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Gwadar, Muscat and Zanzibar: Ports and People Interchange in the Indian Ocean

Abstract

During the nineteenth century, the presence of Omanis political leaders on the Eastern African coasts did lead to numerous intersections between regional and international interests where Britain often played a role of turning realities into new political scenarios.

The power of the Al Bu Sa'id Sultans of Oman was widely known as based on delicate balance of forces, and social groups, deeply different among them. In fact, the elements that composed the nineteenth century Omani leadership were, and had always been, generally divided amongst different groups: the Baloch, the Asian merchant communities and the African regional leaders (Mwiny Mkuu). Within this framework, the role played by European Powers, particularly by the Treaties signed between the Sultans of Oman and the East India Company for abolishing slavery, and by the arms trade was crucial for the development of the Gulf and the Indian Ocean international networks. They highly contributed to the gradual shifting of the Omanis from the slave trade to clove and spice cultivation – the major economic source of Zanzibar Island – along the coastal areas of Sub-Saharan East Africa.

The history of the Indian Ocean has gained a renewed interest as it reminds us of the greatest mobility and traversal with such an impact that it forces us to rethink how the processes of such encounters operate and what the areas stand for. Many stories are untold inside this cosmopolitan interregional arena. The challenge is therefore great to try to reshape our understanding of Africa and Asia.

Within Indian Ocean routes - both maritime and land ones - the port of Gwādar (25° 6' N. 62° 19' E.) represented one of the main routes of communication between the Middle East and the Indian Sub-continent, together with a strategic role within ivory, dates, and spice trade from East Africa and from the Arabian Peninsula, directed to Central Asia and vice versa.¹ Gwādar, on the coastal Makran region, has been scientifically defined *terra incognita*²; it is both a town and a district on the Makran coast, formerly a dependency of the Sultanate of 'Omān and since 1378/1958 a territorial possession of Pakistan. The district of Gwādar extends for 40 miles along the shoreline of Gwādar West Bay, from Cape Pishkān to Gwādar Head, and some 14 miles inland. The town stands on a sandy isthmus, about a mile wide, at the foot of a seaward, hammerhead promontory rising to 400 feet³. In front of Gwādar port there is Ashtola Island, explored by the British Agent McGregor in 1877-78. It is a wild and beautiful island, with a

¹ B. Nicolini, *The Port of Gwadar and its Relationships with Oman* in, A. al-Salimi & E. Staples (Eds.), *Oman: A Maritime History/Ports of Oman*: Georg Olms Verlag, 2016, 245-258; B. Nicolini, *Oman's Maritime Activities in the Indian Ocean, 1650-1856 CE*, in, A. al-Salimi & E. Staples (Eds.), *Oman: A Maritime History/ Ports of Oman*: Georg Olms Verlag, 2016, 139-157.

² B. Nicolini, *Terrae Nullius. Viaggi tanto per terra quanto per mare*, Saarbrücken: Edizioni Accademiche Italiane, 2014.

³ *Encyclopedia of Islam*, online edition Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2014; [http://Balōčistānarchives.gov.pk/exhibits/web_detailview/10#exibits\[exibit-name\]/6/](http://Balōčistānarchives.gov.pk/exhibits/web_detailview/10#exibits[exibit-name]/6/)

high mountain that ends in a plateau. Here local people tell the legend of the white horse of the Prophet, as remembered by the presence of a shrine.

Gwātar (Gwuttur) (25° 10' N. 61° 33' E.) must not be confused with Gwādar (25° 6' N. 62° 19' E.)⁴. Since the British Commission definition of the borders in 1871-2 Gwātar bay, on the eastern shore, remained within the Persian borders, while Gwādar, on the western shore, about fifty miles west of Gwātar, is today part of Pakistan⁵. Gwādar is about 250 miles east of Maskaṭ. One of the earliest detailed source that specifically named Gwātar/Gwādar within Gedrosia region was *Anabasis Alexandri* by Arrianus of 325 B.C.⁶ Together with Pasni, a fishing village on the Makrān coast - today in Pakistan - , Gwādar was attacked and burnt by the Portuguese in 1581⁷. In 1739, Taki Khan, Nāder Shah's general (1736-1747), captured it⁸. In 1784 Mir Naṣir Khan I (1749-95), the Khan of Kalāt, granted as a *jagir* (lease), a temporary grant of land exempted from taxation the port of Gwādar to Sa'id Solṭān b. Aḥmad Āl bu-Sa'id of 'Omān (r. 1792-1804) who ruled on Maskaṭ, on a trust basis⁹. In 1784 half of the revenues of Gwādar belonged to the Gički family of Makrān¹⁰, while Gwātar was nominally under the Persian influence through Jadghāl Balōč (Balōč) tribe chiefs¹¹. On the occasion of the construction of the Indo-European Telegraph Line, investigations made by the Makrān, Sistān and Persia Boundary Commission, directed by Sir Frederick Goldsmid (1818-1908)¹², juridical-territorial claims were advanced¹³. On 24 January 1862 Mir Faqir Moḥammad Bizenjō, chief of the Bizenjō tribe of Makrān and ally of the Khan of Kalāt, who was representative of Kēč, signed a treaty with Goldsmid for the safety of the passage of the telegraph line through Makrān; the representative also granted Goldsmid the safety of the lands belonging to Mir Bayan Gički, chief of the Gički family. At the beginning of 1863 Ibrahim Khan, the Persian military governor of Bampūr, wrote letters to Sa'id Towayni Āl bu-Sa'id of 'Omān (r. 1856-66), grandson of Sa'id Solṭān b. Aḥmad Āl bu-Sa'id of 'Omān, and to the 'Omāni Arab deputy (wālī), named *Mahomed*, of Gwādar suggesting not to give their approval to the prosecution of the telegraph line to the

⁴ Guater (Pers. Govāter) is a little known locality at the South Eastern corner of Iran on the border with Pakistan.

⁵ B. De Cardi, "A New Prehistoric Ware from Balōčistān", *Iraq*, 13/2 (Autumn, 1951): 63-75; L. Potter, "The Consolidation of Iran's frontier in the nineteenth century", in R. Farmanfarmaian (Ed.), *War and Peace in Qājār Persia: implications past and present* Oxford, 2008, 125-148, 139; R. Hay, "The Persian Gulf States and Their Boundary Problems", *The Geographical Journal*, 120/4 (Dec. 1954): 433-443.

⁶ J.A. Saldanha, *Persian Gulf Précis. Précis on Makrān Affairs I*, Calcutta, 1905, 19.

