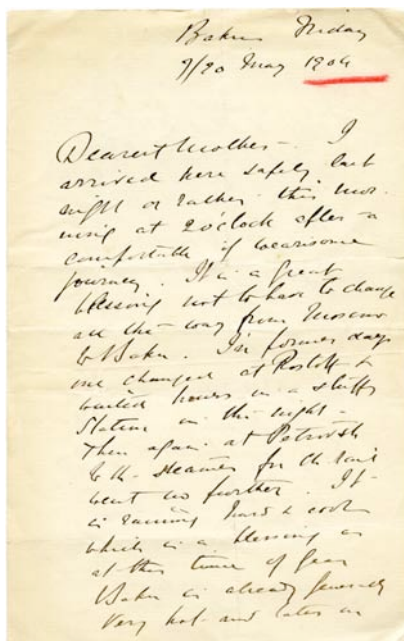


## Across the Caucasus: Photographs and Manuscripts from the John F. Baddeley Collection

Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford

1 May – 29 September 2009

This exhibition presents a selection of photographs, manuscripts and exquisite published material by the writer and traveller John F. Baddeley (1854–1940). Born and raised in England, John Baddeley was introduced to Russia and its cultures by Count Peter Schouvaloff, the Russian Ambassador in London, a family friend with whom he first visited Russia in 1879 and through whose auspices he subsequently secured the position of special correspondent to the *Standard* newspaper in St. Petersburg, a post which he held for ten years. ‘Baddeley never led his editors astray’, Sir Charles Hagberg Wright later recalled, ‘and his knowledge of the language and his access to sources of information in the highest Russian circles which were available to no other Englishman in Russia materially helped to enhance the reputation of his paper and were not infrequently of great use to the Embassy in St. Petersburg.’ It was during a routine assignment for the *Standard*, when he was reporting on an official visit of Tsar Alexander III to the Caucasus in 1888, that Baddeley first made acquaintance with this part of southern Russia (between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea), starting an interest in the region and its peoples which in time led to the production of his first important historical work, *The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus* (1908).



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Letter written by John Baddeley to his mother, dated 20 May 1904, and sent from Baku, now the capital of Azerbaijan, which in the 1890s was the centre of frenzied oil speculation (above): ‘I arrived here safely last night or rather - this morning at 2 o'clock after a comfortable if wearisome journey. It is a great blessing not to have to change all the way from Moscow to Baku. In former days we changed in Rostoff & waited hours in a stuffy station in the night.’

Look-out and refuge towers in Arzee. 'I climbed into the most westerly of the Arzee towers by a perilous bridge composed of two decaying tree-trunks; then up three stories to the fifth and highest by ladders ... The entrance was some 12 feet from the ground, and in this and other respects the resemblance to the Irish towers, though for the most part they are round and these square, is remarkable'. Similar towers were built all over the eastern Caucasus, though few remain today.

*Arzee, Russia. Photograph by John Baddeley. October 1901.*

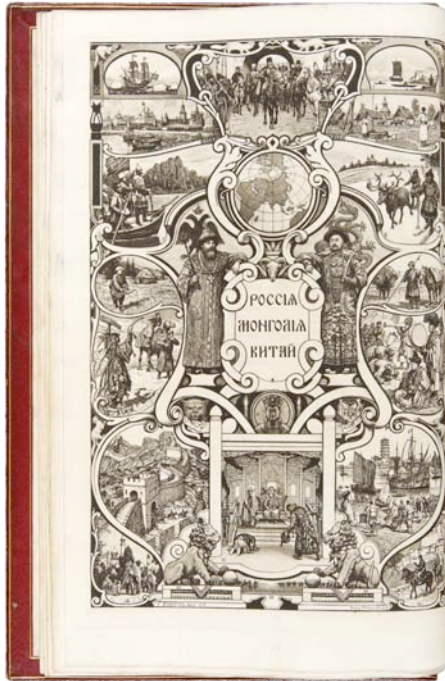
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The niece of Hadji Maali, an Ingush leader, carrying a water jar. 'Next morning we were up and out before 7 o'clock, the sun shining brightly. A girl came past from the well, carrying a copper jar on her back. With permission, readily granted (by her male relatives), I took her photograph, and Ourousbi [Baddeley's local guide], helped by her uncle, the Hadji, and others of the family – showing how emancipated these people were in some respects – “staged” a bride-stealing performance, such as he and others had so often spoken of ... It was supposed, of course, to be the elopement of a willing bride, and the girl took her part, laughing and blushing, with evident enjoyment.'

*Muzhichi, Republic of Ingushetia, Russia. Photograph by John Baddeley. October 1901.*

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The frontispiece of John F. Baddeley's *Russia, Mongolia, China: Being Some Record of the Relations Between Them from the Beginning of the XVIIth Century to the Death of the Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich, A.D. 1602-1676, etc.* (2 volumes, London, 1919). This magisterial work was lavishly printed with many reproductions of rare early maps and remains an important work of scholarship on the links between Russia and its southern neighbours in the seventeenth century.

Pitt Rivers Museum, Balfour Library

'During the years that he was Correspondent to the *Standard*, and later when he embarked on a quasi-commercial career in Siberia, on the Amur River, and in the Caucasus, his leisure moments were fully occupied in historical, antiquarian, and anthropological research', records a memoir published on Baddeley's death in 1940. 'In the unexplored regions of Manchuria and of Asiatic and Southern Russia, where in the course of business he travelled widely, Baddeley became familiar with the manners and customs of the people of the various races around him as well as with the ethnology and archaeology of these regions. These journeys enabled him to gather together a mass of information from hitherto entirely unexplored sources.' It was during his travels in the Russian Far East that Baddeley amassed much of the information for his monumental *Russia, Mongolia, China* (1919), displayed here with its original artwork, for which he was awarded the Victoria Medal of the Royal Geographical Society. Based on original documents located in various Russian archives and acknowledged immediately for its presentation of information unavailable elsewhere, Baddeley's obituary in *The Times* later noted "Russia, Mongolia, and China" will remain a mine of information on that period.'

Following his retirement, initially in London and later in Oxford, Baddeley developed an interest in painting flowers and during his last decade wrote an account of his earlier travels in the Caucasus, a period of reminiscence which the Georgian scholar Sir Oliver Wardrop described as being 'as happy as any previous period of his life'. Published as *The Rugged Flanks of the Caucasus* (1940), the two-volume book was again beautifully produced, with reproductions of Baddeley's own drawings made after the photographs which he had taken several decades earlier, some of which are displayed here. Appearing posthumously, the work stands testament to the passion for the Caucasus region of an experienced traveller and thorough scholar and remains of interest today for its careful record and acute observation of ethnographic detail. John Baddeley's photograph album and personal papers, together with the author's own copy of *Russia, Mongolia, China*, were donated to the Pitt Rivers Museum in 2001 by Lady Cicely Nepean.