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Fair copy of Pelly's diary of his journey from Kuwait to Riyadh and back

Holding Institution	British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers
Reference	Mss Eur F126/58
Date(s)	18 Feb 1865-27 Feb 1865 (CE, Gregorian)
Written in	English in Latin
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About this record

The fair copy of the diary is not complete and only covers the entries for 18-21st, 24th and 26th-27th February.

The entries for each day give the distances travelled, how long each stage took, longitude & latitude co-ordinates for their destination each day, comments on the availability of water, descriptions of the landscapes, observations on people and tribes encountered on route and some rough estimations of the number of pilgrims that travel there from Busreh [Basra], Kowait [Kuwait], Lahsa and Damascus

See F126/57 for the complete journal containing more detailed descriptions for each day's entry.

MSS EUR F126/58

①

Date	From	To	Hours	General direction	Remarks.
1865. Feb 17 th 18 th	Kuwait	beyond Fort Malak	7- $\frac{1}{2}$	Kuwait Lat: 29° 22' 56" Long: 47° 59' 51"	Went an hour $5\frac{1}{2}$ E. then gradually tended to S. S. E. for the Fort Malak which is five hours' distance from Kuwait. There are some wells close to the Fort and a few temporary tents. General character of the country a bounded plain slightly undulating like long depressed waves. For the first hour thin grass eaten by Locusts. Afterwards the plain sprinkled with low brush wood, which the camels browsed as we went along. of rain and strong wind from the Southward during the march. A small conical hill bearing S. W. and by S. from the halting place, its name Wurrah. A longer and more distant hill named Sebahiah bearing S. and by W. The conical hill is one hour and one half distant. We are to pass near the Sebahiah tomorrow. The halting ground is not marked by any tent or Fort. No water would be findable here in the best weather.

Hour	General direction	Remarks
<p>060 By the Malak Legait $4\frac{3}{4}$ By remaining star supposed hours H. 4. 44. 38 Box West 51. 3. 30 toward of Meridia</p>	<p>Lat. 29-11-17 Long. 51-11-17</p>	<p>South Determined on changing the route and going to Sedair instead of direct to Riyadh. Had a fight about this question with my caravan leader who like Euseyben Bedrain, which would propose to fear attack en route, and secondly with a chief of the ^{Bedrain} Loocheeah tribe who is afraid of the Wahabees in that account of any looking at his country. Finally young David and Suliman cheered in against any going. I was compelled to storm and threaten before I could gain my point.</p> <p>First two hours South by West. Then South and by East for an hour and finally South for an hour and three fourths. The Seballiah Hill bore West after three and three fourths of an hour; and some distance away. The ground shaped over today resembles that of yesterday. Vast gently waving Prairies sprinkled with low brushwood. Battered in a slight depression of ground known as Legait. Spot quite unmarked by any dwelling. We only pitched one black tent. Today Bedrain appeared with string bands in the evening. I purchased two of them. Rain water at Legait in this season, but none will be findable here in the hot season. I noticed a good number of wild flowers in blossom today.</p> <p>Latitude by North star I perceive that we have passed over 32 Miles of ground, viz: difference of Latitude 23 Miles; 6 Miles of Longitude; and 3 Miles traversing.</p>

(2)

Zolpy

From our halting place tonight the road to Zolpy diverges. We are taking a medium course. Freijlan on the road to Riyadh lies to our left.

20th Legait Warfa 8 m.
28-37-13

After three hours came on a depression with a hill bearing West (an hour). Name of hill Grae, and the depression which leads East to the sea is known as the Khou or creek of Grae. There was a pool of bad rain water in it near where we passed the creek. After heavy rain water flows along it to the sea distant one day's journey. After eight hours encamped a hill named Rehaigh bearing West half an hour off and a hill named Delaa at Della half an hour in front of us South. The Warfa lands lying half an hour East. The land South beyond the hill Delaa and Della are called Chug, ground today like that of yesterday. Met some Bedouins of the Wahabee tribes. Adau ends at the station we are now at, the low hills bending round our point mark its inland boundary. The ground of Adau is identifiable by the Bedouin in that its strata lie in the direction of the low hills, say South East by North West.

