

THE GREAT INNS OF BUCHAREST. CHANGED SHAPES, LOST IMAGES*

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Abstract: This study focuses on the great inns of Bucharest. Their volumes, details, the relation with the public space are explored following archive documents, sketches or descriptions made by the contemporaries. The resulted image, without subjective interpretations, completes the atmosphere of a city in which Oriental customs, so well rooted, get the alternative of Western ones. Major changes concerning the function, shape and architectural details are recorded, in an almost desperate attempt of the owners to preserve them along the line of new trends. Although the revitalization of those grand commercial ensembles was aimed at by those interested, toward the end of the 19th century only a few remained. Their disappearance resulted in difficulties to recompose their objective images, so common to the city for centuries.

Rezumat: Studiul prezentat are ca subiect central marile hanuri ale Bucureștiului. Volumele, detaliile, relația cu spațiul public sunt analizate urmărind documente de arhivă, schițe sau descrieri ale contemporanilor. Imaginea rezultată, lipsită de interpretări subiective, completează atmosfera unui oraș în care obiceiurile orientale, atât de bine împământenite, primesc alternativa celor occidentale. Sunt înregistrate schimbări importante care privesc funcțiunea, forma și detaliile arhitecturale, petrecute într-o încercare aproape disperată a proprietarilor de a le menține în linia noilor cerințe. Deși revitalizarea acestor mari ansambluri comerciale a fost dorită de cei interesați, către sfârșitul veacului al XIX-lea au rămas în ființă doar câteva. Dispariția acestora a determinat dificultăți în recompunerea unor imagini obiective, atât de comune orașului timp de secole.

The topic of the inns of Bucharest was explored over the time by several authors, starting with in a well-defined structure with Gheorghe Ionnescu-Gion and continuing later with George Potra, Nicolae Stoicescu, Constantin Giurescu or, more recently, Cezara Mucenic. Generally speaking, all those studies propose a chronology of main dates and events influencing the history of these inns, without dwelling in the configuration of shapes, sometimes so difficult to imagine.

Related to the image of inns in Bucharest as it could be seen in the preceding centuries, two stages are to be defined, each of them generating shapes and textures with visibly different characteristics. A first moment concerns the image of inns during the 18th century, when this programme reaches its peak development, and the second stage takes into account the early decades of the 19th century, an interval knowing profound changes at all levels of the society. The changes regard the exterior and the interior of these ensembles. Opaque walls which had been protecting the protecting merchants and their goods for so long start to “open up” to the street, while inside generous porches are closed with glazing, generating practically a negative of the previous shapes, typical to inns.

The architectural image seen from outside

Ion Ghica's descriptions,¹ and those by Ionnescu-Gion published in *Istoria Bucureștilor*, show ensembles surrounded by “thick and high walls as of a fortress”² penetrated by small openings, protected by massive oak doors, braced in iron. Since the protection of people and goods was paramount in an era when the armed conflicts or disasters were frequent, these links with the exterior world might have been absent altogether,³ leaving only the main access, always well-controlled. Later on, all those who have addressed the topic of inns, either through extensive works or by brief papers, have repeated one way or the other the content of these writings, in such a way that the general image is an extremely firmly built one, with not too many variations.

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¹ Ghica (1863) 1959, p. 234. See also Mortu 2012, p. 136.

² Ionnescu-Gion 1899, p. 477.

³ *Ibidem*, loc. cit.

The presentations certainly construct an image getting distinct tones, depending on each particular example. Unfortunately, the lack of additional information makes such descriptions represent the only documents valid in building formal analogies with examples from neighbouring areas.

Following the shapes of this programme in the Balkan world and in that of Constantinople, passed through the filter of architecture with local characteristics, we may draw a few hypotheses to complete the images of the texts. These descriptions may have likely referred to the great inns of Bucharest erected by the rulers or belonging to the great monasteries, where the great trade used to take place. To support this observation, one could study the inns previous to the 18th century built by the Ottomans along the great transcontinental road linking Belgrade – Sofia – Plovdiv – Edirne – Constantinople, further branching out to Western Europe and to the Orient. After the conquest of the Balkan Peninsula by the Turks, mostly completed by the late 15th century, the new territories are subjected to principles of political, military, social and economic organisation specific to the Empire. The commercial relations with Western Europe are not ignored. Main routes to the West are refurbished, bridges are built, and in the great cities, similarly to those in the Orient, inns and bedestans are built. The models set by Mimar Sinan are repeated in Edirne (*Deveci*, *Rüstem-Paşa*, *Taş Inns*), Plovdiv (*Kurşunlu*), Skopje (*Kurşunlu*, *Kapan*, *Suli*), Sarajevo, Thessaloniki, Belgrade (*Kurşunlu*),⁴ the similarities regarding the functional layout and the overall image being obvious. To the exterior, they turn massive walls with small openings, mainly visible at the upper floor (*Kurşunlu* Inn in Skopje and that in Belgrade),⁵ and the facing is made of alternating courses of brick and cobblestone, or just of stone (Figs. 1-3). This way of treating the wall face is typical for the time and the areas under direct Byzantine and later



Fig. 1. Deveci Inn - Edirne (Petru Mortu).



Fig. 2. Rüstem-Pasha Inn - Edirne (Petru Mortu).



Fig. 3. Kurşunlu Inn - Plovdiv (www.lostbulgaria.com/?p=3378).

Ottoman influence. Wallachia and Moldavia subscribe to the same aesthetic options. Voivodal or boyard foundations, be it monastic ensembles, parish churches or civilian constructions, are erected using this building technique and that until late in Matei Basarab's time, when the chromatic play of the two materials is replaced by white plastered surfaces. Technical, rather than visual considerations lead to this type of solutions, which become a rule especially for the buildings with a strong functional character.

