

The historical evolution of the urban centres of the historical provinces of Moldova and Bucovina

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Abstract. Throughout history, under various political, economic and military conditions, these cities had the role of capital of the historical provinces of Moldova and Bucovina (Province of the Habsburg Empire Moldavia and Bukowina), Siret between 1340 and 1388; Suceava from late 14th century to 1565; Chernivtsi (Czernowitz) between 1744 and 1918. Regional history did not treat these cities in the same way, so there was no direct relationship of subordination between these cities in terms of development, but only an exchange of political roles broken down over time. For each site, functioning as a capital is a significant period in the history of development. The three cities studied: Suceava, Siret and Chernivtsi today are located on the territory of two countries - Romania and Ukraine, however, they have a very interesting connection. The urban landscape of these cities has always been shaped and defined by geographical, anthropological, ethnological, ethnographic, social, political, economic boundaries, which has led, comparatively, to a different evolution from an urban point of view. The development of these cities has always depended on political factors, combined with military ones, and their development was artificial, based solely on the temporary political-military role. The purpose of this research is an analysis of the urban development of these cities and the highlighting of the preserved features in the current urban structure, represented by a unique architectural heritage.

1 Introduction

Today these three localities, which are the subject of this study, have very different status. They are even located on the territory of two different countries nowadays - Romania and Ukraine. Throughout history, under various political, economic and military conditions, these cities had the role of capital of the historical provinces of Moldova and later Bukowina (Province of the Habsburg Empire), as follows: Siret between 1340 and 1388; Suceava from late 14th century to 1565; Chernivtsi (Czernowitz) between 1744 and 1918. One of the main factors that influenced the development of these three locations is the fact that all three were stopping points on the trade route connecting Black Sea to the Baltic Sea.

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The urban aspect of these three cities was noted by the Austrian authorities in the first analysis of the newly formed Province of Bukowina, in 1776:

„...daher auf dem der- maligen Territorium des Landes damals (1776) thät- sächlich blos 232 Ortschaften sich befanden. Nach der commissionellen Aufnahme von 1785 waren von diesen 232 Ortschaften: 3 Städte (Czernowitz, Suczawa, Sereth), 2 Marktgemeinden (Sadagóra und Wiznitz) und der Rest 227 Dörfer mit zusammen 75 000 Bewohnern”

- On the territory of the country at that time (1776) there were actually only 232 localities. After the official admission in 1785, these 232 localities were: 3 cities (Czernowitz, Suczawa, Sereth), 2 market towns (Sadagóra and Wiznitz) and the remaining 227 villages with a total of 75,000 inhabitants [1].

The research method chosen for the comparative study was the heuristic, classical one (documentation from known and established sources in the field), in a transdisciplinary context (architecture, urbanism, history, social, political), using a fragmentation and recombination scheme of the disparate elements of each discipline. An attempt has been made as far as possible to fit the historical urbanism research into the same paradigm for all three cities. The generic method could be included in the category of marking (tracing) methods, having in this context a complex set of interventions, periods, transdisciplinary dimensions and a great complexity of changes in the evolution of each individual city.

1.1 Brief history of Siret

The city of Siret is documented since 1211-1225 in the annals of the Geographical Dictionary of the Kingdom of Poland, where it is stated that a fortress was built in the area of Siret, which was destroyed in 1241 by the Tatars. Archaeological sources have discovered traces of civilization from the Neolithic period in the area. The golden age of Siret as the capital of Moldova lasted almost three discontinuous decades, from 1340 to 1388, when Petru I Musat moved the capital of Moldova to Suceava [2]. During the mentioned period, Siret witnessed an interesting development, including the mint that made the first coin in the history of the principality of Moldova. The first Roman Catholic bishopric (1371), the first Franciscan school with Latin teaching (1373) and the first library in Moldova (1380) were established [3]. In 1407 a tax exemption from Alexander the Good for Armenian merchants made many Armenian families settle in Siret and in Suceava. At the time, Siret had an important commercial role, being a stop on the road that connected the Black Sea to the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea to important cities in Poland and Lithuania [4].

