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Griboedov and the Willock Affair

Alexander Sergeevich Griboedov's letter of December 24, 1828 O.S. (January 5, 1829 N.S.)¹ to his wife Nina has hitherto been considered his last extant piece of correspondence.² The Manuscript Division of the University of Nottingham Library, however, has in its archives a copy of an unpublished Griboedov letter which now replaces the letter to Nina as his last surviving letter.³ It belongs to the final weeks of Griboedov's life, early February 1829. I found the letter among that portion of the Portland Papers which comprises the correspondence of Lord William Bentinck, governor general of India from 1828 to 1835. It was lying in a packet containing three other documents: a letter from Lieutenant Colonel John Macdonald, British envoy to Persia,⁴ to Sir John Malcolm, his brother-in-law⁵ and governor of Bombay; a letter from Sir John Malcolm to Lord William Bentinck; and an "Extract of Private Letter from Lt. Col. Macdonald to Sir John Malcolm."⁶ The first two letters

1. All dates for English documents are in New Style. All dates for Griboedov's biography and for Russian documents have been converted to New Style (which is twelve days later than Old Style). Since they have almost always been rendered only in Old Style in Griboedov scholarship, they have not been adequately integrated with English documents, which are all in New Style. Where a date is part of the title of a Russian document, it is of course in Old Style but is cited in New Style (e.g., note 34).

2. Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv literatury i iskusstva, Moscow: fond 131, opis' 1, no. 36. This letter was first published in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii A. S. Griboedova*, ed. I. A. Shliapkin, 2 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1889), 1: 332-34. However, inasmuch as I have had the opportunity to compare Griboedov's published letters with the originals and have found errors and omissions, I use the originals as my source.

3. University of Nottingham Library: Portland Papers. Lord William Bentinck's Papers. Pw Jf 2748/XXV. This library will henceforth be cited as UNL. I should like to thank the Canada Council for a research grant which enabled me to consult the archives in Great Britain cited in this article and the President's Research Grants Committee of Simon Fraser University for funds for the reproduction of documents in these archives.

4. Lieutenant Colonel Macdonald was created a knight bachelor on November 17, 1829 (*DNB*).

5. Lady Malcolm and Mrs. Macdonald were sisters. See John W. Kaye, *The Life and Correspondence of Major-General Sir John Malcolm, G.C.B., Late Envoy to Persia, and Governor of Bombay: From Unpublished Letters and Journals*, 2 vols. (London, 1856), 2: 431.

6. I wish to thank His Grace, the Duke of Portland, for permission to publish these letters and others from Lord William Bentinck's Papers cited in this article. I found a copy of Malcolm's letter to Bentinck among the Campbell Papers (MSS. Eur. D. 556) at the India Office Library, but the letter from Griboedov was missing. I wish to thank Dr. R. J. Bingle of the India Office Library for suggesting to me that since Bentinck's

form a triptych with Griboedov's letter, for all concern chiefly the topic of the scandalous behavior in St. Petersburg of Sir Henry Willock, the first secretary to the British mission. The extract is irrelevant to this topic and will not be discussed here.

After the Russian victory over Persia in 1827, Griboedov played a considerable role in the negotiation of the Treaty of Turkmanchai. He was chosen by the commander in chief of Russian forces in the Caucasus, General Ivan Fedorovich Paskevich, to bring the treaty to St. Petersburg, where he arrived in March 1828. In April of that year Griboedov was appointed minister plenipotentiary to Persia. He married the Princess Nina Chavchavadze in Tiflis, Georgia, on September 3, and a few weeks later proceeded with her and his suite to the new post. On October 18 they arrived in Tabriz, Persia, where the foreign missions resided. Leaving his pregnant wife and part of his suite here, Griboedov set out on December 21 or 22 for Tehran to present his credentials to the shah. The party arrived there around mid-January 1829. As a result of difficulties arising partly from his enforcement of the article of the treaty that dealt with repatriation of Russians living in Persia, a Persian mob attacked the Russian mission on February 11, 1829, massacring almost every member of it, including Griboedov.⁷

papers are part of the Portland Papers, I should consult the University of Nottingham Library for Griboedov's letter.

7. Article 13 of the Treaty of Turkmanchai concerned the repatriation of all military prisoners and other Russian citizens living in captivity in Persia. When Erivan became part of Russian territory with the conclusion of the peace treaty, anyone from that city became eligible to return home freely. Among those seeking repatriation was an Armenian, Khodza Mirza Yakub Markarian. But the matter was far from simple. As a young man in 1804 he had left Erivan and joined a caravan traveling to Tiflis, which was attacked by Persians. Khodza Mirza Yakub was captured and brought to Tehran, where he was castrated and taken into the service of the shah. (According to another version of the story, he was castrated in Tabriz, forced to convert to Mohammedanism, and employed for a time in the seraglio of a Gol'den-Ismail Khan before serving in the shah's harem; O. I. Popova, *Griboedov-diplomat* [Moscow, 1964], p. 161.) He eventually became one of the shah's three chief eunuchs, the other two of whom had been taken prisoner with him. He was taught Persian, Arabic, and bookkeeping. He soon made himself valuable to the shah by bringing order to the royal accounts and served several times as the shah's treasurer. Together with his two companions, Khodza Mirza Yakub formed a company for supplying goods to the women of the shah's harem. With his earnings he helped his family in Erivan, built up a library, and continued to study. He remained secretly Orthodox in his religion and hoped one day to return home (M. Ia. Alaverdians, "Konchina A. S. Griboedova po armianskim istochnikam," *Russkaia starina*, 1901, no. 10, pp. 43-54). The Treaty of Turkmanchai gave him the opportunity.

Griboedov tried to dissuade him from going back, but when Khodza Mirza Yakub insisted, the envoy had no recourse but to acquiesce and give him asylum in the mission. Because he was such an important person—who knew so much about court matters and the shah's private life and secrets and who had a private fortune, which by law became the property of the shah's treasury at the owner's death—the shah was reluctant to give him up. Khodza Mirza Yakub was also accused by the government of owing money to the treasury, but the grounds for this accusation were proven illegal. However, when being questioned about the purported theft, he is supposed to have reviled Mohammedan-

Griboedov's letter, which is in French, is addressed to Lieutenant Colonel John Macdonald. The place where it was written and the date are not given, but the contents clarify the location and enable us to determine a general date. Griboedov's mention of various official events and of his plans to leave the capital makes clear that the letter was written in Tehran, and the enumerated events place the date of writing within the period of mid-January to early February 1829. Any attempt to date it more definitely on the basis of internal evidence alone, however, presents great difficulties. Griboedov's party arrived in Tehran around mid-January 1829. In the letter he says that a reception was given—presumably immediately upon his arrival, inasmuch as he goes on to say that the next day he was visited by Abul Hassan Khan, minister of foreign affairs, and the third day he and his suite were granted an audience by the shah. Two days after his reception at court he himself began to make visits, which he speaks of continuing to make “even now” (some days having passed). On the day he is writing the letter, he has received a list of the persons who are going to have him to dinner, and in eight days he is to leave the capital.

A limited amount of assistance is provided by the “Narrative of the Proceedings of the Russian Mission, from Its Departure from Tabreez for Tehran on 14th Jummade 2D, (Dec. 20th, 1828,)⁸ until Its Destruction on Wednesday the 6th of Shahban, Feb. 11th, 1829,” although its validity has been questioned.⁹ Even if we accept its testimony concerning the date of

ism, which now brought the Persian clergy into the matter. They began to incite the populace against him for his blasphemy. Griboedov was advised by one of the other eunuchs to send Khodza Mirza Yakub to a mosque where he would have immunity. Griboedov, however, is said to have answered that if Khodza Mirza Yakub wished to go he would not deter him, but that he could not himself force him to leave the Russian mission. Khodza Mirza Yakub refused to go. Shortly after the warning an enormous fanatical mob marched on the Russian mission, killing all within it except the first secretary, I. S. Maltsov, and several servants.

