ABSTRACT

In the 1870s a new railroad connected the Crimea to Russia’s two capitals, opening the door for tourism on the southern periphery of the Russian empire. Until this time, it was difficult to access the Black Sea Coast, and it was primarily the wealthiest Russians who traveled there. By the 1890s, however, it was possible for a much broader segment of the Russian empire’s multi-ethnic population to access the North Caucasus and eastern coast of the Black Sea by train, opening the door for a tourist industry to blossom in the last three decades of tsarist rule.

This study examines the role of tourist guidebooks in transforming the Black Sea Coast and the Caucasus mountains in the minds of Russian readers into a premiere tourist destination within the tsarist empire. It will consider themes such as orientalism, romanticism, imagined geography, and tourism, with a particular emphasis on the relationship between these themes, tourist guidebooks, and Russian imperial expansion into the Caucasus.

In the first two thirds of the nineteenth century, correspondence from the military fronts of the Crimea and Caucasus (‘pacified’ and ‘incorporated’ into the empire gradually from 1783 to the 1860s) made Russians in Moscow, St. Petersburg and other cities of the empire envision the Caucasus as Russia’s own orient, a place that was exotic
yet conquerable. The Caucasus, more than any other peripheral region in the tsarist empire, was the setting for poems, short stories, drama, and novels that gained widespread readership amongst Russians in the nineteenth century and today. This literature became the center of a discourse about the Caucasus that fashioned an ambiguous and tenuous relationship between Russians and Muslims in the Caucasus.

The principle argument of this study is that guidebooks changed Russian perceptions of the Black Sea Coast by removing any imperial ambiguity. In this way, guidebooks played a nationalist and imperialist role. They worked to integrate parts of the Caucasus into the Russian empire as an authentically Russian place that was no longer foreign. For tourists, the coast and mountains were indisputably part of the Russian empire, and the right to travel there was hardly questioned. Histories provided in guidebooks did not have the goal of describing cultural diversity and the possible cross-cultural encounters tourists might face along the Black Sea Coast. Quite the opposite, non-Russians were almost entirely written out of the story. Guidebooks offered histories of the region that served to make the potential tourist feel safe, and to make them feel as though, because they were staying in Russia, they were contributing to the welfare of their homeland. The Black Sea Coast may still have been exotic, but guidebooks transformed it into a space of incredible sights, leisure, and health resorts.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: REIMAGINING THE BLACK SEA COAST/CAUCASUS

Sergei Dorovatovskii begins his 1911 guidebook to Sochi and its smaller neighbor Krasnaya Polania with a magnificent depiction of what a tourist’s first impressions of the town must have been, inching towards the city aboard a steamship. The boat, “glided across the smooth surface of the sea, leaving a turquoise track behind it, [the] sun had just risen from behind the mountain range, and the snowy peaks sparkled with whiteness.” Below the peaks, which were bright green as they stretched right to the sea, sat a scattering of small white houses – dachas – with an Orthodox church towering above them. Nearby stood the white tower of Sochi’s lighthouse. “From the boat, everything appeared to be green, beautiful, and elegant. All binoculars were directed at Sochi.” As the boat approached the shore, its passengers caught their first glimpse of an enormous building - the hotel Kavkazskaya Riviera. Its beautiful, original architecture drew everyone’s attention. Once at the state-run pier, visitors saw the Russian Society of Shipping and Trade (ROPT), and further, the trading part of town, where all of the poor people took shelter. But from the ship, even this part of town seemed elegant, and all of the tiny houses appeared as if they were toys. Further, on the very banks of the sea,
almost in its waves, was the white building of Dr. Podgurskii’s hydropathic sanatorium. “And how beautifully it harmonizes with the dark blue sea! In general, what an alluring and elegant view!”¹

Dorovatovskii’s introduction, in only a few pages, offered a snapshot of one possible, and assuredly typical, tourist experience on the Black Sea Coast in late tsarist Russia. The climate was enticing and the geography magnificent. Sochi was picturesque, warm, and inviting. It was safe, and was home to both publicly and privately operated institutions such as the pier, the ROPT, the sanatorium, the lighthouse, and of course the Church, which all marked the sophisticated character of the resort town. The steamships, dachas and hotels that distinguished Sochi’s skyline reflected the wealth and demands of Russia’s burgeoning industrial and professional elites, as well as the empire’s encounter with industrialization and modernization. For Dorovatovskii, the Black Sea Coast was a place for excitement, new experiences, and above all, leisure.

Tourist guidebooks played an integral role in transforming the Black Sea Coast – a region on the eastern shore of the Black Sea, stretching from Anapa in the north to Batumi in the south and the mountain sanatoriums near Piatigorsk – into places of leisure. While guidebooks were in their infancy in Russia during the 1840s and 1850s, and certainly before guidebooks became commonplace in the late nineteenth century, the Russian public understood the Black Sea Coast and other Caucasian territories to be something very different. In the first two thirds of the nineteenth century, correspondence from the fronts (the Crimea and Caucasus were ‘pacified’ and ‘incorporated’ into the

¹ S. Dorovatovskii, Sochi i Krasnaya Poliana s okresnostiami (St. Petersburg: S. Dorovatovskago i A. Charushnakova, 1911) 5-6.
empire gradually from 1783 to the 1860s) made Russians in Moscow, St. Petersburg and other cities of the empire understand the Caucasus as Russia’s own orient, a place that was exotic yet conquerable for much of the nineteenth century. Russian literature played an even more important role than direct correspondence in shaping perceptions of the empire’s southern borderlands in the minds of the literate public. Canonical writers such as A. S. Pushkin, A. A. Bestuzhev-Marlinsky, M. Yu. Lermontov, and later L. N. Tolstoy attained great popularity in part because of works set in the Caucasus. These writers romanticized Caucasian geography and the supposedly free lifestyle of Caucasian peoples. They praised the simplicity of life in the Caucasus as well as the violence believed to be inherent in virtually every Caucasian culture.

This literature became the center of a discourse about the Caucasus that fashioned an ambiguous and tenuous relationship between Russians and the Christians and Muslims in the Caucasus. On one hand, the seemingly inevitable destruction of the various Caucasian ways of life, as a result of Russian conquest, was never brought into serious question and was, at times, even explicitly supported by Russian authors. On the other hand, the Caucasian way of life was lauded and admired, while Caucasian peoples were afforded human dignity and became the heroes of famous Russian works of literature. These authors also went to great lengths to describe accurately the diverse cultures and languages of the Caucasus. Russian romantic writers, rather than construing them strictly as inferior, often portrayed Others as more noble, colorful, moral, and free than themselves.
My principle argument is that guidebooks changed Russian perceptions of the Black Sea Coast and its peoples by removing the ambiguity. For tourists from the 1890s to 1917, the Caucasus was part of the Russian empire (while the Black Sea Coast was then considered part of the Caucasus), and the right to travel there was hardly questioned. The histories provided in guidebooks did not have the goal of describing cultural diversity and the possible cross-cultural encounters tourists might face along the Black Sea Coast. Quite the opposite, non-Russians were almost entirely written out of the story. Guidebooks offered histories of the region that served to make the potential tourist feel safe, and to make them feel as though, because they were staying in Russia, they were contributing to the welfare of their homeland. Guidebooks, thus, played an imperialist role. They worked to integrate the the Black Sea Coast into the Russian empire as an authentically Russian place that was no longer foreign. It may still have been exotic, but guidebooks transformed it into a space of incredible sights, leisure, and health resorts.

Tourist guidebooks did not simply replace the romantic literature that preceded it. On the one hand, I will show how that romantic literature was itself in a sense part of a longer travelogue tradition in Russia that presaged the guidebook genre. On the other hand, Russian tourist guidebook authors clearly drew on romantic literature for inspiration. Romantic literature contained a whole host of footnoted factual information to go along with stories that greatly sensationalized life in the Caucasus. They emphasized the magnificence of Caucasian geography and contrasted it with the dullness of central Russia. Tourist guidebooks used similar tactics as romantic writers to promote and sell the region in a new way. They publicized the region’s climate, and romanticized
its geography and history. The images produced by guidebooks however emphasized that the Caucasus was a Russian place, where beaches were ready for Russians to enjoy, mountains were available for climbers, and mineral waters were waiting to help those seeking a cure. The first half of this essay will look at Russian literature and perceptions of the Caucasus before the onset of tourism, and the second half will analyze and compare how tourist guidebooks meaningfully altered these perceptions.

