



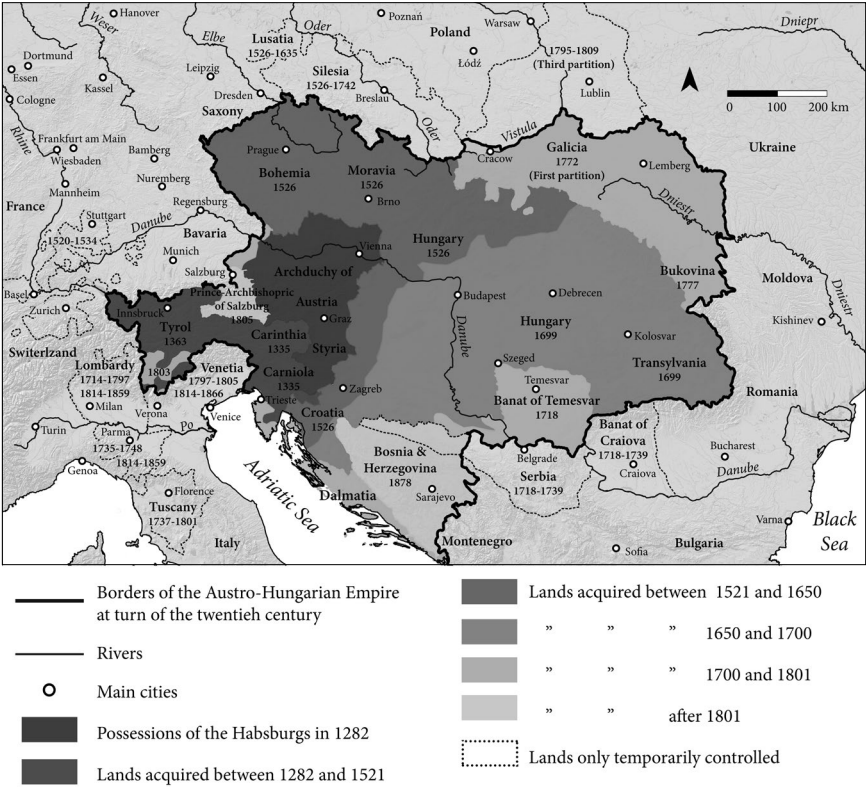
# Introduction

## *Towards the Writing of an Environmentally Inspired History of the Late Habsburg Empire*

Jawad Daheur and Iva Lučić

The long nineteenth century was a century of empires. In a global context it was marked by rapid population growth and intensification of cross-border exchanges of goods and people around the world. More than previous eras, it was marked by global entanglements through advancing trade and finance, in which distant parts of the world became more integrated and interconnected. The nineteenth century was also an era in which nature became a central focus of political, economic and scientific attention: intense and sophisticated explorations of nature, its transformation into productive resources and a growing burning human desire to manage and control it. As Jürgen Osterhammel writes, it was a century in which ‘intervention in nature was greater than ever before’ as industrialization and technological changes advanced and ‘transport, mining, or land reclamation became a hallmark of the times’.<sup>1</sup>

Most of these hallmarks shaped the historical experience of the late Habsburg Empire. By ‘late’ we refer here mainly to the experience of Austria-Hungary, which constituted the final phase of the constitutional evolution of the Habsburg Monarchy established by the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867.<sup>2</sup> One of Europe’s major powers at the time, Austria-Hungary was geographically the second-largest country in Europe (after the Russian Empire), covering 676,615 square kilometres, and the third-most populous (after Russia and the German Empire), with a population of 51,390,223 in 1910. Like other European powers, the late Habsburg Empire engaged in large-scale resource exploitation and in the international integration of commodity chains, participated in the exploration of distant places and established relations with the wider world, massively expanded its infrastructural networks within the imperial space (roads, railways, canals and telegraphs) and was influenced by major technical innovations in extraction and the conservation of nature. These forms of interaction with the domestic and more distant environments were part of a long process of territorial construction that, from the end of the



**Map 0.1.** The territorial expansion of the House of Habsburg (thirteenth–nineteenth centuries). Map drawn by Jawad Daheur using QGIS. Based on: ‘Growth of the Habsburg Dominions,’ in Ramsay Muir (ed.), *New Historical Atlas for Students*. London: Philip & Son, 1911, plate 25a; ESRI Shaded relief (OpenStreetMap).

thirteenth century, saw the lands of the House of Habsburg expand outwards from an initial Austrian core (see Map 0.1).

A disparate collection of kingdoms, duchies and principalities assembled over the centuries, the Habsburg lands became a *de jure* empire in 1804, under the name of the Austrian Empire. Following the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, which reorganized its internal structure, it became a constitutional monarchy known as Austria-Hungary, and often referred to as the Austro-Hungarian Empire or the Dual Monarchy. Around that time, this state stretched across nine degrees of longitude, from the Adriatic coast to the plains of Galicia and from the high pastures of the Alps to the steppes of Hungary – extremely heterogeneous in terms of physical environments, landscapes and climates. The Habsburg Empire was also very diverse in terms of its population, with a strong multilingual dimension that included languages

such as German, Magyar, Italian and Romanian, as well as a range of Slavic languages such as Polish, Czech, Ukrainian, Slovak, Croatian, Serbian and Slovenian.<sup>3</sup> Later on, this multitude of languages served as a central locus for nationally framed political movements within the empire.

Similar to other empires, the historical experience of the late Habsburg Monarchy was shaped by the critical link between empire and environment. Nevertheless, and until today, the characteristics, dynamics and trajectories of the environment–society entanglement in the late Habsburg Empire remain among the least-studied and known subjects within the broader field. Given its specific features, such as the lack of overseas colonies, strong legalistic tradition (*Rechtstaatlichkeit*) and the promotion of legal civic equality for men and women independent of their social background, the (late) Habsburg Monarchy has often been viewed as an anomaly when compared to other imperial entities, which has lent it a marginalized or even neglected place within historical writing on empires. As a result, the scholarship on the (late) Habsburg Empire has offered only a few studies with an environmental bent so far – and, moreover, these have until now remained compartmentalized within the narrower framework of Habsburg history.