⁷ A.W. Stiffe, "Ancient Trading Centres of the Persian Gulf: IV Maskat", *The Geographical Journal*, 10/6 (Dec., 1897): 608-618, 610-12; S. Badalkhan, "Portuguese Encounters with Coastal Makrān Balōč during the Sixteenth Century. Some References from a Balōči Heroic Epic", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Third Series, 10/2 (Jul., 2000): 153-169.

⁸ R. Hughes-Buller, *The Gazetteer of Balōčistān (Makrān)*, 1st ed., Quetta, 1906; repr. Quetta, 1986: 48; S.B. Miles, *The Countries and Tribes of the Persian Gulf*, London: Harrison, 1919, repr. 1994, 252, <https://archive.org/stream/countriestribeso02mileuoft#page/n5/mode/2up>

⁹ E.C. Ross, "Captain's Ross Reports about Mekran, 1865-68", *Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government*, new series, 111, Byculla, 1868: 113.

¹⁰ M.R. Broome, *The 1780 Restrike Talers of Maria Theresia*, British Association of Numismatic Societies, London, 1972, 221-45.

¹¹ H. Pottinger, *Relazioni di un viaggio in Belouchistan e in una parte della Persia*, Milano; Sonzogno, 1819, 3 vols, vol. 2: 30

https://books.google.it/books?hl=it&lr=&id=RjhXAAAACAAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA5&dq=related:zcfsMeP6OZEJ:scholar.google.com/&ots=vQbgaNraLi&sig=afzLRgKaw8Bb_nZeLZFfmYGqqOI#v=onepage&q&f=false; C. Macgregor, *Wanderings in Balōčistān*, London: Allen & Co., 1882: 24; M. Rubin, "The Telegraph and Frontier Politics: Modernization and the Demarcation of Iran's Borders", *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*, 18/2 (1998): 59-72.

¹² F.J. Goldsmid, "Notes on Eastern Persia and Western Beluchistan", *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, 37 (1867): 269-297.

¹³ S. Soli, "Communications, Qājār irredentism, and the strategies of British India: The Makrān Coast Telegraph and British policy of containing Persia in the east (Balōčistān)", Part I, *Iranian Studies*, 39/3 (Sept. 2006): 329-351.

British before a Persian consent¹⁴. Numerous raids followed, and the British did send forces to protect their political agents in Gwādar¹⁵. Only in 1868 the Persian Government accepted to give up its rights of sovereignty over the oasis of Kēč and on Gwādar as part of the Kermān province: “it was better for British India to border with Persia than with a tribal territories such as the Khanate of Kalāt”¹⁶. In 1863 Reverend George Percy Badger (1815-1888) was put in charge of the Boundary Commission to investigating about the question of the political borders in this area¹⁷; he considered politically advisable that Gwādar remained within ‘Omāni hands, with a well armed fleet strong enough to defend it, rejecting the hypothesis of restoration to the Khanate of Kalāt, who was unable to protect this important strategic port against Persian claims. During the second half of the nineteenth century Gwādar was at the same time: a) an enclave of the Sultans of ‘Omān; b) a place of interest for the Gički family from Kēč Makrān; c) an important observatory for the British Government along the coast of Makrān in Persian direction; d) and a station of the Indo-European Telegraph Line. On 24th September 1872, joined by the Persian Commissioner Mirzā Ma’sūm Khan, the British Boundary Commission fixed the demarcation of the frontier, starting from the bay of Gwātar to the west of Gwādar, between Persia, Makrān, and Sistān. Only on 8th September 1958, and for three million pounds, the request of the Khans of Kalāt to restore the *jagir* (lease) on Gwādar granted from Mir Naṣir Khan I of Kalāt to the Āl Bu-Sa’id dynasty of ‘Omān, was finally accomplished. The price for a town, the price for an important harbour and a strategic base that has politically belonged to the ‘Omāni Sultans since 1784. Since that period, close relationships subsisted between the Āl bu-Sa’id of ‘Omān and the Balōč tribes of the coastal area of Makrān¹⁸. Gwādar today belongs to jurisdiction of the Government of Balōčistān - Home and Tribal Affairs Department, within the Makrān Division. As a consequence, the definition of Makrān as a Tribal Area forbids tourists to travel throughout this region without a N.O.C¹⁹. In Pakistan, since 1964, the Gwādar Deep Sea Port Project was a dream of Pakistani government; after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the newly formed Central Asian republics - together with the rich trans-Afghan pipelines - China finally largely financed (\$200 millions) and built the Gwādar Port Project first phase in January 2006²⁰. Although the Pakistani Gwādar should become a twenty-first century reality equipped with a high way and oil and natural gas pipelines, connecting both “horizontal” (Iran, Pakistan, China) and “vertical” (Afghanistan, Central Asia) strategic and economic interests, the traditions of the Makrāni and Balōč groups, still remain politically but not culturally divided. Moreover, China invested \$47 billion in the rail-road beltway between Gilgit and Gwādar potentially acquiring a naval base in the Arabian Gulf²¹. Consequently, the political and cultural issues remain very strong today also in Balōč tribe’s political and territorial claims that include self-determination and independence²².

¹⁴ R. Leech, “Notes taken on a Tour through part of Baloochistan in 1838 and 1839 by Haji Abdun Nubee of Kabul”, *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 13, part 2, 1844: 667-706, 702.

¹⁵ C.P. Harris, “The Gulf Submarine Telegraph of 1864”, *The Geographical Journal*, 135/2 1969: 169-190.

¹⁶ A. Kazeni, “On the Eastern Borderlands of Iran: The Balōč in Nineteenth Century Persian Travel books”, *History Compass*, 5/4 2007: 1399-1411.

¹⁷ G.P. Badger, *Memorandum by the Rev. G.P. Badger on the Pretentions of Persia in Beloochistan and Mekran, drawn up with especial reference to her Claim to Gwādar and Charbar*, London, 1863, 1-8.

¹⁸ R. Hughes-Buller, *The Gazetteer of Balōčistān (Makrān)*, 1st ed., Quetta, 1906; repr. Quetta, 1982, 280.

¹⁹ No Objection Certificate. Recently, the attacks of the Pakistan Army in these regions against many Baloch exponents have been numerous.

²⁰ M. Axmann, “Phoenix From the Ashes? The Balōč National Movement and its Recent Revival,” in C. Jahani, A. Korn, and P. Titus (Eds.), *The Balōč and Others. Linguistic, Historical and Socio-Political Perspectives on Pluralism in Balōčistān*, Wiesbaden: Verlag, 2008, 261-292.

²¹ Maj. Gen. (Retd) G.D. Bakshi, *India owes moral support to Balochistan in its struggle against Pak’s colonial exploitation*, “The New Indian Express”, August 22, 2016.

