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**A Changing Experience of Transport, Travel, and Mobility:
The Transatlantic Crossing to the United States in
19th-century Hungarian Travel Writing**

The nineteenth century brought about major changes in transportation and travel that facilitated the movement of goods, people, and ideas across countries and continents. These included the commercialization of travel, the widespread use of the railroad and steamships, as well as the fact that people began to see nature and its beauties differently, this providing a new incentive for travel for many.¹ At the same time, political and economic trends served as push and pull factors motivating people to leave their home countries and visit and/or settle in other regions. Such developments, in turn, influenced how people acquired knowledge about and understood the world, as well as the way they presented their experience to fellow citizens who were “traveling” in the comfort of their armchairs, reading reports from travelers and emigrants visiting distant and often little-known lands. Meanwhile, the Atlantic Ocean became the scene of one of the largest waves of migration with millions of people traveling from Europe, including Hungary, to the United States. The transatlantic voyage was also altered during the century: it gradually became cheaper, faster, and less demanding. The United States became more and more accessible.

First a few exceptional travelers, later hundreds of thousands of emigrants from Hungary embarked on the transatlantic voyage with the purpose of visiting the United States. As Tibor Glant noted, however, a journey from Hungary to North America involved several parts and the transatlantic crossing was only one, even if the most significant section.² First, Hungarians had to reach a port where they could embark on a voyage to the New World—this in itself was often full of challenges, especially in the first half of the century. The European section was followed by the chief part of the journey: the transatlantic voyage itself. During the century major changes took place here, including a shift from the use of

1 Sándor Gyömrei, *Az utazási kedv története* [The history of the pleasure of travel]. Budapest, 1934. 12.

2 Tibor Glant, *Amerika, a csodák és csalódások földje: Az Amerikai Egyesült Államok képe a hosszú XIX. század magyar utazási irodalmában* [America, the land of miracles and disappointments: The image of the United States in Hungarian travel writing during the long 19th century]. Debrecen, 2013. 35.

sailing ships to steam ships; while with the former it could take several weeks to reach America early in the century, by the end of the era the length of the voyage decreased to only a few days. After arrival, a third major trip awaited many Hungarians — travel within the United States — sometimes looking for attractive sites to visit while in other cases seeking new opportunities, new jobs, and even a new life.

Travel accounts written by people crossing the Atlantic stand as witness to the changes such a challenging journey underwent and the way the transatlantic voyage was perceived by Hungarians: as a place of transformations, a space of reckoning, an opportunity for social and political commentary, etc. Travelogues reflect technological changes, improvements in travel and the varied perceptions of mobility, while they also reveal a lot about the travelers and their home (including the reasons for leaving the mother country). In this paper, I am going to examine representative travel accounts (selected primarily due to their popularity and influence and/or their unique features) detailing the transatlantic voyage in the long nineteenth century³ and the effect of technological changes on the voyage itself as well as its perception. I will discuss how Hungarians could actually reach the United States at different points in time, focusing on the first two sections of this trying journey.

THE UNITED STATES AS A DESTINATION FOR HUNGARIANS

During the nineteenth century, the United States became increasingly attractive and at the same time more and more accessible from Europe. This resulted in a growing number of visitors to the country also from Hungary and this meant that reports (both published and unpublished) also multiplied with time. The 1830s in Hungary brought about a wave of change as regards the United States and its place in Hungarian thinking. Prior to this period “the Hungarian public received only scarce, indirect and belated information about the U.S. from random newspaper articles, encyclopedias, or translations of foreign travelogues, geographical or historical works.”⁴ However, from the first Hungarian travel writers on (the first travelogue was published in 1834) people at home could get

3 In this paper this refers basically to the time between the publication of the first Hungarian travelogue on the United States (1834) and the beginning of the First World War.

4 Anna Katona, *Hungarian Travelogues on Pre-Civil War America*. = *Angol Filológiai Tanulmányok*, 1971. no. 5. 52.

new information about the North American country from Hungarian authors describing their first-hand experience of the US and significantly contributing to the evolution of its image in Hungary.