A secondary cause of the attack was said to have been the presence of two captive women from the harem of Allah-Yar-Khan, an enemy of Griboedov's, in the Russian mission, where they were allegedly being held against their will. But on this point there is some controversy, since Maltsov, an eyewitness, says that the women expressed a desire to return home and were placed in the care of Khodza Mirza Yakub and claims that their presence in the mission in no way influenced the mission's relations with the Persian government. See I. S. Maltsov, “Iz donesenii,” in Z. Davydov, ed., *A. S. Griboedov: Ego zhizn' i gibel' v memuarakh sovremennikov* (Leningrad, 1929), p. 189.

8. The 14th “Jummade” 2D, 1244, actually corresponds to December 22, 1828. For this, as for all information in this article about correspondences between Islamic and Christian dates, I am grateful to Ibrahim V. Pourhadi, Persian Area Specialist, Near East Section, Orientalia Division, Library of Congress. I shall normalize the spelling of the Islamic month given by the “Narrative” as Rujjub, to Rajab, since I shall have occasion to refer to it other than in a quotation.

9. *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, no. 171 (September 1830), pp. 496–512. The anonymous author of the “Narrative,” according to the first paragraph of the document, was the scribe and accountant to the mehmandar, or official escort, sent by the Persian government to accompany Griboedov's party from Tabriz. The English translation which

Griboedov's departure from the capital, we again encounter difficulties.¹⁰ The "Narrative" entry for the 27th of Rajab (February 2) says (p. 503) that the day of departure was fixed, but it does not specify the date. Later it says (p. 507) that the departure was "positively fixed for the 7th or 8th of Shahban" (February 12 or 13). The word "positively," however, seems to imply previous uncertainty and postponement. Although Griboedov speaks in his letter of leaving in eight days, we cannot on the basis of this evidence date

appeared in *Blackwood's* was furnished to the magazine by Major George Willock (see the letter dated June 20, 1830, of Blackwood's reader, J. B. Fraser, National Library of Scotland: Blackwood Papers, MS. 4027, p. 118), the brother of Sir Henry Willock; its authenticity and accuracy were strongly vouched for to Blackwood in a letter written from Tabriz, January 10, 1830, by Dr. John McNeill of the British mission: "You will receive shortly after this letter an account of the Massacre of the Russian Mission at Tehran drawn up by my friend Major George Willock which is by far the most authentic and accurate that has been put together—This he has no objection to put at your disposal for insertion in the Magazine but as it has been written rather hurriedly he thinks it may require slight verbal corrections which I dare say you can easily get done—The circumstances connected with this transaction cannot I think fail to be interesting and I am glad that the only truly authentic account of the business has fallen into your hands—All our friends now look to Maga for notices on Asiatic subjects and many are probably disappointed that nothing has appeared on this occasion—" (National Library of Scotland: Blackwood Papers, MS. 4028, p. 11). Dr. McNeill's phrase "an account . . . drawn up by my friend" is a curious way of describing a translation—for it would seem to apply more properly to an original chronicle—but it may be only a careless use of language. His phrase "written rather hurriedly" could easily apply to a translation, as could the mention of "slight verbal corrections."

The "Narrative" both praises and severely criticizes Griboedov's behavior. Its reliability has been a matter of controversy because "on two or three important points . . . its version of the facts appears to be 'slanted' in such a way as to exculpate the Tehran authorities from complicity in the murders" (D. P. Costello, "The Murder of Griboedov," *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, 8 [1958]: 72–73). Among Soviet scholars who have recently written on Griboedov, S. V. Shostakovich, although he borrows extensively from the "Narrative," considers it a trumped-up Anglo-Iranian document (S. V. Shostakovich, *Diplomaticheskaja deiatel'nost' A. S. Griboedova* [Moscow, 1960], p. 212), while O. I. Popova, who also makes extensive use of the "Narrative" in her book, accepts it as an authentic Persian document (Popova, *Griboedov-diplomat*, p. 146).

10. The discovery of Griboedov's letter helps us to begin to ascertain the events of his last days and their order by enabling us to compare his brief account with the anonymous "Narrative." On one point Griboedov's letter and the "Narrative" seem to agree. The "Narrative" says Griboedov was given a reception at the moment of his arrival. Griboedov's letter suggests that this may have been so. On another point the letter clarifies the "Narrative": Griboedov says he received a visit from Abul Hassan Khan the day following the reception and began making return visits two days after his audience with the shah. The "Narrative" is somewhat ambiguous; it says that the day after Griboedov's arrival the first official visits of ceremony took place and that Abul Hassan Khan was the chief personage. It does not say who visited whom. On a third point, Griboedov's letter seems to correct the "Narrative," though what he says depends on how one counts. The "Narrative," which states that Griboedov arrived on Sunday, the fifth of Rajab (January 11, 1829), says the audience may have taken place on Wednesday, the ninth of Rajab (January 15) (p. 500). However, since Sunday was the fifth, Wednesday, of course, had to be the eighth (January 14). Griboedov, however, says his audience with the shah took place on the third day. From the way he seems to have counted, he con-

the letter as having been written on February 4 or 5, since the first, unspecified date of departure might be the one he had in mind.¹¹

Another document¹² also seems to suggest the possibility of a delay in the date of departure: the report written by Lieutenant Macdonald, the envoy's brother and commander of the escort of the British mission, who was sent to Tehran after the massacre "with the view of ascertaining the exact particulars of the catastrophe and further to aid and facilitate the safe and speedy return of the Survivors to Tabreez."¹³ Lieutenant Macdonald first says: "all was seemingly going on well, and His Excy. the Envoy was making arrangements for his departure, when on about the sixth day before he met his untimely fate, Meerza Yakoob 2^d Eunuch of The King's Harem . . . coming to his house claimed his protection. . . ."¹⁴ Since Lieutenant Macdonald suggests that the controversial request for asylum may have interrupted the preparations for departure, it seems appropriate to postulate that his subsequent mention of an intended departure on the twelfth could reflect a postponement, owing to the resultant crisis, that was finally resolved by the shah's acquiescence: "The Shah . . . expressed his willingness to relinquish the demands upon Meerza Yakoob and had given a farewell audience to Mr. Grebayedoff who had announced his intention to depart for Tabreez on the 12th."¹⁵ Since these partly helpful documents do not in the end permit us to establish a single, fixed date of departure, we must reject them as a sole means of dating Griboedov's letter. A third document, Mrs. Macdonald's letter of February 3, 1829, to her brother-in-law, which is reproduced at the end of this article, actually refers to Griboedov's letter, together with an accompanying "public

sidered the day of his arrival the first day, the visit of Abul Hassan Khan the second, and the audience with the shah the third. If, therefore, he arrived on Sunday, the fifth, his audience took place on Tuesday, the seventh (January 13). Only if one considers that the audience with the shah took place on the third day *after the day of his arrival* does the time span of Griboedov's account coincide with the mention of Wednesday in the "Narrative."

11. We know that Griboedov made plans and encountered delays on other occasions. Thus, in his letter of December 17, 1828, to P. Ia. Rennenkampf, appointed by Paskevich to determine the boundary between Persia and Russia according to the Treaty of Turkmanchai, Griboedov wrote that he planned to leave Tabriz on December 18. But he was delayed and then wrote Rennenkampf on December 21 that he was leaving that day. He left either on December 21 or 22, for his next letter to Rennenkampf, dated December 23, is addressed from Tikmedash. (These letters, which are really fragments of reports, are in the archives of Pushkinskii dom, Leningrad: PI, opis' 5, no. 124, Griboedov, A. S. Otryvki donesenii ego baronu Rennenkampfu, P. Ia. na fr. iaz. ot 5^{go}—11^{go} dek. 1828 g. They were published in Russian in *Russkaia starina*, 1876, no. 12, pp. 735–36.)

