

GERMAN OCEAN SHIPPING AND THE PORT OF ANTWERP, 1875-1914

AN INTRODUCTION

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After the redemption of the toll on the Scheldt and other measures within the scope of a free-trade policy, the port of Antwerp grew rapidly. The Franco-Prussian war favourably influenced this development and a number of shipping lines decided to include Antwerp, either temporarily or permanently, in their itineraries. As for the German shipping trade, one should bear in mind that the German victory in 1870 brought about economic expansion and caused spectacular development in the merchant navy and trade relations of the then united German Reich. As a consequence Antwerp experienced a new wave of immigration from German traders and entrepreneurs.

Having compared a number of authorities and sources and analysed the shipping traffic for the years 1880, 1890, 1900 and 1910, we were able to gain a clear insight into ocean shipping under the German flag in Antwerp before World War I¹. Particular attention was focussed on overseas mail lines, passenger and cargo lines. Originally, Bremen and Hamburg shipping companies had been looking for intermediate ports on the continent in order to fill the gaps in their cargoes for the traffic to non-European territories. More than once Antwerp was preferred, although by the end of the eighties Rotterdam surfaced as a powerful, competitive candidate. The well-developed German colony in Antwerp left no stone unturned to induce important German shipping companies to include the port of Antwerp in their itineraries².

Abbreviations : DADG = Deutsch-Australische Dampfschiffs Gesellschaft ; HAL = Hamburg-Amerika Linie ; NDL = Norddeutscher Lloyd ; ARA = Algemeen Rijksarchief, Brussels ; SAA = Stadsarchief Antwerp.

¹ Harbour statistics SAA, Modern Archief, nos. 13,728-13,752 and 36,238-36,270 and the daily lists of arrivals and departures, published in the *Lloyd Anversois*, combined with recent publications on German shipping companies, so that every ship could be identified and followed during its itineraries.

² In this respect the efforts should be specially mentioned of A. H. von Bary, agent of "Norddeutscher Lloyd" and later of the "Deutsche Ost-Afrika Linie" and of E. Eiffe, agent of the "Deutsch-Australische Dampfschiffs Gesellschaft", of the "Hamburg-Amerika Linie" and the "Hamburg-Südamerikanische Dampfschiffahrts-Gesellschaft".

By means of an adjusted rail-rates policy, the port of Antwerp could attract more cargoes (from West and South-West Germany for instance) than before. Moreover, the Scheldt was 24 hours closer, within reach a day earlier than the Weser or the Elbe³. Time saving on account of the location, as well as the rapid dispatch of goods were obvious advantages, especially in boom periods.

The shipping traffic under the German flag increased remarkably (Table 1) in the course of 39 years (1875-1913); forty times the original tonnage came in and approximately five times the number of ships. This means that the proportion of ships under the German flag, as far as the total incoming tonnage is concerned, rose from 7% in 1875 to 17% in 1890, 23% in 1900 and 32% in 1913. With respect to the number of ships, it should be noted that shortly before World War I broke out, one out of four incoming ships sailed under German colours. By the end of the eighties German shipping in Antwerp occupied second place, after the British, with regard to tonnage as well as to the number of ships. Nothing changed until 1914. The number of German sailing ships, as opposed to the total German traffic, was very low – 33% in 1882 – but continued to drop to 7% in 1890, 3% in 1900 and slightly more in 1910. Apart from during the eighties there were relatively fewer sailing vessels under German colours in Antwerp than under English colours. Half the sailing ships sailed to European ports in 1880 and 1890. Afterwards quite a number of them went to remoter territories: in essence this involved three- and four-masters bound for the west coast of South and North America.

Table 1. – Incoming shipping tonnage in Antwerp, 1875-1913).
(Five years average. Belgian Moorsom tons.)