The aim of this book is to establish environmental perspectives as an integrative part of the new history of the Habsburg Empire. One of the starting points is the question of how the environmental–society nexus can improve our understanding of the late Habsburg Empire as a political entity. More specifically, this book aims to show how the environment and its changes were intertwined with the development of the Habsburg Empire's economy, technology and infrastructure, as well as with its cultural, social and legal spheres. Thus, the analytical style of this book may not correspond to the typical environmental-history style of analysis. Rather, this book is about bringing environmental history into dialogue with other branches of historical research. By looking at how the Habsburg Empire engaged with nature (and ideas of nature), how it tried to manage nature and natural resources and how it coped with natural disasters, the contributors offer important nuanced insights into questions of imperial governance, subject–ruler relations and the expansion of capitalist structures under imperial rule.

## **Austria-Hungary and the Environmental History of Empires**

Until very recently, the Habsburg Empire has occupied only a very minor role (when included at all) in environmental history. Despite its long-lasting duration, the Habsburg Empire remains almost fully absent from both studies on global environmental history and studies on the environmental history of empires. It is, for example, revealing that the major environmental history

syntheses of the 2000s covering the Early and Late Modern Periods do not mention the Habsburg Empire as an actor of significance at all. Examples from the central and southeastern European territories of the Habsburg lands are barely even mentioned.<sup>4</sup> Even the 2002 German-language book by Joachim Radkau, *Natur und Macht* (published in English as *Nature and Power: A Global History of the Environment* in 2008), does not pay much attention to the Habsburg case or even to the Austrian lands.<sup>5</sup> And if we look at the 783 pages of the *Oxford Handbook of Environmental History*, edited by Andrew C. Isenberg in 2014, these territories feature only once, in a reference to a journal article by Deborah R. Coen on Austrian climatology at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>6</sup> The Habsburg case also remains largely invisible in the scholarship dealing with the entangled relationships between environment and empire building. The conditions for the emergence and expansion of this flourishing field of research are well known and they partly explain why the Habsburg Empire – along with a shrinking but still-long list of other imperial states – has been left out of its development. In the wake of Alfred Crosby's *Ecological Imperialism* (1986) and Richard Grove's *Green Imperialism* (1995), both pioneering works,<sup>7</sup> research efforts have focused on European expansion from the perspective of overseas colonized territories, particularly those of the tropical worlds. Studies dealing with European empires during the Early Modern and contemporary times have highlighted not only the transforming impact of settler colonialism on diverse environments around the globe, but also how colonial environments shaped empires and imperial centres with consequences for diverse human and nonhuman agents.<sup>8</sup> Part of this scholarship also argues that the very concept of environmentalism is deeply embedded in the history of empire.<sup>9</sup>

Whereas these studies have extensively explored the environmental dimensions of the colonial expansion of Western European powers (as well as of the United States within its vast territory), the Habsburg Empire (having no formal overseas colonies but having aspired to an empire within Europe since the Late Middle Ages) has not received any proper treatment in this field. While this is not an isolated case, this lacuna is becoming more and more noticeable, particularly in the context of the emergence of a new research field dealing with the environmental history of large continental and multicultural political structures such as the Russian (Soviet), Ottoman and Chinese Empires.<sup>10</sup> Researchers have underlined, especially in the case of Russia, how scholarship dealing with such imperial states has long suffered from marginalization within the field, ignored by colleagues working on the British, French or Dutch empires, and even from significant perception bias (e.g., seen only in terms of massive, state-sponsored environmental degradation by authoritarian regimes).<sup>11</sup> In the case of the Habsburg Empire, however, it is difficult to speak, as David Moon does for Russia, of a phenomenon of 'marginalisation or distortion'. The situation is more serious: that of an almost total absence of

visibility within the field, and this despite the fact that some studies already exist and may be of interest to a larger community of researchers. Scholarship explicitly concerned with the environmental history of the Habsburg lands – here understood as both a historiographical object and a unit of observation – is not entirely new. Various studies dealing with aspects of human–nature relations in different parts of this vast empire at different times have already been published. But what is still missing is the supraregional perspective that would allow for a better understanding of more general environmental dynamics within the Empire.

So far, environmentally inspired studies on the Habsburg Empire form an uneven landscape of scholarship both in quantitative and qualitative terms. Moreover, this landscape has been shaped by contributions of different (sub)disciplinary provenance including history of ideas, science and technology studies, ecology and social and political history of empire, offering a jigsaw puzzle of empirical fields, thematic foci and theoretical entrance points. Characteristic to the diversity of these scholarly practices is the fact that the studies offer different units of analysis ranging from local frames to transregional perspectives, as well as a thematic kaleidoscope of multiple pieces comprising natural resource extraction, climate science, water regulation, trade of natural resources, rights of ownership, access to nature and human–animal relations.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, we observe strong fluctuations in scholarly attention to the different regions of the Habsburg Empire as both socioecological but also political units, as if different regions bear varying ‘academic currencies’ within the field of environmental studies. One of the regions that so far has received the most attention is Habsburg Galicia, one of the Cisleithanian crownlands, known not only for its economic underdevelopment within the Habsburg imperial space, but also for its abundance of natural resources, namely, oil and forests.<sup>13</sup> The environment of the Dinaric Karst, which covered the southern part of the Empire, has also recently been the subject of several studies dealing with the Late Imperial Period and covering issues such as deforestation and afforestation, famine, water management and soil pollution.<sup>14</sup> The Hungarian part of the Monarchy has also received increased attention during recent years, particularly with regard to issues such as forestry, woodland grazing, soil erosion and flooding.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, human ecologists, whose recent works have provided important insights into flows of material and energy between nature and society in the context of the late Habsburg Empire, do offer environmental perspectives, too.<sup>16</sup> Yet most of these works miss out on the concept of power and political asymmetries not only as a characteristic feature of the Habsburg imperial entity but also as a determining factor of the ecological phenomena analysed. Consequently, their analysis often appears to be in a political vacuum or beyond the sphere of imperial policy making.

