

The Story of Circassian Tobacco

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Abstract

This article explores the story of Circassian tobacco by connecting local developments in Circassia with global markets in the 18th and 19th centuries. Since the 17th century, European travelers described production, usage, and trade of Circassian tobacco. The 1807 Constitution of Kabarda (Eastern Circassia) prohibited tobacco for religious reasons; while the Russian conquest, in 1864 ended tobacco growing traditions and culture in Western Circassia. But the Russian settlers inherited the indigenous tobacco culture after they occupied the villages and houses left by the deported Circassians and brought it to a new level. Circassians produced a special brand of tobacco for export, known as Ozereg. Circassian tobacco successfully competed with Virginian tobacco from the year 1700 onwards, after the czar relaxed the ban on Russian trade with the Caucasus. In 1723, Russia started producing a new kind of Circassian tobacco known as cherkassky tabak in Ukraine. The Circassian tobacco competed with the Chinese tobacco in Western Siberia and with Californian tobacco in Alaska. Circassian tobacco became an exchange currency among the Native Siberians and Native Americans. This kind of Circassian tobacco became known as extremely bad for health thanks to the saltpeter added to it in order to preserve it. In the United States, tobacco manufacturer Pierre Lorillard introduced a new tobacco brand which he claimed was real Circassian tobacco, exploiting the exotic image of Circassian females.

Keywords: *Circassian, Russia, America, Alaska, Siberia, Caucasus, tobacco.*

Çerkes Tütününün Tarihi

Özet

Bu makale Çerkes tütününün yerel gelişmeler ve küresel marketler ilişkisinde tarihsel hikayesini araştırmaktadır. Avrupalı gezginler 17'nci yüzyıldan bu yana Çerkes tütününün üretim, kullanım ve ticaretini detaylıca anlatmışlardır. Kabarda (Doğu Çerkesya) 1807 Anayasası dini nedenlerden

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dolayı tütünü yasaklamıştı. 1864'te Rus fethi Çerkes tütününün kültürel geleneklerini sona erdirdi. Yine de sürgün edilen Çerkeslerin yerlerini işgal eden yeni Rus yerleşimciler onların bazı tütün içme gelenekleri miras aldılar. 1700'den itibaren Rusya'nın Kafkasya ile ticaret yasağını kaldırmasıyla, ucuz Çerkes tütünü pahalı Virginia tütünüyle başarılı bir şekilde rekabet etti. 1723'te Rusya Ukrayna'da, Batı Sibiryada Çin tütünüyle ve Alaska'da California tütünüyle rekabet edebilen, kendi yeni Çerkes tütününü (cherkassky tabak) üretmeye başladı. Çerkes tütünü Sibiryanın yerli halkı ve Amerikan yerlileri arasında para yerine geçen bir değiş tokuş birimi haline geldi. Bu tür Çerkes tütünü, içine koruyucu güherçile katıldığından sağlığa son derece zararlı olarak biliniyordu. ABD'de tütün üreticisi Pierre Lorillard gerçek Çerkes tütünü olduğunu iddia ettiği yeni bir Çerkes tütünü üretmiş ve Çerkes kadınlarının egzotik görüntülerini de sömürmüştür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çerkes, Rusya, Amerika, Alaska, Sibiryada, Kafkasya, tütün.

Introduction

The term Circassia was widespread in the West from the 18th through to the 20th Centuries. In Europe and the U.S., the word "Circassian" had become associated with ideas of feminine beauty of the Fair Circassian (New York Mercury) and of male bravery of Circassian Gallantry (Morell). There were brigantines, ocean liners, and passenger ships in Spain, Britain, and the U.S. that were named *Circassia* (Bonsor 461), *Circassian* (New York Daily Times), *Circassian Prince* (New York Times, *Shipping*), *Golden Circassia*, *New Circassia*, and *Circassian Front* (Zhemukhov, *Circassian' ships*). When a search for the word "Circassia(n)" is conducted in the Congress Library in Washington D.C., it turns up with upwards of 26,000 mentions in approximately two hundred American newspapers (Zhemukhov, *Circassians*). Based on the "myths of exceptional beauty" and "health of the Circassian people," the term became a trademark for numerous beauty, fashion and healthcare products, including *Circassian lotion* (Commercial Advertiser), *Circassian Eye Water* (Northern Whig), *Circassian Plaid* (Evening Post), *Circassian shade* (Los Angeles Times), *Circassian design* (New York Times, *January*), among others.

All these trademarks had nothing or little to do with the real Circassians who lived in the Caucasus, between Caspian Sea and Black Sea, except for one item that is the Circassian tobacco. The study of

the origins, production, advertisement and selling of the Circassian tobacco could serve as a case study of prehistory of industrialization and globalization, from as early as the 17th Century. The case of the Circassian tobacco shows how a specific item originated, was produced, competed, and even served as a currency through several centuries.

This article attempts to connect local developments in Circassia with global markets, in order to reveal an important aspect of Caucasus studies that has long been neglected. This research aims to systematize the knowledge about the history of the participation of Circassians in tobacco cultivation and trade, which became globally widespread and profitable in the period between 17th and 19th centuries. This is also significant in the light of recovering the erased pages in the history of the indigenous population of Circassia. Circassians, who were often portrayed, in both the West and Russia, as having fallen out of modernity, did in fact participate in the global capitalist markets in many ways, including with their tobacco, which became one of the main profitable items. After the Russian colonization of Circassia in the 19th century, the tobacco industry began to decline, as Circassia itself disappeared from the world map. The article elaborates on how the Circassian tobacco brand was exploited in both the West and Russia up until the twentieth century. The story of the Circassian tobacco, including its production, usage, and trade, is also valuable as it relates to the prehistory of globalization. This story narrates a history of the world in modern era revealing common threads in the worldwide experience, as well as the interconnectedness of the economies of different regions, based, in this case, on tobacco production, consumption and trade. These narratives were effectively erased by the Western and Russian modernity, after the colonial powers consolidated their control over the economies and trade routes of the colonies in different parts of the world, including Circassia in the Black Sea region.

The first chapter of this article delves into the origins and history of the Circassian tobacco in the Caucasus. Circassians developed a high-quality tobacco brand, which they called *ozereg*, and cultivated it for export. The Circassian tobacco began to be supplied to the Russian market at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Later, the

availability of the original Circassian tobacco decreased due to the spread of Islam in Eastern Circassia (Kabarda) and the Russian conquest of Western Circassia, in the 19th century, accompanied by the massacre and deportation of the entire population from the region.

The second chapter explores how the Circassian tobacco competed with colonial Virginian tobacco in Europe; with Chinese tobacco in Western Siberia, and with Californian tobacco in Russia's Alaska. A special subchapter explores how in the United States a tobacco brand, "White Slave", exploited images of Circassian female slaves and another, *Circassian Tobacco*, appropriated myths about "exceptional beauty and health" of Circassian women in their packagings. This research reveals how the Circassian tobacco served as a form of currency among the natives of Siberia and Alaska, including in the trade between the natives and Russian and American merchants.

