THE ROYAL HOUSE
OF GEORGIA

H.R.H. CROWN PRINCE NUZGAR
BAGRATION-GRUZINSKY
DYNASTY

PRESENTED BY
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PREFACE

NOBLE DYNASTY THE CAPUTO FAMILY ASSOCIATION

http://www.nobledynasty.com/

The Association which is governed by its Statute makes no claim to ancient origins. It is also not a reconstituted "Order of Knighthood". The Association has neither originated from nor associated with other Nobility House or Order of Chivalry. The Association does not claim to be Royal against what might appear on some websites and makes no pretension or claim to be such. The Association stands alone, separate and autonomous.

The Association is to gather all what has remained of the nobility, having preserved their respect for tradition and love for their country. Everyone is proud of his/her ancestors' achievements. Hence the glorious cultural heritage is a subject of pride for every community member. Going back in time is like going in search of ourselves and when something is found is like to find or discover something that we though we lost. It's still fascinating to find our even simple things of ancient history, certainly even if not characterized by exceptional events, but not for this is less important and significant.

The Association believes that the role of the nobility should not be considered exhausted and that it can, today, in the overall crisis of values that involves contemporary society, play a specific role and not easily replaceable, ideally linked to the great activity of the ruling classes passed. To this end, the Association intends to play a dual action, facing the inside of the aristocratic world to regroup in the common values and outward, with the intent to promote the positive role of the nobility.

The aristocratic spirit transcended frontiers. For the nobleman Europe was the homeland. Italian plasterers and painters, German musicians, and French cabinetmakers traveled for high commissions. There were variations reflecting local traditions: the Baroque style was interpreted distinctively in Austria, Italy, Spain, and France. But high style reveals certain underlying principles and convictions.
Today, many European Nobles and descendants of former noble families are dispersed throughout the world, and have important careers, incorporating their rich culture into their American everyday lives. The noble ancestors command us to be a volunteer that must enlarge, expand, promote, and improve, by its commanding presence the high value goals our forefathers stood for and missions to make a real difference in their newly adopted Country with special and unique worthwhile professions: professors, market analysts, mayors, auctioneers, mortgage brokers, bankers, military, actors and artists, charity volunteers and many other vital professions.

Noble Dynasty The Caputo Family Association advocates of the establishment, preservation and restoration of a monarchy and stays neutral on the issue of juridical recognition of reigning and Sovereign Houses, which is of exclusive competence of their respective State Systems and desires exclusively to support their traditional humanitarian commitment at the service of international collaboration.

On the subject of disputed successions in former monarchies and concerning non-reigning royals the Association undertakes attitude of neutrality though not impartiality, in certain cases, the Association has a candidate that considers the legitimate one, such as HRH Crown Prince Nugzar Bagration-Gruzinsky Dynasty, Head of The Royal House of Georgia.

In 2006 a memorandum was signed by the House of Bagrationi, according to which Nugzar Bagrationi-Gruzinski is recognized as heir to the throne. The memorandum rests upon the legal, historical and genealogical basics; historical-legal documents of the historians of the Academy of Sciences; recognitions of the Georgian genealogical society and the assembly of the Georgian nobility; the historical-legal documents preserved in the archives of the Georgian and Russian state archives; recognitions of all Russian Monarchy Centre and the scientific board of the Moscow Memorial Museum of the Russian Imperial Name and the Peter-Paul Imperial Society.

Presently, the distinguished name of Bagrationi has over one hundred known descendants. Naturally, not every descendant has an equal claim to be the heir to the Georgian Royal Throne. The issue of rightful succession is regulated by Georgian dynastic law and supported by international law. Under these laws, His Royal Highness Prince Nugzar Bagrationi-Gruzinski is the rightful heir to the Georgian Royal Throne.
KINGDOM OF GEORGIA

Queen Tamar and her father King George III (restored fresco from the Betania monastery)

Georgia is one of the oldest countries in the world. Its statehood counts 3000 years. Georgia has a monarchic tradition that traces its origins to the Hellenistic period. The medieval Kingdom of Georgia ruled by the Bagrationi dynasty has left behind a legacy that lasts in Georgia even in modern times. The qualities and symbols associated with the Bagrationi monarchy have been crucial in the making of the Georgian nation and the subsequent construction of national history.

Origins
The Kingdom of Georgia (Georgian: საქართველოს სამეფო) was a medieval monarchy established in 975 by Bagrat III. It flourished during the 11th and 12th centuries, the so-called "Golden Age" of the history of Georgia. It fell to the Mongol invasions of the 13th century, but managed to re-assert sovereignty by 1340s. But renewed Turco-Mongol incursions from 1386 led to the final collapse of the kingdom into anarchy by 1466. The ascendancy of the Bagrationi dynasty can be traced to the 8th century, when they came to rule Tao-Klarjeti.

The restoration of the Georgian kingship begins in AD 888, when Adarnase IV of Iberia took the title of "King of Georgians". The United Kingdom of Georgia was established in 1008. In this year Bagrat III, son of Gurgen II, became the ruler of the Kingdom of Western Georgia (Kingdom of Abkhazeti), including the Principalities of Imereti, Samegrelo, Abkhazeti (Abkhazia), Guria and Svaneti. Bagrat's mother was Queen Gurandukht, a daughter of George II of Abkhazia.
Adarnase IV (Georgian: ადარნასე) (died 923) was a member of the Georgian Bagratid dynasty of Tao-Klarjeti and prince of Iberia/Kartli, responsible for the restoration of kingship, which had been in abeyance since it had been abolished by Iran in the sixth century, in 888.

(Picture: A bas-relief from Mtskheta depicting Adarnase II (or Adarnase I) praying before Jesus)

The numbering of successive rulers in the early Bagratid period is very confused in that it moves between the different branches of the family. Hence, Adarnase, known as “IV” for being the second Adarnase as the prince of Iberia, is also known as “II” as a sovereign of Tao-Klarjeti and “I” as the king of Iberia.

Golden Age
The unified monarchy maintained its precarious independence from the Byzantine and Seljuk empires throughout the 11th century, and flourished under David IV the Builder (1089–1125), who repelled the Seljuk attacks and essentially completed the unification of Georgia with the re-conquest of Tbilisi in 1122.

With the decline of Byzantine power and the dissolution of the Great Seljuk Empire, Georgia became one of the pre-eminent nations of the Christian East, her pan-Caucasian empire[1] stretching, at its largest extent, from North Caucasus to northern Iran, and eastwards into Asia Minor. In spite of repeated incidents of dynastic strife, the kingdom continued to prosper during the reigns of Demetre I (1125–1156), Giorgi III (1156–1184), and especially, his daughter Tamar (1184–1213). With the death of Giorgi III the main male line went extinct and the dynasty was continued by the marriage of Queen Tamar with the Alan Prince David Soslan of reputed Bagratid descent.

Tamar (Great Empires)

Saint Queen Tamar the Great (birth name: Tamar Bagrationi) was the greatest of rulers of the Georgia. She merged the Georgia and surrounding kingdoms and brought it to its Golden Age.

Early life
Tamar Bagrationi was born as the daughter of King Giorgi III his consort Burdukhan. Tamar's youth coincided with a major upheaval in Georgia; in 1177, her father, Giorgi III, was confronted by a rebellious faction of nobles. The rebels intended to dethrone Giorgi in favor of the king's fraternal nephew, Demna, who was
considered by many to be a legitimate royal heir of his murdered father, David V. Demna's cause was little but a pretext for the nobles, led by the pretender's father-in-law, the amirspasalar ("constable") Ivane Orbeli, to weaken the crown. Giorgi III was able to crush the revolt and embarked on a campaign of crackdown on the defiant aristocratic clans; Ivane Orbeli was put to death and the surviving members of his family were driven out of Georgia. Prince Demna, castrated and blinded on his uncle's order, did not survive the mutilation and soon died in prison. Once the rebellion was suppressed and the pretender eliminated, Giorgi went ahead to co-opt Tamar into government with him and crowned her as co-ruler in 1178. By doing so, the king attempted to preempt any dispute after his death and legitimize his line on the throne of Georgia. At the same time, he raised men from the gentry and unranked classes to keep the dynastic aristocracy away from the center of power.

**Queen of Georgia**

Tamar was good at diplomacy and politics and soon she would overshadow her father in the government. Her father let her do all the hard work and Tamar was the most powerful person in the kingdom. She set up new laws for more equality and less corruption in the kingdom. The kingdom flourished and grew into a mighty nation. Tamar had great ambitions and invaded the Byzantine Empire, after a 5 months siege, Tamar conquered the city of Trabzon (the center of east Byzantine region) and established Empire of Trabzon in 1204 with the headship of Komnenos who were relatives of Bagrations. The surrounding kingdoms acknowledged Tamar as their ruler and were incorporated into the empire.

During Queen Tamar’s reign a veritable monastic city was carved in the rocks of Vardzia, and the God-fearing Georgian ruler would labor there during the Great Fast. The churches of Pitareti, Kvabtakhevi, Betania, and many others were also built at that time. Holy Queen Tamar generously endowed the churches and monasteries not only on Georgian territory but also outside her borders: in Palestine, Cyprus, Mt. Sinai in Egypt, the Black Mountains, Greece, Mt. Athos, Petritsoni (Bulgaria), Macedonia, Thrace, Romania, Isauria and Constantinople.

The divinely guided St. Queen Tamar abolished the death penalty and all forms of bodily torture.

**Death**

She died in **1213** at the age of **47**, not living long enough to see to Mongols arrive to ravage her empire.

**Legacy**

Tamar is credited for rebuilding the Georgian Kingdom and making it powerful again. She started a golden age for the Kingdom of Georgia. She was a capable politician and diplomatist. At the beginning of her reign, Tamar convened a Church council and addressed the clergy with wisdom and humility: "Judge according to righteousness, affirming good and condemning evil," she advised. "Begin with me — if I sin I should be censured, for the royal crown is sent down from above as a sign of divine service. Allow neither the wealth of the nobles nor the poverty of the masses to hinder your work. You by word and I by deed, you by preaching and I by the law, you by upbringing and I by education will care for those souls whom God has entrusted to us, and together we will abide
by the law of God, in order to escape eternal condemnation.... You as priests and I as ruler, you as stewards of good and I as the watchman of that good." She was so vital for the country that after her death was almost destroyed by the Mongol Empire. Today she is a much respected person in Georgia and a Christian saint.

**Mongol rule**

The invasions by the Khwarezmians in 1225 and the Mongols in 1236 terminated Georgia’s "golden age". The struggle against the Mongol rule created a diarchy. Many powerful Armenian and Georgian families became independent of the Georgian King due to the Mongols' support. Georgians attended all major campaigns of the Ilkhanate and aristocrats' sons served in khesig.

In the year 1327 there occurred in Mongol Persia the most dramatic event of the reign of the Il-Khan Abu Sa'id, namely the disgrace and execution of Chupan, protégé of the Georgian king George. Chupan's son Mahmud, who commanded the Mongol garrison in Georgia, was arrested by his own troops and executed. Subsequently, Iqbalshah, son of Qutlughshah, was appointed to be Mongol governor of Georgia (Gurjistan). In 1330–31 George V the Brilliant annexed western Georgia uniting all of Georgia in the process. Therefore, four years prior the last effective Ilkhan Abu Sai'd's demise, two kingdoms of Georgia united again. In 1334, this post was given to Shaykh Hasan of the Jalayir by Abu Sai'd.

Picture above National Palace Museum Taipei: Ögödei (1185-1241) Chinggis Khan's Third Son and Successor Ögödei, the first to designate himself the "Great Khan," ruled the Mongol empire from 1229 to 1241 and presided over the greatest expansion of the empire. Under his rule, the Mongols incorporated North China, much of Russia, Georgia, Armenia, and parts of Persia and reached all the way to Hungary and Poland in the West.

**Final disintegration**

There was a period of reunion and revival under George V the Brilliant (1299-1302, 1314–1346), but the eight onslaughts of the Turco Mongol conqueror Timur between 1386 and 1403 dealt a great blow to the Georgian kingdom. Its unity was finally shattered and, by 1490/91, the once powerful monarchy fragmentized into three independent kingdoms Kartli (central to eastern Georgia), Kakheti (eastern Georgia), and Imereti (western Georgia) – each led by the rival branches of the Bagrationi dynasty, and into five semi-independent principalities: Odishi, (Mingrelia), Guria, Abkhazia, Svaneti, and Samtskhe – dominated by their own feudal clans.
Unified Kingdom

The nation of Georgia was first unified as a kingdom under the Bagrationi dynasty in the 9th to 10th century, arising from a number of predecessor states of ancient Colchis and Iberia. The kingdom of Georgia flourished during the 10th to 12th centuries, and fell to the Mongol invasions of Georgia and Armenia by 1243, and after a brief reunion under Giorgi V of Georgia to the Timurid Empire. By 1490, Georgia was fragmented into a number of petty kingdoms and principalities, but after the rule of the father and son, Kings Teimuraz II and Erekle II Georgia started to strengthen. Under the King Erekle II in 1763 two separated kingdoms of Kartli and Kakheti had been united. Later in 1790 under the same King Erekle was signed a treaty named treaty of Iverians (Georgians). Important is that by this treaty king of Imereti and all the rest heads of the principalities recognized King Erekle II as sovereign over them.