These strands of work are characterized by their lack of engagement with

the critical nexus of environment and empire as it evolved and materialized in the late Habsburg Empire. This is where our major contribution comes in, namely, offering a new, more nuanced understanding of the late Habsburg Empire by looking at it from the intersection between the new imperial history and environmental history perspectives. As we argue, the structural neglect of the environmental history of empire in the scholarship on the Habsburg Monarchy must not be interpreted as an indicator of a less-pronounced ecological dimension within the specific imperial space on European soil. After all, the Habsburg Monarchy did govern not only historically and socially different regions, as earlier scholarship has emphasized, but also ecologically varying territories. The socioecological differences shaped the ways the late Habsburg Empire governed its territories and how it functioned in relation to its neighbouring empires. Moreover, natural resources made up a substantial part of the Empire's capital base. From the 1880s onwards, for example, Austria-Hungary's forestry industry made great strides in the world timber market, where its share eventually approached that of Finland.<sup>17</sup> Also, in the early twentieth century, Austria-Hungary was the third-largest oil producer in the world, accounting for 5% of world production.<sup>18</sup> In sum, we argue that looking at the late Habsburg Empire from theoretical and methodological perspectives as well as thematic horizons of environmental history offers great potential for understanding or even reimagining its historical experience. At the same time, it can contribute conceptually to the empire–nature nexus within the field of environmental history.

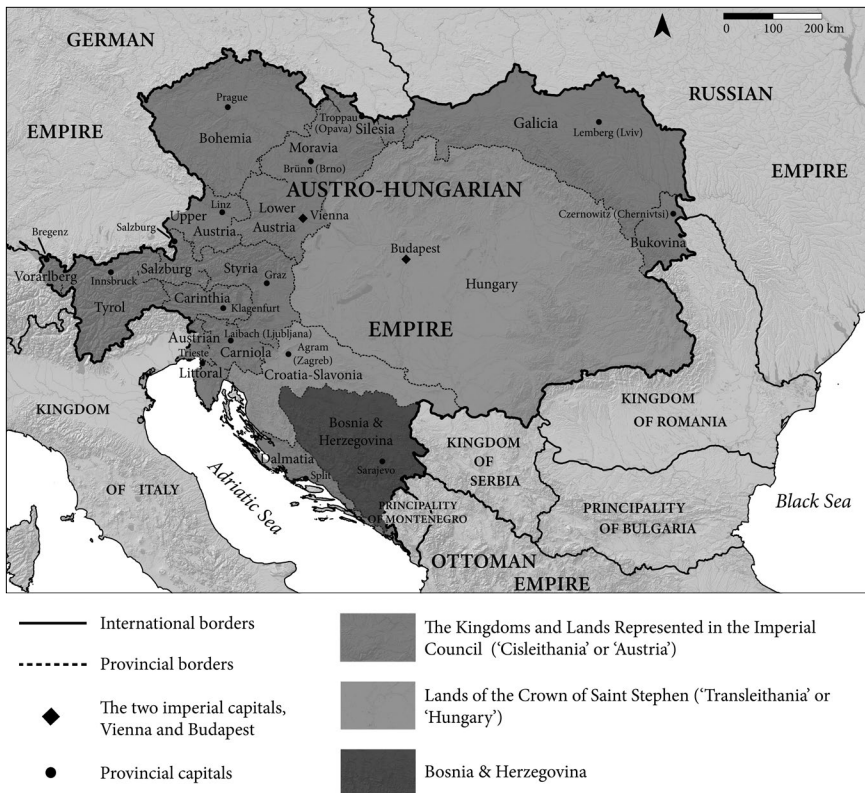
## **Towards a Dialogue between Habsburg (New) Imperial History and Environmental History**

The central themes of this volume are human/nonhuman relations in the late Habsburg Empire and the importance of environmental history for understanding imperial governance. This includes water regulation attempts; natural resource extraction; perceptions of and dealings with environmental threats and crises (e.g., dangerous animals, droughts, insect pests); political, economic and ecological factors in the global trade of commodities; interaction of scientific-technological knowledge promoted by experts and engineers with local traditional knowledge and perceptions of nature; and conceptions and effects of ecological changes. This intentionally broad thematic horizon of environmental currents and their transformation during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is analysed from multiple, but connected, perspectives that are placed at the intersection of ecology with economy, governance and imperialism. Our major argument is that environmental conditions and their changes both set limits and opened possibilities for political control

in the Habsburg Empire. We therefore propose a dialogue between aspects of new imperial history and environmental history perspectives by engaging with a conceptual cross-fertilization and affording nature an active role in the shaping of the political and economic life of the Habsburg Empire. This is done by engaging with some central thematic foci including (shifting) property relations, inter- and intra-imperial trade relations, sociopolitical perceptions of environmental changes and the (re)shaping of imperial borderlands.

Recent decades have witnessed essential historiographic developments in imperial history that have pushed the boundaries of the field on several fronts. New imperial history not only reflected the revival of scholarly interest in imperialism but also paved the way for new understandings of empire with fresh perspectives on its legacy, the nexus of knowledge and power, violence and forms of resistance and collaboration, and ideologies of civilizing and modernizing missions.<sup>19</sup> Scholars have successfully de-exceptionalized the Habsburg Monarchy by rejecting traditional narratives that depicted the Empire as anomalous and doomed to fall apart due to the centrifugal forces of its rising nationalisms. New narrative frames have emerged that go beyond national compartmentalization and affirm the Empire's integrative forces – forces that stressed a stable state apparatus with a strong legalist tradition and cultural manifestations of loyalties towards the emperor.<sup>20</sup> Since the mid-nineteenth century and in the wake of the 1848–1849 revolutionary events, the Habsburg Monarchy represented a laboratory for administrative and political manoeuvres. These were initially top-down, but eventually they also came from below – part of fostering a unified imperial state. In political terms, reforms included several constitutional revisions, among which the most significant was the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 (German: *Ausgleich*; Hungarian: *Kiegyezés*). From then on and until its dissolution in 1918, the Habsburg Empire had the logic of a composite monarchy and represented a dual imperial state with two equally sovereign halves: the Kingdom of Hungary, or the 'Lands of the Holy Hungarian Crown of Saint Stephen' (also known as Transleithania), and an imperial state known as the 'Kingdoms and Lands Represented in the Imperial Council' (known also as Cisleithania or referred to as Austria) (see Map 0.2).<sup>21</sup>

The Latin designations were unofficial and derived from the Leitha River, a 120-kilometre-long right-hand tributary of the Danube. Cisleithania, as the western imperial half, meant the lands on the western side of the Leitha River, as opposed to Transleithania, meaning on the other side or beyond the river.<sup>22</sup> Cisleithania consisted of fifteen crownlands, each of which had representatives in the Imperial Council (*Reichsrat*), the Cisleithanian parliament in Vienna and a regional assembly, which enacted laws on matters of regional importance. With their unique historical, political and legal characteristics, the crownlands were more than mere administrative districts. Transleithania



