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### **Tbilisi Caravanserais: Cultural and Architectural Study**

My PhD thesis addresses the history and development of Tbilisi Caravanserais. It examines the role they played in 19<sup>th</sup> century Tbilisi from a broader cultural perspective.

Tbilisi was historically an important and vibrant center on the crossroad of trade routes connecting eastern countries with the western world. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a capital of Transcaucasia, Tbilisi was a meeting point of travelers and merchants from different parts of the world. Tbilisi Caravanserais are distinguished for the peculiar architectural features and they are vivid examples of this fascinating multicultural synthesis cutting across ethnic, cultural and religious borders.

The study aims to identify the Islamic, European and local elements typical to this phenomenon and to analyze them in a global context of cross-cultural transfer.

The research aims to bring together the historical sources, archive projects and photo material as well as graphical drawings of Tbilisi Caravanserais. The work includes the fieldwork study of Caravanserai buildings in Tbilisi and finally the analysis of typical architectural and historical specifics that were developed in the framework of constant exchange and human interactions.

As geographically closest parallels to Tbilisi Caravanserais, the thesis aims to put forward the comparative analyses of Islamic Caravanserais (bringing examples of South Caucasian trade buildings in Azerbaijan and Armenia) which further will enable the detailed examination of local specificities. Furthermore, the typology of Tbilisi trade buildings will be further compared to other similar structures across the Russian Empire, such as so called **Gostinyi dvors** (an indoor markets or shopping centers). The determination of Islamic, European, Russian and local architectural elements and the detailed exploration of historic peculiarities is supposed to show how these elements were transformed in accordance to local environment, which in itself is an important issue to be addressed by the study.

In order to analyze the geographic dissemination and the strategic locations on the trading routes, my thesis also envisages the study of medieval Caravanserais in Georgia.

By bringing together all abovementioned information about Tbilisi Caravanserais and by offering the wide range of comparative materials from Islamic and Russian to European origins, the study is supposed to be the first attempt of comprehensive analysis of this cultural phenomenon in a broader global context.