	Under German flag	Under British flag	Total incoming tonnage
1875-1879	184,602	1,301,690	2,061,351
1880-1884	278,444	1,659,611	2,991,357
1885-1889	471,618	2,129,228	3,768,197
1890-1894	879,018	2,608,563	4,668,148
1895-1899	1,261,671	3,391,865	6,138,379
1900-1904	2,186,882	3,925,012	8,199,795
1905-1909	3,019,418	5,415,678	10,991,583
1910-1913	4,039,304	6,100,280	13,478,049

Apart from the sailing ships, which were mostly put on tramp shipping (especially in the eighties), almost the entire German shipping trade ran regular services, including some parcel services. Antwerp was an intermediate port to these ships and they finally arrived in Antwerp harbour before setting sail for the Ocean.

³ P. EHLERS, H. BULTMANN, C. CAMPBELL & A. DUBBERS, *Die Verkehrswirtschaft des Antwerpener Hafens*, Hamburg-Bremen, 1915, pp. 53-54.

This had strong implications for the statistics. The figures have to be examined with a severely critical eye and must not be compared with numerical data about the Belgian shipping trade with Antwerp as port of register. After all, the German ships came from Hamburg or Bremen and filled the gaps in their cargoes before putting out to the open seas. When they came back on the way to their home port they often put in at Antwerp again, so that a lot of ships put in at Antwerp twice in a single voyage, as a consequence of which they are recorded twice in the statistics of incoming ships. The same goes for English and other foreign ships. However, since not all ships returned by way of Antwerp, it would not be expedient simply to cut the statistics in half. A supplementary difficulty is that the provenance and destination of ships under the German flag are likely to give a distorted picture of the situation. There seem to be more ships leaving Antwerp for non-European harbours than ships coming back from them; in other words the contribution of ocean traffic to the statistics about incoming ships is much too low, especially for those under the German flag.

Taking into account provenance and destination we arrived at the following conclusions for steamers: in 1880 65% of the total incoming tonnage sailing under German colours consisted of ocean steamers; in 1890 this rose to $\pm 70\%$, in 1900 to $\pm 75\%$ and in 1910 to $\pm 80\%$. The rest of the ships went to European and North African ports.

Because Antwerp served almost exclusively as an intermediate port, there is the problem of the cargo. Generally speaking, vessels in Antwerp shipped only 1/4 of their cargo capacity and unshipped 1/3⁴. Consequently, the massive rise in incoming tonnage under the German flag partly relates merely to the storage of goods. On occasion, trade circles protested against this, certainly if subsidized lines were involved. As a result, the export of heavy goods of Belgian manufacture was sometimes disrupted.

For Antwerp the trade with South and Central America during the second half of the 19th century was undoubtedly the best organized. Whereas the incoming tonnage strongly decreased in terms of percentage for Central America, for South American it continually increased⁵.

The oldest German steamer service via Antwerp was organized by the "DDG Kosmos". A year after the foundation of the shipping company (in 1872) the port was already included in their itinerary to the west coast of South America. From there the ships sailed towards 21 ports. By agreement with the British Post Office, the Falklands were also frequented. It is said to have been the first steamer service to these islands. As a steamer line, "Kosmos" had been able to count on the support of the

⁴ According to the estimates in 1912 of P. EHLERS *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 4. For the services of the NDL to the Far East and Australia (1894) 44.5% was taken in cargo in Bremerhaven, 23.8% in Antwerp, 27% in Southampton, 7.3% in Genoa and 0.4% in Naples (value of the goods). *Lloyd Anversois*, mardi 31.12.1895, p. 4.

⁵ K. VERAGHTERT, *From Inland Port to International Port*, in: F. SUYKENS *et al.*, *Antwerp a Port for all Seasons*, p. 378.

Belgian government since 1874⁶. In exchange for a monthly connection, pilotage, beaconage and light-duties were refunded and the shipping company was allowed to retain the postal duties. At the beginning of the eighties the service was doubled and they continued the line as far as Guatemala. From 1886 on they faced competition from the "Hamburg-Pacific Linie". They, too, made a final call at the port of Antwerp before commencing the transatlantic crossing. Towards the end of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties this generated two extra services. In 1898, however, the "Hamburg-Pacific" was taken over by "Kosmos"; as a result, "Kosmos" could expand and set up services to Chile and Peru as well as Ecuador and Central America at the beginning of the 20th century. In the course of time this line was continued to San Francisco and later to Vancouver, Puget Sound and Tacoma. Meanwhile "Kosmos" had negotiated a community of interests with the "Hamburg-Amerika Linie"⁷.