**Map 0.2.** The internal structure of the Austro-Hungarian Empire after 1867. Map drawn by Jawad Daheur using QGIS. Based on: Paul R. Magosci, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe*, 3rd ed., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002; Helmut Rumpler and Martin Seger, *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918. Band IX: Soziale Strukturen. 2. Teilband: Die Gesellschaft der Habsburgermonarchie im Kartenbild. Verwaltungs-, Sozial- und Infrastrukturen. Nach dem Zensus von 1910*. Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010; ESRI Shaded relief (OpenStreetMap).

consisted of the Kingdom of Hungary, the internally self-governed Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia and the free port of Rijeka (Fiume). The third territorial component of the Empire was Bosnia and Herzegovina, which unlike other regions of the Monarchy was administered by both imperial halves. The Monarchy occupied Bosnia and Herzegovina starting in 1878 and annexed it in 1908; it was the Monarchy's last territorial acquisition before dissolution.

Both imperial halves shared three common ministries that presided over a military, diplomatic corps and certain financial arrangements – and most importantly the emperor. Moreover, and following economic reforms, both imperial halves (later also including Bosnia and Herzegovina) formed a single



free-trade zone.<sup>23</sup> With their respective territories, legislatures and citizenships, both imperial halves experienced very different kinds of imperial state-building processes. Transleithania consolidated its sovereignty based on the ideal of a nation state exercised through centralized governance at the expense of the traditional powers of the counties, accompanied by Hungarian nationalism and the imposition of a Hungarian linguistic hegemony onto its otherwise multilingual and multicultural population.<sup>24</sup> The Cisleithanian half took a very different approach as it pursued a policy of linguistic equality and institutionalized multilingualism, which became a major catalyst for decentralization and federalization processes, granting autonomy to certain crownlands by means of settlements.<sup>25</sup> The relationship between empire and nationalisms has been one of the core questions within the new imperial history of the Habsburg Empire, showing how these two were not antagonistic but complementary phenomena. Its empirical and theoretical inquiries have provided a wealth of historiographies.<sup>26</sup> The political divisions that existed within the late Habsburg Empire greatly influenced the production of knowledge about its history. It has resulted in two divided historiographies, studying the two imperial halves separately from each other. Integral perspectives that put the whole empire at the centre are still rare.

Most recent studies have offered important impulses for a new understanding of the late Habsburg Monarchy and have drawn attention to two concomitant but paradoxical features: the integrative nature of the empire and the multiple asymmetries that informed its political, economic and cultural life. Despite the rising nationalist sentiments with centrifugal potentials, late Habsburg governance was characterized by strong integration processes on a pan-imperial level. A sense of common citizenship following the introduction of the December Constitution in 1867, social policies in the form of expanding health and social insurance, as well as explicit efforts to foster patriotic feelings were some of the factors intended to prepare the base for loyalty towards the Empire (and not only the nation) and encourage political participation of societies at the local level. The integrative empire also materialized through political and economic cooperation between actors and institutions from the Empire's different regions/crownlands, thus creating intra-imperial horizontal 'contact zones'.<sup>27</sup> By contact zones we mean political and economic alliance-building processes arranged between the different regions without necessarily the involvement of the imperial centre and the metropolises of Vienna and Budapest.

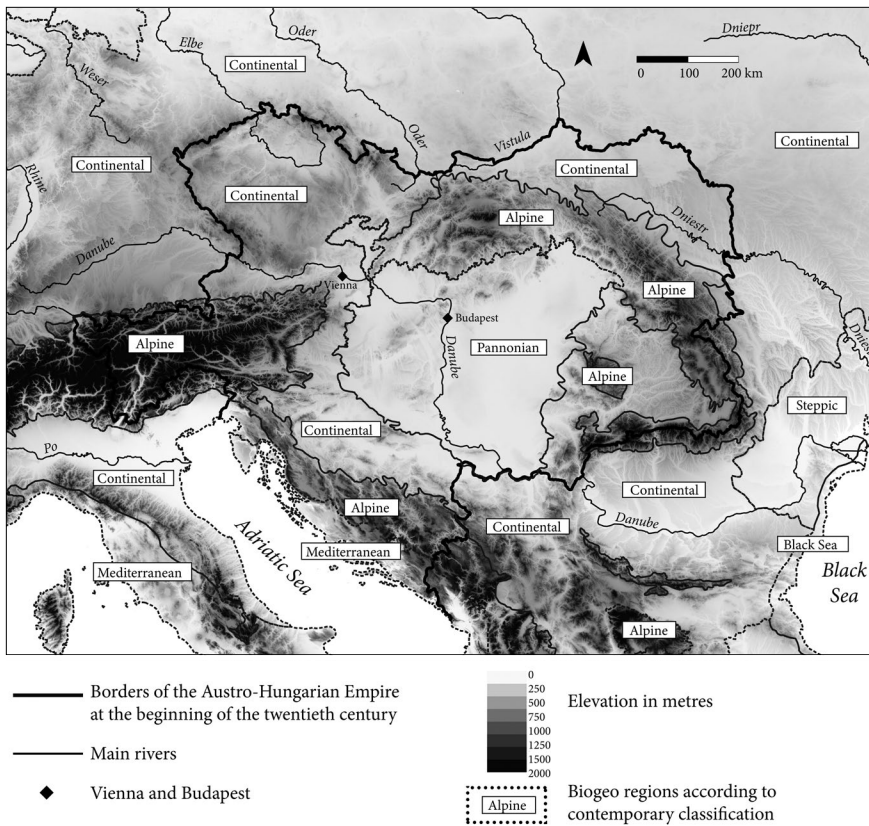
Another recent trend in the scholarship, however, has set its focus on the asymmetric relationships within the Habsburg Empire that certainly coexisted with the integrative empire. Especially within the field of the social and economic life of the Habsburg Empire, recent works have expanded our knowledge on the economic relationship between centres and peripheries, as well as between them and the neighbouring Central European economic areas.

