



Armenian Noble Dynasties in the Russian Empire

By Greg Balagian

Greg Balagian continues Armenian Dynasties in the Russian Empire series. Please see June 2023 issue of the ARPA Journal. For Part 1 about Loris-Melokov dynasty.

Part 2 – Argutinski-Dolgorukov Dynasty

The Argutinsky-Dolgorukov (Arghutyan-Yerkainabazuk in Armenian and Mkharrgdzeli-Argutashvili in Georgian) was Georgian and Russian noble family of Armenian descent. Their Russian name “Dolgorukov” is a direct translation of Armenian “Yerkainabazuk” and Georgian “Mkhargdzeli” which means “Long Armed” with the roots of the name coming from the Persian King Artaxerxes I who’s right hand was allegedly longer than the left which was also a similar attribute of the family’s founder.

This exceptionally large and extremely important noble family got its roots come from the medieval Georgian-Armenian family Zakaryan-Zachariades, and its founder was Arghut, who in the 15th century established himself in Lori, a northern Armenian region which was then under Georgian control and was enfeoffed in Sanahin where the family’s dynastic monastery was located. His descendants were lower-class or “aznauri” nobility in Georgian. King Heraclius II of Kartli and Kakheti officially recognized the Argutashvili fami-

ly having roots from the Mkhardzeli-Zachariades and elevated them to a princely rank of prince (*tavadi* in Georgian or *knyaz* in Russian). This title was confirmed by the Imperial Russian government on March 6, 1819, December 15, 1838, and November 14, 1857. From the late 1800s the majority of dynasty’s members lived in Tiflis and in about 1910 most of them moved to Paris and Nice due to the instability in the Russian Empire prior to the Bolshevik Revolution. Here is the list of the most prominent members of this dynasty.

Hovsep Argutyan (1743 – 1801) was the Catholicos of All Armenians from 1800 to 1801. He was born in Sanahin where he received his divine education in the Sanahin Monastery. He was the Archbishop of Armenians of Russian Empire from 1773 and he receive the Order of St. Anne from Emperor Pavel I for his enormous service to the Russian Empire. Among the most important actions by Hovsep Argutyan are his assistance in the establishment of Armenian diaspora in Russian Empire beginning from the first settlements in Astrakhan, Moscow, and St. Petersburg. The establishment of the city of Nakhichevan-on-Don and construction there of the “Surb Khach” or “Holy Cross” monastery, as well as the establishment of the city of Grigoriopol on the banks of the Dniester River. He was also instrumental in major philanthropic actions such as the establishment of the schools for Armenian orphans, collecting funds for Armenian refugees, and organizing of publication of literature on Armenian language in cities and towns with large Armenian population. He tragically died on his way from Tiflis to Echmiadzin at the age of only 57 years old.



Coat of Arms of Argutinsky-Dolgorukov Dynasty



Catholicos Hovsep Argutyan



His Statue in Rostov-on-Don



Prince Movses (Moisei) Zakharovich Argutinsky-Dolgorukov (1797 – 1855) was the nephew of Hovsep Argutyan. He was born in Tiflis and after studying in Tiflis Noble Academy began his military career in 1817 in Life-Guard Horse Regiment in St. Petersburg. In 1827 after return to Caucasus he entered the 14th Georgian Grenadier Regiment and participated in the war with Persia where he was noted for his bravery during the battle for Erivan. In 1828 he was appointed as the Commandant of Erivan fortress and actively helped in the process of bringing Armenian refugees from Persia. In 1829 – 1830 he was the Chief of the Armenian Oblast. In 1832 he was appointed as a Head of Tiflis Grenadier Regiment. In 1839 he became the Head of Akhaltsikhe Province. In 1840 he was appointed to the position of the 1st Brigade of Georgian Linear Battalion. In 1844 he became the military commander of Russian Army in Derbent and Kuba uezds of Kaspian Oblast. In 1847 he became the Military Governor of Derbent and later we became the Army Commander of Prikaspian Krai. He was famous for extraordinary bravery in battle, and he was nicknamed “Samur Lion” after the same name regiment which was under his command. His brave passage through Caucasian Mountains was compared to the famous passage of the Alps by Russian Army under command of General Suvorov.

