

A Neglected Pioneer: Carla Serena (1820-1884)
*(Travels in Imereti, Mingrelia, Samurzakano, Abkhazia, Kakheti, Guria,
and the districts of Gori, Borjomi, and Akhaltsikhe,
1876-77 and 1881)*

Peter Skinner

An American historian, British by origin, the author of the book translated into eight European languages – “World Trade Center”. His book “Georgia: The Land Behind the Caucasus” was published in the US in 2014. He lives in New York.

Key Words: *Georgia, Calra Serena, Suttners, Vivian Ingham, Anne Lister, Odett Keun.*

Introduction

The newspaper *Droeba* (No. 63, 25 March 1882) carried an article stating that:

A famous woman traveler, Carla Serena, traveled in our country twice. This active woman, who so bravely traveled through our region and barren places of Persia, has prepared a book extensively describing her travel in the Caucasus with photos, which will be published in Paris. This is what one French newspaper wrote about Carla Serena: “A tireless woman traveler, Carla Serena, has recently arrived into Paris from the Caucasus and brought with her numerous photos of the nature and people of the Caucasus; these photos will be included in her literary work *Caucasus* which she has already started to publish.”

This woman was received with great honor in Europe: the King of Italy had a large gold medal cast for her. The London Geographic Society asked her to deliver a public lecture about her travels. Her two interesting literary works – *From the Baltic Sea to the Caspian Sea* and *A European Woman in Persia* – were translated into Italian.

Madame Carla Serena and her travels certainly deserve more than this brief mention. She remains an elusive figure. There may be more extensive presentations of her in Georgian publications, but these do not appear to have been referenced in any English-language work. In fact, the few English-language references to her are minimal, incomplete and usually inaccurate. Carla Serena's travels in Georgia published in French between 1880 and 1884 in a series of very interesting, detailed and well-illustrated articles, have not, to the best of my knowledge, been translated into English (or Georgian) or republished in French. However, *Droeba's* brief mention of Carla Serena, lacking virtually all needed detail, at least provides a starting point for discussing (as this article will): (1) Who was Carla Serena? (2) When and where did she travel in Georgia? (3) Carla Serena's travel narratives, (4) The importance of her account, (5) Unexplored aspects of Carla Serena's travels in Georgia, (6) the strange case of Bertha von Suttner, and (7) Carla Serena's known and unknown predecessors.

(1) Who was Carla Serena?

Only with the publication of Daniela Pizzagalli's biography *Il Viaggio del Destino: Carla Serena de Venezia al Caucaso* (2006) could basic information on Carla Serena be conveniently searched for in one place. Pizzagalli presents valuable information on Carla Serena's birth name, nationality, early life, marriage, European migrations, foreign travels, and final years. However, Pizzagalli has had to draw heavily upon Carla's travel articles (published between 1880 and 1884) and two volumes titled *Mon Voyage: Souvenirs personnels*, both published in 1881. In Vol. I of *Mon Voyage*, Carla Serena adds further material on her travels in

Georgia. But in neither her articles nor in *Mon Voyage* does Madame Serena expand upon her personal life. Nor have other sources come to light: Pizzagalli's bibliography lists only nine sources other than Carla Serena's own writings. Moreover, these nine books -- if their titles are reflective of their content -- briefly treat Carla Serena as only one among other 19th-century women travelers. These sources emphasize female endeavor and participation in travel rather than the actual travel experiences themselves. Much more information is needed before we can discuss Carla's personal and family life in any detail -- or establish full and accurate routes and chronologies for her pioneering travels. For the realization of this, contemporary reportage from the Georgian side (if any exists!) needs to be unearthed.

