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Author: Paul Bushkovitch

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Patrick Gordon and Russian Court Politics

Paul Bushkovitch

Peter the Great's transformation of Russia in the years 1689–1725 is one of the eternal themes of Russian historiography, and is likely to remain so. Peter brought to Russia new forms of state administration that imitated European (mainly Swedish) absolutism, a modern army, a new Europeanized culture that implied a diminished role for religion, and a new capital, Saint Petersburg. Long ago historians saw in the various foreigners living and working in seventeenth-century Russia one of the principal conduits of new ideas and practices. They have been debating the significance of these foreigners ever since. At the beginning of the twentieth century S. F. Platonov believed that the residents of the 'German Suburb' (*Nemetskaia sloboda*), merchants and officers, were crucial to the process, especially since Peter himself was in close contact with them in the 1680s. More recently historians and scholars of Russian literature have gone back to a different and earlier group, the Kiev trained clerics who began to introduce new ideas and new forms of education to the Russian elite a generation before Peter.[1] While the various Kievan clerics produced a great many writings that allow us to trace their own views and impressions, the West European foreigners left almost no records, with one dramatic exception, the diary of Patrick Gordon. The Gordon diary, however, has been available only in a highly selective and often inaccurate nineteenth century German translation, a translation that omitted much of the most interesting material.[2] From the full text scholars will be able to investigate a whole range of issues, military, cultural, social, and also political. The politics in question are the politics of the Russian court, from Gordon's arrival in 1661 until his death in 1699, a period of immense importance in the genesis

[1] S. F. Platonov, *Moskva i Zapad* (Leningrad, 1925); Reinhard Wittram, *Peter I Czar und Kaiser* (2 vols, Göttingen, 1964); Lindsey Hughes, *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great* (New Haven and London, 1998); Paul Bushkovitch, *Religion and Society in Russia: the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York and Oxford, 1992), 128–75; A. N. Robinson, *Bor'ba idei v russkoi literature XVII veka* (Moscow, 1974); L. I. Sazonova, *Literaturnaia kul'tura Rossii: Ranee novoe vremia* (Moscow, 2006).

[2] *Tagebuch des Generalen Patrick Gordon*, ed. and trans. M. Posselt, 3 vols (Moscow-St. Petersburg, 1849–53).

of Peter's transformation of Russia. Court politics were the essence of the Russian state – as well as of most early modern European monarchies – and they are crucial to the understanding of the period. Gordon's diary allows us to understand more clearly both the rise of the favorites of Tsar Aleksei (1645 – 76) that is noticeable from the 1660's onward as well as the rivalry of the Naryshkin faction (Peter's family and boyar allies) with the regent Sofiia and her supporters in the years 1682 – 89.

The history of the politics of the court is essential to understanding the circumstances that brought Peter, his father's younger son, to the throne and to power in August-September, 1689. The factional battles of the 1680s grew out of the rise Artamon Matveev (1625 – 82), in 1671 – 76 the head of the Ambassadorial Office (*Posol'skii prikaz*) that directed Russian foreign policy and Aleksei's principal favorite in those years. It was Matveev that managed to marry Natalia Naryshkina, the daughter of a former fellow officer and Matveev's client, to Aleksei as his second wife. Her first child was Peter, born in 1672. With Aleksei's death and Matveev;'s fall and exile, the Naryshkin family and its allies tried to keep afloat in a hostile court environment under the weak and sickly Tsar Fyodor, a struggle that ended in 1682 when Fyodor died and (after much uproar from the *strel'tsy*, the musketeers) Peter was proclaimed co-tsar along with his older half-brother Ivan. As Peter was young, Ivan was in poor health, and the musketeers hated the Naryshkins, actual power went to Peter's half-sister Sofiia and her favorite, Prince V. V. Golitsyn. For Peter and the Naryshkins to come to power, they had to deal with Sofiia and Golitsyn. While Peter grew up, his mother Natalia, Prince Boris Golitsyn (V.V.'s cousin), and the more exotic Circassian Prince Mikhail Cherkasskii conducted a battle at court in the name of Peter to prepare his accession to real power.[3] Behind the scenes these contending factions determined the fate of Russia, and the new Gordon material throws a great deal of light on that history.

One of the central issues in Russian history in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is the character of the politics of the Russian court, the interplay of aristocratic factions, their relationship to larger politics and everyday governance, and the all-important question of the role of the tsar. While historians of the sixteenth century have studied this topic for half a century, there are

[3] Paul Bushkovitch, *Peter the Great: the Struggle for Power 1671 – 1725* (Cambridge, 2002), chapters 1 – 3. See also P. V. Sedov, *Zakat moskovskogo tsarstva: Tsarskii dvor kontsa XVII* (St. Petersburg, 2006); Lindsey Hughes, *Sophia, Regent of Russia 1657 – 1704* (New Haven and London, 1990); A. S. Lavrov, *Regentsvo tsarevny Sof'i Alekseevny* (Moscow, 1999).

far fewer attempts to uncover the analogous story for the seventeenth century, and they are relatively recent.[4] The cause lies in the relative neglect of the seventeenth century, for the sources are much richer than for earlier periods. Diplomatic sources are much more helpful than for the sixteenth century, for Sweden had a resident agent in Moscow from about 1630, and after the Andrusovo truce with Poland (1667) the obviously enhanced importance of Russia brought permanent ambassadors from Denmark and the Dutch Republic as well. A permanent Polish embassy came after 1684, though its records have not survived in large quantity. Furthermore, Russian sources are both more abundant and more useful for this purpose. From the 1670s onward there is some correspondence of at least a few boyars, the most important being that of prince V. V. Golitsyn. Pavel Sedov has uncovered a source of unmatched interest in the correspondence of monks from provincial monasteries reporting on their dealings with Moscow offices and grandees.[5] The importance of such private sources is that they allow the historian to move beyond the problem of coordinating the information in diplomatic reports with the evidence of promotions and office holding contained in the records of the *Razriad* ('Ordering' Office'), that managed the military and kept records of military and court ranks), a method that inevitably involves some degree of uncertainty in its results. The Gordon diary provides an inside view of the Russian army, court, and elite over thirty years that no other source can offer.

