

EMERGENCE OF TWIN CITIES ALONG THE DANUBE

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Twin cities represent a particular case of two cities or urban centres founded in a close geographic proximity, which gradually grow into each other, losing most of their mutual buffer zone. There are no precise criteria for the twin-cityhood, but to be considered as twin cities, they have to present a similar administrative status and somewhat comparable sizes. However, some of them, considered twinned by proximity, do not necessarily match demographically, economically, or politically. In many historic cases, cities that grew into each other's space lost their individual identities, and the border or barrier originally separating them became almost irrelevant. A case of twin cities merging to become a united one on the Danube River is Budapest, which began as two settlements (Buda and Pest) facing each other across the river at a strategic crossing place along a trade route. Modern twin cities may share an airport, e.g., Dallas-Fort Worth, Leeds-Bradford or Minneapolis-Saint Paul.

Fig. 35.0.1 / Twin cities
divided by a state border
– View on Mária Valéria
Bridge, connecting
Esztergom, Hungary, with
Šturovo, Slovakia (Author: G.
Georgiev, 2021).



In some cases, the twin cities are divided by a state border, often one that strictly adheres to a geographical landmark. This is the situation with the Danube River that divides several states with twin cities on both river banks (Fig. 35.01): Komarno-Komarom and Šturovo-Esztergom in Slovakia/Hungary (Fig. 35.02), Ilok-Bačka Palanka in Croatia/Serbia or Vidin-Calafat, Russe-Giurgiu and Silistra-Calarasi (Fig. 35.03). Depending on the historical background, twin cities can be divided by the current international border, but retain a cultural and historical similarity, due to their economic and cultural relations within the previous common governmental establishment. Border twin cities on the banks of the Danube, situated in the territory of the former Austro-Hungary Empire, represent such an example. Therefore, it is not unusual that even if they developed as very different entities and became more and more separated through political and socio-economic contexts, these twin cities kept prominent internal similarities (Szabo et al, 2019).

Fig. 35.03 / Typology of twin cities and towns along the Danube (Author: B. Antonic, 2022).

Giurgiu - Ruse - Urban development scheme (1918- 2021)

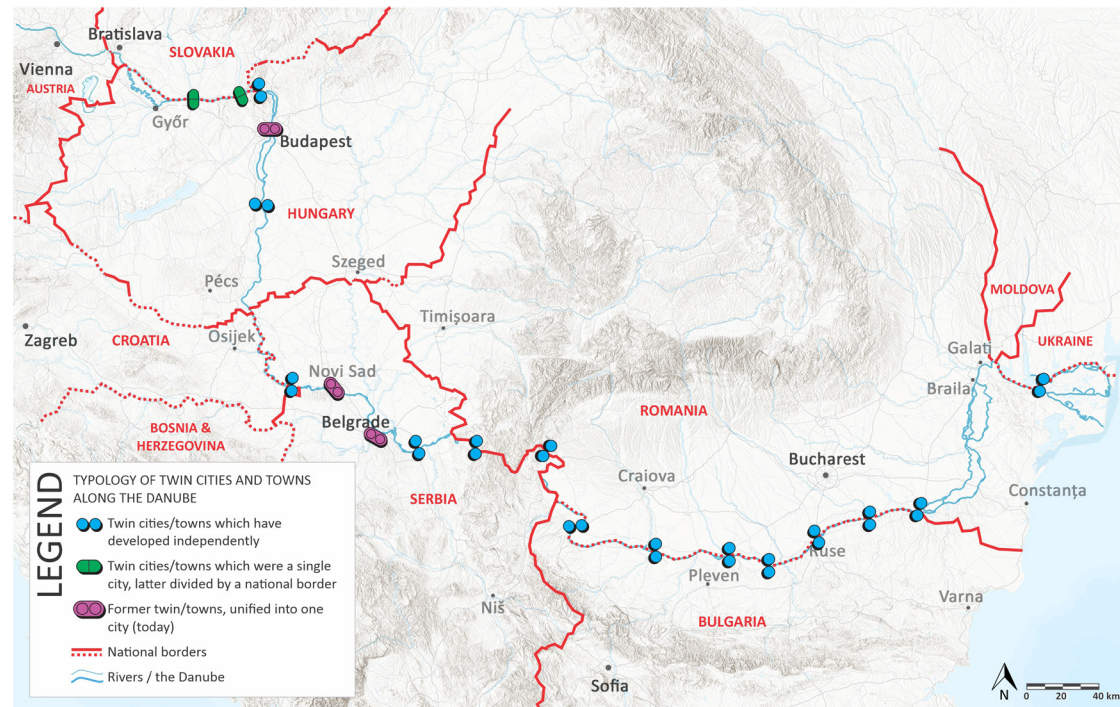
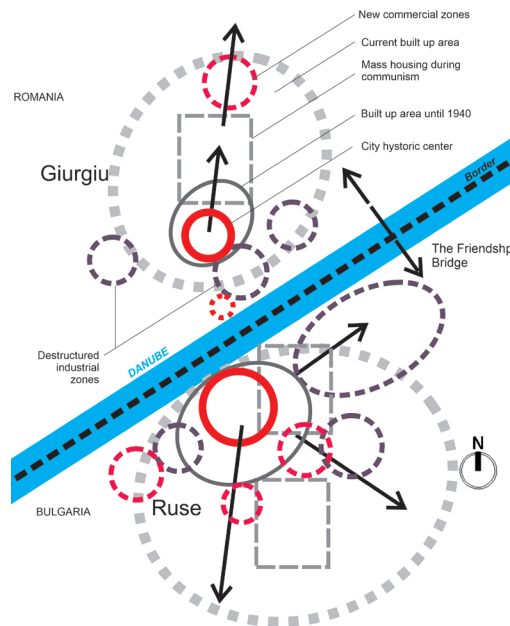


Fig. 35.02 / Twin cities divided by a state border – View across Danube from Bechet, Romania, to Oryahovo, Bulgaria (Author: A. Radulescu, 2021).