The Hamburg monopoly for the trade with the South American west coast led in 1905 to initiatives from Bremen. With the foundation of the "Roland-Linie", which was associated with "Norddeutscher Lloyd", a new competitor for "Kosmos" turned up. But they reached an agreement rather soon, by which the "Roland-Linie" organized an outward voyage every 28 days via Antwerp to Chile and Peru up to Callao⁸. "Kosmos" as well as the "Roland-Linie" acted as a Belgian postal line to these territories. It is noteworthy that the "Roland-Linie" ships always returned via Antwerp, whereas those of "Kosmos" did not.

Besides these steamer services there were also two sailing services, one to Callao, the other to Valparaiso and Iquique. Both were organized by the important Hamburg shipping company "F. Laeisz", the only German shipping company with sailing vessels that was directly represented in Antwerp shortly before the outbreak of World War I.

The second regular steamer service via Antwerp under the German flag went to the South American east coast. It was founded in 1876 by "Norddeutscher Lloyd". At that very moment Lloyd faced competition from the "Lamport Holt Cy", the Belgian daughter company of which was subsidized by the government. The "Norddeutscher Lloyd" ships came in at the port of Antwerp twice a month, on the outward and return voyages. As early as 1890 it split its service up into a line to Brazil and one to Buenos Aires, first involving three, later four steamers a month.

In the course of 1890 "Norddeutscher Lloyd" met with fierce competition from the "DDG Hansa" in Antwerp, which sent a ship to Brazil every fortnight. And there was also the Hamburg shipping company "A. C. De Freitas" which joined in. But in

⁶ A. KLUDAS, *Die Geschichte der deutschen Passagierschiffahrt*, Band I: *Die Pioniersjahre von 1850 bis 1890*, Hamburg, 1986, pp. 69-71; G. DEVOS, *Belgische overheidssteun aan scheepvaartlijnen, 1867-1914*, in: *Collectanea Maritima*, IV, p. 84.

⁷ A. KLUDAS, *Die Geschichte der deutschen Passagierschiffahrt*, Band II: *Expansion auf allen Meeren 1890 bis 1900*, Hamburg, 1987, pp. 130 and 132.

⁸ G. BESSELL, *Norddeutscher Lloyd: Geschichte einer Bremischen Reederei, 1857-1957*, Bremen, 1957, p. 84; A. KLUDAS, *Die Geschichte der deutschen Passagierschiffahrt*, Band III: *Sprunghaftes Wachstum 1900 bis 1914*, p. 107.

1893 the latter was forced to strike a deal with the "Hamburg-Südamerikanische Dampfschiffahrtsgesellschaft". From then on both companies ran a regular biweekly service to southern Brazil. In turn, "Freitas" had to back down in November 1900, and its services and ships were left to "Hapag"⁹. After this the "Hamburg-Südamerikanische Dampfschiffahrtsgesellschaft" together with the "Hamburg-Amerika Linie" ran a biweekly scheduled service to each of no fewer than four different destinations on the South American east coast: North Brazil, Central Brazil, South Brazil and La Plata. This means that shortly before the war eight "Hapag"-ships put in at Antwerp on the way out. In addition to this there were two biweekly services of "Norddeutscher Lloyd" to Brazil and La Plata as well as a biweekly "Hansa" service to La Plata. Together with ships of the "Transatlantica Rhederei A.G.", which, in co-operation with the "Cie Royale Belgo-Argentine" of the "Armement Deppe", sent a ship to Montevideo every ten days under the Belgian or German flag alternately, this amounted to a monthly average of approximately 15 ships under the German flag leaving for the South American east coast via Antwerp. The harbour was not used so much on the voyage home; "Norddeutscher Lloyd" put its ships in faithfully, though only one "Hapag"-ship a month made the port before setting sail to Hamburg. This means that shortly before the war only 30 to 50% of the ships arriving in the port of Antwerp also put in on the return voyage.