Royal Wedding of HRH Princess Anna Bagrationi-Gruzinski Batonishvili of Georgia and Prince Bagration-Mukhranski
On 8 February 2009 the Royal Wedding of HRH Princess Anna Bagrationi-Gruzinski Batonishvili of Georgia and Prince Bagration-Mukhranski celebrated at Holy Trinity Cathedral of Tbilisi who has promoted the restoration on the monarchy.

An agreement resulting from the marriage of Prince David brings to an end any possibility of dynastic dispute in Georgia, as the bride is a princess of the Bagrationi-Gruzinsky Royal House, a branch of the Bagrationi family which by the historical and traditional actuality has a right to be the royal house of Georgia, and the marriage reunites the two - royal and princely branches of the family. But does it?

Anna, who was born in Tbilisi in 1976, is the daughter of Prince Nuzgar and his wife Princess Leila Kipiani. This line of succession, which is a senior line to the Bagration branch, would make Nuzgar the king of Georgia, and his elder daughter, as heir. HRH Crown Prince Nuzgar, a well-known stage and film director, has lived in Georgia all his life and is seen by many as the head of the house, and heir to the non-existent throne.

**The International Laws**

The Pretender to a Throne (that is a juridical person legally recognized by the International Laws) can act when the debellatio lacks, that is, the losing of the sovereignty. Every Sovereign has to carry on the royal power apart from the way in which he has been deposed. In this way all the titles pertain to the Sovereign and to his descendants, they maintain their nature even if the Sovereign lost the real sovereignty of a Land: we have not to forget that the Sovereignty makes part of the Family Estate (even if it has lost the jus imperii – power to command –, the jus gladii – right to have the obedience of the people – and the jus majestatis – the right to have respect and honors).

A Sovereign can be deprived of his Throne and exiled by a Land, but he can never lose His native quality: in this context take the origin the Pretendant to a Throne. In fact he maintains all his rights to the sovereignty and he can exercises it even if his juridical-institutional status has been changed.

There is no doubt that he maintains the jus majestatis and the jus honorum rights; that is the right to grant nobiliary and honorific titles of Knight Orders that made part of the personal dynastic Family’s Estate.
The Georgian royal family of the Bagrations practiced masculine primogeniture, legitimate sons and their descendants taking precedence over daughters and natural sons, and their descendants. But when there were no males in the royal house then female could ascend the throne, consequently the royal line was continued through the female line. When Georgian female heir-to-the-throne got married, the Georgian Dynastic Law of “Zedsidzeoba” (“Georgian Law on marriage concerning “Consort son-in-law”), was applied.

The nation of Georgia was first unified as a kingdom under the Bagrationi dynasty in the 9th to 10th century, arising from a number of predecessor states of ancient Colchis and Iberia. The kingdom of Georgia flourished during the 10th to 12th centuries, what was interrupted during of the Mongol invasions of Georgia in XIII century. Georgia rose up again in prosper at times of King Giorgi V” the magnificent” (1318-1346). He even has once again regained influence on the empire of Trabzon, this political situation remained till the last King of undivided kingdom - Giorgi VIII (1446-1466).

After of eight times invasion of the Tamerlane in Georgia, kingdom was fragmented into a number of petty kingdoms and principalities in 1490, but after the rule of the father and son, Kings Teimuraz II and Erekle II Georgia started to strengthen. Under the King Erekle II in 1763 two separated kingdoms of Kartli and Kakheti had been united. Later in 1790 under the same King Erekle was signed a treaty named treaty of Iverians (Georgians). Important is that by this treaty king of imereti, the Prince of Mengrelia and the Prince of Guria recognized King Erekle II as sovereign over them.

HRH Prince Nugzar has strong superior over representatives of all Bagrations as he descends both in the male line from the last king of the united Georgia Giorgi VIII (1446-1466) (After the whom the country was divided into parts) and also from the last king of Georgia, George XII, who died in 1800.

In 2006 a memorandum was signed by all representatives of society "House of Bagrationi”, including Royal and princely branches, according to which Nugzar Bagrationi-Gruzinski is recognized as heir to the throne. The memorandum rests upon the legal, historical and genealogical basics; historical-legal documents of the historians of the Academy of Sciences; recognitions of the Georgian genealogical society and the assembly of the Georgian nobility; the
historical-legal documents preserved in the archives of the Georgian and Russian state archives; recognitions of all Russian Monarchy Centre and the scientific board of the Moscow Memorial Museum of the Russian Imperial Name and the Peter-Paul Imperial Society.

HRH Crown Prince Nugzar has only two daughters, elder Princess Anna of Georgia and Princess Maia of Georgia. Princess Anna is the heir to the throne of Georgia after her father – HRH Prince Nugzar. She has two daughters from the first marriage which was implemented in full compliance with the Georgian Dynastic Law. Thus these children - HRH Princess Irine (b.2003) and HRH Princess Mariam (b.2007) have the royal name of Bagrationi-Gruzinskis and who are the dynasts of the royal house of Georgia.

The second marriage of H.R.H. Princess Anna of Georgia with Prince David on 8 February of 2009 should also be recognized to be in accordance with the Georgian dynastic law of “Zedsidzeoba”. It is important to mention that under the Georgian Dynastic Law this marriage does not give Prince David any sovereignty. Under this law, Prince David would be recognized solely as the Prince consort for H.R.H. Princess Anna of Georgia.

Accordingly, the born child from this marriage would inherit royal rights from the line of his mother. It is important to note that by Georgian Dynastic Law a male descendent of the Royal House has priority over any females in the line of succession.

Representatives of the two families, Bagrationi-Gruzinski and Bagration-Mukhranski, collaborated on a post-marriage dynastic succession agreement, and the outline of the agreement was sent to His Holiness, the Patriarch of Georgia, Ilia II (This agreement acknowledged H.R.H. Prince Nugzar’s line as the true royal line with his dynastic rights passing to the children of Prince David and H.R.H. Princess Anna). Unfortunately, Prince Davit left the country without completing the request and signing this important document.

Thus, if above mentioned marriage will fit the Dynastic Law then Prince Giorgi will surpass his older sisters in the line of succession - Were Prince Giorgi to become a dynast, he would be the heir apparent to the throne after his mother.
DESCENT OF HRH PRICE NUZGAR

Descent of HRH Prince Nuzgar and HRH Princess Anna

Giorgi VIII
The last King of United Georgia
(1845-1862)
King of Georgia (1846-1862)
King of Kacheti (1846-1850)

Alexander I
(1445-1518)
King of Kacheti (1479-1511)

Giorgi II
(1411-1513)
King of Kacheti (1511-1513)

Levan I
(1506-1574)
King of Kacheti (1510-1570)

Alexander II
(1525-1603)
King of Kacheti (1574-1603)

David I
(1574-1602)
King of Kacheti (1601-1602)

Teimuraz I
(1589-1606)
King of Kacheti (1666-1668)
King of Kartli (1625-1635)

Prince David
(1612-1644)

Erekle I
(1530-1709)
King of Kartli (1668-1702)
King of Kacheti (1703-1709)

Teimuraz II
(1550-1582)
King of Kacheti (1722-1748)
King of Kartli (1744-1762)

Erekle II
(1750-1798)
King of Kacheti (1744-1782)
King of united kingdom of Kartli & Kacheti (King of Georgia)
(1762-1798)

Giorgi XII
(1766-1800)
King of united kingdom of Kartli & Kacheti (King of Georgia)
(1798-1800)

Prince Bagrat
(1711-1840)

Prince Alexander
(1827-1843)

Prince Peter (I)
(1827-1821)

Prince Peter (II)
(1810-1840)

Prince Nuzgar
(D. of birth 1950)

Princess Anna
(D. of birth 1970)
THE CROWN PRINCE

With the collapse of the Byzantine Empire in 1453, the Georgian Kingdom found itself in a difficult position. The last king of united Georgia, King Giorgi VIII (1446 - 1466), was diligent in uniting the east Georgian Kingdom (with the bloodline of King David Ulu on his father's side) and the west Georgian Kingdom (with the bloodline of King David Narini on his mother’s side), which was particularly important for the legitimization of the Royal branch of the united Georgia.

During the rule of Giorgi VIII as king of united Georgia, the Ottomans fractured the coalition between Georgia and the rest of Europe. This led to the break of the united Georgian Kingdom into three provincial kingdoms: Kakheti, Kartli, and Imereti. In 1466, King Giorgi VIII was forced to move to Kakheti, where he established the independent Kakheti kingdom. Although he continued to fight for the restored unification of the country under his crown, the prevailing politics of the region at this point in history did not permit this.

In the following centuries, many of King Giorgi VIII’s direct descendants, the representatives of the Kakhetian Royal branch, continued with this struggle for political unification. Some of them were successful, such as King Teimuraz I (1605-1648). In 1625, he united two kingdoms and became the king of the united Kartli-Kakheti Kingdom. Unfortunately, in 1648, the Iranians abolished this important unification when they invaded Georgia. King Erekle I, the grandson of King Teimuraz I, who reigned over Kartli between 1688 and 1703, tried to unite the two kingdoms again. Yet he was unsuccessful as Iran prevented restoration. Further efforts at unification were sought by the representatives of the Kakhetian Royal branch. For example, King Alexander III, who ruled in Kartli between 1735 and 1737, sought unification. So did his successor, King Teimuraz II, who became the King of Kartli in 1744. But it was his son, Erekle II of Kakheti, who finally succeeded in uniting the two kingdoms after his father died in 1762. Thereby, Erekle II became the king of the united kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti (Georgia).

The year 1790 was marked by the so-called “Treaty of the Iberians”, whereby King Erekle II was recognized as the sovereign of all Georgians: “the father of them all”. The treaty was signed by the Patriarch of Georgia, the Imeretian King Solomon II, Grigol Dadiani (Prince of Mengrelia), and Simon Gurieli (Prince of Guria). The status of King Erekle II was later inherited by his son, Giorgi XII, who was the last King of Georgia.

In 1801, the Russian Emperor tragically abolished the Georgian monarchy, but the titles and honours of the heirs to the throne were still recognized and retained by the descendants of King Erekle II and Giorgi XII. During this time, in 1801, the Georgian royal family (the ancestors of HRH Crown Prince Nuzgar Bagrationi-Gruzinski) found itself exiled by the Russian Empire. No one from the other Bagration lines (the Bagrationi-Mukhranski, the Bagrationi-Davitishvili, and the Bagrationi-Babadishi lines) was exiled to Russia because
these other lines were merely high nobles with no right or claim to the throne of Georgia.

In the early years of the 19th century, Imperial Russia decreed that only the sons and daughters of the Georgian King were allowed to enjoy the titles of “Georgian princes and princesses” (literally Gruzinski, which means “of Georgia”). This was meant to distinguish such princes and princesses from the other Bagrationi nobility. For this reason, only the Royal family today bears the name Bagrationi-Gruzinski. In 1833, Imperial Russia also decreed that only the grandsons of King Erekle II and King Giorgi XII must be accorded the title of "Georgian prince" (Gruzinski); this became the surname of these descendants. In 1865, the Russian Emperor Alexander II granted all the representatives of this Royal branch (the ancestors of HRH Crown Prince Nugzar Bagrationi-Gruzinski) the style of “Most Respectful”. This family, from which HRH Crown Prince Nugzar Bagrationi-Gruzinski descends, was royal and considered equal with the other royal families in Europe. Some very prominent high nobles in Russia considered the Royal family of Georgia to be merely one step below the prestige of the Russian Imperial House itself.

Crown Prince Nugzar Bagrationi-Gruzinski is the son of HRH Prince Peter Bagrationi-Gruzinski of Georgia (1920–1984), who was a prominent poet and the former Head of the Royal House of Georgia between 1939 and 1984. His grandfather, HRH Prince Alexander (1820-1865), was the son of HRH Prince Bagrat, the fourth son of King Giorgi XII of Georgia. Prince Peter’s life was full of tragedy, as he was forced to live in Soviet Russia. The Soviets knew that he was the rightful heir to the Georgian throne, and they did not want the political risk of native Georgians supporting the restoration of an independent Georgian kingdom. Despite imprisonment, Prince Peter continued to express his inner protest against the Soviet political regime through his poetry. He was part of the underground youth organization that secretly had been publishing anti-communist literature. One of his published poetry lyrics led to his arrest in 1946, and he was sentenced to the death penalty. Within this poem, the poet openly refers to his Royal descent and being the direct descendant of the great King Erekle II. Luckily, Prince Peter miraculously survived this punishment. In time, he became quite famous for his lyrics and Georgian songs. When the “Poet” Prince Peter (II) died in 1984, the headship of the Royal House of Georgia passed onto his son Crown Prince Nugzar Bagrationi-Gruzinski, who currently is the director of the Tbilisi theatre of cinema artists.

HRH Crown Prince Nugzar Bagrationi-Gruzinski is married to Princess Leila Kipiani, who was born in Tbilisi on 16 July of 1947. They married on 10 February of 1971. The Crown Prince and Princess have two daughters: Princess
Anna (born 1976) and Princess Maia (born 1978). Princess Leila descends from one of the western high noble families of Georgia.

Like his father, HRH Crown Prince Nugzar Bagrationi-Gruzinski also experienced hardships during the Soviet regime. For example, when his theatre company had overseas commitments, the Prince was always denied a visa by the Soviet government. The Soviets were concerned that allowing the Prince to go abroad could allow him to claim his legitimate rights. Despite this hardship, Crown Prince Nugzar Bagrationi-Gruzinski continued to stage various performances, even in challenging circumstances. Today, he is actively involved in the teaching and training of drama. Additionally, he is involved in directing various stage performances. This is in addition to his obligations as Head of the Royal House of Georgia.