For early travelers the United States often served as a place of study and a possible model to be followed by their home country. Irina V. Popova Nowak claims, similarly to Glant, “in terms of travel abroad, Hungarian accounts outlined two geographically and symbolically polar destinations: travels to the West that were travels to the future, and travels to the East that were travels to the past.”⁵ Travel to the West, especially during the Reform Era in Hungary (from 1825 to 1848), was seen as a form of education and the countries in these regions were often perceived as possible models for Hungary in terms of politics, technological development, and economic modernization.⁶ This was clearly visible with regard to the United States.

For others arriving in greater number in the second half of the century the country represented the land of opportunities and a possibility for a better life than at home. This was true for revolutionaries leaving Hungary after 1849 as well as economic migrants at the end of the century; during the period of New Immigration (from 1870 to World War I) alone, more than a million Hungarians immigrated to the United States. For tourists, the United States was an attractive destination both for its urban development and natural scenery and their visits were made easier by the appearance of travel agencies, travel guides, and the improvement of infrastructure in North America. Besides these groups there were others visiting and writing about the country, including scientists, government officials, etc.⁷ The different reasons for leaving the mother country and alternative objectives in the United States (i.e. their invisible luggage) were often already discernible in reports of the transatlantic voyage.

Hungarian travelers to the United States during the nineteenth century can be grouped together in various ways. Anna Katona, in her often-quoted works on Hungarian travel writing on the United States, distinguishes between Pre- and Post-Civil War Hungarian travelers. Glant refines this kind of approach and distinguishes three separate periods and

5 Irina V. Popova-Nowak, *The Odyssey of National Discovery: Hungarians in Hungary and Abroad, 1750-1850*. In: *Under Eastern Eyes: A Comparative Introduction to East European Travel Writing on Europe*, Eds. Wendy Bracewell and Alex Drace-Francis. Budapest, 2008. 211.

6 Glant, *Csodák és csalódások*, 34.

7 See Glant, *Csodák és csalódások* for a detailed list and study.

groups, based not on historical events in the US but rather in Hungary. Glant distinguishes travelers from the Reform Age, Kossuth emigrants, and the travelers during the Dual Monarchy.⁸

The different perceptions of the US by these groups have been widely noted by scholars. As Katona claims, “the eleven travelogues published in Hungary between 1877 and 1900 bear little or no resemblance to the ten travel books written between 1834 and 1863.”⁹ András Vári goes as far as to claim that “the model country of the Reform Era became the land of threats by 1890.”¹⁰ Tibor Glant argues that travel writing of the period was more complex than what such statements would reflect and there were many more accounts written than examined before. Hungarian travel writing on the United States experienced its heyday between 1893 and 1908 and Glant concludes that although critical voices became more emphatic, the myth of the land of opportunities still survived in both a political and, especially, economic sense.¹¹ Many Hungarian travelogues became more critical of the US in this period and called attention to the downsides of the Gilded Age:

Bölöni and his fellow travelers in pre-Civil War America hailed in the U.S. a land of freedom, equality and plenty. To their counterparts in the second half of the last century America was far from being an Eldorado anymore and they tried hard to dispel the myth of America in Europe and Hungary as a fairy-land of plenty where ‘fried pigeons would fly into your mouth’ whenever you open it.¹²

According to Glant, the anti-American sentiment of the era as expressed in some of these writings was due to three main factors: “a major shift in the way Hungarians came to view the future of their own country, an imperial approach to the New World, and large-scale trans-

8 See footnotes 2 and 4 above.

9 Anna Katona, *Nineteenth-Century Hungarian Travelogues on the Post-Civil War United States*. = *Angol Filológiai Tanulmányok*, 1973. no. 7. 35.

10 András Vári, *Fenyegetések földje. Amerika a 19. század második felében – magyar szemmel* [The land of threats: America in the second half of the 19th century – through Hungarian eyes]. = *Korall*, 2006. no. 26. 153.

11 Tibor Glant, *Dualizmuskori Amerika-kép, utazási irodalom és paródia* [The image of America during the Dual Monarchy, travel writing and parody]. In. *Essays in Honor of György Novák*. Ed. Zoltán Varga. Szeged, 2012. 79–99.

12 Katona, *Post-Civil War*, 37.

Atlantic migration.”¹³ I am going to use Glant’s classification and examine the travelers from the perspective of the experience of the transatlantic voyage; less attention is given to the development of the US image in Hungary, which occupies a central theme in other scholarly studies of the same texts.

