

SCOTTISH SOLDIERS IN RUSSIA:

PATRICK GORDON OF AUCHLEUCHRIES AND THE RUSSO–SCOTTISH CONNECTION

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This paper is concerned with the contribution and character of Scottish soldiers who ventured to Russia in the early modern period (*circa* 1550–1700). The diverse and fascinating subject of Russo–Scottish connections has been studied by historians of both nations. However, they have tended to concentrate on well-known individuals like Patrick Gordon, or a particular period — for example, the reign of Catherine the Great — or some special aspect such as trade or achievements of Scots doctors in Russia.¹ *Scottish Influences in Russian History*

¹ On Scottish doctors in Russia see: J. H. Appleby, *British [chiefly Scottish] doctors in Russia, 1657-1807: their contribution to Anglo-Russian medical and natural history*, PhD thesis, University of East Anglia, Norwich, 1979; F. Ashbee, 'George Lyon Carrick: Scots physician in Tsarist Russia', *Scottish Slavonic Review*, vol. 1 (1983) pp. 73-84; H. Muller-Dietz, 'J. Wylie und die mediko-chirurgische Akademie in St Petersburg', *Clio Medica*, vol. 4 (1969), pp. 99-107; A. G. Cross, 'John Rogerson, physician to Catherine the Great', *Canadian Slavic Studies*, vol. 4 (1970), pp. 594-601; R. Paul (ed.), 'Letters and documents relating to Robert Erskine, physician to Peter the Great, Czar of Russia 1677-1720', *Publications of the Scottish Historical Society*, 44 (*Miscellany of the Scottish History Society*, vol. 2 (1904), pp. 373-430; J. Wilson, 'Letters to St Petersburg written by Dr John Rogerson of Dumcrieff', *Trans. Dumfriesshire Arch. Soc.*, vol. 44 (1972), pp. 121-2; E. M. Tansey, 'The life and works of Sir Alexander Crichton, FRS (1763-1856): a Scottish physician to the Imperial Russian Court', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, vol. 38, no. 2 (1984), pp. 241-59.

On Scottish builders and architects in Russia see: G. C. Lukomsky, *Charles Cameron* (London, 1943); Isobel Rae, *Charles Cameron, architect to the court of Russia* (London, Elek Books 1971); G. K. Kozmian, *Charl'z Kameron* (Leningrad, Lenizdat 1987); V. N. Taleporovskii, *Charl'z Kameron* (Leningrad, 1939); M. N. Lansere et al, *Charl'z Kameron: sbornik statei* (Petrograd, 1924); D. Shvidkovskii, *The Empress and the architect: British architecture and gardens at the court of Catherine the Great* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1996); *Memoir of the late Charles Baird, esq., of St Petersburg, and of his son, the late Francis Baird, esq., of St. Petersburg and 4, Queens Gate, London* (London: T Tower, 1867); J. Howard, *The Scottish Kremlin builder: Christopher Galloway (clockmaker, architect and engineer to Tsar Mikhail, the first Romanov)* (Edinburgh: Manifesto, 1997); A. G. Cross, 'Charles Cameron's Scottish workmen', *Scottish Slavonic Review*, vol. 10 (1988), pp. 51-74; J. M. Robinson, 'A dazzling adventurer, Charles Cameron; the lost early years', *Apollo*, (January 1992), pp. 31-5; E. A. Jones, 'The enticement of Scottish artificers to Russia and Denmark in 1784 and 1786', *Scottish Historical Review*, vol. 18, no. 3 (1920-1), pp. 233-34; A. G. Cross, 'In Cameron's shadow: Adam Menelaws, stonemason turned architect', *Scottish Slavonic Review*, vol. 17 (1991), pp. 7-19.

On Scots merchants and educators in Russia see: H. Pitcher, *Muir and Mirrielees: the Scottish partnership that became a household name in Moscow* (Cromer, Swallow House Books 1994); N. Hans, 'Henry Farquharson: pioneer of Russian education', *Aberdeen University Review*, vol. 38 (1959-60), pp. 26-29; J. M. Sweet, 'Matthew Guthrie (1743-1807): an eighteenth-century gemmologist', *Annals of Science*, vol. 20, no. 4 (1964), pp. 245-302; K. A. Papmehl, 'Matthew

(1913) by A. F. Steuart remains the only real attempt at a general survey of Scottish influence in Russia.²

They were always a small group. Professor A. G. Cross thought it was hardly possible or even meaningful to distinguish Scoto-Russian relations from Anglo-Russian at any period.

It is true that Scots in Russia were called *anglichan* and all Britons lived in the 'English' community in the foreign quarter of St Petersburg or Moscow. They were too few in number to afford a separate living space and Episcopalians had, of necessity, to share a church with Presbyterians. But until the middle of the eighteenth century Scots in Russia were overwhelmingly soldiers, unlike Englishmen who were mostly merchants. Scots more readily became naturalized in their adoptive country — there were about a dozen titled Russian families of Scottish descent (Prince Barclay de Tolley, Counts Bruce, Fermor and Balmain, Barons Stuart, Rutherford and Sutherland among them) compared to one English Baron Dimsdale whose family never settled in Russia. Among untitled nobility of British extraction Scots prevailed as well. As late as 1805 an English traveller said that:

to come from the North side of the Tweed is the best recommendation a man can bring to this city [St Petersburg], the Caledonian Phalanx being the strongest and most numerous, and moving always in the closest union.

