



ARMENIA AND IRAN II. THE PRE-ISLAMIC PERIOD

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ii. The Pre-Islamic Period

1. *The Achaemenid period.* The Armenians probably originated from Phrygia (Herodotus 3.19, and see below; Stephanus of Byzantium, *Ethnika*, ed. A. Meineke, Berlin, 1849 [repr. Graz, 1958], s.v. Armenia). In the first half of the 6th century B.C., when they were subjugated by the Medes, they were newcomers in the territory to which they were to give their name. The conquests of Cyrus the Great made them subjects of the Persians. They seceded at the time of Darius I's accession, but two expeditions, the first led by Dādarši, himself an Armenian, the second under Vahumisa, a Persian, ended their rebellion (DB 2.37-63). At Babylon an Armenian named Arxa, son of Haldita, passed himself off as a son of Nabunaita (Nabonidus), causing a new rebellion there (DB 3.78f.). In connection with the accounts of these events in Darius's inscription at Bisotūn the names Armina (= Armenia) and Arminiya (= Armenian) appear for the first time. The Greek authors also use them. They bear no relation to the names Hay (pl. Hayk') and Hayastan which the Armenians gave, and still give, to themselves and their country.

Armina under Darius and Xerxes had much narrower boundaries than the future Armenia of the Artaxiads and the Arsacids. The "Armenians" with the



inhabitants of Paktyikē (?) and other peoples of the northwest formed the 13th satrapy, whose tribute was fixed at 400 talents (Herodotus 3.93). The Armenians in the strict sense must then have lived in areas between Cappadocia, the Tigris, the Euphrates, and the lake of Van. They are clearly distinguished from the Alarodians (= Urartians) who occupied the future province of Ayrarat (= Urartu) on the Araxes and with the Saspis (further northeast) and the Matienians (further southeast) formed the 18th satrapy (ibid., 3.94, cf. 7.79). Because the Babylonian version of the Bīsoṭūn inscription gives Uraštu (= Urartu) as the translation of the words Armina and Arminiya of the Persian text, it appears that the conception of Armenia was already tending to become confused with memories of Urartu. Probably during Darius's reign, Aramaic was introduced into Armenia, as the language of the imperial administration, where it continued for centuries to be used in official documents (see below), and knowledge of Persian also began to spread among the Armenians, as attested by Xenophon (see below).

In the "Tribute procession" carved on the Apadāna friezes at Persepolis, the Armenians bring a horse and a vase of precious metal. Their costume resembles the Median dress of the first delegation (G. Walser, *Die Völkerschaften auf den Reliefs von Persepolis*, Berlin, 1966, pp. 74-75, pls. X, XXXVI, XXXIX). In the army of Xerxes the Armenians were marshaled with the Phrygians and were similarly dressed (Herodotus 7.73).

The royal road passed through Armenia for a length of 46 parasangs with 15 post-stations (Herodotus 5.52), and a different road crossing Armenia southeast to northwest was taken by Xenophon in 401 B.C. He mentions the province's division into Eastern Armenia and Western Armenia, separated by the Teleboas (Kara-sū) river (*Anabasis* 4.4.3); the former was governed by Orontas (Persian Arvand, Armenian Ervand), regarded by many writers as the ancestor of the Orontids of Armenia; he was a son-in-law of Artaxerxes I (ibid., 2.4.8f. and 5.40; 3.4.13 and 5.17; 4.3.4; for his career see R. D. Wilkinson in *Revue des études arméniennes*, N.S. 7, 1970, pp. 445-50 and M. J. Osborne in *Historia* 22, 1973, pp. 515-51), the latter by Tiribazes, a favorite of the Great King (ibid., 4.4.4). Xenophon has also left observations about the inhabitants, mainly those of Western Armenia. The villages were administered by local notables called *comarchoi* who mediated between the people and the Achaemenid authorities. Although the lifestyle was rough, the countryside showed signs of prosperity. Horse breeding flourished, and the annual tribute to the Great King was paid in foals (ibid., 4.5.24 and 5.34). According to Strabo



(11.14.9), the satrap of Armenia annually delivered 20,000 colts to the Great King. Significantly there is no mention of urban life. Another interesting fact noted by Xenophon is that the Persian language was understood and spoken in remote villages of Western Armenia (*Anabasis* 4.5.10, and 5.34). Interestingly, Darius III Codomannus governed Armenia for several years before his accession in 336, having been rewarded with the post for his victory over the Cadusians (Justin, 4.3.4).

At the battle of Issus in 333, the Armenian contingent is said to have numbered 40,000 infantry and 7000 cavalry (Quintus Curtius 3.2.6; these figures are perhaps exaggerated). At Gaugamela (Arbela), the Armenian cavalrymen were, with the Cappadocians, on the right wing under Mithraustes and Orontes (Arrian, *Anabasis* 3.8.5 and 11.7; Quintus Curtius 4.12). These commanders were evidently the satraps of the two Armenias. There is no proof that this Orontes had a family connection with the earlier bearer of the name; but he survived the fall of the Achaemenid monarchy, and probably it was he who was the first of the Orontids, the hereditary satraps of Armenia.

2. *The Hellenistic period.* Armenia was annexed to Alexander's empire but not really subdued. The governorship was given to Mithrenes (Mithrana), a Persian who had been the satrap of Sardis (Diodorus 17.21.7 and 64.6; Arrian, *Anabasis* 3.16; Quintus Curtius, 6.14.9). A Macedonian, Neoptolemus, is mentioned as holding the office soon after Alexander's death in 323 B.C. but there are indications that he failed to quell an Armenian revolt, which may have been led by the former satrap Orontes. Reports speak of the reappearance of Orontes in 316 B.C. when he was on good terms with the Macedonian generals Eumenes and Peucestas (the satrap of Persis), and add interestingly that he used Aramaic in his correspondence with Eumenes (Diodorus 19.27.3; Polyaeus, *Strategmata* 4.8.3). Toward the beginning of the 3rd century B.C., a certain Ardoates (probably a misspelling for Aroantes or Aroandes, see J. Marquart, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte von Eran I*, Leipzig, 1895, p. 27 n. 123) is mentioned with the title "king of Armenia" (Diodorus 31.19.5); he may well have been an Orontid. Artabazanes, the satrap of Media Atropatene (Āturpātakān), though forced to submit to Antiochus II in 220 B.C., appears to have considerably extended his domain by seizing parts of eastern and northern Armenia (Polybius 5.55.7). It is perhaps around this time that the Orontes mentioned by Strabo (*Geography* 11.14.15) as the last of his line should be placed.

One of the Greek inscriptions from the Hellenistic period found at Armavir in



Soviet Armenia preserves a letter addressed by a king named Mithras to another named Orontes (on the text, see K. Trever, *Očerki po istorii i kul'ture drevneĭ Armenii*, Moscow and Leningrad, 1953, p. 134 and fig. 28; J. and L. Robert, *Bull. Epigr.* 176, 1952, p. 183). This suggests that several dynasts then coexisted in the Araxes region. The inscriptions also show that Hellenism had penetrated into this Iranized land. One of the Orontids, called Ervand in the Armenian sources, chose a site at the confluence of the Araxes and Akhurean rivers for the construction of a town which he named Ervandašat (Arvandašat), i.e. “Ervand’s Joy;” apparently he intended that it should replace the old capital, *Armavir* (see also Movsēs Xorenac’i, *Patmut’iwn Hayoc’* [History of Armenia, Venice, 1865, Tiflis, 1881, tr. R. W. Thomson, Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1978] 2.49; see also J. Saint-Martin, *Mémoires historiques et géographiques sur l’Arménie*, 2vols., Paris, 1818-19, I, pp. 116-17; H. Hübschmann, *Die altarmenischen Ortsnamen*, Strasbourg, 1904 [= *IF* 16, pp. 197-490], p. 426; M. Hovhannessian, *Les forteresses de l’Arménie*, Venice, 1970, pp. 116-17). Ervand is also reputed to have ordered the construction of the fortress of Bagaran (a compound of Bag = God) and the removal of all the idols of Armavir thereto (Movsēs Xorenac’i, 2.40), but this tradition should be treated with caution.

In reality the Orontids were satraps under Seleucid suzerainty despite their claim to the title “king.” Insufficient evidence does not allow a reliable dynastic list and does not support the claim that leading Armenian families of the Christian period were descended from the Orontids (see K. Toumanoff, “A Note on the Orontids,” *Le Muséon*, 1959, pp. 23f.). A contemporary line of dynasts, of Persian origin but also vassals of the Seleucids, ruled in Sophene (the southwest of Armenia). That they were Orontids is uncertain. One of them named Arsames (Aršāma) is known to have received the fugitive throne-claimant Antiochus Hierax at his court some time before 226 B.C. (Polyaenus 4.17). The assumption that he is the “King Arsames” of certain coins (E. Babelon, *Numismatique des rois de Syrie, d’Arménie et de Commagène*, Paris, 1880, p. 211 and pl. XXXIX, 2) has now been strongly contested. He is thought to have been the founder of the city of Arsamosata (Aršamašat, i.e. “Joy of Arsames,” see H. Hübschmann, *Ortsnamen*, p. 406; N. Adontz, *Armenia in the Period of Justinian*, ed. N. Garsoïan, Lisbon, 1970, pp. 28f.; Hovhannessian, *Forteresses*, pp. 80f.). Whether this was the Arsames mentioned among the ancestors of Antiochus of Commagene in the Nīmrōd Dāğ and Arsameia inscriptions (see Th. Reinach, *Revue des études grecques* 3, 1890, p. 369; E. Honigmann, in Pauly-Wissowa, Supp. IV, col. 981; F. W. Walbank, *A Historical*



Commentary on Polybius, Oxford, 1957 ff., II, p. 99; F. K. Dörner, *Istambuler Forschungen* 23, 1963, p. 72). One of the satrap kings of Sophene (possibly the same Arsames) refused to pay tribute to his Seleucid overlord, but besieged in Arsamosata by Antiochus III the Great in 212 B.C., his son Xerxes came to terms and recognized Seleucid suzerainty (Polybius 8.23.1f.), but a few years later he was murdered at the behest of his wife, who was sister of Antiochus III (John of Antioch, frag. 53, ed. C. Müller, *Fragmenta historicorum graecorum*, 5 vols., Paris, 1841-70, IV, p. 557). Coins of this prince show him wearing the Sophenian tiara; the legend reads “King Xerxes” (Babelon, *Rois de Syrie*, p. 212 and pl. XXXIX, 6-7).

3. *The Artaxiad dynasty*. About 190 B.C. Artaxias (Arm. Artaxšas) in Armenia and Zariadris (Arm. Zareh) in Sophene ruled as vassals of the Seleucids, bearing the Greek title *sratēgós*, but they used Antiochus’ defeat at Magnesia in 189 B.C. to rise—with Roman help—to independence (Strabo, *Geography* 11.14.15).

a. *The reign of Artaxias*. Aramaic inscriptions on boundary stones which have been discovered in Soviet Armenia, mainly around Lake Sevan (see below), name Artaxias as the son of a certain Zariadris (Zariatr) and one of the Orontids (Arvandakān). Thus the founder of the Artaxiad dynasty was, or claimed to be, an Orontid. Like the kings of Pontus and the line of Ariarathes in Cappadocia, the Artaxiads adhered in the main to the Achaemenid monarchical tradition, though they were not untouched by the influence of Hellenism which began to gain ground in Armenia. Before long they formed links with the Arsacid dynasty by means of matrimonial alliances.

Artaxias and Zariadris of Sophene who may perhaps have been close relatives, joined forces to conquer a vast area. The domains of Artaxias, at first limited to the Araxes valley, were greatly enlarged at the expense of Iberia and, above all, of Media Atropatene, which lost its Caspian seaboard and the districts of Phaunitis (Siunia ?) and Basoporeda (Vāspūrakān, east of Lake Van). At the same time Zariadris annexed Acilisene (Ekeleac’) and Taraunitis (Taron) (Strabo 11.14.5 and 15). The peoples who were thus brought together in the kingdoms of Armenia and Sophene all spoke one and the same language: Armenian (Strabo, *ibid.*); yet imperial Aramaic (with a quite strong admixture of Persian terms) was still the language of the government and the court, a survival of Achaemenid practices in Armenia down to the first half of the 2nd century B.C.



Artaxias gave orders for the delimitation of villages and fields. The report of this action by Movsēs Xorenac'i (2.65) has been confirmed by the recent discovery of boundary stones with Aramaic inscriptions (J. Naveh, *Die Welt des Orients*, 1971, pp. 42-46; J. Teixidor, *Syria*, 1969, p. 120; 1972, p. 142; 1973, pp. 433-34). Among Artaxias' numerous flattering epithets on these stones we find 'xšhsrt, an unexplained Persian term (see J. Teixidor, *Syria*, 1973, p. 434). Artaxias built a fortress city at a site on the left bank of the Araxes, near the present Khorvirap, which was to remain the seat of the Armenian monarchy until the 2nd century A.D. (see below); it was named Artaxšas-šāt (Joy of Artaxias), abbreviated to Artašat in Armenian and Artaxata in Greek (see H. Hübschmann, *Armen. Etymologie*, p. 28, 211, and *Ortsnamen*, pp. 362, 408; H. Manandian, *The Trade and Cities of Armenia in Connection with Ancient World Trade*, Lisbon, 1965, index, p. 232; Hovhannessian, *Forteresses*, pp. 869-79). It is hard to believe the statements of Strabo (11.14.6) and Plutarch (*Lucullus* 31.5) that Hannibal took refuge at the Armenian court and that the city was designed and built on his advice. Excavations, still in progress after several years, have already yielded amongst other things a lapis-lazuli plate, an enamel spoon with Aramaic letters, and a fragment of stucco with an Aramaic graffito (see B. N. Arakelian, *Artashat I. On Results of Excavations in 1970-77 = Arkheologicheskie raskopki v Armenii*, No. 16, Erevan, 1982).

b. *Tigranes the Great*. In 165/64 B.C. Artaxias was defeated and captured by Antiochus IV (Diodorus 31.17a; Appian, *Syrian War* 45-; Hieronymus, *Comment. ad Danielelem* 11.49), but he managed to aid Timarchos, Satrap of Media, in 161/60 B.C. (Diodorus 31.27a). At the end of the 2nd century B.C., another Armenian King, Artavazdes (Artoadistes in Justin 43.2) was defeated by Mithridates II of Parthia. Probably a grandson of Artaxias, Artavazdes delivered his brother or son Tigranes (Tigrana) as hostage (Justin, loc. cit.; Strabo 11.14.15). The relationship is uncertain, because Appian (op. cit., 83) describes Tigranes as the son of another Tigranes. After spending many years at the Parthian court, Tigranes was sent back with the support of Mithridates II, who in return exacted the cession of the Seventy Valleys (Strabo 11.14.15; Justin 43.3.1) and, despite the silence of the sources, no doubt also the recognition of Arsacid suzerainty. The Seventy Valleys were long to be a bone of contention between Armenia and Parthia; they probably lay on the border with Atropatene and may have been part of the area taken from Atropatene by Artaxias (see Markwart, *Ērānšahr*, pp. 109, 173).

