

# AIHC - IRHA - AIHF

THE INTERNATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



Association Internationale  
d'Histoire des Chemins de fer

International Railway  
History Association

Asociación Internacional  
de Historia Ferroviaria

## HIGHLIGHTS

President's Corner.....02

Conference organised by the Rails et  
Histoire Association .....03

Thank you note from the new president  
of the Iberian Association of Railway  
History (ASIHF).....04

## IN THIS ISSUE

POD nos Trilhos.....05

Asia's first bullet train.....05

Chatbot.....06

Heritage Days, Railway Days.....06

## EVENTS AND EXIBITIONS

ANNOUCEMENT.....07

RAILWAY READINGS.....09

## EDITORIAL

by Fernanda de LIMA LOURENCETTI

### Chief-Editor

The international context of 2023 was turbulent and sad for all nations. However, institutions like ours have shown themselves to be resilient and able to build initiatives allowing a better collaboration between different countries.

In October, an international railway history congress was held. As well as keeping us united with the Iberian Association of Railway History, this event promoted an exchange of knowledge between countries on different continents.

As you will see in this newsletter, other international initiatives, collaborations and publications have been developed by actors from the railway world. During 2024, we hope that the railway keeps its ability of connecting people not only territorially, but also stablishing interpersonal relationships through new events and exhibitions.

We wish you all a happy new year!

May the feeling of unity flourish in everyone's life.

**We hope you enjoy reading this issue!**

## **PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

# **A CONFERENCE IN VERSAILLES AND PARIS**

by Andrea GIUNTINI

President of IRHA

On 17 and 18 November, an interesting conference was held, hosted on the first day by the École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture in Versailles and on the second by the Centre André Chastel in Paris, organised by three architects active in France who have distinguished themselves in the study of railway architecture: Karen Bowie, Franca Malservisi and Annalisa Viati Navone. The title of the conference - Gares, bâtiments, infrastructures ferroviaires entre modernité(s) et identité(s) territoriales en France et Italie: 1918-1945 - refers to fundamental themes in railway history, which represent a decisive crossroads for scholars. Equally relevant is the time span covered: between the two wars and in the years immediately following the end of the Second World War, both in France and Italy experiments and realisations took shape - which were the subject of the conference - with leading figures in both countries.

The use of the terms modernity and territorial identity in the title fully expresses the meaning of the French meeting. Exploring the many aspects of railway architecture, the speakers focused on the main moments of modernisation such as the entry of electrification, the use of concrete and the creation of new construction standards. The conference then reflected on the concept of stations as nodes and as generators of mobility: places of connections able to change everything around them thanks to the new centrality established and to relaunch and multiply more advanced modes of mobility systems. Such a reconstruction very accurately reflects the historical moment and its cultural and economic climate addressed by the conference in an increasingly European perspective. The scientific results confirm the usefulness of comparative logic thanks to interventions that ranged over many specific cases on the two sides.

# COLLOQUE - LES INAUGURATIONS DES LIGNES FERROVIAIRES TRANSFRONTALIÈRES EUROPÉENNES ET LEUR COMMÉMORATION (XIXE - XXE SIÈCLES)

by Federico MENEGHINI SASSOLI

Université de Pavie

Between **30 November and 1 December**, the seminar “The Inaugurations of the European crossborder railway lines and their Commemoration (19th-20th century)” was **held at the CEDIAS - Musée Social de Paris**. This conference organised by the RAILS et HISTOIRE association opened with a scientific framing of the subject by Arnaud Passalacqua, chairman of its scientific committee, where he presented how the idea of an event on this topic arose the previous March following an interesting discussion and carried out by Michèle Merger, honorary president of our International Railway History Association.

**The main feature of the inaugurations was then presented: being a complex and multifaceted event. Underlying the singular phenomenon there is the moment of ceremony but also a project behind it, a meaning (both local and international) and also a set of social practices.**

This conference, rich in both topics and interactions, brought together scholars from 4 different European countries, and among them several IRHA members.