Hours	Direction	Remarks
<p>2 1/2 Feb 21/4 W. Della Majra ul Sulphur Hills</p>	<p>10 Date: 28-12-4</p>	<p>South After half an hour came to Hill Delaa ul Della. Saw a hill about two hours by West. East called Delaa ul Shadaf (entire) plus district which bends away North to South a point between Sahagan and Sulphur Hill near Jokeir. The straits of Sulphur South follow the curve of the hills which mark the boundaries of the District. Ground West today rising and sloping very gently Eastward, the undulations are regular, South the general character above that of with a general gradual rise on our right or Westward. A conical Hill shows East called Five separate irregular hills round our front, an hour half ahead called the Sulphur Hills, only two of them however have Sulphur. Our reckoning this evening by the North star gives us 24 Miles of Latitude gone over today, or I have probably made three Miles of Westing.</p>

③ 3

24th
Water
at the
halting
place

From 4 to 7 P.M. to 5 P.M. of Bedouin including a half of the Mabra
Wells where our caravan also was ordered for the first time since leaving
Lahia by the Bedouins - 27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-73-74-75-76-77-78-79-80-81-82-83-84-85-86-87-88-89-90-91-92-93-94-95-96-97-98-99-100-101-102-103-104-105-106-107-108-109-110-111-112-113-114-115-116-117-118-119-120-121-122-123-124-125-126-127-128-129-130-131-132-133-134-135-136-137-138-139-140-141-142-143-144-145-146-147-148-149-150-151-152-153-154-155-156-157-158-159-160-161-162-163-164-165-166-167-168-169-170-171-172-173-174-175-176-177-178-179-180-181-182-183-184-185-186-187-188-189-190-191-192-193-194-195-196-197-198-199-200-201-202-203-204-205-206-207-208-209-210-211-212-213-214-215-216-217-218-219-220-221-222-223-224-225-226-227-228-229-230-231-232-233-234-235-236-237-238-239-240-241-242-243-244-245-246-247-248-249-250-251-252-253-254-255-256-257-258-259-260-261-262-263-264-265-266-267-268-269-270-271-272-273-274-275-276-277-278-279-280-281-282-283-284-285-286-287-288-289-290-291-292-293-294-295-296-297-298-299-300-301-302-303-304-305-306-307-308-309-310-311-312-313-314-315-316-317-318-319-320-321-322-323-324-325-326-327-328-329-330-331-332-333-334-335-336-337-338-339-340-341-342-343-344-345-346-347-348-349-350-351-352-353-354-355-356-357-358-359-360-361-362-363-364-365-366-367-368-369-370-371-372-373-374-375-376-377-378-379-380-381-382-383-384-385-386-387-388-389-390-391-392-393-394-395-396-397-398-399-400-401-402-403-404-405-406-407-408-409-410-411-412-413-414-415-416-417-418-419-420-421-422-423-424-425-426-427-428-429-430-431-432-433-434-435-436-437-438-439-440-441-442-443-444-445-446-447-448-449-450-451-452-453-454-455-456-457-458-459-460-461-462-463-464-465-466-467-468-469-470-471-472-473-474-475-476-477-478-479-480-481-482-483-484-485-486-487-488-489-490-491-492-493-494-495-496-497-498-499-500-501-502-503-504-505-506-507-508-509-510-511-512-513-514-515-516-517-518-519-520-521-522-523-524-525-526-527-528-529-530-531-532-533-534-535-536-537-538-539-540-541-542-543-544-545-546-547-548-549-550-551-552-553-554-555-556-557-558-559-560-561-562-563-564-565-566-567-568-569-570-571-572-573-574-575-576-577-578-579-580-581-582-583-584-585-586-587-588-589-590-591-592-593-594-595-596-597-598-599-600-601-602-603-604-605-606-607-608-609-610-611-612-613-614-615-616-617-618-619-620-621-622-623-624-625-626-627-628-629-630-631-632-633-634-635-636-637-638-639-640-641-642-643-644-645-646-647-648-649-650-651-652-653-654-655-656-657-658-659-660-661-662-663-664-665-666-667-668-669-670-671-672-673-674-675-676-677-678-679-680-681-682-683-684-685-686-687-688-689-690-691-692-693-694-695-696-697-698-699-700-701-702-703-704-705-706-707-708-709-710-711-712-713-714-715-716-717-718-719-720-721-722-723-724-725-726-727-728-729-730-731-732-733-734-735-736-737-738-739-740-741-742-743-744-745-746-747-748-749-750-751-752-753-754-755-756-757-758-759-760-761-762-763-764-765-766-767-768-769-770-771-772-773-774-775-776-777-778-779-780-781-782-783-784-785-786-787-788-789-790-791-792-793-794-795-796-797-798-799-800-801-802-803-804-805-806-807-808-809-810-811-812-813-814-815-816-817-818-819-820-821-822-823-824-825-826-827-828-829-830-831-832-833-834-835-836-837-838-839-840-841-842-843-844-845-846-847-848-849-850-851-852-853-854-855-856-857-858-859-860-861-862-863-864-865-866-867-868-869-870-871-872-873-874-875-876-877-878-879-880-881-882-883-884-885-886-887-888-889-890-891-892-893-894-895-896-897-898-899-900-901-902-903-904-905-906-907-908-909-910-911-912-913-914-915-916-917-918-919-920-921-922-923-924-925-926-927-928-929-930-931-932-933-934-935-936-937-938-939-940-941-942-943-944-945-946-947-948-949-950-951-952-953-954-955-956-957-958-959-960-961-962-963-964-965-966-967-968-969-970-971-972-973-974-975-976-977-978-979-980-981-982-983-984-985-986-987-988-989-990-991-992-993-994-995-996-997-998-999-1000