THE FIRST SECTION: TOWARDS THE PORT

The initial, and especially in the first part of the century, already challenging section of the journey to the US involved reaching a European port with ships heading to North America. This could mean a journey to Germany (e.g. Hamburg) or England (e.g. Liverpool), while later many Hungarians embarked on their voyages from Fiume (Rijeka). While traveling by stagecoach and other slower means of transport, this section could already take several days as we will see. Thus, the time spent with traveling could be used to visit various European countries and cities. Sándor Bölöni, who is known as the writer of the first Hungarian travel account on the United States, did exactly this. Before visiting the US, the principal destination of his journey, he traveled in Western Europe (Germany, France, England) and shared his experience with his readers in his publication; the European section also became a worthy part of the journey to the United States.¹⁴ With advancements in technology, the European segment was shortened, it became more marginal in terms of reaching the United States, and travelers often only saw and presented “snapshots” of places they passed by. For Nendtvich, for example, the European section was much less emphatic already: “Our crossing of Europe was only a flutter. As we had only four months for the entire trip there was no other choice but to fly through Europe so that we have more time for America. Germany was left behind only in a few days.”¹⁵ Such a trend was even more visible with the more extensive use of the railroad by travelers as we will see.

In the first half of the century, the journey within Hungary was already rather uncomfortable and capricious for travelers. Béla Czére in

13 Tibor Glant, *Travel Writing as a Substitute for American Studies in Hungary*. = *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies*, 2010. no. 1.-2. 175.

14 Sándor Bölöni Farkas, *Utazás Észak-Amerikában* [Journey in North America]. Kolozsvár, 1834. Translations, unless otherwise noted, will be mine.

15 Károly Nendtvich, *Amerikai utazásom* [My journey in America]. Pest, 1858. 4. Translation mine.

his insightful and detailed study of transportation in 19th-century Hungary introduces the conditions of roads at the time, the type of vehicles used, and various technical details calling attention to significant challenges travelers had to face.¹⁶ Terrible road conditions characterized most of Hungary and although there had been various attempts to improve conditions, up to the middle of the 19th century this situation remained practically unchanged.¹⁷ In the Great Plains region there were no permanent roads built until the end of the 19th century due to the swamps and flooding in the area.¹⁸ In the period when the first travelers discussed here started on their journeys, most of the roads were largely neglected and especially in rainy weather they were practically impassable. This was especially true of places where no proper materials for road building were available nearby.

This meant that even without any special problems encountered only a few miles could be completed a day.¹⁹ This is true even if the use of the coach became more and more widespread in Europe and gradually in Hungary as well. Traveling on horse was replaced by traveling in stagecoaches on longer distances. These became more and more comfortable, with different styles of vehicles appearing depending on class, the purpose and length of the journey, etc. The stagecoach service became more regular in Hungary as well from the 1750s with improvements taking place especially in the 1820s and 30s. Traveling by stagecoach provided the most reliable form of land transport before the railroad; it was limited only by the accessibility of roads and the cost of travel.

The Reform Era brought changes in transportation in Hungary and while the major improvement came about with the railroad, there were plans for developing the road network as well. We can claim that during the first part of the century (to the Revolution) there was significant expansion in terms of length, the number of public roads and bridges, and one could witness developments in travel by stagecoach as well partly because of better road conditions, stations for changing horses, the appearance of numerous competitors, etc.²⁰

16 Béla Czére, *Magyarország közlekedése a 19. században (1780-1914)* [Transportation in Hungary during the 19th century (1780-1914)]. Budapest, 1997.

17 Czére, *Magyarország közlekedése*, 23.

18 Czére, *Magyarország közlekedése*, 9.

19 Czére, *Magyarország közlekedése*, 12.

20 Czére, *Magyarország közlekedése*, 80-82.

Slower travel by stagecoach provided opportunities for travelers to pay more attention to the landscape, to travel more flexibly, and also to ponder upon the changes perceived and associated with movement (in this case towards the West). Bölöni traveled through Transylvania, Hungary, and Germany, reaching France and then moving on towards England. The description of the journey towards and through the West already tells a lot about Bölöni's perceptions of the world and the movement in space provided him an opportunity to comment not only on the landscape but on people, culture, etc. His descriptions of visits to Paris, the French countryside, Belgium, Holland, England, Scotland, and Ireland stand as witness for his expression of wonder regarding the unfamiliar and provided a basis for comparisons between home and abroad. Travel in his case as well, as Carl Thompson defines it, was a constant "negotiation between self and other that is brought about by movement in space" and "all travel writing is at some level a record or product of this encounter, and of the negotiation between similarity and difference that it entailed."²¹

