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# The Best Connected Man in Muscovy? Patrick Gordon's Evidence Regarding News and Communications in Muscovy in the Seventeenth Century

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# The Best Connected Man in Muscovy? Patrick Gordon's Evidence Regarding News and Communications in Muscovy in the Seventeenth Century

**Daniel C. Waugh**

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.[1] 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

[1] Patrick Gordon, *Diary of General Patrick Gordon of Auchleuchries 1635–1699*, Dmitry Fedosov (ed.), Vol. I: 1635–1659, Vol. II; 1659–1667; Vol. III: 1677–1678 (Aberdeen: AHRC Centre for Irish and Scottish Studies, University of Aberdeen, 2009–12); Vol. IV: 1684–1689, Vol V: 1690–1695 (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 2013–14); idem, *Dnevnik*, Perevod, stat'ia i primechaniia D. Fedosova, [t. 1] 1635–1659; [t. 2] 1659–1667; [t. 3] 1677–1678. [t. 4] 1684–1689; [t. 5] 1690–1695 (Moskva: Nauka, 2000–14). The original, English text is the primary reference here, except for the most recent volume, which was not yet available at the time of writing, requiring me to rely on Fedosov's translation. I also rely on Fedosov's identifications of individuals with whom Gordon had relations, although eventually it should be possible to say more about who some of them were and flesh out the context of Gordon's interactions with them. I have deliberately avoided footnoting most of the data derived from the diary, since it is easy enough, given its chronological ordering, for readers to locate the passages on which I have drawn. I have tried to preserve all of Gordon's original spellings, where most of the bracketed words or letters are those of the editor. I am grateful to Dmitry Fedosov and Paul Dukes, who suggested some valuable corrections to this article. They bear no responsibility for its opinions or any errors that may remain.

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 Kotilaine[4] 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

[2] In particular, see Sengei Konovalov, 'Patrick Gordon's Dispatches from Russia, 1667', *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, 11 (1964), 8–16; Sengei Konovalov, 'Sixteen Further Letters of General Patrick Gordon', *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, 13 (1967), 72–95; Paul Dukes, 'Patrick Gordon and His Family Circle: Some Unpublished Letters', *Scottish Slavonic Review*, 10 (1988), 19–49 (reprinted in the current volume of JISS, 125–51). Fedosov includes in his Russian edition translations of these letters.

[3] For Fedosov, see the various volumes of his new edition and translation, *passim*; for Brückner, A. G. Brikner, 'Patrik Gordon i ego dnevnik', *Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia*, 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 Kotilaine, *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*.[5] 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).

[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.[6] 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 *iamshchiki* 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

[6] Unless otherwise noted, in what follows below all the dates are Old Style (*st. v.*), 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. (*st. n.*, 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 *billets 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 oft 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 Polland 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 ffriends 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 Menezziia* (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, *Pervye pochty i pervye pochtmeistery 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.[10] 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 Il'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

also A. N. Vigilev, *Istoriia otechestvennoi pochty*, 2-e izd., pererabotannoe 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 Riksbankens jubileumsfond / The Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation.

[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 teksty* (Moskva, 2009); *Ch. 2. Inostrannye originaly k russkim tekstam. Issledovanie i podgotovka tekstov Ingrid Maier* (Moskva, 2008), nos. 66 and 72.

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 effaires 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 *iamshchiki* (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 Sweeden'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

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 *iam* system; he sent one of his first messages back to Moscow via a *iamshchik*. 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 *iam* 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.[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 Bockhoven 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).[13] As a consequence of the end to hostilities, by the time he arrived in Moscow on 6 June, his father-in-law von Bockhoven had been released to return to his family. Von Bockhoven 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

[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.

[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 Arkhangel'sk, 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

[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.[15] 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.[16] What is not clear here

[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. l43r–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.[17] 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. 192r). 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 Shuttleworth, 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.

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.[18] 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.[19] His accounts of the Crimean campaigns, like his earlier narratives

[18] A good summary of his service and life in Kiev is in Fedosov's introduction to Gordon, *Diary*, Vol. 4, 1684–1689, viii–xvii.

[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 *Malorossiiskie 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 Sofiia 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*.

foreign relations files. Some of the relevant material has been published in series such as *Akty dlia istorii Iuzhnoi i Zapadnoi Rossii*, whose materials I still plan systematically to mine for comparison with what Gordon tells us.

[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 allyes 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.[21] Gordon apparently was on very good terms with Samoilovich, from whom on 11 August he received 'a very ffriendly 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 wee hope shall be more active and industrious in hindering the incursions of the Tartars into Polland and Hungary … '[22]

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 Wulffe, 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

[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. Kochegarov, *Russkoe pravitel'stvo i sem'ia ukrainskogo getmana Ivana Samoilovicha v 1681–1687 gg* (Moskva, 2012).