Gordon's position as a Scottish mercenary officer of Catholic faith in Russia gave him an angle of vision possessed by no other source. As a daily participant in the affairs of the Russian army and the offices that administered it (in his case mainly the *Inozemskii prikaz,* or Foreigners' Office, which managed the mercenaries), Gordon reports on the reality of events that otherwise

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[4] A. A. Zimin, *Reformy Ivana Groznogo* (Moscow, 1960); idem, *Oprichnina Ivana Groznogo* (Moscow, 1964: new ed., Moscow, 2001); idem, *V kanun groznykh potriasenii: predposylki pervoi Krest'ianskoi voiny v Rossii* (Moscow, 1986); R.G. Skrynnikov, *Tsarstvo terrora* (St. Petersburg, 1992); idem, *Rossiia nakarnune "Smutnogo vremeni"* ((Moscow, 1980), Nancy Shields Kollmann, *Kinship and Politics: the Making of the Muscovite Political System 1345–1557* (Stanford, California, 1987); A. P. Pavlov, *Gosudarev Dvor i politcheskaia bor'ba pri Borise Godunove* (St. Petersburg, 1992). For a long time the only similar work on the seventeenth century was Robert O. Crummey, *Aristocrats and Servitors: the Boyar Elite in Russia 1613–1689* (Princeton, N. J., 1983), now supplemented by A. P. Pavlov (ed.), *Praviashchaia elita Russkogo gosudarstva IX- nachala XVIII veka: ocherki istorii* (St. Petersburg, 2006), 373–469, and the works listed in note 2 above.

[5] Lindsey Hughes, *Russia and the West: the Life of a Seventeenth Century Westernizer, Prince Vasily Vasil'evich Golitsyn 1643–1714* (Newtonville, Mass., 1984); Bushkovitch, *Peter*, 106–10; Sedov, *Zakat*, 8.

we know only from the official record. As a foreigner, there are inevitably aspects of government affairs and daily life that he did not know about, but the same position as a foreigner means that he noticed things that Russians simply took for granted. Like the diplomats, he allows us to move beyond the endlessly repeated clichés about foreign observers of Russia and their stereotypes. Gordon could certainly repeat those, as he does at the beginning of his description of his time in Russia (II, 129v–130v), but for the rest of the text he provides a pragmatic account of events and conversations free of generalizations. He also clearly did not find Russia incomprehensible or enigmatic.[6] He may have had his views on Russian character, but neither the army nor the government seemed to him peculiar. The diplomats were the same: they did not agonize over questions such as the nature of the Russian *boyarstvo* (was it a nobility or not?). They just called it *Adel* in German or *noblesse* in French and left it at that. For the Scandinavian diplomats writing in German, the duma was simply the *Reichsrat*, a literal German translation of the Swedish/Danish *riksråd*, the aristocratic council of state that advised the Kings of Sweden and Denmark.[7] Similarly Gordon has no difficulty with the structure of the Russian state; to him it is comprehensible in familiar terms: a monarch, his court, the great nobles, the army.

Gordon was an observer of Russian court politics, not a participant. He describes the disputes among the great, but seems to have scrupulously kept to his military position, following the orders of his superiors and providing them with advice when needed. Until 1687 he worked well with Prince V. V. Golitsyn and did not get involved with the Naryshkin faction, though he had many personal ties with it through his fellow officers (Daniel Crawford, Paul Menzies) dating back to the 1660s. When the Naryshkin group approached him in 1688, he was friendly but did not rush into their arms. He was not a client, rather a professional military officer whose contract was to serve in the Russian army, and that is what he did.

What follows is not a complete study of Gordon's observation of Russian court politics. It is merely an attempt to place Gordon in the complex network of alliances at the Russian court, which extended to some degree into the army, and to record the information that he provided on these issues. This information begins from the very first moment of his arrival in Moscow, indeed in a sense before that moment.

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[6] References to the unpublished Gordon Diary in the text are given in the form of volumes in Roman numerals and folio numbers in Arabic numerals..

[7] Bushkovitch, *Peter*, 8–10.