The basic facts about Carla Serena are as follows. She was born in 1820, in Antwerp, Belgium, and was registered as Caroline Hartog Morgenstein. She was brought up in France. In 1847 she married Leone Serena, a wealthy Venetian shipping and insurance broker. In 1849 Serena was expelled from Venice for his support of and participation in the revolutionary faction opposing the Austrian rule of Venice and its region. This had led to an abortive uprising in 1848. Exile took the Serenas, via sojourns in Switzerland, Marseille, Antwerp and Paris, to London, where they settled in the 1850s. Leone Serena was rich and Carla was socially ambitious. The couple lived well, and Carla began holding a salon. She also gave birth to five children: Achille (1850), Lelia (1851), Arthur (1852), Maria (1854), and Olga (1858). Despite her responsibilities toward this quintet of young lives, Carla found time to write articles for the *Précurseur*, an Antwerp newspaper, signing her articles Carla Serena. In 1873 the paper sent Carla to Vienna to report on the Universal Exposition, whose theme was Culture and Education.

The Exposition was a turning point in Carla's life. On August 1, 1874, at the age of 54, Carla left London, returning five years later in 1879. She visited Sweden, Russia, Turkey, Egypt, the Holy Land, Syria, Lebanon and Greece. In the third week of November 1875 she was in Constantinople, with five weeks in hand before the New Year, which she intended to spend at home in London. She could return to

England via Vienna or via Georgia, crossing the Greater Caucasus and Russia. Choosing the latter route, she set off for Poti, her nearest entry point for Georgia. She then traveled almost without stopping until her death in Greece in August 1884. Of her children's lives the record offers little except that her son Arthur founded professorships at a number of universities in England for the teaching of Italian, and at a number of universities in Italy for the teaching of English. Arthur, like his father before him, was a wealthy shipping broker. He also was very active in philanthropic institutions, and held many voluntary service positions in London.



Mme Carla Serena. — Dessin de A. Sirouy, d'après une photographie.

(2) When and where did Carla Serena travel in Georgia?

In November 1875, General Ignatieff, the Russian consul in Constantinople, put Carla in touch with a Russian ship's captain, with whom she sailed for Georgia, planning to return to England by December 31st, 1875. After a challenging voyage, with a call at Trebizond, the *Vesta* docked in Batumi. Storms caused a delay of 12 days before the *Vesta* could sail on to Poti, were another 12 days of storms prevented her rail trip from Poti to Kutaisi for Tbilisi,

where she arrived one month after leaving Constantinople. On arrival (late December 1875), Carla was received by Grand Duke Michael Nicolaevich, the Viceroy of the Caucasus. He encouraged her "to visit all she could of the various Caucasian provinces and was good enough to recommend her to the various authorities." Carla makes it quite clear that throughout her ensuing travels she received official recognition and assistance, though she names only very few

of the people involved. Clearly, the planned year-end return to London was no longer on schedule. . . .

Carla began her travels within Georgia in January 1876, going first to Imereti, with a stay in Kutaisi, then on to Mingrelia, with a stay in Zugdidi, and on to Samurzakano and Abkhazia. Carla's reportage lacks a clear chronological spine, but late in 1876 she appears to have gone by sea from Sukhumi to Yalta and the Crimea. Thereafter (and again she provides no dates), she traveled via Simferopol, Rostov and Vladikavkaz to re-enter Georgia via the Darial Gorge. She then went down the Georgian Military Highway to Tbilisi. She reports being in Tbilisi in January 1877, preparing to leave for Kakheti. After three months of travel throughout Kakheti she returned to Tbilisi. She then accepted an invitation to visit Guria, returning via Gori, Borjomi and Akhaltsikhe to arrive in Tbilisi in October or November.

Carla makes almost no mention of the Russo-Turkish War that had broken out on 24 April 1877 and continued to 3 March 1878. The war's most significant element in the Caucasus was Turkey's invasion of Abkhazia, followed by the destruction of much of Sukhumi and the temporary occupation of parts of the province. As Carla was already traveling in Eastern Georgia in 1877, the war would not directly impede or affect her. However, an American magazine that in 1882 carried an article on Carla's travels "between the Caspian and Black seas" stated that "Whilst there the Russo-Turkish War broke out, and the intrepid lady had many opportunities to distinguish herself by deeds of valor and abnegation in the disturbed districts, tardily but fully appreciated by Emperor Alexander II and the Grand Duke Michael."

