

Ship Newspapers and Passenger Life Aboard Transoceanic Steamships in the Late Nineteenth Century

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1. Introduction: “A striking departure”

It was around midday on a sunny day sometime in the late 1880s when a mixed crowd of people had assembled on the pier at Brindisi harbour. Some were harbour officials, some street vendors. Others had come simply to wave goodbye to the steamer that was just about to leave Brindisi for England. One of the passengers on the outbound ship described the scene as follows:

[T]here was the usual crowd of officials, soldiers, police, etc., resplendent in uniforms all the colours of the rainbow, together with the usual crowd of villainous looking men, all with, apparently, nothing to do but watch the ship go away.¹

The “usual crowd,” however, was in for an unusual surprise. Out of the blue, a group of passengers on the steamer started to fire a huge number of oranges at the people on the pier. During the shore excursion, the fruits had been bought (and stocked for precisely this purpose) from the very vendors at the pier who were now under fire. According to the report of the aforementioned passenger—who was delightfully partaking in the business—the

[...] fire was briskly returned from the shore, and soon the air was thick with yellow oranges. But our ship had a hurricane-deck, and from this high position we aimed our oranges, so we had the crowd to fire into (and though we preferred to hit a fellow with as big a feather in his hat as possible, or one with the most stupendous thing on in uniforms, we were not very particular, as long as we hit someone), we had far the best of the battle.²

1 *Massilia Gazette*, 17.

2 *Ibid.*

Apparently, the passengers gleefully enjoyed themselves and took some pride in the havoc that they wreaked on the shore. But the real climax of the little skirmish was still to come.

It was a fine thing to see the helter-skelter and the rushing and shoving to avoid our fire. Meantime, another little incident occurred which we enjoyed almost as much as shying at the “natives.”³

One of the ship’s junior officers was a good-looking fellow. During the passage from the East he had apparently made quite some impression on several of the young ladies on board—and he had enjoyed every minute of it. At Brindisi he had to leave the ship to take up a new position. However, he was determined not to simply leave the steamer like any other passenger would do. Instead,

[...] he had planned for a striking departure, and as the vessel gradually hauled off from the shore... he left her in a small boat, with a man to row him. There the fine young fellow stood, in the stern of the boat, his face tanned with many suns, leaving for a new call of duty [...]! [W]aving his cap sadly in farewell to the group of girls who, with tear-stained faces and tearful eyes, leaned over the taffrail, waving him back regretful adieux. And so he was slowly being rowed ashore... It was an impressive sight, and a striking and an affecting departure.⁴

It is not particularly difficult to guess what happened—what had to happen—next.

Unfortunately for the young officer, the ship had got almost out of range of the shore, and we had plenty of oranges left. He was a lovely mark... Alas for the best laid plans! The heroic departure, so well contrived, was spoiled. Instead of the edifying spectacle of the noble young fellow standing erect in the stern of the boat waving his sad farewells, we saw him tumbling about from one end of the boat to the other—dodging oranges!⁵

This light-hearted little episode has not been recorded in the anonymous author’s memoirs, diaries, or letters, which so often serve as our principal sources regarding the everyday life of historical actors of globalisation. Rather, these lines hail from a ship newspaper. The author has written them for

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid., 18.

5 Ibid.

the entertainment and distraction of the passengers of the *S.S. Massilia* on her way from London to Sydney in the year 1890. While the portrayed incident did not take place during this particular journey, but apparently during an earlier stopover of the author at Brindisi, the account of the skirmish was published in the second issue of the *Massilia Gazette* on the occasion of leaving Brindisi eastbound. It was the general purpose of the piece to add colour and context to one of the landmarks on the steamer's route. And in the eyes of many of the passengers, Brindisi in particular seemed to need some colour and context to make it just that bit more interesting for the traveller. At least, this transpires from another short, anonymous piece in the same issue of the *Massilia Gazette* entitled *The Sleeping Beauty*:

It is stated that Brindisi has been asleep for six hundred years, and has only just woke up. It is a pity its slumber was disturbed; or, having disturbed it, it is a pity it was not given a bath when it woke!⁶

This serves to illustrate that, even if reporting on seemingly unrelated incidents (as in the Brindisi article), remote places, or fictional people, ship newspapers were primarily concerned with passenger life on board. While to date there is little information as to how common the production of ship newspapers on board long-distance passenger steamers in the late nineteenth century was, we do know that it was certainly not a rare thing. The passages between Great Britain and its Australasian colonies could last weeks or months at a time and were notorious for their dullness. To fight what Jeffrey Auerbach has identified as one particularly trying instance of *imperial boredom*,⁷ the passengers on many journeys got organised and elected a committee “for promoting the entertainment of the passengers during the voyage.”⁸ Besides organising social activities like sports or musical events, such a committee often pushed for the compilation of a ship newspaper, i.e. a newspaper produced by passengers for passengers only with the means available on board—and thus concentrated exclusively on topics that were of interest to the travellers.

So far, ship newspapers have been almost completely overlooked by historians—despite the fact that they are unique, almost unsurpassable sources for life on passenger ships in the late nineteenth century. With the help of this particular set of sources, we want to draw the attention of more historians to what happened on such ships and, thus, to ships as historical

6 *Ibid.*, 20.

7 Jeffrey Auerbach, “Imperial Boredom,” *Common Knowledge* 11, no. 2 (2005).

8 *Massilia Gazette*, 7.

spaces in their own right. During a long-distance voyage the passengers' lives were not on stand-by. The people on board continued to be social beings. They went on talking, sharing their experiences, receiving new input, networking, and so on—but they did so within the relatively narrow framework of the ship, within a narrow and somewhat artificial community of travellers. The time that passengers on intercontinental journeys spent on board a steamer, therefore, was not insignificant. Rather, it was a time in-transit during which both origin and destination were unreal and hazy places; a time, when the “before” and the “after” were constantly re-imagined through the experiences on board and gained their meaning only through the passage.⁹

These experiences, the expectations and anxieties, but also the daily routine of the passengers are mirrored in the ship newspapers. In this article, we seek to demonstrate how these extraordinary publications can serve as lenses not only on shipboard life but actually on historical actors of globalisation in a more general context. First, we seek to highlight why and how ship newspapers played an important role in the shaping of the peculiar social space of the passenger ship. We will then give a brief overview of the context in which these newspapers were produced and what kind of news they contained. In a third step, we will introduce two specific examples of topics discussed in ship newspapers and outline possible fields of research on which ship newspapers can shed new light.

The study is based on the exemplary analysis of all issues of two ship newspapers, the *Massilia Gazette* (Figure 1) and the *Sutlej Gazette* (Figure 2). They appeared on Peninsular and Oriental steamers during voyages from London. The *Massilia* (Figure 3) travelled to Sydney in 1890, the *Sutlej* (Figure 4) to Bombay in 1892. Both ships carried first and second-class passengers only. Hence, their gazettes reflect the experiences of a relatively elite group of travellers and only few references are made, for example, to the everyday life of the seamen on board. Nevertheless it can clearly be seen how “steam liners indeed represented the British Empire in microcosm, with European passengers divided by class and crew divided by both rank and race.”¹⁰

9 This has recently been demonstrated in the case of the Scottish ship surgeon James Thomas Wilson in Tamson Pietsch, “A British Sea: Making Sense of Global Space in the Late Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of Global History* 5, no. 3 (2010).

10 Janet J. Ewald, “Crossers of the Sea: Slaves, Freedmen, and Other Migrants in the Northwestern Indian Ocean, C. 1750-1914,” *The American Historical Review* 105, no. 1 (2000): 81.

The Massilia Gazette.

THE SHIP'S NEWSPAPER.

A
Reproduction of a Newspaper Published Weekly

ON BOARD THE

PENINSULAR AND ORIENTAL STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY'S
ROYAL MAIL STEAMSHIP "MASSILIA."

(CAPTAIN CHARLES FRASER),

DURING

A Voyage from London to Sydney,

NOVEMBER 13TH, 1890, TO JANUARY 1ST, 1891.

EDITED BY EDWARD NOYES.

PUBLISHED BY SUBSCRIPTION.

Fig. 1: The cover page of the bound and printed Massilia Gazette

The "Sutlej Gazette."

A JOURNAL

PUBLISHED ON THE

P. & O. S.S. "SUTLEJ,"

ON HER VOYAGE FROM

LONDON TO BOMBAY, (*en route* FOR CHINA),

OCTOBER 6 TO 30, 1892.

SUBSCRIPTION EDITION.

Bombay:
PRINTED AT THE "BOMBAY GAZETTE" STEAM PRINTING WORKS, FORT.

1892.

Fig. 2: The cover page of the bound and printed Sutlej Gazette

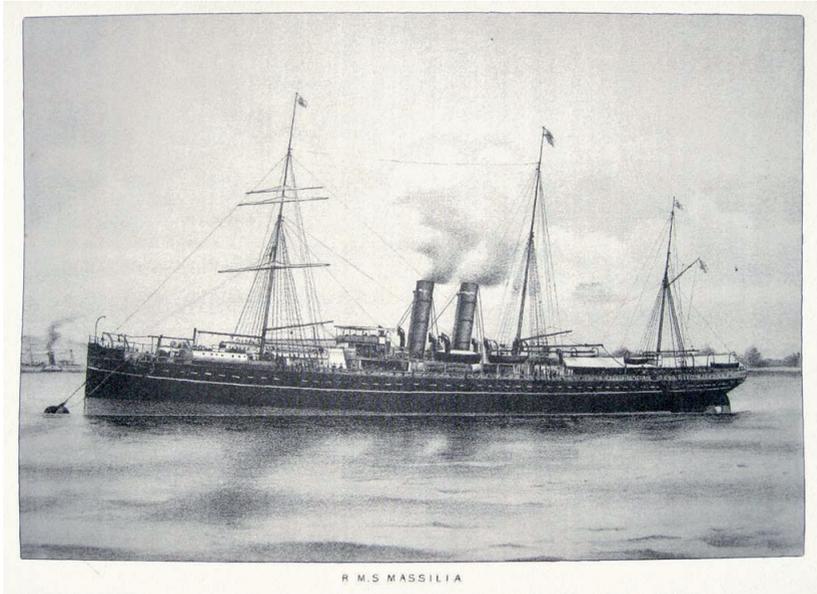


Fig. 3: The Royal Mail Steamship Massilia as depicted in the bound and printed version of the Massilia Gazette

2. Ships as floating spaces

Ships and their movements have traditionally been of prime interest to historians involved in imperial, global or economic history, and other such fields. Therefore, interest in shipping and maritime history in general is certainly not new. Mainly, however, the central focus of maritime history rested on port cities, on ocean littorals, on the routes that people and goods took, and on the people and communities connected by maritime transport. Ships have mostly been acknowledged as carriers and facilitators, not as historically relevant arenas in themselves. They have been treated as classic black boxes.¹¹ Only input and output have been considered as relevant. The places of departure have received attention just as the places of arrival have. But the passage itself has largely been ignored (there are, of course, exceptions as shall be seen below). This is all the more surprising as ship journeys often took a substantial amount of time during which the crew and passengers—

¹¹ For the practice of “blackboxing” see, for instance, Bruno Latour, *Pandora’s Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies* (Cambridge MA, London: Harvard University Press, 1999).

The "Sutlej."

From a poem written by Mr. Ollivant, I. C. S., in 1891, and published in the Bombay Gazette.

" Here's a cheer for the Sutlej, and hail to the breeze,
As we gallantly cut through the crest of the seas,
In our ship that has borne us from rain and from fog,
To sun and to summer, with swift-spinning log :

Hip, Hip, Hurrah !