On 23 February of 2010, Crown Prince Nugzar Bagrationi-Gruzinski participated in a national conference with several high ministers of the Republic of Georgia and distinguished scientists. Within this conference, Crown Prince Nugzar Bagrationi-Gruzinski was rightfully introduced “as the successor to the Georgian throne”. In his speech, he emphasized the importance of the world community’s legal evaluation of crimes committed against the Georgian people.

On 21 May of 2010, a conference on the Circassian tragedy was held in Tbilisi. Within this, an intellectual work entitled “Pages of the History of the 19th century Caucasus” was presented. The event was organized by the “Fund of Caucasus” and attended by various members of the Georgian Parliament, important guests, and famous scholars. Crown Prince Nugzar Bagrationi-Gruzinski had a prominent role in addressing the audience with words of salutation.

With a sense of responsibility towards his country, Crown Prince Nugzar Bagrationi-Gruzinski tries to compensate for the deterioration of the country during the Soviet era and also during the troubled years of the civil war. Unfortunately, many Georgian people still live in difficult conditions. To improve the situation of such people, Crown Prince Nugzar Bagrationi-Gruzinski works with various donor organizations to implement charitable solutions for the Georgian people.
The direct ancestors of HRH Crown Prince Nugzar Gruzinski

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title and Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Erekle II</td>
<td>King of United Georgia (1790 – 1798)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giorgi XII</td>
<td>King of United Kingdom of Kartli &amp; Kakheti (The Last King of Georgia) (1798-1800)</td>
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<tr>
<td>HRH Bagrat</td>
<td>Georgian Prince (heir and successor to the throne) (1776-1841)</td>
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<td>HRH Alexander</td>
<td>Georgian Prince (heir and successor to the throne) (1820-1865)</td>
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<td>HRH Peter</td>
<td>Georgian Prince (heir and successor to the throne) (1857-1922)</td>
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<tr>
<td>HRH Peter</td>
<td>Georgian Prince (heir and successor to the throne) (1920-1984)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His Royal Highness Crown Prince Nugzar of Georgia</td>
<td>heir and successor to the Throne of Georgia (Born 1950)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armorial of the Crown Prince of Georgia</td>
<td>His Royal Highness Crown Prince Nuzgar Bagrationi-Gruzinski</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heir: HRH Princess Anna Bagrationi-Gruzinski</td>
<td>daughter of HRH Crown Prince Nuzgar of Georgia</td>
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HISTORY OF THE ROYAL HOUSE
THE BAGRATIONI DYNASTY

Throughout history, the world has seen many Royal dynasties. These dynasties are created by the kings or queens of respective families who rule throughout multiple generations. Such dynasties include the Valois and the Bourbons of France, the Habsburgs of Austria-Hungary, and the Romanovs of Russia. The Bagrationi Royal dynasty ruled over Georgia between the ninth century A.D. and 1801.

Who is the House of Bagrationi? Most scholars contend that, originally, the Bagrationis were the natives of Speri, which is an old Georgian province. Bagrationi chronicler Sumbat Davitisdze, in his work Life and Activity of the Bagrationis, the Georgian Kings, Their Origin, Time of Their Crowning for Kings of Kartli states that the Bagrationis are descended from the Biblical King David. Mr. Davitisdze states, “And four brothers (the sons of Solomon – R.M.) came to Kartli; but one of them named Guaram was chosen to be the eristavi (i.e. the ruler) and he was the eristavi of Kartli and the Bagrationis’ father. And so the Bagrationis of Kartli were the grandsons and relatives of Guaram”.

There are other chroniclers who also support the Jewish origin of the Bagrationis. The historian of the Georgian King David “the Builder” considers David IV “the Builder” to be the 78th descendant of the biblical King David.

In Georgia, the Bagrationis became famous by the end of the eighth century. From the Bagrationi family came Ashot, eristavi (i.e. regional governor) of Kartli, who is known in history as Ashot the Great. He also had the title of Kurapalat, which is a high Byzantine court title. Ashot the Great established the Bagrationi dynasty of Tao-Klarjeti. The Bagrationis of Tao-Klarjeti (Georgian kingdom) became divided into two main branches: the Tao and the Klarjeti Bagrationis. Ashot’s descendant, Adarnase, was honoured as the first king of the Kartvelians in 888 (although other historical records suggest this took place in either 897 or 899). Adarnase was the son of David I Kurapalat, and he is known in history as Adarnase II. Adarnase II ruled until 923, and he built upon the foundation of the Klarjeti branch of Bagrationis that was established by his ancestor, who was also named Adarnase (and known to history as Adarnase I).

Starting with Adarnase II, the title of the Kartvelians’ king was inherited only by the representatives of the Tao branch of Bagrationis (as the successors of Adarnase II). The first king of the united Georgian Kingdom, Bagrat III,
belonged to this branch. In contrast, the Klarjeti branch of the Bagrationis came to an end in the early 10th century.

During the reign of David IV “the Builder” (1089 - 1125) and Queen Tamar (1179 - 1213), the Georgian state reached the peak of its power and glory. From the second half of the 15th century forward, the united Georgian kingdom was divided into separate smaller kingdoms. Yet the kingdoms of Kakheti, Kartli, and Imereti remained the domains of the Bagrationis.

The last king of the united Georgia, Giorgi VIII (1446-1466), became the ruler of solely Kakheti in 1466. Consequently, he was the first of the Kakheti branch of the Bagrationis. The Kakheti branch of the Bagrationis continued to rule for centuries, and a descendant, Teimuraz II, became the King of Kartli in 1744. His son, Erekle II, ruled Kakheti. From 1762 onward, Erekle II was the king of the united Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti. The last descendant of this line to rule was King Giorgi XII. After his demise on 28 December of 1800, the Russian Emperor abolished the Georgian kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti.
THE BAGRATIONIS DEFENDER OF GEORGIA’S STATEHOOD

The Bagrationis know that their origin stems from the historical and geographical province of Speri (which is present-day Inspiri in Turkey). This southwestern province of the Kartli kingdom has been the subject of various border disputes between Georgia and Armenia for many centuries. The ethnic composition of the population and language of the region was Georgian.

One branch of the Bagrationis settled in Armenia, another in Hereti, and a third branch in Georgia. In time, these respective families became very powerful. The Armenian Bagratuns, notwithstanding their origins, activities, and national self-consciousness, became Armenians. This line of Bagrationis has been in the Transcaucasian area since the second century B.C.

The Armenian Bagratuns, who are descendants of the noble Jew Shambath (149-127 B.C.), became crown-holders. By the end of the fifth century, Sahak Bagratuni became the marzpan (governor-general) of the Armenians. In 862, Ashot Bagratun received the title of “sovereign of sovereigns” (ishkhanaz-ishkhani). Subsequently, in 885, he was crowned King of the Armenians. This position persisted until 1045, when King Gagik II (1041-1045) was exiled to the Byzantine (Eastern Roman) Empire. Yet one of the branches of the Bagratuns, the so-called Kvirikians, kings of Lore-Tashir (Tashir-Dzoraget), continued to reign. This kingdom continued until the beginning of the 12th century. At that time, the Armenian Bagratuni dynasty came to an end.

The separate line of Bagrationis in Hereti became princes in the eighth century and was raised to kingship by the end of the ninth century. Yet, their dynasty ceased to exist in the early 11th century.
In contrast, the Georgian Bagrationis came to power in the mid-sixth century, when the Kartli Eristavis (roughly equivalent to Dukes) chose their leader. Given the power of neighboring Persia and Constantinople, the early Georgian leaders were reticent to call themselves kings. However, according to Georgian historical tradition, Georgian society at the time referred to these Bagrationis as kings.

The ninth century Georgian historical sources (such as Georgian monk Giorgi Merchule) refer to the Jewish origin of the Georgian Bagrationis. These are directly connected to the theory of a biblical origin of the Bagrationis from King David, King of Israel and Judah. The 10th century Byzantine historian Constantine Porphyrogenet refers to this theory. The 11th century Georgian historian Sumbat, the son of David, presented a genealogy of the biblical origins of the Georgian Bagrationis. By the end of the 10th century, the Royal throne of the united Kingdom of Georgia was occupied by a member of the House of the Bagrationi (Bagrat III, 975 - 1014). The understanding regarding the Bagrationis biblical origin and their divine power in Georgia (from God’s promise to King David that a descendant of his would always reign) is also shared by the Georgian church.

Georgia has consistently had a Bagrationi Royal dynasty. By the end of the 15th century, when united Georgia again was dissolved into separate kingdoms (this time, Kartli, Kakheti, and Imereti), the Royal throne was occupied in each kingdom by the representatives of different branches of the Bagrationi Royal house. The Bagrationis have been kings since the sixth century and “Kings of Kartvels” (Georgians) since the 9th century. Provided that one accepts the theory that they are also descendants of the Parnavazians branch, the Bagrationi history may be said to have started from the 4th century B.C.

Throughout history, the Georgian king has served as a symbol of unity of statehood. After annexation, the Russian empire was very cognizant of this, which is why the members of the Georgian Royal family were exiled from their country.
THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF THE BAGRATIONIS IN KARTLI (OR MODERN DAY GEORGIA)

The Caucasian historiography differs slightly from the aforementioned Bagrationi history in that it considers the Georgian and Armenian Bagratids as stemming from the same dynasty. The heads of the Georgian branch were separated from the Armenian princes and settled in Georgia at the end of the eighth century. Some experts in Caucasian studies suggest that the Bagratid family is of Chanish origin. Over time, one of the branches became Armenized.

Between 1990 and 2000, the Institute of Manuscripts conducted four scientific and restoration expeditions to study 141 Georgian manuscripts that were discovered in 1975 in St. Catherine's monastery in Sinai. This expedition led to the important discovery of a unique volume (N/Sin 50). The volume, which is clearly missing an introduction and conclusion, consists of three sections: the “Moktsevai Kartlisai” with “Life of St. Nino”, the “Activities of Ioane Zedazneli and His Disciples”, and the “Martyrdom of Abibo of Nekresi”. The work was compiled or copied in the early 10th century.

The works of the “Activities of Ioane Zedazneli and His Disciples” are unique and not witnessed by any other sources. They contain inserted comments that differ from the rest of the text. These comments contain descriptions of the libraries of Jvari, Zedazeni, and David Gareja; descriptions of the monastery treasures with a reference to the donors (the House of Rustaveli amongst others); and family epitaphs with the exact genealogy and chronology of the Kartli kings. The comments were determined to have been made between the end of the eighth and the beginning of the 10th centuries, but most of them were probably written at the end of the eighth century.

In one of these comments, there is a reference to Adarnase, whose image is on the Jvari relief (usually referred to as the Jvari pedestal inscription). This is the same Adarnase (Atrnerse) who played a leading part in the discord between the Georgian and Armenian churches in the beginning of the eighth century. He was a great supporter of Kiron, the Catholicos of Kartli, during an international conflict concerning orthodoxy. According to the evidence provided by N/Sin-50, a genealogical table of the Kartli princes of the sixth and seventh centuries is as follows: Guaram the Great – Stepanoz – Demetri (his brother) – Latavri (his sister) – Adarnase Mampal – Guaramavri (his wife).

In contrast, the aforementioned archaeological find of Moktsevai Kartlisai does not link the Kartli rulers with the future Tao-Klarjeti Bagrations. In fact, the author does not address this issue at all. If the work was compiled in the ninth or 10th centuries, it could not have avoided identification of the Bagrationi family as the family was mentioned in virtually all sources of that time and for several centuries thereafter. Thus, it is difficult to ensure whether these families are connected with the possible linkage of Juansher. It just isn’t directly addressed in the text. Only in the titles of the royals, which are not in all the lists (including the so-called Anna and Mariam lists), can we read the following: “the thirty-ninth King of Kartli Kurapalat Guaram Bagratoani”, “the fortieth Prince of Eristavis of Kartli, Stepanoz, son of Guaram Kurapalat, Bagratoani”. There is
only one reference in the text that points to links between the Tao-Klarjeti Bagrationis and the descendants of Guaram and Stepanoz. When Caesar Herakles murdered Stepanoz, and Kartli was occupied by Adarnase (the son of Bakur), Juansher refers to the heirs of Stepanoz who remained in Klarjeti. Additionally, he also mentions one Prince, who was a relative of David the Prophet, named Adarnase. This Adarnase was a nephew of Adarnase the Blind. His father was a relative of the Bagrationis, and the Greeks made him a prince in Armenia. Murvan the Deaf visited Guaram Kurapalat’s children in Klarjeti and stayed there. According to Juansher, it was Adarnase who asked Archil Erismtavari to allow him to settle on his territory. He was successful in this request.

Matiane Kartlisai continues Juansher’s narration as follows: Archil’s son, Juansher, marries Latavri, a daughter of the aforementioned Adarnese. Latvari’s mother did not initially support the marriage as she was unaware that the Bagrationis are descendants of David the Prophet. In the end, the matter is settled harmoniously, and the descendants of Adarnese (the son of Bakur) and the Bagrationis become relatives. According to this record, this is how the Bagrationis became related to the Kartli Erismtavaris family.