12. Public Record Office: F.O. 249/27, pp. 184–200. This archive will henceforth be referred to as PRO.

13. PRO: F.O. 249/27, Letter of John Macdonald dated Tabriz, Feb. 21, 1829, p. 165.

14. PRO: F.O. 249/27, p. 191.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 193.

note." It is difficult, however, in the face of more authoritative evidence, to accept the dating of her letter, for it is directly contradicted by a statement of her husband's, and its implication that Griboedov wrote the letter in January is flatly contradicted by two other documents. Her husband's letter to Malcolm of February 18, 1829, also reproduced below, refers to the same private letter and official note as "just received." Malcolm, to whom Macdonald had furnished transcripts of the letter and note, in turn wrote to Bentinck on May 17, 1829 (see below), mentioning Griboedov's letter as having been written "a day or two before the massacre." A final piece of evidence appears in an anonymous "private memorandum," undated but obviously written in the months following the massacre, possibly by Malcolm, that refers to Griboedov's "official note to Col. M. dated in February last."¹⁶ Justification for the degree of precision in Malcolm's letter of May 17 is missing, as is Griboedov's official note. If, however, we now return to Griboedov's letter itself—in the light of the "Narrative," Lieutenant Macdonald's report, and the memorandum—we can offer a more conclusive date. Since the private letter and the official note were almost certainly written at the same time, by dating the note in February the memorandum makes clear that in mentioning a departure in eight days' time Griboedov's letter must be referring to a date between February 9 and the final date of departure identified by Lieutenant Macdonald as February 12 and by the "Narrative" as February 12 or 13. Therefore, Griboedov's statement "Dans huit jours je compte quitter la Capitale" dates the letter as having been written between February 1 and 5, 1829.

Griboedov's letter is very important in that it is, up to the present, the only extant document written by Griboedov himself from Tehran about his embassy and his only extant letter to Macdonald. Griboedov's seeming lack of anxiety concerning official matters is striking. We know that he had many difficulties on the way to Tehran concerning repatriation of prisoners and some unpleasantness caused by certain servants of dubious character in his employ, but perhaps he wished to conceal from the British envoy any problems arising from his official duties. Griboedov's letter shows he was pleased with the reception he had so far received. The paragraph about these events is filled with humor and lightness. The difficulties of the journey are passed over amusingly. There is nothing to suggest worry, uneasiness, or impending disaster. Griboedov's only concern here is for his pregnant sixteen-year-old wife, and this is assuaged by his knowledge that she has found a sympathetic companion in Mrs. Macdonald.¹⁷

An understanding of the Willock scandal, which occupies a prominent

16. UNL: Portland Papers. Lord William Bentinck's Papers. Pw Jf 1427.

17. Griboedov also wrote to Mrs. Macdonald earlier, according to his letter of January 5, 1829, but the whereabouts of his letter to her is unknown.

place in the correspondence published below, requires a certain knowledge of his service in Persia. As of September 1826 Willock had spent eighteen years on government duty in Persia.¹⁸ When Morier and Ellis concluded the Treaty of Tehran in 1814 and left Tehran, Willock, a former aide-de-camp to Sir Gore Ouseley,¹⁹ ambassador extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to the Court of Persia in 1810–15, remained behind as chargé d'affaires. In 1822 the shah threatened him with death after a royal card game,²⁰ and Willock left his post and returned to England. Upon his arrival there he was ordered back to Tehran by Viscount Castlereagh. After Castlereagh died, however, Canning transferred Persian affairs to the East India Company. The company in turn appointed Lieutenant Colonel John Macdonald its agent in 1824 and made Willock first secretary to the mission and John Nicholl Robert Campbell (then a lieutenant)²¹ second secretary. For a variety of reasons Willock was authorized a salary far in excess of the usual allowance for a first secretary.²² However, because Macdonald's appointment by the East India Company instead of the crown was unacceptable to the shah for some time, Willock continued to serve as chargé d'affaires of the British mission until August 27, 1826, at which time Macdonald finally took up his duties.²³ After relinquishing his post, Willock spent about two years in England.²⁴ In 1828, while stopping

18. India Office Library: L/P & S/9/85. Secret Letters & Enclosures from Persia (this series of documents is otherwise known as the Persia Factory Records), Persia. 39. 1829, p. 683: translation of a letter addressed by His Majesty the Shah to the Chairman of the Honble Court of East India Directors. This library will henceforth be referred to as IOL.

19. For further information about Ouseley's mission to Persia, see *DNB*.

20. Costello, "Murder of Griboedov," pp. 85–86.

21. He was promoted to captain in December 1826.

22. PRO: F.O. 248/50, 1824. Extract from a Letter to Major Macdonald dated Mar. 26, 1824: "7. His Lordship in Council has thought proper to appoint Mr. H. Willock to the Situation of Secretary to your Mission from the date of his giving over charge to yourself; and various considerations, having reference chiefly to the claims of that Gentleman, to his merits and qualifications, & to the advantages which are expected to accrue to the public interests from his continued employment in Persia, have combined to induce the Government to place his Office, in point both of salary and designation, on a higher footing than would otherwise have been considered necessary. The excess therefore of Mr. Willock's allowance beyond that enjoyed by a Head Assistant at an Indian Residency viz. SaR^s 750 per mensem, must be considered as entirely personal to that Gentleman.—"

23. IOL: L/P & S/9/85. Secret Letters & Enclosures from Persia. Persia. 39. 1826, p. 449. In a letter addressed from Ardebil, Aug. 25, 1826, Willock said: "The day after tomorrow I resign to Col^l Macdonald, the charge of the British Mission at the Persian Court."

24. In a letter to Bentinck, dated Tabriz, July 21, 1829, Macdonald took up a previous statement he had made to the effect that he needed only one assistant "to aid me in the transaction of the Public business": "This, I repeat, nor have I in truth had more than one Assistant, since the day of my arrival in the country.—During nearly the whole of that eventful period and the absence of Sir Henry Willock who remained upwards of two years in England and Russia the duty naturally devolved on Capt Campbell to whose zeal and ability the Public records bear ample testimony.—" Edinburgh University Library: Letterbook of Sir John Macdonald-Kinneir, Dk 2.37, letter to Lord

in St. Petersburg on his way back to Persia, he passed himself off to Count Nesselrode, the minister of foreign affairs, as the *chargé d'affaires* of the British mission to the Persian court, apparently indicating that he was Macdonald's successor, according to Griboedov's letter.²⁵ Nesselrode thereupon wrote Griboedov, instructing him to conduct himself on the same friendly terms with Willock as he had with his predecessor. It was from

William Bentinck, governor general of India, pp. 57 overleaf, 58. This reference will henceforth be cited as EUL: Letterbook.

25. There is another version of the story which says, "Sir Henry Willock told the Emperor that you were the Companys Minister, and he was the Kings Charge d'Affaire.—Lord Heytesbury [appointed British ambassador to Russia in 1828] told me that every body told him this, that he himself looked in the red book and not finding Sir Henry Willocks name there, he applied to Sir D. Bayley who assured him Sir Henry Willock was King's Charge d'Affaires as he had it from himself, that you had nothing to do with the Kings Ministers, and was only the Companys Employé while he himself was charged with His Majesty's Affaires.—" (IOL: Campbell Papers, MSS. Eur. D. 556. Extract of a letter from St. Petersburg, Aug. 18, 1829).