[22] Konovalov, 'Sixteen Further Letters', 88.

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.[23]

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 befor 2d April; from Coll. Gordon, Hannover, the 12th of December '84; from Mr. Hartman, Mosko, 21 May '85; from Mr. Guasconi, Mosko, 29th *Aprilis* & 11 *Junii*, from Mr. Vinius, 2d *Junii*; from the Holl. resident [Baron van Keller], 20th May & 5th *Junii*; from P[ater] Schmidt [the Catholic priest in the Foreign Suburb], 29th Apr. & 20 *Junii st[ilo] n[ovo]*; P[ater] de Boy, 10 *Junii st. v.*; Coll. von Meng[den], 10 *Junii*; Mr. Sclater, 12 *Junii*; Mr. van Troyen, 11 *Junii*; from Coll. Hamilton, Shevsky, 26 *Junii*; Coll. Roonaer, 26 *Junii*, & from many Rush. noblemen, complements of diverse dates; M[ajor] Ham[ilton], 11 *Junii*.

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

[23] Cf. Wolfgang Behringer, *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 Vasilii Vasil'evich Golitsyn, Nikita Semenovich Urusov, Benedikt Andreevich Zmeev, Leontii Romanovich Nepluiev, Boris Fedorovich Dement'ev, Emel'ian Ignat'evich Ukraintsev, Boris Vasil'evich Gorchakov, Petr Vasil'evich Sheremetev, Ivan Fedorovich Volynskii, Aleksei Petrovich Saltykov, 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. Ukraintsev 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, Nepluiev) had earlier held important posts in the military and administration in the Russian south and Ukraine and thereby been Gordon's superiors. Even

[24] For his service record, see N. F. Demidova, *Sluzhilaia biurokratiia v Rossii XVII veka (1625–1700). Biograficheskii spravochnik* (Moskva, 2011), 575–6.

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.[25] 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[ovchin]';

(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 dispatched 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).

[25] Here I am questioning the argument by Vigelev, *Istoriia*, 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[ieutenan]t'/'The lieutennant dispatched & went from hence';

(May 2) official communication 'by post';

(June 6) 'The Moskoes *streltsees* 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[van]t';

(July 7) 'the writer [=*podiachii*] Sid[or] And[reyev] Putitsky' [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 *iamshchiki* 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 ('perceiveing 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]

Gordon crossed the border into Scotland on 27 May and on 15 July set sail from Aberdeen to return to Moscow. In some fifty days in Scotland, his schedule was full with ceremonial visits, socializing and what apparently were some difficult discussions regarding family properties. While he did exchange some correspondence with London, on only one occasion does he note sending letters to Moscow (to Golitsyn, his wife, and Vinius) and to Cambridge in Hamburg. Despite somewhat adverse winds, he was back in Riga on 2 August, two days later sending a packet of letters back to London 'in a *coverto* to Mr. Meverell by Mr. Philes conveyance *p[e]r mare*', another via William Gordon in Aberdeen, and a third to relatives via his nephew James

[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 Crawfuird. 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 Kings 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 Ukraintsev, 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'.[28] He then gave Middleton's letter to Ukraintsev, 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 returne an answer to the Earle of Middleton, which I sent in a *coverto* to Mr. Sam. Meverell, & that to Mr. Frazer in Riga, desireing him to address it to Sir Peter Wyche, his S[acred] M[ajesty'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.[29] 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 coverte, 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…'[30] Not least in interest here is that Gordon was availing

[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.

[29] Published by Konovalov, 'Sixteen Further Letters', 85–6.

[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.[31] 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).[32] 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.

[31] 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 Birgegård (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). Birgegård 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.

[32] 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 Campagnia 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.[33] 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 unusal for the correspondence) and to Samuel Meverell in London.[34]

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 publitsitiki Posol'skogo prikaza' in *Problemy izucheniia narrativnykh istochnikov po istorii russkogo srednevekov'ia* (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, desireing 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*. adviseing 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:

- (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 *No[vemb]ris* in Mr. Meverells *coverto* of 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, 11, 12, 12, 12, 11, 11, 11, 11, 12, 11, 13, 12, 11, 12, 12, 12, 11, 11, 11, 12, 12, 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.

- 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

[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 Kozlovskii, *Pervye pochty*, 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 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.

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 Arkhangel'sk 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 Arkhangel'sk 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 Arkhangel'sk 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 October1, Gordon received letters from Arkhangel'sk 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 Arkhangel'sk. Once Peter was back, the elapsed times to Arkhangel'sk began to increase.

