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Letters between Harford Jones and Lord Elgin

Holding Institution	British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers
Reference	IOR/L/PS/9/76/106
Date(s)	16 Nov 1799-17 Jan 1800 (CE, Gregorian)
Written in	English in Latin
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About this record

Copies of five letters between Lord Elgin, HM Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, and Harford Jones, Resident in Bagdad [Baghdad]:

1. A letter from Elgin to Jones, sent from Constantinople [Istanbul] and dated 16 November 1799. The letter announces Elgin's arrival in Constantinople and assumption of his duties, offers assistance, and asks for information regarding Bagdad and Persia [Iran]. A duplicate of this letter can be found in IOR/L/PS/9/76/103.

2. A letter from Elgin to Jones, sent from Constantinople and dated 21 December 1799. The letter orders Jones not to open or read any letter addressed to Elgin from India. A duplicate of this letter can be found in IOR/L/PS/9/76/103.

3. A letter from Elgin to Jones, sent from Constantinople and dated 21 December 1799. Elgin renounces the use of cyphers in his communications with India. A duplicate of this letter is catalogued as IOR/L/PS/9/76/104.

4. A letter from Jones to Elgin, sent from Bagdad and dated 17 January 1800. The letter reports the transit of Elgin's dispatches to India via Bagdad and Bussora [Basra] and congratulates Elgin on his appointment as Ambassador. Jones also outlines the policy of the British Government in India towards Persia [Iran], reports on events in Afghanistan, and describes British interests in Bagdad. It also reports a rumour that the Shereef [Sharīf] of Mecca has offered to read the khutbeh [Friday prayer sermon] in the name of Baba Khan [Fath-'Alī Shāh Qājār, Shāh of Persia] instead of the Grand Signior [Sultān of the Ottoman Empire] in exchange for

money. A duplicate of this letter can be found in IOR/L/PS/9/76/105.

5. A letter from Jones to Elgin, sent from Bagdad and dated 17 January 1800. Jones acknowledges the receipt of Elgin's letter of 21 December and pledges not to open or read letters addressed to Elgin from India as instructed. A duplicate of this letter can be found in IOR/L/PS/9/76/107.

To
Harford Jones Esq^r
British Resident
at Bagdad.

Sir,

On the 6th Instant, I reached Constantinople in the Character of his Majesty's Ambassador Extraordinary, and Minister Plenipotentiary; and have assumed accordingly the Business of this Mission.

I found here on my Arrival a Letter from you, to which I shall be happy to pay every Attention the Moment my presentations are over; and that I can enter upon Affairs with the Members of this Government.

Meanwhile after much Conversation, with M. Durdan respecting you, and the Communication, which he made to me of your Correspondence, I beg to offer you any Assistance, in my Power here, and to desire to hear

hear from you, as often and as circumstantially as possible.

I shall have more Leisure, should be enter minutely into Subjects worthy Attention, At present I shall merely request you will be so obliging as to furnish me, with full Information, relative to your Situation and to the commercial Interests of the East India Company connected with the Establishment at Bagdad, Every notion, you can procure me respecting Persia, comes to be of much consequence, at the present conjuncture, and I am anxious, to have this Information, with the advantage of your Authority.

I have the honor to be
with much Respect
Sir

Your very obedient hum^{ble} Serv^t
Elgin.

Constantinople
the 16th November 1799.

Cor.
the 2

(2)

Sir

Not being acquainted with the orders under which you may act relative to Letters passing thro' your hands, I must beg Leave to say that my Instructions, for corresponding with India being in many Instances of a most secret Nature, no Letter endorsed with my Name, or directed to me, and coming to you on the Passage, is on any account whatsoever, to be opened and read: and I have to request that you will by the first opportunity send me, a written acknowledgement, of your having received, and your complying with this official direction.

I have the honor to be,
with the highest Respect
Sir

Your very obedient hum^{ble} Serv^t
Elgin

Constantinople
the 24th December 1799.

Private

Sir,

I have nothing to add, to Mr. Tooke's
communications of this date - and merely add the
enclosed that I may be enabled to carry on my Corres-
-pondence, with India, without the great trouble, of
Cyphering. With the Assurance, I request from you,
and a similar one, I demand from other persons
similarly situated I shall be able to proceed in
Business without Inconvenience.

I have the honor to be,
Sir

Your obed^t: hum^l: Servant
Elgin.

Constantinople
the 21st December 1799.