Ana Cardoso de Matos (Universidade de Évora) presented the inaugurations of lines between Portugal and Spain as seen

and celebrated by different Portuguese newspapers. And how these newspapers, in particular the *Gazeta dos Caminhos de Ferro* had important relationships with the engineers of the time who were also called upon as editors.

Henry Jacolin (honorary president of the IRHA) questioned contradicted the image of the celebration as necessarily cheerful, and rather presented it as a moment of showcasing power relations by addressing the Lemberg-Czernowitz-Iași line and its cold “inauguration without approval”. In the same panel Federico Meneghini Sassoli (Università di Pavia) outlined how in the Italian part of the Austrian Empire the same inauguration could have a profoundly different meaning depending on the environment in which it was presented. He also traced the case of a “missing celebration” during the opening of the Bozen-Verona line.

The conference concluded with a round-table discussion chaired by Jean-Pierre Williot (Université d'Artois) and attended by Christophe Bouneau (Université Bordeaux Montaigne), Michèle Merger (honorary president of the IRHA), Nicolas Steinmann (CFF, Infrastructure, gestion des projets Région Ouest) and Laurent Tissot (Université de Neuchâtel).

## THE IX RAILWAY HISTORY CONGRESS HAS BEEN CELEBRATED

The IX Congress of Railway History was held in Mataró on 25th, 26th and 27th October with the participation of several dozens of participants. Take a look at the congress proceedings [HERE](#).

The Congress was inaugurated by Miquel Àngel Vadell, First Deputy Mayor of Mataró, accompanied by Magda Pinheiro, president of ASIHF, at the time, and Alfonso Herranz, co-president of the congress. Carles Sudrià i Triay gave the keynote lecture "Discovering the paths of the industrial era. Homage to Pere Pascual", a highly emotive act in which he recalled the professional and human trajectory of this great historian, who was the first president of ASIHF. At the end of the event, the four members of the panel presented his widow, Isabel, with a plaque in memory of the tribute.

In the end of the first day a tribute to Horacio Capel was made too, his contributions to railway geography was highlighted. After two days and a half full of presentations and discussions, David Bote Paz, Mayor of Mataró City Council, closed the congress.

Source: [Asociación Ibérica de Historia Ferroviaria](#) (translated by Fernanda de Lima Lourencetti).



## THANK YOU NOTE FROM THE NEW PRESIDENT OF THE ASIHF

by Miguel MUÑOZ RUBIO  
President of ASIHF

On behalf of ASIHF I would like to thank ASIHF for its support for the IX Congress of Railway History, held last October in Mataró. This collaboration ensured the necessary resources to make the congress a success.

**I would like to highlight, above all, the participation of several ASIHF members as speakers, which has undoubtedly increased the intellectual quality of the meeting.**

Although the relationship between the two associations has always been and continues to be very positive, during this new stage, as president of ASIHF, I would like to explore and find out new ways of making this cooperation more solid.

This can benefit railway historiography. And, although it seems far away, perhaps we could start working to celebrate the bicentenary of the railway in 2030, to make an event as the date deserves.

## POD NOS TRILHOS IS ON THE AIR



The Brazilian magazin Revista Ferroviária has launched in 2023 a new communication channel for the sector. It's the **Pod nos Trilhos videocast**, a platform for interviews with relevant railway personalities, **for a lively and informative conversation about this market in Brazil.**

It is the first videocast in the country to be linked to an official news media outlet and focused exclusively on the railway sector. The first episode was released on Tuesday 16th May, 2023 on RF's YouTube and Spotify channels.