This report appears to be inaccurate in stating that Carla performed her deeds in the "disturbed districts"; she was in Tbilisi and Kakheti from January to March 1877, and thereafter on her visit to Guria, with her return via Gori, Borjomi and Akhaltsikhe. As she mentions the medical and support services that the Vicereine, the Grand Duchess Olga Federovna, was providing for wounded soldiers, it is likely that she assisted this Tbilisi-based

effort. At some point in the autumn of 1878, Carla left Georgia and wintered in Tehran.

Although Carla made only the most passing reference to the war in her articles (published in 1881, 1882, and 1884) describing her travels in Mingrelia, Samurzakano and Abkhazia, she discusses it extensively in *Mon Voyage: Souvenirs personnels – De la Baltique à la Mer Caspienne*, published in 1881 (see below). However, she makes no mention of her war work.

In 1881 Carla made a second visit to Georgia, leaving Vienna on October 16 and arriving back on December 23. She planned to attend the Vienna Exposition, which in fact was delayed by a disastrous fire that destroyed the meeting hall on December 11. The purpose of this brief second trip was to take the photographs she needed in order to illustrate her as yet unpublished articles on her 1876-78 travels. To do this, she had taught herself photography, and spent three days in Kakheti and a month in Abkhazia in October-November 1881, taking the required photographs.

(3) Carla Serena's publications

Despite the challenges of her journeys, Carla must have made the notes from which she later wrote 11 vivid and well-illustrated 16-page articles. The French magazine *Le Tour du Monde* published these articles in a sequence that followed that of her journeys. The first article (published in 1880) covered Imereti; numbers 2 and 3 (published in 1881) covered Mingrelia; 4, 5, 6 and 7 (published in 1882), covered Samurzakano and Abkhazia; 8 and 9 (published in 1882) covered Kakheti; whereas 10 and 11 (published in 1884) covered Guria, Gori, Borjomi and Akhaltsikhe. Four of the eleven sections of *Mon Voyage*, (totaling 230 pages) discuss the Caucasus and Georgia; they are *The Caucasus before the War*; *Georgia from the Perspective of the War*; *To the Caucasus during the War*; and *Return to the Caucasus*. The book is more broad-brush and detached than the articles; it is not illustrated though her articles were – and lavishly so.

Four broad questions about Carla's articles and book merit research: (a) Given the historical, folkloric, geographical and personal detail, together with background observations that Carla provides, we can usefully ask what material she gathered while traveling, and what came from subsequent research? And as to research, what sources and/or correspondents – Georgian, Russian and other – did Carla draw upon?; (b) To what extent did Carla's second journey (1881) enable her to add to the narratives of her first journey (1876-78). (She indicates in several places that she is interweaving her two accounts); (c) What was the critical reception of her articles? She was, after all, the recipient of gold medals from the kings of Sweden and Italy and had her work presented at the geographical societies of London, Paris, and Vienna, of which she was a member, and (d) What are the significant commonalities and differences between Carla's articles and her book? Further research will be required to elucidate these matters.

Most important of all is for us to learn *what* the Georgian press, intellectuals, and social leaders published about Carla Serena and her travels. Any relevant records of Princess Catherine of Mingreliawould be of particular interest. Surely Carla received more coverage than a single passing reference in *Droeba*, March 25th, 1882. Were there no extensive articles published in the Georgian or European press following her death in Greece in July 1884? Research is clearly needed in the Georgian, Russian and European archives.

(4) The importance of Carla Serena's travel narratives

Carla Serena's work is important for a number of reasons. First, she traveled privately, not officially or in any organized group, with only a minimal escort (usually a guide and a porter). Carla traveled as roads (or the lack of them) and terrain dictated; often on horseback though at times by *arba*, *tarantass* or *peredkladnaja* or by rail. Second, she was adventurous, frequently taking significant risks such as a Black Sea voyage in the stormy

