



BRYDGES, HARFORD JONES

BRYDGES, Sir **HARFORD JONES** (1764-1847), English diplomat and author, ambassador to the court of Fath-ʿAlī Shah Qājār from 1807 to 1811. Born Harford Jones of a Herefordshire family, he assumed the additional name of Brydges (from his maternal grandmother's family) by royal dispensation in 1836. As a young man he entered the service of the East India Company and spent some years in India, where he acquired proficiency in Persian. As resident (commercial representative) of the Company's factory at Basra from 1786 to 1794, he visited Bushire (Būšehr) and Shiraz during the last years of the Zand dynasty. Here he became friendly with Loṭf-ʿAlī Khan Zand (q.v.), and accompanied the young prince on some of his heroic but ultimately futile campaigns against the advancing Qajars under [Āgā Moḥammad Khan](#). Brydges included a detailed account of these events in the introduction to his translation of ʿAbd-al-Razzāq Beg Donbolī's *Maʾāter-e solṭānīya* (*The Dynasty of the Kajars, Translated from the Original Persian Manuscript*, London, 1833).

During Iran's war with Russia of 1804-13, Napoleon sent a military mission under General Gardane to the Qajar court at Tehran. Britain hastily responded by appointing Brydges envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to the court of Persia (adding a baronetcy), with instructions to ensure Iran's continuance as a bulwark against the perceived designs of France on British India. Arriving in Tehran at the end of 1808, Brydges had to cope not so much with the influence of Gardane, who had just left with scant success, but with the effects of a recent mission from Lord Minto, governor general of the East India Company in Bombay (rarely at one with Whitehall on matters of foreign



policy). The mission's leader, Sir John Malcolm (q.v.), though at his most imperious and escorted by a powerful squadron, was not permitted to proceed to Tehran. Brydges, however, managed in March, 1809, to conclude the first treaty of alliance between the governments of Iran and Britain (Jones [Brydges], *An Account of the Transactions of His Majesty's Mission to the Court of Persia, 1810-1811, to which is Added a Brief History of the Wahauby*, London, 1834, esp. I, pp. 209, 256). Minto, piqued at London's success, refused to honor Brydges' bills and in 1810 sent Malcolm back to Iran; London, however, confirmed Brydges' credentials and henceforth retained control of diplomatic relations with Iran. Brydges stepped down as ambassador in 1811 and was replaced by Sir Gore Ouseley, who negotiated the definitive treaty (*Aitchison's Treaties*, no. vii).

On his return to England Brydges resigned from the East India Company but retained an active and sympathetic interest in Iran and India (see his *Letters on the Present State of British Interests and Affairs in Persia*, London, 1838). He also devoted himself to local politics (as a Whig) and in 1841 was appointed deputy-lieutenant of the county of Hereford.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brydges' works were published under the name of Jones. See also M. Atkin, *Russia and Iran 1780-1828*, Minneapolis, 1980, pp. 125-35; the *Dictionary of National Biography* III, London, 1917; Fasā'i, I, pp. 257-59; P. Sykes, *History of Persia*, London, 1915, II, pp. 306-09; and the annotated Persian translation of Brydges' introduction to his *Dynasty of the Kajars: Ākarīn rūzhā-ye Lotf-'Alī Kān Zand*, tr. H. Nāṭeq and J. Gurney, Tehran, 1353 Š./1973.