**Source:** [Revista Ferroviária](#) (translated by Fernanda Lourencetti).

## WITH CHINA'S HELP, INDONESIA LAUNCHES SOUTHEAST ASIA'S FIRST BULLET TRAIN

Indonesia has launched Southeast Asia's first-ever bullet train, a high-speed rail line that will **connect two of its largest cities (Jakarta-Bandung).**

The \$7.3 billion project, part of China's Belt and Road infrastructure initiative and largely funded by Chinese state-owned firms, **opened to the public on October 2, 2023.**

The ceremony was held at the Halim railway station in the capital Jakarta,

attended by President Joko Widodo and First Lady Iriana as well as several cabinet ministers.

The 86-mile (138-kilometer) high-speed rail line, officially named WHOOSH, **runs on electricity** with no direct carbon emissions and travels **at a speed of roughly 217 miles per hour.**

**Source:** [CNN Travel](#).



## “HELLO, I’AM X 3800, THE HISTORIC RAILCAR THAT’S BACK IN ACTION TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT HISTORY AND HERITAGE OF THE SNCF”.

The year 2023 was marked by the spread of artificial intelligence into all areas of our lives. The history of the railways has also been brought up to date, with the launch of the **first ChatBot (in French) on the history of the railways in France**: a way of making both data (the chronology of the construction of the network, for example) and contemporary debates or areas less familiar to train fans, such as design, even more accessible.

The image you’ll be “chatting” with is that of an **emblematic railcar from the 1960s**, 251 of which were produced to run on rural lines. It was **nicknamed the “Picasso”** because of its high driving position, which, according to malicious tongues, gave it a crooked nose... like a portrait signed by the worldwide known painter.



[CLICK HERE TO EXPERIENCE IT!](#)

Source: [SNCF](#) (translated by Marie-Noëlle Polino).

## HERITAGE DAYS, RAILWAY DAYS.

**On 15, 16 and 17 September 2023, over 200 railway-related events were included in the "European Heritage Days" programme in France.**

These included open days at workshops and production sites, such as railway stations, and architectural tours. **50 railway heritage associations joined the programme**, welcoming the public or exhibiting historic railway vehicles in stations, not to mention numerous special trains. All in all, 60,000 people took the opportunity to discover the railways of today, the jobs of railway workers and the history of rail travel. This success demonstrates the public's interest in "living" heritage and the transmission of know-how. All year round, a dedicated website allows people to discover and even remotely visit railway heritage in 3D.



Source: [SNCF](#) (translated by Marie-Noëlle Polino).

# EVENTS AND EXHIBITIONS ANNOUNCEMENT

## THE 8TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EARLY RAILWAYS

*23rd to 26th September 2025*



An occasional gathering by persons interested in the beginnings of the railway industry throughout the world will happen in Darlington (England).

**Papers are invited:**

**Synopses for referees  
September 2024**

**Draft papers June 2025**

Papers are suggested on the following themes:

- The Stockton and Darlington Railway-its origins and significance in the development of railways, in the UK and elsewhere;
- The metallurgy of early railways and their locomotives;
- Medieval and early modern antecedents of the railway;
- Early Railways and construction;
- Early mainline railways;
- The Finance, construction and management of early railways;
- The personnel and leading protagonists in early (main line) railways;
- The role of early railways in society, literature and the arts;
- Papers on developments outside the UK are particularly welcome;

**Expressions of interest and further information contact: [er8@rchs.org.uk](mailto:er8@rchs.org.uk)**

## CITY, RAIL AND PORT - INTERKNOWLEDGE SEMINARS

January, 2024 - June, 2024



The [City, Railway and Port - InterKnowledge Platform](#) was created in 2023 to give support to a **network** of inter-university researchers, technicians, activists and institutions that focus on **studies about the relationship between cities, railroads and ports on different perspectives**. The **first cycle of seminars will end on January 17, 2024**, but a next cycle has been already prepared keep featuring experts in the fields of heritage, urbanism and transport, five sessions are scheduled.

**Registrations must be made by sending an e-mail to [flima@uevora.pt](mailto:flima@uevora.pt).**

Source: [City, Rail and Port - InterKnowledge](#) (translated by Fernanda Lourencetti).

