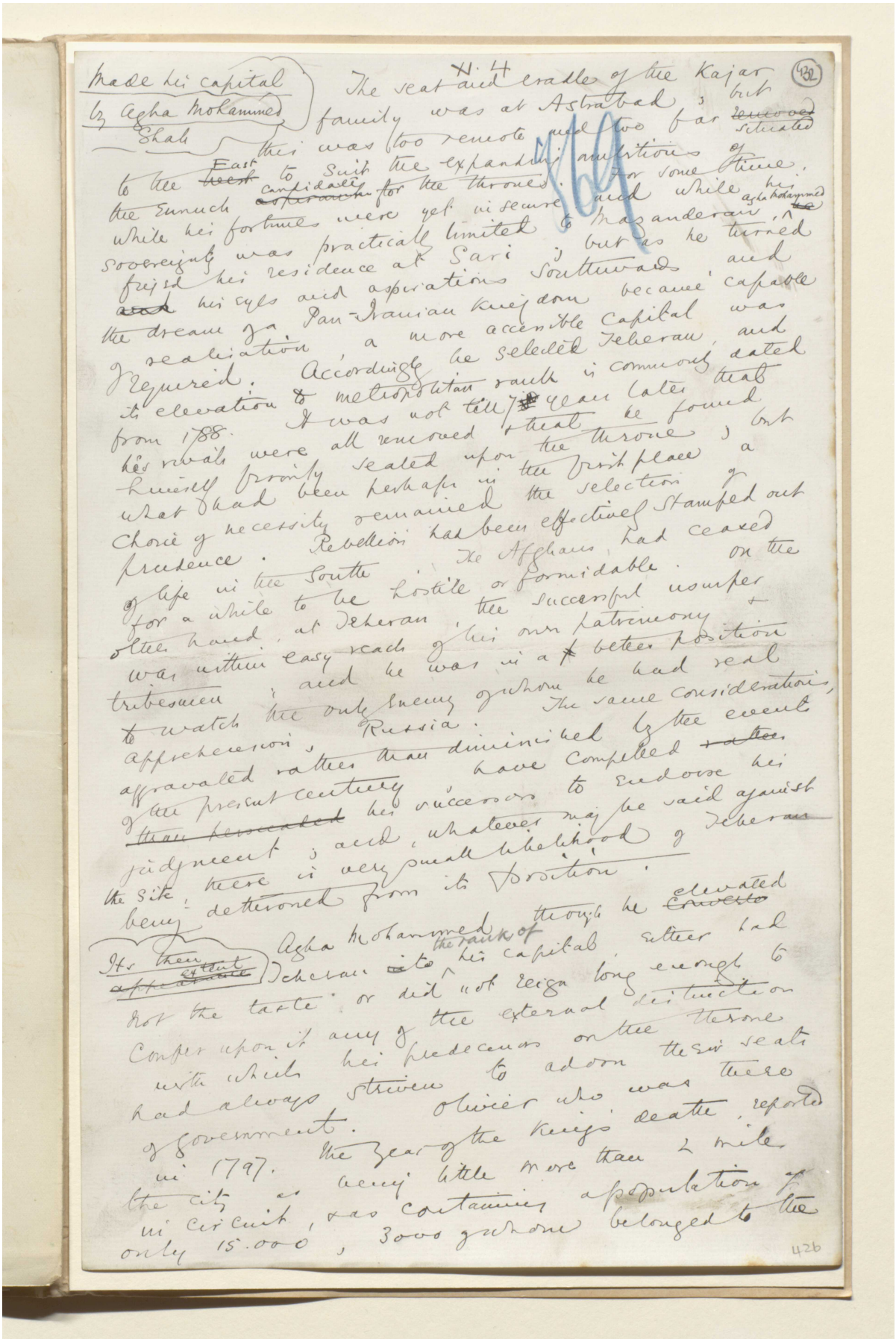

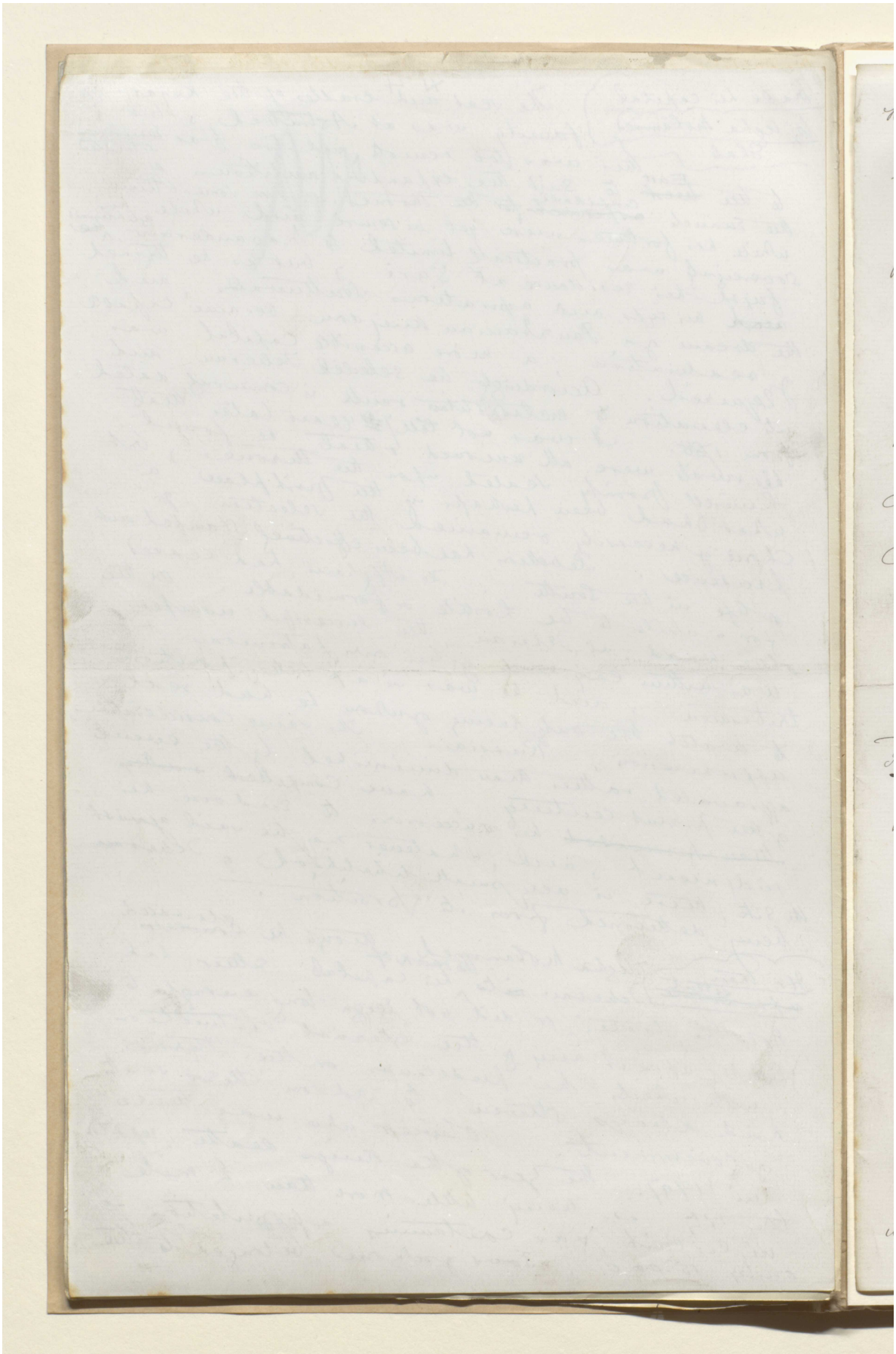

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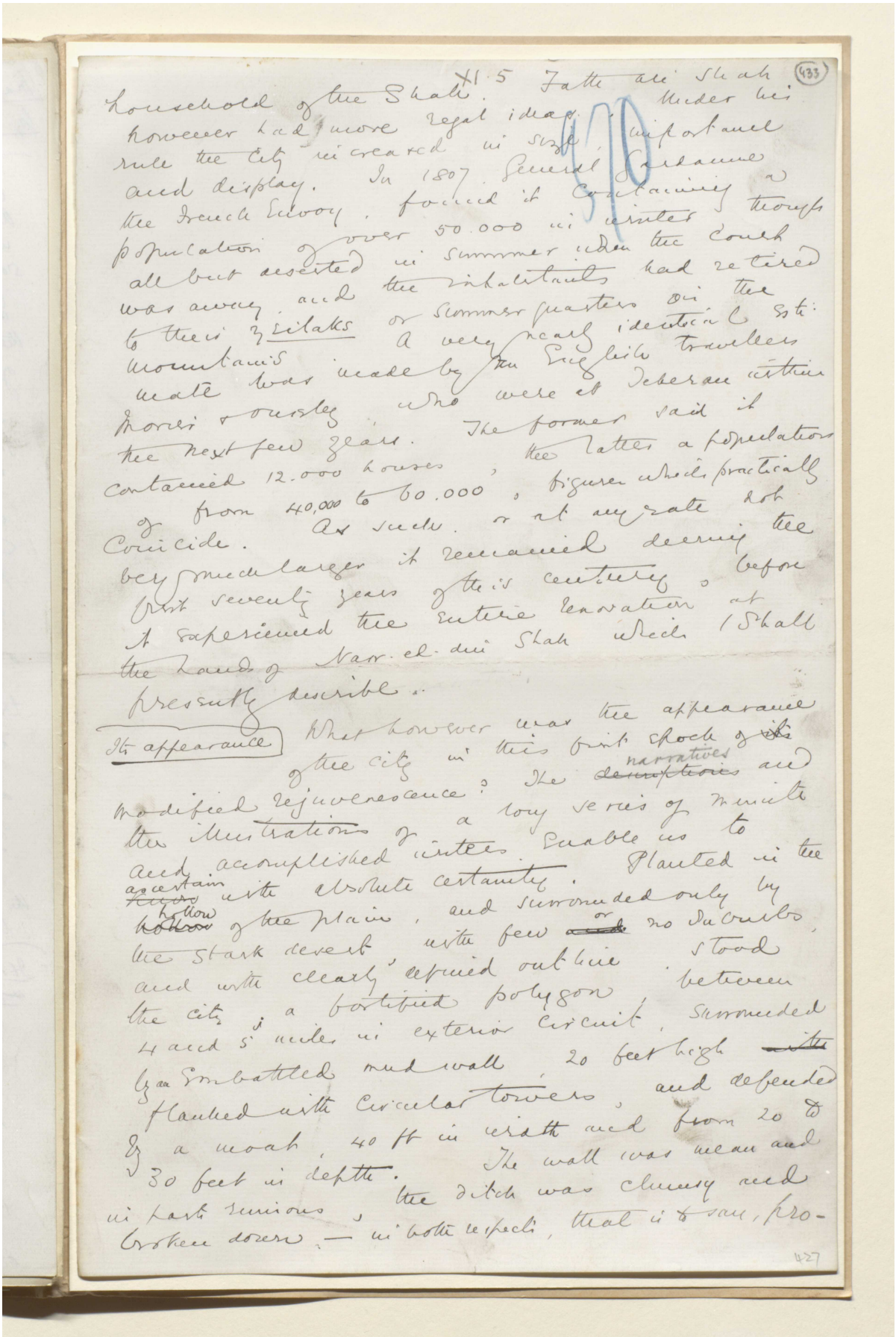

household of the Shah. 115 Fatte ali Shah (433)
however had more regal ideas. Under his
rule the city increased in size, importance
and display. In 1807 General Gardanne
the French Envoy, found it containing a
population of over 50.000 in winter though
all but deserted in summer when the court
was away, and the inhabitants had retired
to their Yeilaks or Summer quarters on the
mountains. A very nearly identical state-
ment was made by two English travellers
Morier & Ousley, who were at Teheran either
the next few years. The former said it
contained 12.000 houses, the latter a population
of from 40,000 to 60.000, figures which practically
coincide. As such, or at any rate both
very much larger it remained during the
first seventy years of this century. Before
I experienced the entire devastation of
the Lands of Nasr-ed-din Shah which I shall
presently describe.

Its appearance What however was the appearance
of the city in this first epoch of ~~its~~
modified rejuvenescence? The ~~descriptions~~ narratives are
the illustrations of a long series of minute
and accomplished writers. Enable us to
ascertain with absolute certainty. Planted in the
bottom of the plain, and surrounded only by
the stark desert, with few ~~and~~ or no Suburbs,
and with clearly defined outline, stood
the city, a fortified polygon, between
4 and 5 miles in external circuit, surrounded
by a Embattled mud wall 20 feet high ~~with~~
flanked with circular towers, and defended
by a moat, 40 ft in width and from 20 to
30 feet in depth. The wall was mean and
in part ruinous, the ditch was clumsy and
broken down, — in both respects, that is to say, pro-

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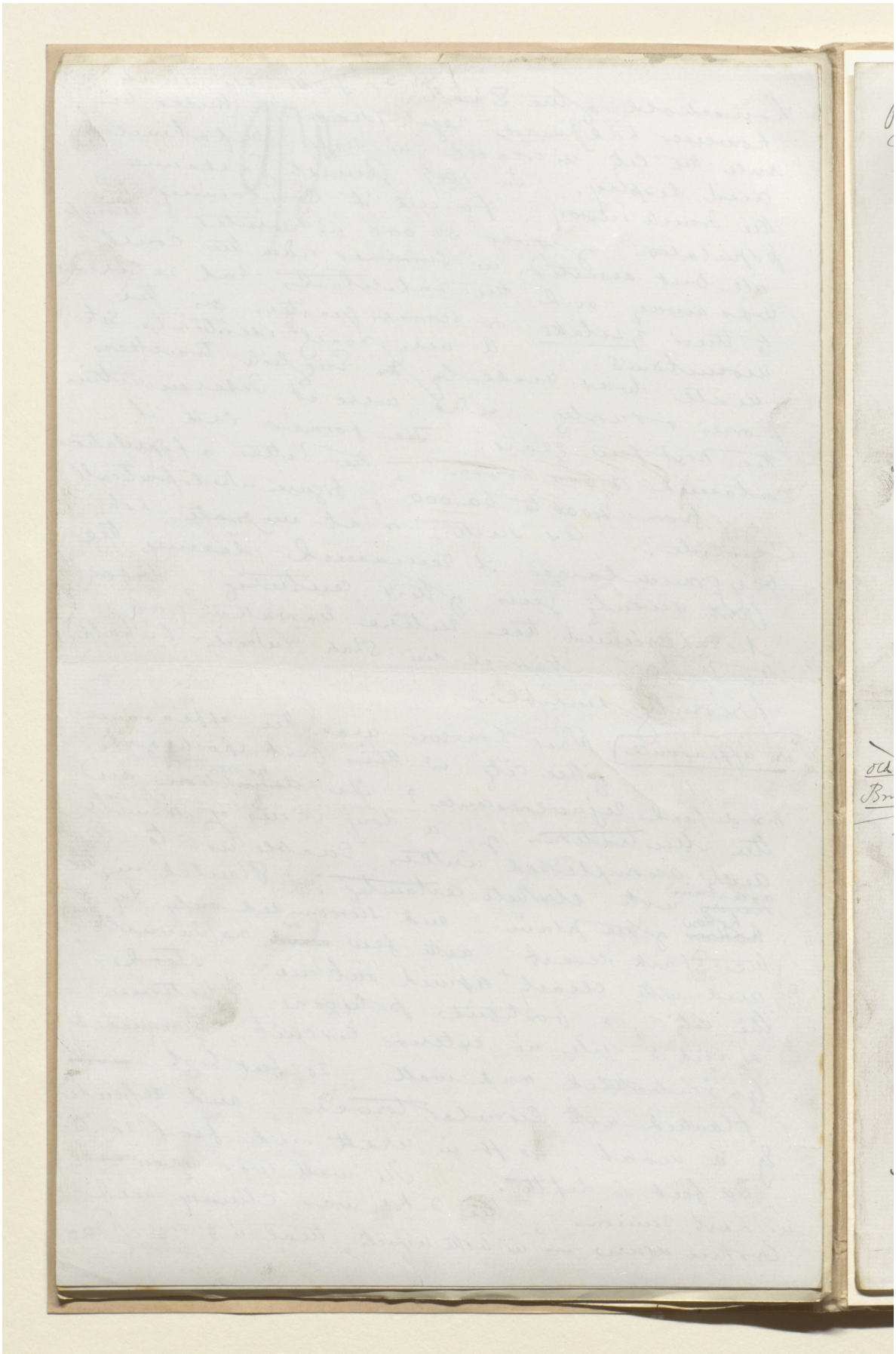

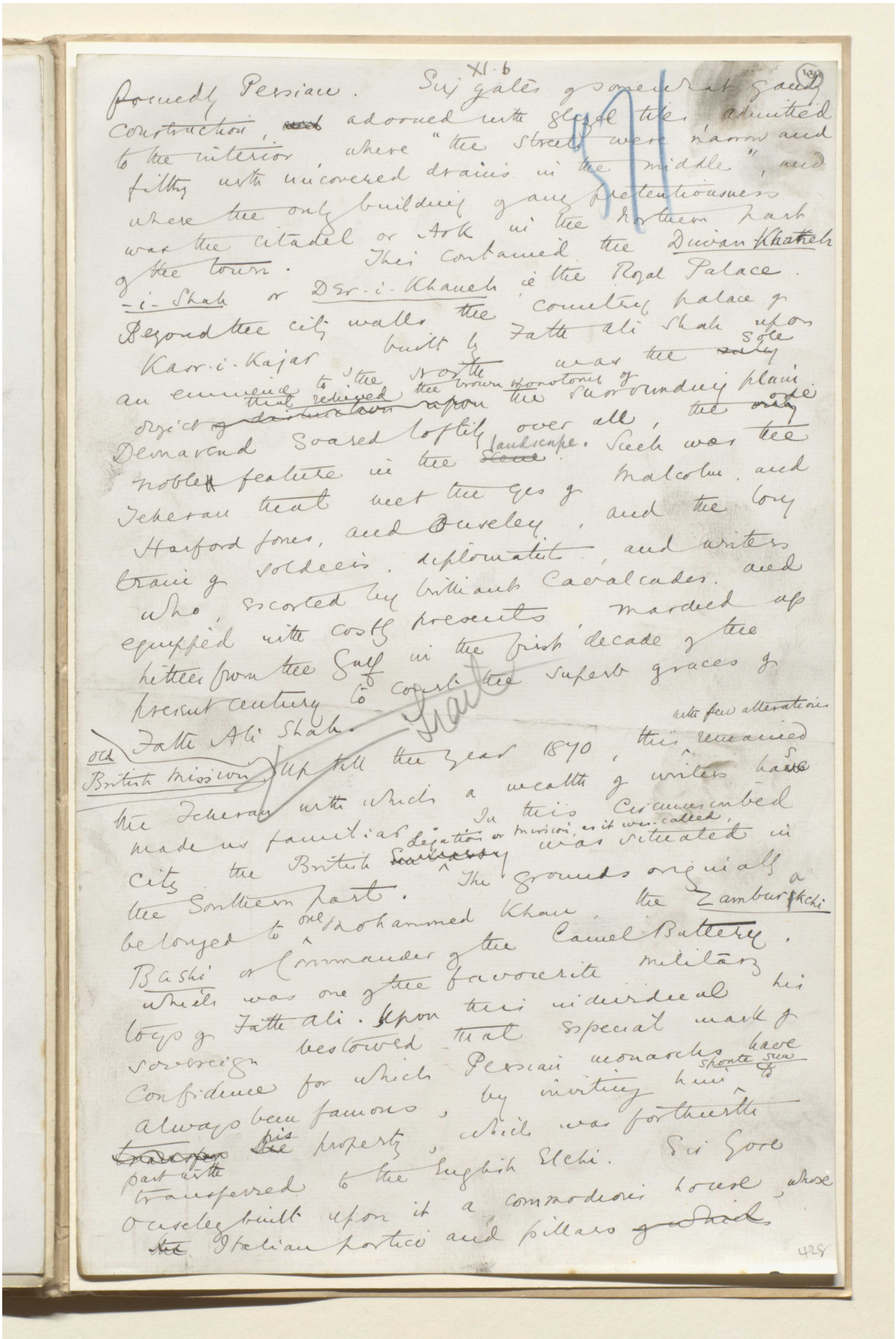

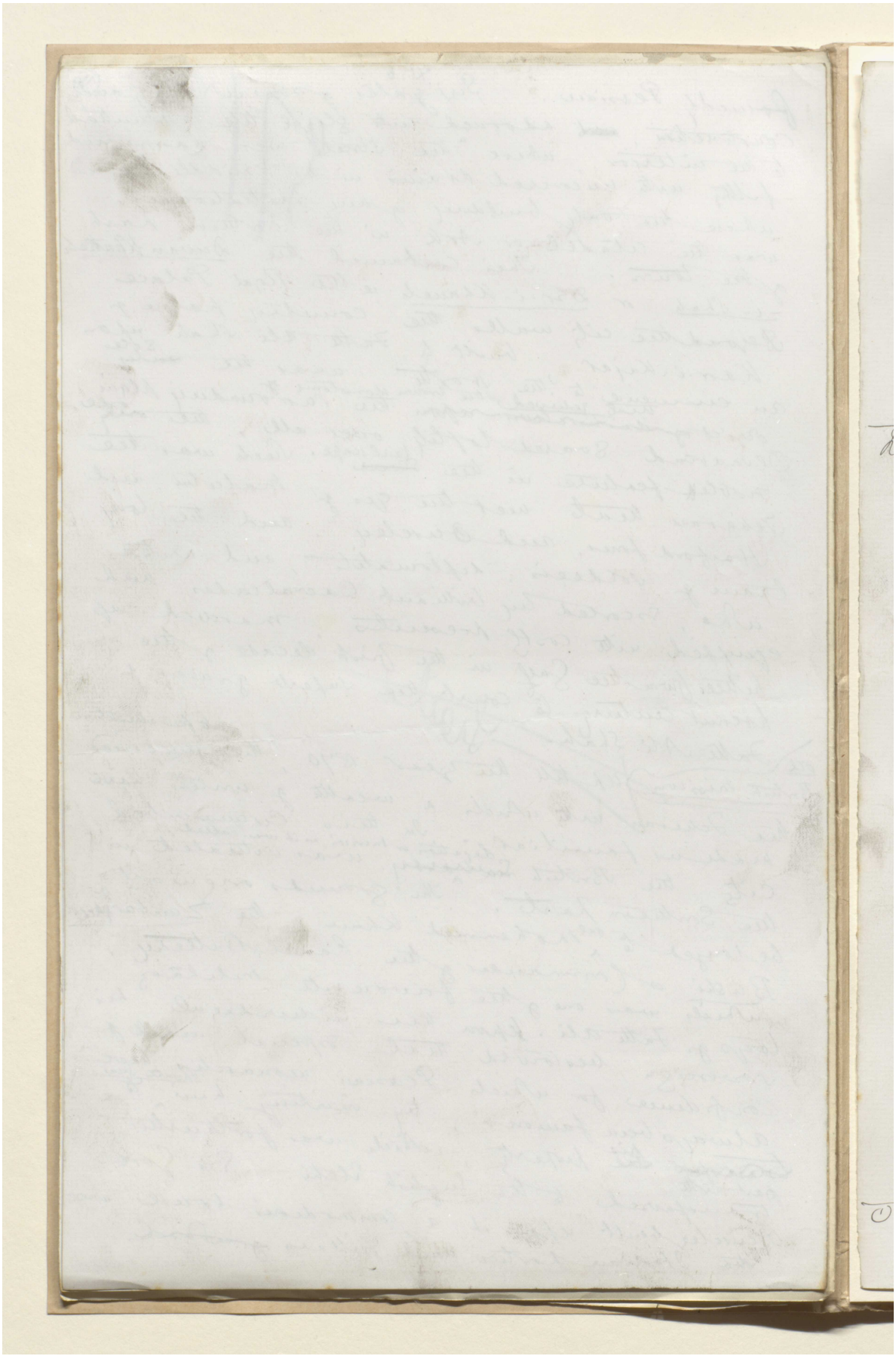

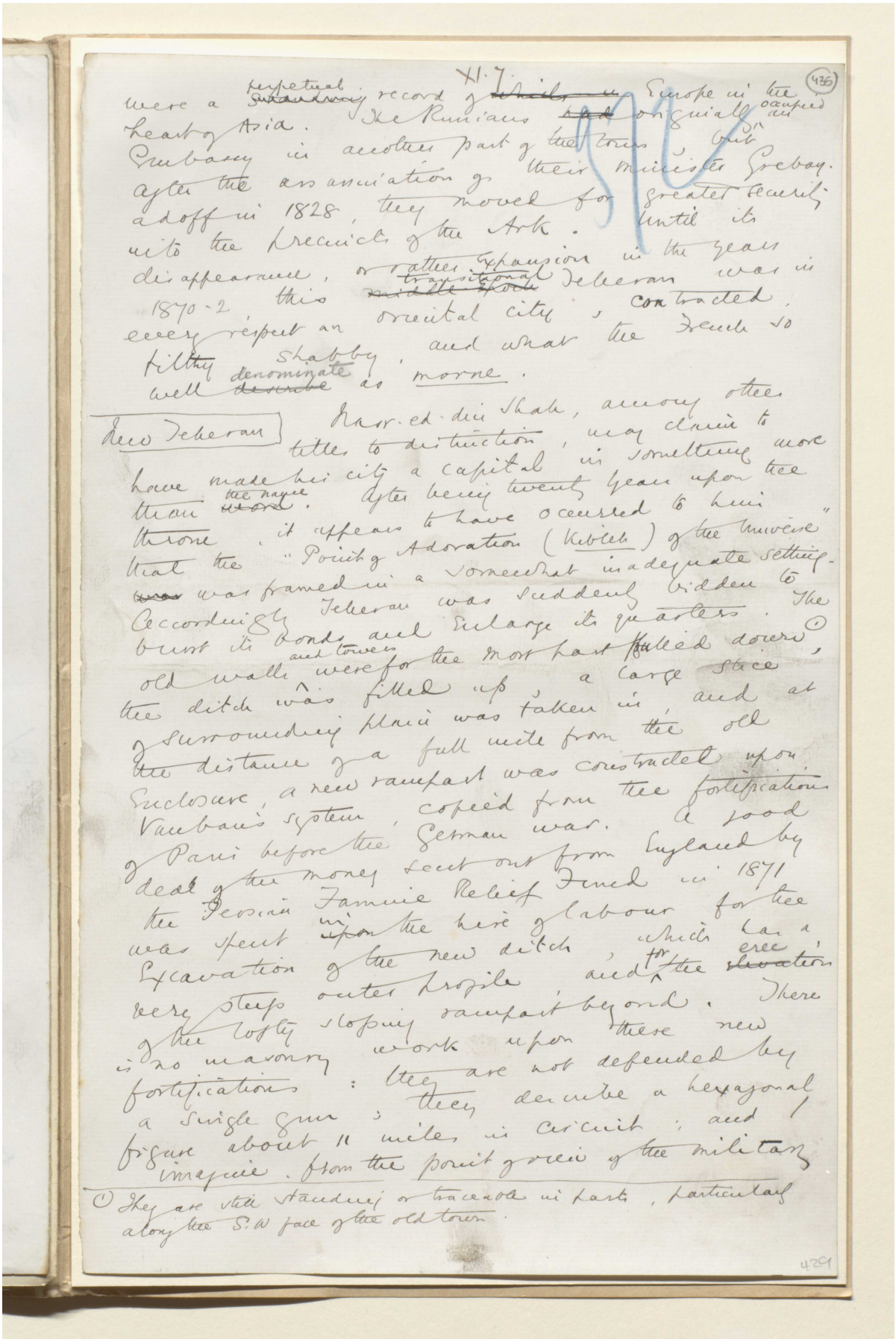

XI.7 (436)

were a perpetual record of Europe in the heart of Asia. The Russians originally occupied an Embassy in another part of the town, but after the assassination of their Minister Grebaydoff in 1828, they moved for greater security into the precincts of the Ark. Until its disappearance, or rather expansion in the years 1870-2, this transitional Teheran was in every respect an oriental city, contracted, filthy, shabby, and what the French so well denominate as morne.

New Teheran

Nasr-ed-din Shah, among other titles to distinction, may claim to have made his city a capital in something more than the name. After being twenty years upon the throne, it appears to have occurred to him that the "Point of Adoration (Kibleh) of the Universe" was framed in a somewhat inadequate setting. Accordingly Teheran was suddenly bidden to burst its bonds and enlarge its quarters. The old walls and towers were for the most part pulled down,[1] the ditch was filled up, a large slice of surrounding plain was taken in, and at the distance of a full mile from the old enclosure, a new rampart was constructed upon Vauban's system, copied from the fortifications of Paris before the German war. A good deal of the money sent out from England by the Persian Famine Relief Fund in 1871 was spent in the hire of labour for the excavation of the new ditch, which has a very steep outer profile, and for the erection of the lofty sloping rampart beyond. There is no masonry work upon these new fortifications: they are not defended by a single gun; they describe a hexagonal figure about 11 miles in circuit; and I imagine, from the point of view of the military

[1] They are still standing or traceable in parts, particularly along the S.W face of the old town.

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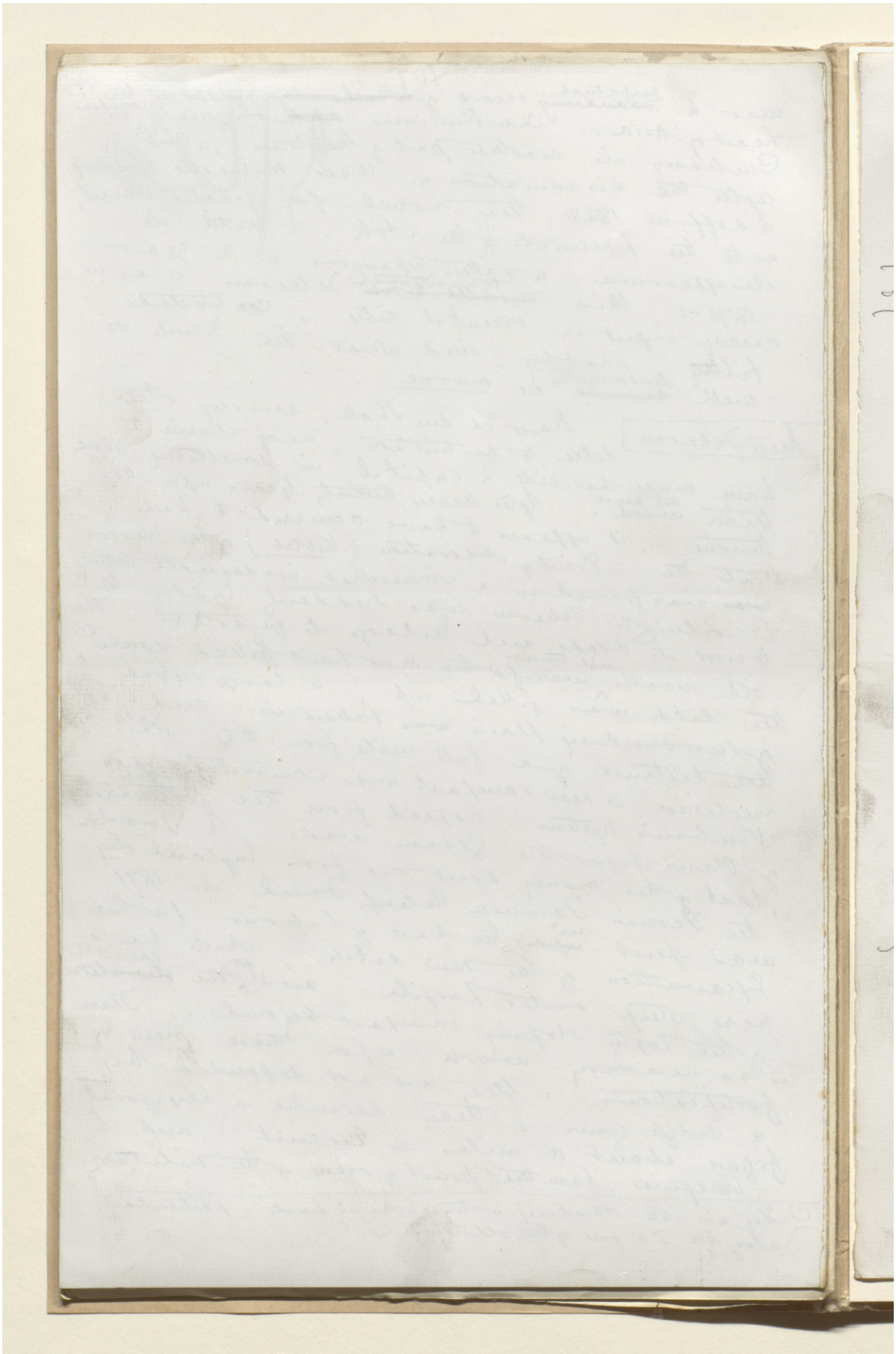

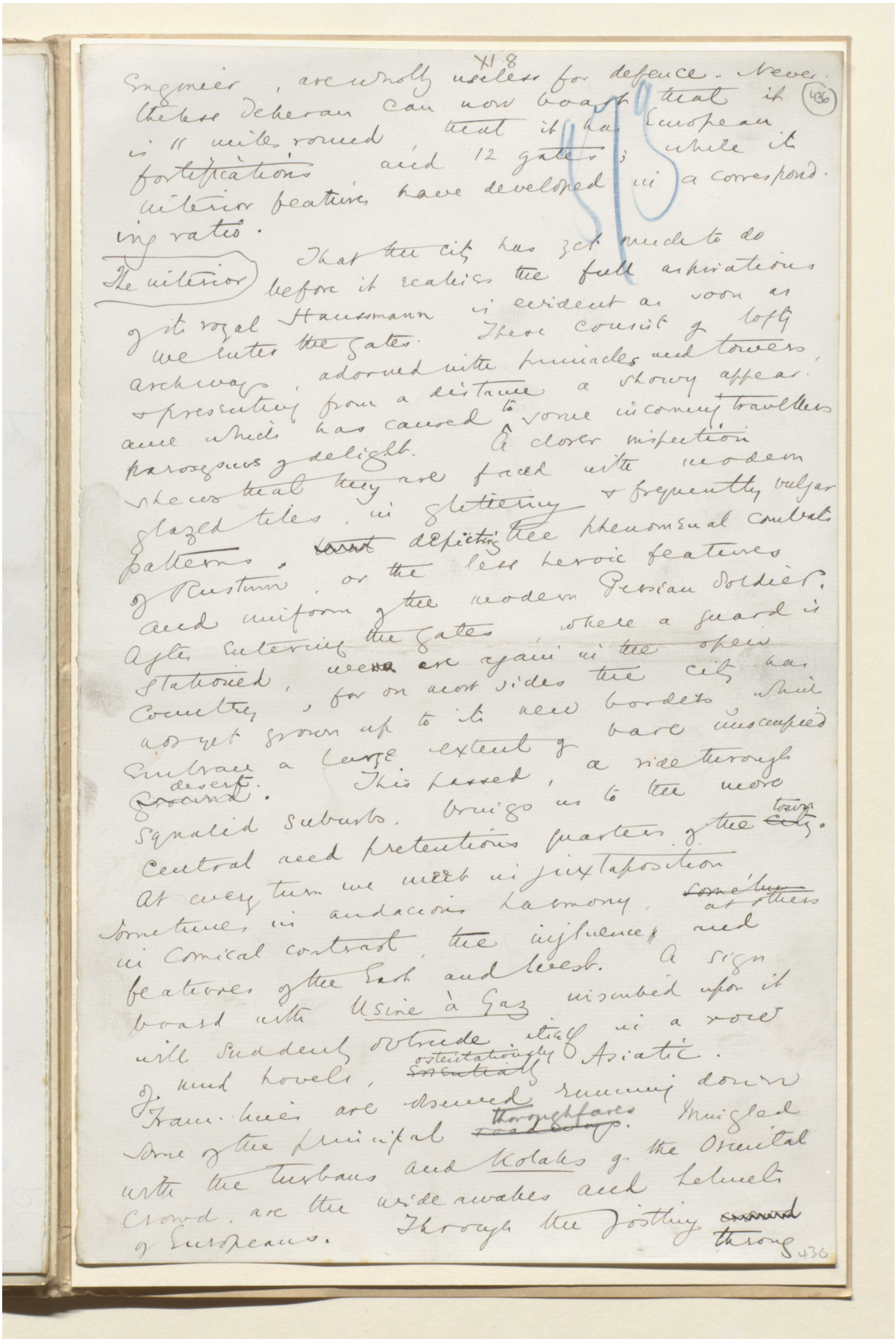

Engineer, are wholly useless for defence. Never-
theless Teheran can now boast that it (436)
is 11 miles round, that it has European
fortifications and 12 gates; while its
interior features have developed in a correspond-
ing ratio.

The interior That the city has yet much to do
before it realises the full ambitions
of its royal Haussmann is evident as soon as
we enter the gates. These consist of lofty
archways, adorned with pinnacles and towers,
& presenting from a distance a showy appear-
ance which has caused to some incomers travellers
paroxysms of delight. A closer inspection
reveals that they are faced with modern
glazed tiles, in glittering & frequently vulgar
patterns, depicting the phenomenal combats
of Rustum, or the less heroic features
and uniform of the modern Persian soldier.
After entering the gates, where a guard is
stationed, we are again in the open
country, for on most sides the city has
not yet grown up to its new borders, but
contains a large extent of bare unoccupied
ground. This passed, a ride through
squalid suburbs, brings us to the more
central and pretentious quarters of the town.
At every turn we meet in juxtaposition
sometimes in audacious harmony, sometimes
in comical contrast, the influences and
features of the East and West. A sign
board with Usine à Gaz inscribed upon it
will suddenly obtrude itself in a row
of mud hovels, ostentatiously Asiatic.
Trams are observed running down
some of the principal thoroughfares. Muffled
with the turbans and kolahs of the Oriental
crowd, are the wide awakes and helmets
of Europeans. Through the jostling throng

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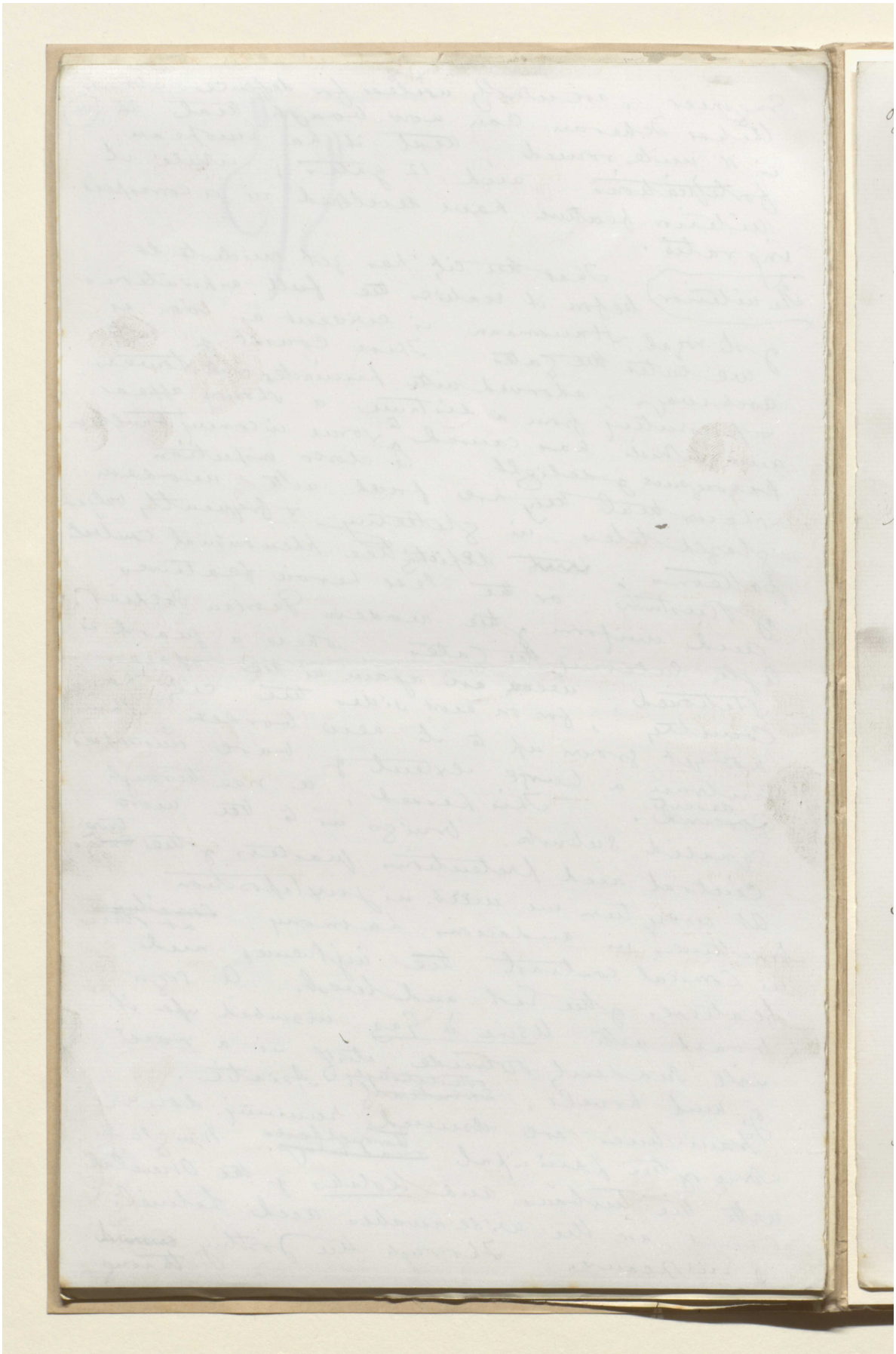

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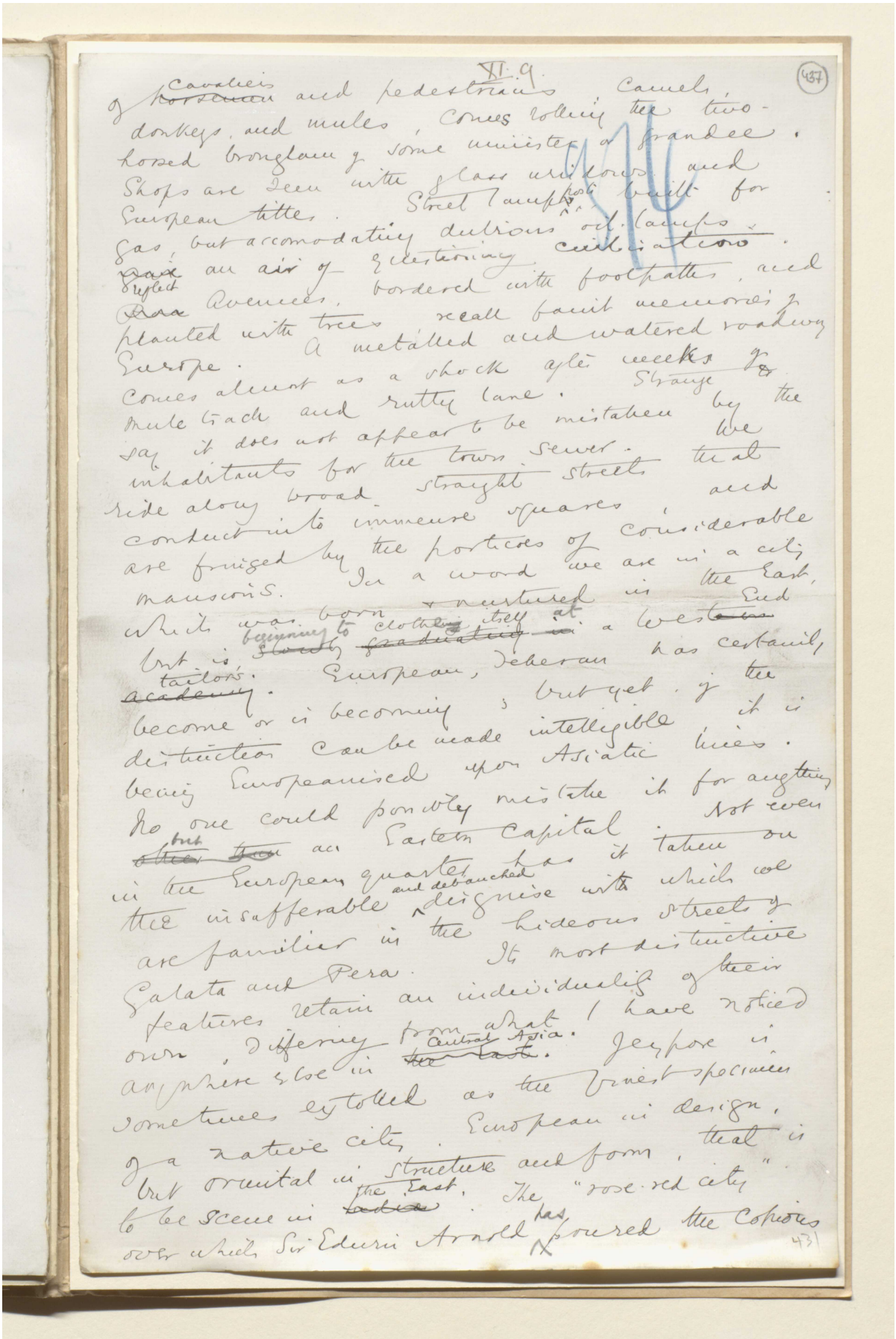

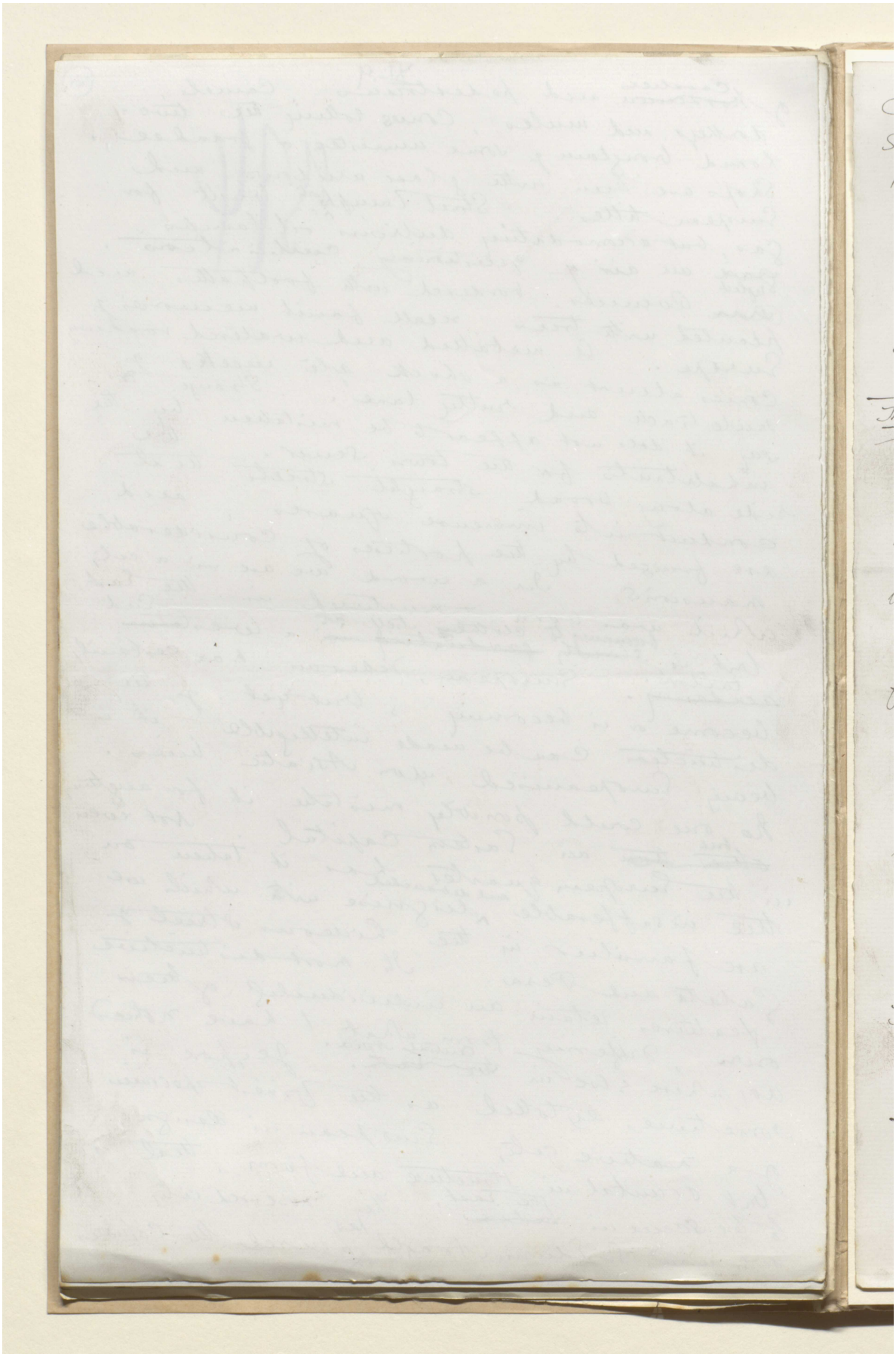

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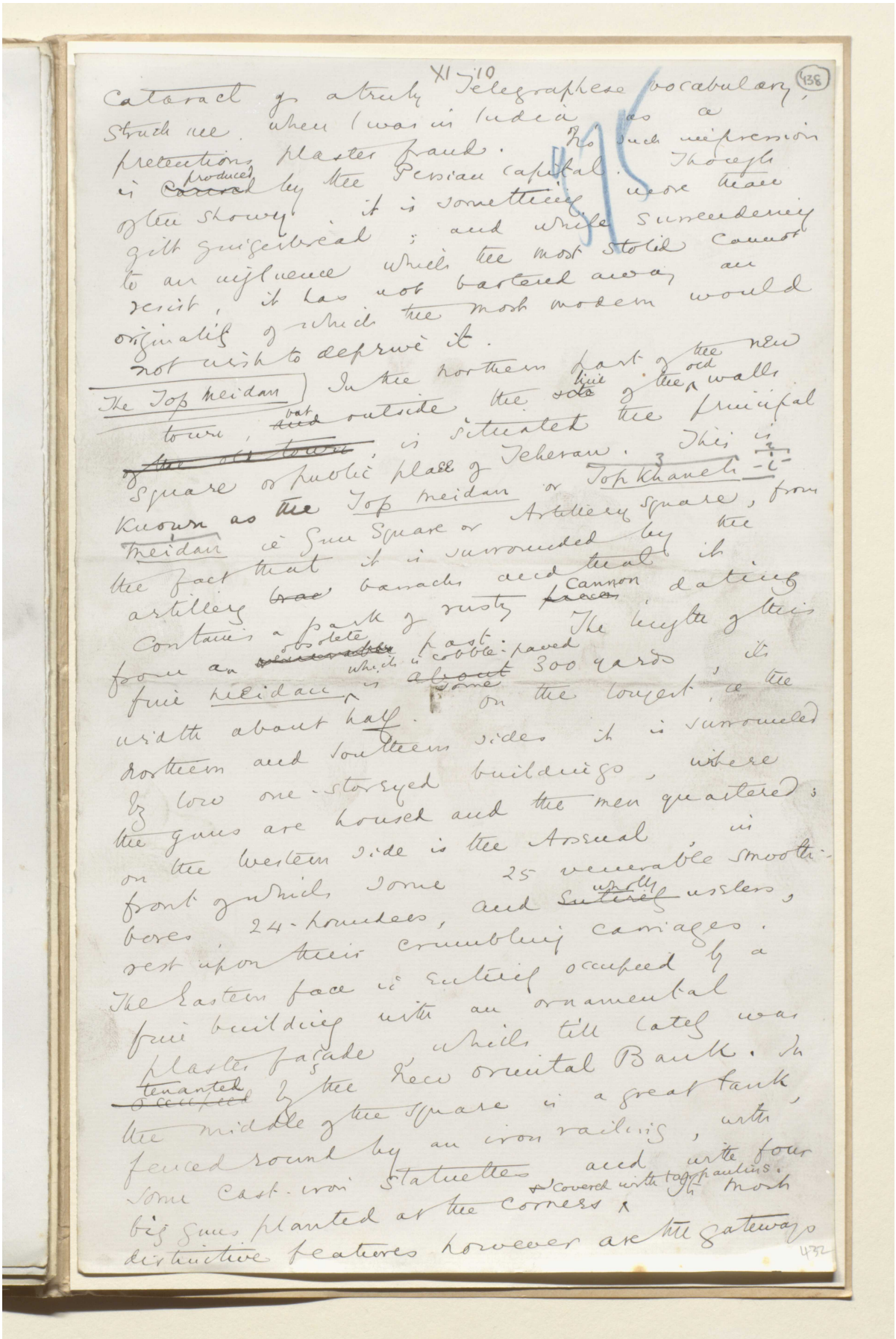

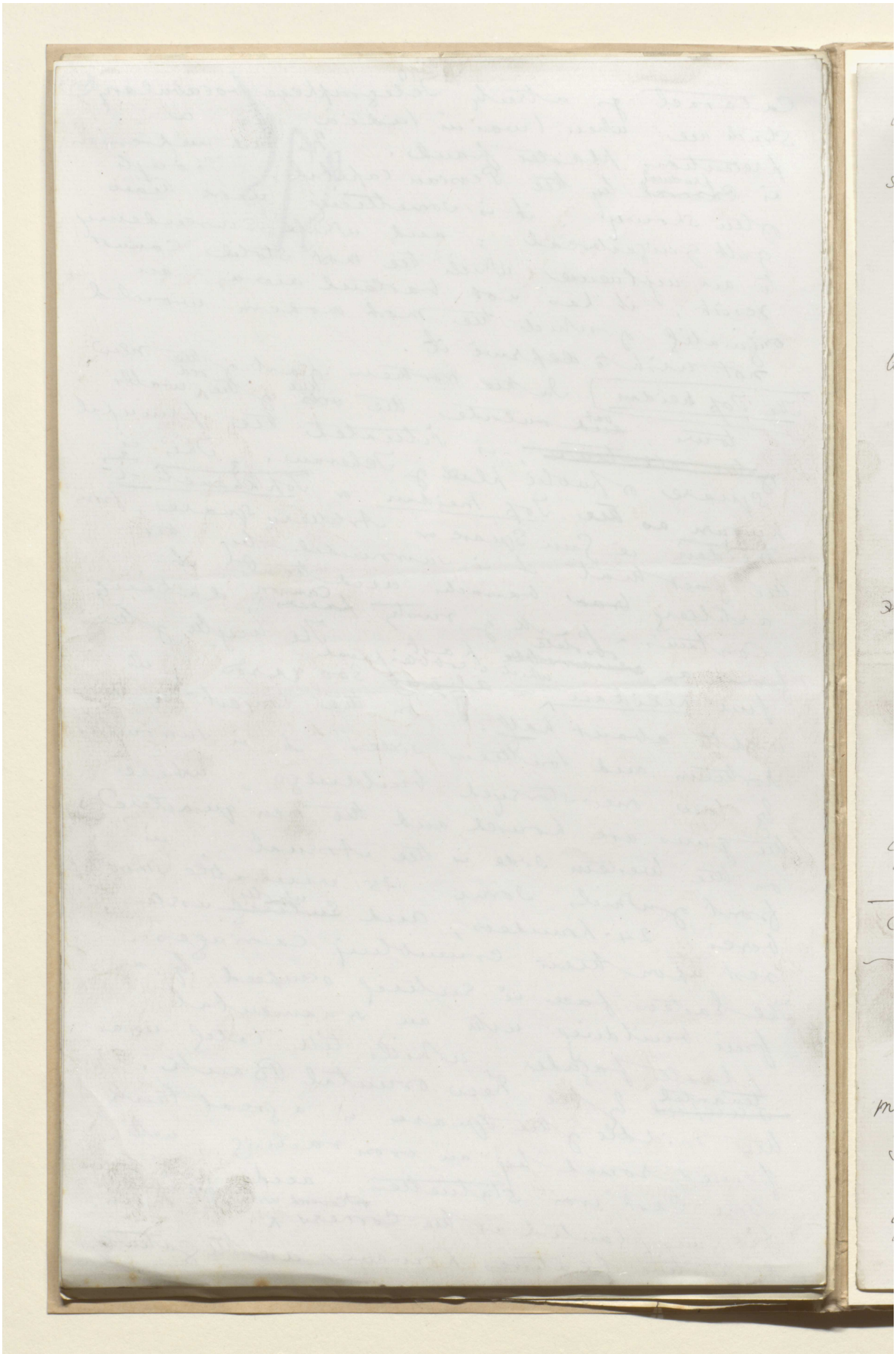

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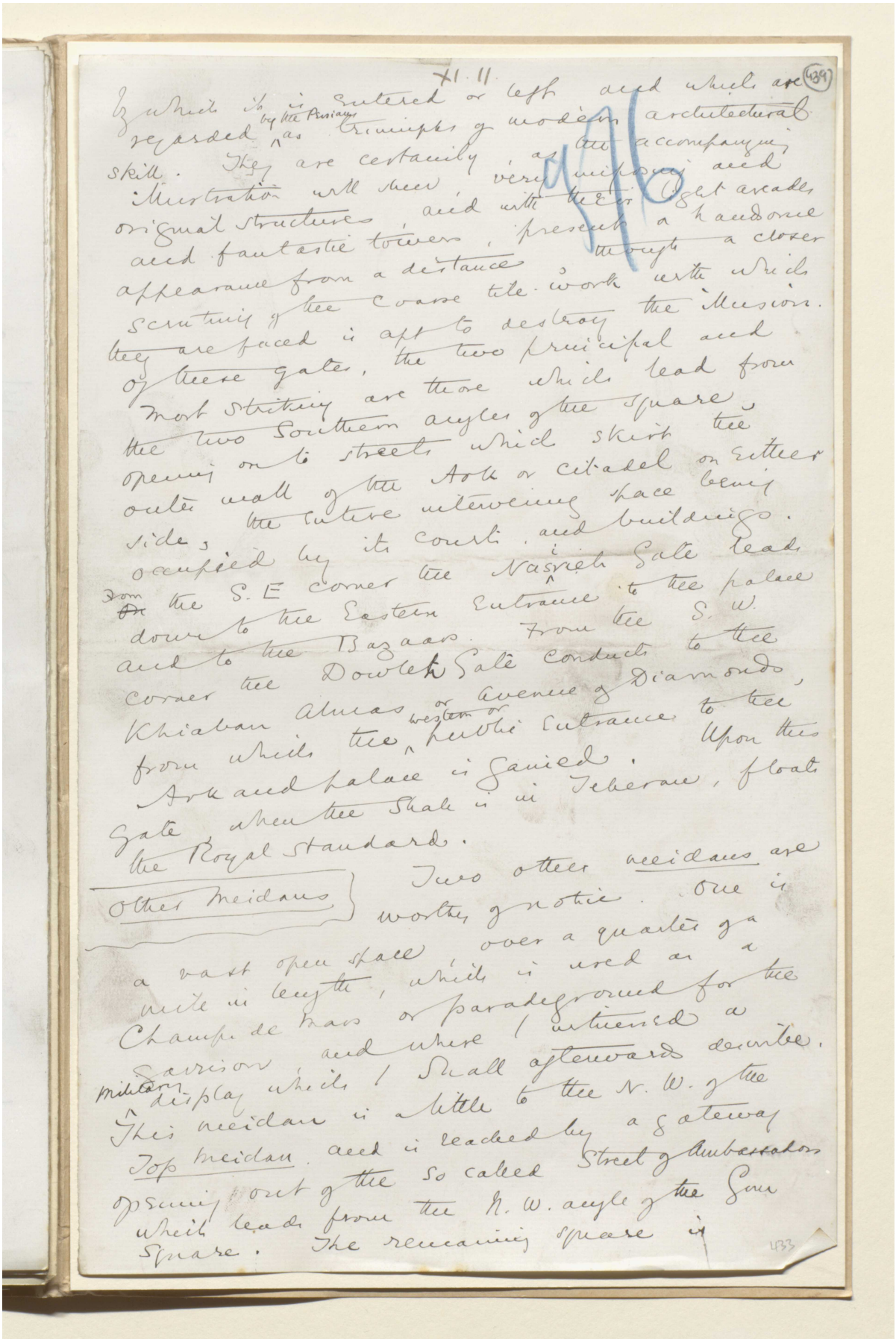
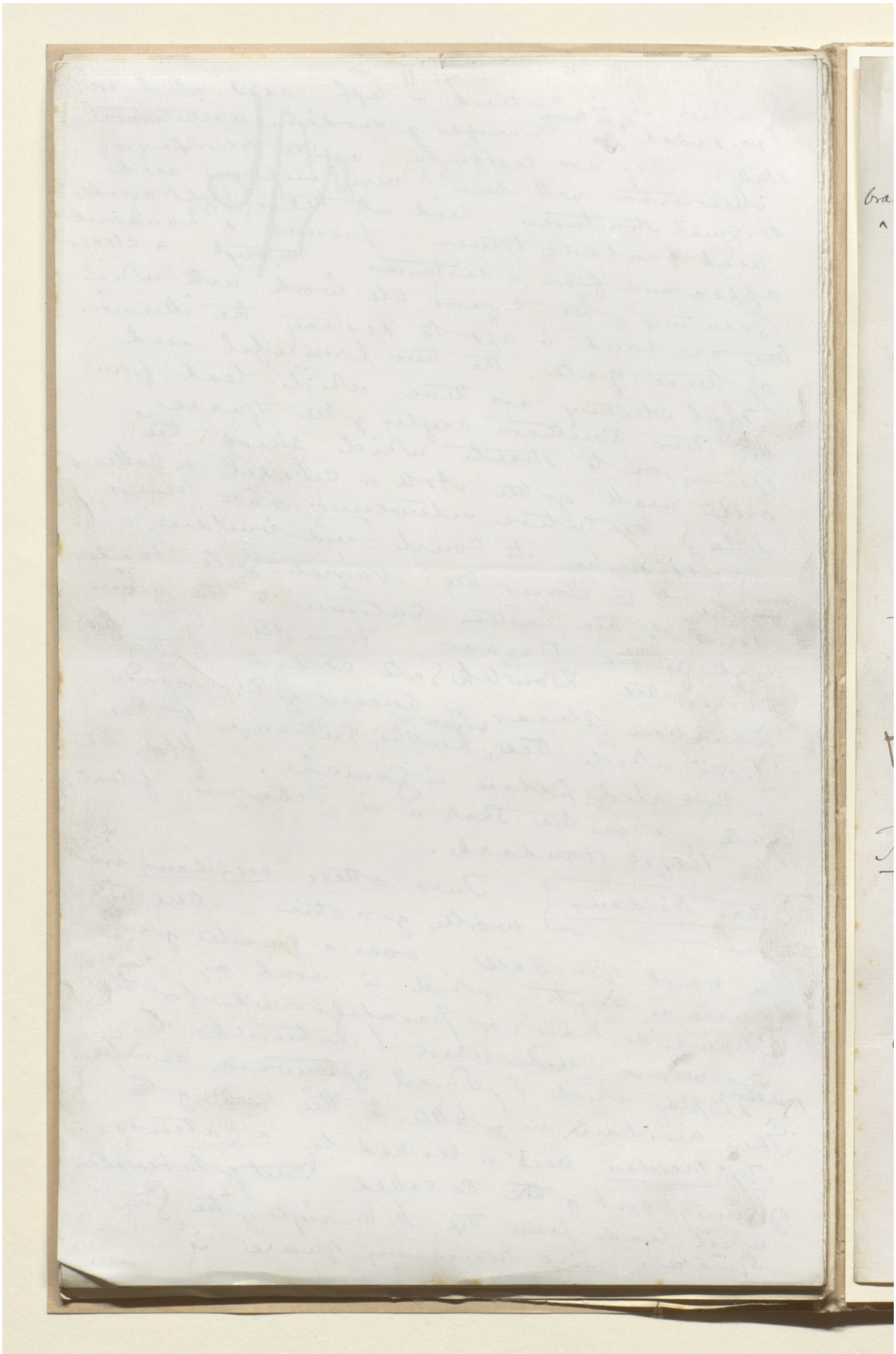
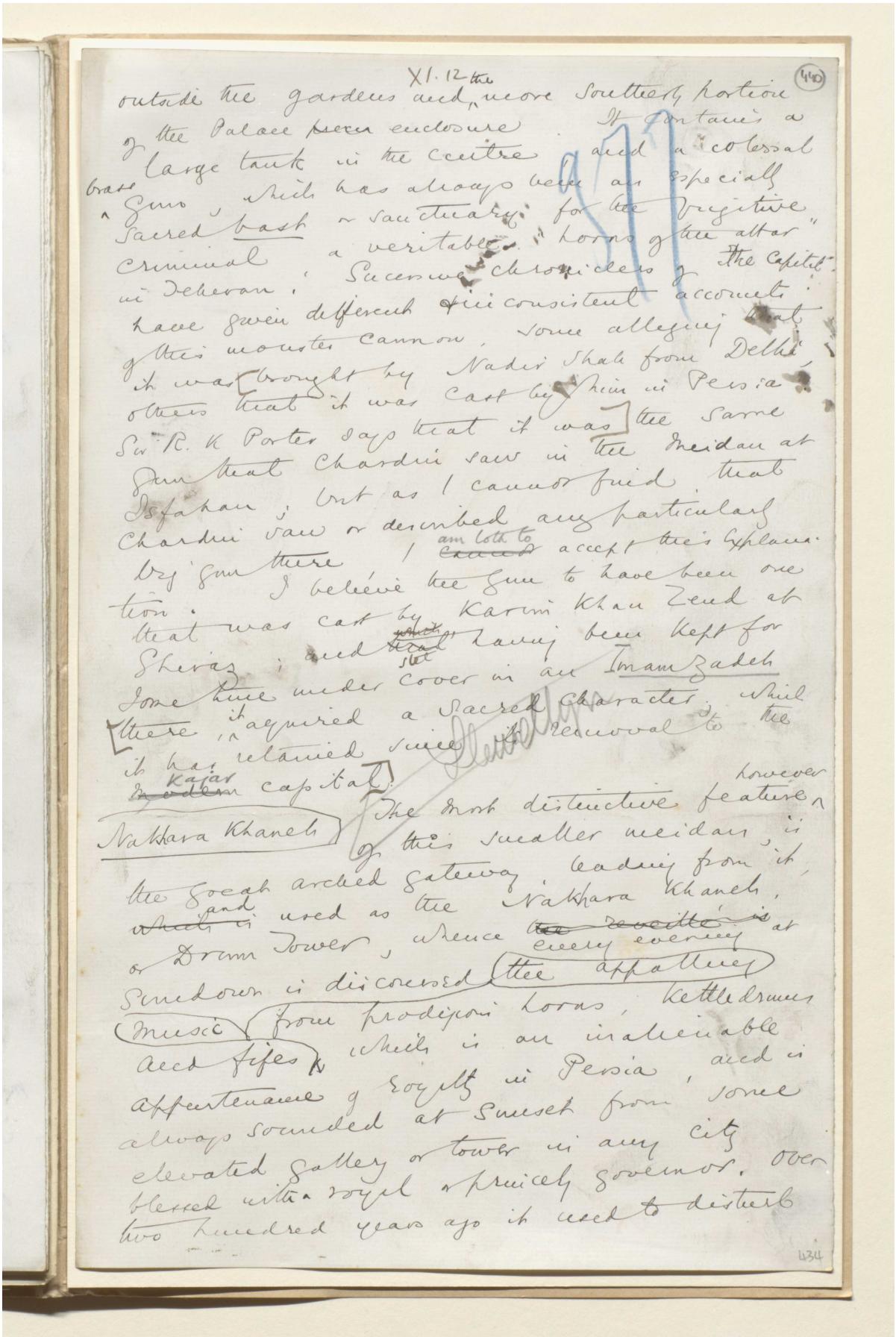




(440)

XI. 12



outside the gardens and the more southerly portion of the Palace ~~[illegible]~~ enclosure. It contains a large tank in the centre and a colossal brass gun, which has always been an especially sacred bast or sanctuary for the fugitive criminal, a veritable "horns of the altar" in Teheran. Successive chroniclers of the Capital have given different & inconsistent accounts of this monster cannon, some alleging that it was brought by Nadir Shah from Delhi, others that it was cast by him in Persia. Sir R. K. Porter says that it was the same gun that Chardin saw in the Meidan at Isfahan; but as I cannot find that Chardin saw or described any particularly big gun there, I am loth to ~~cannot~~ accept this explanation. I believe the gun to have been one that was cast by Karim Khan Zend at Shiraz; and ~~which~~ ~~that~~ still having been kept for some time under cover in an Imamzadeh there, it acquired a sacred character, which it has retained since its removal to the ~~modern~~ Kajar capital.

Nakhara Khaneh

The most distinctive feature however of this smaller meidan, is the great arched gateway leading from it, ~~which is~~ and used as the Nakhara Khaneh, or Drum Tower, whence ~~the reveillé is~~ every evening at sundown is discoursed the appalling music from prodigious horns, kettledrums and fifes, which is an inalienable appurtenance of royalty in Persia, and is always sounded at sunset from some elevated gallery or tower in any city blessed with a royal or princely governor. Over two hundred years ago it used to disturb

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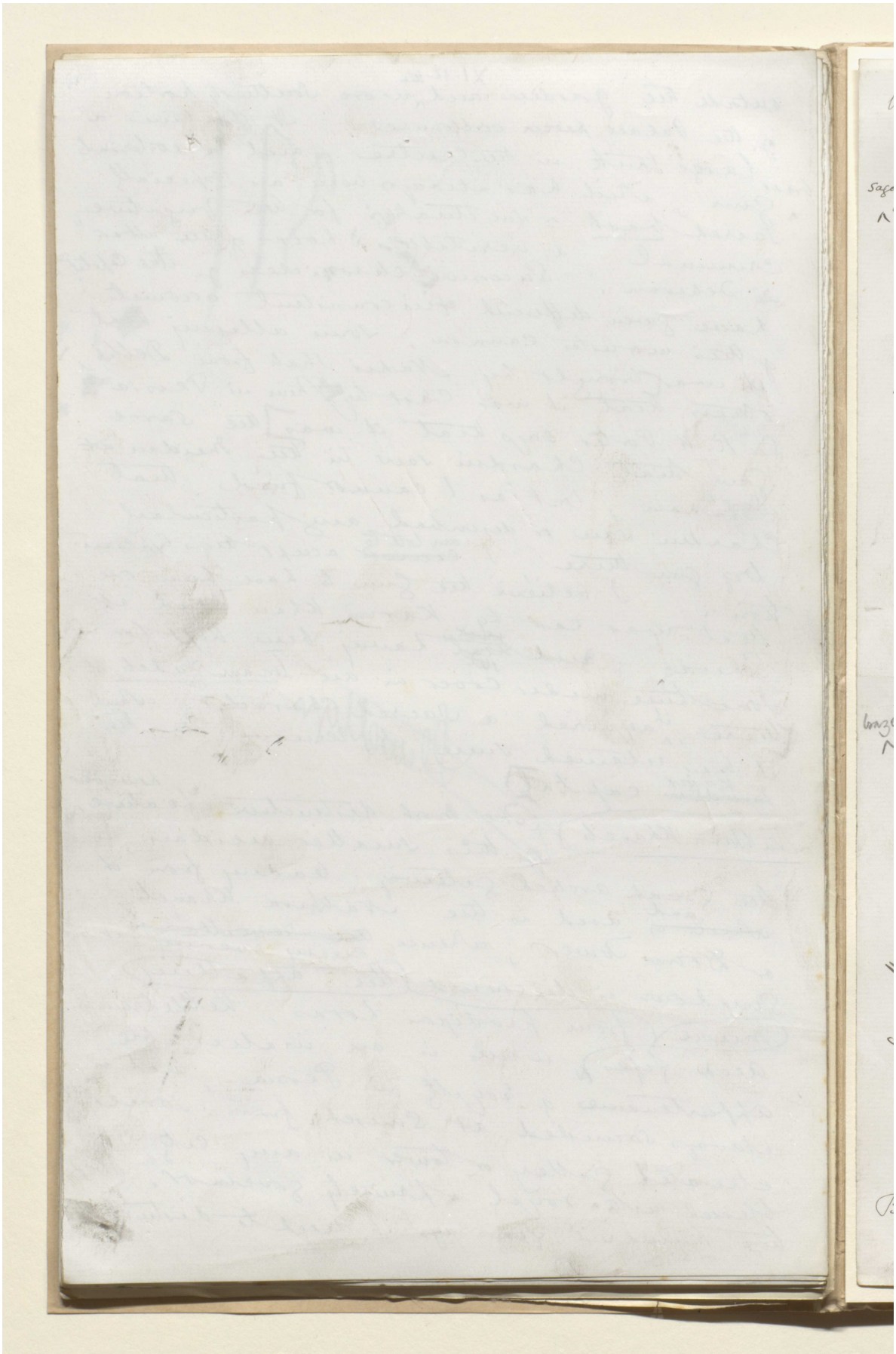

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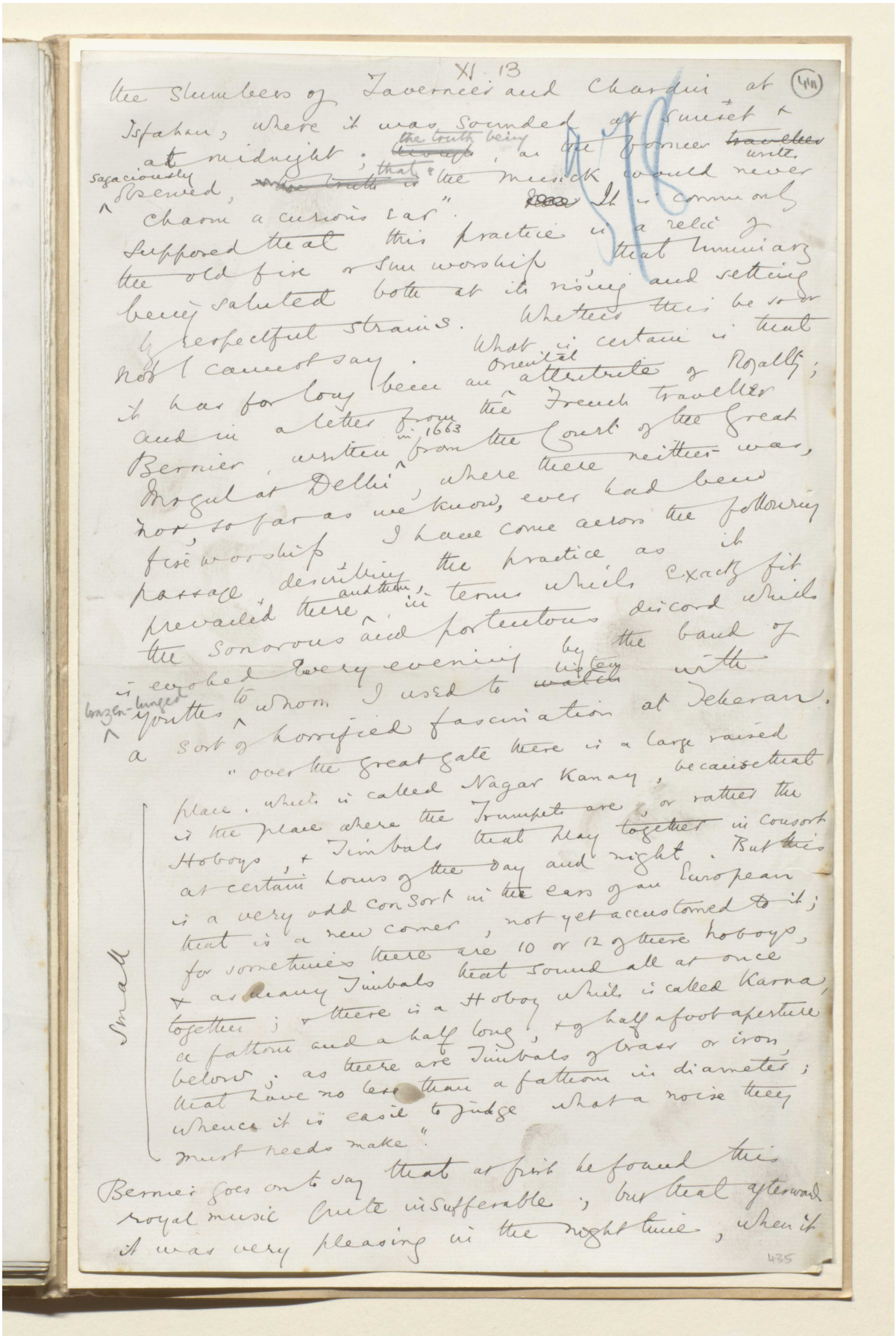

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XI. 13

(441)

the Slumbers of Tavernier and Chardin at Isfahan, where it was sounded at sunset & at midnight; the truth being, as the former writes sagaciously observed, that "the musick would never charm a curious ear". It is commonly supposed that this practice is a relic of the old fire or sun worship, that luminary being saluted both at its rising and setting by respectful strains. Whether this be so or not I cannot say. What is certain is that it has for long been an Oriental attribute of Royalty; and in a letter from the French traveller Bernier, written in 1663 from the Court of the Great Mogul at Delhi, where there neither was, nor, so far as we know, ever had been fire worship, I have come across the following passage, describing the practice as it prevailed there and then, in terms which exactly fit the sonorous and portentous discord which is evoked every evening by the band of brazen-lunged youths to whom I used to listen with a sort of horrified fascination at Teheran.

"over the great gate there is a large raised place, which is called Nagar Kanay, because that is the place where the Trumpets are, or rather the Hoboys, & Timbals that play together in consort at certain hours of the day and night. But this is a very odd consort in the ears of an European that is a new comer, not yet accustomed to it; for sometimes there are 10 or 12 of these hoboys, & as many Timbals that sound all at once together; & there is a Hoboy which is called Karna, a fathom and a half long, & of half a foot aperture below; as there are Timbals of brass or iron, that have no less than a fathom in diameter; whence it is easil to judge what a noise they must needs make".

Small

Bernier goes on to say that at first he found this royal music quite insufferable; but that afterwards it was very pleasing in the night time, when it

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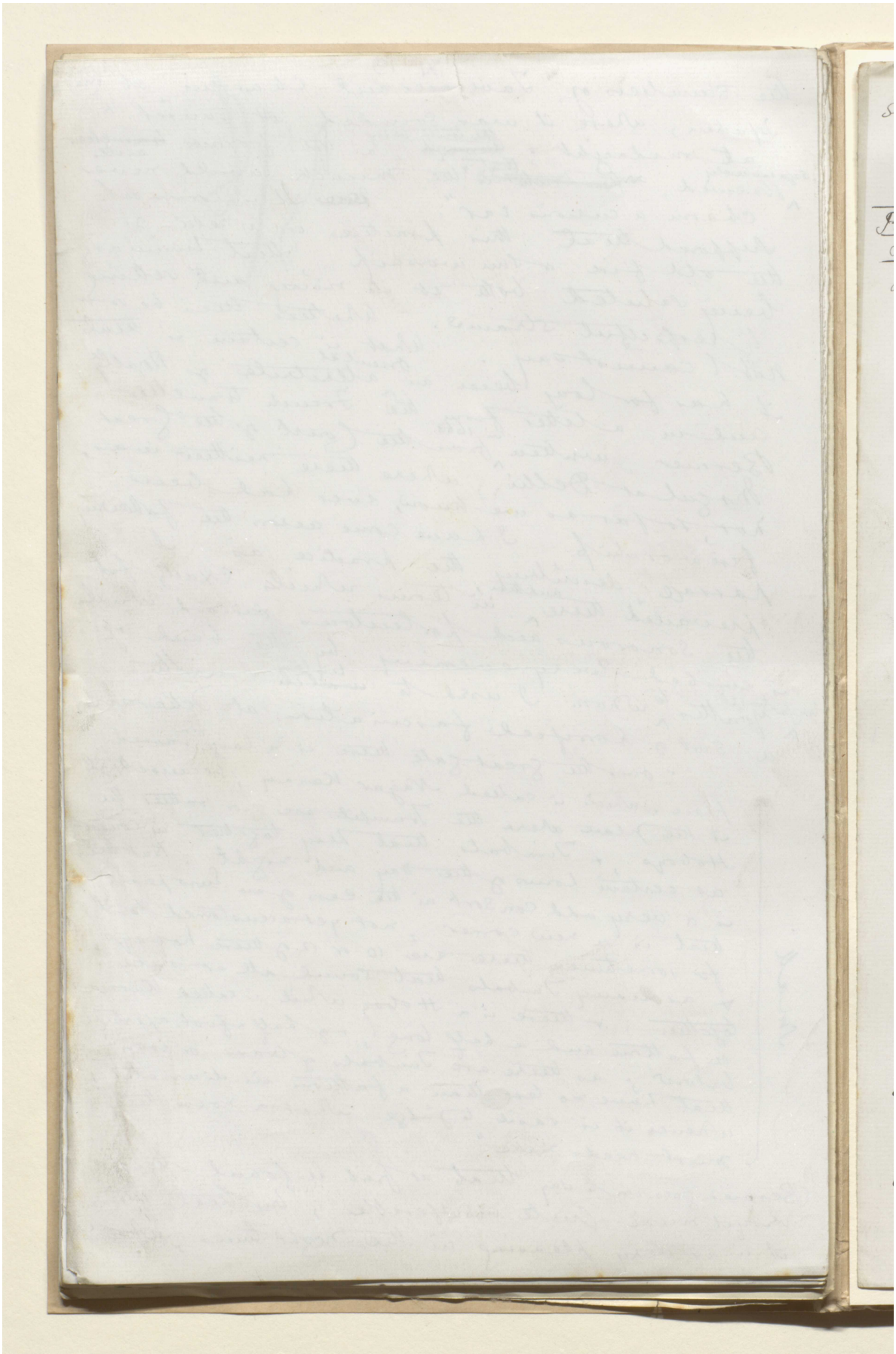

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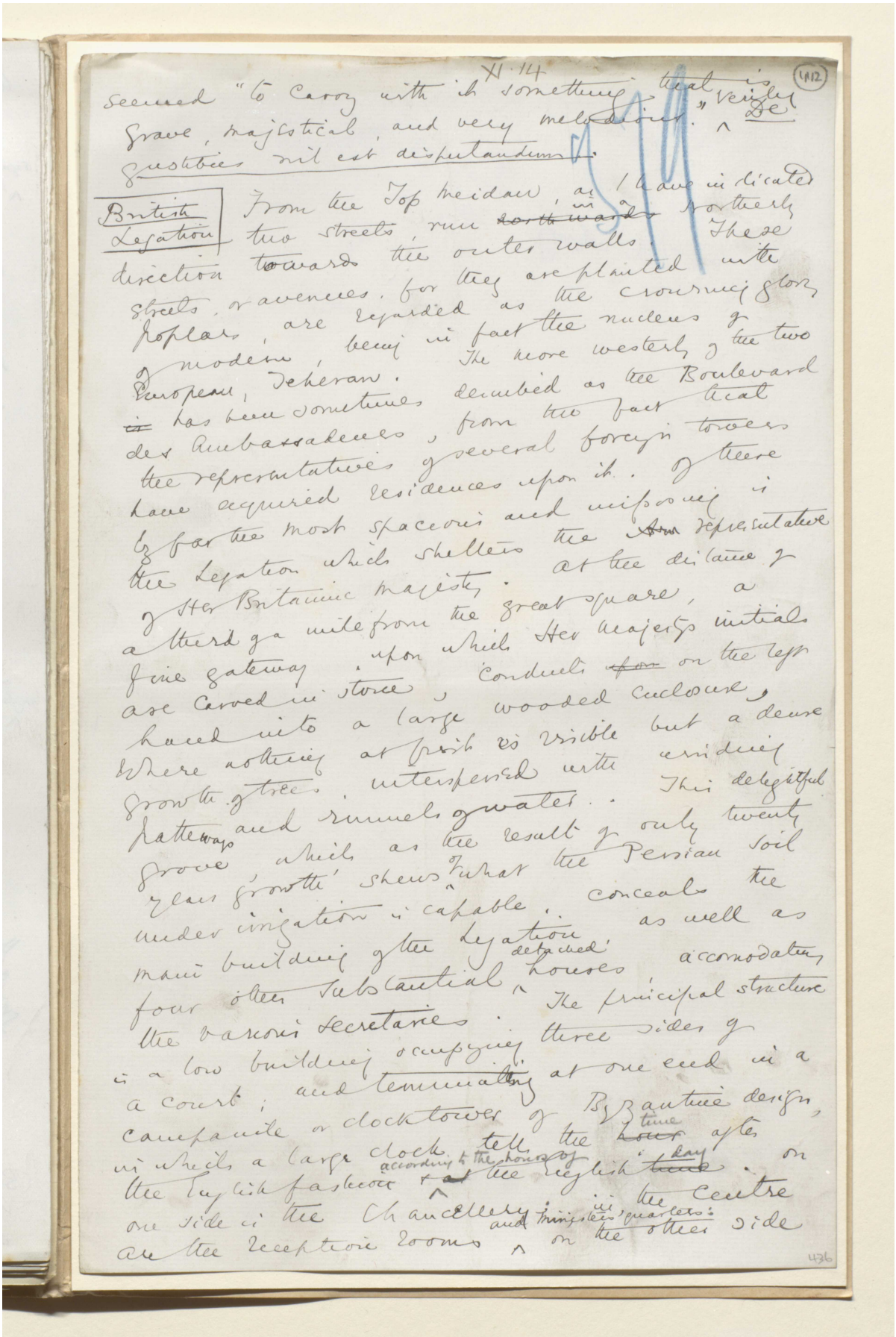
XI.14 (412)



seemed "to carry with it something that is grave, majestical, and very melodious." Verily De gustibus nil est disputandum.

British Legation From the Top Meidan, as I have indicated two streets run ~~northwards~~ in a northerly direction towards the outer walls. These streets, or avenues, for they are planted with poplars, are regarded as the crowning glory of modern, being in fact the nucleus of European, Teheran. The more westerly of the two ~~is~~ has been sometimes described as the Boulevard des Ambassadeurs, from the fact that the representatives of several foreign towers have acquired residences upon it. Of these by far the most spacious and imposing is the Legation which shelters the ~~Am~~ representative of Her Britannic Majesty. At the distance of a third of a mile from the great square, a fine gateway, upon which Her Majesty's initials are carved in stone, conducts ~~upon~~ on the left hand into a large wooded enclosure, where nothing at first is visible but a dense growth of trees, interspersed with winding pathways and rimmels of water. This delightful grove, which as the result of only twenty years growth shews of what the Persian soil under irrigation is capable, conceals the main building of the Legation as well as four other substantial detached houses accomodating the various secretaries. The principal structure is a low building occupying three sides of a court; and terminating at one end in a campanile or clocktower of Byzantine design, in which a large clock tells the ~~hour~~ time after the English fashion according to the hours of ~~at~~ the English ~~time~~ day. On one side is the Chancellery; in the centre are the reception rooms and ministers' quarters: on the other side

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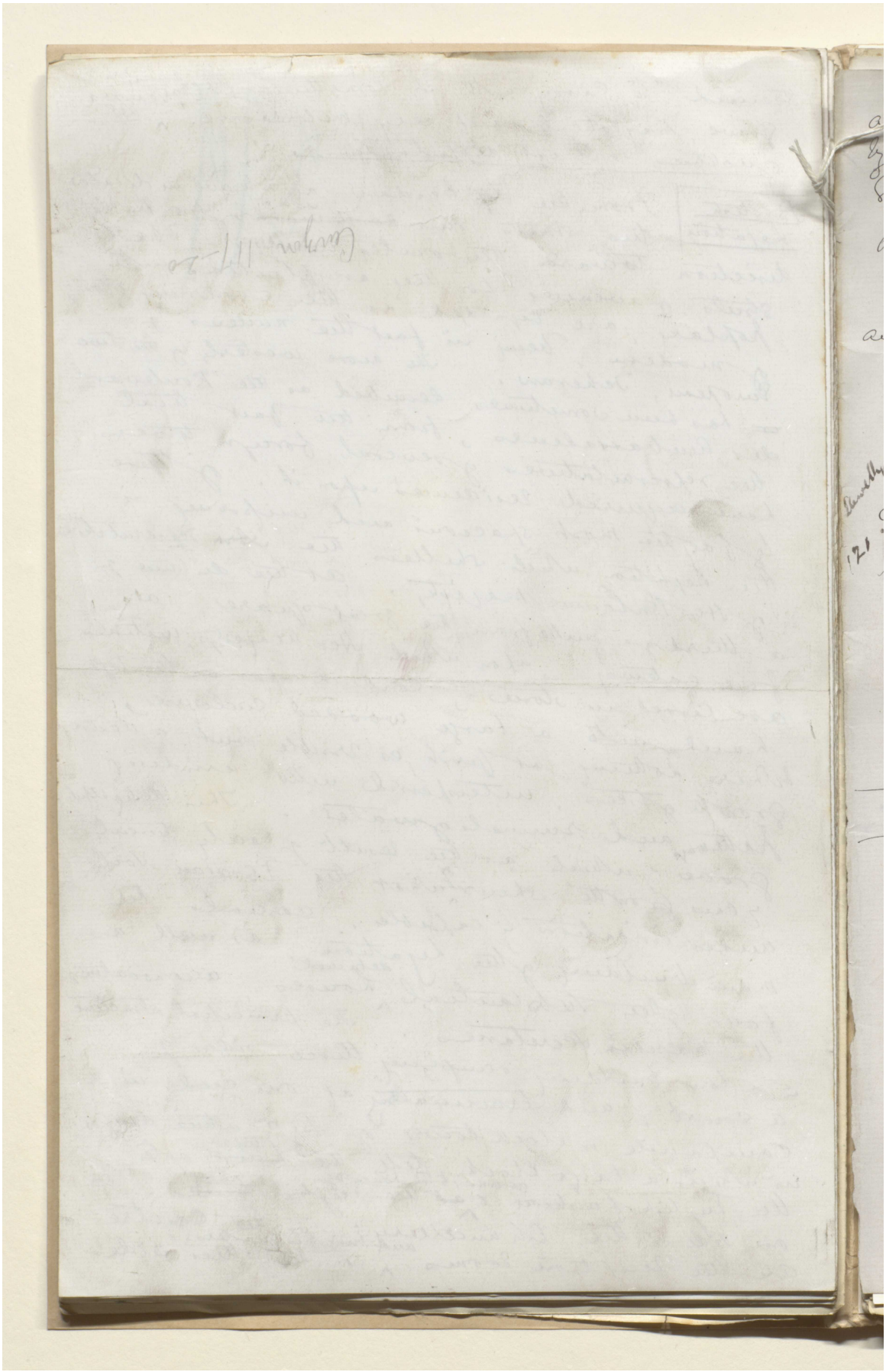

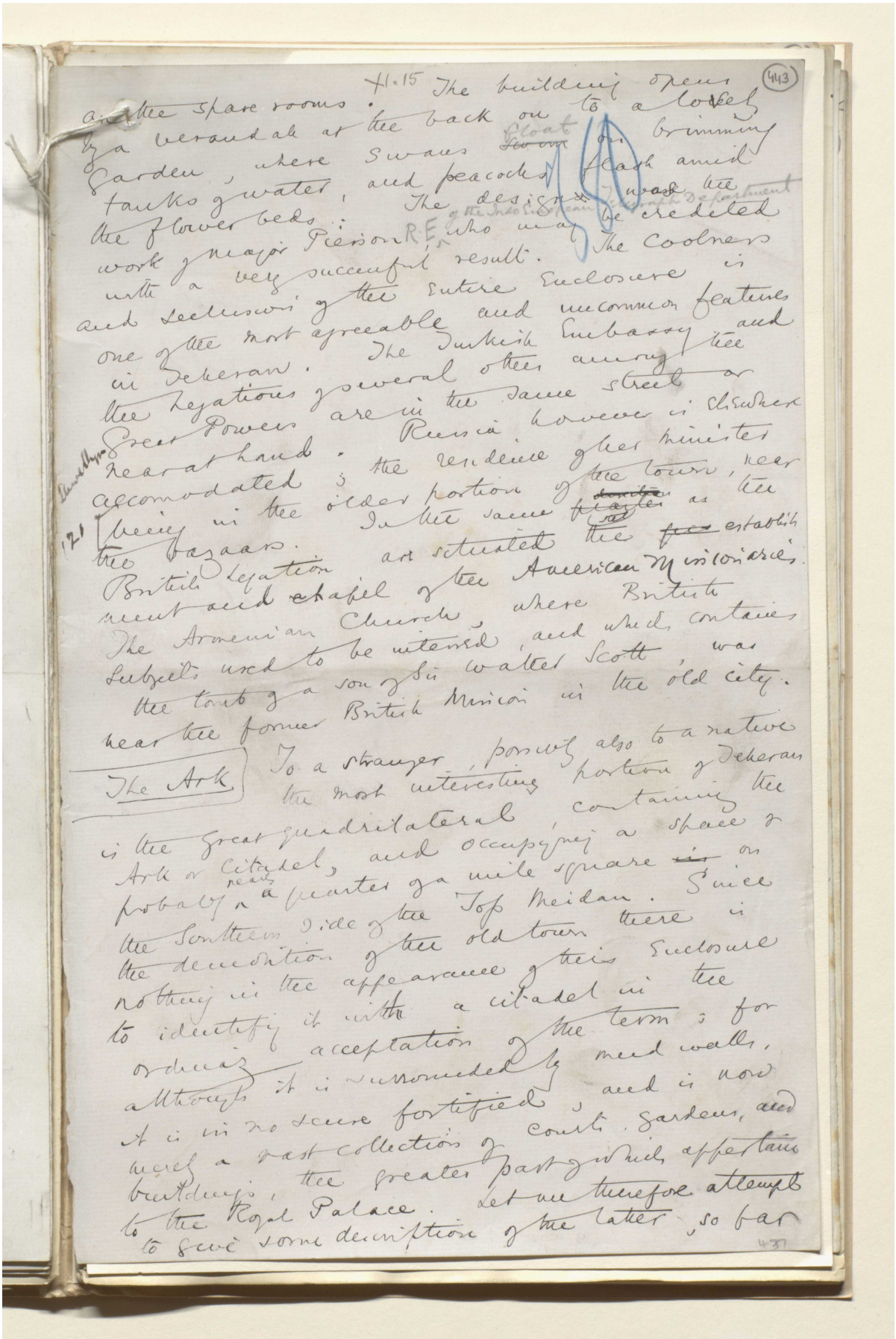

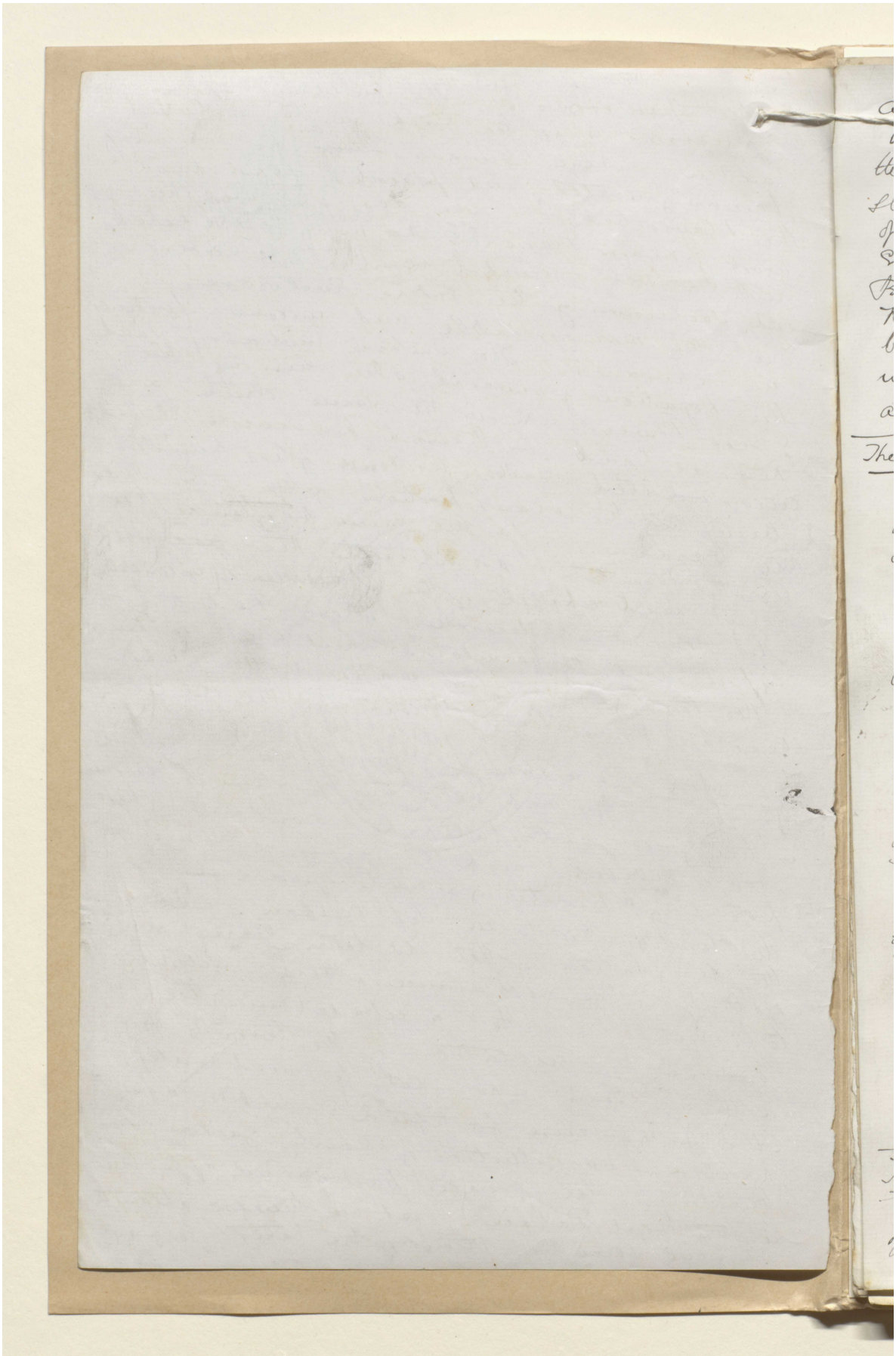

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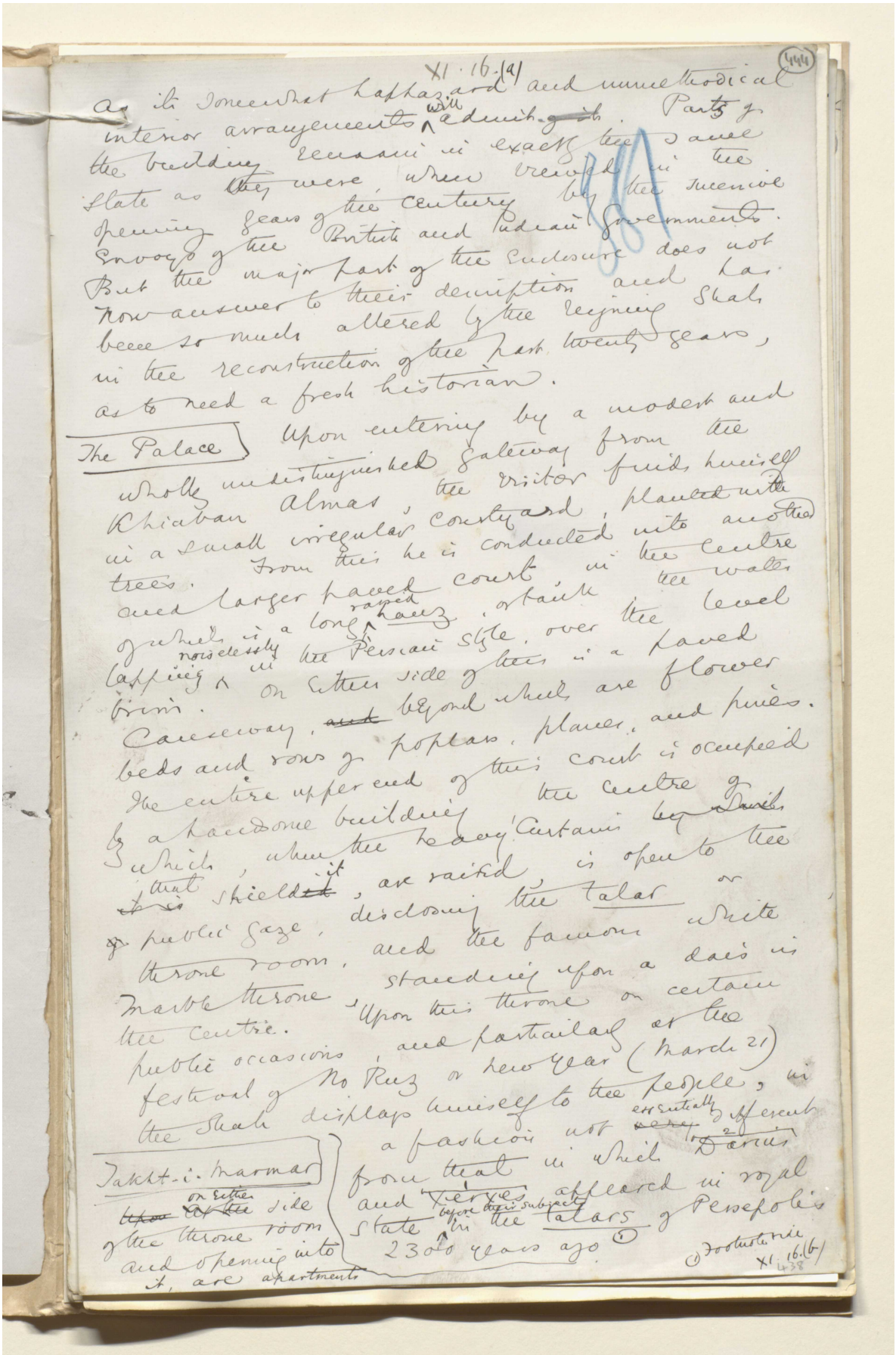


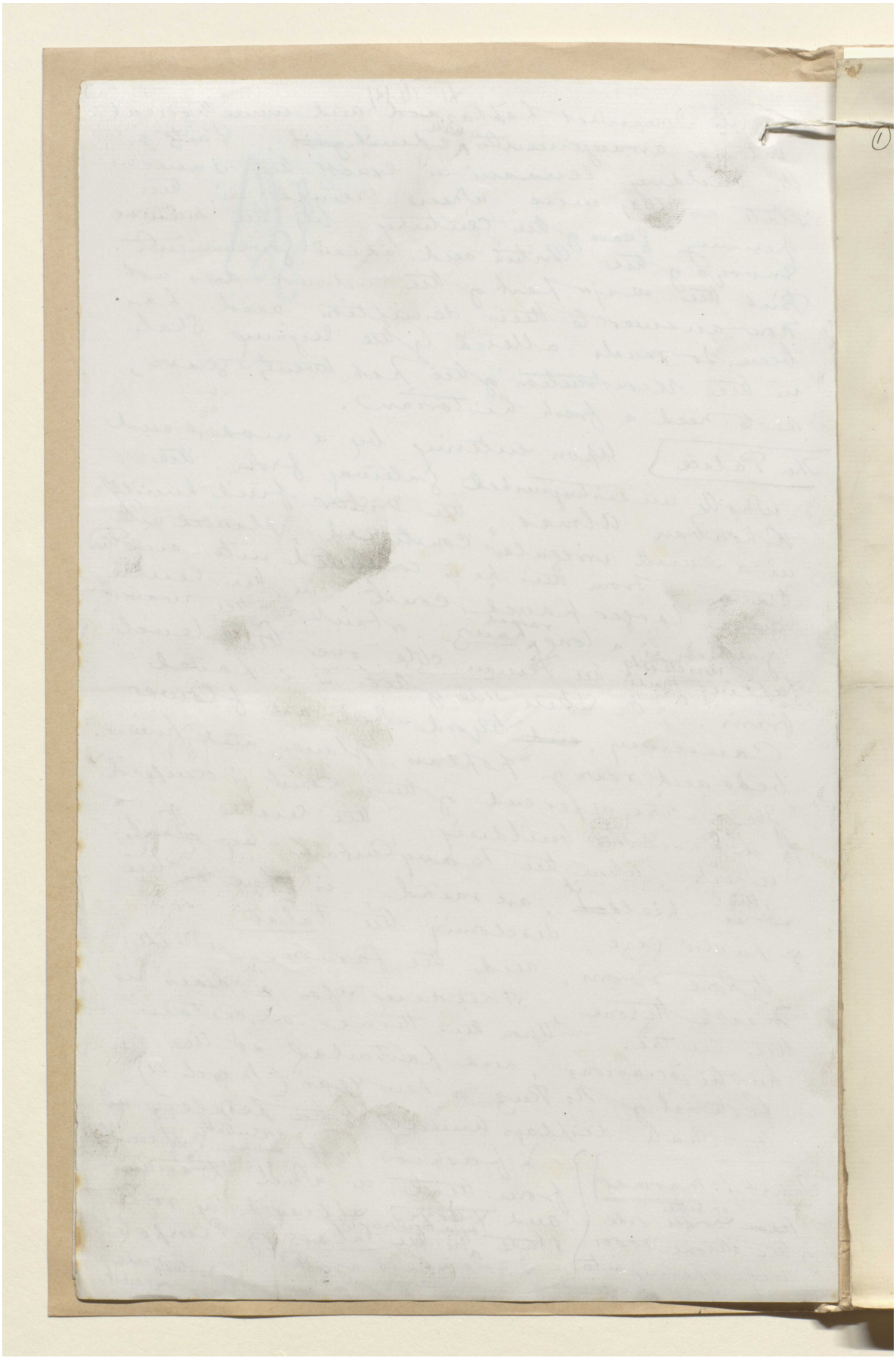
XI. 16. (a) (444)

as its somewhat haphazard and unmethodical interior arrangements will admit. Parts of the building remain in exactly the same state as they were when viewed in the opening years of the century by the successive envoys of the British and Indian Governments. But the major part of the enclosure does not now answer to their description and has been so much altered by the reigning Shah in the reconstruction of the past twenty years, as to need a fresh historian.

The Palace Upon entering by a modest and wholly undistinguished gateway from the Khiaban Almas, the visitor finds himself in a small irregular courtyard, planted with trees. From this he is conducted into another and larger paved court in the centre of which is a long raised hauz, or tank the water lapping noiselessly in the Persian style, over the level brim. On either side of this is a paved causeway, ~~and~~ beyond which are flower beds and rows of poplars, planes, and pines. The entire upper end of this court is occupied by a handsome building the centre of which, when the heavy curtains ~~by which~~ that shield it, are raised, is open to the public gaze, disclosing the talar or throne room, and the famous white marble throne, standing upon a dais in the centre. Upon this throne on certain public occasions, and particularly at the festival of No Ruz or New Year (March 21) the Shah displays himself to the people, in a fashion not essentially different from that in which Darius and Xerxes appeared in royal state before their subject in the talars of Persepolis 2300 years ago. (1)

Takht-i-Marmar on either side of the throne room and opening into it, are apartments

(1) Footnote side XI. 16. (b) 438



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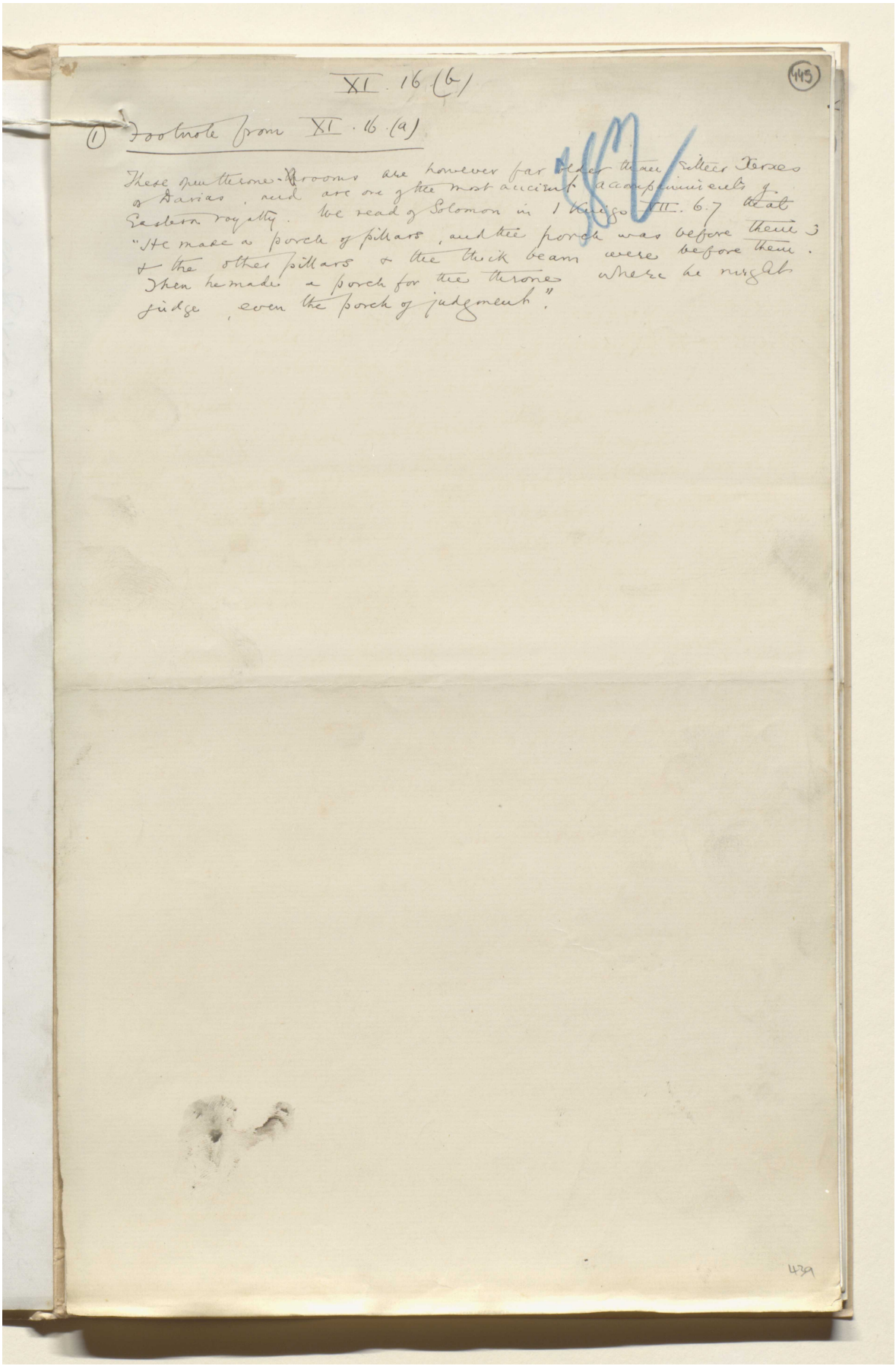


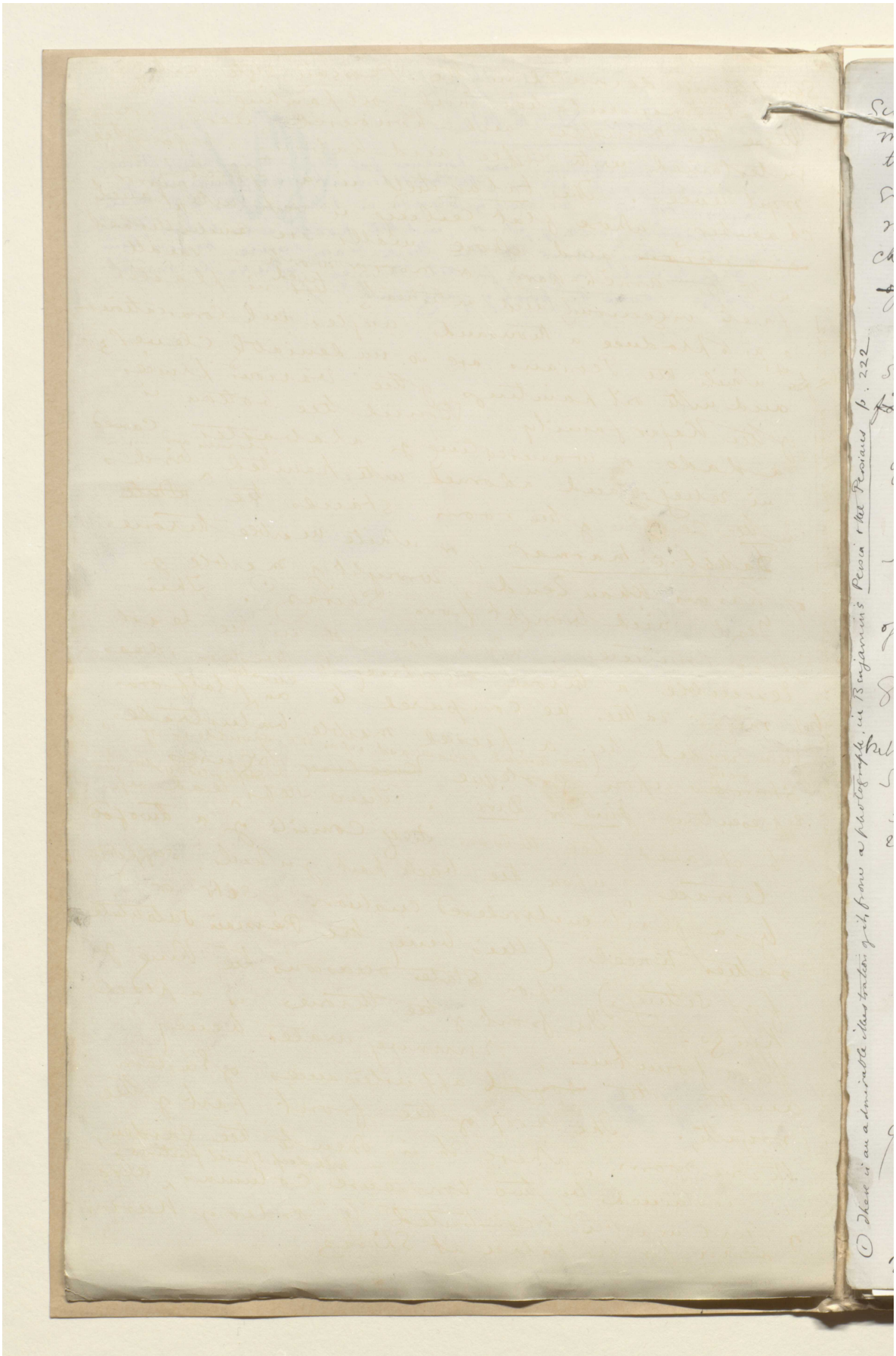
(445)

XI. 16 (b)

(1) Footnote from XI. 16. (a)

These open throne-rooms are however far older than either Xerxes or Darius, and are one of the most ancient accompaniments of Eastern royalty. We read of Solomon in 1 Kings VII. 6.7 that "He made a porch of pillars, and the porch was before them; & the other pillars & the thick beam were before them. Then he made a porch for the throne where he might judge, even the porch of judgment".

439



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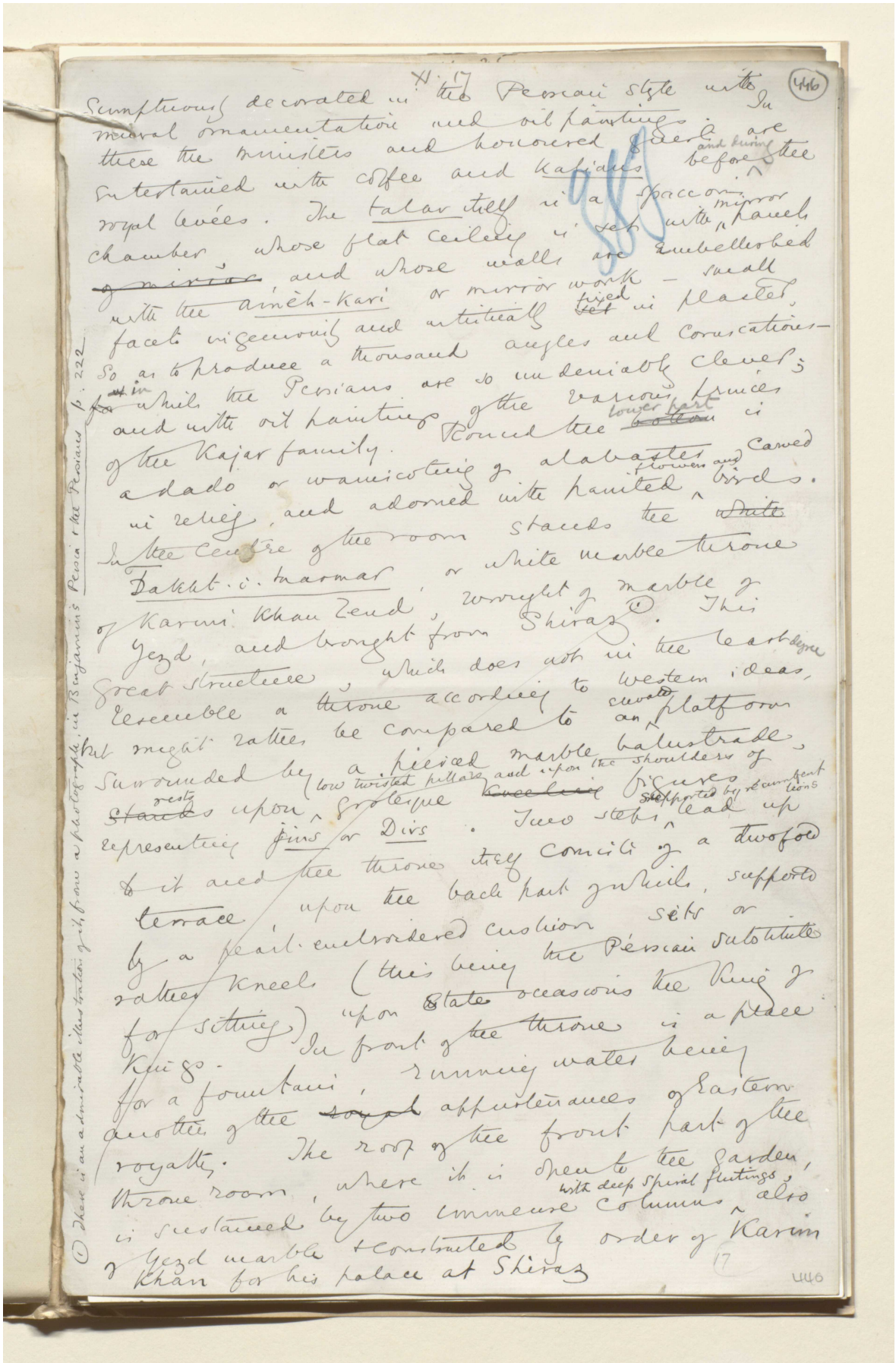

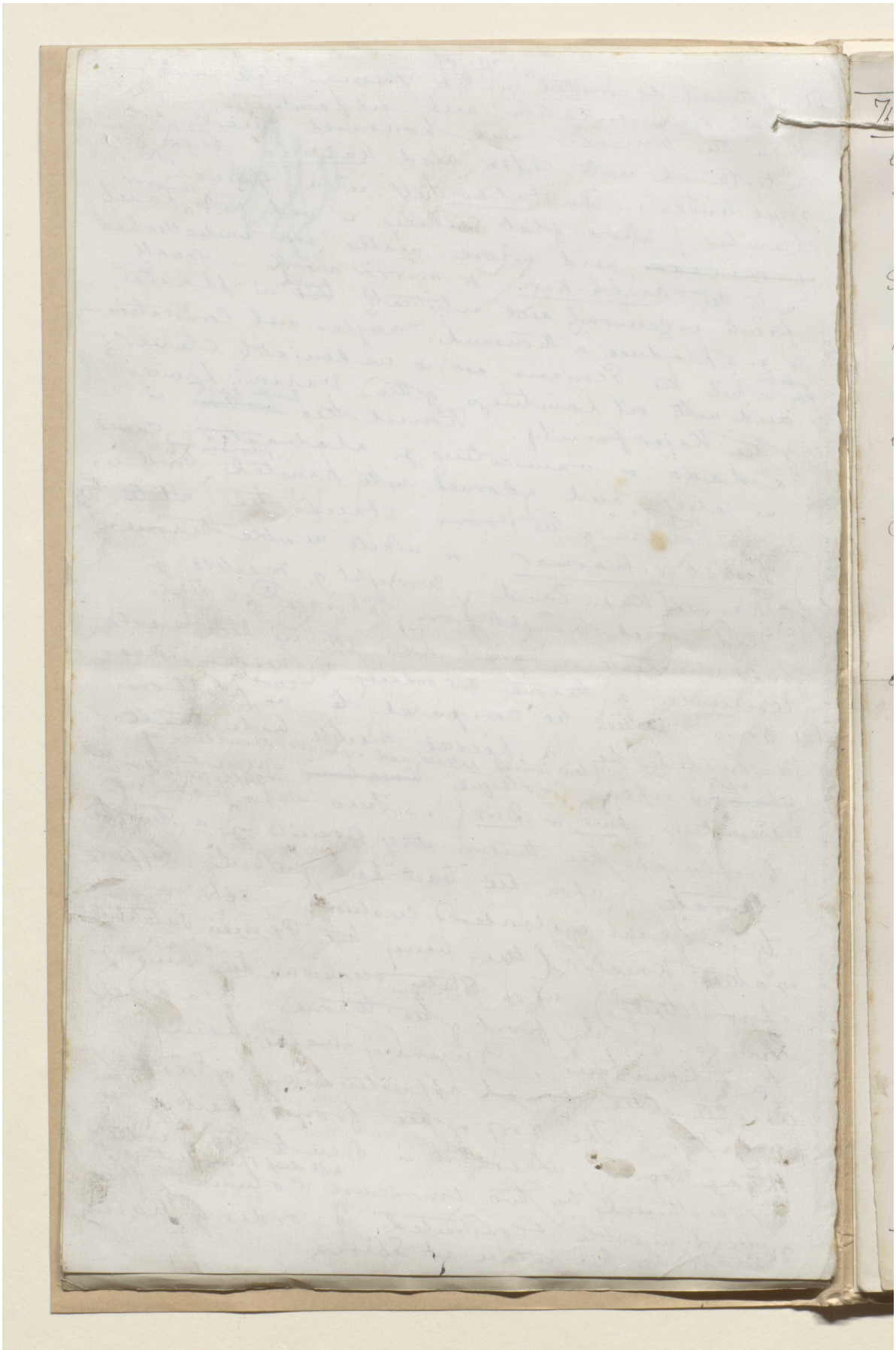

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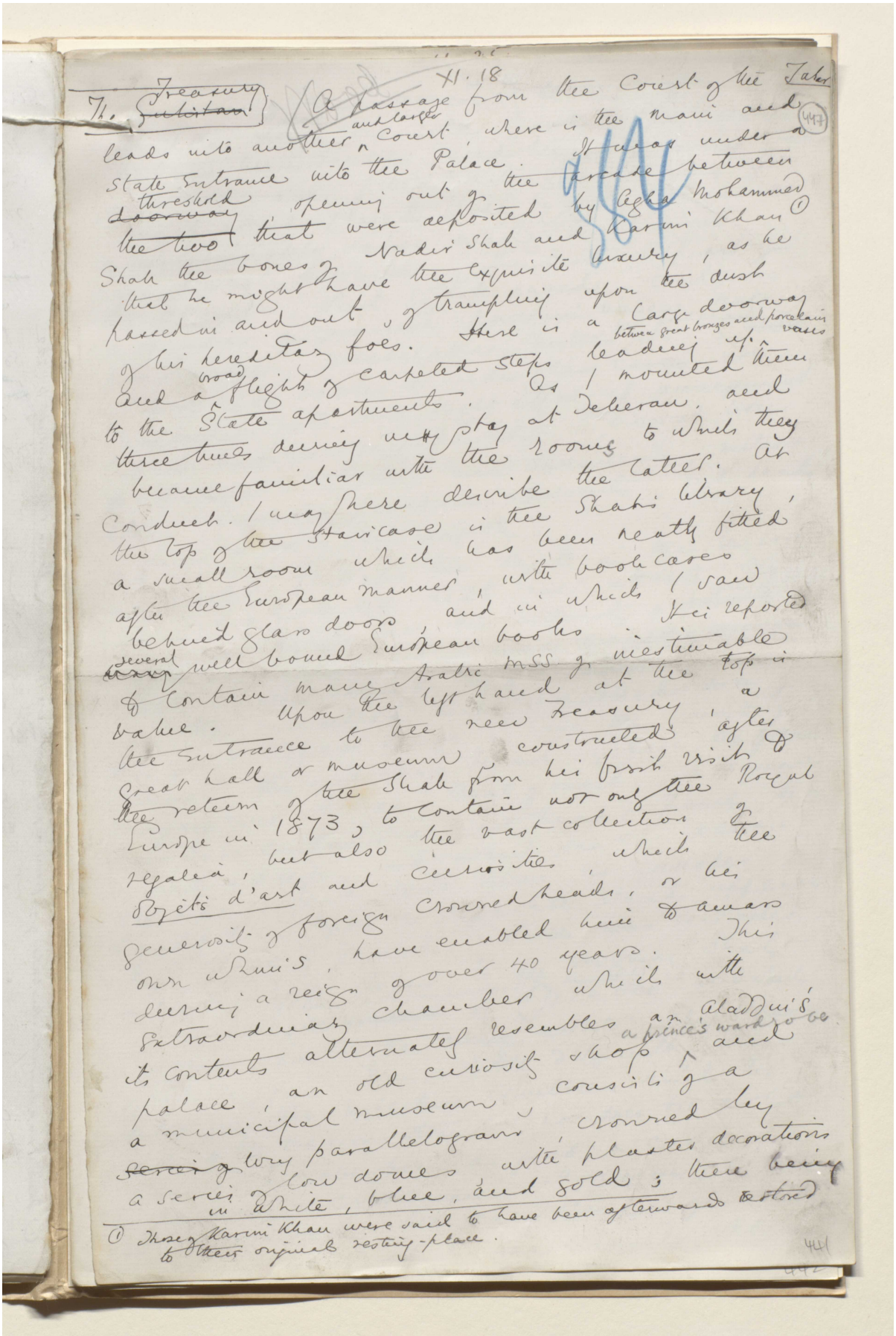

XI. 18

Th. Treasury ~~Gulistan~~ A passage from the Court of the Tahr leads into another and larger Court, where is the main and state entrance into the Palace. It was under a threshold ~~doorway~~ opening out of the arcade between the two that were deposited by Agha Mohammed Shah the bones of Nadir Shah and Karim Khan (1) that he might have the exquisite luxury, as he passed in and out, of trampling upon the dust of his hereditary foes. Here is a large doorway and a broad flight of carpeted steps leading up between great bronzes and porcelain vases to the State apartments. As I mounted them three times during my stay at Teheran, and became familiar with the rooms to which they conduct. I may here describe the latter. At the top of the staircase is the Shah's library, a small room which has been neatly fitted after the European manner, with book cases behind glass doors, and in which I saw several well bound European books. It is reported to contain many Arabic MSS of inestimable value. Upon the left hand at the top is the entrance to the new Treasury, a great hall or museum constructed after the return of the Shah from his first visit to Europe in 1873, to contain not only the Royal regalia, but also the vast collection of objets d'art and curiosities, which the generosity of foreign crowned heads, or his own whims, have enabled him to amass during a reign of over 40 years. This extraordinary chamber which with its contents alternately resembles an Aladdin's palace, an old curiosity shop, a prince's wardrobe and a municipal museum, consists of a ~~series of~~ long parallelogram, crowned by a series of low domes, with plaster decorations in white, blue, and gold; there being

(1) Those of Karim Khan were said to have been afterwards restored to their original resting-place.

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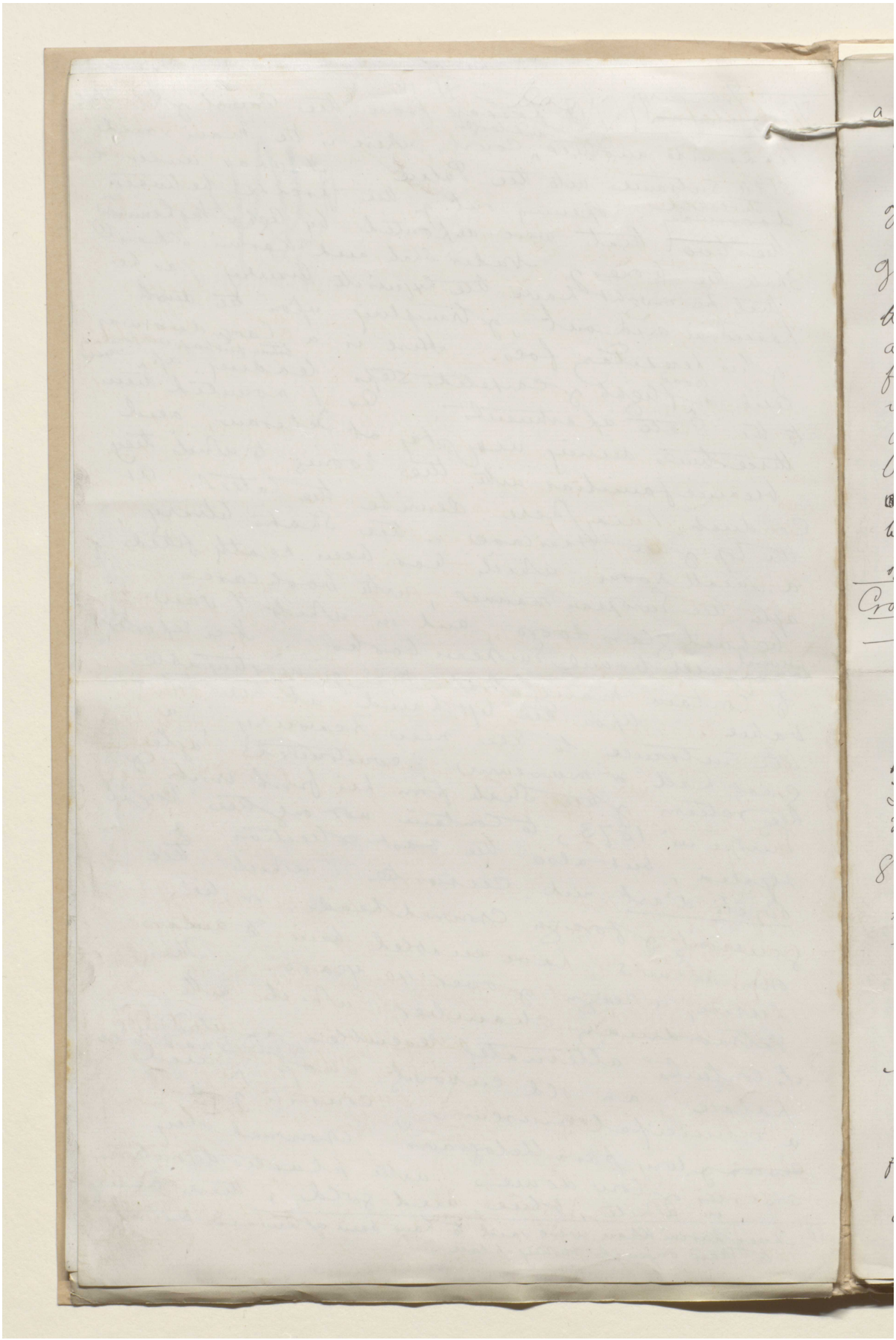

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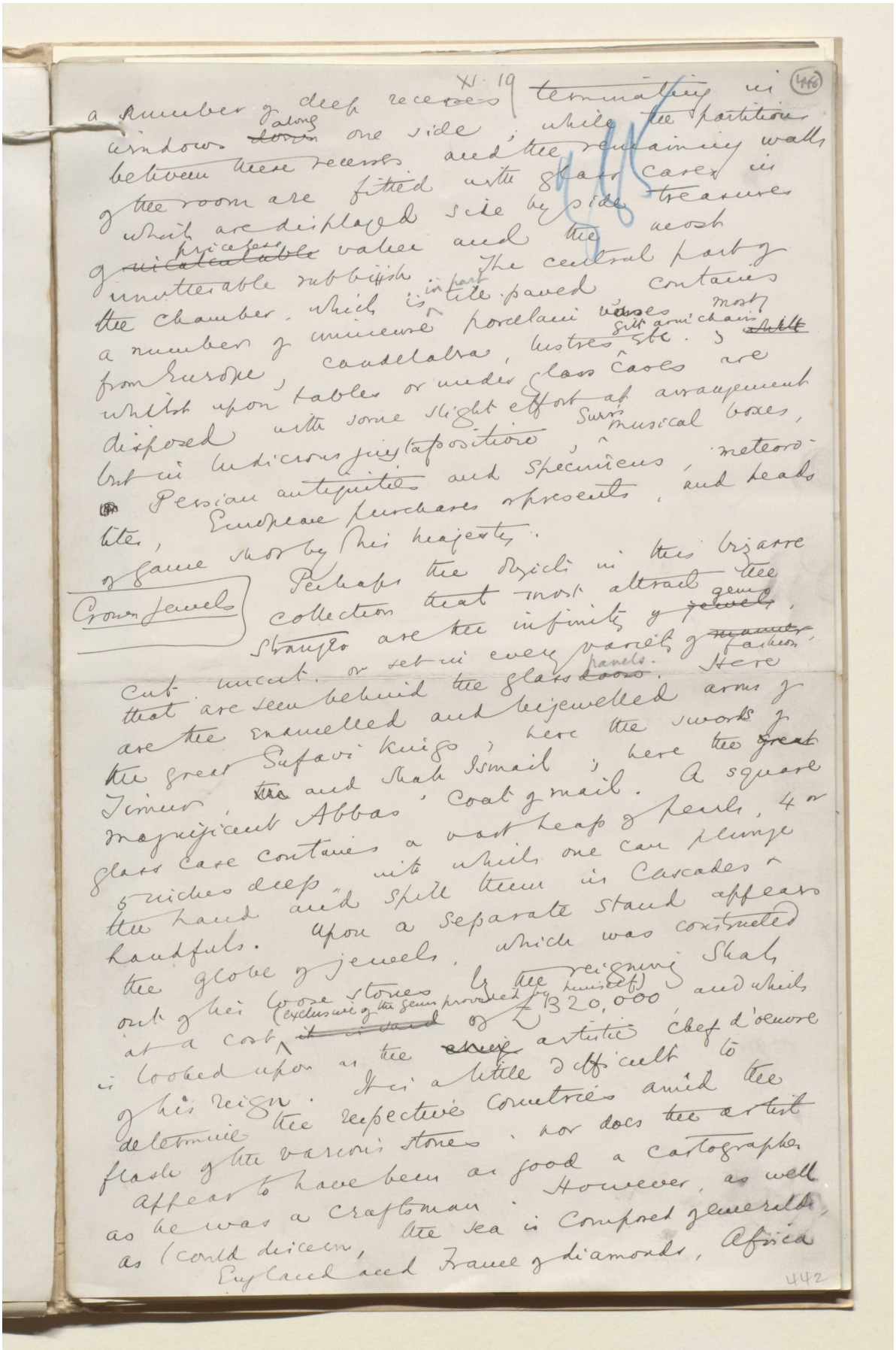


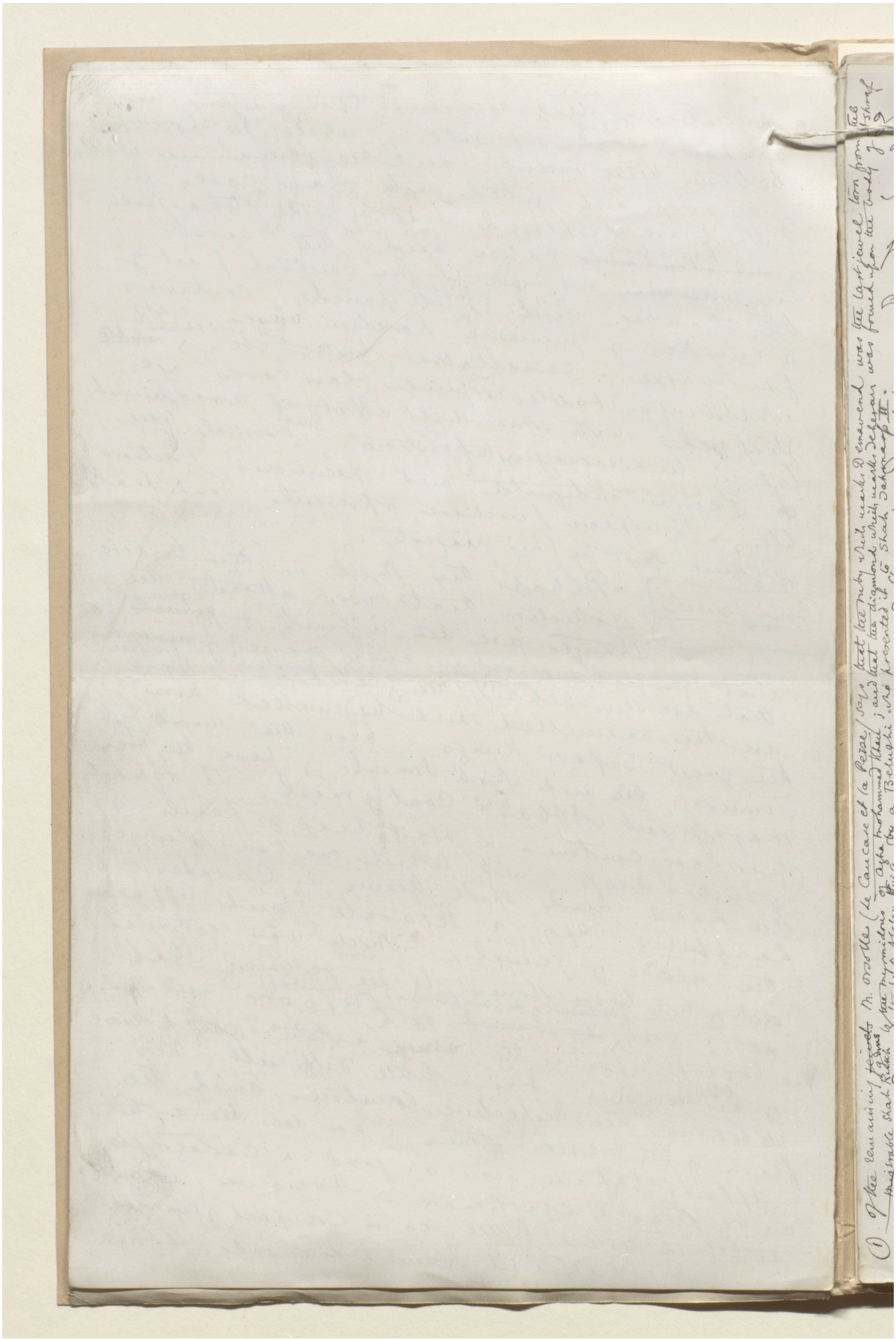
XI. 19 (446)

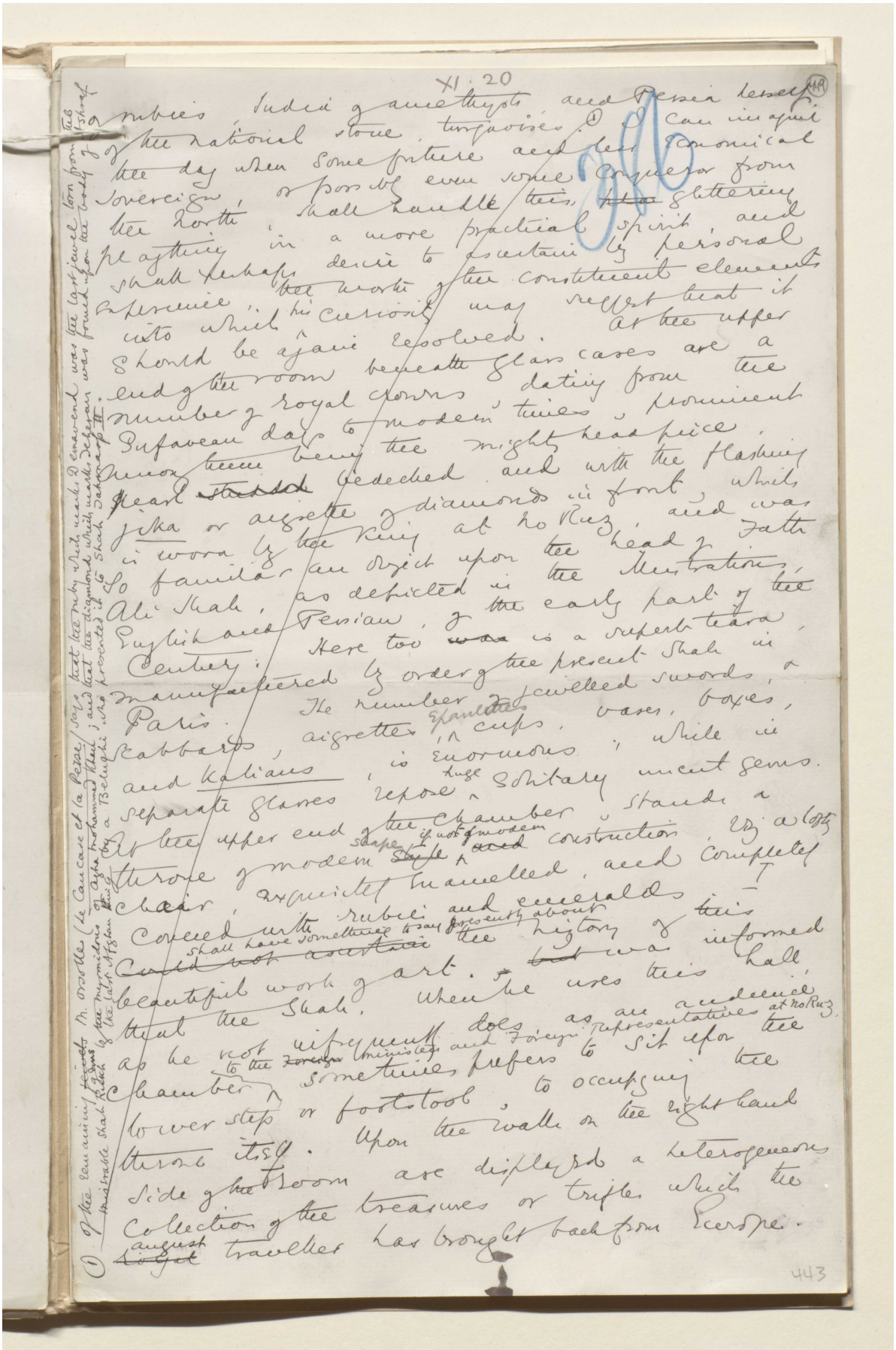
a number of deep recesses terminating in windows along one side; while the partitions between these recesses and the remaining walls of the room are fitted with glass cases in which are displayed side by side treasures of priceless value and the most unutterable rubbish. The central part of the chamber, which is in part tile paved, contains a number of immense porcelain vases most from Europe, candelabra, lustres, gilt arm chairs etc. whilst upon tables or under glass cases are disposed with some slight effort at arrangement but in ludicrous juxtapositions, Sur's musical boxes, Persian antiquities and specimens, meteorolites, European purchases or presents, and heads of game shot by his majesty.

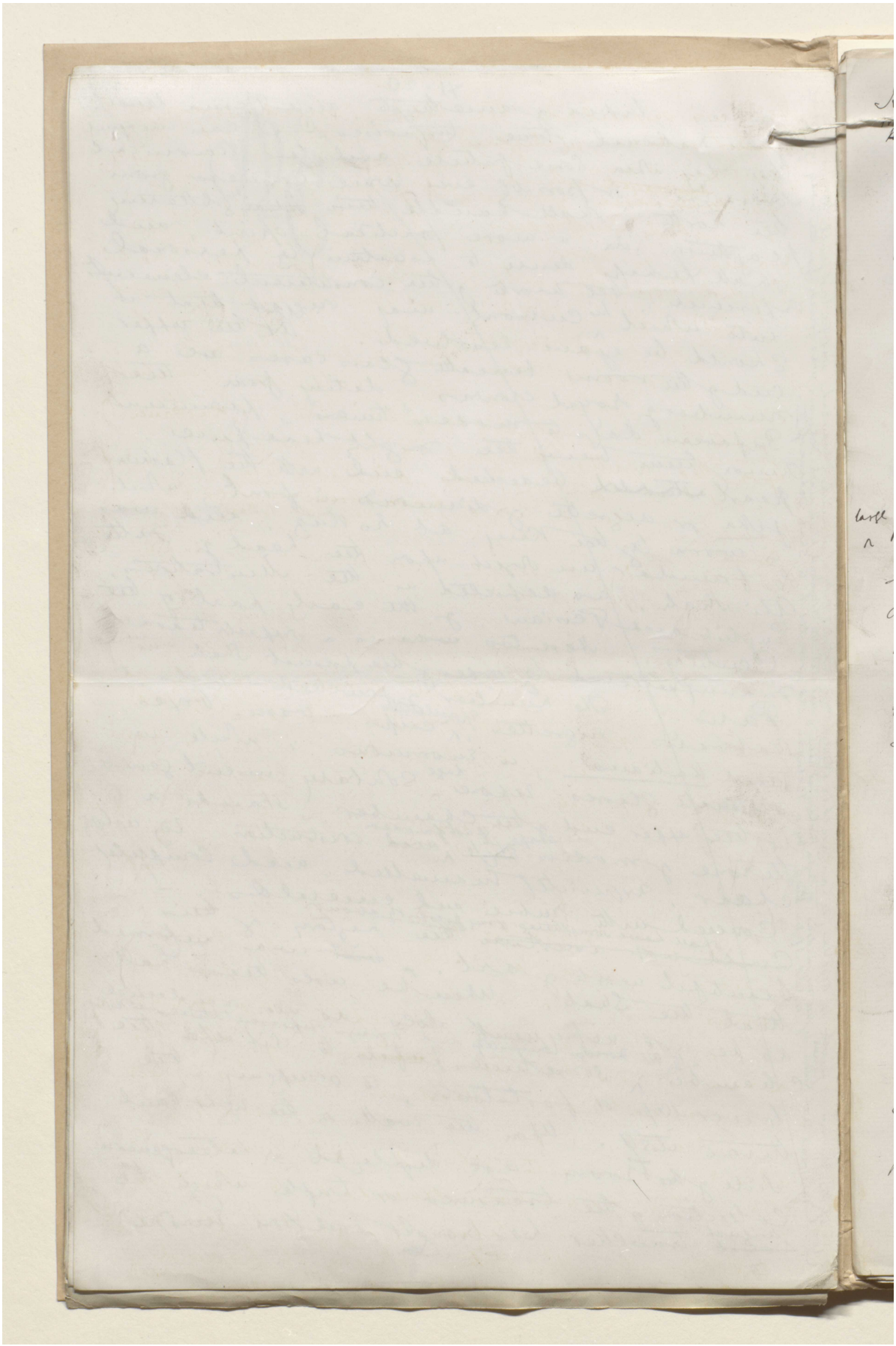
Crown Jewels

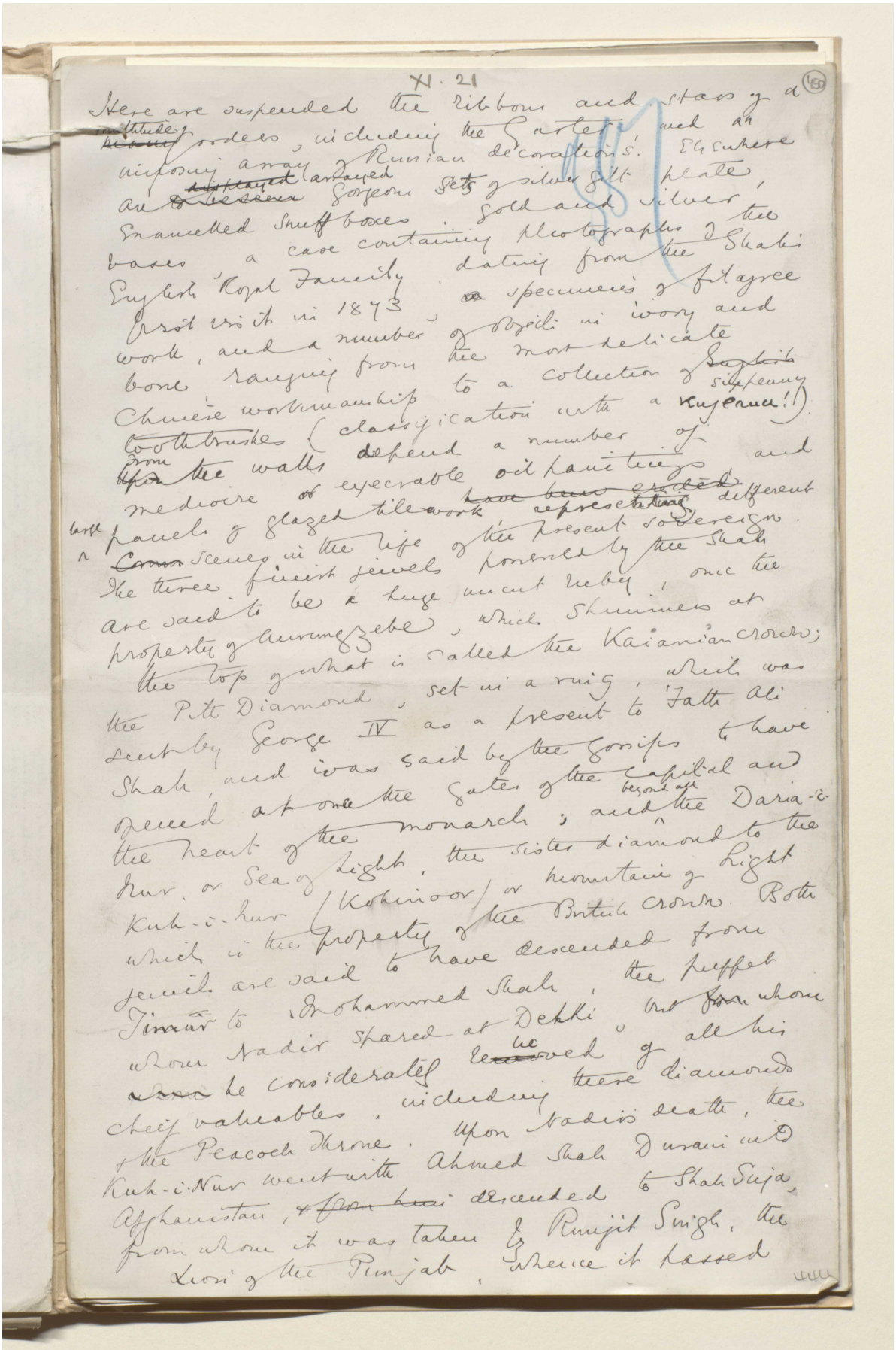
Perhaps the objects in this bizarre collection that most attract the stranger are the infinity of gems, cut uncut, or set in every variety of fashion, that are seen behind the glass panels. Here are the enamelled and bejewelled arms of the great Sufavi kings; here the swords of Timur and Shah Ismail; here the magnificent Abbas' coat of mail. A square glass case contains a vast heap of pearls, 4 or 5 inches deep, into which one can plunge the hand and spill them in cascades & handfuls. Upon a separate stand appears the globe of jewels, which was constructed out of his loose stones by the reigning Shah at a cost (exclusive of the gems provided by himself) of £320,000 and which is looked upon as the artistic chef d'oeuvre of his reign. It is a little difficult to determine the respective countries amid the flash of the various stones, nor does the artist appear to have been as good a cartographer as he was a craftsman. However, as well as I could discern, the sea is composed of emeralds, England and France of diamonds, Africa

442









XI. 21

Here are suspended the ribbons and stars of a multitude of orders, including the Garter, and an imposing array of Russian decorations. Elsewhere are arranged gorgeous sets of silver gilt plate, enamelled snuff boxes, gold and silver vases, a case containing photographs of the English Royal Family, dating from the Shah's first visit in 1873, specimens of filagree work, and a number of objects in ivory and bone, ranging from the most delicate Chinese workmanship to a collection of sixpenny toothbrushes (classification with a kujeanu!). From the walls depend a number of mediocre or execrable oil paintings and large panels of glazed tile work representing different scenes in the life of the present sovereign. The three finest jewels possessed by the Shah are said to be a huge uncut ruby, once the property of Aurungzebe, which shimmers at the top of what is called the Kaianian crown; the Pitt Diamond, set in a ring, which was sent by George IV as a present to Fath Ali Shah, and was said by the gossips to have opened at once the gates of the capital and the heart of the monarch; and beyond all the Daria-i-Nur, or Sea of Light, the sister diamond to the Kuh-i-Nur (Kohinoor) or mountain of Light which is the property of the British crown. Both jewels are said to have descended from Timur to Mohammed Shah, the puppet whom Nadir spared at Dehli, but whom he considerately relieved of all his chief valuables, including these diamonds & the Peacock Throne. Upon Nadir's death, the Kuh-i-Nur went with Ahmed Shah Durani into Afghanistan, & descended to Shah Suja, from whom it was taken by Runjit Singh, the Lion of the Punjab, whence it passed

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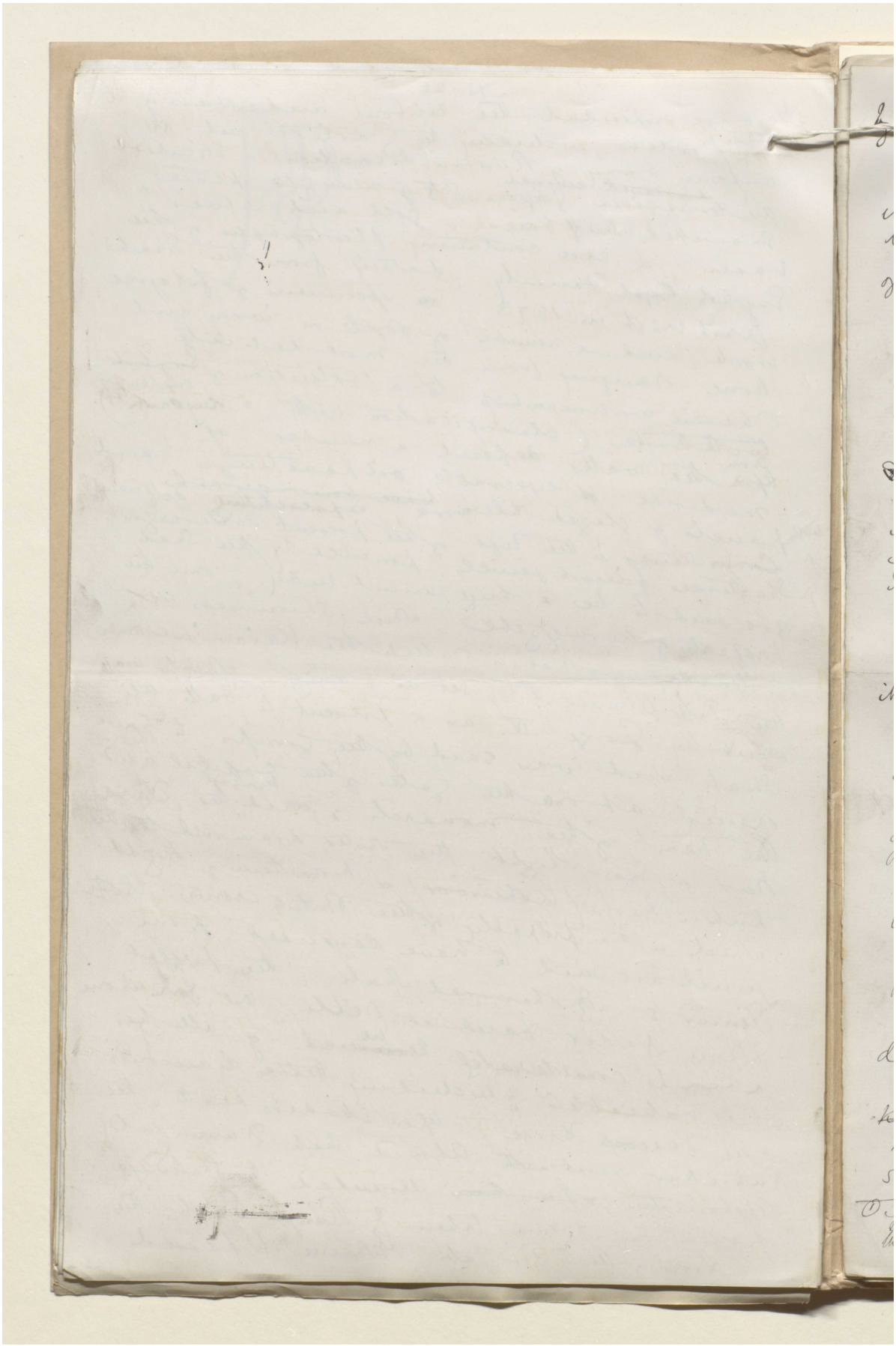

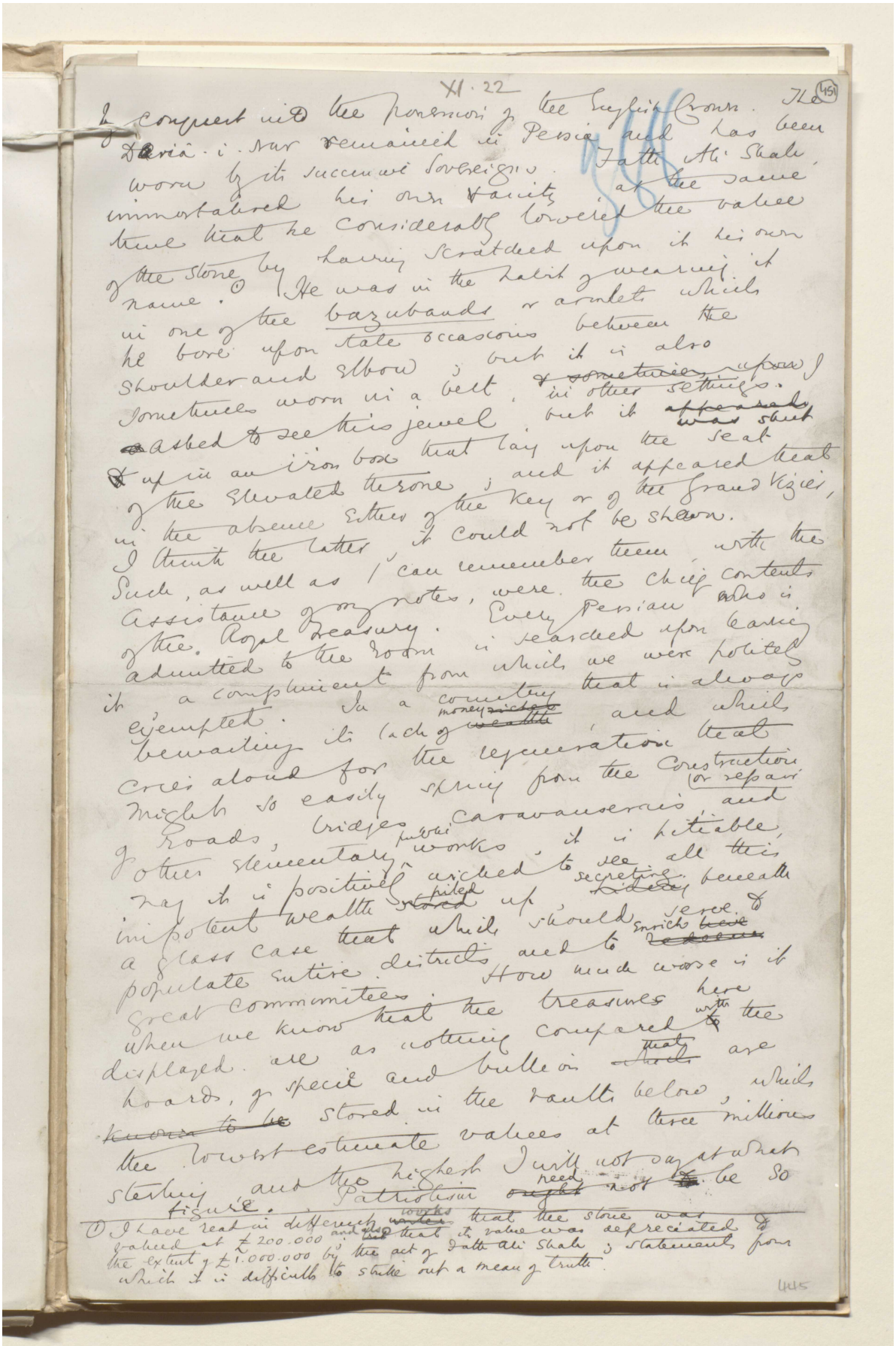

XI. 22

451

by conquest into the possession of the English Crown. The Daria-i-Nur remained in Persia and has been worn by its successive sovereigns. Fath Ali Shah, immortalised his own vanity at the same time that he considerably lowered the value of the stone by having scratched upon it his own name.① He was in the habit of wearing it in one of the bazubands or armlets which he bore upon state occasions between the shoulder and elbow; but it is also sometimes worn in a belt, ~~& sometimes upon~~ I asked to see this jewel, but it ~~appeared~~ was shut up in an iron box that lay upon the seat of the elevated throne; and it appeared that in the absence either of the key or of the Grand Vizier, I think the latter, it could not be shown. Such, as well as I can remember them, with the assistance of my notes, were the chief contents of the Royal Treasury. Every Persian who is admitted to the room is searched upon leaving it a compliment from which we were politely exempted. In a country that is always bewailing its lack of money ~~riches~~ ~~wealth~~, and which cries aloud for the regeneration that might so easily spring from the construction of roads, bridges, caravanserais, and other elementary public works, it is pitiable, nay it is positively wicked to see all this impotent wealth ~~stored~~ piled up, secreting ~~hiding~~ beneath a glass case that which should serve to populate entire districts and to enrich ~~have~~ ~~redeem~~ great communities. How much worse is it when we know that the treasures here displayed are as nothing compared with the hoards of specie and bullion ~~which~~ that are ~~known to be~~ stored in the vaults below, which the lowest estimate values at three millions sterling and the highest I will not say at what figure. Patriotism ~~ought~~ need not be so

① I have read in different ~~writers~~ works that the stone was valued at £200.000 and also that its value was depreciated to the extent of £1.000.000 by the act of Fath Ali Shah; statements from which it is difficult to strike out a mean of truth.

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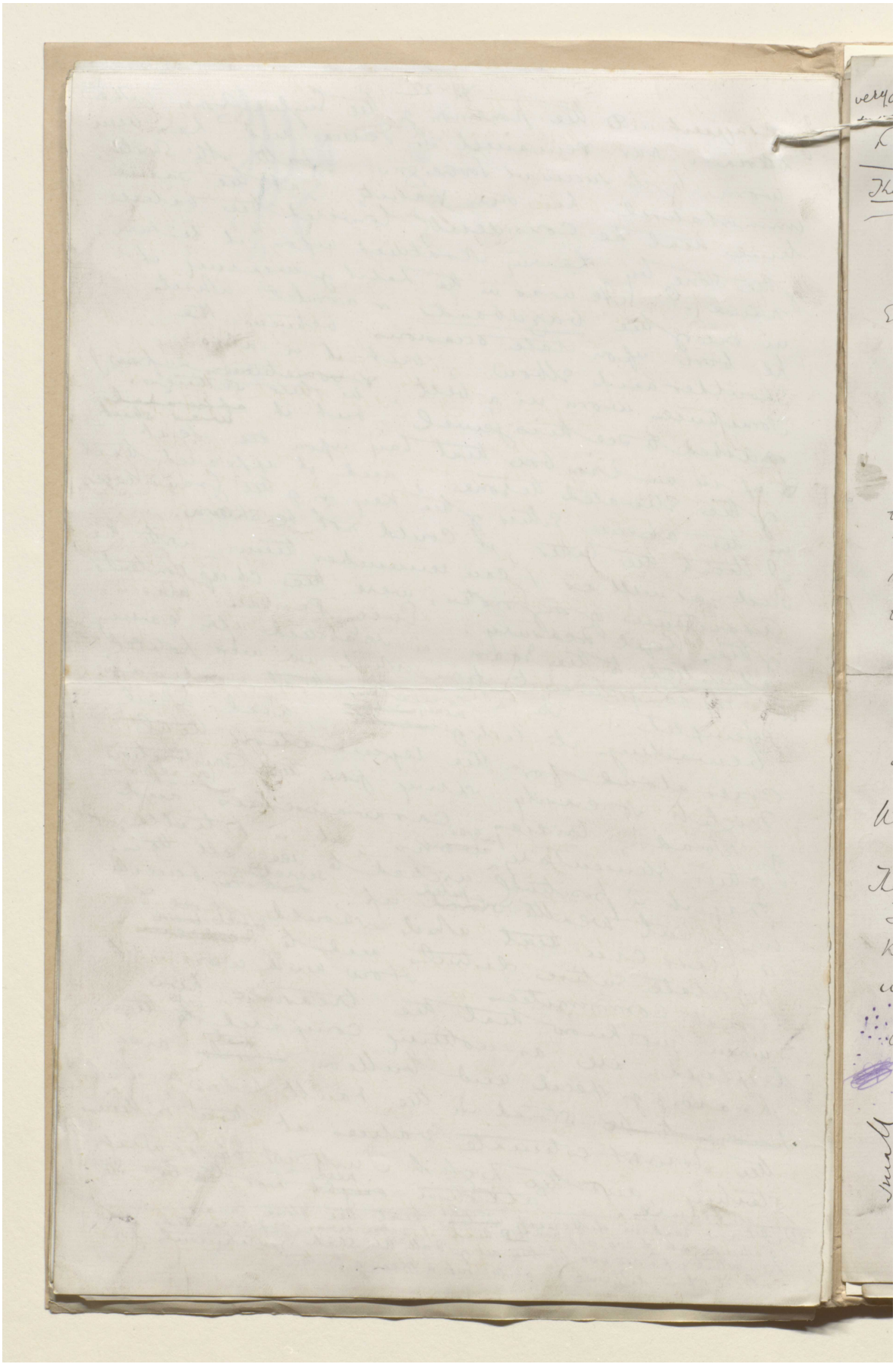

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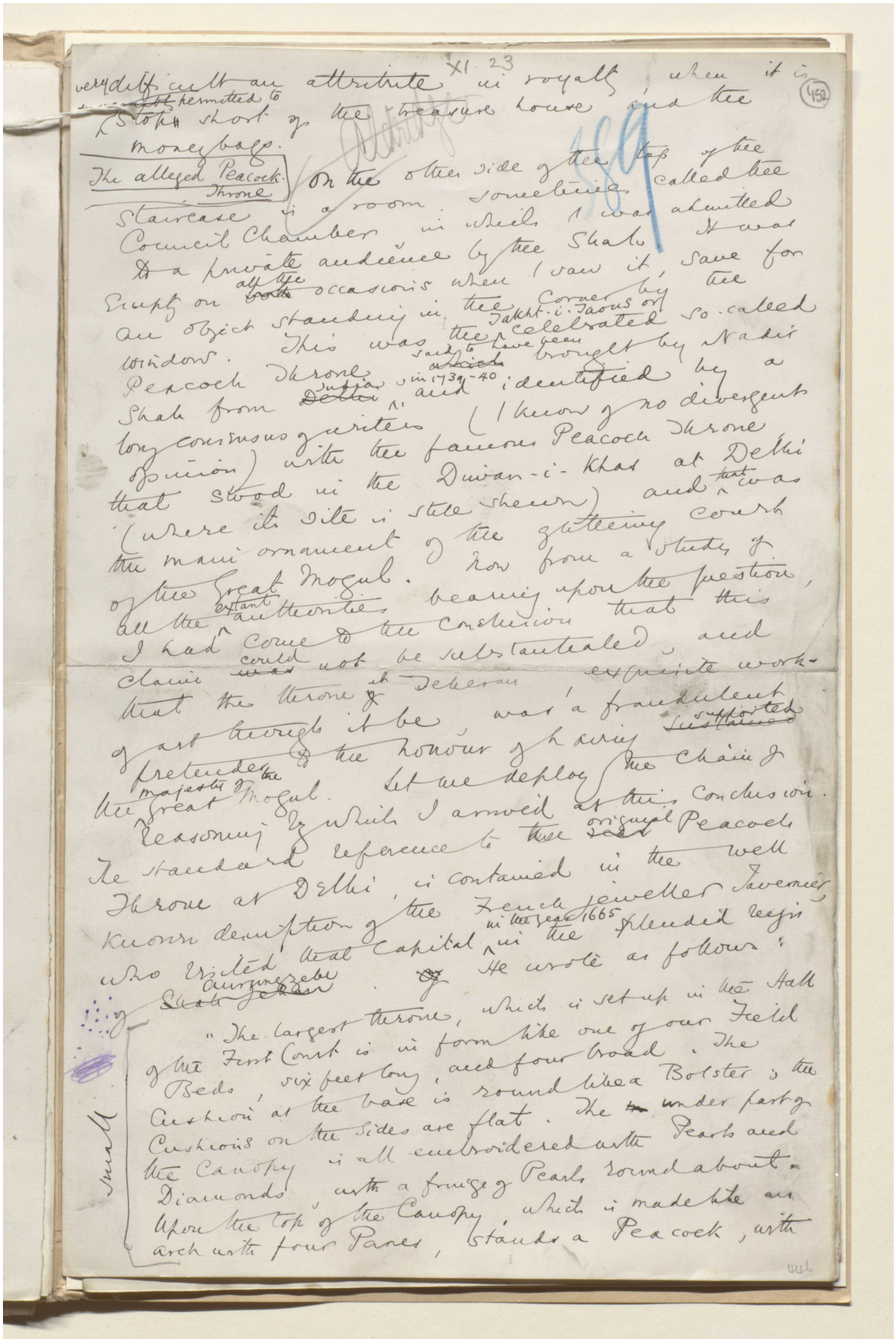
XI. 23

(452)



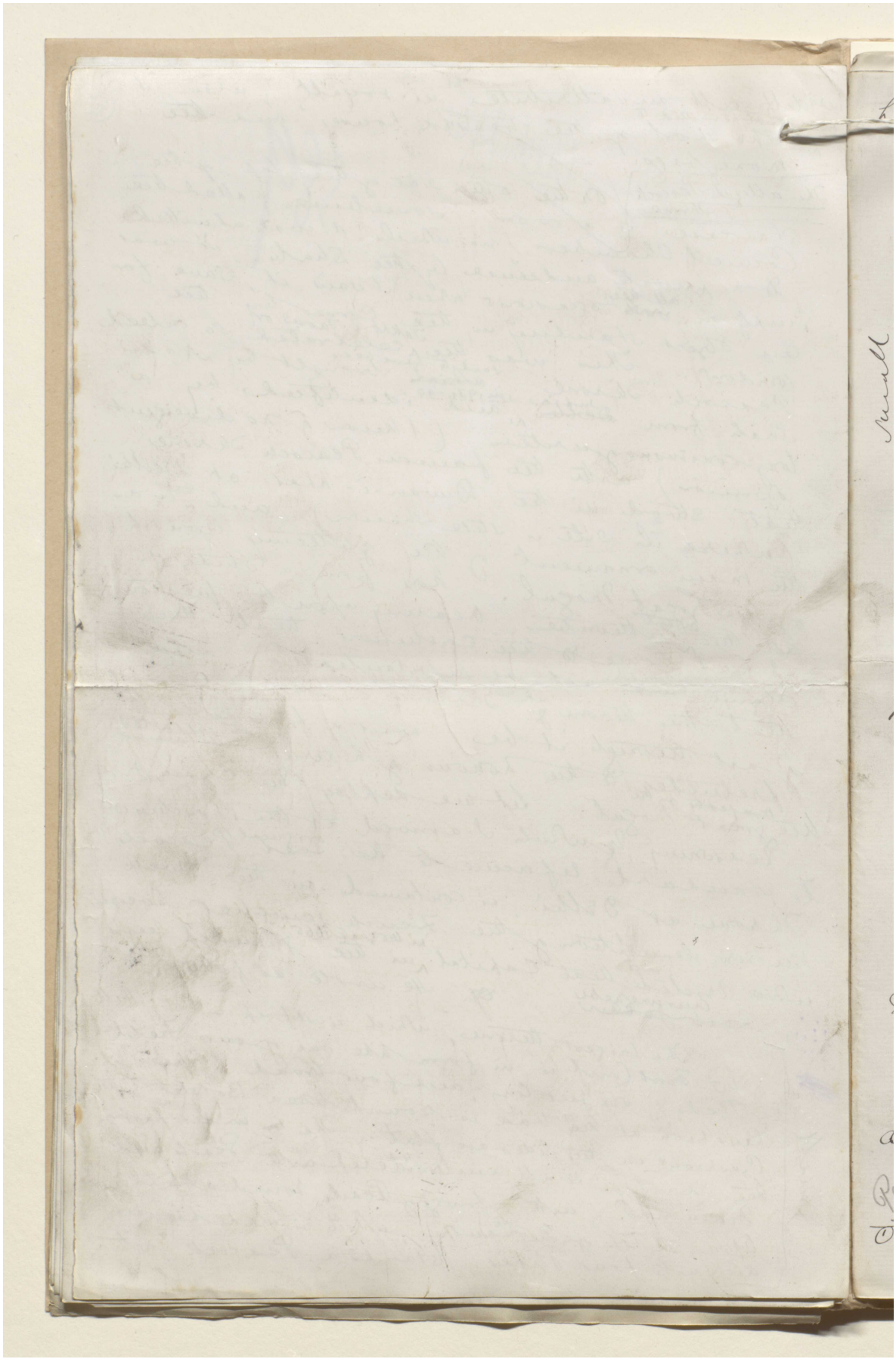
very difficult an attribute in royalty, when it is permitted to stop short of the treasure house and the money bags.

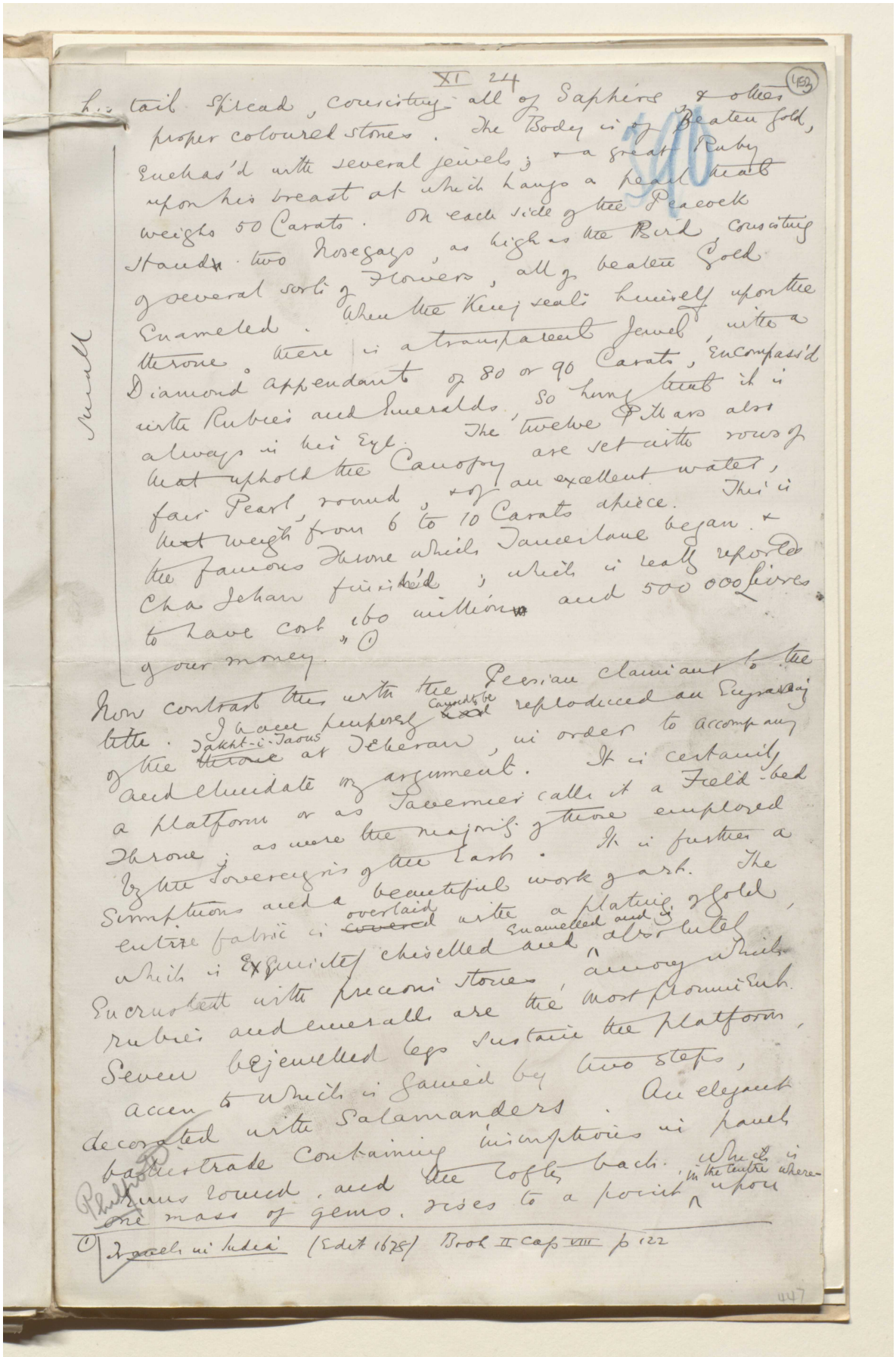
The alleged Peacock Throne

On the other side of the top of the staircase is a room sometimes called the Council Chamber, in which I was admitted to a private audience by the Shah. It was empty on all the occasions when I saw it, save for an object standing in the corner by the window. This was the Takht-i-Taous or celebrated so-called Peacock Throne said to have been brought by Nadir Shah from India in 1739-40 and identified by a long consensus of writers (I know of no divergent opinion) with the famous Peacock Throne that stood in the Diwan-i-Khas at Delhi (where its site is still shewn) and that was the main ornament of the glittering court of the Great Mogul. Now from a study of all the extant authorities bearing upon the question, I had come to the conclusion that this claim could not be substantiated, and that the throne at Teheran, exquisite work of art though it be, was a fraudulent pretender to the honour of having supported the majesty of the Great Mogul. Let me deploy the chain of reasoning by which I arrived at this conclusion. The standard reference to the original Peacock Throne at Delhi, is contained in the well known description of the French jeweller Tavernier, who visited that capital in the year 1665 in the splendid reign of Aurungzebe. He wrote as follows:

small

"The largest throne, which is set up in the Hall of the First Court is in form like one of our Field Beds, six feet long, and four broad. The Cushion at the base is round like a Bolster; the Cushions on the sides are flat. The under part of the Canopy is all embroidered with Pearls and Diamonds, with a fringe of Pearls round about. Upon the top of the Canopy, which is made like an arch with four Panes, stands a Peacock, with





XI 24 (453)

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his tail spread, consisting all of Saphirs & other proper coloured stones. The Body is of Beaten Gold, Enchas'd with several jewels; & a great Ruby upon his breast at which hangs a pearl that weighs 50 Carats. On each side of the Peacock stands two Nosegays, as high as the Bird, consisting of several sorts of Flowers, all of beaten Gold Enameled. When the King seats himself upon the throne, there is a transparent Jewel, with a Diamond appendant of 80 or 90 Carats, Encompass'd with Rubies and Emeralds, so hung that it is always in his Eye. The twelve Pillars also that uphold the Canopy are set with rows of fair Pearl, round, & of an excellent water, that weigh from 6 to 10 Carats apiece. This is the famous Throne which Tamerlane began & Cha Jehan finish'd; which is really reported to have cost 160 millions and 500 000 Livres of our money." (1)

Small

Now contrast this with the Persian claimant to the title. I have purposely caused to be reproduced an Engraving of the Takht-i-Taous at Teheran, in order to accompany and elucidate my argument. It is certainly a platform or as Tavernier calls it a Field-bed Throne; as were the majority of those employed by the Sovereigns of the East. It is further a Sumptuous and a beautiful work of art. The entire fabric is overlaid with a plating of Gold, which is Exquisitely chiselled and enamelled and is absolutely Encrusted with precious stones, among which rubies and emeralds are the most prominent. Seven bejewelled legs sustain the platform, accen to which is gained by two steps, decorated with Salamanders. An elegant balustrade containing inscriptions in panels runs round, and the lofty back, which is one mass of gems, rises to a point in the centre where upon

(1) Travels in India (Edit 1678) Book II Cap VIII p 122

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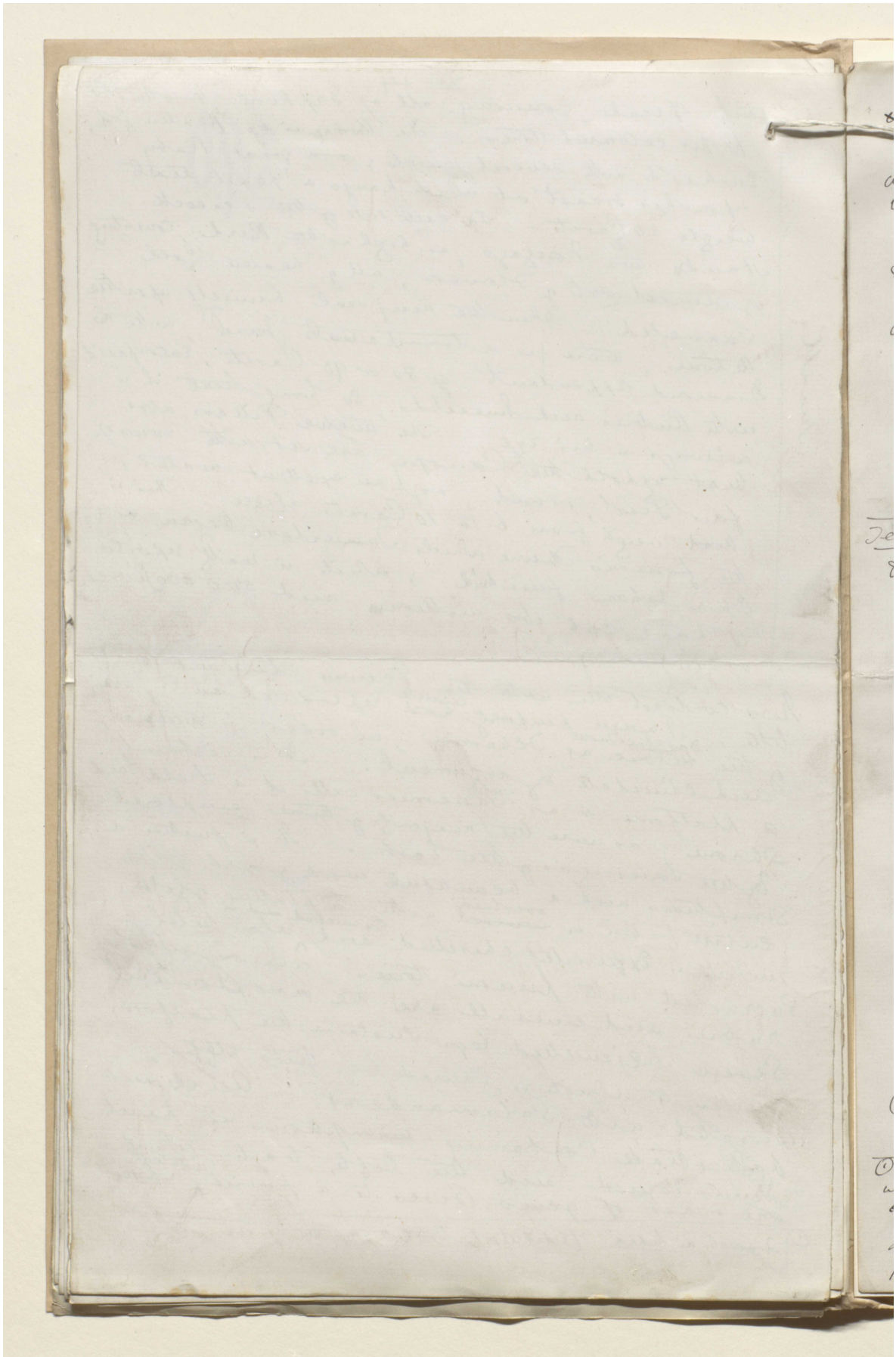

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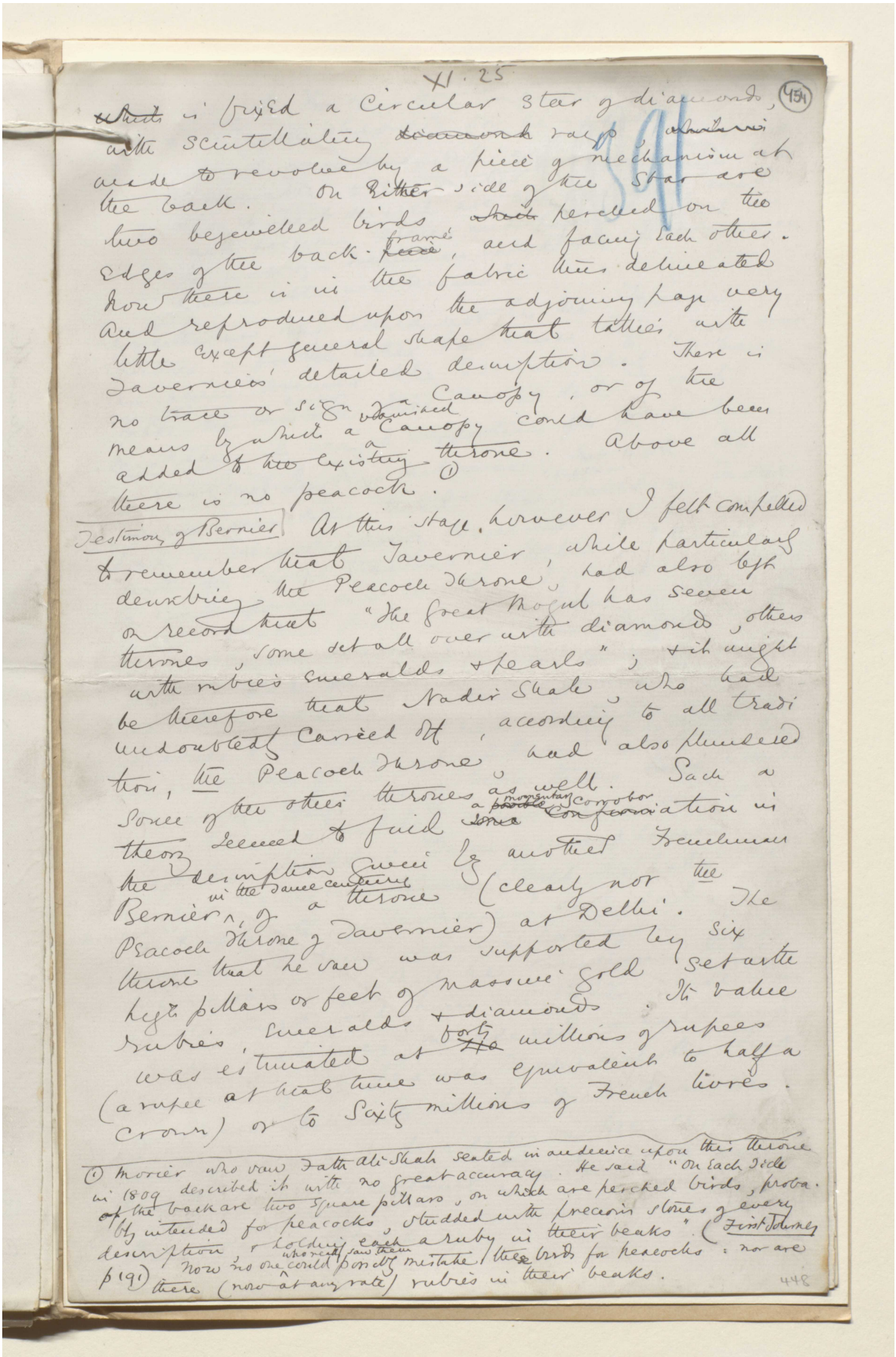

XI. 25

(454)

~~which~~ is fixed a circular star of diamonds, with scintillating ~~diamond~~ rays, ~~which is~~ made to revolve by a piece of mechanism at the back. On either side of the star are two bejewelled birds ~~which~~ perched on the edges of the back-~~piece~~ frame, and facing each other. Now there is in the fabric thus delineated and reproduced upon the adjoining page very little except general shape that tallies with Tavernier's detailed description. There is no trace or sign of a canopy, or of the means by which a vanished canopy could have been added to the existing throne. Above all there is no peacock.(1)

Testimony of Bernier

At this stage, however I felt compelled to remember that Tavernier, while particularly describing the Peacock Throne, had also left on record that "The Great Mogul has seven thrones, some set all over with diamonds, others with rubies emeralds & pearls"; & it might be therefore that Nadir Shah, who had undoubtedly carried off, according to all tradition, the Peacock Throne, had also plundered some of the other thrones as well. Such a theory seemed to find ~~some~~ a momentary corroboration in the description given by another Frenchman Bernier in the same century, of a throne (clearly not the Peacock Throne of Tavernier) at Delhi. The throne that he saw was supported by six high pillars or feet of massive gold set with rubies, emeralds & diamonds. Its value was estimated at ~~Ho~~ forty millions of rupees (a rupee at that time was equivalent to half a crown) or to sixty millions of French livres.

(1) Morier who saw Fath Ali Shah seated in audience upon this throne in 1809 described it with no great accuracy. He said "On each side of the back are two square pillars, on which are perched birds, probably intended for peacocks, studded with precious stones of every description, & holding each a ruby in their beaks". (First Journey p 191) Now no one who really saw them could possibly mistake these birds for peacocks: nor are there (now at any rate) rubies in their beaks.

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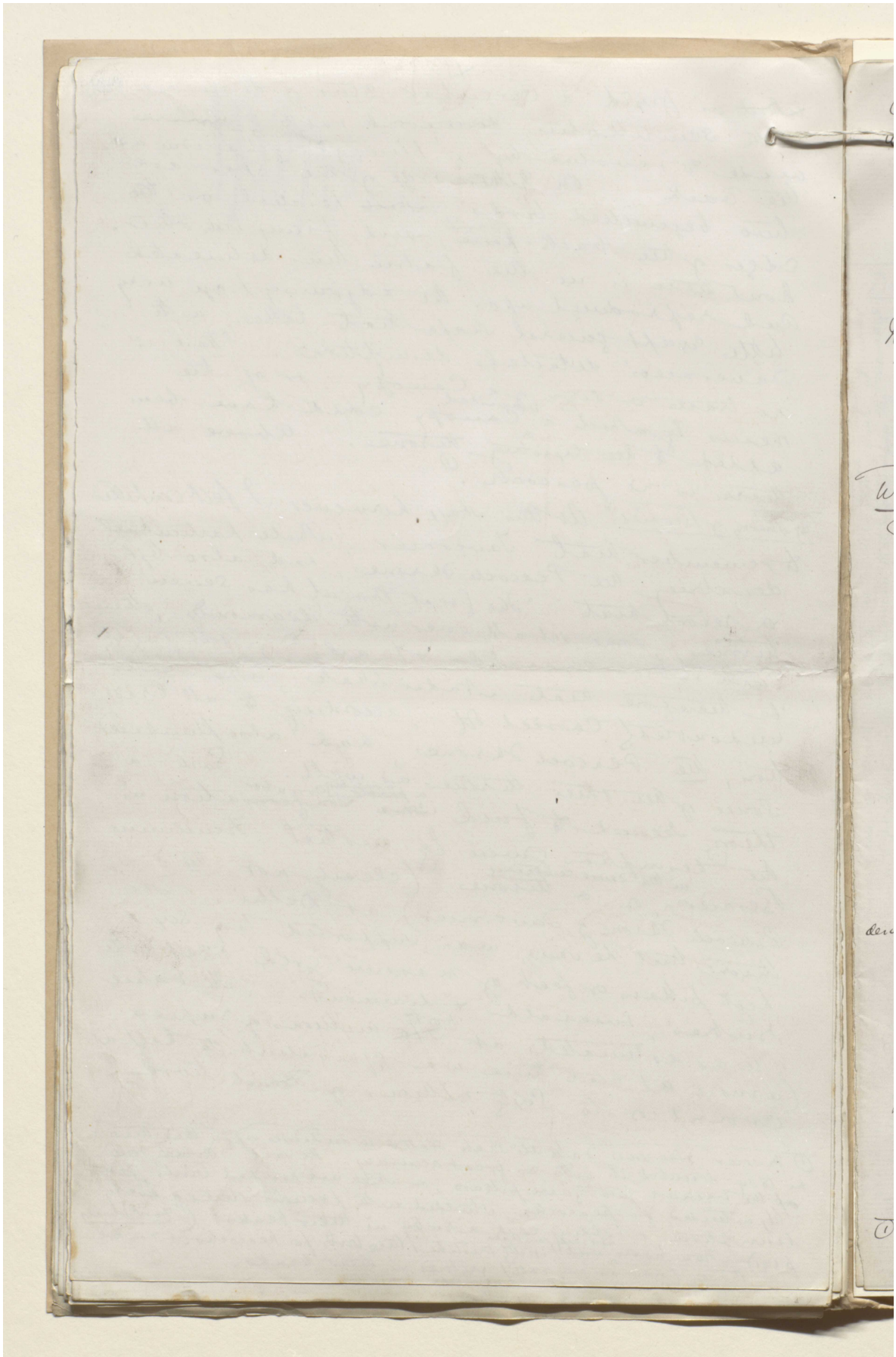

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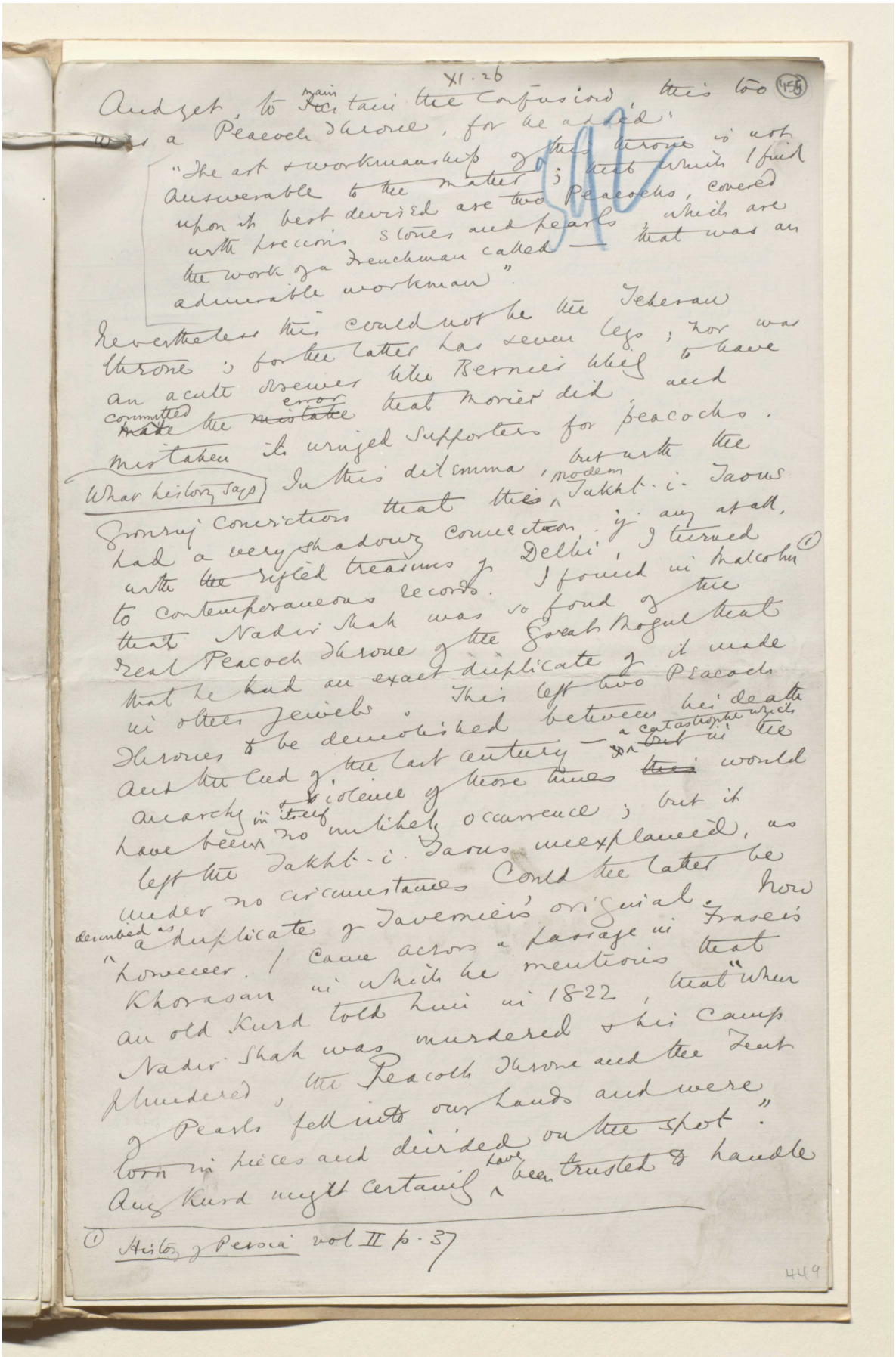

XI. 26

(455)

And yet, to maintain the confusion, this too was a Peacock throne, for he added:

"The art & workmanship of this throne is not answerable to the matter; that which I find upon it best devised are two Peacocks, covered with precious stones and pearls, which are the work of a Frenchman called — that was an admirable workman".

Nevertheless this could not be the Teheran throne; for the latter has seven legs; nor was an acute observer like Bernier likely to have committed the error that Morier did and mistaken its winged supporters for peacocks.

What history says

In this dilemma, but with the Gronruj conviction that this modern Takht-i-Taous had a very shadowy connection, if any at all, with the rifled treasures of Delhi, I turned to contemporaneous records. I found in Malcolm[1] that Nadir Shah was so fond of the real Peacock throne of the Great Mogul that that he had an exact duplicate of it made in other jewels. This left two Peacock thrones to be demolished between his death and the end of the last century — a catastrophe which in the anarchy & violence of those times would have been in itself no unlikely occurrence; but it left the Takht-i-Taous unexplained, as under no circumstances could the latter be described as a duplicate of Tavernier's original. Now however, I came across a passage in Fraser's Khorasan in which he mentions that an old Kurd told him in 1822, that "when Nadir Shah was murdered & his camp plundered, the Peacock throne and the Tent of Pearls fell into our hands and were torn in pieces and divided on the spot". Any Kurd might certainly have been trusted to handle

(1) History of Persia vol II p. 37

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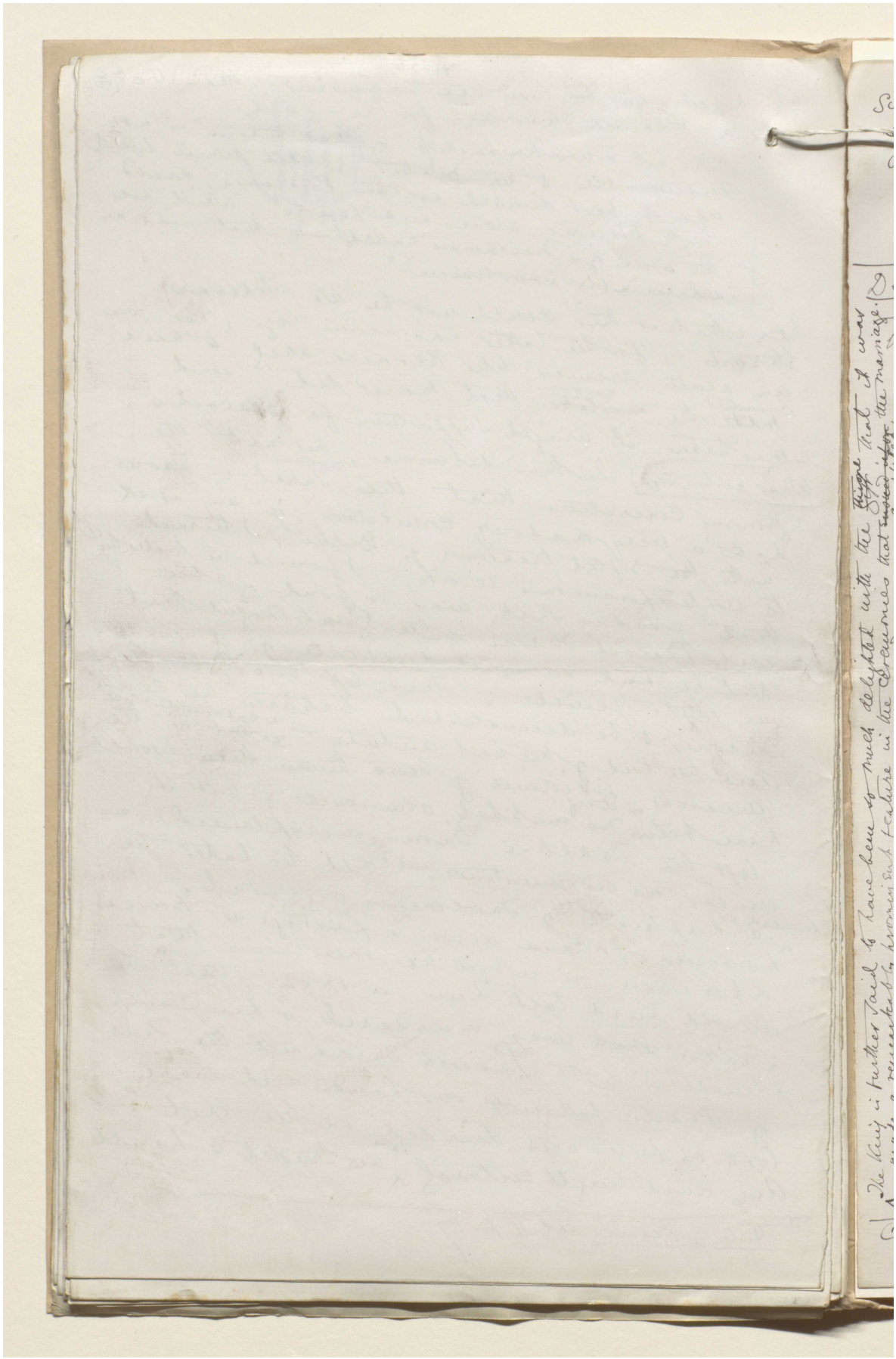

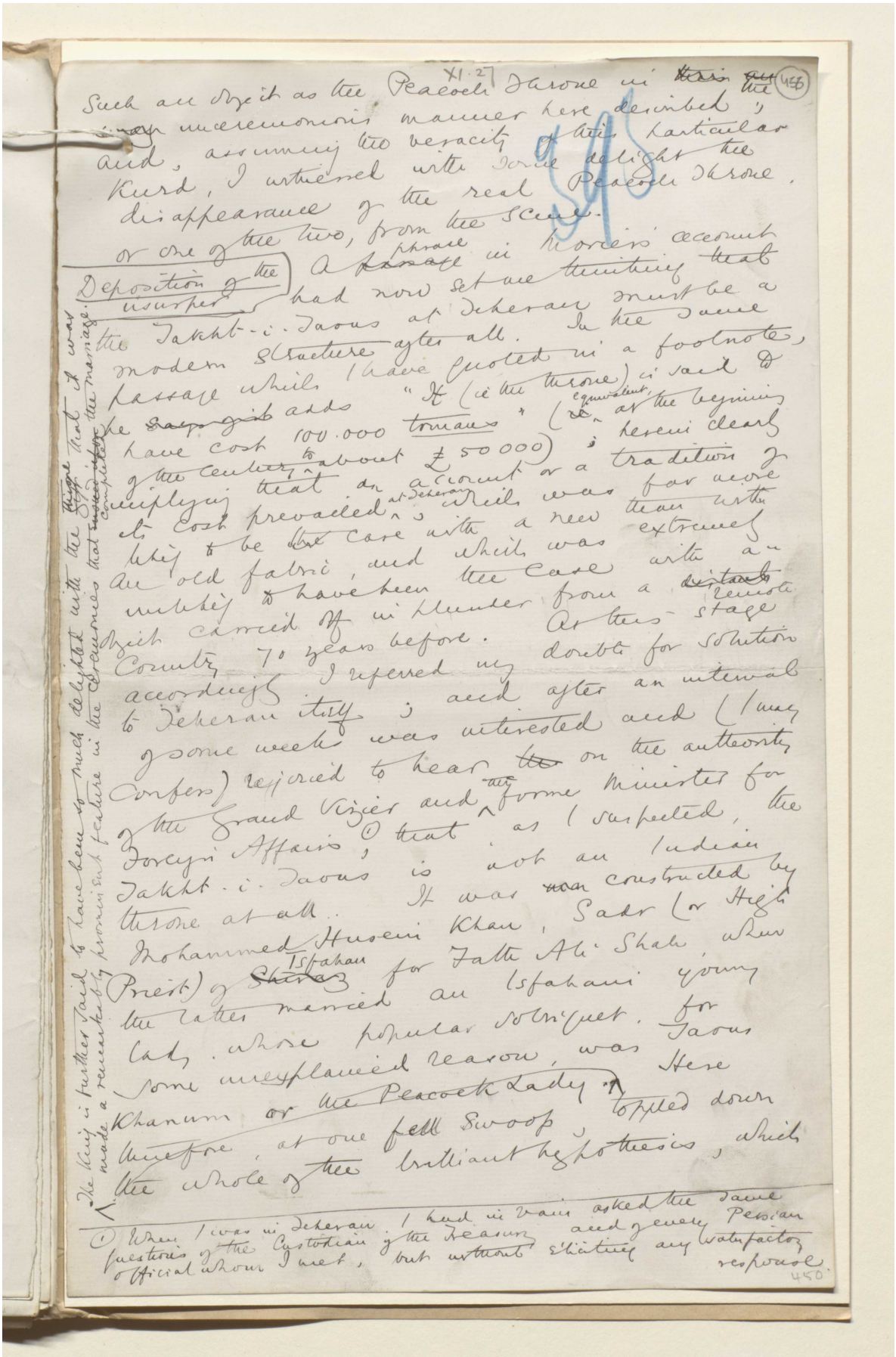

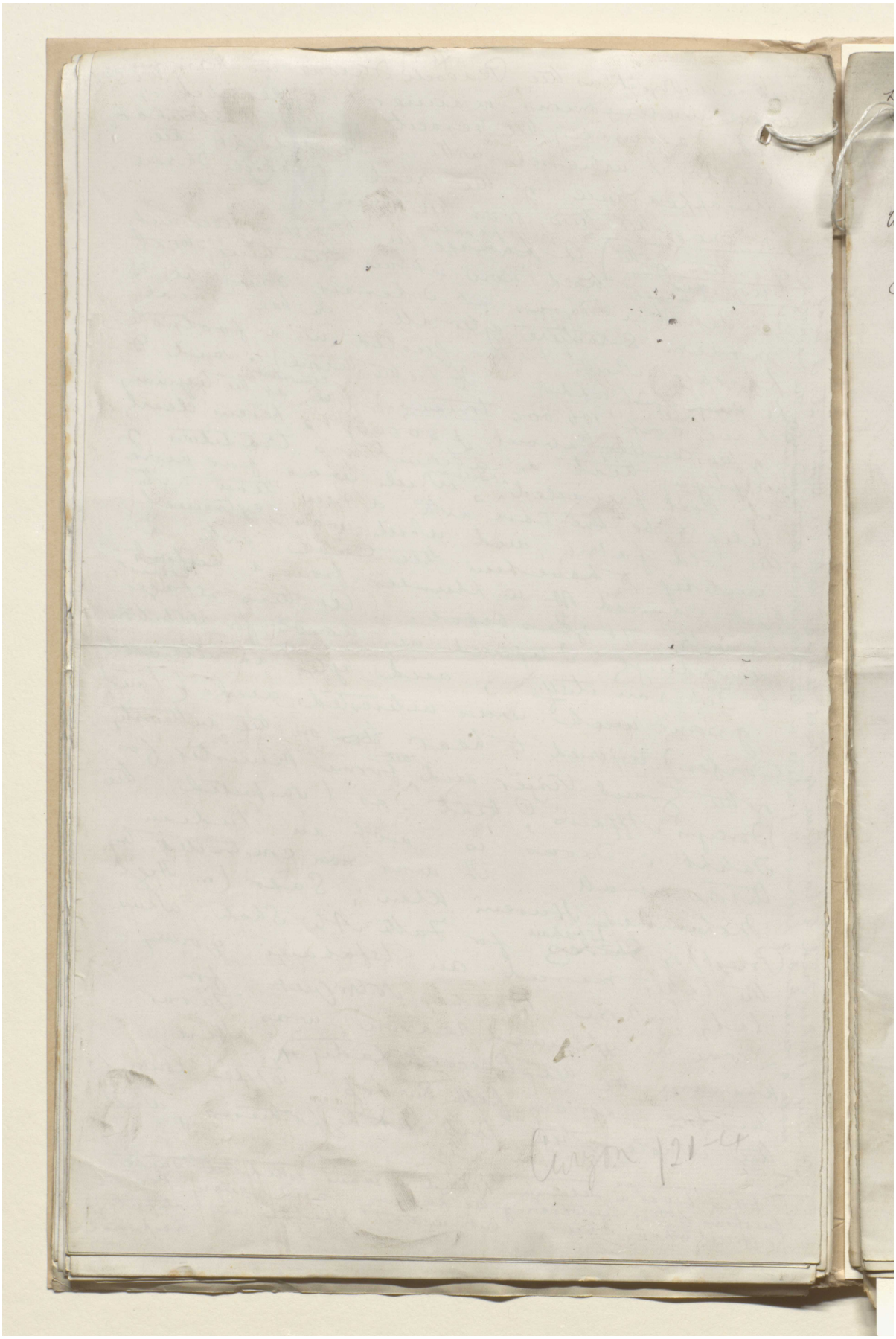

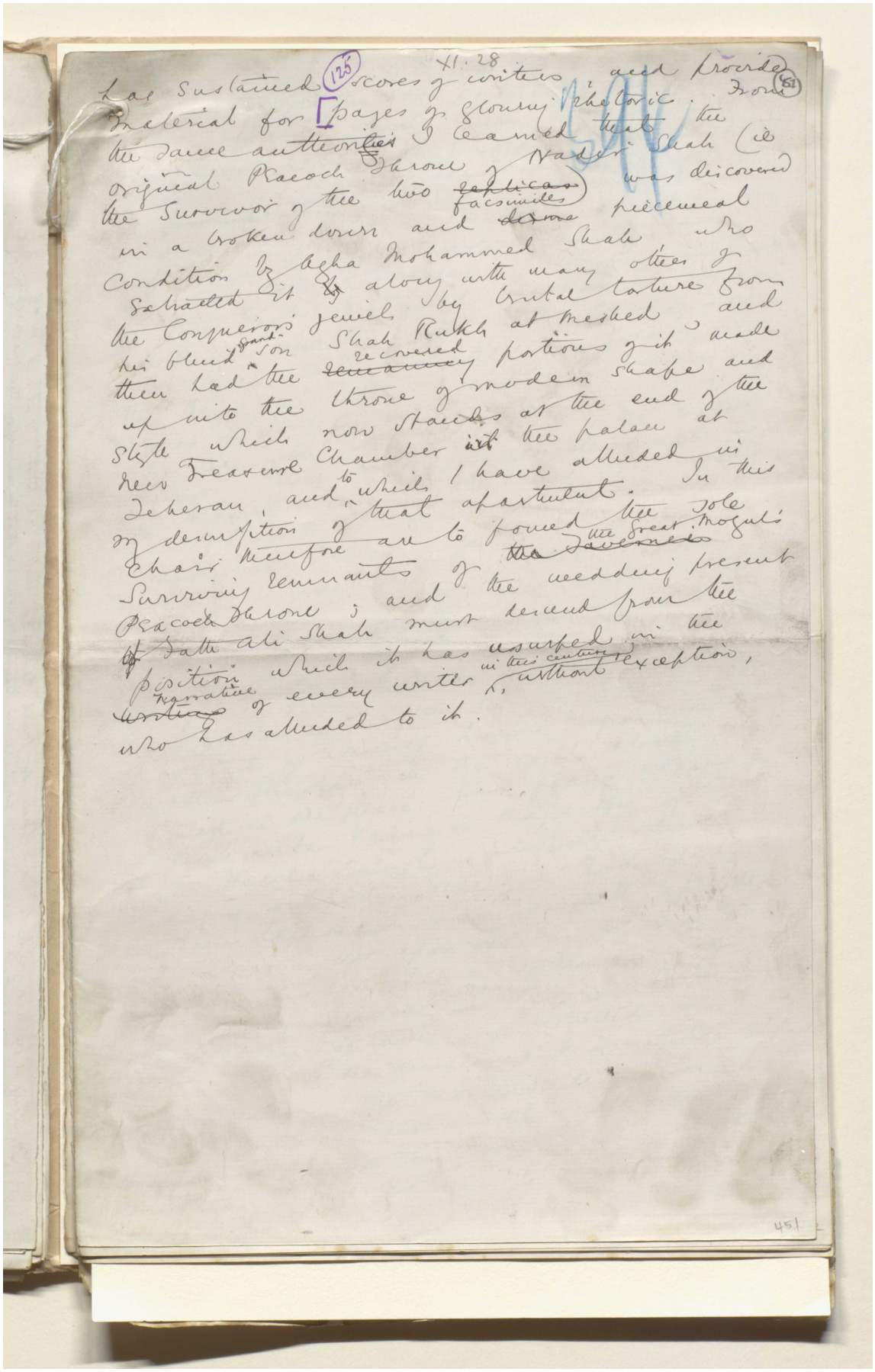

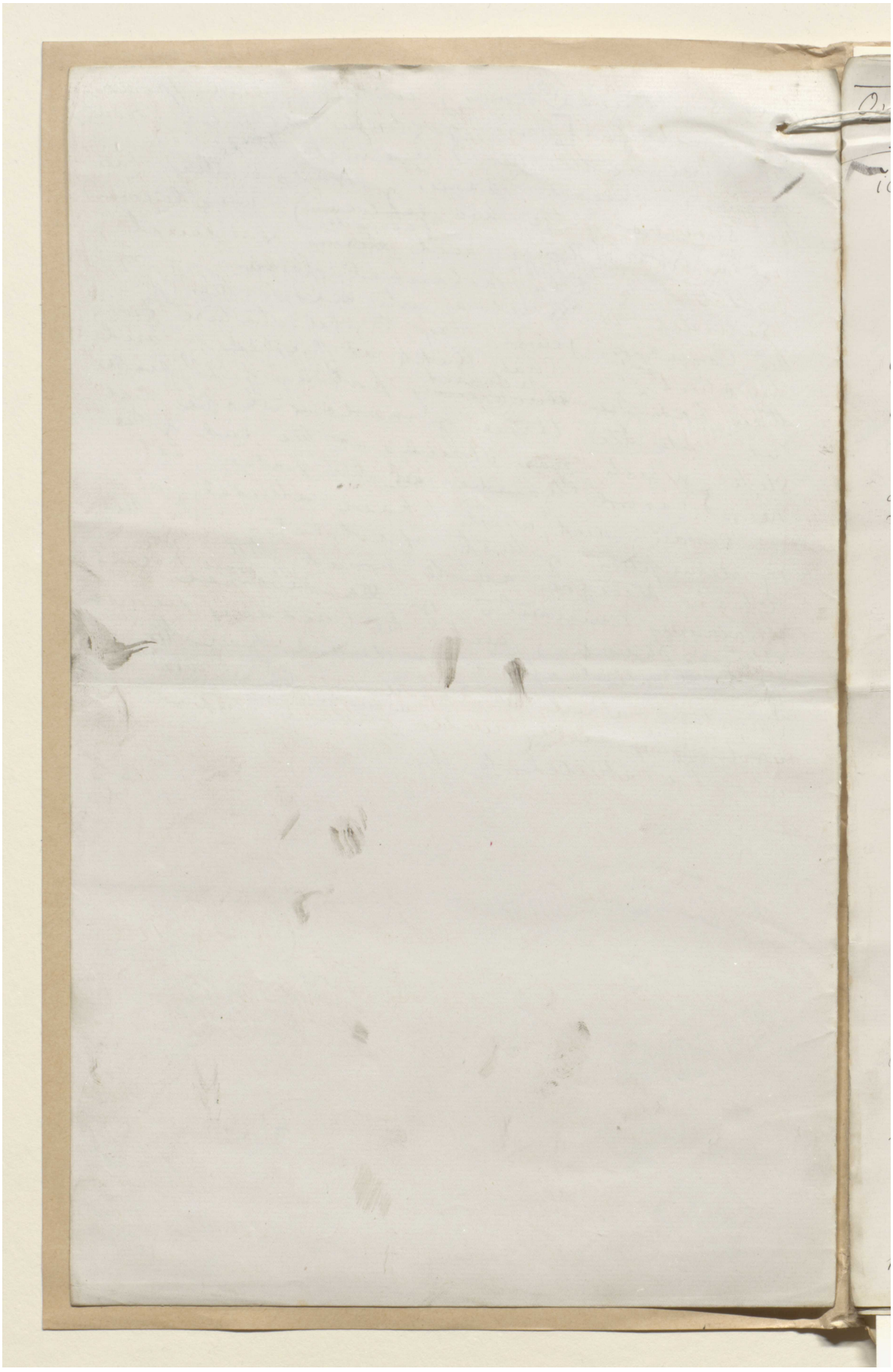

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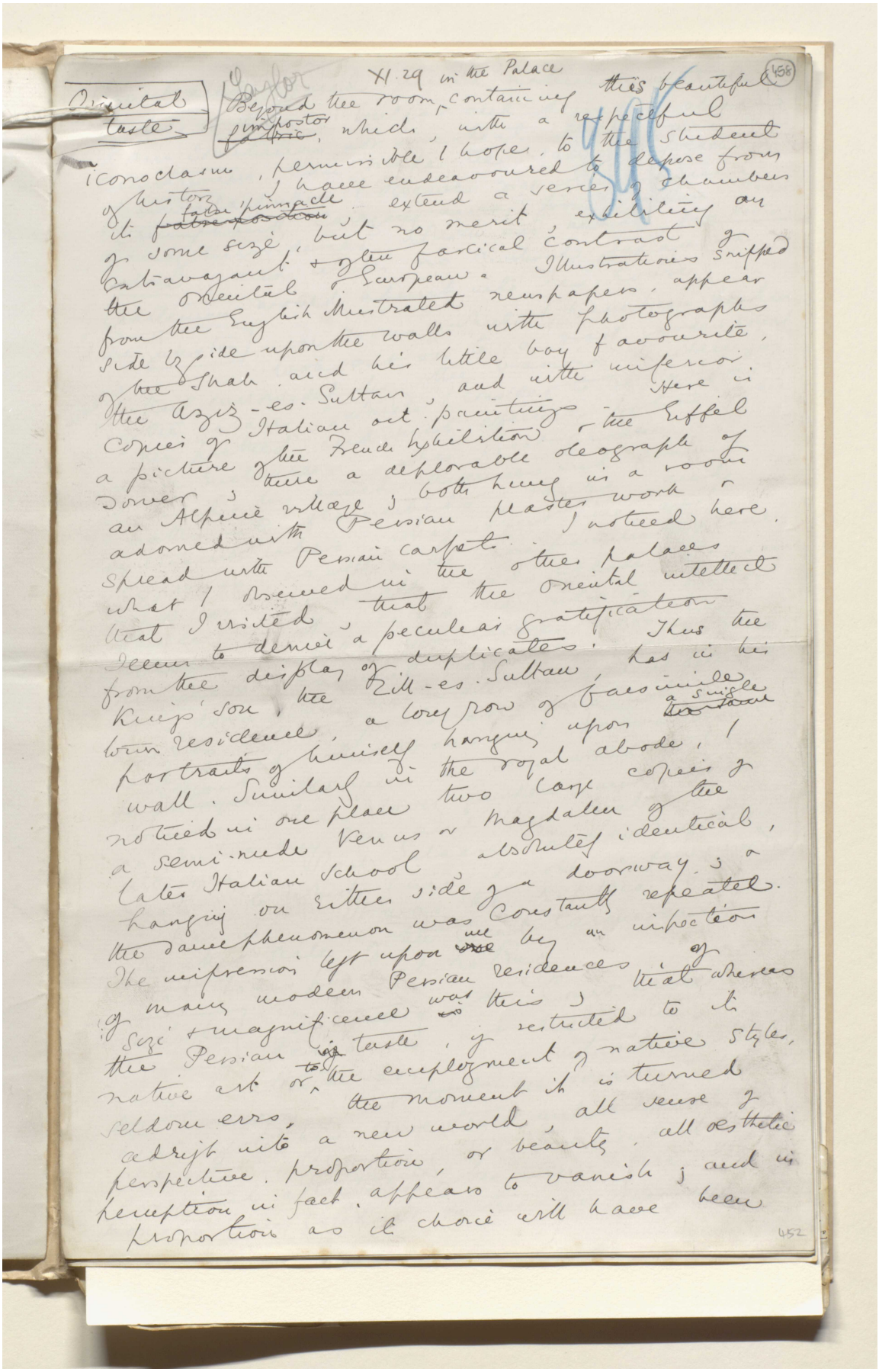

Oriental taste

XI.29 in the Palace

Beyond the room containing this beautiful impostor, which, with a respectful iconoclasm, permissible I hope, to the student of history, I have endeavoured to depose from its false pinnacle, extend a series of chambers of some size, but no merit, exhibiting an extravagant & often farcical contrast of the Oriental & European. Illustrations snipped from the English illustrated newspapers, appear side by side upon the walls with photographs of the Shah and his little boy favourite, the Aziz-es-Sultan, and with inferior copies of Italian oil paintings. Here is a picture of the French exhibition & the Eiffel Tower; there a deplorable oleograph of an Alpine village; both hung in a room adorned with Persian plaster work & spread with Persian carpets. I noticed here what I observed in the other palaces that I visited, that the Oriental intellect seems to derive a peculiar gratification from the display of duplicates. Thus the King's son, the Zill-es-Sultan, has in his town residence, a long row of facsimile portraits of himself hanging upon a single wall. Similarly in the royal abode, I noticed in one place two large copies of a semi-nude Venus or Magdalen of the later Italian school, absolutely identical, hanging on either side of a doorway; & the same phenomenon was constantly repeated. The impression left upon me by an inspection of many modern Persian residences of size & magnificence was this; that whereas the Persian taste, if restricted to its native art or to the employment of native styles, seldom errs, the moment it is turned adrift into a new world, all sense of perspective, proportion, or beauty, all aesthetic perception in fact, appears to vanish; and in proportion as its choice will have been

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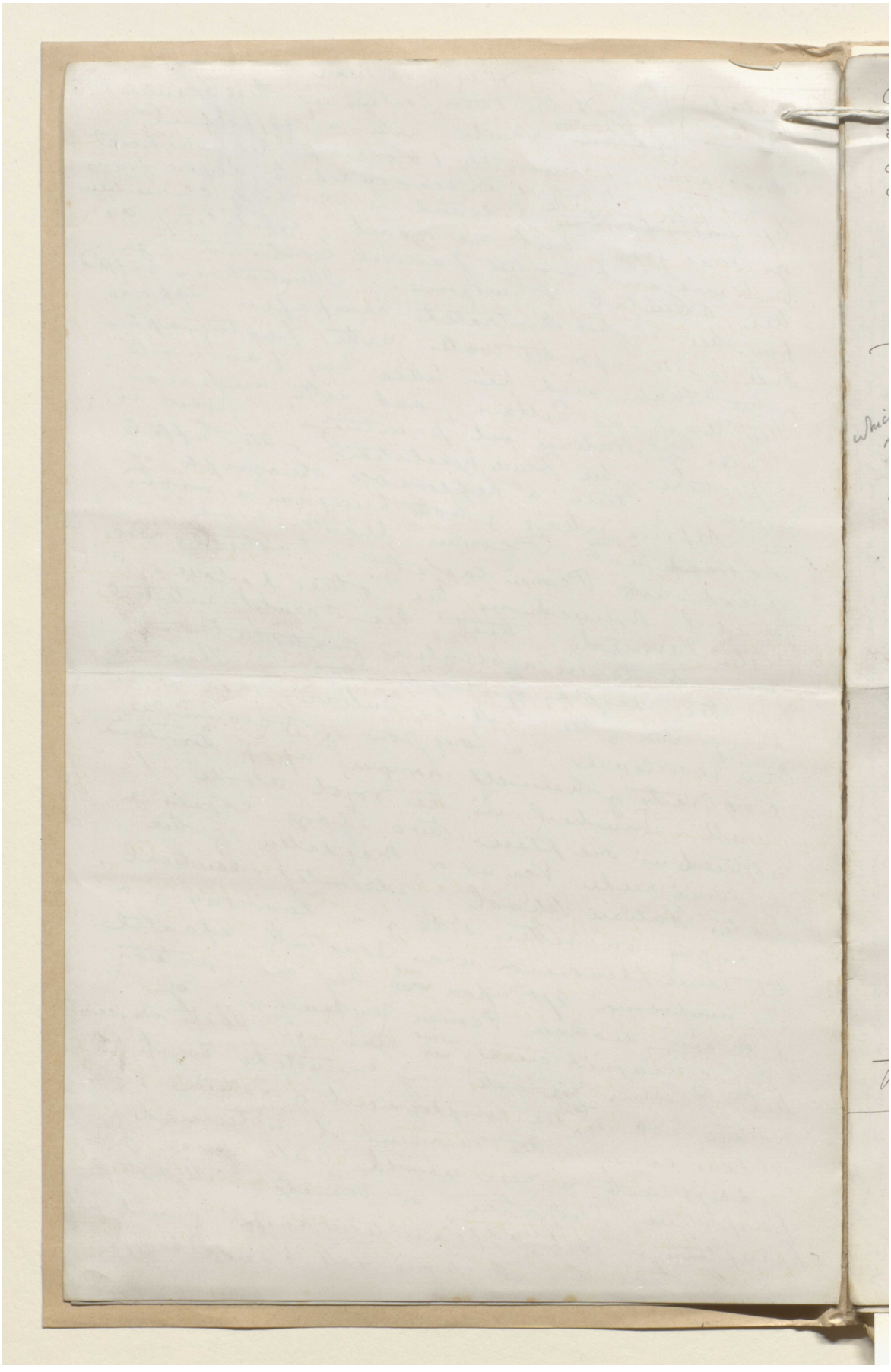
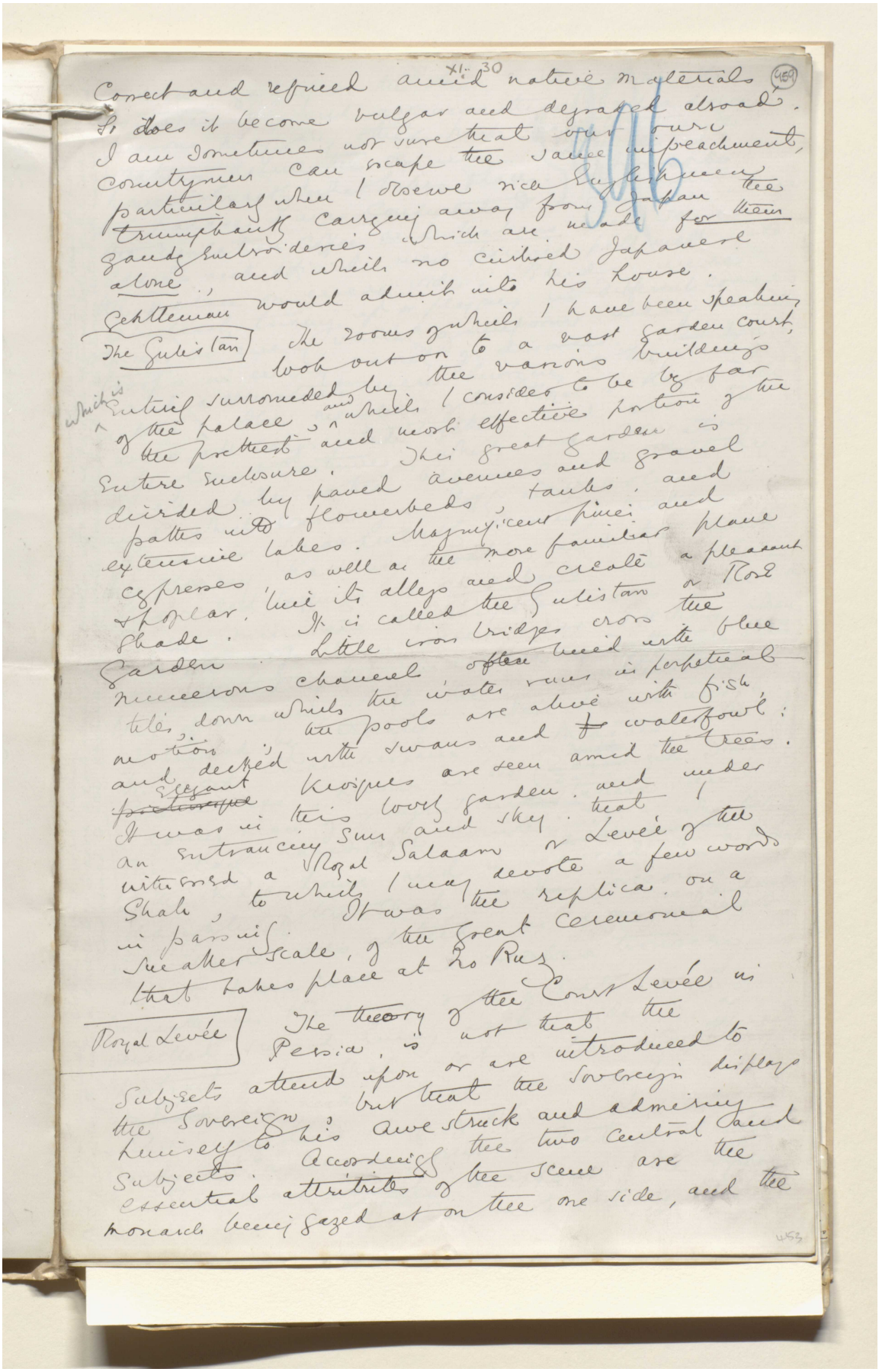


XI. 30 (459)



Correct and refined amid native materials
So does it become vulgar and degraded abroad.
I am sometimes not sure that our own
countrymen can escape the same impeachment,
particularly when I observe rich Englishmen
triumphantly carrying away from Japan the
gaudy embroideries which are made for them
alone, and which no civilised Japanese
gentleman would admit into his house.

