

**Nino Chanishvili**

**RESEARCH PROJECT**

**NINETEENTH-CENTURY ARCHITECTURE OF TBILISI AS A REFLECTION OF  
CULTURAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE CITY**

**SALONICA STUDY TRIP REPORT  
(3-9 July, 2008)**

In the framework of the research project financed by FaRiG I have organized a study trip to Salonica from 3 to 9 July 2008. Initially I had planned to spend five days in Salonika, but due to the flights schedule I had to change the plan and to stay there for seven days.

The goal of the trip was to gain first-hand experience of the nineteenth and early-twentieth century architecture of Salonica. During these seven days, I managed to see almost all of the most important buildings of the city and to examine the urban structure of the old part of Salonica. Though the 1917 fire in Salonica and later reconstruction of the city centre resulted in disappearing hundreds of historic buildings, the study of survived buildings (together with that of old photos, plans, and records) gave me possibility to have a picture of nineteenth and early-twentieth century urban and architectural development in Salonica.

After the study trips to Baku and especially to Salonica, I have realized that these three cities had mainly similar tendencies of development. There are many parallels between them. In all three cases, the medieval part of the city was enclosed within walls and was mostly populated by poor people. Neighborhoods were divided according to ethnicity or confession. Due to the high density, houses were built close to each other. They were small, mostly two-storied, with small courtyards. In the second half of the nineteenth century, rapid development of new middle

class quarters starts in all three cities. These new quarters include public buildings and dwellings of a new type, and broad streets with shops and cafes. Streets are planned more or less on regular basis and differ from an irregular tissue of the medieval city.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, old part of Salonica, so-called Ano Poli (upper city), was surrounded by Byzantine city walls, which were preserved by Ottoman governors. Apart from dwellings, the main buildings of the city were churches, mosques, synagogues, markets and baths. Ano Poli was mostly populated by Turks. This



district was not damaged by the 1917 fire and I had possibility to study its urban tissue and tens of traditional dwelling houses. Typologically, traditional houses of Salonica differ from houses of Tbilisi. Typical for Salonica houses are enclosed balcony and projecting upper storey, while typical houses of Tbilisi have open balconies looking toward the street.



As in case of Tbilisi and Baku, in Salonica too, traditional houses were built by local masons, while new public buildings and dwellings were mostly designed by architects coming from Western Europe and introducing a variety of architectural styles spread in the nineteenth century Europe. This, in its turn, reflects cosmopolitan spirit of these cities. For example, Vitaliano Poselli, the Italian architect from Sicily, who was invited in Salonica by Ottoman government, built the most important public buildings of the city, including the New Mosque of Donmes (Yeni Dzami).

The trip in Salonica was very useful. It helped me to understand that though eclecticism was widespread in Europe and the Near East and actually was an international style, it had strong local implications, which determined differences from country to country.

While being in Salonica I bought following books: M. Mazover *Salonica City of Gohsts, Christians, Muslims and Jews 1430-1950*, (London, New York, Toronto and Sydney, 2005). Papagiannopoulos, *Monuments of Thessaloniki* (Thessaloniki, n.d).

## FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

For Salonica trip I spent 800.12 GBP

Visa fees: GEL 137 = GBP 48

Air tickets: GEL 805 = GBP 285

Accommodation: Euro 301 = GBP 238

Daily allowance: Euro 266 = 210GBP

Books: Euro 24.18 = 19.12