Mrs. Macdonald, when in Russia in 1829, was questioned on the matter by the empress. When Mrs. Macdonald explained that Willock was her husband's secretary, the empress exclaimed: "Comment! il a dit a l'Empereur qu'il est le chargé d'affaires de Sa Majesté Britannique, et votre mari n'est que le Ministere de la compagnie—?" (Duke University Library: Campbell Papers. Extract of a Letter from St. Petersburg, Sept^r 3-1829. This reference will henceforth be cited as DUL: Campbell Papers.) I should like to thank the Librarian of the Duke University Library for permission to publish this document and all other portions of the Campbell Papers from that library cited in this article. I should also like to express my gratitude to the Department of Modern Languages, Simon Fraser University, for a grant enabling me to travel to Duke University to consult the Campbell Papers.

Macdonald's correspondence for 1829 and up until his death in June 1830 is filled with allusions to this matter. On April 3, 1829, Lord Heytesbury wrote to Macdonald to assure him that no offense to him had been meant "in consequence of a letter having been addressed from Count Nesselrode's Office to Sir Henry Willock, as the Minister of His Britannic Majesty—" (EUL: Letterbook, p. 14 overleaf). Macdonald tried to treat the matter lightly in his reply to Heytesbury on May 15, 1829: "The misunderstanding to which Your Lordship alludes originated in an official note addressed to me by the late M. Grebayedof, of which I now enclose a transcript— . . . I . . . regret that Count Nesselrode should have considered it needful to trouble Your Excellency on a matter of such trivial importance.—" (EUL: Letterbook, p. 15). However, he did not take the matter lightly. In a letter to A. Stirling in Calcutta, dated Tabriz, July 5, 1829, Macdonald says: "Circumstances, to which it is not needful to allude, have impaired the intimacy of Sir Henry Willock and myself—I could therefore but ill spare the services of Captain Campbell.—" (EUL: Letterbook, p. 52 overleaf). In a letter dated Tabriz, Oct. 5, 1829, to Sir Robert Campbell, a chairman and one of the directors of the East India Company and father of his second secretary, Macdonald enclosed an extract of Mrs. Macdonald's interview with the empress and said: "such insinuations thrown out to the Emperor and his Minister for Foreign Affairs at the very period I was actively engaged in endeavouring to bring about a peace between H. I. M. and the Shah might have proved fatal to the very existence of Persia by destroying the confidence which both Parties reposed in me, and which alone enabled me to reconcile them—But what is worse the Knight was stabbing me to the heart under the cloak of friendship—While doing me clandestinely all the injury in his power, he was writing me the most fawning and flattering letters—But such is his character—" (EUL: Letterbook, p. 94).

Griboedov that Macdonald first learned of Willock's action. Willock's misconduct, however, extended further than this misrepresentation, for the letters indicate that Macdonald had much incriminating evidence at his disposal for possible use against him. When it seemed that Campbell might be transferred, Sir Henry's brother, Major George Willock, applied for the position of second secretary. But discussions were under way during 1829 concerning the reduction of the operating expenses of the British mission by a reduction in staff, with one secretary instead of two.²⁶ Macdonald began to take some action against the Willock brothers,²⁷ but he was cautious about making the information at his disposal public because of what he called "so delicate a subject."²⁸

26. Macdonald to Bentinck, July 21, 1829, with enclosure of "Proposed Scale of British Legation in Persia" (UNL: Portland Papers. Lord William Bentinck's Papers. Pw Jf 1335).

27. In a letter to Malcolm dated July 17, 1829, he said: "The substance of the late Dispatch to the supreme Govt of which Campbell sent you an Extract by the last Cossed [i.e., cossid, a mounted messenger] has put me in fear for his situation.—I have therefore addressed the accompanying letter to Lord William Bentinck which I leave you to forward or not as you may deem expedient.—The Willocks are sad thorns in my side, because it is not in their nature to do anything openly, candidly, or like gentlemen. They are always clouded in mystery, and enveloped [sic] in intrigue, working like moles in the dark and doing me all the injury in their power by false and secret communications to their friends in India and England—But I am nevertheless reluctant to adopt any measure that might be construed into an unfair advantage of their subordinate situation, or a petty spirit of revenge—and on this occasion I leave it to your less prejudiced judgement to send the letter or not as you think fit—" (EUL: Letterbook, p. 56 overleaf). Malcolm deemed it fit to send the letter on to Bentinck and felt that "MacDonald appears to have brought all this upon himself by misplaced delicacy—He should have stated his opinions of Willocks conduct long ago—& he must have been removed—" (UNL: Portland Papers. Lord William Bentinck's Papers. Pw Jf 2748/XXI, letter of Sir John Malcolm, Sept. 18, 1829).

28. In a letter dated Tabriz, Oct. 28, 1829, and addressed to Malcolm, Macdonald says: "I feel greatly indebted to you for the aid you have given me in my fight with the Willocks—If they had let me alone, I should not have interfered with them or their future prospects, but I have been goaded past endurance into all I have written on the subject of their intrigues—George if left to himself is not a bad fellow, but he is entirely devoted to his brother, who I am told urged him in opposition to his own inclinations, to send in his application—And in order to shew you the lengths to which the Knight can go at times, I enclose the extract of a letter from Amelia, giving the substance of a singular dialogue between her and the Empress of Russia. . . . His object was to augment his own importance and get the Emperor to employ him as the Mediator, in which scheme I have heard he was either directly or indirectly encouraged by certain letters given to him by Mr Wynn—[Charles Watkin Williams Wynn, president of the Board of Control of the East India Company, February 1822 to February 1828. See C. H. Philips, *The East India Company, 1784–1834* (Manchester, 1961), p. 338.] His secret offers to serve in Persia on smaller allowances than mine have met the contempt and silence which they merited—You say—I ought to represent all these things in the strongest and most public manner possible; but how can I do so without involving others in my disputes, and committing a breach of confidence against those, whose friendship towards me have led them to send me the information I possess—The authorities besides dislike being troubled with such matters, and I am loth to run the risk of drawing on myself a charge of vindictiveness—of the truth of the various allegations against the Knight—I have not myself the slightest doubt, but still that proof is wanting on which alone a public accusation, or com-

He appealed to Bentinck to let Campbell stay on as one of the two assistants if the number of assistants was not reduced or as the only assistant if it was reduced. Bentinck granted Macdonald's appeal.²⁹ At Macdonald's death in June 1830, Willock was removed from office.³⁰ Campbell succeeded Macdonald as envoy.³¹

plaint could be framed—It is this which renders caution indispensable in the tenor of my communications with Government on so delicate a subject—Sir Henry has also many powerful friends in England ready to defend or support him, and has considerably increased his interest by his marriage with the daughter of your old friend Mr Davis a very amiable young lady in all respects much his superior—” (EUL: Letterbook, pp. 95 overleaf, 96, 96 overleaf).

29. In a letter to Bentinck, dated Apr. 3, 1830, Macdonald thanks the governor general for not removing Campbell: “I learn from Sir John Malcolm that Your Lordship has been graciously pleased to grant my urgent prayer in behalf of Captain Campbell my 2^d assistant—I therefore avail myself of this occasion to express to your Excellency the deep sense I entertain of this kindness—Provided Captain Campbell be allowed to continue in my family it is of little real importance to me whether Sir H. Willock remain attached to the Mission or not—The injuries done me by that officer under the cloak of friendship in England, and in Russia, render it utterly impossible I can ever serve with him again on terms of cordiality or confidence, but I have nevertheless no desire to blight his future views—My dread was lest he & his brother, who are more disposed to counteract than promote any measure I may propose, should ultimately succeeded [*sic*] in fixing themselves upon me as my only two assistants in a Court so false and venal as that of Persia—From that annoyance Your Lordships goodness hath saved me.—” (EUL: Letterbook, p. 119).

