

SYMBOLS OF PROGRESS: ELECTRIC TRAMS IN SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE UNTIL THE FIRST WORLD WAR

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Abstract: The article examines the introduction of electric trams in several main urban centres in Southeast Europe at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, focusing on their role as an element of urban modernization and the growing interest in the technical discoveries of the era. The article looks at the creation of the new transport infrastructure in Sofia and three major cities of Austria-Hungary's Balkan provinces – Zagreb, Sarajevo, Ljubljana. So, the modernization processes are examined in their Balkan and European context. The article analyses what are the main driving factors in the introduction of the technical innovations, as well as to what extent representative functions or practical economic/social considerations are leading in the process. It also examines the meaning of the technical innovations to both expert communities and everyday users of this new means of transport.

Keywords: trams, electrification, modernisation, Southeast Europe, urban transport

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