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GEORGIAN ROYAL DYNASTIES AND ISSUES OF POLITICAL INHERITANCE IN MEDIEVAL GEORGIA

Abstract

According to the Georgian historical sources, during the transfer of royal power, the issue of inheritance was of special importance. Royal power usually passed from father to son. If the throne could not be handed over directly, the daughter's rights would come to the fore. In this regard, the legal status of a woman member of the royal family is interesting. According to Georgian historical sources, **women not only had hereditary property rights but also the right to inherit royal authority**. Exactly according to this right, the royal government in Georgia has been legitimately transferred several times. One of the clearest examples of this is the enthronement of Mirian in Kartli. After marrying Abeshura, the daughter of the king of Kartli Asfaguri, he became the king of Kartli. As a result, the royal government has been transferred from wife to husband. This is how the kingship of the **Parnavazian-Chosroid** dynasty started in Kartli. Thus, Mirian and his successors became the political heirs of the Parnavazians. In the 6th century, the Bagrationi family appeared in the Georgian political arena and became actively involved in the struggle for the Georgian royal throne. After a long confrontation, at the turn of the 11th century, Bagrat III became the king of the united Georgian Kingdom. He was the political heir to both dynasties. He received the title of the king of Georgians from his father, and the Chosroid inheritance was again transferred by the line of a woman, and from Gurandukht, it passed to Bagrat.

Historical sources clearly show that the issue of the legitimacy of political inheritance was strictly conformed to first by the Chosroids and then by the Bagrations.

In conclusion, it is possible to say that the unified political line of the Georgian royal dynasty founded by Parnavaz was broken only in 1801 when the Russian Empire intervened in Georgia and abolished the monarchy. The political reality of a united Georgia was restored on a democratic basis with the adoption of the Constitution in 1921.

Keywords: History of Georgia, Royal Dynasty, Heritage, Chosroids, Bagrations.

The process of establishment of the Georgian state lasted for several centuries. Scientists believe that the oldest Georgian states used to be the kingdoms of Diaokhi/Daiaeni and Kolkha, which were created in the 2nd mill BC. Georgian historical sources attribute the creation of the first united Georgian kingdom, the kingdom of Iberia/Kartli, to King Parnavaz. This kingdom, which was established at the end of the 4th and beginning of the 3rd cc. BC, despite many changes and transformations, has existed for almost a millennium.

According to the Georgian historical sources, the Georgian royal dynasty was established by King Parnavaz. According to the Georgian historian Leonti Mroveli, Parnavaz was a descendant of the Georgian ethnarch, Kartlos, and therefore his political heir. Exactly this legacy became the main bases for his accession to the throne and recognition of his rights by the Prince of Egrisi, Kuji. This is indicated by the words of Kuji, which are mentioned by Leonti Mroveli. According to the Georgian historian, when Parnavaz met the Prince of Egrisi, Kuji told him: "You are the son of the head of Kartli, and you have the right to be my master" (Leonti Mroveli 1955, 22). After the death of Parnavaz's son, Saurmag, his son-in-law, Mirvan Nebrotiani (i.e. from Nimrod family), became the king of Kartli. This is a very important political passage and it is, in the Georgian reality, the first precedent for the transfer of royal power via a woman line. Similar cases have occurred several times in subsequent epochs.

According to the Georgian historical sources, during the transfer of royal power, the issue of inheritance was of special importance. Royal power usually passed from father to son. If the throne could not be handed over directly, the daughter's rights would come to the fore¹.

In this regard, the legal status of a female member of the royal family is interesting. According to Georgian historical sources, **women not only had hereditary property rights but also the right to inherit royal authority**². Exactly according to this right, the royal government in Georgia has been legitimately transferred several times. This factor used to play an important role in the struggle between Nebrotian and Arshakunian families for the throne of Kartli. In this struggle, both parties used dynastical marriages to legitimate their rights on government. In these cases, no new dynasties were established, but a son-in-law used to become a member, and consequently the heir, of the existing royal family. It is important that the "Chronicles of Kartli" consider all kings before Mirian as members of the Parnavazian family.