South and by West occasionally due South and South by West

After an hour over broken sandstone mounds came on a valley where we got a
little good rain water just enough to fill our seven skins. I turned off to some
tents belonging to the tribe of my guide. The women of either tent brought out large
round metal trays filled with Bedouin cheese and some dried dates, also some
Bedouin butter on a bowl and lots of sour milk; we made a good meal of it.
The little girls and also the grown young men had long braids of black hair at
the back of the head, and the youth had tied two of his front braids round his
chin.

Leaving the tents we ascended some more low hills and in half an hour came
down into the valley in which are situate the wells of Mabra. This at certain
season is a great central Wahabee camping ground. There are upwards of a hundred
wells, all within a space of four hundred yards square. Only a few were in good
repair, and one esteemed sweeter than the others (which are all brackish) was the
common resort. When the Bedouins are here in numbers they clear the adjacent
wells. The wells are dug some three or four fathoms through the sandstone rock.
The wells are said to be of very ancient date. Was this a point of convergence on
the route from Kuwait across Arabia in ancient days?

Standing at the wells the route for ^{Mojmaah} Hajman bears across the sandstone hills
South West by West. The road to Riyadh direct leads up at once over some broken
ground in a direction of South and by West.

South South West are the traces of a small hill fort. They say it is very

Date	From	To	Hours	General Direction	Remarks
					<p>old. It does not so appear to me. I picked up some old crockery about it. From this point the Semman becomes more open, the hills being less composed, the valleys broader and flat lying generally in winding fashion North and South. The side hills lowish flat topped with frequent buck colored ribbons near their bases; and in some instances where the hills are conical the summits of the cones are buck color. We followed one of these long valleys in a Southerly direction until sunset when we halted with the rising ground which will take us out of the valley just in front of us.</p> <p>I picked a good many wild flowers, wild parsley also. The comiyou brushwood of the country seems a wild myrtle. The guide picked me a plant with a bulb. He peeled off the rind of the bulb and the inside both in view and taste reminded me of a Brazil nut. There is a quantity of sour sorrel which they say was imported into Nujd from Egypt by Moorshed Pasha, and is now commonly eaten by the Bedouins. The camels came on a little faster today as they browsed less while walking, the ground being frequently quite barren and glaring; and even where sprinkled with grass and brushwood less fully so than in former marches. I observe a camel will browse as he walks and still make his three miles an hour.</p> <p>The guide described the ruins of the Fort at Haurij as being a mile or more in</p>

④ 5

Ninth The Ard Hills en route to Mecca are occupied by the Khairan Tribe, who possess good horses and are subject to the Arabs.