* And a cheer for our Captain, who helps us along,
With his thought, and his smile, and his word and his song,
In his uniform smart—so gallant and brave,
As he faces the deck of his home on the wave.

Hip, Hip, Hurrah !

" Here's a cheer for the Doctor, so ready to please :
He will sew up your head, or your arteries squeeze,
And through the long voyage he'll treat, with skill,
The sick and the sad—will that man of the pill.

Hip, Hip, Hurrah !

" For the Engineer, too, there's a cheer ! for we trust
To our jolly friend's skill that the Engines don't ' bust :

Hip, Hip, Hurrah !

" But, before I pass on, give a cheer for the crew,
For the stewards who toil, for the stokers who stew,

Hip, Hip, Hurrah !

" And the " boy " at the Bath with his tubs and his taps,
Who is haunted by ghosts in pyjamas and wraps,

Hip, Hip, Hurrah ! "

Fig. 4: A poem about the Sutlej published in the Bombay Gazette and reprinted in the Sutlej Gazette

coming from various social, professional and cultural backgrounds—occupied the same cramped and isolated space. During its journey from port to port, the ship became an isolated space detached from the rest of the world whose movement, however, at the same time co-constituted globality. As Michel Foucault noted in his 1967 lecture “Other Spaces,” ships are “Heterotopias par excellence”: “[T]he ship is a piece of floating space, a placeless place, that lives by its own devices, that is self-enclosed and, at the same time, delivered over to the boundless expanse of the ocean.”¹²

Port cities, on the other hand, have for a long time received attention from scholars interested in topics such as trade, migration, colonialism, or empire, to name but a few examples. Ports control the transition from land to sea and, thus, channel as well as filter the flows of people, goods, and information to and from a region. In order to facilitate these flows, port cities have developed particular infrastructures and *regimes*.¹³ As “ports of trade” in Karl Polanyi’s sense of the word¹⁴ they need to provide a privileged and sheltered place for contact and exchange. Particular contact zones evolve that work along a set of rules different to those of the rest of the world. These alternative rules can range from an intangible cosmopolitan atmosphere to the very concrete existence of a different (extra-territorial) legal basis. Historical interest in port cities has for a long time concentrated mostly on these peculiarities—on the economic role of ports, their function as colonial trading posts and gateways to a particular region, and on the necessary infrastructural features.¹⁵

12 Michel Foucault, “Different Spaces,” in *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, ed. Michel Foucault and James D. Faubion (New York: The New Press, 1998), 184f.

13 Thomas Zitelmann and Roland Wenzlhuemer, “Neue Paradigmen in Der Hafenforschung - Das Projekt ‘Hafenregime’ (ZMO Working Paper),” (Berlin: Zentrum Moderner Orient, 2004).

14 Karl Polanyi, “Ports of Trade in Early Societies,” *The Journal of Economic History* 23, no. 1 (1963). Karl Polanyi, *Ökonomie und Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1979).

15 See, for instance, Dilip K. Basu, ed. *The Rise and Growth of the Colonial Port Cities in Asia* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1985); Frank Broeze, ed. *Brides of the Sea: Port Cities of Asia from the 16th-20th Centuries* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989); Frank Broeze, ed. *Gateways of Asia: Port Cities of Asia in the 13th-20th Centuries* (London: Routledge, 1997); Gordon Jackson, “Ports, Ships and Government in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,” in *Frutta Di Mare. Evolution and Revolution in the Maritime World in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Proceedings of the Second International Congress of Maritime History, 5-8 June 1996, Amsterdam and Rotterdam, the Netherlands*, ed. Paul C. van Royen, Lewis R. Fischer, and David M. Williams (Amsterdam: Batavian Lion International, 1998); Adrian Jarvis, “Attempts at Reducing the Expenditure of the Port of Liverpool, 1836-1913,” in *Frutta Di Mare. Evolution and Revolution in the Maritime World in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Proceedings of the Second International Congress of Maritime History, 5-8 June 1996, Amsterdam and Rotterdam, the Netherlands*, ed. Paul C. van Royen, Lewis R. Fischer, and David M. Williams (Amsterdam: Batavian Lion International, 1998); Lewis R. Fischer and Adrian Jarvis, eds., *Harbours and Havens: Essays in Port History in Honour of Gordon Jackson* (St. John’s, Newfoundland: International Maritime Economic History Association, 1999).

The discussion of the evolution and function of ports, therefore, has long been embedded in economic and colonial contexts. In such discussions, the role of port cities and coastal areas as contact zones has, of course, been acknowledged but treated mainly from a functional viewpoint.

Inspired by postmodernist thought and a relational understanding of space, two innovative approaches to the study of maritime communities and their habitats have started to gain hold since the late 1990s. On the one hand, more and more scholars have started to pay attention to “the contact in ports between people of different origin. This contact situation has the potential to put into question one’s concept of the city, the nation, the religious community, civilization, or even time. [It] has the capacity to alter or reaffirm urban and national identities.”¹⁶ Applying this approach, historians have begun to look at the conditions, as well as at the consequences of cross-cultural contact and exchange, in port cities as regards the identities and spaces of local actors in this transcultural environment.¹⁷ Port cities and other comparable places guarding the exchange between people of different cultural backgrounds have, thus, been identified as prime theatres of cross-cultural encounters and transcultural phenomena.

Roughly at the same time, another group of scholars proposed to adopt a new notion about the historical geography of the sea¹⁸ and demanded to shift the seas “from the margins to the centre of academic vision.”¹⁹ The seas should no longer be seen as large bodies of water separating the principal scenes of historical action and often hindering and delaying interaction between them. Rather it should be acknowledged that in many cases the sea connects its

16 Lars Amenda and Malte Fuhrmann, “Hafenstädte in Globaler Perspektive. Einleitung,” *Comparativ* 17, no. 2 (2007): 7.

17 See, for instance, the special issue of *Comparativ* 17 (2) 2007 called *Hafenstädte: Mobilität, Migration, Globalisierung* or Sandip Hazareesingh, “Interconnected Synchronicities: The Production of Bombay and Glasgow as Modern Global Ports C. 1850-1880,” *Journal of Global History* 4 (2009).

18 Jerry H. Bentley, “Sea and Ocean Basins as Frameworks of Historical Analysis,” *Geographical Review* 89, no. 2 (1999); Hance D. Smith, “The Historical Geography of the Seas around the British Isles,” *Marine Policy* 23, no. 4-5 (1999); David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick, eds., *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Brigitte Reinwald and Jan-Georg Deutsch, eds., *Space on the Move. Transformations of the Indian Ocean Seascape in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2002); David Lambert, Luciana Martins, and Miles Ogborn, “Currents, Visions and Voyages: Historical Geographies of the Sea,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 32, no. 3 (2006).

19 Kären Wigen and Jessica Harland-Jacobs, “Guest Editor’s Introduction,” *Geographical Review* 89, no. 2 (1999): ii.

far-flung littorals, enables contact and exchange between them, and, thus, produces a new shared space held together by the sea. The term “seascape”²⁰ was coined to describe this space and researchers were offered “a prospectus for a version of historical geography that puts the seas and oceans at the centre of its concerns.”²¹ Especially in case studies on the Atlantic²² and the Indian Ocean²³ the validity and insightfulness of this approach has been amply demonstrated. It has been shown that the sea could, indeed, connect actors just as it could separate them. Ocean littorals have been described as places where cultural identities, economic activities, and social belonging have often been detached from geographic proximity. The concept of translocality has been developed in order to provide a theoretical-methodological framework to study such phenomena.²⁴

Integrating the idea of a “seascape” with that of port cities as cultural contact zones, provides an understanding of maritime communities that is translocal and transcultural at the same time. On the one hand, the sea and the countless connections made by traversing it, create socioeconomic and cultural communities whose members are scattered over a large geographic area.

20 Brigitte Reinwald, “Space on the Move. Perspectives on the Making of an Indian Ocean Seascape,” in *Space on the Move. Transformations of the Indian Ocean Seascape in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century*, ed. Brigitte Reinwald and Jan-Georg Deutsch (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2002); Jerry H. Bentley, Renate Bridenthal, and Kären Wigen, *Seascapes: Maritime Histories, Littoral Cultures, and Transoceanic Exchanges* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007).

21 Lambert, Martins, and Ogborn, “Currents, Visions and Voyages: Historical Geographies of the Sea,” 479.

22 Kevin H. O’Rourke and Jeffrey G. Williamson, *Globalization and History: The Evolution of a Nineteenth Century Atlantic Economy* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1999); Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra. Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon, 2000); Armitage and Braddick, eds., *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800*; Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness* (London: Verso, 2002); Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004).

23 Kenneth McPherson, *The Indian Ocean: A History of People and the Sea* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Reinwald and Deutsch, eds., *Space on the Move. Transformations of the Indian Ocean Seascape in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*; Michael Pearson, *The Indian Ocean* (London, New York: Routledge, 2003); Sugata Bose, *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Prabha Himanshu Ray and Edward A. Alpers, eds., *Cross Currents and Community Networks: The History of the Indian Ocean World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Markus P. M. Vink, “Indian Ocean Studies and the ‘New Thalassology,’” *Journal of Global History* 2, no. 1 (2007); Thomas R. Metcalf, *Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860–1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Pier M. Larson, *Ocean of Letters: Language and Creolization in an Indian Ocean Diaspora* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

24 Ulrike Freitag and Achim von Oppen, eds., *Translocality. The Study of Globalising Processes from a Southern Perspective* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2010).

Nevertheless they maintain a sense of community and identity, share a set of values and beliefs, and interact actively. On the other hand, port cities are now understood as contested scenes of contact and exchange where members of very different cultures seek to find their place. Both approaches share the conviction that traditional understandings of space offer little explanatory power here, as culture has been detached from location. The global has found its way into the local, while at the same time existing local(e)s have been connected in new ways, thus transforming the global.

Beyond doubt, such a new double-layered understanding of maritime cultures has been overdue and has already proved its usefulness. Strictly speaking, however, it has merely pushed for the acknowledgment of a new set of socioeconomic and cultural connections—a set of connections that uses the sea as a carrier rather than being obstructed by it. It has not pushed for a shift of attention regarding the theatres of history, the scenes of action. For instance, in their programmatic article *Currents, visions and voyages: historical geographies of the sea*, David Lambert, Luciana Martins and Miles Ogborn refer to a tripartite understanding of Atlantic history as proposed by David Armitage in the late 1990s.²⁵ Armitage suggests thinking of the field in three ways—those of *circum-Atlantic*, *trans-Atlantic*, and *cis-Atlantic* history.²⁶ The first concept treats the Atlantic as a “particular zone of exchange and interchange, circulation and transmission”²⁷ and is, thus, closely related to Lambert’s, Martins’ and Ogborn’s understanding of a historical geography of the sea. To them, circum-Atlantic history is “the history of the people who crossed the Atlantic, lived on its shores and participated in the communities it made possible, of their commerce and ideas, the diseases they carried, the flora they transplanted and the fauna they transported.”²⁸ While such a proposed focus on “circum-ocean” phenomena, and the contacts and exchanges constituting them is most worthwhile, it is important to see that this approach still treats the connections that made such contact possible as a black box. The interest of the new historical geography of the sea still lies on the land, on the ocean littorals, in the liminal places and contact zones arising as a consequence of endless sea-crossings. The historical actors that can be

25 Lambert, Martins, and Ogborn, “Currents, Visions and Voyages: Historical Geographies of the Sea.”

26 David Armitage, “Three Concepts of Atlantic History,” in *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, ed. David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 15.