²² R.D. Kaplan, *Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power*, New York: Random House, 2010, 64-94; M. Kupecz, “Pakistan’s Baloch Insurgency: History, Conflict Drivers, and Regional Implications”,

Makrān forms the southern strip of Balōčistān province. It is a vast wilderness, where miles and miles of virgin golden beaches stretch along the sea in bright sunshine and blue skies during the winter months. As there is hardly any rain, the few villages and settlements depend on spring water and wells (*qanāt/kārēz*)²³. The coast has several small fishing villages while main towns like Gwādar, Ormara, Jiwani and Pasni have fishing harbours where the fishermen can be seen coming in with their catch every morning and evening. As stressed above, Makrān was for a long time a place of refuge. Among the first were the ‘Omānis, who gradually imposed their power on the main coastal centres. The case of Gwādar, as explained above, was of particular interest as the town, its port and the surrounding territory were granted as a jagir (a temporary grant of land exempted from taxation) from the Khans of Kalāt to the Āl bu-Sa‘id of ‘Omān. From a jagir Gwādar soon assumed the status of an enclave of the Sultanate of ‘Omān. As close connections always existed between the two countries, the ‘Omāni presence in the Makrān region eased the control of the local trade and of the regional and tribal mechanisms of power. The role of the port of Gwādar inside the illegal traffic of arms and ammunitions coming from Europe to the Gulf and directed to East Africa, and Central Asia, had been essential. Since 1800, when Sa‘id Sayyid bin Sultan Āl bu-Sa‘id of ‘Omān (r. 1806-1856) received the model of a 74-gun ship as a present from the visiting British envoy, Major-General John Malcolm (1769-1833), from the start he decided to cultivate British friendship. And this was an important relationship for Britain as well. Between the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century the Khanate of Kalāt succeeded in affirming its power in Balōčistān. In the eighteenth century, Nasir Khan I, Khan of Kalāt, kept Makrān under his nominal control. The Khanate of Kalāt was a refuge for waves of invaders coming from South-West Asia, directed to India. Once subdued the agricultural tribes, and enforced the tribal authority on pastoral nomadic groups, the Khanate began developing a centralized bureaucratic apparatus through territorial expansion that included Makrān. But it was not until the nineteenth century that the British got interested in this area during the two Anglo-Afghan Wars (1839-42; 1878-80) and the Great Game with Russia. A British expedition was sent to the region to pave way for the building of the Indo-European telegraph line that passed through Makrān. On its conclusion in 1863, Major Goldsmid was posted to Gwādar as British Assistant Political Agent. In 1872, a firm boundary between Persia and British Balōčistān was established²⁴. The Qājār dynasty came to power in Persia in the nineteenth century. The British Government of India penetrated inside the Persian territory, following its domination over Sind region, under the pretext of extending telegraph lines from India to the ‘Omān Sea and guarding the area. Britain separated a part of Balōčistān from Persia, later known as British Balōčistān, in 1871²⁵. In Persian Balōčistān, local Khans and commanders rebelling against the central government were thoroughly suppressed during the Pahlavi reign in the twentieth century, putting an end to tribal autonomy and local rules. These two entities had a dispute concerning the border dividing the two parts of Balōčistān, which was resolved by an agreement signed only in 1959. The Persian Balōčistān was a part of the Sistān and Balōčistān provinces²⁶. The land of Persian Balōčistān, situated on the South East

International Affairs Review, 20/3, 2012 <http://iar-gwu.org/sites/default/files/articlepdfs/Pakistan%27s%20Baloch%20Insurgency.pdf>.

²³ Underground irrigation canals, known on the Arabian Peninsula as *falaj* (pl. *aflāj*); D. Mustafa & M.U. Qazi, "Transition from Karez to Tubwell irrigation: Development, Modernization and Social Capital in Balochistan, Pakistan", *World Development*, 35/10, 2007: 1796-1813.

²⁴ Report of the British Commissioner for the joint Anglo-Persian Boundary Commission: F. Goldsmid, *Eastern Persia: An Account of the Journey of the Persian Boundary Commission, 1870-1890* London, 1876.

²⁵ F.J. Goldsmid, *Report by Col. Goldsmid on the Claims of Persia, Khelat and Masqat to Sovereign Rights on the Mekran Coast*, Political Department, Bombay, 19 December, 1863; P.J. Brobst, *Sir Frederick Goldsmid and the Containment of Persia 1863-73*, "Middle Eastern Studies", 33/2 London, 1997: 197-215.

²⁶ Its main towns are: Zahedan, Zabol, Iranshahr, Sarawan, and Čāhbahār. Iranian gas is mainly extracted from the Sistān region: this is the major cause of tribal claims for rights extraction recognition.

side of the country, was part of 'Great Balōčistān' with the other half located in British Balōčistān. The province was divided into four regions of Sarhadi, Sarawan, Bampur, and Makrān due to their environmental differences. Within this framework, the case of Gwādar is of particular interest as the town, its port and the surrounding territory were granted during the second half of the nineteenth century as a *jagir* - a temporary grant of land exempted from taxation - from the *Khans* of Kalāt to the Āl bu-Sa'id of 'Omān. From a *jagir* Gwādar soon assumed the status of an enclave of the Sultanate of 'Omān. Gwādar, together with the ports of Sur and Jiwani, soon became an important centre for fisheries; fish was, and is still today, exported to Europe and along the main routes of the Indian Ocean; shark fins were a favourite, and the oil was principally kept for use on the timbers of the native crafts. The seasons in Makrān, as stated above, are very variable as regards rainfall, which causes great fluctuations in the trade between Gwādar and the interior, but the principal commodities, wool and goats hair were exported; another item was supplied by the useful bush named *pesh*, a species of aloe which grows in abundance throughout this part of the country; from its leaves were manufactured bags, matting and a variety of useful domestic articles, whilst the stones of its fruit called *koner* were exported in quantities to Maskat, from where they were sent to Mecca and made into Islamic rosaries - *subha*²⁷. Therefore, the sea represented the main ecological, economic and commercial source of survival for the people of Makrān; in fact they lived on fisheries with small boats. In 1784 Sultan bin Ahmad Āl bu-Sa'id, pretender to the throne of 'Omān, found refuge in the desolate region of Makrān. He directed himself to Tiz, a fortified village, and then marched on to Kharan where he exposed his situation to Mir Jahangir, chief of the Nowšērvānī tribe. Together they travelled to Kalāt, the capital, to confer with Nasir Khan I. The Khan refused the request of military help to restore the power in 'Omān to Sultan bin Ahmad Āl bu-Sa'id, but offered him in exchange the grant of the port of Gwādar, at that time a poor village of fishermen, as a refuge for his temporary exile from 'Omān. Referring to nineteenth century's western sources, on the *khans* of Kalāt side, it seemed that the grant of Gwādar was a temporary concession, to be ended once the pretender on the 'Omāni leadership had solved his personal fights of power. Apparently, towards the end of the eighteenth century, Nasir Khan I, Khan of Kalāt, *granted* the port of Gwādar to Sultan bin Ahmad Āl bu-Sa'id on a *trust* basis²⁸. Subsequent claims from Kalāt with regards to the possession of Gwādar were justified by the temporal and limited nature of the *jagir*, not permanent, but only as a transitional phase of Sultan bin Ahmad Āl bu-Sa'id who seemed to need a safe refuge in Makrān. On the other hand, on 'Omān's side, the concession of the *jagir* implied naval protection of the Makrān coasts, that could be guaranteed once the pretender could ascend to power in 'Omān. This promise of protection and defense probably represented the main reason why Nasir Khan I of Kalāt trusted the Āl bu-Sa'id of Maskat. In 1784 half of the revenues of Gwādar belonged to the group of the Gički who settled in Makrān in ancient times, and controlled the valley and the oasis along the Ketch River. The part of revenues which derived from Gwādar and belonged to the Gički could not be transferred by Nasir Khan I of Kalāt - who owned the other half of them - to anybody, and in this particular case, to an 'Omāni Sultan. Agreements between the two local powers were signed in 1778 and in 1793 where it was specified that the revenue coming from Gwādar went to the Gički. Furthermore, according to a declaration made by Haji Abdun Nabi, encharged in 1839 by Lieutenant Robert Leech to explore the region²⁹, only the half belonging to the Khans of Kalāt could be transferred to the 'Omāni Sultans. In addition the Gički continued to receive their share of the revenue of Gwādar, amounting to 3000 Maria Theresa dollars³⁰ up to the time of Bibi Maryam, a lady from the tribe of the Buledi, who was married to a Gički; this