1. Smoking Circassians

Circassians started producing and using tobacco after it had been brought to the Caucasus from the Ottoman Empire in the 17th century. Once they recognized the value of tobacco as a commercial product they begun cultivating it. The tobacco production changed with time, according to the economic culture. The tobacco production reached such volumes that Circassians exported it to the neighboring Ottoman and Russian Empires. The tobacco from Eastern Circassia (Kabarda) probably arrived on the Russian market in the 1700s, after Russia had lifted a ban on trade with the eastern part of the Caucasus, via Astrakhan, and was banished from it in 1723 when the Czar established monopoly on tobacco trade in Russia and allowed the production of a new brand of tobacco in Ukraine. The Western Circassian market was dominated by Ottoman merchants who either purchased the Circassian tobacco at the Black Sea ports or traveled inside Circassia to buy it directly from the individual tobacco producers. In the Black Sea region, the tobacco trade between Circassians and Russian Cossacks developed in the late eighteenth century under Russian state control after the establishment of the first exchange point (*Menovy Dvor*) in Ekaterinburg in 1794. The exchange trade (*menovaya trgovlya*) reached a new level after the Russian border force established the 1846 Rules for Black Sea Cossack Army

that set out the rules for the exchange trade (*menovaya trgovlya*) between Kuban Circassians and Black Sea Cossacks.

Circassians called their high quality tobacco specifically produced for export *Ozereg*. Also, different Circassian principalities developed their local brands of tobacco of poorer quality. While we know more about the routes of tobacco export from Circassia, however, we know little about how the domestic tobacco market functioned and who regulated the market and how. Also, we know little about tobacco trade between the Circassians and other ethnic groups in the Caucasus. After the 1807 tobacco ban in Kabarda, the Eastern Circassians probably did not engage in tobacco trade with the neighboring regions of Dagestan and Chechnya. The Circassian principalities of the Black Sea region also did not develop tobacco trade with the Caspian Sea region. According to at least one source, Chechens did not cultivate tobacco until 1866, "Several hundred fugitives were allowed to return [from Turkey] to Chechnya. Those returnees from Turkey brought with them, by the way, seeds of Turkish tobacco and knowledge of tobacco culture: the tobacco agriculture spread from them in Chechnya, where it developed to a very significant level" (Abramov *ch.* 3).

From the 17th to 19th centuries, individual tobacco producers who used slave labor cultivated tobacco mostly for sale. By the end of the 19th century, paid workers cultivated the Circassian tobacco fields, along with domestic producers in Western Circassia. After the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, owners of tobacco plantations employed a paid labor force on the territory of today's Republic of Adygea. The Soviets labeled the owners of tobacco plantation as *kulaks* and expropriated their property during the Collectivization in the early 1930s.

The Circassians used tobacco mostly for pleasure and gift giving. The present author observed that contemporary Circassians have also kept the use of tobacco in traditional medicine as a sedative drug, including the treatment of tooth ache, though it is unknown how far back in time that tradition goes. It also remains unknown if the Circassians used tobacco in spiritual or ceremonial practices.

Tobacco production and consumption was prohibited in different parts of Circassia at different times. In the Eastern Circassia (Kabarda), tobacco became prohibited, for religious reasons, in 1807. Meanwhile

residents of the Western Circassia continued to produce tobacco until they lost the control of their lands through the conquest of Circassia by Russia in 1864. The following sections will describe how Circassians produced and used tobacco and how Russian poets pictured imaginary Circassian smokers.

1.1. Arrival and Development of Tobacco Culture in Circassia

Circassian term '*tutyn*' (тутын) originated from Turkish word '*tütün*.' One of the first dictionaries of the Circassian language, by Shora Nogma, contains the words *tuten* (мутен), for tobacco; *tutinilh* (мутинилh) for tobacco pouch (кисет); cigarette case (портсигар) and snuffbox (табакерка) (Nogma, V.1, 201; V.2, 115). The Circassian phrase, "smoking tobacco" translates verbatim as "drinking tobacco" (тутын ефэн) (Abitov et al 635), which is characteristic for the languages that were introduced to tobacco in 16th and 17th centuries when tobacco smoke was usually swallowed with water or filtrated through water, before inhaling. The expression "drinking tobacco" was used in English (Everard), in Turkish, as '*tütün içmek*,' and in Russian as '*piyut tabak*' (пийут табак) and *tabaku ispil* (табаку испил) (Vasmer 5). Besides the linguistic evidence, there are no other known sources that testify that Circassians drank tobacco. The sources describe only smoking procedures, including smoking by pipes and as cigarettes.

Though tobacco had already been known in the Ottoman Empire after 1580, however, Sultan Murad IV banned it and even ordered executions for breaking the ban (Hari 262). Tobacco probably became widely known to the Circassians after 1647, when Sultan Ibrahim lifted prohibition of tobacco in Ottoman Empire after which it became popular in the Black Sea region. The leached black soil of alpine regions of Circassia turned out to be very suitable for cultivating tobacco. Two different sources reported, in 1664 and 1666, that while tobacco was popular among the Eastern Circassians, however, the West Circassians did not use it, yet. The French merchant Jean Baptiste Tavernier visited the Black Sea shores in 1664 and noted, "Circassians do not use tobacco" (81). Meanwhile, according to a Moscovite source in 1666, Circassian diplomats "never come to Rus[sia] without tobacco" (Krizhanich 20). Apparently, the latter source referred to Kabarda Principality, or the Eastern Circassia, that had established direct diplomatic relations with Moscow Principality. The reason why

the above-mentioned Moscovite source paid special attention to the Circassian tobacco was because, at the time, from 1634 through to 1687, tobacco was banned in Russia and the penalties included torture, imprisonment in Siberia and death by execution. Later, tobacco also became popular in Western Circassia, where tobacco was cultivated in plantations, rose to prominence in local agriculture (Narochnitsky 65). By the end of the 17th century, Circassians had developed their own brand of tobacco that became known as “intensely strong, black Circassian leaf tobacco” (New York Times, *Ten days*). Such a characteristic is different from the features of the rather sweet and mild Turkish tobacco. It is also different from the Russian tobacco. In his classification of different types of tobacco, the American tobacco expert E. R. Billings distinguishes Circassian tobacco as a separate type, different from both the Turkish and Russian tobaccos (382).

In 1687, Peter I lifted the ban on the production and use of tobacco and smoking tobacco became popular in Russia. Circassian tobacco, however, could not still legally reach the Russian markets until 1700 because of the protectionist trade restrictions that Russia placed on Circassia in 1673 in order to protect Russian merchants. The Russian ban stated, “Do not allow [merchants from the Caucasus] past Astrakhan, otherwise they will take away trade from the Russian people and that will cost great losses to the Czar’s treasury... Traveling to Moscow and other cities, the Circassians... will be selling their goods to all kinds of people in retail for higher price, while purchasing the better Russian goods for lower price” (Boguslavsky 685).

It is safe to conclude that the tobacco production in Circassia dramatically increased between 1700 when Peter I lifted the restrictions for Russian-Caucasus trade and 1723 when the Czar established state production of Circassian tobacco, in Ukraine.

Visiting Western Circassia in 1711, the French traveler and diplomat Aubry de La Mottraye observed the widespread practice of smoking tobacco with pipe. Mottraye often used tobacco for as gift and noticed that Circassians did not have too much tobacco. One of the episodes in his book described that his noble host had only one joint of tobacco and gratefully accepted Mottraye’s tobacco.

