

## Northern Caucasus Literatures – Early Modern Period

**Contents** (Poetry – Fiction – Essay – Autobiography)

### POETRY

#### *Poetry and War*

The poetry composed during the early modern period is dominated by the invasions of Qajar and other empires. In particular Nadir Shah's invasion of Daghestan, which was most intensive during the years 1741-1743, served as a subject for epic poetry in vernacular languages. The invasions during these years represented the culmination of over a decade of skirmishes between Nadir Shah's troops, which included Tatars and Uzbeks who fought on his side alongside Iranians, and the Daghestani people. Although Nadir Shah captured numerous fortresses and outposts in the Caucasus during his campaigns, he was ultimately defeated by Lezghi warriors. Epic poems about the defeat of Nadir Shah's army were composed in Avar and Lak. The Avar epic poem tells of a battle that is not recorded in any of the standard Persian historiographic sources for Nadir Shah's campaigns in the Caucasus. Just as local historical sources and epigraphic inscriptions tell a story of the Abbasid Caliph Harun al-Rashid and his family's relationship to the Caucasus that differs from that available in better known historical sources (as discussed in the next section), so does local Avar-language poetry and prose report in detail the battle between Nadir Shah and the Avars of Andalal in 1841 that sealed the fate of Nadir Shah's attempts at conquests. This epic poem records in verse a speech by Muhammad Nutsal IV (1730-1774), who is celebrated for defeating Nadir Shah even though he was still a young boy at the time of this battle. As the poem records:

Nutsal Khunzakh was the head of the army.  
He wears a coat of chain mail.  
Nutsal ordered the army to stop for instruction.  
If the enemy takes Andalal, he said,  
we'll never wash away the shameful stain.  
If he reaches [the towns of] Chokh or Sogratl,  
He'll be in Khunzakh tomorrow.  
Young men, repent!  
Anyone who dies today [in this battle]  
will become a martyr.  
Anyone who remains alive [after fighting in this battle]  
will be glorified forever!

Muhammad Nutsal later came to be known for his role in bringing Chechnya within the fold of the Avar Khanate over which he ruled. Lak epic poetry strikes a similar note. One poem is dedicated to the Lak Mortaza 'Ali (Murtazali), son of Ghaziqumuq ruler Surkhay Khan I, who was also instrumental in stopping Nadir Shah's conquest of the northern Caucasus.

Because they were located to the northwest of Daghestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia were not as profoundly affected by Nadir Shah's invasions as was Daghestan. But Chechen-Ingush epic poems (*illi*) tell of other historical battles, in which brave young men, such as Adin Surkho and Aldaman Gheza resist foreign invaders. Aldaman Gheza, whose father was killed by enemies when he was a nine-year-old boy, is particularly celebrated in Chechen poetry for the alliances he formed with other Caucasus peoples during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, including powerful local rulers in Dagestan.

#### *Poetry and Language Study*

Alongside oral epics that circulated among performers often without the attribution of specific authorship, individual authors began to appear in Daghestani literary culture in the early modern period. This was also a period marked by a shift away from Arabic as the exclusive language of learning and an increasing engagement with Persian and Turkic, as well as the transformation of the indigenous languages of Daghestan into literary vernaculars. Among the early modern Daghestani

authors who played an instrumental role in these transformations, arguably none is more important than Dibir-kadi (1742-1817), an Avar linguist, poet, and intellectual who famously compiled Daghestan's first Persian-Turkic dictionary, *Collection of Two Languages (Jami al-lughatayn)*. The dictionary, which included four languages—Arabic, Persian, Turkic, and Avar—was compiled at the request of the Avar ruler Umma-khan in order to prepare translators to serve the khan using their knowledge of the Persian and Turkic languages.