One of the clearest examples of royal government transfer via the female line is the enthronement of Mirian in Kartli. According to Leonti Mroveli, he was a son of the Shah of Iran³ (Leonti Mroveli 1955, 63). After marrying Abeshura, the daughter of the king of Kartli Asfaguri, Mirian became the king of Kartli. Although Abeshura died soon after her marriage and Mirian married a Greek woman, Nana, he remained as the heir of the Parnavazian political line and pursued Georgian politics. In this case, the royal government also was transferred from wife to husband. This is how the kingship of the **Parnavazian-Chosroid** dynasty started in Kartli. Thus, Mirian and his successors became the political heirs of the Parnavazians.

The 6th c. AD was very hard for the Georgian Kingdom. In the 30s of the century, Iran abolished the monarchy in Kartli and appointed its official, Arvand Gushnasp, as the country's Marzpan (Lortkipanidze, Muskhelishvili, Metreveli 2012, 80). However, the rule of the Sassanid official was completely unacceptable to the local nobility. So, they took advantage of the Byzantine-Iranian conflict at that time and turned to Constantinople for help. According to Juansher, the nobles asked the Byzantine emperor to appoint a new king in Kartli but stressed that the new king should have been a member of the Parnavazian-Chosroid family. It seems that in the conditions of the abolished monarchy in Kartli, Constantinople avoided taking radical steps, which would have led to the escalation of relations with Iran, and therefore, it came out with the initiative to introduce the position of not a king but "Erismtavari" (head of the nation) in Kartli. This position should have been occupied by a person acceptable to both Byzantium and Iran, as well as to the Georgian nobility. As a result of the negotiations, Guaram Bagrationi, who held the title of Kouropalates and was the ruler of Klarjeti and Javakheti, was elected as the "Erismtavari" of Kartli. At the same time, via matrilineal line, he was a grandson of King Vakhtang Gorgasali and therefore belonged to the Chosroid dynasty. "Then the emperor granted their request and gave them the king, a nephew (sister's son – G. N.) of Mirdat son of Vakhtang from the Greek wife, Guaram, who ruled over Klarjeti and Javakheti" (Juansheri 1955, 218). However, it is noteworthy that Guaram's mother was a daughter of King Vakhtang from his Byzantine wife, therefore, a representative of that royal line, which, according to the Georgian historical sources, was loyal to Byzantium. "From that time, the relatives of King Vakhtang were separated as the descendants of Dachi subdued by the Persians, and the descendants of Mirdat became loyal to the Greeks" (Juansheri 1955, 207). As it became clear, in this case also, the political inheritance via the woman's line played a crucial role in the appointment of Guaram as the "Erismtavari" of Kartli. This decision played a very important role in the history of Georgia, as the Bagrationi family first appeared in the country's political arena.

Due to the political situation in the South Caucasus at that time, both Byzantium and Iran welcomed Guaram's rule in Kartli. However, according to the numismatic materials, it becomes clear that Kartli, at least nominally, remained in obedience to Iran (Bogveradze 1973, 272-273). Nevertheless, it seems that Guaram did not have complete freedom of action in domestic affairs: "He ruled peacefully and kindly but was not able to change the "Eristavs" (noblemen) of Kartli in their lands, as they hold charters

¹ Vakhushti Bagrationi mentions the issue of the royal political inheritance when describing the traditions of Georgia "there used to be a tradition of loyalty to one king ... only the son succeeds to his father and not a member of another family ... they will be not loyal to another one, only a male or female member of the family (Vakhushti Batonishvili 1973, 17).

² The first fact of woman's vast rights goes back to the wife of the Georgian ethnarch Kartlos. After her husband's death, she distributed the land "between her five hero sons" (Leonti Mroveli 1955, 8).

