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Slavs on Steamships. Steamship Travels between Europe and Asia, 1869–1890

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This article examines diverse travel narratives about steamship voyages to Asia in the first two decades after the opening of the Suez Canal, with special focus on journeys through the Suez Canal, Red Sea, and Indian Ocean. Sources include Polish, Serbian and Russian authors: Julian Fałat, Vlado Ivelić, Lucjan Jurkiewicz, Milan Jovanović, Vsevolod Krestovskiy, Karol Lanckoroński, Bronisław Piłsudski, Paweł Sapieha, Henryk Sienkiewicz, Ivan Yuvachev, Hugo Zapałowicz, and Ivan Zarubin. Given this variety of sources, consisting of 12 accounts in 3 languages, written by different types of travellers with dissimilar social backgrounds, it is possible to demonstrate a variety of phenomena that may be associated with steamship voyages. The two main issues examined here are: 1) the coexistence of multiple mobilities in the era of steam power, 2) different experiences of time while voyaging.

KEYWORDS: mobility; modernity; Slavic travel writings; steamship; transport revolution

Introduction

“By no longer receiving its motion from an external source but somehow creating it within itself, steam engine seemed to be the mechanical equivalent of the Copernican revolution” (Schivelbusch, 2014, xx). Steam power revolutionized both manufacturing and mobility.¹ The railway, called “the icon of modernity” (Tomasik, 2015), represents but one of its many applications. Before the steam engine was put on rails to transport passengers, it was used on ships, which played a crucial role in the diffusion of changes brought about by industrialization (Armstrong, Williams, 2007; Williams, Armstrong, 2014).²

Paweł Sapieha (1860–1934), a Polish aristocrat from Austria-Hungary who travelled around Asia in 1888–1889,³ proudly declared that new technologies made Japan accessible, contrary to the will of former Japanese rulers:

Wielki Jemiton przewidział wszystko inne, ale zastosowania, jakiego doznała para wodna w naszym stuleciu, nie przewidział. Parowce doszły z łatwością tam, gdzie żaglowcom tylko z trudnością dostać się można było (Sapieha, 1899, 225).

(The Great Jemiton [Sapieha is probably referring to Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616), the founder of Tokugawa shogunate] foresaw everything else, but not the use of steam that has been experienced in our century. The steamers easily travelled to where the sailing ships could hardly reach.⁴)

1 Following Tim Cresswell (2006, 3) I understand mobility to be “socially produced motion” that has three relational moments: 1) “a brute fact” of movement, 2) “ideas about mobility that are conveyed through a diverse array of representational strategies,” and 3) “a way of being in the world.”

2 For a general overview of changes in transportation brought about by 18th and 19th-century inventions, see Bagwell (1988).

3 On Sapieha’s journey and writing, see also Mazan (2010).

4 All translations, unless otherwise noted, are by the author.

Sapieha's words are an example of how 19th-century travellers, who experienced an unprecedented increase in mobility and connectivity, eagerly praised the power of steam. The real travel experience could dictate different opinions, though. In a manner similar to Sapieha, Ivan Zarubin, a Russian doctor and intellectual who in 1880 travelled around Asia, exulted over the human mind conquering nature. Nevertheless, despite such triumphal declarations, Zarubin hardly enjoyed his voyage:

Я не знаю ничего утомительнее и однообразнее продолжительного морского перехода. Это есть полнейшее отрицание самого себя; сначала первые дни интересуют все окружающее, но затем повторяются одни и те же впечатления, и остальное время можно считать вычеркнутым из своей жизни (Зарубин, 1881b, 118).

(I know of nothing more tiresome and monotonous than a long sea crossing. It is a total denial of the self; in the first days you are interested in everything around you, but then the same impressions recur, and the rest of the time can be considered a blank spot in your life.) (Zarubin, 1881b, 118)

This juxtaposition of quotations from Sapieha and Zarubin is meant to show that overarching narratives about the expansion of mobility and triumph of technology do not paint the whole picture. Therefore, in this article I would like to show **how wide-ranging the meanings of new technologies were** in the 19th century and **how diverse the experience of new technologies was**. The main focus is **voyaging to Asia in the first two decades after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869**. Referring to the characterization of the 19th-century steamship travel developed by historians, I will demonstrate how various aspects of voyaging were presented in Polish, Serbian and Russian travelogues.