The Russian researcher, Dmitry Fedosov, compiled a list of Scots in Russia.³ He gave a great deal of his data to the *Scotland, Scandinavia and Northern Europe, 1580–1707* database Steve Murdoch and Alexia Grosjean created at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. Fedosov catalogued nearly 400 Scottish names from the

Guthrie - the forgotten student of eighteenth century Russia', *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, vol. 11 (1969), pp. 167-82; M. B. Simpson, 'Biographical notes on John Fraser (1750-1811): plant nurseryman, explorer and royal botanical collector to the Czar of Russia', *Archives of Natural History*, vol. 24, no. 1 (Feb.1997), pp. 1-18.

² A. F. Steuart, *Scottish influences in Russian history: from the end of the sixteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth century* (Glasgow: James Maclehose & Sons, 1913). A number of recent works have appeared, including: I. G. Anderson, *Scotsmen in the service of the Tsars* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press 1990); M. Cornwall and M. Frame (eds), *Scotland and the Slavs: cultures in contact, 1500–2000* (Newtonville, Mass., Oriental Research Partners 2001); Anthony. G. Cross, *By the banks of the Neva: chapters from the lives and careers of the British in eighteenth-century Russia* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1997); D. Dobson, *Scots in Poland, Russia and the Baltic states, 1550–1850* (Baltimore, Clearfield Co 2000); P. Dukes et al, *The Caledonian phalanx: Scots in Russia* (Edinburgh, 1987); Dimitry. Fedosov, *The Caledonian connection: Scotland-Russia ties – Middle Ages to early twentieth century: a concise biographical list* (Aberdeen, URL: <http://www.scalan.co.uk/scotsinrussia.htm> 1996 (accessed 15 July 2006).); *Scots in Russia 1666–1934: eleven Scots who visited Russia from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries*, exhibition catalogue (Edinburgh, 1987)

³ See D. Fedosov, *Scotland-Russia ties: Middle Ages to early twentieth century: A concise biographical list*.

Middle Ages to around 1920 (and most of them were dynasties or 'clans' as opposed to individuals). They fall into four broad categories:

- a) Scots who accepted Russian citizenship and settled permanently in the country;
- b) Scots on temporary service in Russia for periods between several weeks and several decades;
- c) British subjects who were active in Russia in some specific role (diplomats, merchants, travellers, missionaries, etc.);
- d) persons of Scots birth or origin employed by third countries on missions to Russia (for example, Danish envoy to Muscovy Peter Davidson 'de Scotia Aberdonensis', or Spain's first ambassador to St Petersburg who was a Stuart and a Jacobite).

Early contacts

The first Scot in Russia is supposed to have been one 'Master David', a Scottish Herald to the King of Denmark, who acted as envoy from his master, King John, to Vassili Ivanovitch, Grand Prince of Muscovy, in 1495. His name is usually given as *Geraldus*, the Russian version of his office of herald, but it seems to have been Cock or Cook. He was probably sent to Russia with the Danish embassy in 1492, to induce the Grand Prince to seize Sweden and its Finnish dependency in return for which the King of Denmark promised to assist Russia in its struggle against Lithuania.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Scottish merchants spread in hordes all over Prussia and Poland as traders, but few ventured further east to Russia. In the reign of Ivan Vassilievitch (The Terrible) the English spirit of adventure – which had formed The Society for the Discovery of Unknown Lands which focused on Russia for trade – later maintained an 'English house' in the Varvarka at Moscow. However, the settlement of the Scots in Russia was quite distinct from this body. Ivan the Terrible realized that Russia had been cut off from the rest of Europe. No Russian till his father's time (the Danish embassy) had been allowed to leave Russia, and it was fear of war that made him seek friendship with England. One of his ambassadors was wrecked on the coast of Scotland. In 1556, Ossip Gregorievitch Nepeja, with a suite of sixteen persons, was sent as envoy to Philip and Mary. Near Pitsligo Bay their ship was wrecked, and seven Russians drowned. Robert Best, interpreter to the embassy, escaped with the ambassador. This embassy was followed by others to Queen Elizabeth, who herself appointed ambassadors to Russia. When the Tsar complained about the bad conduct of Elizabeth's subjects trading in Russia, she replied that the wrongdoers were probably Scots, come over the border from Poland or Sweden. The Tsar died in 1598 and Boris Godounoff was elected to succeed him. In 1600 he sent an ambassador, Gregory Ivanovitch Mikulin, to Queen Elizabeth. The Russian was visited in London by the Scottish ambassador, James Stewart, fifth Earl of Bothwell

three years before James VI became King of England on Elizabeth's death.⁴ It was a sign that Scotland felt justified in seeking an independent understanding with Russia.

The beginning of the Scottish colony in Russia was very different from that of the English merchants because they began as prisoners captured when the Tsar's soldiers invaded Livonia in 1557–58. The Livonians invoked Polish aid, and the affair became the First Great Northern War.⁵ Many Scots who were settled in these northern lands became involved. In 1572 the Tsar raided Estonia bringing away many captives 'to remote places in his land, Liefflanders, French, Scots, Dutchmen and some English.'⁶ Most were detained in Moscow where he gave them a minister for holy service. 'A venturesome and warlike people', they formed a ready-made colony and Jeremy Lingett was appointed captain of a company of his fellow Scots.⁷ Over 100 years later, in 1679, Dr. Collins, the English Physician of Tsar Aleksei Michaelovitch, said that:

out of two hundred, English, Scots and Dutch, who have embraced the Russian Faith, hardly one has died a natural death.⁸