The accession of Tigranes I (Tigranes II according to certain authors) is usually



dated to 95 or 94 B.C. (F. Geyer, “Tigrane (no. 1),” in Pauly-Wissowa, VI A/1, col. 970; H. Seyrig, *Revue numismatique*, 1959, p. 117 n. 40; H. A. Manandian, *Tigrane II et Rome*, Lisbon, 1963, p. 22), but should perhaps be moved back by a few years. He was already of a ripe age, having been born ca. 140. His first move was to attack Sophene, then ruled by Artanes, which he conquered without resistance and united to the kingdom of Greater Armenia, thereby gaining a big territorial extension to the southwest and the west. He then (ca. 93 B.C.?) became an ally and son-in-law of the king of Pontus, Mithridates Eupator. On the latter’s behalf he invaded Cappadocia, which adjoined Sophene, and evicted its king Ariobarzanes, who was a protégé of the Romans. The Roman commander, Sulla, soon reinstated Ariobarzanes, and then met Mithridates II’s envoy on the bank of the Euphrates (Plutarch, *Sulla* 5.4; N.C. Debevoise, *A Political History of Parthia*, Chicago, 1938, p. 46 n. 67). Tigranes, whose troops had just been driven out of Cappadocia, probably viewed these Parthian-Roman talks with suspicion, but he remained the ally of Mithridates II, one of whose wives was Tigranes’ daughter Aryazate, surnamed Automa (parchment from Awrōmān dated year 225 of the Seleucid era = November, 88 B.C.; see *ibid.*, p. 47 and E. Sullivan in H. Temporini and W. Haase, eds., *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II/9, Berlin, 1976, pp. 911-14). When Mithridates II’s position grew weaker in his last years Tigranes invaded Parthia, recovered the Seventy Valleys probably some time after 90 B.C., and took Atropatene, Adiabene, Gordyene, Osrhoene, and Upper Mesopotamia including Nisibis (Strabo 11.14.15). From Atropatene, Tigranes pushed into Media Major as far as the gates of Ecbatana, where he burned down the Parthian court’s summer residence (*Adrapana* in Isidore of Charax, *Parthian Stations* 6, to be corrected into *Apadana*, see Th. Reinach, *Mithridate Eupator roi du Pont*, Paris 1890, p. 311 n. 6). According to Plutarch (*Lucullus* 21.6), no previous adversary had dealt such blows to Parthian power. The campaigns of conquest are said to have been terminated by the conclusion of an alliance between Tigranes and one of Mithridates II’s successors (Justin 40.1.3; see below). In or around 84/83 B.C., Tigranes attacked the remnant of the Seleucid kingdom, took Commagene, Cilicia Pedias, and Phoenicia; Syria including Antioch came to him either by force (Strabo 11.14.15; Appian, *Syr.* 48f., 69; Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 13.16.4; Eutropius, *Breviarium ab urbe condita* 6.14.2), or voluntarily (Justin 41.1.1-3; on the successive conquests of Tigranes, see Reinach, *Mithridate*, pp. 311f.; P. Asdourian, *Die politischen Beziehungen zwischen Armenien und Rom 190 v. Chr. bis 428 n. Chr.*, Venice, 1911, pp. 19-20; F. Geyer, in Pauly-Wissowa, VIA/1, cols. 970f.; Manandian, *Tigrane II*, pp. 41f.). The local kings of Atropatene, Adiabene, Osrhoene,



Gordyene, and Commagene were left in office as vassals of the Armenian crown. The Nisibis district, perhaps with the enhanced status of a satrapy, was put under the command of Gouras, a brother of Tigranes. The governorship of Syria went to a certain Megadates or Bagadates (Bagadāt, Arm. Bagarat) (Appian, *op. cit.*, 48); the view that this dignitary was the ancestor and eponym of the great Armenian family of the Bagratids seems speculative.

Having thus become the master of a vast empire and the overlord of many kings, Tigranes deemed himself worthy of the title “king of kings” (on his coins with this title, see Babelon, *Rois de Syrie*, pp. cciii and 213-15; G. Macdonald, *NC*, 1902, pp. 196f.; Kh. A. Mushegian, *Trésors monétaires d’Arménie*, pp. 78-80 and plate; P. Bedoukian, “A Classification of the Coins of the Artaxiad Dynasty of Armenia,” *The American Numismatic Soc. Museum: Notes* 16, 1968, pp. 12f. and 47f.). He thus presented himself as the successor of Mithridates II, the Arsacid king who had first (ca. 109/108) assumed this title. Nevertheless on his coins minted at Antioch he was generally content with the simple designation of king. The court ceremonial maintained by Tigranes was on lines inherited from the Achaemenids with borrowing of Parthian features. The Roman envoy who was sent by Lucullus and received in audience at Antioch in 70 reported that Tigranes was served by four kings who always stood submissively to attention in his presence (Plutarch, *Lucullus* 21.6). J. Markwart thought that these four persons might be the four *vitaxes* (Arm. *bdeašx*; on the office, see below); but the context suggests that they were more probably kings who had been reduced to vassalage (see A. von Gutschmid, *Geschichte Irans und seiner Nachbarländer*, Tübingen, 1888, p. 85).

Just as the regal style of Tigranes conformed to the authentic Persian tradition, his religion, like that of Mithridates Eupator of Pontus, undoubtedly hinged on Mazdaism. Nevertheless he promoted the spread of Hellenism in his dominions and even designated himself “Philhellene,” evidently in imitation of the Parthian kings who since Mithridates I had happily assumed that title. Wishing to have a worthy capital, he laid the foundations of a huge city on the Hellenistic plan and named it Tigranocerta (Arm. Tigranakert) after himself (see H. Hübschmann, *Ortsnamen*, pp. 473-75). Greek deportees from Cappadocia and Cilicia were the economically active elements in this city’s population (Strabo 11.14.15; Appian, *The Mithridatic War* 67.84; Plutarch, *Lucullus* 26.1). In spite of its characteristics of an Hellenistic city, Tigranocerta retained some aspects of an Iranian royal residence, i.e., vast parks and hunting grounds around its suburbs (Appian, *op. cit.*, 84). The location of



Tigranocerta is uncertain. Discussion has centered on Amida, Arzen Se'ert, Mayyāfāreqīn, Tell Ermen, and other sites in southern Armenia and northern Mesopotamia. Though C. F. Lehmann-Haupt's weighty arguments (e.g. in Pauly-Wissowa, VI A/1, cols. 981-1007) in favor of Mayyāfāreqīn (Martyropolis, Arm. Nephkert) gained wide acceptance, the case for Tell Ermen in northeastern Mesopotamia has more recently been advocated with vigor by L. Dillemann, (*La Haute Mésopotamie orientale et les pays adjacents*, Paris, 1962, pp. 247f. and passim).

In 70 B.C. Mithridates Eupator, having been defeated in Pontus, took refuge in the dominions of Tigranes, who refused to deliver him to the Roman general, Lucullus. In the spring of 69 B.C. Lucullus marched into Armenia and laid siege to Tigranocerta. Close to the city's walls, one of the most memorable battles of antiquity was fought, with disastrous results for Tigranes. The Romans soon took and sacked Tigranocerta, which was still in the process of construction (Appian, op. cit., 83-86; Memnon, secs. 56-57 = *Fragmenta historicorum graecorum* III, pp. 555-56; Dio Cassius 36.1bf.; Sallust, *Historiarum fragmenta* 4.61f. See also K. Eckhardt, *Klio* 10, 1910, pp. 91 f.; P. Asdourian, op. cit., pp. 31-32; J. van Ooteghem, *Mémoires de l'Académie Royale de Belgique* 43, 1959, pp. 117-33; H. Manadian, *Tigrane II*, pp. 93f.). This defeat sounded the knell for the empire of Tigranes. He subsequently made an alliance with Mithridates Eupator, and on the latter's advice sent an embassy to the Parthian king, Phraates III, offering to retrocede Adiabene, northern Mesopotamia, and the Seventy Valleys and arguing that assistance to the allied kings would be in the Parthian interest (Appian, op. cit., 87; Memnon, sec. 58 = *Fragmenta* p. 556f.); but Phraates, who had also been approached by the Romans, hesitated to commit himself to either side. The Armenians, with some aid from Pontic troops, continued to fight in southern Armenia and northern Mesopotamia (battle of the Arsanius river in 68 B.C.; capture of Nisibis by Lucullus in the winter of 68-67).

The appointment of Pompey to the supreme command of the Roman army in the east in 67 brought the war to the phase of decision. Mithridates of Pontus was defeated at Dasteira (Nicomedia) in the spring of 66 and then fled to Armenia. At about the same time Tigranes had to deal with the revolt of his son Tigranes "the Younger." Eventually the latter, together with his supporters, found shelter at the Parthian court, where he married the daughter of Phraates (Appian op. cit., 104; Dio Cassius 36.50.1 and 51.1). Phraates invaded Armenia, but failed to capture Artaxata. Tigranes the Younger was soon



beaten off by his father and left with no choice but to take refuge with Pompey, who had already penetrated into Armenia. Accompanied by this prince, Pompey advanced to the neighborhood of Artaxata and obtained the submission of Tigranes the Great at minimal cost. The king presented himself voluntarily and in full regalia at the Roman camp (Plutarch, *Pompeius* 33.2.4; Appian, op. cit., 104; Dio Cassius 36.52.1-4. See also H. Manandian, *Tigrane II*, pp. 170-75). Tigranes had to renounce all his conquests, while Tigranes the Younger received Sophene (and Gordyene?) as apanages (Plutarch, op. cit., 33.5; Appian, op. cit., 104-05; Dio Cassius, 36.52.2). This turn of events enabled the Parthians to recover many of the territories which Tigranes had taken from them.

Tigranes the Younger soon incurred the displeasure of Pompey, was arrested and sent to Rome; his father-in-law Phraates pleaded in vain for his release (Plutarch, op. cit., 33.7). King Tigranes, on the other hand, received several tokens of the victor's respect. Pompey restored Gordyene (Plutarch, op. cit., 36.1) and even part of Upper Mesopotamia (Strabo 16.2.24) to Tigranes and apparently went so far as to reserve the title "king of kings" for him while withholding it from Phraates (Dio Cassius 37.6.2, where Tigranes is obviously confused with Tigranes the Younger). Having thus become the ally and protégé of the Romans (Dio Cassius, 36.53.5), Tigranes stayed on the Armenian throne until his death in 55/54 B.C. c. *The successors of Tigranes the Great*. Artavazdes I (55/54-34 B.C.), the son and immediate successor of Tigranes the Great, was a very cultured prince with a sufficient mastery of Greek to write discourses, tragedies, and historical treatises in that language (Plutarch, *Crassus* 33.2). Throughout his reign he wavered between the Romans and the Parthians. He was allied to the former by virtue of his father's treaty with Pompey, but being himself of Iranian extraction, had deep-rooted ties with the latter. Each power aspired to dominate Armenia. On his coins Artavazdes styled himself "king of kings" (H. Seyrig, *Revue numismatique*, 1956, p. 119, and 1964, pp. 138-40; Kh. Mushegian, op. cit., pp. 25-27 and plate; P. Bedoukian, op. cit., pp. 25-27, 69-70, and plate 6), but this title was purely nominal and also used by his Arsacid contemporary, Orodes II.

When Crassus set out on his campaign against the Parthians in 53 B.C., Artavazdes was unable to provide the Romans with promised reinforcements because Orodes II had swiftly occupied Armenia (Plutarch, *Crassus* 22.2). Crassus's army met with crushing defeat at Carrhae in June 53 B.C. Meanwhile Orodes and Artavazdes had come to terms and sealed their compact with the



betrothal of the Armenian king's sister to the Parthian king's eldest son, Pacorus. When the news of the victory at Carrhae was brought, together with Crassus's head, to Artaxata, the two kings were attending a performance of one of the tragedies of Euripides (Plutarch, *Crassus* 33). In the following years, Roman authorities (notably Cicero, *Epistulae ad Atticum* 5.16.4 and *ad familiares* 15.3.1) suspected Artavazdes of collusion with the Parthians, but apparently he did not depart from a policy of strict neutrality. In 36 B.C. Artavazdes joined Mark Antony's expedition against the Parthians and the king of Atropatene. The Romans advanced to Phraaspa (in Atropatene), which they unsuccessfully besieged, but Artavazdes and all his troops withdrew at the first Roman setback (Plutarch, *Antonius* 39; Dio Cassius 49.25.4). He thereby incurred Antony's enmity. Two years later, Antony returned to Armenia and captured the king and his family (Dio Cassius 49.39.3-5). Artavazdes was taken to Egypt and put to death by order of Cleopatra in 31 B.C.; his head was sent to the king of Atropatene, another Artavazdes, who had become Antony's ally.