The Gulistan

The rooms of which I have been speaking
look out on to a vast garden court,
which is entirely surrounded by the various buildings
of the palace, and which I consider to be by far
the prettiest and most effective portion of the
entire enclosure. This great garden is
divided by paved avenues and gravel
paths into flowerbeds, tanks, and
extensive lakes. Magnificent pines and
cypresses, as well as the more familiar plane
& poplar, line its alleys and create a pleasant
shade. It is called the Gulistan or Rose
Garden. Little iron bridges cross the
numerous channels often lined with blue
tiles, down which the water runs in perpetual
motion; the pools are alive with fish
and decked with swans and waterfowl;
~~picturesque~~ elegant kiosques are seen amid the trees.
It was in this lovely garden, and under
an entrancing sun and sky, that I
witnessed a Royal Salaam or Levée of the
Shah, to which I may devote a few words
in passing. It was the replica, on a
smaller scale, of the great ceremonial
that takes place at No Ruz.

Royal Levée

The theory of the Court Levée in
Persia, is not that the
subjects attend upon or are introduced to
the Sovereign, but that the Sovereign displays
himself to his awe struck and admiring
subjects. Accordingly the two central and
essential attributes of the scene are the
monarch being gazed at on the one side, and the

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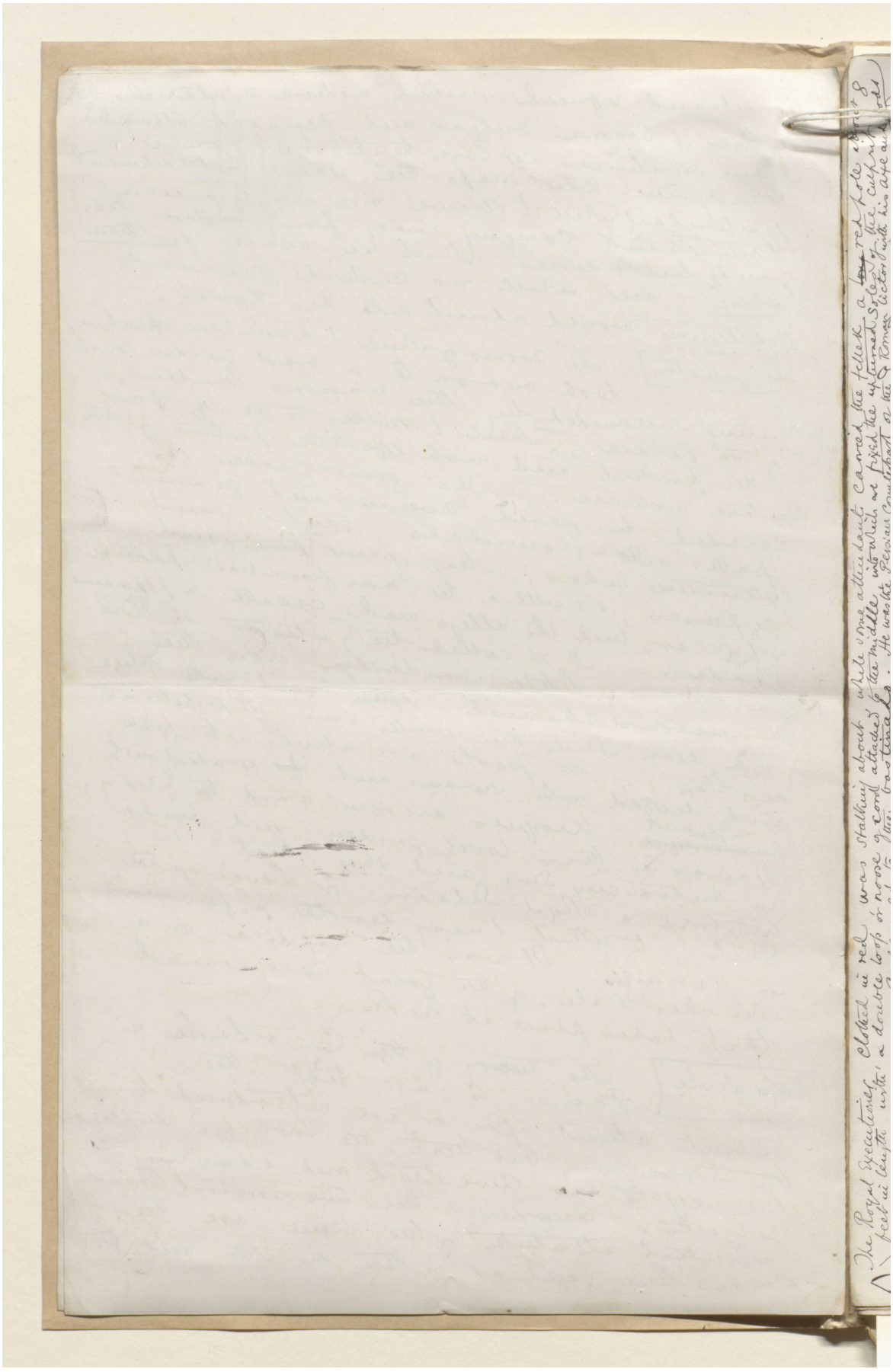

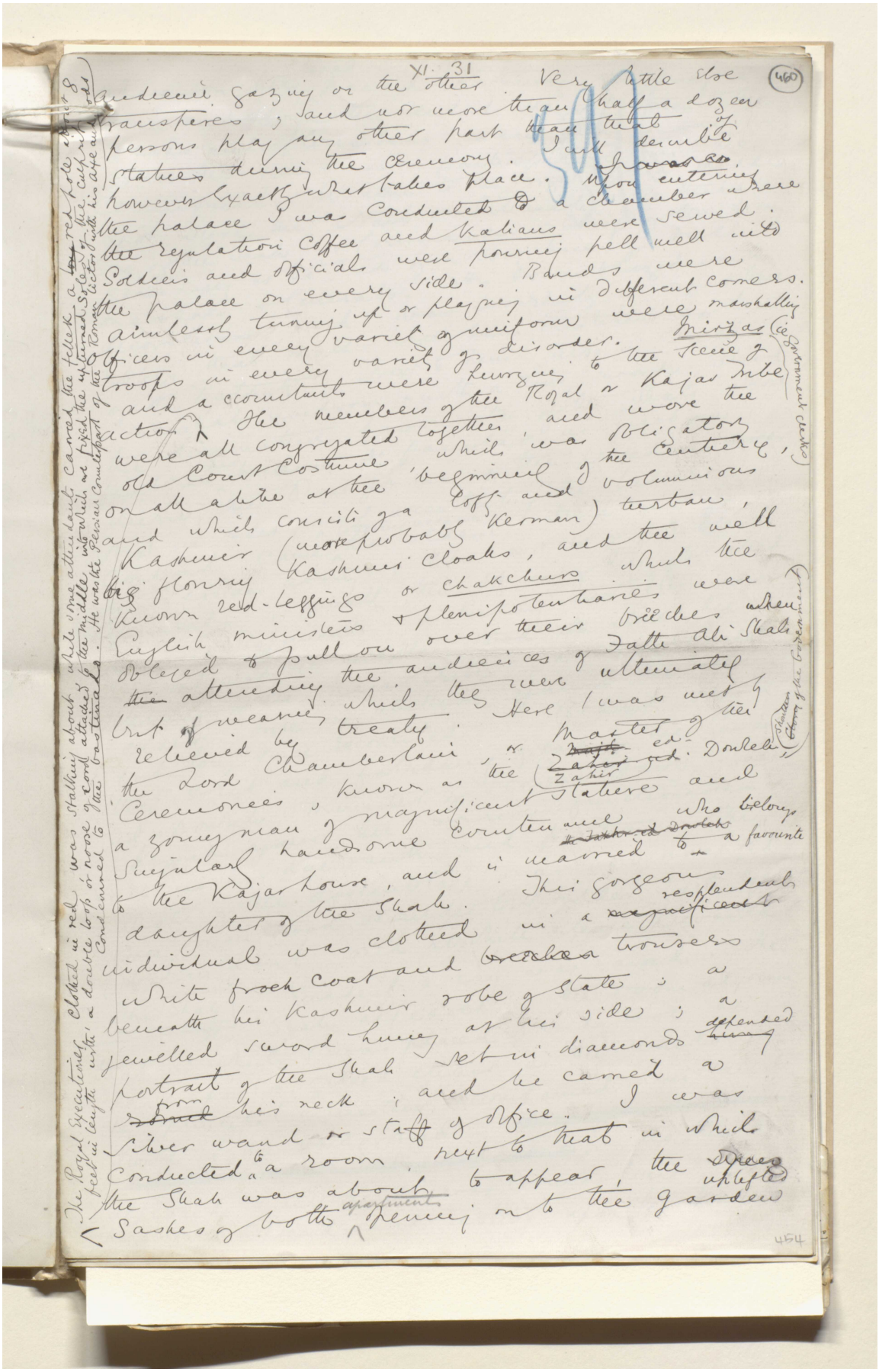

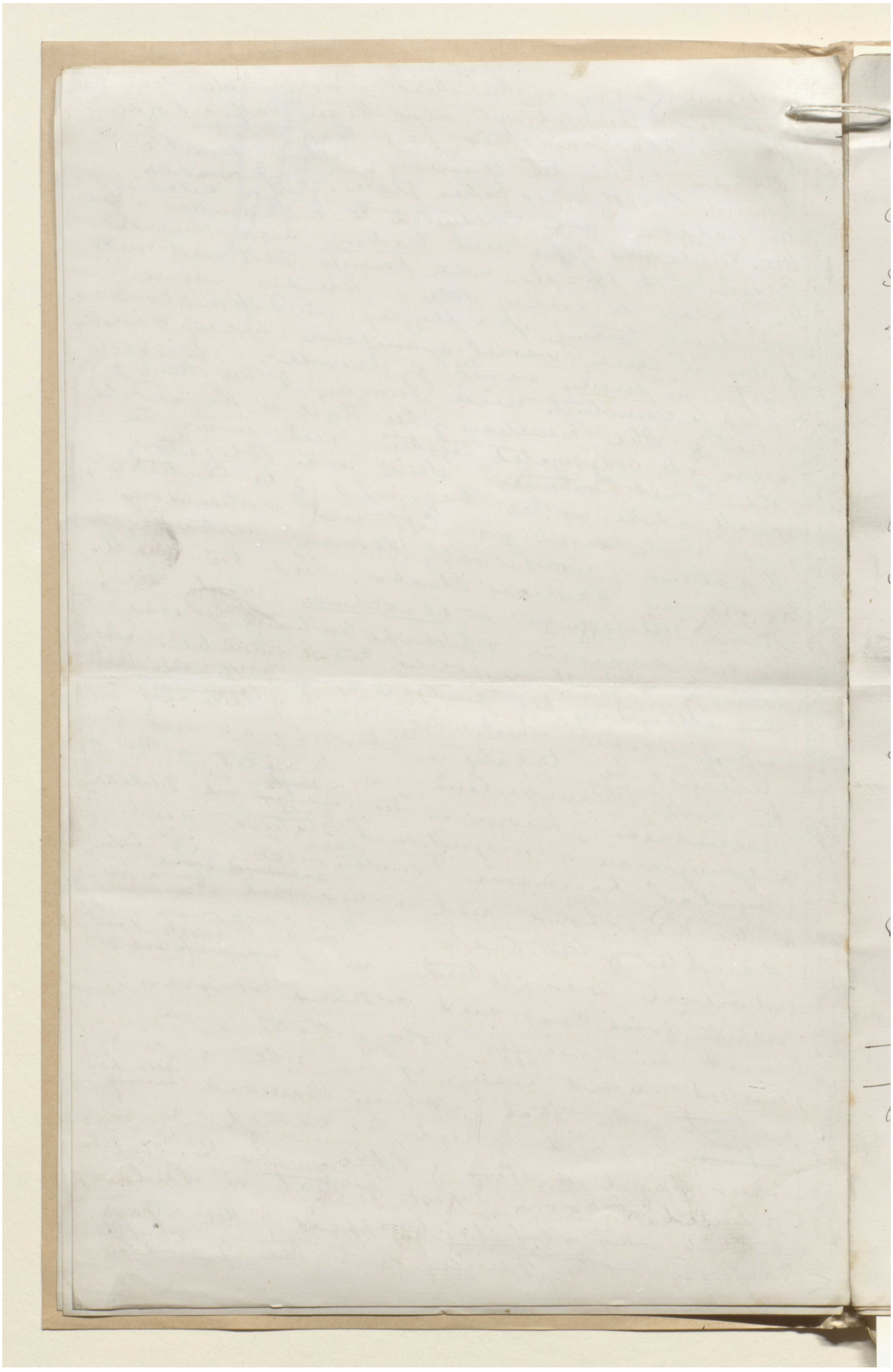

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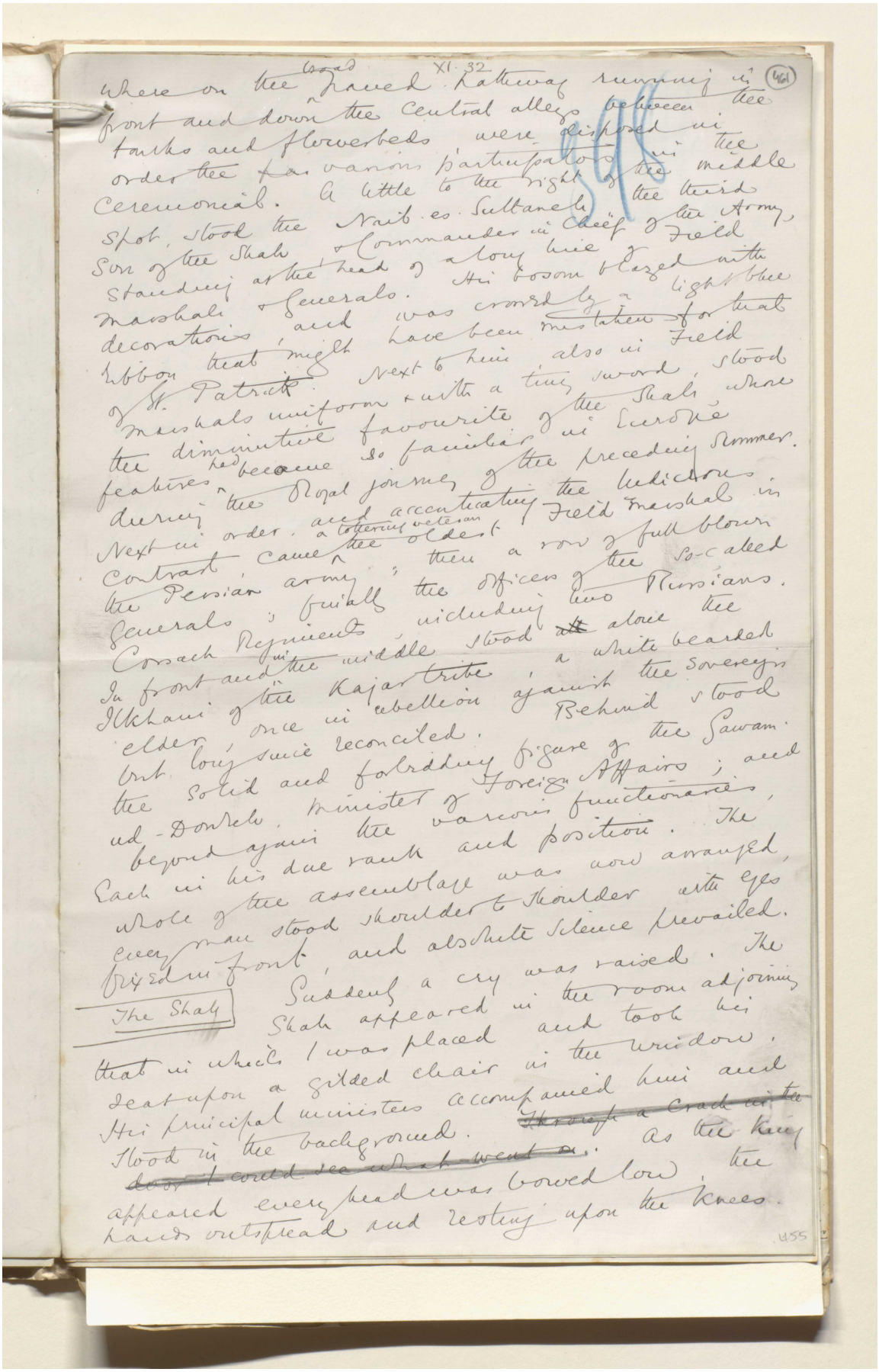
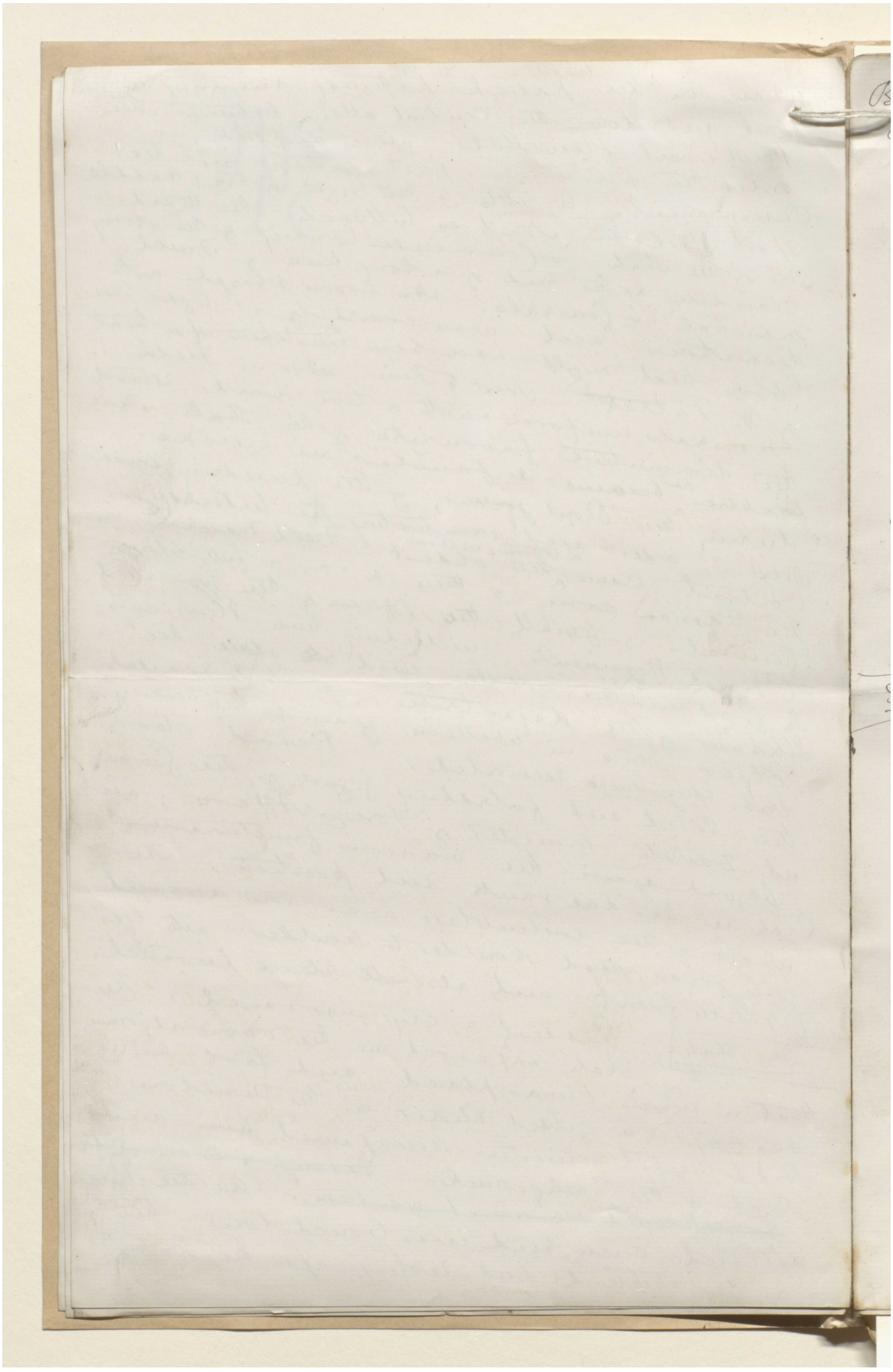


XI. 32

The Shah



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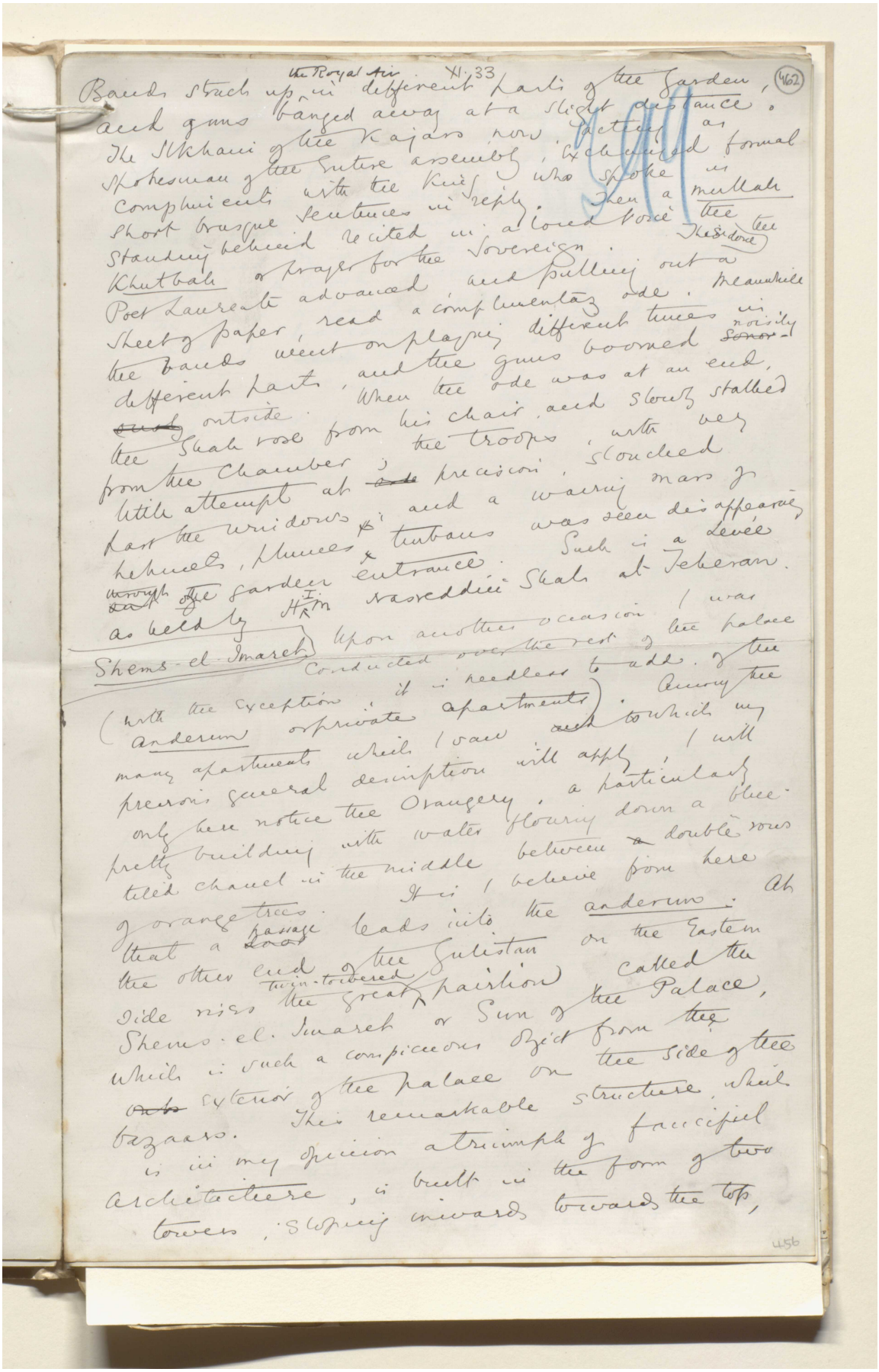

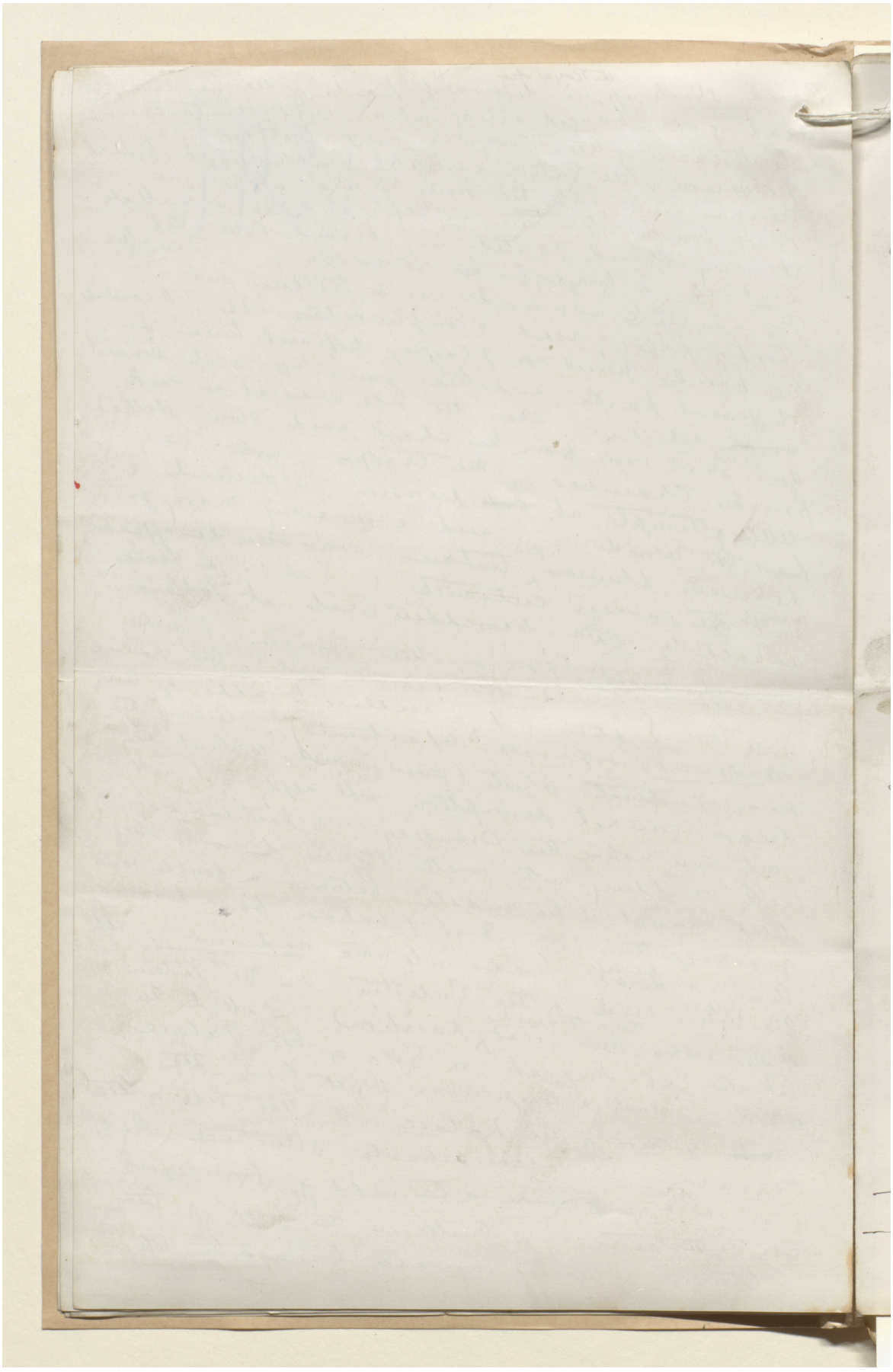

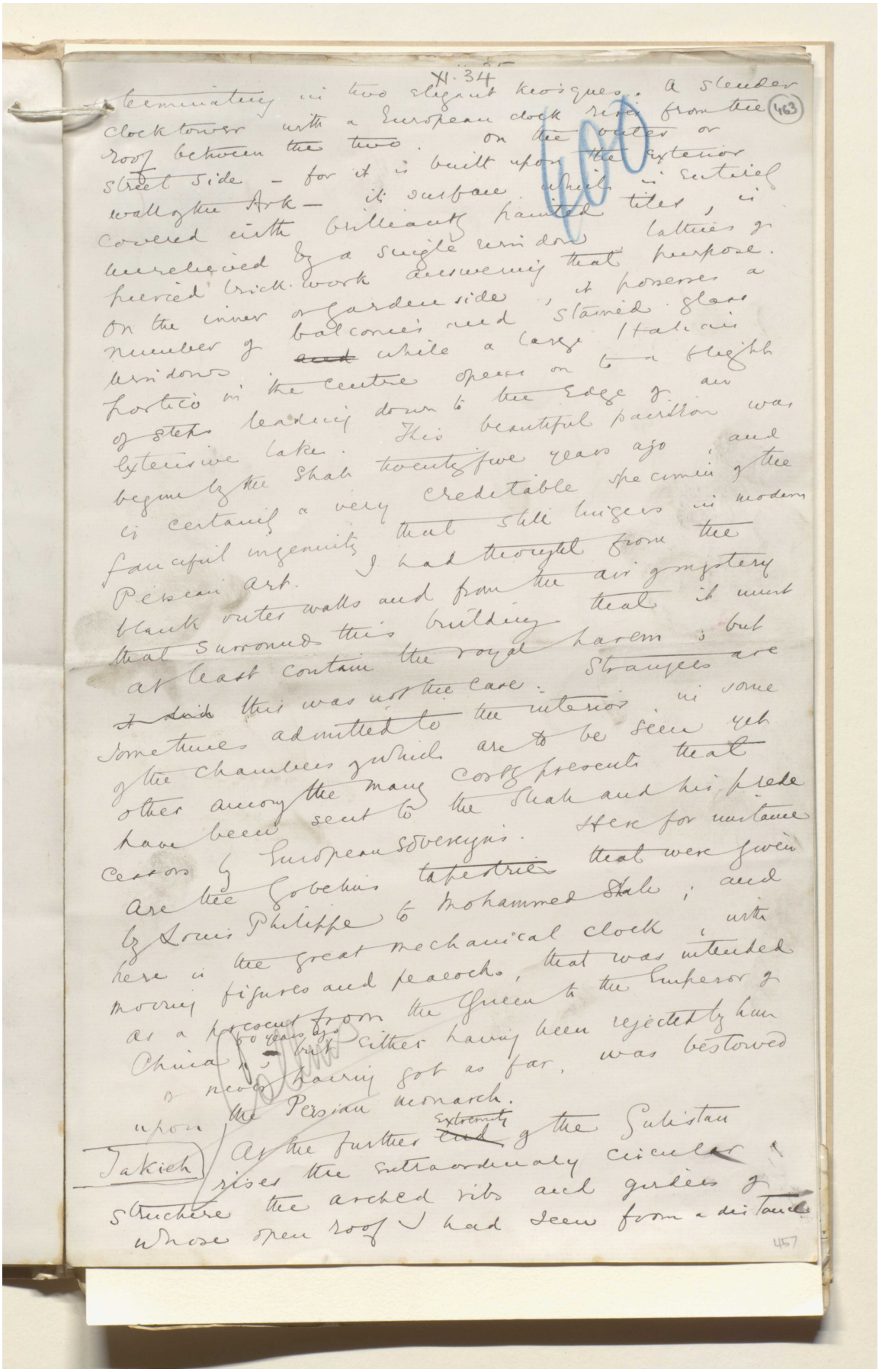



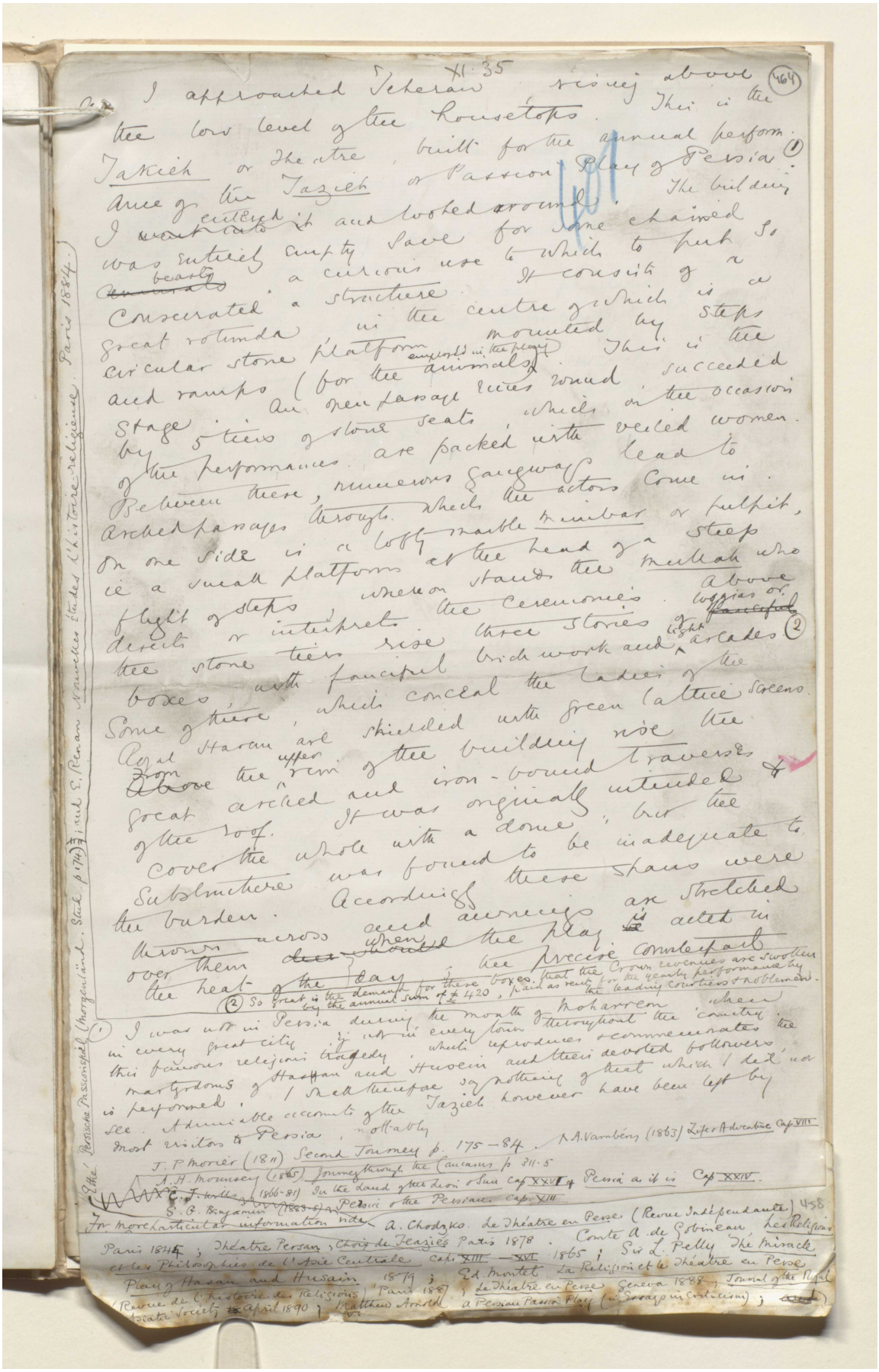

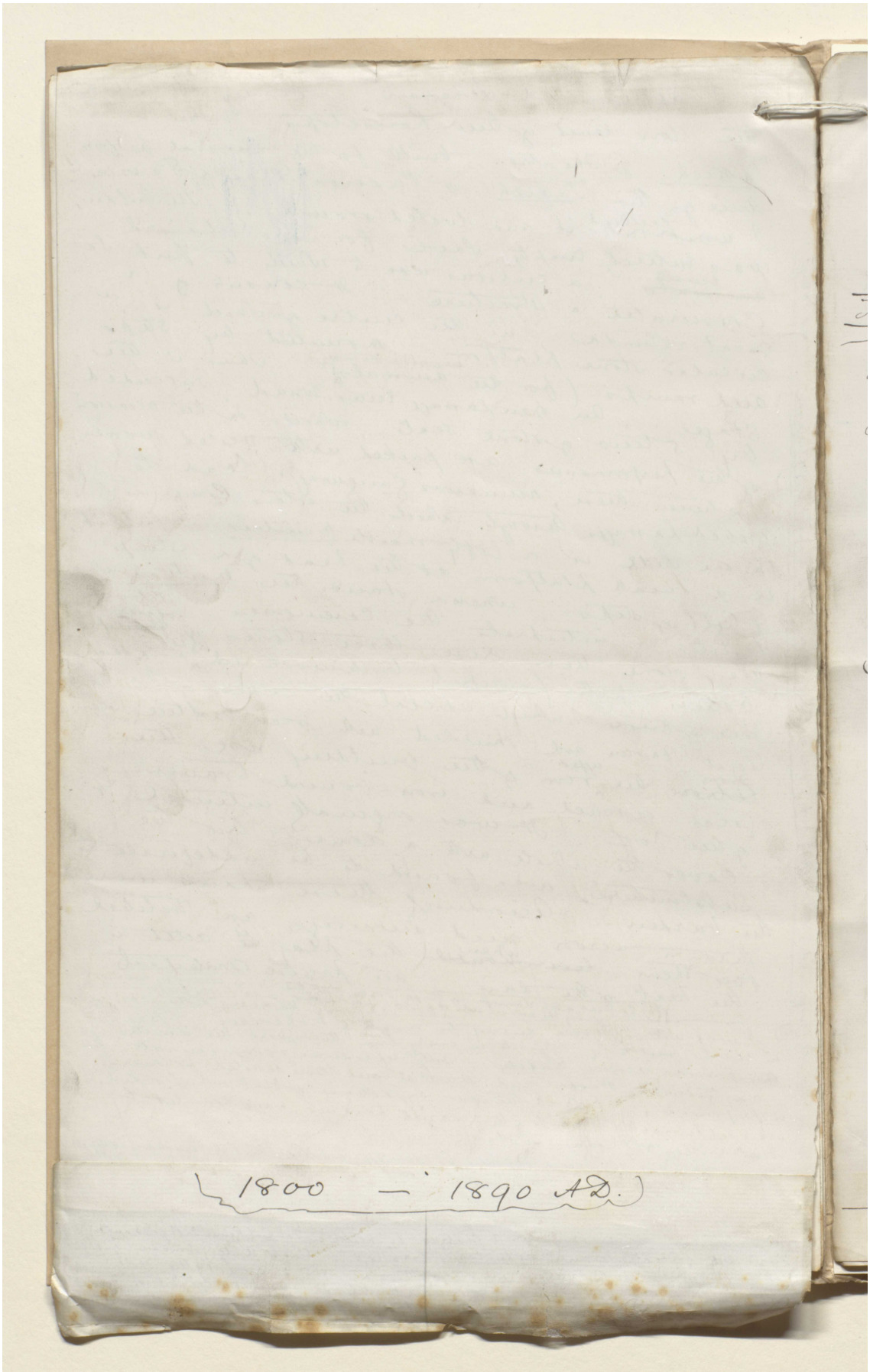
1800 — 1890 A.D.)

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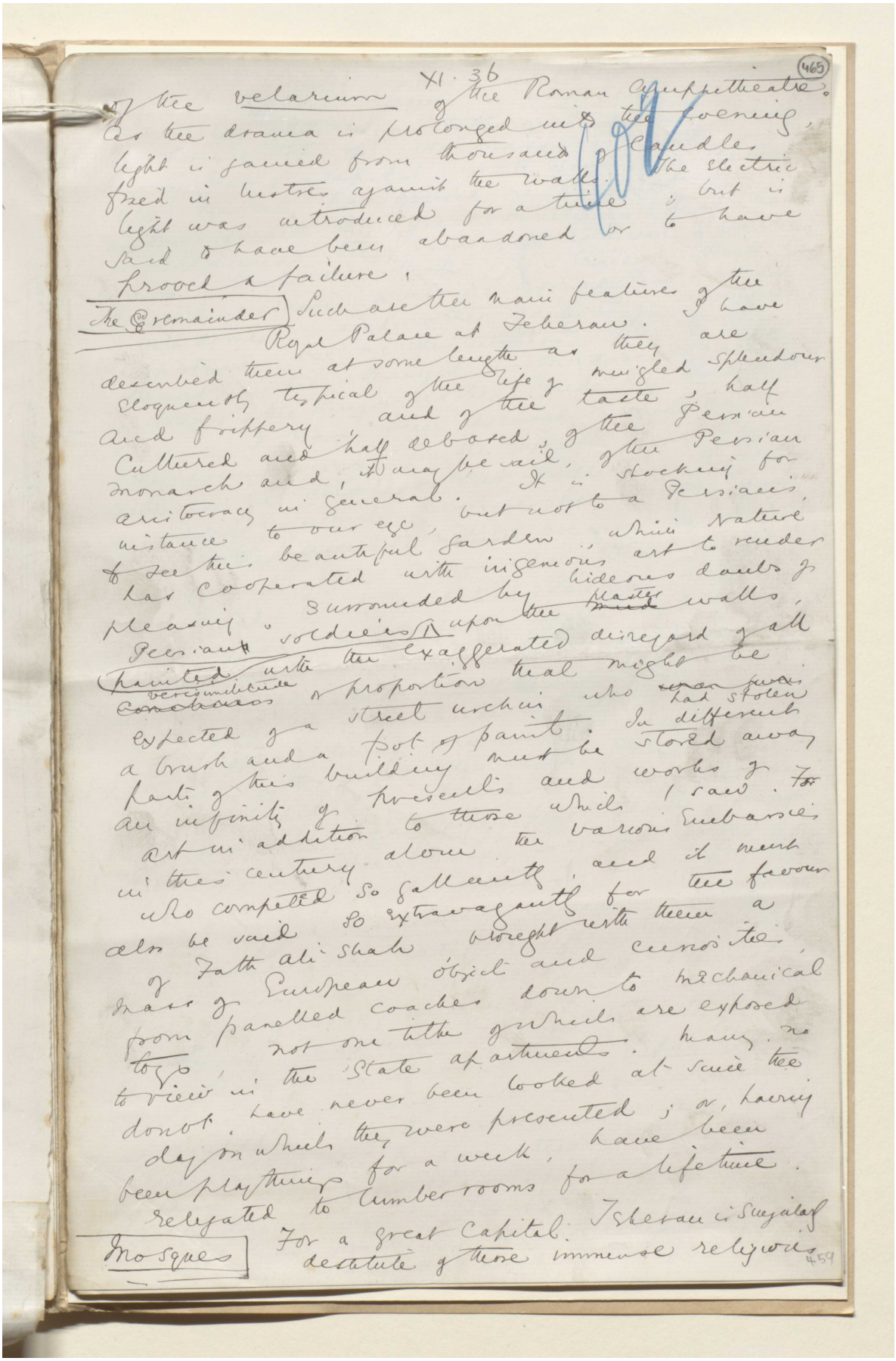

of the velarium of the Roman Amphitheatre. As the drama is prolonged into the evening, light is gained from thousands of candles fixed in lustres against the walls. The electric light was introduced for a time; but is said to have been abandoned or to have proved a failure.

The Remainder

Such are the main features of the Royal Palace at Teheran. I have described them at some length as they are eloquently typical of the life of mingled splendour and frippery, and of the taste, half cultured and half debased, of the Persian monarch and, it may be said, of the Persian aristocracy in general. It is shocking for instance to our eye, but not to a Persian's, to see this beautiful garden, which Nature has cooperated with ingenious art to render pleasing, surrounded by hideous daubs of Persian soldiers, painted upon the plaster walls, with the exaggerated disregard of all verisimilitude or proportion that might be expected of a street urchin who had stolen a brush and a pot of paint. In different parts of this building must be stored away an infinity of presents and works of art in addition to those which I saw. For in this century alone the various Embassies who competed so gallantly, and it must also be said so extravagantly for the favour of Fath Ali Shah brought with them a mass of European objects and curiosities, from panelled coaches down to mechanical toys, not one title of which are exposed to view in the State apartments. Many, no doubt, have never been looked at since the day on which they were presented; or, having been plaything for a week, have been relegated to lumber rooms for a lifetime.

Mosques

For a great capital Teheran is singularly destitute of those immense religious

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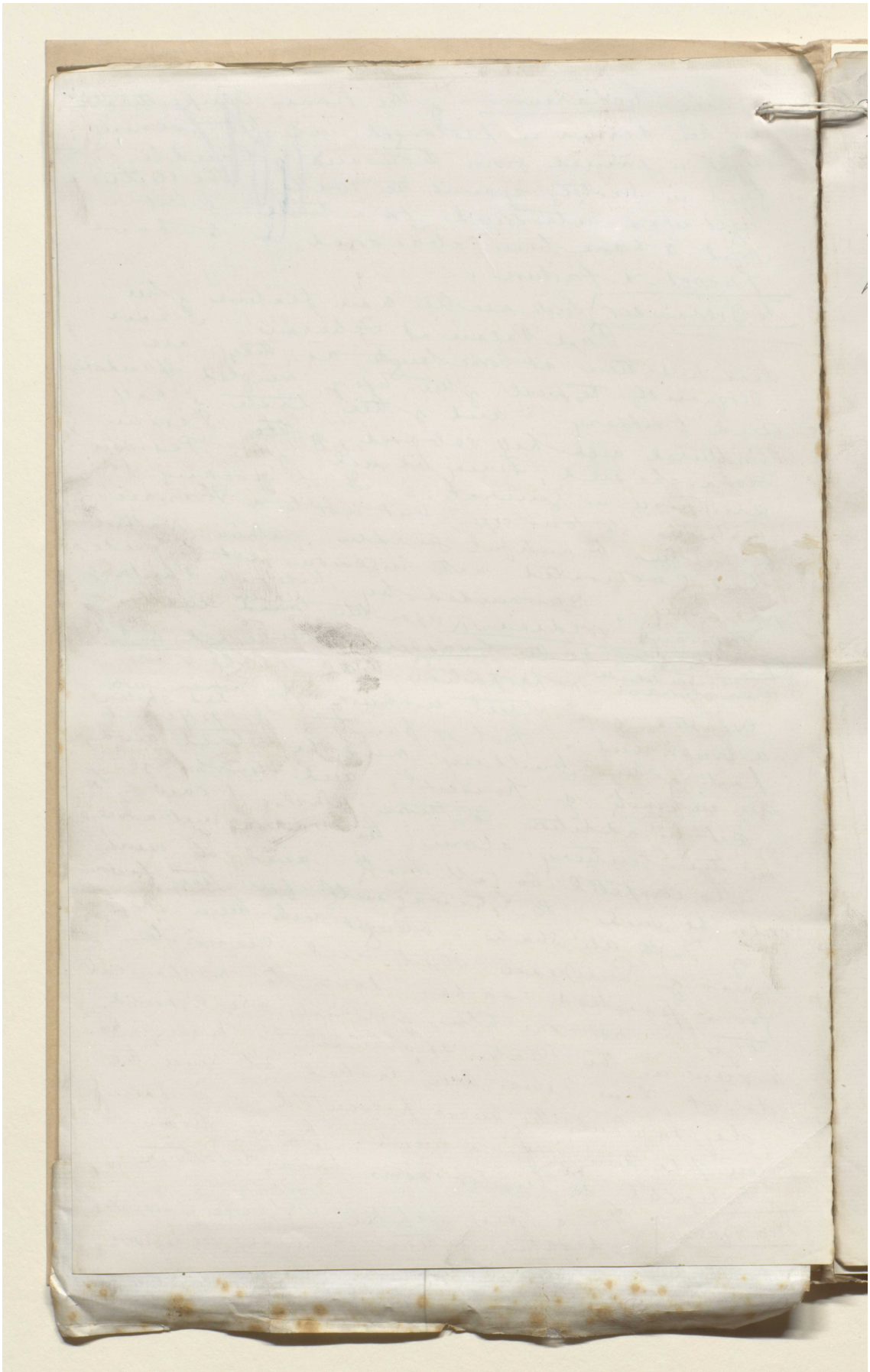

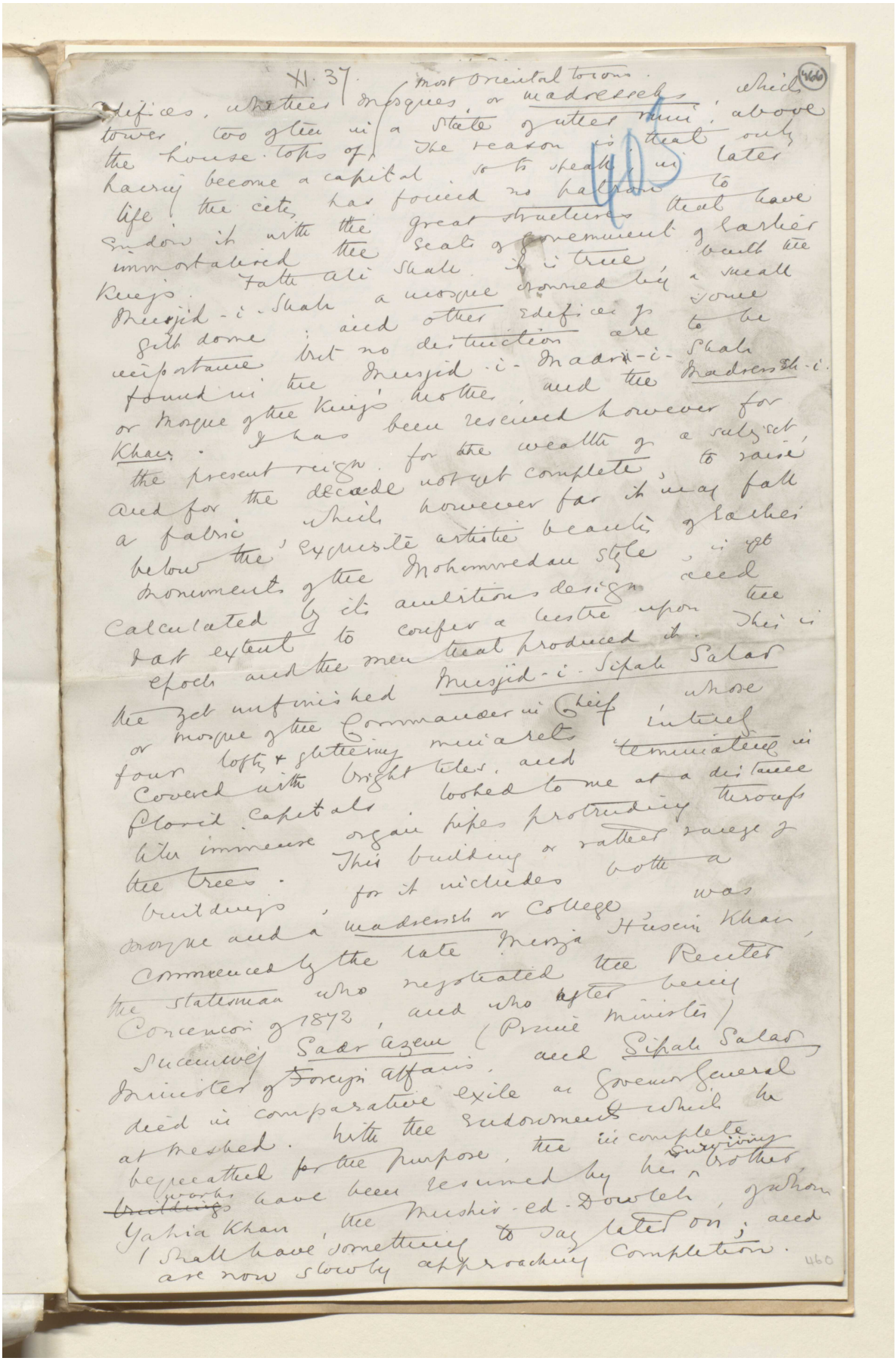

XI. 37. (466)

edifices, whether mosques, or madresseks, which most Oriental towns, tower too often in a state of utter ruin, above the house-tops of. The reason is that only having become a capital so to speak in later life, the city has found no patron to endow it with the great structures that have immortalised the seats of government of earlier kings. Fath Ali Shah, it is true, built the Musjid-i-Shah a mosque crowned by a small gilt dome; and other edifices of some importance but no distinction are to be found in the Musjid-i-Madr-i-Shah or mosque of the king's mother, and the Madressah-i-Khan. It has been reserved however for the present reign, for the wealth of a subject, and for the decade not yet complete, to raise a fabric which however far it may fall below the exquisite artistic beauty of earlier monuments of the Mohammedan style, is yet calculated by its ambitious design and vast extent to confer a lustre upon the epoch and the men that produced it. This is the yet unfinished Musjid-i-Sipah Salar or mosque of the Commander in Chief whose four lofty & glittering minarets entirely covered with bright tiles, and terminating in florid capitals looked to me at a distance like immense organ pipes protruding through the trees. This building or rather range of buildings, for it includes both a mosque and a madressah or College, was commenced by the late Mirza Husein Khan, the statesman who negotiated the Reuter Concession of 1872, and who after being successively Sadr Azem (Prime Minister) Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Sipah Salar died in comparative exile as Governor General at Meshed. With the endowments which he bequeathed for the purpose, the incomplete works have been resumed by his surviving brother Yahia Khan, the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, of whom I shall have something to say later on; and are now slowly approaching completion.

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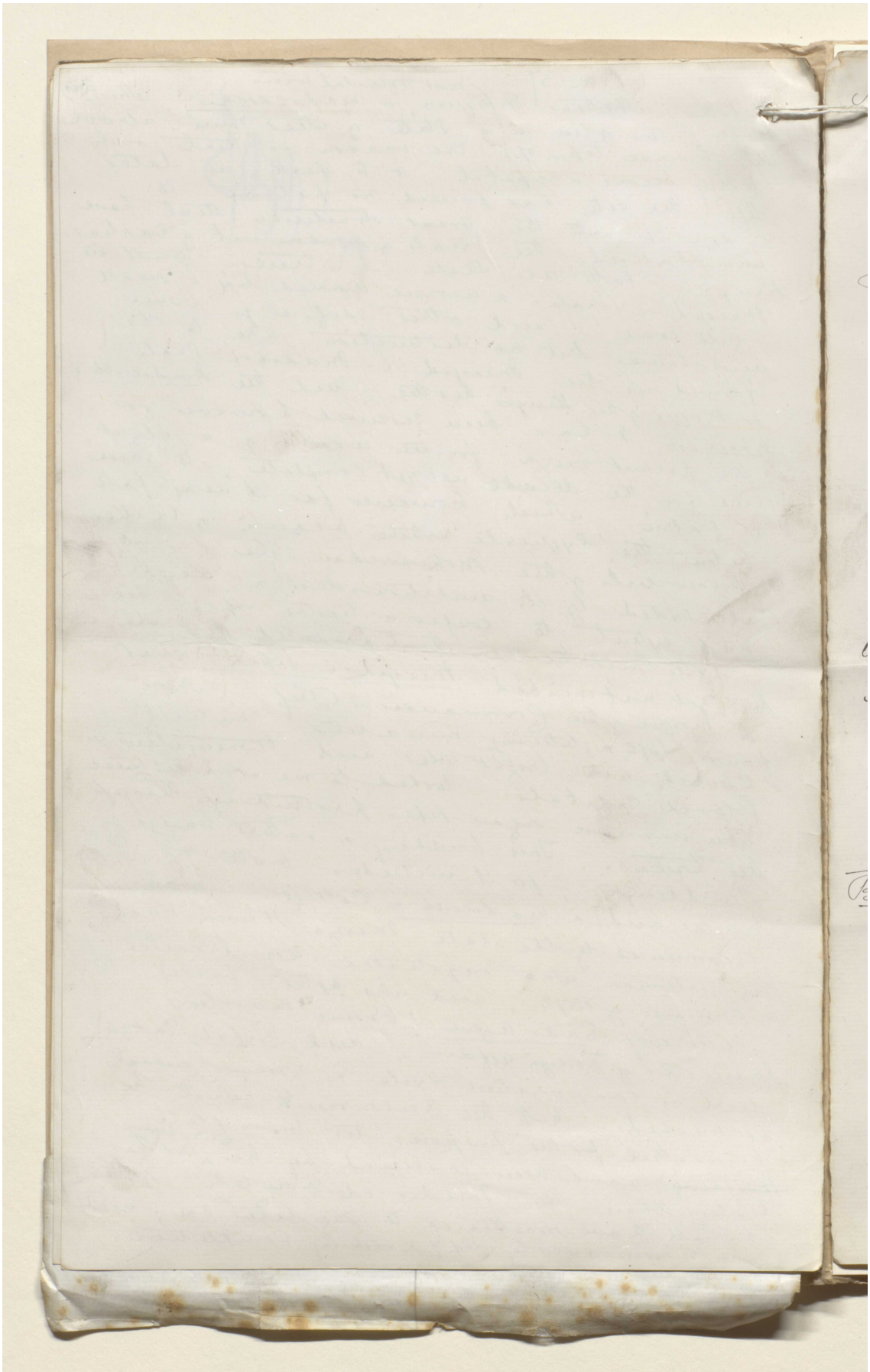

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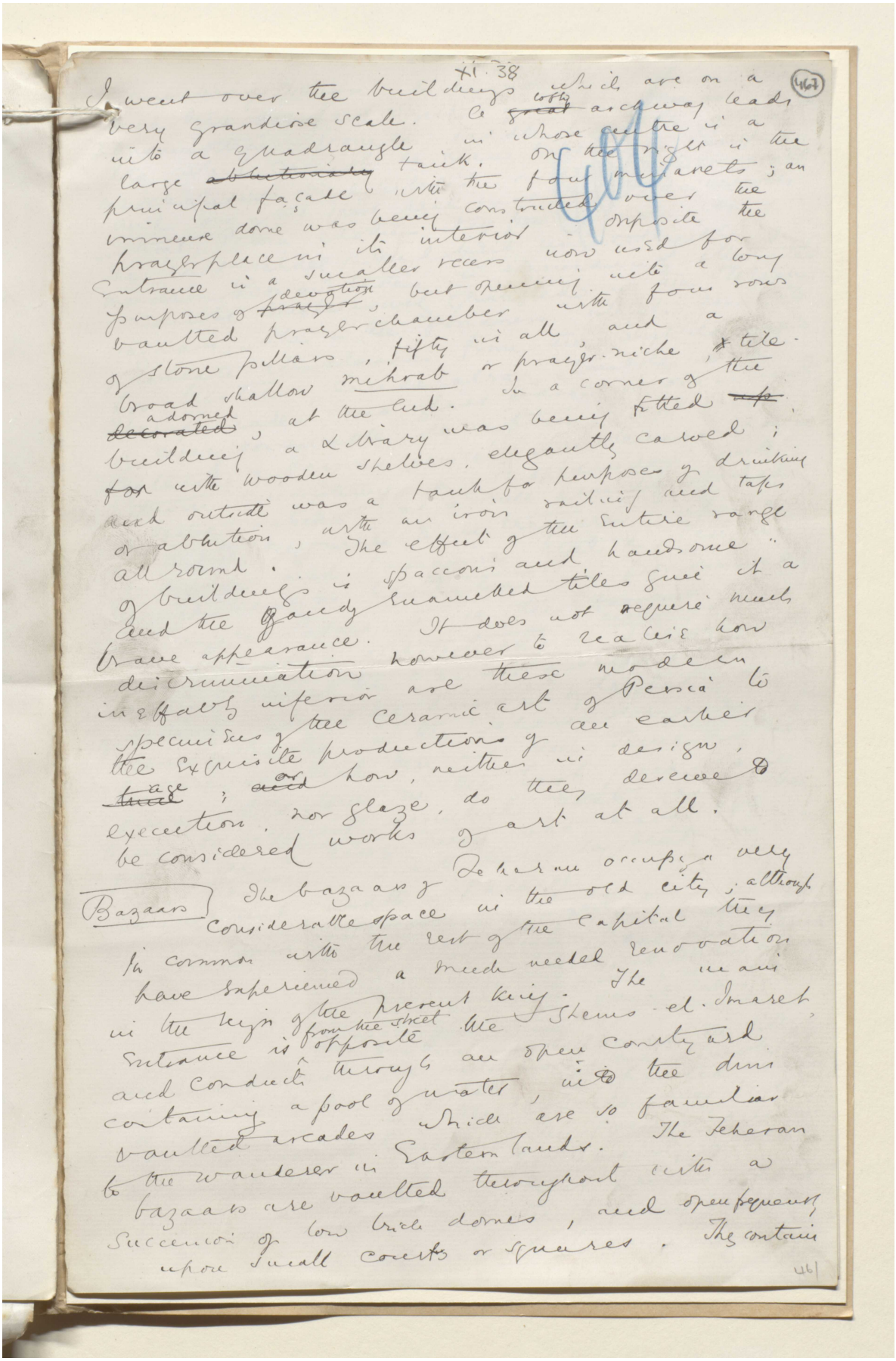

XI. 38

(467)

I went over the buildings which are on a very grandiose scale. A lofty ~~great~~ archway leads into a quadrangle in whose centre is a large ~~ablutionary~~ tank. On the right is the principal façade with the four minarets; an immense dome was being constructed over the prayer place in its interior. Opposite the entrance is a smaller recess now used for purposes of ~~prayer~~ devotion, but opening into a long vaulted prayer chamber with four rows of stone pillars, fifty in all, and a broad shallow mihrab or prayer-niche, tile-adorned ~~decorated~~, at the end. In a corner of the building a Library was being fitted ~~up~~ ~~for~~ with wooden shelves, elegantly carved; and outside was a tank for purposes of drinking or ablution, with an iron railing and taps all round. The effect of the entire range of buildings is spacious and handsome. And the gaudy enamelled tiles give it a brave appearance. It does not require much discrimination however to realise how ineffably inferior are these modern specimens of the ceramic art of Persia to the exquisite productions of an earlier ~~time~~ age; ~~and~~ or how, neither in design, execution, nor glaze, do they deserve to be considered works of art at all.

Bazaars

The bazaars of Teheran occupy a very considerable space in the old city; although in common with the rest of the capital they have experienced a much needed renovation in the reign of the present king. The main entrance is from the street opposite the Shems-el-Imaret, and conducts through an open courtyard containing a pool of water, into the dim vaulted arcades which are so familiar to the wanderer in Eastern lands. The Teheran bazaars are vaulted throughout with a succession of low brick domes, and open frequently upon small courts or squares. They contain

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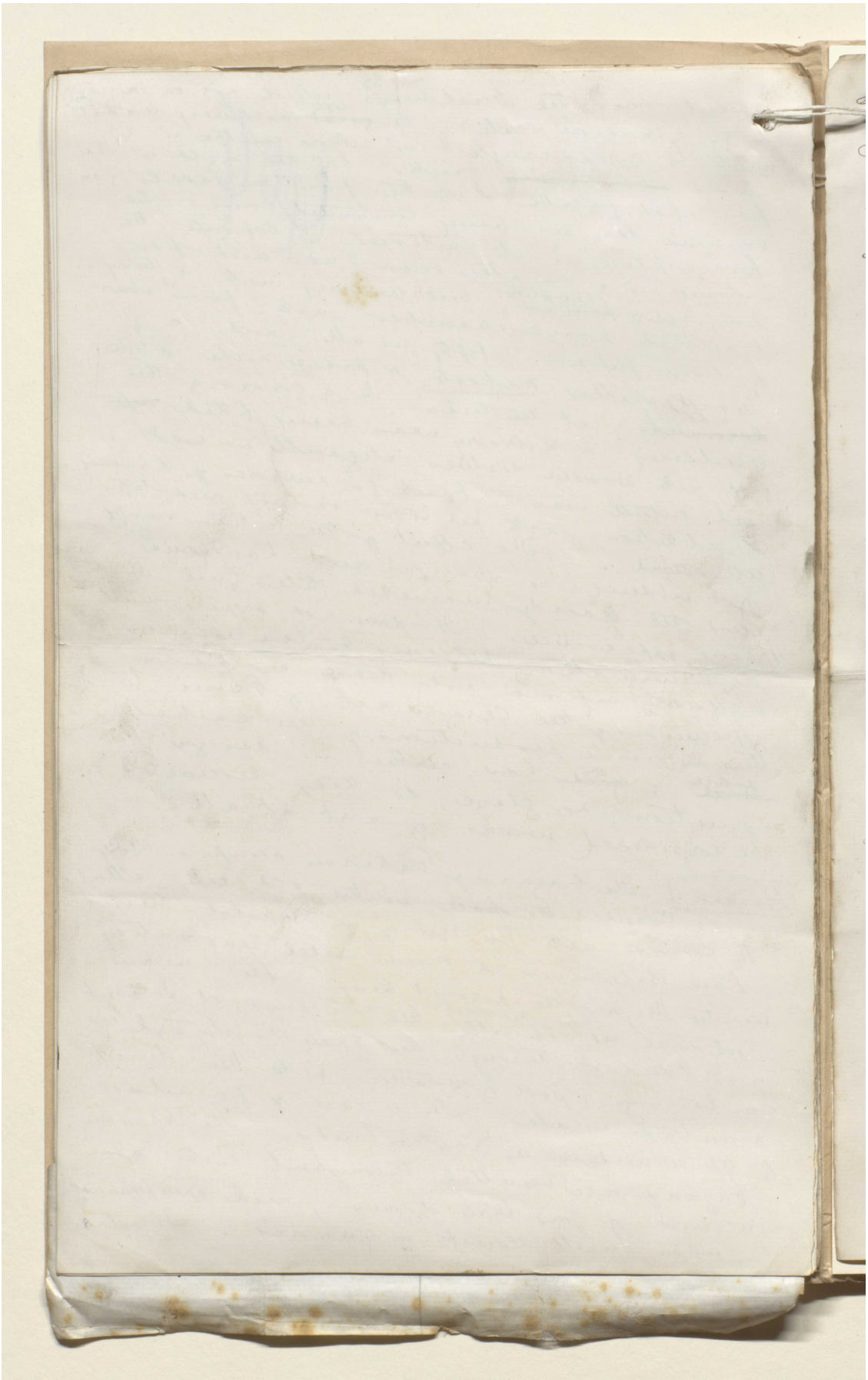

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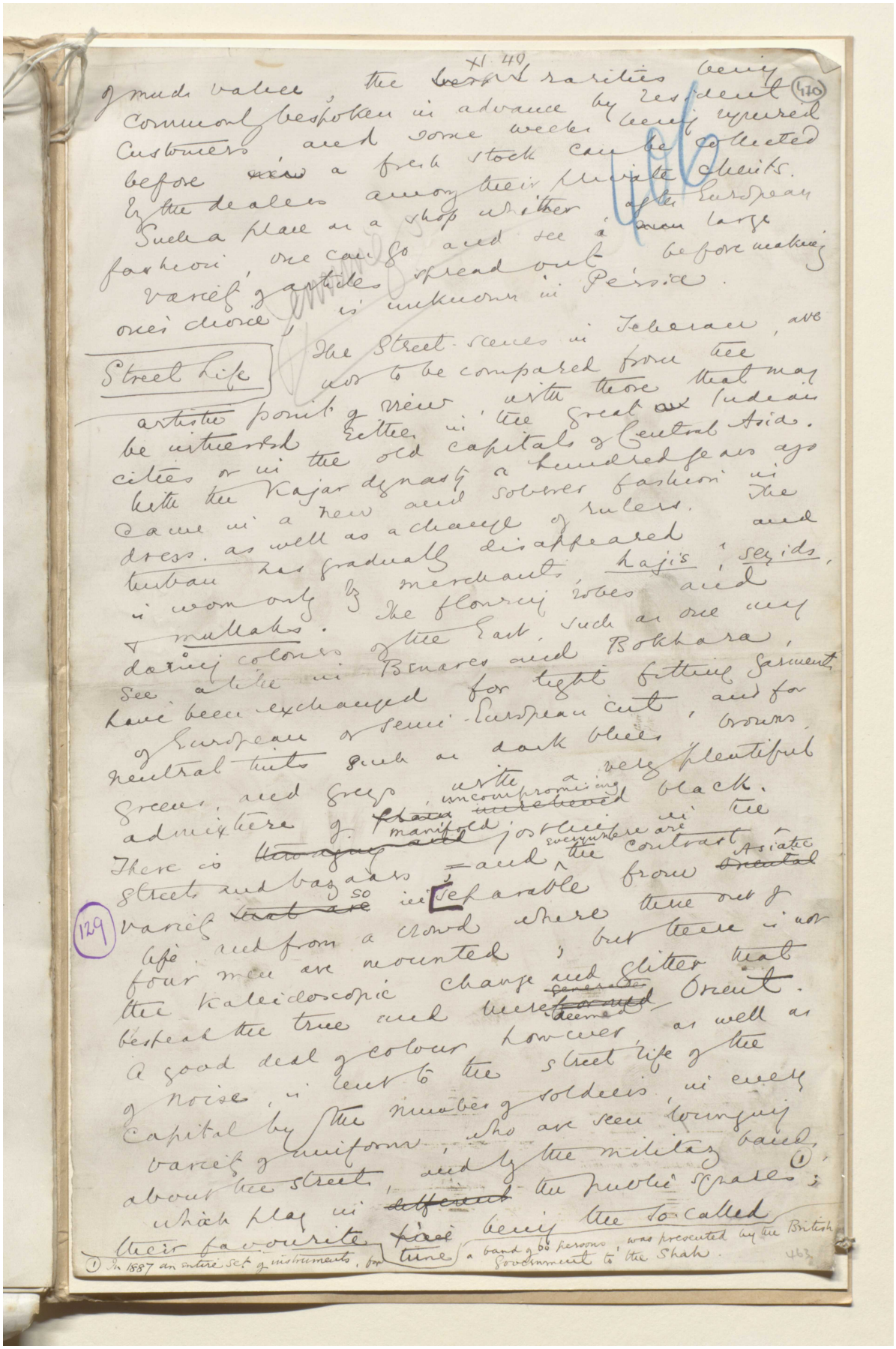

XI. 40

(470)

of much value, the ~~best~~ rarities being commonly bespoken in advance by resident customers, and some weeks being required before ~~new~~ a fresh stock can be collected by the dealers among their private clients. Such a place as a shop whither after European fashion, one can go and see a ~~man~~ large variety of articles spread out before making one's choice, is unknown in Persia.

Street Life

The Street-scenes in Teheran, are not to be compared from the artistic point of view with those that may be witnessed either in the great ~~ax~~ Indian cities or in the old capitals of Central Asia. With the Kajar dynasty a hundred years ago came in a new and soberer fashion in dress, as well as a change of rulers. The turban has gradually disappeared and is worn only by merchants, hajis, seyids, & mullahs. The flowing robes and daring colours of the East, such as one may see a like in Benares and Bokhara, have been exchanged for tight fitting garments of European or semi-European cut, and for neutral tints such as dark blues, browns, greens, and greys, with a very plentiful admixture of ~~plain~~ uncompromising ~~unrelieved~~ black. There is ~~[illegible]~~ manifold jostling in the streets and bazaars, and everywhere are the contrast & variety ~~that are~~ so inseparable from ~~Oriental~~ Asiatic life, and from a crowd where three out of four men are mounted; but there is not the kaleidoscopic change and glitter that bespeak the true and ~~[illegible]~~ ~~generated~~ deemed Orient. A good deal of colour, however, as well as of noise, is lent to the street life of the capital by the number of soldiers, in every variety of uniform, who are seen lounging about the streets, and by the military bands, which play in ~~different~~ the public squares (1); their favourite ~~[illegible]~~ tune being the so-called

(1) In 1887 an entire set of instruments, for a band of 60 persons, was presented by the British Government to the Shah.

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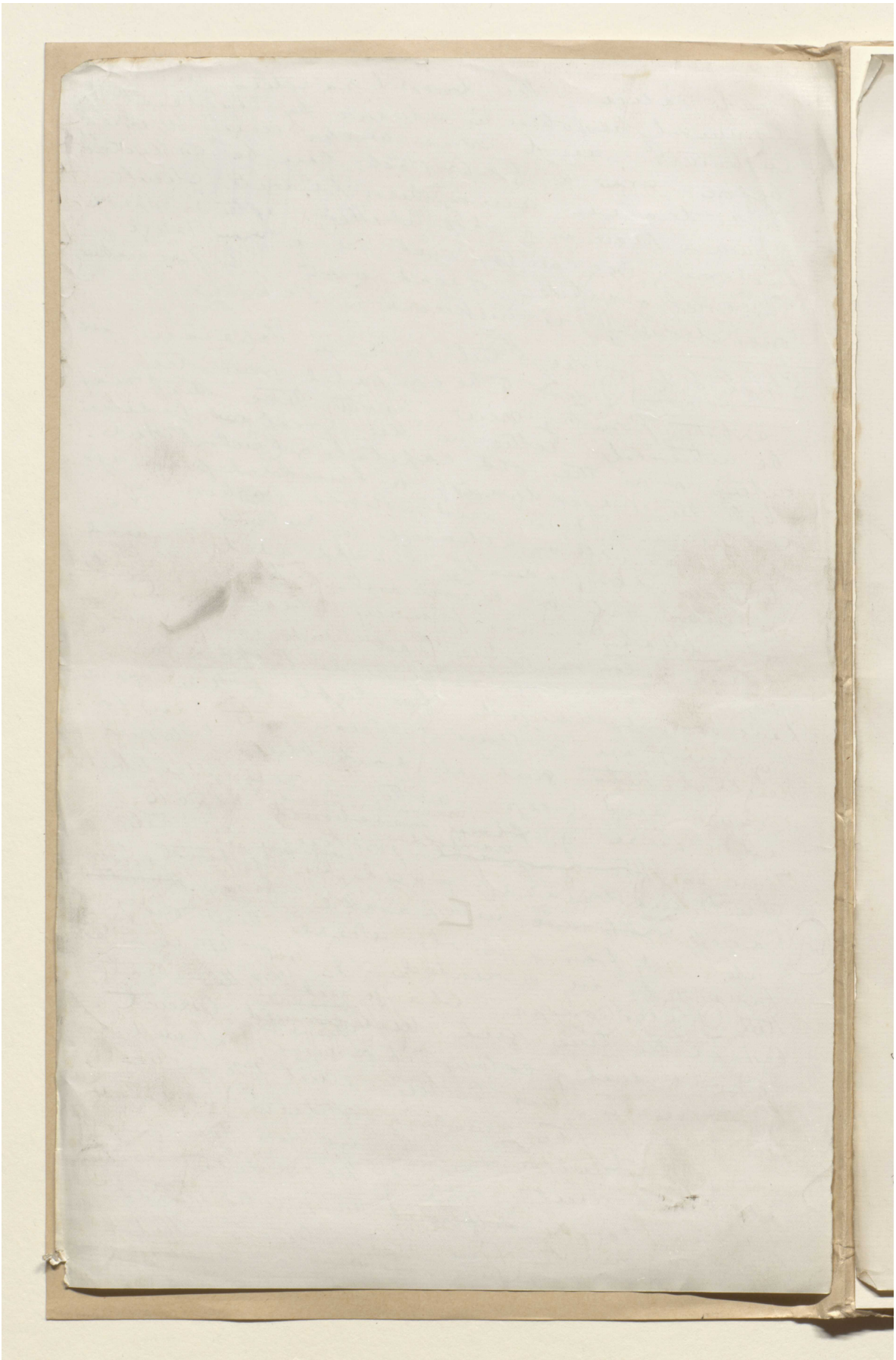

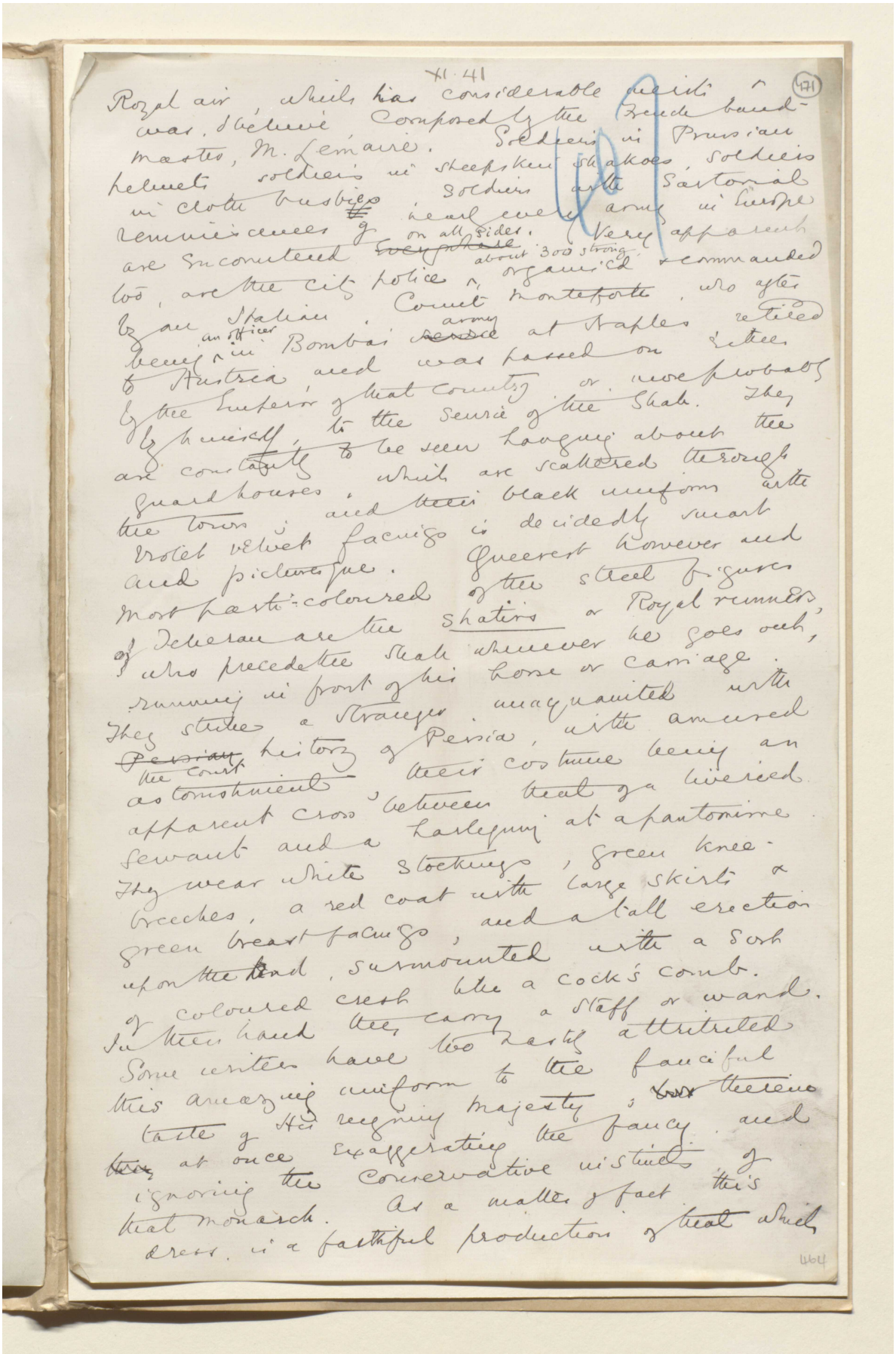

XI. 41

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Royal air, which has considerable merits, was, I believe, composed by the French band-master, M. Lemaire. Soldiers in Prussian helmets, soldiers in sheepskin shakoes, soldiers in cloth busbies, soldiers with Sartorial reminiscences of nearly every army in Europe are encountered ~~everywhere~~ on all sides. Very apparent too, are the city police, about 300 strong, organised & commanded by an Italian Count Monteforte, who after being an officer in Bombai ~~service~~ army at Naples retired to Austria and was passed on either by the Emperor of that country or more probably by himself, to the service of the Shah. They are constantly to be seen hanging about the guard houses, which are scattered through the town; and their black uniform with violet velvet facings is decidedly smart and picturesque. Queerest however and most parti-coloured of the street figures of Teheran are the shatirs or Royal runners, who precede the Shah whenever he goes out, running in front of his horse or carriage. They strike a stranger unacquainted with ~~Persian~~ the court history of Persia, with amused astonishment, their costume being an apparent cross between that of a liveried servant and a harlequin at a pantomime. They wear white stockings, green knee-breeches, a red coat with large skirts & green breast facings, and a tall erection upon the head, surmounted with a sort of coloured crest like a cock's comb. In their hand they carry a staff or wand. Some writers have too hastily attributed this amazing uniform to the fanciful taste of His reigning Majesty; ~~but~~ therein ~~they~~ at once exaggerating the fancy and ignoring the conservative instincts of that monarch. As a matter of fact this dress is a faithful production of that which

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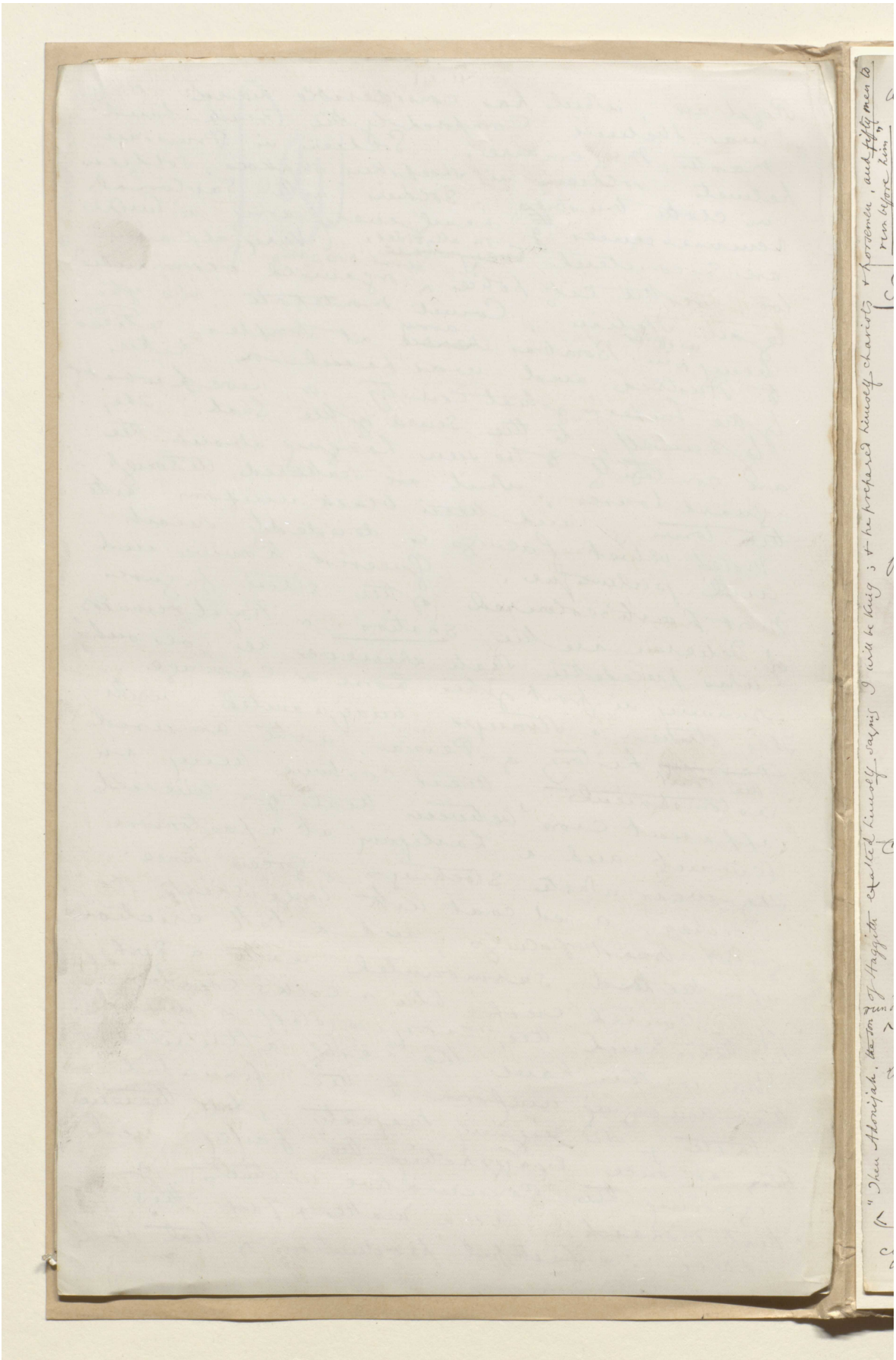

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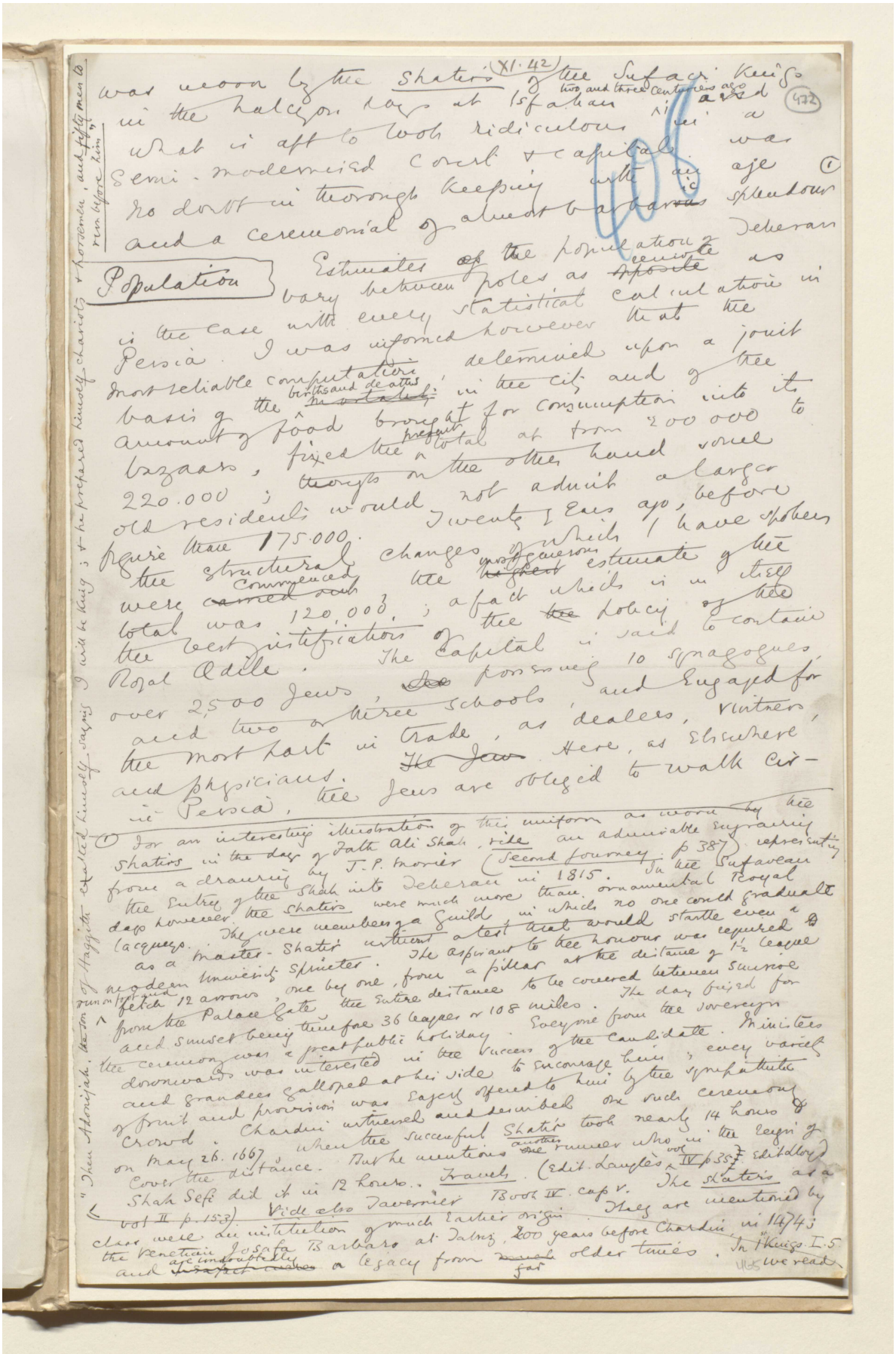

(XI.42) (472)

was worn by the Shatirs of the Sufavi Kings in the halcyon days at Isfahan two and three centuries ago; and what is apt to look ridiculous in a semi-modernised court & capital was no doubt in thorough keeping with an age and a ceremonial of almost barbaric splendour (1)

Population

Estimates of the population of Teheran vary between poles as remote as is the case with every statistical calculation in Persia. I was informed however that the most reliable computation, determined upon a joint basis of the births and deaths in the city and of the amount of food brought for consumption into its bazaars, fixed the present total at from 200 000 to 220.000; though on the other hand some old residents would not admit a larger figure than 175.000. Twenty years ago, before the structural changes of which I have spoken were commenced, the most generous estimate of the total was 120,000; a fact which is in itself the best justification of the policy of the Royal Odile. The capital is said to contain over 2,500 Jews, possessing 10 synagogues, and two or three schools, and engaged for the most part in trade, as dealers, vintners, and physicians. Here, as elsewhere in Persia, the Jews are obliged to walk cir-

(1) For an interesting illustration of this uniform as worn by the Shatirs in the days of Fath Ali Shah, vide an admirable engraving from a drawing by J. P. Morier (Second Journey p 387) representing the Entry of the Shah into Teheran in 1815. In the Sufavean days however the Shatirs were much more than ornamental Royal lacquers. They were members of a Guild in which no one could graduate as a Master-Shatir without a test that would startle even a modern University Sprinter. The aspirant to the honour was required to fetch 12 arrows, one by one, from a pillar at the distance of 1½ league from the Palace Gate, the entire distance to be covered between sunrise and sunset being therefore 36 leagues or 108 miles. The day fixed for the ceremony was a great public holiday. Everyone from the sovereign downwards was interested in the success of the candidate. Ministers and grandees galloped at his side to encourage him; every variety of fruit and provision was eagerly offered to him by the sympathetic crowd. Chardin witnessed and described one such ceremony on May 26. 1667, when the successful Shatir took nearly 14 hours to cover the distance. But he mentions another runner who in the reign of Shah Sefi did it in 12 hours. Travels (Edit. Langlès vol IV p 357; Edit. Lloyd vol II p. 153). Vide also Tavernier Book IV. cap V. The Shatirs as a class were an institution of much earlier origin. They are mentioned by the Venetian Josafa Barbaro at Tabriz, 200 years before Chardin, in 1474; and are undoubtedly a legacy from far older times. In 1st Kings I. 5 we read

"Then Adonijah, the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying I will be king; & he prepared himself chariots & horsemen, and fifty men to run before him"

المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة
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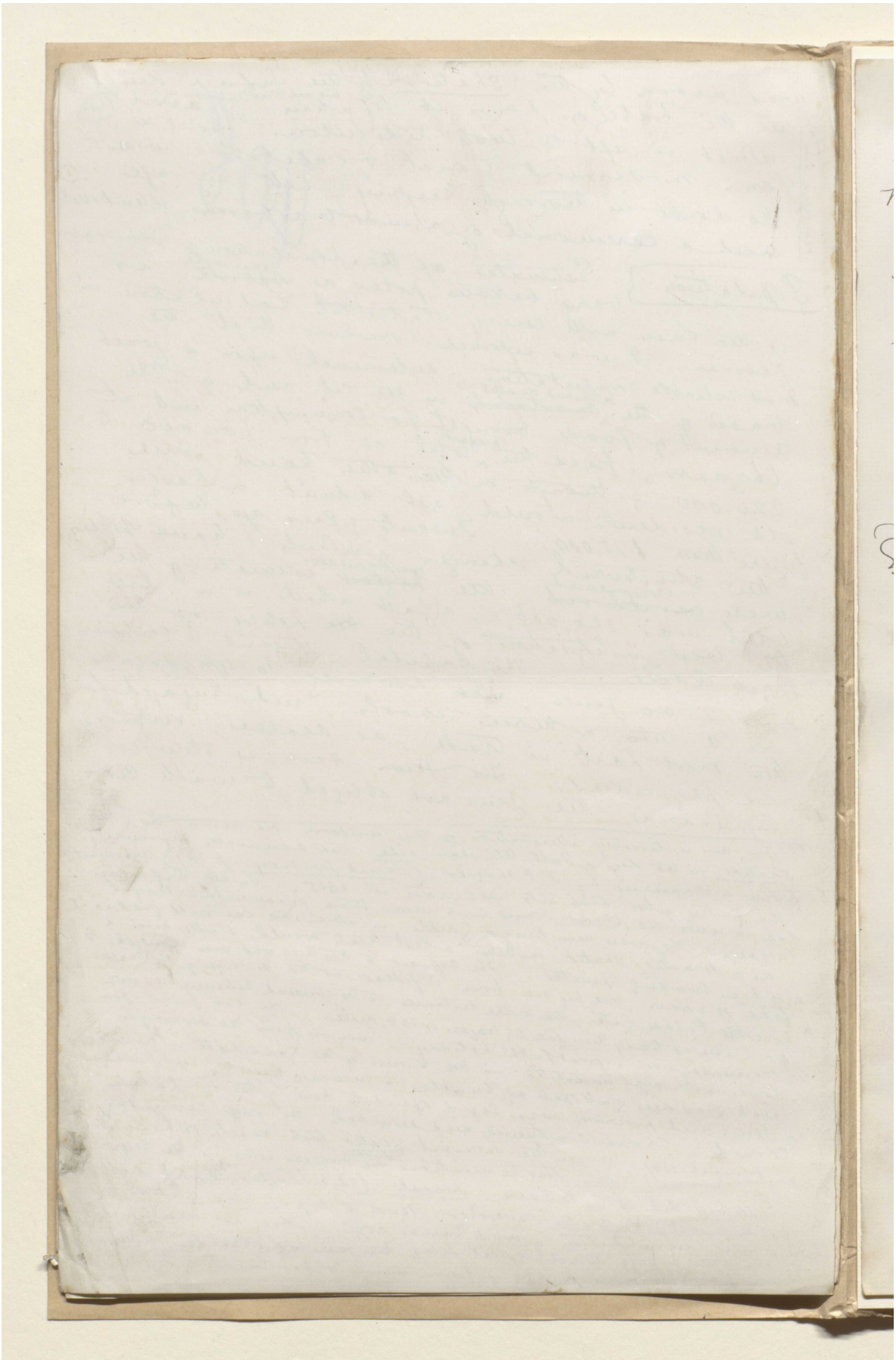

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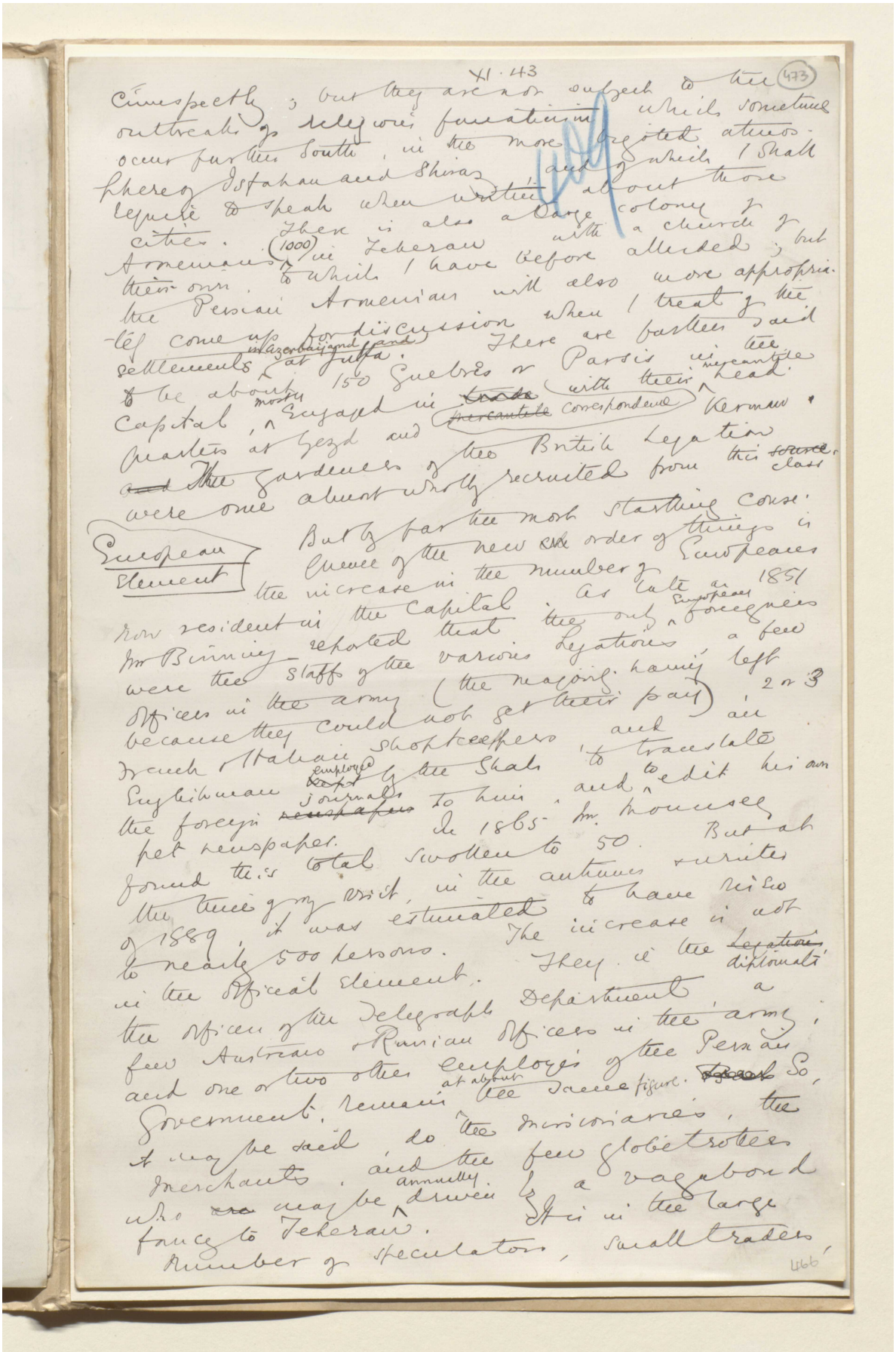

XI. 43 (473)

Circumspectly; but they are not subject to the outbreaks of religious fanaticism which sometimes occur further South, in the more bigoted atmosphere of Isfahan and Shiraz, and of which I shall require to speak when writing about those cities. There is also a large colony of Armenians (1000) in Teheran with a church of their own, to which I have before alluded; but the Persian Armenians will also more appropriately come up for discussion when I treat of the settlements in Azerbaijan and at Julfa. There are further said to be about 150 Guebres or Parsis in the Capital, mostly engaged in ~~trade~~ ~~mercantile~~ correspondence with their mercantile head quarters at Yezd and Kerman. ~~and~~ The gardeners of the British Legation were once almost wholly recruited from this ~~source~~ class.

European Element

But by far the most startling consequence of the new ~~ex~~ order of things is the increase in the number of Europeans now resident in the Capital. As late as 1851 Mr Binning reported that the only European foreigners were the staffs of the various Legations, a few officers in the army (the majority having left because they could not get their pay), 2 or 3 French & Italian shopkeepers, and an Englishman employed ~~kept~~ by the Shah to translate the foreign ~~newspapers~~ journals to him, and to edit his own pet newspaper. In 1865 Mr Mounsey found this total swollen to 50. But at the time of my visit, in the autumn & winter of 1889, it was estimated to have risen to nearly 500 persons. The increase is not in the official element. They i.e. the ~~Legation~~ diplomatic, the officers of the Telegraph Department, a few Austrian & Russian officers in the army, and one or two other employés of the Persian Government, remain at about the same figure. ~~Trade~~ So, it may be said, do the missionaries, the merchants, and the few globetrotters who ~~are~~ may be annually driven by a vagabond fancy to Teheran. It is in the large number of speculators, small traders,

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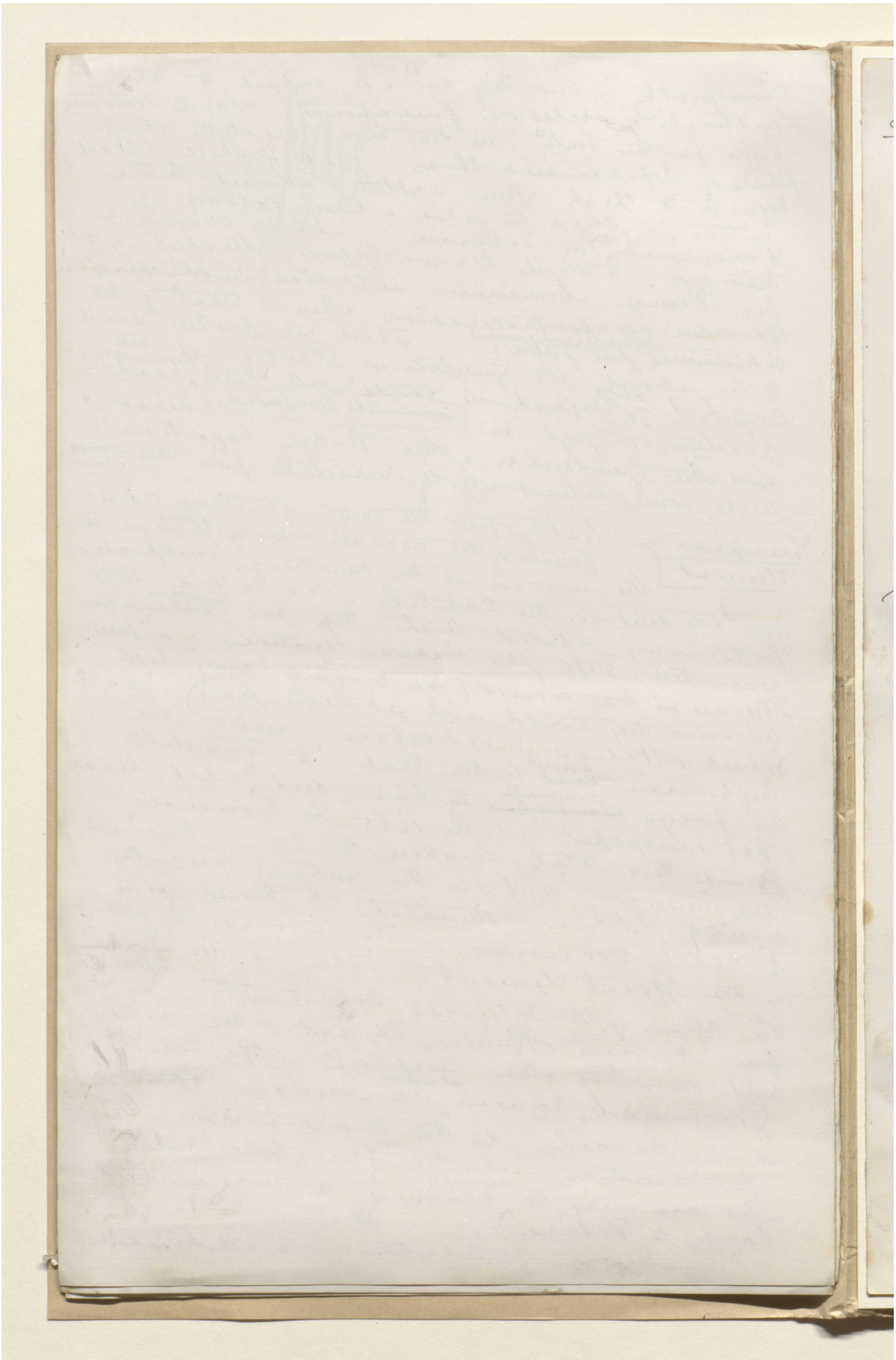
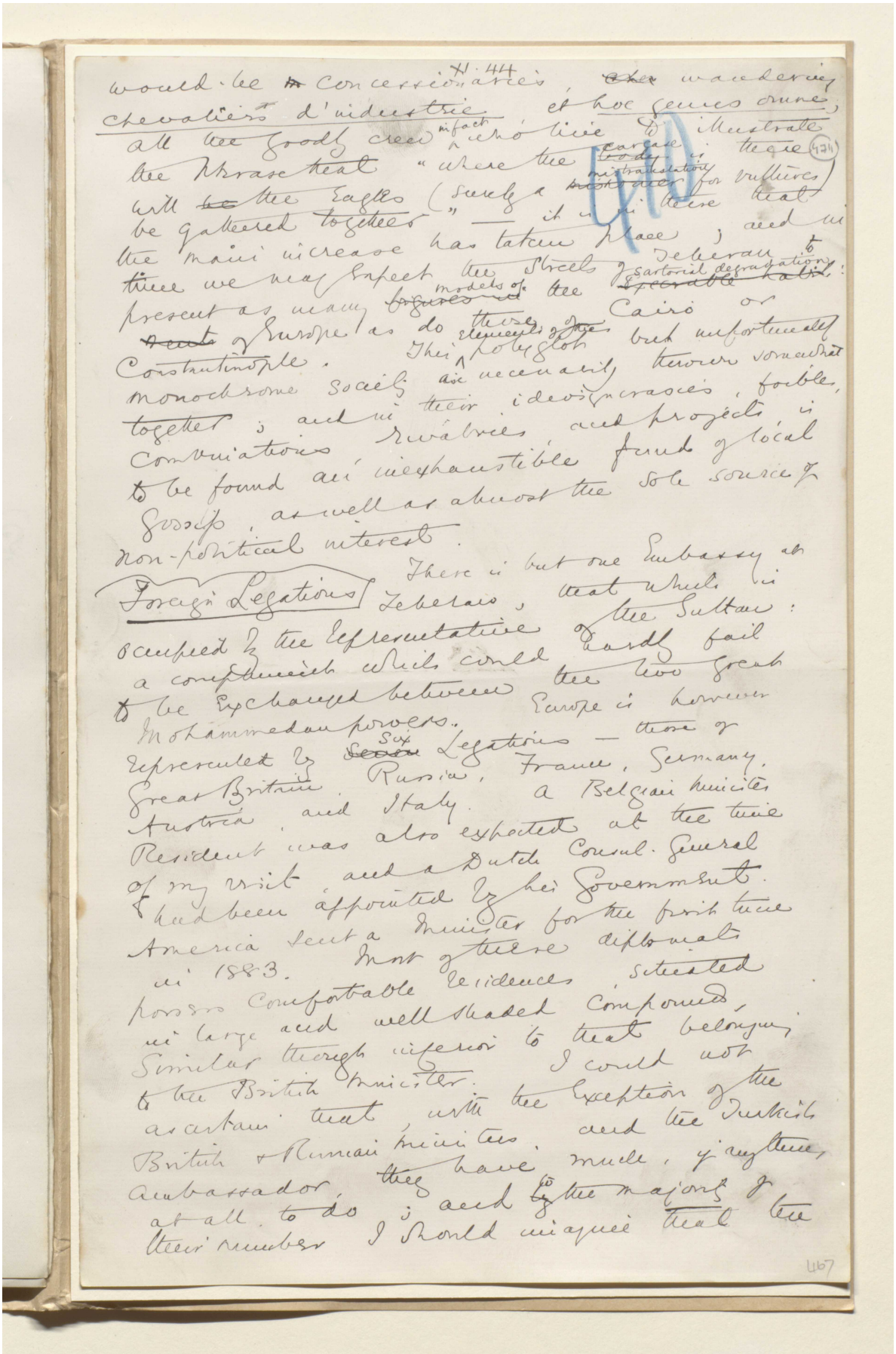


XI. 44



would-be concessionaries, wandering chevaliers d'industrie et hoc genus omne; all the goodly crew in fact who live to illustrate the phrase that "where the carcase is there will the Eagles (surely a mistranslation for vultures) be gathered together" — it is in these that the main increase has taken place; and in time we may expect the streets of Teheran to present as many models of the sartorial degradation of Europe as do those of Cairo or Constantinople. This elements of this polyglot but unfortunately monochrome society are necessarily thrown somewhat together; and in their idiosyncrasies, foibles, combinations, rivalries and projects is to be found an inexhaustible fund of local gossip, as well as almost the sole source of non-political interest.

Foreign Legations

There is but one Embassy at Teheran, that which is occupied by the representative of the Sultan: a compliment which could hardly fail to be exchanged between the two great Mohammedan powers. Europe is however represented by six Legations — those of Great Britain, Russia, France, Germany, Austria and Italy. A Belgian Minister Resident was also expected at the time of my visit, and a Dutch Consul-General had been appointed by his Government. America sent a Minister for the first time in 1883. Most of these diplomats possess comfortable residences, situated in large and well shaded compounds, similar though inferior to that belonging to the British Minister. I could not ascertain that, with the exception of the British & Russian ministers and the Turkish Ambassador, they have much, if anything, at all, to do; and to the majority of their number I should imagine that the

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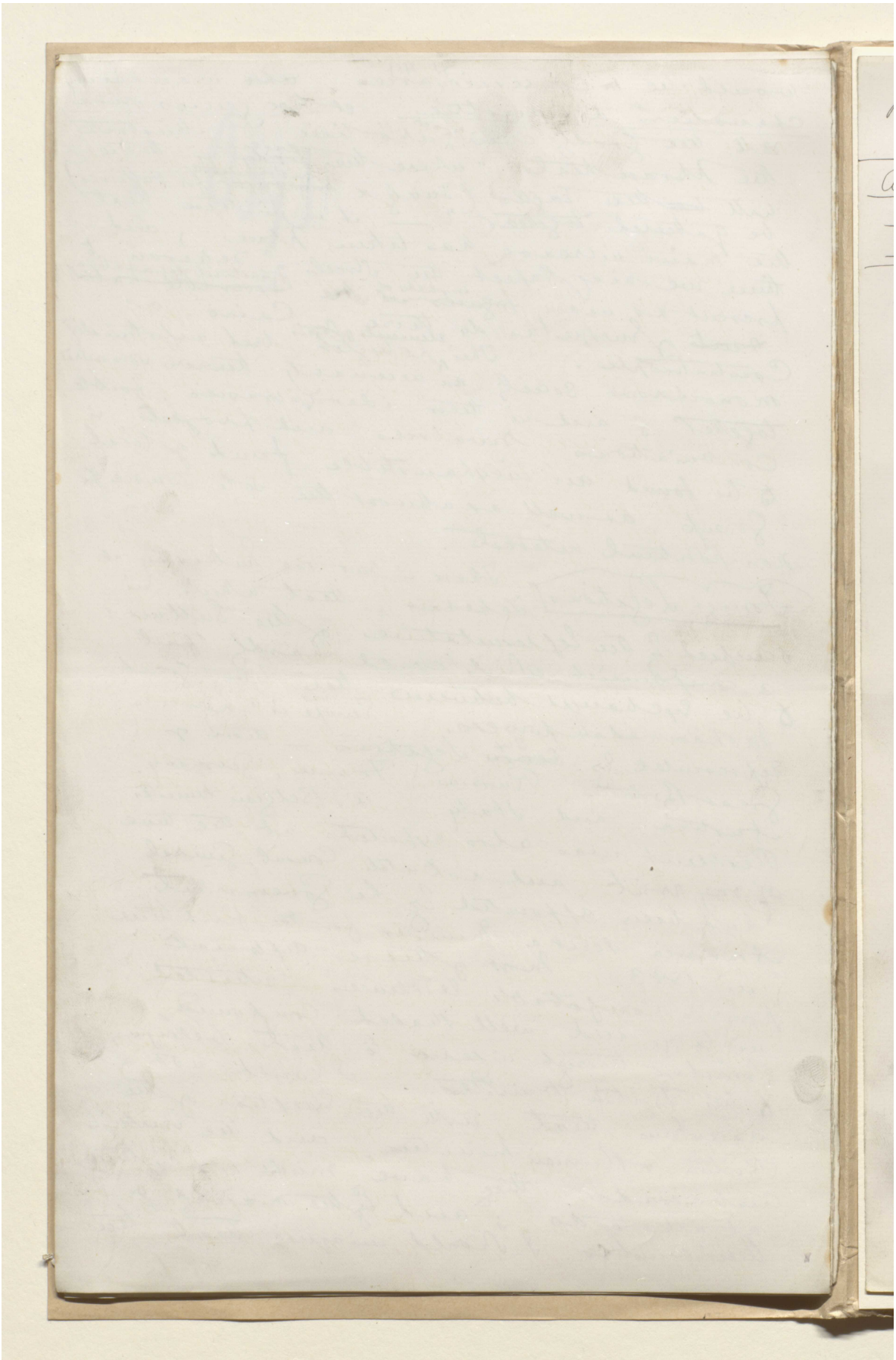

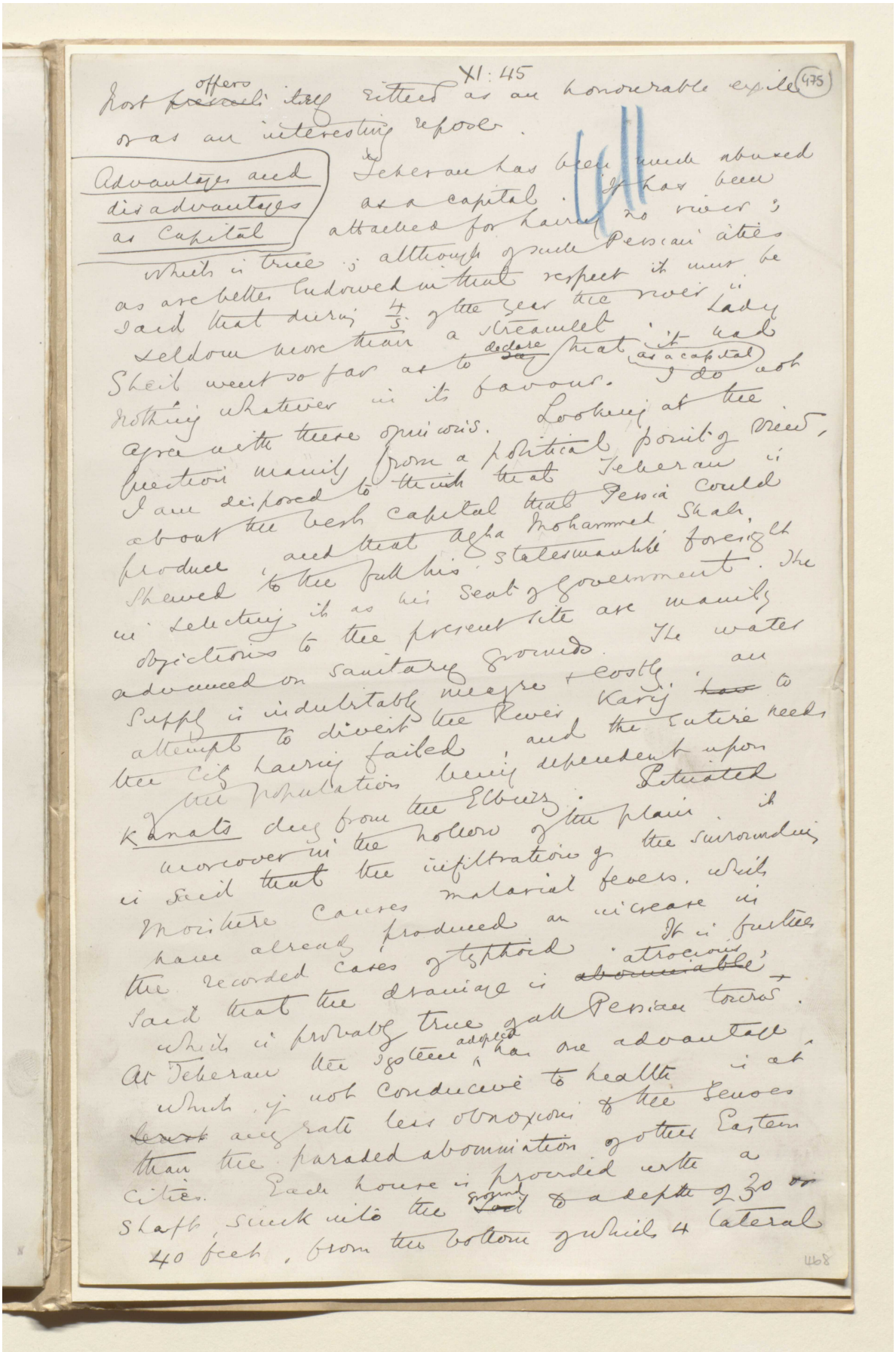

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Advantages and disadvantages as Capital

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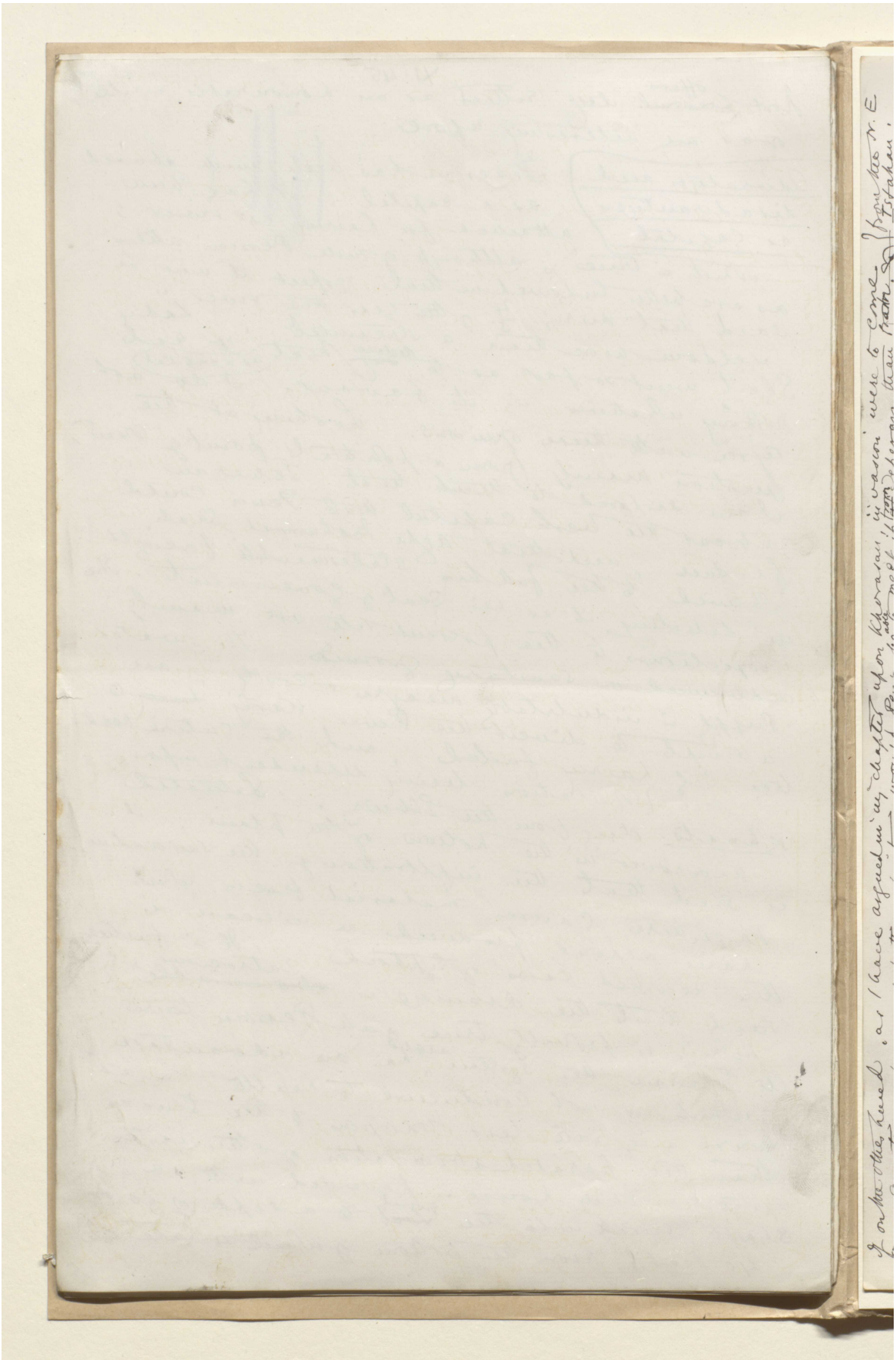
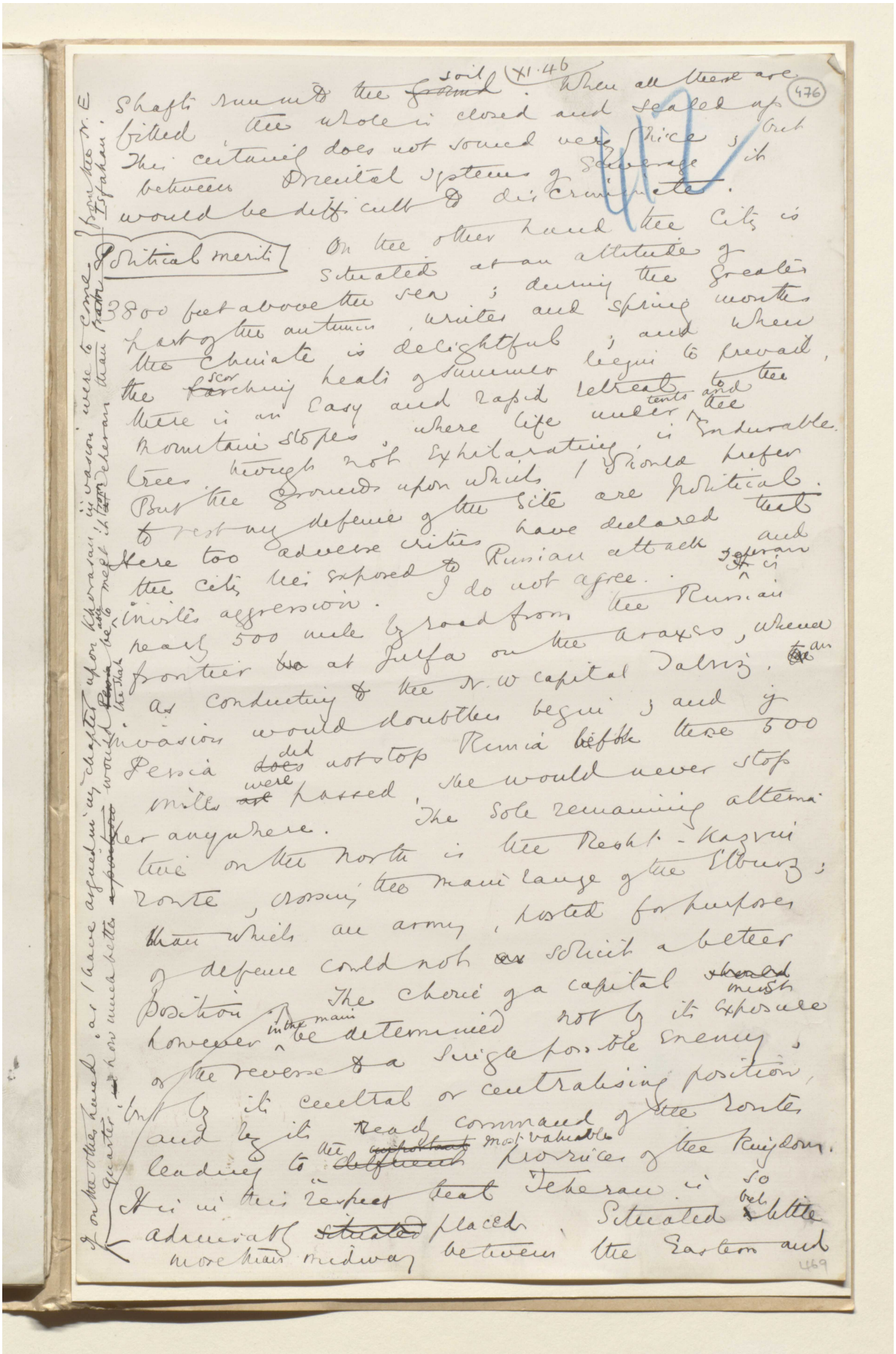
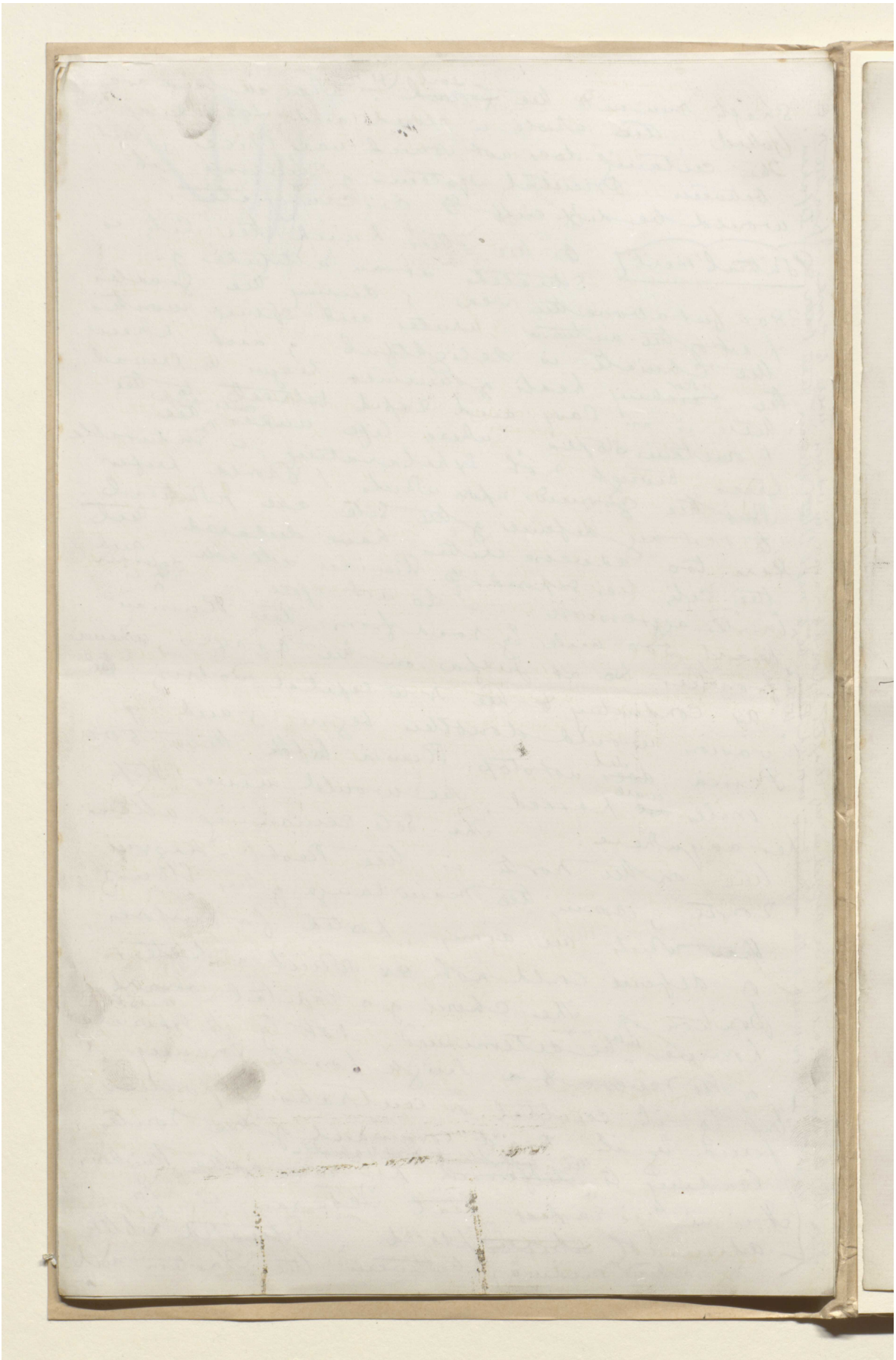
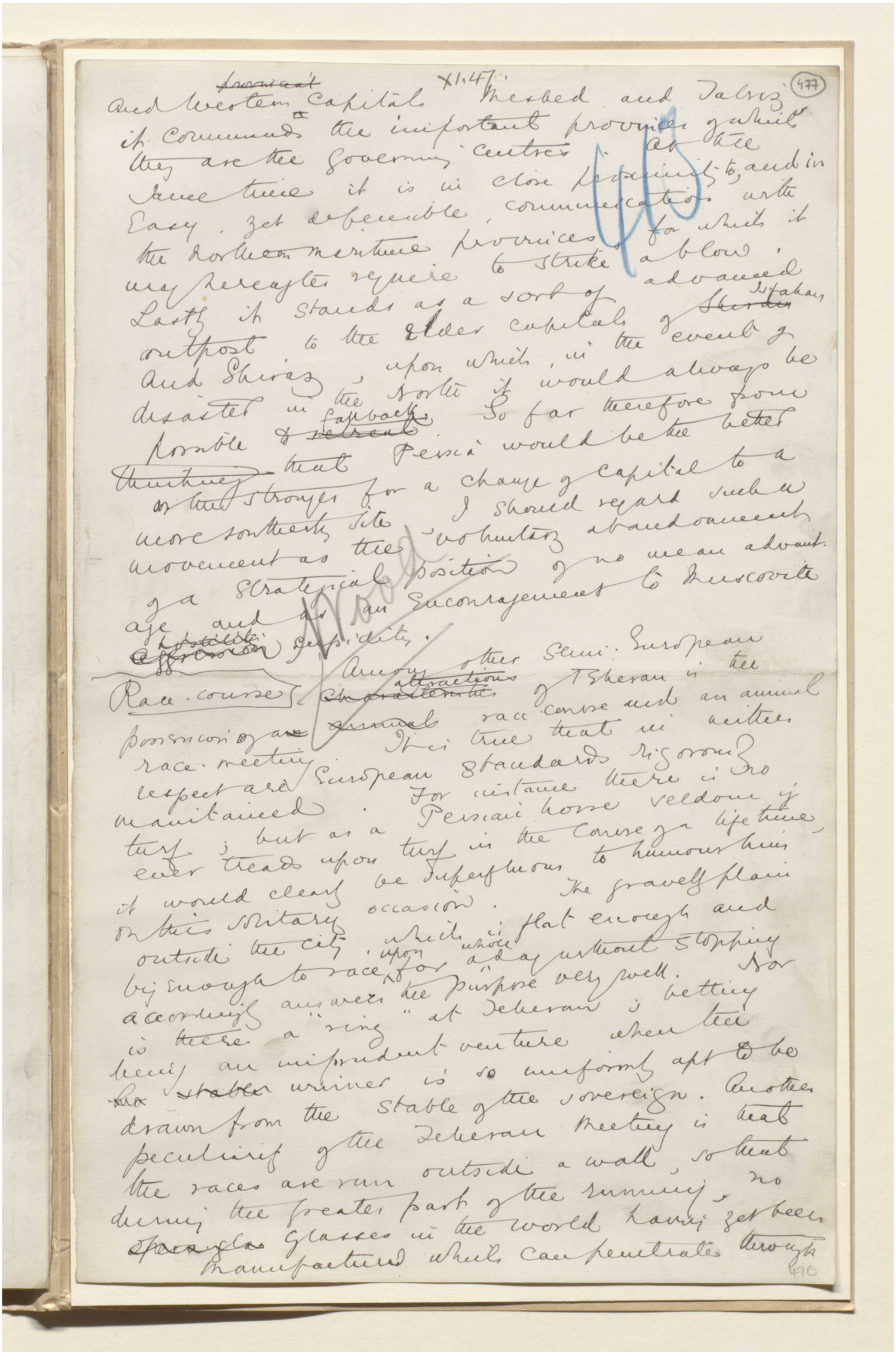






مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٤٧٧و] (١٣٥٥/٩٥٤)

XI.47



and Western ~~provincial~~ capitals Meshed and Tabriz it commands the important provinces of which they are the governing centres. At the same time it is in close proximity to, and in easy, yet defensible, communication with the northern maritime provinces, for which it may hereafter require to strike a blow. Lastly it stands as a sort of advanced outpost to the elder capitals of ~~Shiraz~~ Isfahan and Shiraz, upon which, in the event of disaster in the North it would always be possible ~~& retreat~~ fallback. So far therefore from ~~thinking~~ that Persia would be the better ~~or the~~ stronger for a change of capital to a more southerly site I should regard such a movement as the voluntary abandonment of a strategical position of no mean advantage and as an encouragement to Muscovite ~~hostility~~ ~~aggression~~ cupidity.

Race-course

Among other semi-European ~~characteristics~~ attractions of Teheran is the possession of an ~~annual~~ race course and an annual race-meeting. It is true that in neither respect are European standards rigorously maintained. For instance there is no turf; but as a Persian horse seldom if ever treads upon turf in the course of a lifetime, it would clearly be superfluous to humour him on this solitary occasion. The gravelly plain outside the city, which is flat enough and big enough to race upon whole, for a day without stopping accordingly answers the purpose very well. Nor is there a "ring" at Teheran; betting being an imprudent venture when the ~~stable~~ winner is so uniformly apt to be drawn from the stable of the sovereign. Another peculiarity of the Teheran meeting is that the races are run outside a wall, so that during the greater part of the running, no ~~sparingly~~ glasses in the world having yet been manufactured which can penetrate through

Wood

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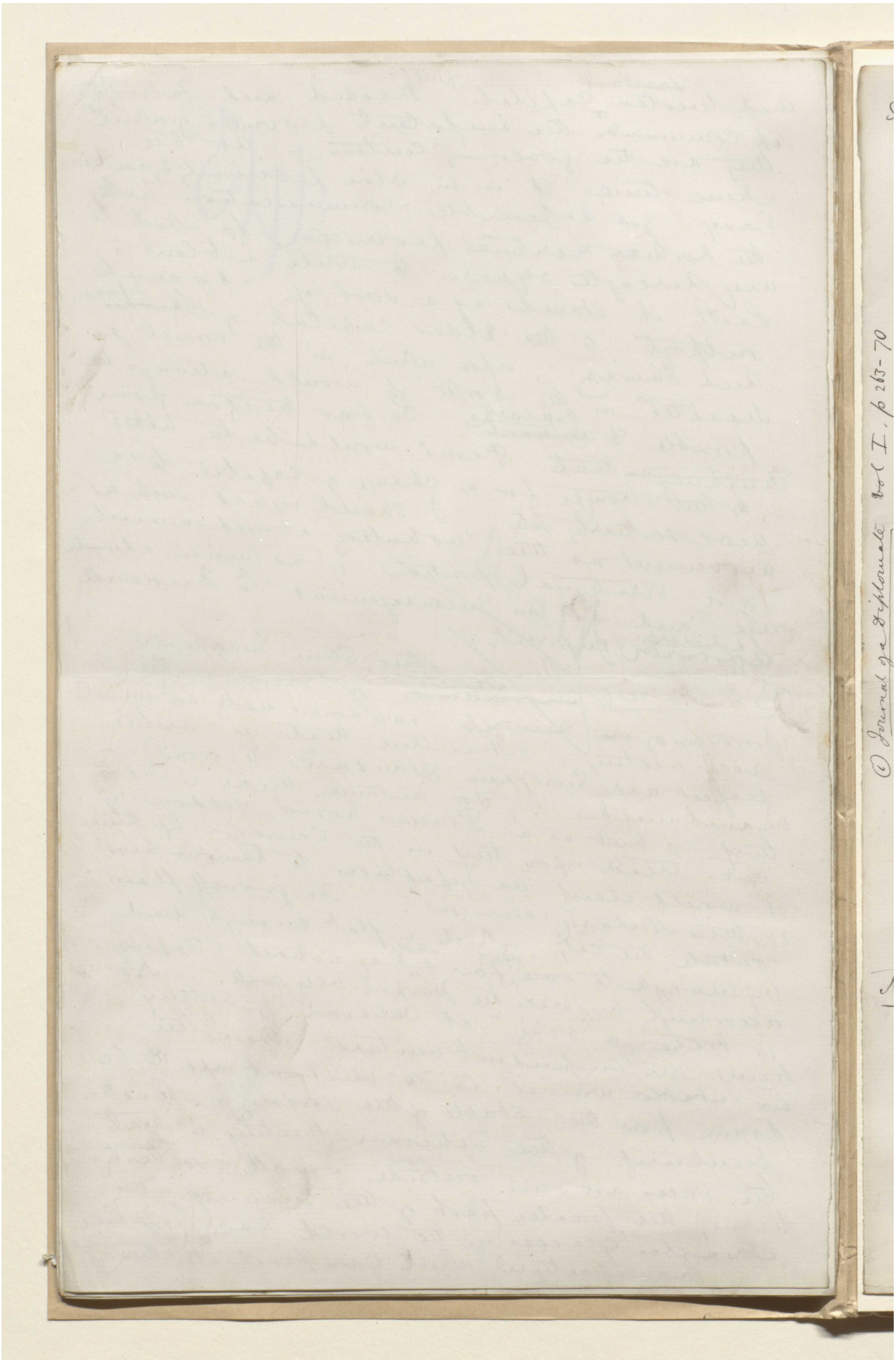
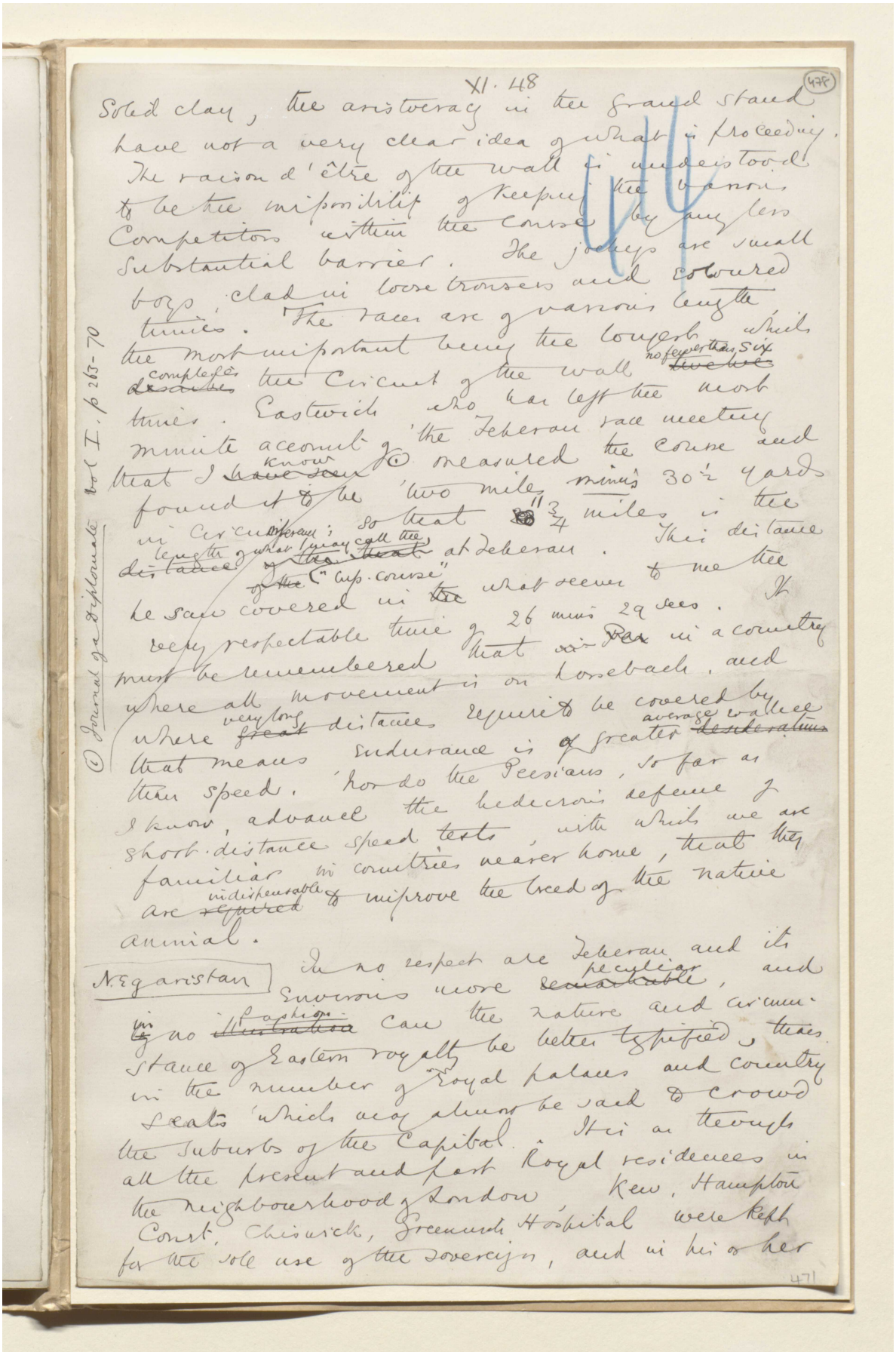

Journal de diplomate Vol I. p 263-70

مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٤٧٨و] (١٣٥٥/٩٥٦)



XI. 48 (478)

Solid clay, the aristocracy in the grand stand have not a very clear idea of what is proceeding. The raison d'être of the wall is understood to be the impossibility of keeping the various competitors within the course by any less substantial barrier. The jockeys are small boys, clad in loose trousers and coloured tunics. The races are of various length the most important being the longest which ~~describes~~ completes the circuit of the wall no fewer than six ~~twelve~~ times. Eastwick who has left the most minute account of the Teheran race meeting that I ~~have seen~~ know (1) measured the course and found it to be two miles minus 30½ yards in circumference; so that 11¾ miles is the length of what I may call the ~~distance of the that~~ at Teheran. This distance he saw covered in ~~the~~ what seems to me the very respectable time of 26 mins 29 secs. It must be remembered that ~~in Pex~~ in a country where all movement is on horseback, and where ~~great~~ very long distances require to be covered by that means endurance is of greater average value than speed. Nor do the Persians, so far as I know, advance the hedecrous defence of short-distance speed tests, with which we are familiar in countries nearer home, that they are ~~required~~ indispensable to improve the breed of the native animal.

(1) Journal of a Diplomate vol I. p 263-70

Negaristan

In no respect are Teheran and its environs more ~~remarkable~~ peculiar, and in no ~~illustration~~ fashion can the nature and circumstance of Eastern royalty be better typified, than in the number of Royal palaces and country seats which may almost be said to crowd the suburbs of the Capital. It is as though all the present and past Royal residences in the neighbourhood of London, Kew, Hampton Court, Chiswick, Greenwich Hospital were kept for the sole use of the sovereign, and in his or her

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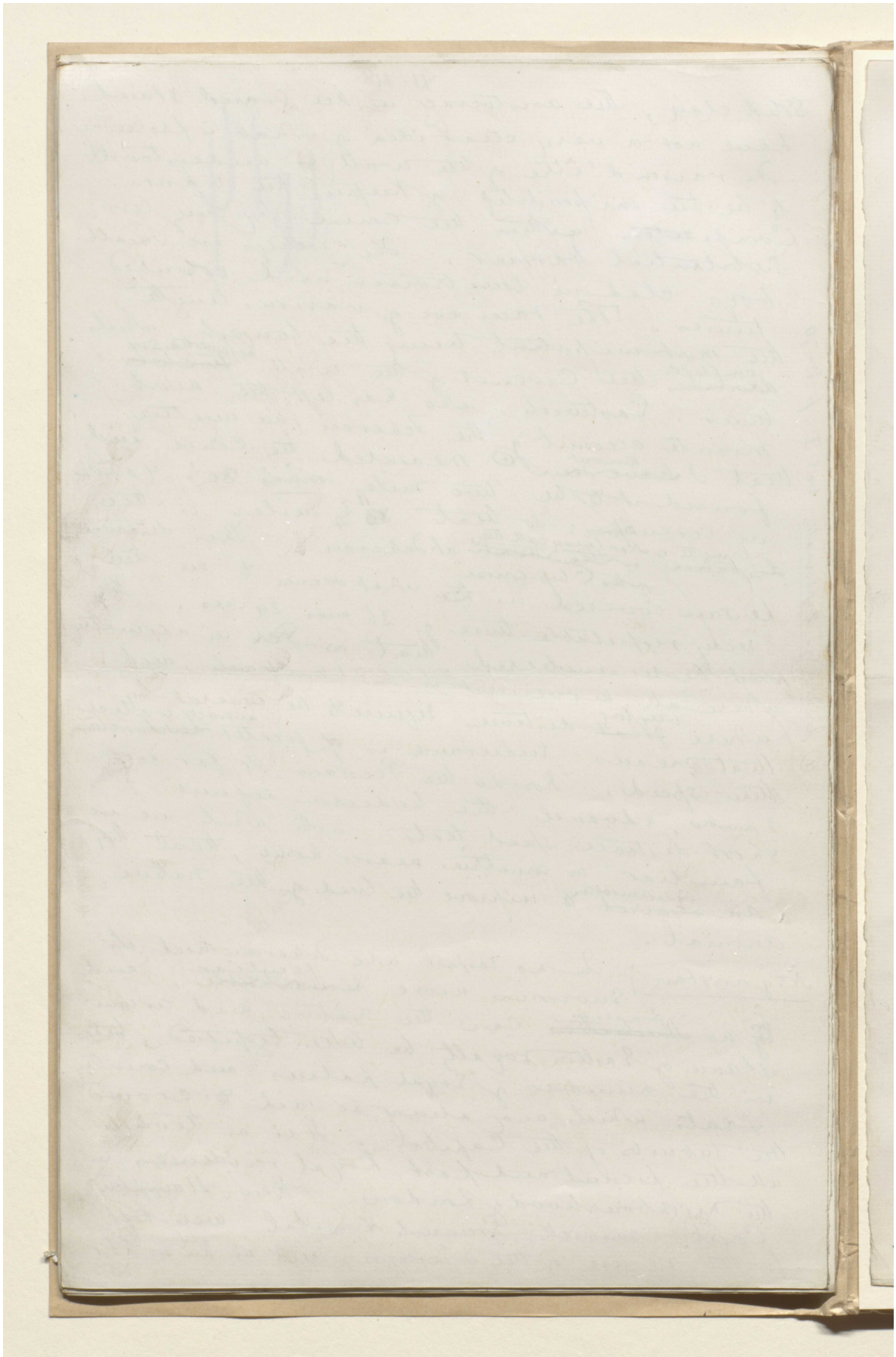

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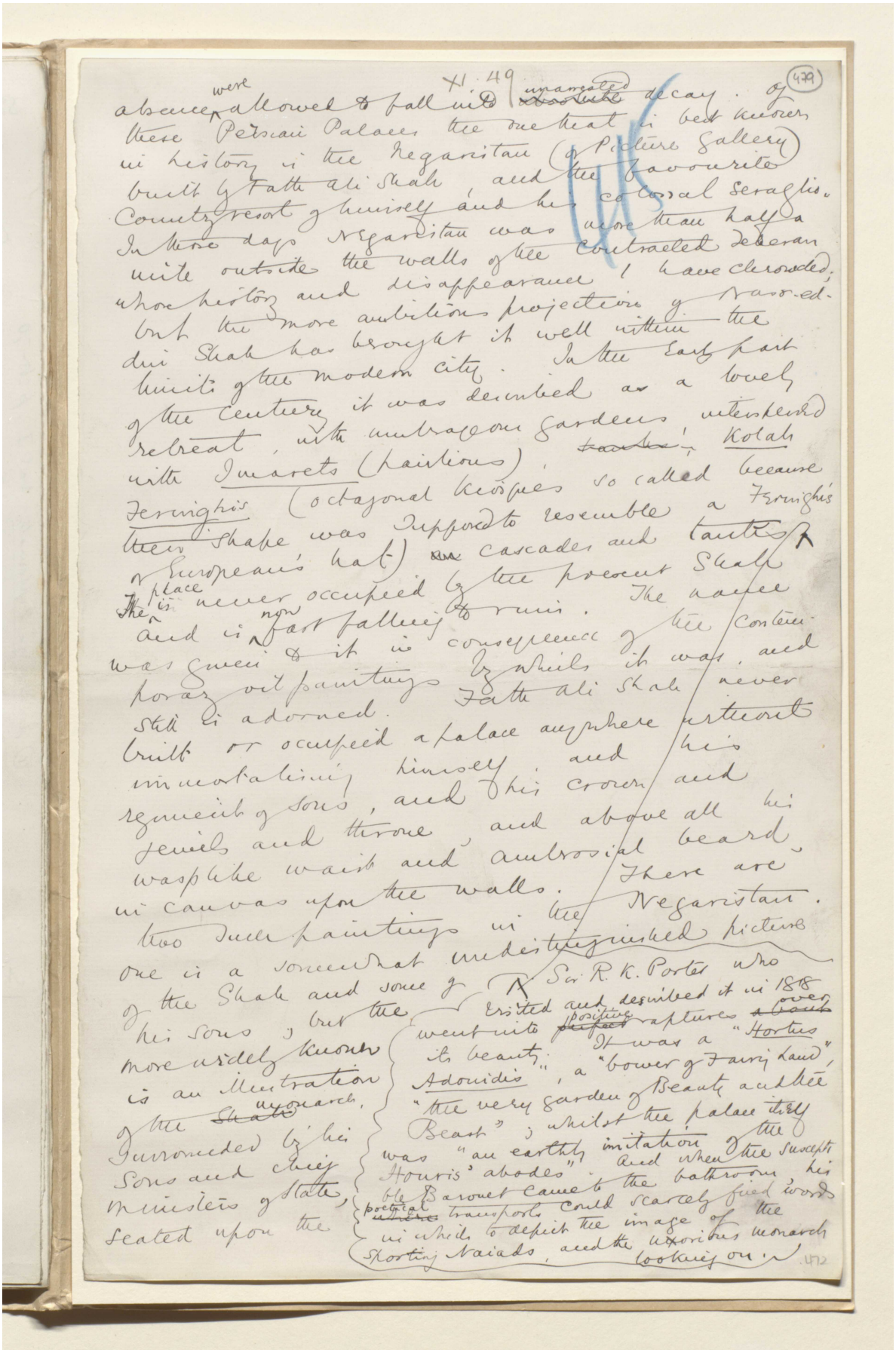
XI. 49 (479)



absence were allowed to fall into ~~absolute~~ unarrested decay. Of these Persian Palaces the one that is best known in history is the Negaristan (or Picture Gallery) built by Fath Ali Shah, and the favourite Country resort of himself and his colossal Seraglio. In those days Negaristan was more than half a mile outside the walls of the contracted Teheran whose history and disappearance I have chronicled; but the more ambitious projection of Nasr-ed-din Shah has brought it well within the limits of the modern city. In the early part of the century it was described as a lovely retreat, with umbrageous gardens interspersed with Imarets (pavilions), ~~tanks~~; Kolah Feringhis (octagonal kiosques so called because their shape was supposed to resemble a Feringhi's or European's hat) ~~an~~ cascades and tanks. The place is never occupied by the present Shah and is now fast falling to ruin. The name was given to it in consequence of the contemporary oil paintings by which it was, and still is adorned. Fath Ali Shah never built or occupied a palace anywhere without immortalising himself and his regiment of sons, and his crown and jewels and throne, and above all his wasp-like waist and ambrosial beard, in canvas upon the walls. There are two such paintings in the Negaristan. One is a somewhat undistinguished picture of the Shah and some of his sons; but the more widely known is an illustration of the ~~Shah~~ monarch, surrounded by his sons and chief ministers of State, seated upon the

Sir R. K. Porter who visited and described it in 1818 went into ~~perfect~~ positive raptures ~~about~~ over its beauty. It was a "Hortus Adonidis", a "bower of Fairy Land", "the very garden of Beauty and the Beast"; whilst the palace itself was "an earthly imitation of the Houris' abodes". And when the susceptible Baronet came to the bathroom, his poetical ~~where~~ transports could scarcely find words in which to depict the image of the sporting Naiads, and the uxorious monarch looking on.

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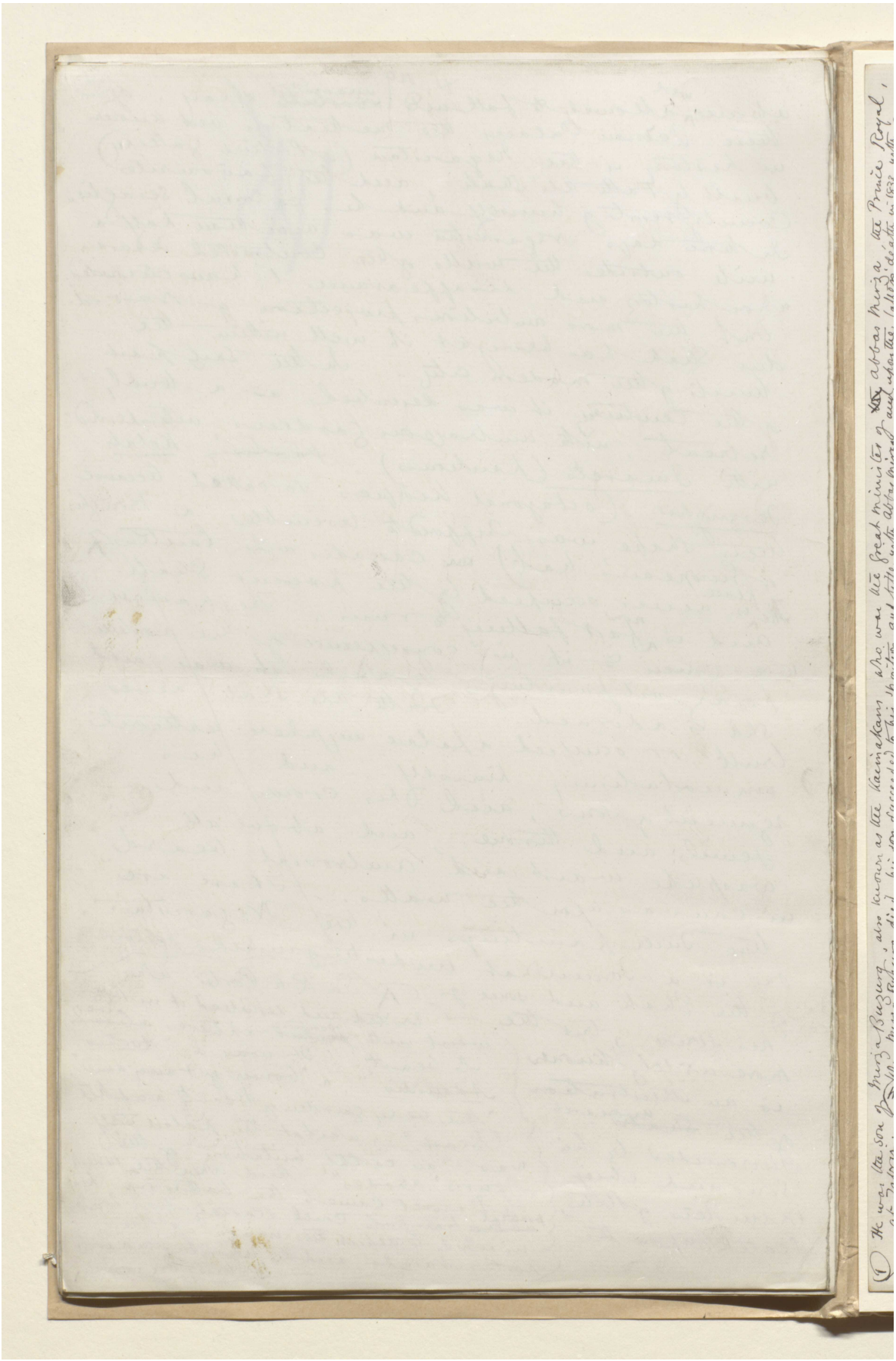

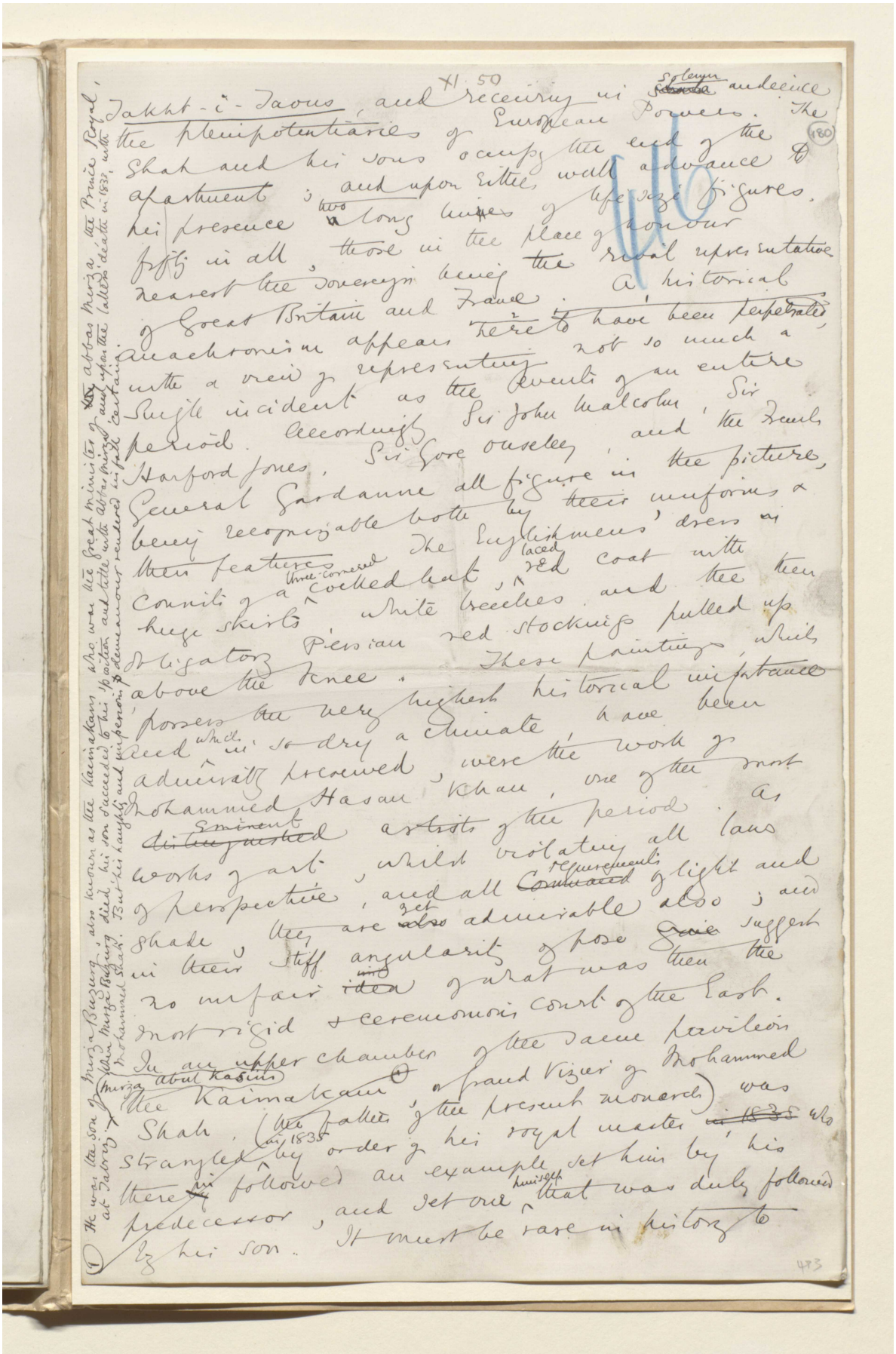

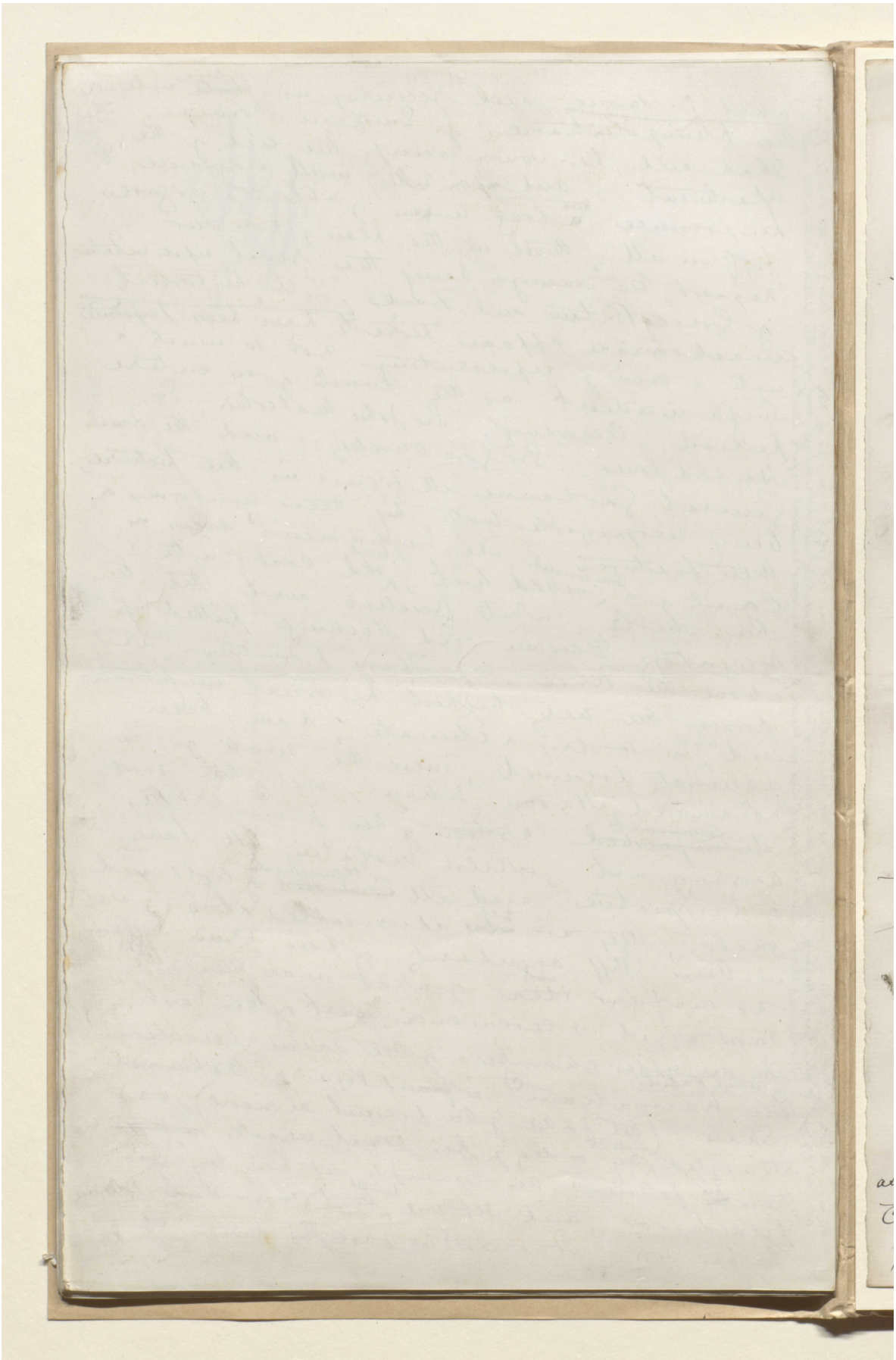

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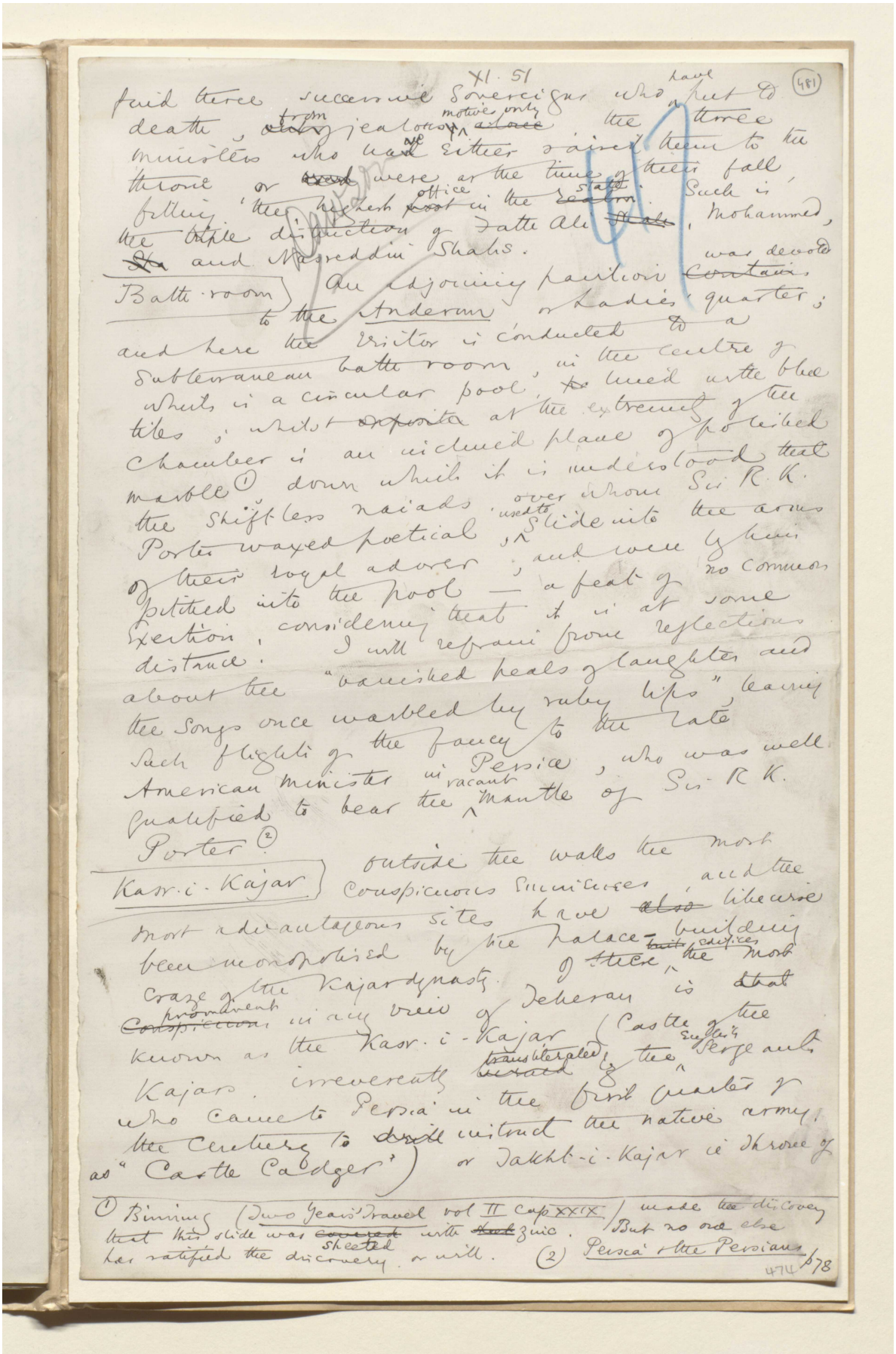
XI. 51 (481)



find three successive Sovereigns who have put to death, from jealousy motives only, the three ministers who have either raised them to the throne or were at the time of their fall, filling the highest office in the state. Such is the triple distinction of Fatte Ali, Mohammed, and Nasreddin Shahs.

Bath-room

An adjoining pavilion was devoted to the Anderun or Ladies' quarter; and here the visitor is conducted to a subterranean bath room, in the centre of which is a circular pool, lined with blue tiles; whilst at the extremity of the chamber is an inclined plane of polished marble (1) down which it is understood that the shiftless naiads, over whom Sir R. K. Porter waxed poetical, used to slide into the arms of their royal adorer, and were by him pitched into the pool — a feat of no common exertion, considering that it is at some distance. I will refrain from reflections about the "vanished peals of laughter and the songs once warbled by ruby lips", leaving such flights of the fancy to the late American minister in Persia, who was well qualified to bear the vacant mantle of Sir R. K. Porter (2)

Kasr-i-Kajar

Outside the walls the most conspicuous eminences, and the most advantageous sites have likewise been monopolised by the palace-building craze of the Kajar dynasty. Of these edifices the most prominent in any view of Teheran is that known as the Kasr-i-Kajar (Castle of the Kajars, irreverently transliterated by the English sergeants who came to Persia in the first quarter of the century to instruct the native army, as "Castle Cadger") or Takht-i-Kajar ie Throne of

(1) Binning (Two Years' Travel vol II cap XXIX) made the discovery that this slide was sheeted with zinc. But no one else has ratified the discovery or will. (2) Persia & the Persians p78

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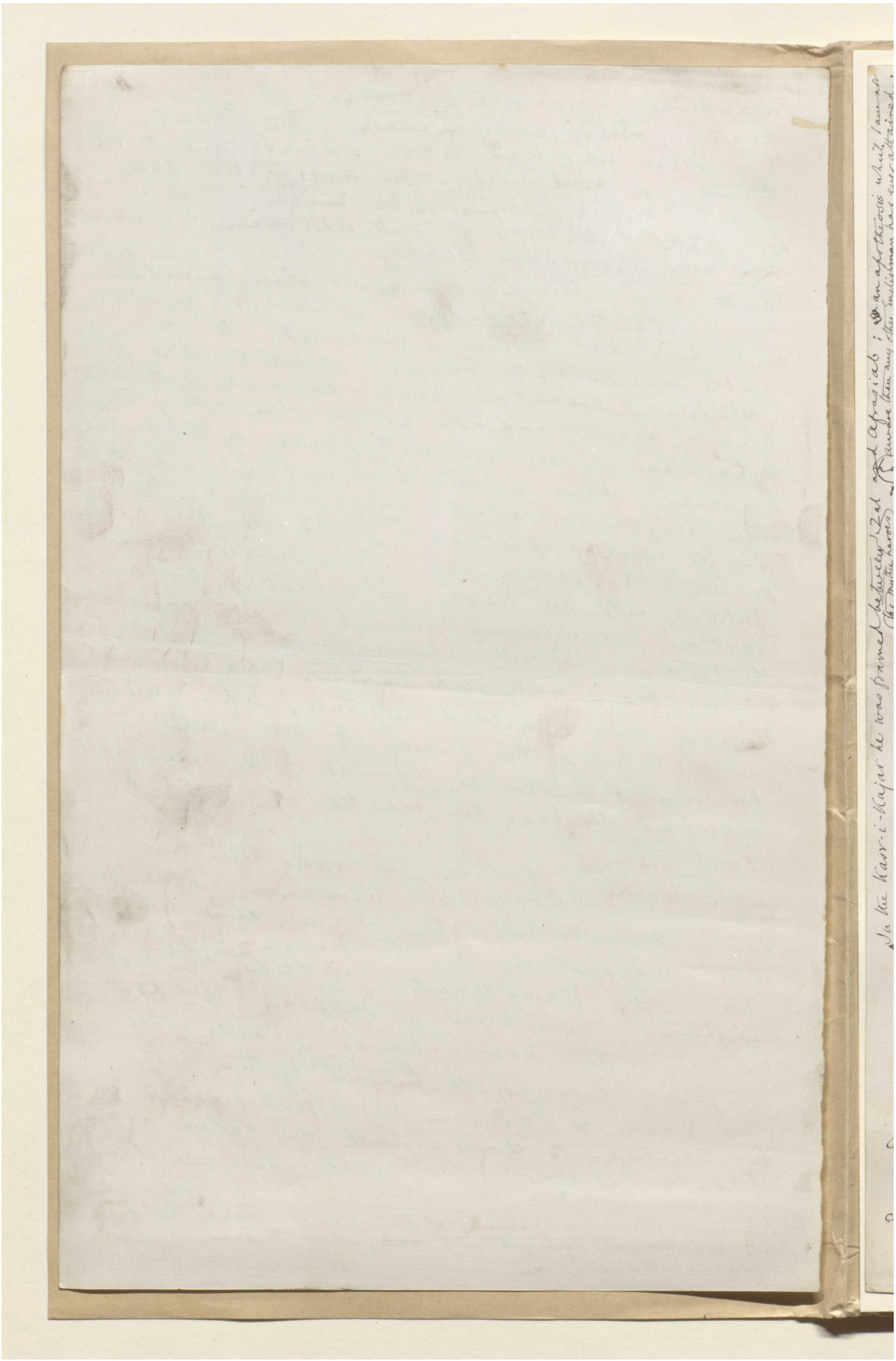

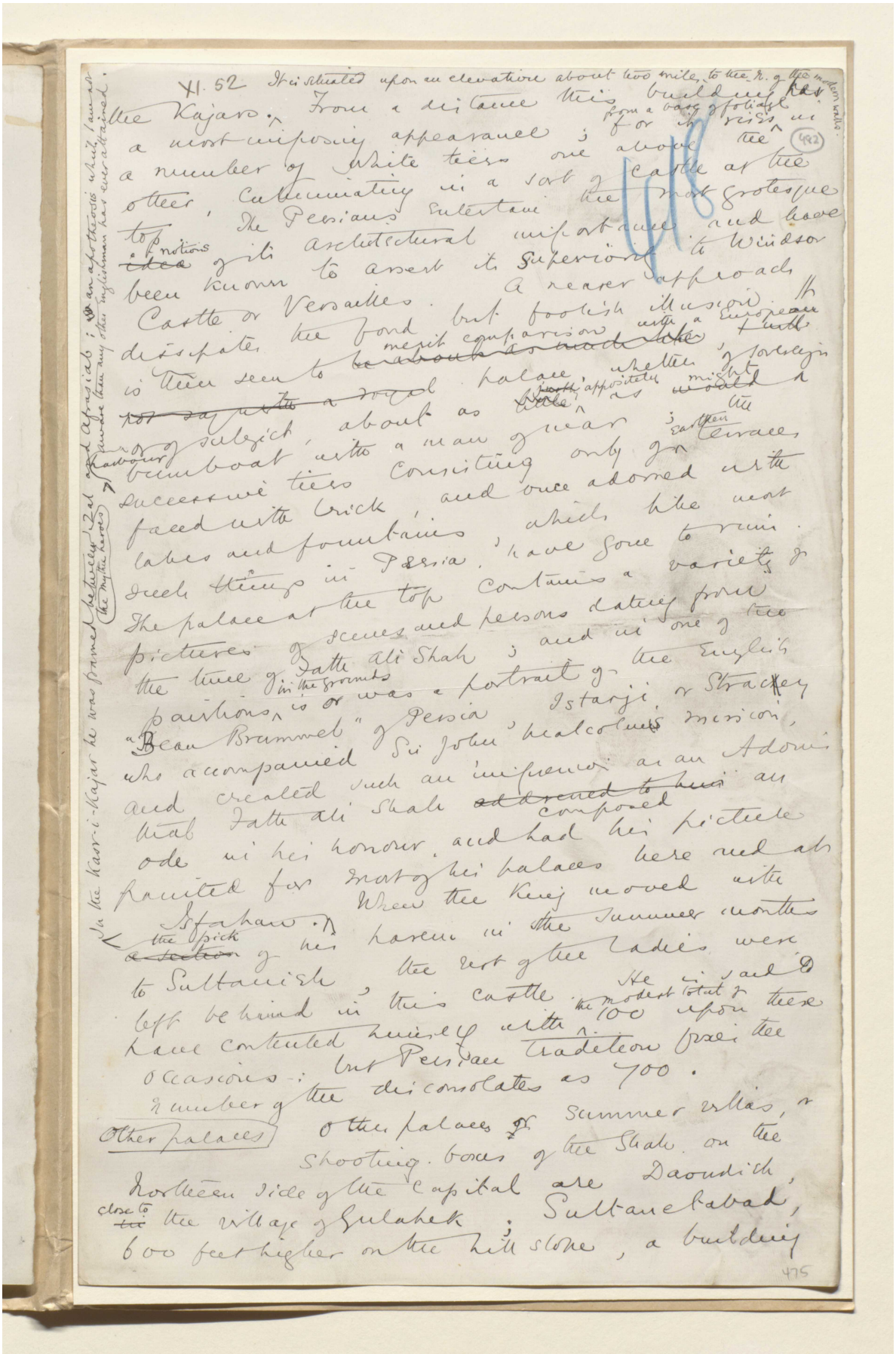

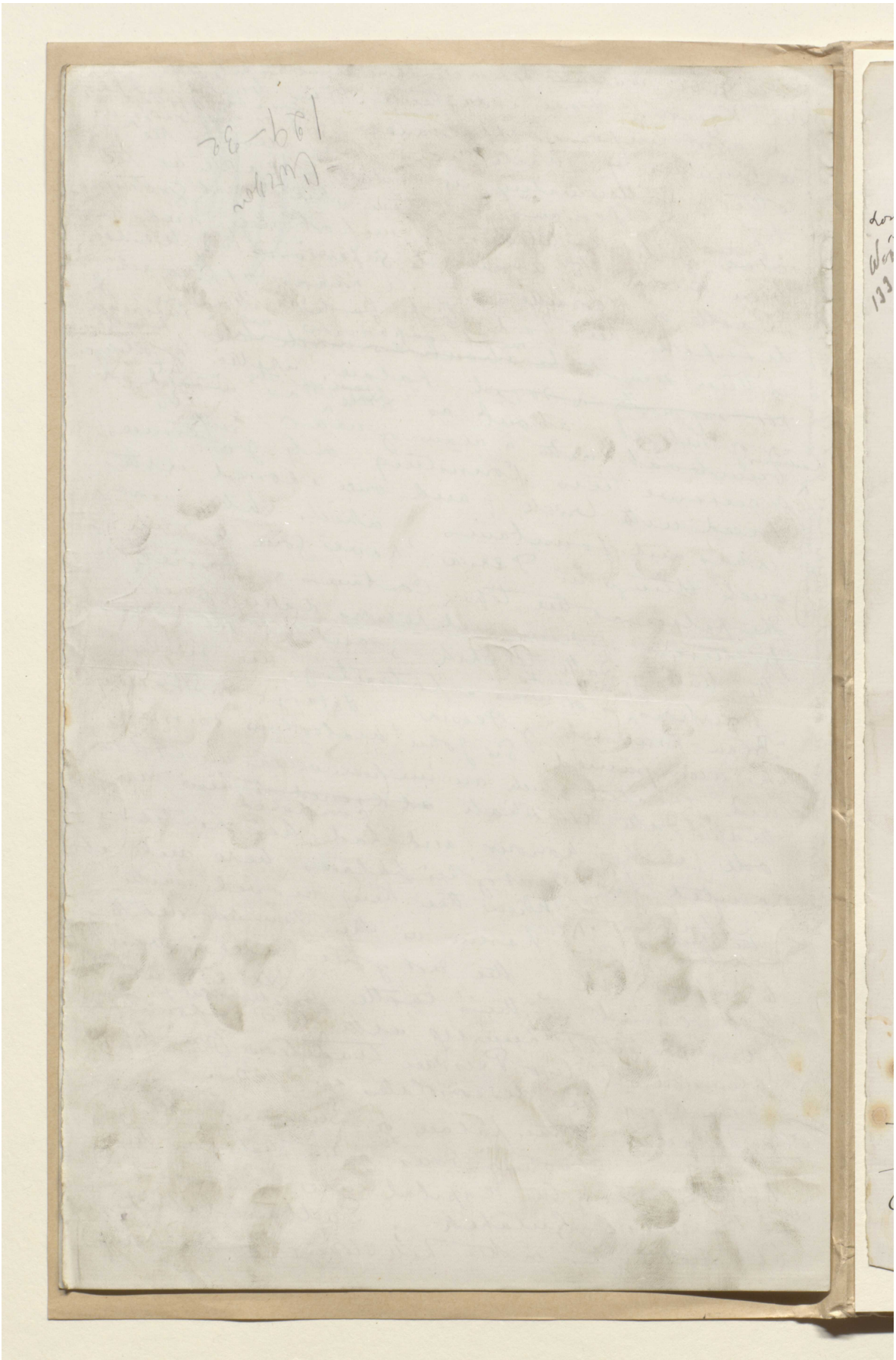

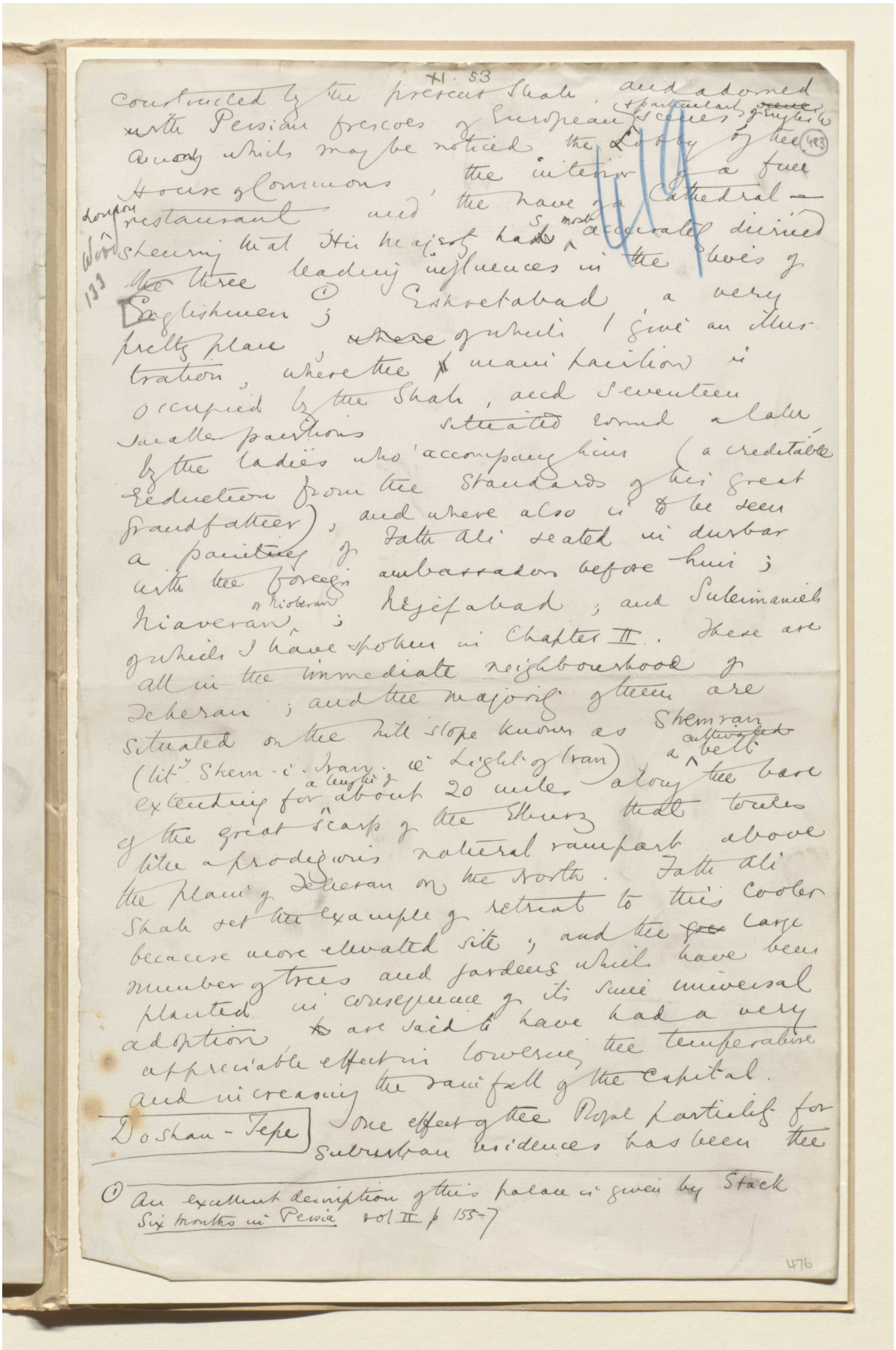

XI. 53

constructed by the present Shah, and adorned with Persian frescoes of European scenes, particularly of English, among which may be noticed the Lobby of the House of Commons, the interior of a fine restaurant and the nave of a Cathedral — sheering that His Majesty has most accurately divined the three leading influences in the lives of Englishmen ①; Eshretabad, a very pretty place, of which I give an illustration, where the main pavilion is occupied by the Shah, and seventeen smaller pavilions situated round a lake by the ladies who accompany him (a creditable reduction from the standards of his great grandfather), and where also is to be seen a painting of Fath Ali seated in durbar with the foreign ambassadors before him; Niaveran or Nioberan; Nejefabad; and Suleimaniah of which I have spoken in Chapter II. These are all in the immediate neighbourhood of Teheran; and the majority of them are situated on the hill slope known as Shemran (lit. Shem-i-Iran, ie Light of Iran), a cultivated belt extending for a length of about 20 miles along the base of the great scarp of the Elburz that towers like a prodigious natural rampart above the plain of Teheran on the North. Fath Ali Shah set the example of retreat to this cooler because more elevated site; and the large number of trees and gardens which have been planted in consequence of its since universal adoption are said to have had a very appreciable effect in lowering the temperature and increasing the rainfall of the capital.

Doshan-Tepe

One effect of the Royal partiality for suburban residences has been the

① An excellent description of this palace is given by Stack Six months in Persia vol II p 155-7

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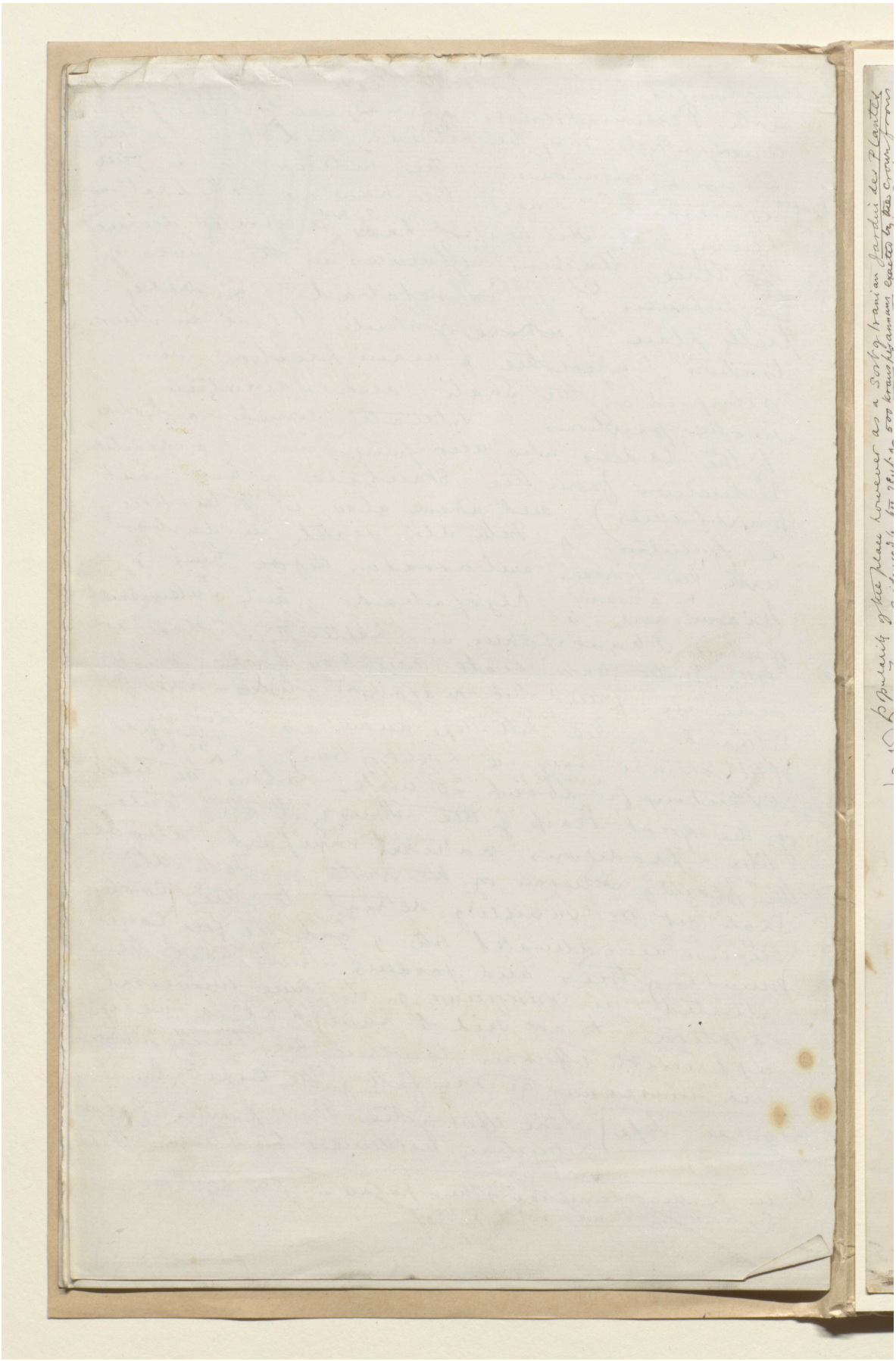

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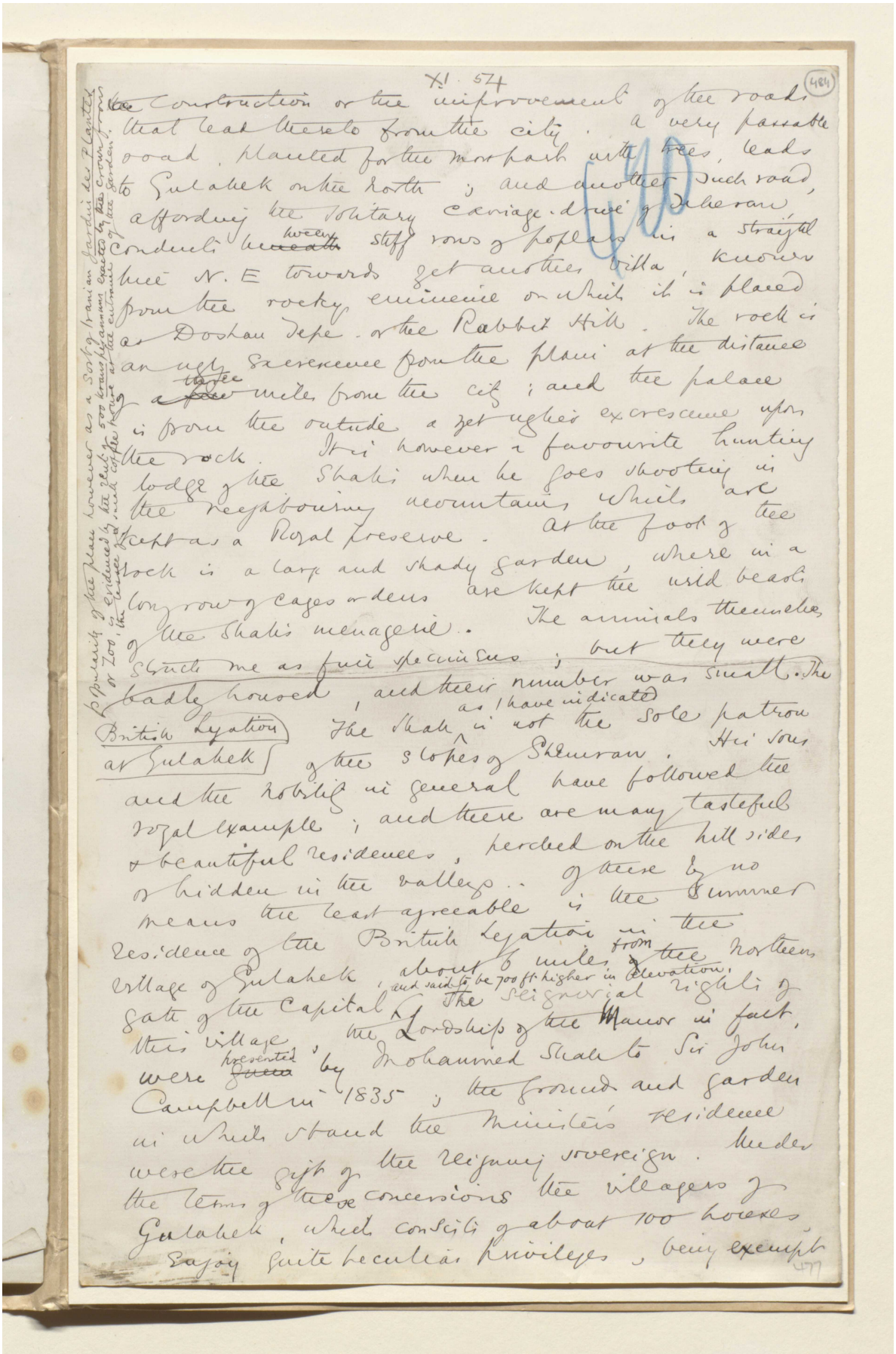
XI. 54

(484)



the construction or the improvement of the roads that lead thereto from the city. A very passable road, planted for the most part with trees, leads to Gulahek on the north; and another such road, affording the solitary carriage-drive of Jaheran, conducts between stiff rows of poplars in a straight line N.E towards yet another villa, known from the rocky eminence on which it is placed as Doshan Tepe or the Rabbit Hill. The rock is an ugly excrescence from the plain at the distance of a three miles from the city; and the palace is from the outside a yet uglier excrescence upon the rock. It is however a favourite hunting lodge of the Shah's when he goes shooting in the neighbouring mountains which are kept as a Royal preserve. At the foot of the rock is a large and shady garden, where in a long row of cages or dens are kept the wild beasts of the Shah's menagerie. The animals themselves struck me as fine specimens; but they were badly housed, and their number was small. The

British Legation at Gulahek

The Shah as I have indicated is not the sole patron of the slopes of Shemran. His sons and the nobility in general have followed the royal example; and there are many tasteful & beautiful residences, perched on the hill sides or hidden in the valleys. Of these by no means the least agreeable is the summer residence of the British Legation in the village of Gulahek, about 6 miles from the northern gate of the capital, and said to be 700 ft. higher in elevation. The seignorial rights of this village, the Lordship of the Manor in fact, were presented by Mohammed Shah to Sir John Campbell in 1835; the grounds and garden in which stand the Minister's residence were the gift of the reigning sovereign. Under the terms of these concessions the villagers of Gulahek, which consists of about 100 houses, enjoy quite peculiar privileges, being exempt

popularity of the plain however as a sort of Iranian Jardin des Plantes or Zoo, is evidenced by the rent of 500 krans per annum exacted by the crown from the lessee of a small coffee house at the entrance of the garden.

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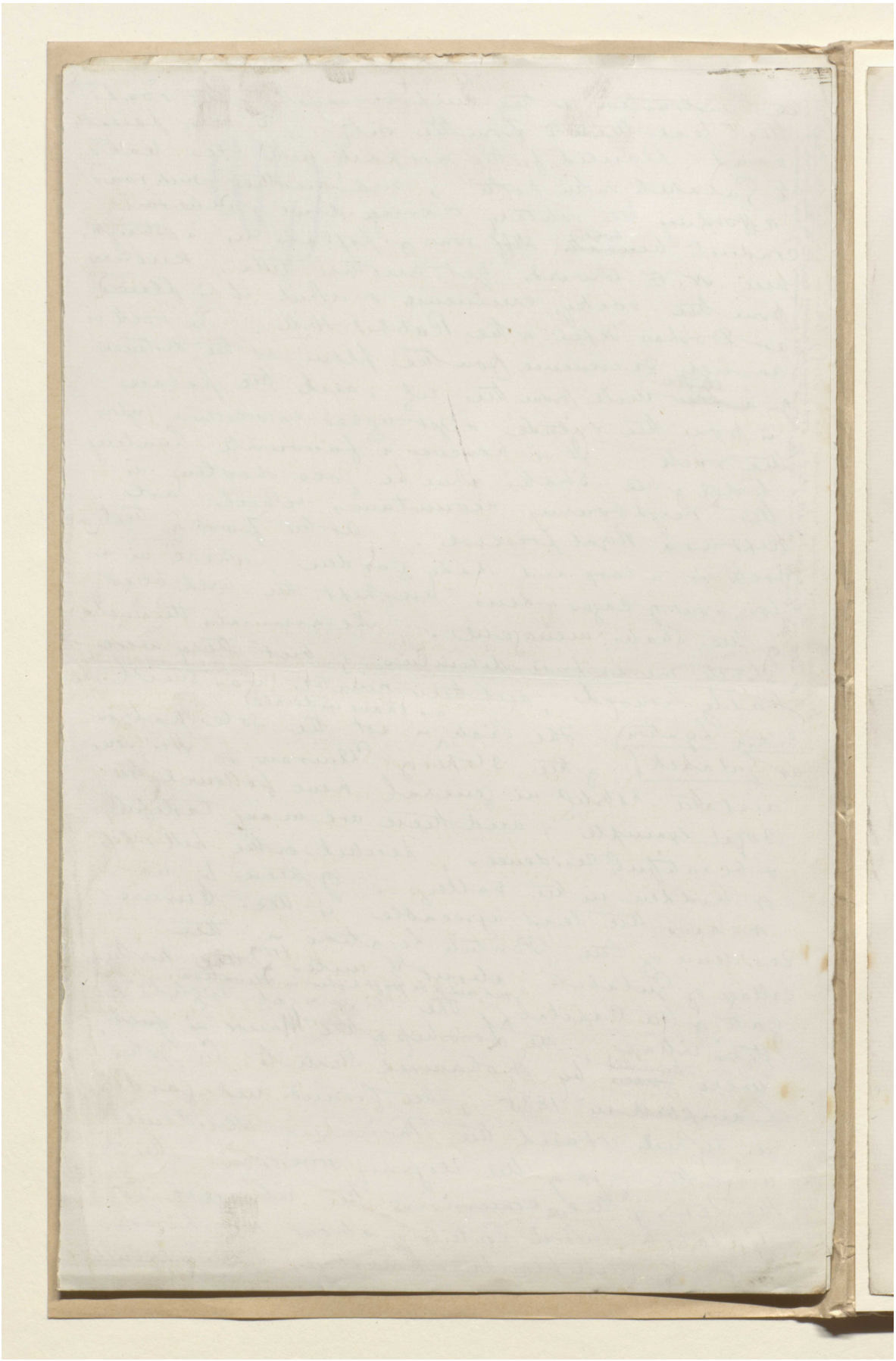
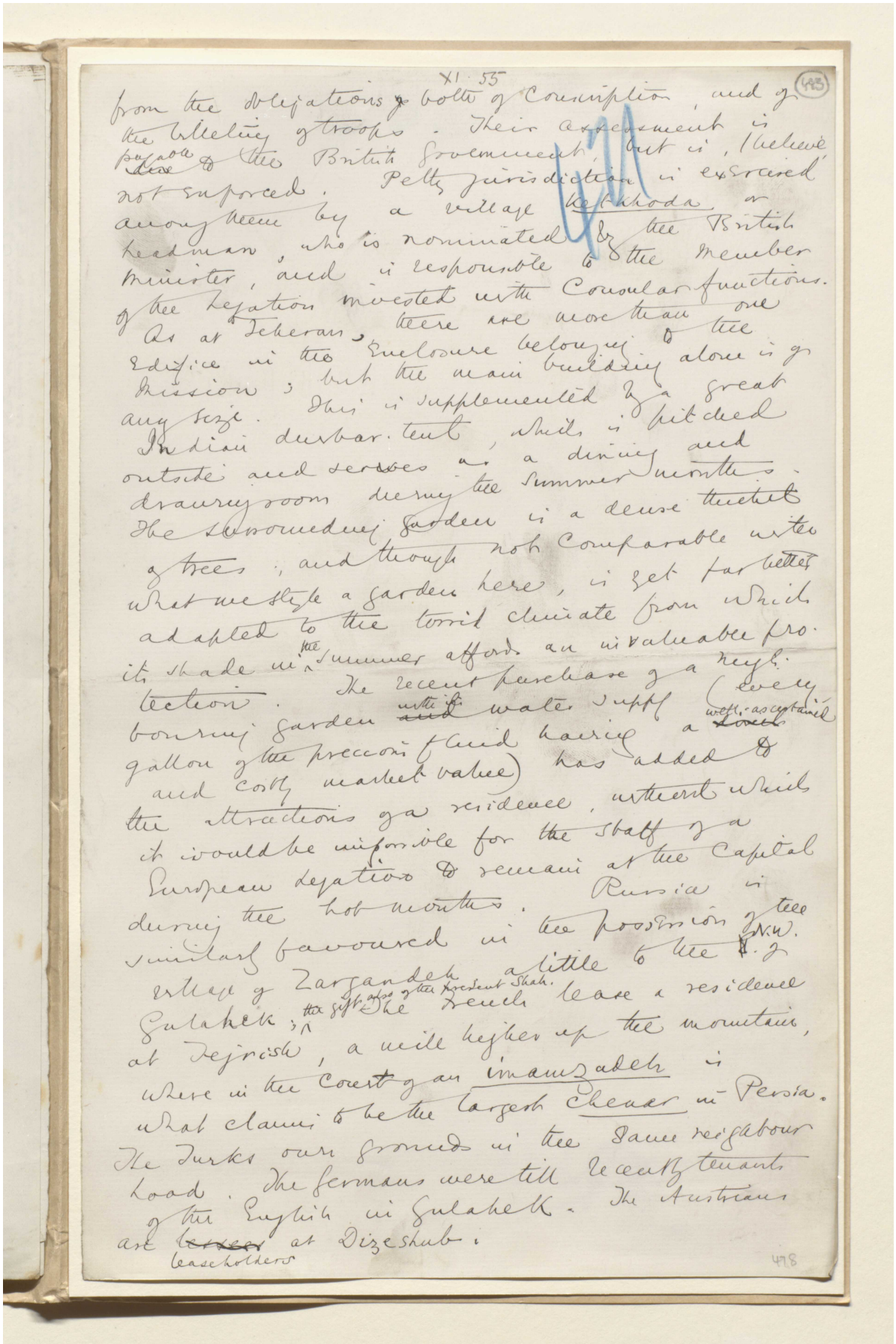


مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٤٨٥و] (١٣٥٥/٩٧٠)



XI. 55

(483)

from the obligations of both of Conscription, and of the billeting of troops. Their assessment is payable to the British Government, but is, I believe, not enforced. Petty jurisdiction is exercised among them by a village Ketkhoda or Headman, who is nominated by the British Minister, and is responsible to the Member of the Legation invested with Consular functions. As at Teheran, there are more than one Edifice in the Enclosure belonging to the Mission; but the main building alone is of any size. This is supplemented by a great Indian durbar-tent, which is pitched outside and serves as a dining and drawing room during the summer months. The surrounding garden is a dense thicket of trees; and though not comparable with what we style a garden here, is yet far better adapted to the torrid climate from which its shade in the summer affords an invaluable protection. The recent purchase of a neighbouring garden with its water supply (every gallon of the precious fluid having a well-ascertained and costly market value) has added to the attractions of a residence, without which it would be impossible for the staff of a European Legation to remain at the Capital during the hot months. Russia is similarly favoured in the possession of the village of Zargandeh a little to the N.W. of Gulahek; the gift also of the present Shah. The French lease a residence at Tejrish, a mile higher up the mountain, where in the Court of an imamzadeh is what claims to be the largest Chenar in Persia. The Turks own grounds in the same neighbourhood. The Germans were till recently tenants of the English in Gulahek. The Austrians are ~~lessees~~ leaseholders at Dizeshub.

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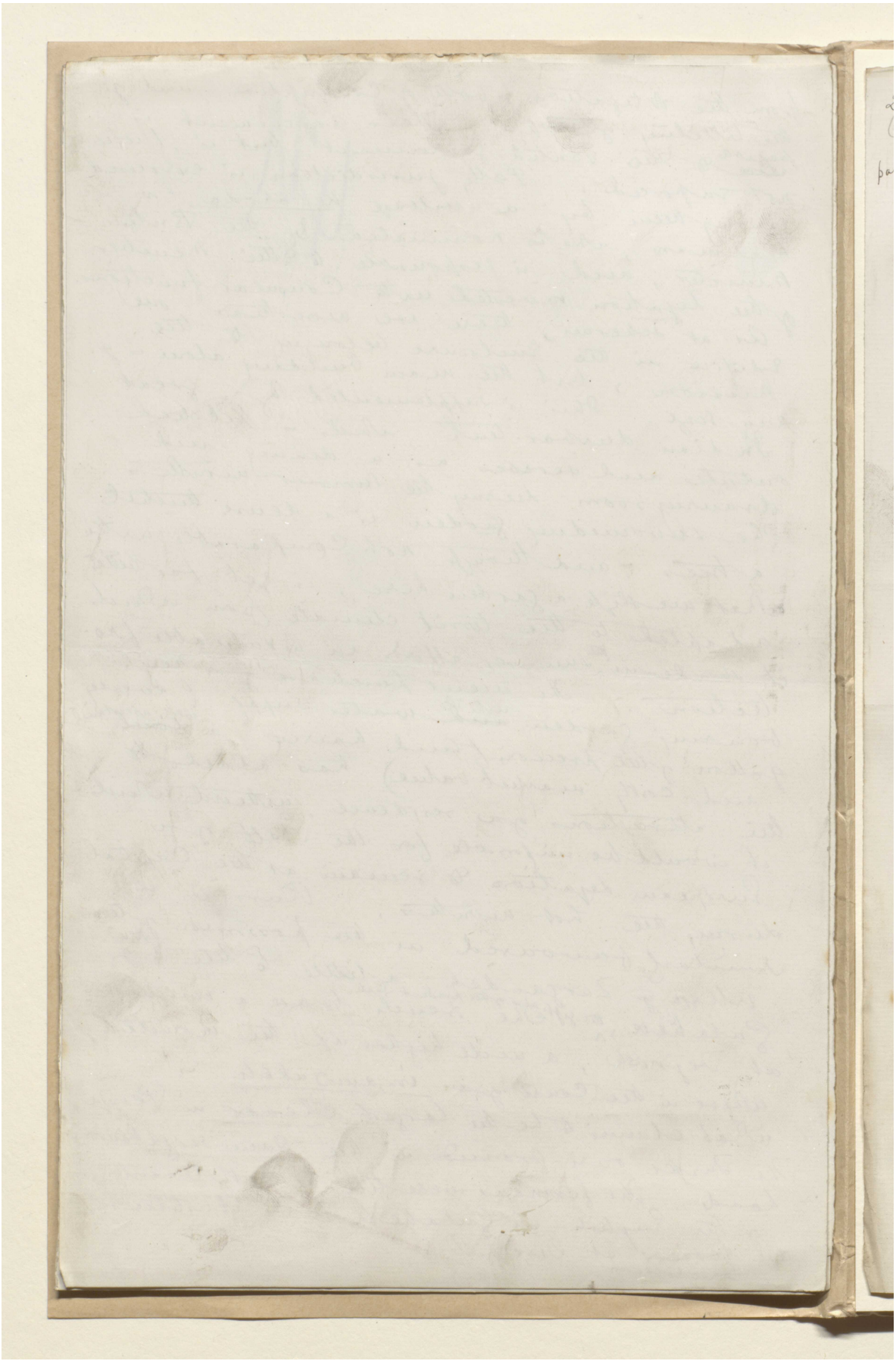

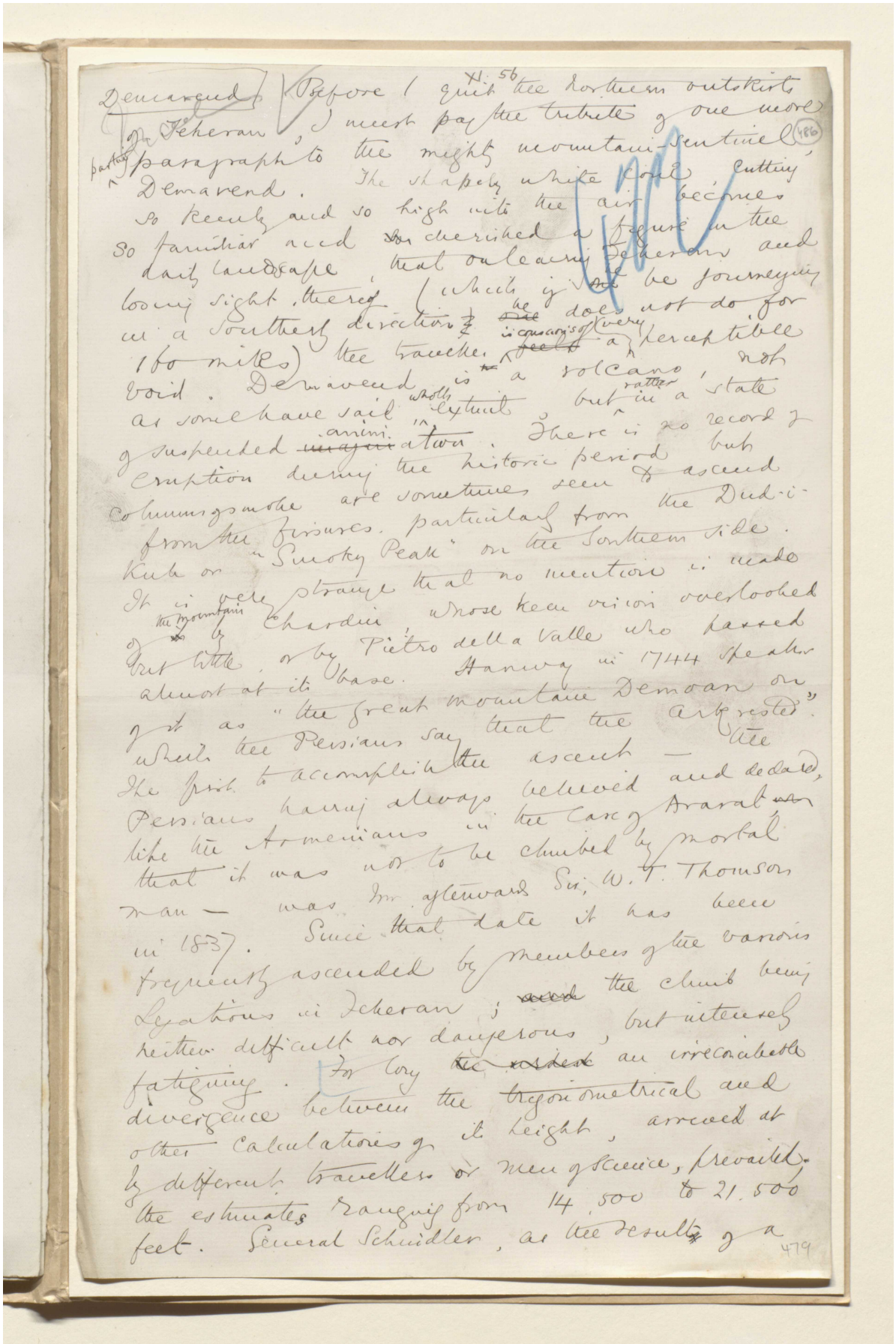

Demavend. Before I quit the northern outskirts of Teheran, I must pay the tribute of one more paragraph to the mighty mountain-sentinel, Demavend. The shapely white cone, cutting so keenly and so high into the air becomes so familiar and cherished a figure in the daily landscape, that on leaving Teheran and losing sight thereof (which if he be journeying in a southerly direction he does not do for 160 miles) the traveller is conscious of a very perceptible void. Demavend is a volcano, not as some have said wholly extinct, but rather in a state of suspended animation. There is no record of eruption during the historic period but columns of smoke are sometimes seen to ascend from the fissures, particularly from the Dud-i-Kub or "Smoky Peak" on the southern side. It is very strange that no mention is made of the mountain by Chardin, whose keen vision overlooked but little, or by Pietro della Valle who passed almost at its base. Hanway in 1744 speaks of it as "the great mountain Demoan on which the Persians say that the Ark rested". The first to accomplish the ascent — the Persians having always believed and declared, like the Armenians in the case of Ararat, that it was not to be climbed by mortal man — was Mr afterwards Sir W. T. Thomson in 1837. Since that date it has been frequently ascended by members of the various Legations in Teheran; the climb being neither difficult nor dangerous, but intensely fatiguing. For long an irreconcilable divergence between the trigonometrical and other calculations of its height, arrived at by different travellers or men of science, prevailed; the estimates ranging from 14,500 to 21,500 feet. General Schindler, as the result of a

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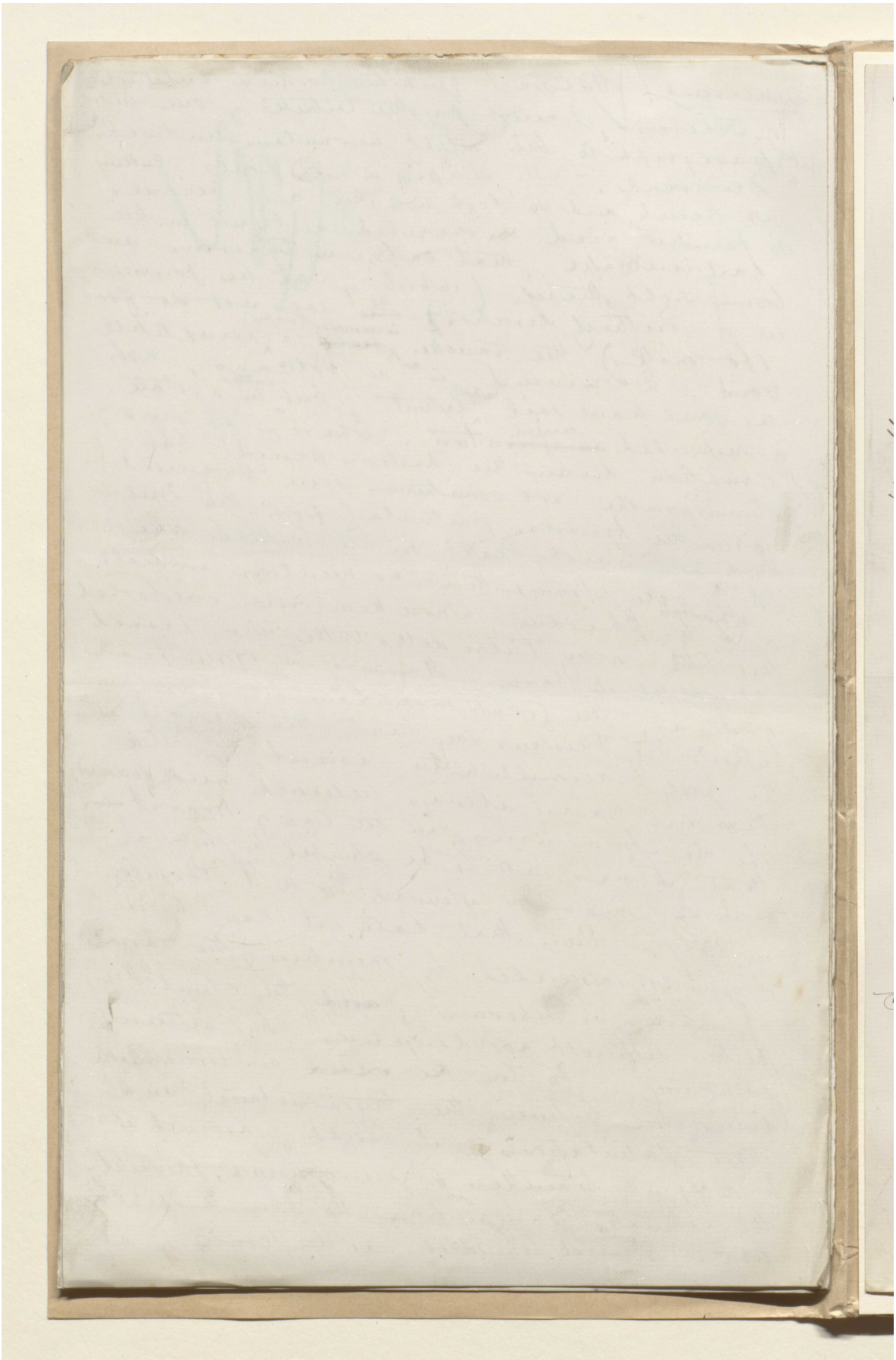

المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة

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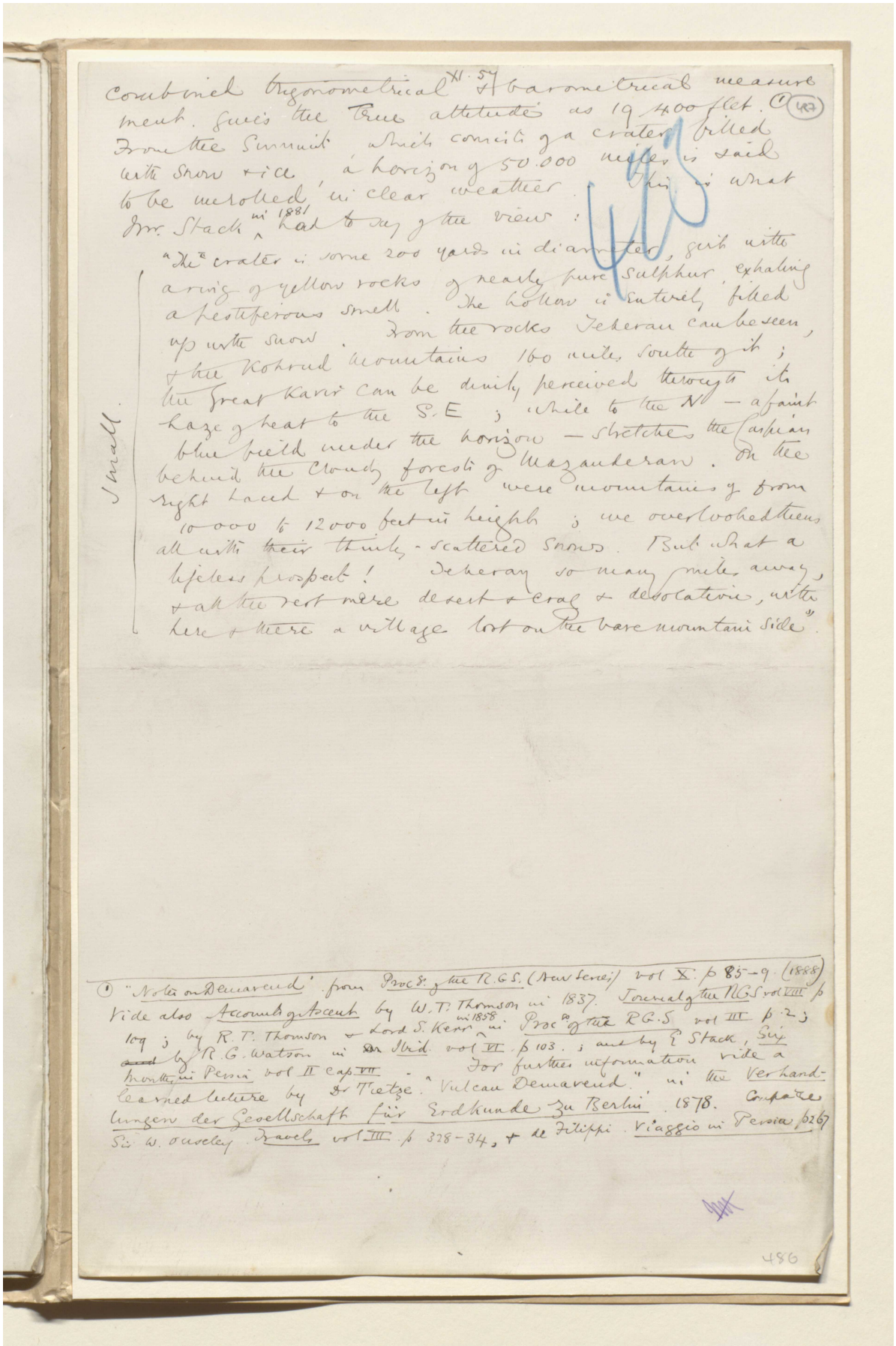

combined trigonometrical & barometrical measurements. fixes the true altitude as 19,400 feet. (1) (487)
From the Summit which consists of a crater filled with snow & ice, a horizon of 50.000 miles is said to be unrolled, in clear weather. This is what Mrs. Stack in 1881 had to say of the view:

"The crater is some 200 yards in diameter, girt with a ring of yellow rocks of nearly pure sulphur, exhaling a pestiferous smell. The hollow is entirely filled up with snow. From the rocks Teheran can be seen, & the Kohrud mountains 160 miles south of it; the great Kavir can be dimly perceived through its haze of heat to the S.E; while to the N — a faint blue field under the horizon — stretches the Caspian behind the cloudy forests of Mazanderan. On the right hand & on the left were mountains of from 10000 to 12000 feet in height; we overlooked them all with their thinly-scattered snows. But what a lifeless prospect! Teheran so many miles away, & all the rest mere desert & crag & desolation, with here & there a village lost on the bare mountain side".