In 1653, the Italian missionary Vitto Piluzzi portrays a desolate image of the whole of Moldavia, and about Siret he says that "Siret was devastated, and the churches were ruined by the Tatars" [5]. However, in 1673, the Church of St. Onufrie was built, which architecturally copies the style of the Putna Monastery, and in the same period, the Church "St. John the Baptist" (Fig. 1) and the Church of St. Dumitru were built (still functional today). In the same bibliographic source, it has been found the fact that in 1770 the city is hit by a cholera epidemic, and at the end of the summer 1770 the population of Siret was 265 inhabitants, in 50 households, an extraordinarily small number compared to the population of Suceava in the same period. In 1774 the city was assimilated to the Habsburg Empire. The migration of Germans and Jews to the Siret area was significant, so that at the beginning of 1786 the town hall was established, and most of the inhabitants (approx. 1800) were emigrants. 1786 Siret becomes the seat of the district and will administer a territory that will include the town of Siret and 35 villages. In 1826, the construction of the Roman Catholic Church in Siret, the building of the old town hall, where a polyclinic currently operates, was completed, and until the start of the First World War, important elements of the city were built, the Great Jewish Temple, the school building (still used today), 4 bakeries, 1

slaughterhouse and 1 mill, various factories, 4 brickyards and a pottery workshop, a small oil refinery, Siret railway station, Siret Court, Waterworks, Prefecture, Power Plan [6].



Fig. 1. Church "St. John the Baptist", built in the 17th century, Photo by Inna Ostrovsca, (2022).

Unfortunately, in 1918, when the Russian troops retreated, they looted the city. In the interwar period there are many enterprises, mills, in 1930 the population was 7397 people. In 1947, the city is included in the socialist development program, and during the communist period, housing blocks are built and the city's economy is oriented towards the food and textile industries [7].

Being relatively disconnected geographically from the rest of the national infrastructure, the socialist plan of 1940s was implemented relatively late in the case of Siret, between 1970 and 1989, and a relatively productive industry was established, but which declined almost immediately with the Revolution of 1989, economic plans and the level of industrialization being functional only in a socialist type economy [8]. For the city of Siret, a difficult period begins from an economic point of view. All the factories built during the communist period close their doors in a few years. Starting with the year 2000, the city begins to revive economically as a result of the arrival of foreign investors in the area. The most important factory is opened by the company Swedwood, part of the IKEA concern. Besides this company, there were also English, Portuguese and Italian businessmen who carry out economic activities in the area. Unfortunately in 2008 – the Sweedwood wood processing factory closes and all the staff are laid off. The economic situation of Siret is on the ground. A section of the factory is being sold, but only around 20 people are employed. Only 3 of the foreign investors remained. Nowadays, in Siret, the city hospital, the chronic psychiatric hospital and the nursing home, the general school, the "Latcu-Voda" technical college, the city police, the customs checkpoint, the fire department, the council, a few shops are still operating [7].

1.2 Brief history of Suceava

Although archaeological traces of human activities have been identified since the age of flint tools, Suceava does not have an exact foundation period; the settlement is documented for the first time in 1388, in the writings of Petru Musat to the Polish king, Vladislav Jagello, by

mentioning the place where the address to him was written, "the fortress of Suceva". There are several legends regarding both the name and the founders, but the real impact of the settlement in the documents was through the prism of the fortress [2]. The first documented intervention, which also decided the development line of the settlement, was the establishment by Petru I of the main voivodeship residence in Suceava. With this decision, at the end of the 14th century in the middle of the settlement, two stone fortresses were built in a royal court, one on the western side, near the village of Scheia, and one in the eastern area - The Seat Fortress of Suceava (included on the List of historical monuments in Suceava county from 2015, with classification code SV-II- a-A-05449 [9]) Also during this period, the church dedicated to Saint George of Mirăuți was built, between the years 1402–1522, the Mirauti Church will fulfilled the role of the metropolitan cathedral of Moldova. The next leap in the development of Suceava was the choice by Stephen the Great of the city as the center of the defense system [2].