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Prince Pavel Parsadanovich Argutinsky-Dolgorukov began his military career in 1836. In 1845-1846 he was appointed as Gorodnichiy, or military-administrative head of the city of Baku. In 1858-1859 he held a similar position in the town of Nukha. From 1869 to 1873 he was the Commander of the Baku Gubernatorial Battalion of Russian Imperial Army. He was a recipient of several high military awards. His son Luarsab Pavlovich



Order of St. Anna



Order of St. Stanislaus

Argutinsky-Dolgorukov was the Gubernatorial Secretary of Tiflis Administrative Region. Both his grandsons – David Luarsabovich Argutinsky-Dolgorukov and Pyotr Luarsabovich Argutinsky Dolgorukov had exceptional military careers. No photos survived, so we decided to show his most prestigious military awards.



Prince Nikogaios Barsegovich Argutinsky-Dolgorukov (1845-1916) was an important Armenian politician and intellectual in Georgia. He was elected as a mayor of Tiflis three times. He was also an active philanthropist and founded in Tiflis a school for deaf and mute children which he managed until his death. He owned a massive collection of books and other publications which was considered as a gem of Caucasus. In 1920 this collection with over 16,000 items was purchased by the Government of the First Armenian Republic and transferred from Tiflis to Erivan. After his death he was interned in Sanahin monastery.

Prince Georgiy Davidovich Argutinsky-Dolgorukov (1873-1949) was a hero of World War I. He became Colonel in 1912 and in 1914 became an active participant in World War I. In 1916 he was appointed as a Commander of 3rd Novorossiysk Dragoon Regiment. He was a recipient of several military awards. In 1916 he received the Golden Sword for Bravery. Emigrated to France in 1917.



Prince Pyotr Mikhailovich Argutinsky-Dolgorukov (1850-1911) was a prominent physician, pediatrician, and author. He was the Chair of Pediatrics at Kazan Imperial University. He authored numerous research papers on infectious diseases, especially on malaria. No photos, so a picture of Imperial Kazan University.



Prince Nikogaios Argutinsky-Dolgorukov (1845-1916) - Active State Counsellor. Most of his life spent in Tiflis. He was elected mayor of Tiflis three times (1891-1893, 1895-1896, and 1903-1904) and all three times he resigned before his tenure ended. Mostly known for his charitable work in the sphere of education. He established a school for handicap children, and has been chairman of the men's gymnasium and school of deaf-mute children.

Vartan (Vladimir) Nikogaiosovich Argutinsky-Dolgorukov (1874-1941) was Russian diplomat, artist, art collector and philanthropist. After studying at St. Petersburg University, he continued his education in Cambridge University. He was friendly with the great Russian composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky and his brother Modest. He was also an acquaintance of Anton Chekhov to whom he sent his writings to get his opinion. During his diplomatic career he served as the 2nd secretary of Russian Embassy in Paris. He owned a major collection of paintings, drawings, porcelain, and other antique items. In 1929 he sold and gifted most of collection to the British Museum. In 1910 he became a member of the Society of Preservation of Russian antiquities and monuments and in 1918-1919 he was the head of paintings department of the Society. He is interred in Paris.



Vartan Argutinski-Dolgorukov in a company of Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky.



Mikhail Petrovich Argutinsky-Dolgorukov (1884-1953) became an officer of the Russian Imperial Army in 1907. He was a World War I participant on the Western front. He became Lieutenant Colonel in 1917 and after the October Revolution was a member of the White Army. He emigrated to France in 1920.

There were some other prominent individuals which were part of this massive noble family and their contribution to Russian military and culture is enormous.

I have an interesting postcard in my collection addressed to Prince Georgiy Iosifovich Argutinsky-Dolgorukov who was one of many members of this dynasty.