30. In a letter to George Swinton, secretary to the Supreme Government, Fort William, dated Tabriz, June 14, 1830, Willock said: “immediately after the death of Sir John Macdonald and the examination of a Box containing particular papers which the Envoy had consigned to the care of Captain R. Macdonald, Captain Campbell delivered to me a Dispatch therein found addressed by you, Sir, to the late Envoy announcing the abolishment of my Office as Secretary and First Assistant. . . . I bowed . . . with submission to the will of the Right Honorable the Governor General in Council, informing Captain Campbell that I made no pretension to the assumption of the charge of the Mission and I delivered to him the Key of the Chest of Archives, which I had demanded of Mr Shepherd, the clerk of the Mission on the demise of the Envoy. Under circumstances of so peculiar a nature, and when by the awful dispensation of Providence I was called upon to act in a situation of high importance and responsibility it has been a severe mortification to find myself deprived of Office. At the same time I have derived great consolation in observing that no cause which at all reflects on my character has been assigned for my removal which seems to rest on the preference given by the late Envoy to Captain Campbell in the case of a reduction of the Mission and his only being allowed to retain one Assistant—and it is an additional source of gratification to me to observe that His Lordship in Council has been pleased to record his high sense of my Services at this Court. I have viewed my Cotemporaries [*sic*] in the Service rise in reward for their exertions by sure gradations to the highest Branch of duty on which they have been employed and obtained that recompence for their labours which every generous mind must look forward to. I appeal to the same dispensing Power to shew to me that favor it has already extended to acknowledged Services and in forwarding the many testimonials of my public life I entreat the perusal of them and solicit His Lordship in Council's nomination to the superintendence of the British interests at this Court over which I have already presided for eleven years as Chargé d’Affaires” (IOL: Campbell Papers, MSS. Eur. D. 556).

31. Campbell's correspondence, addressed mostly to his father, Sir Robert Campbell,

Macdonald, upon receiving the letter from Griboedov, forwarded it together with his own letter to Malcolm. The latter in turn wrote to Bentinck, at the same time forwarding Macdonald's and Griboedov's letters. The letters

is full of his bitterness at Willock's large salary and his disgust at the first secretary's misconduct. The following is a letter which cites both an example of his misbehavior in Persia and the Willock affair in St. Petersburg, mentioning "the late M. Griboyedof" (DUL: Campbell Papers) :

Maraga, 20th August, 1829

My dearest Father,

Some days previous to my quitting the City of Tabreez I transmitted to you through Russia a few lines explanatory of *W*'s public usage of intelligence conveyed in a private & confidential communication, & enclosed copies of certain documents forwarded by the Envoy to the Supreme Gov^t, which detail in the most explicit manner, his wishes regarding Assistants, & can leave no doubt on the minds of the Gov^t as to his own private opinion of whom has been the most useful & zealous, during the difficult & critical time he has had the direction of affairs in this Country—

However inconsistent & unusual it may be to remove a first Ass^t from his situation, without some actual charge against his character, it is alike inconsistent that, that officer should receive a double remuneration from the King's & Company's Gov^t for exactly the same purpose, which places him in a situation in this ostentatious Country at once lucrative & respectable, whilst the means afforded to the 2nd Ass^t (who in fact has been the only one for the last 3 years) places him far below mediocrity, & not even able to maintain a common respectable appearance at the Court, without being on all common occasions of state ceremony, under the mortifying necessity of borrowing Horses & Servants, for the maintenance of common decorum, when employed on Government duty—

It is said that *W.* cannot be removed without some special impeachment of his conduct. This course it is not the business of the Envoy to adopt unless officially called upon to do so: & only to instance one material difference between the two Ass^{ts}. *W.* received his dispatches in October 1827, & delivered them in Tabreez in 12 months, whilst I received mine the latter end of May, & they were delivered in Tabreez in 3 months & 12 days from that date, not withstanding serious detentions on the road from my Wife's ill state of health, & had I had, the same advantage of Winter & Sledge roads, they would have been received by the Envoy at least a month sooner.

I have told you in former letters that I dread being the victim of any new arrangements in the Mission, though one would imagine that it would be very unpleasant for *W.* to remain, after the Envoy having given it out publicly that he can place no confidence in him, & does not wish to hold any private or public communication with him.

The Colonel has repeatedly told me that he should be glad to resign his present situation, provided he was certain that myself or some other person would succeed him, who would continue to follow up the same strait forward & conscientious policy, which he has with so much credit to himself & his Gov^t established, & which in a general point of view fully coincides with my ideas of the relations of Britain with this Country; but that so long as his departure would necessarily throw the interests of our Gov^t upon his present 1st Ass^t, he is determined not to quit his post; I cannot say more on this subject than I have already done in all my communications, & sincerely trust that my good fortune may still keep me in this Country, or procure me some respectable appointment at home, for you well know the misery I endure in India from constant bad health—The die however is cast by the Courts last letter, & I must patiently await the chances & the view which the Supreme Council of India may take upon the subject. The ambiguous manner in which the public letter is worded, is well calculated to excite my apprehensions as to the issue of the question. . . . In former letters I mentioned to you that Count Nesselrode had addressed Willock as "Chargé d'affaires," & that the mistake was pointed out by the late M. Griboyedof in consequence of which the Count has by

are therefore reproduced here in that order. Griboedov's and Macdonald's letters are copies. The numerous errors in French can most likely be attributed to the clerk who transcribed Griboedov's letter.³² Malcolm's letter is in his own handwriting.

* * * * *

GRIBOEDOV'S LETTER³³

Mon chère Monsieur Macdonald

Je vous prie avant tout d'exprimer à M^{me} Macdonald combien je me sens redevable à elle pour toutes ses bontés et tant de charmants procédés envers ma femme.—Je suis vraiment tranquille depuis que je sais, qu'elles se voient souvent, et toutes les lettres de ma femme me prouvent, qu'elle s'attache de plus en plus à une Amie, aussi éclairée, qu'indulgente, car encore faut il beaucoup d'indulgence pour Nina, où son Age et le manque d'usage du monde, qui la caractérise.—

Je viens de recevoir un Affice du C^{mté} Paskewitz, où il me dit que Campbell a été gratifié par S.M. l'Empereur de l'ordre de S^{te} Anne 2^{me} Classe à l'egal des

the present Minister Prince Dolgorouki sent verbally & written to the Envoy a handsome apology for the mistake— . . .

J. N. R. Campbell

P.S. The Colonel tells me in confidence that he has received authentic intelligence of the positive & final refusal by our Gov^t for permission to wear the Russian Orders, but that it is the intention of our most gracious Sovereign to confer upon him some special mark of the royal favor. Under these circumstances as I am the only other, in the Diplomatic line mentioned in the Emperor's letter, I hope that you will use your best exertions to obtain for me as a compensation permission for me to wear the Windsor uniform, regarding which I believe there is not much difficulty.

32. Two Griboedov notes written in 1820 to Willock and discovered at the Public Record Office (F.O. 60/14, nos. 34 and 36) by D. P. Costello are also written in French and suffer from innumerable errors, apparently the fault of the transcribing clerk (D. P. Costello, "Griboedov in Persia in 1820: Two Diplomatic Notes," *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, 5 [1954]: 81–82). Griboedov's knowledge of French was good, as witness those letters written in his own hand, for example, to P. N. Akhverdova (Gosudarstvennaia publichnaia biblioteka imeni Saltykova-Shchedrina, Leningrad: fond 221, no. 5, Pis'ma (9) k Akhverdovoi, P.N. na fr. iazyke, 1827–28).