Small.

(1) "Notes on Demavend" from Proc.s of the R.G.S. (New Series) vol X: p 85-9. (1888)
Vide also Account of Ascent by W.T. Thomson in 1837. Journal of the RGS vol VIII p 109; by R.T. Thomson & Lord S. Kerr in 1858. Proc.s of the R.G.S vol III p 23; by R.G. Watson in Ibid vol VI p 103.; and by F. Stack, Six Months in Persia vol II cap. VIII. For further information vide a learned lecture by Dr Moetze "Vulcan Demavend." in the Verhandlungen der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin. 1878. Compare Sir W. Ouseley Travels vol III p 328-34, & de Filippi Viaggio in Persia p 267

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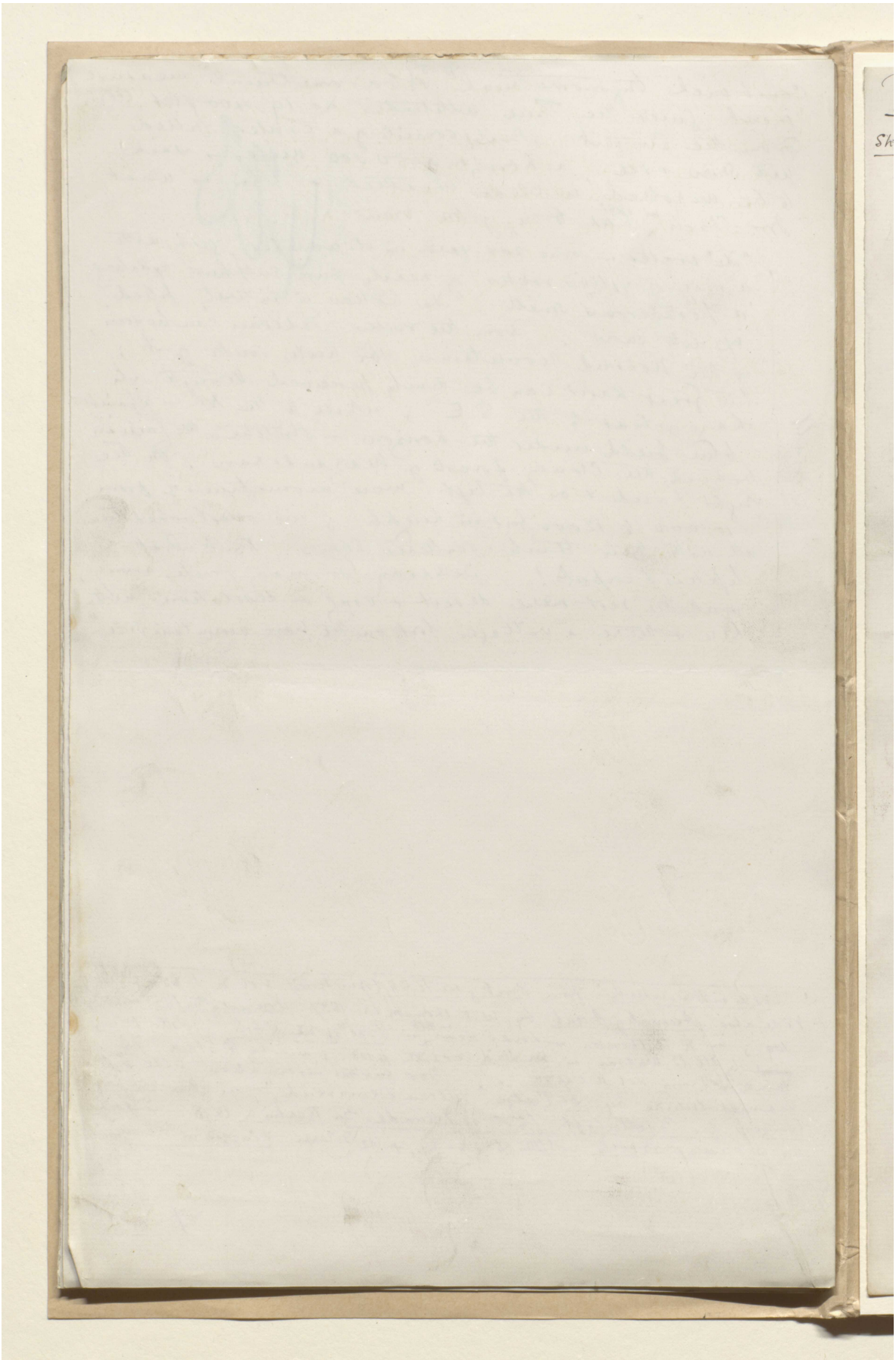

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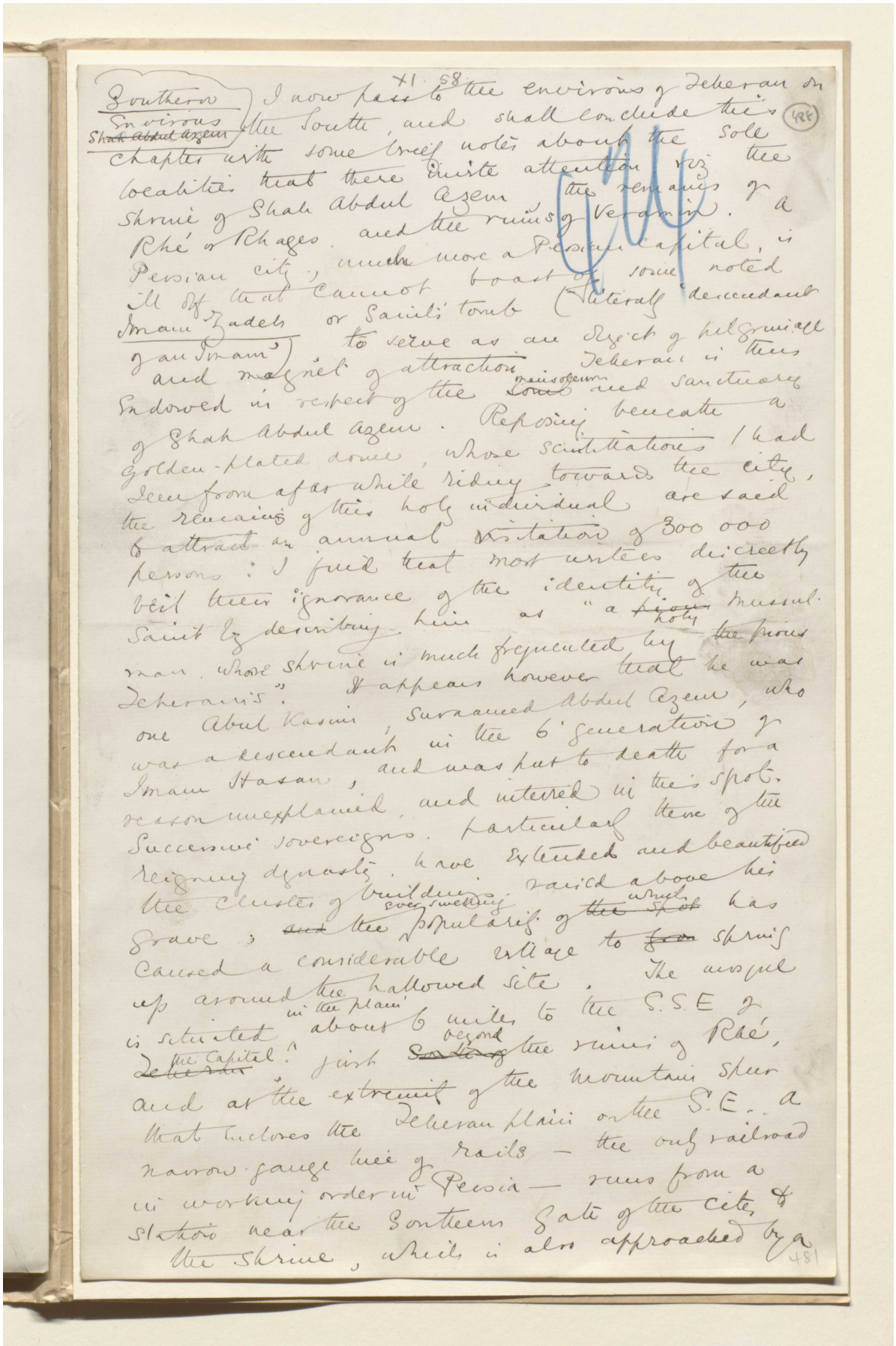

Southern Environs Shah Abdul Azem

I now pass to the environs of Teheran on the South, and shall conclude this chapter with some brief notes about the localities that there invite attention viz the Shrine of Shah Abdul Azem the remains of Rhé or Rhages, and the ruins of Veramin. A Persian city, much more a Persian capital, is ill off that cannot boast of some noted Imam Zadeh or Saint's tomb (literally descendant of an Imam) to serve as an object of pilgrimage and magnet of attraction. Teheran is thus endowed in respect of the mausoleum and sanctuary of Shah Abdul Azem. Reposing beneath a golden-plated dome, whose scintillations I had seen from afar while riding towards the city, the remains of this holy individual are said to attract an annual visitation of 300 000 persons: I find that most writers discreetly veil their ignorance of the identity of the Saint by describing him as "a holy Mussulman, whose shrine is much frequented by the pious Teheranis". It appears however that he was one Abul Kasim, surnamed Abdul Azem, who was a descendant in the 6th generation of Imam Hasan, and was put to death for a reason unexplained, and interred in this spot. Successive sovereigns, particularly those of the reigning dynasty, have extended and beautified the cluster of buildings raised above his grave; and the popularity of the spot has caused a considerable village to spring up around the hallowed site. The mosque is situated in the plain about 6 miles to the S.S.E. of the Capital, just beyond the ruins of Rhé, and at the extremity of the mountain spur that encloses the Teheran plain on the S.E. a narrow gauge line of rails — the only railroad in working order in Persia — runs from a station near the Southern Gate of the city, & the Shrine, which is also approached by a

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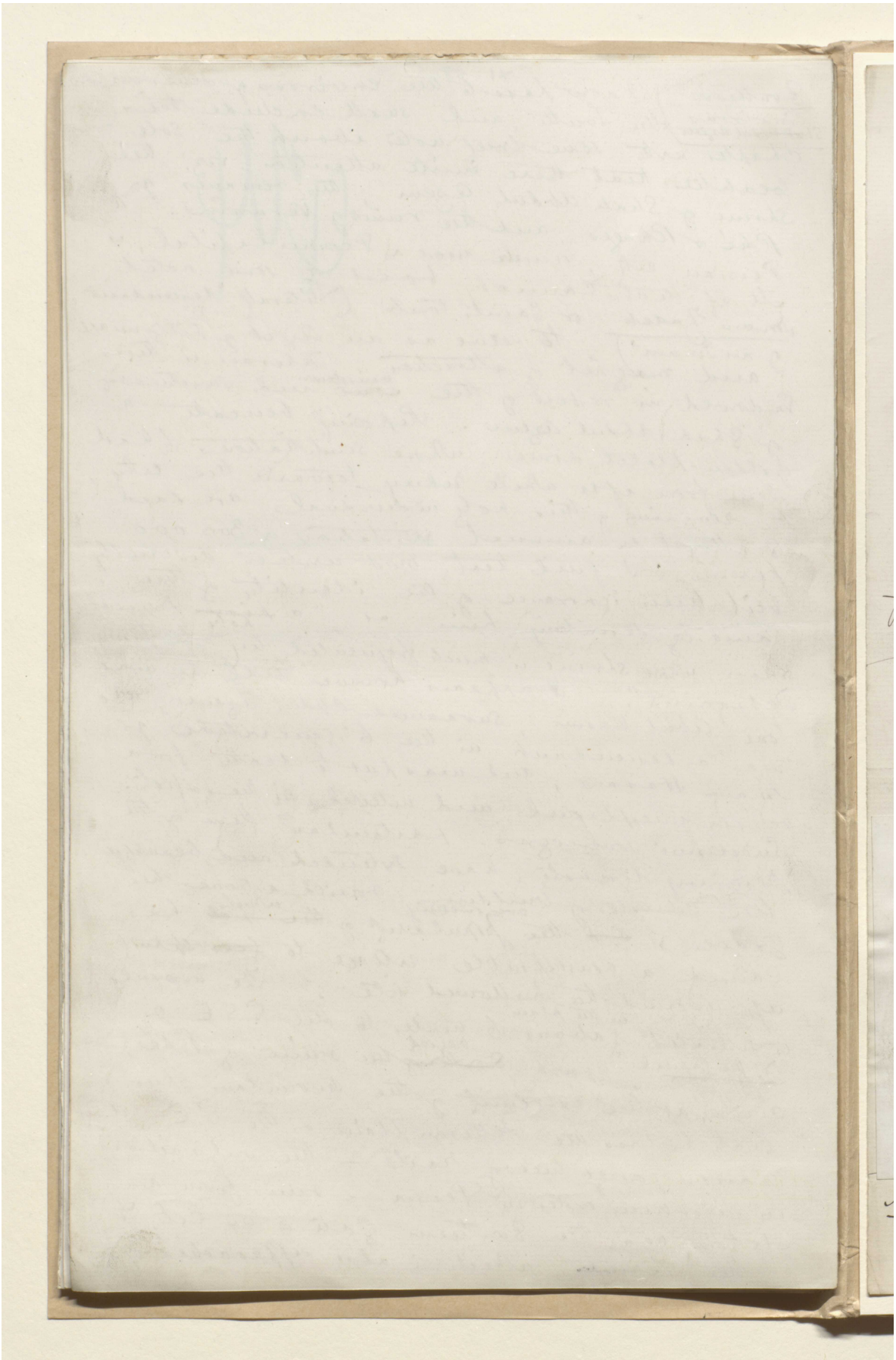
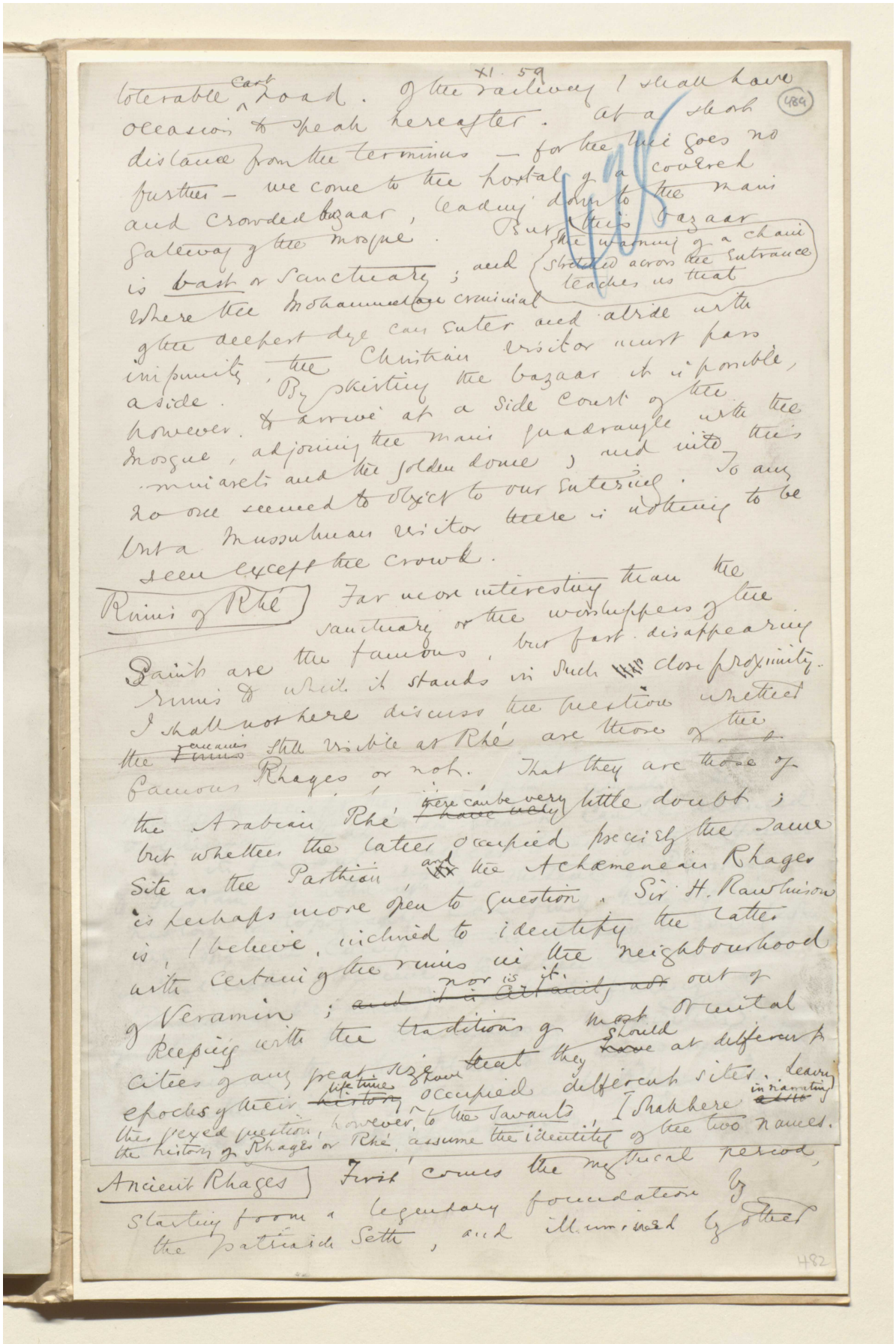


XI. 59

(489)



tolerable cart road. Of the railway I shall have occasion to speak hereafter. At a short distance from the terminus — for the line goes no further — we come to the portal of a covered and crowded bazaar, leading down to the main gateway of the mosque. But this bazaar is bast or sanctuary; and where the Mohammedan criminal of the deepest dye can enter and abide with impunity, the Christian visitor must pass aside. By skirting the bazaar it is possible, however, to arrive at a side court of the mosque, adjoining the main quadrangle with the minarets and the golden dome, and into this no one seemed to object to our entering. To any but a Mussulman visitor there is nothing to be seen except the crowd.

(the warning of a chain stretched across the entrance teaches us that)

Ruins of Rhé Far more interesting than the sanctuary or the worshippers of the Saint are the famous, but fast disappearing ruins to which it stands in such close proximity. I shall not here discuss the question whether the remains still visible at Rhé are those of the famous Rhages or not. That they are those of the Arabian Rhé there can be very little doubt; but whether the latter occupied precisely the same site as the Parthian and the Achaemenian Rhages is perhaps more open to question. Sir H. Rawlinson is, I believe, inclined to identify the latter with certain of the ruins in the neighbourhood of Veramin; nor is it out of keeping with the traditions of most Oriental cities of any great size that they should at different epochs of their life time occupied different sites. Leaving this vexed question, however, to the savants, I shall here in narrating the history of Rhages or Rhé, assume the identity of the two names.

Ancient Rhages First comes the mythical period, starting from a legendary foundation by the patriarch Seth, and illumined by other

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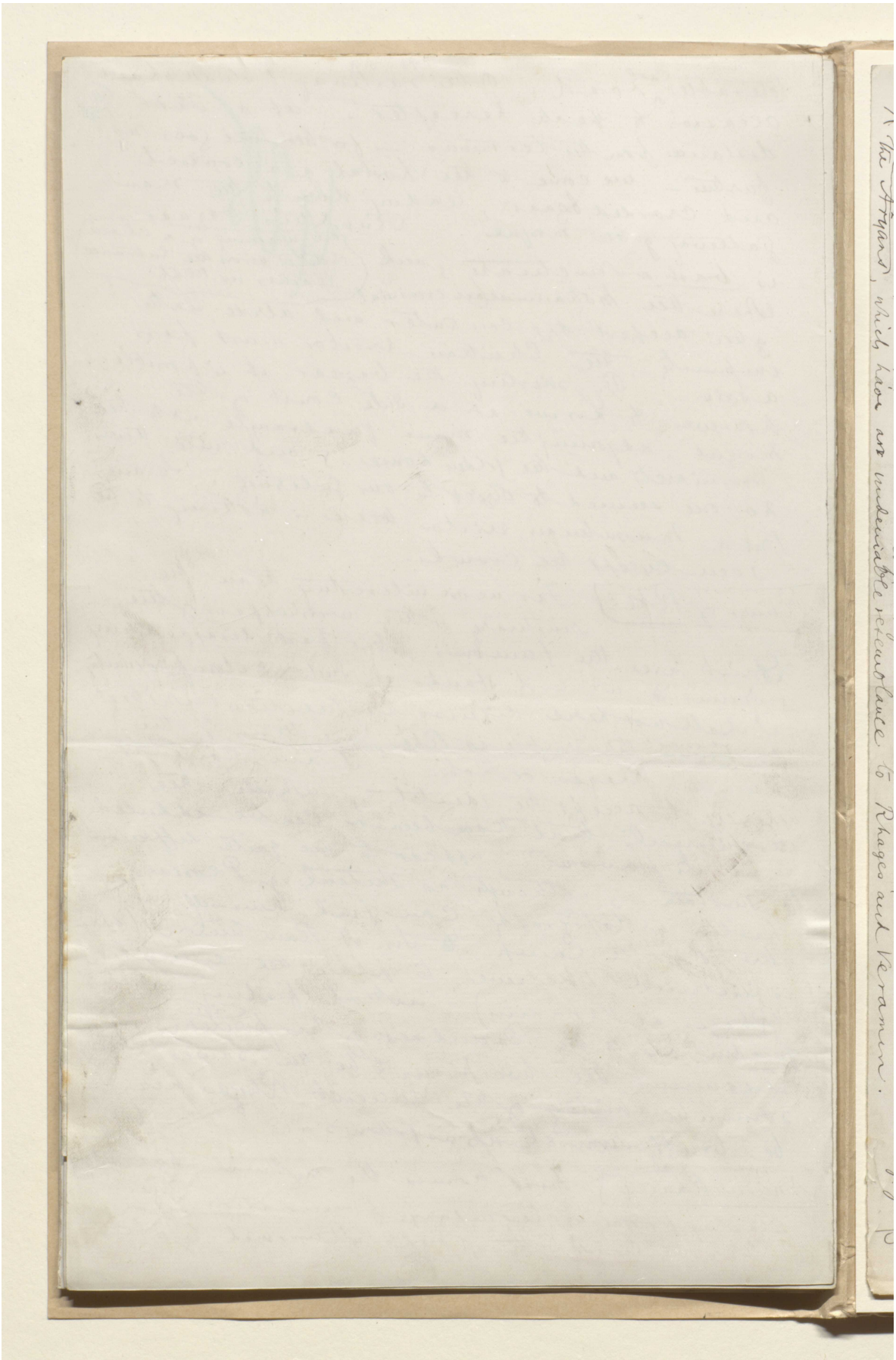
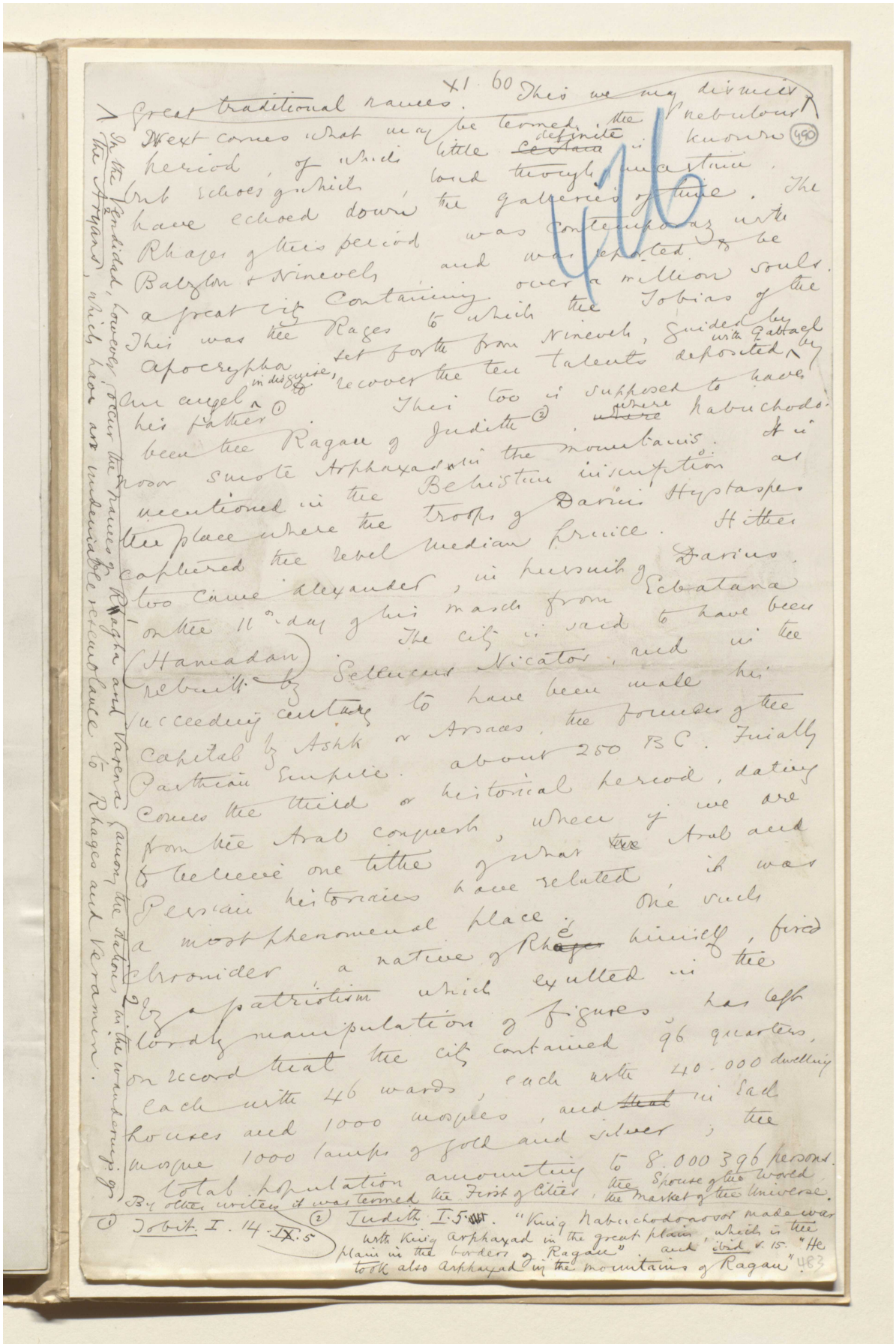
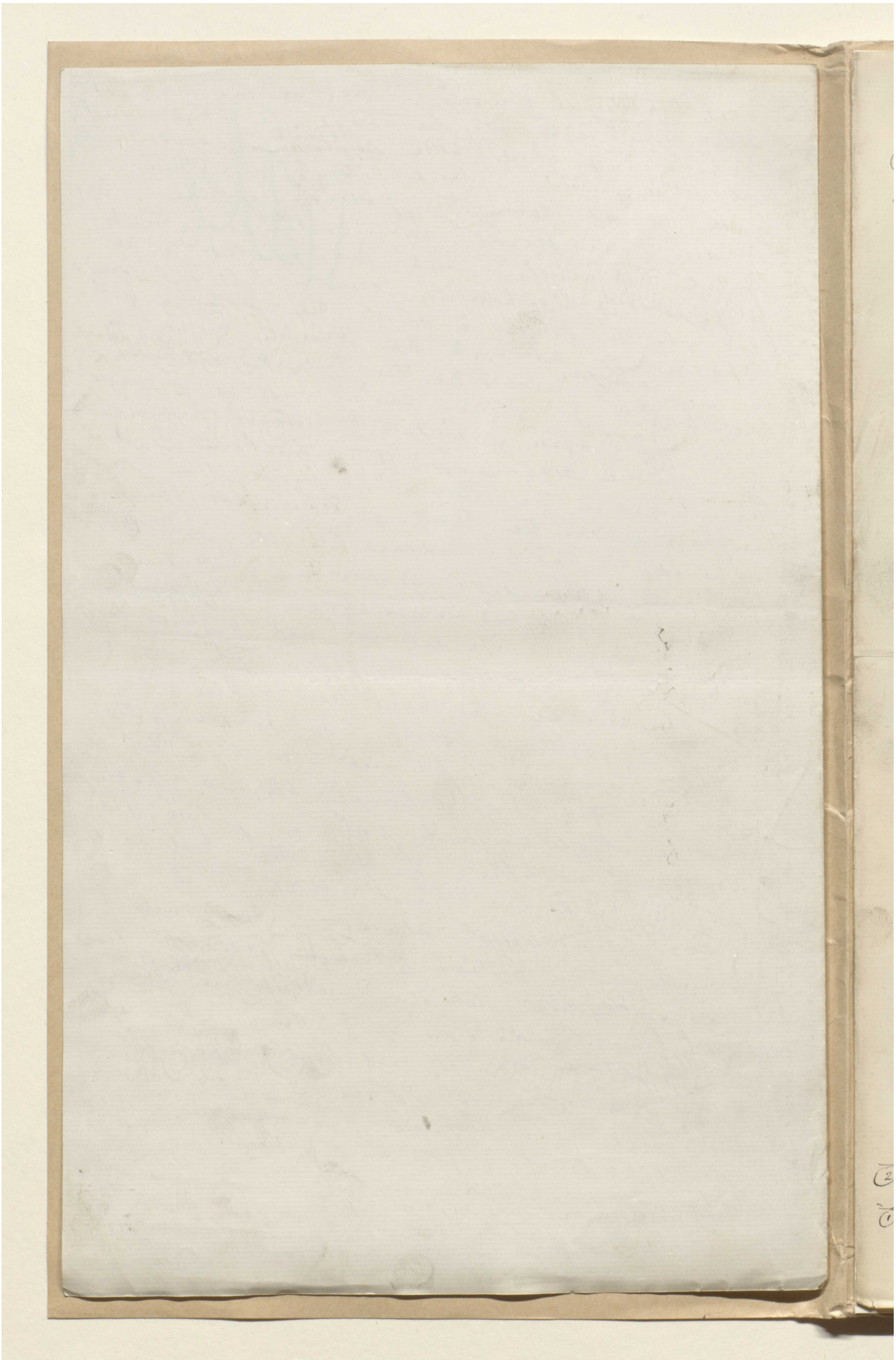
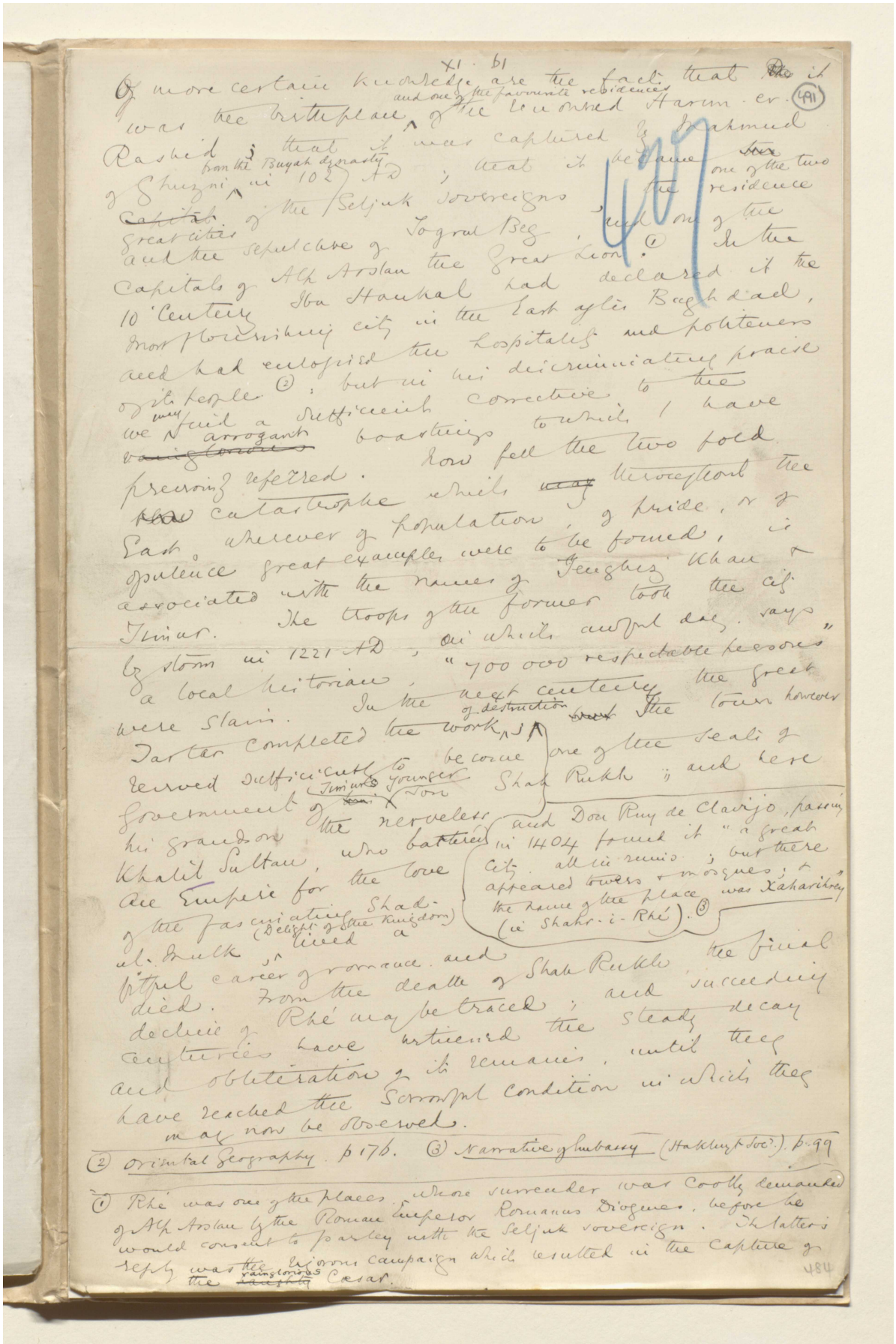
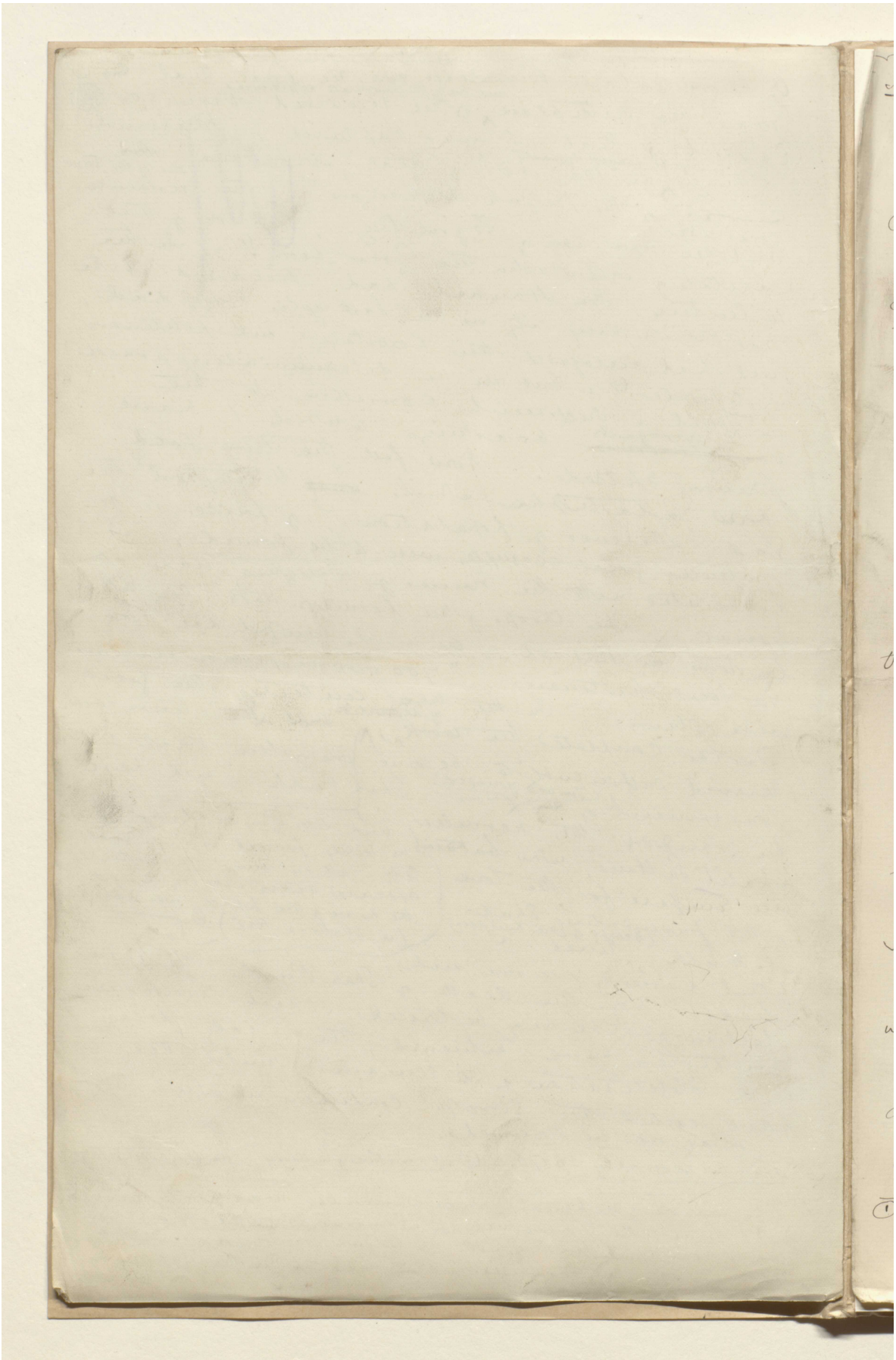


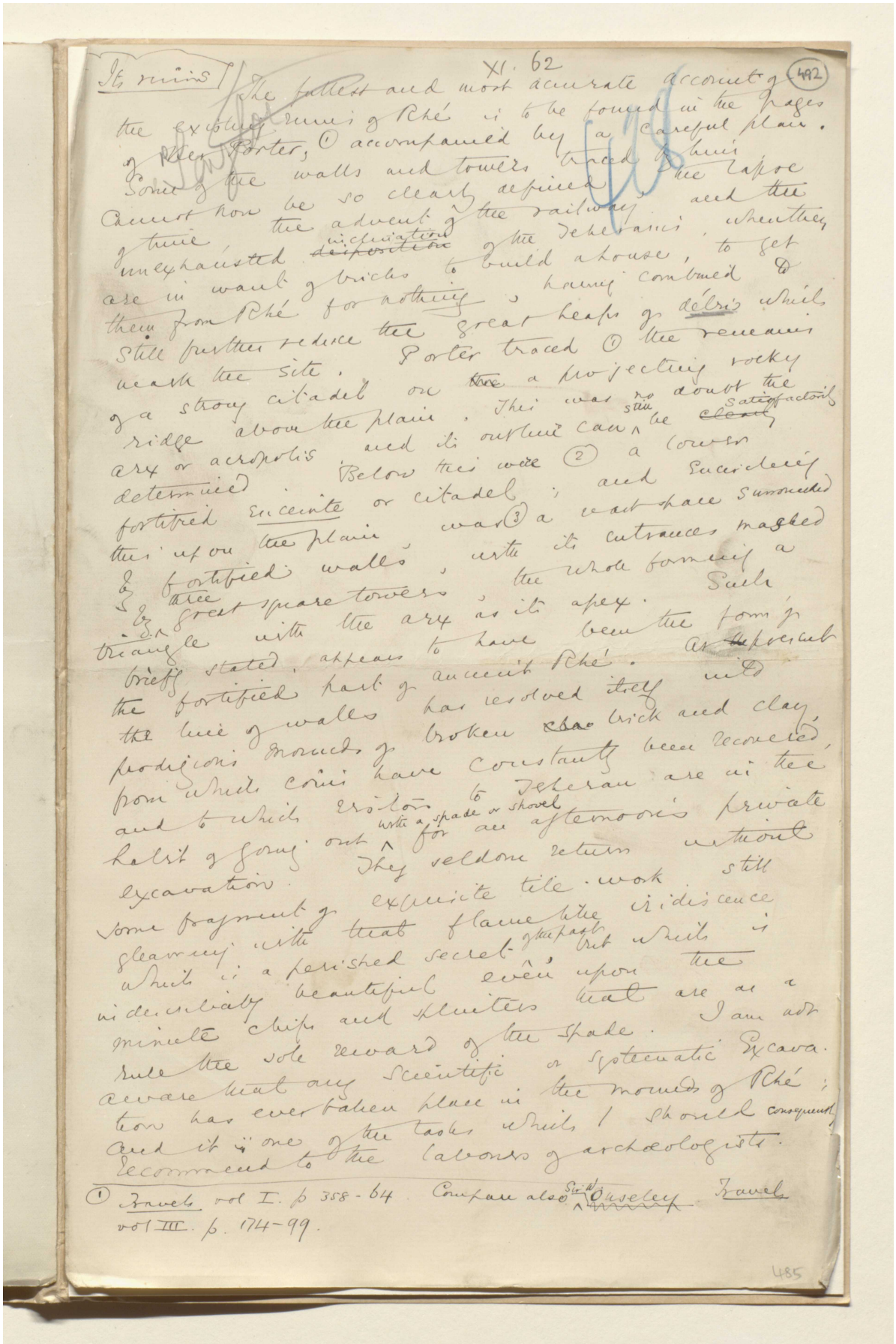








مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٤٩٢و] (١٣٥٥/٩٨٤)



Its ruins

XI. 62

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The fullest and most accurate account of the existing ruins of Rhé is to be found in the pages of Sir Porter, (1) accompanied by a careful plan. Some of the walls and towers traced by him cannot now be so clearly defined, the lapse of time, the advent of the railway, and the unexhausted ~~disposition~~ inclination of the Teheranis, whenever are in want of bricks to build a house, to get them from Rhé for nothing, having combined to still further reduce the great heaps of débris which mark the site. Porter traced (1) the remains of a strong citadel on ~~the~~ a projecting rocky ridge above the plain. This was no doubt the arx or acropolis, and its outline can still be ~~clearly~~ satisfactorily determined. Below this were (2) a lower fortified enceinte or citadel; and encircling this upon the plain was (3) a vast space surrounded by fortified walls, with its entrances masked by three great square towers, the whole forming a triangle with the arx as its apex. Such briefly stated, appears to have been the form of the fortified part of ancient Rhé. At ~~the~~ present the line of walls has resolved itself into prodigious mounds of broken ~~clay~~ brick and clay, from which coins have constantly been recovered, and to which visitors to Teheran are in the habit of going out with a spade or shovel for an afternoon's private excavation. They seldom return without some fragment of exquisite tile-work still gleaming with ~~that~~ flame-like iridiscence which is a perished secret of the past, but which is indescribably beautiful even upon the minute chips and splinters that are as a rule the sole reward of the spade. I am not aware that any scientific or systematic excavation has ever taken place in the mounds of Rhé; and it is one of the tasks which I should consequently recommend to the labours of archaeologists.

(1) Travels vol I. p 358-64. Compare also Sir W. Ouseley Travels vol III. p. 174-99.

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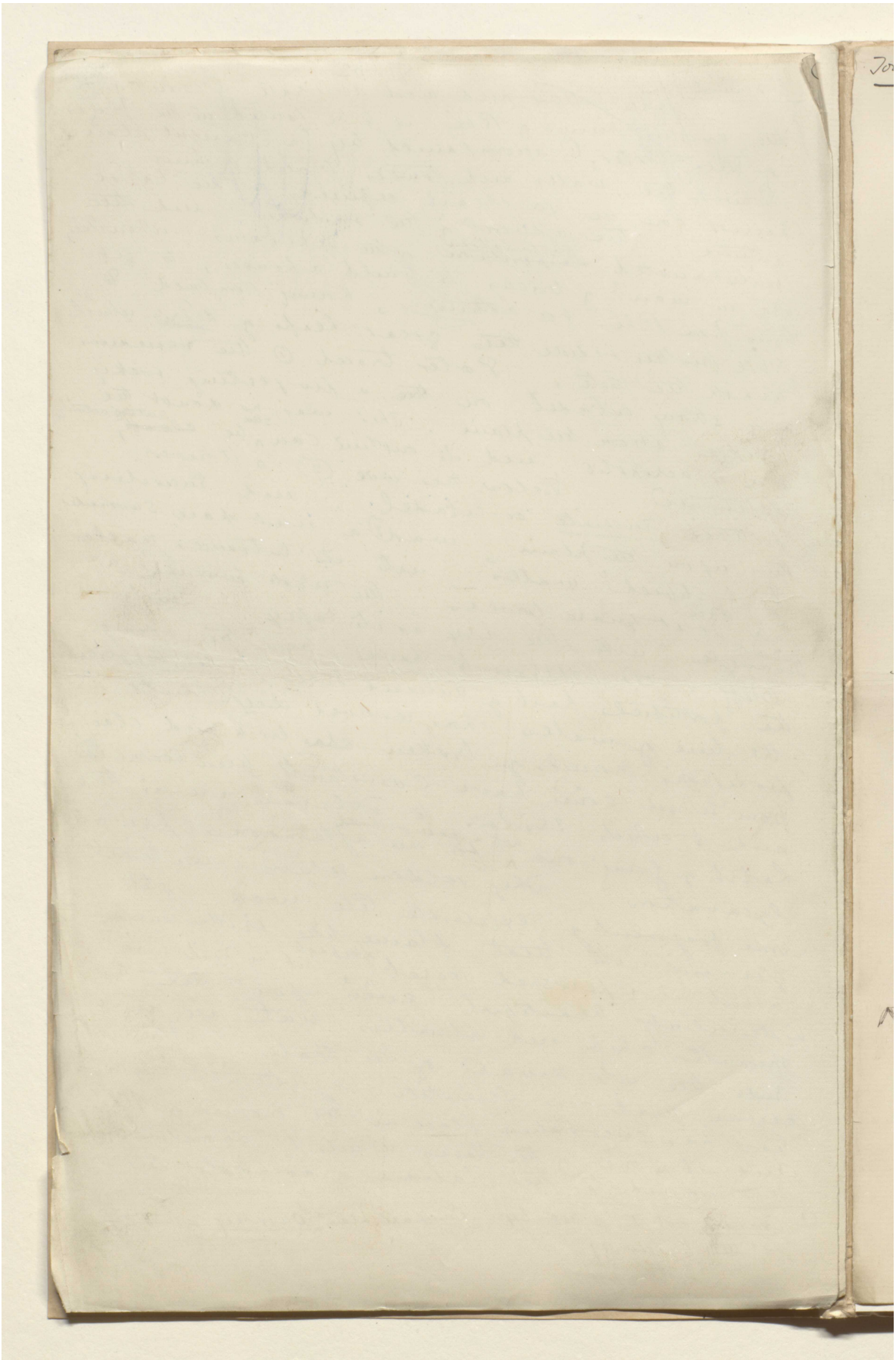

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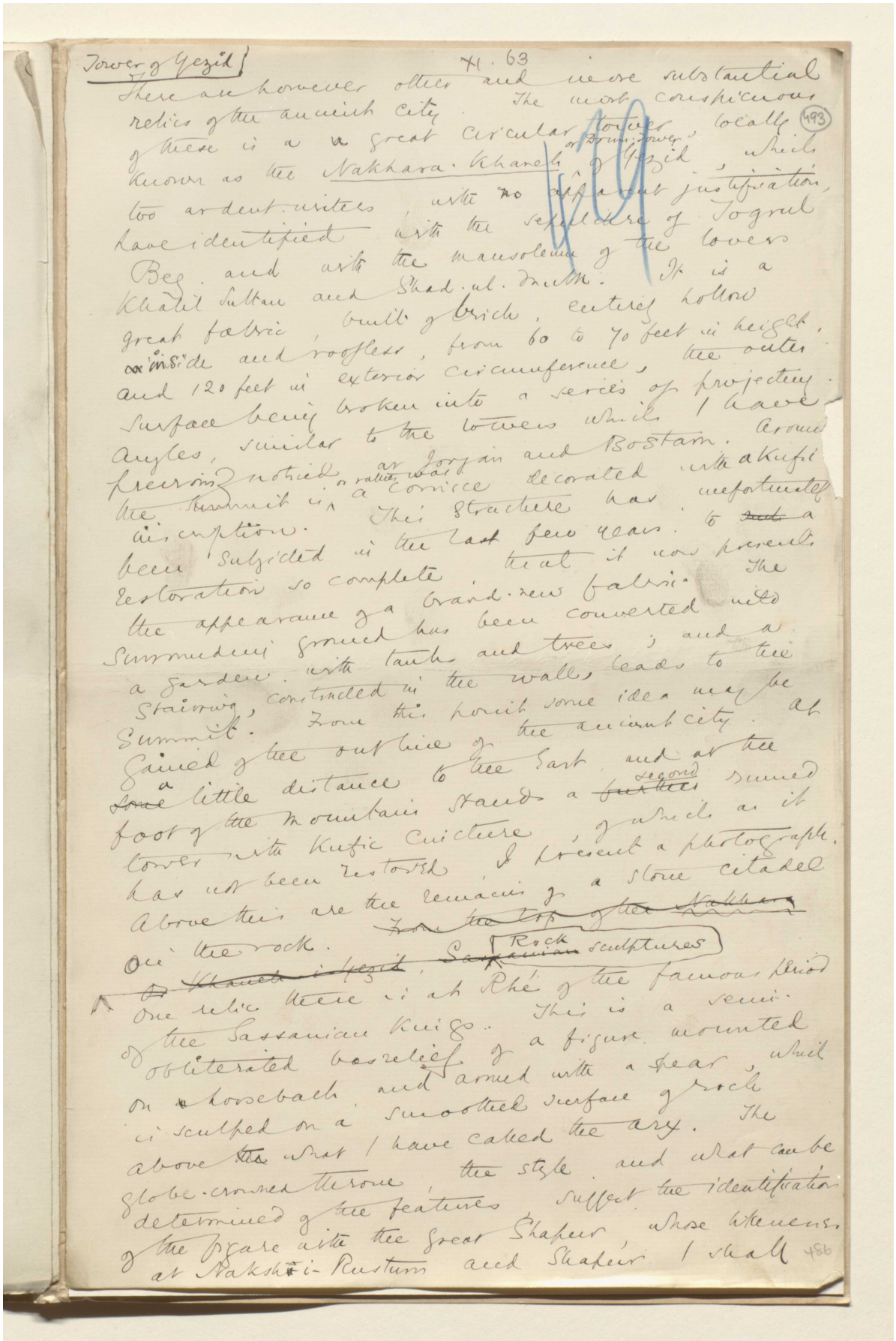

Tower of Yezid

XI. 63

There are however other and more substantial relics of the ancient city. The most conspicuous of these is a great circular tower, locally known as the Nakhara-Khaneh or Drum-Tower of Yezid, which too ardent writers, with no apparent justification, have identified with the sepulchre of Togrul Beg and with the mausoleum of the lovers Khalil Sultan and Shad-ul-Mulk. It is a great fabric, built of brick, entirely hollow inside and roofless, from 60 to 70 feet in height, and 120 feet in exterior circumference, the outer surface being broken into a series of projecting angles, similar to the towers which I have previously noticed at Jorjan and Bostam. Around the summit is a cornice decorated with a Kufic inscription. This structure has unfortunately been subjected in the last few years to a restoration so complete that it now presents the appearance of a brand-new fabric. The surrounding ground has been converted into a garden with tanks and trees; and a staircase, constructed in the wall, leads to the summit. From this point some idea may be gained of the outline of the ancient city. At a little distance to the East, and at the foot of the mountain stands a second ruined tower with Kufic cincture, of which as it has not been restored I present a photograph. Above this are the remains of a stone citadel on the rock.

One relic there is at Rhé of the famous period of the Sassanian Kings. This is a semi-obliterated basrelief of a figure mounted on horseback and armed with a spear, which is sculped on a smoothed surface of rock above what I have called the arx. The globe-crowned throne, the style and what can be determined of the features suffect the identification of the figure with the great Shapur, whose likeness at Naksh-i-Rustum and Shapur I shall

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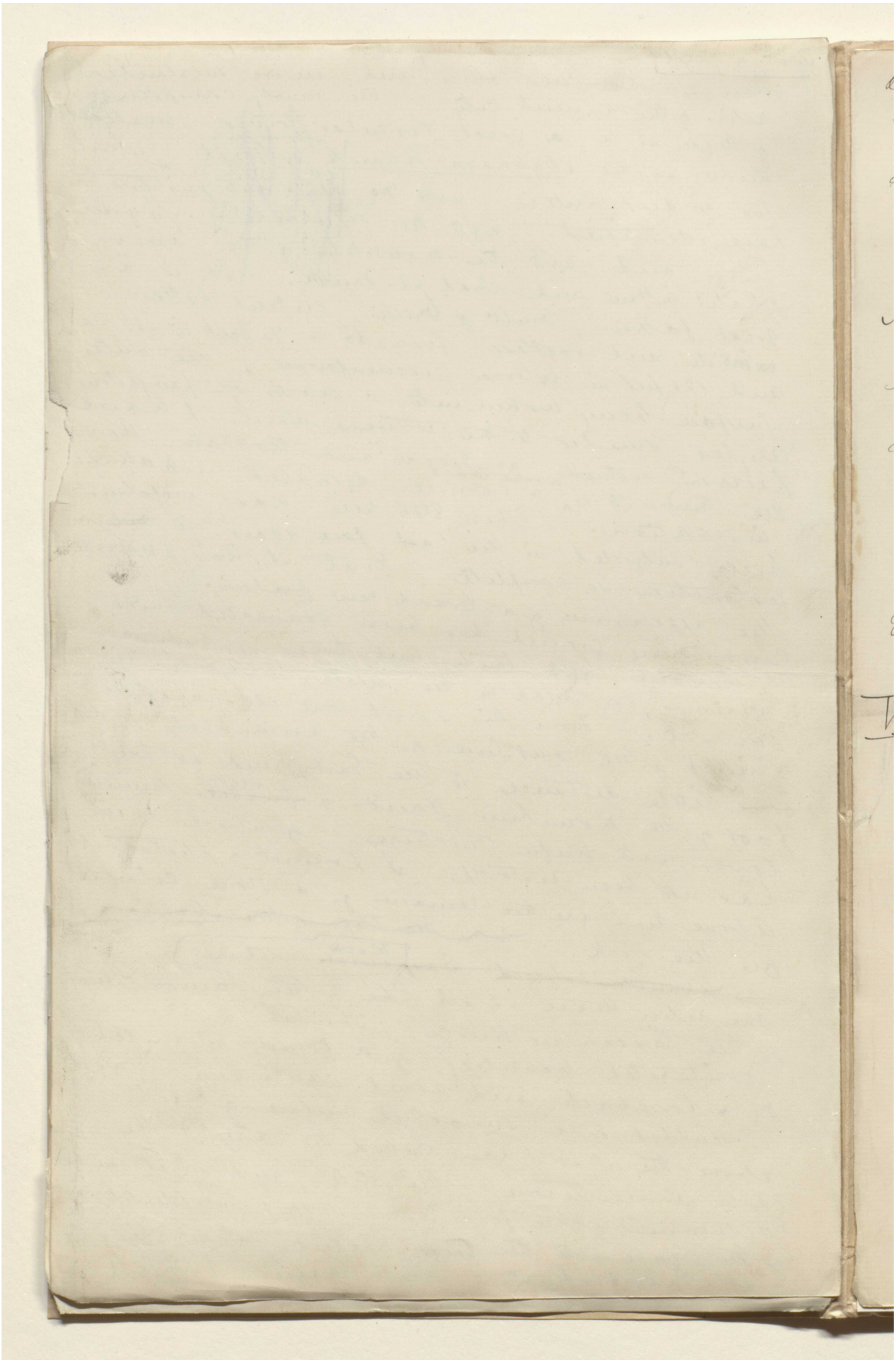

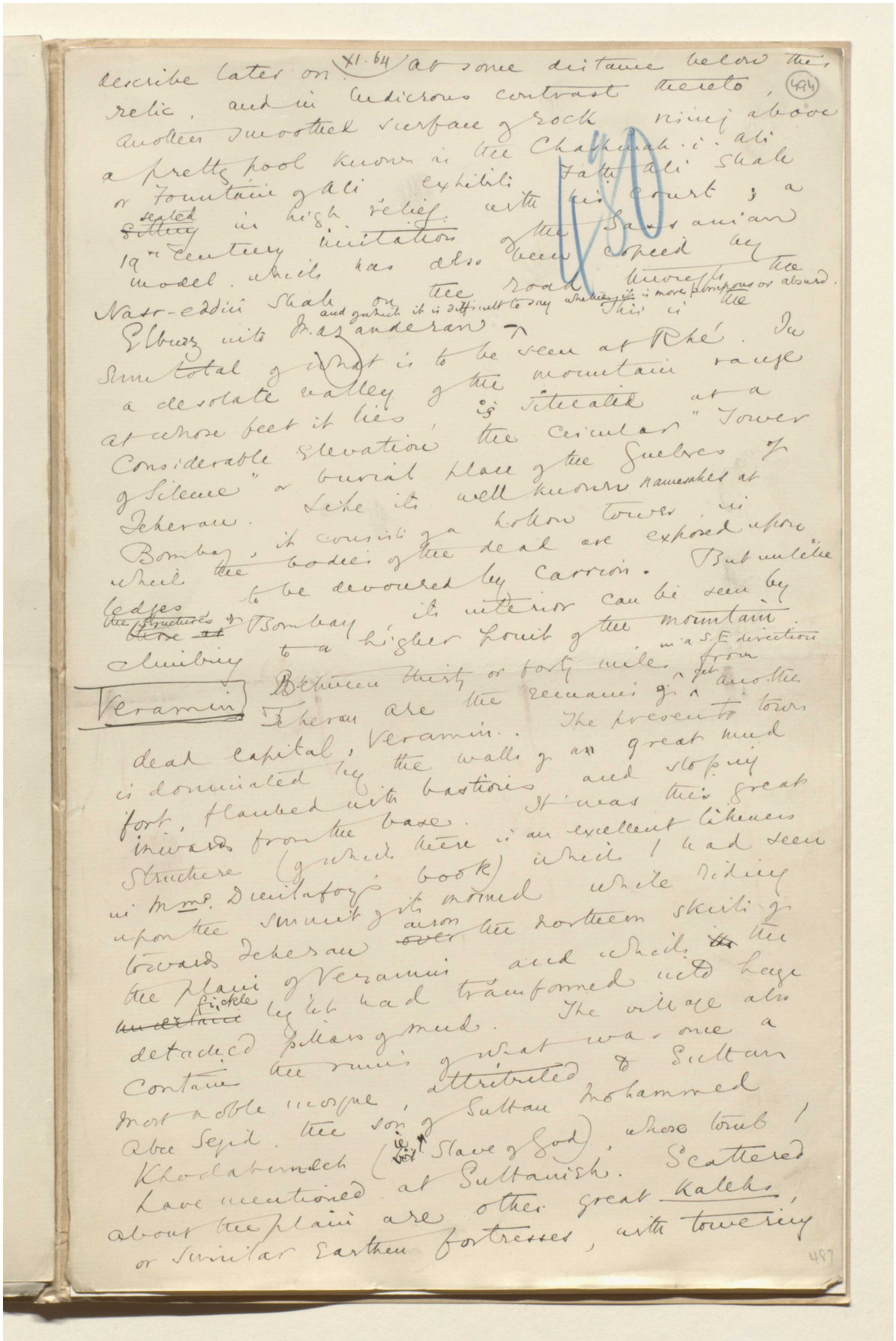

describe later on. XI. 64 At some distance below this relic, and in ludicrous contrast thereto, (494) another smoothed surface of rock rising above a pretty pool known as the Chashmah-i-Ali or Fountain of Ali exhibits Fath Ali Shah ~~sitting~~ seated in high relief with his court; a 19th century imitation of the Sassanian model, which has also been copied by Nasr-eddin Shah on the road through the Elburz into Mazanderan and of which it is difficult to say whether it is more pompous or absurd. This is the sum total of what is to be seen at Rhé. In a desolate valley of the mountain range at whose feet it lies, is situated at a considerable elevation the circular "Tower of Silence" or burial place of the Guebres of Teheran. Like its well known namesakes at Bombay, it consists of a hollow tower, in which the bodies of the dead are exposed upon ledges to be devoured by carrion. But unlike the structures of Bombay its interior can be seen by climbing to a higher point of the mountain.

Veramin

Between thirty or forty miles in a S.E direction from Teheran are the remains of yet another dead capital, Veramin. The present town is dominated by the walls of a great mud fort, flanked with bastions and sloping inwards from the base. It was this great structure (of which there is an excellent likeness in Mme. Dieulafoy's book) which I had seen upon the summit of its mound while riding towards Teheran across the northern skirts of the plain of Veramin and which the ~~uncertain~~ fickle light had transformed into huge detached pillars of mud. The village also contains the ruins of what was once a most noble mosque, attributed to Sultan Abu Sejid, the son of Sultan Mohammed Khodabunneh (i.e. Slave of God), whose tomb I have mentioned at Sultanieh. Scattered about the plain are other great kalehs, or similar earthen fortresses, with towering

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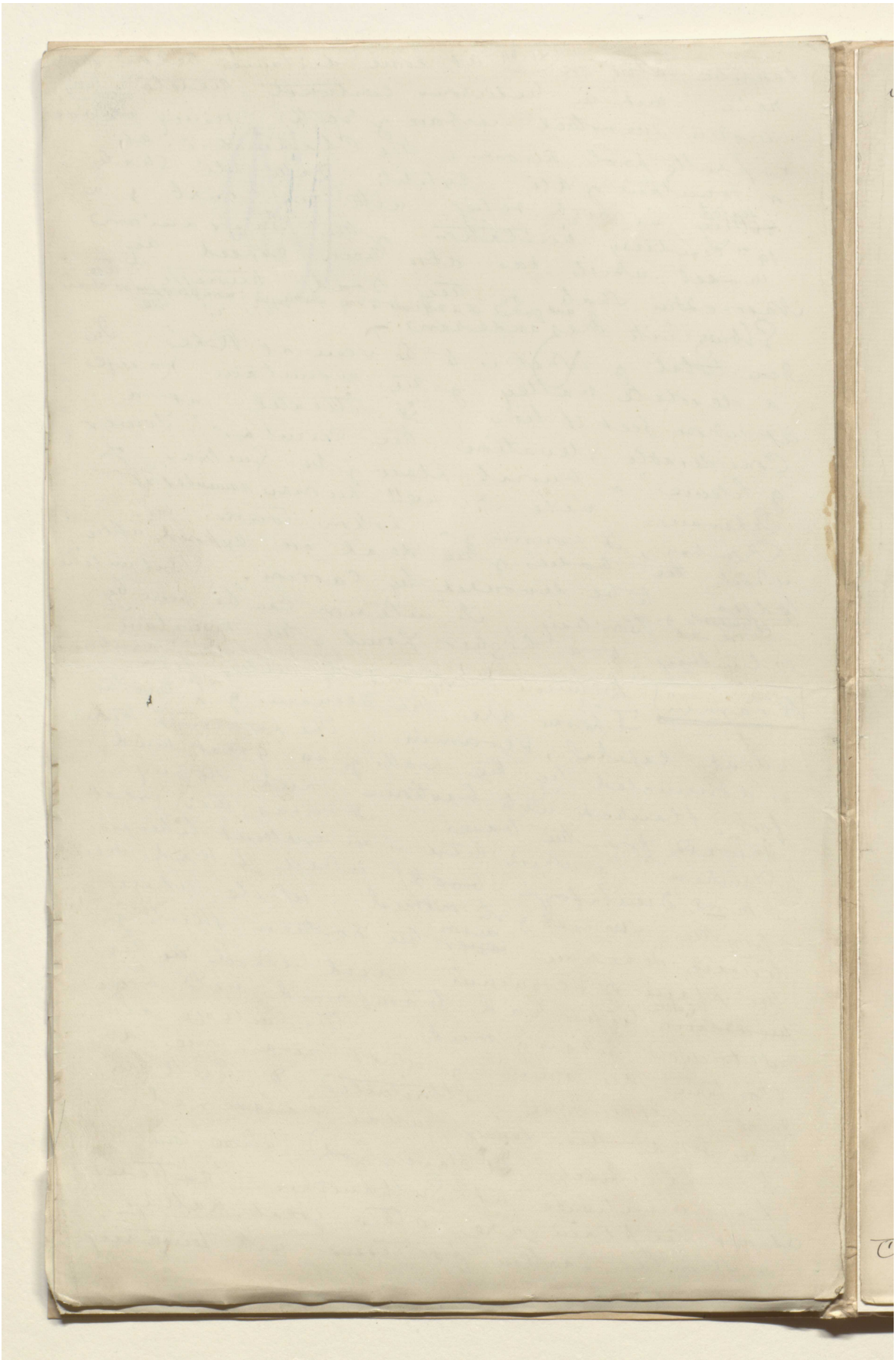

XI. 65

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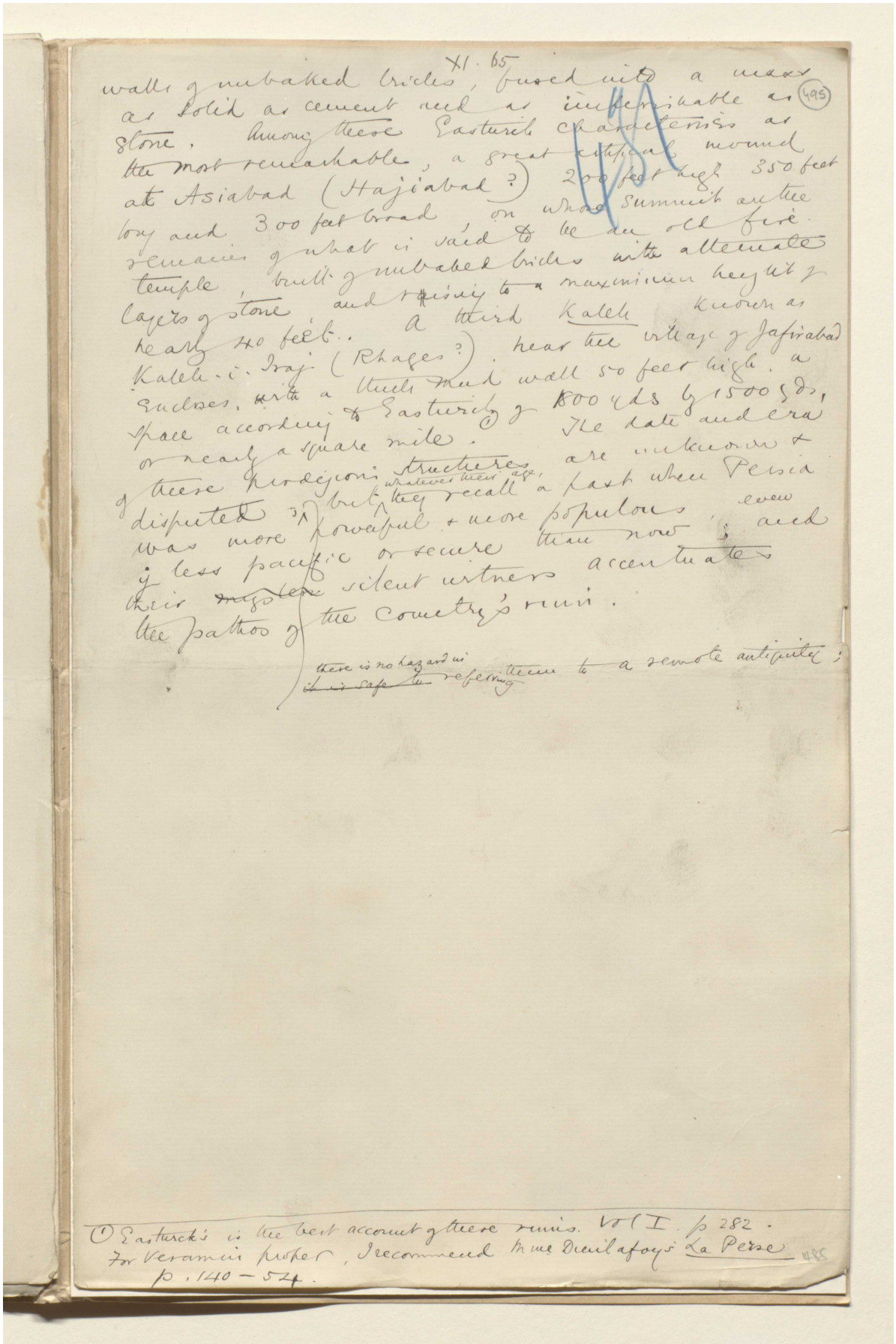

walls of unbaked bricks, fused into a mass as solid as cement and as imperishable as stone. Among these Eastwick characterises as the most remarkable, a great artificial mound at Asiabad (Hajiabad?) 200 feet high 350 feet long and 300 feet broad, on whose summit are the remains of what is said to be an old fire temple, built of unbaked bricks with alternate layers of stone and raising to a maximum height of nearly 40 feet. A third Kaleh known as Kaleh-i-Iraj (Rhages?) near the village of Jafirabad encloses, with a thick mud wall 50 feet high, a space according to Eastwick of 1800 yds by 1500 yds, or nearly a square mile.(1) The date and era of these prodigious structures are unknown & disputed; but whatever their age, they recall a past when Persia was more powerful & more populous, even if less pacific or secure than now; and their ~~mystery~~ silent witness accentuates the pathos of the country's ruin.

there is no hazard in ~~it is safe to~~ referring them to a remote antiquity;

(1) Eastwick's is the best account of these ruins. Vol I. p 282. For Veramin proper, I recommend Mme Dieulafoy's La Perse p. 140–54.

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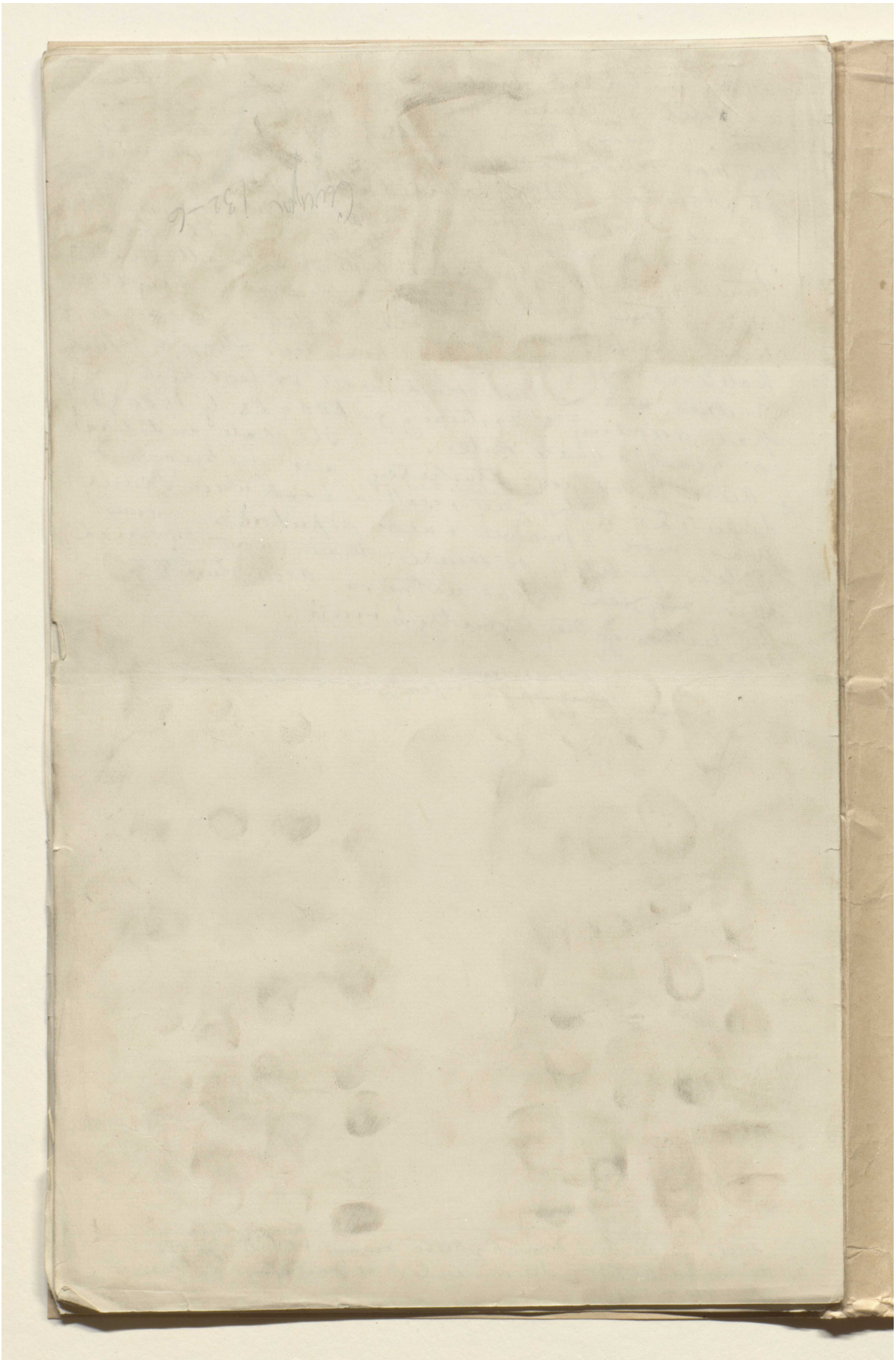

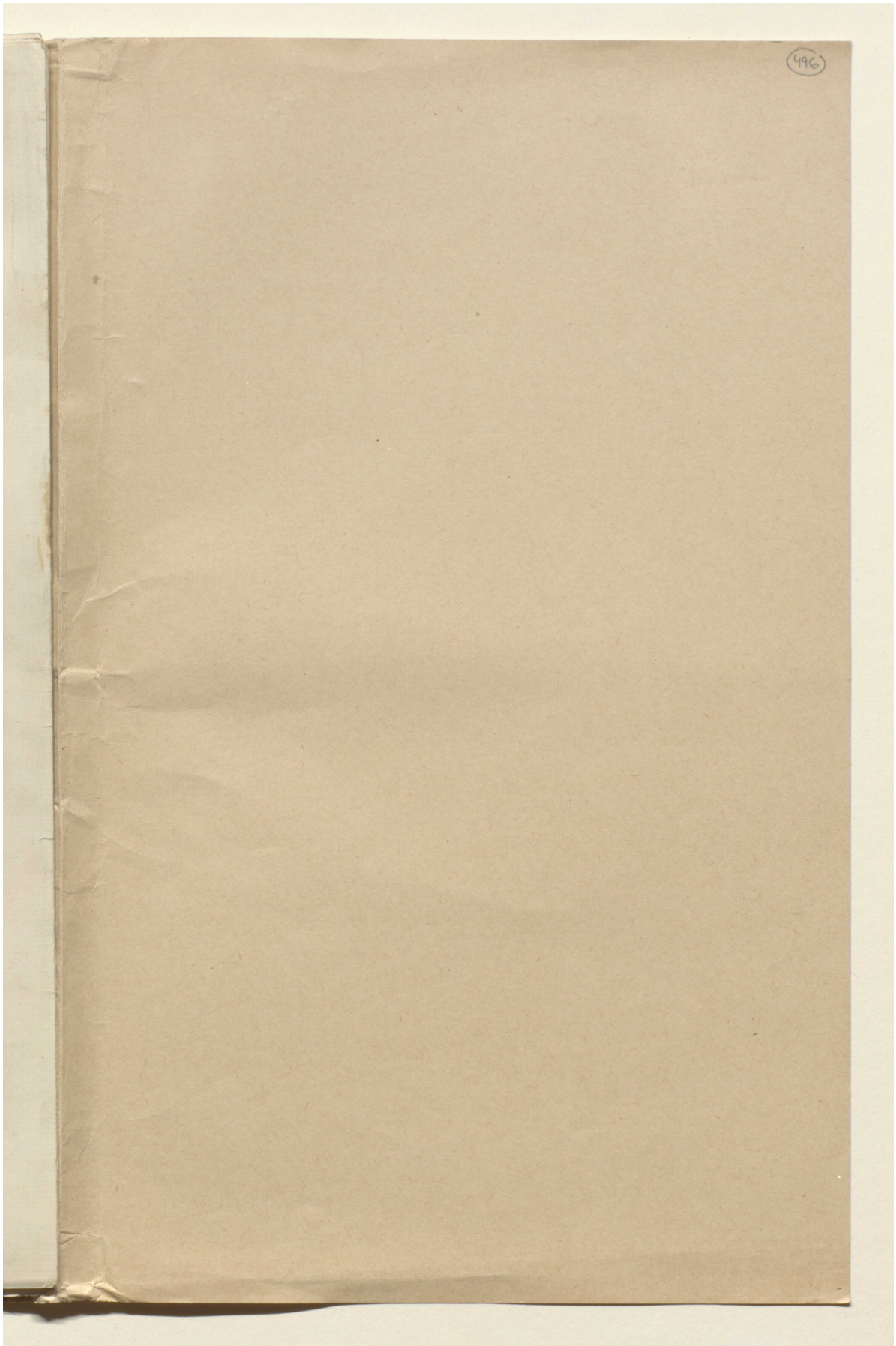

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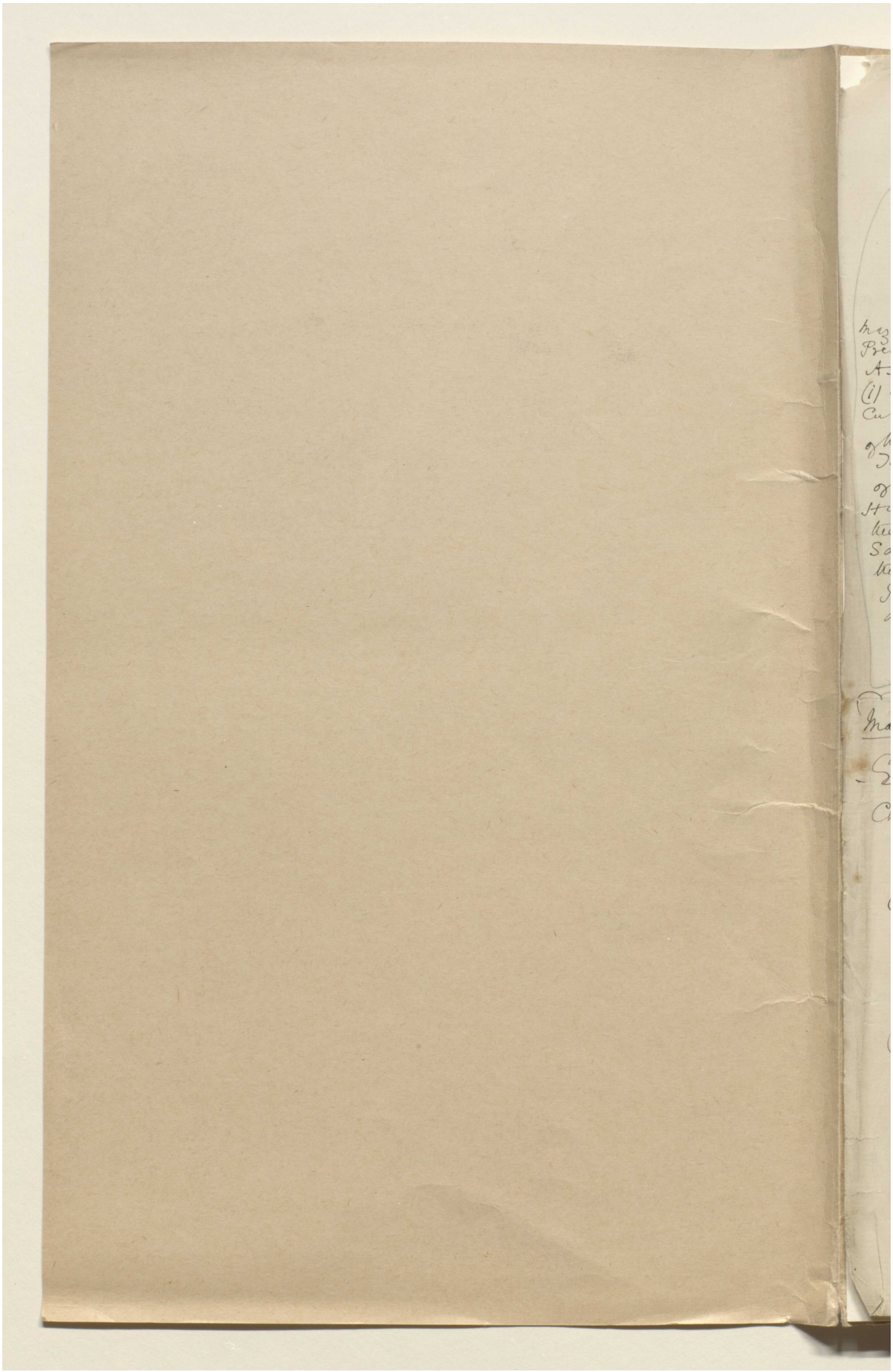

المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: رخصة حكومة مفتوحة

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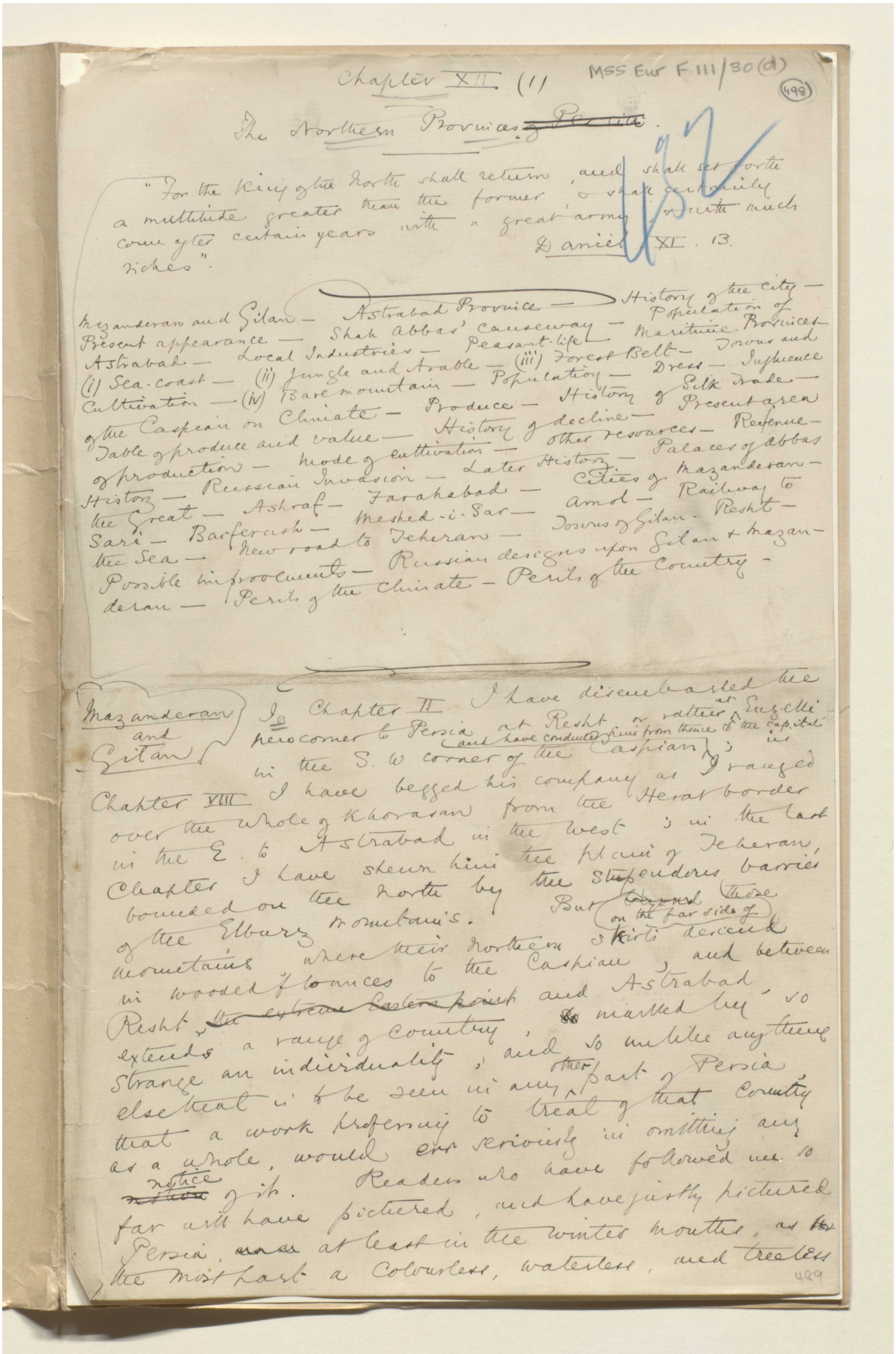
مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٤٩٨و] (١٣٥٥/٩٩٦)



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(498)

Chapter XII (1)

The Northern Provinces ~~of Persia~~.

"For the King of the North shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, & shall certainly come after certain years with a great army, & with much riches".
Daniel XI. 13.

Mazanderan and Gilan — Astrabad Province — History of the city — Present appearance — Shah Abbas' causeway — Population of Astrabad — Local Industries — Peasant-life — Maritime Provinces — (i) Sea-coast — (ii) Jungle and Arable — (iii) Forest Belt — Towns and Cultivation — (iv) Bare mountain — Population — Dress — Influence of the Caspian on Climate — Produce — History of Silk Trade — Table of produce and value — History of decline — Present area of production — Mode of cultivation — other resources — Revenue — History — Russian Invasion — Later History — Palaces of Abbas the Great — Ashraf — Farahabad — Cities of Mazanderan — Sari — Barferush — Meshed-i-Sar — Amol — Railway to the Sea — New road to Teheran — Towns of Gilan — Resht — Possible improvements — Russian designs upon Gilan & Mazanderan — Perils of the Climate — Perils of the Country —

Mazanderan and Gilan

In Chapter II I have disembarked the newcomer to Persia at Resht or rather at Enzelli in the S. W corner of the Caspian, and have conducted him from thence to the capital; in Chapter VIII I have begged his company as I ranged over the whole of Khorasan from the Herat border in the E. to Astrabad in the West; in the last Chapter I have shewn him the plain of Teheran, bounded on the North by the stupendous barrier of the Elburz mountains. But ~~beyond~~ those on the far side of mountains where their Northern skirts descend in wooded flounces to the Caspian, and between Resht, ~~the extreme Eastern point~~ and Astrabad, extends a range of country, ~~so~~ marked by so strange an individuality; and so unlike anything else that is to be seen in any other part of Persia that a work professing to treat of that country as a whole, would err seriously in omitting any ~~notice~~ notice of it. Readers who have followed me so far will have pictured, and have justly pictured Persia, ~~and~~ at least in the winter months, as ~~the~~ the most part a colourless, waterless, and treeless

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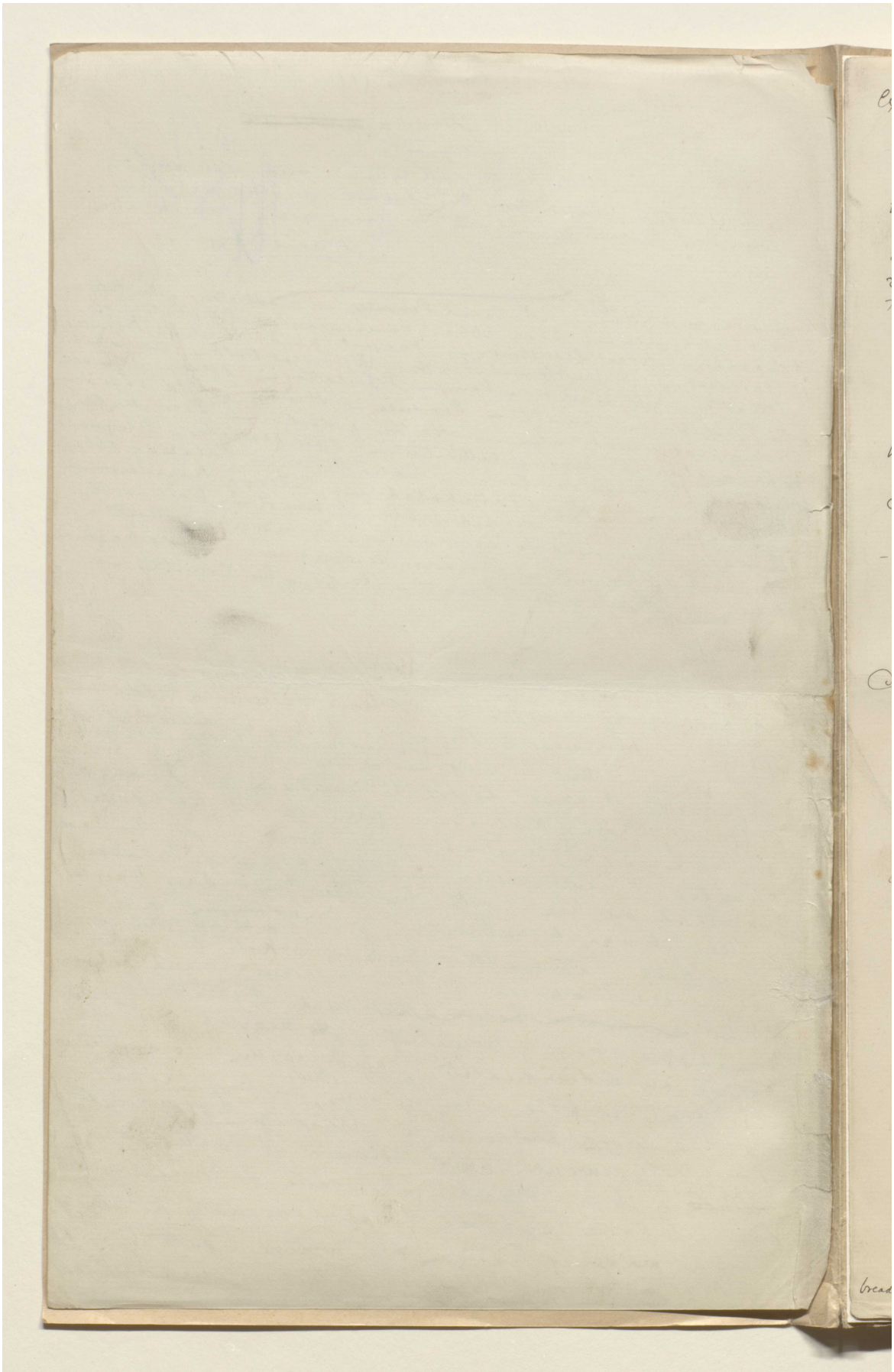

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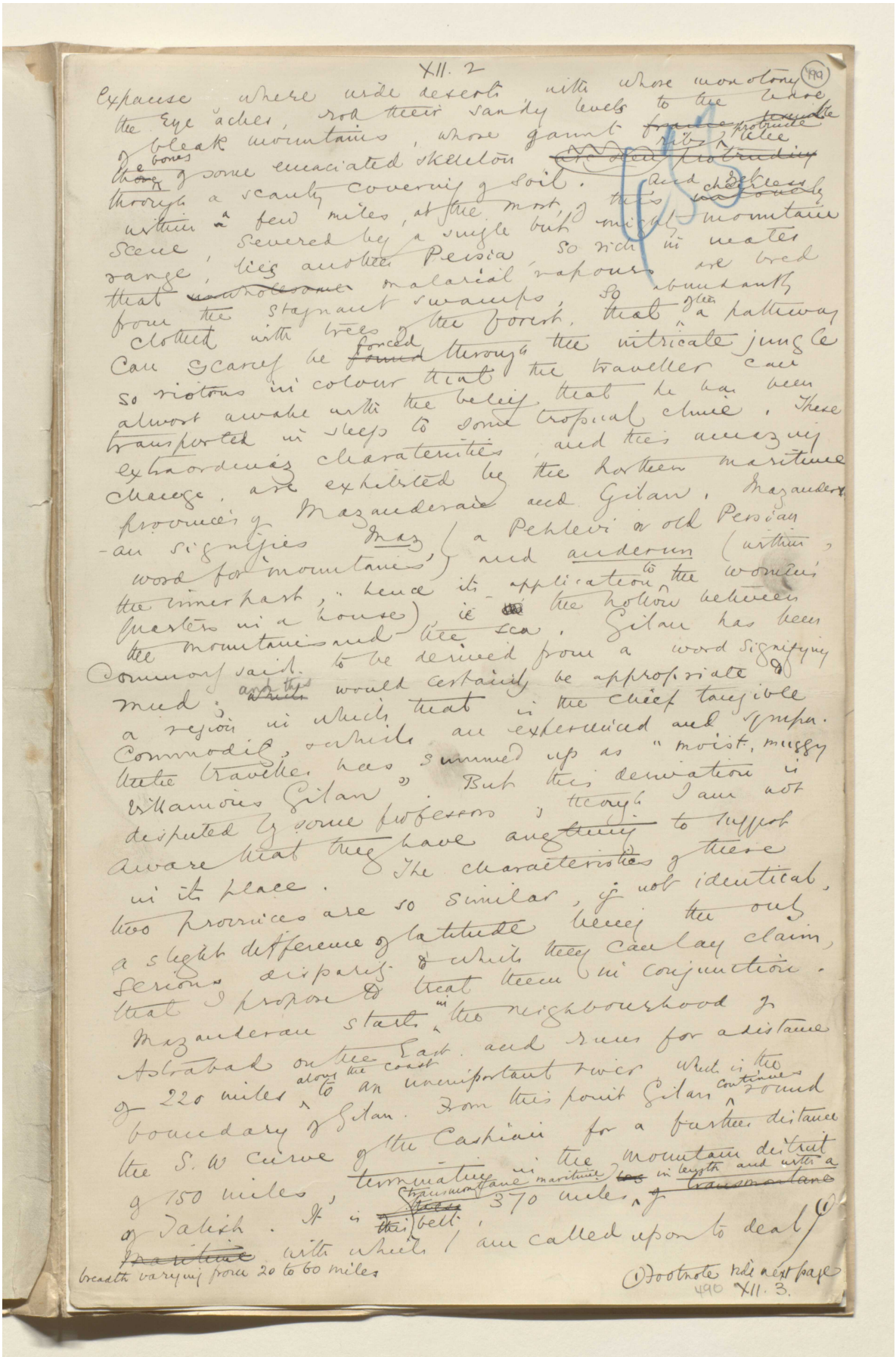

XII. 2

expanse where wide deserts with whose monotony
the eye aches, and their sandy levels to the more
bleak mountains, whose gaunt ~~projecting~~ ridges
bones
show some emaciated skeleton ~~of the dead projecting~~
through a scanty covering of soil. And ~~the~~ ~~scenery~~
within a few miles, at the most, of this ~~wonderful~~ mountain
scene, severed by a single but mighty mountain
range, lies another Persia, so rich in waters
that ~~unwholesome~~ malarial vapours are bred
from the stagnant swamps, so abundantly
clothed with trees of the forest, that a pathway
can scarcely be forced through the intricate jungle
so riotous in colour that the traveller can
almost awake with the belief that he has been
transported in sleep to some tropical clime. These
extraordinary characteristics, and this amazing
change, are exhibited by the fourteen maritime
provinces of Mazanderan and Gilan, Mazanderan
-an signifies mas (a Pehlevi or old Persian
word for mountains) and anderun (within,
the inner part; hence its application to the women's
quarters in a house) ie the hollow between
the mountains and the sea. Gilan has been
commonly said to be derived from a word signifying
mud; and this would certainly be appropriate
a region in which that is the chief tangible
commodity, which an experienced and sympa-
thetic traveller has summed up as "moist, muggy
Gilan". But this derivation is disputed by some professors; though I am not
aware that they have anything to support
in its place. The characteristics of these
two provinces are so similar, if not identical,
a slight difference of latitude being the only
serious disparity which they can lay claim,
that I propose to treat them in conjunction.
Mazanderan starts in the neighbourhood of
Astrabad on the East and runs for a distance
of 220 miles along the coast to an unimportant river which is the
boundary of Gilan. From this point Gilan continues round
the S.W curve of the Caspian for a further distance
of 150 miles, terminating in the mountain district
of Talish. It is 370 miles in length and with a
transmontane
breadth varying from 20 to 60 miles
with which I am called upon to deal (1)

(1) Footnote ~~this~~ next page

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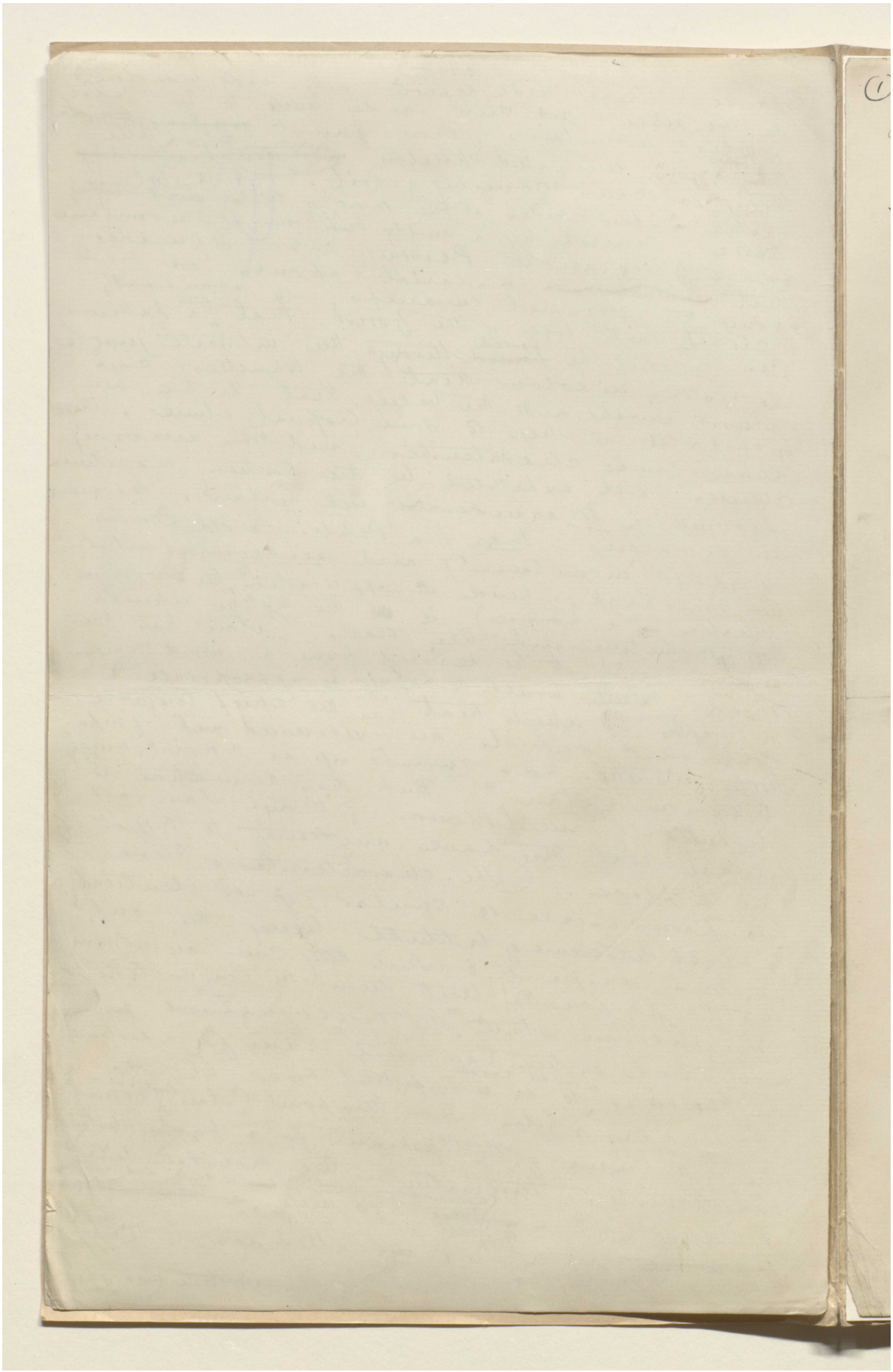

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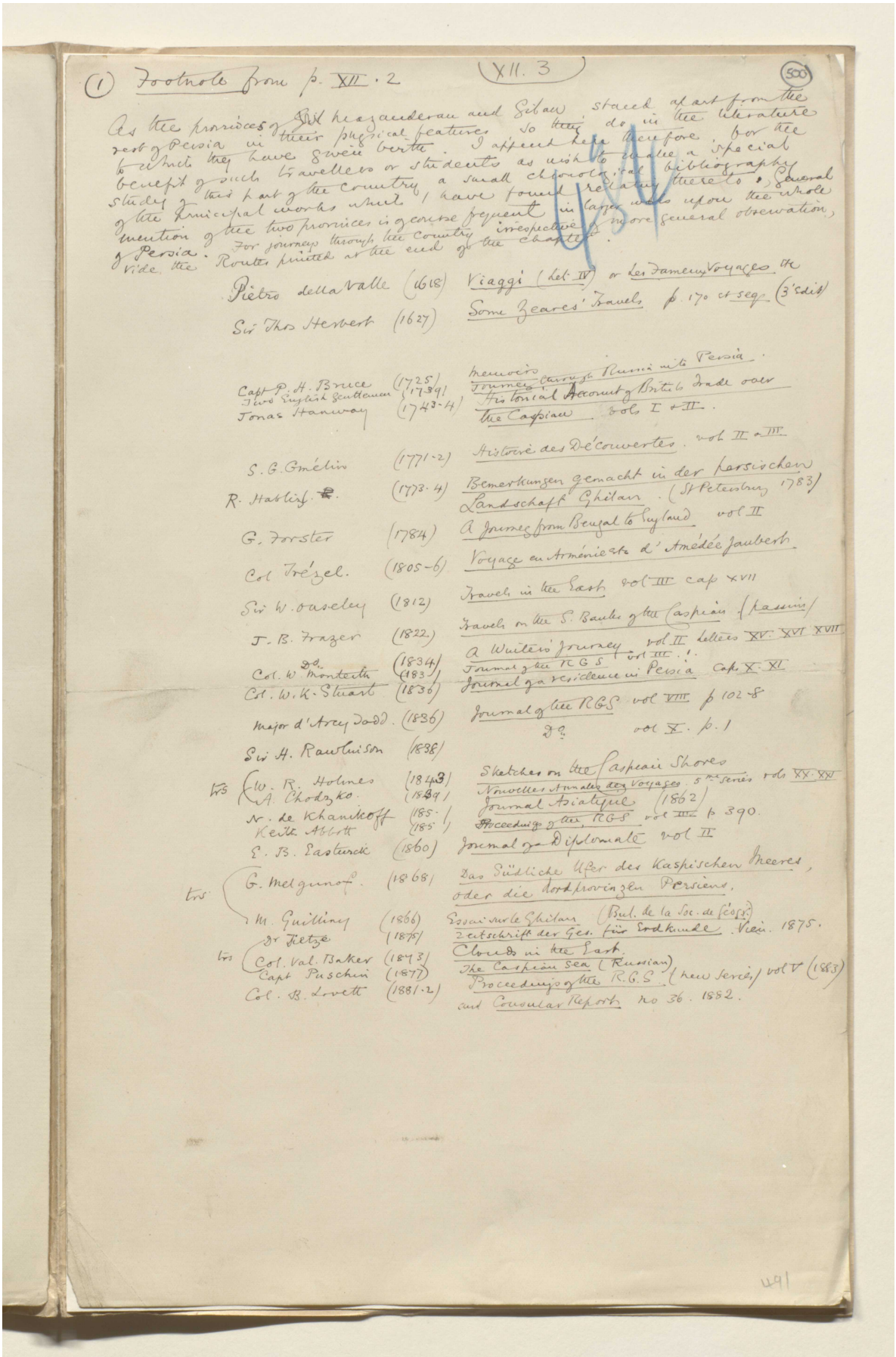
مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٥٠٠و] (١٠٠٠/١٣٥٥)



(1) Footnote from p. XII. 2 (XII. 3) (500)

As the provinces of Mazanderan and Gilan stand apart from the rest of Persia in their physical features so they do in the literature to which they have given birth. I append here therefore, for the benefit of such travellers or students as wish to make a special study of this part of the country, a small chronological bibliography of the principal works which I have found relating thereto. General mention of the two provinces is of course frequent in larger works upon the whole of Persia. For journeys through the country irrespective of more general observation, vide the Routes printed at the end of the chapter.

Pietro della Valle	(1618)	Viaggi (Let. IV) or Les Fameux Voyages &c
Sir Thos Herbert	(1627)	Some Zeares' Travels p. 170 et seq. (3e édit)
Capt P. H. Bruce	(1725)	Memoirs
Two English Gentlemen	(1739)	Journey through Russia into Persia.
Jonas Hanway	(1743-4)	Historical Account of British Trade over the Caspian. vols I & II.
S. G. Gmélin	(1771-2)	Histoire des Découvertes. vol II & III
R. Hablizl	(1773-4)	Bemerkungen gemacht in der persischen Landschaft Ghilan. (St Petersburg 1783)
G. Forster	(1784)	A Journey from Bengal to England vol II
Col Trézel.	(1805-6)	Voyage en Arménie etc d'Amédée Jaubert
Sir W. Ouseley	(1812)	Travels in the East vol III cap XVII
J. B. Frazer	(1822)	Travels on the S. Banks of the Caspian (passim)
Col. W. Monteith	(1834)	A Winter's Journey vol II letters XV. XVI XVII
Col. W. K. Stuart	(1836)	Journal of the RGS vol III. 1.
Major d'Arcy Todd.	(1836)	Journal of a residence in Persia Caps X. XI
Sir H. Rawlinson	(1838)	Journal of the RGS vol VIII p 102-8
		Do. vol X. p. 1
trs W. R. Holmes	(1843)	Sketches on the Caspian Shores
A. Chodzko.	(1849)	Nouvelles Annales des Voyages. 5me series vols XX. XXI
N. de Khanikoff	(185.)	Journal Asiatique (1862)
Keith Abbott	(185.)	Proceedings of the RGS vol III p 390.
E. B. Eastwick	(1860)	Journal of a Diplomate vol II
trs G. Melgunof.	(1868)	Das Südliche Ufer des Kaspischen Meeres, oder die Nordprovinzen Persiens.
M. Guilliny	(1866)	Essai sur le Ghilan (Bul. de la Soc. de géogr.)
Dr Tietze	(1875)	Zeitschrift der Ges. für Erdkunde. Vien. 1875.
trs Col. Val. Baker	(1873)	Clouds in the East.
Capt Puschin	(1877)	The Caspian Sea (Russian)
Col. B. Lovett	(1881-2)	Proceedings of the R.G.S. (new series) vol V (1883) and Consular Report no 36. 1882.

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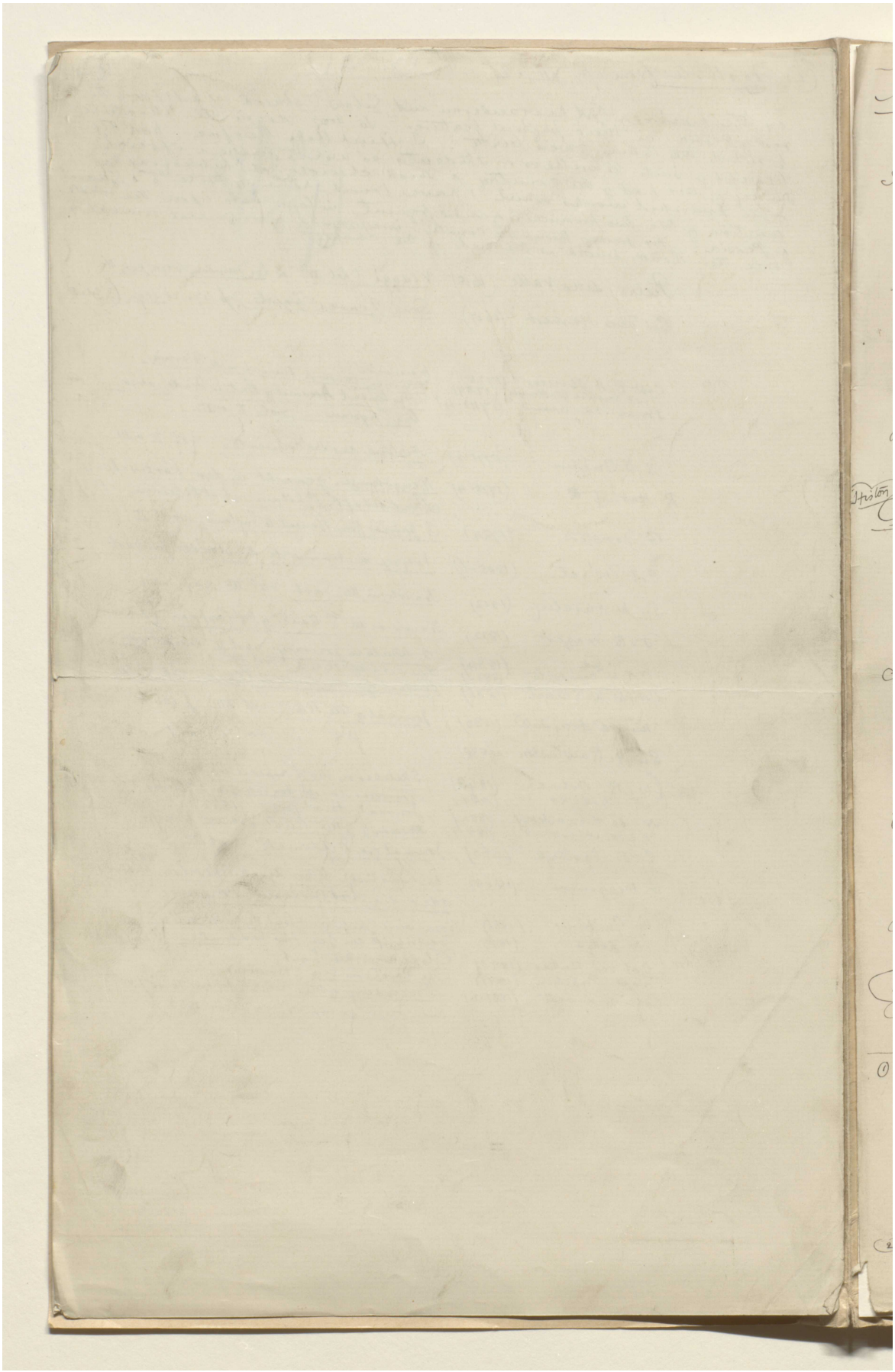
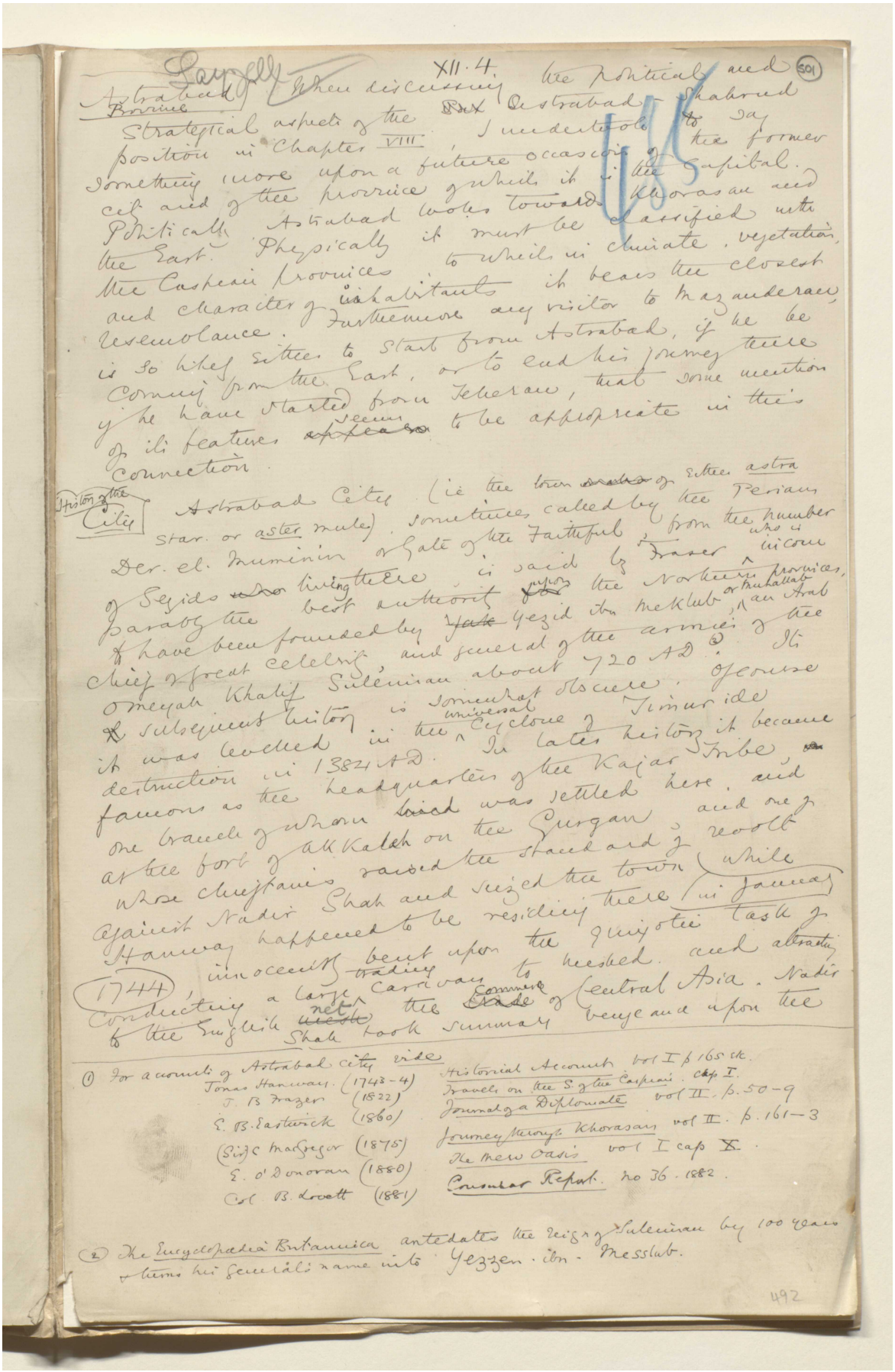


مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٥٠١و] (١٠٠٢/١٣٥٥)

Layzell

XII. 4. (501)

Astrabad Province



When discussing the political and strategical aspects of the Astrabad – Shahrud position in Chapter VIII, I undertook to say something more upon a future occasion of the former city and of the province of which it is the capital. Politically Astrabad looks towards Khorasan and the East. Physically it must be classified with the Caspian provinces to which in climate, vegetation, and character of inhabitants it bears the closest resemblance. Furthermore any visitor to Mazanderan, is so likely either to start from Astrabad, if he be coming from the East, or to end his journey there if he have started from Teheran, that some mention of its features seems to be appropriate in this connection.

History of the City

Astrabad City (ie the town of either astra star or aster mule), sometimes called by the Persians Der. el. Muminin or Gate of the Faithful, from the number of Sejids living there, is said by Fraser who is incomparably the best authority upon the Northern provinces, to have been founded by Yezid ibn Meklub or Muhallab, an Arab chief of great celebrity, and general of the armies of the Omeyah Khalif Suleiman about 720 AD.(2) Its subsequent history is somewhat obscure. Of course it was levelled in the universal cyclone of Timur ide destruction in 1384 AD. In later history it became famous as the headquarters of the Kajar Tribe, one branch of whom was settled here, and at the fort of Akkalah on the Gurgan, and one of whose chieftains raised the standard of revolt against Nadir Shah and seized the town (while Hanway happened to be residing there in January 1744), innocently bent upon the quixotic task of conducting a large trading caravan to Meshed and attracting to the English net the commerce of Central Asia. Nadir Shah took summary vengeance upon the

(1) For accounts of Astrabad city vide
Jonas Hanway (1743-4) Historical Account vol I p 165 etc.
J. B. Fraser (1822) Travels on the S. of the Caspian. cap I.
E. B. Eastwick (1860) Journal of a Diplomate vol II. p. 50-9
(Sir) C. MacGregor (1875) Journey through Khorasan vol II. p. 161-3
E. O'Donovan (1880) The New Oasis vol I cap X.
Col. B. Lovett (1881) Consular Report. no 36. 1882.

(2) The Encyclopaedia Britannica antedates the reign of Suleiman by 100 years & turns his general's name into Yezzen ibn Messlub.

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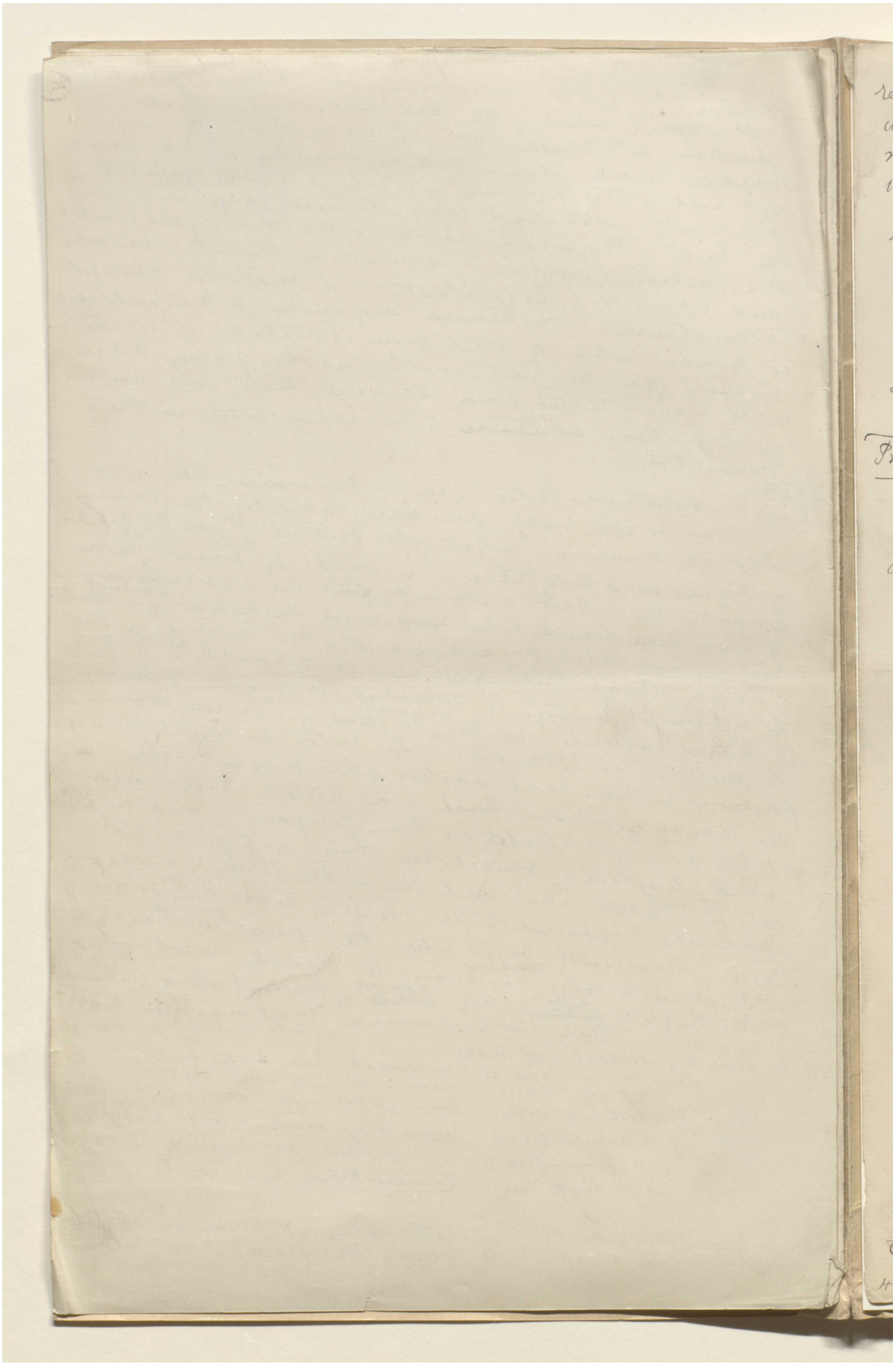
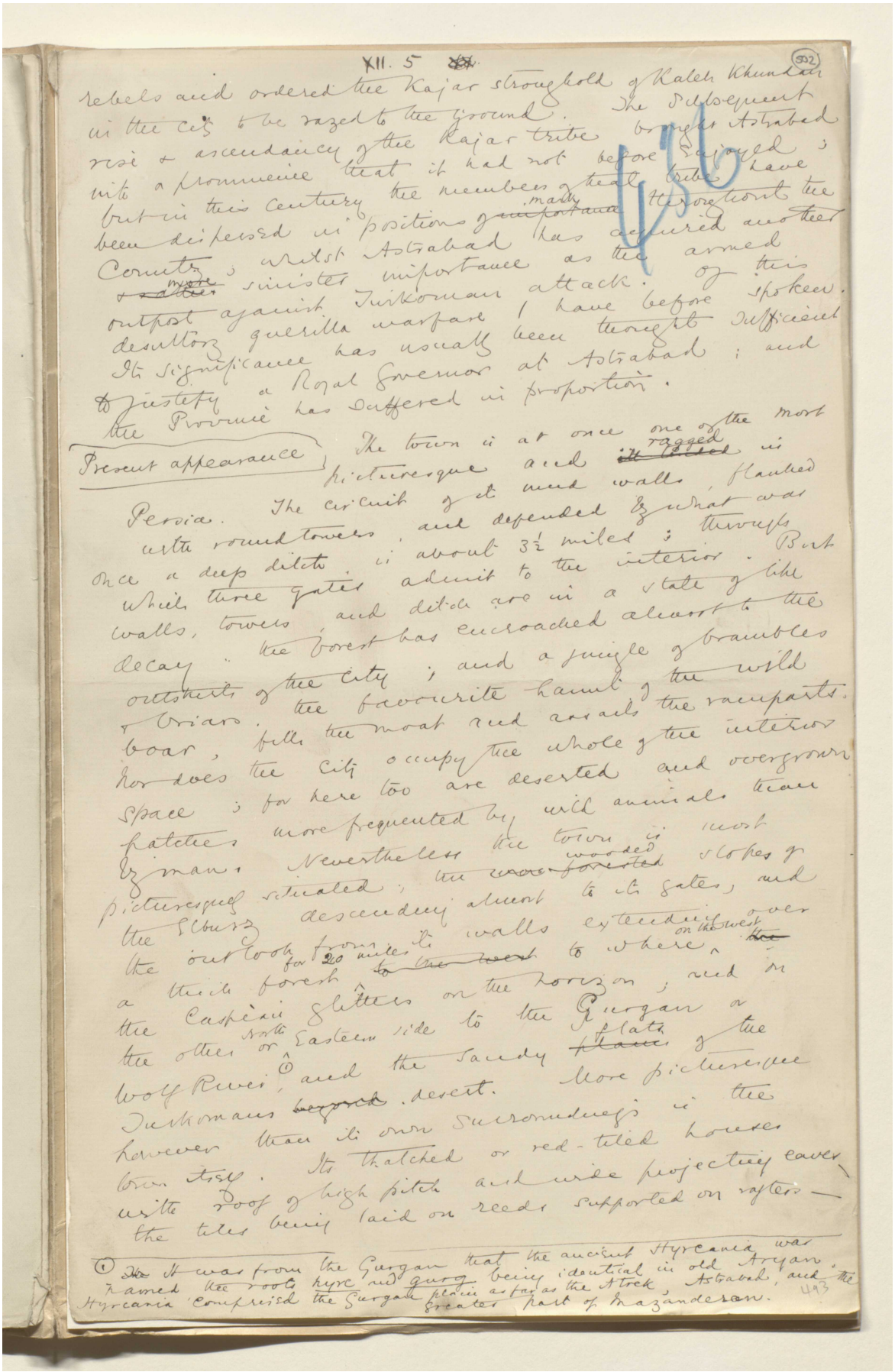


مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٥٠٢و] (١٠٠٤/١٣٥٥)



XII. 5 (502)

rebels and ordered the Kajar stronghold of Kaleh Khundan in the city to be razed to the ground. The subsequent rise & ascendancy of the Kajar tribe brought Astrabad into a prominence that it had not before enjoyed; but in this century the members of that tribe have been dispersed in positions of ~~importance~~ mark throughout the Country; whilst Astrabad has acquired another ~~& rather~~ more sinister importance as the armed outpost against Turkoman attack. Of this desultory guerilla warfare I have before spoken. Its significance has usually been thought sufficient to justify a Royal Governor at Astrabad; and the Province has suffered in proportion.

Present appearance

The town is at once one of the most picturesque and ~~ill-tended~~ ragged in Persia. The circuit of its mud walls, flanked with round towers, and defended by what was once a deep ditch, is about 3½ miles; through which three gates admit to the interior. But walls, towers and ditch are in a state of like decay: the forest has encroached almost to the outskirts of the city; and a jungle of brambles & briars, the favourite haunt of the wild boar, fills the moat and assails the ramparts. Nor does the city occupy the whole of the interior space; for here too are deserted and overgrown patches more frequented by wild animals than by man. Nevertheless the town is most picturesquely situated; the ~~more forested~~ wooded slopes of the Elburz descending almost to its gates, and the outlook from its walls extending over a thick forest for 20 miles ~~to the west~~ to where on the west ~~the~~ the Caspian glitters on the horizon; and on the other or North Eastern side to the Gurgan or Wolf River,[1] and the sandy ~~plains~~ flats of the Turkomans ~~beyond~~ desert. More picturesque however than its own surroundings is the town itself. Its thatched or red-tiled houses with roof of high pitch and wide projecting eaves, the tiles being laid on reeds supported on rafters —

[1] ~~The~~ It was from the Gurgan that the ancient Hyrcania was named the roots hyrc and gurg being identical in old Aryan. Hyrcania comprised the Gurgan plain as far as the Atrek, Astrabad, and the greater part of Mazanderan.

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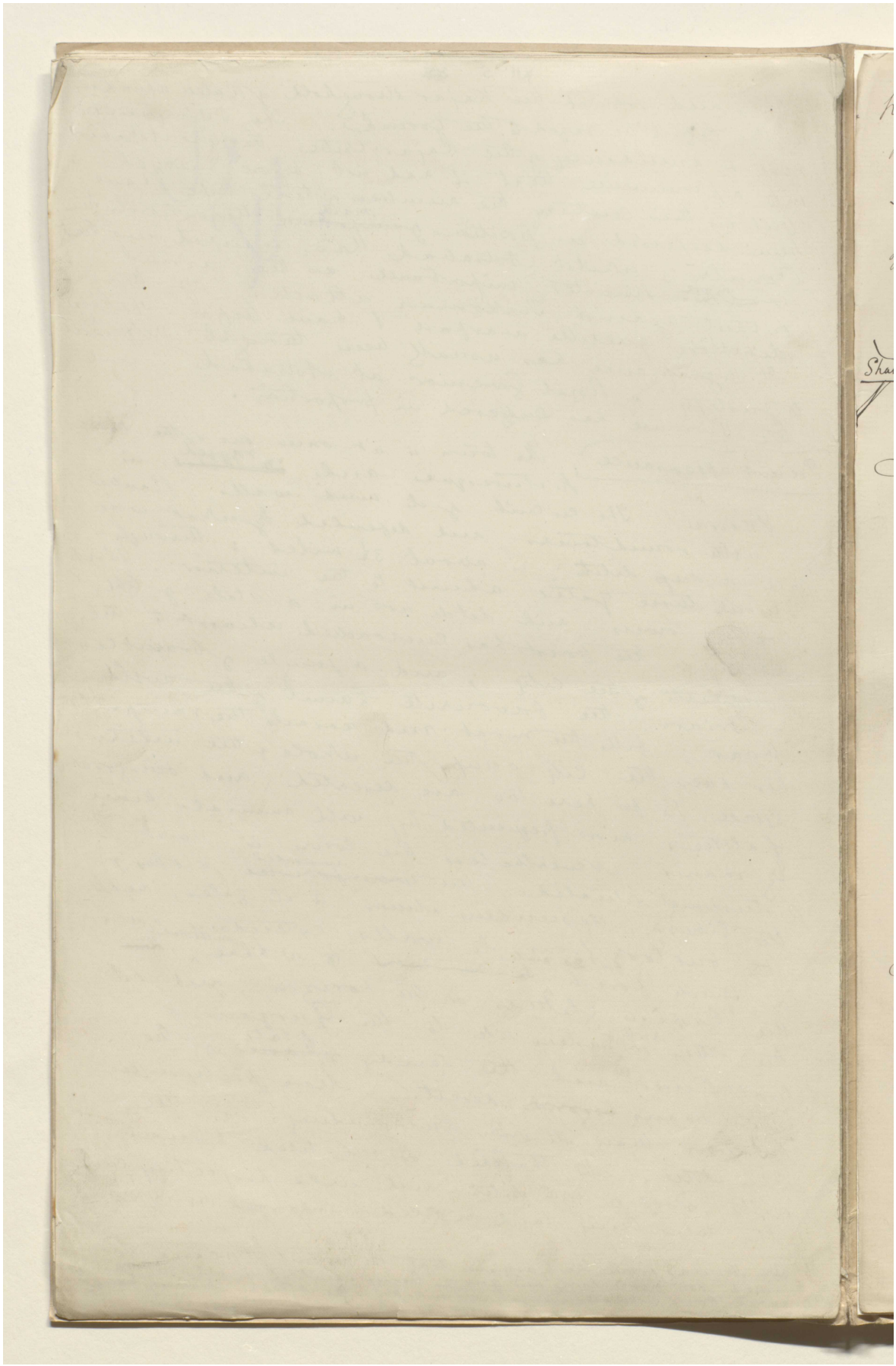

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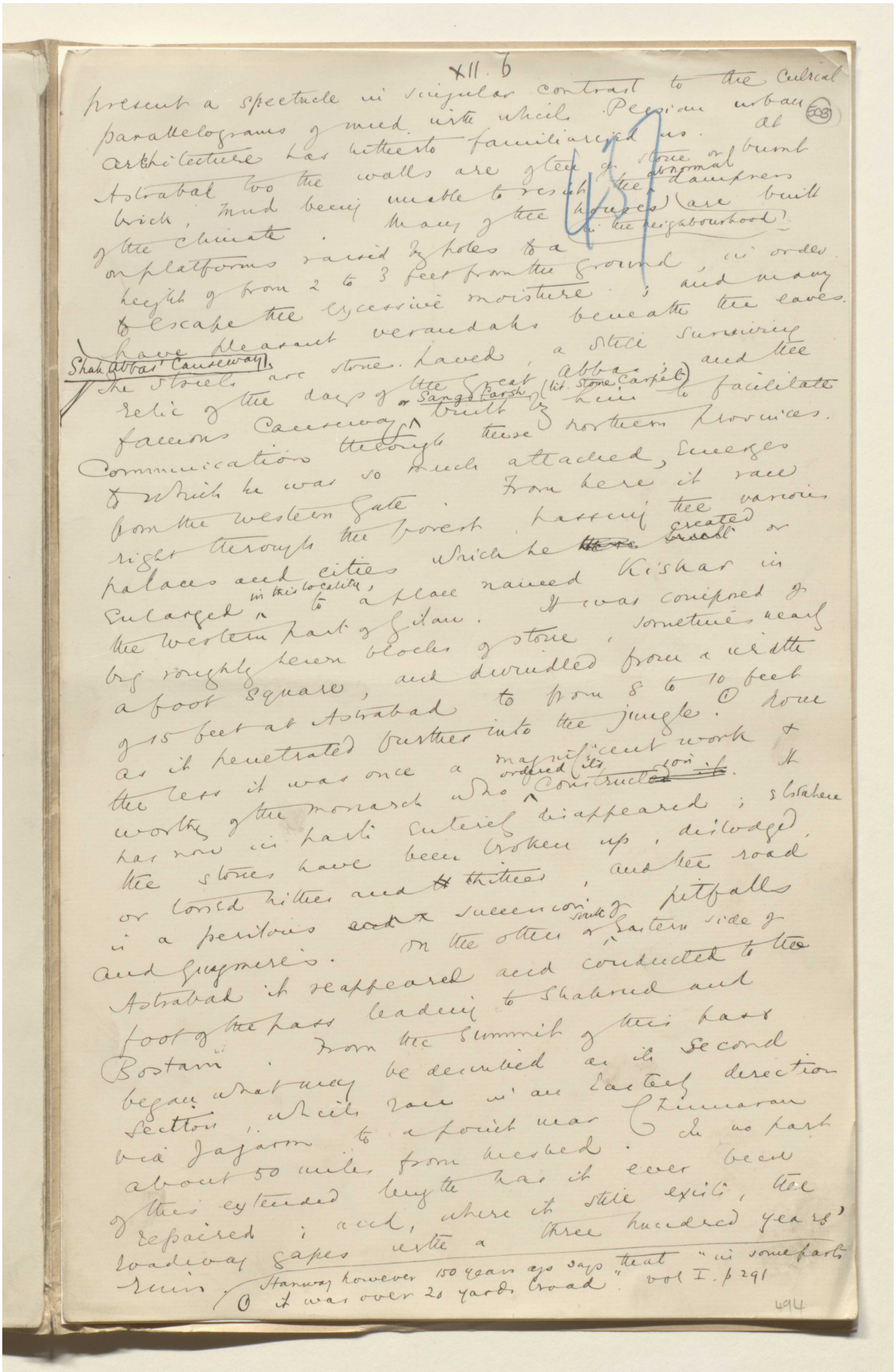
مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٥٠٣و] (١٠٠٦/١٣٥٥)



XII. 6

present a spectacle in singular contrast to the Cubical parallelograms of mud with which Persian urban architecture has hitherto familiarized us. At Astrabad too the walls are often of stone or burnt brick, mud being unable to resist the abnormal dampness of the climate. Many of the houses (in the neighbourhood) are built on platforms raised by poles to a height of from 2 to 3 feet from the ground, in order to escape the excessive moisture; and many have pleasant verandahs beneath the eaves.

Shah Abbas' Causeway.

The streets are stone paved, a still surviving relic of the days of the Great Abbas; and the famous Causeway or Sangfarsh (lit. stone carpet) built by him to facilitate communication through these northern provinces, to which he was so much attached, emerges from the western gate. From here it ran right through the forest, passing the various palaces and cities which he ~~there~~ created or enlarged in this locality, to a place named Kishar in the western part of Gilan. It was composed of big roughly hewn blocks of stone, sometimes nearly a foot square, and dwindled from a width of 15 feet at Astrabad to from 8 to 10 feet as it penetrated further into the jungle.① Now the less it was once a magnificent work & worthy of the monarch who ordered its construction. It has now in parts entirely disappeared; elsewhere the stones have been broken up, dislodged, or tossed hither and thither, and the road is a perilous ~~and~~ succession of pitfalls and quagmires. On the other or south eastern side of Astrabad it reappeared and conducted to the foot of the pass leading to Shahrud and Bostam. From the summit of this pass began what may be described as its second section, which ran in an easterly direction via Jajarm to a point near Chinnaran about 50 miles from Meshed. In no part of this extended length has it ever been repaired; and, where it still exists, the roadway gapes with a three hundred years' ruin.

① Stanway however 150 years ago says that "in some parts it was over 20 yards broad". vol I. p 291

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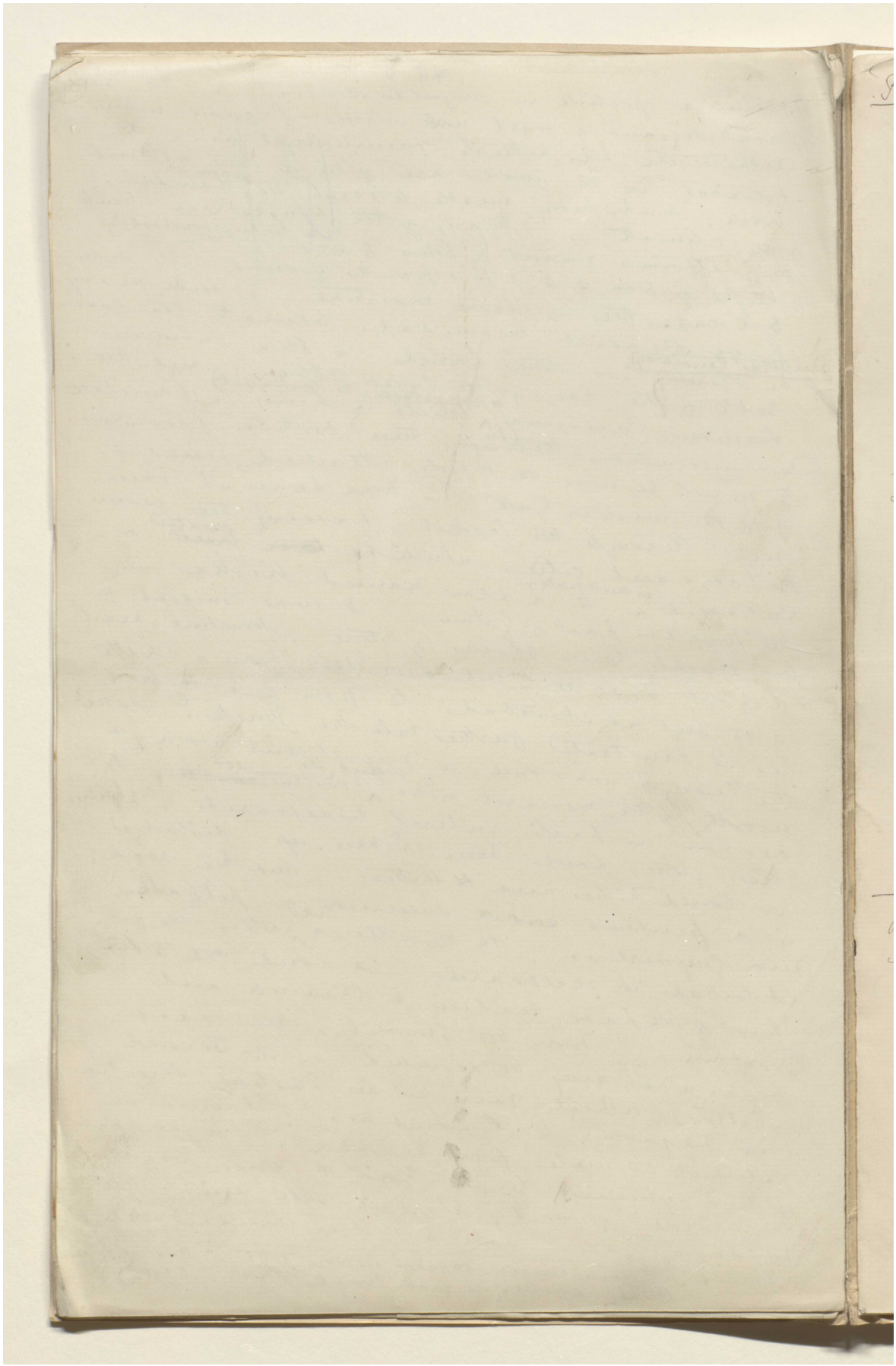
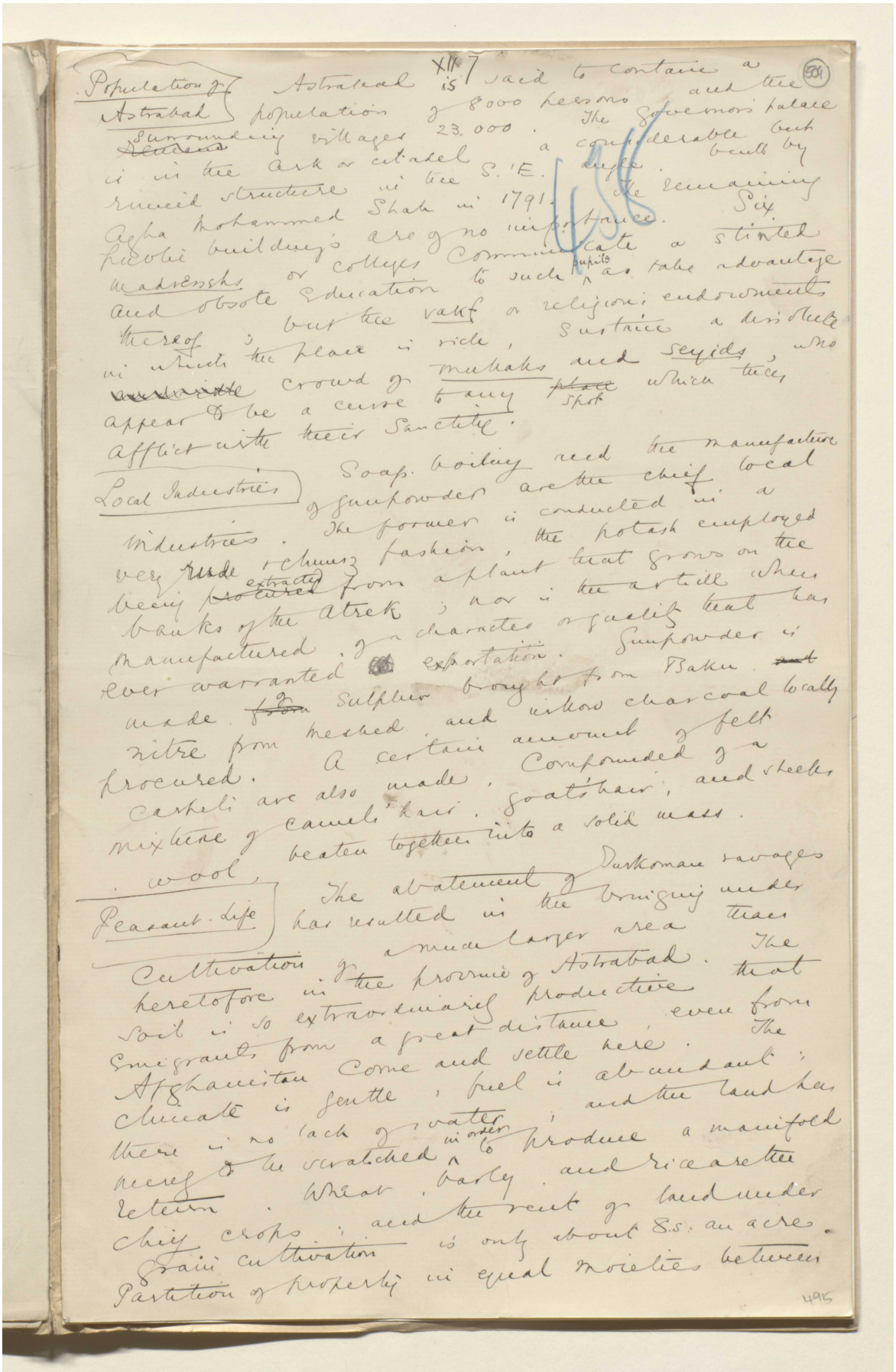


XII 7 (504)



Population of Astrabad Astrabad is said to contain a population of 8000 persons and the surrounding villages 23,000. The Governor's palace is in the ark or citadel a considerable but ruined structure in the S.E. angle. Agha Mohammed Shah in 1791. The remaining public buildings are of no importance. Six madressahs or colleges communicate a stinted and obsolete education to such pupils as take advantage thereof; but the vakf or religious endowments in which the place is rich, sustain a dissolute crowd of mullahs and seyids, who appear to be a curse to any spot which they afflict with their sanctity.

Local Industries Soap boiling and the manufacture of gunpowder are the chief local industries. The former is conducted in a very rude & clumsy fashion, the potash employed being extracted from a plant that grows on the banks of the Atrek; nor is the article when manufactured of a character or quality that has ever warranted exportation. Gunpowder is made of sulphur brought from Baku, nitre from Meshed, and willow charcoal locally procured. A certain amount of felt carpets are also made, compounded of a mixture of camel's hair, goat's hair, and sheep's wool, beaten together into a solid mass.

Peasant Life The abatement of Turkoman ravages has resulted in the bringing under cultivation of a much larger area than heretofore in the province of Astrabad. The soil is so extraordinarily productive that emigrants from a great distance, even from Afghanistan come and settle here. The climate is gentle; fuel is abundant; there is no lack of water; and the land has merely to be scratched in order to produce a manifold return. Wheat, barley and rice are the chief crops; and the rent of land under grain cultivation is only about 8s. an acre. Partition of property in equal moieties between

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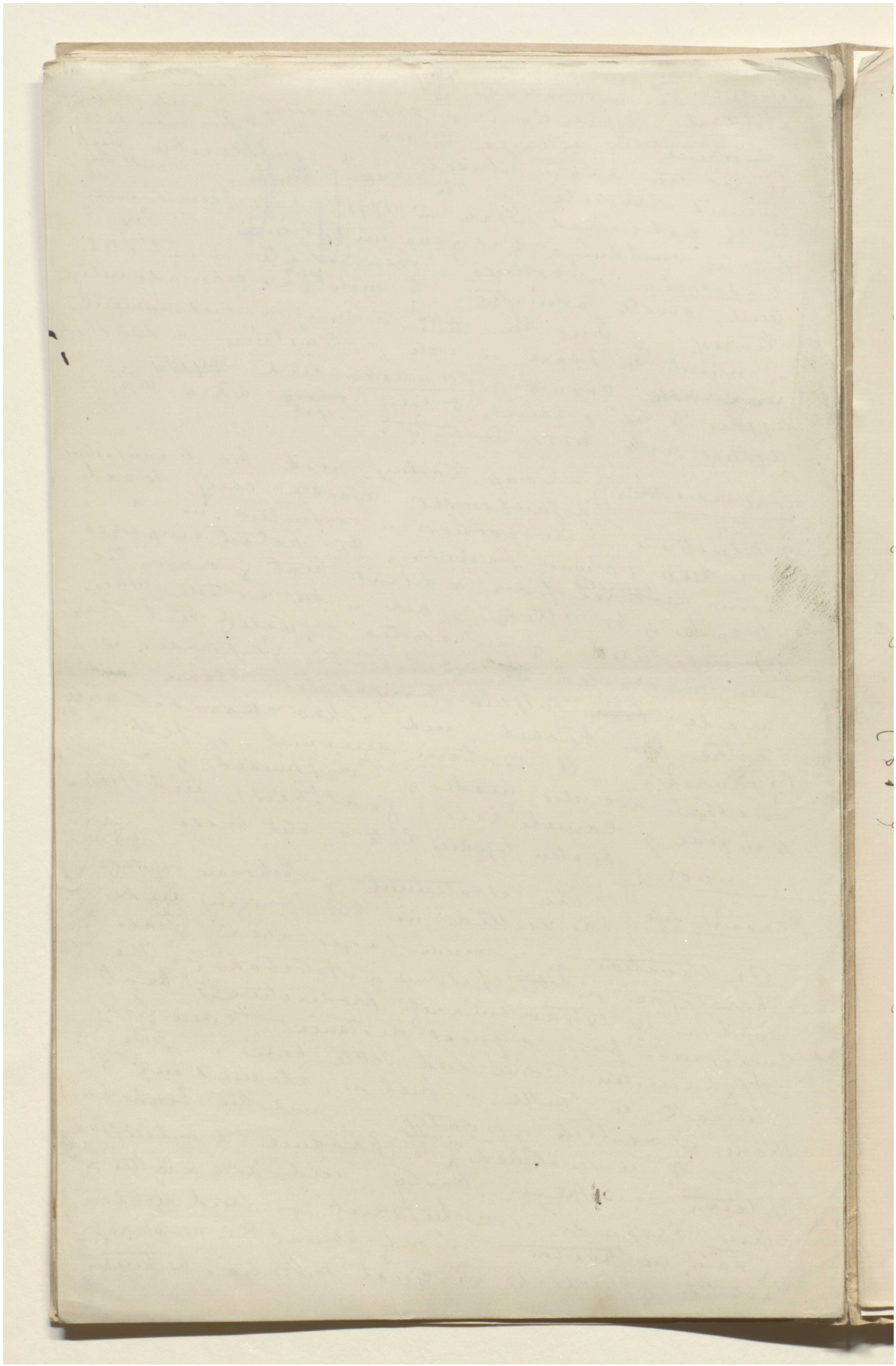
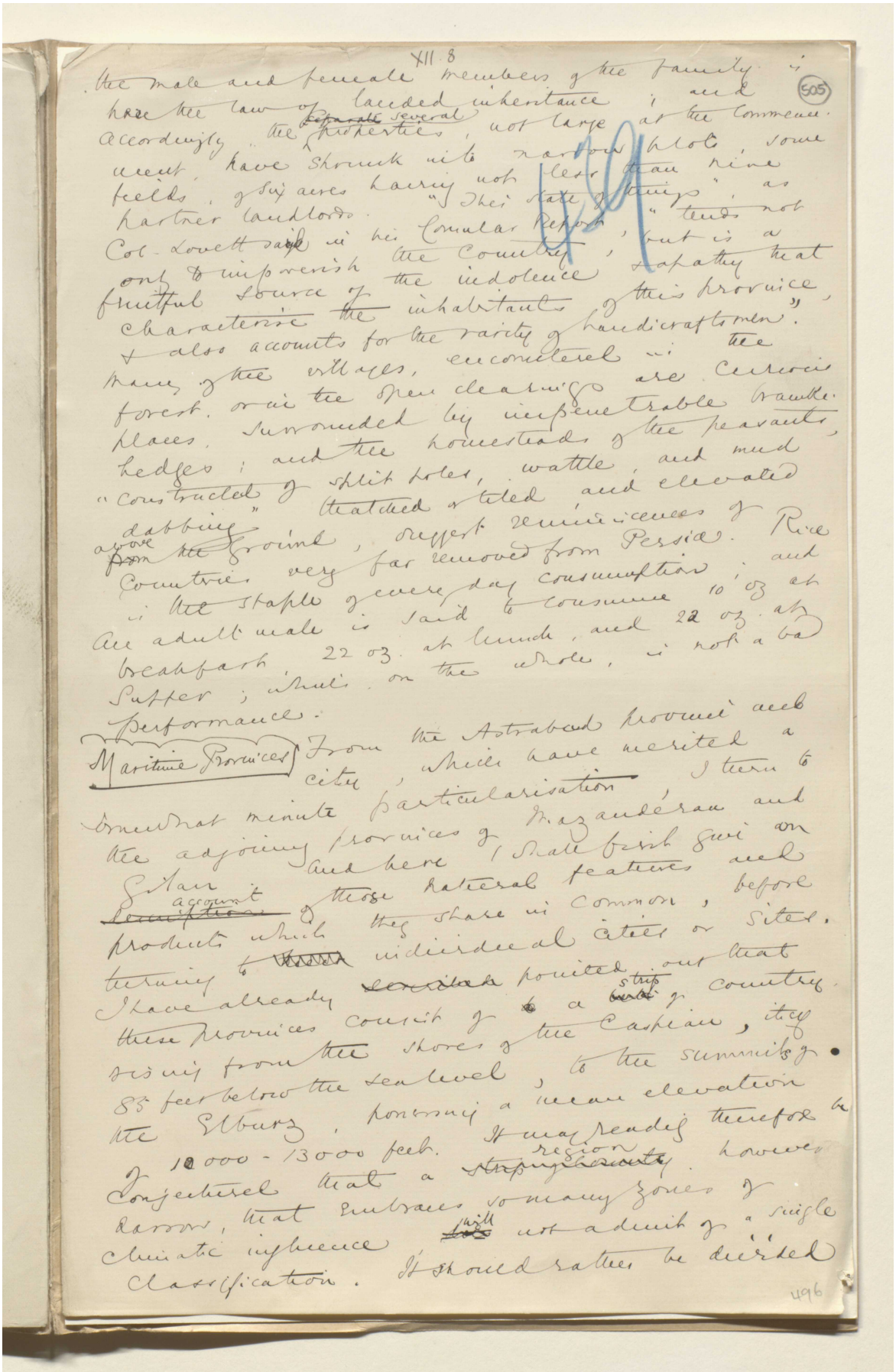


مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٥٠٥و] (١٠١٠/١٣٥٥)



XII. 8

505

the male and female members of the family is here the law of landed inheritance; and accordingly the ~~separate~~ several properties, not large at the commencement, have shrunk into narrow plots, some fields, of six acres having not less than nine partner landlords. "This state of things", as Col. Lovett said in his Consular Report, "tends not only to impoverish the country, but is a fruitful source of the indolence & apathy that characterise the inhabitants of this province, & also accounts for the rarity of handicraftsmen". Many of the villages, encountered in the forest, or in the open clearings are curious places, surrounded by impenetrable bramble hedges; and the homesteads of the peasants, "constructed of split poles, wattle and mud dabbing" thatched or tiled and elevated above ~~from~~ the ground, suggest reminiscences of countries very far removed from Persia. Rice is the staple of every day consumption; and an adult male is said to consume 10 oz at breakfast, 22 oz. at lunch, and 22 oz. at supper; which, on the whole, is not a bad performance.

Maritime Provinces

From the Astrabad province and city, which have merited a somewhat minute particularisation, I turn to the adjoining provinces of Mazanderan and Gilan. And here I shall first give an ~~description~~ account of those natural features and products which they share in common, before turning to ~~those~~ individual cities or sites. I have already ~~[illegible]~~ pointed out that these provinces consist of a ~~[illegible]~~ strip of country rising from the shores of the Caspian, itself 85 feet below the sea level, to the summits of the Elburz, possessing a mean elevation of 10000 - 13000 feet. It may readily therefore be conjectured that a ~~strip of country~~ region however narrow, that embraces so many zones of climatic influence ~~[illegible]~~ will not admit of a single classification. It should rather be divided

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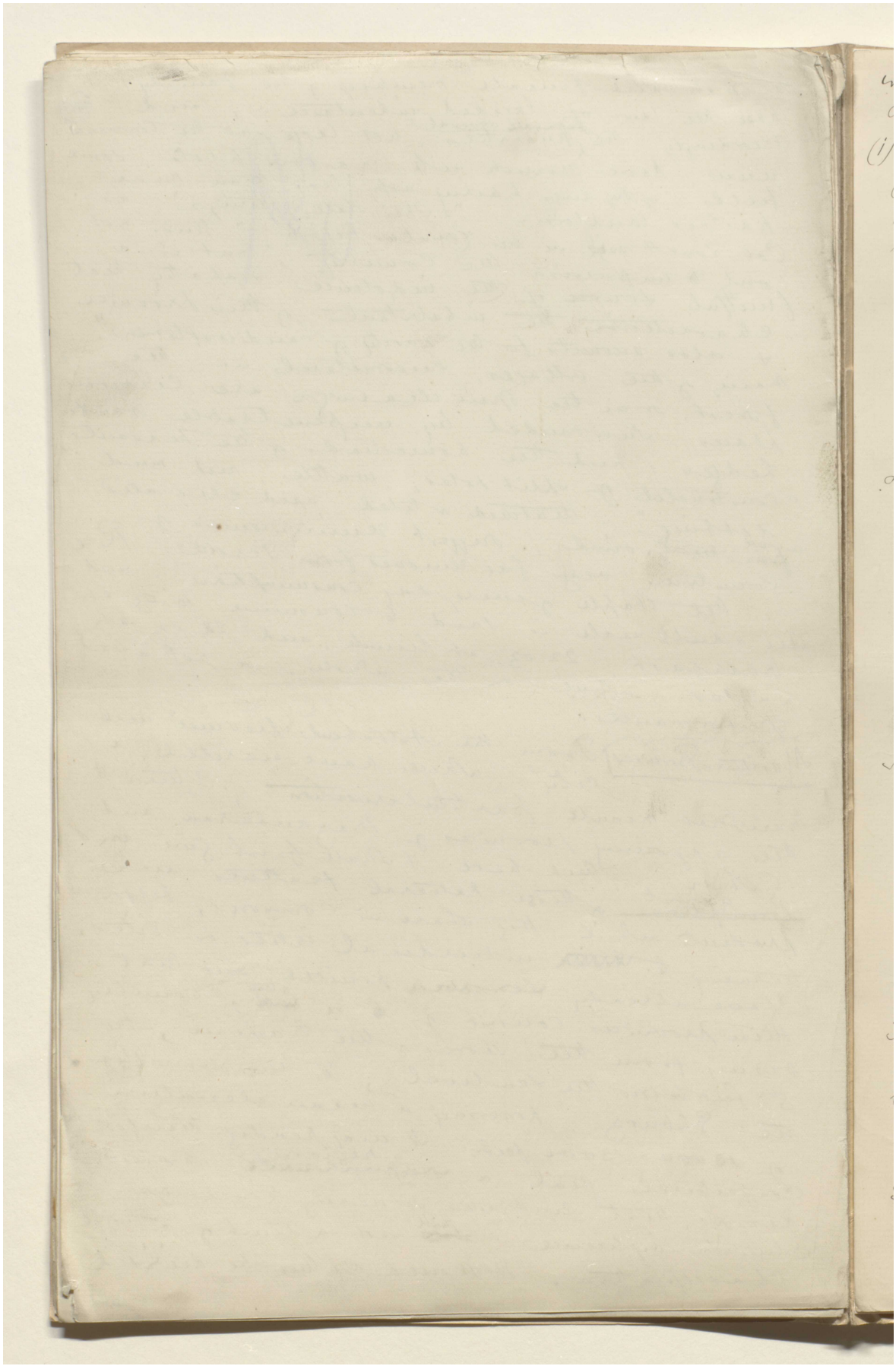
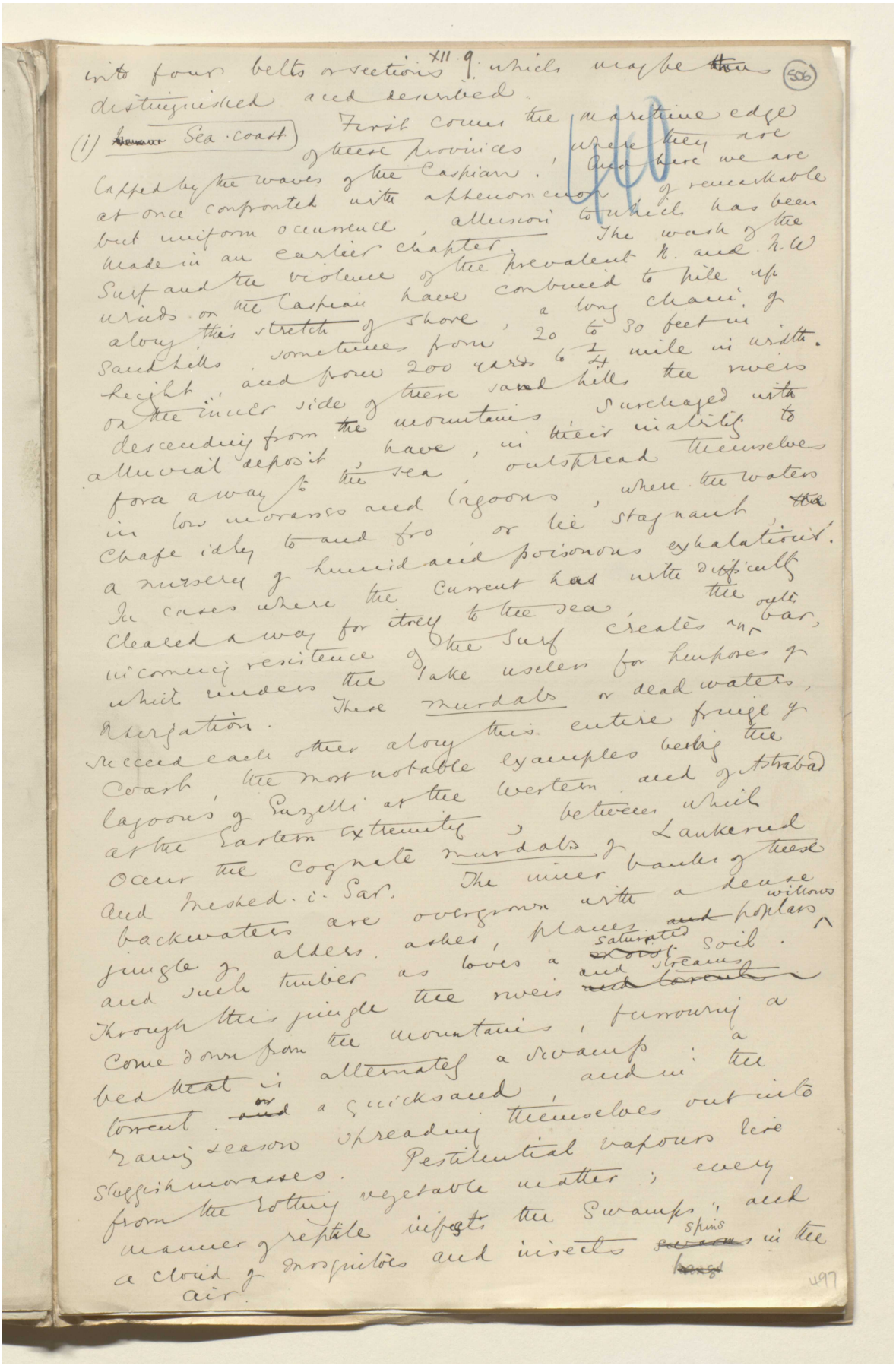


مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٥٠٦و] (١٠١٢/١٣٥٥)



into four belts or sections XII. 9. which may be ~~thus~~ distinguished and described. (506)

(i) ~~[illegible]~~ Sea-coast. First comes the maritime edge of these provinces, where they are lapped by the waves of the Caspian. And here we are at once confronted with a phenomenon of remarkable but uniform occurrence, allusion to which has been made in an earlier chapter. The wash of the Surf and the violence of the prevalent N. and N.W. winds on the Caspian have combined to pile up along this stretch of shore, a long chain of sand hills, sometimes from 20 to 30 feet in height, and from 200 yards to 1/4 mile in width. On the inner side of these sand hills the rivers descending from the mountains, surcharged with alluvial deposit, have, in their inability to force a way to the sea, outspread themselves in low morasses and lagoons, where the waters chafe idly to and fro or lie stagnant, ~~the~~ a nursery of humid and poisonous exhalations. In cases where the current has with difficulty cleared a way for itself to the sea, the outer incoming resistence of the Surf creates an bar, which renders the lake useless for purposes of navigation. These murdabs or dead waters, succeed each other along this entire fringe of coast, the most notable examples being the lagoons of Guzelli at the western and of Astrabad at the Eastern extremity, between which occur the cognate murdabs of Lankerud and Meshed-i-Sar. The inner banks of these backwaters are overgrown with a dense jungle of alders, ashes, planes ~~and~~ poplars, willows and such timber as loves a ~~moist~~ saturated soil. Through this jungle the rivers and streams ~~and torrents~~ come down from the mountains, furrowing a bed that is alternately a swamp, a torrent ~~and~~ or a quicksand, and in the rainy season spreading themselves out into sluggish morasses. Pestilential vapours rise from the rotting vegetable matter; every manner of reptile infests the swamps; and a cloud of mosquitoes and insects ~~swarms~~ spins ~~hangs~~ in the air.

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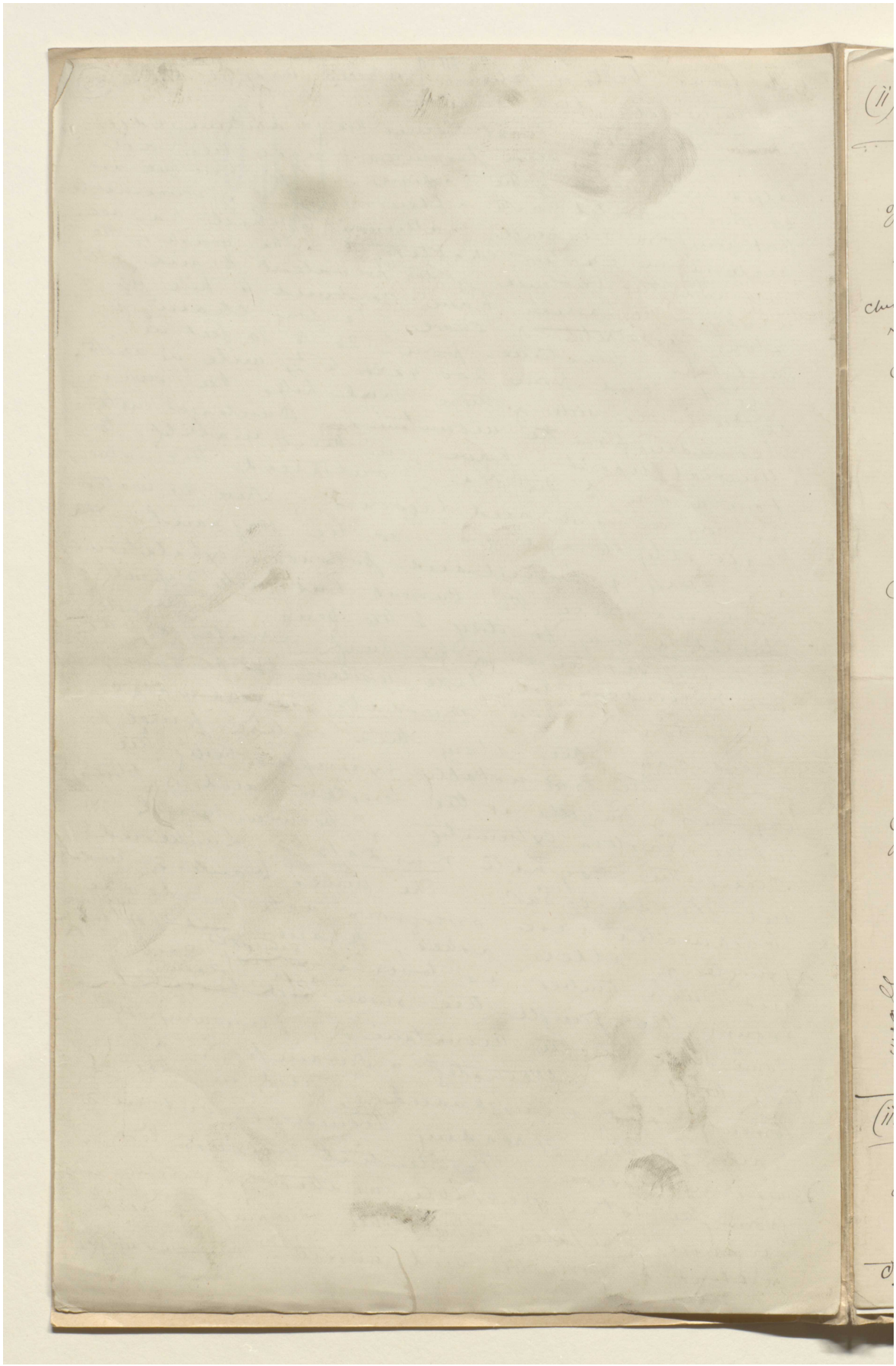
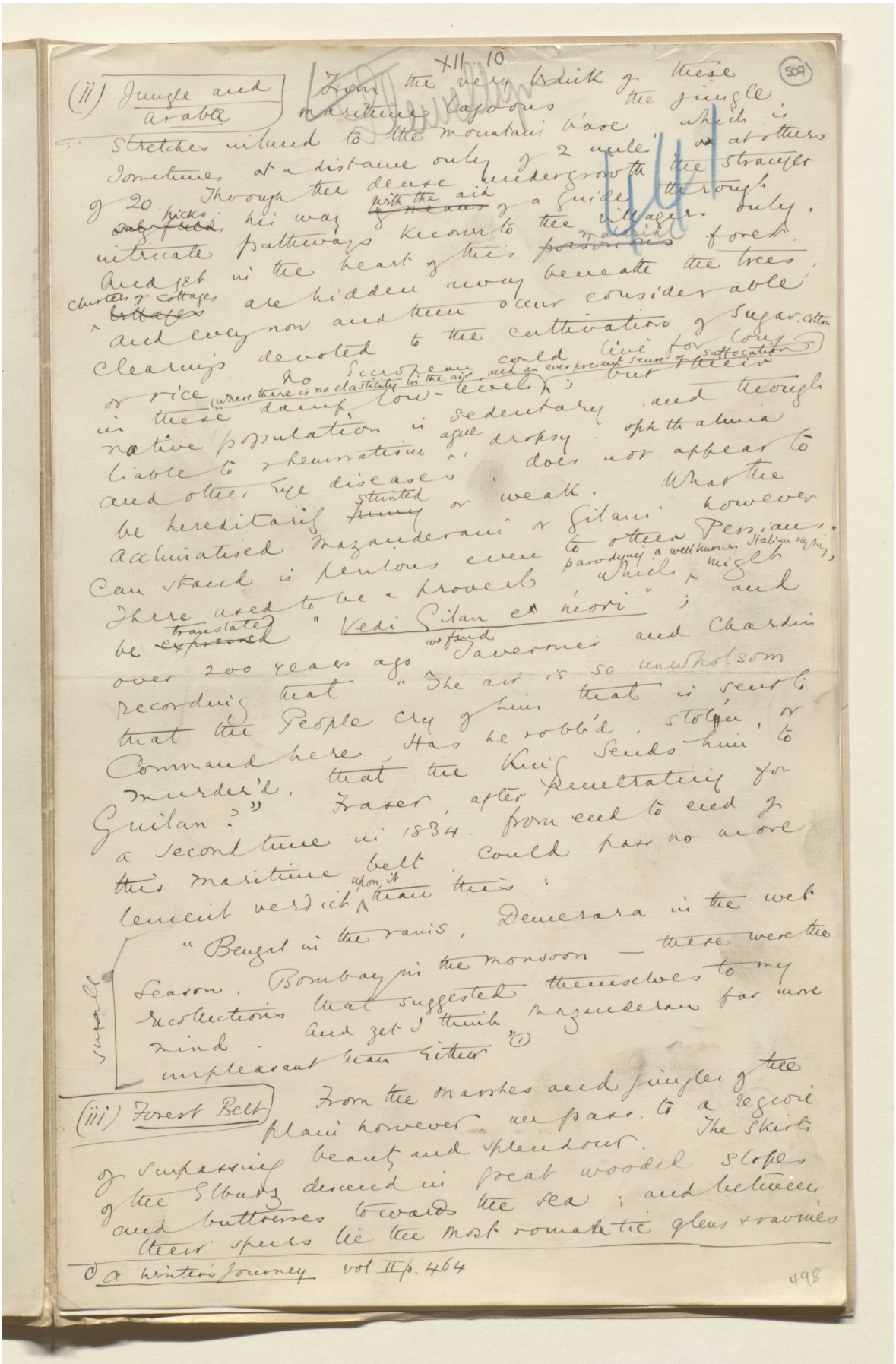


مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٥٠٧و] (١٠١٤/١٣٥٥)

XII. 10

507

(ii) Jungle and arable



From the very brink of these maritime lagoons the jungle stretches inland to the mountain base which is sometimes at a distance only of 2 miles, at others of 20. Through the dense undergrowth the stranger ~~only feed~~ picks his way ~~by means~~ with the aid of a guide through intricate pathways known to the villagers only. And yet in the heart of this ~~poisonous~~ malarial forest, clusters of cottages ~~villages~~ are hidden away beneath the trees, and every now and then occur considerable clearings devoted to the cultivation of sugar, cotton or rice. No European could live for long in these damp low-levels (where there is no elasticity in the air, and an ever present sense of suffocation); but their native population is sedentary, and though liable to rheumatism, ague, dropsy, ophthalmia and other eye diseases, does not appear to be hereditarily ~~funny~~ stunted or weak. What the acclimatised Mazanderani or Gilani however can stand is perilous even to other Persians. There used to be a proverb, which parodying a well known Italian saying, might be ~~expressed~~ translated "Vedi Gilan e mori"; and over 200 years ago we find Tavernier and Chardin recording that "The air is so unwholsom that the People cry of him that is sent to Command here, Has he robb'd, stolen, or murder'd, that the King sends him to Guilan?" Fraser, after penetrating for a second time in 1834, from end to end of this maritime belt, could pass no more lenient verdict upon it than this:

"Bengal in the rains, Demerara in the wet season, Bombay in the monsoon — these were the recollections that suggested themselves to my mind. And yet I think Mazanderan far more unpleasant than either"(1)

(iii) Forest Belt

From the marshes and jungles of the plain however we pass to a region of surpassing beauty and splendour. The skirts of the Elburz descend in great wooded slopes and buttresses towards the sea; and between their spurs lie the most romantic glens & ravines

(1) A Winter's Journey vol II p. 464

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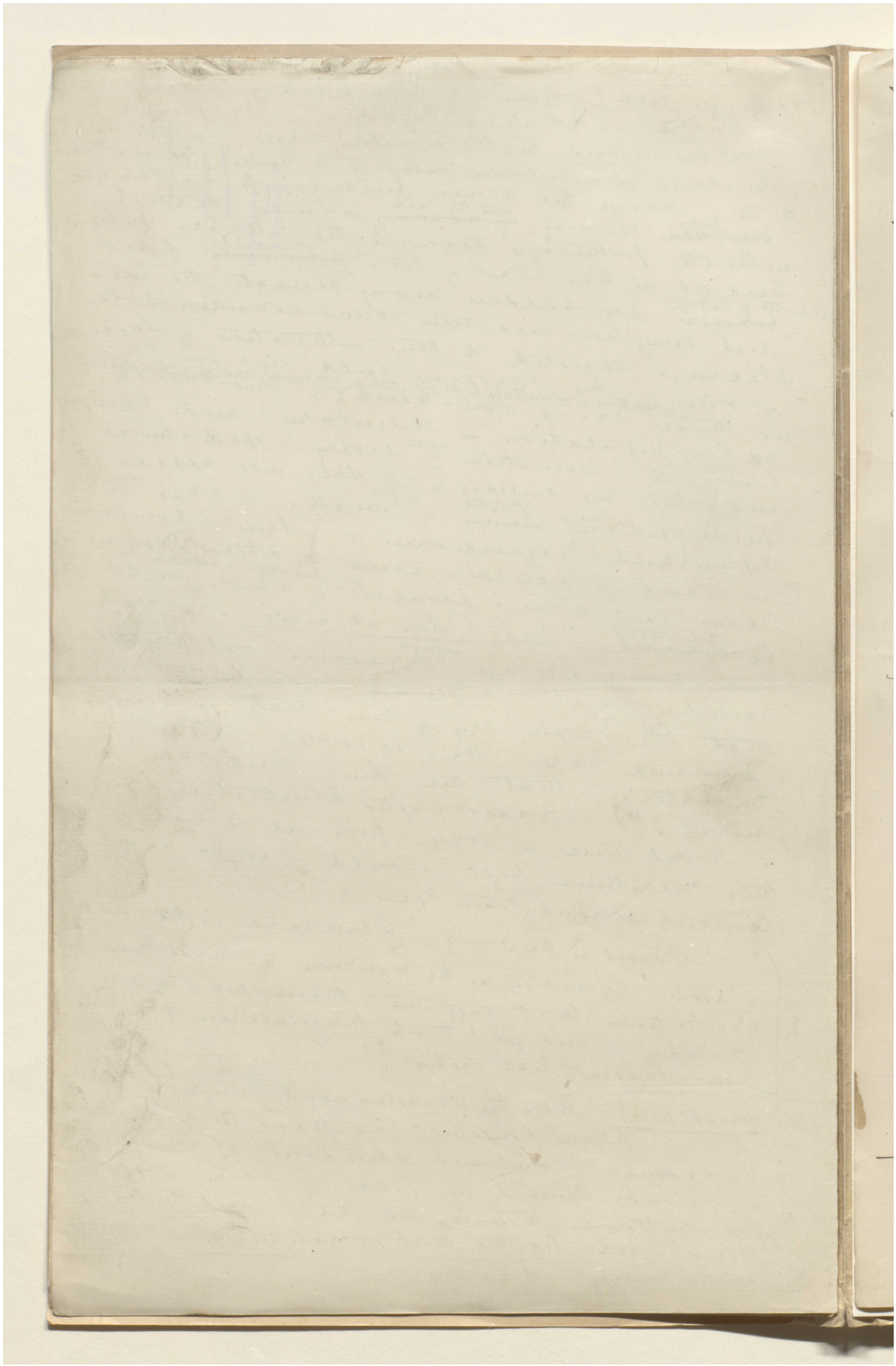

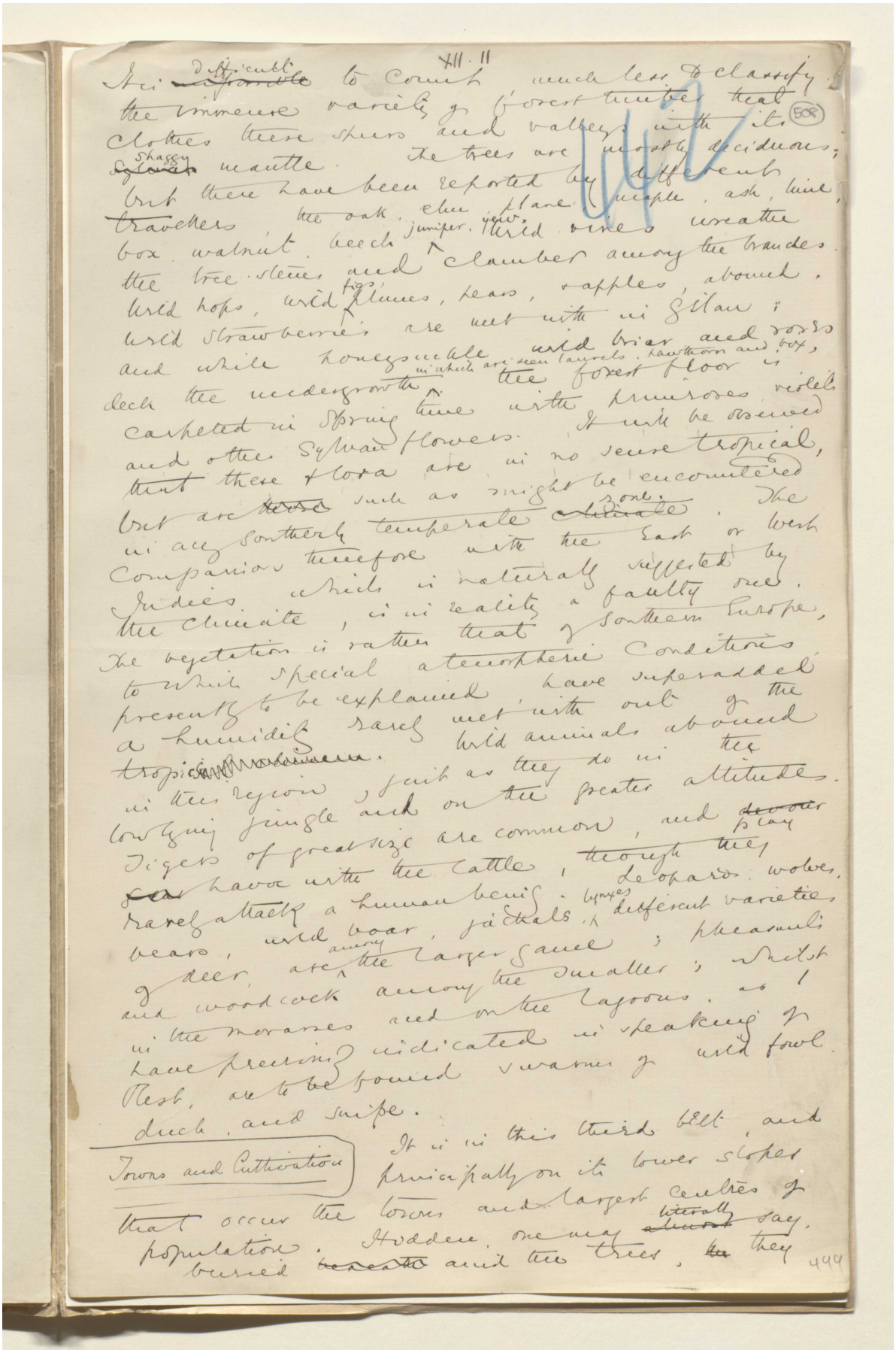

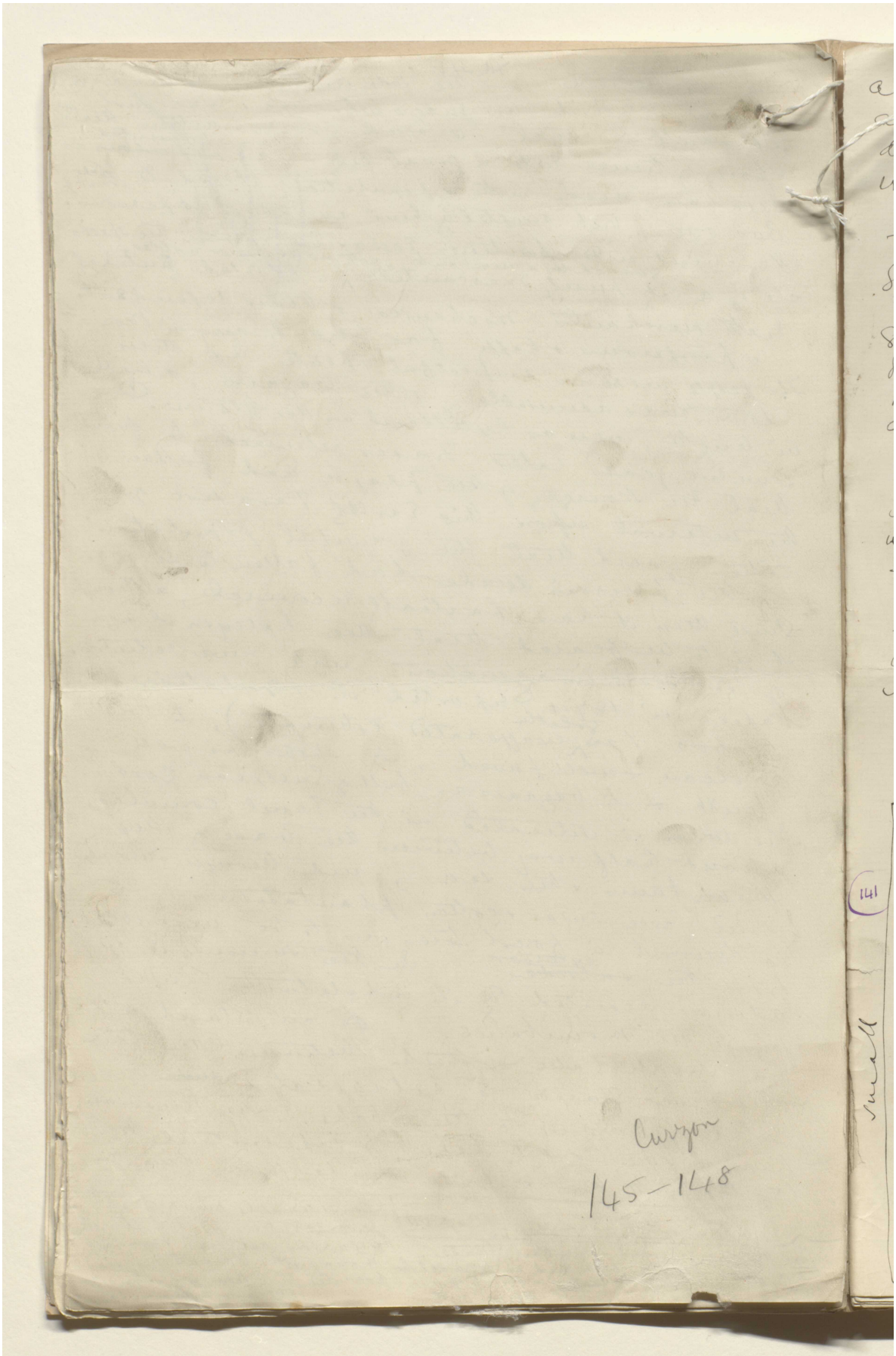
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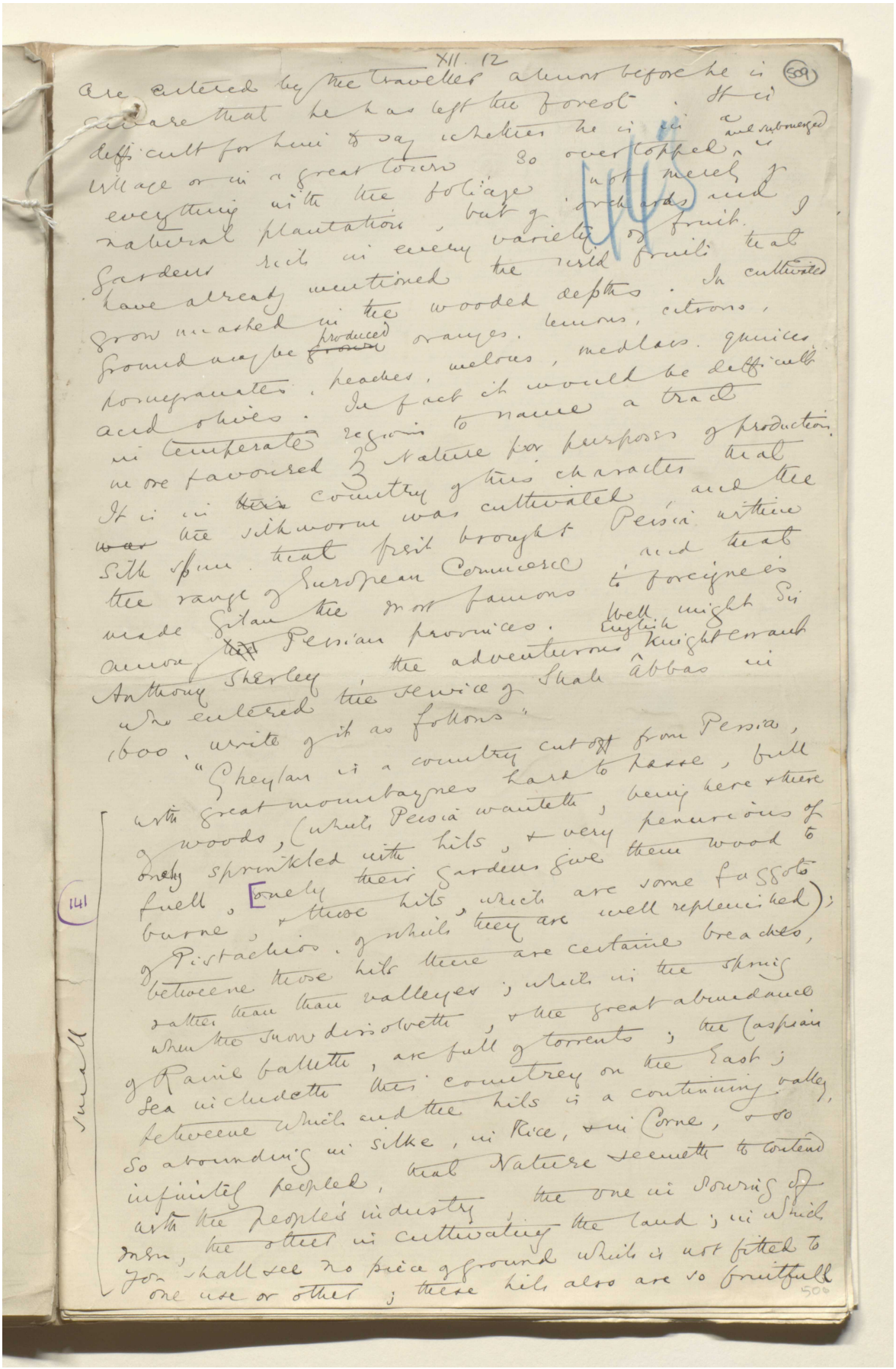
Curzon
145-148



are entered by the traveller almost before he is aware that he has left the forest. It is difficult for him to say whether he is in a village or in a great town, so overtopped everything with the foliage of natural plantations, but of orchards and gardens rich in every variety of fruit. I have already mentioned the wild fruits that grow unasked in the wooded depths. In cultivated ground may be produced oranges, lemons, citrons, pomegranates, peaches, melons, medlars, quinces and olives. In fact it would be difficult in temperate regions to name a tract more favoured by Nature for purposes of production. It is in this country of rich character that the silkworm was cultivated, and the silk spun that first brought Persia within the range of European Commerce and that made Satan the most famous to foreigners among Persian provinces. Well might Sir Anthony Sherley the adventurous English knight-errant who entered the service of Shah Abbas in 1600, write of it as follows:

"Sheylan is a country cut off from Persia, with great mountaynes hard to passe, full of woods, (which Persia wanteth), being here & there finely sprinkled with hils, & very penurious of fuell, [f]onely their Gardens give them wood to burne; & those hils, which are some fassots of Pistachios, of which they are well replenished); betweene those hils there are certaine breaches, rather than valleyes; which in the spring when the snow dissolveth, & the great abundance of Raine falleth, are full of torrents; the Caspian Sea including their countrey on the East; betweene which and the hils is a continuing valley, so abounding in silke, in Rice, & in Corne, & so infinitely peopled, that Nature seemeth to contend with the peoples industry, the one in pouring of rain, the other in cultivating the land; in which you shall see no peice of ground which is not fitted to one use or other; these hils also are so fruitfull

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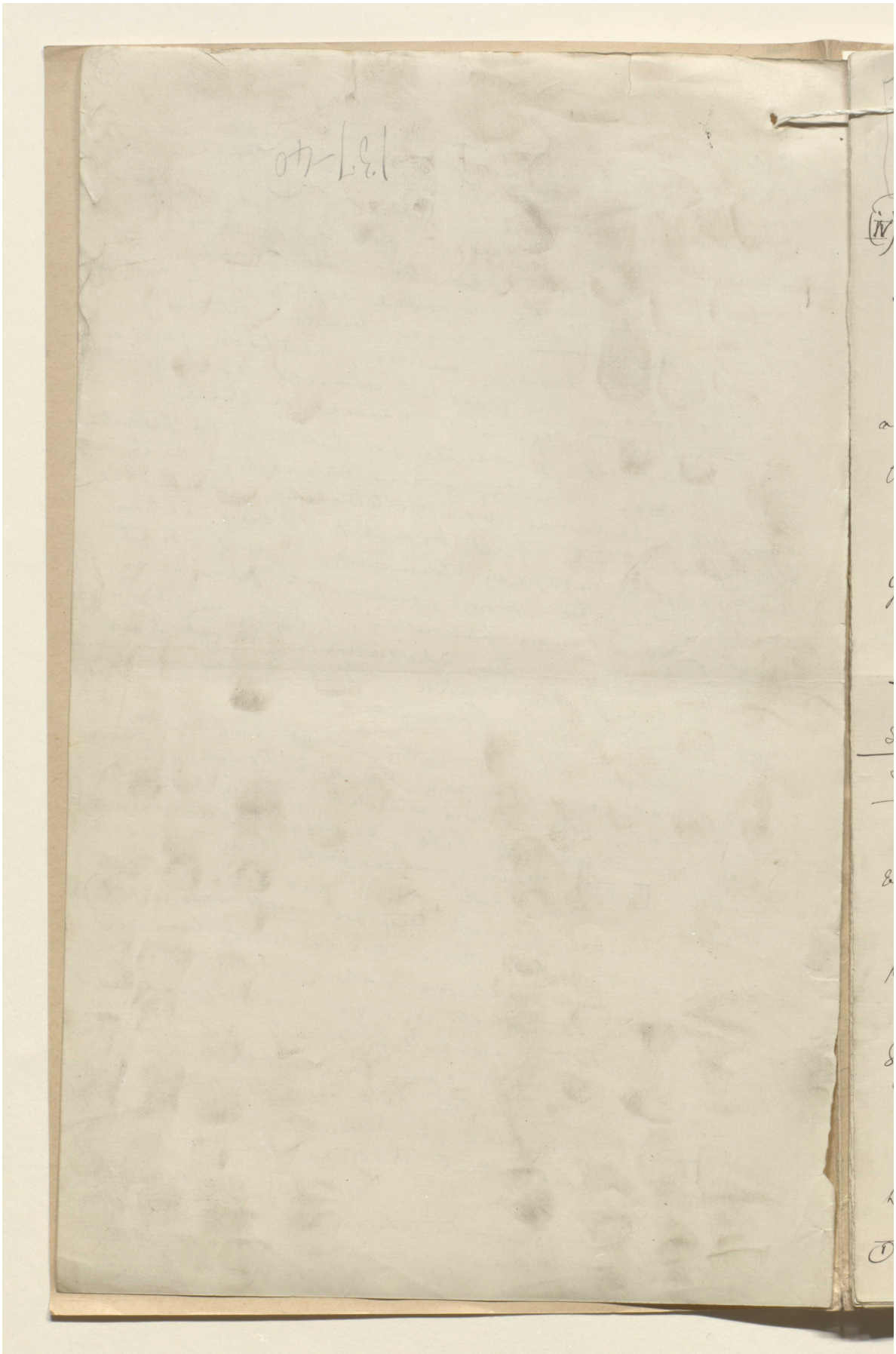
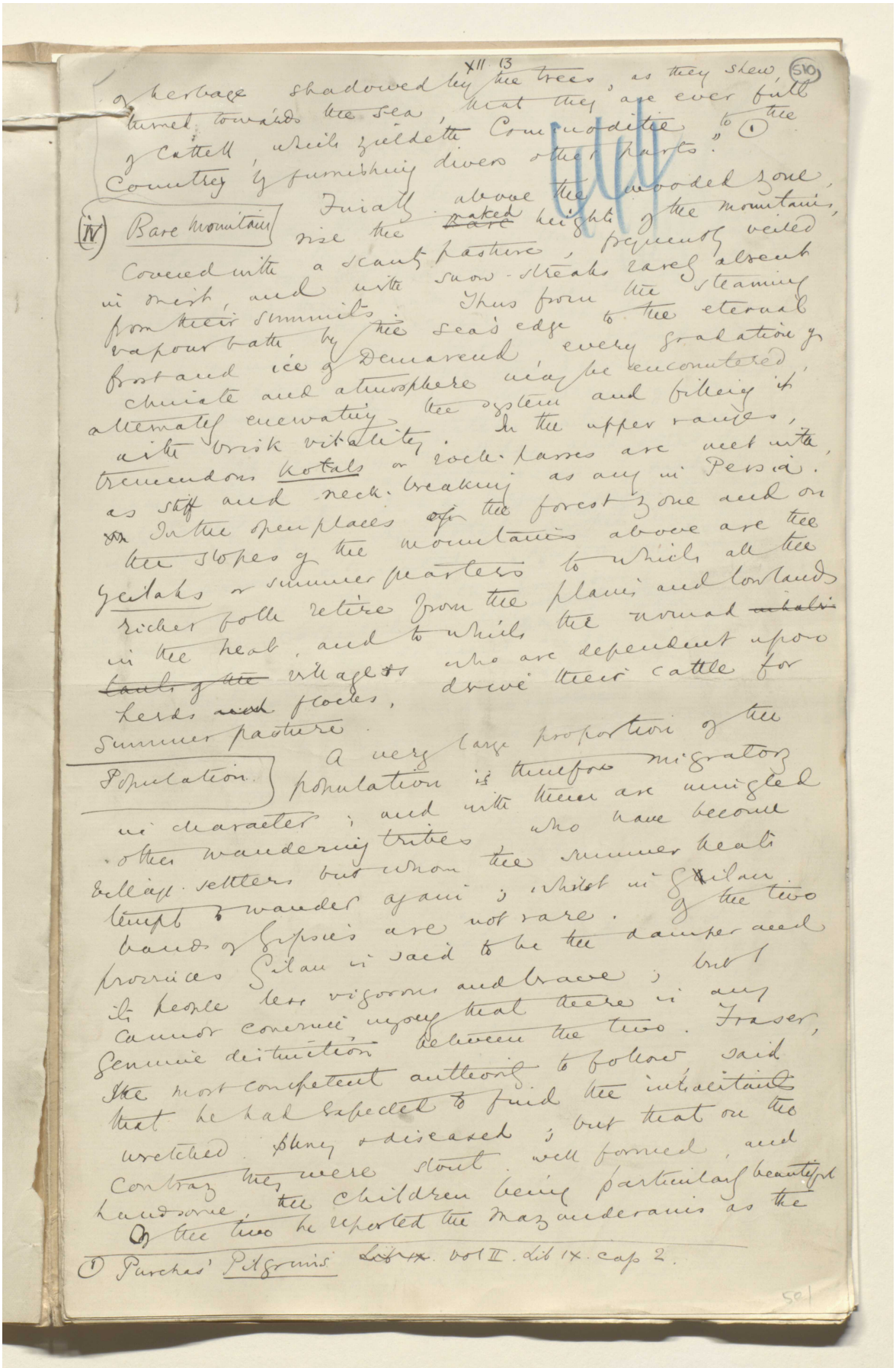
small

509





herbage shadowed by the trees, as they skew (510)
turned towards the sea, that they are ever full
of cattle, which yield the Commodities to the (1)
Country by furnishing divers other parts."

(IV) Bare mountains

Quite above the wooded zone, rise the naked heights of the mountains, covered with a scanty pasture, frequently veiled in mist, and with snow-streaks rarely absent from their summits. Thus from the steaming vapour bath by the sea's edge to the eternal frost and ice of Demavend, every gradation of climate and atmosphere may be encountered, alternately enervating the system and filling it with brisk vitality. In the upper ranges, tremendous Kotals or rock-passes are met with, as stiff and neck-breaking as any in Persia. In the open places of the forest zone and on the slopes of the mountains above are the Yeilaks or summer pastures to which all the richer folk retire from the plains and lowlands in the heat, and to which the nomad tribes who are dependent upon villages for herds and flocks, drive their cattle for summer pasture.

Population

A very large proportion of the population is therefore migratory in character; and with them are mingled other wandering tribes who have become half settled but whom the summer heat tempts to wander again; whilst in Gilan two bands of Gipsies are not rare. Of the two provinces Gilan is said to be the damper and ill people less vigorous and brave; but I cannot concur in any such generic distinction between the two. Fraser, the most competent authority to follow, said that he had subjected to find the inhabitants wretched, puny & diseased; but that on the contrary they were stout, well formed, and handsome, the children being particularly beautiful. Of the two he reported the Mazanderanis as the

(1) Purchas' Pilgrims Lib. vol II. bk IX. cap 2.

المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة
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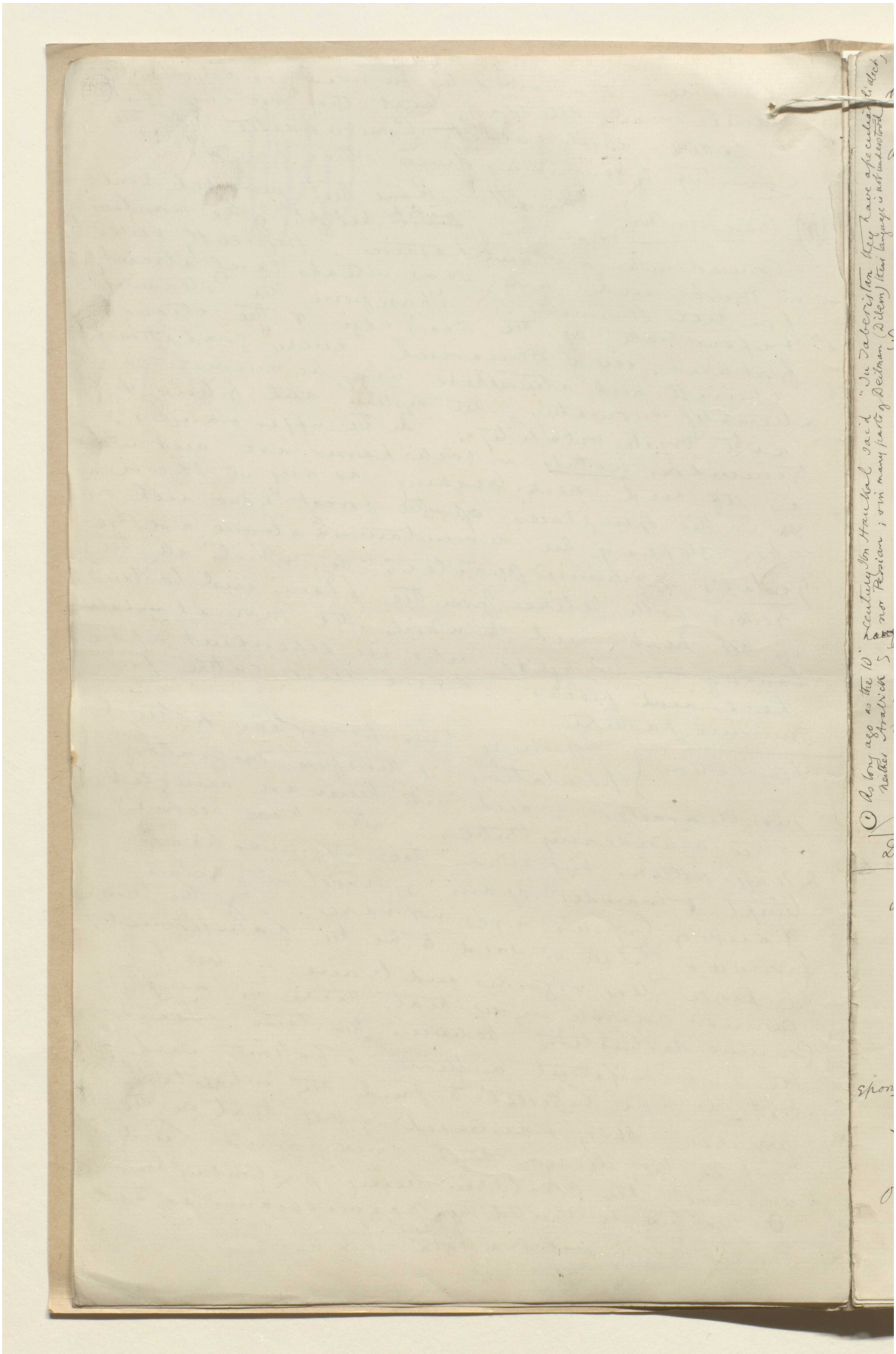

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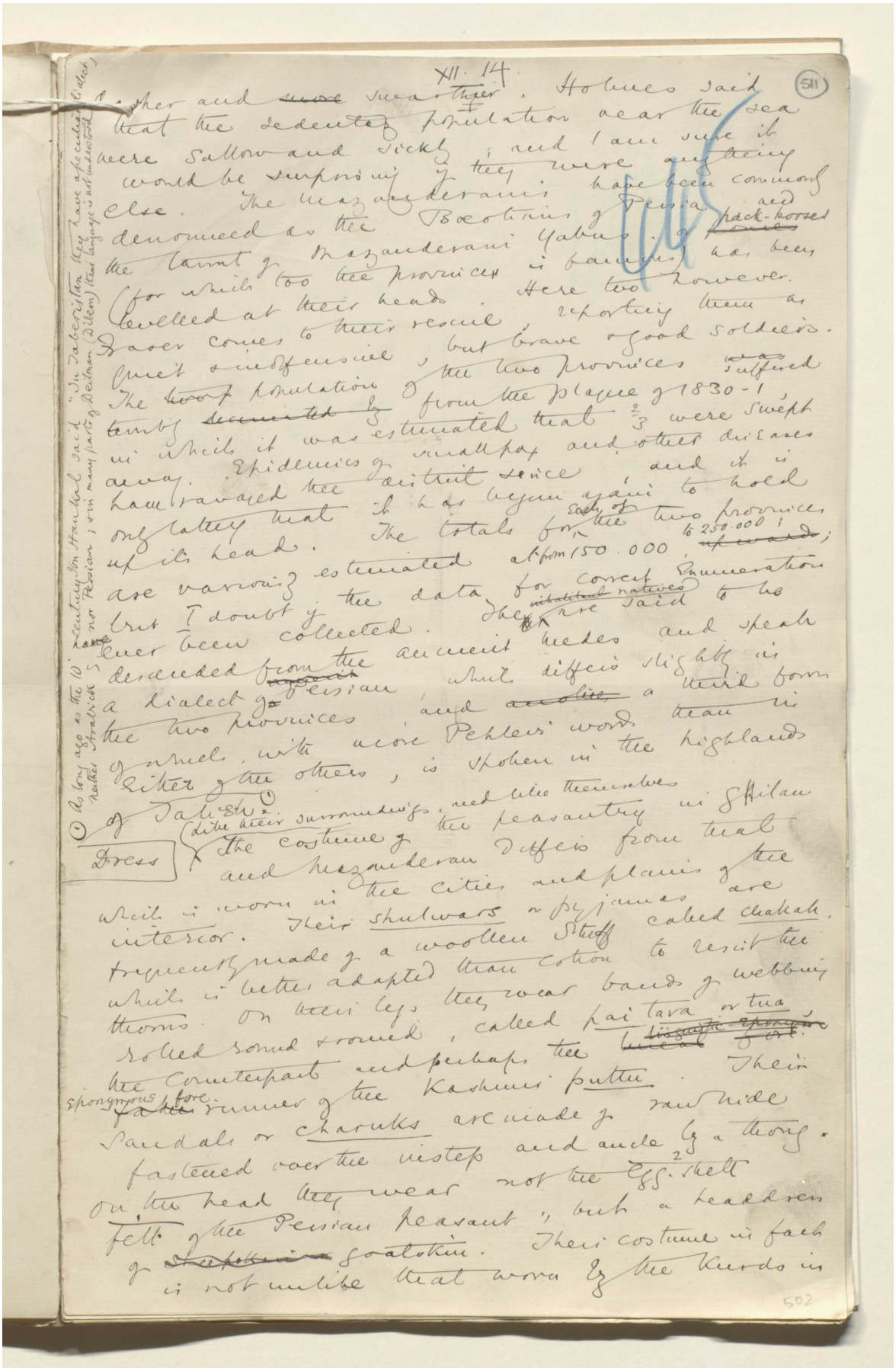
XII. 14

(511)

Asher and ~~more~~ swarthier. Holmes said that the sedentary population near the sea were sallow and sickly; and I am sure it would be surprising if they were anything else. The Mazanderani have been commonly denounced as the Boeotians of Persia and the tarmt of Mazanderani Yabus (for which too the provinces is famous) or pack-horses has been levelled at their heads. Here too however Fraser comes to their rescue, reporting them as quiet & inoffensive, but brave & good soldiers. The ~~two~~ population of the two provinces ~~was~~ suffered terribly ~~decimated by~~ from the plague of 1830-1, in which it was estimated that 2/3 were swept away. Epidemics of smallpox and other diseases have ravaged the district since, and it is only lately that it has begun again to hold up its head. The totals for each of the two provinces are variously estimated at from 150.000 to 250.000; ~~upwards~~; but I doubt if the data for correct enumeration ever been collected. The ~~inhabitant~~ natives are said to be descended from the ancient Medes and speak a dialect of ~~[illegible]~~ Persian, which differs slightly in the two provinces, and ~~another~~ a third form of which, with more Pehlevi words than in either of the others, is spoken in the highlands of Talish.(1)



Dress

(like their surroundings, and like themselves) The costume of the peasantry in Ghilan and Mazanderan differs from that which is worn in the cities and plains of the interior. Their shulwars or pyjamas are frequently made of a woollen stuff called chakah, which is better adapted than cotton to resist the thorns. On their legs they wear bands of webbing rolled round & round, called pai tava or tua, the counterpart and perhaps the ~~[illegible]~~ ~~[illegible]~~ ~~[illegible]~~ spongiosus fore runner of the Kashmiri puttu. Their sandals or charuks are made of raw hide fastened over the instep and ancle by a thong. On the head they wear not the Egg-shell felt of the Persian peasant, but a headdress of ~~[illegible]~~ goatskin. Their costume in fact is not unlike that worn by the Kurds in

(1) As long ago as the 10th century Ibn Haukal said "In Taberistan they have a peculiar dialect, neither Arabick nor Persian; in many parts of Deilman (Dilem) their language is not understood

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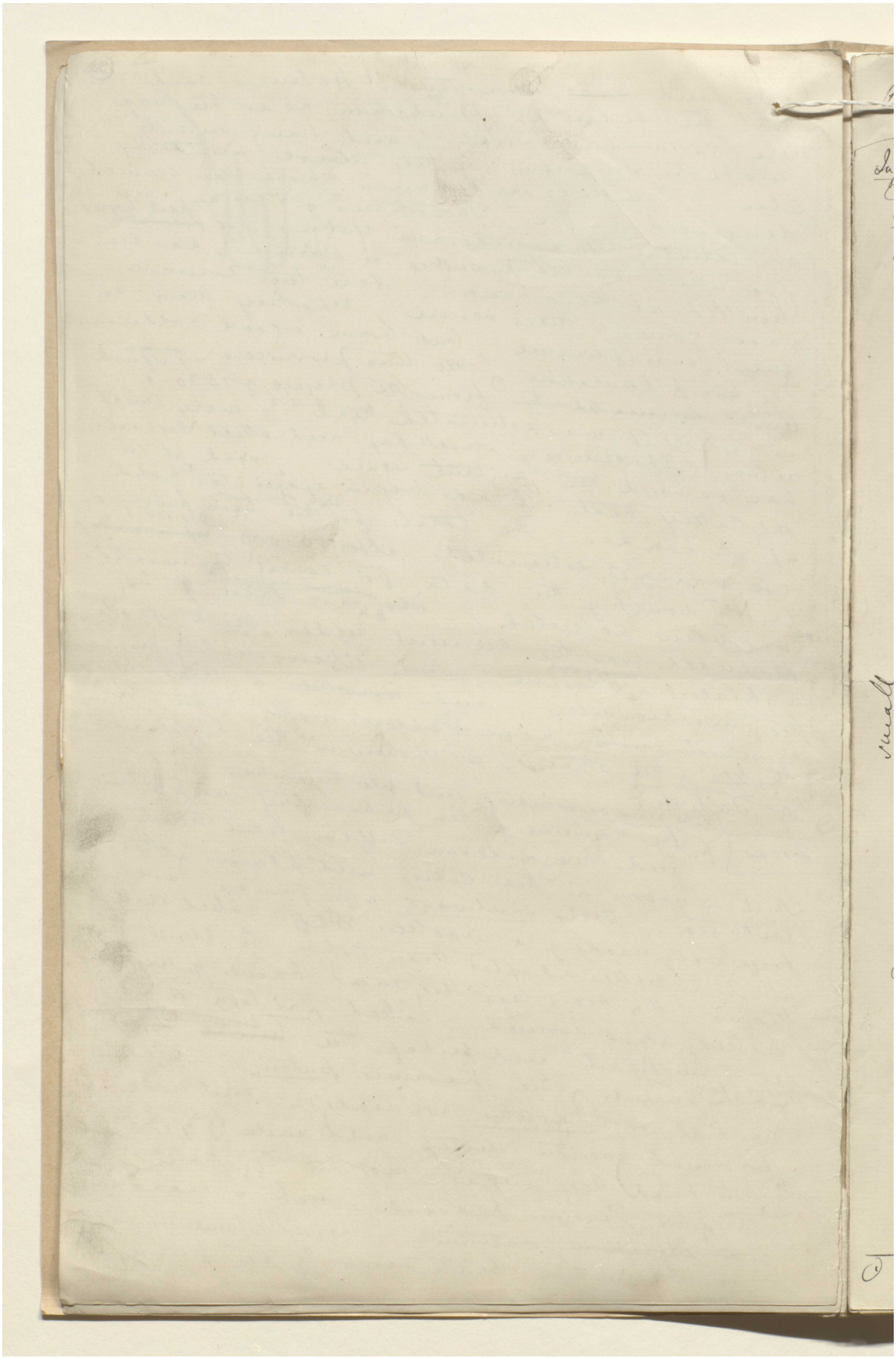

مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٥١٢و] (١٠٢٤/١٣٥٥)

XII. 15

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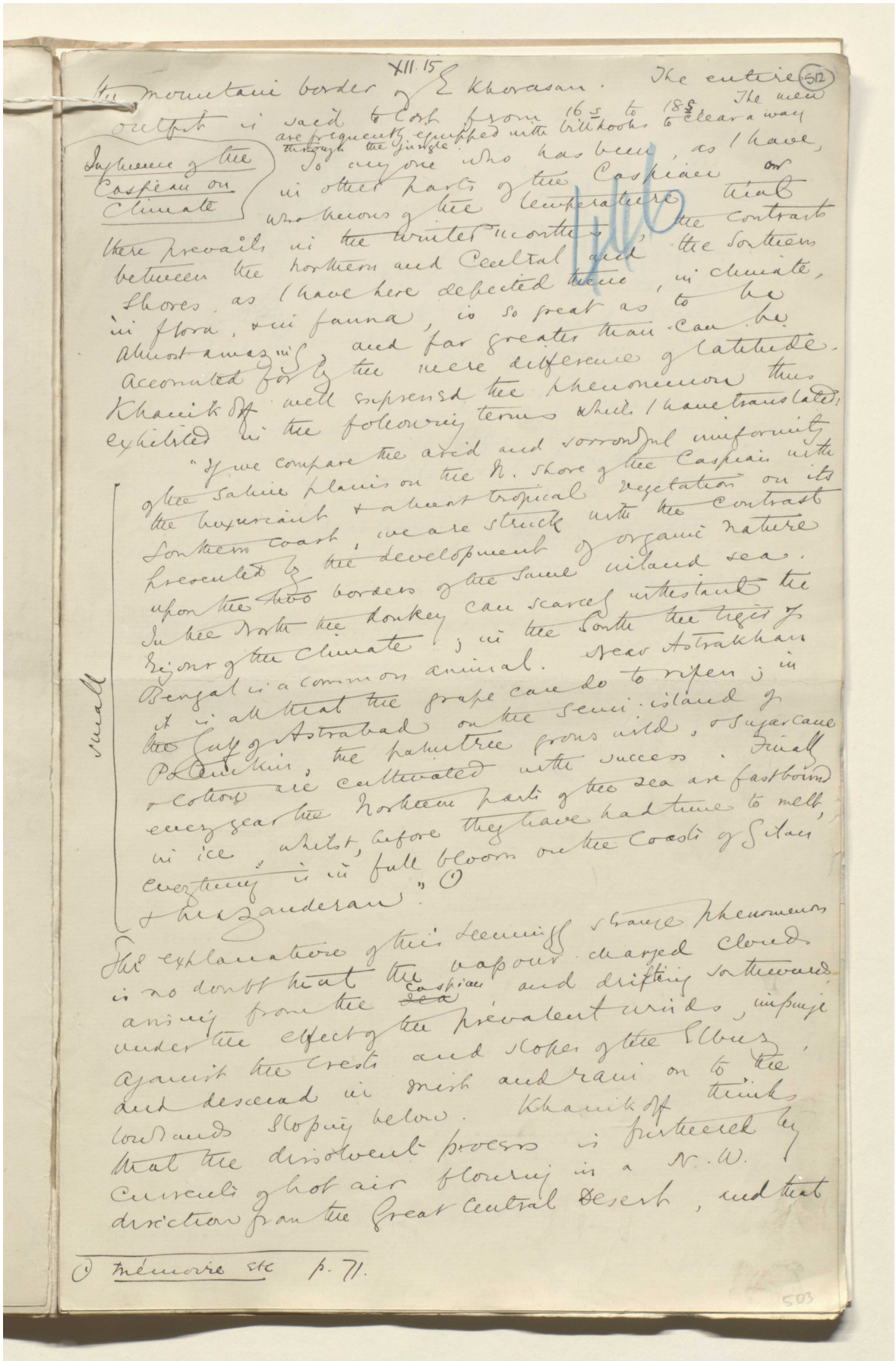

the mountain border of E Khorasan. The entire outfit is said to cost from 16s to 18s. The men are frequently equipped with billhooks to clear a way through the jungle.

Influence of the Caspian on Climate

To anyone who has been, as I have, in other parts of the Caspian or who knows of the temperature that there prevails in the winter months, the contrast between the northern and Central and the southern shores, as I have here depicted them, in climate, in flora, & in fauna, is so great as to be almost amazing, and far greater than can be accounted for by the mere difference of latitude. Khanikoff well expressed the phenomenon thus exhibited in the following terms which I have translated:

"If we compare the arid and sorrowful uniformity of the saline plains on the N. shore of the Caspian with the luxuriant & almost tropical vegetation on its southern coast, we are struck with the contrast presented by the development of organic nature upon the two borders of the same inland sea. In the North the donkey can scarcely withstand the rigour of the climate; in the South the tiger of Bengal is a common animal. Near Astrakhan it is all that the grape can do to ripen; in the Gulf of Astrabad on the semi-island of Potemkin, the palm tree grows wild, & sugar cane & cotton are cultivated with success. Finally every year the northern parts of the sea are fast bound in ice, whilst, before they have had time to melt, everything is in full bloom on the coasts of Gilan & Mazanderan." (1)

small

The explanation of this seemingly strange phenomenon is no doubt that the vapour charged clouds arising from the ~~sea~~ Caspian and drifting southwards under the effect of the prevalent winds, impinge against the crests and slopes of the Elbuz, and descend in mist and rain on to the lowlands sloping below. Khanikoff thinks that the dissolvent process is furthered by currents of hot air flowing in a N.W. direction from the Great Central Desert, and that

(1) Mémoire etc p. 71.

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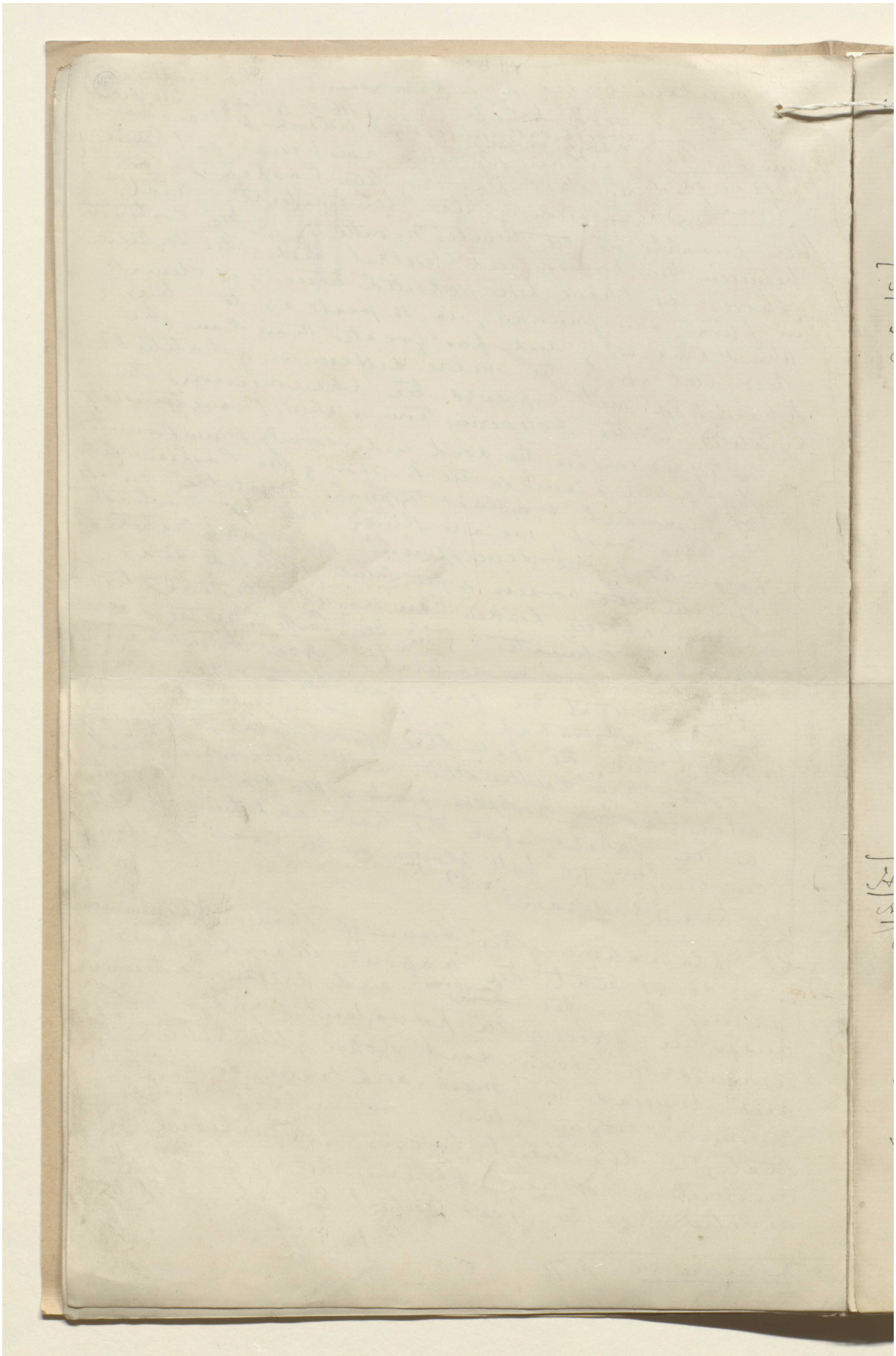

XII. 16

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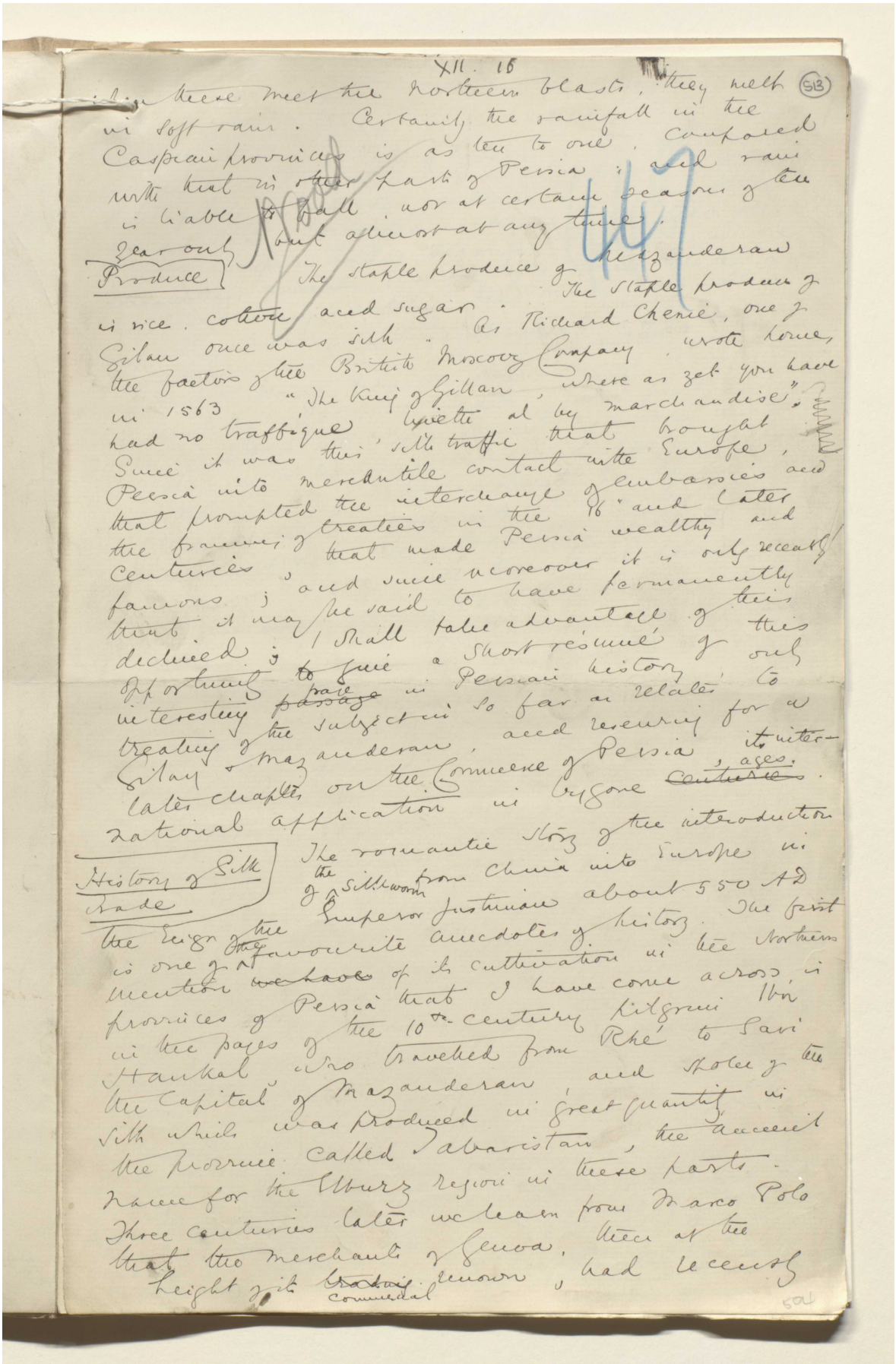

when these meet the Northern blasts, they melt in soft rain. Certainly the rainfall in the Caspian provinces is as ten to one, compared with that in other parts of Persia; and rain is liable to fall, nor at certain seasons of the year only but almost at any time.