winter weather, crossing rivers tied to her horse as it swam over, risking dangerous mountain ascents and exploring unsafe ruins. Third, she frequently left the beaten track (which seldom merited the name of 'road') to visit remote churches and chapels and to stay in village homes that often could offer only the most limited comfort. Though in her mid-fifties, she faced the numerous hardships she encountered with cheerful good humor. Fourth, she had an acute eye for the daily life of different classes – princes, priests, peasants, ship's captains, physicians, horse-thieves, bandits, café keepers and others; all receive descriptive comment that reflects Carla incisive curiosity and acute eye. Fifth, Carla notes and comments on change be it the new railways that connected Batumi and Poti to Tbilisi and to each other, the great Indo-Britannic telegraph line that passed through Georgia, or a model town or scientific agriculture. Sixth, she is an energetic commentator on Georgian history and folklore – though her findings are not always accurate. In summary, Carla's narrative reflects "being there" rather than merely "passing through," just as her participation in family life, feasts and celebrations confirm that she "lived for the moment," to use a contemporary term.

As a close observer, Carla was often lavish in praise of the natural wealth and scenic beauty of the Georgian regions she explored, and also the generosity of the people she met, of whatever social class. However, she could be devastatingly critical where she found hygiene unnecessarily deficient or lacking. Such comment should not cause distress; in the 1870s and 1880s conditions among the lower middle class, small-holders and peasants were much the same throughout rural Europe – and drew similar comment from travelers.

Carla's range of interests and narrative skills call to mind those of a small number of earlier Roman Catholic missionaries whose vivid narratives, though highly acclaimed, have not yet been translated into English. They include Don Pietro Avitabile (in Mingrelia during 1626-1638), Arcangelo Lambertini (1633-1649), Don Christoforo de Castelli (1628-1654), and Joseph-Marie Zampi

(1645-1668). In addition to two books, Castelli produced over 500 extremely interesting sketches, covering every aspect of regional life – churches, farmsteads, recreations, portraits, costumes, and more. Although Mingrelia and religion were the primary concerns of these writers, their narratives certainly extended beyond the province and the faith; in all, they touch upon a very broad range of topics.

To the foregoing quartet we must add the flamboyant French-born Jean Chardin, a wealthy merchant and dealer in precious stones who spent time in Mingrelia in 1672-73, en route to Tehran. He published and republished his voluminous narratives in several different editions, but a 1686 issue includes his travels and experiences in passing through Mingrelia en route to Tbilisi and Persia. His work includes the first panoramic drawing of Tbilisi. Later writers include Catherine the Great's savants – Guldenstädt, Klaproth and others, followed much later by Dubois de Montpéreux and Alexandre Dumas. Though Carla wrote later, at a time of great change, and with a somewhat different purpose, she is a worthy addition to the select company named above – our primary historians of life in Georgia.

One great strength of Carla's work is the lavish illustration she included in it. All eleven articles were profusely illustrated with line drawings made from photographs or, occasionally, with original drawings. Each contains three full-page illustrations and at least seven smaller ones. The illustrations capture a very wide range of subjects – men, women, and children of every rank from prince to pauper, castles, churches, the homes of the wealthy and the poor, family groups and domestic scenes, feasting and dancing, weddings, and panoramic views of mountains, the countryside and towns. This range of subjects, together with the very high quality of the original photography, makes the illustrations of continuing interest and great historical value.

Carla's primary resource as a photographer was the then 30-year-old Dimitri Ermakov (1848-1916), resident in Tbilisi. He was

a keen ethnographer and was to become a giant among 19th-century photographers; on his death he left some 25,000 photographs, some 15,000 glass-plate negatives, and over 5000 albums – a treasure-trove for any student of Georgian history, life and culture. Whether Carla and Dimitri ever met, whether she used available photographs or commissioned needed ones, and exactly when the photographs were matched to the related articles, remain to be researched.

It is to Carla Serena's great credit that between her 1876 and 1881 trips to Georgia she became a self-taught photographer meeting the need to illustrate her travels of 1876-77 in Samurzakano and Abkhazia in order to illustrate her 1876-77 travels. Her mastery and use of her new skills deserves recognition; she set off on dangerous photo-shoots in the mountainous wilds of Abkhazia and obtained first-class results. A third photographer features (there may have been more), but an illustration caption that simply reads "after a photograph" leaves us with no clue as to the man behind the camera. Undoubtedly, research in the Georgian National Museum (where the work of Ermakov and his contemporaries and successors is held), would reveal much, and likewise research in the Georgian National Library might enable us to develop a comprehensive map and detailed chronology of Carla's travels.

