Inns and churches in Bucharest’s Old Town – Patterns of the past

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Abstract. The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze inns and churches of the historical Bucharest, based on diachronic cartography on historical maps from 1789 up to the present. The importance and the spatial development of the inns and churches throughout history were identified using modern GIS techniques for spatial representation. A major goal was to identify connections between churches and inns. Routes and checkpoints of the passersby and inhabitants were established. Results showed that there were strong connections between churches and inns, represented as patterns of the past.

Keywords: Bucharest’s Old Town, inns, churches, checkpoints, routes, pattern

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the well-known areas of Bucharest, The Old Town represents the birth place of the capital city of Romania. Being only a village, 600 years ago, it developed into a citadel – Arx Bukaresth, market and later became the capital of Wallachia (Gheorghe, 2014). The capital is first attested in 1459 during the reign of Vlad Țepeș and the first focal point was located in the southern part of The Old Town, overlapping The Old Princedom Court (Mucenic, 2004). However, The Old Princedom Court does not refer to its old age, but the explanation of this title is related to Alexandru Ipsilanti, who changes his residence to the New Princedom Court on Spirei Hill, abandoning the old one (Giurescu, 1966). Even so, The Old Town continues its prosperous existence, becoming the main attraction in Bucharest area. This was only possible due to the inns and churches that populated throughout history the central part of the city an played an interdependence role one for another.

There are only a few studies published in the last century regarding The Old Town (Florescu, 1935; Potra, 1985). Many inns, churches and other historical sites are no longer identified and it is difficult to spot them without having the necessary equipment and access to valuable documents.

However, there are a couple of authors in the last decade that made progress locating them based on archives and maps: Gherasim (2007) – analyzing how Bucharest was reflected in cartographic documents, Zamani (2007) – centered on trades and leisure activities in the Old Bucharest and Mortu (2011) – well known for his studies regarding specific commercial architecture buildings. Before the 2000s, three great authors have to be mentioned: Florescu (1935) – focused on churches, manorial courts and inns based on Purcel's (1789) and Ernst' Plan (1791), Giurescu (1966) – focused on the whole history of the city and and Potra (1985) with his monumental work – Istorical hanurilor bucreștene, focused on the evolution of all the inns that existed in Bucharest.

The research aimed to use and process all the available data and references, by using GIS, in order to identify, analyze, complete the list, and visualize the inns and churches of Bucharest’s Old Town. The study was based on the idea that there were strong connections between the inns and churches in the Old Town, considering the fact that they played a major role for the population.
2. METHODOLOGY

The methodology of consisted in four major parts, based on notable references (Chelcea, 2003 and Armaș, 2006). The four methodological steps were as follows:
1. Setting the objectives;
2. Delimitating the study area;
3. Collecting the research data;
4. Elaborating the paper.

2.1. Setting the objectives

The objectives were split up into four main categories, according to their importance. The priority of the first objectives was higher than that of the secondary ones. These are listed below as follows:

I. Identifying and locating all the inns and churches that overlapped The Old Town at a specific point during history by using the diachronic analysis method based on historic cartographic material and archive documents.

II. Elaborating a diachronic analysis of the churches and inns of The Bucharest’s Old Town, starting with the oldest known cartographic representation of the Old Town 1.

III. Identifying connections between the churches and the inns located in the area.

IV. Photographing the actual points of interests after replicas or old reproductions from the same angle and rendering them as collages.

The objectives were fulfilled in a cascade manner, in chronological order. The basic characteristic of these ones was the fact that they formed complex links between their components.

2.2. Delimitating the study area

The study area covers a surface of 54 ha. The area borders Victoriei Avenue on the west side, Regina Elisabeta Boulevard on the north side, I. C. Brătianu Boulevard to the east, Halelor Street and Independenței Splai to the south as shown in Figure 1.

These boundaries were attributed by taking into consideration different factors such as changes of the street network and significance of the area. Although, for instance, Lipscani Street lies not only to the west of Victoriei Avenue, which is the western limit of the area, but also to the east of I. C. Brătianu Boulevard, the eastern limit, the first segment of the street appeared on the actual territory of The Old Town. The five major arteries represent, at the moment, a well-established and precise limit.

Contrariwise, the conventional boundaries of the current Old Town were different in the past. Formerly the street network had different names and most of the roads followed a different trail. A decisive role was played by The Dâmbovița River whose riverbed was channeled only at the end of the nineteenth century. The river affected the way the street network, the churches and the inns were built. As a result, the Old Town had different boundaries to the east and to the west before the regularisation of the river. On this regard there were included in the study even churches and inns located on the left side of the actual Victoriei Avenue, in the southwestern part of the area, and also on the right side of the actual I. C. Brătianu Boulevard such as Sfântul Gheorghe and Bărăției Square.