Produce

The staple produce of Mazanderan is rice, cotton and sugar. The staple produce of Gilan once was silk. As Richard Chenie, one of the factors of the British Moscovy Company, wrote home, in 1563 "The King of Gillan, where as yet you have had no traffique, liveth al by marchandise". Since it was this silk traffic that brought Persia into mercantile contact with Europe, that prompted the interchange of embassies and the framing of treaties in the 16th and later centuries, that made Persia wealthy and famous; and since moreover it is only recently that it may be said to have permanently declined; I shall take advantage of this opportunity to give a short résumé of this interesting ~~passage~~ page in Persian history, only treating of the subject in so far as relates to Gilan & Mazanderan, and reserving for a later chapter on the Commerce of Persia, its international application in bygone ~~centuries~~ ages.

History of Silk trade

The romantic story of the introduction of the silkworm from China into Europe in the Reign of the Emperor Justinian about 550 AD is one of the favourite anecdotes of history. The first mention ~~we have~~ of its cultivation in the Northern provinces of Persia that I have come across, is in the pages of the 10th century pilgrim Ibn Haukal, who travelled from Rhé to Sari the Capital of Mazanderan, and spoke of the silk which was produced in great quantity in the province called Tabaristan, the ancient name for the Elburz region in these parts. Three centuries later we learn from Marco Polo that the merchants of Genoa, then at the height of its ~~trading~~ commercial renown, had recently

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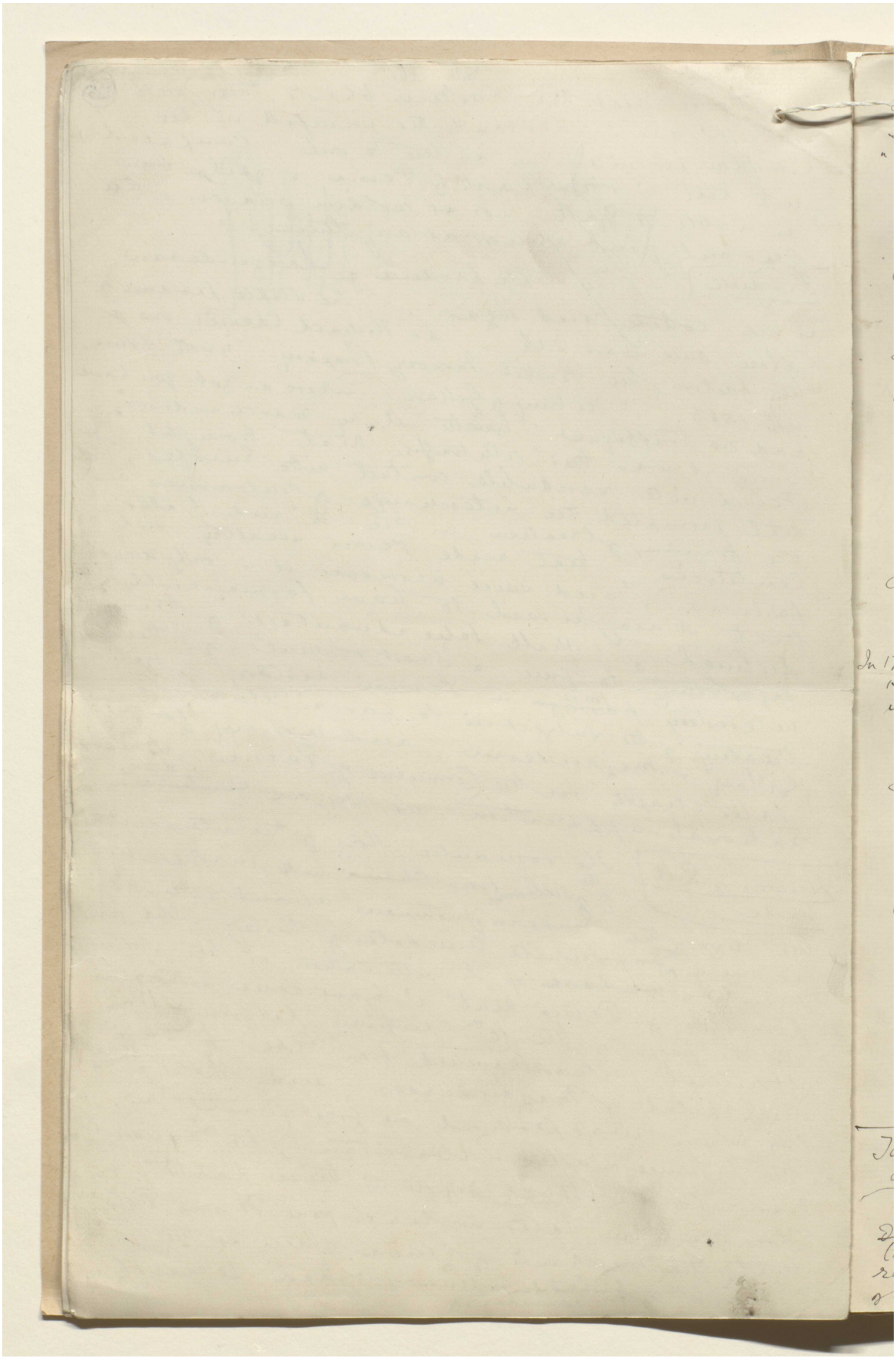

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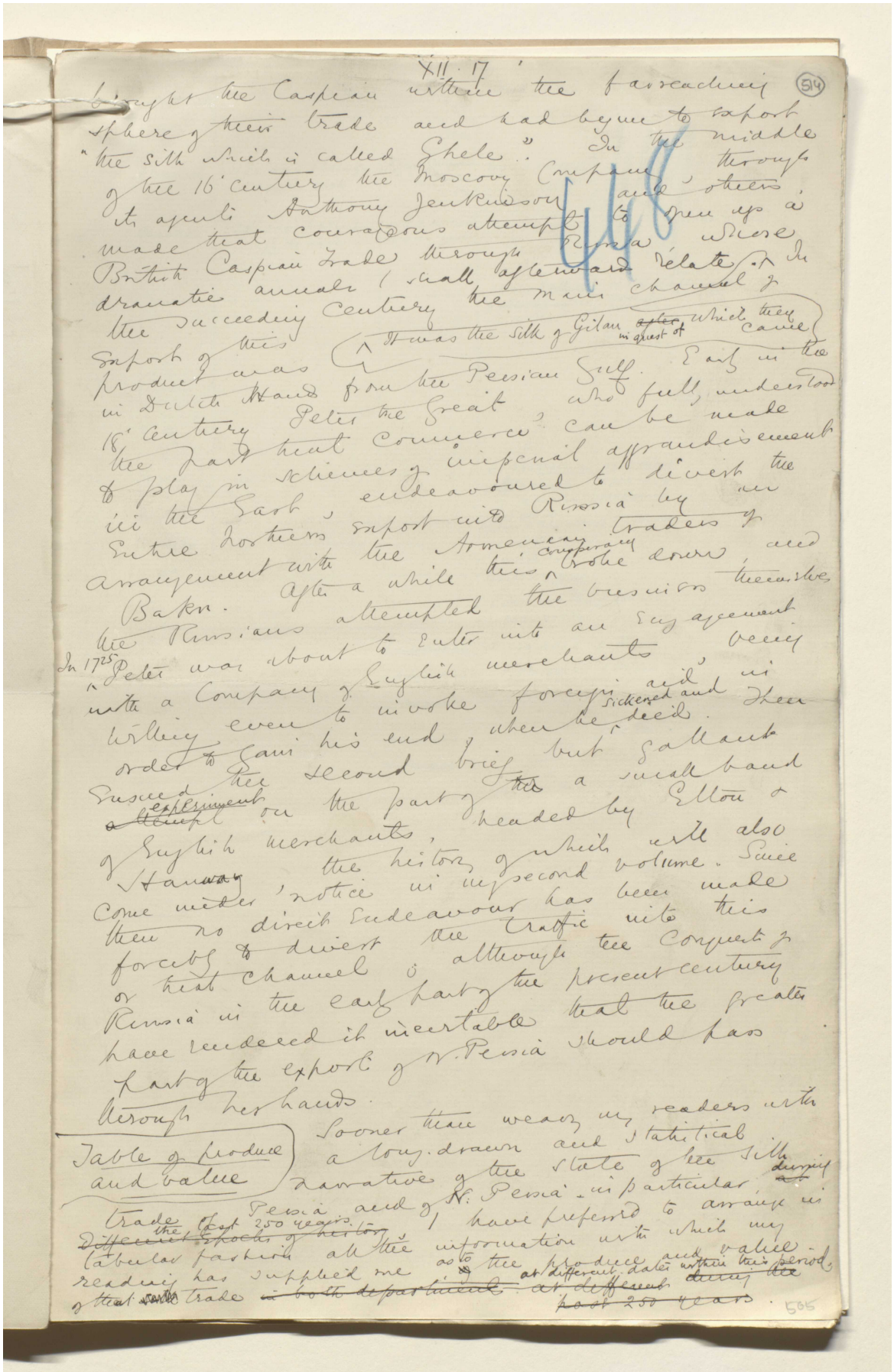

XII. 17

(514)

brought the Caspian within the far reaching sphere of their trade and had begun to export "the silk which is called Ghele." In the middle of the 16th century the Moscovy Company, through its agents Anthony Jenkinson and others, made that courageous attempt to open up a British Caspian trade through Russia whose dramatic annals I shall afterward relate. In the succeeding century the main channel of export of this product was (It was the silk of Gilan in quest of which they came) in Dutch Hands from the Persian Gulf. Early in the 18th century Peter the Great, who fully understood the part that commerce can be made to play in schemes of imperial aggrandisement in the East, endeavoured to divert the entire Northern export into Russia by an arrangement with the Armenian traders of Baku. After a while this conspiracy broke down, and the Russians attempted the business themselves. In 1725 Peter was about to enter into an engagement with a Company of English merchants, being willing even to invoke foreign aid in order to gain his end, when he sickened and died. Then ensued the second brief but gallant ~~attempt~~ experiment on the part of ~~the~~ a small band of English merchants, headed by Elton & Hanway, the history of which will also come under notice in my second volume. Since then no direct endeavour has been made forcibly to divert the traffic into this or that channel; although the conquest of Russia in the early part of the present century have rendered it inevitable that the greater part of the export of N. Persia should pass through her hands.

Table of produce and value

Sooner than weary my readers with a long-drawn and statistical narrative of the state of the silk trade of Persia and of N. Persia in particular during ~~at~~ the last 250 years, I have preferred to arrange in ~~Different Epochs of history~~ tabular fashion all the information with which my reading has supplied me as to the produce and value of that ~~same~~ trade ~~in both departments~~ at different dates within this period, ~~at different~~ ~~during the~~ ~~past 250 years~~.

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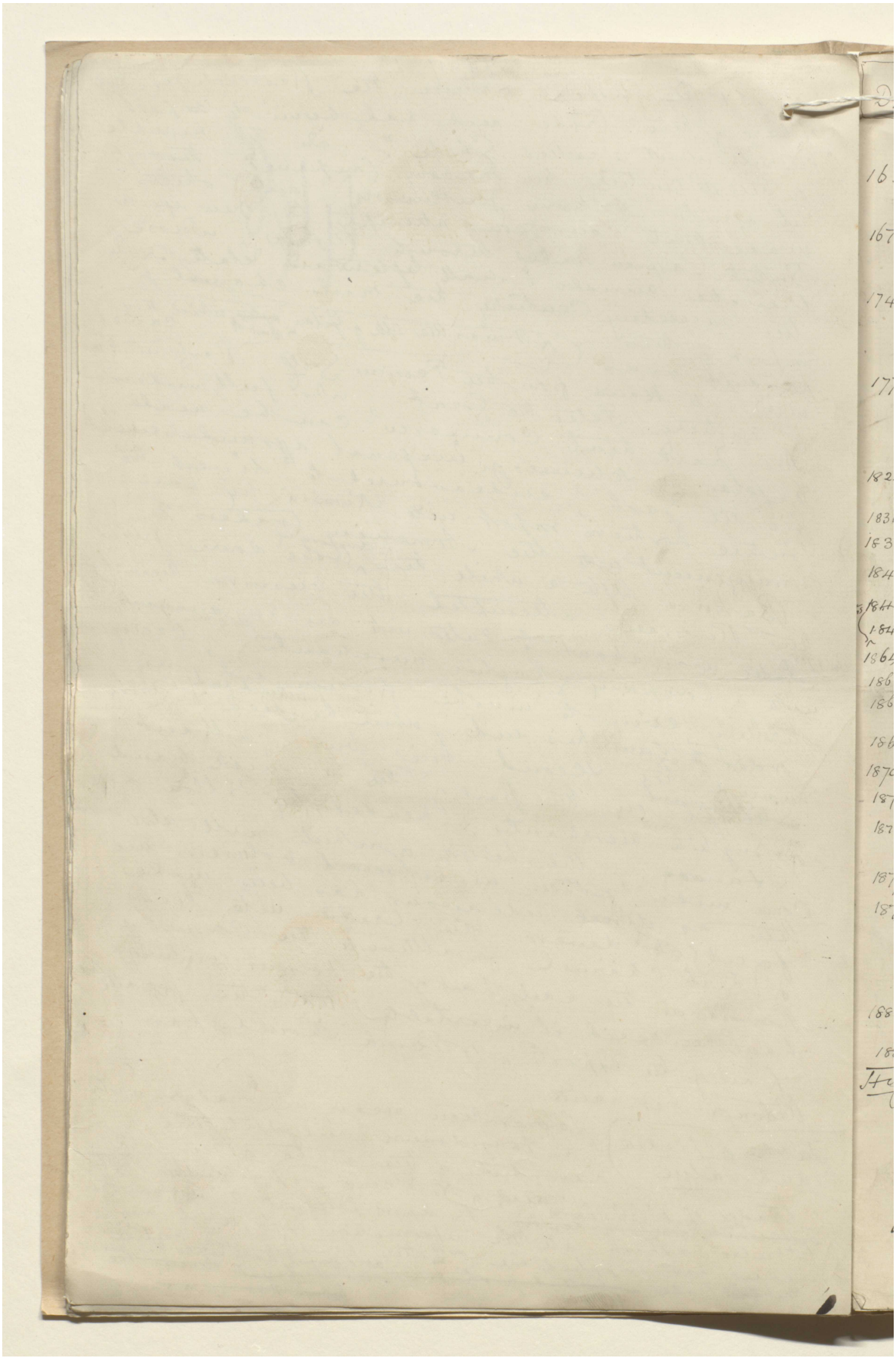
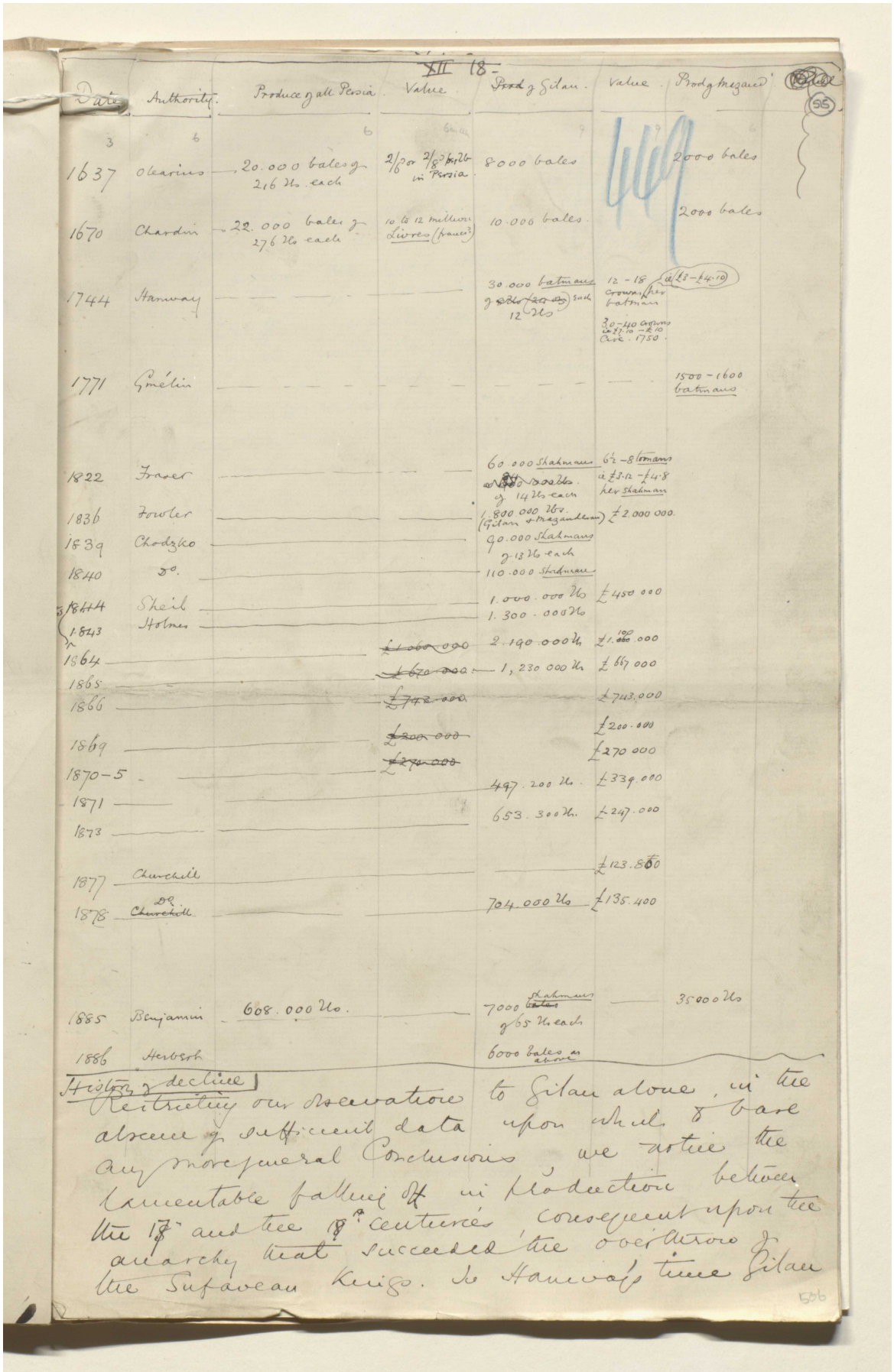


XII 18



Date	Authority	Produce of all Persia	Value	Prod of Gilan	Value	Prod of Mazand
1637	Olearius	20.000 bales of 216 lbs. each	2/6 or 2/8 per lb in Persia	8000 bales		2000 bales
1670	Chardin	22.000 bales of 276 lbs each	10 to 12 million Livres (francs?)	10.000 bales		2000 bales
1744	Hanway			30.000 batmans of ~~8 lbs (20 oz)~~ each 12 lbs	12 - 18 crowns per batman (ie £3 - £4.10) 30-40 crowns ie £7.10 - £10 Circ. 1750	
1771	Gmélin					1500 - 1600 batmans
1822	Fraser			60.000 Shahmans ~~[illegible]~~ of 14 lbs each	6½ - 8 tomans ie £3.12 - £4.8 per Shahman	
1836	Fowler			1.800.000 lbs. (Gilan & Mazandaran)	£2.000.000	
1839	Chodzko			90.000 Shahmans of 13 lbs each		
1840	Do.			110.000 Shahmans		
1844	Sheil			1.000.000 lbs	£450.000	
1843	Holmes			1.300.000 lbs		
1864			~~£1.060.000~~	2.190.000 lbs	£1.100.000	
1865			~~£670.000~~	1,230.000 lbs	£667.000	
1866			~~£743.000~~		£743.000	
1869			~~£200.000~~		£200.000	
1870-5			~~£270.000~~		£270.000	
1871				497.200 lbs.	£339.000	
1873				653.300 lbs.	£247.000	
1877	Churchill				£123.800	
1878	Do. ~~Churchill~~			704.000 lbs	£135.400	
1885	Benjamin	608.000 lbs.		7000 Shahmans ~~bales~~ of 65 lbs each		35000 lbs
1886	Herbert			6000 bales as above		

History of decline

Restricting our observation to Gilan alone, in the absence of sufficient data upon which to base any more general conclusions we notice the lamentable falling off in production between the 17th and the 18th centuries, consequent upon the anarchy that succeeded the overthrow of the Sufavean Kings. In Hanway's time Gilan

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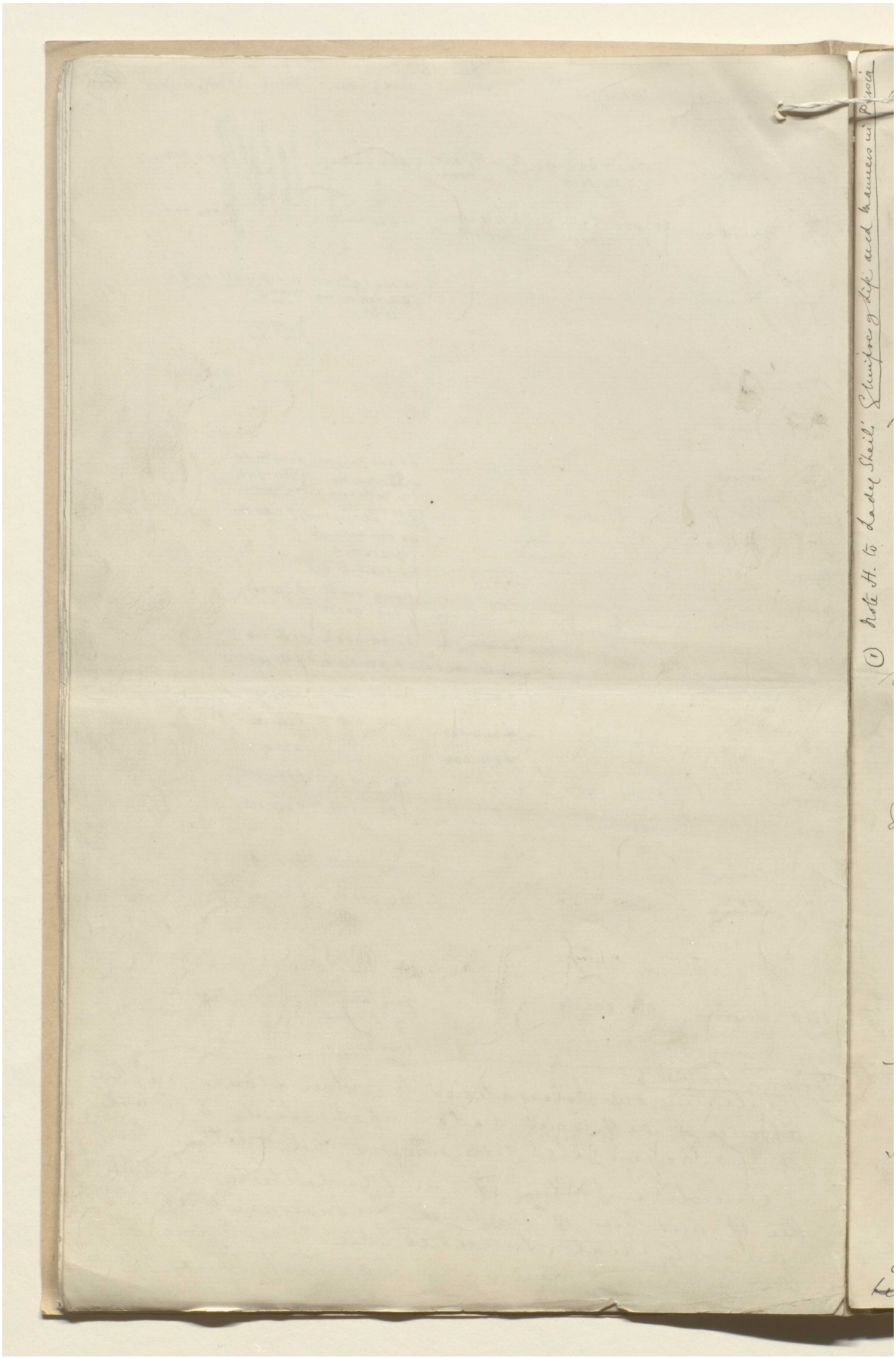

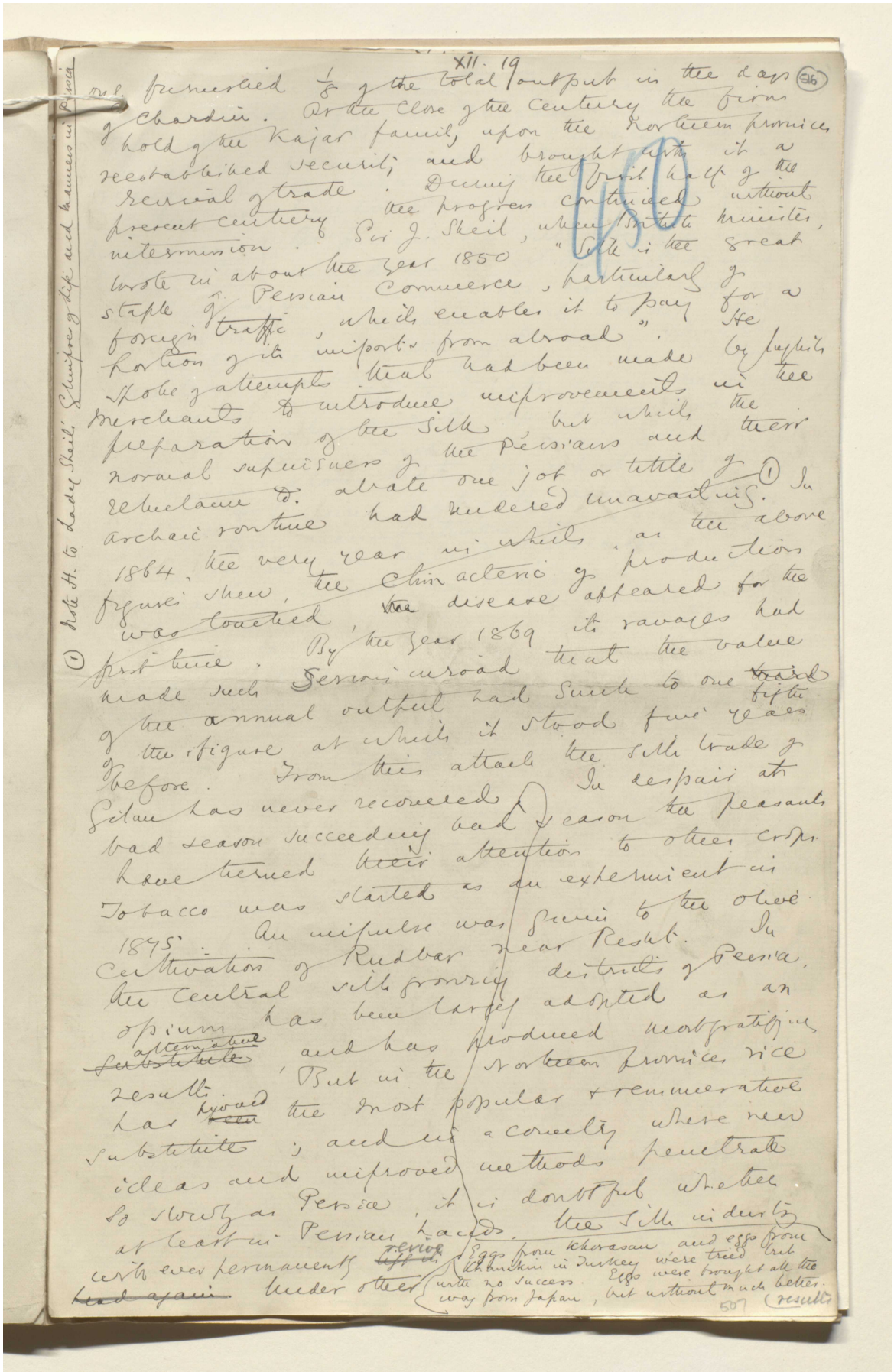

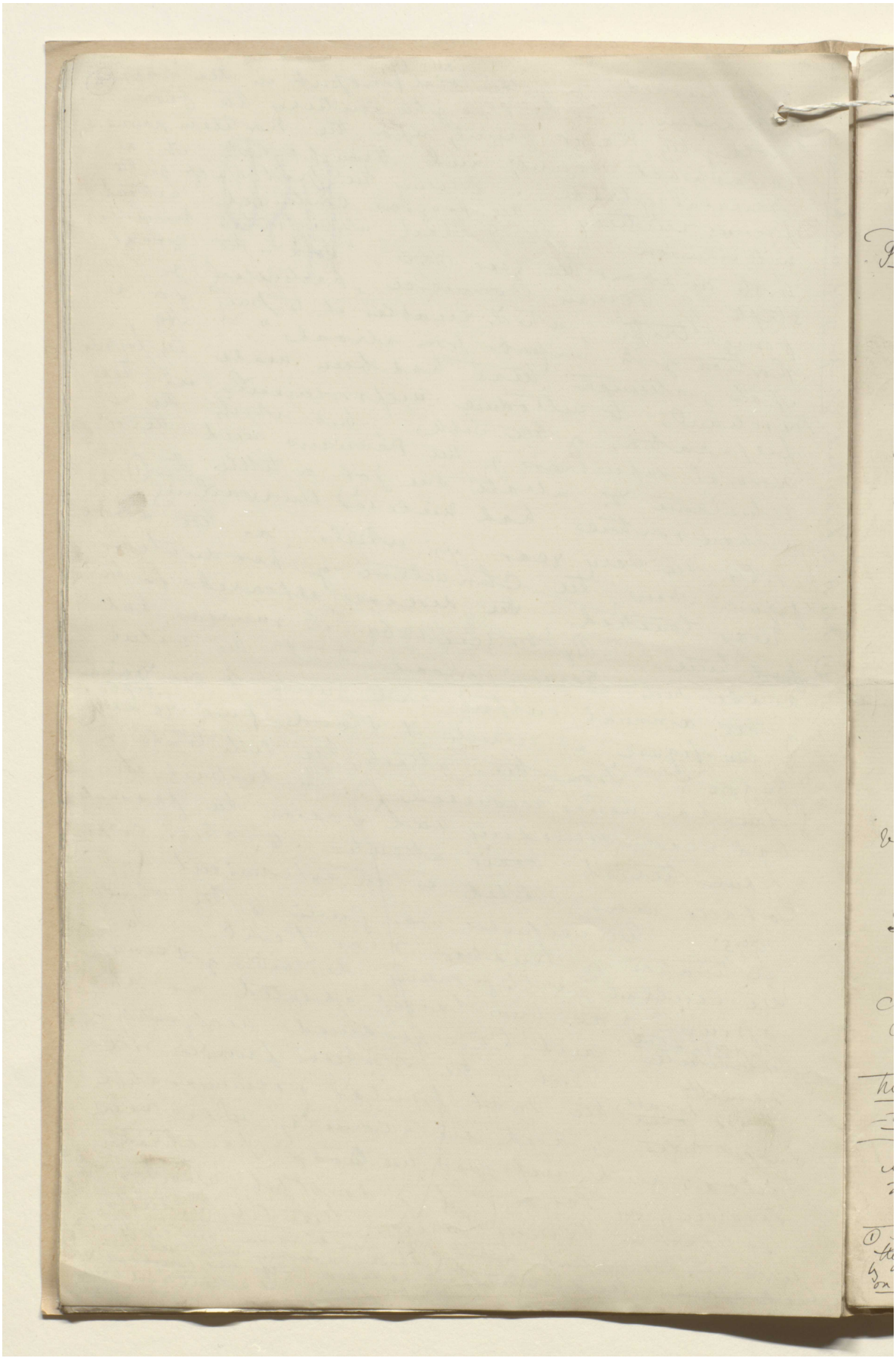

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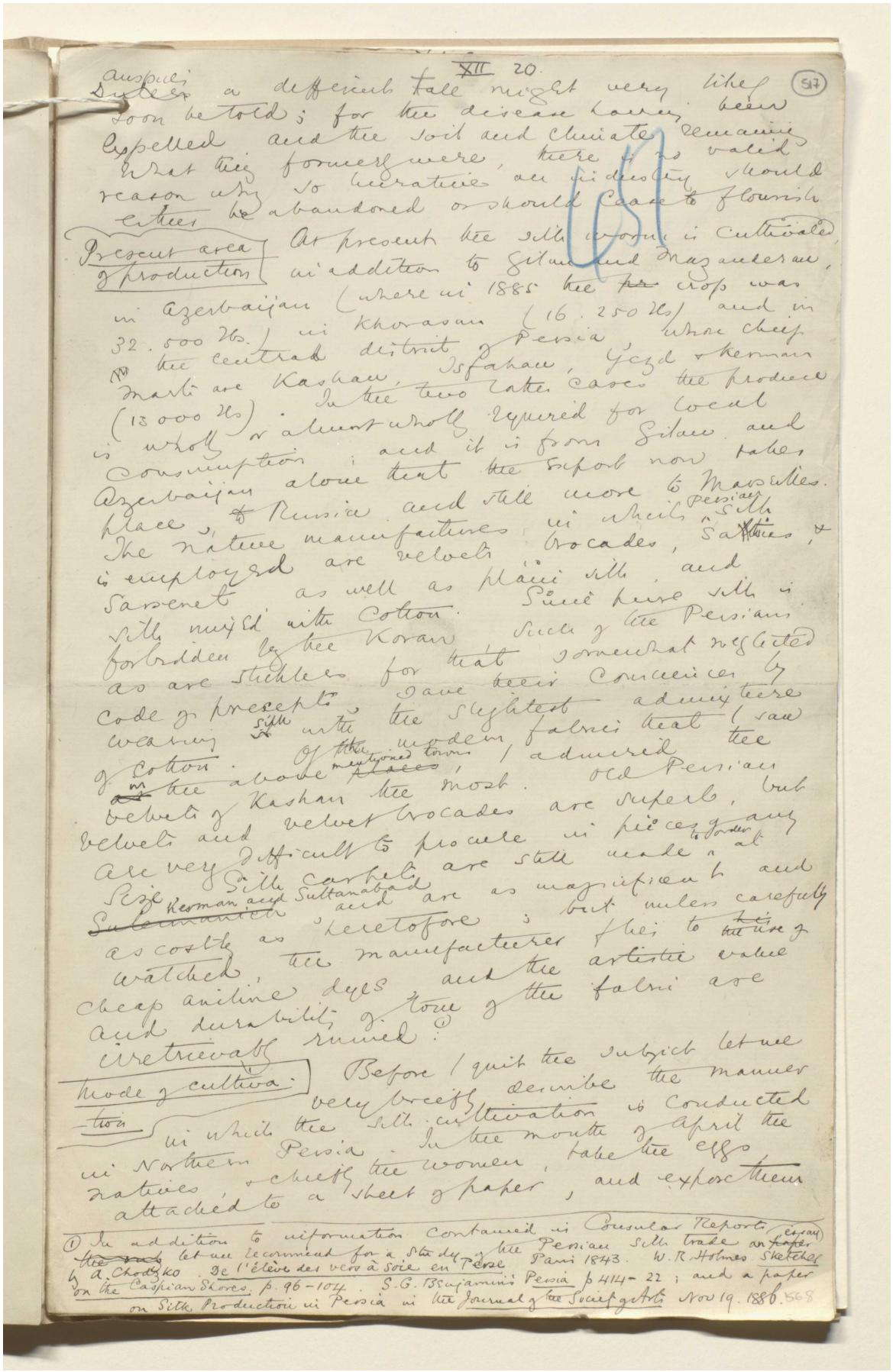

XII 20. (517)

auspices a different tale might very likely soon be told; for the disease having been expelled and the soil and climate remaining what they formerly were, there is no valid reason why so lucrative an industry should either be abandoned or should cease to flourish.

Present area of production

At present the silk worm is cultivated, in addition to Gilan and Mazanderan, in Azerbaijan (where in 1885 the crop was 32.500 lbs.) in Khorasan (16.250 lbs) and in the central district of Persia, whose chief marts are Kashan, Isfahan, Yezd & Kerman (13000 lbs). In the two latter cases the produce is wholly or almost wholly required for local consumption; and it is from Gilan and Azerbaijan alone that the export now takes place, to Russia and still more to Marseilles. The native manufactures in which Persian silk is employed are velvets, brocades, satins, & sarsenet as well as plain silk, and silk mixed with cotton. Since pure silk is forbidden by the Koran, such of the Persians as are stickless for that somewhat neglected code of precepts, save their conscience by wearing silk with the slightest admixture of cotton. Of the modern fabrics that I saw in the above mentioned towns, I admired the velvets of Kashan the most. Old Persian velvets and velvet brocades are superb, but are very difficult to procure in pieces of any size. Silk carpets are still made to order at Kerman and Sultanabad and are as magnificent and as costly as heretofore; but unless carefully watched, the manufacturer flies to the use of cheap aniline dyes, and the artistic value and durability of tone of the fabric are irretrievably ruined.[1]

Mode of cultivation

Before I quit the subject let me very briefly describe the manner in which the silk cultivation is conducted in Northern Persia. In the month of April the natives, & chiefly the women, take the eggs attached to a sheet of paper, and expose them

[1] In addition to information contained in Consular Reports, let me recommend for a study of the Persian silk trade an essay by A. Chodzko. De l'élève des vers à soie en Perse. Paris 1843. W. R. Holmes Sketches on the Caspian Shores. p. 96-104. S. G. Benjamin's Persia p 414-22; and a paper on Silk Production in Persia in the Journal of the Society of Arts Nov 19. 1886. 568

المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة
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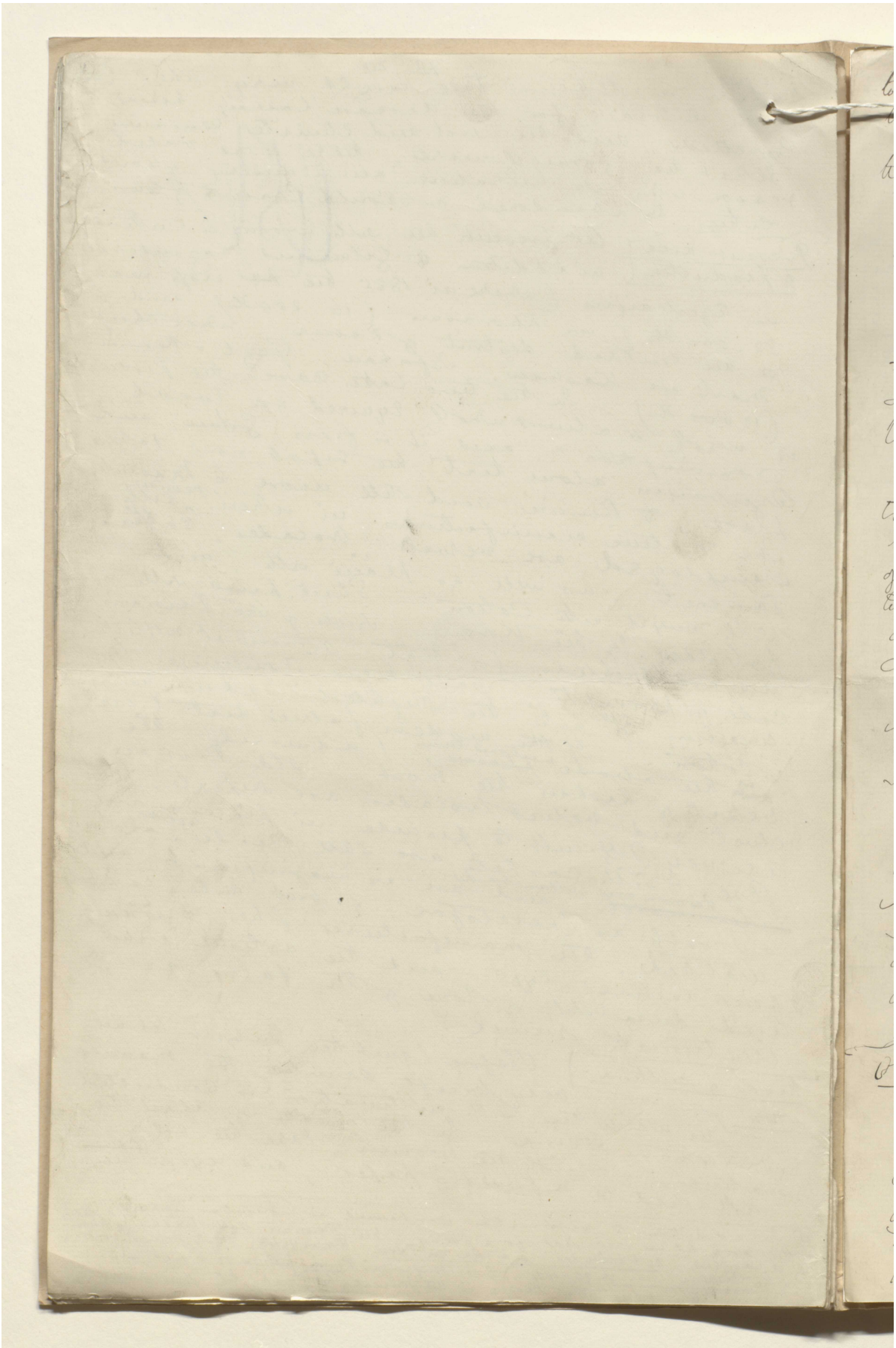

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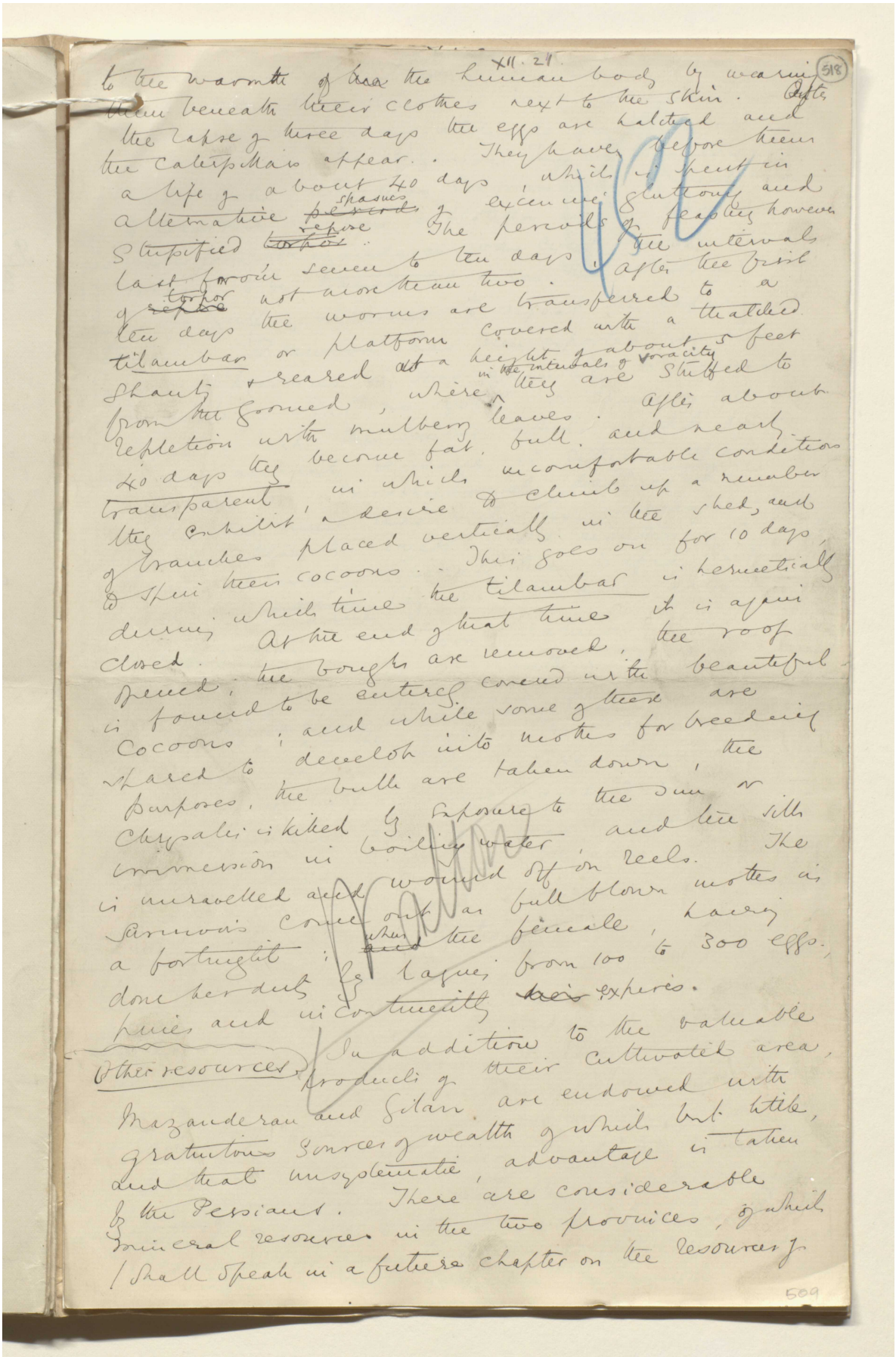
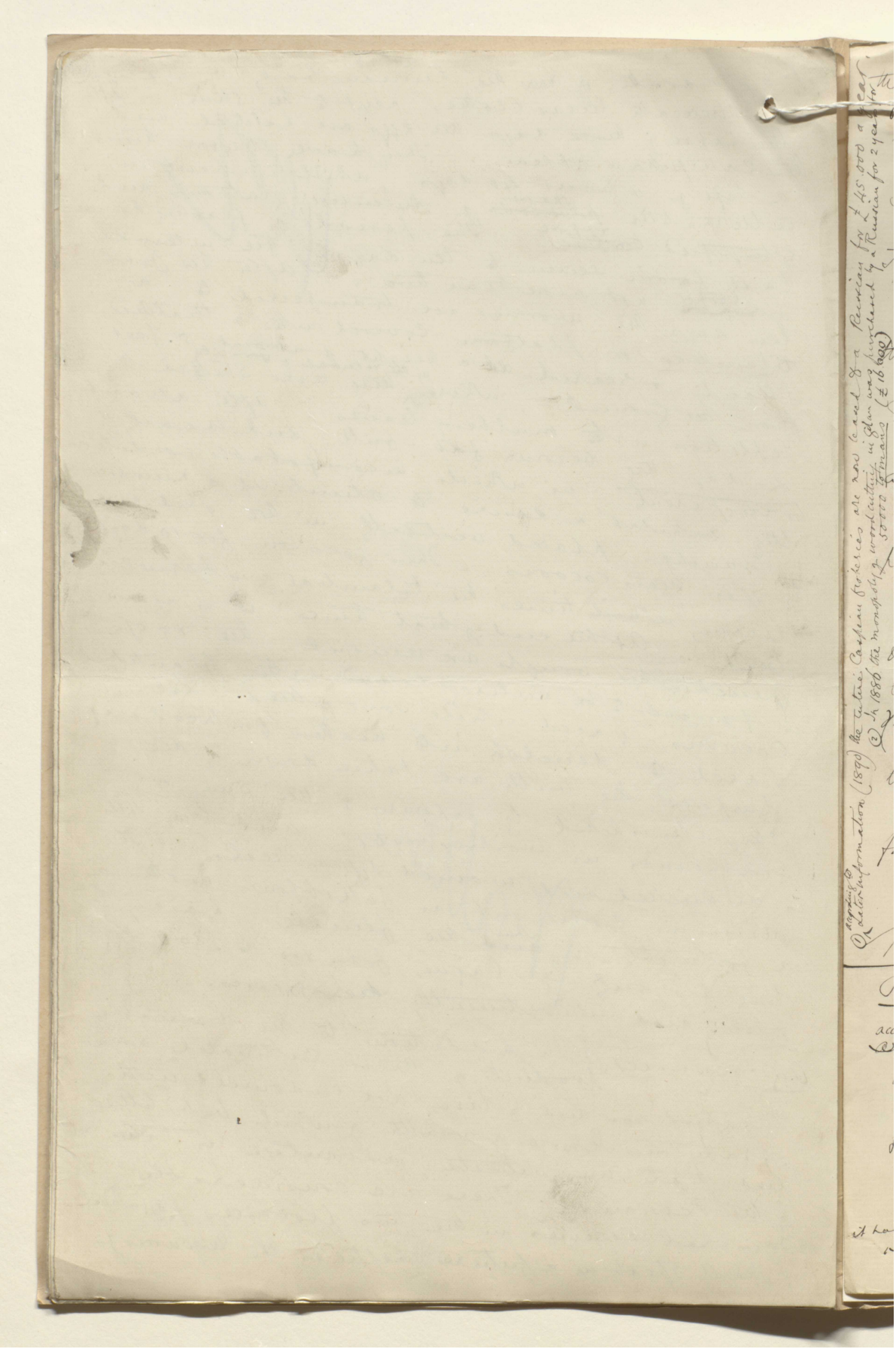
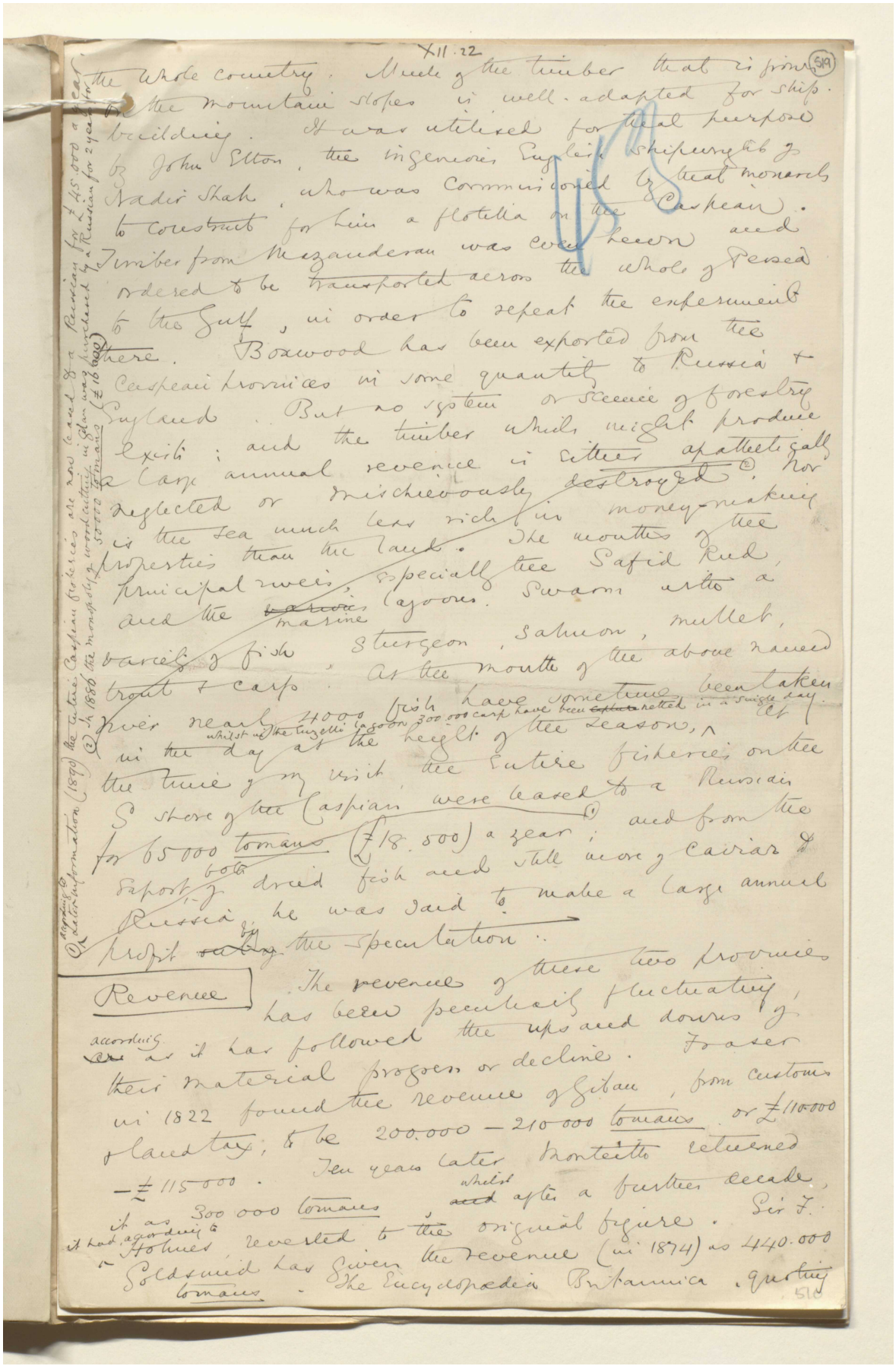
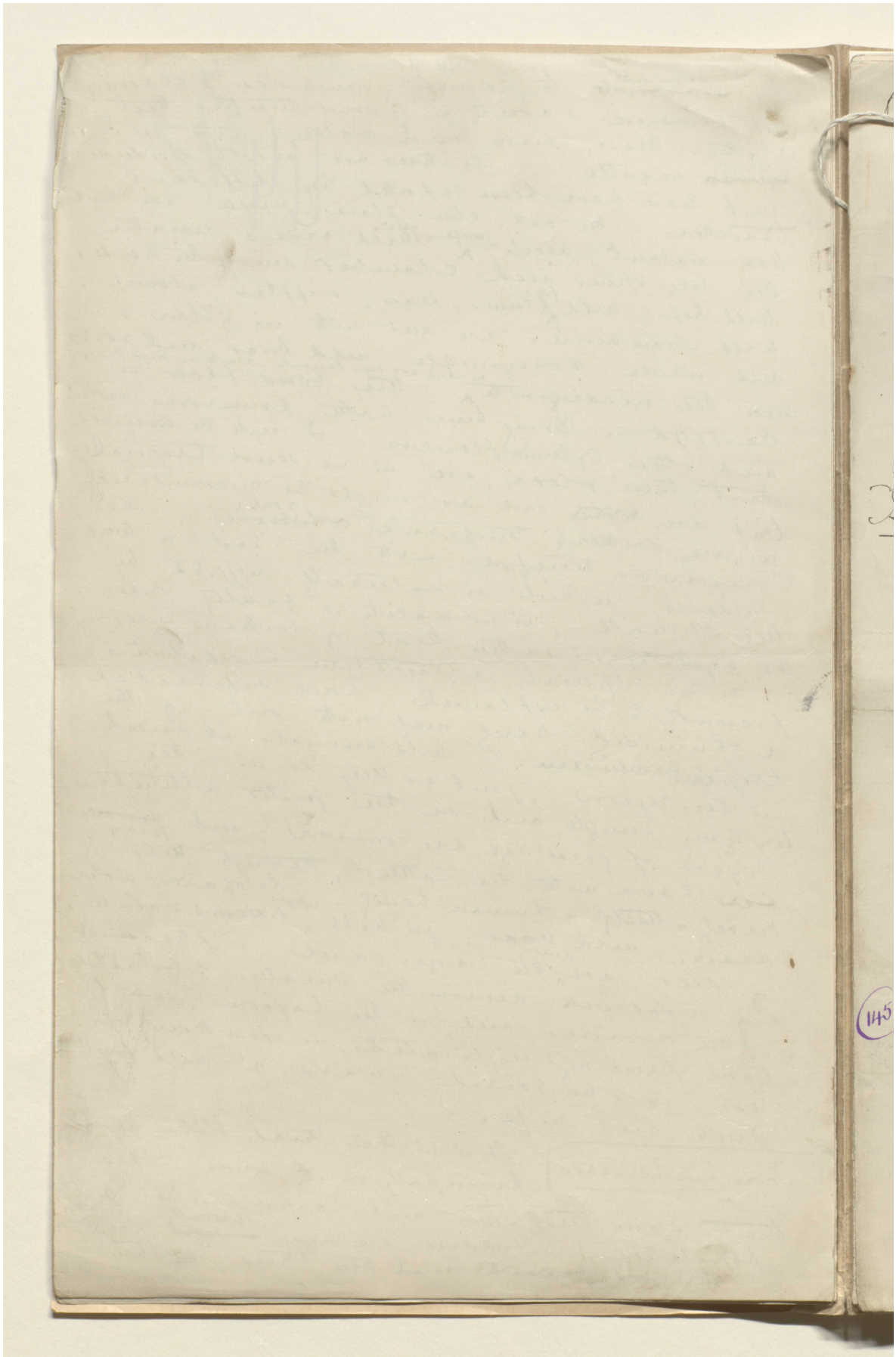
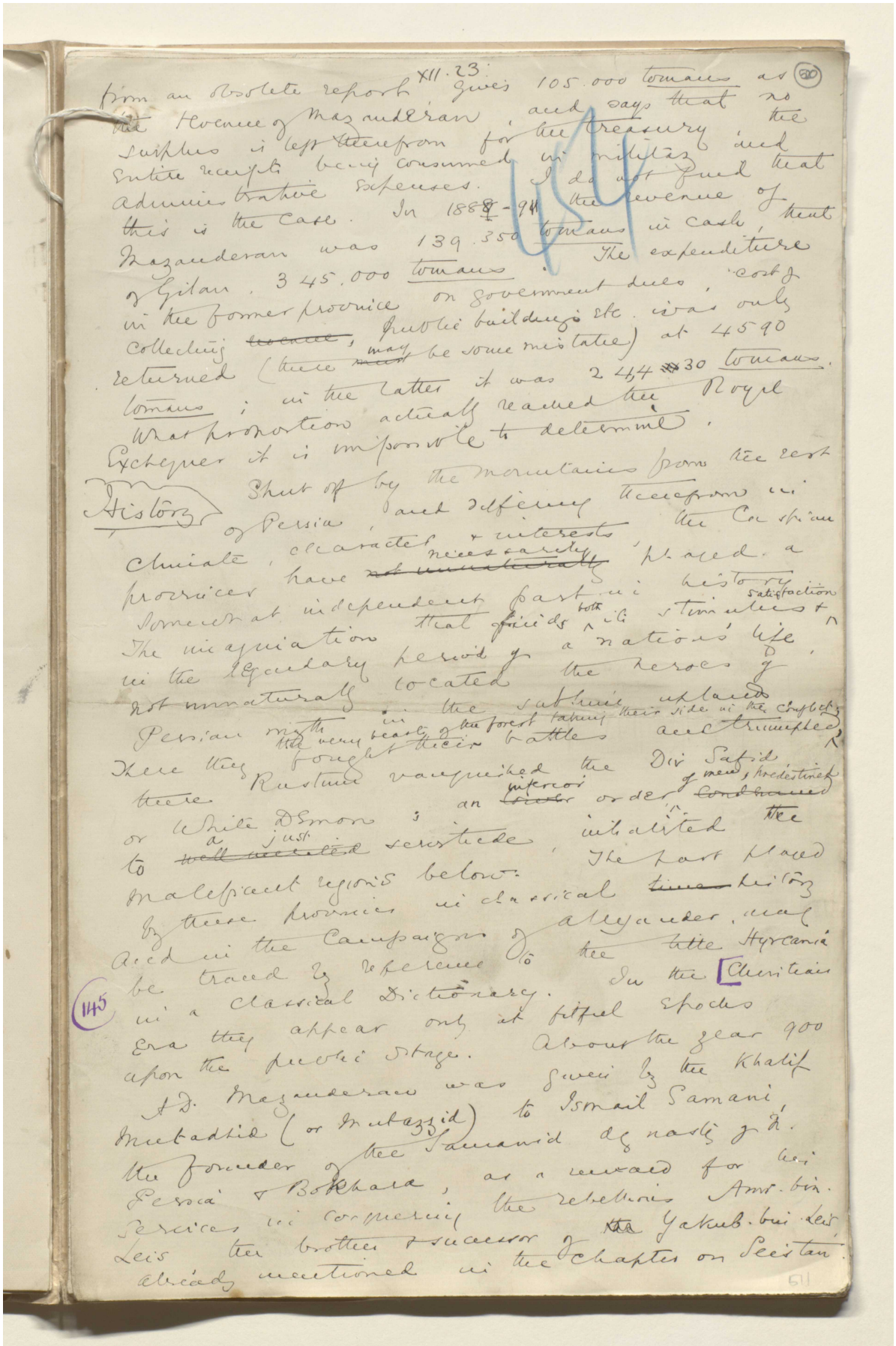
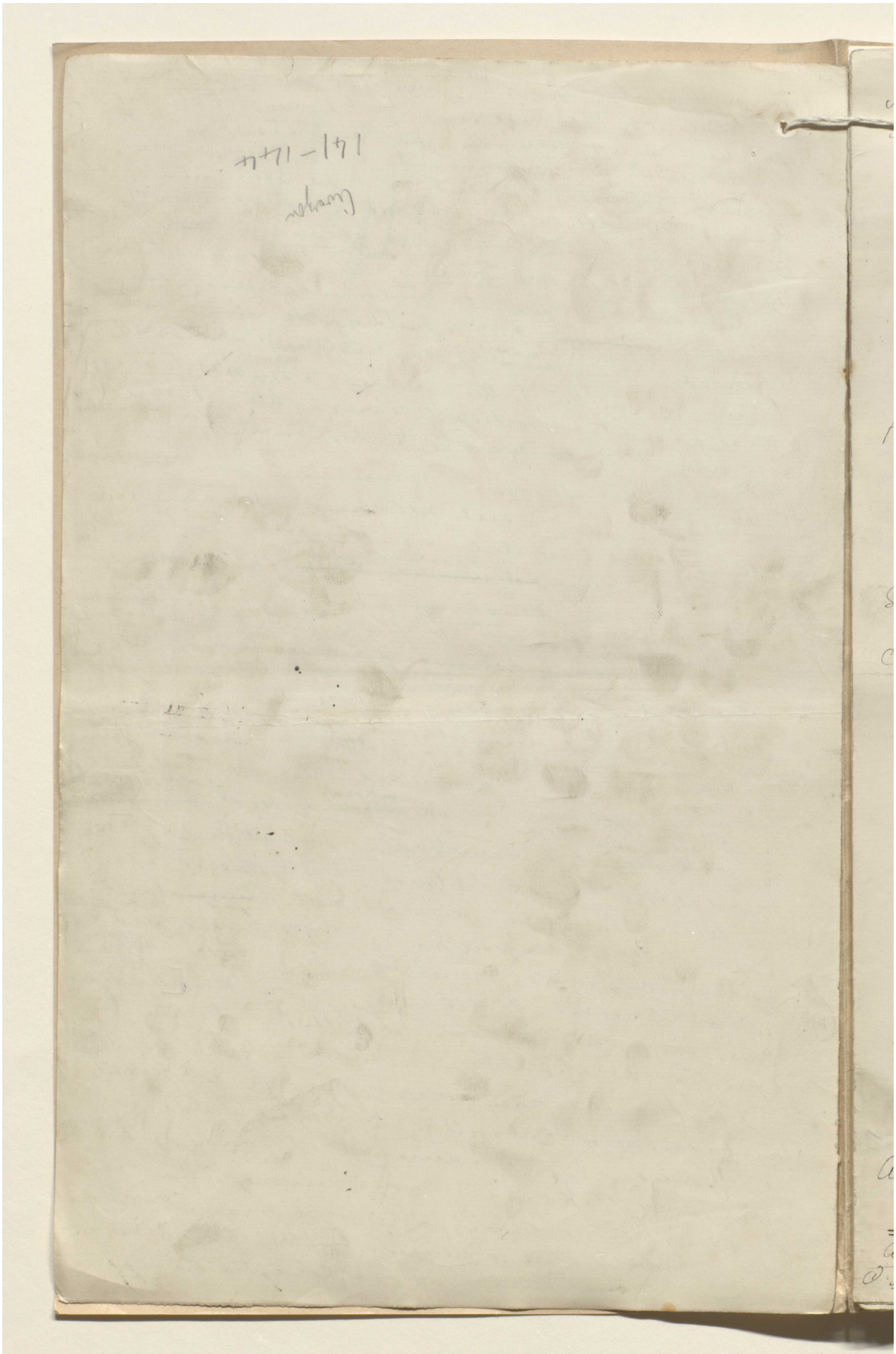






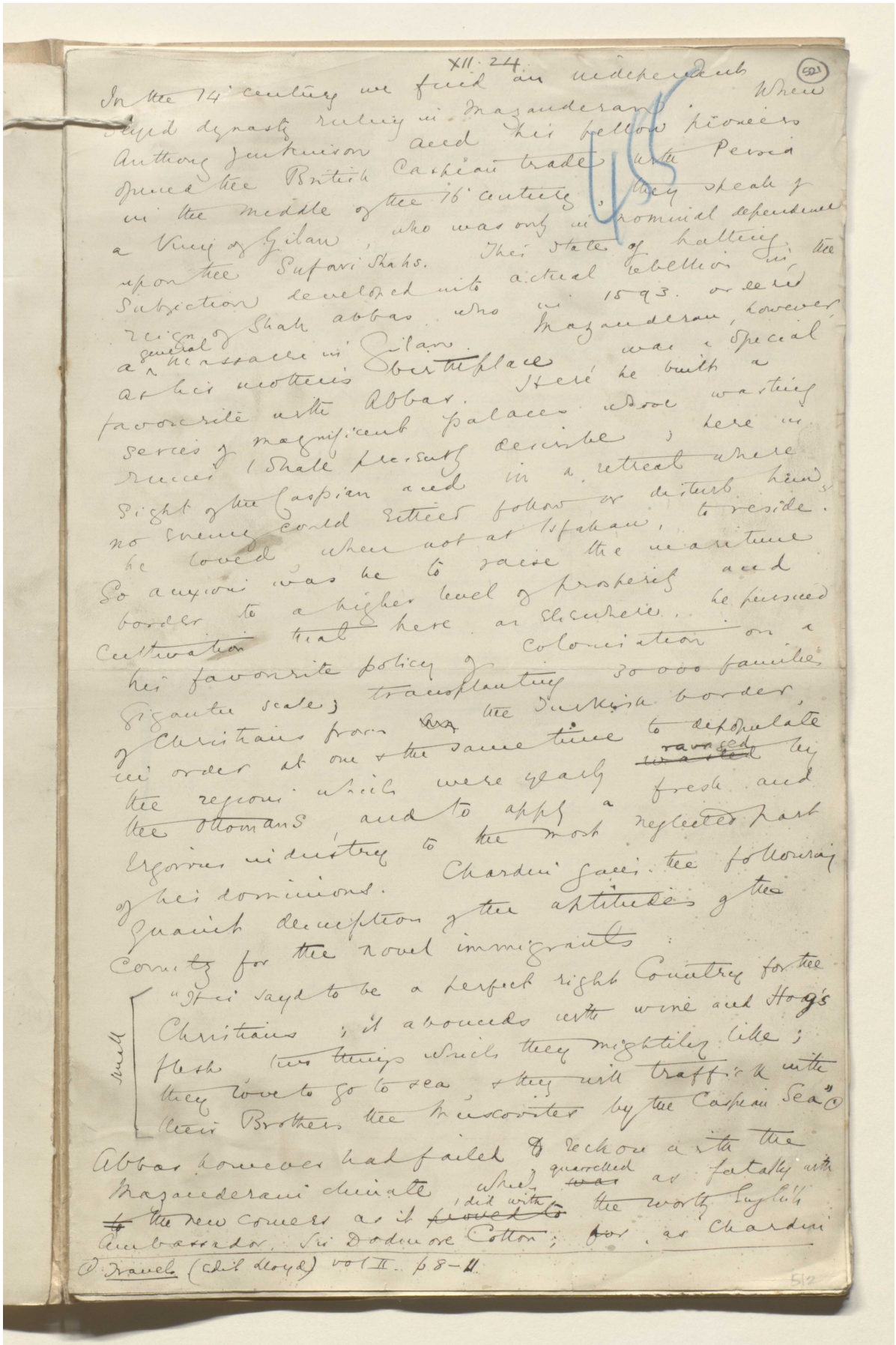






مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٥٢١و] (١٠٤٢/١٣٥٥)

XII. 24. (521)



In the 14th century we find an independent Seyed dynasty ruling in Mazanderan. When Anthony Jenkinson and his fellow pioneers opened the British Caspian trade with Persia in the middle of the 16th century, they speak of a King of Gilan, who was only in nominal dependence upon the Sufavi Shahs. This state of halting subjection developed into actual rebellion in the reign of Shah Abbas, who in 1593 ordered a general massacre in Gilan. Mazanderan, however, as his mother's birthplace was a special favourite with Abbas. Here he built a series of magnificent palaces whose wasting ruins I shall presently describe; here in sight of the Caspian and in a retreat where no enemy could either follow or disturb him, he loved when not at Isfahan, to reside. So anxious was he to raise the maritime border to a higher level of prosperity and cultivation that here as elsewhere he pursued his favourite policy of colonisation on a gigantic scale; transplanting 30000 families of Christians from the Turkish border, in order at one & the same time to depopulate the regions which were yearly ~~wasted~~ ravaged by the Ottomans and to apply a fresh and ergorous industry to the most neglected part of his dominions. Chardin gives the following quaint description of the aptitudes of the Country for the novel immigrants:

small

"It is said to be a perfect right Country for the Christians; it abounds with wine and Hog's flesh two things which they mightily like; they love to go to sea, & they will traffick with their Brothers the Muscovites by the Caspian Sea"(1)

Abbas however had failed to reckon with the Mazanderani climate which ~~was~~ quarrelled as fatally with ~~to~~ the new comers as it ~~proved to~~ did with the worthy English Ambassador, Sir Dodmore Cotton; for, as Chardin

(1) Travels (edit Lloyd) vol II. p 8-11.

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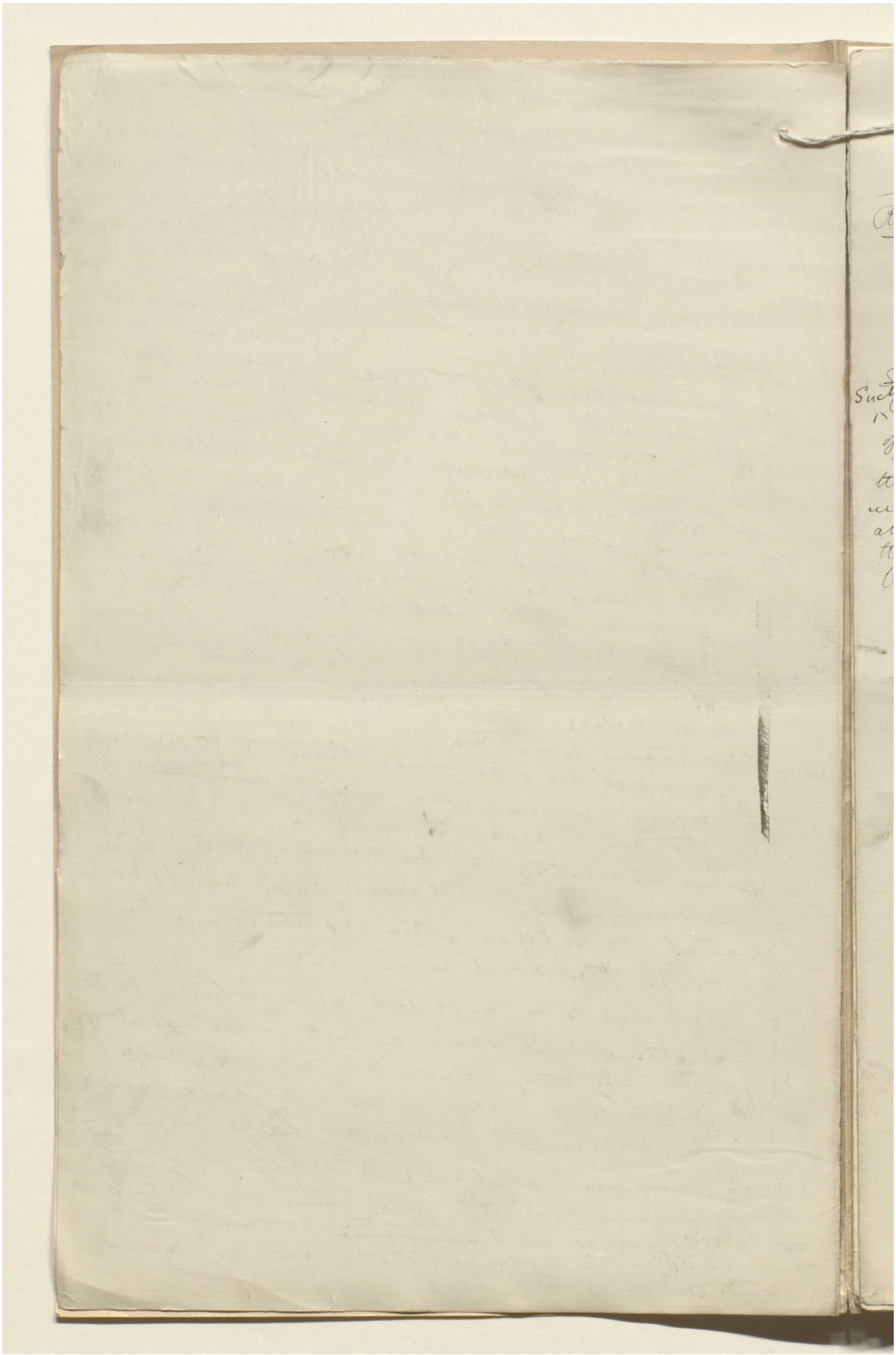
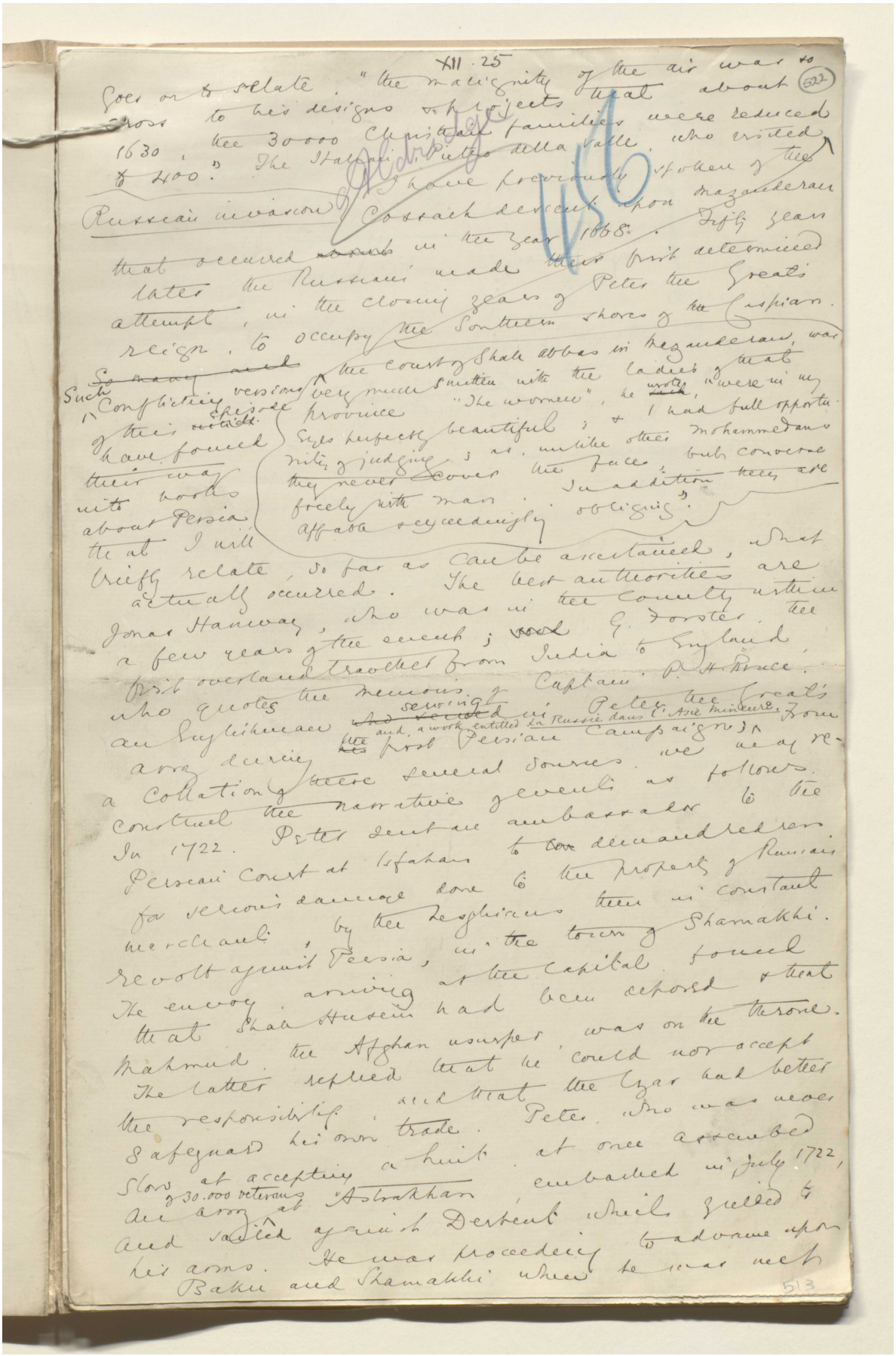
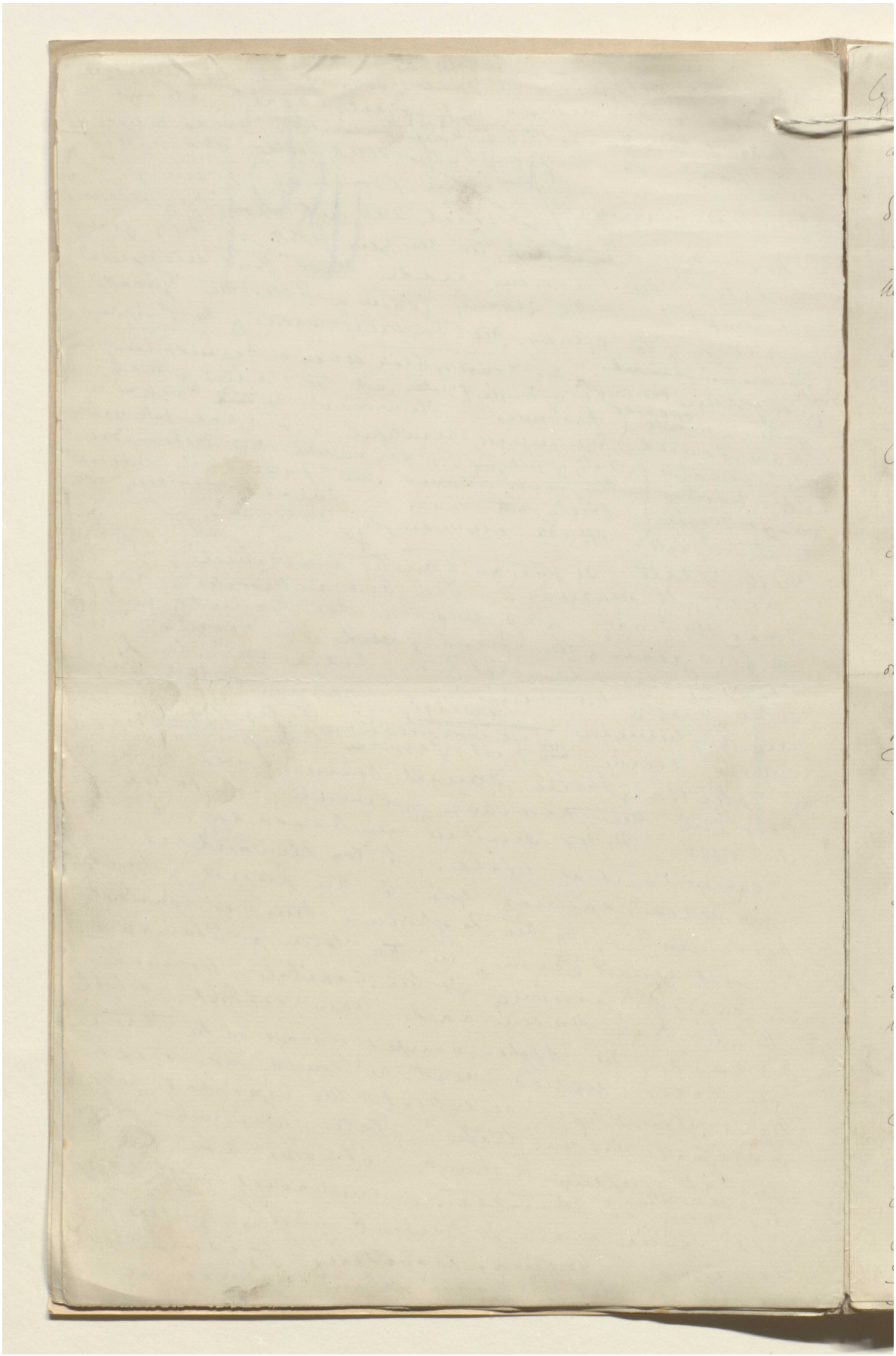
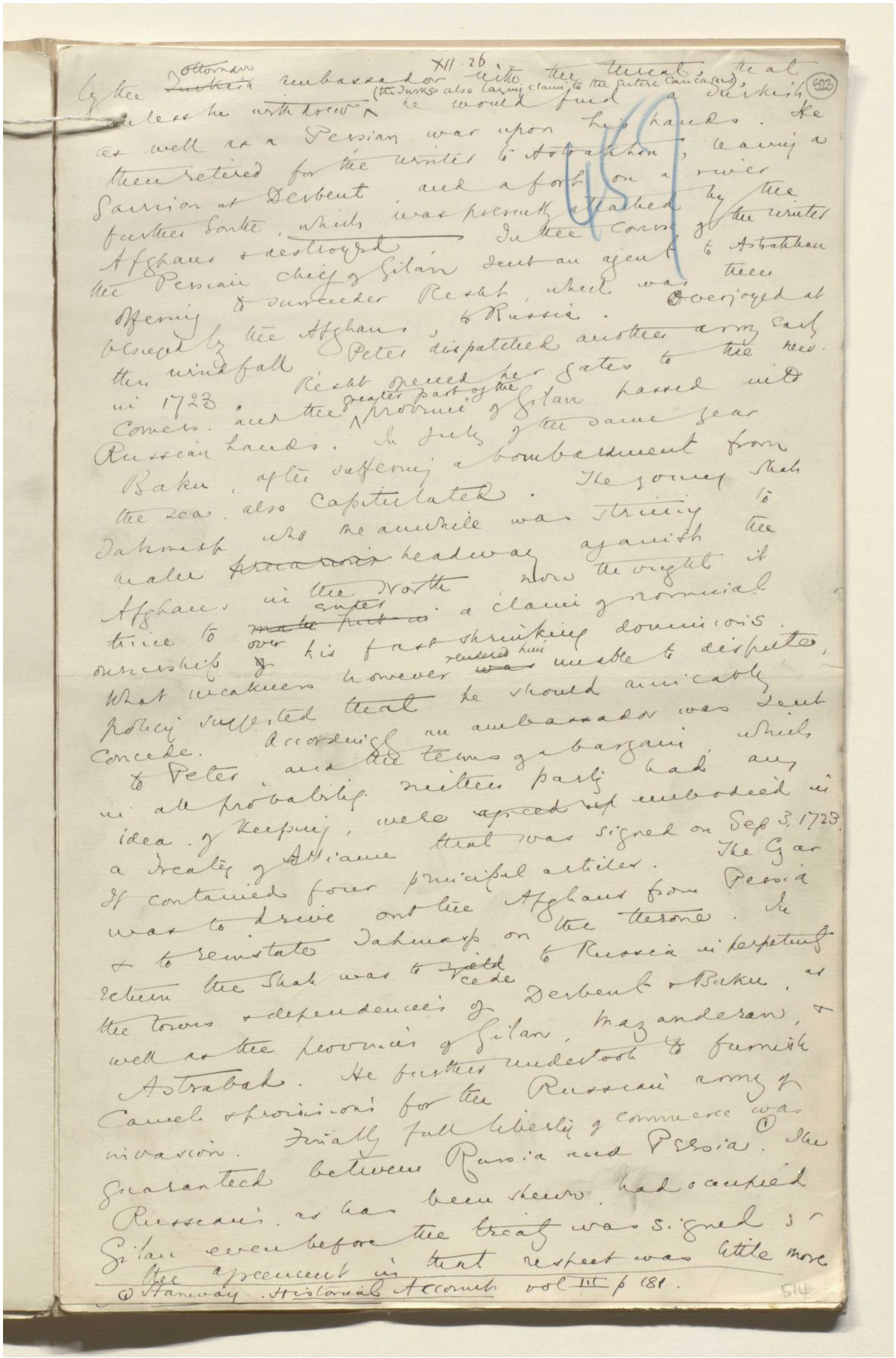
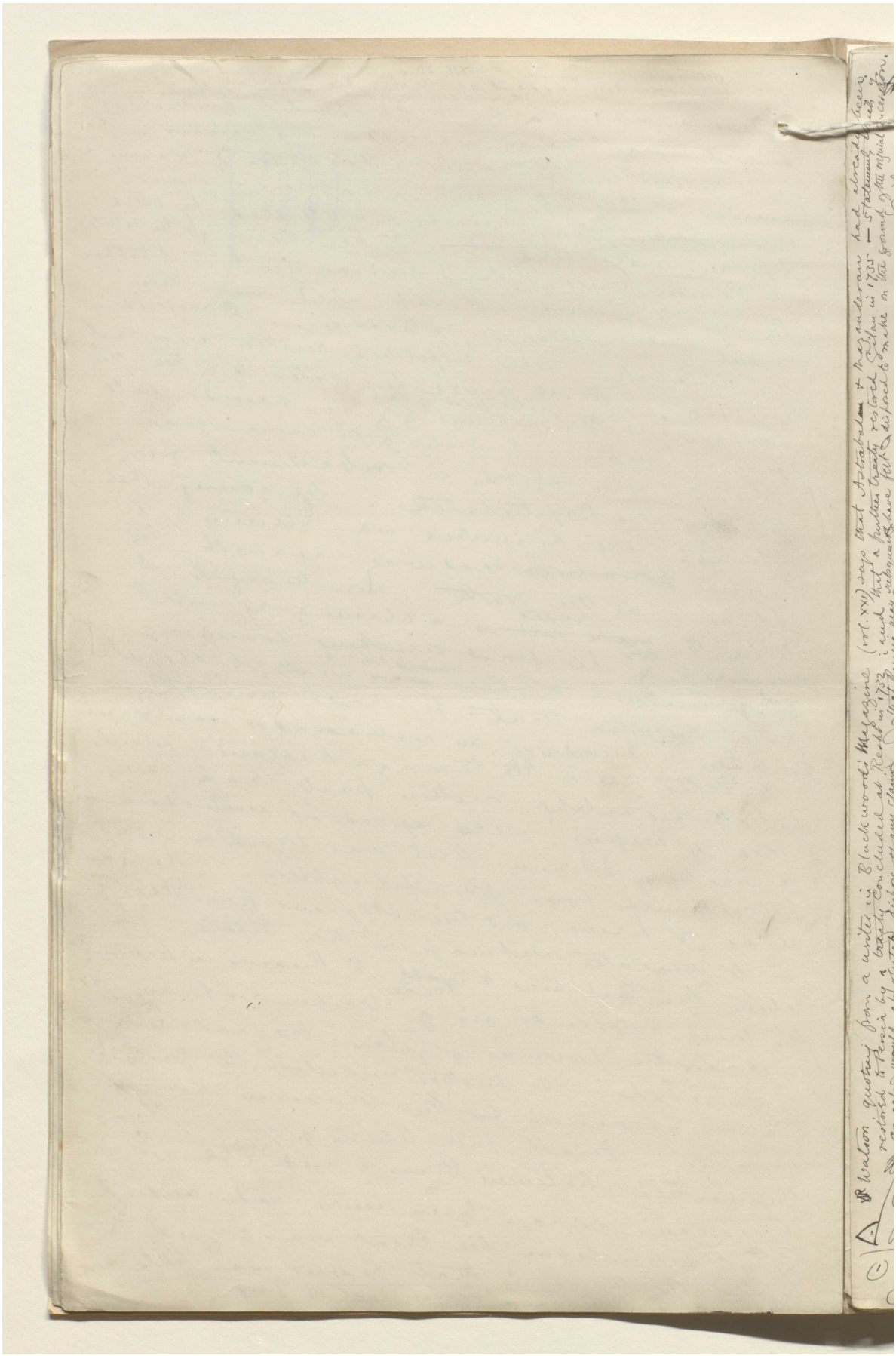
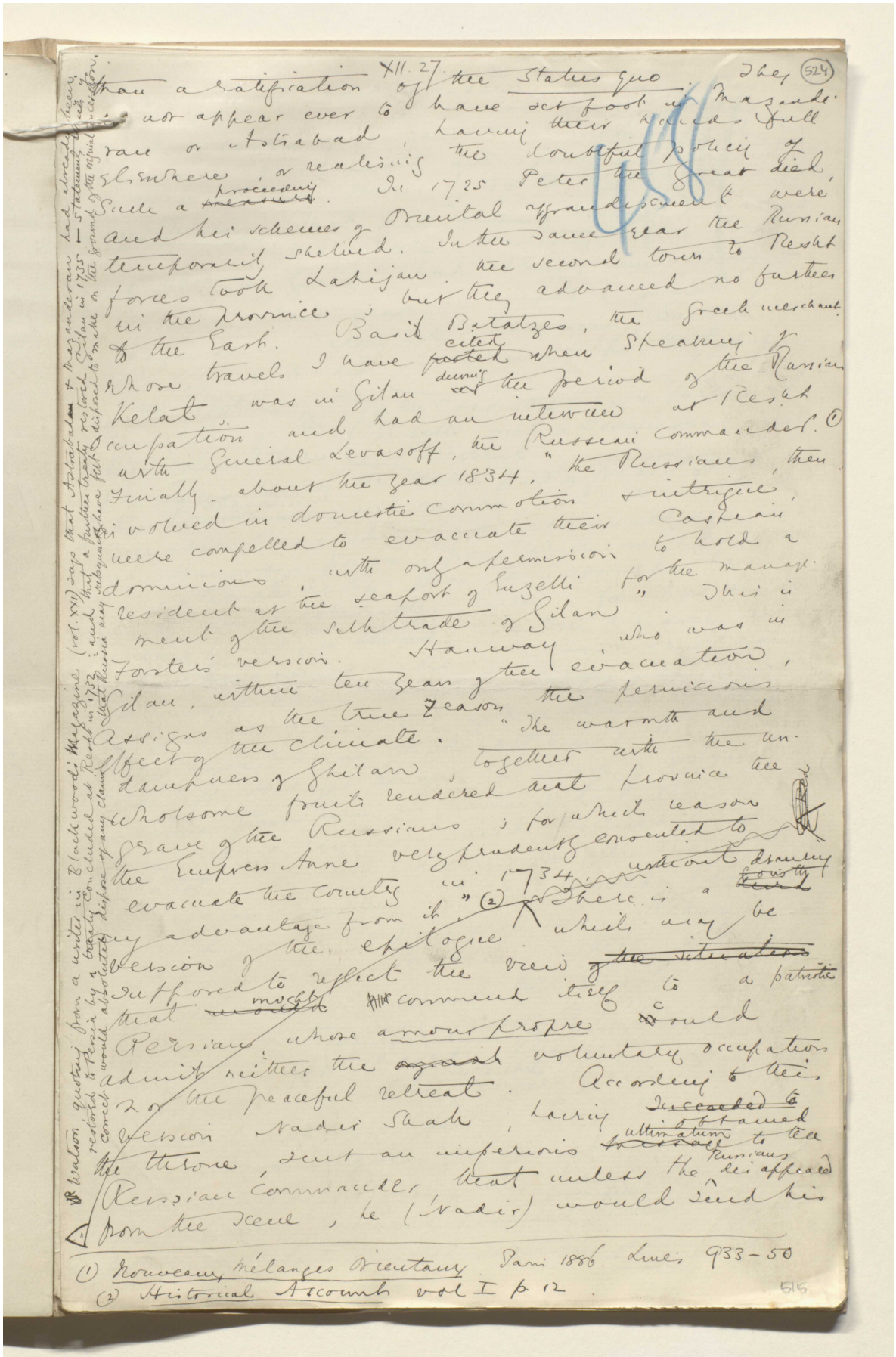


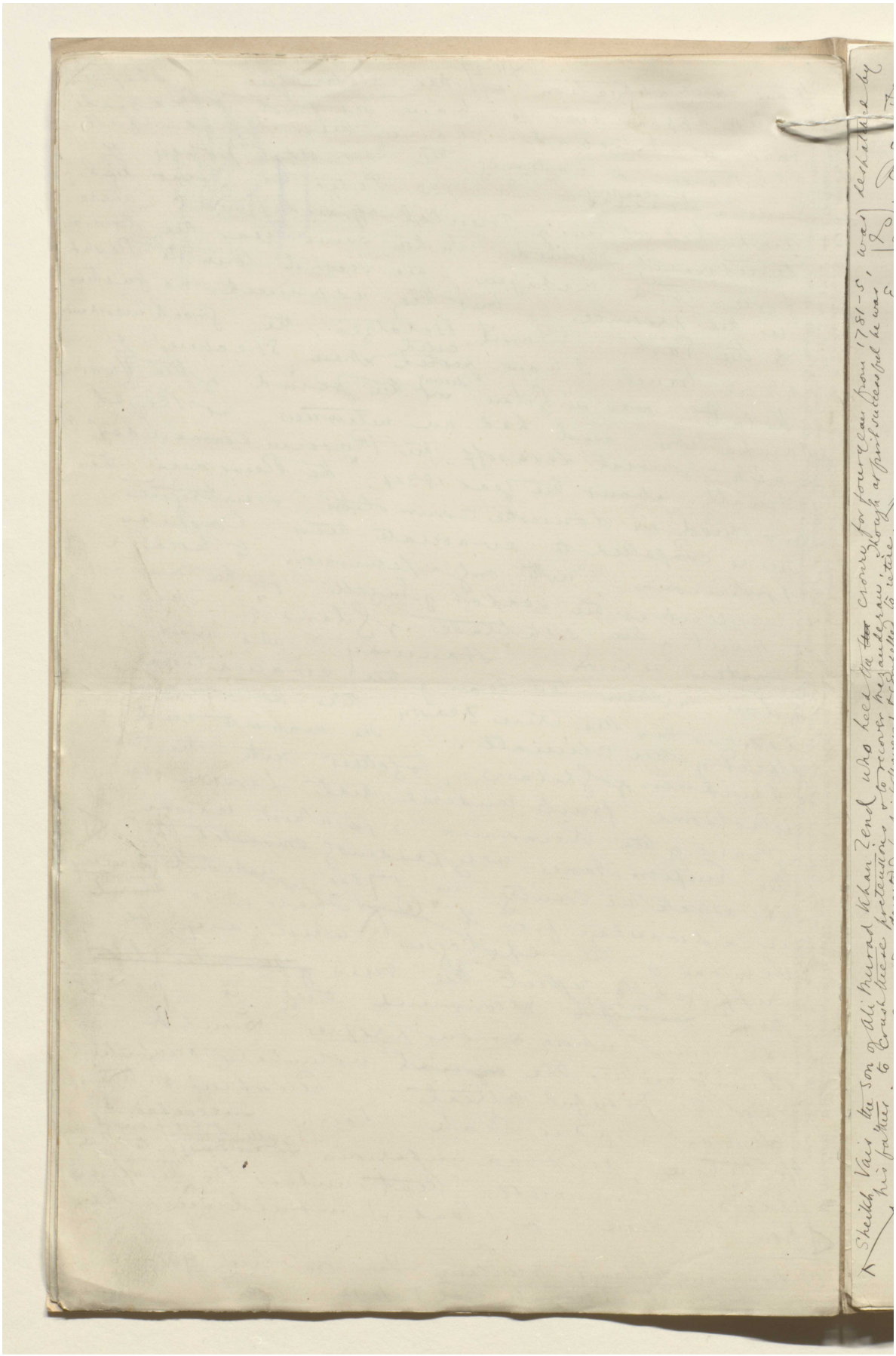


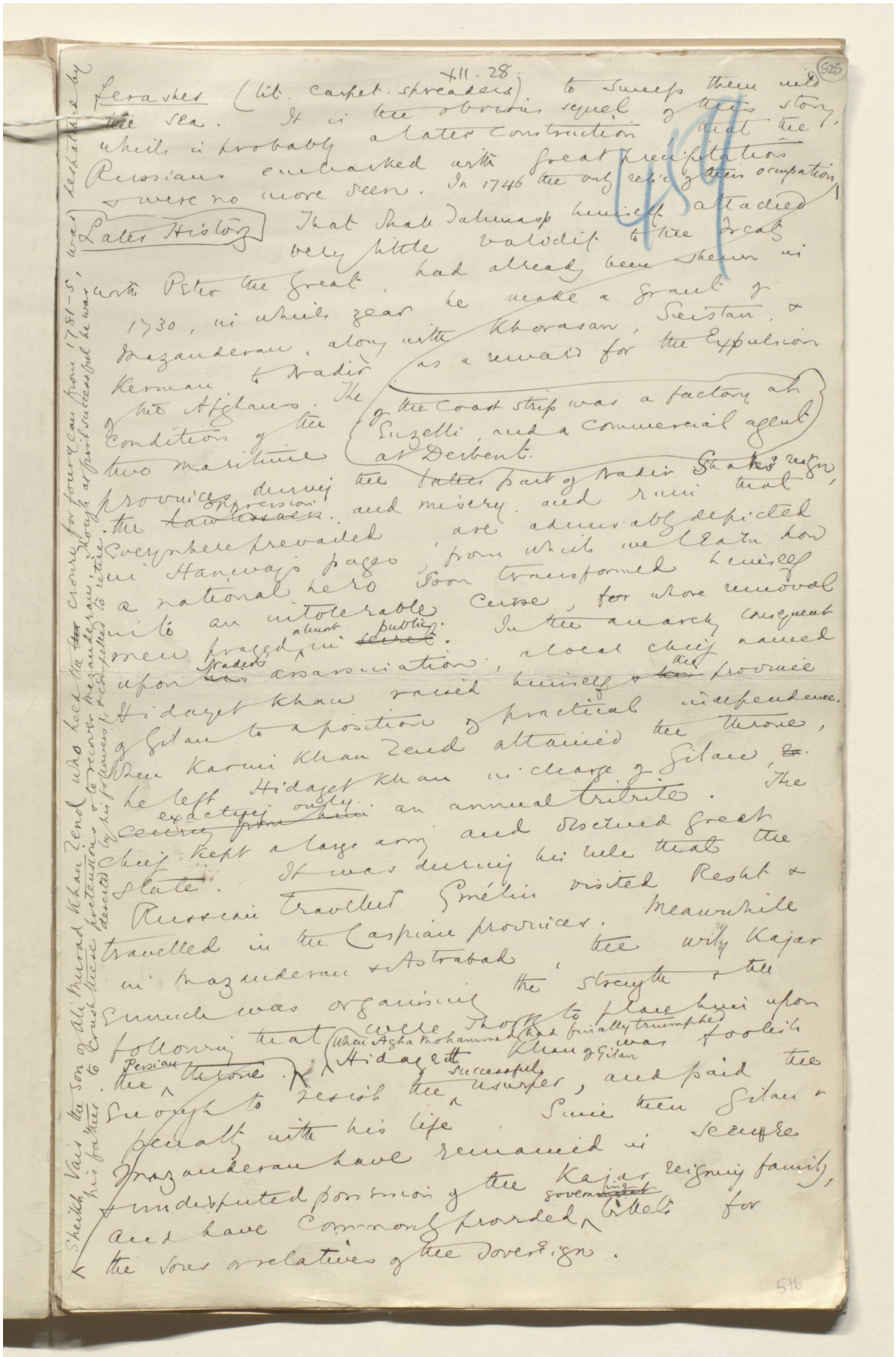


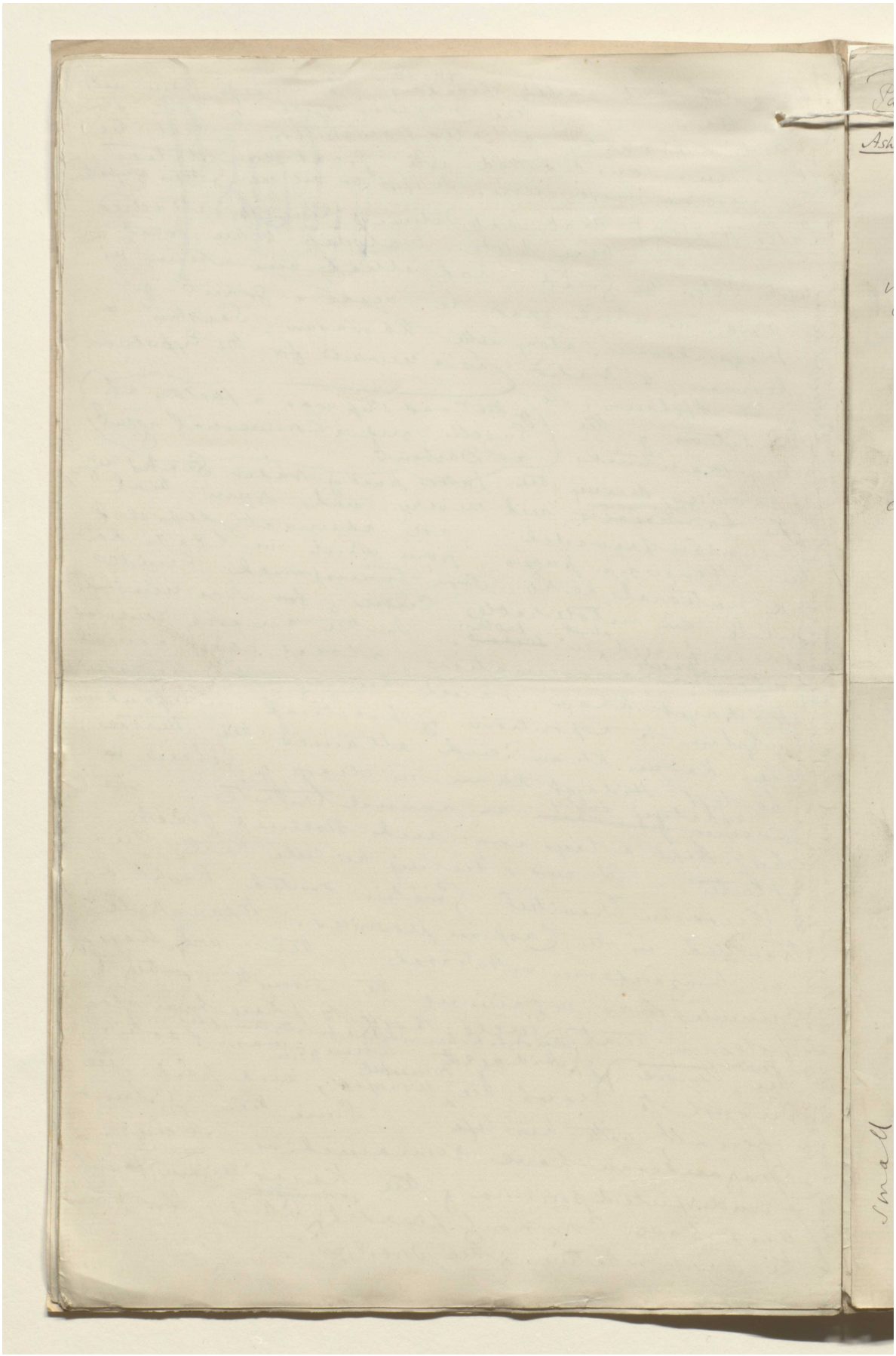


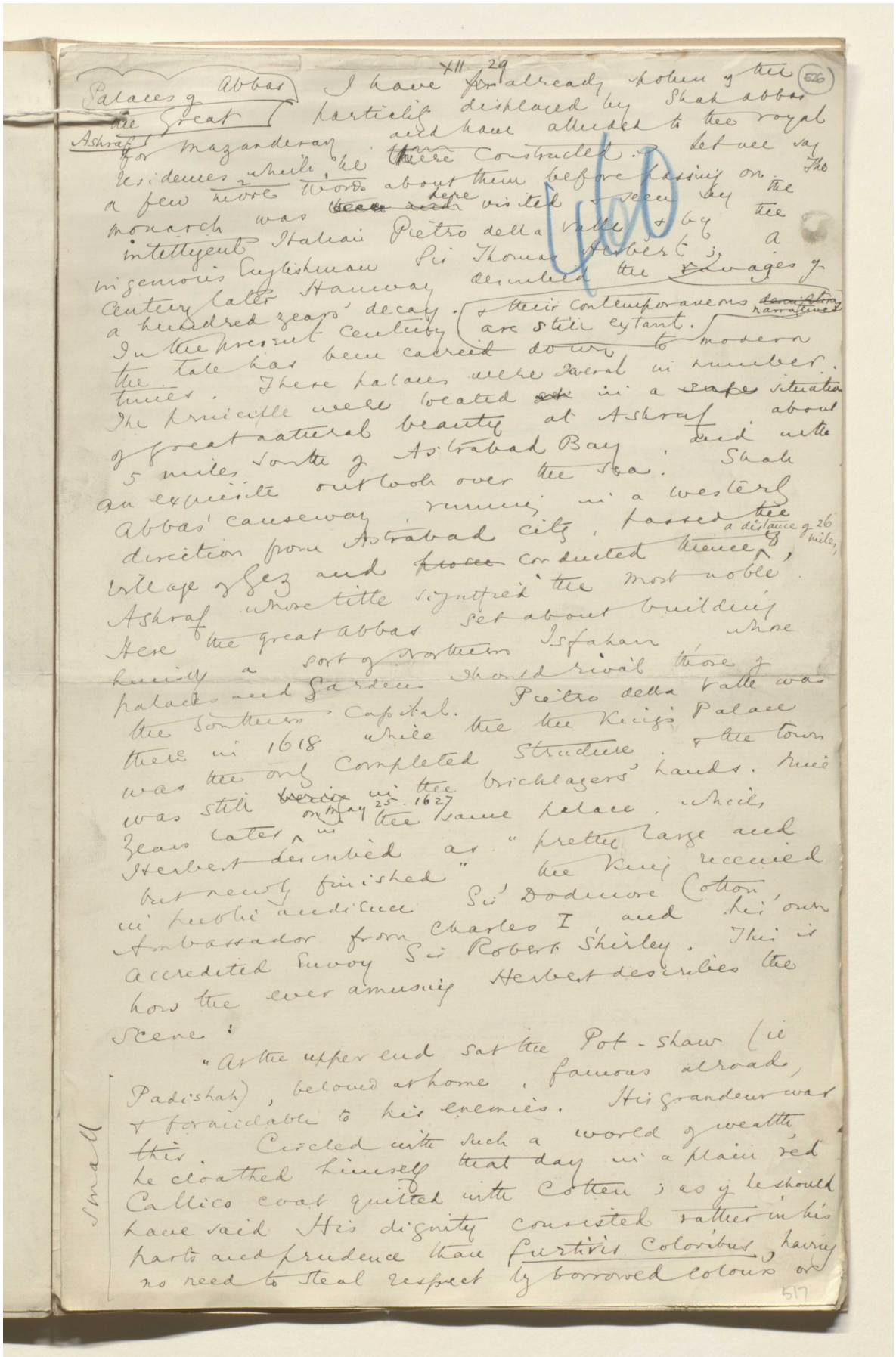


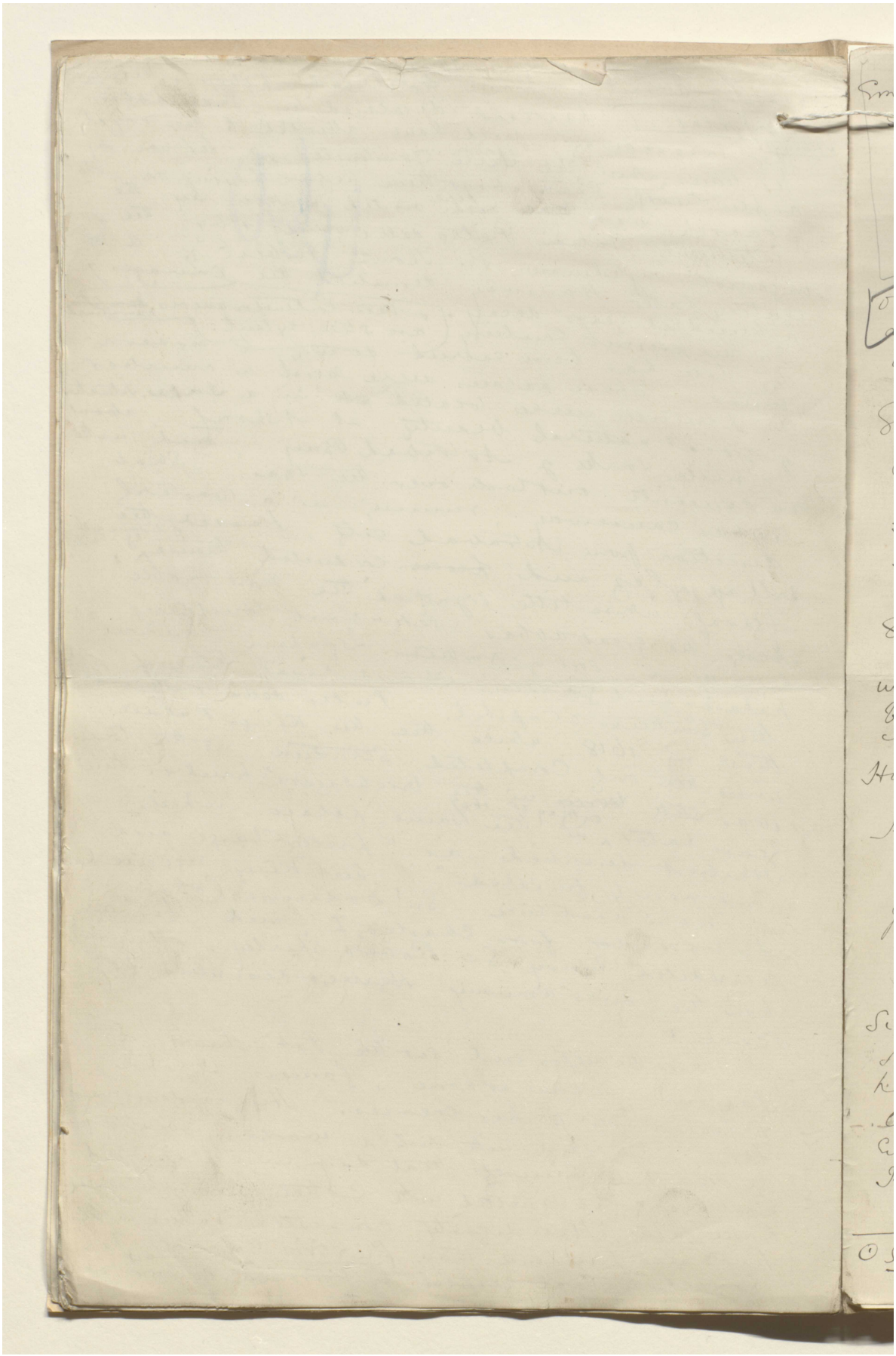






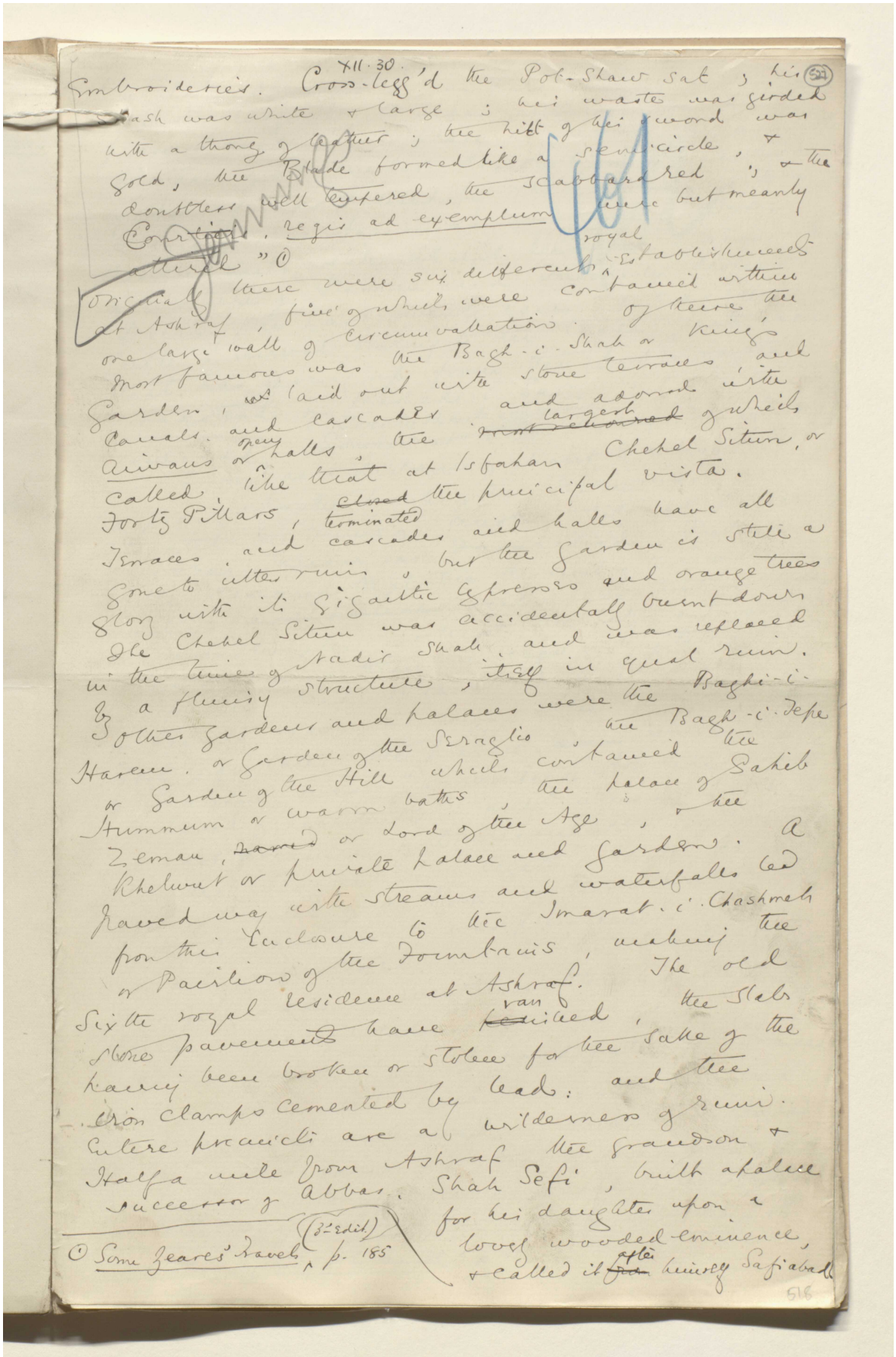






مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٥٢٧و] (١٠٥٤/١٣٥٥)

XII. 30.



Embroideries. Cross-legg'd the Pot-Shaw sat; his (527)
Sash was white & large; his waste was girded
with a thong of leather; the hilt of his sword was
gold, the Blade formed like a semicircle, &
doubtless well tempered, the scabbard red; & the
Courtiers, regis ad exemplum were but meanly
attired" ①

Originally there were six different royal establishments
at Ashraf, five of which were contained within
one large wall of circumvallation. Of these the
most famous was the Bagh-i-Shah or King's
Garden, laid out with stone terraces and
canals and cascades and adorned with
Aiwans or open halls, the largest of which
called, like that at Isfahan Chehel Situn, or
Forty Pillars, terminated the principal vista.
Terraces and cascades and halls have all
gone to utter ruin, but the garden is still a
glory with its gigantic cypresses and orange trees.
The Chehel Situn was accidentally burnt down
in the time of Nadir Shah, and was replaced
by a flimsy structure, itself in equal ruin.
Other gardens and palaces were the Baghi-i-
Harem, or Garden of the Seraglio, the Bagh-i-Tepe
or Garden of the Hill which contained the
Hummum or warm baths, the palace of Sahib
Zeman, or Lord of the Age, & the
Khelwut or private palace and garden. A
paved way with streams and waterfalls led
from this Enclosure to the Imarat-i-Chashmeh
or Pavilion of the Fountains, making the
Sixth royal residence at Ashraf. The old
stone pavements have vanished, the slabs
having been broken or stolen for the sake of the
iron clamps cemented by lead: and the
entire precincts are a wilderness of ruin.
Half a mile from Ashraf the grandson &
successor of Abbas, Shah Sefi, built a palace
for his daughter upon a
lovely wooded eminence,
& called it after himself Safiabad

① Some Yeares' Travels (3rd edit.) p. 185

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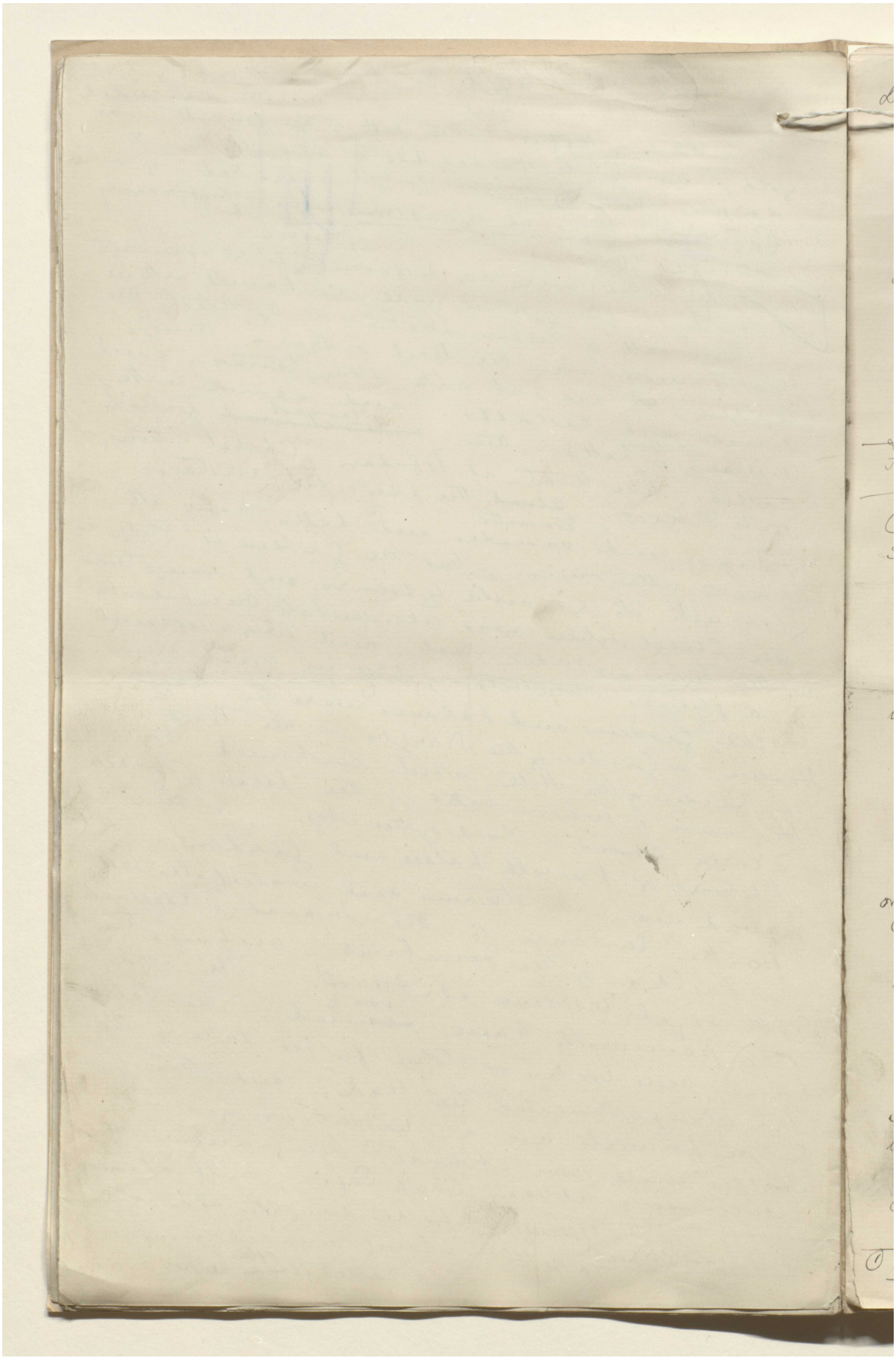
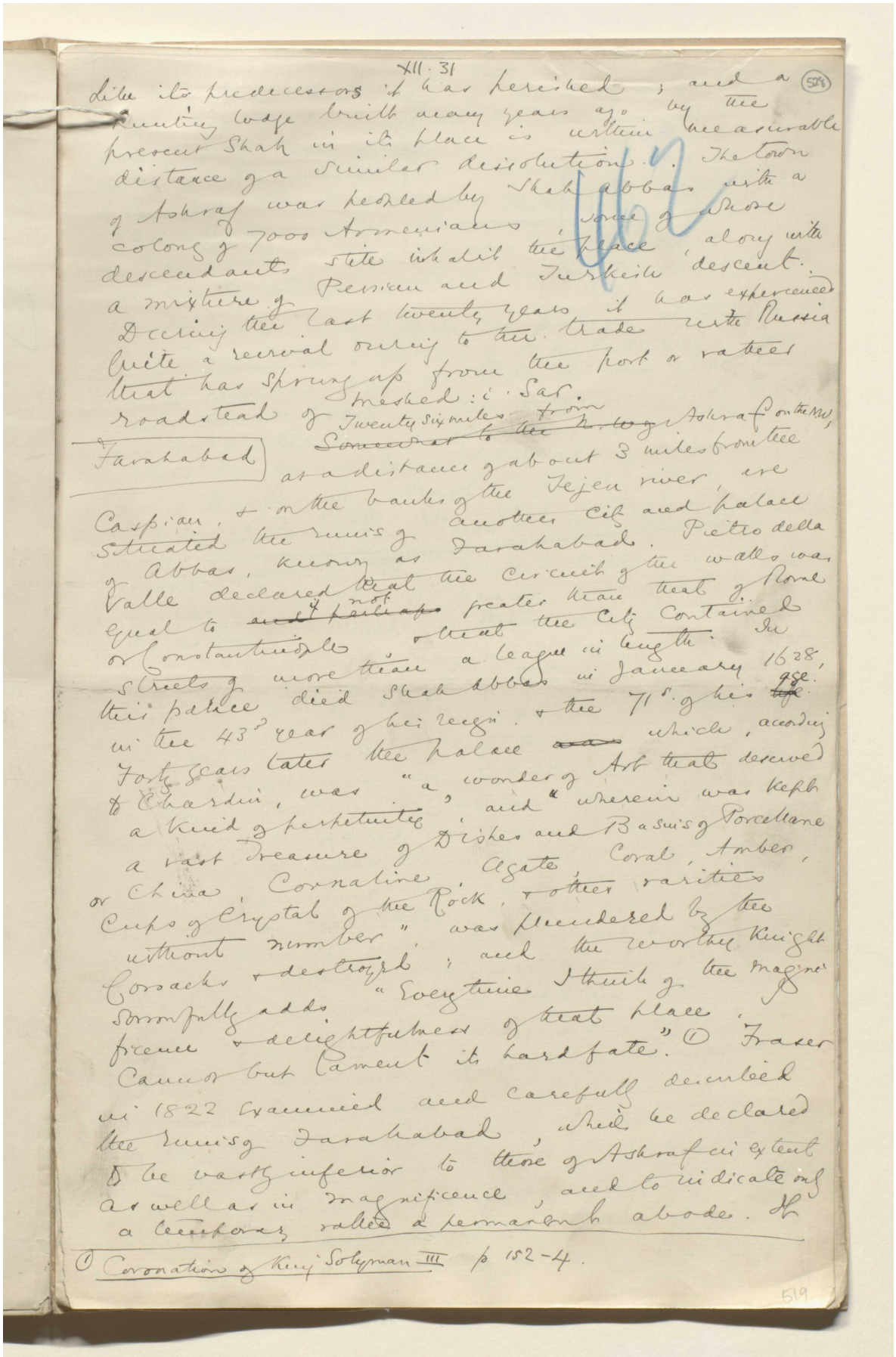


مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٥٢٨و] (١٠٥٦/١٣٥٥)

XII. 31

(528)



Like its predecessors it has perished; and a hunting lodge built many years ago by the present Shah in its place is within measurable distance of a similar dissolution. The town of Ashraf was peopled by Shah Abbas with a colony of 7000 Armenians, some of whose descendants still inhabit the place, along with a mixture of Persian and Turkish descent. During the last twenty years it has experienced quite a revival owing to the trade with Russia that has sprung up from the port or rather roadstead of Meshed-i-Sar.

Farahabad

Twenty six miles from ~~Somewhat to the N.W. of~~ Ashraf on the N.W., at a distance of about 3 miles from the Caspian, & on the banks of the Tejen river, are situated the ruins of another city and palace of Abbas, known as Farahabad. Pietro della Valle declared that the circuit of the walls was equal to ~~and perhaps~~ not greater than that of Rome or Constantinople, & that the city contained streets of more than a league in length. In this palace died Shah Abbas in January 1628, in the 43rd year of his reign, & the 71st of his ~~life~~ age. Forty years later the palace ~~was~~ which, according to Chardin, was "a wonder of Art that deserved a kind of perpetuity", and "wherein was kept a vast treasure of Dishes and Basins of Porcellane or China, Cornaline, Agate, Coral, Amber, Cups of Crystal of the Rock, & other rarities without number", was plundered by the Corsacks & destroyed; and the worthy Knight sorrowfully adds "Every time I think of the magnificence & delightfulness of that place, I cannot but lament its hard fate." (1) Fraser in 1822 examined and carefully described the ruins of Farahabad, which he declared to be vastly inferior to those of Ashraf in extent as well as in magnificence, and to indicate only a temporary rather a permanent abode. It

(1) Coronation of King Solyman III p 152-4.

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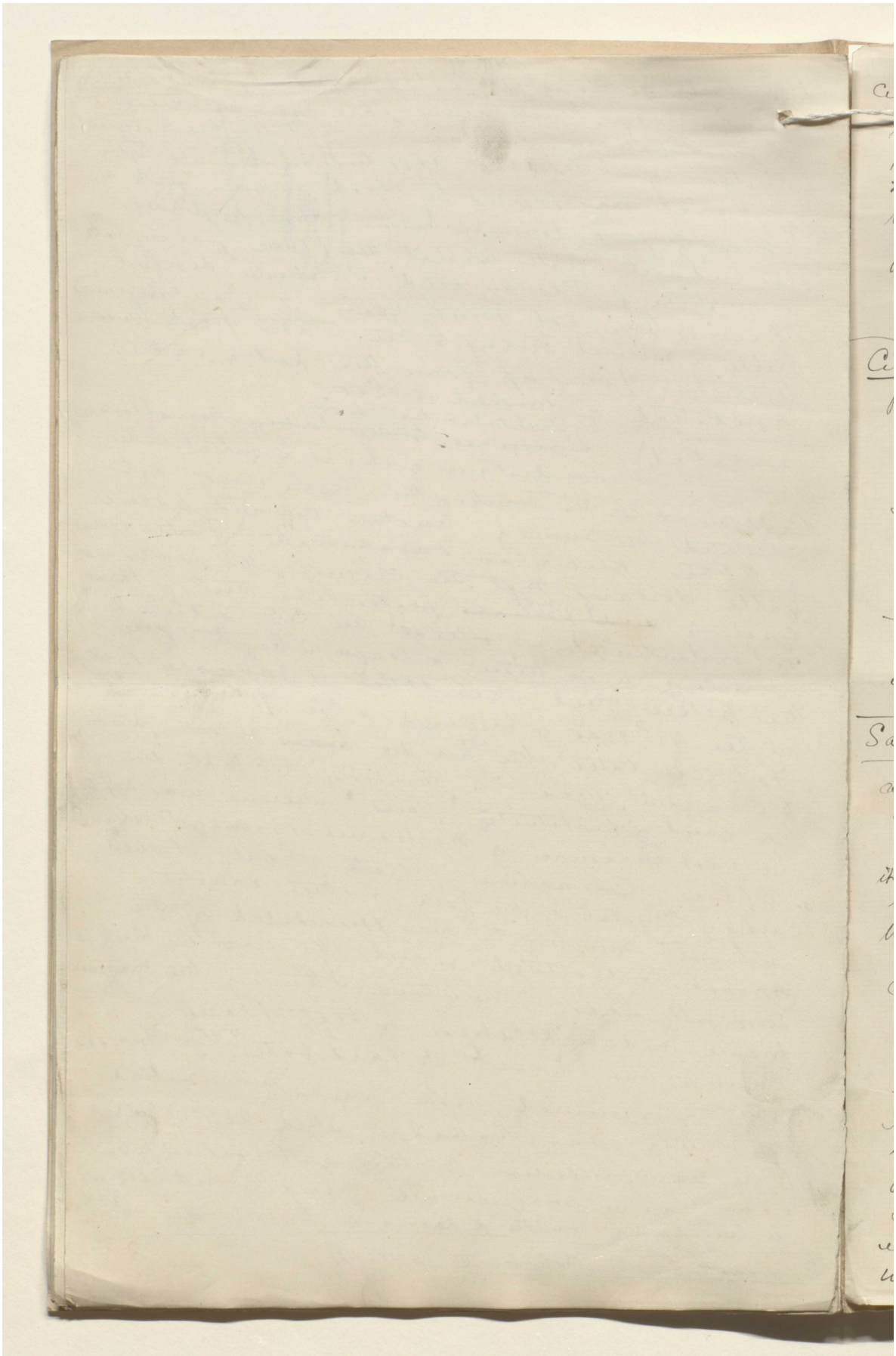
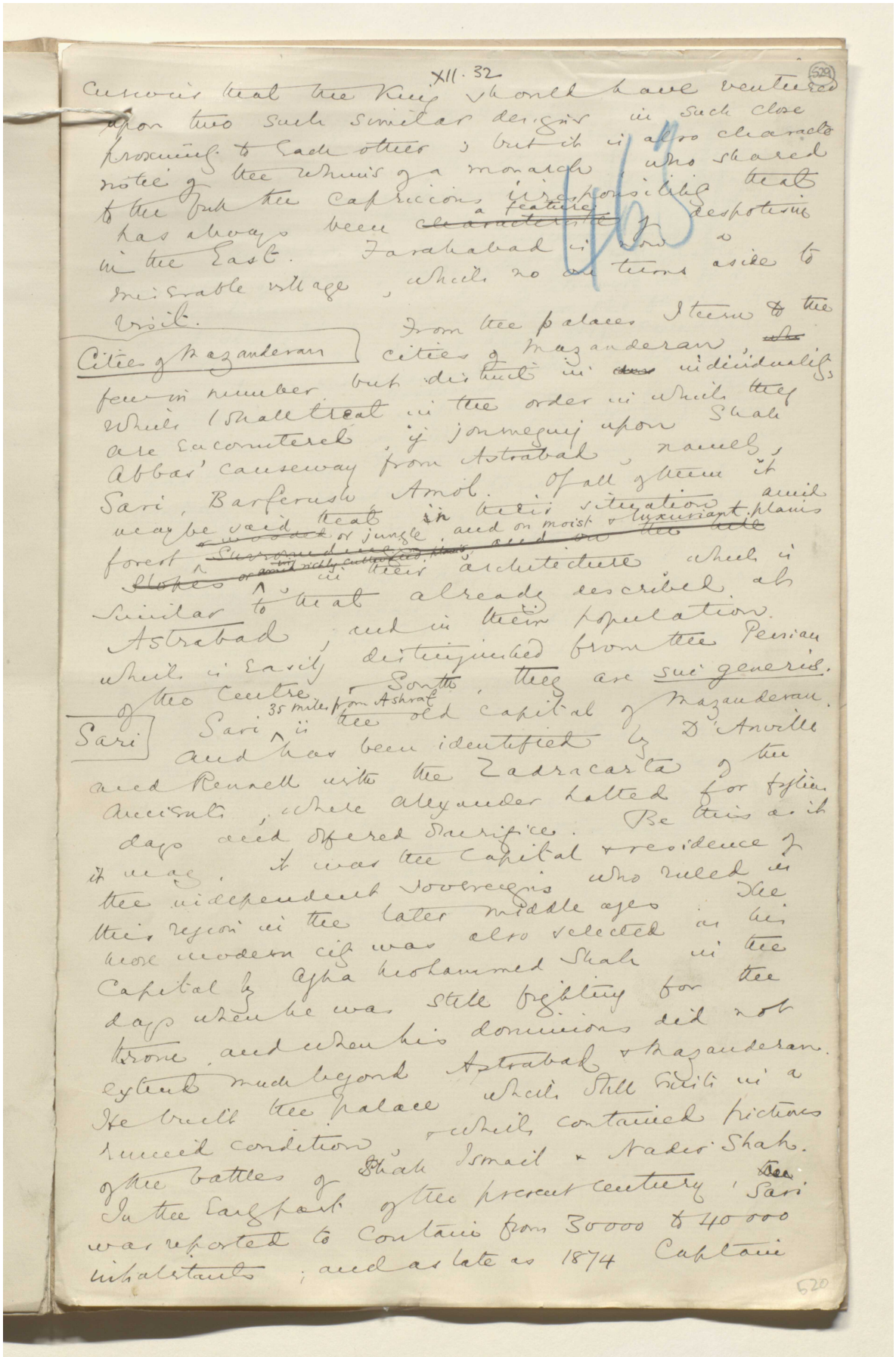


مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٥٢٩و] (١٠٥٨/١٣٥٥)

XII. 32

(529)



Curious that the King should have ventured upon two such similar designs in such close proximity to each other; but it is also characteristic of the whims of a monarch who shared to the full the capricious irresponsibility that has always been ~~characteristic~~ a feature of despotism in the East. Farahabad is now a miserable village, which no one turns aside to visit.

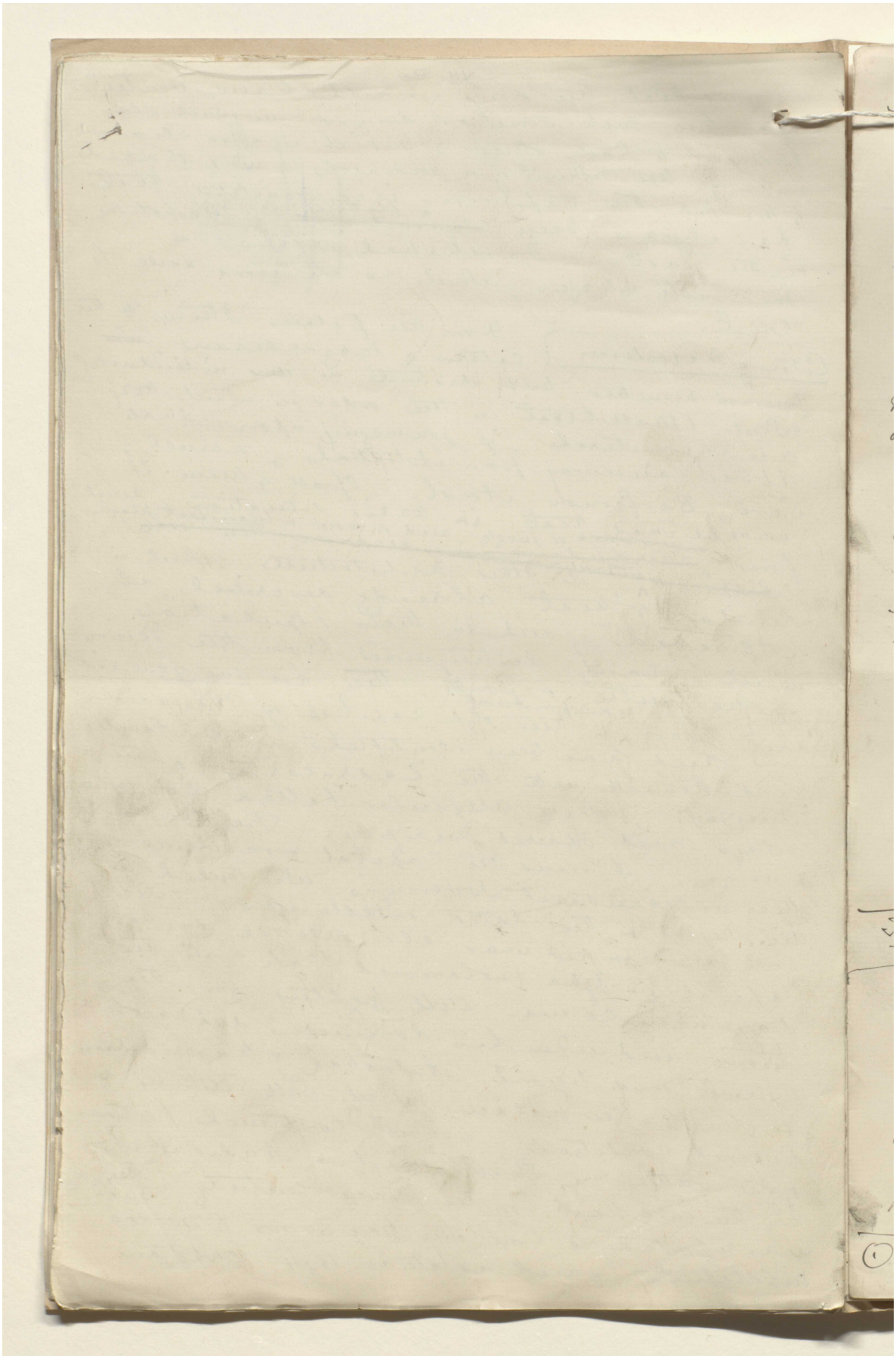
Cities of Mazanderan

From the palaces I turn to the cities of Mazanderan, ~~the~~ few in number but distinct in ~~our~~ individuality, which I shall treat in the order in which they are encountered, if journeying upon Shah Abbas' causeway from Astrabad, namely, Sari, Barferush, Amol. Of all of them it may be said that in their situation amid forest ~~or wooded~~ or jungle, and on moist & luxuriant plains ~~Surrounding plains, and on the hill slopes or amid richly cultivated plains~~ in their architecture which is similar to that already described at Astrabad, and in their population which is easily distinguished from the Persian of the Centre & South, they are sui generis.

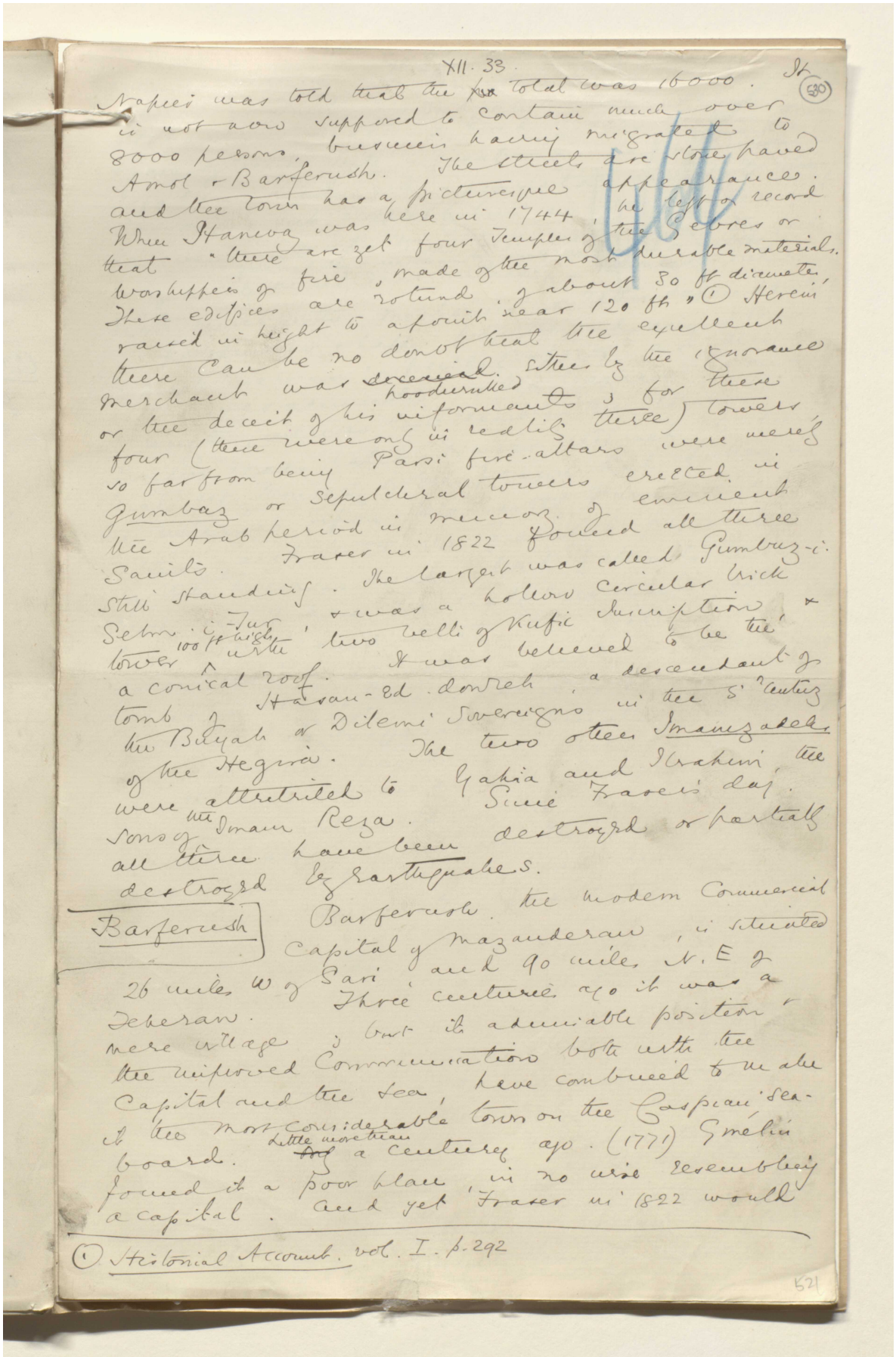
Sari

Sari 35 miles from Ashraf is the old capital of Mazanderan. And has been identified by D'Anville and Rennell with the Zadracarta of the ancients, where Alexander halted for fifteen days and offered sacrifice. Be this as it may, it was the capital & residence of the independent sovereigns who ruled in this region in the later middle ages. The more modern city was also selected as his capital by Agha Mohammed Shah in the days when he was still fighting for the throne, and when his dominions did not extend much beyond Astrabad & Mazanderan. He built the palace which still exists in a ruined condition, & which contained pictures of the battles of Shah Ismail & Nadir Shah. In the early part of the present century, ~~the~~ Sari was reported to contain from 30000 to 40000 inhabitants; and as late as 1874 Captain

520



مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٥٣٠و] (١٠٦٠/١٣٥٥)



XII. 33.

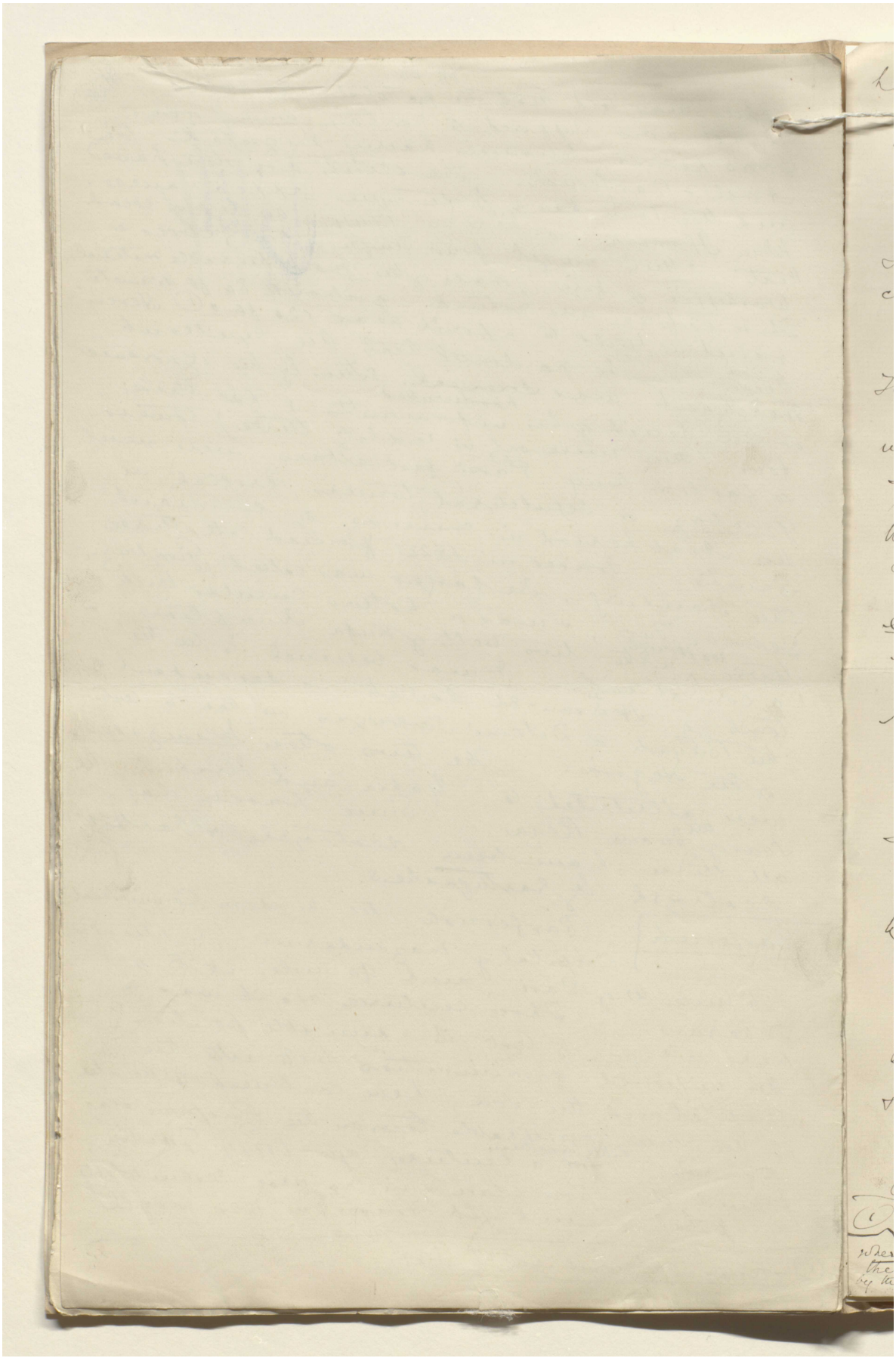
Napier was told that the ~~pa~~ total was 16000. It is not now supposed to contain much over 8000 persons, business having migrated to Amol & Barferush. The streets are stone paved and the town has a picturesque appearance. When Hanway was here in 1744, he left on record that "there are yet four Temples of the Gebres or worshippers of fire, made of the most durable materials. These edifices are rotund, of about 30 ft diameter, raised in height to a point near 120 ft." (1) Herein there can be no doubt that the excellent merchant was ~~deceived~~ hoodwinked either by the ignorance or the deceit of his informants; for these four (there were only in reality three) towers so far from being Parsi fire-altars were merely Gumbaz or sepulchral towers erected in the Arab period in memory of eminent Saints. Fraser in 1822 found all three still standing. The largest was called Gumbuz-i-Selm-i-Tur, & was a hollow circular brick tower 100 ft high with two belts of Kufic Inscription & a conical roof. It was believed to be the tomb of Hasan-Ed-dowreh, a descendant of the Buyah or Dilemi Sovereigns in the 5th century of the Hegira. The two other Imamzadeh were attributed to Yahia and Ibrahim, the sons of the Imam Reza. Since Fraser's day all three have been destroyed or partially destroyed by earthquakes.

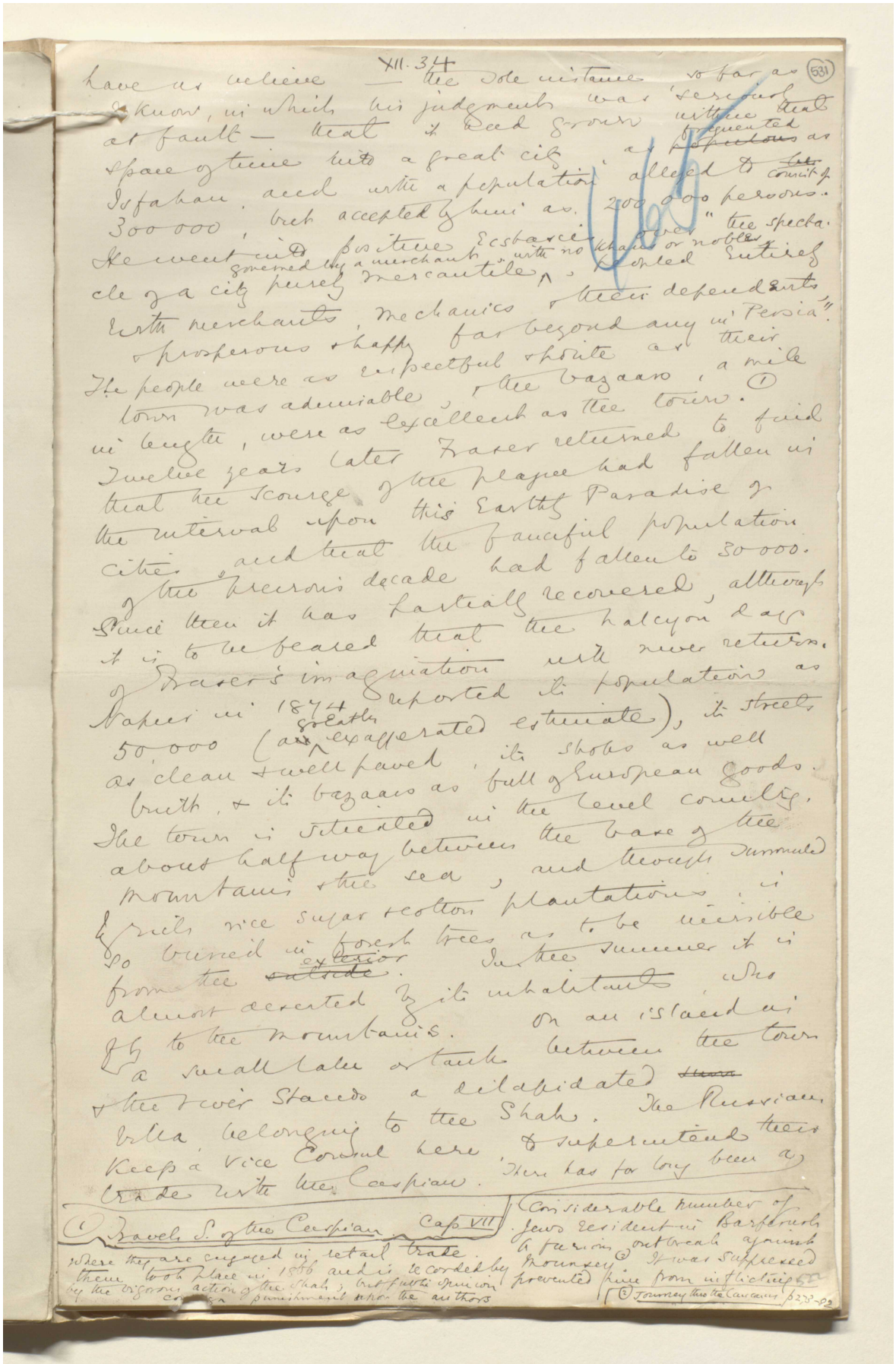
Barferush

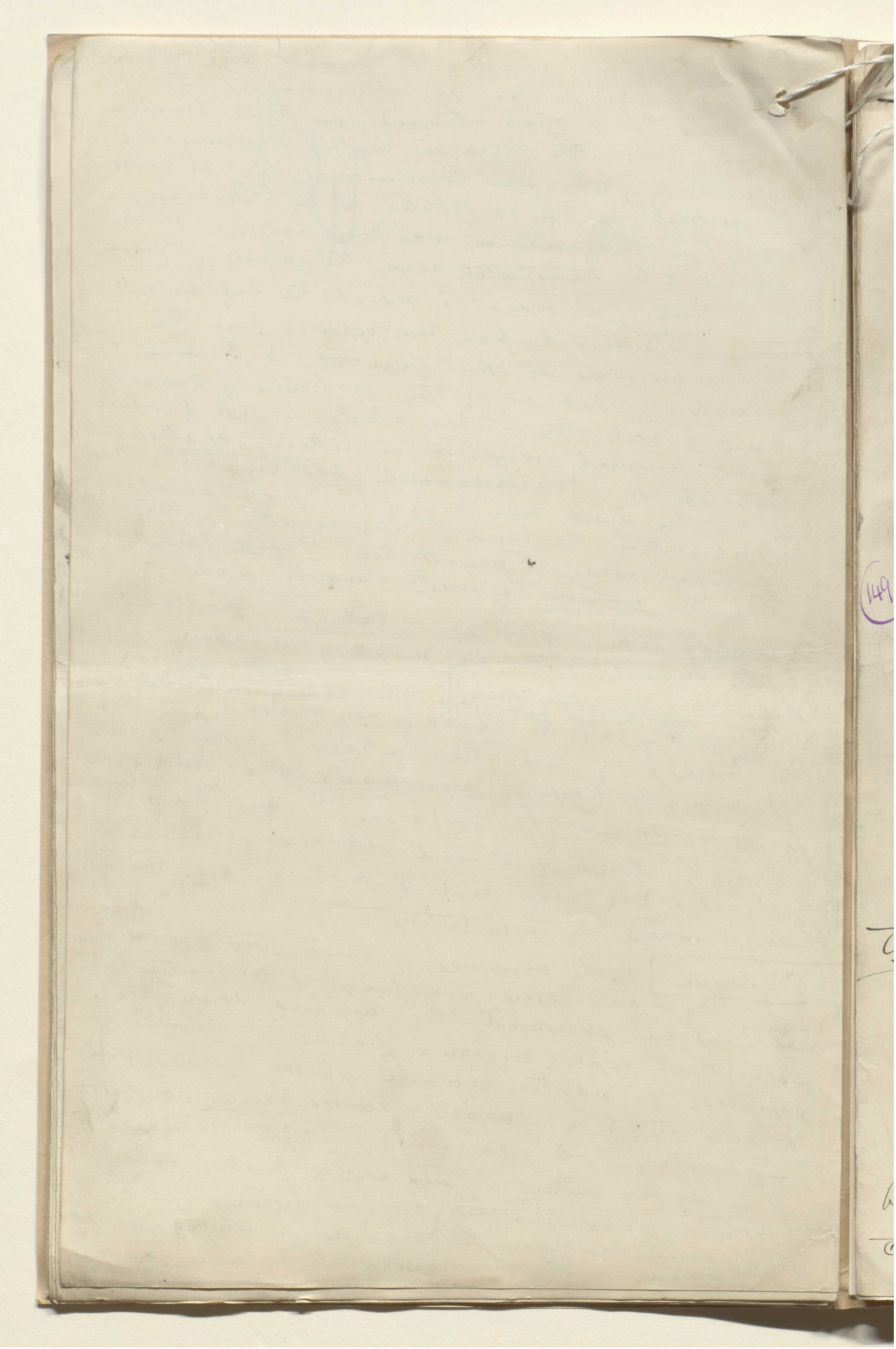
Barferush, the modern Commercial Capital of Mazanderan, is situated 26 miles W of Sari and 90 miles N.E of Teheran. Three centuries ago it was a mere village; but its admirable position & the improved Communication both with the Capital and the sea, have combined to make it the most considerable town on the Caspian sea-board. Little more than ~~Only~~ a century ago (1771) Gmelin found it a poor place, in no wise resembling a capital. And yet Fraser in 1822 would

(1) Historical Account. vol. I. p. 292

521

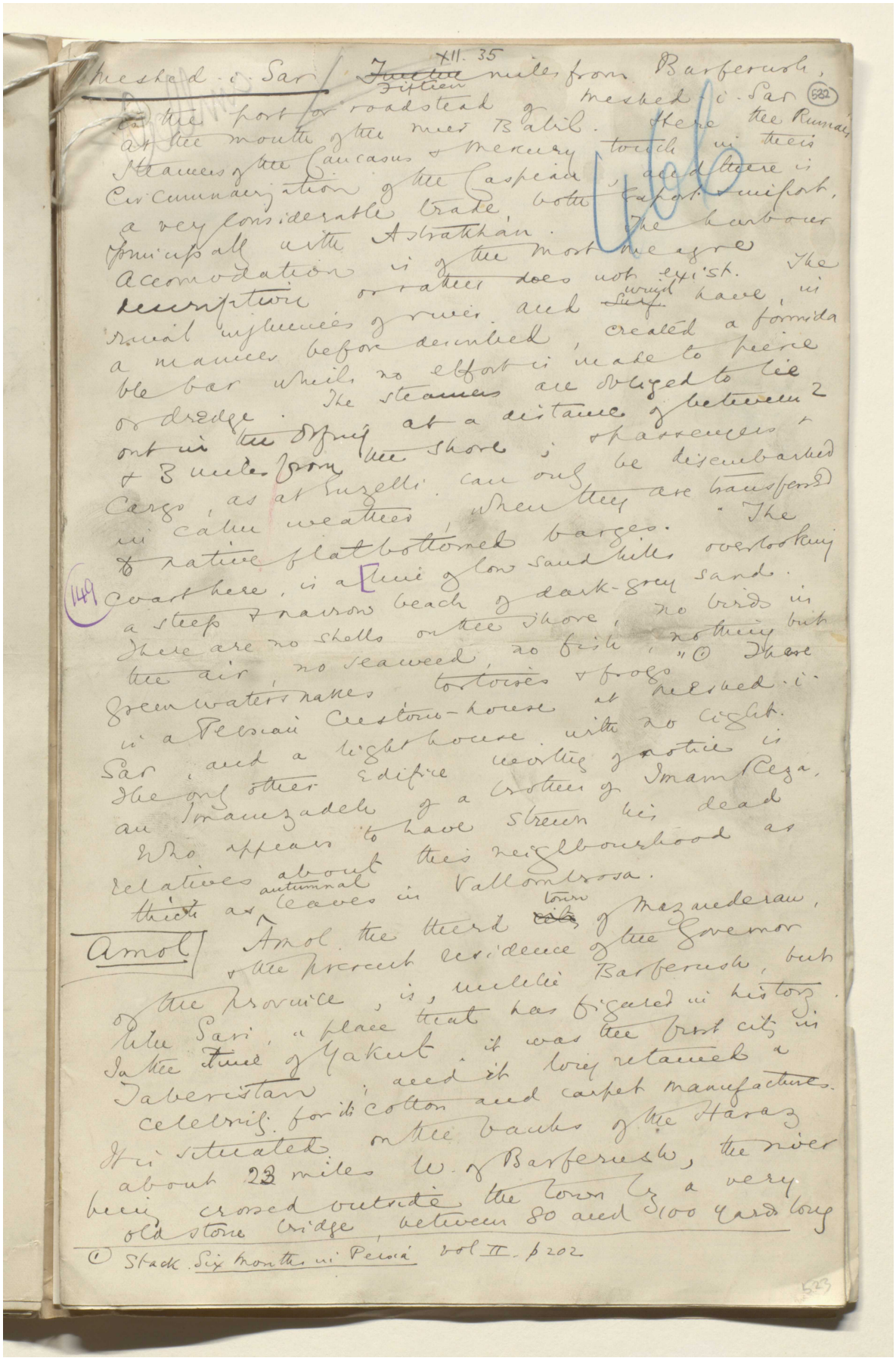






مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٥٣٢و] (١٠٦٤/١٣٥٥)

XII. 35



Meshed-i-Sar / ~~Twelve~~ Fifteen miles from Barferush, is the port or roadstead of Meshed-i-Sar at the mouth of the river Babil. Here the Rumah Steamers of the Caucasus & Mercury touch in their circumnavigation of the Caspian, and there is a very considerable trade, both export & import, principally with Astrakhan. The harbour accomodation is of the most meagre description or rather does not exist. The rival influences of river and ~~surf~~ wind have, in a manner before described, created a formidable bar which no effort is made to pierce or dredge. The steamers are obliged to lie out in the offing at a distance of between 2 & 3 miles from the shore; & passengers & cargo, as at Enzelli, can only be disembarked in calm weather, when they are transferred to native flat bottomed barges. The coast here, is a [line of low sand hills overlooking a steep & narrow beach of dark-grey sand. There are no shells on the shore, no birds in the air, no seaweed, no fish, nothing but green water snakes, tortoises & frogs." ① There is a Persian Custom-house at Meshed-i-Sar, and a lighthouse with no light. The only other edifice worthy of notice is an Imamzadeh of a brother of Imam Reza, who appears to have strewn his dead relatives about this neighbourhood as thick as autumnal leaves in Vallombrosa.

Amol

Amol the third ~~city~~ town of Mazanderan, & the present residence of the Governor of the province, is, unlike Barferush, but like Sari, a place that has figured in history. In the time of Yakut it was the first city in Taberistan, and it long retained a celebrity for its cotton and carpet manufactures. It is situated on the banks of the Haraz about 23 miles W. of Barferush, the river being crossed outside the town by a very old stone bridge, between 80 and 100 yards long

① Stack Six months in Persia vol II. p 202

المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة
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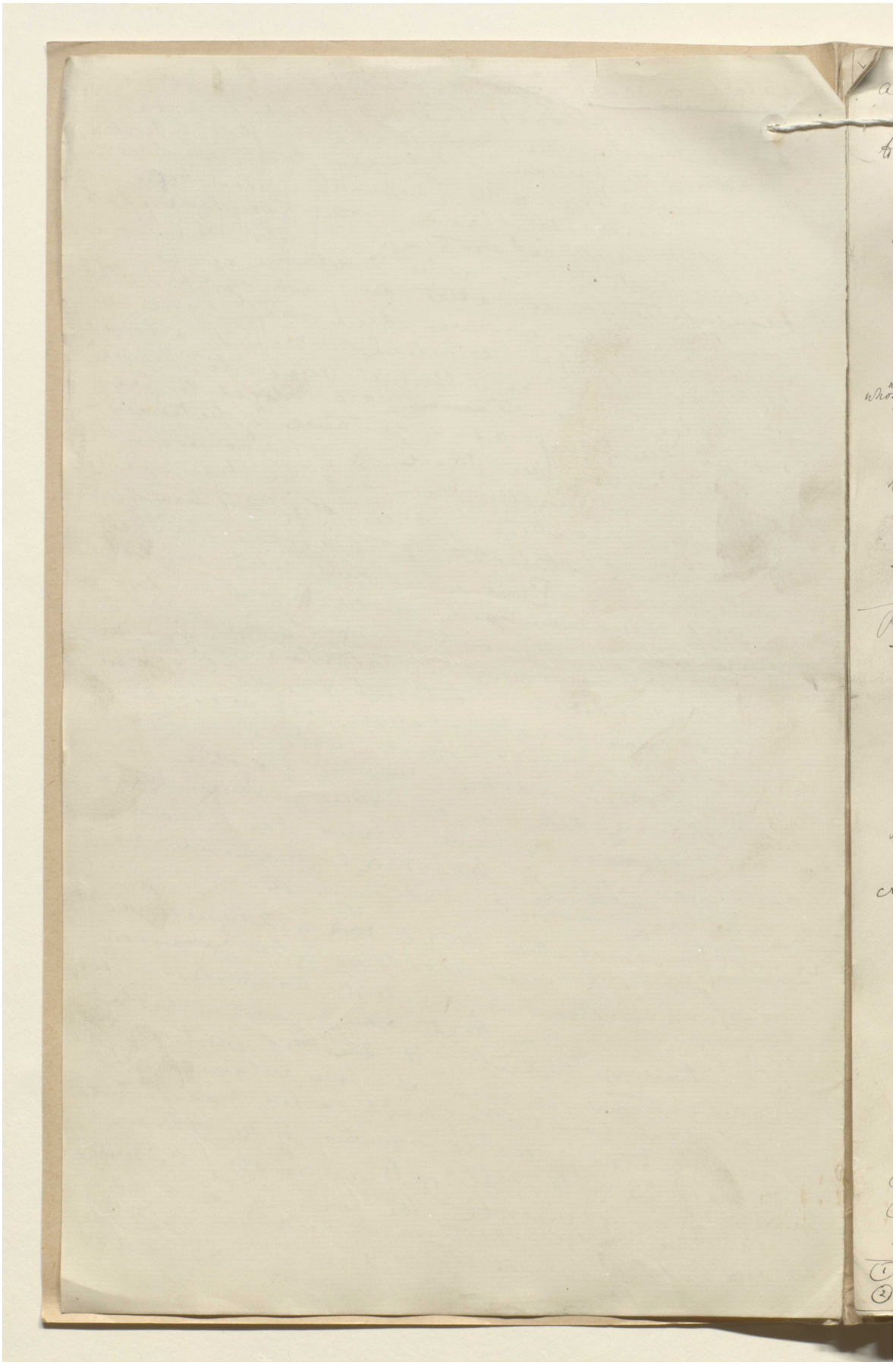

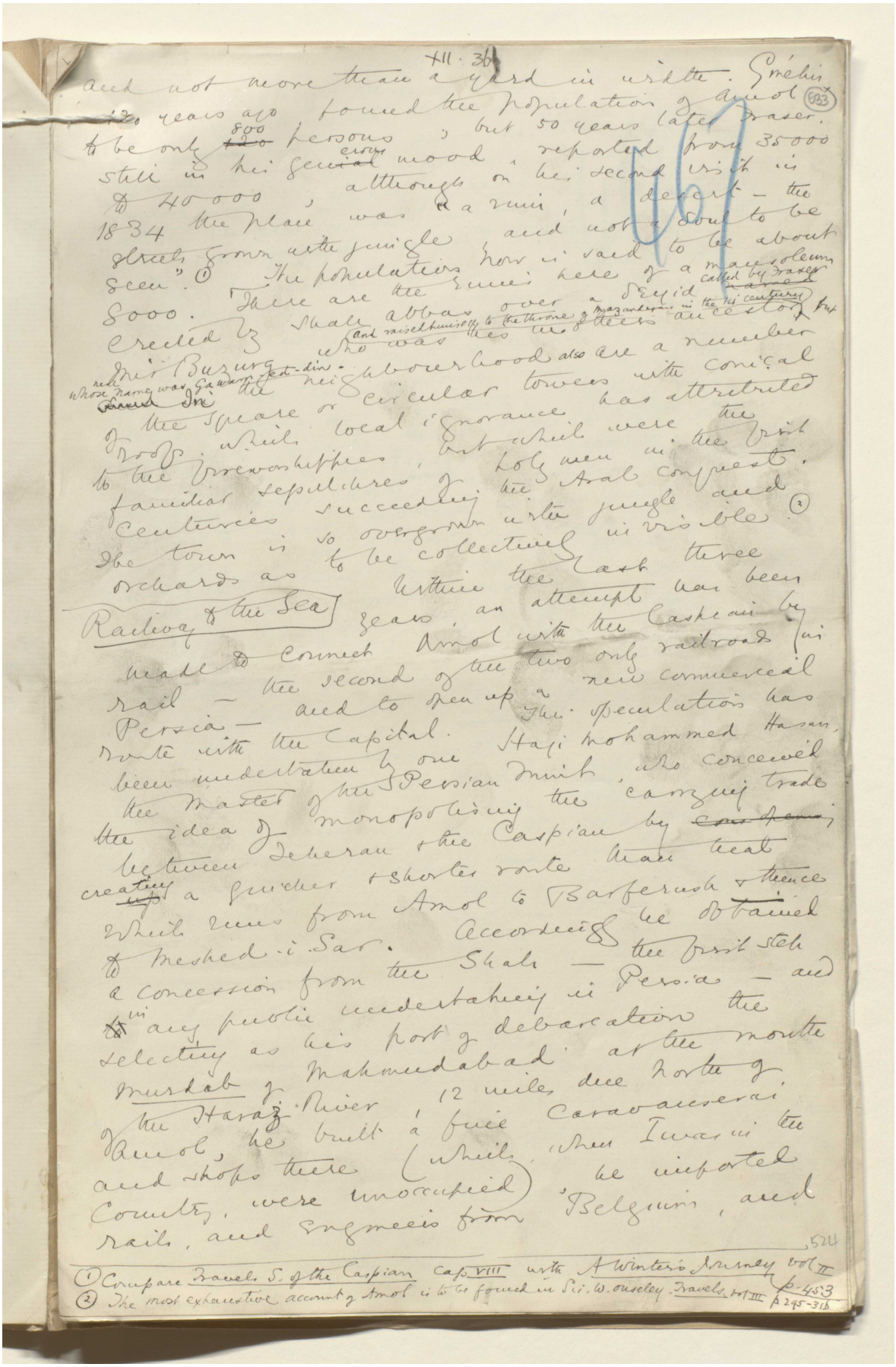

and not more than a yard in width. Schéhr
120 years ago found the population of Amol (533)
to be only 800 persons; but 50 years later Fraser,
still in his genial mood, reported from 35000
to 40000, although on his second visit in
1834 the place was a ruin, a desert — the
streets grown with jungle and not a soul to be
seen". (1) The population is said to be about
5000. There are the ruins here of a magnificent
erected by Shah Abbas over a mazaar called by Fraser Mamet
Mir Buzurg (and misnamed Jenab-din) who was the high priest
whose name was Sayyid Jenab-din
of the Sheahs or circular towers with conical
roofs, which local ignorance has attributed
to the Fireworshippers, but which were the
familiar sepultures of Zoroastrian Persia
Centuries succeeding the Arab conquest.
The town is so overgrown with jungle and
orchards as to be collectively invisible (2)

Railway & the Sea

Within the last three years, an attempt has been
made to connect Amol with the Caspian by
rail — the record of the two only railroads in
Persia — and to open up a new commercial
route with the Capital. The speculation has
been undertaken by one Haji Mohammed Hasan,
the Master of the Persian Mint, who conceived
the idea of monopolising the carrying trade
between Teheran & the Caspian by
creating a shorter route than that
which runs from Amol to Barfurush & thence
to Meshed-i-Sar. Accordingly he obtained
a concession from the Shah — the first step
in any public undertaking in Persia — and
selecting as his port of debarcation the
Murdab of Mahmudabad at the mouth
of the Haraz River, 12 miles due North of
Amol, he built a fine Caravanserai
and shops there (which, then Unwanted
Country, were unoccupied) he imported
rails, and Engineers from Belgium, and

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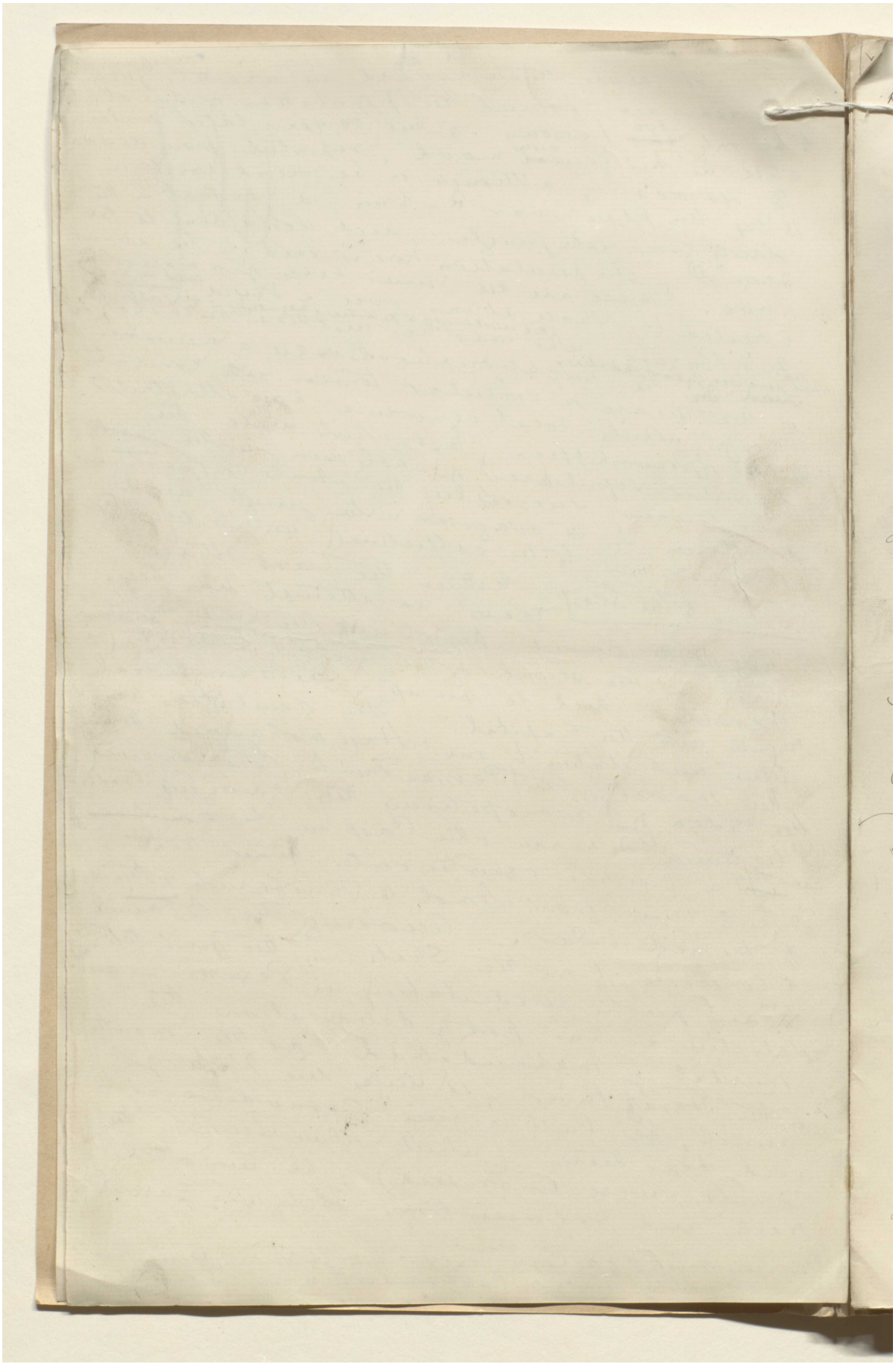
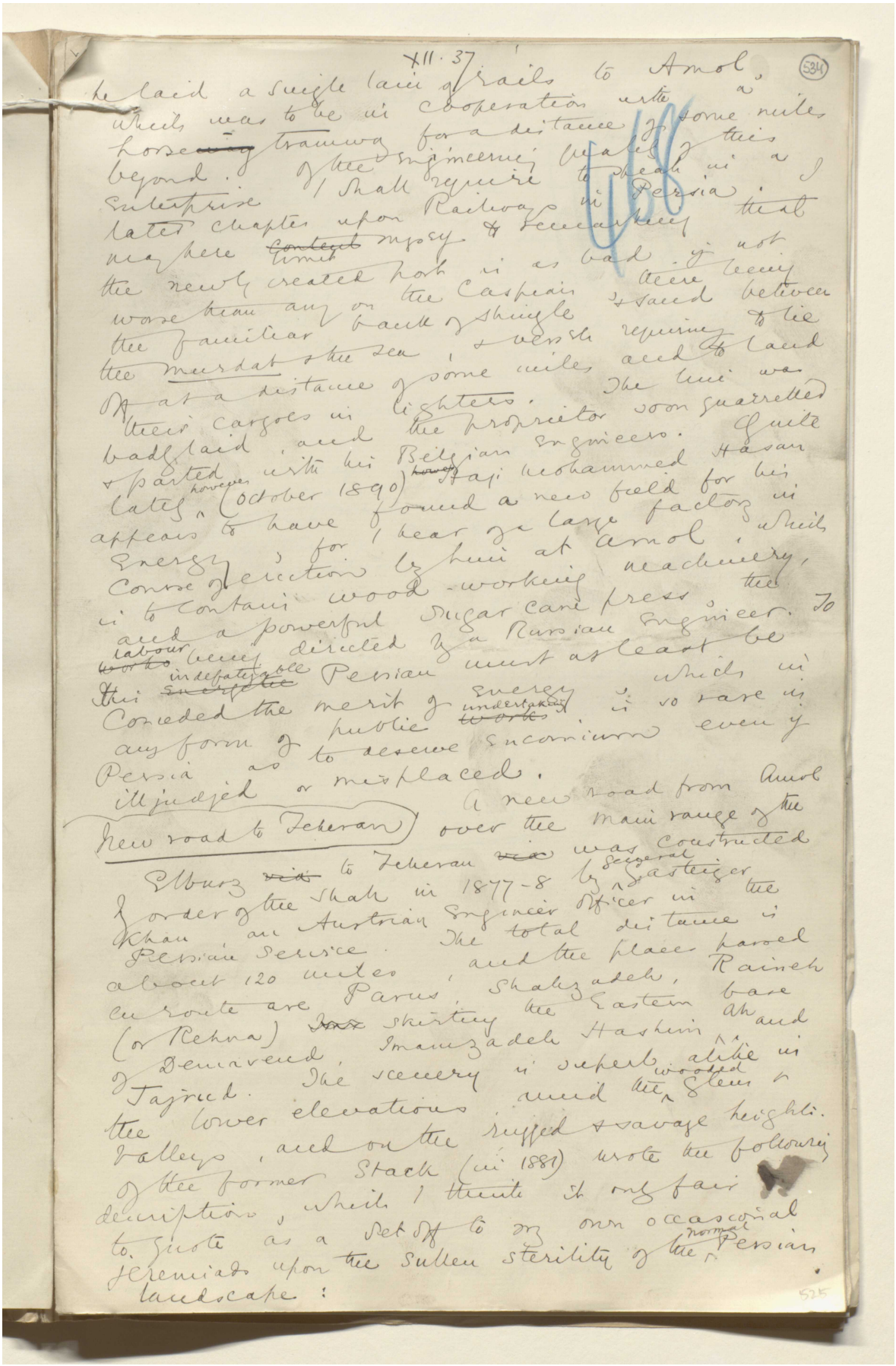
(1) Compare Travels S. of the Caspian Cap. VIII with A Winter's Journey Vol II p. 453
(2) The most exhaustive account of Amol is to be found in Sir. W. Ouseley Travels Vol III A 245-316



XII. 37

534

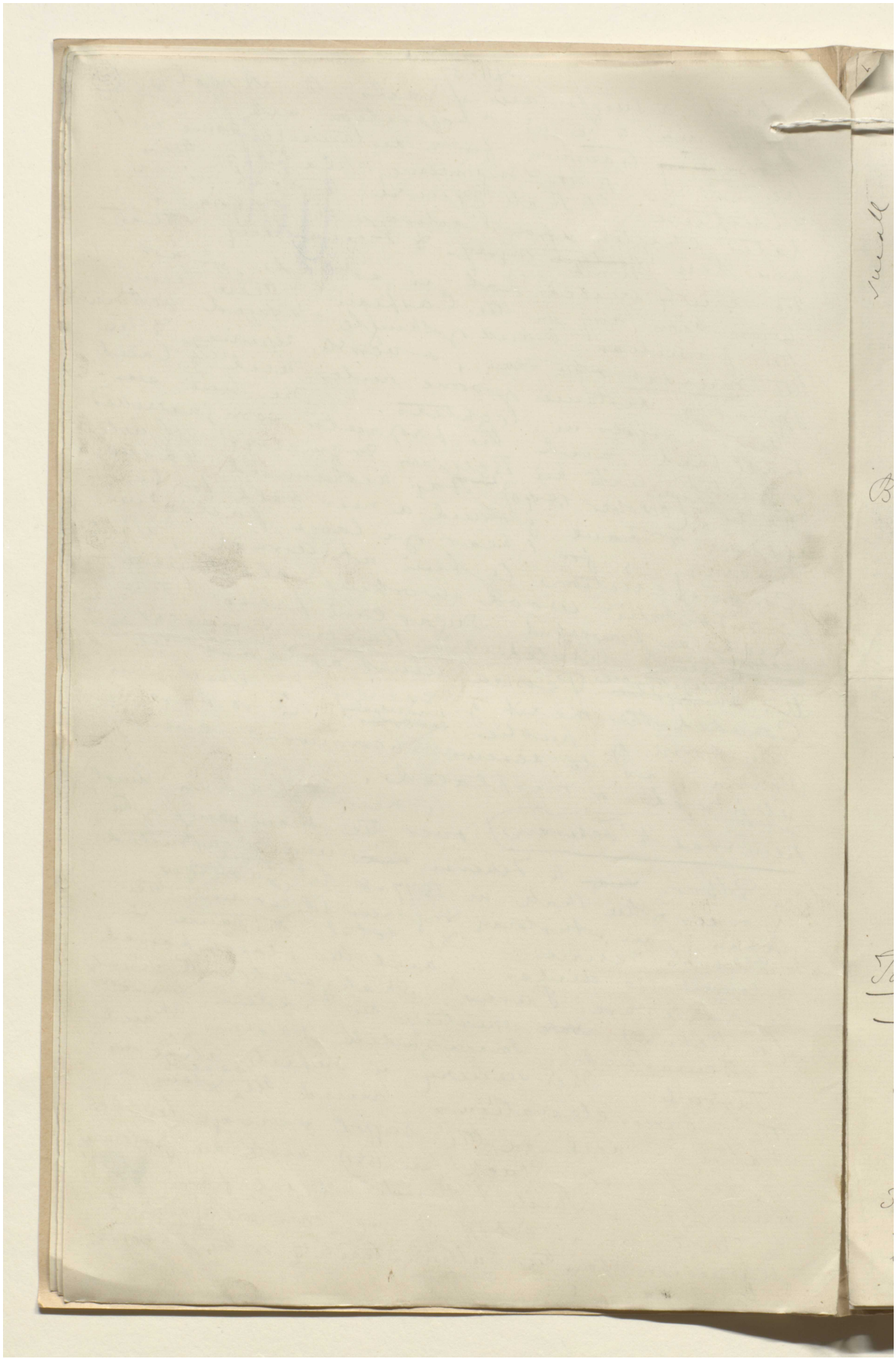


He laid a single lain of rails to Amol, which was to be in cooperation with a horse-~~way~~ tramway for a distance of some miles beyond. Of the engineering quality of this enterprise I shall require to speak in a later chapter upon Railways in Persia. I may here ~~content~~ limit myself to remarking that the newly created port is as bad if not worse than any on the Caspian, there being the familiar bank of shingle & sand between the murdab & the sea, & vessels requiring to lie off at a distance of some miles and to land their cargoes in lighters. The line was badly laid, and the proprietor soon quarrelled & parted with his Belgian engineers. Quite lately, however (October 1890) ~~[illegible]~~ Haji Mohammed Hasan appears to have found a new field for his energy, for I hear of a large factory in course of erection by him at Amol, which is to contain wood-working machinery, and a powerful sugar cane press, the labour ~~works~~ being directed by a Russian engineer. To this ~~energetic~~ indefatigable Persian must at least be conceded the merit of energy, which in any form of public ~~works~~ undertaking is so rare in Persia as to deserve encomium even if ill judged or misplaced.

New road to Teheran

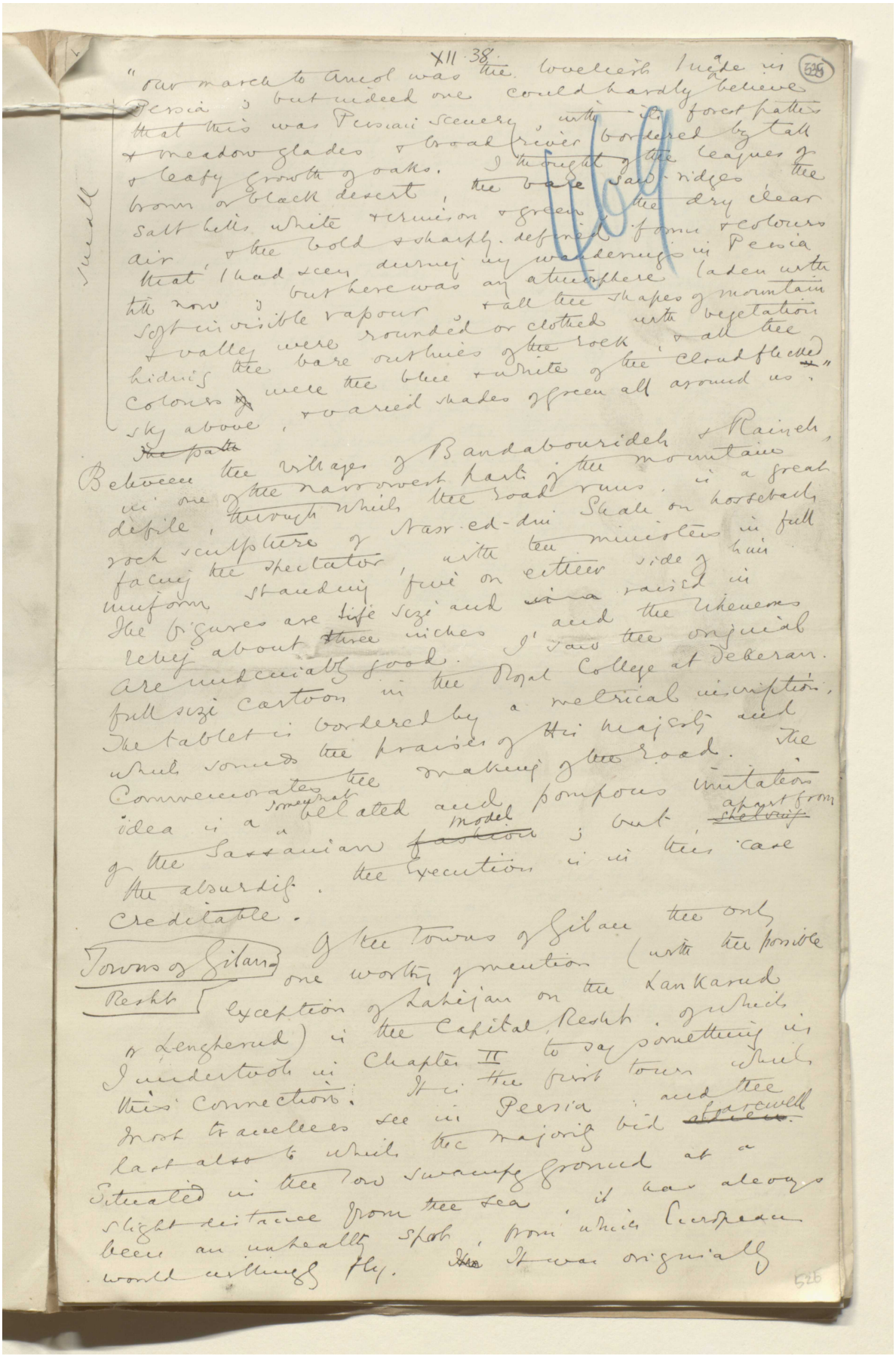
A new road from Amol over the main range of the Elburz ~~via~~ to Teheran ~~via~~ was constructed by order of the Shah in 1877-8 by General Gasteiger Khan an Austrian Engineer Officer in the Persian Service. The total distance is about 120 miles, and the places passed en route are Parus, Shahzadeh, Raineh (or Rehna) ~~[illegible]~~ skirting the Eastern base of Demavend, Imamzadeh Hashim Ah and Tajrud. The scenery is superb alike in the lower elevations amid the wooded glens & valleys, and on the rugged & savage heights of the former Stack (in 1881) wrote the following description, which I think it only fair to quote as a set off to my own occasional jeremiads upon the sullen sterility of the normal Persian landscape:

525



XII. 38.

(525)



"Our march to Amol was the loveliest I made in Persia; but indeed one could hardly believe that this was Persian scenery, with its forest paths & meadow glades & broad river bordered by tall & leafy growth of oaks. I thought of the leagues of brown or black desert, the bare sand-ridges, the salt hills white & crimson & green, the dry clear air, & the bold & sharply defined forms & colours that I had seen during my wanderings in Persia till now; but here was an atmosphere laden with soft invisible vapour, & all the shapes of mountain & valley were rounded or clothed with vegetation hiding the bare outlines of the rock, & all the colours were the blue & white of the cloud flecked sky above, & varied shades of green all around us."

Small

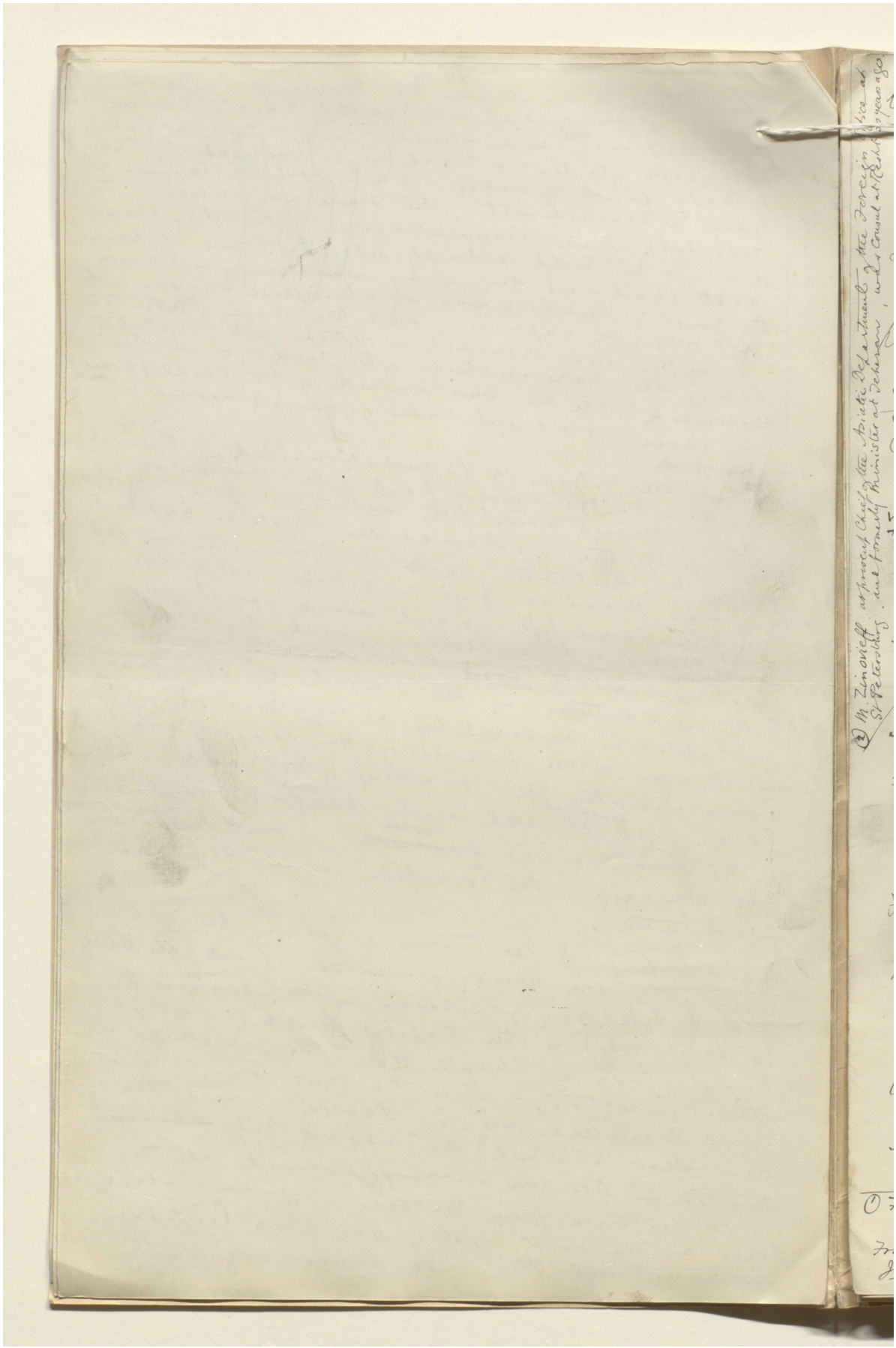
~~The path~~

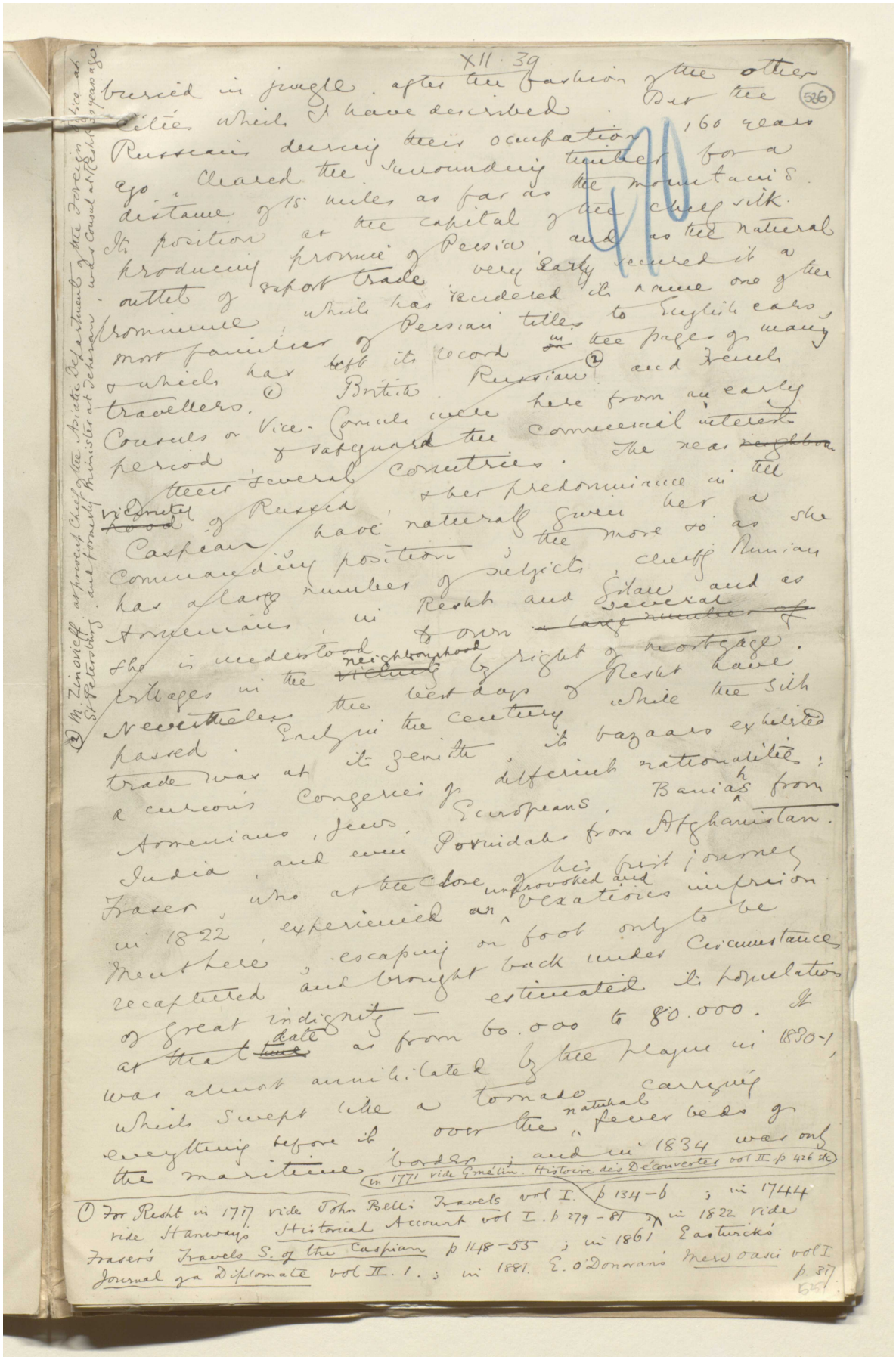
Between the villages of Bandabourideh & Raineh, in one of the narrowest parts of the mountain defile, through which the road runs, is a great rock sculpture of Nasr-ed-din Shah on horseback facing the spectator, with ten ministers in full uniform standing five on either side of him. The figures are life size and ~~in a~~ raised in relief about three inches, and the likeness are undeniably good. I saw the original full size cartoon in the Royal College at Teheran. The tablet is bordered by a metrical inscription, which sounds the praises of His Majesty and commemorates the making of the road. The idea is a somewhat belated and pompous imitation of the Sassanian ~~fashion~~ model; but apart from ~~shelving~~ the absurdity, the execution is in this case creditable.

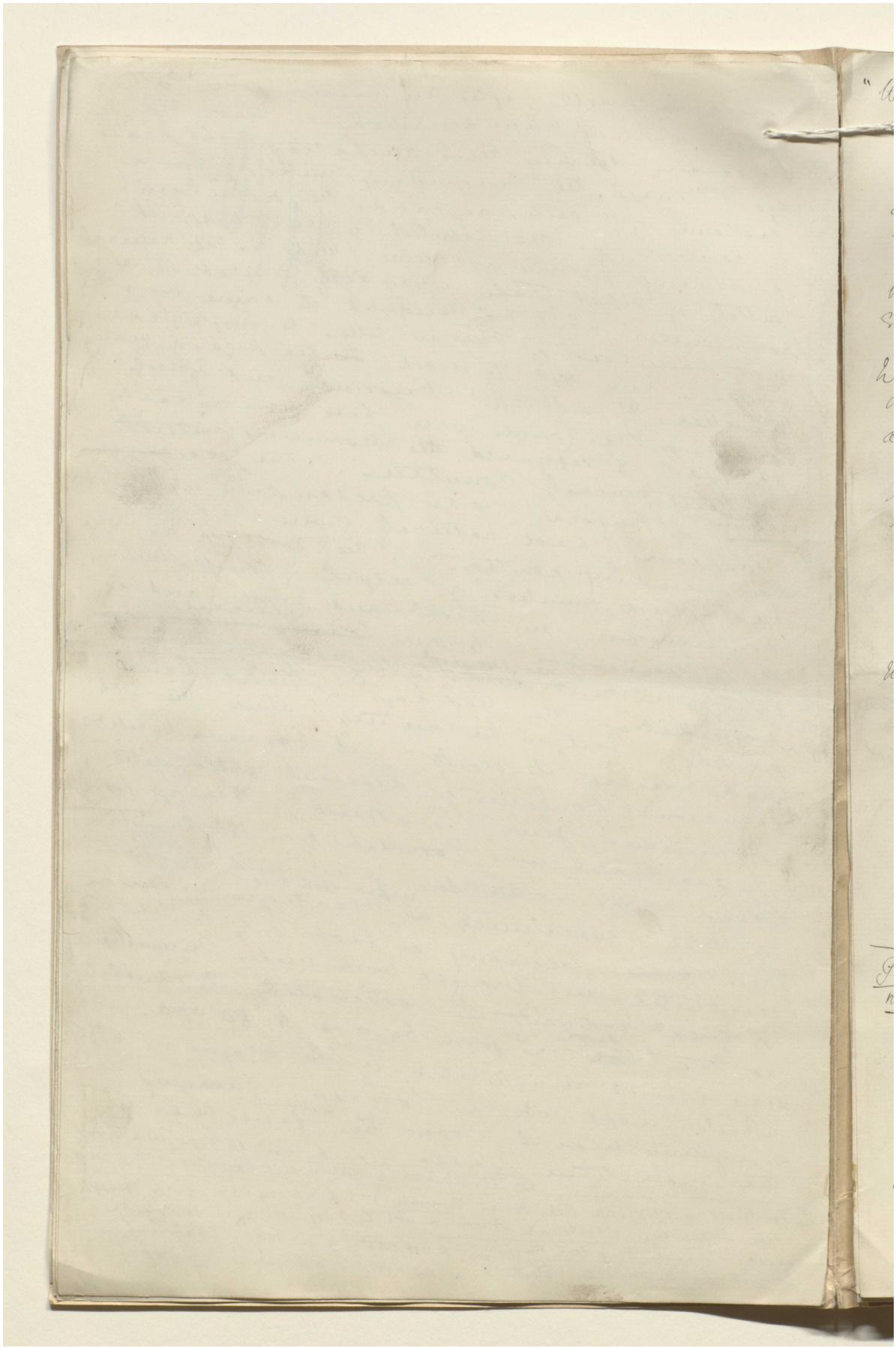
Towns of Gilan — Resht

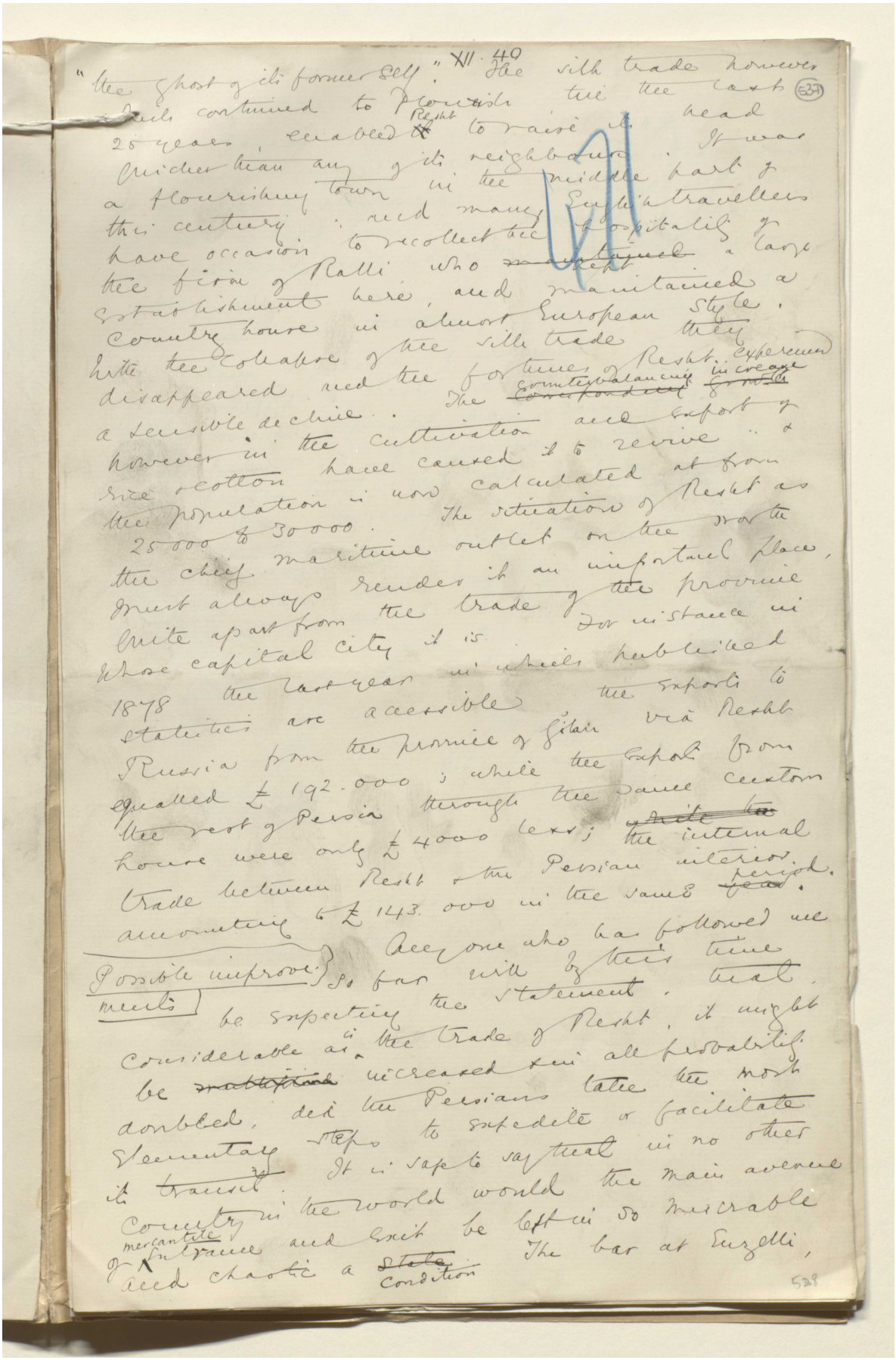
Of the towns of Gilan the only one worthy of mention (with the possible exception of Lahijan on the Lankarud or Lengherud) is the Capital, Resht, of which I undertook in Chapter II to say something in this connection. It is the first town which most travellers see in Persia, and the last also to which the majority bid ~~adieu~~ farewell. Situated in the low swampy ground at a slight distance from the sea, it has always been an unhealthy spot, from which European would willingly fly. ~~It~~ It was originally

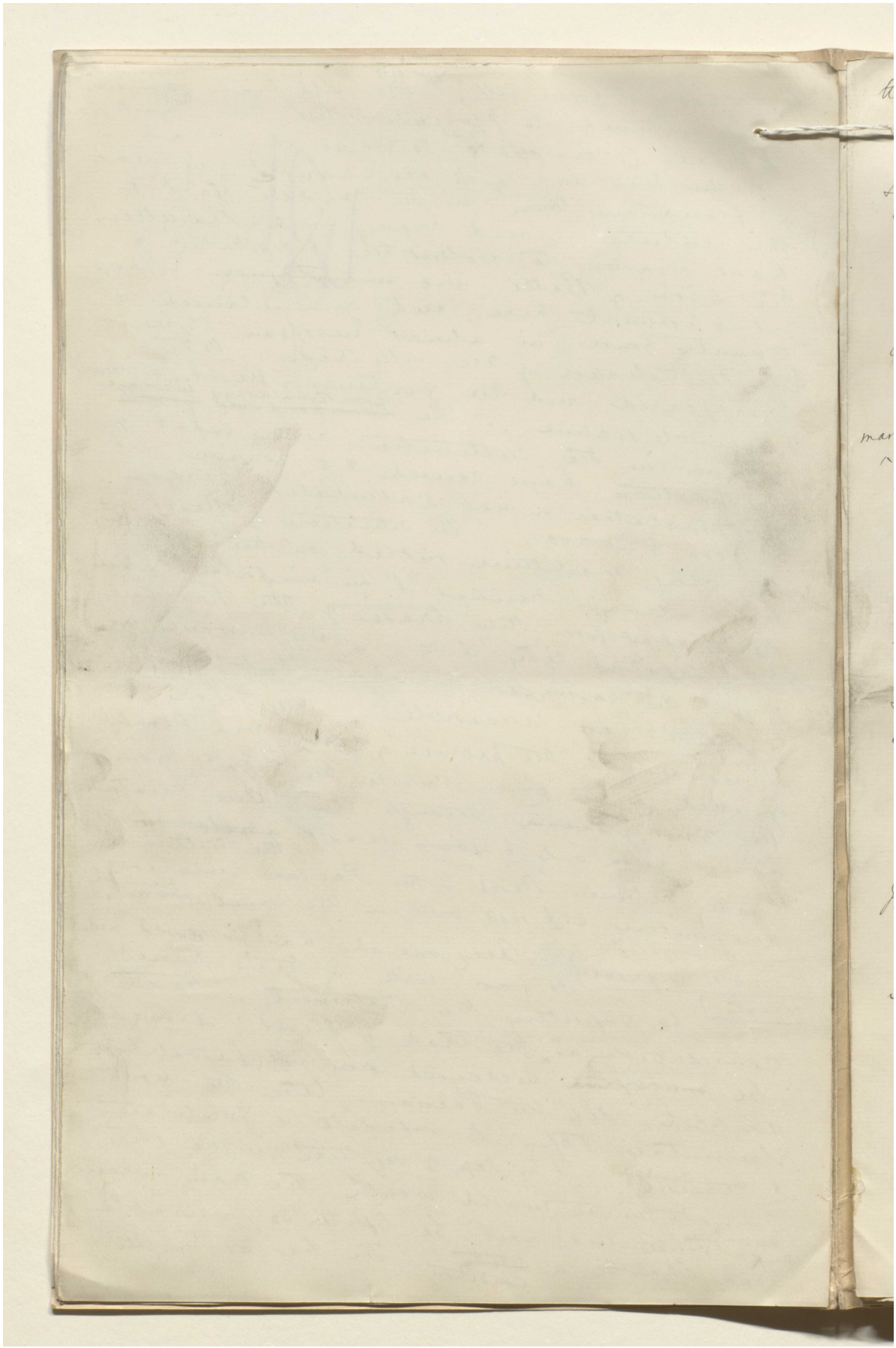
526











المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة

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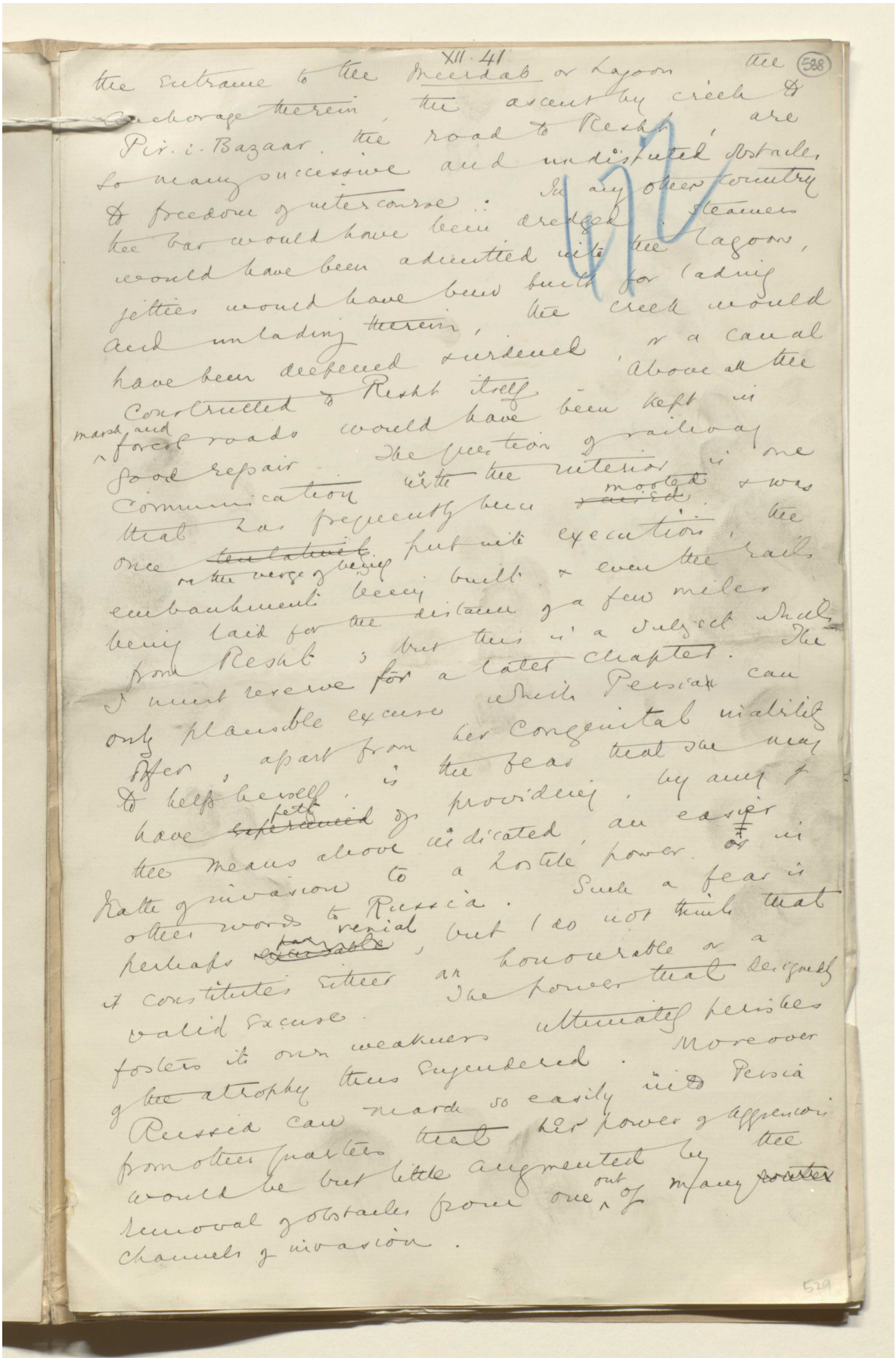
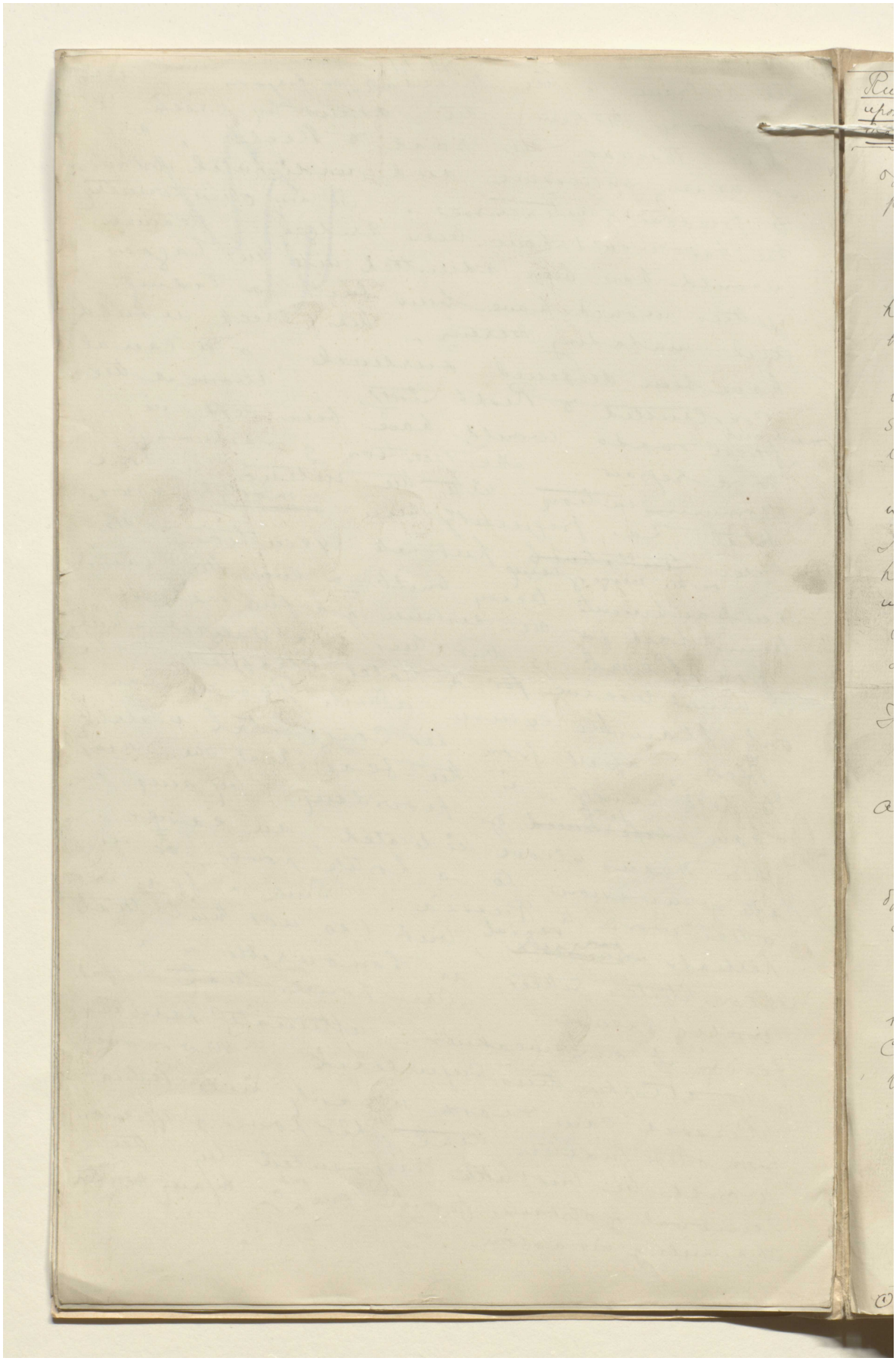
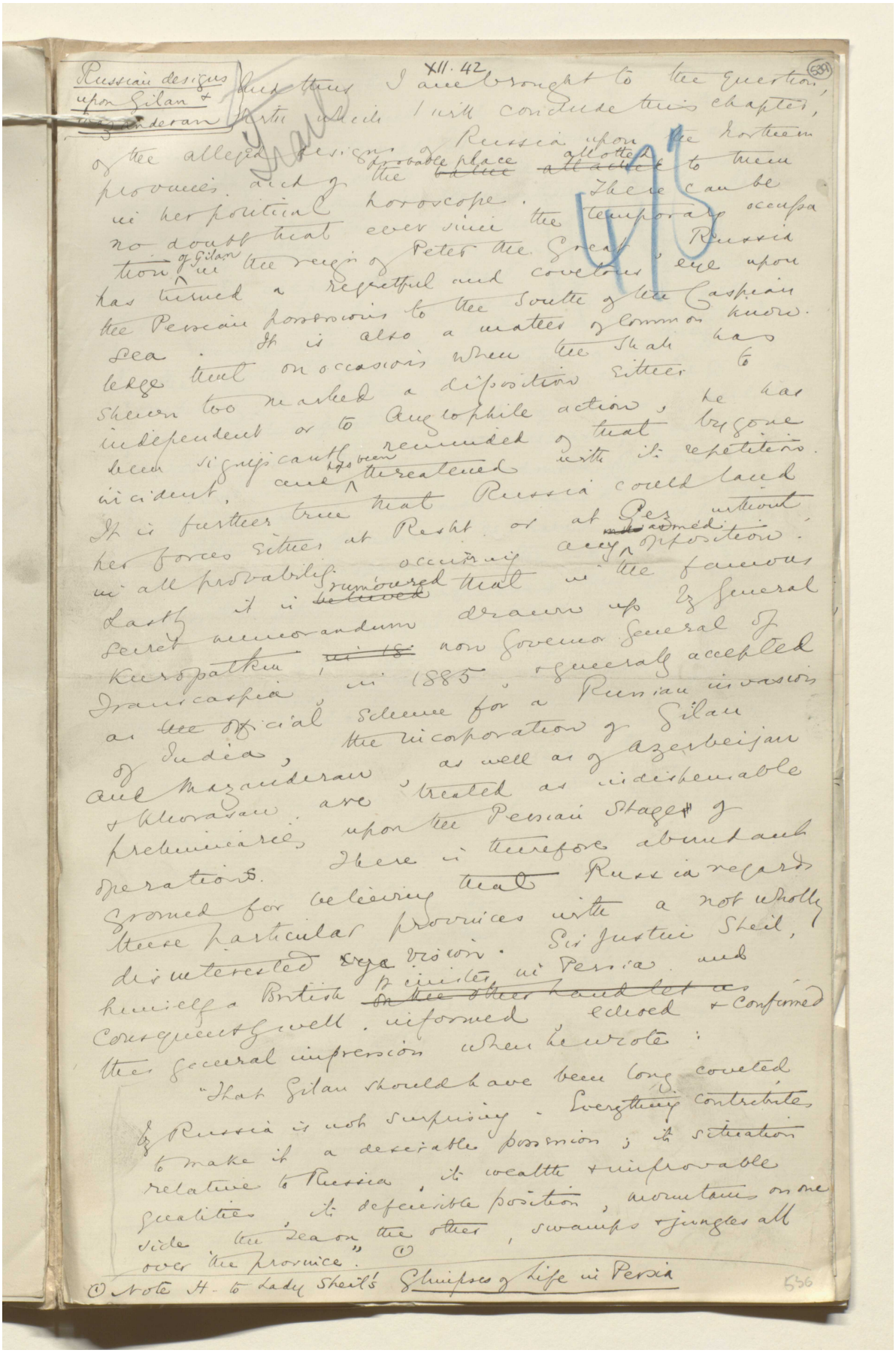




مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٥٣٩و] (١٠٧٨/١٣٥٥)



Russian designs upon Gilan & Mazanderan

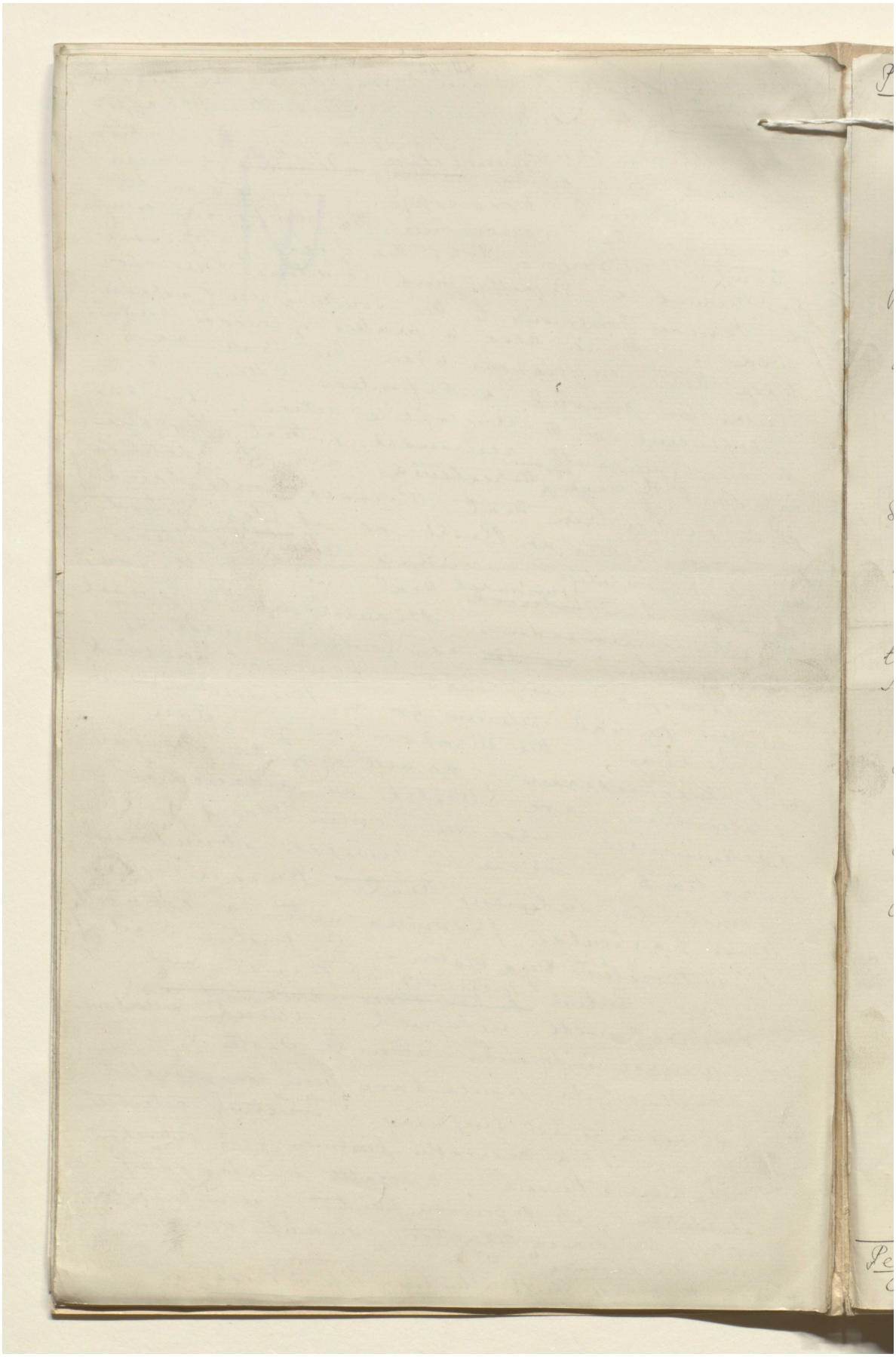
XII. 42

And thus I am brought to the question, with which I will conclude this chapter, of the alleged designs of Russia upon the northern provinces and of the probable place allotted to them in her political horoscope. There can be no doubt that ever since the temporary occupation of Gilan in the reign of Peter the Great, Russia has turned a regretful and covetous eye upon the Persian possessions to the South of the Caspian Sea. It is also a matter of common knowledge that on occasions when the Shah has shewn too marked a disposition either to independent or to Anglophile action, he has been significantly reminded of that bygone incident, and has been threatened with its repetition. It is further true that Russia could land her forces either at Resht or at Pez without in all probability occurring any armed opposition. Lastly it is rumoured that in the famous secret memorandum drawn up by General Kuropatkin, now Governor General of Transcaspia, in 1885, & generally accepted as the official scheme for a Russian invasion of India, the incorporation of Gilan and Mazanderan, as well as of Azerbeijan & Khorasan, are treated as indispensable preliminaries upon the Persian stage of operations. There is therefore abundant ground for believing that Russia regards these particular provinces with a not wholly disinterested vision. Sir Justin Sheil, himself a British Minister in Persia and consequently well informed, echoed & confirmed this general impression when he wrote:

"That Gilan should have been long coveted by Russia is not surprising. Everything contributes to make it a desirable possession; its situation relative to Russia, its wealth & improvable qualities, its defensible position, mountains on one side, the sea on the other, swamps & jungles all over the province." (1)

(1) Note H. to Lady Sheil's Glimpses of Life in Persia

536

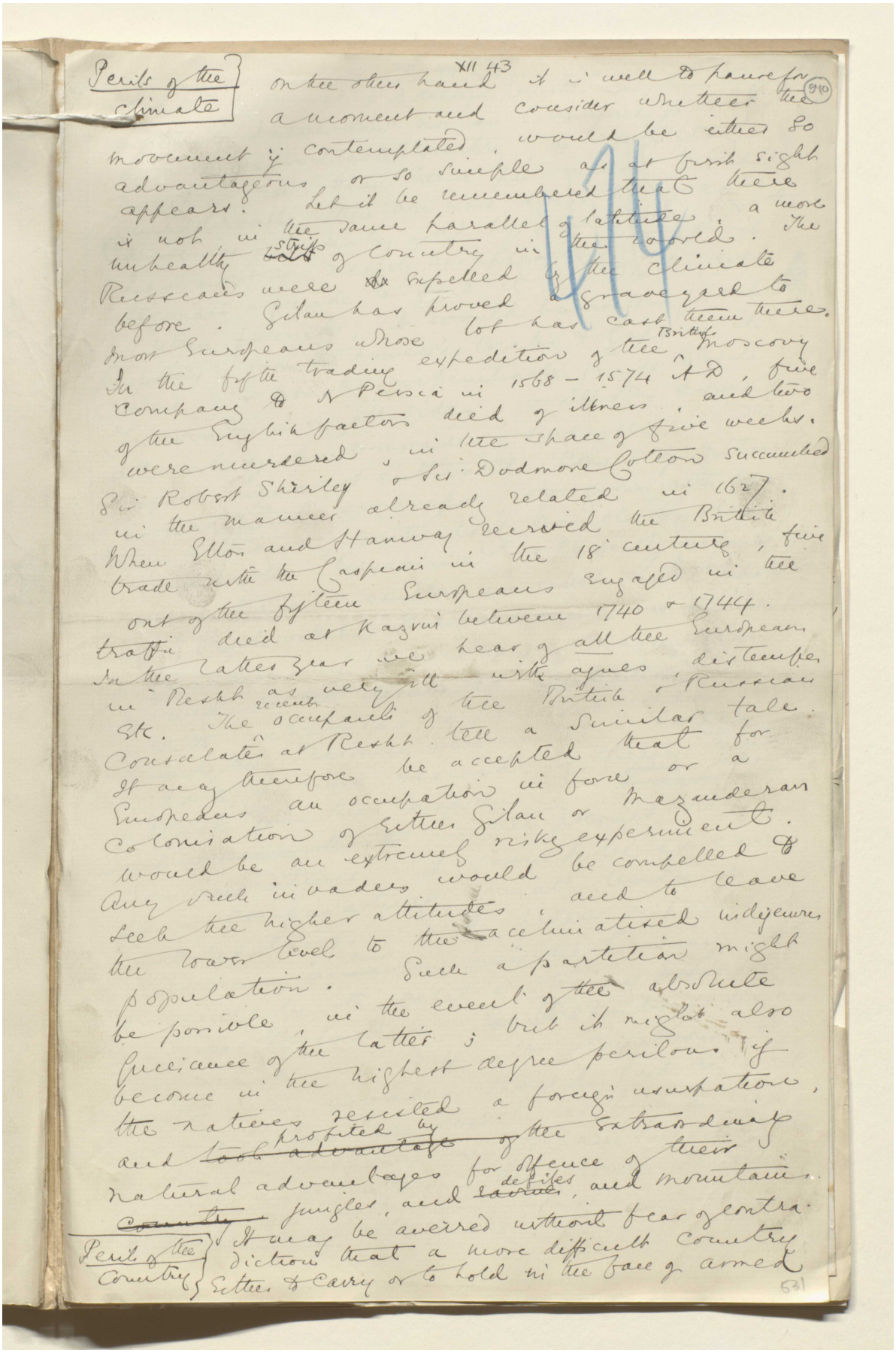


مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٥٤٠و] (١٠٨٠/١٣٥٥)

XII 43

(910)

Perils of the climate

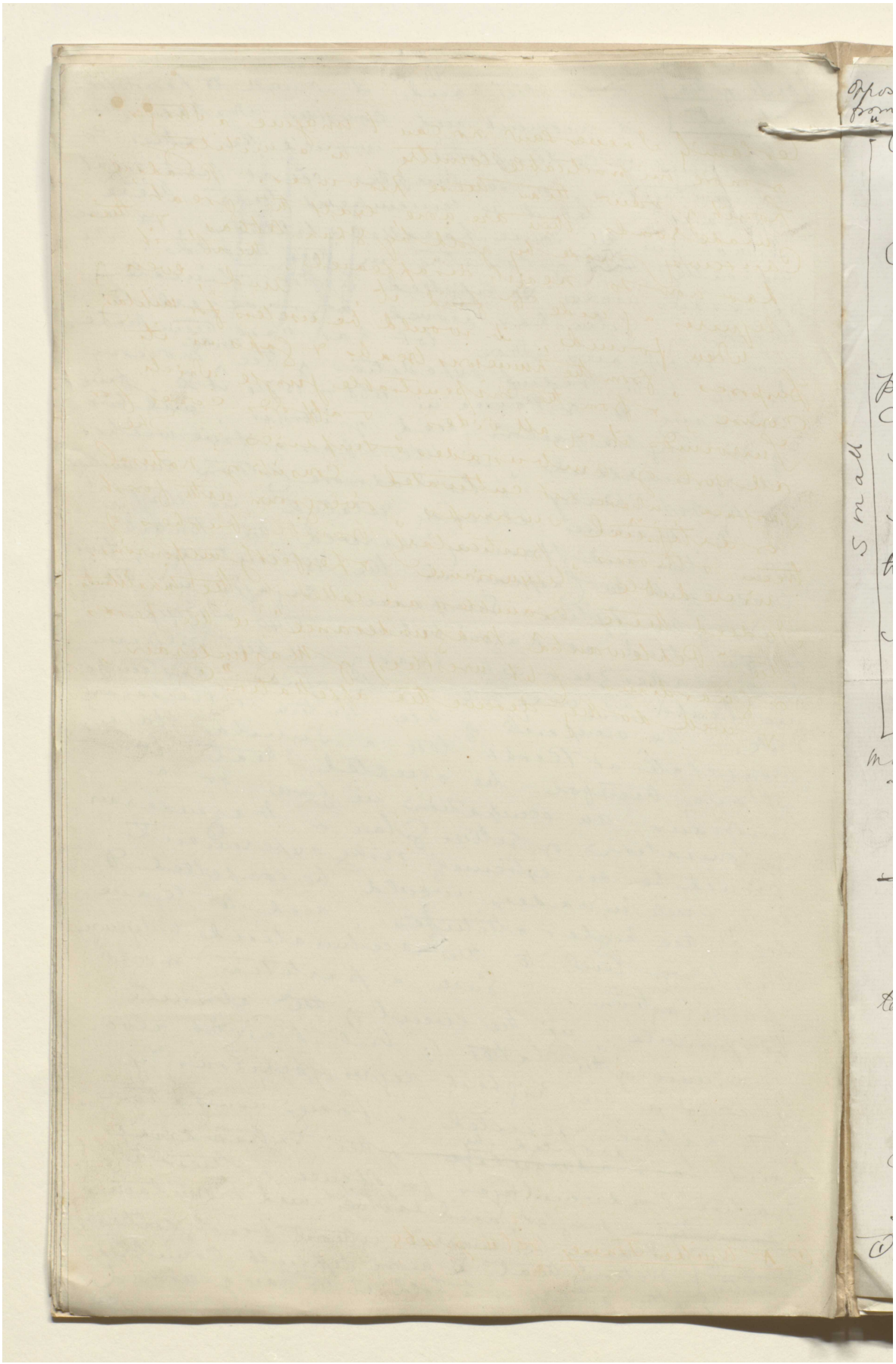


On the other hand it is well to pause for a moment and consider whether the movement is contemplated would be either so advantageous or so simple as at first sight appears. Let it be remembered that there is not in the same parallel of latitude a more unhealthy ~~belt~~ strip of country in the world. The Russians were ~~as~~ expelled by the climate before. Gilan has proved a graveyard to most Europeans whose lot has cast them there. In the fifth trading expedition of the British Moscovy Company to N Persia in 1568 – 1574 A.D., five of the English factors died of illness, and two were murdered, in the space of five weeks. Sir Robert Shirley & Sir Dodmore Cotton succumbed in the manner already related in 1627. When Elton and Hanway received the British trade with the Caspian in the 18 century, five out of the fifteen Europeans engaged in the traffic died at Kazvin between 1740 & 1744. In the latter year we hear of all the Europeans in Resht as very ill with agues, distempers etc. The recent occupants of the British & Russian Consulates at Resht tell a similar tale. It may therefore be accepted that for Europeans an occupation in force or a colonisation of either Gilan or Mazanderan would be an extremely risky experiment. Any such invaders would be compelled to seek the higher attitudes, and to leave the lower level to the acclimatised indigenous population. Such a partition might be possible, in the event of the absolute quiescence of the latter; but it might also become in the highest degree perilous if the natives resisted a foreign usurpation, and ~~took advantage~~ profited by of the extraordinary natural advantages for offence of their ~~country~~ jungles, and ~~ravines~~ defiles, and mountains.