In conclusion, we can say that at the end of the 17th century, when the great voivodal and monastic inns appear in the urban landscape of Bucharest, they are surrounded by massive, plastered walls with small openings to the exterior, thus placed so as to prevent any break-in attempt. In a city haunted by plagues and crossed, not a few times, by foreign armies passing by or groups of belligerents trying to impose a claimer to the throne, the safety of business for those with stable trade here turns compulsory.

⁴ In the last three cities, the inns built in the Ottoman era are gone. In Belgrade, for instance, five inns were mentioned in 1575. Ćurčić 2010, p. 763.

⁵ At the ground floor level, the opening to the public space is higher, as a result of the interventions of the following centuries, when security becomes a constant and the influence of the Western world penetrates Oriental conceptions.

For the second half of the 19th century, the descriptions of those familiar with these ensembles are supported by archive documents and, most importantly, by engravings or even photographs taken by the artists of the moment, the subjective being thus eliminated from the artistic descriptions captured in the Romanticism of the texts. Of those who left graphic documents, we can count the French Denis Auguste Marie Raffet, Michel Bouquet, Auguste Lancelot, and also Amedeo Preziosi, and among the photographers Carol Popp de Szathmari, Ludwig Angerer, Mortiz Benedict Baer, Franz Duschek⁶ and later Nicolae Cerchez.

Even if, generally speaking, all these representations show the interior of inns, the most interesting place of the whole ensemble, there are a few frames capturing images of the exterior. Some include the general volume, while others just parts of it, with the main focus point of the composition following other objectives. In the first category one may note the photographs of Cerchez taken in 1882, just before Șerban-Vodă Inn is pulled down, or that by Franz Duschek capturing Zlătari Inn at the end of the 19th century.

The images show changes regarding the relationship to the public space, to the passer-by, and to all those whom the merchants wanted closer to their shops. The insecurity of previous centuries when imperial armies, Turkish, Russian or Austrian under an on-going conflict destroy and plunder the city is forgotten, and the owners' and merchants' willingness to get rich results in the gates of the inns being open.

The relations which the great wholesalers had with the trade offices in the Western world, the cities seen in their journeys, as well as the prospect of better profits were sufficient motivation to abandon the kind of trade in which the merchant would visit his clientele and present the goods coming from Europe or the Orient. "Instead of the merchant – the hawker as it was called – going out to the boyard's home, with his bunch of goods on the back, the boyard, and especially the lady, started to go to the merchant".⁷ Slowly, the shop of the 18th century changes its specific. It is no longer just a storage space of bought merchandise and a place for negotiations aiming at important transactions, but it turns into a presentation area of the goods to be shown to the client in a manner as convincing as possible. The need for exhibition space, and to attract inside the shop the passer-by walking indifferently on the streets represented an additional motivation to break the until-then blind walls. Regarding this moment, Ionnescu-Gion observed: "Hegumens of monasteries with inns started to grumble, and that is why, to have more shops facing the street inside the walls of their inns, they started, around early 19th century, to break openings to make doors and windows." All those operations done unitarily, by the managers of inns or locally by tenants, resulted in changes of the façades, influenced by Western architectural styles, mainly at detail level. The monotony of blind walls is brought to life by the regular sequence of door and barred-window openings⁸ braced with shutters and by pilasters. One must not ignore from this composition the horizontal elements of the socle, the cornice and, not seldom, of the various decorative elements marking off the storeys.

Changing the aspect of the exterior configuration of inns and shops is not only the result of political stability, the safety it implies or the economically-related conditions, but was also favoured by various actions marking the city over the 19th century, some unexpected, other supported by the municipality. Frequent fires, floods and earthquakes coming over the capital at the turn of the 19th century made the responsible authorities to decide on repairing the constructions affected and to take measures to prevent future damages. The great fire on 23 March 1847 which burnt down the central area of Bucharest, notwithstanding the damage it caused, lead to imposed firm actions of authorities. Larger widths of streets were decided, and the straight line turns into a rule which the engineers and the architects of the city want imposed. The houses, the shops, but also the great inns of Bucharest will become subject to the same conditions.

Zlătari Inn and its church, affected by the fire, will be rebuilt at the initiative of hierarch Calistrat Livis in late 1849,⁹ the completion of the works being done by his successor, Atanasie Livis. The project approved by the authorities was drafted by Architect Xavier Villacrosse and executed by masters Anastasie Veruș, Iene

⁶ Bădescu 2006, pp. 29-34.

⁷ Crutzescu 1987, p. 67.

⁸ Round, three-centred, segmental arched, or spanned by a lintel.

⁹ ANIC, MA, Small goods, File 33/1849, f. 3.

Adanasiu and Nicolae Sotis, winners of the tender organised by the hegumen of the monastery.¹⁰ The contract, the budget and the technical specifications preserved in the archives represent valid documents in outlining an external image close to the reality of the time. Preserved documents recompose but a general volumetric image, the composition of the shapes or the constructive details being just roughly outlined. In the absence of drawings, stated by mentioned texts, Franz Dushek's photo taken at the end of the 19th century becomes the support to add to the text.