²⁷ R. Hughes-Buller, *The Gazetteer of Balōčistān (Makrān)*, 1st ed., Quetta, 1906; repr. Quetta 1986: 180.

²⁸ Ross, 1868, 113.

²⁹ Leech, 1844, 667-706.

³⁰ Broome, 221-245.

person was described in 1868 by Lieutenant Edward Charles Ross, Assistant Political Agent at Gwādar, as living on the charity of the Sultans of Maṣṣaṭ, but it is asserted by the Gički that what she received was really hers by right, and that it represented the Gički share of the revenue, which the Sultans of ‘Omān had gradually curtailed. From this short summary of the events, we could take into consideration the hypothesis that the ‘Omāni occupation of Gwādar was justified by a *de facto* presence. Moreover, in 1847 the representative of Kej, Mir Faqir Muhammad Bizanju, nominated by Mir Mehrab Khan of Kalāt (r. 1831-1839), attacked Gwādar with a force of 1000 men; his object was to extort from Sa’id Thuwayni Āl bu-Sa’id (1856-1866) a customary annual present which had been withheld for two years in succession. After the attacks of Mir Faqir Muhammad Bizanju had been repulsed several times, the inhabitants of the town finding themselves short of ammunition and supplies, obtained a truce; but the intervention of a Maṣṣaṭ force of 100 men in a brig obliged the Bizanju to relinquish the siege. Many years later, more precisely during the summer of 1870, the behaviour of the representative of Kej resulted in the accusation by Atta Muhammad, counsellor of the Khan of Kalāt, to have kept for himself the entire amount of revenue destined to Kalāt. This was a serious accusation, as the main source of Kalāt was the tax upon land, according to western sources, illegally kept by the representative and not paid to the Khanate. The Bizanju representative refused to respect administrative and fiscal rules imposed by Kalāt and, deeply outraged, resigned; the counsellor succeeded him. In 1857, it was the turn of Nasir Khan II to organise a military expedition to conquer Gwādar, but the attack was bought off by the ‘Omāni governor who gifted a number of slaves and a sword to the ruler of Kalāt and paid a sum of money; Nasir Khan II accepted the offer. Khuda Dad Khan of the Nowšērvānī tribe from Kharan was among the pretenders to the conquest of Gwādar but he was interrupted by struggles within his tribe. During investigations made by the Makrān, Sistān and Persia Boundary Commission, directed by Sir Frederick Goldsmid³¹, juridical-territorial claims were advanced from all parties involved, causing tensions and struggles for a long time unresolved. In 1861 the Khan of Kalāt proposed that Gwādar should be purchased by the British Government from ‘Omān. This suggestion was rejected by the Government of India as the real nature of the acquisition of Gwādar by ‘Omān was on British side - as we have said - inevitably obscure, and the favoured policy in these regions was at that time of passive vigilance. On 24 January 1862 Mir Faqir Muhammad Bizanju, representative of Kej, signed a treaty with Sir Frederick Goldsmid for the safety of the passage of the telegraph line through Makrān; the representative also granted to Goldsmid the safety of the lands belonging to Mir Bayan Gički. At the beginning of 1863 Ibrahim Khan, the Persian military governor of Bampur, wrote letters to Sa’id Thuwayni Āl bu-Sa’id and to the governor of Gwādar suggesting not to give their approval to the prosecution of the telegraph line to the British before a Persian consent. In order to enforce this suggestion, Ibrahim Khan assembled a large body of Balōč troops and advanced in the direction of Gwādar, causing the interruption of communication between the coast and the interior of Makrān. Numerous raids followed, and the British decided to send forces to protect their political agents in Gwādar. Meanwhile, Teheran, denied its support to Ibrahim Khan’s claims on Gwādar; but only in 1868 the Persian government accepted to give up its rights of sovereignty on the oasis of Ketch and on Gwādar port and region as part of the Kirman province. Moreover, within the British government there were numerous political debates: Sir Charles Wood, the India Secretary, viewed Persian territorial and political claims on Makrān with favour, as he thought it politically advantageous for British India to be bordered by a reliable country. In fact, he ordered Dalhousie in Bombay to be ready to intervene in case of a Persian attack against ‘Omāni possessions on the Makrān coast. Canning, the Governor General, realised that the state of political instability and the weakness of western Makrān borders were two

³¹ Goldsmid, 1863, 14.