This kind of distribution was due to the multitude of inns and places of worship located around the western core of the Old Town. This operated like an organized, structured, and interdependent system. Not including some elements situated in the proximity to the area would have led to breakage of the balance between these ones. Colței Inn, for instance, located previously nearby Sf. Ilie/Bulgară Church, which had the previous name of Colței Inn Church, could not exist without Colței Church. It was located near Colțea Hospital, on the right side of the I.C.Brătianu Boulevard, out of the study area. In the past the Colței Church administered the Colței Inn. Excluding the first one from the study would have unbalanced the organism - the church and the organ – the ecclesial inn. Another example is represented by the former inn and the Sfântul Spiridon Vechi Church, on the actual field of Națiunile Unite Square, southwest of the Old Town, and back then, located on the left bank of the Dâmbovița River.

1 The oldest known cartographic representation is Fr. Purcel’s

2 In this part the river formed a meander that was rectified after the first regularisation of the river (1881-1886).
Being situated close to the Șilcărilor Lane (nowadays Franceză Street), the access from the inn and the church to The Old Town was within reach, conferring them a special role. Excluding these components from the area of study would have represented interrupting the link between the Lipscani core and its proximal components like Sf. Spiridon Church and Inn.

Therefore, before the regularisation of the Dâmbovița River until the nineteenth century, the southern boundary of the area of study was represented by the river itself, the access to the right riverbank being possible through light pedestrian trellis bridges. Through the regularisation process the river was channeled and its bed was changed, so the area regained its final southern boundaries - Halelor Street and Independenței Splai, the last one designed to follow the actual flow of the river.

![Figure 1. The study area and its actual boundaries (Source: ANCPI’S Portal, Bucharest’s City Plan 2008)](image)

### 2.3. Collecting the research data

After identifying the actual boundaries of the study area, the research data was collected. The required data was collected during several field surveys and based on archival research (Armaș, 2006).

a.) Field data collection

By applying the cartographic method, all the landmarks were mapped on the sketch map, including the researcher's comments. The mentioned landmarks\(^3\) were photographed by applying the photographic method.

\(^3\)In this case the inns and the churches

b.) Archival research

First of all, there were identified the required works that had to be investigated in order to create a temporary reference list. Different works have been used such as from the field of geography, history, literature or Romanian grammar like “The Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language” (DEX, 2009). The complete reference list is available at the end of the paper.

Another source of information was represented by the old topographical plans of Bucharest, the newer topographical maps and aerial photographs. The above mentioned cartographic sources were scanned and stored on the computer. In the next step the content was edited and analyzed.

Finally, the online references represented another source of information. As a result there were examined and used digital libraries as “The Digital Library of Bucharest”, blogs of interest and discussion forums.

### 2.4. Elaborating the paper

The paper followed two main directions: the Diachronic Analysis and the analysis of Attractors.

The first direction was meant to analyze and interpret the study area in terms of its history and evolution. We applied the method of historical maps analysis (Armaș, 2006).

Once scanned and transferred to the computer, the raster files of the historical maps were imported in the ArcMap 10.1, module of the Geographic Information System software ArcGis 10.1, based on the Bucharest City Plan, published in 2008 by Editura AGC Busman. The imported maps were georeferenced using the Image to Image method and the stereographic projection 1970.

On each of the georeferenced map, on the basis of the original legend, there were identified all the points of interest, beginning with churches, inns and ending with the Dâmbovița River (defining element of the environment) and the actual boundaries of The Old Town.

For each georeferenced map we created three different shapefile (.shp) types – polyline, line and point. Churches were digitized through a point shapefile (in form of a black church with a white
cross inside), the street network, The Dâmbovița River and the boundaries through line shapefiles (the street network symbolized by yellowish orange and the boundaries, by dashed line) and the inns through a polyline shapefile (light brown color). By using the ArcMap's Buffer function, the river's line shapefile has been converted into a light blue polyline shapefile for a better representation. On each of the following maps the inns were assigned letters and the places of worship numbers. Depending on the importance of some streets, those were attributed labels. As a result, each map contained in the background at least five shapefiles.

In case of some specific maps we added supplementary shapefiles, like in the case of the 1789 map. In this case, we emphasized the importance of trellis bridges back then, i.e. connection routes between the Old Town and the neighboring areas, by adding another shapefile.

Six maps which cover a period of 219 years (1789-2008) were scanned and underwent the diachronic analysis: Officer F.Purcel's Bucharest City Plan – 1789, Baron R.A.Borroczyn's Plan - 1852, the Plan Issued by the Geographic Institute of the Army – 1900, Masterplan of the Municipality of Bucharest - 1921, Topographical Plan of Bucharest - 1984, Bucharest City Plan published by Editura AGC Busman – 2008. The diachronic analysis was related to the historical events of the past and consisting of six phases: 1789, 1852, 1900, 1921, 1984 and 2008.