The unitary building with basement, ground floor and first floor keeps to the sides of the plot. The wall surface is paced by pilasters and the openings of the ground floor and first floor resulting in a constant image along all the three sides of the plot. The uniform mass of the volume is interrupted by the vertical accent of the gate tower raising two levels on top of the current height. In this case, the neo-classical lines of architecture are well marked. The whole composition is organised around the entrance, turned into the axis of composition of the whole ensemble. The access emphasised by a round-arched opening is supported at upper levels by a classical composition with pilasters, architrave and pediment (Fig. 4). Architectural details are hardly visible so that the image can be complemented by the texts of the technical specifications where there are a few references in this respect. For the shutters, the model from Șerban-Vodă Inn and that at Castrișoiaia¹¹ was shown, for the windows the "French fashion" is proposed, while for the protection of doors edges against impacts, it is mentioned that "stone masonry should be laid, two hands high, as for Filipescu's Inn".¹²

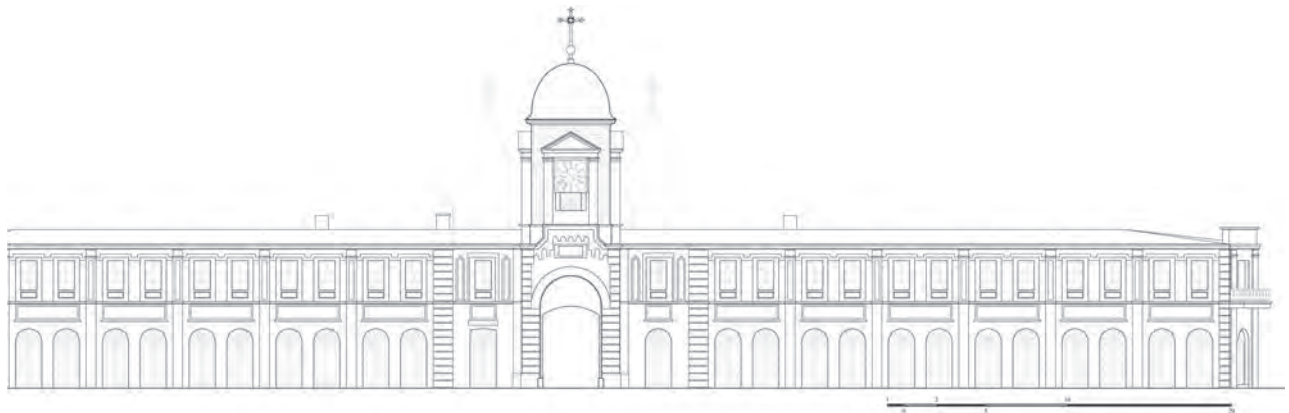


Fig. 4 Main façade of Zlătari Inn (Petru Mortu).

Although the fire of March 1847 stops at the walls of Șerban-Vodă Inn, which is mentioned by Colonel Dimitrie Papasoglu, an active participant to the event,¹³ shortly after the disaster the hegumen of the monastery asks the permission of authorities to repair the rooms of the inn. The divergences about the dimension of interventions arise in this case as well, something to be met at most monastic inns which the authorities would like to pull down. A first survey completed on 13 May 1848 indicates the bad state of the building wings facing Nemțească (Rom. for German; today Smârdan) and Lipscani Streets, showing that "it would be absolutely necessary to plan their demolition".¹⁴ Connected to the same issue, on 16 March 1849, a new commission appointed by the City Council made of architects Xavier Villacrosse and Anton

¹⁰ ANIC, MA, Small goods, ff. 39v and 40r.

¹¹ ANIC, MA, Small goods, f. 38v.

¹² ANIC, MA, Small goods, f. 35v.

¹³ Papazoglu (1891) 2000, pp. 185-186.

¹⁴ ANIC, MLP, File 42/1847, f. 17.

Heft¹⁵ writes a report confirming the degradation of the buildings and making recommendations for future interventions. We find out that the inn had two floors to the above-mentioned streets and, claiming structural reasons, it is proposed to demolish the upper floor, weakened by earthquakes. Along the same direction goes the intervention guidance regarding the openings, so as not to diminish the load bearing capacity.¹⁶ We can certainly say that, prior to the fire of 1847 the inn had a different volume compared to that shown in the photographs taken by Nicoale Cerchez in 1882, shortly before demolition. The presence of the upper floor, as well as of corridors with wooden pillars, accessible from the interior yard¹⁷ point out to a well-structured silhouette, the dimensions of the ensemble surprising the travellers of those times. The repairs initiated by archimandrite Meletie,¹⁸ follow the plans of alignment and the suggestions of the two architects. The pictures taken in 1882 show, toward Lipscani and Smârdan Streets, a construction which does not impress but through the size of unfolded fronts, outlining only assumptions of the images of the past centuries. Endless series of shops with large doors spanned by round arches¹⁹ are visible, protected by massive shutters and a discreet iron cover - an almost compulsory condition²⁰ when building in the central area.

Smaller-scope repairs or partial demolitions of ancillary buildings still take place at other inns which are under the patronage of monasteries, but the way in which those changed the exterior appearance of certain inns cannot be clearly determined in absence of graphic documents. There are interventions on the inns of Stavropoleos (1847,²¹ 1861), Sfântul Ioan cel Mare (1860) and Greci monasteries. In the last case, soon after 1847, there is a correspondence between hegumen Panaret and the administration regarding the proposal of the latter to impose the withdrawal of the buildings and their reconstruction on a new alignment. The rebuilding of the ensemble on new limits after 1847 is confirmed by the alignment plan of Lipscani Street, drawn up by Borroczyn²² and by one of the inventories undertaken in the last years of existence of the inn. It is mentioned in this document that “In the side towards Monast. Stavropoleos, the buildings are collapsed too damaged, on the sides facing Lipscani and Șerban-Vodă streets new buildings were made, numbering 14 shops”.²³ This situation corresponds to the graphic documents elaborated in 1871 and 1875²⁴ (Figs. 5, 6) where two building wings appear represented, assigned to the shops facing Lipscani and Smârdan streets, the latter being then known as Șerban-Vodă. The connections of the commercial spaces with the two streets are obvious, yet the outlining of shapes and details without the support of contemporary images or sketches turns subjective. If these graphical elements are missing in regard to Lipscani, towards Stavropoleos street one of the photos taken by Carol Popp de Szathmari with the church founded by monk Ioanikie Stratonikeas in the forefront surprises a section of a two-storey building. The façade is paced by openings treated differently. Those at the upper floor are wider and straight, while at the ground floor they end in the upper part with segmental arches. The monotony of the façade is interrupted by a series of pilasters which separate the openings and by a horizontal register placed between the two levels (Fig. 7).