³ It must be mentioned that based on the Georgian chronicle "Moqtsevai Qartlisai", in Georgian historiography this note is considered as unbelievable one (Lortkipanidze, Muskhelishvili, Metreveli 2012, 10), although its accuracy is confirmed by Vakhushti Bagrationi (Vakhushti Batonishvili 1973, 71).

from the King of Persia and the King of the Greeks, protecting their landownership, though they were obedient to Guaram Kouropalates” (Juansheri 1955, 221).

It seems that the government of Guaram was acceptable to the Chosroids as well, and they settled in their land, Ujarma: “Sons of King Bakur, descendants of Dachi son of Vakhtang, to whom Vakhtang gave the kingship, stayed in Kakheti, occupied Kukheti and Hereti from Iori. They settled in Ujarma and were obedient to Guaram Kouropalates” (Juansheri 1955, 219).

After Guaram’s death, his son Stephanos became the ruler of Kartli. Stephanos tried to strengthen his position and opposed the Shiomghvime Monastery (Bogveradze 1973, 273-274). Also, at the expense of moving Mtskheta to the background, Tbilisi became a political center: “In the time of Stephanos Mtskheta reduced and Tbilisi strengthened, Armazi ruined and Kala built” (Juansheri 1955, 223). During the reign of Stephanos, a fierce confrontation began between the Dyophysite and Monophysite churches, which led to the final division of the Georgian and Armenian Churches (Bogveradze 1973, 277). The same period coincided with the unrest in Byzantium. After the assassination of Emperor Maurice⁴, Stephanos sided with the Persians. He fiercely resisted Emperor Heraclius at Tbilisi but was killed in the battle. After that, Emperor Heraclius returned the rule of Kartli to the Chosroid dynasty and appointed Adarnase as the governor. Stephanos’ sons fled to his estate, Klarjeti. The Byzantines conquered Speri, and Adarnase remained as an “Erismtavari” of Kartli. “Then the Greeks conquered the borderlands of Kartli: Speri and the far edge Klarjeti, the seaside. And the sons of Stephanos remained within the rocks of Klarjeti; all other territories of Kartli were occupied by Adarnase son of Bakuri. He also did not dare to take the title of king. The “Eristavs” remained in their land without any change, though they did obey Adarnase” (Juansheri 1955, 226).

In spite that Adarnase became the ruler of large territories, he was unable to strengthen the central government in Kartli. Thus, he remained a loyal ally of Byzantium. As it seems, his son and heir, Stephanos, could not change anything and continued his father’s pro-Byzantine policy. During the reign of Stephanos, the first army of Arabs appeared in Kartli. Arab sources describe in detail the invasion of Habib Ibn Maslama in Kartli and the Georgian embassy to the Arab commander-in-chief. As a result of the negotiations, the parties reached an agreement – Habib Ibn Maslama gave the Georgians the so-called “Charter of Security”. Despite the truce, both the Arab invaders and the Georgian nobility started to act against Stephanos. As a result, he could not stand the joint oppression of external and internal enemies, and with his sons, Mir and Archil fled to Egrisi. According to the Georgian historian, Stephanos died in Anacopia (Juansheri 1955, 235).

Georgian sources mention Mir and Archil⁵ in the context of the campaign of Murvan the Deaf (Marwan Ibn Muhammad) (Juansheri 1955, 237); however, here is a chronological inaccuracy⁶. Juansher has described in detail the events during the invasion of the Arab warlord. The Georgian historian tells us about the campaign of one of the most brutal invaders in the history of Georgia and describes the terrible damage inflicted on the country and the population by the Arab army (Juansheri 1955, 233-238). According to the Georgian historian, after the conquest of the North Caucasus, Murvan the Deaf turned his attention towards Egrisi and reached the Anacopia fortress, where Stephanos’ sons, Archil and Mir, were settled. According to Juansher, at Anakopia the Georgians fought and defeated the Arabs (Juansheri 1955, 237). After that, King Mir soon died.

⁴ Emperor Maurice was murdered in 602 during the riots.