A number of Scots entered Russian service from that of Sweden.⁹ In the late 1500s a number of Swedish soldiers escaped Swedish service and ventured to Moscow to serve the Tsar; among them Gabriell Elphingstone, a 'valiant Scottish captain', who arrived with a commendation from a fellow Scot, Colonel Stewart (who served the King of Denmark). Six other Scots came with him 'but all verie bare of monny and furniture [*i.e.* possessions]'. Elphingstone took charge of a large number of Swedish deserters, of whom the Scots were the most favoured. He was soon followed into Russian service by General Carmichael, uncle to Sir John Carmichael, Warden of the Border in Scotland, from the family settled at Hyndford in Lowland Scotland. In 1570 Carmichael was given command of 5,000 of the Tsar's men during the Great Northern War, and later became Governor of Pskoff. Giles Fletcher, writing in 1591, says:

⁴ N. Evans, 'The meeting of the Russian and Scottish ambassadors in London in 1601', *Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 55 (1977), pp. 517–28.

⁵ Robert I. Frost, *The northern wars: war, state and society in northeastern Europe, 1558-1721* (Harlow: England and New York: Longman, 2000).

⁶ P. Dukes, 'The first Scottish soldiers in Russia', in G. G. Simpson (ed.), *The Scottish Soldier Abroad* (Edinburgh, John Donald Publishers 1992), pp. 47–54.

⁷ Sir J. Horsey, *Extracts out of Sir J. H.'s Observations in seventeene yeeres travels and experience in Russia, and other countries adjoining* (S. Purchas the Elder, 1626) republished in *Russia at the close of the sixteenth century. Comprising the treatise 'Of the Russe Commonwealth,' by G. F., and the travels of Sir J. Horsey, now for the first time printed entire from his own manuscript*, ed. E. A. Bond (London: Hakluyt Society, 1856), pp. 182–4.

⁸ S. Collins, *Relation curieuse de l'estat present de la Russie. Traduite d'un auteur anglois qui a este neuf ans a la cour du Grand Czar. Avec l'histoire des revolutions arrive es sous l'usurpation de Boris, & l'imposture de Demetrius, derniers Empereurs de Moscovie* (Paris, 1679), pp. 9, 67.

⁹ Horsey, *Travels*, p. 225.

of mercenary soldiers that are strangers (whom they call *nemschoy*), they have at this time 4,300 of Polonians: of Chircasses (that are under the Polonians) about four thousand, whereof 3,500 are abroad in his garrisons, of Deutches [Germans] and Scots about 150, of Greekes, Turks, Danes, and Swedes, all in one band an 100 or thereabouts. But these they use only upon the Tartar side and against the Siberians.¹⁰

The Scottish settlers, excluded, like all non-Orthodox residents, from the *kitai gorod* (China City) and the *byelo gorod* (White City) of Moscow, were placed in the *nemetskaya sloboda*, beyond the gates of the capital, north-west of the city.¹¹ Most Scots married their fellow exiles, mainly Livonians and Germans. One, a Hamilton, was almost certainly among the Swedish prisoners, mentioned previously and left two sisters as descendants, who both married Russians: one wed Artamon Sergievitch Matveeff and the other Feodor Poleukhtovitch Narishkin, both members of prominent Russian noble families.¹²

The career of just one of these Scots is worth citing as it says much about their role in Russian history. When Tsar Feodor was overthrown by his wife's brother, Boris Feodorovitch Godounoff, Captain David Gilbert, a Scot, cooperated with the Frenchman, Captain Margaret, and other international scoundrels, to support Godounoff. On Godounoff's death, Gilbert served in the bodyguard of the so-called "False" Dmitri, composed entirely of foreigners. The bodyguard consisted of 300 English, French and Scots, divided into three squadrons, and commanded by officers of each nation.¹³ Gilbert was one of the fifty two of these strangers whom the second False Dmitri wished to drown in the river Oka. Gilbert subsequently served in the ranks of the Polish army, but was soon taken prisoner and brought to Moscow. The MSS. of the Orusheynaya Palace at Moscow show that Gilbert, Captain Jacob Margaret, Robert Dunbar (another Scot), and Andrew Let were taken into the military service of another Russian magnate, Afanassi Ivanovitch Vlasseff, in 1600/1.¹⁴

In 1610 the Scotsman, Captain Robert Carr, accompanied Gilbert and his son, Thomas, on their return to Russia. On 24 June 1610, Carr commanded one of the six companies of British cavalry which remained for the longest time on the battlefield when the new Tsar Vassili Shuiski's army was defeated by the Poles at Kluchino under the Grand Hetman Zolkiewski. Carr lost his whole company, but remained unwounded. The names of the other captains were Benson, Crale, Crichton, Kendrick and York. Disillusioned, Thomas Gilbert and Captain Carr

¹⁰ G. Fletcher, *Of the Russe Commonwealth*, ed. R. Pipes and J. V. A. Fine (London, 1856; republished Harvard: Harvard University Press, Mass., 1966), pp. 52, 73.

¹¹ K. Waliszewski, *Peter the Great* (London: William Heinemann, 1897), p. 15.

¹² Wird. Gerrare, *Story of Moscow* (Nendeln, Liechtenstein : Kraus Reprint, 1970.), p. 121.

¹³ Collins, *Present State of Russia*, p. 283.