27 *Ibid.*, 16.; Lambert, Martins, and Ogborn, “Currents, Visions and Voyages: Historical Geographies of the Sea,” 481.

28 Lambert, Martins, and Ogborn, “Currents, Visions and Voyages: Historical Geographies of the Sea,” 481.

found in these places have either already crossed an ocean or are about to do so. They have either already brought their cargoes (material or “invisible”) with them or are about to do so. They live and act in a transcultural space co-constituted by the sea but located on terra firma. The actual transit itself largely remains a black box in regard to which only input and output are of interest. The theatre of all action remains on land. The local(e)s which, in their interconnectedness, produce the global, remain on land, in the port cities, on the ocean littorals.

This is a pity as it fails to acknowledge the considerable amount of time that both mariners and passengers could (and would) spend on board intercontinental ships—in transit between two worlds and for all practical purposes in a state of limbo. Such passages lasted weeks, often months at a time, punctuated only by short calls at ports to refuel or pick up new passengers. Regular travellers could spend months and even years of their lives on board ships (and we need not speak only of the crew). Therefore, we believe that it is time to widen this all too narrow focus by directing scholarly attention to the passage itself. We want to look at what happens during the transit, on the high seas, on board vessels on long-distance routes. We want to shed light on the space of the ship—but also on the space of the ocean itself²⁹—as a historical arena, a zone of cultural contact and interaction, and we propose to examine the transcultural phenomena arising as a consequence. In short, we suggest looking into the black box of ocean-travel and ship voyages. While the history of ships and shipping has, of course, been intensively studied in a broad context, only very focused attention has so far been given to the time of the passage itself, let alone to questions of sociocultural interaction on board. Only very few studies looked at shipboard life at all.³⁰ Some were concerned with the professional life of the crew on sailing or steam vessels.³¹ Others were inspired by the recently renewed interest in the history of piracy and pirate life ashore and afloat.³² The most notable exception, however, can be found in a

29 See, for instance, Bernhard Klein and Gesa Mackenthun, eds., *Sea Changes. Historicizing the Ocean* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

30 Among the most insightful (and delightful to read) studies in this regard is still Greg Denning’s excellent book on the mutiny on the *Bounty*. Greg Denning, *Mr Bligh’s Bad Language. Passion, Power and Theatre on the Bounty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

31 See, for instance, Linebaugh and Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra. Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*; Jonathan Hyslop, “Steamship Empire: Asian, African and British Sailors in the Merchant Marine C. 1880-1945,” *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 44, no. 1 (2009); Frances Steel, *Oceania under Steam. Sea Transport and the Cultures of Colonialism, c. 1870-1914*, Studies in Imperialism (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 2011).

32 See, for instance, Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen,*

number of important studies on the Atlantic slave trade, convict transport, the migration of indentured labourers, and the so-called middle passages. These look not only at departures and arrivals, but also the passages.³³ The effort that these and other studies make to actually explain what happens during a ship's passage cannot be overestimated as they face the fact that

[i]n many ways, convict ships [just as slave or indentured labour ships—R.W./M.O.] are empty archival spaces. Colonial officials recorded their departure and arrival, and enumerated and described convicts on board, often in meticulous details. However, the limitations of these records make the experiences of convict men and women on board transportation vessels more difficult to access.³⁴

Given the scarcity of sources that allow researchers access to the passage itself, it is hardly surprising that to date there are only a handful of studies that have looked at the question of how being in transit aboard a ship also meant being in transit between two regions, two cultures. Andrew Hassam, for instance, analyzed emigrants' travels to Australia as a particular rite of passage and provided a helpful interpretation of passages as formative periods in emigrants' lives in the nineteenth century.³⁵ Bill Bell studied how

Pirates and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age*; Michael Kempe, *Fluch Der Weltmeere. Piraterie, Völkerrecht Und Internationale Beziehungen, 1500-1900* (Frankfurt a. M., New York: Campus, 2010); Michael Kempe, "'Even in the Remotest Corners of the World': Globalized Piracy and International Law, 1500-1900," *Journal of Global History* 5, no. 3 (2010).

33 See, for instance, Emma Christopher, Cassandra Pybus, and Marcus Rediker, eds., *Many Middle Passages. Forced Migration and the Making of the Modern World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); Maria Diedrich, Henry L. Gates, and Carl Pedersen, eds., *Black Imagination and the Middle Passage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Robert Harms, *The Diligent. A Voyage through the Worlds of the Slave Trade* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); Linebaugh and Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra. Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*; Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (London: Viking Penguin, 2007); Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness*; Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery. A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge Ma: Harvard University Press, 2007); Clare Anderson, "'the Feringees Are Flying-the Ship Is Ours!' the Convict Middle Passage in Colonial South and Southeast Asia, 1790-1860," *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 42, no. 2 (2005); Verene A. Shepherd, *Maharani's Misery. Narratives of a Pas-sage from India to the Caribbean* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2002); Adapa Sanyanarayana, *Birds of Passage. Migration of South Indian Labour Communities to South-East Asia, 19-20th Centuries, A.D.*, Clara Working Paper 11 (Amsterdam 2001); Ewald, "Crossers of the Sea: Slaves, Freedmen, and Other Migrants in the Northwestern Indian Ocean, C. 1750-1914."

34 Anderson, "'the Feringees Are Flying-the Ship Is Ours!' the Convict Middle Passage in Colonial South and Southeast Asia, 1790-1860," 143.

35 Andrew Hassam, *Sailing to Australia. Shipboard Diaries by Nineteenth-Century British Emigrants*

such passages to Australia were meant to be filled by edifying shipboard reading.³⁶ In a recent article, Tamson Pietsch hints at how social and cultural exposition during passages to India and Australia could shape perceptions of the self and the other.³⁷ Michael Pesek focuses on steamer passages to the German colonies. He analyses nineteen travel accounts of German colonial administrators, soldiers, and tourists for the significance of the journey itself in respect to the imperial project.³⁸ In another piece, John Ryan examines the sea voyages of the wealthy Brassey family and the narratives of these journeys. He explores “how Lady Brassey’s narratives of these grand oceanic tours surveyed and domesticated the world beyond England, and how they were shaped through the construction of the *Sunbeam* [i.e. the ship] as a ‘home’ in which discourses of domesticity, gender and empire were played out.”³⁹ Gopalan Balachandran looks at the situation of Indian seamen on board mostly British ocean-going vessels in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Balachandran primarily examines “forms of protest and defiance of authority.” He emphasises the “transnational and trans-cultural context of employment of Indian seamen” and puts forward that “their encounters with bosses and others in authority invite us to re-examine pervasive notions of cultural difference—‘owned’ as well as attributed.”⁴⁰ Together with several other contributions to the 2006 special issue of the *Journal of Historical Geography*,⁴¹ these few articles are among the few pieces of scholarship that try to draw our attention to the role of the ship as a zone of socio-cultural interaction.

3. Ship newspapers as source material

Studying ship newspapers as historical sources can be one way to gain more

(Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994).

36 Bill Bell, “Bound for Australia: Shipboard Reading in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Journeys Through the Market. Travel, Travellers and the Book Trade*, ed. Robin Myers and Michael Harris (New Castle: Oak Knoll Press, 1999).

37 Pietsch, “A British Sea: Making Sense of Global Space in the Late Nineteenth Century.”

38 Michael Pesek, “Von Europa nach Afrika. Deutsche Passagiere auf der Dampferpassage in die Kolonie Deutsch-Ostafrika,” *Werkstatt Geschichte* 53 (2009).

39 James R. Ryan, “‘Our Home on the Ocean’: Lady Brassey and the Voyages of the *Sunbeam*, 1874-1887,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 32 (2006): 579. Regarding discourses of gender see also Frances Steel, “Women, Men and the Southern Octopus: Shipboard Gender Relations in the Age of Steam, 1870s-1910s,” *International Journal of Maritime History* 20, no. 2 (2008).

40 Gopalan Balachandran, “Cultures of Protest in Transnational Contexts: Indian Seamen Abroad, 1886-1945,” *Transforming Cultures eJournal* 3, no. 2 (2008): 45.

41 *Journal of Historical Geography* 32 (2006).

direct access to such interaction on ship passages at least as far as nineteenth- and twentieth-century steamer passages are concerned. But what exactly are ship newspapers? There are different forms of ship newspapers that share only one principal characteristic: namely that they have been produced aboard ships for the exclusive perusal of the people on the ship. The best-known example of a ship newspaper is probably the *Cunard Daily Bulletin*. It was published for the first time in 1901 on the *RMS Lucania* and gave passengers news received by wireless. Thus, it was produced by the Cunard crew for the passengers in order to give them information about the vessel but also about what was going on in the world. Due to its semi-official character and the fact that it has been produced by Cunard, many issues of the bulletin survived. Its history is reasonably well documented (although not as thoroughly as one might expect) and, thus, the *Cunard Daily Bulletin* very much shaped our image of ship newspapers. However, it was neither the first ship newspaper nor was it representative regards their role and function.

With wireless telegraphy available on board it was the purpose of the *Cunard Daily Bulletin* to connect the shipboard community with the rest of the world. The ship newspapers that we are dealing with here, however, aimed at making the most out of being totally unconnected to the outside world. They hail from an earlier decade, namely from the 1890s. These were pre-Marconi times. No wireless telegrams could be received or sent on the ship. On the high seas there was no international news to be distributed in these papers. Rather, these papers were produced by the passengers themselves for entertainment and information. The initiative to start and edit a ship newspaper mostly had to come from the passengers themselves. As pointed out in the introduction, this was often part of a broader set of measures taken against imperial boredom. During the first days at sea the passengers would form committees like the *Massilia's* "committee for promoting the entertainment of the passengers during the voyage." This committee divided its duties in activities such as "drama," "sports and dancing," and "music," and raised funds to meet its expenses.⁴² A similar "entertainment and games committee" was formed aboard the *Sutlej*, after a general meeting of the passengers convened by the captain.⁴³ By organising social events like cricket matches, musical events, and dances they tried to amuse the passengers and imitated the social activities

42 *Massilia Gazette*, 7. During some journeys, subcommittees seem to have mushroomed with the intention of attracting the satirical attention of the ship newspaper contributors. The *Massilia Gazette*, for instance, features the following short notice in its third issue: "A new sub-committee! Passengers will be glad to learn that the committee have appointed a new sub-committee, consisting of Captain Fraser, Messrs. Daniel, Rogers, Cooper, Lee, Hetherington and Bakie, to attend to the navigation of the ship." *Massilia Gazette*, 30.

43 *Sutlej Gazette*, 14.

on land. Consequently, the newspapers devoted much space to report about the committees' events and took part in the production of a comfortable social life.

On some particularly boring days the appearance of a new issue was the main event of the day.⁴⁴ Ship newspapers, therefore, seem to have been an essential part of the social life of passenger ships in the late nineteenth century⁴⁵—at least as far as the more affluent passengers were concerned. At the moment, our overview of surviving issues of ship newspapers is still too rudimentary as to allow us to make any claims as to the class pervasiveness of shipboard newspaper production. Most of the exemplars we have been able to look at seem to have been produced almost exclusively by first- and second-class passengers and, thus, by an elite group among historical actors. This is certainly true for the two particular papers that serve as our main examples in this article—the *Massilia* and the *Sutlej Gazettes*. These publications have been selected as case studies due to their comparative breadth and depth. Both appeared regularly throughout the journey, filled a remarkable number of pages in every issue, and covered a wide spectrum of topics and genres. Hence, they seem to have been able to draw on a very broad basis of relatively well-educated contributors that submitted texts for publication. The entire design as well as the contents of these and many other ship newspapers point to the upper-class passengers as their principal producers and users. We have to keep in mind, however, that in the historical archives mostly such ship newspapers survive that have later been printed and sent to subscribers—a practice certainly more likely and widespread among well-to-do passengers. It might well be that a similar form of whiling away transit time by sharing onboard information was also an established practice—but at this time we have next to no dependable evidence for this.