In 1538, the fortress was handed over to the Ottoman Empire, which looted the city and the surrounding areas, aspects that lasted until 1540, when the puppet lord of the Ottoman Empire, Ștefan Lăcustă, was assassinated by the boyars who had been abused during his almost 2-year reign. The next mark in the evolution, and this time also negative, through serious destruction brought to the fortress, was the year 1563, under the siege of the hetman Ștefan Tomșa [10].

The political move of the capital of Moldova in 1565 to Iași threw the city into decline in terms of importance. In 1774 Suceava came under the control of the Habsburg Empire as part of the Bukowina province; the city will be part of the Empire until 1918. At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the city experienced a period of modernization and development, which transformed the old medieval market, which went into anonymity after the loss of the status of the capital, into an important and modern city within Duchy of Bukowina. Under the mandate of Franz des Loges (1846-1914), an Austrian politician from Bukowina, he served as the mayor of Suceava for almost a quarter of a century, between 1891 and 1914, Suceava changed the detailed topology of the city. During this period were built for local institutions, which changed the landscape of the town; the City Administrative Palace build in 1903-1904 (arh. Peter Paul Brang) (Fig. 2.), the Headquarters of the District Administration (today Bucovina Museum), the "Ștefan cel Mare" National College, the Suceava General Public Hospital (arh. Josef Laizner [11]), and the old Suceava Water Plant. The same mayor invested in the electrification of the city, sewerage, aqueducts and the systematization of the Suceava River, as well as the Power Plant, and extensive paving works on the city's streets [13].

The city had a strong development typical of Western European countries until the installation of the socialist regime in Romania. In 1975 the Ceaușescu regime began demolitions in the city of Suceava. Paradoxically and in contrast to other cities in the country, the demolitions started from the old center and approximately 400 houses were demolished, in place of which more than 30,000 apartments were built in housing blocks. The destroyed houses were in the central area, buildings that today could have been included in the list of monuments of national importance, having valuable architecture and history. Fortunately, some interwar and pre-World War I buildings were saved. The city center now contains an esplanade, framed by blocks of flats and shopping areas, banks, restaurants and nothing of the image of the city before the socialist intervention [8].

After the Revolution of 1989, no large buildings were built in Suceava, except for 3 shopping centers, Shopping City Suceava (2008), Iulius Mall Suceava (2008), Galleria Suceava (2009), and a few supermarkets. From the point of view of the city's evolution, there is a master plan, but the geographical positioning and the fact that Romania in the context of being a member of the European Union has the largest commercial exchanges in the other areas (Transylvania, Banat, Muntenia, Oltenia and southern Moldova) with western Europe,

as well as the lack of infrastructure, highways in the area of Suceava makes the economic development of the city not competitive with other cities better connected and closer to the West such as Oradea, Braşov or Timişoara.

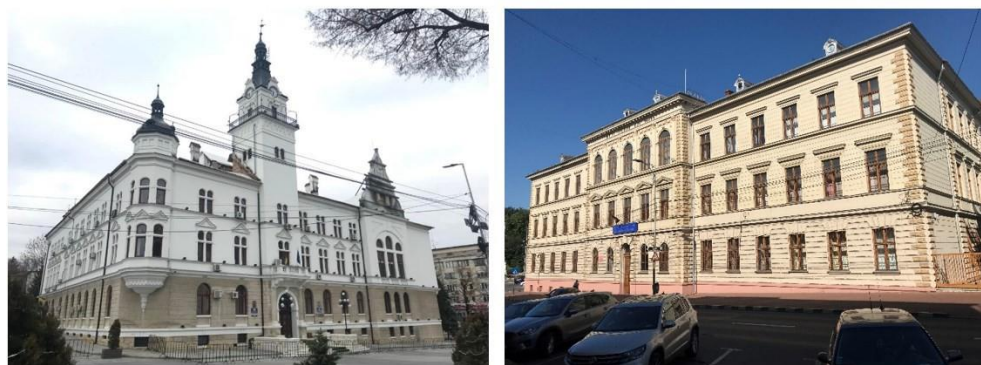


Fig. 2. Palatul Administrativ Suceava (arh. P.P. Brang, 1904), Colegiul Național „Ștefan cel Mare”, Photo by Inna Ostrovsca, (2022).