The Mirsa having a pipe brought of wood, and only one joint, with a head after Turkish fashion, began to smoke; and I drew out one of several joints with my bag of tobacco, and kept him company. After he had finished his first pipe, I presented him with my bag to try my tobacco; he did, and praised it; whereupon I said, that I had at my lodging some more of the same; with a bag entirely new at his service; and accordingly, I went and fetched it him, and he accepted it with great deal of satisfaction. (59)

1.2. Ozereg: The Original Circassian Tobacco

The tobacco production did not decrease in Circassia after the Russian market had become prohibited for tobacco exports from Circassia as a result of the beginning of state sponsored production of Circassian tobacco in Russia (in Ukraine) and the establishment of trade monopoly on tobacco products by the order of the Czar in 1723. Foreign travelers observed that Circassians kept planting tobacco in new areas through the second half of the eighteenth century (Atalikov 107).

Circassians developed several varieties of tobacco and *Ozereg* was the name of the most expensive one produced for export as well as for domestic use in Western Circassia. Large leaves of yellow color distinguished *Ozereg* from other varieties (Shamrai 377). It remains unclear how the brand obtained its name. It could be named after the person who cultivated the brand. *Ozereg* was a popular Circassian male name. In Circassian fairy tales, there was a character named *Ozereg* who was a short man with unusual power and magic skills, which he used to eat the good characters' food in the fairy tales (Buhurov 110). During Soviet era, a village in Eastern Circassia (Kabarda) was named Ozrek, pronounced the same way as *Ozereg*, which shows that the name and the word remained popular among the Circassians over the long time.

Other Circassian tobacco brands were of poorer quality, with smaller leaves and less prominent taste. Most of the low quality tobacco brands were named after the principalities where they were cultivated, like the Abadzekh tobacco. In his memoirs, Fyodor Tornau, a Russian spy who was kept captivity in Western Circassia in the early eighteenth century, called that particular brand "repulsive" (103).

The use of tobacco pipes also developed throughout the eighteenth century. In his observations of trade on the Black Sea, in the second half of the eighteenth century, a French diplomat, Claude-Charles de Peyssonnel, noted that Circassians used tobacco pipes in great quantities (110-111). In particular, long pipes were in fashion during the eighteenth century. Such long a pipe was pictured in Peter Simon Pallas' book about his travels in 1793-1794 that illustrated "a Circassian of distinction in his ordinary domestic dress; and a Princess of that nation" (389). (See Picture 1.) The same kind of Circassian smoking a long pipe is pictured in Giulio Ferrario's book (81). (See Picture 2)

Taitbout de Marigny heard an unusual story related to a tobacco smoker in 1818:

Two Circassians possessed some lands in common, upon which grew a tree which was stripped of its bark by one of the two proprietors; he soon after ceded his share to his companion, and went to reside in another district; the tree withered, and in order to bring it to the ground the proprietor set fire to it; whilst it was burning, a man wishing to approach in order to light his pipe, was crushed by its fall. The family of the deceased attacked the proprietor and demanded of him the price of the man whose death he had caused. The practice was an established one; it seemed as if he could have nothing to oppose to it, when, convoking an assembly, he proved that having only set fire to the tree because it was dead, the former proprietor ought to be condemned to make the payment, because the thing would not have happened if it had still preserved its bark. The whole assembly applauded him and decided the cause in his favour (Marigny, *Three Voyages* 50).

Marigny's story resembled theoretical cause-and-effect exercises among Circassian thinkers in the eighteenth century, similar to those of ancient Sophists and Socrates. However, it is doubtful that they had any practical meaning. Later, in 1838, another traveler, James Bell, verified Marigny's story with at least three Circassians, including at least one professional judge. Hadji-oghlu Mehmet, the chief judge in his village, appeared to take Marigny's story entirely as a joke. Mehmet repeated the story "to another senior, to their mutual great merriment." When Bell enquired if such a law existed among the Circassians, the chief judge

replied, "I don't know how it may have been anciently, but I never heard of such law" (273). Bell also told Marigny's story to another Circassian, Navruz, who was not a judge, and "Navruz' opinion coincides with that of the judge, with this qualification - that possibly long ago, and towards the south, a man who set fire to a tree, by the falling of which another was accidentally killed, might have been held liable to compensate his relations" (275).

1.3. Decline of tobacco culture in Kabarda (Eastern Circassia)

While tobacco production and trade developed well in Western Circassia it, however, diminished in Kabarda (Eastern Circassia). With the spread of stricter rules of Islam at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Muslim priests advocated giving up unhealthy habits of smoking and sniffing tobacco. The new Sharia reform prohibited planting and using tobacco in Kabarda. Article 13 of the 1807 People's Conditions Abolishing Former Customs, which became Kabarda's constitution, stated, "Kabardians are prohibited to shave their beards, smoke tobacco, and grow tobacco" (Nogmov 163). The Russian official reports confirmed that Kabardians "stopped drinking strong wine, smoking, and taking snuff" (Kumakhov 232). The 1807 ban on tobacco in Kabarda echoed the worldwide debates about morality and legality of tobacco smoking. At the same time, such a ban resonated with traditional mentality of Circassians and became part of Circassian customary law, known as *Adyge Khabze*. The tobacco ban in Kabarda remained in place from 1807 through to 1822 when Kabarda became part of the Russian Empire. Not legally prohibited anymore, however, the prohibition of tobacco consumption remained part of *Adyge Khabze*. The tobacco agriculture in Kabarda never recovered from the prohibition lasting from 1807 to 1822. After that, the Kabardian tobacco users consumed mostly Russian tobacco products. Accordingly, the Kabardian tobacco users were those who were directly connected with the Russian colonial administration in the Caucasus or mostly affected by the Russian culture.

While male tobacco consumers were tolerated, female smokers risked becoming outcasts. Nago Nogma, the daughter-in-law of the famous Circassian historian Shora Nogma, experienced the negative attitude toward female smokers in the Kabardian society to the full extent. Nago and her mother-in-law, Salimat Nogma, developed

complicated relations between themselves, one of the reasons for which was the daughter-in-law's smoking habits that were regarded as unacceptable in the Kabardian society. After her husband's death, Salimat lived with her youngest son, in accordance with the Circassian traditions. In 1870, Salimat's two younger sons immigrated to Ottoman Empire with their families and only her older son and his wife Nago, remained in Russia. According to the Circassian traditions, Salimat was supposed to move in with her older son, however, she never did because of the disagreements with her daughter-in-law's life style, including smoking (Zhemukhov, *Zhisn Shory* 46). The *Adyge Khabze* disapproved the use of tobacco until after the 1917 Bolshevik revolution. However, during the Soviet times the culture of heavy tobacco and alcohol consumption became widespread in the country, including among the Circassians. The present author heard from his grandfather, born in 1910, that "Back in the days, sitting in our yard, we could recognize when a Russian male entered the village, by his strong smell, because Russian males used to smoke makhorka."

1.4. Tobacco culture in Western Circassia

Western Circassians also attached religious sentiments to the tobacco. According to Tornau, "Circassians usually do not have much supply [of good Turkish tobacco, but use local bad tobacco] and deprive themselves from the pleasure of smoking according to the religious rule, which prohibits developing habits that could turn into a passion" (Tornau 167). Later, in the 1850s, tobacco was prohibited in some of the most religiously-oriented Western Circassian settlements and a fee was established for smoking tobacco (Pokrovsky 235).