44 *Massilia Gazette*, 18.

45 The first issue of *The Carthaginian*—published aboard the S. S. *Carthage* on its way from London to Sydney on 14 November 1885—opens with the following words: “The impossibility of any English community existing very long without a newspaper is now so fully admitted that we make no apology to our readers for the appearance of the *Carthaginian*. Neither do we purpose to follow the course pursued by some of our contemporaries in indulging in a cackle of congratulations upon the superiority of our ship to all other ships, of our captain and officers to all other captains and all other officers; nor would we dwell upon the fact that our body of passengers excels in geniality, kindness, and all other virtues every other body, equally numerous, that is now afloat. We shall merely take these things for granted[.]” By referring to and making fun of the self-assertion of other bodies afloat, these lines clearly point to how widespread a practice the production of a ship newspaper must have been in the late nineteenth century. *The Carthaginian*, 1.

Just like their counterparts on land, ship newspapers usually had an editor in chief and one or more subeditors who overlooked the production of each issue. The *Sutlej Gazette*, for instance, features an imprint that lists its editor “WM. DIGBY, C.I.E.,” its assistant editor “H. G. PEARSE, I.C.S.,” and “CONTRIBUTORS, AND OTHERS, who have assisted in the literary and caligraphical [sic] production of the *Gazette*.”⁴⁶ (Figure 5) It is very likely that the *Sutlej Gazette* owes its semi-professional appearance to the proficiency of William Digby. He edited several newspapers in India and had travelled regularly between England and India since 1871.⁴⁷ On board, Digby apparently used his journalistic expertise to help while away the time during the passage of the *Sutlej*.

However, when it came to filling the many blank pages of an issue the editors’ powers were limited. To produce a ship newspaper was considered to be a “purely mutual undertaking” and, thus, depended on the active contribution of the people on board. The editorial of the *Massilia Gazette* explicitly appealed to everyone: “So now, fellow-passengers, send in your ‘copy,’ your sketches, your funny jokes and your advertisements.”⁴⁸ The contributions that reached the editors were usually typed out with typewriters, as the *Massilia Gazette* explicates in the preface (Figure 6).⁴⁹ All drawings were done by hand and inserted as pictorial supplements. In this way, only very few copies could be produced on board and these had to be circulated and shared among the passengers. Regarding one of its earlier issues, the *Sutlej Gazette* states that “every head was buried in the *Sutlej Gazette* and groups of eager readers

46 *Sutlej Gazette*, 3.

47 Brown, Frank Herbert/Kaul, Chandrika: Art. “Digby, William (1849–1904)”, in: *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford 2004, accessed May 05, 2012. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32823>.

48 *Massilia Gazette*, 7. And when the editors felt that some passengers or a particular group of passengers did not contribute enough to the newspaper, they could revert to “name and shame” tactics as page eighteen of the *Sutlej Gazette* illustrates. Under the headline “Ladies Page” it features only the following short editor’s introduction—the rest of the page has been left blank: “When the idea of issuing the *Gazette* was mooted the ladies on board were most eager for its production. ‘Oh! Yes! Most certainly. Delighted to do everything we can,’ and so on. This page will show what the journal would have been like if—in this respect—we had trusted to the ladies. Of course, in everything else the fair sex on board are wholly to be depended upon.” *Ibid.*, 18.

49 *Massilia Gazette*, 1.

The "Sutlej Gazette."

EDITOR:

WM. DIGBY, C.I.E.

ASSISTANT EDITOR:

H. G. PEARSE, I.C.S.

CONTRIBUTORS, AND OTHERS, who have assisted in the literary and caligraphical production of the *Gazette*.

MISS ANDREE.

„ BARTLETT.

MR. A. BIRDWOOD.

„ R. E. CANDY, I.C.S.

REV. F. G. CHOLMONDELEY.

MR. WM. DIGBY, C.I.E.

MISS MARSH.

MR. J. H. MARTIN,

„ A. W. D. OAKES.

„ H. G. PEARSE, I.C.S.

„ F. E. ROBERTSON, C.I.E.

„ S. N. SQUIRE, D. P. W.

„ F. B. O'SHEA.

„ S. TOMLINSON.

DR. SOLTAU.

„ PRIDMORE.

MR. E. H. TUCK, D. P. W.

CAPTAIN WORCESTER, R.N.R.

MR. W. J. SIMMONS.

„ SMITH (" of Asia.")

„ H. J. WELBY.

Fig. 5: The "imprint" of the Sutlej Gazette

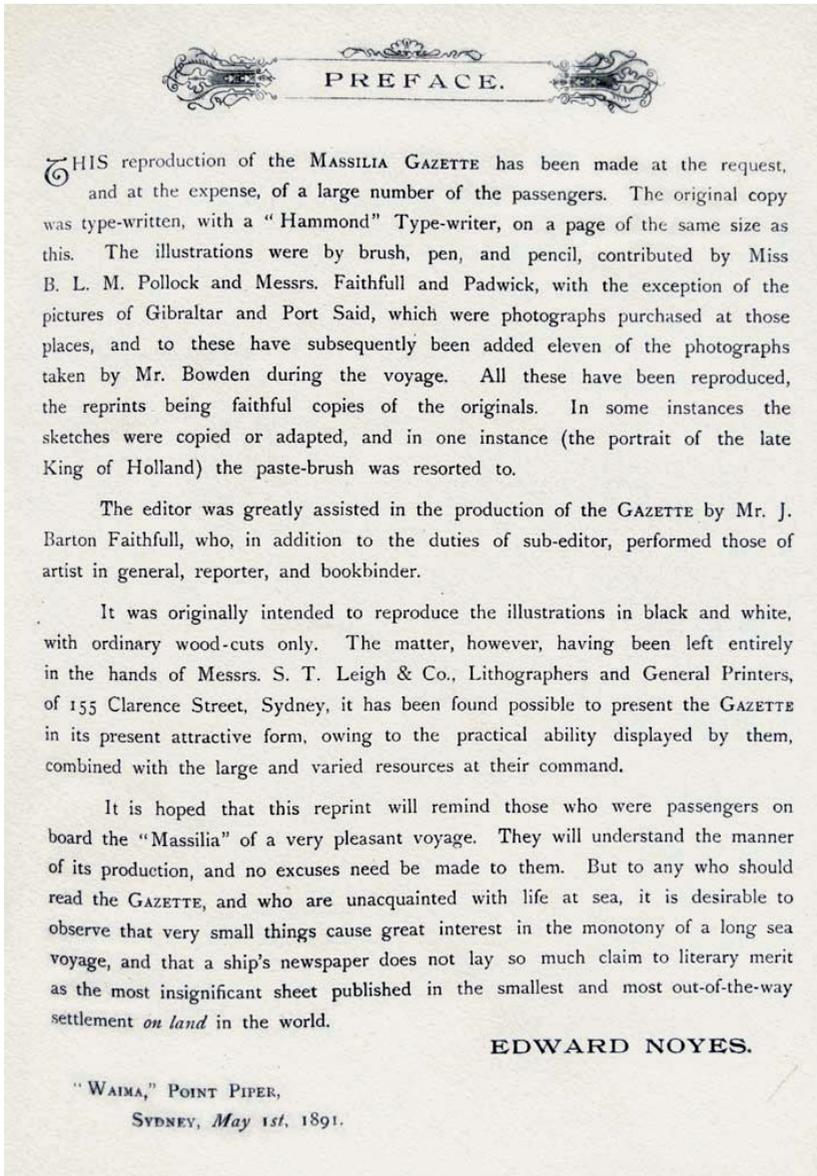


Fig. 6: The preface of the bound and printed Massilia Gazette

were looking over the shoulders of the happy possessors of the journal.”⁵⁰ The *Massilia Gazette* tried to make a pun about the small number of copies in circulation on board and in one issue offered the following made-up dialogue between two passengers:

“Let me have a gaze at the GAZETTE, old man?”

“You must think me sillier (‘Massilia,’ d‘ye see) than I look! I haven’t finished.”⁵¹

After the ship had reached its destination, the original issues were often taken to a professional printer, typeset there, reprinted, and then sent out to the ship’s former passengers as a souvenir (Figure 7). Whoever wanted to receive a copy had to subscribe and pay a certain amount of money beforehand. The issues that survive in the archives today are usually such reprinted versions. The *Massilia Gazette*, for instance, has been reproduced in Sydney at S. T. Leigh and Co. Printers, 155 Clarence Street.⁵² Digby’s editorship of the *Bombay Gazette* enabled him to print the *Sutlej Gazette* at the “‘Bombay Gazette’ Steam Printing Works.”⁵³ These print reproductions closely emulated the design and layout of the British broadsheet newspapers of the time. They sported a masthead (sometimes replete with an emblematic drawing and even a motto), gave the number of the issue, and the date and place of publication. The contents were printed in columns and divided in different articles with the help of headings and separating dashes (Figures 8 and 9). In their appearance, most ship newspapers tried hard to create the feel of reading a regular British newspaper. The content was ordered under headings that could also be found in the dailies. For instance, every issue of the *Massilia Gazette* featured an editorial, “Latest News,” “Advertisements,” or “Latest Telegrams.” The *Sutlej Gazette* sported very similar rubrics (Figures 10 and 11). Sometimes, a mock “obituary” at the end of the newspaper was dedicated to the passengers who had left the ship at a port between two issues (Figure 12).⁵⁴

50 *Sutlej Gazette*, 22.

51 *Massilia Gazette*, 47.

52 *Ibid.*, 1.

53 *Sutlej Gazette*, cover page.

54 See, for example, the first issue of the *Massilia Gazette*, 7-13.

50 THE MASSILIA GAZETTE.

ADVERTISEMENT S.

NOTICE.

—

"THE MASSILIA GAZETTE"

WILL BE

RE-PRINTED AT THE END OF THE VOYAGE.

AT THE REQUEST OF NUMEROUS PASSENGERS

—

Those desirous of securing copies should communicate with Mr. Noyes at once.

—

The re-print will, it is hoped, include all the

ILLUSTRATIONS,

which will, however, be in BLACK AND WHITE, not in color.

—

A COMPLETE LIST OF PASSENGERS

WILL BE INCLUDED.

—

Those who wish to secure copies must leave their addresses with the Editor, and state up to what amount they are prepared to pay per copy. This course is necessary as it cannot be yet known what the cost of re-printing will be. If the re-print can be made within the limit of all, it will be done; but the cost depends on the number of subscribers and the style in which it is to be done. We have already enough applications to ensure the GAZETTE being re-printed.

Dec. 13th, 1890.

GREAT SALE. WITHOUT RESERVE.

THE VALUABLE PROPERTY

CONSISTING OF

THE ORIGINAL COPY

OF THE

"MASSILIA GAZETTE."

ON SATURDAY NEXT, DECEMBER 20TH,

WILL BE

SOLD BY AUCTION (WITHOUT RESERVE),

THE ABOVE, WITH THE PROVISIO ONLY THAT

THE PURCHASER LENDS IT FOR RE-PRINTING.

—

THIS VALUABLE PROPERTY WILL BE

SOLD TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER

AND THE

PROCEEDS WILL BE DEVOTED TO

CHARITY. CHARITY

—

NOTICE OF REMOVAL.

