

Travelling in the Caucasus, Travelling in Time: Decoding Biography as Genre

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Anne Lister's last journey took her and her partner, Ann Walker, to Russia and the Caucasus in 1839–40. While working on my biography of Lister, I followed in their footsteps: from Saint Petersburg via Moscow to Nizhny Novgorod, and then along the Volga to Kazan. On a second trip, I went from the Russian–Georgian border in the Darial Gorge via Tbilisi, Kutaisi and Zugdidi in Georgia, all the way to Baku in Azerbaijan. My findings were often sobering. Not even rivers and mountains have remained the same. Stalin had the Volga dammed into a chain of artificial lakes; the Darial Gorge, which seemed to Anne Lister like the earth on the very first day, now thunders with heavy Soviet-built trucks passing through. Doubts were my constant companion during my biographical research. What can today's places, landscapes and people tell us about Anne Lister?

Anne Lister was enthusiastic about the idea of travelling back to antiquity in Georgia, akin to meeting Medea and the Argonauts in Kutaisi. On her search for the past, however, the present bothered her no less than it did me on my research trip. After my biography, her and my travels gave me reason to reflect on biographical writing itself, in *Zeitreisen. Vier Frauen, zwei Jahrhunderte, ein Weg* (Time Travels: Four Women, Two Centuries, One Journey) (2018). The book describes Anne Lister and Ann Walker's trip through Russia and the Caucasus not only in more detail than the biography, but also refracted in the experiences my wife, Susette, and I had in their wake.¹

The following extracts from *Zeitreisen* describe Anne Lister and Ann Walker's travels through Georgia from late June to early August 1840.

Books and Reality

Anne and Ann stayed in Gori for three days, climbed up to the old castle and went on two excursions described by Frédéric Dubois de Montpéreux (1798–1850) in his *Voyage autour du Caucase*.² Since Moscow, Anne Lister and Ann Walker had been lugging along the newly printed first three

volumes by the Swiss travel writer, who had circumnavigated the Caucasus in 1833/4. Both destinations were off the post road, only accessible on horseback. Ann Walker was a good rider; she had a pony stabled in England. Anne Lister had previously kept a horse but actually preferred to walk. Perhaps that was to do with the side saddle, however, which was gradually becoming standard for women in England. On the continent, women rode 'German style', straddling the horse like men. Anne and Ann had previously taken long rides in the Alps and the Pyrenees, so both women were familiar with experiencing nature on horseback. Accompanied by their Russian servant, George, and a Cossack officer, they rode uphill according to Dubois' directions. *Ride through hedges and bushes of jasmin, pomegranate, yellow honeysuckle, sweet gall, privet in flower particularly pretty along the banks of the stream here and there.*³ They eventually reached the village of Ateni and the ancient Sioni church, picturesquely sited above a river, like many of Georgia's churches. *At present, Sion has neither a spiritual shepherd nor a spiritual flock*, Dubois wrote, but only the animal kind; *the shepherds must remove the tremendous layer of dung that gathers here every year, in order to enter through the doors.*⁴

Although Dubois had written about it in detail, Anne Lister repeated in her journal that the church was *now used merely to house sheep and cattle.*⁵ On her previous travels guided by the *Handbook for Travellers in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Russia*, she had also drawn great satisfaction from comparing the printed details with reality. In the Caucasus, Anne *had fallen more and more under the spell of a guide book*, as Phyllis Ramsden established. *This last section of her narrative is completely dominated by the Frenchman* (Dubois came from Francophone Switzerland).⁶ Anne not only attempted to follow Dubois' exact route; she also commented upon and corrected his assessments everywhere she went, even if she merely agreed with him, as in Sioni. What Dubois had first experienced and written down, she read, re-experienced and wrote anew. The manic diarist thus pulled off the trick of exponentiating her life in writing yet again.

The second destination in the area was and still is the rock-fortress town of Uplistsikhe. Frédéric Dubois was the first Western traveller of the modern period to describe this ancient but long-abandoned town; the *buildings consist of cavities aligned alongside and above one another, hewn into the individual rock masses*, as were the paths, stairways and water channels. In sophisticated houses, the workers – presumably slaves – had managed to *imitate in this solid rock all embellishments and details of meticulous woodwork . . . Cornices, small beams, large cross-beams, which are all hewn with great care like in a dwelling of fir.*⁷ Ann sat straight down to draw, and Anne Lister also sketched a few outlines in her journal.

The two ladies from England may have been the third and fourth guests from the West in Uplistsikhe. The second was the German botanist Karl Koch (1809–79), who believed himself to be the first modern Western European to set foot there, in 1836. He could not know that Frédéric Dubois had visited three years before him and was already working, back home in Switzerland, on his six-volume work on the Caucasus, which garnered him great fame partly owing to such ‘discoveries’ (from a Eurocentric perspective; the locals were, of course, perfectly aware of the ancient town’s existence). Only a year after Koch’s return, in 1838, Dubois was awarded the Paris Société de Géographie’s Grande Médaille d’Or des Explorations for his work. While Koch was still writing his two-volume *Reise durch Rußland nach dem kaukasischen Isthmus* (Journey through Russia to the Caucasian Isthmus) (1842–3), volume after volume of Dubois’ *Voyage autour du Caucase* was published. The academic fame Karl Koch had hoped to claim by travelling and writing was reaped by Frédéric Dubois. It must have been particularly humiliating for Koch that the French work was immediately translated into German. Instead of presenting new content, Karl Koch had to structure his own books as a commentary on Dubois – just as Anne Lister had done.

I first read Anne Lister’s diaries and letters, and then travelled in her footsteps. Did the books come first, or reality? Do I only grasp those aspects of reality I have previously read about? Does the past only come about in the writing process? Am I cribbing my story from prior narratives? Does the story take place from text to text?

My wife and I too are deeply impressed by what wind, weather and, above all, an earthquake in 1920 have left of Uplistsikhe. I can barely tear my eyes away from the coffered ceilings sculpted out of the rock. Uplistsikhe was the region’s capital in the pre-Christian era, before first Mtskheta and later Tbilisi moved up in the world.

‘I’m really glad Anne and Ann brought us here,’ Susette says.

In several houses we find graffiti on the rock walls, banal messages scribbled in felt pen, but also older remnants, elaborately carved in Georgian, Cyrillic and Latin letters. I find an ‘1882’, and elsewhere I think I can decipher an old-fashioned cursive Latin letter A.

‘I could carve “AL + AW 1840” right here. Shall I?’

Kutaisi

Can anything be more picturesque than Kutais and its environs? Frédéric Dubois rhapsodised, igniting Anne Lister’s anticipation.⁸ *The view from the castle mount is magnificent. On two sides, the greenish Rion rushes along its*

narrow rock bed, and above it stretches the pretty town with its friendly and prudent houses, almost all of which have a small garden, the town occupying much space. Further in the vicinity this side of and beyond the river, unending forests begin, bordering the Colchis Plain as far as the eye can see, behind which the Black Sea is found. To the north were the icy peaks of the Caucasus . . . topped with snow, while to the south the equally white pinnacles⁹ of the Lesser Caucasus are visible in Armenia, then as now.