## DB MULTIMEDIA EXHIBITION ON THE CONDITION OF JEWISH RAILWAY WORKERS UNDER THE NATIONAL SOCIALIST REGIME

October, 17, 2023 - January, 28, 2024

**Who was Fritz KITTEL?**

**This question was posed by the writer Esther DISCHEREIT.** The Deutsche Reichsbahn agent hid her mother Helga and her sister Hannelore ZACHARIAS during the National Socialist period, and provided them with false papers. **He was one of the few people who helped the two women survive the Holocaust.** In 2019, Esther DISCHEREIT, with the help of the Deutsche Bahn DB Historical Collections, was able to track down members of the KITTEL family in Heringen, starting by the grandson, Peter KITTEL.

**"Who was Fritz KITTEL - a (Reichsbahn) railway agent gets involved two families from 1933 to 2022".** The exhibition is on show **at the DB Museum in Nuremberg from 19 October 2023 to 28 January 2024.**

Source: [DB Museum](#) (translated by Fernanda Lourencetti).



# RAILWAY READINGS

**El Primer Ferrocarril de la Pensínsula 175è aniversari de la línia Mataró a Barcelona 1848-2023.**

Manel Cusachs; Xavier Nubiola; Alexis Serrano



On the occasion of the 175th anniversary of the first railway in the Iberian Peninsula, from Mataró to Barcelona, the Arxiu Comarcal del Maresme has coordinated the publication of a book that focuses on the history of this branch, which is considered a heritage site.

The book is accompanied by a number of outstanding texts dealing with civil engineering, history, curiosities and anecdotes relating to this railway heritage site.

**Ferrovissime** is a magazine for anyone who loves trains and their history. Each issue presents the history of the railways today, invites you to climb aboard some of the rolling stock that has run or is still running. Its 24 pages takes you on a journey through the world of railways. **Twice a year, a comprehensive special issue is included in the subscription, shedding light on a particular aspect of the railways.**



Source: [Ferrovissime - LR PRESSE](https://www.ferrovissime.com/)

In 2022, the online journal [TST - Transportes, Servicios y Telecomunicaciones](#) dedicated the issue 48 exclusively to rail transport. The publication "**De vuelta al ferrocarril / Back to the railway**" features the articles:

**Los ingenieros de caminos, el Estado y la supervisión sobre el terreno de la construcción ferroviaria: la División de Ferrocarriles de Miranda de Ebro (1857-1862).**

Rafael Ruzafa Ortega

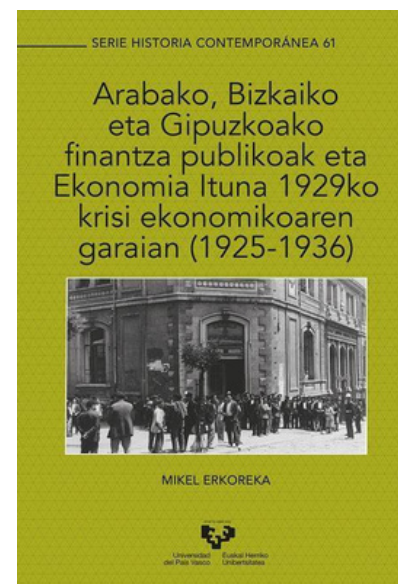
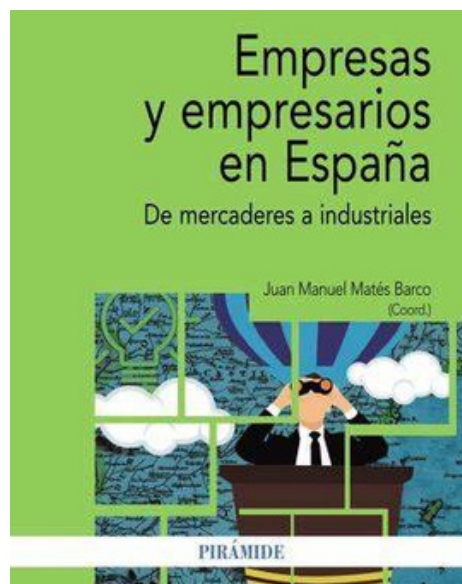
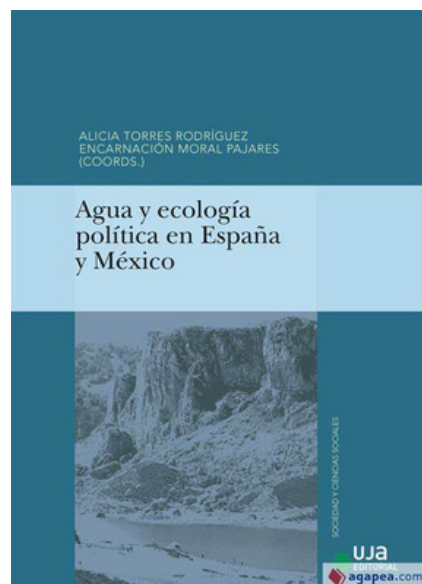
**Orígenes ferroviarios y efectos urbanos de la logística de "última milla" en la ciudad de México, ca. 1890-1950**