After the capture of King Artavazdes of Armenia, one of his sons, who had escaped from Antony's clutches, was proclaimed king by the people, and given the name Artaxias II. He was soon driven out when the Romans occupied the whole country, but he was able to escape to the Arsacid court and, a few years later (ca. 30 B.C.), to recover his throne with Parthian help (Dio Cassius 49.44.4, 51.16.2). During his reign the Parthian influence in Armenia remained strong. At Rome, however, power passed to the emperor Augustus, who was determined that the Roman suzerainty should be reestablished and that only candidates acceptable to him should be allowed to reign in Armenia (on the Armenian policy of Augustus, see P. Asdourian, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-77; M. L. Chaumont, "L'Arménie entre Rome et l'Iran," in Temporini and Haase, eds., *op. cit.*, pp. 75f.). He therefore sent out his stepson Tiberius with orders to enthrone Tigranes II (or III), who was probably one of the surviving sons of Artavazdes II. Before the arrival of Tiberius, Artaxias II was assassinated, undoubtedly at the instigation of the pro-Roman party (Tacitus, *Annals* 2.3.4; Suetonius, *Tiberius in Vitae Caesarum*, Tübner ed., 1908, 9.1; Dio Cassius 55.9.5). Tigranes II had a short reign and was succeeded by his son Tigranes III (or IV), whose sister Erato shared power with him. This prince, who had been crowned without Roman approval, definitely leaned toward the Parthians. Being determined to assert Roman authority at any price, Augustus then supported the claim of a certain Artavazdes, probably another son of Artavazdes II; but the pro-Parthian faction restored Tigranes III, who



eventually, under the pressure of the circumstances, acknowledged Roman suzerainty (Dio Cassius 55.10.20). On the death of Tigranes III, Augustus instructed his grandson Gaius to place Ariobarzanes, a son of King Artavazdes of Media Atropatene, on the Armenian throne (*Res Gestae Divi Augusti* 27; Tacitus, *Annals* 2.4.3; Dio Cassius 55.10a.5). The dynasty of Atropatene had long been linked by marriages to the Artaxiads (Strabo 11.13.1; see R. D. Sullivan, *Eastern Dynastic Network*, in Temporini and Haase, eds., op. cit., II/8, 1977, pp. 916-18). Augustus' action provoked an Armenian uprising, and Gaius had to prepare for a siege of the fortress of Artagira (Artagerk' in the province of Ayrarat), where an insurgent leader named Addon had entrenched himself; during this operation Gaius was ambushed and mortally wounded (Strabo 11.14.6; Tacitus, *Annals* 1.3.3; Velleius Paterculus 2.102.2; Dio Cassius 55.10a.6-8; see N. C. Debevoise, op. cit., pp. 149-50). Ariobarzanes was succeeded by his son Artavazdes III. After the latter's death, the Armenians wanted no more of the Atropatenian line (Tacitus, *Annals* 2.4.2). One of Herod the Great's grandsons, Tigranes IV (V), was then appointed king of Armenia; he made himself disliked by his subjects and was deposed after a very short reign (Tacitus, *Annals* 6.40.2; Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 17.1.2; *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* 27.2, ed. Gagé, pp. 130-31).

After a brief spell in which the Artaxiad Erato, sister and widow of Tigranes III, was restored while the country sank into anarchy, the vacant throne was offered about A.D. 12 to Vonones; a son of Phraates IV whom Artabanus II had just driven out of Parthia. Although he was romanized and romanophile, the Roman authorities shortly withdrew their support and ordered him back to Syria (Tacitus, *Annals* 2.3.2 and 4.4-5; Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 18.2.4, see R. Hanslik, in Pauly-Wissowa, Suppl. IX, cols. 1865-(7). The dynastic issue was again in deadlock.

4. *The Parthian period.* a. *The efforts of the Arsacids.* For a long time the Arsacids had set their eyes on Armenia, a former territory of the Achaemenid empire. Proof of this had been given by Mithridates II's war against Artavazdes I (see above). Hitherto, however, they had not succeeded in permanently imposing their authority on this warlike and independent-minded nation. No credence can be given to the Armenian sources which date the foundation of the Arsacid dynasty of Armenia back to Vałaršak, or Arsaces the Lesser, a brother of a Parthian king Arsaces the Great, in the 2nd century B.C. (This tradition, said to have come down from a secretary of Vałaršak named Mar Abas Katina, is cited by the Pseudo-Sebeos, ed. Patkanean, 1879, p.



9 = V. Langlois, *Historiens* I, p. 199, and by Movsēs Xorenac'i 1.9, 12, 31 and 2.1-9 = Langlois II, pp. 28, 56, 62, 65, 76, 80-85.) Vonones was the first of his line to wear the Armenian crown, but it was only from the time of Artabanus II (long known as Artabanus III) of Parthia that the Arsacids entered the struggle for the throne of Armenia in real earnest.

In A.D. 18 the emperor Tiberius' commissioner, Germanicus, crowned a foreign prince, Zeno, at Artaxata with the consent of the Armenian nobles. Zeno, who was a son of King Polemon of Pontus, adopted the Irano-Armenian name Artaxias (III) and, having acquired some knowledge of Armenian customs, reigned peacefully until his death in 35 (Tacitus, *Annals* 2.56.2-4). It was then that Artabanus II resolved to make his eldest son Arsaces (Aršak) king of Armenia. At the same time he demanded restitution of treasures left in Syria by Vonones and restoration of "the frontiers of the Achaemenids and the Macedonians" (Tacitus, *Annals* 6.31.12; Dio Cassius 58.26.1). In reply, Tiberius immediately put up his own candidate Mithridates, a brother of King Pharasmanes of Iberia. Mithridates the Iberian soon contrived to have Arsaces assassinated and to take possession of Artaxata (Tacitus, *Annals* 6.32.3 and 33.1). Thereupon Artabanus assumed the role of avenger of Arsaces and sent another of his sons, Orodes (Vorod), with a strong force to seize power in Armenia. Mithridates could only maintain his position by calling in the Albanians and also nomad tribes living beyond the Caucasus. The Parthians were defeated and had to leave Armenia to Mithridates, who kept control until he was summoned to Rome by the emperor Caligula. The emperor Claudius released him in 42, but he had to fight for repossession of his kingdom, where the Parthians had again won a foothold (Dio Cassius 60.8.1; Tacitus, *Annals* 11.8.1, 9.1-2). Their king Vardanes, who had temporarily ousted his brother and rival Gotarzes, at first intended to recover Armenia, but soon desisted under the threat of Roman intervention (Tacitus, *Annals* 11.10.1; Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 20.3.4). The Parthian dynastic troubles gave some years of respite to Mithridates the Iberian, whose cruelty made him odious to the Armenians. In 51, however, the Armenian throne was snatched from him by his nephew and son-in-law Rhadamistus with the connivance of the latter's father, King Pharasmanes. Mithridates escaped to the fortress of Garni and eventually fell through treachery into the hands of his adversary, who put him and his family to death (Tacitus, *Annals* 12, 45-47).

The decisive phase in the struggle for Armenia began with the accession of the Parthian king Vologeses (Valagaš) I ca. 51. Resuming the policy of Artabanus II



but without flinching before obstacles, he resolved to place one of his brothers, Tiridates, on the throne of Armenia. Thanks to the unpopularity of Rhadamistus, he had no difficulty in occupying Artaxata and Tigranocerta (Tacitus, *Annals* 12.50.1-2). The Iberian king, however, escaped. In 52 Tiridates was able to establish himself at the capital. In the face of this Parthian coup, the emperor Nero and his advisers decided to intervene. An expedition under the command of Cnaeus Domitius Corbulo was mobilized. Notwithstanding the withdrawal of the Parthian troops, Tiridates, who cherished his royal vocation, remained at Artaxata (see P. Asdourian, *op. cit.*, p. 89 n .1). In the spring of 58 Corbulo marched into Armenia at the head of some 30,000 men. His main targets were Artaxata and Tigranocerta. After Tiridates had fled, Artaxata surrendered without resistance but was sacked and burned down (Tacitus, *Annals* 13.41.1-3; Dio Cassius 62.20.1). In the spring of the following year, 59, it was the turn of Tigranocerta to open its gates to the Romans. (On this point, the account of Frontinus, *Strategmata* 2.9.5, differs considerably from that of Tacitus, *Annals* 14.24.5-6. On the whole campaign see E. Egli, "Feldzüge in Armenien, von 41-63," in M. Büdinger, *Untersuchungen zur römischen Kaisergeschichte* I, Leipzig, 1868, pp. 265-363, esp. pp. 321f.; J. G. C. Anderson, in *CAH* X, 1934, pp. 760f.; L. Dillemann, *Haute Mésopotamie*, pp. 268-71; K. Gilmartin, *Historia* 12, 1973, pp. 594f.).

In the wake of Corbulo's successes, Nero designated Tigranes V (or VI), a descendant of Herod the Great and nephew of Tigranes IV (see above) formerly detained in Rome as a hostage, to be Armenia's next king. He was not well received because the Arsacids still had many supporters (Tacitus, *Annals* 14.26.1-2). Moreover he rashly ventured on raids into Adiabene, a Parthian dependency. The complaints of the aggrieved king of Adiabene, Monobazes, and the reproaches of Tiridates who was intent on regaining his throne, together sufficed to persuade Vologeses to take up arms (Tacitus, *Annals* 15.1.1-5). At the same time Vologeses solemnly crowned Tiridates in the presence of the Parthian assembly of nobles, thereby formally making his brother his vassal. (There is reason to suppose that the ceremony, which Tacitus briefly describes, was normal practice at investitures of vassal kings of Arsacid descent.) Armenia was placed third in the hierarchy of the Parthian monarchy's dependencies, the second rank having already been assigned to Atropatene, whose king was Pacorus, the brother of Vologeses and Tiridates (Tacitus, *Annals* 15.1-4).

Having made up his mind to support his brother's cause, the Parthian king



quickly sent forces under Monaeses and King Monobazes against Tigranocerta, where Tigranes V had established himself under the protection of a Roman garrison. When their siege of the town failed, Vologeses agreed to an armistice, which apparently included a secret clause requiring both parties to withdraw their troops (Tacitus, *Annals* 15.5.46; Dio Cassius 62.20.3-4, see K. H. Ziegler, *Die Beziehungen zwischen Rom und dem Partherreich*, Wiesbaden, 1964, pp. 69-70). It was a shaky truce, and hostilities soon recommenced. The Romans under a new commander in chief, Paetus, were surrounded in their camp at Rhandeia (Erand) on the Arsaias river and forced to capitulate (Tacitus, *Annals* 15.14-16; Dio Cassius 62.21.1-4). Paetus misreported this defeat as a victory. The Parthians were in fact not fully in control of the situation. It was again time for negotiations. A Parthian embassy to Rome (Spring 63) remained without practical results. But shortly after his return to Armenia the Roman general Corbulon (restored to the command of the army of the east) received the envoys of Vologeses and Tiridates. It was agreed to hold a conference at the same spot where Paetus had capitulated (Tacitus, *Annals* 15.28.2-3). During the talks on the future of Armenia, Tiridates made much of the nobility of his lineage but consented to travel to Rome and “bring to Caesar a new glory, that of a supplicant Arsacid” (Tacitus, *Annals* 15.28.5-6 and 29.1-2). A few days later, the Roman camp was the scene of a ceremony in which, before the onlooking Parthian cavalymen and Roman legionaries, the Arsacid prince laid his crown at the feet of a statue of Nero (Tacitus, *Annals* 15.29.3-5 and 30.12). Under the treaty which was then signed at Rhandeia, investiture of Armenia’s kings was to be reserved to Rome’s emperors. Nevertheless Armenia had become an Arsacid fief, because the actual choice of its kings lay with the Parthian monarch. The situation has rightly been described as a “co-suzerainty” (Ziegler, *op. cit.*, pp. 75f.).

b. *The Arsacid dynasty: Tiridates I and his successors.* Tiridates made the journey to Rome with much pomp and circumstance and in the company of his wife and children and two of his brothers. His escort included 3,000 Parthian cavalymen, several sages, and also a large number of Romans. (For a detailed account of Tiridates’ journey and stay at Rome see Dio Cassius 63.1-7.) The Romans went to great expense in their reception of the prince, whom everybody wanted to see. Kneeling before Nero, Tiridates said in a short speech in Greek that he was the emperor’s slave and had come to worship the emperor in the same way as he worshipped Mithras, whereupon Nero gave him the accolade and crowned him with the diadem (Dio Cassius 63.4, 5; Suetonius, *Nero* 13.3). It has been suggested that this scenario was inspired by



an episode in the legend of Mithras (F. Cumont, "L'iniziazione di Nerone da parte di Tiridate d'Armenia," *Rivista di filologia* 61, 1933, pp. 147f.). It is perhaps more likely that the kneeling and the wording of Tiridates' speech were borrowed from the ritual in use at the Parthian court when the Arsacid king of kings, under the aegis of Mithras, the god of contract, invested a vassal king. In this context, the Greek *doulos* (slave) was probably the equivalent of *bandak*, which meant vassal in the terminology of Iranian feudalism. Tiridates left Rome with some architects and a subsidy for the reconstruction of Artaxata (Dio Cassius 63.6.5-6); the town was to be officially renamed Neroneia (Dio Cassius 63.7.2), but the new name appears to have fallen very quickly into disuse.

In A.D. 72 hordes of Alans overran Atropatene and Armenia. This invasion caused concern at Rome and prompted the emperor Vespasian to strengthen the defenses of Harmozica, the capital of Iberia, where there was a Roman garrison. Tiridates, while fighting the invaders, ran into great danger and narrowly escaped being taken prisoner (Flavius Josephus, *Bellum judaicum* 7.7.4). This is the last mention of him in the sources. The date of the end of his reign is not known.

The names and dates of the successors of Tiridates can only be conjectured, as little or no information is available from either literary or numismatic sources. It would appear that the Arsacids of Armenia did not possess the royal privilege of minting coins; this must indeed have been the case if they were strictly subordinate to their suzerain, the Arsacid great king of Iran. Through careful collation of various texts (by U. Ph. Boissevain, *Hermes* 25, 1980, pp. 328-29, and in his ed. of Dio Cassius, vol. 3, pp. 218-19, notes), sufficient evidence has been obtained to justify inclusion of the name of Sanatroces (Sanatruk), who must have reigned at the turn of the 1st and 2nd centuries, in the list of Armenia's kings (see Markwart, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte von Eran II*, pp. 221-22; Asdourian, op. cit., pp. 100f.; H. Manadian, *The Trade and Cities of Armenia*, p. 83). Arrian in his *Parthica* praises this ruler's merits and equates him with the most illustrious Greeks and Romans (*Parthica*, fragment 47, ed. A.G. Roos and G. Wirth, Teubner ed., 1968, p. 247). The Armenian authors mention him as the founder of the town of Mcurk' (P'awstos Buzand 4.14 = Langlois, I, p. 250; Mar Abas Katina apud Pseudo-Sebeos = Langlois, I, p. 195; Movsēs Xorenac'i 2.36 = Langlois, II, p. 99). He was buried in a tomb of cyclopean construction at Ani (P'awstos 4 = Langlois, I, p. 261). Probably he is the same person as the King Sanatruk whom the hagiographic tradition



blames for the martyrdoms of the Christian missionary St. Thaddeus and of his own daughter Sandukht (on problems arising from this tradition, see F. Tournebize, *Histoire politique et religieuse de l'Arménie*, Paris, 1910, pp. 410-413; L.S. Koyan, *L'Église arménienne jusqu'au Concile de Florence*, 1961, pp. 29 f.; also M. van Esbroek, *Revue des études arméniennes*, N.S., 1972, pp. 243-92, who against all probability argues for the identity of this king of Armenia with the Arab king of Hatra, Sanatruk I (ca. 177/178), son of 'Abd Simayā.