The foot of the mountain range has probably always been inhabited. The residents had superior artistic and cultural skills compared with the people of the Mediterranean, as the ancient Greeks report in their tales of forays into this astonishing land. Anne Lister had a classical education, spoke Latin and Greek. For her, Kutaisi was the capital of ancient Colchis and *le séjour de Médée, de Circe, &c., &c.*¹⁰ According to Greek legend, the place was ruled by King Aeëtes, from whom Jason wanted to steal the Golden Fleece. He and his companions sailed on the *Argo* across the Black Sea to the mouth of the Rioni, known as Phasis at the time (hence the name ‘pheasant’ for the bird from this region, released around Europe for hunting purposes). The Argonauts rowed up this river to Kutaisi. Aeëtes demanded heroic acts in return for the golden sheepskin, acts Jason could never have performed without the aid of Aeëtes’ daughter. Medea fell in love with him and helped him to plough a field with fire-breathing bulls, sow dragons’ teeth and defeat the soldiers sprung from the planted fangs. Since Aeëtes still refused to surrender the fleece, Medea eventually stole it and fled with Jason to Corinth, where the drama moved on to the next act. A fascinated Anne read in Dubois that the *most natural explanation for the tale of the Golden Fleece is gold panning, for the rivers . . . carry gold in them* and a sheepskin, stretched in the water, catches the grains of metal. Products of the extremely fine goldsmithing from the second and third millennia BCE, which attracted the Grecian robbers, are now the pride of the national museum in Tbilisi.

Yet *Medea’s city is hidden among so many other ruins that it is impossible to find*. Even Anne and Ann could not read Kutaisi’s venerable history from the city’s repeatedly destroyed face. *The new Russian city rises upon the old*¹¹ and the *streets run straight and are broad and the country’s national character emerges only here and there*.¹² Slightly fewer than three thousand people lived here, largely Armenians, many Jews and some few Georgians. Pigs wandered the streets. *Homer appreciated their behaviour, for it was here that he had the infamous transformation of Ulysses’ companions take place*. Circe too, like her niece Medea, was far superior in terms of knowledge and lifestyle to the rough Greek buccaneers, and thus helped them take form.

*These pigs, in Kutais and other towns where they roam in herds, are not to the advantage of street cleanliness.*¹³

Anne and Ann were accommodated in a government guesthouse, where Frédéric Dubois and Karl Koch had stayed before them. Its four rooms were empty, however, and had to be furnished on the instruction of the Cossack commander Boujourov on their arrival. Anne and Ann had already met his *very amiable*¹⁴ wife in Tbilisi. They had barely unpacked before there was a knock on the door from the English businessman Mr Marr, who lived near Kutaisi and wanted to inspect his surprisingly arrived compatriots immediately. Anne and Ann hid their sparse breakfast so they would not have to share it with him.

‘David Agam–, Agsh–, Agmesh–’.

By Kutaisi at the latest, travellers to Georgia have to practise the name of David Agmashenebeli, who meets them at every turn on arrival in the country. The main roads of all towns are named after him, along with many restaurants and hotels, schools, ships and an airport. David was crowned king in Kutaisi’s Bagrati Cathedral in 1089. He united the Georgian principalities and improved their administration, built roads and bridges, founded churches, monasteries and educational institutions. His epithet means ‘the Builder’. His granddaughter Tamar continued his work, expanding the country’s borders (Georgia would never regain such a large territory) and reforming its legal system. Her finance minister and alleged lover, Shota Rustaveli, wrote the Georgian national epic poem *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* (around 1200). If a place in Georgia has a second and third street, they are named after Tamar Mepe (‘Queen Tamar’) and Rustaveli. The years from David’s ascent to the throne until Tamar’s death in 1213 are glorified today as the Georgian Golden Age.

The cathedral where David was crowned must have been magnificent. *The whole hill is strewn over and over with rubble, and among it are also the remains of a wonderful large church, of a type not found anywhere else in Transcaucasia. The most beautiful pillars and sculptures lie scattered around, and bear witness to the builders’ craft and taste.*¹⁵ Frédéric Dubois prompted such great expectations that Anne Lister could only be disappointed by reality. What was still standing after the Ottomans had blown up the cathedral in 1692 had to be partially dismantled for safety reasons. Nothing but picturesque ruins were left enthroned above the city until the reconstruction of Georgia’s once largest and most important church was decided upon, against UNESCO protests, in 2006. Today, a shiny new Bagrati Cathedral soars above the city, its style a pretence of the old building.

Several kilometres outside Kutaisi, David the Builder founded the Gelati monastery and academy; scholars whose work was banned elsewhere, for instance in Constantinople, taught philosophy, rhetoric, grammar, geometry and arithmetic here. For an excursion to Gelati, Mr Marr hired a local guide, Adam, with four horses; *but Mr Marr talked so incessantly, much about himself and his wife, that it was impossible to pay the attention I wished to the road.*¹⁶ However, the destination was worth the effort. *The view of the monastery is one of the most picturesque you can imagine.*¹⁷ Then, as now, three churches richly decorated with frescoes and mosaics were preserved, as well as the main gate, beneath which David was buried so that anyone visiting the monastery had to step over him. Ann Walker drew delighted sketches; Anne Lister compared reality meticulously with the statements in Dubois' guide.

Unlike Bagrati Cathedral in Kutaisi, Gelati probably still looks roughly the same as it did on Anne and Ann's visit. The grounds seem untouched, the paths overgrown with weeds; we look in vain for a monastery shop or café. Only the academy building has been newly built; old photos show merely its foundation walls. Will it ever be reinvigorated to serve the Builder's purpose? Our new friends from the Heinrich Böll Foundation in Tbilisi had told us it was very difficult to get vocational training in modern-day Georgia. Anyone wanting to work as a doctor must present qualifications from the West; people distrust the quality of university teaching in their own country, or suspect the degree may have been bought.

'Pretty long time ago, that Golden Age.'

'That's nothing. Have you ever read the Georgian founding myth? When God created the earth and divided the land between the peoples, the Georgians arrived too late, as usual. But they were so nice, he gave them the land he'd been saving for himself.'

'Georgia is drunk on itself, like Cologne and nowhere else I know.'

During the Soviet period, Kutaisi was built up as a second industrial hub in Georgia, alongside Tbilisi. Hydroelectric power stations on the Rioni fuelled large tractor and truck factories. Vocational colleges and universities trained local experts. The ancient village of Kutaisi grew into Georgia's second-largest city, with socialist living quarters and magnificent boulevards. On independence in 1991, the Soviet market for the goods manufactured here was lost. All the factories were forced to close and the city descended into agony. Nothing here is worth seeing. The best thing about Kutaisi is the tea room opposite the opera house. There, we sit on armchairs rescued from the local dump, eat the most delicate blinis since

Veliki Novgorod and drink the strongest tea in all of Georgia. Non-tea-drinkers will have to opt for the second-best thing in Kutaisi: Argo-brand dark beer. And then get out of there quick-march, just like the Argonauts.

The Colchic Forest

On 9 July 1840 Anne and Ann rode out from Kutaisi, led and accompanied by Adam, the nameless Cossack from Tbilisi, their servant George from Moscow and the groom Mosche with two packhorses: six people and eight horses in total. They followed the same route one takes today from Kutaisi to Racha. The *decent horse-road* in the bed of the Tskaltsitela was *very picturesque – very beautiful ride all day among wooded combs*. Highway 17 is not much less attractive today. *Centaury in flower all today*.¹⁸ They managed twenty-five kilometres and stayed overnight in the village of Satsire. Thanks to their papers from the military administration, they were entitled to demand accommodation for the night from locals. Thus, whereas Karl Koch and Frédéric Dubois had to make do with barns in Racha, the two English ladies were always invited into the local princes' best houses – though the local nobles rarely possessed much more than their titles. In Satsire, Prince Yorgi Kaidisa opened up his doors to them; *in a common dirty Persian coat, and dirty – I should not have taken him for the owner of the place but for him being evidently above all the rest. The women and children that we caught a glimpse of much below the prince himself in appearance*. The room Anne and Ann were given, however, was a *large lofty room – very comfortable*, and the food even better. *The prince asked what we should like – fowl or mutton or both with soup or what*. They contributed trout bought along the way, and were served a feast towards ten o'clock at night, including two types of wine.¹⁹ Ann Walker had problems with her digestion for a week afterwards, longing for a *log-but privy (but no such luxury to be found here!)*²⁰