There is little if any discussion of actual means and details of traveling in Bölöni's account. Types of transportation are mentioned only if connected to progress in Bölöni's mind. In England, for example, steamships and railroads are already seen and used by the Hungarian and the latter is especially associated with advancement in his account. The railway is presented as a superior way of traveling and a new experience for travelers:

From Liverpool to Manchester we took the steam wagon. The steam wagon is one of the largest triumphs of the human mind. At the end of the city about 130 of us sat on the wagon and completed this trip to Manchester [...] under one hour and half a minute. But sometimes it runs this distance under 58 and even 57 minutes. Neither a bird, nor the fastest running horse can travel this fast. One can feel a special sense of pleasure when from one city he suddenly finds himself in another, far-away town.²²

Ágoston Haraszthy, in his book published ten years after Bölöni's and similarly titled *Utazás Éjszakamerikában* (Travels in North America), summarized the European section of his journey between Pest and London in much more detail, providing insights into the "mechanics

21 Carl Thompson, *Travel Writing*. New York, 2011. 9-10.

22 Bölöni, *Utazás*, 9.

of the journey” as well.²³ He included insightful information not only with regard to the cost but also the forms of transportation used as well as the length of the different sections. He already used the railroad in Germany and steamships in different parts but he is more pragmatic than Bölöni and (just as in the rest of his account) focuses more on technical details, numbers, and statistics, than questions of progress in general; this attitude was also influenced by the different purposes of travel, of course. Haraszthy summarized his European journey that took more than six days the following way: the journey from Pest to Vienna by stagecoach took 36 hours, he used the same means to Prague and then to Dresden (36 and 26 hours respectively). To Leipzig he already traveled on the train, the journey taking only 3 hours. He used the steamship to get to Hamburg and then to London (for 26 and 36 hours), this way the entire journey took him 6 days and 12 hours between Pest and London.

Haraszthy also included the cost of different sections as well as what he paid for food and accommodation and it is visible from his account that reaching the United States was not an easy and certainly not a cheap enterprise even if we consider the European part of the journey only. Katona also emphasized that the first travelers to the United States from Hungary were representatives of the nobility as they had the money and the opportunity to travel.²⁴

The second half of the century brought about major improvements in the Hungarian road network, especially after the Revolution and during the Dualist Era. Stagecoach use continued to grow (in 1850 there were 9.8 million passengers, by 1867 this increased to 39 million) but gradually the railroad became to be seen as the superior form of travel and most resources were allocated to the development of this new means of transport.²⁵ The opportunity to travel for the masses came about also with the railroad (together with the commercialization of travel²⁶).

The railroad was often associated with progress and it brought about major changes not only in terms of commerce, communication, and the economy in general but, naturally, in travel as well. It influenced the way (as seen above in Bölöni’s quote) the way people sensed and related to the places visited and this provided a new travel experience. “Annihilation

23 Ágoston Haraszthy, *Utazás Északamerikában* [Journey in North America]. Pest, 1844. 17-20.

24 Katona, *Pre-Civil War*, 51.

25 Czére, *Magyarország közlekedése*, 117 and 167.

26 For more information on the latter see: Gyömrei, *Utazási Kedv*, 145 ff.

of space and time' was the early nineteenth-century characterization of the effect of railroad travel. The concept was based on the speed that the new means of transport was able to achieve. A given spatial distance, traditionally covered in a fixed amount of travel time, could suddenly be dealt with in a fraction of that time."²⁷ Railroad travel was not only faster but it also changed the way travelers related to the landscape and experienced the journey. "The empirical reality that made the landscape seen from the train window appear to be 'another world' was the railroad itself, with its excavations, tunnels, etc." and "[...] the machine ensemble [...] interjected itself between the traveler and the landscape. The traveler perceived the landscape as it was filtered through the machine ensemble."²⁸

The Liverpool and Manchester Railway mentioned by Bölöni was opened in 1830 starting the first steam passenger service; of course steam locomotives had been used and passenger railway service had been introduced years earlier. However, it was this line that proved the viability of railroad transport and had a great influence on railroad building both in England and worldwide. In the 1830s steam-powered German railroad lines were opened, the Leipzig-Dresden line and the first Austrian line were also available for travelers.