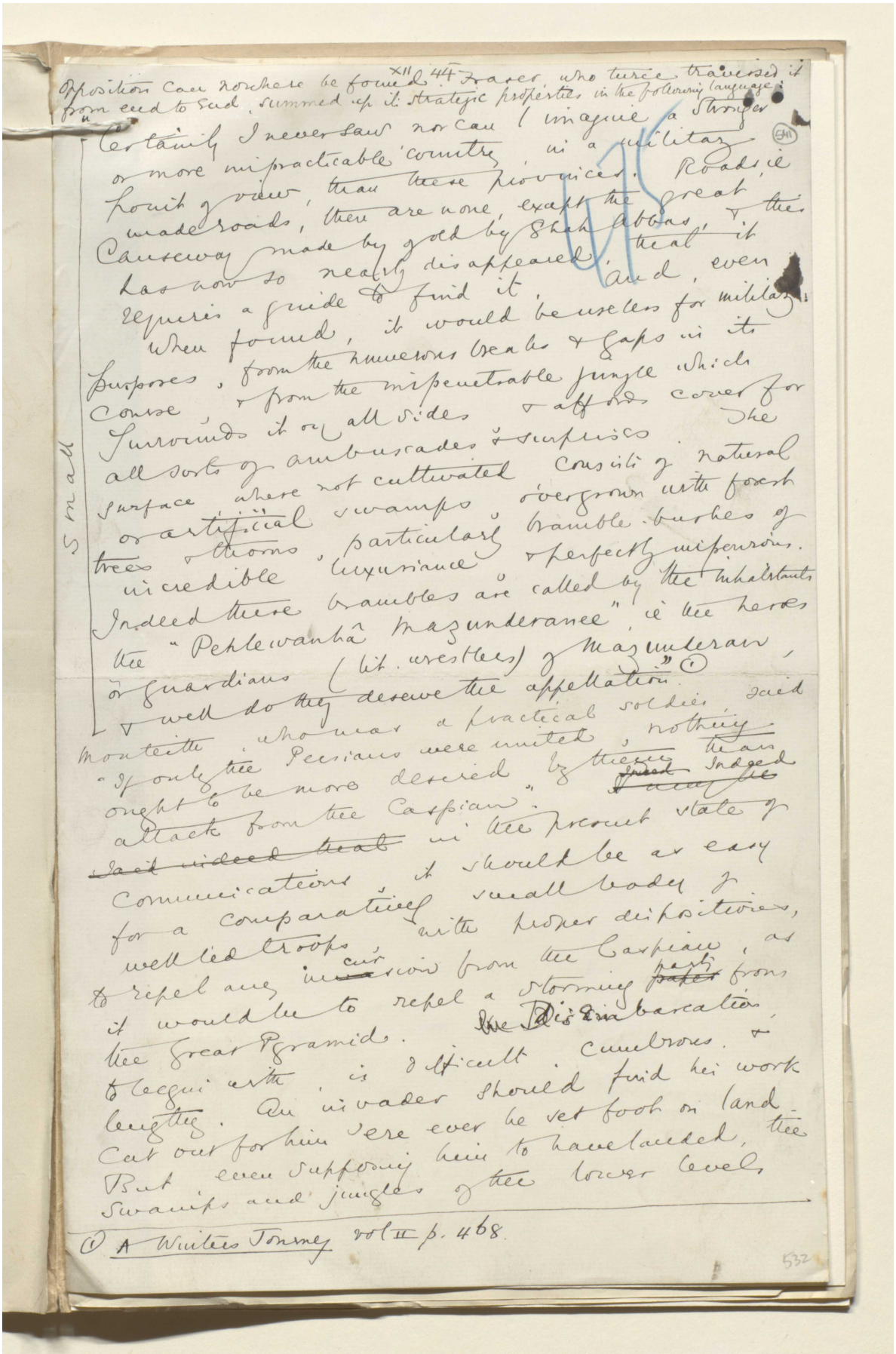
Perils of the Country

It may be averred without fear of contradiction that a more difficult country either to carry or to hold in the face of armed

531



مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٥٤١و] (١٠٨٢/١٣٥٥)



Opposition can nowhere be found. XII 44 Fraser who twice traversed it from end to end, summed up its strategic properties in the following language:

"Certainly I never saw nor can I imagine a stronger or more impracticable country in a military point of view, than these provinces. Roads, ie made roads, there are none, except the great Causeway made by of old by Shah Abbas, & this has now so nearly disappeared, that it requires a guide to find it. And, even when found, it would be useless for military purposes, from the numerous breaks & gaps in its course, & from the impenetrable jungle which surrounds it on all sides & affords cover for all sorts of ambuscades & surprises. The surface where not cultivated consists of natural or artificial swamps, overgrown with forest trees & thorns, particularly bramble-bushes of incredible luxuriance & perfectly impervious. Indeed these brambles are called by the inhabitants the "Pehlewanhâ Mazunderanee", ie the heroes or guardians (lit. wrestlers) of Mazunderan, & well do they deserve the appellation." (1)

Small

Monteith, who was a practical soldier, said "If only the Persians were united, nothing ought to be more desired by them than attack from the Caspian." ~~Indeed~~ Indeed ~~I may be~~ ~~said indeed that~~ in the present state of communications, it should be as easy for a comparatively small body of well led troops, with proper dispositions, to repel any incursion from the Caspian, as it would be to repel a storming party from the Great Pyramid. ~~The~~ Disembarcation, to begin with, is difficult, cumbrous, & lengthy. An invader should find his work cut out for him ere ever he set foot on land. But even supposing him to have landed, the swamps and jungles of the lower levels

(1) A Winters Journey vol II p. 468.

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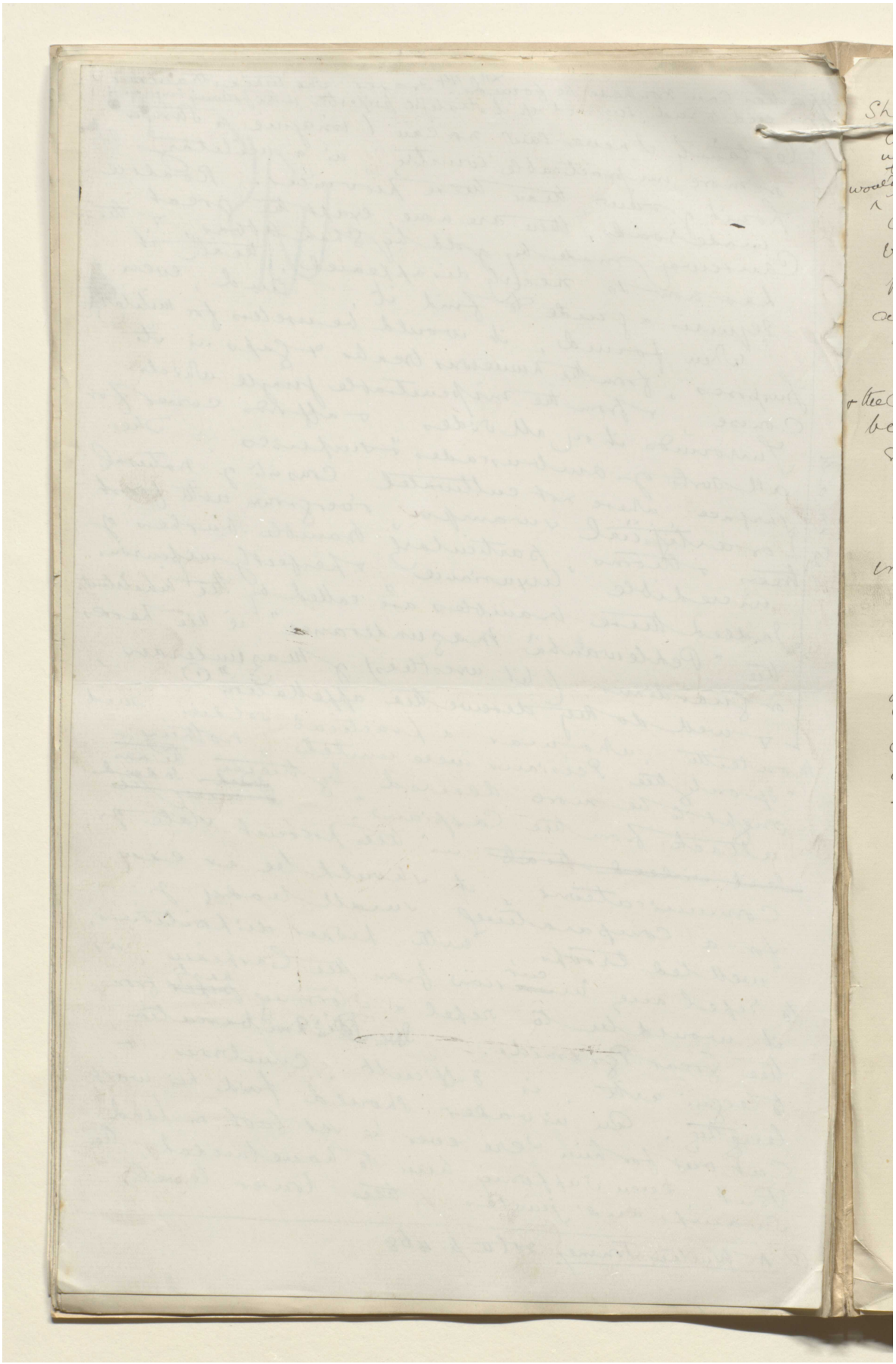

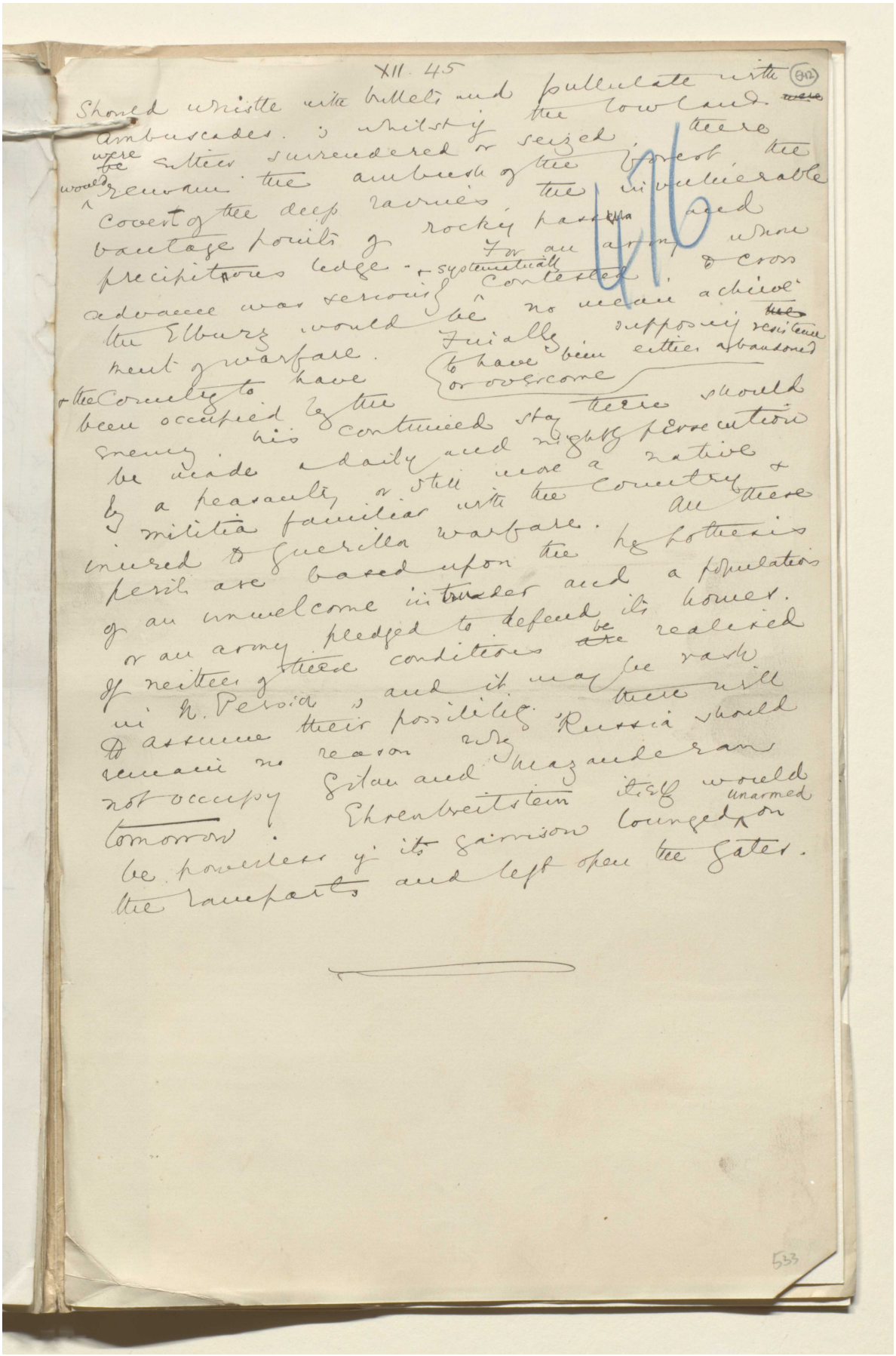

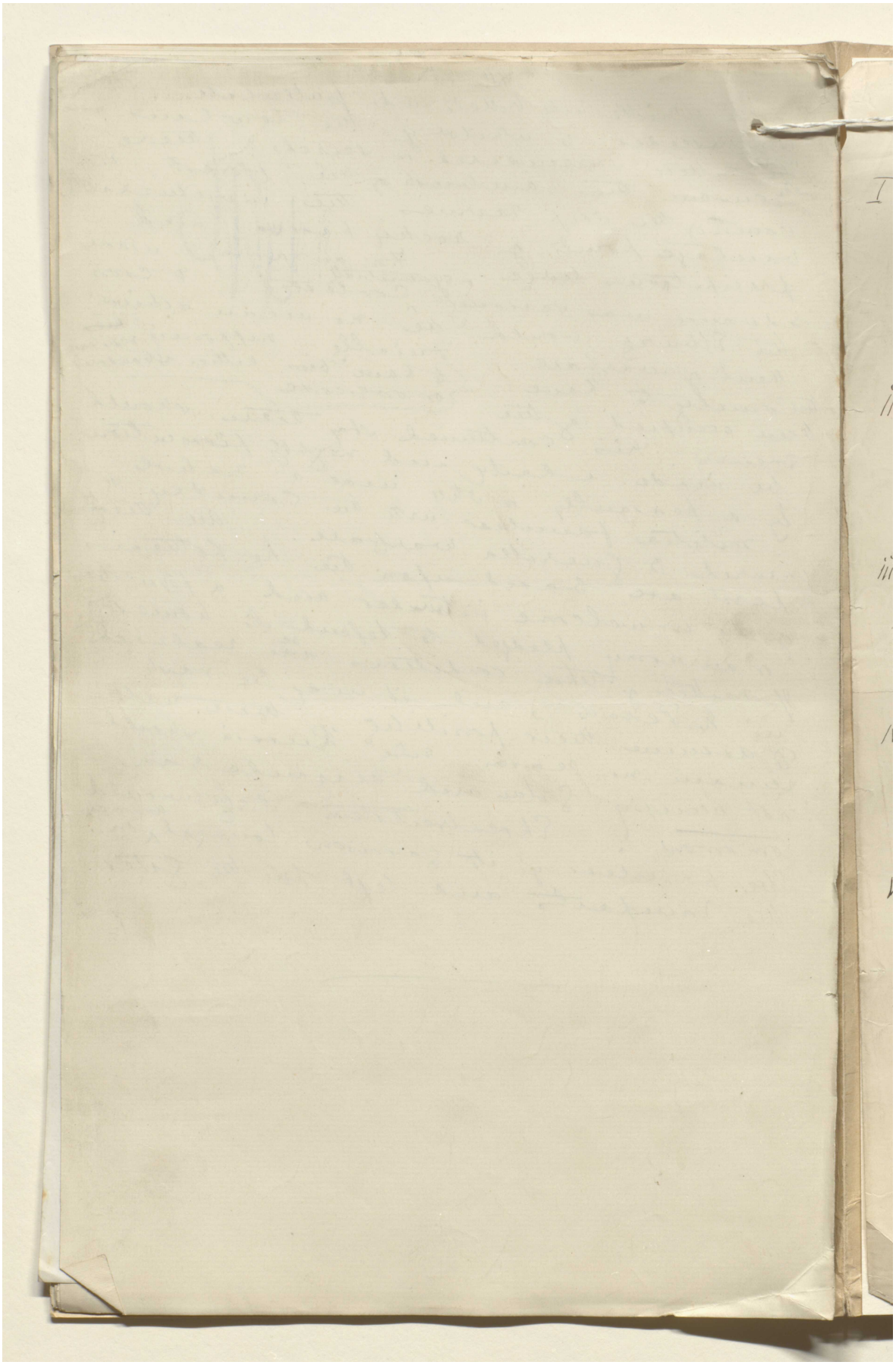

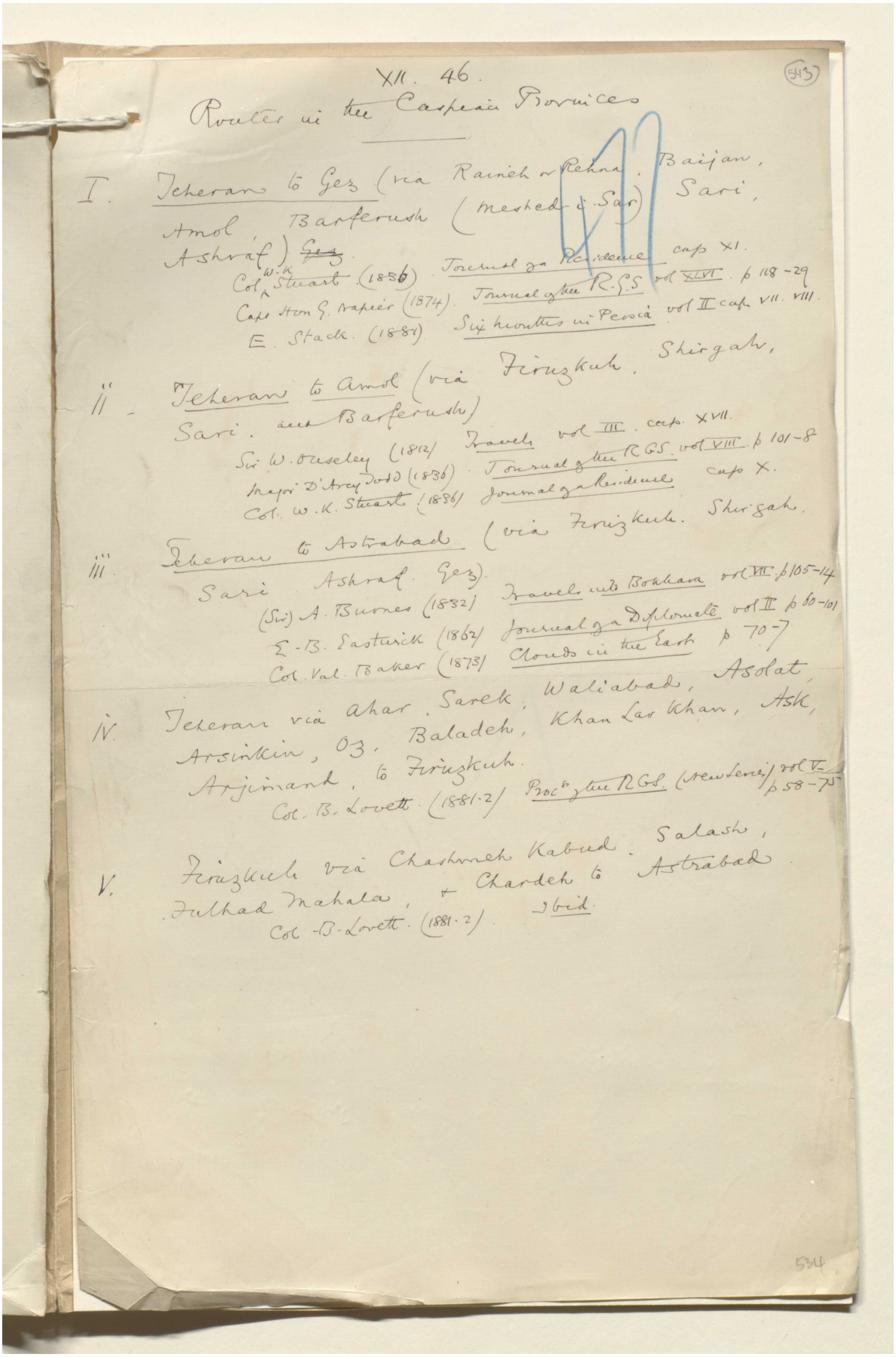
XII. 46.

Routes in the Caspian Provinces

(543)

I. Teheran to Ges (via Rainch or Rehna, Baijan, Sari, Amol, Barferoush (Meshed-i-Sar) Ashraf) Ges.

Col. W.K. Stuart (1856) Journal of a Residence cap XI.
Capt Hon G. Napier (1874) Journal of the R.G.S. vol XLVI. p 118-29
E. Stack. (1881) Six months in Persia vol II cap VII. VIII.

II. Teheran to Amol (via Firuzkuh. Shirgah, Sari. and Barferoush)

Sir W. Ouseley (1812) Travels vol III. cap. XVII.
Major D'Arcy Todd (1836) Journal of the RGS. vol VIII. p 101-8
Col. W.K. Stuart (1856) Journal of a Residence cap X.

III. Teheran to Astrabad (via Firuzkuh. Shirgah. Sari Ashraf. Ges).

(Sir) A. Burnes (1832) Travels into Bokhara vol VII. p 105-14
F-B. Eastwick (1862) Journal of a Diplomate vol II p 60-101
Col. Val. Baker (1873) Clouds in the East p 70-7

IV. Teheran via Ahar, Sarek, Waliabad, Asolat, Arsinkin, Oz, Baladeh, Khan Lar Khan, Ask, Arjimand, to Firuzkuh.

Col. B. Lovett. (1881-2) Proc^s of the RGS (New Series) vol V. p 58-75

V. Firuzkuh via Chashmeh Kabud, Salash, Julhad Mahala, + Chardeh to Astrabad.

Col. B. Lovett. (1881-2) Ibid.

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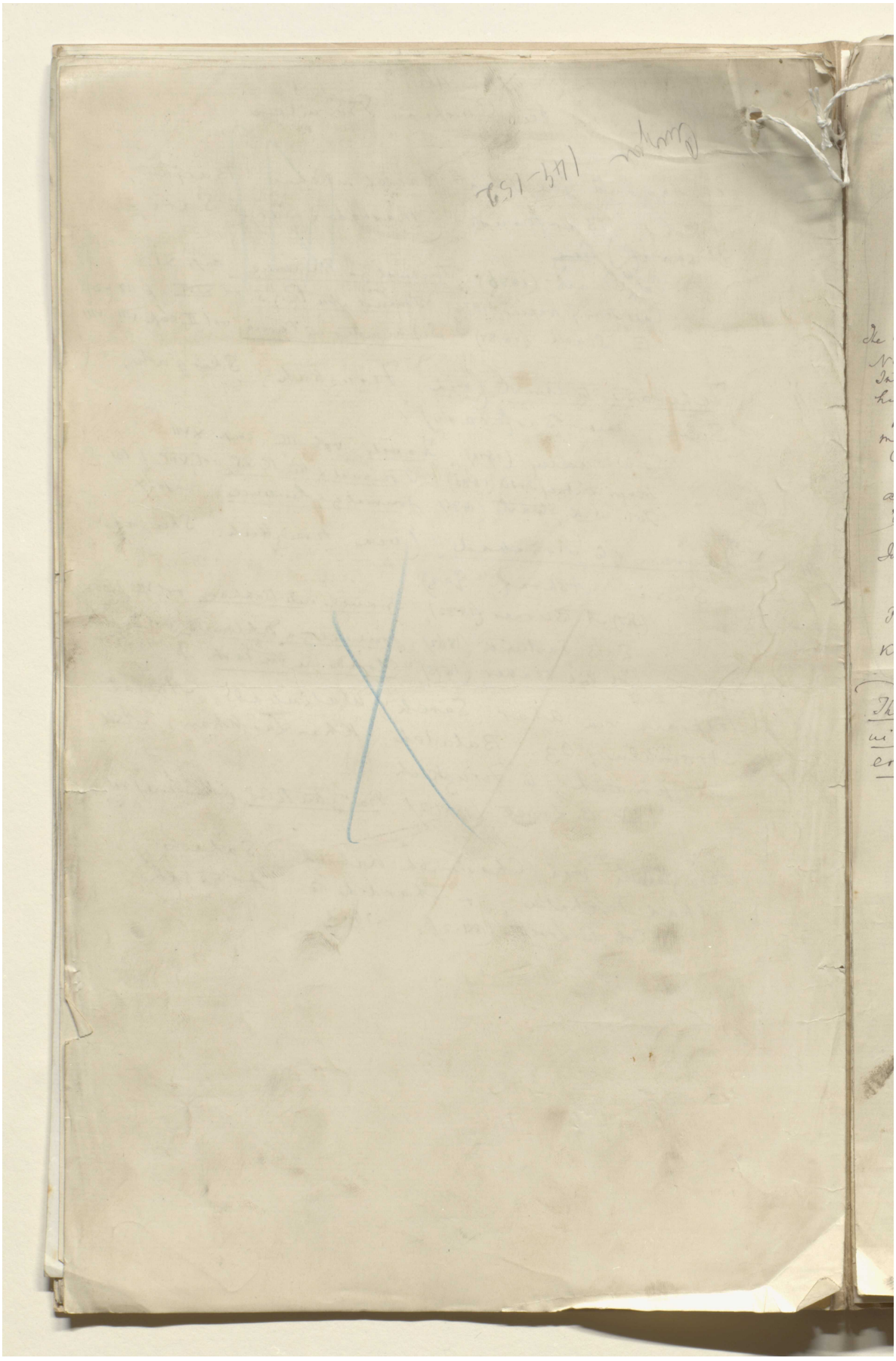

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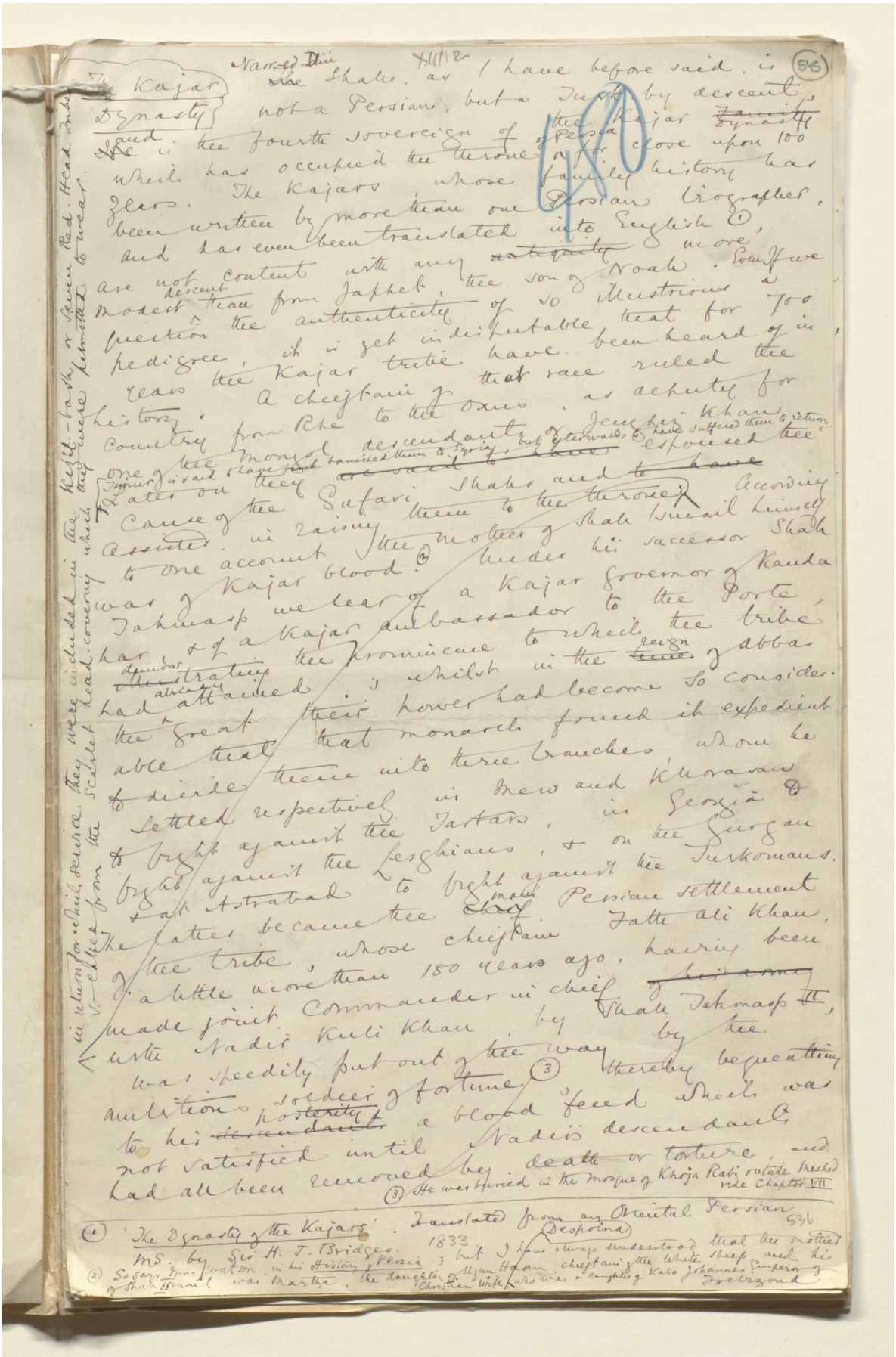
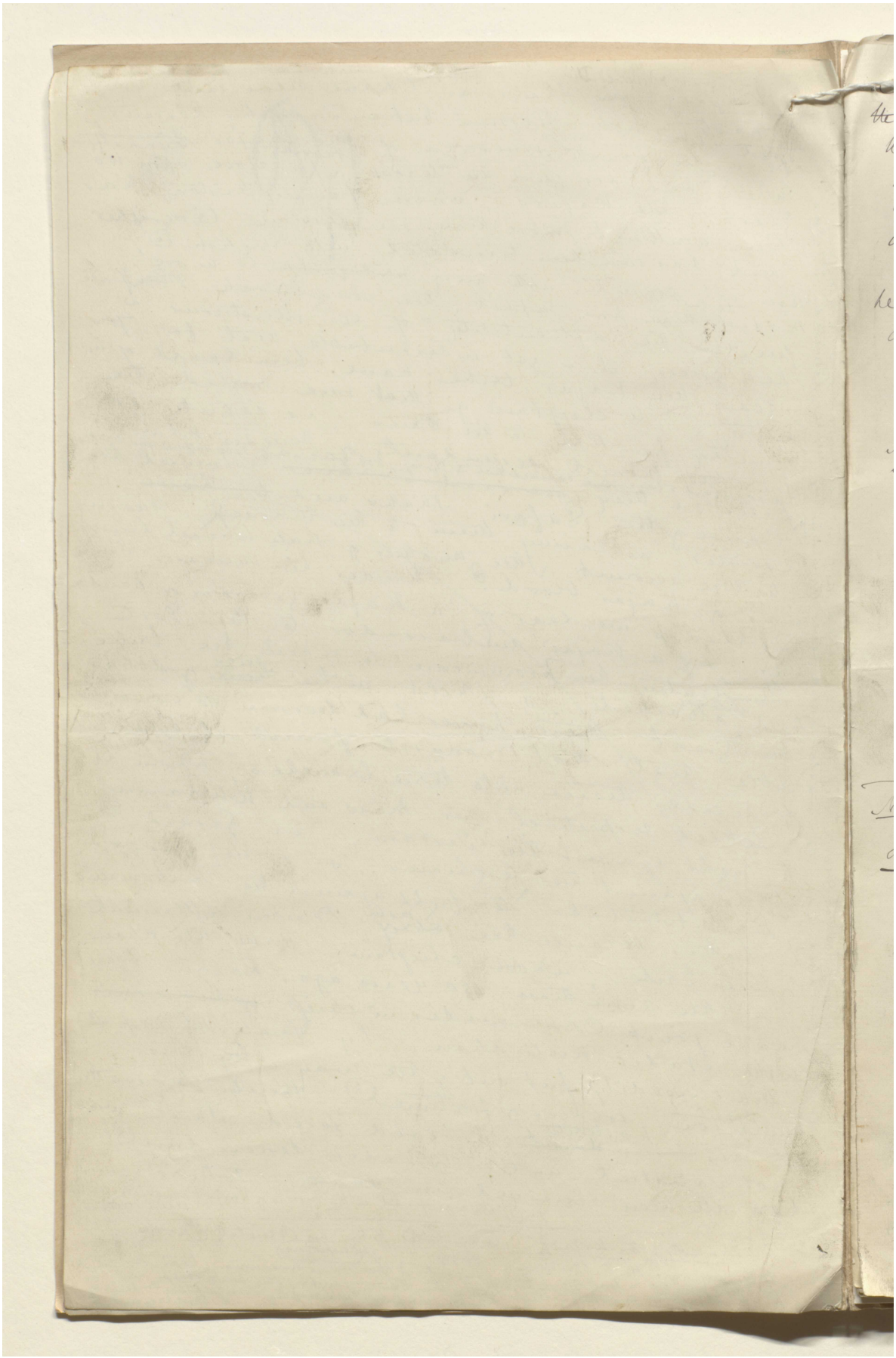
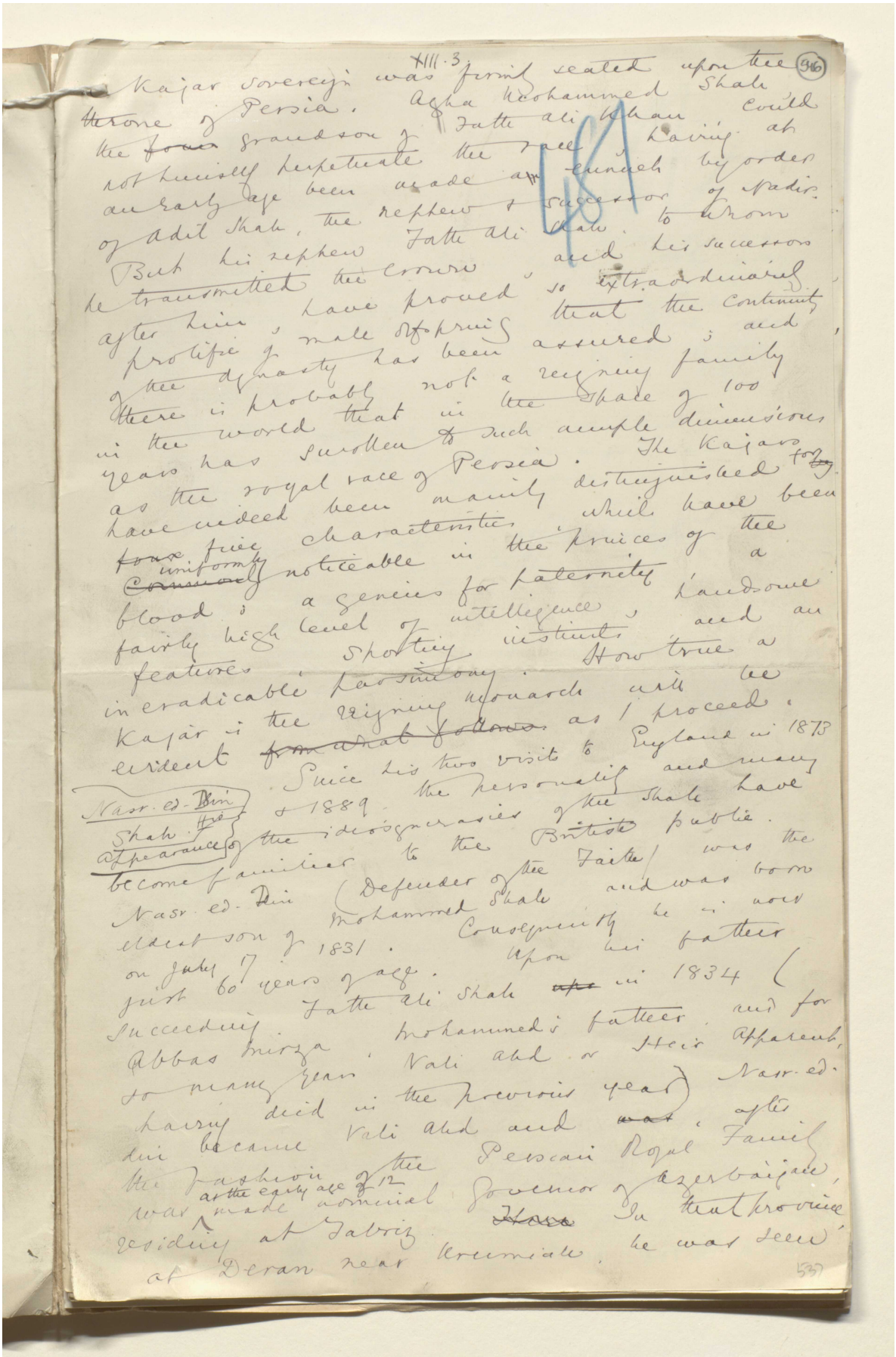
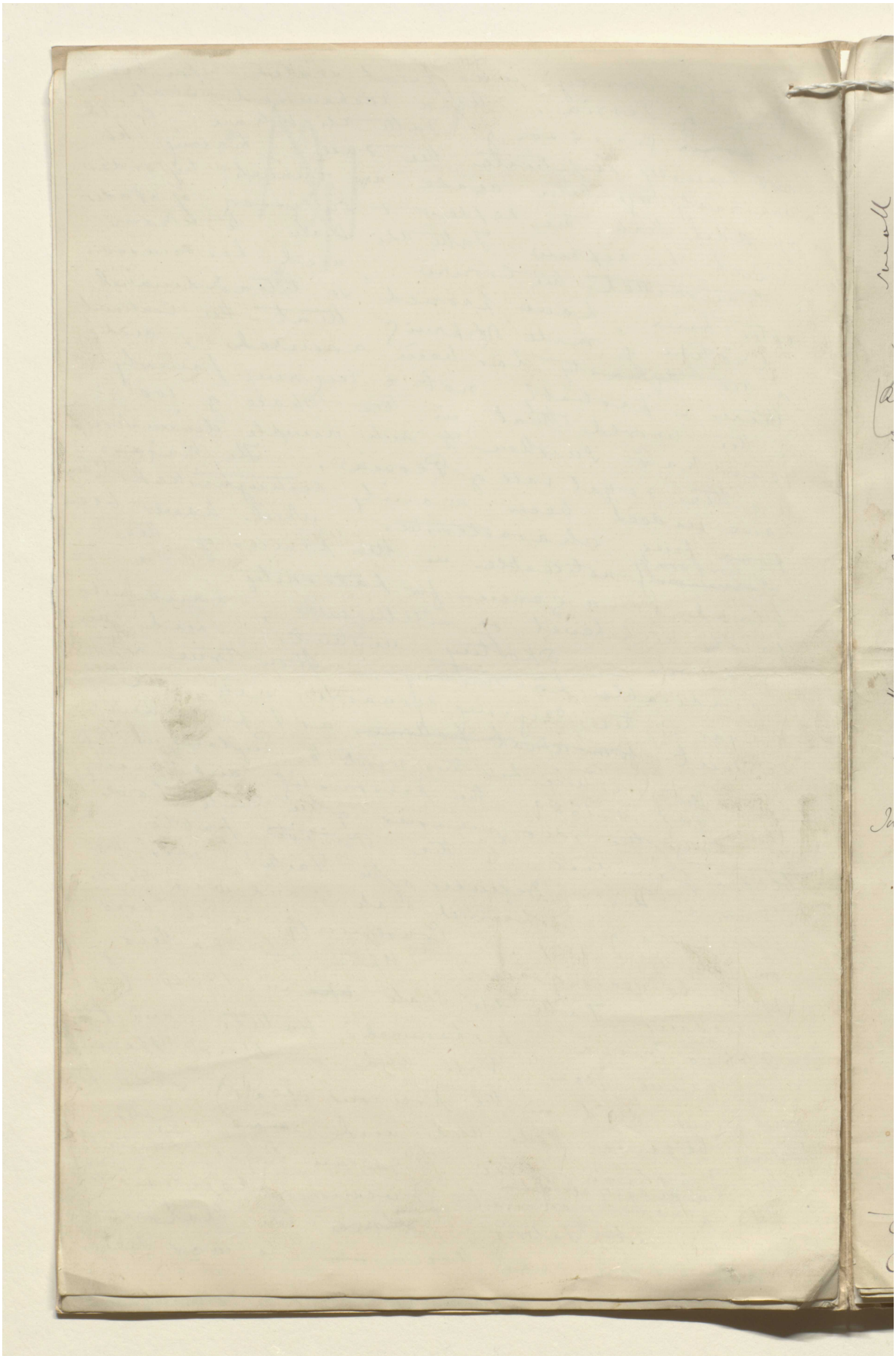
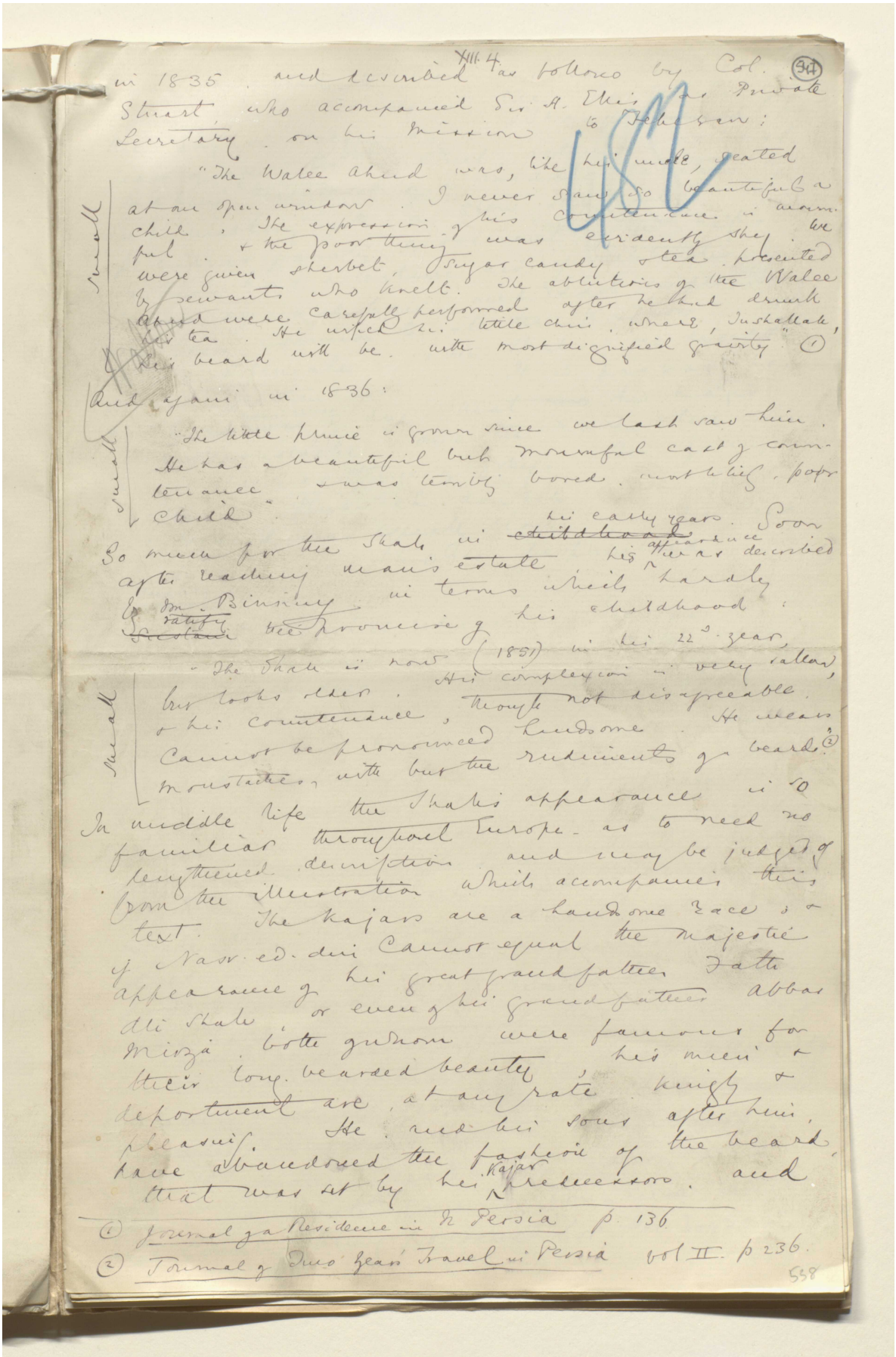








XIII.4 (347)



in 1835 and described as follows by Col. Stuart who accompanied Sir H. Ellis as Private Secretary on his Mission to Teheran:

"The Walee Ahud was, like his mule, seated at an open window. I never saw so beautiful a child. The expression of his countenance is mournful & the poor thing was evidently shy. We were given sherbet, sugar candy & tea presented by servants who knelt. The ablutions of the Walee Ahud were carefully performed after he had drunk his tea. He wiped his little chin, where, Inshallah, his beard will be, with most dignified gravity." (1)

small

And again in 1836:

"The little prince is grown since we last saw him. He has a beautiful but mournful cast of countenance & was terribly bored, most likely, poor child."

small

So much for the Shah in his early years. Soon after reaching man's estate his appearance was described by Mr. Binning in terms which hardly ratify the promise of his childhood:

"The Shah is now (1851) in his 22d year, but looks older. His complexion is very sallow, & his countenance, though not disagreeable, cannot be pronounced handsome. He wears moustaches, with but the rudiments of a beard." (2)

small

In middle life the Shah's appearance is so familiar throughout Europe as to need no lengthened description and may be judged of from the illustration which accompanies this text. The Kajars are a handsome race; & if Nasr-ed-din cannot equal the majestic appearance of his great grandfather Fath Ali Shah or even of his grandfather Abbas Mirza, both of whom were famous for their long-bearded beauty, his mien & deportment are, at any rate, kingly & pleasing. He and his sons after him have abandoned the fashion of the beard, that was set by his Kajar predecessors, and

(1) Journal of a Residence in N. Persia p. 136

(2) Journal of Two Years' Travel in Persia vol II. p 236.

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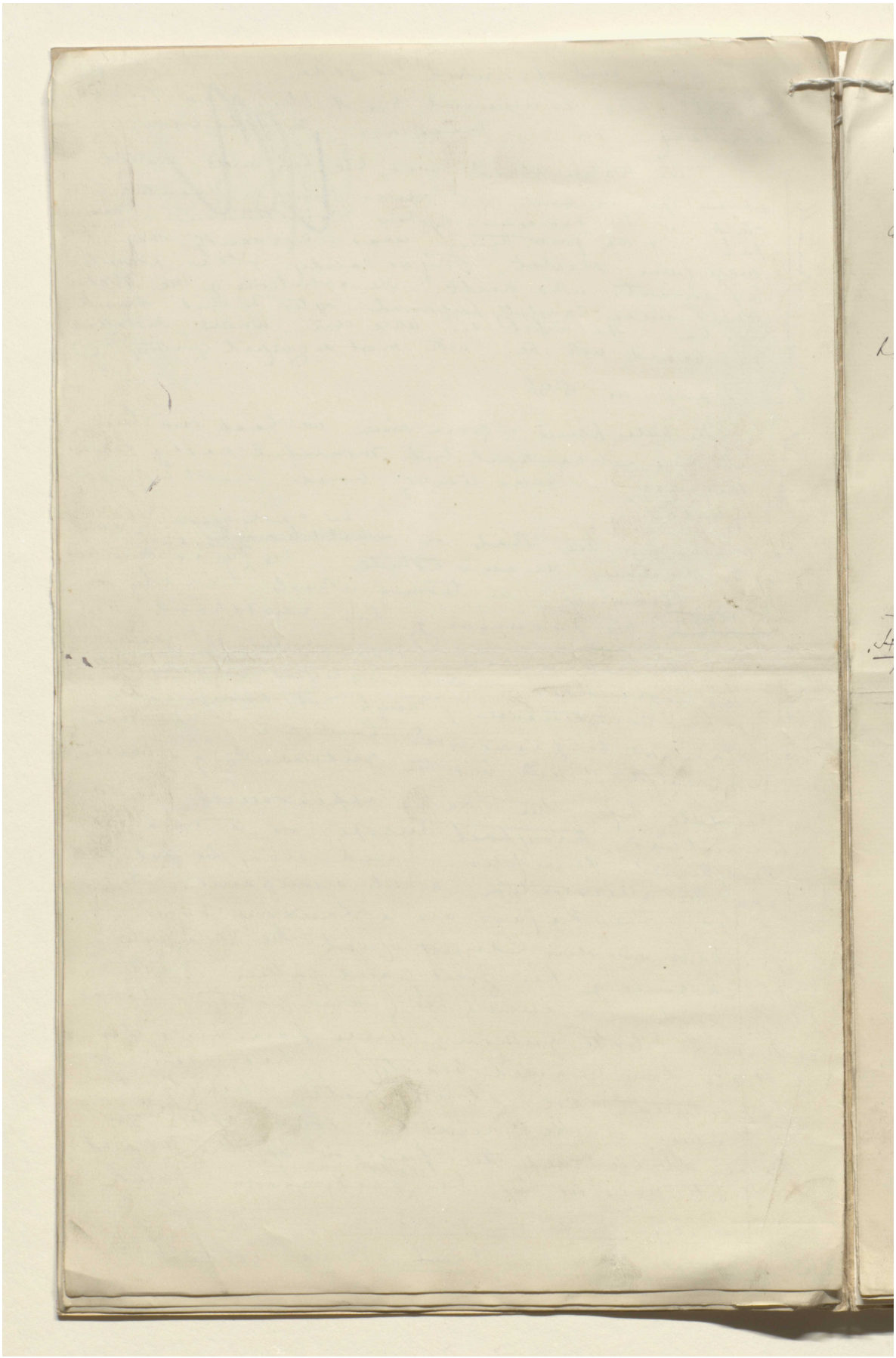

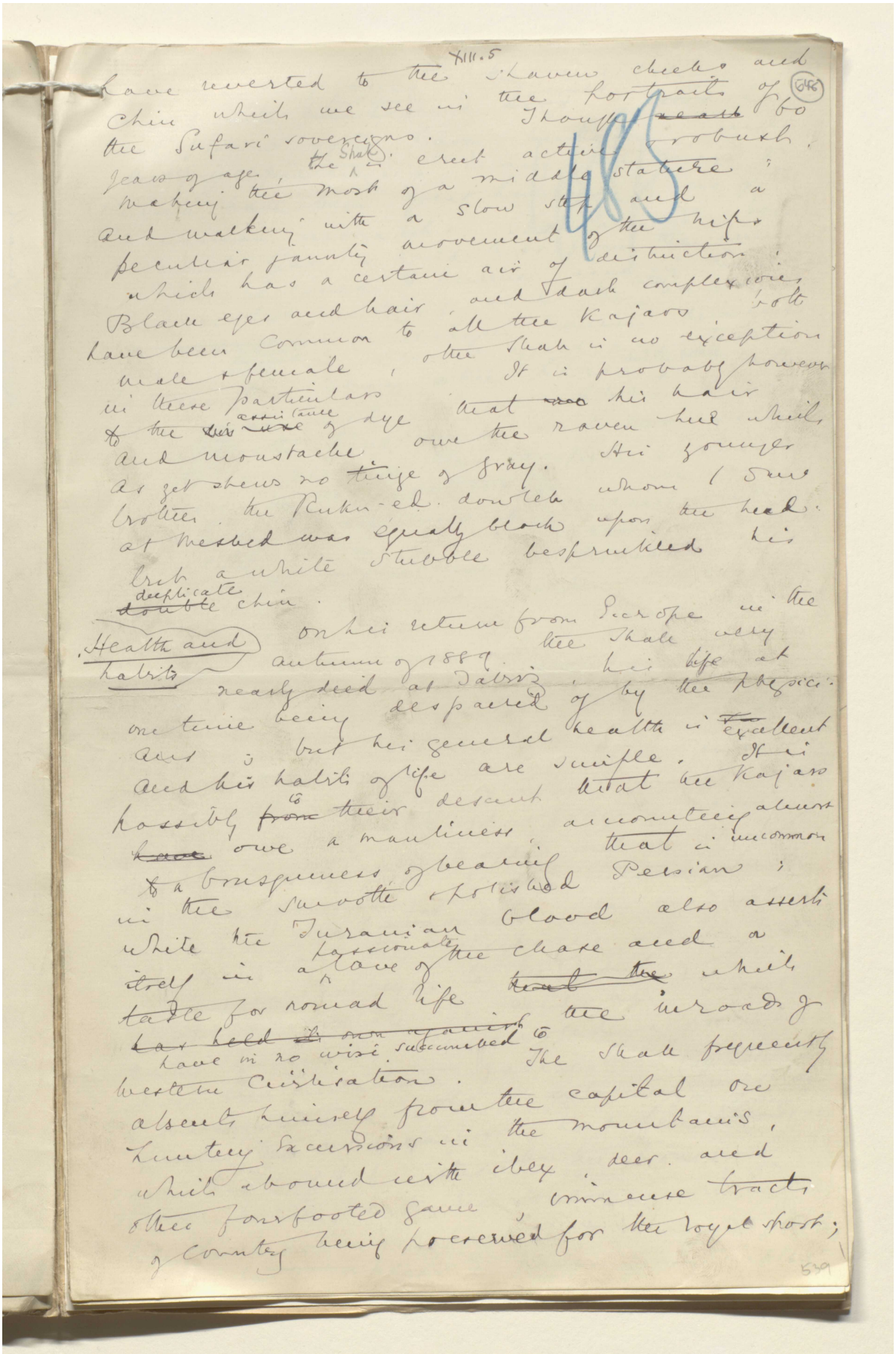

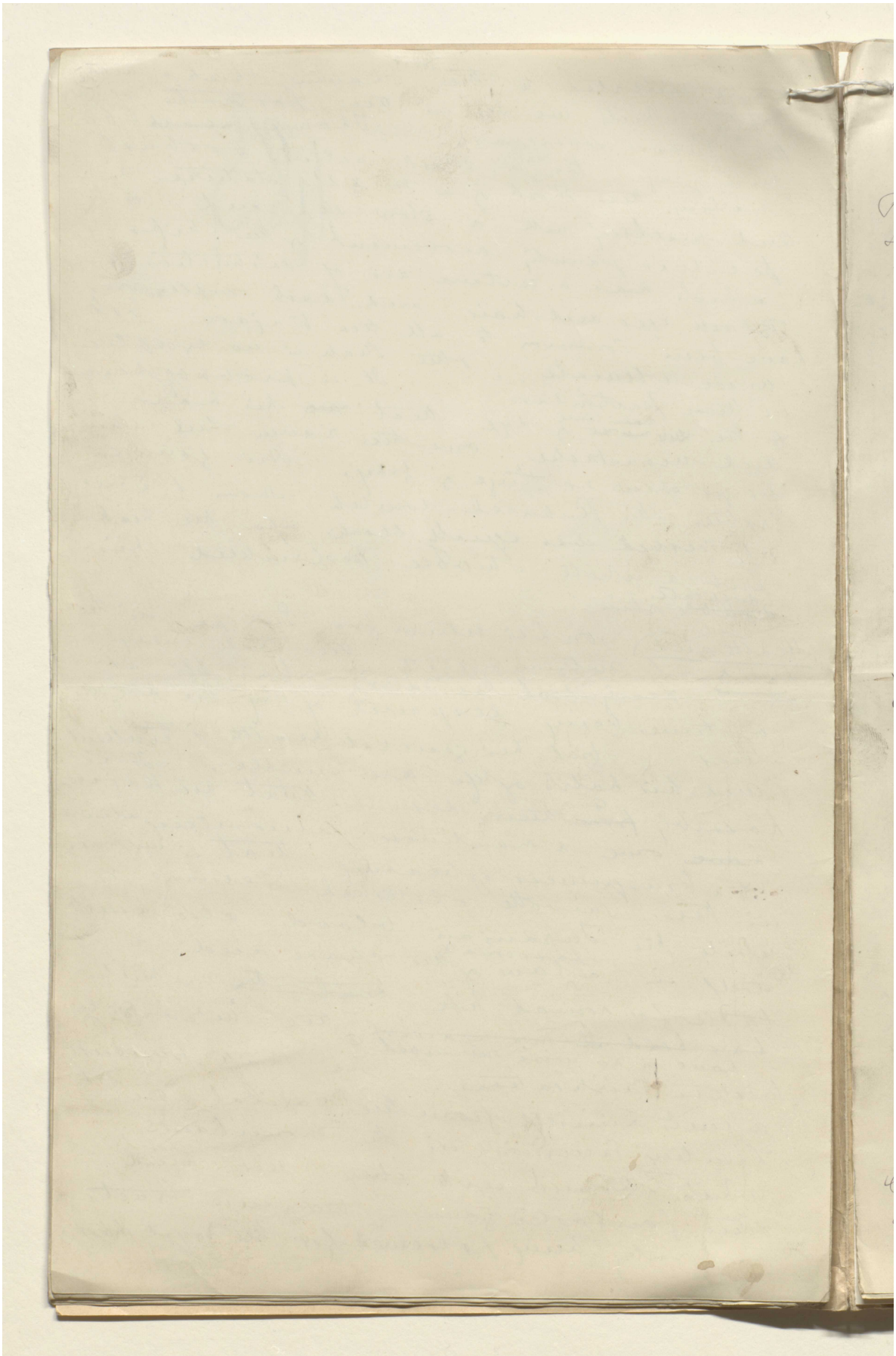

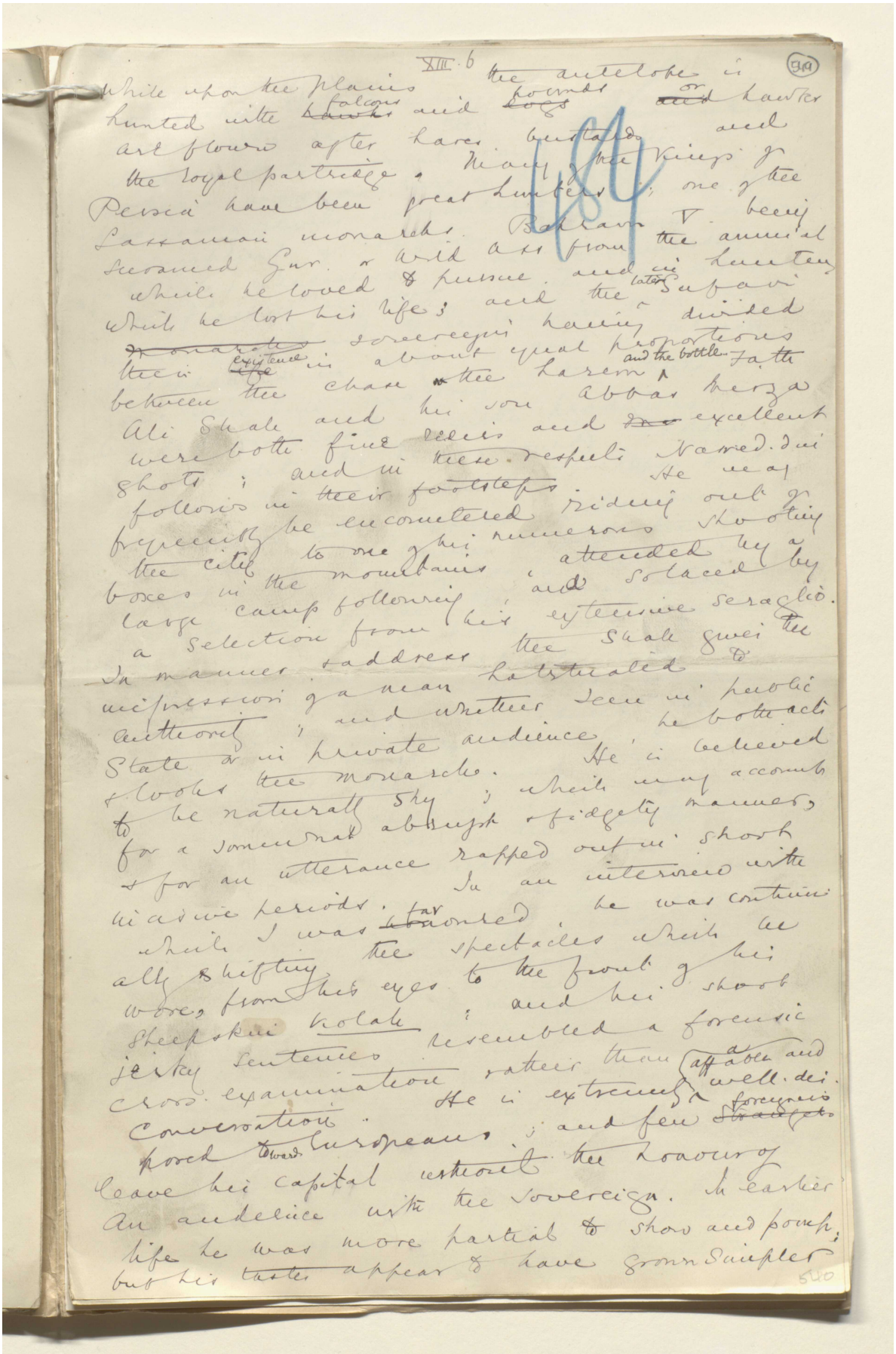

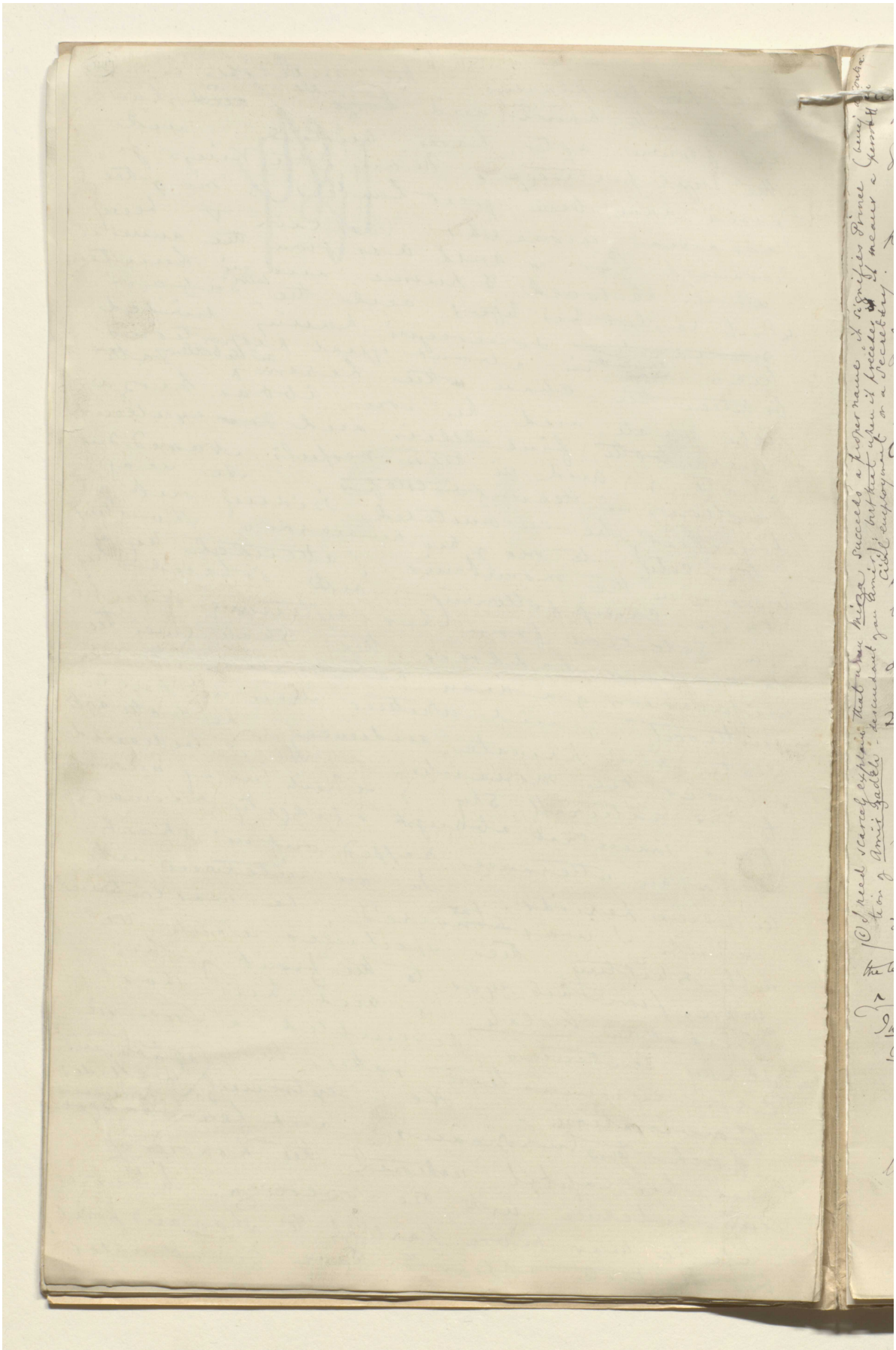

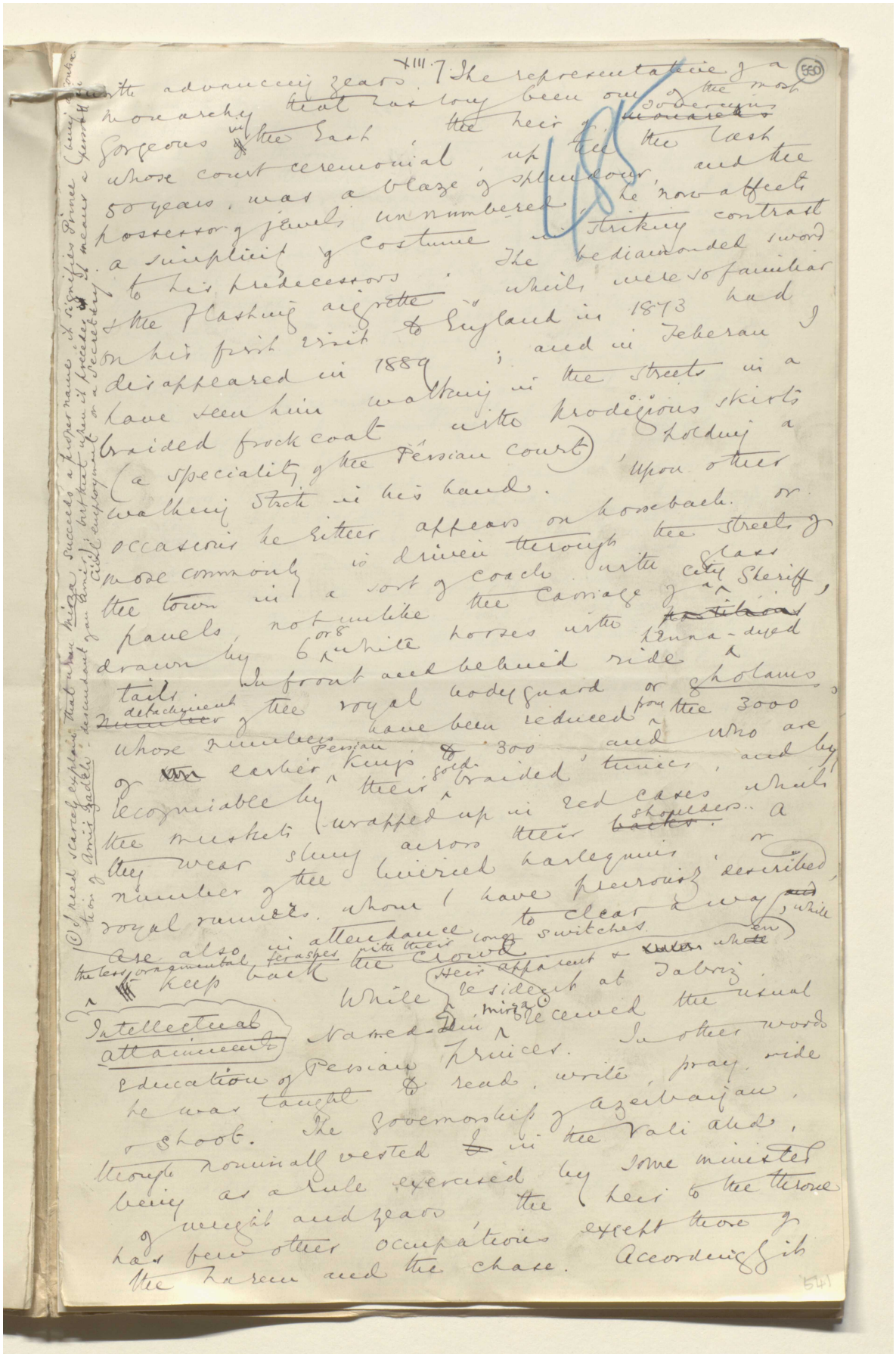

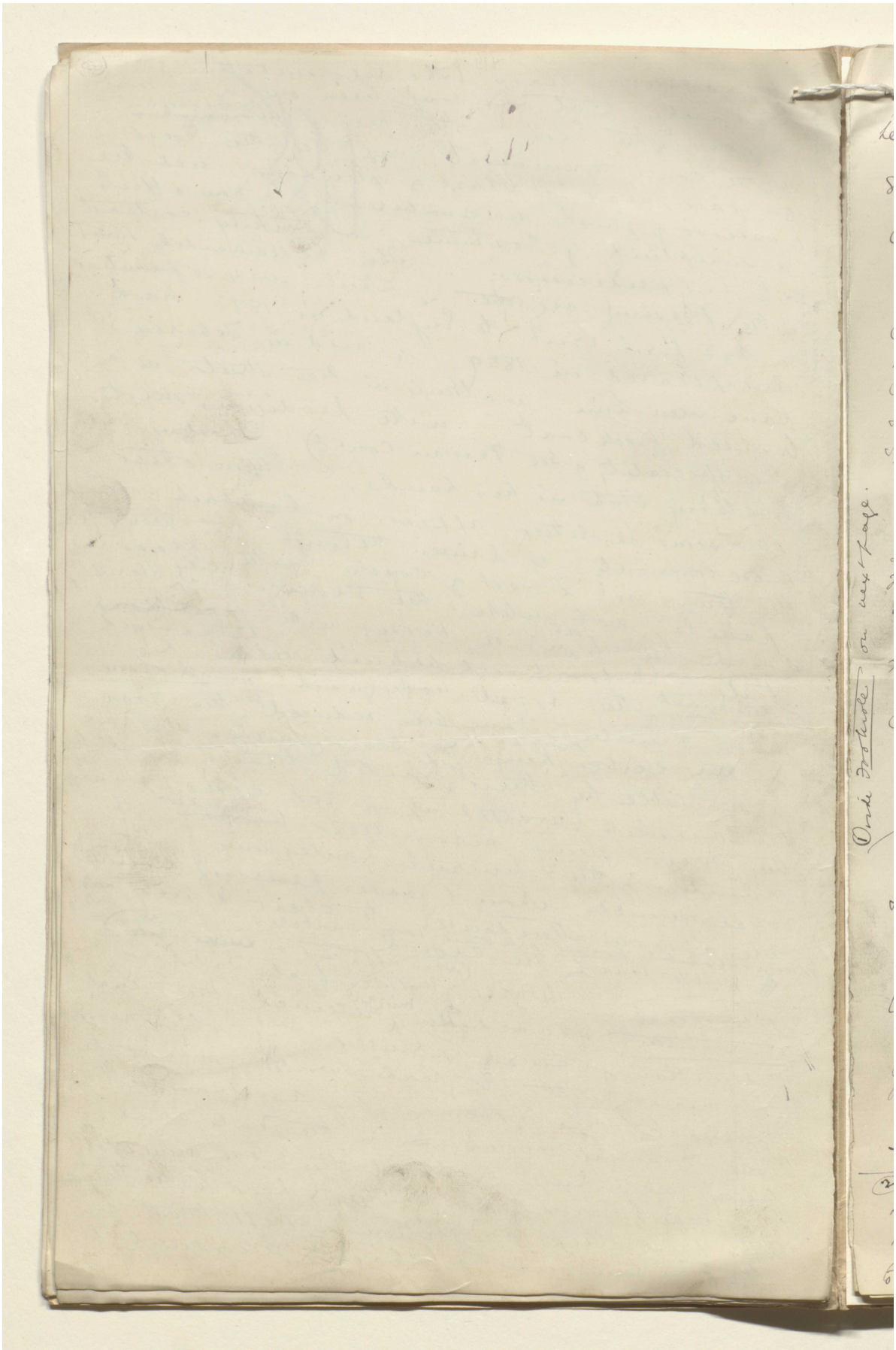

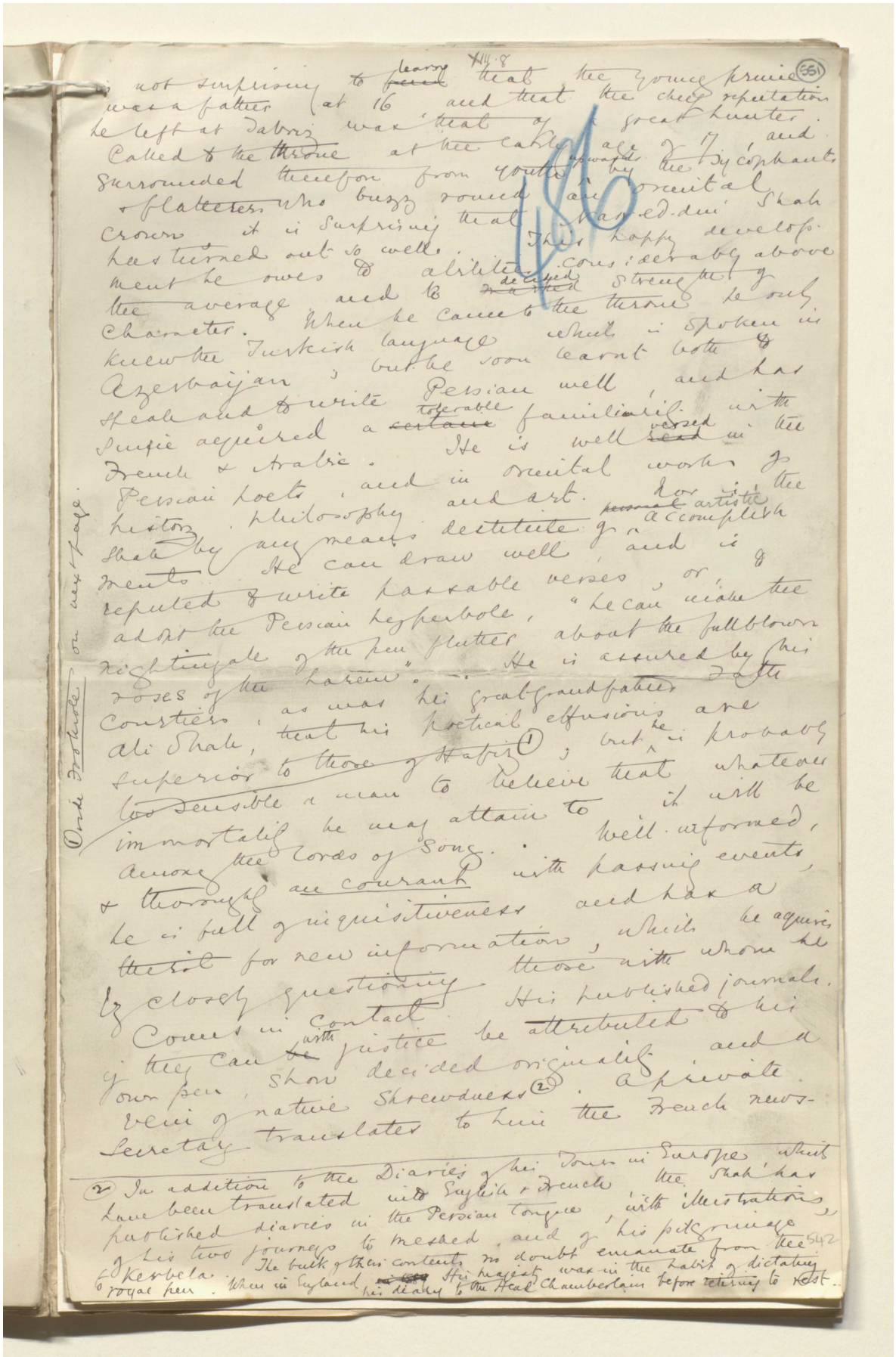

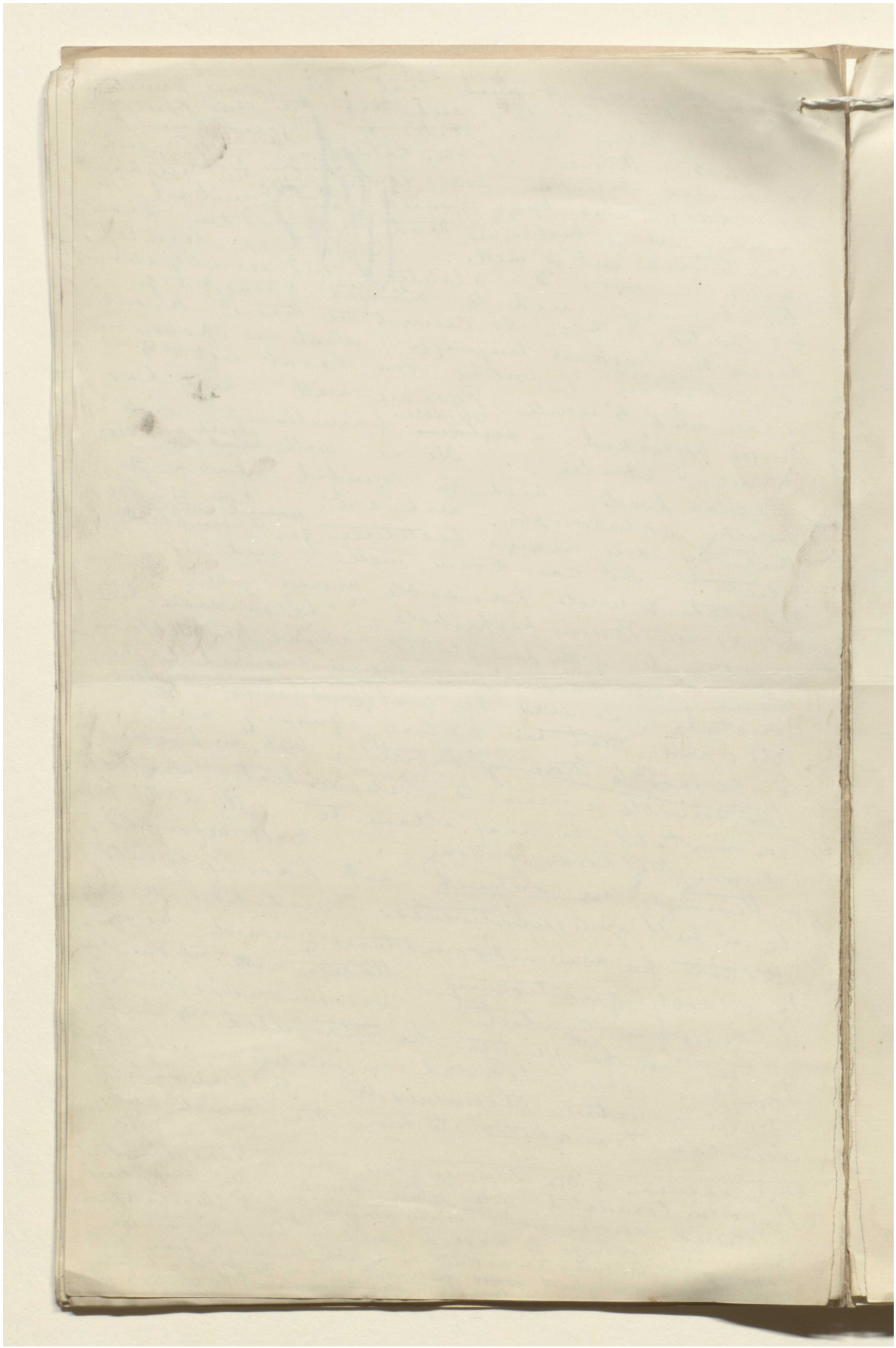

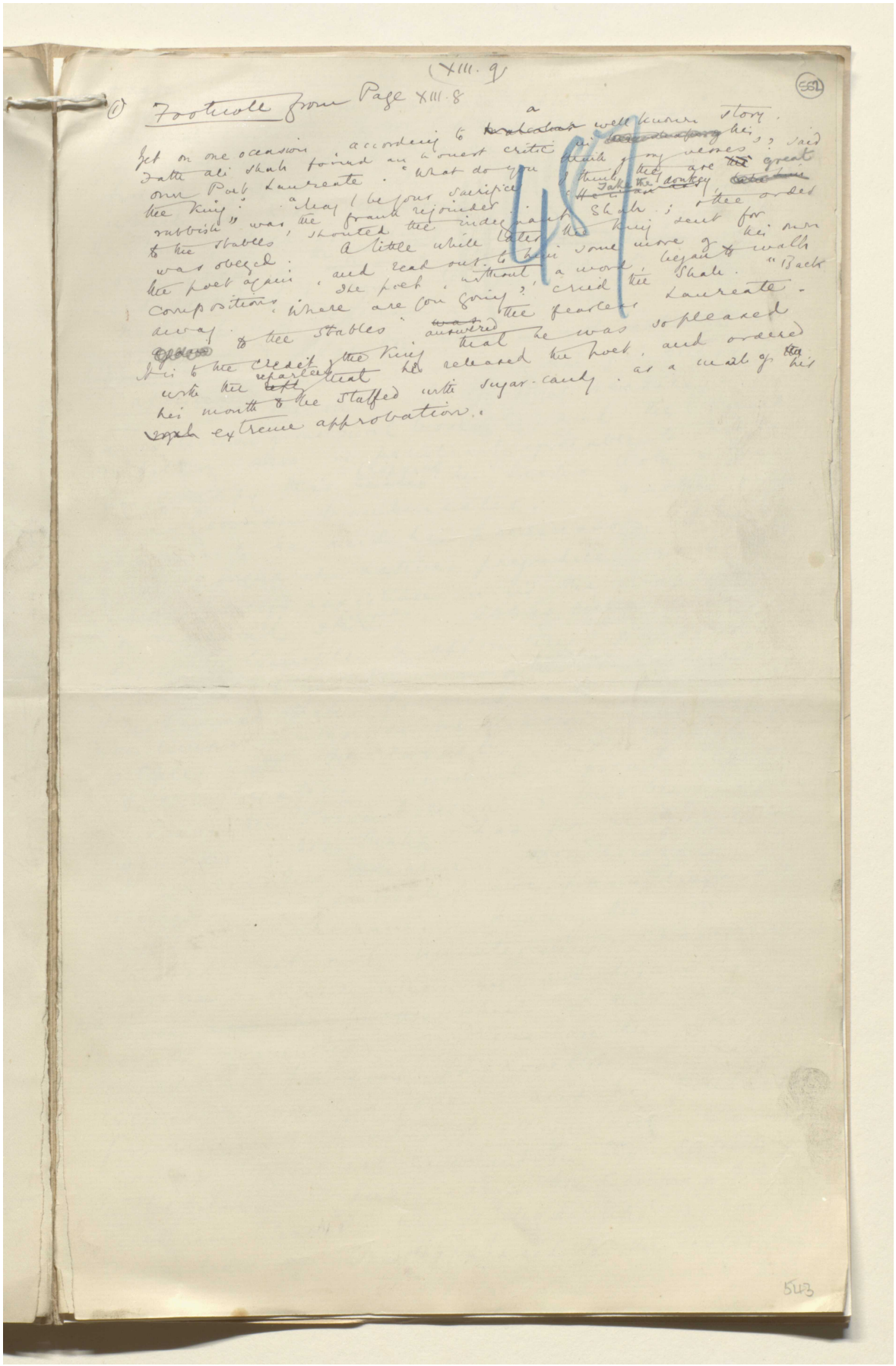

(XIII. 9)

(552)

(1) Footnote from Page XIII. 8

Yet on one occasion, according to a well known story, Fath ali Shah found an honest critic in his own Poet Laureate. "What do you think of my verses?" said the King. "May I be your sacrifice, I think they are great rubbish" was the frank rejoinder. "Take the donkey to the stables," shouted the indignant Shah; the order was obeyed. A little while later the King sent for the poet again, and read out to him some more of his own compositions. "The poet, without a word, began to walk away. Where are you going?" cried the Shah. "Back to the stables" answered the fearless Laureate. It is to the credit of the King that he was so pleased with the reparlee that he released the poet, and ordered his mouth to be stuffed with sugar-candy, as a mark of his extreme approbation.

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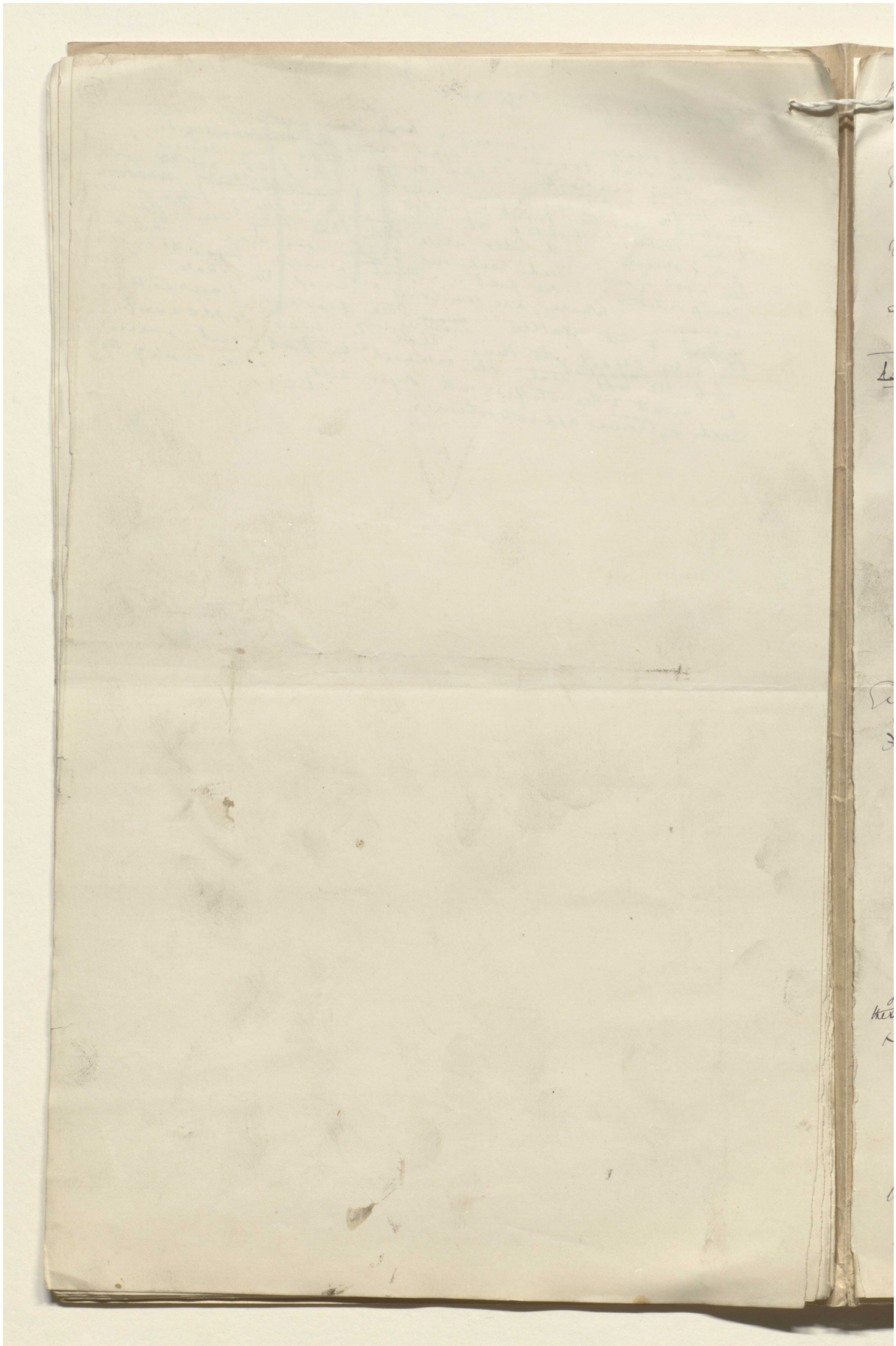

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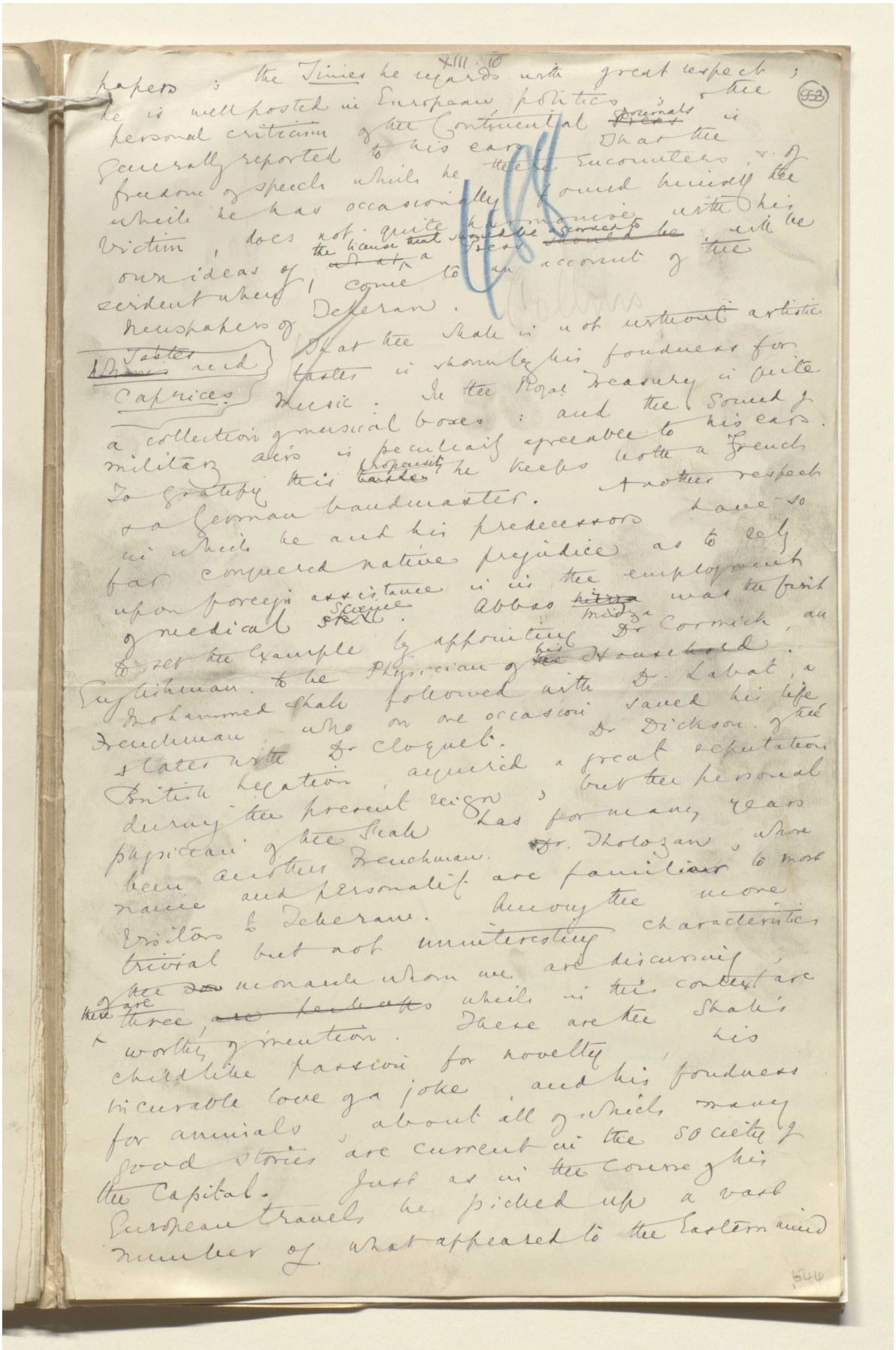

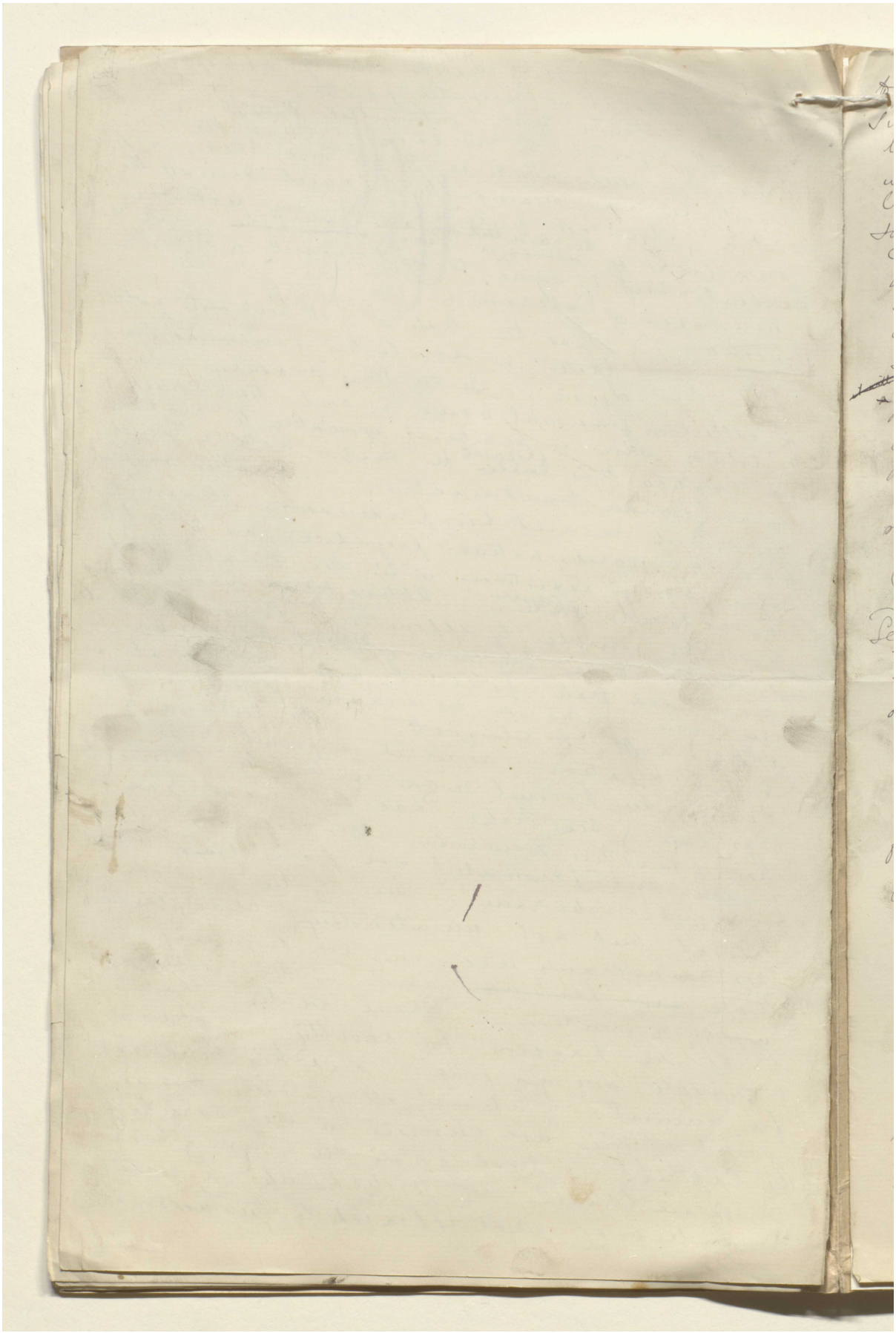

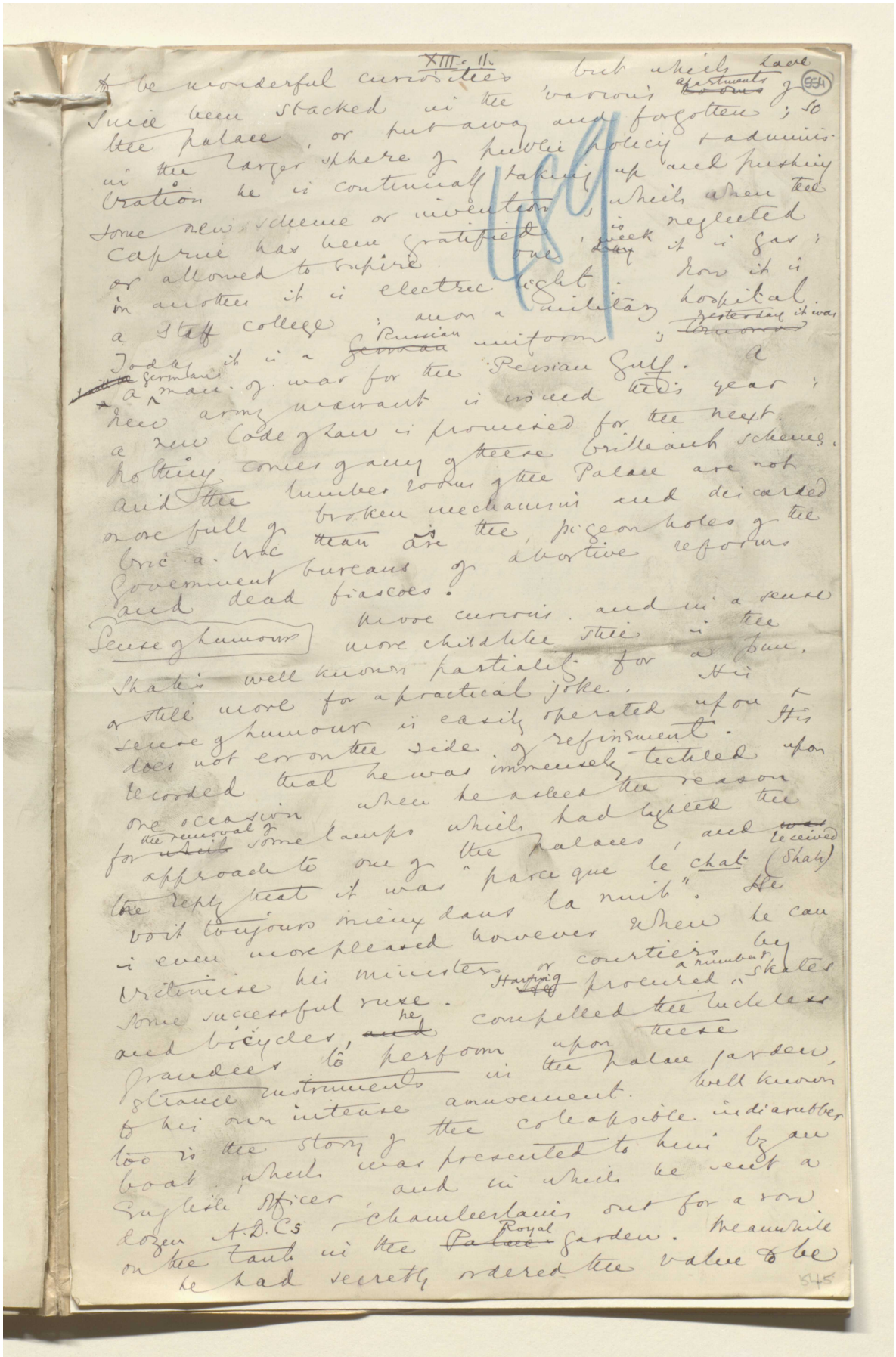

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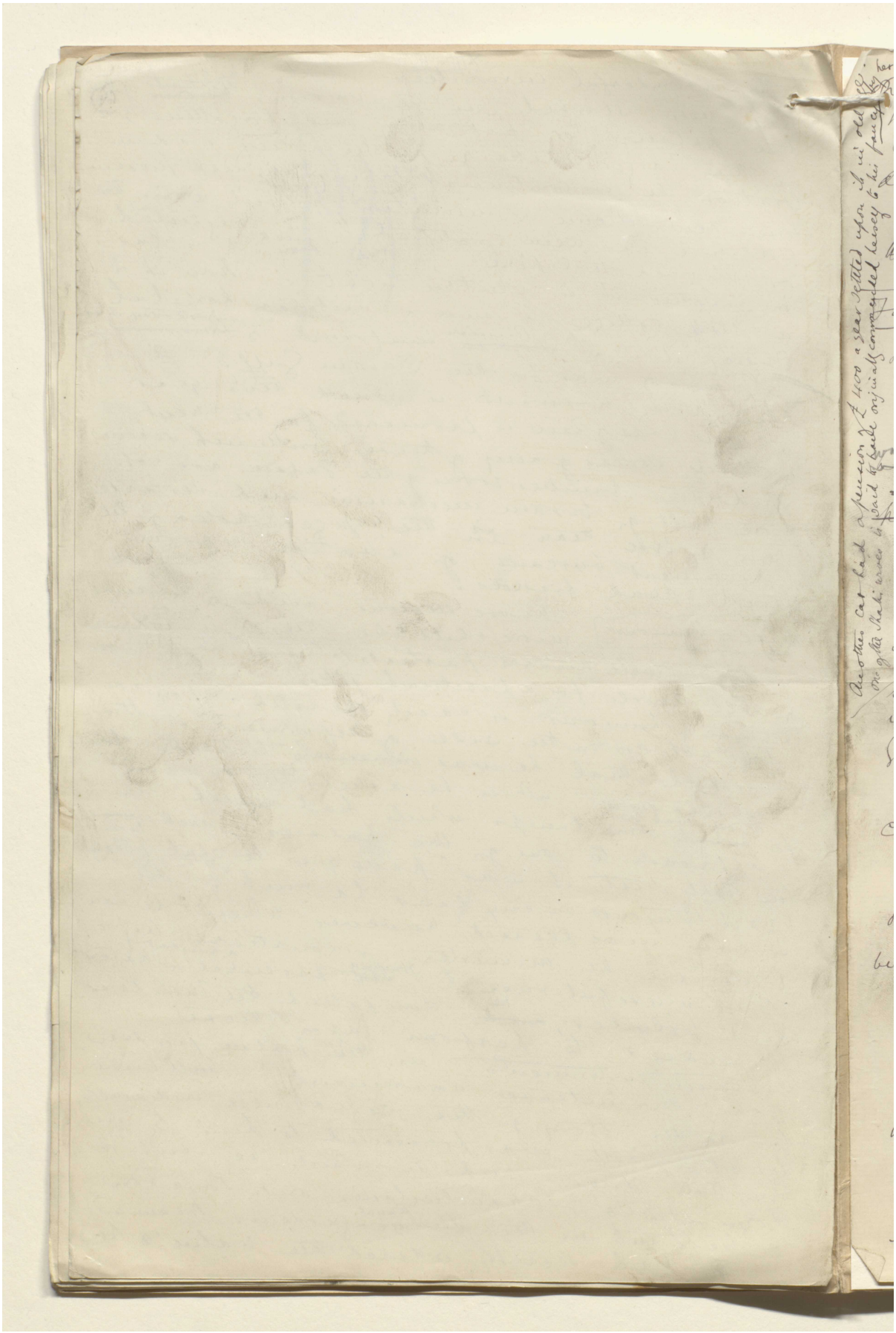

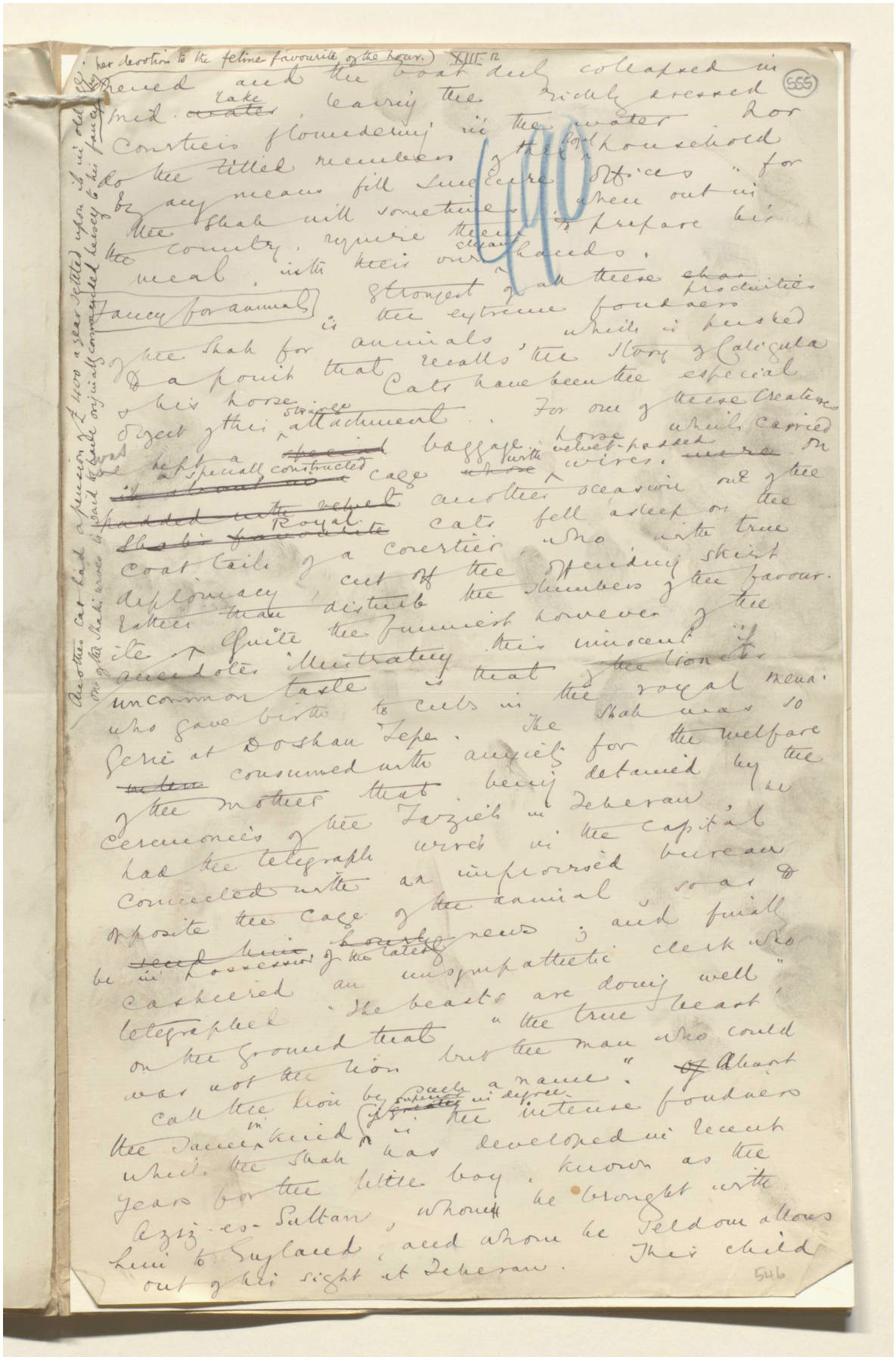

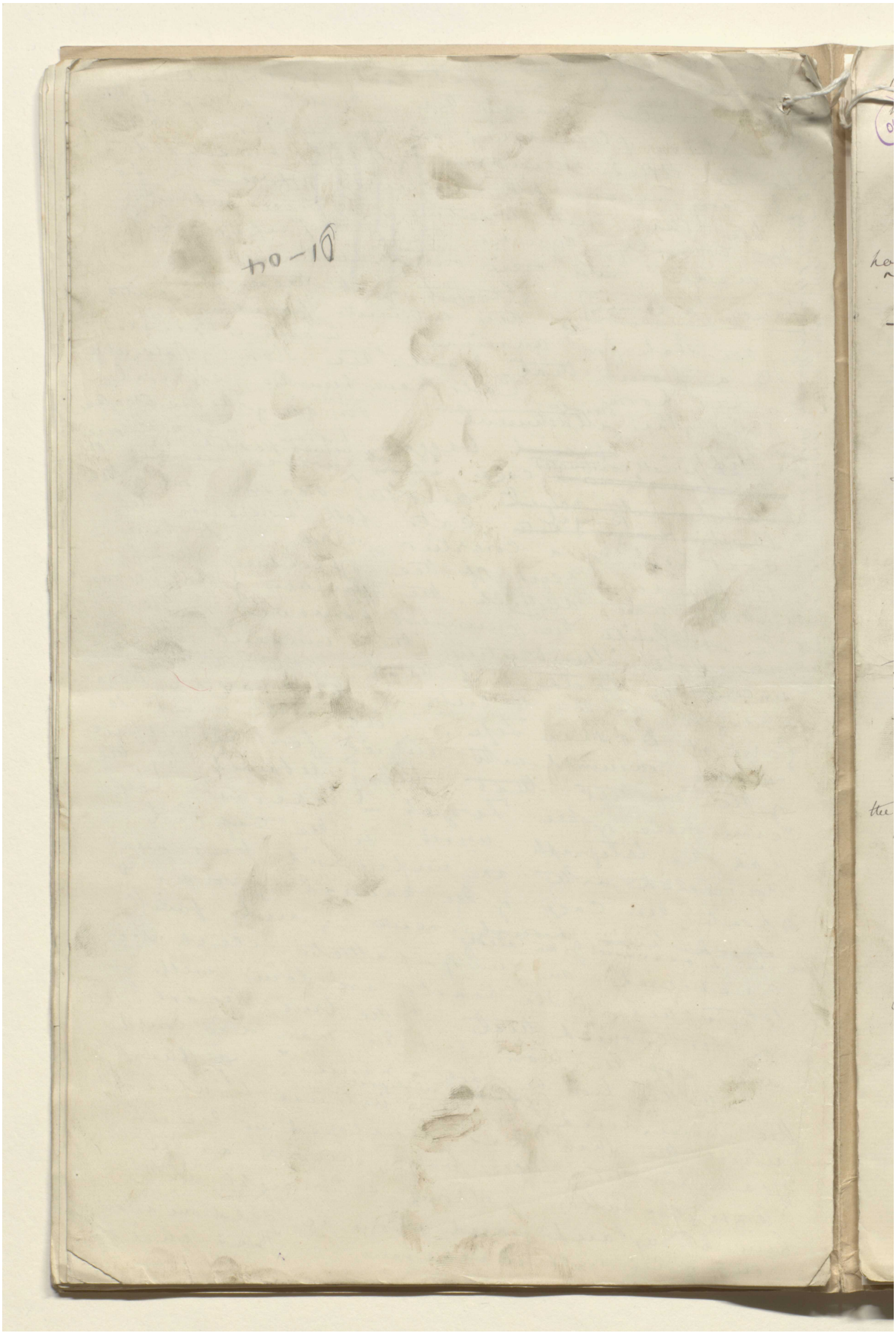

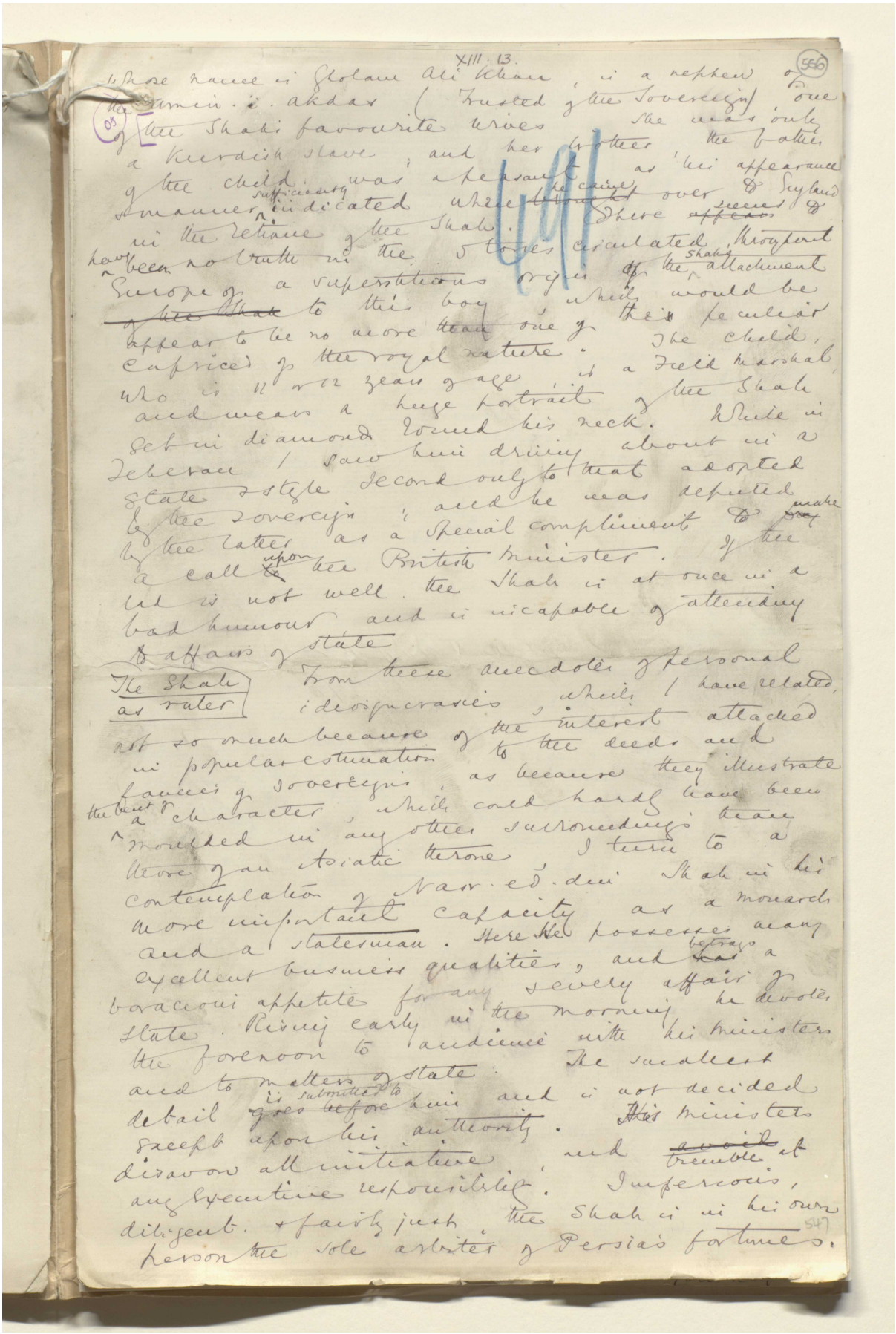

XIII. 13.

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Whose name is Gholam Ali Khan, is a nephew of the Amin-i-akdas (Trusted of the Sovereign) one of the Shah's favourite wives. She was only a Kurdish slave, and her brother, the father of the child, was a peasant as his appearance & manner sufficiently indicated when he came over to England in the retinue of the Shah. There seems to have been no truth in the stories circulated throughout Europe of a superstitious origin of the Shah's attachment to this boy, which would be appear to be no more than one of the peculiar caprices of the royal nature. The child, who is 11 or 12 years of age, is a Field Marshal, and wears a huge portrait of the Shah set in diamonds round his neck. While in Teheran I saw him driving about in a state & style second only to that adopted by the sovereign; and he was deputed by the latter as a special compliment to make a call upon the British Minister. If the lad is not well, the Shah is at once in a bad humour and is incapable of attending to affairs of state.

The Shah as ruler

From these anecdotes of personal idiosyncrasies, which I have related, not so much because of the interest attached in popular estimation to the deeds and fancies of sovereigns, as because they illustrate the bent of a character, which could hardly have been moulded in any other surroundings than those of an Asiatic throne, I turn to a contemplation of Nasr-ed-din Shah in his more important capacity as a monarch and a statesman. Here he possesses many excellent business qualities, and betrays a voracious appetite for any & every affair of state. Rising early in the morning he devotes the forenoon to audience with his ministers and to matters of state. The smallest detail is submitted to him and is not decided except upon his authority. His ministers disavow all initiative and tremble at any executive responsibility. Imperious, diligent & fairly just, the Shah is in his own person the sole arbiter of Persia's fortunes.

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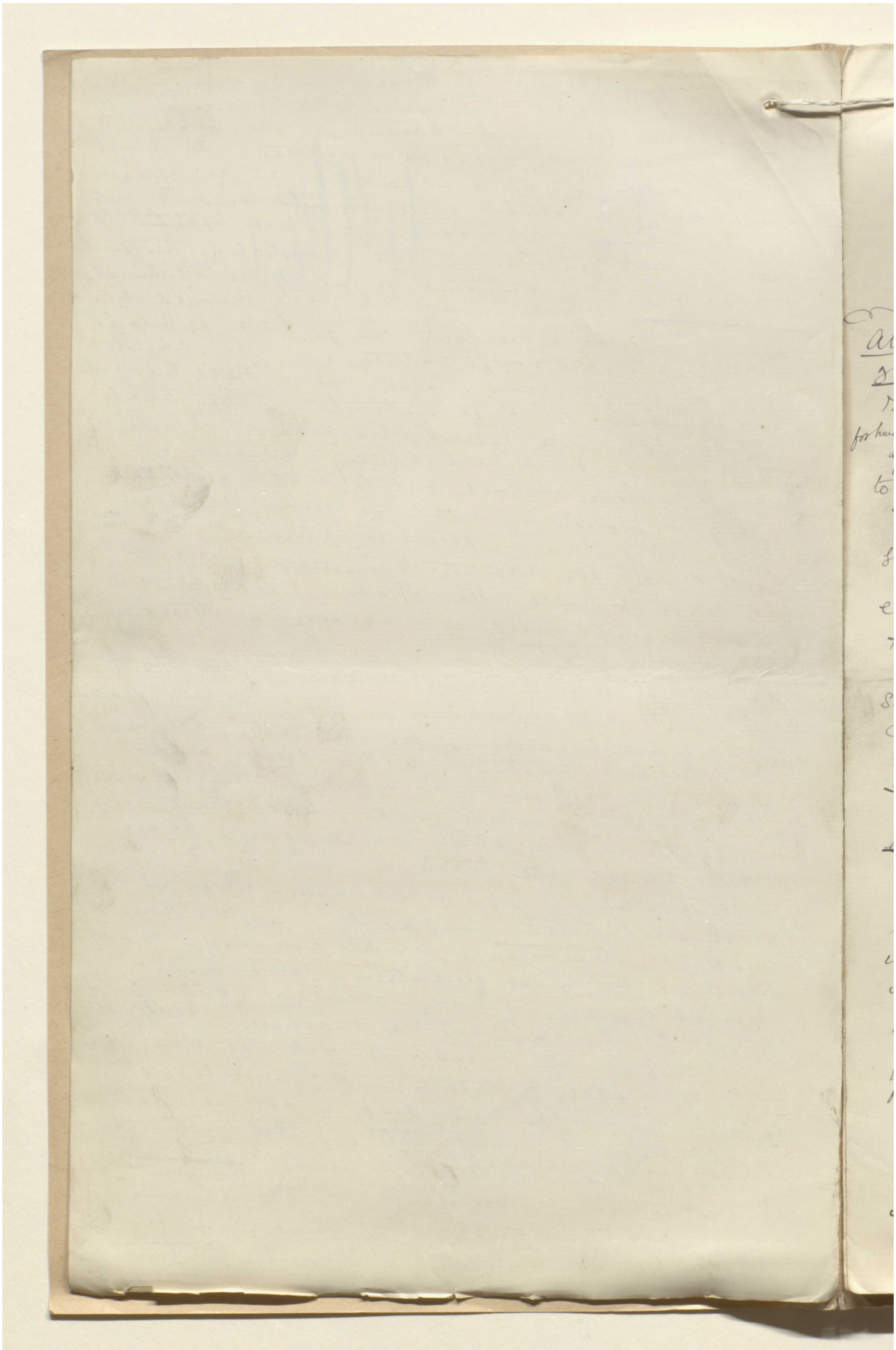

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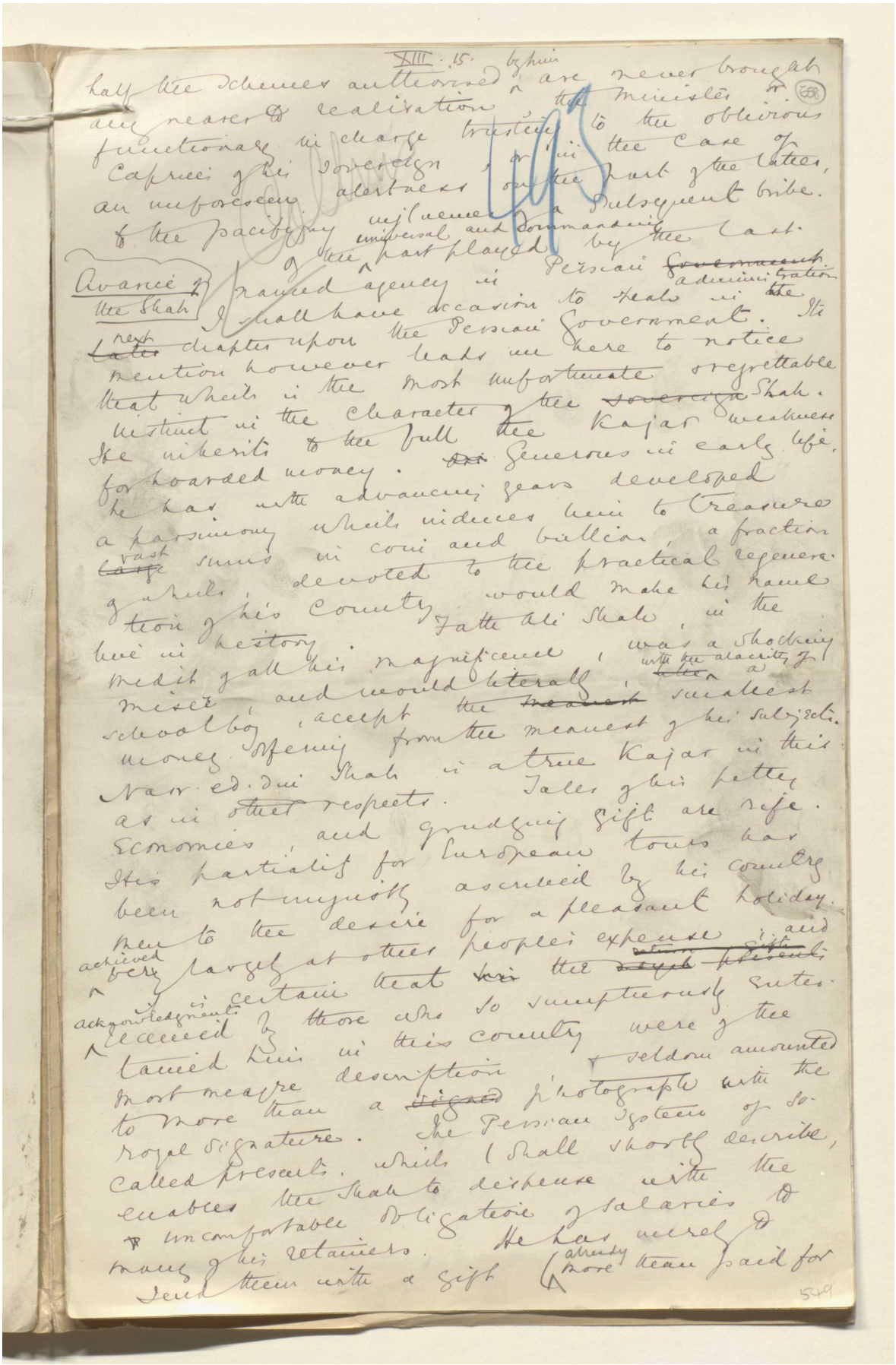

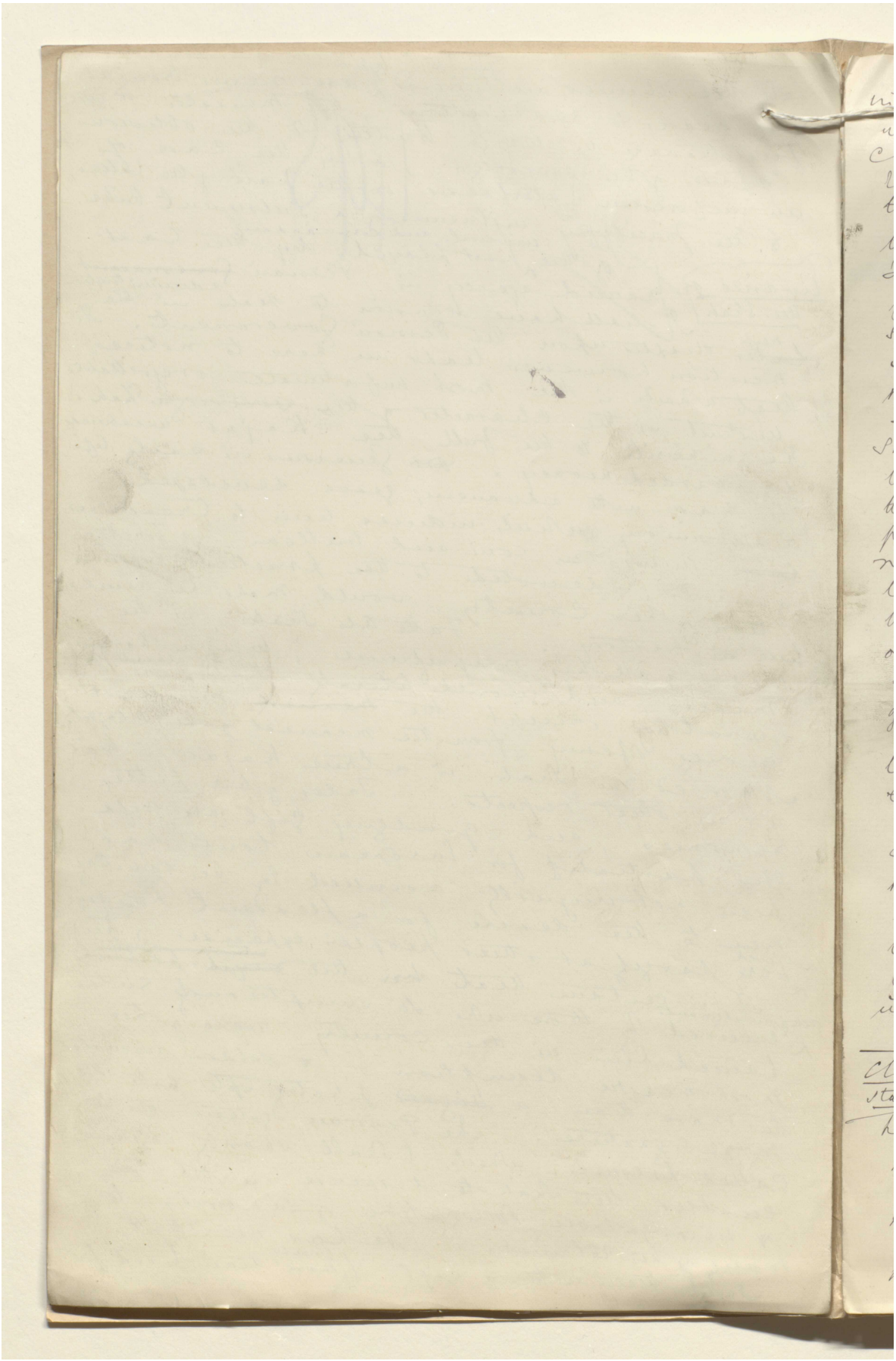

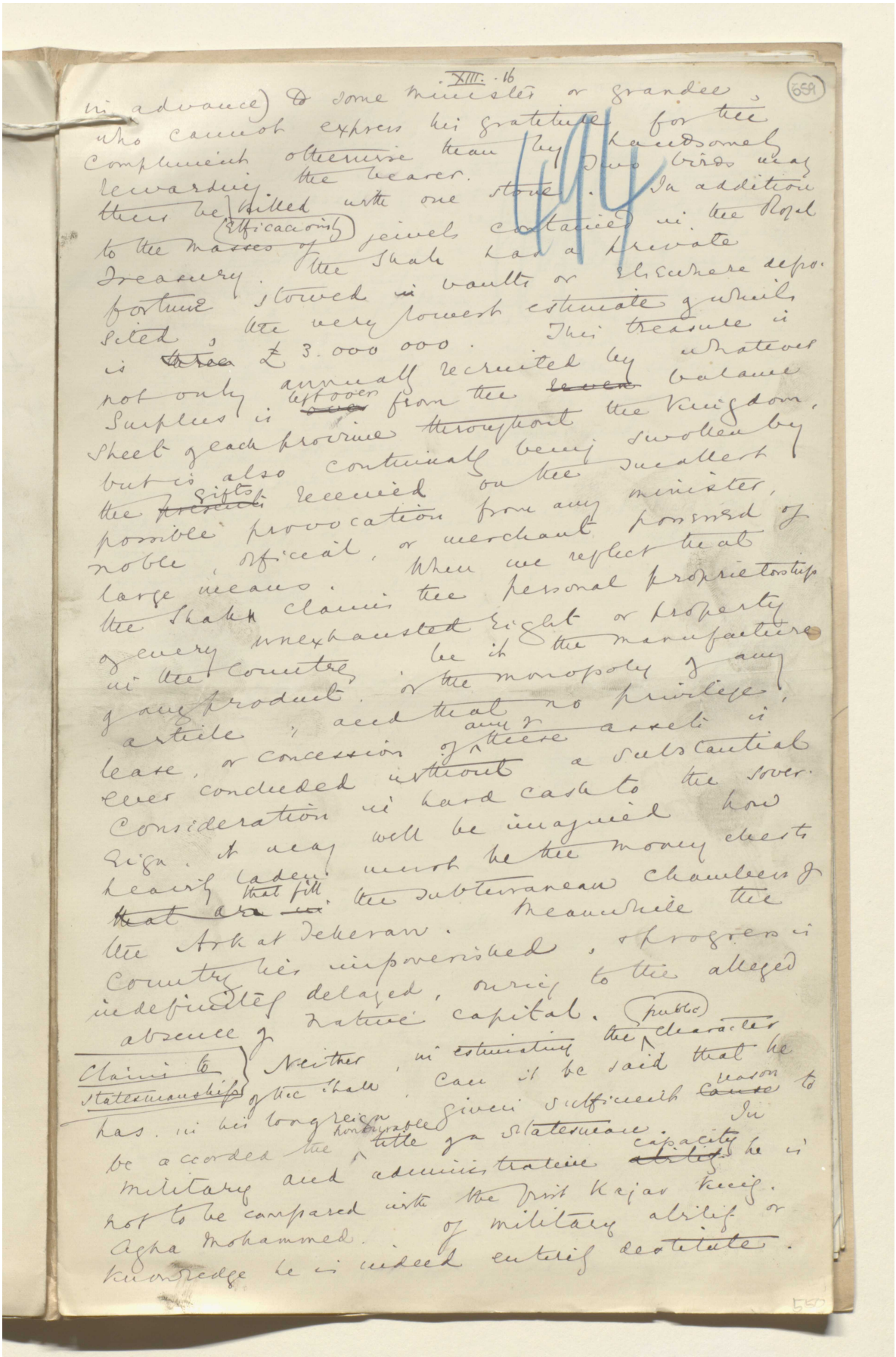

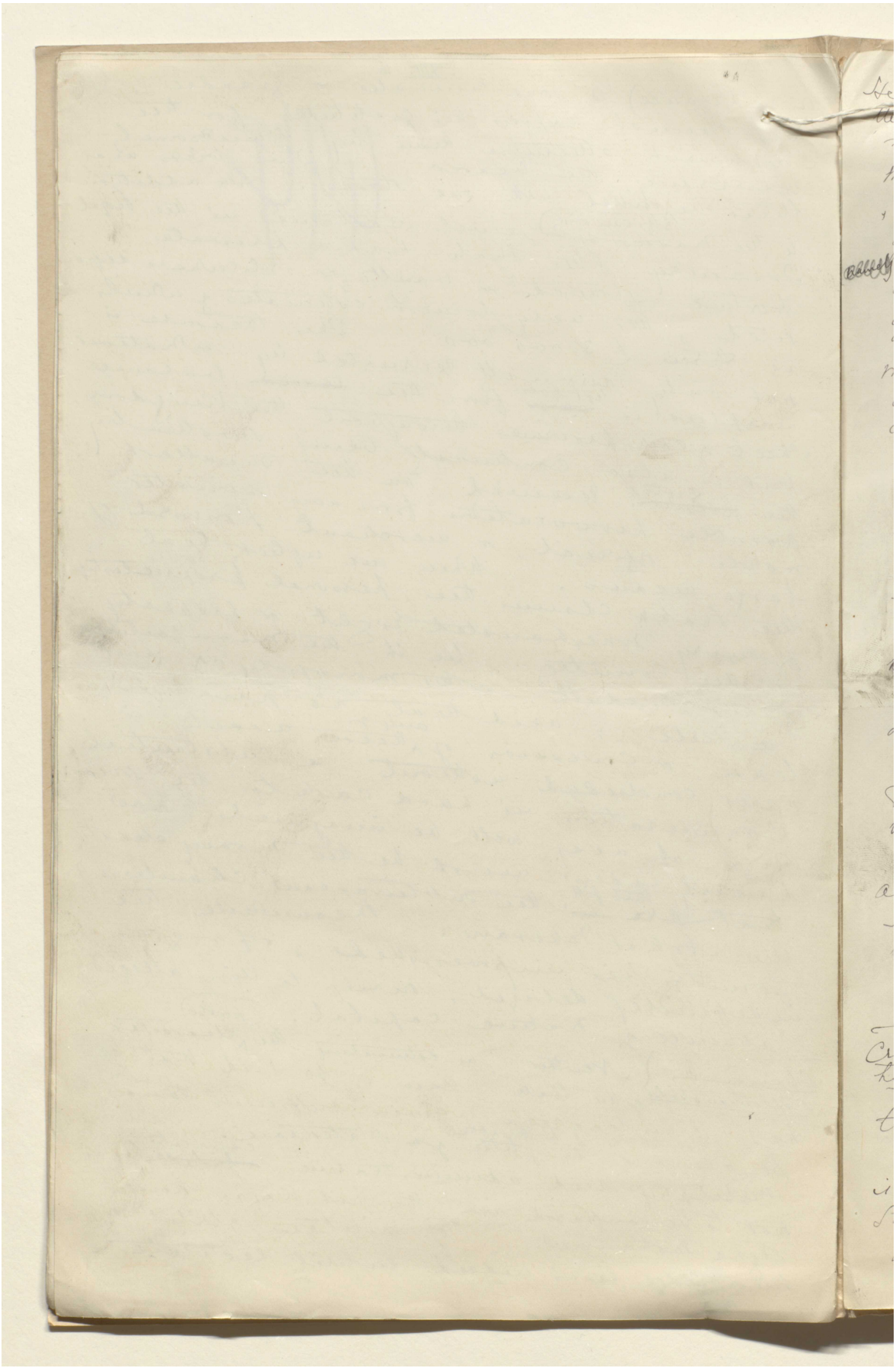

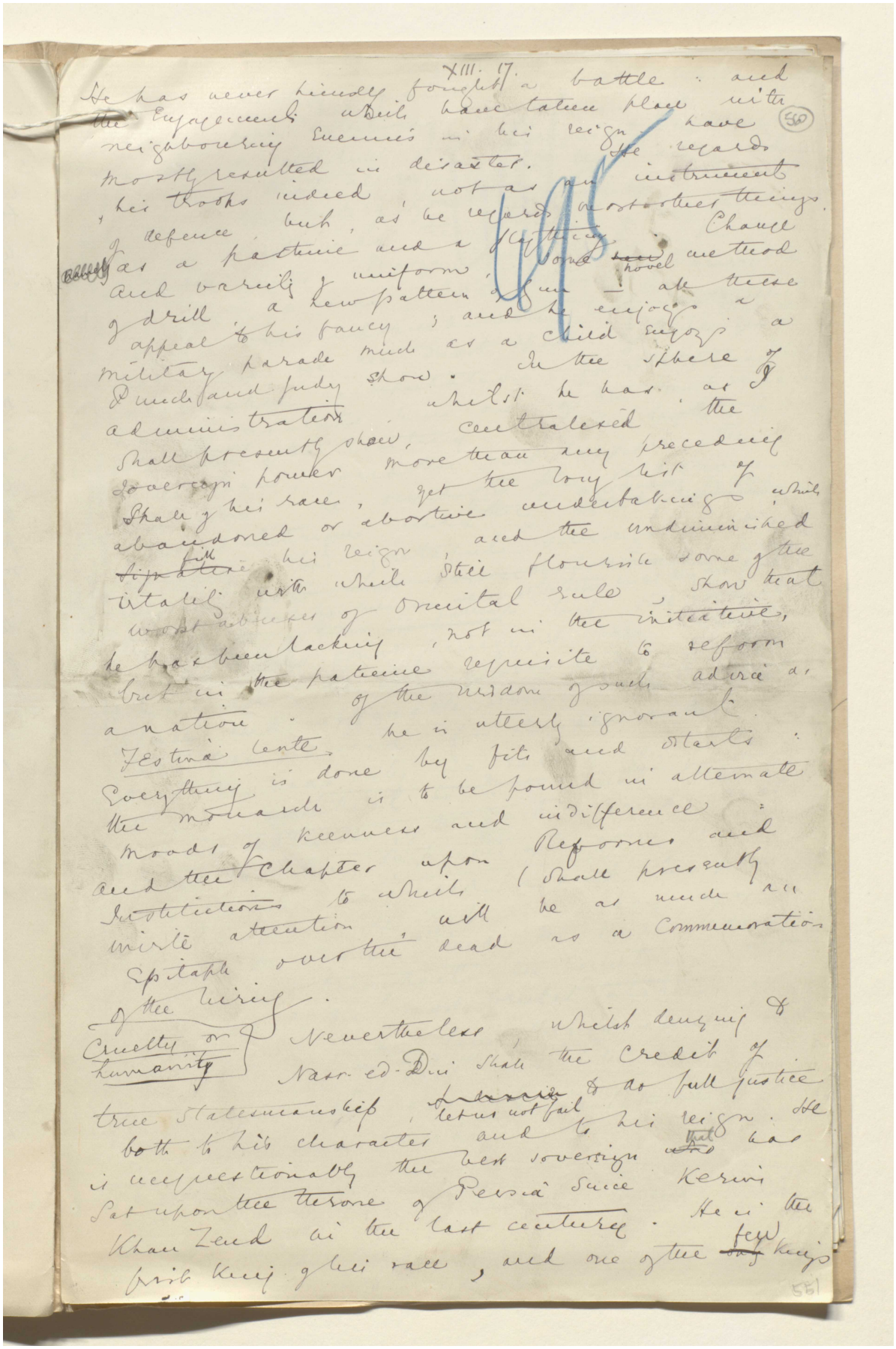

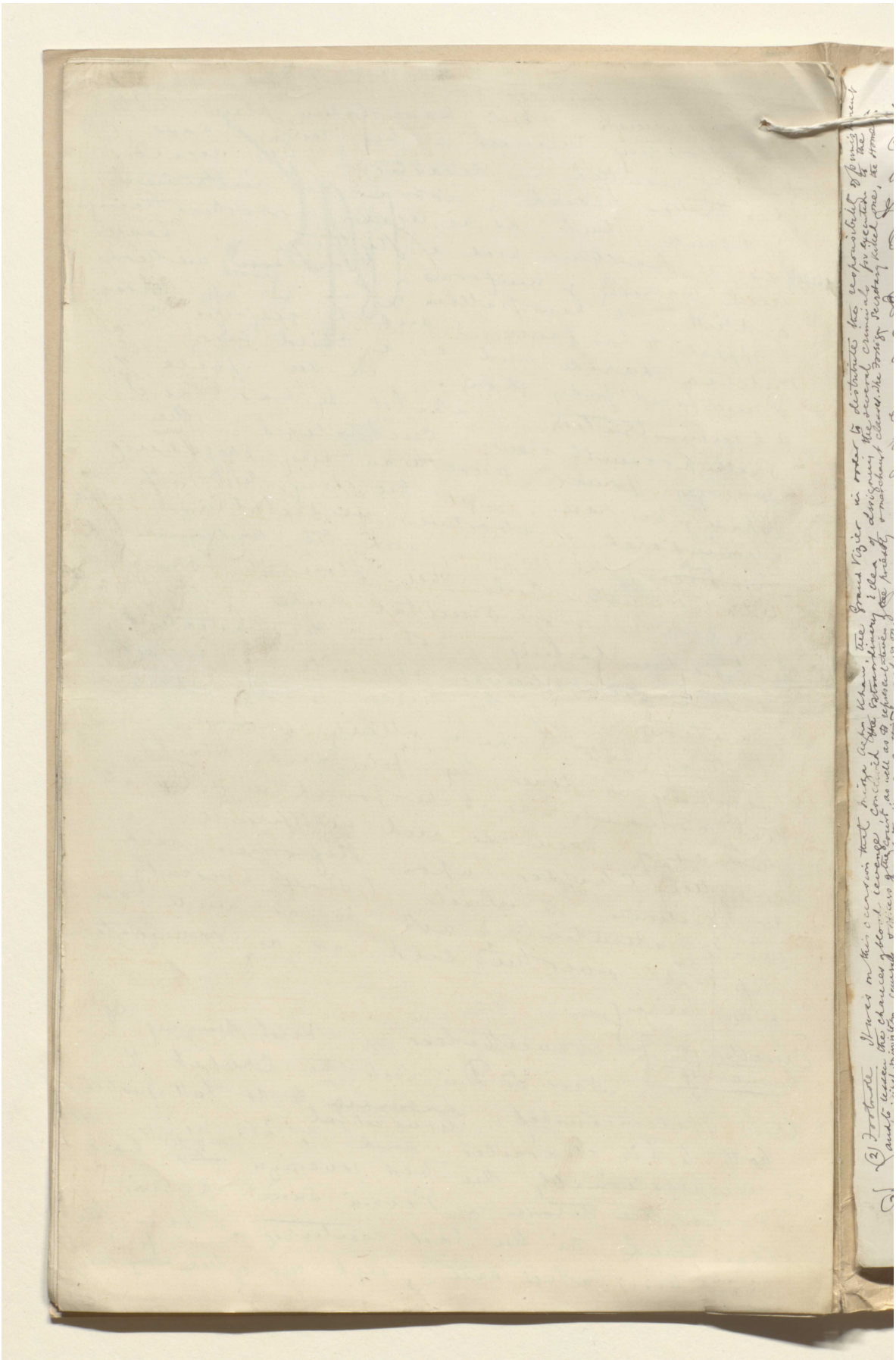

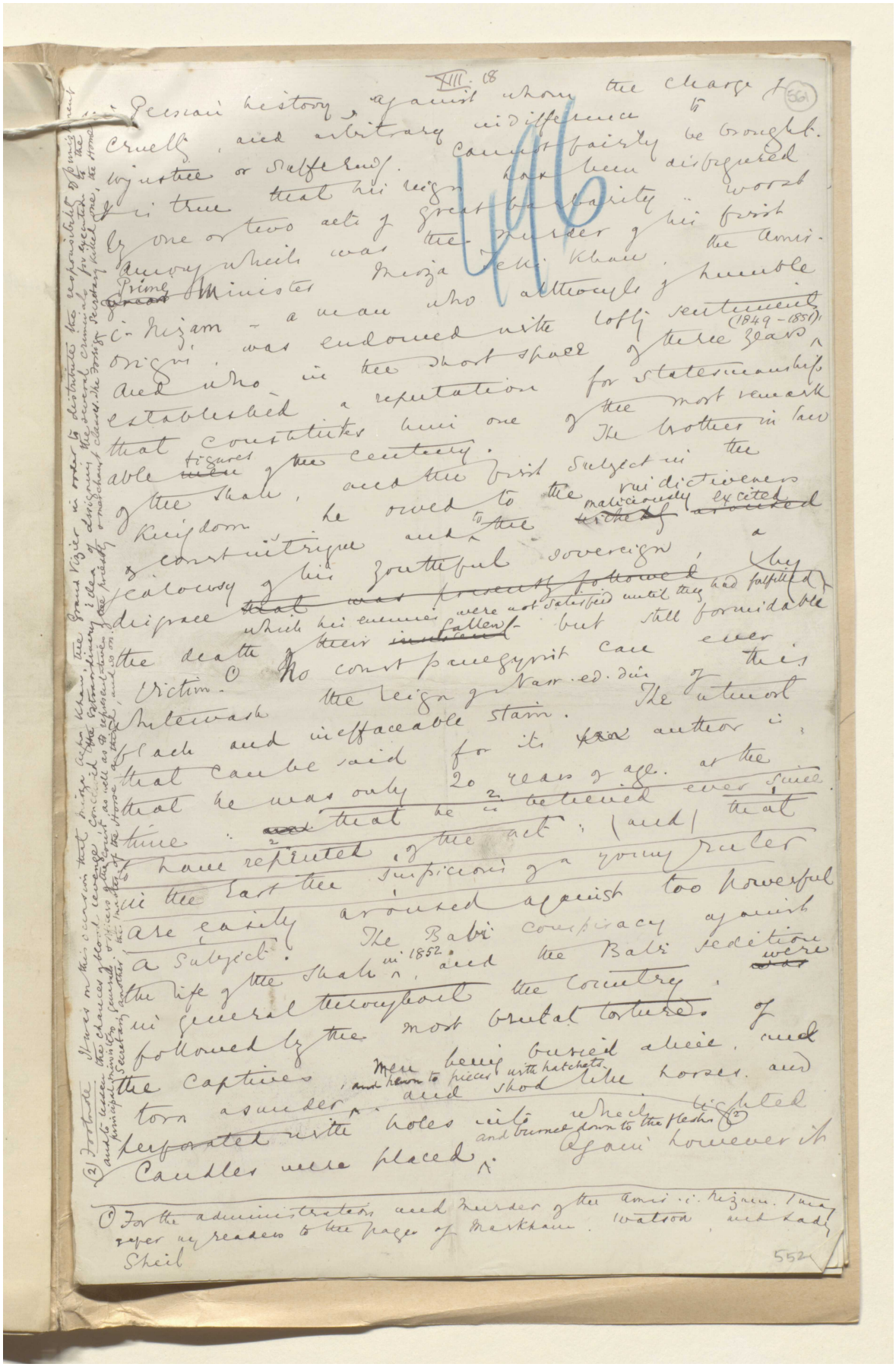

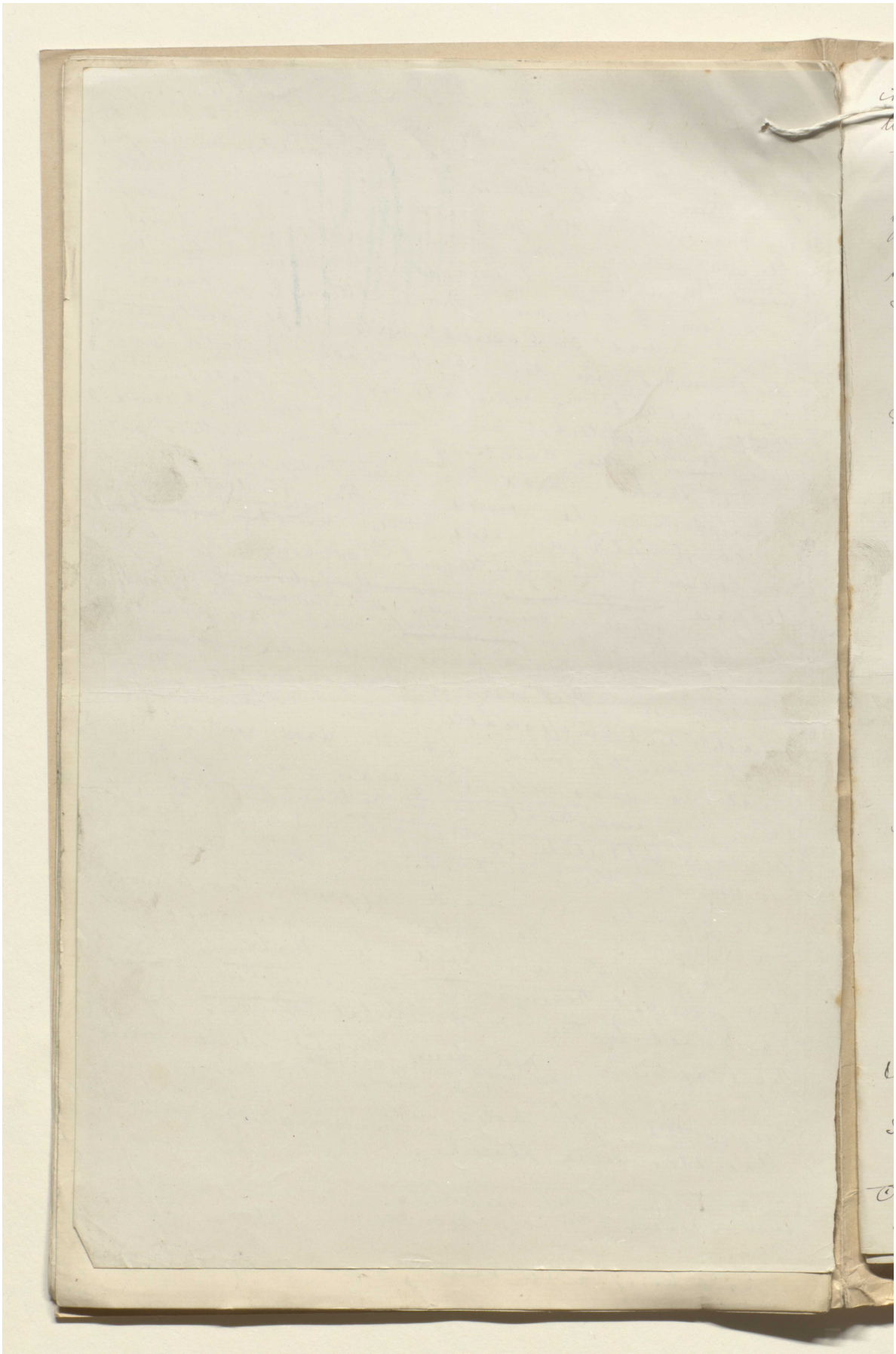

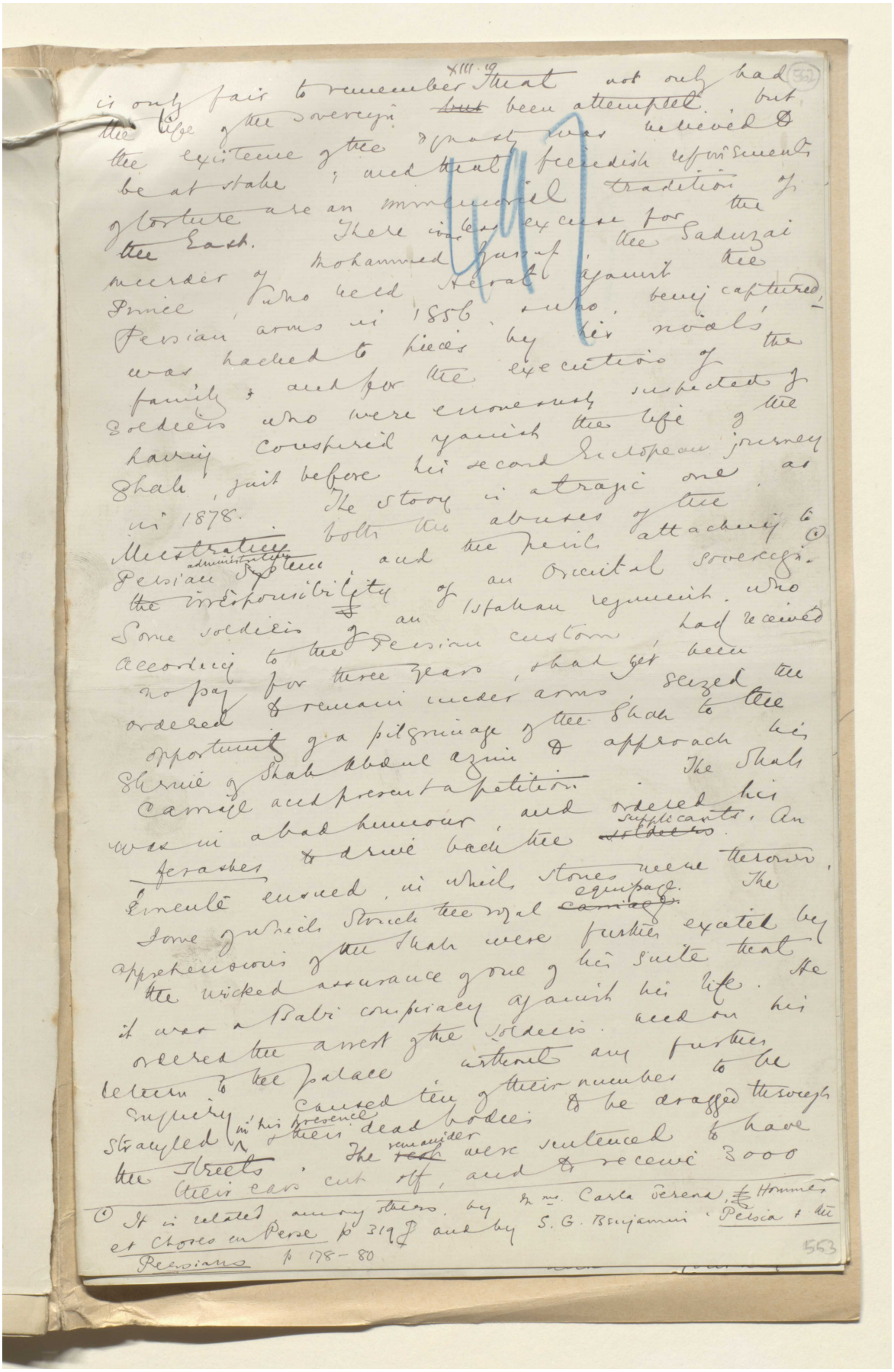

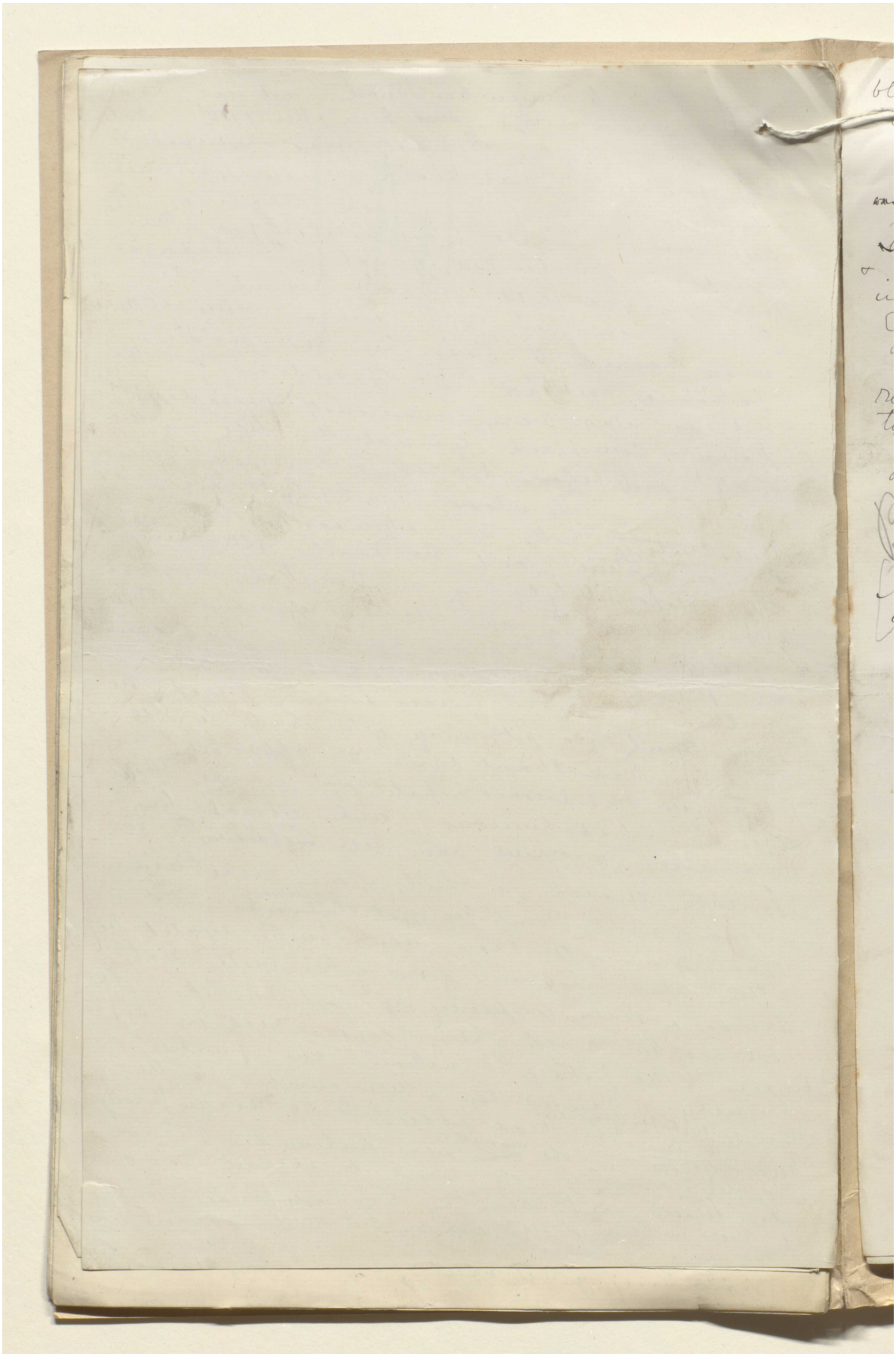

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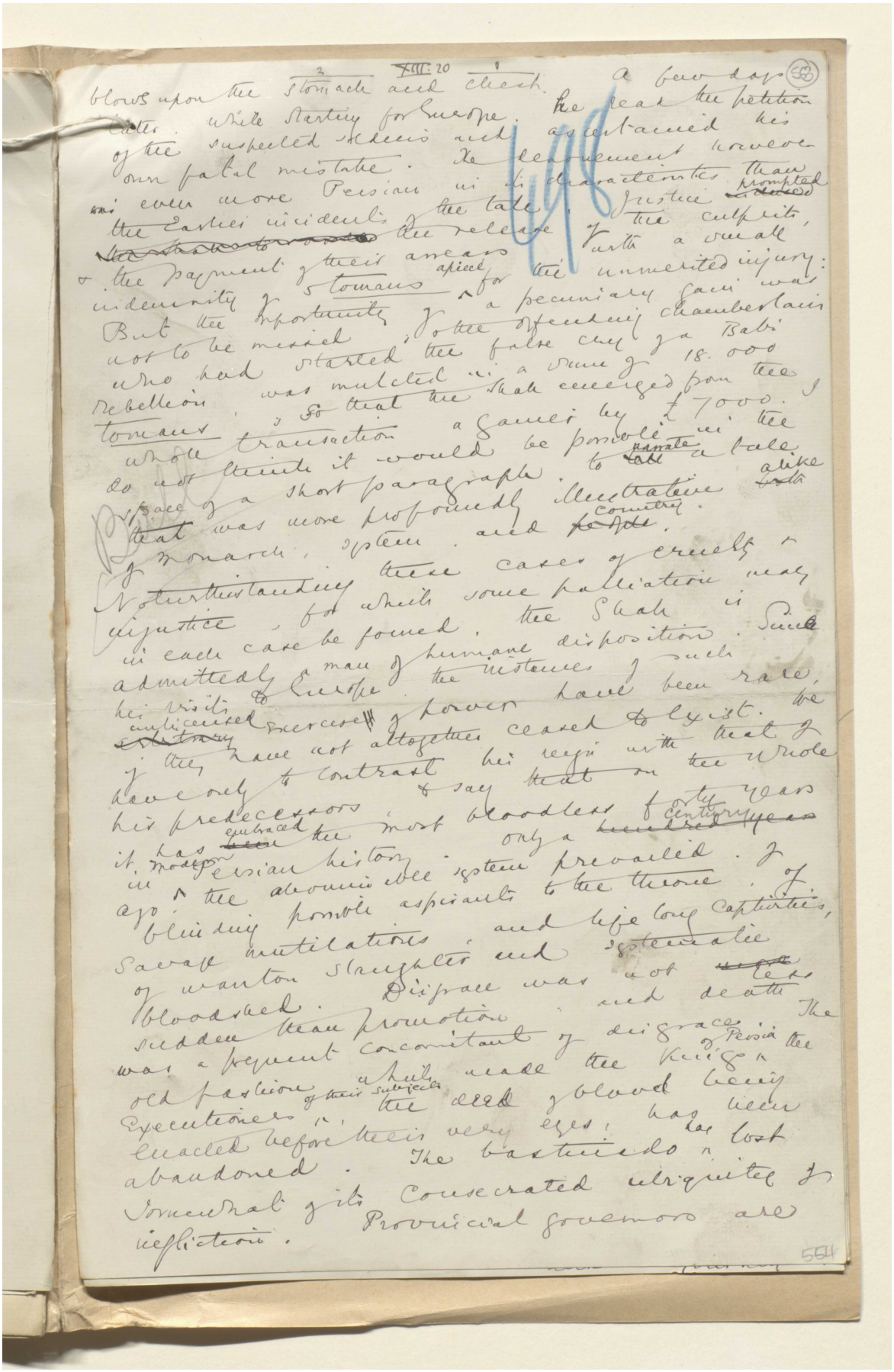

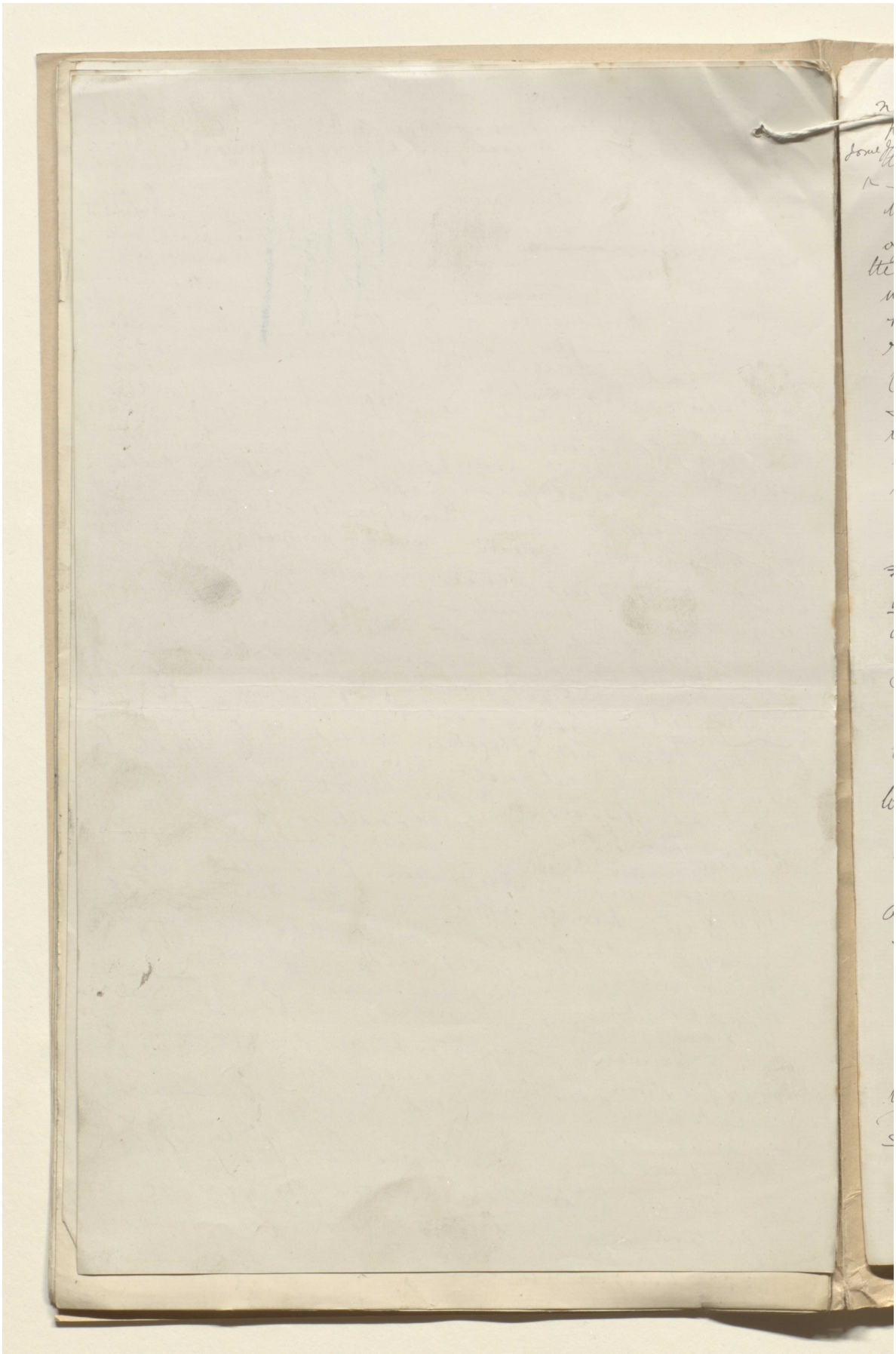

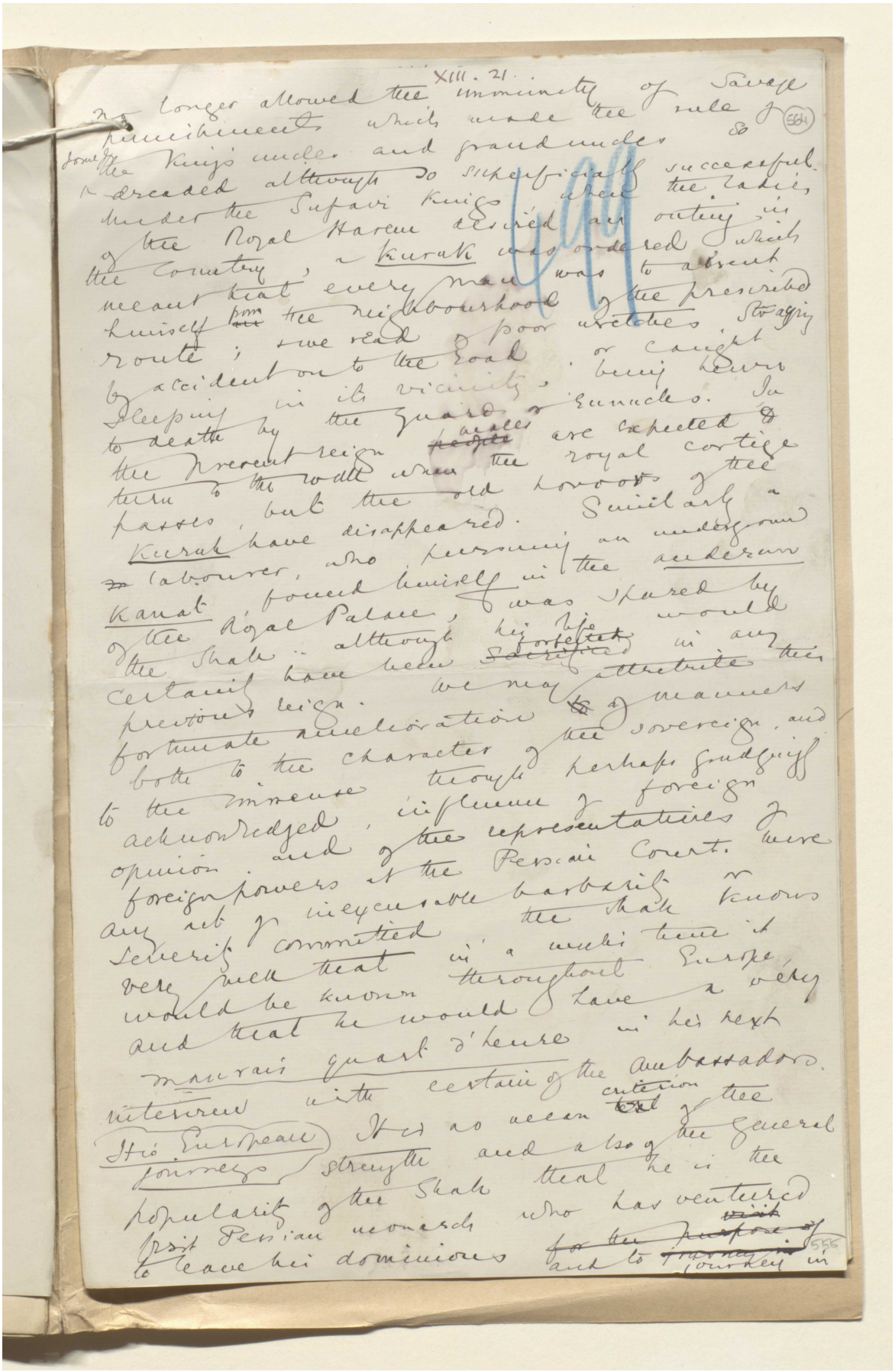

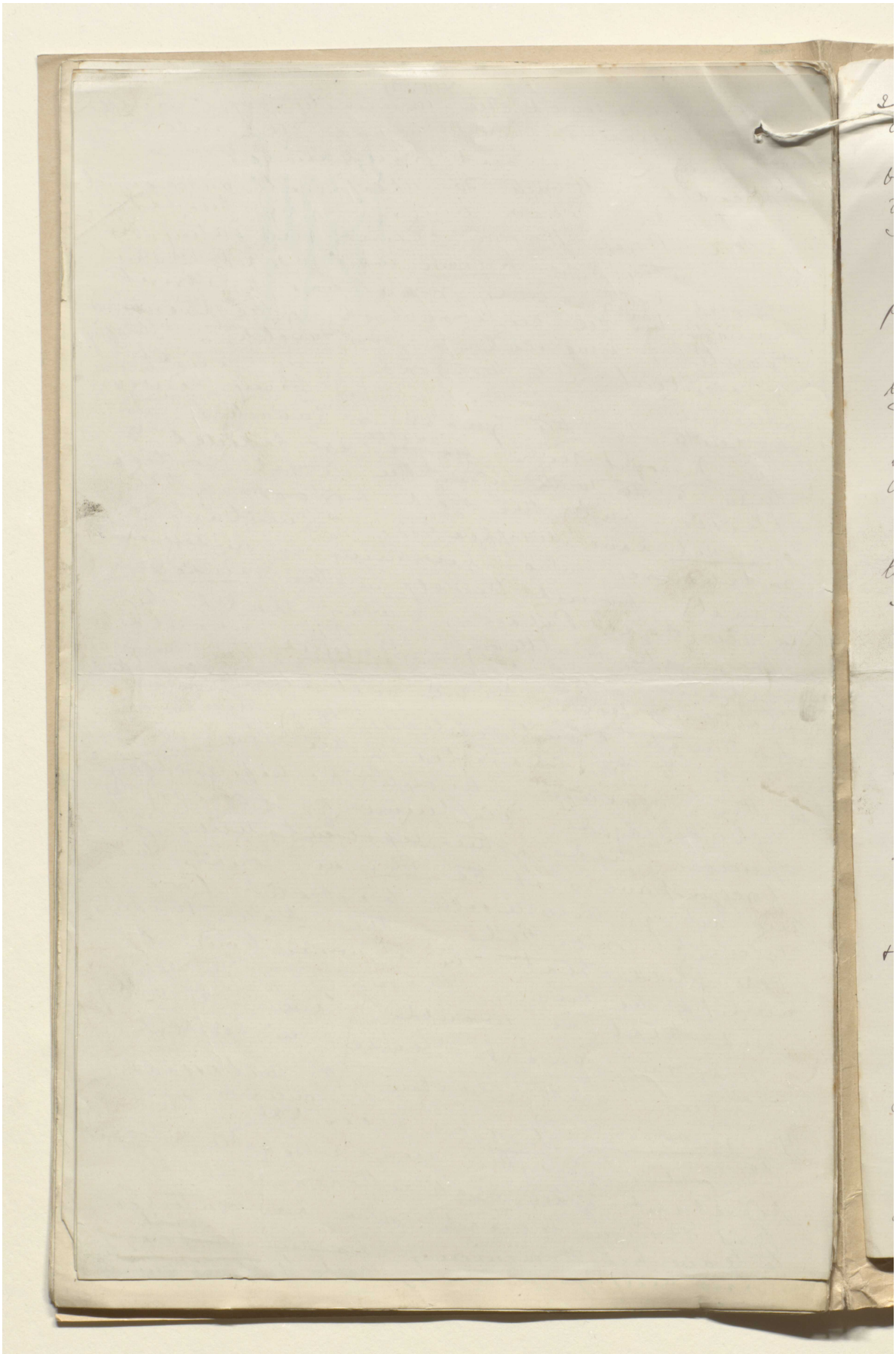

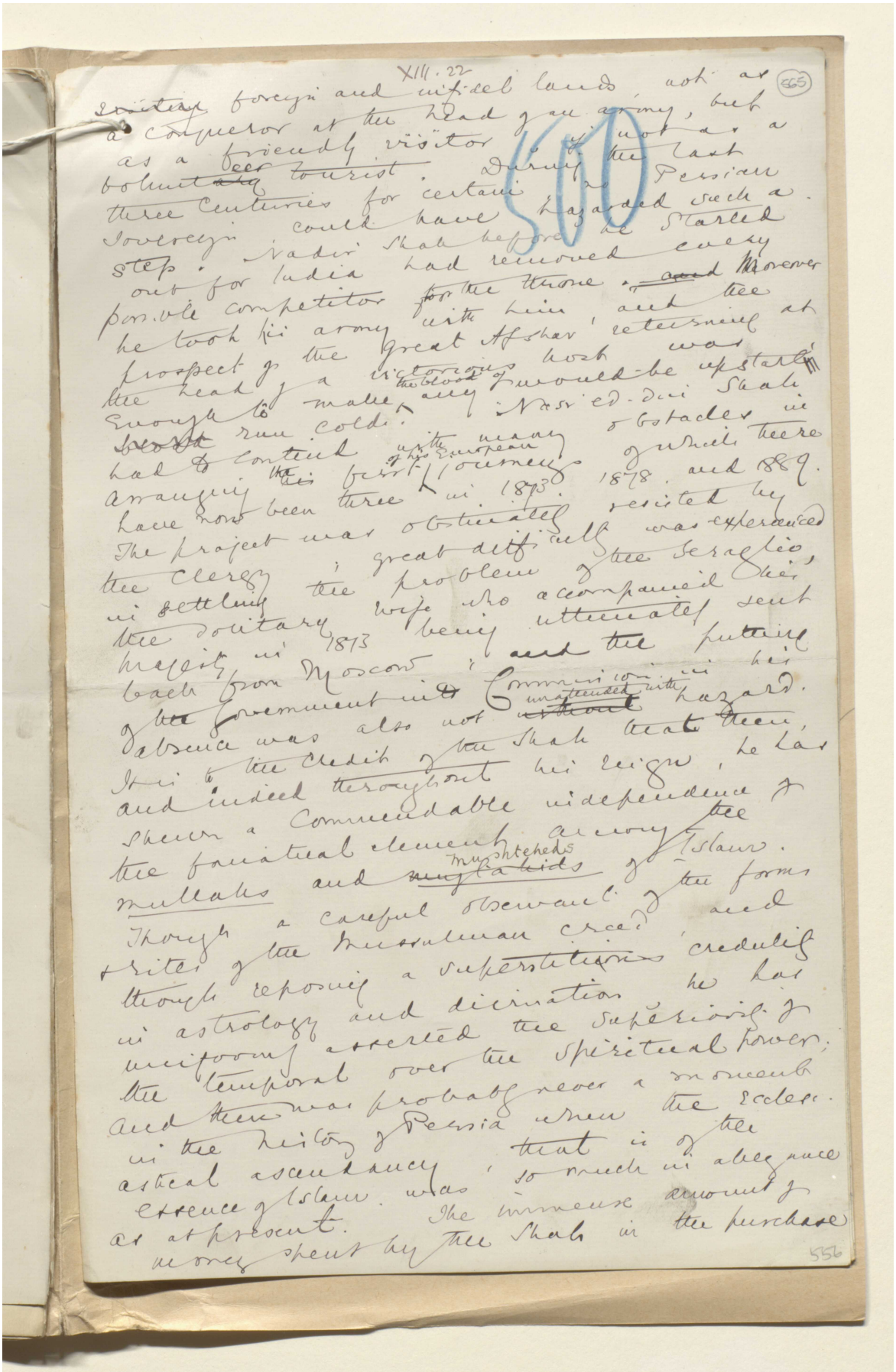

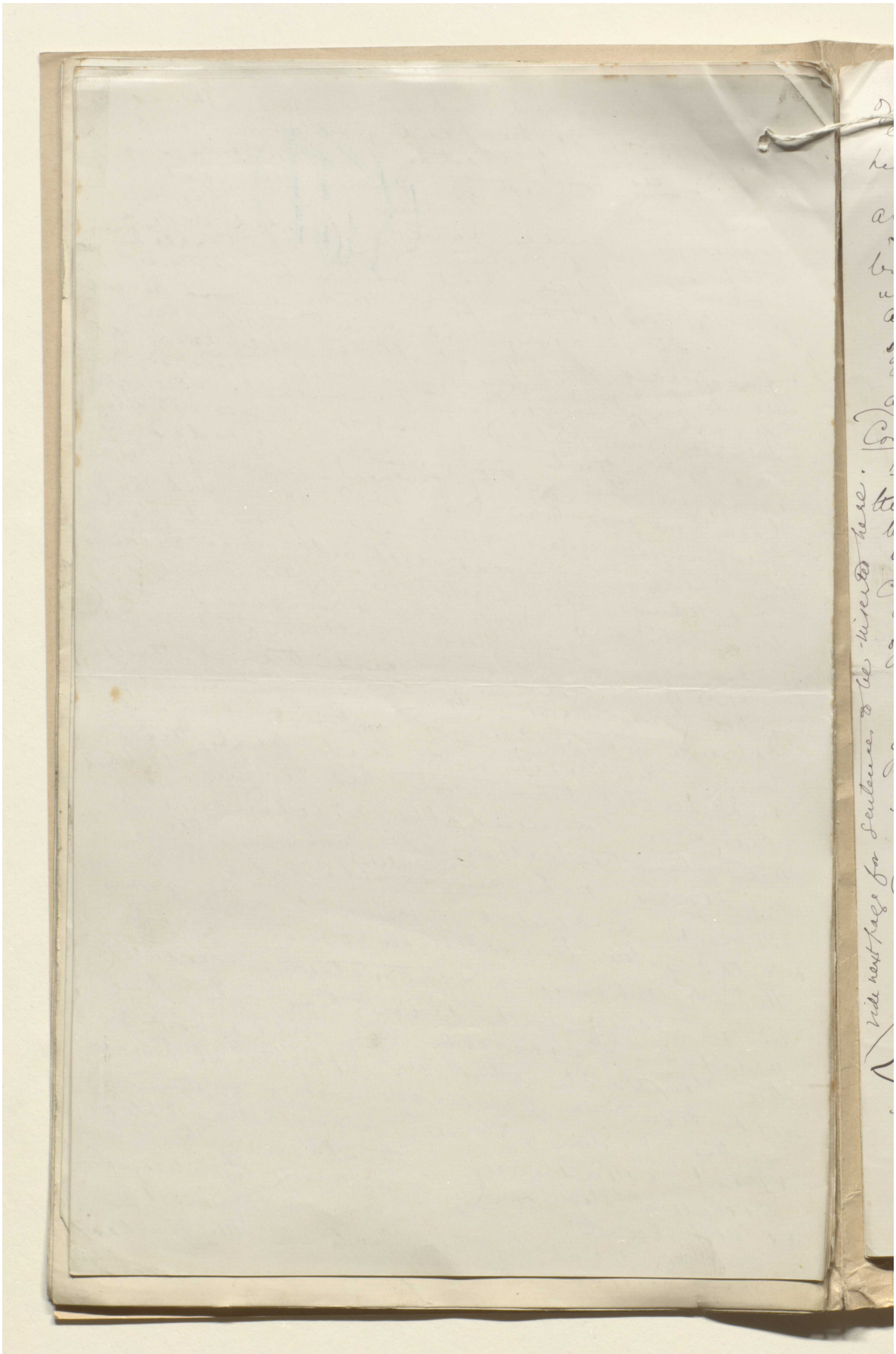

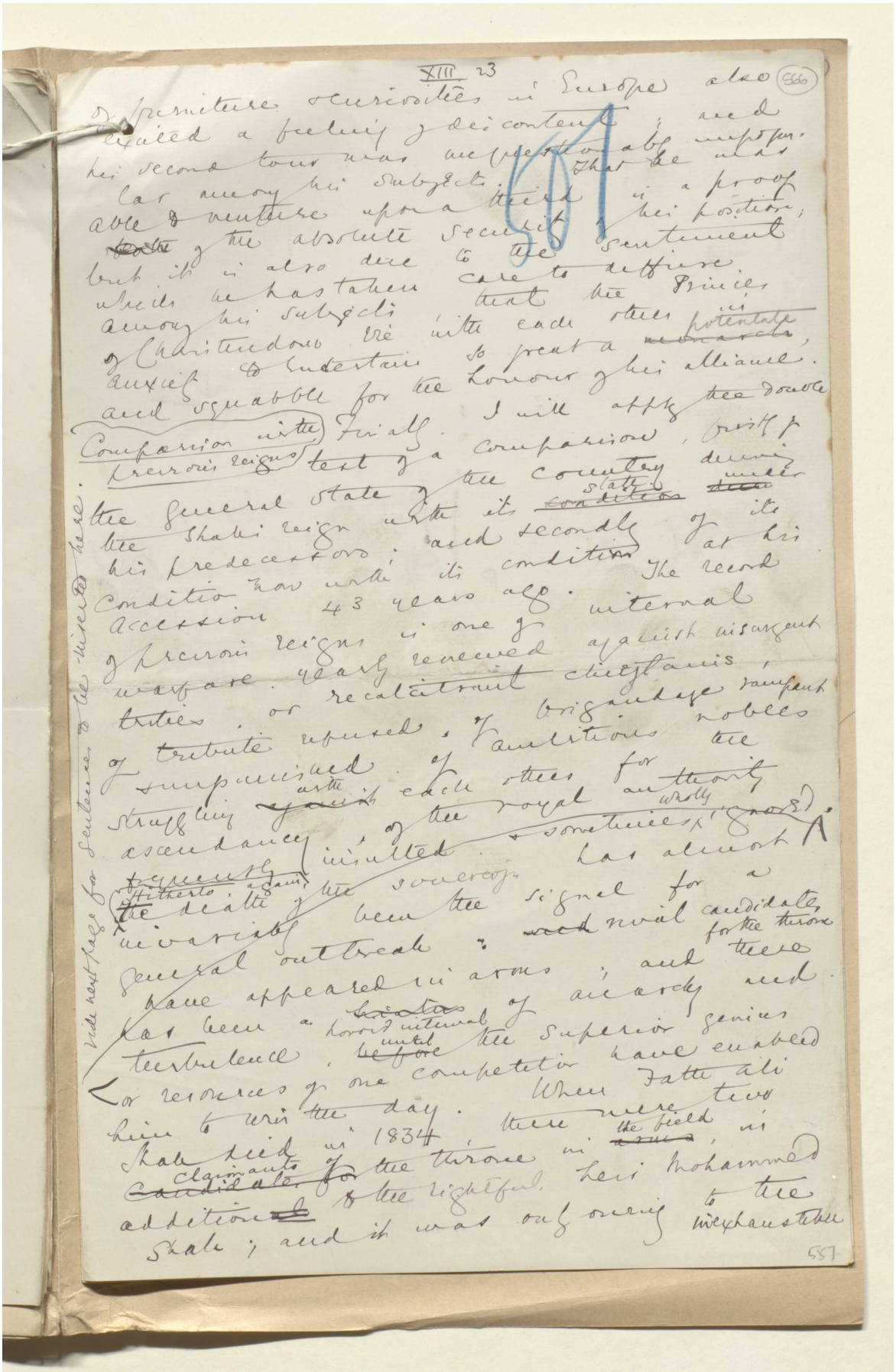

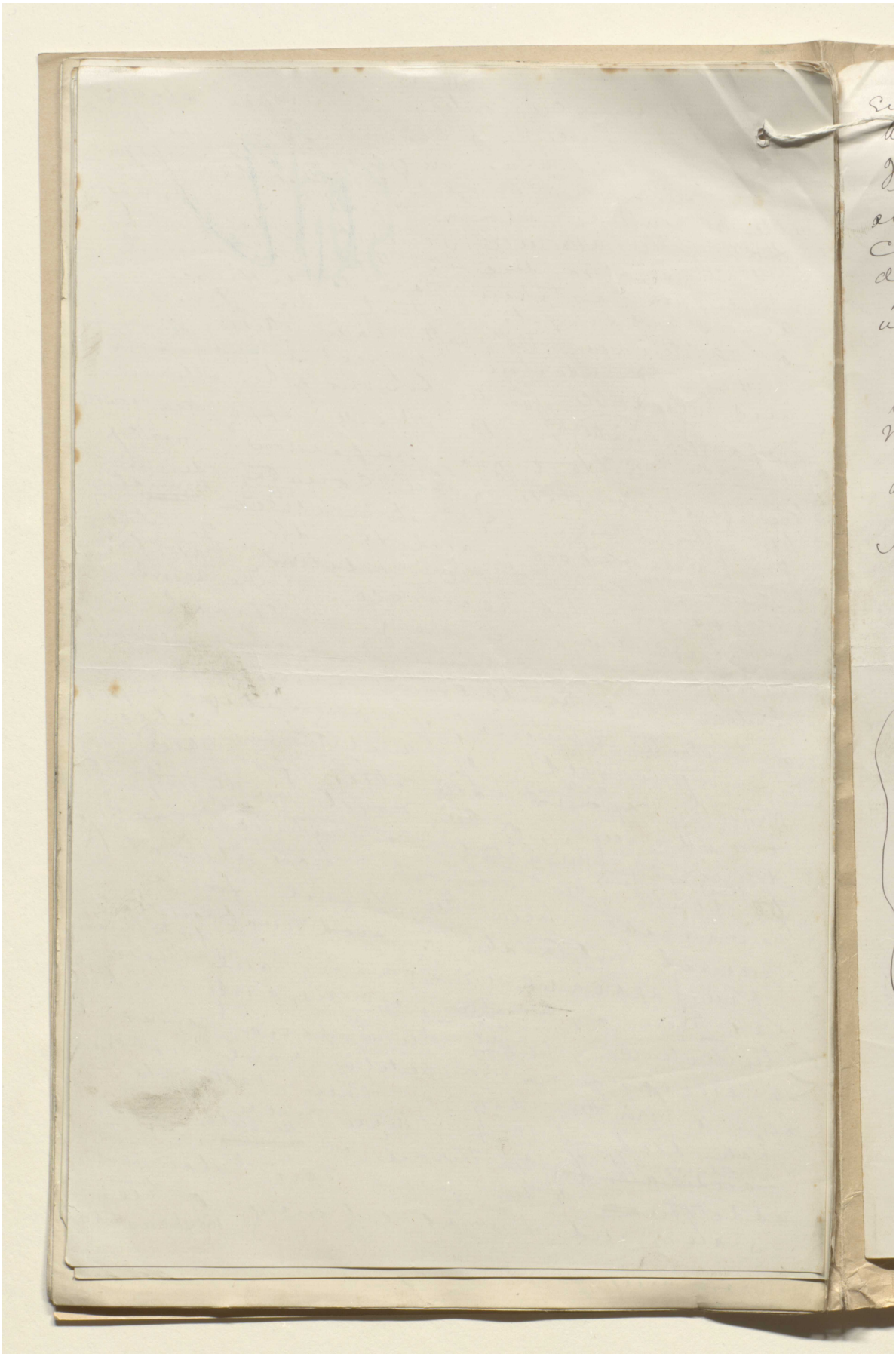

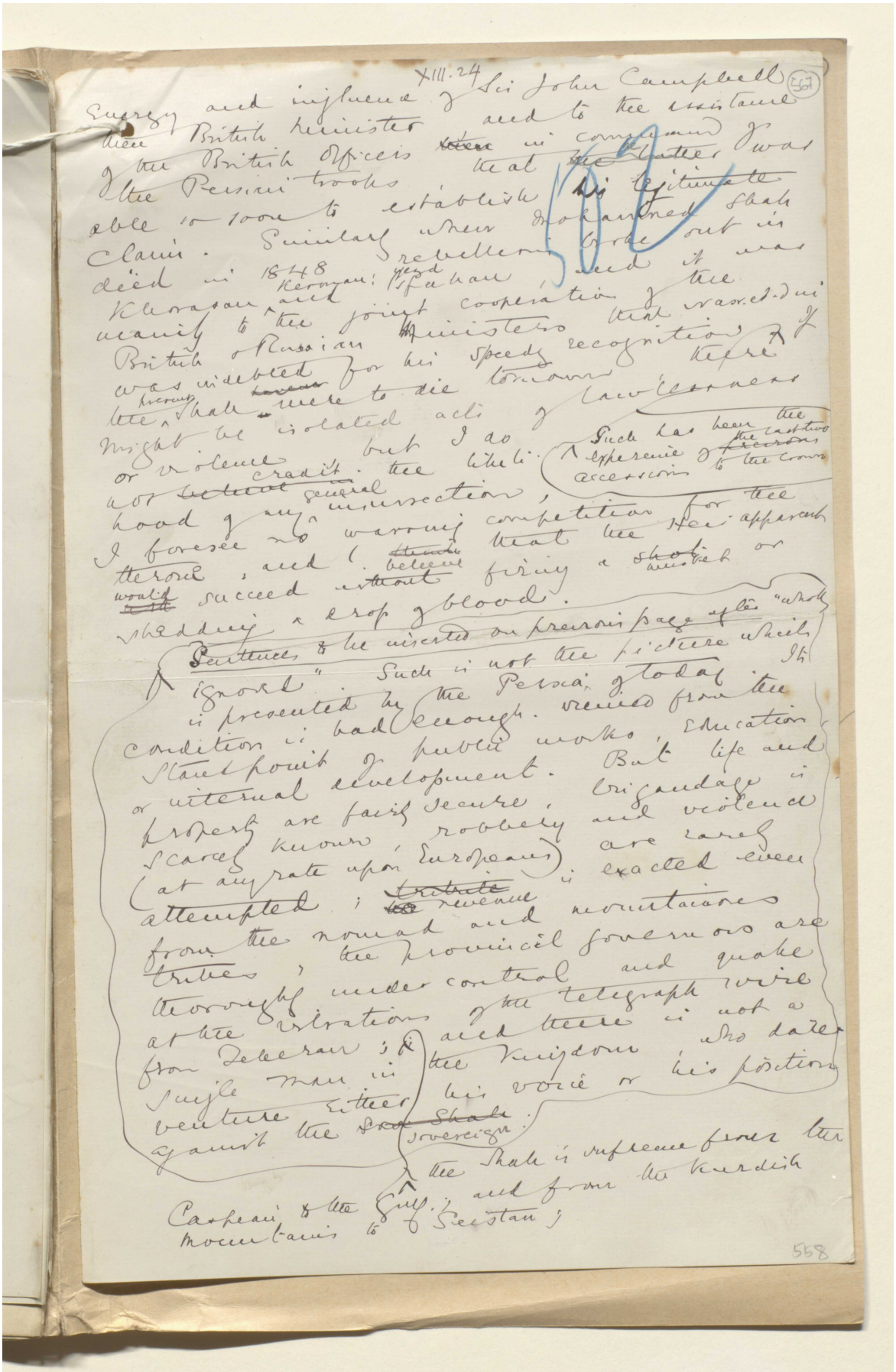

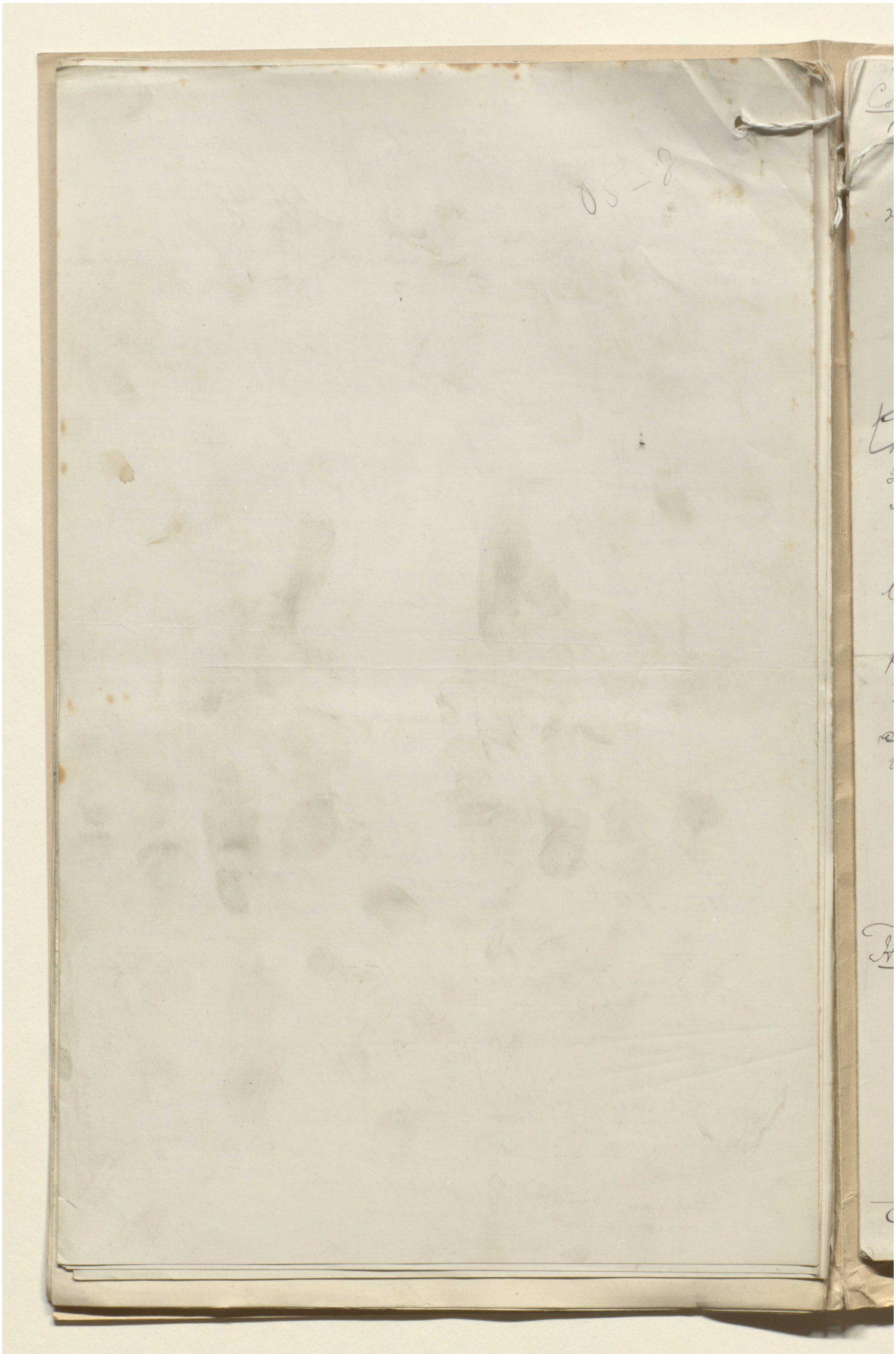

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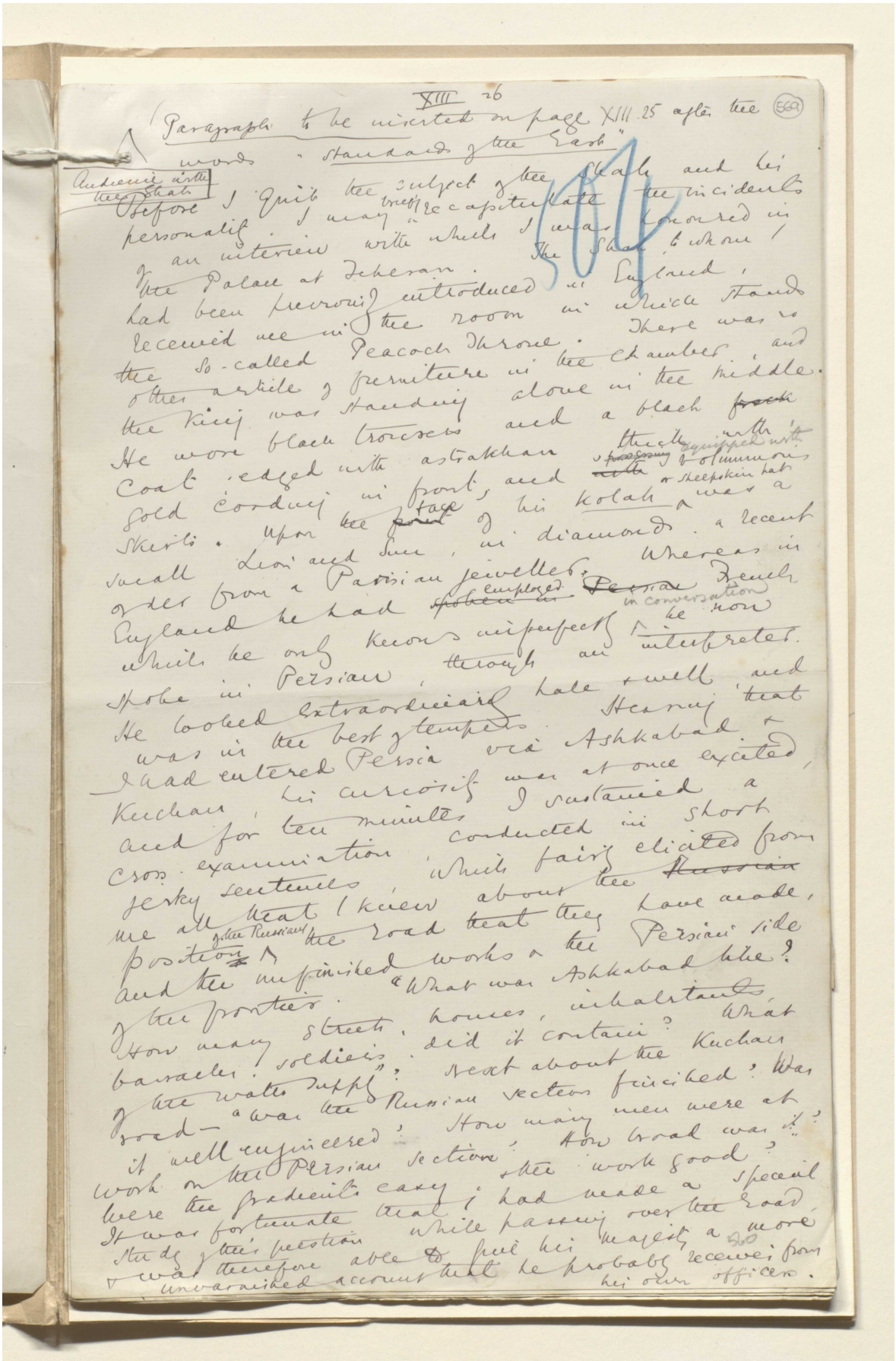

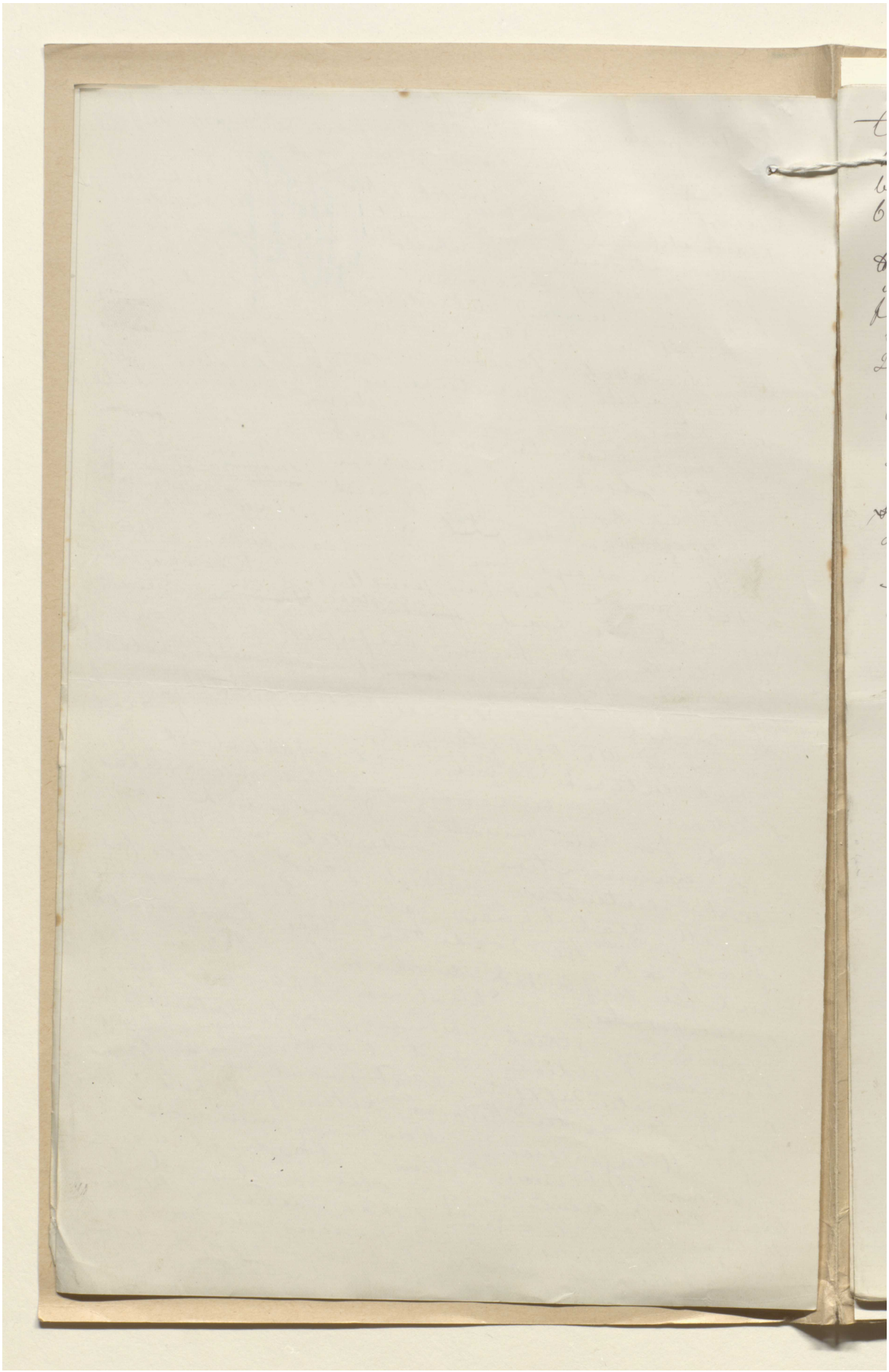

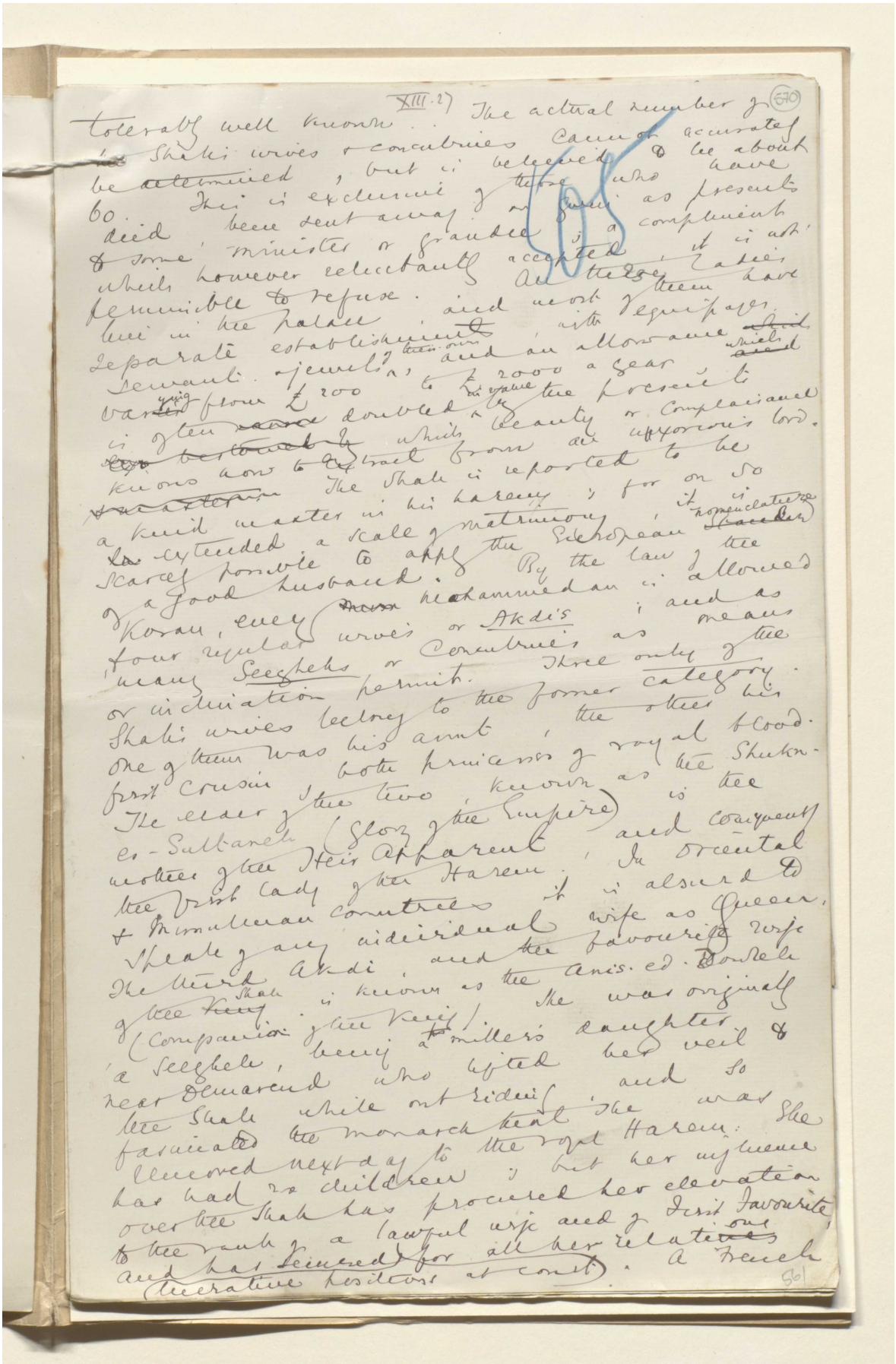

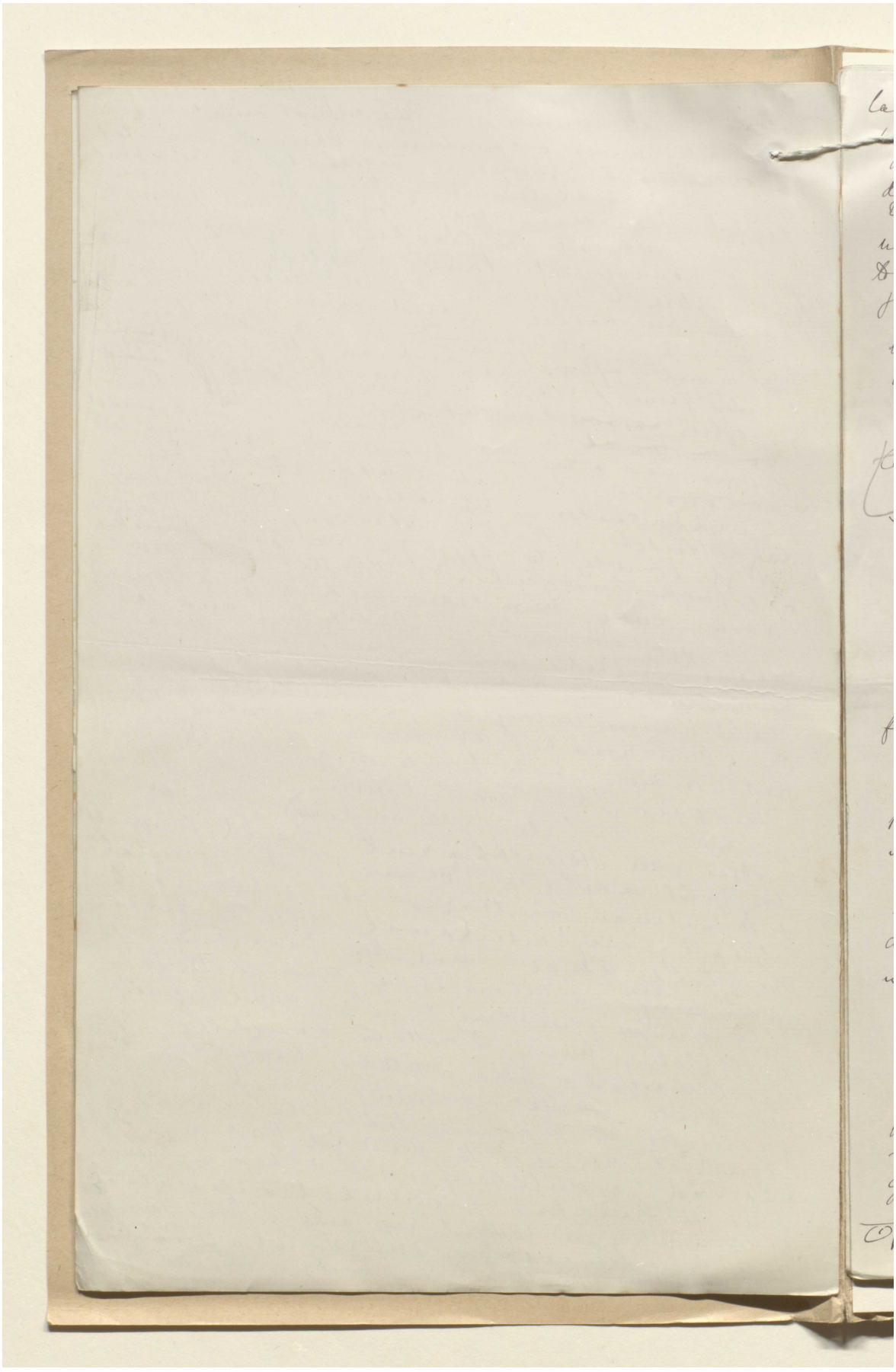

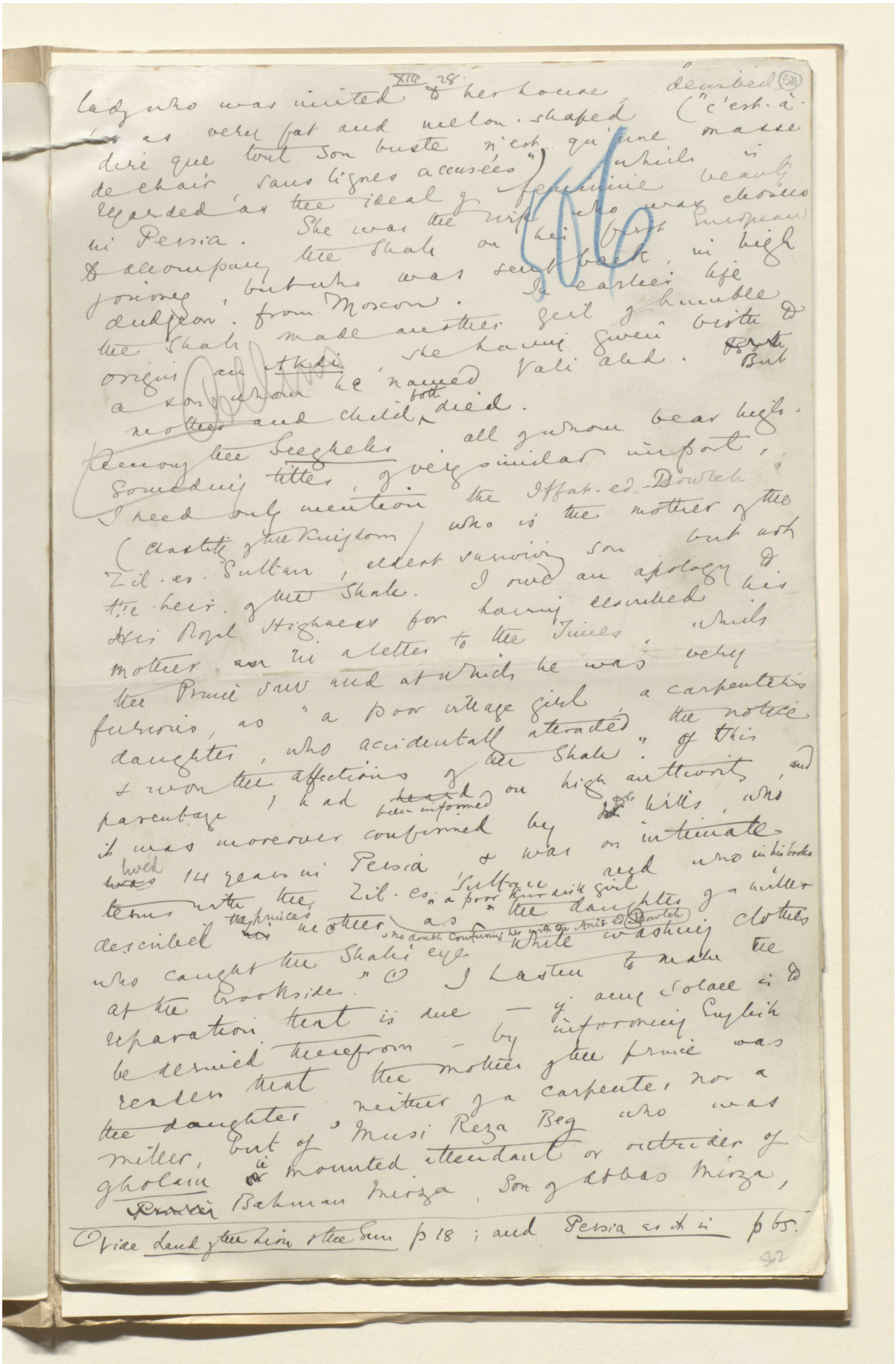

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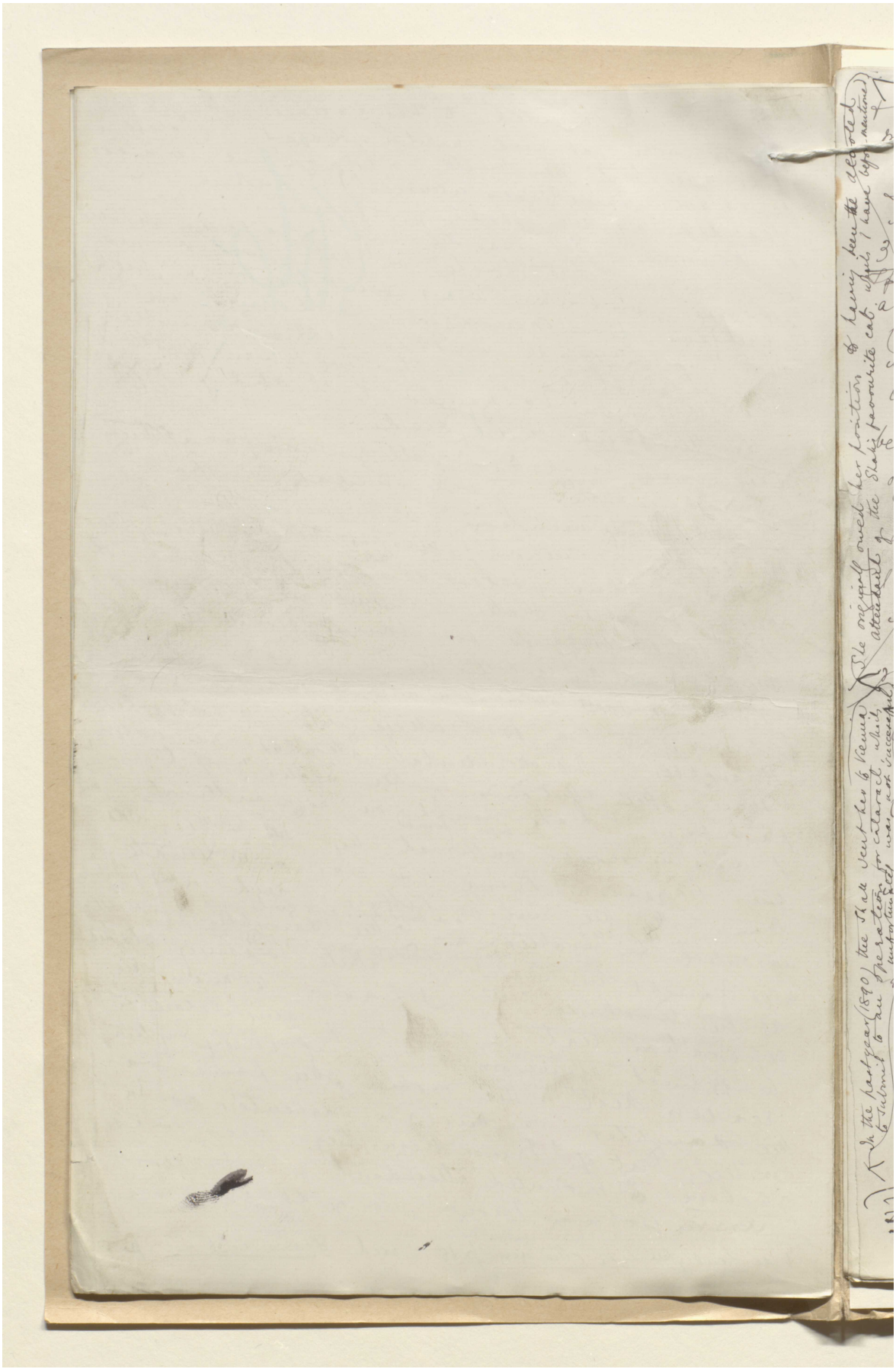
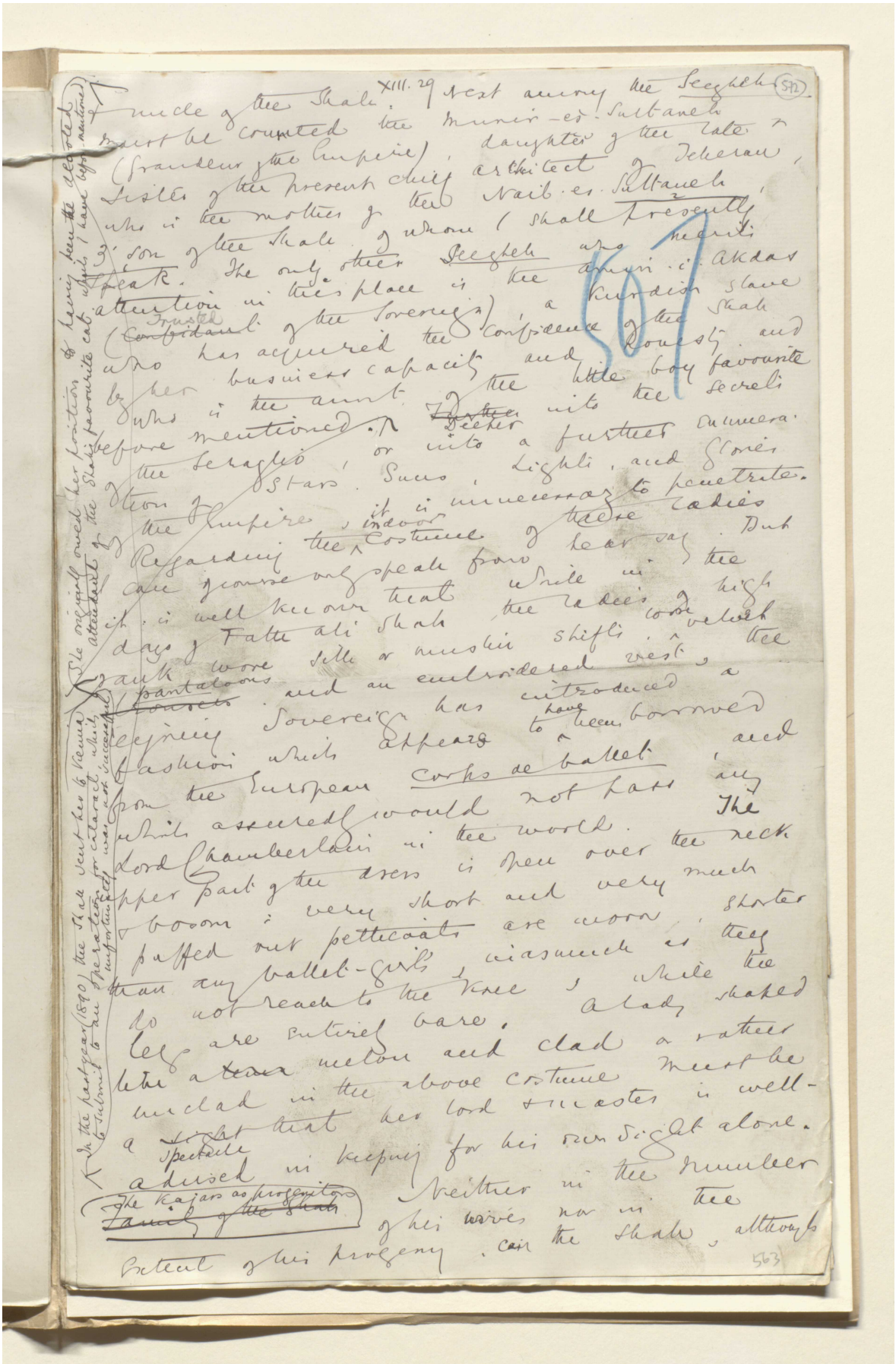
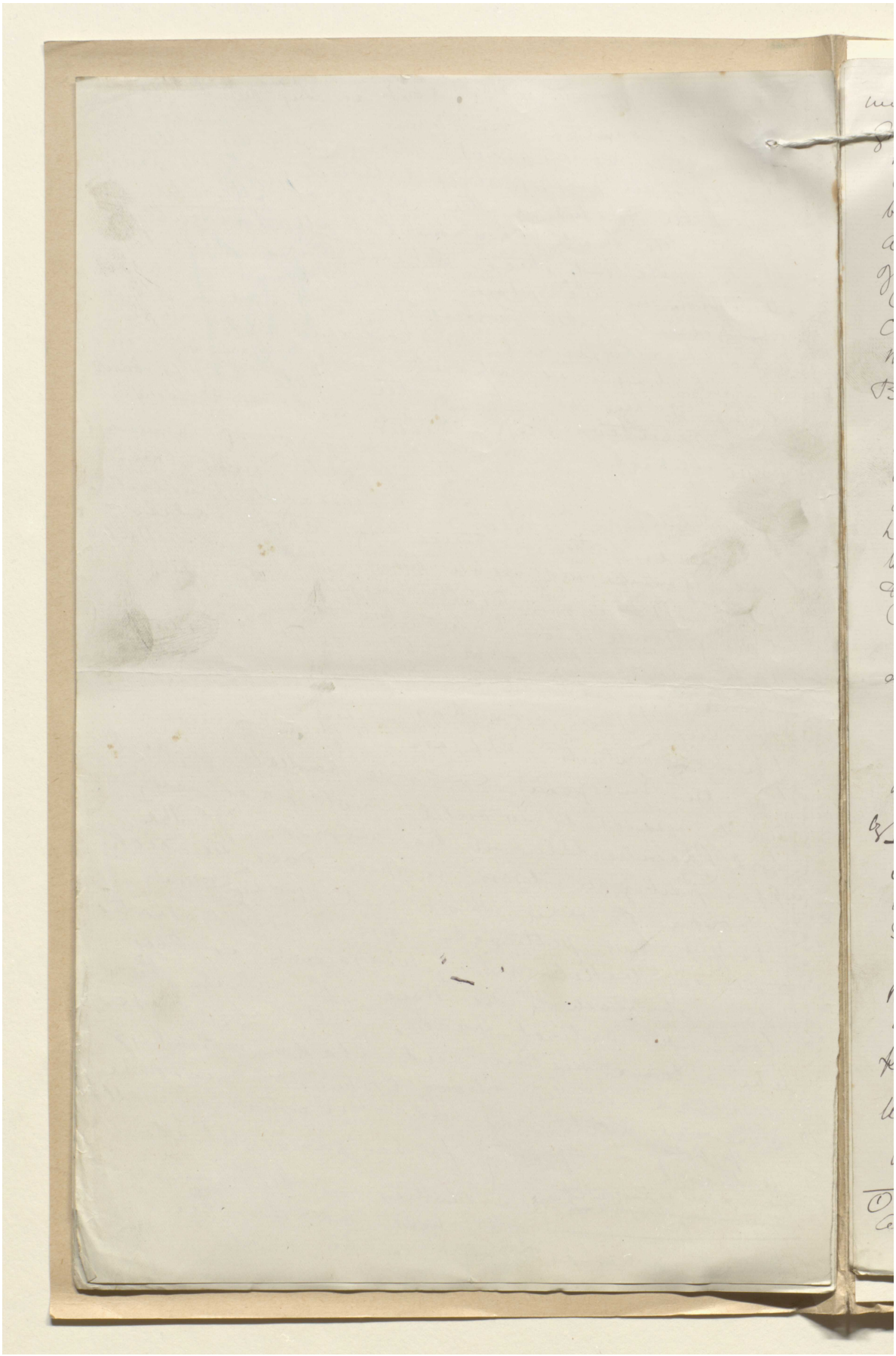
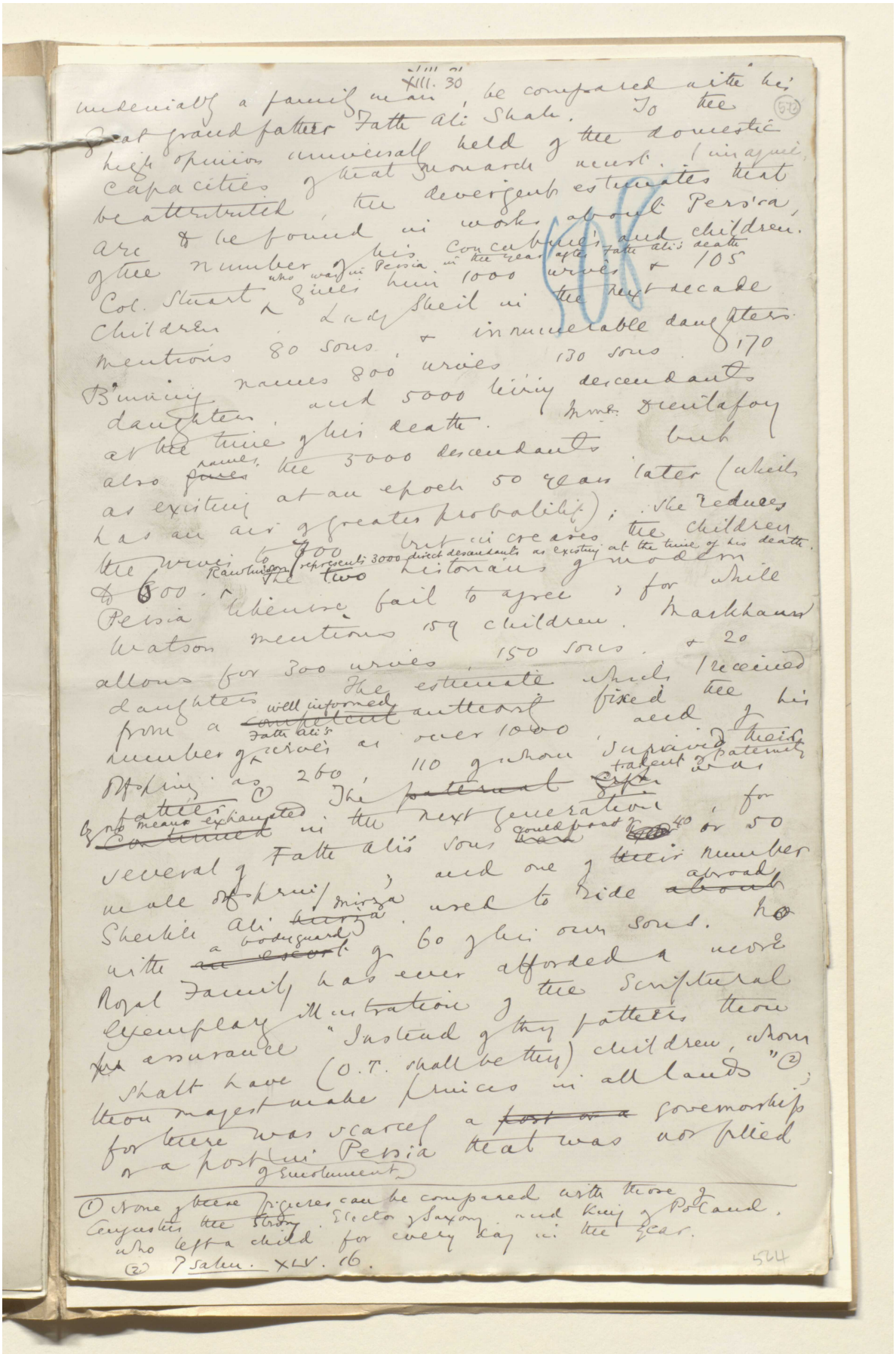






XIII. 30

(572)



undeniably a family man, be compared with his great grandfather Fath Ali Shah. To the high opinion universally held of the domestic capacities of that monarch must, I imagine, be attributed, the divergent estimates that are to be found in works about Persia, of the number of his concubines and children. Col. Stuart who was in Persia in the year after Fath Ali's death gives him 1000 wives & 105 children. Lady Sheil in the next decade mentions 80 sons & innumerable daughters. Binning names 800 wives, 130 sons, 170 daughters, and 5000 living descendants at the time of his death. Mme. Dieulafoy also names the 5000 descendants but as existing at an epoch 50 years later (which has an air of greater probability); she reduces the wives to 700 but increases the children to 600. Rawlinson represents 3000 direct descendants as existing at the time of his death. The two historians of modern Persia likewise fail to agree; for while Watson mentions 159 children, Markham allows for 300 wives, 150 sons, & 20 daughters. The estimate which I received from a well informed authority fixed the number of Fath Ali's wives as over 1000, and of his offspring as 260, 110 of whom survived their father.(1) The ~~paternal~~ ~~[illegible]~~ talent of paternity was by no means exhausted in the next generation, for several of Fath Ali's sons could boast of 40 or 50 male offspring, and one of their number Sheikh Ali Mirza used to ride abroad with a bodyguard of 60 of his own sons. No Royal Family has ever afforded a more exemplary illustration of the Scriptural assurance "Instead of thy fathers thou shalt have (O.T. shall be thy) children, whom thou mayest make princes in all lands"(2); for there was scarcely a ~~post or a~~ governorship or a post of emolument in Persia that was not filled

(1) None of these figures can be compared with those of Augustus the Strong, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, who left a child for every day in the year.
(2) Psalm. XLV. 16.