The second direction – entitled “Attractors” referred to the two factors that dominated the history of Bucharest and especially of the Bucharest’s Old Town: the ecclesiastic factor and the commercial factor.

All the references were evaluated and the required information concerning churches and inns quantified and summarized. Regarding the churches and the inns, information such as founders, originality elements, relevant events and years, for instance year of demolition, were extracted. Based on the inductive and deductive methods linked to the shooting method during the field research, similarities and differences between the attractors were found. Using Photoscape 3.7 soft, the old and actual photos of the attractors were merged, resulting in meaningful collages. The actual photos were taken after old ones, trying to capture the same focal point and shooting angle.

3. RESULTS

28 inns were identified and grouped by their functionality into four categories (Figure 2):

- Monastic inns (7): Coțlea, Golgota, Grecilor, Sfântul Ioan cel Mare, Sfântul Spiridon, Stavropoleos, Zlătari.
- Manorial inns (7): Câmpineanu-Serafin-Villacrosse, Damaris, Filipescu, Greceanului-Dedu, Iacovachi, Roșu, Ion Românul (Eliad).

Figure 2 shows that more than one in three inns were commercial, one out of two monastic or manorial and rough 10% lordly.

After analyzing all the six maps that underwent the diachronic analysis, only 16 inns out of 28 could be represented. The remaining 12 inns were not marked on any of the six maps. References regarding them were found only in old works of Romanian authors such as Crutzescu, Floreşcu, Iorga, Giurescu and Potra. The evolution of the map-based identified inns is shown in Figure 3.

Two of them survived until the present day: Manuc’s Inn (Hanul lui Manuc) and The Linden Tree Inn (Hanul cu Tei).

Even though they do not fulfill their old functions anymore, Manuc’s Inn (Figure 4)
comprises a restaurant and a hotel and The Linden Tree Inn, an art gallery and two pubs (Figure 5).

Figure 3. Identified inns on the maps that underwent the diachronic analysis

Figure 4. Manuc’s Inn (M. Bouquet, 1841) and today (V-N. Nechita, 2015) consisting of basement, ground floor and two upper floors; oriental style architecture

Figure 5. The Linden Tree Inn (Poitevin-Scheletti, 1927) and 2015 (V-N. Nechita, 2015) unique for its passageway form; it shelters today The Linden Street, a short path between Lipsani and Blănarî Street

According to Figure 3, the maximum number of inns was reached in 1852 – 12. Half of them were monastic and along with the manorial ones – two, this types reached their peak that year. The highest number of lordly inns was quantified 1789 – two and the highest of commercial ones, 1900 – three. Only two inns were represented in 1984 and 2015 (see Figure 3), therefore two distinct periods can be identified: 1789-1852 and 1852-2015. During the first period, the number of inns increased gradually and starting with 1852, it decreased drastically, because of natural events such as The Great Fire of Bucharest (1847) or the sociocultural evolution of the city. As for the churches, 19 were identified in the Old Town during the covered period.

Contrary to the inns, all 19 churches were identified on one of the six maps at least once.

The evolution of the map-based identified churches is shown in Figure 6. Only eight churches out of eighteen persist until the present day. The highest number of identified churches was 15, in 1852 and the lowest, eight, beginning with 1984 until now. Two major periods can be identified: 1789-1921 and 1921-2015. The number of sanctuaries identified on the maps during the first period was greater than ten. After 1921, the number of these ones decreased, reaching values less than nine as shown below.

Five churches were found on each of the six researched maps as shown in Figure 7. During history all of them were located in the actual study area and well dispersed throughout it: Sf. Nicolae–Șelarî in the northeast, Doamnei in the northwest, Zlătari and and Sf. Dumitru to the southwest and Curtea Veche in the southeastern part.

Figure 6. Identified churches on the maps that underwent the diachronic analysis

Figure 7. Number of appearances of the churches on the researched maps
4. DISCUSSION

Interpreting the previous results, different suppositions can be made. Both the inns and the churches evolved throughout history in close relations, serving as attractors for Bucharest inhabitants, travelers and merchants. However, the inns had a higher priority than the churches, being main cores for the further development of the city, especially the monastic inns that were built later in the proximity of the monasteries and the churches.