factors of high exposure to attacks by local tribes. The Russian advance in Central Asia initially dictated British policy in Makrān; consequently, as stated above, it was better for British India to border with Persia than with a tribal kingdom such as the Khanate of Kalāt. On 19th December 1863 Sir Frederick Goldsmid was aware that the *terra incognita* of Balōčistān, insignificant on the map of the world, became a real entity if seen from Western India. But was the setting of the frontier to be determined on a juridical basis or on a plea of strategic and political conveyance? To this regard, in 1863 Reverend George Percy Badger, nominated by the Boundary Commission to investigate on the intricate question of the borders in this area expressed his perplexities about the local perceptions of concepts like territorial or state ownership³². Badger stressed on the importance of oral tradition for the historical reconstruction of land possessions and of political influences in Makrān claimed by the following pretenders: Persia, the Khanate of Kalāt and ‘Omān. Therefore, after accurate investigations, Reverend Badger, considered it politically advisable that Gwādar remained within ‘Omāni hands, with an armed fleet strong enough to defend it, rejecting the hypothesis of restoration to the Khanate of Kalāt, who was unable to protect this port against Persian claim. After the murder of Sa‘id Thuwayni Āl bu-Sa‘id in 1866, fights for the accession to power in ‘Omān included the Makrān coast as well; the fights were brought to an end by the British Political Agents at Gwādar and at Maṣṣaṭ as a result of the British policy in the Gulf. Only in May 1872 did disputes among the descendants of Sa‘id Thuwayni Āl bu-Sa‘id end with the accession to power of Sa‘id Turki Āl bu-Sa‘id (1871-1888), whom, with a body of 200 Wahhabis, occupied Gwādar and took possession of the town. The victory of Sa‘id Turki Āl bu-Sa‘id was disturbed by the loss of Čāhbahār, taken by Ibrahim Khan of Bampur and annexed to Persia in 1872. And it was in this same year that the British Boundary Commission, after numerous consultations with all claimants, fixed the demarcation of the frontier between Persia, Makrān and Sistān³³. From August to December 1875 Sa‘id Turki Āl bu-Sa‘id resided in Gwādar; he ordered the construction of a small fort also at Pishkān, on the western border of the ‘Omāni enclave. Sa‘id Turki Āl bu-Sa‘id had a particular affection for Gwādar, where he used to spend long periods of recovery. But he also had to face a succeeding series of revolts and raids, this time coming from some elements of the Rind tribes. In 1877 Sir Charles Macgregor touched at Gwādar with the task of completing geographical and topographical information³⁴. He described Gwādar as a village of mud huts, with a squared fortress in the middle, with 5000 inhabitants and about 2500 boats, some of them large for trade with Maṣṣaṭ, Bandar Abbas, Bombay and the coast of Malabar. The roads to the interior, when open, were those leading to Kej and to Panjgur, the two main oases. According to the British explorer Macgregor, Persia never had juridical rights on possessions of lands in Balōčistān, despite her numerous interventions into this region during phases of political instability and uncertainty. Towards the end of the nineteenth century Gwādar was flourishing despite many raids of the Balōč tribes and the frequent Persian menaces; this situation persisted till the epoch of Sir Robert Sandeman, Agent to the Governor General in Balōčistān, who, in July 1883 went to Gwādar with the object to pacifying, with success, the revolts, the fights, and the raids of the local tribes.

Until the first British explorations around the nineteenth century, Balōčistān was considered as a blank area, ‘*terra incognita*’, that is, an unknown and empty land on British maps of the period³⁵. It was not until the nineteenth century that the British became interested in this area for strategic reasons, first during Napoleon’s occupation of Egypt (1798-1801)³⁶,

³² Badger, 1863, 1-8.

³³ Brobst, 1997, 197-215.

³⁴ Macgregor, 1882.

³⁵ B. Nicolini, *Terrae Nullius. Viaggi tanto per terra quanto per mare*, Saarbrücken: Edizioni Accademiche Italiane www.edizioni-ai.com/, 2014.

³⁶ B. Nicolini, 2012, 84-94.

and, later, during the time of the first Anglo-Afghan War (1838-42). The British government of India penetrated Persian territory, following its domination over Sind, under the pretext of extending telegraph lines from India to South Central Asia, and guarding the area. A British expedition (1861-62) sent to pave the way for the building of the Indo-European telegraph line passed through Makrān. On its conclusion in 1863, Major Frederick Goldsmid was posted to Gwādar, the main city on the coast and the terminus for the telegraph, as British Assistant Political Representative. In 1872, the British established a political boundary between Persia and British Balōčistān³⁷. Since the British defined the Persia-India border, Gwatar Bay, on the eastern shore, remained within the Persian borders, while Gwādar, on the western shore, about 50 miles to the west³⁸ was confirmed as part of India.

Greater Balōčistān was thus divided into Persian Balōčistān and British (now Pakistani) Balōčistān³⁹. Persian Balōčistān is part of the present Iranian province of Sistān-Balōčistān⁴⁰. The province was divided into the four regions of Sarhadi, Sarawan, Bampur, and Makrān due to their environmental differences. During the twentieth century, after the creation of the state of Pakistan in 1947, Balōčistān became its largest province. In 1871, they finally succeeded in separating a part of Balōčistān from Persia, later known as British Balōčistān. These two entities had a dispute concerning the border dividing the two parts of Balōčistān, which was resolved by an agreement signed in 1959⁴¹.

The 32-foot deep-sea port of Gwādar lies on the coast of Makrān where it is well positioned for land and maritime communication routes between the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, Nasir Khan I, Khan of the Brohi tribe of Kalat granted the port of Gwādar to Sultan bin Ahmad Āl bu-Saʿid (1792-1804) of ʿOmān who escaped from Maskaṭ around 1784. Sultan bin Ahmad Āl bu-Saʿid retained the port even after his accession to power in Maskaṭ. One of the first steps taken by Sultan bin Ahmad Āl bu-Saʿid was the appointment of a deputy with an escort of 20 sepoys, or soldiers, who received the order to build a fort on side of Gwādar Bay that offered the best protection. The local governor also received the order from the ʿOmāni Sultan to conquer Čāhbahār, which was captured by surprise and annexed to the Maskaṭ dominions. The port of Gwādar and its surroundings was handed by Nasir Khan I, of the Brahui tribe, Khan of Kalat, to the Āl bu-Saʿid of Maskaṭ not only as a refuge, but also as a strategic base for the struggles of power within the ʿOmāni tribes. Consequently, Gwādar remained in ʿOmāni possession as a maritime colony and became part of the Sultanate of ʿOmān, as mentioned above, until 1958. Lying approximately 290 miles west of Karachi and 160 miles South West from Turbat (the capital of Pakistani Makrān), Gwādar encompasses not only the town and port, but also the entire sandy peninsula of that name covering an area of about 307 square miles. The Gički family, former rulers of Makrān, owns property in Gwādar with all the home comforts and roses in their garden. During contemporary times, in 1973, following President Nixon's visit to Pakistan, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1928-1979) offered Gwādar to the United States as a naval base for its fleet

³⁷ See the report of the British Commissioner for the joint Anglo-Persian Boundary Commission: F. Goldsmid, *Eastern Persia: An Account of the Journey of the Persian Boundary Commission, 1870-1890*, 2 vols. London: Oxford Printing, 1876.

