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FOUNDATION OF THE NIKORTSMINDA EPARCHY

The Nikortsminda eparchy was founded by King of Imereti Bagrat III in 1544. It covered the historical and geographical province of western Georgia - Racha. Its establishment was due to certain social and political factors.

The inner political situation of the Kingdom of Imereti at the beginning of the 16th c. was quite difficult. The social and religious life in the country decayed. Racha was in a sad state too, so that the monastery of Nikortsminda, once rich and flourishing, was referred to as a "decaying monastery" in the documents of that time. Bagrat III was well-aware of the historic role of the Orthodox Church in the development of the country. Therefore, after his enthronement he began to strengthen the Church, in order to enable the latter to participate in the normalization of social life. The foundation of a see in Racha was part of this policy.

The king granted numerous lands and peasants to the newly established see, which was approved by the king's official document. According to the latter, Bagrat granted it 70 peasant families in 14 villages.