On the second day, they had to conquer the first significant incline across the Nakerala Pass (1,217 m), which offers a fantastic view to the south over the Colchis Plain, all the way to the snow-capped peaks of the Lesser Caucasus. The path itself also rewarded all the effort. *Beautiful forest all along the fine gorge, fringed with sweet bay and common laurel – the bright shining green that nothing can exceed – and rhododendrum ponticum in full flower, patches of it here and there on the rocks like lilac carpets scattered up and down. At the top yellow turn-cap lilies and lower down yellow iris. . . . All the hills covered with rhododendrum, oak, Spanish chestnut, beech, elm, and hornbeam, and some very fine trees of all these kinds*.²¹ Anne and Ann had

never seen such a forest; and neither had Karl Koch or we. The winters are harsh in western Transcaucasia, and the summers not only scorching hot but rather wet. In this climate, deciduous forests with their familiar trees develop in incredible ways, especially as not only beech, oak and so on thrive; *wild fruit trees, cherry, pear and apple alternated with them and were occasionally joined by the date tree*, that is the date-plum, named for its fruit that resembles a cross between both types. The Colchis Forest is famous among botanists; for nature-lovers, it is worth a trip of its own. *Such a primeval forest has an air of magnificence foreign to all our forests*. However, a lack of paths makes this European jungle almost impossible to roam. We have to stick to the road, for which Karl Koch, Anne and Ann would have been grateful. *The path grew more arduous with every step. We all had to dismount and let the horses down ravines, with great effort. Trees brittle with age or torn down by storm winds had often lain across our path and we were forced to clear a track with our sharp weapons. Creepers such as ivy, brambles and smilax [prickly ivy] also contributed not little to laying hurdles in the path of our journey through the jungle.*²² The creepers also include the European grapevine, which originates from these forests and *loops in unbound freedom from tree to tree.*²³

In Georgia, grapes were pressed for wine as long as six thousand years ago. The oldest known winepress may have been in Iran, but since the Islamic Republic has no wish to laud this heritage, Georgia is regarded as the undisputed birthplace of wine. Along with its intoxicating effects, the Georgian word *gwino* came to Europe. Saint Nino is said to have converted the Georgians so early and easily to Christianity not least because wine plays such a key role in communion. Her cross was made of the wood of grapevines.

Like Anne Lister, my wife and I enjoy a dry red, very heavy and full-bodied. Ann Walker preferred white wine. As in ancient times, the wine matured in buried and shaded jugs. For transport and serving, it was poured into inverted animal skins. *For this purpose, the skins of buffalo, calves or pigs are used in particular, usually inverted during removal so that they retain their original shape, sewing up all the holes with the exception of one hind leg.* Anne Lister was very enthusiastic about this ancient storage method. The taste, however, was presumably rather unusual. *To avoid the wine souring due to the great heat, the fur on the inside is soaked in naphtha.*²⁴ This crude oil from the Absheron peninsula was supposed to prevent the wine turning to vinegar. Karl Koch was badly disappointed by his first taste, but like Frédéric Dubois, he found one *grows very quickly accustomed to the strange bitter flavour.*²⁵ Anne and Ann seem to have had similar

experiences. On their way to Racha, they paid a special visit to a grotto that Dubois had recommended as a natural curiosity, because it was full of ice even in high summer. *Adam brought away 2 nice pieces of ice which we wrapped in moss and contrived to bring home to ice our wine after dinner.*²⁶

Towards Racha

Anne and Ann drank their iced wine in Khotevi, thirty-seven kilometres from Satsire. The best house there was *a very poor little place*; Anne and Ann were shown into an even smaller outbuilding. *Terribly dirty, a man partly sweeping it with a long whisk.*²⁷ Rain dripped through a roof like a sieve and they were given nothing to eat. The rice they had brought along and nine eggs they had purchased en route had to suffice for them and the four men. They stayed a second night nonetheless, to view the church at Nikortsminda, the most beautiful in Racha and, in our opinion, all of Georgia (constructed 1010–14); *the carvings and mouldings and cornices the richest and best done we have seen.*²⁸ The interior is decorated with whimsical frescoes. While Anne rode on to a river that disappears into the ground, only to reappear numerous kilometres away, Ann preferred to stay at the church and draw. Oh, if only her album had survived!

On the fourth day, Anne Lister could no longer stand the long midday rest they took every day. Once everyone had eaten, she was eager to continue the journey. However, the men refused to ride in the scorching noon heat. The horses too had to rest and graze, since oats were very difficult to obtain. Ann Walker sided with their companions. After writing her journal, Anne could no longer sit still, and set out alone at one o'clock on the steep uphill path to the partly overgrown fortress at the foot of which the group were resting. Her first attempt ended in a rock crevice: *I had had 50 minutes of toil for nothing.* George and Adam had to join her on her second, successful attempt; *back to the tree at 3:18, soaked through, my mouth quite parched. The 2 men (George and Adam) ½ undressed, smoking with heat. We had full sun upon us the latter part of the way, the heat near our walnut tree at 3:35 was F. 104 ½ (40.3° C).*²⁹ George and Adam had gained a first impression of the exertions awaiting them by the side of this energy-laden woman.

The midday rest continued to plague Anne Lister, making her feel robbed of valuable daylight. Though she did everything else Frédéric Dubois suggested, she had no understanding whatsoever of his advice not to travel during the hot hours of the day, *from ten or eleven in the morning until three in the afternoon in July and August.* The only

recommendation of his she did follow was *to be careful what one wears*.³⁰ Lister records *[Leaving] off my woollen undersleeves this morning*. Despite this, Anne was surprised to find that *Ann bears the heat with much less thirst and much better than I*.³¹ Often, Ann Walker was the driving force when it came to riding out early in the morning, at the break of dawn. She would enjoy their picnic lunch and then seek a shady place to draw, following a nap. In the late afternoon, she would ride on with a will for adventure. It seems she took what Frédéric Dubois called the *best way to see the country* more to heart than Anne; *when one arrives at a beautiful spot where the horses may rest, one should stop; one lies down beneath a lime tree or an oak and feels as though one were merely taking a pleasure trip*.³²

In Ambrolauri that day, they re-encountered the Rioni, which they had left in Kutaisi. Dubois and Koch outdo one another with superlatives in their attempts to describe the beauty of the landscape. *The upper valley of the Rion or Racha resembles nowhere more than the upper Rhine Valley, and were the Racha residents' clothes and language not so unfamiliar, one could easily imagine oneself in the romantic areas of Grisons. The same now broad, now narrow valley of mountains, raising their heads boldly to the skies, surround them, the same number of fortresses and towers . . . the same greenish, wildly foaming and loudly rushing river that descends over large stone blocks . . . If travellers were to return highly satisfied from the Rhine Valley, however, and then visit Racha, they would find everything even greater and more majestic*.³³

Along the Rioni, Anne Lister and Ann Walker reached Oni (800 m above standard zero) on the fifth day of their tour. The main settlement of Upper Racha *consists largely of a long row of piteous houses inhabited by Jews and Armenians*.³⁴ Whereas Karl Koch had to put up with two poor rooms at the bazaar and Frédéric Dubois almost found no accommodation, Anne and Ann got the top floor of Prince Gregori Tsereteli's house, called the *palace*; Anne wrote: *blessed be the memory of this prince who has so well provided for the shelter of travellers*!³⁵

We too are housed in a palace in Oni; our hotel is the only new building in the place, which was destroyed by an earthquake on 29 April 1991. Since then, Oni has suffered not only from this devastating natural disaster, but also from a sense of powerlessness or apathy or poverty of the state, which has provided no help with reconstruction, or at least none visible to us. Near our hotel, building after building is still nothing but rubble. Only the synagogue has been renovated, although Oni's Jewish community has almost entirely left since the earthquake. My wife and I are alone at dinner, and at breakfast.