Born just a year after the Nadir Shah's defeat at Andalal, in Khunzakh, the same Avar town from which Muhammad Nutsal IV who defeated the Nadir Shah was originally from, Dibir-kadi is not known primarily for his poetry. However, his Persian-Turkic dictionary, as well as his Arabic-language textbook for the study of Persian, greatly facilitated the accessibility of Persian poetry within the northern Caucasus, since it includes extensive citations from major Persian poets such as Hafez of Shiraz, Mas'ud Sa'd Salman of Lahore, in order to illustrate the meanings of Persian words. In the preface to his dictionary Dibir-kadi recognized the pre-eminence of Arabic as a learned language within this triad, but emphasized the delicacy, subtlety, and beauty of Persian.

#### *Poetry in the Vernacular*

Dibir-kadi belonged to a period that has been referred to by scholars as part of Daghestan's literary renaissance. Classical Arabic poetry was much in vogue at the time. In particular the poetry of Abu Tammam and his anthology of early Arabic poems, *Hamasa*, inspired numerous imitators. During the same period that Dibir Qadi was occupied with making Persian, Turkic, and Arabic literary heritage accessible to his fellow Avars, Daghestani poets such as Abu Bakr al-Aymaki (b. 1711) and Hassan al-Kudali were occupied with integrating their knowledge of Arabic, Persian, and Turkic with their native Avar. Abu Bakr al-Aymaki's composition entitled *Turks*, which consisted of thirteen Avar poems in the *ajami* script on topics such as belief in Allah, the appearance of heaven and hell, and what acts were condemned and which approved by Islam, was composed in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Literature in Avar using the Arabic *ajami* script is attested as early as the fifteenth century, but Avar poetry flourished in particular during this period. The poetry of al-Aymaki and Hassan al-Kudali in the *ajami* script mark a new stage in Daghestan's vernacular literary traditions. Al-Aymaki in turn inspired a lengthy commentary by the Daghestani scholar-poet Sa'id al-Harakani, which compared al-Aymaki's poetry collection *Turks* with his philosophical ode, composed in classical Arabic with an end rhyme on the letter m (*qasida al-mimiyya*).

#### Further Reading:

Aligadzhi Aminovich Akhlov, *Istoricheskie pesni narodov Dagestana i Severnogo Kavkaza* (Moscow: Nauka, 1981).

Patimat Alibekova. Дибир-кади из Хунзаха. Собрание двух языков для обучения двух братьев. Персидско-арабско-туркский словарь. (Словарные статьи, содержащие персидские поэтические тексты: перевод и комментарии) (Makhachkala: АЛЕФ, ИЯЛИ ДНЦ РАН, 2014).

Алиев Б.Г. *Борьба народов Дагестана против иноземных завоевателей: Источники, предания, легенды, героико-исторические песни* (Makhachkala: ДНЦ РАН, 2002). The Avar and Lak epic poems narrating the defeat of Nadir Shah are on pp. 377-392.

N. V. Kapieva, *Pesni narodov Dagestana* (Leningrad, 1970).

Ėffendi Kapiev, *Pesni gortsev* (Moscow: Khudozh. literatura, 1939).

*Poéziia Dagestana: antologija*, ed. M R Rasulov (Makhachkala: Dagestanskoe Knizhnoe Izd-vo, 1971).

*Antologija dagestanskoi poézii*, ed. Kamal Abukov, A M Vagidov, and Sirazhudin Khaïbullaev. 4 volumes (Makhachkala: Dagestanskoe knizhnoe izd-vo, 1980-1983).

Khalil Khalilov, ed. *Lakskie épicheskie pesni* (Makhachkala, 1969).

#### Discussion Question:

How did scholars and critics from the northern Caucasus promote the study of poetry during the early modern period?

## **FICTION, LEGENDS, MYTHS**

### *Epic Fiction*

Epic songs narrating the exploits of brave Daghestani warriors in battle that were discussed in the article on early modern poetry had a counterpart in oral legends, which later when recorded in writing took the form of prose. As with epic poems, their dominant themes are the struggles of Daghestani peoples with foreign invaders. Notwithstanding their aesthetic orientation, these legends often have strong historical content. This means that the boundaries between fact and fiction, or fiction and documentary prose which have been adopted for the purposes of this study guide, are necessarily porous.