The success of the railroad was obvious by the 1830s so construction became a central issue in Hungary as well.²⁹ It was only in 1846 that the first steam railroad line was inaugurated, connecting Pest and Vác. In 1847 the Pest-Szolnok line was opened, followed by several others later on. The immediately noticed positive effects of railroad travel were its speed and the shortening of travel time as mentioned above as well.³⁰ The latter decreased to about one fourth or one fifth of the time required before. The wide ranging social and economic benefits of the railroad were realized gradually and especially after 1867 a new era started in Hungarian transportation history when a "railroad building fever" could be witnessed (even if disrupted sometimes) that resulted in a huge expansion of the network.³¹

27 Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey. The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century*. Oakland, 1986. 33.

28 Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, 24.

29 For further information on the history of Hungarian railroad construction see: János Majdán, *A vasszekér diadala: A magyarországi vasútépítés 1914-ig* [The triumph of the iron wagon: Railroad construction in Hungary to 1914]. Budapest, 1987.

30 Czére, *Magyarország közlekedése*, 67.

31 Czére, *Magyarország közlekedése*, 123 and 131.

As mentioned above, railway travel changed the perception of the European section of the journey from Hungary to the United States and travel accounts from the second half of the nineteenth century prove this. Travel speeded up, it also became less flexible, and thus the journey itself became more practical, more of a means only of reaching the ports while visits to European cities were not necessarily part of the US trip any more. This is especially true for emigrants who did not want to do this and in most cases did not even have the means to spend a lot of time in Europe before the transatlantic crossing. Jenő Bánó traveling to the United States in 1889 was not a typical emigrant, he was much better off than the average migrant as we will see from his description of the voyage, but he still did not offer too much information on the European section of his journey. He traveled from Eperjes (Prešov) to Bremen (expressing the difficulties of leaving behind his family and home country) and emphasized the speed of train travel:

The train, with the few-minute-long stops at the stations, continued on its way at a dizzying speed, such a speed was only surpassed by the flight of my thoughts as by the time the train reached Oderberg, Wroclaw, Berlin, Hannover, and finally Bremen, I have already completed the long ocean voyage in my thoughts [...] ³²

Bánó reached Bremen in 30 hours. Before his ship left, he had one and a half days for visiting Bremen. The description of the city is positive but rather short, also reflecting a decreasing interest in the European section of the journey. This seems to be the case with regard to tourists visiting the United States at the turn of the century, too. Mrs. Béla Mocsáry did not even mention the European section of her journey in detail while Mrs. István Jakabffy described only Hamburg very briefly and without any close attention to details. They focused on the American trip and what they wanted to see there.

CROSSING THE ATLANTIC

The transatlantic voyage posed a major challenge for most people traveling to North America during the nineteenth century. The length and cost of the journey were the main obstacles for early travelers while

³² Jenő Bánó, *Úti képek Amerikából [Images of a journey in North America]*. Budapest, 1890. 10-11.

for those in later groups the challenge was often represented by the lack of knowledge in terms of language and concerning the United States, the often bad circumstances of the journey, etc. As seen above, the first section was already difficult but the longest and most demanding section was, of course, the transatlantic crossing.

The nineteenth century saw a tremendous improvement in sea travel, not only regarding speed but also the level of comfort, costs, services, etc. Bölöni stressed these changes that were to continue with great speed later in the century:

Only sixty years ago, when the United States was not free yet, the crossing of the ocean caused lot of worries for and required great determination by the English as well, who live on the sea. Then it took months and usually half a year to cross the ocean. [...] However, since then the science of shipping took enormous steps forward.³³