The fashion of the pipes changed in time in Western Circassia. While the eighteenth century pictures have images of long pipes, the pictures of the beginning of the nineteenth century showed medium size pipes. The first edition of Taitbout de Marigny's book [*Voyage*] had several pictures with men smoking medium size pipes, including a man on a day bed inside a Circassian house (Picture 3) and a man sitting with the view of the port Ghelendjik (Picture 4).

Thanks to the fact that the size of the Circassian pipe gradually reduced with time, a pipe can be regarded as a tool to identify the time of an image, as well as to understand if the drawing was original or a copy from earlier pictures. For example, an 1856 picture of a group of

Circassians includes a man smoking a pipe which looks too long for its time (see pic. 5). Other features of that picture, which, also prove that it is a copy of the eighteenth century pictures, include that the men did not have any firearms but only shields, bows and arrows, which, however, had long gone out of use by 1856.

Almost every western Circassian household planted tobacco. Russian scholar Semyon Bronevsky wrote in 1823 about the Circassian gardening that, “everyone has a place for tobacco in the garden” (192). Another scholar of the time, Johann Blaraberg wrote the same in 1833 that, “every Circassian has a special place [in his garden] where he plants tobacco” (142).

Due to the fact that the habit of smoking tobacco became widespread, tobacco accessories also became fashionable among the Circassians. The French traveler Frédéric Dubois de Montpéreux observed in 1833 that tobacco purse (*bourse à tabac*) was one of the usual elements of the everyday Circassian dress (120).

The export of tobacco from Western Circassia to Russia grew at the end of the eighteenth century. Even after the Russian trade with Eastern Circassia (Kabarda) via Astrakhan had grown after the relaxation of the trade in 1700, it took the Russian state almost another century to allow Cossacks to freely trade with Circassians. In 1794, Russians established an exchange point (*Menovy Dvor*) in Ekaterinburg for trade with Circassians in the Bzhedug principality. Later, two more exchange points were established for trade with Circassians in the Hatukay and Shapsug principalities. According to the Cossack historian Shscherbina, the reason for the establishment of exchange points was that “Cossacks needed supply of food from outside [of Russian state’s supply system], since the beginning of the colonization of the [Circassian] regions, as well as later” (561, 573).

The tobacco culture became better developed in those Circassian principalities that had regular trade with Russians via the exchange points (*Menovy Dvor*). I have already mentioned the Russian spy Fedor Tornau’s name-calling of the Abadzekh tobacco. In his memoirs, Tornau recalls an incident during his captivity in which Shmitripsh Islam from Shapsug principality visits him and the moment Islam sees Tornau smoking the repulsive Abadzekh tobacco, he takes such a pity on the Russian spy that, “without saying a word, he traveled to the sea shore

and brought me, a week later, an oka [1.3 kg] of good Turkish tobacco” (103-104).

Circassians of Bzhedug principality exported tobacco to the Ottoman Empire. Circassian tobacco producers brought their tobacco to the Black Sea shore to sell it to the Turkish merchants. Also, the Turkish merchants traveled to Bzhedug principality to buy tobacco from smaller tobacco producers (Zhentel 20). Other contemporary authors also stated that Circassians imported tobacco (Mackie 129, 133).

Circassians actively traded tobacco with Russian Cossacks. Salt became an exchange currency in the trade between Russians and Circassians. Taitbout de Marigny’s book has a table of Circassian goods that they sold to Kuban Cossacks in 1823 which included tobacco, among most popular items. Marigny’s characterization of the Circassian tobacco as “very strong to smoke” is similar to the widespread characterization of the Circassian tobacco worldwide (see next chapter in this article). Cossacks purchased tobacco from Circassians in two ways: for money and in exchange for salt. Marigny’s table reflects both prices (Marigny, *Three Voyages* 253) (See Table 1)

Table 1. The 1823 Exchange rate in salt and money for 1 *pood*¹ of Circassian tobacco.

	In pounds of salt	In evaluation money, price of salt. Rbls.
Tobacco for smoking, very strong - 1 <i>pood</i>	12	6

An 1827 price table indicated that Russians established different salt currency exchange rates at different exchange points (*Menovy Dvor*). Russians purchased two brands of Circassian tobacco. A brand called *Ozereg* had higher quality; it was sold as large leaves and was distinguished by its yellow color. The price of *Ozereg* was 15 to 18 Rubles per *pood*. The other brand in question was simply recorded as average tobacco; it was sold in small leaves and cost 8-12 Rubles per *pood*. Table 2 lists the 1827 Exchange rate in salt and money, for 3 pounds of Circassian tobacco (Shamrai 377).

¹ A Russian unit of weight equal to about 36.11 pounds (16.38 kilograms)

Russian government attempted to cultivate alternative brands of tobacco in the Caucasus. In the middle of the nineteenth century, the Russian Ministry of State Property encouraged the Russian population of the Black Sea to cultivate American tobacco (Shscherbina 673). However, the American tobacco project in the Black Sea region failed, in ways akin to the failure of Peter I's attempts to cultivate Hispanic tobacco in the Caspian Sea region in 1723 (Butkov 147).

Table 2. The 1827 Exchange rate in salt and money for 3 pounds of Circassian tobacco.

	<i>Ozereg</i> , a higher quality tobacco, distinguished by large leaves and yellow color; cost 15-18 Rubbles per pood. 1 oka (equal to 3 pounds)	Average tobacco, sold in small leaves, cost 8-12 Rubles per pood. 1 oka (equal to 3 pounds)
Ekaterinodar	1 pood of salt	20 pounds of salt
Tamazinskaya pristan	1 pood and 20 pounds of salt	30 pounds of salt
Bugaz	2 poods of salt	1 pood of salt

In 1846, the Rules for the Black Sea Cossack Army (*Polozhenie o Chernomorskom Kazachem Voiske*) were established for the exchange trade (*menovaya trgovlya*) between Kuban Circassians and Black Sea Cossacks. The official statistics of that period indicated that tobacco was one of the main items that Circassians sold to Russians at the exchange points – *Menovy Dvor* (Pokrovsky 135).

Western Circassians supplied the Black Sea region with tobacco, until they were expelled from the coast as the result of the Russian conquest in 1864. The new Russian settlers inherited the Circassian tobacco culture, as well as other forms of agriculture. The Russian village (*stanitsa*) Severskaya was one of the many examples of how Russians had taken over the expelled Circassians' property. The previous Circassian name of the village remained unknown to this date. Russians settled in the same settlement where Circassians used to live, as soon as Circassians left in 1864 and renamed the settlement after the Seversky military regiment that was quartered in the Circassian houses. The Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopedic Dictionary's description of the new settlement mentioned that it had 3,737 people

and the villagers cultivated tobacco, over 15.000 poods per year” [6.000.000 lbs.].

Alongside the tobacco culture, the new Russian settlers also adopted some Circassian traditions connected with tobacco. One of the new Cossack traditions reflected some Circassian roots. It was a tradition of braking tobacco stems after the harvest according to which Cossacks dressed the biggest tobacco stem with ribbons and flowers. Cossacks also made *papukha* (паныха) from dried and pressed tobacco leaves. At the end of the traditional ceremony, the owner of the plantation supposed to ‘buy out’ the papukha and invite everybody to a party (Bondar). The Russian term ‘*papukha*’ (паныха) means a “bunch of dried tobacco leaves”, and probably comes from the Circassian word “*papuqh*” (папыхъ) which means a loose knit, for example, “папыхъ лъэпэд” a loosely knitted sock (Abitov et al 548).