Patriarchy

In all the houses they stayed in, Anne and Ann also met the women. *The ladies all well enough dressed à la Georgienne and evidently much pleased at our visit. The wife of Ottea not the handsomest, but the most talkative and intelligent. All wore the white thing that when pulled up covers the mouth, but all came to us uncovered except one, and she uncovered at my request and they all laughed.*³⁶ Despite her previously extravagant love life, Anne Lister seems not to have sought an opportunity to get close to any women in the Caucasus. *These Georgian Mingrelian ladies sit squat all day on their carpets doing nothing and are queer dowdy-looking figures. Crimson or white chemise under their long trailing gowns. Their breasts wobbling about like a couple of bladders.*³⁷

Frédéric Dubois and Karl Koch, being men, never saw anything of Georgian family life. *According to custom, the women were not allowed to receive us,*³⁸ Karl Koch reports on a family in Racha, whose female members took tea with Anne and Ann. *Domestic life is a very closed life; the women rarely leave the house, rarely show themselves and do not take part in public activities.* Regardless of whether they were Christian or Muslim, *all women wear a scarf, which covers them up to their mouths,*³⁹ and swathed themselves in a large cotton cloth of white colour, called a *chadri*.⁴⁰ Despite this, the two explorers both claimed to be experts on Caucasian woman-kind. *The Circassian women vie with the Georgians for beauty and one does not know to whom to award the prize.* However, their dyed eyelashes, plucked eyebrows, red-varnished fingernails and henna-red hair were too artificial for Dubois' taste. *There is no country where the ladies take coquetry further than here, although only they ever see each other.*⁴¹ So how did he know?

Karl Koch reported with disappointment that there were no women in the world *with as little fire in love as the Georgian women. No matter how much grace and decorum the Georgian woman displays otherwise, she shows great indifference, one might say gaucherie, in the feeling that has buried itself so deep in man's chest.*⁴² Koch may have been judging by prostitutes; in any case, he informs his readers of the precise location of Tbilisi's brothels.

According to Dubois and Koch, the only difference between prostitution and marriage was duration. *In Transcaucasia, the female sex is considered a commodity that exists only for the pleasure of gentlemen, of men,* wrote Karl Koch. *This applies among both Mohammedans and Christians.*⁴³ *Here, one buys . . . one's wife for a significant wedding present,* Frédéric Dubois explained to his readers in Europe, who expected the opposite: a dowry

from the bride. *It is only a short step from this custom to that of selling one's daughter or niece . . . A brother can sell his sister if their parents are no longer alive.* All the work, not only inside the house, was done by women. *These poor women are slaves to their husbands and have to do everything; they not only perform all housework, weave fabrics, sow the grain, but also work the field and the mill . . . The woman is thus, like in all peoples who seek their glory only in pillage, very subordinate to the man, and is more his maid than his companion.*⁴⁴

Anne Lister and Ann Walker had been allowed to visit a harem back in Kazan on the Volga. *Poor things! So many human beings human animals! Except an asylum for insanes I have never seen any sight so melancholy and so humiliating as this harem. They are not admitted or capable of being admitted into society – how terrible the degradation of one half mankind!*⁴⁵ Nine months later, however, they had had a magnificent conversation in a harem in Baku and clapped along to the rhythm of the lesghinka the incarcerated women danced for them. *On leaving, just went up to Hadji and the Commandant and one or 2 more men. They had had sweetmeats, but had probably been less amused than we.*⁴⁶

Utsera

Anne and Ann used their palace in Oni as a base camp for three multi-day excursions to the mountains. As always, they followed Dubois and visited first Tsedisi with its *very curious mine, as nearly as may be in the state of nature.* Anne viewed mines on all her travels, taking inspiration for her own coal mines at home. Although the entrance, a small low hole, was *masked with large masses of fallen rock,* the two women squeezed through with lit torches to a steep ladder, which led downwards. *Anne sent Ann back.* She herself descended some thirty metres and explored a tunnel. *Did not stop much, got down quickly and up quickly was in the mine ¼ hour.*⁴⁷ In the evening, the villagers fed them trout and eggs; they had to sleep in a barn.

Their second excursion was to the source of the Rioni, which rises on the main crest of the Greater Caucasus. They set out late and arrived at Utsera (950 m), twelve kilometres from Oni, easily along a pleasant path. Anne and Ann slept in an empty hut, the men in the yard. *Too much bit to sleep comfortably, otherwise pretty well off.*⁴⁸ The next morning, they visited the mineral springs for which Utsera was famous. *The water is rich in carbon dioxide, which gushes out of cracks in the rock everywhere. The natives bring their sick here in particular, and have them breathe in the gas.*⁴⁹

As Anne Lister described, they did so by *inhaling it through a hollow stem. They cover the little hole in the ground at which the gas issues with leaves and stick the pipe among the leaves and may thus inhale enough to make them sneeze, or feel a sort of intoxication. Was it something of this sort that was so famous at Delphi?*⁵⁰

The local administrator sent four armed men with them for the continuation of their journey, as their path ran close to the border with Ossetia, which was at war with its neighbour at the time. The same applies today. On the Soviet Union's collapse, South Ossetia broke away from Georgia as early as April 1990 and declared itself a sovereign republic. Once Georgia gained its own independence in 1991, South Ossetia refused to rejoin Georgia. UN peacekeeping troops succeeded in preventing a war like that in Abkhazia, but the situation is nonetheless tense. Georgia continues to assert a claim to the two separatist regions, where those in power are Russia-oriented. It is impossible to travel directly from Georgia to South Ossetia or Abkhazia.

Anne and Ann rode out without breakfast at 5:30 a.m. Karl Koch described the following three hours' journey: *Half an hour after Utsere, the surroundings change character all at once. The valley suddenly narrows and barely permits the Rion to penetrate between the tree-high rocks; the path continues onto hillsides covered in the most beautiful deciduous and partly coniferous timber and allowed me only rarely to follow it on horseback. The grapevine, the fruit and nut trees have all at once vanished, for the air blows colder. The entire valley, up to the place where the western and eastern Rion unite, is one of the most beautiful points in the Caucasus and I cannot recall finding anywhere in Switzerland a valley that might match this one for magnificence.*⁵¹

Anne and Ann were equally enthusiastic. *How fine this defile! We hear the roaring Rioni but see it only now and then, peep through the thick wood. The mountain mixture of spruce, birch and beech very picturesque and beautiful.*⁵²

Crossing this wild, narrow valley called for courage, however, as Dubois implied. *To avoid the enormous vertical rock masses that often hang above the river, one must walk now on the right bank, and now on the other.* Anne counted ten adventurous bridges, described by Dubois as *supported by three beams laid from one bank to the other; they are overlaid with thick six-foot planks held together by a slat, and have no handholds. The Phasis foams over the porphyric, granite and protogynous blocks and drowns out the human voice; the bridge sways beneath our feet; frequent signs of decay make us tremble.* Anne saw the remains of each bridge's previous construction in the raging

waters below them. Travellers were advised *to dismount and lead [their] horse by the reins, so as not to get too confused in the event that the bridge might collapse; one walks across carefully, at a suitable distance from one another.*⁵³ Anne cursed herself for having skipped breakfast, and took a hard-boiled egg from the picnic basket.