—

THE PRINTING AND PUBLISHING OFFICE

OF THE

"MASSILIA GAZETTE"

IS

REMOVED

FROM 97 BOILER ALLEY

TO 10 GROSVENOR SQUARE

(Larger and more commodious premises being needed).

—

Air—"Sally In Our Alley."

Of all the spots that are so sweet,
There's none like Boiler Alley
It was the darling of our hearts,
'Twas handy for the galley.
And when on Sunday in our whites
We walked down Boiler Alley,
And got 'em blacked, with all our might
We'd bless, and out we'd sally

Of all the days that we love best
(We're now so nice and tidy),
It is the day that comes between
The Wednesday and the Friday
For on that day, out short our stay,
Our spirits soon did rally;
With coat and dress and printing press,
We walked from Boiler Alley.

Fig. 7: "Advertisements" regarding the production of souvenir copies of the Massilia Gazette

The Massilia Gazette.



"HONI SOIT QUI MAL Y PENSE."

No. I.] S.S. "MASSILIA," NOVEMBER 22, 1890. [No. I.

EDITORIAL.

IN offering to the passengers of the "Massilia" the first number of their newspaper, THE MASSILIA GAZETTE, we express the hope that its perusal may serve to while away a little time pleasantly, and that it may be one of the means of adding to the pleasures of the trip. This journal is in the unusually happy position of possessing in its readers its proprietors, its contributors and its advertisers! It is therefore a purely mutual undertaking, and its success depends on the good-will which all must show by "doing something" for it. There are over 200 passengers on board the ship, and we want this journal to be a means of communication, of telling the news of the vessel, and of good-natured fun.

The GAZETTE, we hope, will be illustrated, and we shall welcome, not only news of all kinds, but sketches. So now, fellow-passengers, send in your "copy," your sketches, your funny jokes and your advertisements.

* * *

We are able to publish an excellent portrait of our Captain. We are indebted to Miss B. L. M. Pollock for this. We are sure all join us in thanking her.

AMUSEMENTS.

ON Wednesday, 18th instant, a general meeting of passengers was held in the saloon, in order to elect a committee for promoting the entertainment of the passengers during the voyage. The following gentlemen were unanimously elected:—

Messrs. A. H. Pearson, J. B. Faithfull, J. H.

Rolland, E. Gumpert, R. Cotesworth and, as *ex-officio* member, Dr. C. W. Low.

Mr. Pearson has been elected Chairman, and Messrs. Gumpert and Cotesworth, Hon. Secretaries.

The Committee have sub-divided their duties as follows:—

Mr. Pearson, dramatic; Mr. Faithfull, sports and dancing; Mr. Rolland, music; Mr. Gumpert, dramatic; Mr. Cotesworth, music.

The Committee have decided that the necessary funds be raised by means of a subscription as follows:—

Gentlemen, five shillings; ladies, two shillings and sixpence.

It is hoped that all will join in raising this fund to defray the expenses.

A WEEK'S RECORD.

THE first week of a sea voyage is usually void of incident, and ours is no exception to this rule; so the readers of THE MASSILIA GAZETTE must forgive the week's record being little beyond a log.

A cheer and a tear or two at parting, and shortly after two o'clock, November 13th, the "Massilia" hauled off, and moved out from the Royal Albert Docks to the Thames. There being a thick mist on the river, the start seemed anything but cheery; but after a good lunch, however, matters seemed somewhat brighter. This did not last for long, for after dinner a thick fog came on, and we anchored for the night off Sheerness, hearing throughout the night the dismal sound of the bell, which rang at frequent intervals.

Fig. 8: The first page of the first issue of the Massilia Gazette

The "Sutlej Gazette."

No. 1.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1892.

2s. 6d. WHOLE SERIES.

THE GOOD SHIP "SUTLEJ."

OFFICERS.

Captain	W. D. G. Worcester, R. N. R.
Chief Officer	Charles L. Daniel.
Second "	R. J. Cooper.
Third "	H. G. Evans.
Fourth "	R. M. C. Wallace.
Fifth "	A. D. Burroughs.
Doctor	E. N. Pridmore, M.S.
Steward-in-Charge	W. J. Edmunds.
Chief Engineer	J. Phillips.

PASSENGERS.

For Gibraltar	42
" Malta	14
" Brindisi	9
" Ismailia	25
" Suezbay	135
" Hong Kong	2
" Yokohama	2
" Sydney	1

Total... 224

THE SHIP'S RUN EACH DAY.

Left Dock at 12-30 Noon 6th October—

	Lat.	Long.	Run.
October 7th	50°19' N	2°47' W.	250½
Do. 8th	46°34' N	7°39' W.	301
Do. 9th	42°19' N	9°23' W.	257½
Do. 10th	37°27' N	1°94' W.	294½
Do. 11th on Gibraltar 7-22 A.M., Left 11-80 A.M.,			
Run to Gibraltar 207 from Gibraltar 5.			
Do. 12th	36°39' N	0°58' E.	306
Do. 13th	37°11' N	7°39' E.	324

THE DAILY SWEEP.

	Winner.	Amount	Charity.
October 7th			
Do. 8th	Mr. Watson ...	40s.	
Do. 9th			
Do. 10th	Mr. Tuxon ...	30s.	10s.
Do. 11th			
Do. 12th	Mr. Charman ...	30s.	7s.
Do. 13th	Mr. Birdwood ...	30s.	8s.

WEATHER FORECAST.

QUARTER DECK.—Serene and Sunny; almost perfect calm in forenoon; in afternoon and evening occasional disturbances and lightning flashes from ladies' eyes.

HURRICANE DECK.—Great heat, frequent storms, and swift descent of thunderbolts (or cricket ball).

SALOON.—Pleasant breezes arising from joyous conversation inspired by good cooking and excellent waiting.

MUSIC SALOON.—Harmony prevails generally. Save for local disturbances, as above, fine, warm, and agreeable.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

LOST, STOLEN, OR STRAYED, AT LEAST THREE TIMES EVERY DAY, A LARGE NUMBER OF HEALTHY APETITES.—It is believed that the ship's Cook is responsible for poisoning many of them. Large reward offered for a revelation which will keep a gourmet always hungry.

PIANO, PIANO FOR SALE.—Piano by a lady with Walnut legs—Apply Cabin 4,004 Port Side a.s. Sutlej.

WASHING.—Two young ladies want washing.—Apply anywhere but on the Sutlej.

THE MERITS OF THE "SUTLEJ" AND OF HER CAPTAIN.

Though some prefer to travel, and some to stay at home, And some perchance on board this ship would sooner not have come, Yet doubtless now they've started, and feel no longer ill, They are willing to admit that much is done the time to kill.

What with concerts, cricket, quilts, all kinds of sports in store, And well-chalked decks inviting the most staid to take the floor, No grumbler will deny Captain Worcester's claim to thanks For the trouble which he takes to muster all his ranks.

And, speaking for myself, when next to sea I go, I hope it may be in this pleasant P. & O., That he may still be Captain, and that those who may be there, Will, one and all, like us, support his efforts for their care.

Our goals are wide apart, some leave us very soon, But others take their places on the following afternoon, And so throughout the journey, fresh talent will be found, And still, to notes of harmony, the music room resound.

If all on board will read, and some will wield the quill, The "Sutlej" Periodical is very rare to fill, And if, in future years, you should scan a number through, May the memories it awakens be pleasant ones to you.

LATEST INTELLIGENCE.

By SPECIAL SHIP'S CABLE EXPRESS.
CONCERT IN THE SECOND SALOON.

While a portion of this issue was passing through the press a Concert was held in the Second Saloon last night at 8-30; the following attractive programme was rendered:—Piano Solo "Parade Quatre" Miss Jenkins; Song "The Veteran," Mr. Russell; Song "In Old sladridd" Miss Roberts; Song "The Owl" Mr. Edwards; Song "The Old Church on the Hill," Miss Crawshaw; Song "The Nancy Brig," Captain Worcester; Piano Solo "Annie Laurie" Mr. Tomlinson; Song "Ratzy" Mr. Reising; Song "The Coaster's Proposal" Mr. Sexton; Song "The Soldier and a Man" Mr. Russell; Song "The Old Lock" Miss Crawshaw.

MATHEMATICAL PUZZLE.

Given £150 to buy 100 animals, Cows £5, Sheep £1, Ducks £1 how should it be divided to make money and animals balance?

A RIDDLE SHROUDED IN MYSTERY.

A well-known character in History, who died a death that was never died before, never will be again, a portion of whose shroud is in every house and on this ship.

Fig. 9: The first page of the first issue of the Sutlej Gazette

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Fig. 10: The Sutlej Gazette's Table of Contents

The Suttlej Gazette.

Published for the amusement and edification of the Passengers on the good ship Suttlej and for the special glory of the P. & O. Company.

The Gazette will appear twice a week, if contributors supply sufficient manuscript. Every passenger is requested to bear a hand. Editorial Offices being in the Air, all communications to be addressed to:—

THE EDITOR,
c/o Capt. WORCESTER, R.N.R.,
Captain's Cabin.

PUBLISHING OFFICE: The Chief Steward's Cabin.
Subscriptions may be paid to the Chief Steward.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1892.

EDITORIAL.

THE "GAZETTE" MAKES ITS BOW.

Whether this journal will live to an honoured old age, departing from this mortal existence shortly before the Suttlej reaches Bombay, or whether it dies after its first number, depends wholly upon two classes (1) The contributors to its pages, and (2) its subscribers. So far as the Editor is concerned, he will spare no pains to make the *Gazette* an interesting and trustworthy mirror of our good ship's proceedings day by day. But, as he can do little of himself, he asks that all the passengers and the officers will do what they can to ensure the paper's success. First in providing "copy," and next, in sending "copy" to the Editor, everybody can do something. Nobody is so inept that he cannot sometimes score at "Bull" or drop the quill into the bucket; no one is so unappreciative as not to be able to applaud those who try to serve and amuse their fellow passengers. To record the appreciation with which efforts to please are received will be among the most gratifying duties falling to the lot of the conductor of this journal. We know no politics in these pages; no theological differences will be recognised; only that which is kindly and cordial will find place here. At the call of duty the *Gazette* has been pleased to live; it will live to please. All may be pleased if all will take a part in carrying it on.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENCE.

"ANXIOUS MOTHER."—No, Babies are not allowed to dig holes in the deck with their noses. Try counter-irritation.

"CAPTAIN."—Isn't it a bit strong of you to say that the roll of the Suttlej is so smooth that it might have been buttered?

"MUSICAL ENTREPRENEUR."—Yes, you are quite right, P. & O. pianos should be built with not less than 48 octaves to accommodate everybody at once. The matter is under consideration.

"SHIP'S CAT."—We are nothing if not electric. The excuse of the gentleman who said he mistook the cat's tail for a bell rope is clearly inadmissible.

"The Genesis of a Happy Family" unavoidably held over.

SPECIAL TELEGRAMS.

[Received by the Look-out-Man at the Masthead, per Edison's non-wire Telegraphic System.]

THE LOWERING OF BRITISH MARITIME SUPREMACY.

LONDON, October 10th.

It is rumoured that Earl Spencer contemplates retirement from the Admiralty. The blow struck at British Maritime prestige by the defeat of the London crew on the Seine by a French crew, has caused so much concern throughout the United Kingdom that the First Lord of the Admiralty feels he is interpreting public sentiments in the course he is taking. President Carnot nominates Earl Spencer's successor.

MR. REDMOND TO THE FRONT.

DUBLIN, October 11th.

As the result of the unparalleled demonstration at Mr. Parnell's tomb on Saturday Mr. John Morley proposes to retire from the Chief Secretaryship in favour of Mr. Redmond. This step meets with universal approval. After the Seine incident there is nothing worth British keeping.