³⁸ B. De Cardi, "A New Prehistoric Ware from Baluchistan", *Iraq*, 13/2 (1951): 63-75; L.G. Potter, "The Consolidation of Iran's frontier in the nineteenth century", in R. Farmanfarmaian (Ed.), *War and Peace in Qajar Persia: implications past and present*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 125-148.

³⁹ It consists of an area equal to 273,661 square kilometers, with a population of about 2,388,000 (July 2014) bounded on the north to Sistān and Kermān provinces, on the south to the Oman Sea, on the east to Kalat, and on the west to Roudbar-e-Bashagard. The World Factbook – CIA <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/pk.html>.

⁴⁰ Its main towns are Zahedan, Zabol, Iranshahr, Sarawan, and Čāhbahār.

⁴¹ H. Balōč, *Balōčistān Bibliography* Karachi: Hasmi Reference Library, 2006, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/19761515/Balōčistān-Bibliography>.

in exchange for developing a major seaport there through direct investment. The United States declined, and as a consequence the harbour remained inactive for almost thirty years. In March 1994, Benazir Bhutto (1953-2007), twice Prime Minister of Pakistan, wished to develop the port of Gwādar as an alternative harbour to Karachi, that was considered too vulnerable to Indian attack. Since 2007, fitting out the seaport will cost to the China's Peoples Republic 932 million dollars and will allow Gwādar to triple its trade flow. Today, the presence of this new global reality such as the port of Gwādar in front of the coast of 'Omān will ease the relationships between these two ancient interconnected maritime coasts.

As we have seen above, two distinct political realities were destined to co-exist along the coasts of South West Asia, in the desert region of Balōčistān⁴², in 'Omān, and in Sub-Saharan East Africa: the multi-ethnic societies of the coasts, and the tribal, pastoral societies of the interior where, from time to time, the former succeeded in prevailing and imposing its laws. The Arab powers of the coasts thus created flourishing markets between the ports of South-Western Asia and the Arabian, Western Indian and East African coasts. From the nineteenth century onwards, it was the red flag of the 'Omāni Sultanate that formed multiple ties between the 'Omāni enclave of the port of Gwādar in Makrān-Balōčistān, the principal ports of 'Omān itself, the East African coast and the island of Zanzibar through the movement of peoples, ideas, and merchandise. Oman international activities during four centuries - 1500 to 1800 - saw numerous waves of political leaders, seafarers, merchants and adventurers in a competition between leaders and merchants from every part of Asia and Africa as well as of Europe and the newly United States. During the period that saw the rise of European powers in the Indian Ocean, according to available historiography, a revolution occurred from which new protagonists emerged along the Asian, Arabian and African regions. Against these backdrops, the gradual emergence of new Omani dynasties resulted from the polarization that followed the struggle against the Portuguese presence in the Gulf and in the Indian Ocean. This gave rise to gradual and discontinuous processes of unification among the Omani groups, traditionally divided and in conflict with each other, which came to the fore in the progressive affirmation of what we could define as the international power of the Omani Arabs in the Gulf and in the Indian Ocean.

The history of Oman⁴³ international relations has been connected mainly to the maritime routes across the Indian Ocean: sailing the Gulf and the Indian Ocean had always been dependent on the fact that the winds occur in an annual sequence with great regularity. The balance created by the monsoons⁴⁴ was achieved over the space of a year with the following rhythm: from December to March the monsoon blows from Arabia and the western coasts of India in the north-east, pushing as far as Mogadishu. The winds are light and constant, the climate hot and dry. In April the monsoon starts to blow from the south-west, from Eastern Africa towards the coasts of the Gulf, the climate cooler but much more humid. The rains are mainly in April and May, while the driest months are November and December. Moreover, along the East African coasts and in the islands of the Indian Ocean, the tropical climate is always tempered by sea breezes.

Since immemorial times until the nineteenth century, sailing from Arabia in November in a south-south-westerly direction took thirty to forty days in ideal weather conditions while, in December, thanks to the stabilization of the monsoon, the voyage took only twenty to twenty-five days. Consequently, thanks to the monsoons the international trade relations of Oman had

⁴² J.E. Peterson, "'Omān's diverse society: Northern 'Omān", *Middle East Journal* 58 (1) Middle East Journal, Jan 01, 2004; Vol. 58, No. 1; 2004-1-1: 32-51; J.E. Peterson, *The Baluch Presence in the Persian Gulf*, L. Potter (Ed.) Sectarian Politics in the Persian Gulf, London: Hurst, 2013, 229-244.

⁴³ The word Oman was used by Europeans to describe all of South-Eastern Arabia that lies to the east of the sands of the Rub'al Khali.

⁴⁴ The term derives from the Arabic *mawsin* (pl. *mawasin*), season, from the Portuguese *monção*.

been historically through the sea; although we must remember that Oman trades were intense through land as well. Maritime coastal trades, as well as long distance trades, constituted the expressions of an economy that was highly sophisticated, developed and organized; therefore, the necessity of control of these sea trade routes represented a crucial element: a political element.

During the sixteenth century the Portuguese presence in the Gulf did not really affect Oman trades; nevertheless, after the loss of Hormuz in 1622 Portuguese increased their influence at Muscat while the Ya'ariba threatened the Portuguese forts along the coast of Oman, as well as the trades of pearls from Julfar and of horses from Muscat.⁴⁵

From the eleventh to the seventeenth century the Ya'ariba dynasty empowered Oman foreign trades through an active naval policy against the Portuguese, combined with an expansion of their mercantile influence in Sub-Saharan East Africa. During the eighteenth century the Ya'ariba stood at the head of a flourishing mercantile reign that was linked to the coastal cities and the principal islands of East Africa. The Ya'ariba domination along East African littorals, that included Mombasa and the island of Pemba, was characteristic of quite normal changes in dominion over the seas, without resulting in substantial alterations in traditional commercial organization. The presence of Arab governors was so as to control trade and impose taxes; this institution had its roots in the traditional Omani system of exercising power, as well as in the political agreements with local chiefs and rulers. In this regard, the Ya'ariba often assisted by merchants from the coasts of Western India, and defended by Asian troops, carried to the coasts of Sub-Saharan East Africa the Omani power system, in which the notion of central government did not exist. After centuries of relative prosperity, the traditional thalassocratic system that had developed along the shores of the Western Indian Ocean was modified by the Europeans, who started to extend their mercantile and territorial ambitions, pursued from land (*terra firma*), to the seas.