The supposition that Sanatruk survived until the time of Trajan's campaign is contradicted by the fact that the throne of Armenia was held about 110 by Axidares, a son of the Parthian monarch Pacorus II. When Pacorus was supplanted by Osroes (i.e. *Ḳosrow*), the latter deposed Axidares and installed that prince's brother Parthamasiris without consulting the Roman emperor. This breach of the treaty of Rhandaia gave Trajan a pretext for war. The Roman expeditionary force left Antioch in the autumn of 114. Trajan marched straight into Armenia, the territory in dispute, halting at Satala (in Lesser Armenia) and then at Elegeia (near Erzurum). There, before the assembled Roman troops, he gave an audience to Parthamasiris, who had come in the hope that Trajan would crown him in the same way as Nero had crowned Tiridates. Trajan, however, rejected his claim and then and there declared Armenia to be a Roman province (Dio Cassius 68.19.2-5 and 20.1-3). Thus the Arsacid dynasty's rule in Armenia was brought to an end. Not long after the meeting, Parthamasiris was killed in obscure circumstances which did not exclude the possibility that Trajan was responsible (Fronto, *Principia historiae*, Loeb ed., II, pp. 212-14; Arrian, *Parthica*, fragment 39; Dio Cassius 68.17.4; see also A. V. Gutschmid, *op. cit.*, p. 105; N.C. Debevoise, *op. cit.*, p. 224). Armenia was attached to the province of Cappadocia, which already comprised Lesser Armenia.

Trajan left the task of taking Artaxata to one of his generals (on the presence of a Roman garrison at Artaxata in 116, see *Année épigraphique*, 1968, nos. 510 and 511). He himself proceeded to Nisibis and thence to Edessa. His triumphant expedition culminating in the capture of Ctesiphon in the summer of 116 will not be discussed here. The Roman conquests were too rapid, and from the spring of 116 onward revolts broke out in all the annexed territories. Armenia was one of the main trouble-spots. Among the rebel leaders a certain Sanatroces/Sanatruk is mentioned (Malalas, *Chronographia*, ed. L. Dindorf, Bonn, 1831, XI, pp. 270 and 273-74, where he is wrongly described as "king of the Persians"), and attempts have been made to identify him with the king of



Armenia discussed above. Also mentioned is Vologeses son of Sanatroces, who concluded an armistice with the Roman governor Lucius Catilius Severus and received from him “a part of Armenia” (Dio Cassius 74.9.6; see also U. Ph. Boissevain, *Hermes* 25, 1890, pp. 329f.). It must have been a big concession to the opposing side.

This step was ratified and implemented by the emperor Hadrian, who renounced all his predecessor’s conquests in the east and “permitted the Armenians to have a king” (*Vita Hadriani* 23.10). Thus Parthian suzerainty over Armenia on the terms of the treaty of Rhandeia was again formally acknowledged; it was at the same time given practical expression through the investiture of Vologeses. This king, the Vałarš of the Armenians, was certainly the founder of Vałaršapat, the town “made populous by Vałarš” (H. Hübschmann, *Ortsnamen*, p. 470); somewhat later this town (the future Echmiadzin) was made the kingdom’s capital instead of Artaxata (on the foundation of Vałaršapat, see P. Asdourian, op. cit., p. 110; H. Manandian, *The Trade and Cities of Armenia*, pp. 84-86). Vologeses/Vałarš was still reigning in 136 when hordes of Alans burst into Atropatene and Armenia, pushing as far west as Cappadocia; apparently he and the governor of Cappadocia made a joint effort to check the advance of the barbarians (Dio Cassius 79.15.1-2). The account of a campaign of Vałarš against the peoples of the north given by Movsēs Xorenac’i (2.65 = Langlois, II, pp. 163-64) is probably an echo of these events.

The following years are obscure, apart from some evidence of a Parthian move to impose an Arsacid on Armenia. This was apparently the prince Pacorus (Pakur), who is mentioned in some sources (Fronto, *Epistulae* 2.1; Asinius Quadratus, fragment 9, apud Stephanus of Byzantium) and on a silver cup (K. Trever, *Ocherki*, pp. 242-45 and fig. 35). He may perhaps be identical with Aurelius Pacorus “king of Greater Armenia,” who is known from a Greek inscription found at Rome (*Corp. Inscr. Gr.*, III, 6559; see Trever, op. cit., pp. 237f.) and was the brother of Aurelius Tiridates.

In 161 Marcus Aurelius decided to make war on the Parthians and put his co-emperor Lucius Verus in charge of the campaign. The task of restoring order in Armenia was entrusted to the governor of Cappadocia, Staius Priscus. He successfully occupied Artaxata and installed a garrison at Vałaršapat, which was then renamed Kainepolis (Dio Cassius 71.2.3). According to a Roman source (Fronto, *Epistulae* 2.1), there were then three claimants to the throne: a certain Vologeses/Valagaš, who no doubt enjoyed Parthian support, and a



Syrian prince, Sohaemus, as well as Pacorus who had apparently just been deposed. Eventually Sohaemus won the day. At a later date, Martius Verus had to march into Armenia to suppress troubles instigated by a satrap who bore the name Tiridates (Dio Cassius 71.14) and may have been an Arsacid. It was then that Kainepolis/Vaġaršapat became the capital by order of the Roman general (ibid., 71.1.4). An inscription gives evidence of Roman presence in this town in the reign of Commodus (180-192) (*Corp. Inscript. Lat.*, III, 6052; cf. K. Trever, *op. cit.*, pp. 267f.).

In 214 the emperor Caracalla arrested the king of Armenia—an unnamed Arsacid—whom he had invited to Rome for the ostensible purpose of reconciling him with his sons. When news of this perfidy reached the Armenians, they rose up in arms and inflicted a severe defeat on Theocritus, the general who was sent to quell them (Dio Cassius 77.12.1-2 and 21.1). Under the treaty of 217 which ended the Roman-Parthian hostilities of the two previous years, Caracalla's successor Macrinus agreed to confer the diadem on Tiridates II, to return his mother to him, and to recompense the Armenians for booty taken from them (Dio Cassius 78.27.4). Tiridates II was the son of the king detained at Rome; no further information about him has come down.

Weakened by constant internal dissension, the Parthian empire was soon to be overthrown by a petty provincial king. In 224 the ruler of Persis (Fārs), Ardašīr son of Pāpak and grandson of Sāsān, defeated the Parthian monarch Artabanus (Ardavān) and proclaimed himself king of kings.

This dynastic upheaval in Iran transformed the political scene in Armenia. The Armenian sources state that the country's king at the time was Khosrov (Kōsrow) "the Great." He was probably a close relative of the last Parthian monarchs, and he evidently wanted to make his realm an Arsacid bastion against the Sasanians (Agathangelos 9-12 = Langlois, I, pp. 114f.). Since his own forces were too weak, he needed Roman support and remained resolutely pro-Roman. Shortly after his accession, Ardašīr made a first attempt to subjugate Armenia but was thwarted by the joint resistance of the Armenians and their allies, the Atropatenians, who were led by sons of Artabanus (Dio Cassius 80.3.2-3). The task of conquering Armenia had to be left to Ardašīr's son and successor Šāpūr I.

5. *The Sasanian period I: Armenia between Rome and Iran.*

a. *Armenia as a Sasanian province.* At Misikhe on the Euphrates in 244, Šāpūr I



defeated the young emperor Gordian III. The latter's successor Philip the Arab sued for terms and undertook not only to pay a ransom and an annual tribute but also to renounce the Roman protectorate over Greater Armenia. The country was thus left with no security against Sasanian designs. Lacking Roman support, King Khosrov lost prestige and a few years later was murdered. Armenian tradition generally names the murderer as Anak, a member of the Parthian Suren family (e.g., Agathangelos 13 = Langlois, I, pp. 118f.), but this story should be treated with caution; the surmise of Elišē Vardapet (3.48 = Langlois, II, p. 206) that Khosrov was killed by his own brothers is more likely to be true.

Various pieces of evidence indicate that Šāpūr I's conquest of Armenia took place ca. 252/253. Khosrov's son Tiridates, who was still a child but had perhaps by then succeeded his father, was forced to take refuge in the Roman empire. Presumably Šāpūr was helped by the complicity of certain members of the royal family (Elišē Vardapet, loc. cit.; the account given by Zonaras 12.21 = ed. Dindorff, III, p. 137, is dubious). The kingdom of Greater Armenia was simply abolished. Its territory became a new province of the Sasanian empire, though its southern or "Transtigritan" districts may perhaps have been detached and incorporated in the province of Arbāyestān (Persian Arabia), as they certainly were in 363 (see below). Šāpūr gave the governorship of Armenia to his son and heir Hormizd-Ardašīr, who received the title Vazurg Šāh Arminān, i.e., "Great King of the Armenians" (trilingual inscription of Šāpūr I on the Ka'ba-ye Zardošt at Naqš-e Rostam, Mid. Pers. lines 23 and 25, Parth. lines 18 and 20, Greek lines 41 and 48 = A. Maricq, *Classica et Orientalia*, Paris, 1965, pp. 59, 61). When Hormizd-Ardašīr succeeded his father in 272, Armenia remained under the rule of Sasanian viceroys, notably Šāpūr's youngest son Narseh (see M.L. Chaumont, *Iranica Antiqua* 8, 1968, pp. 81-93 and H. Humbach and P.O. Skjærvø, *The Sassanian Inscription of Paikuli*, Wiesbaden, 1983, III/1, pp. 28, 32, 45; III/2, pp. 10f., 36, 72). By curbing the quarrels of the feudal chiefs, Sasanian rule undoubtedly gave Armenia a period of internal peace. In the field of religion, the Persian authorities made great efforts to bring the local gods and cults into line with orthodox Mazdaism, for instance by prohibiting certain forms of idolatry and by smashing divine and royal statues (Movsēs Xorenac'i 2.77 = Langlois, pp. 119-120; see M. L. Chaumont, *Recherches sur l'histoire de l'Arménie*, Paris, 1969, pp. 70f.). The "king of the Armenians named Artabasdes," who according to the *Historia Augusta (Vita Valeriani* 3) addressed a letter to Šāpūr pleading for the captive emperor Valerian, is evidently a legendary figure (see A. Alföldi, in



Beiträge zur Historia Augusta-Forschung, Antiquitas 4, Bonn, 1964.

While in exile in Cappadocia, the Arsacid Tiridates received a Roman education and acquired a good knowledge of Greek and Latin (*Life of St. Gregory*, Gk. version 159, 183 = Ar. version 145, 176 = G. Garitte, *Documents pour l'étude du Livre d'Agathange*, Vatican, 1946, pp. 97, 110). His restoration appears to have been the result of a compromise agreed by Vahram II and Diocletian at some uncertain date around 286-287. Under its terms the Persians must have kept possession of the greater part of Greater Armenia, because in 293 the Sasanian Narseh was still in residence in Armenia as its "king" (Humbach and Skjærvø, op. cit., and W. B. Henning, *BSOAS* 14, 1952, pp. 517f.). It was only after the defeat of Narseh, now the king of kings, by the Caesar Galerius at Osxa (Oskik' in the canton of Calkotn) in Armenia that the whole of the territory passed out of Persian control and the Arsacid dynasty was definitely reinstated in Armenia under Roman suzerainty. Under another clause of the treaty signed at Nisibis in 297, the five old "Provinces" or districts of southern Armenia—Sophene, Ingilene, Arzanene, Gordyene, and Zabdicene—were ceded to the Romans (Petrus Patricius, fragment 14 = Dindorf, *Hist. Gr. Min.* I, p. 434; cf. Ammianus Marcellinus 25.7.9; see below).

b. *The Christian Arsacids: Tiridates III and his successors until the partition.* The reign of Tiridates II was marked by an event of far-reaching importance for Armenia's future, namely this king's adoption of Christianity as the state religion at the urging of St. Gregory the Illuminator (i.e. Baptist). The latter was probably a Greek from Cappadocia (*Life*, Gk. version 40 = G. Garitte, *Documents*, p. 37) rather than a nobleman of the stock of the Suren family, as Armenian tradition maintains. At the king's behest, Gregory went to Cappadocia with an escort of *naxarars* to receive consecration as bishop. (The Armenian church remained dependent on the see of Caesarea until the reign of King Pap—see below). The chronology of Armenia's conversion presents a problem. The event used to be dated about 300, but more recent scholars (notably P. Ananian "La data e le circostanze della consecrazione di S. Gregorio Illuminatore," *Le Muséon* 84, 1961, pp. 43-73, 317-60) tend to change the date to 314/315—a surmise which seems probable but cannot be proved. B. MacDermot's arguments for 294 (in *Revue des études arméniennes*, N.S., 1971, pp. 281-358) are ingenious but not convincing. The war of Maximinus Daia in 311-312 (Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 9.66.3) might provide a terminus ante quem if it could be proved that "the Armenians allied to the Romans" were subjects of King Tiridates. In any case, Christian communities had



unquestionably existed in Armenia before the official conversion. In a passage in the church history of Sozomenus (*Historia ecclesiastica* 2.8.2) it is stated that the Persians began to become Christian as a result of their contacts with the Armenians and the Osrhoenians; but as far as the Armenians are concerned, this is not wholly true, because the first penetration of Christianity into Iran was definitely not by way of Armenia (see M. L. Chaumont, *La diffusion du christianisme en Iran au IIIe siècle*, in Temporini and Haase, op. cit., II, forthcoming). Christianization tended to strengthen Armenia's links with the Roman empire and to set back the Iranian cultural influence.