Russian “Tourism” and the Cultural Significance of Guidebooks

Guidebook authors and their readers extended Russian political authority over the Black Sea Coast, much as was the case in many other parts of the world. Robert Campbell has argued that nineteenth century travelers to Alaska carried out a distinctly political project. In the tsarist empire, travelers included some well-known individuals, such as Chekhov, while others were anonymous teachers bringing students to camp, or otherwise unknown businessmen from Baku. Travelers, by and large, were not agents of the state, nor were they carrying out this political project knowingly. They were, however, critical for the expansion of imperial power in the Caucasus. They commanded, in Campbell’s words, “an imperial ‘common property’, a sort of power over territory and capacity to mobilize its human and natural resources toward political, economic and military ends.” The tourists’ presence and their written passages exercised a form of state
power while appearing to have no political effect whatsoever. Guides displayed the power of a dominant worldview, even if it was hidden as common sense.\(^2\)

Tourist guidebooks also reflected and affected the social and cultural milieu in late imperial Russia. Christopher Ely notes how, “at a time when tourism had become widespread throughout Europe, Russia remained a place to leave rather than visit.”\(^3\) Provincial Russia, he says, never became a scenic space for tourism because the Russian landscape came to acquire a special significance resistant to scenic interpretations.\(^4\) He argues, though, that educated Russians during the late imperial period, “taught themselves to admire their natural surroundings.”\(^5\) Landscape painting and even the idea of scenic beauty was simply not part of Russian culture before Peter I. Even until the 1820s landscape depictions in Russia were primarily of scenes in Western Europe. Ely goes on to argue that Russia followed a different path to appreciating its national space in comparison with Western Europeans. The monotony of the central Russian landscape and the severity of the climate created initial dissatisfaction amongst Russians. But, by the end of the nineteenth century, as European aesthetic ideas came to Russia, as Russian geography came to be better understood, and as Russian nationalism grew stronger, Russians came to see their landscape as unmatched in beauty worldwide.\(^6\)

Tourist guidebooks in Russia were part of this story, even if they lay outside the scope of Ely’s book. Guidebooks carried on the tradition established by romantic writers

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\(^4\) Ibid., 5.

\(^5\) Ibid., 5.

\(^6\) Ibid., 25.
in the 1820s and 1830s of taking the exotic landscapes of the Caucasus and the Black Sea Coast and turning them into something accessible for Russians. The Caucasus was re-imagined in similar ways to the Russian plain. Russians gave it special significance in the empire, drawing upon European aesthetic principles, geographical knowledge and a growing concern about national identity in the late nineteenth century. However, because the Caucasus was a place of aesthetic beauty, the results were somewhat different. Instead of viewing the Caucasus as something that possessed “inward, or metaphysical significance,” (like central Russia)7 Russians found their own Alps and their own Riviera. Guidebooks, as I will show, echoed and altered the new understandings of nature that came together in fin-de-siècle Russia.

The arrival of tourism in Russia in the late nineteenth century itself was an important event in Russian history. In order to understand this process, it is necessary to define exactly what ‘tourism’ actually was in Russia. Sociologists, anthropologists, geographers, literary critics and only more recently historians, have struggled with defining ‘tourism’ itself, and especially the ways that it differs from ‘travel’. In the 1950s, the French geographer and social critic André Siegfried associated travel with high culture while saying tourism was the shallow amusements of the masses, unable to distinguish for themselves between filth and beauty.8 Soon afterwards, Paul Fussell argued that, “the traveler was active; he went strenuously in search of people, of adventure, of experience. The tourist is passive; he expects interesting things to happen to

7 Ely, This Meager Nature, 25.
him.”9 John Urry’s influential book, *The Tourist Gaze*, further qualified the negative connotations associated with tourism, arguing that the Tourist’s gaze (he borrows from Foucault’s idea of the gaze) was something socially constructed, systematized, and the product of power relations. He particularly stressed the role of the tourist industry in defining and limiting the experiences of tourists, while he questioned the ability of tourists to actually be ‘active’ in the sense that Fussell had suggested.10

The debate over the activity or passivity of tourists was made more sophisticated in Dean MacCannell’s *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. For him, in contrast to his predecessors, tourists are active seekers of experience and knowledge. Tourists were not passive observers, subject to the whims of the tourist industry. They participated in a conscious ‘search for authenticity’, where they projected their own meanings onto tourist sites, sought new experiences and real sites unseen in their everyday lives.11

Rudy Koshar has also argued that tourists engaged in an active search for knowledge, reformulating Urry’s notion of the tourist gaze to include not only MacCannell’s ‘active tourists’, but also the critical role that nationalism played in tourist guidebooks. Koshar’s work on tourist guidebooks in England and Germany led him to conclude that there was a dynamic relationship between tourist literature, tourists, and

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national identity. Guidebooks (and the tourist industry in general) produced images not only of tourists and tourist sites, but also images of the nation that were to be consumed.12

The sociologist Jean-Didier Urbain, however, has argued that perhaps such a focus on ‘tourism’ is limiting, and that instead tourism ought to be situated in a larger conceptual framework of the vacation. Tourism, he argues, has come to mean something more akin to ‘excursions’ undertaken while on vacation. As such, the vacation is not simply free time away from work or school. It was, rather, an emotional, pleasurable, educational, and cultural undertaking that was done outside of the workplace.13 Vacationing in this sense was intimately related to modern consumer culture. Ultimately, vacationing and tourism were highly profitable industries, which ‘sold’ experiences, places, and souvenirs to tourists.

By situating tourism, as defined in the Western European case by Urry, MacCannell and others, under the umbrella of vacationing, we can better understand the multiple meanings that travel had for different individuals. By emphasizing the ‘consciousness of displacement’ rather than the activity or passivity of tourists, it is possible to better understand the broader patterns of travel and experience along the Black Sea Coast in the final decades of tsarist rule in Russia. Furthermore, in the tsarist empire, a turist, was broadly defined as, “anyone who followed a leisure-travel program of visual, cultural, and material consumption.”14 This definition would drastically change,

12 Baranowski, Being Elsewhere, 4.
as did tourism itself, in the Soviet Union. For the imperial period, however, this definition best reflects the recent theoretical understandings of European tourism, and particularly those of Urbain, as well as the essential meaning of tourism in late imperial Russia.
CHAPTER 2

RUSSIA’S ORIENT: IMAGINING THE CAUCASUS IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The Caucasus and the Black Sea Coast had attracted the attention of Russians long before tourism was possible. There has been a clear sense - not only amongst Russians but stretching back to antiquity – that the Caucasus, “represented a kind of borderland, a frontier where different peoples, empires, and social systems came into contact.”\(^{15}\) The geopolitical and military aspects of this contact occupied the interests of Soviet historians, as well as historians in the West such as John Baddeley. Until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, military conquest remained the dominant motif in Russian and nineteenth century Western historiography of the Caucasus. Even ‘post-colonial’ works such as Moshe Gammer’s *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar* reiterate the narrative of conquest, if only from a different perspective (that of the conquered).\(^{16}\)

In reality, nineteenth century images of the Caucasus were diverse and did not revolve solely around the discourse of colonial conquest. Historians were neither the first nor the most influential people in Russia to describe the Caucasus. Russian perceptions of

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the Caucasus, for the better part of the nineteenth century, came out of the works of Russia’s leading literary figures and ethnographers.

In 1787, and again in 1791, Johann Anton Güldenstädt published the most influential ethnographic work on the peoples of the Caucasus ever produced. He is credited with naming the territories of the Caucasus (Kabarda, Ossetia, Ingushetia, Chechnya, Dagestan) and classified languages and ethnicities according to the obsessively taxonomical standards of the Enlightenment. It became the most significant ethnographic source of information about the Caucasus and was used throughout the nineteenth century as a primer for administrative personnel assigned to help govern the region.17 Because the contents of Güldenstädt’s book were more focused on biology and classification of territories, and did not discuss at great length the cultures he came into contact with, a new study was commissioned not long afterwards. Julius von Klaproth (another Baltic German) set out in 1807 to study the region, under orders to discover, among other things, ‘the descendants of Herodotus’ Scythians’ and whether the women of the Caucasus were as beautiful as was claimed. His study, published in 1812 and later translated into English and French, came to some interesting conclusions. He saw the Circassians as inherently thievish, and that, “freedom, wildness, and gravity, are expressed in their looks.”18 Captivity and freedom, somewhat paradoxically, became the dominant tropes in more widely read Russian literature of the nineteenth century.

The majority of readers, however, preferred pleasurable literature to scholarly journals. Susan Layton has written the most comprehensive and nuanced study of the

nineteenth century body of literature about tsarist colonialist expansion into the Caucasus.\textsuperscript{19} The Caucasus, more than any other peripheral region in the tsarist empire, was the setting for poems, short stories, drama, and novels that gained widespread readership amongst Russians in the nineteenth century and today. Layton’s book examines the literary Caucasus in relation to imperialism. The tsarist state, she argues, had an imperialist outlook that was based upon Catherine’s objectives for expansion, where the major components were, “a commitment to the multinational tsarist empire already in existence; territorial aggrandizement and the assertion of political sovereignty over subject peoples; a reliance on force to subjugate the tribes [of the Caucasus]; an interest in economic enrichment; and an avowed dedication to a civilizing mission in Asia.”\textsuperscript{20}

Layton, drawing inspiration from Edward Said, ties these goals together with Russian literature by exploring the, “literary and cultural ramifications of empire-building by focusing on Russian perceptions of the Caucasus as the orient.”\textsuperscript{21} Seeing, as Said had, a ‘dynamic exchange’ between writers and texts and, on the one hand, and the state’s power structure and political agenda, on the other hand, Layton argues that authors and their texts have the ability to affect structures of political and socioeconomic dominance. In this case, Pushkin, Bestuzhev-Marlinsky and Lermontov affected tsarist imperialism and perceptions of the Caucasus by disrupting the belief that European Russia had a right to subjugate the orient, dissolving supposedly firm boundaries between Russia and Asia.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 5.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 1.
and degrading the tsarist conquest and the violence inherent in Russia’s supposed civilizing mission.