According to the diary, it was Daniel Crawford who (with the Russian envoy Z. F. Leont'ev) convinced Gordon to come to Russia, and he left Warsaw for Moscow in July, 1661, in the company of Daniel Crawford and Paul Menzies (II, 119v–20).[8] On arrival in Moscow, Gordon's first Russian contacts were, as was to be expected, with the *Inozemskii prikaz* and its then head, the boyar Il'ia Danilovich Miloslavskii, tsar Aleksei's father-in-law and one of the most powerful men at the court until 1668.[9] His first meeting was not a happy one, for it was Miloslavskii that made Gordon show his ability to handle arms like a private soldier (II, 128–28v). By the end of the year the relations at the court were already clear, for it was F. M. Rtishchev's 'great dissension' at that time with Miloslavskii that allowed Gordon to come out unscathed from a nasty dispute over housing (II, 137–37v). He also reported Ordin-Nashchokin as 'a very wise statesman and in great favor with the Tzar' (II, 142) under December, 1661, and July, 1663, as 'a favourite of the Czars' (II, 173). Gordon seems to have had some informal ties to Ordin-Nashchokin, as he sent a letter to his fiancée in Moscow with the dignitary (or someone in his suite) in July of the next year (II, 189v). Early in 1665 the affair of Lt. Generals Drummond and Dalyell's release from Russian service shows Gordon's awareness of the power relations at court. The tsar had granted their release at their own request supported by Ordin-Nashchokin and prince Iurii Alekseevich Dolgorukii (II, 200v), but 'the better sort of the Russes were hugely displeased with their demission, especially Elia Daniel. [Miloslavskii], the Emperours father in law, was in the highest degree irritated' (II, 204v). The escape of colonel Kalkstein, an officer in Polish service and prisoner of war in Russia, gave an excuse to try to stop them, and Drummond wrote to Gordon to ask him to procure an order from the tsar 'by the meanes' of Ordin-Nashchokin or Dolgorukii to prevent any attempt to hold them back. Gordon saw the two dignitaries the next day and got the order (II, 205).[10]

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[8] Bushkovitch, *Peter*, 60–3. 75, 81, 89–90, 149; N. V. Charykov, *Posol'stvo v Rim i sluzhba v Moskve Pavla Menezziia 1637–1694: issledovanie* (St. Petersburg, 1906).

[9] S. K. Bogoiavlenskii, *Moskovskii prikaznyi apparat i deloproizvodstvo XVI–XVII vekov* (Moscow, 2006), 263.

[10] Gordon's evidence shows that Ordin-Nashchokin was in favor rather earlier than usually reported. Ordin-Nashchokin was a *dumnyi dvorianin* in 1658–65, rising to *okol'nichii* in 1665, boyar in 1667 when he took control of the *Posol'skii prikaz*. Marshall T. Poe, Ol'ga Kosheleva, Russell Martin, Boris Morozov, *The Russian Elite in the Seventeenth Century*, Annales Academiae scientiarum fennicae, Humaniora 322–3 (2 vols, Helsinki, 2004), I, 431. In the same years 1661–2 the imperial ambassador Meyerberg did not notice Ordin-Nashchokin among the tsar's favorites. Historians, including the present author, dated his rise from the the success of the negotiatins

In the summer of 1666 Gordon went to England to deliver the tsar's letters to King Charles II, so he did not record the Andrussovo treaty of January 30, 1667, which raised Ordin-Nashchokin so much in the tsar's estimation that he appointed him head of the *Posol'skii prikaz* in February of that year.

The first volume of Gordon's diary is followed by a gap of ten years, from 1667 to 1677. Thus there is no description of the crucial years of Ordin-Nashchokin's tenure as head of the *Posol'skii prikaz* and favorite of the tsar, nor of his fall and replacement in both positions by Artamon Matveev. Similarly we do not know what Gordon did at the time of the accession of tsar Fyodor and the fall of Matveev. When the diary resumes Gordon was in the south at Sevsk with the army, though he does mention the decision to confiscate more of Matveev's property and send him to Pustozersk under May 25, 1677 (II, 6v). Nevertheless the second volume does contain some information about Gordon's relationship to the emerging court factions, since he tells us that from his arrival in Moscow in 1661 he served with Paul Menzies in the regiment of Daniel Crawford (2, 128v). Gordon had come to Russia with the two Scots, and it is not surprising that he would serve with them at first. Crawford was promoted to Major-General in July, 1663, but Gordon seems to have continued to serve under him (II, 173v). He went with him to Smolensk, arriving 25 May, 1664 (2, 186v). When Crawford was recalled to Moscow at the end of the year, Gordon was supposed to take the regiment but soon returned to Moscow himself (II, 199, 200). There Gordon received the rank of colonel in February and was ordered to remain in Moscow rather than proceed to Smolensk as he had planned (II, 207–8). In this situation it was Paul Menzies whom Gordon asked to take care of his affairs in Smolensk (II, 208–8v). Crawford returned to Smolensk, where Gordon wrote to him as well as Menzies, throughout the year (II, 209, 214). Crawford then disappears from the diary (he died in 1674), but Gordon does mention handling the correspondence of Menzies with his father from London in November-December 1666 (II, 250v, 252).

The Crawford-Menzies connection is important because both directly and through their friends among Marselis clan the two Scottish friends of Gordon were part of the larger network of the Naryshkin family and their patron Matveev. Kirill Naryshkin, the father of Natalia, served as colonel of a regiment of musketeers with Crawford in Smolensk. Indeed at the time of her marriage to tsar Aleksei in 1671 the rumor in Moscow was that Natalia had picked up Polish habits from her time as the colonel's daughter in Smolensk. Menzies

for the January, 1667 treaty of Andrusovo: Bushkovitch, *Peter*, 29–32, 51–5. See also I. V. Galaktionov, *A. L. Ordin-Nashchokin--russkii diplomat XVII v.* (Moscow, 1961).

even described her on his Italian embassy as a 'girl from Smolensk'. Before his command in Smolensk, Kirill and his brother had served under Matveev in his regiment, and entered the court ranks only after Matveev had married off Natalia to Aleksei. This, in fact was the real background of the Naryshkin marriage, not the eighteenth century fantasy that Natalia was Matveev's ward (*vospitannitsa*).[11] Finally, the Dutch ambassador in Russia in 1669–70, Nicholas Heinsius, met Daniel Crawford and Peter Marselis, and from them learned of the Naryshkin marriage project a full year before it came to completion. Marselis was also the main informant later for the Danish ambassador (who for foreign policy reasons was pro-Matveev) and on the death of Marselis Menzies took his place as the Dane's chief source of information.[12]

