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This special issue of *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies*, ‘The World of Patrick Gordon’, may be seen as a sequel to Volume 3: Issue 2, 2010 of the same journal, ‘The Patrick Gordon Diary and Its Context’. The aim is to provide further background to the publication of the *Diary of Patrick Gordon of Auchleuchries, 1635 – 1699*, the fifth of six volumes coming out in 2014.

The first three contributions were given as papers at the seminar on ‘Cultural Diffusion and Catholicism in Early Modern Russia and Northern Europe’, held on the occasion of the launch of Volume IV of the *Diary* on 29 November 2013. Elena Alekseeva from the Academy of Sciences in Ekaterinburg, Russia, finally making it to Aberdeen after inclement weather foiled a previous attempt, began her presentation with a photograph of a bust of Patrick Gordon to be found at a pub in the centre of the city bearing his name and inscribed with the words allegedly addressed to him by Peter the Great: ‘I gave you a handful of earth, and you gave me Russia.’ This was the point of departure for wide-ranging observations on theories of military revolution, diffusion and modernization. Chester Dunning, a recent welcome Fulbright visitor from Texas A&M University, most appropriately for a meeting held under the auspices of the Research Institute of Irish & Scottish Studies, spoke of both Scottish and Irish Soldiers with newly discovered material and special reference to the ancestors of the celebrated writer Lermontov. And Tom McInally provided an illuminating analysis of Gordon’s Catholicism, reading in a convincing manner between some of the Diary’s early lines.

At a late stage in the preparation of this number of *JISS*, Daniel Waugh from the University of Washington sent for comment a thorough survey of Gordon’s evidence concerning news and communications during the years that he was in Muscovy. It immediately seemed appropriate to add this paper to the others.

Finally, some letters concerning Gordon and his family circle, most of which are not be found in the Diary, previously published in a long defunct journal, have been republished.
Warm thanks are due to Jon Cameron, the Administrator of Research Institute of Irish and Scottish Studies (RIISS), for seeing this collection through to completion, to Michael Brown, Acting Director of RIISS, for his thorough preliminary reading, and to him and Cairns Craig, Director of RIISS, for their continued support of the publication of Patrick Gordon’s Diary so magnificently edited by Dmitry Fedosov, to which this special number of the journal adds further context and understanding.

Paul Dukes, Guest Editor.
On the border of Europe and Asia, in the Urals city of Ekaterinburg in front of the pub called ‘Gordon’s’ stands a monument to Patrick Gordon (1635–1699). Of course, the famous Scot had never been to the city (founded nearly a quarter of a century after his death), but the fact is very symbolic. Europe and Asia were fused in Gordon’s fate. More than that, the development of the Urals region as a mining centre of Russia and its weapons arsenal began at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries due to the needs of the Russian army. That was the army, in the creation of which General Gordon played a very important role. At the pedestal of the monument its sculptor engraved the phrase: ‘I gave you a handful of earth and you gave me Russia’ signed ‘Peter the Great’. Thus, Peter’s last words to Gordon which the tsar allegedly said at the general’s tomb, and referred merely to the state’s southern borders, were extended to the whole of Russia.

1 The article was prepared within the framework of the research project ‘The Waves of Westernization in Russia (XVII–beginning of the XXth century.)’, supported by the Russian Foundation for Humanities, grant № 13-01-00114.

2 The sculptor of the statue is Alexander Selnitsky.
Stone or bronze figures of Vladimir Lenin are still standing in all Russian cities. Modern young architects produce new urban sculptures, but monuments dedicated to the historical figures of the Petrine epoch are extremely rare. The number of monuments to Peter I in Russia exceeds thirty, yet only a handful of his followers were honoured in the same way. All the more remarkable is the fact that Patrick Gordon’s bust was set in Ekaterinburg. Explaining the pub’s name, its owners say that Peter Ivanovich was a famous doctor in his regiment and treated any ailment with a cup of whisky, for which he earned the nickname ‘Dr. Scotch’. Thus, after three hundred years, the person of Patrick Gordon still acquires legendary details and the Russians continue to romanticize his image as an ‘incorruptible and stern warrior’, ‘severe and calm’, ‘cheerful, honest’ and as a ‘Glorious General’ created by the Soviet writer Alexei Tolstoy in his famous novel Peter I. Along with historical legends and fictionalized images of Patrick Gordon, an extensive historiography as well as publications of his diaries exist. Gordon himself gave a kind of indulgence to all those interested in his fate or person. He wrote in the beginning of his diary: ‘leaving to others, if any shall take pains to read it, the free censure of any thing here done’. We are intending to use the given opportunity and approach the activity and deeds of this great man keeping in mind the major changes that took place in Europe and Russia in the second half of the seventeenth century.

These changes are associated with the birth of the modern world and the process of modernization which came to life in Russia under the strong

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5 Gordon, Passages from the Diary of General Patrick Gordon of Auchleuchries, 3.
influence of the West. The importance of the interaction between Russia and the West on the one hand, and its diversity on the other hand, is proven by countless attempts to reflect and make sense of it in thousands of scholars’ texts, works of literature and the arts. A network resource ‘Russia and the West: the relationship and interaction (IX—beginning of the XXth century)’, which reflects but a limited number of these results, for now contains more than 13,400 entries. In a single electronic library it unites bibliographic descriptions of publications and full-text files (more than 800 full-texts entries, about 35,000 pages) in Russian and many European languages which contain materials on various aspects of interaction between Russia, its regions and the western countries at different stages of historical development—from the ninth to the first decades of the twentieth century. On ‘the shelves’ of the electronic library are monographs, articles from scientific journals, essay collections, conference proceedings, dissertation abstracts, bibliographies, memoirs, diaries, correspondence, legislative regulations, illustrative materials, works of fiction, etc. The earliest of the books included in the resource was published in 1517, and numerous current publications complete the corpus. In accordance with the specific needs of the scholars they can perform four different types of search: in the ‘search window’ where one can type a word or a combination of words; geographical (Russia, the West, their territorial and administrative units); thematic (general questions, the state and the army, economy, art, knowledge, society, ideas and concepts, everyday life—each of these areas are subdivided into specific fields); chronological (any century from the ninth to the early twentieth century).

The Westernization of Russia was a part of the global process of Westernization. Being a common phenomenon in many countries it followed in its development certain laws. A number of theories deal with the description and the study of these laws, among them are three theories: of the military revolution, diffusion of innovations and modernization.

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6 ‘Russia and the West: the relationship and interaction (IX—beginning of the XXth century)’ http://iguran.ru/ruswest/ The resource was created in Russian by the author of the article together with the bibliographers from the Central Scientific Library of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Ural Branch with the support of the Russian Foundation for Humanities.

7 These theories along with the others are applied to the study of Russian history by Sergey Nefedov. See for example: Sergey Nefedov, Istoriya Rossii. Faktorny analiz. T. I. S drevneyshikh vremen do Velikoy Smuty (Moskva, 2010); idem, Istoriya Rossii. Faktorny analiz. T. II. Ot okonchaniya Smuty do Verafskoy revolyutsii (Moskva, 2011), etc.
A theory of the military revolution

The main idea of the theory of ‘the military revolution’, substantiated in 1950s by Michael Roberts and developed by his followers, is that over the last 3000 years there was a number of military revolutions, and each of them ushered a new stage of history.\(^8\) Analyzing changes in warfare in Western Europe between 1560 and 1660, Roberts pointed to a true revolution, the core of which was the birth of new, linear tactics, artillery, and regular armies. These innovations had major social consequences, led to tax increases, growth in the bureaucracy and the strengthening of the royal power. That is why it is so important to analyse these changes in the military sphere: they ushered the way to the modern state and a new social order. The fiscal-military state that eventually grow out of these changes was characterized by an unlimited power of the monarch who at the same time was in fact a military leader; mobilization of all public resources to support the army; strict military discipline, whose principles diffused into the civilian sector as well; effective bureaucracy; statutes and regulations, censuses and inventories; and the ideological monopoly of the state. A concept of the regular state has been much explored over the last decades by Western scholars.\(^9\) Researching the origins of the regular state in Russia, Sergey Nefedov affirms that until the time of Peter I, the Russian tsars in their decisions strongly depended on the Boyar Duma and Zemsky Sobor. The ideology and practice of the fiscal-military state were most clearly manifested in Petrine Russia.\(^10\) But its roots are much deeper: the first Russian military-bureaucratic monarchy appeared in the sixteenth century under the strong influence of the Ottomans. Its founder was Ivan the Terrible. Peter the Great called Ivan IV his ‘precursor and foregoer’.\(^11\) The origin of Peter’s absolutism can be explained by the theory of the military revolution that illuminates how the military changes influenced the transformation of socio-economic development.

Geoffrey Parker tied the military revolution in Europe with the ascent

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\(^9\) Christopher Storrs (ed.), The Fiscal-Military State in Eighteenth-Century Europe (Ashgate, 2009); M. S. Anderson, War and Society in Europe of the Old Regime, 1618–1780 (Leicester, 1988), etc.


\(^11\) Ibid. 2014. № 2, 43.
Patrick Gordon and the Westernization of Russia

of the West to the world domination, emphasizing the global importance of this phenomenon. He proposed to extend the time frame of the military revolution from 1530 to 1710 and drew attention to a number of military-technical innovations that had a significant impact on the development of military affairs in the sixteenth century, above all, to a new system of fortification, trace italienne. Parker proposed a new interpretation of the concept of Roberts: the transformation of military affairs in Europe at the dawn of modern times included three main components—the widespread use of firearms, the spread of a new fortification system and the growth of armies.

The creation by 1630 under the Swedish King Gustavus Adolphus of Europe’s first regular army and the development of light cannons underpinned Swedish military victories and made Sweden a major political and military player in Europe. Radical changes that took place in the West also encompassed Russia. Since the beginning of the seventeenth century there were several attempts to organize regiments of a new type. Sweden was not the only participant in these transformations. Polish Hussars served as a model for the creation of the Russian hussar units. By 1654 the hussar regiment commanded by Colonel H. Rylsky numbered a thousand men. During the Russian-Polish war of 1654–1667, the new type regiments became a major part of the armed forces. By 1663, the fifty-five regiments of ‘foreign order’ with Russian soldiers and foreign officers numbered 50,000–60,000 people. The reform was not limited to the organization of the infantry regiments; the old aristocratic cavalry was trained to fight in ranks and formed the Reiter regiments. Yet, the growing share of infantry in the armed forces was one of the most important features of the classical model of the military revolution—by 1680 the Russian army numbered about 126,000 soldiers, dragoons and musketeers. Regiments of the ‘new

13 Parker, The Military Revolution.
14 Roberts wrote, that the military revolution associated with Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden stood ‘like a great divide separating medieval society from the modern world’, and had a wider influence on European society at large. See Michael Roberts ‘The Military Revolution, 1560–1660’, 195.
15 Vitaliy Penskoy, Velikaya ognestrel'naya revolyutsiya (Moskva, 2010), 369.
17 Penskoy, Velikaya ognestrel'naya revolyutsiya, 362.
order’ made up 62.5% of the Russian armed forces, with 90,035 officers and soldiers, while regiments of the ‘old order’ numbered 52,614 men.\(^{18}\)

Foreigners who participated in the organization of the new Russian army (up to twenty per cent of the officers were foreigners\(^{19}\)) often had the experience of serving several European crowns, and transitions from one army to another were common. Along with them went the dissemination of warfare experience. Before going to the Russian service, Gordon fought on the side of the Swedes (which had the best infantry of the time), and then the Poles (famous for the best cavalry). This period of Gordon’s life in Rzeczpospolita is reflected in his diary and provides us with valuable information on military matters, political systems and the struggle of the parties, the life, manners and character of the Poles.

The role of Patrick Gordon in radical military changes in Russia was essential. From the very beginning of his service in Russia (1661) in a ‘new type’ Dragoon regiment under Daniel Crawford, Major Gordon taught mounted soldiers the European military order, firing guns, sword drill, guard duty, military discipline, and understanding of different orders.\(^{20}\) His daily work of many decades – Gordon stayed in Russia for thirty-eight years – on the transformation of Russian troops into the army of the new model is detailed in his diaries. They give us the information on how the military forces were formed and trained, how they were armed and paid, how the military actions went, and fortifications were built.

The success of the new tactics was directly dependent on the intensity of the drill. Foreigners and the Russians, committed to train soldiers and dragoons, were ordered from 1650 to drill their men at least one or two times a week.\(^{21}\) Patrick Gordon, on assuming his duties in Moscow got under his command 700 former fugitive soldiers whom he trained ‘twice a day in good weather’. Sometime later he taught the proper volley firing to 1,200 men for five days. He did it ‘with officers on the Neglinnaya stream from dawn until dark, giving an hour at noon for lunch’.\(^{22}\) Strict discipline and order, worked out for almost a week of enhanced drill, allowed the regiment to show off the art of coordinated burst firing on 14 January 1664 at the Novodevichy

\(^{18}\) Tat’yan Chernikova, Yevropeizatsiya Rossii vo vtoroy polovine XV–XVII vekakh (Moskva, 2012), 606.

\(^{19}\) Aleksandr Kutishchev, Armija Petra Velikogo: evropeyskiy analog ili otechestvenaya samolyutnost’ (Moskva, 2006), 94.

\(^{20}\) Aleksey Shishov, Znamennyye instrantsy na ischezhe Rossii (Moskva 2001), 13.

\(^{21}\) Penskov, Velikaya ognestrelecchaya revoliutsiya, 387–388.

Convent. There were many other occasions when Gordon’s soldiers showed their skills and gained the approval of the monarch. For example, on the occasion of the birth of tsarevich Alexei, Gordon drew up his regiments in lines three deep, the first rank kneeling, the second stooping, the third standing. In this position they fired all at once, while their drums beat, and banners waved. The tsar was so delighted with all this, that he ordered it to be repeated again and again.23

Patrick Gordon turned to be one of the best military engineers in Russia. In November 1678, Gordon presented at the Malorossiysky prykaz his proposals concerning the necessary changes to be made to the Kiev garrison in view of the Ottoman danger. He insisted on increasing the number of armed men in the garrison, enhancing the presence of the necessary specialists, and on addition of cannons. As a result, Major General Gordon and his European assistants as well as Russian and Ukrainian soldiers turned dilapidated and obsolete Kiev fortifications into a modern European well-fortified military fortress with a trained garrison. Neither the Poles nor the Crimeans together with the Turks, nor the Swedish King Charles XII dared to attack it in 1708–1709.24 Gordon was guiding these works from 1678 to 1685, and they were completed after his departure to Moscow. His diary describes in detail the construction works aimed at the transformation of Kiev in accordance with European ideas and practices of modern fortress construction.

Gordon played an active, innovative role in a gradual transition from a medieval Russian army to the regular one. Butyrskiy soldier regiments became a nucleus of the new regular Russian army. Patrick Gordon took the second Butyrskiy Regiment under his command in 1686. At the parade in the Kremlin in February 1687 the ‘passage’ of Gordon’s soldiers delighted the fifteen-year-old Peter I. On 2 September 1688, Peter made the transfer of eight soldiers from the Butyrskiy regiment to his Poteshniye regiments, which marked an important change in their composition: from ‘all ranks’ people to the best professional soldiers. On 7-8 September, Peter also demanded five flutists and five drummers from Gordon’s regiment. Altogether according to Gordon’s ‘Diary’ in September–November 1688, about forty people from the Second Butyrskiy Regiment were transferred to the Poteshniye regiments of the young tsar Peter.

The Kozhukhovsky campaign organized in accordance with Gordon’s plan in autumn 1694 became the first large-scale military exercises in Russia’s

23 Ibid, 139.
24 Chernikova, Yevropeizatsiya Rossii, 608.
history which proved in combat the advantages of the ‘new order’ regiments and the necessity of military reforms in the Russian state. In the course of the manoeuvres in Kozhukhovo Gordon showed the tsar the art of linear tactics, combined with the use of ‘regementsstytcke’: the troops made different rearrangements, took field fortifications by storm and fired artillery.

Experience of the exercise was applied during the Azov campaigns. In 1696 at Azov, in a real combat situation, European rules of siege engineering were also applied. Twelve Austrian officers—cannoneers, sappers, gunners—arrived in the Russian camp. They helped to build siege trenches and other constructions. Immediately after the Russian units captured the city, Peter commissioned engineer Antoine de la Valle with the planning and construction of a harbor and the building of an Admiralty at the Azov Sea. Through the efforts of many people, rounded up to Azov (deportation there often replaced the death penalty), the fortress was built as a bastion fortification system. The appearance of the bastion fortifications (or trace italienne) in early-modern Europe was a key element of the military revolution, rivaling in importance the development of linear tactics.

Artillery played a great role in the military revolution in the middle of the seventeenth century. Gordon was actively interested in innovations in this area. He ordered books from Europe on the art of artillery, discussed them with Peter, experimented with new mortars, hand grenades, bombs, carried out tests of new guns, gave technical advice, and introduced them in combat practice. The first Russian Grenadier company was organized in Gordon’s Butyrskiy regiment in 1694.

As substantiated by William McNeill, Jared Diamond, Ian Morris and many other authors, countries that were faced with the expansion of the West had to give an answer to the challenge from the Europeans. Preservation of their independence, culture and way of life depended on the ability of a non-Western society to accept the ideas and practices of the military revolution and adapt them in relation to their own circumstances. Not all of them managed to give an adequate response to the military challenge of Western Europe. Russia was certainly one of those which succeeded. The military revolution in Russia was accomplished and eventually made it a truly great power, an empire. A gradual transition from the medieval to the regular, European-type

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army involved turning a considerable part of the Russian armed forces into the regiments of the new order with the officer corps formed according to the European principles.

A diffusion theory

The military superiority of the absolutist states gained in the course of the military revolution induced the surrounding countries to modernize in accordance with the winners’ models and to adopt their military, social and political institutions. Processes of cultural interaction are studied in the framework of the diffusion theory. Adoption of the fundamental discoveries, e.g. new weapons, comes along with the borrowing of the tactics and military organization, which is often a part of the social organization. In most cases, accompanying cultural elements, such as new professional knowledge, household items, style, clothing, foreign words, etc. are also borrowed. According to the diffusion theory, the fundamental discovery that generated a wave of Swedish conquest and an expansion of a Swedish ‘cultural circle’ in Europe and Russia in the second half of the seventeenth century was a regimental cannon ‘regementsstycke’ (1629). The main components of this circle were ironworks, cannons, the regular army and the absolutism of the Swedish model of government. In Russia, the military changes also ran parallel with social and cultural borrowings. These aspects are the subject of numerous special studies.

It is necessary to stress that the Russian state was very prudent regarding the specialists who introduced innovations in the country. Perhaps Patrick Gordon’s case is one of the most representative in this context. Many foreigners found themselves ‘prisoners’ in Russia. Those of them who were really or allegedly at fault, one day could appear in Siberia. Those who, on the contrary, due to their talents and undeniable merits were highly needed by the Russian government, could not leave Muscovy.

26 The concepts of diffusionism were worked out by the German anthropologists in the second half of the nineteenth century and developed in the following centuries. See: Elena Alekseeva, ‘Diffuzionistskiy podkhod k isследovaniyu mirovoy i regional’noy istorii: teoretiko-metodologicheskii i istoriograficheskii aspekty’ in Diffuziya tekhnologiy, sotsial’nykh institutov i kul’turnykh tsennostey na Urale (XVIII – nachalo XX v.) (Yekaterinburg, 2011), 23–74.

If we focus on mechanisms and channels of diffusion of innovations, we find that the most effective mechanism is the personal contact of the parties involved in the transfer of knowledge. Personal communication of the Russian tsar and Patrick Gordon was crucial for the penetration of innovations in the Russian military sphere and lifestyle. Due to Gordon, Peter used to visit the German settlement (Nemetskaya Sloboda) on the right bank of the Yauza river in Moscow and met with the mores of Western Europe. There he feasted, took part in the organization of fireworks, talked about war, politics, commerce and culture.

Constant communication between Peter and Gordon was established in September 1689 at the Trinity Monastery, when Gordon supported the young tsar at the time of the Strelets riot. The young tsar regularly participated in military exercises organized under the guidance of Gordon. The Scottish General shared his knowledge in the military field with the tsar, and also constantly deepened it. He had a large library and read a lot of military essays on artillery, fortifications, the composition and mode of actions of troops in the European countries. Specially for the tsar Gordon purchased from abroad the latest research on the art of war, the works of famous European generals Montecuccoli and Turenne, and books on fortifications and artillery. He talked with the tsar about various military subjects: the structure of armies across Europe, new weaponry, and the variety of strategies and tactics used by the famous generals. During their practical exercises, Peter I worked out the technique of how to use various weapons and organize the parade of the troops. Peter quickly became a skilled bombardier, impressing observers with the extensive knowledge of the artillery, which derived from talks with Gordon and books from his library. ‘Poteshniye’ Preobrazhensky and Semenovsky regiments, which became the nucleus of the emerging Russian regular army, mastered military knowledge under the tsar’s leadership. In these exercises, Gordon drew particular attention to target shooting and the actions of the grenadier company of his regiment. Drill of separate regiments expanded to the training of all the regiments of infantry and then the exercises spread to the joint manoeuvres of infantry and cavalry. Manoeuvres were the peak of training. Still at the

29 Aleksey Shishov, Znamenitye inostrantsy na sluzhbe Rossii (Moskva, 2001), 37.
Trinity Monastery, the tsar held a week-length military exercise under Patrick Gordon's command near the Alexandrovskaya settlement. In May 1694, near the village of Preobrazhenskoye, Gordon demonstrated the results of the military drill. Various exercises of the cavalry were conducted. His men stormed the yard in Semenovskaya village, used hand grenades—clay pots filled with gunpowder. In September 1690, Gordon led the largest military exercise near the village of Preobrazhenskoye. The most important manoeuvres—Kozhukhovsky—were held in 1694.

As already mentioned, cultural phenomena spread along with the military borrowings. To meet the spiritual needs of the foreigners in the Nemetskaya Sloboda, two Protestant German churches and a Dutch Calvinist church were built. Gordon was the respected head of the Catholic community in Russia. With the assistance of Sophia's favorite V.V. Golitsyn, Gordon managed to open the Catholic mission in the German settlement in Moscow where two Jesuit monks served. Again with the help of Gordon in August 1684 the monks got permission to open a Catholic chapel and a school. Due to his efforts and close contacts with the tsar the first Catholic church was built in Russia in 1694 in Moscow. Gordon's diary reads: '20 (November 1694) his Majesty came to me at 11 am and stayed for about an hour. Then we went to George Ritz wedding ... Driving down the street, where is our church, I spoke to his majesty, that he permit us to build a stone house of God, to which he graciously deigned'. Peter was the first of the Russian sovereigns to attend celebrations in the Catholic church in the German settlement (as well as the Protestant ones). Yet, he remained an Orthodox man and the monopoly rights of the Russian Church as the state church persisted.

The channels of obtaining information include travel, books, newspapers and letters. Travelling through Europe, Gordon became acquainted with the life of various countries and peoples, each time with a sharp eye fixing the condition of fortifications—the ramparts, towers, walls of the cities through which his way ran. In London, where he met a Scottish battalion, the Russian ‘servitor foreigner’ noted that it was well outfitted, armed and trained, and the king and the queen watched its parade in Hyde Park. He was ordered to bring

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31 Chernikova, Yevropeizatsiya Rossii, 816.
33 Gordon, ‘Dnevnik’ 1684—1689, 94—100.
34 Ibid., 108–9.
from England to Russia junior rank officers, engineers, miners and \emph{feuerwerkers}.\footnote{Ibid., 115.} He brought from overseas books on fortification, artillery, history, religion as well as fiction, and ordered books from his friends and merchants. He studied them himself and gave them to Peter and fellow officers.\footnote{Gordon, \textit{Passages from the Diary of General Patrick Gordon of Auchleuchries}, 169, 181.} Gordon requested the merchant Meverall to inform him of the new inventions in mechanics, etc., published by the Royal Society in England and to send him a model or a detailed description of the new bullets. He got the news from the European newspapers and Russian ‘Courants’. For example, in his diary, on 4 October 1684 Gordon wrote that in Kiev he knew from a Dutch news dispatch from Moscow about the dismissal of his cousin as Lord Chancellor of Scotland. From the newspapers and letters from Moscow on 23 April 1685 he knew about Charles II’s death. On 19 November 1688 he left the following note: ‘We got the courants, or a newspaper, on November 4.’ etc. Gordon himself dispatched news from Russia to be published in Britain. Gordon corresponded intensively, sending and receiving more than a dozen letters a day. The letters talk about different tools for drawing and ballistics, the circulars and quadrants. Russians themselves shared quite a different view from the British on the postal service, as seen, for example, from I. T. Pososhkov’s letter to Gordon, where he proposed ‘to block out that hole and set it firmly, for news not to spread.’ Pososhkov seemed offended by the fact that ‘news of everything done in our country spreads into all lands’.\footnote{Aleksandr Brikner, \textit{Patrik Gordon i yego dnevnik} (Sankt-Peterburg, 1878). The chapter ‘Obshchestvennoye i ekonomicheskoye polozheniye Gordona’.} Gordon, on the contrary, learnt about current events in the world from the letters he received: the Eastern question, the English Revolution, the wars between England, France and Holland, and so forth.

Exchange of knowledge and traditions went in both directions. Being in Britain, Gordon repeatedly provided detailed answers to the questions of King James II about Russia, the tsars, the situation, the army, the way of government, garrisons, soldiers, weapons, methods of warfare, discipline and much more.\footnote{Gordon, \textit{Dnevnik} 1684—1689, 103—4.} The king asked Gordon’s opinion of British fortifications in the fortresses Skons, Tilbury and Sheerness, which they visited.\footnote{Ibid., 105—6.} In typically Russian style Gordon sent lady Melfort sables as a gift.\footnote{Ibid., 107.}

On return from the Great Embassy, Peter I regularly shared with his
Patrick Gordon and the Westernization of Russia

Scottish mentor the plans of the military reform in the state, showed new items of arms bought abroad. On a September day during the reception in the village of Preobrazhenskoye the tsar gave Gordon a bayonet, which can be considered as quite a symbolic gift. The appearance of a bayonet and flint lock—the two major military innovations—marked an important step in the military revolution.

Certainly, Gordon was but one of the ‘agents of Westernization.’ By 1650 Russia was inhabited by about 11 million people;\(^41\) The question about the number of the Western Europeans in Russia in the seventeenth century is controversial; accurate statistics do not exist. Yet, it is obvious that their significance for the history of Russia was determined more by the quality of their knowledge and experience than by their number. Vera Kovrigina fixed the population of the German settlement in mid-1660s’ Moscow as about 1,200 people\(^42\). According to Nikolai Petrukhintsev’s calculation the ‘foreign officers’ corps of Russia by the accession to the throne of Peter I numbered at least 700 foreign officers\(^43\). Other foreigners also brought to Russia professional knowledge and innovations in everyday life and leisure. Military changes went paralleled social and cultural borrowings:

Likewise at that very time they started to wear the German dress, as there was an Englishman, a merchant Andrew Krevet, who purchased all sorts of things for his Majesty from overseas and was admitted to the court. And due to him they started to wear English hats as the Sary (galley workers) use, and camisoles, and belts with dirks. Also during the jollities of the two aforementioned tsars, the noble persons accompanying them were dressed in German dress.\(^44\)

In December 1693 the Englishmen presented Peter with a gold watch and a box of tools.\(^45\) In February 1694 Gordon received from London via a Novgorod merchant Jacob Meyer rich gifts from the Anglo-Moscow trade

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\(^{41}\) Natal’ya Gorskaya, Istoriicheskaya demografia Rossii epokhi feudalizma (Moskva, 1994), 93.
\(^{42}\) Vera Kovrigina, Nemetskaya sloboda Moskvy i yeye zhitei v kontse XVII—pervoy chetverti XVIII vv (Moskva, 1997).
\(^{44}\) Boris Kurakin, ‘Gistoriya o Petre I i blizhnikh k nemu lyudyakh. 1682—1695 gg.’ in Russkaya starina, T. 68, № 10 (1890), 253.
\(^{45}\) Gordon, Passages from the Diary of General Patrick Gordon of Auchleuchries, 181.
company for the Russian tsar: magnificent weapons (halberd, sword, pistols) and a hat with a white feather. The tsar in his leisure time played skittles (not a typical game for the Russians) with Gordon and British skippers.

In a letter to Earl Middleton (1687) and a number of other letters Gordon wrote about the importation of tobacco—still an innovation in Russia—for the transportation of which from England to Russia he solicited, though unsuccessfully. Gordon became also one of the ‘pioneers of Russian wines’. During his stay in Kiev, as the chief of the local garrison, he produced wine from the grapes grown in his garden. The General regaled his Russian and foreign colleagues with this wine. Gordon’s diary entry from 14 October 1685 reported: ‘We celebrated the birthday of our King with the usual solemnity and drank for the health of His Majesty and for the others, the wine from my own vineyard’.

To complete this list of human folly imported to Russia from Europe in the seventeenth century, we will mention duelling. This custom was alien to the Russians who habitually defended their honour at court. Yet by the end of the seventeenth century the Russians had become accustomed to foreigners’ duels. And by the middle of the eighteenth century, this ‘noble’ Western tradition spontaneously spread to Russia. None of the Russian monarchs in the first half of the eighteenth century, even such an enthusiast for Western habits as Peter I, promoted duels. Indeed, the ‘Sea Charter’ adopted under Peter I prohibited them. Patrick Gordon mentions several duels between foreigners and even tells about his own duel with Major Montgomery, with whom he quarreled at a party in his own house.

European music of course was played in the German settlement. It also became quite common at the court of the princess Sophia during her regency (1682–1689). ‘We were celebrating Halloween with vocal and instrumental music’, remarked Patrick Gordon in his ‘Diary’ on 1 November 1688 probably about a night passed with other foreigners in the settlement. From his notes we may have an idea about the constant communication of foreigners and Russians. Gordon’s ‘Diary’ tells us about celebrations of the Orthodox and Catholic holidays by Russian nobles, foreign officers and Cossack chieftains together in Kiev in the late 1670s and 1680s. On these occasions people of different confessions might be united thanks to St. Andrew—the patron saint of Scotland and Russia, said to have once preached at the Dnieper steep slopes.

46 Gordon, ‘Dnevnik’ 1684—1689, 222.
47 Chernikova, Yevropeizatsiya Rossii, 707.
48 Ibid., 533.
foretelling the appearance of the great city of Kiev there. Gordon reports about participating in the voyevoda’s wife funeral ceremony in the Orthodox church and celebrating with the Russians their holidays: Vladimir’s day, Pokrov holiday, St. Boris and Gleb day. All these, as well as mutual celebrations of tsar’s name-days, British kings’ birthdays, home events like name-days and birthdays in the Russian noble families, hunting and dinners with lavish viands and an abundance of alcohol (that so often made Gordon suffer the next morning), provide evidence of everyday close and warm relationships. Friendly meals together with women accompanying their husbands, and dances after midnight (about three decades earlier than the assemblies, established by Peter I in St. Petersburg) point to a more open way of life in Kiev than in Moscow.

The diffusion of ideas in the ‘Kiev’ period of Patrick Gordon’s life also occurred in meetings and talks with the orthodox clergy, teachers and students of the Mogilyanskaya Collegia which at that time was a kind of university. The Scot met with them at the theological ‘dialogues’ or disputes, as well as at lunch. His engineering knowledge was applied to practical matters too. Gordon advised the hierarchy of the Pechersky monastery how to avoid the rockslide of the hill with a church at its top leading to the underground caves where the holy ancients laid.

So, by corresponding with many people in different parts of Europe, and visiting these countries personally, Gordon was kept aware of what was happening in the world. Ordering books, tools, and luxury goods from abroad, he maintained a close connection with the western culture which was so attractive to Peter I. Being older than the Russian Tsar by thirty-seven years, Gordon was a mentor and a powerful mediator in the rapprochement with European culture.

According to diffusion theory, innovation inevitably meets with traditionalist reaction. Its most vivid, explosive manifestation in the Russian case was a rebellion raised by the Streltsy on 6 June 1698. Their leaders shouted: ‘Go to Moscow! Destroy the German settlement and beat the Germans for making orthodoxy narrow-minded, beat the nobles … and not allow the sovereign into Moscow and kill him for his sympathy to the Germans!’.49 Patrick Gordon was one of the main actors in the suppression of a riot in 1698. In his ‘Diary’, he gave the most detailed and reliable description of the dramatic events. Perhaps it would not be an exaggeration to call Gordon twice saviour of Peter I: if it were not for the brave actions of the Scot, who stood firmly in the protection

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of the young tsar, whose life and power in the riots of 1682 and 1698 was subject to immediate danger, Russian history would have been different.

Controversies between tradition and innovation are typical for all the cultures in transit. Westernization was promoted in Russia by the ‘Moscow foreigners’ and a group of the Russian elite as well. Confrontation between them and proponents of the old Russian tradition in the seventeenth century became sharper and encompassed more people. This struggle of the old traditions and the new European trends eventually divided Russian society and culture deeply.

Examples of rejection of the foreign, the alien, may be found on many pages of Gordon’s diary. This applies not only to common Russian rejection of foreigners in everyday life, for example strife with townspeople who did not wish to let foreign officers be quartered that Gordon faced upon arrival to Moscow; or the zeal of the customs’ officers, ransacking his possessions when he went abroad, but also to opposition to the proposals of the European engineering officers. Gordon’s orders were regarded by Russians as unnecessary; they were reluctant to fulfill them. There were cases when the troops would not work, and Gordon had to convince, persuade or change his plans. There were frequent disagreements with regard to proposed constructions. Gordon’s relentless drive, especially as commandant of the fortress of Chigirin, in the maintenance of strict military discipline and order in the regiments caused strong dissatisfaction among the people under him, especially on the part of the so-called streltsy musketeers. Gordon’s supporters did not dare to express their agreement with him. Sometimes Russian officers, who had not seen fortifications such as Gordon suggested constructing, expressed their surprise and doubt, and tried to impede the execution of his projects. When the preparations for the second Crimean campaign started, Gordon was actually removed from its planning and direct involvement in the mustering of the troops. During the meeting on the coming campaign, on 26 October 1687, the Patriarch denounced Gordon, claiming that Russian weapons cannot succeed or achieve anything, as ‘a heretic has under his command the best people in our country.’ But Gordon narrates that the Patriarch was strongly repelled by the nobles who even laughed at him. Commander Vasily Golitsyn had the opportunity to learn the contents of Gordon’s ‘Reflections on the coming campaign’, but considerations of the experienced military man were not taken into account. It was not the only occasion that Gordon experienced

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51 Gordon, ‘Dnevnik’ 1684—1689, 179.
the Patriarch’s hostility to foreigners. Invited to the ceremonial table to celebrate the birth of tsarevich Alexei Petrovich (in February 1690), he could not take part in the dinner because the Patriarch declared emphatically that involving foreigners in such events was indecent.52

The creation of the regular army after the European model, as noted above, was the main goal of the reforms of Peter I. The need to provide that army with powerful artillery and infantry weapons caused the creation of a metallurgical and weapons factories complex in the Urals. Over 300 years about 300 metalworking factories and mills were built there. They fully determined the economic and socio-cultural identity of the region. Hundreds of foreign specialists helped to organize the production at the established enterprises. Among them there were many Britons, including Scots. Their activities should be seen as part of another, even more powerful diffusion wave generated at the end of the eighteenth century in Great Britain. The Industrial Revolution brought a whole series of fundamental innovations: spinning and weaving machines, steam engines, steamboats and locomotives, precise machine tools, mass production of cast steel.

In 1786 a Scottish engineer Charles Gascoigne invited by Catherine II, arrived in Russia.53 The first steam engines were built in Russia in 1790s by the Scottish engineers George Sheriff and Charles Baird. In 1792, Charles Baird founded a mechanical works in St. Petersburg, where more than 140 steam engines were built in twenty years. A little later, another Scot who worked with Gascoigne, Joseph Major, moved to the Urals and from 1804 constructed mechanisms for private and state-owned mining plants. In 1812 he became a mechanic at the Perm Mining Board and in 1826 founded a private mechanical factory, the first in the Urals. From 1804 to 1829 Joseph Major built at least eighteen steam engines, and trained more than fifty specialists at the Ural factories.54 Thus, European countries have repeatedly become centres of fundamental discoveries in weaponry and industry, to name but two, which extended to other countries. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Westernization of Russia and its modernization continued. Europeans again took an active part in it and many of them were the compatriots of Patrick Gordon.

52 Gordon, Passages from the Diary of General Patrick Gordon of Auchleuchries, 169.
54 Fedor Bondarenko, Vladimir Mikityuk, Vladimir Shkerin, Britanskiye mekhaniki i predprinimateli na Urale v XIX – nachale XX vv (Yekaterinburg, 2009), 5 – 22.
Modernization theory

For the Modern time period, the processes determined by technological innovations and foreign influences are broadly discussed in the framework of the modernization theory. According to the definition of one of the founders of this theory, Cyril Black, modernization is a process of adapting a traditional society to the conditions generated by the technological revolution. Modernization is not the only word that describes this process, the words ‘Europeanization’ and ‘Westernization’ are used in the same sense. For the peripheral countries of Eastern Europe and Asia, the modernization process is often directly equated with the process of Westernization. For example, the Russian historians A. N. Medushevsky and A. B. Kamensky indicate that modernization in Russia has taken the shape of Europeanization or Westernization—the transformation of Russian society along the Western lines.