Besides the examples known from texts, sketches of photographs, existing inns are sources which may structure concluding images on the shapes of such ensembles, as they could be seen in the second half

¹⁵ Two of the first foreign architects to design buildings in Wallachia's capital. Both had a close collaboration to the authorities, taking the position of City Architect. They are responsible for the systematization of streets and squares, for the plans of public buildings (city hall, theatre) and many projects of private residences for the high society.

¹⁶ ANIC, MLP, ff. 53, 54.

¹⁷ ANIC, MLP, f. 17.

¹⁸ ANIC, MLP, f. 55. Meletie Căscioreanul was appointed administrator from 24 June 1840 to 17 December 1863. Potra 1985, p. 44.

¹⁹ In the report by Vilacrosse and Heft it is said that the arch “should be made vaulted, in the shape of a half circle or segment”. ANIC, MLP, File 42/1847, f. 54.

²⁰ The building regulations for the first district (central area) stated that the covering could only be made of clay tiles or iron. Since in the report of architects Villacrosse and Heft the bearing capacity of walls was questioned and, moreover, it was proposed to demolish the upper floor to lighten the ground floor walls, the solution of iron covering remains the only alternative.

²¹ ANIC, MLP, File 42/1847, f. 166.

²² ANIC, MLP, File 42/1847, f. 90.

²³ ANIC, MLP, File 993/1863, f. 3v and 4.

²⁴ ANIC, Plans Fund, Ilfov, File 186 and 187.

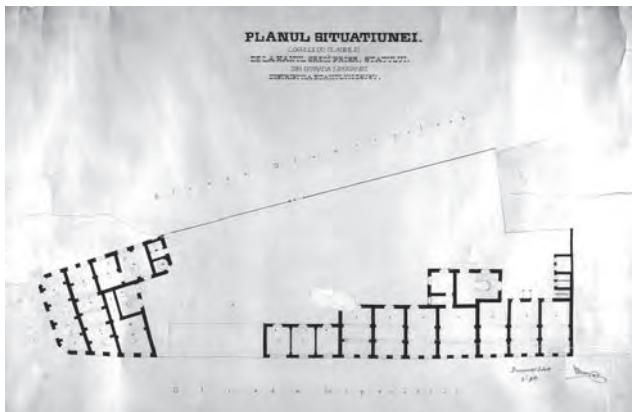


Fig. 5. Greci Inn with all its buildings. Survey made in 1871 by M. Constantinescu (ANIC, Plans Fund, Ilfov, File 196).

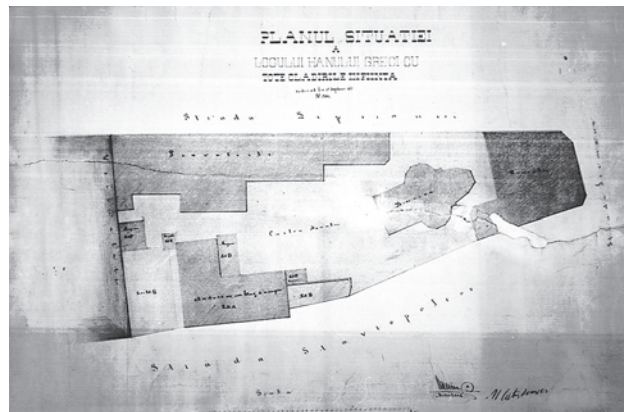


Fig. 6. Upper floor of Greci Inn (ANIC, Plans Fund, Ilfov, File 197).



Fig. 7. Stavropoleos church in foreground. In background a part of Greci Inn (DITCP, Tzigara-Samurcaș Fund, box no. 16-30).

of the 19th century. It is about Manuc's Inn, Hanul cu Tei and Gabroveni Commercial Passage. In the first case, considering the configuration of the whole complex, the characteristics met at the great voivodal or monastic inns are also present here: long façades paced by openings, in an even number to the ground floor and the upper floor, decorated with horizontal mouldings and Corinthian pilasters placed between the windows of the first floor. A major volume is that of the roof made of shingles before 1847 and later of barrel tiles and sheet metal.

The exterior of the two passage inns differs from those explored so far, first because of the short façades they turn to the streets which they connect. The long façades, stretching horizontally, with the endless openings pace, receive solutions close to those of the shops in the central area, sometimes the very unity of the façade being abandoned after various interventions which the owners or the tenants would make on the shops. A concrete example is Hanul cu Tei where G.M. Brejyer asks in 1888 the permission to add a floor on top of the existing ground floor.²⁵ The proposed architecture is indebted to the mentality of the time, being inspired by Western trends in a formula almost compulsory for those who wished to be in line with the general taste of the society. If the numerous interventions taking place in the late 19th century on Hanul cu Tei resulted in images quite distant from the initial shapes, this cannot be stated about the Gabroveni Commercial Passage, situated across the street. The façade of the passage published in the album *The Bank Marmorosch - Blank & Co. Anonymous Society 1848-1923*, and an examination of the outer appearance indicate the use of neoclassical elements. The composition is symmetrical, balanced, with clearly-outlined pedestal and cornice, windows ending in a semicircle in well-defined framing. Over the entrance, placed centrally, used to be an iron balcony supported by metal brackets, their traces being still visible (Fig. 8).