The significance of these rather complex interrelations is twofold. First, Gordon was close friends with the circle out of which came, under Matveev's guidance, the second marriage of tsar Aleksei. There is no evidence that Gordon knew Matveev himself well, which is not a surprise since the Scot was at that time too far down in the military hierarchy. It does, however, make one think about Gordon's later success with Peter. Second, Gordon's diary provides further evidence of the ties of friendship as well as marriage among the Crawford, Marselis, and Menzies families, making it clear that the foreign officers and merchants in Russia were solidly enough established by the 1660s to form such ties, ties that lasted over decades, and that their networks were entwined with Russian networks of similar type in the army and the court.

Unfortunately the third volume of Gordon's diary has very little to illuminate his ties to the various groupings. He does describe the wedding of the widow of Peter Marselis to Menzies on 11 February 1677, who also served at Chigirin. Other guests at the wedding included unspecified princes Golitsyn and the 'young' Dolgorukii, presumably prince Mikhail Iur'evich (III, 3, 41v). Among the Golitsyns was surely prince Vasilii Vasil'evich, with whom Gordon had dined a few weeks earlier (III, 1). Yet among his protectors was also prince V. V. Golitsyn's rival, prince G. G. Romodanovskii (III, 1v). It seems that both Menzies and Gordon were keeping up good relations with all the main groupings at court in 1677, the Golitsyns, Dolgorukiis, and Romodanovskiis. Most of the volume is taken up with the siege of Chigirin and other moments of Gordon's service in the south. Gordon had a great deal of contact with princes V. V. Golitsyn and Romodanovskii, but as they were the principal commanders, these contacts reflect mainly reflect his service with the army.

[11] Bushkovitch, *Peter*, 57–60.

[12] Bushkovitch, *Peter*, 61 note 29, 75 note 58, 80–1 note 2.

The fourth volume, in contrast, covering 1684 to 1689, reveals a great deal about the court politics of the time as well as Gordon's own attitude toward them. It opens with Gordon making a trip to Moscow from his usual residence in Kiev. Gordon had been ordered to Kiev at the end of 1678 to supervise the fortifications, and he remained there for the next five years (IV, 7v). Thus his contacts were primarily with the Russian officers and officials in Kiev, as well as with the Ukrainian Cossack commanders, including Hetman Ivan Samoilovich, the Kiev city elite, and a number of prominent local clergymen. He also came into contact with more of the foreign officers, the most important for the future being François Lefort, whom he requested and received as a subordinate in 1678. Lefort's wife was also Gordon's cousin by marriage.[13]

The contacts with the Russian elite made when Gordon was in Kiev centered around the commanders of the army sent south to Sevsk and Kiev as well as the Russian governors in Kiev itself. Among the Kiev governors the most important contacts were with the Sheremetevs. On his trip to Moscow in January, 1684, he dined with P. V. Sheremetev the elder, who had served as governor in Kiev and was now the head of the *Oruzheinyi prikaz* (Armory Office) and several other palace offices (IV, 1v).[14] Gordon may have met Sheremetev many years before, since the former served in various southern fortresses in 1667–9, while the latter was governor of Kiev (1666–8)[15], and the garrisons on the western part of the southern frontier had many dealings with the Kiev governors. While Gordon was in Sevsk (1670–7), however, Sheremetev served as *voevoda* (governor) in Simbirsk, Novgorod, and Tobol'sk in succession and did not return to Kiev until 1681. With him came his son Fyodor Petrovich as his '*tovarishch*' (associate) and his younger son Boris, Peter's future field marshal.[16] The elder Sheremetev was much more than an official contact, for Gordon did not only dine with him in Moscow. Sheremetev's son Fyodor Petrovich arrived in Kiev as voevoda in August, 1684 (IV, 27v), but at first Gordon did not see much of him (two dinners, 16 November and Christmas, IV, 36v, 40). He received letters from the father late in 1684 and in January 1685 and Gordon wrote to Sheremetev 'in answer to his, with promise of faithful advice to his sonne' (IV, 54). In May the Scot received another letter 'full of love' (IV, 73). From then onward Gordon dined with the

[13] Ibid., 122; *F. Lefort: Sbornik materialov i dokumentov* (Moscow, 2006), 62–4.

[14] Bogoiavlenskii, *Moskovskii prikaznyi apparat*, 304.

[15] Patrick Gordon, *Dnevnik, 1677–78,* trans. D. G. Fedosov, Moscow, 2005, 132; Aleksandr Barsukov, *Spiski gorodovykh voevod i drugikh lits voevodskogo upravleniia Moskovskogo gosudarstva XVII stoletiia* (St.Petersburg, 1902), 102.

[16] Barsukov, *Spiski*, 103, 154, 208, 241.

governor more often, including a wedding and a feast where Mazepa was one of the guests (IV, 56v, 57v, 61, 64, 70v, 71v, 77). Gordon describes the illness, death, and funeral of the younger Sheremetev's wife (the daughter of Hetman Samoilovich) in some detail (e.g. IV, 64v) as well as the property complications afterwards.