Primarily the careful narrator of colorful scenes – and willing to provide historical details on places visited and biographical details on persons met – Carla does not provide us with all we need to fully define her travels.

(5) Unexplored aspects of Carla Serena's travels in Georgia

When the reader steps back from the richness, excitement and colorfulness of Carla's narratives and begins to consider the exact route and chronology of her travels, her financing, funding and contacts, unanswered questions arise. As yet there is no definitive, printed chronology of her journeys; Carla indicates (or

the reader can generally work out) the year and season, but she seldom dates events by the month or the day.

A clearly defined chronology is not the only item lacking in Carla's accounts of her travels. She does not discuss the full range of contacts that Viceroy Mikhail Nicolaevich provided her with, mentioning only a very view by name and position. She does, however, dwell upon the hospitality that Princess Catherine Dadiani of Mingrelia offered her. This remarkable woman, who was one of the three daughters of Prince Alexander Chavchavadze, was born in 1816. In 1838 she married David Dadiani, the ruler of Mingrelia; his death in 1853 left her as Regent of Mingrelia. In 1856, following the Crimean War (in which Catherine played an active role in the defense of Mingrelia), she moved to Russia, ceding her rights in Mingrelia to her son George. She made a brief return to Mingrelia in 1857, at the time of Uta Mikava's rebellion, but then moved to St Petersburg, with the Russian annexation of Mingrelia already underway. In 1867 she moved to Paris to join her daughter Salomé, married to Prince Achille Murat. She spent her summers in the spa town of Bad Homburg, in Germany.

Here, in 1864, the 48-year-old Princess Catherine began a social friendship with Bertha Kinsky, the 21-year-old daughter of a minor Czech aristocratic family. Such is the importance of Bertha von Suttner that she merits a separate section of this article.

(6) The strange case of Bertha von Suttner

After their initial meeting in 1864 Bertha met frequently with Princess Catherine. More than a decade later, in early 1876, the now 33-year-old Bertha became engaged to Artur von Suttner, also of a minor aristocratic family. Both families disapproved of the match. Catherine, about to depart for a late-life return to Mingrelia, invited the couple to live with her in Zugdidi, and immediately after their wedding on June 12th the couple set out to do so, arriving in Mingrelia in late June. The von Suttners stayed in Georgia for nine years, living at various times in Gordi, Zugdidi,

Kutaisi and Tbilisi. They left Georgia in May 1885, overt two years after the death of Princess Catherine in August 1882.

It is indeed surprising that Carla makes no mention of Bertha in her published writings. In the second of her two articles on Mingrelia she states that she was in Zugdidi on Good Friday (April 14th), and for lack of any hotel, stayed with Princess Catherine. Carla also states that “after several weeks” she began making excursions with Princess Catherine, leaving for Samurzakanoin the early fall. Surely Princess Catherine would have mentioned that the von Suttners were arriving in mid-June, and arranged for her European guests to meet each other and local notables. Similarly, in her *Memoirs: Records of an Eventful Life* (1910) Bertha writes appreciatively about Princess Catherine and about her and her husband Artur’s time in Mingrelia, yet makes no mention of Carla. Perhaps each mentioned knowledge and impressions of (or possible meetings with) the other in private correspondence, but the archival research is needed to bring any letters to light has not yet been done, and we have as yet no known record of any possible Carla-Bertha connection.

As a passing note we should add that Artur published a number of “lost” novels or narratives on Caucasian and Georgian themes, among them: *Daredjan: Mingrelisches Sittenbild*(1886); *Ein Demon*(sic) (1895); *Ein Aznaour: kaukasischer roman* (1886); *Der Batono*(1886); *Kinder der Kaukasus*(1890); *Die Tscherkessen: roman* (2 vols; 1896-98); *Daredjan*(1896); *Die Adjaren* (1890); and *SchamyI*(1891). Another novel, *Djambek the Georgian*, was translated into English and published in New York in 1890. One further listing of interest is: *atscharlebi* (Artur von Suttner and Gwinerpads; t’bilisi, gamomc’emloba enc’iklopedia adschara, 2007).