¹⁴ J. von Hamel, *England and Russia: comprising the Voyages of J. Tradescant the elder, Sir H. Willoughby, R. Chancellor, Nelson, and others to the White Sea*, trans. J. S. Leigh (London, 1854; republished London: Frank Cass & Co., 1968), pp. 402-407.

returned home in 1619, but the elder Gilbert remained in Russia and probably died there.¹⁵

In 1631, at the height of the Thirty Years' War (1618–48) — when the first Romanov ruled in Russia — another Scot, Sir Alexander Leslie of Auchintoul, arrived with a letter from King Charles I to the Tsar Michael.¹⁶ The Patriarch Philarete, then co-regent, sent him to Sweden to hire 5,000 infantry, and persuade smiths and wheelwrights, carpenters, and other vital tradesmen, to settle in Russia as part of his regimental community. By the end of 1631 there were 66,000 mercenaries in Moscow.¹⁷ Captain William Gordon, another Scot, was at the same time in the Muscovite service. In 1634, a Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Gordon was also present: he appears in Sir Thomas Urquhart's *Jewel* among the:

Scottish colonels that served under the great Duke of Muscovy, against the Tartar and Polonian.¹⁸

In the reign of the next Tsar, Aleksei Michaelovitch (1645–76), there was a marked increase in the number of Scots in Russia. The Tsar raised the number of foreign soldiers in his dominion, including two regiments,

one of cavalry and one of infantry ... commanded by a Scotsman as colonel, and have a staff's company in each of them. He received four times the usual pay.¹⁹

This Scot was probably no other than Sir Alexander Leslie of Auchintoul. On 28 March 1633, Captain James Forbes received a commission to raise 200 men in Scotland for the Russian service under Auchintoul. On 1 May 1633, he was granted a warrant to levy the same number of men that Auchintoul as 'Generall Colonel of the Forrain forces of the Emperour of Russia' was granted.²⁰ Five years later, in 1638, the first Bishop's War broke out between England and Scotland (precipitating

¹⁵ He may have returned to Russia as a noble Russian family called Kar appears on record: see W. Tooke, *View of the Russian Empire during the Reign of Catherine the Second* (3 vols, London, 1799)

¹⁶ See relation of his adventures published in G. Leslie, *Podarki Tsaria Alekseia polkovniku Lesli dlia kreshchenia i za podnachalstvo 1625 g.*, ed. V. Storozhev (Moscow, 1895); P. Dukes, 'New perspectives: Alexander Leslie and the Smolensk War, 1632–1634', in S. Murdoch (ed.), *Scotland and The Thirty Years War* (Leiden, 2001), pp. 173–189; P. Dukes, 'The Leslie family in the Swedish period (1630–5) of the Thirty Years' War', *European Studies Review*, vol. 12, no. 4 (1982), pp. 401–24.

¹⁷ R. Nisbet Bain, *Slavonic Europe: a political history of Poland and Russia from 1447 to 1796* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1908), pp. 194–5.

¹⁸ Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty, *Ekskybalaaron: or, The discovery of a most exquisite jewel, more precious then diamonds incased in gold, the like whereof was never seen in any age: found in the kennel of Worcester-streets, the day after the fight, and six before the autumnal æquinox, anno 1651. Serving in this place, to frontal a vindication of the honour of Scotland, from that infamy, wherinto the rigid Presbyterian party of that nation, out of their coveteousness and ambition, most dissembledly hath involved it* (London: J. Cottrel, 1652)

¹⁹ Tooke, *View of the Russian Empire*, p. 474.

²⁰ *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, vol. 5, 2nd series, pp. 79, 548.

the Civil Wars of the 1640s). Though many Scots returned from Sweden to defend their homeland, those in Russia were too far flung to heed the call home.²¹

Following the overthrow and execution of Charles I in Britain, a number of royalist Scots entered Russian service — if for no other reason than the desperate need to make a living in exile. In 1656 Thomas Dalzell of Binns (who never shaved his beard after the 1649 execution of his beloved master, King Charles I) and William Drummond of Cromlix entered the Russian service together. Binns became a general, and Cromlix a lieutenant-general and Governor of Smolensk. Both returned to Scotland in 1665, but only on the direct entreaty of King Charles II to the Tsar who was loath to allow any of his servants to depart his service. The autocratic rule born over their men by Cromlix and Binns was much commented on.²² Dalzell was described as a man whose

rude and fierce natural disposition had been much confirmed by his breeding and service in Muscovy, where he had the command of a small army and saw nothing but tyranny and slavery.²³

Later in the century, Gilbert Burnet wrote of Drummond of Cromlix that he ‘had yet too much of the air of Russia about him, though not with Dalziel’s fierceness.’ Dalzell of Binns was also denounced as ‘a Muscovy beast who used to roast men’ and accused of having introduced the thumbscrews as a torture device into Scotland; though in truth it was already known although called by another name ‘the pilliewincks.’²⁴ To confirm all of these prejudices, the Catholic James II created Drummond of Cromlix Viscount Strathallan (1686), and Dalzell was Commander-in-Chief of the Scottish army until his death at Edinburgh in August 1685.

Cromlix and Binns were, however, unusual in that they came home. Most Scots in Russia would not, or could not, leave. Paul Menzies, a son of Sir Gilbert Menzies of Pitfoddels, came to Russia from the Polish service in 1661. The Tsar Aleksei showed him immediate favour, arranged his marriage to a Russian woman, and appointed him a gentleman in the household of the Boyar Feodor Michaelovitch Milotawski, envoy to Persia. In 1672 Menzies acted as the Tsar’s envoy to Prussia and to Vienna to propose a league against the Turk and proceeded to Rome to petition Pope Clement X to assist Poland against the Ottoman Sultan. He succeeded in his mission. He returned in 1674, to become tutor to Peter the Great (which he remained until 1682). In 1689 he gained the rank of lieutenant-general; he died on 9 November 1694, leaving a wife and children. Incidentally, as

²¹ *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, vol. 5, 2nd series, pp. 79, 548.

