



### Additional information № 3

## 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 reinstated 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).



King Bagrat III (975-1014)

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, Miqueli, 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, Kakhეთians 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 chronicler. 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 Kakhეთian 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 Kakhეთi 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.



St. King (Queen) Tamar  
(1184-1210/13)

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.