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

[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 Arkhangel'sk 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 Arkhangel'sk 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 *strel'tsy* and a Captain Fedor.

On 30 January 1694, Gordon wrote his son-in-law in Arkhangel'sk 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 Arkhangel'sk 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 Arkhangel'sk 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 (Asshallo[38] 20 July, replying to G's of 12 January), daughter-in-law Elizabeth Grant (Auchleuchries, 18 July), uncle

[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 Aucheuchries.

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.[39] 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.[40] Even though his father approved John's marriage, he learned of it *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 *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 *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 *striapchii*, 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

[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 knou hou 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 accots 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 Ukraintsev 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 Arkhangel'sk). 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 Arkhangel'sk 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 Arkhangel'sk, 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.[41] 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.[42] Gordon's correspondence with van Keller was frequent, and they also met regularly when he was in Moscow.

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[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 Wladimiroff, *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 sobraniia 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 Vinius, 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 biurokratiia*, 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 avisoes from Moscow' regarding ouster of Gordon's cousin as Lord High Chancellor of Scotland.
- (17 October) 'I had letters from Mosko and avisoes'.
- (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 avisoes'.
- (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 succeded 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[i]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 January1686. 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. novo*'.
- (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 aboord of the fleete 100,000 men of all sorts; that the Prince [William of Orange] went aboord 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 befor the Tzaars & counsell, gave great satisfaction'.[43]
- (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 *Decembris*'[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 infidility 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

[43] 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*.[44] 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

[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.[45] 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 by wiewing 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 Diocess 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.

[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 Aprill'.
- (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 *Junii* 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]'. Another example of an added entry, here under the correct date when the city was taken back from the Turks. Under 7 November, Gordon noted that the Habsburg Emperor had written the Tsars about the fall of Belgrade 'and the victorious progress of his armyes' but does not indicate when that information was received.

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[46]; 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.

[46] N. Ogloblin, 'Voevodskie vestovye otpiski XVII v. kak material po istorii Malorossii', *Kievskaia starina*, 12 (1885), 365–416.

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 [L'viv] … '
- (11 July). 'By a fryer come from Shewsky wee were informed … ' 'By a writeing sent from Nemerow to the prior of the Mezegorsky Monastery wee had notice … '
- (12 July). 'We heard by people come out of Polland … '
- (29 July). 'The *voyt* of the towne came and told that a merchjant come out of Polland said that he had heard that the Roman Emperour, haveing sent very rich presents to the King of Polland … '
- (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 Polland with his armyes was only blocquiring Caminiets … '
- (23 October). 'By diverse persons come from Polon[n]e 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 Kievan Academy, in 1672. See D. K. Uo [Waugh], 'Tekst o nebesnom znamenii 1672 g. (k istorii evropeiskikh sviazei moskovskoi kul'tury poslednei treti XVII v.)', in *Problemy izucheniia kul'turnogo naslediia* (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 Nemirow 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 comeing from Nemerow informed, that two regiments of Polls souldiers 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 [Żółkiew], 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 gentlman, 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 Polland & Germany and went from hence the first of May last

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evidence, much of which has been preserved in the *Grecheskie dela*.

[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* [Fünfkirchen/Pécs] attempted to have releeved 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 comeing 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 businesse'.

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 Cossacks 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 Polland come into Kyow, but to send them back againe; wee being jealous of their being quartered so near us; and this was upon a letter sent by the Hetman Ivan Samuelowits & dated the 27 Dec-ris, wherein he writeth that haveing intelligence from a burger of Pereaslaw lately come out of Polland, & from other places, that one Kensky, a stranger by birth and in quality generall of the strangers in Polland, calleth himself *woywod* 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 Polland, was apprehended, and being examined, he told that serving in Bially Cserkiew for a sojor, he with other two sojors in the night tyme on the 2$^{d}$ of Februar had come over the wall; that the other two, called Griska & Fedka, were gone to Pereaslaw; that their errand to steale 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 Chotiatefsky …

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.[50] 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[i] 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.

[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.

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deeming it an organ of the new English government which he so disliked for having overthrown James II (VII). On the larger subject of western newspaper reports about Muscovy, the pioneering and still valuable study is that by Martin Welke, 'Russland in der deutschen Publizistik des 17. Jahrhunderts (1613–1689)', *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte*, 23 (1976), 105–276. The most important studies of English news and intelligence acquisition in this period are Fraser, *Intelligence*, and Alan Marshall, *Intelligence and Espionage in the Reign of Charles II, 1660–1685* (Cambridge, 1994). Fraser focuses on the relationship between intelligence gathering and publication of foreign news in the press.

## 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'.[52] 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.

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