The Bagrationi origins are described quite differently in the Chronicle by Sumbat, the son of David: seven brothers came from the land of the Philistines and settled first in Armenia. Subsequently, four of the brothers went to Kartli. The Kartli Bagrationis descend from one of them: Guaram Eristavi. The N/Sin-50 indicates that: Guaram, Stepanoz, and Adarnerse (Kartli Erismtavari) were father, son, and grandson. This evidence supports and reinforces Sumbat’s version.

Further evidence of the accuracy of the Sumbat account is the precision of familial relationships. Translated into English, the document reads in part, “Bagrationis are the grandchildren and relatives of Guaram”. Given that other sources indicate that the mother of the Bagrationis was Latavri, the granddaughter of Guaram Kurapalat, the Sumbat version gains more credibility.

Therefore, the Georgian Bagrationis cannot be the direct close relatives of the Armenian Princes Ashot the Blind and Vasak. According to N/Sin-50, the Bagrationis were in Kartli before they became related to the Kartli Erismtavaris in the early seventh century.

Like Matiane Kartlisai, the Bagrationis and the Kartli Erismtavaris are related to each other. The aforementioned Latavri was married to a representative of the Bagrationi family. When translated into English, just as Sumbat refers to Guaram the Great as the “father of the Bagrationis”, N/Sin-50 states that Guaram’s granddaughter Latavri was the “mother of Bagratunians”.

The additional expression “mother of Bagratunians and Kurapalatians” points to the unification of the Kartli Princes (Kurapalatians, the descendants of Guaram Kurapalat) and the Bagrationi family. During the same era, which was the eighth and ninth centuries, being a Kurapalat was a privilege reserved only for the Bagrationis. This suggests that the Bagrationis were not yet kings (until Adarnase II at the end of the ninth century. Otherwise, it is difficult to
understand mentioning the Bagrationis as being Kurapalats and not kings. The evidence provided by N/Sin-50 also justifies one more supposition; namely, Mtskheta Jvari became a burial place for the Kartli Princes, at least for those who participated in its building: Guaram, Stepanoz, Demetre, Adarnase and members of their family. Yet the Bagrationis were also buried there. According to the Mtskheta Jvari, there was also buried the “mother of Bagratunians – with her son and son of her daughter”. The children of the mother of the Bagrationis would certainly have been Bagrationis. Given its cultural significance, Mtskheta Jvari would have become a burial place for the Bagrationis only through unification with the Kartli Princes. Therefore, it is very likely that the Bagrationis became Kartli princes, then kings, and were the legal descendants of Pharnavazians and GorgasaliANS.

HERALDRY OF THE BAGRATIONI ROYAL DYNASTY

The use of symbolic signs is a well-established historical tradition. Heraldry is the art of armorial achievements, including coats of arms. There are different types of coat of arms: patrimonial, territorial, and sovereign. The latter are often concurrent with the coat of arms of the ruling dynasty. The Georgian nation has a rich history and a long heraldic tradition.

The roots of the ancient Georgian heraldic symbols have come from totemic thought. Georgia is fortunate in that numerous historical seals with emblems have been preserved. A state gold seal of King Giorgi III (1156-1184) is of particular importance among the old Georgian symbols. It is characterized by an emblem of St. George. Seals with coat of arms became particularly widespread in Georgia in the 18th century. By the end of the 18th and the early 19th century, Georgian heraldry had come under the influence of the heraldic traditions of both Western Europe and Russia. The first Georgian patrimonial coat of arms appears only in the beginning of the 18th century, when the King of Kartli was Vakhtang VI (1703 - 1724). In 1724, King Vakhtang visited Russia and became acquainted with the heraldry of that country.

Yet there are earlier examples of heraldry in Georgia, with the Bagrationis prominent amongst the examples. On the gravestone of Queen Tinatin, the wife of Kakheti King Levan I (1518 - 1574), there is distinctive heraldry. On the shield of the coat of arms, there is an inescutcheon (smaller shield within the main shield) with the Lord’s tunic, which is the most important sacred relic of the Georgian Orthodox church. This holy tunic remains preserved in Georgia. Additionally, two lions serve as supporters for the shield. In addition to the Lord’s tunic, the remainder of the shield is quartered. On the upper left quarter, there is a sceptre and sword that symbolize the military and royal power of the Georgian kings. On the upper right quarter, there is the harp of the biblical King David and his catapult. These heraldic symbols reinforce the theory that the
Bagrationis descend from the biblical King David. In the lower left quarter, there are scales. These symbolize the justice of King Solomon, son of the biblical King David. Within the lower right hand quarter, there should have been a royal orb to be consistent with the coats of arms of the Kartli and Kakheti kings. It is unclear what is actually on the lower right quarter of Tatinat’s gravestone. Over the shield, there is a crown that resembles other European royal crowns. Surrounding the armorial achievement is a verse from the biblical Psalms: “The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; He will not turn from it; of the fruit of the body will I set upon the throne” (Psalm 132:11).

From the coats of arms that have been preserved, the next chronological evidence is the armorial achievement of Queen Tamar, wife of the Imereti King Alexander III (1639 - 1660). The design is as follows: the shield is divided into four quarters. In the upper left quarter, there is a harp of David the Prophet (the biblical King David), in the upper right quarter David’s catapult, in the lower left quarter a warder, and in the lower right quarter a sceptre and a sword. The shield is surmounted by a crown. The Lord’s tunic does not appear on Queen Tamara’s coat-of-arms; the tunic appears only on the Imereti Bagrationi armorial achievements at the beginning of the 19th century.

A third historical armorial achievement that has been preserved belongs to the Kakheti King Vakhtang VI (1703 - 1724). Originally, this achievement belonged to King Vakhtang’s uncle, the Kartli King Giorgi XI (1676 - 1688, 1703 - 1709). Another coat of arms belongs to the Kartli King Kaikhosro (1709 - 1711), who was King Vakhtang’s elder brother. Vakhtang VI had his own coat of arms from 1726 - 1737. In 1735, Vakhushi Batonishvili, the son of Vakhtang VI, drew up an important map of the Caucasus. Within this map are the coat of arms of the countries and regions that appear on it, including those of the Bagrationi family.

During the period of the Kartli-Kakheti King Erekle II (1744 - 1798) the Bagrationi armorial achievement shares a State function as well. During this period, heraldry became prominent in the kingdom. This includes a Bagrationi coat of arms that appears on the seal of a ratification deed of the Georgievsk Treaty in 1783. This was the first officially confirmed state armorial achievement of the Kingdom of Georgia. Similarly, between 1765 and 1766, heraldic symbols of the Bagrationis appear on coins minted in Tbilisi, which is the first time this occurs in Georgian history.

The next chronological Bagrationi armorial achievement belongs to Giorgi XII, King of Kartli-Kakheti. His arms were also the state arms of the Kartli-Kakheti Kingdom. During the short period of the last governor of Kartli-Kakheti (1800-1801), Prince David XII also had an armorial achievement.

From 1801, east Georgia (the Kartli-Kakheti Kingdom) fell under the domination of the Russian Empire. This affected the heraldry of that time, and various changes occurred in stylistic
expressions. Thus, the first period of independent Georgian heraldry came to the end, ushering in a second era that is typically referred to as the Russian-European period. During this era, Bagrationi heraldry was reduced with historical evidence only of the armorial achievement of Prince David (XII). Famed heraldist M. Vadbolski refers to heraldry within this era as the “protectorate period”.

There are even fewer surviving records of the heraldic traditions of the Bagrationi dynasty in the Imereti Kingdom. Only a few coats of arms have been preserved:

1) Those of Queen Tamar, the first wife of the Imereti King Alexander III (1630 - 1660);

2) Those of the Imereti King Alexander V (1720 - 1752); and

3) Those of the Imereti King Solomon II (1789 - 1810).

In honour of Old Colchis, since the latter half of the 18th century, a sheep is represented on the coat of arms to symbolize this ancient country and its glorious history.

There is also heraldry from non-Royal ancillary Bagrationi families. By the end of the 15th century, the single state of Georgia was partitioned into several political units. These political units were governed by the Royal branches of Kartli, Kakheti, and Imereti. In the early 16th century, a branch of the princely Mukhranbatoni family separated itself from the Kartli Bagrationi Royal House. From 1512 to 1801, this family owned the Mukhrani principedom, which did not have individual sovereignty. This princely branch did not have a unique armorial achievement until the 19th century, when the family inappropriately usurped the arms of the already deposed Royal family of Georgia (Bagrationi-Gruzinski). One of these early Mukhranbatoni coats of arms belong to the descendants of the King Iese of Kartli, who migrated to Russia in 1757. This coat of arms was confirmed by the Emperor Alexander I of Russia on 4th October of 1803. It was listed in the “common register of coats of arms”, part VII (number 2), as a patrimonial coat of arms of the Bagrationis themselves.

Another branch of Bagrationis with heraldry are the Davitishvilis. In the early 15th century, a branch of the Bagrationis, the Davitishvilis, separated from the Kakheti Bagrationi Royal House. The family settled in Kartli due to intertribal tension. By the 18th century, the Bagrationi-Davitishvilis also had their own coat-of-arms.

An additional heraldic Bagrationi line is the Babadishs. In the second half of the 17th century, the line of Bagrationi-Babadishs separated from the Kakheti Bagrationi Royal House. By the 18th century, this line had established its own coat-of-arms that was later confirmed by the Russian Empire. Within this armorial achievement were royal symbols of the Bagrationi family. (This prince is from Bagration-Gruzinski family and not of Bagration-Babadishi)
Presently, there are more than 50 armorial variants that belong to the Georgian Kings of the Bagrationi family. The arms of the Princes Gruzinski (the descendants of King Erekle II) were confirmed within the Russian Empire on 22nd January of 1886. This confirmation was included in the common register of arms, specifically Vol. XIV, №2. Other armorial bearings for the Bagrations dynasty are recorded in various historical seals, gravestones, and private articles.

**OFF SHOOTS OF THE BAGRATIONI ROYAL HOUSE: 16th - 18th CENTURIES**

The main Royal Bagrationi line spawned many lines. Given a lack of consistency in succession rules, some of these offshoot lines were significant in the history of Georgia. For classification purposes, it is easier to break these groupings into stages.

The initial stage of collateral lines was regarded as a “Tekhili” (a turning point in Georgian history). In the 13th century, royal power was devolving and foreign affairs became more complicated. In conjunction with the general weakening of the throne, Georgian princes engaged in violent struggles for dominance within their domains. From 1298 to 1318, several kings ruled simultaneously. This gave rise to the collateral lines of descent that became important for the first time since Georgia coalesced into a country. The era was known for provincial kings with reduced centralized authority.

The subsequent “Orianoba” stage further weakened centralized power and broke up the administrative machinery. This, in turn, affected the House of Bagrationi. The interrelationship between the dissolution of the united Georgian feudal monarchy and the meddling of offshoot Bagrationi family lines is strong. Interfamily rivalry led to power grabs. This resulted in a lack of governmental
stability and continuity that ultimately resulted in the country becoming splintered.

After the collapse of the united kingdom of Georgia, the various Batonishvili (princes) and the Bagrationi family struggled to maintain their rights within the independent kingdoms. The rights of inheritance that were established in previous centuries were no longer respected; power vacuums and political intrigue often determined the inheritance instead. This led to a reduction in the status of the Batonishvili amongst the general populace. Unlike in previous centuries, these princes were no longer referred to as prince-kings, and it was clear that these off-shoot branches lacked sovereignty in their own right.

Throughout the 14th and 15th centuries, these offshoot branches, although reduced in status, remained linked with the royal Bagrationi family. But from the 16th century, as new principalities were established, some of these lines did not solely retain the Royal name of Bagrationi. These lines were called Natomi Mepeni, and historical examples of these collateral lines are Bagration-Gochashvili, Bagration-Mukhranski, Bagration-Davitishvili, Bagration-Babadishi, and Bagration-Ramazishvili.

This brief review demonstrates that collateral offshoot branches have caused administrative challenges for the Royal Bagrationi family for many centuries, including being instrumental in the collapse of the united Georgian kingdom.

**ON THE ORIGINS OF THE GREAT ROYAL FAMILY OF BAGRATIONI-GRUZINSKI**

The history of the Bagrationi Royal family is organically connected with the Georgian people for centuries. The Bagrationi Royal Dynasty, which headed the Georgian state for more than a thousand years, rightly occupies a place of honour amongst Christian dynasties. Over the millennia, representatives of the Bagrationi Royal dynasty made significant contributions to the country's military, political evolution, and cultural development. The dissolution of the unified Georgian kingdom led to the establishment of the Kartli, Kakheti, and Imereti Royal branches of the House.

According to the 1801 manifest of Russian Emperor Alexander I, the Bagrationi Royal rule of the Kartli-Kakheti kingdom was illegally abolished, and Georgia was declared to be a Russian province. Despite the illegal military overthrow, the Bagrationi Royal family continued to make significant contributions to Georgia and the greater Russian Empire in the military, scientific, artistic, literary, and other spheres. Within the Russian Empire, children of the Kartli-Kakheti (Georgian) kings Erekle II and Giorgi XII had official titles of “Georgian Princes and Princesses”. In Russia, the honorary style for these Royals was “the Most Respectful”. In 1804 and
1812, the Russian government decided that only the sons of Georgian (Kartli, Kakheti) kings were permitted to enjoy this title. These descendants enjoyed the title of “Georgian prince” (Gruzinski).