Nonetheless, the Caucasian tribes remained orientalized in Russian literature, in the sense that they were to be studied, categorized, and better understood by Russians, while simultaneously made distinct (eastern, as opposed to western) and shown to have a different historical role. Russian writers rescued Caucasian tribes from obscurity – Vissarion Belinsky named Pushkin the ‘discoverer of the Caucasus’ – by making their lands into \textit{terra cognita}.\textsuperscript{22} Layton in fact prefers the idea that Pushkin and others \textit{produced} the Caucasus in the Russian imagination, rather than discovered it, for the Caucasus that these writers described was itself imagined. The Caucasus at the same time was exoticized, which is perhaps unsurprising given that the literature Russians had by 1800 about ‘Asia’ included \textit{The Thousand and One Nights}, which, “drew Russians into a pan-European ‘collective daydream’ [of sensuality and violence] about sultans and seraglios,” and, “a massive, lowbrow French literature of harem intrigues.”\textsuperscript{23}

Literature contributed to the sense that Russia, like a Western power, was superior to its Asian neighbors. Empire-building in the region was portrayed as a civilizing mission with the spread of Christianity at its core. News of the extension of Russian territories in the Caucasus, combined with a growing literature in the first half of the nineteenth century led, “educated Russians of Pushkin’s era to view the Caucasus as an enormous battlefield where the Orthodox state was locked in epochal combat with

\textsuperscript{22} Layton, \textit{Russian Literature}, 16.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 72.
Islam.”24 This polarization of Orthodoxy and Islam not only contributed to the orientalization of Caucasian peoples, but also intensified the sense, amongst Russians, that they were a Western power.

Yet, as Layton argues, “Russians could not believe in the alterity of the orient as readily and invariably as a European might.”25 The contradictory notion that Russia was at once a Western power and at the same time saw Asia as a critical source for its own cultural and political institutions weighed heavily in the minds of (and often confused) those who thought about Russia’s relationship with Europe and the Caucasus.

Austin Jersild’s recent book, Orientalism and Empire: North Caucasus Mountain Peoples and the Georgian Frontier, 1845-1917, looks at Russia’s position vis-à-vis the ‘oriental’ Caucasus from a slightly different perspective. The book explores the “conceptualization of empire by considering the work and ideas of Russian and non-Russian administrators and state-builders, colonial officials, travelers, literary figures and thinkers, and ethnographers and geographers as they administered and thought about the North Caucasus from the 1840s to 1917.”26 In other words, Jersild is concerned with a broader spectrum of people that contributed to the construction of the Caucasus in the Russian imagination. Similar to Layton, however, is the way that Jersild uses Said’s idea that colonial practices involved a set of discursive practices that set out to affirm the superiority of the West while, “impos[ing] or creat[ing] some form of order and meaning

24 Layton, Russian Literature, 73.
26 Ibid., 5.
out of the confusing chaos they perceived in other lands.\textsuperscript{27} Both Jersild and Layton see a close connection between knowledge, imagination, and colonial rule in the North Caucasus.

Jersild avoids a complete adoption of Said’s concept of orientalism, and instead sees the frontier of Russia’s contiguous empire as a source of complexity unseen in the paradigmatic (in the sense that they were Said’s models) maritime empires of Britain and France. Jersild argues that, “Borderland communities such as educated society in the Caucasus were the important voices that shaped the new consciousness of empire which emerged in Russia from the middle of the nineteenth century.”\textsuperscript{28} Jersild argues that the Georgians in particular, “possessed a world of discussion and debate similar in important respects to Russian worlds of educated society.”\textsuperscript{29} Georgians had an emerging press, educated readers, plays, books and their own historians. Georgians themselves viewed the peoples on their borders, similar to Russians, as inferior and in need of cultural and religious direction. They too assumed an historic struggle between Christianity and Islam. Georgians, native to the Caucasus, orientalized others on the periphery of the tsarist empire. Colonial practices, and the imagination of peripheral regions, were not wholly a product of the binary opposition between east and west, but were rather complicated by the complex inter-ethnic relations on the frontier.

Jersild’s examination of Slavophiles and particularly the Society for the Restoration of Orthodoxy sheds light on one popular attitude towards Russia’s southern periphery. Founded in 1860, and expanding the earlier efforts of the Ossetian Spiritual

\textsuperscript{27} Jersild, \textit{Orientalism}, 5.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 146.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 7.
Commission (established in 1743), the Society for the Restoration of Orthodoxy was an institution determined to ‘restore’ Orthodoxy in the North Caucasus. Arguing that history had not been given due respect, the society sought to restore Orthodoxy, the region’s supposed historical faith, by building upon the Slavophile notion present in both Russia and Georgia that, “emphasized the non-indigenous, and therefore illegitimate character of Islam.” For missionaries in the society, the political and military subjugation of the borderland region was secondary to the moral subjugation of the Caucasus. Security in the region, missionaries argued, might be better achieved through the promulgation of Christianity and opposition to Islam. Restoration of Orthodoxy in the Caucasus, the potential of native language literacy and education programs, and the reintroduction of notions of ‘genuine faith’, ‘correct ritual’, and the ‘heritage of custom’ became the vanguards of Church and Slavophile attitudes towards the peoples of the Caucasus.

Despite the important roles of colonial administrators and the efforts of the Society for the Restoration of Orthodoxy in the Caucasus, literature remained the most popular medium through which ideas and information about the Caucasus permeated into Russian civil society. As Layton argues, “fact-oriented writings about the territory grew massively in the course of the nineteenth century, but readers consistently gravitated to the most artful, entertaining texts.” Pushkin, who excelled beyond his contemporaries in creating a harmony of sounds and rhythm in his language made reading about the Caucasus into an aesthetic pleasure. Layton notes how at least one contemporary, Dmitiri Mirsky, claimed that, “the ‘wonderful music’ was quite simply the primary

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30 Jersild, Orientalism, 42.
31 Ibid., 42-3.
32 Layton, Russian Literature, 20.
explanation for the extraordinary success of *The Prisoner of the Caucasus.*"³³ The orientalist Ilya Berezin claimed that the poem, filled readers with rapture and stimulated a pandemic daydream of the territory as a romantic adventure."³⁴ Paula Michaels claims that, “it is not surprising that Russian adventurers, soldiers, and others have found themselves captivated by the Caucasus – with customs, climate and topography that contrasted sharply with their homeland – for the last two centuries,” and brought to life the Caucasus’s, “stony mountain spires in arid shades of tan and gray pierce brilliant azure skies.”³⁵ *The Prisoner of the Caucasus*, to this day, is still entertains readers, and, having particularly anti-classicist form and content, has been well-received as an important work for Russian romanticism.³⁶

Indeed Pushkin’s *The Prisoner of the Caucasus* possessed numerous themes that reflected European romanticism and helped stimulate the movement within Russia. The two most pervasive and influential themes were Pushkin’s exoticized and savage mountain peoples, and the poem’s mountain setting itself. Written in 1821 and published in 1822, Pushkin’s poem tells the story of a Russian soldier who is captured by Circassians. An unnamed Circassian woman falls in love with the captured Russian hero, returns him to health (he was nearly killed by his capturers), and eventually sets him free. She refuses his impulsive offer to flee with him, and in the end drowns herself,

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³⁴ Quoted in ibid., 19.
³⁶ Cesar Cui composed an opera, of the same name, based upon the poem which was composed in three stages beginning in the 1850s until it was ultimately completed by 1882.
confirming that once she cannot give herself to love, she had no reason to live any longer.37

Reflecting Pushkin’s boredom with city life in St. Petersburg, the poem encouraged readers to align themselves with the Circassians and appreciate their freedom, something that Russian intellectuals in the city yearned for. There are certainly parallels between Pushkin’s Circassians and the Cossacks of folklore. Rather than depicting simply wild savages, participating in constant warfare with the tsarist empire, the poem, to readers in the early nineteenth century, spoke of a frontier people who possessed liberty, a civilized patriarchal society, and fascinating, “religion, moeurs and manner of rearing children.”38 The poem is filled with what Susan Layton calls ‘the poetics of flight’. The wild and free frontier was depicted as a seductive place (the sexual impulses of the Circassian woman only add to this) devoid of the restrictive elements of the Russian state and society that were constraining the Russian national community.39 The attraction of the Caucasus and the noble savages that inhabited the region was immense, even if the lands and peoples there were foreign and exotic. Even once the war had been won in the 1860s for Russia, and Shamil, the leader of the Muslim resistance movement in Dagestan, was toured about Russia in hopes of fostering national pride, this did not change. Instead, the military victory was not a particularly good thing for Russian readers, because it meant that all of the Caucasus’s, “poetry was dead.”40

39 Ibid., 82.
40 Quoted in Ibid., 95.
appeal of the Caucasus did not wane over the nineteenth century, however. Romantic
depictions of the region’s diverse peoples did not disappear (though their treatment
evolved as seen below).