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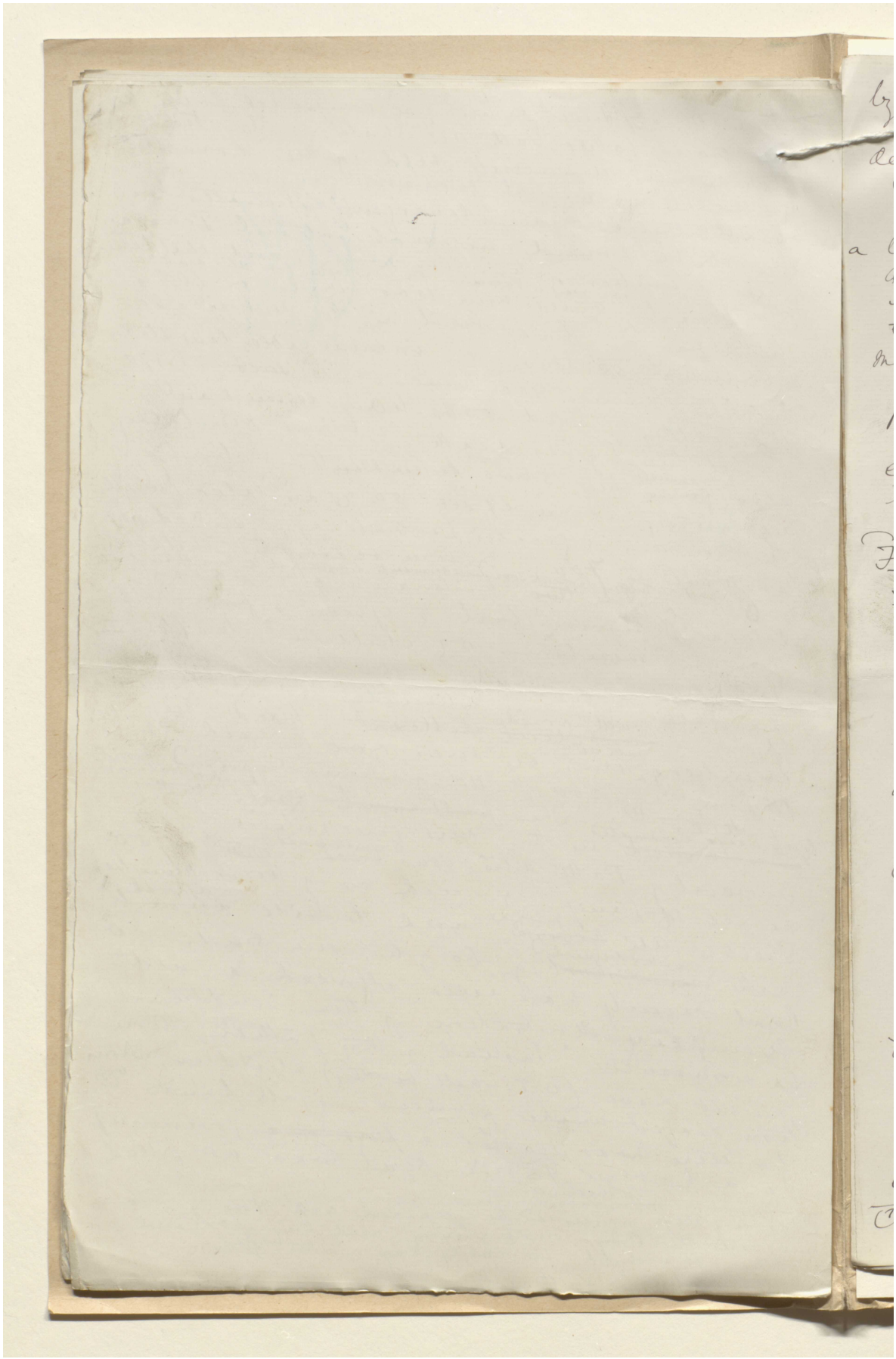
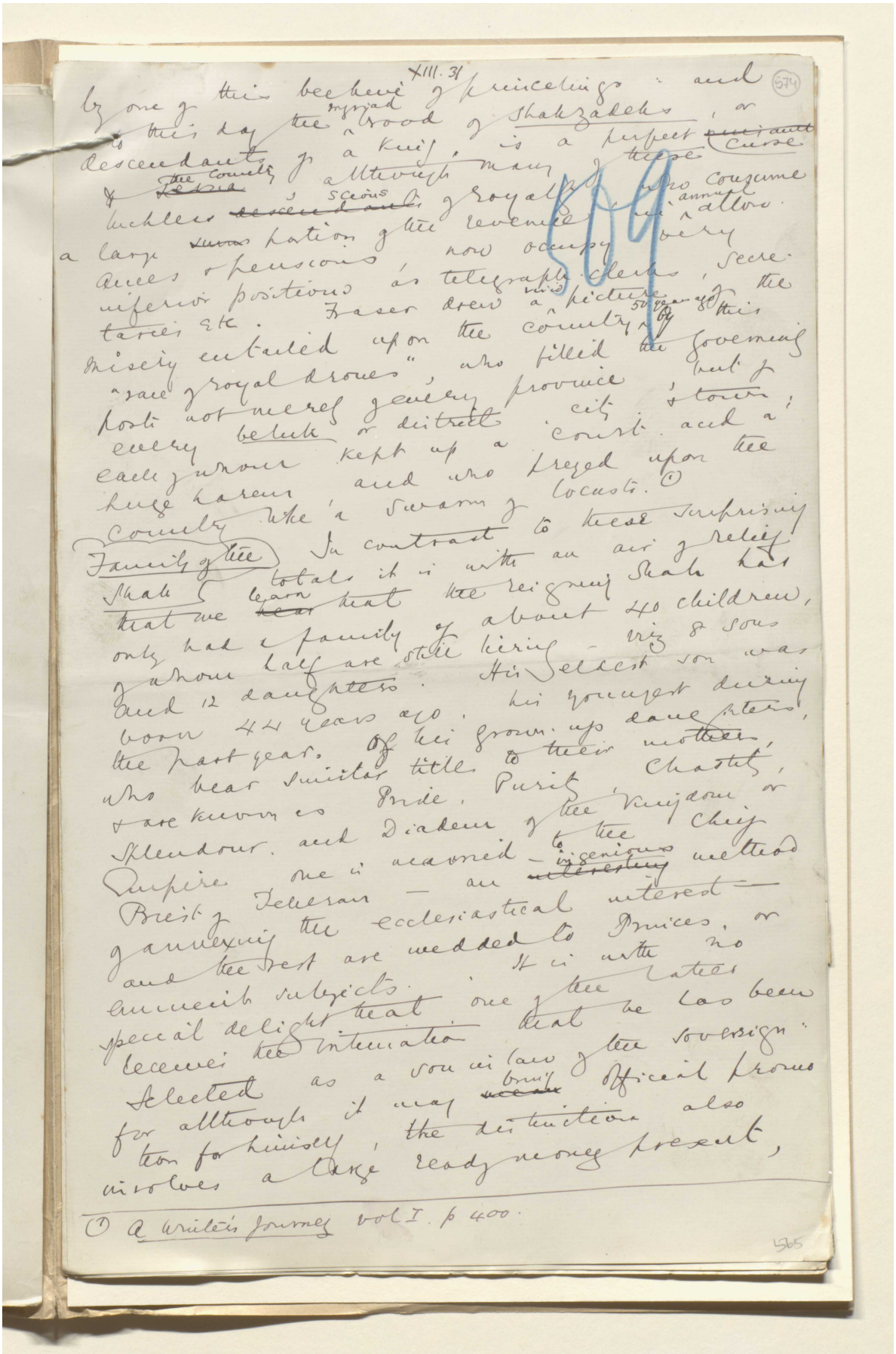


مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٥٧٤و] (١٣٥٥/١١٤٨)

XIII. 31

(574)



by one of this beehive of princelings: and to this day the myriad brood of Shahzadehs, or descendants of a king, is a perfect ~~[illegible]~~ curse of the country, although many of these luckless ~~descendants~~ scions of royalty who consume a large ~~[illegible]~~ portion of the revenue in annual allowances & pensions, now occupy very inferior positions as telegraph clerks, secretaries etc. Fraser drew a vivid picture of the misery entailed upon the country 50 years ago by this "race of royal drones", who filled the governing posts not merely of every province but of every beluk or district, city & town; each of whom kept up a court and a huge harem and who preyed upon the country like a swarm of locusts. (1)

Family of the Shah

In contrast to these surprising totals it is with an air of relief that we learn that the reigning Shah has only had a family of about 40 children, of whom half are still living — viz 8 sons and 12 daughters. His eldest son was born 44 years ago. His youngest during the past year. Of his grown-up daughters, who bear similar titles to their mothers, & are known as Pride, Purity, Chastity, Splendour, and Diadem of the Kingdom or Empire one is married to the Chief Priest of Teheran — an ingenious method of annexing the ecclesiastical interest — and the rest are wedded to Princes, or eminent subjects. It is with no special delight that one of the latter receives the intimation that he has been selected as a son in law of the sovereign: for although it may bring official promotion for himself, the distinction also involves a large ready money present,

(1) A Winter's Journey vol I. p 400.

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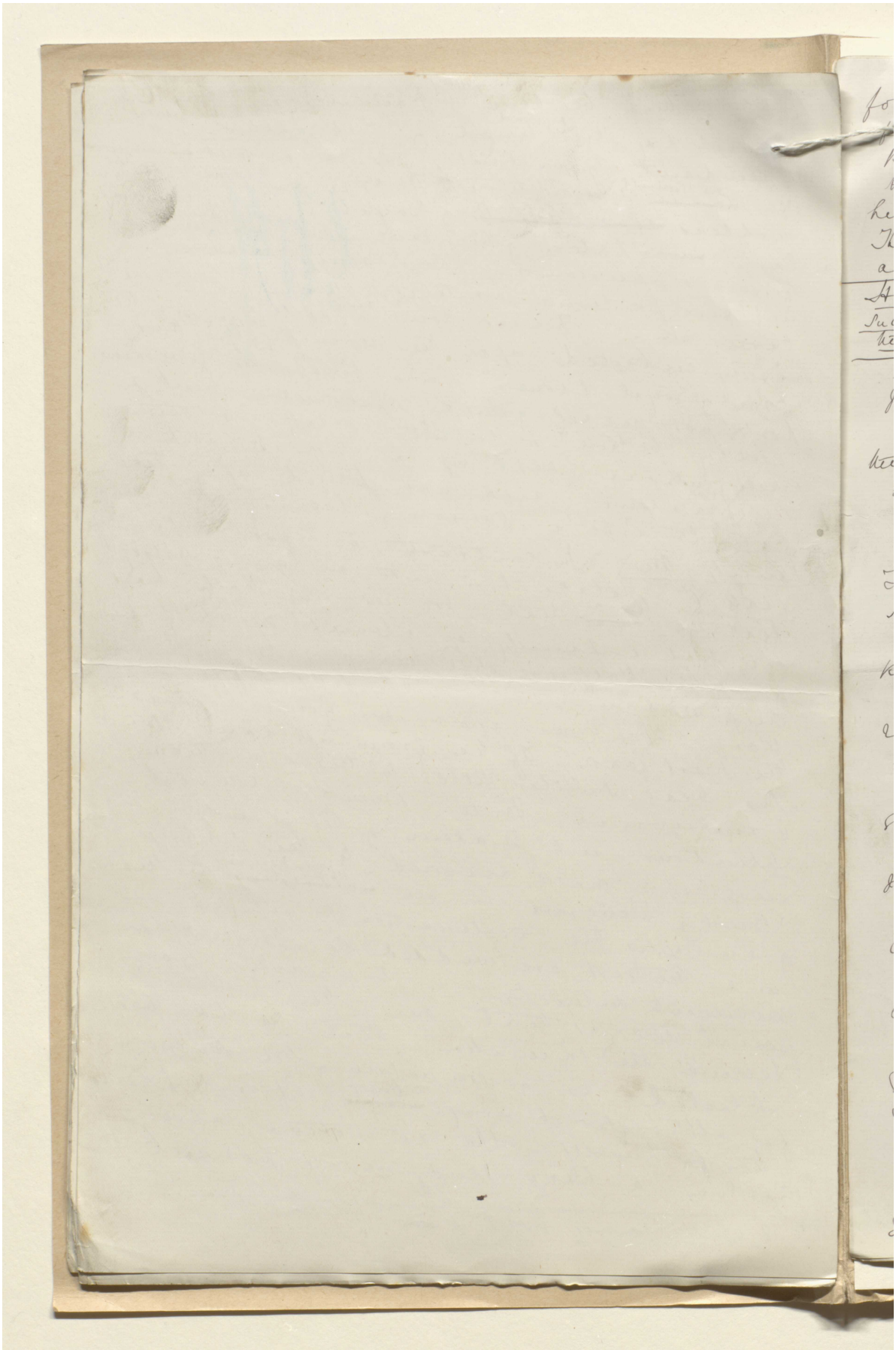
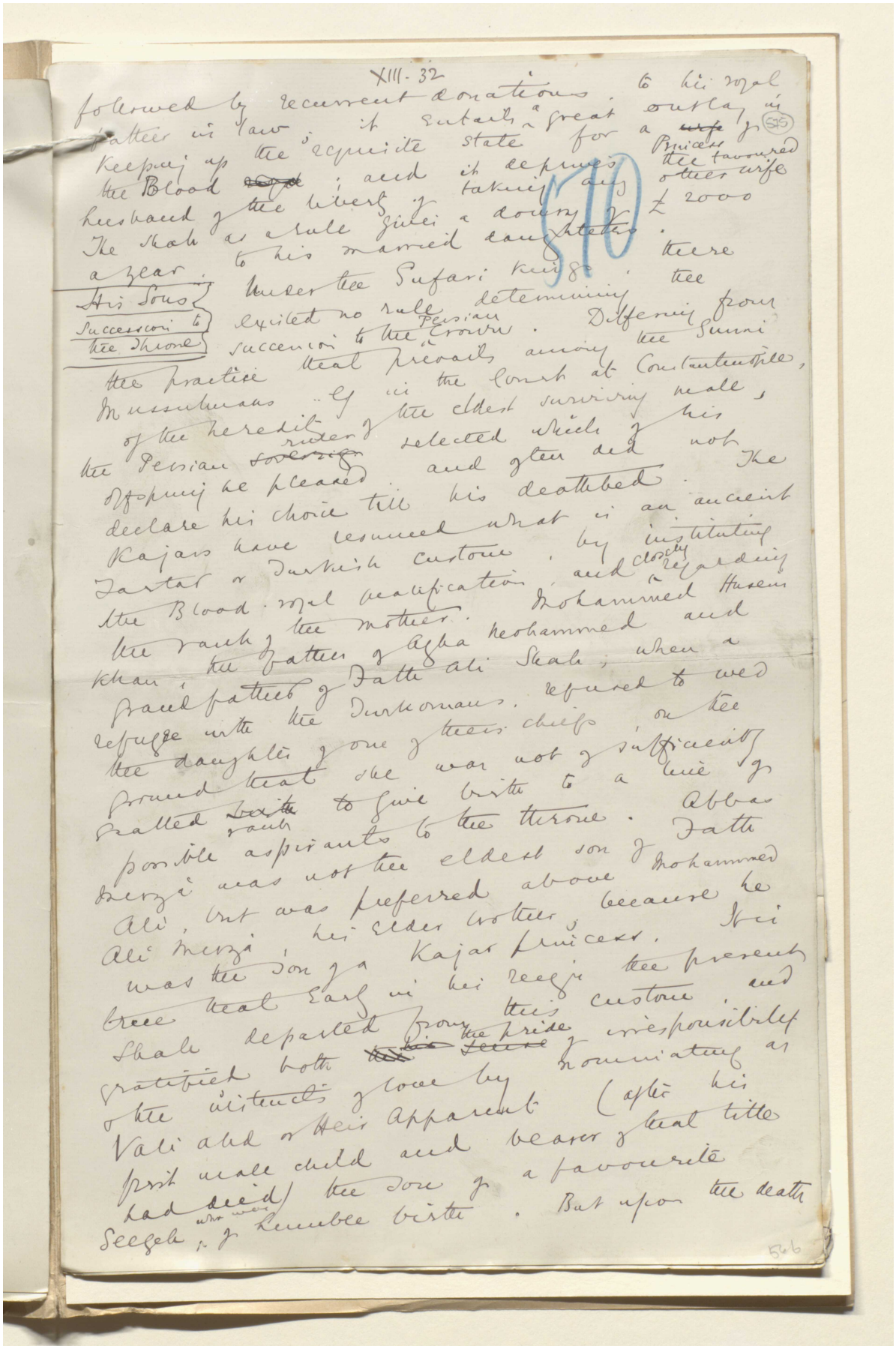


مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٥٧٥و] (١٣٥٥/١١٥٠)



XIII-32

followed by recurrent donations to his royal father in law; it entails a great outlay in keeping up the requisite state for a ~~wife~~ Princess of the Blood ~~royal~~; and it deprives the favoured husband of the liberty of taking any other wife. The Shah as a rule gives a dowry of £2000 a year to his married daughters.

His Sons Succession to the Throne

Under the Sufari kings there existed no rule determining the succession to the Persian crown. Differing from the practice that prevails among the Sunni Mussulmans, eg in the Court at Constantinople, of the heredity of the eldest surviving male, the Persian ~~sovereign~~ ruler selected which of his offspring he pleased and often did not declare his choice till his deathbed. The Kajars have resumed what is an ancient Tartar or Turkish custom, by instituting the Blood-royal qualification, and closely regarding the rank of the mother. Mohammed Husein Khan, the father of Agha Mohammed and grandfather of Fath Ali Shah, when a refugee with the Turkomans, refused to wed the daughter of one of their chiefs on the ground that she was not of sufficiently exalted ~~birth~~ rank to give birth to a line of possible aspirants to the throne. Abbas Mirza was not the eldest son of Fath Ali, but was preferred above Mohammed Ali Mirza, his elder brother, because he was the son of a Kajar princess. It is true that early in his reign the present Shah departed from this custom, and gratified both ~~the~~ ~~his~~ ~~sense~~ the pride of irresponsibility of the instincts of love by nominating as Vali Ahd or Heir Apparent (after his first male child and bearer of that title had died) the son of a favourite Seegeh, who was of humble birth. But upon the death

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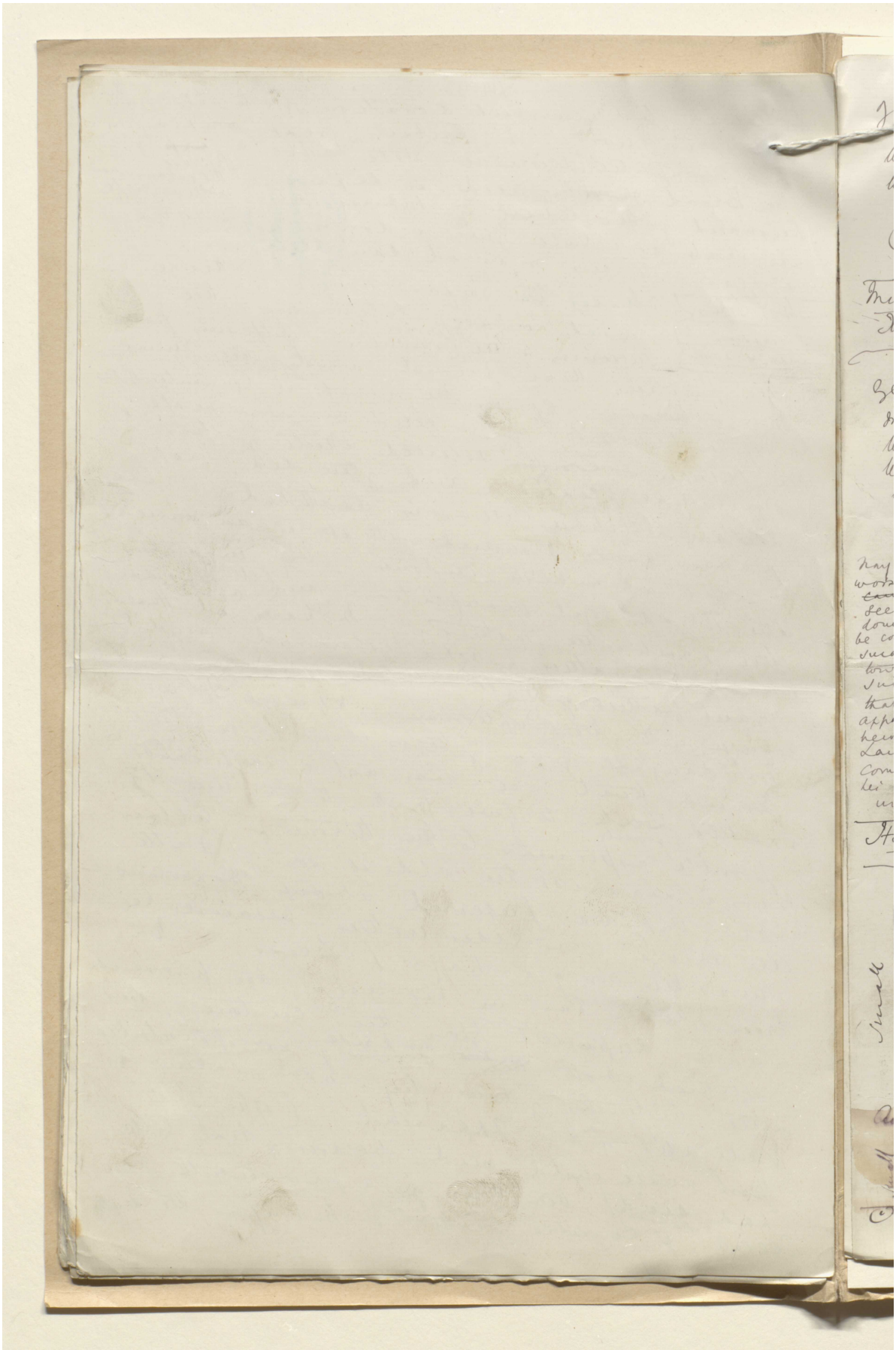

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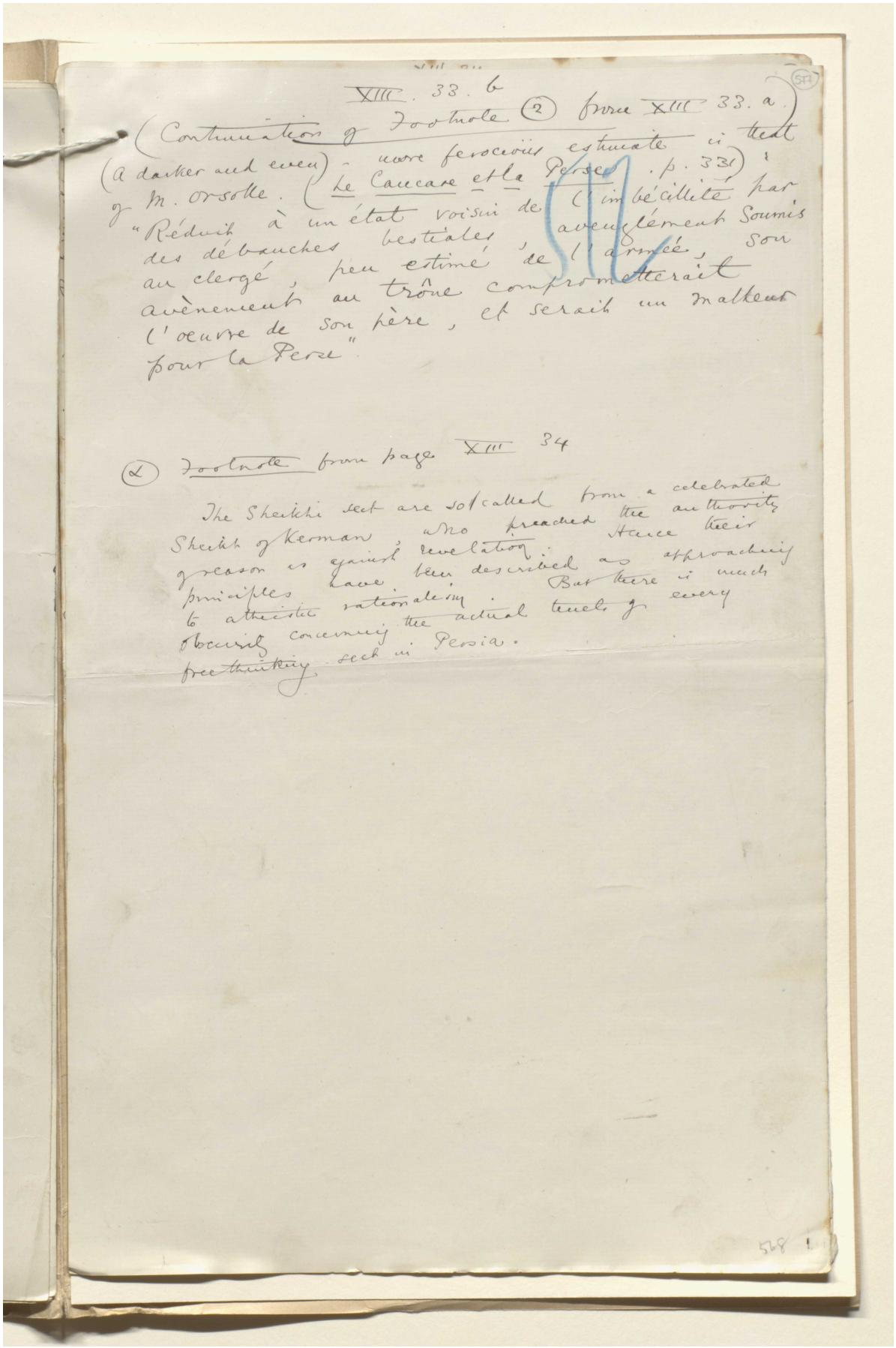
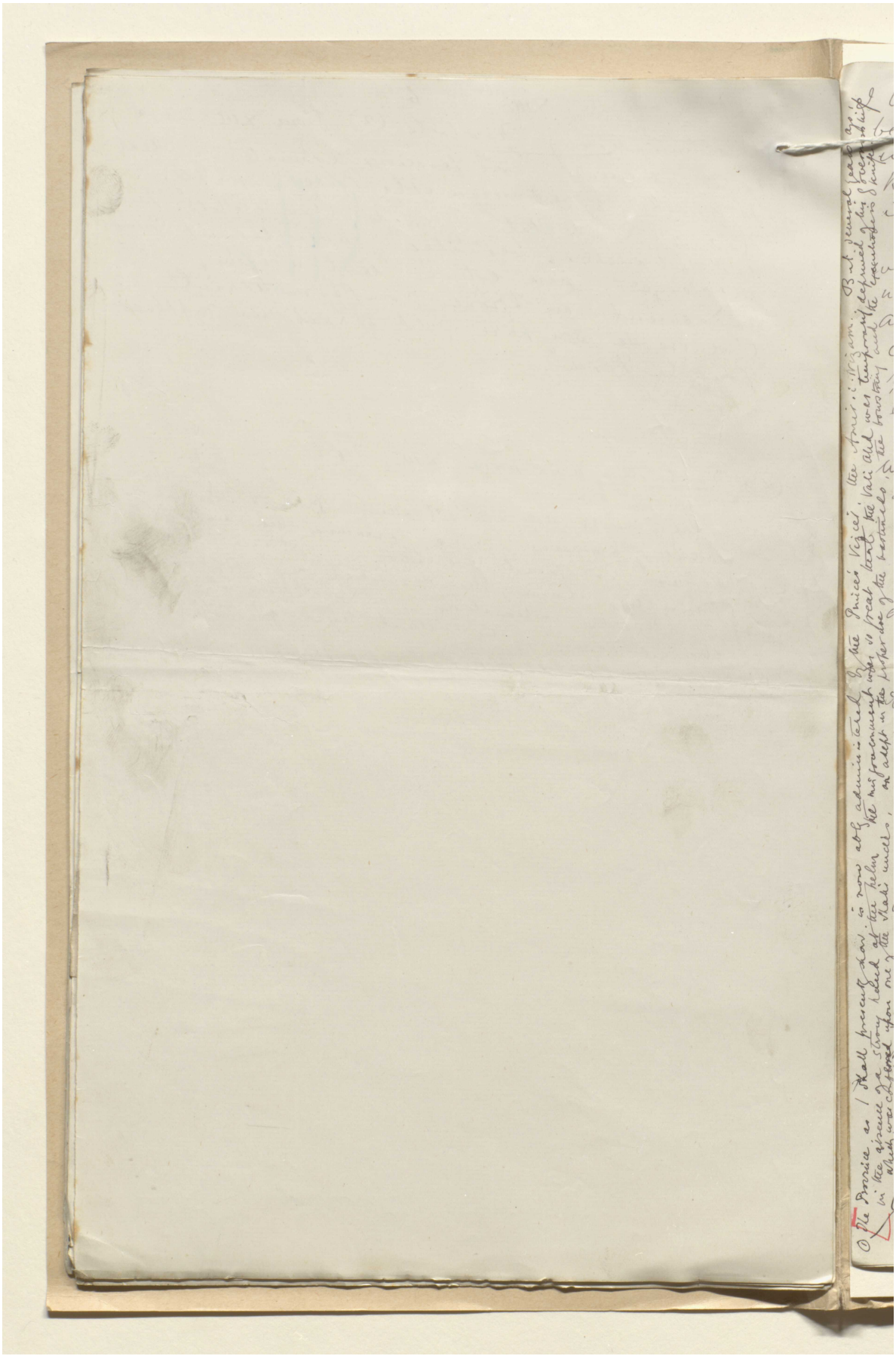


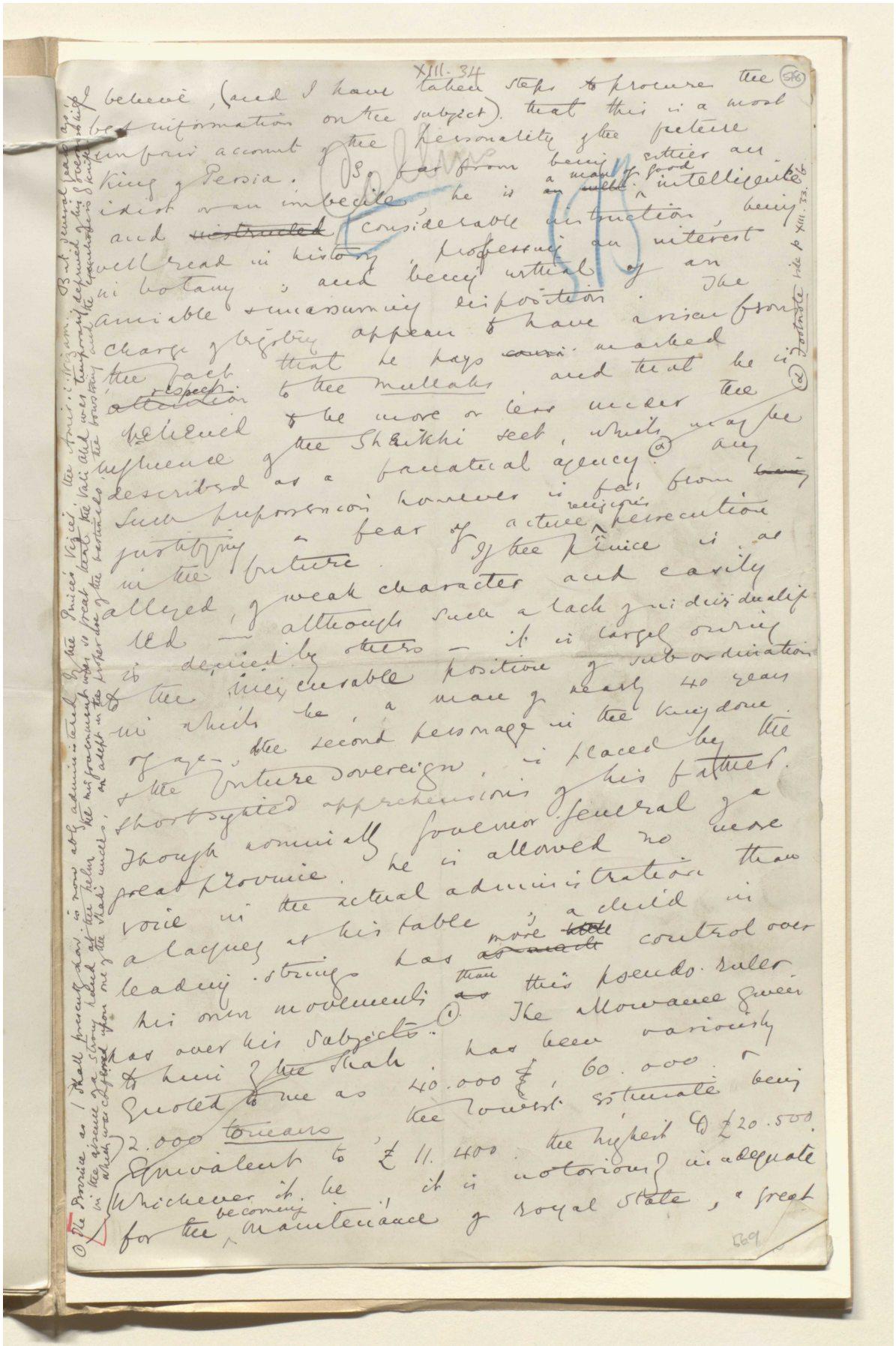
XIII. 33. b

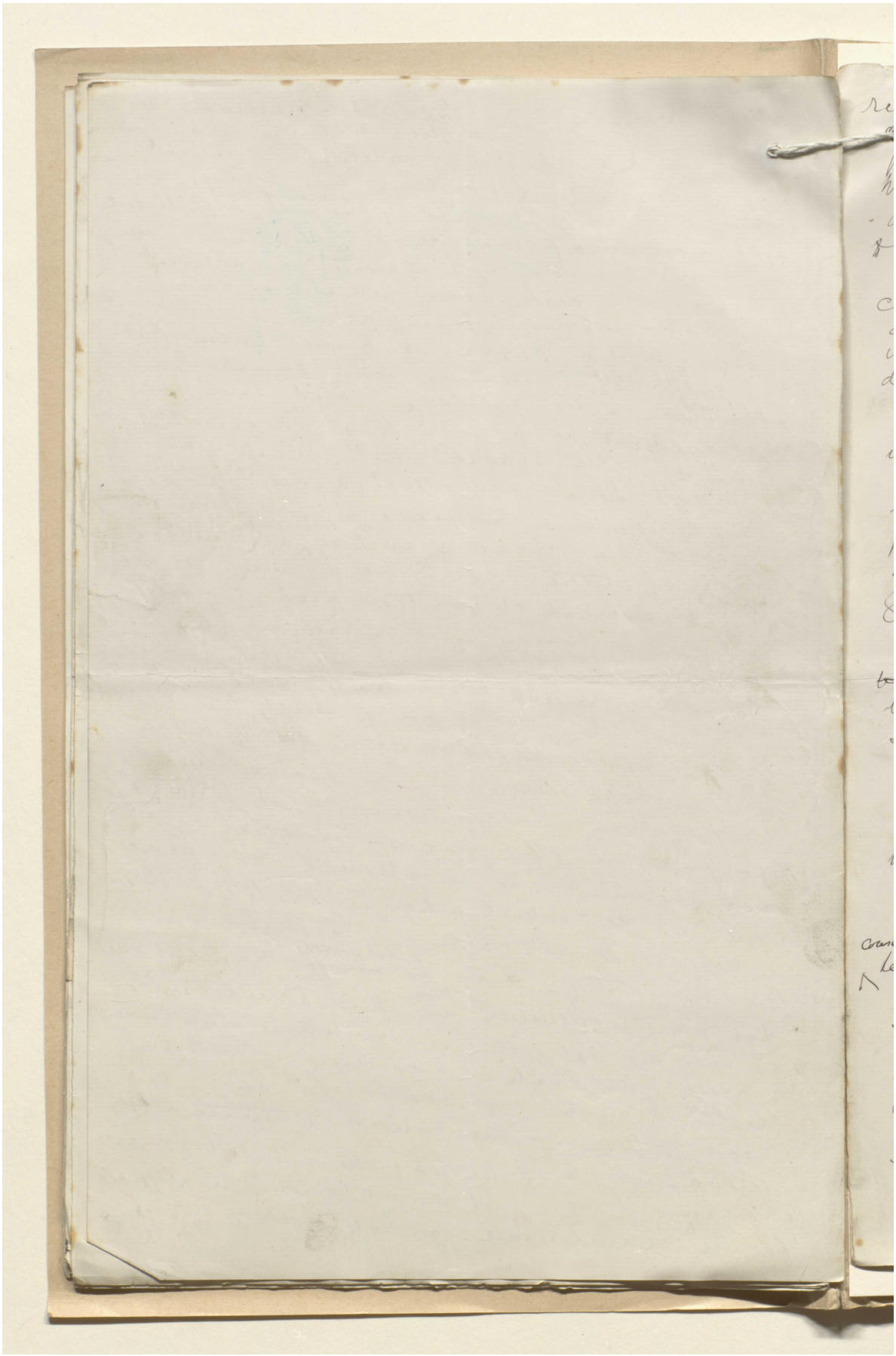
(Continuation of Footnote (2) from XIII 33. a.
(a darker and even more ferocious estimate is that of M. Orsolle. (Le Caucase et la Perse, p. 331)
"Réduit à un état voisin de l'imbécillité par des débauches bestiales, aveuglément Soumis au clergé, peu estimé de l'armée, son avènement au trône compromettrait l'oeuvre de son père, et serait un malheur pour la Perse"

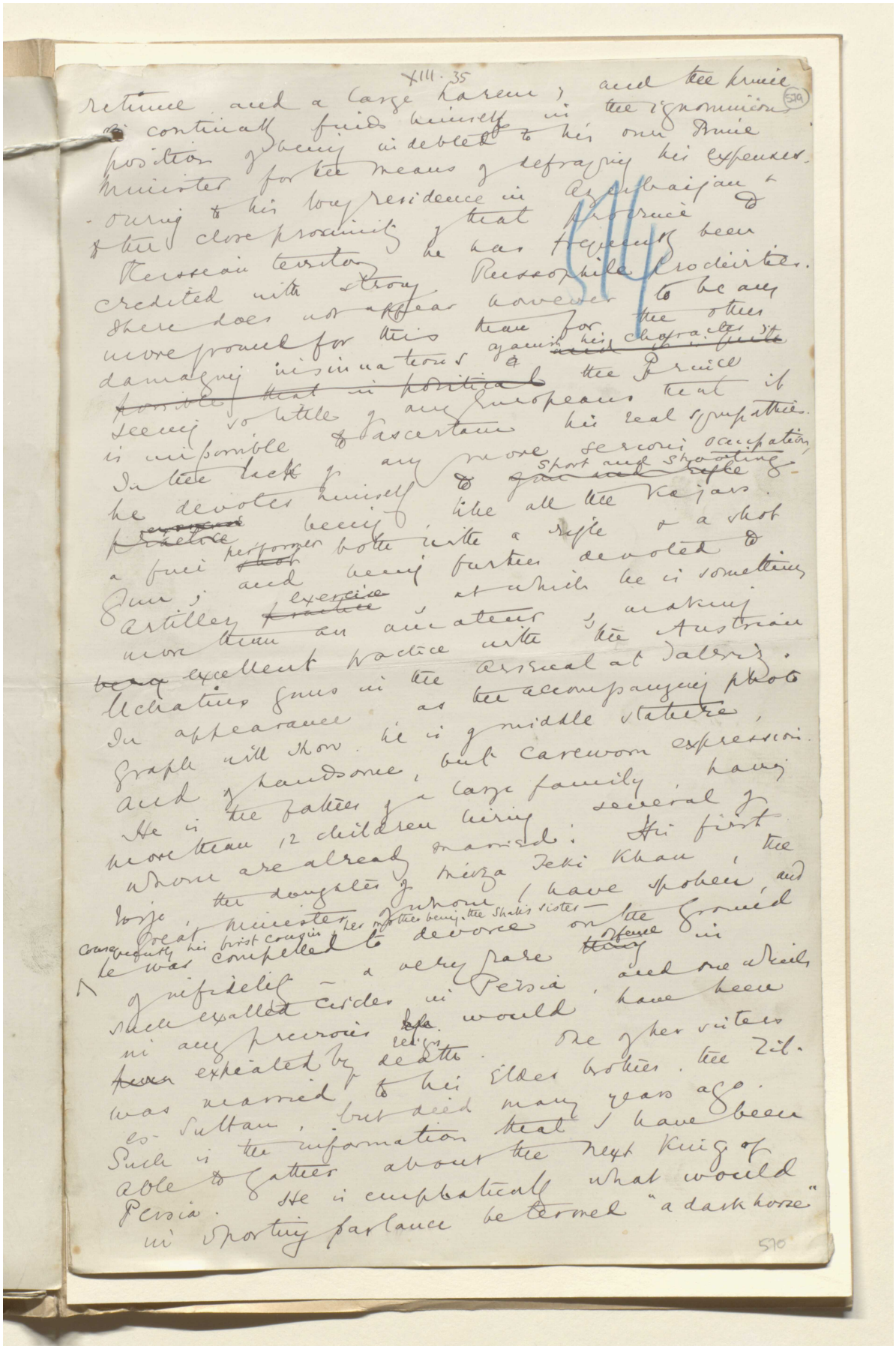
(2) Footnote from page XIII 34

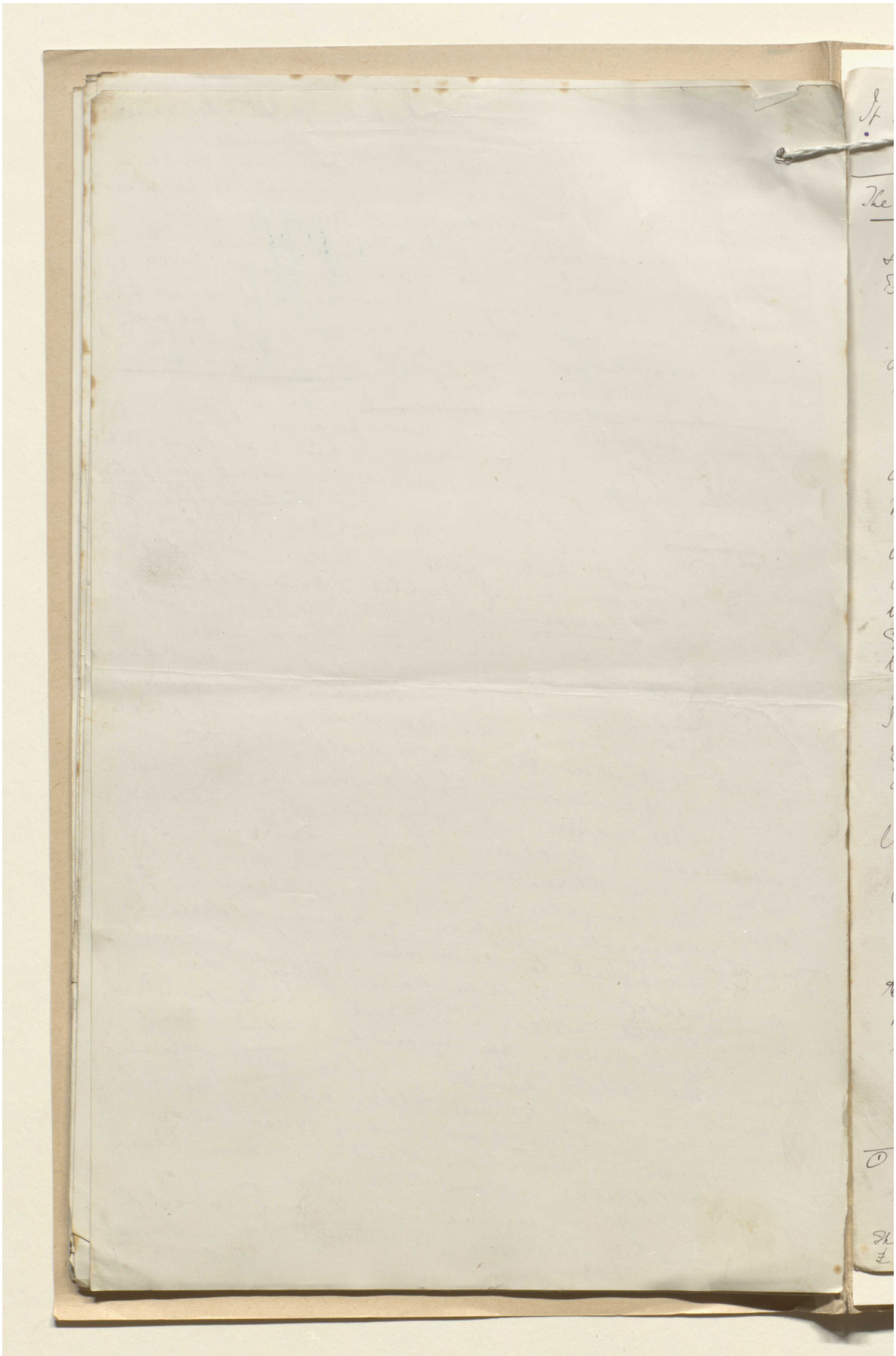
The Sheikhi sect are so called from a celebrated Sheikh of Kerman, who preached the authority of reason against revelation. Hence their principles have been described as approaching to atheistic rationalism. But there is much obscurity concerning the actual tenets of every freethinking sect in Persia.











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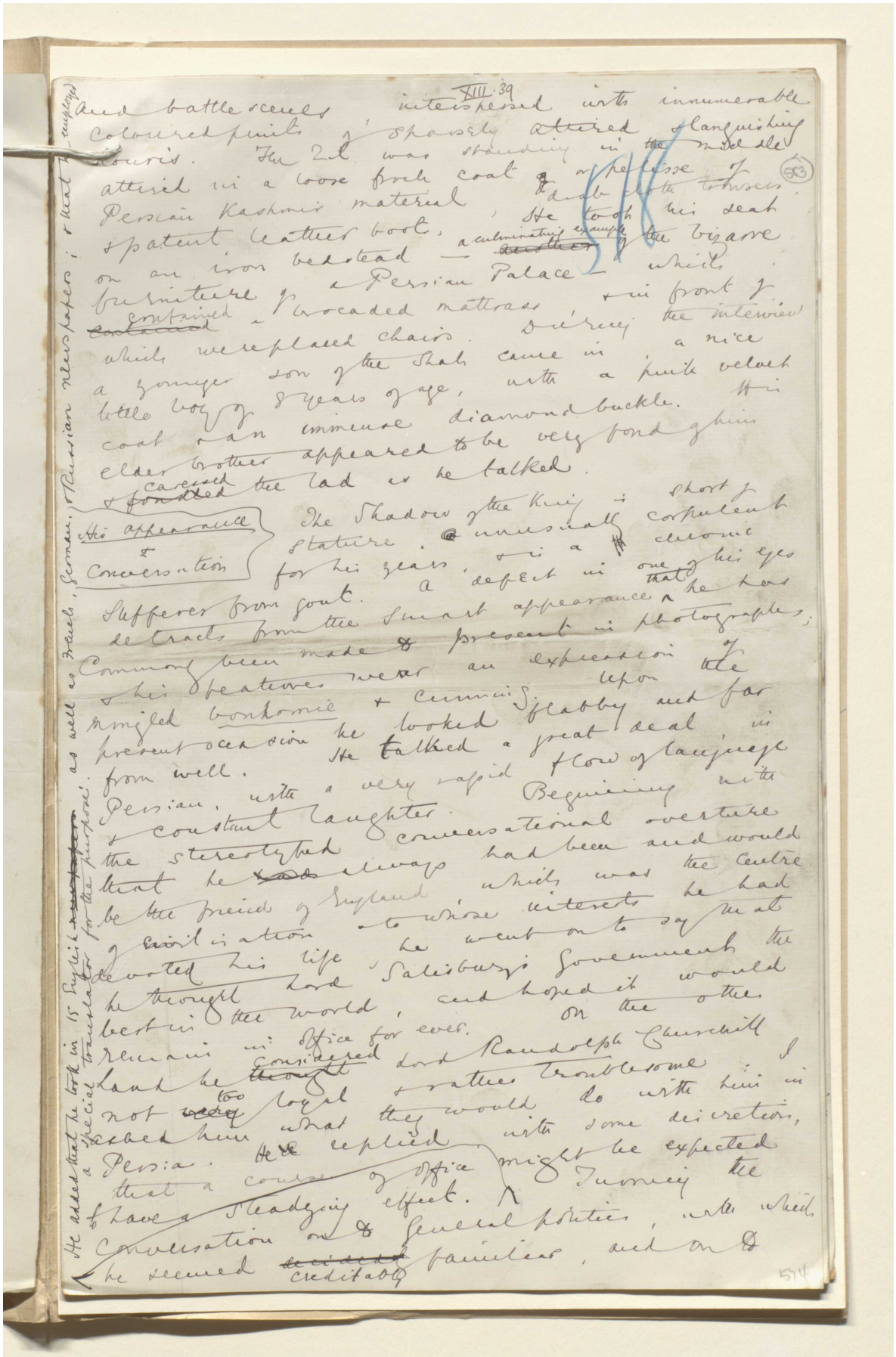
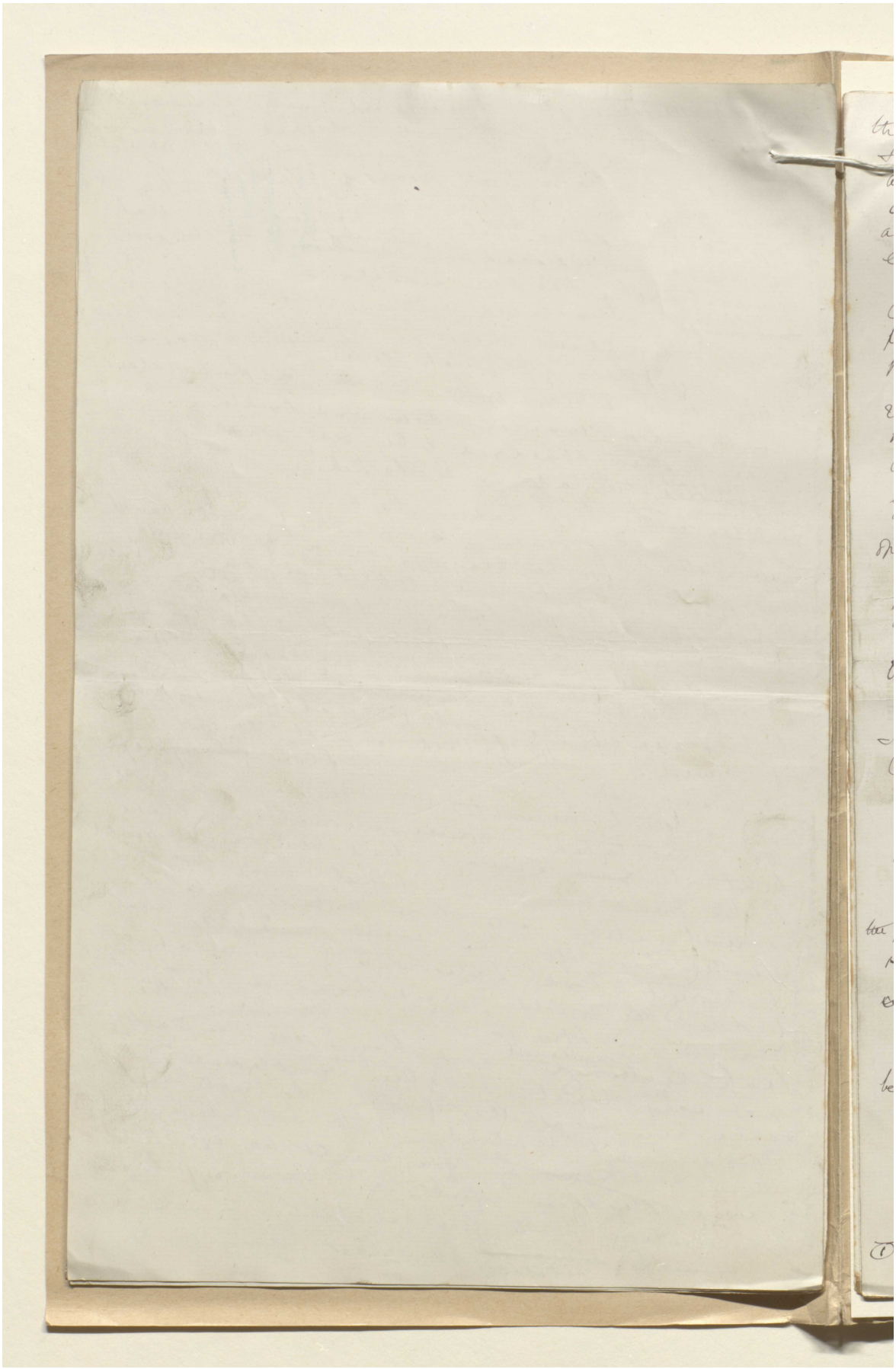
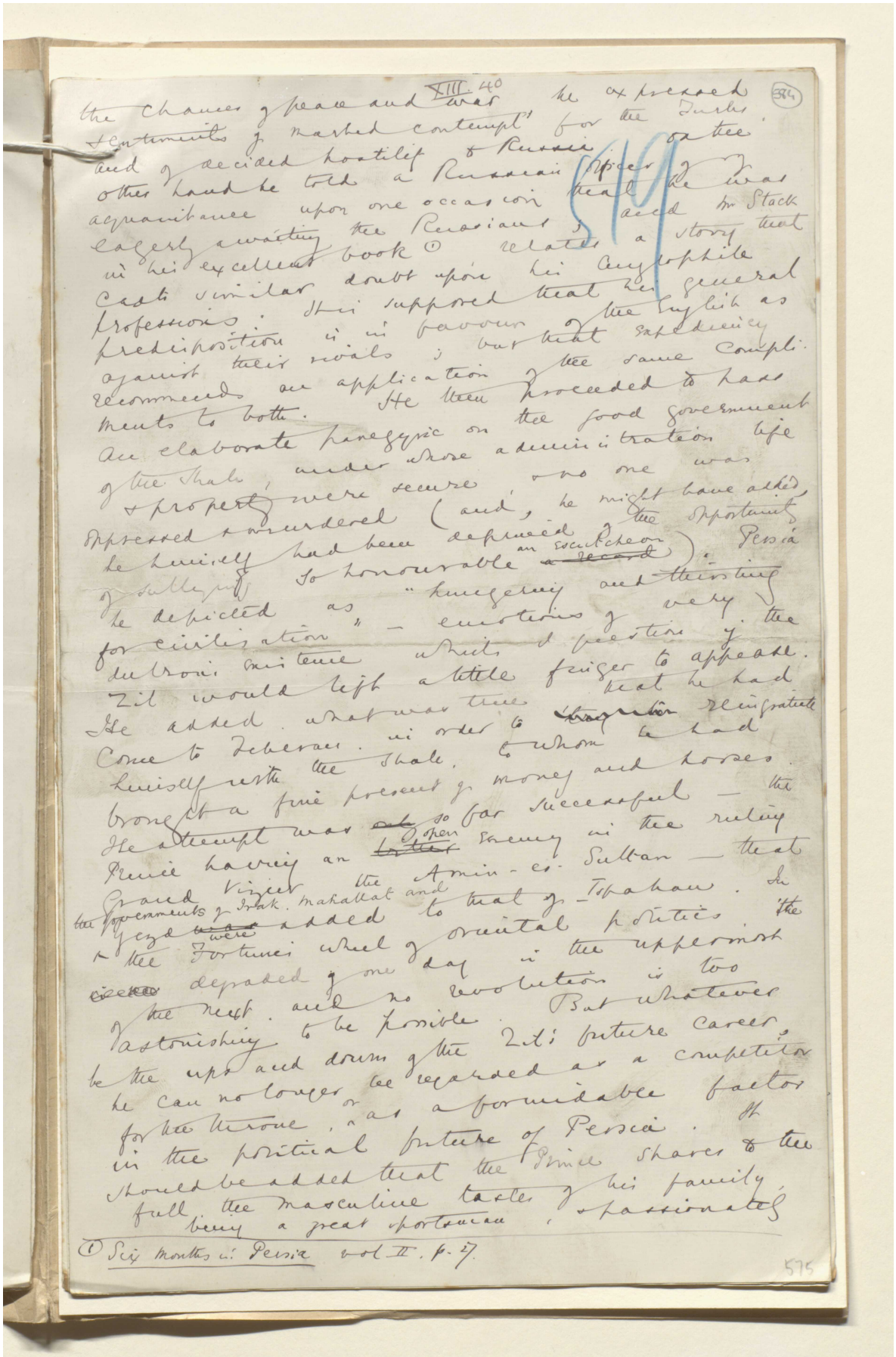




مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٥٨٤و] (١٣٥٥/١١٦٨)

XIII. 40 (384)



the chances of peace and war he expressed sentiments of marked contempt for the Turks, and of decided hostility to Russia. On the other hand he told a Russian officer of my acquaintance upon one occasion that he was eagerly awaiting the Russians; and Mr Stack in his excellent book ① relates a story that casts similar doubt upon his Anglophile professions. It is supposed that his general predisposition is in favour of the English as against their rivals; but that expediency recommends an application of the same compliments to both. He then proceeded to pass an elaborate panegyric on the good government of the Shah, under whose administration life & property were secure, & no one was oppressed & murdered (and, he might have added, he himself had been deprived of the opportunity of sulleying so honourable an escutcheon). Persia he depicted as "hungering and thirsting for civilisation" — emotions of very dubious existence which I question if the Zil would lift a little finger to appease. He added what was true that he had come to Teheran in order to ~~[illegible]~~ reingratiate himself with the Shah, to whom he had brought a fine present of money and horses. He attempt was ~~only~~ so far successful — the Prince having an ~~[illegible]~~ open enemy in the ruling Grand Vizier the Amin-es-Sultan — that the governments of Irak, Mahallat and Yezd ~~was~~ were added to that of Ispahan. In the Fortune's wheel of oriental politics the ~~[illegible]~~ degraded of one day in the uppermost of the next, and no revolution is too astonishing to be possible. But whatever be the ups and downs of the Zil's future career, he can no longer be regarded as a competitor for the throne, or as a formidable factor in the political future of Persia. It should be added that the Prince shares to the full the masculine tastes of his family, being a great sportsman, & passionately

① Six months in Persia vol II. p. 27.

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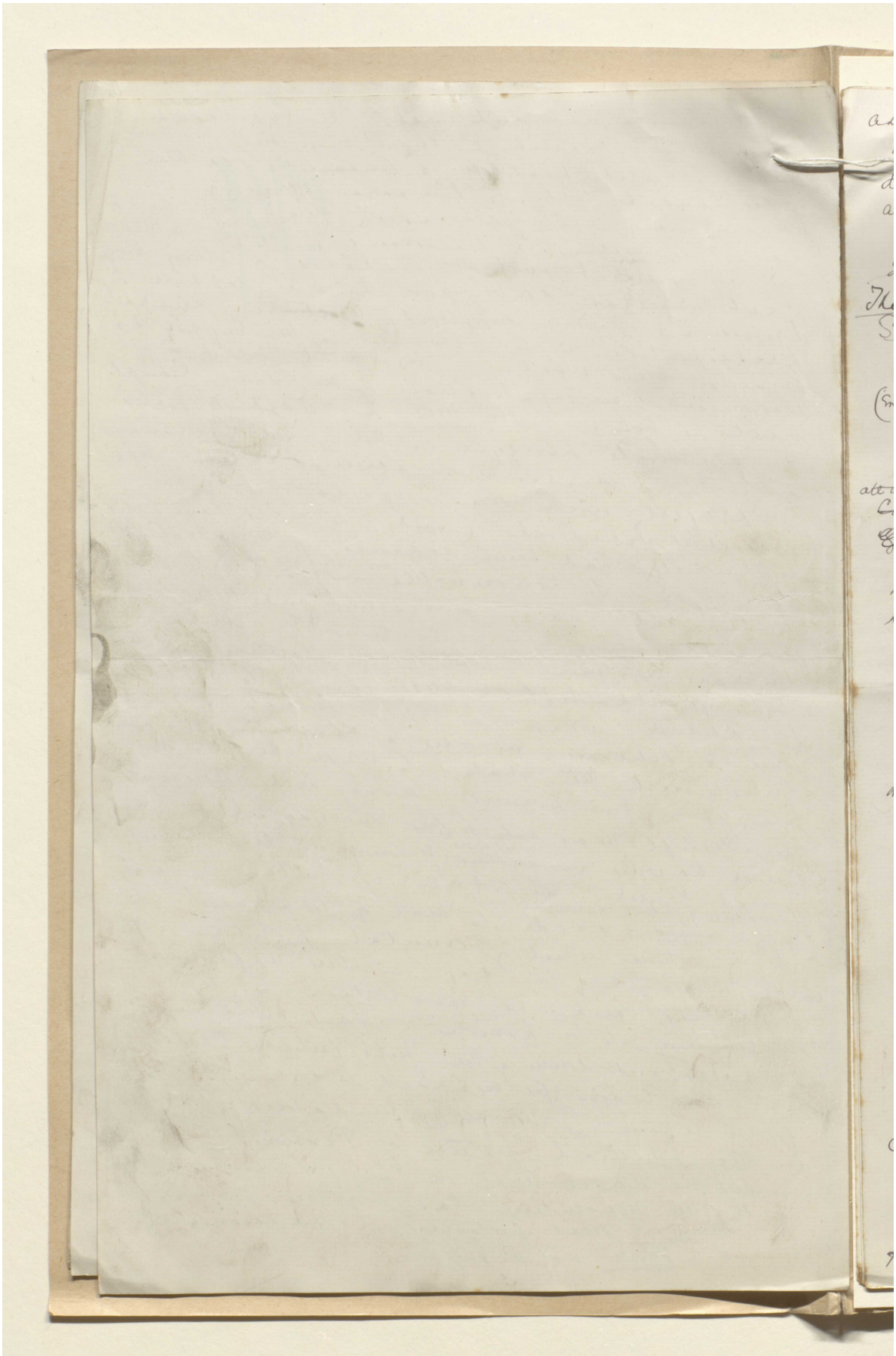

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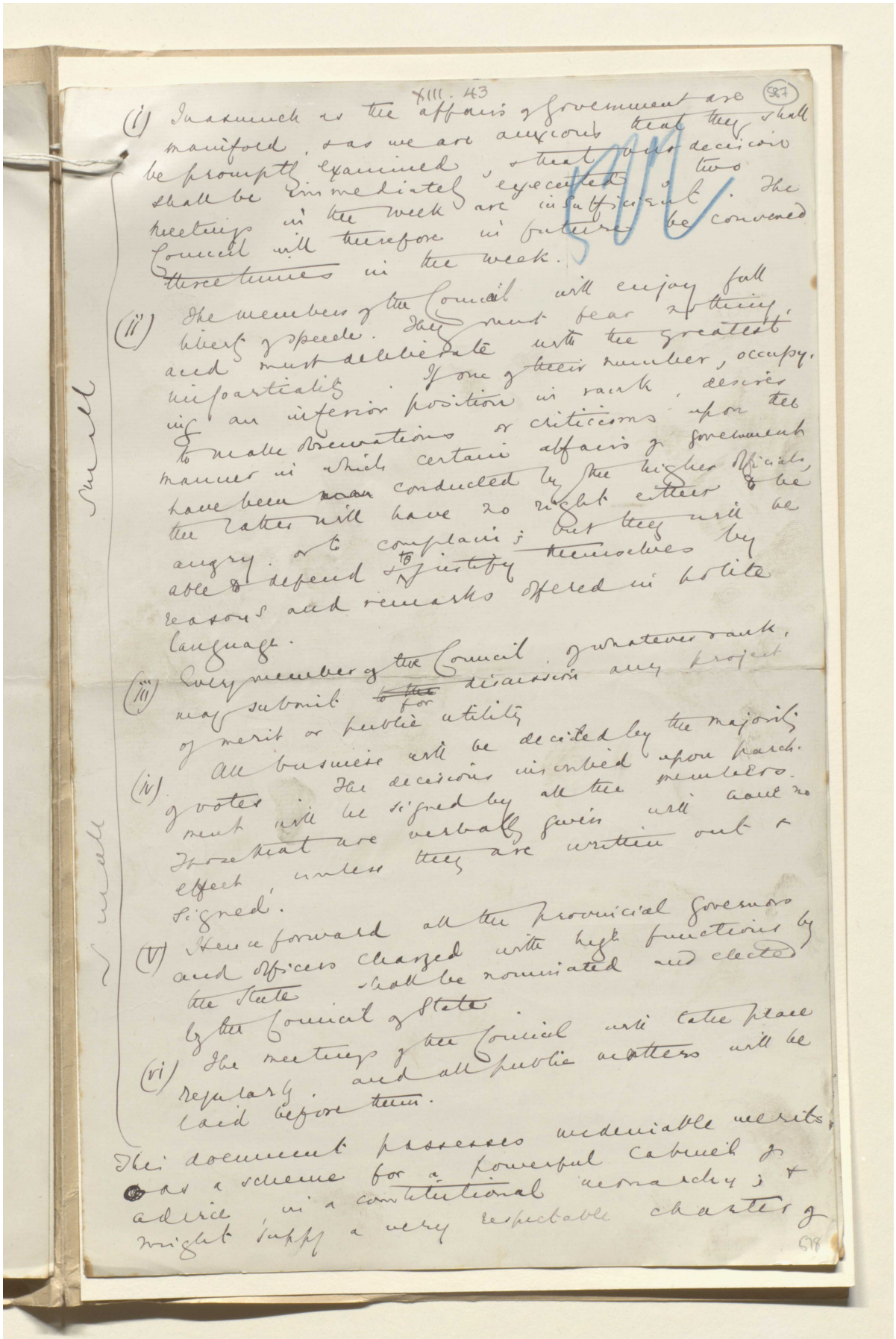

(i) Inasmuch as the affairs of government are manifold, and as we are anxious that they shall be promptly examined, & that our decisions shall be immediately executed, the two meetings in the week are insufficient. The Council will therefore in future be convened three times in the week.

(ii) The members of the Council will enjoy full liberty of speech. They must fear nothing, and must deliberate with the greatest impartiality. If one of their number, occupying an inferior position in rank, desires to make observations or criticisms upon the manner in which certain affairs of government have been conducted by the higher officials, the latter will have no right either to be angry or to complain; but they will be able to defend themselves by reasons and remarks offered in polite language.

(iii) Every member of the Council, whatever rank, may submit to the discussion any project of merit or public utility.

(iv) All business will be decided by the majority of votes. The decisions rendered upon each point will be signed by all the members. Those that are verbally given will have no effect unless they are written out & signed.

(v) Henceforward all the provincial governors and officers charged with high functions by the State shall be nominated and elected by the Council of State.

(vi) The meetings of the Council will take place regularly, and all public matters will be laid before them.

This document possesses undeniable merits as a scheme for a powerful Cabinet & advice in a constitutional monarchy; & might supply a very respectable charter of

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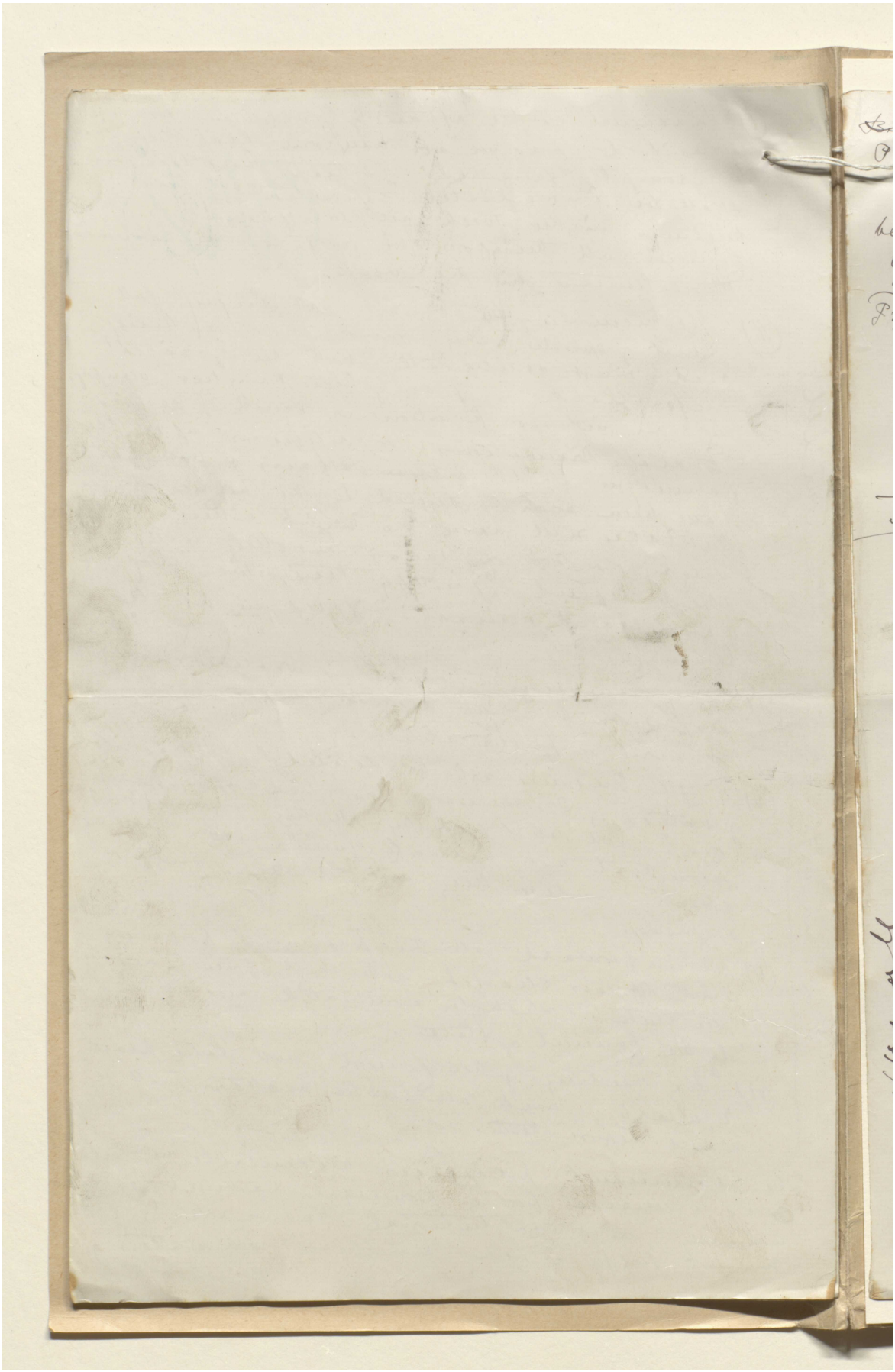

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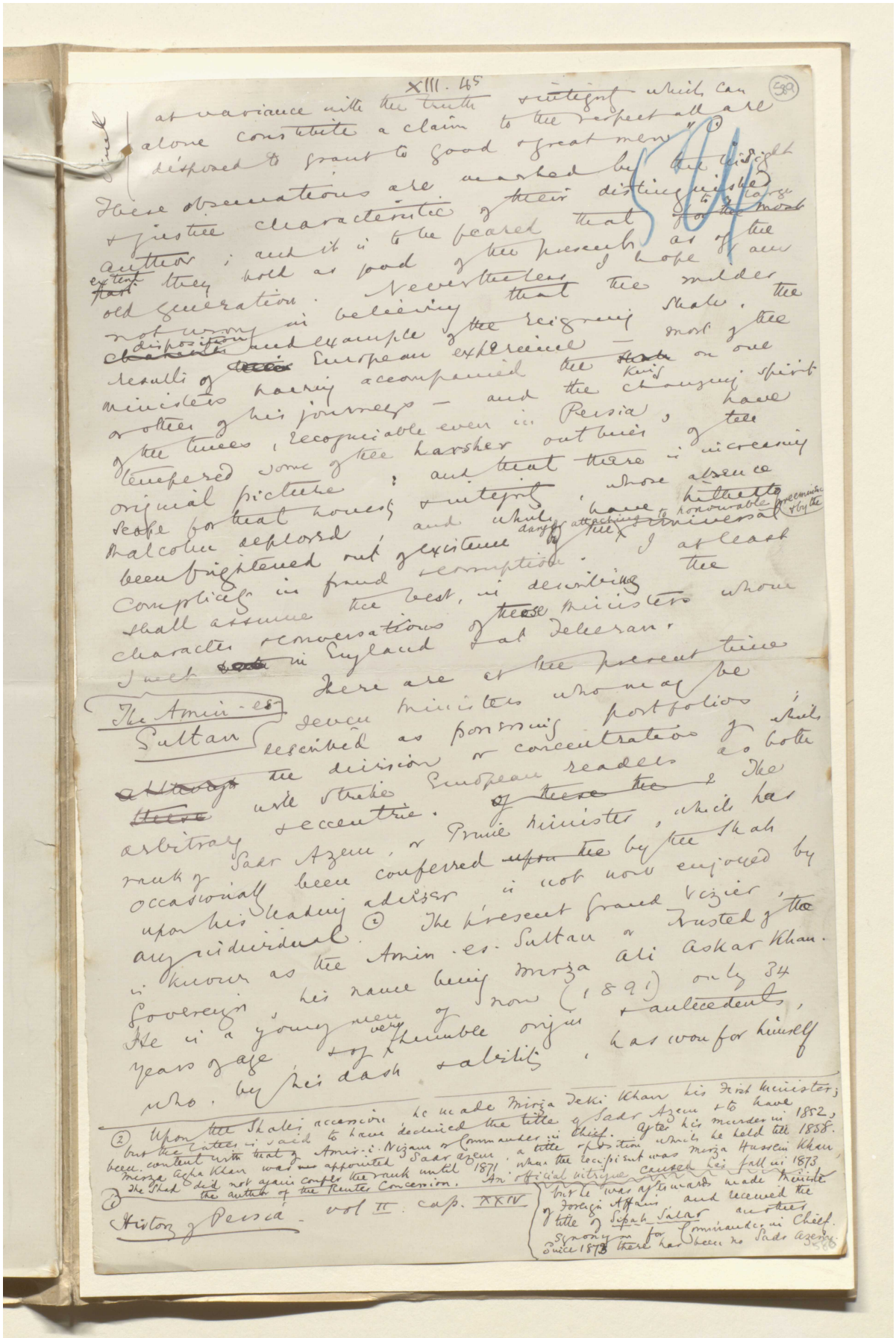

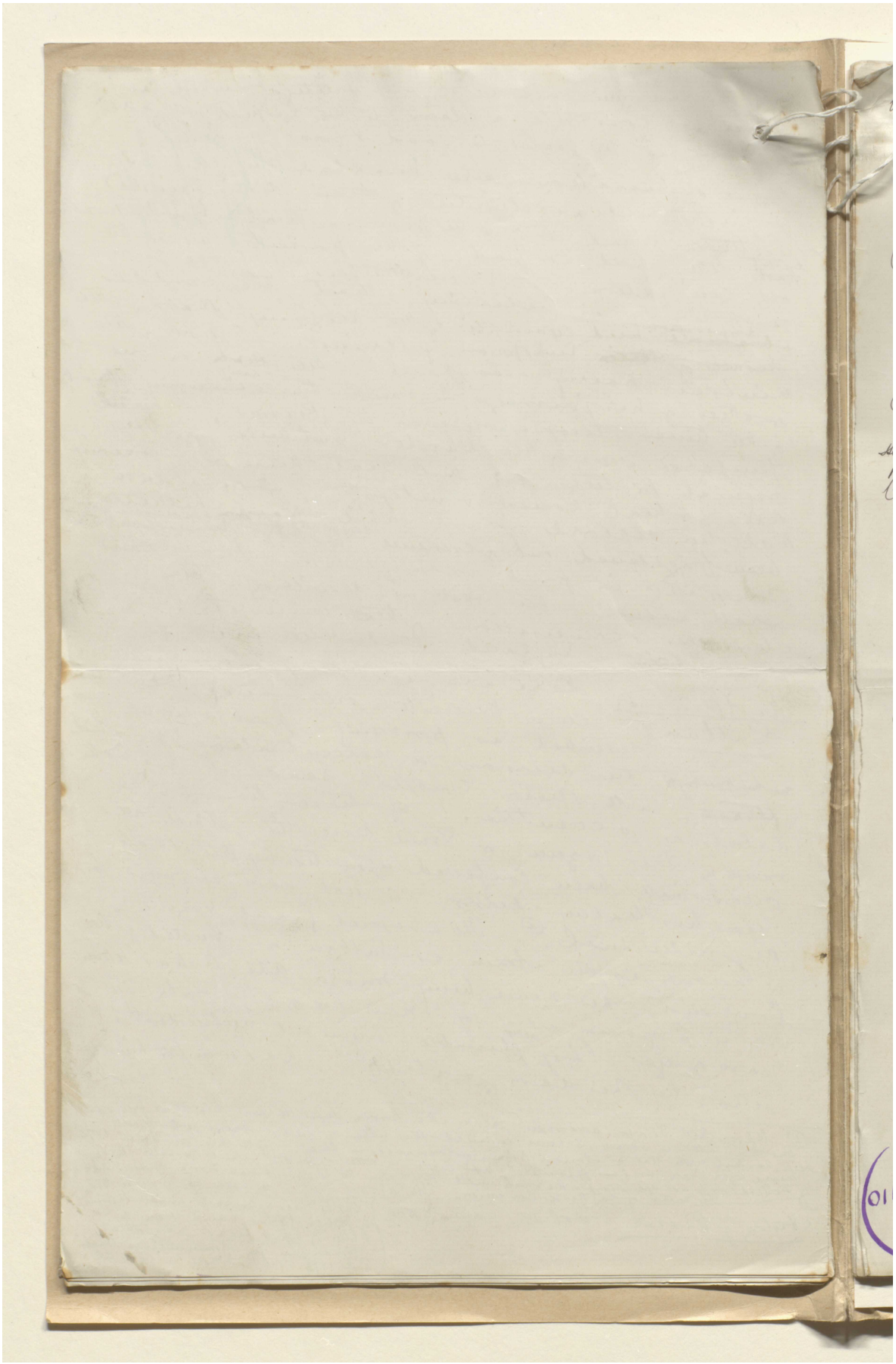

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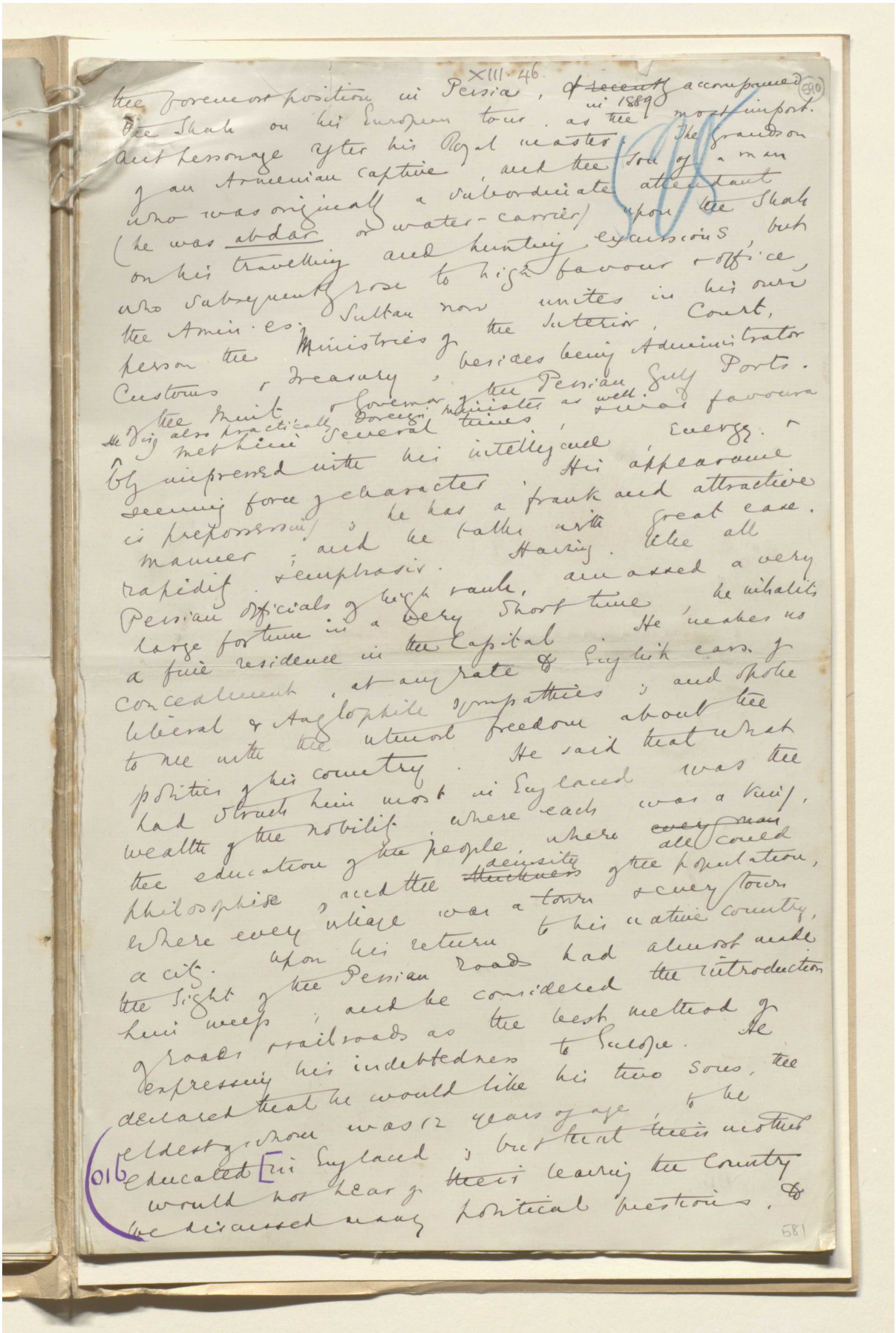

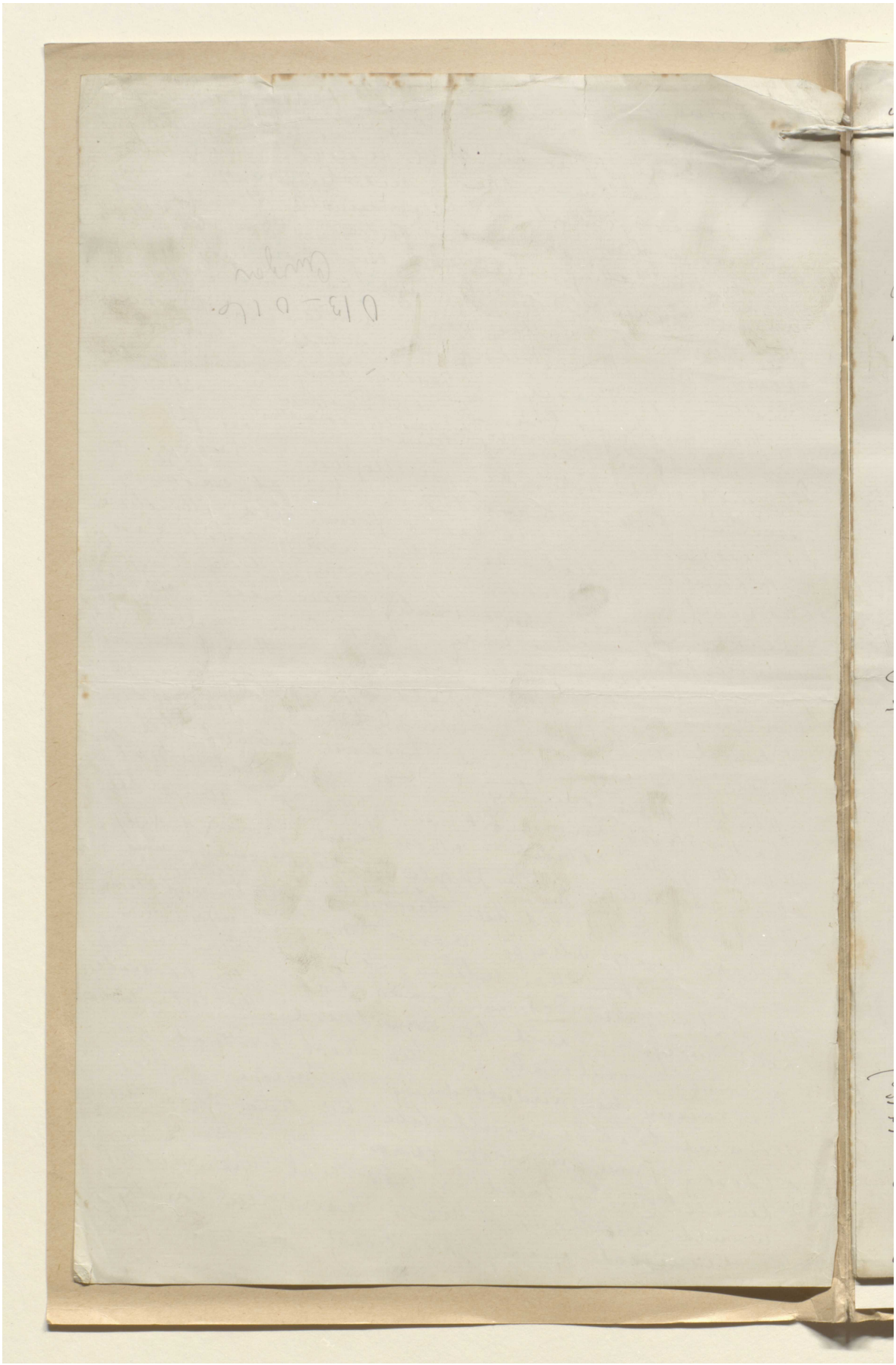

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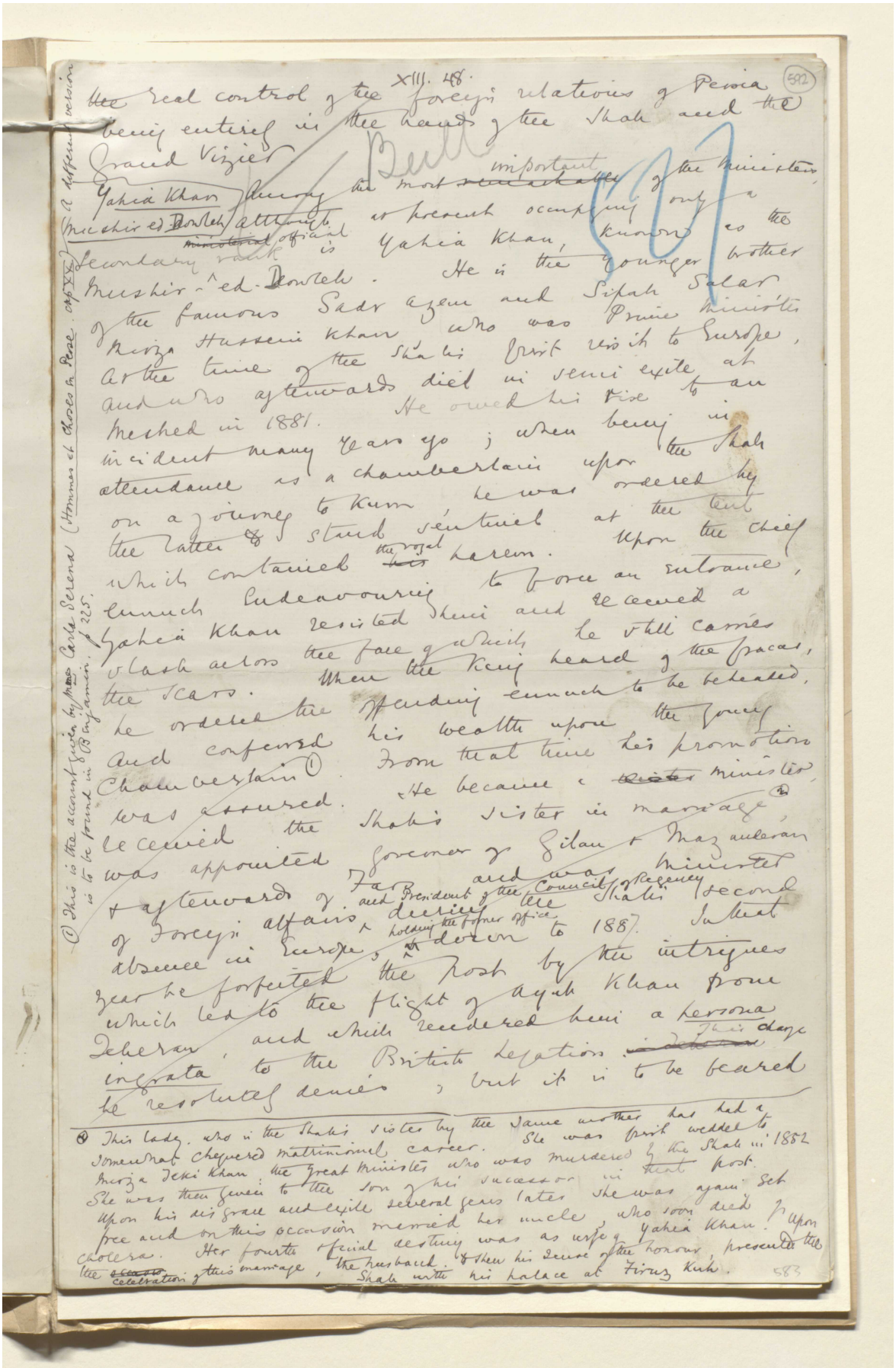

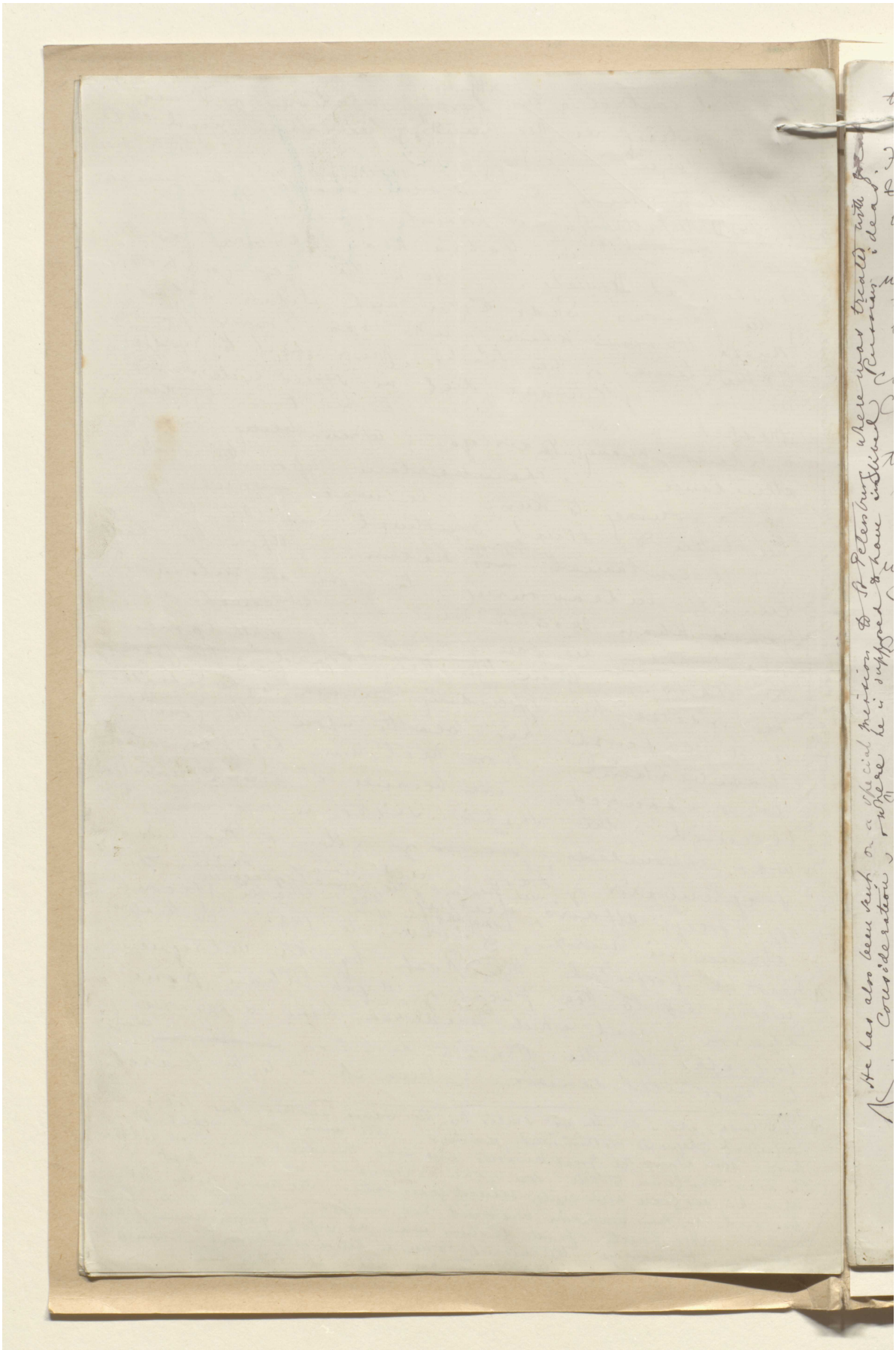

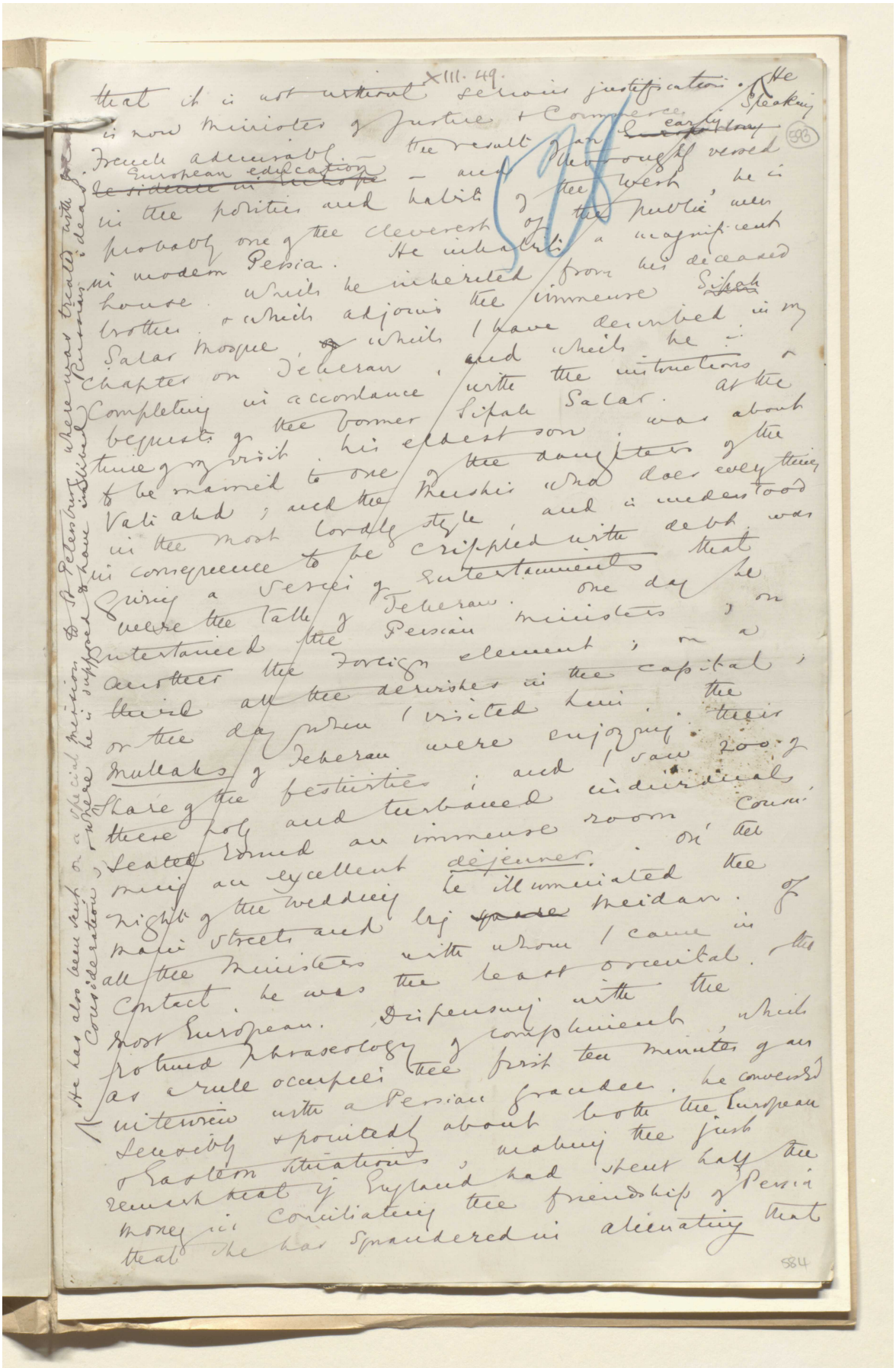

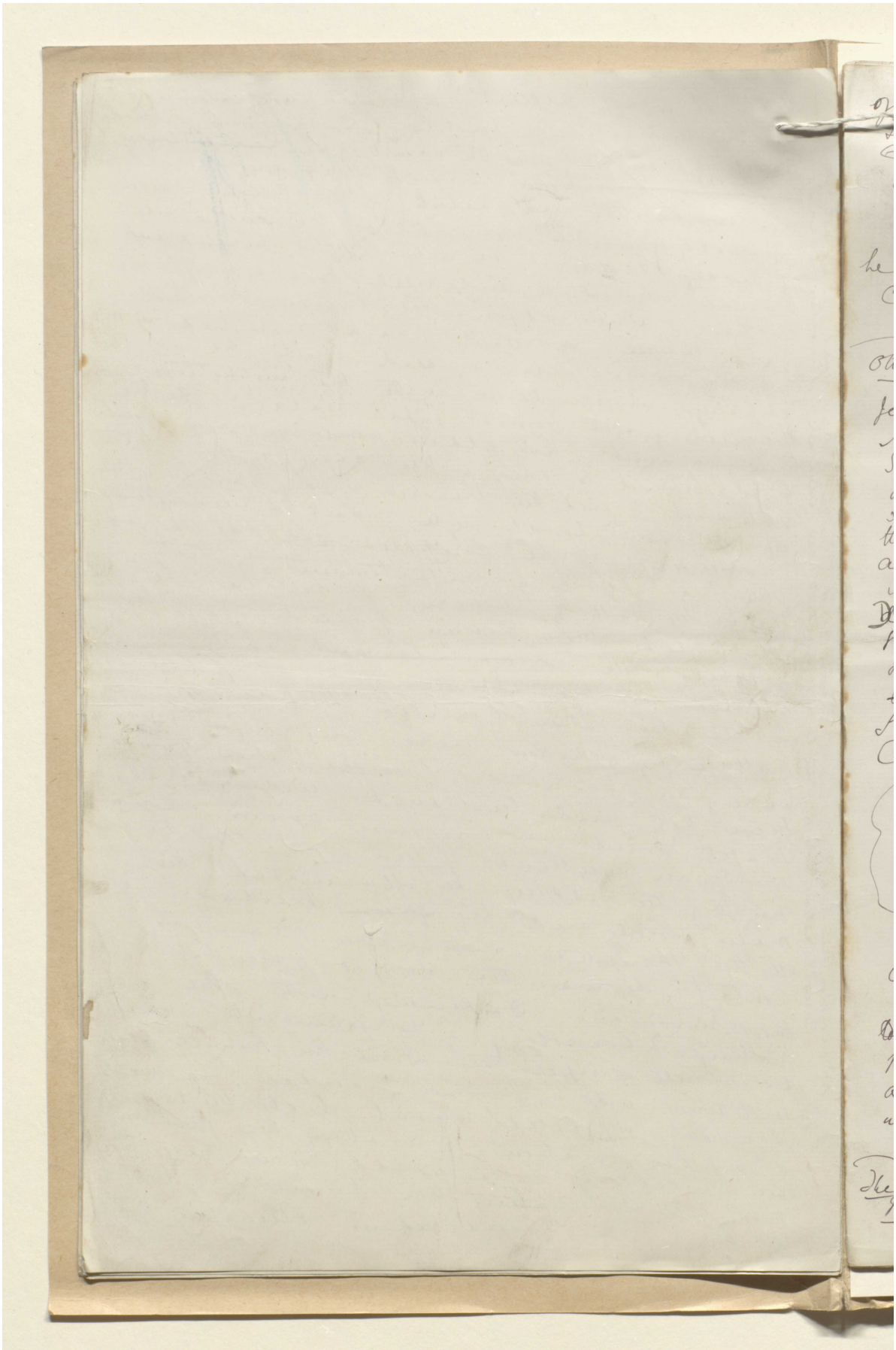

مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٥٩٤و] (١٣٥٥/١١٨٨)

XIII. 50

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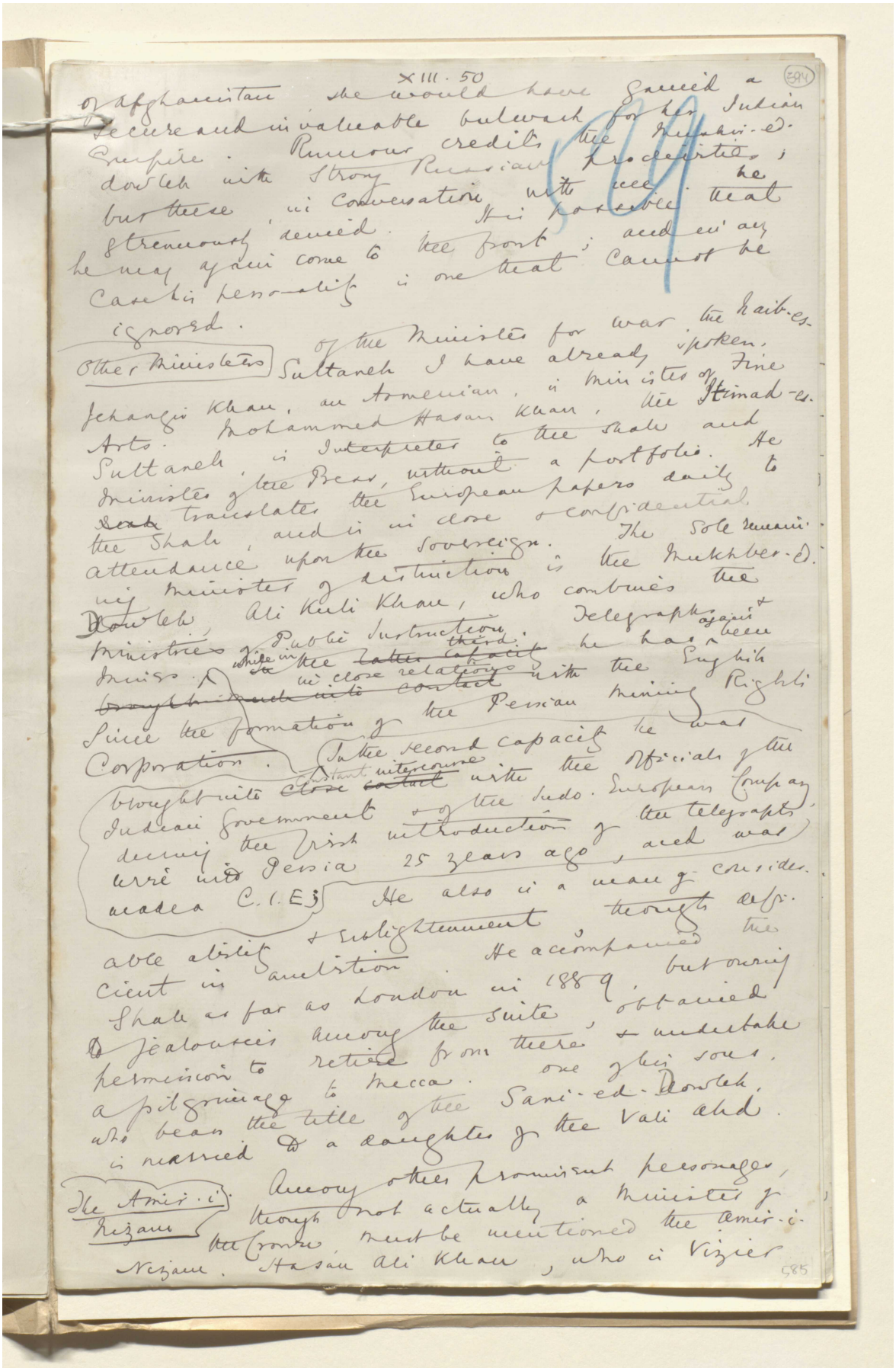

of Afghanistan she would have gained a secure and invaluable bulwark for her Indian Empire. Rumour credits the Mushir-ed-dowleh with strong Russian proclivities; but these, in conversation with me, he strenuously denied. It is possible that he may again come to the front; and in any case his personality is one that cannot be ignored.

Other Ministers

Of the Ministers for war, the Naib-es-Sultaneh I have already spoken. Jehangir Khan, an Armenian, is Minister of Fine Arts. Mohammed Hasan Khan, the Itimad-es-Sultaneh, is Interpreter to the Shah and Minister of the Press, without a portfolio. He ~~[illegible]~~ translates the European papers daily to the Shah, and is in close & confidential attendance upon the sovereign. The sole remaining minister of distinction is the Mukhber-ed-Dowleh, Ali Kuli Khan, who combines the Ministries of Public Instruction, Telegraphs & Mines. While in the ~~latter capacity~~ third he has again been ~~brought much into contact~~ in close relations with the English Since the formation of the Persian Mining Rights Corporation. In the second capacity he was brought into ~~close contact~~ constant intercourse with the Officials of the Indian Government & of the Indo-European Company during the first introduction of the telegraphs, wire into Persia 25 years ago, and was made a C.I.E. He also is a man of considerable ability & enlightenment, though deficient in ambition. He accompanied the Shah as far as London in 1889, but owing to jealousies among the suite, obtained permission to retire from there & undertake a pilgrimage to Mecca. One of his sons, who bears the title of the Sani-ed-Dowleh, is married to a daughter of the Vali Ahd.

The Amir-i-Nizam

Among other prominent personages, though not actually a Minister of the Crown, must be mentioned the Amir-i-Nizam. Hasan Ali Khan, who is Vizier

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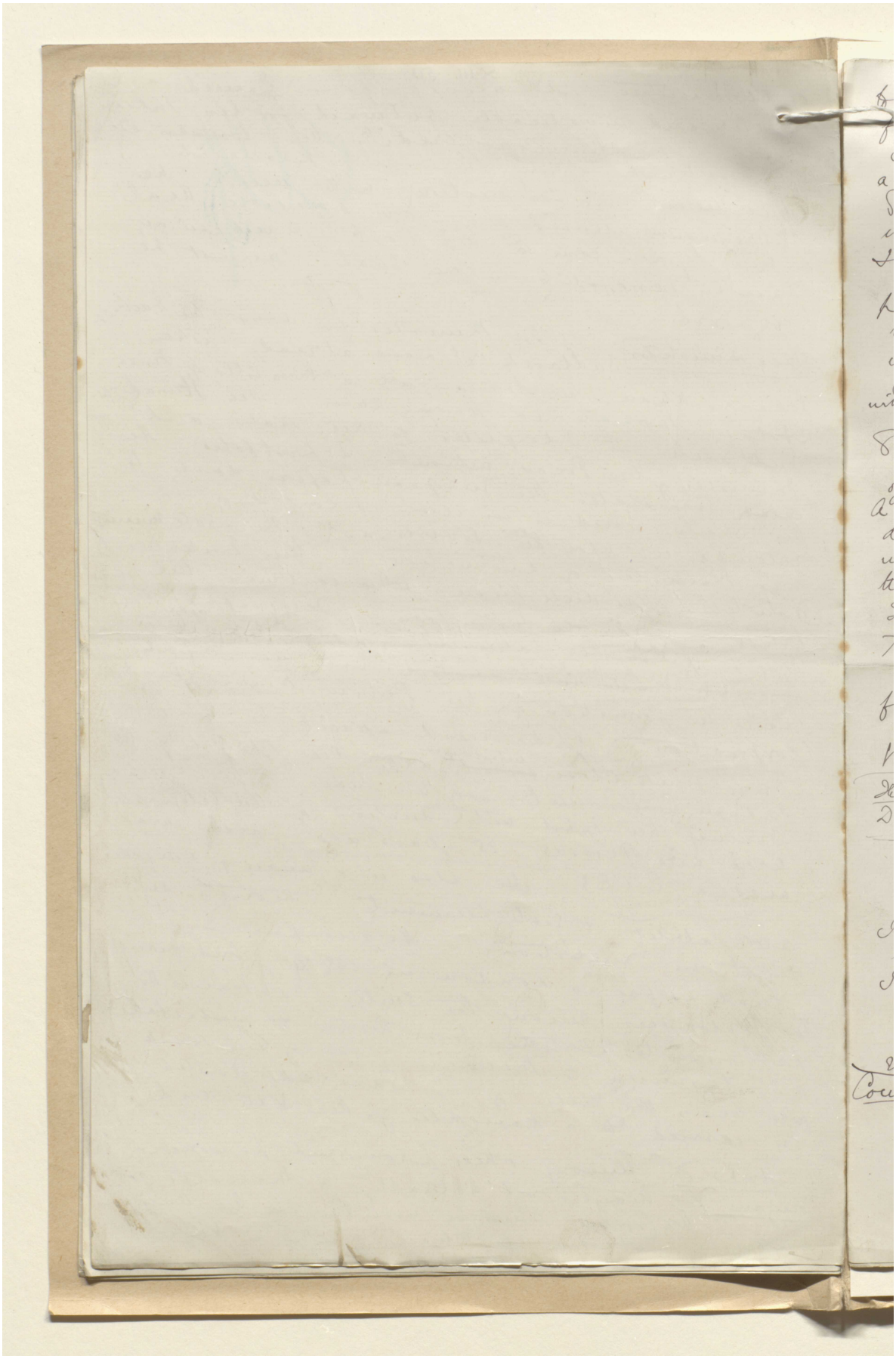

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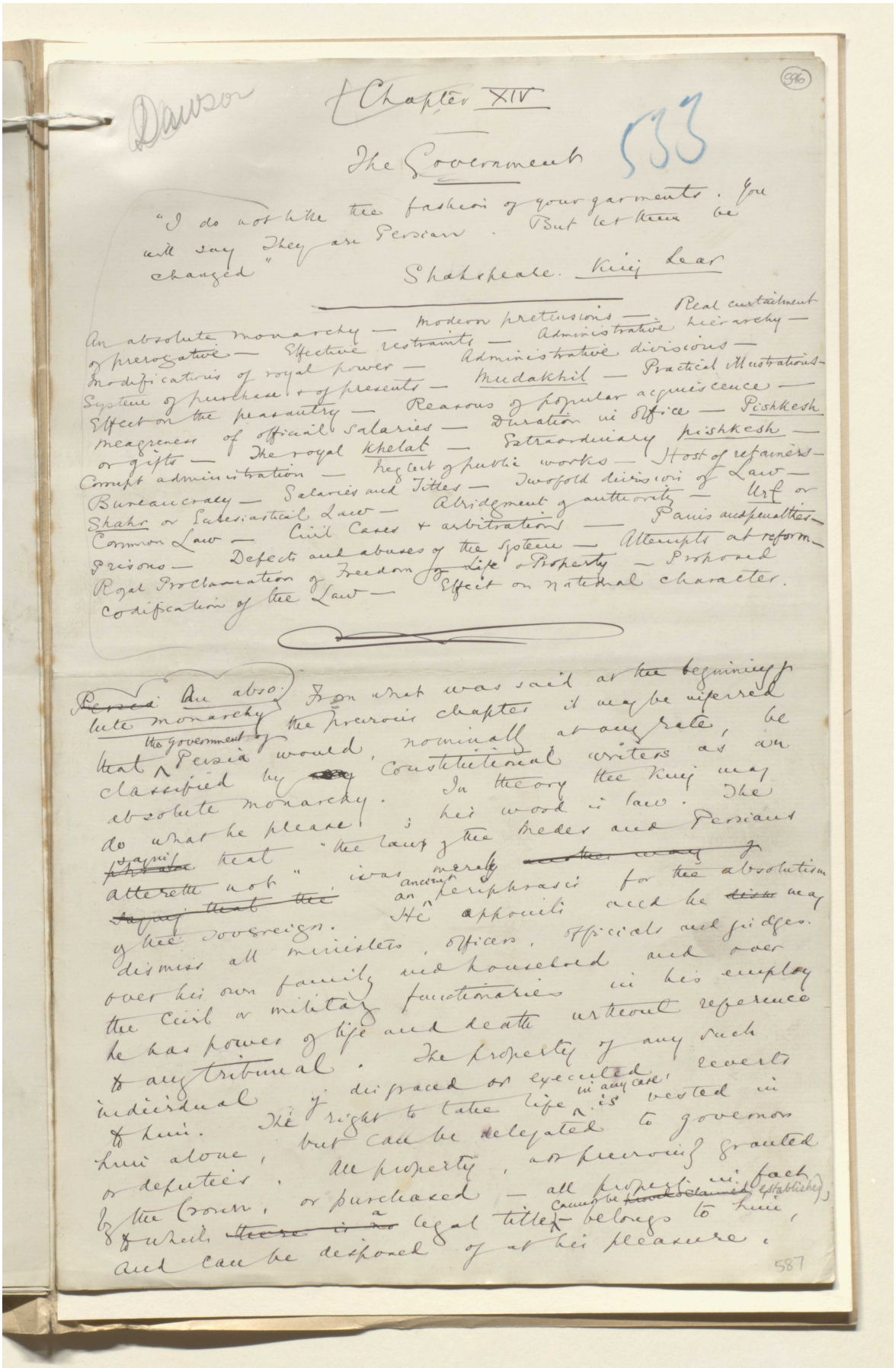

Dawson

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Chapter XIV

533

The Government

"I do not like the fashion of your garments. You will say they are Persian. But let them be changed"

Shakspeare. King Lear

An absolute monarchy — modern pretensions — Real curtailment of prerogative — Effective restraints — Administrative hierarchy — Modifications of royal power — Administrative divisions — System of purchase & of presents — Mudakhil — Practical illustrations — Effect on the peasantry — Reasons of popular acquiescence — meagreness of official salaries — Duration in office — Pishkesh or gifts — The royal Khelat — Extraordinary pishkesh — Corrupt administration — Neglect of public works — Host of retainers — Bureaucracy — Salaries and Titles — Twofold division of Law — Shahr or Ecclesiastical Law — Abridgment of authority — Urf or Common Law — Civil Cases & arbitrations — Pains and penalties — Prisons — Defects and abuses of the system — Attempts at reform — Royal Proclamation of Freedom of Life & Property — Proposed codification of the Law — Effect on national character.

~~Persia~~ An absolute monarchy. From what was said at the beginning of the previous chapter it may be inferred that the government of Persia would, nominally at any rate, be classified by ~~any~~ constitutional writers as an absolute monarchy. In theory the King may do what he please; his word is law. The ~~phrase~~ saying that "the law of the Medes and Persians alteretth not" was merely ~~another way of saying that the~~ an ancient periphrasis for the absolutism of the sovereign. He appoints and he ~~dis~~ may dismiss all ministers, officers, officials and judges over his own family and household and over the civil or military functionaries in his employ he has power of life and death without reference to any tribunal. The property of any such individual if disgraced or executed reverts to him. The right to take life in any case is vested in him alone, but can be delegated to governors or deputies. All property, not previously granted by the Crown, or purchased — all property in fact to which ~~there is no~~ a legal title cannot be ~~proved claimed~~ established, belongs to him, and can be disposed of at his pleasure.

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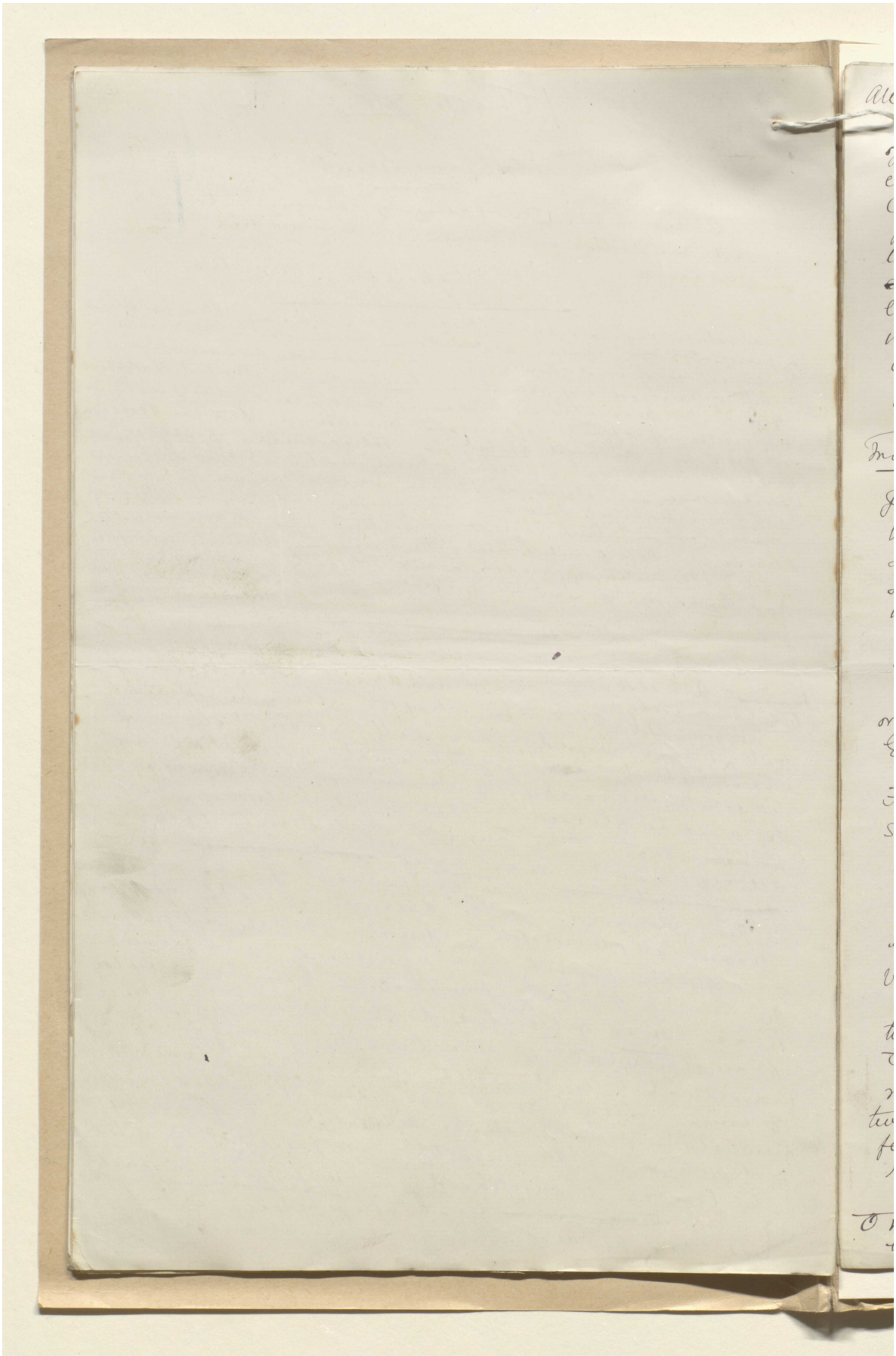

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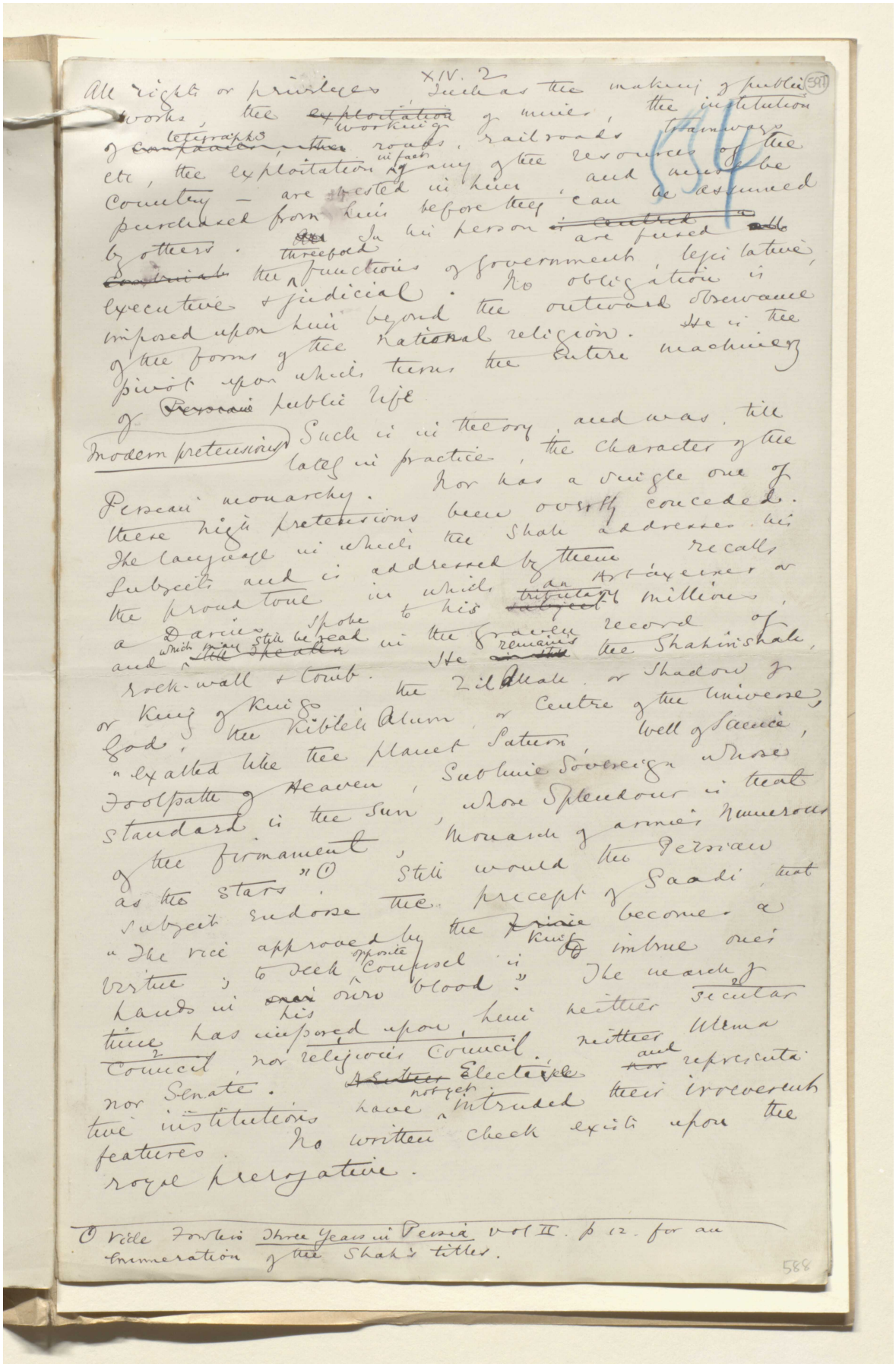

XIV. 2

All rights or privileges such as the making of public works, the ~~exploitation~~ working of mines, the institution of ~~companies, the~~ telegraphs, roads, railroads, tramways etc, the exploitation in fact of any of the resources of the country — are vested in him, and must be purchased from him before they can be assumed by others. In his person ~~is centred~~ are fused ~~all~~ ~~combined~~ the threefold functions of government, legislative, executive & judicial. No obligation is imposed upon him beyond the outward observance of the forms of the national religion. He is the pivot upon which turns the entire machinery of ~~Persian~~ public life.

Modern pretensions

Such is in theory, and was, till lately in practice, the character of the Persian monarchy. Nor has a single one of these high pretensions been overtly conceded. The language in which the Shah addresses his subjects and is addressed by them recalls the proud tone in which an Artaxerxes or a Darius spoke to his ~~subject~~ tributary millions, and which may still be read in the graven record of rock-wall & tomb. He ~~is the~~ remains the Shahinshah, or King of Kings, the Zil Allah, or Shadow of God, the Kiblah Alum, or Centre of the Universe, "exalted like the planet Saturn, Well of Science, Footpath of Heaven, Sublime Sovereign whose standard is the Sun, whose Splendour is that of the firmament, Monarch of armies numerous as the stars"(1). Still would the Persian subject endorse the precept of Saadi, that "The vice approved by the ~~prince~~ King becomes a virtue; to seek opposite counsel is to imbrue one's hands in ~~our~~ his own blood." The march of time has imposed upon him neither secular council, nor religious council, neither Ulema nor Senate. ~~Neither~~ Elective ~~nor~~ and representative institutions have not yet intruded their irreverent features. No written check exists upon the royal prerogative.

(1) Vide Fowler's Three Years in Persia vol II. p 12. for an enumeration of the Shah's titles.

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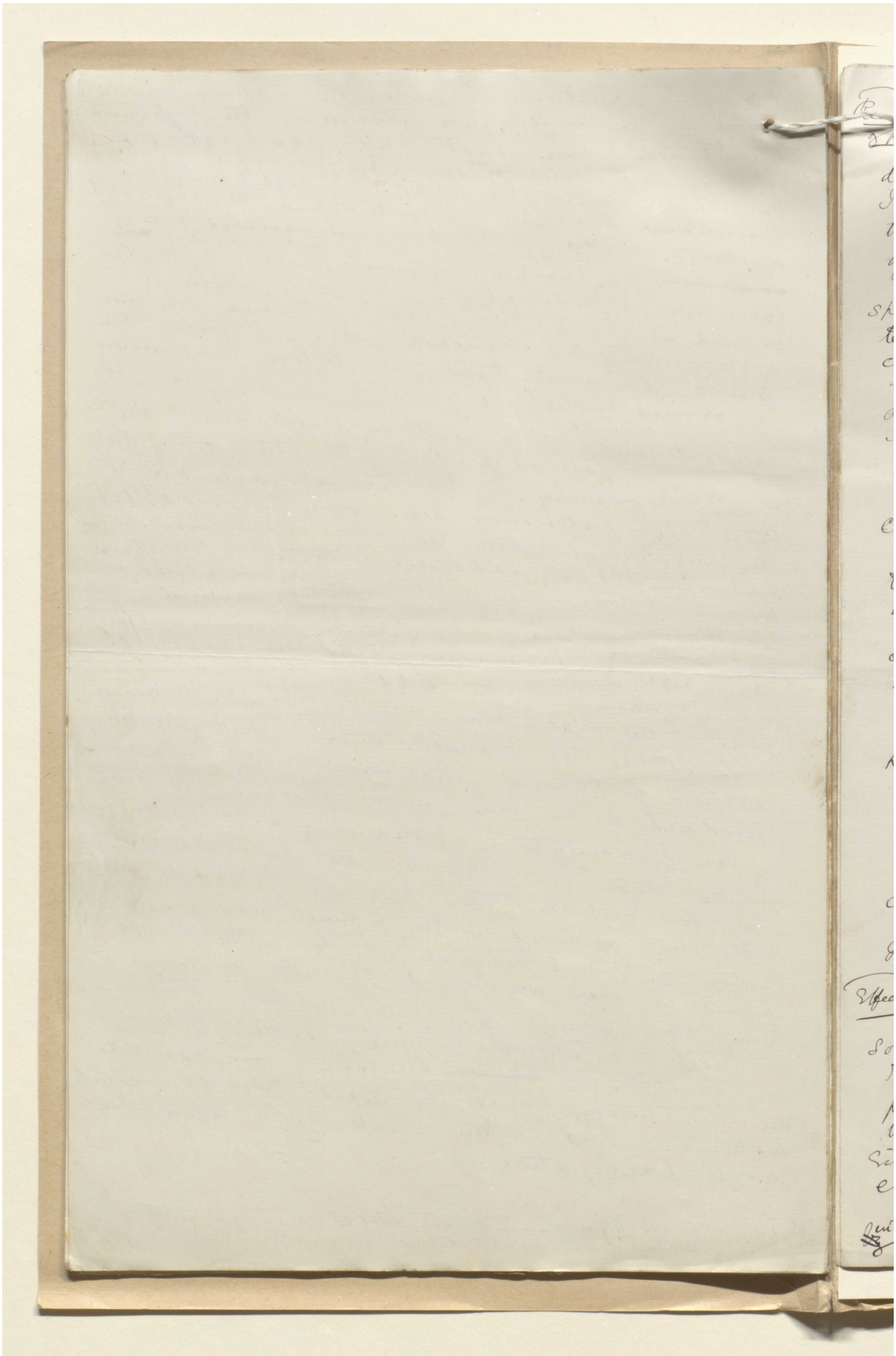

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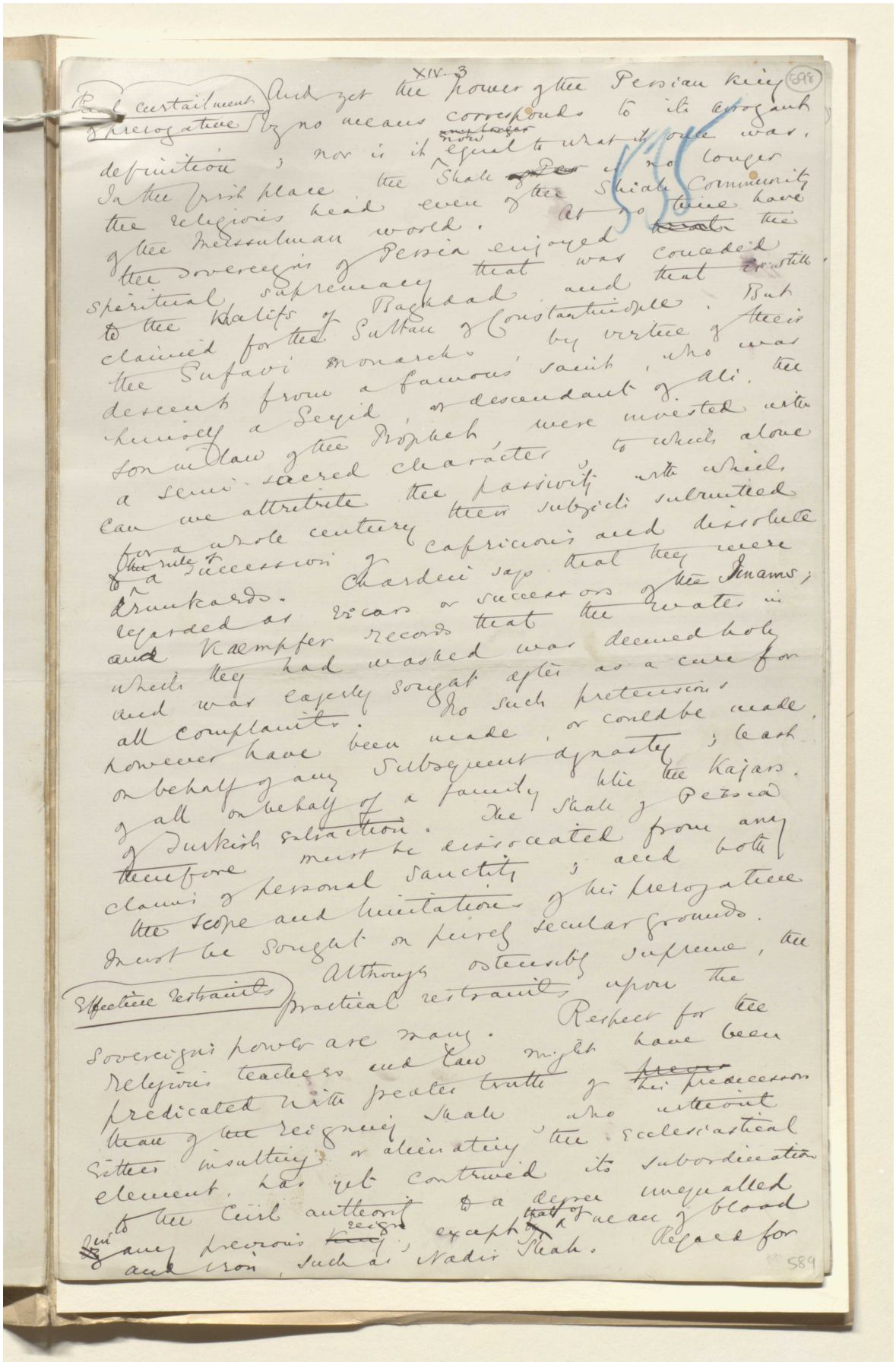

XIV. 3

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Real curtailment of prerogative

And yet the power of the Persian king by no means corresponds to its arrogant definition; nor is it now equal to what it once was. In the first place the Shah is no longer the religious head even of the Shiah Community of the Mussulman world. At no time have the sovereigns of Persia enjoyed the spiritual supremacy that was conceded to the Khalifs of Baghdad and that is still claimed for the Sultan of Constantinople. But the Sufavi monarchs, by virtue of their descent from a famous saint, who was himself a Seyid, or descendant of Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet, were invested with a semi-sacred character, to which alone can we attribute the passivity with which for a whole century their subjects submitted to the rule of a succession of capricious and dissolute drunkards. Chardin says that they were regarded as vicars or successors of the Imams; and Kaempfer records that the water in which they had washed was deemed holy and was eagerly sought after as a cure for all complaints. No such pretensions however have been made, or could be made, on behalf of any subsequent dynasty; least of all on behalf of a family like the Kajars of Turkish extraction. The Shah of Persia therefore must be dissociated from any claims of personal sanctity; and both the scope and limitations of his prerogative must be sought on purely secular grounds.

Effective restraints

Although ostensibly supreme, the practical restraints upon the sovereign power are many. Respect for the religious teachers and law might have been predicated with greater truth of his predecessors than of the reigning Shah, who without either insulting or alienating the ecclesiastical element, has yet contrived its subordination to the Civil authority to a degree unequalled in any previous reign, except that of a man of blood and iron, such as Nadir Shah. Regard for

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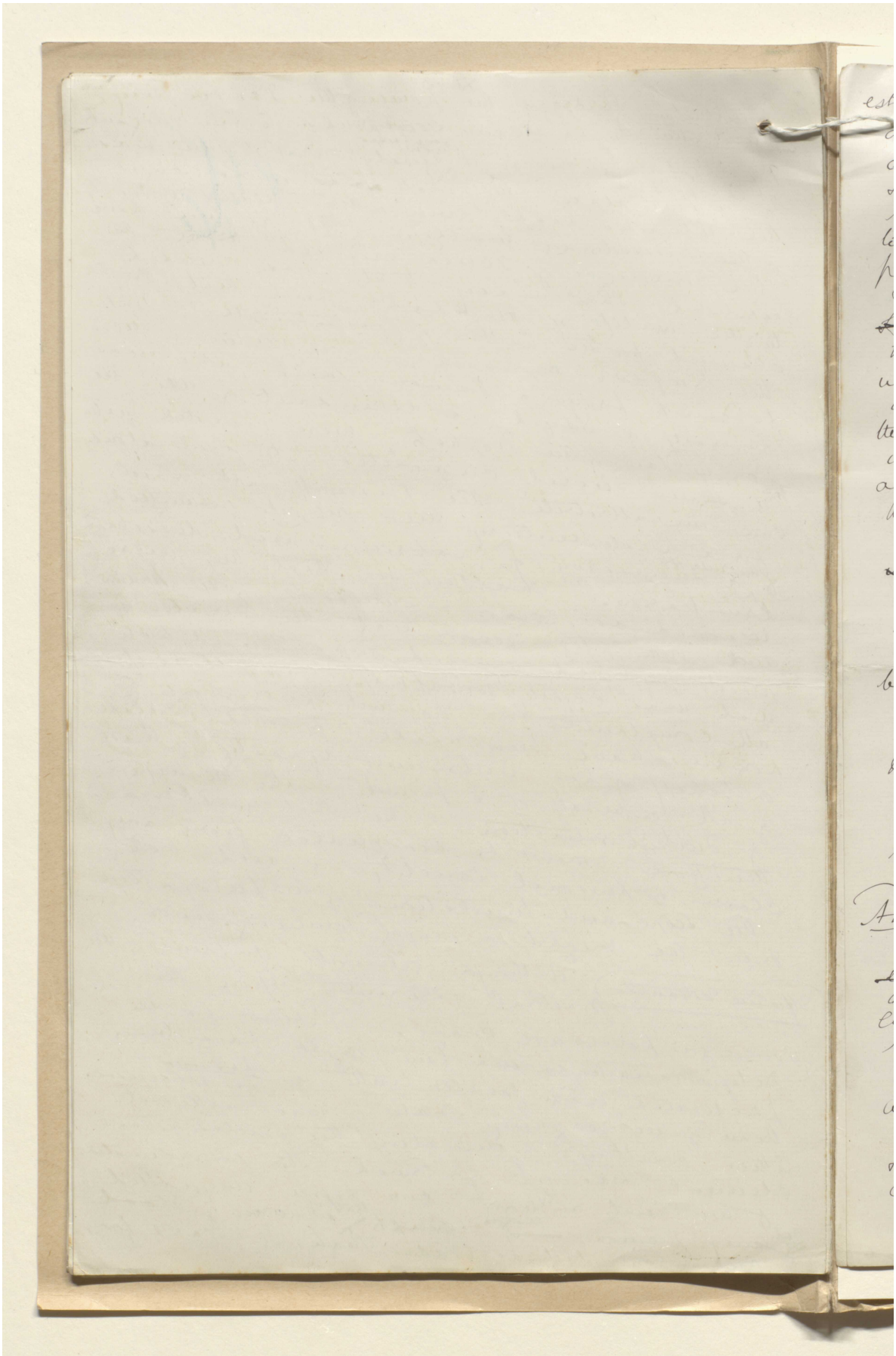

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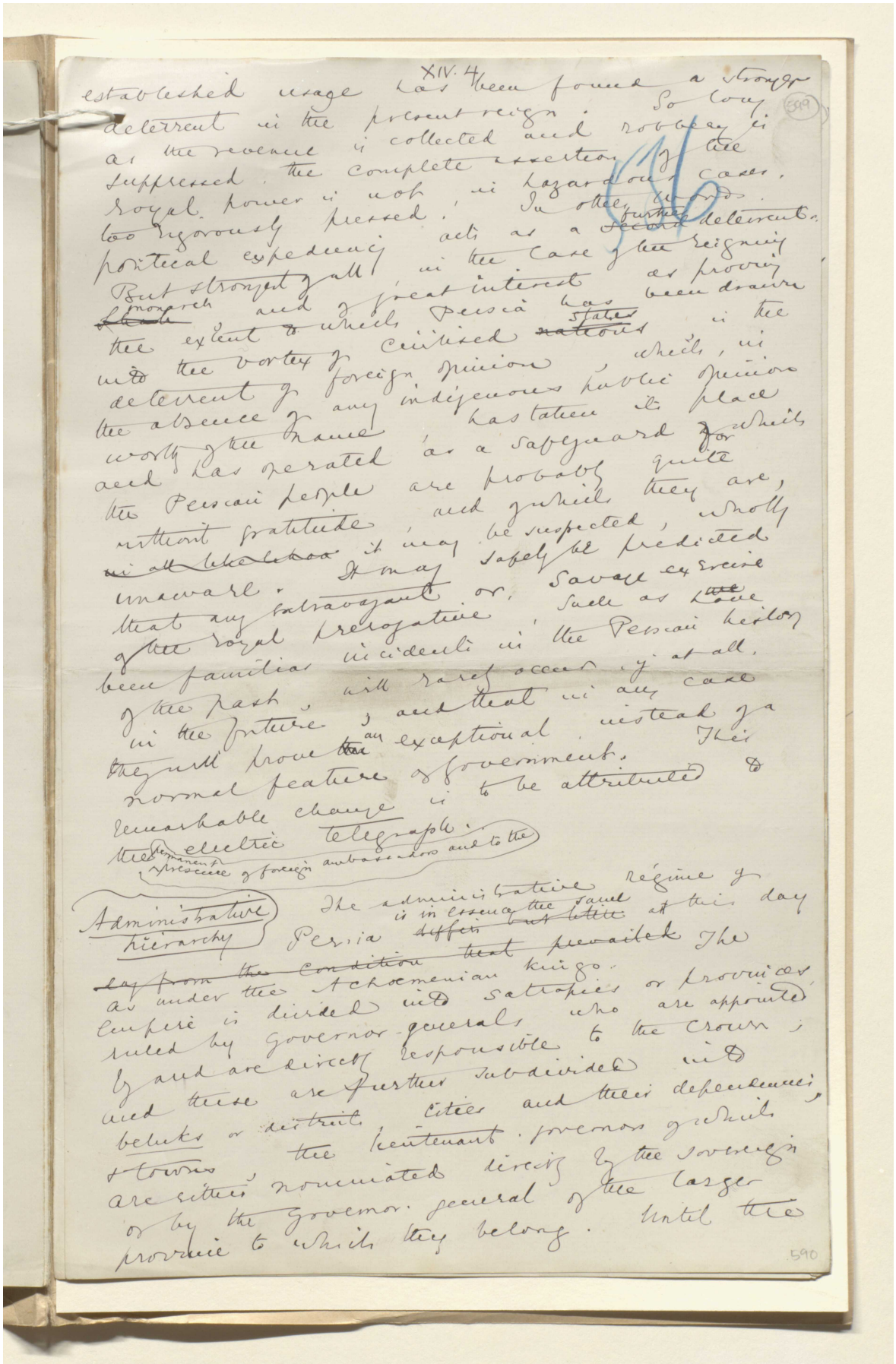

XIV. 4

established usage has been found a stronger deterrent in the present reign. So long as the revenue is collected and robbery is suppressed, the complete assertion of the royal power is not, in hazardous cases, too rigorously pressed. In other words, political expediency acts as a further deterrent. But strongest of all in the case of the reigning monarch and of great interest as proving the extent to which Persia has been drawn into the vortex of civilised states is the deterrent of foreign opinion, which, in the absence of any indigenous public opinion worthy of the name, has taken its place and has operated as a safeguard for which the Persian people are probably quite without gratitude, and of which they are, it may be suspected, wholly unaware. It may safely be predicted that any extravagant or savage exercise of the royal prerogative, such as have been familiar incidents in the Persian history of the past, will rarely occur, if at all, in the future, and that in any case they will prove an exceptional instead of a normal feature of government. This remarkable change is to be attributed to the permanent presence of foreign ambassadors and to the electric telegraph.

Administrative hierarchy

The administrative régime of Persia is in essence the same at this day as under the Achaemenian kings. The empire is divided into satrapies or provinces ruled by governor-generals who are appointed by and are directly responsible to the crown; and these are further subdivided into beluks or districts, cities and their dependencies, & towns, the lieutenant-governors of which are either nominated directly by the sovereign or by the governor-general of the larger province to which they belong. Until the

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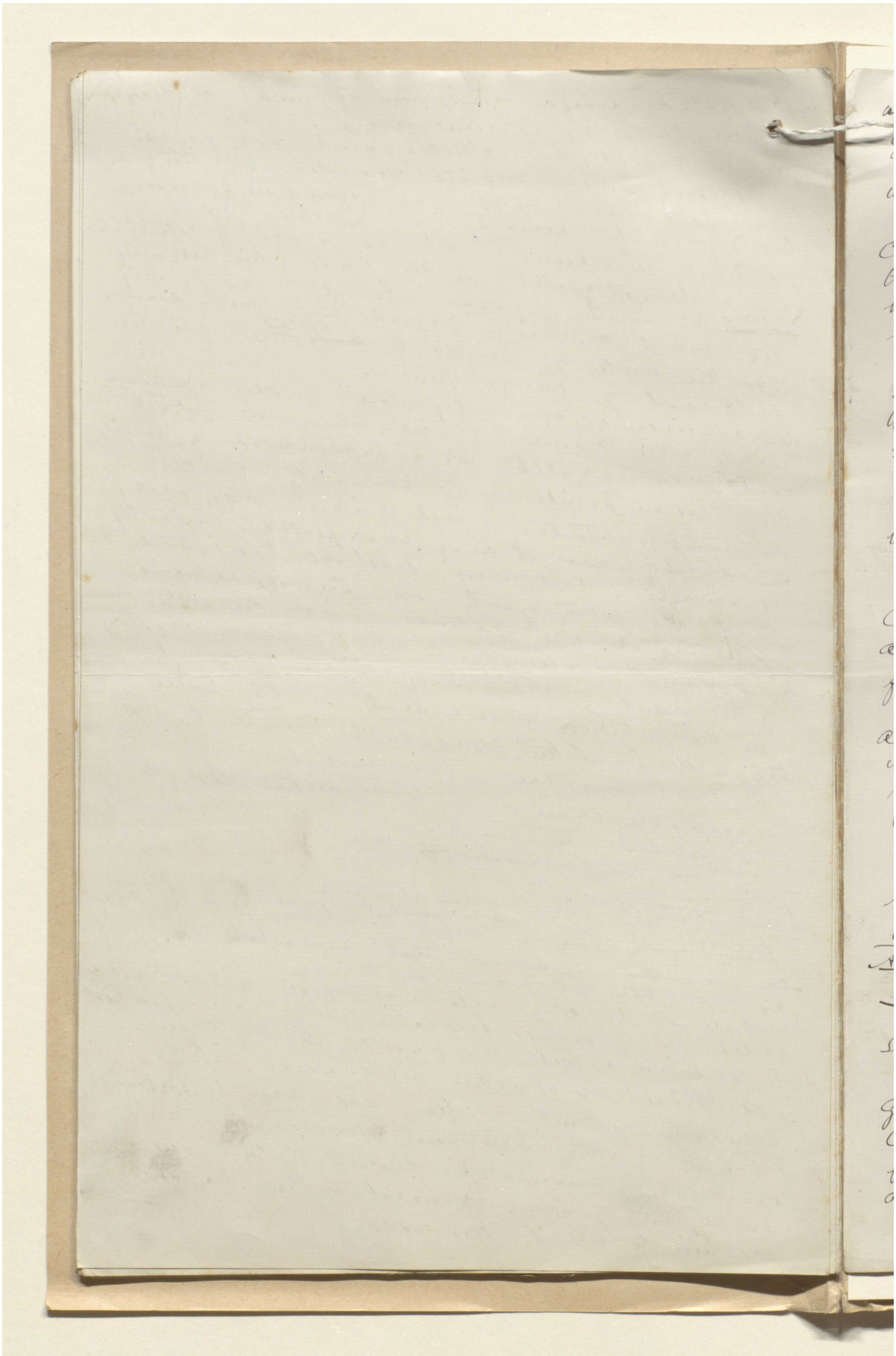

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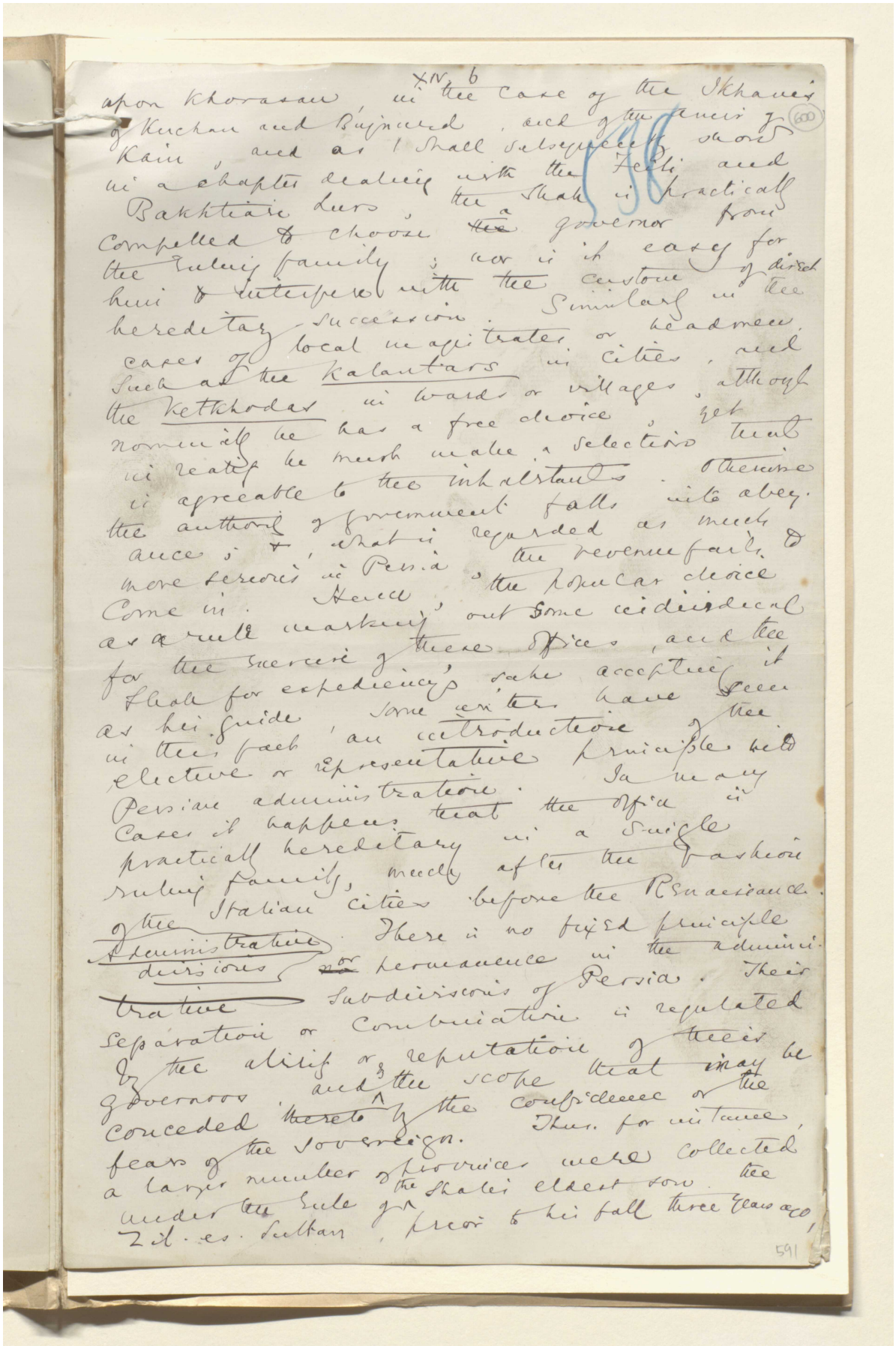

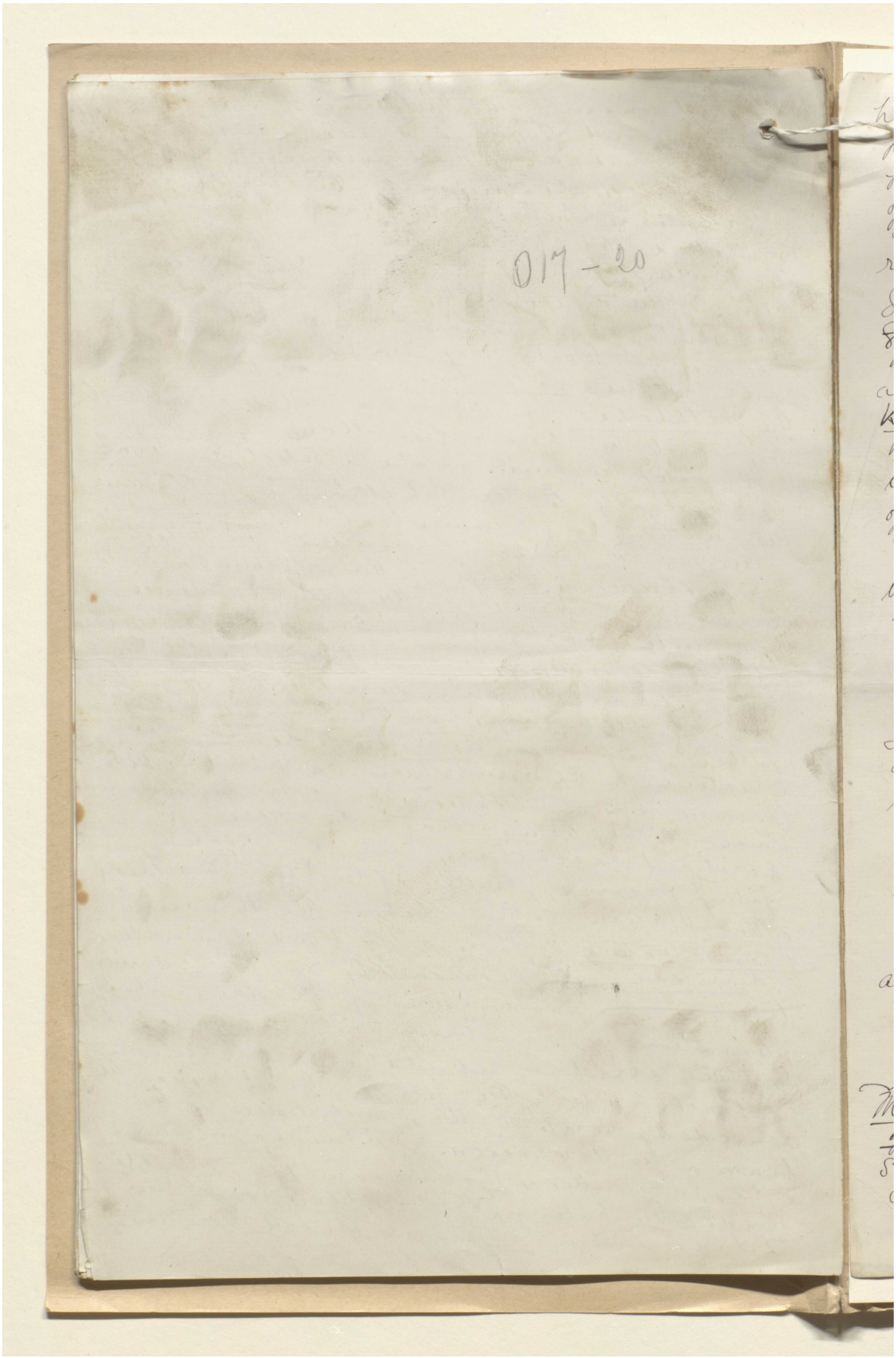
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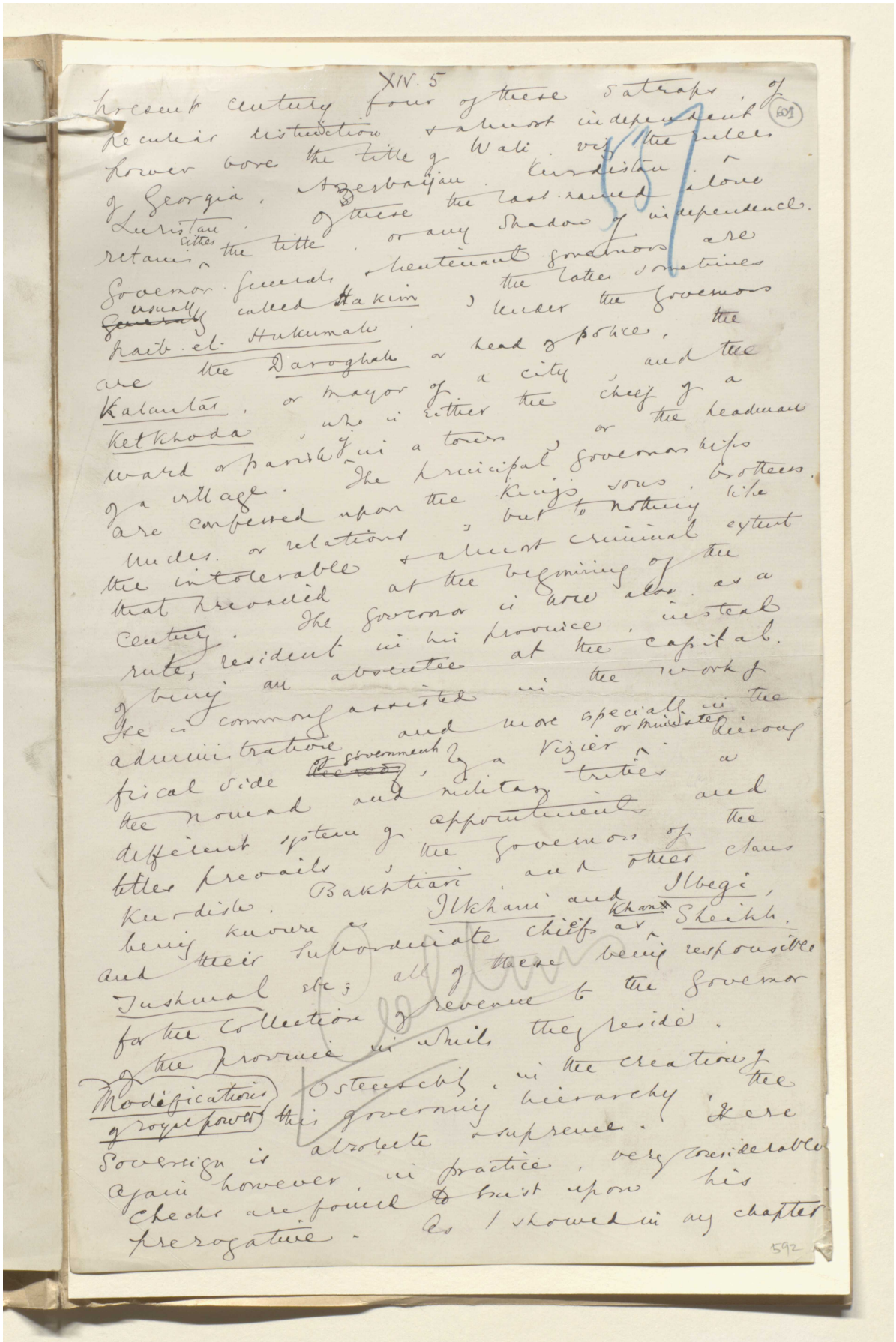

XIV. 5

present century four of these satraps of peculiar distinction & almost independent power bore the title of Wali viz the rulers of Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kurdistan & Luristan. Of these the last named alone retains either the title, or any shadow of independence. Governor generals & lieutenant governors are usually called Hakim, the latter sometimes Naib-el-Hukumah. Under the governors are the Daroghah or head of police, the Kalantar, or mayor of a city, and the Ketkhoda, who is either the chief of a ward or parish in a town, or the headman of a village. The principal governorships are confessed upon the king's sons, brothers, uncles, or relations, but to nothing like the intolerable & almost criminal extent that prevailed at the beginning of the century. The governor is now also, as a rule, resident in his province, instead of being an absentee at the capital. He is commonly assisted in the work of administration and more especially in the fiscal side of government by a Vizier or minister. Among the nomad and military tribes a different system of appointments and titles prevails, the governors of the Kurdish, Bakhtiari and other clans being known as Ilkhani and Ilbegi, and their subordinate chiefs as Khan, Sheikh, Tushmal etc; all of these being responsible for the collection of revenue to the governor of the province in which they reside.

Modifications of royal power

Ostensibly, in the creation of this governing hierarchy, the Sovereign is absolute & supreme. Here again however, in practice, very considerable checks are found to exist upon his prerogative. As I showed in my chapter

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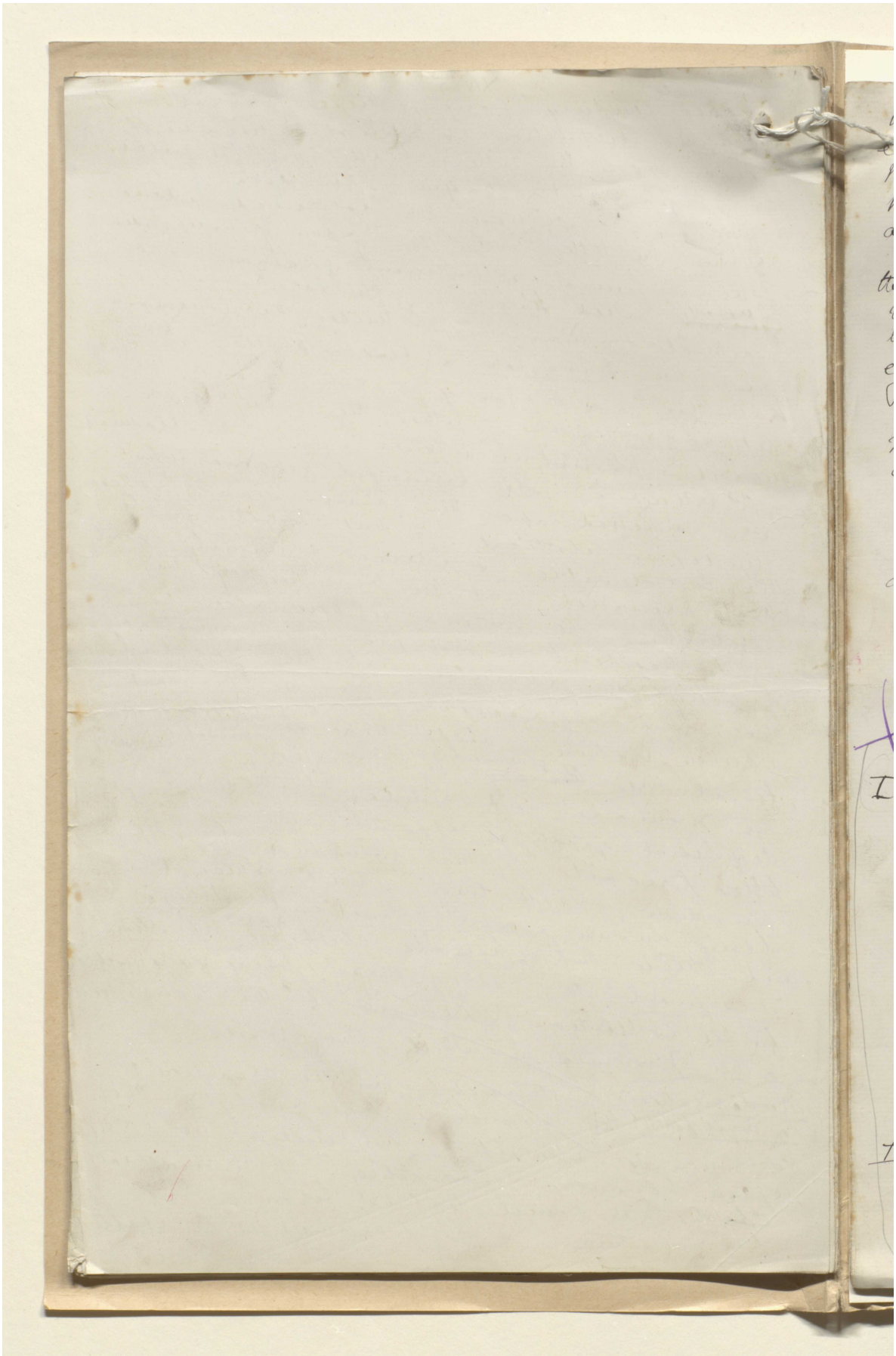

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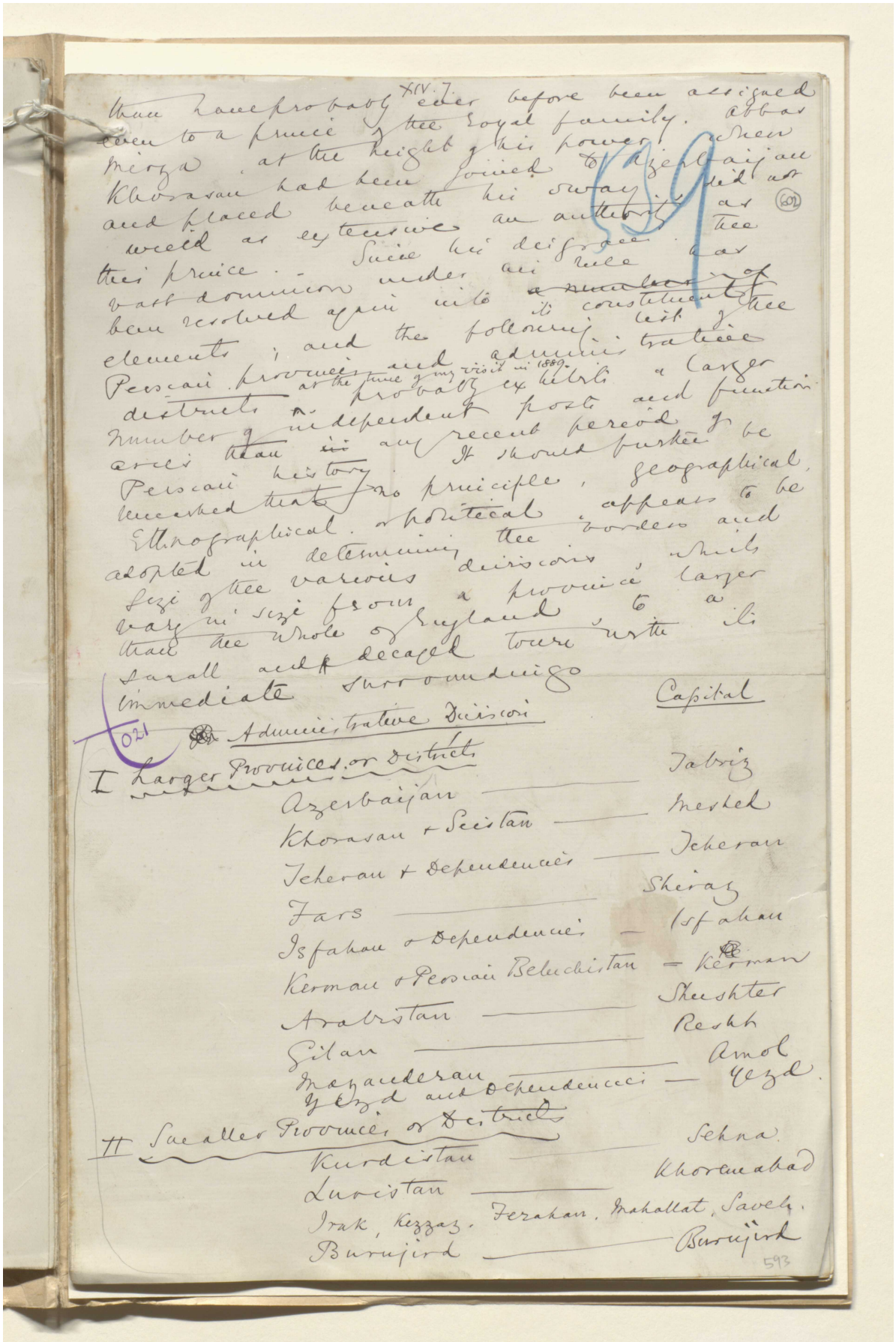

than have probably ever before been assigned even to a prince of the Royal family. Abbas Mirza, at the height of his power, when Khorasan had been joined to Azerbaijan and placed beneath his sway, did not wield as extensive an authority as this prince. Since his disgrace the vast dominion under his rule has been resolved again into ~~a number of~~ its constituent elements; and the following list of the Persian provinces and administrative districts at the time of my visit in 1889 probably exhibits a larger number of independent posts and functionaries than in any recent period of Persian history. It should further be remarked that no principle, geographical, ethnographical or political, appears to be adopted in determining the borders and size of the various divisions, which vary in size from a province larger than the whole of England to a small and decayed town with its immediate surroundings.

Administrative Division

	Capital
I Larger Provinces or Districts	
Azerbaijan	Tabriz
Khorasan & Seistan	Mesheh
Teheran & Dependencies	Teheran
Fars	Shiraz
Isfahan & Dependencies	Isfahan
Kerman & Persian Beluchistan	Kerman
Arabistan	Shushter
Gilan	Resht
Mazanderan	Amol
Yezd and Dependencies	Yezd
II Smaller Provinces or Districts	
Kurdistan	Sehna
Luristan	Khoremabad
Irak, Kezzaz, Ferahan, Mahallat, Saveh.	
Burujird	Burujird

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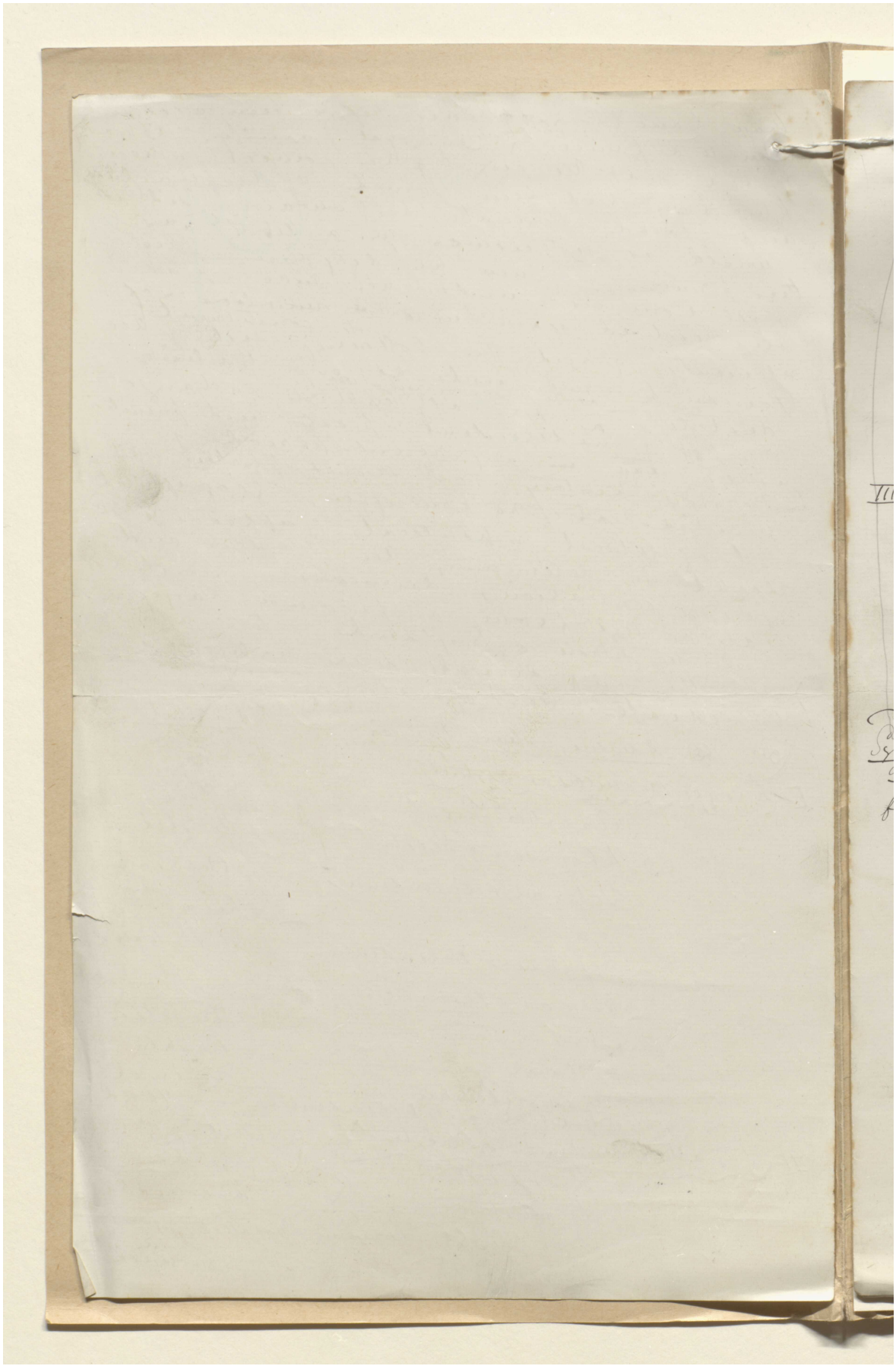

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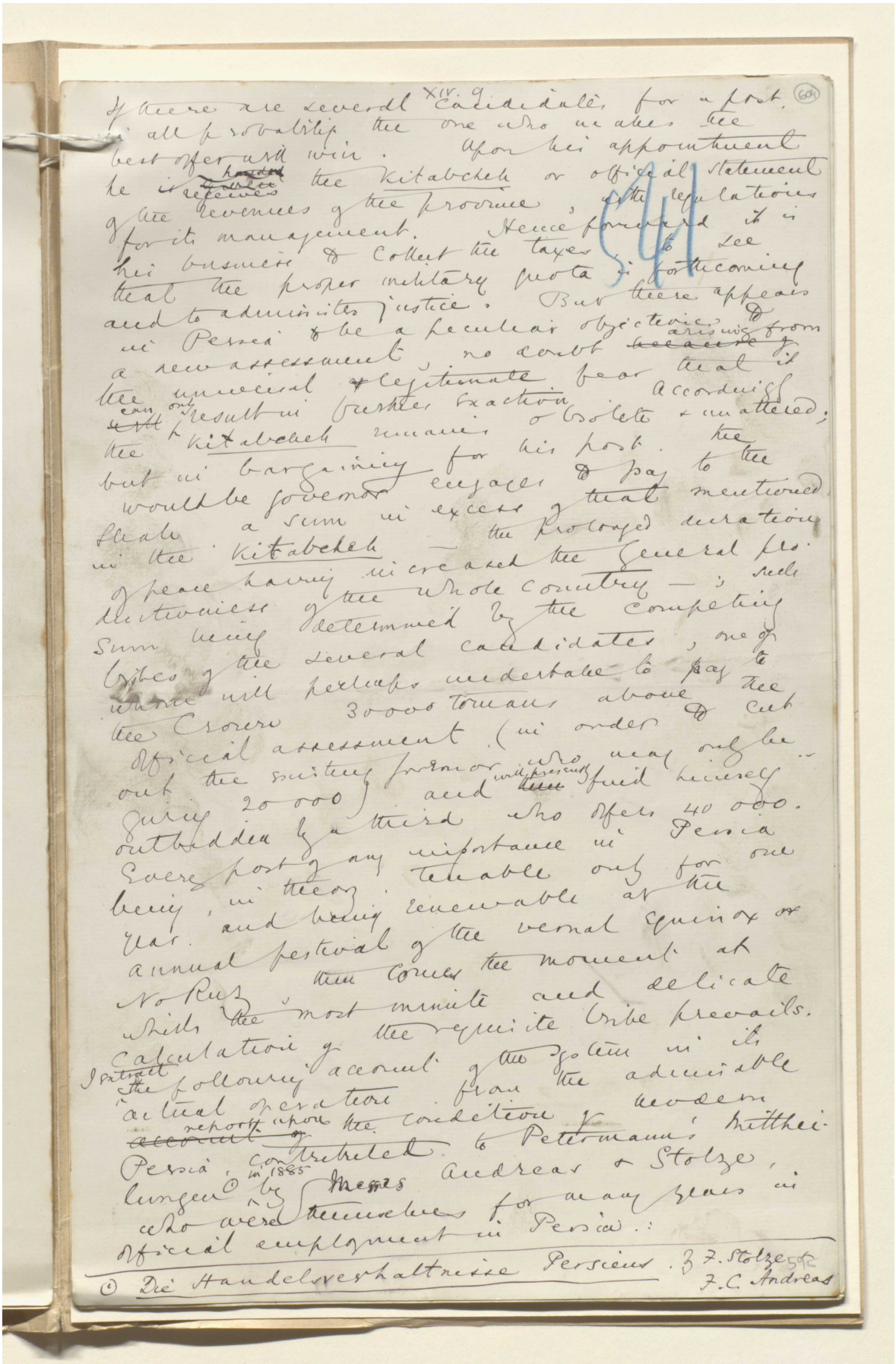

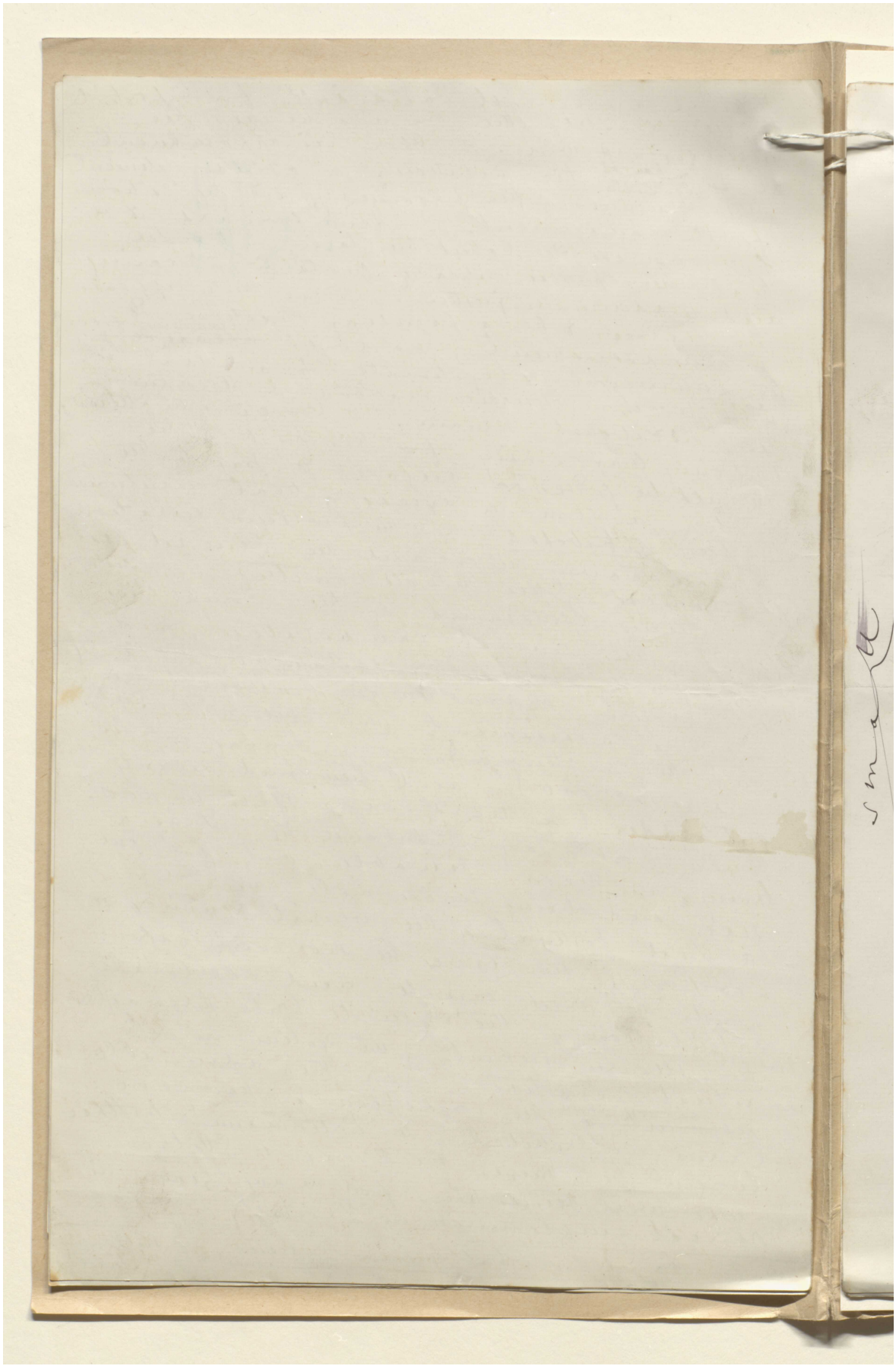

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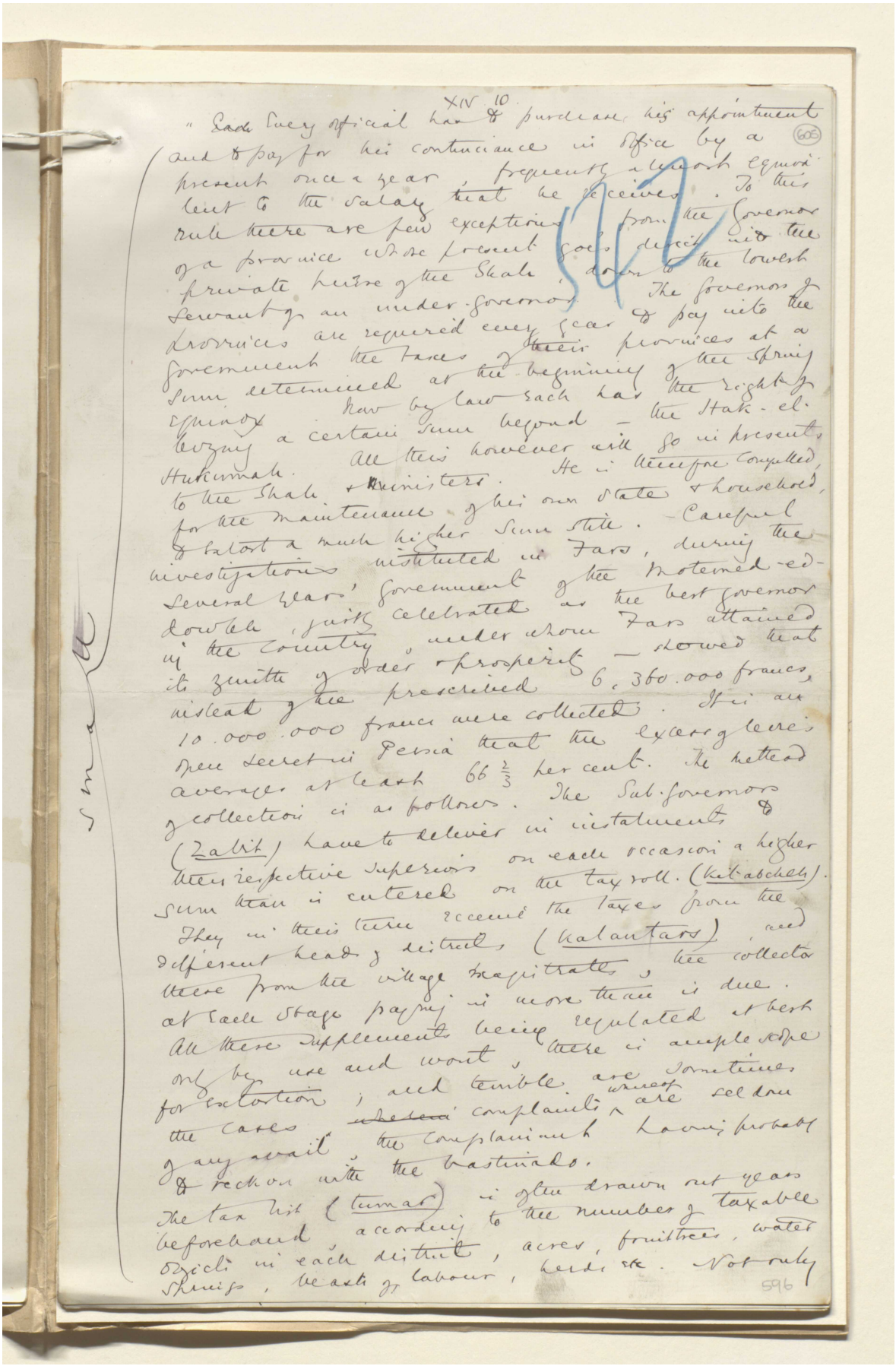

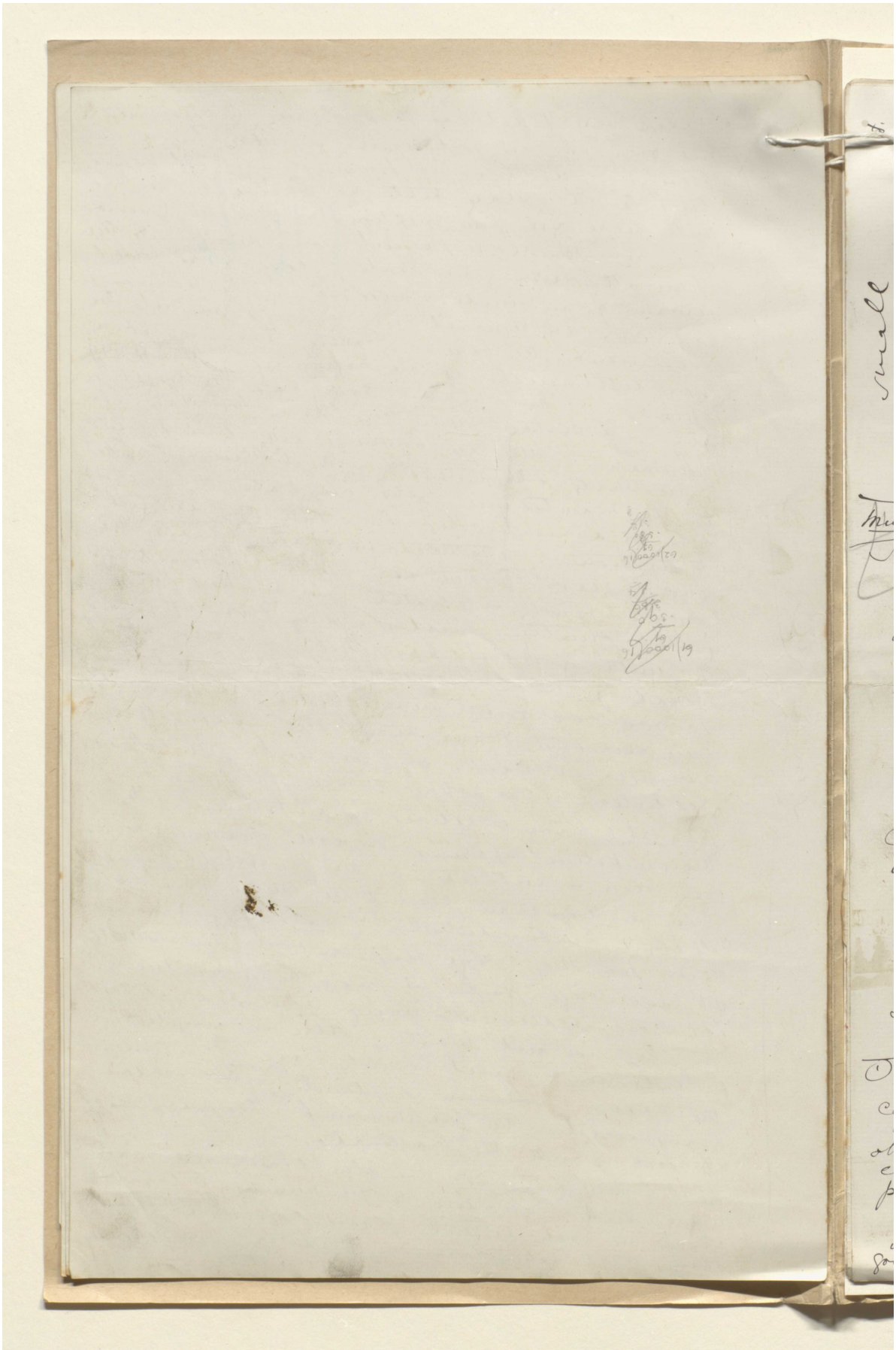

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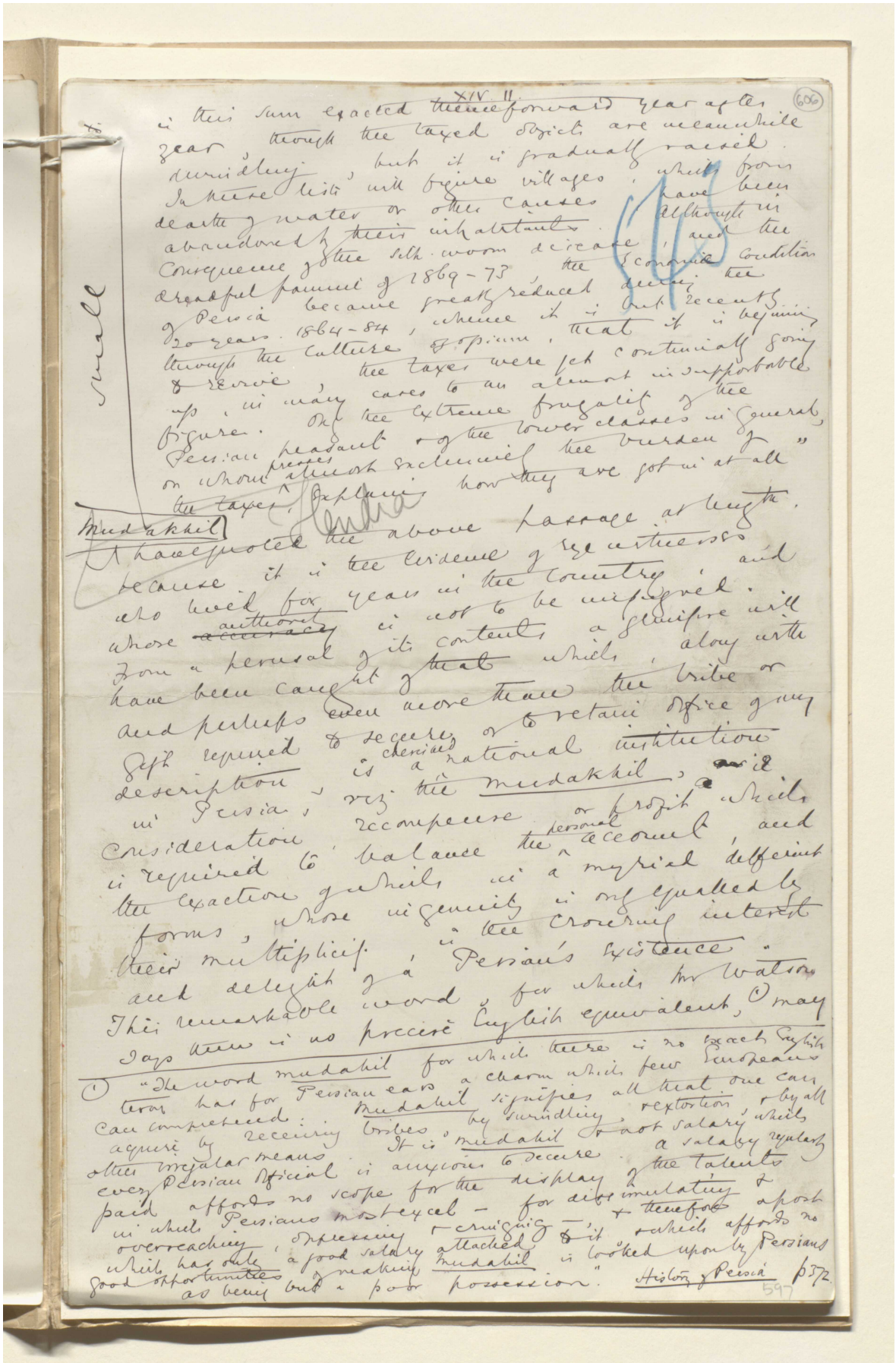

XIV. 11 (606)

is this sum exacted thenceforward year after year, though the taxed objects are meanwhile dwindling, but it is gradually raised. In these lists will figure villages, which from dearth of water or other causes have been abandoned by their inhabitants. Although in consequence of the silk-worm disease, and the dreadful famine of 1869-73, the Economic Condition of Persia became greatly reduced during the 20 years 1864-84, whence it is but recently through the culture of opium, that it is beginning to revive, the taxes were yet continually going up, in many cases to an almost insupportable figure. Only the extreme frugality of the Persian peasant & of the lower classes in general, on whom presses almost exclusively the burden of the taxes, explains how they are got in at all."

Mudakhil

I have quoted the above passage at length, because it is the evidence of eye witnesses who lived for years in the country, and whose authority is not to be impugned. From a perusal of its contents a glimpse will have been caught of that which, along with and perhaps even more than the tribe or gift required to secure or to retain office of any description, is a cherished national institution in Persia, viz the mudakhil, a consideration, recompense or profit which is required to balance the personal account, and the exaction of which in a myriad different forms, whose ingenuity is only equalled by their multiplicity, is the crowning interest and delight of a Persian's existence. This remarkable word, for which Mr Watson says there is no precise English equivalent,(1) may

(1) "The word mudakhil for which there is no exact English term has for Persian ears a charm which few Europeans can comprehend: Mudakhil signifies all that one can acquire by receiving tribes, by swindling, & extortion, & by all other irregular means. It is mudakhil & not salary which every Persian official is anxious to secure. A salary regularly paid affords no scope for the display of the talents in which Persians most excel — for dissimulating & overreaching, oppressing & cringing —, & therefore a post which has only a good salary attached to it & which affords no good opportunities of making mudakhil is looked upon by Persians as being but a poor possession." History of Persia p372.