²² J. Kirkton, *A history of the Church of Scotland 1600-1679*, ed. R. Stewart (Lampeter, Lewiston, N.Y., Edwin Mellen, 1992), p. 225.

²³ Quoted in ‘Memoirs of Captain Creighton’, in *The Works of Jonathan Swift, containing additional letters, tracts and poems not hitherto published*, ed. Sir W. Scott (19 vols, Edinburgh, 1814; 2nd edn., 19 vols, Edinburgh, 1824), vol. 12.

²⁴ Sir J. Lauder, Lord Fountainhall, *Historical notices of Scottish Affairs* (4 vols, Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1848), vol. 1, p. 32; vol. 2, p. 557.

a faithful Catholic and a good Scot, when in Rome he obtained from Pope Clement X permission for a service to be held commemorating Saint Margaret, Queen of Scots.

Several members of the Catholic family of Menzies travelled to Russia to capitalize on the Tsar's good will; Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Menzies of Balgownie was one. He married at Riga in July 1651, a noble lady from Curland, and was wounded and taken prisoner by his countryman, Lord Henry Gordon, youngest son of George, second Marquis of Huntly. The young Gordon was fighting for the Poles and also happened to capture his distant cousin, Gordon of Auchleuchries (*of which more below*) at the battle of Szudna in 1660. Balgownie later died of wounds in the Ukraine. By contrast, Lord Henry Gordon died at home in Strathbogie; he was described as being a 'little hair-brained, but very courageous' — a fitting description for many of the Scots who served so far from home.²⁵

Also unlike Generals Dalrymple and Drummond, Sir Alexander Leslie of Auchintoul, chief of the permanent foreign legion in Russia, remained in Russia until his death. His son, Theodorus, became a general and Governor of Smolensk, and died in 1661 at the age of 95.²⁶ Two other Leslies, Captain Alexander (a son of Leslie of Kininvie) and a Leslie of Wardis, were in Russia about the same time, as well as George Leslie, a Capuchin monk at Archangel. The birth-briefs (statements of parentage and ancestry) which some of Auchintoul's brother-officers obtained to prove their nobility are an important source for reconstructing his circle. For example, on 13 October 1636 the Privy Council of Scotland presented Colonel John Kynninmonth, Governor of Nettenburg in Russia, with the 'certificat of his lawful birth and progenie.'²⁷ The Keith family was represented by Lieutenant George Keith who left an heir called Alexander, a fact we know from his birth brief.²⁸ There is also a petition of 1 March 1670 for a 'borebreiff' from Lt-Col. Alexander Hamilton, who desired to prove his descent. He was the eldest son of Sir Alexander Hamilton of Fenton and Innerwick in East Lothian.²⁹

²⁵ Henry, Lord Gordon came to Poland after his sister, Catherine, married Andrew John, Count Morszyn, the 'exiled' Grand Treasurer of Poland. Gordon became a Polish noble in 1658 and got from King Charles II a life annuity of 6,000 *merks* Scots from the Huntly estates in 1667: *Papers relating to the Scots in Poland, 1576-1793*, ed. A. Francis Steuart, (Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 1915), pt 2.

²⁶ W. Macfarlane, *Genealogical collections concerning families in Scotland*, ed. J. T. Clark (2 vols, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1900), vol. 1, p. 66.

²⁷ *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, vol. 6, p. 327.

²⁸ 'Birthbriefs from the Registers of the Burgh of Aberdeen, 1637-1705', *The Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 5 (Aberdeen, 1852), p. 340, recently reprinted: Frances McDonnell (ed.), *Birth Briefs of Aberdeen 1637-1705* (London: Willow Bend Books, 1998). See also *Index to genealogies, birthbriefs and funeral escutcheons recorded in the Lyon Office*, ed. F. J. Grant (8 vols, Edinburgh: Scottish Record Society 40, 1898)

²⁹ Sir R. Douglas of Glenburvie, *The baronage of Scotland: containing an historical and genealogical account of the gentry of that kingdom* (Edinburgh, 1798), vol. 1, p. 462.

Patrick Gordon of Auchleuchries (1635–99)

The best-known Scottish soldier of fortune in Russia is Patrick Gordon of Auchleuchries.³⁰ He served there from 1661 until his death in 1699.³¹ He was known among the Russians as Patrick Ivanovitch and was the second son of a younger brother of a younger house of the Gordons of Haddo. His mother was Mary Ogilvie, heiress of Auchleuchries, a small estate in Buchan. As a younger son of a Catholic family he was forced to seek his fortune abroad, but not before he had received a competent education, especially in Latin, (and even from far-off Russia he took an interest in the Royal Society). In his seventeenth year he records:

I resolved, I say, to go to some foreigne country, not caring much on what pretence, or to which country I should go, seing I had no knowne ffriend in any foreigne place.