Tiridates III, the St. Tiridates of the Armenians, worked closely with St. Gregory to spread Christianity through his kingdom and to suppress the pagan cults (described below), which nevertheless did not disappear altogether. While remaining a loyal ally of the Roman emperor, Tiridates did not break off all links with the Sasanians. Presumably he was on good terms with the prince Hormizd, who after the death of his father Hormizd II in 309 had been excluded from the throne and kept in prison until he escaped to the Armenian court (Zosimus, *Historia nova*, [ed. Mendelssohn, 1887] 2.27; see P. Peeters, in *Bulletin de l'Académie Royale de Belgique* 17, 1931, p. 37). Tiridates is said to have been killed in a plot hatched by his adversaries (text published by Alishan = Langlois, pp. 193-94; Movsēs Xorenac'i 2.92 = Langlois, I, p. 131). From the sources, his death would appear to have occurred not later than 320 (see Peeters, op. cit., pp. 17, 37), but some (Markwart, *Untersuchungen* I, p. 220; R. Grousset, *Histoire de l'Arménie des origines à 1071*, 2nd ed., Paris, 1947, p. 120; Ananian, op. cit., p. 353) hold that his reign lasted until 330 or even later (Asdourian, op. cit., p. 143, places his death in 337). The view of H. Manandian reiterated by K. Toumanoff (in *Revue des études arméniennes*, 1969, pp. 263f.) that Tiridates III was succeeded by another king of the same name, Tiridates IV, seems unfounded.

Information about the successors of Tiridates, namely his son Khosrov Kotak (Kosrow the Lesser) and his grandson Tiran, is available only from the Armenian sources. Khosrov chose a site north of Artaxata on which to build a new capital, Dvin, and an *aparank'* (Parthian *apadān*) or royal palace (P'awstos 3.8 = Langlois, I, pp. 216-18; Movsēs Xorenac'i 3.8 = Langlois, II, pp. 136-37). The statement of Movsēs Xorenac'i that *dvin* was a Persian word meaning "hill" was generally doubted until V. Minorsky ("*Transcaucasica*," *JA*, 1930, pp. 41f.) drew attention to the use of *dovīn* with the sense of "hill" in Persian place names. Khosrov Kotak had to contend with an invasion by the Massagetae of



Balāsagān, whose king, named Sanesan or Sanatruk is said to have been related to him (P'awstos 3.7 = Langlois, I, pp. 215-16; Movsēs Xorenac'i, 3.9 = Langlois, II, pp. 137-38). Another problem is said to have been the defection of the *vitaxes* (*bdeašx*) of Arzanene, who sought to become a vassal of the Persian king (P'awstos 3.9 = Langlois, p. 216; Movsēs Xorenac'i 3.4 = Langlois, II, p. 135); but this defection, the date of which is unclear, cannot really have affected the king of Armenia because Arzanene had not been Armenian for many years, having been annexed to the Roman empire under the treaty of Nisibis. King Tiran (incorrectly called Tigranes VII) seems to have had serious conflicts with the Christian clergy and is said to have put St. Gregory's successor, the catholicos Yusik, to death. In his foreign policy he was mainly concerned to placate Šāpūr II of Iran. The latter made no secret of his designs on Armenia (Libanius, *Orationes* 59.71-72; Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* 4.56), where he could count on support from some of the *naxarars*. Probably ca. 334/335 or perhaps a little later, Šāpūr succeeded in capturing King Tiran, his queen, and the crown prince Aršak (according to the rather picturesque account given by P'awstos 3.20 = Langlois, I, pp. 229f.). Tiran is said to have been betrayed by his chamberlain (*senekapet*) Phisak, who delivered him to the satrap of Arzanene, Šāpūr-Varāz (on the chronology of these events, see N. H. Baynes, "Rome and Armenia in the Fourth Century," *English Historical Review* 25, 1910, pp. 627-28; E. Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire* I, Paris, 1959, p. 130). In 338, however, Šāpūr after his first reverse outside Nisibis agreed to the release of the royal family of Armenia and to the enthronement of Aršak, apparently at the special request of the emperor Constantius II; the matter is the subject of oracular comments by Julian (*Orationes* 1.20d; ed. J. Bidez, p. 34 in which the personal name of the king of Armenia is not mentioned).

From the deductions of leading scholars (J. A. Saint-Martin, ed. C. Lebeau, *Histoire du Bas-Empire* I, Paris, 1824, p. 412; H. Gelzer, "Die Anfänge der armenischen Kirche," *Berichte der Königlich-sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften*, 1895, p. 118 n. 2; Baynes, *op. cit.*, p. 629; Peeters, *op. cit.*, pp. 10f.; Stein, *op. cit.*, p. 137) it may be taken that the accession of Aršak II occurred about 338/339. This dating is implicitly confirmed by an Armenian chronogram which makes the first year of Aršak's reign coincide with the second year of the reign of the sons of Constantine, i.e. 338 (Pseudo-Sebeos, ed. Patkanean, Moscow, 1979, p. 16; tr. F. Macler, *JA*, 1905, p. 141). During Aršak's reign, St. Nerses was consecrated as catholicos and before long the two came into conflict. Weak and indecisive, the king wavered between the Persians and the Romans, leaning now to one side, now to the other. His relations with



Šāpūr II (309-379) are outlined by P'awstos. He first visited the Sasanian court sometime in the years 338-340 (P'awstos 4.16-17 = Langlois, pp. 224-25). Later, at an uncertain date and in unclear circumstances, he gave armed help to the Persians in the Nisibis region (P'awstos 4.20 = Langlois, pp. 256-57). In 358 Šāpūr through diplomatic channels sent a demand to Constantius II for restitution of (Upper) Mesopotamia and Armenia (Ammianus Marcellinus 17.5.6). Despite the arguments of N. Garsoian (*Quidam Narseus*, in *Armeniaca*, Venice, 1969, and *Revue des études arméniennes*, 1973, pp. 123-24), Šāpūr's ambassador Narseh can not have been the same person as the Armenian catholicos Nerses, as the Sasanian dignitary appears as a general of the Parthian army in 363 (Ammianus Marcellinus 14.6.12). Aršak still showed susceptibility to Šāpūr's influence when he was interviewed and taken to task by Constantius at Caesarea in Cappadocia in 362 (Ammianus Marcellinus 20.11.1). In 363 he was instructed to lead a raid into Persian territory in conjunction with the emperor Julian's expedition. After Julian's defeat and death, the new emperor Jovian made peace later in the same year and, amongst other things, undertook not to intervene in the affairs of Armenia, thereby laying the country open to Šāpūr's schemes (Ammianus Marcellinus 25.7.12; P'awstos 4.21 = Langlois, pp. 258-59). Armenia soon fell into anarchy. At the Persian monarch's instigation, the Armenian *naxarars* gradually deserted their own king, who finally had to flee to the Sasanian court. Although Šāpūr provided a "sworn and inviolable" safe-conduct, in writing and stamped with the royal seal (P'awstos 5.53 = Langlois, pp. 268-69; Procopius, *Persian Wars* 1.5.16-17), Aršak was placed under surveillance as soon as he arrived; subsequently, after a dispute over precedence, he was arrested and sent on Šāpūr's command to the notorious "castle of oblivion."

Having thus eliminated Aršak, Šāpūr sent troops into Armenia. The Persians had to fight particularly hard at Artagerk', an old royal fortress where Queen Pharandzem and her son Pap held out with the help of two Armenian noblemen, Cylax or Cylaxes and Artabanus, who had rallied to her cause; only after a long siege did she surrender early in 370 (Ammianus Marcellinus 27.12.5-8; P'awstos 4.54 = Langlois, pp. 273-74). After being taken prisoner, the queen of Armenia was put to death in Persia. Pap escaped from Artagerk' before the end of the siege and took refuge in Pontus. He returned and ascended the throne in 371 with the aid of the emperor Valens. In 372 Šāpūr again marched into Armenia, but the Roman forces, supported by Armenian contingents, decisively defeated the Persians in a battle at Bagavan, on the Arsaias river at the foot of Mount Niphates (Ammianus Marcellinus 29.1.2;



P'awstos 5.4 = Langlois, pp. 281-83; *Life of St. Nerses* 11 = Langlois, II, pp. 34-35). King Pap, however, caused offence with his dissolute morals and was thought to be possessed by demons (*dēv*). Being unable to endure the reproaches of the catholicos Nerses, who after a long absence had been recalled to the court, he caused this saint to die by poison (P'awstos 5.24 = Langlois, pp. 290-91; *Life of St. Nerses* 12 = Langlois, II, p. 36; Movsēs Xorenac'i 3.38 = Langlois, II, p. 153). The next catholicos, Yusik, was consecrated outside the jurisdiction of the see of Caesarea, then held by St. Basil, and the breach soon became absolute. Not long after this, King Pap, who was veering toward alliance with the Sasanians, was assassinated in 374 at a reception in the Roman camp, apparently at the behest of the emperor Valens (Ammianus Marcellinus 30.1.18-21; P'awstos 5.32 = Langlois, pp. 295-96).

After Pap's death, another Arsacid, Varazdat, was designated by Valens. He procured the assassination of his own chief adviser, the general Mushel Mamikonian, and was then driven out by Manuel, his victim's brother. The latter, who had inherited the office of *sparapet*, took charge of affairs and made Pap's two very young sons, Aršak (III) and Valaršak, joint kings with the elder in the paramount position. As regent, Manuel was assisted by Queen Zarmandukht, the mother of the two princes. Having failed to obtain support from the emperor, Manuel sent a "message of submission" to the aging Šāpūr II. In reply, Šāpūr sent diadems to Zarmandukht and her sons and appointed Suren to be governor of Armenia with the title *marzbān* (P'awstos 5.37-38 = Langlois, pp. 300-01). The dispatch of a *marzbān* suggests that the Sasanians now considered Armenia to have been annexed to the Persian empire as a vassal state. Only the western part of the Armenian kingdom remained under Roman protectorate. (For more details, see M. L. Chaumont, in Pomperini and Haase, eds., op. cit., III, forthcoming.) Naturally Manuel soon clashed with the *marzbān* Suren; but the statement of P'awstos (5.38-43 = Langlois, pp. 302-06) that Manuel succeeded in completely freeing the country from the Persians is hard to believe.

c. *The partition of Armenia and the end of the Arsacid dynasty.* The Sasanian king Šāpūr III (383-387), who was more disposed to compromise than his predecessors, opened negotiations with the emperor Theodosius for settlement of matters in dispute, particularly the Armenian question. Agreement was reached on partition of the country into two zones, which amounted to confirmation of the status quo. The demarcation line ran through Karin (Erzurum) in the north and Amida (Diyarbakir) in the south, and thus



left to the Persians most of the Armenian territory, including the northern and northwestern provinces adjacent to Iberia and Colchis (P'awstos 6.1 = Langlois, p. 307; Łazar P'arbec'i 5 = Langlois, II, p. 262; Movsēs Xorenac'i 42 = Langlois, II, pp. 155-56). The date of this treaty remains uncertain; it is placed by most scholars in 387, but by some in 384 or even in 389/390 (see Saint-Martin, ed. Lebeau, IV, p. 429; Markwart, *Ērānšahr*, p. 114; Asdourian, op. cit., pp. 166-67; J. Doise, in *Revue des études anciennes* 47, 1945, pp. 274f.; Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire* I, pp. 205-06; K. Stock, *Studia Iranica* 7, 1978, pp. 179f.).

Aršak III decided for religious reasons to leave Persian Armenia and went to Acilisene, where he reigned under Roman protection. When he died, his realm was annexed to the Roman empire. In Persarmenia the throne passed to another Arsacid, Khosrov III. After a few years this king incurred the disfavor of the Sasanian Vahrām IV, who replaced him with his brother Vramšapuh (392-415); the name is the armenianized form of the Pahlavi Vahrām-Šāpūr. Vramšapuh's reign (Łazar P'arbec'i 8-12 = Langlois, II, pp. 265-68; Movsēs Xorenac'i 3.50-55 = Langlois, II, pp. 159-63; Koriun, *Life of St. Mesrop* = Langlois, II, p. 10) coincided with the rise of the catholicos St. Sahak (Sahak the Great) and with an event of great consequence, namely the invention of an Armenian alphabet. Hitherto the Armenians had not written their language and had therefore been obliged to use foreign languages, mainly Greek and Syriac, for religious teaching and for official documents. The Armenian alphabet, consisting of modified Greek characters and a number of signs borrowed from Semitic scripts, was invented by the monk Mesrop Mashtotz with the approval of the king and the catholicos. Thanks to vigorous encouragement by St. Sahak, its adoption prompted a great translation effort; in addition to the Bible, many liturgical books, canons of church councils, and patristic texts were rendered into Armenian (Koriun, *Life or St. Mesrop* = Langlois, II, pp. 9-16; see P. Peeters, "Pour une histoire des origines de l'alphabet armenien," *Revue des études arméniennes* 9, 1929, pp. 203-37; F. Feydit, *Considérations sur l'alphabète de St. Mesrop*, 1964). It must in fairness be added that this singular upsurge of Armenian literature could not have occurred if Vahrām IV and, above all, Yazdegerd I had not pursued a policy of religious toleration which left the Armenian clergy completely free to maintain contact with Constantinople.

