

## **Tao-Klarjeti in the architecture of Tbilisi**

We walk down Tbilisi to find at what level Tao-Klarjeti has inspired architects of 20th c Tbilisi.

**Tbilisi State University: coat of arms.** It was developed by Dimitri Shevardnadze through the consultations with Ivane Javakhishvili served as the basis for creating the university coat of arms. Its sketch was approved by the 4th meeting of the Council of Professors of the Tbilisi State University on February 5, 1918. The seal bears the ornamentation that is a copy of the ornamental spandrel of the Ishkani King Gurgens church tympanum decoration. Inhabited scroll represents a symbol of paradise, where all zoomorphic figures, are moving towards the grape, as a symbol of life, wealth and knowledge. Bringing the symbol from Ishkani to University, itself had largely a symbolic meaning. Ishani, once being a strong spiritual and educational center, became a model for the newly established center of education- Tbilisi State University.

**Wine factory N 1,** stand on the junction of Melikishvili and Petriashvili streets. Was built in 1894-1896 by the architect Aleksander Ozerov.

This specific building does not show exact and direct connection with the architecture of Tao-Klarjeti, but it has its roots in medieval Georgian architecture, in general. Facade of the factory is nothing but a church facade, with its triparted gabled roofs, articulated with the blind arcade, typical for the Georgian churches since 11th c. even more, its decoration inside or outside resembles the motives of medieval church ornamentation, as interlaced crosses, rosettes, floral and geometrical ornaments, typical for the medieval churches. This factory is one of the earliest buildings in Georgia, where the motives of sacred buildings were transferred in civic architecture.

**The National Library** was planned and built by the architects Anatoly Kalgin and Heinrich Hrinevski. The first plan was made in 1912 and the building construction took place 1913-16. the facade decoration and stonework was executed by the masons' Neophyte, Vladimer, and Lavrenti Agladze. It stands on Gudiashvili street, N 3, which is parallel to Rustaveli avenue. Library building is one of the best examples of 20th c secular architecture, where the traditional, especially church architectural motives were used to create a modern building. Its long arched gallery across the Gudiashvili Street facade resembles the open spaces that usually surrounded churches. Twin windows and ornamented trefoil hangings are another indication of church architecture. With these and other features, this building is considered as one of the turning points in defining the architectural tendencies of Georgia in the early-mid 20th century. But the most important detail in our case is a large double window facing from the „tower“ facade. This double window topped with a massive eyebrow includes a bust of King David IV. The structure of the window and its decoration is a copy of one from Oshki, the difference is that in Oshki there is the bust of St Simeon the Stylite and here of a King. It is worth to mention that Anatoly Kalgin was a member of Takaishvilis field surveys in historic North-eastern provinces, where he studies monuments of Tao-Klarjeti. He visited Oshki and historic province of Tao in 1917. We can assume, that the window and its decoration were done after his visit to the medieval monastic site, which worked as an inspiration for him. Another important connection to the medieval architecture of Tao was made recently. The entrance floor of the library was covered with the replica of the 11th c floor from Ishkani church.

**National Museum** building standing on Rustaveli avenue N3 has changed its facade in 1929-1930 by the architect Nikolay Severov. Severov was largely involved in studying the medieval architectural monuments, measurements and drawings of many churches were made by him. It's no surprise, that when redesigning the facade of the Museum building, Severov recalled architectural elements of the churches. He was largely inspired by the images of the churches of Tao, especially of Oshki, at that time available from the photos of Takaishvili.

**Academy of Science**, built-in 1953-1958, is located on N 52 Rustaveli Avenue. Architects were Michel Ckhikvadze and Konstantine Ckheidze. Originally it was constructed as a house of miners. Its a typical monumental building of Stalin's epoch, but like other buildings of this time, it brings alive some „national“ architectural motives. In this building most striking are the two massive columns creating the porch of the building. These columns were inspired by the massive columns of Oshki. The refine masonry and the cladding of the facades with the evenly cut yellowish sandstone, typical of medieval Georgian church architecture, is another resemblans where the tration roots come from.