The Armenian community that had been living among the Circassians was allowed to stay after the expulsion of the Circassians and continued producing tobacco in the region. An expert on the colonization of the Black Sea region, Vereshschagin, reported that, “In a valley along the river Shapsug, there is an Armenian village that became well known for producing tobacco of good quality in large quantities; and those [tobacco producers] have to drive their valuable trade items either to Jubga or to Tuapse, in order to deliver it to the steamships” (38).

About ten percent of the original population remained in Western Circassia after 1864. It took the remaining residents several decades to recover from the impact of what historians qualify as an ethnic cleansing and even genocide of the Circassian people by the Czarist Russia (Richmond). Gradually getting back on their feet, the remaining Circassians became integrated in the new trade and agriculture system developed by the Russian colonial administration by 1880s, including the production and trade of tobacco (Besleneev 405).

After the expulsion of the Circassian population, the new Russian settlers dramatically increased the tobacco production and as a result the combined production of the former Circassian regions of Kuban Oblast and Chernomorskaya Governorship constituted 15% of all tobacco produced in Russia at the beginning of the World War I. Half of the tobacco produced was high quality Turkish tobacco. The

Tobacco production brought ten million rubles of annual income for the region (Kozlov). In 1914, Institute of Tobacco was established in Ekaterinodar that, which remains the only tobacco institute in Russia, is renamed as All-Russia Science-Research Institute of Tobacco, Makhorka, and Tobacco Items of Russian Academy of Agricultural Sciences.

The Shapsug National Region (*Shapsugsky Natsionalny Raion*) was another small territory in the Black Sea coastline where a few thousand Circassians remained after the deportation of the majority of the population. According to the Circassian historian Trakho, the population of the Shapsug National Region, which existed from 1924 to 1945 and contained fourteen Circassian villages, was mainly occupied with tobacco production (79).

2. Circassian tobacco beyond Circassia

Peter I realized how profitable the tobacco industry was and developed production of Circassian tobacco in Russia. After violating a contract that gave concession on tobacco trade to British producers of Virginian tobacco, Russia was banned from the European market. The following sections will describe how, thanks to its cheap price, Circassian tobacco ended the monopoly of Virginian tobacco in the European part of Russia. Later the Circassian tobacco competed with the Chinese tobacco in Western Siberia and Californian tobacco in Alaska. At one point, a new brand called Circassian tobacco became popular in the United States, though it did not have anything in common with the original Circassia tobacco.

2.1. Competition between Circassian and Virginian tobacco

On February 1, 1697, Peter I issued a decree (*ukaz*) allowing importation of tobacco in Russia (Crosby 5). He signed an agreement with England according to which concessions on tobacco trade in Russia were sold to England for the next seven years (Tobacco Trade in Russia 255). At the time, England accumulated large amounts of overproduced tobacco in its American colonies of Virginia and Maryland. The governor of Virginia, Sir Thomas Colepeper, estimated that the colony had overproduced tobacco for five years and was worried about the bankruptcy of the industry. The agreement with Russia helped resolve the tobacco overproduction crisis, and within

few years the tobacco trade from England to Russia increased dramatically, from 87,000 pounds in 1678 to 1,450,000 pounds in 1700 (Price 20, 101). The situation changed, however, after the relaxation of trade restrictions between Russia and Circassia following the 1700 Treaty of Constantinople. Russian imports of Virginian tobacco decreased significantly after 1700 and later Russia even began exporting tobacco. Crosby notes that the problem was not only that British had lost the Russian market of raw tobacco, but “the Americans feared that the Muscovites, once in possession of the skills to transform tobacco from the raw leaf to a smokable product, would use the nearby Circassian or even homegrown tobacco rather than American” (Crosby 5).

One half of the British tobacco imports consisted of manufactured tobacco and the other raw tobacco. Thus, the British could sell only the manufactured tobacco, while the expensive raw Virginia tobacco would not sell and was in danger of rotting, not being able to compete with the cheap Circassian tobacco. To resolve the issue of the raw Virginia tobacco already imported in Russia, a tobacco specialist, James Spilman, arrived in Moscow. He stated, “Despite the indigenous Circassian plant, however, they were unable to satisfy a new demand in Russia for tobacco manufactured in the English style.” As a solution, Spilman offered to organize manufacturing of tobacco in Moscow (Appleby), which required bringing British tobacco specialists and technology to Russia. In 1704, two British tobacco specialists arrived in Moscow; Francis Peacock, a tobacco cutter, and Peter Marshall, a tobacco spinner. They brought the tools, machinery, and mixing fluids necessary for their crafts and managed to preserve the British tobacco imported for the previous five years. Peacock and Marshall also set up in Moscow a large-scale tobacco processing factory with 200 native workers, the only one of its kind in Russia at the time. After Peter I established a monopoly on tobacco trade and production in Russia, the Burgermasters of Moscow demanded from the English Consul, Charles Goodfellow, he surrendered the machinery and skilled work force (Price 20, 101). Russians’ aggressive approach alerted the British and a group of Virginian and Maryland tobacco manufacturers complained to the British Lords of Commissioners for Trade and Plantation on May 10th that Russians did not comply with

the agreement, “but on the contrary great quantities of Circassian tobacco were imported and publicly sold” in Russian. Following that complain, on May 31st, 1705, the British Lords of Commissioners for Trade and Plantation, presented a report to the Queen indicating that in the violation of British-Russian agreement, Russia imported “the tobacco of the growth of Circassia, a large Province appertaining to that Prince” and that “the Czar having not hindered the sale of Circassian tobacco as was agreed” (Virginia Tobacco in Russia 61).

The British Parliament passed regulation banning sharing of the newest tobacco processing technologies with Russia so that production of Circassian tobacco would not undermine the British tobacco. On 26 May 1705, Anne, Queen of Great Britain issued an order forbidding “to send any person into Muscovy versed in the mystery of spinning and rowling tobacco or any instruments or materials for the same, or to employ any person therein as they would tender her Majesty’s displeasure and will answer the contrary of their perils” (Virginia Tobacco in Russia 57).

The competition between Virginian and Circassian tobacco in the Russian market balanced the offer and demand and, in 1706, the price for the high-quality Virginian tobacco dropped to 9 *kopek* per pound; while the low quality Circassian tobacco would fetch 1.3 *kopek* per pound (Hellie 107). The two sorts of tobacco had seven-times difference in price because the Circassian tobacco was row, while the Virginian tobacco was rolled.

Russia’s attempts to export Circassian tobacco to Europe, however, was blocked by the British protectionist policy. Russians kept trading raw unrolled Circassian tobacco and it took some time for Russian tobacco industry to develop the European method of rolling Circassian tobacco. When the American Revolution cut the supply of American tobacco to Western Europe, an appreciable amount of the slack was taken up by increased importation of Russian tobacco (Price 95, 101).

2.2. Production of the Circassian tobacco in Russia

The reason why British and American tobacco merchants expressed their concerns about Circassian tobacco was because they had secured tobacco trade agreement with Peter I, before the latter relaxed the trade restrictions with Circassia allowing the imports of cheap Circassian tobacco. After lifting the ban on tobacco in 1687 but before

relaxing the trade regulations with the Caucasus in 1700, Russia established tobacco trade with European countries via Riga, which excluded a non-European trade. During the early 1690s, tobacco prices remained low in Russia; one source indicates that in 1690 a Tatar merchant was caught illegally selling tobacco for 20 Russian pence (*kopek*) per pound (Doroshenko 222). By the middle of the 1690s the level of tobacco trade had increased dramatically to 1.2 of Russia GDP (Tobacco Trade in Russia), and tobacco prices reached 40-45 kopek per pound (Hellie 107).