Patrick Gordon was clearly friendly with the Sheremetevs beyond the official level. He records similar contacts, with the previous governor, A. P. Saltykov but there are no personal letters (IV, 17, 17v, 18, 26). Gordon records writing to another previous governor, prince N. S. Urusov, who had served in Kiev in 1679, but in neither case is there any hint of greater intimacy (IV, 12, 63v,).[17]

The friendship with the Sheremetevs placed Gordon alongside one of the most powerful boyar clans, and one that kept its distance from the circle around V. V. Golitsyn and Sofiia. The Sheremetevs seem not to have involved themselves in the increasingly acrimonious relationships of Sofiia and Tsaritsa Natalia, of Prince Boris Golitsyn and the Naryshkin clan with the supporters of the favorite. The younger Sheremetevs served in the household of tsar Ivan, not Peter. Nevertheless in 1689 they would land on Peter's side and be rewarded for their efforts, perhaps following the lead of P. I. Prozorovskii, Ivan's *d'iadka* (tutor), who came over to Peter in the crisis.[18] The Sheremetev connection also puts into perspective Gordon's relationship with pr V.V. Golitsyn himself and followers. Golitsyn was not just the dominant favorite at court after 1682, he was an important military commander under whom Gordon had served several times, and many of Golitsyn's clients (L. R. Nepliuev, V. A. Zmeev, S. F. Tolochanov, and the Narbekovs) were among the Scot's frequent correspondents.[19] In January, 1684, in Moscow Gordon had 'private conference' with Golitsyn himself on the prospect of a war with the Ottoman Empire and Crimea and the alliance with Poland and the Empire, presenting the favorite with a detailed memorandum on the subject (V, 1b–6v). He was certainly aware of the situation at the Russian court, for one of the possible objections to the war, according to Gordon, was 'That there are two [rulers], by which means the state is divided into factions, the nonconcordance, jealousies, and dissentions among the nobility breeding confusion and irresolution in counsells' (IV, 2). The objection, he thought, was not so serious since the two tsarevich were young, and as long as the 'most

[17] Barsukov, *Spiski*, 103.

[18] Bushkovitch, *Peter*, 129, 133, 161, 171.

[19] Bushkovitch, *Peter*, 168–9.

eminent persons' agreed, the war could be successful (IV, 3–3v). Gordon remained cautious, for he at first declined the offer to meet one of the young princes, preferring to meet them both. In the event, Peter's illness (an excuse?) meant that he only met Ivan, who was 'sickly and infirm' (IV, 7). As Gordon was preparing to return to Kiev in March, Golitsyn told him "that for my liberty to go out of the country I should rely on him, and that I should writt confidently to him of all things that passed in Kyow" (IV, 9). This latter task Gordon fulfilled regularly, as the diary records.

The *Diary*'s account of these discussions with Golitsyn leaves the impression that Gordon wanted to discuss the Turkish war, but that he did not want to be forced to make a choice between the rival factions. He wanted a formal audience with both Ivan and Peter, not just one. Golitsyn's offer to him, to see just one and to choose himself which, seems almost like a trap, designed to find out the Scot's estimation of which side was more important or with which he had greater sympathy. The request to inform him of all matters in Kiev, coupled with the promise to support his plans to go to Scotland, sounds like the prince was telling him that unless he cooperated, the Scot would never leave the country.

As it happened, Gordon did go to England and Scotland in 1686 to take care of his own business as well as that of the Russian government. The trip came after a year of lobbying with the government for redress of various grievances, mainly about pay and promotion, that had accumulated over the years (IV, 73v–6). He wrote to Golitsyn himself about this matter in June, with requests for support to P. V. Sheremetev and L. R. Nepliuev (IV, 77v–8). Then he was called to Moscow, and in January, 1686, he left for London (IV, 99v–101v), returning at the end of August with a letter from King James II to the tsars (IV, 143v–4v). Back in Moscow, Gordon's relationship with Golitsyn and Sofiia deteriorated sharply. He composed an even greater petition than before which produced such a negative reaction that he was told by 'some Russes, who pretended to by my ffriends, that if I did not petition for favour or grace', he might be sent with his family to some remote place of exile. Two additional issues appeared, one that the Russians felt that James was too pro-Turkish, and the other was that Sofiia was angry at his 'obstinacy' apparently in persisting in presenting his grievances (IV, 145, 146–6v). Gordon realized that he had to surrender: he went to Izmailovo, where Sofiia and Ivan were staying, and met Golitsyn, who reproved him for trying to leave Russian service and demanded that he acknowledge his error and ask forgiveness. The assembled courtiers 'did all

fall to the Boyars syde and in his favour, though even against reason and their owne judgment' (IV, 147–7v). He then went to the *Posol'skii prikaz*, where its head, Emel'ian Ukraintsev, gave him a petition with the right formulas to copy, which Gordon did with some amendments (IV, 147v–48). Gordon was forgiven (IV, 148–49v). He continued to be entertained by Golitsyn, who obviously was also trying to efface the bad impression he had created (IV, 155, 158).

Much of the rest of the diary for 1687 is taken up with Gordon's account of the Crimean campaign of 1687 during which, in Gordon's account, Golitsyn instigated and managed the ouster of Ukrainian Hetman Samoilovich and his replacement by Ivan Mazepa.[20] Back in Moscow in the fall Gordon had many official encounters with the favorite, but was entertained only once (14 December: IV, 187v; there are gaps in the diary for that autumn).

