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Letter from Harford Jones to Lord Elgin

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About this record

A copy of a letter from Harford Jones, Resident in Bagdad [Baghdad], to Lord Elgin, HM Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, sent from Bagdad and dated 3 September 1801.

Jones states that he is planning to leave Bagdad for a location south of the city along with the Residency staff, despite the objections of the Pashaw [Büyük Sulaymān Pāshā, Governor of Bagdad].

The letter also conveys reports from Persia [Iran], Afghanistan, and the Caucasus, including: reports that Hossein Kouli Khan [Ḥusyan Qulī Khān Qājār] has captured Ispahan [Isfahan]; reports of executions carried out by Hossein Kouli Khan and the King [Fath-'Alī Shāh Qājār, Shāh of Persia]; reports of a defeat of Zeman Shah [Zamān Shāh Durrānī, Ruler of Afghanistan] to his brother Shah Zadeh Mahmood [Maḥmūd Shāh Durrānī]; and reports of a Russian incursion into Georgia.

A duplicate of this letter is catalogued as IOR/L/PS/9/76/180.

Letter from Harford Jones to Lord Elgin [1r] (1/4)

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

My Lord,

I had last the honor to address your Excellency under the 18th
Ultimo, and on the 30th I had that of receiving your commands of the 1th
August

Surrounded, as I have been for these three months past, with
difficulties as unpleasant as novel, It is scarce necessary to mention the
Satisfaction, I received from the flattering expressions of Confidence your
Excellency has condescended to make use of towards me: I must hope how-
ever that you will believe it is and ever will be my endeavour to merit them.

The heats being considerably broken, and my present Situation
with the Government rendering my Residence in Bagdad neither very
creditable nor very comfortable, I yesterday evening delivered in an offi-
-cial Note, stating my intention of encamping with every body attached
to the Mission, at some little distance to the Southward of Bagdad,
and remaining there until His Majesty's Ministers or the Company
should direct me what to do.

The Pashaw, who about four days ago suffered a kind of
Stroke, whilst airing, and who as the Company's Linguist tells me,
is exceedingly infirm solicited me by message to lay aside the idea

of

Letter from Harford Jones to Lord Elgin [1v] (2/4)

of leaving Town — to remain in Town, as propriety would demand, I should avoid stirring from home, until proper Satisfaction has been procured from the Government, would put me to great inconvenience, not only in point of comfort, but probably in point of health — and I am sure the Conduct of the Government towards me has been such that my Honorable Superiors will think me justified in refusing the Pashaw such a sacrifice, Let me venture respectfully to say, My Lord, with a view to our national Credit in Persia, India, and with the Afghans, that the wanton and great disgrace, which the Pashaw has cast on the Mission / urged to it no doubt, poor old Man! by a set of Scoundrels, who have other purposes in hand / must be severely punished by the Porte. Your Excellency will — pardon me, I hope for saying thus much on a point, the consideration of which belongs to you and His Majesty's other Ministers.

The Mystery we have been in for some time past in respect to the state of Persia begins to clear up — Hossien Kouli Khan the King's Brother, who was Governor of Cashan, and its dependencies, after laying Cashan under a heavy Contribution fled with a number of Attendants to Isfahan — The Beglar bey of Isfahan, a City without means of defence, is said to have fled at the approach of the Prince, by which means — Hossien Kouli Khan got possession of it, from the Inhabitants of which Report says he has exacted 30000 Tomans.

At the time the King seized his Minister Saïjee Ibrahim Khan, he caused one or two great Bahliary Khans to be put to death, a Circumstance, that cooled the affection of that Tribe for his Majesty — Hossien Kouli Khan, taking advantage of this, endeavoured to open a Correspondence with the malcontents, who, it is said, reproached him with having in a former Affair of this sort, made his peace with his

Brother

Letter from Harford Jones to Lord Elgin [2r] (3/4)

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Brother, and sacrificed by that means the lives of all who joined him. On this, as the Story goes, Hossien Khan, in the presence of the Bakhtiary Messengers, murdered the Prince Shawinshaw, the son of his Brother, who had been put under his tutelage at Cashan, intending thereby to convince the Bakhtiarys that the Breach between himself and his ^{ty} Majesty was irreparable. Hossien Kouli Khan is reported to be at the head of 10 or 12,000 Men.

Although the greater part of the foregoing is given out here with great confidence, I confess to your Excellency I believe very little of it, and my incredulity proceeds from what one of ^{my} People, lately returned, tells me of the orderly state of the Roads and from the daily arrival here of considerable Caravans, which, if Hossien Kouli Khan's rebellion had put on so formidable an appearance, certainly would ^{not} be the case. It must be confessed however that Hossien Kouli Khan has left Cashan.

I had the honor sometime ago to transmit your Excellency a Memoire on the Affair of Senno and Ardistan, and I have since learnt the King of Persia has sent 2000 Horse towards Bullics, which gives cause of alarm to this Government.

A Report has prevailed here, and by comparing dates it seems at least possible to be true, that Zeman Shah on the 12th Mo-harrem, between Caboul and Candahar, was obliged to fly before his Brother Shah Zadeh Mahmood, who afterwards proceeded in his march towards Caboul. Shah Zeman is said to have fled towards Lahore.

Altho' I know not what degree of Credit it deserves, it perhaps may be proper to mention to your Excellency that you may compare

it

Letter from Harford Jones to Lord Elgin [2v] (4/4)

it with such intelligence as you get by other means, a Report which prevails here of the Russians having sent large bodies of Troops, which have arrived into Georgia. — I ought however to add that I have a man in those parts, from whom I have not got any information on the subject — If your Excellency knows any thing more of this Affair than myself, I shall consider myself obliged by any Information on it you will condescend to impart, especially as it may be the means of enabling me to get at the Truth.

Nothing in the world, My Lord, can be more embarrassed than this Government, which in a short space has had the singular talent to make itself enemies on all sides. — The Porte, in my humble opinion, should be put very much on her guard on the Affair of the Wa ha by — Her existence depends on it — and this Government for these 18 months last past, for I have watched their proceedings with uncommon care, has by its Conduct destroyed every means it had of resisting these Sectaries.

The Pashaw has received advice from Bussora of the arrival of one of his Majesty's, which from what I can make out, appears to be a Vessel sent thither with Dispatches from Sir Home Popham.

I have the honor to be

with profound respect —

My Lord,

Your most obedient and

devoted humble servant

(signed) Harford Jones

Bagdad

the 3rd Sept. 1801.

MS/A/10/172

True Copy
Harford Jones

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