In 1833, the Russian government adopted an additional decision regarding which grandsons of Erekle II and Giorgi XII were granted the title of “Georgian prince” (Gruzinski), and this title eventually became their surname. The representatives of all other branches of the Bagrationi family had only a title of prince, which was below the title of Georgian prince. Examples of other families that only had the title of prince are Bagration-Mukhranski, Bagration-Davitashvili, and Bagration-Babadishi.
The Legal Heir to the Royal Throne of the Georgian Bagrationi Dynasty

The Georgian Royal Dynasty – the “Iesian, Davitian, Solomonian Bagrationi” – has a documented history of roughly 1,300 years and is among the oldest monarchies in the world. (See Additional Information No. 1) This honourable dynasty, consisting of the Royal line and noble offshoots, has enriched Georgian history with saints, kings, politicians, military commanders, churchmen, scientists, and artists. Bagrationi descendants still serve their motherland and struggle for its welfare. (See Additional Information No. 2) (Perhaps the additional informations would not need to be indicated in this book).

Statement of the Chancellery of the Royal House of Georgia

“God established earthly royal rule to be similar to heavenly rule, according to His all-powerful reign; akin to His eternal realm, earthly royalty is hereditary.” The Bagrationi succession has been established through centuries of tradition, and it stipulates that there is only one rightful heir at a time. The heir must be a Bagrationi of the Royal line. While the history of Georgia has had occasional exceptions, the traditions of Georgia establish a clear succession mechanism. Any election of a monarch in Georgia or selection of a candidate from offshoot Bagrationi lines would be a rude violation of dynastic law established over centuries and supported by international law. The proper heir must be a descendant of Georgia’s last king, Giorgi XII, and also a descendant of the king Giorgi VIII, who ruled prior to the disintegration of united Georgia into the kingdoms of Kartli, Kakheti, and Imereti. (See Additional Information No. 4) The last king of united Georgia, Giorgi VIII, represented both the east Georgian bloodline of his father, Davit-Ulu, and the west Georgian bloodline of Davit-Narini, through his mother. This was of major importance in the legitimization of the Royal line of the united Georgia. (See Additional Information No. 5)

During the 30-year rule of Giorgi VIII, the Ottomans fractured the coalition between Georgia and the rest of Europe. This led to the break of the united Georgian Kingdom into the aforementioned provincial kingdoms of Kakheti, Kartli, and Imereti. (See Additional Information No. 6)

The Imereti Royal dynasty was headed by the cousin of King Giorgi VIII. Collateral lines of this dynasty led to the honourable nobility of the Bagration–Imeretinski, the Imeretinski (who did not retain the Bagrationi name), and the Imeretian Bagrationis (Ghvankiteli).

In contrast, the nephew of Giorgi VIII, Konstantine, gave rise to the Kartli Royal dynasty. Collateral lines of this dynasty are the nobility of the Bagration–Mukhraneli and the Gochashvili.

King Giorgi VIII retained the loyalty of Kakheti and became the first ruler of the Kakheti kingdom. Collateral lines from this dynasty gave rise to the noble branches of the Bagration–Davitishvili and the Bagration–Babadishvili. Yet,
King Giorgi VIII never gave up on restoring the united Georgian Royal Throne. His struggle was carried on by his descendants and was eventually brought to realization by Erekle II. (See Additional Information No. 7)

In 1790, under the reign of King Erekle II, an agreement known as the “Treaty of the Iberians (Iverians)” was signed. Within this document, King Erekle II was recognized as the sovereign of all Georgians – “the father of them all”. The treaty was signed by Imeretian King Solomon II, Grigol Dadiani, and Simon Gurieli. Thus the status of King Erekle II was inherited by his son, who became the Georgian King Giorgi XII. (See Additional Information No. 8)

In 2006, a memorandum was signed by the House of Bagrationi in which Nugzar Bagrationi-Gruzinski was recognized as the Royal heir to the throne. The memorandum confirms the legal, historical, and genealogical reasons why he is the Royal heir. Additionally, the memorandum contains legal documents from historians of the Georgian Academy of Sciences, recognition of Prince Nugzar as the rightful heir from the Georgian genealogical society and the assembly of the Georgian nobility, and historical documents preserved in the libraries of the Georgian and Russian State Archives. Furthermore, the memorandum contains recognition of Prince Nugzar as the rightful heir by the all-Russian Monarchy Centre, the scientific board of the Moscow Memorial Museum of the Russian Imperial Name, and the Peter-Paul Imperial Society. (See Additional Information No. 10)

Some people maintain that the Royal heir should instead be chosen from offshoots of the Kartli or Imereti Bagrationis because Prince Nugzar Bagrationi only has daughters. But entertaining such a notion is contrary to Georgian dynastic law and could be considered an attempt to usurp the throne of the rightful Prince Nugzar. Neither of the Kartli and Imereti Bagrationi lines represent the direct heirs of the last king of the united Georgia, Giorgi XII. Neither do these lines represent the direct heirs of King Giorgi VIII, who reigned prior to the dissolution of the united Georgian kingdom. The Throne of united Georgia belongs only to the Bagration-Gruzinski Royal House, and Prince Nugzar Bagrationi is the current heir to the throne and the Head of the Royal House. Consequently, as the Royal heir, Prince Nugzar has every right under dynastic law to name his future heir. That heir is Princess Anna Bagrationi-Gruzinski. (See Additional Information No. 11)

Today, women reign in Britain, the Netherlands, and Denmark have dynasties that are perpetuated through the female line. The kings of Romania and Sweden have likewise named their daughters as the future heirs to the throne. Within Georgia, the concept of female leadership is well-settled historically. In the Middle Ages, the Georgian throne was occupied by the King of Kings Tamar,
King of Kings Rusudan, and the King – queen of Hereti, who was Dinara I. Additionally, there was Dinara II, who was the Queen Regent of Kakheti Ketevan, and the King – queen of Imereti, who was Darejan. Consequently, it is well-established that if a monarch has no son, the dynasty continues through the female line. (See Additional Information No. 12)

Prince Nugzar accepted the proposal of the Catholicos Patriarch, Ilia II, to pass the Royal headship of the House of Bagrationi through his daughter. Therefore, at his death, the Royal line will pass to his daughter and to a child of hers. Naming the future heir to the throne is solely the prerogative of the Head of the Royal House according to historical customs and dynastic law. (See Additional Information No. 13)

Holy Easter, 2010
Chancellor of the Royal House Kakha Koridze
ON THE ORIGINS OF THE GREAT ROYAL FAMILY OF BAGRATONI-GRUZINSKI

The history of the Bagrationi Royal family is organically connected with the Georgian people for centuries. The Bagrationi Royal Dynasty, which headed the Georgian state for more than a thousand years, rightly occupies a place of honour amongst Christian dynasties. Over the millennia, representatives of the Bagrationi Royal dynasty made significant contributions to the country’s military, political evolution, and cultural development. The dissolution of the unified Georgian kingdom led to the establishment of the Kartli, Kakheti, and Imereti Royal branches of the House.

According to the 1801 manifest of Russian Emperor Alexander I, the Bagrationi Royal rule of the Kartli-Kakheti kingdom was illegally abolished, and Georgia was declared to be a Russian province. Despite the illegal military overthrow, the Bagrationi Royal family continued to make significant contributions to Georgia and the greater Russian Empire in the military, scientific, artistic, literary, and other spheres. Within the Russian Empire, children of the Kartli-Kakheti (Georgian) kings Erekle II and Giorgi XII had official titles of “Georgian Princes and Princesses”. In Russia, the honorary style for these Royals was “the Most Respectful”. In 1804 and 1812, the Russian government decided that only the sons of Georgian (Kartli, Kakheti) kings were permitted to enjoy this title. These descendants enjoyed the title of “Georgian prince” (Gruzinski).

In 1833, the Russian government adopted an additional decision regarding which grandsons of Erekle II and Giorgi XII were granted the title of “Georgian prince” (Gruzinski), and this title eventually became their surname. The representatives of all other branches of the Bagrationi family had only a title of prince, which was below the title of Georgian prince. Examples of other families that only had the title of prince are Bagration-Mukhranski, Bagration-Davitashvili, and Bagration-Babadishi.
About the Divine Origin of Bagrationis Royal Dynasty

“from The Stem Of David The Psalmist Are We
By Origin, And, Therefore, Divine Right Of Kings
We Have – Bagrationis And We Are King And
Prophet David’s Tribes”
“new Kartli life”

King David's Tomb in Har Zion

According to Venice merchant Marko Polo’s source “Georgian kings were born with eagle on the right shoulder” (1. Marco Polo. Travell. Edition of Magidovicha. Moscow, 1954, str.153). The theory of divine origin of Bagrationis royal dynasty is one of the peculiarity. According to the Bible, God chooses Jewish people, where the kingdom he establishes: “Praise be to the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on the throne of Israel. Because of the LORD’s eternal love for Israel, he has made you king, to maintain justice and righteousness” (2. Bible. Publication of the Georgian Patriarchate. Tbilisi, 1989, str.249 - Kings And, Chapter 10, Section 1) (in Georgian).


The theory of Bagrationis’ origin from Biblical David is citied from Byzantine emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus “De administrando imperio”: Must know that Iverians, namely - the people of Curapalates, priding, assert that originate from the wife of Uri (Hit- Christ blessing the Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII Porfirogenet tite), committing adultery with David, prophet and basileus. They take place, according to them, from David's children, they are the relatives of David, prophet and basileus, and the same and All-Holy our Lady, because it originated from a seed of David. As they talk, they take place from Jerusalem, as great respect they feed to him and to the coffin Lord our Jesus Christ, and from time to time generously send money to patriarch of the sainted hail and local Christians. Since migration them from Jerusalem in the country now inhabited by them passed to this pore, to 10 indiction 6460 from creation of the world (952), to the reign of Constantin and Romana, God Grigol Khandzteli (Miniatures of the XII c.) lovers and crimson wearing Basilius of Rome - 400 years or even 500”. (7. Porfirogenet Constantine VII (Porphyrogenitus). On the control of the empire. Edited G.G.Litavrina. Moscow, 1991, str.193-195).

First notification of about theory of Bagrationis’ origin from Biblical David or about their divine origin is kept in Giorgi Merchule’s “life of the Saint Grigol”; Grigol Khandzteli said to Ashot Curapalates: “Called son of David the prophet and anointed king, kingdom and virtue strengthens the Christ to you” and legitimate Ashot the Ist Curapalates right on Tao-Klarjeti. (8. George Merchule. Life of Grigol Khandzelty. In: Monuments of Georgian hagiographic literature, Book II, Tbilisi, 1963 (in Georgian); George Merchule. Life of Gregory Handztiyskogo. Georgian text, introduction, edition, translated from the Diary

“Kartli Convert” and Sumbat son of David considered Adarnase Curopalates as a representative of Kartlian dukes house and their member. In one of Georgian historical source tradition, promotion of Bagrationis family is dated back of VI century, and founder of Georgian Bagrationis dynasty is considered Guaram (Gurgen) the duke (hence, they call it as a Guaramian house). That notice of Sumbat son of David refers Byzantine emperor Constantine Porphyrogennetos (1913-959) information about 400-500 years ago dwelling of Bagrationis in Iberia.


For example, historian of David the Builder king David IV is considered as the 78th heir of Jewish king David: “in the darkness raised sun of all kingdom, great by name and the greatest by acting, name of nobles, David, from God’s Father and seventy eighth child of this David himself, David”. (11. Life of the King of Kings David. Text prepared for publication, research, vocabulary and pointers supplied Mzekala Shanidze. Tbilisi, 1992, str.165 (in Georgian).

After inserting the reconstructed appendix of “Kartli life” by the commission of King Vakhtang VI, “Prince of Kartli Guaram” was Khosroyan (Parnavazian) from the mother and the Bagration from father.”The nearly same refer has prince Vakhushti; thus, they say about relationship between those families. Armenian anonym of historian Sebeos connects Bagrationis to royal dynasty of Kartli and considered themselves as Parnavazian branch. Historical traditions kept in `life of Kartli` relates Kartlian dukes with Parnavazian dynasty. (12. Vakhushti. Description of the Georgian kingdom. In: “Kartlis Tskhovreba”, Volume IV. Text published S.Kauhchishvili. Tbilisi, 1973, str.565 (in Georgian).) Legend about Bagrationis’ origin from Biblical David aimed to strengthen of idea Georgian state independence and originality. That stipulated “habit of Georgians not to have the any proprietor, otherwise, they have hair of Kings relative” and if pretender of “kingdom” was not `king’s relative he “couldn’t take liberties to call the king or equal to it and not a royal surname”. (13. Vakhushti. Description of the Georgian kingdom. In: “Kartlis Tskhovreba”, Volume IV. Text published S.Kauhchishvili. Tbilisi, 1973, str.565 (in Georgian).
In genealogy made by Vakhtang the VI further branches of Solomon circled ovals. There is the genealogical line represented from Biblical Adam to Noah, from Noah to David the prophet, form David to Georgian kings till XVIII century. Thus is stressed Bagrationis direct relativity with Biblical David. (14. Georgian antiquities found in the Gorky region. “Literary finding” Vol. IV. Tbilisi, 1947, see Appendix № 1 (in Georgian) Biblical genealogies of Georgian Kings compiled by King Vakhtang VI. In: Bagrationis. Scientific and cultural heritage. Tbilisi, 2003, p.256-257 (in Georgian).