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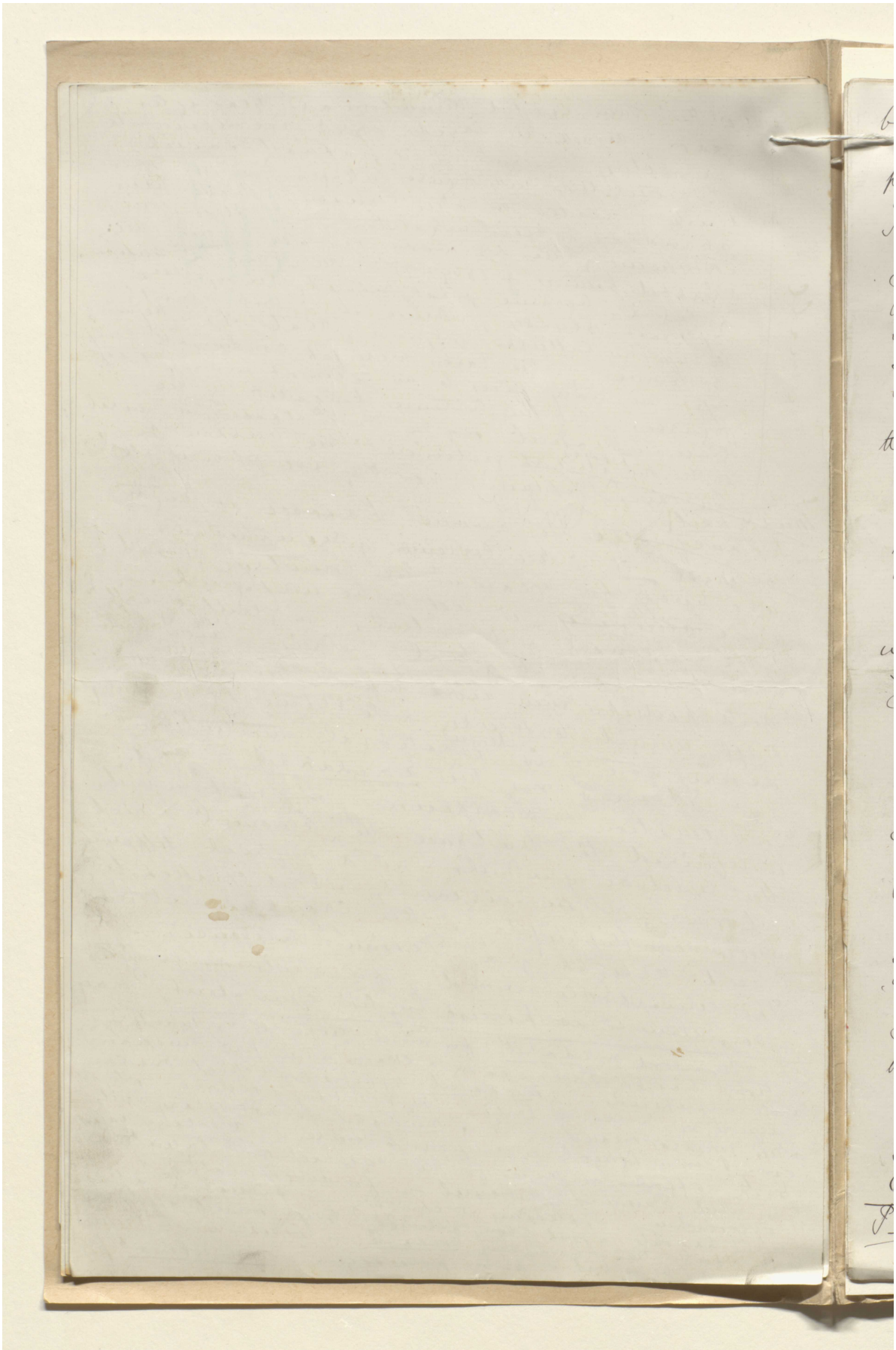

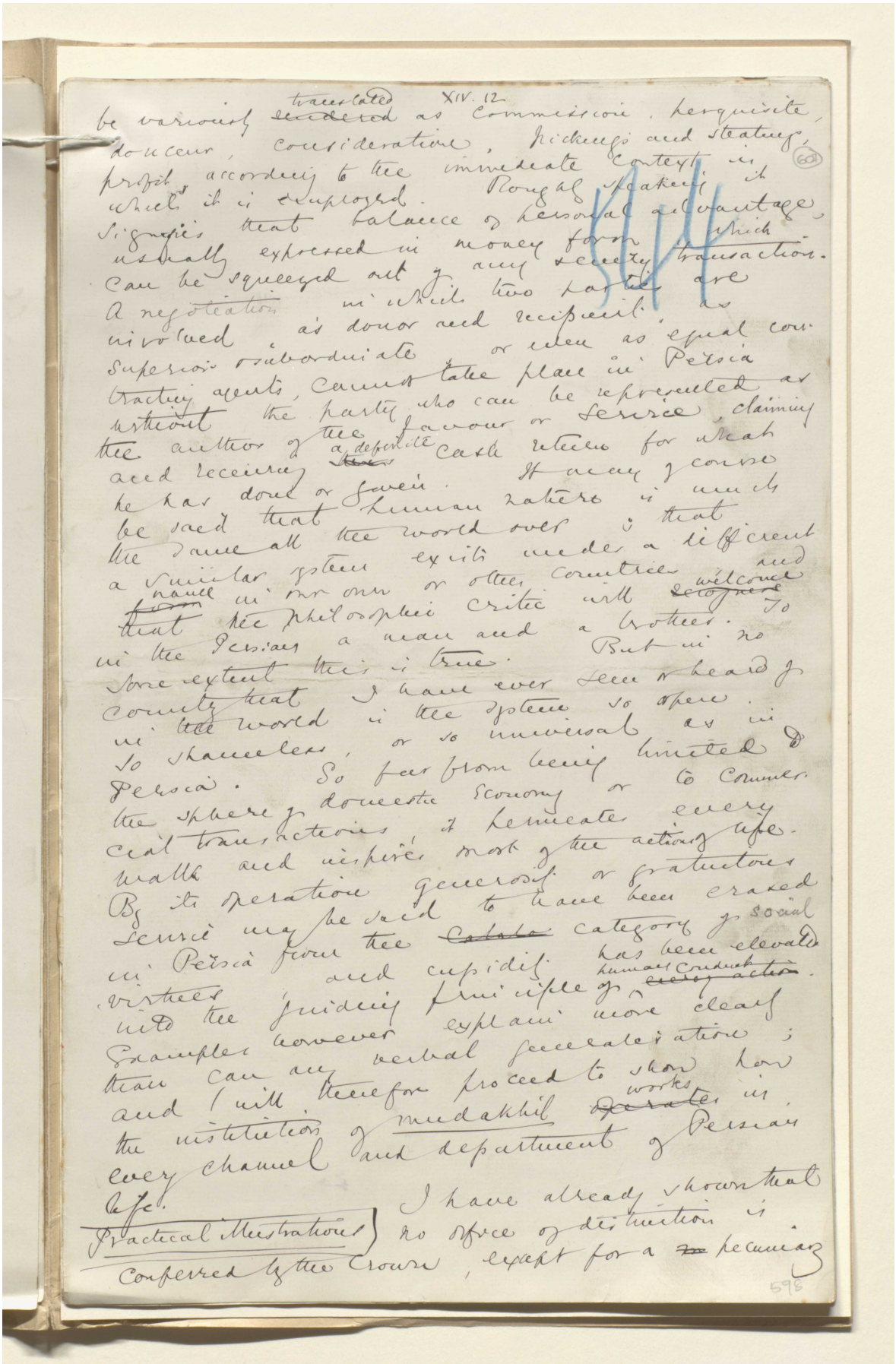

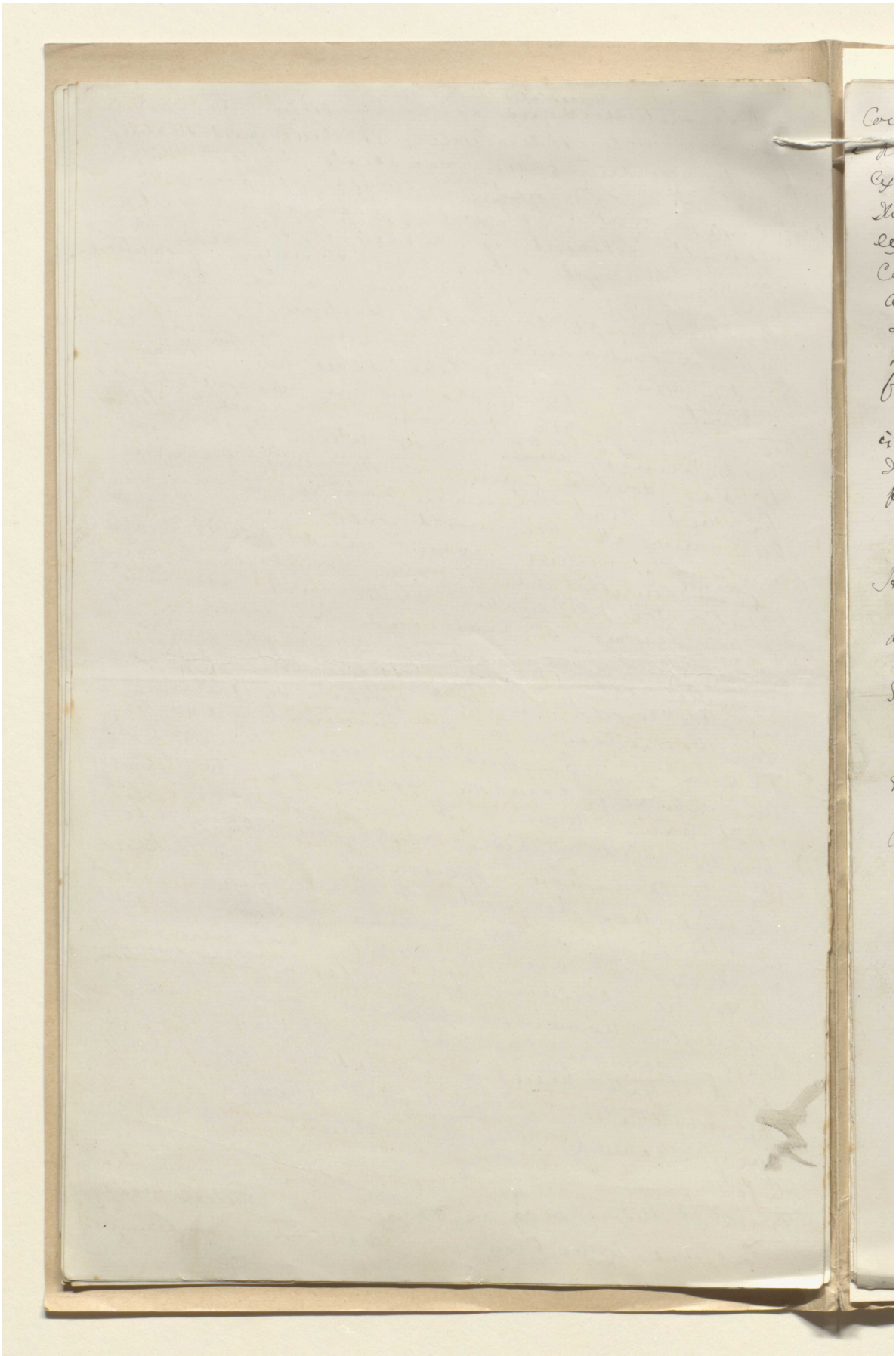

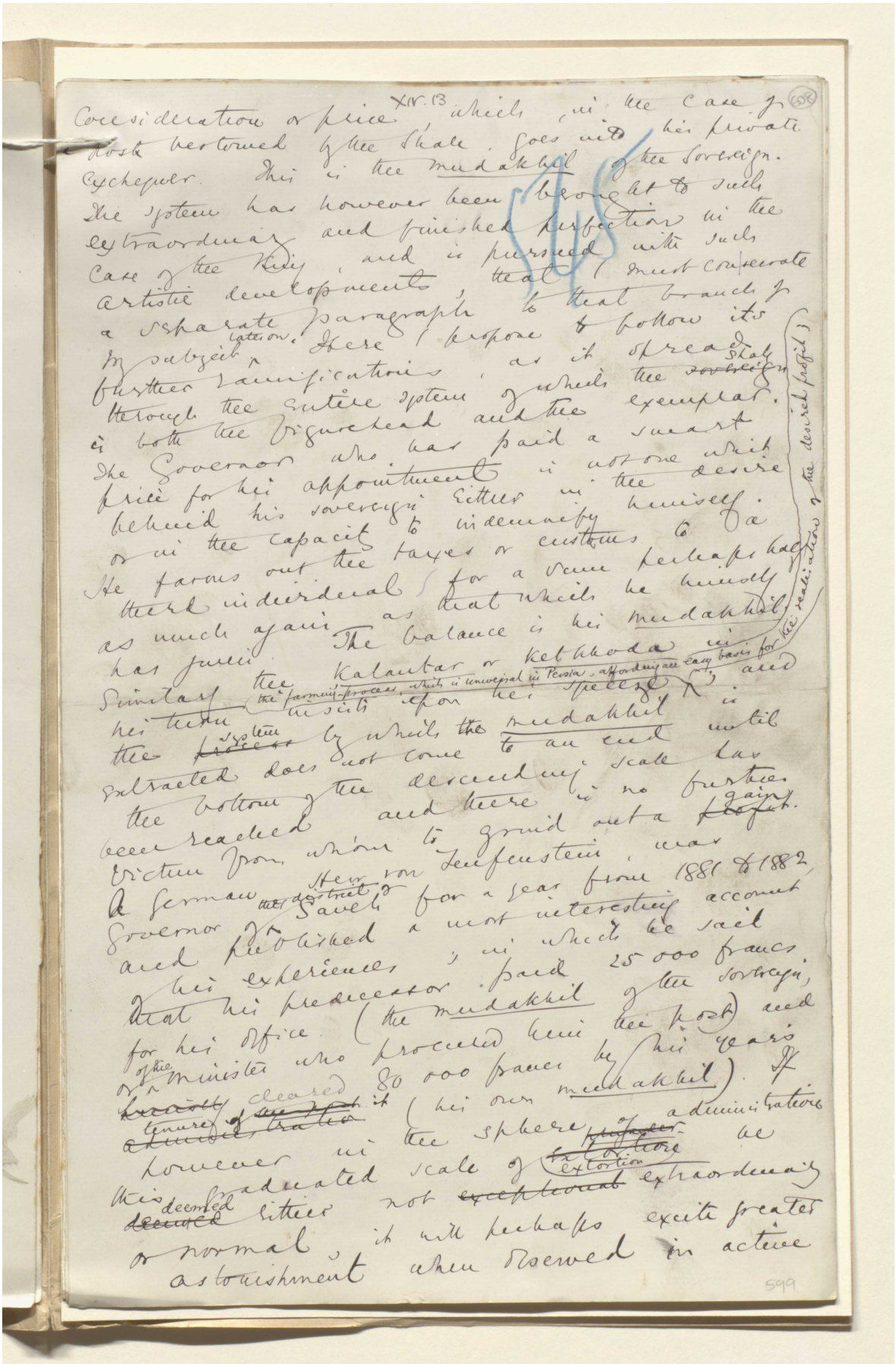

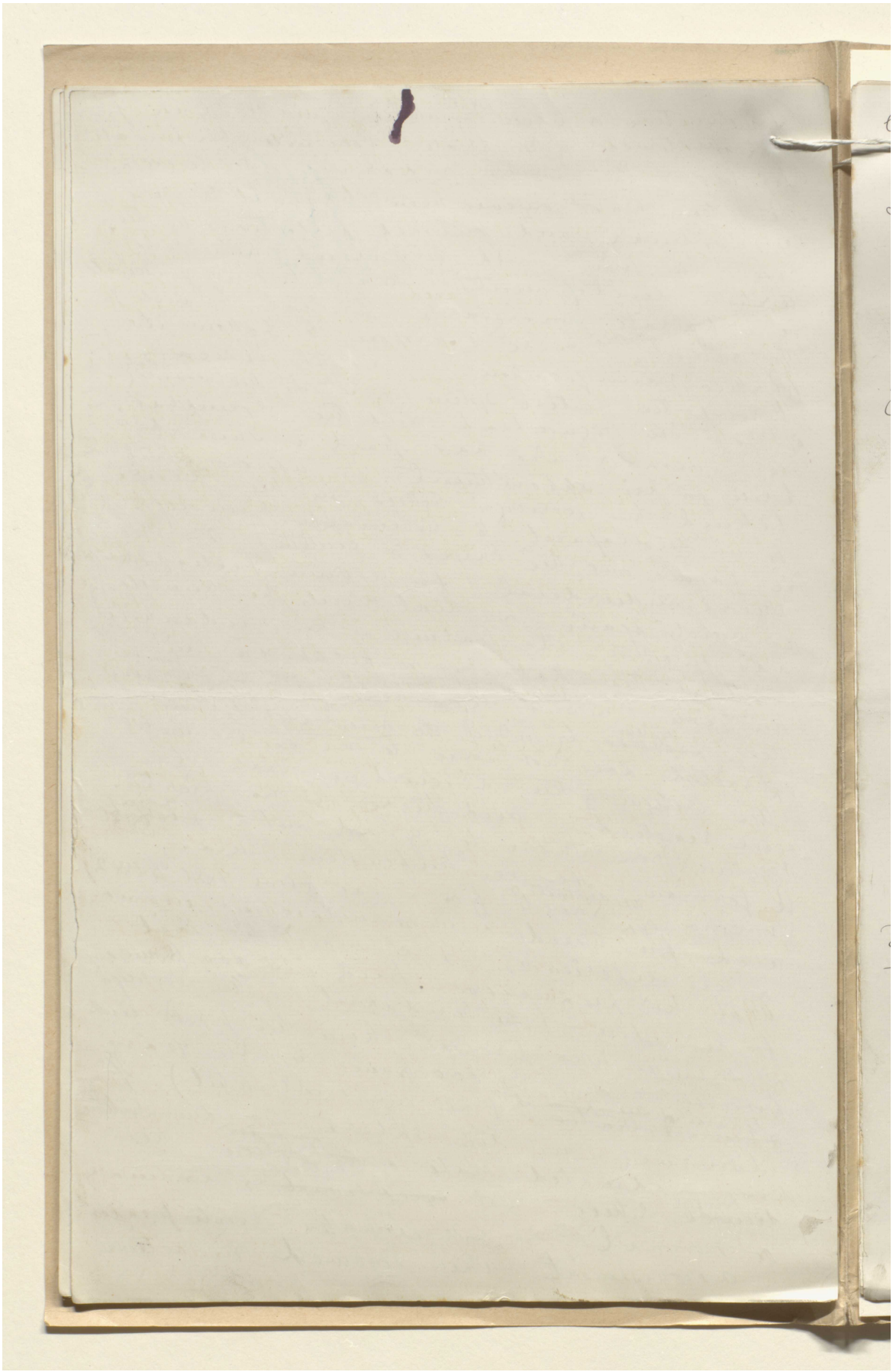

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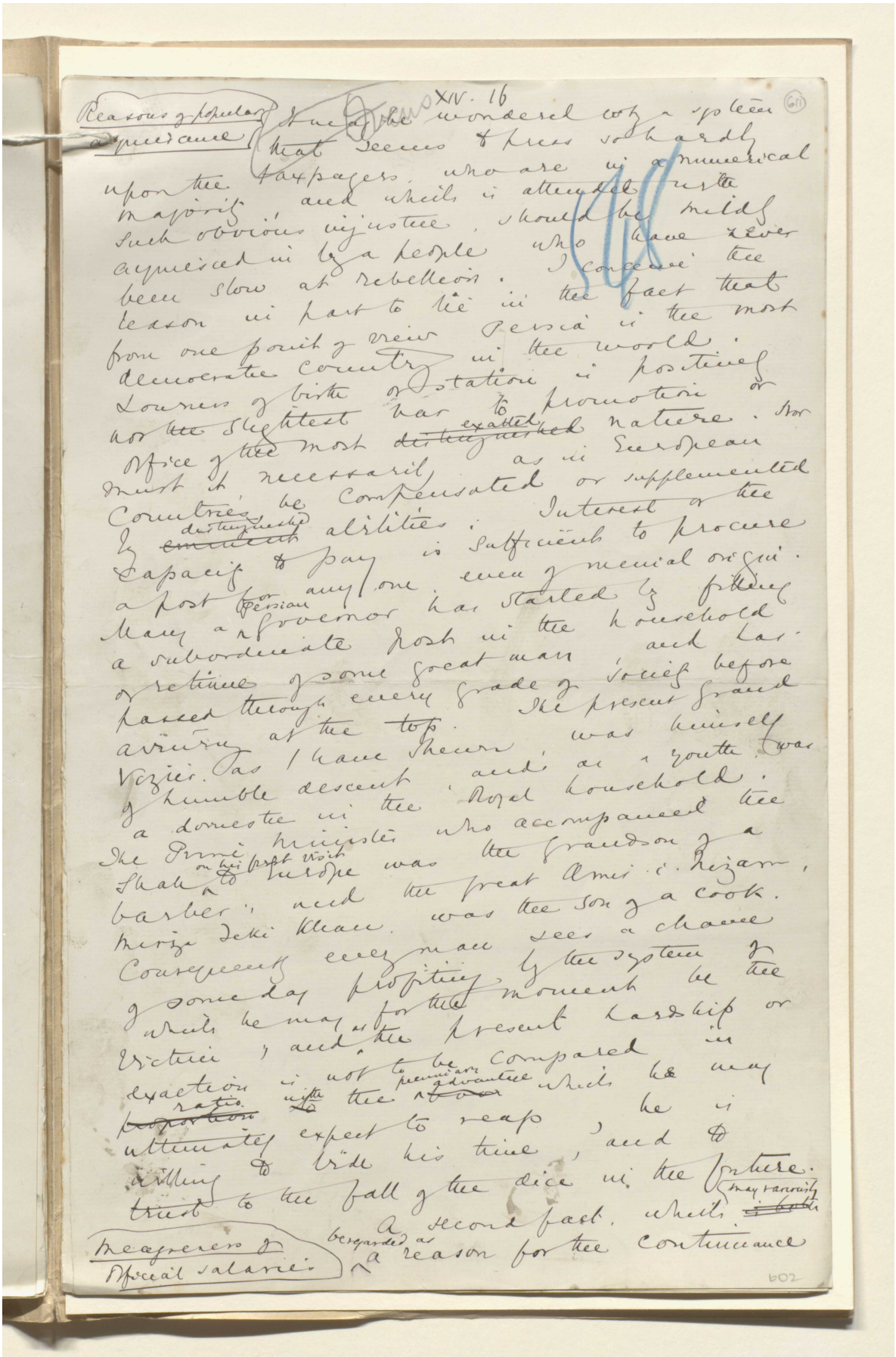

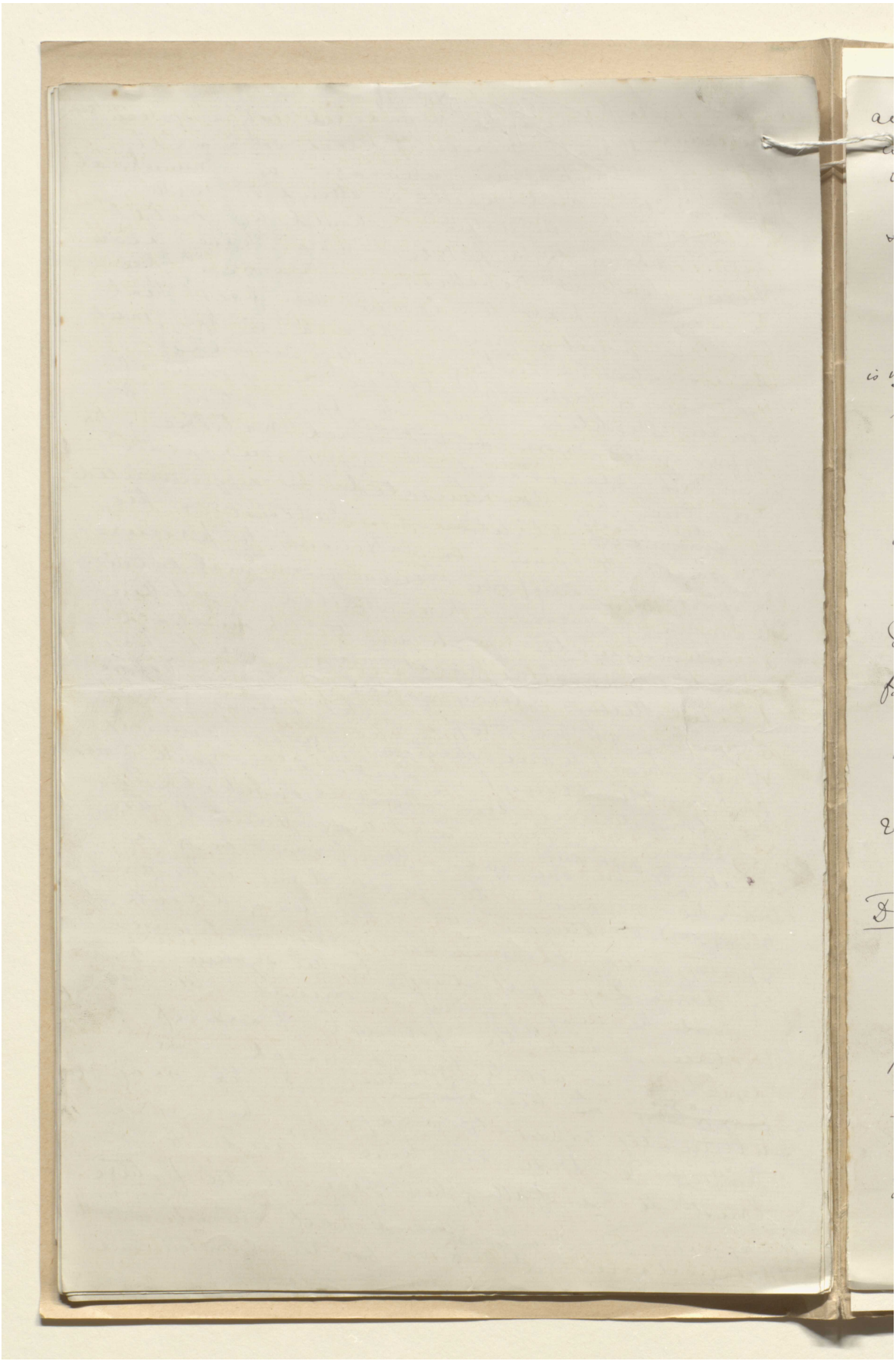

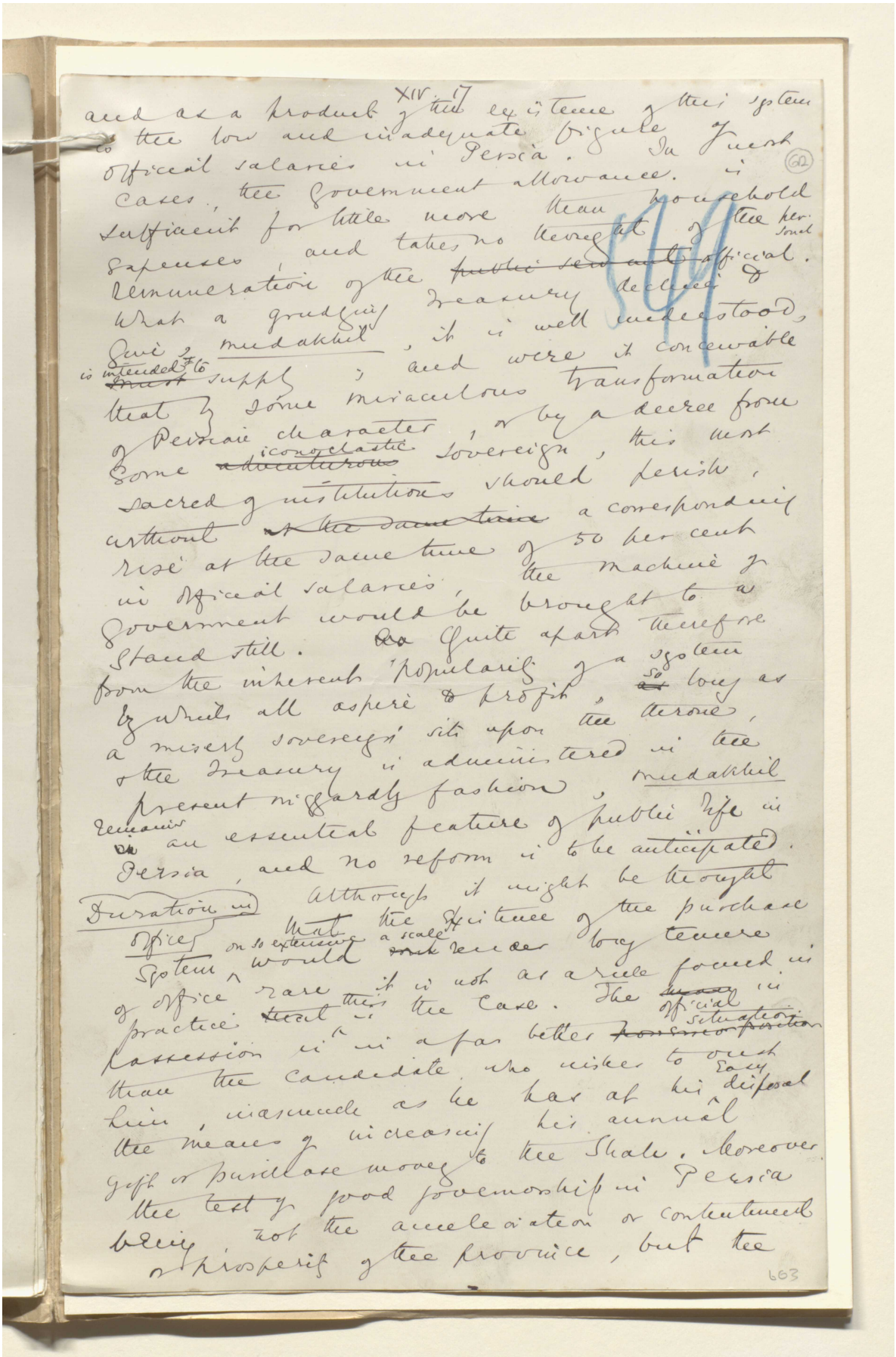

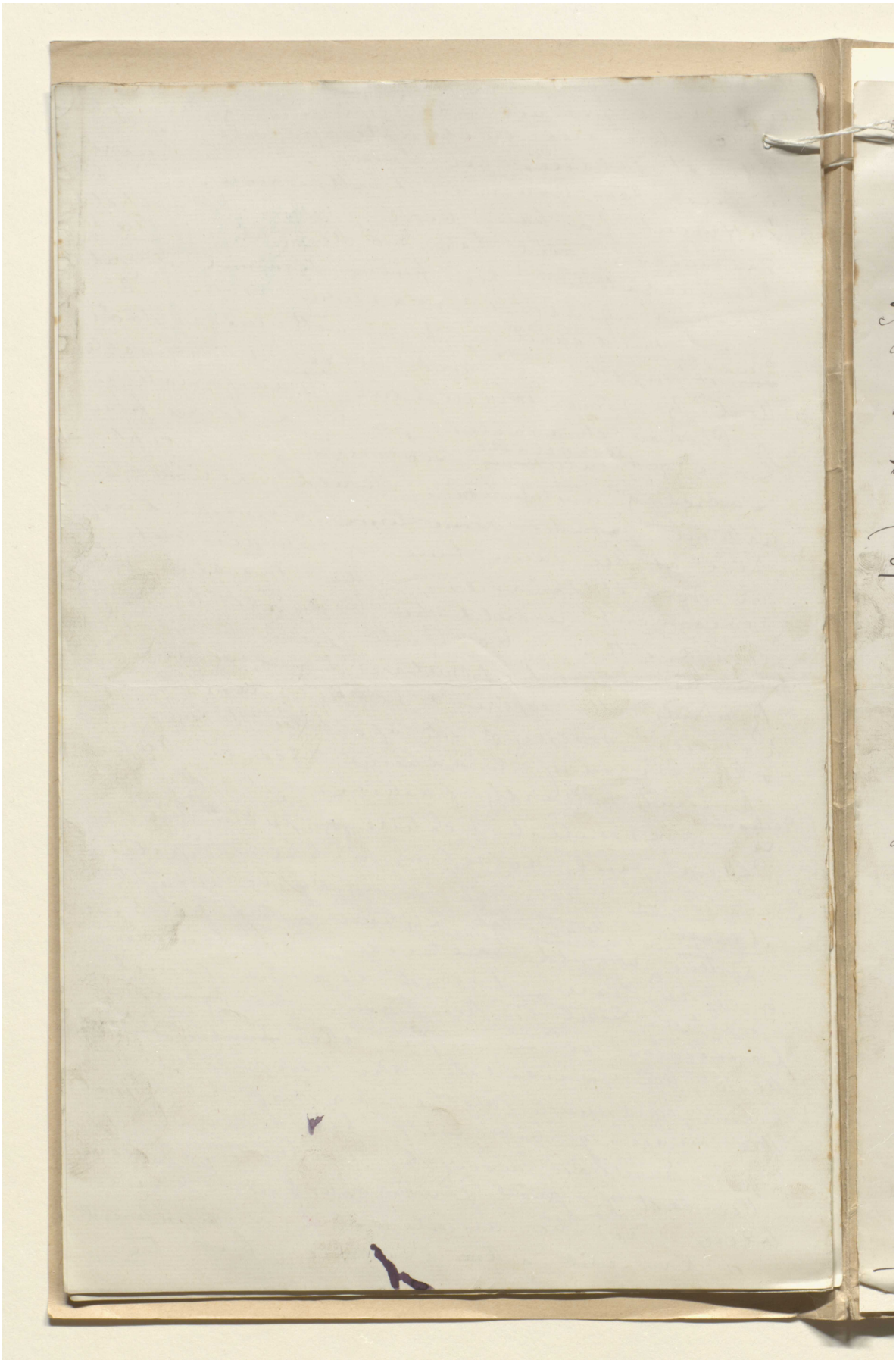

المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة

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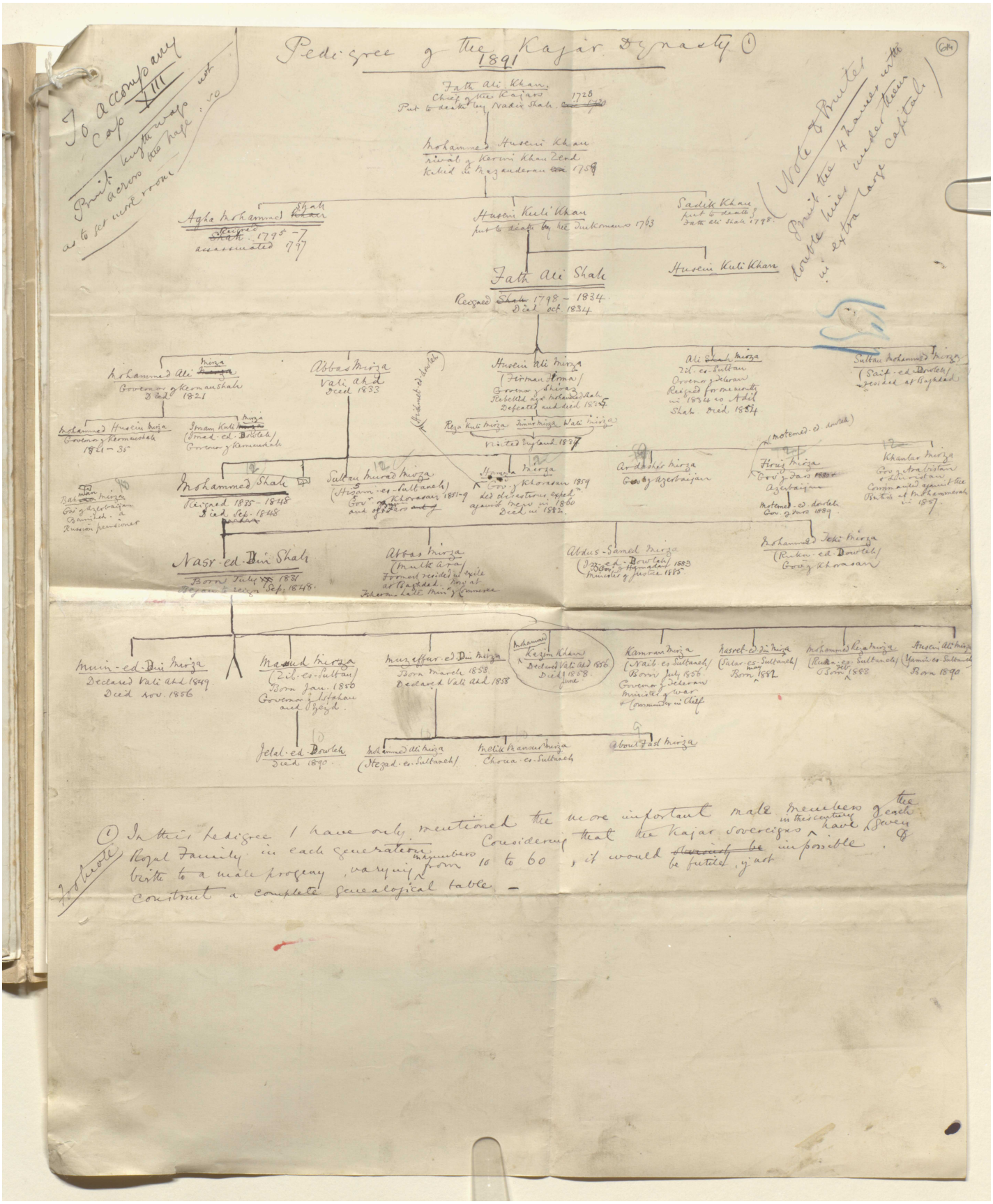
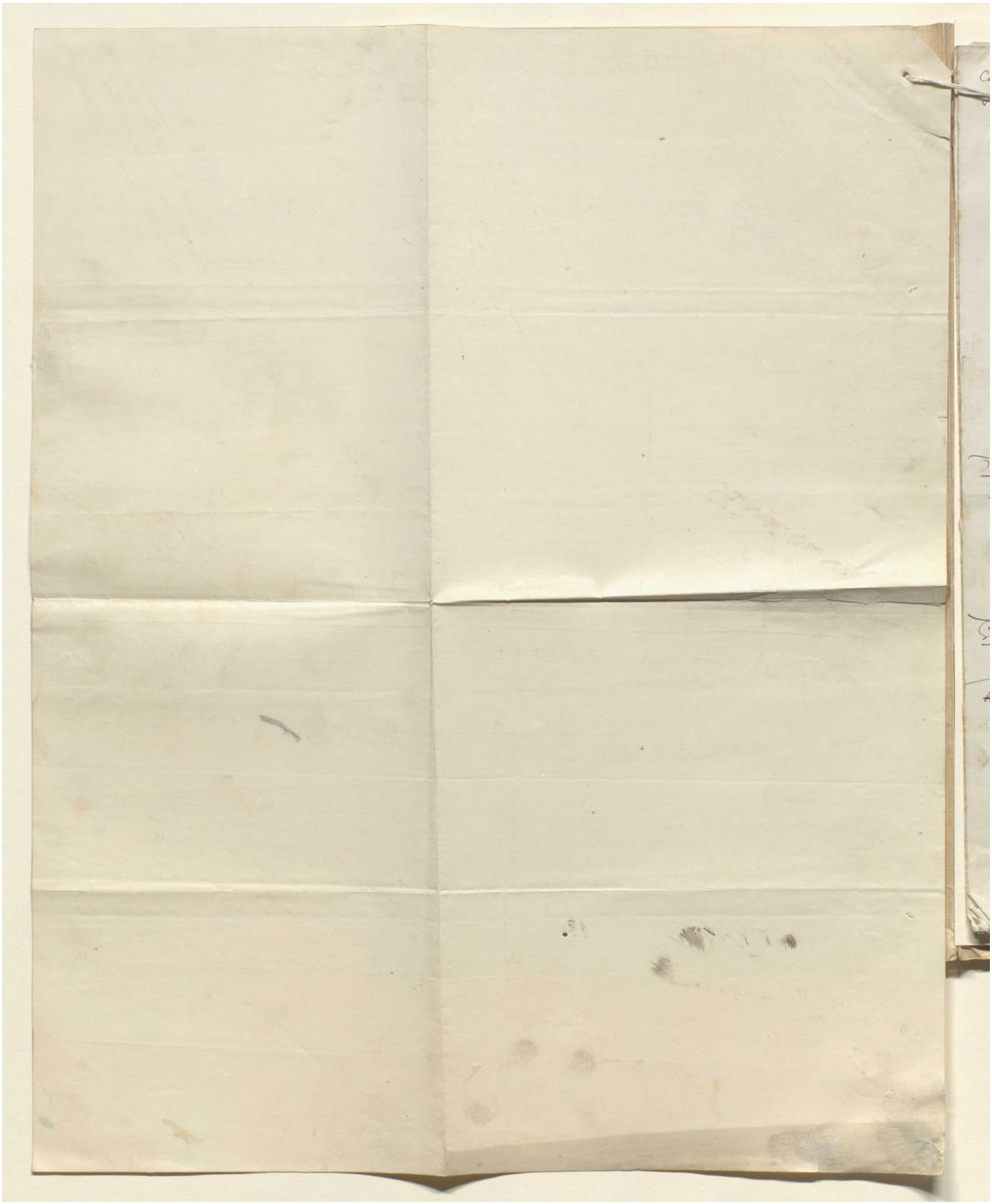

Pedigree of the Kajar Dynasty (1)
1891
To accompany Copy XIII
Fath ali Khan
Chief of the Kajars
1728
Mohammed Hussein Khan
Vakil of Karim Khan Zend
Governor of Mazanderan
1759
Agha Mohammed Shah
1795 - 7
assassinated 1797
Hussein Kuli Khan
put to death by the Turkomans 1763
Sadik Khan
put to death by Fath ali Shah 1798
Hussein Kuli Khan
Fath Ali Shah
Reigned 1798 - 1834
Died oct 1834
Mohammed Ali Mirza
Governor of Kermanshah
1821
Abbas Mirza
Vali ahd
Died 1833
Hussein Ali Mirza
(Firman Farma)
Governor of Shiraz
Rebelled against Mohammed Shah
Defeated and died 1835
Ali Shah Mirza
Zil-es-Sultan
Governor of Teheran
Reigned for seven months in 1834 as Adil Shah
Died 1874
Sultan Mohammed Mirza
(Saif-ed-Dowleh)
resided at Baghdad
Mohammed Hussein Mirza
Governor of Kermanshah
1821 - 35
Imam Kuli Mirza
(Emad-ed-Dowleh)
Governor of Kermanshah
Mohammed Shah
Reigned 1835 - 1848
Died Sep. 1848
Sultan Murad Mirza
(Hisam-es-Sultaneh)
Gov. of Khorassan 1851-9
Hamza Mirza
Gov. of Khorassan 1859
led the rebellion against Nasr in 1860
Died in 1882
Ardeshir Mirza
Gov. of Azerbaijan
Firuz Mirza
Gov. of Fars 1880
Azerbaijan
Mohammed Vali Mirza
(Rukn-ed-Dowleh)
Gov. of Khorassan
Khanlar Mirza
Gov. of Astrabad
Commanded against the British at Mohammerah in 1857
Nasr-ed-Din Shah
Born July 1831
Began to reign Sep. 1848
Abbas Mirza
(Mulk Ara)
Formerly resided at Teheran
Now at Baghdad
Abdus-Samed Mirza
(Azad-ed-Dowleh) 1883
Minister of Justice 1885
Mohammed Taki Mirza
(Rukn-ed-Dowleh)
Gov. of Khorassan
Nain-ed-Din Mirza
Declared Vali Ahd 1849
Died Nov. 1856
Mahmud Mirza
(Zil-es-Sultan)
Born Jan. 1850
Governor of Ispahan and Yezd
Muzeffar-ed-Din Mirza
Born March 1853
Declared Vali Ahd 1858
Mohammed Kerim Khan
Declared Vali Ahd 1886
Died 1888 June
Kamran Mirza
(Nain-es-Sultaneh)
Born July 1856
Governor of Teheran
Minister of War
+ Commander in Chief
Nasrel-ed-din Mirza
(Salar-es-Sultaneh)
Born 1882
Mohammed Reza Mirza
(Rukn-es-Sultaneh)
Born 1888
Hussein Ali Mirza
(Yamin-es-Sultaneh)
Born 1890
Jelal-ed-Dowleh
Died 1890
Mohammed Ali Mirza
(Sirjad-es-Sultaneh)
Melik Mansour Mirza
(Shua-es-Sultaneh)
Aboul Fazl Mirza
(1) In this Pedigree I have only mentioned the more important male members of each Royal Family in each generation. Considering that the Kajar Sovereigns have always had numbers of wives & brothers to a male progeny, varying from 10 to 60, it would be impossible to construct a complete genealogical table.



المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة

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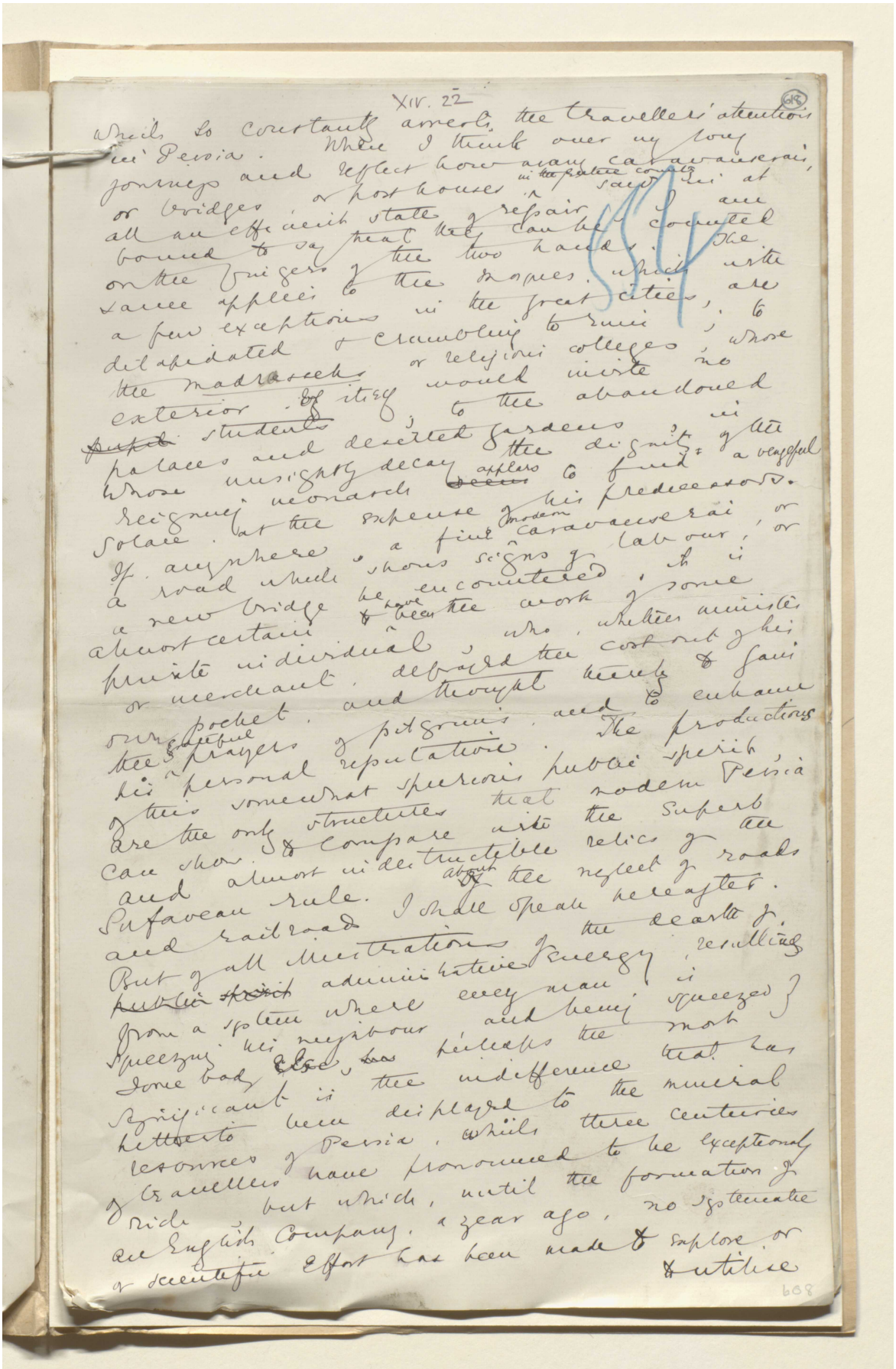

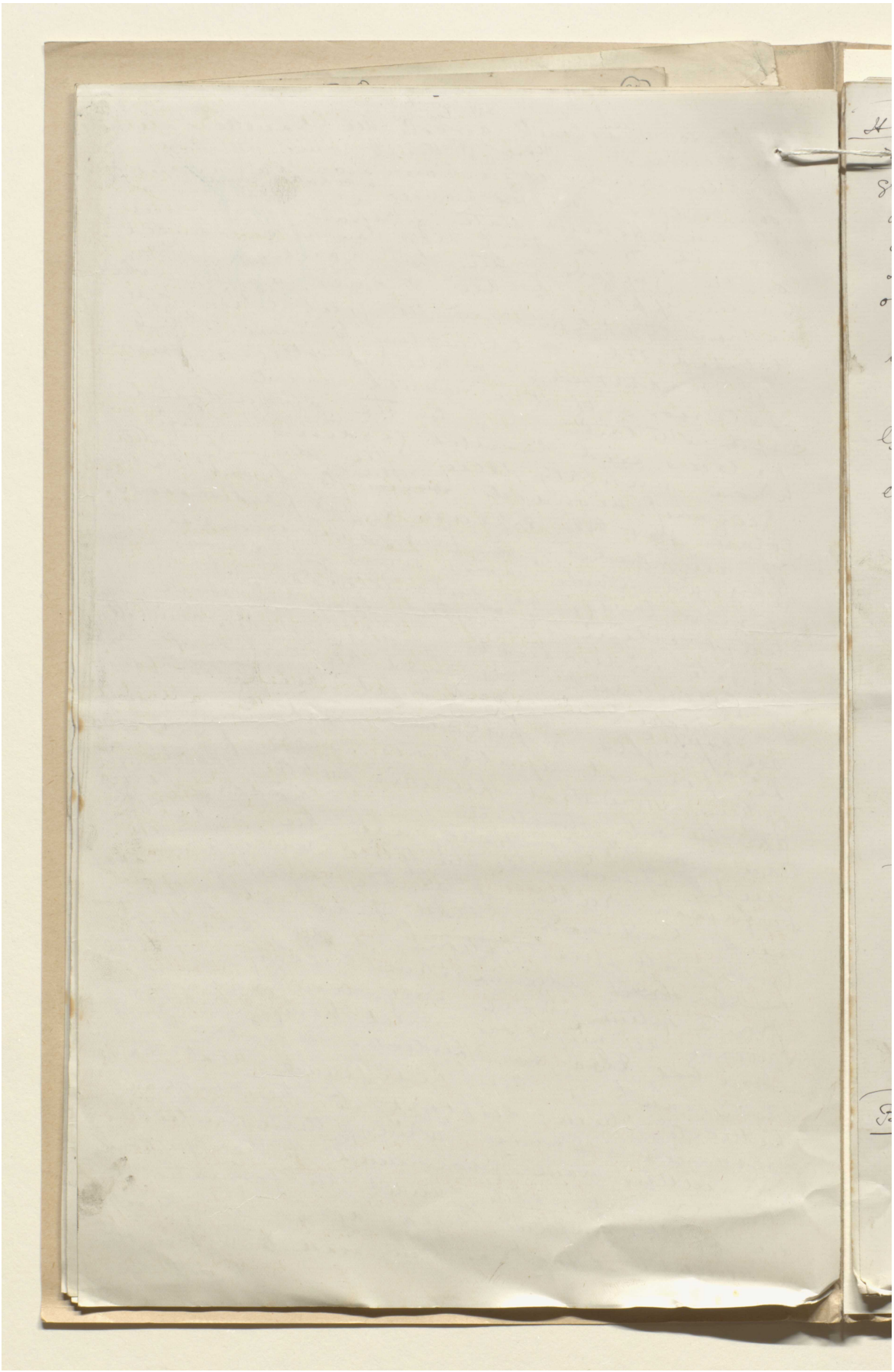

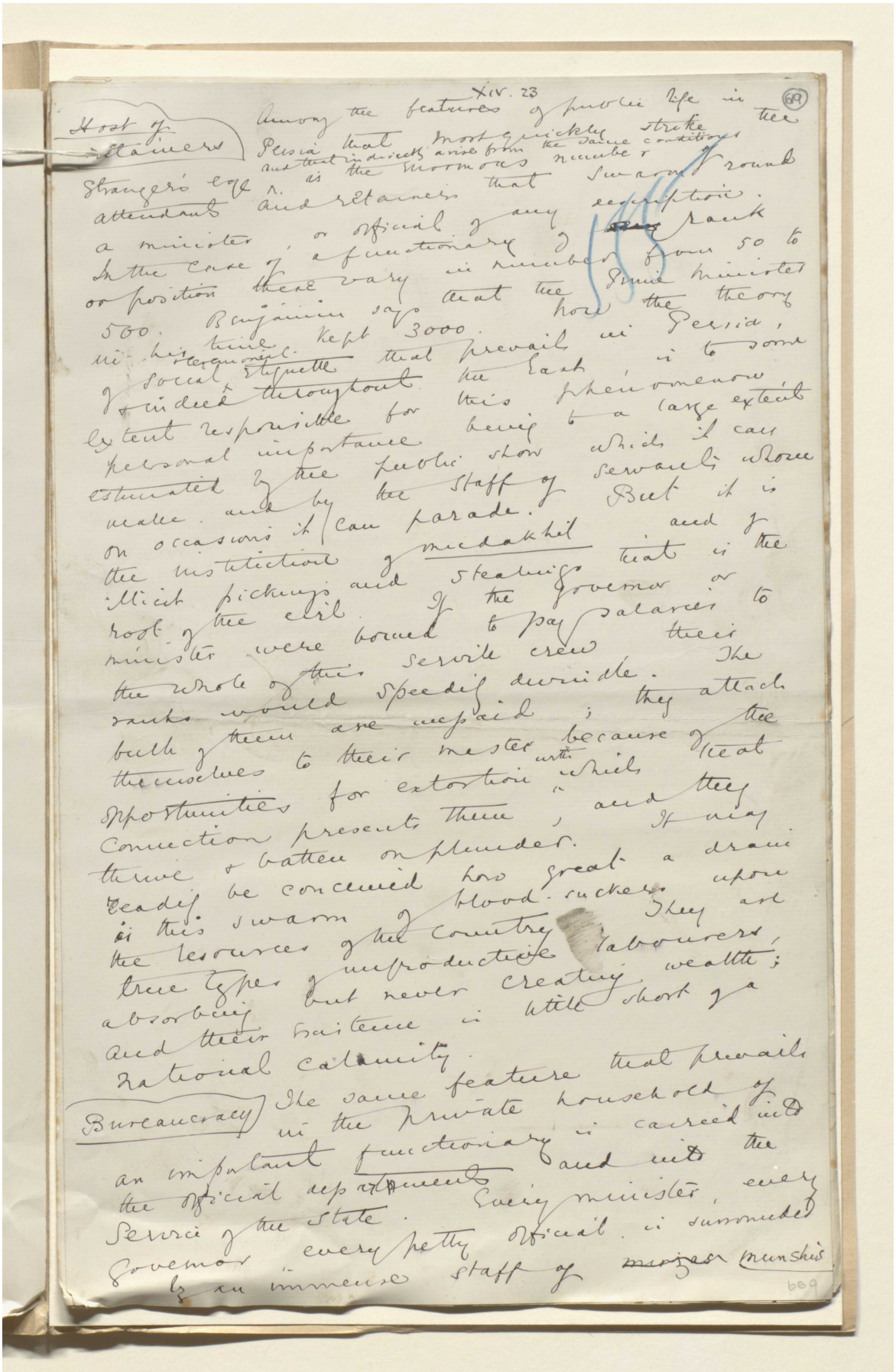

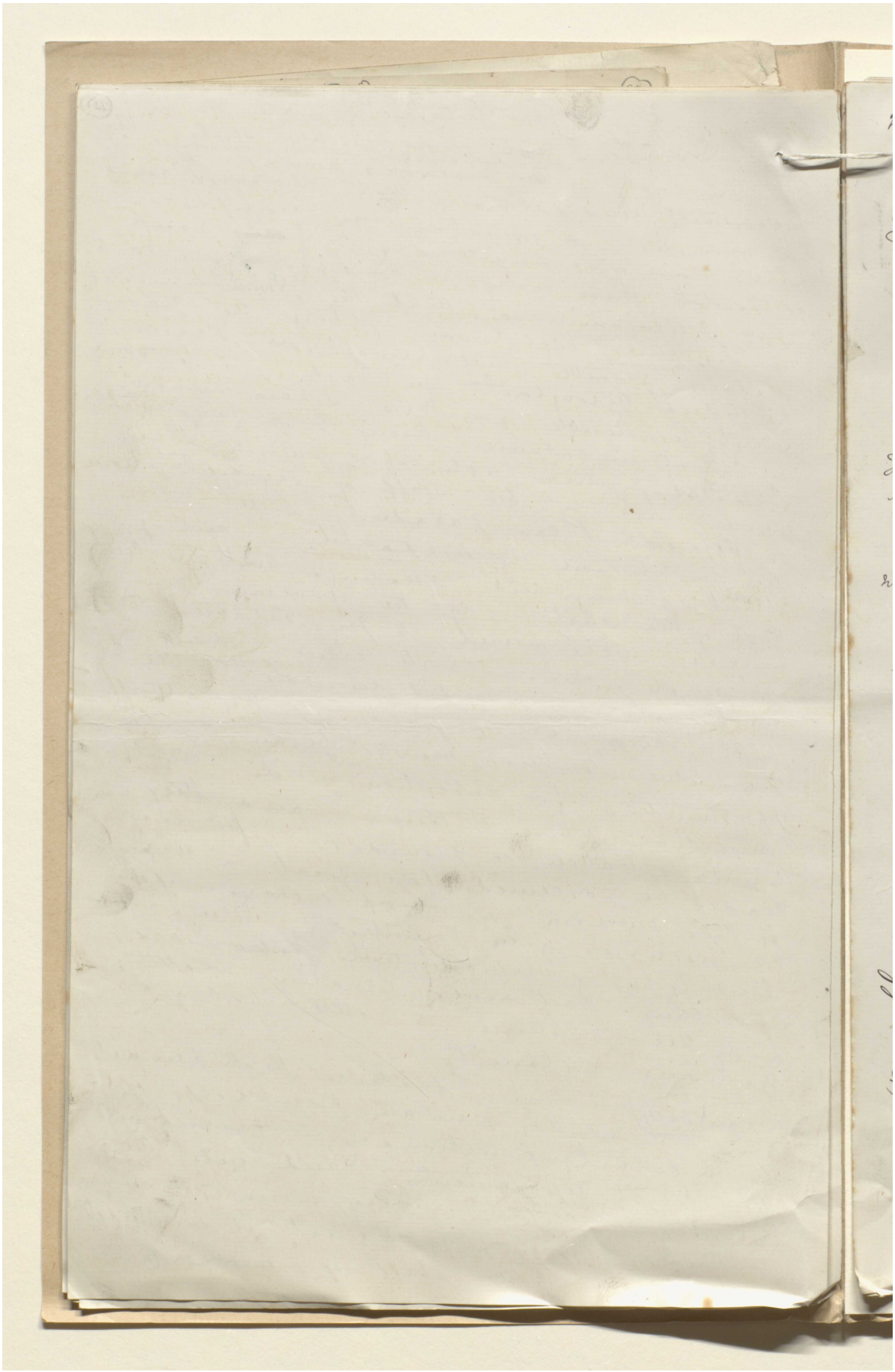

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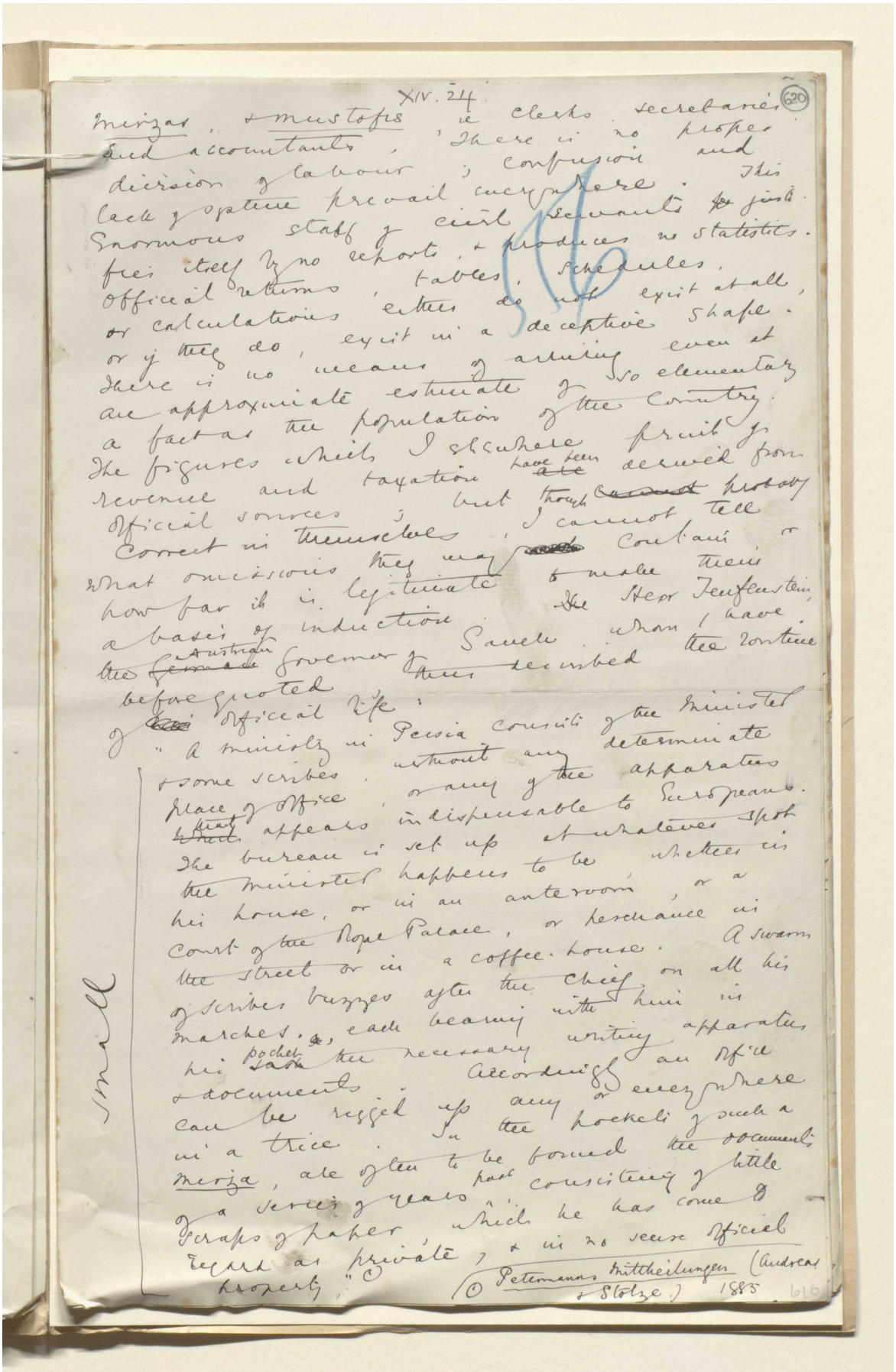

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XIV. 24 (620)

Mirzas, & Mustofis, ie clerks, secretaries and accountants. There is no proper division of labour; confusion and lack of system prevail everywhere. This enormous staff of civil servants justifies itself by no reports, & produces no statistics. Official returns, tables, schedules, or calculations either do not exist at all, or if they do, exist in a deceptive shape. There is no means of arriving even at an approximate estimate of so elementary a fact as the population of the country. The figures which I elsewhere print of revenue and taxation have been derived from official sources; but though probably correct in themselves, I cannot tell what omissions they may contain or how far it is legitimate to make them a basis of induction. Herr Teufenstein, the Austrian Governor of Saveh, whom I have before quoted, thus described the routine of official life:

"A ministry in Persia consists of the minister & some scribes, without any determinate place of office, or any of the apparatus that appears indispensable to Europeans. The bureau is set up at whatever spot the minister happens to be, whether in his house, or in an anteroom, or a court of the Royal Palace, or perchance in the street or in a coffee-house. A swarm of scribes buzzes after the chief on all his marches, each bearing with him in his pocket the necessary writing apparatus & documents. Accordingly an office can be rigged up any or everywhere in a trice. In the pockets of such a Mirza, are often to be found the documents of a series of years past consisting of little scraps of paper, which he has come to regard as private, & in no sense official property." (1)

small

(1) Petermanns Mittheilungen (Andreas & Stolze.) 1885

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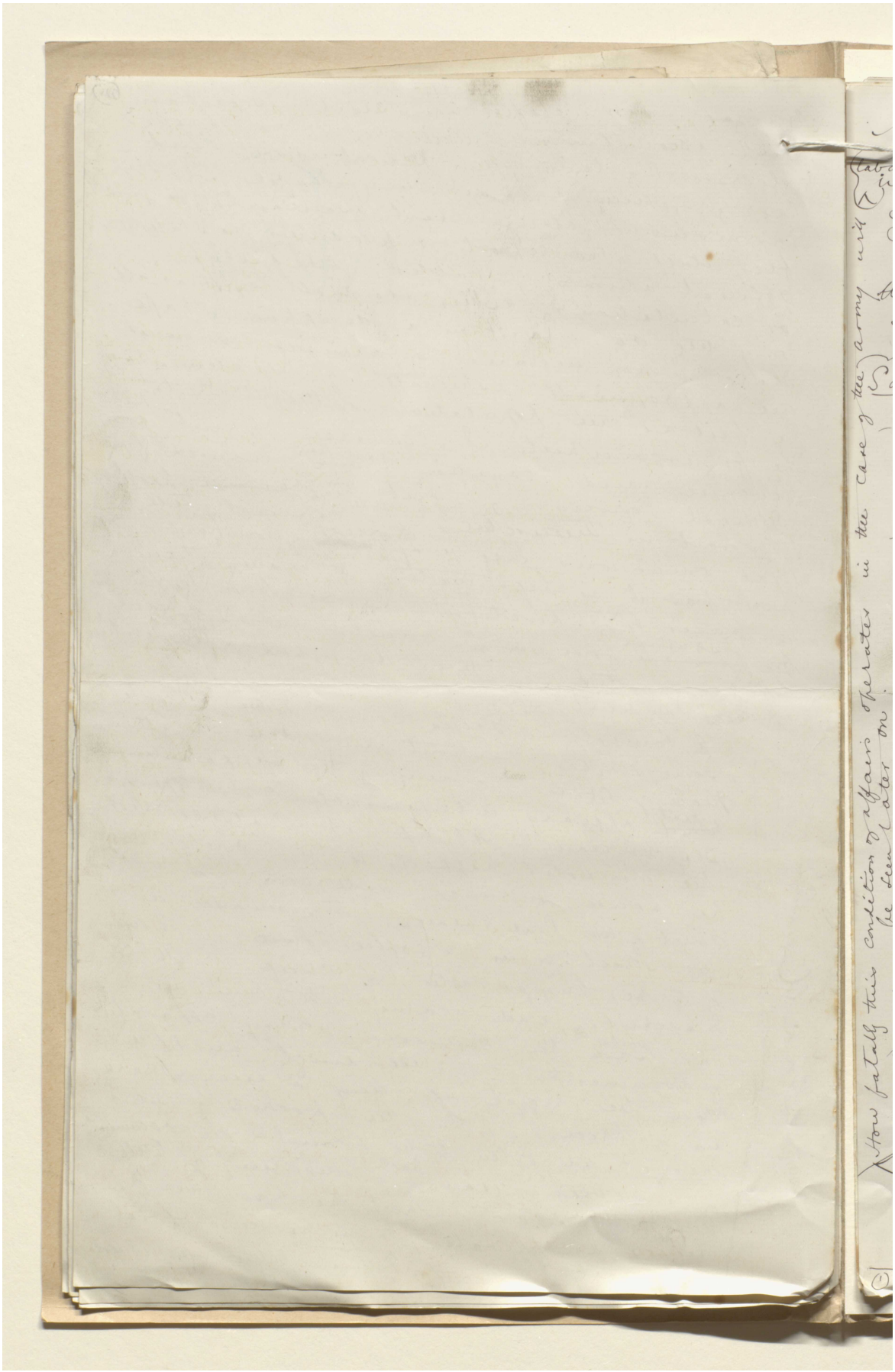

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مكتبة قطر الوطنية
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مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٦٢١و] (١٣٥٥/١٢٤٢)

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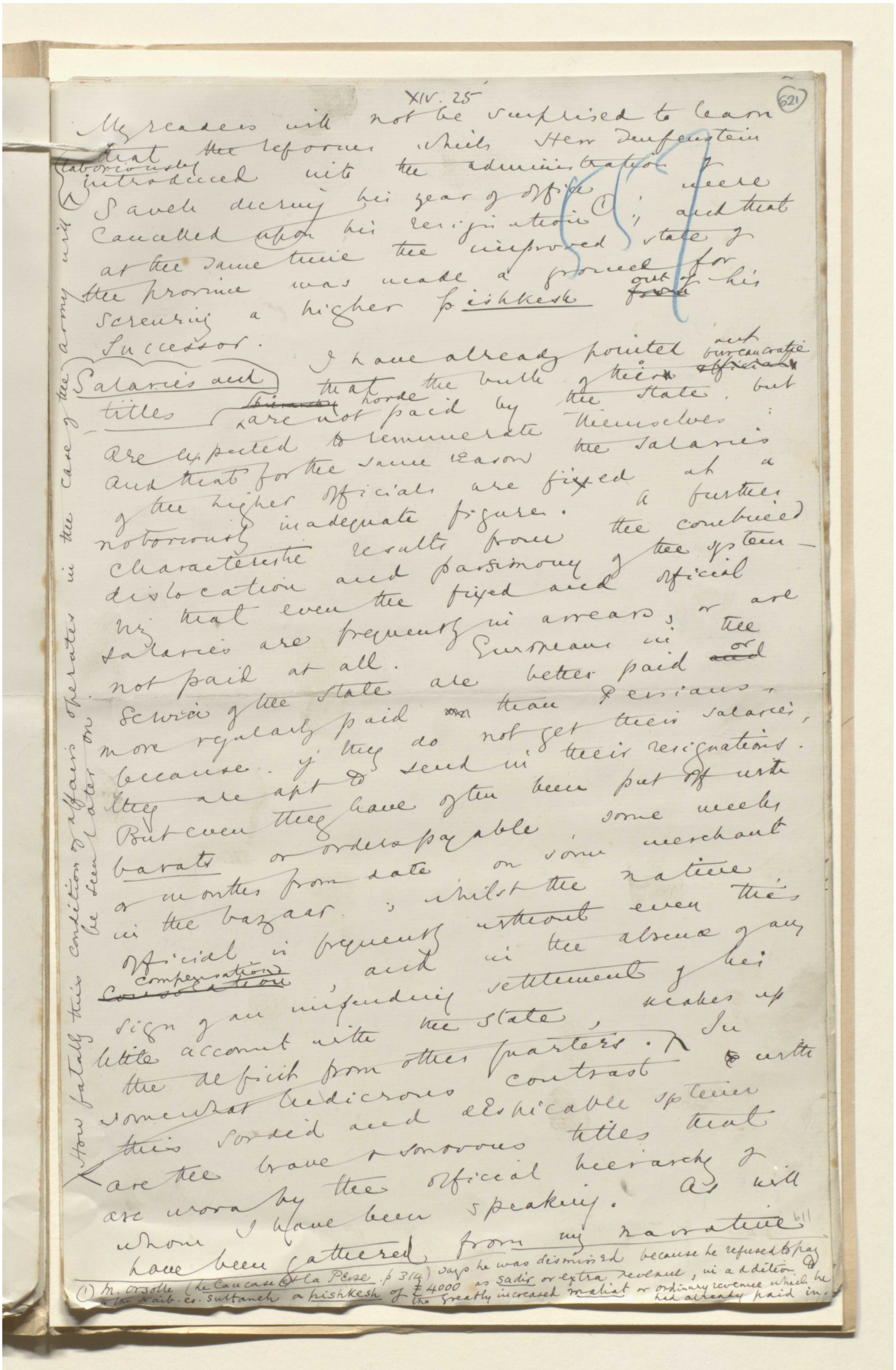

XIV. 25

621

My readers will not be surprised to learn that the reforms which Herr Denfenstein laboriously introduced into the administration of Saveh during his year of office were cancelled upon his resignation (1); and that at the same time the improved state of the province was made a ground for screening a higher pishkesh out of his successor.

Salaries and titles

I have already pointed out that the bulk of their bureaucratic horde are not paid by the state, but are expected to remunerate themselves: and that for the same reason the salaries of the higher officials are fixed at a notoriously inadequate figure. A further characteristic results from the combined dislocation and parsimony of the system — viz that even the fixed and official salaries are frequently in arrears, or are not paid at all. Europeans in the service of the state are better paid or more regularly paid than Persians, because if they do not get their salaries, they are apt to send in their resignations. But even they have often been put off with barats or orders payable some weeks or months from date on some merchant in the bazaar; whilst the native official is frequently without even this compensation, and in the absence of any sign of an impending settlement of his little account with the state, makes up the deficit from other quarters. In somewhat ludicrous contrast with this sordid and despicable system are the brave & sonorous titles that are worn by the official hierarchy of whom I have been speaking. As will have been gathered from my narrative

How fatally this condition of affairs operates in the case of the army will be seen later on.

(1) M. Orsolle (le Caucase et la Perse p. 314) says he was dismissed because he refused to pay to the Naib-es-Sultaneh a pishkesh of £4000 as sadir or extra revenue, in addition to the greatly increased maliat or ordinary revenue which he had already paid in.

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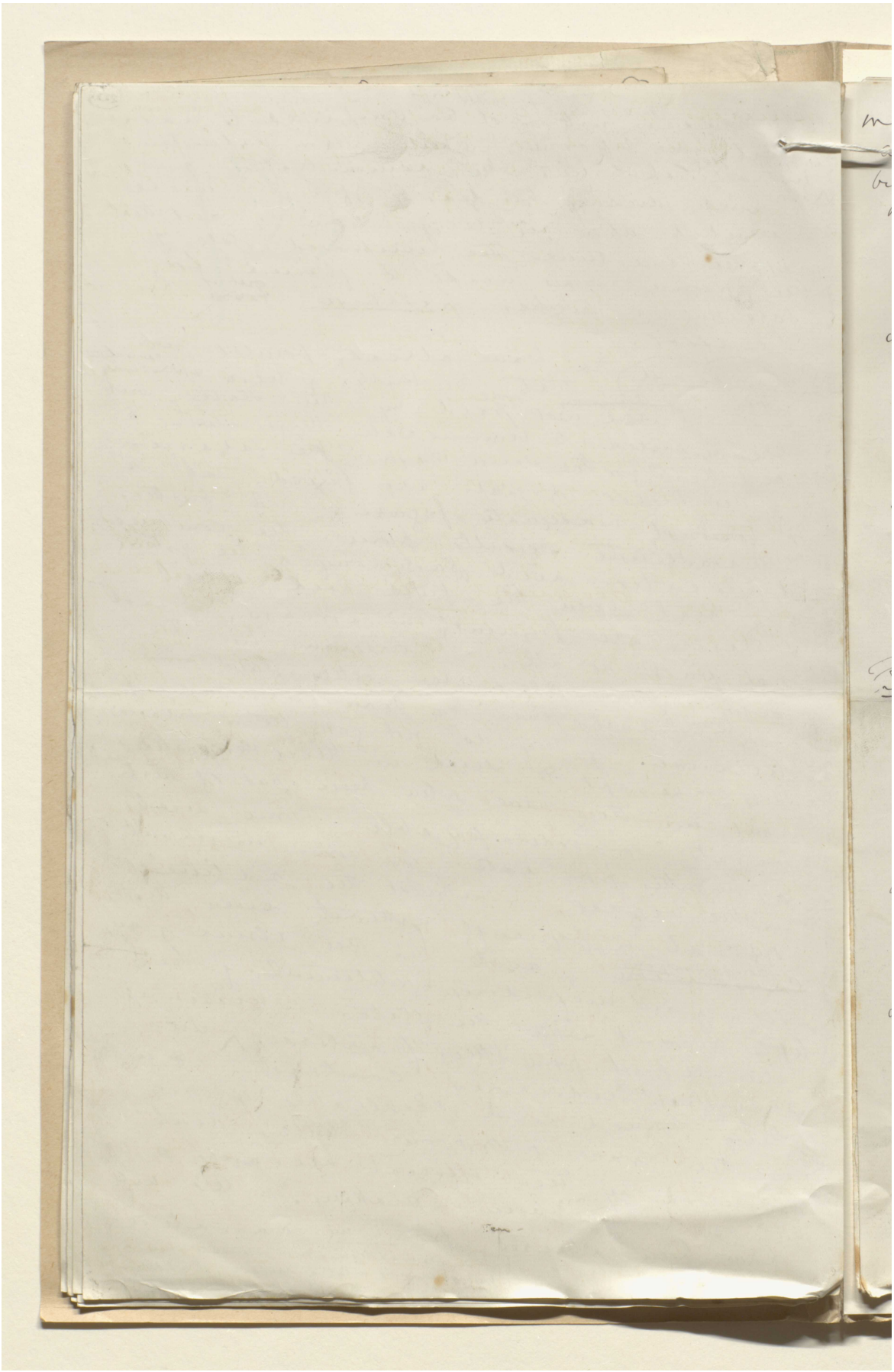
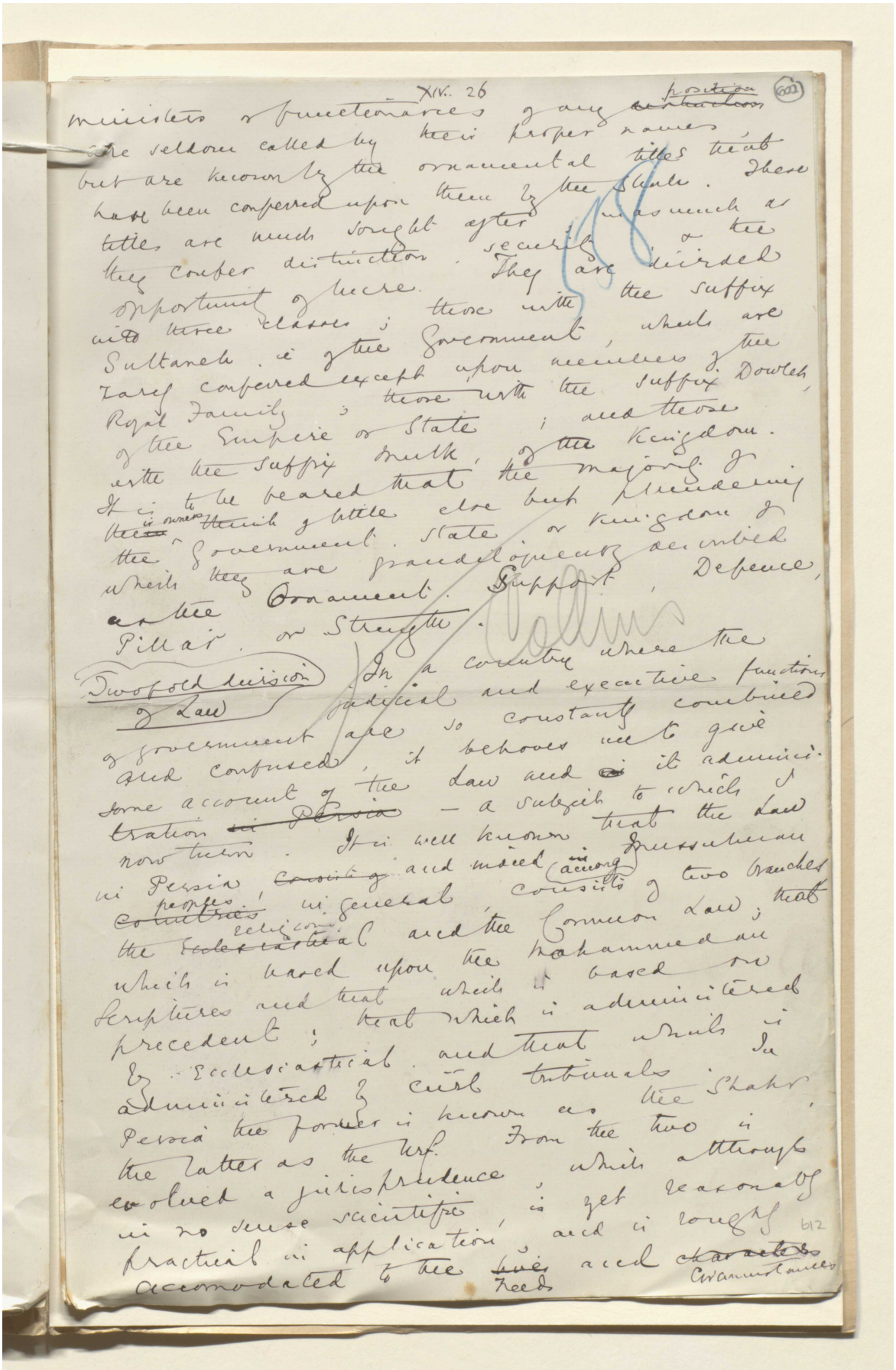


مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٦٢٢و] (١٣٥٥/١٢٤٤)

XIV. 26

(622)



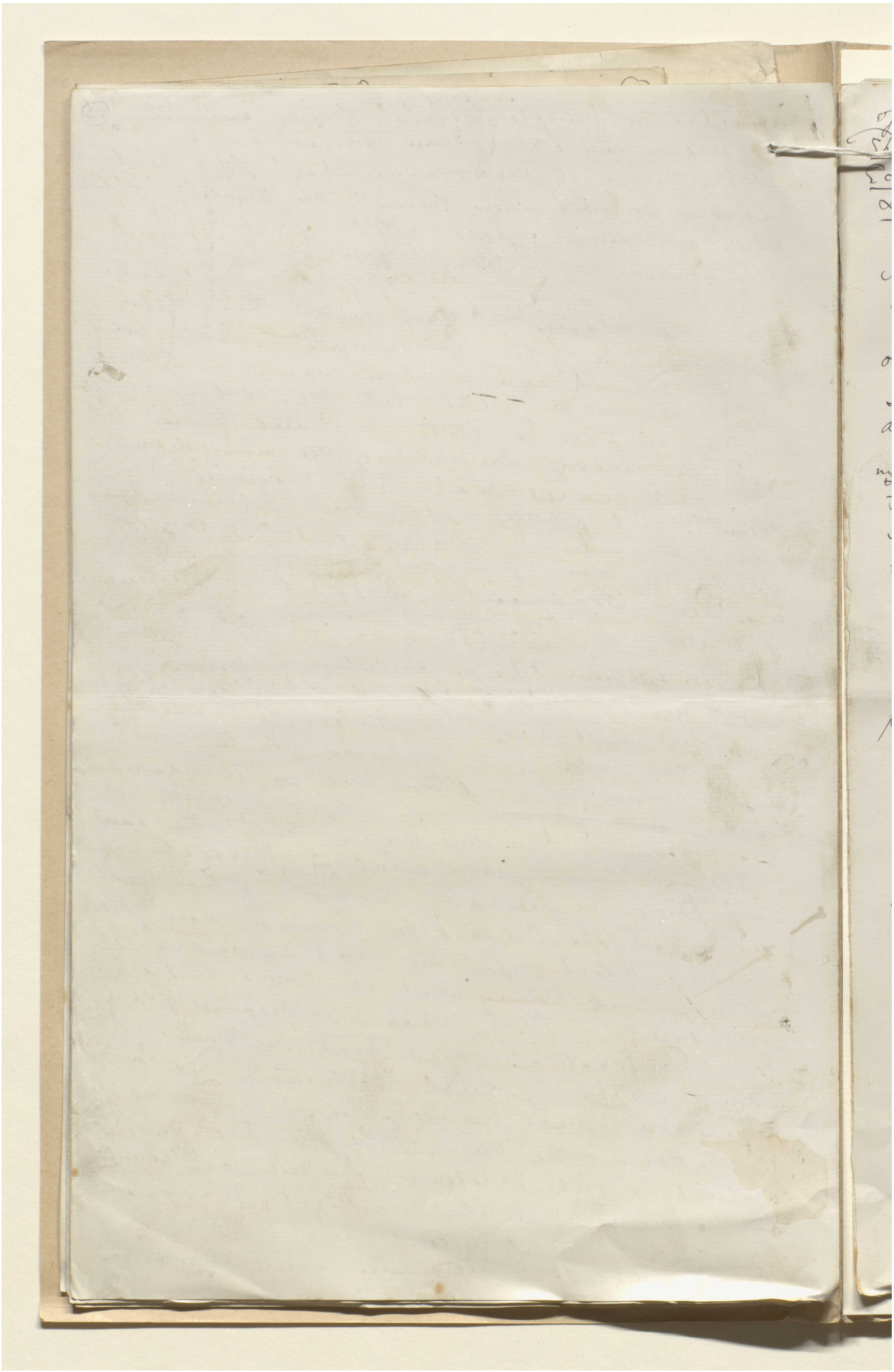
ministers or functionaries of any ~~distinction~~ position are seldom called by their proper names but are known by the ornamental titles that have been conferred upon them by the Shah. These titles are much sought after, inasmuch as they confer distinction, security & the opportunity of lucre. They are divided into three classes; those with the suffix Sultaneh, i.e. of the Government, which are rarely conferred except upon members of the Royal Family; those with the suffix Dowleh, of the Empire or State; and those with the suffix Mulk, of the Kingdom. It is to be feared that the majority of the ~~them~~ owners think of little else but plundering the Government, State or Kingdom of which they are grandiloquently described as the Ornament, Support, Defence, Pillar or Strength.

Collins

Twofold division of Law

In a country where the judicial and executive functions of government are so constantly combined and confused, it behoves me to give some account of the Law and ~~in~~ it administration ~~in Persia~~ — a subject to which I now turn. It is well known that the Law in Persia, ~~consists of~~ and indeed ~~in~~ among Mussulman ~~countries~~ peoples, in general consists of two branches the ~~Ecclesiastical~~ religious and the Common Law; that which is based upon the Mohammedan Scriptures and that which is based on precedent; that which is administered by Ecclesiastical and that which is administered by civil tribunals. In Persia the former is known as the Shahr, the latter as the Urf. From the two is evolved a jurisprudence, which although in no sense scientific, is yet reasonably practical in application, and is roughly accomodated to the ~~lives~~ needs and ~~characters~~ circumstances

612



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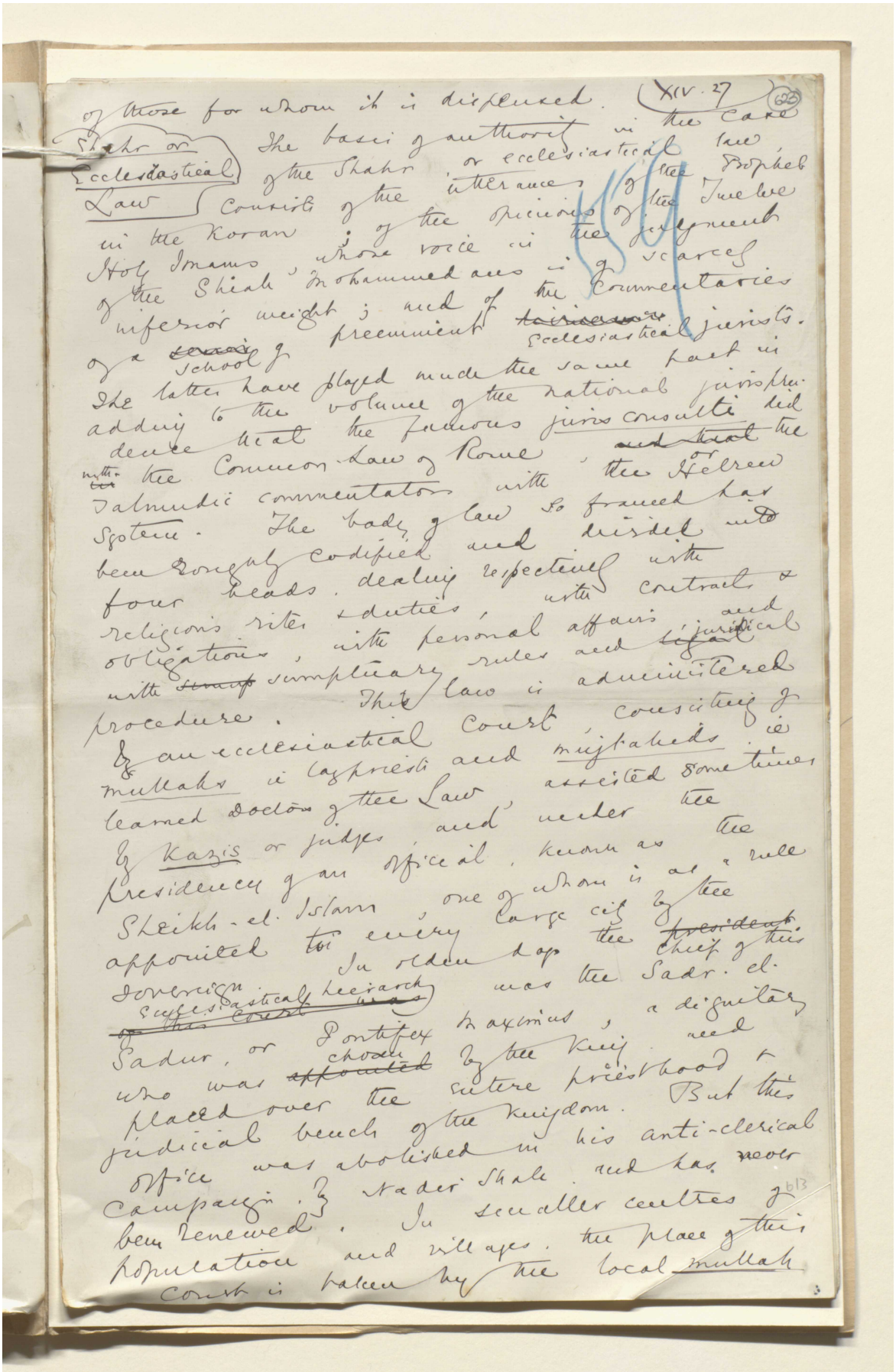
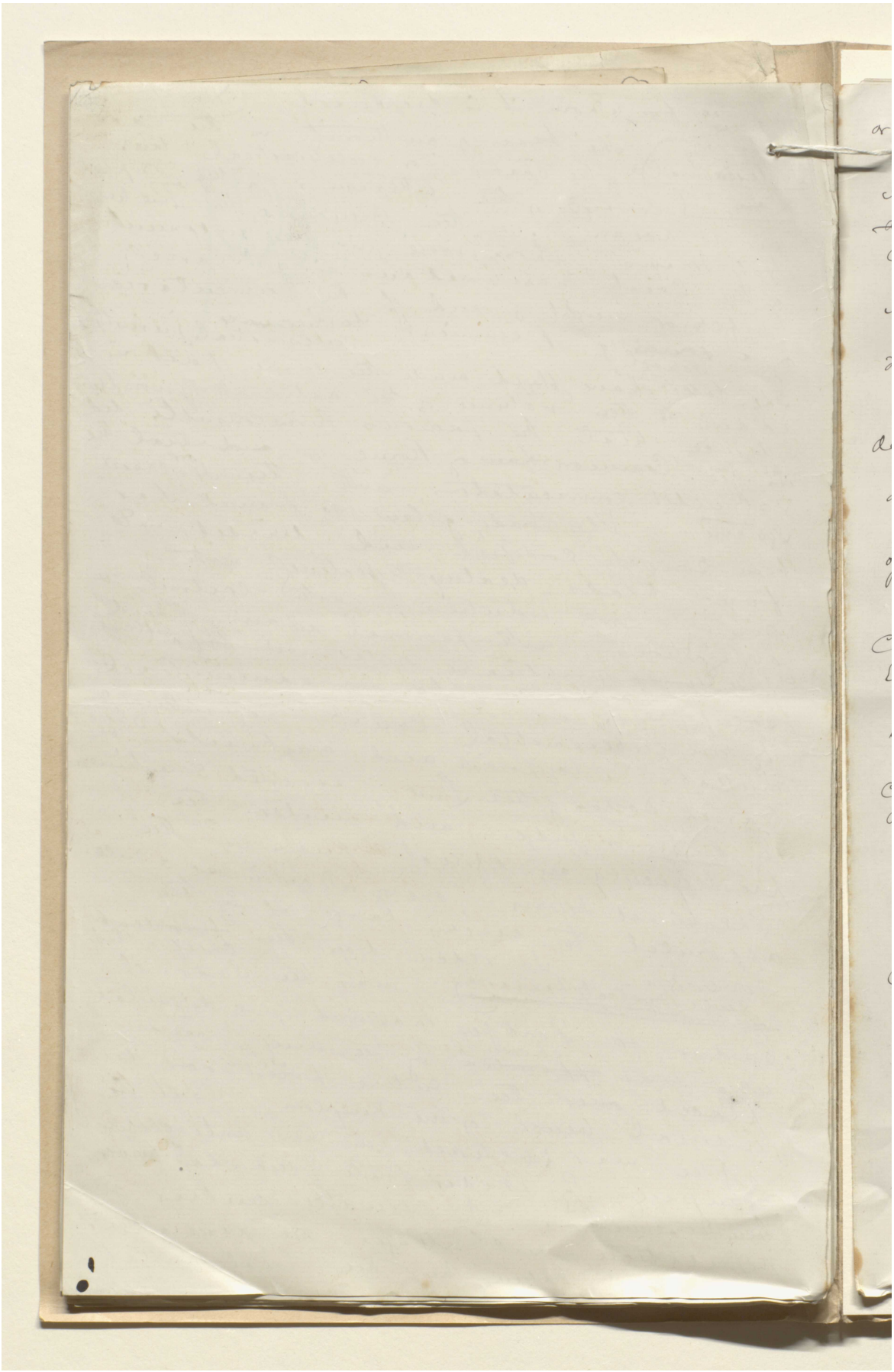


of those for whom it is dispensed. (XIV. 27) (623)

Shahr or Ecclesiastical Law

The basis of authority in the case of the Shahr, or ecclesiastical law, consists of the utterances of the Prophet in the Koran; of the opinions of the Twelve Holy Imams, whose voice in the judgment of the Shiah Mohammedans is of scarcely inferior weight; and of the commentaries of a ~~[illegible]~~ school of preeminent ~~[illegible]~~ ecclesiastical jurists. The latter have played much the same part in adding to the volume of the national jurisprudence that the famous juris consulti did with the Common Law of Rome, ~~and that~~ the Talmudic commentators with the Hebrew System. The body of law so framed has been roughly codified and divided into four heads, dealing respectively with religious rites & duties, with contracts & obligations, with personal affairs and with ~~[illegible]~~ sumptuary rules and ~~legal~~ juridical procedure. This law is administered by an ecclesiastical Court, consisting of mullahs i.e. lay priests and mujtahids i.e. learned doctors of the Law, assisted sometimes by Kazis or judges, and under the presidency of an official, known as the Sheikh-el-Islam, one of whom is as a rule appointed to every large city by the Sovereign. In olden days the ~~president~~ chief of this ~~of this court was~~ ecclesiastical hierarch was the Sadr-el-Sadur, or Pontifex Maximus, a dignitary who was ~~appointed~~ chosen by the King and placed over the entire priesthood & judicial bench of the Kingdom. But this office was abolished in his anti-clerical campaign by Nadir Shah and has never been renewed. In smaller centres of population and villages, the place of this Court is taken by the local mullah



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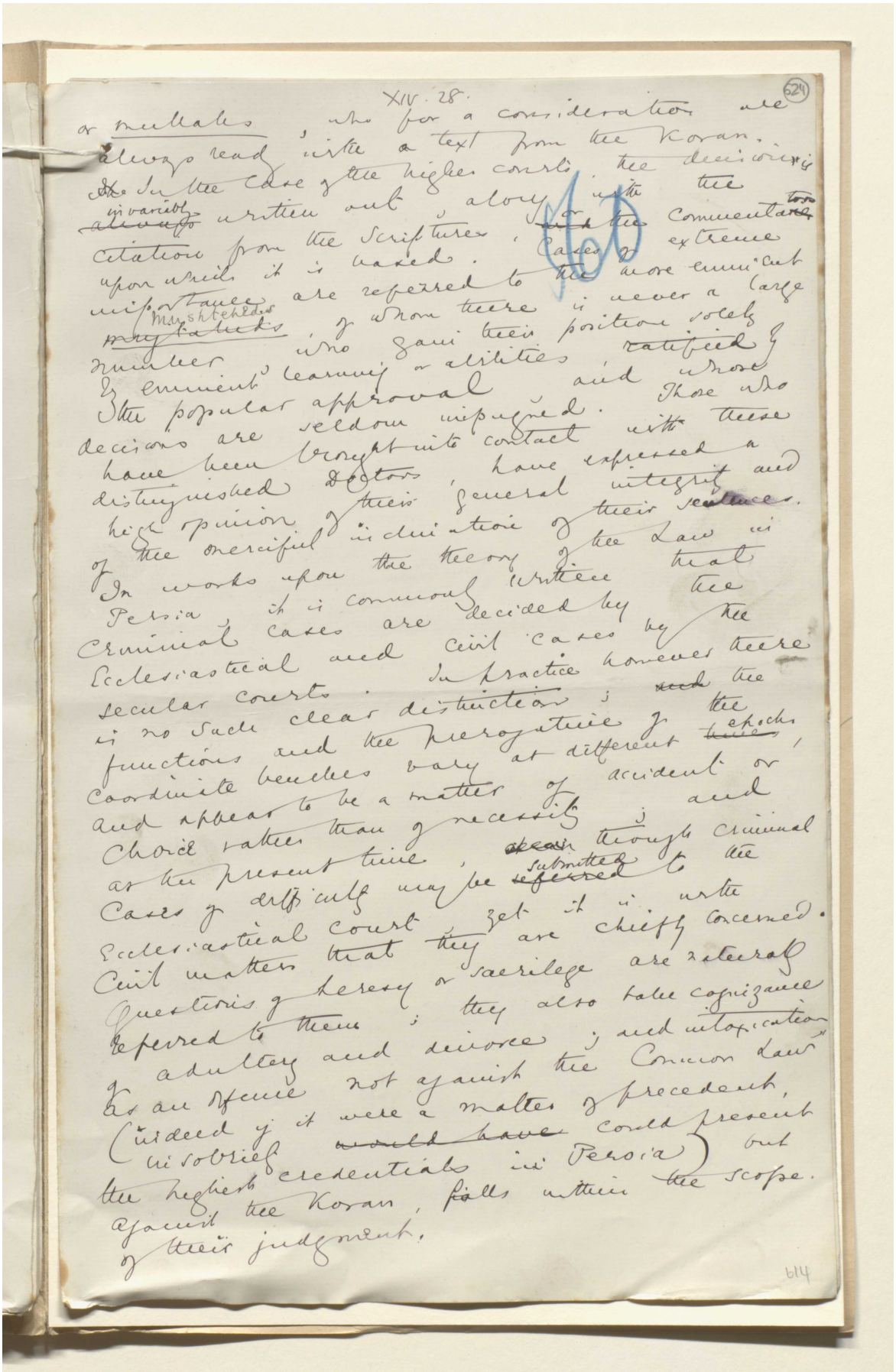
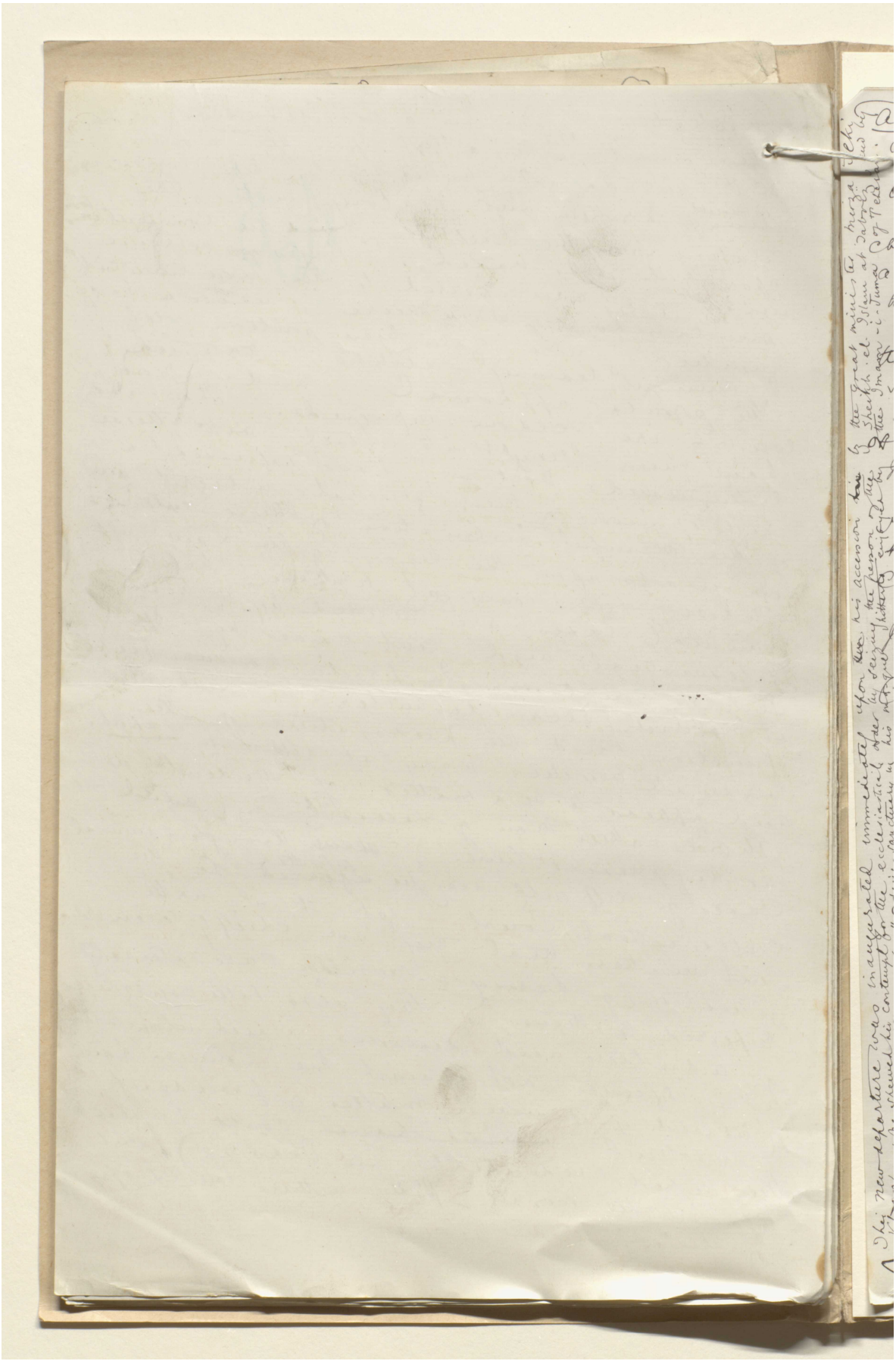
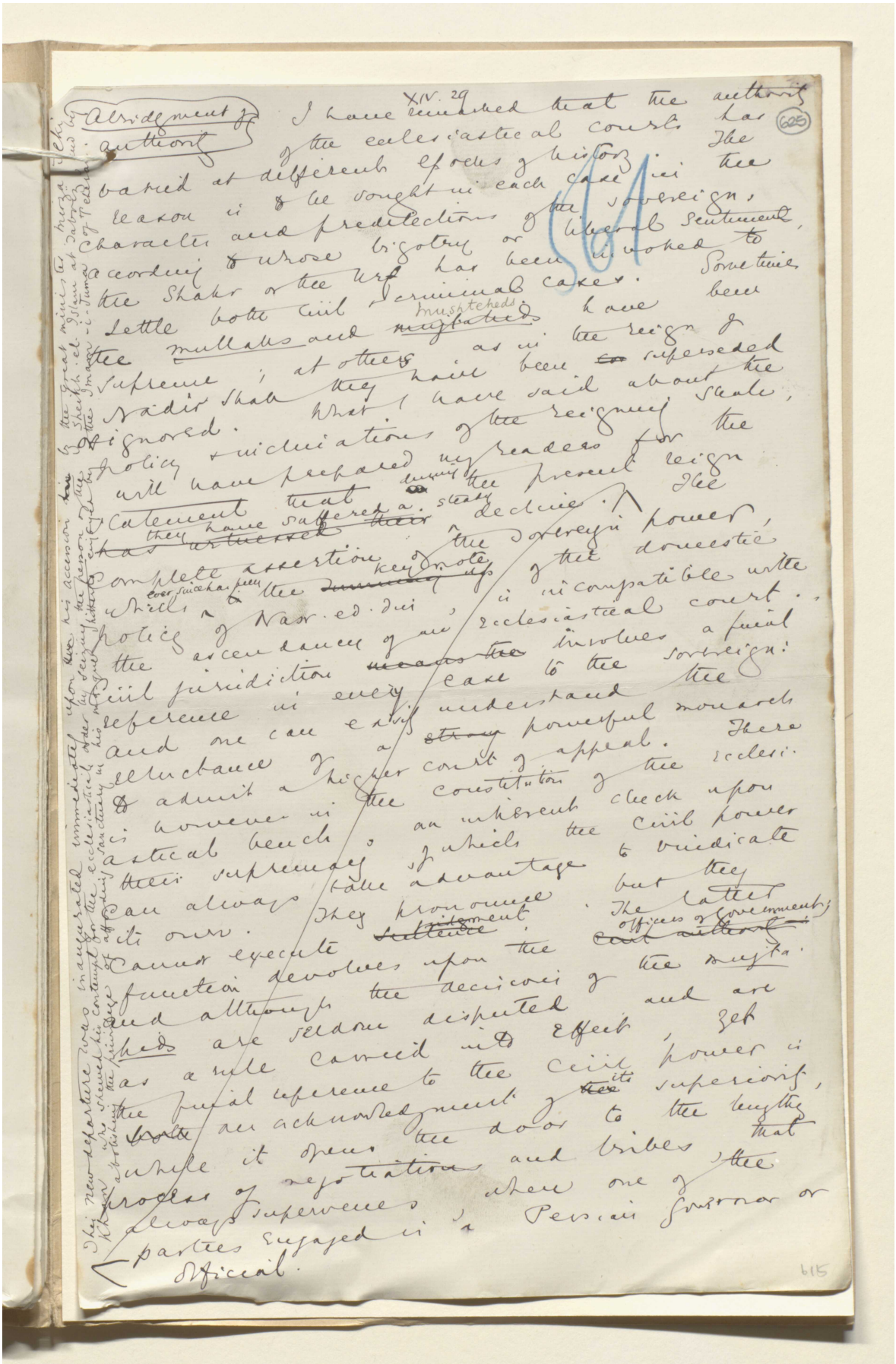
مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٦٢٤و] (١٣٥٥/١٢٤٨)

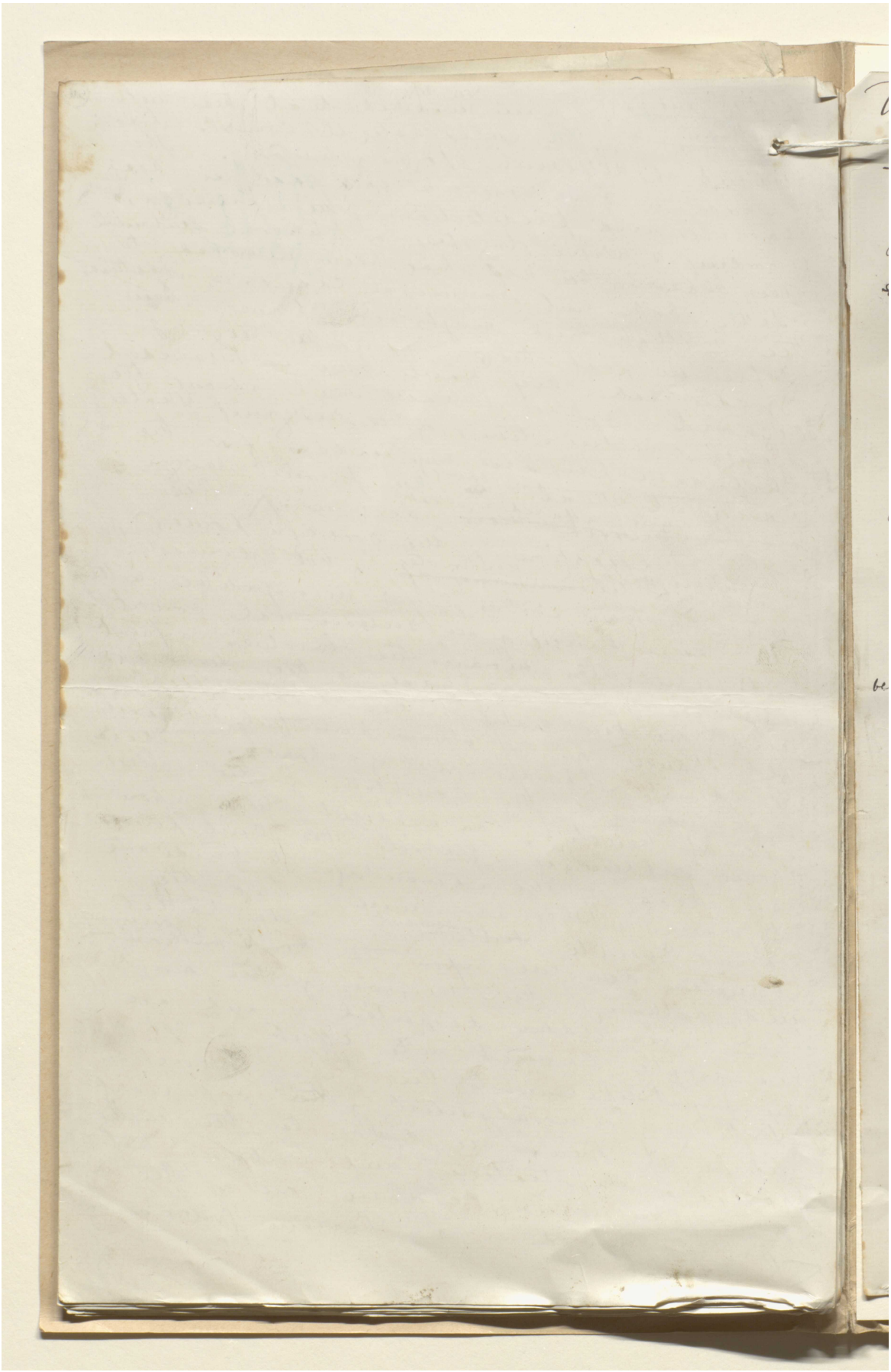


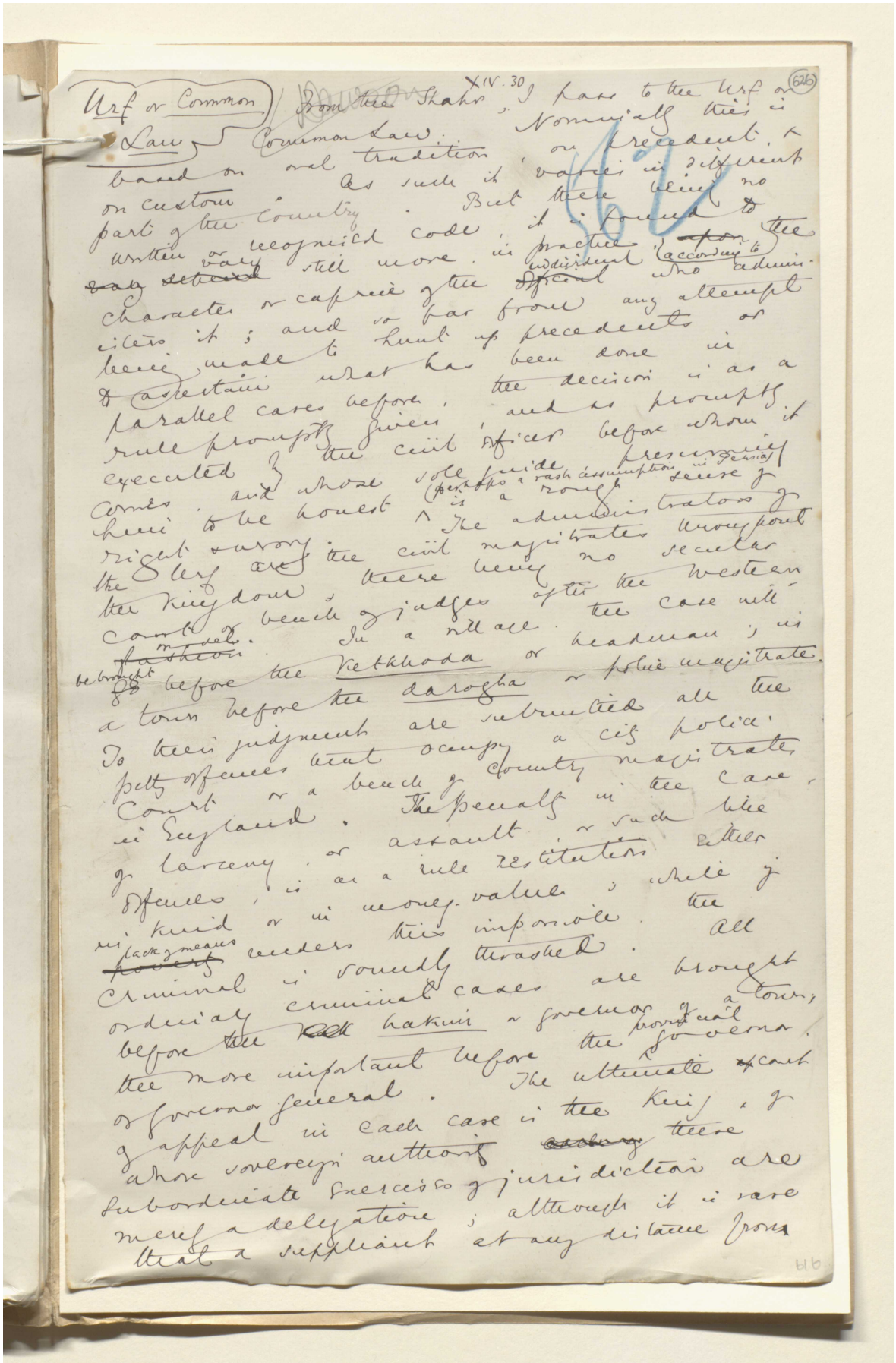
or mullahs, who for a consideration are always ready with a text from the Koran. In the case of the higher courts, the decision is invariably written out, along with the citation from the Scriptures, or the Commentators upon which it is based. Cases of extreme importance are referred to the more eminent Mushtehedes, of whom there is never a large number, who gain their position solely by eminent learning or abilities, ratified by the popular approval, and whose decisions are seldom impugned. Those who have been brought into contact with these distinguished Doctors, have expressed a high opinion of their general integrity and of the merciful inclination of their sentences. In works upon the theory of the Law in Persia, it is commonly written that criminal cases are decided by the Ecclesiastical and civil cases by the secular courts. In practice however there is no such clear distinction; the functions and the prerogative of the coordinate benches vary at different epochs, and appear to be a matter of accident or choice rather than of necessity; and at the present time, though criminal cases of difficulty may be submitted to the Ecclesiastical court, yet it is with civil matters that they are chiefly concerned. Questions of heresy or sacrilege are naturally referred to them; they also take cognizance of adultery and divorce; and intoxication as an offence not against the Common Law (indeed if it were a matter of precedent, insobriety could present the highest credentials in Persia) but against the Koran, falls within the scope of their judgment.

614









Urf or Common Law

XIV. 30

(626)

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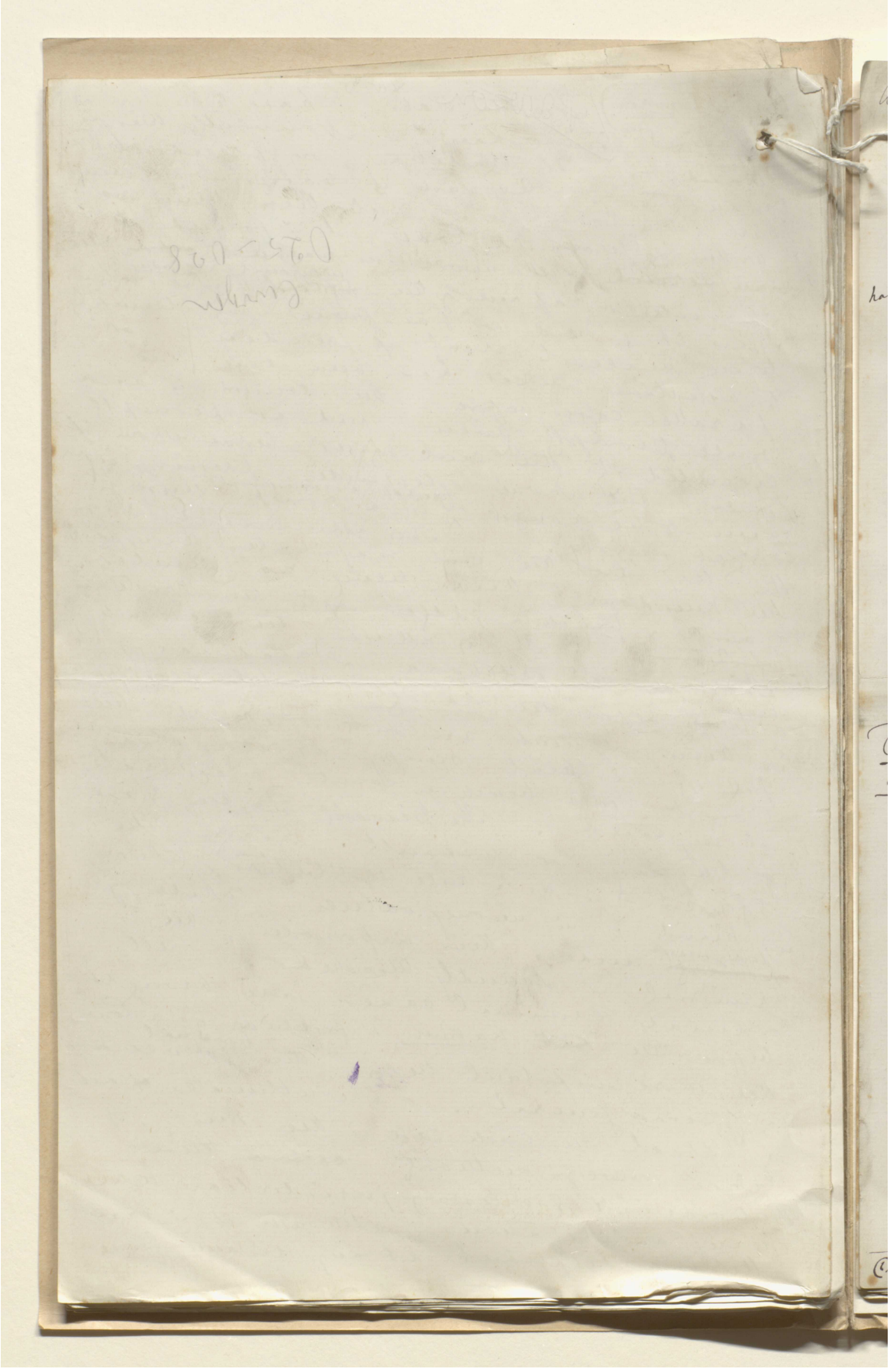
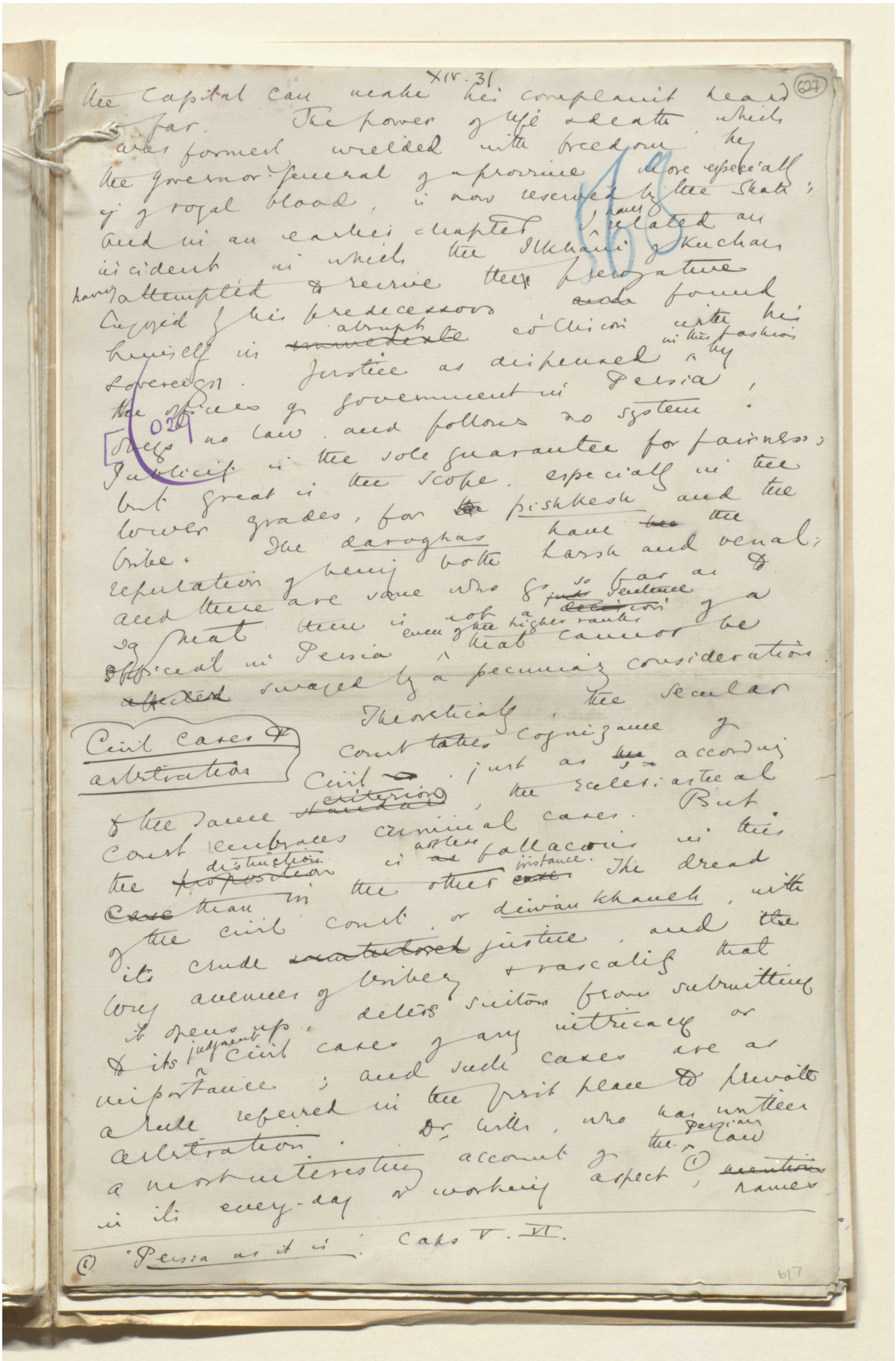


مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٦٢٧و] (١٣٥٥/١٢٥٤)

XIV. 31

(627)



the Capital can make his complaint heard so far. The power of life & death which was formerly wielded with freedom by the governor-general of a province more especially if of royal blood, is now reserved by the State; and in an earlier chapter I have related an incident in which the Ilkhani of Kuchan having attempted to revive the prerogative enjoyed by his predecessors found himself in abrupt collision with his sovereign. Justice as dispensed in this fashion by the officers of government in Persia, obeys no law and follows no system. Publicity is the sole guarantee for fairness; but great is the scope, especially in the lower grades, for pishkesh and the bribe. The daroghas have the reputation of being both harsh and venal; and there are some who go so far as to say that there is not a sentence of a official in Persia even of the higher ranks that cannot be swayed by a pecuniary consideration.

Civil cases & arbitration

Theoretically, the secular court takes cognizance of civil, just as according to the same criterion, the ecclesiastical court embraces criminal cases. But the distinction is not less fallacious in this than in the other instance. The dread of the civil court, or diwan khaneh, with its crude justice, and the long avenues of bribery & rascality that it opens up, deters suitors from submitting to its judgment civil cases of any intricacy or importance; and such cases are as a rule referred in the first place to private arbitration. Dr. Wills, who has written a most interesting account of the Persian law in its every-day or working aspect (1), names

(1) 'Persia as it is'. Caps V. VI.

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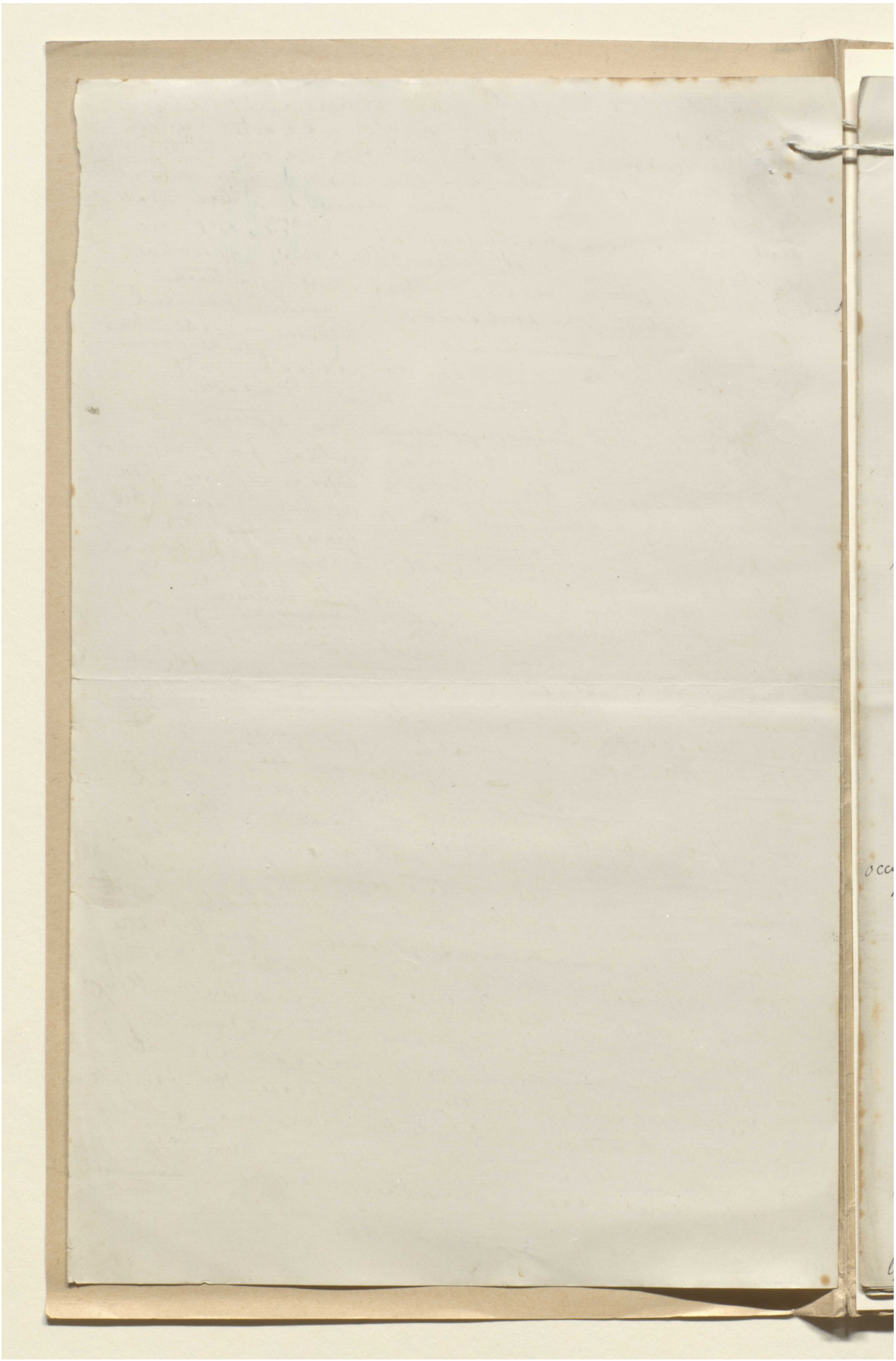

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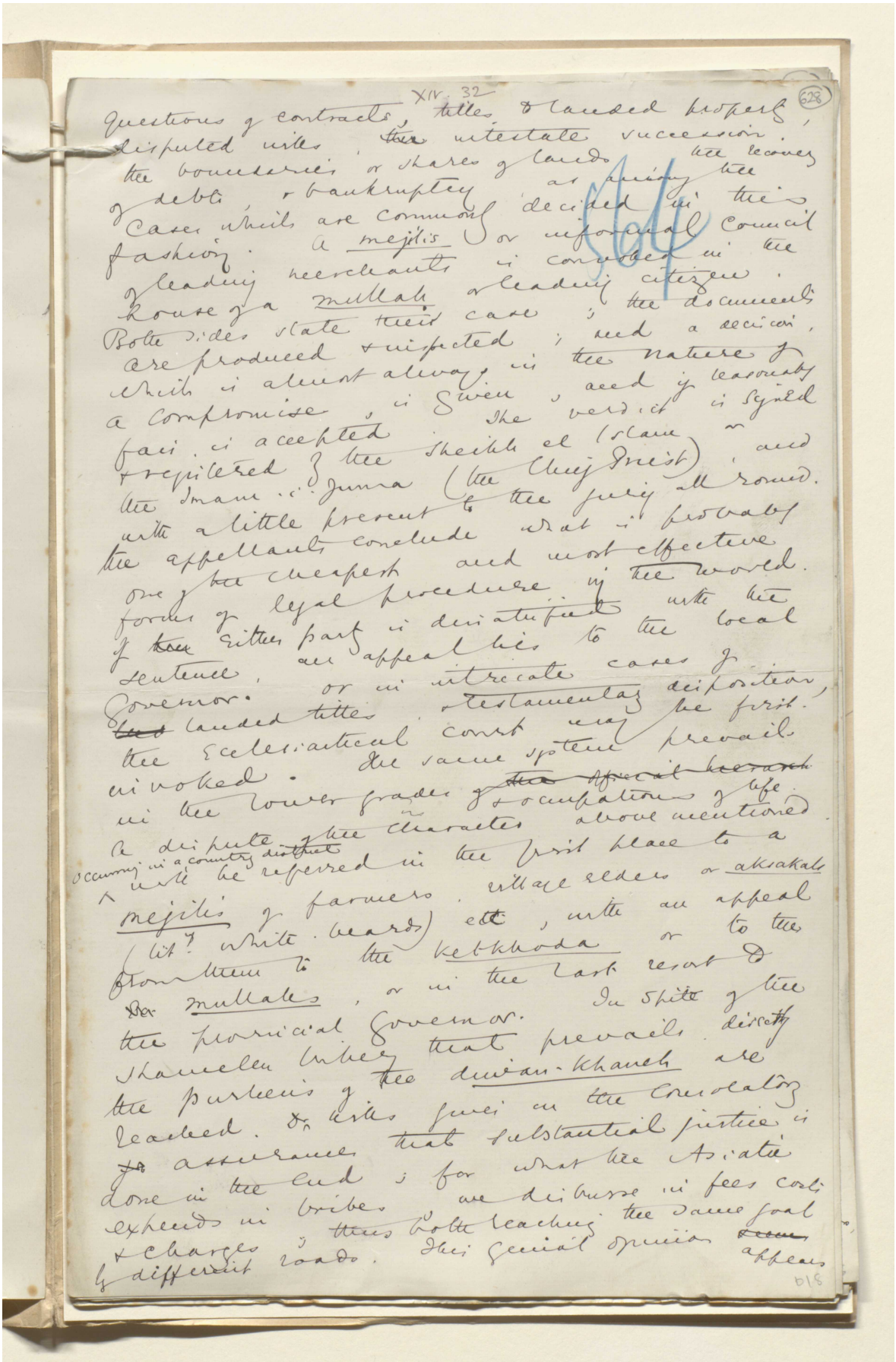

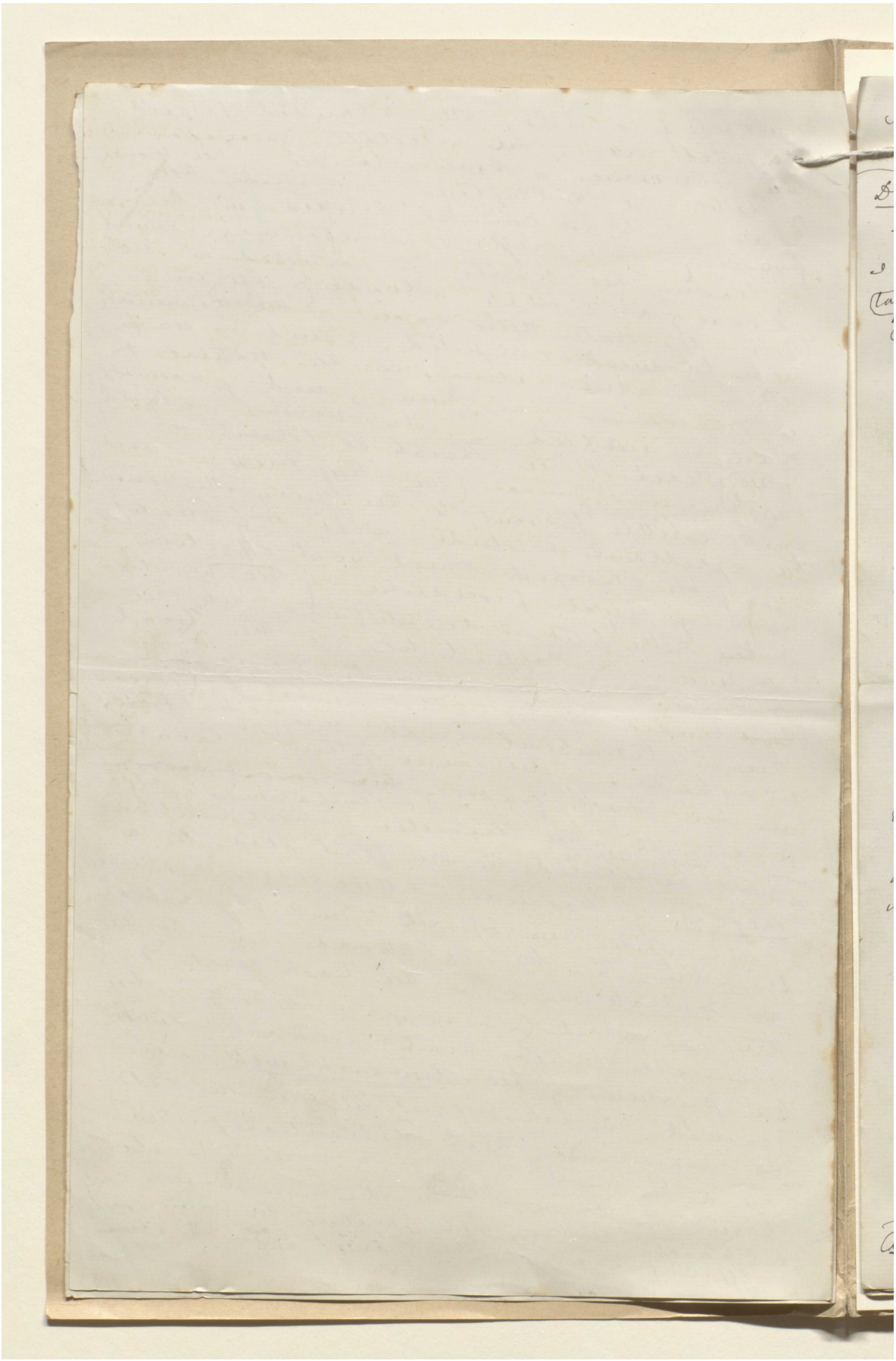

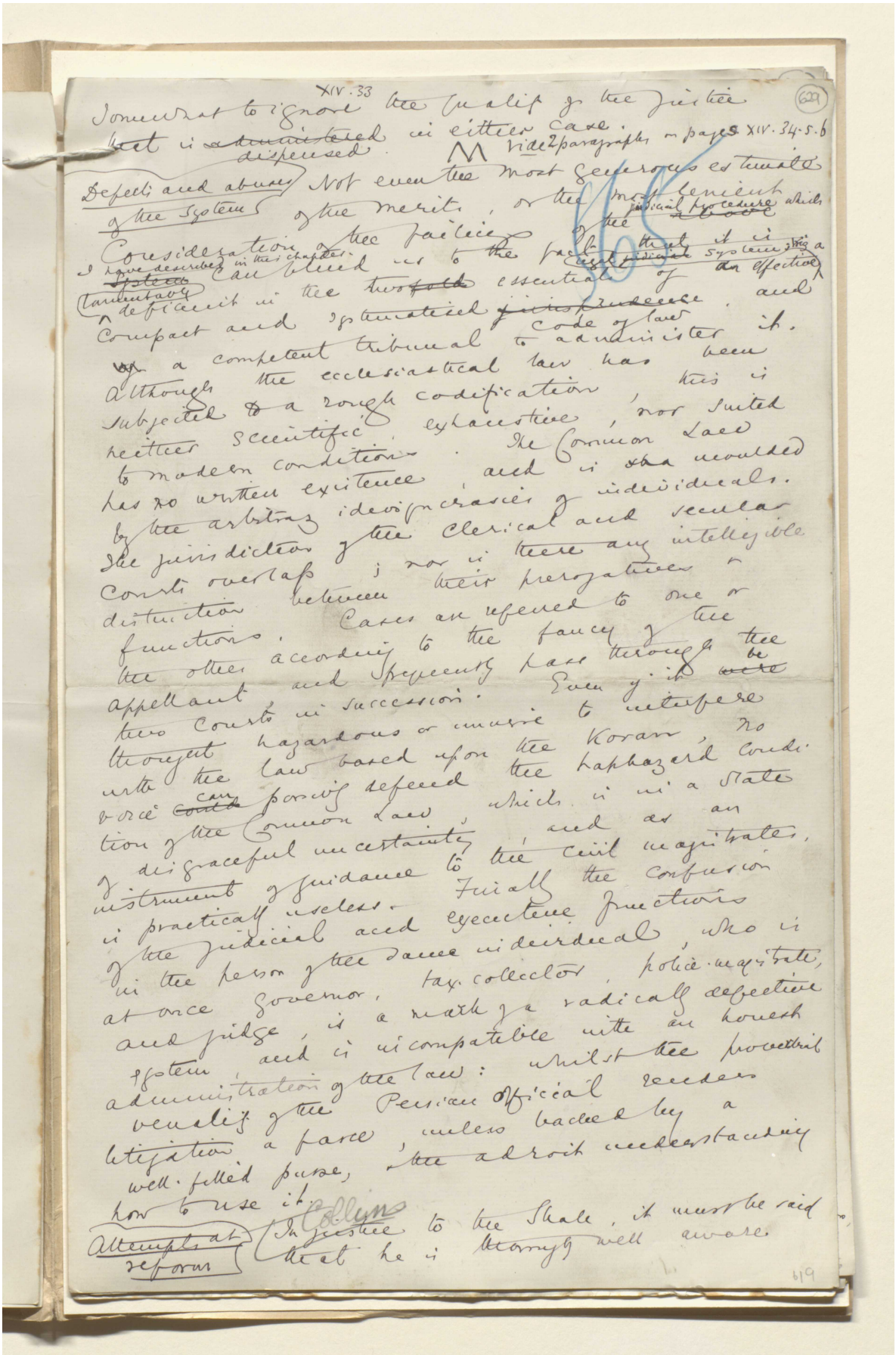

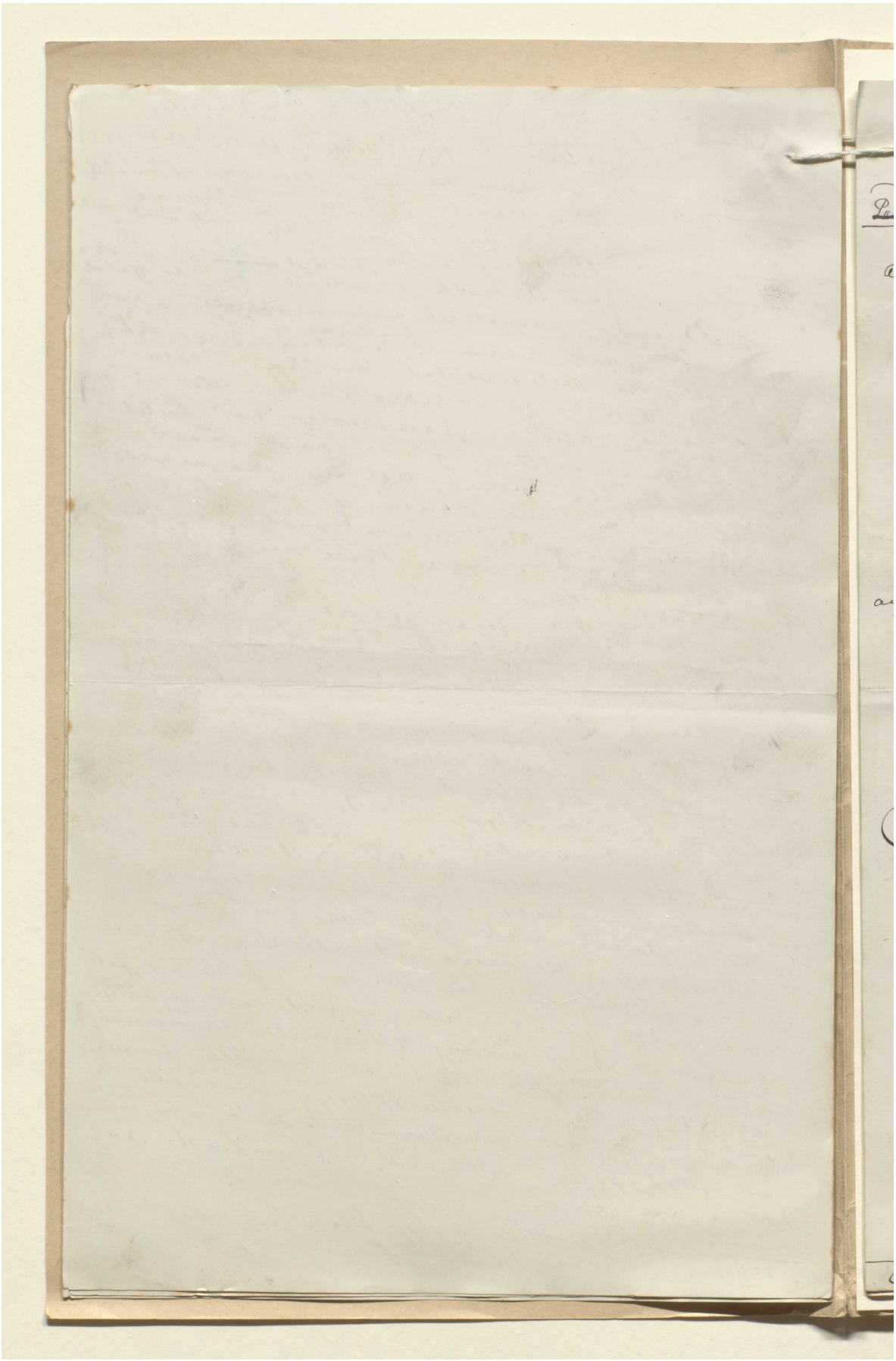

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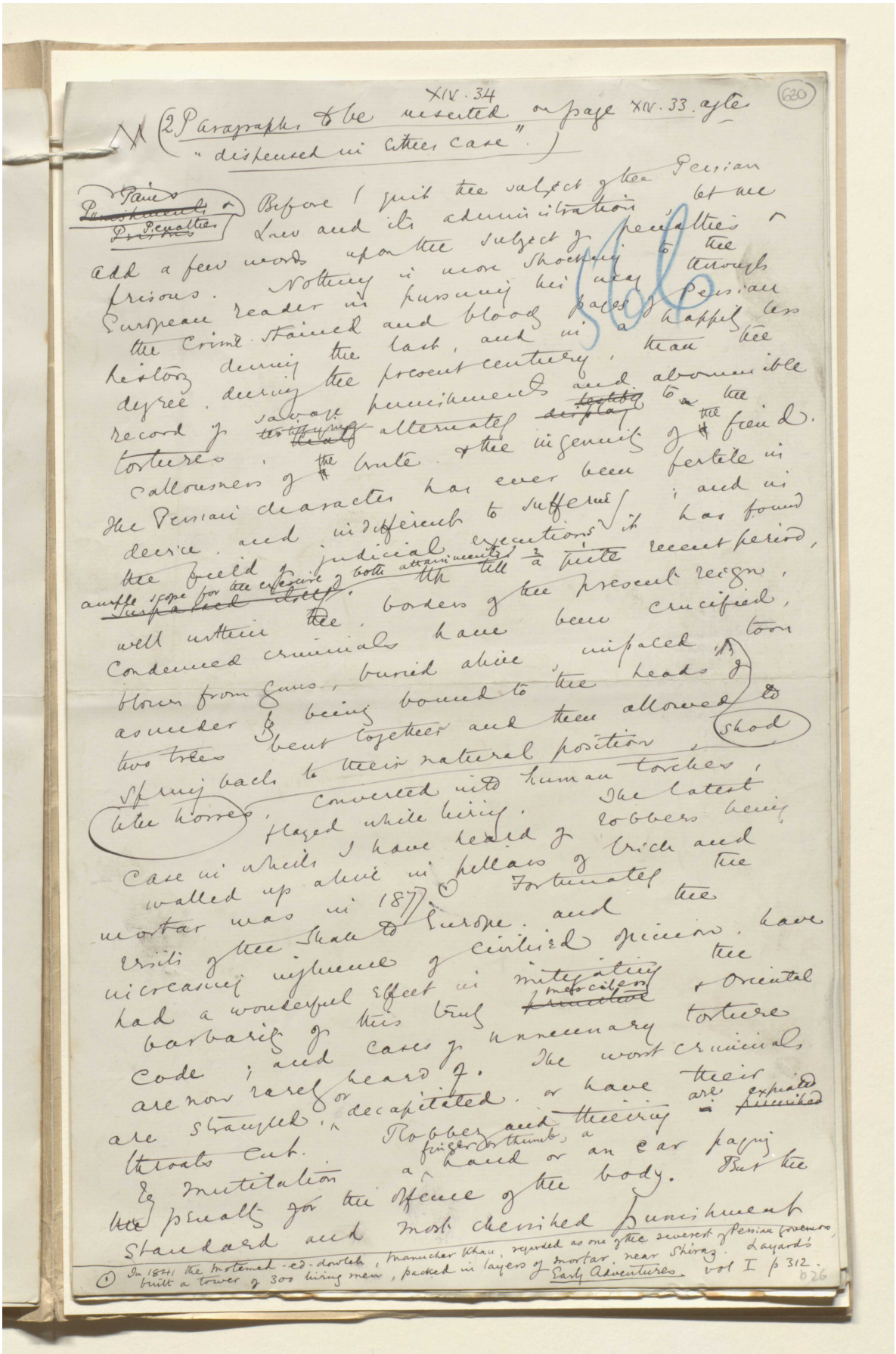
XIV. 34



(630)

(2 Paragraphs to be inserted on page XIV. 33. after "dispensed in either case".)

~~Punishments~~ Pains & ~~Prisons~~ Penalties

Before I quit the subject of the Persian Law and its administration, let me add a few words upon the subject of penalties & prisons. Nothing is more shocking to the European reader in pursuing his way through the crime-stained and bloody pages of Persian history during the last, and in a happily less degree, during the present century, than the record of savage punishments and abominable tortures, ~~testifying~~ ~~that~~ alternately ~~display~~ ~~testify~~ to the callousness of the brute & the ingenuity of the fiend. The Persian character has ever been fertile in device, and indifferent to suffering; and in the field of judicial executions it has found ample scope for the exercise of both attainments ~~surpassed itself~~. Up till a quite recent period, well within the borders of the present reign, condemned criminals have been crucified, blown from guns, buried alive, impaled, torn asunder by being bound to the heads of two trees bent together and then allowed to spring back to their natural position, shod like horses, converted into human torches, flayed while living. The latest case in which I have heard of robbers being walled up alive in pillars of brick and mortar was in 1877.(1) Fortunately the ersits of the Shah to Europe, and the increasing influence of civilised opinion, have had a wonderful effect in mitigating the barbarity of this truly ~~primitive~~ merciless & Oriental code; and cases of unnecessary torture are now rarely heard of. The worst criminals are strangled, or decapitated, or have their throats cut. Robbery and thieving are expiated ~~punished~~ by mutilation, a finger or thumb, a hand or an ear paying the penalty for the offence of the body. But the standard and most cherished punishment

(1) In 1841 the Motemed-ed-dowleh, Manucher Khan, regarded as one of the severest of Persian governors, built a tower of 300 living men, packed in layers of mortar, near Shiraz. Layard's Early Adventures. vol I p 312.

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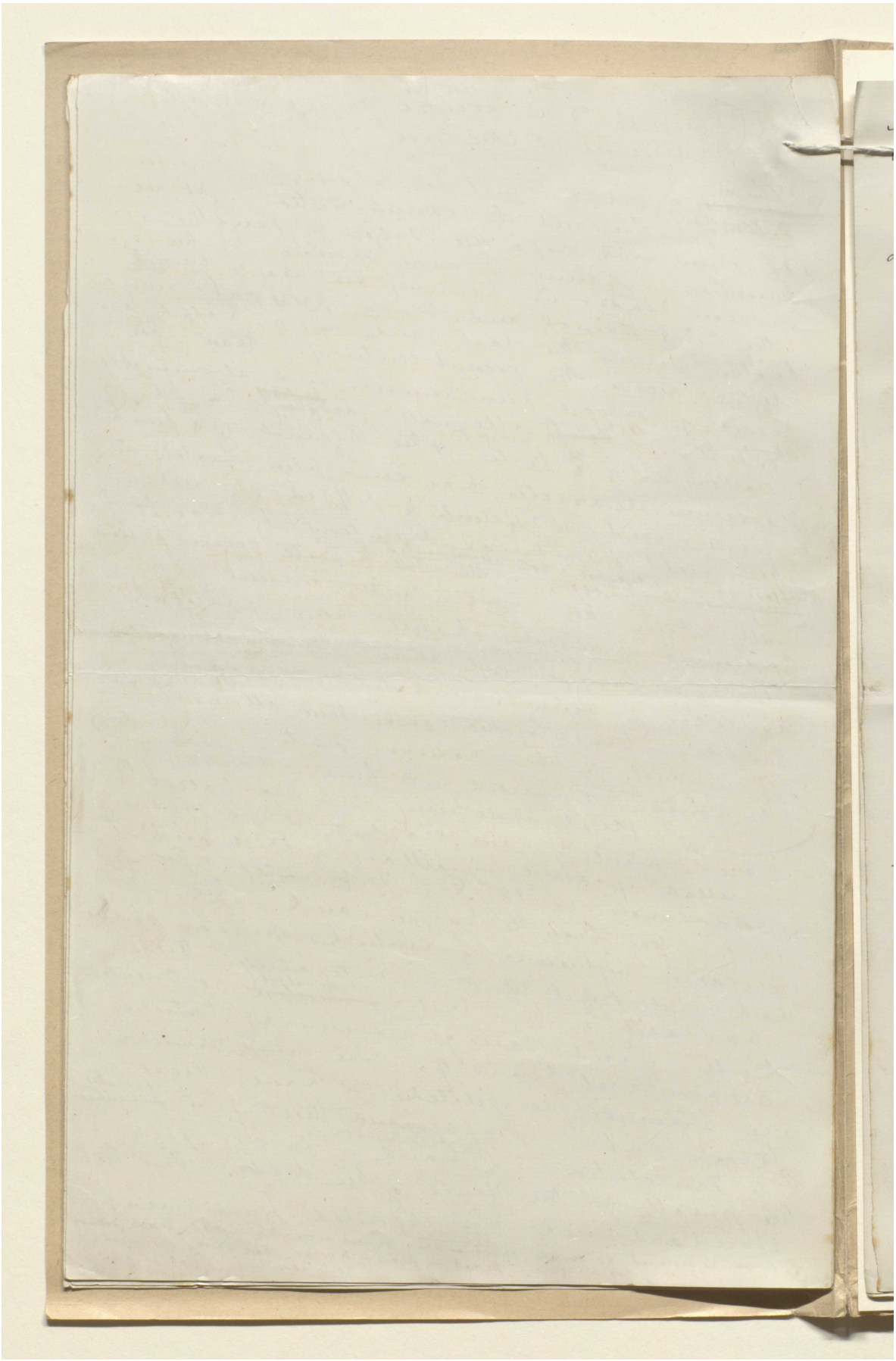

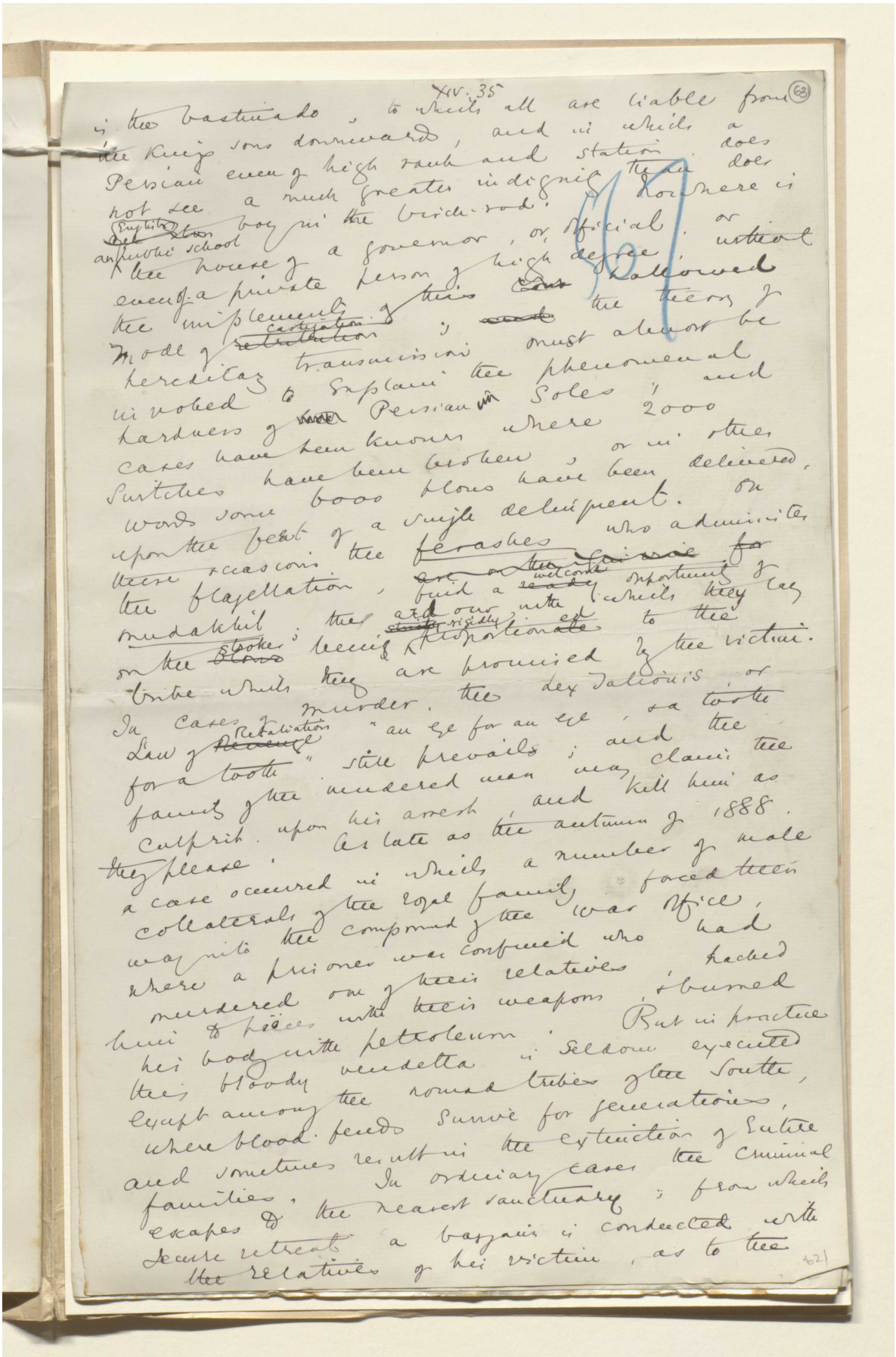

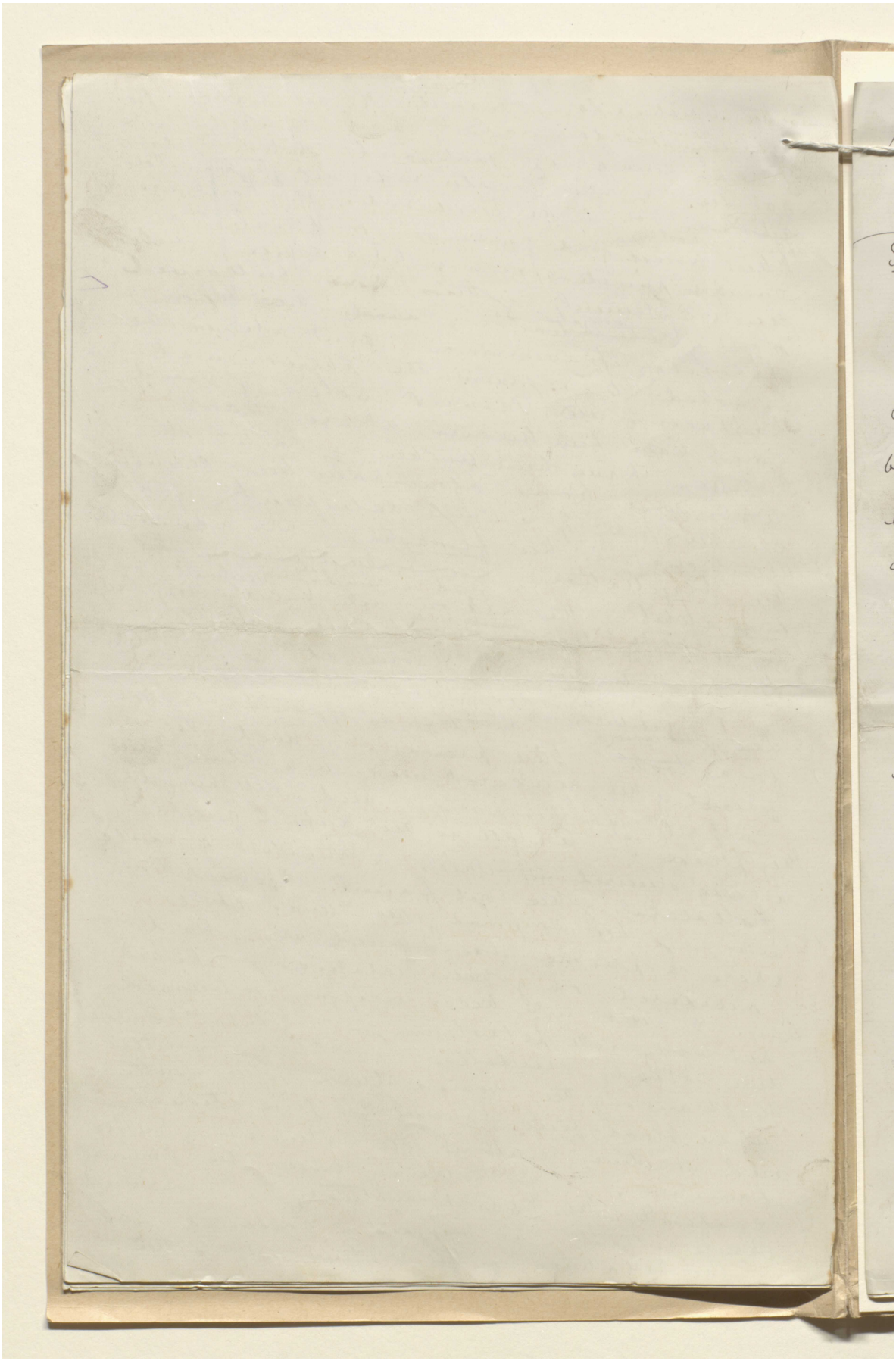

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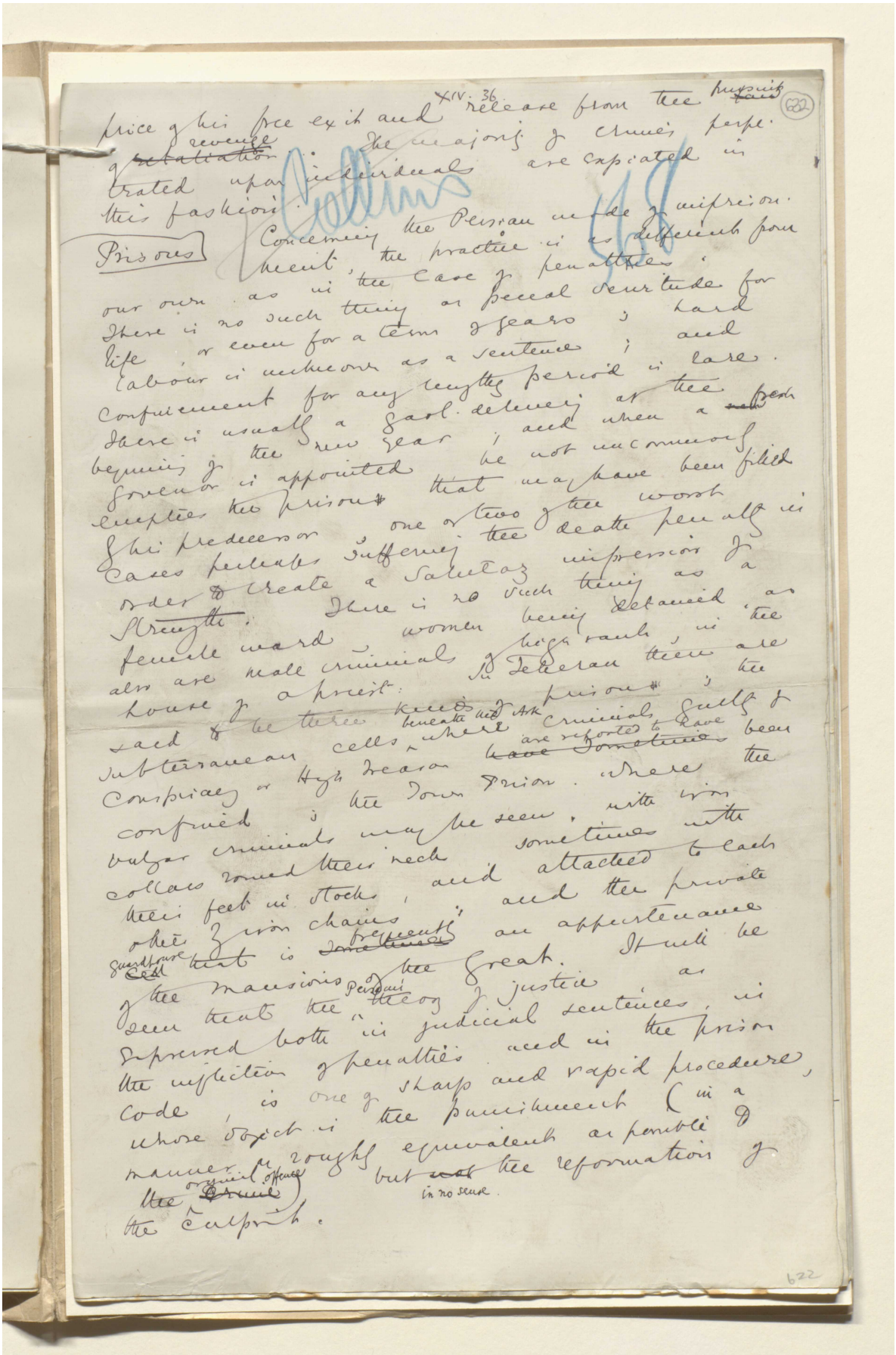
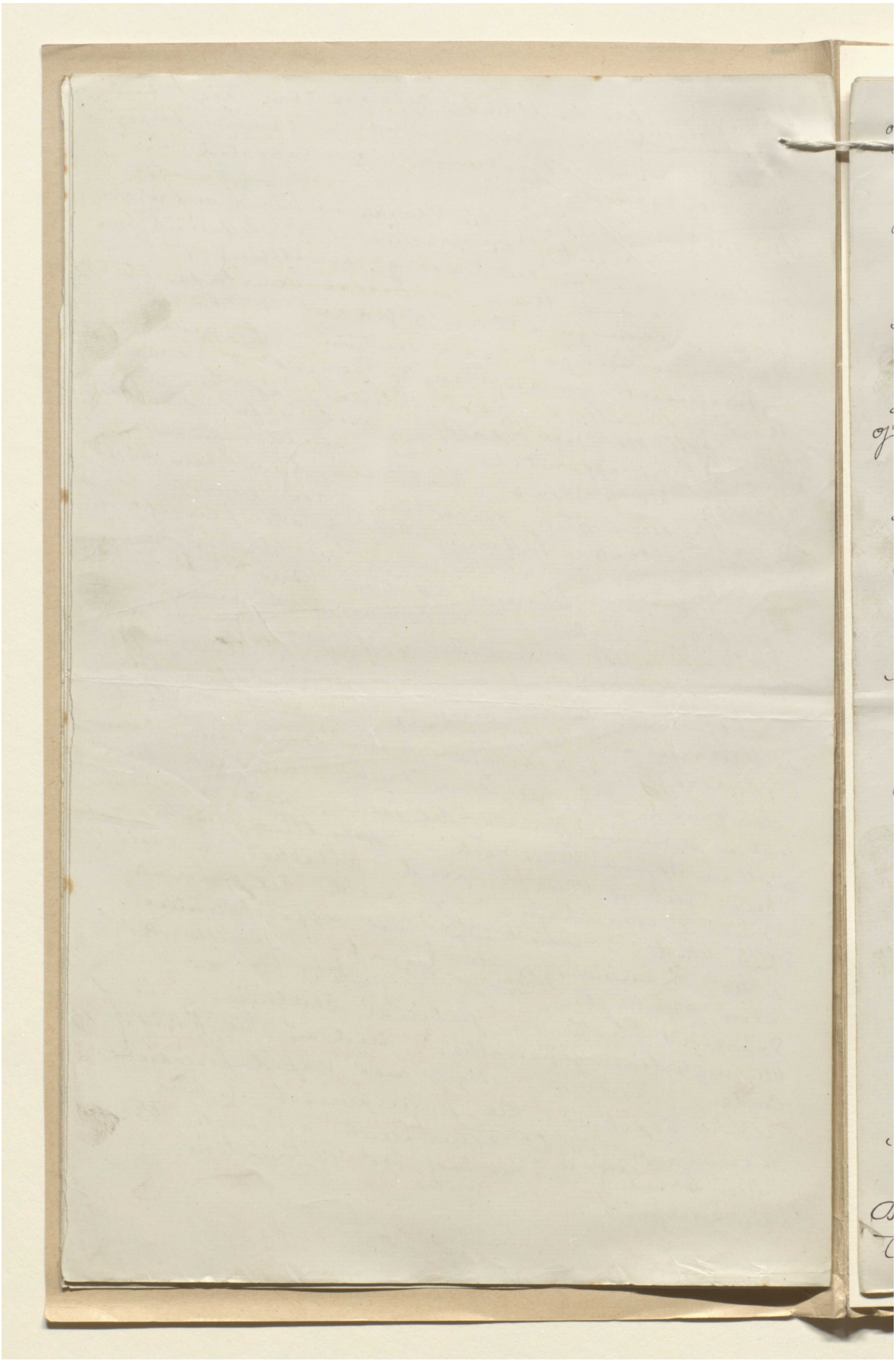
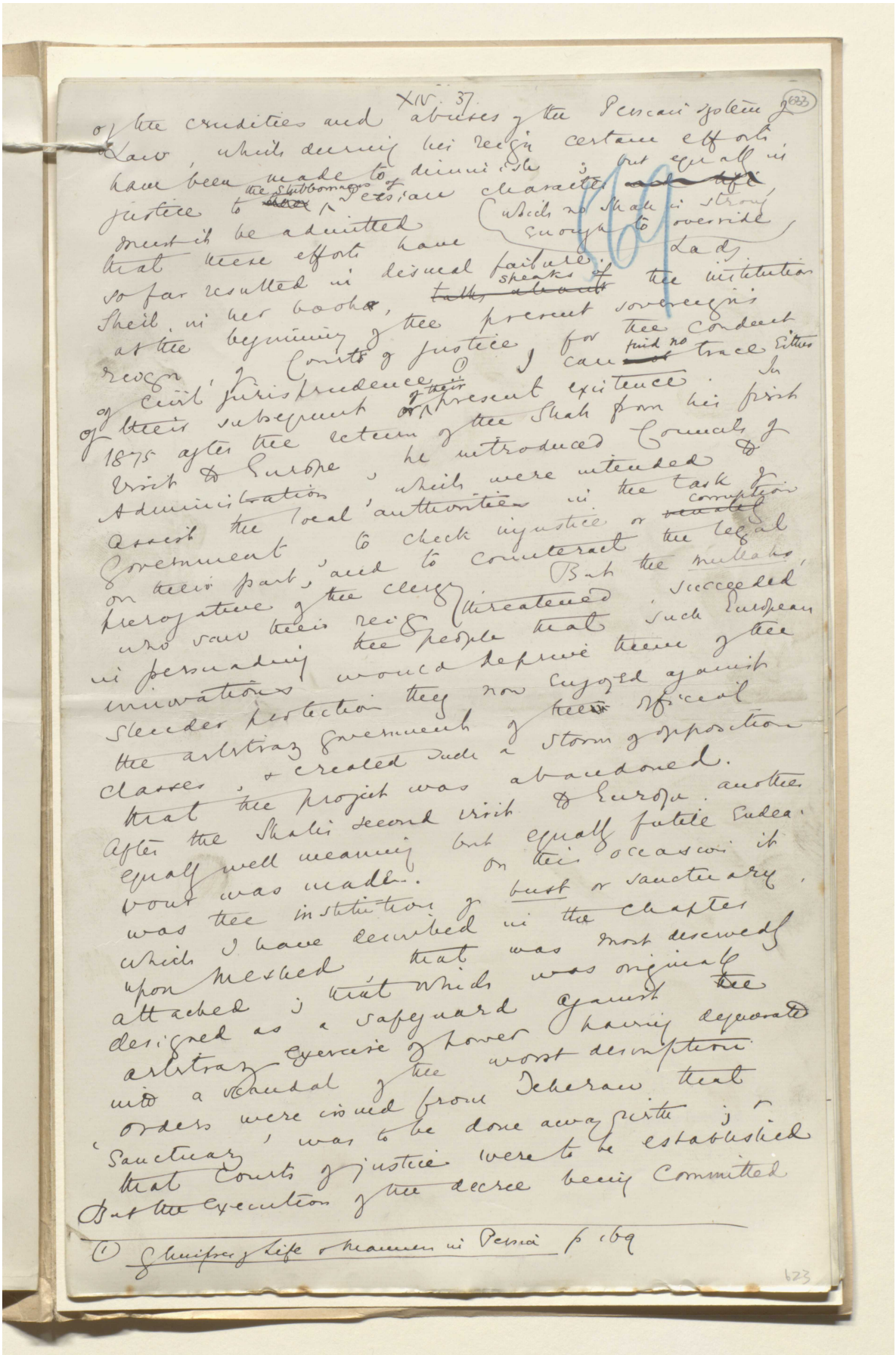
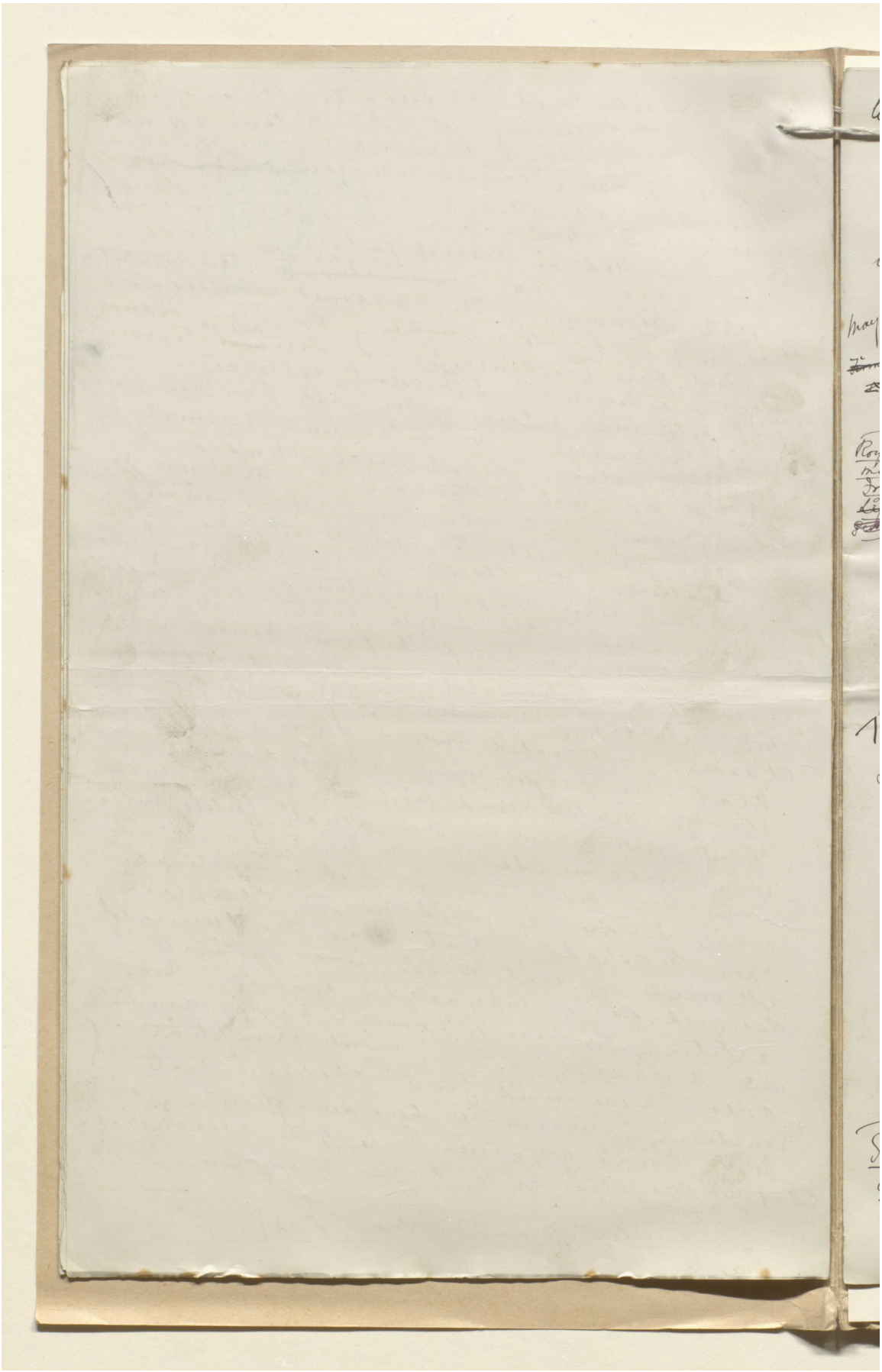
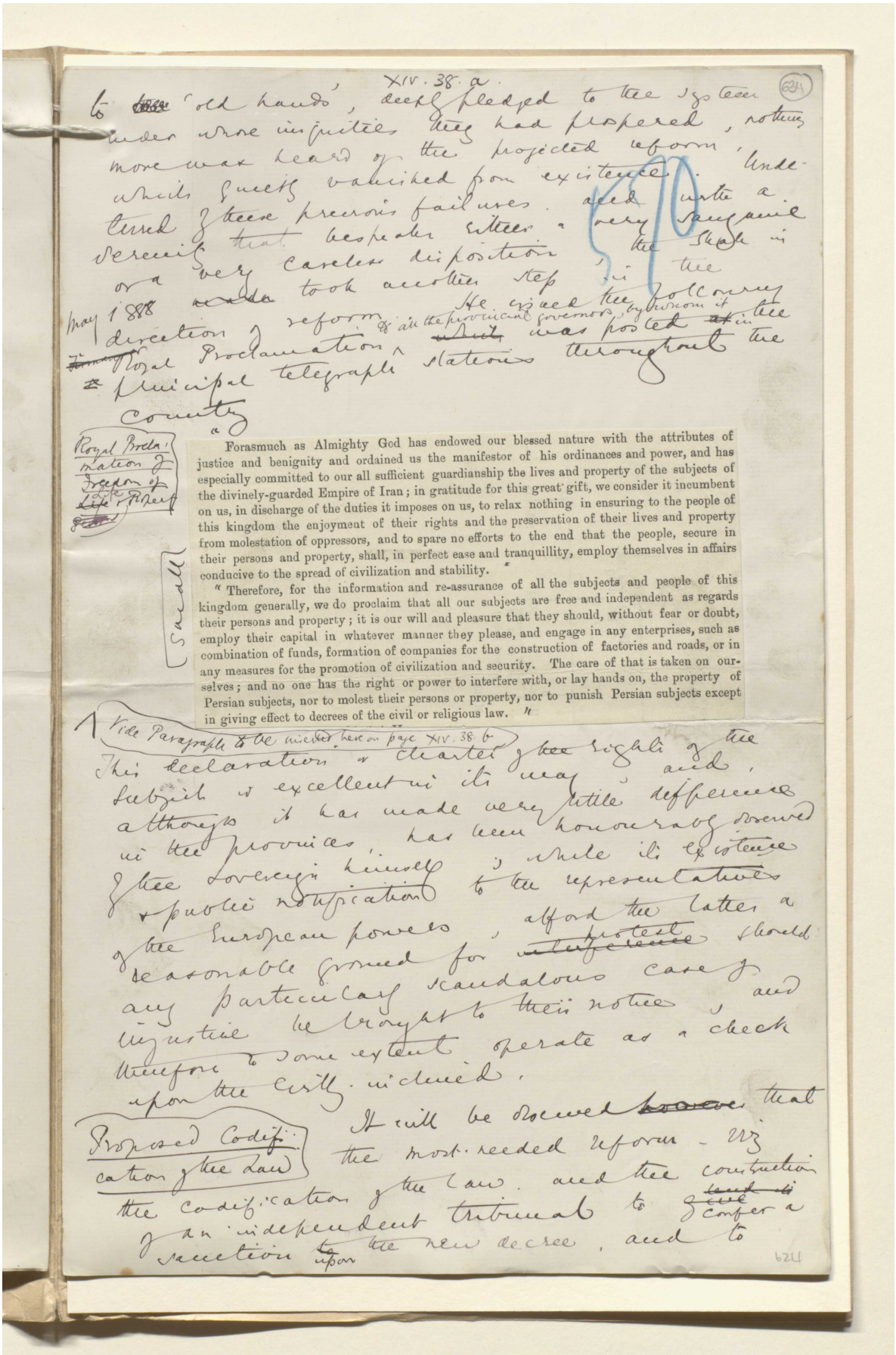


Prisons









XIV. 38. a.

to the 'old hands', deeply pledged to the ignorant under whose injurious rule they had prospered, nothing more was heard of the projected reform, which quickly vanished from existence. Undeterred by these previous failures, and under the spur of [illegible] despatches, [illegible] very sanguine or a very careless disposition, the Shah in May 1888 took another step in the direction of reform. He issued the following Royal Proclamation, which was posted in the principal telegraph stations throughout the country.

Royal Proclamation of Freedom of Life & Property

Forasmuch as Almighty God has endowed our blessed nature with the attributes of justice and benignity and ordained us the manifestor of his ordinances and power, and has especially committed to our all sufficient guardianship the lives and property of the subjects of the divinely-guarded Empire of Iran; in gratitude for this great gift, we consider it incumbent on us, in discharge of the duties it imposes on us, to relax nothing in ensuring to the people of this kingdom the enjoyment of their rights and the preservation of their lives and property from molestation of oppressors, and to spare no efforts to the end that the people, secure in their persons and property, shall, in perfect ease and tranquillity, employ themselves in affairs conducive to the spread of civilization and stability.

"Therefore, for the information and re-assurance of all the subjects and people of this kingdom generally, we do proclaim that all our subjects are free and independent as regards their persons and property; it is our will and pleasure that they should, without fear or doubt, employ their capital in whatever manner they please, and engage in any enterprises, such as combination of funds, formation of companies for the construction of factories and roads, or in any measures for the promotion of civilization and security. The care of that is taken on ourselves; and no one has the right or power to interfere with, or lay hands on, the property of Persian subjects, nor to molest their persons or property, nor to punish Persian subjects except in giving effect to decrees of the civil or religious law."

Sandall

[1] Vide Paragraph & the nineteen lines on page XIV. 38. b

This declaration or charter of the rights of the subject is excellent in its way, and although it has made very little difference in the provinces, has been honourably observed by the Sovereign himself, while its existence & public notification to the representatives of the European powers, afford the latter a reasonable ground for interference should any particularly scandalous case of injustice be brought to their notice, and therefore to some extent operate as a check upon the evil-minded.

Proposed Codification of the Law

It will be observed that the most needed reform - viz the codification of the law, and the construction of an independent tribunal to confer a sanction upon the new decree, and to

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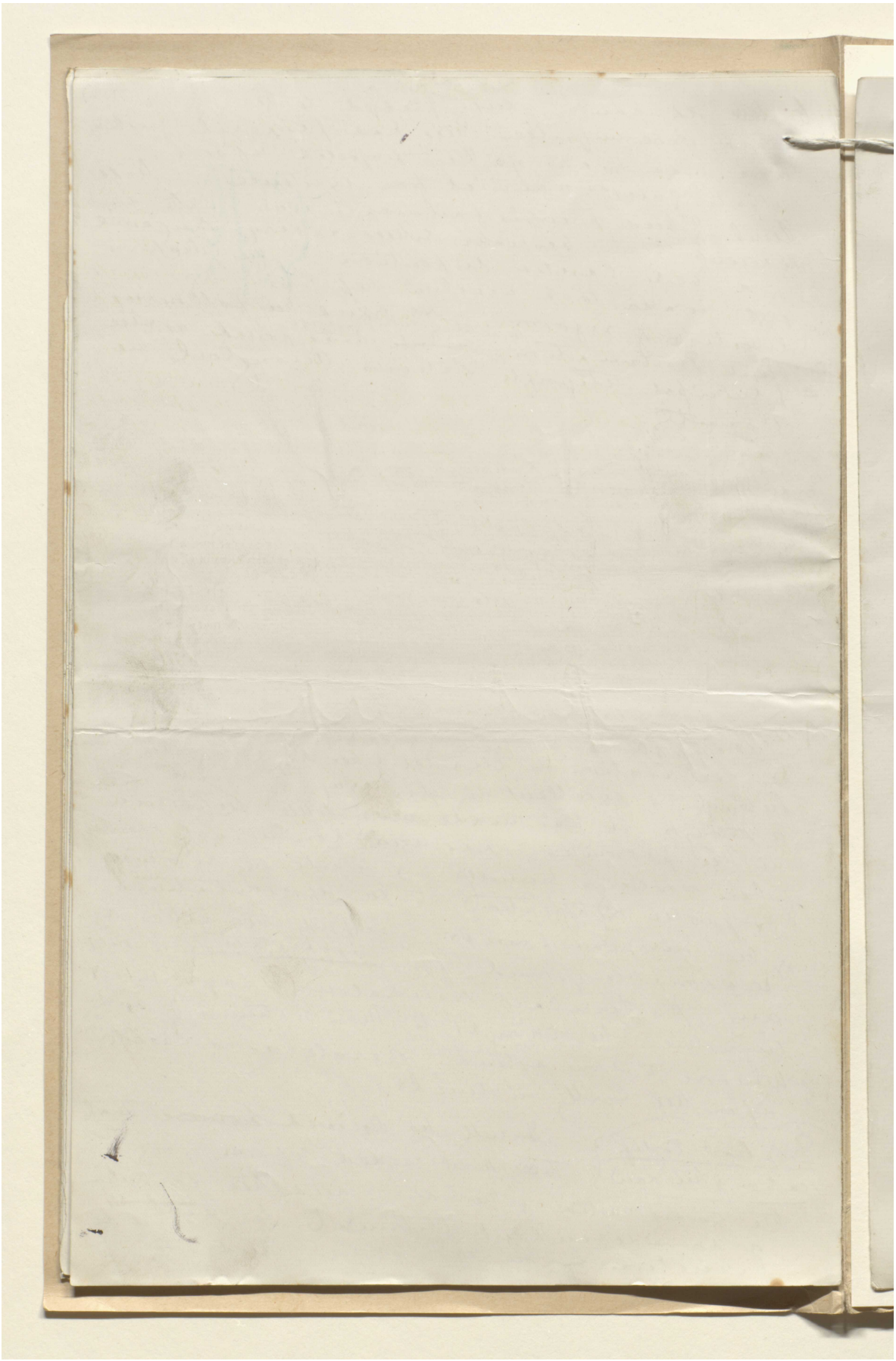

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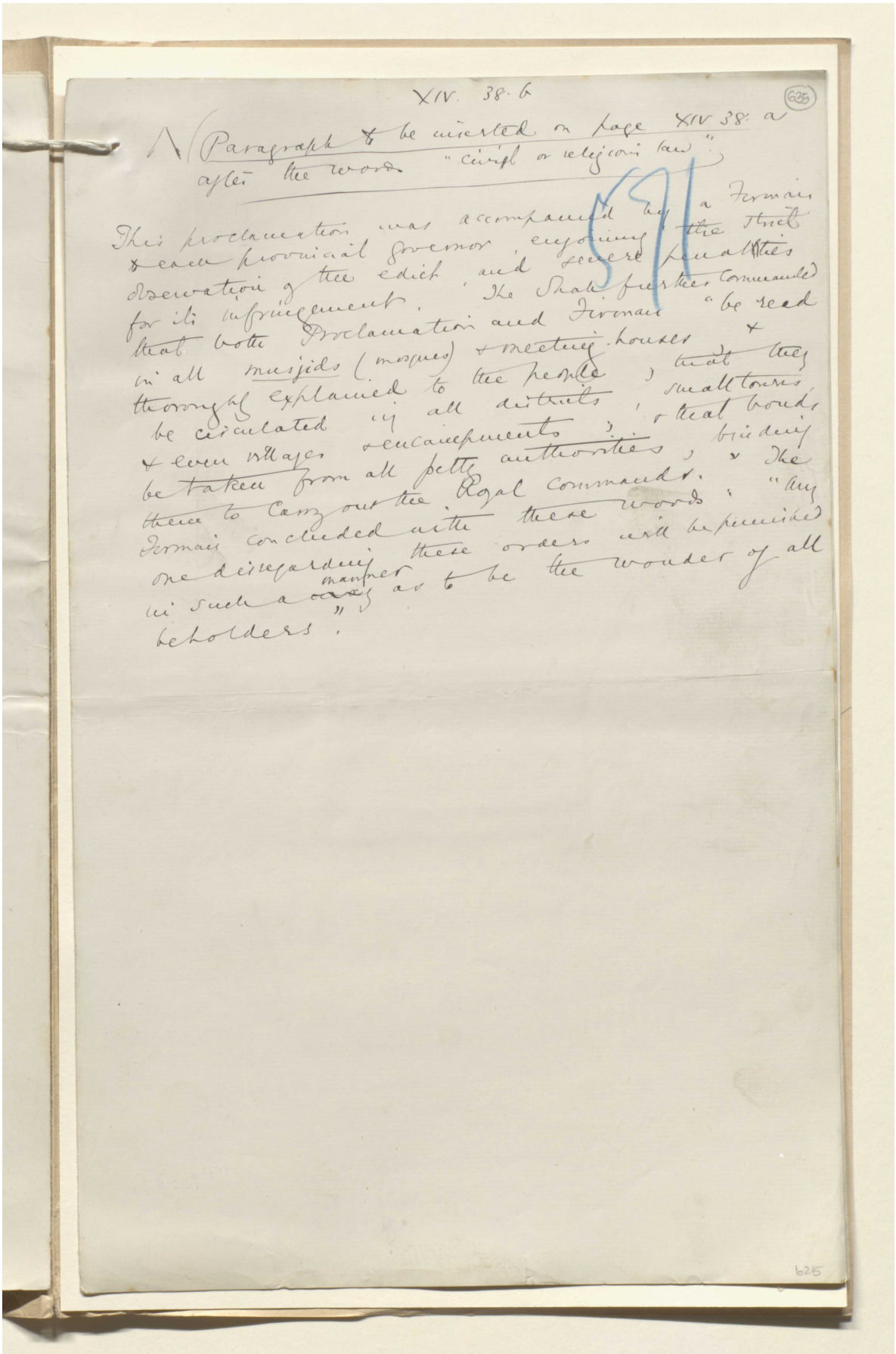
XIV. 38. b

(635)

Paragraph to be inserted on page XIV 38. a after the words "civil or religious law".



This proclamation was accompanied by a Firman to each provincial governor, enjoining the strict observation of the edict, and severe penalties for its infringement. The Shah further commanded that both Proclamation and Firman "be read in all musjids (mosques) & meeting-houses & thoroughly explained to the people; that they be circulated in all districts, small towns & even villages & encampments; & that bonds be taken from all petty authorities, binding them to carry out the Royal commands." The Firman concluded with these words: "Any one disregarding these orders will be punished in such a manner as to be the wonder of all beholders".

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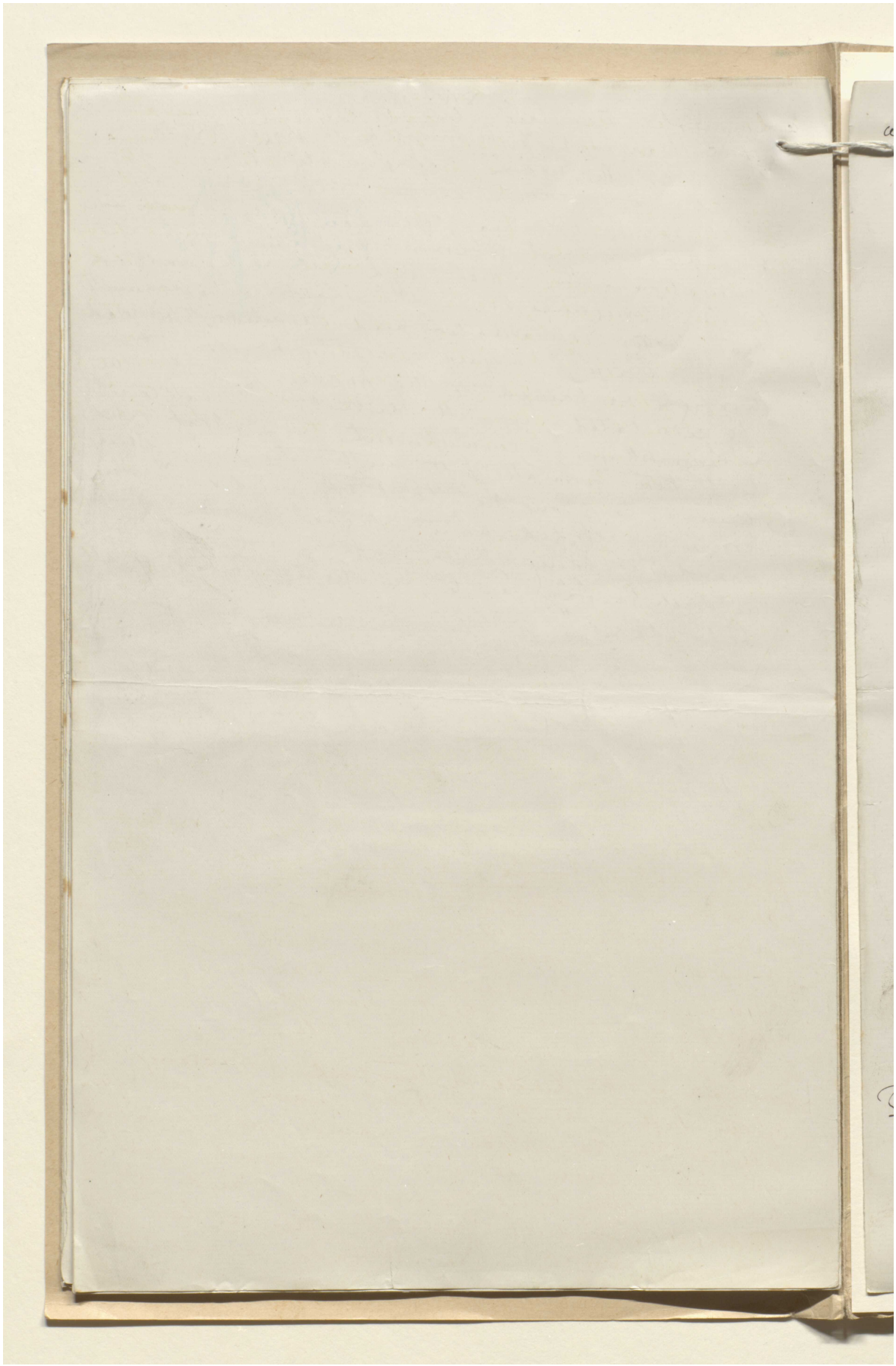

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مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٦٣٨و] (١٢٧٦/١٣٥٥)

Dawson

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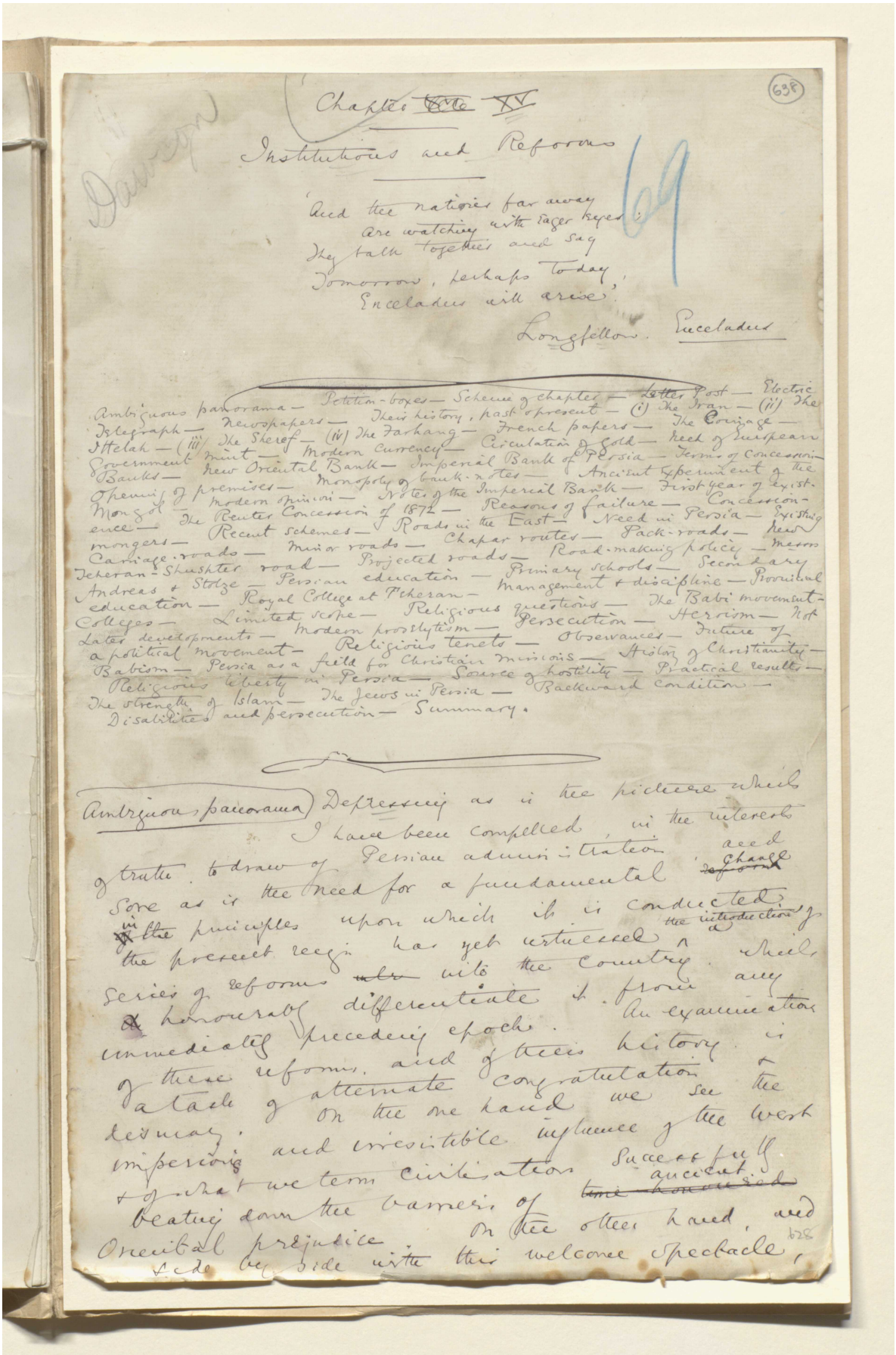
Chapter ~~XVIII~~ XV

Institutions and Reforms



'And the nations far away
Are watching with eager eyes;
They talk together and say
Tomorrow, perhaps today,
Enceladus will arise.'

Longfellow. Enceladus

Ambiguous panorama — Petition-boxes — Scheme of chapter — Letter Post — Electric Telegraph — Newspapers — Their history, past & present — (i) The Iran — (ii) The Ittelah — (iii) The Sheref — (iv) The Farhang — French papers — The Coinage — Government mint — Modern currency — Circulation of gold — Need of European Banks — New Oriental Bank — Imperial Bank of Persia — Terms of concession — Opening of premises — Monopoly of bank-notes — Ancient experiment of the Mongol — Modern opinion — Notes of the Imperial Bank — First year of existence — The Reuter Concession of 1872 — Reasons of failure — Concession-mongers — Recent schemes — Roads in the East — Need in Persia — Existing Carriage-roads — Minor roads — Chapar routes — Pack-roads — New Teheran-Shushter road — Projected roads — Road-making policy — Messrs Andreas & Stolze — Persian education — Primary schools — Secondary education — Royal College at Teheran — Management & discipline — Provincial Colleges — Limited scope — Religious questions — The Babi movement — Later developments — Modern proselytism — Persecution — Heroism — Not a political movement — Religious tenets — Observances — Future of Babism — Persia as a field for Christian missions — History of Christianity — Religious liberty in Persia — Source of hostility — Practical results — The strength of Islam — The Jews in Persia — Backward condition — Disabilities and persecution — Summary.

Ambiguous panorama Depressing as is the picture which I have been compelled, in the interests of truth, to draw of Persian administration and sore as is the need for a fundamental change ~~reform~~ in the principles upon which it is conducted, the present reign has yet witnessed the introduction of a series of reforms ~~into~~ into the country which ~~a~~ honourably differentiate it from any immediately preceding epoch. An examination of these reforms, and of their history is a task of alternate congratulation & dismay. On the one hand we see the imperious and irresistible influence of the West & of what we term civilisation successfully beating down the barriers of ~~time honoured~~ ancient Oriental prejudice. On the other hand, and side by side with this welcome spectacle,

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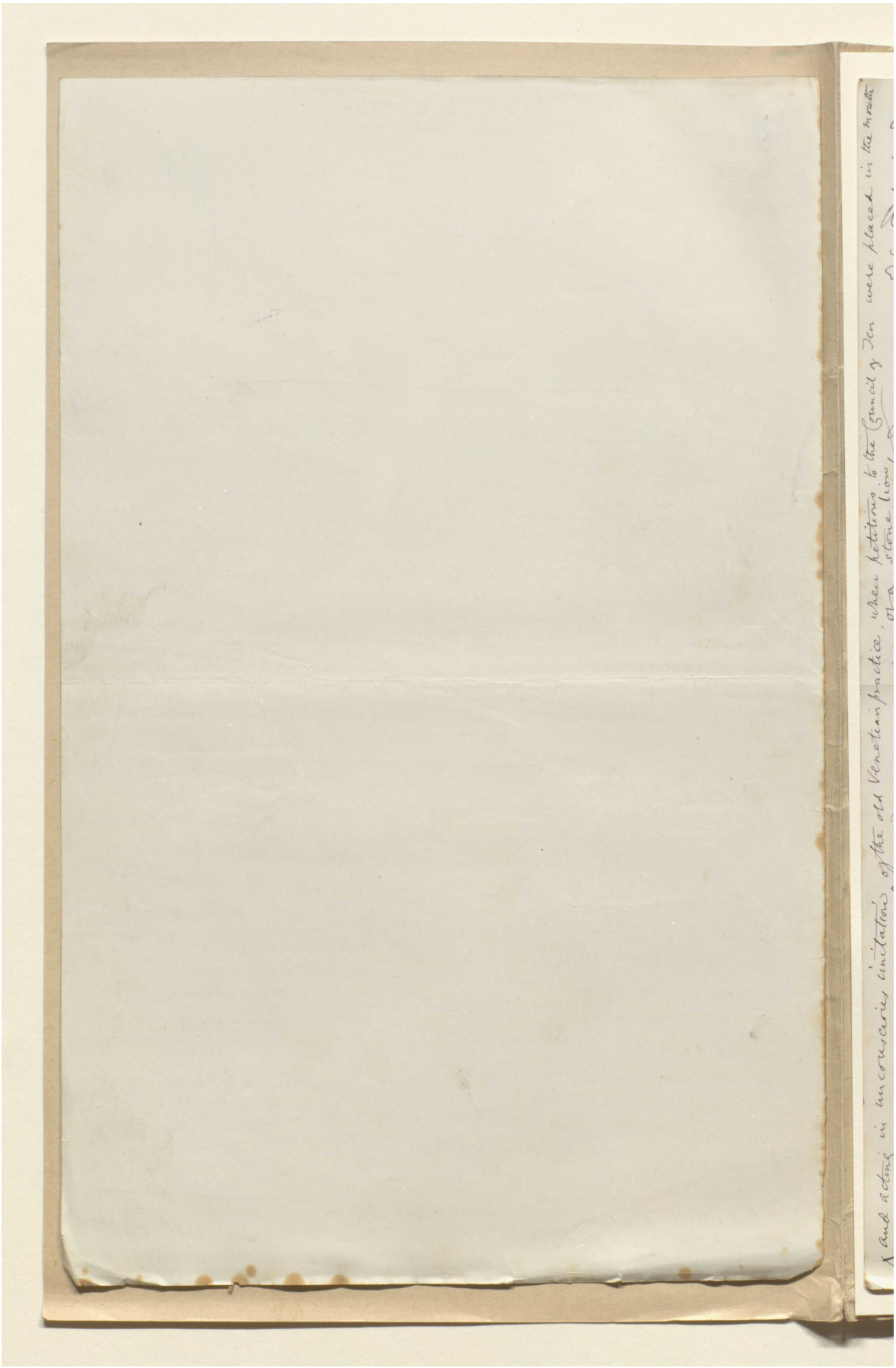

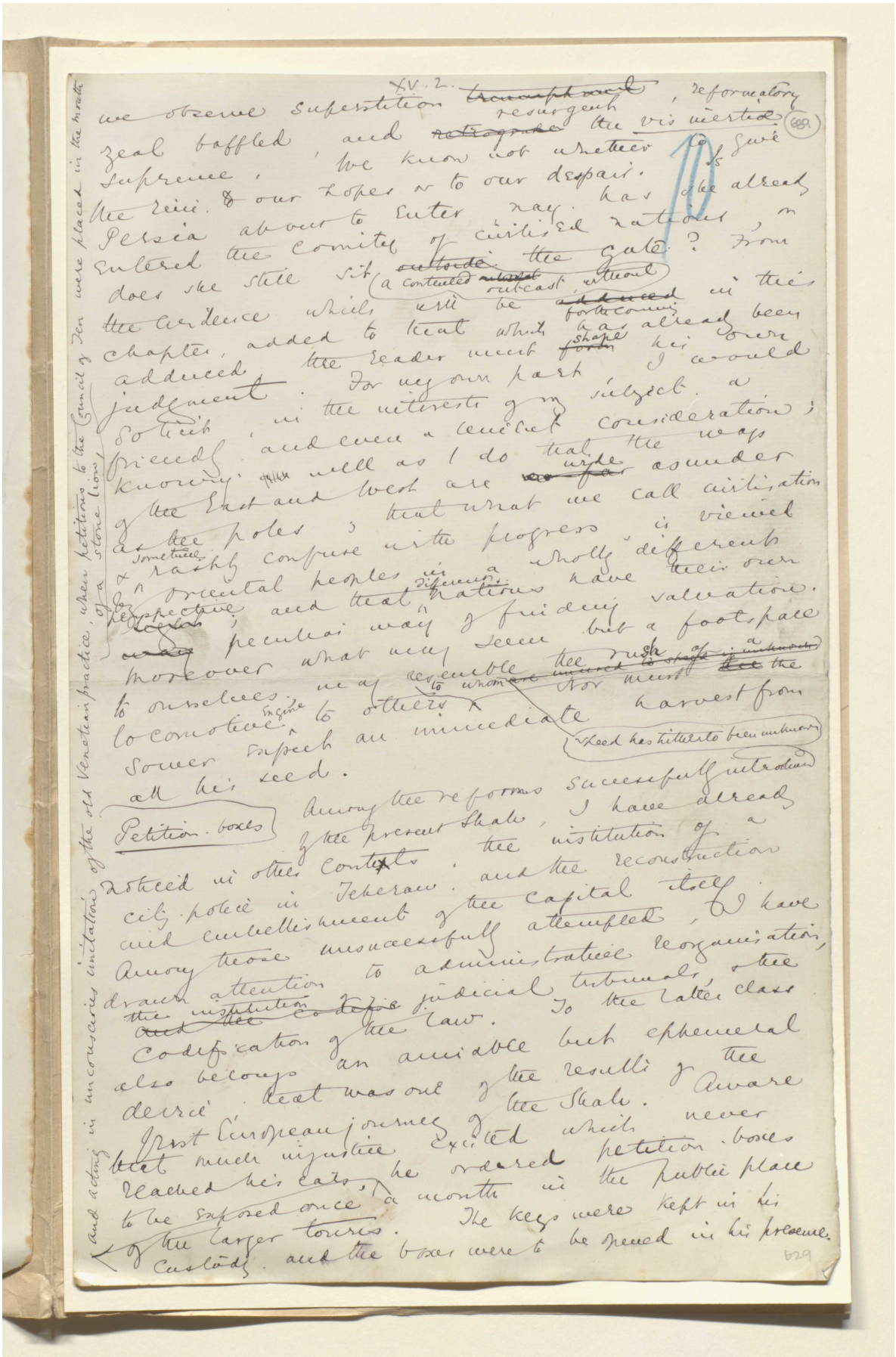

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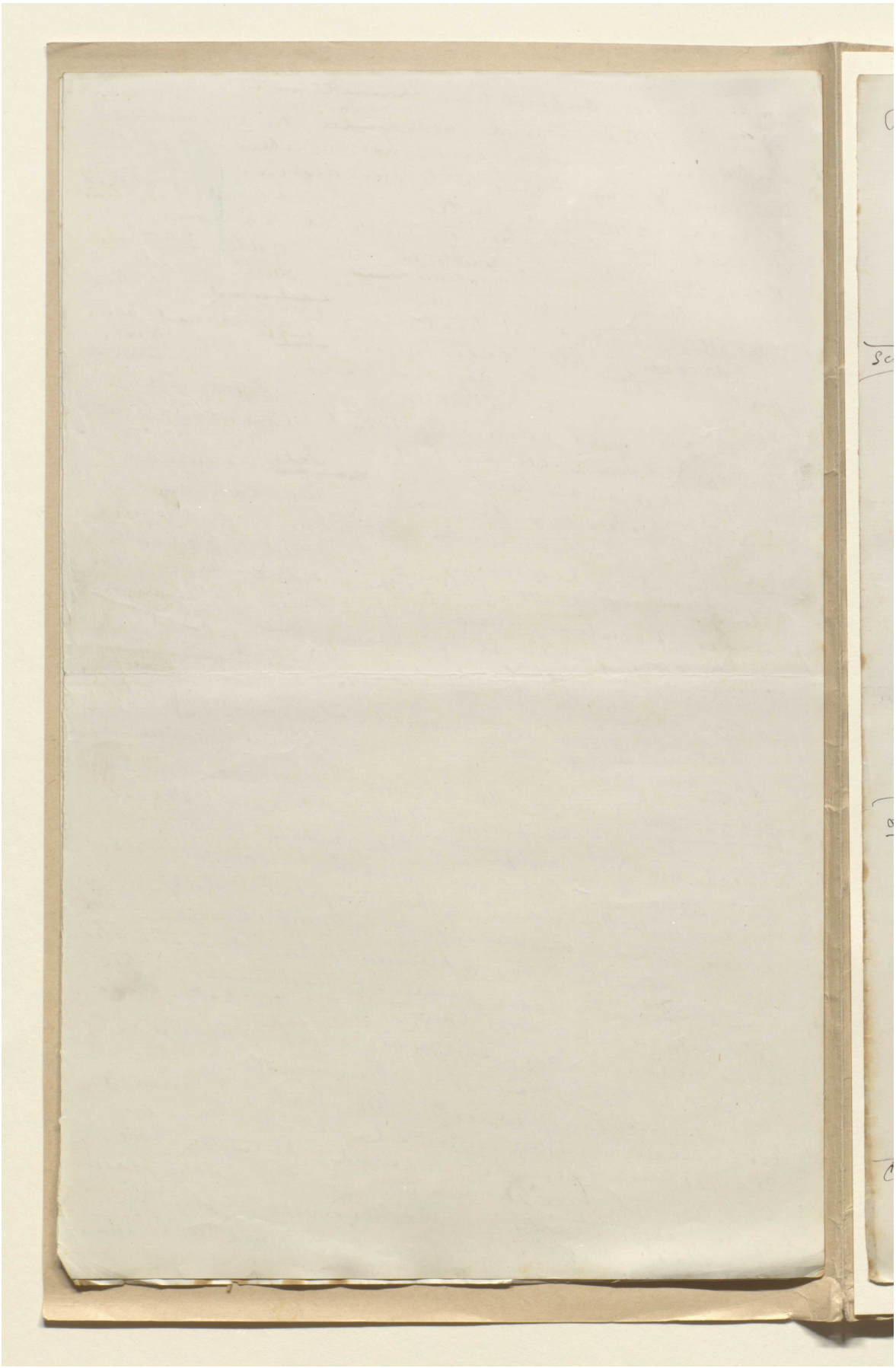

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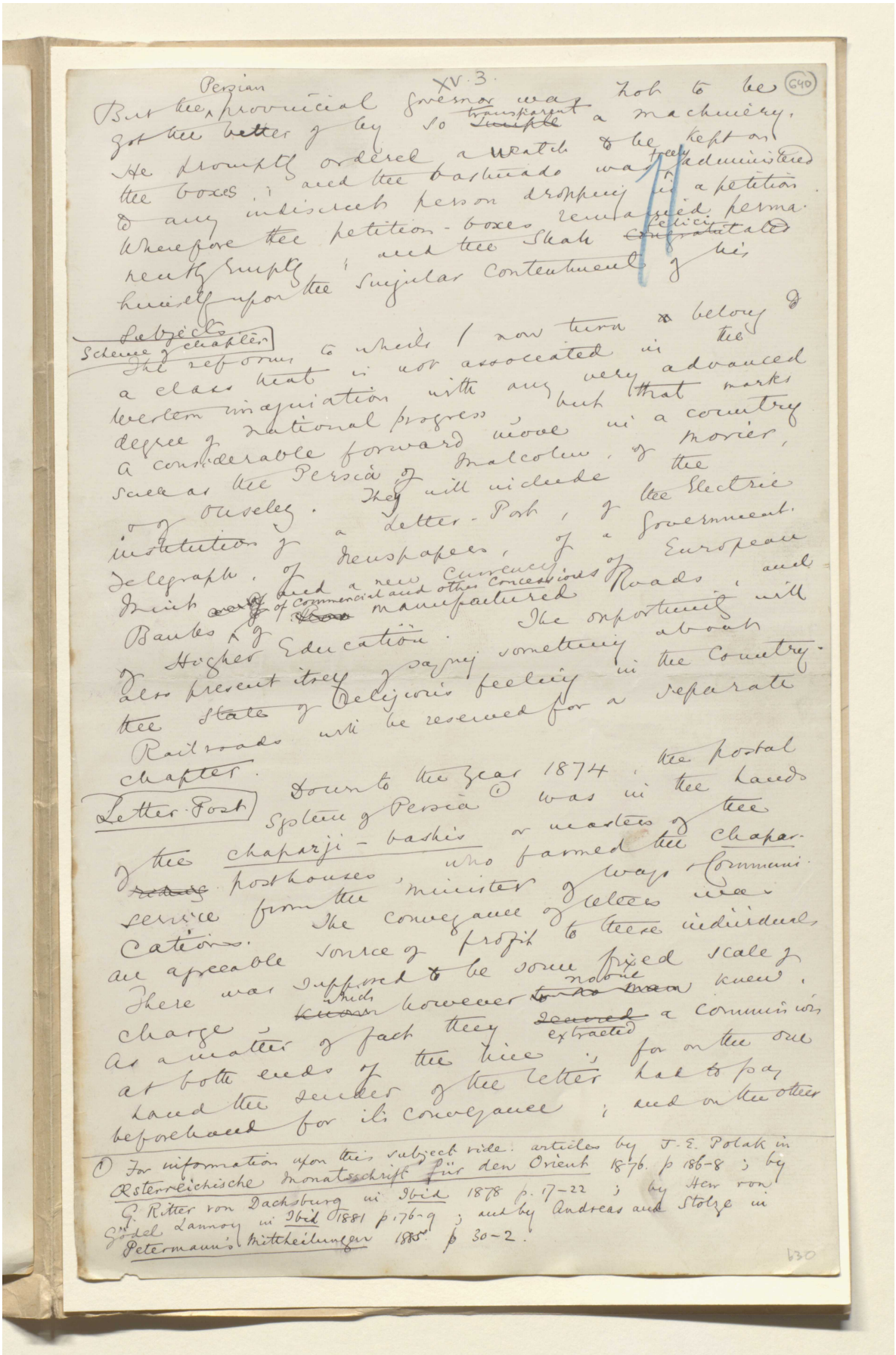

XV.3. (640)

But the Persian provincial governor was not to be got the better of by so transparent a machinery. He promptly ordered a watch to be kept on the boxes; and the bastinado was freely administered to any indiscreet person dropping in a petition. Wherefore the petition-boxes remained permanently empty; and the Shah felicitated himself upon the singular contentment of his subjects.

Scheme of chapter

The reforms to which I now turn belong to a class that is not associated in the western imagination with any very advanced degree of national progress, but that marks a considerable forward move in a country such as the Persia of Malcolm, of Morier, or of Ouseley. They will include the institution of a Letter-Post, of the Electric Telegraph, of Newspapers, of a Government Mint and a new currency, of European Banks of commercial and other concessions of manufactured Roads, and of Higher Education. The opportunity will also present itself of saying something about the State of Religious feeling in the Country. Railroads will be reserved for a separate chapter.

Letter-Post

Down to the year 1874, the postal system of Persia (1) was in the hands of the chaparji-bashis or masters of the posthouses, who farmed the chapar-service from the minister of ways & communications. The conveyance of letters was an agreeable source of profit to these individuals. There was supposed to be some fixed scale of charge, which however no one knew. As a matter of fact they extracted a commission at both ends of the line; for on the one hand the sender of the letter had to pay beforehand for its conveyance; and on the other

(1) For information upon this subject vide: articles by J. E. Polak in Österreichische Monatsschrift für den Orient 1876. p. 186-8; by G. Ritter von Dachsburg in Ibid 1878 p. 17-22; by Herr von Gödel Lannoy in Ibid 1881 p. 76-9; and by Andreas and Stolze in Petermann's Mittheilungen 1885 p. 30-2.