After Vramšapuh's death, the ex-king Khosrov III had a second reign of not more than one year before he too died. Thereupon Yazdegerd I, following old precedents, made his own son and heir, Šāpūr, governor of Armenia; and



Šāpūr, like his Sasanian forerunners in the 3rd century, assumed the title “Great King of Armenia” (*Vazurg Šāh Arminān*). This arrangement lasted until the death of Yazdegerd I in 420, when Šāpūr left Armenia; after his return to Iran, he fell in battle with an opposing faction (Łazar P’arbec’i 12 = Langlois, II, p. 268; Movsēs Xorenac’i 3.55-56 = Langlois, II, pp. 163-64). Yazdegerd’s successor was another of his sons, Vahrām V Gōr (see A. Christensen, *Iran Sass.*, pp. 274f.). At the request of the *naxarars*, Vahrām V appointed Artašēs, a son of Vramšapuh, to be the king of Armenia, reportedly on condition that he gave his name the Pahlavi form Ardašīr (Movsēs Xorenac’i 3.50 = Langlois, II, p. 166). It was probably in his reign that the catholicos Sahak went to Ctesiphon seeking changes in the order of precedence at the court of Armenia (see M. L. Chaumont, *JA*, 1966, pp. 485f.). In the event, the Armenian noblemen did not find Artašēs/Ardašīr to their liking, and regardless of Sahak’s remonstrances they complained to Vahrām Gōr, who deposed the king and ousted the catholicos (Łazar 13-15 = Langlois, II, pp. 268-74; Movsēs Xorenac’i 3.58 and 63-64 = Langlois, II, pp. 166, 169-70). Thus ended the rule of the Arsacid dynasty of Armenia, founded in the 1st century A.D. by Tiridates, the brother of Vologeses I, king of the Parthians. Thereafter the government of Armenia was conducted by *marzbāns*, who were sometimes picked from the Armenian nobility. The first *marzbān* appointed by Vahrām was Vēh-Mihr-Šāpūr. After a few years, the office passed to an Armenian nobleman, Vasak, prince of Siwnik’, who must have had a tricky task during the troubles of Yazdegerd II’s reign (439-457).

d. *The privileges of the Armenians at the Sasanian court.* According to P’awstos (4.54 = Langlois, p. 271), the king of Armenia had the privilege of sharing the seat (*taxt*) of the king of kings at the royal banquets. On the other hand Movsēs Kałakatuarec’i (*History of the Albans* 2.1; tr. C. J. F. Dowsett, London, 1961, pp. 61-62) relates that Šāpūr II changed the order of precedence and of the cushions at the royal table as to admit the great Armenian *naxarars*. Thus Andok, prince of Siwni’ received the fourteenth cushion. We have to make reservations on these statements. Nevertheless it is not unlikely that the Armenian king preserved at the Sasanian court some of the privileges which he had enjoyed under the Parthian monarchy—as a member of the Arsacid family—and that the Armenian Greats could in certain cases be admitted in the Sasanian *gāh-nāmag*.

It is also noteworthy that, according to an ancient custom, whenever a contingent of the Armenian cavalry with its general came to the Sasanian



residence it was received by a delegate of the king who inquired about the welfare and the situation of Armenia. The question was repeated three and four times. Afterwards the Armenian cavalry was reviewed and then presented to the court. One of them would then relate the deeds of courage of their ancestors (Eliše 264 = Langlois, II, p. 196-97). It is likely that this custom was a survival from the Parthian period.

6. *The Sasanian period II: Persarmenia.*

From the political viewpoint, which alone is relevant here, “Persarmenia” has the broader meaning of the whole Armenian area under Persian rule (as opposed to the Roman Armenia). It must not be confused with the late geographical term of Parskahayk’ or “Persarmenia,” a province which lay north and west of the lake Urmia and bordered on Adiabene and Atropatene (see J. Markwart, “*La province de Parskahayk’*,” *Revue des études arméniennes*, 1966, pp. 252-314).

a. *The religious policy of Yazdegerd II and Pērōz.* In 444 twenty Armenian prelates gathered in a synod at Šahapivan to condemn the doctrine of the Messalians, i.e. Paulicians (F. Tournebize, s.v. *Arménie*, in *Dictionnaire d’histoire et de géographie ecclésiastique* IV, 1930, cols. 301-02; G. Garitte, *Narratio de rebus Armeniae*, Louvain, 1952, pp. 88-90; J. Mercierian, *Histoire et institutions de l’église arménienne*, Beyrouth, 1965, p. 54). A more acute danger threatened Armenian Christianity when Yazdegerd II, in the eighth year of his reign, was persuaded to take steps against the Persian empire’s Christian subjects by his minister Mihr-Narseh, an intransigent upholder of Mazdaism. One step in this connection was a royal edict requiring the Armenians and other nations of Caucasia to renounce Christianity and perform Mazdean rites (summaries of the edict in Łazar 20 = Langlois, II, p. 281; Elišē 2.19-25 = Langlois, II, pp. 190-91). In response to these arbitrary commands, another synod met at Artašat and roundly condemned Mazdaism (Tournebize, loc. cit.). The *naxarars*, including Vardan Mamikonian and Vasak of Siwnik’, were summoned to the royal court. Though determined not to apostatize, they finally consented, for the sake of avoiding a worse fate, to show outward respect for certain practices of the Persian religion such as bowing to the sun (Łazar 24-27 = Langlois, II, pp. 283-88; Elišē 2.61 f. = Langlois, II, pp. 196f.). Yazdegerd then sent them back to Armenia in the company of numerous (according to Elišē, 700) magians headed by a *mowbed* (Arm. *mogpet*). The magians had received precise orders: they were to close the churches and turn them into fire-temples, forcibly secularize the monks and nuns, compel the



wives of the satraps and the children of the Armenians to receive instruction in the doctrines of Zoroaster, and impose strict observance of various Mazdean practices (Eliše 2.81-87 = Langlois, II, pp. 199-200). In concert with Vindoy, the chief of the magians, one of the Armenian magnates, Šavasp of the Artsruni clan, built temples of Ormizd at Artaxata and Dvin; the fire-temple at Dvin was put under the care of Vindoy's son, Široy (Thomas Artsruni 2.1, tr. M. E. Brosset, *Collection d'historiens arméniens* I, St. Petersburg, 1874, p. 70; John Catholicos, *Histoire d'Arménie*, tr. J. Saint-Martin, Paris, 1841, p. 50). From the Armenian people, however, the Persian magians encountered constant hostility; they were ill-received almost everywhere, and in some cases, as at Zarehavan, they were massacred. Vardan Mamikonian, despite his outward apostasy, took the lead in this revolt. In often brutal fighting, Vardan clashed with the *marzbān* Vasak of Siwnik', who presented himself as a mediator but was hated by his compatriots for his real or alleged Mazdean sympathies. The rebels captured several important places, including Artasat, Artagerk', and Garni. At Dvin, Vindoy and his son Široy were executed. In the spring of 451, a strong army commanded by Muškan Niusaławurt broke into Armenia from Atropatene, and Vardan set out to meet it. The decisive encounter took place on 2 June 451 in the plain of Aravayr in the district of Artaz, at the foot of Mount Masis (Ararat). Being inferior in number, the Armenians could not withstand the assault of the Persian "immortals" (*gundn matean* or *matenik gundn*) and were cut to pieces. Most of their leaders, including Vardan, fell in the battle (Łazar 34-36 = Langlois, II, pp. 296f.; Eliše 6.1-9 = Langlois, II, pp. 220f.; see Saint-Martin, ed. Lebeau, op. cit., VI, pp. 258-318; S. Weber, *Die katholische Kirche in Armenien, ihre Begründung und Entwicklung vor der Trennung*, Fribourg (Brisgau), 1903, pp. 439-47; Tournebize, op. cit., pp. 80-82; Grousset, op. cit., pp. 189-206; C. Sanspeur, *Revue des études arméniennes*, 1975-76, p. 140).

Armenian insurgency continued in the form of a war of ambushes, mainly in the mountains of northern Armenia. Eventually Yazdegerd II decided against further open persecution and charged a new *marzbān* Ādur-Hormizd-Aršakān, to calm the tempers. Nevertheless the leading Armenian clerics and nobles were summoned to appear before the king of kings and answer for their conduct. Being unable to justify it, they were detained and deported initially to Hyrcania (Gorgān) whence they were transferred to the fortress of Nišāpūr in Khorasan. In 454 some of the clerics, including the catholicos Joseph and the priest Leontius, were by royal command put to death at Revand near Nišāpūr in the "martyrdom of the Leontian saints" (Łazar 38-51 = Langlois, II, pp.



300-19; Ehiše 7.1-45, 8.1-100 = Langlois, II, pp. 225-43). The imprisoned *naxarars* were sent to Herat (Hrev), where the prince (or satrap) Šnūm-Šāpūr became their friend and protector. After the accession of Pērōz in 459, they were released at the request of Šnūm-Šāpūr and another Persian dignitary, Yazd-Gušnāsp, but it was not until the sixth year of Pērōz's reign that they were able to return to Armenia (Łazar 53 = Langlois, II, pp. 319-20; Sanspeur, op. cit. pp. 85-87). Despite the more tolerant attitude to Christians, the magians in Armenia won a fairly large following thanks to the support given by Persian officials and high-ranking apostates. The catholicos Giwt strove to counteract this trend and was denounced in a report to the king by the *małxaz* Godišoy, nobleman who had gone over to Mazdaism. Giwt traveled to Ctesiphon and appeared before King Pērōz, who dismissed him from his office as catholicos but left him in liberty. During his stay at Ctesiphon, he contacted local priests and even performed ordination. He ended his days in Armenia (Łazar 54-58 = Langlois, II, pp. 322-27; Sanspeur, op. cit., pp. 90-94).

From ca. 480 the Armenian revolt gained fresh vigor under the leadership of Vahan, a nephew of the national hero Vardan Mamikonian. The Persians were beaten by rebel troops at Nersehapat in the Artaz district in 482, but afterward got the better of them in a battle in Iberia in 483.

The defeat and death of Pērōz in the land of the Hephthalites in 484 forced the Persian generals to evacuate Armenia and thus changed the scene to the advantage of Vahan Mamikonian, who became the virtual master of the country. Pērōz's successor, Valāš, who was pacifically inclined and ready for a compromise, sent a high official to negotiate with Vahan. The latter set the following conditions: freedom to practice the Christian religion, absolute prohibition of Mazdean worship in Armenia, and empowerment of *naxarars* to appeal directly to the king of kings. Valāš, who needed Armenian military help to put down the revolt of his brother Zareh, conceded all these demands. After the brief marzbanate of Andigān, Vahan himself was appointed *marzbān* of Armenia.

b. *The political and religious situation in the reigns of Kavād and Kōsrow Anōšīrvan.* Kavād I's treatment of the Christians of Armenia was relatively tolerant aside from passing lapses. Vahan Mamikonian was confirmed in the marzbanate, which passed on his death to his brother Vard. In 505-506 the catholicos Babgen convoked a synod at Dvin, which the *marzbān* Vard attended; also present was a Persian priest, Simon of Beth Arsham, who came unexpectedly for the purpose of denouncing the Nestorians (*Book of Letters*,



Tiflis ed., pp. 41-47; see Tournebize, op. cit., IV, col. 303, s.v. Arménie; Mercierian, op. cit., pp. 61-66; and especially V. Inglesian, apud A. Grillmeier and H. Bacht, *Das Konzil von Chalkedon II*, Würzburg, 1953, pp. 364f.). The synod's decisions were written down "in Armenian and Persian."

Vard Mamikonian was subsequently dismissed, and the governorship of Persarmenia was for a time in the hands of Persian officials until it reverted to an Armenian, Mjej Gnuni. The latter did his best to satisfy the king's requirements, particularly for regular delivery of the tribute due from the Armenians. He was apparently still in office in the 23rd year of Ƙosrow I's reign when a synod, convoked by the catholicos Nerses II and again held at Dvin, formally repudiated the decisions of the council of Chalcedon, which it deemed to be tainted with Nestorianism (*Book of Letters*, p. 72, and the "History of the Councils" attributed to John of Odzun, *ibid.*, p. 221; Stephan Asoġik 2.2, tr. H. Gelzer and A. Burckhardt, Leipzig, 1907, pp. 58-59; *Diegesis* 60-76, ed. Garitte, *Narratio*, pp. 34-36; see Tournebize, loc. cit.; Garitte, *Narratio*, pp. 130f.; Mercierian, op. cit., pp. 66f.). According to the "letter" of the patriarch Photius (*Patrologia graeca* 102, col. 705), one result of this synod was that King Ƙosrow designated Nerses II as the adoptive father of one of his sons.

Mjej Gnuni's successor as *marzbān* was a Persian, Dēn-Šāpūr. He harassed the Christians and kindled a fire of Aramazd (Ōhrmazd) in the country of the Reštunik' in the district of Vaspuragān (Stephan Asoġik 2.2, ed. Gelzer and Burckhardt, p. 59). Eventually Ƙosrow dismissed Dēn-Šāpūr at the request of emissaries from the catholicos. The next governor, Gušnāsp-Vahrām, was sent to Persarmenia with orders to stop interference with Christian worship and permit reversion to Christianity by Armenians who had been compelled to profess Mazdaism, but definitely not to allow Persians to become Christians. A notable victim of this rule was Yazdbozit, whose real name may perhaps have been Makhosh. The converted son of the chief of the magians of Dvin, he was crucified at Dvin after refusing to abjure. The fame of Yazdbozit spread throughout oriental Christendom ("The passion of Yazdbosit," ed. P. Peeters, in *Acta Sancta Nov.* IV, pp. 191 f.; Menander Protector, Bonn ed., pp. 432, 434; John Catholicos, tr. Saint-Martin, p. 53; Samuel of Ani, *Tables chronologiques*, tr. Brosset, op. cit., II, pp. 34f.; see Saint-Martin, ed. Lebeau, op. cit., pp. 82-84).

The appointment of Čihr-Gušnāsp, a member of the powerful Suren family and a relative of the king, again set a match to the powder-keg. The new governor not only took stern measures against *naxarars* suspected of collusion with the Byzantines; claiming to act on a royal command, he also made persistent



efforts to impose Mazdaism on the Armenians and caused a fire-temple to be built at Dvin. This conduct soon provoked a popular uprising, in which Vardan Mamikonian took the lead. Late in 571 or early in 572, Vardan captured Dvin and put the *marzbān* “Suren” to death (Stephan Asōlik 2.2, tr. Gelzer and Burckhardt, p. 60; Sebeos, *History of Heraclius* 1, tr. F. Macler, Paris, 1905, pp. 4, 5. On the chronological problem, see G. Garitte, *Narratio*, pp. 184f.). The insurgents appealed to the emperor Justin II, who promised assistance. With help from troops sent by the emperor, Vardan defeated the Persian general, Mihrān Mihrewandak, who had 20,000 men under his command (Sebeos I, tr. Macler, pp. 5, 6). Later he fought side by side with the Romans at the battle of Melitene in 575, when the Persians suffered a disastrous defeat. The emperor Tiberius, however, was anxious to make peace with Ḳosrow. A truce which was arranged in the same year guaranteed possession of Persarmenia and Iberia to the Persians, but the emperor Tiberius II refused to hand over the Armenians who had taken refuge in Roman territory (see P. Goubert, *Byzance avant l’Islam*, Paris, 1951, pp. 70-71).

c. *Armenia between Iran and Byzantium.* During the reign of the emperor Maurice (582-602), favorable circumstances enabled the Romans to regain territory in Armenia. After the deposition and death of Hormizd IV in 590, the latter’s son and heir Ḳosrow II (later named Aparvēz “the Victorious”) was challenged by an eminent general, Vahrām Čōbēn of the Mihrān family. When Vahrām seized the throne, the young Ḳosrow fled to Roman territory and put himself under the protection of the emperor. In return for big territorial concessions in Armenia and (Upper) Mesopotamia, Maurice promised him military aid. Despite offers from Vahrām Čōbēn, the leading Armenian *naxarars* such as Mušeł Mamikonian and Sembāt Bagratuni remained loyal to Ḳosrow and provided him with contingents amounting to 15,000 men. Armenian troops under the command of John formed the left wing of the combined force which decisively defeated Vahrām Čōbēn at Bałaraṭ’, not far from Ganzak in Atropatene, in the autumn of 591 (Theophylactus Simocatta 5.10; Sebeos 3, tr. Macler, pp. 18-22; John Mamikonian, *History of Taran* 1 = Langlois, I, pp. 363-64; on the campaign, see Saint-Martin, ed. Lebeau, op. cit., pp. 326-32; Grousset, op. cit., pp. 250-51; Goubert, op. cit., pp. 141-62). Ḳosrow after his restoration promptly fulfilled all his obligations and ceded to Rome the western part of Persian Armenia up to the river Azat (Garnī-Čāī) in the north and lake Van in the south, as well as part of Arbāyestān (Persian Arabia) as far as Nisibis, which remained in Persian possession (Sebeos 2-3, tr. Macler, pp. 15, 27; Thomas Artsruni 2.3, tr. Brosset, in *Collection* I, p. 78; see



Hübschmann, *Ortsnamen*, pp. 229-30; Grousset, *op. cit.*, pp. 251-53; Gaubert, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-70).