Guillermo Guajardo Soto

**Noticia del proyecto y construcción del ferrocarril Ribes-Querolbs-Núria, en el Pirineo de Girona**

Carles Gorini Santo

BOOK REVIEWS:



DISCUSSIONS OF CLASSIC WORKS:

**George Lee Boag, Manual of Railway Statistics y The Railways of Spain** - Tomás Martínez Vara

**Ralph William Huenemann, The Dragon and the Iron Horse. The Economics of Railroads in China, 1876-1937** - Wang Bin

**Gaspar Martins Pereira, O Douro e o Vinho do Porto. De Pombal a João Franco** - Carla Sequeira





In the second half of 2022, issue 49 was launched, dedicated to the journeys of technical directors. In this publication, in addition to reviews and debates on classic works, we can find articles like:

**José Eugenio Ribera. Crónicas de viajes:la mirada del ingeniero**

Inmaculada Aguilar Civera

**Maristany y sus impresiones de un viaje por los Estados Unidos: ferrocarriles y sociedadrailways and society**

Tomás Martínez Vara

**Viajar para unificar: análisis de una expedición de estudios ferroviarios a Alemaniaanalysis of a railway study journey to Germany**

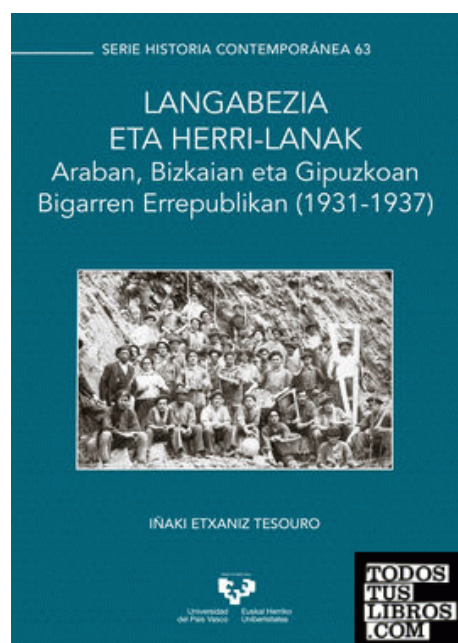
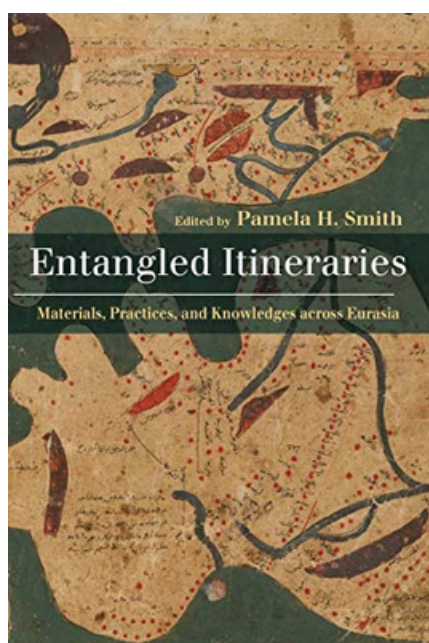
Jesús Enrique Arnaiz Barrero