### *Historical Fiction*

Also as with epic poetry, historical figures abound in such legends. These legends are set in the towns of Qumyq, Turchidag, Khunzakh, Qubachi, Sogratl, Chokh, Megeb, and Obokh. They feature Mutazali, son of Surkhai-Khan I, who helped to defend Daghestan from the invasion of Nadir Shah, and Shakhman, a Daghestani who is remembered for his traitorous dealings with Nadir Shah. After three years of being educated in Persia, Shakhman returned to Daghestan as part of the Nadir Shah's retinue. He led many campaigns against the Daghestanis who were resisting the Persian conquest, and local legends remember him as an enemy. After Nadir Shah's defeat at the battle of Andalal in 1741, Daghestanis began to seek out Shakhman in order to punish him for treachery. Eventually, Shakhman decided to surrender and hand himself over to the Daghestanis who planned to kill him. According to legend, his final words were: "Muslims! I swore to take my revenge on you and found many ways of doing this. Now my life is reaching a close. I arrived here in order to die by your hands."

Another legend tells of a mountaineer named Antkilish (whose name means "six fingered"). Antkilish is remembered alongside other Daghestanis who foiled the efforts of Nadir Shah to conquer the Caucasus. He is also believed to have been a friend of the noble bandit named Khochbar, from the town of Gidatl'. Antkilish assisted Khochbar in his efforts to protect Daghestani people. Antkilish's advice and counsel turned out to be crucial in Daghestanis' battles with invading armies. For example, on one occasion, Antkilish saw that the mountaineers were clearly outnumbered by an army that was trying to besiege them. So he advised that, rather than openly resisting the army, they should gather their ashes into bags and scatter the contents of these bags to the wind as soon as they came under attack. When the enemy began attacking, the mountaineers immediately opened their bags. Seeing the air become hazy, the invading army assumed that all the Daghestanis' ammunition had been exhausted, and they moved to the next village. Thus was that village spared further destruction.

Soon after Daghestanis conquered Nadir Shah, they had to face ever-increasing encroachment from Russia. Yet whereas Daghestan was the frontline in the wars with invading Persian armies from the south, Chechnya became the frontline for invading armies from the north. The borderland regions of Chechnya and Ingushetia were particularly affected by the growth of Cossack settlements, which were first set up by Russia in the early modern period. Although Cossacks and Chechens shared some qualities in common, and borrowed each other's styles of dress and certain aspects of their ways of life, they were aligned with different political regimes, and for this reason often came into conflict. Chechen literature from this period reflects the increasingly tense relationship with the Cossacks who had settled along their borders.

### Further Readings:

Thomas M. Barrett, "Lines of Uncertainty: The Frontiers of the North Caucasus," *Slavic Review* 54.3 (1995): 578-601.

Владимир Бобровников, "Насилие и Власть в Исторической Памяти Мусульманского Пограничья (К Новой Интерпретации Песни о Хочбаре)," *Ab Imperio* 1 (2003): 177-208.

U. B. Dalgat, *Fol'klor i literatura narodov Dagestana* (Moscow: Izd. vostochnoi literatury, 1962). Pages 116-117 for the legend of Shahmakh.

A. A. Akhlakov, *Geroiko-istoricheskie pesni avartsev* (Makhachkala: Dagestanskii filial Akademii nauk SSSR, In-t istorii, iazyka, i literatury im. G. Tsadasy, 1968), 163–179.

#### Discussion Questions:

What role did historical events play in shaping cultural memory in the northern Caucasus?

How did poetry shape the way in which historical events were memorialized?