1.3 Brief history of Chernivtsi

Chernivtsi is documented on October 8, 1408 in a trade privilege granted by Alexander the Good (ruler of Moldavia, 1400–1432) [12]. This mention of Chernivtsi is connected with the development of trade relations in the region at the end of the 14th century. The political rapprochement of Moldova and Poland contributed to the establishment of trade relations between them. The trade route from Lviv to Siret and Suceava passed through the city. The sealed charter of the Moldavian voivode Alexander I dated October 8, 1408, given to Lviv and Podil merchants who had to pay customs duties in Chernivtsi, was written in the Church Slavonic language, which was widely used in Moldavia at that time for drawing up similar documents [13]. For all goods that were loaded on carts, a toll was collected, and its amount depended on the goods and their value [14].

During the wars, which Moldavian princes fought with the kings of Poland, Chernivtsi was repeatedly destroyed in 1509, 1531 and 1537 and plundered by the Cossacks in 1740. In 1709, the Swedes defeated the Russians on Cecina in Chernivtsi (there was a fortress built by King Kasimir the Great of Poland around 1349, unfortunately it was destroyed over time) [1].

Another mention of Chernivtsi customs can be found in the decree of the Moldavian voivode Grigoriu Ghica from 1737, where it is about easing the customs regime for Lviv merchants. Chernivtsi customs ceased to exist in connection with the Russo-Turkish war and Bukowina's accession to Austria [3]. In 1774, the Austrian troops gradually occupy The Upper Country of Moldavia. The newly established province receives the official name of Bukowina [15]. During the Habsburg period, Bukowina went through three forms of organization - military administration (1774-1786); civil administration, as the 19th province of Galicia and Lodomeria Kingdom (1786-1848 and 1850-1862); and provincial autonomy, as Duchy (Herzogtum) of the empire (1862-1918) [16]. The central point of all political, economic and cultural activities was established in Chernivtsi, because it was closer to Lemberg (the capital of Galicia). Officially, Czernowitz became the capital of the Duchy of Bukowina, established by the Austrian Constitution of March 4, 1849. [15].

The period of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was a period of flourishing of urban architecture in Bukowina. Important part of the urban architecture, especially in Czernowitz, was built in the 19th and early 20th centuries using the modern materials and techniques of the time. These buildings are known for their elegant eclectic-style which were created by representatives of the Viennese and Prague schools of architecture.

The most remarkable and impressive work of architecture in the city is The Ensemble of the Residence of Bukowinian and Dalmatian Metropolitans (Fig. 3), designed by Czech architect Josef Hlavka, build in 1864-1882. The expressive ensemble of the period of historicism in Bukowina, an unparalleled example of the synthesis of arts and the combination of European achievements with regional traditions, listed in UNESCO World Heritage since 2011. Today the ensemble is the central building of the "Yurii Fedkovici" National University from Chernivtsi [17].



Fig. 3. The Ensemble of the Residence of Bukowinian and Dalmatian Metropolitans, Photo by Inna Ostrovsca, (2021).

Bukowina was the most eastern province of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This territory was part of Austria between 1774 and 1918. In November 1918, as a result of the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, Bukowina united with the Kingdom of Romania, with its capital (called in Romanian) Cernăuți, and became a province of Romania. World War I interrupted real estate development, and a stagnation in the field will continue in the early years after the war, when the society will experience political and economic instability [12]. The interwar architecture of Chernivtsi provides a thorough illustration of the architectural debate in the Romanian cultural space, as well as in a larger European context. A number of buildings appear in the Neo-Romanian, Art Deco architectural styles [15], as seen in the figure below.