State of the art

My inquiry brings together two fields: the study of travel writing and the cultural history of transport. It has been claimed that in the

last four decades, research on travel writing has established itself as a subject of serious cross-disciplinary study (Pettinger, Youngs, 2020, 1) and even an academic discipline (Moroz, 2020, 1). In the 1980s and 1990s, this area was dominated by a postcolonial perspective (Thompson, 2011, 2–3); however, recently various other approaches have been gaining significance. The most recent overviews of the field have paid attention to anthropology of the senses, types of travel and interactions, ecocriticism, genre, paratexts, etc. (Das, Youngs, 2019; Forsdick, Kinsley, Walchester, 2019; Pettinger, Youngs, 2020). If we narrow our focus to travel in Slavic cultures with special focus on the second half of the 19th century, a number of book-length studies and collective monographs can be singled out (Budrewicz, Sadlik, 2018; Burkot, 1988; Ihnatowicz, Ciara, 2010; Peković, 2001; Pecherska, 2015). There are also studies and anthologies devoted to Polish, Serbian and Russian travelers in particular regions of Asia, e.g. India (Podemski, 2005, 175–323; Radulović, 2018), Japan (Kalarus, 2017; Renner, 2011), China (Ewertowski, 2020; Kajdański, 2005; Pušić, 1998, 2006; Peng Yuchao, 2020). Of special importance is Vladimir Gvozden's monograph (2011) on Serbian travel writings of the interwar period, where the author introduced a number of meaningful concepts. Gvozden's thought-provoking analysis of various connotations attached to different means of transport (Gvozden, 2011, 150–168) directs attention to the significance of technology and transport.

At the beginning of the previous section, I quoted Schivelbusch and Tomasik on railways, but steamships have also been examined by various scholars. For the topic of this article, the most noteworthy is the monograph by Douglas Burgess (2016) on steamships in the Victorian imagination. Crosbie Smith (2018) analyses the history of early ocean steamships, emphasizing the interconnections between engineering, maritime life, and culture. A monograph by Frances Steel (2011) devoted to steamships in 19th-century Oceania interestingly juxtaposes the perspectives of ship owners, mariners, and passengers in a thoughtful examination of links between transport and colonial culture. Another important subject is the role of steamships in colonial expansion (Headrick 1981, 17–57; 2010, 177–225). The research presented in this article was also influenced by numerous shorter studies that dealt with various

aspects of steamship journeys: passengering as “slowing down mobilities” (Ashmore, 2013); spaces and connections created through interactions between steamships, telegraphs and press (Wenzlhuemer, 2016); Czech narratives about voyages to Asia (Mrázek, 2021).

Building on concepts proposed by the aforementioned publications, in this article I analyse how changes in mobility brought forth by steamships were expressed by Polish, Serbian, and Russian travellers to Asia in the first two decades after 1869.

Suez Canal and its impact on travel

The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 was one of the most important events in the history of transport in the 19th century.⁵ The new waterway shortened the distance between London and Bombay by 40%, and between London and Hong Kong by 25% (Rabino, 1887, 526) in comparison with the route by the Cape of Good Hope. Combined with developments in steamship technology (a screw propeller, a compound steam engine), it transformed a journey from Europe to Asia from a risky expedition of many months to a trip of few weeks. Hence the Polish aristocrat from Austria-Hungary, Karol Lanckoroński (1848–1933),⁶ who travelled around the world in the years 1888–1889, stated:

Odbyłem ją z wyjątkiem nieznacznych zbroczeń utartymi szlakami, którymi dziś okrążyć można ziemię wygodniej i bezpieczniej, aniżeli przed pięćdziesięciu laty przebywało się drogą z Warszawy do Paryża (Lanckoroński, 1893, V).

(I made it [my trip] with the exception of insignificant deviations, by the well-beaten tracks, upon which one can nowadays travel around the world more comfortably and safely than 50 years ago from Warsaw to Paris.)

5 A brilliant analysis of the impact of the Suez Canal on globalization and mobility can be found in Huber (2013).

6 On Lanckoroński, see Winiewicz-Wolska (2018).

Lanckoroński's utterance demonstrates one of the most striking phenomena brought forth by technological and infrastructural changes. Modern tourism, which in Europe is linked with the expansion of railways (Urry, Larsen, 2011, 14), appeared in Asia thanks to steamships and the Suez Canal.⁷ In the period after 1869, we see a growing number of tourists travelling to Asia or around the world for pleasure and knowledge, like Lanckoroński, the aforementioned Sapieha, the famous Polish painter Julian Fałat (1853–1929)⁸ and a Polish military lawyer and natural scientist from Austria-Hungary, Hugo Zapałowicz (1852–1917).⁹ If elite tourism generated a number of interesting travel accounts, however, other transformations brought forth by steam power had an even greater impact on historical processes. European empires used the new means of transport to expand and reinforce their control over colonies. One example of a travelogue written by a soldier in a colonial army is the memoir written by Henryk Sienkiewicz (1852–1936), a relative of the famous writer of the same name, who served in the Royal Dutch Colonial Army in the years 1876–1882. Russia was a land-based empire, but due to the vastness and poor development of Siberia, after the opening of the Suez Canal and the establishment of the Russian Volunteer Fleet (Добровольный флот) in 1879, imperial officials and soldiers travelled to the Russian Far East by ship. One of them was the aforementioned Zarubin, a ship doctor on one of the Volunteer Fleet vessels. Another was Vsevolod Krestovskiy (1840–1895), who travelled to East Asia as an official correspondent and a secretary of the Russian fleet in the Pacific Ocean. Another, Lucjan Jurkiewicz (1833–after 1898), a Pole from Prussia who later became a Russian subject, travelled by ship to Sakhalin to take up the position of an agronomist there. It should be noted that practices of mobility involved more than voluntary travels. Before the construction of the Suez Canal, exiles to Sakhalin travelled by land, but after 1879 they were transported by ship (Vysokov, Vasilevskiy, Kostanov,