Gordon’s diary shows that Russia in the second half of the seventeenth century was, no doubt, a traditional society. This is proved by many facts and circumstances which he had to encounter. For example, a natural part of the salary was paid in cloth, damask, and sables. Their subsequent sale was a constant problem for the serving foreigner. Traditional oriental features were the bribes, all kinds of gifts that Gordon at first was amazed at, and then quickly adapted to, regarding them as an effective mechanism of traditional Russian administration. The contrast between European societies, already moving along the path of modernization, and Russia that remained deeply traditional, struck Gordon immediately after he changed his European masters for the Russian service. He formulated it as follows:

For having served in such a country, and amongst such people where strangers had great respect and were in a great reputation, and even more trust as the natives themselves; and where a free passage, for all deserving persons, lay open to all honour, military and civil; and where, in short time, by good husbandry and industry, an estate might be gained; and, in marrying, no scruple or difference was made betwixt the natives and strangers whereby many have attained to great fortunes,

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56 Ibid., 6.
57 Andrey Medushevsky, Utverzhdeniye absoluteizma v Rossii (Moskva, 1993), 47; Aleksandr Kamenskiy, Ot Petra I do Petra I: Reformy v Rossii XVIII veka (Moskva, 1999), 41.
governments, and other honourable and profitable commands; as indigenation, also, being usually conferred on well qualified and deserving persons; where a dejected countenance or submissive behaviour is noted for cowardice and faintheartednes, and a confident, majestick, yet unaffected, comportment for virtuous generosity the peoples high mindednes being accompanied and qualified with courteousness and affability, wherein, meeting with the lyke humours, they contend for transcendence. Whereas, on the contrary, I perceived strangers to be looked upon as a company of hirelings, and, at the best (as they say of women) but necessaria mala; no honours or degrees of preferment to be expected here but military, and that with a limited command, in the attaining whereof a good mediator or mediatrix, and a piece of money or other bribe, is more available as the merit or sufficiency of the person; a faint heart under faire plumes, and a cuckoe in gay cloths, being as ordinary here as a counterfeited or painted visage; no marrying with natives, strangers being looked upon by the best sort as scarcely Christians, and by the plebeyans as meer pagans; no indigenation without ejeration of the former religion and embracing theirs; the people being morose and niggard, and yet overweening and valuing themselves above all other nations.58

From this passage we may confirm the opposition of such features immanent to traditional and modern societies as: rigid traditional attitudes regarding personal and professional progress, obedience to prevailing norms of behaviour, social humility, restrictions with regard to foreigners and, in particular, marriages with them; protection of traditional religious values—on the one hand; and a positive attitude towards changes in persons’ social status through their own merits and qualifications, recognition of the value of personality, recognition of transnational and social mobility—on the other hand.

Texts left by many other foreigners that travelled across Russia or lived there for some time affirm that the Europeans perceived Muscovites as humiliated Asians rather than as the free peoples of the West. Those Asiatic features seemed them to be archaic, uncivilized and backward. Europeans remarked that the Russians were not interested in science and modern medicine, and the splendour of their despotic tsars contrasted with the primitiveness and dirt of all other people.

58 Gordon, Passages from the Diary of General Patrick Gordon of Auchleuchries, 47. Orthography of the original.
Russia modernized slowly and its own original impulses were substituted by artificial, constant borrowings of the western innovations. Thus, Russia became in some sense dependent on Europe. At the same time, expanding western patterns into its life, Russia became more and more a part of Europe. The traditional Russian society in the second half of the seventeenth century embraced new features as well. Gordon’s Diary is ‘inhabited’ by many foreigners, experts in different areas, whose performance in Russia was objectively aimed at its modernization. Foreigners—merchants, technicians, pharmacists, doctors, and others—were of great importance for the modernization of Russian life, not only in Moscow but also in other places. For example, Gordon, passing via Tula in 1687, noted that all the specialists in the factories were Germans or Swedes, and then reported some comments of a wealthy industrialist Marselis, the owner of Tula ironworks. In 1684, in Vologda (on his way to Archangel’sk), Gordon noted that the eastern part of the town, where ‘foreigners lived in spacious and comfortable homes’, was built up better than other districts.

The modernization of Russian civilization was a response to the challenge of the West. In the seventeenth century it took only its first important steps. Meanwhile, the further development of the process from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries went towards the total transformation of Russian social and cultural foundations. An agrarian type of subsistence was changing to an industrial one; Orthodox spirituality was eroded by secularization and rationalization; villages provided cities with goods to their own detriment; a spirited traditional consciousness was replaced by standardized education, science and professions; autocracy, that always performed as sanctified by the church, was forced to change towards representative political power; territorial and social sedentary life was replaced by mobility; folk customs and culture were marginalized by the new theater, music, visual arts, literature; Russian as the national language was undergoing substantial changes under the influence of borrowings from European languages. This development was destroying the Russian civilization in its traditional quality. The borrowing of the European order of things modernized it.

Theories of military revolution, diffusionism and modernization are interrelated and have common elements, but they illuminate the historical process from different perspectives and complement each other. They provide an effective tool for the study of the early-modern period in Europe and in Russia, allowing us to understand more clearly the different events in which the life of Patrick Gordon—the Scot who made a significant contribution to the
modernization of Russia in the second half of the seventeenth century—was so significant.

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Scottish and Irish Soldiers in Early Seventeenth-Century Russia: The Case of George Learmonth and the Belaia Garrison

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The activities, writings, and historical significance of the Scottish general, Patrick Gordon (Peter the Great’s mentor), are becoming very well known thanks to scholarship supported by the Research Institute of Irish and Scottish Studies (RIISS) at the University of Aberdeen. Patrick Gordon’s diary—being published in English and Russian—provides a unique and invaluable lens for viewing seventeenth-century Russia and the role in Russia’s modernization played by an exceptional Scottish soldier. Many other Scottish soldiers fought honourably for the tsars in the seventeenth century and played important roles in Russia’s growing military power, but they are not well known. Several Scottish officers settled permanently in Russia, married, raised families, and founded Scottish-Russian clans of noble warriors. By examining some of these less famous Scots we can learn much about early modern Scottish culture, kinship ties, and networking, as well as the role Scottish soldiers played in Russian history.

Historians have been studying Scots in early-modern Russia for over two centuries, but the subject is not yet fully developed. For example, we still do not know how many Scots served in Russia during the seventeenth century. It has been estimated at about 3000, but there may have been many more. The

1 I acknowledge with thanks the encouragement, bibliographic suggestions, and timely assistance given me by Dmitry Fedosov.


study of Scots in early-modern Russia has been greatly advanced by recent scholarship associated with RIISS. Of particular interest to me is Dmitrii Fedosov and Oleg Nozdrin’s forthcoming book, *Lion Rampant to Double Eagle: Scots in Russia, 1600–1700*, which contains biographical data on 650 Scots who lived in Russia during the seventeenth century. A surprisingly large number of those men (approximately 10%) served in 1613 in the garrison of Belaia, a town located on the border between Russia and Poland-Lithuania. That intrigued me because I had previously encountered the Belaia garrison while studying Irish soldiers in Russia at the end of its ‘Time of Troubles’ (1598–1613), a horrific period of civil war and foreign military intervention. By combining data from my Irish mercenary project and RIISS-related resources, it may soon be possible to write a collective biography (or cohort study) of the Belaia garrison. To my amazement, I was able to identify 117 out of the 130 Scottish and Irish soldiers who served in Belaia. (See Appendix.) One Scottish soldier in particular caught my attention—George Learmonth, the founder of Russia’s famous Lermontov family. As an experiment in prosopography, I decided to use the Belaia garrison data base to try to fill the gaps in the record of George Learmonth’s life and the early history of the Lermontovs. The main purpose of this essay is to reconstruct the biography of George Learmonth and to examine the impact of his obscure but remarkable career. Starting in 1613, Learmonth and his descendants proudly served the tsars as cavalry officers. George’s descendants included one of Russia’s greatest poets, Mikhail Lermontov (1814–1841), who was fascinated by and wrote poetry about his Scottish heritage. Many efforts have been made to trace the distant ancestry of Mikhail Lermontov, but with mixed results that contain many

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The Case of George Learmonth and the Belaia Garrison

errors and a maddening lack of detail. This essay will attempt to overcome those problems.

During the sixteenth century many Scots (especially younger sons) left home to serve as mercenary soldiers in the armies of Continental European monarchs. Scottish soldiers soon became renowned for their martial skills and bravery, and they were actively recruited by, among others, the kings of Sweden and Poland-Lithuania and the tsar of Russia. Some enterprising Scots went into business as recruiters, gathering large numbers of unemployed Scots (including their own kinsmen) for service abroad, especially for the king of Sweden. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the unquenchable desire for foreign troops in Eastern Europe also resulted in the recruitment (often by coercion) of many Irish soldiers. In the final stages of Russia’s Time of Troubles, Swedish, Polish, and Russian armies contained many Scottish and Irish soldiers. When those armies collided on the battlefield, Scots and Irishmen fought side by side against their fellow countrymen, sometimes against their own kinsmen. How did this strange development come about?

6 Common biographical misinformation about George Learmonth includes confusing him with his kinsman Peter Learmonth, failure to comprehend the circumstances of his entry into and departure from Polish service, seriously misdating his entry into Russian service, and failure to examine his service to the Romanovs. See A. B. Kurakin (ed.), Obshchi Gerbovniki Dvorianskikh rodov Vserossiiskoi Imperii: nachatyi v 1797m godu, 10 vols (St. Petersburg, 1798–1836), vol. 4, 102; Nikol’skii, ‘Predki’, 547–50; Antoni Krawczyk, ‘The British in Poland in the Seventeenth Century’, The Seventeenth Century, 17 (2002), 256; Steuart, Scottish Influences in Russian History, 524.


8 Grosjean, An Unofficial Alliance, 14–15, 28–9; Fischer, The Scots in Sweden, 73.


10 Dunning and Hudson, ‘The Transportation of Irish Swordsmen’, 430–5; Steuart, Scottish Influences in Russian History, 22–8, 31–2; Frost, ‘Scottish Soldiers’, 198–9; Richard Hellie, Enserfment and Military Change in Muscovy (Chicago, 1971), 169, 267; Samuel
In 1608 and 1609, King Karl IX of Sweden sent embassies to King James VI and I to request permission to recruit British soldiers for service in Russia in a war he and his beleaguered ally, Tsar Vasili Shuiskii (r.1606–10), were fighting against King Sigismund III of Poland-Lithuania. Negotiations were cordial and led James to formally recognize Karl’s claim to the Swedish throne.¹¹

James allowed Karl quietly to recruit Scottish soldiers, and, as a result, large numbers of Scots were serving in Swedish military forces by 1609. One of those Scots, Sir James Spens (1571 – 1632), became Karl IX’s principal military recruiter in Britain and headed the Swedish embassy to King James which sought reconciliation and more mercenary soldiers.¹²

Karl IX relied heavily upon foreign mercenaries, including Scots and Englishmen, to supplement Swedish soldiers fighting against Poland-Lithuania, and by 1608 Karl had a very good reason to ask James for permission to recruit many more soldiers. Sweden’s next-door neighbor Russia was experiencing its devastating Time of Troubles. In 1606 Tsar Dmitrii had been assassinated by a small group of aristocrats, triggering a powerful civil war. The usurper Tsar Vasili Shuiskii loudly denounced the dead Dmitrii as an impostor, but the former tsar’s supporters successfully put forward the story that Tsar Dmitrii had escaped death and would soon return to punish the traitors. So energetic was the response to the call to arms against Shuiskii that civil war raged for many years and produced several impostors claiming to be Tsar Dmitrii or other members of the extinct ruling dynasty. Russia’s internal disorder eventually prompted Polish and Swedish military intervention. In 1608 a desperate Tsar Vasili Shuiskii approached Karl IX with an urgent request for


military assistance. Karl took maximum advantage of Shuiskii’s distress to force him to cede to Sweden valuable territory on the Baltic coastline in return for the promise to provide Shuiskii with up to 5,000 mercenary soldiers to be paid for by the Russians. Karl turned to James for assistance in recruiting those soldiers, and James proved to be very receptive to the idea. Brisk recruiting in Scotland and Ireland began almost immediately.\(^{13}\)

Without doubt, during the early seventeenth century the most successful recruiter of Scottish soldiers was Sir James Spens, a middle-ranking Scottish landowner from the region of Fife. Spens recruited several thousand British and Irish soldiers for Swedish military service, and he sometimes acted as their commanding officer in the Swedish army. Occasionally, Spens served as Sweden’s ambassador to James, invariably seeking permission to recruit more British subjects for Swedish military service. The majority of his Scottish recruits came from eastern and northeastern Scotland. Spens was always on the lookout for potential officers, and he recruited dozens of his fellow Scots to serve as officers of mercenary forces in the Swedish army.\(^{14}\)

James Spens was the son of David Spens and Margaret Learmonth, and James Spens made serious efforts to hire his own kinsmen, including the Learmonth family.\(^{15}\) The Learmonths were an ancient and respectable Scottish noble family. By the sixteenth century the Learmonths had become a powerful clan in eastern Scotland, especially in the region of Fife.\(^{16}\) In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries many Learmonths served abroad in Continental armies, including those of Sweden, Poland-Lithuania, and Russia.\(^{17}\) In the mid-sixteenth century Michael Learmonth became one of the first Scots to attempt to recruit Scottish soldiers for Sweden.\(^{18}\) It is therefore no surprise to


\(^{15}\) Bruce A. McAndrew, *Scotland’s Historic Heraldry* (Woodbridge, 2006), 518.


find several Learmonths serving as officers under James Spens's command in the Swedish army. Among those officers was George Learmonth's outstanding kinsman, Peter Learmonth, who has occasionally been misidentified as the founder of the Lermontov family.19

Peter Learmonth entered Swedish service in 1603 as an ensign, and he rose through the ranks in (Colonel) James Spens's regiment.20 In 1610 Peter Learmonth served as a captain in the Swedish army that was invited by Tsar Vasili Shuiskii to enter Russia to oppose Polish military intervention. At the battle of Klushino (June 1610) the large Swedish and Russian armies were decisively defeated by a small Polish army. After the battle, over 1500 foreign mercenary soldiers transferred their allegiance to the king of Poland-Lithuania, Sigismund III. Although Peter Learmonth was listed as ‘captured’ by the Poles, in fact he had little choice but to join the bulk of his men and fellow officers entering Polish service.21 It is important to note that early-modern European mercenary soldiers not infrequently switched sides for a variety of reasons, including lack of pay and food, the cowardice or incompetence of their commanders, and the hopelessness of their tactical position. Mercenary units and individuals regularly changed allegiance without embarrassment and usually without loss of credibility. In the seventeenth century many Scots served more than one master, including Patrick Gordon—who served the kings of Sweden and Poland-Lithuania and was ‘captured’ before entering the tsar's service.22

Once in Polish service, Peter Learmonth proved to be an exceptionally energetic officer whose skill and bravery were quickly demonstrated. His unit was almost immediately sent to aid the Polish siege of the mighty Russian fortress of Smolensk, and Learmonth distinguished himself during that long and successful military operation.23 In the final years of Polish intervention in Russia’s Time of Troubles, Captain Peter Learmonth commanded three

20 SSNE 1763.
companies of infantry (900 men) in Polish forces that attempted to capture Moscow. During the winter of 1617–18, Polish troops reached the outskirts of the Russian capital before being turned back by Russian forces that included Captain Learmonth’s kinsman, George Learmonth.24 During that campaign Peter Learmonth once again demonstrated bravery, tactical skill, and energetic leadership. In 1619 King Sigismund III rewarded the ‘noble’ and ‘brave’ Scot with a hereditary estate.25

George Learmonth (c.1590–1634), the son of Andrew Learmonth and the great-nephew of George Learmonth of Balcomie, was a minor nobleman (or ‘gentleman of horse’) from Fife.26 No records have survived concerning George’s early career, but in my considered opinion he almost certainly got swept up in his kinsman James Spens’s large-scale recruiting campaign. George Learmonth probably entered Swedish service in 1609. Like his kinsman Peter Learmonth, George probably served in the large Russian-Swedish army that was decisively defeated by a smaller Polish army at the battle of Klushino in June 1610. Mercenary soldiers in the Russian-Swedish army (including more than 2000 Scots and Irishmen) performed well on the battlefield but suffered heavy casualties and were abandoned by their commanders before deciding to surrender.27 After the battle, Peter Learmonth (and, I believe, George Learmonth) and at least 1,500 mercenaries agreed to enter Polish military service.28 They were soon put to work by their new masters. In late 1610 many former members of the Swedish-Russian army participated in the Polish capture of the Russian border town of Belaia and subsequently served in a newly-created Belaia garrison composed of approximately 150 soldiers organized into two cavalry companies, one Scottish and one Irish.


26 There is no surviving record of George Learmonth’s birth. It has been claimed that he was born as early as 1573 or as late as 1596. See Fedosov, Caledonian Connection, 67; Fedosov and Nozdrin, Lǐn Rǎmpǎnt, 61; Reid, ‘Lermontov’, 315; S. B. Veselovskii (ed.), Prikhodo-raskhodnye knigi moskovskkh prikazov 1619–1621 gg (Moscow, 1983), 414; Anderson, Scotsmen, 44; Wood, The East Neuk, 439–46; ‘Rod Lermontovykh’, in Lermontovskaia entsiklopediia, V. A. Manuilov (ed.) (Moscow, 1981), 467. I wish to thank Dr Kelsey Jackson Williams for his insights into the Learmonth family history during the sixteenth century.

27 Brereton, Newses of the Present Miseries of Rushia, 53–4; Dunning, Russia’s First Civil War, 409–10; Grosjean, An Unofficial Alliance, 30.

companies served side by side for three years while maintaining their separate identities and strong unit cohesion. Some of the men married local women and started families. George Learmonth probably participated in the capture of Belaia, but the first direct reference to him in surviving records dates from 1613. By then he was serving as an ensign in the Belaia garrison’s Scottish company.²⁹

In August 1613 a Russian army commanded by voevoda (general) Dmitrii M. Cherkasskii laid siege to Belaia. After putting up a stout defence for almost a month, the garrison surrendered.³⁰ Voevoda Cherkasskii was impressed by the garrison’s skill and determination, and he reported that to Moscow. The Russian army at this time contained less than 1000 foreign troops, and the new Romanov regime was determined to hire many more of them.³¹ The ‘Bel’skie nemtsy’, as the Russians called them, consisted of excellent, well-ordered soldiers with highly competent officers. They were soon informed that Tsar Mikhail had graciously agreed to accept them into Russian service.³² At the time of the garrison’s surrender, it consisted of approximately 130 men almost equally divided between Scots and Irishmen. The ‘Bel’skie nemtsy’ immediately began receiving from the Russian government regular wages, food, and fodder for their horses.³³ The garrison contained fifteen

²⁹ Phipps, ‘Britons in Seventeenth-Century Russia’, 201, 460–61; Dukes, ‘The First Scottish Soldiers’, 48; Dobson, Scots in Poland, 93; Fedosov, Caledonian Connection, 67; Fedosov and Nozdrin, Lion Rampant, 61–2. Scholars have long assumed that George Learmonth joined the Polish army on his own initiative by 1613 and that he was not among the large group of mercenary soldiers who entered Polish service after surrendering at Klushino in 1610. Unfortunately, there are serious problems with that generally accepted interpretation. In fact, relatively few Scottish soldiers were enticed into joining the army of the arch-Catholic King Sigismund III in the period 1609–13. Presbyterians in particular were unlikely to seek their fortune in the service of the ‘Jesuit king’ of Poland-Lithuania. Although there are no surviving records of George Learmonth’s faith, in my considered opinion he was almost certainly a Presbyterian. See footnote 58 below.


³³ Russkaia istoricheskaia biblioteka [hereafter cited as RIB], vol. 28, Prikhodo-raskhodnye knigi Moskovskikh prikazov (St Petersburg, 1912), cols. 530–32; Vasilii Storozhov, ‘George Lermont—Rodonachal’nik russkoi vetyi Lermontovykh’, Knigoredenie, nos. 5–8 (1894), 9, 14, 19–20; O. V. Skobelkin, ‘Shotlandtsy na russkoi sluzhbe v seredine 10-kh godov XVII veka’, Istoriicheskie zapiski. Nauchnye trudy Historicheskogo fakul’teta
‘gentlemen’ (fourteen Scots and one Irishman), six of whom served as officers, including Ensign George Learmonth. George Learmonth—known as Iurii Lermont (or Lerman) to the Russians—as a ‘nobleman’ and was initially paid two rubles per month, about twice the salary of a Russian gentry cavalryman. George worked hard and showed initiative, and as a result his salary was soon increased to three rubles per month.34

Many of the ‘Bel’skie nemtsy’ were immediately assigned to Cherkasskii’s army and participated in skirmishes against Polish forces and a protracted but unsuccessful siege of Smolensk, which had been captured by the Poles in 1611. The Belaia garrison cavalrymen earned high praise for their order and discipline, and some of them were assigned as teachers of the native Russian gentry cavalrymen.35 Scottish officers greatly outnumbered Irish officers in Russian service. As a result, several Scots served as officers of the Belaia garrison’s Irish cavalrymen. By 1616 George Learmonth (Iurii Lermont) was serving as an officer in the garrison’s Irish company, and his pay was increased to seven rubles per month.36 By then more than a dozen ‘Bel’skie nemtsy’ had been sent to Tula, a major southern military headquarters, where they helped defend Russia’s vulnerable steppe frontier against Tatar raids. In the same period, many other members of the Belaia garrison fought gallantly and successfully against marauding Cossacks.37

Dozens of ‘Bel’skie nemtsy’, including George Learmonth, were assigned to Russian army units trying to block Polish military intervention. During 1617–18 King Sigismund III’s son, Prince Wladyslaw, made one last serious attempt to capture Moscow and enforce his claim to be tsar of Russia. At least eighteen former members of the Belaia garrison served in military forces defending Moscow against a Polish army that contained many Irish and Scottish

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35 Fedosov and Nozdrin, Lion Rampant, 61; Storozhev, ‘George Lermont’, 11.
troops. Several of the ‘Bel’skie nemtsy’ were killed or wounded in the heroic defence of the capital. At least six of them, including George Learmonth, helped decisively turn back Prince Władysław’s troops in intense fighting at Moscow’s Arbat Gate. In that battle, Ensign George Learmonth’s bravery was on display ‘for all to see’. When Lieutenant David Edwards was killed in the defence of Moscow, the Irish soldiers in his company immediately petitioned to have George Learmonth replace him. Newly promoted Lieutenant Iuri Lermont received fifteen rubles per month.38

Polish intervention in Russia’s Time of Troubles ended by negotiations. Tsar Mikhail was so anxious to have his father, Patriarch Filaret, released from Polish captivity that he agreed to cede several border towns to Poland-Lithuania, including Belaia.39 By the time the war was officially over, most of the Scottish and Irish soldiers of the former Belaia garrison were concentrated in the Tula region. After a review of their condition, the Russians dismissed twenty one of them as unfit for further duty due to old age or infirmities; those men were honourably settled near Tula at half pay. About a dozen Scottish and Irish soldiers successfully petitioned the tsar to allow them to return home. The rest remained on active duty in the Tula region. There Lieutenant George Learmonth (called Iuri Andrejevich Lermont in Russian records) served as second in command of a mixed company of Scottish and Irish cavalrymen.40 Several ‘Bel’skie nemtsy’ married Russian women and had children. Lieutenant Iuri Lermont married twice: first, to Ekaterina who bore him three sons (William, Peter, and Henry), all of whom became cavalry officers in the tsar’s service; and second, to Mariia who bore him a daughter named Ekaterina.41 By 1620, Iuri Lermont’s pay had risen to thirty rubles per month.42 His high salary testifies to the excellent reputation some Scottish officers had earned while in Russian service.

While living in the Tula region several officers of the former Belaia garrison, including Iuri Lermont, petitioned Tsar Mikhail for an increase in status and


salary. They requested transfer into the ranks of the Russian gentry militia (pomeshchiki). That would qualify each of them to receive several hundred acres of land as a pomest’ye estate—a conditional land grant requiring the holder to serve in the Russian army for several months each year until death or disability prevented further service. In their petition, the men stated: ‘We your slaves do not wish to go to our own land, because we have married here and have children, and we want to spill our blood for Thee the Sovereign.’ A few of the officers were granted pomest’ye estates, but those estates were usually located in remote places near the southern frontier that were difficult to monitor and offered only limited opportunities for generating revenue. That was not Lieutenant Iurii Lermont’s fate, however. Instead, in 1621 he was assigned a fine pomest’ye estate of approximately 500 acres in the Zabolotsk district near Kostroma, about 400 kilometres northeast of Moscow. In effect, he became a Russian nobleman. Iurii concentrated on the careful management and development of his pomest’ye estate. He was regarded as a good lord who energetically improved his estate by attracting peasants to settle on his undeveloped ‘wastelands’, thereby increasing the amount of arable land he held by about 20%. In 1628 Iurii Lermont was the relatively prosperous lord of nine villages.

By 1628 the number of foreigners in Russian service who had formerly served in the Belaia garrison had declined significantly, leading to the merger of the Irish and Scottish companies into one unit under the command of Captain Thomas Garne. Many of those men lived long enough to participate actively in the Smolensk War (1632–34). That war came about due to Tsar Mikhail’s determination to recapture Smolensk from Poland-Lithuania. The tsar and his advisers realized that the Russian army needed significant military modernization to achieve that ambitious objective. First and foremost, that meant attracting foreign officers who were well versed in the latest military technology and tactics, including the talented Scottish general, Alexander

45 Dukes, ‘Scots in Russia and the “General Crisis”’, 105; Murdoch, Networks North, 92–3; Phipps, ‘Britons in Seventeenth-Century Russia’, 312–13; Fedosov, Caledonian Connection, 19, 54–5, 59, 85–6, 95, 106.
47 Fedosov, Caledonian Connection, 67; Fedosov and Nozdrin, Lion Rampant, 61.
Leslie. General Leslie and others were tasked with organizing and training Russian soldiers in ‘new formation regiments’ (modelled on the Swedish army) to fight in more modern ways. Most of the new formation infantry regiments were composed of Russian gentry militiamen who had previously served in cavalry units.49

In 1632 a new formation cavalry regiment was formed composed of approximately 2000 Russian dvoriane (provincial noblemen) and deti boiarskie (petty gentry) under the command of a high-ranking foreign general.50 Among the officers chosen to train this new cavalry regiment was Lieutenant Iurii Lermont, who was promoted to the rank of captain and given the astronomically high salary of 100 rubles per month (approximately the same salary paid to high-born aristocrats serving in Tsar Mikhail’s court).51 Also joining the same new formation cavalry regiment were two newly-arrived kinsmen of Iurii Lermont – John and Thomas Learmonth.52 Captain Iurii Lermont was given command of a company of 200 cavalrymen, mostly Russian provincial nobles and petty gentry, along with some foreigners who had recently converted to Russian Orthodox Christianity.53 Like most soldiers in the tsar’s army, Lermont’s men were required to bring their own food for several months, horses, helmets, armour, and sabres. After mustering for inspection, they were outfitted with gunpowder weapons: pistols and harquebuses, muskets, or carbines.54

Captain Lermont’s company participated actively in the Smolensk War of 1632–34. During that conflict, Scottish and Irish soldiers in the Russian army fought against Scottish and Irish soldiers in the Polish army. Not surprisingly, there were Learmonths in both armies.55 At the outset of the war, voevoda Mikhail B. Shein’s large army managed to recapture the town of Belaia. By early 1633, Russian forces settled into a long and bloody siege of the great fortress-

The Case of George Learmonth and the Belaia Garrison

During 1633 approximately 10% of voevoda Shein’s new formation cavalrmen were killed. In August of that year several skirmishes helped clear Polish troops from the area around the fortress, but in those encounters the Russians suffered many casualties. One of them was Captain Iurii Lermont, killed in battle in late 1633 during the siege of Smolensk.57

Although George Learmonth (Iurii Andreevich Lermont) faithfully served Tsar Mikhail for twenty years, he almost certainly remained a Presbyterian until his death.58 All three of George’s sons followed their father’s career path and served as cavalry officers in the Russian army. George’s eldest son, William, became a captain of cavalry, and in 1634 he received a pomest’e estate of about 300 acres. (The eldest son of a pomeshchik whose service had been honourable was almost invariably promoted to that rank upon his father’s death and usually received his father’s pomest’e estate or a comparable one.) William died in 1670. George’s youngest son, Henry (Andrei Iur’evich Lermont), began his military

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58 There is no surviving record of George Learmonth’s faith, but at the time of his birth a majority of Scots, especially in northeastern Scotland, were Presbyterians. George’s close kinsmen and his recruiter, James Spens, were Presbyterians. Early-modern Russians generally shunned Catholics as heretics and tools of Satan. By the time George Learmonth entered Russian service, the Time of Troubles had convinced most Russians that the Catholic church posed a dire threat to the existence of Orthodox Christian Russia. Polish military intervention and the activities of Catholic soldiers in Russia made the new Romanov regime wary of Catholics. Tsar Mikhail’s father, Patriarch Filaret, regarded the Catholic faith as a ‘heresy’. The tsar’s agents scoured Protestant Northern Europe looking for officers to train Russian soldiers in modern warfare, but they avoided hiring Catholics. The appointment of Learmonth as a pomeshchik and lord of several Russian villages without first requiring him to convert to Orthodox Christianity suggests that he was a Protestant, as does his later appointment as captain of a regiment composed of Russian Orthodox Christian gentry and foreigners who had recently converted to Orthodox Christianity. Most Russians remained xenophobic about Catholicism, and it was only in the second half of the seventeenth century that the pragmatic Tsar Aleksei began to hire talented Catholic military specialists, including Patrick Gordon. Nevertheless, Catholics continued to face widespread discrimination in Russia and were not even allowed to worship openly. As late as 1690, Peter the Great’s friend and mentor, General Patrick Gordon, was being denounced as an untrustworthy heretic by Patriarch Joachim. See Dunning, Russia’s First Civil War, 468–9, 472–3; Hellie, Enserfment, 169–70, 173, 190; Givi Zhordania, Ocherki iz istorii franko-ruskikh otnosheniia kontsa XVI i pervoi poloviny XVII e., 2 vols (Tbilisi, 1959), vol. 2, 310–12, 327–57, 362–7; Paul Bushkovitch, Religion and Society in Russia: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (New York, 1992), 52–3, 136–40; Gordon, Diary of Patrick Gordon of Auchleuchries 1635–1699, vol. 2, 1659–1667, xv.
career in 1641 and also rose to the rank of captain of cavalry. He married and had a daughter, Anna. Henry died in 1652. George’s second son, Peter (Petr Iur’evich Lermont), began his military career in 1641 (along with his younger brother). By 1653 Peter became a captain of cavalry. Starting in the 1650s, the Russian government began prohibiting foreigners who were not Russian Orthodox Christians from holding помест’е estates. Foreign officers were forced to choose between giving up their estates or converting to Orthodox Christianity. Petr Iur’evich Lermont chose to convert, in the process changing his first name to ‘Evtikhii’. Evtikhii Iur’evich Lermont subsequently rose to the rank of major and served as the military governor of Saransk (1656–59). He had four children: Evdokiiia (d. 1653), Marfa (d. 1729), Iuri (d. 1708), and Petr (d. 1704). Major Evtikhii Lermont died in 1679. By then the Lermonts had become a highly respected noble family of the Tula region.

Evtikhii Iur’evich Lermont’s sons, Iuri Evtikhovich (Petrovich) and Petr Evtikhovich (Petrovich) Lermont, both served as cavalry officers in Tsar Aleksei’s army. In their spare time they enthusiastically studied their family’s history which led them to make contact with the Scottish Learmouths. Among other things, the brothers learned about the Learmonth family coat-of-arms that was registered for the first time by the Scottish Parliament in 1672. Iuri Evtikhovich Lermont completed a written account of the Lermont family history by 1688, and in it he claimed that the Lermonts were descendants of the ancient Scottish noble Learmonth family that got its start in the eleventh century. Before submitting genealogical records to the Russian Military Affairs Chancellery (Разриядный приказ) along with a petition for official recognition of the Scottish-Russian Lermont family’s claim of venerable noble lineage, Iuri and Petr asked a senior colleague for help. In a noteworthy example of networking among Scots in Russia, General Patrick Gordon attested to the

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59 SSNE 3969, 3970.
60 SSNE 3971; Fedosov and Nozdrin, Lion Rampant, 61; Phipps, ‘Britons in Seventeenth-Century Russia’, 312; ‘Rodoslovnaia Lermontovykh’, 464–5; ‘Rod Lermontovykh’, 467; Niko’lskii, ‘Predki’, 547, 552; Hellie, Enserfment, 173n51. Although the name ‘Evtikhii’ may be associated with Russian Orthodox Christian meekness, it is derived from a Greek term meaning ‘good fortune’. See Judith E. Kall, Russia’s Rome: Imperial Visions, Messianic Dreams, 1890–1940 (Madison, 2008), 54.
61 Murdoch, Networks North, 93; ‘Rodoslovnaia Lermontovykh’, 464–5; SSNE 3971; ‘Rod Lermontovykh’, 467.
62 Fedosov, Caledonian Connection, 61–2; Dukes, ‘Scots in Russia and the “General Crisis”’, 105; idem, ‘The First Scottish Soldiers in Russia’, 47–54.
accuracy of the Lermont family’s pedigree in 1688, less than a year before Gordon helped Tsar Peter I seize power from his step-sister, the regent Sophia. Not surprisingly, Tsar Peter accepted the Lermonts’ petition. As a result, in 1690 the Lermont family added the noble ‘ov’ to their name—becoming the Lermontov clan.64 Iurii Evtikhovich Lermontov rose to the rank of stol’nik (minor courtier) in the service of Peter the Great.65

At some point, perhaps as early as 1682, the Lermontovs designed their own coat-of-arms. Even though it was not formally registered by the Russian government until the late eighteenth century, the Lermontov coat-of-arms is one of the oldest among Russia’s nobility.66 The Lermontov family’s coat-of-arms was closely based on the Learmonth coat-of-arms. That becomes obvious when the two coats-of-arms are placed side by side. (See illustration.) The Lermontov coat-of-arms, with a black flower below the chevron, was designed as the coat-of-arms of a cadet branch of the Learmonth clan. There is an unusual Latin phrase inscribed on the Lermontov coat-of-arms: ‘Sors mea Iesus’ (‘My fate is in the hands of Jesus’ or ‘Jesus is the master of my fate’).67 The devoutly Russian Orthodox Christian Lermontovs continued to produce many generations of cavalry officers, and the family continued to be held in high esteem among Russian aristocrats. The seventh generation of George Learmonth’s descendants included the family’s most famous member—the cavalry officer and extraordinary poet, Mikhail Iur’evich Lermontov.

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64 Fedosov, Caledonian Connection, 67; Fedosov and Nozdrin, Lion Rampant, 61–2; Murdoch, Networks North, 93; SSNE 6723, 6724.
67 See William Rae Macdonald, Scottish Armorial Seals (Edinburgh, 1904), nos. 1584–91. I wish to thank Dr Kelsey Jackson Williams for this reference.
APPENDIX

SCOTTISH AND IRISH SOLDIERS OF BELAIA GARRISON WHO ENTERED TSARIST SERVICE IN LATE 1613

(\textit{S} = in Scottish Regiment; \textit{I} = in Irish Regiment)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Regiment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADAMSON, James</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIKMAN, Adam</td>
<td>S</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANDREWS, David</td>
<td>S</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANSTON, Andrew</td>
<td>S</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARDSIN, Alexander</td>
<td>I</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARMON, Arthur</td>
<td>S</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARNOTT, John</td>
<td>S</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARTHUR, William</td>
<td>S</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASTON, William</td>
<td>S</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUCHTERLONIE, James</td>
<td>S</td>
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<tr>
<td>BAIN, Ian</td>
<td>I</td>
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<td>BELL, David</td>
<td>I</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOURKE, Michael</td>
<td>I</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOYD, Ian</td>
<td>I</td>
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<td>BREDON, Gabriel</td>
<td>I</td>
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<tr>
<td>BROOM, Ian</td>
<td>I</td>
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<td>BROWN, David</td>
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<td>BROWN, John</td>
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<td>BUIST, David</td>
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<td>I</td>
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<td>CARROLL, William</td>
<td>I</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAX (COX), Richard</td>
<td>I</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLELLAND, Thomas</td>
<td>S</td>
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<tr>
<td>COOK, Ian</td>
<td>I</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRANSTON, John</td>
<td>S</td>
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<td>CRICHTON, John</td>
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</tbody>
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CUMMINGS, Richard (S)
CUNNINGHAM, Robert (S)
DONOGH, Art (I)
DREW, James (S)
DRUM, Michael (I)
DUFF, James (S)
DUFFY, Ian (I)
DURIE, William (S)
EDWARDS, David (S)
EUSTACE, Thomas (I)
FARQUHAR, Ian (I)
FORBES, John (S)
GAR, Alexander (I)
GAIRNE, Thomas (S)
GENTS, John (S)
GETTY, Ian (I)
GORDON, Alexander (S)
GORDON, Peter (S)
GRIM, William (S)
GUTHRIE, John (S)
HALKETT, David (S)
HARVIE, William (S)
HERNE, Thomas (I)
HORN, Valen (I)
INGLIS, John (S)
IRIS, Thomas (I)
JOHNSON, William (I)
JOHNSTONE, Andrew (S)
JOHNSTONE, James (S)
KINGAN, Robert (S)
KINLOCH, William (S)
KINNAIRD, James (S)
KRIUSH, Michail (I)
LANE, John (S)
LAUNDIE, David (S)
LAUNDIE, John (S)
LEARMONTH, George (S)
MacALLEN, James (I)
MacCUrTAIN, Thomas (I)
MacGINN, Arthur (I)
MacKEEN, Conagher (I)
MacKINLEY, Donogh (I)
MacMAHON, Art (I)
MacNAILLY, Peter (I)
MacNAMARA, Art (I)
MacNAMARA, Donogh (I)
MacTOOLE, Ian (I)
MELLICK, Gilbert (S)
MONTEITH, Patrick (I)
MOuTRAY, Andrew (S)
MOWBREy, John (S)
MUNTEAN, Peter (S)
O’CAHANE, Brian (I)
O’CAHANE, Donogh (I)
O’CAHANE, Michael (I)
O’COLLINS, Ian (I)
O’DONALD, Neil (I)
O’HANLON, Arthur (I)
O’KELLY, Ian (I)
O’MARA, Niall (I)
O’SIRDAN, Brian (I)
PAREKH, Ian (I)
PAUL, William (S)
PAULL, Edward (I)
Peebles, George (S)
PHILIPS, Thomas (S)
ROW, Ian (I)
ROWEN, David (S)
RUTHVEN, William (S)
SCOTT, James (S)
SCOTT, John (S)
SCROPE, Jarlath (I)
SEWELL, Frank (I)
SHAW, James (S)
SHEARER, William (S)
STEEL, James (S)
STENSON, Robert (S)
STEVENSON, Robert (S)
STEWART, William (S)
SYMPSON, Allan (S)
SYMSON, John (S)
WARD, Alexander (I)
WATTS, William (S)
WILLIAMSON, John (S)
WOOD, Andrew (I)
WOOD, Andrew Henry (S)
WOOD, John (S)
WYEAST, Thomas (I)
YETTS, Gabriel (S)
YUILLE, Peter (S)
Patrick Gordon and the Jesuit College at Braunsberg

Tom McInally

The reader of Patrick Gordon’s diaries is struck by the fact that these are the work of an educated man. From the first page he peppers his sentences with Latin phrases and quotes from ancient authors. These are not the writings of a typical professional soldier. Yet in his diaries Gordon tells us little of his formal education. In 1640 at the age of five he was sent to board at a church (Calvinist) school in the village of Cruden along with his brother, George, who was a year older than him. Their formal study was Latin grammar and Patrick even recalled the page of the book which he and his brother had reached when they stopped after four years of study. The brothers moved school on a number of occasions and were later joined by their younger brothers. He recounts that in total he had nine and a half year’s schooling but gives no details of his studies other than the names of his teachers and the location of the schools he attended. He records that in 1651 when he was sixteen years old he ‘was taken from schoole’. By then he had ‘attained to as much learning as the ordinary country schools affoords’. Furthering his studies would have required attendance at a university. Being a Catholic he was unwilling to subscribe to the Calvinist Confesion of Faith which was required of students at Scottish universities. Although Gordon

1 The colleges at Braunsberg are frequently referred to as a university although they were never formally awarded that status. Josef Bender (ed.), Geschichte Der Philosophischen und Theologischen Studien in Ermland (Braunsberg, 1868), 15–16. In 1912 what remained of the Jesuit College was enlarged and allotted the title of State Academy by Prussia.
2 Dmitry Fedosov (ed.), Diary of General Patrick Gordon of Auchleuchrics 1635–1699, Volume I: 1635–1659 (Aberdeen, 2009) (hereafter referred to as Diary 1), 4. The schoolmaster, William Logan, taught from the most common Latin grammar book used in Scotland at the time; Jean Despauter’s Gramaticae institutiones, an abridged edition of which was published in Aberdeen in 1623 by the printer Edward Raban with the financial support of D. Melvil, a burgher of the city. The book was published in eight volumes covering grammar and syntax from basic to advanced level. The last volume was used as a course text by second year students at the University of Edinburgh. Alexander Bower, The History of the University of Edinburgh (Edinburgh, 1817), 65–6.
3 Diary 1, 6
4 Initially it was required of those who had completed their studies and wished to graduate but later was mandatory on matriculation. The Aberdeen universities were
makes no mention of names it would appear that some family acquaintance had suggested that he continue his studies abroad, specifically at the Pontifical College in Braunsberg (Braniewo in north-eastern Poland).

