



Karl Terzaghi: The Engineer As Artist

By Richard E. Goodman

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Although I knew Terzaghi well, I did not fully appreciate the personal struggles or the genius of the man until I read Goodman's manuscript - Goodman has caught the essence of the man, says Ralph Peck in the foreword of this first full-length, critical biography on the life of Karl Terzaghi. If civil engineering were a game, Terzaghi had a right to lay down the rules, as he had invented and established much of the groundwork. Karl Terzaghi (1883-1963) is one of the leading civil engineers of this century and widely known as the father of soil mechanics. His life-long application of the principles established in his work took him throughout the world to engineering challenges in Communist Russia, Nazi Germany, America, and the entire post-war world. Terzaghi's fame as a master engineer is well known, but the story of his development, both personal and professional, has remained unexplored by most people. This material emerged from reading his publications, hundreds of unpublished reports, thousands of private letters, and 82 volumes of previously private personal diaries. This narrative shows Terzaghi's struggle to understand the phenomena observed on many major engineering projects. Through his own words, we explore friendships, conflicts, jealousies, frustrations, and enormous successes. Terzaghi was an artist with constant focus, commitment, and genius. The exploration of his life, much of it amid the backdrop of turbulent Europe between the Wars, becomes an adventure that unfolds to entertain, educate, and stimulate.

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