After the Second World War, the region of Bukovina was divided between two countries, the southern part remained in Romania and the northern part including the capital Chernivtsi in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, becoming the Chernivtsi region with the residence in Chernivtsi. The Soviet period, in turn, spared the city of unnecessary destruction by marking its shape only by placing large volumes, such as the brutal building of the regional hospital (Ruska Street). The city went through a very complex process of functionalizing the architecture, according to the communist development scenario. In particular, the buildings of worship suffered, all forms of religion being banned in the Soviet Union.

A large part of the churches in Chernivtsi during the communist period were closed or was used for totally unexpected functions. As examples: the seminary church of the former residence of the Orthodox metropolitans of Bukovina and Dalmatia in the Soviet period housed the university's computer center with the installation of one of the first Soviet computers "Minsk-4" (a prototype of a modern computer); Orthodox Cathedral, in the 1960s

became an exhibition hall; the Armenian Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul was used as a grain store; The Jesuit Church was modified to store the documents of the regional archive [13].

In 1965, the town of Sadguru on the left bank of the Prut was added to Chernivtsi, which led to the doubling of the city's territorial surface [13].

In 1991, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Chernivtsi region remains part of independent Ukraine. Today Chernivtsi is an important city in Western Ukraine. It is located 30 km from the border with Romania and is an important point of connection with the European Union.



Fig. 4. Priest House in Chernivtsi (1929, arch. Tadeusz Kossowski) / Romanian Cultural Palace, (1938, arch. Horia Creanga), Photo by Ostrovsca Inna, (2021)

All these changes have left their mark on the urban aspect of the city. However, most of the architectural heritage and urban structure of the city was built during the Habsburg Empire. In the Ukrainian state register, are more than five hundred architectural monuments registered in the historical center of the city, of which 20 are of national importance and one of international importance.

2 The role of the capital

Moldova had 4 historical capitals, Baia, Siret, Suceava and Iasi. Siret and Suceava are chronologically separated in the role of capital, in the sense that Siret was the residence of Moldova for approximately 3 decades, while Suceava was the capital, seat fortress, residence, in the classical period of the Middle Ages, being more known for its fortress and military role, also having its share of sieges, battles and brutal leadership changes.

For all three cities, the situation changed radically when the political pole moved to Iasi, approx. 150 km from Suceava towards southeast, and all economic interests were also transferred to Iasi. A socio-economic decay began, along with the change in geographical power ratios.

With the conquest by the Austrian Empire of the territory that included all three localities, the situation changed again, radically. During the Habsburg period, the central point of all political, economic and cultural activities is established in Chernivtsi, because it was closer to Lemberg (the capital of Galicia).

Transition of the Upper Country of Moldavia under Austrian rule marked, for the whole province, the beginning of a rapid modernization process and synchronization with Western civilization, following the model of architectural- urban development in Austrian Empire. The whole region is experiencing rapid population growth, especially through massive immigration. Ukrainians, Romanians, Germans, Jews, Poles, Armenians, etc. will make

Bukowina a multiethnic and multi-faith province, but especially a multicultural one. This aspect can be still observed in Czernowitz, the former capital of Bukowina.

Comparatively, the role of the three settlements was similar from a political point of view, but from an economic point of view, it is well known that a transit point, as Siret has marked itself over time, cannot reach the heights of development of a locality designated as capital, even regional, as was the case with Suceava and Chernivtsi.

2.1 Comparative analysis

From a geographical point of view, the conjuncture is similar, all the cities being bordered to the north-east by the water course, as well as the neighbouring hills have relatively similar positions, aspects that led to a relatively similar development of the shape of the cities. In the centers of the cities, the hearths of early villages, there are places of worship, churches and monasteries, and the main access roads are usually oriented towards these places of worship.