Tenth Balfy is from 5 to 6 days from Riyadh. If you go to Balfy via Shagra it is 7 days. From Balfy to Kuwait is 12 days. The pilgrim route from Bueish passes near Zobair, Tharah and so to Balfy. It leaves Riyadh to the South.

Our halting ground last evening was Saba Samman. Today the ground for the first half hour or so ^{was the same} as yesterday. ~~The~~ The country ~~then~~ opened out into plains and the hills gradually diminished in height until they sank into gentle undulations of sandstone and sandstone flaps.

For the last half hour that is on leaving Samman you approach the first range of the sand hills of the Delma over a gentle plain of hard pebbly ground, on the further edge of which the sand hills rise much as they would (and with quite as much distinctness of outline) along the sea beach.

The sand ridge is low, say 70 to 80 or 90 feet, and sprinkled with vegetation which looks much fresher than that we have passed in Samman. Indeed the strip of Samman seems to have ^{no} little or no rain this year. Looking forward from any camping ground I can see another plain and in the distance a second ridge of sand hills. The ridge I am now on is no more than a few hundred of yards wide. So far as I can judge the general direction of the ridge when I am crossing it is North West and by West and South East and by East.

26th From To the From
a further first ^{to} after
point in ridge of 6 A.M.
Samman desc. to 4 to 5
Hills and 1 M. or
Delma 10 hours
I had
baggage
on wheels
continues
by mov-
ing as
usual

Repeat
of Meccan
Samman
14.5.26.30

Repeat
of Meccan
Samman
14.5.26.30

to Samman
to Samman
to Samman
to Samman

Date	From	To	Hours	General Direction	Remarks.
					<p>After about four hours marching this morning I came to a great circular figure in the rock sand about 20 feet above there was a sort of beam and then a lower circular figure for 30 or more feet down. The diameter of the upper figure may be 35 feet or so. I cannot determine whether the hollow is natural or wholly, or in part artificial. It looks, however, artificial. Its sides are throughout solid rock. One of my guides descended to the beam by the aid of a rope and then re-descended the lower well by the same aid. He found no water however. A few miles further on we found a little water by digging in a sandy depression. It was with difficulty they collected two khatif. But even this is something as we have a reach of five days without water.</p> <p>Yesterday my Sibbees guide had a narrow escape with his life. He had gone ahead for half a mile with the head camel man to buy me a witch camel from some Bedouins. When they turned out to be Bedouins from Wady Dowasir with whom the Sibbees are at blood feud. The camel man retreated first, and then the guide watching his movement, bolted too before the Bedouins could seize him. He came back trembling from head to foot, and in the evening there was a general gratulation to him. It seems his people killed 70 of Dowasir people last year.</p> <p>Gather from conversations today</p>

5

First - That there is an outcast Tribe towards Yemen which who have a religion of their own. They are ^{Awizem} ~~Awizem~~ ^{Awizem} ~~Awizem~~. The Mahomedans designate both them and Selaib outcasts in that they have no Chiefs or Tribal organization or recognition.

Second - It seems that the real state of the question as between the Imam and Muscat is that the former wishes to increase the tribute money from 12 to 40000 Dollars. The Deputy at Buerch is put forward as the aggressor but the Imam himself is at the bottom of the matter.