At the time many boys and young men from Scotland travelled to the continent to continue their education. Calvinist youths often chose Geneva but later in the seventeenth century the University of Leiden became the preferred choice of the majority. Catholic youths had separate facilities. In the fifty years between 1575 and 1625 four Catholic colleges were established on the continent specifically for Scots—at Douai (in the Spanish Netherlands), Rome, Paris and Madrid. Scottish Benedictines also had schools available in Regensburg and Würzburg in Southern Germany. By the time Patrick Gordon was preparing to go abroad to study, over 500 Scottish Catholics, many like him from the northeast, had attended these colleges. During the 1650s while he was in Braunsberg a further 100 enrolled at the Scots Colleges abroad. Gordon’s choice of Braunsberg requires an explanation since he appears to be alone in deciding to study there.

Fifty years earlier this would not have been the case. The college in Braunsberg predated the Scots Colleges and Scots had not simply attended as students but had been closely involved with its foundation and running. The Cardinal Archbishop of Ermland (Warmia), Stanislaus Hosius (1504–79), was a leading proponent of the Catholic counter-Reformation and in 1564 as part of his efforts to reform his diocese he decided to found a school in the port city of Braunsberg. The Lyceum Hosianum was established with assistance from the Society of Jesus which sent him among others a number of Scottish Jesuits: Robert Abercrombie, John Hay, John Tyrie and later William Ogilvie were among its first teachers. These Scots had already been engaged in developing the Jesuit colleges which were being established throughout Catholic Europe. Hosius gave the Jesuits full responsibility for the lyceum and the following year he built on this educational establishment by opening a college for noble Polish (Szlachta) students, again run by the Society of Jesus.

later in insisting on these requirements than the other three Scottish universities but even in Aberdeen open profession of Catholicism was impossible.

5 G.M. Murphy, ‘Robert Abercrombie, SJ (1536–1613) and the Baltic Counter Reformation’, *Innes Review*, 50 (Edinburgh, 1999), 58.


7 This was one of the earliest attempts to engage the nobility in higher education.
In 1567 he added a diocesan seminary in keeping with the provisions laid down by the Council of Trent and in 1569 he further enlarged the educational facilities by permitting the Society to open a Jesuit seminary for novitiates to their order. Robert Abercrombie was appointed the first master of novices for this new college. The same year Sigismund Augustus (1520–72), king of Poland, made the cardinal his official representative in Rome. Hosius spent the rest of his life at the papal court and the colleges were left largely in the control of their Jesuit teachers.

In attempting to transform Braunsberg into a centre of Polish Counter-Reformation, Hosius was following the precepts of his former mentor and professor of jurisprudence at the University of Bologna, Ugo Buoncompagni (1502–85). In addition to Hosius in Poland Buoncompagni had inspired other pupils in a similar way to establish Counter-Reformation movements in their homelands of Italy, Germany and England. Ugo Buoncompagni was elected to the papacy in May 1572 and from his installation as Pope Gregory XIII he had a clear vision for the continuing reform of the Catholic Church. Although he was seventy years of age at the time of his election, immediately he began to institute major change within the Church. Earlier he had served as a papal jurist at the Council of Trent and was passionate in implementing its key directives: rooting out corrupt practices and improving the standard of education among priests. As part of his efforts to achieve the latter Gregory embarked on a programme which was to result in the establishment of twenty-three new

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Throughout Europe they resisted joining institutions which allowed the 'lower orders' to be members. By creating colleges exclusively for the nobility it was hoped that they would become engaged with improving their education and thereby contribute more effectively to the running of the state, the administration of which was increasing in complexity. The universities of the German states were more successful in attracting nobility than others. In the late sixteenth century they established Ritterakademien which were not only exclusively for the sons of the nobility but had curricula tailored to their perceived needs—horsemanship, swordsmanship, courtly music and dancing with some classical learning. In the case of the Classics even the texts used were specially chosen to appeal to the tastes of the nobility with Caesar's *Gallic Wars* and Apollodorus' *Twelve Labours of Hercules* being to the fore. The academies for knights in Heidelberg (1593) and Tübingen (1594) were among the earliest successful examples. See Norbert Conrads, *Ritterakademien der frühen Neuzeit* (Göttingen, 1982).

8 Pope Pius V (1504–72) had already appointed Hosius papal legate to the Polish court.

9 Alessandro Farnese (1520–89), Cristoforo Madruzzo (1512–78) and Carlo Borromeo (1538–84) in Italy; Otto Truchsess von Waldburg (1514–73), Prince-Bishop of Augsburg in Germany; Reginald Pole (1500–58), Queen Mary's Archbishop of Canterbury, in England. Pole's reforming work was swept away after his death and the accession of Queen Elizabeth in 1558.
colleges. The pattern of how this was to be carried out had already been set. In 1552 Pope Julius III (1487–1555) had established a college in Rome for German nobility who did not want to be educated in the reformed religion of their homelands. The teaching was supervised by Ignatius Loyola (1491–1556) and his followers. Initially reluctant to become involved in education Loyola went on to embrace this work and, by improving on the methods then in use, placed the Jesuits in a dominant position in higher education in Europe and beyond. Their reputation was such that Protestants sent their sons to Jesuit colleges and the Society gained the name of ‘Schoolmasters of Europe’.\(^{10}\) The pope had firm views on how his new colleges should be ordered and the Jesuits were to play the key part in running them. Pope Gregory’s ambassador to the Swedish court, the Jesuit, Antonio Possevino (1533–1611), recommended that a papal seminary (which came to be known as the Swedish Seminary or Northern College) should be established in Braunsberg alongside the colleges of Cardinal Hosius. Possevino had identified the need for a college specifically to train priests for the northern mission.\(^{11}\) It was to be open to all nationalities of northern Europe. By the terms of the Council of Trent seminaries were to be set up in the dioceses in which the priests were to serve (as Bishop Hosius had done in Braunsberg for his diocese) but, since this was impossible in Protestant lands, extraordinary measures were required. Possevino’s suggestion was accepted by Pope Gregory and in 1578 the pontifical college was founded in Braunsberg, using the buildings and Jesuit staff of Hosius’ colleges.

This Northern College was open to Scottish Catholics at a time when no other institute of higher education was available to them. Robert Abercrombie, who had remained at Braunsberg since he had been sent by the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Diego Laynez (1512–65), to help set up the original college, took the opportunity that this presented to set out for Scotland to promote the new college and recruit potential students. The following year he returned with two candidates and began the enrolment of Scottish students into the college. In 1581 Abercrombie gained permission from Claudio Acquaviva

\(^{10}\) Edward A. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *St Ignatius and the Ratio Studiorum* (New York, 1933), 24.

\(^{11}\) ‘Antonio Possevino’ in Charles E. O’Neill, Joaquín María Domínguez, *diccionario de la Compañía de Jesús* (Madrid, 2001). Possevino also helped found papal seminaries in Olomouc (Moravia) and Cluj (Romania) as well as the University of Vilnius (Lithuania) as part of his counter-Reformation drive. These seminaries, especially Vilnius, remained in close cooperation with the pontifical and Jesuit colleges of Braunsberg, and frequently transferred staff and students between the colleges. John Hay SJ went to Vilnius to help establish the Jesuit novitiate college at the university in 1584. Murphy, ‘Robert Abercrombie’, 60, 62.
Patrick Gordon and the Jesuit College at Braunsberg

(1543–1615), the then Jesuit general, to establish a mission in Scotland with the help of a small group of fellow Scottish Jesuits. Over time a practice developed that when they journeyed back to the continent missionaries would accompany any candidates who wanted to study at the Northern College. In the course of the next forty years at least thirty five Scots studied at Braunsberg. Missionary work was difficult and, although Abercrombie and his colleagues had initial successes, the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot in 1605 caused King James VI and I to issue a warrant for Abercrombie’s arrest. He managed to escape from England and returned to the college where he died in 1613 aged 77 years. All of the Jesuit colleges in Braunsberg were forced to close in 1626 when the town was occupied by Protestant troops during the Thirty Years War (1618–48). When the teachers returned and reopened three colleges in 1637 Scots also began to enrol as students although this time in fewer numbers. Nevertheless, one of them, Alexander Menzies (see below), was to be particularly important to Patrick Gordon.

The drop in numbers can be accounted for by the fact that by the 1620s Scottish Catholics had four colleges available to them and the one located in Douai was attracting the majority of entrants due to the relative ease of travel from Scotland to the Spanish Netherlands. It does not appear that any more Scottish students enrolled at Braunsberg after Patrick Gordon. There were, however, Polish-born sons of expatriate Scots who studied there. The convenience of studying closer to home outweighed any attraction that the Scots colleges in Douai and Paris might have had for them.

The missionaries were forced to used aliases—Abercrombie’s was Robert Scot—so identification is difficult but at least one, William Ogilvie, had studied and taught at Braunsberg. G. L. Delavida, George Strachan (Aberdeen, 1956), 7–8.

Five are known to have become Jesuits and a further seven appear to have been ordained priests in other religious orders. The records of the Scots Colleges run by Jesuits give great detail on students who became members of the Society but less so in relation to those who joined other orders.


The occupation began during the phase known as The Polish Swedish War (1625–9).

The college for Jesuit novitiates had been transferred to Krakow earlier. The college for nobles had not been successful in attracting the desired number of students. Only the lyceum and diocesan seminary were reopened along with the Swedish Seminary. The total number of students fluctuated between 130 and 300 of whom about forty attended the Swedish Seminary which Gordon attended. Bender, Geschichte, 15–16.

Robert Abercrombie initiated more than the tradition of Scots studying at Braunsberg. The purpose of his visit to Scotland in 1578 had been to recruit students for the Northern College. Thereafter it became standard practice for missionary priests to identify potential recruits and accompany them to a Scots college abroad. Priests and others who carried out this role ran serious risks. Travelling to and from the continent aroused suspicion and port authorities were alert to strangers. Priests often travelled in the guise of mercenaries or merchants and equipped themselves accordingly to avoid detection. Secrecy had to be maintained regarding the identities of those involved and surviving correspondence, when it mentions the courier at all, refers to him by an alias. However, in the registers of the Scots colleges there are many references to the arrival of a student accompanied by a member of the college staff or sometimes by some visiting dignitary from Scotland who was a friend of the student’s family. Occasionally a party of students travelled together as can be identified by their being recorded as having entered college on the same day. The records of the Swedish Seminary in Braunsberg show similar patterns for Scottish students although there is no mention of a guide who might have accompanied them.  

In his diary Patrick Gordon makes no mention of being recruited as a student or of being accompanied to the college in Braunsberg, nevertheless, he gives sufficient information to deduce that this was the case. After expressing unwillingness to go to university in Scotland he asserts that he ‘resolved … to go to some forreigne country, not careing much on what pretence’ implying that attending university was his purpose in travelling abroad and that it would also serve him by providing the freedom and adventure he sought. His description of his journey as a youthful Scottish student travelling to a foreign college is almost unique but another account of such a journey does survive for Gordon’s great nephew, twelve-year-old Charles Arbuthnot. In a letter home dated 22 September 1748 Arbuthnot described his feelings on leaving his family and the discomfort of what turned out to be a twenty-day voyage from Aberdeen to Rotterdam during which he was almost constantly seasick. On arrival in

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18 The students, Patrick Abercromby, William Douglas and James Lindsay, each entered the college on 6 August 1596. Thomas Abercromby and David Kinard entered on 27 September 1599. Others are recorded in December 1609, August 1641 and August 1642. Belleshem, History, 455–7.
19 Diary 1, 6–7.
20 Aberdeenshire Museum Service, Mintlaw, archive, PEHMS:P3422, Letter no. 1. The voyage took so long because had weather forced the ship to take shelter in a number of ports including Whitby before finally reaching Rotterdam. The similarity between Gordon and Arbuthnot of the description of parting from their families is
Rotterdam he went to a house recommended to him before he left Aberdeen where he was well treated and stayed a number of days while transport was arranged for him and four other boys to their final destination which was the Scots college in Regensburg. He makes no reference to a guide accompanying them although one would have been required to coordinate their journey.

In his account of his arrival in Gdansk Gordon tells of lodging in the house of a Scotsman, John Donaldsone, before travelling onward to Braunsberg on the ordinary coach for Konigsberg in the company of three unnamed Germans and a ‘gentleman Thomas Menezes’ (Menzies). Given that Gordon spoke no German or Polish, this journey could only have been achieved smoothly by his having a guide to accompany him. Gordon does not refer to him as his guide but Thomas Menezes is his only Scottish travelling companion and when the coach arrived at Frombork they were met by the priest, Robert Blackhall, and together lodged with him. Robert was a canon of Frombork cathedral and the brother of Gilbert Blackwell, who at the time was a missionary in the northeast of Scotland and would have been known to Gordon’s family. The following day the three men travelled together into town and stayed with Alexander Michal Menezes, brother of Thomas, who was a parish priest in Braunsberg. Gordon records that he lodged with the priest for a while. Alexander Menezes had enrolled at the Braunsberg College in 1641 along with his brother, William. William left without completing his studies but Alexander was ordained and remained as a parish priest in the city dying there in 1671 while attending to the plague stricken of his parish. It would appear that Patrick Gordon was able to travel to the college in Braunsberg because Thomas Menezes had planned to visit his brother and this had become known to Gordon’s parents.

Following the note on lodging with Alexander Menezes, Gordon’s next diary entry is the short paragraph:

Here being at my studies in the Colledge of the Jesuits, albeit I wanted not for anything, the Jesuits always bestowing extraordinary paines, and takeing great care in educateing youth, yet could not my humor endure such a still and strict way of liveing.\(^{24}\)

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\(^{21}\) Diary 1, 9.

\(^{22}\) Diary 1, 10.

\(^{23}\) Fischer, Scots in Germany, 299. Their names appear in the register as ‘Minnesius’.

\(^{24}\) Diary 1, 10.
This is all the information Gordon gives of his studies with the Jesuits at the college in Braunsberg. In order to understand what his experiences there might have entailed it is necessary to look elsewhere regarding Jesuit education.

When Ignatius Loyola opened his first college, *Collegio Romano*, in Rome in 1551 a notice was nailed to the door which said ‘School of Grammar, Humanities and Christian Doctrine, free’.25 There were three distinct aspects to the structure of the education which the Jesuits provided and as far as was possible every college complied with them. First the colleges were run by the Jesuits according to their rules. Although students had rights laid down in the college rule book they had no power of appointment or dismissal of academic staff who were exclusively members of the Society of Jesus. Loyola had organised his new society along military lines and he and his successors were referred to as ‘The General’. Discipline was required and Gordon commented on the strictness of the Jesuit way as something his ‘humor’ could not endure.

Secondly, whenever possible, the colleges were housed in buildings in which the students had secure lodgings and received teaching and spiritual direction. Although Gordon wrote that on first arriving in Braunsberg he lodged with Alexander Menezes it is unlikely that he continued to stay with the priest since after he enrolled at the college he would have been required to reside in the college buildings.26 Bishop Hosius had established his colleges in a former Franciscan friary. The old friary would have provided the enclosed environment that the Jesuits needed. When Gordon arrived in 1652 the Swedish Seminary was housed in the quarters previously occupied by the college of the *Szlachta*27 which were probably the most commodious and comfortable available in the old friary, nevertheless, he still referred to his time there as a ‘still and strict way of living’.

Thirdly the courses of study were organised in a logical way, with each new stage attempted requiring the students’ having knowledge and understanding of the previous stages. Classes were grouped according to attainment not age. Gordon was sixteen or seventeen years old when he first arrived and would have been four or five years older than most in his class.28

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27 Bender, *Geschichte*, 15.
28 The Braunsberg college records show that it was not uncommon for Scots to be older at entry than would normally be the case. When he entered in April 1607, Patrick Stichel was aged twenty-five but since he was ordained two years later he must have completed most of his *Quadrivium* studies elsewhere. Equally the Seton brothers,
Despite 'the Jesuits always bestowing extraordinary paines' this aspect of his education must have presented him with difficulty in settling into his new surroundings. At the outset of Jesuit involvement in education Loyola had stipulated that new entrants had to be fully literate in Latin before they could be accepted into a Jesuit college. He believed that this entry qualification was essential since the Society's resources could not be stretched to include elementary education. On arrival Gordon would have been tested on his proficiency in reading, writing and conversing in Latin. After nine-and-a-half years' tuition he should have had no difficulty in satisfying the university staff in this regard. However, it is known that continental scholars sometimes had difficulty in understanding the strongly accented Latin spoken by the Scots. No doubt Gordon equally would have taken some time to attune his ear to the Latin he heard at Braunsberg. This would have presented him with problems since all the tuition was conducted in Latin. The Jesuits permitted a limited use of the vernacular in the first year of study but only for the purpose of explaining the more difficult aspects of the lesson being taught. Since Gordon was the only Scot at the college all of his discourses would have been in Latin. Even if there had been sons of expatriate Scots in his class it is unlikely that he would have had an opportunity to converse in his native tongue with anyone other than Alexander Menezes on the limited occasions when he was allowed out of college. After Gordon left Braunsberg to attempt his journey home to Scotland he makes reference in his diary to his inability to converse with Poles and Germans. His lack of progress in learning the language of his hosts can be explained by the college environment of total immersion in Latin. A considerable effort would have been needed on Gordon's part to follow his class work and, as a new boy

David and James, who enrolled in December 1609 at the age of nineteen and eighteen respectively, are recorded as having been entered in the class for syntax and would thereby have avoided the first three years of the Trivium course. The ages of those Scots who, like Patrick Gordon, started at the beginning of the Trivium ranged from twelve to seventeen. Older boys after completing three or four years study (such as John Lesley—entered August 1613) were, however, transferred to other Jesuit colleges such as Vilnius and Rome to finish their studies. This was possibly in recognition of the fact that they were by then fully adult. Bellesheim, History, 455–7.

In the late eighteenth century it was still possible for the Dutchman, Jan Bilderdijk, to report that the reason why continental students shunned Scottish universities was that they could not understand the Latin spoken there. Hilde de Ridder-Symoens, 'Mobility' in Hilde de Ridder-Symoens (ed.), A History of the University in Europe, vol. II, 428.

30 'I had not learned any Dutch, by reason of our speaking Latine in the Colledge'. Diary 1, 10.
straight from a village school, his Jesuit teachers required him to start at the beginning of the first year of *Trivium* studies.

Education in colleges and universities at the time was structured into lower and higher studies known as *Trivium* and *Quadrivium*. The first level to be undertaken was the *Trivium* which was a course of studies normally lasting five years and consisting of three years of grammar, one of syntax and a final year of rhetoric. The age of students on entry to the *Trivium* was usually between ten and twelve years. Higher studies were attempted only after successful completion of the *Trivium*. The *Quadrivium* took from four to seven years and required study in one or more of four faculties—arts (philosophy), theology, medicine and law. Jesuit students usually enrolled in arts and theology but canon law was also common. The Braunsberg colleges did not offer *Quadrivium* studies until 1701 when the Jesuit rector applied to Rome for formal designation as a university but Pope Clement XI (r. 1700–21) denied the request. When Gordon was a student the college offered limited study in theology and philosophy but all of its students who progressed to higher studies did so at another college.

During the early years of Jesuit involvement in education they developed an approach to studies which they found most effective in imparting knowledge. Adherence to the plan which they formulated gave a consistency to the standard of education being provided which was superior to that available at most other colleges and universities. It was this systematic approach which was in large part responsible for their reputation as ‘the schoolmasters of Europe’. After several decades of deliberation, in 1599 the plan was formalised in a document entitled *Ratio Studiorum* (System of Studies) which thereafter became the template for use in Jesuit education throughout Europe and in their worldwide missions. (One of the authors of the original draft of this document in 1585 was John Tyrie, the Scottish Jesuit and friend and companion to Robert Abercrombie, who had helped set up the colleges in Braunsberg before becoming master of novices at the Jesuit noviciate in Vilnius.) The *Ratio Studiorum* stated that the purpose of the *Trivium* was to ‘… instruct the boys,

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31 Fitzpatrick, *St Ignatius*, 195. A minimum of nine years study was required to take a student from first entry to graduation and ordination. Most students would have achieved this by their early to mid twenties. In Gordon’s case, however, he could not have achieved graduation before his mid to late twenties or even into his early thirties. It is questionable whether he ever seriously considered committing so much of his life to study. As events turned out he did not.

32 Bender, *Geschichte*, 36.

who are entrusted to our Society, that they will thoroughly learn along with
their letters, the habits worthy of Christians'.\footnote{Fitzpatrick, \textit{St Ignatius}, 195.} The system was not intended to
be prescriptive and teachers were encouraged to vary it to suit local conditions
but it was so successful that it was applied with few variations in all Jesuit
colleges. When Gordon entered college his first year of study would have
covered grammar using as the main text the first book of \textit{Emmanuel} (Isaiah's
prefiguring of the coming of Christ from the Vulgate Bible). In addition he
would have studied texts from Cicero, the epistles of Ovid, an expurgated
Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius and the \textit{Eclogues} and fourth \textit{Georgic} of Virgil.

Despite his being much older than his classmates and having had over
nine years of education in Scotland, he was started in the first class of the
\textit{Trivium} and not allowed to move immediately into any of the higher classes as
was possible for some older students. This can deduced from the stipulation
in the \textit{Ratio Studiorum} that in their second year of study, as well as furthering
their proficiency in Latin grammar, students should be taught Greek. In his
diaries Gordon does not make use of Greek words or quotations. From this
it would appear that he was still in his first year of study when he decided
to leave. As well as laying out the course content and teaching material the
\textit{Ratio Studiorum} also stipulated how the teaching was to be conducted. Classes
were to be held each morning and afternoon. The teacher would choose
the topic to be studied and read a passage from an appropriate book which
illustrated the point to be examined while the pupils consulted their own
copies of the text. The teacher followed a logical pattern of discussion by
explaining the argument of the author (\textit{thesis}) followed by a possible counter
argument (\textit{antithesis}) and finally a resolution of the opposing ideas by an
argument, usually of his own devising, which reconciled all the accepted facts
(\textit{synthesis}). Afterwards the students were set exercises (\textit{exercitium}) on the subject
to complete and memorise before their next lesson so that the teacher could
check on their comprehension and progress.\footnote{Rainer A. Müller, ‘Student Education, Student Life’ in Hilde de Ridder-Symoens (ed.), \textit{History of the University in Europe}, vol. II, 343–5.} Teachers also gave individual
attention to students through a practice called \textit{concertatio}. In this exercise one
student was set a piece of written work which was criticised in ‘honourable
rivalry’ by a fellow pupil in the presence of their classmates and the professor.
The author and critic would then engage in debate. The exercise was designed
to raise standards and give practice in logic and rhetoric.\footnote{Fitzpatrick, \textit{St Ignatius}, 203.} As well as these
regular exercises the Jesuits required all the students to engage in a group *exercitium* which usually marked the end of the academic year. Such ‘spectacles’, as they were called, were performed in front of audiences of local civic and church dignitaries. The ‘spectacles’ took the form of orations or recitations of poetry or dialogues which would include verses set to music, philosophical and theological disputations or dramas which often included music *entr’acte.*

These performances were taken very seriously since they acted as promotional vehicles for Jesuit education and preparation occupied much of the students’ leisure time for that year. By being engaged in this way they were expected to improve both their Latin and their memories.

There is no reason to believe that Patrick Gordon’s experience at Braunsberg did not conform to the normal Jesuit practices laid out in *Ratio Studiorum*. He was therefore in receipt of a very high standard of education which he acknowledged in his diary comment that the Jesuits were ‘taking great care in educating youth’. Nevertheless, he decided to leave while in his first year of studies. His reason for doing so was not any physical hardship which he had to endure, nor was it disappointment in the education he was receiving. His own words ‘yet could not my humor endure such a still and strict way of living’ suggest that he was not settling in to his new life and in all likelihood he was homesick. There are a number of such instances recorded in the student registers of the Scots Colleges. The malady of ‘homesickness’ would not have been recognised by Gordon and his contemporaries but the college rectors make references to illness which could only be cured by the boy breathing the clear air of his homeland once more.

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38 Gordon’s diary provides evidence for this practice of memorizing Latin verse. He quotes from a number of classical authors—not always with complete accuracy which may have been because of the passage of time or perhaps reflects some difficulty he had with this kind of exercise as a student.

39 There are a number of entries in the registers of the Scots Colleges of students who fit this description. Thomas Abercromby, Douai 1632 (*Records of the Scots Colleges*, vol.1 (Aberdeen, 1906) hereafter referred to as RSC, 27), and Patrick Gray, Douai 1623 (RSC, 15), were Scottish but Ignatius Corduan (RSC, 50–51), was a French student who was so unhappy at the Scots College in Douai that he asked his mother to request that he be sent home. Walter Hervey, Douai 1634 (RSC, 30), in a number of ways was in a similar situation to Patrick Gordon in that he was aged fifteen when he entered the college but left after less than a year, supposedly on the grounds of ill health, but immediately enlisted in the Spanish army. The tragic case of John Ingles, Douai 1650 (RSC, 38), would have been known in all of the Jesuit colleges at the time Patrick Gordon was at Braunsberg and would have given the staff concern for the wellbeing of any student suffering from homesickness. The young Scotsman had
abroad to be homesick. In Gordon’s case he had more reason than most being separated from almost everything that he was familiar with – family, homeland, the Scots language and even companions of his own age all of which would have contributed to the loneliness he must have felt in Braunsberg. Nevertheless, it is likely that there was an incident which triggered his decision to leave.

The trigger could have been the ‘Mission Oath’. In Rome the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (*Propaganda Fide*) was established in 1624 to oversee the Church’s missionary activities throughout the world including the training of missionaries. It was given responsibility for all the papal colleges such as that of the Northern College in Braunsberg. Its responsibility covered the funding and regulation of the colleges and from the outset *Propaganda Fide* was concerned that not all students at the colleges, which were primarily seminaries, had the intention of being ordained. Instructions were issued that all new entrants to the colleges should be required, after about six months’ attendance, to sign a ‘Mission Oath’. By the terms of this formal document students could continue at college only on the understanding that they would become priests and that on ordination they would serve a minimum of three years as missionaries. At first the college principals ignored this instruction but by the 1650s *Propaganda Fide* was becoming insistent and issued formal rebukes when delinquency was proven. Exceptions were made for young boys starting their *Trivium* studies since it was felt that at twelve years of age they were too immature to make such a solemn promise. Although Gordon was in his first year of study he was seventeen and at an age when the college would have insisted on the signing of the oath. This proposal would have been put to him about the time his class was preparing for the annual examination of academic achievement. The Jesuit method of assessment determined whether each student had mastered that year’s subject sufficiently to allow them to progress or whether they should repeat their year’s studies. On being presented with the ‘Mission Oath’ Gordon was faced with a difficult decision. It involved not only committing himself to a minimum of a further eight years of study but also of making a lifetime commitment to the Church and mission in Scotland. The homesick Gordon decided to return to Scotland. This would have been met with disappointment by his Jesuit tutors but it was not uncommon for students to decline the ‘Mission Oath’ and they would have remained on friendly terms with the young man.  

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40 James Gibb (1682–1754), the architect, did so at the Scots College in Rome in 1704
In his diaries Patrick Gordon tells of his travels in great detail, naming the places he visited and the people he met. The absence of information in his diary on his time at the Northern College, therefore, is remarkable. It can be explained by a promise he is likely to have been asked to make. The Jesuit principal would have requested that the Scot keep confidential details of his time spent with them especially in regard to naming anyone associated with the college; staff and particularly students. The reason for the request was the concern that information could be divulged which would place students and their families in jeopardy in their homeland. The Braunschberg College had been set up specifically for students from the northern Protestant lands such as Scandinavia, Germany and Britain where penal laws against Catholics were in place. In Scotland it was a criminal offence for the head of a family to send his sons abroad to a Catholic college. Severe penalties, usually fines, were exacted. The colleges had a duty to keep identities secret not only for the safety of the students but for the wellbeing of their families. This was of particular concern to the Scots Colleges since the Kirk and state authorities were especially diligent in applying the penal laws. The degree to which the Scots Colleges tried to protect themselves can be gauged by two examples both of which happened about the time Patrick Gordon was in Braunschberg. In 1657 a self declared convert from Calvinism, Alexander Gordon, applied to the college in Paris for admittance. He had been vouched for by Jesuit missionaries in Scotland but the college rector, Robert Barclay, suspected his intentions and refused him entry. He travelled on to Rome and Würzburg and applied unsuccessfully for entry to the colleges there. He finally succeeded in gaining entry to the Scots monastery in Regensburg and enrolled as a Benedictine novice. After staying for a year he returned to Scotland and reported that he had been spying on the colleges. The Jesuit, James Macbreck, who was based in Paris, reported later that Alexander Gordon had been a political spy in the pay of Cromwell’s spymaster, John Thurloe. Another example which shows the caution exercised by the Scots Colleges concerns James Fraser, a graduate of King’s College Aberdeen, who travelled around Europe in the years 1657 to 1660. He kept a journal in which he recorded a visit he made to the Scots College in Douai. He spent several days as the guest of the college and recorded the names of the staff and students that he met during his stay.

42 Aberdeen University Library, Special Collections, MS 2538, Vol. III.
The college register shows that Fraser's record was correct in the case of the staff but the names of the students he gives were neither the true ones nor the aliases which they adopted while at the college. It would appear that even when the college authorities were willing to entertain a visitor their concern did not allow them to share any knowledge of their students’ identities. It is in light of such a level of concern for secrecy that Patrick Gordon's omission of details of his time at the Braunsberg College must be viewed.

Given that Patrick Gordon wrote so little in his diary regarding his formal education and that he spent less than a full academic year with the Jesuits it is tempting to believe that he had been little affected by his experience. This would be a mistake. Despite the lack of details it is possible to deduce that he gained much by his studies. His education was the equal of, if not superior to, that of most of his fellow officers. Moreover by following the Jesuit Ratio Studiorum, which was designed not simply to impart knowledge but to help students question what they had learned, Gordon developed in intellectual maturity. Specific skills such as the ability to memorise information and a proficiency in presenting logical argument were attributes which his military superiors would have valued.

The Jesuits also took great pains with their students’ religious education and although his experience at the college did not convince him that the life of a priest would suit him, initially he did feel uncomfortable about this decision. On leaving the college he met with Father Menzies before departing Braunsberg but he

resolved not to go to Father Blackhall for fear of being chidden for leaving Colledge, he haveing alwayes diswaded me from takeing any other course as to be a scholler and turne religious.43

It would appear that Gordon had misgivings regarding staying at the college even before his final decision to leave.

Gordon makes numerous references in his diaries to occasions when his Catholic faith both supported him and caused difficulties in his life in the military. He makes clear the great reliance he placed on prayer especially when under stress or in danger.44 His experience at college would have influenced

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43 Diary 1, 10.
44 'And truly, as well now as very many times hereafter, as you shall hear, when, in my necessities or any extremity, I betooke my self to God Almighty by prayer, I found His extraordinary assistance.' Diary 1, 13.
him in this practice of prayer. In 1524 Ignatius Loyola (1491–1556) developed a regime of prayer which was widely used by Jesuits and others. It received papal approval from Paul III and was published in 1548 as the *Spiritual Exercises (Exercitia Spiritualia)*. It consists of a programme of meditations, prayers and mental exercises set out over four weeks with each week being separately themed. The object of the prayer cycle was to train the participant to discern between good and evil in any situation with which they were faced and to provide them with the spiritual strength to endure life’s trials. Patrick Gordon would have been required to practice the *Spiritual Exercises* while at college. In his diary he mentions that when he left Braunsberg his possessions consisted of ‘linens and some books’. Given his relative poverty the books were probably parting gifts from his Jesuit teachers and would have included a copy of Loyola’s *Exercitia Spiritualia*, although by that time it is likely that he would have memorised the whole prayer cycle. We know that he carried a Latin copy of Thomas á Kempis’ *Imitations of Christ* for personal use on his travels. Loyola’s *Spiritual Exercises* would have fitted well with this book in his small library.

The value of such a structured prayer regime to Gordon is illustrated by his account of his imprisonment by Poles in 1656. After thirteen weeks of being held confined in irons, he believed that he was about to be executed. Having meditated on his life and ‘found many things justly deserving a publick judgement and punishment from God Almighty’ nevertheless he had confidence in God’s mercy and regained his courage and resolution that somehow he would survive. Although he was barely twenty years old the mental resolve he had gained through prayer allowed him to present judicial arguments to his captors which persuaded them to spare him and his companion even while others were being executed. It would appear that the training he had received in the Jesuit College saved his life on this occasion.

It is clear, however, that other lessons learnt while at Braunsberg caused him problems. His diaries are remarkable records of the events which he witnessed but also at times they take on the character of a written confession. Some of the actions which he felt obliged to undertake as a soldier clearly troubled his conscience. His behaviour in the heat of battle did not affect him in this way but theft from civilians often did—‘This I confess to be a most heinous crime’. This declaration was made regarding his actions in September 1656.

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45 Diary 1, 12.
46 Diary 1, 85.
47 Diary 1, 170. Gordon in this passage lays the blame in part for these actions on his superiors since the army was unpaid although he adds ‘let no man presume to think
Patrick Gordon and the Jesuit College at Braunsberg

in Radzin in Poland but the early diaries have many such references. On that occasion, however, he concluded his confession with the cry ‘Peccavi’—an echo of the personal confessions he made while a student at college.\(^48\) He followed this declaration with an appeal to ‘all Christian soildiers’ to fight only in just wars, the characteristics of which he then attempted to define.

I would persuade all Christian soldiers… first to seek to serve under a lawful prince or state in a good quarrel or cause, the defensive war being always the most lawful, or that made to recover or maintain one’s own property and rights. But that war made against one’s own religion, native country, or assisting rebels or those who upon the pretense of injuries do follow the way of conquest, such is impious and unlawful.\(^49\)

His description of a just war fits well with the doctrine of *Bellum Iustum* as argued by Thomas Aquinas (1225–74). This Catholic doctrine had been disputed by Protestant jurists such as Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) who argued that morality needed to be replaced by international law. The Jesuits saw it as a duty to counter such doctrinal attacks. It is likely that Gordon became familiar with this debate as part of a student *exercitium* at Braunsberg but for him it changed from a theoretical argument to a practical concern when he became a professional soldier.

Gordon benefited from his time at Braunsberg college in at least one other way. By virtue of studying abroad he became part of a network of Catholic college alumni that could provide support to its members. Significantly many of the alumni had been ordained and taken up positions of authority in the Church in Europe and on the mission in Scotland. The majority, however, did not become priests but returned to their families in Scotland. Others took up careers in the diplomatic and military service of European powers. Patrick Gordon was a trusted member of this grouping which included men in the service of Spain\(^50\),

\(^48\) *Diary 1*, 170. The formulaic appeal to a confessor at the start of the act of confession (the sacrament of reconciliation) was: *Benedicite me, Pater, quia peccavi* (Bless me, Father, for I have sinned).

\(^49\) *Diary 1*, 170.