²⁵ AN-DMB, Bucharest City Hall Fund, Technical Dept., File no. 26/1888, ff. 247, 351.

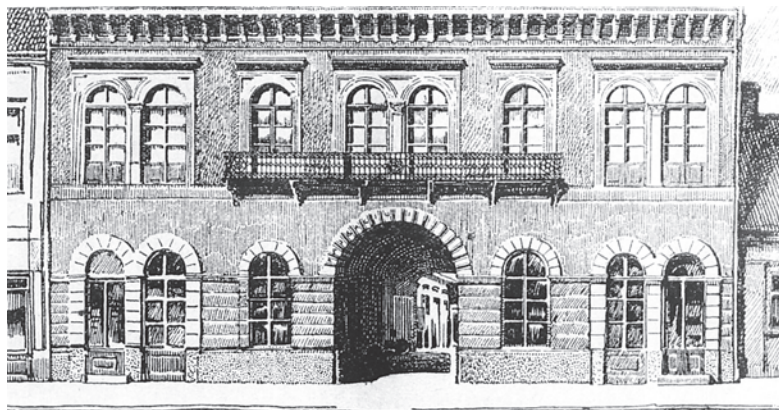


Fig. 8. The north façade of Gabroveni Commercial Passage (Marmorosch - Blank Bank).

The solution for access

An overview of monastic inns and of those built by voivodes, boyards or merchants point out various solutions for the access. In the first case, the entrance is placed under a massive tower, after a model found in most of the ecclesiastic ensembles in Wallachia and Moldavia. The function of an inn occupy most of the ensemble, but monastic tasks do not disappear, actually it turns into an extension of the monastery, bringing constant revenue, where those interested get rooms which they use for various purposes. The religious service follows its course, the spaces meant for monks, even

if they reduce their dimensions, are still there, and the hegumen's house is a compulsory presence, his activity taking place within the precinct.

Regarding the silhouette of the gate tower, analogies with those of existing monasteries situated outside of the city may probably lead to results not very different from the volumes of the past times. If the general image, the structure and the use of spaces inside are constant features, the exterior cover of architecture details suffered frequent changes going between locally specific patterns and the Western lines of the Neoclassical or Romantic. The moment of repairs, of outright reconstructions, the personality and the cultural horizon of the beneficiary, craftsman or architect represented variables which decided the selection of architectural shapes.

Functionally speaking, the ground floor was meant to the entrance system, followed by one or two floors hosting rooms of various use and at the top floor there was the bells room, major items for churches which, given their typical sounds would stress the identity of the neighbourhood. Entrances marked by bell towers could be met at Crețulescu, Sărindar, Sfântul Gheorghe Nou, Sfântul Ioan cel Mare, Zlătari, volumetries confirmed by sketches, etchings, photographs or archive documents.²⁶

A particular case is that of monastic ensembles on Stavropoleos Street, subject to the Greek Archdiocese of Pogonianis.²⁷ Modest constructions, compared to those of the monasteries nearby, these have not enjoyed the protection of a voivode or great boyard, so that the constraint of limited plot size determined, most probably, the abandon of the vertical accent.

The presence of the bell tower, as a general rule, states the existence of a monastic inn where religious service is observed. In this situation, even if there are in Bucharest other inns as well to be under the administration of monasteries such as Colțea, Sfânta Ecaterina, Cernica, Butoiul²⁸ monasteries, these inns are built only for the increase of their owners' revenue, therefore the lack of the entrance tower is not surprising.

Voivodal inns or those founded by boyards and merchants follow the same lines, of buildings with a clearly marked commercial character, and therefore they lack the vertical accent of the bell tower. The analysis of

²⁶ Crețulescu Inn had a robust tower to Calea Victoriei, a situation maintained until 1939 when it was demolished to widen the yard of the neighbouring Royal Palace. The tower of Sărindar Monastery can be seen in an unsigned painting from 1836 (Stoica, Ionescu-Ghinea 2006, p. 659) and in one of the photos by Ludwig Angerer taken from the roof of the Grand Theatre. In a sketch by Auguste Raffet drawn in 1837 there is the image of Sfântul Gheorghe Church seen from South-East, comprising therefore the entrance tower (Moisil 1932). For Zlătari there are archive documents and period photos already mentioned, while in the case of Sfântul Ioan cel Mare, in a report of architects X. Villacrosse and A. Heft, it is mentioned as reference point the bell tower of the inn (ANIC, MLP, File 42/1847, f. 169).

²⁷ Ioanikie Stratonikeas is for a while the priest of Ghiorma Banul Church (of the Greeks). Potra 1985, p. 102.

²⁸ Church subject to Golgota Monastery from Mount Athos. Potra 1985, p. 85.

the inns of Bucharest identifies those of the Greek Ioanikie Stratonikeas and of Șerban Cantacuzino as having a church in the middle, but not a bell tower. These are no exceptions, but rather particular cases, where the church appeared later to the inns and had rather the role of a chapel.