7 On steamships and tourism in general, see Burgess (2016, 123–220).

8 On Fałat's trip to Asia and its influence on his paintings, see Malinowski, (2000); Moroz (2021).

9 Some of selected Polish accounts have been analysed by Kołos (2021) and Gromadzka (2021).

Ishchenko, 2008, 361). In this article I will also refer to letters from a sea journey written by the Russian Ivan Yuvachev (1860–1940) and the Pole Bronisław Piłsudski (1866–1918),¹⁰ both sentenced to exile in Sakhalin and transported there on the same ship in 1887. Letters written during the passage provide an interesting testimony of the dark side of steamship mobility.

For some travellers, seafaring was a professional activity. The gradual shift from sails to steam in global sea transport was witnessed by the sailor Vlado Ivelić (1855–1940) from Boka Kotorska, who wrote a memoir of his 50 years of seamanship (1869–1919).¹¹ The Serb Milan Jovanović (1834–1896) was not a professional sailor, but had served as a ship doctor on one of the Austrian Lloyd steamships for 4 years (1878–1882).¹² Both Ivelić and Jovanović observed yet another consequence of the steamship: huge migrations within Asia, for example, the movement of Chinese and Indian labourers to Southeast Asia.

In some of the selected sources, the experience of travel is described within a memoir that covers many years (Sienkiewicz, Ivelić, Fałat.) We see the context of the voyage, although steamships themselves may be marginal for the whole narrative. Some sources are literary travelogues, in which the authors construct coherent, literary narratives about their travels (Jovanović, Lanckoroński, Sapieha, Krestovskiy, Zarubin, Zapałowicz), even though some of them are based on letters written on the spot. It is possible to more clearly understand the means used to present travel experiences in this type of writing than in other examples. Finally, the least literary and the most focused on the present are letters (Yuvachev, Piłsudski) as well as Jurkiewicz's diary, where the recorded impressions are more direct, although still mediated by writing. Given the brevity of this article, I do not use these sources in an equivalent manner, but a comparison of a relatively wide array of texts written by travellers of different backgrounds and voyaging in dissimilar conditions allows us to see various dimensions of steamship mobility. As noted above, studies of both travel writing and the cultural history of

10 On Piłsudski, see Sawada (2021).

11 On Ivelić, see Doklestić (2004).

12 On Jovanović, see Veljković (2016).

transport offer a vast range of concepts and travellers' experiences were anything but uniform. Due to constraints of space, the rest of this article focuses on two main problems. The first is a question of coexistence of multiple mobilities in the era of steam. The second is different experiences of time while voyaging. The Suez Canal, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean are the main areas of my interest, but some travel narratives described longer journeys, so I will refer to events which happened in other bodies of water, too.

Multiple mobilities

In the context of the Suez Canal, considering the usage of the camel corps and dhow boats to patrol desert areas and the coast of the Red Sea, Valeska Huber stated that: "the canal represented not simply the coexistence of «modern» and «traditional» forms of mobilities, but the complex interaction between different forms of mobility in order to control others" (Huber, 2016, 765). Such "complex interactions" were observed by travellers as well. Zarubin, while his ship was crossing the Canal, went ashore and reported both a curious view of a steamship in the middle of the desert and a meeting with a Bedouin caravan travelling to Sinai to kiss a trace of Muhammed's foot (1881a, 301–303).¹³ There is an evident difference between the way in which Zarubin writes about ships and his comments on the caravan. For the former, he employs typical 19th-century rhetoric of progress and triumph of reason, whereas the caravan and the desert are presented using the romanticising rhetoric of orientalism and exoticism. He even quotes the orientalist poem "Три пальмы" (Three palms) by Mikhail Lermontov (1814–1841). Zarubin's narrative thus displays a strong literary component. Therefore, even though he later claims that the Russian song sung by sailors in the desert did not match the surroundings, he himself places that