\(^50\) There were many during Gordon’s lifetime, two examples of whom are Walter Hervey and William Laing. Hervey studied at the Scots College in Douai and afterwards joined the Spanish army. He also fought in the Wars of the Three Kingdoms and was knighted by Charles I. RJC, 30. Laing studied at the Scots Colleges in Douai and Madrid before entering the service of the Marquis of Castello Rodriguez. RJC, 32, 195.
Portugal, France, Russia and the Holy Roman Empire. As his career progressed he became increasingly involved with these Scots and other members of the expatriate Jacobite communities which developed in Paris, Rome and Regensburg. The Scots Colleges provided the members of the networks with a means of communicating with each other as well as affording them accommodation and financial support. Knowledge of and trust in such able men allowed Gordon to facilitate the entry of Scots into the Russian Imperial service and thereby help both his fellow countrymen and his Russian hosts.

Patrick Gordon’s diary gives his account of the great events of his time—war, peace and politics—but it also contains a fascinating description of his life experiences among which were fighting, stealing, drinking, gambling and womanising. It is when he attempts to explain his motives for his actions, however, that he reveals some of the influence of his Jesuit teachers. The adage attributed to Ignatius Loyola ‘Give me the boy and I will give you the man’ is too great a claim to make on behalf of the Jesuits in Gordon’s case. Nevertheless, it is clear that even in the short time that he spent with them in Braunsberg the seventeen year old gained much that was to influence him throughout his later life and perhaps much of Gordon’s philosophy as expressed in his diary is simply a reflection of the Jesuit motto:

Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam (To the greater glory of God).

University of Aberdeen

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51 Henry Chatlain, Douai, who entered service in Portugal with his stepfather, Colonel Cathcart. RSC, 42.
52 Prominent among these was Thomas Maxwell. RSC, 44, 98.
53 Augustine Whytford, Douai, took service in Russia with his father Colonel Walter Whytford. RSC, 43. Colonel Whytford’s younger son, Charles, studied at the Scots College in Paris and later became its rector. Halloran, Scots College Paris, 104–39. Alexander Gordon, who studied at the Scots College in Paris, was a major general in the imperial army and became Patrick Gordon’s son-in-law. RSC, 211.
54 General Alexander Leslie, Count of the Holy Roman Empire, was a benefactor of the college in Regensburg run by the Scots Benedictine monastery there. His nephew, James, who inherited his titles, also served the emperor at the siege of Vienna and in the wars against Sweden. Gordon mentions encountering Leslie who was leading the imperial forces on the occasion of Gordon’s capture by them. Leslie’s cousin William who studied at the Scots College in Rome became bishop of Ljubliana as reward for his services to the emperor. RSC, 119.
We still lack a proper history of communications in Muscovy and probably cannot expect to have one for many years to come, given the volume and scattered nature of the sources. However, it is possible to gain an appreciation of the subject by looking at a rather narrowly focused set of sources: the diary and surviving correspondence of Patrick Gordon, one of the best known and arguably the most accomplished of the many foreign mercenaries who entered Muscovite service. Gordon hardly needs an introduction, since his multi-volume diary has long been tapped as a source for late Muscovite history. Its first entries date from the 1650s when he left Scotland for Eastern Europe to seek his fortune, and it extends nearly up to his death in Moscow in the late 1690s. Until recently, scholars have had to make do with an incomplete and imperfect German translation (which then served as the source for a Russian translation in the nineteenth century) and only a fragmentary publication from the English/Scots original. Thanks to Dmitry Fedosov, we now have a proper edition of both the original and a new Russian translation based on it, with...
only the final volumes in Russian and in English still to appear. This essay is based primarily this new edition (thus taking us through 1695), with some supplements from correspondence of Gordon’s which has been published from various archives.2

Fedosov and, back in the nineteenth century, Alexander Brückner, have written in summary fashion about Gordon’s impressively extensive correspondence and interest in the news.3 In their book about the relations between Stuarts and Romanovs, Paul Dukes, Graeme Herd and Jarmo Kottilaine4 draw heavily on Gordon’s communications as reported in his diary and in his correspondence. So this subject is not really new. Yet there is much yet to be learned from Gordon when we look systematically at the details of what he recorded. That is the purpose of what follows.

Some Methodological Considerations

We might start here with some observations about the overall structure and content of the diary. Some volumes of it are missing. Thus there are major gaps for 1668–76 and 1679–83. Moreover, within the years covered by the volumes we do have, there are often gaps of several weeks or more. While almost all of what we do have is in Gordon’s own hand (but for some entries he apparently dictated to his son James when they were traveling through Europe in 1686), there are as yet unresolved puzzles concerning when Gordon actually wrote down important parts of what has survived. The narrative form and detail of some parts and content that reflects knowledge obtained after the fact would seem to indicate that much of the first and third volumes was the product of re-writing, even if relatively close to the time when some of the events recorded were occurring. For example, the first volume often

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3 For Fedosov, see the various volumes of his new edition and translation, passim; for Brückner, A. G. Brückner, ‘Patrik Gordon i ego dnevnik’, Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshchenia, 1877 September (ch. CXCIII); 1877 November (ch. CXCIV); 1878 March (ch. CXCVI) and May (ch. CXCVII); here, March 1878, sec. 2, 102–04.

4 Paul Dukes, Graeme P. Herd, and Jarmo Kottilaine, Stuarts and Romanovs: The Rise and Fall of a Special Relationship (Dundee, 2009).
reads like a kind of retrospective autobiography (or at least a personalized account of the northern wars in which he was participating), and the third volume, covering the sieges of Chyhyryn in 1677 and 1678, has a form and sub-text that might suggest he was writing for a broader audience. Gordon tried unsuccessfully over the years to leave Russian service and return home to Scotland permanently, but he was never given permission to do so. One has to wonder whether he was not in part preparing his memoirs for possible publication, had he been able to go home. It is well known that for a time Gordon was a purveyor of news from Muscovy to the English Secretary of State. Some of his reports ended up in the London Gazette. There is ample evidence that Gordon would have been aware of other possible options for publication of what he wrote, something he probably held back from for fear of compromising his position in Russia should he have ventured to do so. The newspaper reports, after all, were anonymous. It is possible, of course, that he shaped the narrative about Chyhyryn primarily as a self-serving document that was intended to absolve him of any responsibility for the failure there and burnish his credentials in the event that he might have an opportunity to carve out a career elsewhere. At very least, his conduct at Chyhyryn seems to have earned him promotion in Moscow, perhaps a result he had not intended, in that it convinced the authorities there that Gordon was simply too valuable to be allowed to leave Russia permanently.

The foregoing considerations are important, since they help explain why we do not have a complete record of Gordon’s correspondence and acquisition of or dissemination of news, however meticulous he seems to have been when actually recording diary entries on a regular basis. Even for those sections of the diary where indeed it seems he was making daily entries, as we know from the experiences of many other diarists, the appearance of such dutiful regularity may be misleading. Individuals who are very busy, traveling, exhausted, or whatever, might go for several days or longer between writing sessions. When they finally sit down to bring the diary up to date, they may unwittingly forget things. Gordon’s entries indeed show some evidence he inserted later information in earlier entries (and thus even placed some news under the wrong date).

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5 In his letter to Joseph Williamson of 28 January 1678 (Konovalov ‘Sixteen Further Letters’, 83), Gordon indicates he was sending him via John Hebdon (Jr) ‘a Relation of our last Campagnia’, which surely has to include at least part of what is preserved in the diary. Unfortunately it has not survived, unless the text in the diary in fact is a version of that same Relation. For the Gordon dispatches in the London Gazette, see Andrew W. Pernal, ‘The London Gazette as a Primary Source for the Biography of General Patrick Gordon’, Canadian Journal of History, 38 (April 2003), 1–17.
Another aspect of the diaries needs to be mentioned here, in that our interest is very much focused on what we learn about Gordon’s correspondence. On a number of occasions he refers to having sent letters from a copy or having dated letters at some interval after they had been first written. On several occasions, he refers explicitly to a ‘copy-booke of letters’ separate from the diary in the narrow sense, but no such copy-books have survived. Rather, scattered in the diary are a good many copies of the letters, but far short of the huge number he wrote over the decades. Small caches of the originals have turned up in British archives, some in Reval [Tallinn], and there may be more to be found in various European archives. We have enough to be reasonably confident about the generic content of what he might write to a particular individual, in part because, even if the letter itself has not been preserved, he may tell us in the diary entry what the subject matter was. The fact that Gordon’s separate letter books have not survived is another of the reasons why we have to think that the diary in its current form represents some kind of re-working or combination of materials that originally existed in some other form.

To appreciate the evidence in the diary concerning communication and the news, requires that we look closely at the terminology Gordon uses. A ‘post’ may or may not refer to any kind of regular institutionalized sending of mail. In some of the later entries in the diary, he does at times qualify ‘post’ with an adjective (‘regular’ or ‘ordinary’), which seems to indicate the by then established postal network. In fact, it is rare that Gordon merely refers to what I would term an ‘anonymous post’. When he indicates a letter is being sent ‘by the conveyance’ of an individual, it may mean it is personally being carried by the named individual, but it also seems possible that someone working for that individual carried it. Once a letter reached the first agent via whom it was sent, that individual presumably knew how best to send it on to its ultimate destination; so the further means of transmission of the missive may not be specified in the diary. However, there are a good many instances of missives enclosed in a ‘coverto’ or cover envelope addressed to an agent and those packets then enclosed in another addressed to a different agent along the route, etc. There may thus be as many as four or five intermediary re-mailings of letters before they finally reach their addressee. The final agent tends to be in the same locality as the addressee, presumably a person well known to the ‘postmaster’, whereas the addressee may not be an individual who would ordinarily receive direct deliveries. It was regular practice for security reasons to enclose certain correspondence in cover envelopes addressed to someone other than the ultimate recipient.
Gordon often provides a lot of evidence that enables us to calculate times in transit or the turn-around time between sending or receiving a letter and the writing and receipt of a response. His letters generally will open with an indication of when previous ones had been sent or the addressee’s letters had been received. Diary entries may indicate the date a letter was written by the correspondent or the date of a letter received to which Gordon is now replying.

Gordon’s terminology regarding the acquisition of news also requires some general explanation. Phrases such as ‘We heard’, ‘We had notice’, ‘We had that’ or ‘We were informed’ often introduce the communication of some news report, but do not tell us via whom or in what form. Sometimes the context at least gives us a clue — for example, if the preceding sentence under the same date indicates he dined with someone, such occasions undoubtedly being ones in which news was exchanged. Often though, news entries are independent of any context other than the fact that he was known from the diary to have been at that time in residence in a particular location. The sources for such unspecific transmissions of news then can only be inferred from the content of the news. There may be ambiguities here which prevent us from delineating oral from written communication or unconfirmed from confirmed reports. Yet he and his Muscovite peers were highly aware of the need to verify information, given the fact that reports sometimes were ill-informed or deliberately misleading.

Fortunately, in a great many cases, Gordon specifies who brought the news, be it a merchant, a Cossack messenger, or an intelligence agent. Moreover, in some cases he records a news item only then to inject skepticism as to its accuracy or, in a later entry, to indicate that more recent information showed the earlier report to be false. There are a good many instances when he was stationed in Kiev where some particularly detailed or important report about events in Poland would be sent immediately on to Moscow.

Among the more interesting entries for our purposes here are ones that specify the involvement of Andrei Vinius, the Muscovite postmaster, who not only received packets of letters from Gordon presumably with the prior agreement that he would put them in the foreign post but also seems to have been Gordon’s main source for copies of Dutch (and possibly German) newspapers. Such entries appear in the diary when Gordon was off on campaign or posted to his military duties in Kiev. Among Gordon’s many correspondents, very few (insofar as we can tell from the extant copies of letters) were individuals with whom he shared political news. Much of his exchanges with family and
friends dealt with family or personal financial matters. Over the years, the frequency of his writing members of the Muscovite elite increases, at least in part simply because he was cultivating them to support his petitions to be allowed to return to Scotland.

What follows is divided into two parts which perforce will overlap to a certain degree. First I shall discuss the evidence regarding the communications network Gordon used — the routes, institutional or personal arrangements, speed, frequency. To a limited degree, in this section I shall mention contents of his letters, but leave the analysis of his acquisition of political news and intelligence to part two. In both parts, the exposition is for the most part chronological, since it is important to see what change there was over the nearly half century encompassed by the diaries.

I. Gordon's Communications Network

Despite the rapid development of postal networks throughout Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries, a person wishing to transmit messages other than by direct, personal contact, had to consider many possible options, in the first instance presumably taking into account the reliability of the network. Speed of communications might or might not be a consideration. For example, depending on the circumstance and identity of his correspondent, Gordon might request an immediate response, or he might simply indicate it would be nice if at least once a year he received a missive. Even where institutionalized networks existed, there was no guarantee that they connected with one another except through the agency of a known individual or that they could always be trusted. One had to be opportunistic, communicating via individuals who might be traveling to a certain place, or sending messages via one's agents in that location. This was a world where a very traditional reliance on personal trust and acquaintance continued to be important. Moreover, given the uncertainties of travel — ships might sink, mailbags might be lost, military conflicts might prevent delivery, the bearer of a letter sicken and die — it was often deemed important to send the same communication simultaneously via different routes.

One of the first really extended sequences of entries in the diary with data on Gordon's correspondence comes in 1663 and 1664 and involves not the foreign post (its formal establishment came only two years later) but rather pertains to Muscovite internal communications. Since a settlement of
the war with Poland-Lithuania still had not been achieved, Smolensk was a center of major importance for the Muscovite armies. Gordon had an active correspondence with officers stationed there, especially with his fellow Scot, Lt. Gen. William Drummond. Drummond did not always reply to Gordon immediately: for example, his letter dated 7 April 1663 in Smolensk was a response to Gordon’s sent from Moscow 22 February. Drummond’s letter reached Gordon on 11 April. Another of Drummond’s letters, sent on 30 July in response to Gordon’s of 1 July, was received by Gordon on 7 August. Two letters from Drummond, dated 21 and 25 October, arrived together in October, which probably means the last day of the month. Thus we have some evidence to suggest that for correspondence between Smolensk and Moscow a transit time of five to seven days might be normal. Gordon notes that his letter to Drummond dated 16 November was sent ‘by an express’, presumably a fast courier, but we do not know how long it took en route, as Drummond replied only on 7 December. Whether most of this correspondence was being carried by the normal iam system (the government network of horse relays) is uncertain, though that seems likely. It is worth keeping in mind that when the foreign post to Vilna was established a few years later, the route ran through Smolensk and the iamschikhi were given the assignment to carry the mail, something they did not always do very efficiently.

To a considerable degree, the subject of this correspondence between Gordon and Drummond seems to have involved the efforts to have Col. Philip von Bockhoven released from Polish captivity. Gordon’s interest in this was very much a personal one, in that he was engaged to von Bockhoven’s daughter, Catherine, whose mother was insisting that the marriage could not take place until her husband returned. In fact, in one letter to Gordon, she advised him not to address her as ‘mother’ before her husband was released, for fear, if the letter were intercepted by the Poles, there might be some

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6 Unless otherwise noted, in what follows below all the dates are Old Style (O.S.), that is, according to the Julian Calendar which was used in Russia and by Gordon in his diary. Generally he indicates when he has received a letter dated N.S. (N.S., the Gregorian Calendar), though in some instances where he fails to do so and where one knows his correspondents were using N.S., it has been necessary to give an O.S. date for consistency. Where I have questions about the accuracy of an elapsed time of transit, I may suggest in parentheses that one of the dates for the calculation may have been in N.S., even if Gordon did not note as much. In the seventeenth century, O.S. dates were ten days behind N.S. ones. In my calculations of transit times, I include the day a letter was written and the day it was received. Some who calculate transit times simply subtract the dates from each other; so those calculations yield one less day than mine do.
misunderstanding that would complicate the negotiations. Looking ahead, Mrs von Bockhoven finally relented, and the wedding would take place on 26 January 1665.

The lovestruck Gordon was posted to Smolensk at the beginning of May 1664. He was not yet out of sight of Moscow on the Sparrow Hills when he wrote the first in a long set of *billet doux* to his fiancée and her mother, some of the letters having been preserved in his diary. ‘… [N]either tyme nor distance of place shall in the least weaken my passionate inclinations for you…’; ‘P.S. Writt to me though but 2 lines so off as you can’. Indeed, between 5 May and 6 December, when he returned to Moscow, he sent at least twenty-eight letters to Catherine and eighteen to her mother. He received at least fifteen replies from Catherine and thirteen from her mother. In addition, his correspondence with Moscow in that period included several letters to ‘sister Bryan’, the wife of the merchant Thomas Bryan. In this period, the Bryans seem to have been among the closest friends of Gordon and the von Bockhovens in the Foreign Suburb of Moscow. While there is one instance of his receiving a letter from Moscow in four days, the norm seems rather to have been closer to two weeks in transit. In one instance, he specifies that his letter to Catherine went ‘by the Russe post’, by which we probably should understand the *iam*. Where there is no mention of who carried a letter, we might also assume a *iamshchik*. For the most part though, Gordon specifies the carrier, and he took advantage of every opportunity to send his personal correspondence, even if the carrier's main purpose was official business. Thus, he mailed by ‘a servant’; ‘by Capt. Dalyell’, who had stopped at Gordon’s camp near Mozhaisk en route to Moscow from his father Gen. Dalyell in Smolensk; ‘by Lt. Coll. Holmes’; ‘by a denshik’ [orderly]; ‘by Dmitre’; ‘by Major Butrimuf’; ‘by Jacobs servant’; ‘by Robert Stewart’; ‘by L. Coll. Zeugh’; ‘by Mr. Hoffman’; ‘in a coverto to Lt. Gen-ll Drummond’, who was already in Moscow; by ‘Maior Gen-ll Crawfuird’. One of Gordon’s servants who had been sent to Moscow and then brought back letters was a certain ‘Stanislaw’; another one who brought him letters from Catherine was ‘Vasily’.

Acting on Gordon’s advice (‘Do not fail to writ by Capt. Dalyell, being a sure occasion’) Catherine replied to Gordon’s of 9 May, delivered by Dalyell, who brought back her letter to Gordon, already in Smolensk, on 1 June. There are other instances where the carrier of Gordon’s letters to Catherine brought him hers on return. In one case, Gordon apparently received his mail from Moscow via the Kremlin’s most important foreign policy expert, Afanasii Lavrent’evich Ordin-Nashchokin, who had left the negotiations with
the Poles at the border and gone back to consult with his superiors before
returning via Smolensk. While in some instances Gordon seized opportunities
to send off several letters in rapid succession, that did not ensure he would
get a quick response. Several went unanswered when there was some kind
of misunderstanding and Catherine apparently thought he was concealing
something from her, but they seem to have moved through that rough patch
with no lasting damage to their relationship.

Gordon's correspondents in this period included a good many others,
some his military colleagues who were in towns not far from Smolensk. He
managed to get a letter to Col. von Bockhoven in his Polish captivity via Vasilii
Mikhailovich Tiapkin, 'sent to Poland with business previous to the embassy
to be sent to the parliament or Seym'. A John Bruce had delivered to the Tsar
a letter from the King Charles II asking that generals Dalyell and Drummond
be released from Russian service. Thus Gordon had the opportunity at the
beginning of July to 'writt to my ffrinds in Scotland by John Bruce.'7 In
contrast to what we see in later volumes of the diary though, at least while on
duty in Smolensk, Gordon rarely wrote to his family in Scotland. Once back
in Moscow, in mid-January 1665, he wrote to his father, uncle, brother John
and friends.

Among those who became part of Gordon's circle of close friends was the
Scottish mercenary Paul Menzies, with whom Gordon now began to exchange
correspondence in the first half of 1665 when Menzies was stationed in
Smolensk.8 Gordon records sending at least three letters to Menzies via his
mistress, who remained behind in Moscow; Menzies wrote Gordon at least
five times, once with a certain 'Ivan the Tartar' and another time via Col.
Drummond's servant. In one exchange, when Menzies wrote to Gordon
from Smolensk on 9 March, Gordon responded promptly with a letter dated
Moscow, 13 March.

While Gordon was back in Moscow in 1665, the entrepreneurial Johann
van Sweeden negotiated a contract with the Tsar's government (it was signed
in May) to establish a regular postal connection between Moscow and Riga, its
primary purpose being to ensure the acquisition of foreign news.9 We know

7 As Dmitry Fedosov has pointed out to me, 'in Scots usage 'friends' often means
relations' and often is the term Gordon uses when referring specifically to his kin.
8 On Menzies the still standard reference is N. V. Charykov, Posol'stvo v Rim i sluzhba v
Moskve Pavla Menziia (Sankt-Peterburg, 1906), although surely there is more needing
to be done to flesh out his biography.
9 For the history of the Muscovite foreign post, the still standard work is I. P. Kozlovskii,
Perye puchty i perye pochtmuistery v moskovskom gosudarstve (2 vols; Warsaw, 1913); see
very little about the actual operation of van Sweeden’s post, even though there is reason to think it did in fact begin to operate as planned with bi-weekly deliveries in both directions. Since we begin to obtain in Gordon’s diaries from this period increasing amounts of information regarding his correspondence abroad from Muscovy (or, once he was in the West, back to Moscow), it is of some interest to see whether these data may tell us anything about the functioning of the new foreign post. The few preserved letters of his are also helpful.

The first evidence which may be relevant here involves Gordon’s correspondence with Generals Drummond and Dalyell. Even though permission had been obtained for them to leave Muscovite service, in mid-January 1665 it appeared that the Muscovite authorities might be having second thoughts and were trying to find excuses to block their departure. In a rapid exchange of letters while they were still en route from Moscow back to Smolensk, Gordon learned from them what was happening and immediately took their concerns to Afanasii Ordin-Nashchokin, who provided the necessary support for them to leave, in the face of an effort by II’ia Danilovich Miloslavskii to prevent them from going. Gordon rushed the document from Ordin-Nashchokin off to Smolensk, advising his countrymen to skip town before a countermanding order from Miloslavskii arrived. On the receipt of Gordon’s letter some time in the second half of February, they immediately left for Pskov, which was the last major stop on the road to Riga. Drummond wrote his thanks to Gordon on 14 March from Pskov, and Gordon replied ‘by the next post’, enclosing letters to his father, uncle and brother John in Scotland and to William Fryer at Elsinore in Denmark. Gordon followed this on 15 April with letters to Dalyell, Drummond and his father, all sent with Col. Trawrnicht, ‘who went from hence to England’. A month later, on 15 May, Gordon again wrote to his

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10 See Daniel C. Waugh and Ingrid Maier, ‘How Well Was Muscovy Connected with the World?’ in G. Hausmann and A. Rustemeyer (eds.) Imperienvergleich. Beispiele und Ansätze aus osteuropäischer Perspektive. Festschrift für Andreas Kappeler, Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte, Bd. 75. (Wiesbaden, 2009), 17 – 38; here, 30, n. 19. To the list there, one can add dates of the receipt or translation of kuranty (the foreign news reports obtained in Moscow) 19 Nov. and 15 Dec. See V. G. Dem’ianov et al. (eds) Vesti-kuranty, 1660–1662, 1664–1670 gg. Ch. 1. Russkie tektety (Moskva, 2009); Ch. 2. Inostrанныe originaly k russkim tekstam. Izledovanie i podgotovka tekstov Ingrid Maier (Moskva, 2008), nos. 66 and 72.

also A. N. Vigilev, Istoriia otechestvennoi pochty, 2-e izd., pererabotannoj i dopolnennoe (Moskva, 1990). In a book project on the Muscovite acquisition of foreign news, Prof. Ingrid Maier and I are updating Kozlovskii; the current essay is a step in that direction. The work is being supported in part under a grant to study ‘Cross-Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe’, RFP12-0055:1, funded by Riksbanken jubileumsfond / The Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation.
father, uncle and brother. Some time between 1 and 10 June, Gordon received a reply from General Drummond, by then in Riga, to his letter of 15 April. Both Dalyell and Drummond wrote Gordon from Riga, on 4 June and 8 June respectively, informing their Moscow colleague that their onward departure was imminent. Unfortunately Gordon does not tell us when he received their letters, but it appears to have been before the end of June. On 6 July, Gordon took advantage of Col. Whitefuird’s departure from Moscow to write again to his father, uncle, brother and to Dalyell and Drummond. Upon receipt of this letter via Whitefuird in Hamburg, Dalyell and Drummond responded on 19 September, enclosing in their long letters ‘a large and particular relation of the passages and state of affaires in Cristendome’. The entries in the diary are few and far between in this period; we know only that their letters seem to have arrived in Moscow before the end of October.

Since it seems likely van Sweeden’s postal service was not fully operational until early 1666, we may assume Gordon’s evidence tells us merely something of the state of communications along the Moscow to Riga route and beyond just prior to the inauguration of the new service. Messages within Russia could have been sent via iamschiki (thus, ‘the next post’). Whether there was anything like a predictable schedule is hard to say, though the evidence would seem to point to some kind of mid-monthly receipt and departure of the mail in Moscow. What dates we have suggest a message from Riga might have made it to Moscow in about three weeks and from Hamburg in about a month. Where possible, having an individual who was traveling take letters to their addressee was still deemed important.

Gordon himself received permission to travel to Britain in 1666, when he was able to combine family business with an official mission as a messenger to the English court. His correspondence during that trip, which took him away from Moscow for nearly a year beginning at the end of June, was extensive and is quite well documented in the diary, which, however, has a number of gaps for periods when surely he wrote other letters.

Gordon was not equipped with staff or funding that would have enabled him to send any special messengers in connection with his official duties. Thus, in the absence of any opportunities to give letters to individual travelers, it is reasonable to assume he used the regularly scheduled posts. Some time between 19 and 25 September 1666, he wrote from Bruges to Moscow, his letter in Latin to his boss in the Ambassadorial Office (Posol’skii prikaz), Almaz Ivanov, being translated in Moscow on 15 November. In it, he mentions having written earlier to Almaz from Riga on 22 July, from Hamburg on 10 August,
and from Bruges on 24 August, but had received no replies to those reports. It is certainly possible that he had more frequent official communication with his superiors in Moscow. The translation of Gordon's letter on 15 November would be consistent with its having arrived via van Swedein's bi-weekly Riga post, one delivery of which generally would reach Moscow toward the middle of each month. Gordon received letters from Moscow dated 20 and 24 July, 24 and 26 August, 25, 26 and 27 September, 7 November, 4, 14 and 17 December, 2, 4 and 17 March. While there are some possible inconsistencies here, for the most part this pattern would fit a reality whereby the Riga post was departing in the middle and toward the end of each month. Correspondents wrote and dated their letters anticipating the departure of the next mail.

His correspondence with family and friends back in Moscow includes in first instance his wife, mother-in-law, the merchant Thomas Bryan, and Almaz Ivanov. He also corresponded with Dr Samuel Collins, the Tsar's personal physician. It seems as though Gordon sent a good many of his letters to his wife and mother-in-law in packets addressed to Bryan in Moscow, not directly to them.

Gordon also developed a network of agents in Europe for forwarding his mail. Upon his arrival in Hamburg on 6 August, for example, he introduced himself to Nathaniell Cambridge, who would subsequently receive and forward (or, as appropriate, hold) Gordon's packets of correspondence. While it is difficult to know to what extent letters were sent in multiple copies, one gets the impression this was common — they might go via different routes in the event that one route might prove to be unreliable. In one instance a Mr Kenedy, who had been given in Moscow letters from Gordon and his friends addressed to Scotland, had some kind of breakdown in Riga and lost the packet there. Even though the route might seem a bit improbable, Gordon once received letters from his family in Moscow via Col. von Bockhoven, his father-in-law who was still in Polish captivity. It was common for packets of letters to be held for a person's arrival. So, when Gordon arrived in Hamburg, Cambridge handed him a packet; when he arrived in London he got a packet; when he returned to Riga, he received another. All these are ones that must have sat around for a while; so in some cases the letters might be quite old. For example, on his arrival at Peckham outside of London on 2 October, letters were waiting from his father in Scotland, dated 20 June, from Bryan in Moscow dated 16 August, and from Collins dated 20 August.

From the time he left Moscow, starting a couple of days out of the city, he wrote back at least twenty times to family and to Bryan. He was away for nearly
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a year. So we might average this out at his writing approximately every other week. He records receiving letters from Moscow at least fifteen times, some of these though being cases where packets had been waiting for him.

We can calculate the following about transit times for the mail:

Moscow—Pskov, 7 days.
Moscow—Riga, 16, 22 days
Moscow—Lübeck, 2+ months for a letter carried by Gordon.
Moscow—Hamburg, roughly the same for letter carried by Gordon.
Moscow—Hamburg, 1+ month.
Moscow—London, 42, 47 days.
Moscow—London, approx. 2 months for most recent, 3 months for oldest.
Moscow—London, 6–7 weeks.
Moscow—London, 2+ months.
Moscow—London 45–50+ days.
Moscow—London, 1+ month (twice).
Moscow—Hamburg, 1+ month, but as old as 54 days.
Moscow—Riga, oldest ca. 2 months (obviously sat there for a long time).

It is not clear that we can see any pattern here about seasonal differences, since some of fastest times to London were in mid-winter. Yet there is insufficient evidence to suggest that winter was normally faster. One needs to keep in mind the possible impact of the Anglo-Dutch war on communication with London, though he notes at one point that the posts seemed to be going through even if he could not be sure of traveling across the Channel safely himself. Also, there were possible delays due to quarantines on account of plague.

From all this we cannot be certain to what degree he may have been using van Sweeden’s new post between Riga and Moscow, though it seems likely it was involved. It had, after all, been established in part specifically to service the needs of Russian emissaries who might be abroad. While leaving Muscovy, Gordon’s travel arrangements seem to have been through the iamschik system; he sent one of his first messages back to Moscow via a iamschik. At the end of his mission, he hired wagons in Riga to take him to Pskov, where he then received his permission to continue on to Moscow in the company of a pristav and presumably making use of the iams system. Outside of Muscovy, for the most part Gordon seems to have been using the established postal network for his correspondence. Twice while in London he sent letters to Moscow ‘per post’. On 14 January 1667, he replied ‘by the first post’ to letters in a packet.
dated by Bryan in Moscow December 14. It is of some interest that on his return, in Lübeck, he met Johann van Sweeden, who was heading back to Moscow with his family. They then traveled together to Riga, where they were hosted by one of van Sweeden’s acquaintances, Herman Becker (a relative of the Riga postmaster, Jacob Becker?).

Gordon’s diary entries for the period between his departure from England (he left Dover 6 February) and his arrival in Pskov on 17 May contain a lot of other interesting information for our topic. He was anything but direct in his travels back to Moscow. He stopped in Bruges, Ghent, Antwerp, Rotterdam, Delft, The Hague, Leiden, and Amsterdam. ‘For hearing of a ballet to be held by the Queen Christina of Schweden at Hamburg the 4th of March, I intended to get thither before that tyme … ’ Unfortunately stormy weather delayed the legs of his journey by sea, and he missed the ‘ballet’ (a term that could denote a kind of theatrical presentation), arriving in Hamburg on the eighth. Yet he arranged for an audience with Christina on the fifteenth, strolling up and down a ‘large roome’ while conversing with her in ‘high Dutch’ [German]. We should note here that Christina’s presence on the Continent after abdicating the Swedish throne, converting to Roman Catholicism, and eventually ending up in Rome, was a subject for much speculation in the European press during this period.11 Years later, Gordon inserted in his diary a note about her death under the date when it had occurred.

Apart from his correspondence with Moscow, Gordon’s network of contacts while abroad is impressive. He had met with Sir John Hebdon in London (Hebdon an old Muscovite hand and sometime ambassador to Muscovy who had carried out commissions for Aleksei Mikhailovich) and then corresponded with him, having agreed to try to recover a debt owed Hebdon by someone in Moscow. While in London, Gordon had also reached an agreement with Joseph Williamson, the Secretary to Lord Arlington, one of the Principal Secretaries of State, to send him regular news reports from

11 Various entries in the Muscovite kuranty translate Western news reports about Christina’s whereabouts and purported intentions, several of the reports from Hamburg. See Vesti-kuranty. 1660–1662, 1664–1670 gg., ch. 1, index of personal names, s.v. Khristina, 823. Thomas Thynne, the English resident in Stockholm was frequently mentioning in his letters to the Secretary of State in London in early 1667 the plans for Christina’s anticipated arrival back in Sweden. See National Archives (London), SP 95/6, passim. I gratefully acknowledge the support provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities (grant RZ-1635-13) for work in the National Archives (London) in preparation of this article. Any views, findings, or conclusions expressed in this article do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.
Russia, some of which then appeared in the officially-sponsored *London Gazette*. His first correspondence with Williamson comes before Gordon was back in Russia.\(^\text{12}\) The rest of that correspondence will be discussed below. In one remarkable flurry of letter writing on 15 March, in addition to his normal communications with Moscow and family in Scotland, Gordon sent letters to acquaintances in Bruges, Ghent, Warsaw, Danzig, Magdeburg, and Riga. Some of this correspondence involved forwarding letters which had been solicited from important personages on behalf of Col. von Boekhoven in the hope of attaining his release. It seems clear that Gordon’s network often had nothing to do with official business — some involved his contacts with other Roman Catholics and Catholic institutions, some concerned his personal business matters, and some involved the fact he had agreed to assist others in collecting or paying debts. For the most part he never tells us how the letters were sent, leaving me to assume that he was using the ordinary post.

On 12 March while in Hamburg, Gordon learned the news that Muscovy and Poland had concluded the Truce of Andrusovo (it was signed on 20 January).\(^\text{13}\) As a consequence of the end to hostilities, by the time he arrived in Moscow on 6 June, his father-in-law von Boekhoven had been released to return to his family. Von Boekhoven and Mr Bryan thus met Gordon and escorted him to the Foreign Suburb, where he ‘was with great joy welcomed by my wyfe and ffriends’. The final entries to this volume of the diary (whose continuation beyond the end of June is no longer extant) record Gordon’s writing to Hamburg and Riga to inform two officers who had been seeking

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\(^\text{12}\) The letter, written from Lübeck on 2 March 1667, has been published by Konovalov, ‘Sixteen Further Letters’, 80–1. Apart from any possible financial consideration (about which there is no evidence), the *quid pro quo* here seems to have been Gordon would receive from Williamson his manuscript news compendia on a regular basis. Gordon was listed amongst the recipients in Williamson’s diary for the period December 1667 – January 1669; see Peter Fraser, *The Intelligence of the Secretaries of State & Their Monopoly of Licensed News 1660–1688* (Cambridge, 1956), 154. Williamson sent out both the printed *London Gazette* (for which he was largely responsible) and manuscript news compendia, reserving for the latter items that might have been of special interest and not otherwise obtainable in open news channels. It is not always clear which of these two news sources is in question when one of his correspondents acknowledges hearing from him.

\(^\text{13}\) Thomas Thynne wrote from Stockholm to Williamson on 20 February, his letter received in London 14 March, mentioning an offensive and defensive alliance between Muscovy and Poland, the reference presumably being to the Truce of Andrusovo (National Archives [London], SP 95/6, State Papers Foreign. Sweden, 1666–1668, fol. 144r). Thynne seems to have assumed Williamson would already have learned the news.
employment in Moscow that there was no possibility they could expect to obtain it.

Given the paucity of information on the functioning of van Sweeden's post, Gordon's correspondence from Moscow with Joseph Williamson merits special attention.\(^{14}\) The dates Gordon wrote the letters (and in three instances, dates they were received, indicated in parentheses) are: 9 July 1667 (22 August); 20 August (13 October); 3 September; 1, 15 and 29 October; and 9 December (28 January 1668). In the first of these, Gordon notes receiving Williamson's letter of 24 May six days earlier (presumably July 3), but Gordon had no opportunity to respond before the ninth. He also specified that the post via Riga 'goeth every Fortnight once' and his correspondent there was an English merchant Benjamin Ayloff, 'by whose conveyance my letters are sent directly for England'. Letters from Williamson via Danzig could be sent to Ayloff for forwarding to Moscow. In his letter of 20 August, Gordon apologizes for missing the two previous posts (presumably one in late July and another perhaps toward the middle of August). It is not clear whether Gordon's of 3 September did not in fact get posted closer to the middle of the month, in which case it could have been the 'last' letter he refers to in his of October 1. On 1 October, he acknowledges receipt of Williamson's letter of 23 August. His letter of 9 December indicates that the most recent post left a day early and he thus missed it. He now had Williamson's of 4 October (received in the 'former' post) and the more recent one of 11 October. The 9 December letter contained news dating from 12 November through 8 December. In the conclusion to this letter he warns Williamson he soon will be ordered out of Moscow with his regiment and thus unlikely to receive mail from London, but whether it would be sent via Danzig, Riga or Arkhangelsk, it would be held for him.

From this small set of letters we can reconstruct a picture of more or less regular bi-weekly posts between Riga and Moscow, in each of which there should have been a letter from Gordon, and in which he might expect one in return from Williamson. If the norm was not observed, the fault seems not to have been so much the post (one did leave a day early) but rather Gordon's

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\(^{14}\) For the Gordon letters, see Konovalov 'Patrick Gordon's Dispatches', where he publishes them from National Archives, London, SP 91/3, State Papers Foreign, Russia. It is not entirely clear how long Gordon continued as Williamson's news agent in Moscow (that is, irrespective of whether he was on the list of those receiving Williamson's newsletters). One letter of Gordon's, sent from Edinburgh 12 October 1669, has survived, as has one from Moscow dated 28 January 1678, when Williamson was now a Principal Secretary of State. For these, see Konovalov, 'Sixteen Further Letters', 81–3.
occupation with his other duties. Where we can calculate transit times, we see Gordon’s mail to London took forty-seven, fifty-five, and fifty-one days, one of Williamson’s to Moscow forty-one days and another no more than thirty-nine days. We do need to keep in mind that letters might be dated some days in advance of when they actually went off in the mail, though Gordon gives the impression he was trying to time his close to the day the post rider left. We know from later evidence that anything under forty days for a letter to travel between Moscow and London was probably pretty good time. Around fifty days was slow, although newspaper reports datelined London and printed in Holland that were arriving in Moscow in the mid-1660s tended to take that long or longer.