Glacier

Anne and Ann's venture through the valley beyond Utsera ended, as Dubois stated, *on a terrible path up a monstrous wall of slate . . . Once one has descended on the other side, all difficulties are overcome.* Before noon, they reached *the last village on the trip up the Phasis.*⁵⁴ Anne Lister considered Ghebi (1,337 m), surrounded by snow-capped mountains, *with its two white towers one of the most picturesque villages in the Caucasus.*⁵⁵ Dubois ended his excursion here. Karl Koch did not get even this far, having heard people here apparently *did not like to host strangers.*⁵⁶ In Ghebi, Anne and Ann learned that the sources of the Rioni were much further away than they had been told in Oni. They had to allow another night's stay to get there alone, not something they had planned. Anne had thought the high mountains were home to another orderly military post with *an officer commandant and 40 Russians (for George had said 40 soldiers) and supposed there would be women and that we could get milk and be tolerably comfortable and that my horse's loose shoe could be fastened on.* They therefore ventured what Dubois had not, and rode further along the Rioni at 1 p.m., higher and higher into the mountains. In the darkness, they reached not a military village with women and milk, but the provisional camp of the last military outpost before the main crest of the Greater Caucasus. The soldiers could only help the two English ladies to survive the night in the open air at an altitude of at least 2,000 m. *A few long thin poles set up meeting in a point and a few small branches thrown over them to the north and a fire in front – and this our bivouac for the night. I kept my thoughts to myself, set the Cossack to bring 3 pieces of wood and arranged Ann's bed very fairly. No wood convenient for me so spread my burca [a shepherd's coat] and saddle cloth on the ground, put on my light cloak and wrapped myself up in my mackintosh for the night. Ann had an egg and I my flat cake from Rebi [Ghebi] and a bit of cheese and supped very well.*⁵⁷

At four the next morning, twenty-one armed mountain dwellers were ready to accompany them to the source of the Rioni. *The Ossetes lie hid in the wooded mountains along the right bank of the river, and had fired on the people not so long since.* By six o'clock there was no longer even a path. They

had to leave the horses behind, under guard, and their helpers hacked a way through the undergrowth for them. At seven they found a 'cirque' formed by 2 mountains, having the glacier on the col between them. The source is from under a glacier, and 2 picturesque high falls of water, the one double or more the other. Ann Walker sat down to sketch, while Anne Lister climbed on with difficulty, until she was really at the source at 7.55 a.m. She had reached the large arch of ice, beneath which the glacier water shot out as a foaming, considerable stream. Although the Rioni springs from more than one source, Anne and Ann had achieved what no Western European explorers had done before. Johann Anton von Güldenstädt, exploring the Caucasus at the behest of Catherine the Great, had been the first to try to reach the sources of the Rioni in the summer of 1772. However, he did not get beyond Ghebi. Heinrich Julius Klaproth claimed to have been the first Western European traveller to cross the main crest of the mountains in 1807, from Stur-Digora in the north to Ghebi in the south, during which he must have passed the Rioni's source. However, Frédéric Dubois proved Klaproth was lying. In 1825, Eduard von Eichwald made just as little effort as Karl Koch in 1836 to get so far into the high mountains. Anne Lister and Ann Walker trumped them all.

They could not stay at the glacier for long. They were back at the military base at 10.10 a.m. and bid farewell to their helpers with two silver roubles, *with which they seemed well satisfied . . . Good honest mountaineers – I would go all the Caucasus over with them.* They returned along the same path and spent the night in a shed in Ghebi. *A threshing-sledge was Ann's bedsted, and 3 boards laid on shallow kneading-troughs was mine. For some time at first the little court filled with people to look at us. Then Ann drank about a pint and a half of boiled milk and fell asleep. The good woman brought me a thick cake and 2 thin ones and ½ a large white cheese. I supped magnificently and lay down at 9 ½.*⁵⁸

Violence

Dubois had not made it to the sources of the Rioni, but he did get to Glola, a village in a side valley of the Rioni with the *most beautiful of the mineral springs of High Racha*.⁵⁹ What he had seen, Anne Lister wanted to see too. To take a detour via Glola on the way back to Oni, Anne and Ann had to cross two particularly hair-raising bridges: *2 broad rapidly streams, 3 trees over first, only one over second.* Ann Walker had one of the men carry her. *I myself took Ann's burca and bag and my own, and Ann set off. Frightened, but was carried over the first very well. On the second the man*

*who carried her staggered two-thirds over. Frightful! Another man ran to him and between them Ann was safe over – I stood watching them! Then followed, hold one man whose only fault was going too slowly. Obligated to look at one's feet and the rapid stream made me feel giddyish.*⁶⁰

Their six-man escort took the uphill route along the Rioni tributary, weapons cocked; *looking carefully into the wood on both sides at every step as if expecting a party of Ossetes to pounce out upon us.* The border with South Ossetia was still only a few kilometres away. In the village, they drank from the mineral spring and were glad to have made the trip. *Have not seen in the Caucasus a nicer little village than Glola,* Anne Lister noted.⁶¹ With snow-capped mountains as their backdrop, the square towers built on to the houses looked particularly impressive. *This is the building style of the mountain-dwellers who occupy the high part of the valley. The towers are pierced by arrow slots and one can only enter the houses through a door placed on the first floor.* In Racha, these fortified towers have now all but disappeared; they have been preserved in Svaneti and declared world heritage in Ushguli. As picturesque as they may look, they testify to *a continuous state of war, fear and distrust.*⁶² Not only the Ossetians, but also the Circassians and Abkhaz, the Lezgins in Dagestan and the Chechens lived in constant conflict with their neighbours. The towers have recently been used only as defence against the Russians; for countless generations, people here entrenched themselves against anyone not belonging to their own family. *The Ossetian does not think it a sin to rob and pillage his fellow countryman, if no familial relationship prevails between them, just as he himself is also always on the alert to receive his foe in worthy manner.*⁶³ Thus, women who married in were not trusted either. If they had to enter the keep, they were blindfolded so they could not later betray the secret entrance to their original families.

Dubois complained of the rough morals of Glola's inhabitants. Although the village was small, *not a year passes in which several murders do not take place due to abduction of women (i.e. rape) or for other causes.*⁶⁴ Karl Koch, who stayed overnight in Glola, received a friendly welcome but had to prevent a neighbour from punching his host's teeth out, because the latter had not provided his guest with enough food for the former's taste: the only cow was still grazing outside his house. Koch knew a first blow would have had fatal consequences. *Blood revenge prevails in all its cruelty and unnaturalness ... and every misdemeanour, no matter how minor, becomes subject to it. While only blood was avenged with blood among the Circassians, blood must flow at every insult received by an Ossetian.*⁶⁵

In Glola, Anne Lister and Ann Walker had to fear not only for their money, equipment and horses. Kidnappings were commonplace as a means of extracting ransoms. Abduction and slave trading had been profitable business in the Caucasus since ancient times. As slaves shipped across the Black Sea to Constantinople and the Mediterranean, the Caucasian peoples preferred *Russians, because they notice that they are industrious and hardworking* – and nor were they free at home, as serfs. The word ‘slaves’ is said to be derived from ‘Slavs’. In 1840, *this barbaric custom is still present among the Abkhaz, and other peoples would like to follow it, if Russia had not put a stop to this trading through extremely severe measures*.⁶⁶ Anne Lister and Ann Walker hurried to leave Glola and return to Oni that evening.

