

## **HISTORY OF THE HORSE DRAWN TRAM FROM TEMESVÁR/TIMIȘOARA\* (1869–1899) (SUMMARY)**

150 years ago, back in 1869, the horse drawn tram started being used in Temesvár and served the public transport for three decades, until 1899, when the „horsepower” was replaced by the electric motor. Subsequently, the old tram line was electrified and other new tram lines were put into operation.

At the beginning of the 19th century, industrialization led to the sudden expansion of cities. The transportation was done with carriages and the public transport was provided by the so-called omnibuses (in Bucharest they were called tramcar). With the growth of the population, the aim was to create a safer, faster and more convenient public transport system. The first attempt to use the horse drawn cars on the streets of a city took place in New York in 1832. The first line connected the centre of the metropolis with the neighbourhood of Harlem. This urban railway was built with the technology of the metropolitan area railways, using normal rails. They were not embedded in the street layers, thus hindering the circulation of carriages. The discontent was very high and led to the abolition of the line.

In the following years various solutions were experienced. One which seemed satisfactory, was the track with rail and rail guard, thus creating a space for running the wheels. This system was abandoned because it could not maintain the distance between the two rails and the wheels of the vehicles often became captive of the narrowed path. Two decades have passed, until a French engineer, Alphonse Loubat (1799-1866), who was working in New York, invented and patented the grooved rail. This rail revolutionized public transportation. It guarantees the constant dimension of the grooves, offering optimum conditions for the movement of the wheels. The wheel, of course, ran smoothly on the railhead, and a very important aspect is that: this type of rail could be embedded in the pavement or in the wearing course of the road, after generalizing the asphalt road coatings, without hindering the circulation of the carriages. The rail was called the „Loubat rail”. At that time the rails were mounted on longitudinal beams located under them, and not on sleepers. Loubat’s system is considered the first modern tram (urban railway on public roads).

The first tram built on Loubat’s system was put into operation in New York in 1852.

Returning to his homeland, Loubat built the first tram line in Paris. It was put into operation in 1854. It is interesting that the provincial cities of France did not embrace the new system of public transport: only in Nantes and Lille were built tram lines.

We must also remember that the first tram line in Germany was opened in Berlin in 1865, and in Vienna the first horse drawn tram line was opened for traffic in the autumn of 1865.

Since Temesvár was part of Hungary at that time, we must look at our city's priorities in relation to the cities of Hungary at the time. The first horse drawn tram of the country was put into operation in 1866, in Budapest. Temesvár ranks first, being the first provincial city that adopted this system of public transport. Other cities followed very quickly: Arad also in 1869, Szeged in 1884, Debrecen in 1887, Kassa (today Košice in Slovakia) in 1891.

Nowadays, Timișoara/Temesvár is a leading city of Romania. In the Old Romanian Kingdom, only in Bucharest was built a network of horse drawn trams; the first line was inaugurated in 1871. Thus, on the current territory of Romania, Timișoara/Temesvár is the first city where the new system of public transport was put into operation.

This book is based on primary and original documents as well as on the decisions of the city council, published in the city monitor, which at that time had the title of *Városi Közlöny*. The reports of director Henrik Baader are also very valuable. The monograph of the former director and scientist Corneliu Miklósi, published in 1929, was particularly useful due to photographs and the reproduction of documents, even though the data was known to me from the works mentioned earlier. Unfortunately, the drawn parts of the project can no longer be found. They have either been destroyed or are hidden in some stack of old papers and will perhaps be found by a future researcher, to the delight of all those who are interested in the history of the horse drawn tram.

In the book I have reproduced some maps and sketches unpublished so far. References and citations from newspapers of the time facilitate the reading of the book, which contains numerous technical information.

For the presentation of the life and activity of the two personalities who contributed to the greatest extent to the project (Mayor Küttel and Director Baader), I dedicated two separate chapters.

The book, in addition to providing a lot of data, wishes to be a tribute to the memory of those who laid the foundation of the new modern city, through which, the small provincial city rose to the rank of the leading cities on this part of our continent.

\* *Temesvár in Hungarian / Timișoara in Romanian*