It is interesting to compare this evidence for Russia with that regarding the communications between the British government in London and its agent in Stockholm in 1667. The agent, Thomas Thynne, continually complained about how he felt himself on the fringes of the civilized world, as evidenced by the slowness and irregularity of the communications from London. He claimed that the Dutch representative in the Swedish capital was not experiencing the same difficulty. He expected to write to London and receive letters in return on a weekly basis. What he missed in particular was the regular and rapid receipt of Williamson’s newsletters, for the information that might not be available in other news sources regarding England and which could then be traded for other ‘exclusive’ news or used to counter what he considered falsities being spread in Stockholm about England.

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15 See National Archives (London), SP 95/6, with the continuation of the Thynne correspondence for 1668 in SP 95/7.

16 In particular here, note Thynne to Williamson, Stockholm, 20 February 1667 (received in London 14 March), acknowledging receipt of Williamson’s of 25 January: ‘…Wee live beyond the end of the world, and are certainly the last of mankind who heare what passeth in the habitable world. Whatever wee receive passeth by Hamburgh, eaven the newes of Poland and Leifland…Till this last I have received neither written nor printed newse in a whole month; once I had French gazetts, but heare of none since since either wee are esteemed too barbarous for so polished a language or you have ceased to print any…’ (fols. 143r–143v). A week later, on 27 February, he wrote: ‘…Frequently I receive no informations at all, and never little more then what all the world does, even our enemies, the ordinary minuts and that the Harlems Courants brings me verbatim every weeke…You would not blame me if you knew how dismall a place this is without newse from England. I must confesse I am ashamed to owne I have noe intelligence, & on the other side my never bringing any even of ordinary matters makes these ministers either suspect my inclinations or my abilities, who am not thought fit to know any thing. I should willingly oblige my selfe to writing twice a weeke to you if this place would afford matter for it, but it scarce
is whether Williamson was in fact keeping in touch with Thynne as regularly as the latter expected. It seems not to have been a matter of letters being intercepted (presumably by the Dutch) and removed from the mail packets. At one point (11 March 1668; fol. 280) Thynne blamed the irregularities on ‘the negligence of the Imperiall Postmaster’. For some nearly two dozen letters of Thynne to London (most addressed to Williamson), where we know both the date they were written and the date received, we can see that the elapsed time varied, from a fast two-and-a-half to three weeks during May through August, to three-and-a-half to five weeks during the rest of the year, when the median elapsed time was thirty days. Thynne obviously considered a transit time from London of twenty-nine days was slow. It seems that for the most part the letters were being carried through regular post; the fastest route probably ran through southern Sweden and then across to Hamburg, from which the post ran to Holland and Flanders. For security, the letters always were sent in envelopes addressed to someone other than Thynne’s bosses in London.

The lack of diary volumes for mid-1667 through 1676 and for 1679–83, plus the distinctive form of the volume for 1677–78, leaves us with a will fill a letter in a month … ‘ (fols. 145r–145v). On 26 June, Thynne wrote the Earl of Arlington, the Principal Secretary of State (copies of his letter received in London on 13 and 15 June): ‘I am very much to accuse the slownesse of the Post which brought me but fouer days since yr favour of the 24th of May. Though having noe particular addresse to Hamburgh I am to rejoyce that it did not totally miscarry, & having made a long and hazardous journey through our enemies countrey to whose mercy I dare commit noe packets without covers to private men either at Hamburgh or Bruxells’ (fol. 188). On 17 July, Thynne wrote Williamson (the letter received in London on 3 August): ‘ … There is noe part the world whose newse arrives here at first hand; that of Poland, Muscovie, Leifland & the habitable part of Sweden comes first to Hambourgh from whence, or Elsingburgh you have it three weeks younger then from Stockholm’ (fol. 192v). Yet on 3 October, he was able to tell Williamson, ‘I will now entertaine with the affaires of Poland, the Emperors Resident having a very intelligent as well as punctuall correspondent at Warsowe … ’ (fol. 218r). Joseph Werden, Thynne’s eventual replacement, in writing to Arlington (7 September 1670), indicated that he did not need the printed London Gazette: ‘You will oblige me much to let me have sometymes some of the written papers & what other notices you thinke fit of Domestic Matters (but not yr Printed Gazetts, because I shall have those of Harlem, Hamborough &c.)’ (SP 95/7, fol. 173v). He repeated this to Williamson on 5 October, a letter received in London on the 25th (fols. 179r–180v).

17 Williamson’s diary lists Thynne as a recipient of the newsletters for the periods March–December 1667 and December 1667–January 1669. George Shuttleton, an English merchant in Stockholm, also was on Williamson’s list for the first of those periods. Edward Chamberlayne, who accompanied the embassy led by the Earl of Carlisle to Sweden, was added to the list of newspaper recipients for January–October 1669. See Fraser, Intelligence, 153–5.
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significant gap regarding Gordon’s correspondence. The peculiarity of the 1677–78 volume, which is mainly concerned with the Chyhyryn campaigns, is its narrative form that suggests much was written down (or at least copied and edited) after the events, even if based on detailed notes he had kept. We learn from this volume a considerable amount about military field intelligence, but it lacks the entries that we might expect would tell us about his ordinary correspondence. It is hard to imagine he was not writing his family or friends in this period, although the exigencies of the sieges (especially that in 1678) would have made correspondence difficult at times, if not impossible. So we will leave the subject of military intelligence for later analysis and move on to the next volume of the diary, which picks up Gordon’s life in January 1684.

To appreciate the data in this volume of the diary, we need to say a few words about where Gordon was and what he was doing between 1684 and 1689. Certainly much had changed in the more than decade-and-a-half since his last conscientious record of his correspondence in the 1660s. By 1684, thanks in part to his valuable service at Chyhyryn, he had a high profile amongst the Muscovite elite, and his personal connections in those circles were impressive. Thus the assignments he was given and the value placed on his service reflect an elevated status that he had not enjoyed in the 1660s, when he was more likely to interact with his fellow Scots or the other foreigners in Moscow than with important Russians. For much of the time covered by this volume of the diary, he was stationed in Kiev or on the campaigns (which proved disastrous) against the Crimea. There was also one foreign trip to England and Scotland. Even though he claimed no special training as a military engineer, it was in that capacity that his expertise was needed in Kiev, where he moved easily amongst the elite there, regularly interacting with the Muscovite military governor (voevoda) and his subordinates, meeting with important clerics, indulging in an active social life. Thus he had ready access to all possible channels of communication and was regularly informed of important news, whether it was coming via Moscow or across the borders from Poland.

Since there is as yet no systematic study of Muscovite post and communications in the South in this period or the acquisition of military and political intelligence, what Gordon records on these subjects is of great interest. His accounts of the Crimean campaigns, like his earlier narratives

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19 To produce such a study will require extensive work in the archives (which I can never expect to undertake), especially the files of the *Midorossiiskie dela* but also in various
of the sieges of Chyhyryn, are valuable eyewitness documents by a trained observer who could appreciate what was going on from the military standpoint. Interesting as that aspect of his diary is, to discuss it here would take us beyond the purpose of this essay. Likewise, the insights we gain from Gordon regarding Muscovite politics during the regency of Tsarevna Sofia are beyond our scope here. The fact that in this period Gordon had close relations with the favorite and overseer of Muscovite foreign policy, Vasilii Vasil’evich Golitsyn, is important to discuss though, given how relations with Poland, the Ottoman Empire, and the Crimea were at the top of the Muscovite government’s list of priorities. One of the most interesting entries in the diary from early 1684 is a copy of the advice Gordon provided Golitsyn at the latter’s request, regarding the advisability of launching a military campaign against the Crimea. Gordon laid out first the cons, then the pros, and concluded that it made sense to go ahead with such a campaign, since it would be fairly certain of success. Little did he realize, it seems, how badly prepared as yet was the Russian military and how ill-suited Golitsyn was as a military commander.20

On 6 March 1684 Gordon was already on his way back to Kiev from Moscow, stopping first at Sevsk, the town an important military garrison post for operations in the south, where he had earlier lived with his family before his posting to Kiev in 1678. His next stop was in Baturin, the headquarters of the Hetman of the Left-Bank Cossacks, Ivan Samoilovich, with whom on 23 March he ‘had a large conference…. where wee handled all Muskoes & other affaires very narrowly’. Since the normal route of communications between Moscow and Kiev ran through Sevsk and Baturin, the diary records a great many instances of Gordon’s sending letters to both towns. He still had close contacts in Sevsk. So, for example, on 31 May, he took advantage of Major Bockhoven’s traveling back there from Kiev (where he had arrived on 6 May, bringing Gordon letters from Moscow, Smolensk, Sevsk and Baturin) to send letters to Colonels Hamilton and Ronaer and to the Russian voevoda.

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20 In early January 1687 though, a few months before leaving for the Crimean campaign, Gordon was expressing doubts about the wisdom of the venture in his letter to the Earl of Middleton in London: We ‘fancy to ourselves that wee may breake with the Tartars and not with the Turkes, which cannot be, for neither will the Turkes desert their vassalls, nor shall wee be able to effect any great matters without clearing the Dneper and Don, which are blocked up with Turkish garrisons. Jealousy and fear to be deserted by the allies maketh all this’ (Gordon to Middleton, 7 January 1687, in Konovalov, ‘Sixteen Further Letters’, 86).
Bockhoven was related to Gordon by his first marriage and Ronaer was Gordon’s current father-in-law. Gordon seems at every opportunity to have send notes to Ronaer and Hamilton in Sevsk.

As the diary makes clear, the Hetman in Baturin, while for the most part a loyal ally of Moscow, was also pursuing policies in his own interest independently of what the Kremlin might have wanted. Gordon apparently was on very good terms with Samoilovich, from whom on 11 August he received ‘a very friendly letter … and thereby 3 kowes, 25 sheepe, a pipe of aqua vitae and 40 rubles of money’. He may have been even closer to Ivan Mazepa, Samoilovich’s chief lieutenant. We have a number of the letters Gordon would write Mazepa, always in Latin, which tend for the most part to be simply polite expressions of friendship or thanks for some personal favor. Mazepa succeeded Samoilovich as Hetman in 1687, when the latter was deposed and sent off into exile in Muscovy. In reporting this to the Earl of Middleton in London, Gordon wrote of Mazepa: ‘This man is better affected to the Christian interest, and we hope shall be more active and industrious in hindering the incursions of the Tartars into Polland and Hungary …’

Gordon arrived in Kiev on 4 April 1684, almost a month after he had left Moscow. It is important to remember that the relatively slow time of his travel is no indication of the speed of normal communication between the two cities. Gordon was in no hurry and presumably was traveling with a lot of baggage, as his family was awaiting him in Kiev.

Gordon’s foreign correspondence in this period was impressive, although spaced at longer intervals than might have been the case had he remained in Moscow. On the eve of his departure from Moscow, he sent letters abroad to Samuel Meverell, an English merchant who had been in Moscow but was probably then back in London, a Mr. Grove, and his cousin Alexander Gordon, all via an English merchant Joseph Wulfe, who was apparently in Moscow. On 21 April in Kiev, he wrote his brother John in Scotland, enclosing the letter in one to Meverell and that in turn in a letter to Daniell Hartman. In the same mail he sent a letter to his cousin Thomas Gordon (also apparently then in Scotland) via James Adie in Danzig, the letter to Thomas enclosed in one to Andrei Vinius in Moscow and the whole batch of these letters in a packet.

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21 Ukrainian nationalist historians have not looked kindly on Samoilovich, seeing him as having supported too closely Muscovite domination of Ukraine. For a sympathetic reassessment of the Hetman, see K.A. Kochev, Russkoe pravitel’stvo i sem’ia ukrainskogo getmana Ivana Samoilovicha v 1681 – 1687 gg (Moskva, 2012).

addressed to Col. Menzies. Separately, he wrote one of his regular commercial contacts in the foreign suburb, Francesco Guasconi, sending the letter in one addressed to another regular correspondent, Col. Georg von Mengden, who had served under Gordon.

This manner of making up packets of letters, rather like a matryoshka doll, is an important feature of much of Gordon’s correspondence. He had prior agreements with a few key ‘agents’ for his letter packets, with the understanding that they then would deliver or forward the individual messages or enclosed packets. Von Mengden now seems to have replaced Bryan in the foreign suburb as his main agent there for receiving mail. Vinius was the crucial link for getting letters into the foreign post, James Adie was his agent in Danzig, Meverell his agent in London. The Danzig connection was important, since ships sailed from there directly to Aberdeen in Scotland. When on 22 July Gordon wrote to George Gordon (the Lord Chancellor of Scotland and a kinsman), to Lt. Gen. Drummond, to Gordon of Rothiemay (another kinsman), to his cousin Thomas, uncle, brothers, children and brother-in-law William Hay, he sent all the letters via a Kievan merchant Martin Seyts, who was to deliver them to Adie in Danzig. His letters of 23 January 1685 included one to Drummond ‘in a letter to Mr. Adie, & that in one to Mr. Daniell, and this to the Postm-r Vinius, & his in myne to James Lindesay… all in a packet to Coll. von Mengden… sent to Mosko by the Boyars [i.e., the Kievan voevoda’s] servant Kusma’. Daniell was now one of Gordon’s agents in Riga; Nathaniell Cambridge in Hamburg continued to represent Gordon’s interest there, as we learn from other entries.

Gordon sent his next batch of letters off to Scotland on 5 May with merchants heading to Danzig, but all of those letters came back to Kiev on 31 July, since the merchants determined that there were better prices for their leather goods in Silesia and thus never went to Danzig. Gordon then re-sent the letters of 5 May to Scotland (along with some new letters written by 8 October) in the care of Martin Seyts, who left for Danzig on 15 October. It is easy to see how a letter received in Scotland from Kiev might thus have been en route for over half a year. (Indeed, a letter brought to Gordon from Moscow on 10 March 1685 had been written in Edinburgh the previous April.) One must ask then, do we have here an indication that most such correspondence had no time value, or might the example of the letters of 5 May rather suggest Gordon wanted to avoid sending sensitive letters through certain channels where he worried they might be intercepted and opened? That he had such concerns will become apparent shortly. The case here was special in that he
also entrusted to the merchants the sizeable sum of 300 florins to pay for his son James’s maintenance in Danzig where he was studying at the Jesuit college. At very least, what we are learning about transit times has to raise caution flags if we are wanting to read too far back into pre-modern Europe from our contemporary expectations of speed in communications in an effort to argue that the post on the wings of Mercury was already the norm.  

On 4 July 1685, his servants arrived from Moscow, bringing him a big batch of mail. Since he specifies the dates of the letters, and the locations of the writers, this entry is worth quoting in its entirety:

My letters were from Mr. Meverell, London, 24 Feb. 1685; from Mr. Daniell, Riga, 26 March & 2 weeks before 2d April; from Coll. Gordon, Hannover, the 12th of December ’84; from Mr. Hartman, Mosko, 21 May ’85; from Mr. Guasconi, Mosko, 29th April & 11 Juni, from Mr. Vinius, 2d Juni, from the Holl. resident [Baron van Keller], 20th May & 5th Juni, from P[ater] Schmidt [the Catholic priest in the Foreign Suburb], 29th Apr. & 20 Juni st[i]l[n]o[v]o; P[ater] de Boy, 10 Juni st. v; Coll. von Meng[den], 10 Juni; Mr. Sclater, 12 Juni; Mr. van Troyen, 11 Juni; from Coll. Hamilton, Shevsky, 26 Juni; Coll. Roonaer, 26 Juni, & from many Rush. noblemen, complements of diverse dates; M[ajor] Hamilton, 11 Juni.

The elapsed time between the writing of most recent letter in Moscow and its arrival in Kiev was twenty-three days, probably indicative of Gordon’s servants having been burdened with carrying more than just letters and hence traveling at a modest pace. It took the letter from London more than four months to arrive and that from Hannover more than half a year. As the most recent letter from Riga was some three months en route, we have to imagine that a packet of mail for Gordon had sat around somewhere before it finally occurred to someone to forward it. In short, this evidence of itself can hardly be construed to indicate normal speed of communication. Gordon responded to these letters on 9 July, received another packet of mail from Moscow on 18 July (senders not specified), and sent responses to many of those named in the quote above on 8 August and again (presumably in response to letters recently received?) on 20 September. Of the foreign

\[\text{Cf. Wolfgang Behringer, } \text{Im Zeichen des Merkur: Reichspost und Kommunikationsrevolution in der Frühen Neuzeit. Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Institut für Geschichte, 189 (Göttingen, 2003).}\]
correspondents listed in the 4 July entry, only Meverell is mentioned in the entries for these two dates.

On 21 September though, he received a new batch of letters from Moscow along with international news reports (apparently printed newspapers). The letters were from his eldest son, uncle and brother John (all in Scotland), dated 4 and 5 June 1685, from his second son James from Danzig dated 30 June, all apparently contained in a packet forwarded by Mr Adie in Danzig to Father de Boy (then in Moscow) via the regular post. Thus the letters from Scotland were over three and half months in transit, and that from Danzig took roughly a month less. Father de Boy was a Moravian Jesuit who had brought papal letters to Moscow and then stayed on there until his death in 1686. Gordon wrote back to James and to Adie in Danzig, on 26 September, enclosing the letters in a packet to Andrei Vinius (to whom Gordon was sending recently-received news from Poland), ‘desiring him to forward it by the first post’. A diary entry of 4 October suggests that Gordon’s replies to his correspondents might be composed up to several weeks before he actually sent them off. Moreover, he seems to have sent second copies in some cases, the packet being taken to Moscow by Capt. Kristy on 4 October containing, *inter alia*, his letters to Vinius, Adie and James dated 26 September. It is possible, of course, that he recorded writing these letters on the twenty-sixth, but Kristy’s departure was the first opportunity he had to mail them.

Gordon’s correspondence from Kiev in this period included a great many letters to important members of the Muscovite elite, most of them nobles who seem to have been on his regular mailing list. Among them were Vasili Vasil’evich Golitsyn, Nikita Semenovich Urusov, Benedikt Andreevich Zmeev, Leontii Romanovich Nepluev, Boris Fedorovich Dement’ev, Emel’ian Ignat’evich Ukrainsev, Boris Vasilevich Gorchakov, Petr Vasilevich Sheremetev, Ivan Fedorovich Volynskii, Alekssei Petrovich Sal’tkov, and Ivan Mikhailovich Miloslavskii. It is easy to see why most of these names would have been in his address book. Golitsyn was, of course, the favorite, the arbiter of foreign policy, and one who had consulted closely with Gordon in Moscow regarding military and foreign affairs. Ukrainsev was one of the senior Muscovite foreign policy specialists, with particular expertise on Ukraine, Poland, and the Ottoman Empire.24 Others on the list (for example, Nepluev) had earlier held important posts in the military and administration in the Russian south and Ukraine and thereby been Gordon’s superiors. Even

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if in part the correspondence may have been simply a matter of maintaining old ties, they would have to have been interested in whatever news Gordon might send of current events in Ukraine. Perhaps most important from Gordon’s standpoint was that he hoped many of these highly placed nobles might influence the decision in Moscow about whether he would be allowed to leave Russian service permanently to return to Scotland. Gordon often would mention in passing that this was the subject of some of these letters. Whether or not his contacts were supportive, as we know, Gordon’s hopes were to be dashed.

Gordon’s correspondence from Kiev raises questions as to whether by this time there were regular postal communications along the normal route to Moscow. To illustrate, here is a tabulation of messengers, not all of whom were carrying personal letters for Gordon, starting with 11 April 1684 and running through September 1684:

**Between Kiev, Baturin and Sevsk:**

(April 11) ‘by the officers who convoyed the streltses from hence to Shewsky’;

(May 6) ‘Major Bockhoven & Capt. Bresky came from Shewsky’ (bringing letters from Moscow, Smolensk, Sevsk and Baturin);

(May 31) ‘Major Bockhoven went to Shewsky’;

(June 23) ‘by a Russe capt. of Serg[ey] Gol[ovechin]’;

(July 2) ‘by Simon Reinolds’;

(July 3) ‘Major Bockhoven returned from Sevsk’ (with letters from Moscow);

(July 11) ‘a fryer come from Shewsky’;

(July 11) ‘We dispatched an ensigny to Shewsky’;

(July 13) ‘A cornet dispatchd to Baturin’;

(July 15) ‘A kaptaine came from Shewsky’;

(August 6) ‘An officer sent to the Hetman’;

(August 11) from the Hetman via a ‘writer’ accompanied by his brother and a servant (they were bringing Gordon 3 cows, 25 sheep and other gifts, not just mail);

(September 21) ‘by the Capt. Macare’ (carrying letters that presumably were to be forwarded from Sevsk to Moscow).

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25 Here I am questioning the argument by Vigelev, *Istorija*, 119–30, that there was a regular Moscow to Kiev post.
Between Kiev and Moscow:

(April 13) ‘a post’ with official communication;
(April 24) ‘by Boris Anutshin, a lt. to horse of my regiment’;
(April 26) official communications ‘by a l[ieutenant]t’/‘The lieutenant dispatched & went from hence’;
(May 2) official communication ‘by post’;
(June 6) ‘The Moskoes strelets brought kasna or pay’;
(June 15) ‘By a servant of the Boyars come from Mosko in ten dayes’;
(June 15) to Moscow ‘by a capt. and the Boyars ser[vant]t’;
(July 7) ‘the writer [=podiachii] Sid[or] And[reyev] Putilsky’ [who apparently was supposed to have left for Moscow two or three days earlier];
(July 10) letters ‘of the last Junii’ from Moscow ‘by post’;
(August 1) to Moscow ‘by [the Boyar’s] servant Vasily Nekrasuf’;
(August 7) with Boyar Fedor Petrovich Sheremetev, who had left Moscow 5 June and halted for a time at Sevsk;
(August 9) ‘by Samson Dmitreuf, a strelets of myne’;
(August 11) ‘The post who was to be sent with notice of the Boyars arrivall going but this day’.

The few indications of a ‘post’ tell us nothing about a regularly scheduled departure or arrival; in fact the last entry here suggests that is simply a way Gordon might refer to the sending of a courier. Clearly there was a lot of traffic back and forth between regiments stationed in the Russian south and Ukraine, but where military officers were carrying messages, there is nothing here to suggest they were doing so by any regular schedule. Granted, these listings are not exhaustive; on other dates orders were received from Moscow but with no indication as to who brought them. In two of the examples above, we see that a message from Moscow might arrive in as little as 10 or 11 days, one via a ‘servant’ of the Kievan voevoda who then was almost immediately sent back to Moscow. Yet we have other evidence (from 15 and 18 September) that orders and letters from Moscow might have been en route for as long as a month to a month-and-a-half. Overall, I would have to conclude that communication between Moscow and Kiev was ‘on demand’, the authorities in Moscow or Kiev able on short notice to send a courier where that was deemed essential. I shall discuss instances of this later in examining Muscovite intelligence-gathering along the southern borders. Timely delivery of much of the other correspondence seems not to have been a major concern.

Within a short time of his return to Moscow at the beginning of 1686,
Gordon was allowed to travel back to Scotland to deal with family business, although the mission ‘had a diplomatic bias’.26 His wife and family had stayed in Kiev, as hostages to ensure he would return. His verbal instructions included V. V. Golitsyn’s demand that he write him ‘by every post’. By 4 February he was already in Novgorod; before leaving there on the 6th, he wrote back to Vinius, Menzies and his wife. Since the Muscovite authorities suspected Gordon might be carrying commercial goods on which he was trying to avoid paying duty, he rushed to stay ahead of the detachment of strel’tsy he learned had been sent in pursuit, managing to get across the border by virtue of rousing out his drunk iamshbiki in the middle of the night for the last leg from Pskov. The diary from this point provides abundant detail about the route, means and cost of travel and accommodation as Gordon proceeded west.

He arrived in Riga on 12 February and immediately sent a packet of letters back to Moscow with an apothecary Christian Egler. Gordon wrote his wife, von Mengden, Menzies, Vinius, Guasconi and V. V. Golitsyn. He also sent back some keys he had forgotten to give to Guasconi. Egler had come to Gordon in the company of a merchant, Marcus Luys, to whom he delivered ‘divers tokens’ from Moscow. Gordon had indeed been transporting goods for his acquaintances in Moscow: he had trunks belonging to the merchants Henrik Butenant, Daniel Hartman and van Sowme, which had to pass through Riga customs. The next day Gordon wrote to the voevoda and a merchant Joachim Voght in Pskov, thanking them for their hospitality. During his several days in Riga, Gordon socialized with Richard Daniell and George Frazer, merchants with whom he had maintained regular contact and who were involved in forwarding Gordon’s letters from Moscow.

On his arrival in Danzig on 5 March, he informed the rector of the Jesuit college that he was withdrawing his son James (‘perceiving that they had here infected him with Calvinisme’!). Among his social visits were ones to James Browne and Patrick Forbes, the latter one of Gordon’s regular contacts for business matters. On the sixth, he sent a packet of letters back to Moscow and Kiev, and a letter to a military acquaintance in Memel via George Frazer in Riga; he also wrote to a George Gray in Königsberg.

In Hamburg on 22 March, he was ‘feasted’ by his regular correspondent and agent Nathaniell Cambridge, the company including the English resident Sir Peter Wyche (earlier an English ambassador to Moscow) and merchants

26 See Dukes et al., Stuarts and Romanovs, 141, for a good analysis of his trip in the broader context of Russian relations with the Stuarts.
of the Muscovy Company. The next day he noted receiving mail from his son-in-law in Kiev and Vinius in Moscow, the latter's letter dated 7 February. On 26 March, he used the post to write V.V. Golitsyn, Vinius, Hartman, von Mengden and his wife in Moscow, ‘all under the coverto of Mr. von Sowme addressed to Mr. Vinius’. He wrote separately to Madam Crawfuird, ‘in a coverto to Mr. Gray addressed to Mr. Edie in Dant[zig]’.

By 14 April, he had arrived in London, where, among others, he was met by his ‘good friend’ Samuel Meverell, his cousin Alexander Gordon and General Drummond. After acquiring suitable clothing (the details of whose purchase he dutifully recorded), he had an audience with the King on the sixteenth. ‘His M. asked me many questions concerning the Tzars, the countrey, the state of effaires, the militia & government, as also of my jorney, & many other particulars’. The conversation continued on two subsequent occasions. One subject that came up was the defense of Chyhyryn; the King also asked Gordon’s opinion on the fortifications the English had erected near Chatham to deter naval attacks by the Dutch up the Thames. On 4 May, Gordon attended a production of Shakespeare’s Hamlet in Whitehall, the King and all the court being present. One of Gordon’s preoccupations while he was still in London was arranging for his son James to study in the Scots Jesuit college in Douai in French Flanders. Before leaving London, he had one last audience with the King; it is also of significance that he took leave of the Secretary of State for the Northern Department, Charles Middleton, to whom he would be sending newsletters on his return to Moscow.27

27 Middleton became Secretary of State for the Southern Department in 1688, but then, as a Stuart loyalist, was replaced following the overthrow of King James II (VII). See ‘Charles Middleton, 2nd Earl of Middleton’ (Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Middleton,_2nd_Earl_of_Middleton>, accessed 26 September 2014). Presumably Gordon was aware of Middleton’s sympathies.
Gordon. The next day he sent letters to his wife, von Mengden and Vinius ‘per post’, another packet via Adie in Danzig also through the post, and wrote to Madam Crawford. On the twelfth, he wrote via the post to Middleton and Meverell in London.

His journey from the Russian border at Pechory to the Foreign Suburb of Moscow, where he arrived 31 August, took two weeks. The next day, Russian New Year, he visited Vasilii Golitsyn, attended festivities and received visitors; on 2 September he found time to write his wife. While in England, Gordon had arranged that the King write a letter on his behalf, asking that he be released from Russian service. The official copy of the letter arrived in Moscow via the Dutch resident van Keller, who had been sent it through the Dutch ambassador in London. Gordon notes that on 15 September ‘the King’s letter was interpreted by a Dutch man [presumably here he means a German], who understood but little English’. Gordon was busy writing yet another petition about his release and had it translated ‘in the Slavonian language’ by one Eustachius. We should not take this to mean Gordon did not know Russian, but presumably he wanted to make sure the appropriate formalities for petitions to the Tsars would be followed precisely. On 25 October Gordon had letters from Riga informing him that his baggage that had been sent there from England had arrived and was being forwarded to Pskov. So he wrote there to arrange for its conveyance to Moscow.

Anxious to be reunited with his family, Gordon wrote his wife in Kiev ‘per post’ on 4 November, and despite an equivocal response from Golitsyn when he asked that she be allowed to come to Moscow, decided to go ahead and arrange her travel. On the ninth, he sent his servants to Kiev to get her, ‘giving them three horses along, and to 4 persons three rubles on the way’. On the twelfth he sent another letter to her, via a surgeon who was going to Baturin.

Gordon’s persistence in trying to obtain his release from Russian service finally ruffled the feathers in the Kremlin. Van Keller refused to help in the matter, informing Gordon that the Russian government was not about to accede to a request from the King of Great Britain, suspecting him of having too friendly relations with the Ottoman Empire. After a contentious confrontation with Golitsyn, Gordon caved in, recognizing the reality that he would have to accept whatever posting he was given, the alternative being exile with his family to Siberia. The dumnyi diak Emel’ian Ukrainsev, one of his long-time correspondents, handed him a draft of an abject petition asking forgiveness. Gordon was allowed to edit it before it was copied in final form, but he swallowed hard at its ‘submissive tearme & expressions as could be
done to God Almighty’. Gordon reported all of this to his friends in Sevsk and Smolensk.

This was not the end of the matter though. To his surprise, Gordon received on 29 November a letter from the Earl of Middleton that had been written in London on 25 October informing Gordon that the King was appointing him Envoy Extraordinary to Russia, with his credentials to follow via Riga. Gordon immediately consulted with van Keller and Vinius, the latter giving him ‘dubious & uncertaine advice’. He then gave Middleton’s letter to Uikraitsev, who instructed that Gordon translate it into Latin so that it could then be translated into Russian ‘and this because they had no English translator’. While waiting for an official response to the submission of all the documents, on 3 December Gordon did return an answer to the Earl of Middleton, which I sent in a coverto to Mr. Sam. Meverell, & that to Mr. Frazer in Riga, desiring him to address it to Sir Peter Wyche, his Sacred Majesty’s resident in Hamburgh, under whose coverto it had come to him. From Mosko it went in Mr. John Sparvenfelts coverto, the copy hereof in my other booke.

Amazingly, this letter reached its addressee and has survived. In it, Gordon apologized for his long silence, blaming it on the fact that he was now something of a persona non grata in court circles (‘I have been and am still under a great cloud … ’). ‘The reason that I have not written since that of the 17th September is that in such a case I could not trust a letter without a coverto, and none whom I could trust being come from our Sea Port but some dayes ago’. Indeed, one has to assume that Sophiia and Golitsyn would not have been happy to read Gordon’s next sentence: ‘Affaires here of late are ripening to some revolution … ’

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28 For Gordon’s relations with van Keller, see Thomas Eekman, ‘Muscovy’s International Relations in the Late Seventeenth Century: Johan van Keller’s Observations’, *California Slavic Studies*, 14 (1992), esp. 48–50. Even if Gordon thought van Keller was his friend, the Dutchman in fact was going to do everything in his power to prevent Gordon’s becoming the English envoy, since he assumed Gordon would then use that position to work against Dutch commercial interests in Muscovy.


30 In his letter of 25 January 1687 to Middleton, Gordon indicated he had planned to include ‘a large narrative of publick affaires as also of my owne particular’, but then he seems to have thought the better of writing it out. He trusted the bearer of his letter, the merchant Joseph Wulffe, to fill Middleton in with the details, especially
himself of help from the Swede Johann Sparwenfeld, whose extended stay in Moscow has left an important legacy. The response from on high, when it came, was a flat refusal to accept Gordon’s appointment as English envoy, the reason his Muscovite military service which was about to take him off on the first Crimean campaign. Gordon was instructed to write Middleton refusing the appointment and required to clear that letter (in Latin) in the Ambassadorial Office before it could be sent off. He mailed it, via Frazer in Riga, on 31 December.

While we need not dwell here on the details of Gordon’s correspondence on the eve of his departure for the campaign, it is worth noting that starting on 22 January 1687, presumably not knowing when he might have the next opportunity, he wrote several packets of letters and entrusted them to the English merchant Joseph Wulffe, who then left Moscow (we assume headed for Riga) on the twenty-ninth. Wulffe was carrying what has to have been a record number of Gordon’s letters, more than thirty of them to his sons and the rector of the college in Douai, family in Scotland, and his acquaintances in London, in Danzig and in Hamburg.

Once the army marched, Gordon seems to have been able to keep up his correspondence for a time. Between a notation of having received letters from his wife, Vinius and Guasconi on 11 May and his arrival back in Moscow in September, he managed to send at least one letter to Middleton (on 26 July when the army was already on the march home). Otherwise the diary those concerning Russian commerce. See ibid., 87. He did, however, proceed to proffer advice on how the English might best respond to the Russian embassy that was being sent to London, if they were to hope to make headway in having the privileges of the Muscovy Company restored.

Sparwenfeld amassed an interesting collection of Russian manuscripts, compiled a Latin-Slavonic Dictionary and left a valuable diary of his travel and stay in Muscovy in 1684–7 which is now available in English translation: Ulla Birgégård (ed., tr. and commentary), J. G. Sparwenfeld’s Diary of a Journey to Russia 1684–1687. Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akadamien. Slavica Suecana, Series A—Publications, Vol. 1 (Stockholm, 2002). Birgégård has also published a scholarly edition of the dictionary. Sparwenfeld mentions Gordon as being amongst his best friends (ibid., p. 231), and provides interesting detail (ibid., p. 227) about the whole incident regarding Gordon’s appeal, the letters from England, and the flat refusal of the authorities to allow either his appointment or his departure. In this telling, the Russians accused Gordon of having ‘cheated the Tsars’ by going to England deliberately to solicit a letter from the King on his behalf. In his defense, according to Sparwenfeld, Gordon insisted he was still the King’s subject.

Oddly, when Gordon wrote Middleton on 26 September from Moscow, after the campaign had ended, he mentioned that his previous letter had been written on 3 July with ‘an account of our Campagna and the reasons that according to our
is filled with a detailed narrative of the campaign and the events surrounding the decision to depose Hetman Samoilovich. His letter to Middleton of the twenty-sixth already included the news that Mazepa had been chosen to replace Samoilovich. On several occasions, ‘posts’ were exchanged with Moscow reporting on the campaign and the Samoilovich affair; presumably Gordon managed to send the letter to Middleton in one of these. Gordon was back in Moscow on 6 September, and ten days later wrote both to Middleton (in Latin, which seems to have been unusual for the correspondence) and to Samuel Meverell in London.

During the second Crimea campaign in 1689, it seems Gordon had few opportunities to write. Anticipating that it might be some time before he could again correspond internationally, Gordon wrote a good many letters to Scotland, London, Danzig and Warsaw on 1 February 1689, sending all of them ‘by Mr. Steels’. Once on the march, he was able every so often to designe wee did not advance into the Crim or Perekop. Shortly after was discovered the treason of the Hetman of the Cosakes…wherefore he was on the 23rd July taken, deposed, and thereafter sent with his family into Siberia’. For some reason, Gordon failed to mention his letter of 26 July. Perhaps Gordon confused dates here, as no letter of 3 July has surfaced, but we do have that of 26 July and the actual report (in Latin) written 16 September. See Konovalov, ‘Sixteen Further Letters’, 88–93. The diary lacks entries for 11 May to 10 June, then contains a long narrative text about the campaign that includes a rather belabored account about Samoilovich, following which there seems to have been another gap, the narrative resuming with 8 July. At least some parts of the campaign narrative here are almost verbatim the same as sentences in Gordon’s Latin letter to Middleton of 16 September, although that letter condenses a great deal and summarizes rather bluntly about Samoilovich’s betrayal and arrest. If there was an entry in the diary about Gordon’s writing on 3 July, it simply has not been preserved. While the published information on the watermarks is scanty and the restoration of the manuscript in 2003 probably now makes it impossible to say anything definite about the quire structure, one might imagine that the narrative text in the diary on fols. 164–8 is an insertion, possibly composed when Gordon was back in Moscow and preparing his letter of September 16. See Gordon, Diary, Vol. 4, 1684–1689, esp. 176–82. The 16 September letter is in Konovalov, ‘Sixteen Further Letters’, 90–3, and has been translated into Russian by Fedosov in Dnevnik 1684–1689, Appendix 8, 225–7.

33 A. P. Bogdanov, ‘Istinnoe i vernoe skazanie’ o I Krymskom pokhode 1687 g. – pamiatnik publitstiki Posol’skogo prikaza’ in Problemy izuchenia narrativnykh istochnikov po istorii russkogo srednevekov’ja (Moskva, 1982), 27–84, takes a rather dim view of the accuracy of Gordon’s account of the first Crimean campaign, but his view would seem to be a minority opinion.

34 Might it not be that the letter to Middleton had to be in Latin to ensure that the Muscovite officials be able to read it before it was sent, given the indication they did not have someone available to read what he would write in English? The letter to Middleton could be one in which Gordon deliberately exercised self-censorship.
write his wife and Vinius in Moscow, and once or twice to Guasconi. Most of the diary for the remainder of 1689 though focuses on the events of the Crimean campaign and the political upheaval in Moscow which followed, during which presumably about the last thing Gordon had time for was his international correspondence. He did mail one packet by post to Frazer in Riga on 6 December, responding to letters received the previous day from him and Mr. Rob that had been in transit roughly two weeks. He included in the packet a letter to the Earl of Melfort in London (apparently asking him to look after the affairs of Marquis Angelus Gabrielli who, like Melfort, was traveling to Rome) and another letter to Thomas Gordon in Edinburgh.

Three of Gordon’s sons, John (b. 1667), James (b. 1668), and Theodore (b. 1681) lived to adulthood. Significant parts of their father’s correspondence involves them, while they were studying abroad, when James entered Russian military service, and when John was given the responsibility of managing the family properties in Scotland. The exchanges with James are particularly revealing about situations in which Gordon felt some urgency in the delivery of and response to his letters and expressed concerns over the security of communications.