In what concerns the access to an inn, this had to be well protected against disasters or groups of outlaws for which the vaults, shops and merchant counters were permanent temptations. In such conditions, the strict control of the access turns into an obvious need. No graphic documents or photographs are known regarding the details of inn gates, the only source being Ion Ghica's text in which he writes that there used to be "thick oak gates reinforced with iron, tied with spikes, rails and chains".²⁹ An addition to this description is brought by one of the chapters of a contract for the (re)construction of Zlătari monastery, where, under carpentry works, there is a provision stipulating the obligation of the contractor to make a great oak iron-braced door. The door was to be provided with a "strong lock", metal ornaments and the craftsman was held to follow the details provided by the architect.³⁰

Towards the end of the 19th century, when the safety of the public space turns into a certainty, the model of iron-braced gates is abandoned, being replaced with iron grids or fretted pieces in the attempt to outline a spatial continuity between the private area and the street, while stressing the aesthetic features of decorations. An interesting example was the recently disappeared³¹ gate of Gabroveni Commercial Passage where the massiveness of the wooden structure was diminished by cast-iron panels, cut through and decorated with twisted leaves and stems, in a pattern suggesting the expression of Oriental miniatures (Fig. 9).

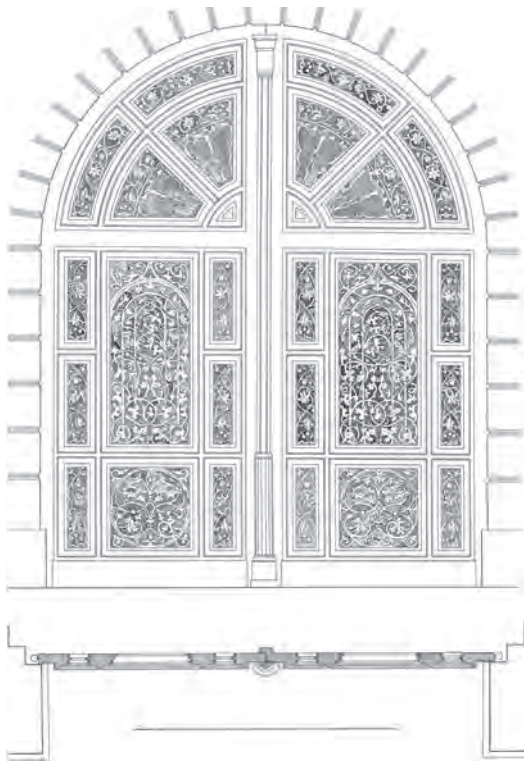


Fig. 9. The main gate of Gabroveni Commercial Passage (UAUIM-DITCP, Survey Fund, R. 619, M. Alimănișteanu, C. Roguschi, L. Ungureanu, S. Budis).

Interior yard

The most interesting area of the inns described by many of the travellers who visited them is the interior yard, the place where the picturesque of architectural lines with wide galleries and gazebos blends with the cosmopolitan atmosphere supported by merchants, soldiers or simple travellers coming from the European West, neighbouring Balkans or the Far East. Inside is the place where even from the first hours of the morning, when the inn gates open, crowds of people start to work, each with their own jobs. Carters, wagoners and servants rush to get horses, carts, carriages and luggage ready, masters still plan the details of their final business, while merchants wait for customers at the doors of shops. At the first floor, in the rooms of the inn and the wide corridors, the routine of family life with wives chattering on and on, washing, and cooking with their children around. When the dark made the daily lines vanish, each person in the inn used to try and find the shelter he could afford. The rich ones would take furnished rooms, with everything needed, while the less fortunate, peasants, farm servants or other similar ones coming with their masters or at the fair would stretch a mat under the wide eaves, warmed by a fire around which they would tell stories until late in the evening. A suggestive image of such a yard is surprised at Manuc's Inn by Auguste Lancelot who noted: "The galleries where the rooms of the inn open, serve

²⁹ Ghica (1863) 1959, p. 234.

³⁰ ANIC, MA, Small goods, File 33/1849, f. 37v.

³¹ In 2008 parts of the metal pieces set in the carpentry were still visible towards Lipscaeni Street.

as a walking area and common halls. There is an extraordinary indifference and lack of shyness there. Under everyone's eyes, the tolerance which is nobody's praise, makes everyone feel at home. From where I had sat to make my sketches, I could see a blonde German woman washing torn underwear expected by children; an itinerant barber shaving beards and backheads, a gypsy woman dancing in front of some merry Turks, a comedian, in a drab t-shirt teaching lessons to a shabby monkey".³²

Architectural image of the interior yard

Architecturally, the interior yard is characterized by wide porches on one or two floors, built of masonry or wood. Using one or the other material resulted in clearly different images, yet with a common denominator given by the intermediary space stretching between the yard and the rooms. In the case of using brick, the building technique asked for using the round arch using wooden tie-beams and plastered walls. The white of the wall was cut by recurrent openings, emphasised by intense shades, while the monotony of the surfaces was interrupted by gazebos and staircases. Using such solutions is confirmed by the lithography of Sfântul Gheorge Nou Church engraved by Auguste Raffet in 1837 (Fig. 10), or by the survey of Constantin-Vodă Inn drawn by Baron Borroczyń in 1848³³ (Fig. 11) and by one of the city panoramas taken by Ludwig Angerer from



Fig. 10. The inn of Sfântul Gheorge Church drawn in 1837 by Auguste Raffet (Corbu 1936, XIX).