Here the emphasis lies on the importance of profound intra-imperial regional differences of economic development and living standards within the Empire, demonstrating how such differences often ran along ethnolinguistic lines.<sup>28</sup>

In sum, the new imperial history of the Habsburg Empire has offered important revisions in the field and a revival in imperial interpretative frames of the Habsburg past. Nevertheless, environmental dimensions and aspects of society–nature interactions have remained largely understudied topics. For generations, academics have neglected the importance of environment, ecology and natural resources despite the fact that both the Habsburg Empire and its local populations' livelihoods depended on them. By combining environmental concerns with attention to political, social and economic history, this anthology aims to offer important contributions both thematically and also conceptually within the above-mentioned fields of research. It engages with the question of reimagining late Habsburg imperial governance in the context of writing environmental history.

As for the understanding of Austria-Hungary as an empire with an essentially asymmetrical arrangement of power, environmental history showcases ecological dimensions as a determining factor that shaped core-periphery inequalities within the Habsburg imperial space but also beyond it. The intra-imperial exchange of natural resources (timber or mining) is a case in point as it illuminates how the demands of more powerful provinces were met by supply from other parts of the Empire – often hinterlands and often with heavy ecological consequences for the local environment, thus perpetuating mechanisms of asymmetrical arrangements. In this sense, the role of natural resource extraction helps to deepen our understanding of economic segmentation within the Empire and the connections between macroeconomic dynamics and ordinary people's experience on a regional or local scale.

An analytical nexus between environmental history and imperial governance is also established in the field of environmental history of law. The process of reframing nature into resources was determined by the regulation of property rights and the management of commons. Here, legal codes were often reformulated and adapted to the local conditions of specific regions. Thus, it is possible to explore the variations in time and space that limited the Empire's ability to exercise overall control, thus challenging the undifferentiated concept of the imperial state as a legalist state. One central inquiry is the relationship between the environmental specificities of a place and the broader, legal structures and systems on the empire-wide level. One of the leading questions is to what extent the specific regional context had an impact on the legal structuring of human–nature relations, especially access to nature. Finally, with regard to nationalism, the environment as an object of analysis can nuance our understanding of nationalist manifestations as they materialized during the collisions and interplays between the Empire's transformative



**Map 0.3.** The physical environment of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Map drawn by Jawad Daheur using QGIS. Based on: Paul R. Magosci, *Historical Atlas of Central Europe*, 3rd ed., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002; SRTM GL1 Global 30m elevation database; Biogeographical regions dataset, Europe 2016, version 1, European Environment Agency.

visions and their concrete implementation. Connected to this field is also the question of to what extent and in what way political autonomy had an impact on resource management.

In environmental and climatic terms, the Habsburg Monarchy was probably as diverse as the European continent itself.<sup>29</sup> It included areas of exceptional primaeval broadleaf and coniferous forest lands, vast reservoirs of minerals, numerous rivers including the Danube (Europe's second largest river, after the Volga in Russia) and the encompassment of the Alps as the highest and most extensive mountain range in Europe (See Map 0.3). On the whole, the late Habsburg Monarchy benefited from relatively favourable conditions compared with the great continental or overseas empires of the time. Admittedly,

agriculture in most parts of the Habsburg Monarchy was only possible during a short season of sufficient rainfall and mild temperatures, and its territory was not spared hunger and famine when climatic fluctuations occurred.<sup>30</sup> However, the conditions for agricultural development were much more favourable than in the Russian Empire, for example, where the imperial eastward expansion had to contend with a lack of precipitation and extensive desert and mountainous terrain, which greatly reduced the agricultural potential of the conquered territories.<sup>31</sup> In the Russian north, the extremely low temperatures were also a major problem.<sup>32</sup> Further south, in Russian Central Asia, severe water shortages hindered the development of agriculture.<sup>33</sup> This was also the case in the arid regions of the Ottoman, French and British empires.<sup>34</sup> In the tropical colonies, certain environmental conditions – such as heat, humidity and climatic extremes – were considered particularly dangerous to health. New disease regimes debilitated and killed military personnel, civil servants and settlers, as well as their livestock.<sup>35</sup> The Habsburg dynasty, on the other hand, had a large hinterland of easily conquered territory into which it could expand. The logistical difficulties of transporting, feeding and supplying an army and an administration did exist, but they were limited or tended to diminish over time. During the Little Ice Age, the frequent freezing of waterways and the accumulation of snow, which blocked certain mountain passes throughout the year, caused major transport problems.<sup>36</sup> Since the relative warming that began in the 1860s, these difficulties have diminished. Still, from the perspective of imperial integration, the hydrological configuration was not the most favourable. The main Habsburg ports were located on the Adriatic coast, but they were not connected to the hinterland by any major river that could be used for transport. The main watercourses of Bohemia flowed north to the North Sea and those of Galicia to the Baltic and the Black Seas, linking these important parts of the Habsburg Monarchy to the economies of the German and Russian empires. The Empire's main waterway, the Danube, was extremely difficult to navigate, even after the end of the Little Ice Age and the subsequent reduction in frosts.

Nonetheless, the Habsburg Monarchy still had a number of assets. Most of its territories followed the more general Western and Central European pattern, characterized by 'relatively successful combinations of farming and herding, and that means by a relatively well-organized material flux in agriculture combined with high ecological reserves'.<sup>37</sup> Forests were an important part of these ecological reserves, and in this respect the Habsburg Monarchy was again in a favourable position, since in Central Europe the forest easily regenerates itself without artificial reforestation. As elsewhere in the region, the tradition of institutionalized forest protection was certainly favoured by this ecological setting.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, the contrast between extremely densely populated and extremely sparsely populated regions was not as striking in the Habsburg Empire as in other imperial states such as the Ottoman Empire, the

Russian Empire or even the United States. In terms of land use, there were certainly major differences between the different parts of the empire due to agricultural specialization. However, the way in which the land was used was fairly homogeneous compared with other empires, where, for example, extensive cultivation and nomadic practices still played an important role.