Both Bertha and Artur sent articles to the Austro-Hungarian press while in Georgia, and Bertha reported in 1884 that “[her] husband’s Caucasian stories and novels were meeting with great success.” This date of 1884 suggests that Artur’s work saw print (possibly in periodicals) before being issued in book form in the

1890s. These works have yet to resurface, and clearly a dedicated German-speaking Georgian researcher is needed to illuminate the many lost von Suttner writings on Georgia. These include an attempt (abandoned unfinished) at a translation of *The Knight in the Panther Skin*.

(7) Carla Serena's known and unknown predecessors

Some of the few mentions of Carla Serena in the standard travel literature describe her as “a pioneer woman traveler” or even “the first woman traveler” who visited Georgia. But this is not the case. On record as an earlier traveler is Fredrika von Freygang who with her husband Wilhelm von Freygang traveled from Vladikavkaz via Tbilisi and Yerevan to Tabriz in 1811-1812. Wilhelm held the rank of Conseiller de Cour, and was traveling on a diplomatic mission for the Russian emperor, Alexander I. To add to the challenges and dangers of winter travel, the couple had to care for their son André (“not yet three years old”) and their daughter Catherine (“born but three weeks ago”). Unfortunately, the rigors of the round-trip caused Catherine's death. Fredrika published an excellent account of her arduous – and tragic – journey: *Letters from the Caucasus and Georgia: To Which Are Added The Account of a Journey into Persia in 1812*. The book appeared in an English-language edition in 1823.

The next pioneer woman traveler to make an extended trip through Georgia has remained almost unknown and entirely unpublished. The late Dr. D. M. Lang, a valued and highly productive English historian of Georgia, provided an account of Anne Lister in 1990 in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*. He notes that the late Miss Vivian Ingham had written to him in December 1965 saying that she was working on the journals [but not the travel journals] of Anne Lister of Shibden Hall, Halifax, Yorkshire. Miss Ingham stated that:

[Anne Lister] was an ardent traveler and in 1840 died in Kutaisi after a fantastic journey from Moscow, starting in February

of that year and traveling mostly on the frozen Volga to Astrakhan—thence by kibitka, telega and heaven knows what to Tiflis . . . Details like prices, agricultural products etc. are given - far more so than in Dumas' travels with which they form an interesting comparison.”

Dr. Lang informs us that Anne Lister and her companion Ann Walker entered Georgia via the Darial Gorge and traveled down the Georgian Military Highway to Tbilisi. Governor-General Golovin was absent, but his wife introduced Anne to the capital's socially significant people, all of whom Anne comments on in her journal. Lang states that Anne “thought highly of the Georgian poet and patriot Alexander Chavchavadze” and met his daughters Nino and Catherine (the latter was to become Princess-Regent of Mingrelia and, as we know, the friend of Carla Serena and Bertha von Suttner). In his article Dr. Lang records Anne as meeting many people in all walks of life – intellectual, military and other – and discussing Shamil and the strength and health of the Russian army, among many other topics. In visiting numerous shrines and monuments, Anne recorded travel distances and conditions, and made many pen and ink sketches.

In June 1840 Anne traveled to Kutaisi and then on to Zugdidi. Here she suffered a bite from a tick that became inflamed and venomous. She returned to Kutaisi, where she died on September 23rd, having spent some six months in Georgia, with a side trip to Azerbaijan.

It is indeed a very great pity that Anne Lister's Georgian travel journal – which Dr. Lang states would run to some 400 printed pages – has not yet been transcribed and published, in full or in part. Dr. Lang emphasizes its great importance as a source of information on (1) social and economic conditions, (2) cultural life, (3) travel and topography, (4) architecture and archeology, (5) military intelligence, and (6) religious observations - areas that he breaks out in fuller detail in his article. The journal is undeniably of great value and interest - and surely deserves transcription and

publication as a primary historical source on Georgian history and the Russian occupation in 1840.

