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FROM THE HISTORY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IMERETI AND SAMTSKHE IN THE 30- 40S OF THE 16TH CENTURY

In the 30s of the 16th century King Bagrat III (1510 - 1565) made efforts to expand his dominance over the Samtskhe principality. In 1535 he defeated Atabeg Kvarkware III of Samtskhe in the battle of Mujakheti. After the defeat in the battle the separatist Samtskhe principality ceased its existence for a while. Ottoman authorities could not accept the existing state of affairs and launched an invasion in Samtskhe in 1536. From this time on Ottomans begin establishing their rules and governance here that meant creating prerequisites for the eradication of the Georgian element. King Luarsab I of Karli (1527-1556) supported the policy initiated by Bagrat III. However, the campaign mounted for the annexation of Samtskhe to Imereti ended up in the battle fought at Sokhoista where the united forces of Imereti and Kartli lost the battle against the Ottomans. After the Sokhoista battle Ottomans appointed Kaikhosro III (1545 - 1573), at the same time they enhanced the process of expanding their rules and form of governance.

The initiative exercised by King Bagrat III of Imereti with regard to Samtskhe in the 30s of the 16th century deserves negative assessment. In fact, beginning the military campaign in Samtskhe the king of Imereti undervalued adversary forces and eventually poured the oil for the activation of the Ottoman policy in the region. It is also noteworthy that the hostility between the King of Imereti and Samtskhe rulers with the Ottomans did not terminate in 1545. This conflict served one of the main reasons for the secession of Guria and Megrelia principalities and gaining complete political independence from Imereti Kingdom.