### **ESSAY : DOCUMENTARY PROSE**

#### *Treatise on Djinnns*

In the domain of prose as much as of poetry, literary production took place overwhelmingly in Arabic-script literatures. In the domain of prose, most short analytical writing fell under the heading of *risala*, an Arabic term that can be translated as “treatise,” “essay,” or “epistle” depending on the context and content. Most narrative literature pertained to historical writing (*tarikh*) in one way or another. The writing of *risalas* flourished throughout the post-classical and early modern period. One example from seventeenth-century Daghestan is the *Treatise on Djinnns (Risala al-Jinn)* by Muhammad b. Umar al-Daghestani, from the village of Irib. This unpublished work, of which only four copies in the world have been identified, is held in the Saidov fund of the Institute of History, Archeology, and Ethnography of the Daghestan Research Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences. It was copied by the 20<sup>th</sup> century Daghestani scholar Ali al-Ghumuqi (Ali Kaiaev), who is discussed below in the section on life-writing during the Soviet period; this copy formed part of the library that al-Ghumuqi kept secret during the Soviet period and which was only revealed to the world after the end of the Soviet Union. In another surviving manuscript, the treatise bears a longer title: “This is a story about an amazing incident that once happened to the jinn in the Daghestan village of Irib in 1076 (1665 CE).” The work is remarkable in many respects, not least for its memorable combination of a theological debate, a tragic story of unreciprocated love, and a historical rendering of a specific incident in the Irib, which the author records in the spirit of documented fact.

Narrating the theological debate between the famed Daghestani scholar Talhat Qadi, a group of djinnns whom he calls “Christian,” and their king, the *Treatise on Djinnns* bears the traces of the highly syncretic milieu in which Daghestanis operated long after the conversion of most of the region to Islam. The first part of the text unfolds in the form of a dialogue between the scholar (identified as the historical Talhat midway through the exchange) and the *djinnns*. In this part as well as towards end, when the action has concluded, the dialogue reads like a play, albeit one composed in a literary tradition that was unfamiliar with the conventions of modern drama. After the first part of the theological exchange is complete, the story turns to the resolution of the core problem that brought them into contact: the daughter of the king of the djinnns is in love with a Daghestani Muslim youth and wants to marry him. The djinnns torment the poor youth in the hopes of compelling him to agree to the marriage. But he is his parents’ only son, and will not abandon them.

The conflict is resolved when the king himself appears and engages in extended negotiations with Talhat near the village mosque. The narrative then returns to the dialogic mode of theological debate. Talhat asks the djinnns probing questions, such as “Why do you harm us, when we have done nothing to harm you?” and “Who is your prophet?” He also asks the djinn about their daily rituals, such as “On what days do you fast?” The result is a lively text that also sheds light on the worldview of Daghestani Muslims from this period. In an intriguing metaphysical aside, we are told that Talhat “could neither hear nor see the djinnns due to the wall that stands between *djinnns* and humans.” Talhat’s conversation is mediated by a designated intermediary between the humans and the spirit world, who is also a scholar. The exchange between Talhat and the djinnns suggests a worldview that, while it rejects certain theologies and favors other ones, also recognizes in the religious practices of the djinn—who are figured as both Christian and Sabean—a shared idiom for worshipping God. The world view implied by this exchange is quite unlike the stereotyped representation of Islam as a religion that condemns all that is foreign to it. Instead, we find here a syncretic view of religion, in which conflicting religious practices blend easily with everyday life, and underwrite robust and open intellectual inquiry.