⁵ According to the one late note in the “Chronicles of Kartli” Archil was enthroned in the year 668 (Juansheri 1995, 241, footnote 2) and was martyred in 718 (Leonti Mroveli 1955a, 242, footnote 1). The same dates are mentioned by Vakhushti Bagrationi (Vakhushti Batonishvili 1973, 125-126).

⁶ It is noteworthy that the Georgian historian correctly mentions the name of the caliph who sent Marwan Ibn Muhammad (Murvan the Deaf) to the Caucasus. It is true that Murvan the Deaf appeared in the South Caucasus during the time of Hisham Ibn Abd al-Malik. However, further chronology raises some questions. It is possible, however hard to imagine that Archil and Mir were still alive during the campaign of Murvan the Deaf, as it had been about 80 years since the invasion of Habib Ibn Maslama before these events. The Georgian historian mentions that King Archil married his wife and gave birth to children 12 years after Murvan’s expedition, which raises serious doubts. By this time, King Archil would have been over a hundred years old man. Thus, it is probable that the Arabs marched on Egrisi before Murvan the Deaf, although this does not exclude the possibility that he also may have invaded the kingdom of Egrisi. The chronology is also incorrect in “the martyrdom of St. Archil” written by Leonti Mroveli. According to a Georgian historian, King Archil was murdered by a person named Chichnaum, son of Momadi, who invaded Kartli and Kakheti after 50 years of Murvan the Deaf’s expedition. In the martyrdom of St. David and Constantine, Murvan is referred to be a nephew of the Prophet Muhammad. All this indicates that Murvan the Deaf’s expeditions, with their ruthlessness and destructive results, left an indelible mark on the memory of Georgians. Thus, it is probable that the authors of the chronicles or hagiographies attribute all the atrocities of the Arabs to him.

Despite the Arab violence, it seems that King Archil reached some kind of agreement with the Arab administration in Tbilisi and was able to carry out significant land reform. It is noteworthy that the kings previous to Archil were limited in the distribution of lands and the appointment of new nobles. As it seems, the situation changed after the Arab conquest and the kings of Kartli received full freedom of internal administrative management of the country. Juansher notes that Mir bequeathed conducting the reform to his brother, Archil. According to the will, Mir's daughters were to marry local nobles and prove their land rights to them as a dowry. We learn from the words of the Georgian historian that among the ancestors of Archil and Mir, it was not accepted to marry off female representatives of the royal family to nobility, however, kings and nobles married the daughters and sisters of nobles. The change in tradition was caused by a hard situation.

After Mir's death, Archil complied with his brother's will and married his daughters to the Georgian nobles (Juansheri 1955, 241-243). According to some Georgian scholars, this step was a cause of a central government, and by distributing the lands to the nobility, Archil accelerated the process of disintegration of the Kingdom of Kartli into several political units (Meskhia 1973, 20).

Contrary to this opinion, it can be said that no internal controversy can be seen in the Kingdom of Kartli during the reign of Archil. Despite the Arab invasion, the kingdom is relatively united and Archil's rule extends over its almost entire territory. This is clear from the list of lands distributed to Eristavs. It is noteworthy that the list mentions Arab-controlled lands and even Tbilisi⁷. This fact once again confirms the opinion that in the first stage of Arab Conquest, the invaders were satisfied with the collection of taxes and did not interfere in the governance of the country.