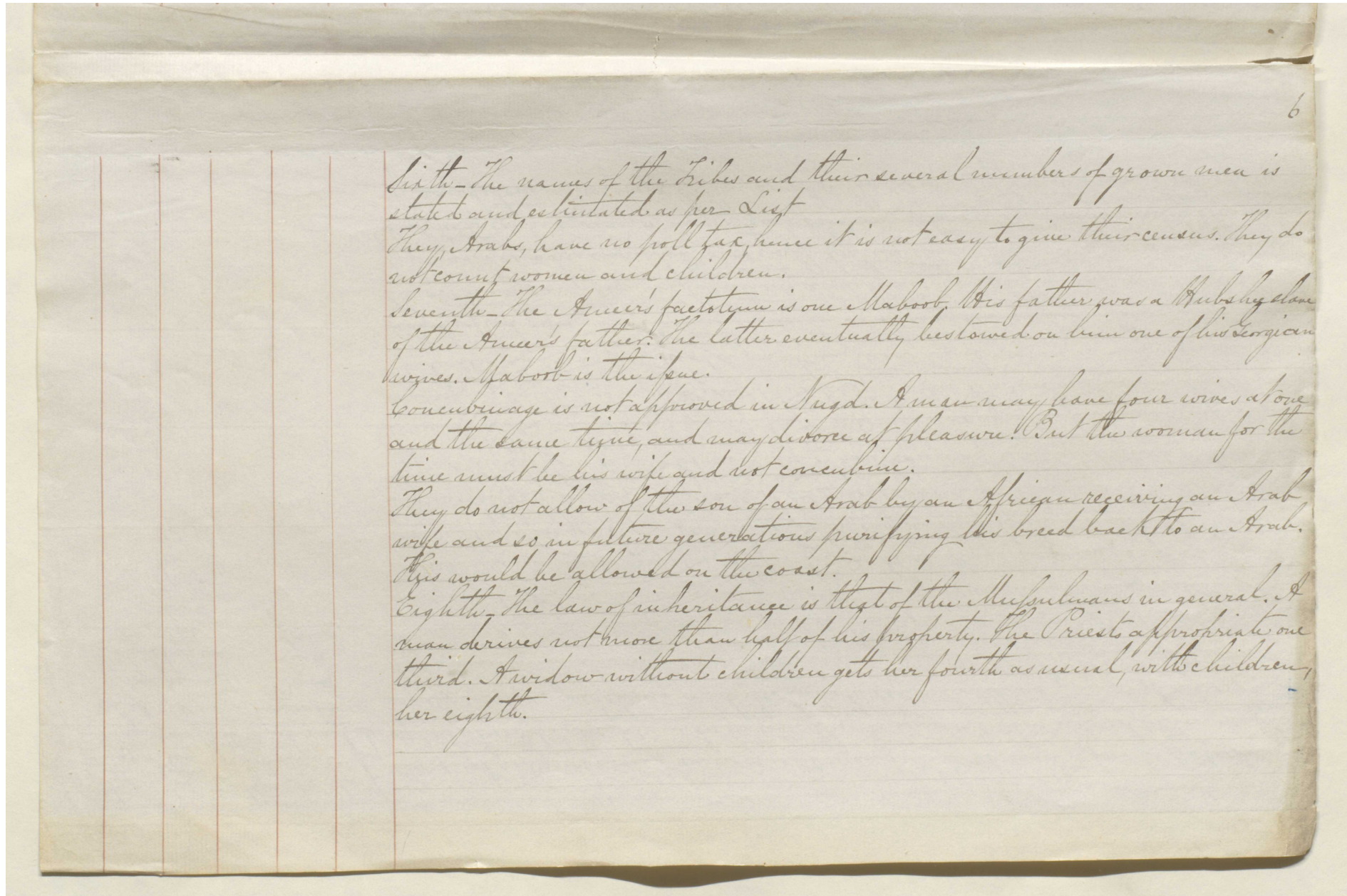
Third - Before the Ben Saoud Family came into power Central Arabia was partitioned among numerous independent small Chiefs.