A further interesting point in this text is the representation of the *djinnns’* religion. The djinnns refer to their God as Allah and they fast and pray just as Muslims do, albeit on different days. That the conflict between the Daghestanis and the *djinnns* is not really about religion is further underscored by the plot: the djinnns are attacking the Daghestani youth because the daughter of their king wants marry him, not due to any doctrinal differences. At the same time, the details of the *djinnns’* religion are a

central aspect of the narrative and ethnographic interest of the story. In the course of their dialogue, Talhat accuses the *djinnns* not only of being “from the cursed society of the Christians,” but of belonging to the branch “referred to as the Sabeans.” Such syncretism is reflective of Daghestan’s links to the Christian cultures of Georgia as well as pre-Islamic Chechnya and Ingushetia. Talhat’s conflation of Christianity and Sabeanism may seem erroneous to some schools of thought. However, the Shafi’i school of Islamic jurisprudence that Daghestanis followed held that Christianity and Sabeanism resembled each other. Further, Orientalists such as V. V. Bartold have contended that the Sabeans were not originally a unified group. These links make the association between Christianity and Sabeanism in this 16<sup>th</sup> century treatise more plausible.

Finally, it is worth noting the ways in which *Treatise on Djinnns* locates a narrative of events that typically are relegated to the sphere of the miraculous within a precisely delineated historical time. The text is clearly dated, both with regard to the timeline for the events it narrates (4 February 1665-6, in the month of Ramadan) and the time of its composition (1667-8). The author further stipulates that everything which he has recorded was conveyed to him directly by the intermediary “including the words of the teacher of the *djinnns* and their king.” The author’s insistence on the historical veracity of his narrative adds a further empirical dimension to the uncanny events narrated in his text. In sum, the as-yet-unpublished *Treatise on Djinnns* is a masterpiece of early modern Daghestani literary and religious culture that suggests a strong degree of tolerance for—and curiosity about—the non-Muslim peoples who resided in Christian-dominant regions bordering Daghestan, such as Georgia and Tushetia (mentioned in the text as the place of exile for the daughter of the king of the *djinnns*), home to the Batsbi people who speak a language closely related to Chechen and Ingush.

#### *Local Historical Chronicles*

Alongside the *risala* genre, historical chronicles proliferated during the early modern period, as did commentaries of various kinds, often composed in the margins of other treatises and often written in vernacular languages using *ajami* script, dictionaries between Arabic and the various languages of Daghestan, and legal documents. The best-known historical work from this period, which is extant in multiple Caucasus languages, is the Turkic *Darband-nama*, composed during the 17<sup>th</sup> century by Muhammad Awwabi al-Aqtashi, from the Qumyq village of Endirei in Daghestan’s Khasavyurt District. Among the most detailed and complete histories of Daghestan’s most ancient city, Awwabi’s work is a revision and updating of the earlier *Darband-nama* of Yusuf al-Lakzi, mentioned above.

The translation of Awwabi’s *Darband-nama* into English, completed by the Azeri-Iranian Orientalist Alexander Kasimovich Kazembek (also known as Mirza Kazem Bek/Beg) in 1831 is a literary achievement in its own right, and is probably the first major work of Orientalist scholarship about the Caucasus written in English by a native of the Caucasus. Kazembek was a native of Darband who learned English from his debates with Scottish Presbyterian missionaries residing in that city and went on to become one of Darband’s foremost scholars and Dean of the Oriental Faculty of St. Petersburg University. Describing this work as “the narrative of the protracted sufferings of the people of Derbend and of the whole country” of Daghestan, Kazembek dedicated his translation to the Grand Duke Constantine, the second son of Emperor Nikolai I. With this work, he introduced in many respects for the first time the rich literary legacies of the Caucasus to English.

#### Reading:

V. V. Bartol’d, “K voprosu o sabiiakh,” *Sochineniia*, vol. VI *Raboty po istorii islama i Arabskogo khalifata* (Moscow: Nauka, 1966), 469–488.

Mirza A. Kazem-Bek, *Derbend-Nāmeḥ, or The History of Derbent* (St. Petersburg, 1851)

Rebecca Ruth Gould, “*Ijtihād* against *Madhhab*: Legal hybridity and the meanings of modernity in early modern Daghestan,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 57.1 (2015): 35-66

Michael Kemper, “Communal Agreements (*ittifāqāt*) and ‘*ādāt*’-Books from Daghestani Villages and Confederacies (18<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> Centuries),” *Der Islam* 81.1 (2004): 115-151.

