

# ZAMFIR INN, ION ROMÂNUL INN, SIMION INN. NOTES ON BUCHAREST HISTORICAL TOPOGRAPHY\*

Petru Mortu\*\*

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**Abstract:** A large number of small inns which were present in the central area of Bucharest at the beginning of the 19th century have determined researchers to give this subject particular attention. Lacunar bibliography, incomplete archive sources and last but not least, the proximity of several inns produced frequent identification errors. Such is the case with Zamfir's Inn, Simion's Inn and Ion Românul Inn located on Blănari Street, which generated a great deal of debate regarding their owners and exact positions in the urban tissue. Historic topographical plans, images and written sources reveal new information and help clarify some of these problems.

**Rezumat:** Numărul mare de hanuri care erau prezente în zona centrală a Bucureștiului la începutul secolului al XIX-lea a determinat pe diverși cercetători să scrie despre acest subiect. Bibliografia lacunară, surse incomplete de arhivă și nu în ultimul rând apropierea unora dintre hanuri a produs frecvent erori de identificare. Un astfel de caz este cel al hanurilor Zamfir, Simion și Ion Românul situate pe strada Blănari, acestea generând dezbateri referitoare la proprietari și la poziția exactă în țesutul urban. Vechi planuri topografice, imagini și surse de arhivă dezvăluie informații noi și clarifică o parte dintre aceste probleme.

An exciting topic, subject to debate in recent time, is that of the inns of Bucharest, in particular the least known, scattered throughout the city centre and contributing to a picturesque atmosphere. Money changers, merchants and small landowners tried to find a place in proximity to areas where trade was intense, whether marketplace, lanes, princely or monastic inns. Proximity to these business areas offered the guarantee of success so that along the streets of Gabroveni, Doamnei or Blănari there were numerous such buildings (Fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> The plots almost fully built measured between 1,000 and 1,500 sqm, rarely falling below the former, since the program imposed that certain conditions be met that reflected the efficiency of the leased space.

Occasionally mentioned by the legal documents of past centuries or by the travellers visiting them, the exact location of these compounds within an urban texture in a continuous process of transformation can only be established after detailed analysis. Often the lack of continuity of some landmarks, the proximity of certain inns, the frequent changes of ownership, the wrong identifications perpetuated in various studies are just some of the causes that have generated a lot of controversy. Such is the case of the Inns of Ion Românul, Simion and Zamfir<sup>2</sup> Inn located on Blănari Street.

The first controversy concerns the identification of the position of Zamfir's Inn, one of the oldest in the city, built by Zamfir, who was the head of the merchants during the first decades of the eighteenth century.<sup>3</sup>

\* The present contribution represents a development of the paper *Hanul Zamfir, Hanul Ion Românul, Hanul Simion. Note de topografie istorică bucureșteană* given at the Symposium "Architecture. Restoration. Archaeology", 2010 (ARA 11).

\*\* Petru Mortu: "Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and Urbanism, Bucharest.

<sup>1</sup> In the nineteenth century Gabroveni lane was the location of the inns of Gabroveni and of Constantin and Tudor Hași Tudorache (the latter also known as the Commercial Passage), and by the end of the century, of the hotels "Bulgaria" and "Romania", probably former inns converted into hotels according to the customs of the time. Castrîșoaiei and Greceanu-Dedu inns were located on Mogoșoaia Street, at the intersection with Doamnei Street and adjoining the latter on the East side there was Golgota Inn, while farther on Colței lane, there was Gherman Inn and the inn of Colțea monastery. On Blănari lane the following inns could be identified: the inns of N. Lahovari (Arhivele Naționale, Direcția Municipiului București / National Archives, Bucharest Municipality Department – N.A. - B.M.D. / Technical Service, File 80/1847, tab 24), Ion Românul, Simion, Pleșoianu (N.A. - B.M.D., B.M.P. Fund, Alignment Service, File No. 52), Hanul cu Tei and Zarafi Inn, the latter developed on the plots of land reaching Lipskani lane.

<sup>2</sup> Even if its position is uncertain, Zamfir's Inn was located on the island delimited by the current I.C. Brătianu Boulevard, Lipskani Street, Șelari Close and Blănari Street, being probably one of the inns connecting Blănari and Lipskani streets.

<sup>3</sup> Potra 1985, p. 186.