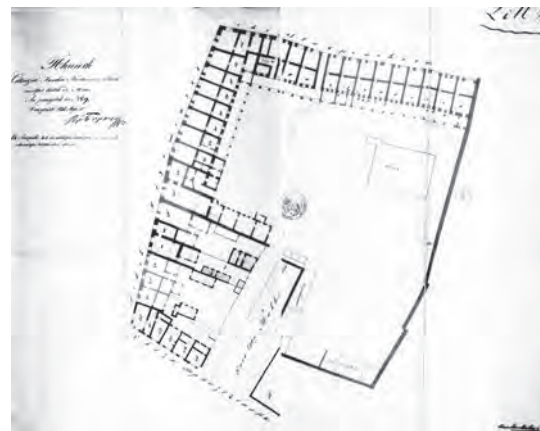


Fig. 11. First floor of Constantin-Vodă Inn. Survey made by Austrian officer Rudolf Arthur von Borroczyń in 1848 (ANIC, Plans Fund, Ilfov, File 38).

atop the Metropolitan Hill at that time. Certainly, those were not the only inns adopting similar solutions and, based on an analogy not at all artificial, one could suspect that the great monastic inns Saint John the Great (Sfântul Ioan cel Mare), Zlătari, Colțea or the one built by Șerban Cantacuzino had such kind of yards. In a report written by the city architect in May 1848, regarding the repairs to be done at the northern and western wings of the voivodal inn, he stresses the existence of wooden and stone galleries and, since both are in a bad shape, recommend them to be demolished and rebuilt "with arched masonry".³⁴ The same document mentions the existence of eight flats at the first floor of those two wings, while the ground floor had vaulted cellars. Even if the indications of the architect were only partially followed, if we look at the survey of the inn taken in 1876 and the photos from the late 19th century, we can imagine the shapes of the north-west part prior to the post-fire interventions. Most probably, the western area went through changes of the first floor and a reconfiguration of the façade, while the northern wing had the first floor with flats and wooden

³² Lancelot 1845 *apud* Potra 1990, p. 357.

³³ ANIC, Plans Fund, Ilfov, File 38 and 39.

³⁴ On the first page there is a small hand-made sketch indicating the buildings to have the intervention. ANIC, MLP, File 42/1847, f. 21.



Fig. 12. Courtyard of Stavropoleos Inn (UAUIM-DITCP, Tzigara-Samurcaş Fund, box no. 16-27).



Fig. 13. Courtyard of Manuc's Inn (Corbu 1936, XXXIV).

galleries erased. A similar case, most likely incidental, and not resulting from certainly expressed wishes, is that of Constantin-Vodă Inn. The side of the first floor toward Podul Mogoşoaiei had in 1848 a wooden porch,³⁵ while the one facing Stavropoleos Street used masonry pillars and round arches.

The porches made of wood are documented for the inns of Stavropoleos Monastery and Manuc. For the foundation of Greek Ioanikie, iconographic documents drawn in the 60s-70s of the 19th century show to the south a wing developed on two floors, with wide porches at both, and the access to the first floor through a staircase which ended up in a gazebo. Images taken by Szathmari in 1861 (Fig. 12) and Preziosi in summer 1868 are very suggestive. The characteristics of the material used resulted in the abandon of the semi-circular arches, replaced by horizontal wooden elements. Structural needs, but also perhaps an attempt to somehow suggest old shapes stress the joining area of the vertical support with the beam, where the latter is doubled by another short beam, a “capital”. Wooden galleries supported by pillars are visible in the northern building as well, close to the entrance.³⁶

In the case of Manuc's Inn, taking into consideration the atmosphere full of colour, animated by an intense life and cosmopolitan characters, the graphic representations of Westerners passing through the city capture recurrently the interior of the yard, with the intention to show the West romantic fragments from the life of Bucharest Lithographs by Bouquet, Lancelot (Fig. 13) or the pictures of Angerer and Szathmari show a construction with a high semibasement meant for annexes and two upper floors with wide galleries. The arches of the last floor, polilobe or three-centred, are made on a wooden structure hidden by a plaster layer. At the ground floor, the horizontal line of the beam remains apparent, being revealed by the corbels accompanying decorated pillars. The access to rooms goes through one flight staircases, ended in wide gazebos, after a model noticed at Stavropoleos Inn as well. The stuccowork over the first floor openings is also interesting, with curved shapes playing vegetal motifs in an expression of local Baroque.

The use of wood as a base material to complete the structure and the detail elements brings an image freed from the constraints of the masonry forms, stressing the moving turn of shades and lights rendered by the porch pillars of the inn. The vigor of the walls of the old inns, cut through by arcades, is replaced with the slender lines of wooden structures which will gain diverse expressions along the 19th century.

³⁵ ANIC, Plans Fund, Ilfov, File 39.

³⁶ Nedioglu 1924-1925, Fig. 19.



Fig. 14. Courtyard of Hanul cu Tei (Petru Mortu).

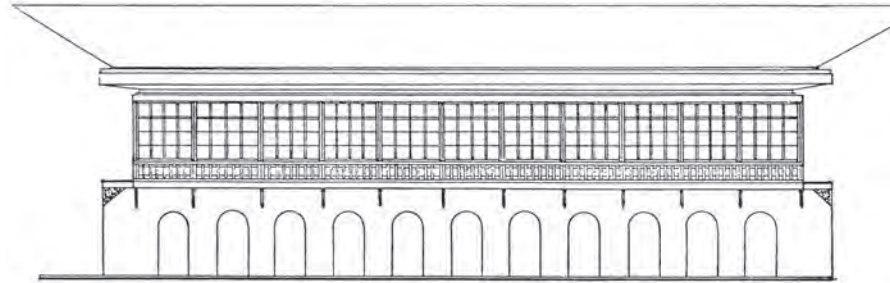


Fig. 15. Interior façade of Hillel Manoach's Inn (Joja 1980, p. 10).

Obviously, the passage inns show different features of the interior yards. The narrow plot linked to the streets at the both ends, the lengthwise development of the ensemble, results in axial images to one of the entrances (Fig. 14). The space between the long sides is narrow, tense, replacing the wide and inclusive perspectives of the great inns. The two parallel fronts complete each other creating similar views. The openings cut in the walls and braced in shutters bring new rhythms in the composition of the ensemble, stressed by window-frames or pilasters. The image of the passage is completed by coloured canopies, extending outward from each shop, by signs with most varied shapes and sizes, all to attract the buyer at the door of the master. The examples to confirm descriptions are the two passage inns with entrances in Lipscani Street, built after the 30s of the 19th century, rebuilt and extended several times over the same century.