Fourth - Down to within three or four years ago Pilgrims passing through Nuzd paid black mail to the several chiefs through whose grounds they moved. They now contract, that is the Persians and Pilgrims not being Arabs for a lump sum of 72 Dollars which is paid to the Imam, and of which he gives to the Sheriff of Mecca Dollars twenty, and to the chiefs of Tribes who are on the road to Mecca Dollars twelve. The number of Pilgrims passing annually is roughly estimated -

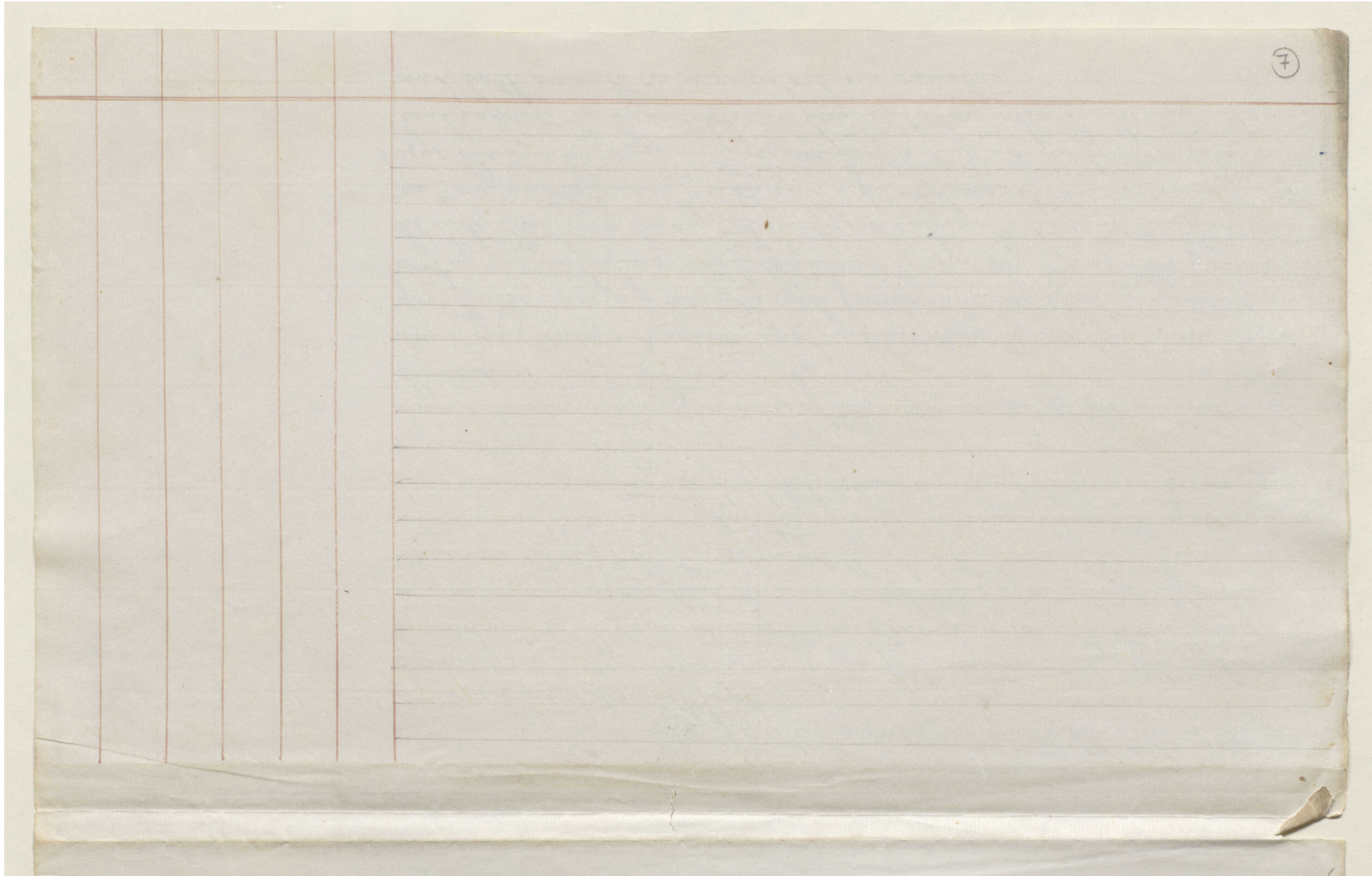
Via Buerch	18,000
Via Kowait	2,000
Via Salsaa	30,000
Via the N. or from Damascus	150,000