Even though the ocean-going trade with the West Indies and Central America was on the decline by the second half of the century, as far as the incoming tonnage is concerned, the list of foreign services arriving in Antwerp to load goods was impressive. The German shipping trade to Central America took off rather late in Antwerp and remained insignificant. Except for one, all regular services were direct, something that can hardly be said of other foreign services. The shipping company that had gradually expanded its services in the course of the eighties and nineties was "Hamburg-Amerika Linie", which by the end of 1900 ran a direct service to Haiti and Mexico (Tampico and Vera Cruz) twice a month. There was a monthly connection with Puerto Rico, Cuba and Guatemala via Hamburg. In 1907, the shipping company's jubilee year, four of its six Hamburg/West Indies services ran via Antwerp, as did two of its four services to Central America, making a total of six ships a month¹⁰. This situation remained unchanged till World War I broke out. But Bremen showed initiative, and after 1901 "Norddeutscher Lloyd" set up a service via Antwerp to Central America and up to Cuba, where they put in at some eight ports¹¹. The smaller shipping company "Ozean" doubled its service before 1910: one monthly sailing to Cuba and one to Cuba and Mexico.

⁹ A. KLUDAS, *op. cit.*, Band II, pp. 143, 144 and 149.

¹⁰ *Hamburg-Amerika Linie 1907. Entwicklung der Seeschiffahrt in den letzten 60 Jahren und die 50-jährige Jubiläumsfeier der Gründung der ersten Dampferlinie unter deutsche Flagge*, Hamburg, 1907, pp. 60-61.

¹¹ G. BESSELL, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

All through this period trade with Northern America remained a weak link in the chain of German shipping in Antwerp. Although its share of the north-transatlantic services was considerable, in Antwerp proper this did not show. A frequent regular steamer service was lacking, though around the turn of the century the "Dampschiffahrts Gesellschaft Argo" temporarily ran a direct monthly service to New Orleans. Probably by agreement with the "Red Star Line", "Hal" regularly sent a ship to Philadelphia or New York alternately. According to some sources, one of the connections of the "Hamburg Amerika Linie" to Central America went via New York and linked up with the "Atlas-Linie"¹².

And the trade under the German flag to Canada was not a huge success in Antwerp. The "DDG Hansa", which had just been founded, organized a regular summer service to Quebec and Montreal in 1883. Ten years later a ship left the port of Antwerp for this destination every week; in the meantime the regular service had been taken over by the "Hamburg-Amerika Linie". Shortly before the turn of the century there were no more sailings via Antwerp and this remained so until the war broke out.

Antwerp did not have a regular direct service to Australia at the beginning of the eighties. The services were partly run by sailing vessels or steamers carrying approximately 4,500 tons a month¹³. There were proposals enough to organize regular steamer services, but financial assistance from the government was expected in return. The experiment of the "Rob. M. Sloman" shipping company received Belgian support. They proposed to organize a monthly postal service via Antwerp to Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney and, if cargo was available, they would return via Antwerp. The "Australia-Sloman-Linie A.G.", founded in 1882, could hardly be called a regular service, notwithstanding its monthly sailings. Outside the wool seasons it was difficult for ships to find return cargo in Australia, so that they were forced to look for cargo elsewhere as tramp ships. On account of this the subsidy from the Belgian government was cancelled. English competition was too keen for the first German service to Australia. The "Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Company", which transhipped goods in English ports and had vainly been applying for support from the government for years, protested strongly when "Norddeutscher Lloyd" received a yearly Belgian subsidy for its postal service. The Bremen shipping company agreed to send a ship via the Suez Canal every 28 days to Australia and a second one to the Far East¹⁴. But it soon became obvious that the packetboats of "Norddeutscher Lloyd" put in at Antwerp with a virtually full load so that a second direct line was envisaged. The newly founded (in 1889) "Deutsch-Australische

¹² According to the regular surveys of the steamer services in Antwerp published in the *Lloyd Anversois*. The announcements in the same newspaper do not mention it, neither does the Jubilee edition of the HAL in 1907.

¹³ ARA, Bestuur Zeewezen, 4137, letter from G. Delcourt to the general inspector in Brussels, Antwerp, 3.10.1885.