G. M. R. Ozaev, “О Русских Переводах Дагестанских Исторических Сочинений “Дербенд-Наме” И “Дарбанд-Нама-Йи Джәдид” (Историографический Ракурс),” *Вестник Института Истории, Археологии и Этнографии* 2.50 (2017): 5-13.

David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, "Mirza Kazem-Bek and the Kazan School of Russian Orientology," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 28.3 (2008): 443–458.

A R Shikhsaidov, T M Aitberov, and G. M. R. Orazhev, *Dagestanskije istoricheskie sochineniia* (Moscow: Nauka, Vostochnaia lit-ra, 1993).

Шехмагомедов Магомед Гаджиевич and Хапизов Шахбан Магомедович "«Хазихи рисала ал-джинн» - Дагестанское сочинение жанра манакиб: предисловие, перевод и комментарии," *Вестник СПбГУ. Востоковедение и африканистика* 9.3 (2017): 266-280. Article on *Risala al-Jinn*, with facsimile of Arabic text (pp. 269-272). Available online at: <https://dSPACE.spbu.ru/bitstream/11701/8521/1/04-Shekhmagomedov.pdf>.

### Discussion Questions:

How did early modern Daghestani authors represent the spirit world in everyday life?  
What role did local history play in literary production?

## **LIFE-WRITING (INCLUDING TRAVEL WRITING)**

During the early modern period, many European travelers to the northern Caucasus and the Islamic world provided detailed and nuanced accounts of local culture and ways of life based on what they witnessed on their journeys. Key early modern travellers to the Caucasus include the German scholar and geographer Adam Olearius (1599-1671), Jean Chardin (1643-1713), a French merchant who later became the English ambassador to Holland, and the Ottoman polymath Evliya Çelebi (1611-1684). Adam Olearius' Persian travels are widely known; his journey through the Caucasus—especially his notes on Derbent (in southern Daghestan)—on the way to Moscow are also worth noting.

### *Germany*

Olearius was employed secretary to an embassy sent by the small German state of Schleswig-Holstein for the purpose of developing an overland route for trade with Persia. He was entrusted with the task of gathering information about the regions he travelled to and recorded what he saw and learned in a volume, *Much-coveted description of the new oriental journey, facilitated by the Holstein legation to the Persian King* (*Offt begehrte Beschreibung der newen orientalischen Rejse, so durch Gelegenheit einer Holsteinischen Legation an d. König in Persien geschehen*, first edition 1647) that included seventy copper engravings, focusing on scenes of daily life and cityscapes, sketched by himself. Well-versed in the local languages of the regions through which he traveled, Olearius also translated Sa'di's *Rose Garden* (*Gulistan*) from Persian into Latin and prepared a Latin-Persian-Turkish-Arabic-Hebrew dictionary.

### *Greece*

Contemporaneously with Olearius, the Greek traveler and mapmaker Vasileios Vatatzes (b. 1694), who was based in Moscow, travelled to Persia and the Caucasus and spent time in Derbent on his way back to Moscow. He also visited Shirvan and Shemakhi, traditional centers of Persianate culture located in present day Azerbaijan near the Daghestani-Azeri border. Vatatzes's poetic account of his travels, called *Periegetikon*, consists of two thousand verses. Based on the example of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE author Dionysius the Traveler, *Periegetikon* is considered to be an outstanding example of first-person narrative in Greek geographical literature.

### *Ottoman Empire*

With his *Seyâhatnâme* (Book of Travel, 1640s), Çelebi became one of the earliest travellers to transcribe the language of the regions of the northern Caucasus he visited, including Abkhaz, Ubykh, and Mingrelian. Çelebi journeyed through the entire North Caucasus twice, from 1641-1642 and from 1666-1667. His transcriptions of the Ubykh language are the only known transcriptions by a non-linguist. Along with languages, Çelebi took a deep interest in the cultural history, folklore, and geography of the Caucasus and his *Seyâhatnâme* is regarded as a classic of Ottoman literature. Another early modern traveller who made a significant contribution to early understandings of the languages of the Caucasus is Latvian-born German, Johannes Anton Güldenstädt (1745-1781).