The trade restrictions between Russia and the Caucasus were relaxed after the 1700 Treaty of Constantinople. The Czar's envoy (*voevoda*) in Astrakhan was ordered to "establish friendship and trade relations" with the Caucasus region and its residents. At the time Astrakhan was the main frontier Russian town in the south where all forms of economic and political interactions with the Caucasus took place. Following the recommendations of his adviser, A.A. Kurbatov, the Czar issued an order in 1704 to provide licenses on tobacco production and trade in Russia (Price 62). By 1705, British tobacco merchants noted that Russia had imported big quantities of cheap Circassian tobacco from Circassia (Stephenson 654-656). American tobacco producers also became worried about the competition and that Russia would prefer to "use the nearby Circassian or even homegrown tobacco rather than American" (Crosby 5). Virginian producers of tobacco detected that Russia began not only importing the Circassian tobacco, but also exporting it to Europe, "the Czar's subjects have already brought the Circassian Tobacco to the Ports of Neva and Dantzick" (Virginia Tobacco in Russia 61). The dramatic increase in tobacco trade in the following several years made the industry so profitable that Peter I issued a decree in April 1705 that established a state monopoly on the tobacco trade in Russia. Unlicensed tobacco trade was punished with confiscation of the property and deportation to Azov; the informers on illegal trade received a quarter of the confiscated property, while those who intentionally did not inform would lose half of their property (Kostomarov 586).

After seeing how profitable the tobacco trade was, the Czar ordered in March 1723 the beginning of Circassian tobacco production

in Russia's Ukraine. In Russian, the name of the region of the Ukraine, where some of the tobacco was produced, Cherkassy (Черкассы), sounds similar to Circassia (Cherkessia) and that led to two different spellings/pronunciations of the Circassian tobacco in Russian, *cherkassky* (черкасский) and *cherkessky* (черкесский). It is also called "*malorossiisky tobacco*" (малороссийский табак), in reference to the unofficial name of the Ukraine, *Malorossia* (Малороссия) (Kostomarov 658). According to the Russian Historian P. G. Butkov, the Czar also attempted to cultivate Hispanic tobacco in the Caspian Sea region, but the project failed (147).

From the Ukraine the Circassian tobacco was sold to other parts of Russia. Saltpetre were added to the stored tobacco in order to extend its shelf life. The saltpetre component made the Circassian tobacco taste acidic and bad for health. American tobacco expert Billing stated, "The effect of the Circassian tobacco on the lungs is extremely bad, and among those tribes who use it many die from asthma and congestion of the lungs. This is principally due to the saltpetre with which it is impregnated" (142).

2.3. Circassian tobacco in Western Siberia

Banned from the European markets, the Circassian tobacco trade moved to the east. In Western Siberia, the Circassian tobacco competed with the Chinese tobacco. The Circassian tobacco changed the way the tobacco was consumed in Siberia, while the Chinese tobacco shaped the way the Circassian tobacco was sold. According to Kostomarov, Elizabeth of Russia allowed selling tobacco to Siberia without taxes (658). A 1748 account (ведомость) of 348 imported items in Irkutsk State Archive lists Circassian tobacco, alongside with other exotic items, including English razors, Florentine silk, Dutch cloth, German lead, and French wine (Spektor).

The Circassian tobacco arrived in Siberia after the Chinese tobacco trade was already established there. After Peter I lifted the ban for tobacco trade, the Chinese tobacco trade grew in size via the Bukharan trade route. Between 1690 and 1697, Nerchinskaya Customs Office registered 100 *poods* of Chinese tobacco (in comparison, 50 *poods* of tea was recorded during the same time period) (Alexandrov 219). Until the middle of the eighteenth century, Siberians mostly used a high-quality and expensive tobacco known as "Chinese ball," which was

consumed with water. For Chinese ball, smokers used special long-stemmed *chibouks*, which they connected to a stone bowl with the tobacco. The smoker would put a small amount of water in his/her mouth and inhale a whole Chinese ball in two-three times. The smoker would smoke sitting and, after inhaling the whole smoke, would lie down and rest for a half hour (Ides 103).

According to Trusevich, the Chinese and Circassian tobaccos were quite different in quality and price, "Two kinds of tobacco were used in Siberia: Circassian and Chinese. There used to be also a Siberian [kind] cultivated, since 17th century, in Tobolsk..., but it was so bad that was used only during tobacco hunger, when there was neither Circassian no Chinese tobacco, and also among the poorest people. Circassian tobacco was worse than Chinese one... that was why [Siberians] mostly used the Chinese ball" (104).

The arrival of the Circassian tobacco in Siberia coincided with the crisis of Bukharan trade. According to Shapovalov, a Russian historian of tobacco, the Chinese tobacco was quickly replaced by the "very strong Circassian tobacco that was produced in the South of Russia" (110). After becoming popular in Western Siberia, the Circassian tobacco changed the smoking tools in the region. The pipes became bigger to accommodate more tobacco. Later, the smokers stopped using water. Picture 6 shows how pipes in Western Siberia transformed from the Chinese style (1-4) to Circassian style (5-8).

One of the ways the Western Siberians smoked the Circassian tobacco, the so-called Circassian ball, was developed under the influence of the Chinese ball. Later, the Circassian ball also became popular in Alaska. Most popularly, the Western Siberians smoked Circassian tobacco as home-made cigarettes (*самокрутка*), as an American explorer of Siberia, George Kennan described, "home-made cigarettes of acrid Circassian tobacco rolled in bits of old newspaper" (*A Russian* 305). Kennan also noted the strong effect of the Circassian tobacco, often used to energize native Western Siberians, "quickening his dull apprehension with a preliminary pipe of strong Circassian tobacco, we succeeded in making arrangements for our transportation" (*Tent Life* 182).

Circassian tobacco became used in Western Siberia as a medium of exchange instead of money or in the words of the German science

writer Georg Hartwig, "tobacco is the premium mobile of the trade" (263). Kennan noted during his travels in Siberia, "we provided ourselves also with six or eight puds of Circassian leaf tobacco to be used instead of money" (*Tent Life* 241). According to Hartwig, the Circassian tobacco became used as a currency in the Russian-American trade, thanks to the Western Siberian intermediaries, "generally the Tchuktchi receive from the Americans as many skins for half a pud, or eighteen pounds, of tobacco-leaves as they afterwards sell to the Russians for two puds of tobacco of the same quality. These cost to the Russian merchants about 160 roubles at the very utmost, while the skins which he obtains in barter are worth at least 260 at Jakutsk, and more than double that sum at St. Petersburg" (264).

During large trade fairs, with the participation of native and foreign merchants, the organizers of the fair would agree on the exchange rate of the Circassian tobacco. In 1821, the Russian traveler Fyodor Matushkin described a trade fair organized by the Chukchi people where Circassian tobacco served as the medium of exchange. Before the opening of the fair, all merchants agreed on the exchange rate of the tobacco in order to prevent the merchants from undermining each other's trade. The exchange rate established was as follows - two *poods* of Circassian tobacco were equal to 16 fox skins or 20 marten skins. Similar rates applied to other items. Those who traded at lower rates were issued with penalties. About 100 to 150 Chukchi warriors provided security for the communities during the fair. This produced about 250% net profit. During the trade, a total of 120,000 rubles worth of tobacco was sold (Meri 182).