Romantic depictions of the region’s geography were equally attractive. The
contrast between the Caucasus and Northern Russia was vast, and Nikolai Gogol wrote in
1837 how, “it is wonderful to imagine at the end of some Petersburg street the snow-
capped mountains of the Caucas, or the lakes of Switzerland, or Italy crowned with
laurels and anemones, or Greece, lovely in its emptiness … But wait! The houses of
Petersburg are still piled up on either side of me.”41 The contrast was acclaimed by
others. E. A. Verderevskii said in 1857 that, “the combination of brilliant colors in the
south and the pale grey of the north render any other nation in the world pallid and
insignificant by comparison.”42 Written in 1829, Pushkin’s poem The Caucasus tells
how:

Below me the silver-capped Caucasus lies
Nearby an abyss yawns and, far down, a roaring
Stream swift rushes past; over the peaks calmly soaring,
An eagle seems motionless, pinned to the skies.
Here rivers are born that mid rocks, grumbling wander
And landslides begin with a crash of thunder….

And, laugh-crazed, the Terek goes tumbling and leaping
It lashes about like a beast in a cage
With food out of reach, full of hunger and craving,
And licks at the boulders, and howling and raving,
 Strikes out at the shore in a frenzy and rage
Alas! It is thwarted: the mountains surround it;
Mute, threatening giants, they press darkly around it.43

41 Quoted In Ely, This Meager Nature, 97.
42 Quoted In Ibid., 144.
43 Pushkin, Alexander, “The Caucasus,” in Selected Works in 2 Volumes (Moscow: Raduga Publishers,
1985), vol.1, 46.
Such graphic images drew Russians and Europeans to the Caucasus, especially alpinists. They, however, knew the dangers inherent in their trade, particularly in the Caucasus. The foremost British climber of the nineteenth century, Douglas Freshfield, after several expeditions including one where several climbers and guides mysteriously disappeared, concluded that the mountains were a place where danger lurked and the promise of emotional fulfillment was counterbalanced by the prospect of tragedy. Mountain climbers, like Pushkin and his contemporaries, had, in Charles King’s words, “the sense that the Caucasus was a place where one lived on the edge, at the extreme limits of civilization, propriety, and human emotion, where the rules of polite society no longer applied and savagery was within reach.”\(^{44}\) The travelogue that Freshfield authored during his expeditions, complete with a unique collection of photographs, became popular among alpinists and other readers in Britain in the late nineteenth century.

Pushkin’s readers in a similar way actually viewed *The Prisoner of the Caucasus* as a sort of travelogue. The poem contained ethnographic information (fact) as well as a romantic storyline (fiction) and travelogues of the time also combined both fact and fiction into their narratives. Readers of both Pushkin’s poems and Russian travelogues were brought into a foreign realm that contrasted starkly with their homeland. Both combined entertainment with intellectual stimulation. The poetry of Byron, and similarly, Pushkin, acted as a substitute for real travel, as many could not leave home. Tourism was not yet possible in Pushkin’s era, but literature about the Caucasus acted as the first tourist guidebooks, if only intended for the armchair traveler.

\(^{44}\) King, *The Ghost of Freedom*, 133.
For the landed gentry, and particularly provincial ladies, travelogues and poetry offered a welcome escape from the monotony of country life. The almost total lack of any political news in periodicals during Pushkin’s lifetime, due to the strict censorship imposed by the tsarist state, meant that perhaps the only exposure to empire-building in the Caucasus came through literature. While readers were surely aware of the difference between poetry and fact-oriented journalism, their perceptions were defined much more through Pushkin’s poetic travelogues than through periodicals, war correspondence or ethnographies.

It must be stressed, however, that Pushkin’s poem was not about strictly foreign landscapes, but instead depicted the Caucasus as a place of conflict that had an ambiguous relationship with the tsarist empire. On the one hand, the Caucasus was exoticized, particularly with regards to its geography and its peoples (noble savages) living in the mountains. On the other hand, Pushkin made the Caucasus, “a site of Russian history, both a foreign yet familiar place.” In the poem’s dedication he writes that to him the Caucasus is a new Parnassus, and also that Beshtau (a group of five mountains near Piatigorsk – both Beshtau and Piatigorsk also mean five mountains) was already famous in Russian history. The epilogue speaks of Mstislav, an ancient Russian (actually Kievan) warrior, and according to Pushkin, a ‘legend of the formidable Caucasus’. Pushkin not only initiated the discourse on the Caucasus in Russian literature with the poem, he also posed a new relationship between the Russian empire

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45 Layton, Russian Literature, 33.
47 Ibid., 344.
and the Caucasus that did not necessarily suggest that the Caucasus was authentic
Russian territory, but did suggest that Russia’s presence in the Caucasus had historical
precedence and suggested that it might be Russian once again.

Subsequent Russian literature about the Caucasus continued to portray the region
in an ambiguous and often contradictory light. Aleksandr Bestuzhev-Marlinsky’s
_Ammalat-Bek_ was an extraordinarily popular work (it was made into an opera and
translated into French by Alexandre Dumas) of Russian romanticism. The story is filled
with images of captivity, exile, and conflict. During one typically dramatic moment,
Ammalat, the Circassian hero, kills the Russian captive Verkhovsky, who had been
ordered to take Ammalat and exile him to Siberia, in plain view of the Russian army. The
Sultan had beforehand promised Ammalat the beautiful Sultanetta if he was successful in
this task and Ammalat sneaks to the grave of Verkhovsky, digs up his corpse and
decapitates it. He takes the head to the Sultan, who is so horrified with Ammalat that he
abruptly passes away. The community, also horrified, casts him out, and he eventually
perishes at the hands of a Russian soldier, Verkhovsky’s brother, during a siege of the
Circassian stronghold (and now tourist resort) of Anapa.\(^48\) The barriers between Russian
and Caucasian are broken down in the story, as Bestuzhev-Marlinsky glorifies the
passion and violence of the Circassian hero while depicting both Russian and Caucasian
as having similarly disturbed morals. With Bestuzhev-Marlinsky, as with Pushkin, the
imperial mission is at once exonerated and criticized for its violence.

Also in parallel with Pushkin, the story became immensely popular in part due to
its substantial ethnographic information. Bestuzhev-Marlinsky was exiled to the

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\(^48\) Lewis Bagby, _Aleksander Bestuzhev Marlinsky and Russian Byronism_ (Penn State, 1990), 310-12.
Caucasus for his involvement in the Decembrist uprising in 1825, and like Pushkin had first-hand experience in the Caucasus. In the mid-nineteenth century, critics even considered Ammalat-Bek a veritable encyclopedia of Dagestani legends, sayings, beliefs, and vocabulary.\textsuperscript{49} It is replete with footnotes to give the Russian reader the full flavor of the local customs and culture. This information, in combination with the often excessively dramatic and romantic aspects of the tale gave it immense popularity, which has for some reason faded in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Mikhail Lermontov also rejected the Eurocentric imperialist view of Russia’s conquest of the Caucasus that based itself upon a civilizing mission with Orthodoxy at its center. He too saw the Russian presence in the Caucasus as corrupting to the free and already more civilized tribes in the region. Ambiguity was present in his tales as well. He saw himself as a child of the Caucasus, having lived there in the final years of his life before being killed in a duel by Martynov in Piatigorsk, which blurred the lines between ‘self’ and ‘other’ in his writing and for his readership.

Besides these popular writers there also existed a brand of literature that shamelessly promoted Russia’s colonization of the Caucasus. Layton’s book does not address this generally more underground literature, though it deserves consideration based upon its substantial readership in the nineteenth century. Writers such as Polezhaev envisioned the conflict as one between light and dark forces (holy Orthodoxy and black jihad), while others sensationalized the war and represented the mountaineers as savages

\textsuperscript{49}Bagby, \textit{Aleksander Bestuzhev Marlinsky}, 309.
and fanatics. The more intuitive Russian writers nonetheless painted a picture far more complex than these writers of popular fiction.\textsuperscript{50}

Lev Tolstoy sustained the tradition of writing about the Caucasus at both the beginning and towards the end of his career. He, however, took aim at both these popular writers and the Russian romantics. His initial works took an anti-imperialist stance that initially did not resonate with the reading public because he avoided the romantic imagery espoused by Pushkin, Bestuzhev-Marlinsky, and Lermontov. Nonetheless, his short stories \textit{The Raid}, \textit{The Wood-felling}, \textit{The Cossacks}, and \textit{The Prisoner of the Caucasus}\textsuperscript{51} had a lasting impact, despite being released at the same time as interest in the almost mythical figure Shamil was captured and toured about the country. Perhaps the most glaring critique of romantic depictions of the Caucasus comes in \textit{The Cossacks} where the main hero, Olenin, joins the military (perhaps as Tolstoy himself did) in search of escape from dull Moscow and adventure akin to that seen in \textit{Ammalat-Bek}. Initially enamored, his vision of the Caucasus is shattered as his friend Luka is killed during a raid, and, unable to separate himself from his former life, Olenin leaves, depressed, alone, and without fanfare.