Improvement came with the appearance of sailing ships referred to as packet ships or packet liners that carried both freight and passengers. Their major innovation was their regularity as they departed port on a regular schedule. The first of the packet lines was the Black Ball Line sailing between New York and Liverpool from 1818. “The typical packet sailed between American and British ports, and the ships themselves were designed for the North Atlantic, where storms and rough seas were common.”³⁴ For several decades, until the steam ship finally took over, packet ships were the most efficient means of crossing the Atlantic even if they were not too fast as they were not specifically designed for speed. Bölöni introduced Hungarians to the innovations and the improvements brought about by the packet ships in his book: these ships, he wrote, started from the main ports of Europe on specific days of the month and regularly, providing a more reliable and comfortable service for travelers.³⁵

Even if packet ships made the crossing more predictable and reliable, the voyage itself was still full of difficulties for contemporary travelers. Depending on the weather, the voyage could still take more than a month, passengers feared of a possible sinking, suffered from sea sickness, etc.

33 Bölöni, *Utazás*, 11.

34 Robert McNamara, Packet Ships. Available at: <http://history1800s.about.com/od/1800sglossary/g/packetdef.htm>. Date of Access: Nov. 30, 2014.

35 Bölöni, *Utazás*, 12.

These became standard elements (among others) of the descriptions of the voyage since Bölöni. Besides possible emerging hazards, the voyage was often perceived as boring, long, and very demanding, especially when the ship was not moving at all due to lack of wind.³⁶ At the same time the long days spent on board also offered a chance to think about home and abroad, expectations about the New World, the description of the character of fellow travelers, etc. and this way also allowed for political and social commentary.

Bölöni's voyage took 39 days, for Haraszthy the crossing required 42. For Károly Nendtvich (1858) it was only 12 days, which shows the remarkable advancement of technology in just two decades. Nendtvich wrote: "We reached the American coast at 11:20 on July 18; thus on the eleventh day after leaving Liverpool and during this time we completed 2,394 nautical miles, i.e. we traveled 217 miles a day."³⁷ The time of crossing decreased and became less dependent on weather conditions with the appearance and spreading of steamships and by the turn of the century a crossing would typically be around 10 days (of course depending on the actual port of departure, the number of stops, etc.). The *New York Daily Times* wrote retrospectively in 1891: "the old packet ship filled all the wants of transit in their day. They are no longer a necessity. Progress has put steamers in their place."³⁸ From the 1850s on, the use of steamships became more and more widespread and by the 1870s sailing ships crossing the ocean became a rarity.

Kossuth emigrants already arrived to the US mostly on steamships. The U.S. Steam Frigate *Mississippi* carried many former revolutionaries living in exile in Turkey to North America in 1851. Károly László, Kossuth's secretary during the Governor's American tour, described the voyage in his diary (published later in book form).³⁹ The circumstances of the voyage itself were different not only because of the changes in technology but also because of the background of travelers and purpose of their journey. Besides the description of meals, other people on board, the standard topics of storms and sea sickness, László used the transatlantic

36 Bölöni, *Utazás*, 16-17.

37 Nendtvich, *Amerikai utazásom*, 38.

38 Days of the Old Packet. *New York Daily Times*. Dec. 13, 1891. Available at: <http://www.theshipslist.com/accounts/packets.shtml>. Date of Access: Nov. 30, 2014.

39 Károly László, *Napló-töredék az 1849-iki menekülteket, internáltakat, különösen Kossuthot és környezetét illetőleg* [Diary fragment concerning the 1849 emigrants and internees, especially Kossuth and his entourage]. Budapest, 1887.

crossing as a space and time for pondering upon his “farewell to Old Europe” and expectations regarding the “land of freedom” awaiting them: talking about the past and their doubtful future. Forced to leave Hungary in 1849 and Europe in 1851, the transatlantic voyage provided the perfect opportunity to think about issues related to a failed War of Independence and his and fellow travelers’ role in the events.

Pál Rosti, another participant of the Revolution who went to North America not with Kossuth but after studying in Germany and France, also traveled on a steam ship in 1856, departing from France and reaching the United States in 16 days. He described the experience of the voyage in a series of articles in *Hazánk s a Külföld* in 1867. He provided a fascinating and entertaining account, as he said, “as if the reader was also traveling with him.” The farewell to the Old World and the expectations regarding the land of opportunities appeared in his text just as in László’s, contrasting the two worlds on the two sides of the Atlantic: “how calm and comfortable life is here in Europe [...] and see how merry and bustling life is over there [...] the New World appeared in my mind in newer and newer images struggling and progressing continuously.” At the same time, the description of the transatlantic crossing also revealed his background; Rosti came from the upper class and this resulted in a completely different type of travel experience that was much more enjoyable:

We had lots of fun after lunch. We held a rope climbing competition with the sailors, a steeplechase race on the deck, competing on all fours and jumping over small obstacles. And in the evening we played “Schwarz Peter,” the game probably well known by everyone at home, together with the women, “blackening” each other to a great degree, which provided an occasion for a lot of laughter.