Travelers on expeditions were supplied with tobacco, as a valuable asset. The explorer and travel writer Harry de Windt noted, "so many of our dogs had died or been bartered that only thirty-one were now left, and these, with four sleds, about fifteen pounds of Circassian tobacco and under a gallon of vodka, represented the entire assets of the expedition" (107). According to E. R. Billings the tobacco became so important in the Western Siberians that the indigenous Yakuts would exchange their most valuable furs and skins for a few ounces of the "Circassian weed" (217). However, according to George Kennan there were things in Siberia that no amount of tobacco could buy - that is, the Koraks and Chukchis would not sell, for superstitious

reasons, live reindeers, “they could sell us a hundred dead deer for a hundred pounds of tobacco but five hundred pounds would not tempt them to part with a single animal as long as the breath of life was in his body” (*Tent Life* 212).

Due to the high exchange rate, tobacco was exchanged not only by weight, but also as separate leaves. According to Dall, the governor of Siberia annually sent to St. Petersburg a number of barrels of king salmon, a rare delicacy among the indigenous people, “the largest, weighing sixty pounds, can be bought for a single leaf of Circassian tobacco” (Dall 486).

Smoking was one of the rare source of entertainment in the harsh Siberian environment, both for the indigenous people and for the travelers. George Kennan described how, in December of 1870, he and his American companions, together with Cossacks, made themselves “comfortable inside the yurt, and passed away the long evening in smoking Circassian tobacco and pine bark, singing American songs, telling stories and quizzing our good-natured but unsophisticated Cossack Meranef” (*Tent Life* 246).

The Circassian tobacco used in Siberia was extremely strong. A traveler, Harry de Windt described how he would refuse a pipe of Circassian tobacco from a local host fearing that it “would probably have finished me off completely” (48).

2.4. Circassian tobacco among the Native Americans

From Russia through Siberia, the Circassian tobacco reached Alaska in the eighteenth century. According to a travel report of the Russian pilot Zaikov, who visited to the islands inhabited by Aleuts in 1773, that “the Russians also gave them Circassian tobacco, glass beads of various colors, copper kettles, shirts, and cat skins” (Masterson 89). Within a century, tobacco had become popular among the indigenous people of Alaska. “Tobacco went farther than we had ever known it to do before,” (Hartwig 286) Frederick Whympfer, an artist employed by the Telegraph Expedition to explore lands in order to establish a cable communication between London and New York mainly by land as an alternative to the cables across the Atlantic, noted in 1866.

The Russian-American Company under the supreme patronage of the Czar held monopoly on the import of Circassian tobacco; according to William Dall “Circassian or Cherkatsky tobacco, [was] imported only

by the Russians" (78). The company operated Fort Ross in California, from where it traded with natives and United States' merchants. James Gibson compared the income and the expenses of a Russian worker at Ross, Vasily Permitin who had a wife and five children. Permitin's salary was 350 Rubles per annum, and in order to to save enough money to go back to Russia he would have to work for seven years without spending anything. However, Permitin not only was not able to save anything, he spent twice more than he earned by receiving supplies at the factory's store. His annual purchase included 22 *poods* of Circassian tobacco, which equaled 19 4/5 lbs. Other items on Permitin's annual purchase list included 125 lbs. of wheat flour, 68 lbs. of fresh beef, 24 lbs. of soap, 13 lbs. of salt, 10 lbs. of tea, and 42 lbs. of sugar (Gibson 211).

While the Circassian tobacco was very expensive in Alaska in the eighteenth century, the competition with the American merchants lowered its price in time. Russian traveler Semyon Unkovsky lamented in his notes that between 1803 and 1819 the Russian-American company could no longer exchange a dozen of leaves of Circassian tobacco for a beaver, which would cost two or three hundred rubles in Russia (18).

In Alaska, the Circassian tobacco competed with the Kentucky tobacco. William Dall noted that in 1870 that the Circassian tobacco "is the prime favorite where the Russians trade; but those who deal more with the English at Fort Yukon like the long natural Kentucky leaf best" (78). Another American traveler noted that the natives of Alaska "prefer the intensely strong, black Circassian leaf tobacco, which they get from the Russians" (New York Times, *Ten days*).

Smoking tobacco was not limited to male natives, but according to the Russian traveler Zaikov, who travelled among Aleuts, "both men and women liked Circassian tobacco" (Masterson 91). Smoking became a ritual among the native Alaskans and pipes were considered an item of pride. A contemporary traveler described a smoking ceremony of a native American chief in a *New York Times* article:

The chief had a nicely-made pipe of wood, inlaid with lead, and furnished with a rim of lead at the top, and with several brass chains and a variety of charms. The bottom of the bowl of this pipe led into a cavity, which could be opened from without, intended to receive

shavings or moss to soak up the nicotine and other waste products which accumulate after smoking... The caliber of the pipe is small, not more than one fourth of an inch, and its depth is not great. I watched the chief preparing to smoke. He first pulled from his parka a little tuft of hairs, which he put in the bottom of the pipe to prevent the tobacco from being drawn into the stem; then put in a few grains of black tobacco, inhaled the smoke, and retained it a short time in the lungs, and slowly exhaled it. This was done just once, but that was enough to warrant a deep-drawn sigh of relief and an involuntary trace of tears after the expulsion of the smoke. The temporary stupefaction produced by this style of smoking was quite perceptible (New York Times, *Ten days*).

The Circassian tobacco in Alaska was sold in small bundles, called *papoosh* or *papooshki*. The Russian-American company's price on Circassian tobacco was thirty cents, which was equal to three minks. However, according to a William Dall, the Russian traders cheated enormously while trading with the locals, "yet the native received nothing like a pound for three mink skins. The tobacco comes done up in small bundles called *papooshki*. There may be from two to six of these in a pound; yet for each one, large or small, the native must give a marten skin or two marten skins" (501). Dall himself stated that he gave "a small bundle of Circassian tobacco, called by the Russian a *papoosh*, for a beaver-tail" (78).

The amount of Circassian tobacco trade in Alaska can be approximately judged by the quantity of fur exported from the region that was paid mostly with tobacco. Even before Russia began getting its own fur from Siberia and Alaska, the demand for fur in Russia was quite sizable. According to Alfred Crosby "in 1775, Russia, one of the greatest fur producers in the world, imported 46,460 American beaver skins and 7,143 American otter skins through St. Petersburg. A contemporary English writer said that the motive for this strange Russian yen for American furs arose simply from the fact that they were "far-fetched and dear bought" (6). A hundred years later, the fur from Alaska was in high demand. By Dall's estimate:

In the season 1867-68, there were collected in the District of St. Michael, by Stepanoff, sixteen thousand martens, according to the Indian mode of counting. During the same time, not less than

fourteen thousand found their way to the traders at Katzebue Sound and Grantley Harbor, and ten thousand to Fort Yukon. That makes a total of forty thousand, which maybe averaged to be worth at least two dollars and a half each. In their purchase, not over twenty thousand dollars were expended, in every way. The profits of such abusyness are evident. (501)

2.4. Circassian tobacco in the United States

Once the ban was lifted in the Ottoman Empire, women enjoyed tobacco in private as well as in public spaces. With many Circassian women present in the Ottoman Empire, the tobacco culture affected them, too. Europeans and Americans developed a whole discourse that has combined the orient and tobacco, especially in the images of the exoticized and eroticized smoking women, equating it with otherness and sensual pleasure, and using it as a successful marketing tool for selling tobacco.