13 According to Islamic belief, on Mount Sinai there is a rock resembling a camel's foot, believed to be a hoofprint of Muhammad's camel or the so-called the Print of the She-Camel (Matabb an-Naaga) of Nabi Saalih Rashiid (a person venerated by local Bedouins). See Hobbs (2014, loc. 3385).

environment within an orientalist imaginarium. Besides those two different stylistic modes—progressivism linked with modern European culture exemplified by steamships and exoticism linked with caravans—Zarubin uses one more form of rhetoric: the language of “geological imagination” (Massey, 2005, 133). He notices shells in the sand, similar to shells found by him two years earlier in Central Asia, consequently he claims that the whole desert area from Gobi to Sahara was the bottom of the sea in a distant past. References to geology are made by the Russian traveller in other locations as well, introducing a relativistic dimension to his claims about triumphs of the human mind in the 19th century.

Milan Jovanović also perceives the Canal as a zone of multiple mobilities and layers of time. Describing his passage through the waterway, he states that first they passed a house where the telegraphist and keepers of the waterway lived, which can be interpreted as a sign of cutting-edge modernity, then a town where the Canal crossed the caravan route from Syria to Egypt which epitomizes traditional mobility (Jovanović, 1894, 32). In the town of Suez, Jovanović contrasts modern European civilization with the local Arabs in orientalist, essentialist terms:

Malo čas trčali su gladni Arapčići za parobrodom duž kanala i ribali tvrđ hleb što im bacahu veseli mrnari navalice u vodu; a sad gledamo izobilje na licu kolonista a udobnost u svakom uglu njihovih stanova. Istočnjak gleda s druge obale kakve je plodove doneo trudan rad evropskim naseljenicima; ali on leškari i sad na toplom pesku i gleda s prezorom na evropski „konfort”; njemu nije od potrebe da se muči: sunce ga besplatno greje dok živi, a kad umre i tako mu ništa ne treba. Alah il Alah (Jovanović, 1894, 35).

(A short time ago hungry Arabs ran after the steamship along the canal and fished for hard bread thrown by cheerful mariners to the sea, and now we are looking at abundance on the faces of the colonists and the comfort in every corner of their homes. The easterner sees from the other bank the harvest achieved by European colonists with hard work, but he is lounging about on warm sand and looks with disdain on European “comfort”; he does not need to tire himself: the sun warms him for

free while he is alive, and when he is dead he does not need anything. Allah il Allah.)

In this fragment Jovanović employs the standard conventions of orientalist, pseudo-ethnographic discourse. A ship and a modern European settlement are contrasted with “a lazy native”; “an everyman” characterized in essentialist terms with the use of the ethnographic present. Despite using orientalist clichés in these quotes, in other parts of his travelogue Jovanović is remarkably progressive for his era and sharply criticizes colonialism, although he sometimes still bows to stereotypes. His remarks on India and China as well as the opium trade are the most significant from this perspective (Radulović 2018, 62–70), but for the topic of this article it is of crucial importance that in other parts of his travelogue Jovanović presents local practices more favourably. Observing the night sky over the Indian Ocean, for example, he remarks that stars are a reliable compass for Arab sailors, who in their huge boats with one big sail cross the waters between Africa, Persia, and India, transporting goods to the main steamship ports (Jovanović, 1894, 87). Here, “traditional” mobility is seen as complementary to the “modern” one and the skill of sailors is presented as noteworthy. In this way Jovanović appreciates the role of local trade networks, which were essential for the Indian Ocean economy even in the period of global empires.¹⁴ Another example of complementarity is local boats, used to transport passengers ashore from steamships in Colombo. The Serbian traveller describes with admiration indigenous technological expertise. Thanks to their ingenious construction, these boats cannot be overturned even by the largest waves during the monsoon, furthermore such boats are very light and fast (Jovanović, 1894, 167). Preindustrial means of transportation are not only complementary to steamships, but also the result of great skill.¹⁵

14 On the role of non-European traders and capitalists in the Indian Ocean during the period of high imperialism, see Bose (2009, 72–121).