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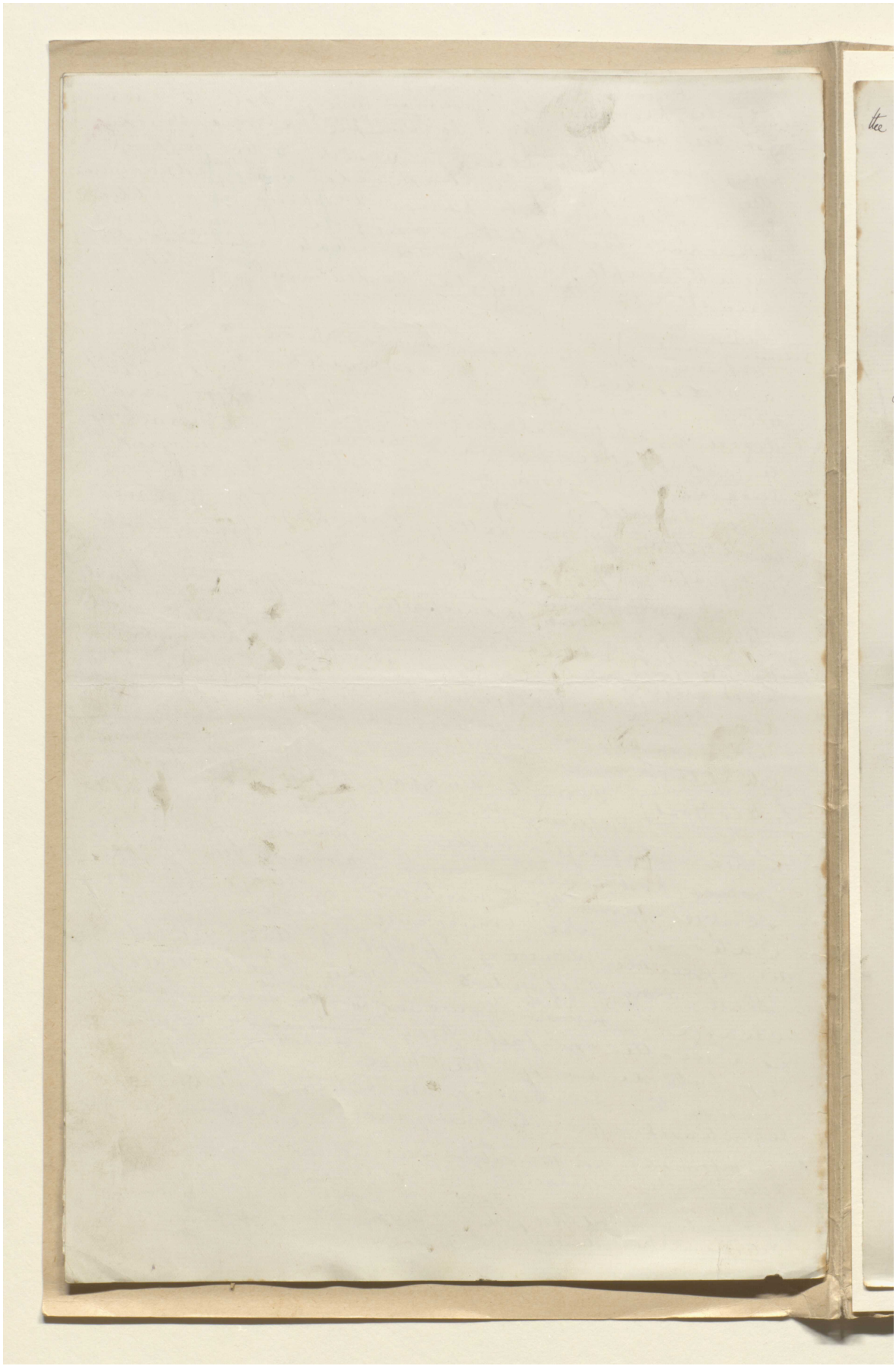

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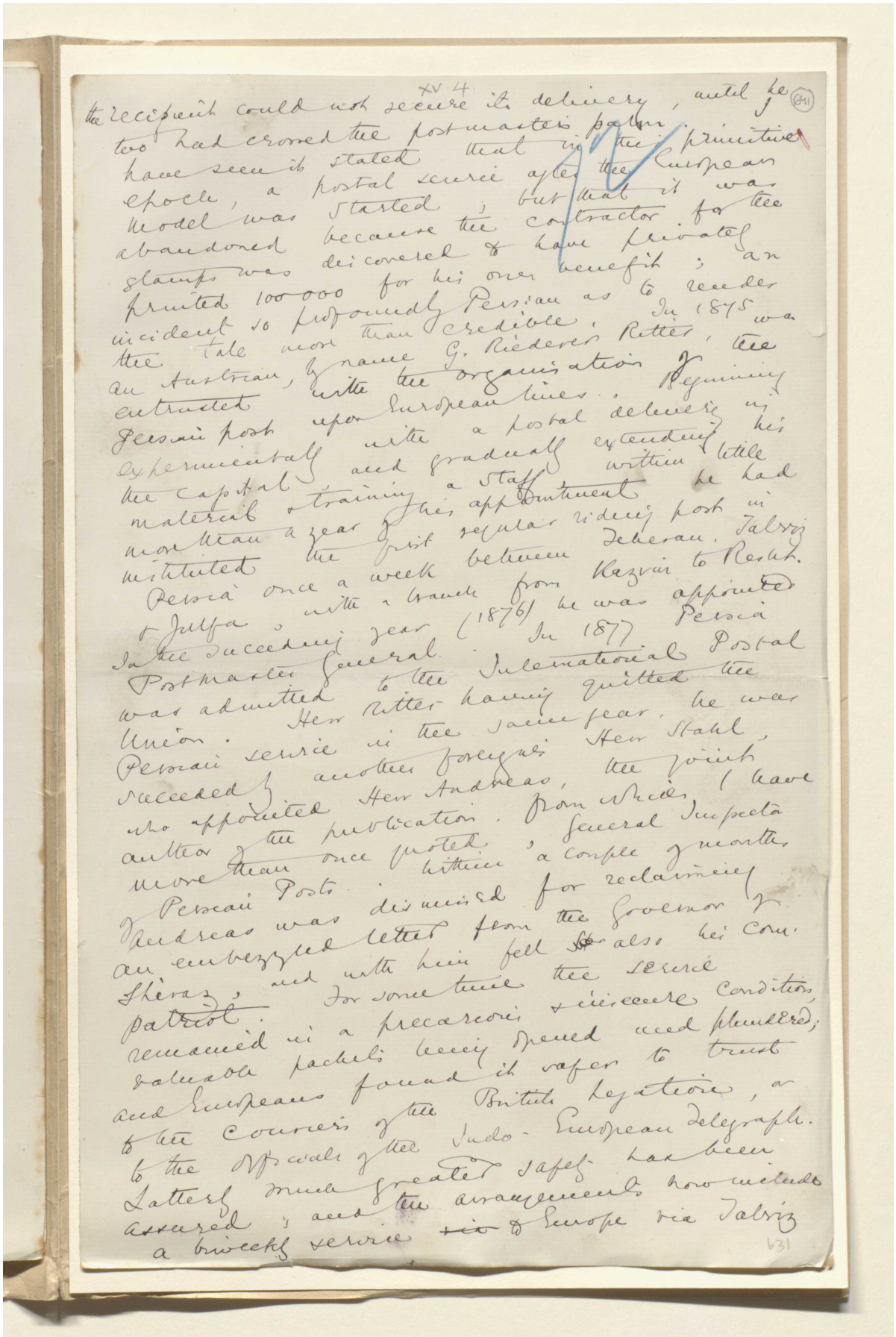
مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٦٤١و] (١٢٨٢/١٣٥٥)

XV.4

(641)



the recipient could not secure its delivery, until he
too had crossed the postmaster's palm.
have seen it stated that in this primitive
epoch, a postal service after the European
model was started; but that it was
abandoned because the contractor for the
stamps was discovered & have privately
printed 100 000 for his own benefit; an
incident so profoundly Persian as to render
the tale more than credible. In 1875 was
an Austrian, by name G. Riederer Ritter, the
entrusted with the organisation of
Persian post upon European lines. Beginning
experimentally with a postal delivery in
the capital and gradually extending his
material & training a staff within little
more than a year of his appointment he had
instituted the first regular riding post in
Persia once a week between Teheran, Tabriz
& Julfa, with a branch from Kazvin to Resht.
In the succeeding year (1876) he was appointed
Postmaster General. In 1877 Persia
was admitted to the International Postal
Union. Herr Ritter having quitted the
Persian service in the same year, he was
succeeded by another foreigner Herr Stahl,
who appointed Herr Andreas, the joint
author of the publication from which I have
more than once quoted, General Inspector
of Persian Posts. Within a couple of months
Andreas was dismissed for reclaiming
an embezzled letter from the Governor of
Shiraz, and with him fell also his com-
patriot. For some time the service
remained in a precarious & insecure condition,
valuable packets being opened and plundered;
and Europeans found it safer to trust
to the Couriers of the British Legation, or
to the Officials of the Indo-European Telegraph.
Latterly much greater safety has been
assured; and the arrangements now include
a biweekly service ~~via~~ to Europe via Tabriz

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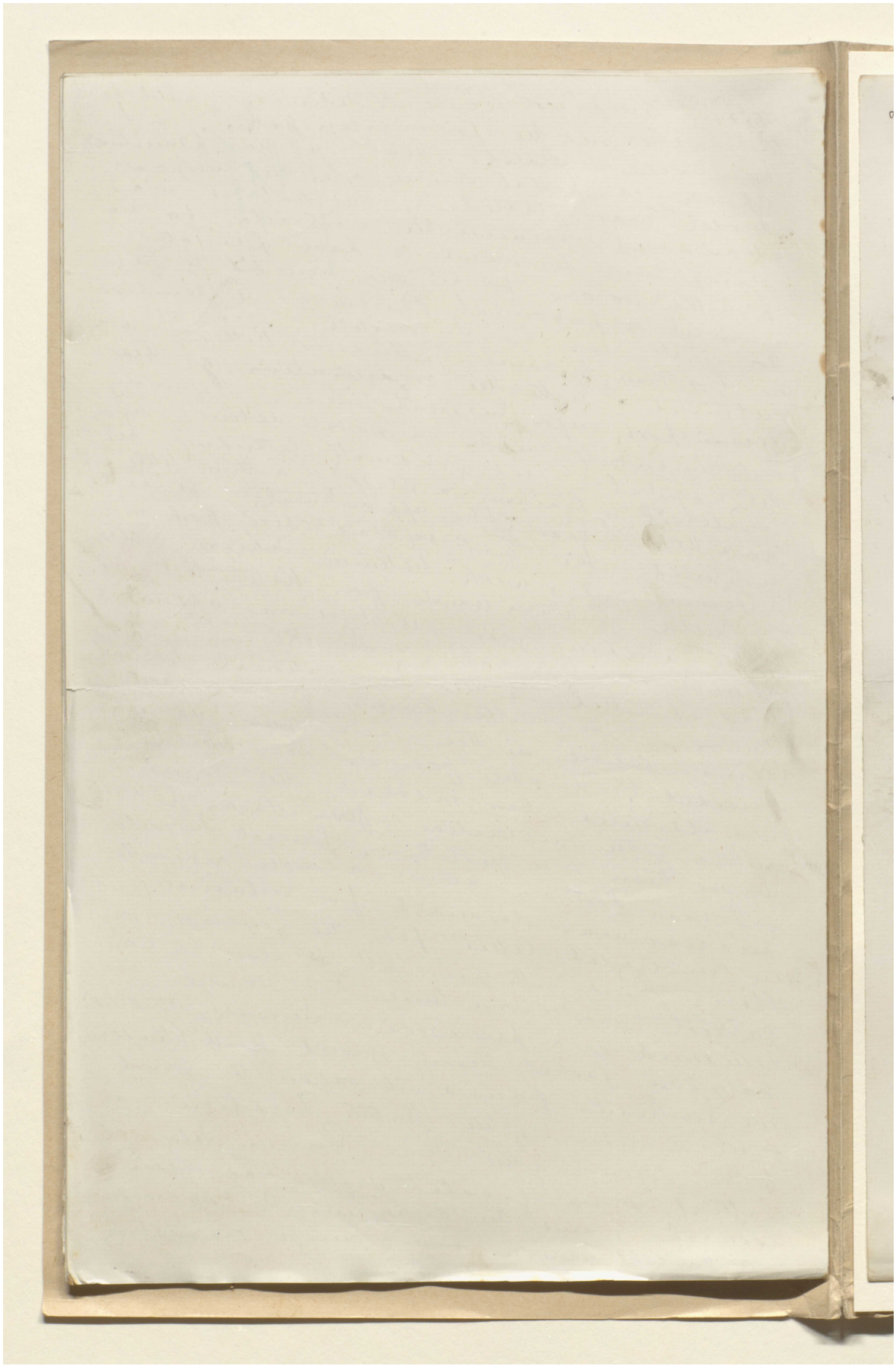

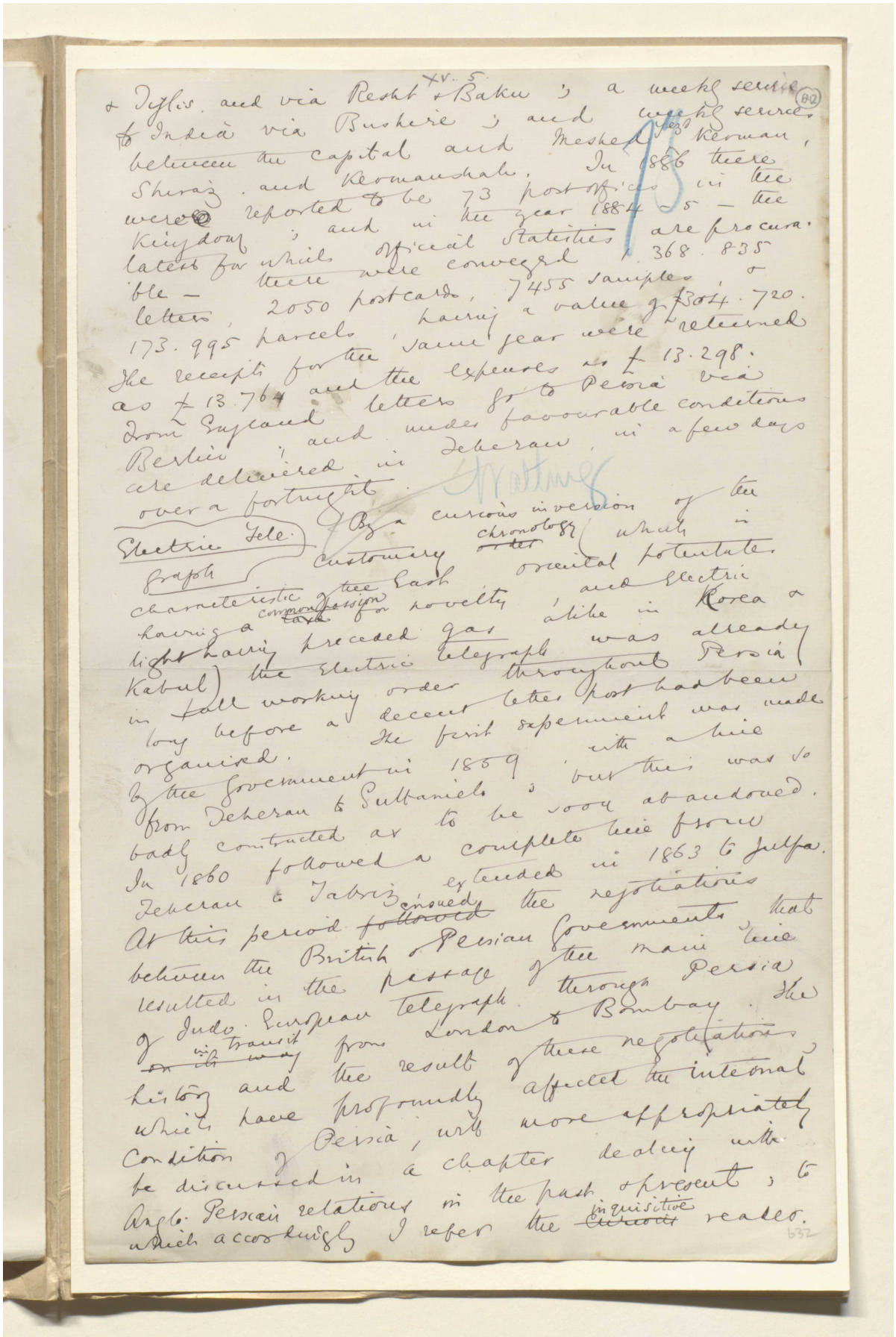

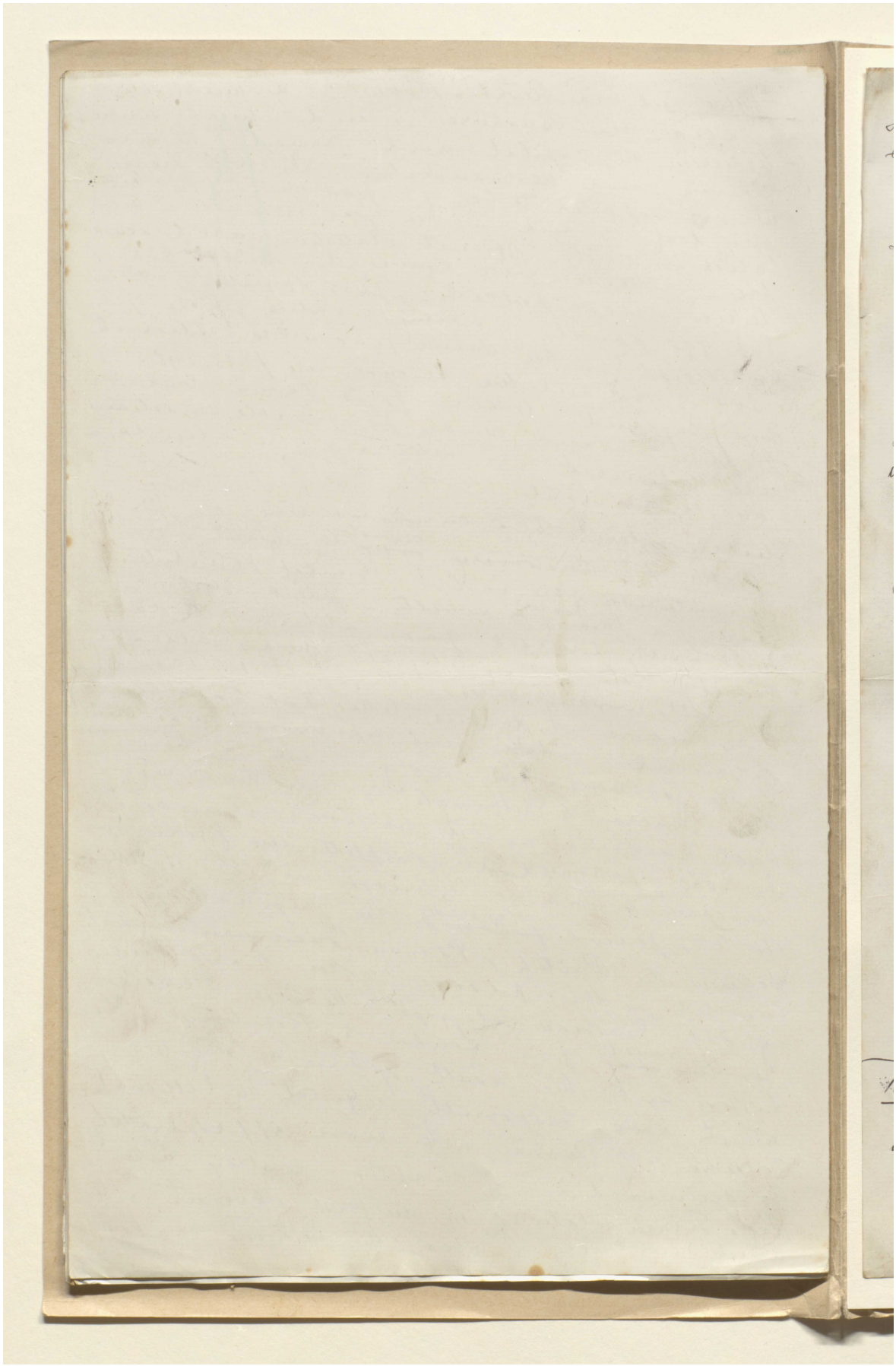

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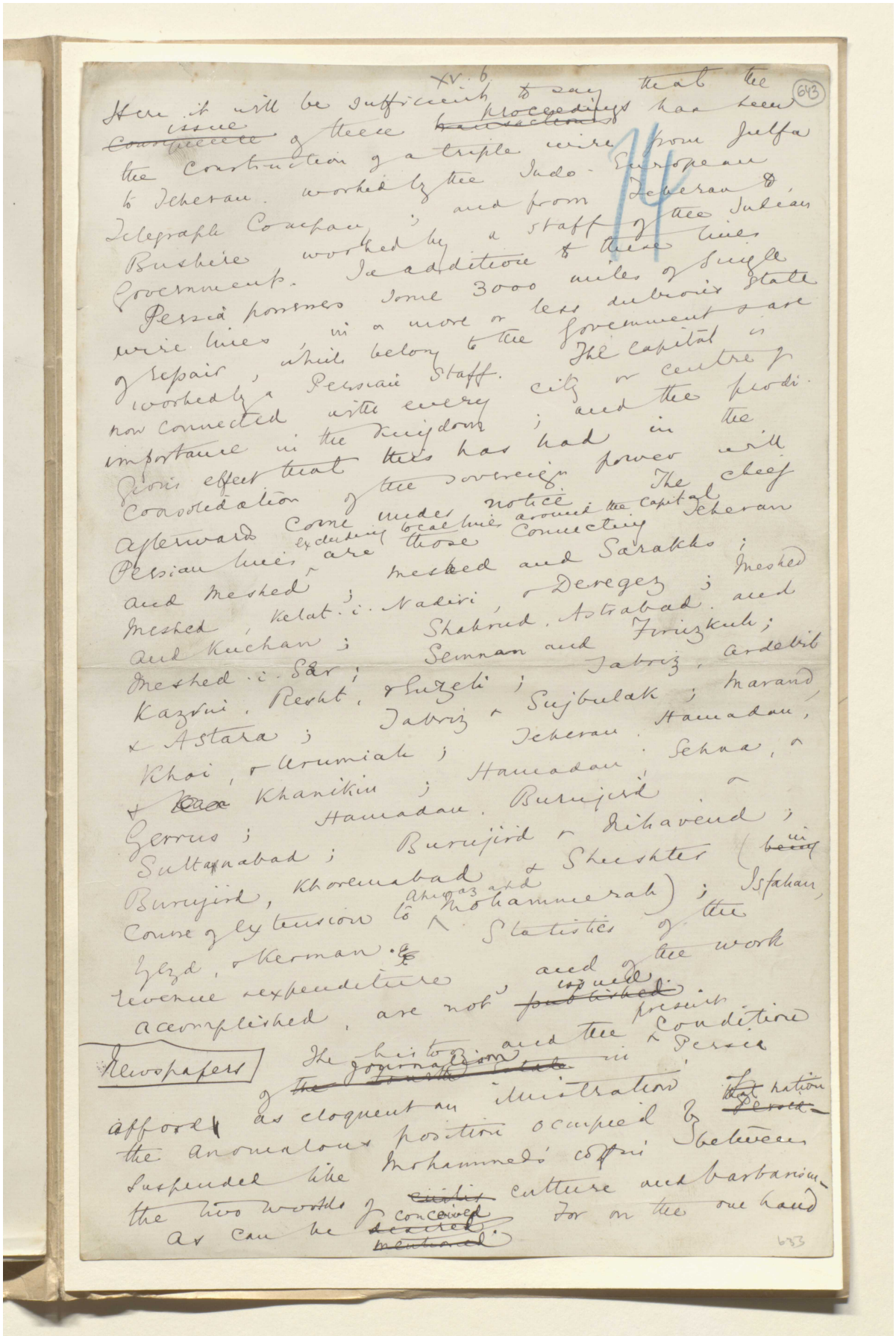

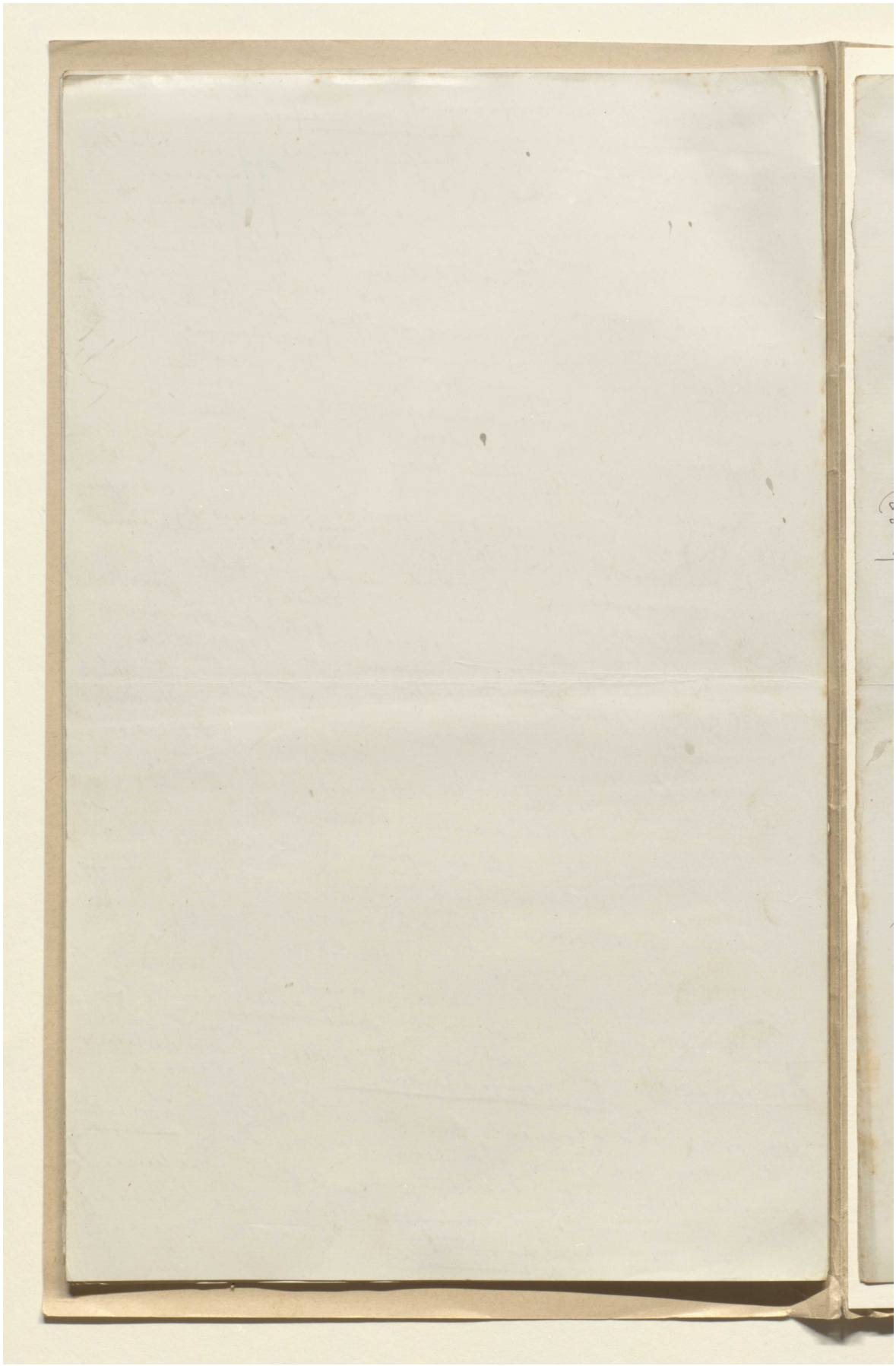

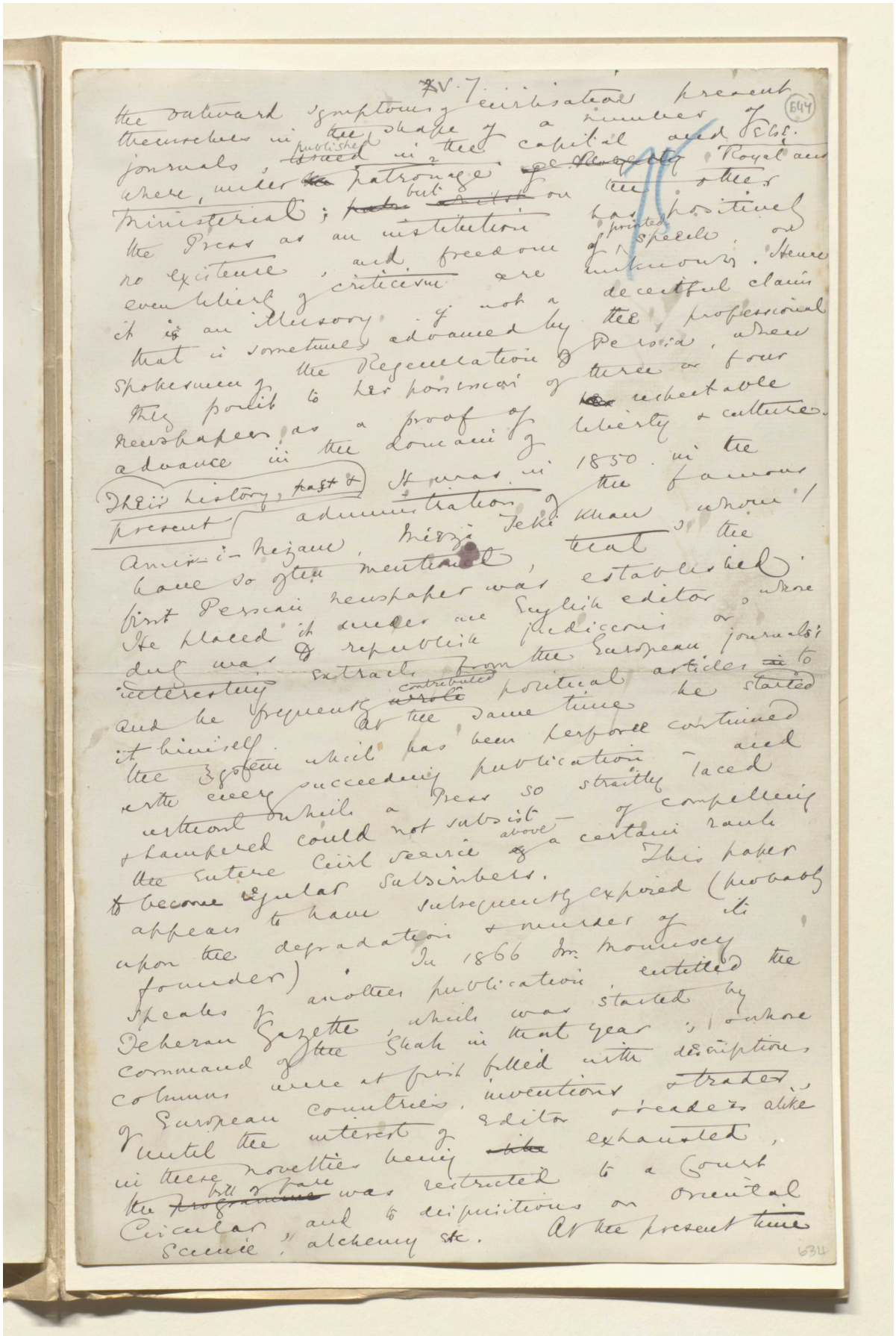

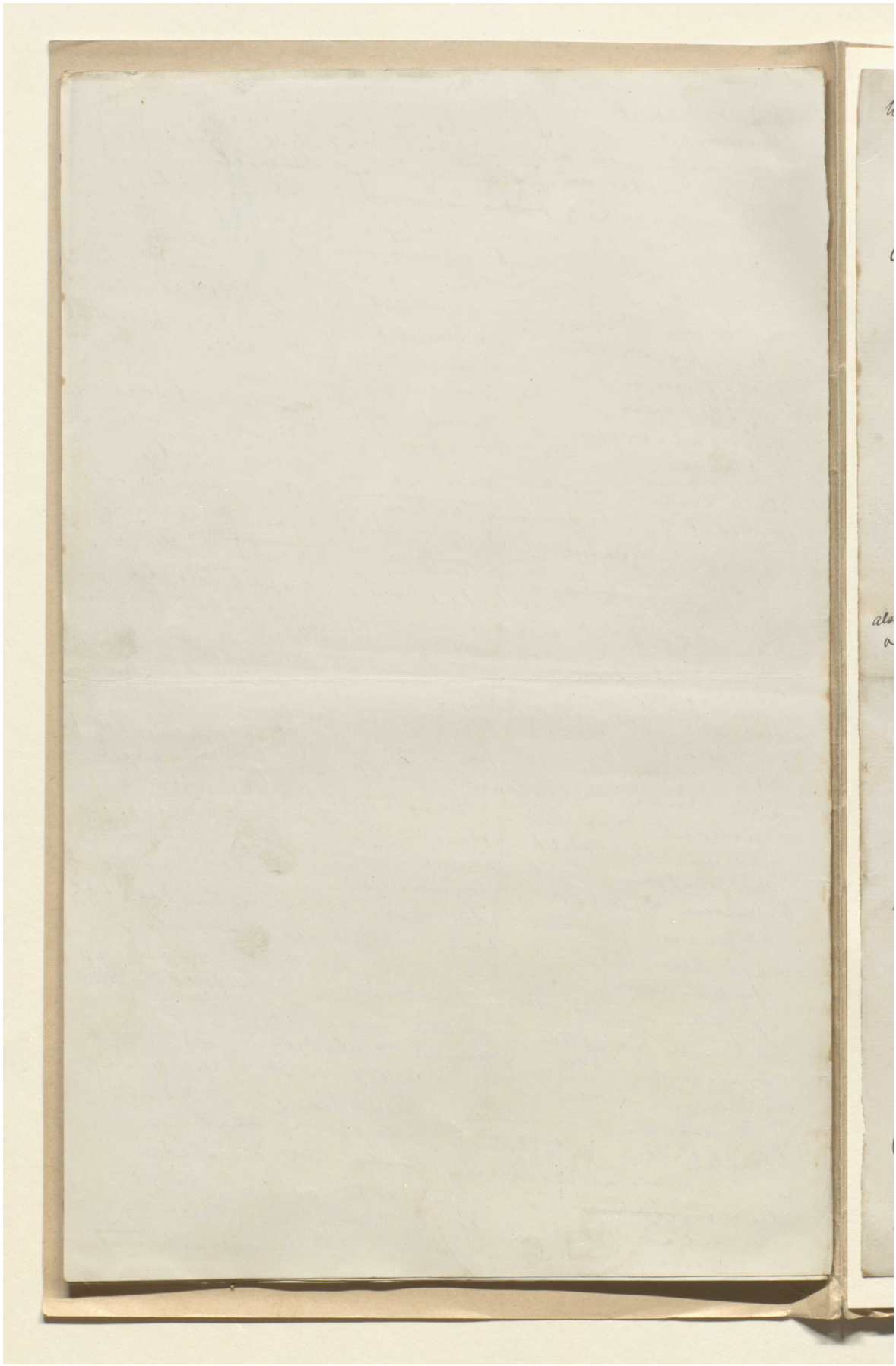

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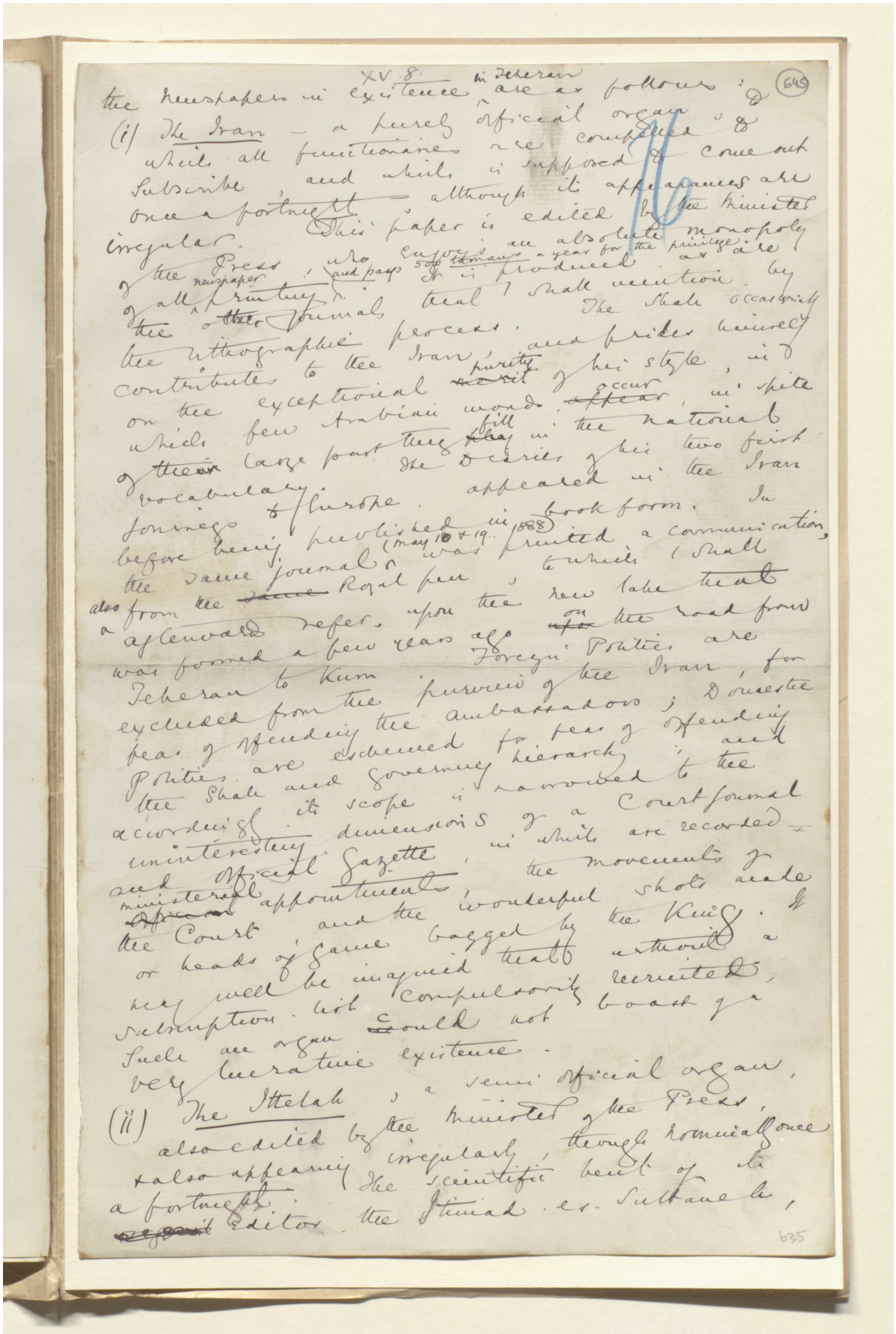

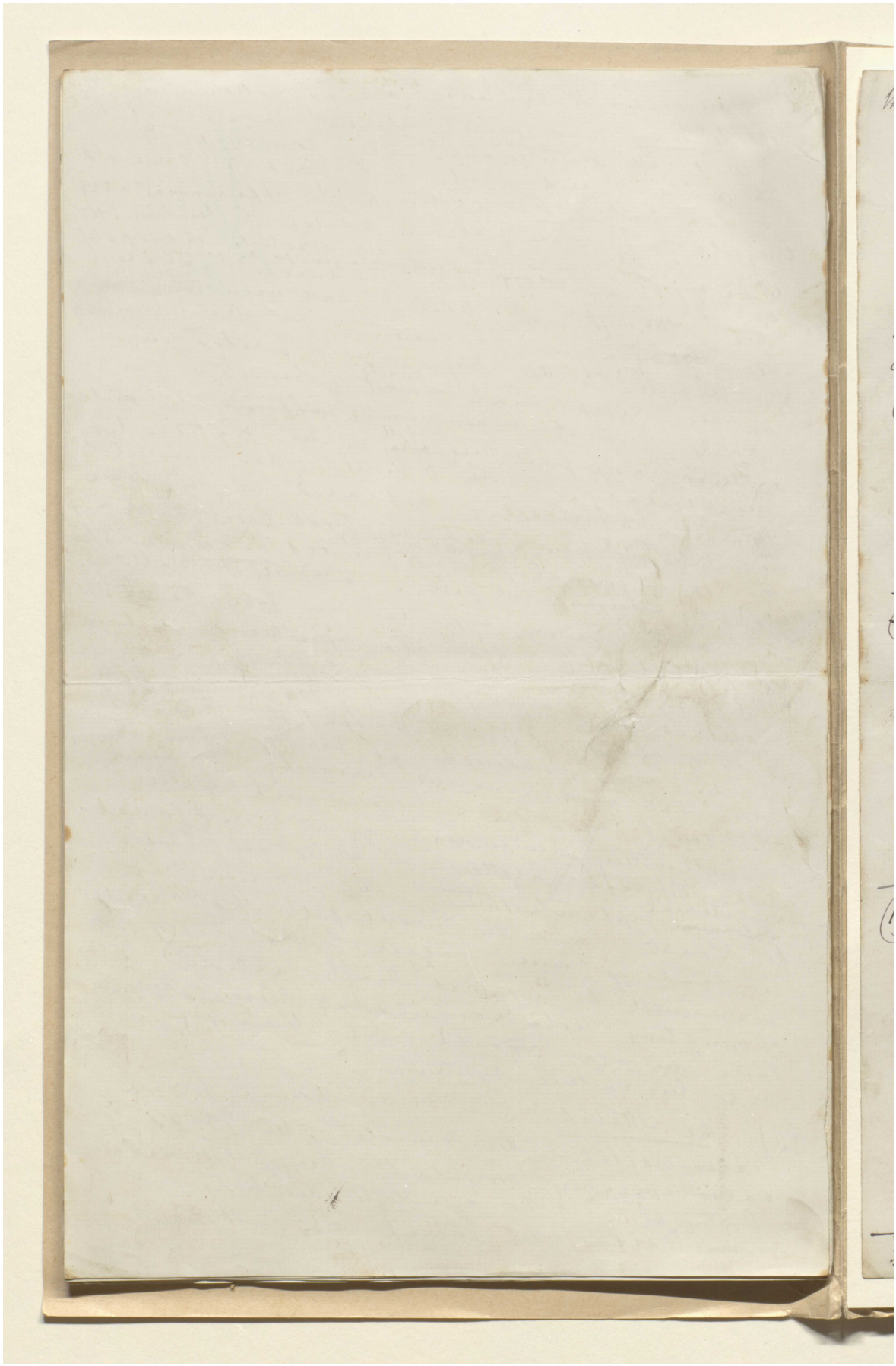

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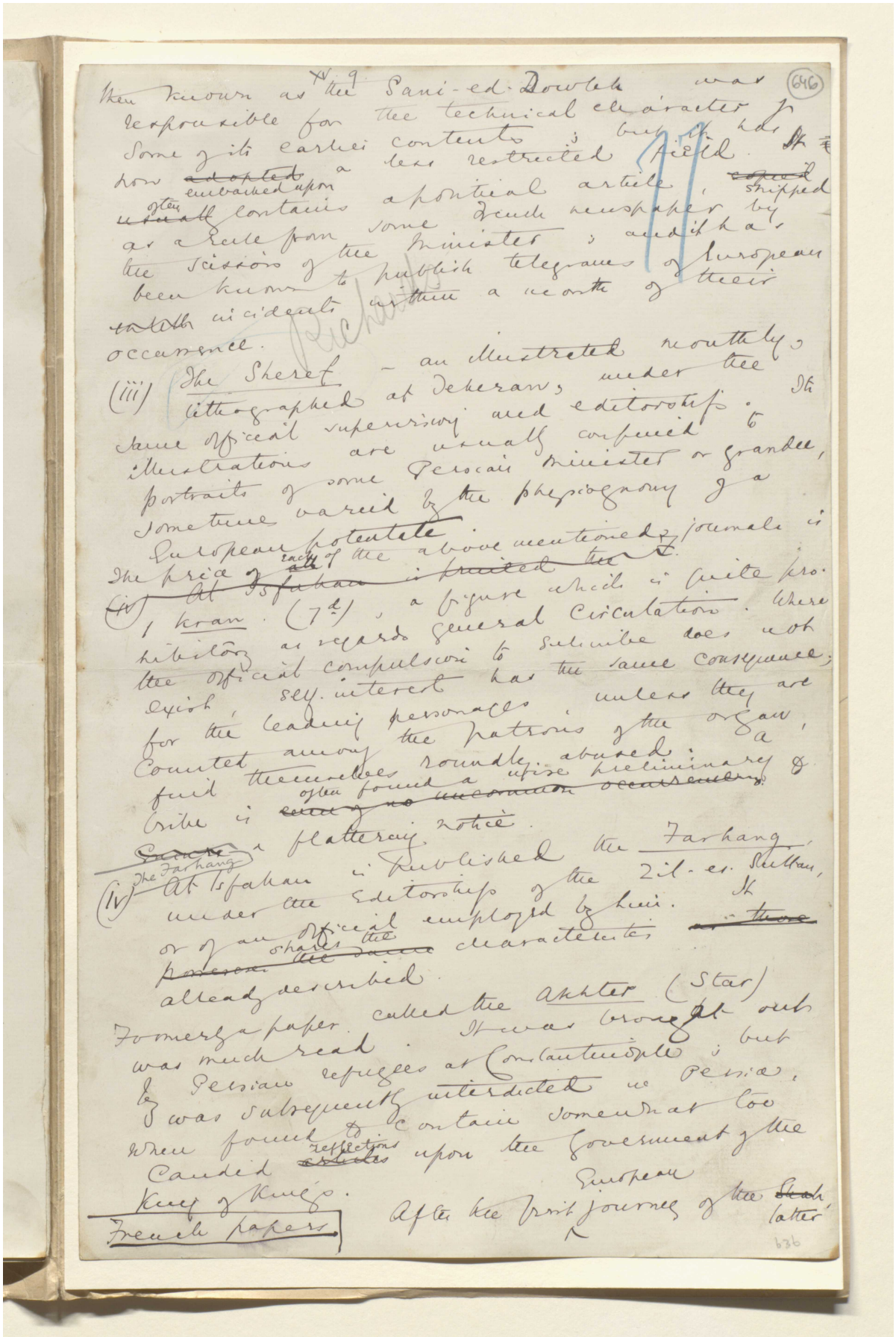
مكتبة قطر الوطنية
Qatar National Library



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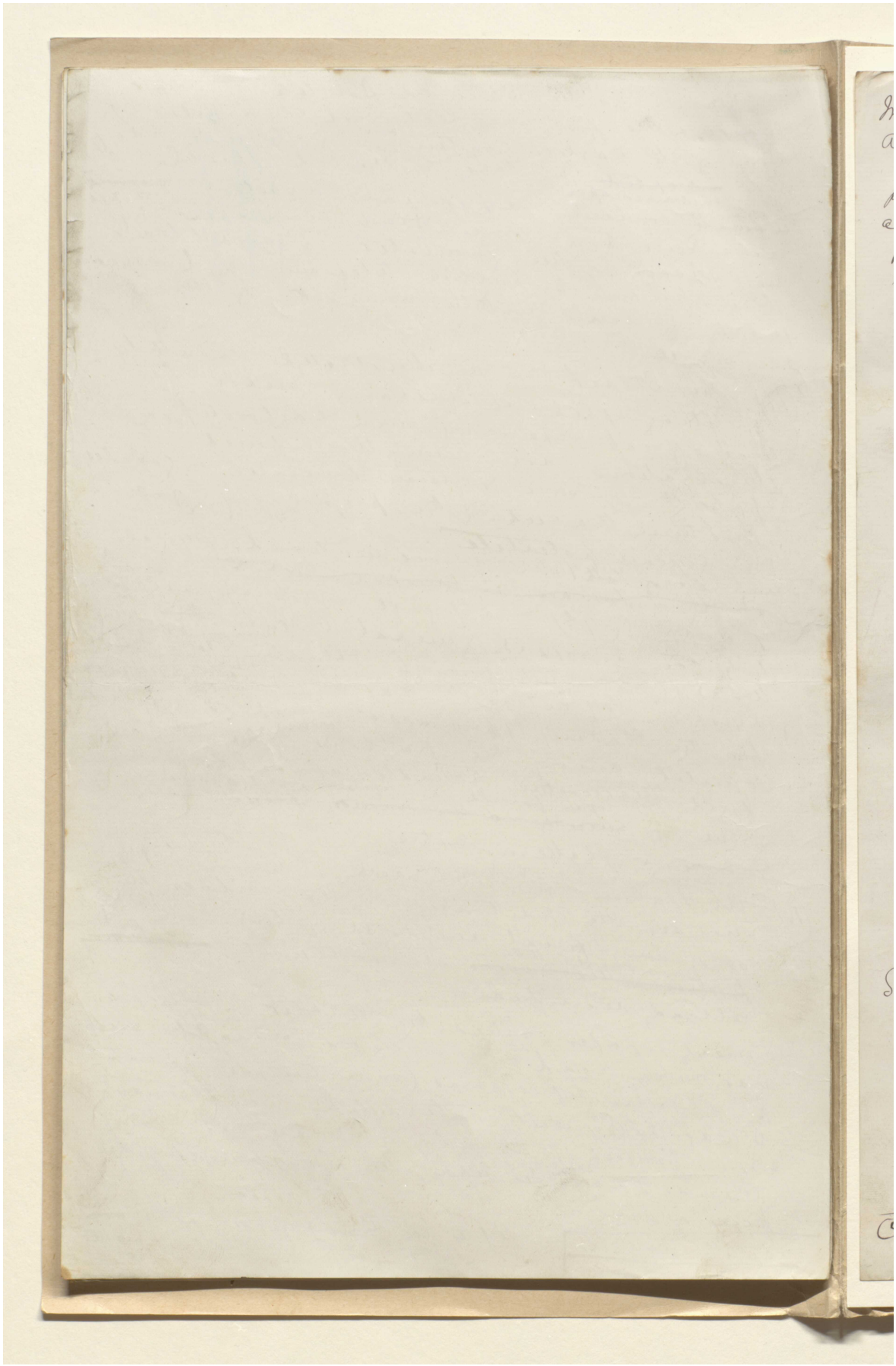

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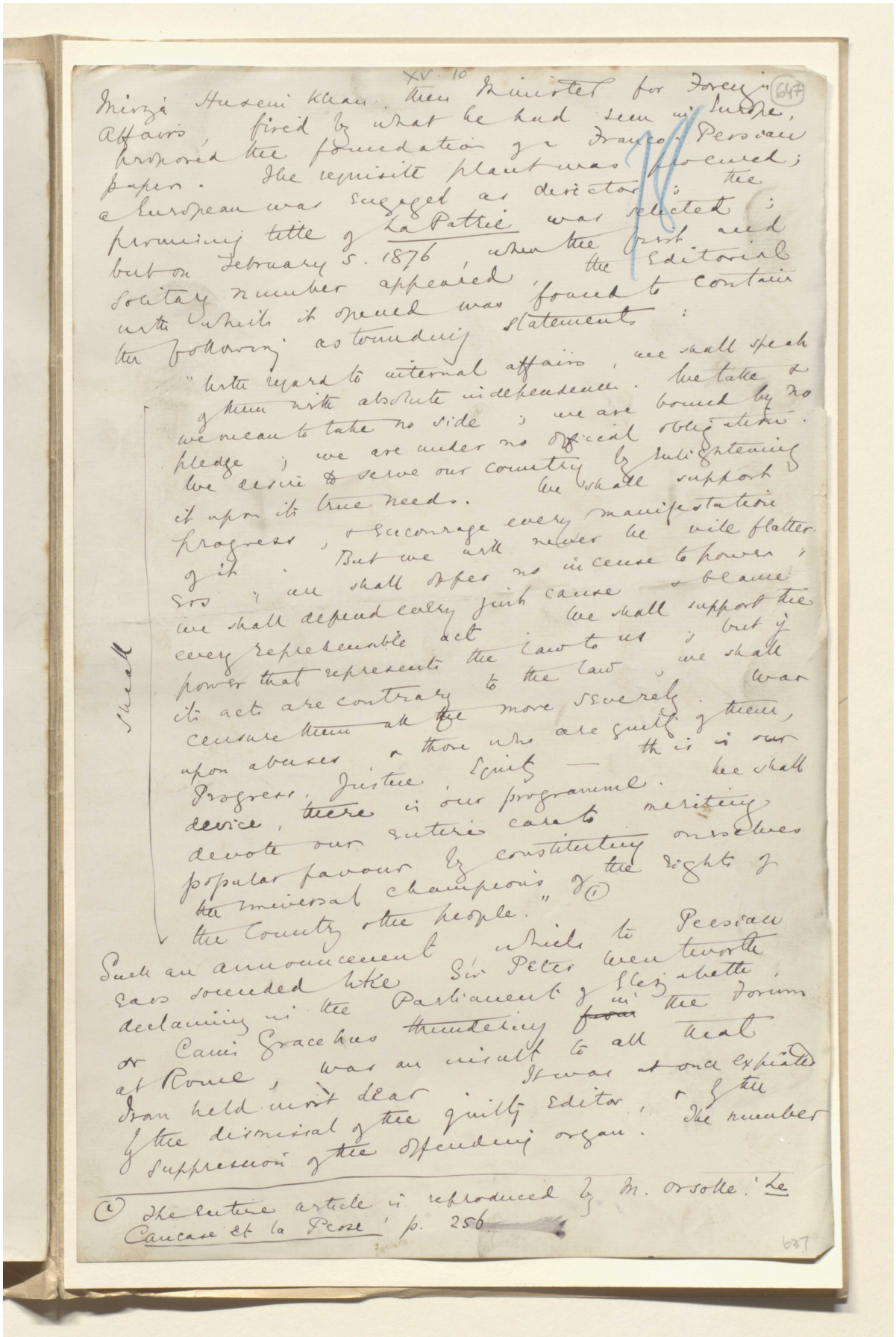
مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٦٤٧و] (١٢٩٤/١٣٥٥)



XV. 10

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Mirza Husein Khan, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, fired by what he had seen in Europe, proposed the foundation of a Franco-Persian paper. The requisite plant was procured; a European was engaged as director; the promising title of La Patrie was selected; but on February 5. 1876, when the first and solitary number appeared, the Editorial with which it opened was found to contain the following astounding statements:

"With regard to internal affairs, we shall speak of them with absolute independence. We take & we mean to take no side; we are bound by no pledge; we are under no official obligation. We desire to serve our country by enlightening it upon its true needs. We shall support progress, & encourage every manifestation of it. But we will never be vile flatterers; we shall offer no incense to power; we shall defend every just cause & blame every reprehensible act. We shall support the power that represents the law to us; but if its acts are contrary to the law, we shall censure them all the more severely. War upon abuses & those who are guilty of them, Progress, Justice, Equity — this is our device, there is our programme. We shall devote our entire care to meriting popular favour by constituting ourselves the universal champions of the rights of the country & the people." (1)

Such an announcement which to Persian ears sounded like Sir Peter Wentworth declaiming in the Parliament of Elizabeth, or Caius Gracchus thundering ~~from~~ in the Forum at Rome, was an insult to all that Iran held most dear. It was at once expiated by the dismissal of the guilty editor, & by the suppression of the offending organ. The number

(1) The entire article is reproduced by M. Orsolle: 'Le Caucase et la Perse' p. 256.

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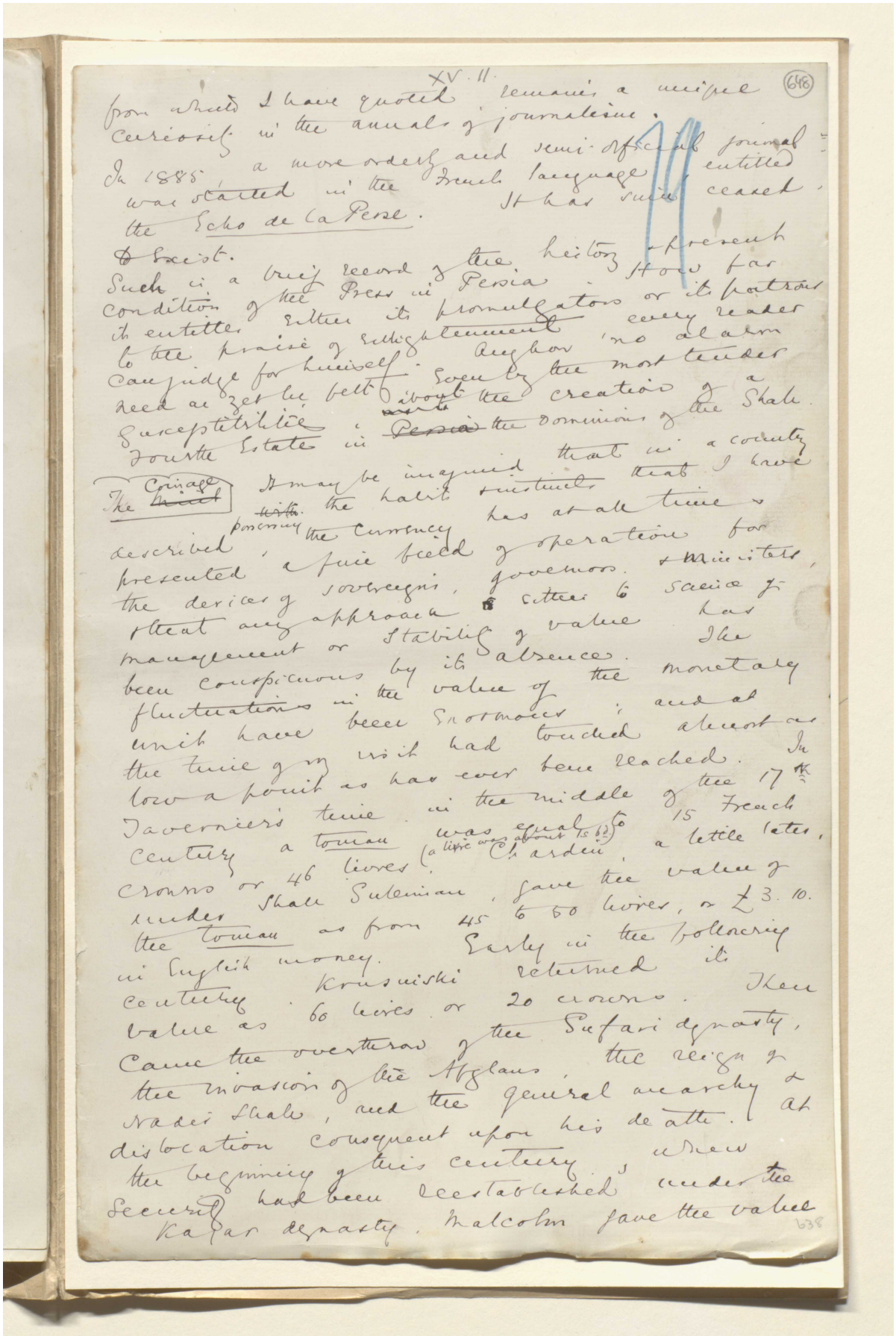

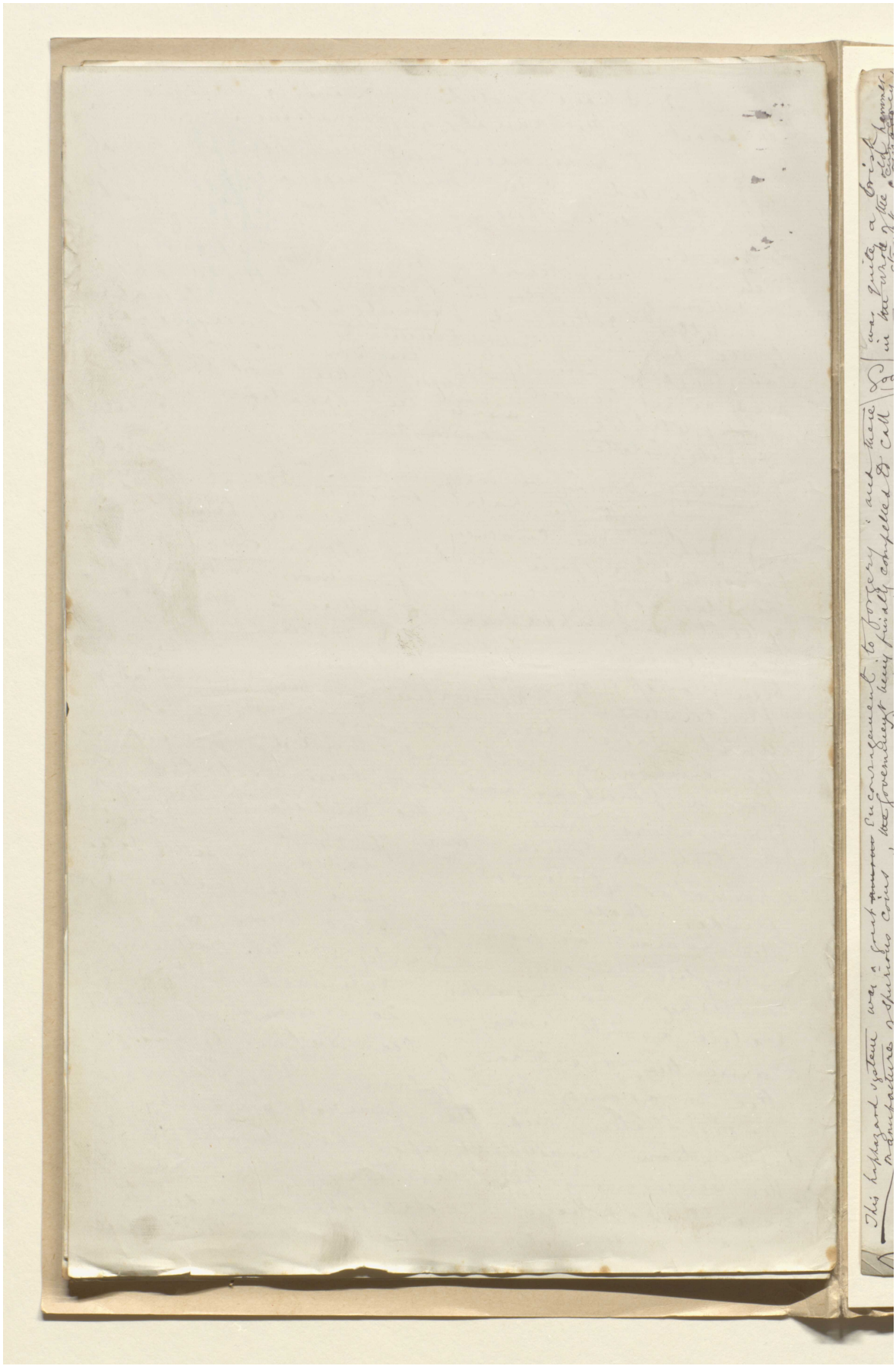

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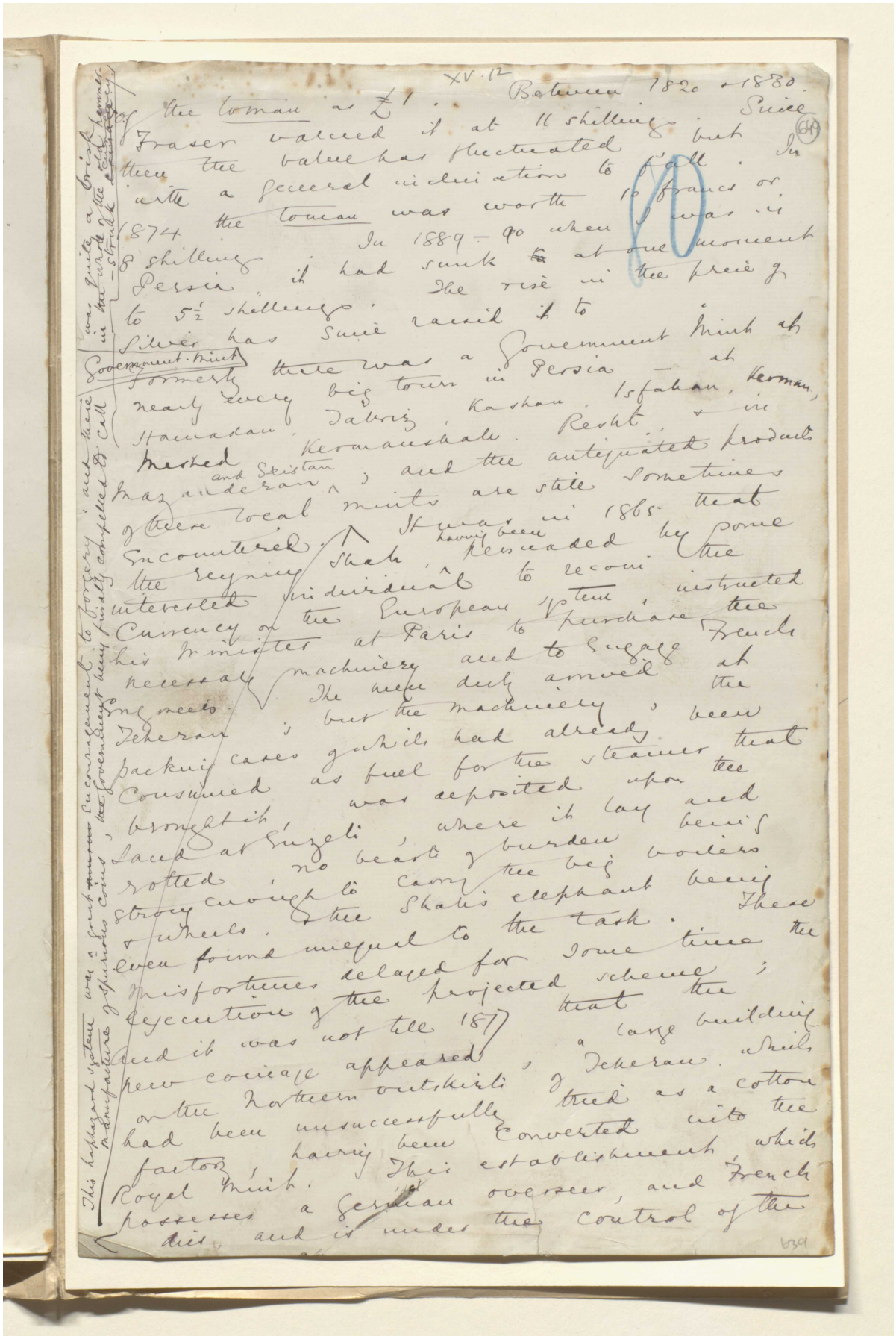

المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: المُلكية العامة

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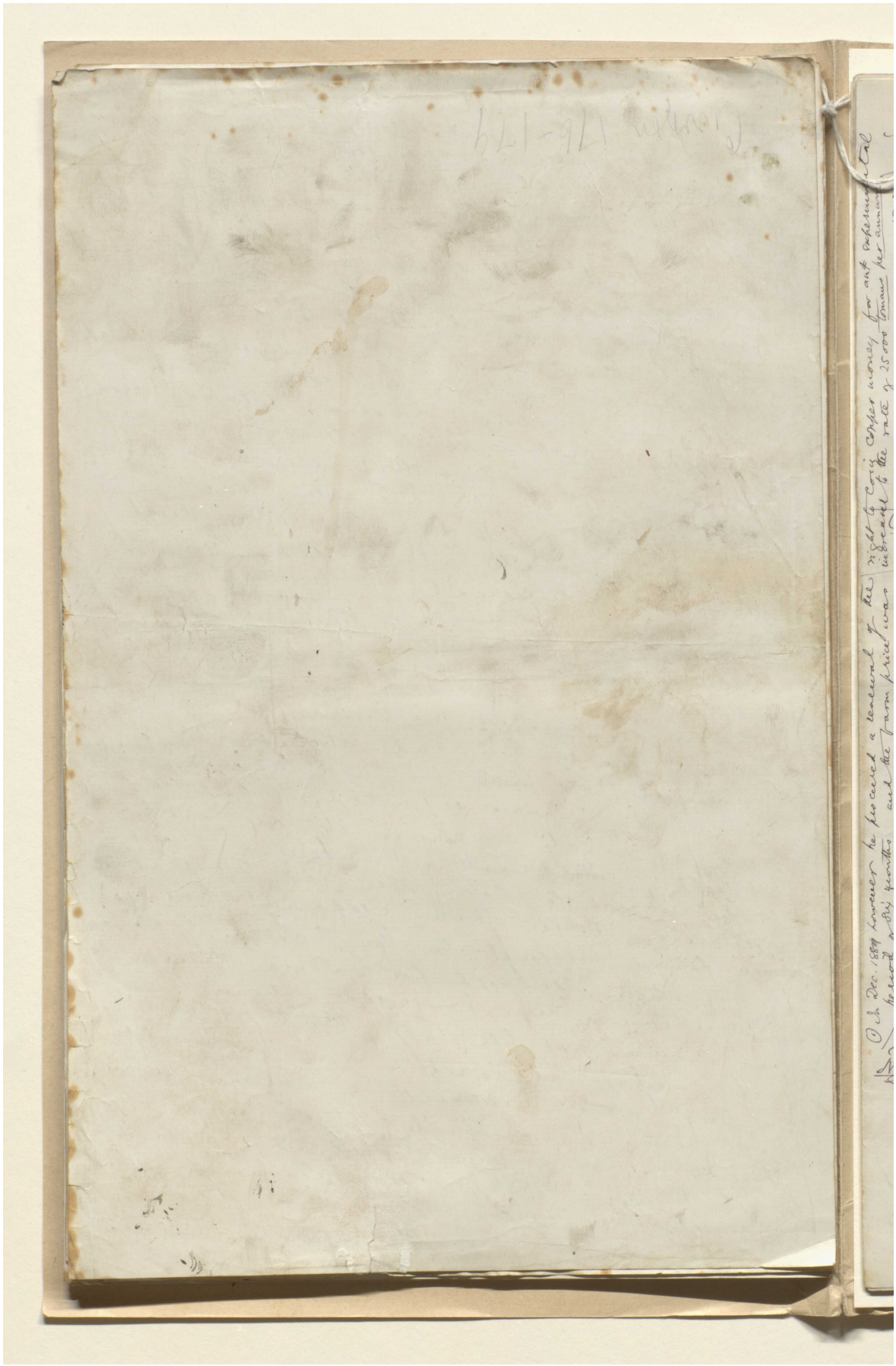

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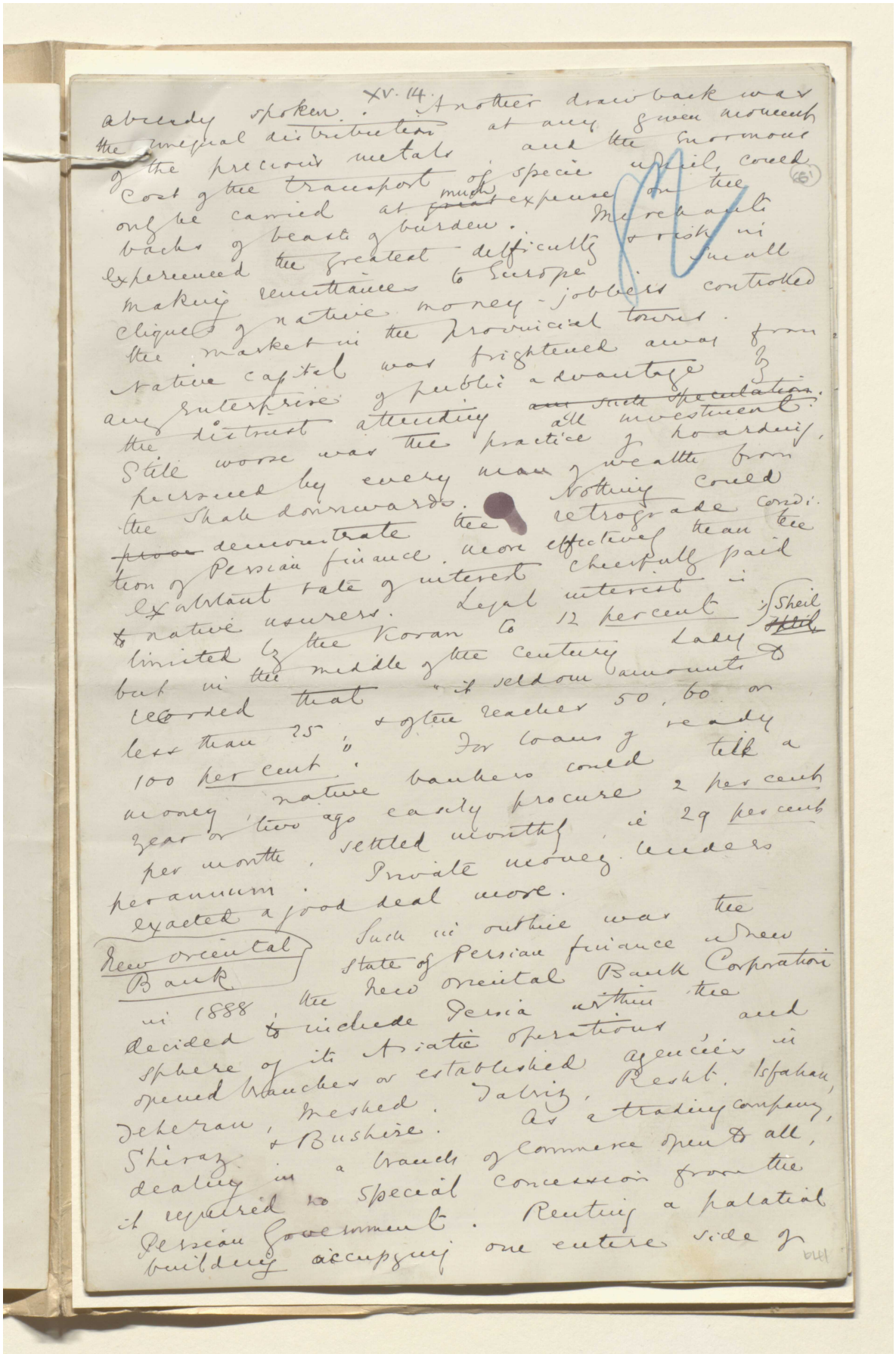
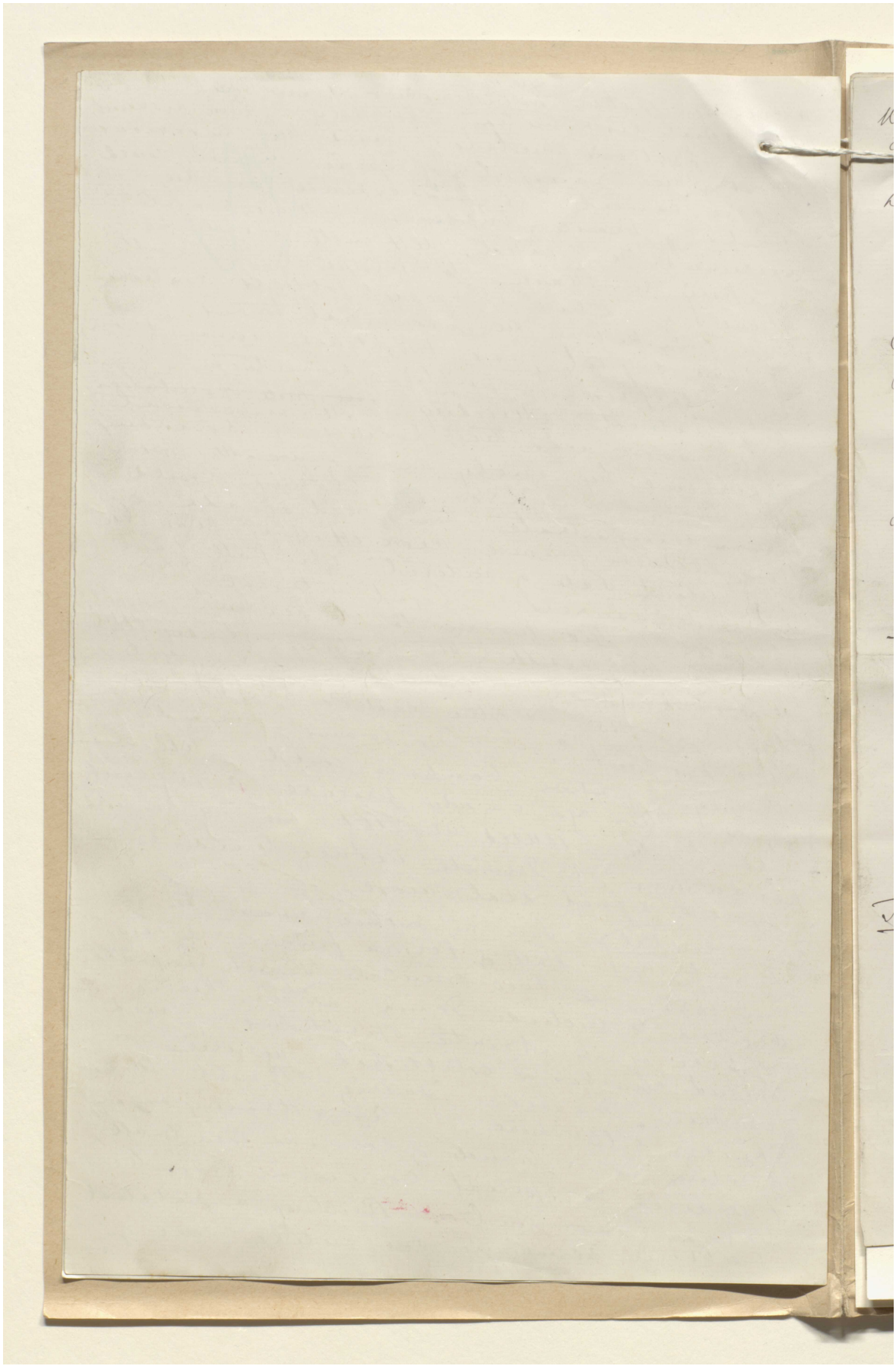
XV. 14.

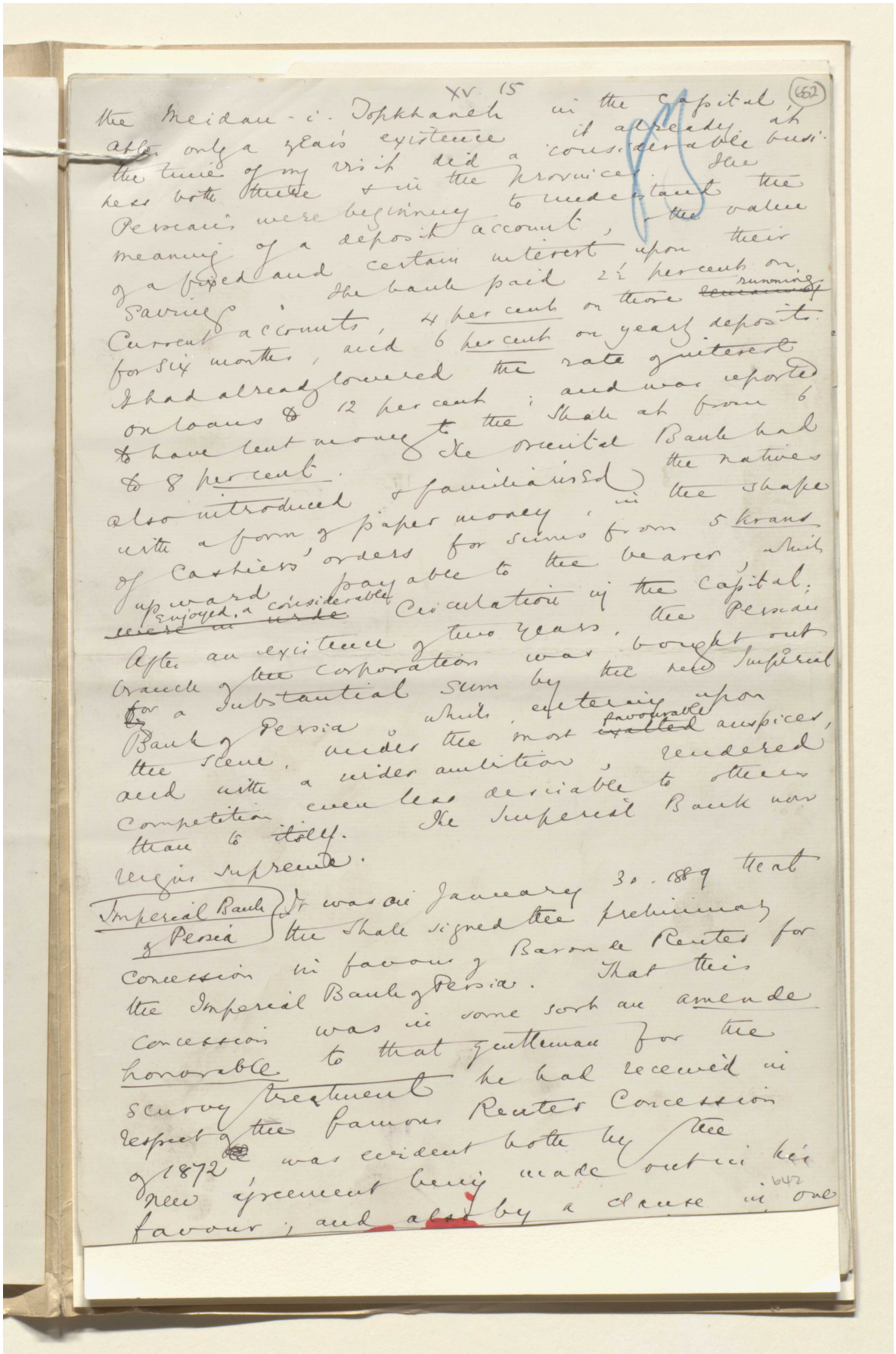


already spoken. Another drawback was the unequal distribution at any given moment of the precious metals and the enormous cost of the transport of specie until could only be carried at much expense on the backs of beasts of burden. Merchants experienced the greatest difficulty & risk in making remittances to Europe. Small cliques of native money-jobbers controlled the market in the provincial towns. Native capital was frightened away from any enterprise of public advantage by the distrust attending all investment. Still worse was the practice of hoarding, pursued by every man of wealth from the Shah downwards. Nothing could demonstrate the retrograde condition of Persian finance more effectively than the exorbitant rate of interest cheerfully paid to native usurers. Legal interest is limited by the Koran to 12 per cent; Sheil but in the middle of the century Lady recorded that "it seldom amounts to less than 25, & often reaches 50, 60 or 100 per cent". For loans of ready money native bankers could till a year or two ago easily procure 2 per cent per month, settled monthly, i.e. 29 per cent per annum. Private money lenders exacted a good deal more.

New Oriental Bank

Such in outline was the state of Persian finance when in 1888 the New Oriental Bank Corporation decided to include Persia within the sphere of its Asiatic operations and opened branches or established agencies in Teheran, Meshed, Tabriz, Resht, Isfahan, Shiraz & Bushire. As a trading company, dealing in a branch of commerce open to all, it required no special concession from the Persian Government. Renting a palatial building occupying one entire side of





XV. 15 (652)

the Meidan-i-Topkhaneh in the Capital, after only a year's existence it already at the time of my visit did a considerable business both there & in the provinces. The Persians were beginning to understand the meaning of a deposit account, & the value of a fixed and certain interest upon their savings. The bank paid 2½ per cent on Current accounts, 4 per cent on those ~~remaining~~ running for six months, and 6 per cent on yearly deposits. It had already lowered the rate of interest on loans to 12 per cent; and was reported to have lent money to the Shah at from 6 to 8 per cent. The Oriental Bank had also introduced & familiarised the natives with a form of paper money, in the shape of Cashiers' orders for sums from 5 krans upward payable to the bearer, which ~~were in wide~~ enjoyed a considerable circulation in the Capital. After an existence of two years, the Persian branch of the corporation was bought out for a substantial sum by the new Imperial Bank of Persia, which, entering upon the scene, under the most ~~exalted~~ favourable auspices, and with a wider ambition, rendered competition even less desirable to others than to itself. The Imperial Bank now reigns supreme.

Imperial Bank of Persia

It was on January 30. 1889 that the Shah signed the preliminary concession in favour of Baron de Reuter for the Imperial Bank of Persia. That this concession was in some sort an amende honorable to that gentleman for the scurvy treatment he had received in respect of the famous Reuter Concession of 1872 was evident both by the new agreement being made out in his favour; and also by a clause in one

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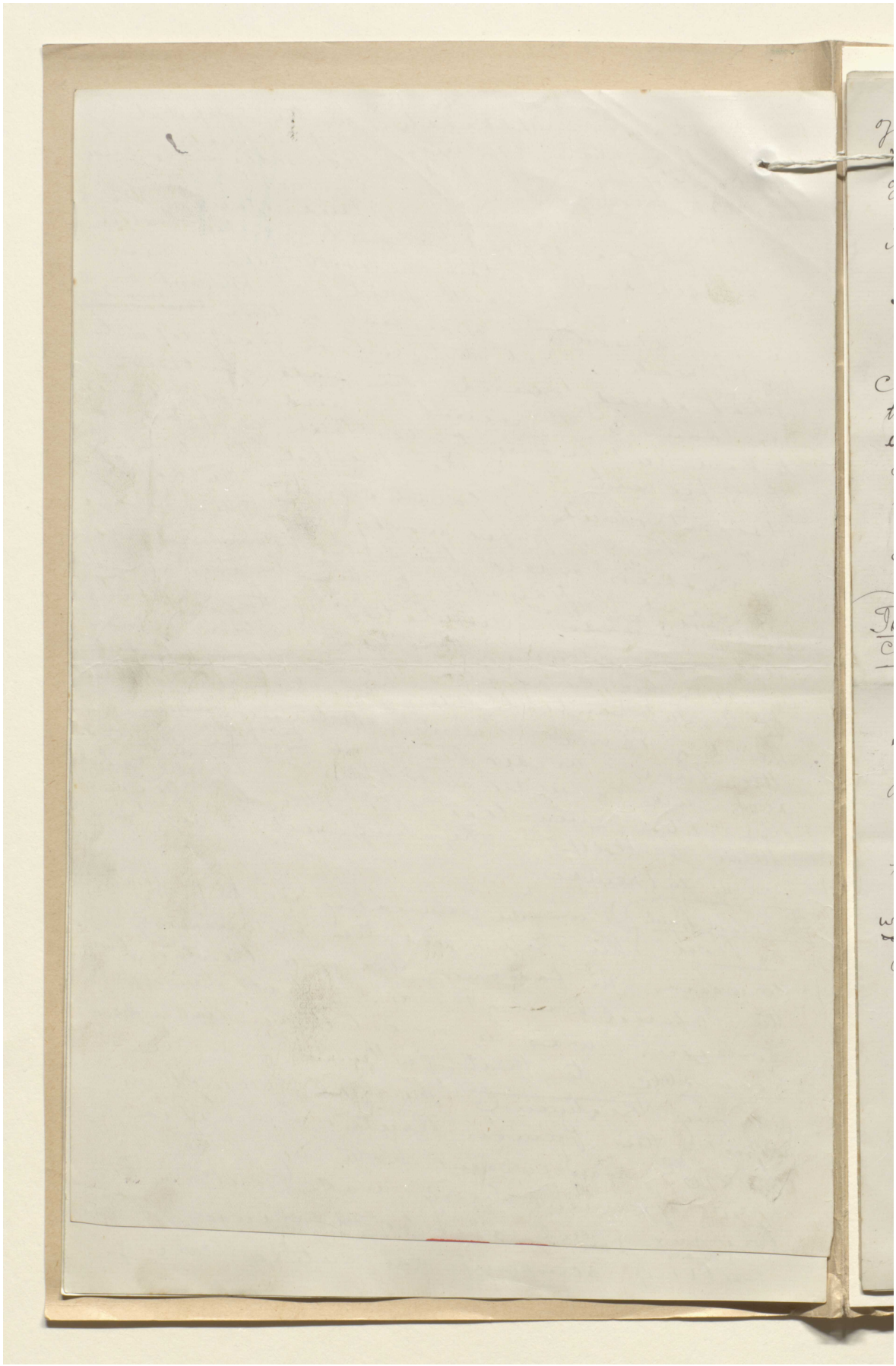

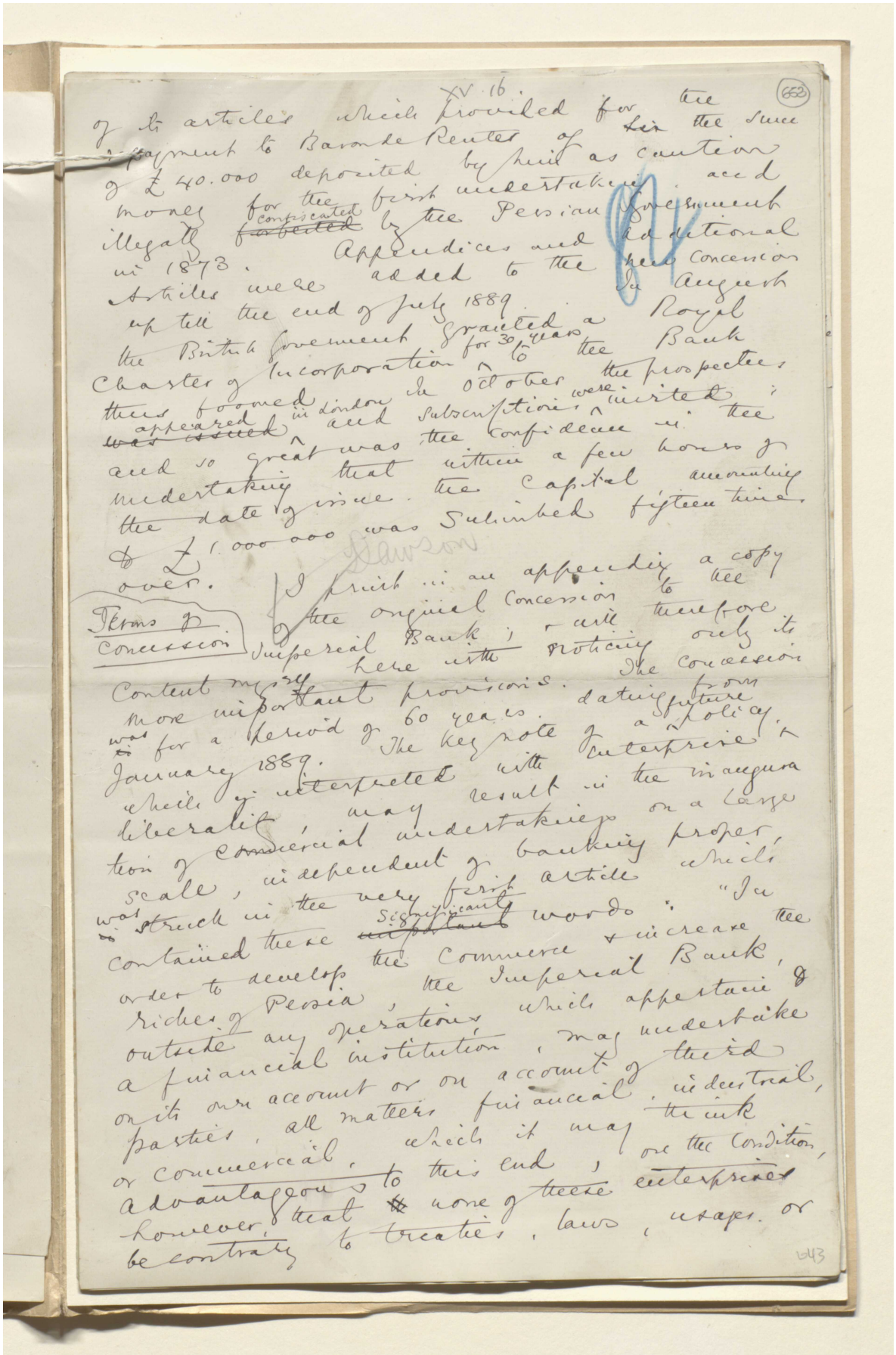

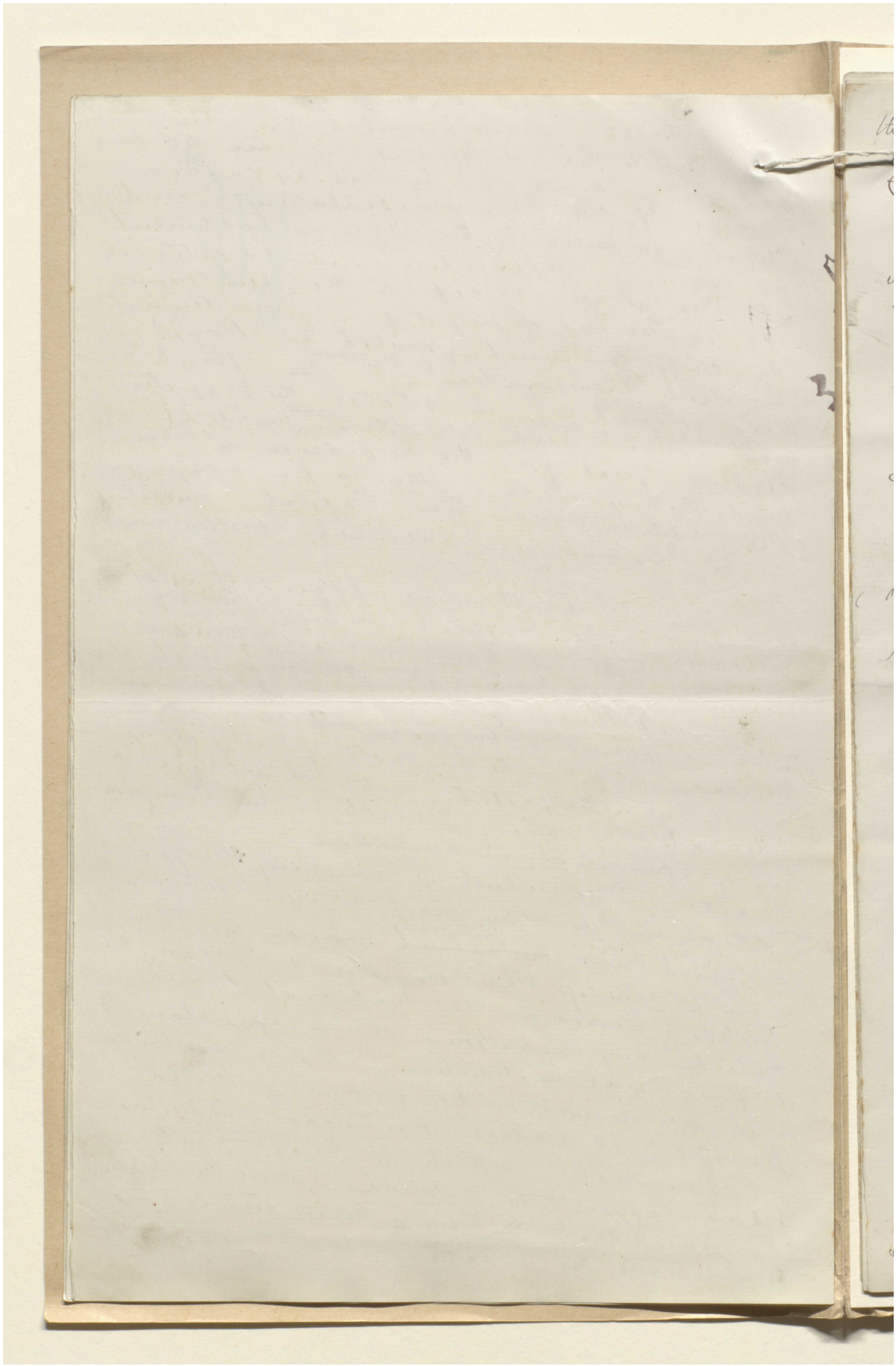

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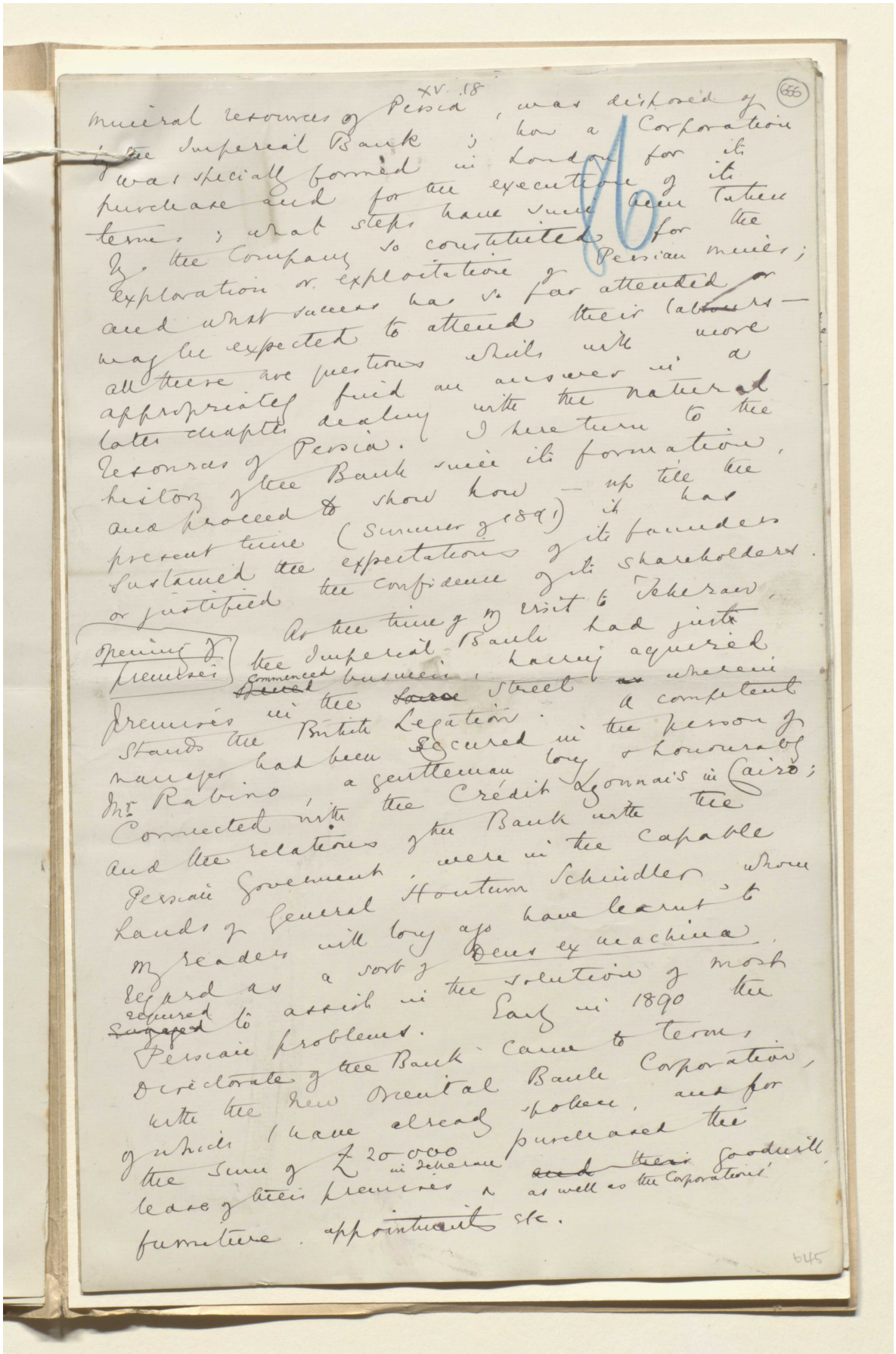

mineral resources of Persia, was disposed of
by the Imperial Bank; how a Corporation
was specially formed in London for its
purchase and for the execution of its
terms; what steps have since been taken
by the Company so constituted for the
exploration or exploitation of Persian mines;
and what success has so far attended or
may be expected to attend their labours —
all these are questions which will more
appropriately find an answer in a
later chapter dealing with the natural
resources of Persia. I here turn to the
history of the Bank since its formation,
and proceed to show how — up till the
present time (Summer of 1891) it has
sustained the expectations of its founders
or justified the confidence of its shareholders.

Opening of premises

At the time of my visit to Teheran,
the Imperial Bank had just
commenced business in handsome
premises in the Lalezar Street, wherein
stands the British Legation. A competent
manager had been secured in the person of
Mr. Rabino, a gentleman long connected with the Crédit Lyonnais in Cairo;
and the relations of the Bank with the
Persian Government were in the capable
hands of General Houtum Schindler, whom
my readers will long ago have learnt to
regard as a sort of Deus ex machina,
required to assist in the solution of most
Persian problems. Early in 1890 the
Directorate of the Bank came to terms,
with the New Oriental Bank Corporation,
by which I have already spoken, and for
the sum of £20,000 purchased the
lease of their premises in Teheran and as well as the Corporation's
furniture, appointments etc.

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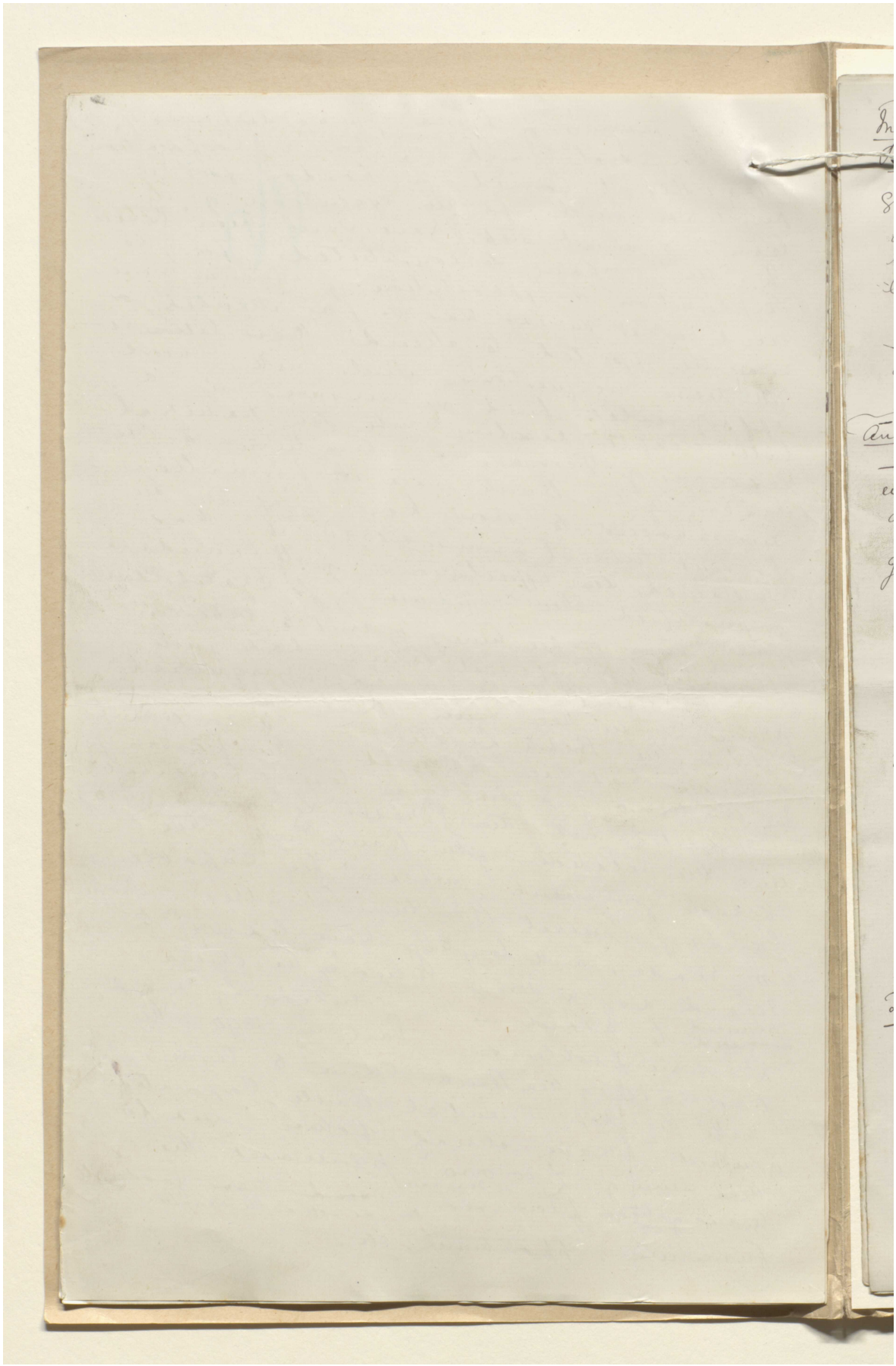

مخطوطة لكتاب "بلاد فارس والشأن الفارسي" [٦٥٦و] (١٣١٢/١٣٥٥)

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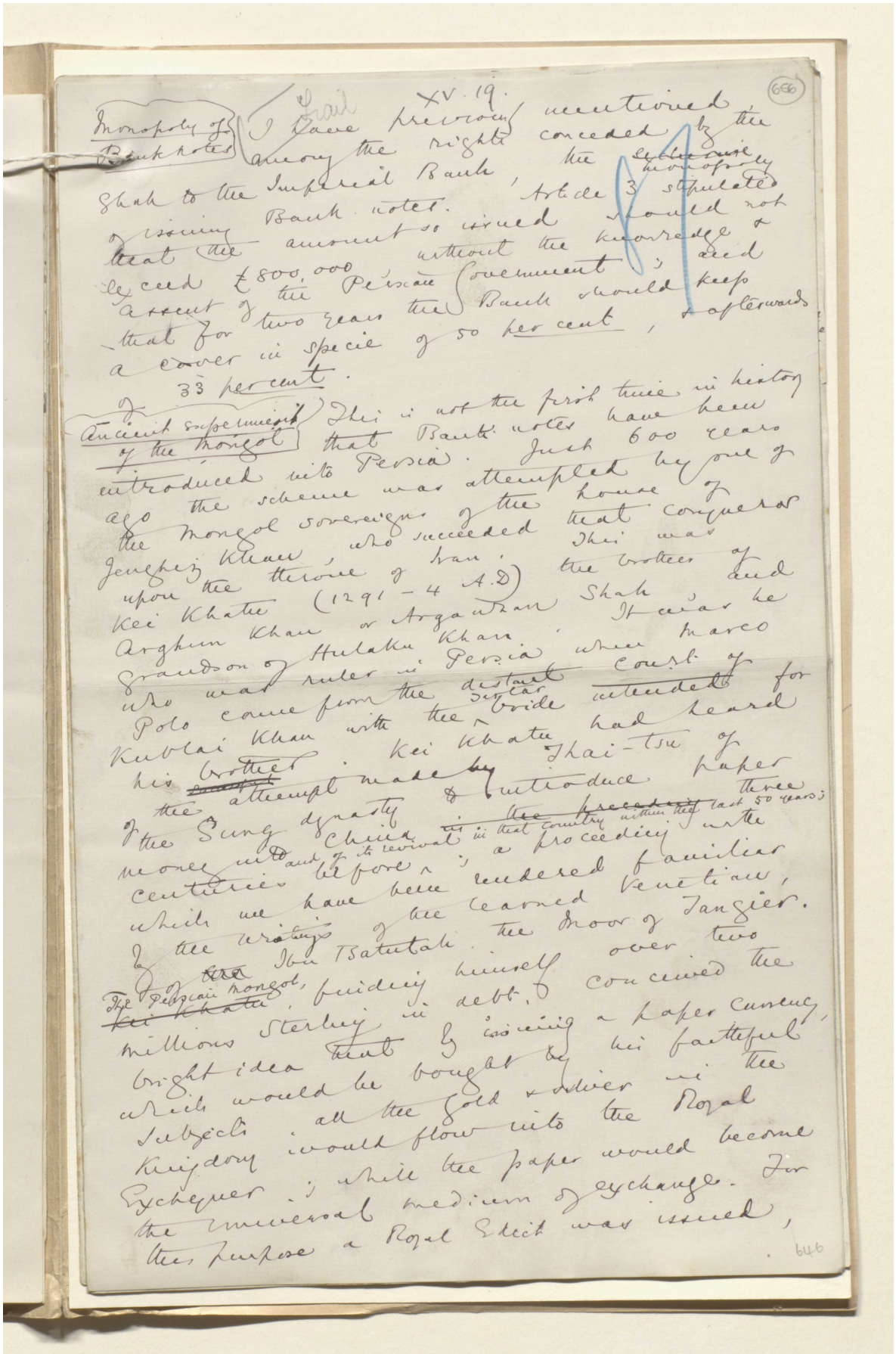
Monopoly of Bank notes

Trail

XV. 19.



I have previously mentioned among the rights conceded by the Shah to the Imperial Bank, the ~~exclusive~~ monopoly of issuing Bank notes. Article 3 stipulated that the amount so issued should not exceed £800,000 without the knowledge & assent of the Persian Government; and that for two years the Bank should keep a cover in specie of 50 per cent, & afterwards of 33 per cent.

Ancient experiment of the Mongol

This is not the first time in history that Bank notes have been introduced into Persia. Just 600 years ago the scheme was attempted by one of the Mongol sovereigns of the house of Jenghiz Khan, who succeeded that conqueror upon the throne of Iran. This was Kei Khatu (1291-4 A.D) the brother of Arghun Khan or Arganwan Shah and grandson of Hulaku Khan. It was he who was ruler in Persia when Marco Polo came from the distant court of Kublai Khan with the Tartar bride intended for his brother. Kei Khatu had heard of the attempt made by Thai-tsu of the Sung dynasty to introduce paper money into China ~~in the preceding~~ three centuries before and of its revival in that country within the last 50 years; a proceeding with which we have been rendered familiar by the writings of the learned Venetian, of ~~the~~ Ibn Batutah, the Moor of Tangier. The Persian Mongol, ~~Kei Khatu~~, finding himself over two millions sterling in debt, conceived the bright idea that by issuing a paper currency, which would be bought by his faithful subjects all the gold & silver in the Kingdom would flow into the Royal Exchequer; while the paper would become the universal medium of exchange. For this purpose a Royal Edict was issued,

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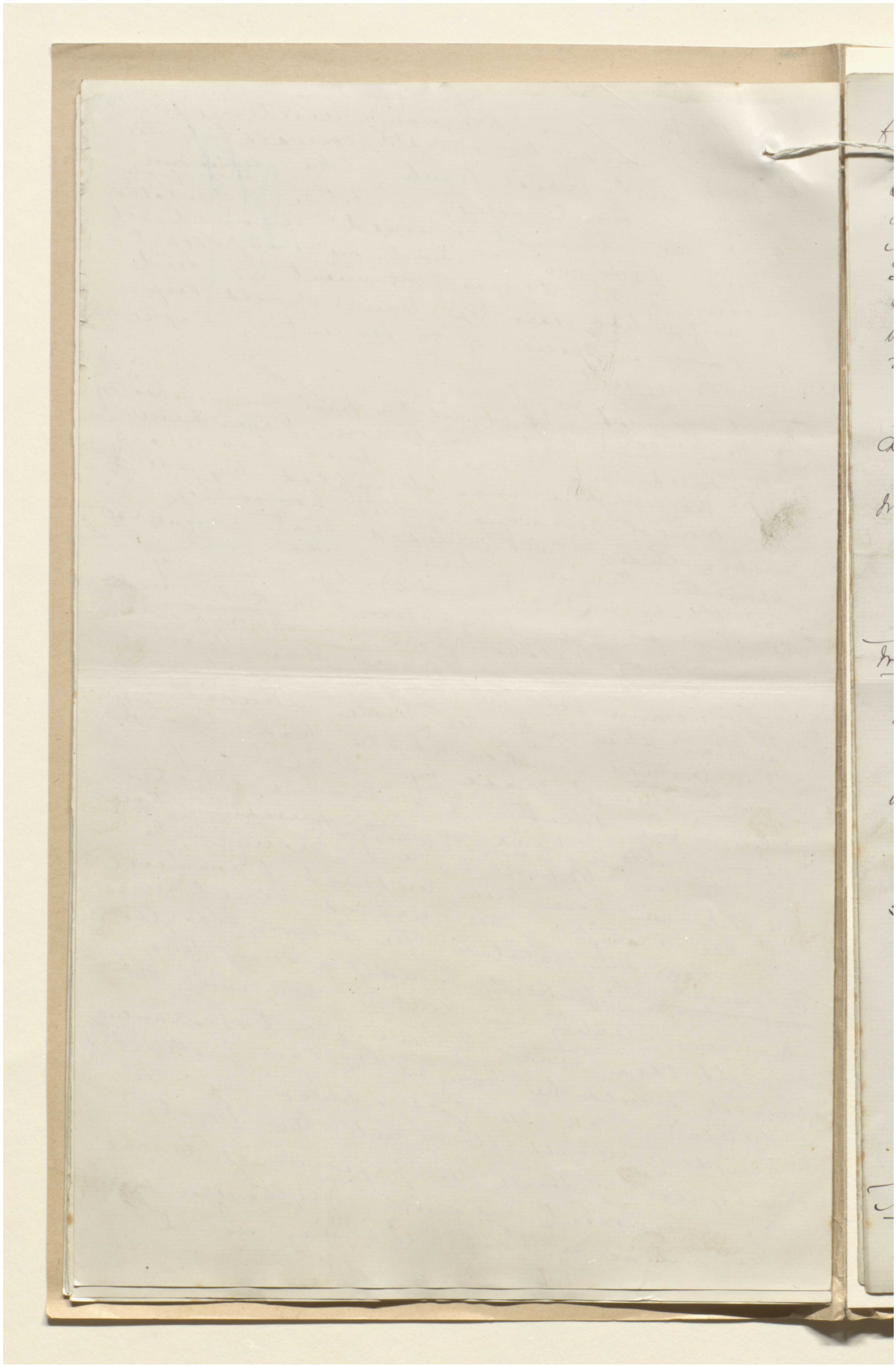

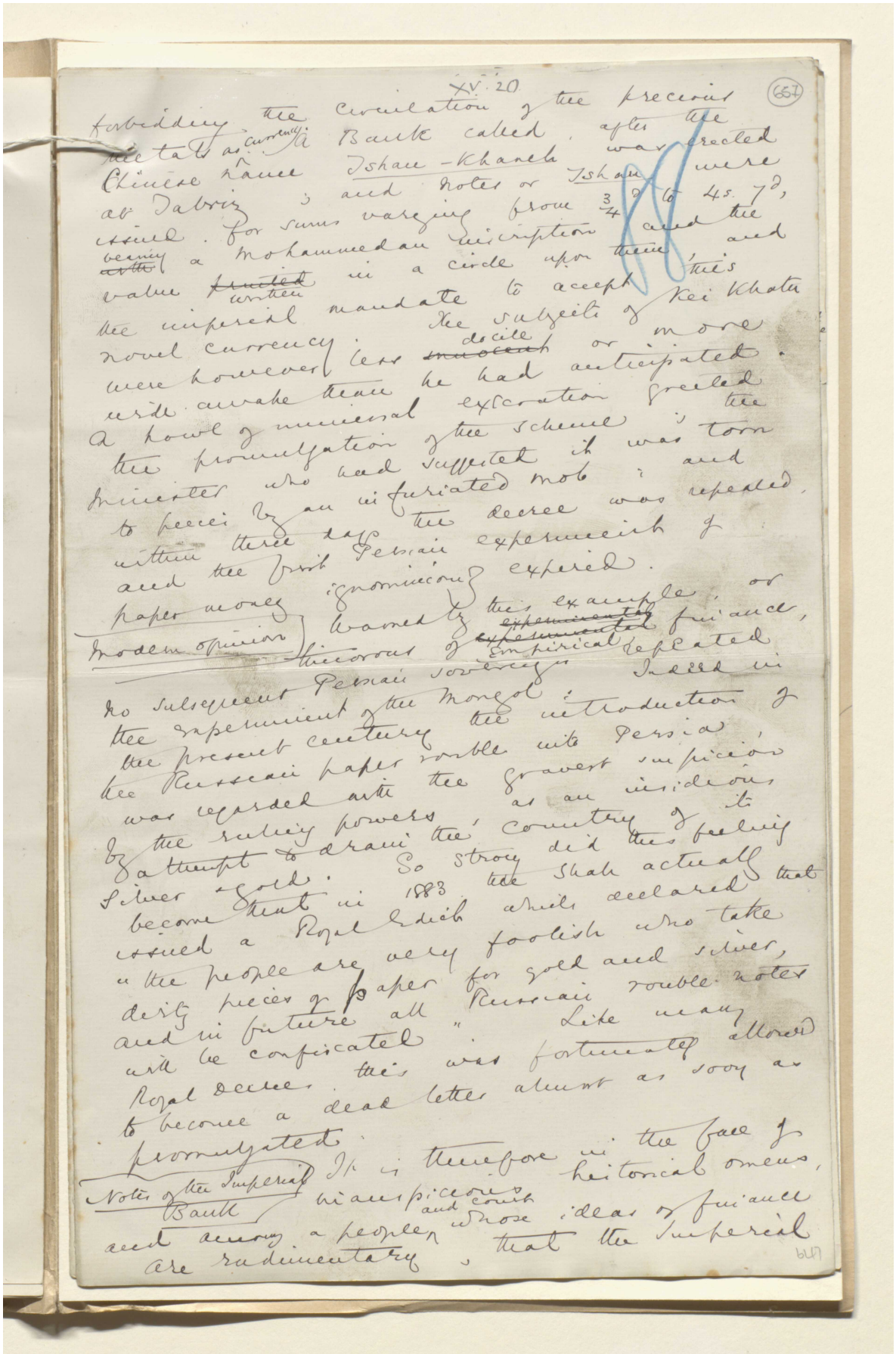

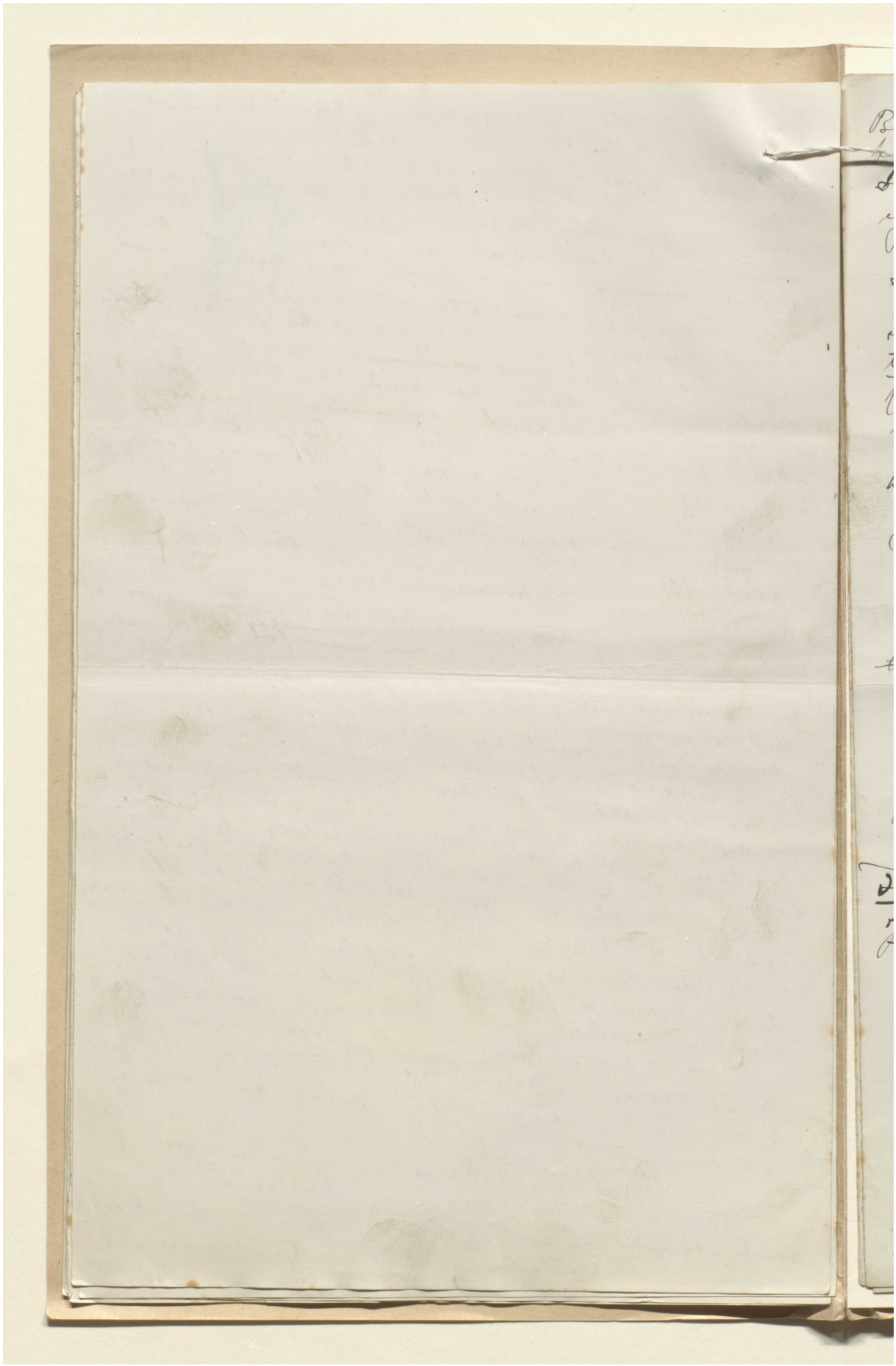

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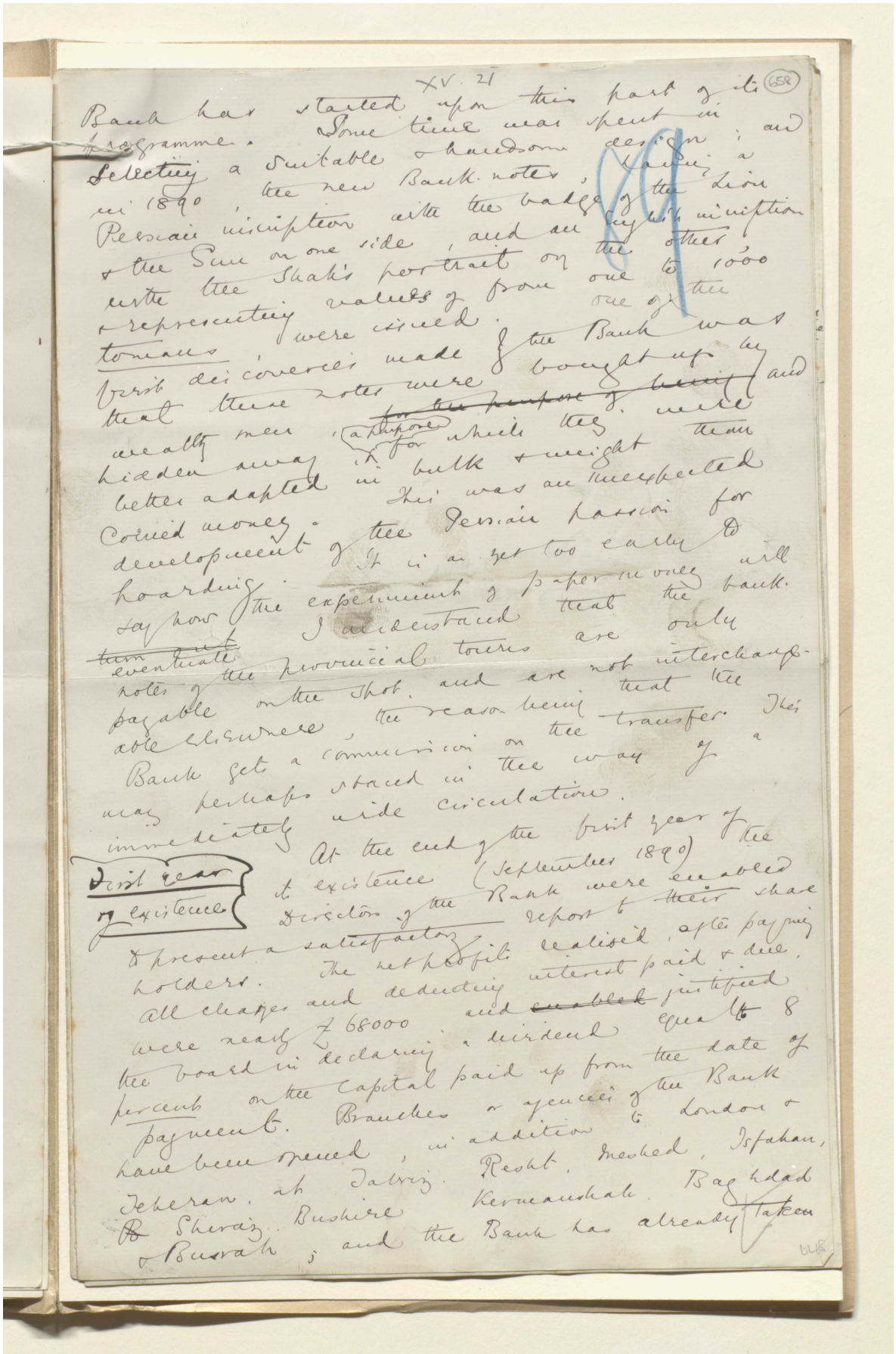


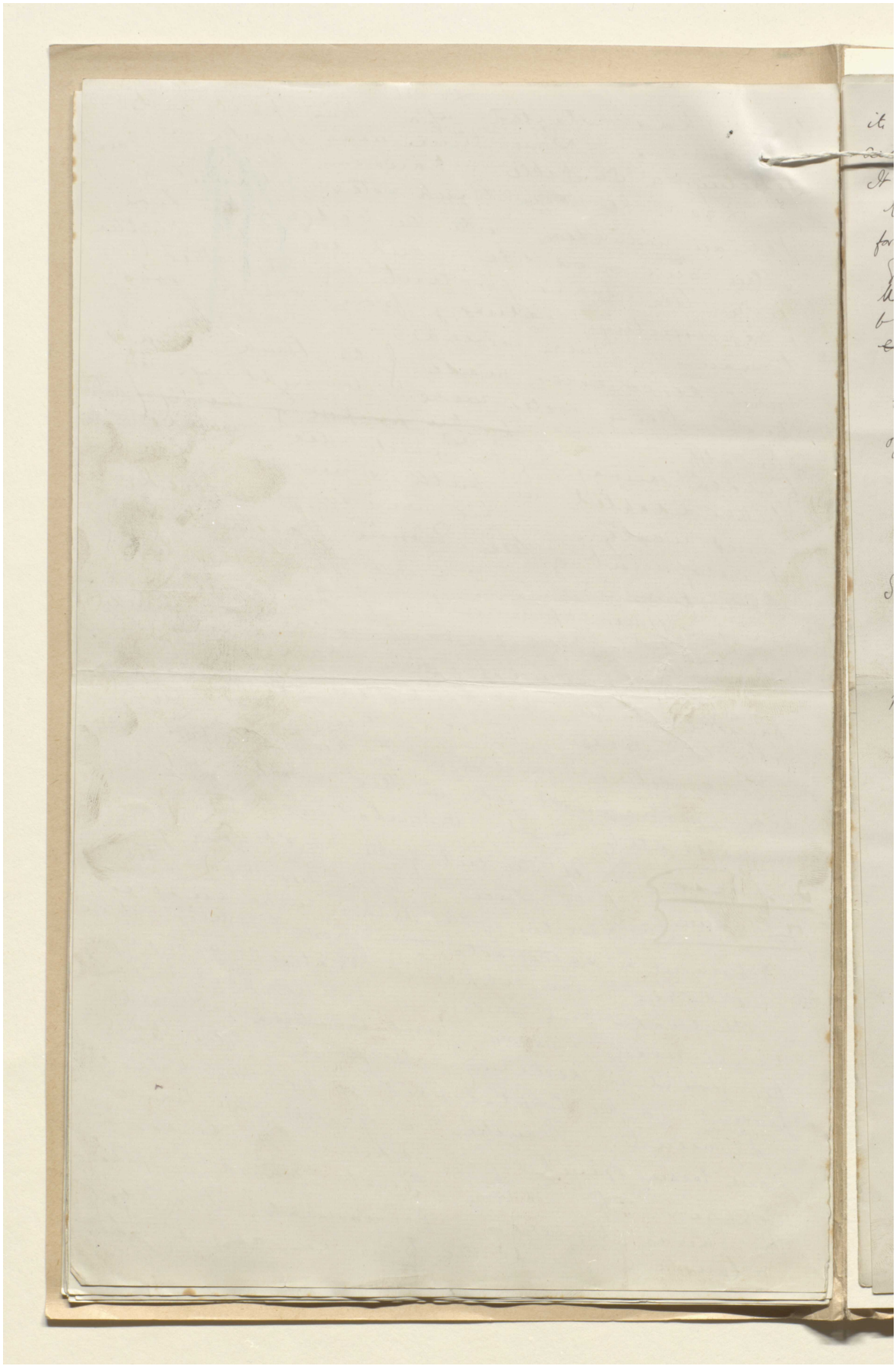
XV. 21

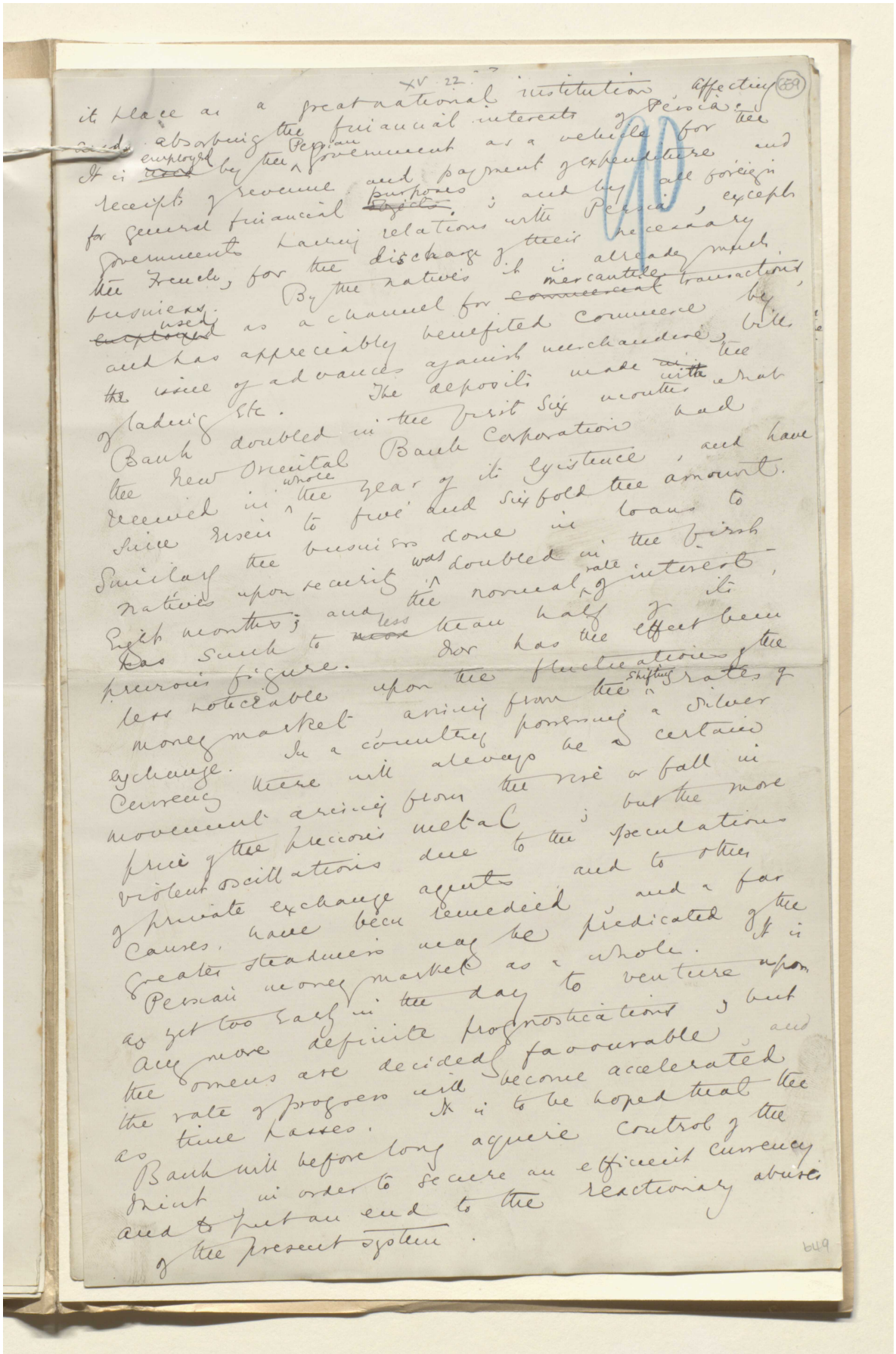
(658)

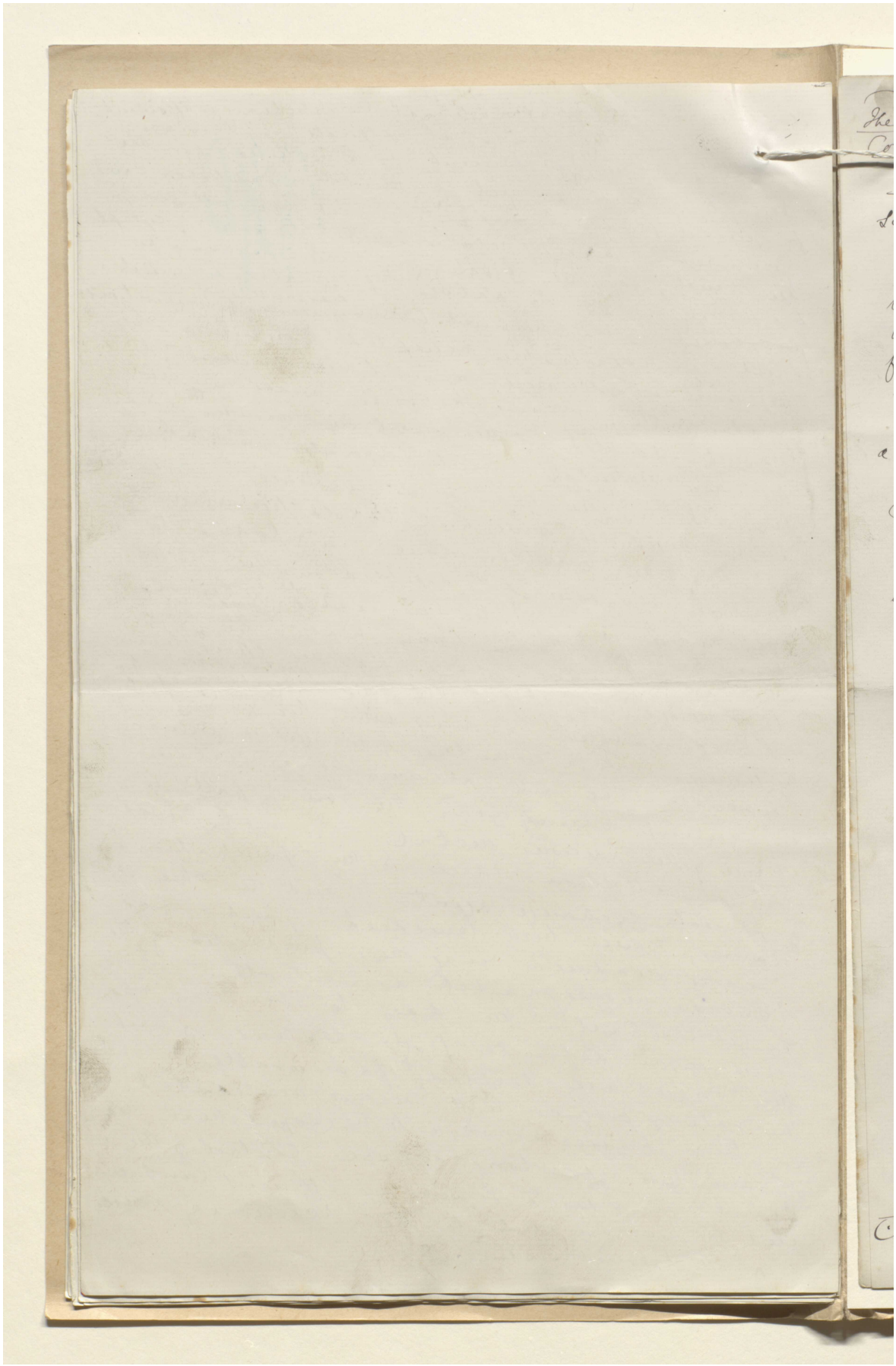
Bank has started upon this part of its programme. Some time was spent in selecting a suitable & handsome design; and in 1890 the new Bank notes, having a Persian inscription with the value of the Sum on one side, and an English inscription with the Shah's portrait on the other & representing values from one to 1000 tomans were issued. One of the first discoveries made by the Bank was that these notes were bought up by wealthy men, & for which they were hidden away in bulk & might thus be better adapted for coined money. This was an unexpected development of the Persian passion for hoarding. It is as yet too early to say how the experiment of paper money will eventually work. I understand that the Bank notes of the provincial towns are only payable on the spot, and are not interchangeable elsewhere, the reason being that the Bank set a commission on the transfer. This may perhaps stand in the way of a more immediately wide circulation.

First year of existence

At the end of the first year of its existence (September 1890) the Directors of the Bank were enabled to present a satisfactory report to their shareholders. The net profits realised, after paying all charges and deducting interest paid & due, were nearly £ 68000. and the Board in declaring a dividend equal to 8 per cent on the capital paid up from the date of payment. Branches or agencies of the Bank have been opened, in addition to London & Teheran, at Tabriz, Resht, Meshed, Isfahan, & Shiraz, Bushire, Kermanshah, Baghdad & Busrah; and the Bank has already taken







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Watting XV. 23.

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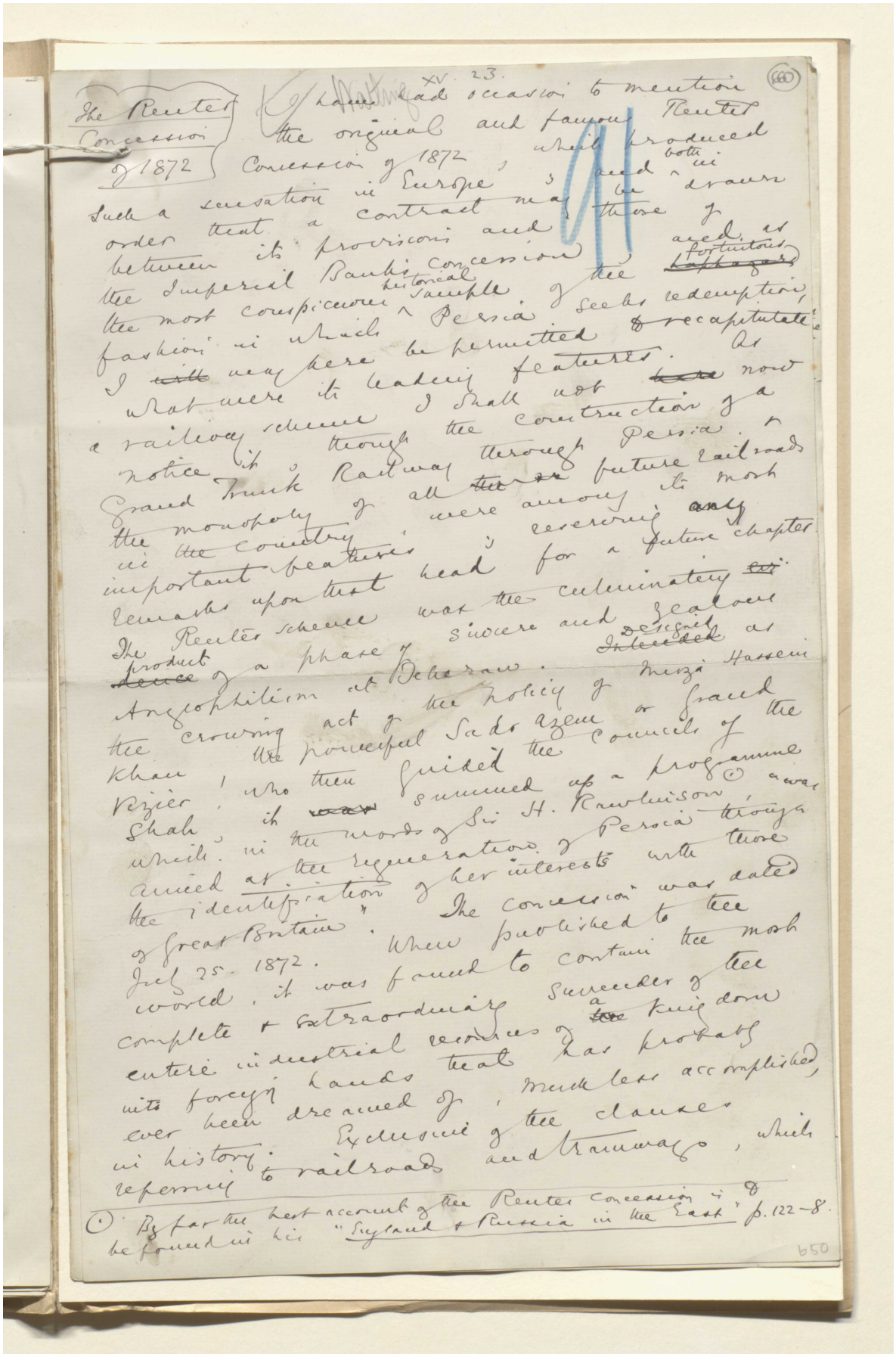

The Reuter Concession of 1872

I have had occasion to mention the original and famous Reuter Concession of 1872, which produced such a sensation in Europe; and both in order that a contract may be drawn between its provisions and those of the Imperial Bank's concession, and as the most conspicuous historical sample of the fortuitous fashion in which Persia seeks redemption, I ~~will~~ may here be permitted ~~to~~ recapitulate what were its leading features. As a railway scheme I shall not ~~have~~ now notice it, though the construction of a Grand Trunk Railway through Persia, & the monopoly of all ~~the~~ future railroads in the country, were among its most important features, reserving any remarks upon that head for a future chapter. The Reuter scheme was the culminating ~~ex~~ product ~~dence~~ of a phase of sincere and zealous Anglophilism at Beheran. ~~Intended~~ Designed as the crowning act of the policy of Mirza Hassein Khan, the powerful Sadr Azem or Grand Vizier, who then guided the councils of the Shah, it ~~was~~ summed up a programme which, in the words of Sir H. Rawlinson (1) "was aimed at the regeneration of Persia through the identification of her interests with those of Great Britain". The concession was dated July 25. 1872. When published to the world, it was found to contain the most complete & extraordinary surrender of the entire industrial resources of a ~~the~~ kingdom into foreign hands that has probably ever been dreamed of, much less accomplished, in history. Exclusive of the clauses referring to railroads and tramways, which

(1) By far the best account of the Reuter Concession is to be found in his "England & Russia in the East" p. 122-8.

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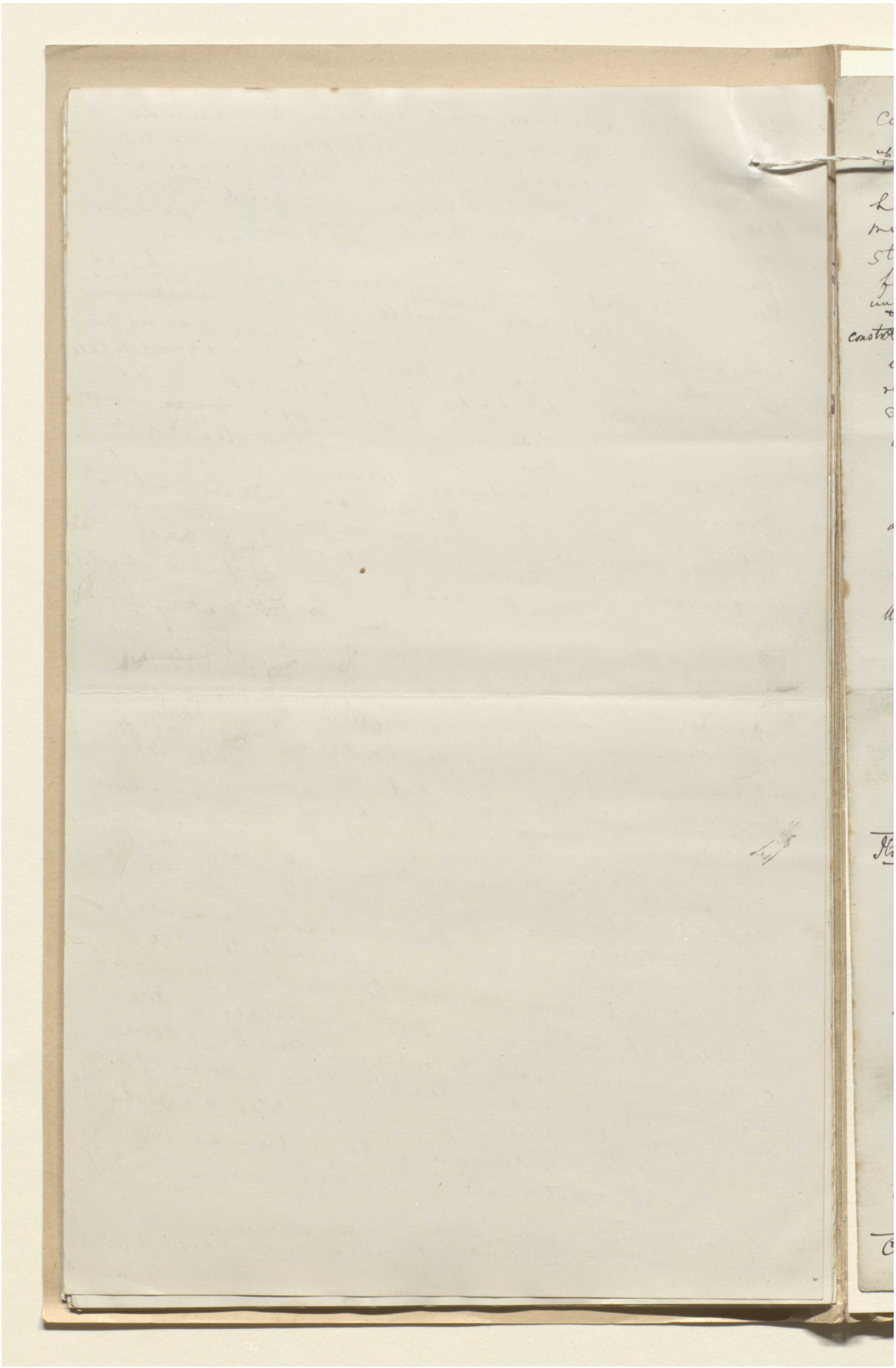

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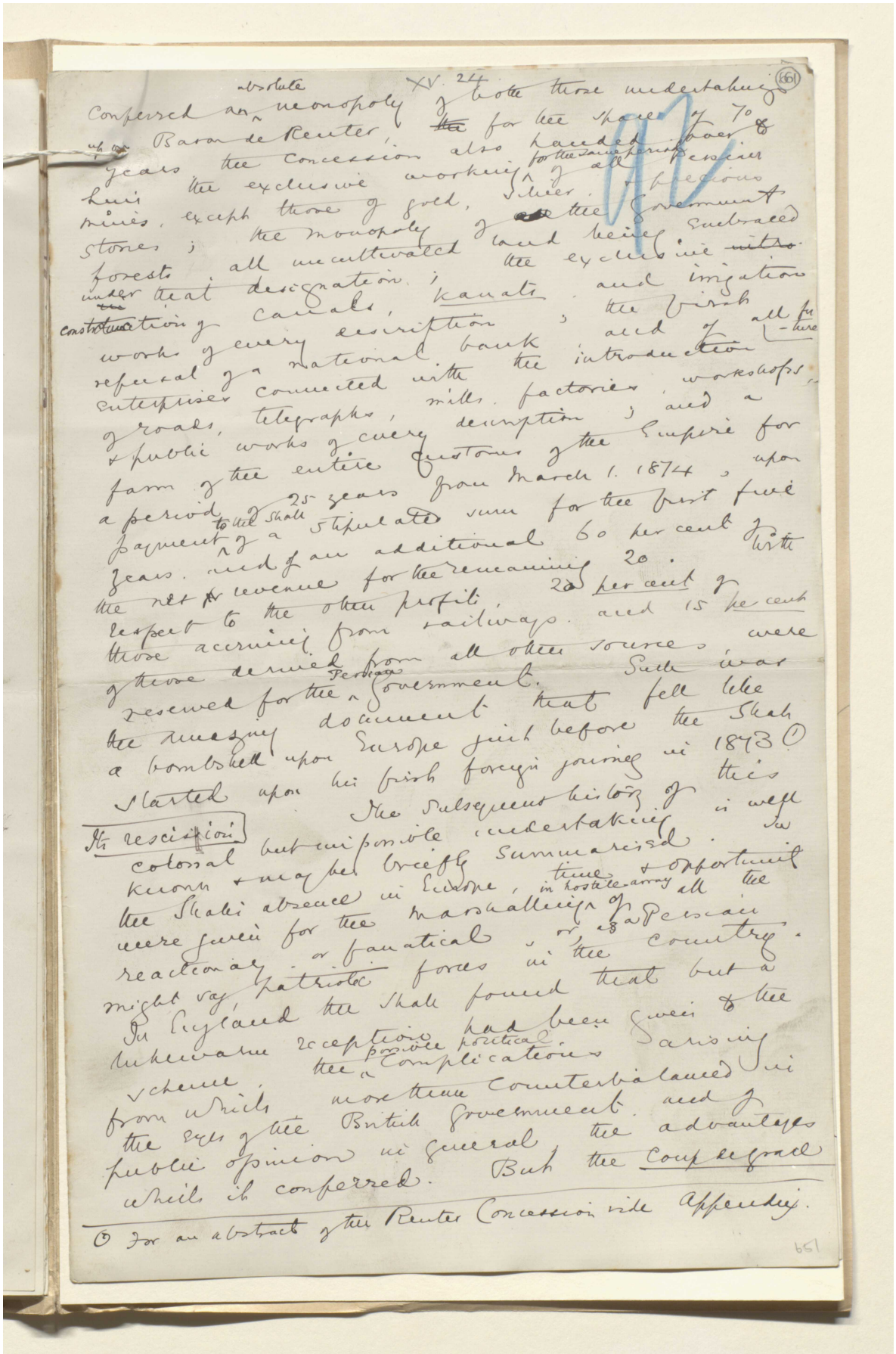

XV. 24 (661)

Conferred an absolute monopoly of both those undertakings upon Baron de Reuter, for the space of 70 years, the Concession also handed over to him the exclusive working for the same period of all Persian mines, except those of gold, silver, & precious stones; the monopoly of the Government forests, all uncultivated land being embraced under that designation; the exclusive construction of canals, kanats, and irrigation works of every description; the first refusal of a national bank and of all future enterprises connected with the introduction of roads, telegraphs, mills, factories, workshops, & public works of every description; and a farm of the entire customs of the Empire for a period of 25 years from March 1. 1874, upon payment to the Shah of a stipulated sum for the first five years, and of an additional 60 per cent of the net revenue for the remaining 20. With respect to the other profits, 20 per cent of those accruing from railways, and 15 per cent of those derived from all other sources were reserved for the Persian Government. Such was the amazing document that fell like a bombshell upon Europe just before the Shah started upon his first foreign journey in 1873 (1)

Its rescission

The subsequent history of this colossal but impossible undertaking is well known & may be briefly summarised. In the Shah's absence in Europe, time & opportunity were given for the marshalling in hostile array of all the reactionary or fanatical, or, as a Persian might say, patriotic forces in the country. In England the Shah found that but a lukewarm reception had been given to the scheme, the possible political complications arising from which more than counterbalanced in the eyes of the British Government, and of public opinion in general, the advantages which it conferred. But the coup de grace

(1) For an abstract of the Reuter Concession vide Appendix.

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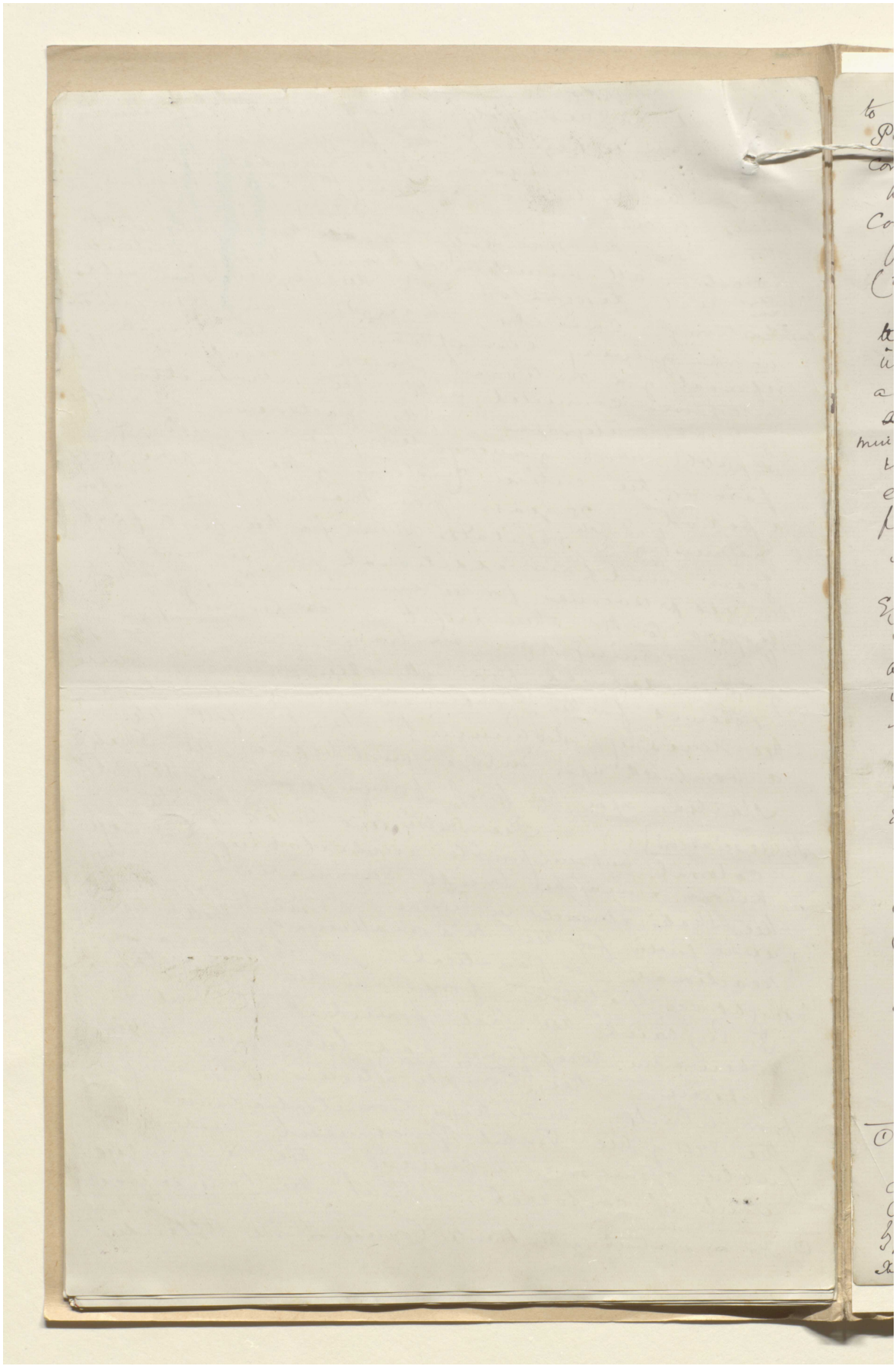

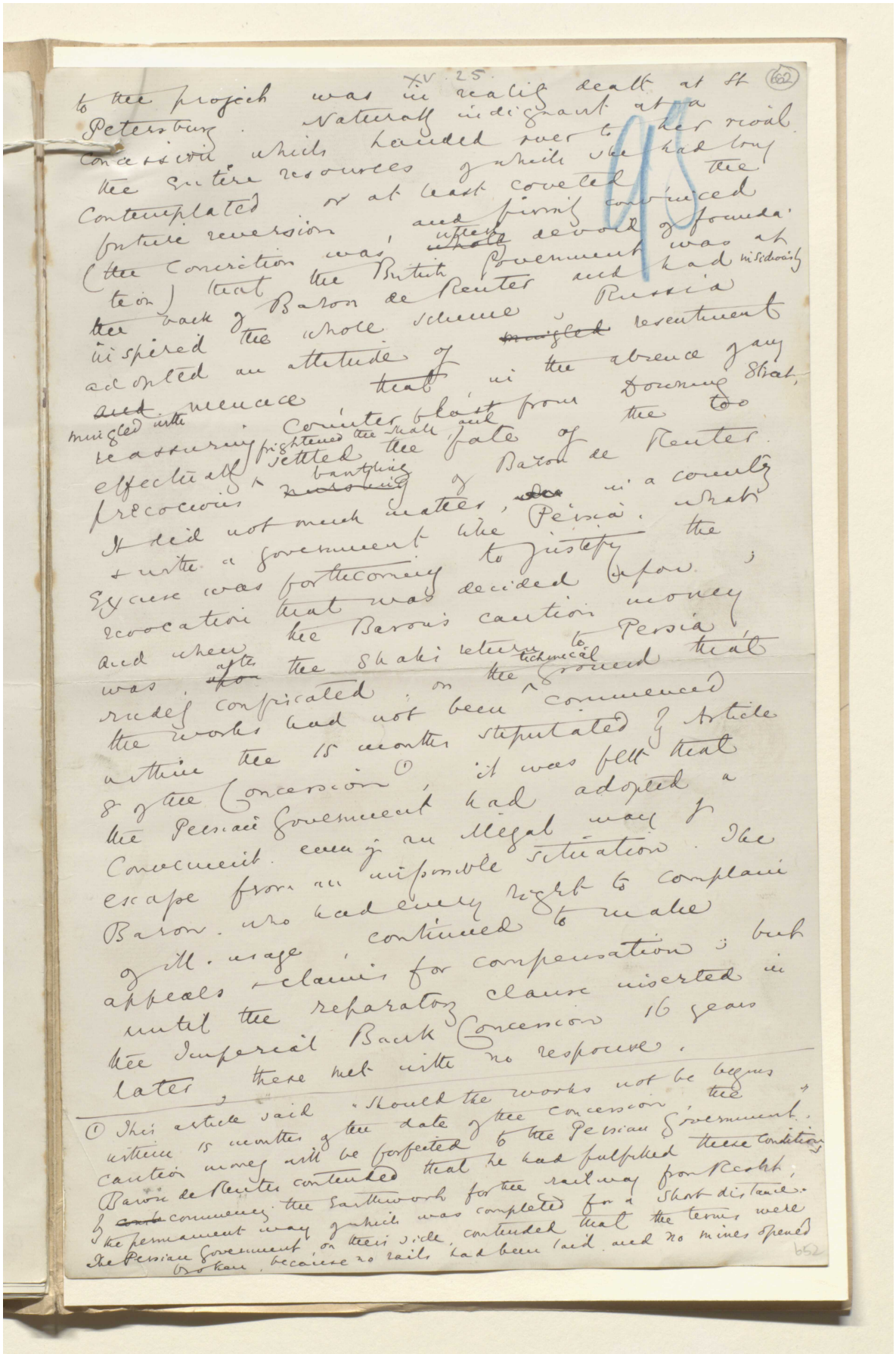

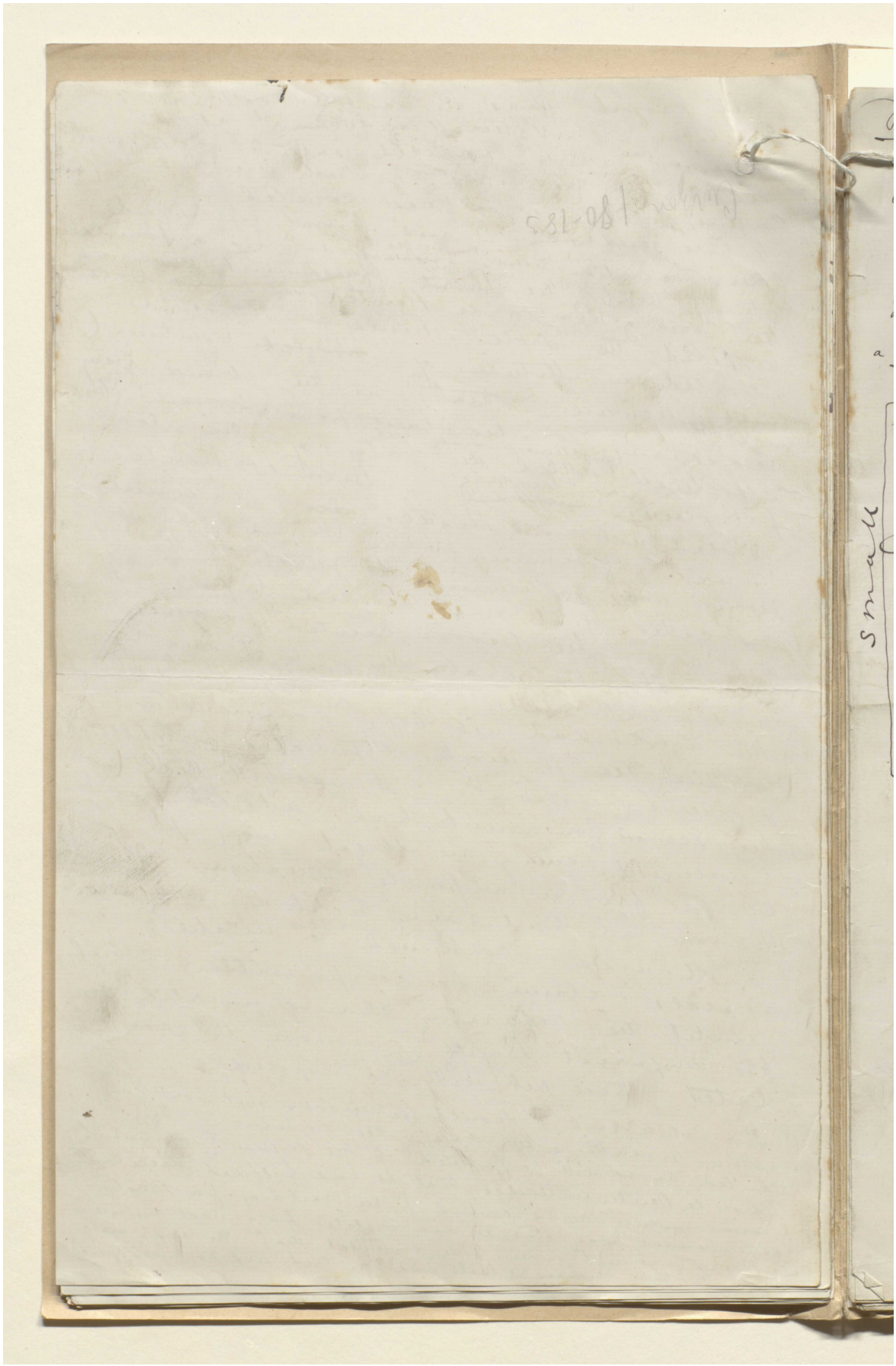

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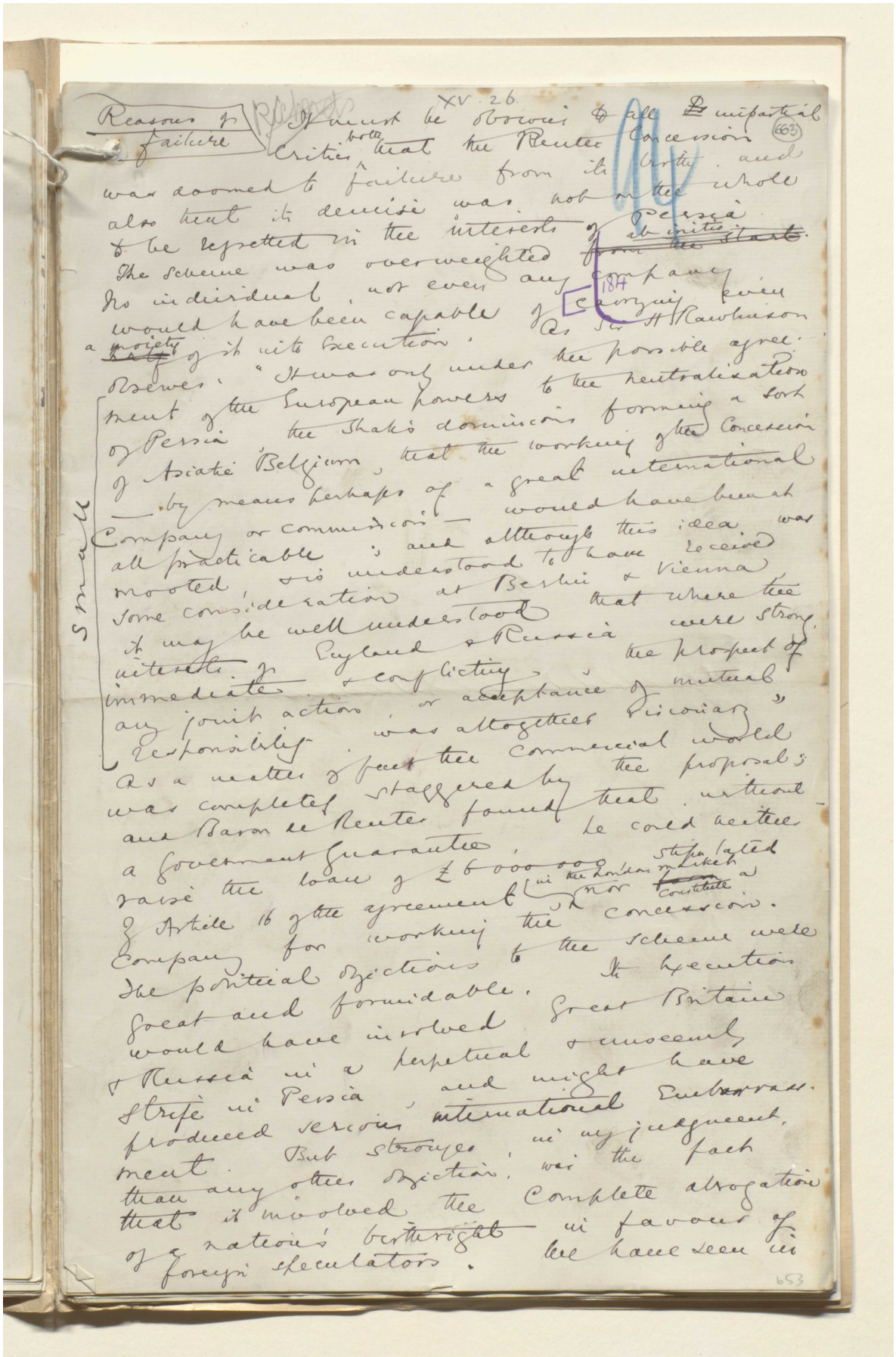
XV. 26.

Reasons of failure

Richards



It must be obvious to all impartial critics both that the Reuter Concession was doomed to failure from its birth, and also that its demise was not on the whole to be regretted in the interests of Persia. The scheme was overweighted ab initio. No individual, not even any company would have been capable of carrying even a moiety of it into execution. As Sir H. Rawlinson observes: "It was only under the possible agreement of the European powers to the neutralisation of Persia, the Shah's dominions forming a sort of Asiatic Belgium, that the working of the Concession — by means perhaps of a great international Company or commission — would have been at all practicable; and although this idea was mooted, & is understood to have received some consideration at Berlin & Vienna, it may be well understood that where the interests of England & Russia were strong, immediate & conflicting, the prospect of any joint action or acceptance of mutual responsibility was altogether visionary."

Small

As a matter of fact the commercial world was completely staggered by the proposal; and Baron de Reuter found that without a Government Guarantee, he could neither raise the loan of £6 000 000 stipulated of Article 16 of the agreement in the London market, nor constitute a Company for working the concession. The political objections to the scheme were great and formidable. Its execution would have involved Great Britain & Russia in a perpetual & unseemly strife in Persia, and might have produced serious international embarrassment. But stronger, in my judgment, than any other objection, was the fact that it involved the complete abrogation of a nation's birthright in favour of foreign speculators. We have seen in

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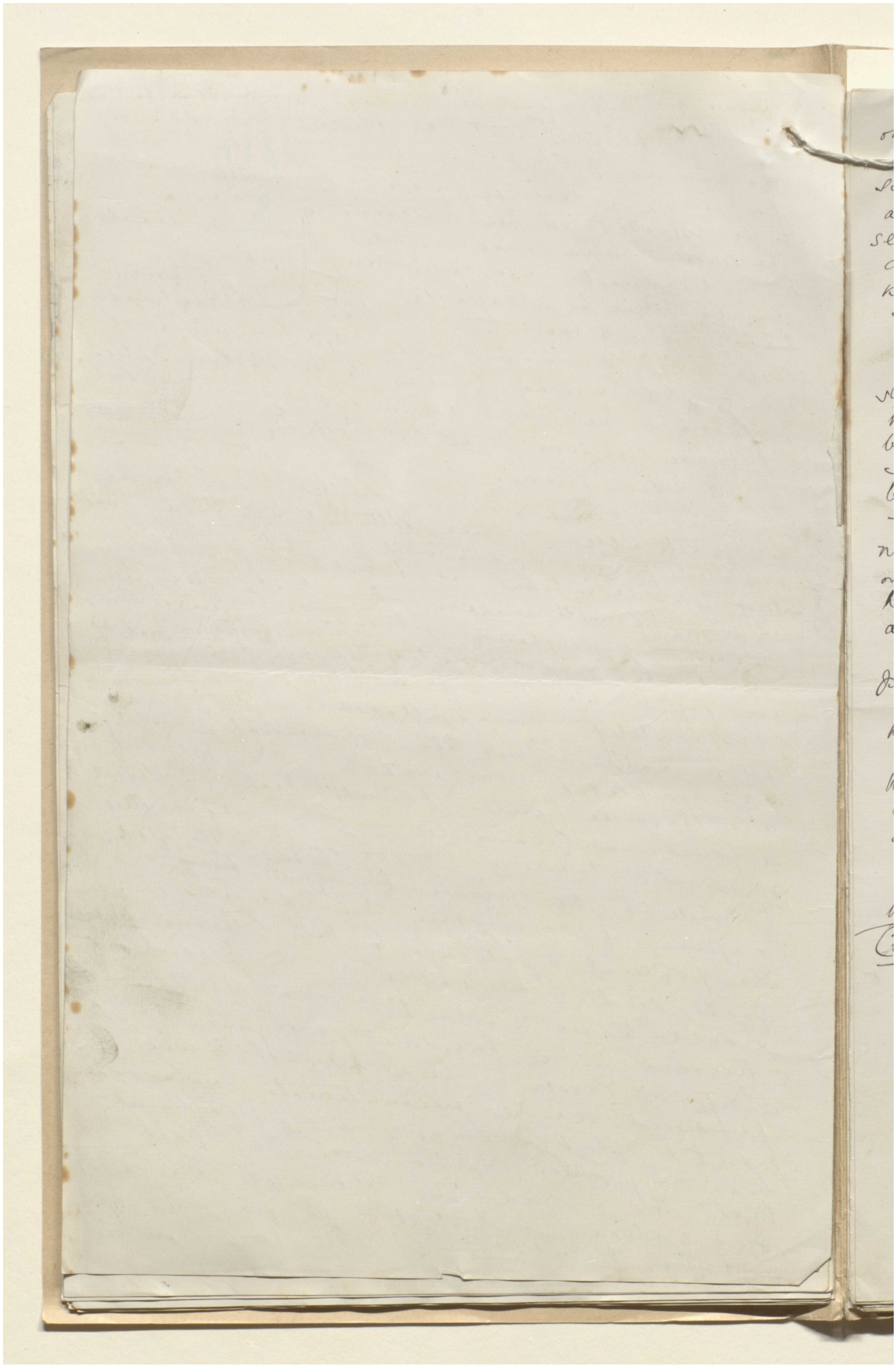

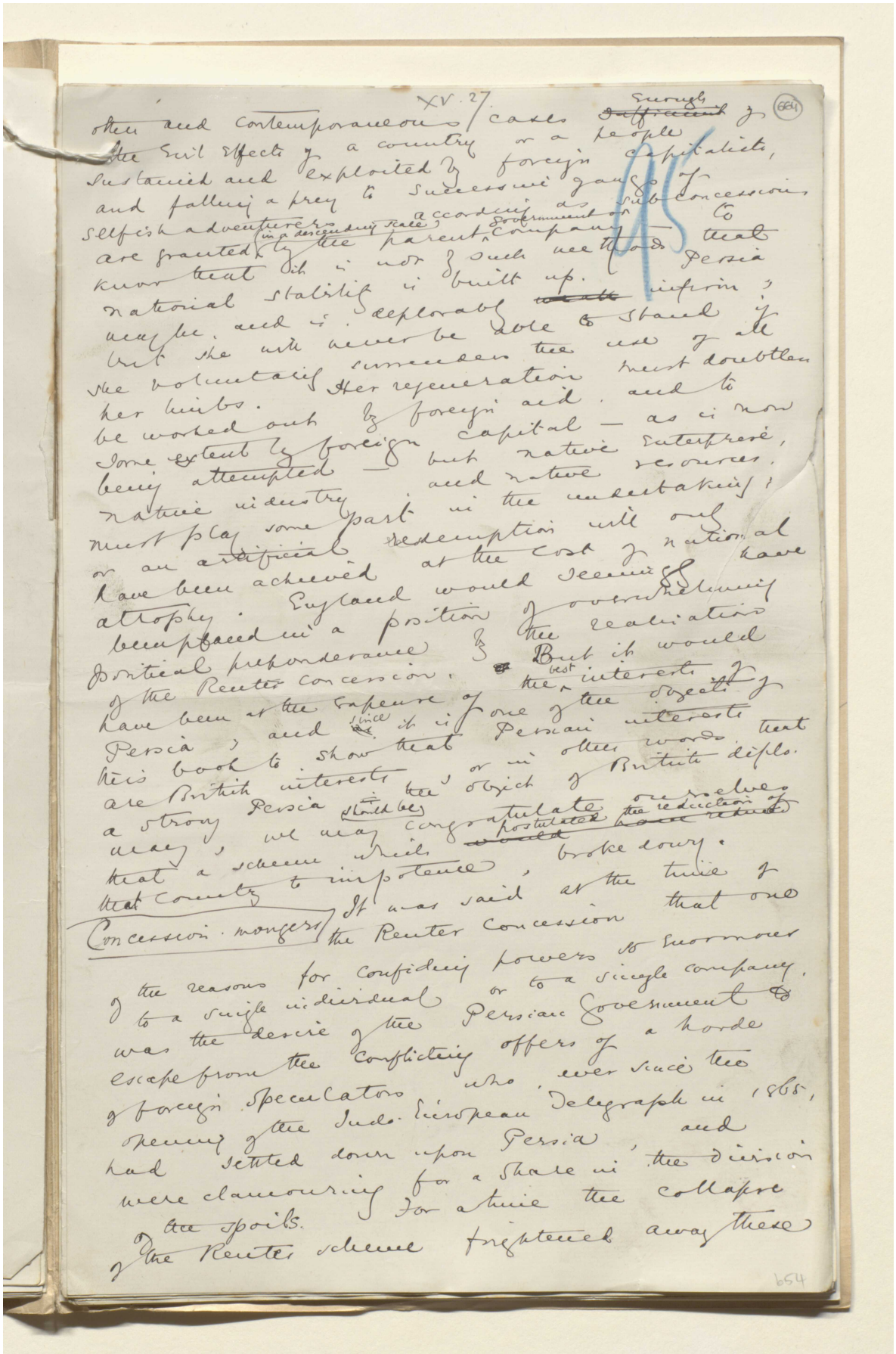

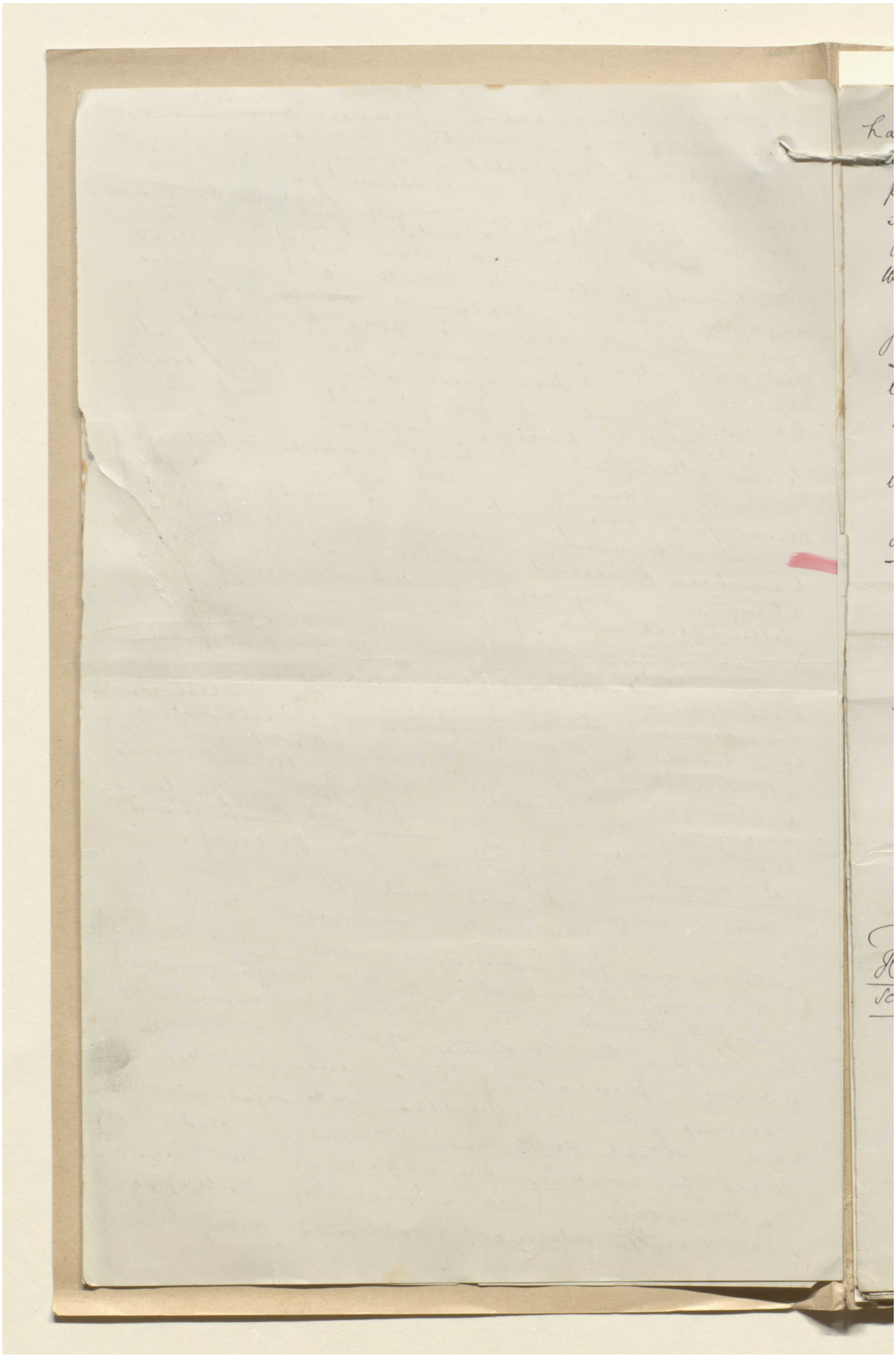

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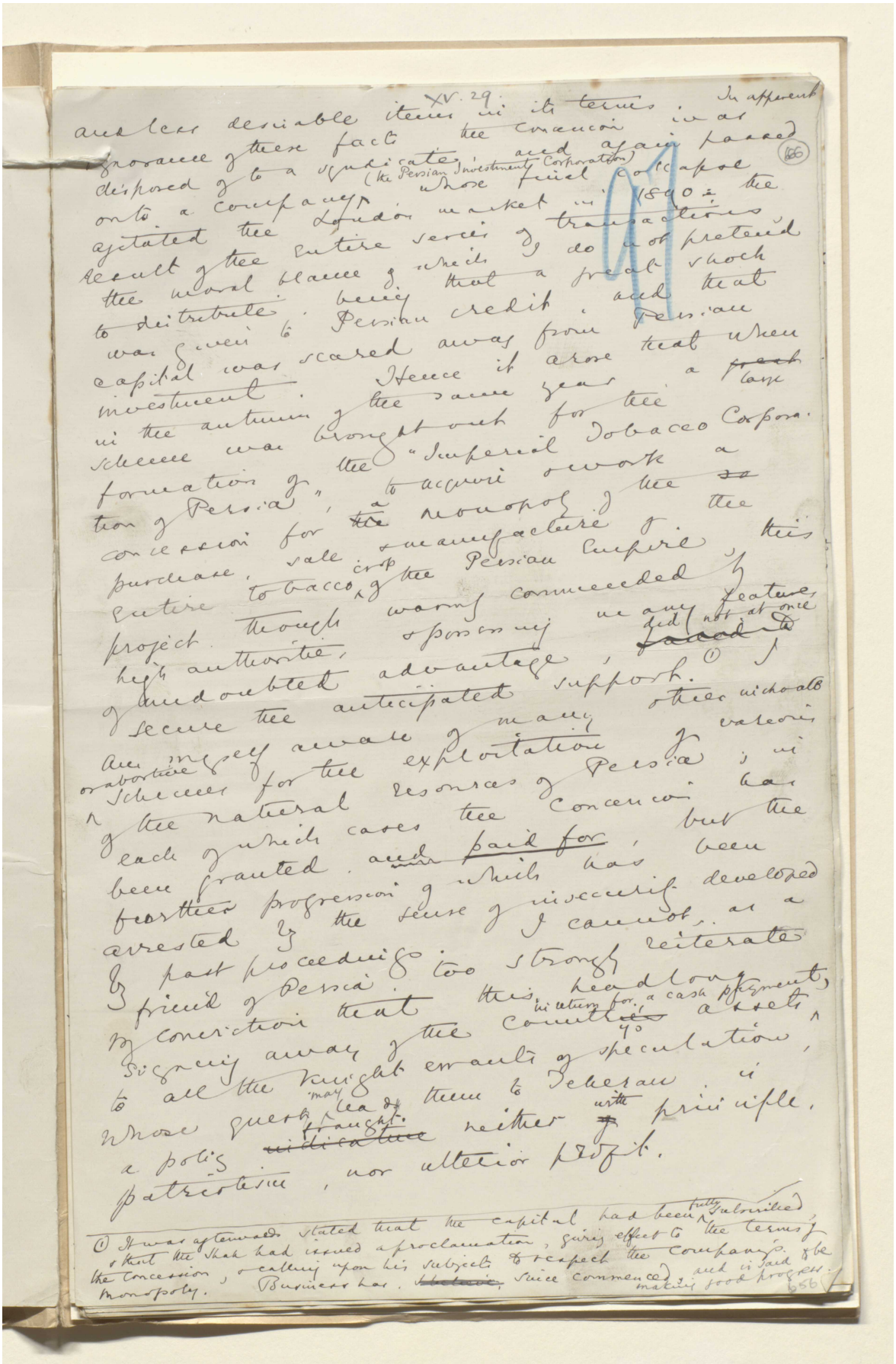

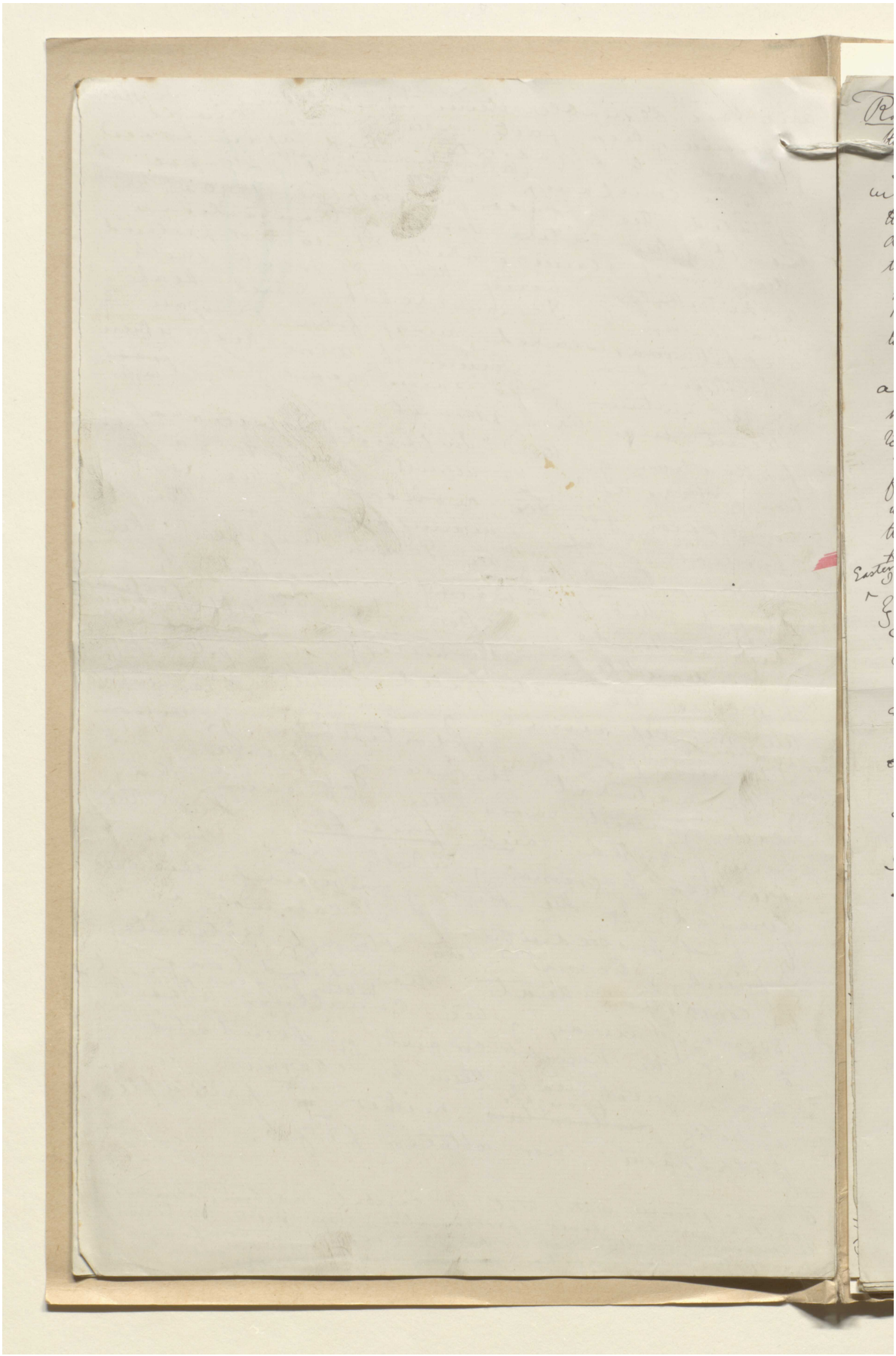

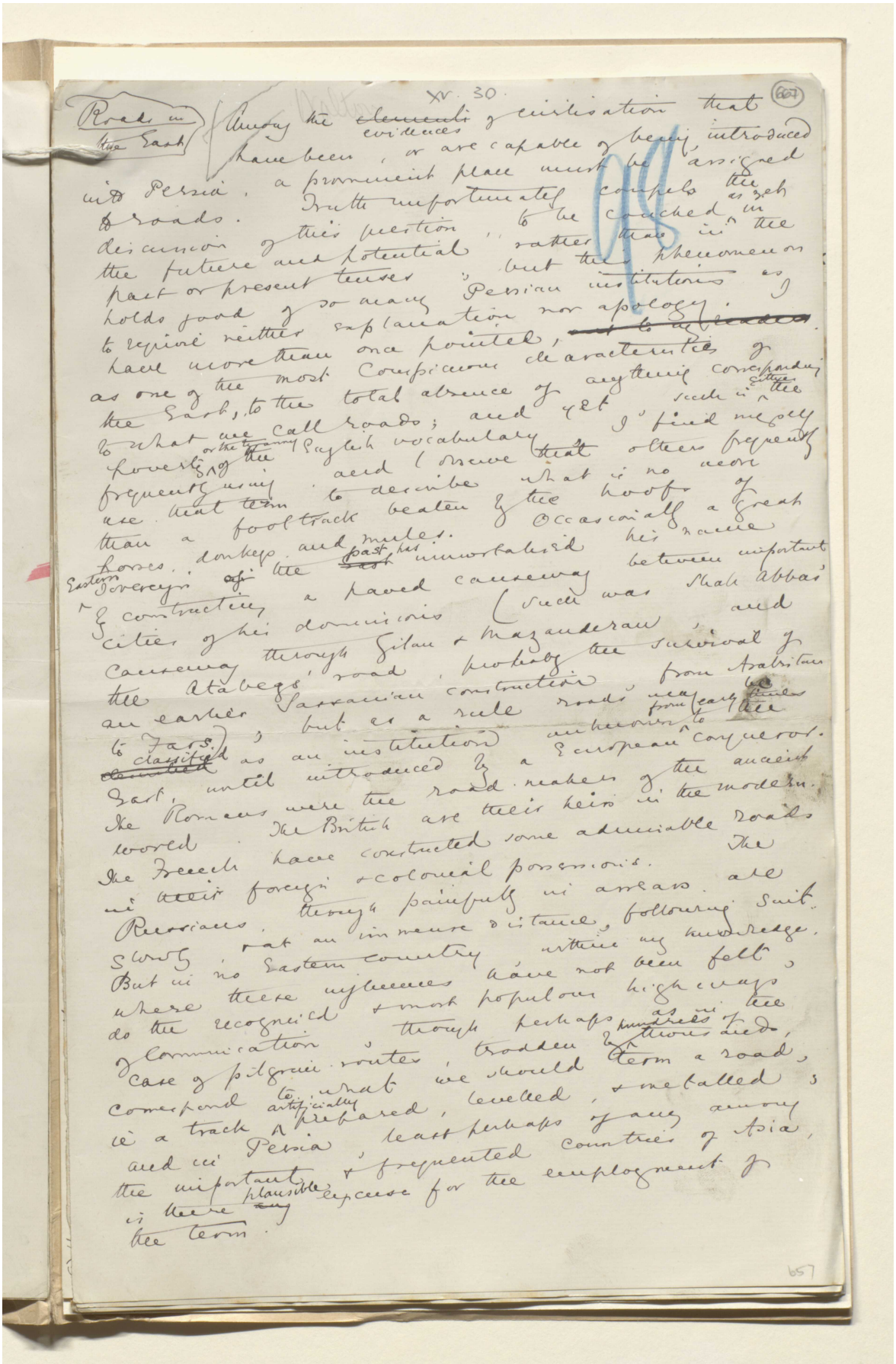

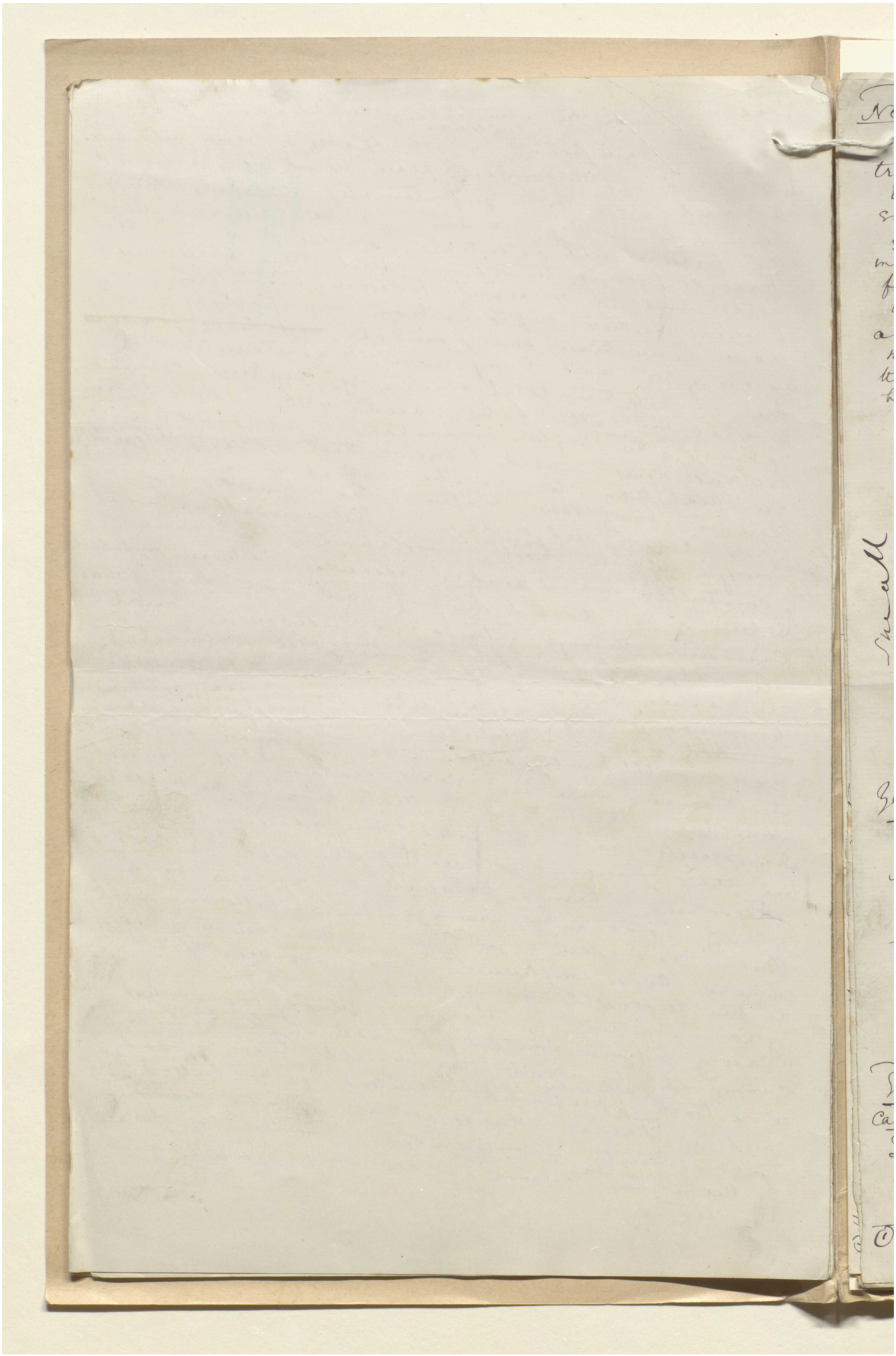

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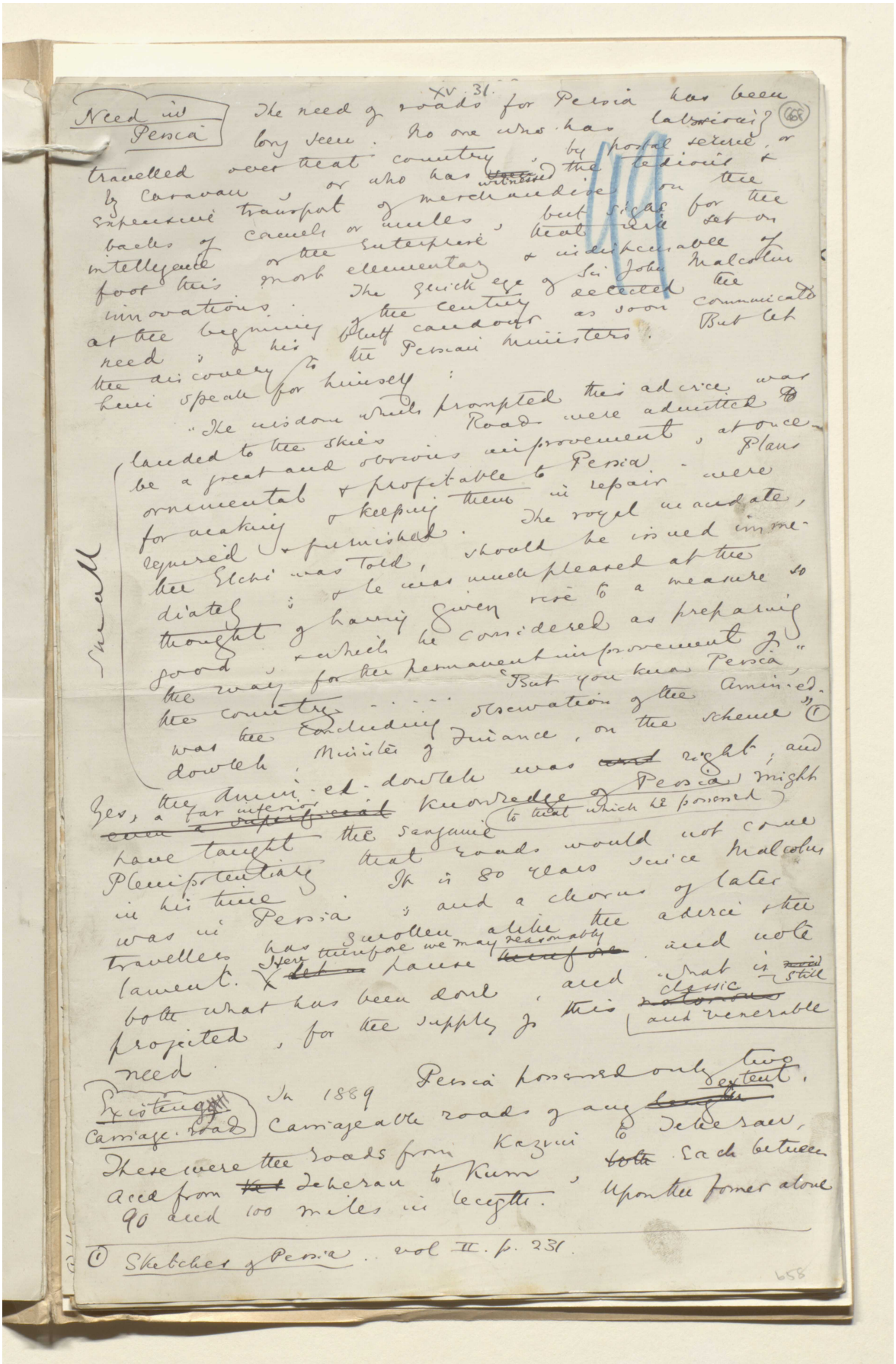
XV. 31.

(668)

Need in Persia



The need of roads for Persia has been long seen. No one who has laboriously travelled over that country, by postal service, or by Caravan, or who has witnessed the tedious & expensive transport of merchandise on the backs of camels or mules, but sighs for the intelligence or the enterprise that will set on foot this most elementary & indispensable of innovations. The quick eye of Sir John Malcolm at the beginning of the century detected the need; & his bluff candour as soon communicated the discovery to the Persian ministers. But let him speak for himself:

"The wisdom which prompted this advice was landed to the skies. Roads were admitted to be a great and obvious improvement, at once ornamental & profitable to Persia. Plans for making & keeping them in repair were required & furnished. The royal mandate, the Elchi was told, should be issued immediately; & he was much pleased at the thought of having given rise to a measure so good, & which he considered as preparing the way for the permanent improvement of the country. ... "But you know Persia," was the concluding observation of the Amin-ed-dowleh, Minister of Finance, on the scheme" (1)

Small

Yes, the Amin-ed-dowleh was right; and a far inferior knowledge of Persia might have taught the sanguine (to that which he possessed) Plenipotentiary that roads would not come in his time. It is 80 years since Malcolm was in Persia; and a chorus of later travellers has swollen alike the advice & the lament. Here therefore we may reasonably pause and note both what has been done, and what is still projected, for the supply of this classic and venerable need.

Existing Carriage-road

In 1889 Persia possessed only two carriageable roads of any extent. These were the roads from Kazvin to Teheran, and from Teheran to Kum, each between 90 and 100 miles in length. Upon the former alone

(1) Sketches of Persia. vol II. p. 231.

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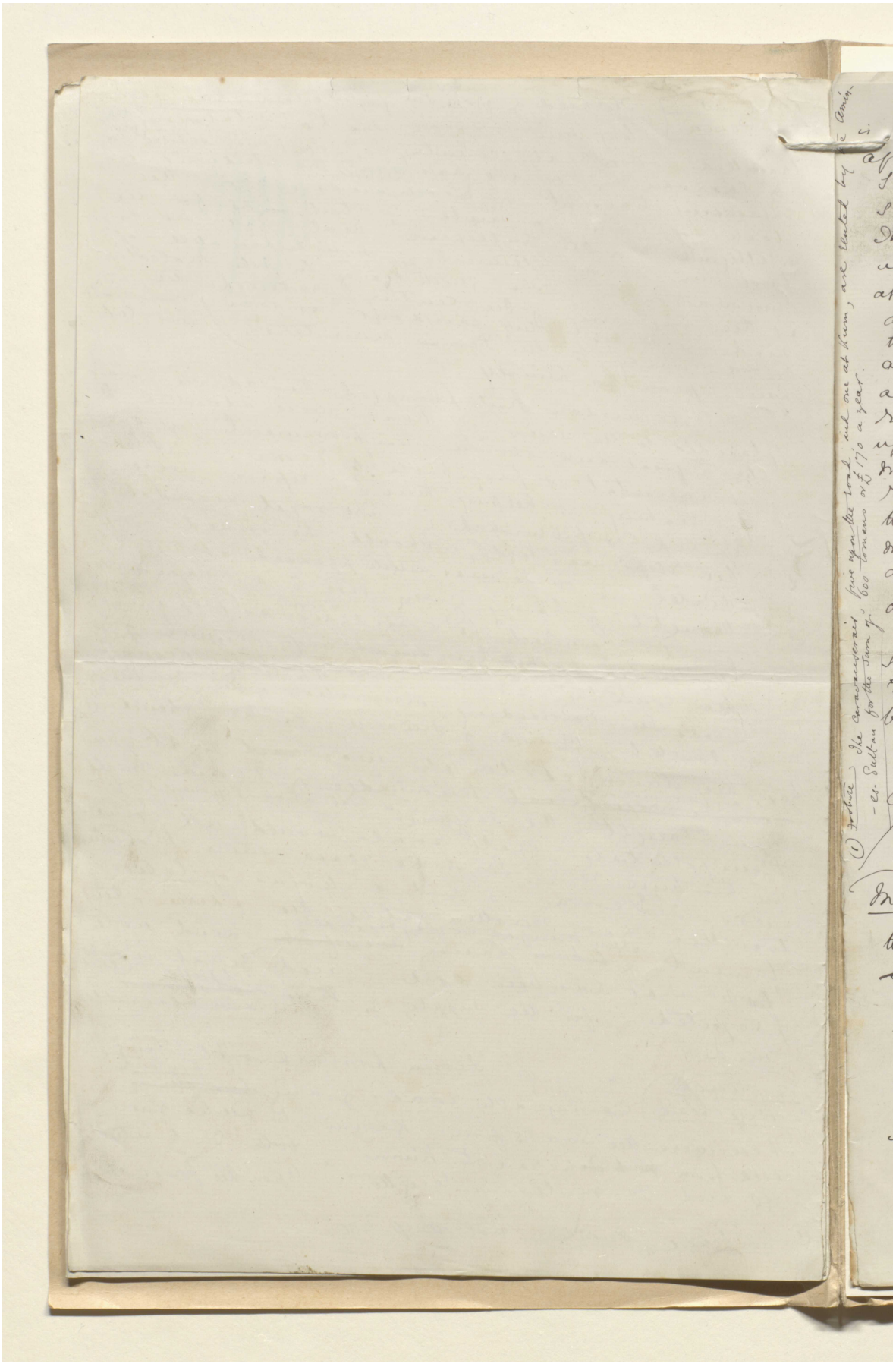

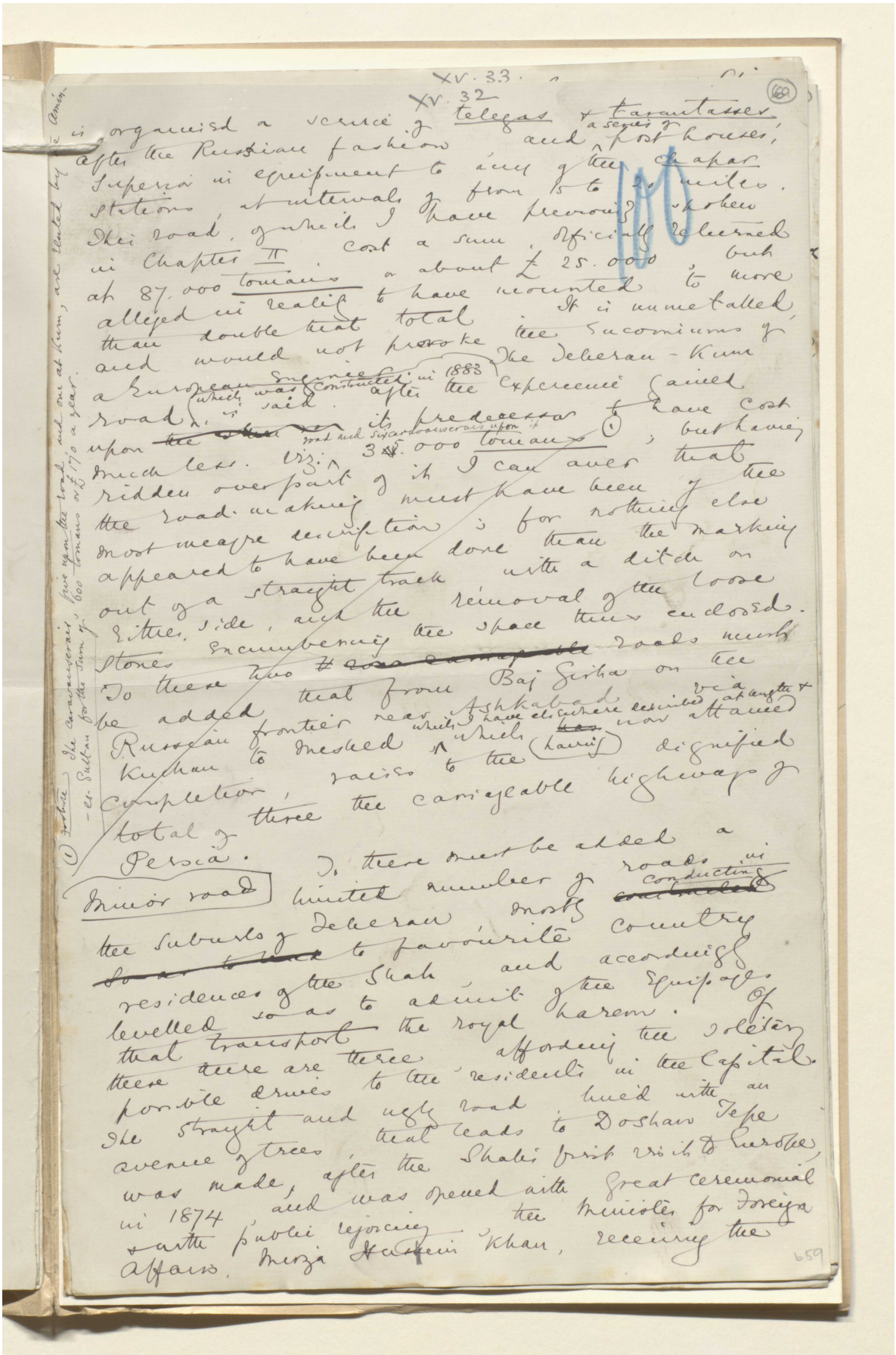

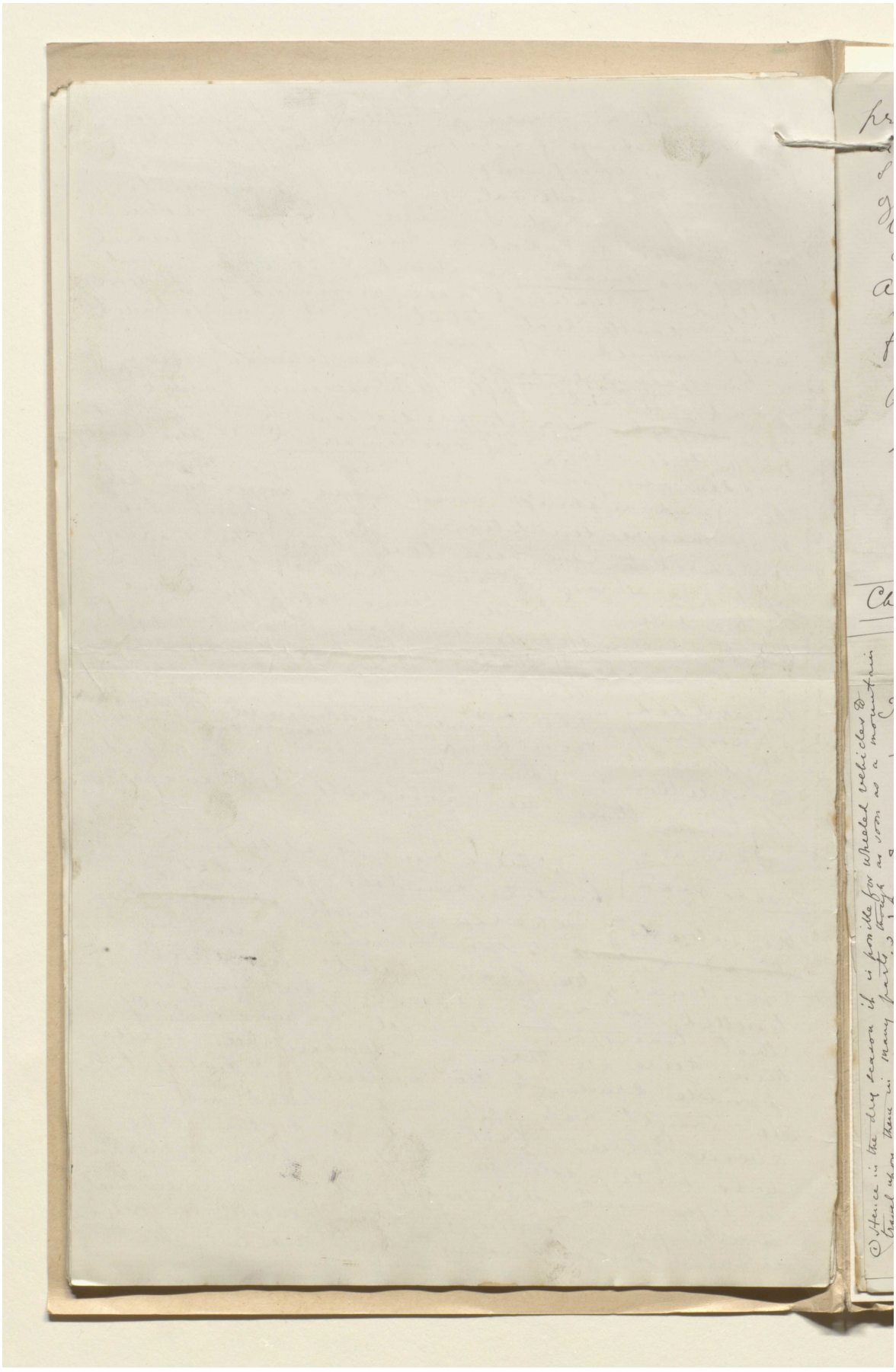

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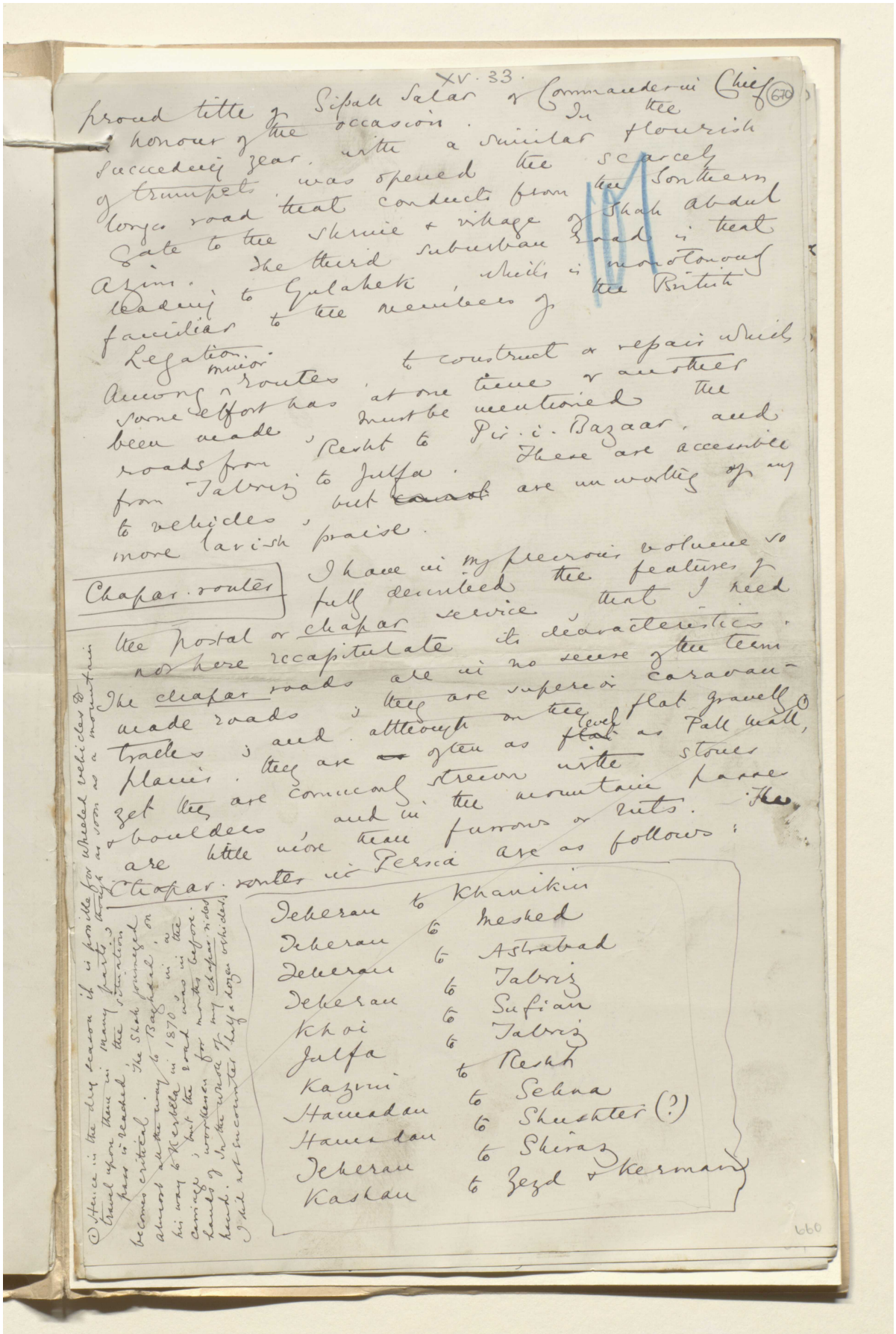

XV. 33.

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proud title of Sipah Salar or Commander in Chief in honour of the occasion. In the succeeding year, with a similar flourish of trumpets, was opened the scarcely longer road that conducts from the Southern Gate to the shrine & village of Shah Abdul Azim. The third suburban road is that leading to Gulahek, which is monotonously familiar to the members of the British Legation.

Among minor routes, to construct or repair which some effort has at one time or another been made, must be mentioned the roads from Resht to Pir-i-Bazaar, and from Tabriz to Julfa. These are accessible to vehicles, but ~~cannot~~ are unworthy of any more lavish praise.

Chapar-routes

I have in my previous volume so fully described the features of the postal or chapar service, that I need not here recapitulate its characteristics. The chapar roads are in no sense of the term made roads; they are superior caravan-tracks; and although on the flat gravelly plains, they are ~~as~~ often as ~~flat~~ level as Pall Mall,(1) yet they are commonly strewn with stones & boulders, and in the mountain passes are little more than furrows or ruts. The Chapar-routes in Persia are as follows:

Teheran	to	Khanikin
Teheran	to	Meshed
Teheran	to	Astrabad
Teheran	to	Tabriz
Khoi	to	Sufian
Julfa	to	Tabriz
Kazvin	to	Resht
Hamadan	to	Sehna
Hamadan	to	Shushter (?)
Teheran	to	Shiraz
Kashan	to	Zezd & Kerman

(1) Hence in the dry season it is possible for wheeled vehicles to travel upon them in many parts, though as soon as a mountain pass is reached, the situation becomes critical. The Shah journeyed almost all the way to Baghdad, on his way to Kerbela in 1870, in a carriage, but the road was in the lands of worthless for months before. In the whole of my chapar-rides I did not encounter half a dozen vehicles.

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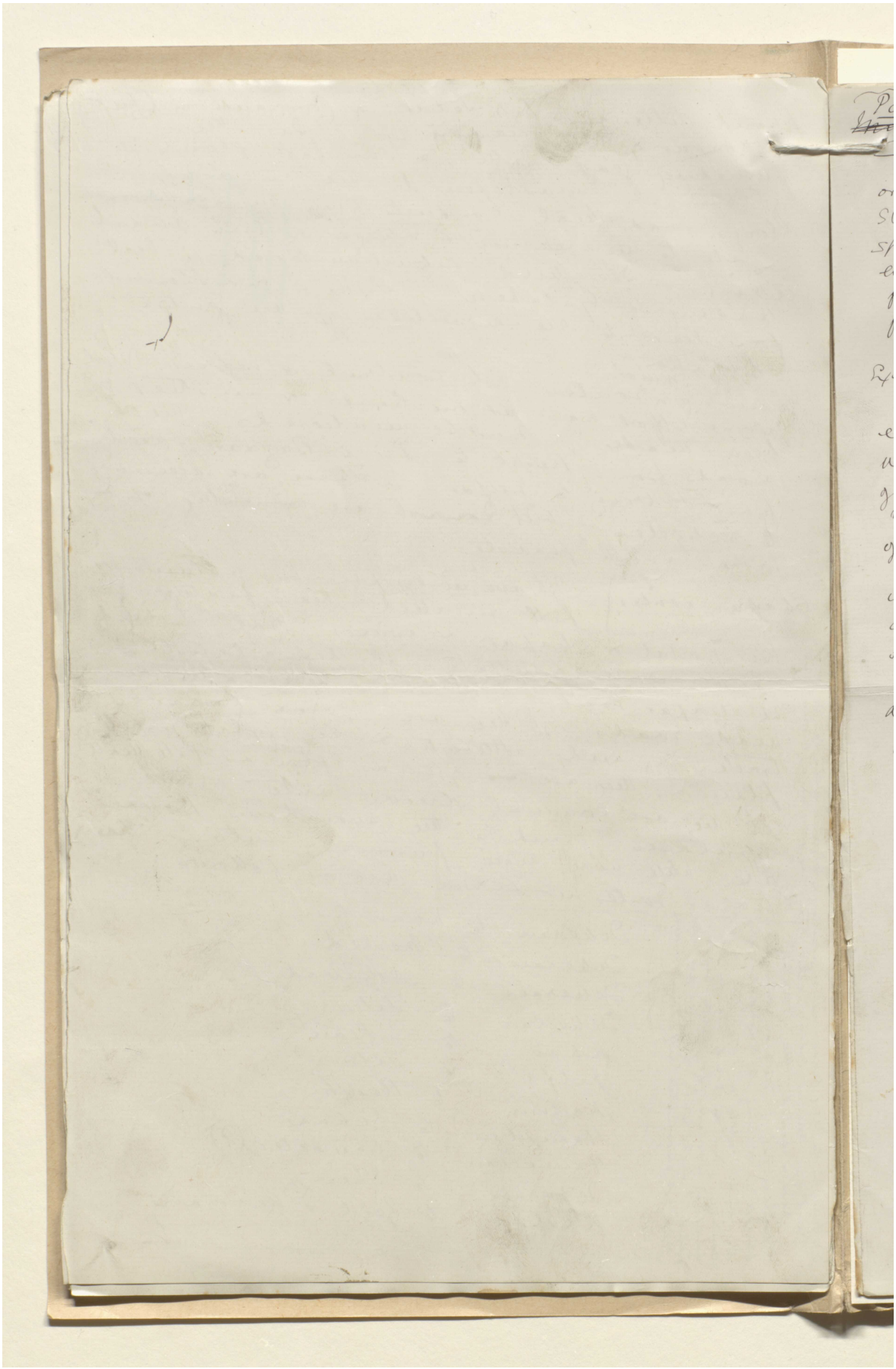

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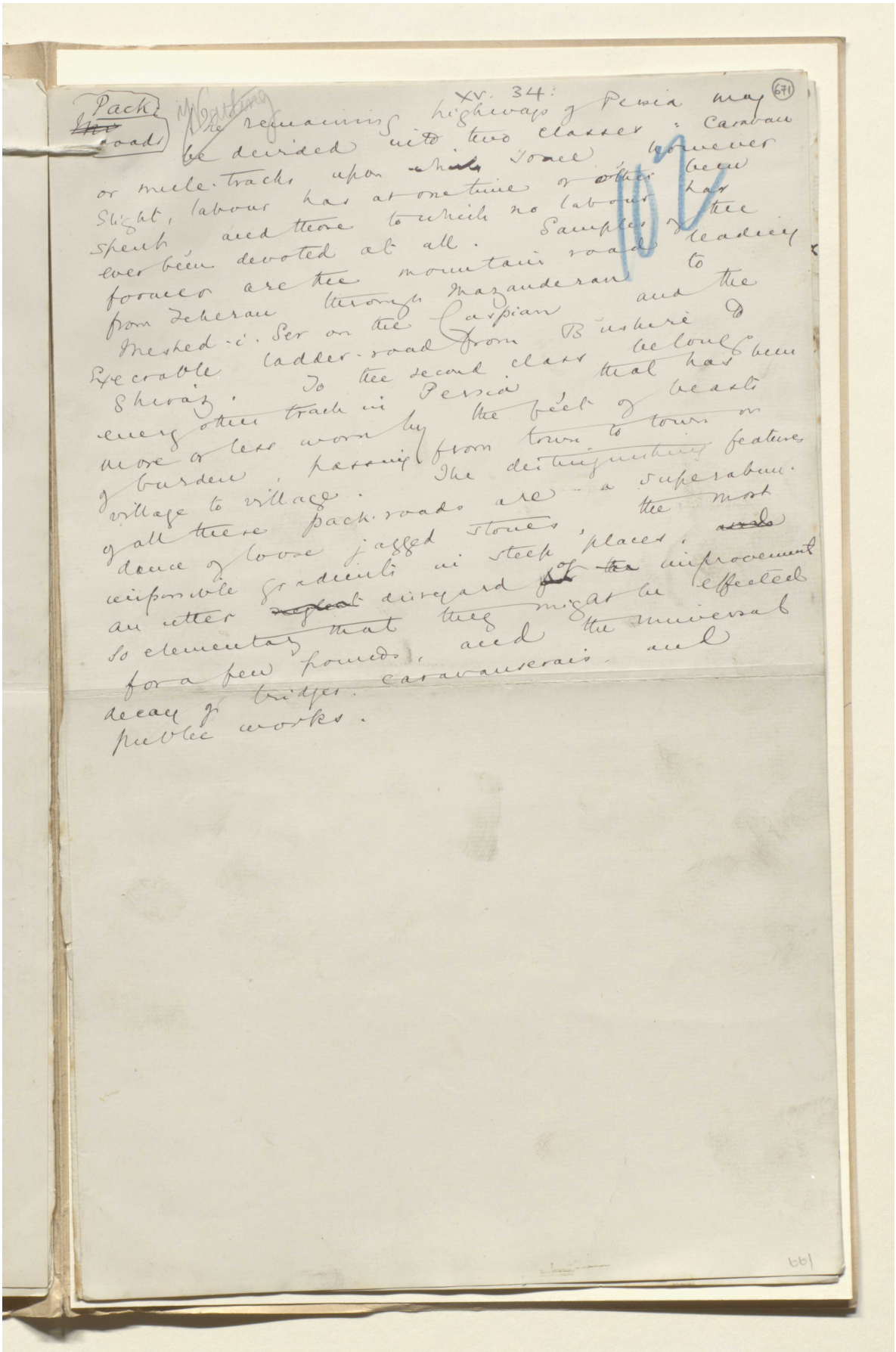

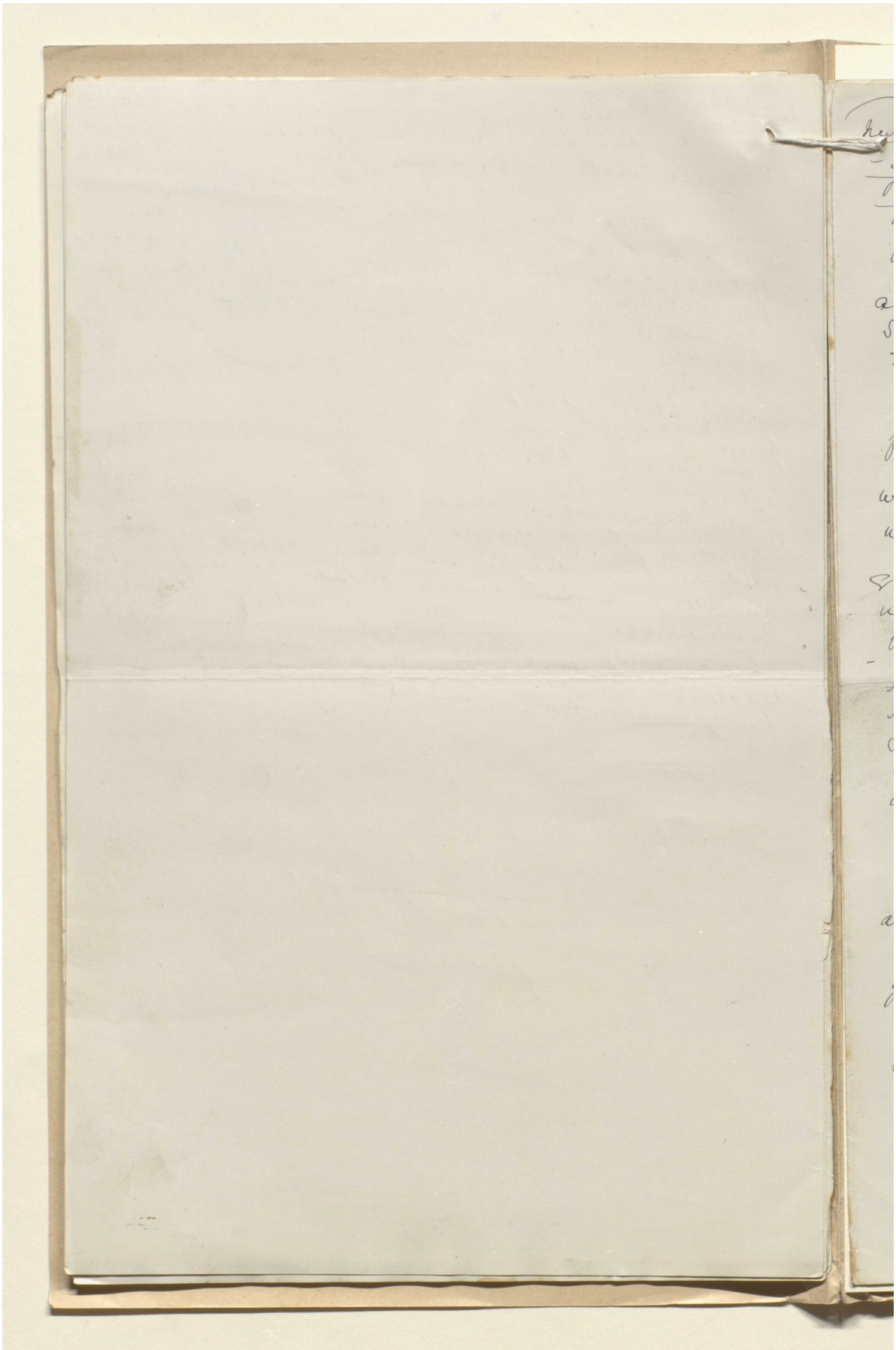

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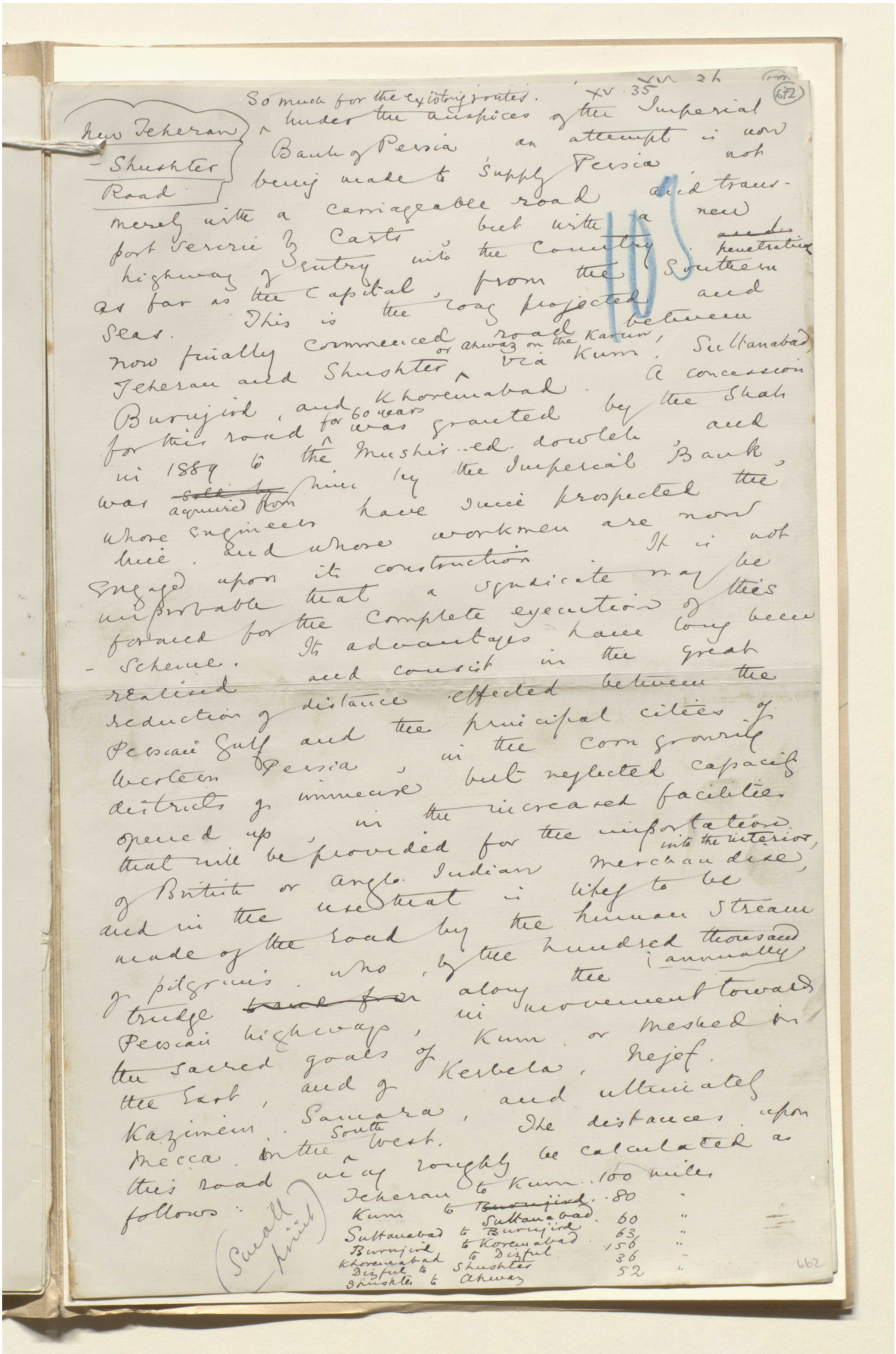
XV. 35

New Teheran - Shushter Road



So much for the existing routes. Under the auspices of the Imperial Bank of Persia an attempt is now being made to supply Persia not merely with a carriageable road and transport service by Carts but with a new highway of entry into the country penetrating as far as the Capital, from the Southern Seas. This is the long projected and now finally commenced road between Teheran and Shushter or Ahwaz on the Karun, via Kum, Sultanabad, Burujird, and Khoremabad. A concession for this road for 60 years was granted by the Shah in 1889 to the Mushir-ed-dowleh and was acquired from him by the Imperial Bank, whose engineers have since prospected the line, and whose workmen are now engaged upon its construction. It is not improbable that a syndicate may be formed for the complete execution of this scheme. Its advantages have long been realised and consist in the great reduction of distance effected between the Persian Gulf and the principal cities of Western Persia, in the corn growing districts of immense but neglected capacity opened up, in the increased facilities that will be provided for the importation of British or Anglo-Indian merchandise into the interior, and in the use that is likely to be made of the road by the human stream of pilgrims who, by the hundred thousand annually trudge along the Persian highways, in movement towards the sacred goals of Kum or Meshed in the East, and of Kerbela, Nejef, Kazimein, Samara, and ultimately Mecca in the South West. The distances upon this road may roughly be calculated as follows:

Teheran to Kum	100	miles
Kum to ~~Burujird~~ Sultanabad	80	"
Sultanabad to Burujird	60	"
Burujird to Koremabad	63	"
Khoremabad to Dizful	156	"
Dizful to Shushter	36	"
Shushter to Ahwaz	52	"

(Small print)

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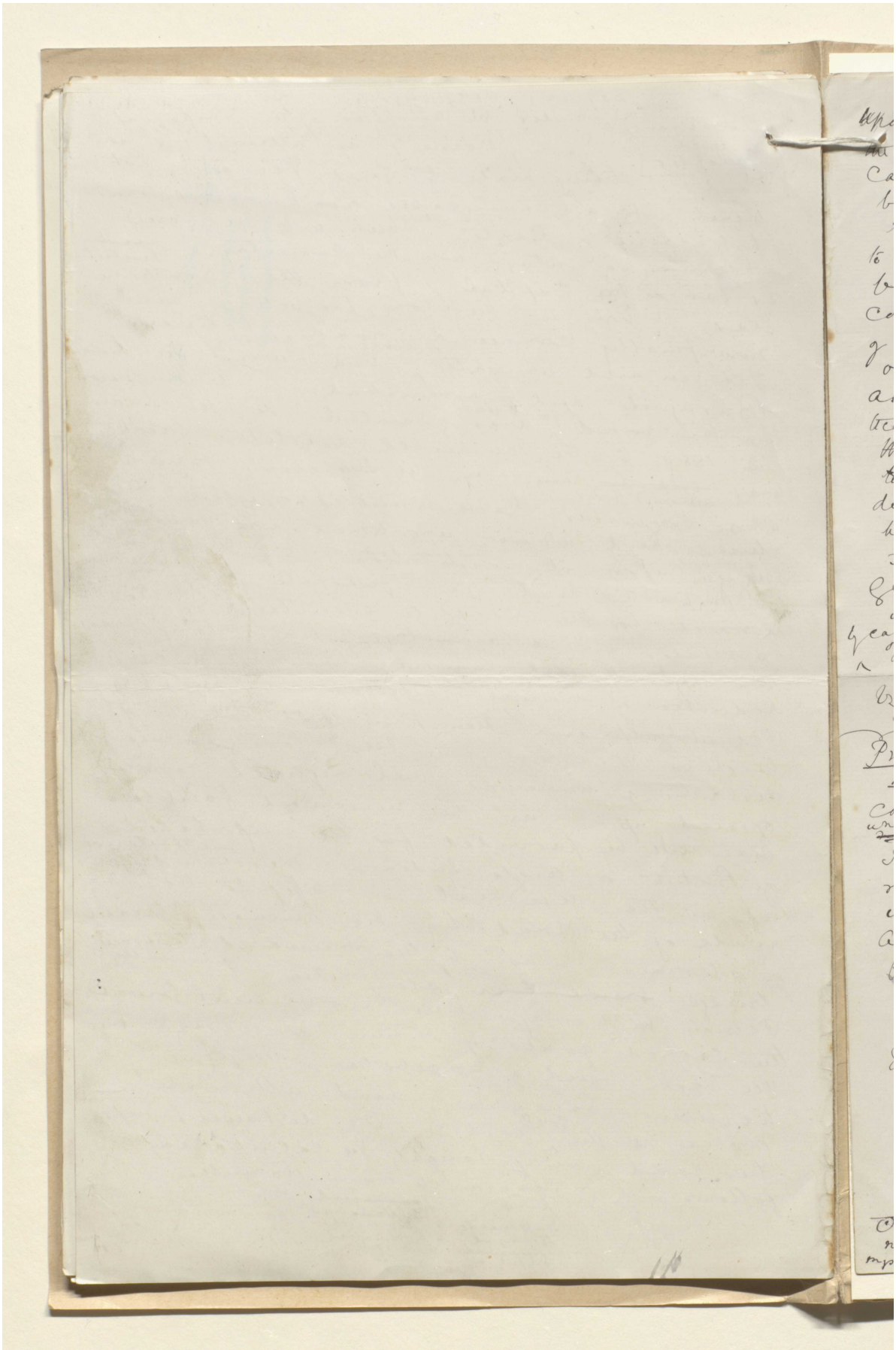

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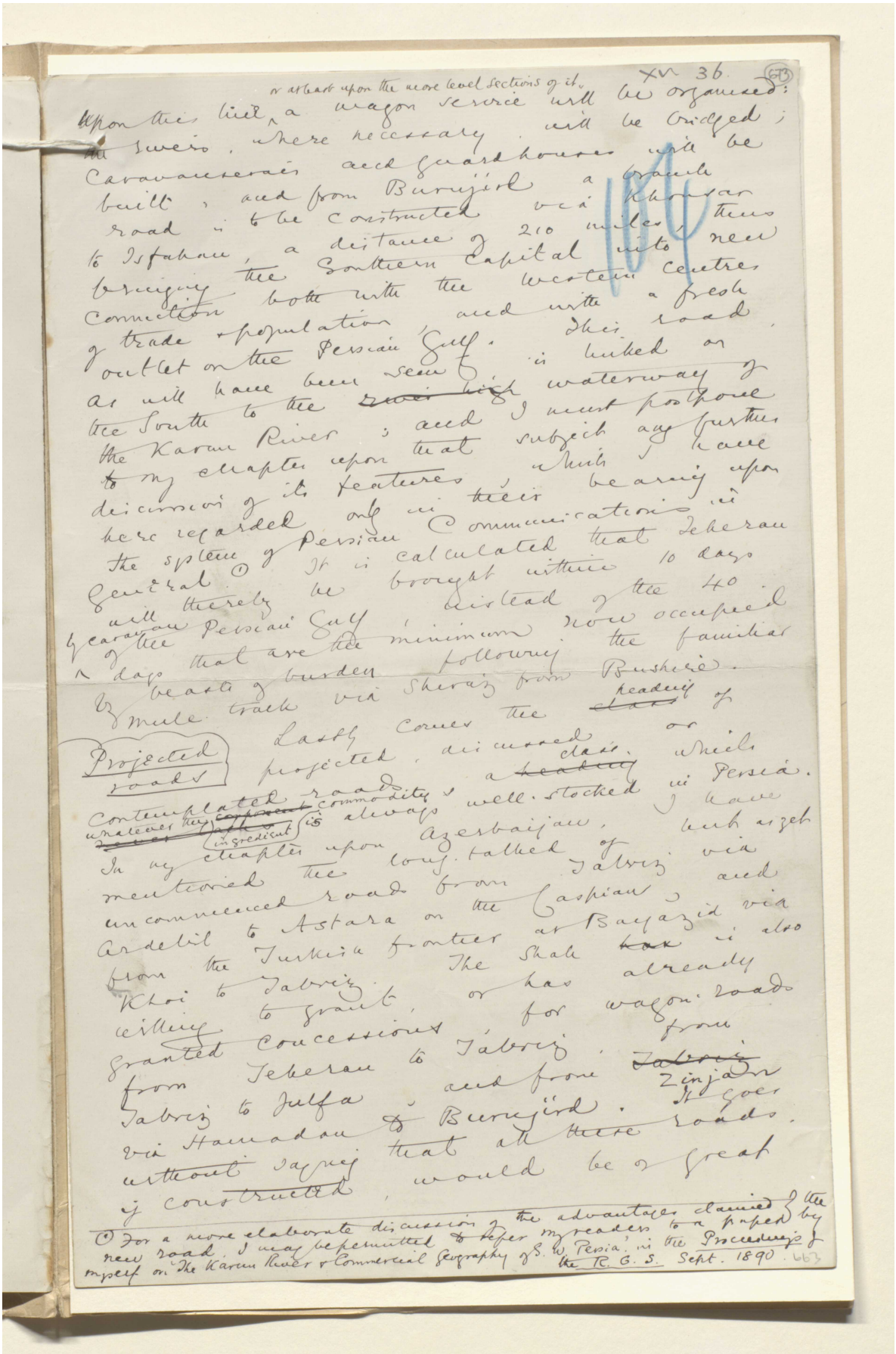
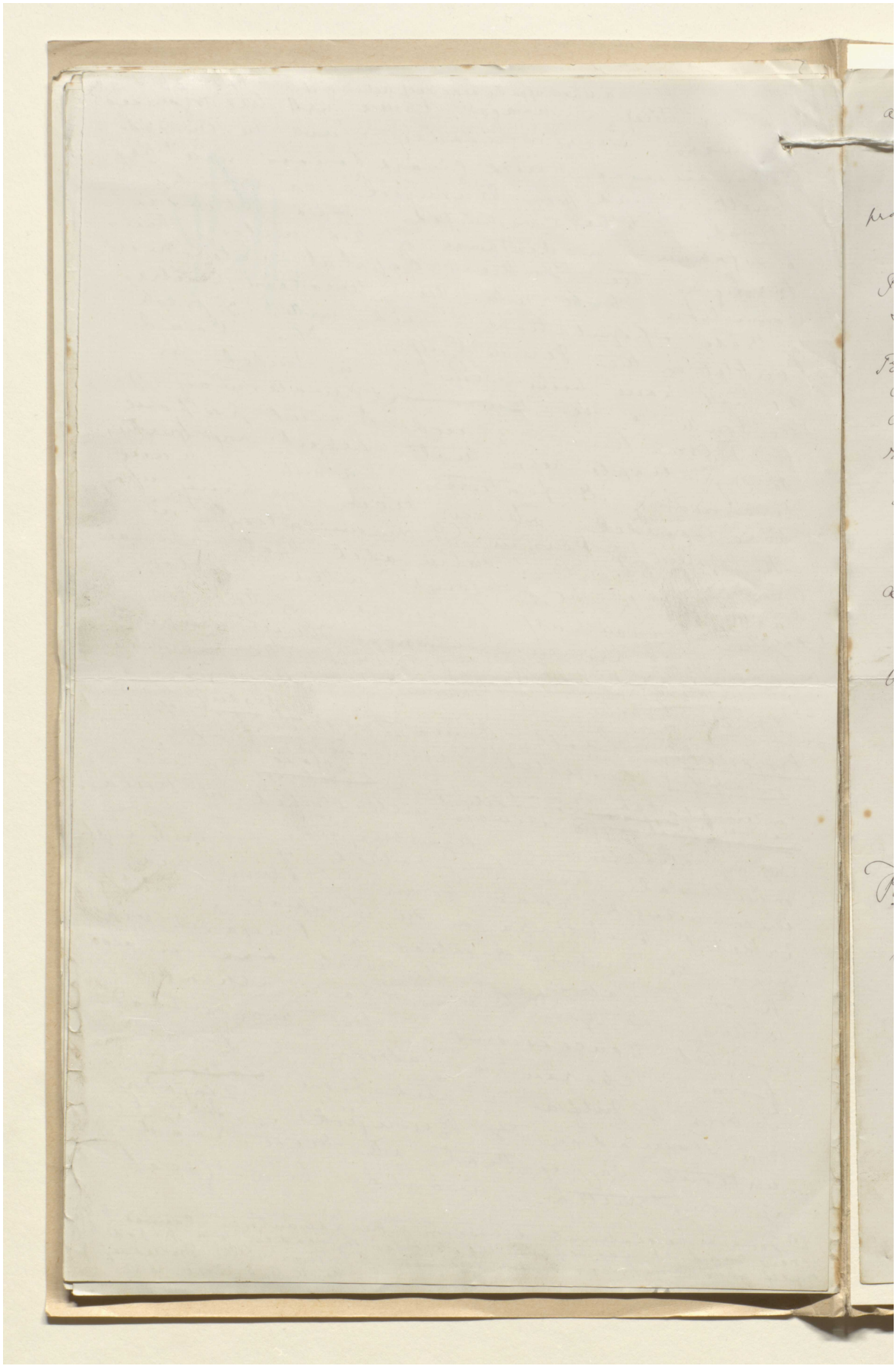


Upon this line, or at least upon the more level sections of it, a wagon service will be organised: the rivers, where necessary, will be bridged; Caravanserais and guardhouses will be built; and from Burujird a branch road is to be constructed via Khonsar to Isfahan, a distance of 210 miles, thus bringing the Southern Capital into new connection both with the Western Centres of trade & population, and with a fresh outlet on the Persian Gulf. This road, as will have been seen, is linked on the South to the ~~river high~~ waterway of the Karun River; and I must postpone to my chapter upon that subject any further discussion of its features, which I have here regarded only in their bearing upon the system of Persian Communications in General.(1) It is calculated that Teheran will thereby be brought within 10 days by caravan of the Persian Gulf, instead of the 40 days that are the minimum now occupied by beasts of burden following the familiar mule track via Shiraz from Bushire.

Projected roads

Lastly comes the ~~class~~ heading of projected, discussed or contemplated roads, a ~~heading~~ class which whatever the ~~component~~ ingredient commodity is always well-stocked in Persia. In my chapter upon Azerbaijan, I have mentioned the long-talked of but as yet uncommenced roads from Tabriz via Ardebil to Astara on the Caspian, and from the Turkish frontier at Bayazid via Khoi to Tabriz. The Shah ~~has~~ is also willing to grant, or has already granted concessions for wagon roads from Teheran to Tabriz, from Tabriz to Julfa, and from ~~Tabriz~~ Zinjan via Hamadan to Burujird. It goes without saying that all these roads, if constructed, would be of great

(1) For a more elaborate discussion of the advantages claimed by the new road, I may be permitted to refer my readers to a paper by myself on "The Karun River & Commercial Geography of S. W. Persia," in the Proceedings of the R. G. S. Sept. 1890. 663



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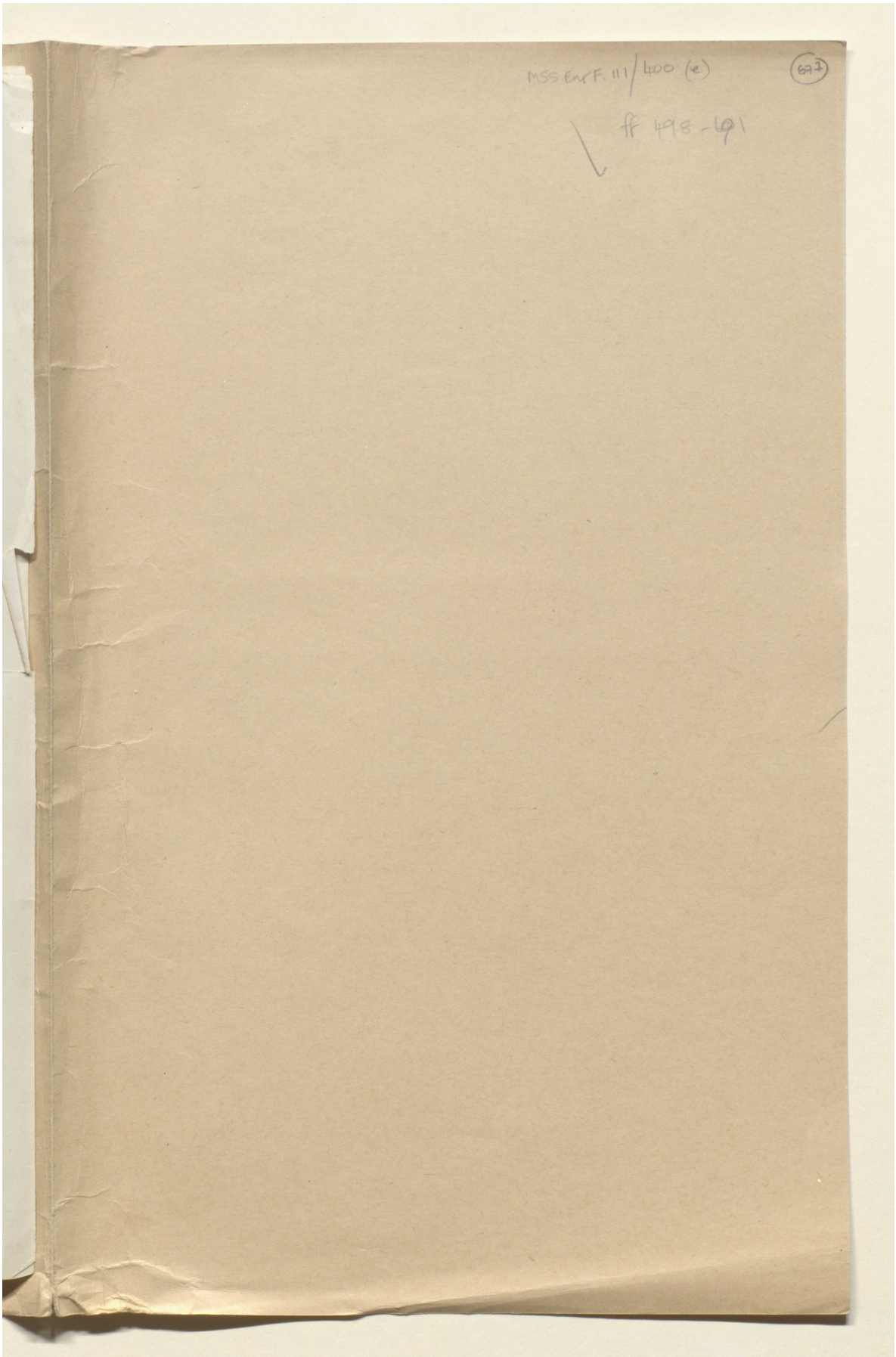
MSS Eur F. 111/400 (e)
ff 498-491



المرجع: Mss Eur F111/30 حق النشر: رخصة حكومة مفتوحة

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