On 18 October 1687, Gordon recorded what for him must have been unwelcome news, given the pains he had taken to arrange a proper education for his son:

My daughter received a letter from her brother James, showing that he had quite the Colledge of Doway & was come to Lublin, with an intention to come into this countrey, desiring her to interceed for his pardon & permission to come to Mosko, where he would willingly be a sojour.

Two days later, On 20 October, Gordon recorded:

I did writ to my sonne James & the P[ater] Rector of the Jesuits Colledge in Lublin by the way of Kyow, whereby I ordered him to come by the way of Riga into this countrey, no other way being well allowed; which albeit against my will I did, fearing lest throwing him of altogether he should take some desperate course or other.

Apparently it is the letter(s) to James via Kiev which Gordon notes were returned to him in mid-June. Well into the summer, Gordon was still settling
the accounts for defraying James’ expenses while in Lublin.

Two days after writing to James in Lublin via Kiev, Gordon sent copies of these same letters to Riga ‘by Mr. Frazer’s address & Mr. Hartmans conveyance from hence’. Apparently the post left the next day. On 29 October, he sent another letter to James, enclosed in a letter to Col. Menzies, ‘to be sent the safest & speediest way’. On 2 November he received letters from James and Frazer, to whom he then wrote back two days later. Gordon ‘gave up a petition for post horses to my sonne James’ on the fifteenth; on the sixteenth reported ‘4 podwodes granted for my sonne and a letter got to that purpose’. On 18 November, he wrote to James and Frazer in Riga ‘by post’. Frazer’s letter to Gordon in Moscow, written in Riga on the tenth, arrived on the twenty-second. On 25 November, Gordon ‘writ to Mr. Frazer in Riga & Mr. Joachim Voght in Plesko with the Tsars letter for podwod for my sonne, & letters of recommendation to the governour & chancellor’. Over the next few weeks, he wrote Frazer concerning other matters (a shipment of masts); on 8 January he ‘received a letter from Mr. Frazer of the 29 passat, advising that my sonne came thither the 21, and one from my sonne dated 7 Ja-ry novo stilo’ [= 29 Dec. O.S.]. On the fifteenth, Frazer’s letter to Gordon reached Moscow with the information that James had left Riga on the fifth. So the mails from Riga were taking from 10 to 13 days to reach Moscow. James arrived in Moscow on the twenty-second, bringing letters from the Rector in Lublin, a Mr. Thomson and Frazer. When Gordon got around to replying to Thomson and the Rector on 7 February, he sent his letters ‘by the conveyance of the Polls resident’, that is, presumably a courier who would have taken them on the route to Vilna, not via the Riga route.

By the beginning of May, perhaps prodded by his father, James had had enough of Russia and petitioned to leave. He was on his way west out of Novgorod before the end of the month. Toward the end of July, Gordon was already forwarding to London letters addressed to James that had just arrived from Lublin. Subsequently, Gordon sent his letters to James via Samuel Meverell in London.

The diary entries beginning in the late 1680s often provide precise information on the elapsed time between the writing of a letter and Gordon’s receipt of it in Moscow. Here is a tabulation from late September 1688 up to Gordon’s departure for Ukraine in February 1689. Included are all the entries that would be of interest for the international post and for the connections internally with Smolensk and Kiev:
The Best Connected Man in Muscovy?

• (received 23 September 1688) from Guasconi in Arkhangel'sk dated 7 September.
• (8 October) (presumably via Riga post) from uncle in Aberdeen dated 28 May; from James Rob in Riga dated 20 September and Georg Frazer in Riga dated 27 September.
• (2 December) from the Duke of Gordon dated London 2 July, from Pater Dumbarr in London dated 21 July, from his uncle in Aberdeen dated 21 July, from Meverell in London dated 5 September, ‘all per mare to Narva’. He was apparently now in regular contact with Thomas Loftus in Narva, who probably had forwarded this packet. He wrote to Loftus ‘by Mr. Kenkels conveyance’ on 7 December.
• (9 December) from Frazer and Rob in Riga dated 29 November and ‘an extract of a letter from London’ of 6 November with news of the landing of the Prince of Orange.
• (13 December) from Menzies in Smolensk dated 8 December.
• (17 December) from Kiev dated 4 and 6.
• (23 December) from ‘my sonne James dated London 20 Novemb[ris] in Mr. Meverells covert to the 23 ditto’. On 4 January 1689, responded to James and Meverell and also to the letters of, Dumbarr, his uncle and Meverell received on 2 December, sending these ‘by Mr. Wulffes conveyance by post’.
• (7 January 1689) from Fr. Schmidt in Danzig dated 8 October, from Fr. Hacky dated 25 October, from Patrick Forbes in Danzig dated 28 December [presumably N.S.], from Robert Gordon of Chmielnick dated Warsaw 24 December, all in a packet from Frazer in Riga dated 27 December.
• (13 January) from Loftus in Narva dated 3 January and Frazer in Riga dated 3 January with news King James VII and II had fled England.
• (19 January) from son James dated 12 December in a letter from Meverell in London dated 14 December along with further news on the arrival of King James in France. Replied to son James and Meverell on 25 January via Frazer ‘per post’.

Starting with the information above and adding data from diary entries for 1690 until his departure for Arkhangel'sk on 1 May 1694, we can tabulate the following transit times to Moscow:

• from Arkhangel'sk, 17, 13, 15, 20, 17, 12, 12, 13, 11, 22, 9, 7, 8, 7, 7, 7,
7, 7, (received around midnight in Preobrazhenskoe), 12, 8, 9, 11, 15, 12, 16, 34 (via Timmermann), 38 (apparently accompanying a load of wine), 14, 13, 11, 39, 15, 11, 16, 15, 11 (via Christopher Brandt), 9, 33 (with some silk handkerchiefs), 10, 13 days.

- Ustiug, 8 days.
- Vologda, 7, 3 (!), 7, 13, 7 (along with letters as old as 17 days), 7, 7 days.
- Iaroslavl’, 22 days (clearly written prior to one received earlier that took only 7 days from Vologda).
- Smolensk, 6, 13 days.
- Pskov, 9, 16, 8 days.
- Novgorod, 6, 8, 10, 4 days.
- Kiev, 12, 45 days.
- Narva, 11, 20, 12, 18, 14, 13, 11, 20, 47 (sent with a bulky gift, so not just through letter mail), 36, 26, 42 days (received in suburbs of Moscow), 12, 33 days (private delivery), 15, 20, 27, 26, 14, 16 days.
- Riga, 12, 11, 11, 12, 12, 11, 11, 11, 12, 11, 13, 12, 11, 12, 12, 12, 11, 11, 12, 11, 11, 11, 11, 12 (included was a shipment of books), 11, 12, 12, 13, 11, 11, 11, 11, 11, 11, 11 days.
- Braunsberg [Braniewo], 28 days (via Riga), 24, 36, 41, 21, 20 (via letter en route from Königsberg [Kaliningrad]), 15 (!), 22, 22, 20, 28, 18, 22 (via Riga; from which 12), 22 (via Riga, from which 12), 21 (? 31; via Riga, from which 11), 18 days.
- Königsberg, 20, 20, 20, 19, 29, 23, 19, 19 days.
- Pottendorf, 16 days.
- Mittau [Jelgava], 17, 23 days.
- Danzig [Gdańsk], 12 (? 22—date of letter probably N.S.), 18, 10 (? 20), 21, 25, 15, 33, 28, 16 days.
- Reval [Tallinn], 45, 43 days.
- Hamburg, 23 days.
- London, about 3 months, 33 or 34, 31, 36 days, more than 13 months (via Warsaw), 37, 47(?), 52 days, about 4 1/2 months, about 4 months, 75 days (via Arkhangel’sk), 39, 38, 35 (via regular post), 45, 38 days.
- Scotland, nearly 4 1/2 months (twice), 2+ months (in a mailing from London that took nearly 8 weeks en route and came via the normal post), 67 days, more than 5 months (via letter en route from London that took about 4 1/2 months), 72 days (via a letter en route from London in 38 days), 64 days.
- Rotterdam, 30, 52 days.
The Best Connected Man in Muscovy?

- Roussel, 49 days.
- Vienna, 36 (± 46) days.
- Rome, 68 days (via post), 57 days.
- Kraków, about 5 months (sent via Danzig in letter that arrived quickly by regular post).
- Warsaw, 50, 26 (± 36), 57 days.
- Częstochowa, 31 days (via Riga).
- Lublin, 76 days.
- Vilna, 17 days.
- Bresslau [Wrocław], more than 3 months.

There are various anomalies here which would argue that for many of the letters we should not accept the one or two indications of elapsed time as anything like a norm for how fast communication might travel.\(^{35}\) Too often we simply do not know enough to determine whether a letter might have sat in one place for a long time waiting for an appropriate carrier. The Riga post (and we do seem to be dealing here with the regular post in which Gordon sent or received letters with practically every delivery) seems to have run well on schedule, taking 11 or 12 days to Moscow.\(^{36}\) Likewise, it seems letters from Danzig could consistently arrive around a median of about three weeks, the city being on the main postal route that ran west from Riga. Communication from Narva was erratic, but we would assume the ideal falls somewhere in the 11–14 day range. When Gordon sent his young son Theodore to study with the Jesuits in Braunsberg (Braniewo), he wrote to George Frazer in Riga

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\(^{35}\) That said, for the most part we have to appreciate that news contained in any of Gordon’s letters from European cities could arrive in Moscow faster than news from those same cities that first was printed in newspapers which then arrived in Moscow. Compare the times in Table 3 in Waugh and Maier, ‘How Well Was Muscovy Connected’, 28–9, which, granted, are calculated from a small sampling of news in one Dutch newspaper for 1666. We need to recognize that the location where a newspaper was published would make a great deal of difference as to how recent its news was, as local reports would be close to the date of printing and shipping. Joseph Williamson in the office of the foreign secretary in London was obviously very concerned about the transit time for news, as he tabulated in one of his notebooks for a good many cities the postal departure days and some of the elapsed times it would take the mail to get to London and compiled a separate table of the elapsed time between the date of an item of foreign news in the Haarlem Courant and its arrival in London. See National Archives (London), SP 29/87, fols. 74, 70 and 72. He had a separate tabulation of postal times for routes within England.

\(^{36}\) This is in contrast with the route to Vilna, which became increasingly problematic and irregular beginning in late 1691. See Kozłowski, Poryje puchy, II, 198–9.
asking him to identify a reliable agent in Königsberg, some 55 kilometres away, who could transmit correspondence between Gordon and his son roughly once a month. Apparently William Gray assumed that function. It would seem from the letters Gordon received out of Königsberg that the postal connections from there to Riga were regular, and he indeed maintained frequent correspondence with Gray, Theodore and Fr Schmidt. Mail out of Poland seems to have been slow, at least in part because much of it probably was traveling indirectly to connect with the routes along the southern shore of the Baltic, or, given Gordon’s concerns over security (elaborated on below), had to await a reliable individual. The fastest times from London are consistent with what we saw earlier, a little over a month, but then there could be letters from London which took a lot longer (perhaps some of them routed via Arkhangel’sk?). Communication with Scotland seems to have been especially problematic.

Of course in part, making arrangements to route correspondence via a trusted agent was merely to ensure that postage costs would be covered (and then easily reimbursed). That is, it was not simply a matter of security and confidentiality. In at least one of his exchanges with his son John in Aberdeenshire, Gordon had learned that on receipt of a packet he had sent from Moscow in February 1691, his son had been overcharged. In connection with this, he reiterated that John should use the reliable intermediacy of Meverell in London or Forbes in Danzig.

Gordon’s correspondence contains very explicit instructions to those engaged in his communications network. When the merchant Henry Styles left Moscow to travel west, he took letters and a memorandum from Gordon as to whom he should look up at every stop along the way. Gordon names all of his regular agents. Styles had a special commission to check on son Theodore’s progress in his studies and ensure that Fr. Schmidt was being reimbursed for his expenses. Gordon wanted to be sure that Theodore would know his Latin authors and be able to converse in that language, not have lost his Russian, and have learned his arithmetic. On 20 February, Gordon wrote to Styles via Riga a letter with some further instructions, and then wrote separately to Frazer a few days later (apparently the mail that would carry both letters had not yet left) instructing him what to do about forwarding the letter to Styles — if it would catch him in Reval, send it there; otherwise send it to Hamburg where Mr Cambridge or Mr Cox would hold it for his arrival.

When a Gordon clansman Captain William Gordon, who had been posted in Kiev, left to go back to Scotland in 1691, he carried with him the
correspondence he had received from home via Patrick in 1686 and new letters from Patrick and his son James for the family in Scotland. Patrick also drew up instructions regarding family matters and asked that William report back:

Let me hear from you as soone as possible, by the way of London, my Correspondent there is Mr. Samuell Beverell, in Dantzick Patrick Forbes & James Adie. In Hamburgh Robert Jolly in Roterdam James Gordon. In Riga Georg Frazer, in Narva Thomas Loftus & Thomas More.

Despite this careful planning, fate intervened. William never made it beyond Reval, where he took ill and died. Thus all the letters he was carrying never made it back to Scotland and remain today in the Reval [Tallinn] archives.37

While I have not included all the data on Muscovite internal communications, the Arkhangelsk route is of particular interest for its connection with the outside world and as an example of what could be accomplished with a determined effort to achieve speedy delivery. The extraordinary speed of messages sent from Arkhangelsk in August and September 1693 is to be explained by Tsar Peter’s having made this a priority during his trip there. Express couriers traveled between the two cities. On 9 August, Gordon received a letter that took 9 days en route; the next one took 7 days, then 8, then five in a row took only 7. In one of his replies sent back to Arkhangelsk in this period, Gordon specifies it went simply ‘by post’; in another case he notes his reply just missed the return courier. Starting on 9 August and going through to just before Peter returned on 1 October, Gordon received letters from Arkhangelsk on 19, 23 August, 1, 6, 10, 12, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 26 September. The flurry of almost daily communication in September was probably in anticipation of Peter’s return. Gordon would normally write a response immediately or at latest on the following day, which seems to have been when a courier headed back to Arkhangelsk. Once Peter was back, the elapsed times to Arkhangelsk began to increase.

The largest number of Gordon’s letters to Arkhangelsk were to his daughter Mary and son-in-law, Major Karl Snivins, who had been posted

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37 For all the letters, including the quoted instruction, see Dukes, ‘Patrick Gordon’. As Dmitry Fedosov has emphasized to me (e-mail of 9 October 2014), the Diary demonstrates a clear hierarchy of preferences for Gordon in communications: he would first rely on clansmen (however distantly related), then other Scots, and when there were no alternatives, Englishmen or others.
there just prior to Peter’s trip north. Gordon also corresponded regularly with Fedor Fedorovich Pleshcheev, and only somewhat less frequently with Franz Lefort. One of Gordon’s regular correspondents in Arkhangelsk was the merchant Henry Crevet. However, it seems that during the time Peter was in the North, they did not exchange letters, the couriers taking mainly official communications. One of the messages after Peter’s return to Moscow, which took 16 days en route, was brought by a strelets assigned to Gordon’s son-in-law. The same day he received that, Gordon had written to Crevet via Andrei Vinius’s courier, an option he used again in November. This would seem to suggest that, even if Vinius’s son Matvei may have been officially in charge of the Arkhangelsk post, Vinius père had the real responsibility. Gordon also mentions other options, in December receiving a letter via Christopher Brandt and writing one via Franz Timmermann, in January writing and sending some ‘things’ via streletsy and a Captain Fedor.

On 30 January 1694, Gordon wrote his son-in-law in Arkhangelsk with the news he (Gordon) had been ordered to travel there to ‘brew beer’ (!) and deal with other affairs in preparation for Peter’s next visit. Gordon’s record of his trip north provides precise details on distances and times of travel; at one point he noted inaccuracies in the map he had along. His correspondence during this period is revealing for the evidence it provides about the functioning of the Arkhangelsk post. In Vologda on 6 May, he received letters written in Moscow on 3 May (and one from his son James in Tambov) and replied the next day in an envelope addressed to Menzies. He wrote again from Tot’ma on the eleventh. Approaching Ustiug on 12 May, the post brought a packet of letters: from the recent Imperial Envoy to Moscow, Johann Kurtz, sent from Vienna on 27 (?17) March, from Patrick Forbes in Danzig (20 April), from Fr. Schmidt and Theodore in Braunsberg (16 April), George Fraser in Riga (26 April) and from Vinius in Moscow (7 May). Gordon sent letters back by post the next day. He arrived in Arkhangelsk on the eighteenth, and the next day on the nineteenth sent a packet to Menzies in Moscow, enclosing in it letters he had written in Kholmogory two days earlier. One of those letters was to Francesco Guasconi; in it, Gordon enclosed a letter to him from Kurtz, which had come in Gordon’s own mail a few days earlier. The next mail delivery from Moscow on the twenty-third took ten days. The post from Moscow on 29 May brought a letter from Scotland dated 28 February, letters from Schmidt and James in Braunsberg dated 8 and 9 May (presumably 29, 30 April, O.S.), from James misdated 25 May (presumably April); and several from Moscow written between 19 and 21 May. Gordon wrote the next day to his wife, daughter
Katherine, and Menzies, and then on 2 June wrote the replies to the other letters. The return posts seem to have been scheduled to leave early morning a day or two after the arriving post, though as Gordon notes, those departures did not always go on time. From late May through into August, the posts from Moscow arrived weekly, with transit times of 8 or 9 days, whereas letters brought by private individuals generally were more than two weeks en route. Gordon received no fewer than 22 letters in a single post that arrived 9 July, only 7 days in transit. Among them was a letter from Kurtz, written in Buda on 7 June (? = 29 May).

Gordon also provides information on arrivals by the northern sea route. On 4 June, Bremen and Hamburg ships which had sailed six weeks earlier arrived in Arkhangel'sk. Two English ships reached port on the morning of 9 June after a seven week passage. A Bremen ship (described by Gordon as a Creyer [Kreyer]) that arrived 22 June took only three weeks, five days en route. On the twenty-seventh a small galliot under the Swedish flag arrived from Bordeaux with 400 hogsheads of wine, having taken nine weeks to sail north around the British Isles. As Gordon noted, the first landfall they had made was the Faeroe Islands and then after that the coast of Norway. Of particular interest was the arrival from Holland of a 44-gun frigate Peter had ordered there. It dropped anchor on 21 July after 5 weeks and 4 days in transit.

After some 10 days aboard ship in the White Sea, in mid-afternoon on 24 August, Gordon set off on his return journey to Moscow. He arrived back in the Foreign Suburb shortly before sunset on 11 September and almost immediately found his time taken up by one of Peter's most serious military training exercises involving the storming of a fortress.

The regular tempo of Gordon's correspondence from Moscow resumed and thus need not be chronicled here. The contents of one packet which arrived on 7 November are worth listing in detail though, for the specific evidence about Gordon's correspondence with relatives back in Scotland. This batch of letters included the news of the birth in March of Gordon's grandson, who was christened Patrick. There were letters from his son John (dated Auchleuchries 4 July), the Laird of Creichie (7 July, answering Gordon's of 3 February 1693), brother John (Asshallo38 20 July, replying to G's of 12 January), daughter-in-law Elizabeth Grant (Auchleuchries, 18 July), uncle

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38 I was mystified by this name. In response to my query, Dmitry Fedosov has kindly informed me (e-mail of 13 October 2014) that this is the only mention of it in the diary. The modern spelling is Ashallow; it is located near Auchleuchries.
James (Westertoun, 18 July, replying to G’s of 12 January), cousin William Gordon (Aberdeen, 3 August, who was forwarding all the preceding letters and answering G’s of 12 January). William Gordon in turn forwarded his packet to Samuel Meverell in London, who wrote his own cover letter on 5 October acknowledging Gordon’s letter sent from Arkhangel’sk on 4 August.

Gordon’s diary is full of his concerns, as a passionate adherent of the Catholic Stuarts, about the overthrow of King James VII and II and the ascent to the English throne by William of Orange. The tumultuous events which followed affected his lines of communication with Scotland at a moment when Gordon was wanting to ensure safe and regular correspondence with his sons. Appended to the diary entries for 1690–92 are a good many of the full texts of the letters, which provide details about the problems in communication. Writing to George Gordon, the Earl of Aberdeen, on 28 January 1690 from Moscow, Gordon notes he had not heard anything from there for almost two years. He laid the blame for this on his son John’s laxity, but adds that the route via London presumably was unreliable, even if it still would have been possible to send messages via ships sailing between Aberdeen and Danzig. Indeed at least one letter son James had sent from Scotland in August via London had never arrived in Moscow. While the Danzig route (where correspondence now always went through Gordon’s agent Patrick Forbes) may have been safe, in a letter to Forbes of 5 April, Gordon noted that he had learned there had been no ships between the two cities during the whole of the previous summer. In that same letter to Forbes, he asked that an enclosed letter to his son (John?) be forwarded via London. He also was writing his sons via the merchant James Gordon in Rotterdam, who presumably was forwarding mail via London. On at least one occasion, Gordon documents sending his mail to England via Guasconi in Arkhangel’sk, slow as that might be.

His son James had finally returned to Scotland where he engaged in trying to raise troops for James VII and II. Rather than retire to the life of a gentleman farmer as his father apparently hoped, he wanted to carve out a military career. Judging from Gordon’s letters to James dated 13 June and 9 July 1690, his son never thought to wait for replies to his letters, having left Aberdeen just before one should have arrived there from Moscow, and later left Hamburg without waiting for a reply. By departing in such haste from Scotland, James failed to collect funds allocated to him which he would have needed to pay

39 For the best treatment of Gordon’s concerns in the context of Romanov-Stuart relations, see Dukes, et al., Stuarts and Romanovs, esp. chapter 7, covering the period between 1688 and 1697.
his expenses along the way. As Gordon reminded his son, the young man had to think about the distances and times of travel between cities and realize that his father never lost time in responding and never skipped a single post. How could he think that a letter from Hamburg would get a response back to Danzig in only four weeks, when the mail from Hamburg took four weeks to arrive in Moscow and the mail back to Danzig another three?

When he wrote James on 9 July, Gordon still did not know whether his son was planning to come to Moscow (he had advised him not to seek employment in Poland, as that would complicate Gordon’s own career in the Russian military). If James were to decide to come, he should travel via Riga. However, should he decide to stay in Poland, he should write only via Danzig or Riga, never use Poland as the return address and backdate his letters by a month, pretending that they had been sent from France. To indicate the location where he actually was, he should simply substitute a city name that began with the same letter, viz.: Paris for Poznan; Lyon for L’viv; Caen for Cracow; Ventadour for Varsoviae (Warsaw) and others. Moreover, he should not mention the names of any people with whom he might be dealing, for fear the letters would be intercepted: nowhere were people more suspicious, especially in regard to Poles, as in Muscovy. The bottom line was not to do anything which might compromise his father’s chances of leaving Russia once and for all. Even if the letters from Moscow were missing him (Gordon did try to send letters anticipating his son’s arrivals though), James was able to use his father’s network of agents as he traveled through northern Europe. He arrived in Moscow on 22 September, the day before the wedding of his sister Mary to Daniel Crawfuird, a ceremony attended by Tsar Peter. James then embarked on a career in the Russian army, his father having obtained for him a commission. The young Gordon was promoted to Lt Colonel almost immediately by Tsar Peter. In subsequent years the diary records their corresponding when posted in different locations (for example, in early 1694, when James was in Tambov, from which letters might normally never reach Moscow in less than a week).

It was the older son John who was the more persistent headache for Gordon. He had been entrusted with managing the family properties in Scotland, but seems to have taken the duties lightly and was something of a spendthrift. His father refused to increase his allowance. John failed to respond to several of Gordon’s letters from Moscow, and when he finally did send a
financial accounting, it was inadequate.\textsuperscript{40} Even though his father approved John's marriage, he learned of it \textit{ex post facto} and was not happy that he had not been informed earlier. A good deal of the correspondence with the other relatives in Scotland concerned Gordon's wishes that they keep an eye on the matters John was supposed to be handling. Gordon kept reminding John that his uncles were to be listened to \textit{in loco parentis}.

For our final example of Gordon's communications network, we will look briefly at the period when he participated in Peter's first Azov campaign in 1695, during which a postal connection had to be established on an \textit{ad hoc} basis to ensure that the Tsar would be in touch with events back in his capital. Gordon set out in the late afternoon on 7 March, on each of the following three days writing back to Moscow. Having halted in Tambov, he sent a large packet of letters back to Moscow with a Captain Andrew Lamb on the twenty-first and received mail from Moscow (written 16 days earlier) on the twenty-sixth. He noted the arrival of one officer from Moscow in only 7 days on the twenty-eighth, and the following day managed to send off another packet of letters with a courier. Instructions from Peter which arrived on 1 April stressed the importance of communicating the army's plans only to the higher officers and stationing guards at all the river crossings to prevent any intelligence of the advance from reaching the enemy in Azov. Over the next month, while the final pieces were being put in place for the campaign, there were frequent comings and goings to Moscow, and we see little evidence Gordon's normal correspondence was much different than usual other than the fact that the transit times were longer. It seems that in some cases he paid the costs of sending one of his own staff with his letters. The army marched on 1 May 1695. Two weeks later, he sent detailed reports back to Moscow with a \textit{striapbii}, who also carried personal letters, including ones to be forwarded through the post to London and thence to Scotland. On 25 May, already in the process of getting the army across the Don, he managed to send letters off to his wife, daughter and Vinius, via the son of a Fedor Obonosov. A month then elapsed before a courier Timofei Belevin arrived from Moscow with four royal rescripts.

\textsuperscript{40}James in Moscow surely had to absorb a lot of his father's anger at brother John's irresponsibility. In a letter to John of 6 August 1691, James wrote to 'let you know how impatient Father is, I, and all your friends are to hear of yr welfare, and I will assure you ye anger my Father very much In being so negligent in writeing to him, and if you would have that he should supply you wt monneys for the buying of Birnis, you must shou yr self worthy of it by yr diligence in writeing to him often & sending yr exact accts of every thing …' James also mentioned this in a letter to his great uncle James in Westertoun. See Dukes, 'Patrick Gordon', 30, 26.
and a packet of letters: one from Vinius enclosing newspapers and dated 26 April. The most recent of the Moscow communication was dated 18 May. The packet also included a letter sent by Peter from Verkhnii Kurman-Iar on 21 June. Letters from Vinius (dated Kolomna 1 May and enclosing newspapers) and from Johann Kurtz in Vienna, dated 20 April, arrived on 29 June. Peter caught up to the army two days later where it was fortifying its advance camp.

Now that the Tsar was in residence, it appears that more regular communications with Moscow were available. On 30 June Gordon noted writing his wife, daughter, Vinius, and ‘as usual’ various magnates (that is, his Russian correspondents). He received letters from Ukraitsev and Vinius on 11 July and wrote to his usual list of correspondents in Moscow on the twelfth. On the sixteenth, letters arrived from Moscow in the ‘post’, dated there only two weeks earlier. The following day Gordon wrote again to his usual Moscow addressees. There was another post on 19 July, with replies going back on the twentieth. On 24 July, Gordon wrote several letters, to his merchant contacts Wulffe and Crevet, to William Gordon in Aberdeen concerning the inheritance left by James Bruce, and to his son-in-law (in Arkhangelsk). The next post from Moscow on 28 July brought letters written as recently as the sixteenth. Gordon composed his replies the following day. When he sent yet another letter to his wife on the thirtieth and one to Tikhon Nikitich Streshnev, they were forwarded by the Tsar with one he was sending to Streshnev, presumably by special courier. Between 2 August and 1 October, when the decision was made to break camp and abandon the siege, at least 9 posts arrived from Moscow, at intervals ranging from 6 to 10 days with a median time in transit of 13 days. As the army was slowly making its way back toward Moscow in the nasty cold of October’s early winter, the posts continued to find it at regular intervals, one packet of letters arriving in Gordon’s hands on the nineteenth after ten days in transit. Letters sent from Scotland reached him north of Tula in a packet from Vinius 64 days after the most recent of them had been written. By the twentieth, he had arrived at Kolomenskoe outside Moscow, met there by his son Theodore, who handed him a packet of letters that had come via the post that had left Riga about a month earlier and had been collected by Gordon’s merchant acquaintance Crevet in Moscow. The final month plus of the diary for 1695, contains a few more entries about Gordon’s usual correspondence.

This history from the first Azov campaign echoes what we saw when Peter decided to go to Arkhangelsk and wanted to be sure of rapid communication with Moscow. That is, he could allocate resources to ensure that there would be riders and fresh horses all along the route for regular and, in
Russian conditions, impressively speedy posts. In the case of Arkhangelsk, of course, the route had long been established and used by both Russian officials and foreign merchants. As far as we know though, prior to the 1690s, there was nothing approaching the speed and regularity of the communication Peter wanted. Private individuals who still traveled the route during Peter’s stay in the north invariably took a lot longer to deliver the letters they carried.

For the Azov campaign, there was a standard route of military travel as far as Tambov, even though there is no evidence that in the normal order of things letters between there and Moscow were delivered with any regularity or speed. Beyond Tambov, at least for Russian military communications, it was venturing into the little known. The army marched ponderously, but presumably laid the foundation for a speedy military post which then seems to have been up and running from the moment Peter arrived on the Don. For the rest of the campaign then, there was a regular post, supplemented by extra couriers as needed. Gordon was able to pick up the threads of his correspondence with barely a hiccup, even if for the most part he confined himself to writing to his wife, daughter, Andrei Vinius and the few Russian grandees whom he had cultivated in Moscow.

II. Gordon and the News

We now turn our attention to Gordon’s interest in and acquisition of news. The focus here is not on personal or family matters but rather on international political and military news and intelligence which might have some bearing on Muscovite foreign policy and military activity. In a Muscovy where such news was for the privileged few, Gordon was uniquely positioned to obtain it via his contacts in the foreign community and thanks to his high professional standing in the Russian military, which gave him direct access to the Russian and Ukrainian elites. We can learn a great deal from his diary both about the transmission of news from Western Europe and the acquisition of news and intelligence from frequent contacts crossing the borders between Polish Ukraine and Muscovite Ukraine.

_Gordon, Vinius and the receipt of foreign newspapers_

Any study of the acquisition of foreign news in Muscovy in the last third of the seventeenth century needs to examine closely the activity of
Andrei Vinius. Born to a Dutch entrepreneur in Moscow and a convert to Russian Orthodoxy, Vinius became a translator in the Ambassadorial Office in the 1660s, went on an embassy to Western Europe in the early 1670s and returned to take over the Russian foreign post, which he ran through to the end of the century, along with other important duties. Vinius thus had direct access to the incoming mails with their packets of foreign newspapers and newsletters. Among the Muscovite chancery officials, Vinius was the individual most frequently in correspondence with Gordon. Since a good many of the entries specify Vinius sent Gordon newspapers (and Gordon in return sent news), I include in the tabulation below instances where Gordon notes receipt of avisos or gazettes, even if he does not specify Vinius as their source. Of course there were other possible sources among Gordon’s close contacts in Moscow’s foreign community, the most obvious being the Dutch resident Johann van Keller, who, like Gordon, probably received mail in every postal delivery via Riga. Gordon’s correspondence with van Keller was frequent, and they also met regularly when he was in Moscow.

41 The now standard work regarding the Vinius family and in particular Andrei is the recent biography by I. N. Iurkin, Andrei Andreevich Vinius 1641–1716 (Moskva, 2007), which deliberately defers to Kozlovskii, Pervye pochty, for Vinius’s management of the post. Starting with Ch. 4, Kozlovskii contains a long section on Vinius and the post which expands on a separate monograph Kozlovskii published two years earlier (first serialized in Russkaia starina) devoted to Vinius. There is also a recent book (Igor Vladimiroff, De kaart van een verzwegen vriendschap: Nicolaes Witsen en Andrei Winius en de Nederlandse Cartografie van Rusland [Groningen, 2008]) on Vinius and the important Dutch burgomeister and student of the Russian north and cartographer, Nikolaas Witsen, but its strength lies in its treatment of the Dutch side of the story. Vinius had one of the most extensive libraries of foreign books in late Muscovy; a full description of it has now been published (E. A. Savel’eva [comp.], Knigi iz sobrania Andreia Andreevicha Viniusa: katalog [Sankt-Peterburg, 2008]). Iurkin’s somewhat overblown biography is strongest on the entrepreneurial and financial aspects of Vinius’s life but less satisfying regarding Vinius as author and about Vinius’s library. The recent book on Vinius by Kees Boterbloem, Moderniser of Russia: Andrei Viniius, 1641–1716 (New York, 2013), adds nothing new regarding the post and news networks. For summary data on Vinius’s career and other aspects of his life, see Demidova, Sluzhilaia biurokratia, 113–14.

42 Van Keller arrived in Moscow in 1675 with the van Klenk embassy, stayed on, and was appointed Dutch Resident in 1677. Eekman, ‘Muscovy’s International Relations’, 47, notes that van Keller undoubtedly received a lot of his foreign news from Dutch newspapers on a regular basis, but seems not to understand fully the degree to which that must have been via the regular post through Riga. As Dmitry Fedosov has indicated to me (e-mail 9 October 2014), there is evidence in the last years of the diary suggesting that Gordon received gazettes and news reports from others amongst the foreign residents in Moscow.
While extensive, this tabulation of Gordon's exchanges with Vinius in 1684 and 1685 from Kiev cannot be considered complete, given the fact that often Gordon simply tells us he received or sent letters to Moscow without indicating their authors, addressees or contents.

- (22 April 1684) Gordon sends Vinius a packet of his mail for the foreign post.
- (11 May) wrote Vinius from Kiev.
- (15 June) ditto.
- (5 July) ditto, the letter leaving Kiev on the seventh.
- (7 August) received letter from Vinius in Kiev and replied on the ninth.
- (15 September) letters from Vinius dated 3 August.
- (18 September letters from Vinius dated 22 August; replied September 20.
- (4 October) news received ‘by Hollands avisos from Moscow’ regarding ouster of Gordon’s cousin as Lord High Chancellor of Scotland.
- (17 October) ‘I had letters from Mosko and avisos’.
- (14 December) wrote to Vinius in Moscow.
- (8 January 1685) wrote ‘to Mr. Vinius, newes, and desireing him, if I be not let go out of the country, to send me the lend of Theatrum Scotiae’.
- (23 January) letters for foreign post sent to ‘the Postm-r Vinius’ enclosed in an envelope to James Lindesay, carried to Moscow on 25 January by a servant of the Kievan voevoda.
- (14 February) ‘I had letters from Mosko from Mr. Vinius dated 30 Ja-ry with printed avisos’.
- (25 February) wrote Vinius ‘with newes’.
- (4 March) wrote Vinius.
- (24 March) wrote Vinius and others ‘newes & matters of course’.
- (15 April) wrote Vinius.
- (23 April) ‘I received notice by gazets & letters from Mosko of the death of our King & that the Duke of Yorke was succeeded to all his Kingdomes & Dominions, whom God long preserve!’
- (26 April) sent Vinius ‘matters of course & correspondence’.
- (21 May) ‘I had letters & avisos from Mosko by post’.
- (6 June) wrote Vinius.
- (10 June) ditto.
- (17 June) ‘I had letters from Mosko … but no newes’.
(19 June) wrote Vinius.

• (4 July) received letters from Moscow including one from Vinius dated 2 June.

• (9 July) wrote replies to ‘all the friends who had written to me’ from Moscow.

• (8 August) wrote Vinius.

• (21 September) ‘I received letters with avisoes from Mosko w[j]t[h] notice that the rebells in Scotland & England were beat, the chieffe taken prisoners & executed’. As Fedosov notes, the events reported in this news had occurred as recently as 15 July. A later entry under September 29 refers to Gordon’s receiving ‘a perfect account’ of these events, from which he quotes verses in Latin.

• (26 September) wrote to Vinius news of events in Poland reported by merchants who had come to Kiev; also sent Vinius letters for Mr. Adie and Gordon’s son James in Danzig ‘desireing him to forward it by the first post’. This letter went off only on 4 October.

• (3 October) wrote Vinius.

• (16 November) ‘Received letters from Mosko from the Hol. resident & Mr. Vinius with gazets’.

Gordon left Kiev for Moscow in December 1685. While in the capital, he records dining at Vinius’s home on 21 January 1686. On the eve of his departure for his trip to England and Scotland, on 29 January he ‘tooke my leave of the Secretary of Estate [Emelian Ukraintsev], and Mr. Vinius, from whom I received a verball commission, by order from the Chieffe Minister of Estate [Vasilii Golitsyn], concerning their Ma-ties effaires’. While he was on this trip, he wrote a letter to Vinius in every post he sent back to Moscow. During the first Crimean campaign the next year when Gordon generally sent few letters back to Moscow, Vinius invariably was among the recipients.

While Gordon at times reports other news that he learned directly or indirectly from the European press, he focused particularly on the events in England in 1688 which resulted in William of Orange’s invasion, the flight of James VII and II and the end of paternal and absolutist Stuart rule.

• (5 November 1688) in Moscow, ‘wee had Holl. gazettes of the 19th Oct-ris st. nov’.

• (12 November) ‘I received a letter from Mr. Frazer informing that the
Hollanders ‘great designe’, as they call it, was now awowed against England; that they were gone with a fleet of 500 saile at least; that there were aboard of the fleete 100,000 men of all sorts; that the Prince [William of Orange] went aboard on the 17th st. veter. In the gazetts of the 28th wee had the same’.