15 On indigenous boats and navigational practices used in the Indian Ocean, see Pearson (2003, 48–49, 63–75).

Ivelić's memoir offers the first-hand experience of a professional mariner, who during his long career has switched from sailing ships to steamers. His account testifies to the fact that while noticeable innovations like steam power transformed the 19th century, sails and steam still coexisted in that period. A large amount of cargo was transported worldwide on vessels using wind power (in the 1870s sailing ships accounted for almost 2/3 of the tonnage of the British merchant fleet—Smith, 2018, 365); steamers were usually equipped with sails as well; coal for steamships was transported around the world by sailing ships (Smith, 2018, 285–303). While retelling the story of a disaster suffered on a sailing ship, Ivelić clearly states that steamships are safer and far more comfortable, in this way trying to encourage youths towards a modern maritime career: “A na parobrodima na kojima mladost počinje i svršava pomorsku karijeru, posve je drugi i udobniji život u svakom pogledu” (Ivelić, 1933, 80) (On the steamships where young people begin and end their maritime career, life is completely different and more comfortable in every way). This demonstrates the perspective in terms of time in Ivelić's narrative, which is a memoir written many years after his sailing days were over, as well as its pragmatic function: encouraging seamanship in Yugoslavia. Interestingly, despite praising conditions on steamships, the aged mariner is infatuated by the older type of transport and longs for sailing ships, in which he even continues to invest money while serving as an officer on a steamship. He even curses the advancement of steamers that has led to the downfall of sailing (Ivelić, 1933, 87–88). There is also an interesting dialogue between Ivelić and an old officer from another ship, who wants the traveller to lend him sailors for a particular task. Both of them have sailing experience, and Ivelić complains that in the past a crew of 10 people could operate a large seagoing ship. The old officer sadly responds that sailors then were different (Ivelić, 1933, 162). This story illustrates an important phenomenon: despite the coexistence of various mobilities, “The rise of steam appeared to sound a slow death knell for the science and art of seamanship” (Steel, 2011, 75).

The experience of various modes of mobility during one journey is not only a question of reflecting on the gap between industrial and preindustrial modes of transport. Sometimes two steamships offer widely different experiences. Sienkiewicz, as a soldier in the Dutch colonial army,

was transported from Europe to the island of Java on a large Dutch vessel, named *Princess Amalia*. Although the air below deck was heavy despite ventilators, and the jolting of the ship caused discomfort, still he was satisfied with the “impeccable order” and excellent food (Sienkiewicz, 1914, 113–114). Up to this point, his narrative complies with the general change in the perception of sea journeys brought forth by steamships: maritime voyages have ceased to be a *travail*, and have turned into an enjoyable type of experience, because conditions such as a lack of fresh food, the discomfort of seasickness, and a general feeling of insecurity have been ameliorated (Burgess, 2016, 169–174). This changes, however, when Sienkiewicz is transported along the Java coast from Batavia to Semarang on a smaller, local ship. From the outset of the journey, the Polish soldier is not satisfied with such a small ship; its “mestizo” captain and Javanese crew are apparently more poorly trained than those on European ships. And then the storm comes: “Przemoczoni [sic] do nitki, linami przmocowani do wielkiego mostu, wolimy jednakże to, niż siedzieć pod spodem, jak w pułapce” (Sienkiewicz, 1914, 124) (We are soaked to the skin, and attached with ropes to the great bridge, yet we prefer this to sitting underneath as in a trap). If on a larger steam vessel Sienkiewicz experienced comparative comfort (his requirements were not very high after 5 years of service in Algeria,) even though he was not an aristocrat travelling in a first class cabin like Lanckoroński or Sapieha, on the smaller, local ship he feels much worse and experiences the fragility of the human body when exposed to the elements. Travel becomes a *travail*. Racist and Eurocentric views are also noticeable in Sienkiewicz’s account: from the beginning, he dislikes the ship not only because of its small size, but also because of its Asian crew.

Finally, to round out these descriptions of multiple mobilities, a story told by Vsevolod Krestovskiy should be mentioned. The ship on which he was voyaging from Odessa to the Mediterranean was checked at Istanbul by Turkish civil servants who wanted to quarantine it, a problem that was ultimately solved by a bribe (Krestovskiy, 1885, 65–66). Krestovskiy uses this story as an example of the corruption of Ottoman officials, a topic that corresponds with the tone of the nationalistic rhetoric found elsewhere in his account, but in the context of the topic of this article it also shows something else. The unprecedented increase in mobility thanks

to modernized means of transportation was accompanied by apparently contradictory phenomena: the intensified control and “channelling” of mobility by state actors, against which individuals fought back using official and unofficial means (Balachandran, 2016; Huber, 2013, 241–271). Whereas Krestovski in 1880 was lucky and his voyage was not impeded by a quarantine, Sienkiewicz (1914, 209) was kept for 4 days on an island near Marseille on the way back to Europe in 1882. Ivelić (1933, 103–106) was delayed in Aden, Suez, and Trieste due to an overzealous ship doctor who reported a case of cholera on board. Jurkiewicz’s (2014, 71) ship on the way to Sakhalin did not stop in Japan because a possible contact with cholera cases there would later force them to quarantine in Vladivostok. In the pre-steam era, when a voyage between Europe and Asia (around Africa) took months, losing a few days to quarantine might not be that significant, but the greater speed of transport and communication in the 19th century made time itself more valuable (Wenzlhuemer, 2013, 46). This leads to the second main issue of this article, the experience of time on the steamship voyage.