Over time, the street layout has evolved similarly within all three settlements, in the sense of connecting with the neighbouring settlements of commercial interest (Dorohoi, Rădăuți, Iași, Lviv). An important aspect in the development of the street network through major interventions has always been the political factor, for example, for the city of Siret, the visit of Emperor Joseph II to Suceava, caused his short stop in the city of Siret to indirectly create a wooden bridge over the Siret river, new entrances to the city from Chernivtsi and Suceava, and a bridge over the Târgului stream, as well as two new streets, Suceva Street and Chernivtsi Street, as well as moving the central square from Miezeni to Siretul Vechi (Old Siret) [4].

All the cities had a railway that leads almost to the central area, built in the second half of the 19th century. But Siret and Suceava both lost it over time. Siret no longer bears any traces of the railway. While Suceava being now served by the railway station on the left side of the Suceava river, in Burdujeni, partially preserved the railway connection on the old plan, from Itcani, but the railway no longer reaches the center but the Suceava West station. This is a recent addition, from the communist era. In the case of Chernivtsi, the railway that reaches the city center has been preserved and is in operation. Including the Railway Station built in 1909, which still fulfils its original function today.

The big difference between the cities is the nature of decadence in each and when it began to set in Siret, marked as a transit city, located almost equidistant between Chernivtsi (43.2 km) and Suceava (42 km), suffered greatly with the cooling of north-south economic relations, while Suceava, occupying a military role, which often mixed with the political one, had almost permanently a real reason for social and economic development, inertia that ensured the development of the city even after the capital was moved to Iași.

In the case of Chernivtsi, the most important period of development and flourishing is undoubtedly during the Habsburg Empire the city was considered a cultural center of the eastern monarchy.

Although at first glance this may give some explanations regarding the evolution and current status of the cities under comparison, the tumultuous historical evolution and, as it has been reiterated, the politico-military role of each city have always depended on the confrontations of the great European powers, either that we are talking about Poland, Lithuania, Russia, in its early forms, the Habsburg/Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Ottoman Empire and the interests of Moldova, culminating in the abandonment of the use of Suceava and Siret as capitals due to the troubled history of ever-changing borders, constantly affecting all settlements from demographic, town planning and architecture point of view.

With the advent of communism, the role of the city of Suceava increased, once again becoming the county capital (this time it became municipality), and the misfortune of the city of Siret was that the territorial division included Siret in the same county as Suceava, which

led to polarization and stronger economy around the city, an aspect that can be observed at the national level.

Despite the political changes, the territorial conquests, in these cities multi-ethnic communities - composed of Romanians, Germans, Ukrainians, Armenians, Poles, Jews, Gypsies - multi-confessional communities that brought their personal contribution to the configuration of everyone's urban spaces were aggregated among the cities studied. The architecturally interesting connection between these three localities is the fact that Josef Hlavka in search of local artistic traditions to inform and inspire his design of Ensemble of the Residence of Bukowinian and Dalmatian Metropolitans, made a study on the medieval Orthodox Christian architecture of Bukowina, including the churches in Siret and Suceava. His research was published in 1866 as an article - „Die griechisch-orientalischen Kirchenbauten in der Bukowina” (Greek-Oriental church buildings of Bukowina), In *Österreichische Revue* [18].

3 Conclusion

In the context of the cities under analysis, the urban landscape has always been defined between geographical (watercourses, landforms), anthropological (social needs, access routes, trade, historical security context), ethnological and ethnographic, pedological, social-administrative, political-economic, which led, comparatively, to a different evolution from an urban point of view for the cities.

Political changes brought in all three cities the greatest urban impact, both due to new construction technologies and the socialist paradigm of building. In this context, due to the hierarchical fragmentation of the orders which at the level of the higher forums were relatively condensed, the local emergence of some continuities between the historical substratum, but also some contradictions between paradigms was allowed. If the urban fabric of the cities was organic, developed gradually, adapting permanently historically to the needs of the inhabitants and local/regional communities, the socialist intervention brought into practice the theory of social systems, of urban planning, landscaping and territorial planning, which were partly Soviet in essence.