As was already mentioned above, after the Arab invasion, the Chosroid royal court moved to Anakopia, and Archil managed the affairs of the country from there. The governor of Abkhazia, Leon, after a dynastic marriage, is mentioned in the ranks of Archil's Georgian nobles⁸. At the same time, it seems that Archil is accompanied by the Georgian army, as the Georgians fought the Arabs in Egrisi and even defeated them. After the defeat of the Arabs, Archil moved freely to Kakheti, where he started reconstruction works and strengthening his rule (Juansheri 1955, 243-244). It seems that the Arab administration of Kartli saw a danger in the active work of King Archil. According to Leonti Mroveli, King Archil personally visited the Arab commander in Kakheti, someone named Chichnaum, for negotiations. However, he failed to achieve his goal and fell victim to the Arabs. It is interesting that the Muslim ruler of Gardabani, who was hostile to the Chosroids, played a major role in disrupting the negotiations, as Archil's grandfather, Adarnase, sheltered his uncle's assassins. This person, whose name is not mentioned in the sources, told the Arab commander that Archil was involved in the defeat of the Arabs in Egrisi and he knew where the royal treasures of the Chosroids and the treasure left by Emperor Heraclius were hidden. Chichnaum then offered Archil the rule of Kartli and the right to preserve the ancestral treasure if the king of Kartli gave him the treasure of Emperor Heraclius and converted to Islam. King Archil refused these conditions and in response, the Arab commander ordered the execution of the king (Leonti Mroveli 1955a, 246-247).

It is important that the body of deceased Mir was moved from Anakopia to Mtskheta and buried in "Samtavro Monastery" (Juansheri 1955, 241). Unfortunately, we know nothing about the burial place of Stephanos. As for King Archil, Georgian nobles buried him in the monastery of Notkora (Leonti Mroveli 1955a, 248).

Internal unrest in the Kingdom of Kartli began during the reign of Archil's sons, Ioane and Juansher, and was caused by the campaign of Murvan the Deaf⁹, the ongoing civil war in the caliphate¹⁰, and the renewed invasions of the Khazars.

According to the "Chronicles of Kartli", the situation in Kartli worsened during the reign of King Archil's sons. First of all, it should be noted that in 764 the Khazars invaded Kartli. In Georgian sources, the Khazars are represented as a savage and ruthless people: "There, where the home of Magog's sons is, are Khazars. They are wild, ugly, and animal-like people who drink blood and have no religion" (Ioane

⁷ Tbilisi, Manglis Khevi, Mtiuleti, Jvari, and Kherki, Archil granted to Juansher Juansheriani, who, according to "The Martyrdom of King Archil", was the Juansher who described the life of Vakhtang Gorgasali.

⁸ Among the noblemen to whom Archi married his nieces, one is Leon.

⁹ Some scientists believe that exactly during the campaign of Murvan the Deaf, the Emirate of Tbilisi was established (Silagadze 1991, 107; Lortkipanidze 1973, 494).

¹⁰ In the 40s of the 8th century, many problems in the vast territory of the caliphate (from Spain to India) arose. Many small and medium-sized uprisings began on religious or political grounds. One such revolt, which began in 747 in Khorasan and is known as the "Abbasid Revolution", took on a much larger scale. This revolt soon escalated into a civil war, which, in 749, changed the ruling dynasty of the caliphate and brought the Abbasid dynasty to power.

Sabanisdze 1987, 453). According to the Georgian historian, Khazar Khakan wanted to marry King Archil's sister, Shushan, which would have allowed him to claim the throne of Kartli, but he was brutally refused. In response to the refusal, the enraged Khakan sent a large army to the South Caucasus, captured Juansher and Shushan, and devastated Kartli. As it becomes clear from "Chronicles of Kartli", Shushan committed suicide on the way, and Juansher spent 7 years in captivity ("Matiane Kartlisa" 1955, 249-250).

After the martyrdom of Archil, Ioane, his mother, and two sisters settled in Egrisi. It should be mentioned that Juansher's mother was the daughter of Stephanos' brother, Guaram Kouropalates, and therefore a member of the Chosroid family¹¹. Archil's wife, the Juansher's mother, was a member of the family loyal to Byzantium, and her father held the title of Kouropalates. I do not rule out that the mother of Juansher and Shushan was driven by her political goals and she sought more close relations with the Byzantine Empire. The Georgian historian does not hide this either when he quotes Juansher's mother as saying: "If our life becomes hopeless, it would be better for us to go to Greece and beg Christians for help than to let the pagans to insult our daughter" ("Matiane Kartlisa" 1955, 249).