This is not to say, of course, that the Habsburg Empire was untroubled. Almost all the natural disasters that are typical of Europe occurred in its territory. Unlike its southern neighbours, such as the Kingdom of Italy and the Ottoman Empire, the Habsburg Monarchy was largely spared major earthquakes. However, daily and seasonal weather conditions and anomalies had a major impact on people and their livestock. The greatest economic damage was caused by meteorological hazards affecting agriculture, such as drought, hail, storms and frost. Floods were also a major cause of death and material damage, both in the valleys of major rivers and along mountain streams. In the Alps and the Carpathians, rockfalls and landslides were common, associated with torrential or prolonged rainfall or snowmelt. Fires characterized Mediterranean landscapes, as did rare small and medium-sized earthquakes. Despite all this, the level of environmental anxiety was certainly not the same as in most other empires, nor did it have the same impact in terms of imperial governance.<sup>39</sup>

Given both the features that made it atypical as well as its similarities with other empires of the late nineteenth century, the Habsburg case study can certainly provide important conceptual interventions for our understanding of the empire–environment nexus. Its geographical particularity as an intra-European empire marked by ecological asymmetries brings the discussion of extraction-based inequalities and interdependencies right back into the heartland of Europe via its peripheries. Thus, the Habsburg experience of unequal exchange both within the Empire and on the global market invites comparative inquiries with overseas colonialisms, exploring systematic similarities and context-based differences between these two types of imperialism.

Moreover, the specific state structure with dual sovereignty promises to add new dimensions to the political–environmental relationship. The increasing politicization of language and culture and the nationalization of political practices in the late Habsburg Empire have the potential to illustrate the profound entanglements of political structures, interethnic relations and local society with the physical environment. One central question here is to what extent this rather unusual state structure influenced the human–nature relationships in the Empire and the management of its resources. Another, given the cultural and linguistic plurality, is to what extent and in what ways ethnic composition or diversity and national aspirations shaped the imperial governance of the environment as well as the local people's experience of nature. Finally, the Habsburg case also provides new insights into scientific explorations of nature

and environmentally derived technological improvements. After all, the most technically modern forestry equipment in Europe in the late nineteenth century was located in Habsburg Bosnia, one of the most sophisticated river regulation projects of the Danube was launched by the Habsburg government and the foundation of modern climate science took place in the Habsburg Empire.<sup>40</sup> These historical experiences, we argue, can provide new and unexpected findings on the inextricable links between imperial patterns of politics, scientific bases of knowledge production and global patterns of capitalism.

## Outline of the Book

The anthology brings together cutting-edge research by historians and ecologists who work on environmentally inspired perspectives on history and natural resource extraction in different parts of the Habsburg Empire. Given the diversity of ethnoreligious and ecological contexts of the various regions of the Empire, their geographical dispersion as well as the languages in which sources are available, writing on an Empire-wide scale requires a multiauthored engagement. By studying the different local and regional processes and regional particularities within the Habsburg Empire, the chapters explore regional diversity understood as a product of interrelated sociopolitical and ecological processes, challenging any undifferentiated concepts of the imperial state. They highlight both similarities and differences across the regions, leading to a more integrative supraregional perspective on the Habsburg Empire and nature. Moreover, with its broad regional and Empire-wide scope, this volume covers both the Habsburg imperial centres and peripheries. It explores the importance of the environment for understanding both intra-imperial regional interconnectedness (such as exchange of environmental goods or natural resources) and regional segmentation due to socioeconomic and political inequalities, with its direct impact on regional ecological systems (e.g., resulting from the overexploitation of natural resources and the uneven distribution of environmental burdens).

With their (trans)regional approaches and thematic varieties, the case studies serve as a platform for comparative perspectives across different commodities, regions and political and ecological constellations, offering new perspectives on the pan-imperial level (e.g., the Galician oil industry compared to the Bosnian timber industry, or legal disputes over rights of access to nature in Transylvania and Cisleithania). By offering a wide range of case studies located within the dialectics between the local and imperial levels, the anthology stitches a tapestry of an environmental history of the Habsburg Empire. Against the background of previous research, pan-imperial approaches are very rare. This silence seems surprising when we consider that the Habsburg

Empire builders had remarkably far-reaching plans for studying, recording and controlling the Monarchy's natural environment. All the more surprising is that our attempt to cover and analytically examine the Habsburg Empire as a whole from an environmental angle is a unique endeavour.

In methodological terms, what unites all chapters is their actor- and action-centred focus, by means of which they explore the roles of different individuals and groups, including corporate actors, merchants, civil servants, scientists and local people. Another important common denominator of the contributions is that they understand human/nonhuman relations not only through the prism of state-induced attempts to manage nature, but also through the perspective of ordinary people and their agency in the processes of (re)shaping these relations.

The contributions have been selected and compiled to cover as many relevant themes as possible and to provide case studies from all over the Dual Monarchy. Of course, certain themes are more prevalent than others, but this is primarily a result of the current state of research; not all themes have yet been taken up with the same degree of intensity. In this case, the majority of contributions deal with forestry or agricultural issues, but this does not mean that mining and industry issues are neglected. The issue of coal, for example, appears not only in Ségolène Plyer's chapter on Bohemia, in which it is the central subject, but also indirectly in other chapters engaging with fossil fuels or the importance of railways in structuring the relations between different parts of the Empire. Animal history is also very present, again not only in the chapters dealing with Indian mongooses (Wolfgang Göderle) or the bark beetle (Kristýna Kaucká), but also through the reflections on animal husbandry in other chapters. Our major drive is to show that environmental history matters for understanding the multifaceted life of the late Habsburg Empire.

The anthology's contributions are organized around four thematic sections that all lay at the heart of attempts to manage, control or extract nature and were immediately related to imperial power: (Inter/Intra) Imperial Entanglements; Cooperation and Conflict; Engineering Nature; and Managing Resources. The first thematic section studies the late Habsburg Empire as a political entity whose policy was embedded within a transimperial net of political, economic and ecological entanglements, and shaped by intra- as well as inter-imperial interactions. At the heart of both Robert Mevissen's and Jana Osterkamp's chapters, although approached from different angles, are hydraulic infrastructure projects. As the Habsburg Empire's most powerful river, the Danube formed a natural artery, linking the Empire's different regions and connecting with neighbouring states while at the same time empowering Habsburg's European trade position. Mevissen focuses on the transimperial political landscape in the context of diplomatic negotiations and environmental factors. He shows how the river's physical state influenced Habsburg's (international) policies in its