Early in 1688 Gordon, apparently suddenly, began to make contact with a whole new group in Moscow, the household of tsar Peter. On January 7 1688, he records that 'I dined by Kniaz Boris Alex. Golitzin,was merry, and came late home'. The next day princes Petr Alekseevich Golitsyn and Boris Fyodorovich Dolgorukov dined with Gordon (IV, 193–3v). This was a highly important trio. Prince Boris was the *kravchii* (cupbearer) for Tsar Peter, effectively the head of his household, as well as the most important and most visible leader of his faction at court. Prince Petr Golitsyn was his brother, a *komnatnyi stol'nik* (roughly equivalent to gentleman of the bedchamber) of Peter since at least 1676, and Prince Boris Dolgorukov was a *komnatnyi stol'nik* to Peter's mother, Tsaritsa Natalia. His brother, Prince Iakov Fyodrovich Dolgorukov, also served as *komnatnyi stol'nik* to Peter, and was at that moment on a diplomatic mission to France and Spain. Both Iakov Dolgorukii and Petr Golitsyn had prominent careers in the army, the Senate and diplomatic corps in later years.[21]

Ten days later Gordon visited Andrei Artamonovich Matveev, and the next day dined with him (IV, 194). He too served Peter as *komnatnyi stol'nik*, but even more important he was the son of Artamon Matveev, tsar Aleksei's last

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[20] Golitsyn's role in the 'election' of Mazepa is a sore point of Ukrainian historiography, for whom the role of Mazepa as a Russian stooge in 1687 is an uncomfortable fact. See Bushkovitch, *Peter*, 152–3, note 50, and most recently Tat'iana Tairova-Iakovleva, *Mazepa* (Moscow, 2007), 48–54.

[21] Bushkovitch, *Peter*, 125–69, 175–7, 194; Poe, *Russian Elite* I, 397, 404; [P. I. Ivanov], *Alfavitnyi ukazatel' familii i lits, upominaemykh v boiarskikh spiskakh* (Moscow, 1853), 93, 118.

favorite and the man responsible for the tsar's marriage to Peter's mother.[22] The diary now begins to record more information about Peter, his fireworks at Maslenitsa (Shrovetide, February 21) and his return to Moscow (June 23), his name day and return to his favorite suburban residence at Preobrazhenskoe a few days later (IV, 196v, 206–6v). Gordon continued to see Golitsyn: 'A feast by Kniaz Boris Alex. Golitzin at his countrey house, where with much company merry' (July 25; IV, 208). Prince V. V. Golitsyn's movements continue to appear in the diary, but Gordon saw less of him personally, and now always without incident. He dined with him on August 30, where the prince again complained that King James was not favorable enough to Russia, apparently over commercial dealings (IV, 210v).

September, 1688, brought a whole new element to Gordon's life. Peter began to ask for drummers from the Scot for his own regiments, to the anger of V. V. Golitsyn. On the fifteenth Gordon dined with colonel Le Fort, one of several meetings recorded that year, but this time prince Boris Golitsyn, one of the guests, 'came to my house but did not stay'. What they probably discussed becomes clear in the next entry, for 17 Sepember: 'In the afternoon the yongest Tzaar comeing from Prebrozinsko, I did meet his M. and was honoured with a kiss of his hand, and enquired of my health' (IV, 211v,–2).

Gordon realized that he was now meeting regularly with members of a faction at court, the Naryshkin faction opposed to Sofiia and V.V. Golitsyn. Describing one of his now rather rare meetings with the latter he wrote that 'I dined by Elias Tabort, where was the Boyar K. V. V. and *most of that party*' (emphasis mine, IV, 213v, 30 September). His new friends did not mean that he totally ignored the still dominant party, for he had plenty of business to transact. The autumn of 1688 was the moment of the Glorious Revolution in England, which naturally caused dismay to Gordon and he discussed it at length with Fyodor Shaklovityi, the 'second favorite' at the end of November (IV, 220). He remained in contact with Zmeev and L. R. Nepliuev, and dined again with V. V. Golitsyn and his son in February, 1689 (IV, 229).[23] Thus by the time of the second Crimean campaign Gordon had made solid contact with

[22] Bushkovitch, *Peter*, 49–79, 123–30, 141–2, 177; Sedov, *Zakat*, 111–89.

[23] Fyodor Leont'evich Shaklovityi was the main supporter of Sofiia and V. Golitsyn among the government clerks (*d'iaki*) and an important figure in his own right. After 1682 he headed both the *Razriad* and the Musketeer Office, giving him control over the army. He achieved the rank of duma secretary, the highest rank of clerks, giving him access to the duma. A major actor in 1689, he was executed on Peter's victory. Bushkovitch, *Peter*, 159–62, 165–8.

the Naryshkin faction and Peter's household, without breaking ties with prince V. V. Golitsyn, though those seem to have become more of a formality of his military service. How can this change be explained?

There is clearly some personal side to the new contacts. François Lefort was Gordon's relative by marriage, thought the diary does not suggest that they were personally very close (or Gordon did not record all contacts with Lefort because they were too common). Lefort, however, was close to prince Boris Alekseevich Golitsyn from at least 1685, for that it is what he wrote to his brother Ami in Geneva in March of that year: 'le Prince Knese Borris Alexevits c'est celuy qui m'ayme d'une amitié extraordinaire'. Prince Boris had promised him a cavalry regiment and dined frequently with Lefort. Lefort may not have wanted to put on paper the role of the prince in court politics, but he was perfectly aware that his other role, besides that of *kravchii* to Peter, was to head the *Kazanskii dvorets* (Kazan palace).[24] There is no way of knowing whose was the initiative in the meetings of Gordon and Boris Golitsyn, but Lefort undoubtedly had some role. Another intermediary may have been Paul Menzies, who also seems to have been a friend of Boris Golitsyn. The other personal side to Gordon's sudden contact with the Naryshkin faction may be his bad experiences with V. V. Golitsyn and Sofiia in late 1686 over the rejection of his grievances. Gordon never records that sort of inner thoughts, though he did mention his very unhappy state of mind, and the dinners with V. V. Golitsyn seem to become rarer after this moment. Neither does Gordon record his thoughts about the 1687 Crimean campaign, though reading between the lines he clearly noted the failures of leadership. He does not tell us what he thought of the removal of Samoilovich, with whom he was in constant contact during his time in Kiev, though he makes it clear that Mazepa received the Hetmanate not from the desires of the Ukrainian Cossacks but as the result of Golitsyn's manipulation of the election. More careful study of the 1687 campaign might throw more light on Gordon's conclusions about it.