According to "Matiane Kartlisa", the expedition of the Khazars and the capture of Juansher brought disastrous results to Kartli. The Chosroid royal dynasty eventually lost power, local rulers engaged in quarrels, and the Arabs strengthened their positions in Tbilisi ("Matiane Kartlisa" 1955, 250).

The end of the rule of the Chosroid royal dynasty¹² played a major role in the internal unrest, which was later followed by the formation of three independent Georgian political entities – the Tao and Abkhazian kingdoms and the Chorbishopric of Kakheti. Over the next period, these political units became embroiled in a constant confrontation. Eventually, this struggle ended with the formation of a united Georgian kingdom led by the Bagrationi dynasty.

It is interesting to follow the process of how the Parnavazian-Chosroid dynasty was replaced by the Bagratians and what events took place during this period. It seems that with the consent of the Arab administration, Archil and his son Juansher fully control the territory of the Kingdom of Kartli, and the administrative reform carried out by Archil worked well. The Eristavs were loyal to the king, and Archil had to subdue the rebellious nobility only in Kakheti, which he succeeded in doing. At that time, the Bagratians ruled the southwestern regions of the Kingdom of Kartli. However, they do not appear to be a significant political force or are in opposition to the central government. The fact that Archil did not marry any of his nieces to a member of the Bagrationi family allows us to make this assumption.

Also noteworthy is the reaction of Archil's wife and Juansher's mother, a member of the Chosroid family, to the fact that her son married a Bagrationi woman: "Juansher married a member of the Bagrationi family, daughter of Adarnase, Latavri, and his mother accused him of this" ("Matiane Kartlisa" 1955, 251). It is also interesting that the relatives of the Armenian Bagratunis of Taron came to Archil and the King of Kartli granted them lands. However, they also had good relations with the Georgian Bagratians in Klarjeti. This is confirmed by the information of Juansher, where the chronicler tells us about Adarnase, a nephew of Adarnase the Blind, who settled in Klarjeti at Guaram Kourapalates' sons, after his release from the captivity of Murvan the Deaf. Later he came to King Archil and promised obedience in exchange for lands (Juansheri 1955, 243). The partition of the Kingdom of Kartli began during Juansher's old age and ended after his death.

According to the Georgian sources, in the last years of Juansher's life, Leon II, the nephew of the governor of Abkhazia Leon I and the son of the Khazar Khakan's daughter, with the help of Khazars' military force, expelled the Byzantines out of Abkhazia, occupied territories from Abkhazia to the Likhi ridge, and declared himself a king ("Matiane Kartlisa" 1955, 251). It seems that during this period the Byzantines, probably with the support of Archil's wife, regained their power over the territory of Abkhazia. Thus, Leon, with the support of the Khazars, had to expel them. At the same time, the Bagratians withdrew from obedience to the king and, probably, joined the service of the Arabs. This may be indicated by one reference from the "Chronicle of Kartli": "During the life of Juansher, Adarnase Bagrationi exchanged one-third of Nasamali, Klarjeti, Shavsheti, Adjara, Nigali, Asisfori, Artani, and

¹¹ According to Juansher: "He (Archil – G. N.) married the daughter of Guaram Kouropalates, who was a descendant of King Vakhtang and his Greek wife". So, it turns out that Archil married his cousin. It is noteworthy that Guaram's son, who ruled Klarjeti and Javakheti, married one of Mir's daughters, or the daughter of his cousin.

¹² After the death of Juansher and Ioane, the Chosroid dynasty finally lost its political power, and their descendants no longer appear in the historical arena.

Kvemo Tao, and the fortresses of King Vakhtang's¹³ descendants, and went to Klarjeti, where he died" ("Matiane Kartlisa" 1955, 251). It is possible, that Adarnase handed the territories over to the Arabs in exchange for nominal independence, while his son, Ashot Kourapalates joined their service. At that time, the Tsanar uprising broke out in Kakheti. The situation was unmanageable, so the central government lost its control over the region.