attempts to regulate the river's navigation according to its geography as well as commercial and transportation opportunities. Osterkamp, on the other hand, offers a transregional and pan-imperial perspective when looking at a series of ecoengineering melioration projects, which she analyses as examples of imperial state building and nation building that were shaped by both conflicts and cooperation. By showing that the chronologies and dynamics of hydraulic projects were shaped by the political status of the respective region (ranging between heartland, imperial periphery and colony), Osterkamp illustrates the importance of power and intra-imperial political hierarchies for understanding environmental objects of study in the late Habsburg Empire. In Selçuk Dursun's chapter, forests take centre stage – specifically forests in Bosnia and Herzegovina, seen as an Ottoman–Habsburg borderland, forming not only a physical boundary between the two empires but also an economic resource for both entities, leading to major interimperial conflicts. By adding an Ottoman perspective on the late Habsburg Empire, Dursun elevates the aspect of informal empire as an integral part of late Habsburg governance. Securing ecological and economic interests beyond its own imperial territories was one important way to secure access to natural resources (here, timber). Moreover, his study shows that Habsburg presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina started as early as the 1840s, well before the formal occupation in 1878, demonstrating how attention to environmental aspects can offer important corrections to the periodization of Habsburg history. Finally, all three chapters call for units of analysis that transcend traditional, regional or even national approaches, illustrating another strong potential of environmental history.

The second thematic section focuses on cooperation and conflict as two concomitant dimensions of the late- and post-Habsburg periods. All three chapters focus on conflicts over forests as they materialized in three different regions of the Empire: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Transylvania and the Military Border in Croatian Slavonia. Gábor Egry's and Robert Skenderović's chapters are located within an environmental history of law as they focus on legal conflicts over (re)structuring property and usage rights of forests. Both authors elevate forests as environmental aspects that have shaped law as a medium of sovereign power. They show how legal conflicts involved a multitude of interest groups of varying political strengths and how they were finally resolved in different parts of the Empire. They emphasize the role of local people, mostly peasants, whose economic life was highly dependent on access to forests by means of customary usufruct rights or entitlements to natural benefits, which became threatened in the context of the growing commerce-based capitalist exploitation of timber in the late Habsburg Empire. In the case of Croatian Slavonia, as Skenderović shows, the commercialization of the Military Border's oak forests led to major socioenvironmental transformations. Nevertheless, the peasant soldiers managed to preserve access to forests for their economic needs, due to



their particular status. In the case of Transylvania, on the contrary, rights were voiced in national terms, which Egry frames analytically as ecological nationalisms. As his chronology extends beyond the 1918 period, he illustrates an intimate connection between late- and post-Habsburg Transylvania, showing a Habsburg legacy in the state–nature relationship, most notably with regard to the role of experts and the integration of local elites. Iva Lučić, meanwhile, focuses on Bosnia’s timber exports, which soon became a major contributor to frictions with other timber-exporting regions of the Empire. She illustrates how the specific tree species and their respective export destinations shaped the timing and constellation of the conflicts, in which Austrian crownlands aimed to exclude Bosnia as a legitimate timber exporter of the Empire. Thus, Lučić adds a new logic to the idea of cooperative empire in which integration between some crownlands aimed at disintegrating other parts of the Empire, describing Austria-Hungary as a fragmented timber empire. Finally, all three chapters illustrate how the issue of extracting nature as an economic resource reveals an important aspect of governance as it was shaped by a complex intersection and interdependence of imperial state power and private capital (itself often of foreign origin).

The third thematic section focuses on the engineering of nature, with two case studies dealing with the significance and consequences of human intervention in the Empire’s natural environments, and placing the relations between the imperial administration and nonhuman dwellers of the Empire at the centre of analysis. Göderle tells the story of the release of eleven Indian mongooses for the purpose of snake control on the island of Meleda/Mljet, off the Dalmatian coast, in 1910. The mongooses released by the Austrian state forest administration were supposed to prey on horned vipers, which were considered a major obstacle to the touristic and agricultural development of the remote island. Another harmful animal is at the heart of Kaucká’s chapter, which addresses the reactions and responses of the aristocratic Bohemian landowners of the Šumava region to the outbreak of bark beetles – the most serious pest species in spruce forests – that occurred after the storms of 1868 and 1870. Both chapters use the study of human–animal relationships as a magnifying glass for a closer look at the imperial administration in action. By giving special attention to the lowest levels of imperial administration and their fundamental role in the mongoose operation, Göderle’s microhistorical perspective highlights how practical knowledge and experience came into play when formal requirements, guidelines and regulations issued by the state bureaucracy proved impractical or even useless. Kaucká shows that the intervention of state authorities at the request of landowners (who suffered immense economic losses from the bark beetle infestation) was an opportunity to define optimal mechanisms for similar events for the Viennese government and Bohemian Provincial Government Office. This was, in particular,

a case of seeking labour that could be quickly moved to the site or providing channels for future transfers of financial resources. In both cases, intervention in the animal world stimulated technological modernization and scientific transfer at the transimperial level.

The fourth and last section brings together three chapters dealing with the issue of resource management in the Empire. Austria-Hungary's development depended on its ability to appropriate and manage its natural resources to meet its population's needs for food, energy and materials. This section contains case studies on fodder, coal and wood, all of which highlight the complexity of management issues in an empire where there were major divergences between the economic and environmental aspirations of its various components. By focusing on animal feed, Jawad Daheur explores a poorly studied aspect of Habsburg agricultural history: the bans on fodder exports that were imposed twice at the turn of the twentieth century in the context of two major droughts. In doing so, he raises the question of what they tell us about the Empire's ability to resist external commercial pressure. Plyer focuses on the exploitation and sale of coal in the context of the natural inequality between coal-rich and coal-poor regions. These two chapters shed important light on the question of justice in the distribution of resources throughout the Empire. Austro-Hungarian society had high expectations of the central authorities in this respect. This was reflected in legislative measures aimed at improving the management and circulation of resources (the Mining Act of 1854, the Water Act of 1869 and the nationalization of the railway network in 1908, which enabled the state to take charge of the transport and sale of coal) or at safeguarding stocks before they were exported (the export bans on fodder in 1893 and 1904). As a result, as the Czech lands developed between 1880 and 1914, this peripheral region was gradually able to form its own capital resources and, at the end of the First World War, take more control over its energy sources. As for the bans on fodder exports, while the one of 1893 proved to be a failure, the second, adopted in 1904, achieved its objectives and enabled Austria-Hungary to stand up to Germany, an economically superior importing country.