33. My dear Colonel Macdonald

First of all please tell Madame Macdonald how indebted I feel to her for all her kindnesses and friendliness toward my wife. I am truly reassured since I know that they see each other often, and all of my wife's letters prove to me that she is becoming more and more attached to a friend as enlightened as she is lenient, because much leniency is still necessary for Nina because of her age and the lack of knowledge of the world which characterize her.

I have just received a notice from Count Paskewitz in which he tells me that Campbell has been awarded the Order of St. Anne Second Class by His Majesty the Emperor equal to that of the other members of the English Mission, and he is surprised that I did not know it. Other than that he writes that he has just repeated his formal statement to the Minister that someone may intercede on the part of our Government to His Majesty the King of England to confirm the decoration which you have been awarded by the Emperor. As for me, I have also written twice: I believe that this will not be long without its effect.

Will you kindly explain to me what Count Nesselrode is advising me on the matter

autres membres de la Mission Anglaise,³⁴ et il s'étonne, que je ne le sache pas, outre cela il m'écrit qu'il vient de réitérer sa présentation au Ministère, pour qu'on intercede de la part de notre Gouvernement auprès de S.M. le Roi d'Angleterre, pour qu'il vous confirme la décoration, qui vous à été accordée par l'Empereur.— Moi de mon côté, j'ai aussi écrit deux fois, je crois, que cela ne tardera pas à produire son effet.—³⁵

of Sir H. Willock; he tells me that I must try to be on as good terms with him as I have been with Col. Macdonald, his predecessor, that is, with you, of whom he has sent me a eulogy, like a panegyric for one no longer with us. Is this a rumor going about which he has understood wrongly, or a change in fortune for you which we shall know of perhaps later; the fact is that it intrigues me very much. Tell me what you know. The Vice Chancellor gives me details of Lord Heytesbury, who has already earned the good graces of the Emperor. He adds that England strives to interpose its good services to renew peace between the two powers at war at the present time, in the same manner as it did when we were at war with Persia and that we have never had such good diplomatic relations and friendly relations with Great Britain as at this moment. You can imagine what joy this gives me, because if I personally have not felt so closely tied to many of your fellow countrymen up to now, I am one of those who esteem your nation above all.

Because you have always shown an interest in me, my dear Colonel, I shall tell you in a few words about my trip and my arrival here. To begin with the cold was unbearable. I galloped, I trotted, I ran at full speed from one station to another. My Mehmandar, Mehmet Khan Afshar, pointed out in a friendly manner that this was not the custom in Iran, where the Envoy of a great sovereign must go slowly and with solemnity even if he should die of the cold. Here I was given a very nice Istikbal. The next day I had a visit from Abul Hassan Khan with all kinds of Herjerat from the Shah. The third day the King received us in a solemn audience with much pomp. As for the rest I do not need to write you all that, since you have experienced all this show before me. Two days after my reception at Court I began to make visits to those who visited me, and still am, during terrible weather; it snows a great deal here every blessed day, and the mud in the streets is abominable. Today I received from His Majesty the list of those who are to have me to dinner, five times more than my digestion can take. On the whole I can only praise the way they have treated me.

In eight days I plan to leave the Capital. I shall not receive any of my things before spring because the Ghilan road is impassable. The same is true of the presents. I am leaving Maltzof and Meerza Neriman here.

Once more my sincere respects to Mme Macdonald and warm greetings to Cormac. I am a little displeased with Monteith about the plans in which he plotted against me with Castella, and which have just been found among the dead man's papers, of which I was notified recently. I shall spell it all out to him upon my return to Tabriz.

Believe me your most esteemed
and devoted
etc etc etc

SIGNED A Gribayedof

34. The members of the British mission had been awarded decorations and gifts by Nicholas I for their aid in the negotiations at Turkmanchai. Campbell had received neither at that time because he was away on official business in England (EUL: Letter-book, p. 58). Griboedov wrote to Paskevich on October 5, 1828, asking that Campbell also be awarded an order and gifts. See *Akty, sobrannye Kavkazskoi Arkheograficheskoi Komissiei*, 9 vols. (Tiflis, 1866–86), 7, no. 621. Otnoshenie s. s. Griboedova k gr. Paskevichu, ot 23-go sentiabria 1828 goda, no. 56—Erivan¹, pp. 645–46. This document will hereafter be referred to as *AKAK*.

35. After the awarding of the decorations, permission to wear them had to be granted by the British government. As permission was refused, the Russian government conferred

Voulez vous bien m'expliquer ce que le C^{te} Nesselrôde me recommande au sujet de S. H. Willock il me dit, que je dois tâcher d'être aussi bien avec lui, que je l'ai été avec Col. Macdonald son prédécesseur, vous c:a:d: dont il me fait parvenu cela un éloge, comme le panegirique de quelqu'un qui n'est plus.—Est ce un faut bruit, qu'il aura induit en érreur, ou bien un changement de destination pour vous, que nous saurons peût être plus tard, le fait, est que cela m'intrigue beaucoup.—Dites moi Ce que vous en savez.—Le Vice Chancelier³⁶ me donne des détails sur Lord Heytesbury, qui a déjà mérité les bonne grâces de S.M. l'Empereur, il m'ajoute, que l'Angleterre s'efforce d'interposer ses bons offices pour renouer la paix entre les deux puissances actuellement, en guêrre³⁷ tout comme elle l'a fait; quand nous etions en guêrre avec la Pêrse, et que jamais nous n'avons été dans des meilleurs rapport de franchise et d'amitié avec la Grande Bretagne, comme à l'heure même.—Vous pouvez bien penser combien cela me donne de la joie, car si individuellement je ne me sois pas trouvé jusqu'ici lié avec beaucoup de vos Compatriotes,³⁸ je suis un de Ceux, qui estime votre nation pâr dessus tout.—

gifts upon several members of the British mission who had until then received nothing (AKAK, no. 655: Otnoshenie gr. Nessel'rode k gr. Paskevichu, ot 26-go fevral'ia 1829 goda, no. 361, p. 675). Campbell was among these. In a note written on July 3, 1829, the Russian minister to Persia who succeeded Griboedov, Prince Dolgoruky, announced to Macdonald the awarding of these gifts (EUL: Letterbook, pp. 50 and 50 overleaf). Macdonald, on July 5, 1829, acknowledged Dolgoruky's note and declared that he had "personally delivered" the gifts (EUL: Letterbook, pp. 54 and 54 overleaf). Griboedov's note of October 5, 1828, shows that he had also requested permission for the members of the British mission to wear the decorations (AKAK, 7, no. 621, p. 646).

36. Count Nesselrode was made vice chancellor in March 1828.

37. Russia declared war on Turkey in April 1828.

38. Griboedov was not on bad terms with the English in Tabriz, but Macdonald is the only Englishman whom he praised and whose friendship as a private person he esteemed. In his letter of December 12, 1828, no. 212, from Tabriz, to Count Nesselrode, Griboedov said: "Je prie dependant Votre Excellence de ne pas me supposer mal avec les Anglais, d'après tous ce que Vous venez de lire sur leur façon d'agir ici. Au contraire le dernier trait que je viens de citer je le tiens de M^r Macdonald même, avec lequel nous vivons dans la plus grand intimité, car en privé c'est l'homme le plus loyal et le plus estimable que j'ai rencontré depuis longtems" (Pushkinskii dom, Leningrad: PI, opis' 5, no. 126; a Russian translation of this letter appeared in *Russkaia starina*, no. 12, 1876, pp. 730-35).