He arrived at Danzig and was encouraged by fellow Scots to go on to Poland, where the *Hetman*, Krzysztoff Radziwi, had a mostly Scottish regiment. But at Posen he joined a Polish noble called Opalinski and went to Antwerp. There he met a Scottish cavalry captain who helped him enter the Swedish army in 1655. After a baptism of fire (that included having a horse killed under him and being shot in the leg) he was captured by the Poles in 1656. He was freed on the condition that he would join the Polish army. Then, captured by the Swedes, he returned to their service and helped devastate East Prussia. The First Great Northern War, like the Thirty Years' War before it, was a destructive internecine conflict. He was captured and re-captured, at one time by the Poles and in 1657 by the Imperial Forces. Finally, in 1661 at Warsaw he received an offer to join the Russian army from the Russian ambassador, Zamiaty Feodorovitz Leontieff, and (more importantly) Colonel Daniel Crawford, son of Hew Crawford of Jordanhill and Governor of Smolensk.³² Auchleuchries joined Colonel Crawford, Captain Paul Menzies and five servants along with two Scottish friends, Alexander Landells and Walter Airth.

³⁰ General works on Patrick Gordon of Auchleuchries include: S. Buxhoeveden, *A cavalier in Muscovy* (London, Macmillan, 1932); A. Mackay, *General Patrick Gordon of Auchleuchries* (Peterhead, 1915); P. Dukes, 'Patrick Gordon and his family circle: some unpublished letters', *Scottish Slavonic Review*, no. 10 (1988), pp. 19–49; L. Grey, 'A Scot in the service of the Czars: General Patrick Gordon of Auchleuchries', *History Today*, vol. 18, pp. 251–58; S. Kononov, 'Patrick Gordon's dispatches from Russia', *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, vol. 11 (1964), pp. 8–16

³¹ This brief relation of his life is based on published selections of his writing, including: P. Gordon, *Dnevnik (1635–1659)* (Moscow, 'Nauka' 2000); P. Gordon, *Passages from the diary of General Patrick Gordon of Auchleuchries, 1635–1699*, ed. J. Robertson (Aberdeen: Spalding Club, 1859); P. Gordon, *Tagebuch des Generales Patrick Gordons* (3 vols, Moscow, 1849); S. Kononov (ed.), 'Sixteen further letters from Patrick Gordon', *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, vol. 13 (1967), pp. 72–93

³² His elder brother, Thomas Crawford, was a colonel in the Muscovite service, and married a daughter of Colonel Alexander Crawford, but died in 1685, without surviving issue': Douglas, *Baronage of Scotland* 1, p. 430.

Other Scots joined them on the way, including one William Hay, and a John Hamilton. On 2 September 1661 Auchleuchries entered Moscow. But they soon realized they had made a bad bargain. Even the copper coin in which they were paid was adulterated. Nor was Gordon pleased with the attitude of the Russians towards their foreign legion. He said:

Strangers, were looked upon as a company of hirelings, and, at the best (as they say of woman) but *necessaria mala* [a necessary evil]; no honours or degrees of preferment to be expected here but military, and that with a limited command ... no marrying with natives, strangers being looked upon by the best sort as scarcely Christians, and by the plebeians as mere pagans ... and the worst of all the pay small.

Auchleuchries tried to get leave, but was threatened with exile to Siberia if he tried to escape the service.³³ Reluctantly he remained and was given a regiment that he filled up with his countrymen, about thirty in all, mostly Scots collected in Riga, including Hay and Hamilton already named, and William Guild, George Keith, Andrew Burnet, Andrew Calderwood and Robert Stuart. Disgusted by the attitude of the Russians, Auchleuchries tried to join the embassy of Feodor Michaelovitch Milotawski to Persia, but this was not permitted, though his friend, Captain Paul Menzies, obtained the post by a bribe of a hundred ducats to the Boyar and a saddle and bridle worth twenty ducats to his steward.³⁴ Despite dissatisfaction with Russia, soon after his arrival Auchleuchries married the daughter of Colonel Philip Albrecht von Bockhoven. It was an international match; the bride's father was an ethnically German Lithuanian nobleman (then a prisoner of the Poles), while her mother was from Wales and belonged to the Vaughan family. As a slight sweetener, Auchleuchries received the rank of lieutenant-colonel in 1662.

In 1665 Auchleuchries heard of the death of his eldest brother and petitioned to visit home. The Tsar refused, but the following summer (1666) sent him on a mission to Charles II, as no Russian Boyar was willing to go. In his suite was Captain Peter Rae and at Pskoff he met another Scot called MacNaughton. Once in Britain Auchleuchries contacted Generals Dalryell and Drummond, those veterans of the Muscovite service, and had the satisfaction of an interview with King Charles; Auchleuchries remained a devoted adherent of the Stuarts. When, in 1667, he returned to Russia he carried a letter from the King to the Tsar, requesting the restoration of the privileges of the English merchants. Though he retained his regiment, Auchleuchries was constantly suspected of planning to defect from the Russian service and in consequence in 1670 was sent into the Ukraine to subdue it, where he remained, conquering the province, for seven long years. In 1677 his defence of Tschigirin against a Turkish siege ended in the Moslems being driven out of the province and this was the making of his military reputation in Russia.

³³ See P. Dukes, 'Problems concerning the departure of Scottish soldiers from seventeenth-century Muscovy', in T. C. Smout (ed.), *Scotland and Europe, 1200-1850* (Edinburgh, 1986), pp. 143-56.

³⁴ P. Dukes, 'Paul Menzies and his mission from Muscovy to Rome, 1672-1674', *The Innes Review*, 35 (1984), pp. 88-95.