Georgia coming under the auspices of Saint Virgin and owner of the Christ tunic. After Georgian historical sources “there were sent Elios Mtskheteli and Longinos Karnesi and they met the crucifixion there”; after Jesus Christ was “nailed to the cross” “the tunic was apportioned to Mtskhetians: took Elios and brought in mtskheta (Ancient capitol of Georgia)”, in the town called “the second Jerusalem”. After Ascension Day: “as the apostles casting lots, than Holy Virgin apportioned the country of Georgia to convert”; when the Savor appeared to her, he said: “Oh, mother of mine, I don’t Elios Mtskheteli with the Tunic of the Christ (Svetitskhoveli cathedral) deny the eminent nation above all to be under your protection. And you send the Saint Andrew to your apportion and give him your icon reflected after you put your face. And instead of you the icon protects them forever”. (15. Monk Arsene. Life decent and on par with the apostles referred to the worthy Saint Nino. Edition of the Church of the museum. Tbilisi, 1904 (in Georgian).

Really “in time of Aderk reign Andrew and Simon Canaanites came in apportioned to her country – Georgia, from twelve apostles”. Georgian catholics Nicolas Gulaberisdze (XII century) stressed that Georgia auspices to Saint Virgin – “it was part of the Mother of God”. Old mistress told to Saint Nino about terrestrial torment of the Savior: “Annunciation and Epiphany, Crucifixion and Easter, and the Shroud and Materials, and Cross and Tunic”. Saint Nino asks: “where the tunic is?”, she was replied: “that was shared among Mtskhetian Yids”. Equal to the Apostles Saint Nino “all time long prayed toward the Holy Virgin icon in the cell”, to see the first holiness of Christianity – the Savor tunic (shirt). “The Holy Virgin took heed her imploring and mentioned about apportion of Georgian nation, when apostles shared the countries and therefore prepared worthy and Saint Nino as an Apostle, and blest we are and yearned for being part of Holy Virgin”; “And Holy Virgin appeared to worthy Saint Nino in the dream at night and said to her: “Go to the North country and preach the Gospel of my son and you find out grace before God and I’ll be your guard helper”. (16. Monk Arsene. Life decent and on par with the apostles referred to the worthy Saint Nino. Edition of the Church of the museum. Tbilisi, 1904 (in Georgian).
Bagrationis especially stressed tunic possession. Georgia and Royal Family possess one of the first relic and holiness, which is marvelous for any nation or country because its possession and divine theory of Bagrationis origin reflected on the Bagrationis royal emblem (also on the state flags and stamps). That is notable that tunic all time puts on the special place. Possession of the Tunic and divine origin of Bagrationis family display on the Royal emblem inscription: “Royal Tunic Davidic Georgia”. Besides the Savor Tunic there is a sling of David the prophet killed the Goliath on the Royal Emblem, his Harp, also there are royal regalia on the emblem – sphere, scepter, sword and scales. They represented elements revealing Bagrationis Family’s divine origin. (17. T.Asatiani. Coat of Arms of Georgia. Magazine “Artanuji”, № 5, Tbilisi, 1996, p.41-42 (in Georgian) Georgian flags and emblems according Vakhushti Bagrationi. Compiled N.Gamtsemlidze, T. Kiknadze. Tbilisi, 1991, page 7, 9.11 (in Georgian); I.Bichikashvili.

About Georgian historical state flag and crest. Magazine “Гербовед”, № 29, Moscow, 1998, page 134, 141). That is confirmed inscriptions on their family emblem as follows: “The Lord swore an oath to David, a sure oath that he will not revoke: “one of your own descendants I will place on your throne”. (Ps.131.11) “This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom” (John, 19.23).

The earliest portrayal of the Coat of Arms of Queen Tinatin, wife of the King of Kakheti Levan I, XVI c.)

The Coat of Arms of King of Kartli Vakhtang VI (1722)

The Coat of Arms of King Giorgi XII of Georgia (1799)

In respect to the Tunic of the Virgin, the king Bagrat IV of Georgia in 1030 married the niece of the Byzantine emperor Romanus III Argery Helen. According to one of the legends, she brought a rich dowry in Georgia, among which was the Tunic of the Virgin.
(18. David Bakradze. Caucasus in the ancient monuments of Christianity. Tiflis, 1881). According to Georgian sources, the Tunic of the Holy Virgin is not mentioned in any of them, even in the 12th century, the Catholicos-Patriarch of Georgia Nikoloz Gulaberidze in his work, along with the Tunic of Christ does not mentions the Tunic of the Virgin. In 1386, the Russian Mitropolit Pimen during his visit to Constantinople, while examining shrines, which were placed in local churches and monasteries. During a visit to the cathedral of Vlakherna he was shown coffin in which lay the Tunic and the belt of the Holy Virgin (19. S.Snsorova. “Earthly Life of the Holy Virgin Mary and a description of the holy miracle-working icons of her.” Yaroslavl, 1997, p.83).

There is also a legend that the Tunic of the Mother of God is stored in Georgia. In particular, after the fall of Constantinople Greek monks (refugees), along with other relics, was brought this holy relic in the western part of Georgia - Megrelia. They found shelter in various convents Samegrelo, where they could be saved from the destruction. In 1639, Russia’s ambassador visited the Duke of Samegrelo Levan II Dadiani, in his subsequent description of the embassy, he gives evidence that he visited monastery of Khobi, where he was shown the Tunic of the Holy Virgin (20. Description of the Embassy of Zakharyin on the land of Dadiani. In the book: “Russian travelers in XVI-XVIII th centuries”. Moscow, 1956, p.87). According to the catholic missioner - Patri Dzampi, who visited Mingrelia in the 40s of the XVII th century, during his visit to the monastery of Khobi, he was shown the Tunic of the Virgin (21. Giuseppe Dzheduch from Milan. Letters about of Georgia. From Italian to Georgian was translated, also made introduction and notes by B. Giorgadze. Tbilisi, 1964, str.156, G.Kalandia. Bishopric of Odishi. Tbilisi, 2004, str.193-194 (in Georgian).

Today, the Georgian Orthodox Church, in every year, during the celebration of the Holy Virgin Mary makes accessible for believers to worship the Holy Tunic.

Therefore, His Royal Highness Prince Nugzar of Georgia in his new Coat of Arms made some changes and added a Tunic of Holy Virgin.

The Coat of Arms of HRH Crown Prince of Georgia Nugzar Bagrationi-Gruzinski - Designed by Emir Burjanadze
The legitimate heir-to-the-throne of Georgia reviewed in a historical and genealogical context

The Georgian nation is grateful to the Lord that the genuine royal family of Bagrationi has survived to this very day, which has at least 1,300 years of history. The period between the 8th and 9th centuries AD witnessed the formation of the Principality of Tao-Klarjeti, led by the powerful Bagrationi Dynasty. This was one of the most powerful territorial unions in the territory of south-west Georgia, which sought the reunification of old Georgian lands. The territory was occupied by the dynasties of King Farnavaz and King Vakhtang Gorgasali, but was then divided during the Arab invasion (see the genealogical scheme of King Vakhtang VI).

Beginning with the Kingdom of Tao-Klarjeti, the ruling branch was considered a line of the Bagrationi of Tao, although genealogically this was a junior branch. From the second half of the 8th century onwards until the reign of David IV these kings held the title of “Kurapalati” (an honorable title which was granted by the Byzantine emperors to the Georgian kings).

By the end of the 9th century (898), the Head of the Tao branch of the Tao-Klarjeti Bagrationi Dynasty, Adarnase II (898-923), received the title of “King of Georgians” (this included Tao-Klarjeti and part of the territory of Kartli). Between the 9th and 10th centuries the leadership of the Tao-Klarjeti was continued by the successors of the middle son of Ashot I Kurapalati, Bagrat I Kurapalati (826-876). King Bagrat III (975-1014), the Head of Tao branch and the direct descendant of Adarnase II, was the one who unified again Georgian lands.

The period between the 10th and 11th centuries saw the formation and reinforcement of the united Georgian monarchy. Between the 12th century and the following one Georgia became one of the strongest countries in western Asia. After the period of David IV Aghmashenebeli and King (Queen) Tamar, Georgia entered into a political decline, marked by the Mongolian invasions and the endless attacks by other invaders.

The rule of succession in the Bagrationi dynasty is similar to that of Byzantium, according to which the royal throne could be transferred not only to the eldest son, but also to the youngest one. In the absence of a male heir, the throne of Georgia could then pass to the eldest daughter. This was the case of King Demetre I (1125-1156), when his eldest son, the legitimate heir-to-the-throne, could not stand any longer his father’s reign. He led a revolt against his father, depriving him of the throne by sending him to a monastery to become a monk. His son became a king, David V, in 1155. King David had of course violated the ancient rules of Georgian Dynastic succession. After a short period the
supporters of King Demetre I led a revolt against King David and was defeated. This led to the restoration of Georgian dynastic law.

King Demetre I re instituted the throne of Georgia. However, after his demise Prince Demna (the son of the rebellious King David V), could not become king of Georgia, since he was still under age. Therefore, the throne of Georgia passed to his uncle Giorgi, the youngest son of King Demetre I, later known as King Giorgi III (1156-1184).

Like his father, Prince Demna also led a rebellion against the anointed king, but never succeeded in becoming a king. Demna died in 1178. King Giorgi III appointed his elder daughter Tamar as his co-ruler. In 1184, after her father’s demise, Tamar became Queen of Georgia, and her reign is known as the Golden Age of Georgia. Tamar was canonized by the Georgian Orthodox Church and became Saint Queen Tamar. When a Georgian female heir-to-the-throne got married, the Georgian Dynastic Law of “Zedsidzeoba” (“Georgian Law on marriage concerning “Consort son-in-law”), was applied (see D. Ninidze “Offshoots of the Bagrationi Royal House in the 16th-18th centuries”, Tbilisi, 2004, p. 41).

After the failure of the King (Queen) Tamar’s first marriage with the Russian Prince Yuri Bogolubski, she married David Soslan, who stemmed from an offshoot branch of the Bagrationis, and therefore the child born from this marriage (the future King Giorgi IV) continued the royal succession of the King of Kings (Queen of Queens) Tamar (Life of Kartli, V. 1, text established according to all the general manuscripts by S. Kaukhchishvili, Tbilisi, 1955, p. 369).

Queen Tamar’s daughter, Rusudan (1223-1245), married the Seljuk Prince Ghias ad-Din in 1224. This did not prevent the legitimate successor of Queen Rusudan to continue using the royal surname of Bagrationi. For example, Queen Rusudan’s son, King David VI (Narini), bears the surname of Bagrationi as well as his descendants: King of Georgia Vakhtang II and the Kings of Western Georgia, Constantine I, Miqeli, St. King (Queen) Tamar (1184-1210/13) Bagrat Eristavi, Aleksandre I, Giorgi I, and Constantine II. What is being said here is proved by various historical documents. For instance, the deed of 1271 states the following “in the name of the Lord, We, David Bagrationi, the son of the King of the Kings (Queen of the Queens) blessed Rusudan, by the grace of God, the King of Abkhazians, Georgians, Kakhetians and Armenians, Sharvansha and Shaansha, and the Conqueror of the East and West” (Georgian historical documents, 9th – 13th centuries, prepared for publishing by T. Enukidze, V. Silogava, and N. Shoshiashvili, Tbilisi, 1984, p. 175). Another document dated 1278 states “By the will and help of the Lord, from David Bagrationi the son of King (Queen) Rusudan and from Our son King Vakhtang” (Georgian historical documents, 9th – 13th centuries, prepared for publishing by T. Enukidze, V. Silogava, and N. Shoshiashvili, Tbilisi, 1984, p. 175). The latter deed was
afterwards approved by the grandson of King David VI (Narini), King Bagrat, the son of Michele. The same is confirmed by the historical source named “The centennial chronicle”: “Sixty second Kings - David, the son of the King Giorgi IV (Lasha), and David the son of the King (Queen) Rusudan, Bagrationis” (The chronicler: In the book: Life of Kartli (Georgia), Vol. 2. Text is set according to all the general manuscripts by S. Kaukhchishvili, Tbilisi, 1959, pg. 226).

Today, the surname of Bagrationi has more than one hundred representatives, in Georgia and abroad. Naturally, not all of these representatives are heirs to the Royal Throne. And this was the main reason why following the collapse of the Soviet Union many scholars and researchers raised an issue to establish the legitimate heir-to-the-throne of Georgia. To determine this, it was first necessary to consider the fact that Georgia, notwithstanding its two hundred years of Russian supremacy, survived to this day as a whole country and not in segregated states. Scholars had, therefore, to determine which branch of the Royal family of Georgia could be the legitimate successor not only of the last King of united Georgia (Giorgi VIII), before this was separated in the 15th century, but also of the last King of Georgia (Giorgi XII), who was the last monarch of the de jure restored kingdom in the second half of the 18th century. The representatives of the Kakhetian kingdom, which was established by the last King of undivided Georgia, Giorgi VIII, had on various occasions tried hard to reunite Georgia. One has to mention in particular King Teimuraz I (1625-1633), King Erekle I (1688-1703), King Aleksandre III (1717-1735), and King Teimuraz II (1744-1762). King Erekle II (1744-1798) finally succeeded in reuniting the kingdoms of Kartli and Kakheti in 1763. Today, the Head of the Royal House of Georgia is His Royal Highness Crown Prince Nugzar, the legitimate heir of the above mentioned kings.