Macdonald, in turn, writing on February 20, 1829, to A. Stirling, acting secretary to government, Political Department, Fort William, said in praise of Griboedov: "I learn from M. Grebayedof that the most friendly and confidential relations continue to subsist between the Courts of London and Petersburg, and that he has in consequence been instructed by the Count de Nesselrode to cultivate the best understanding with the British Mission.—In this I apprehend he will experience little difficulty since His Excellency and myself have long been on terms of personal intimacy, and so far as my knowledge of his Character entitles me to judge there are few men who have less of that little jealousy usually to be found among the Russian Functionaries than M. Grebayedof.—" (PRO: F.O. 249/27, p. 147). It is strange that Macdonald speaks of Griboedov as though he were alive. On February 19 he had informed the secretary to government of Griboedov's murder (see note 49).

In informing the secretary to government of Griboedov's death, Macdonald gave his honest opinion, both criticizing and praising the Russian Envoy: "To the generous, manly, though perhaps somewhat unbending Character of the deceased, no one can bear more ample testimony than myself, having long lived [piece of page torn off] on terms of personal intimacy been connected with him in the transaction of business as well

Comme vous m'avez toujours montré de l'intérêt mon chère Colonel, je vous raconterai en peu de mots mon voyage et mon arrivée ici.—D'abord il faisait un froid intolérable, je gallopais, je trottais, je courrais à bride abattue d'une station à l'autre, mon Mehmandar³⁹ Mehmet Khan Afshar⁴⁰ me représentait amicalement, que ce n'est pas l'usage dans l'Iran, où un Envoyé de la part d'un grand Souverain doit garder le pas et sa gravité, s'il doit même mourir de froid.—Ici on m'a fait un très bel Istikbal,⁴¹ le lendemain j'ai eu la visite d'Abul Hassan Khan avec toute sorte de Herjerat⁴² de la part du Schah.—Le troisième jour le Roi nous a reçus dans une Audience solennelle avec beaucoup de pompe, du reste je n'ai pas besoin de vous écrire tout cela, car vous m'avez précédé dans toutes ses représentations.—Le sur-lendemain de ma réception à la Cour je me suis mis à rendre les visites, qu'on m'a faites, et cela duré encore, par un temps affreux, la neige tombe ici en abondance tous les jours, que Dieu donne, et la boue dans les rues est exécration.—Aujourd'hui j'ai reçu de la part de S.M. la liste de ceux, qui doivent me donner à dîner, cinq fois plus, qu'il me faut pour une bonne indigestion.—En tout je ne puis que me louer des procédés, qu'on a eus envers moi.—

Dans huit jours je compte quitter la Capitale, je ne recevrai rien de mes effets avant le printemps, car la route de Ghilan est impraticable. C'est le même pour les présents, — je laisse ici Maltzof et Meerza Neriman.—⁴³

Encore une fois mes sincères hommages à M^{me} Macdonald et un bonjour à Cormac.⁴⁴—Je suis un peu mécontent de Monteith⁴⁵ pour les projets, dans lesquels il a trépané contre moi avec Castella,⁴⁶ et qu'on vient de trouver dans les

public as private, and in short enjoyed numberless opportunities of duly appreciating the many virtues which adorned his mind, and of perceiving that a high sense of honour formed on all occasions the rule and guide of his actions.—" (PRO: F.O. 249/27, pp. 163-64).

39. Mehmandar—a Persian word meaning an "official escort."

40. The "Narrative" points out that "at Seahdohun, Mahomed Khan Afshar joined M. Grebayedoff on the part of the Shah. He had in the autumn been sent to Azerbijan, to receive M. Grebayedoff on crossing the Arras, and had conducted him to Tabreez; but as M. Grebayedoff's delay there was longer than at first anticipated, he had returned to the Court" ("Narrative," p. 498). Griboedov's letter, therefore, corroborates the "Narrative" in identifying Mahomed Khan Afshar as his Mehmandar.

41. Istikbal—a Persian word meaning "reception."

42. Herjerat—this seems to be a distortion of the Persian word *kharjerah*, meaning "travel expenses." It used to be the custom for the host government to defray the travel expenses of the visiting embassy. The letter suggests that gifts amounting to this kind of gesture were given by the shah when Abul Hassan Khan visited Griboedov. I wish to thank Kazem Kazemzadeh, lecturer in Persian at the University of California in Los Angeles, for his help in deciphering this word.

43. Griboedov's household goods and the gifts from Nicholas I for the shah had been sent from Astrakhan via the Caspian Sea. Griboedov planned to leave behind Maltsov, his first secretary, and Mirza Neriman (Melik-Shah-Nazarov), an interpreter, to carry on diplomatic relations and to receive and present the gifts when they should arrive (his letter and the "Narrative" [p. 503] both so state).

44. Dr. John Cormick was the physician to the British mission.

45. Colonel William Monteith of the Madras Engineers was attached to the British mission in Tabriz and served as a military adviser to Abbas-Mirza, the ruler of Azerbijan.

46. Castella (or Kastellas) was a French businessman who was engaged in silk manufacturing in Georgia. He died in October 1828. Griboedov had plans for the establishment of a Russian Transcaucasian Company for the economic development of the

papiers du defunt, dont j'ai reçu la Communication dernièrement, je lui declinerai tout cela par syllables à mon retour à Zauris.—

Veuillez me croire
avec l'estime et le devouement le
plus parfait
etc etc etc
SIGNED A Gribayedof

* * * * *

MACDONALD'S LETTER⁴⁷

My dear Sir John,

I send you transcripts of an official note,⁴⁸ and private letter, which I have just received from the Russian Envoy.⁴⁹ Willock when in Russia was introduced to the Emperor as H:B:M. Chargé d'Affaires, gave himself out as my successor, and on his departure from Moscow, would seem to have made a tender of his services to the Count de Nesselrode, who in consequence desired Gribayedoff to keep on the same friendly terms with Sir Henry as he had done with his Predecessor—All this of course must eventually recoil on the head of its author—but such unworthy procedure is unpleasant while reports industriously circulated of my anticipated removal have a natural tendency to shake, and undermine my influence at this weak, and venal Court I have loaded Willock with kindness from the first day of my arrival, and in return have experienced nothing but clandestine, not open & manly, hostility—It is not in his nature to do anything above board, or like a gentleman—I possess indubitable proofs that he intrigued against me all the time he was in England. I fear not to set his machinations, his [word illeg.] and his intrigues at defiance. Were I inclined to do him injury I could make such an exposé of certain proceedings here, as would damn him for ever. So long as he remains in Persia he will find means to counteract and defeat all my endeavours for the public good—I wish therefore that Gov^t would provide for him elsewhere, though by his own confession he can spend £3500 a year at home

adieu Sir [?]

SIGNED J. McDonald

Tabriz 18th Feby
1829

TRUE COPY

* * * * *

Caucasus, which he had presented on September 19, 1828, to Paskevich for his approval just before leaving for Tabriz. Griboedov possibly means that Monteith and Castella were plotting against him by planning a similar project.

47. UNL: Portland Papers. Lord William Bentinck's Papers. Pw Jf 2748/XLIV.

48. Neither the official note nor the transcript was among the letters.

49. Macdonald's letter was written after Griboedov's death, but Macdonald did not yet know of it. On the *night* of February 18 he was called to the palace of Prince Abbas-Mirza, where he was informed of the massacre of the Russian mission. PRO: F.O. 249/27, no. 5 of 1829. To the Secretary of Government, Political Department, Fort William, Feb. 19, 1829, p. 159.