Later in life, Tolstoy took a different strategy in expressing his hostility towards Russian colonial missions. Instead of railing against the romantic tropes used by other authors, his novel, \textit{Hadji Murat} (written from 1896-1904 and published posthumously in 1912), used them to condemn his predecessors. Tolstoy did not orientalize the Caucasus

\textsuperscript{50} Susan Layton, “Aleksander Polezhaev and Remembrance of War in the Caucasus: Constructions of the soldier as victim” in \textit{Slavic Review} 58,3 (Fall 1999), 559-583.

\textsuperscript{51} Two popular films have been based on this story including Sergei Bodrov’s highly acclaimed 1996 film of the same name.
in the way that Pushkin had but did use romantic tropes to invoke ambiguity over Russia’s position on its southern borderlands. The ambiguity, however, derived from the contradictory notion that while the tsarist empire set out on a morally justified civilizing mission, ultimately it was that mission that led to the extermination and expulsion of Caucasian peoples. In doing so, Tolstoy was well aware of the role that literature had played in ‘producing’ the Caucasus in the Russian imagination. The book itself, aided by its pseudo-romantic style but realist storyline, was an effort to demonstrate the collaboration of Russian writers and the expanding empire.

While the efforts of ethnographers and missionaries did play some role in defining popular perceptions of the Caucasus in the nineteenth century, Russian literature was certainly the most popular medium through which images of Russia’s southern borderland were transmitted to the reading public. Inspired by Byron and The Legend of the Thousand and One Nights, Pushkin began a tradition in Russia of romantic writing about the region. Indeed, in no other part of the tsarist empire was romantic writing so prominent. And while these texts showed orientalist tendencies, particularly in the ways that they studied and categorized mountaineers within their footnotes, they cannot be said to have been totally driven by the premise that Caucasians were alien peoples and that writing about them was designed to help conquer them. In fact, much of the literature served to break down the barriers of ‘east’ and ‘west’, and the inherent superiority of the latter was not professed by Pushkin, Bestuzhev-Marlinsky, or Lermontov. With the exception of Tolstoy, writers did not condemn the imperialist mission, nor did they seek to promote the total incorporation of the Caucasus into the empire. Rather, the writing
was most often contradictory in its attitudes towards the Caucasus, and portrayed an
uncertain relationship, where the only constant was violence, between local peoples and
the invading Russians. This ambiguity was to disappear with the arrival of tourism.
CHAPTER 3

RUSSIA’S RIVIERA: GUIDEBOOKS TO THE BLACK SEA COAST

In 1913, A. S. Ermolov delivered a speech entitled ‘The Russian Riviera’ to inaugurate the Exhibition of the Black Sea Coast and the Caucasus in St. Petersburg. With Tsar Nicholas II in audience, Ermolov remarked that a “new era” and a “period of new development” in the history of this region had begun in the 1890s.52 He spoke of how in recent years these lands had taken on new significance as a site for tourist resorts, “attracting during the season many thousands of visitors.”53 Roads and railways, tourist agencies and sanitoriums, hotels and restaurants were central to the development of the Black Sea Coast and parts of the Caucasus mountains following the violent conflicts of the mid-nineteenth century.

In the 1870s a railroad connected the Crimea to Russia’s two capitals, opening the door for tourism. Until this time, it was difficult to access the Black Sea Coast, and it was primarily the wealthiest Russians who traveled there. The Romanov family had maintained an estate in Yalta since 1834, while Prince Aleksandr Ol’denburg built an extravagant dacha in the town of Gagry (now in Abkhazia). By the 1890s it was possible

52 Pervaia Vystavka Chernomorskago Poberezh’ia Kavkaza v Sankt-Peterburg pod nazvaniem ‘Russkaia Riviera’ (St. Petersburg: Department Zemledel’ia, 1914), 3.
53 Ibid, 4.
to access the North Caucasus and eastern coast of the Black Sea by train. With the railroads came luxury hotels, pensions, restaurants, and sanatoria. Tourists inspired the construction of telegraph and telephone lines, postal services, and helped to bring electricity and newspapers even to small towns along the Black Sea Coast. Following in the footsteps of the nobility, tourists flocked to the Black Sea, where tourism, “grew not by days, but by hours.”

Tourist Guidebooks: European Origins

Guidebooks in this study are treated as marketing tools, designed to sell Russians not only on traveling, but on what they should see and where they should visit. Tourism, though, was not wholly determined by guidebooks. Often the structure and content of the guides reflected the desire of tourists to pursue their own interests. Rudy Koshar’s analysis of Western European guidebooks is particularly relevant to this study. He compellingly argues how tourist guidebooks produced images and expectations for their readers, before they even traveled, or if they even travel at all. In the process of reading tourist guidebooks, the readers themselves always, to borrow Koshar’s word, ‘inhabited’ these texts. They participated in (by imagining) a wide range of tourist activities from mountain climbing to relaxing aboard a cruise ship, all without leaving their homes. Individuals inhabited the different worlds each in their own way, to be sure, each making

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them their own. At the same time, he argues, guidebook authors were responsible for inspiring (and limiting) these images and expectations within readers’ imaginations.\textsuperscript{55}

Murray’s handbook, a British publication that was touted as a comprehensive guide to Europe and Germany first came off the press in 1836. It can be considered one of the first modern tourist guidebooks because for the first time information about what ought to be seen, rather than simply what could be seen, was imparted to the reader.\textsuperscript{56} Interestingly, John Murray’s handbook later offered a large and detailed section for travelers to the Crimea in order to visit resorts at Yalta and historic sites from the Crimean War. In Germany, one of the earliest guidebooks, and undoubtedly the most successful in the nineteenth century was first published by Karl Baedeker in 1839, three years after Murray’s handbook emerged. Beginning with a text focused on the Rhineland, Baedeker expanded the scope of his German language guidebooks to all of Germany and the Austrian Empire. Fifteen editions of this particular book were published before 1872, and its contents became unmanageable and complex, growing to 961 pages including maps and illustrations.\textsuperscript{57} Western Europe saw the emergence of the modern tourist guidebook by the middle of the nineteenth century, much earlier than Russia.

Karl Baedeker’s \textit{Russia with Teheran, Port Arthur, and Peking: Handbook for Travellers} was published in 1914. The book contains extensive information for travelers to all parts of the tsarist empire and includes 40 excellent maps - Baedekers were famous for the quality of their maps - and 78 different plans for tourists to enjoy from Warsaw to St. Petersburg to Odessa to Tbilisi, Tehran, Central Asia, Siberia, and into China. It

\textsuperscript{55} Rudy Koshar, \textit{German Travel Cultures} (Oxford: Berg, 2000)
\textsuperscript{56} Koshar, \textit{German Travel Cultures}, 1.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 21.
details in particular expected budgets, climate, important geographic information, and tourist seasons.

Consistent with other Baedeker publications, which sought to serve the particular tastes of the European middle class, the guide to Russia emphasized activities most popular amongst this group. Cycling, mountain-climbing, excursions to popular sites (the Hermitage occupies more space in the guide than some large cities) as well as those off the beaten track, such as the Ossetian Military Road. The guide also recommends hotels deemed suitable for the European middle class, which paralleled the most popular accommodations for Russian travelers. Hotels recommended in Tbilisi for example included The London and The Orient, both of which employed English, French and German speaking staff. Travel plans include information on how to travel by horseback, carriage, bicycle, and in some cases by car.\(^{58}\) Baedeker’s guides were consistently aware of their audiences and the English version of the guide to Russia is no exception, not only outlining routes to Russia from the United Kingdom but also emphasizing points of interest to British travelers. Baedeker’s chapter on the Crimea is filled with notes on the Crimean war, cemeteries, monuments to British, French and Italian soldiers, not to mention actual battlefields.

The Baedeker became the guidebook of choice for European travelers by the end of the nineteenth century, beating out Murray’s guides in Britain, largely because it was

\(^{58}\) Travel by car was extremely expensive, though the number of advertisements for car rentals in Russian newspapers suggests it was a somewhat popular mode of travel. A trip from Novorossiisk to Sochi cost 300 rubles (about $150).
not, “so patronizingly familiar in its assumptions and values.”59 This was true of the guide to Russia as well. Neither Russia, the Caucasus, Tehran, Central Asia nor China are described as inherently uncivilized places to travel. Though the Baedeker guide, sticking to its principles of providing essential information so that the tourist would have a reliable independent source of facts other than local peoples, does not offer a great deal of ethnographic information, it does provide essentials. The introduction to the Russia guide offers the traveler a sketch of Russia’s multi-ethnic empire, its peoples and geography. Great Russians have, “broad shoulders and bull necks, [are] often somewhat clumsy and with a strong tendency to obesity,” and are, “melancholy and reserved, clinging obstinately to their traditions, and full of self-sacrificing devotion to Tzar, Church, and feudal superior.” Little Russians, on the other hand, “have the emotional southern temperament; their poetry and music are of a high order, as evidenced by their popular songs and proverbs.” Other groups are both praised and criticized as well. Finns, “have considerable achievements to show in science, art, and literature,” while, “the Samoyeds or reindeer Possessing nomads of the Tundra are an insignificant item.”60 Though the peoples of the Caucasus are strangely absent from this section (which further speaks of Jews, Tatars, Bashkirs, Kirgiz and others), there are extensive notes on the dress, customs, and ethnicities in the region later in the book, including such details as who to hire as guides, how and when to pay them, and when it is more economical to simply purchase a horse (Baedeker praises Caucasian horses) than to rent one by the day.61

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60 Karl Baedeker, Russia with Teheran, Port Arthur, and Peking (Leipzig: Baedeker, 1914), xliii-xliv.
61 Ibid., 442-4.
customs such as these are nearly absent in guides published in Russia, and the adherence
to specifics and practicality in Baedeker’s ethnographic information was one of the
reasons it gained such popularity in Europe.