### *Other Europeans*

Most early modern travellers to the Caucasus passed most of their time in Tbilisi and did not venture north across the Caucasus mountains, to Daghestan, Chechnya, or Circassian lands. Two exceptions include Jacques François Gamba (1763-1833), who served as Consul in Tbilisi from 1821 to 1824. Alongside his knowledge of Georgian and travels to mountainous Georgian areas, Gamba travelled to Circassia and Abkhazia. Finally, Jacques Victor Edouard Taitbout de Marigny (1793-1853) travelled along the Black Sea coast in Circassian lands from 1813 to 1818. He became the Netherland's Consul for the Black Sea region in 1821. The German Orientalist Heinrich Julius Klaproth (1783-1835), best known today as a specialist of East Asian languages, pursued a similar trajectory, publishing his travelogue *Reise in den Kaukasus und Georgien in den Jahren 1807 und 1808* (Halle, 1812–1814; French translation, 1823), recording his travels throughout the Caucasus during this same time period.

While early travellers to the Caucasus were often driven by commercial motives, later travellers journeyed to these regions for political reasons, out of simple curiosity, or in pursuit of knowledge about the region for its own sake, or for adventure. The German writer Friedrich Bodenstedt (1819-1892) combined several of these motives in his travel writings. Bodenstedt was a German author who in 1841 was employed as tutor in the family of Prince Gallitzin in Moscow. It was through this connection that he gained his knowledge of Russian, as well as an appointment as head of a Russian school in Tbilisi, when the city was called Tiflis and was capital of the Tiflis Governorate of the Russian empire. In 1849, Bodenstedt wrote what was at that time arguably the definitive account of Imam Shamil and his resistance to the Russian conquest: *People of the Caucasus and their Struggle Against the Russians (Die Völker des Kaukasus und ihre Freiheitskämpfe gegen die Russen, 1849)*. Bodenstedt followed the pattern of the Russian Romantics Pushkin and Lermontov in writing a book-length poem in the Romantic tradition glorifying the mountaineers' struggle against the tsar's army, called *Ada the Lezgi (Ada die Lesghierin. Ein Gedicht, 1853)*.

#### *French*

Europe's most famous writers journeyed to the Caucasus, including Frenchman Alexandre Dumas, best known for his adventure tales such as *The Three Musketeers* (1844). Dumas' *Journey to the Caucasus (Voyage au Caucase, 1859)* traces the author's journey, to Tiflis via Baku, Shemakhi, and Kizlyar, site of a fortress on the Daghestani-Chechen border built by the army of the tsar.

#### *British*

The Scottish traveler and diplomat David Urquhart (1805-1877) took a particular interest in the Circassians and their struggle for freedom during his travels there in the 1830s. So powerfully moved was he by the Circassian cause that he designed a flag for a united Circassia and tried to persuade the British government that was funding his journey to wage war on Russia following its seizure of a ship containing a cargo of salt that was intended for trade along the Circassian coast. Two other British travelers followed in Urquhart's footsteps soon after, and at his prompting: J. A. Longworth, correspondent for *The Times* in London, and the merchant James Stanislaus Bell. These three authors collectively offered the first extended explorations of the social and political institutions of Circassia in their journalistic writings for a British readership.

#### Further Reading:

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George Hewitt, "Western travellers to the Caucasus," in Jennifer Speake, ed. *The Literature of Travel and Exploration*, vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 2003), 199-202.

Paul Manning, "Just like England: On the Liberal Institutions of the Circassians," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51.3 (2009): 590–618.

#### Discussion Question:

How did European and other non-local perceptions of the northern Caucasus change over time? What factors contributed to these transformations?