Probably the most significant group of “travelers” in the second half of the century (simply based on their sheer number as well) included the immigrants leaving Hungary between 1870 and the First World War. By this time the cost of the voyage decreased significantly and crossing time was reduced but for them it still represented a major challenge. They had to leave behind their home probably for a longer time, the price (although low compared to earlier times) was still relatively high for them and for many this was the first journey away from home; thus they had no experience in organizing the journey itself. The different emotional

stance towards travel is also visible in accounts written by people who left Hungary in search of better opportunities abroad.⁴⁰

The journey, and the transatlantic voyage in particular, was most difficult for poor migrants leaving the home country and maybe even their villages for the first time. They had to get passports, buy their tickets, learn English (at least at a very basic level)⁴¹, and organize their new life without knowing too much about the New World. Most of the ships left from Liverpool, but Hamburg and Bremen remained important ports for Hungarian migrants, with Fiume also serving as an alternative place of departure and one supported by the Hungarian government (from Fiume the voyage was longer, it could take 20 days).⁴² German ports remained dominant during the unprecedented wave of migration, accounting for the large majority of Hungarian emigrants.

Major differences can be seen in the circumstances of the voyage depending on how much money one had and such differences were present even within the same ship, concerning first and third-class passengers. Jenő Bánó serves as a great example for a migrant who left Hungary for economic reasons but who was better off than the typical emigrant and thus could travel under better circumstances: “[t]his ship is equipped with most comfort and one might as well say luxury,” wrote Bánó about his ship, “light is provided by electricity, heating by gas, its rooms, besides the numerous cabins and nicely decorated dining hall, also included an elegantly furnished lady’s salon, a reading and smoking room, as well as a barber’s salon and bath with full comfort.”⁴³ Bánó continued and described his accommodation the following way: “[f]ortunately, I could use my cabin alone and thus my feeble dreams were not disturbed by the snoring of a German fattened on beer or a raw-meat eating Englishman, or, for that matter a Russian who has become tipsy from whiskey.” This was in sharp contrast with the circumstances of the majority of migrants who traveled on third class, in the cheapest and most uncomfortable parts of the ship (the steerage), crammed together with numerous other travelers.

40 See for example Bánó, *Úti képek*, 9-10.

41 On the last aspect see for example: István Kornél Vida and Balázs Venkovits, Strange New Wor(l)ds: English Language Books for Hungarian New Immigrants; With Two Case Studies. In *Hungarian-American Ties: Essays and Studies in Intercultural Links and Contacts*. Ed. Zsolt K. Virágos. Debrecen, 2013. 200–213.

42 This overview is mostly based on István Kornél Vida, *Megy a hajó éjjel-nappal mindig* [The ships keeps moving day and night]. Unpublished Manuscript.

43 Bánó, *Úti képek*, 13.

A special type of travel account was written by Sándor Tonelli in 1907 based on his voyage on *Ultonia*⁴⁴ and his book grants us insights into this type of crossing. He was a sociologist who disguised himself as an emigrant and conducted a sociological survey, traveling together with people on third class. He witnessed and took note of the terrible conditions and corruption and also illustrated his account with photographs that tell us a very different story of the transatlantic crossing than what one can get from Bánó's account. With regard to men's accommodation, for example, Tonelli wrote:

My home, the largest sleeping quarters ... were a large, uneven room which extended from one side of the ship to the other. It received light through several small, round windows, but its middle section remained dark even in broad daylight... There were about 300 berths. Each was prepared by fixing a wire network on four iron poles which had a straw mattress on it, with very little straw.⁴⁵

He also noted the catastrophic hygiene conditions found on the ship:

The stink dominating the sleeping quarters can only be imagined, but impossible to describe. The rooms of any military barrack were sanatoriums as compared to the sleeping quarters of the *Ultonia*. The strongest smell was in our sleeping quarters as all the doors of rooms around and under us opened towards this place. Everyone was smoking the pipe here and the breath and bodily vapor of hundreds of people condensed into steam or gas.⁴⁶

While travelers on the first class were well entertained and had good opportunities for relaxation, those traveling on the third class could not leave the crowded quarters and part of the deck designated for them; entertainment was provided by stories told by people (especially those who have completed such a voyage before, traveling between Hungary and the US multiple times as 'birds of passage'), as well as games and gambling.