¹⁴ Agreement and law of 21.5.1886: *Pasinomie*, 1886, no. 149.

Dampfschiffs-Gesellschaft" was chosen. They agreed to freight 1,500 tons of merchandise per voyage, 1,000 of which were to be heavy goods¹⁵. Soon the shipping company expanded its services to Fremantle, Brisbane and Townsville and, in time, to the Dutch East Indies. Some of these services preferred to put in at Rotterdam. "Norddeutscher Lloyd" doubled its services in 1899. The "Deutsch-Australische Dampfschiffs Gesellschaft"-lines, on the other hand, increased fourfold before the war. On the voyage home, this shipping company, which had become a predominantly cargo company, turned out to be less loyal to Antwerp.

On services to the Far East "Norddeutscher Lloyd", which had doubled its services in the period 1886-1900, had to face competition in 1896 from the "Rickmers Linie", which had started servicing East Asia in the seventies with clippers it had built itself. They were persuaded by "Norddeutscher Lloyd" to give up ships, so as to break the Bremen monopoly. For some time an agreement was reached between "Norddeutscher Lloyd" and "Hapag", who jointly organized a fortnightly sailing. In 1903, "HAL Ostasiatischer Frachtdienst" committed itself entirely to cargo shippings and was able to guarantee a weekly service¹⁶.

"Rotterdamsche Lloyd" together with the "Deutsch-Australische Dampfschiffs Gesellschaft" ran a regular biweekly service via Antwerp to the Dutch East Indies. The "H. Wilhelm Dieckmann jr. - Eugen Cellier" shipping company organized a direct service to Siberia (Vladivostock), a connection that was also serviced in Antwerp by the "Gellatly Lines". To avoid competition, it came to cartel agreements with "Hapag"¹⁷. By 1914 the "Rickmers Linie" had taken over "Dieckmann-Cellier". At that moment there were three regular connections in Antwerp with Siberia: one under the English and two under the German flag. "Hansa" organised regular services to Madras and Calcutta and to Bombay-Kurrachee every fortnight, but had to face severe competition from the English shipping companies ("British India Line", "P&O" and "Bibby Line"). Later, a third service was added to Burma (Rangoon)¹⁸.

Shortly before World War I there were also the transpacific services. The "Royal Mail Steam Packet Company" as well as "Hapag" organised monthly connections between Antwerp and the North American west coast via the Far East¹⁹.

In the same way as with the Far-East and Australian trade, proposals were made at the beginning of the eighties about trade with Africa, the chief destinations being the African west and east coasts. Trade with the east coast had greater appeal in trade circles because it offered more cargo opportunities on the voyage back. More than

¹⁵ Agreement and law of 5.8.1889: *Pasinomie*, 1889, no. 284; O. J. SEILER, *Australienfahrt. Linienschiffahrt der Hapag-Lloyd AG im Wandel der Zeiten*, Bonn, 1988, p. 52.

¹⁶ O. J. SEILER, *Ostasienfahrt. Linienschiffahrt der Hapag-Lloyd AG im Wandel der Zeiten*, Bonn, 1988, pp. 49 ff.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

¹⁸ Although the "DDG Hansa" signed an agreement with "Hapag" in 1903 for the Calcutta service, apparently only the "Hansa"-ships ran into Antwerp harbour.

¹⁹ O. J. SEILER, *Ostasienfahrt*, p. 63.

once the South African ports were included in the itinerary to fill gaps in cargoes. In April 1882 the English "Union Steam Ship Company" was able to get support from the Belgian government for its service to the African east and south coast via Antwerp and, later, via London and Southampton. But the 'regular' service proved to be rather irregular, which contributed to the support finally being discontinued. The Post Offices did not show any interest and neither did the business world ; it was estimated that less than 100 tons of cargo per voyage would be loaded in Antwerp²⁰. Towards the end of the eighties the same English shipping company attempted to set up a regular service via Antwerp every 28 days, but the Belgian government refused to give its support. Their interest had been stirred by Hamburg, where a consortium led by the Woermann group had managed to establish a direct connection with German East Africa and was subsidized by its own government²¹. At first the "Deutsche Ost-Afrika Linie" opted to use Rotterdam as an intermediate port, but in the course of the nineties Antwerp was also included in the itinerary. Shortly before World War I the "Deutsche Ost-Afrika Linie" serviced four sailings from Antwerp each month, two of which went as far as South Africa and another two to the African east coast.