- (19 November) ‘Wee had currants or gazetts of the 4th of No-r’. (presumably N.S.)
- (26 November) ‘Wee had Holl. gazets of the 11th of November st. no., where the notice of Philipsburgh being taken confirmed, & the elements fighting against the Hollanders designe upon England’. Gordon repeats essentially this news under December 2, possibly via a separate report received then, its source not specified.
- (4 December) ‘I was by the Hol. resident & heard the relation of all’, that is presumably the preceding news about William of Orange’s invasion of England.
- (8 December) ‘The Prince of Arange his declaration dated the 10th of October, & the addition to it the 24th’. (no source given)
- (9 December) ‘I received letters of the 29th No-ris from Mr. Frazer and Mr. Rob in Riga & an extract of a letter from London of the 6th of November, giving notice of the Pr[ince] of Orange his arrival & landing at Torbay, Dartmouth & Exmouth; he landed the fourth st. vet. & the next day had all his forces on land’. On the following day Gordon ‘caused translated the extract of the letter from London, which being read before the Tzaars & counsell, gave great satisfaction’.
- (17 December) ‘The Holl[anders] were very jolly over the newes of their Princes progresse in England’.
- (31 December) ‘Gazetts from Holland of the 14th Dicembris[N.S.]’
- (13 January 1689), received letter ‘from Mr. Geo. Frazer dated Riga 3d Ja-ry, with the lamentable newes of the King his having been forced by the infidelity of his unnaturall English subjects to flee, & that he was safely arrived at Dunkirk’.
- (19 January) Along with a letter from Meverell from London, dated 14 December, received ‘also certaine newes that the King was safely

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In Eekman’s telling (‘Muscovy’s International Relations’, 50), based on van Keller’s letters, Gordon apparently first heard the news of William’s landing in England from van Keller. When news of William’s victories arrived subsequently (this is a reference to later military news, not that from 1688), van Keller indicated in a letter of 1 July 1692 that he rushed off to tell Peter, who promptly called for a celebration of the event.
arrived at Ambleteuse, a new harbor betwixt Calais and Boloigne in France.

The work of trying to match up Gordon's record of receiving newspapers of a specific date with the actual papers lies ahead, but it is easy to see what the most likely possibilities are. We know that at least two Dutch papers were being received on a regular basis in Moscow in this period, the Amsteldamsche Courant and the Haerlemse Courant. Both were published thrice weekly, on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. The specific dates indicated by Gordon, where I am assuming he is writing about Dutch, not German papers even where he does not specify as much — 19, 28 October, 4, 11 November, and 14 December — are all publication dates for these two papers. While a good many of the Dutch papers from this period which were received in Moscow have been preserved there in the archives, the only one that matches one of Gordon's dates is a 19 October Oprechte Haerlemse Dingdaegse Courant. The current state of preservation, of course, says nothing about whether the other copies were received. Vinius may have been showing the Dutch papers to Gordon in Moscow, but it is also possible that more than one copy of each came in the mail, other members of the foreign community receiving them on subscription. That is, the importation of the papers was not simply for the official purposes of the Diplomatic Chancery, where they were regularly translated/excerpted for the court. I have seen no evidence to suggest that Gordon himself subscribed to the western newspapers and thus would have received them on a regular basis via his contacts in Riga, though this possibility cannot be totally excluded.

The other fact to note here about this receipt of news from the Dutch papers is the speed with which it arrived. For the five numbers Gordon documents, the elapsed time between publication date and receipt is quite consistent and in fact almost hard to believe: 28, 26, 29, 27 and 28 days. Since the Riga post was generally taking 11 to 13 days to reach Moscow, this meant that the papers were traveling from the Netherlands to Riga in only 2+ weeks.

Once he left Moscow in mid-February for the Crimean campaign, Gordon's reports about the news regarding England cease, even though he continued to exchange correspondence with Vinius back in Moscow. Gordon's remaining

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44 See Ingrid Maier, 'Niederländische Zeitungen ('Couranten') des 17. Jahrhunderts im Russischen Staatsarchiv für alte Akten (RGADA), Moskau,' Gutenberg-Jahrbuch, 2004, 191–218, for information about specific papers and listings of all the copies of them she has located in RGADA.
mention of newspapers during 1689 comes on 4 December, when he reported
‘Having read in the gazetts that the Earle of Melfort was to go from Paris to
Rome, I did writt to him … ’ Melfort was one of the leaders in the effort to
restore James VII and II.

Gordon would occasionally comment on what he perceived as the biases
of news reported in the printed newspapers. On 17 November 1686, the
Dutch resident van Keller informed him ‘that the Russes had from the avisoes
conceived an evill opinion of o[u]r King [that is, James VII and II] as favouring
the Turkes too much’. On 15 November 1690, Gordon wrote his clan head,
the Duke of Gordon, who at the time was trying to raise support in France
for a campaign to restore the Stuarts. He complained that the only news he
was getting about ‘our countrie’ was from Dutch newspapers, which, though
biased, were at least reasonable in suggesting that the lack of success on the
part of the deposed king was to be attributed in part to his indecisiveness.
In a letter of the same date to the Earl of Melfort in Rome, he repeated the
comment about the bias of the Dutch papers but emphasized that even from
them one could learn not everyone in Scotland was a supporter of William of
Orange, which should give some hope for a Stuart restoration.

What was newsworthy to Gordon might include a broad range of topics
where we cannot always be sure what his sources were, some surely not printed
newspapers. Entries beginning in April 1688 give a sense of what Gordon
found to be newsworthy:

• (5 April). ‘The eclipse of the moone, w-ch begun at halfe ane howre
past seven at night, the midle at a q-r past nine, the end at 3 4ts past 10;
which how much it differs from what Voight hath written this year will
be knowne byiewing his kallender’. The reference here is to Johann
Voight, a publisher of almanacs, at least some of which are known to
have been translated in Moscow in the seventeenth century.
• (22 April). ‘About this tyme in England such a list was published: In
the Dioecess of the Archb-p of Canterbury were numbred 2,123,362
members of the English Church, 93,151 non-conformists, 21,878
Roman Catholicks … ’ Statistics for York follow.

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45 There are interesting echoes here of the comments by the English representatives
in Stockholm in the 1660s, cited earlier from SP 95. As the reports to Arlington
and Williamson show, there was certainly a perception of Dutch and French bias in
what was being said about England and, presumably, written in the Haarlem Courant,
which was one of the main sources of foreign news in the Swedish capital.
• (3 May). ‘Had notice of the death of Generall Drummond, who dyed on the 2nd of April’.
• (18 June). ‘I rode to Ismailow. We had the confirmation of the rendition of Alba-Regalis’, a Hungarian fortress taken back from the Turks by Habsburg forces. This information could have come via Ukraine or Poland; one should not necessarily assume a printed news source via the Baltic.
• (10 July). ‘The Prince of Wallis borned in the morning betwixt 9 & 10 & 15 minutes; christened James’. This item inserted in wrong place; see below.
• (12 July). ‘At a feast by Elias Tabort, where much discourse about our Kings haveing set fast the Archb[isho]p of Canterbury & 6 other b-ps in the Tower, w-ch I maintained to be reasonable & just’. One of the acts by James VII and II which contributed to his overthrow a short time later.
• (16 July). ‘Wee had the joyfull newes of the birth of the Prince of Wales, whom God preserve, who was borne Juni 10 betwixt 9 & 10 houres & 15 minutes in the morning at St. James’. Here the correct birth date is given.
• (6 September). ‘Belgrade castle & towne after 27 dayes siege taken by sturme; 12,000 of all sorts killed, Christians 1,000, Gen-ll Graffe von Sherfen be[in]g […], having been Turkish 167 yeers 6 da[ys]’.

In probably the majority of cases, he recorded events on the day he learned of them, and might not indicate the actual date of the event. In all the news reports, he was captive to his sources, which might not be accurate. This was the case on 4 August 1690, when he reported the news of a major French naval victory over the Anglo-Dutch fleet at Beachy Head without mentioning when it occurred (30 June/10 July 1690), but giving precise (if, as it turns out, inflated) numbers on the size and armament of the French ships and on the Dutch losses. He also would add to the diary on the actual date events occurred news of them which he would have received only weeks later. That must explain the wrong entry (under 10 July rather than June) for the report
on the birth of the Prince of Wales. On the other hand, he correctly entered on 9 April 1690 a note about the death of Queen Christina of Sweden in Rome at age 63. Events in the wars against the Turks in the Balkans attracted attention, such information possibly coming via reports brought from Poland-Lithuania to Kiev, which will be discussed shortly. Certainly some of what he records came simply from conversations he had with his acquaintances in Moscow, who may have received the information in their own correspondence. In addition to merchants, his acquaintances included all the foreign resident representatives of various states, and he seems to have been in the loop for receiving information via visiting foreign ambassadors. Discussions with members of the Russian court elite often seem to have included strategy sessions about foreign affairs.

In the first instance, the information about Gordon’s network for obtaining foreign news via western newspapers and newsletters is of interest for what it reveals about the way such sources were disseminated. One can, at least, posit that there was extensive sharing of foreign news amongst the members of the Muscovite elite, both Russian and foreign. Of course little of this is really new, given the attention in recent years to the study and publication of the kuranty and what we know about the foreign newspaper files that have been preserved from this period in Moscow.

**News from the southern borders**

Arguably of greater interest in Gordon’s diary is what he tells us about the news networks which operated in Ukraine, where he spent so many years in service and where he had immediate access to reports before they even would have reached Moscow. The published newspapers — at least the Dutch ones — seem to have been of little relevance here, even if we can occasionally find evidence that printed materials were being acquired. The pioneering study which introduced the subject of the reports from Muscovite voevody in Ukraine was published by Ogloblin in 1885; yet no one has followed his lead to expand the inquiry geographically, chronologically or by examining a wider range of source materials. What follows here focuses on Gordon’s records, which are particularly revealing of the mechanisms by which news and intelligence were obtained. Of course this is only a start, since a necessary next step will be to see to what extent that news made it to Moscow, how it then was used and to incorporate sources which may not have come under Gordon’s purview.

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I shall limit this discussion to the period of Gordon’s residence in Kiev in 1684–1685.

Several issues were of particular concern to the Muscovite officials in Kiev, who were functioning in the framework established back in 1667 by the Truce of Andrusovo until the conclusion of the ‘Permanent Peace’ with Poland-Lithuania at the beginning of May 1686. There was ongoing fighting between Poland-Lithuania and the Turks and Tatars, including a siege of Nemirov (Nemyriv) which had dragged on and on. Whether or when new campaigns would be mounted, reinforcements and supplies sent, were continual concerns. While Kiev at least for the time being seemed to be secure, and even though ostensibly Muscovy and Poland-Lithuania had a common interest in fighting the Turks and Tatars, there were continual suspicions that the Poles might be planning to conclude a separate peace in order to launch an attack on Left-Bank Ukraine. Complicating the political and military situation was the uncertainty and instability involving the Cossacks, those on the Right Bank in the Polish sphere of influence, those on the Left Bank under Muscovy, but in both cases with their own agendas. Independently of the military events involving Poland, Muscovite relations with the Crimean Tatars were a continual concern, involving the threat of Ottoman military intervention and necessitating continual efforts to bring to bear other forces such as the Don Cossacks and the Kalmyks. Orthodox Church affairs also were a concern, since the Moscow Patriarchate was wanting to assert once and for all its control over the Metropolitanate in Kiev.

In order to keep track of all these matters, the Muscovite officials in Kiev tapped into every available source. In a great many cases, Gordon simply tells us ‘wee heard’ or ‘wee were informed’. In reporting on Cossack affairs, he often relates information about Hetman Samoilovich’s actions without indicating any source; we assume the information would have come via a regular informant in Baturin or from one of the frequent messages Samoilovich presumably was sending to Kiev. Often Gordon does name sources, some being military men such as a Colonel Korpshunka, whom he mentions on 21 May 1684, and the voevoda of Pereiaslav, who sent a long letter on 8 June 1684. Here is a sampling where much of the reporting occurred simply because the informants showed up in Kiev on their own business and presumably were interrogated upon arrival:

- (30 April 1684), ‘A Kyovish burgesse comeing from Nemerow informed that the Polls had taken a Tartar of whom they had learned’
• (11 May). ‘A Jew came from Byally Czerkiew, who told…’
• (3 June). ‘I was in the Widebitsky Monastery, where I heard…’
• (23 June). ‘Wee had notice by a merchant come from Russe Lemberg [Lviv]…’
• (11 July). ‘By a fryer come from Shewsky wee were informed…’
• (12 July). ‘We heard by people come out of Poland…’
• (29 July). ‘The voyt of the towne came and told that a merchant come out of Poland said that he had heard that the Roman Emperour, having sent very rich presents to the King of Poland…’
• (4 August). ‘A merchant come from the market of Berestetsko reported that he had seen the Littawish army on their march towards Camieniets…’
• (29 September) ‘Men come from the Bania with salt informed that about 4 weeks [ago], as they came by Trembovla, they heard that the King with the Crowne & Littawish army and the Cosakes were lying at the siege of Camieniets…’
• (6 October). ‘I examined a merchant come from Slobodiska, who told that the King of Poland with his armeyes was only blocquiring Caminiets…’
• (23 October). ‘By diverse persons come from Polon[ne] and Nemerow wee had the following relation…’

A great many such reports clearly come from merchants, who seem to have been free to cross the border, although at certain points subsequently we read about restrictions on some articles of trade.47 The suggestions that clerics were a valuable source of information certainly merits further study.48 Gordon

47 For example, when there was a grain shortage in early 1685, causing there to be a sharp rise in prices in Kiev, exports to the Right Bank were forbidden and guards posted to enforce the decision (see the entry for 17 January). On 9 February came a report that ‘The Hetman sent an order to the Kyovish colonel that no brandewine, tobacco or any sort of provisions should be let passe into the Polnish dominions’.

48 A specific example of this earlier can be seen in the transmission and interpretation of an illustrated broadside by Varlaam Iasinskii, Rector of the Kiev Academy, in 1672. See D. K. Uo [Waugh], ‘Tekst o nebesnom znamenii 1672 g. (k istorii evropeiskikh svizhei moskovskoi kultury poslednii treti XVII v)’, in Problemy izucheniia kulturnogo nasledii (Moskva, 1985), 201. An important category of Orthodox informants was those coming from territories of the Ottoman Empire usually on missions to obtain some kind of financial support from Muscovy. There is a growing literature on this
appreciates that a lot of the news is hearsay; there is plenty of evidence to suggest that reports were being weighed carefully for consistency and accuracy. In one case (19 November 1684), for example, he entered information that Nemirov had been taken, only to add a note that this was not true, as he learned from another report a few days later. Even though such indications are rare here, he personally interrogated some of the arrivals. Many of the reports were quite short, but others (for example, those listed above for 29 September and 23 October) were quite substantial. The content of the reports focuses for the most part on what was happening locally, with only occasional additions of material about events in the campaigns of the Habsburgs against the Turks in the Balkans.

The Muscovite military in Kiev also engaged in active reconnaissance and intelligence operations. On 5 July 1684, Gordon reported that ‘trowpers sent to Nemirov returned, having been no further as Bially Czerkiew, because of the Tartars…[and] informed…’ The reconnaissance might be specifically by one of Gordon’s own troops: (16 December) ‘A sojour of myne with a Czirkass coming from Nemerow informed, that two regiments of Polls soldiers were come thither…’

Certain of the intelligence agents crop up several times in the reports. One, Ivan Filonov Varilov, first mentioned under 11 November, returned from another mission on 2 January 1685 and informed that he being in Lvova and Solkwo [Zółkiew], where the King was with the Hetmans & senatours, 15 Tartars were come from the Chan desiring that the King might make peace with the Turks & them; that a gentleman, Yury Papara, had bidd him tell the governour of Kyow and assure him that at the parliament to be holden on the 20th Feb-ry peace betwixt the Polls & Turkes with the Tartars will be concluded, and that then the Polls with their help would invade Russia, without all question.

Whereas many of the reports obtained from visiting merchants about possible military maneuvers seem not to have been so important as to require immediate forwarding to Moscow; Varilov’s information was sent to the capital the following day ‘by post’.

Another of these intelligence agents was Mikhail Suslow, ‘whom wee had sent to Poland & Germany and went from hence the first of May last
[1684]’ returning to Kiev on 1 January 1685, a day before Varilov. He surely has to have been the one who sent a report received back on 5 August: ‘The person whom wee sent to Silesia & Polland for intelligence sent the following intelligence to us: that there had been a great battell betwixt the Imperialists & the Turkes by Rab …’ On 4 January,

Michael Susluw gave up his relation in writeing, wherein he magnifyed the great victoryes as well as the losses of the Christians in Hungary; that, because of the great mortality of the souldiery they were forced to leave Buda, leaving however 5 or 6,000 men in the nearest strengths to block it up; that seraskier bassa, who with the Turks from Quinque Ecclesiae [Fünkirchen/Pécs] attempted to have releaved the siege, was totally routed, himself hardly escapeing; that the Venetians were prosecuting the warr vigorously with the help of the Pope & the princes of Italy; that coming through Polland he heard among the common people that at the parliament it would be urged by the lower house that peace be made with Turkes & Tartars & warr proclaimed ag-st Russeland, with a great many storyes more.

One gets the sense here that Suslov may not have been considered especially reliable (at very least prone to exaggerate), an impression reinforced on the next day, when Gordon reported ‘It was resolved to methodize & epitomize Susluws newes & send them to Mosko by post’.49 Yet later in the year, after yet more of his intelligence reports whose accuracy had come under fire but then been confirmed, Gordon would write of him (18 October): ‘Susluf being a good bairne, as bringing good wares for their money, was dispatched againe for more, and to attend the event of business’.

In both the report of 4 January 1685 and that of the previous 5 August, the

49 Suslov continued to be employed, on 21 June 1685 again being sent off on an intelligence gathering mission. This one lasted but a month, his written report then being forwarded to Moscow on 21 July. On 15 October, Suslov reported from his latest mission news he ‘said he had in Labiun from Col. Lazinsky his ser[van]ts, who were come thither from the army for provisions, they having it from Lemberg’. The report concerned the difficulties the Polish army was experiencing in its campaign in Moldavia, due to dissension between the two field commanders. However, relief was on its way; ‘this being glad tythings here, was dispatched by a post to Mosko befor day’. When Cossackes arrived over the next couple of days from Nemirov, in their interrogations they indicated they had not heard any of the news Suslov had reported, but then, under Gordon’s header, ‘A mistake mended’, yet another Cossack report confirmed Suslov’s.
news primarily dealt with the more distant wars against the Turks, concerning which the information surely would have been old by the time it reached Moscow. Arguably what Varilov had reported should have been of greater interest in the Kremlin, since it was fresh and might have really been news. Whether it was accurate (in particular, the idea that the Poles were about to make peace and then attack Muscovy) is another matter.

Engaged in spying themselves, the authorities in Moscow and Kiev were also sensitive to the likelihood that they were being spied upon or that agitators might come who would engage in subversive activity. On 21 January 1685,

an order came from Mosko not to let any person of whatsoever quality coming out of Poland come into Kyow, but to send them back again; wee being jealous of their being quartered so near us; and this was upon a letter sent by the Hetman Ivan Samuelovits & dated the 27 Dec-ris, wherein he writeth that having intelligence from a burger of Pereaslaw lately come out of Poland, & from other places, that one Kensky, a stranger by birth and in quality general of the strangers in Poland, calleth himself waywod of Kyow, and that three regiments of Polls dragouns are to be quartered in the countrey about Kyow …

Presumably this was not intended to apply to ordinary merchants, since that then would have interrupted essential trade and devastated the local economy.

An alert about the possible infiltrators must have been circulated, as we learn from a report on 6 February:

A Poll called Stenka Prochoruf, being discovered by Abraham the farrier and delated as if he were come from Bially Czerkew of purpose to bespeak the Cosakes to come & serve the King of Poland, was apprehended, and being examined, he told that serving in Bially Czerkew for a sojer, he with other two sojors in the night tyme on the 2d of Februar had come over the wall; that the other two, called Griska & Fedka, were gone to Pereaslaw; that their errand to steal horses & then to go to the Kings army with them, which trade they had used befor with the servants who had runn away from the Okolnitse Kniaz Ivan Stepanovits Chottiatefsky …

The rest of Prokhorov’s interrogation brought out information about the Tatars supposedly having taken the lower town of Nemirov, the besieged
now desperately holding on in the castle. This report went off to Moscow on the following day ‘by post’. As bad news continued to arrive from Nemirov in subsequent days, the urgency of the situation merited sending reports to Moscow immediately (‘by evening’ on one day, ‘this day’ on another).

Reports received on the same day might contain conflicting information that could not be resolved in Kiev and thus was simply forwarded to Moscow. Such was the case on 21 March, when two separate sources reporting on the meeting of the Polish parliament differed as to whether there had been a major conflict between the King and the Lithuanian magnates regarding the issue of whether the war was to be continued. The second of these reports was another of those submitted by the trusted intelligencer Ivan Varilov, although it was not certain here whether his information about a major quarrel at the Parliament was accurate. Varilov indicated (somewhat improbably?) that the Habsburg Emperor, unhappy with the most recent Polish campaign, was conniving to have the King (Jan Sobieski, the hero at Vienna in 1683) replaced by a son of the former King Michał Wiśniowiecki, and that a gaggle of ambassadors, including one from the Shah of Persia, was about to descend on Warsaw to urge common cause against the Turks. Varilov’s next report on 17 June seems to have been more accurate, in that he made it clear the Poles were still in the war, even if some of the Lithuanian magnates were resisting joining a campaign that would take them off to help the Habsburg armies in the West.

The longest of all the news accounts Gordon received concerning the Polish campaign in Moldavia in the summer of 1685 was one reported to him by a Pater Makovius, who dined with Gordon on 24 November. Gordon characterized the information as ‘the true relation of the Polls businesse w[j] t[h] the Turkes & Tatars, he being present at all’. Whereas most of the other reports tended to oversimplify what was in fact a complex interplay of forces, Makovius seemed to understand the connection between receipt of news regarding Imperial successes in the West, news of the Don Cossacks and their relations in with the Crimeans in the East, decisions made by the Crimean Khan and by the Polish Crown Hetman. The report included a persuasive narrative of the difficulties the Polish army faced, though it managed to survive.

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50 That Varilov was apparently wrong about this was confirmed in a report received on 27 April. On 1 June, a merchant arriving from L’viv also reported that the sejm had voted to continue the war. When on 16 June a Greek arriving from Poland delivered the discredited news that the Poles were signing a peace with the Turks and preparing to attack Muscovy, Gordon characterized this report as ‘without ground or likelihood’.
While the foregoing analysis is based primarily on one source, Gordon’s diary, and covers only two years, the material underscores that military governors and their staffs, especially if posted to a sensitive border region, were very active and important contributors to the acquisition and transmission of news in Muscovy. Kiev was deluged with incoming news, which would be scrutinized closely, compared with other reports, and if deemed important would be immediately dispatched to Moscow by courier. It was not enough to rely on the chance arrival of merchants or clerics; their information had to be supplemented by reports from spies, some of whom seem to have been on the regular payroll. Eyewitness news was valued over hearsay. There have to have been gradations in the value of what Kiev sent on to Moscow — probably news of military actions by the Polish army was going to be more valuable than the same news if reported in German or Dutch newspapers. However, reports on the Habsburg successes in the Balkans might have been inferior to those received through northern channels. There were other options for obtaining good news about the Crimean Tatars or Don Cossacks. And certainly the officials in Moscow were aware they had to sift very carefully what they might be told concerning the intentions of the Left- or Right-Bank Cossacks, the former (in this case Samoilovich) communicating his own version of events directly to Moscow. Obviously to assess the quality and impact of all this news from the south will require further study.

Gordon as purveyor of news

Since our concern here has been primarily Gordon as recipient of news, I will add only brief comments on his role in disseminating what he learned. That he reported to his superiors in Moscow is obvious, as is the fact that his many correspondents there included individuals such as the foreign residents who might then forward information obtained from Gordon to their superiors. A close examination of their reports should reveal at least some instances where Gordon can be indentified as a source. Given the sensitivity of his position where he might be seen as treasonous if he passed on information deemed secret by the Muscovite authorities, Gordon must have considered very carefully what he wrote and to whom. His role as news agent for Joseph Williamson and the Earl of Middleton is well known, although it is not clear that he actually had a contract with Middleton at the time he sent him a series of reports.51 Gordon does seem to have been sensitive to the need to send

51 On Gordon, Williamson and the London Gazette, see Pernal, ‘The London Gazette’. Pernal notes that Gordon ceased to supply news for the London Gazette after 1688,
his newsletters through secure channels. Yet one has to wonder whether his trust in, for example, Andrei Vinius, was warranted, given the fact that Vinius probably was under pressure from above to keep track of what was being sent out through the posts which might be deemed in the Kremlin to impugn Muscovite honour.

The substance of what Gordon wrote Williamson, some of which ended up in anonymous news reports out of Moscow in the *London Gazette*, has been adequately analyzed in the context of scholarship devoted to the images of Muscovy in the West. To my mind, much of what he reported was so cryptic that it would have been unlikely to contribute much to what his correspondents might well be able to learn from other sources. Gordon may well have exercised some self-censorship in what he chose to write, thereby reducing the value of what he knew. Of course there are exceptions—anything he might write about a major event such as the siege of Chyhyryn or the Crimean campaigns, told from the viewpoint of an eyewitness, was unique. Very likely many details were left to personal conversations, such as those which he had with King James VII and II in London or with his relatives in Scotland. Apart from his letters to the British Foreign Office, Gordon’s other correspondence suggests he was very selective in his communication of political news. The explanations for this could be several — perhaps in the first instance an assumption that his addressees either were not interested or had other sources of information, or that political news had little relevance for the personal or business matters at hand. There has to have been something of a *quid pro quo* involved here — those who sent news to Gordon presumably expected news in return, Vinius being the prime example.

Conclusion

Gordon’s information certainly fleshes out a picture of a Muscovy in which, by the second half of the seventeenth century, the acquisition and dissemination of foreign news had expanded to become an important factor in broadening the horizons of members of the ruling elite. That many foreigners in Muscovy, at least those in Gordon’s inner circle, were generally well informed regarding their homelands and the broader currents of European politics may be safe to assume. It is harder to establish the same for members of the Russian elites, but the degree to which someone like Gordon moved in those circles makes plausible the idea that the written record alone — what we know about the manuscripts of the kuranty or the distribution of selected translated news in manuscript books — may understate the degree to which news was shared. The Muscovite networks for the acquisition and dissemination of news arguably were quite good by the last third of the seventeenth century, better than we might have expected, even if at the same time limited in their access. We should not jump to the conclusion that Gordon’s Muscovite interlocutors viewed the world through the same lens he did or that they were anywhere near as well informed about it as he was. Arguably he was exceptional for the extent of his networks and the degree to which he actively sought and obtained information. He had the experience of other cultural milieux that most in the Muscovite elite lacked, and his deep religious faith arguably would not have created the same barriers for him in the absorption of new information and new ideas as did Orthodoxy for the Muscovite faithful. That said, we can certainly see how his biases might have led him to view the foreign news through something of a warped lens.

Historians of news in pre-modern Europe talk now about its role in the emergence of a sense of contemporaneity, ‘the perception, shared by a number of human beings, of experiencing a particular event at more or less the same time … At the very least, it may add to a notion of participating in a shared present … it may contribute to individuals’ sense of community, or their identification with one another’. I am not persuaded there was yet much of this in Muscovy, at least not on account of any awareness of current political news about events beyond its borders. Perhaps contemporaneity for Muscovites meant something quite different from what it did for Patrick Gordon and his foreign correspondents. Obviously there is still much to do.

52 Brendan Dooley (ed.), The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early-Modern Europe (Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, VT, 2010), xiii.
if we are to contextualize properly what he tells us about news networks and communication.

*University of Washington (Seattle)*
Patrick Gordon and his Family Circle:  
Some Additional Letters 

Paul Dukes (ed. and intro) 

Acknowledgements 
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Introduction 
The letters may conveniently be included in several groups. 

Numbers 1, 2, 3, 27 and 28 
These were written by the sisters and brother of William Gordon, whose death in Reval (later Tallinn) en route from Moscow to Aberdeen led to the location of the whole collection in the Town Archive. William’s siblings took advantage of their kinsman Patrick Gordon’s visit home in 1686 to give him letters for their brother then serving in Kiev. Jean hopes that if the General returns to Britain more permanently to serve James VII and II, William will come with him. She also refers to several personal family and personal matters. Kathren has time only for a quick note, while brother Jo. says little more. Sister L. (her Nos. 27 and 28 give no year, but references to ‘lefftenen generall’ Gordon as he then was indicate 1686) also concentrates on domestic affairs. This group clearly indicates the advantages and disadvantages of the way of life of close relations. The handwriting, syntax and spelling lead to some obscurity of meaning. 

Numbers 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 16, 21, 22, 23 and 29 
The second group of letters is all in Patrick Gordon’s own handwriting, for the most part clear and careful. They are concerned above all with
questions of money and land, as we shall see when we consider each of them in turn. No.5, to William Gordon, a merchant in Aberdeen and cousin to Patrick, refers to a sum of money due from Captain Gordon, and the possibility of a bond to Nethermuir, that is, John Gordon of Nethermuir, about eight miles north of Ellon, also cousin to Patrick. No.6, addressed to Nethermuir himself, who is also apparently brother in-law to Captain Gordon, refers to a trunk left in Edinburgh with yet another cousin, Thomas Gordon, and to another letter written to Rothiemay, named John Gordon like Nethermuir, concerning a land deal. A postscript follows on the debt owed by Captain Gordon to Patrick. No.7, to Sir George Barclay, Colonel of Infantry, probably in London, thanks this brother officer for his friendly treatment of Patrick's son, James, and laments developments in Britain, presumably from 1688 onwards. No.11 is the most personal of all the letters in the group, consisting of a complaint to his son John about negligence in sending over reports about the management of the family estate of Auchleuchries and about his own intention still to retire and die back home there. No.12 is to the Laird of Rothiemay, who turns out to be the brother of Captain William Gordon, whose health in Moscow has apparently not been good. Money and land remain the chief concerns of Patrick Gordon, who in No.16, to William Gordon, the Aberdeen merchant, discusses money yet again, but also goes on in a postscript to ask that '5 or 6 pair of the fynest Scottish plaids' be sent to him.

Numbers 21, 22 and 23 are all to Captain William Gordon in Reval. In No. 21, after an obscure reference to Mr Abraham Houtmann, a Moscow merchant, Patrick Gordon reverts to the subject of land, first the transfer of Auchleuchries to his son John, second an enquiry about an estate near Reval which belonged to his deceased son-in-law, Captain Rudolph Strasburg. The Letter also refers to some mathematical instruments and books on their way from England. No.22 is mostly concerned with the business of the two estates in Scotland and Estonia respectively, and with the continuation of Captain William Gordon's journey home, while No.23 is nearly all repetition except for a postscript noting the welcome fact that Gordon has been awarded a 400-ruble per annum pay rise by the joint tsars, Ivan V and Peter I, later the Great. No.29 consists of a memorandum for Captain William Gordon, giving him a list of requests nearly all connected with land, money and lines of communication from Britain to Moscow, but also mentioning Gordon family genealogy.

*Numbers 4, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 24 and 25*
By his first marriage to Katharine Bockhoven, Patrick Gordon had two sons and two daughters, John and James, and Kathenne and Mary: While John removed to Scotland to look after the family estate of Auchleuchries, James remained in military service in Moscow. The second largest group of letters is from James Gordon to a variety of correspondents. No.4 is to his Grand-Uncle James Gordon at Westerton, adjacent to Auchleuchries near the small town of Ellon, itself about fifteen miles north of Aberdeen. Westerton is asked to intercede with brother John at Auchleuchries for a less negligent attitude to correspondence with their father, while James also complains about the troublesome, drunken court life in Moscow and expresses a desire to come home to a restored James VII and II. No.8, to Major MacDougall in London, tells of a change of mind since Tsar Peter has conferred several honours on James and promoted him to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in a regiment of his father’s. In No.9, James writes to brother John at Auchleuchries about his father’s impatience and his own weariness of life in Moscow (No.9 precedes No.8 in date), and about the death of their sister Mary’s husband, Daniel Crawford. In No.10 (also preceding No.8 in date), James voices a similar concern about his life in Moscow to William Gordon, the merchant in Aberdeen, and he repeats his wish to come home to serve ‘King & Country’. No.14 is a brief note of acknowledgement of assistance rendered by Samuel Meverell, Patrick Gordon’s agent in London, while No.15 is a Memorandum for Captain William Gordon, listing a number of errands to be performed in Hamburg, concerning some young ladies, the nieces of a local merchant named Kenkel, and in London, concerning some former brother officers, as well as the almost omnipresent request for remonstrance to brother John at Auchleuchries. For some obscure reason, perhaps for a measure of security, No. 24, to Captain William Gordon in Reval, is in French. It consists of the latest news from Moscow, including the funeral of Captain Strasburg, sister Katherine’s deceased husband, his own disgrace after an incident in the presence of Tsar Peter at the house of the merchant Mr Abraham Houtmann, and so on. It also mentions an engine of war, which is described in an enclosure in English, No.25. James has a more flamboyant style of handwriting than his father’s, but most of what he has to say is easy enough to follow, even in imperfect French.

Numbers 13 and 17

These are to John Gordon at Auchleuchries from his two sisters, Katherine and Mary. In No.13, Katherine talks of her three children and of her husband, Captain Rudolph Strasburg, whom she considers to be on
the mend after a serious accident, but who is in fact about to die. In No.17, Mary, already bereaved, laments that Major-General Daniel Crawford and herself had no more than a few months together but that she had soon given birth to a son named after his late father. Both Gordon girls write in a simple, straightforward manner.

**Numbers 20 and 26**

These are both to Captain Gordon in Reval from his cousin Major Harie Gordon, also a kinsman of Patrick Gordon. No.20 relates the engagement of the widow Mary to Captain Snivins, although incorrectly naming her first husband as Colonel Strasburg, and goes on to record his own recent promotion from Captain, as well as other recent developments in the wider family of Patrick Gordon. He thanks God that he has managed to avoid the tsar’s entourage after three nights of it at Mr Houtmann’s, and has now found quieter company. No.26 thanks Captain Gordon for a letter, and goes on to describe the manner in which the tsar’s order for Harie to be Major has not yet been confirmed by the appropriate boyar. Harie urges William to write to Patrick. As a whole, Harie’s writing presents no great difficulties, although his spelling is more than a little wayward.

**Numbers 18 and 19**

Finally, two somewhat miscellaneous items, one in a juvenile, the other in a more mature hand. No.18 is from young Alexander Gordon to his brother, Thomas Gordon, Captain of 'The Marr Maid' in Aberdeen, recounting how the General, Patrick Gordon, has put him to school to learn the 'Duch' language while offering him the choice of a future career as merchant or soldier. This is not the Alexander Gordon who rose to high rank and wrote a two-volume work on Peter the Great, but it is probably an early mention of the Thomas Gordon who later rose to be Admiral and Governor of the naval base of Kronstadt. No.19 is from Captain William Gordon’s uncle, Paul Menzies, writing on family matters to his sister, Mrs Jean Sempill, widow to the deceased Laird of Pitfodels. It is the only item in the whole collection not written by a Gordon, although even Menzies is related to the family.

The Gordon family tree as a whole, even Patrick’s branch of it, appears to possess so many connections and offshoots that even a skilled genealogist might find it baffling. The letters published here provide much evidence of consanguinity, although we must remember that 'cousin' in the late seventeenth century had a broader meaning than is customary nowadays. In any case, the purpose of presenting them here has been to illustrate
the manner in which Patrick Gordon's family circle operated in the late seventeenth century. From Moscow to Aberdeenshire, with several points in between, a network of contacts was used to transact business as well as to maintain blood ties. From this correspondence we learn not only about career developments and prospects, but also about more domestic concerns. There are sidelights on the lifestyle of the future Peter the Great as well as on that of North-East Scottish 'wyfies'. While the letters are less concerned with public matters than those published by Professor Konovalov in *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, XI, 1964 and XIII, 1967, they have their own distinctive character and even peculiar charm.

*University of Aberdeen*

Letter 1  12 July 1686. From Jean Gordon in Aberdeen
to William Gordon in Kiev

Abd the 12 of July 86

My dear brother,

Altho I have nott had the pleasour of a lyne from you drected to me in pertikolar yett I see of yrs to edenglacie wherein ye mentioned me with kyndness enufe bott I coud never befor now have the ocasion to acknowldg the favour or asure you of my sincere and constant afecion bott I was big with hope befor the liotenant generl came to Scotland that ye had been with him and most now content my self with the newes of yr being well and nixt to the hapiness of seeing you I'm pleased to know that ye have ateaned the good fortoun of such a character from yr commander who is in everything a person in everybodys opinion very capable to judg of merit and I beg itt of you my dear brother with all the ernistness imagenable and for the gret satasfaction a most affectionatt sister that ye will indevour to preserve his good opinon of you and in cass he come to serve his own prince and to oblidg his country by afourding his genourous care and conduct for its preservation, that ye may doe to come along with him and setle among yr relations wher I make no dout bott ye might in tyme aquer both honer and advantag with less toyl or hazard then wher ye are and I'm sure ye wood fynd yr companie very excepttable to all of uss bott my dear brother I take too much upon me when I ofer to advyss you, Yett I hope ye will excuss my afecion, if it be nott conform to yr opinion
and inclynation att least to lett uss hear from you mor frequently will be both Justice and Charitie and if ye woud command me in any thing for yr service I shoud take the freedom as a testimony of that frindship I may Justly requer from you, and to tell you any thing of my self would perhaps be mor trublsom then divertisse to you yet since ye mentiunid my resolution of leaving the world in on of yrs I most tell you that itt was a very sincere intention nether left of any possable means unatemped for the accomplisment of that dieing, bott my brother was pleased to cross itt so that he rendered all my indevours ineffectuall and alltho for a whyl I did nott take itt so yett I may belive in kyndness to me since he complyes with any thing for my satasfation in my own country and gives me the trust, of all his afairs att [home] and liberty to doe as I pleas and after what maner I will, yet being resolu'd to ingadg my self in the bonds of matrtrimony I ame not as yett determined to end my lyfe under the Climett I recuned it and has been railling with the lieutenant general and telling him that I cane doe no mor to acknowledg the sence I have of his kyndness to you bott ofer him the dispossel of my own fortoun and propoossed that if he woud send you to see yr frinds I shoud be free to return with you the bearer. Mr Gordon can inform you mor fully of afairs hire then I coud in a letter he intrets me to recommend him to yr aquantance and frindshipe bott I told him I nided nott mention the last since his own good humour woud be suuficant to procure itt. I belive our brother will or has wrett to you att this tyme bott if he disapoynts you of any kyndness ye expeck or deserve from him, ye are suuficiently revenged of him since he is mor troubled by having a wicked maliciousse wylie then ye with all yr millatary deficollties yett I'm convinced he means nothing less then all Justice to you and if ye woud wrett to him I'll oblidg my self he shall returne itt with aboundance of discration and if any thing within my pour can be acceptable to you ye may (without complement) assure yr self that I'll perform itt with all the willingness of a most affectionat sister and servant
Jean Gordon


My dear brother

Thoe I have not tym to wreat you a formall Jeter I hop you never think me forgetfull or behynd in sinser affection with any of the rest whow had
mor tym to tell you it being iust nou going to my hors nor hath tym nor the satisfaktion to speak with that truely genorous gentllman your generall to aknowled my obligation tou him on your account – I hop to hear from you with the first ocation of your health and condishion which is wisht to be prospperous as my own by my dear brother.
youre most affectionatly sister to serven you
Kathren Gordon
I most trubl you if ye have ocasion to wrett to our uncle that ye may present my sincere good wishes and humble service to him.