In Byzantine Armenia, the emperor Maurice in 602 ordered deportations of the people for resettlement elsewhere. To escape this calamity, many Armenians moved to the Persian zone, where the local authorities took care of them. King Ƙosrow himself showed concern for their lot when he ordered the tax collector (see below) of the province of Vaspuragān to give financial help to the fugitive chiefs, whom he wished to win to his side. Nevertheless this official was molested by one group of the Armenians (Sebeos 6, tr. Macler, p. 31). The Armenian nobility split into several factions, and the Persians had to deal with sporadic revolts. Among the powerful *naxarars*, Mušeł Mamikonian apparently always wavered between the emperor and the king of the kings (see Grousset, *op. cit.*, pp. 253-55; Goubert, *op. cit.*, pp. 191-97), whereas Sembat Bagratuni finally entered the service of Ƙosrow, who appointed him *marzbān* of Hyrcania (Gorgān) and honored him with the title Ƙosrow-Šnūm (Ƙosrow's joy). At the head of an Armenian force, Sembat warred victoriously against the Kushans and Hephthalites and was rewarded by Ƙosrow with the highest honors (Sebeos 14.17-19, tr. Macler, pp. 42-43, 45-52; see Goubert, *op. cit.*, pp. 197-204). The same Sembat sponsored the convocation of a church council at Dvin in 596 which categorically rejected the Chalcedonian doctrines and confirmed the Armenians in their monophysite belief (Goubert, *op. cit.*, pp. 213-14). Sembat's son Varaztirots was educated at the Sasanian court and later appointed *marzbān* of Armenia with the proud title Javitean-Khosrov (eternal Ƙosrow) (Sebeos 28-29, tr. Macler, pp. 87, 92).

After the overthrow and murder of Maurice by Phocas in 602, Ƙosrow II launched a general offensive against the Byzantines on the pretext of avenging the emperor who had been his benefactor. Persistent efforts were made to regain the lost territory in Armenia. In 605 Ƙosrow's troops under the command of Datoyean defeated a Byzantine force in the plain of Širak in the district of Ayrarat. Later another Persian general, Senitam-Khosrov, won a victory in the sub-district of Tsalkotn, not far from the fortress of Angeł on the Arsanias river; the *naxarar* Theodosius Khorkhruni then delivered the fortress to the Persians and decamped to Ƙosrow's court (Sebeos 12, tr. Macler, pp. 57-69). In 607-08 the Byzantines were severely defeated by Aštāt Yestayār (Yazdayār) in the sub-district of Basean, and the city of Karin (Erzurum) surrendered to the Persians, who pushed on the Satala in Little Armenia. Ƙosrow then sent the *patgosapan* Šāhēn who was also *šarayanpet* (*āyēnbed* of



the empire) to Armenia, the latter in the capacity of *marzbān* at Dvin. After Šāhēn had defeated the Romans at Karin, the city's inhabitants were deported to Hamadān in Media (Sebeos 13, tr. Macler, pp. 63-65). Subsequently Caesarea in Cappadocia and Melitene (Malatya) fell to Šāhēn. These military successes enabled the Persians to recover the territory which they had ceded to the emperor Maurice. According to Sebeos (13, tr. Macler, p. 66), the *marzbāns* at Dvin after the šarayanpet Šāhēn were successively the *parseanpet* (*āyēnbed* of Fārs), Faršenazdat, Šahraplaken, and Roč-Vehan (Rhazates).

In 610 Heraclius, who may perhaps have been of Armenian origin, seized the throne at Constantinople. In 623 he began a stubborn campaign, indeed a veritable crusade, to reconquer Byzantine Armenia. After passing through Armenia by way of Karin, Dvin, and Naķčevān, he entered Atropatene, where he destroyed the great fire-temple of Ādur Gušnāsp. In the following year 624, he came up against the famous Persian general Šahrvarāz and routed him in a battle near the small town of Tigranakert (in the northeast of Armenia). Somewhat later, Heraclius returned to Armenia by way of the sub-district of Širak. After crossing the Araxes river and marching through the sub-districts of Gogovit, Hēr, and Zarevand, he set his course toward Ctesiphon and crushed the army of Roč-Vehan in a battle on the plain of Nineveh (Sebeos 26, tr. Macler, pp. 81-84; Theophanes, *Chronography*, ed. J. Classen and I. Bekker, Bonn, 1939-41, p. 475). These clear victories led to the deposition of Ƙosrow Aparvēz and enabled Heraclius to insist on Persian consent to restoration of the frontier lines fixed in 591 (Lebeau, op. cit., pp. 130-57; Grousset, op. cit., pp. 273f.).

When danger from the Arabs first appeared, the Armenian *naxarars* were engaged in futile quarrels among themselves, some looking to Persia, others to Byzantium. Nevertheless there are mentions of Armenians in the service of the Sasanian monarchy right up to its fall. Mušel Mamikonian and Gregory of Siwnik' fought under the Persian general Rustahm (Rostam) and were killed with him at the battle of Qādesīya in 636.

d. *Internal organization.* The capital of Persarmenia was Dvin, the town reputedly founded by Khosrov II Kotak (see above). It was the seat of the Sasanian administration and the repository of the state archives (*dīvān*), which presumably comprised the official records of all the "provinces" of districts of Armenia. This was certainly so in the case of the archives of Siwnik' until Ƙosrow Anōšīravān, at the request of Prince Vahan, ordered their transfer from Dvin to Phaitarakan, a town then and subsequently belonging to



Atropatene (Sebeos 1, tr. Macler, p. 5).

Recent excavations at the site of Dvin have identified the premises where the archives were kept. Among the unearthed objects are remnants of tapes used for tying parchments together and numerous seals of civil and ecclesiastical functionaries (K. G. Kafadarian, “Les fouilles de la ville de Dvin,” *Revue des études arméniennes*, 1965, pp. 283-302, and “Vestiges des archives administratives de Dvin,” *Patma-banasirakan Handēs*, 1974, pt. 2, pp. 101-11; A. A. Khalantharian, “Les bulles sassanides de Dvin,” *Patma-banasirakan Handēs*, 1977, pt. 3, pp. 195-205).

As a Sasanian province, Armenia was governed by a *marzbān*, a title meaning literally “guardian of the frontier” but given from the 4th century onward to almost all provincial governors. The *marzbān* of Armenia was in command of all the local Persian garrisons and had authority also in administrative, judicial, and even religious affairs. He was assisted by a *hazārbed* (Armenian *hazarapet*), literally “chiliarch,” whose exact functions are not clear. There was also a *mowbed* (Arm. *mogpet*), i.e., chief of the magians, who resided at Dvin and had jurisdiction over all the scattered magians in the province.

Tax collection was supervised by the *āmārgar*. There must have been one of these officials in every district of Persarmenia. Sebeos (6, tr. Macler, p.31) mentions a *Vaspurakan-hamarakar*, i.e. *āmārgar* of Vaspuragān, the district east of lake Van. Another important office was the management of the gold mines of Armenia, which was held in Pērōz’s reign by a Syrian (Łazar 58 = Langlois, II, p. 325; Sanspeur, op. cit., p. 95) and later by an Armenian nobleman (see above).

This system, which must have been common to all the Sasanian provinces governed by a *marzbān*, was supplemented—or encumbered—with a structure of hereditary offices held by members of the Armenian aristocracy. Chief of these was the office of *sparapet* or *asparapet* (see below), which belonged to the Mamikonian family. It should be noted, however, that the decree (*fravartak*, Arm. *hrovartak*) whereby each holder of such an office was appointed came from the sovereign Sasanian monarch himself (Łazar 85 = Langlois, II, p. 365). The troops of the Armenian *naxarars* were commanded by the *sparapet* but of course at the disposal of the *marzbān*; they formed the contingents which were required from the annexed districts in time of war. Not even the head of the Armenian church was immune against the authority of the king of kings. In 428 Vahrām V deposed the illustrious catholicos Sahak



and nominated a successor for him (see above), and in like manner Pērōz removed the catholicos Giwt (see above). In short, the Armenian holders of every kind of high office, and likewise the great *naxarars* were strictly subordinate to the Sasanian central government. Only in the period in the reigns of Pērōz and Kavād when Vahan Mamikonian was the *marzbān*, did Armenian enjoy a special autonomous status.

e. *The prosperity of Armenia.* The historian Procopius, in his account of affairs in the first half of the 6th century, paints a bright picture of the salubrity and prosperity of the area around Dvin, with its dense population, many villages, and plains well-suited for horses. Merchandise was brought to the town from neighboring Iberia, from the Roman empire, from almost all regions of Persia, and even from India (Procopius, *Persian Wars* 2.25.1-3; see A. Baumgartner in Pauly-Wissowa, V/2, col. 1751, s.v. Doubios; Manandian, *The Trade and Cities of Armenia*, pp. 81-82). Among the strangers who came regularly to do business in Persarmenia, Syrians and Jews were notably active but Persians, being the masters of the country, had the biggest stake. In the early part of the 6th century there was a castle in Persarmenia which stood on an almost unassailable site and was therefore used by the merchants from Persia as a safe repository for their gains (Malalas, *Chronography*, p. 469). The large scale of Persarmenia's commercial activity in the later decades of the 6th century and early decades of the 7th century has been confirmed by discoveries of a great variety of coins: in one excavation at Dvin, 31 gold pieces of Justin II, Phocas, and Heraclius (V. V. Kropotkin, *Byzantine monetary treasures* (in Russian), Moscow, 1962, No. 336; cf. M. Raschke in Temporini and Haase, eds., op. cit., II/9, 2, 1978, p. 734 n. 362); again at Dvin, a hoard comprising 136 drachmas of Kōsrow I, Hormizd IV, and Kōsrow II together with 84 silver coins of Heraclius (Kropotkin, op. cit., No. 365; cf. Raschke, op. cit., p. 735, No. 365); at Echmiadzin, 20-30 coins of Heraclius found in 1908 (Kropotkin, op. cit., No. 387; cf. Raschke, loc. cit.); at Leninakan (Alexandropol), 92 drachmas of kings from Kavād to Ardašīr III and 16 coins of Heraclius and Constans II (M. I. Kamera and K. V. Golenko, in *Vizantiĭskii vremennik* 29, Leningrad, 1958, pp. 172-93). Also among the finds at Dvin are Sasanian seals which give ample evidence of Persarmenia's close links with the rest of the Sasanian empire (Khalantharian, in *Patma-banasirakan Handēs*, 1977, pp. 195-205).

Persarmenia was not only a country of transit; it also possessed considerable resources in its own soil. Particularly important were the gold mines of Pharangion, which lay near the frontier with Roman Armenia (Procopius,



Persian Wars 1.15.26-29; Malalas, *Chronography*, pp. 455-56) and had been famous since early times (Strabo 11.14.9). Kavād's insistence that the Romans must return these mines (530-31) indicates that their exploitation yielded large profits for the Sasanian government. Apparently part of the output was exported. Dvin was the main center of economic life. Around the palaces of the *marzbān* and the catholicos stood the abodes of the principal *naxarars*. Craftsmen in a wide range of industries, such as weaving, pottery, and jewelry, worked hard to satisfy the demands of not only local customers, such as Persian officials and Armenian nobles, but also external markets.

7. Iranian influences on Armenia.

a. *Religion*. Armenian polytheism had indigenous roots but shows signs of considerable borrowing from the religion of ancient Iran. Probably it was in the Achaemenid period that Iranian influences first made themselves felt. Strabo (11.4.16) who describes the situation in the 1st century B.C., states that the Armenians worshipped the same gods as the Persians and particularly venerated Anaïtis (see also [Anāhīd iii](#)).

There is evidence that from a very early times Anaïtis (the Anāhitā of the Avesta and the Persian inscriptions, Anahit of classical Armenian) was worshipped at Erēz (Eriza) in western Armenia (Strabo, loc. cit., Pliny, *Natural History* 33.82-83; Movsēs Xorenac'i 2.14 = Langlois, II, p. 88). This town, where the goddess was adored in the guise of a gold statue, appears to have remained the chief center of her cult in Armenia until the demise of paganism. Also mentioned are gold idols of Anahit at the capital, Artaxata, and at Artašat in the Taron district. The "great Lady Anahit and daughter of Aramazd" (Agathangelos 22 = Langlois, I, p. 127) was the preferred object of devotion of the Arsacid kings, who made annual visits to her temple at Erēz (Agathangelos 21 = Langlois, I, pp. 125-26; Garitte, *Documents*, p. 78). This custom may be compared with the homage which the early Sasanian kings paid to the same goddess at Eṣṭakr in Fārs (see M. L. Chaumont, *JA*, 1965, pp. 167-81).