The service to the West African coast and the Free State of Congo proved to be more difficult. Attempts by the Hamburg business house "C. Woermann" at the beginning of the eighties to obtain financial support from the Belgian government failed²². After some time the ships no longer put in at Antwerp but chose Flushing as an intermediate port.

The first Belgian attempt to establish a connection between Antwerp and Congo is dated 1886. But for lack of government funds the "Cie Gantoise de Navigation" could hold out barely two years. English competition was fierce and the cargoes insufficient, as a consequence of which the service to Congo was organised by the Liverpool "Elder Dempster" at the end of the eighties.

German competition grew in the early part of the nineties. The "Woermann Linie" was prepared to leave Flushing for Ostend and take passengers and small cargoes aboard²³. Later, their activities shifted to the port of Antwerp. Thus the service to the Congo Free State was left in foreign hands, much to the dissatisfaction of King Leopold II. There were Belgian plans to organize a service of this kind, but for lack of government funds enthusiasm quickly faded. The King kept insisting on the need to found a shipping company under the Belgian flag. His appeal was eventually complied with by two competing services already in existence, each of them becoming incorporated as a company under Belgian law. With the assistance of the Hamburg "Woermann Linie" the "Société Maritime du Congo" was established, the "Compagnie Belge Maritime du Congo" being supported by the "Liverpool Shipping

²⁰ ARA, Bestuur Zeewezen, 4166, no. 3.

²¹ ARA, Bestuur Zeewezen, 4166, Greindl-letter to de Chimay, Berlin, 6.2.1890.

²² ARA, Bestuur Zeewezen, 4179, letter from Min. Travaux Publics, Brussels, 11.8.1882.

²³ *L'Écho d'Ostende*, 6.8.1891.

Company”²⁴. The sailings of both companies were reserved for one another. But in time it became evident that the “Compagnie” was flourishing while the “Société” was not, as a result of which the latter passed on its contracts to the “Compagnie” in 1901. This was not the end of the “Woermann Linie” in Antwerp, however ; they went on servicing monthly sailings to the African west coast up to Sierra Leone. In due time they met with competition from the “Hamburg-Bremen-Africa Linie”, which was heavily supported by “Norddeutscher Lloyd” and wanted to break the Africa monopoly of the Woermann group. At the end of 1907 they co-operated, an event that was recorded in the announcements of maritime journals ; the “Woermann Linie”, the “Hamburg-Amerika Linie” and the “Hamburg-Bremen-Afrika Linie” jointly serviced a direct monthly connection up to west Angola and German South-West Africa. This also included the Congolese ports of Boma and Matadi²⁵.

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A survey of regular steamer services in Antwerp on the eve of World War I led to the following conclusions :

1. There were no fewer than 26 services to North America, organized by 23 companies. The Germans apparently took no part in this.
2. Fifteen services were in operation for South America, organized by 14 companies, under either Belgian or non-German flags, and 10 services by 6 companies under the German flag.
3. Germany’s position in Central America was rather weak. We were able to find 4 services under the German flag as opposed to 22 Belgian and foreign services other than German.
4. The non-German and German services to India and the Far East balanced each other : 14 services each for 12 and 5 shipping companies respectively. There was also one joint initiative : the co-operation of the “Deutsch-Australische Dampfschiffs Gesellschaft” with the “Stoomvaartmaatschappij Nederland” and the “Rotterdamsche Lloyd” for sailings to the Dutch Indies.
5. As far as the services to Australia are concerned, the Germans prevailed in numbers : 2 shipping companies organized 6 services as opposed to 3 services by 3 companies under non-German flags.
6. There was a balanced proportion of services on the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf which resulted in two monthly sailings.
7. Nine different companies organized 9 services under non-German flags to Africa, with the exception of the North African ports. Three shipping companies, among which one group, took care of 6 different destinations.