Such information served to make the guidebook, “a great leveler of knowledge
and culture.”62 Like travel literature that preceded it, and the literature of the Caucasus,
guidebooks were read not only by the male, educated nobility but also the less well-off
and especially by women. Part of the success of the Baedeker brand was that it gave
women the independence to travel without male guides. They also gave both men and
women the ability to enjoy foreign cultures, even of the expense or dangers of a trip to
the Black Sea prevented one from actually visiting, only this time without the romantic
overtones.

Tourist Guidebooks: Tsarist Russia

Russian guidebooks, while importing some of the fundamental features of the
genre from Western and Central Europe, were different in many ways, and Russian
guidebooks themselves differed greatly from each other. Most strikingly, in clear contrast
to the Baedeker and other Western and Central European guidebooks, is the absence of
the ‘grand tour’ in Russian guidebooks. They offer suggestions for planning and popular
routes for tourists (which I will discuss below), but not comprehensive itineraries

suggesting exactly ‘what ought to be seen’.\textsuperscript{63} J. Mourier’s French Guide to the Caucasus is built around its itineraries, of which sixteen are offered.\textsuperscript{64} The itineraries are complete with maps of the routes, and accommodations, restaurants, points of interest and descriptions of the regions are all outlined in order of their appearance on the tours.

Despite the variety amongst Russian guidebooks, none offer comparable itineraries. Grigorii Moskvich’s guide to the Caucasus, entitled \textit{The Caucasus: An Illustrated Practical Guidebook}, was published in its 27\textsuperscript{th} edition by 1915. It is organized geographically, in the sense that each region of the Caucasus has its own section of the guidebook, in which the history, climate, accommodations, restaurants, excursion opportunities and other information is included. Enough essential information is provided about each region (The Caucasian Mineral Waters, The Central Caucasus and the road to Tbilisi, Tbilisi itself, Baku, and the Black Sea Coast) so that the tourist could choose destinations of his or her own taste. Recommendations are made about where to travel for certain types of mineral waters, or if certain outdoor activities were available. Moskvich’s guides would have been useful for both the tourists who sought out one destination to spend their vacation, or to the tourists who preferred to travel to several different destinations of their choice, as the book always offers information on how to get to and from each site. Moskvich’s guidebooks were the most popular amongst Russian tourists in the early twentieth century, based on the frequency of the publications and by the fact that Moskvich’s company also published guides to the Crimea, the Black Sea Coast, the


\textsuperscript{64} J. Mourier, \textit{Guide au Caucase} (Paris: Librairie Orientale et Americaine de J. Maisonneuve, 1894).
Caucasian Mineral Waters, the Volga, Scandinavia, Petrograd, Moscow, Odessa, Warsaw and were, in 1915, working on guides to Kiev/Dniepr River and Siberia.65

Other guides took a similar approach. The *Kratkii Putevoditel’ po Mineral’nym Vodam*66 (A Brief Guidebook of the Mineral Waters) is structured in much the same way, and even though it focuses on one region in particular, its information even for the Caucasian Mineral Waters is abbreviated, but this was done by design in this condensed and conveniently-sized guide. Its style is one more familiar to the twenty-first century tourist, and appears to have been adopted by early Soviet publishing firms.67

Most Russian guidebooks did not look quite like Moskvich’s version, and certainly did not resemble the Baedeker, Murray, or Michelin guides in Western and Central Europe. Russian guides tended to favor narrative over lists. S. Anisimov published a guidebook entitled *Batumskoe Poberezh’e* (The Batumi Coast) which is actually a collection of seven essays (in addition to the publisher’s introduction) that covers topics ranging from climate to agriculture to the city itself.68 Other guides preferred to offer a mixture of narrative, through which the attraction of the Caucasus could best be shown, and the essential information required to make travel to the Black Sea Coast comfortable for tourists. Dorovatovskii’s guide, as seen above, was very descriptive not only at the beginning of the guide itself, but in each section, with pain-

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66 *Kratkii Putevoditel’ po Mineral’nym Vodam* (Gornogo Department, 1894)
67 For an example of a guidebook with similar structure and style, see Sergei Anisimov, *The Black Sea Coast* (Moscow: V. Ts. S. P. S., 1925). Perhaps it is a coincidence but it is interesting that this particular book looks very similar to Moskvich’s guidebook (the same words are in boldface, the same headings are used, and the same photographs are there).
68 S. A. Anisimov, ed., *Batumskoe Poberezh’e* (Batumi, 1911). Note: This is the same editor who published the guide in the preceding footnote, but the style is remarkably different.
staking detail, it took the reader on a journey along a particular excursion or tour of a
particular site. Perhaps most fascinating, S. Vasiukov, in his guide *Tselebni Krai: Kavkazskie Mineral’nye Vody* (The Medicinal Borderlands: Caucasian Mineral Waters) offers stories written by the author, complete with characters and dialogue, which give the tourist a sense of what a typical day in the mineral waters region just to the east of the Black Sea Coast would be like, and what they might encounter along their travels. The narratives are however rather unrealistic in the sense that the author seems more concerned with describing the perfect vacation than the realities of long-distance travel. Nonetheless, it is a unique style of guidebook, contrasting greatly with the Baedekers and Murrays in Western Europe.⁶⁹

The first task of Russian tourist guidebooks was to inform readers about how to get to the Black Sea Coast. Visiting the Black Sea in the late nineteenth century almost always meant traveling by rail. There were essentially four routes recommended for travel to the Caucasus from Moscow, and travelers from St. Petersburg would have to go through Moscow anyway. The most straightforward routes went from Moscow either: a) via Riazan, Kozlov, and Voronezh or b) via Kursk, Kharkiv, and Taganrog to Rostov. From Rostov you could continue by rail to the mineral water sanitoriums in Kislovodsk or proceed straight to the northwest coast of the Black Sea and the town of Novorossisk. Two other options existed for those interested in longer but potentially more scenic journeys to the Caucasus. You could travel either: c) via Kharkiv to Sevastopol and from there, on board a ship across the Black Sea to Novorossisk or d) via Nizhniy Novgorod

and Tsaritsyn, for 10 days partly by train and partly by boat on the Volga River. By 1894 it was already possible to travel from St. Petersburg to Rostov in first (81.03 rubles\textsuperscript{70}), second (58.26 rubles) or third class (32.07 rubles).\textsuperscript{71}

Special rates could of course be obtained through tourist agencies. *Kavkaz i Merkuriy, Samolyot, and Zeveke* were each agencies that promoted the lengthy journey down the Volga, the first advertising that they would provide all of the comforts required, food, and guides.\textsuperscript{72} By 1913 (or earlier), it was possible to travel direct, without switching trains, from St. Petersburg to Novorossisk aboard the weekly Black Sea Express, equipped with a restaurant car (not atypical for Russian trains however) and was, “splendidly equipped, illuminated with electricity and offering many comforts and conveniences.”\textsuperscript{73}

The most important tourist agency for travel to the Black Sea Coast was the Russian Society of Shipping and Trade (ROPT). It was, as the name suggests, a shipping company but recognized that “people too, were commercial objects.” It evolved into Russia’s premiere tourist agency on the Black Sea Coast, boasting agencies in virtually every town tourists visited. Building upon the concept of ‘inclusive independent travel’ developed by Thomas Cook decades earlier in England, ROPT sought to give the customer independence to travel as he or she desired, while the agency sought to resolve the many difficulties encountered along the route, providing transportation, accommodation, food and guidance wherever necessary for a fixed price. As with

\textsuperscript{70} Price for route a)
\textsuperscript{71} *Kratkii Putevoditel’ po Mineral’nym Vodam* (Gornogo Department, 1894) 15, 17, 19-22.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 16.
\textsuperscript{73} Grigorii Moskvich, *Putevoditel’ po Kavkazu*, Izdanie XX (1913), 344.
Thomas Cook’s enterprise, ROPT worked under the premise that tourism could be made affordable through its practical organisation and mass production.

The tourist guidebooks suggest numerous ways that tourists could travel from northern and central Russia to the Black Sea Coast with relative ease. The railroads represented a physical and metaphorical connection between Russia’s southern periphery and the center. With the help of modern technologies, this connection between center and periphery only became more intimate. Postal service to Sochi, for example, was established not only for tourists, but made possible by a tourist agency. The ROPT used their ships, traveling between Novorossisk, Sochi and Batumi to deliver the mail.\textsuperscript{74} The guides underscored how telephone and telegraph lines had also been constructed.\textsuperscript{75} Sochi also had a lighthouse, newspaper and modern roads to connect it to Russia, both physically and in the minds of people throughout the Empire.