Everything Flows

Anne Lister and Ann Walker’s third excursion from Oni took them *into the least-known valleys of the Caucasus*, according to Frédéric Dubois; *no traveller had visited them before me, to my knowledge*.⁶⁷ That made the excursion all the more enticing for Anne Lister; they took *only the clothes on our backs, except Dubois*.⁶⁸ On a long day’s ride south, they crossed a mountain crest and arrived in the bed of the Jruchula at the Jruchi monastery, magnificently located on a mountain spur with the river foaming at its feet. The monks gave them a pleasant guestroom in which Dubois had slept before them. The next day, they reached Sachkhere via a route both breath-taking and adventurous. Here, Prince Tsereteli was pleased to make the ladies’ acquaintance at last, having hosted them at his palace in Oni. On the third day, they rode along the bed of the Qvirila, which is hemmed in by high cliffs for many kilometres, to the Ghvimevi monastery, with its church, already more than a thousand years old at the time, *built in the mouth of a large cavern – a little gem*. Several monastery buildings preserved to this day were also housed in caves. By the river were thatched huts, shaded by tall walnut trees. *Perfectly beautiful. So taken with the place I would gladly have stayed all night*. The room for visitors was occupied by a sick guest, however, and they had to make do with refreshments; *one of the monks brought us a bottle of such nice light wine that we drank the whole of it*. They rode back to Jruchi monastery that afternoon, spending the night there again; *crossed today Qvirila 29 times and Djouroudja [Jruchula] 19 times . . . my boots wet though I held up my feet as high as I could*.⁶⁹

Their ride along the river beds took its toll, with two horses lame the next day. They urgently needed replacements, but in Oni *for a largeish grey horse the man asked 40 R. silver – Nonsense, said I, and walked off.*⁷⁰ After a day's rest, they therefore set off for the neighbouring province of Letchkhumi to the west, where they had heard it was easier to buy horses than in Racha. They rode back downstream along the Rioni, its wild valley transforming beyond Ambrolauri into a charming orchard. After a forty-kilometre journey, too long for the human and animal travellers, they did not reach the village of Khvanchkara until after dark. *Arrived at 9.35 at a lighted, comfortable well-galleried wood house and open court. I rode up to the lights to see the house. Some ladies asked us in to stay the night. We were taken to a large 1-room cottage across the court, 1 divan (carpeted) for Ann and a long low table for me . . . They brought a higher table and eggs and cucumbers and fine filberts and bread and wine and good water for supper. Their servants were also well treated; The wine excellent . . . had drunk all night.*⁷¹ The Khvanchkara wine cultivated here was well known in the Soviet Union, as Stalin enjoyed it as much as Adam and George had.

Beyond Khvanchkara, the Rioni valley grows dramatically narrow and deep. *I suddenly thought myself transported to the grounds of Saxon Switzerland, wrote Frédéric Dubois. Cliffs split from top to bottom into huge blocks with vertical walls, divided by chasms more than 500 feet deep [170 metres] . . . The Phasis flows in one of these crevasses, and if one does not see it, one at least hears it roaring in the chasm. On the highest block, which, rising like an obelisk, presents only a small platform at its peak, was the small Sairme monastery. I could barely believe my eyes.*⁷² Anne and Ann were no less impressed. After the previous day, they were glad to have demanded only around fifteen kilometres from their horses. *The good monks received us without even looking at our paper. A good wood house to ourselves with gallery for the servants and a private gallery. Excellent – most comfortable. In our grand salon a good broad divan for me and a little cabinet for Ann's bedroom, and a good steady table under the little window. The abbot himself showed them around and had them served a dinner of a fine boiled fowl and bread and wine.*⁷³ They were happy to stay another day.

When Ann Walker wanted to attend lauds in the church at three in the morning, she found the door locked: she had been locked in for her protection, and that of the chaste monks. At six, she went down to the river valley in the morning air to draw the spectacular ravine dug out by the Rioni over several kilometres. She came back to the monastery for breakfast with Anne, only to return to the ravine until the midday heat hailed her for her usual siesta. Anne Lister spent the whole day writing her

journal at her desk. To prompt her memory, she used a notebook, the writing in which she then erased so as to refill the pages. Unlike Ann, she did not go down to the river until the hot late afternoon, with George and Adam. *Returned at 7.50 and back, soaked, at 8.25. Had wine and water, glass after glass – very hot in the thick wood at the bottom.*⁷⁴

Lost

The dramatically located Sairme monastery no longer perches atop its rock. Did it collapse into the Rioni in the 1991 earthquake? The monks now live on a mountain on the other side of the river. Nor does the road run along the bottom of the Rioni ravine any longer, instead being sited 500 metres or more from the escarpment. When its course allows a view of the ravine from a distance, my heart cramps up: it is breath-takingly beautiful here, but sadly we cannot get close enough to the ravine. The road had been transformed into a potholed track that our car can barely navigate. We make as slow progress as Anne and Ann with their lame horses. We don't see any footpaths that might take us to the edge of the ravine.

'Perhaps it's better that way. There probably aren't any warning signs at dangerous spots here.'

Anne and Ann would not have got far with that attitude. What can ever be reconstructed, re-experienced? So much has been irrevocably lost. Anne Lister wrote here all day long, with pen and ink on paper. She took her writing case with all the necessary accoutrements even on this tour. To write, she had to keep removing her hand from the page to dip the pen in the ink every few syllables and begin anew. The eye has to move with the hand, from the page to the inkpot and back. Does a person formulate differently, think differently, when that rhythm dictates their writing?

Anne did not go down to the ravine with Ann in the morning because she wanted to use the good desk during daylight. That dependency on natural light is another thing unfamiliar to me. Even at night, it made a difference whether the moon was shining or the sky was clouded. Two days previously, Anne and Ann had got lost. *At 8 too dusk to see anything clearly. Soon afterwards what with night and thick woods we groped in the dark. Could not see each other ½ dozen yards off and I called every now and then to make sure Ann was close behind me.*⁷⁵ Once darkness fell outside, it was barely brighter inside. Candles and tallow lamps – one expensive, the other foul-smelling – cast weak light on a room or a sheet of paper. A smartphone torch grants more illumination today. In our light-polluted

cities, we never experience complete darkness. We have to seek out high mountains, or perhaps the Rioni valley, to see the black of night.

Travelling itself has changed fundamentally. Anne Lister and Ann Walker would have been disconcerted: seven weeks for Russia, Georgia and Azerbaijan? That's barely enough time for Yorkshire! The two of them assumed they would be travelling for two years; those who could travel for pleasure often stayed abroad that long. The slower speed of transport only partly explains the long stays. People wanted to spend a while in new countries and towns, make acquaintances and take part in local life. Today, many more can afford to travel, but such a long stay is still reserved for the few. As soon as one has got over the jetlag, one heads back home. All the conversations you've had were with other tourists at the breakfast buffet or the woman on the museum cash desk.

Would Anne and Ann even take us seriously as travellers? Travelling by plane deprives you of the gradual changes to the landscape, architecture, people and languages. You only ever visit a kind of island, with terra incognita between the point of departure and the holiday resort. What is regarded as sights has also altered. Anne and Ann viewed schools and factories, visited orphanages or the Moscow water tower. (Susette: 'I'd have been interested in that. Why didn't we go there?')

What remains unchanged is our longing to travel back in time. Anne Lister and Frédéric Dubois were not unique in that respect. Historical events were reconstructed even in ancient times. European princes had romantic ruins built in the eighteenth century. Nineteenth-century historicism made history into the present. Today, we can do all sorts of time travel, from jousting fairs to medieval markets to experimental archaeology, as science fiction, fantasy or science. Thousands of war fans spend their free time recreating battles where no blood is spilled. They go to great lengths to tailor uniforms, obtain authentic weapons, group into well-researched formations – and despite all historical accuracy, they lack the decisive factor that playing at war can never give them: fearing so much for their lives that they vomit or wet themselves, being mutilated, bleeding to death. And yet followers of the various re-enactment scenes have creative disputes over authenticity and obtain precise historical expertise. Can you use a sewing machine for a jester's costume? Can you make a sixteenth-century monk's habit out of cotton? Or even – can you take part in re-enactments in the first place if you were born by caesarean? If you have fillings in your teeth or have been vaccinated? How genuine is genuine?