²⁴ *Moniteur belge, Recueil des actes, extraits d’actes, procès-verbaux et documents relatifs aux sociétés commerciales*, 1895, no. 280 (act of 24.1.1895 for the “Compagnie”) and no. 515 (act of 20.2.1895 for the “Société”).

²⁵ O. JOEHLINGER, *Koloniale Schifffahrtsprobleme*, in : *Zeitschrift für Politik*, VII, 1914, p. 256.

This amounts to 90 regular steamer services under the Belgian and, mostly, foreign flags, as opposed to 41 under German flag, i.e. 31% of the total. It is a striking fact that German services were realised by a smaller number of shipping companies. Another characteristic seems to be that German ships mostly did not put in at a continental port, and certainly not a North Sea port, other than Antwerp. This was hardly the case for ships under foreign, non-German flags, which filled up the gaps in their cargoes in other ports along the North Sea.

On the other hand, German ships that put in at Antwerp on the voyage out did not always do so on the return voyage ; in other words, the export of goods was more important than the direct import of raw materials. Attention should be drawn to the fact that regular weekly services between Antwerp and Hamburg on the one hand and Bremen on the other were organized throughout this entire period by several shipping companies.

Further analysis of shipping traffic in Antwerp shows, for instance, that 50% at the most of the ships servicing the trade with South America and that put in at Antwerp also did so on the return voyage (1910). Previous statistics (1880, 1890 and 1900) differed according to destination. The most loyal shipping company was undoubtedly "Norddeutscher Lloyd", which made its ships put in at Antwerp on the voyage out and home. For their trade with Australia and the Far East they used their biggest ships as far as tonnage is concerned, those of the Barbarossa class. Their measurements varied, ranging from approximately 10,000 gross tons to 13,000 tons. The largest of the group was the "Grosser Kurfürst", an ocean liner that was also the largest German ship of "Norddeutscher Lloyd" to enter the port before the First World War²⁶. This means that the biggest ships, with respect to tonnage, under the German flag to put in at Antwerp were smaller than the "Red Star Line"-ships built after 1900. The fact that Antwerp was not included in the North Atlantic itinerary from Bremen or Hamburg explains why the biggest ships that waged battle for the Blue Riband did not call at the port.

In conclusion it can be stated that ocean shipping from Antwerp received a strong impetus from the presence of the German shipping companies. Their efforts to organize regular steamer services are remarkable. Their ships' punctuality on arrival and departure was appreciated by both entrepreneurs and forwarding agents. The fact that some services were subsidized by the Belgian government shows that they were truly innovative.

The regular and direct trade under German colours to Australia and the South American west coast was completely new. "Hansa" was the first to organize a service to Canada, in contrast with the English companies, which even in the eighties for some destinations used to send coasters to load foods and tranship them in an English port.

²⁶ *Lloyd Anversois*, 9.7.1914, p. 4 ; W. H. MILLER, *German Ocean Liners of the 20th Century*, Wellingborough, 1989, p. 33.

The list of regular ocean steamer shipping services at the beginning of the eighties is relatively short: a maximum of 11 more or less regular services to non-European territories as opposed to 131 services in 1914²⁷. The eighties were of overriding importance in the development of new markets for regular German steamer services. This benefited not only German but also Belgian exports at a time when sales potential to neighbouring countries was reduced by protectionist measures. In the nineties, a lot of shipping companies came up with new initiatives, while others expanded their services. After the turn of the century the naval battle between the ports of Hamburg, represented by "Hapag", and Bremen, represented by the "Norddeutscher Lloyd", began to show. Monopolies were broken and co-operation between different shipping companies became a must, especially on account of English competition. On the eve of World War I one could argue that almost all destinations in South and Central America, Australia, Asia and Africa had their counterpart in one of the ten German shipping companies present in the ocean shipping traffic out of Antwerp.

²⁷ ARA, Bestuur Zeewezen, 4209, Lignes de bateaux-à-vapeur and lists in the *Lloyd Anversois*, 1913-1914.