SIR CHARLES RUSSELL IN A NEW ROLE.

FORECASTLE, S.S. "SUTLEJ," 12th October.

The Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Birds has issued a Commission to enquire into the report that a Spanish Robin was this morning turned into curry, within five minutes of its landing on the rigging for a rest, by the Sidi Boys. Capt. Worcester, because he knows nothing of the matter, was under examination when this despatch was forwarded. Sir Charles Russell is conducting the cross-examination, which will not be concluded till after Christmas.

A CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE THERMOMETER.

QUARTER-DECK, S.S. "SUTLEJ," 13th October.

A conspiracy to prevent the thermometer rising, in which nearly all the passengers are involved, has been discovered. The Captain purposes putting into Lyons for a corps of Gendarmerie to maintain order. It is considered the mere sight of French officers will cow the conspirators, the majority of whom are not, as has been falsely asserted, the Naval Lieutenants on board.

WEATHER IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

S.S. "ORIENTAL," October 12th.

Calm, and fair breezes since leaving Malta.

Fig. 11: A typical page from the Suttlej Gazette

In Memoriam

OF

THE PASSENGERS WHO LEFT US AT MALTA.

LOST TO SIGHT, TO MEMORY DEAR

(ESPECIALLY TO SOME OF US).

GONE,

BUT NOT FORGOTTEN,

AND OUR ONLY HOPE IS THAT THOSE THAT ARE TO JOIN US

AT BRINDISI,

WILL BE AS NICE.

BOO-HOO! BOO-HOO!!

WE WILL TRY TO BEAR UP,

BUT IT IS VERY HARD!



Printed and Published, on behalf of the "MASSILIA" COMPANY, at 97 Boiler Alley.
Not registered for transmission abroad. But it is going there.

Fig. 12: A mock "obituary" for the passengers that left the Massilia at Malta

In layout and structure ship newspapers were modelled after regular newspapers published on land. However, the contents and style of writing often leaned very much towards entirely different genres. Ship newspapers often bore a striking resemblance to student newspapers or the satirical journals of the day. Many issues mix features of both forms of writing—sometimes more, sometimes less aptly—very much in the style of the satirical issues that many student newspapers would publish at special occasions. Among the features that ship newspapers shared with such publications is, first and foremost, its focus on a closed community of both readers and contributors. Just as student newspapers exclusively cater to the students of a particular university and address their common experiences, ship newspapers appealed only to the onboard community that, for the time of the journey, shared a very narrow stage with each other. In-jokes and allusions to onboard incidents that would only make sense to a very small group of people are, therefore, the rule and not the exception. They create the feeling of relevance and intimacy—also by offering the opportunity to actively contribute to the publication. Basically, the members of a particular community were talking to themselves, thus fuelling their shared experiences and reinforcing the bonds that held them together. At the same time, however, the newspapers themselves often lacked any coherence, as many varying styles and quality were published in every single issue.

The actual contents of the papers were in almost all cases somehow related to the journey and, thus, to the one thing that all people on board had in common. Within this loose frame, however, the spectrum of subjects covered was immense. It could range from stories about earlier voyages (like the Brindisi incident related in the introduction) to reports about the various social activities on board; from the publication of amateur poetry to the indulgence in almost pubescent puns and jokes. At times, the papers also contained reports about shore leaves of the passengers at stops during the voyage which are particularly interesting in regard to the question of how passengers experienced other cultures. Especially the *Sutlej Gazette*, under the professional editorship of Digby, also featured articles about the history and the political and economical development of India—the destination of the *Sutlej*.

Most of the time, however, the ship newspapers that came to our attention tried to use a light, witty tone on their pages. Many openly emulated the satirical writing of the day. Much of the contents of, for instance, the *Massilia* or the *Sutlej Gazette* were meant to sound like the satirical poems or cartoon captions in *Punch* (or other such journals). One principal purpose of ship newspapers—besides informing about the speed and location of the ship—

was to entertain and the entertainment value of satirical writing seems to have been deemed particularly high. Most issues offered a collection of jokes (often in-jokes, as pointed out above), witty poems, and puns in all variations. Unfortunately, the amateur origins of these humorous contributions were, in most cases, rather obvious. They rarely reached the literary quality of the role models, as the pun on “Massilia” or the *Sutlej Gazette*’s “Ladies Page” illustrate. These are examples for the generally good-natured but often rather simple-minded humour that characterises many of the contributions to ship newspapers. Many editors seem to have been critically aware of this. In the preface of the *Massilia Gazette*, the editor-in-chief Edward Noyes offered a kind of disclaimer for the unsuspecting reader:

But to any who should read the GAZETTE, and who are unacquainted with life at sea, it is desirable to observe that very small things cause great interest in the monotony of a long sea voyage, and that a ship’s newspaper does not lay so much claim to literary merit as the most insignificant sheet published in the smallest and most out-of-the-way settlement *on land* in the world.⁵⁵

Despite (or maybe even precisely because of) the literary shortcomings of which many ship newspapers so evidently suffered, compilations such as the *Massilia* or the *Sutlej Gazette* offer us rare access to shipboard life, especially but not exclusively to the routines, thoughts, and problems of the passengers on board. First, they constitute such an interesting historical source, because they are—as pointed out above—a “purely mutual undertaking.” Many different people who had not gone through any form of journalistic training or experience contributed to the papers. Much of what eventually found its way on the pages of the ship gazettes, therefore, did not go through much professional filtering and channelling (the case of William Digby acting as the editor of the *Sutlej Gazette* may, of course, be considered a rare exception in this regard). Second, ship newspapers catered exclusively to the real or perceived needs of the passengers on board. Therefore, their composition alone offers a rare glimpse into the concerns of an ephemeral shipboard community.

4. Images of the “other”

Thinking of ships as historical arenas implies thinking of ships as social spaces. Hosting an artificial community of different social and cultural backgrounds over a significant amount of time, intercontinental steamers,

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

for instance, were places in which socio-cultural identities were played out. As James Ryan points out, a ship in the nineteenth century was important “as a site of modernity, of colonial encounter and of the performance of social and gender identities.”⁵⁶ These aspects were not only present in the materiality of the ship itself, but mainly came to life through group-building processes among the passengers and through the interaction between this artificial community and various “others”—aboard and ashore.

In the late nineteenth century, the crew and passenger areas on British steamships were clearly demarcated. The crew itself was divided into a higher class of officers, lower ranking European seamen, and Asian *lascars* (from Persian *Lashkar* -“army”, and Arabic *al-askar* - “soldier”) at the bottom. This partition entailed different types of work, reserving lower respected jobs for lascars. The crew list of the *Sutlej Gazette*, for example, reflects this composition of the ship’s crew.⁵⁷ It lists the names of the seamen (and women) on board, ranked after their duties. From the officers down to the stewards every European seamen is named, only the lascars are subsumed under the names of their *serang* and *tindal*.⁵⁸ The image of the ship was that of a well-managed, hierarchically structured community in which each social group was clearly demarcated and fulfilled neatly delineated duties for the benefit of the entire ship. On the other hand, certain social boundaries were not always as rigid as they seemed. Within the limited space of a ship, strict social separation according to ethnicity, class, or gender was not always possible. In transit, forms of contact became possible—sometimes inevitable—that would neither have been possible at the point of origin nor at the destination. The (temporarily) more flexible interpretation of social boundaries was made possible by the special conditions of uprootedness and isolation within the confined environment of a vessel. Therefore, the emergence of a group identity—no matter how narrow or wide we might define this term—among the somewhat random community of passengers on such a ship took place in an unusual space whose social borders were rigid and permeable at the same time. For a first-time traveller, it was certainly no easy feat to understand the elusive and ephemeral web of meanings that made up this peculiar social space. In the ship newspapers, this struggle for making sense of the new social environment and the attempt to form a coherent group identity among the passengers comes to life.

Numbering between 100 and 200 passengers, this community consisted

56 Ryan, “‘Our Home on the Ocean’: Lady Brassey and the Voyages of the Sunbeam, 1874-1887,” 582.

57 *Sutlej Gazette*, 8.

58 *Ibid.*; *Serangs* and *tindals* were the labour gang leaders of the lascars on a particular ship.

of people with different cultural backgrounds, different experiences, and different expectations—regards their destination, for instance. Ship newspapers allow us a glimpse of the communication going on within this group and provide a way to answer the “need to specify the ways in which social and cultural differences were made, negotiated and contested in and through the geographies of ship, shore and ocean.”⁵⁹ For the passengers, the newspapers were an excellent forum to appeal to (and, thus, create) a common identity —amongst other things by identifying, discussing, and finding a place for various “others” that did not belong to one’s own group. These “others” could be very close and share the same cramped space of the ship or they could be those ashore. In the following, we will briefly look at how these “others”—both aboard and ashore—were depicted in the *Massilia* and *Sutlej Gazettes* and how these depictions contributed to the (re) affirmation of passenger identity.

a. Images of the “other” on board

Passenger ships were (and are) not only means of transport but also cultural contact zones. People from the very different backgrounds shared the limited space of the ship for a considerable amount of time and usually were somehow bound make contact. Between some social groups on board, however, practically no contact existed. European passengers and lascars, for instance, occupied entirely different decks of the ship and were kept as separate from each other as at all possible. Lascars were Asian—mostly Indian—seamen doing service on European ships. In the late nineteenth century, so many Indian seamen worked on British ships that many of them did not hail from maritime communities but, for instance, from the Deccan or other regions far from the sea. Accordingly, their duties were often not nautical in the narrower sense of the word, but they were responsible for the most menial jobs on board. Lascars spent practically all of their time below deck and had no contact whatsoever with the passengers—unless the passengers decided to do a guided tour through the intestines of the ship.

Some of the passengers of the *Massilia* undertook such a tour and reported about it with great enthusiasm in the gazette.⁶⁰ To be sure, the lascars featured only at the margins of the report as the “busy firemen, always feeding the great furnaces to make steam for the boilers.” However, the short paragraph

⁵⁹ Lambert, Martins, and Ogborn, “Currents, Visions and Voyages: Historical Geographies of the Sea,” 487.

⁶⁰ *Massilia Gazette*, 58-60.

is instructive as to how the lascars and their role on the ship were perceived by many of the passengers:

The engine room and stokehole are roomy, and are tolerably comfortable for those who, unseen by us who walk on the decks, contribute their important share to our journey, and to whose unremitting care and attention is entrusted the great motive power of the “*Massilia*.”⁶¹

In this quote, the lascars are described more like part of the machinery than the crew. They are important for the functioning of the ship and do their part well. And, of course, the situation under deck is styled as at least “tolerably comfortable.” This description of a group of people who were arguably furthest removed, in terms of status from the European passengers, is all the more interesting when contrasted with the image that the passengers had of other members of the crew, such as the stewards. The stewards had direct contact with the passengers and were usually Britons or at least of European origin.⁶² Interestingly, to the European passengers, their lives seemed to be so much harder than that of the lascars below deck. Several contributions in the *Massilia Gazette* allude to this. For instance, a mock letter to the editor in the gazette’s Indian Ocean issue of 6 December 1890, reads:

SIR—Can you tell me why it is that the stewards have to take their meals in such an uncomfortable manner? They are, the majority of them, willing, hard-working fellows... and yet they have to take their meals standing, or sitting on the floor, or anyhow. And that after seeing everyone well attended to, or they know it.