The royal branch of Kartli became extinct in 1919 with the demise of Prince Dimitri Petrovich (1863-1919). Even if this royal branch survived, its representatives would still not have been considered as legitimate claimants to the throne of Georgia, since as an autonomous political unit the Kingdom of Kartli had ceased to exist in 1763, and juridically became part of the unified Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti (Georgia).

The princely offshoot branches of the Kingdom of Kartli indicated in the genealogical chart are: the Princes of Bagration-Mukhranski and the Bagration-Gochashvili. Those of the Kingdom of Kakheti are: the Princes of Bagration-Babadishi and the Bagration-Davitishvili. According to Georgian Dynastic rules and historical facts, these branches never had any relation to the Royal throne of Georgia. From a genealogical and historical perspective, the Imereti Royal branch is considered as a junior offshoot. This derives from the younger brother of King Alexandre I (1412-1442), Prince Giorgi, and not from the last King of united Georgia, Giorgi VIII, or from the last king of Georgia, Giorgi XII. The Treaty of the Iverians needs to be emphasized as well. According to this, the Kingdom of Imereti, together with the Principalities of Samegrelo and Guria, recognized the sovereign rights of King Erekle II. Later on, these rights and prerogatives were inherited by the last King of Georgia, Giorgi XII, whose direct heir is His Royal Highness Prince Nugzar. Following Prince Nugzar, these rights
and prerogatives will be inherited by his elder daughter, Her Royal Highness Princess Anna.

According to the Georgian Dynastic Law of “Zedsidzeoba”, the two daughters born from Princess Anna’s first marriage, Princesses Irine and Mariam Bagrationi-Gruzinskis, will be next in line after their mother Princess Anna. On the other hand Prince Giorgi, born from Princess Anna’s second marriage, remains a representative of the princely offshoot branch line of the Bagration-Mukhranskis. This is also confirmed by the genealogical record of the “Almanach de Gotha”. When Princess Anna’s second marriage fits the framework of the Georgian Dynastic Law, and when the Georgian Dynastic Law of “Zedsidzeoba” is no longer ignored but adopted and implemented by the child’s father, then Prince Giorgi will be considered as the legitimate successor of the Kingly Line of his mother. This will put him above his elder sisters in the line of succession and becomes the future heir-to-the-throne of Georgia. Such is the Georgian Dynastic Law, which has never been changed and no one has the right to ever change it.

The Legitimate Heir to the Throne of United Georgia

Let us suppose that the last King of Georgia, Giorgi XII, was only the King of Kakheti and at the same time there were also other legitimate heirs from the royal lines of Imereti and Kartli. To establish the legitimate heir to the throne of united Georgia from all these potential representatives, one needs to refer to the Georgian dynastic law, which is based on traditions, history, and genealogies.

Could the representatives of the potential heirs of Imereti and Kartli have a right to claim the throne of united Georgia? For example, is it possible for a potential heir of the royal line of Kartli to claim the thrones of Kakheti and Imereti or, in the case of an heir of the royal line of Imereti, to claim the thrones of Kakheti and Kartli? The answer is certainly not. The reason is that the last king of united Georgia was Giorgi VIII (1446-1466), after whom the country was partitioned into several parts. Only the direct descendants of this King have a right to claim the throne of united Georgia, because neither the Imeretian nor the Kartlian royal lines are related with King Giorgi VIII.

Only the royal line of Prince Nugzar is related. Let us also suppose that all these royal lines descend from the same King, Giorgi VIII. This particular issue would have been resolved by determining who is the direct descendant of the last King of Georgia, Giorgi XII (1798-1800). Even in this case Prince Nugzar’s line still remains the most senior, because it is the only one that descends from King Giorgi XII. This is the reason why the Georgian dynastic law considers it crucial to determine the real direct legitimate successor of both Kings (King Giorgi VIII and King Giorgi XII) in order to establish the true heir to the Georgian throne.

Besides, Prince Nugzar unites the royal blood of the Kartli-Kakhetian King Erekle II and the royal blood of the last Kartlian King Vakhtang VI (1703-1724), because the daughter of King Vakhtang was the mother of King Erekle II. Here one should also mention that the representatives of the former Royal House of the Kartlian kings became extinct in 1919. Prince Nugzar is the sole legitimate blood descendant of the first dynasty of the
Kartlian anointed kings, as were his ancestors Constantine II (1484-1505), David X (1505-1525), Giorgi IX (1525-1527), Luarsab I (1527-1556), Simon I (1556-1600), Giorgi X (1600-1606), and Khoreshan (? -1659) (the mother of King Erekle I (1688-1709)). This first dynasty of the Kartlian kings became extinct in 1658. None of the other Bagrationi representatives do represent blood-succession from the above mentioned kings, except for Prince Nugzar (see genealogical chart below).

(Picture of The last king of united Georgia Giorgi VIII (1446-1466)

From a genealogical and historical perspective, the Imereti royal branch is considered as a cadet branch, because it is not related with the last King of united Giorgia, Giorgi VIII, but descends from the younger son of King Constantine I (1407-1412), Prince Giorgi. The elder son of King George XII, Crown Prince David (XII), de jure ruler of Georgia between 1800-1801, in one of his letters sent to the Russian Emperor, dated 25th December 1812, shows concern about the Imereti and the Akhaltsikhe regions. He declares: “...the Ottoman Empire did not have any right to occupy the Imereti and Akhaltsikhe regions, because by hereditary right these belong to Our Royal House. The representatives who ruled over the Imereti region are not the legitimate descendants of the Bagrationis family, which is so famous among the local people”. (Two notes by Crown Prince David about “the best device of Georgia.” Prepared or publication by I.K. Enikolopov. “Materials on the History of Georgia and the Caucasus,” Edition I, Tb., 1942, pg.132, 136). What was meant by Prince David by illegitimacy of the Imeretian line could become perfectly clear if we look at the genealogical table of the Bagrationi dynasty. Probably he was referring to the large number of illegitimate sons who were becoming Kings of Imereti.

A similar case which concerns the enthronement of an illegitimate son occurs also in the royal line of Kartli, when the King of Kartli- The last king of united Georgia Giorgi VIII (1446-1466) The Crown Prince David (XII) de jure ruler of Georgia (1800-1801) Kakheti, Teimuraz I (1625-1633), the direct descendant of the last King of united Georgia Giorgi VIII, was forcibly expelled from Kartli by Iranian forces. Instead, the throne of Kartli passed on the Muslim Prince Rostom, who was an illegitimate son of the former King of Kartli, David XI. It is important to mention that such cases never occurred before, neither in the period of united Georgia nor after its division, which again proves Prince Nugzar’s undoubted seniority.
The partition of Georgia led to the formation of two more royal branches: the Kartli and the Imereti. However, it was a well known fact that the main line of Georgian Kings was that of Kakheti, which was therefore the most senior. This also proves a historical fact which occurred in 1625, following the victory at the battle of Martkopi, where the people and nobility of Kartli unanimously proclaimed the King of Kakheti, Teimuraz I, as King of Kartli. Teimuraz I was then anointed as king at the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral. After 25 years from this historic event the king of Imereti, Alexander III (1639-1660) (despite the existence of his own son - Prince Bagrat to whom was 30 years old at that time), adopted Prince Luarsab (the grandson of King Teimuraz I) as heir-to-the throne of the Kartli-Kakheti Kingdom. Luarsab was the elder brother of King Erekle I (1688-1709). Probably this act was intended to unify the country under one king. Unfortunately, this plan was hindered by the Iranians. Nevertheless, this historical fact shows the seniority of the Kakhetian royal branch, to which His Royal Highness Crown Prince Nugzar belongs.

King Giorgi VIII: the legitimate heir of the eastern and western royal dynasties of the Bagrationis

Through King (Queen) Tamar’s second marriage two children were born: the elder son Giorgi Lasha and the younger daughter Rusudan. Later on these became King Giorgi IV Lasha (1210/13-1223) and King (Queen) Rusudan I (1223-1245).

In a period of about two hundred years the descendants of King Giorgi IV and King (Queen) Rusudan I laid the foundations for two important royal branches: that of David VI “Narini” (eastern Georgia) and that of David VII “Ulu” (western Georgia). King Giorgi IV Lasha had established that his sister Rusudan would be his immediate successor. In the meantime, Rusudan had to bring up her brother’s illegitimate son, Prince David, who upon reaching his adulthood had to become King of Georgia. King (Queen) Rusudan partially fulfilled her brother’s wish, because instead she proclaimed her own son, David, as co-ruler. In 1245 her son was anointed as King David VI “Narini” of united Georgia (Essays on Georgian History. Volume 3, edited by Z. Anchabadze, F.Guchua, Tbilisi, 1979, p. 570).
Through time, this led to direct confrontation between the two parties: the supporters of David (Queen Rusudan I’s son) and the other David (King Giorgi IV’s son). The supporters of the former asserted that, according to the Georgian law of royal succession (“Zedsidzeoba”), King David had the right to become king since he was the legitimate son of Queen Rusudan, while the other David was the illegitimate son of King Giorgi (The History of Georgia from Ancient Times to the end of the XIX Century Vol. 1, edited by A. Apakidze, N. Berdzenishvili, M. Dumbadze, G. Melikishvili, Sh. Meskhia, P. Ratiani; Tbilisi, 1958, p. 229-230).

On the other hand, the supporters of David (the son of King Giorgi) argued that the Queen had failed to comply with the King’s request. Because of the strong position taken by the supporters of Rusudan’s son, those of his rival demanded that the dispute be solved by the Mongols, because at that time Georgia was still under Mongolian domination. Finally, the dispute was examined by the Great Khan. According to Mongolian law there was no difference between legitimate and illegitimate children, therefore the Mongols decided that both of them had to reign together, but priority was to be based on their age. That is the reason why the son of King Giorgi, David, was named “Ulu”, which in Mongolian means the elder, and the son of Queen Rusudan was named “Narini”, which means the younger. The two kings ruled together between 1247 and 1259. Later on, Georgia was divided into two parts: King David VI “Narini” reigned over western Georgia, while King David VII “Ulu” ruled over eastern Georgia (Essays on Georgian History. Volume 3, edited by Z. Anchabadze, F.Guchua, Tbilisi, 1979, p. 573).
Despite the fact that in following centuries the descendants of King David VII “Ulu” continued to rule over Georgia, historians continued to argue that the royal line of King David VI “Narini” had more legal rights than the descendants of the illegitimate King David VII “Ulu”. This controversy was solved by the second marriage of King Alexander I “the Great” (1412-1442), who married a direct descendant of King David VI “Narini”, Princess Tamar (the daughter of the western provincial King Alexander (I) (1372-1389)). From this marriage was born their son Giorgi, who later on became the last king of united Georgia. Giorgi VIII, who united the western and eastern royal houses, ruled between 1446 and 1466.

**Offshoot Branches of the Bagrationi Royal House in the 16th-18th centuries**

From the second half of the 15th century onwards Georgia witnessed various dynastic confrontations and internal political battles. While the Royal throne became weaker, the struggle between the Georgian princes to inherit their respective domains became even stronger. The dissolution of the kingdom and the subsequent separation of estates led to the formation of offshoot branches within the Royal House of the Bagrationis.

This political instability eventually led to the emergence of the Kartli, the Kakheti and the Imereti Bagrationi Royal dynasties. The negative economic and social situation which prevailed in the kingdoms of Kartli, Kakheti and Imereti led to the establishment of several offshoot royal branches. Unfortunately, “provincial kings” played a regressive role which, apart from other reasons, facilitated the dissolution of the united Kingdom of Georgia. (Provincial Kings in XIV-XV Century Georgia by D. Ninidze, Tbilisi, 1995).

After the collapse of the united Kingdom of Georgia various representatives of the Batonishvili from the Bagrationi family, who were present in independent kingdoms, started struggling for their rights. The main reason for this tense situation in the Royal House was complicated. Close and distant relatives of the Royal family, particularly the offshoot branches of the Bagrationis, made claim for their respective rights and legal status. Although the rules of succession to the Royal throne were frequently violated, their representatives succeeded to obtain certain legitimate rights. This resulted in the emergence of a new branch, besides numerous others of the Bagrationis.

They made their political and economic claims, while the conditions for obtaining their relevant statuses no longer existed. Despite being related to the Bagrationis, these were no longer respected and referred to as “princes”. Throughout the 14th and 15th centuries all the offshoot branches of the Bagrationis remained loyal to the real Bagration Royal House, but from the 16th century onwards some of them failed to retain their Royal name (Bagrationi). In turn, this resulted in the emergence of the Natomi Mepeni (relatives of the King). This gave rise to the formation of different offshoot branches which had a
princely status. Therefore, the princely offshoot branches of the Bagration-Mukhranski, Bagration-Davitishvili, Bagration-Ramazishvili, Bagration-Gochashvili, Bagration-Babadishvili all belonged to the above mentioned Natomi Mepeni (The Scientific and Cultural Heritage of the Bagrationis, edited by Roin Metreveli, Rafael Chikovani and Ramaz Shengelia; Offshoots of the Bagrationi Royal House in the 16th-18th Centuries by David Ninidze, Tbilisi, 2003, p. 51-52).