Time

Scholars of travel writing emphasize that the experience of traveling changes one’s perception of time. In the contemporary context, it has been stated that “time is part of the value of travel—the «time out» of vacation intensifies and extends subjective temporality in a way that is often then projected on to the holiday locale, as a place where time is condensed and diffused” (Curtis, Pajaczkowska, 1994, 199). Such a perspective is noticeable in Lanckoroński’s travelogue: “Na okręcie jestem już jak w domu i przekonywam się raz jeszcze, że nigdzie nie jest się tak panem swego czasu, jak między niebem a wodą” (1893, 3–4) (On a ship I’m already at home and I feel convinced once again that nowhere is one more a master of one’s time than between the sky and water). There is, however, one important difference between the quoted statement made by researchers and the remark by Lanckoroński. The traveller does not write about a holiday locale or any destination, he sees value in being in transit.

Sapieha presents a generally similar, but more nuanced approach to the issue of time being part of what makes travel valuable. In a provocative and ironic way, typical of his literary travelogue, he contrasts the activities of the “tourist-traveller” exploring his or her destination with the time spent in transit on board.

Na lądzie, prowadząc to życie, właściwie tak czcze, podróżnika-turysty, będąc od rana do wieczora zajęтым tym tysiącem rozmaitych spraw, które nie są niczem innym jak spotęgowaniem próżniactwem, nigdy na nic czasu się niema. A co najsmutniejsza, to owa próżnia, która mimowoli tworzy się w głowie turysty, próżnia rosnąca i potęgująca się w miarę trwania podróży! (Sapieha, 1899, 119)

(On land, leading the life of a traveller-tourist, which is actually so insipid, as it is occupied from morning until evening with a thousand different matters that are nothing other than increased idleness, one never has time for anything. The saddest thing of all is this vacuum, which is involuntarily created in the mind of the tourist, a vacuum which grows and intensifies as the journey continues!)

Sapieha distinguishes two modes of spending time: being busy in a useless fashion and using time in a worthy manner. According to him, sightseeing corresponds to the first mode, being merely busy does not necessarily mean doing anything valuable. Remarks by this aristocratic traveller are underpinned by a broader 19th-century discourse on mass tourism as a worthless activity practiced by tourists, whose lack of cultural competence renders them unable to achieve any valuable experience (Buzzard, 1993). While “antitouristic” travellers usually criticized others as shallow tourists, Sapieha talks about himself as a tourist. Additionally, we see here an example of Sapieha’s auto-orientalism, for he claims that touristic life is so attractive for Poles because it fits their laziness: as travellers they can pretend to be busy while doing nothing.

Being in transit is, however, a different story, for then time can be used in a worthy manner:

Na statku inaczej. Na statku, o ile morze pozwala, to znaczy o ile nie nadto się okręt rzuca i przewraca po falach, o ile uczucie z chorobą morską nader blisko spokrewnione, a składające się z niecierpliwości, strachu i znudzenia, nie nadto nad wszystkim innym górę bierze—na statku żyje się regularnie, zwiedzać niema [sic] co, więc z nudów zabierasz się do lektury, i jak ja: do pisania (Sapieha, 1899, 119).

(On a ship it is different. On a ship, as long as the sea permits, that is, provided the vessel does not toss and turn over on the waves, and the feeling closely related to seasickness, which consists of impatience, fear and boredom, does not override everything else—on a ship you live regularly and there is nothing to see, so out of boredom you take to reading and, like me, to writing.)

Unlike Lanckoroński, Sapieha did not see himself as the master of his own time on board, but in the end both did the same: they wrote. Both consider intellectual work to be a valuable way of spending time and find that the isolated environment of the ship makes it possible. Besides Lanckoroński and Sapieha, some other travellers were also able to use time on board productively as well. Fałat was a painter, and although few watercolours from his trips survived, the one which is most often commented on by art historians presents a scene on a ship (*Na statku-kupcy na wyspie Ceylon*; Aboard ship—traders on Ceylon island) (Król, 2009, 40). The painter even earned money for a ticket from Hong Kong to Yokohama by preparing the portrait of a rich Englishman (Fałat, 197, 122–123).