True Copies.
Harford Jones

Mr. Tooke's letter 18th June 1799
R. Elgin

(3)

To
His Excellency
The Right Honble the Earl of Elgin
His Britannic Majesty's Ambassador Extraordinary
Vc. Vc. Vc. Vc.
at The sublime Porte

My Lord

I have the honor, to acknowledge the
Receipt on the 8th Instant of your Excellency's commands
of the 16th November, accompanied by two Packets for the Honble
the President, at Bombay which were carefully forwarded the
next Morning to the Resident at Bussora, with a Request
that they might be sent to India, by an express conveyance
agreeably to your desire intimated to me by the Honble
Company's Agent M. Toke.

At the same time, that I beg to offer
my

my congratulations on your Excellency's Arrival at Constan-
-tinople, I hasten to express, the just and due sense, I entertain
of the obliging and condescending Promises you have
made me of your Assistance, and Support; and to assure
you that I will not omit, to communicate those Circum-
-stances, worthy of Notice which may take place, either here
or in Persia, by every opportunity that shall present itself.

The information communicated by your
Excellency by his Majesty's Ministers and by my Honble
Superiors has made you acquainted with the Line of Policy
which the British Government in India has adopted at
the Court of Persia - with the Expedition made by Baba Khan
during last Summer into the Province of Khorassan, with
his precipitate Retreat on the arrival of Zeman Shah at
Herat; and with his final Return to his present Capital
Tehran. Your Excellency has been made acquainted also
with Meerza Mehdi Khan, and the Nature of his Mission.
and his Majesty's Secretary of Legation has I hope communi-
-cated to you, the recent Appointment of Captain Malcom of
of the Madras Establishment, to be his Lordship the Govern-
General's Envoy at the Court of Baba Khan. On these subjects
therefore, it is unnecessary for me, to trouble you, but I think it
proper

proper, to mention, that under the Authority of Mr. Dundas, I wrote a friendly complimentary Letter to Rahmut-Ullah, Khan the favorite Minister of Lenzian Shah which was to serve as a sort of indirect credential, to a person employed to sound him, and the Shah on the Subject of an English Embassy, to the Court of Caboul: that the Letter was dispatched on the 24th September; and that I may reasonably expect within a very few days more to receive a Reply to it. I do nothing my Lord, to make me change the sentiments, I have already ventured to express to Mr. Dundas on the subject of Baba Khan which appear to have been communicated by that Minister to your Excellency.

The latest Accounts, I have of Lenzian Shah are that he had returned, towards Caboul after having left his artillery at Herat by which I am in hopes, he has not pursued his Invasion of India during this Winter. Baba Khan is at Tahiran, and by Report, Shah Zadeh Mahmood, the rebellious, and defector Brother of Lenzian Shah is also at that Capital. Meerza Mehedi Ally Khan arrived at Tahiran in his Way, to Tahiran on the 17th October, and, as I may reasonably expect to hear from him within a few days I shall then hope, to have it in my Power, to transmit to your Excellency, more ample, more authentic, and more interesting Information.

Th.

The Honble the East India Company have
not at present any commercial Interest at Bagdad tho' from
some queries lately put to me by the Honble the Secret
Committee, and from my Replie's thereto, I am lead to imagine
that they may ^{som} have a very important one: of which if it takes
place your Excellency will no doubt be amply informed by his
Majesty's Ministers, and my Honble Superiors. The dearest
Interest the Honble Company have at present or perhaps can
have in this Country is the speedy and safe Transmission
of the publick dispatches, to and from India, on which
account the Establishment at Bagdad, will in my humble
Opinion always be a Matter of Importance, & them.

I presume his Majesty's Secretary of
Legation delivered to your Excellency my Address of the 20th
December, and in continuation of the subject mentioned, therein
I think it my duty to communicate, tho' under the strongest
hopes that your Excellency will not mention the Means by which
it has come to your Knowledge, that a person to whom the
Pashaw most confidentially entrusted it informed, ^{me} that the
Pashaw, had assured him he had received certain Advice
(I believe an intercepted Letter) of the Sherief of Mecca having
offered Baba Khan for a certain Sum of Money to read the
Kutbeh in his Name instead of that of the Grand Signior.

Your

Baba
the 17th

Baba
the 17th

Your Excellency will no doubt perceive this^{is} Matter if it be true ⁵
sufficiently important to justify the secret dispatch of a Tartar.

I have the honor to be,
with the most profound Respect
My Lord,
Your very obedient hum^l: Servant
Harford Jones.

Bagdad
the 17th January 1800.

My Lord,

I have the honor to acknowledge the
Receipt of your Commands of the 21st December in regard to
such Packets endorsed with your Name or directed to you as may
come into my hands on their Passage to or from India, to
which I beg to assure your Excellency I shall pay the strictest
and most correct Attention.

I have the honor to be,
with the most profound Respect
My Lord,
Your very obedient hum^l: Servant
Harford Jones.

Bagdad
the 17th January 1800.