44 Sándor Tonelli, *Ultonia: Egy kivándorló hajó története* [*Ultonia: The story of an emigrant ship*]. Budapest, 1929. For a more detailed study of Tonelli's book see: István Kornél Vida: 'An Immigrant in Disguise': Sándor Tonelli's *Ultonia* – A Written Photograph. In. *East Central Europe in Exile. Volume I: Transatlantic Migrations*. Ed. Anna Mazurkiewicz, Newcastle, 2013. 141–156.

45 Tonelli, *Ultonia*, 27. Translation from Vida's article, see the footnote above.

46 Tonelli, *Ultonia*, 28-29.

There is one more group of travelers that should be mentioned because their experience of the transatlantic journey offers other insights and aptly reflects changes of the time. Tourists who visited the United States for its natural beauties, tourist attractions as part of the commercialized travel market now using travel guides, staying in hotels, and focusing on specific attractions recommended for such visitors, also often provided accounts of their journeys. Such a trip was certainly not affordable for everyone and due to the status of the tourists, the voyage was most often completed under good conditions. Traveling by the turn of the century became safer, more comfortable, and less demanding; partly as a result of this, more and more women could also embark on longer journeys and such an act was not seen as so extraordinary as before. The two examples provided here are also from two female tourists, Mrs. Jakabffy and Mrs. Mocsáry (the former traveling to the US with her son in 1893, the latter traveling alone to the United States (1902) and Mexico (1905)). The description of the voyage tells a lot about their background, they witness similar conditions as Bánó did: “The dining hall, drawing and smoking rooms of *Columbia* were like many temples of luxury.”⁴⁷ They were also aware that such an experience was not available for everyone: “The greatest luxury called comfort which might not be available on land by many even for an entire lifetime of work.”⁴⁸

It is also an important development that the transatlantic voyage became attractive in itself for tourists, of course enjoying the luxury of upper class travel: Mrs. Jakabffy emphasized that “the sea voyage itself deserves to become an objective of travel itself. That wonderful one-week ocean life is worth traveling by the railroad and cars for days and bothering with hoteliers, customs officers, and porters.”⁴⁹ Mrs. Mocsáry expressed a similar attitude where the transatlantic crossing became worthy on its own and served as a tourist attraction, the ocean itself providing enough entertainment:

Most people would believe that such a long sea voyage as the one between Europe and the Antilles and Mexico is boring. What could be interesting about everyday uniformity? This, however, is not mentioned by the travelers often visited by sea sickness either and those not so

47 Istvánné Jakabffy, *A nagy számok honában* [In the home of great numbers]. Budapest, 1893. 12.

48 Ibid.

49 Jakabffy, *A nagy számok honában*, 11-12.

sensible to the restless waves of the sea find such a sea voyage especially enjoyable and even varied.⁵⁰

The ocean presented a very different image and experience due to the purpose of the journey and the background of these travelers.

As we have seen, during the nineteenth century there were major transformations and improvements in the circumstances of the transatlantic voyage. The travel accounts describing the crossing were influenced by the available transportation technology of the time (the length of the voyage, perceived hazards), the class and background of the traveler (who they met as fellow travelers, how much they could enjoy the crossing), as well as the objective of the journey and expectations regarding the New World (the journey providing an opportunity for commenting on home and abroad, past and future, familiar and unfamiliar). The image of the United States also depended on how people arrived and what they brought with themselves in their invisible luggage already from the transatlantic voyage which was a major adventure for most. At the same time, for a lot of travelers crossing the Atlantic was only the beginning of a life-changing experience.

50 Béláné Mocsáry, *Mexikói utazásom: úti jegyzetek* [My journey in Mexico: travel notes]. Budapest, 1905. 3.