Zarubin's experience of time aboard the ship was totally different. As quoted in the Introduction, he considered the voyage to be a "blank spot" in his life, an example of how steamship travel, although vastly quicker than sailing, could still be experienced as "slowing down" (Ashmore, 2013). The overwhelming heat during a passage through the Indian Ocean made him bored and fatigued: "Человек ходит без дела, без цели слоняясь из угла в угол, не имея развлечений, не видя возможности заняться чем-нибудь от нестерпимой жары" (Zarubin, 1881b, 118) (A man walks around aimlessly from corner to corner, with no entertainment, seeing no opportunity to do anything because of the unbearable heat). Travellers on ships in the 19th century often expressed

“anxiousness about unproductivity” and complained about “enforced idleness” (Pietsch, 2016, 217). Zarubin, a highly cultured traveller pursuing specific intellectual goals, was living under the modern imperative not to waste time, so “enforced idleness” on a ship was also a mental torment.

Zarubin shared this feeling with the deportee Piłsudski, who travelled in far less comfortable conditions. Therefore, despite a difference in the type of travel as well as the dissimilarity of both narratives (literary travelogue vs letters,) they experienced similar emotions. The imperative of using time worthily combined with the ethos of a public educator and a belief in the moral value of education led Piłsudski to assume the role of a teacher among other exiles, the majority of whom were criminals who could neither read nor write (Piłsudski, Inoue, 1999, 47). Despite his ambitious aspirations, however, Piłsudski was unable to fulfil them on board. The physical situation simply made work impossible: “Духота, грязь, головная боль, качка, необходимость проводить почти целый день лежа, бездействие, делающие все вместе человека раздражительным, ленивым, неспособным к чему бы то ни было” (Piłsudski, Inoue, 1999, 46) (The stuffiness, the dirt, the headaches, the rocking, the need to spend almost the whole day lying down, the inactivity, all of them making a man irritable, lazy, incapable of doing anything at all). The Polish exile’s feelings make an interesting comparison with those of Ivan Yuvachev, another deportee from our corpus. In one of his letters, Piłsudski mentions a person who constantly studies the Bible (Piłsudski, Inoue, 1999, 26). This person can be easily identified as Yuvachev. Letters sent by Yuvachev to his family indeed contain numerous references to the Bible and even his own religious poetry:

Волнуемы в морской пучине,
Томимся в душной тесноте,
И плачем горько в злой кручине,
Как некогда пророк в ките (Ювачев, 2016, 98).

(Wavering in the depths of the sea,
We languish in a cramped space,
And we weep bitterly in our wicked grief,
Like once a prophet in a whale.) (Yuvachev, 2016, 98)

The physical experience of being transported below deck was described by both Piłsudski and Yuvachev as torment. However, Orthodox spirituality allowed Yuvachev to cope with the resulting suffering better and to use his time more meaningfully.

The experience of time aboard ship also meant one of comparison, especially for travellers voyaging through the tropics during winter months who tended to juxtapose the weather conditions with the situation at home. Their earlier lives in Europe had formed particular expectations associated with specific dates and those expectations clashed with the bodily experience of heat in another latitude:

На другой день, 13 апреля, было Вербное Воскресенье. Там, на родине, в далекой и холодной России, в это время только что начинают распускаться вербы, а здесь мы уже любовались прелестными фигами и миртами, которые в изобилии доставил в этот день на пароход русский консул (Зарубин, 1881а, 289).

(The next day, 13 April, was Palm Sunday. Back home, in far-away and cold Russia, palms were just beginning to blossom, but here we were already admiring the lovely figs and myrtles that the Russian consul had delivered in abundance to the steamer that day.) (Zarubin, 1881a, 289)

Experiencing time on a ship was also linked with an action that is very simple for an ordinary man, despite the huge amount of science and technology that lies behind it: glancing at a clock. In the period included in our research, railways, steamship and telegraphs had already led to the construction of global networks of communication and to precise timekeeping being in high demand. The worldwide system of time zones that had been proposed by Sandor Fleming (1827–1915) in 1876 was not yet universally established, however, even after the International Meridian Conference (1884) (Ogle, 2015, 14). Hence Fałat (1987, 108) reports on how during a journey to the East a clock is moved forward by 15 or 20 minutes every day, which was greeted by travellers with joy, because it meant that each day dinner was served earlier. Although Fałat travelled across the Pacific in 1885, hence after the international date line was established in 1884, he did not write anything about that boundary.