The Ya'ariba society was a rich and powerful merchants and landlords society, and numerous forts were built in Oman during the Ya'ariba period. The round fort of Nizwa was started by Sultan bin Saif I (r. 1649-80); while his son Bal'arab (r. 1688-92) built the magnificent fort of Jabrin. Saif bin Sultan I (r. 1692 - 15th October 1711) was the greatest of the Ya'ariba princes, and was succeeded by his eldest son Sultan bin Saif II, who in turn was succeeded as Imam in 1719 by his son Saif bin Sultan II, a boy of twelve. Unable to find any further supports for his cause in Oman, he turned to Persia for help, and his country was soon invaded by a large Persian force. The Omanis suffered many defeats but were finally helped by Ahmad bin Sa'id (r. 13th March 1793 - 20th November 1804), one of the small A1 Bu Sa'id group who, at that time, was governor of Sohar. He succeeded in driving out the Persians and, after having overcome the Ya'ariba family and their Ghafari supporters, was elected Imam and founded the present A1 Bu Sa'id dynasty.

The title of Imam gave Ahmad bin Sa'id Al Bu Sa'id a certain control over Oman, and under him and his successors the country saw an expansion for more than a century. The Omanis extended their influence into the interior and into part of the present-day United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.), consisting of the future states of Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Al Fujayrah, Dubai, Ras al Khaymah, Sharjah, and Umm al Qaywayn. They also collected tribute from as far away as present-day Bahrain and Iraq. The Al Bu Sa'id conquered the Dhofar region, which is part of present-day Oman but was not historically part of the region of Oman. Although Ahmad bin Sa'id Al Bu Sa'id had succeeded in uniting Oman under an Ibadi Imamate, the religious nature of his family's authority did not last long. His son, Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultan Al Bu Sa'id (r. 14th September 1806 - 19th October 1856), was elected to the Imamate after him, but no other family member won the official approval of the religious establishment. The Al Bu Sa'id used the title

⁴⁵ W. Floor, *The Persian Gulf: Muscat – City, Society and Trade*: Mage Publishers, Washington D.C., 2014.

Sultans, a secular title having none of the religious associations of Imam. They further distanced themselves from Ibadi traditions by moving their capital from Rustaq, a traditional Ibadi centre in the interior, to the trading centre of Muscat.⁴⁶ The result was that the traditional conflict relationships between the coast and the interior were reconstituted. Starting from the eighteenth century onwards, groups from the interior gradually began to settle on the coastal new centres. As stated, the 'Omānis gradually imposed their power over the main coastal centres of the region. In this regard, the traffic of arms and ammunitions between the port of Gwādar and the town of Maṣṣaṭ in 'Omān, worried British officials for a long period, and interesting documentation emerged from the Balōčistān Archives based in Quetta, which largely complemented the British Records of the I.O.R. (India Office Records)⁴⁷. They revealed some aspects of the British perspectives and strategies of this historical period, and taking into consideration some effects of the volume and of the extent of the traffic of arms and ammunitions within the areas under political control of the 'Omāni leadership. Between the end of 1800 and the first decades of 1900 large quantities of weapons were traded from Europe via sea and from Maṣṣaṭ directed north to Afghanistan and south to East Africa. "*If an ewe dies in Makrān, ghee won't become expensive in 'Omān*"⁴⁸. This proverb was applied to events unlikely to have significant influence or consequences. It was taken from a collection of 'Omāni proverbs and popular sayings compiled to the end of the nineteenth century by A.S.G. Jayakar and first published in the Journal of the Bombay branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1900-1903. Lieutenant Colonel Jayakar of the Indian Medical Service served as Surgeon in the British Political Agency, Maṣṣaṭ from 1870 to 1900. On several occasions, during the absences on leave of the Political Agent, Jayakar himself acted as Agent. Between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century the delineation of borders between Balōčistān and Persia necessitated control by the British Intelligence Agencies of the continuous illegal arms traffic entering Balōčistān internal market at Gwādar port, dominion of the 'Omān Sultanate despite numerous agreements with the British Government. During a long period of time the tribal groups beyond the North West Frontier of India succeeded in obtaining rifles from the Arabian coast. Arab dhows used to brought them across the Gulf and adjacent waters, and caravans of camels conveyed them to their destinations through the mountain passes of

⁴⁶ Ibadi Studies, <http://ibadi-studies.org/pubs.htm>.

⁴⁷ Field work and training of local archivists in Quetta. Quetta is the headquarters of Balōčistān Province and the principal city in the province. It was a small outpost of Kalat State in the pre-colonial period. During the colonial period 1839-47, it steadily grew in importance and became the main bulwark of British defence of the Northwest Frontier of India. In this context, The Political Agent, Quetta-Pishin was a key pillar of the colonial administration in Balōčistān Agency. This district was subsequently elevated to the status of a Commissioner's Division. The archives cover the activities of the Commissioner, Quetta Division from the end of the nineteenth century to the 1970s. They, therefore, cover the period under the British colonial rule as well as post-independence period of Pakistan. These records date back to the 1880s when the colonial authority first created the Quetta-Pishin District. The records can be roughly divided into Revenue, Judicial, General, and Political & Secret headings. These records have suffered from neglect, especially during the District Government System of 2002-2008, and some records have been damaged permanently. Many files are incomplete and others have not been systematically organized. The first systematic survey of these records was undertaken by a team of Italian researchers, namely, Professors Beatrice Nicolini and Riccardo Redaelli in the 1990s. The results of their survey were published in an article titled "Quetta: History and Archives. Notes of a Survey of the Archives of Quetta" in the August 1994 issue of the research journal *Nuova Rivista Storica*. Balōčistān Archives has recently taken the initiative to acquire and systematically catalogue the contents of the Commissioner, Quetta Division Records with the support and cooperation of Commissioner's Office. As of now, one fourth (25%) of the Commissioner's Office records have been catalogued and accessioned. <http://Balochistanarchives.gob.pk/Commissioner-Quetta-Records>.

⁴⁸ *Idha matat na'jah fi Makrān ma yaghla al-samn fi 'Omān*, Thank to John Shipman, The Society for Arabian Studies, Edinburgh, 23 July 2001. Thanks to Amal Ghazal, Department of History, Dalhousie University, Canada, who made me realize through 1800 proverbs the interesting differences between the insignificance of Makran compared to the extreme importance of Zanzibar by hearing the flute to the Great Lakes written by R.F. Burton. August 2016.

