

THE HISTORY OF THE TEMESVÁR/TIMIȘOARA-LIPPA/LIPOVA-RADNA RAILWAY

(Summary)

After the middle of the 19th century, the small but chic garrison town of Temesvár/Timișoara stepped onto the path to becoming a large and important civilian city with a strong industry, and rose in the hierarchy of cities in what was then Hungary.

Among the visionary mayors who played an important role we must mention Károly Küttel, János Török and Károly Telbisz on the one hand and the county leaders – *comes* (appointed) and *vice-comes* (elected) – Zsigmond Ormós, János Török, Viktor Molnár and others - on the other hand. The leaders of the city and the county supported all efforts towards the development of the city and of the county. One of those efforts, the construction of the Temesvár/Timișoara–Radna railway, is the focus of this work.

The authorities in Temesvár/Timișoara considered that a local railway, providing a shorter connection with the Arad–Tövis/Teiuș main railway would bring great benefits and would contribute substantially to the development of the city's industry, for example the transport of coal, construction materials, timber and firewood would be much cheaper compared to transportation on the much longer Radna–Arad–Temesvár/Timișoara route. Furthermore the localities from this part of the county would be able to transport their products by rail to Temesvár/Timișoara and beyond, or to the markets of Transylvania.

The first initiatives for construction of these railway connections had been formed beginning in the 1870s, but remained unsuccessful. Law no. XXXII. of 1880 on the construction of local railways gave a strong impetus to the construction of such railways and soon the country was endowed with a very dense railway network. Temesvár/Timișoara also used the facilities provided by law and within a few years several railways were built from the city to the four cardinal points. Among them is the Temesvár/Timișoara–Radna railway. The most important craftsmen of the railway were the legendary mayor Károly Telbisz and comes Viktor Molnár. An initiative committee was set up which obtained the concession and, according to the concession deed, the company was formed as "Temesvár-Lippa-Radnai helyi érdekű vasút Részvénytársaság" (in translation: "Temesvár/Timișoara-Lippa/Lipova-Radna" Limited Company). To secure the necessary funds, shares were issued, designers were

chosen and the construction company with which the necessary contracts were concluded, initialled the agreement with MÁV (Royal Hungarian State Railways) for the joining of the local railway with the MÁV network in Temesvár-Gyárváros/Timișoara-Fabric and Radna stations. According to the obligations in the concession deed, it concluded with the Hungarian Royal Railways the contract for the operation of the local railway. In order to ensure uniform operation, traffic safety and comfort on local lines, after commissioning they were handed over to the State Railways (MÁV) which were responsible for the operation of the railway, paying the joint stock companies an amount set out in the contract, usually 50% of the profit.

Usually preferential network tariffs state railways were also applied to local railways. Because the railway competed with the state railway, it did not want to apply preferential tariffs, which led to much discussion and animosity between the company on shares and MÁV.

Another problem arose when the localities that made subscriptions refused to receive and pay them, and the railway company could not honour the payments to the state railway company for the rolling stock. In this regard, Achill Deschán Vice-Prefect played a very negative role, which led to his dismissal. The book deals with these lesser known issues today. The company also had to build an imposing curved bridge (not very common at that time), with five arches and a length of 250 meters over the Maros/Mureș river. The designer of the railway and of the bridge over the Maros/Mureș was the famous engineer, later university professor, Szilárd Zielinski from Budapest.

All these are treated in detail in the volume. Designers and builders were required to satisfy higher requirements than those imposed on other local railways, and this led to higher prices, but this railway has become one of the most solid and well-built from Austria-Hungary. After the end of the First World War and the establishment of new borders, the whole line became the property of the Kingdom of Romania and exploitation by C.F.R.

This book presents the history of the Temesvár/Timișoara–Lippa/Lipova–Radna railway. Based on research in various archives, the author presents in detail both the administrative steps as well as the purely technical aspects of the railway line. The following are treated separately: the procedures for setting up the railway, the concession contract, the technical conditions, the status of the joint stock company, the network connection contract (MÁV), the route, the plan route, the longitudinal profile and the type cross-sectional profile, infrastructure, superstructure, works of art, railway maintenance buildings, locomotives that provided traction, the railway situation in the interwar period and after the purchase of the entire asset of the society made by the Romanian state in 1942, the current situation.

Due to in-depth archival research, the author has included numerous reproductions of original projects and other unpublished documents. They provide this book with special documentary value.