Date	From	To	Hours	General Direction	Remarks	
Left blank					Fifth - The Ameer is said to receive money Revenue from his subordinates as follows, in camel loads of 6,000 Dollars per camel:-	
					From El Ahsa	80,000
					The people of Oman in the interior or among from Ras-ul-Hud to the Maritime Arabs of the Gulf	40,000
					The Maritime Arabs	12,000
					Muscat	12,000
					Bahrein	6,000
					Khutiffe	60,000
					Bedouin Tribes of Nejd	573,000
Other Districts of Nejd	90,000					
<p data-bbox="660 837 2027 1204">He receives also one sheep in 50 and one camel in 100. From many Tribes on possessing good horses he receives presents of horses; for instance from Subul Humudiar he receives annually 18 horses being the number which he gets. From Humudiar, however, is not called tribute but a present. In addition from El Ahsa he gets also presents of fine Abbas and other manufactures. He gives his retainers and deputies sent to El Ahsa or Khutiffe an order for such and such a quantity of dates.</p>						

Date	From	To	Hours	General Direction	Remarks
1865 Feb 7 th 27 th	From the ridge of the hills in plain between the fourth & fifth ridges of sand	To the ridge of the hills in plain between the fourth & fifth ridges of sand	1/4 after 9 P.M. to 3 P.M. 4 hours	So South East Dunes had four	The first ridge of sand was some 50 or 60 feet high and a few hundred feet broad. The plain between this ridge and the second ridge occupied us 2 1/2 hours in crossing, and I estimate its breadth at 7 miles. The second ridge occupied us one hour and 1/2 in crossing; the second plain half an hour. The third ridge one hour 10 minutes; the third plain one hour. The fourth ridge one hour; we were crossing the fourth plain when the dysentery from which I have been suffering for two or three days became so painful that I could no longer bear the camels' jolting and ordered a halt at 3 P.M. None of the ridges of sand we have yet crossed are of any altitude. It seems to me that the general character of the country is that which I described immediately after leaving Kuwait, namely a generally plain country with a series of slight undulations at intervals and have a common direction. Only the Delma is a higher plateau than that near Kuwait; and the sand has drifted over it collecting in deeper and broader masses where it met with the obstruction of the undulations and lying in thick sands over the unheaving plains. The soil indeed shows itself frequently in these plains in patches of a lightish looking clay, or in patches strewn with small pebbles and the debris of sandstone. The flora on the sandhills seems different from that of the



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Summan. I have today plucked a few specimens. The color of the sand is
 light red or reddish orange.
 Immediately after halting we had a false alarm. The party approaching
 turned out to be some men of Wadi Dowafir. We were too strong for them
 so they were civil; but the Soobeah owned that if it were not for fear of the
 Amir he would kill the fellows. My Interpreter tried to get some infor-
 mation about Dowafir. But they would not even return the salaam; and
 told him to pray to the prophet, which is a hint to turn the conversation
 and not ask questions.
 I find that one of my men is of the Speer Tribe, of the mountains towards
 Hodeidah.
 One of our Arabs, a Kowaiter, shot another hare today; this is his third or
 fourth. He always fires with ball from a long barrelled matchlock; and has
 not as yet wiped one shot. He seems to consider it a matter of course that
 he hits. The hares are small but good eating. We have seen little game as
 yet; one antelope - our hares - and a few oobara. I have got also a few oobara
 eggs. The snakes are plentiful; our people kill a dozen or more daily as they
 walk along. The lizards also are frequent as are also the beetles in places;
 and both seem to have some curious varieties.