Popular myths about the beauty and health of Circassian women were exploited in the United States in order to sell tobacco, including the images of Circassian women as white female slaves in the Middle East. “White Slave” brand tobacco packages, in the United States, pictured semi-nude white women in harem settings. Lori Anne Salem noted the difference between representation of black and white women in the advertisements that, “cigarette advertisements make a neat parallel here: whereas the Circassian/Arab scenes in tobacco advertising showed beautiful women in alluring poses, the black/American scenes showed black women haranguing their husbands, picking cotton, stirring porridge, and other decidedly nonsexual and non-alluring activities” (226).

Alongside with advertisement on the “White Slave” cigarettes, U.S. tobacco industry produced an original brand of Circassian tobacco, a milder one, while the strong Circassian tobacco from Russia was used in other parts of the world. Using the myths about exceptional beauty and health of Circassian women, an American tobacco manufacturer, Pierre Abraham Lorillard, invented an American brand of Circassian tobacco which he advertised as “The Real Circassian Tobacco” (Salem Gazette). Lorillard’s brand of Circassian tobacco was mild in contrast with the Circassian tobacco from Russia. Lorillard even attributed the

“mythological beauty of Circassian women” to the “fact” that they smoked tobacco.

The extreme beauty of the Circassian females, and the magical influence they have. When raised to the rank of Sultanness, exercised over the Sublime Porte, are well known; but perhaps it is not so generally known that it is owing almost exclusively to the use of the “Circassian Tobacco,” which, from its mild but powerful qualities, preserves the teeth, gives a delicious perfume to the mouth, renders the body less susceptible of pain, and of course renders permanent that placid tranquility of countenance so favorable to health and beauty. It promotes digestion, and a moderate, steady flow of animal spirits suitable to animated social conversation, and good tempered political discussion. Its exhilarating powers are less intense, more equable, and not injurious like that produced by vinous, alcoholic or opiate stimuli. From the manner of its preparation, it may be chewed or smoked, and by an easy manipulation process, reduced to a state of snuffed. It may be had wholesale and retail at Cushing & Appleton’s Book-Store” (Lorillard).

Besides with the images of female Circassian smokers, an image of a male Circassian smoker also was created. An image of a Circassian smoker was included in the first cigarette cards for collecting and trading, created and marketed by John Allen and Lewis Ginter’s tobacco manufacturing firm in Richmond, Virginia. “Circassian” a man wearing an ethnic costume and smoking a pipe, appeared on the 1888 N33 set, known as Allen and Ginter World’s Smokers, which included fifty images. (See Picture 7). Among other cards in the same set, there is an image of a smoking female, “Odalisque.” The female image was quite different from any resemblance to the paintings picturing Circassian female slaves also often titled as “Odalisque”. The Allen and Ginter “Odalisque” was sully dressed and looked like a determined and busy woman rather than a sex slave. She also smoked a hookah, instead of a cigarette or pipe. (See Picture 8.)

Conclusion

The three kinds of Circassian tobacco were significantly different from each other. The original strong tobacco was cultivated in

Circassia, from the end of 17th century onwards. European travelers described production, usage, and trade of Circassian tobacco in details, while Russian poets created romanticized images of Circassian smokers. Circassian tobacco was cultivated both in Kabarda (Eastern Circassia) and Western Circassia. With the spread of Islam, smoking and chewing tobacco was banned for religious reason by the 1807 constitution of Kabarda (Eastern Circassia) and were greatly reduced in western Circassia in 1850s until the Circassian tobacco culture was almost totally disappeared, after the expulsion of Circassians from Western Circassia. After the Russian settlers took possession of the villages left by the departing Circassians, the new settlers inherited some traditions connected with harvesting tobacco.

Peter I lifted the tobacco ban in Russia in 1687, however, the Circassian tobacco did not arrive in Russia until 1700 when he also relaxed the ban on Russia's trade with the Caucasus. For a quarter of a century, the cheap Circassian tobacco from the Caucasus successfully competed with expensive British tobacco from Virginia. In 1723, Russia started producing its own Circassian tobacco in Ukraine, a new kind of Circassian tobacco that became widely known around the world.

Banned from the European markets by Britain, the Circassian tobacco from Russia spread in Western Siberia, where it competed with the Chinese tobacco and changed the fashion of smoking and usage of pipes among the natives. With Russians reaching Alaska, they introduced the Circassian tobacco to the Native Americans of Alaska and California, where it competed with Californian tobacco. Circassian tobacco became an exchange currency among the Native Siberians and Native Americans. This kind of Circassian tobacco was known to be extremely bad for health, because of the saltpeter added to it in order to preserve it.

In the United States, tobacco manufacturers exploited the exotic image of Circassian females on "White Slave" cigarette packages. The myth about beautiful Circassian women was also used to develop a special brand of Circassian tobacco in the U.S. The American brand of Circassian tobacco was different from the Russian one, and the manufacturer, Pierre Lorillard, claimed it as the real Circassian tobacco.

Pictures

Picture 1



A Circassian of distinction in his ordinary domestic dress; and a Princess of that nation in eighteenth century (Pallas 398).
Source: <https://goo.gl/WvGcnw>

Picture 2



Circassian consumes tobacco in eighteenth century (Ferrario 81).
Source: <https://goo.gl/RCS5QZ>

Picture 3



Inside view of a Circassian house (Marigny Voyage).

Source:
<https://goo.gl/2jWZdo>

Picture 4



The view of the Western part of the Ghelendjik Port (Marigny Voyage).

Source:
<https://goo.gl/efzHL9>

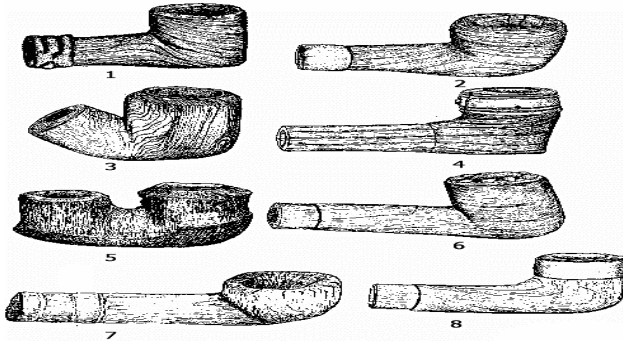
Picture 5



Circassians (Illustrated London News).

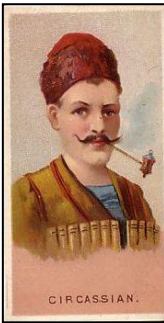
Source:
<https://goo.gl/qk5uK8>

Picture 6



How pipes in Western Siberia transformed from Chinese stile (1-4) to Circassian stile (5-8) (Shapovalov 120).

Picture 7



Circassian (Metropolitan Museum of Art. Circassian).

Source: <https://goo.gl/FPoYkh>

Picture 8



Odalisque (The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Odalisque).

Source: <https://goo.gl/HMPvwn>

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