While easy access and the amenities tourists had at their disposal encouraged tourists to come to the Black Sea, guidebooks emphasized climate as the region’s best selling point. The most striking images, perhaps, were those of the Caucasus’s climate and remarkable geography, so different from the rest of the Russian empire. Geography played an enormous part in the romantic stories of Pushkin and others as well, but Caucasian geography for those Russian writers was something foreign and part of a distant borderland. Tourist guidebooks made the awe-inspiring Caucasus mountains and

\textsuperscript{74} Dorovatovskii, 1911, 17.
\textsuperscript{75} Dorovatovskii claims that these telephone lines were only functional in 1910 in Sochi, though evidence suggests that they were built much earlier, in 1885. See V.E. Shehtneva, \textit{Ocherki Istorii Bol’shogo Sochi (Tom 1)} (Sochi: RIO SGUTiKD, 2006), 462.
the beautiful coastline of the Black Sea into something that was at once exotic but at the same time Russian.

Christopher Ely, in studying the Volga and Volga River tourism, has examined how “precisely as tourism began to flourish in Russia, a new vision and language of Russian space ultimately emerged that represented the river as a scenic location … [and] we see the image of Volga space transformed from a location of national significance, but no special beauty, into a scenic landscape shaped for the consumption of tourists.”76 The same process of re-imagining space took place for the Black Sea Coast. Tourism worked to shed the images of the hostile environment of the Caucasus, with its sharp precipices and fast flowing and dangerous rivers and replace them with images of comfortable resorts.

In reality, the climate on the Black Sea coast was rather variable. One traveller has proclaimed that this is so much the case that:

At one time, when, for example, in Sochi mandarins grow on the southern side of your house all winter without cover … on the northern side of your house everything is frozen … In Sokhumi in December 1903 in the botanical gardens the temperature on the roof where there was a weather station the lowest temperature was -20°C while a little lower in the same park the lowest temperature was +5.4°C77

This particular description, found in Moskvich’s 1915 guide, while giving perhaps extreme examples, is one of the few that is not consistently positive in its accounts of the Black Sea Coast’s climate. In fact, Moskvich’s more practical guides were the only early

77 Moskvich, Kavkaz (1915), 356.
twentieth century Russian guides to point out treatment procedures for malaria and tips for its prevention.\footnote{Moskvich, Kavkaz (1915), 357.}

Most Russian guidebooks utilized some sort of detailed visual representations of the Black Sea Coast. When speaking of the climate, they argued that not only was the Black Sea coast closer and more affordable than the Mediterranean, the climate was equally appealing, if not superior. A professor Krasnov’, having visited the Black Sea coast, was quoted not in a guidebook, but in a book clearly intended for tourists appropriately entitled \textit{Strana tepla i solntsa} (Country of Warmth and Sun) as saying, “There isn’t a place in the Russian Empire that could be compared to Sochi, and really only the Pyrenees and western France have something similar. Sochi – it is our Toulouse, Biarritz, Bordeaux, but it is even better than them, for it is warmer and more picturesque.”\footnote{N. G. Kalabykhov and N. I. Yablonskii, Strana tepla i solntsa (1904), 17.} In Sochi, during normal tourist season between April/May and October, daytime high temperatures do not drop below 23°C or rise above 32°C, even in August, as tables in the guides clearly show.\footnote{Dorovatovskii, Sochi, 60.} These sorts of comparisons not only attested to Russia’s supposed equality with Western Europe, but added a new dimension to the way that Russians envisioned their empire.

Russian guidebooks used the climate of the Black Sea Coast more than any other feature as their main selling point. Descriptions of the region’s environment were employed to encourage tourism within Russia, and to turn potential tourists’ attention away from Europe. \textit{Strana tepla i solntse} begins with a typical sentiment:
We, Russians, know little about our fatherland – and, for example, such a miraculous little corner as the Black Sea coast with its rich natural conditions – remains unfamiliar … Merano, Davos, the southern coast of France and other foreign places arouse in us delight, and we go every year en masse and visit them in the winter while in the meantime the Black Sea coast can fully substitute for all of this. \(^81\)

A guidebook of the Batumi coast region, now in Georgia, offers the following lamentation over the tendencies of Russian tourists:

It is the end of September. Over the great Russian plain the grey sky hangs lower and lower. It is as if the bright summer beauty never existed. Nature is shrouded in grey. Grey, dry grass, a grey leaf on the ground with a bare tree … but for those getting used to our gloomy environment, to the frost and snow of our northern Russian plain, they paint pictures of countries of warmth and sun: the Hellenes and Italy, the French Riviera and Spain … they run [to these places] and bring with them the money of their own poor country and contribute to the prosperity of someone else’s. Specifically Monaco, Cannes, Sanremo, Naples and many others speak to the minds and hearts of Russians more than their own resorts. \(^82\)

These quotations in particular would have resonated with those Russians in search of an exotic holiday, but either did not want to travel abroad or could not afford to do so. The first encourages Russians to explore their own country before traveling abroad, without a consideration for the beauty of the Russian Empire. There is no question in this quotation that the Black Sea Coast is Russian, and that it makes the Russian Empire on par with Western European countries in aesthetic appeal. The second makes a similar effort to change the way that Russians viewed their own landscapes, emphasizing the ‘grey’ that seemed to encompass everything in central Russia, and how there were comparably exotic resorts nearby.


\(^{82}\) S. Anisimov, *Batumskoe Poberezh’ e*, (1911) 3-5.
As far as the Caucasus is concerned, parallels to the Alps abound in Baedeker’s
guide, though his contentions are quite the opposite. About the Caucasus range, for
example, Baedeker says how:

The effects of the glaciers of the ice age are, however, much less
marked than in the Alps. For this reason the Caucasus is almost
wholly devoid of the charm of lakes and waterfalls. The general
character of its scenery is much wilder and more sombre than that
of the Alps, owing to the destruction of its forests, while its
meadows and pastures lack the Alpine luxuriance.83

Other Russian guides, though, gave more romantic depictions of the Black Sea Coast
and its climate, which were the sort of images the Russian reading public would have
been familiar with. They had, however, been spun to attract a particular clientele, namely
tourists. For example, one guide speaks of how,

…since ancient times the luxurious ‘golden’ coast of the Caucasus,
washed (surrounded) by warm sky-blue waves, spread wide under
the hot southern sun, attracted people with captivating views of
nature, and in present day on this blessed coast of ‘fiery
Kolchics84, in the expression of a poet, brings more and more
trying to find rest, peace, a cure, or to touch triumphant, ever
joyous, ever green nature.85

The author, Dobrokhotov, refers to the ancient history of the region as a site of
beauty and luxury. His reference to the ‘fiery Kolchics’ suggests a period in which travel
to the region was made impossible, but at the same time brings to mind the image of the
romantic savage, so common in Russian literature of the Caucasus.86 Nature is
torzhestvennaya (triumphant, or perhaps more commonly, solemn). The author might
have chosen this sort of language because romantic images of the Caucasus were what

83 Baedeker, Russia, 439.
84 People who lived in Kolchiki, a historical region of Georgia
86 See Susan Layton, “Nineteenth Century Mythologies”.

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Russian readers were accustomed to, but this description is clearly different in certain aspects from the romantic literature of the first half of the nineteenth century. The ‘fiery Kolchics’ are gone, the coast is blessed, and has become a place of relaxation, peace, and health.

The Black Sea Coast was made into an essential part of Russia not only because its climate and geography were portrayed as Russian, but also because of the histories that introduced readers to any particular site along the coast. These histories, almost without exception, reinforced the rights of Russians to be in the region as an imperial power. Similar to the way that Dobrokhotov’s guide discussed the environment, many discuss the region’s ancient past, Greek perceptions of it, and how the region was revered throughout the world. Local cultures however, according to the guidebooks, were not preserved. To take one example, Dorovatovskii’s history of Sochi skips straight to the Russian conquest in the nineteenth century after discussing the ancient past, showing how the Circassians who came to inhabit the region harvested so many trees as to nearly ruin the region’s unique environment, and how the Russians overcame serious problems with disease within their ranks to defeat the Circassians and force them to re-settle in the Ottoman Empire. It also goes on to show how the Russian government encouraged settlement in the region by offering subsidies and free building materials to those who moved to the coast. The remainder of Dorovatovskii’s extensive - 20 page - history of Sochi goes on to explain in detail the ways that agriculture, political control and transportation networks developed in the town. These images reinforced a narrative of

87 Dorovatovskii, 1911, 26-8.
88 ibid., 29, 33-4.
89 Ibid., 35
imperialism and domination rather than one of cross-cultural interaction. Locals are absent from this narrative unless they were destructive or were pushed out of the region – making the region more Russian (and rightfully so) in the minds of the reader. If locals are mentioned, it is most often part of a warning against crime or the likelihood that certain goods or services that Russians were accustomed to may not be available, and therefore the tourist should be prepared so that they would not have to eat local cuisine, for example.