Balōčistān⁴⁹. The growing importance of the Indian Ocean as a watering highway was soon to becoming the focal point of world politics, making the region the pivot of world affairs. Here the promotion of arms trade and its influence has been not only a source of complex relationships between different people, different cultures, and religions, but also played an important role in searching for peace among all the littorals of the Indian Ocean.

Since the end of the eighteenth century, the Al Bu Sa'id empowered the mercantile expansion towards the oceanic coasts of Africa; therefore, within the Indian Ocean developed a cultural connection represented by continuous migratory flows. During the nineteenth century the dominions of Muscat consisted of the island of Bahrain, the coast of Makran, some areas along the Persian coast such as Chah Bahar, the island of Socotra, the islands of Kuria Muria, the islands of Zanzibar and Pemba and adjacent ports of the East African coast from Cabo Delgado to Cape Guardafui. And it was in this very period that the presence of many economic opportunities on the East African littorals was a potent factor that led the Omanis more and more towards Zanzibar.

The power of the Al Bu Sa'id Sultans of Oman was widely known as based on delicate balance of forces, and social groups, deeply different among them. In fact, the elements that composed the nineteenth century Omani leadership were, and had always been, generally divided amongst different groups: the Baloch, the Asian merchant communities and the African regional leaders (*Mwiny Mkuu*). Within this framework, the role played by European Powers, particularly by the Treaties signed between the Sultans of Oman and the East India Company for abolishing slavery, and by the arms trade was crucial for the development of the Gulf and the Indian Ocean international networks. They highly contributed to the gradual shifting of the Omanis from the slave trade to clove and spice cultivation – the major economic source of Zanzibar Island – along the coastal areas of Sub-Saharan East Africa.

Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultan Al Bu Sa'id vitalised in the Indian Ocean an important mercantile empire. The main factors of the rise of a mighty maritime trade network were constituted by the expansion of the spice trade, especially by the cultivation of cloves in Zanzibar and the Pemba islands, by the slave trade, by ivory exportation and by their implications with the European powers of the nineteenth century. Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultan Al Bu Sa'id spoke Arabic, Hindi, Persian and Swahili; he had seen the island of Zanzibar for the first time in 1802, when he was only eleven years old - he had remained enchanted.⁵⁰ He represented the major exponent of the revaluation of the spice trade as a means of creation of power elite, through a significant expansion of the cultivation of cloves in Zanzibar. This highlights one of the first major steps towards the importance of spice. At the end of the eighteenth century the introduction of cloves (*Eugenia Caryophyllata*, from the Mirtaceae family, *kavafuu* in kiswahili) onto this tropical island determined a new perception of economic-commercial potential to the eyes of the Al Bu Sa'id. The creation of a new niche of agricultural exploitation in Zanzibar itself and in Pemba was destined to transform Zanzibar and Pemba into new centres of global mercantile interests.

⁴⁹ T.T. Jeans, *The Gun-Runners*, London: Blackie and Sons, 1928; Brig.-Gen. Robert Harding, *Terror of the Desert: A Tale of Gun-Running in the Persian Gulf*, London: J. Murray, 1936.

⁵⁰ Among the numerous biographies on Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultan Al Bu Sa'id see for example J.G. Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia*, Calcutta, 1915, 2 Vols., Vol. 1, 440-469; R.S. Ruete, *Said Bin Sultan (1791-1856). Ruler of Oman and Zanzibar. His Place in the History of Arabia and East Africa*, London, 1929; R.S. Ruete, *The Al Bu Said Dynasty in Arabia and East Africa*, "Journal of the Royal Asiatic and Central Asian Society", Vol. 16, London, 1929, 417-432; S.A.S. Farsi, *Seyyid Said Bin Sultan. The Joint Ruler of Oman and Zanzibar (1804-1856)*, New Delhi, 1986; V. Maurizi, *History of Seyd Said, Sultan of Muscat*, London, 1819, (new ed. Cambridge, 1984).

On 19th October 1856, Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultan Al Bu Sa'id died on a dhow⁵¹ that was taking him from Muscat towards his favourite island, Zanzibar. His death was followed, on 5th July 1857, by that of Atkins Hamerton, the British Consul, himself in Zanzibar. The Al Bu Sa'id dominions in Muscat and in Zanzibar were divided under the terms of the settlement of 13th May, 1861 (with Zanzibar having to pay 40,000 Maria Theresa thalers⁵² to Muscat annually) and formalised by the Canning Award, confirmed by the Anglo-French Agreement of 1862. With this division, the possessions were assigned to the sons of Saiyid Sa'id bin Sultan Al Bu Sa'id, Majid Bin Sa'id Al Bu Sa'id (1856-70) from an Ethiopian secondary wife on Zanzibar and Thuwayni bin Sa'id Al Bu Sa'id (r. 19th October 1856 - 11th February 1866), from a Georgian secondary wife, in Muscat. The gradual and progressive process of eroding Omani-Arab power in East Africa had begun, and British predominance was to increase still further. In this new context, external powers and trade, once established from the Gulf to the Indian Ocean wider scenarios and different economies, contributed to modify the powers within regional and international leaderships that were inevitably subjected to future substantial changes of these seaboard regions. Probably, Zanzibar was not that rich and the Omani Sultans did not benefit that much from the trade.⁵³ Moreover, they did not effectively control, in the modern European sense, the East African coast from Cape Guardafui to Cabo Delgado. Starting from 1842 onwards, the presence of Omanis political leaders on the Eastern African coasts did lead to numerous intersections between regional and international interests where Britain often played a role of turning realities into new political scenarios. It was a fight for power as well as a series of territorial and political claims of control and dominance upon a large, as well as indefinable, area such as the Indian Ocean where regional and international trades did follow ancient distributions of powers, of forces, and of ancient routes through land as well as through sea.

⁵¹ *Daw* is a Swahili name, not used by the Arabs but adopted by English writers in the incorrect form 'dhow'. G.F. Hourani, *Arab Seafaring*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951 (rev. ed., 1995), p. 89; D. Agius, *Classic Ships of Islam: From Mesopotamia to the Indian Ocean*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 2008.

⁵² M.R. Broome, *The 1780 Restrike Talers of Maria Theresa*, Doris Stockwell Memorial Papers, No. 1, reprinted in "Numismatic Chronicle", VII Series, Vol. XII, London, 1972, 221-253; C. Semple, *A Silver Legend: The Story of the Maria Theresa Thaler*, "Barzan Studies in Arabian Culture", No.1, Manchester, 2005.

⁵³ J.G. Deutsch, *The Indian Ocean and a very small place in Zanzibar* in J.G. Deutsch (Ed.), *Space on the Move. Transformations of the Indian Ocean Seascape in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Berlin: Verlag, 2002, 61-73.