It is not known whether there were any descendants of Ioane or Juansher, but the fact is that the Chosroid dynasty lost its political power and the Kingdom of Kartli was divided into three main political units. Nevertheless, the struggle for the unification of the Kingdom of Kartli continued, in which both the Bagrationis and the Abkhazian kings actively participated. The involvement of the Abkhazian kings in this struggle and their confrontation with both the Arabs and the rulers of Kakheti is noteworthy. It seems that they are claiming not only western Georgia but their main goal was to rule Kartli and Kakheti.

It is noteworthy that the Abkhazian kings never claimed the lands of the Bagrationis in Tao and Klarjeti. It seems that they were fighting for the restoration of the Chosroid Kingdom of Kartli within the former borders. Therefore, it can be assumed that the Abkhazian kings considered themselves the political heirs of the Chosroids. In terms of legitimacy, they had this privilege after Leon I married Mir's daughter.

We know nothing about the fate of Mir's other daughters and their spouses. Probably they died during the unrest that started after Archil's death. However, the heirs of Leon and, consequently, the Chosroids, survived and became a considerable force.

This may explain the fact that until the last years of Juansher's life, Leon II did not declare himself a king and remained the ruler of Abkhazia. When the representative of the Chosroid royal family grew old, of course, the question of inheritance had to be raised, and it was at this time that Leon acted, declaring himself the king of the Abkhazians and, therefore, the political successor of the Chosroids.

After a long confrontation, the political and dynastic union of the Abkhazian royal family and the Bagrationi family took place when Gurgen, the Georgian king, married Gurandukht, the daughter of the Abkhazian king. As a result, their son, Bagrat III became the king of the united Georgian Kingdom. He was the political heir to both dynasties. He received the title of the king of Georgians from his father, and the Chosroid inheritance was again transferred by the line of a woman, and from Gurandukht, it passed to Bagrat. Thus, Bagrat became the legitimate king of the united Georgian Kingdom and ended the ongoing political struggle for domination in Kartli.

In conclusion, it could be said, that the idea of a united Georgia, created by Parnavaz, has endured for centuries and it is still the main political doctrine of our country. I would like to emphasize once again that during a long history of Georgia, a political heritage has played an important role in the issues of the legitimization of the government. The inheritance, as we have seen, was often transferred via the female line.

In the case of Mirian and Abeshura, the royal government has been transferred from wife to husband. This is how the kingship of the **Parnavazian-Chosroid** dynasty started in Kartli. Bagrat III received the legitimate right to inherit from his mother, Gurandukht. Even clearer examples of women's royal inheritance rights are the ascent of Tamar and Rusudan to the throne, whose sons, Lasha-Giorgi and David Narin also became kings of Georgia.

Historical sources clearly show that the issue of the legitimacy of political inheritance was strictly conformed first by the Chosroids and then by the Bagrationis.

Parnavaz's political successors remained the rulers of the Georgian kingdom, directly or formally, during times of power or times of disaster. It is noteworthy that the issue of once-established political heritage has never been questioned and no one has tried to change it. Even powerful oppositional families, such as the Baghuashs, the Jakels, the Amilakhvars, and others, did not try to usurp the royal throne. The only exception is when the Abkhazian throne was temporarily occupied by a Shawliani family. However, their rule did not last long. Thus, it can be said that, in most cases, the Georgian nobles also strictly adhered to the rules of legitimacy established by tradition. It is also noteworthy that many foreign conquerors formally left the representative of the royal family in the rule of Georgia. Even the kings and princes of the small political units that emerged during the unrest never claimed to be the kings of united Georgia.

In conclusion, it could be said that the unified political line of the Georgian royal dynasty founded by Parnavaz was broken only in 1801 when the Russian Empire intervened in Georgia and

¹³ We are probably talking about Vakhtang Gorgasali here, but it is unclear when the Bagrationis occupied the lands belonging to Vakhtang's descendants. It is possible, that Adarnase gave up these territories because he did not inherit them.

abolished the monarchy. The political reality of a united Georgia was restored on a democratic basis with the adoption of the Constitution in 1921.

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