Locals are essentially omitted from historical narratives found in other guides as well. Histories in Moskvich’s guides were short, and wholly neglected the current local populations, small as they might have been after forceful emigration saw the vast majority of Circassians leave in the 1860s. His history of Anapa, one of the few urban centers of Circassia, emphasizes like Dorovatovsii, the ancient past and Russian conquest. He writes:

Ancient Anapa was a Greek colony, holding the name Georginii [Georgippia]. Later, in the twelfth century it was possessed by the Genoese, who called the colony Mapa. From the end of the fifteenth century it belonged to the Turks and was the center of trading for slaves taken from the Caucasus to Turkey and the Crimea. In 1771 they built a very strong fortress (with the help of French engineers), which the Turks valued highly, and vigilantly protected on the mainland and sea. This was to be the center of Islamic propaganda between the Caucasian tribes, and it was where the Turks exiled their worst criminals. The fight between Russia and The Porte for possession of Anapa began under Catherine II in the time of the Second Turkish War. After the third and final engagement of Russian troops at Anapa, according to the Treaty of Adrianople [1829], it was taken by Russia.90

90 Moskvich, Kavkaz (1915), 363.
Unlike in the epic poems of Pushkin and other romantic writers, Circassians have disappeared from the narrative. Anapa, for nearly one hundred years from when this was written, had been Russian, and the Turks, their criminals and propaganda, had been driven from the Black Sea Coast. About Sokhumi, the center of Abkhazia at that time, Moskvich writes:

Sokhumi, until only recently was called Sukhum-kale, as it was founded by Greeks from Milet in the seventh century B.C. and was called Dioscurias. Later the city came under the power of Mithradates the Great and Rome, and in the end received the name Sevastopolis. Then Georgians named it Tskhomi, but from 1455 the city became Turkish, and received its current name (Su – water, khum – sand, kale-fortress). Since 1810 Sokhumi has been Russian [Russkii]; in 1855 and 1877 you could see the Turks within its walls and in 1914 it was under siege by Turks again.91

In both of these accounts, the histories of local peoples are not described, there is a stress on the Russianness of the region, while the ancient empires of Greece and Rome are revered, justifying imperial power in the region (and connecting tsarist Russia directly to the glories of the classical past “shared” by Europeans). The preface to Dobrokhotov’s guide, written by A. S. Ermolov, goes a step further. The historical sites worth visiting, according to Ermolov, were those related to the ancient history of the coast. He spoke of how, “at many points along the Coast are monuments of old antiquity – ancient dolmens, ruins of churches from the first centuries of Christianity, Genoese fortresses, etc. Diggings often turn up valuable archeological findings.”92 The European ties to the region are spelled out by Ermolov in his preface, and he encouraged tourists to visit these

91 Moskvich, Kavkaz (1915), 416.
92 Ibid., xiii.
sites rather than any that would have spoken to tourists about Circassian people and their history.

Dobrokhotov, in his introduction to a chapter on Gelendzhik, performs a very similar task. He outlines the region’s importance in ancient times and moves on to a narrative of conquest and development in the nineteenth century as Gelendzhik went from an important fort during the conquest of the North Caucasus to a key industrial center with the opening of a cement plant that brought 3,000 Russians to the small town. That Russia was making economic inroads into the Black Sea Coast, and bringing settlers to the region, was indicative of Russia’s growing presence in the region. A strong Russian presence was critical if tourists were going to feel safe and as though they were contributing to the Russian economy while traveling to the coast.

Speaking about Russia’s colonization of the Black Sea Coast, Ermolov described how after the wars in the Caucasus concluded in the 1860s “we have a different task in front of us – the placement of Russians there instead of the half-wild indigenous peoples, and the spread of culture, the elevation of its industry and the use of our new region’s natural riches.” Not only did Ermolov see the Coast as a Russian place, he saw its development as part of Russia’s civilizing mission in the Caucasus. Russia’s current and future role along the coast was to explicitly incorporate the region, particularly through tourism, into civilized and cultured world.

While histories in Russian guidebooks served to legitimize the empire’s extension along the Black Sea Coast, they also served to transform it into a place of leisure. Dr.

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93 Dobrokhotov, 1916, 142-144.
94 Ibid., ix.
Podgurskii’s sanitorium is among the most important features of Sochi’s landscape, marking the appeal of the Black Sea coast as a health resort. There was much to do on the Black Sea Coast, but the most popular activity was surely a bath in any of the mineral water spas scattered all the way down to Batumi. The coast offered a climate suitable for the treatment of a wide range of afflictions or illnesses, and guidebooks offer especially detailed information on how the specific weather patterns in certain towns were more or less suitable for treatment of illnesses.

Such a climate also afforded travelers opportunities to participate in new and often quite modern activities. “Often it is now possible to observe whole cavalcades of cyclists, going by at times from Novorossisk to even Sokhumi.” Tourists made excursions to numerous waterfalls, many of which were quite close to the coast. Nearby hot springs were always popular. Gardeners were treated to a whole host of different species of plants and of course a much more favorable growing season. There were over 125 species of trees that existed nowhere else in the Russian Empire. Unique species of animals also live in the region, perhaps most notably the rare Caucasian panther. Alpinists were drawn to the Caucasus for world-class mountain climbing and numerous amateur alpine clubs were established. New interest in the health sciences, botany, adventure sports, and participation in excursions unseen anywhere else in the empire made traveling to the Black Sea a new experience for even the most modern and cultured tourist.

In order to entice tourists to remain within Russia, advertisers and guidebook authors argued the equivalency of accommodations and services to the most popular...
European resorts. Yet Russians did not simply imitate Europe. They sought to make the Black Sea Coast attractive to Russians by offering European quality with Russian cultural influence, thereby making travel to this region even more attractive than the Mediterranean, and the Caucasus more attractive than the Alps. Hotels with names such as the European, The Grand Hotel, Bristol, the Belle-vue and even the Sanremo, the France, or the Venice all had Russian style rooms, Russian restaurants and offered Russian entertainment.

The language of the guidebooks reflected the need for Russians to feel at home, in their own nation, on the Black Sea Coast. This often meant advising tourists to avoid local peoples as much as possible. When discussing cycling along the coast, Moskvich’s guide book goes to great lengths to explain the dangers involved, saying that while the local populations were essentially ‘peaceful’, the risk of theft and other criminal activity on the roads between the Russian resort towns was quite high.95 Hotels along the Black Sea Coast served Russian cuisine in their restaurants, and suggested that tourists avoid many kinds of local fare, for it could potentially harm a Russian digestive system. Rather than acquainting travelers with local theatrical and musical performances, Russian high culture blossomed on the Black Sea Coast. Hotels such as the Kavkazskaya Riviera in Sochi, perhaps the most luxurious and well-known resort on the Black Sea outside of Yalta, boasted a concert hall with seating for six hundred and regular performances by Russian orchestras. It had a luxurious Casino, parks, and even a ‘glass palace’.

Purchasing a dacha on the Black Sea Coast was a popular option for more well-off travelers. Investment opportunities occupy a good portion of Moskvich’s section on

95 Moskvich, Kavkaz (1915), 344.
the local businesses and services, even offering rates of return and benefits for investors. The growth of industry in certain areas is cited as a reason for visiting. Investment in land was particularly encouraged, and many Russians (tourists or businessmen) took advantage by buying portions of land and sub-dividing them, so that dachas could be built. Guidebooks were even successful in making readers guilty for not contributing to the growth of tourism and Russian presence on the Black Sea Coast. Travelers were encouraged in these guidebooks to stay in Russia and support the imperial economy. The advertisements which fill up numerous pages at the beginnings and ends of the guidebooks were purchased by investment banks and insurance companies as much as firms providing services for tourists on the Black Sea Coast.

Conclusion

Russian tourist guidebooks served to create images and expectations in the minds of readers. Readers were given a degree of freedom to decide for themselves where they would travel, and whether it be to one resort or to several destinations. Yet the stories told in Vasiukov’s guide, the extensive descriptive sections in Dorovatovskii’s guide, and even the details chosen by Moskvich would all have given the tourist certain perceptions of the Black Sea Coast without having even traveled there. Instead of visualizing the coast as a place of freedom, violence and oriental peoples, tourist guidebook readers viewed it as a place waiting for visitors to come vacation.
As the luxury hotels, mineral water sanitoriums, cruise ships became the primary features of the Black Sea Coast’s visual landscape, the region ceased to be defined solely as ‘Russia’s Orient’ and became ‘Russia’s Riviera’. Guides spoke of how railroads, ships, telegraph and telephone lines, roads and other infrastructure created with the tourist in mind, physically tied the Black Sea Coast to Russia making it accessible to middle and even lower class Russian civilians. They reproduced a history of the region that legitimized Russia’s presence along the coast, while the inviting climate made it into a popular tourist destination. Guidebooks worked to change the ways that Russians thought about the Black Sea Coast. No longer a place of conflict and danger, where Russians retained an ambiguous and complex relationship with local peoples, it had become a leisure setting in the natural possession of the Russian Empire.
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