Major changes of image take place after 1850, with the generalization of glass usage³⁷ supported by the technological progress with an impact on prices and quality of materials. The conditioning given by a cold climate for nearly half of the year, and the functional-related needs resulted, to a wide extent, in closing the transition spaces – galleries, gazebos and vertical circulations. Strong horizontal registers are outlined, marked by the structural elements and numerous muntins supporting the glass sheets. The plastic character of the interior yards gets new features. The combination of materials, plastered masonry, wood, glass or metal,³⁸ sometimes in equivalent percentages, maximizes the vibration of façades enhanced by the reflexions and the transparencies of glazed surfaces. The changes of image always accompany seasons. Besides the lights and shadows of various intensities and shapes, during the cold season the walls animated by openings read through the glass screen, sometimes obstructed by the reflected images of the neighbourhood or the sky. In summer though, to avoid the excessive heat of closed spaces, the window panes were covered with bits of white paper or fabric.

If in the case of great inns this case is less known, as they disappear when the glazing turns fashionable, for the smaller ones, the pictures and sketches taken by Constantin Joja, a constant supporter of the qualities of traditional urban architecture, as well as the photos of passionate historians make us know in detail such structures. At Hillel Manoach's Inn, in Calea Moșilor, the gallery was supported by metallic corbels, outlining a well-defined horizontal volume surrounding the construction on all sides (Fig. 15). Another example is that of Manuc's Inn, transformed around 1870 into "Hotel Dacia" at the initiative of its owner, Vasilescu Lambru.³⁹ He repairs radically the old inn weakened by earthquakes, in accordance with the needs of the passing travellers and those renting spaces for a longer while, increasingly used to the West European everyday life. The galleries are closed with windows⁴⁰ and set into a fretwork carefully decorated

³⁷ Constantin Joja considers the moment of closing the porches for the late 18th century, with no further reasons for this statement. The presence of such solutions prior to 1800 was not confirmed by historic documents. Joja 1977, p. 11.

³⁸ With either structural or fireproofing role for the wooden elements.

³⁹ Intervention coordinated by architect Veltz. Theodoraky 2003, p. 126.

⁴⁰ Joja 1977, p. 11.

with details often seen in the rural architecture of Argeş and Oltenia. The unity of the space is given by the continuous shapes of the glazing, paced by vertical structural elements, and by the window panes and the flat relief of decoration (Fig. 16).

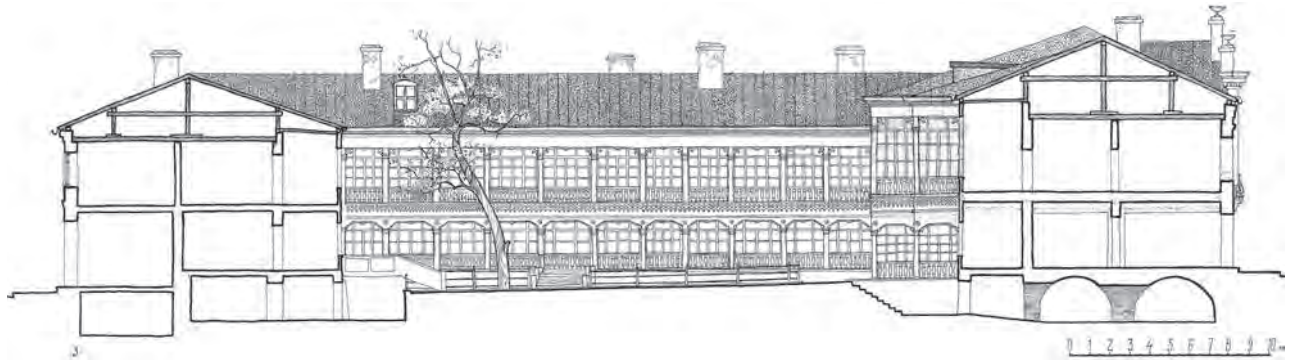


Fig. 16. Interior façade of Manuc's Inn (UAUIM-DITCP, Survey Fund, R. 950, B. Lupu, M. Daisa, E. Daisa, Gh. Moldovan).

The volumes, shapes, architectural details characteristic to many inns of Bucharest suffered changes along time, each moment of such change being caught by the architecture of these great ensembles. The general political context, the technical progress or just the constraints imposed by decision makers, contributed to the continuous reshaping of the image of the inns. Their disappearance from the urban landscape of Bucharest, mainly taking place in the late 19th century, represented a significant loss for the identity of the city trying to move away from its medieval past. Recomposing certain images so typical for the Bucharest of past centuries often turns into a difficult objective as long as preserved data are fragmentary. The appeal to the analogies to similar ensembles from Rumelia or the area of Constantinople, the study of archive documents, the descriptions of contemporaries may outline an image a lot clearer, far from subjectivism.

Archival sources abbreviations:

ANIC	Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale [National Central Historical Archives].
AN-PMB	Arhivele Naționale - Direcția Municipiului București [National Archives - Bucharest Municipal Direction].
MA	Ministerul Agriculturii [Ministry of Agriculture].
MLP	Ministerul Lucrărilor Publice [Ministry of Public Works].
UAUIM-DITCP	Universitatea de Arhitectură și Urbanism „Ion Mincu”, Departamentul de Istoria & Teoria Arhitecturii și Conservarea Patrimoniului [“Ion Mincu” University of Architecture and Urbanism, Department of History & Theory of Architecture and Heritage Conservation].

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