Though he still wished to leave Russia, Tsar Feodor (who succeeded Aleksei Michaelovitch in 1676), made Auchleuchries return to Tschigirin, now threatened by the Grand Vizier Kara Mustapha. Auchleuchries took command when the Russian governor was killed by a bomb, and the campaign ended in the slaughter of 4,000 Turks; in other words a complete, if sanguinary, victory which brought him the rank of major-general. In 1679 Auchleuchries was appointed to the Chief Command at Kiev, and in 1683 was made a lieutenant-general. By this time Tsar Feodor had died (in 1683) and been succeeded by his two brothers, Ivan and Peter, with the Tsarevna Sophia as Regent. Auchleuchries tried his luck with this third ruler, but was again sent back to Kiev to fortify it against a Turkish invasion.

In 1685, Patrick Gordon of Auchleuchries, heard of the death of his 'native sovereign', Charles II, and, thrilled by the accession of a Catholic King to the throne in the form of James II, petitioned the Tsar to let him return home. His petition was addressed to Prince Vassili Vassilievitch Galitzin, the favourite of the Tsarevna Sophia. He received permission to go, but his wife and children had to be left behind as hostages for his return. On 26 January 1686, he received a *charka* (cup) of brandy out of the young Tsar Peter's hand, with a command from him to return speedily. He visited England, was received well by King James II and his equally Catholic queen, Mary of Modena, and then travelled to Scotland for the first time in over twenty years.

When he returned to Russia, Auchleuchries was armed with letters of introduction from his King and his clan chief and cousin, the Duke of Gordon, begging for his discharge so that he could enjoy a retirement on the Scottish estates to which he had now succeeded. This led to his disgrace and, in January 1687, he was informed he would serve against the Tartars of the Crimea. In September he received the rank of general. In 1688 he was troubled by the Russian Patriarch's prophecy that the Muscovites would not prevail while they were commanded by a heretic (*i.e.* Auchleuchries). But now Auchleuchries was in the ascendant as he grew in favour with the Boyars, and especially with the young Tsar Peter. In May 1689, Tsar Peter accorded him the special privilege of being addressed in the third person, and also as Patrick Ivanovitch, like a genuine Russian nobleman. On 6 August when a *coup* attempt was made against Tsar Peter, Auchleuchries fled with him to safety at Troitza.³⁵ Having thrown in his lot with the Tsar he became a *genuine friend*.

Auchleuchries was now frequently in company with the young Tsar and honoured with gifts. Because of his knowledge of pyrotechnics, he was appointed director of fireworks. Waiting on the tsar entailed serious dangers to health, with drinking bouts common among the courtiers, but Auchleuchries's cousin, Gordon of Auchintoul writes that he remained

³⁵ Gordon, *Diary*, p. 172.

a sober man, in a country where drinking is so much in fashion and though he used to be much in the tsar's company, his Majesty knowing his inclinations, would never allow him to be urged.³⁶

Auchleuchries grieved for James II's loss of his throne in 1688.³⁷ He was a ready-made Jacobite and his influence ensured that William III's envoys were not received in Russia.³⁸ From 1693 Auchleuchries acted as Rear-Admiral of the Fleet at Archangel. In 1695 he planned an attack on Azof, one fort of which was stormed by Colonel James Gordon (though it was not taken by the Russians until 1696).³⁹ The only officer of distinction the Russians lost was Colonel Stevenson,

a Scots gentleman (who was) shot in the mouth being a little too curious, and raising himself too high on the top of the loose earth to observe the enemy.

On the return of the triumphant troops to Moscow in October, Gordon received a medal, a gold cup, a sable robe and an estate with ninety serfs on it. Though he never again returned home to Scotland, Auchleuchries spent his last years respected and secure in Russia.

Scots in the service of Peter the Great

George Ogilvy was a son of Baron George Ogilvy, Governor of Spielberg in Moravia (himself a son of Patrick Ogilvy of Muirtoun, and grandson of James Ogilvy, Lord Airlie). He joined the service of the Holy Roman Emperor and rapidly became a Gentleman of the Bedchamber and major-general. When the Tsar visited Vienna in 1698 he was struck by his ability and took him Ogilvy his service.⁴⁰ Ogilvy rose to become Field Marshal of the Russian army. Major-General James Daniel Bruce (Yakov Vilemovitch, 1670–1735) and his brother, Robert Bruce (Roman Vilemovitch, 1668–1720), were sons of an immigrant to Russia, Colonel William Bruce, who claimed descent from the family of Bruce of Airth.⁴¹ Robert's son, born in 1705, took part in the war with the Turks, and was a major-general by 1739.⁴²

³⁶ Quoted in Waliszewski, *Peter the Great*, p. 128.

³⁷ See Rebecca Wills, *The Jacobites and Russia, 1715–1750* (East Linton, Tuckwell Press, 2000)

³⁸ G. P. Herd, 'The mercenary as diplomat: the fall of the House of Stuart and the rise of the Petrine order', in C. Brennan and M. Frame (eds), *Russia and the wider world in historical perspective: essays for Paul Dukes* (Basingstoke, 2000), pp. 24–44; S. Murdoch, 'Soldiers, sailors, Jacobite spy: Russo-Jacobite relations 1688–1750', *Slavonica*, vol. 3, no. 1 (1996/7), pp. 7–27.

³⁹ J. W. Barmhill and P. Dukes, 'North-East Scots in Muscovy in the seventeenth century', *Northern Scotland*, vol. 1 (1972), pp.49–63.

⁴⁰ *Memoirs ... containing an account of his travels in Germany, Russia, Tartary, the W. Indies, etc; as also very interesting private anecdotes of the Czar, Peter I of Russia*, ed. P H Bruce (London, 1782); *Des Heil. Rom. Reich. Genealogisch-Historischen: Adels Lexici* (2 vols, Leipzig, 1747)

⁴¹ D. Fedosov, 'The first Russian Bruces', in G. G. Simpson (ed.), *The Scottish Soldier Abroad* (Edinburgh, 1992), pp. 55–66.