Whatever personal grievances the Scot might have had, there is another element in his new-found contacts with Peter and his household. In 1688 Peter reached the age of sixteen, and even before his birthday, exactly in January, the diplomats report that the young tsar for the first time began to take at least formal part in public affairs. He was brought to the duma, and his uncle Lev Kirillovich Naryshkin received the rank of boyar.[25] In other words, Peter

[24] *F. Lefort: Sbornik*, 77.

[25] One of the diplomats reporting all this was the Dutch resident Keller, with whom Gordon was in frequent contact: Bushkovitch, *Peter*, 154.

was approaching manhood, and V. V. Golitsyn and Sofiia could not pretend otherwise. The Naryshkin group was coming out into the open, and perhaps it was they who (through Lefort) wanted to meet Gordon, by now a general and an important figure among the foreign officers.

The final crisis of the regency of Tsarevna Sofiia came in the wake of the Crimean campaign of 1689. The campaign was no more a success than that of two years before, and at the end of June the soldiers were sent home, the orders coming with V. V. Golitsyn's client V. S. Narbekov, with forewarning from Andrei Lyzlov, the future author of the *Skifskaia istoriia,* an account of the Ottoman Empire that was among the first Russian historical works to rely mainly on Western sources (IV, 243). The last part of the diary for 1689 is one of the sections that earlier historians most often cited from the Posselt translation, the description of the collapse of the regency of Sofiia and Peter's rise to power. S. M. Solov'ev, E. Shmurlo, M. M. Bogoslovskii, and all later historians used the diary in Posselt's translation, directly or through earlier historians.[26] Fortunately this part of Posselt's translation was among the fullest, and has provided the most detailed chronology of events, apart from the gap for 19–31 August. Solov'ev was among the first to use the diary, though he was not interested in Gordon's relationship to the court factions. He cited the Scot merely as an 'eyewitness' or even impersonally: 'сохранилось любопытное известие' ('a curious notice has been preserved').[27] Gordon himself entered Solov'ev's account of events only as a commander in September, when he openly went over to Peter. Bogoslovskii used him more extensively and did investigate his connections. He used Gordon with other sources to demonstrate that Boris Golitsyn was in charge at the Trinity Monastery. He also cited Gordon in the Posselt version to mean that Gordon believed that Boris Golitsyn was sending orders to the *strel'tsy* without Peter's knowledge, but Gordon actually wrote only that 'it was bruted about' (IV, 250v).[28] Even so, Bogoslovskii does not seem to have realized how thoroughly Gordon understood the factional lineup at the court. He asserted as if it was new that under 23 September 1688 Gordon noted the division of the court into two factions. In fact the statement may not refer to court parties (IV, 213), though the later comment under 29 September (IV, (213v) does clearly refer to them.

[26] S. M. Solov'ev, *Istoriia Rossii s drevneishikh vremen* (15 vols, Moscow, 1960–6), VII, 438–67, originally published in 1864; E Shmurlo, 'Padenie tsarevny Sofii', *Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnogo prosveshcheniia,* 303 (January, 1896), 38–95; M. M. Bogoslovskii, *Peter I: Materialy dlia biografii*, 5 vols., (Moscow, 1940–8), I, 68–87.

[27] Solov'ev, *Istoriia*., VII, 458, 462.

[28] Bogoslovskii, *Petr,* I, 83.

As we know, however, Gordon was aware of the divisions already early in 1684 (above). Bogoslovskii did derive from the Posselt version that in 1688 prince B. A. Golitsyn 'особенно сблизился' ('grew particularly close') with Gordon and Lefort, but he did not realize how new was Boris Golitsyn's contact with Gordon nor (since he did not have Lefort's correspondence) that Golitsyn and Lefort were already close in 1685.[29] For the actual events of 1689, however, Gordon provided the basic chronology, and on that basis historians have added the information derived from Russian sources such as the Shaklovityi trial and other archival material. Bogoslovskii created the fullest account on that basis, and later historians, Reinhard Wittram, N. I. Pavlenko, A. S. Lavrov, Lindsey Hughes, and the present author largely followed Bogoslovskii's version of events, supplementing it with other sources. Only Hughes had some direct access to Gordon's original text.[30] Thus Gordon's diary provided the skeleton of the narrative of 1689, fleshed out by other foreign and Russian material.