Mingrelia

From the Sairme monastery, Anne and Ann rode up to the mountain village of Lailashi, where they were accommodated in the guesthouse of the Mingrelian Dadians' modest summer residence. The princely family was currently staying in Zugdidi, however, to where Ekaterina Dadiani – who had enchanted Anne Lister in Tbilisi – had invited the English ladies. Dashing their hopes, there was only a single horse to be had in the *poor little place*⁷⁶ that was Lailashi, at the same price as in Oni. This foiled Anne's plan of continuing on Dubois' tracks. She had wanted to descend, like him, via a mountain ridge into the Tskhenistskali valley, which Dubois counted one of the most beautiful in the Caucasus. However, not only their horses but also their men refused. Only the Cossack was willing to accompany them; all the others wanted to return to Kutaisi via the shortest route. Anne Lister had to give in. On 2 August 1840, they rode back to the Rioni and its densely wooded, hilly banks.

The lame horses meant Anne and Ann made only slow progress. Late at night in heavy rain, they reached a tiny village. In the first house there was *no possibility of staying there – full of people ill in 'the hot fever', the 2 or 3 that came to the door pale as ghosts. Rode further into the village. About 9 ³/₄ before we got quarters in a good cottage with 6 women and 3 men and 3 or 4 children, boys and girls. The children were roused to give us their corner, and there we spread our burcas and saddle-blankets and made ourselves comfortable, all our baggage around us . . . Fire in the middle. Boiled our kettle and eggs and baked our flat cake in the ashes. The rain pelted hard and thunder rolled and lightning flashed and we were satisfied to be so well housed, our wet cloaks hung on the rails suspended from the roof.*⁷⁷ The next day, they had to leave three of their eight horses behind along the way. They eventually reached Kutaisi, from where they had set out for the mountain world twenty-six days previously.

Anne Lister and Ann Walker departed a second time from Kutaisi as soon as possible. Susette and I followed them to Jvari, close to the Enguri river in western Georgia, where Anne Lister wrote in her diary for the last time. The *Indian corn barn (a little wicker place perhaps 4 1/2 by 3 yards)*⁷⁸ where they stayed overnight is today hard to imagine in front of Europe's highest dam wall. What do we know at all? What do we involuntarily or even necessarily invent in writing Anne Lister's life? What did *she* invent already while living? Is there any history without narrator? History? Which history? And whose?

Zeitreisen became the second part of my trilogy on biographical writing, which I completed with *Poetik der Biographie* (Poetics of Biography (2019): a triple jump from Biography (*Anne Lister*) – to reflection (*Zeitreisen*) – to theory (*Poetik*).

Notes

Extracts from the journals Anne Lister kept on her last travels were transcribed by Phyllis Ramsden and Vivien Ingham, but not published. The typescripts are held at West Yorkshire Archive Services in Halifax, call number RAM:6–25. Citations from these typescripts are given only with date and archive call number.

Please note that when quoting from a primary source accompanied by my comments, the end note number appears at the end of the passage under discussion.

- 1 See A. Steidele, *Anne Lister. Eine erotische Biographie* (Berlin: Matthes & Seitz, 2017), trans. K. Derbyshire, *Gentleman Jack: a Biography of Anne Lister: Regency Landowner, Seducer and Secret Diarist* (London: Serpent's Tail, 2018); A. Steidele, *Zeitreisen. Vier Frauen, zwei Jahrhunderte, ein Weg* (Berlin: Matthes & Seitz, 2018). A. Steidele, *Poetik der Biographie* (Berlin: Matthes & Seitz, 2019). The excerpts from Steidele, *Zeitreisen*, are taken between pages 189 and 240. Translation and inclusion by kind permission of the publisher.
- 2 F. Dubois de Montpéreux, *Voyage autour du Caucase, chez les Tcherkesses et les Abkhases, en Colchide, en Géorgie, en Arménie et en Crimée. Avec un Atlas géographique, pittoresque, archéologique, géologique etc.*, 6 vols. (Paris: Librairie de Gide, 1839–43).
- 3 P. Ramsden and V. Ingham, *Anne Lister Unpublished Transcriptions*, West Yorkshire Archive Service, Calderdale, 25 June 1840, RAM:20, p. 4.
- 4 *Aujourd'hui Sion n'a plus de berger ni de troupeau spirituel . . . chaque année il faut que les bergers déblaient la couche énorme de fumier qui s'y entasse pour pouvoir entrer par les portes* (Dubois, *Voyage*, vol. III, pp. 217–18).
- 5 25 June 1840, RAM:20, p. 4.
- 6 RAM:20, p. 7.
- 7 *[Le reste des] édifices consiste en excavations groupées et terrassées les unes sur les autres et taillées dans des massifs isolés. // Dans cette roche compacte, d'imiter tous les ornements et tous les détails d'une boiserie soignée . . . Vous y retrouvez corniches, petites poutres, grandes poutres traversières, taillées avec le plus grand soin, comme dans une maison en sapin* (Dubois, *Voyage*, vol. III, pp. 196, 198–9).
- 8 *Est-il rien de plus pittoresque que Koutaïs et ses alentours?* (Dubois, *Voyage*, vol. I, p. 381).
- 9 K. Koch, *Reise durch Rußland nach dem kaukasischen Isthmus in den Jahren 1836, 1837 und 1838*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart and Tübingen: Cotta, 1843), p. 165.

- 10 Anne Lister to Sophia Radziwill, 11 May 1840, in M. Green (ed.), *A Spirited Yorkshirewoman: the Letters of Anne Lister of Shibden Hall, b. 1791–d 1840*, Library Associations Honours Diploma (1938), p. 537.
- 11 *Ici commence l'histoire de la toison d'or ... De tous les temps les rivières ... ont passé pour charrier de l'or. // La ville de Médée est ensevelie sous tant d'autres ruines qu'elle est introuvable* (Dubois, *Voyage*, vol. II, p. 18; vol. I, pp. 381–2, 428–9).
- 12 Koch, *Reise durch Rußland*, p. 163.
- 13 *Homère avait su apprécier leur bonheur, puisque c'est précisément ici qu'eut lieu la fameuse métamorphose des compagnons d'Ulysse. // Ces porcs, dans les villes, à Koutaïs entre autres, où ils se promènent par troupes, contribuent singulièrement à la propreté des rues* (Dubois, *Voyage*, vol. I, p. 390).
- 14 Early/mid-June 1840, RAM:18, p. 13.
- 15 Koch, *Reise durch Rußland*, p. 164.
- 16 30 June 1840, RAM:20, p. 9.
- 17 *L'aspect de ce monastère est l'une des plus pittoresque que l'on puisse voir* (Dubois, *Voyage*, vol. II, p. 176).
- 18 9 July 1840, RAM:22, p. 2.
- 19 9 July 1840, RAM:24, pp. 8, 6.
- 20 28 July 1840, RAM:24, p. 13.
- 21 10 July 1840, RAM:22, p. 2.
- 22 Koch, *Reise durch Rußland*, pp. 151, 166, 146.
- 23 K. Koch, *Wanderungen im Oriente während der Jahre 1843 und 1844*, 3 vols. (Weimar: Verlag des Landes-Industrie-Comptoirs, 1847), vol. III: *Reise in Grusien, am kaspischen Meere und im Kaukasus*, p. 175.
- 24 Koch, *Reise durch Rußland*, pp. 328–9.
- 25 *Un goût particulier d'amertume, auquel on s'habitue très promptement* (Dubois, *Voyage*, vol. I, p. 389).
- 26 12 July 1840, RAM:22, p. 5.
- 27 10 July 1840, RAM:24, p. 9.
- 28 11 July 1840, RAM:23, p. 4.
- 29 13 July 1840, RAM:23, pp. 2–3.
- 30 *De ne pas se mettre en route pendant les heures chaudes de la journée depuis dix et onze heures du matin jusqu'à trois heures de l'après midi, dans les mois de juillet et d'août. // d'être sur leurs gardes par rapport à l'habillement* (Dubois, *Voyage*, vol. I, p. 379).
- 31 Late July 1840, RAM:24, p. 2.
- 32 *C'est la meilleure manière de voir le pays. // Trouve-t-on un bel endroit pour reposer des chevaux, on s'y arrête; on s'y couche sous un tilleul ou sous un chêne; il semble qu'on ne fasse qu'une promenade de plaisir* (Dubois, *Voyage*, vol. II, p. 424).
- 33 Koch, *Reise durch Rußland*, p. 125.
- 34 *Ibid.*, p. 124.
- 35 20 July 1840, RAM:24, p. 9.
- 36 28 July 1840, RAM:24, p. 13.