⁴² Fedosov, 'First Russian Bruces'

These Bruces and Ogilvies were typical of the quality and calibre of foreign professionals who served Peter the Great. Five hundred Scots and Englishmen were recruited by Tsar Peter during his residence in England in 1698. Another of them, Major-General Chambers, following his victory at Narva, was made a Knight of the Russian Order of St Andrew. Major Alexander Magnus Anderson went over to the Russians from the Swedes in 1712, but was later sent to Siberia, with many other Scoto-Swedes. Another man, Duncan Robertson, son of Alexander Robertson, twelfth Laird of Strowan, rose to the rank of colonel.⁴³ Yet another, Count James Gordon, was wounded in the ankle at the battle of Notteburg, near Narva. James Patrickovitch Gordon, son of Auchleuchries, was captured at Narva and escaped to become a brigadier. Another James Gordon was taken prisoner in 1704 and suffered 'misirabill bondeg' among the Swedes.

Most Scots were loyal and competent, but some were pure chancers. A good case in point is a member of the Swedish branch of the Douglas family, originally from Whittinghame in Scotland. Count Gustaf Otto Douglas, born in 1687, was a Life Guard under Charles XII of Sweden.⁴⁴ He was a son of Count Gustaf Douglas, and grandson of General Count Robert Douglas, a prominent Scottish mercenary in his adoptive Sweden during the Thirty Years' War.⁴⁵ Both Gustaf Otto and his brother, Wilhelm, were taken prisoners at Poltava and conveyed to Vologda where Gustaf Otto entered the Russian service at the age of thirty. He was made Governor-General of Finland in 1717, but was so violent in temper, that in 1719, at a wedding in Åbo, he

Register of the Privy Council of Scotland, vol. 5, 2nd series, pp. 79, 548slw the Russian chief bailiff, for which he was deprived of his post and imprisoned.

During his rule 3,000 Finns were forcibly recruited into Russian regiments and sent to Astrachan. Later, Douglas served as Governor of Reval in Estonia (1737-41), and as a general, but retired under a cloud in 1751.

Scots also served with great distinction in the Russian navy. Thomas Gordon left the British Navy due to his Jacobite sympathies and was found by Peter the Great in Holland in 1698.⁴⁶ In 1717 he was a captain-commander and in 1719, a rear-admiral.⁴⁷ In 1721 he commanded the squadron of Kronstadt, consisting of six battleships, three frigates and two smaller vessels. Astonishingly, he spoke no Russian, but talked to Prince Menschikoff in fluent Dutch. He captured Danzig in 1724 and was Commander-in-Chief at Kronstadt in 1727. Admiral Gordon died at

⁴³ Douglas, *Baronage of Scotland*, p. 409.

⁴⁴ H. Marryat, *One year in Sweden: including a visit to the Isle of Gotland* (2 vols, London, John Murray, 1862), vol. 2, p. 463.

⁴⁵ O. Donner, *A brief sketch of the Scottish families in Finland and Sweden* (Helsingfors, The Finnish Literary Society 1884).

⁴⁶ See M. W. Bruce, 'Jacobite relations with Peter the Great', *Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 14 (1936), pp. 343-362.

⁴⁷ W. M. Parker, 'A Scots admiral of the Russian Navy (Thomas Gordon)', *Journal of the Royal United Services Institution*, vol. 92 (1947), pp. 268-73.

Kronstadt on 18 March 1741; the Jacobites, who had put great hope in him, said the 'Pretender', called the Chevalier de St George, regretted 'the honest Admiral very much.' In the next generation Samuel Greig, from Inverkeithing in Fife, Scotland (1735–1788), became a full admiral and reformer of Russia's Baltic Fleet.⁴⁸ He is still universally hailed as the father of the modern Russian navy. All four of Greig's sons followed in his footsteps, and one of his grandsons ended up serving as the Imperial Russian Minister of Finance. Altogether, nearly thirty Scots (or men of directly Scottish descent) achieved senior rank in the Imperial Russian Navy before its destruction during the 1917 Revolution.

Conclusion

Scotsmen, although never the majority in Russian service, made their mark through a combination of competence, loyalty, tenacity and luck. They were good at what they did and were physically and morally hardy enough to survive terrible conditions. Many felt they had no choice but to seek their fortune far from home. Those who came from Sweden, Denmark or the Baltic states were already separated by one degree from their native soil and this added to their versatility in an international market for soldiers in which the reputation of the Scot remained high.

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A. Aslanberov, *Admiral Aleksei Samuilovich Greig* (St Petersburg, 1873); A. L. Fullerton and F. Yarmukhamedova, *The Family Greig in Russia* (Bernardston, Mass. Bernardnton Books, 2001); I. U. S. Kriuchkov, *Aleksei Samuilovich Greig* (Moscow, 1984); W. G. Pratts, *Grand Admiral Samuel Greig* (Fife, 1985); A. G. Cross, 'Samuel Greig, Catherine the Great's Scottish admiral', *Mariner's Mirror*, vol. 60 (1972), pp. 173–97; S. Greig, 'Memoir of Sir Samuel Greig', *Dublin University Magazine*, vol. 44 (1854), pp. 156–67; M. M. Page, 'Admiral Samuil Karlovich Greig', *Scottish Slavonic Review*, no. 15 (1990), pp. 7–18.