What can be said without a doubt is that all cities have largely preserved the organic layout of the main streets, even after the often-destructive systematization of the socialist system of intervention, in the last half of the 20th century. However, new streets, traffic arteries inevitably appeared, and the systematization of watercourses and the inclusion of neighbouring villages as new residential areas neighbourhoods led to the development of cities towards areas that were not regarded as de facto units of the comparative settlements. Suceava and Chernivtsi could include the settlements around it, because they developed in the immediate vicinity of the hearth of the original centre, while the stopover character of Siret, the geography and the proximity to the various historical borders (permanent security instability) did not allow the developments of other localities in the immediate vicinity, so it had no way to develop artificially through the inclusion process.

Currently, Suceava and Chernivtsi are bigger and more developed cities than Siret, with a more diversified economy and a more modern infrastructure. However, Siret has a longer history and cultural importance in the region, with several archaeological sites and historical monuments. All three cities are important and have contributed to regional development over time from similar points of view (capitals).

Regional history did not treat cities the same in any way, so there was no direct subordination/coordination relationship between these cities in terms of development, just an exchange of roles broken down over time. Understanding the historical development of these cities depends on an extraordinary number of factors, and unfortunately most bibliographic

sources are not always on the side of the native inhabitants, but rather on the side of occupying forces, great empires or merchants.

After tracing the historical evolution of the urban centres of Moldova and Bucovina from an architectural perspective, it is clear that these regions have undergone tremendous changes over the centuries. From the medieval fortresses and medieval churches to the buildings in the 18th and 19th centuries styles, and finally to the modernist and socialist architecture of the 20th century, these regions have been witness to a rich and diverse array of architectural styles. Through wars, invasions, and periods of peace, the architectural heritage of Moldova and Bukowina has survived and continues to tell the story of these regions' past. From the imposing citadels of Suceava and Soroca to the elegant palaces of Iasi and Chernivtsi, the architecture of these urban centres has left an indelible mark on the cultural identity of the region. But as these cities continue to grow and evolve, it is important that we preserve and protect the architectural heritage of the past, while also embracing the new and innovative designs of the future. By doing so, we can ensure that these urban centres remain vibrant and thriving centres of culture and history, and that they continue to inspire future generations to come. In conclusion, the historical evolution of the urban centres of Moldova and Bukowina from an architectural point of view is a testament to the resilience and creativity of the human spirit and their architectural heritage remains a source of pride and inspiration for all who call these places home.

A potential research hypothesis regarding the evolution of the cities would be to analyze the interdependence of the evolution of the settlements, a simple example for the motivation of such research would be the fact that, the visit of Emperor Joseph II from Chernivtsi to Suceava, caused that, on his way, to produce effects on the infrastructure development of the city of Siret, some of the effects being visible until now. Or that the most important work of architecture in Chernivtsi is inspired by the medieval churches in the areas of Suceava and Siret.

A general conclusion that would answer the main question of the paper and provide insight into the whole study would be that cities have developed linearly up to a certain point, and the exchange of roles between them as a local/regional power center has caused them to succeed in rising from the level of common settlement on the edge of an empire. The development of cities has always depended on political factors, always corroborated with military ones, and their development has been artificial, based solely on the temporary political-military role. Only in the socialist era, their development, even forced, created the auspices of an industrial development for all cities. But the gap between the level of investment made Suceava and Chernivtsi evolve much stronger than Siret. Which remained, even after all the years of at its documentary attestation, a border town, located between several important urban centers, Suceava, Rădăuți, Cernăuți, Dorohoi, without much interest from the state to invest in its development. The main investment in Siret, after the last change of political regime in 1989, was the Border Police building, without identifying any other religious, cultural or social interests from the state.

It is very difficult to make a forecast of the development of the three cities for the medium future, for several reasons, including the administrative regionalization plan at the national level, in 21st century, which would change the way of investment and prioritization at the regional level, under the auspices of the motivation that regional, local issues are managed more efficiently than centrally.

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