[Envelope reads]: For Cap: Liwteant William Gordon In Kiow [Both letters 1 and 2 are on the same sheet of paper]

Letter 3    2 June 1686, From Jo. Gordon in Ellon
to William Gordon in Kiev

Ellon the Second of June 1686
Dear Brother
The Lifetenent-Generall haveing passd hire yesterday where I was only by accident & beeing to goe a shipboord this day I am so affrayd to miss the opportunetie of saluteing you with this occasione that I can only tell you in generall that the accompt of yr weelfaire is to the regaird as weelcome to me as any good fortune that relaites to my self wuld bee.
The Lifetenent General who is trewly a persone of so much honor & worth & of so much goodness towards you hath giv'ne me so favorable ane accompt of you so far as the short tyme I had the good fortune to bee with him could allow that you may in the generall assure your self that so far as I am capable to doe ether my dutie towards you or express my affectione you may bee confident I say of both I have spoke of yr affaires in passing with the Lifetenent Generall & settl'd so with him as he thought fitt so wisshing you much happyness & my dutifull respects presented to the Lifetenent Generalls Lady & childrine till the nixt opportunetie I ad no further but that I am Dear Brother Your affint brother & servnt Jo: Gordone
All frends blisst be God are weel as when you went from Scotland

[Envelope reads]: For Lifetenent William Gordone for the pnt [present] At Kiow

Letter 4    6 August 1691, From James Gordon in Moscow
to James Gordon at Westerton, Ellon

Most loving Granduncle
My loving respects remembered though I have little to writ here, having written all what was needful in my last to you dated the 2 Jan by the way of Hambourg yet this good occasion of the bearer—Capt Gordon offering, I thought of it the least of my duties to let you hear of my welfare, as also to let you know who am impatient I am to hear of yours. My father is not very well pleased wt my Brother, for his negligency in writeing to him, and acquainting him wt his accost; for it is yr writing in both our favors and his diligencie will encourage my Father to enlarge his estate there, for be asserued yr writeing can doe very much—I am everyday wearied more & more of this troublesome, Drunken Court lyfe and base nation, where ther is neither honor to be had nor riches, bot I hope godwilling, so shoon I see his Maties of great Britain his business in a better case, not to stay longer here, wch is only for a tyme.

Dear Granduncle as all my relyance is on you, so I hope this great distance betwixt us shall not make you forget me who shall ever so long I live be myndfull of you.

I hope also you will not be wanting in yr counsels to my Brother and in writing hither in both our favours, for I will assure you that my whole relyance is on you and I wish I may have the happiness to see you shortly in good health, No more desiring to be remembred.

My Loveing Granduncle I acknowledge though I never deserved these goodneeses of you yet since you have been pleased to let me know them I hop you will continue. I rest yr Loveing Grandnephoi

J. Gordon
Mosco the 6 of August 1691
The morrow we Journy wt his Matie to Pereaslau.

[Envelope reads]: For My Loveing Granduncle James Gordon of Westertoun. In Abd. these

Letter 5 7 September 1691. From Patrick Gordon in Moscow to William Gordon in Aberdeen

Dear Cousin
by this bearer you will receive another letter, and I thought fitt in this to advise you, that I am to have from Capt. Gordon 722 merks at white-
Sunday next, which I hope he will not faile to pay, If you have occasion
for the money yourself you may keep it and give your Bond to Netherrnuir
in keeping & pay the interest to him, but if it be found fitt to give the
money to any other, then give his bond also to Netherrnuir, I entreat
you to let me heare from you once a year at least, by the Dantzick
shipping, pray remember me to all friends, I remaining
Your most affectionate Cousin,
P. Gordon
Mosco 7 Sept.ris 1691
PS. I have his bond here, and an acquittance there being registrated there
or so is sufficient & it being payed, I shall tear his Bond befor his unkle &
ors. [others] [Envelope reads]: For Mr Wm. Gordon Mercht. In Aberdeen

Letter 6  8 August 1691. From Patrick Gordon in Moscow
to John Gordon of Nethermuir, Aberdeenshire

Mosco 10 Augusti 1691
Dear Cousin
My last was the 16th of February, and albeit I have no returne to that nor to many
of my former, yet I could not omitt to salute you by so sure an occasion as
your brother in law, whose sufficiency to informe you of my condition & desires,
makes this the shorter, I entreat you to assist my Son in recovering a chest which
Ileft in Edr. by our cousin Mr Thomas Gordon, wherein diverse things of value,
I hope the business with Watertowne is ended befor this tyme, seing in your last
you did writt to me that it only wanted the declaratour, I have written
to Rothemay to assist to gett the holding of the Lands changed. I have
not heard from my Son in near a year & a halfe, so being confident of your
frienship & assistance in my affaires there, with tender of due respects to
your fyresyde & all friends I remaine
Your most affectionate Cousin
P. Gordon
PS. The money which your bror. in law oweth me, being 300 merks Scottish
with interest for 8 yeares, and 200 Merks for which he was cation for Charles
Gordon, I desire to be given to Wm Gordon our Cousin, in Aberdeen and his
Bond for it to be given to you in custody whereof pray advise me as soon as
possible.
[Envelope reads]: For His honoured Cousin John Gordon of Nethermuir
Sir

The short acquaintance we had at London, and the many kindnesses and Civillites you shewed to my son James whilst he was under your Comand, obligeth me to a thankfull remembrance. I am extremely sorry for the unhappy distractions and miseries happened in our unfortunate Countrey, God Almighty send peace and tranquility, and that every one may enjoy his owne right without disturbance. The bearer Captaine Gordon, who is dismissed from this service for a tyme will sufficiently informe you concerning the state of this Countrey and of my owne particular, so rendering you thankes for all your kindnes, and wishing that an occasion may offer of showing how much I am
Sir
your affectionate reall friend and servant
P. Gordon

[Envelope reads]: Monsieur Le Chevalier Georgio Barclaio Colonell d'Infanterie

Letter 8  6 September 1691. From James Gordon in Moscow
to Maj. MacDougall in London

Mosco the 6 of 7ber 1691
Sir
My kynd respects to you, haveing this good occasion of my Couseing Capt. Gordon, who travels for Scott, I would not let it pass w'tout saluting you wt a lyne, and recommending him to you, as also to let you know of my arrivall here on the 23 of 7ber 1690, yet wt no intention of takeing service, bot his Tzars Majestie being once by my Father, conferred severall great honours on me; by my Fathers persuasions I consented to serve for a tyme and was graced Lt. Cornll to my Father's first Elected Regt; any other particulars you desire to know since my departure from London, the bearer will informe you of them, to whom pray shou all the kyndness lyes in yr powr, and you will infinitely oblige him, who desires to be remembred to yr bedfellow, and all freinds and rests
Sir  Your humble Freind & Servt
J. Gordon
Letter 9  6 August 1691. From James Gordon in Moscow
to John Gordon at Auchleuchries, Ellon

Dear Brother
In my last by the way of Hambourgh dated the 2 of Jan: I acquanted you of my arrivall her on the 22 of 7ber 1690, as also of my Engagement here; wherfore I have bot little to say here; only this occasion of Capt. William Gordon offering I thought it the least of my brotherly duties to acquaint you of my welfare, and also to let you knou hou impatient Father is, I, and all your freinds are to hear of yr welfare and I will assure youe anger my Father very much In being so negligent in writeing to him, and if you would have that he should supply you wt monneys for the buying of Birnis, you must shou yr self worthy of it by yr diligence in writeing to him often & sending yr exact accots of every thing, and be assured it will be a great encouragement to him to supply you wt monnys. Doe nothing of Importance wtout the advice of our Honnoured Granduncle Westertoun and get him to wnt in yr favour concerning that, for I will assure you that he can do much by him; I am here every day more wearied of this Troubolsome Drunken Court lyfe, and Barbarous nation, bot yet I live In hopes to be ridd of it shortly. Our Brother in law Major Daniell Craufuird who was married to my sister Marie dyed the 15 of May and left one Sonne behinde him called also Daniel. No mor bot desiring to be remembred to both our unkles & their bedfellous & all freinds, I Rest Yr Loveing Brother J Gordon Mosco the 6 of August 1691

The morrou we are to Journy wt his Majestie to Pereaslau.

Letter 10  6 August 1691. From James Gordon in Moscow
to William Gordon in Aberdeen

Loveing Cousin
My kynd respects to you. Excuse me that wt my last to my Granduncle and Brother, I did not writt to you, bot the want of tyme hindered it, though I have not much more nou, being to journey wt his Tzaar's
Matie to Pereaslaw the morro, yet this good occasion of Capt Gordon offering, I thought it the least of my duties to let you hear of my welfare and let you know the desire I have to hear of yours. As for any other thing you desire to know I do not doubt but my loving Granduncle & brother has letten you know by my last. I live always in good hopes to be quite of this base service shortly and come and be serviceable to my King & Country, for her ther is neither riches nor honour to be gained here which I never knew so well as at present. I hope you will not be wanting in yr advise to my Brother, and in yr writeing to me who wishes to see you shortly and in good health, & bedfellou to whom I pray present my service and remember me to all freinds especially to all my dear comarads in that service.

I Rest Yr loving Cousin & humble Servt
J. Gordon

Moscou the 6 of August 1691

[Envelope reads]: For My loving Cousin Mr William Gordon Mercht in Abd.

Letter 11 8 August 1691. From Patrick Gordon in Moscow to son John at Achleuchries, Elion

Mosko 8 Aug 1691

Loving Son

My Last was the 5th of May pr post by the way of London, at which tyme I was resolved not to have written to you any more, because of your negligence in not giving me returnes. Yet by such an occasion as this of Capt Wm Gordon I have been persuaded to writ once more, and because you may have understood my mynd sufficiently out of my many former, I need not here enlarge, only this you shall know, that, I expect an accot of the rents and how you dispose of them, do not tell me of your living lyke my son, or that I shall give you possession or declare what I will give you, wee have many examples there of Parents not declaering or quitting possession so long as they Live, and yet their sons have gott honourable matches, witnes this Pitfoddells his Father & others, and your negligence & udutyfulness confirmes such practice & my opinion the more, as I have told you often: my Father upon that which I have allowed you lived very honourably and payed the publick dues for the whole Land besides, and you may have heard that it was my portion and my brother James his too, It is your good Comportment, which may move me to allow you more as
others, I have desired Capt Gordon to take a view of the lands & of a particular place which I would have for a retireing dwelling & burial, writ to me in your next concerning it. It is a clay barren place lying betwixt the two stripes as you go to Westertowne, I have written for some things, which you should send to me, but you are in this as in other things. I have no more but desire you to amend your ways as you would have me to continue Your Loveing Father

P Gordon

P.S. The businesse with Watertowne I hope is ended and that you have recovered the trunke from Edinburgh, consult with ffrinds about getting the holding of the Lands changed.

[Envelope reads]: For My Loveing Sonne John Gordon Auchleuchries

Letter 12 5 September 1691. From Patrick Gordon in Moscow to the Laird of Rothiemay

Mosko 5 7bris 1691

Sir

With much ado we have gott of your brother for a tyme; he hath been always tender and sickly here, I wish his Geniall Aire may recover him. He hath a project of putting his Patrimony in Scots Pearles which according to the Comon opinion would render considerable advantage, he and I have made up our accots so that he remaineth owing to me 300 Merks with the interest for 8 or 9 yeares as also 200 Merks Scottish as cation for Charles Gordon with the interest for 5 yeares the 1700 Merks which according to his letter to you was advanced to him he hath restored so that if it be payed to my order there it must be restored, so that I have only to receive 722 Merks Scotish, which I desire may be delivered to Wm Gordon in Aberdeen son to Patrick Gordon of Cults, and if he hath not occasion for it then to any other responsable person, & the Bond delivered to John Gordon of Nethermuir, who may advise me thereof. I have a project of getting the lands of Auchleuchries holden of he king, If it be found practicable there, I doubt not but you will give your assistance in perswadeing the Earl of Erroll to sell the superiority; the manner of the holding of these lands you will be pleased to learne from your brother in law Nethermuir, as to the concemes of this place, give me leave to referr all to the relation of your brother, so takeing leave I remaine

Your most affectionate humble sert
Letter 13  5 September 1691. From Katherine E. Gordon Strasburg in Moscow to John Gordon at Auchleuchries, Ellon

Dear brother,
This good occasion of the bearer Captain Gordon offering, I thought it the least of my duties to let you hear from me, and acquaint you of my Impatience to hear from you; I need not trouble you with particulars, not doubting but what concerns you, brother James, hath largely written to you, only to show you that God almighty hath blessed me with one sonne theodorus, and two daughters, Anna, and Elizabeth. I doubt not but Father has acquaint you of the great accident that befell my husband Last winter by poudre; but now blessed be God is on the mending hand (though few expected that he ever should recover) and desires to be remembred to you. I cannot end without acquainting you of father’s great displeasure at you for yr not writing oftener to him wherfore I hope in tymes comming you will amend that fault by yr future diligence which I schall be Glad to hear of, hoping also that when you writt to Father you will not forgett to Lett me have also a lyne from you who Rests, dear brother
Your Loveing sister
Katherin, Elizabet, Strasburg
born Gordon
Mosco the 5 of September 1691

Letter 14  6 September 1691. From James Gordon in Moscow to Samuel Meverell in London

Mosco the 6 of 7ber 1691
Sir
Salut, want of occasion has kept me so long silent, wherfor I am very glad of the offer of this occasion of my euseing Capt Gordon, wherby I may make some worthy acknowledgement of yr many great kyndnesses shouen to me, and also render you harty thanks for them; and acquaint you of my arrivall her on the 23 of 7ber 1690 blessed be God in good health, wishing
to hear the continuance of yrs. I hope when an occasion shall offer you will also be so kynd, as to let me have a lyne from you also. I doe not doubt but my Father, has acquainted you of my engagement in this service, No more but desiring to be remembred to yr Family and all freinds I rest
Sir your humble Servt
J Gordon

Letter 15  6 September 1691. From James Gordon in Moscow to Captain William Gordon [in Reval]

A Memorandum for Cuseing Capt Gordon
Not to forget, when he comes to Hamburg to get himself acquainted wt Mr Kenkels neeces, and writt to me concerning that.
To speak wt my brother sharply concerning his negligencie in writieng to my Father.
To doe what lyes in his powr to get me my Comission from my Cornll Sr George Barckly or at least a testification, and send it to me by the first post, and to tell to all that I am resolved shortly to returne.
To remember me to all my Comarad officers Capt Colleson, Seton Lt Steuart, Craufuird, and my Dear Comarad Ensigne Robert Seimpell, & Doctr Elfin [crossed through] Alfioni and acquant them of my being here.
If you meet wt Ensigne Alxr Innes, be pleased to speak to him concerning that 3 lib. Sterling he oues me, if ye get it from him, pay Mr Robert Seimpell wt it, if he will not have it, deliver it to my Brother.
I hope you will be so good as to bestowe a halfe of sheet of paper at least once a year, and acquant me: qt passes there.
Your humble Servt
J Gordon
Mosco the 6 of 7ber 1691

Letter 16  8 August 1691. From Patrick Gordon in Moscow to William Gordon in Aberdeen

Dear Cousin
my last was the 16th of February with, enclosed to ffriends, which I hope
is come safe to your hands, this sure occasion makes me trouble you againe. If any ships have gone from Aberdeen to Danzick I know not, for I have not had a word from no body there in more as a year, the bearer Capt. Gordon is indebted to me 300 Merks Scottish with interest for 8 yeares, as also 200 Merks upon the accot of Charles Gordon, all which I have desired to be delivered to you, a note for which written to be due to me, you may give to Nethermuir to whom I have written. You being neerest occasions & knowing them may writt oftener, which I entreat you to do hereafter, so desireing to be remembred to all friends there especially to your fyre syde, I remaine

Yor affectionate Cousin & Sert
P Gordon
Mosco. 8 August 1691

P.S. Gett my Son to send 5 or 6 paire of the fynest Scottish plaids, or if he delay send them your self & put them up to my accot. Patrick Forbes & James Adies are my correspondents in Dantzick.

[Envelope reads]: For Mr William Gordon Mercht In Aberdeen

Letter 17  4 September 1691. From Mary Gordon in Moscow
to John Gordon, Ansebleuchries, Ellon

Dear Brother
My kynd respects to you, this good occasion offering I thought it the Least of my duties to Salute you by it with a lyne I doe not doubt bot Father has acquainted you of the death of my dear husband uho parted from this lyfe on the 14 of may this year haveing lived togither only 7½ months and in place of that loss has blessed me with a sonne called after his Faber Daniell Craufuird borne on the 9 of July 1691 wherfor I am left a poor widdow with a fatherles child bot yet I put my trust in almighty God uho I hope will not leave me In the meantym I hope that when you uritt to Father you uill not forget to let me have also a lyne from you which be assured will be a great comfort to me who am at presnt comfortless. no more bot hoping you will not forget me who rests
Dear brother
your Ioveing sister
Mary Gordon
Mosco the 4 of 7ber 1691
Letter 18  5 September 1691. From Alexander Gordon [in Moscow] to Thomas Gordon in Aberdeen

Dear Brother

This being the first occasion I find since I came from Dantzick I wold not feal to salut you and all frinds and let you knou of my condition Generall Gordon by whom I liue and to whos keindnes I am very much obliged keeps Me at the Scool wher I learne to reckne and to reade and ureat the Duch-language and uhen I shal be perfect in thes he will giue it Me in my chois ether to be a merchant Or soouldier and impoy his moyen to engage me in seruice accordengly praye present my affection and respects to my sister and to her husband and children and to my Grandmother also to Willam Monro and his bedfellow my Cousine and all frinds whou shall axe for me which-being all at present I remain your dear brother your Must affectienat brother And servaunt

Alexr Gordon
Anno 1691 September the 5 daye:

Letter 19  8 September 1691. From P. Meneses [Menzies] [in Moscow] to Jean Sempill at Pitfodels, Aberdeen

Much Honored & Deare Sister.

With this occasion of my Nephew Captain Williame Gordon I would not omitt to salute you most affectionatly & let you know whou much I desire to heare of your good health & weallfaire, as for me I'm still alive wt my Wiffe & 4 Cheildrein Magnus, John, Andreu & Catharine. All my Cheildrein of my first Wiffe being dead. I pray Late me heare from you, whou it is wt & your Dauchter & my Deare Neece whou I pray God Allmghty to bliss. Thus referring you to the bearer & desiring to be most kindly remembred to all our deare Freinds & relations praying for excuse of this my biessness Committing you & your Deare Dauchter to the Protection of the Allmghty God I rast Deare Sister

Mosco ye 8th of 7ber 1691
Your most Loving Brother & humble Servtr
P. Meneses

[Envelope reads]: These to my much Honored and very Loving Sister Mrs. Jeane Sempill Wyfe to the deceased William Laird of Pittodres

Letter 20  22 January 1692. From Harie Gordon in Moscow to William Gordon in Revel.

Moscou ye 22 Janua 1692
Honored Cousen

yours of ye deat ye 10 december: 91 I receaued ye 22 January 92, which put me in too Diferent extasies, the on of Joye, the other of Grife, Joye in respecke of your safatie And present health, which god knoues Is wished as my owen. grife in respecke of your misfortoun of being beat back, And brought to greater chargis, yet god knoues whats best for man patiens. Sir you shall knou al the neues we hau hear is not worthy of ye rehersing, being only whats public to all, colonel Strasbourg is ded and buried the 7 of this Instant, and Marey ye young widow, Is hand fastit to on capitain Sneuens. And as to my ouen bussenes its not worthy to truble you with, but to obey your comands, you shall know that his Maj Has greaced me for major to ye butirie Regment, (your old frynds) and that I thank god I continou in good health, hooping in short tym, for promotion, the generals son I supoes may be collonel befir this coms to your hands; I continou as yet in generall Gordons feamaly, thogh I supoes not much longer. On thing I forgot that is, the generals sister in lawe that was in the feamalie is mared to Lyonfelt. I thank god, I am not trubled with the Royal companie only saw 3 nights by houtman, which almost head been my death, after I beged pardon and shanked of. So that Now I live in ease only pass my tym Som tyms by your ouenckle, or by kiling Housen, pristouf, or Livengstoun, which Is al my companie: saue som tyms by The patter, the factions are hear as formerlie; Sir this is the largest description I can giu you at present, and begs to know wherin I can serue you, or satesfye you further, which shall always be his studie to gaen, Sir the honnor of your fryndship so obligeth me to maek Som worthy acknowledgment that I am all full of will to serue you, and as full of Default in the performance; I will therfor waet the tym and occasion, wherin by: your command I may signallize my obedience, which shall always, and wherso ever I be, make me apiere as I am
Sir that is,
your loueing cousen, and humbl servant,
whill I am.
Harie Gordone

PS. The generall I supoes hath obeyed your deseyr as to Mr Mauerall
befor this cam to his hands.
– pardon me to renew our speach at pearting, which I doubt nothing of but
you will observ your promes, in not Mentioning of such a person as I, till such
tym as I shall giu you further notec, and if any suchthing should fal in the
by, you may giu me Acompt ther of (I mean) in any conferment of myn:
I beg you may let me hau A lyn from your hands befor your departur
from reueil, with acompt of your condition; I head not tym to mit with
your ouneckle or any of ye rest of your frynds yet they are all in good
health.

[Envelope reads]: For Capitain William Gordon lodging in the foortoun
of revel
In the lubecks Taveran Revele.

Letter 21 29 January 1692. From Patrick Gordon in Moscow
to William Gordon in Revel

Mosco 29 Ja.ry 1692
Sir,
I am very glad to hear by yours of the 10th of December from Revall,
that you have recovered your health in some measure, your stay there
cannot be helped. Only leave of your melancolious thoughts, and keep
your self at moderate excersize, about 3 weekes ago I gott Mr Houtman
satisfyed, since you went from hence I had letters from my ffriends in
Scotland, whereby I have been obliged to send a disposition of the
Heretable right of the Lands of Achiuchries to my eldest son John,
which I have sent by Mr Pendek who went from hence a fortnight ago
for England, wee were something perplexed not to heare from you,
after you were past Narva, for Mr Loftus from thence informed me
that you were past that place, whilst you are there, you can do me a
great kyndnes wch is this, There is a place neer to Revall called Rokill
wch belonged to one bilou Strasburg, my son in law his Grandfather
who had 4 sons who all except my son in law his father being the
youngest are deceassed without children, so that, as wee are informed,
the lands should belong to my son in law his son (he himself to our great loss & grieffe being deceased the 4th Instant) That place is inhabited now by the widdow of Joachim Strasburg my son in law his uncle, and she is marryed to One Ruit Mr. Branhoffe, I would most willingly be informed of the following particulars. how farr & which way it Lyeth from Revall, of what extent and what value it may be either yearly or if to be sold or wedsett, If engaged at present by way of wedsett or otherwise, If reduced or not, If Pawres belonging to it and how many or if only a Hoffe, by what means wee could atteine it, yet all this must be carryed so close that they gett not the least least notice of it, for feare of preveening us, if it be not farr of, you would do me a kindnes to take a jorney to it yourself, but keep all close, there liveth in Revall one John Lanting a dutchman, to whom Mr Munter hath written concerning it by my desire, if you can come to speake with him, he may assist you, the same Lanting hath received from England for me some Mathematicall Instruments and books, I admire he sent them not by Mr Munster, yet I hope they are now upon the way by some other occasion, so not doubting your diligence and that you will give me sufficient information, I remaine 
Yor affectionat Cousin & Servant 
P . Gordon
P.S. I shall have occasion to writt to you ere you go from thence, & shall not faile to writt againe to Mr Meverell in your behalfe.

Letter 22 12 February 1692. From Patrick Gordon in Moscow to William Gordon in Reval

Sir

my last to you was Recomended to Mr Loftus, being an answer to yours of the 10th Dec.ris, having then written to you at Large of diverse concernes, I have only herein to add that I have written pr ffriend to Mr Meverell to affoord you ten Libs Ster: if you call for it, yet when I consider the great way & large expences whereat you will be in going to London, I thought fitt to advise you to go with the first shipping to Elsenuir & there stay if it were 6 weekes for any occasion for Scotland, which will be easier, better cheape & secure, because the ships tradeing thither are furnished with Danish or Swedish passes. I shall
be very glad to heare of your arrivall thither in health, wherefor I entreat you when you come to Edr. or Abd. to writt to me immediately addressing your letter to Mr Sam Meverell Mercht in London, I have as I told you befor sent a disposition of the Heretable right of my Lands to my eldest son John, reserving only three thousand Merks for a portion for one of my sons who may come thither as also 300 Merks yearly dureing the naturall Lyfes of me & my wyfe, which Last with what you are indebted to me, I have allotted for a fonds of a portion for my youngest son Peter, which if duly payed and well improved may in tyme grow to be considerable, I have intrusted it to your brother in law Nethermuir, and my Cousin of Cults, when my unkle shall not be able or willing to be troubled with it. I durst not molest the Earle of Abd. with more as the direction & inspection of it, my earnest desire to you is, that when you come thither, you will not only informe your self of what is done in it, but assist to settle it and give an accot as soone as possible, that the small thing and the encrease of it yearly may be setled in the hands of honest and responsable men, and the notes or obligations kept in the custody of uninteressed persons with my eldest son, so that it will be a great hearts ease to me to heare & be assured, that it shall be forthcoming, I rely much herein upon your industry and diligence, and assure you that you will do me a great Courtesy, and put a great obligation upon me, by contributeing to the Settlement of my affaires in the forsd particular, and giving me tymely and particular information thereof. I writt to you in my Last to enquire of the condition of a house & Lands called Rockill near to the place where you now are, which belongeth by right for want of heires male to my Grandchild Theodorus Strasburg. I expect to have hereof information from you, as also to heare from you as often as you can dureing your stay there. I have nothing more, but to committ you to the protection of God Almighty remaining Yor affectionat Cousin & Sert P Gordon in great hast

[Envelope reads]: For Capt Wm Gordon at Reval Ich versoeke deses te expediren aen Mr Loftus in Narva recomende a Sr Jaques Meyor Novogrodt

Letter 23  19 February 1692. From Patrick Gordon in Moscow to William Gordon in Reval

Mosco 19 Feb: 1692
Paul Dukes (ed. and intro)

Sir

Since mine of the 20th Ja.ry in ansr to yours of the 10 Dec.ris and myne of the 12th instant, I have yours of the 3d Ja.ry. I am glad you keep your health and that that Climate suits with your constitution better as this. I did writt to you at large in both my former to the which I have little to add only to desire you to be carefull of all I recommended to you, especially of selling a fonds for my yongest son and that the obligations be given into the hands of these who are not concerned with my eldest son. My unkle I am loth to trouble in his extreme old age. If the Earle of Aberdeen would accept thereof it would be well, the most troublesome part I desire Nethermuir & yong Cults to take upon them. My things sent from London enquire for, as also concerning my Grandchild Strasburg his inheritance of Rockill neer that place, I shall writt as yet to you befor you quite that place, and hopes you will not omit writt to me so long as you are there, as also from London of Elsonure, and from Scotland as soone and oft as you can. Haveing nothing else at present I remaine yor affectionate Cousin & Sert
P Gordon

P.S. I forgott to tell you that their Maties have graced me with an addition of 400 rubles yearly to my pay in money.

[Envelope reads]: For Capt William Gordon lodging in the Lubecks Taverne in the suburbs.

Letter 24  19 February 1692. In French. From James Gordon in Moscow to William Gordon in Reval

Moscou le 19 de Feb 1692
Monst le Capt
Votre Lettre du troisiéme de Janvier J'ay receut, et suis exreemt bein aise d'entendre de votre bonne santé, priant le bonne Dieu pour la continuation de votre bonne santé; voila le discription de cet Engin, pour laquelle vous m'auez priez dans votre Lettre. Je suis bien aisé d'avoir cett occasion par laquell Je vous peut tesmoigner le grand desire que J'ay de vous servir.
Depuis votre depart d'icy, il'ya n'a une grand changement icy; mon beau frere Le Colonell Strasbourgh estant mort le 4 de Jan-r; ii estoit magnifiquement enterré, Sa Majestée en person l'ayent conwoyée, avec
son Regiment, au place d'enterement, luy et tous Jes officiers allant en Deuell, et tous Jes boyars qui sont de sa compagnie; sa mort est cause que notre maison n’est pas en tel estime au pres de sa majestee comme auparavant.

Moy Je suis un peu en disgrace au pres de sa Majestee, a cause que J'ay en question, en presence de Sa Majestee, avec Le Colonell Delauzier, sur un Wesherinskie, chez Monsr Hauteman; ii est marriez et retourne a Courskte; c'est pourquoi Je ne frequent pas la Cour tant qu'auparavant.

Monsr le Generll Major votre oncle est fort fasche que wous n'avez pas escrit a Iuy; Votre Lettre a Monsr le Colonel Litle!eJohn J'ay rendu avec les medecins a Iuy, il estoit bien aise d'entrendre de votre bonne santè en vous remerciant pour cet amitiè vous l'avez montré, il se porte come auparavant; j'ay faite wos baisez-mains a tous ceux que vous m'avez priez de faire; ils vous saluent tous; pour le Lt Colonell Crafuird ii n'est pas icy, nous n'avons non plus rien entendue de Iuy: Le Colonell Levenfelt est marriez avec Maria Jacolina, la belle seur de ma bell mere; wous avez cognee monsr Jeebrandt qui est Banquerut, rnais Sa Majestee l'envoye a China dans la qualite d'Envoye extraordinaire, Ma Seur Marie est fiancèe a Monsr le Capt Snewens. notre cousin estoit gracée de Sa Majestee Major, et le boyar il dit asteur [sic] peur que Sa Majestee a Contre-comandée de l'inscrire pour Capt, ses affaires rest com ca jusq au retour de Sa Majestee de Pereslaw; J'espere que wous m'honnoreraie avec une Response avec le premier occasion et vous m'obligerai de rester toujours

Monsr votre Serviteur J. Gordon

Je ne doute pas de wotre soin de mes instruction a wous adieu

[Envelope reads ]: A Monsr Monsr Le Capt Gordon Lodging in the Lubecks Tavern in the fortoune of In Rewell these

Letter 25  [enclosed inside Letter 24]

An engine or invention wherby horsemen may easily brake in into batallions of foot albiet they be guarded wt pikes or Spanish Ritters.

Make a stellagie, or plate forme pointed like to a Ravelin, under the Middle wherof to the point almost, most be a long beam of 4 or 5 fathome long, to this must be an axed 2 axetrees one under the
plateforme and another behind it as near as possibly, on those must be Cattrols, or strong wheels, and in the end of the long beam, behind must on Cattrols, or wheel, round the borders of this platforme, must be a parapet or breastworke, made and covered wout, plats of strong steel, and so high as may cover a man & a horse or more, to the longe beam— & must be made pieces of wood or iron, betwixt the Caroll, at the end, & the 2 which are immediately behind the plateforme, to wch the horses 2 or 3, on each syde may be yoaked for drawing, the horses must be strong and couragious— who upon plain ground, where battals are usually drawn up will brake any body of Foot, though never so weall guarded, the horse squadrons must follow immediatly, and whou shoon this engin hath brok through the Spanish Rters or pikes, and brought the Battallion in confusion, they must fall on, and so easily ruin them, on the plateforme may be, wyde Cannon load med wt Cartouches, web will doe: them more harme, and doe the effort easier. From the wings may be lights, blinds of thin bourds to hinder the sight of the horses and Riders when thy come in war.

Letter 26  19 February 1692. From Harie Gordon in Moscow to William Gordon in Reval

Dear Cousen
Sir After the recept of yours from Revell of the 3 January by which you Honnored me so faer, that if I have done you any acceptable servic, think it was but the shadow of what I deseyr to show you, by reall effects. Thogh the service I hav doun you, be but small; yet the deseyr I Hau head to acknowledg the honnors I Hau receavcd from you ar great without Meashur: dear Sir I hoop you accept the Will, for the deed of him, who after his Aryvel at this pleac, found the foord. In evere respeck, acording as my good frynd Had discribt in respeck of yr netour, polasie, And kyndnes; Its hard to knou if I stay Hear or not as yet (be caus) [sic] after that his Majestie head greaced me for major, the boyar would not Insert in the books for Mor as captain, acording as I cam in the Land from whom It flous the Lord knous, but in the next I shall be mar posative, which shall be within two posts, or on, his Majestie being at present in Perislaw so tht We expeck him 22 or 23 of this Instant, all your frynds ar weill at this pleac, only I admyr you hav
not wreat to your ounckle, for I ashur you that he is were much grived, all our exterordener neues, I gav you acompt of in my last, and In the nixt you shall hav a fuller, which shall be in all heast and In the mean tym I rest
Dear Cousen
your most Loving cousen and humbl serant whill I am Harie Gordone Sloboda a Mosco ye 19 Febr 1692
[Envelope reads): For Capitain william gordon present At his lodgings in The Lubecke Taweren in the foortoun of Revell.

Letter 27  8 July [1686?] From L. Gordon, Aberdeen, to 'Brother' [William Gordon]

Abn the 8 of iule
dear brother
Tho I kno it cannot signefie much too you yet I most give ye this smal testemone of my affecttion too ashoure ye that I recevéd the good news of yr welbeing with a greatt dell of satesfaction and I hoop you doe not queastion my earnest wisheses for the advancment of of yr fortton evere way, and in my opinion you may alrede estime your selff vere hape by being in companie with such a fyne man as I teak lefftenen generall Gordon too be I cannot tell you how much you ar oblidged too him for his characktour of you amongest the rest of yr other tys too him, and I am persuaded if youll doe yr selff the kindnes too teak his advise and indeovre too dooe by his exampell you may coom too be an honor too yr nation as he nou is, he says he spok bot litell of yr affers to yr brother so that it sims he intends to refer particikloers till nis nixt cooming which I wish with all my heart may be prosperously and Im shour all that has concern in you has reason too doe so, for his favor to you who was a mir streanger too him may convince pipel how much he has of the princepalls of generositte. I shall expect to hear from you when he cooms. I belive you will have a greatt loss bye pearting with him, so that it ware for yr satesfaction and intrest. I wish you cuid coom alongs with him. All your frinds and sisters ar well and be confedent ther is non of them with greater sencerite
dear brother
your most affectionat sister and servante
pray Jett us hear from you with the first occasion our sister wartell and I 
joyns our intretess that when this cooms to yr hands you may ashour the 
Leften gerall of our kind remembranc and lekways tell him that tho I had 
not the confedance to meak him a formall spitch at pearting yet I m shour 
non wished him a better voyage. Adoue I am in heast as you may iudg by 
this I hop Mr Gordon and you shall be vere good frinds. I min mine r,noors 
son who is a vere well houmer'd young man

Letter 29  6 August 1691. Memorandum from Patrick Gordon for William Gordon

Memorandum for Capt Wm Gordon
When it shall please God to bring you to Scotland pray take the pains and go 
to my habitation; and take a view of the lands and see in what condition they 
are as to the tennants & buildings. & what the new dwelling house is which 
he hath built. as also that place which I have designed for a retirement & 
buriall place, whereof I would have a Cart with the exact measure, as also if 
your leasure serve you a Cart of the whole Land.
Put my Sonne in Mind of makeing an end of the business with Watertowne, 
of recovering the trunke from Edinburgh. and show him how he irritates me 
by his negligence in writeing to me, & not giving me me an exact accot of 
the rents of the Lands and tell him, that my Father lived very honourably 
upon that which I have allowed him & payed the publick dues for the 
whole Land, that I have more Children as him, & may dispose of that 
Land as I please.
Desire your brother to assist in getting the holding changed, to be holden 
of the king, as also to gett the business wt Watertowne ended with the help 
of the Earle of Aberdeen & Nethermuir.
Let me hear from you as soone as possible, by the way of London, 
my Correspondent there is Mr Samuell Meverell, in Dantzick Patrick 
Forbes & James Adie. In Hamburgh Robert Jolly in Roterdam James 
Gordon, In Riga Georg Frazer, in Narva Thomas Loftus & Thomas 
More.
Bestow on me at least once in a yeare a sheet of paper by the shipping 
to Dantzick, wherein informe me of my particular busines as above, give me
notice of the condition of particular friends and as much of the publick as you can. If you see my brother John, tell him I wonder that he doth not writ to me the restoring him his bond for 400 Merks deserved at least to be acknowledged, neither can he be ignorant how nobly I dealt with him, when I was there.

If the history of the Gordons be publick which Mr Pat Gordon was compiling, let one be sent me.

[In another hand below this: James Ogilvie of Blairack grandfather to Gen: Gordon to inquire whence desended]
Notes on Contributors

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Daniel C. Waugh is Professor Emeritus of History, International Studies and Slavic and East European Languages and Literatures at the University of Washington (Seattle). He has published extensively on Muscovite history and on the history of the Silk Roads across Asia. The current article is part of a larger book project on news in Muscovy which he is writing with Professor Ingrid Maier (Uppsala).