Yours obediently, INDIGESTION.⁶³

Compared to the “tolerably comfortable” situation of the lascars in the engine room, the living conditions of the stewards seemed to be everything but comfortably tolerable for the *Massilia*’s passengers. Apparently, the problem had not been adequately addressed until the publication of the next—the Equatorial—issue one week later. Accordingly, another mock complaint found its way into the gazette:

61 *Ibid.*, 60.

62 Generally, there were a good number of so called “native” stewards doing service on steamships as well. However, judging from the names on the crew lists of the *Massilia* and *Sutlej*, the first and second class passengers had dealings only with European stewards.

63 *Massilia Gazette*, 34.

DEAR SIR.—I am glad the question of the accommodation given to stewards on some of the P. and O. ships has been raised in your paper. I have no hesitation in saying that it is the universal feeling on this ship that some proper accommodation should be found for these men. It is highly distasteful to me to have to ask a man to do things for me, when I know that he has to work under the circumstances of no place to take his meals in. I can only say I hope the matter will soon receive the attention of the directors.

Yours truly, CONSTANT TRAVELLER.⁶⁴

We have little knowledge beyond these short texts to gauge the larger context of this championing the cause of the stewards. While the tone of the complaints suggests at least some degree of real concern, it might just as well have been a private joke among some of the passengers that is not accessible to us anymore. Still, the depiction of the lascars and the stewards in the *Massilia Gazette* can serve as an excellent example of how ship newspapers provided a forum to position the community of the passengers within the larger social framework of the ship.

b. Images of the “other” ashore

Being in transit and, thus, in transition, the community of passengers not only had to locate itself within the environment of the ship but also in the (imperial) world. How did their position on the isolated, restless vessel relate to the societies ashore? Shore leaves provided new input to think about and the ship newspapers offered a way to share such thoughts about other cultures and the colonial order in more general terms. By publishing such stories and reports, the newspapers also held influence over the perceptions of unacquainted travellers and newcomers to the colonial world.

Interestingly, the perception of cultural difference between “us” and “them” already started at one of the eastbound ships’ first stops in Europe. Most steamers to Australasia made a stop at Brindisi to welcome new passengers and collect the latest mails that had been dispatched by train after the ship had left the United Kingdom. The introductory episode already hints at a certain dislike that many of the British passengers seemed to have for the Italian port city. In a piece entitled “How to Spend a Happy Day in Brindisi,” the *Sutlej Gazette* declared that the Brindisi’s surroundings were “so tropical,

⁶⁴ Ibid., 48.

that for the moment we almost felt ourselves transported to the wide plains of the Deccan or the rolling prairies of the Mahratta country.” The text reflects the passengers’ curiosity and puzzlement as they explored the Italian town and their feeling of strangeness as “seven P. & O. passengers, arrayed in curious and wonderful hats,” in contrast to an Italian’s “plumed *sombrero*.”⁶⁵ The passengers of the *Massilia* were even less impressed by the south Italian city, which they called “a miserable dirty town, which has been asleep for 500 years, and it is a pity the P. and O. Company have awakened it.” Some passengers of the *Massilia* also undertook a small sightseeing tour, visiting a “small church, quaint, and filled with tawdry images.” The terminal columns of the Via Appia also aroused little enthusiasm, being described as “the two columns on a rock just above the quay, which are the most interesting objects in the place.”⁶⁶ In both papers, the South Italian port—portrayed as a sleepy provincial town in sub-tropical Southern Europe of very little touristic value—is perceived as strikingly different from the British environment most passengers hailed from.

However, while Brindisi might have seemed outlandish to some of the travellers, the proper rite of passage from Europe to Asia only came with the transit of the Suez Canal. A pun on the word “Suez Canal” in the *Massilia Gazette* still very much followed the style of the depreciative descriptions of Brindisi. In a mock “answer to correspondents” a certain “Nosey Bob” was informed that:

It is not pronounced “Sewage Canal,” but Suezzz Canal. We are not lost in wonder at your question, however, as both words have somewhat the same sense (scents).⁶⁷

Apart from this exception, however, the passage through the canal was described in much more elevating words that also convey the self-perception and group identity of the travellers. The Suez Canal had only been completed in 1869 and constituted a substantial technological accomplishment. Upon seeing it, a sense of pride and imperial triumph was evoked in many of the passengers. One particularly impressed contributor to the *Sutlej Gazette* waxed lyrical about the significance of the Suez Canal and its impact on the relationship between Asia and Europe:

⁶⁵ *Sutlej Gazette*, 21.

⁶⁶ *Massilia Gazette*, 19.

⁶⁷ *Massilia Gazette*, 36.

This Desert of Division separates
 Two worlds—the watchful, wakeful conquering, West;
 The dreamy, brooding, East; the young, the old;
 The wise-eyed serpent, and the lion bold;
 The Prayerful Mystic, waiting on the Fates;
 The Warrior, sword in hand, his only test.⁶⁸

The comparison between an active and thriving Europe and a dormant Asia complied with the ideologies of the time. The metaphor of the lion and serpent assigned the continents a particular character and, what is even more significant, a particular place in the imperial order: as the steamer passed from Europe to Asia, the former is depicted as the conquering warrior who rightfully dominates the latter who is merely “waiting on the Fates.” While these lines fit easily into the imperialist discourse of the day and hold little surprise in this respect, they do gain an additional layer of meaning in the context of the ship. They voiced the self-perception but also the expectations of the passengers on board, many of whom were colonial officials, members of the Indian Civil Service, or employees of British firms operating in India.⁶⁹ Soon, their energetic group—“watchful, wakeful,” “bold,” and “sword in hand”—would be faced with the “dreamy, brooding, East.” For many, the passage of the Suez Canal doubled as their very own *rite de passage*.

A very similar self-perception transpires in several pieces in the *Sutlej Gazette*. Although mainly concerned with life on board, ship newspapers occasionally also provided information and advice about the country and culture of the ship’s destination. While acknowledging that “[t]o those who ‘know all about India’ we can offer nothing new,” the *Sutlej Gazette* ran a rather practical piece as a “Reminder of some of the chief facts concerning country and people.” (Figure 13)⁷⁰ The article catered to imperial first timers and mainly provided a geographic description of the subcontinent and its impact on the prehistoric migration of different “races” into India. No account is given about “Hindu or Mahomedan times,”⁷¹ i.e. about Indian history between prehistoric times and the arrival of the Europeans. Until then, India seemed to have been a country without much of a history. Now, however, India was “that great country in which many of us have

68 *Sutlej Gazette*, 27.

69 List of passengers, *Sutlej Gazette*, 9f.

70 *Sutlej Gazette*, 28.

71 *Ibid.*

to pass the largest and best portion of our lives, some perhaps to die there because ‘in the bones of the English the English flag is stayed.’⁷² The reference to Rudyard Kipling’s paean of “The English Flag” only emphasises how deeply entrenched the self-perception of the passengers on the *Sutlej* was in the imperialist ideology of the day. Almost all of them were somehow involved in matters of imperial administration or commerce. They were in transit to a place so very different from home. In their eyes, life there promised few amenities but many deprivations. In this respect, they literally all seemed to be in the same boat. England’s imperial duty and the ongoing civilising mission provided an ideological framework in which the passengers could locate themselves and make sense of their past, present, and future.

In other cases, however, the travellers perceived themselves mainly as tourists—at least as long as they were still far from their destination. In the *Massilia Gazette*, a report about a shore leave at Colombo (Figure 14) reads more like a naïve touristic anecdote, noting the “bright dresses and turbans of the Cingalese who had come off to take orders for white suits... in fact to do anything for us out of which they could make rupees.”⁷³ The article in many ways resembles the accounts of modern day tourists in developing countries. It highlighted the salesmanship of the natives, which was seen as an amusing, colourful feature. After buying souvenirs from local vendors, the passengers were wholly satisfied with the transaction—apart, of course, from having spent too much money. “No doubt we were cheated, but one somehow enjoys it.”⁷⁴ The experience of cultural difference is transformed into an amusing, light-hearted account that transforms the alien culture into an object of European curiosity.

72 *Sutlej Gazette*, 28.

73 *Massilia Gazette*, 56f.

74 *Ibid.*

THE "SUTLEJ GAZETTE," THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1892.

INDIA.

A REMINDER OF SOME OF THE CHIEF FACTS CONCERNING COUNTRY AND PEOPLE.

We shall soon be in India; some of us for the first time; and a few "Gossip Notes" on that great and interesting Empire will not be out of place in "The Sutlej Gazette." To those who "know all about India," we can offer nothing new; and would merely observe in passing that the office of a reader, though more humble than that of an instructor, is often scarcely less necessary. Along the North of India is a great mountain range, the Himalayas, of which Everest, the loftiest peak in the world, attains to the height of 29,002 feet. The great elevation of the Himalayan range and its position secure for it every possible variety of climate from that prevailing in the torrid, to that which distinctively pertains to the Arctic zone. At each end of this vast chain is what may be designated a gateway, or series of gateways leading into India. Through the eastern gate, which opens on the Chinese and Burmese frontiers, the Mongolian races have found their way into India, and left traces of their presence in the ethnographic characteristics of the tribes that dwell at that end of the range. Through the Western gate, which leads into Afghanistan and the region of the Oxus and the Pamirs, the Aryan races found their way into India. Both the Mongolians arriving by way of the eastern gate, and the Aryans by way of the Western, found earlier and aboriginal tribes in possession of the country. In the ancient poems of the Aryans, these aboriginals figure as Rakshasas, Demons, and Monkeys. They were driven by the Aryan and other foreign invaders of the country into mountain and hill tracts and forests, but they are still represented among the living Indian people, and pass under many names, Kols, Bhils, Santals, &c. They are dark-skinned and uglier than the Aryan races, and hence they were called demons, &c., by their fair-skinned invaders. Alliances were formed between the two as is evident from the old Hindu epic, the Ramayana which narrates how Ramayan leagued himself with Hanuman, the Monkey God of the poem, and of the Hindu myths, and who was one of the great aboriginal chiefs of the Southern end of the peninsula. As might have been anticipated, the two races inevitably formed other alliances, and the peoples of India, even those who claim the purest descent, are not improbably the result of these prehistoric unions. Prolonged residence in the country told on the physique of the Aryan invaders just as it does on that of Europeans, also Aryans, who, in later times, have found their way to India by sea. The Aryans have always deteriorated in India.

The Himalayan range has played a great part in the history of India. There can be no doubt that the sea in past geological ages extended far up to the north. It is equally certain that the whole of the Gangetic valley, like the valley of the Indus on the West, has been slowly built up out of the debris from the Himalayas. Three of the great rivers of India emanate from the Himalayas—the Indus, the Ganges, and the Brahmapootra. The first-named has its source not far from the last-named, but their courses are widely divergent. The Indus flows southwards, and off the southern face of the Himalayas range; the Brahmapootra flows eastwards, and drains the northern face of the range for a great part of its length; it then turns sharply round the eastern base of the Himalayas, in the region of the eastern gateway, and then flowing westwards and southwards falls into the Bay of Bengal close to the natural outlet of the Ganges. This last-named sacred stream, a river of ruined capitals, as it has been aptly termed, has its source in one of two peaks visible from the hill station of Mussoorie, and known as Gangotri. The sister peak Jannoori, is the source of the Jumna, the greatest of the tributaries of the Ganges. The Ganges and the Jumna unite their waters at Allahabad, a spot which the Hindus regard as specially sacred; while its Mahomedan name Allahabad, the City of God, is equally significant. Another mountain range of considerable importance is the Vindhyan which runs from east to west across India, and which divides the Northern or Gangetic portion from Central and Southern India. The Nerbudda has its sources in this range, and, taking a westerly course, falls into the sea, a short distance beyond which says that in three or four years, about 1895-96, the river continues low. One other feature in the physical geography of India which remains to be noticed in this brief outline, is the table-land of the Deccan; its natural features have also largely determined its history, whether in prehistoric or Hindu or Mahomedan times; and will do so again in the future.

