

Copy
Political No. 2.

Jerusalem 20 April 1861.

My Lord

I have the honor to report that I have lately made an expedition to Petra having long meditated that journey from the consideration of the number of British subjects who pass every year from here to Petra on the way to Jerusalem and it seemed to me that where so much British money is spent and where so many disputes have arisen between British Travellers and the people of the place it would be well for some person in authority to be seen at least once in a while only to prove to the people there that British subjects are not forgotten even in Petra -

I had also another object in view
G. C. B. nearly

Mr. Consul
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namely to open a communication between Jerusalem and Petra, the distance being shorter through the desert than it is by Egypt -

Several English parties have desired to reach Petra from Jerusalem since my arrival in this country, but have been unable to accomplish it on account of the exorbitant demands of Abderrahman the Governor of Febron - Some have even left Jerusalem with the intention of reaching Cairo through Petra, but no traveller has travelled from Jerusalem to Petra direct since Dr Robinson in 1838 except a Lieut. Newbold in 1846, who passed through Febron singly and suddenly during the absence of the Governor -

Thus Abderrahman has kept the Arab tribes in his vicinity in awe of himself, but I thought it possible that
the

The English name and influence among the Arabs might serve to counterbalance the Power of Abderrahman - This I have found to be the case - on learning from Capt. Borrow of the 13 Light Dragoon, that he wished to make that journey, I went with him escorted by the Sehalin Arabs who were glad of the opportunity of defying Abderrahman by means of the English Consul, and we accordingly avoided Febron altogether -

On the return we met at the South end of the Dead Sea a party of natives proceeding to Kerak under an escort of Arabs, these informed us that Abderrahman had in his rage sent for the Chiefs of the Tāmuri and Sehalin Arabs and menaced them with his resentment for having assisted the Consul in proceeding without his knowledge, and had then sent

for the Director of the Quarantine (which said establishment he cordially detests) and warned him to look out for the party returning, and bring them to Tibron -

We returned by the Dead Sea and Ain Liddy to Jerusalem, where we performed quarantine in tents outside the city -

I have received complaints from Petra Travellers this year as well as previously of the extortion and menaces of the people of Petra (who are quite distinct from the Desert Arabs) but in every case I have found the disputes to arise from the circumstances of their having arrived by way of Stakbel where the Arabs have less influence or means of force than the Haween under Shikh Hussein from Akaba - but from what I have now seen I do not despair of yet finding the people of Petra

Petra reasonable and manageable -

I am about to commence a negotiation with the Sehhalin Arabs for the easy progress and safety of Travellers between Jerusalem and Petra, on certain fixed and published terms, in the same manner as has been done by F. B. M. Consul in Cairo in which matter I anticipate no difficulty - Many persons in Jerusalem are of opinion that it would be a public benefit to this city to bring Petra travellers by this route; perhaps it would not diminish the number of those proceeding by Egypt and Sinai, but only superadd the number of those who wish to visit Petra as easily as possible - However, it will be necessary to make the Sehhalin as much respected (they are a strong tribe) as Shikh Hussein is or the South of Petra, and so the Petra people

Wm. Palmerston
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will be more than ever kept in check.
 I also expect that if Travellers
 pass by this route, their transit and the
 money spent will tend to civilize the
 Arabs, and serve much to extend the
 influence of the Turkish Government which
 is now an *utro nov-entia* among them,
 felt and declared to be so by the
 Authorities in Jerusalem - I had yesterday
 some papers brought to me by the Sheikh
 of the Saamri, guaranteeing on the part
 of the Benni Hamidch and Benni Sakhi
 beyond Jordan the safety of Travellers
 visiting Kerak, which has been but seldom
 visited of late years -

I have the honor to be

My Lord

with the highest esteem

Your Lordship's

most Obedient Humble Servant

(signed) J. Finn

Copy

Political No. 1.

Jerusalem, 29 April, 1851.

My Lord

I have the honor to report in continuation of my Despatches Nos 15 and 18 of 1850, that the Greek Convent continues to make purchases of land in this country, and to spend large sums of money in improvement of the same, converting stony hills and other long neglected lands into olive grounds and mulberry gardens - This is most observable between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, not only in a direct line, but extending wide in every direction - And I have been lately informed from several quarters, especially by a respectable Moslem of Jerusalem, who has access to such kinds of knowledge, that they have purchased largely on the sea coast between the Bay of Acre and Jaffa, having sent men from Beit Sahoor a Greek village in this neighbourhood to Caiffa and Akko for that purpose - They have also purchased land near Nablous at Jacob's well -

A rumour having reached us some months since of a number of Russians being about to colonize Caesarea, and cultivate the vicinity of those ruins, we have

Viscount Palmerston
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Copy of Despatches
 from Mr. Consul Fin
 No 2 Political

2 Enclosure in Mr. Consul
 Fin's Despatches No 5 of
 5th May, 1851.