The spatial representation showed that more than half of the monastic inns were located in the proximity of the Lipscani Street, two of them bordering it to the south. Following the natural path of urban evolution, the churches preceding the inns were built close to The Inner Fair in order to mark checkpoints for the passers until reaching the main core of The Old Town. These checkpoints developed into imposing inns, attracting a numerous population. We can assume that the people were following the next path: Podul Mogosoaiei (actual Calea Victoriei) – Lipscani Alley (actual Lipscani Street) – Podul spre Hanul Șerban Vodă (actual Șmârdan street) –Ișlicari Alley (actual Franceză Street) –Târgul de Afață Alley (parts of actual Calea Moșilor, for accessing Eastern Europe) or Podul Șerban Vodă (actual Unirii Passageway and Dimitrie Cantemir Boulevard, for accessing Constantinople) or Colței Alley (actual I. C. Brătianu Boulevard as a wayback route). Certain is the fact that, even if the inhabitants, travelers or merchants crossed the Old Town starting from another point on the map, they had to follow at a certain time a major part of the route above mentioned. This was possible due to the greater accessibility of the road network in the area, to the famous churches and inns that contained stores with a high variety of products.

In addition to this, the lordly inns followed a major part of the same path. Two of them – Șerban Vodă and Sfântul Gheorghe Nou were located on the Lipscani Alley – the third one, Constantin Vodă being located to the southwest, close to Șerban Vodă inn. Representing only 11% of the total number of inns that served the population of the study area at a certain time, they had the longest lifespan. Occupying large areas, consisting of an extensive courtyard and built after the Arabic fondacos (store house in Arabic, inn in Italian), they represented main attractions for travelers, merchants or simple citizens, having a total lifespan of more than one century. Many merchants decided to sell their products in one of their rooms, because of the large number of available rooms for rent. Back then it was more affordable to sell products in one of the lordly inns’ available rooms, rather than having your own commercial inn.

Almost 40% of the researched inns were commercial, meaning they were built and exploited only by merchants. The only representative commercial inns were the ones that survived until today, Manuc’s Inn (Hanul lui Manuc) and The Linden Tree Inn (Hanul cu Tei), even if they do not fulfill the old functions anymore. Being built later, in the first part of the nineteenth century and having a stable polygonal shape, both the inns withstood calamities like earthquakes, fires or floods. The other commercial inns occupied small areas and were destroyed mostly during the Great Fire of 1847 or during the later earthquakes. The remaining 25% of inns were manorial inns, founded by boyars and occupying small areas. Built later, after the apparition of the lordly and monastic inns, but having a reduced area of influence, they were either destroyed or abandoned. The most famous manorial inn was the Papazoglu Inn located in the area of the Sfântul Gheorghe Nou Church, destroyed by The Great Fire and abandoned.

On the other hand, most of the churches survived and that was possible due to their spiritual role. As the inns lost their importance and were demolished or replaced by hotels, all the churches underwent a restoration process. During the researched period only six churches out of the 19 disappeared, considering the fact that only two out of the 28 inns survived. Five churches were demolished following the modernization process: Sfântul Sava, Șerban Vodă, Grecilor, Sfântul Ioan cel Mare and Măgureanu and only one, Sfântul Anton, burned to the ground in 1847 following The Great Fire. The highest number of churches identified on the maps analyzed using the diachronic analysis was recorded in 1852. An explanation for that could be the fact
that in 1852 was released one of the most detailed Bucharest’s Plan.

In comparison to the first researched map of 1789, more churches were omitted, due to lack of information. As time went by, churches were demolished after 1852 one by one and their number continued to decrease. Only one church was built during this period – the Rusă Church – built between 1905-1909. Along with the modernization of the Romanian society, the rulers in charge for the city’s development rather restored older churches instead of building new ones. One important aspect that has to be mentioned is that, as shown in Figure 8, only five churches were identified on all researched maps that overlapped the actual area of the Old Town. Considering that each church had an circular area of attraction with a radius of 200 meters, more than 95% of Bucharest’s Old Town overlaps one of the circles, except a small area in the northeast. Anywhere an inhabitant, a traveler or a merchant was located, excepting a small surface in the northeast, he was attracted by one of the churches. The first one was located around E. Carada street, the second one at the crossroads of Lipscani, Stavropoleos and Smârdan streets and the last one in the northern part of Smârdan streets. Interesting is that two thirds of this urban texture, the northern and the central one, comprised inns: Ghermanii, Șerban Vodă and Grecilor, meaning that the area of influence of those inns increased as they offered the inhabitants, the travelers or the merchants various ways through to one of the main churches and later to the main streets. The three high density areas of attraction, especially the northern and the central ones can be considered locations of great historical significance, having a particular role in setting patterns of the past.

5. CONCLUSION

The research showed that there was a strong connection between the churches and the inns located in Bucharest's Old Town. They played an important role for the travelers, merchants or inhabitants from the city centre. The assumption that they were following specific routes, attracted by checkpoints – inns and churches could be validated. However, the lack of information because many valuable documents have been lost, represented weak points in the research. The study shows that using modern spatial representation techniques as GIS can improve and lead to better understanding of the history and the spatial development of a city. The methodology and the results of the study provide basic information for further research of The Old Town.

References