The third chapter of the section, by Simone Gingrich and Martin Schmid, looks at another important area of state intervention in resource management, namely, forestry. The authors examine the Imperial Forestry Act of 1852 as the culmination of a modern, 'sustainable' forest regime. They argue that the success of this legislation was not only the result of an alliance between the imperial state and forest owners, but was also made possible by biophysical substitution processes that accelerated during the same period. In particular, the intensification of agriculture and the transition to an energy system increasingly based on fossil fuels reduced the importance of wood for a large part of society. Although described as 'sustainable' by its proponents, the forestry regime introduced in 1852 privileged forest owners and market-oriented

timber production at the expense of farmers who needed forests as a buffer for nutrient and energy supply. As for the measures taken to protect domestic fodder consumers, they reveal major power inequalities within the empire, with certain regions and social actors more likely to be heard than others.

In the conclusion, we bring together the results of the contributions and discuss them at the pan-imperial Habsburg level. We reveal in what way environmental perspectives revise or deepen our understanding of the late Habsburg imperial order. Moreover, we engage with comparative perspectives on the governance–nature nexus in other imperial contexts, such as the Ottoman, Russian, Japanese, British and French Empires. By doing so we discuss both similarities as well as peculiarities of the late Habsburg Empire. Moreover, we give prospects on potential conceptual cross-fertilizations between different scholarly traditions and invite stronger interimperial scholarly cooperative works that might enhance our understanding of ecologically shaped imperial governance in different parts of the world. We conclude with research desiderata within the field of the environmental history of the late Habsburg Empire, opening up potential ideas for further research.

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## Notes

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1. Osterhammel, *Transformation of the World*, 95.
2. In this book we use the term 'Habsburg Empire' as a synonym for 'Habsburg Monarchy' and, for the period after 1867, for 'Austro-Hungary' and 'Dual Monarchy'. After 1867 the official name of the realm was in German *Österreichisch-Ungarische Monarchie* and in Hungarian *Osztrák–Magyar Monarchia*. The Austrians also used the name *k. u. k. Monarchie*, the term 'k. u. k.' (*kaiserlich und königlich* or Imperial and Royal) being used to designate institutions common to both parts of the Monarchy.
3. Evans, 'Language and State Building', 1.
4. Hughes, *An Environmental History*; Richards, *The Unending Frontier*.
5. Radkau, *Nature and Power*.
6. Coen, 'Scaling Down'; referred to in Isenberg, *The Oxford Handbook*.
7. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*; Grove, *Green Imperialism*.
8. Griffiths and Robin, *Ecology and Empire*; Beinart and Hughes, *Environment and Empire*; Ross, *Ecology and Power*; Blanc, Plarier and Seri-Hersch, 'Vers une histoire socio-environnementale'.
9. Anker, *Imperial Ecology*; Barton, *Empire Forestry*.
10. Mark, *The Retreat of the Elephants*; Mikhail, *Ottoman Egypt*; Josephson et al., *An Environmental History of Russia*; Mikhail, *Under Osman's Tree*; Breyfogle, *Eurasian Environments*.
11. Moon, 'The Curious Case'; Breyfogle, 'Toward an Environmental History'.
12. Frank, *Oil Empire*; Mevissen, 'Forged in the Floods'; Coen, *Climate in Motion*; Göderle, 'The Habsburg Anthropocene'; Lučić, 'Law of the Forests'; Rícz, *The Steppe to Europe*; Göderle, 'Materializing Imperial Rule?'; Pál, 'The Second Hungarian Conquest'.
13. Frank, *Oil Empire*; Daheur, 'Exporting Environmental Burdens'; Amato, *The Carpathians*.
14. Tekić and Watkins. 'Making Dalmatia Green Again'; Fuerst-Bjeliš et al., *Environmental Histories*.
15. Varga et al., 'The History and Natural Regeneration'; Balogh and Homor, 'Professionalization, State-building'; Pál, 'The Second Hungarian Conquest'.
16. Gingrich, 'Foreign Trade and Early Industrialisation'; Winiwarter et al., 'Danube River Basin'.
17. Söderlund, *Swedish Timber Exports*, 195.
18. Frank, *Oil Empire*.
19. The literature on new imperial history is vast and multifaceted. For an overview, see Howe, *The New Imperial History Reader*.
20. Feichtinger and Uhl, *Das Integrative Empire*; Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*; Osterkamp, *Kooperatives Imperium*; Unowsky, *Pomp and Politics*.
21. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*; Grandits, Judson and Rolf, 'Towards a New Quality of Statehood', 62; Wheatley, *Life and Death*, 55.

22. Wheatley, *Life and Death*, 57.
23. Grandits, Judson and Rolf, 'Towards a New Quality of Statehood', 64.
24. MacArtney, *The Habsburg Empire*, 557–58, 645–46.
25. Deak, *Forging a Multinational State*, 154–156; Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 251–5.
26. See, among others, Feichtinger and Cohen, *Understanding Multiculturalism*; Wingfield, *Creating the Other*; Judson, *Guardians of the Nation*; Cohen, 'Nationalist Politics'.
27. Feichtinger and Uhl, *Das integrative Imperium*; Osterkamp, *Kooperatives Imperium*.
28. Komlosy, *Grenze und Ungleiche Regionale Entwicklung*; Bruckmüller and Sandgruber, 'Economic Integration', 159; Schulze, 'Patterns of Growth and Stagnation'.
29. Freytag, 'Nature and Environment'.
30. Coen, *Climate in Motion*, 13.
31. Weiner and Brooke, 'Conclusions', 313.
32. Herzberg, Renner and Schierle, *The Russian Cold*.
33. Keating, *On Arid Ground*.
34. Davis, *The Arid Lands*.
35. Arnold, 'Introduction'; Brown and Gilfoyle, *Healing the Herds*.
36. Coen, *Climate in Motion*, 13.
37. Radkau, 'Exceptionalism', 29.
38. *Ibid.*, 34.
39. Ford, 'Reforestation, Landscape Conservation'; Beattie, *Empire and Environmental Anxiety*.
40. Coen, *Climate in Motion*; Mevissen, 'Forged in the Floods'; Feitler, *Einiges über bosnisch-hercegovinische Industrie*; See also Iva Lučić's chapter in this volume.

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