**El plan Marshall ferroviario y los viajes de estudio de Renfe a Estados Unidos**

Miguel Muñoz Rubio

In 2023 the journal opened the year with another issue dedicated to rail transport, "**Ferrocarriles, ciudad, trabajo / Railway, city and labour**", in which we can find:

BOOK REVIEWS:



## ARTICLES:

**The Historical Interrelationship of Railways and Cities from an Urban Viewpoint. Conceptual review and application to the Iberian Peninsula**

Luis Santos y Ganges

**Ferrovias, estrutura e dinâmica de cidades feiras no interior do território brasileiro: Final do século XIX e início do século XX**

Doralice Sátyro Maia

**Los trabajadores de la construcción en la Compañía de los Ferrocarriles del Norte de España (1856-1864).**

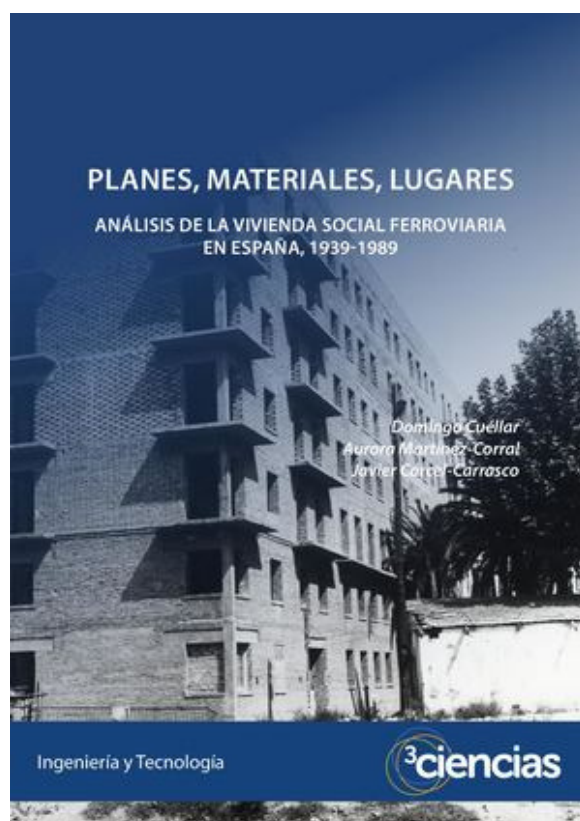
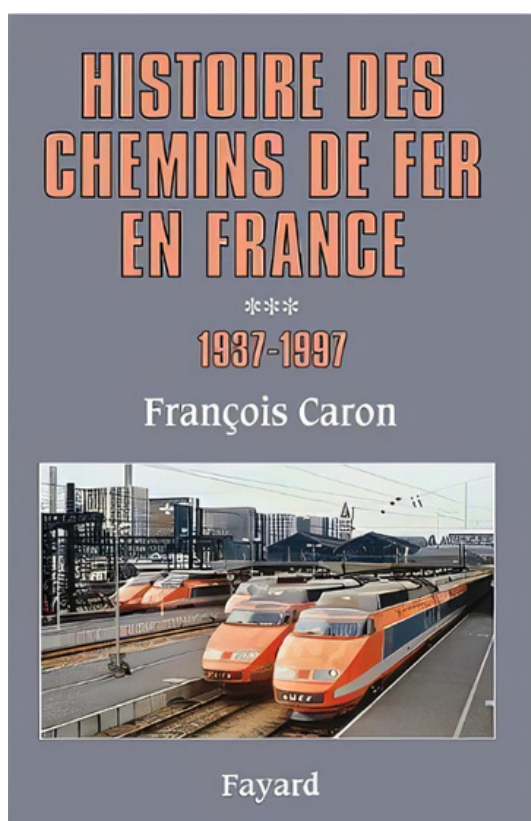
Francisco de los Cobos Arteaga