It was commented upon by Lanckoroński and Hugo Zapałowicz, however, who travelled a few years later. Zapałowicz (1899, 174), en route from San Francisco to Japan, was amused that one day of his life had disappeared. Lanckoroński (1893, 272), travelling from Asia to America, was much more philosophical. He remarked that at the International Date Line the ultimate east borders the ultimate west, which represented, for him, evidence that everything on Earth is relative. But he also observed that in the western hemisphere the weather was as cold as in the eastern. In this way Lanckoroński amusingly contrasted bodily sensations with an abstract order of human culture. Geographers divided the Earth into the western and eastern hemispheres, but people experienced the same temperature on both sides of the meridian. Multiple ways of timekeeping are described in a thought-provoking manner by Jovanović, who claims that there were three times on a ship. One was Greenwich Mean Time, which was used by sailors to establish the longitudinal position of the ship. Latitude was measured using a sextant three times a day, and in this way the second time was defined, namely the time of the ship in its current position. Finally, the third time was shown by the traveller's own clock, and it was home time. According to Jovanović, this time never changed, so when the traveller wanted to know what time it was in his current location, he had to glance at his clock and count the time difference from that indicated as his home time. Jovanović travelled in the years 1878–1882, i.e. before the International Meridian Conference, nevertheless his account shows how experiencing time on a ship was mediated by different temporal orders. One single universal time was known due to a great invention of the 18th century—marine chronometer (Sobel, 2010)—that was linked with London, centre of the global economy in the 19th century. Complicated navigational procedures were used to determine local ship time. Sextant was another instrument created in the 18th century, but the procedure of measuring position with it was much older. Finally, private timekeeping was to some extent irrational, instead of simply moving his clock forward the traveller forced himself to counting the time difference, but in this way he maintained connection with home.

Conclusions

In this article I have analysed two different aspects of the experience of travel by steamship in the 1869–1890 period: the involvement in multiple mobilities and the perception of time. Through the examination of relatively extensive sources, consisting of 12 accounts in 3 languages, it was possible to demonstrate a variety of phenomena associated with steamships and diverse meanings attached to this new technology. All of the analysed accounts constitute a testimony to the increasing contacts between Europe and Asia after 1869, when the opening of the Suez Canal and improved steamships allowed for much easier, regular and more comfortable travel (at least for some passengers). New types of travel appeared (modern tourists like Lanckoroński and Sapieha), while old types were transformed: sailors (Ivelić), soldiers (Sienkiewicz) but also deportees (Piłsudski, Yuvachev) travelled like never before. The analysed material, although limited in scope, suggests a few general conclusions about the phenomenon of modern travel on a steamship.

Firstly, travellers still experienced multiple mobilities; they observed preindustrial means of transportation being used, sometimes romanticizing them (Zarubin). Ivelić, although he saw advantages of the new technology, had a huge attachment to sailing ships. The experience of multiple mobilities can be linked to the uneven spread of modernity. Travellers mostly celebrated steamships that enabled them to enjoy an unprecedented level of mobility. Nonetheless, modern means of transportation coexisted with traditional ones, and sometimes the latter were indispensable for using the former (such as traditional boats conveying passengers from a steamship to the shore, or coal transported by sailing ships). In addition, the analysed sources also display how new technology served traditional practices. For example, they describe Muslim pilgrims travelling to Mecca by steamship.

Secondly, the shift from sailing ships to steamships in general meant safer, less adventurous, more regular modes of travelling. Lanckoroński claimed that a journey around the world in the 1880s was easier than a trip from Warsaw to Paris 50 years earlier. Upper-class tourists like Lanckoroński, Sapieha and Fałat could spend their time on board productively and comfortably. The material analysed in this article thus

demonstrates the rise of modern tourism. In some cases, however, voyaging was far from perfect. Travellers could experience seasickness, tropical heat and outbreaks of disease: Zarubin was so tired by his voyage around Asia that he decided to return home via Siberia, because the sea journey for him was like a “blank spot” in his life.

Thirdly, the improved mobility due to modern technology was accompanied by modernisation in other fields, like the escalation of a nation state bureaucracy and globalised efforts on disease prevention. Consequently, despite new possibilities, the movement of some travellers was constrained by quarantine (Krestovskiy, Jurkiewicz, Ivelić, Sienkiewicz). Besides, Piłsudski and Yuvachev exemplified how state institutions could use industrial means of transport to move people from one side of Eurasia to another, simultaneously restricting their mobility. They travelled much further and in a much shorter time than it was possible for previous generations, but they were mostly confined to a small space under deck.

Finally, timekeeping on a ship as portrayed by Jovanović, and the crossing of the international date line as described by Lanckoroński and Zapałowicz, show how travellers functioned in a web of connections, somewhat contrary to the concept of ship as an isolated microcosm.¹⁶ In this way the authors analysed portray how steamships were extending the expansion of modern institutions and concepts. Even in the wide-open space of the ocean, the abstract order of human time and space enveloped the wanderers.

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¹⁶ On ships as microcosms, see also Burgess (2016, 147–149, 249). On ships as nodes in network of global connections, see Wenzlhuemer (2016).

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