We are apt to regard foreign intercourse with India by sea as a quite recent event in history, there is much to show that this view is incorrect. The code of Manu, the age of which has been fixed at various periods, but which certainly dates back to before the fifth century B. C., has special provisions for fixing the rate of interest on money lent on maritime ventures. Remains in the island of Java indicate the presence there in early times of Hindu colonies, while there is reason to believe that the eastern coast of India has for an extended period, held communication by sea with the countries that lie to the east of the Bay of Bengal.

Whether or not Ophir be rightly identified with the extreme southern portion of the Indian promontory, it is by no means improbable that traffic was at suitable seasons carried on between perhaps Pinneacia and more certainly Arabia and Western India. One of the most interesting of Indian Ethnographical problems concerns itself with the peopling of the group of islands in the Bay of Bengal known as the Andamans.

Having thus endeavored without the aid of works of reference or maps to awaken some interest in that great country in which many of us have to pass the largest and best portion of our lives, some perhaps to die there because "in the bones of the English the English Bug is stayed," we may fitly close with a few suggestions as to the books in which the different subjects lightly and imperfectly touched on here, may be further studied with advantage. The following list will probably be useful in this connection; and while it does not claim to be exhaustive, it will be helpful to those who would know something worth knowing about the people of India, and their country and history, religion and government.

- Geography *Blenfolds's*—India Burma and Ceylon (Macmillan)
Hunter's—Map of India.
 History.—*Hunter's*—Indian Empire. Brief History of the Indian
Wheeler's Tales from Indian History; and *The Ruler of India*, series.
 Religion *Wilkins's*—Hindu Mythology; *Rhys Davids's* Buddhism;
Monier Williams's Hinduisms.
 Government.—*Bills's* Government of India. *Hunter's* Indian Empire; *Conroy's* British Rule in India.
 Ancient India.—As known to the Greeks; *McCrie's* Translations of the works of Megasthenes, &c. &c.

LIFE AND DEATH STRUGGLE WITH A BULL BISON—continued.

Capt. P. has only time to raise his rifle and with unerring aim place a bullet in the bison's forehead between the eyes. Next moment he is jostled and alights in a clump of bamboo still grasping his rifle. The bull which had fallen on its knees, rose and at once charged again. Capt. P., who had struggled on to one knee, again fired at the forehead of the advancing beast but failed to stop it. He was knocked over and his rifle smashed. Then began a struggle for life between man and beast. The bison, snorting with rage, the blood streaming from the wounds, tried to gore the man. He seized the horns in his hands, wriggled on the ground, firmly hampered by his length of limb, but his pluck never failed; still the right horn stuck in the ground, then the left, but at each dig the little form escaped being transfixed. The bull mad with fury struggled to its feet, the man still clinging to its horns and with supreme effort tossed his head hurting the man some distance and rolled over from loss of blood. Exhausted though he was by the agony of the contest and bruised with his falls, Capt. P. lost not a moment in pulling himself together. Looking round for a weapon of defense, he saw his shikaris standing some distance off trembling in every limb and whimpering like children. Rushing at them and cursing their cowardice, he seized one of their spare rifles, not a moment too soon, for the gallant bull, having got on his legs and seeing his enemy, retreated to the charge. The supreme moment had arrived. Leaping to one side behind a clump of bamboo, Capt. P. sent a bullet crashing into the shoulder and the bull rolled over, when (man, his hereditary instinct once more prominent, unsheathed his knife, and with a prayer to Allah drew the blade across the bison's throat.

Slowly the brave Capt. P. walked back to the village and mounted his pony, and then in silence returned to his home. When shades of evening fell loud were the songs of rejoicing as with dancing and song the villagers and brave Seedie boys carried in the head of the bison slung to a pole and laid it at the feet of their lord, the great Shikari, and there to this day hangs on the wall the skull of that bison showing the holes where the bullets entered but failed to stop that bison's charge.

JUNGLE WALLAH.

Fig. 13: "India. A reminder of some of the chief facts concerning country and people" from the Sutlej Gazette

THE MASSILIA GAZETTE.

THE SHIP'S CHARITIES.

For the information of passengers, the captain has requested us to state that the money collected, and handed to him for charities, is divided among the following institutions:—

The Merchant Seamen's Orphan Asylum, Southbrook, Essex; office 127 London Wall, E.C.

The Royal Alfred Aged Merchant Seamen's Institution, The Bazaar, Kent's Town, London, E.C.

The London Hospital, Whitechapel, E.

All the above institutions have their special work assigned to them, and with the aid of the ladies, are exclusively devoted to the work of relieving poor and sick seamen, or the orphans of seamen.

We are requested to state that the last collection for the benefit of charities will be held on Sunday next, after Divine Service, morning and evening.

CONCERT IN THE SECOND SALOON.

On Friday evening, the 16th inst., a concert was given in the second saloon, and was attended by passengers from both saloons. The attendance was very good, and there was only one standing room. The following is the programme:—

1. *Glee*, "Oh, Who Will Do The Towns So Free?" (Parnell)
2. *Pavane*, "Solo" ... "Taranella" (Heller)
3. *Song* ... "The Old Maid" (M. J. Kelly)
4. *Song* ... "The Lark in Bed" (M. J. Kelly)
5. *Fritz Sings* ... "Allegro Vivace" (Kalden)
6. *Solo* ... "Beyond The Gate" (Parnell) Miss GAZZOTTI.
7. *Years Song* ... "There" (Dunlop) ... Mrs. PERAZZINI.

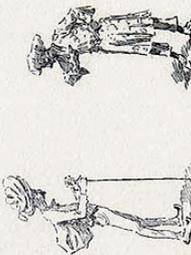
INTERVAL.

8. *Year Song* ... "Sweet and Low" (Dunlop) ...
9. *Solo* ... "The Old Maid" (M. J. Kelly)
10. *Solo* ... "There's Nothing Here" (Kalden)
11. *Pavane* ... "Nocturne and Fugue" (Parnell)
12. *Solo* ... "The Holy" (M. J. Kelly)
13. *Précieux Solo* ... "The Red Bow" ... Mrs. GAZZOTTI.
14. *Solo* ... "The Gallops of England" ... Mrs. DAVITT.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.

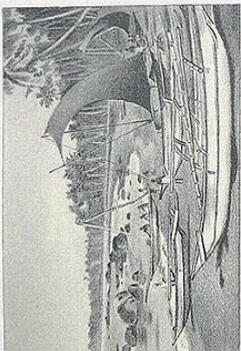
AN INCIDENT.

On Friday night, the dinner of the punkahs were going on as usual, and one of the punkahs should have been washed. A question then arose as to whether the majority of the passengers at the table in question wished the punkah or not, and, on taking a poll, it was found that a decided majority wished the punkah. The Captain emphatically laid down the rule that the majority had their way in such matters. It is satisfactory to know that the majority wish the majority desired the punkahs to be washed, and that it being only one or two, we understand.

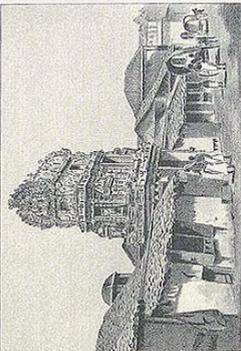


A VISIT TO COLOMBO.

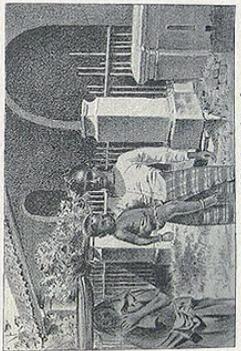
We dropped anchor in the fine harbour of Colombo at about 8.30 on Wednesday morning. The weather was fine and bright. We were soon surrounded by a crowd of boats of all kinds, from the native P. and O. "Cattamans" to the smart "gigs" of natives who were diving for jing near us. Among one of the latter who had the additional accomplishment of being able to produce cracking sounds from any part of their body, which they did as an accompaniment to their song. They are not so persistent as the Aden boys, however. The "Massilia" was soon gay with the bright dresses and turbans of the Cinghales who had come off to take orders for white sails (and have them made to order and ready before the morning leaves—), to change money for us, to do our errands for us, and in fact to do anything for us out of their



NATIVE CANOES AT COLOMBO.



TEMPLE AT COLOMBO.



CINGALESE MOTHER & CHILD.

Fig. 14: A double page of the Massilia Gazette giving details and images about a visit to Colombo

5. Conclusion

The study of seafaring and maritime communities has long been an established field of enquiry in historical research. Traditionally, much scholarly focus rested on the military and economic dimensions of shipping. In recent decades, however, more and more attention has rightly been directed to the transcultural dimensions of maritime activities. Port cities and other liminal places have been recognised as cultural contact zones par excellence. At the same time, the sea started to be seen more and more as a connecting rather than a separating factor when it comes to the interaction and exchange between maritime communities. It is this gradual shift in focus that informs the justified call for a new historical geography of the sea that we should all heed.

Apart from only a handful of exceptions, however, the ocean passage itself, and, thus, the ship as a historical space in its own right, has received only fleeting attention. This is especially surprising as long-distance ship voyages could last weeks or months at a time. During this period, the lives of both crew and passengers were not on stand-by. The people on board continued to think, feel, and interact, but they did so within the confined space of the ship. And at least the passengers did so as members of a newly formed, random, and ephemeral group of travellers who often shared little more than origin and destination.

We believe that this phase of being in transit should urgently be studied in much more detail as it is intimately connected with the making of a globalised world in the nineteenth century. During such a passage, the ship was one of the most isolated and, thus, “local” places imaginable. At the same time, its very existence and movement between the continents actively contributed to the process of globalisation. The space of the ship and its inhabitants were, therefore, caught between the local and the global in a most peculiar way. Studying the space of the ship can, thus, provide a much-needed lens on historical globalisation as a whole.

The brief examples presented above illustrate that self-affirmation and community-building featured prominently in ship newspapers. Given the very different origins of the passengers and the largely artificial and ephemeral character of their group, these were not easy tasks. Besides reporting on shared experiences and common activities (such as concerts, sports events, etc.), such a group identity was mainly created by describing various “others”—both afloat and ashore. In itself, this already provides valuable insights into how European actors of globalisation made sense of themselves and their changing surroundings in a globalising world. However,

it gains additional significance by the fact that the producers and consumers of these newspapers were themselves on the move while writing and reading. They were in transit between two cultures and, therefore, partly in suspension between two worlds.

Ship newspapers in many ways mirror the questions, notions, and anxieties that passengers entertained in the context of this transition. They illustrate that a ship's passage was also a formative phase during which passengers built, corrected, shared, or jettisoned the images and expectations they had of their destination. The examples discussed in this article only offer a preliminary glance at the possible questions that historians with an interest in cultural contact and exchange will be able to ask and hopefully answer by looking at ship newspapers. Ideally, this will complement and expand our knowledge about shipboard life gained from the study of relatively well-researched sources such as travel reports, diaries, and logbooks. We are convinced that the hitherto almost completely overlooked genre of the ship newspaper offers a rare window onto the floating space of the ship and especially on passenger life aboard oceangoing steamers in the late nineteenth century. These newspapers can be seen as a product of the uncertainties to which the passengers were exposed. They offered a feeling of domesticity and a place where experiences and notions of the "other" could be expressed. This helped the passengers to situate themselves in the culturally differentiated world through which they were travelling.

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