The original text of Gordon's diary, in the original language and without Posselt's omissions, provides a revised picture of Gordon's relationship to Russian court politics. He did not merely come into contact with the Naryshkin faction early in 1688. From the time of his arrival in Russia in 1661 his Scottish friends and fellow officers, Daniel Crawford and Paul Menzies, had most of their Russian contacts with the Naryshkin group, starting with the father of tsaritsa Natalia. By 1678 Gordon had François Lefort under his command, who was also to become his relative by marriage. In these years none of the foreign officers were any sense involved in the Russia court factions, rather they seem to have kept out of the disputes and served diligently in the army under whoever fate placed over them, Il'ia Miloslavskii, princes Vasilii Golitsyn and Grigorii Romodanovskii. As time went on, this degree of distance became harder to sustain. As the years passed, Lefort and especially Gordon rose in importance and rank. By 1684 Gordon was speaking very frankly to prince Vasilii Golitsyn about foreign affairs, and trying to maintain his neutrality in Russian politics, even under some pressure from the prince. When his relative Lefort described Prince Boris Golitsyn as his friend in 1685, Gordon had become indirectly entangled the Naryshkin faction. Personally he held off until early 1688, when he came into frequent contact with Boris Golitsyn and Peter himself, though even then he does not seem to have been as closely involved as Lefort. In the crisis of August, 1689, the foreign officers were at

[29] See above, and Bogoslovskii, *Petr,* I, 93.

[30] Wittram, *Peter*, I, 93–102; N. I. Pavlenko, *Petr Velikii* (Moscow, 1994), 27–32; Lavrov, *Regentsvo*, 157–82; Hughes, *Sophia*, 221–41, 308–9; Bushkovitch, *Peter*, 157–69.

first not pressed to make a choice. Only on 4 September, when orders arrived from Peter to come to the Trinity Monastery, did Gordon make a move. After some discussion among the officers, and after they had informed Vasilii Golitsyn, Gordon told his colleagues that 'I was resolved to go, and would be gone in the evening'. This decision decided the rest of the mercenary officers: 'whereupon all great and small made ready' (IV, 253v).

Even so Gordon was not taking the initiative. Prince Vasilii Golitsyn, by the Scot's account, was already looking for a way out of the crisis, a sign of weakness (IV, 252v: 3 September 1689). It was not to be expected that Gordon would take the initiative. Aside from the unpredictability of the outcome, Gordon knew that the relations between the factions were complicated. He recorded both Boris Golitsyn's attempt to get his cousin Vasilii to surrender peaceably and ask for Peter's favor on 2 September, and the later moves by Prince Boris to lighten Vasilii's sentence (IV, 252, 256v). Most important, Gordon as a foreign mercenary officer, however high in rank, did not get totally involved in Russian court politics. He stood just outside them, and though clearly aligned with the Naryshkin faction in 1688–89, he was not a participant until the very end. What his story shows is the complexity of court factions in late seventeenth century Russia, with their long reach into the community of foreign officers, merchants, and diplomats. Around the actual actors, the great boyars at the court and the members of the ruling dynasty, were a larger number of lesser folk, Russian and foreign officers and others, on whom the factions hoped that they could rely in a crisis. Gordon was not an independent actor in Russian court politics, but he was more than a passive witness.

Patrick Gordon was the highest ranking and most prominent of the foreign officers in the Russian army and his story reveals a great deal about the role of those officers. His attitude was not, of course, universal. Many of the officers, maybe most of them, stayed out of Russian politics entirely. Others, most prominently Paul Menzies, were more deeply involved, and perhaps that is the reason that the more cautious Gordon says relatively little about him. As the foreign officers were, at the end of the seventeenth century, essential to the Russian army, Gordon's account of their role is enough to make it a crucial source, but there is more. It is an important source for the politics of the court. From the full text of the diary we have new information about the relations among the prominent figures at the court in the 1660s and a much more nuanced chronicle of the factional battles of the 1680s. Unfortunately most of the entries for the reign of tsar Fyodor are lost, except for the Chigirin

campaign, where there is naturally little about the disputes among grandees back in Moscow.[31] Finally, the Gordon diary in its original version remains the best account of the course of events in 1689.

It has been normal in Russian historiography to divide sources into 'foreign' and Russian. This classification ignores the radical differences among the foreigners, lumping together the reports of casual tourists with those of diplomats who spent years cultivating contacts at the court. It also ignores the unique features of the records of foreigners who to a greater or lesser degree integrated themselves into Russian life. Gordon's diary has normally been considered one of the 'foreign' accounts of Russia, and to be sure he was a Scot and not a Russian. Nevertheless, the diary – again, something visible only in the full version – reveals a man who was indeed a foreigner, but at the same time an insider on the Russian scene. Perhaps he is better classified among the many foreigners who came to Russia and retained ties with their original homes, but whose life was nevertheless more involved with Russia more than with their countries of origin. Such were Gordon's contemporaries such as the Marselis family or Paul Menzies, in a later century the sculptor Carlo Rastrelli and his son Francesco (the architect of the Winter Palace) or the boyhood tutor of Tsar Paul, Baron Ludwig Nicolai, and many other Europeans whose lives ended up forever tied to Russia and her history. As a source the Gordon diary is not of the same type as the works of even the most talented diplomats of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Baron Sigismund von Herberstein and Adam Olearius, much less tourists such as Cornelis de Bruyn or Francesco Algarotti in the eighteenth. However well-intentioned, the diplomats and tourists came to Russia for a short time, had few unofficial contacts, and normally knew nothing of the language. Gordon's diary is more of a piece with the memoirs of count Ernst Münnich from the time of Catherine the Great or those of General Theodor Schubert in the nineteenth century, foreigners who became part of the Russian scene, who wrote in French and German but saw Russia from the inside. It is this insider view, combined with Gordon's literary talent and sharp eye, which makes it an invaluable testimony to a central moment in Russian history.

Yale University

[31] For the 1680s Gordon also provides much information on the relations among the colonels of the Ukrainian hetmanate and the doings of the Hetmans themselves as well as their ties to prominent figures in Moscow, especially prince V. V. Golitsyn. This is an important topic that will repay further investigation.