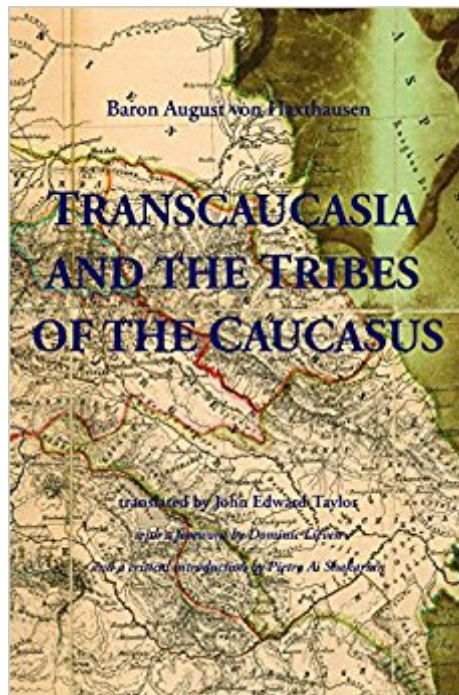




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Transcaucasia And The Tribes Of The Caucasus



Synopsis

In the spring of 1843, German Baron August von Haxthausen commenced his journey throughout the Russian Empire. His famous account of his travels became a sensation and his writings on the Russian peasant commune fueled Russian intellectual debates of the day. To this day, Haxthausen's work remains a major historical resource on Russian history. Less well-known is his comprehensive study of the Caucasus. The baron traveled to the region as part of his broader expedition to Russia. Intrigued and enchanted by its distinct character and its multitude of cultures and nationalities, Haxthausen felt that the Caucasus deserved a study of its own. His resulting work, *Transcaucasia*, though not as renowned as his general study of Russia, is nevertheless just as significant. Haxthausen's fascinating survey is filled with valuable historical information. He recounts his travels along the Black Sea coast and into Georgia, its capital Tiflis (Tbilisi), the city of Gori (the future birthplace of Joseph Stalin), and the fertile province of Kakheti. Traveling south to Armenia, he was joined by celebrated Armenian writer Khachatur Abovian who accompanied him through Erivan (Yerevan) and its vicinity, including an encampment of Yezidis. Haxthausen also met with the Armenian Catholicos Nerses V and, in the present-day disputed region of South Ossetia, he surveyed Ossetian village life. Additionally, his work presents fascinating accounts of the Karabagh region and the oil-rich city of Baku. It also includes numerous tales and legends from throughout the Caucasus. Haxthausen's study was originally written in German but first published in its English translation by John Edward Taylor in 1854. Curiously, an additional volume written by Haxthausen and translated Taylor, entitled *The Tribes of the Caucasus*, was published a year later. That thin work focused almost exclusively on Imam Shamil and the eastern theatre of the Caucasian War, and appears to have been intended by Haxthausen to be an additional chapter of *Transcaucasia*. Consequently, this new edition of the Taylor translation includes the content of both *Transcaucasia* and *The Tribes of the Caucasus*. This new edition of *Transcaucasia* also features a critical introduction by Pietro A. Shakarian and a foreword by eminent Russian scholar, Dominic Lieven, whose great-grandfather, Prince Paul Lieven, accompanied Haxthausen on much his journey through the Caucasus. Further, it includes the gorgeous full-color illustrations from the original English edition of Haxthausen's book, reproduced with the assistance of the Cleveland Public Library's John G. White Special Collection of Folklore, Orientalia and Chess and Digital Public Library. All of these elements underscore the significance of Haxthausen's text a must-read primary source for students and scholars of Russia and the Caucasus.

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Customer Reviews

"Haxthausen's Transcaucasia is one of the great European travel ethnographies of the nineteenth century. Elegantly and thoughtfully written, the book is at once a window onto the rich history and culture of the peoples of the Caucasus--then newly enveloped into the Tsarist empire--as well as an entrance into the mindset and worldview of the educated European elite. Pietro Shakarian is to be commended for bringing this classic text, with The Tribes of the Caucasus, back into print, including such high-quality copies of the magnificent original illustrations, and for his very helpful introduction to the book."--Dr. Nicholas Breyfogle, Associate Professor of History at The Ohio State University and author of Heretics and Colonizers: Forging Russia's Empire in the South Caucasus (2005)"Haxthausen's Transcaucasia is a perceptive and frequently entertaining record of a lost world: the north and south Caucasus before Russia's final conquest of the highlands. It remains one of the essential works of travel on the region and a telling record of the cultural and geographical diversity of this ancient land."--Dr. Charles King, Professor of International Affairs and Government at Georgetown University and author of The Ghost of Freedom: A History of the Caucasus (2008)"This new republication of Haxthausen's Transcaucasia is a useful addition to the English language literature dealing with the Caucasus. As a first hand account of the region from the 1840s, it unsurprisingly shows orientalist attitudes. However, it also contains numerous details on socio-spacial and political conditions on the ground, which, when contextualized, offer a better understanding of the Caucasus. Written in a very accessible manner, it is a joy to read."--Dr. Arsĕne Saparov, author of From Conflict to Autonomy in the Caucasus: The Soviet Union and the Making of Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno Karabakh (2014)"Haxthausen describes in great detail the countryside through which he passed,

the people, their customs, dress, food, villages, social and government structures, irrigation systems, and so on. He recounts local legends; meets Nerses, the head of the Armenian Church; spends time with the great Armenian literary figure Khachatur Abovian; and describes the religious beliefs of the Yazidis... The book's main audience is likely to be those studying the history, sociology, and ethnography of nineteenth century Georgia and Armenia. They will find much in it of value."--Dr. Paul F. Robinson, Professor of Russian and Military History at the University of Ottawa

Baron August von Haxthausen (1792-1866) was an agricultural scientist, lawyer, writer, and economist. As a young man, Haxthausen joined the War of the Sixth Coalition against Napoleonic France. A conservative reformer, he opposed French-style revolution and believed in cooperation, not conflict, between the classes. He is best known for his celebrated study of Russia, which he wrote in 1843 and published in three volumes from 1847 and 1852. His work extolled the Russian peasant commune, fueling contemporary Russian intellectual debates. An opponent of bureaucracy, Haxthausen was a staunch supporter for the abolition of serfdom in the Russian Empire. John Edward Taylor (1809-1866) was an English translator and printer. He was a cousin of Edgar Taylor, the first translator of the stories of the Brothers Grimm in English. Following the death of Edgar Taylor in 1839, John Edward continued his work and became the second person to translate the Grimms into the English language. In addition, he was commissioned by August von Haxthausen, a close friend of the Grimms, to translate his study of the Caucasus into English. Dominic Lieven is a historian and senior research professor at the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of the British Academy. He earned his PhD at University College London's School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES) in 1978 and taught Russian Studies at the London School of Economics for thirty-three years. His specialty is Imperial Russian history, a subject on which he has written many books. Pietro A. Shakarian is a PhD Candidate in Russian History at The Ohio State University in Columbus. He earned his MA in Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. His primary interest is in the Caucasus, particularly Armenia and Georgia. He has written analyses on developments in Russia and the former Soviet space for The Nation, Russia Direct, and Hetq Online.

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