- 37 7 August 1840, RAM:24, pp. 8–9.
- 38 Koch, *Reise durch Rußland*, p. 240.
- 39 *La vie privée est une vie d'isolement. Les femmes sortent peu, se montrent peu; elle ne remplissent aucune fonction quelconque de la vie publique. // Les femmes ont toutes un mouchoir qui leur passe par-dessus la bouche* (Dubois, *Voyage*, vol. I, p. 394; vol. II, p. 413).
- 40 Koch *Reise durch Rußland*, p. 289.
- 41 *Les femmes tcherkesses rivalisent en beauté avec les Georgiennes, sans qu'on puisse se décider pour les unes ou pour les autres. // Il n'y a pas de pays où elles poussent plus loin la coquetterie qu'ici, quoiqu'elles ne se voient qu'entre elles* (Dubois, *Voyage*, vol. I, p. 121; vol. III, p. 174).
- 42 Koch, *Wanderungen im Oriente*, p. 50.
- 43 *Ibid.*, pp. 49–50.
- 44 *On achète ici sa femme en payant une forte dot. // De cet usage à celui de vendre sa fille ou sa nièce à un étranger, il n'y a qu'un pas. . . . Un frère a aussi le droit de vendre sa soeur quand ils n'ont plus de parents. // Ces pauvres femmes sont les esclaves de leurs maris: ce sont elles qui font tout; non seulement elles font tout le travail de la maison, tissent des étoffes, vannent le blé, mais elles vont aux champs, au moulin. // On voit que la femme, comme chez tous les peuples qui mettent leur gloire dans le pillage, est très subordonnée à l'homme, et sa servante plus que sa compagne* (Dubois, *Voyage*, vol. I, pp. 124, 126; vol. II, pp. 413–14; vol. I, p. 124).
- 45 21 February 1840, RAM:15, p. 3.
- 46 [May] 1840, RAM:15, p. 4.
- 47 15 July 1840, RAM:22, p. 7.
- 48 17 July 1840, RAM:22, p. 9.
- 49 Koch, *Reise durch Rußland*, p. 130.
- 50 18 July 1840, RAM:22, p. 9.
- 51 Koch, *Reise durch Rußland*, p. 131.
- 52 18 July 1840, RAM:22, p. 10.
- 53 *Pour éviter les énormes masses de rochers à pic qui surplombent souvent le fleuve, nécessité est de passer tantôt sur une rive, tantôt sur l'autre. // Ponts de bois que supportent trois poutres lancées d'une rive à l'autre; elles sont couvertes de madriers de 6 pieds de long, assujétis par une latte, sans garde-fou. Le Phase écume sur les blocs de porphyre, de granit, de protogyne, et mugit à couvrir la voix humaine; le pont se balance sous nos pas; de nombreuses traces de pourriture nous font frémir. // De mettre pied à terre, et de mener mon cheval par la bride, peur ne pas d'être trop embarrassé en cas qu'il s'écroule; on marche à distance* (Dubois, *Voyage*, vol. II, p. 405).
- 54 *Pour escalader par un affreux chemin une énorme paroi schisteuse qui barre le passage; on ne se fait pas une idée d'un pareil chemin. Redescendu de l'autre côté, toutes les difficultés sont surmontées. // Le dernier village en remontant le Phase* (Dubois, *Voyage*, vol. II, pp. 406, 409).
- 55 19 July 1840, RAM:22, p. 13.
- 56 Koch, *Reise durch Rußland*, p. 135.

- 57 18 July 1840, RAM:22, p. 11.
- 58 19 July 1840, RAM:22, pp. 12–13.
- 59 *La plus belle des sources acidulées du Haut-Ratcha* (Dubois, *Voyage*, vol. 11, p. 422).
- 60 20 July 1840, RAM:22, pp. 13–14.
- 61 20 July 1840, RAM:22, p. 14.
- 62 *C'est le style d'architecture des montagnards qui occupent la haute partie de la vallée. Les tours sont percées de meurtrières, et ce n'est que par une porte placée à l'étage dans l'intérieur des maisons, qu'on peut y entrer. // Cet état de guerre continuel, de crainte, de méfiance* (Dubois, *Voyage*, vol. 11, pp. 401–2; vol. 1, p. 129).
- 63 Koch, *Reise durch Rußland*, pp. 96, 105.
- 64 *Il ne passe pas d'année où il n'y ait plusieurs meurtres pour enlèvement de femmes ou autres causes* (Dubois, *Voyage*, vol. 11, p. 423).
- 65 Koch, *Reise durch Rußland*, pp. 61, 107.
- 66 *On aime les Russes, parce qu'on remarque qu'ils sont industriels, laborieux. // Cet usage barbare répandu aussi chez les Abkhazes. // le feraient bien encore si la Russie n'y avait mis bon ordre par ses mesures sévères* (Dubois, *Voyage*, vol. 1, pp. 126, 127).
- 67 *Des vallées les moins connues du Caucase // pas un voyageur ne l'avait visitée, à ma connaissance, avant moi* (Dubois, *Voyage*, vol. 111, p. 156).
- 68 22 July 1840, RAM:23, p. 4.
- 69 24 July 1840, RAM:23, pp. 6–7.
- 70 17 July 1840, RAM:24, p. 3.
- 71 27 and 28 July 1840, RAM:24, pp. 12, 14.
- 72 *Je me crus tout à coup transporté dans les grands de la Suisse saxonne. // Toute la formation crayeuse était pourfendue de haut en bas comme par blocs immenses à parois à pic, que des abîmes de plus de 500 pieds de profondeur séparaient les uns des autres . . . Le Phase coule dans l'une de ces fentes, et si on ne le voit pas, on l'entend au moins mugir dans ce gouffre. Sur le plus grand des blocs, qui, dressé comme un obélisque, ne présente à son sommet qu'une étroite plateforme. // Je n'en pouvais croire mes yeux* (Dubois, *Voyage*, vol. 11, pp. 431–2).
- 73 28 July 1840, RAM:23, pp. 8–9.
- 74 29 July 1840, RAM:23, p. 9.
- 75 27 July 1840, RAM:24, p. 12.
- 76 30 July 1840, RAM:24, p. 3.
- 77 2 August 1840, RAM:24, p. 5.
- 78 11 August 1840, RAM:25, p. 10.