In the second half of 2023, issue 51 was launched with the theme "Transportes y sindicalismo / Transport and trade unionism". In this publication, railway history is clear in the article:

**La evolución de los medios de transporte en Gijón: de la implantación del ferrocarril a la llegada del autobús**

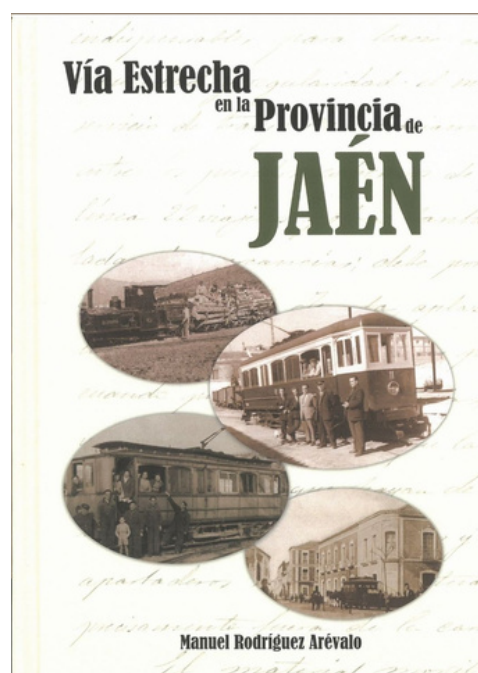
Natalia Solís Sánchez

And in the BOOK REVIEWS:



## Vía Estrecha en la Provincia de Jaén.

Manuel Rodríguez Arévalo



On the November 30, at Museo del Ferrocarril de Madrid (Salón de Actos) was lauched the book “Vía estrecha en la provincia de Jaén”, the last book of Manuel Rodríguez Arévalo.

In general terms, the book is structured in several chapters dedicated to the different provincial railways with the metric gauge, as well as some incursion into the work in the mines where the narrow gauge became the economic solution for various types of infrastructures that even used lower gauges.



Follow the articles published by Journal of Transport History (JTH), in the last semester of 2023:

**Railway experts and the construction of national space(s) in post-imperial Southeast Europe: the case of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes/Yugoslavia**

Danijel Kežić

**Book Review: Railways' Economic Impact on Uttar Pradesh and Colonial North India (1860–1914): The Iron Raj by Ian D. Derbyshire**

Aparajita Mukhopadhyay





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Do not forget to visit  
our website!

[https://aihc-irha-  
aihf.com/](https://aihc-irha-aihf.com/)

NEXT ISSUE MAY  
2024

SEE YOU AROUND:

*"(...)The trains still come  
and go,*

*I hear now as before,  
I listen to infinity,*

*That ascending music  
Of the permanent shaking  
Of locomotives and  
wagons,*

*Filled only with emotions."*  
(Sidney Rodrigues, O Trem  
de Ferro)

**UIC - the worldwide professional association representing the railway sector and promoting rail transport.** With the aim of fostering international cooperation at a strategic, technical, professional and service level, this organisation promotes rail transport globally.

The organisation is currently highlighting two events:



**UIC Harmotrack Project final**

**28th February 2024**

UIC Headquarters (Paris) from 9h to 17h.

Organised by the UIC and SNCF Réseau.

If you want to know more: [UIC Website](https://www.uic.org/)