

have also provided translations of various primary documents for the first time in addition to a helpful glossary of specific terms (271). Both display an acute awareness for the colony's reception domestically, with Falser dedicating particular attention to the various Austro-Hungarian visitors to the concession, whose accounts are somewhat tediously quoted at length (80–82). One finds this tendency to overuse verbatim language a gripe within this work, which is also sadly riddled with stylistic Germanisms forming often clunky and obfuscating passages that an editor might have weeded out.

In the end, the narrative drive of the work is outweighed by an important section on the “heritagization” (182) of the concession's remaining edifices that have not only been restored in part but even accentuated and expanded upon, leading to a curious state of what we might call a Chinese city with Austrian characteristics. Falser's account of Tianjin's past from a “contested history” to a “glorious heritage”—or even a “global theme park” (182)—is a particular strength to be commended as it relies upon a keen eye for detail in the built environment, an understanding of the historical condition, and his personal expedition to the city in 2018. Present-day China's “rediscovery” of the Tianjin legacy and its reappropriation functions now as an invitation to continue the modernizing process initiated by the public works begun during the concession period. Here, Falser's argument fits well into wider debates about the post-Maoist reconciliation with China's history and does much to reconfigure the conventional focus on narratives of humiliation and imperialistic subjugation about the concession period. It is a shame, therefore, that the same deft treatment of exhaustive contextualization is not made when considering this wider framing of Chinese interpretations of an Austro-Hungarian legacy or the concession era in general, though the fact that this book appears in English rather than German might allow for scholars to run with Falser's ground-breaking baton and continue to pay heed to the far-reaching influence of a short-lived but significant example of Austria-Hungary's commitment to maintaining a colonial world power status during a period of feverish imperialism.

doi:10.1017/S0067237823000851

## **Gatejel, Luminita. *Engineering the Lower Danube: Technology and International Cooperation in an Imperial Borderland***

**Budapest: Central European University Press, 2022. Pp. 348.**

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French Minister Tallyrand is credited with declaring in 1815 that the center of gravity of European politics was located at the mouth of the Danube. At that time, delegates at the Congress of Vienna were debating whether to internationalize key rivers like the Danube to free up navigation and liberalize trade throughout Europe. The Congress ended without resolving this issue on the Danube; however, Tallyrand's assertion proved quite prescient for the remainder of the nineteenth century when the Danube's lower stretches, including its mouth, were caught up in European-wide negotiations, debates, and even active fighting to resolve questions of trade, the Eastern Question, and imperial expansion (3–6).

Luminita Gatejel's book delves into this dynamic space and reveals how engineering projects on the Lower Danube unfolded against a backdrop of conflicting processes: the calcification of state sovereignty and the institutionalization of international cooperation. Studying these projects from the perspective of diverse actors and organizations, Gatejel's book masterfully explores the formulation and execution of engineering plans, chronologically tracing their progress from surveying works in the

seventeenth and eighteenth centuries until the engineering of the Iron Gates at the end of the nineteenth century. Spatially, the work travels back and forth from the Iron Gates, a series of rocky rapids located at the border between the Habsburg and Ottoman empires, down the Lower Danube to its mouth at the Black Sea. Along this entire stretch, the great powers and (later in the nineteenth century) newly independent riparian states sparred over the river's physical conditions, control over engineering projects, and the movement of ships, goods, and people in and out of sovereign territory. Decision-makers, stakeholders, and experts also navigated the many epistemological, environmental, and technical developments reshaping the Danube during this period.

Gatejel's analysis reveals how the Danube River served as a critical space for cooperation amidst persistent imperial conflicts and offered a trial ground for innovative supranational governance in the form of the European Commission of the Danube. Engineers and technical bodies played a guiding part in this history, translating political and commercial agendas into technical blueprints while at the same time providing oft-needed forward momentum to fund and undertake these works (297). Gatejel argues that this process empowered engineers and local officials to collaborate across national boundaries and to modify plans to best adapt to local conditions. This gave them space to act independently of distant technical and political superiors and negotiate mutually beneficial plans. The decades-long timescale of these works offered ample time for generations of engineers to observe and attempt to correct the unintended environmental effects of their predecessors' works.

One or two additions may have strengthened our insight into the implications of these engineering works on the Lower Danube. There is limited coverage of how local communities reacted or adapted to engineering projects on their stretches of the Danube and the minimal treatment of the ecological consequences that they wrought on the riverscape. Analyzing the ecological ramifications of these interventions may have more clearly illustrated how they impacted the lives and livelihoods of the local populace. More voices like those of local merchants or fishermen, discussed briefly in chapters two and five, respectively, would have offered a refreshing look at people's agency and adaptability during this process (114, 284–88). Likewise, Gatejel clearly indicates the myriad ways that engineers reflected on their role modifying the Danube, but the book stops short of more systematically discussing other factors such as changing climatic conditions, population growth, new land use practices, urbanization, or other developments in the Danube Basin that broadly affected the river's hydrology and inadvertently fuelled the need for certain engineering works in the first place. (The major exception here comes from the short ruminations of prominent engineer Gustav von Wex, who postulated that Tisza River reclamation projects, embankments, and deforestation in the Habsburg monarchy affected the Lower Danube's hydrology [240–41].)

On the whole, Luminita Gatejel's work is impressive, informative, and insightful. The vast supply of sources and languages that it employs lends a rich composition of narratives that serve to further underscore the transnational nature of interest and engagement along the Lower Danube. Its scope is likewise enjoyable—zooming in on the individuals whose travels and engineering insights influenced imperial policies toward the river and zooming out to glimpse the sweeping geostrategic considerations formulated at the highest levels of imperial governments. Finally, its conclusions help to redefine the nature of state-building projects in the nineteenth century as we see the contributions of both river-level engineers and supranational organizations in this process, helping to draw and blur the lines of state sovereignty, imperial competition, and international cooperation.