A fourth pioneering woman traveler merits mention. The adventurous and somewhat flamboyant Odette Keun (1888-1978), of Dutch-Turkish parentage born and raised in Constantinople, journeyed extensively through the short-lived Democratic Republic of Georgia in 1919. Her book, *In the Land of the Golden Fleece: Through Independent Menchevist Georgia* (1924) - described by Professor Stephen Jones as “. . . an excellent ethnographic work on Georgia’s regions, interspersed with feminine reflections” – retains its value as an impassioned and knowledgeable account of the young republic and its regions, characteristics and personalities. Ms. Keun’s subsequent book, *Prince Tariel: A Story of Georgia* (1925) is a political-espionage-romance novel of great interest, but was withdrawn shortly after publication, following a libel suit by a British army officer, whom MsKeun alleged had been involved in her expulsion from Constantinople in June 1921, under the rationale that she was a dangerous Bolshevik activist. Very few copies of the book survived the court-ordered recall, and only five libraries worldwide are listed as having copies.

Conclusion

This article must be considered as no more than an introductory essay on the history and publications of four pioneering woman travelers to Georgia. There are undoubtedly others who have been neglected or lost to the record. My hope is that this article communicates at least some of the achievement of these four women and some of the value, colorfulness and interest of their writings.

Travel narrative are often important sources of knowledge about the subject country or region insofar as the traveler frequently offers observations and comments on daily life – on housing, food, clothes, education, family and social life, popular art and literature, and on religious rites and other matters of daily

life. In broad-brush histories these topics necessarily take second place to politics, demography and economics. In general, an individual who chooses to travel will be more given to broad reportage than the en-passant traveler, an individual who, for whatever reason, has to get from A to B as quickly and conveniently as possible. Travel accounts written by women – usually unofficial, private travelers - invariably provide different insights to those written by men.

For countries like Georgia, for which major general histories are few and not widely circulated, travel narratives can shed much light. Their value, of course, depends upon the open- and fair-mindedness of the traveler; religious, ethnic or political biases result in distorted reportage. Many such narratives have only a short “public” life: they may see print, but seldom in large or repeated editions. All too often they appear as magazine articles that may lead to temporary discussion but seldom result in lasting concern. Hence the urgent need to revisit and republish these valuable sources.

Note

Narikala Publications has commissioned a translation of Carla Serena’s 11 articles that appeared in *Le Tour du Monde* in the 1880. Their republication in an annotated English-language facsimile format, including all illustrations, is scheduled for late 2015.

Bibliography and additional reading

Carla Serena:

Droeba, No 63, 25 March, 1882

Frank Leslie’s Sunday Magazine, Vol. 14, No., 6, December 18

Illustrazione Italiana, Vol. X, No. 3 (1882), Vol. XI, No. 37 (1884)

Le Tour du Monde. No. 1035 (1880), Nos. 1067-68 (1881), Nos. 1118-21, 1135-36 (1882), Nos. 1224-25 (1884)

Pizzagalli, D.I, *I Viaggio del Destino: Carla Serena da Venezia al Caucaso* (Rome, 2006)

- Scriboni, M. "Il viaggio al femminile nell'Ottocento," in *Annali d'italianistica*, 14 (1996)
- Serena, C. *Mon Voyage: souvenirs personnels*. (Vol. I: *De la Baltique à la Mer Caspienne*) (Paris, 1881)
- Fredrika von Freygang, Odette Keun, Anne Lister:
 Freygang, F. von *Letters from the Caucasus and Georgia* (London, 1823)
- Keun, O. *In the Land of the Golden Fleece: Through Independent Menchevist Georgia* (London, 1924, *Prince Tariel* (London, 1925)
- "Libelled Officer," O. Keun's Trial, London. In *Evening Post* (23 February, 1928), Putanga, NZ
- Lang, D. M. "Georgia in 1840: The Lister Diaries." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol. 53, No. 1 (1990)
- Suttner, B. von *Memoirs of Bertha von Suttner: Scenes from an Eventful Life* (Boston, 1910)