For instance, since the beginning of the 16th century (1512) the Mukhranbatonis (Bagration-Moukhransky) became an offshoot branch of the Kartli kingdom. This was confirmed and expressed by Prince Ioane of Georgia, when he states: “[They are] second degree Bagrationi and first degree princes”. (Prince Ioane of Georgia, a brief description of the nobility of Georgia, n.p. “Iveria” V-VI, 1884). Moreover, the upper part of the banner which was granted to Prince Konstantine Mukhranbatoni by King Teimuraz II in 1745 contains the words Natomi Mepeni, which emphasize the origin of this offshoot branch. (The Scientific and Cultural Heritage of the Bagrationis”, edited by Roin Metreveli, Rafael Chikovani, Ramaz Shengelia; Offshoots of the Bagrationi Royal House in the 16th-18th centuries by David Ninidze, Tbilisi, 2003, p. 37-50).

According to a law enacted by King Vakhtang VI (1703-1724) of Kartli, the princes of Georgia had to be divided into three ranks: high, middle, and low. That the Mukhranbatonis had a princely origin is also evident from a list compiled by Vakhtang VI before his re-settlement in Russia in 1724. This list of royal retinue (amounting to approximately 2,000 people) included all the members of the royal family, the nobility, and servants. Every person was listed according to rank and status. This important historical document reveals once again that the Mukhrani line was part of the nobility, but not part of the Royal House. (David Guramishvili within the Georgian Hussar’s Regiment by S. Kubaneishvili, Tbilisi, 1955, p.122). Therefore, the princes of the Mukhranbatoni offshoot branch belonged to first degree of princes.

The other Georgian princes, for example the Eristavi of Aragvi, the Eristavi of Ksani, the Orbeliani, the Tsitsishvili and the Amilakhvari belonged to the same rank and were all loyal servants to the King. The direct descendant of the last King of Georgia Giorgi VIII, the anointed King of united Kartli-Kakheti, Teimuraz I (1625-1633), was expelled from Kartli by Iran to be succeeded by the illegitimate son of King David XI, the self-styled King Rostom- Khan. While Rostom attempted to strike a balance between the beliefs and customs of the Persian Shah and the Georgian people, his reign brought about the deterioration of the moral life of the country and its people. Human vices became common. Anti-national sentiment led the Patriarch of all Georgia, Evdemoz (1630-1642), to preach throughout the country about this sorrowful situation that prevailed in Georgia. He also developed and implemented a plan to bring back King Teimuraz. In 1642 Catholicos Evdemoz was arrested by King Rostom-Khan. Catholicos Evdemoz criticized the king even more harshly and called on the people to rise up against him. Finally Rostom ordered that Catholicos Evdemoz be strangled to death in his own prison cell.
Having no children of his own, King Rostom-Khan adopted the 30-year old Prince Bakhuta from an offshoot branch of the Mukhranbatoni, who later became King Vakhtang V of Kartli. This action delayed the unification of the Kartli and Kakheti kingdoms by at least another fifty years.

(Picture: King Teimuraz I of Georgia (1625-1632).

This historical fact may give some people a wrong perception, particularly those who are not quite familiar with dynastic law. Some think that with King Rostom-Khan’s adoption of Prince Bakhuta, the princely offshoot branch of Mukhrani received a royal dignity. This is completely wrong, because according to past and present legislation an adopted person loses one's own origin (that is, his/her hereditary surname) and becomes an integral part of his/her adoptive parents (thus, a heir of their estate). Following his adoption, Prince Bakhuta became the successor of King Rostom-Khan, and thus established the continuation of the Royal House of Kartli until it became extinct in 1919.

Parallel to this, the princely offshoot branch of Mukhranbatoni continued to exist till the present day and had nothing to do with the Royal House of Kartli. One should also mention that none of the seven kings of Kartli, including King Vakhtang V, were ever anointed according to the established rules. On the other hand, it is interesting to observe that all the direct ancestors of Crown Prince Nugzar, from King Ashot I the Great (780-826) down to last the King of Georgia, Giorgi XII (1798-1800), were all anointed according to the established rules and procedures, except for King Erekle I (1688-1709).

On 23rd July 1783, in a written authorization, King Erekle II refers to Princes Garsevan Chavchavadze and Ioan Bagration-Mukhranbatoni as “Our faithful servants” (The Treaty of Georgievsk by Giorgi Paichadze, Tbilisi, 1983, p. 26). By signing the Treaty of Georgievsk as a legate of the King, Prince Ioane Mukhranbatoni had confirmed the sovereign rights of King Erekle II and his direct descendants over all the other branches of the Bagrationi. (The Treaty of Georgievsk by Giorgi Paichadze, Tbilisi, 1983, p. 36, 39). Iran, the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire always considered the Kings of Kartli-Kakheti as Kings of Georgia (Letters and Other Historical Documents of the XVIII century relating to Georgia. Vol. I (1768-1774.), edited by A.A.Tsagareli, 1891; Georgia in the Archives of Europe, Vol. II by I. Tabaghua, Tbilisi, 1986).

The superiority of the Royal House of King Erekle II over all the others branches is confirmed by the fact that the highest echelons of the Imeretian Kingdom
(both secular and religious) had requested King Erekle II to put the Imeretian kingdom under his Crown. At that time this kingdom was still characterized by the presence of various representatives of the Imeretian Royal House, in particular the illegitimate son of King Solomon I; the brother of Solomon I (Prince Bagrat) and his two sons (the legitimate David and the illegitimate Simon); and the former King (David II) and his sons (the future King Solomon II and his illegitimate half-brother Prince Archil). In 1789 King Erekle II elected his grandson, Prince David, to succeed him as king. The latter took the name of Solomon II and ruled over the Imereti kingdom between 1789 and 1810. This political act confirms the superiority of the Kartli-Kakhetian Royal House. It was also an act intended to speed up the unification of Georgia, which was supported by the Imereti people.

In the same year, approximately after six months since the enthronement of Solomon II, an important document was signed. This was known as the Treaty of the Iberians (Georgians), which once again emphasizes the precedence of the Royal House of Kartli-Kakheti over all the other offshoot branches (Georgia and Russia by G. Veshapeli, Tbilisi, 1918). The precedence of this royal house is also confirmed by various historical facts which occurred during the first half of the 19th century. In all the uprisings that took place at that time, the rebellious people of Georgia demanded from Russia the restoration of the Georgian throne, headed by the representatives of the Kartli-Kakheti Royal House. In particular, they demanded that the elder son of the late King Giorgi XII, Crown Prince David (XII), to become king of the Kartli-Kakheti Kingdom, while his younger brother, Bagrat, to become king of the Imereti kingdom.

Today, the royal branch of Imereti includes descendants of the illegitimate son of Prince Bagrat (1740-1800), Simon (1771-?). According to Georgian dynastic law, the representatives of this family are not considered as royals, because this line stems from an illegitimate prince, which therefore puts them in a lesser position that the legitimate counterparts. In 1831 the wife of King Solomon II, Queen Mariam, states that Simon (the son of Bagrat), his son Rostom as well as his grandsons wore “princely” titles but were not royals (Central State Historical Archive of Georgia, Fund 2, Census I, Case № 2232, p.6). One should also observe that even after the annexation of Georgia, the representatives of the Royal House of Kartli-Kakheti, in particular the sons of King Giorgi XII, his grandsons, granddaughters, great grandsons and great grand-daughters retained their royal titles of Princes and Princesses of Georgia. (Russian State Historical Archive, Department of General Affairs, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Fund № 1284, Inventory 235: Inventory Affairs of the Chief Inspector in Terms of the Former Royal Houses of the Caucasus, 1804-1861, Letters of the Princes and Princesses of Georgia and their Children: Case № 44 (1807), Case № 58 (1815), Case № 60 (1811), Case № 251 (1861)). From the second half of the 19th century onwards the Russian Empire distinguished the representatives of the former Royal House of Georgia from all the other branches of Bagrationis by granting them the title of Serene Highnesses.

The argument that in the Imereti Kingdom several illegitimate sons became kings does not justify the real situation. The throne of Imereti was often occupied by persons who did not carry the Bagrationi surname. Examples of these include Gurieli-Demetre (1663/1668-1669), Giorgi IV (1681-1683), Mamia
III (1701-1702, 1711-1712, 1713-1714), Giorgi V (1716), and Giorgi (Malakia) Abashidze (1701-1707).

Let us refer once again to the historical fact, when King Teimuraz I was replaced by Rostom-Khan. This act was downright illegal, because Teimuraz was recognized as King of Georgia, not only in his own country but also internationally. This is clearly manifested in his diplomatic relations which he established with various other countries. In the diplomatic correspondence with certain European countries one can read: “Nicophores Irbachi (1585-1657) was conferred the title of Ambassador by the King of Iberia (Georgia) Teimuraz...”; “…the Duke of Alba! Praise be to the Lord! The Georgian King’s envoy Nicophores Irbachi trusts in thy protection”; and “The Georgian King’s envoy who is returning to his homeland...” Moreover, in a letter sent to Pope Urban VIII King Teimuraz I puts his seal which states: “Praise be to God, from the seed of David and praiseful to the Holy Trinity, the King of entire Georgia, Teimuraz” (Georgia in the Archives of Europe, Vol. II by I. Tabaghua, Tbilisi, 1986).

Following, the issue of legitimate heirs was strictly observed in the Kingdom of Kartli. Despite the fact that the illegitimate son of King Vakhtang VI, Prince Vakhushti, was older than his brother Prince Bakar, the latter was still considered as the future heir-to-the-throne of Kartli. One should also note, here, that in the case of the direct descendants of King Teimuraz I, down to Crown Prince Nugzar, no such violations ever took place (please refer to the detailed genealogical chart of the Bagrationi dynasty).

**Letter to His Holiness, the Patriarch of Georgia, Ilias II**

On 2 February of 2012, a number of well-respected Georgian scholars sent an explanatory letter to His Holiness, the Patriarch of Georgia, Ilia II. The letter was entitled “In Regard to the Matter of Succession of the Georgian throne”; the 14-page letter discussed the legal and historical rights of the Royal House of Georgia and its current succession laws. The following are the concluding comments of the letter (translated into English):

"Your Holiness and Beatitude, in accordance with your request, representatives of the two families (Bagrationi- Gruzinski and Bagration-Mukhranski) collaborated on a postmarriage dynastic succession agreement, and the outline of the agreement was sent to you (This agreement acknowledged H.R.H. Prince Nugzar’s line as the true royal line with his dynastic rights passing to the children of Prince David and H.R.H. Princess Anna). Unfortunately, Prince Davit left the country without completing your request and signing this important document. Through God’s blessing, H.R.H.
Princess Anna gave birth to a son on September 27, 2011. This fulfilled your wishes as the spiritual leader of this country and H.R.H. Prince Nugzar’s hopes as head of the royal house

of Georgia. Yet, because the document clarifying the dynastic succession rights passing through H.R.H. Prince Nugzar to his grandchild through H.R.H. Princess Anna was not signed and finalized, under the framework of Georgian dynastic law and tradition, which is supported by international law, the grandson, Prince Giorgi, is currently only the continuation of the princely line of Bagration-Mukhranski. He is therefore not a royal successor of the Royal BagrationiGruzinski line. (Please see the genealogical table of the Bagrationi Dynasty or the Almanach de Gotha at:


Despite the desire of H.R.H. Prince Nugzar, under Georgian traditions and dynastic law, he cannot name his newborn grandson Prince Giorgi as a future heir and a royal dynast. This will eventually result in widespread confusion regarding who holds the dynastic rights (after Princess Anna). Were Prince Giorgi to become a proper royal dynast, he would surpass his elder sisters T.R.H. Princesses Irine and Mariam Bagrationi-Gruzinskis in the line of succession under Georgian tradition. This is because Georgia is not a member of the European Union and is therefore not bound to consider changing the royal succession to the eldest child, regardless of gender.

H.R.H. Prince Nugzar still wants Prince Giorgi to become a lawful heir, and this is also your wish. Therefore, Prince Giorgi could still become a royal dynast if you will convene the Holy Synod and judge that: The marriage between Prince David and H.R.H. Princess Anna on 8 February of 2009 should be recognized to be in accordance with the Georgian dynastic law of “Zedsidzeoba”. Under this law, Prince David would be recognized solely as the Prince consort for H.R.H. Princess Anna of Georgia. The royal dynast rights of Bagrationi-Gruzinski could then pass to Prince Giorgi upon Prince Nugzar’s death as Prince Giorgi would be a proper Bagrationi-Gruzinski heir. The kingly Kartli-Kakheti line of Bagrationi-Gruzinski would be maintained.

Your Holiness and Beatitude, we believe that should the Holy Synod be convened and the status of the second marriage of H.R.H. Princess Anna conclusively determined, the proper succession of future heirs to the Georgian throne will be finally resolved. May God bless Georgia!

With great respect,

Signed by:"
Professor Mariam Lortkipanidze, Doctor of Historical Sciences, head of the Georgian History Department at Tbilisi State University, leading scholar of the Javakhishvili Institute of History and Ethnography of the Georgian Academy of Sciences.


Roin Metreveli is a Georgian Academician and historian. He was the first elected rector of the Tbilisi State University, after Petre Melikishvili and Ivane Javakhishvili. He was a major editor of the Georgian Encyclopedia. He is the author of more than 300 scientific publications and books about Georgian history and Caucasiology. For several years, he was member of the Georgian Parliament. He was Chairman of the Board of Rectors of all Georgian Universities.

Professor David Ninidze, Doctor of Historical Science

Professor Giorgi Otkhmezuri, Doctor of Historical science

Professor Givi

Anania, Member of the Holy Synod, Metropolitan Georgian Orthodox Church, a scholar of Georgian history
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