MALCOLM'S LETTER⁵⁰

Private and confidential

—Mount Charlotte—
Mahabelesher Hills⁵¹
17th May

My dear Lord William,

You will be shocked at the account Col. Macdonald gives of the murder of the Russian Ambassador & suite at Teheran—The Count Grobidof was a very superior young man and from his connection & talent—bid fair for the highest Offices in the Empire. I enclose a private letter he wrote to Lt. Col. MacDonald a day or two before the massacre—⁵² It is interesting as it shews the man—The footing upon which our Envoy—stands with the Russian Employéz—but above all as it Exhibits the character of an intrigue which has been long carrying on by Sir Henry Willock to supplant—MacDonald & to replace himself in a Charge in which—I was so perfectly satisfied he had disgraced himself & Government that I made it a condition when they desired me to go to Persia a few years ago that this Gentleman—should not—return—to that Country—He has neither ability nor manliness—but is a flatterer & intriguer & with these qualities some relations clerks in the foreign office & the support of M^r Ellis—a son of Lord Buckingham here & brother (but born before the marriage of the mother) to Lady Goderich⁵³ this Willock has managed to make himself strong enough to embarrass & injure both the Envoy & the public service—I think it proper your Lordship should be privately informed of these facts—to guard against misrepresentation—for Sir H.W. has friends at Calcutta & MacDonald has none for Lord Amhersts⁵⁴ stout preference of him to the pretensions of M^r Prinsep⁵⁵ & others who thought themselves better qualified has never been forgotten nor forgiven—by these Gentlemen—but thank God his merits are now fully recognized in England & by my letters of Ja^v he stands as high with the Directors as with Minister.

To make Your Lordship more fully acquainted with Sir H.W.s proceedings I enclose Copy of a private letter to me upon the subject—I also Enclose an Extract

50. UNL: Portland Papers. Lord William Bentinck's Papers. Pw Jf 2748/XXII.

51. This is the transcription of Malcolm's handwriting. However, in the copy of his letter (IOL: Campbell Papers, MSS. Eur. D. 556) the transcribing clerk writes it as Mahabuleshwur Hills. Kaye, in his biography of Malcolm, speaks of the Mahabuleshur Hills (p. 526) and the Mahabuleshwur Hills (p. 543). Malcolm lived in these hills outside of Bombay during the hot season.

52. Malcolm dates Griboedov's letter as having been written about February 9 or 10, but gives no basis for his dating.

53. Lady Sarah Albinia Louisa, wife of John Frederick Robinson, Viscount Goderich. Her husband was prime minister from August 1827 until January 1828 (*DNB*).

54. Lord William Pitt Amherst, governor general of India from August 1823 until February 1828.

55. Philips, in *The East India Company, 1784–1834*, mentions two gentlemen named Prinsep connected with the company. One is Thoby Prinsep, the Persian secretary to the Bengal government (p. 241). The other is J. Prinsep, India Merchant, M.P., and Proprietor of India Stock (p. 345). On October 28, 1829, Macdonald wrote to Malcolm, who was having difficulties with Swinton and Prinsep in India. This would seem to suggest that his own problems were with the same Prinsep, that is, Thoby (EUL: Letterbook, p. 95 overleaf).

of a letter regarding his⁵⁶ Expenses—In the latter he will not disappoint Your Lordship but he will like a fool as I have told him he is spend his own money as he has done constantly rather than that the service should suffer.

The removal or resignation of his SecY Sir H.W. & a Brother a Major who does nothing & receives *full Indian allowances* would be a considerable saving and if MacDonal takes my advice he will—not stand upon any delicacy but bring the former Gentleman forward—On matters of this description I have ever found the plain open course best giving Individuals fair warning & if they did not take it bringing the matter to issue at once.

Considering what Your Lordship has to do it is hardly fair to intrude such small matters upon your notice.

I have yet no letters latter than the 8th of January and only answers to mine of the 10th of August. No news of the fight with the Judges therefore but Your Lordship will be glad to—learn—both my letters public & private are pleasant—I am as yet deemed a Good Boy even in Leadenhall Street⁵⁷

I am Your Lordships most sincerely

John Malcolm⁵⁸

Lord William Bentinck

The Manuscript Division of the University of Edinburgh Library contains the letterbook and some papers of Sir John Macdonald-Kinneir.⁵⁹ In the volume marked “Papers” there is a letter⁶⁰ from Macdonald’s wife, Amelia, to his brother, William, a clergyman in England.⁶¹ The letter is interesting in that it forms a companion piece to the three letters cited above, dealing as it does with the Willock affair and alluding to the letter which Griboedov wrote to the British envoy from Tehran. It is addressed from Tabriz and dated February 3, 1829. The reference to Griboedov is genial. As Malcolm’s letter speaks of a superior young man and emphasizes the good relations between Macdonald and Griboedov, so Mrs. Macdonald’s letter mentions Griboedov’s cleverness and wit and the “best and most intimate terms” existing between the two envoys.

56. The word “his” is replaced by the word “Macdonald’s” in the copy of this letter, which makes sense, for “his” seems to refer to Sir Henry Willock. Malcolm, however, was trying to show that Macdonald’s concern for the service was so great that he would spend his own money on it lest it suffer. He was not attempting to point out Willock’s virtues.

57. Leadenhall Street in London was the location of East India House.

58. A postscript concerns construction at the site from which Malcolm is writing.

59. Sometime around 1818, Macdonald took his mother’s surname of Kinneir (*DNB*).

60. EUL: Papers of Sir John Macdonald-Kinneir, Dk 2.38.

61. Reverend William Macdonald, archdeacon of Wiltshire and canon of Salisbury Cathedral.

Tabreez Feby 3rd 1829

My dear William

I daresay you will think me a great torment but I cannot sit down quietly & see your brother's interest without communicating to those who must be equally alive as myself to every thing that relates to him what is going on—My other letters will have opened your eyes to the systematic intrigue that is carried on against him by a member of his own family & the enclosed correspondence will shew you to what a height this has been carried & you will be not a little surprised to find that his first Sec^y passed himself off all through Russia as his Majesty's Charge des affaires at this Court [word illeg.] where he was to supersede your brother on his arrival here—This at present will of course recoil on his own head—as Macdonald does not intend to submit the matter to Gov^t you must keep the whole business a profound secret—but as it is necessary that some friend of judgment should be in possession of these facts in case of any tricks going on in England against Macdonald I think it advisable to send you the enclosed papers trusting to your discretion to keep them perfectly quiet unless obliged to produce them in his defence should any secret attack be made upon him—All open remark he stands quite above as no one was ever in greater favor with both Persians & his own Gov^t than he at present is—You would be amazingly amused could you see the private letter of the Russian Ambassador to M forwarding the public note 'Tis so kind & so funny saying he was not aware M intended to resign so suddenly & half a dozen witticisms that I must not repeat Mr. Gribayedoff is an exceedingly clever man & he & M are on the very best & most intimate terms which makes it very agreeable & every thing goes on most smoothly—I certainly leave this in May⁶² & it would be a great comfort to me to have particular introductions to Lord Heytesbury from his family at home if they could be procured—You know the Douglass's were formerly intimate with the A'Court family so that if you from your Wiltshire connexion can get me a few lines of introduction to his Lordship enclose them to our Agents Mess^{rs} Hornby Bailey & C^o St Petersburg & mention on that letter that it is to be kept by them 'till my arrival there—I hope all your family are w[ell]⁶³ Your little daughter h[as]⁶³ very soon given me up as a correspondent How is this? Give my kindest love to your amiable wife & you believe me

Your affecte sister
Amelia

The Rev^d

William Macdonald
Archdeacon of Wilts
Salisbury
England

62. Mrs. Macdonald was returning to England. Her plans were to travel via Russia, judging from the reference to Lord Heytesbury and St. Petersburg.

63. A small piece of the edge of the letter is torn off.