Despite Anahit's importance, the first place in the Armenian pantheon belonged to Aramazd (the Armenian form of Ahura Mazdā/Öhrmazd. Being "the great and mighty," the creator of heaven and earth, and "the father of the gods," he was assimilated to Zeus but had all the attributes of his Iranian prototype (see Hübschmann, *Armen. Etymologie*, pp. 24-25; H. Gelzer, "Zur armenischen Götterlehre," *Berichte der Königlich-sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften*, 1896, pp. 102f.; Tournebize, *Histoire politique*, p. 766). He



was the first in the triad to which Tiridates III initially prayed, coming before Anahit and Vahagn (Agathangelos 133 = Langlois, I, p. 167). A temple and statue of Aramazd stood in the fortress of Ani in Upper Armenia, which also sheltered the tombs of the Arsacids (Agathangelos 133 = Langlois, I, p. 167). There were probably also temples of Aramazd at several other religious centers, in particular Bagaran and Bagavan (see below).

The third in the above-mentioned triad was Vahagn, the *Vərəθrayna* of the Avesta and *Varθagan* of the Parthians. However, this hero-god whose original name was *Vahevan*, and who was commonly confused with Heracles, differs from *Vərəθrayna* in many respects. The legend about his birth (*Movsēs Xorenac'i* 1.31) recalls an Anatolian myth. He is the most popular deity of the Armenian pantheon. Under the name of *višapakal* “the dragon-puller” he presided in his temple (*Vahevanean mehean*) of *Aštišat* over a sort of triad which included the goddesses *Ahahit* and *Astlik*, the last-named being a local equivalent of Aphrodite (Agathangelos 141 = Langlois, I, p. 173; see Gelzer, *op. cit.*, pp. 104f.) or, rather, of the Semitic *Astarte*.

The cult of Mithras (*Mihr*) was probably first brought to Armenia in the Achaemenid period. The annual festival of Mithras was the occasion on which the satrap of Armenia sent to the Great King the 20,000 colts which the people had to deliver as tribute (Strabo 11.14.9). Liability for such contributions was of course not peculiar to Armenia. At the time of the conversion to Christianity, there was a temple of *Mihr* at *Bagayarič* or *Bagayarinj* in the *Derdjan* district of Upper Armenia (Agathangelos 134 = Langlois, I, p. 168); the local people assimilated him to *Hephaestus* or sometimes to *Dionysus* (see Gelzer, *op. cit.*, p. 137; Garitte, *Documents*, p. 110). In view of the scarcity of evidence on the Mithras cult in ancient Armenia, it seems likely that he played a secondary role compared with the other Iranian deities, particularly *Anahit* and *Aramazd*. Still, one should note that the Armenian term for idol-temple, *mehean*, is a derivative of the name *Mithra/Mihr* (see A. Meillet, *MSL* 17, 1911, p. 246, and *Revue des études arméniennes* I, 1921, p. 234).

Also imported from Iran was *Tiur*, whose prototype was the Persian god *Tīr* (with features of the Assyrian *Nabû*). His name is attested mainly in compounds such as *Tiridates/Trdat* (*Tīr*-created). *Tiur*, “the scribe of *Ormizd*,” was assimilated to *Apollo* and worshipped principally in a temple at *Erazamoyñ* not far from *Artaxata* (Agathangelos 129 = Langlois, I, p. 164; see Gelzer, *op. cit.*, pp. 109f.). His oracular pronouncements were based on interpretation of dreams—a peculiarity which can hardly be traced to Iranian



religion. Another notable borrowing is *sandaramet/spandaramet*, modified from Spəntā Ārmaiti (Pahlavi Spendarmat); in Armenian the word means “infernal region” or “hell” and makes compounds such as *sandarametakan* (infernal dungeon), *sandarametapet* (lord of the lower world), etc. (cf. A. Meillet, *ibid.*, pp. 234-35, and see *Ārmaiti*).

Also mentioned are idolatrous cults of the Sun (Arev, Aregakn) and the Moon (Lusin) (Movsēs Xorenac’i 2.8 and 77), but no exact equivalent of this cult is known in Persian religion. The accounts of Armenian paganism before the conversion contain no mention of Ahriman, the adversary of Ahura Mazdā and one of the two central figures in Mazdean dualism. Belief in pernicious beings, however, was general. Most of these personifications of evil were derived from Iranian demonology, particularly the *dews* and the *višaps*. *Dews*, i.e. demons, were the most harmful; any human possessed by a *dew* was doomed to the worst misfortune. Armenia’s soil seems to have been particularly productive of *višaps*, i.e. dragons (Av. *višāpa*). Preeminent among the dragons was Ādahak (Av. Āidahāka), whom Armenian legend assimilated to a king of the Medes; his wife Anoyš was “the mother of the dragons.” There are even mentions of dragon-temples. Clearly the *višaps* were the objects of a form of devil-worship. Movsēs Xorenac’i (1.24-31 = Langlois, II, pp. 72-76) contrasts the Ādahak legend and the dragon cult with the worship of good gods, and remarks that, in this respect, Tigran, the supposed father of Vahagn “the dragon-strangler” had played a beneficent role.

Popular superstitions, still persisting in the Christian period, were pinned on genies of many kinds, mostly maleficent. Their names, if not attributes, were borrowed from Iranian lore: e.g. *pariks*, *huškapariks* (“ass-bulls” who haunted ruins), *hambaruks*, *nahangs* (sorts of crocodiles), etc. There were also beings called *kaĵ* and *aṛlēz* (q.v.), from the original stock of Armenian lore. (The various genies and *visaps* are described by Eznik of Kolb, *Against the Sects*, Venice ed., 1821, pp. 97-98, and in the “Questionnaire de S. Grégoire,” apud N. Adontz, *Revue de l’orient chrétien*, 1925-26, pp. 330f.; see also A. Christensen, *Essai sur la démonologie iranienne*, Copenhagen, 1941, pp. 87ff.).

In addition to the words quoted above, other loan-words from the Iranian religious vocabulary that entered Armenian are, e.g., *bagin*, a derivative of bag, Persian *bag*, “god” (Hübschmann, *Armen. Etymologie*, p. 114). *Bag* also appears in several old Armenian place-names (Hübschmann, *loc. cit.* and *Ortsnamen*, pp. 410-11), which cannot be definitely dated from before or after the establishment of the Arsacid dynasty: e.g. Bagavan, a place in the



Bagrevand sub-district of the Ayrarat district, whose name is correctly explained in the Armenian version of the Book of Agathangelos (144 = Langlois, I, p. 176) as meaning “town of the idols” in Parthian; Bagaran, the name of two different places in Ayrarat; Bagayarič or Bagayarinj, the center of the Mithras cult (see above). On the other hand, the term for a pagan priest, *k'urm* (pl. *k'urmk'*) is an Armenian modification of the Aramaic *kumrā* and must have entered the religious vocabulary in the period when imperial Aramaic was the main governmental language in Armenia.

Despite so many borrowings from Iranian cults, the frankly polytheistic and idolatrous religion of pagan Armenia was very different from the orthodox Mazdaism which took shape in Iran, mainly under the Sasanians. As A. Meillet (op. cit., p. 236) justly observed, the Armenians absorbed Iranian cults but knew nothing of the teachings of the Avesta. One of the grounds for this view is the fact that the texts containing material on Armenian paganism never refer to fire-worship. On the other hand, the discovery of remains of fire-temples under some Christian churches during recent excavation (see S. A. Nigosian, “Zoroastrism in the Fifth Century,” *Studies in Religion* 7, 1978, pp. 425-30; written communication from J. P. Mahe) points to a certain diffusion of this essential component of Mazdaic worship in pre-Christian Armenia. It cannot be disputed, however, that the priests of pagan Armenia, the *k'urmk'*, were fundamentally different from the Mazdean priests, the magians (see Chaumont, *Recherches sur l'histoire de l'Arménie*, p. 80).

b. *Institutions: the court and senior officials.* According to Movsēs Xorenac'i (2.6.8 = Langlois, II, pp. 82-85), the institutions and procedures current in the court and kingdom of the Arsacids of Armenia were introduced by Valaršak, a son of the Parthian king Arsaces. This anachronistic story can be interpreted as referring to reforms implemented by Tiridates I and his successors for the purpose of parthianizing the preexistent feudal and official institutions. Since Armenia had for several centuries been subject to Iranian influence in this respect, it is not always easy to tell how much was due to Arsacid initiative and how much was derived from earlier, particularly Achaemenid, times.

The royal residence was called the *aparan-k'* (Parth. *apadān* < Old Persian *apadāna*), which also served as a place-name (Hübschmann, *Ortsnamen*, pp. 332, 401). *Banak*, properly meaning “camp” or “army,” in some contexts denotes “the court” (*banak ark'uni* “the royal court”). The royal palace was the *tačar* (Old Persian *tačara*) or *darapas*; the throne was the *taxt* or the *gah*. The word for the crown or more precisely the diadem, was *č'ag* (Parthian and



Pahlavi *tāg*), and *ṭ'agawor* was synonymous with *ark'ay*, the Armenian word for king. The crown and all the other regalia were kept in the *tun patmučakc'n* “house of those in charge of the royal wardrobe,” also referred to as the *tun ṭ'agac'*, “house of the crowns” (P'awstos 5.6 = Langlois, I, pp. 285).

The titles *ṭ'agadir* and *ṭ'agakap* were in principle synonymous, as both meant “bestower of the crown” (Hübschmann, *Armen Etymologie*, p. 153), the latter more precisely “he who affixes the diadem.” Affixation of the diadem, the symbol of kingship, had doubtless been originally the highest of all court functions. Under the Arsacids it appears to have always belonged to the “general of the cavalry;” it was hereditary in the Bagratid family in Armenia and the Suren family in Iran (see M. L. Chaumont, *JA*, 1961, pp. 98f.).

The presence of a *hazarapet* (*hazārbed*) or “chiliarch” at the court of the Arsacids of Armenia is well attested. He was a sort of prime minister; it is not known whether he kept the military responsibilities of the chiliarchs of the Achaemenids, particularly the command of the royal bodyguard. The office must be distinguished from that of the *hazārbed*, the representative of the Sasanian government (see above). The term for the Armenian royal bodyguard was *ṭ'iknapah*, an exact equivalent of *p'uštīpan* (Pahlavi *puštīgān*). Also in service at the palace of the kings of Armenia were the *pahapank' dran ark'uni*, “guards of the royal court” consisting of four companies called *gundk'* (Movsēs Xorenac'i 2.7 = Langlois, II, p. 83); they were probably comparable with the *darīgān* corps known to have been maintained at the court of Šāpūr I (trilingual inscription of Šāpūr, Mid. Pers. line 33, Parth. line 27, Greek line 65 = Maricq, *Classica et Orientalia*, p. 71)—an institution which Šāpūr must have taken over from his Arsacid forerunners.

In the 4th century A.D. the eunuch-chamberlain bearing the title *mardpet* seems to have been one of Armenia's most powerful dignitaries. He was called “the father of the king.” According to P'awstos (5.6 = Langlois, I, pp. 285-86), he was responsible for the custody of the treasures in the royal castles in Ingilene and Sophene. The presence of the title *mardpet* on a seal from the early Sasanian period (V. G. Lukonin, *Iran v èpokhu pervykh Sasanidov* (Iran under the early Sasanians), Leningrad, 1961, p. 219) proves that the office was of Iranian and probably Parthian origin and belies the interpretation of the word as a territorial label meaning “chief of the Mardi” (e.g. by N. Adontz, in *Armenia in the Period of Justinian, the Political Foundations based on the naxarar system*, ed. Garsoïan, Lisbon, 1970, pp. 249-50). (On the uncertain etymology of *mardpet*, see J. Harmatta, *Acta Antiqua Academiae Hungaricae*,



1961, p. 424). Entirely distinct was the office of the *senekapet* (from *seneak* “room”), also a royal chamberlain of very high rank, whose functions are said to have included custody of royal treasures and carriage of the royal sword and signet-ring (P’awstos 4.3 = Langlois, I, p. 235; *Life of St. Nerses* 3 = Langlois, II, p. 23). Also worthy of mention are the *spaskapet*, “major-domo” (Agathangelos 165 = Langlois, I, p. 187), who as head of the servants held an important court position obviously patterned on an Iranian prototype, the *axorapet* (master of the stable), the *barapan* or *darapan/darapet* (guardian of the door), etc. The dignitaries and officials residing at the court were graded, especially at the royal table, in an order of precedence which was recorded with great precision in a *gahnamak* (from *gah* (throne or rank) and *namak* (document)). The practice, like the term, was unquestionably of Iranian origin and was probably introduced when Tiridates I and his immediate successors reorganized the Armenian court. Later the order of precedence was rearranged several times, notably on the initiative of St. Nerses, in whose time the number of seats (cushions) at the royal table was 400 (*Life of St. Nerses* 5 = Langlois, II, pp. 25-27; P’awstos 4.2 = Langlois, I, p. 236, raises the number to 900; on the *gāh-nāmag* of the Sasanians, see A. Christensen, *Iran Sass.*, pp. 62f.).

c. *The feudal system.* Feudal organization was a common characteristic of many Indo-European peoples with no history of mutual contact. In the case of the Armenians, however, there can be no doubt concerning the decisive influence of Parthian Iran on the introduction and shaping of their feudal system and, in particular, the *naxarar* system. It may be taken for certain that there was no link between this institution and the division of Armenia into 120 administrative districts called *strategoï* (Pliny, *Natural History* 6.27)—a division probably dating from the time of Tigranes the Great. N. Adontz (*Armenia*, pp. 304f.) argues that the tribal system of the *komarchoï*, as described by Xenophon, was the original frame from which the *strategoï* and the *naxarars* evolved, and (op. cit., pp. 311f.) that the tribal background was reflected in titles locally given to *comarchoï* such as *malxaz* (said to be borrowed from the Assyrian *malxazu*), *aspet* (said to mean “clan chief”), *mamak* (said to be an Armenian form of the Iberian *mama* “father”), *tēr* (said to be an elided form of *ti-ayr*); but the word *malxazu* does not exist in Assyrian, and the real meaning of *aspet* is “cavalry commander” (see below). In any case Xenophon’s *komarchoï* (see above), who were modest village headmen and low-ranking agents of the Achaemenid government, are not comparable with the *strategoï* of the Hellenistic period or with the *naxaras*.



One fact is undisputed, namely that the word *naxarar* comes from the Parthian *naxvadār*, which appears together with the word for satrap in an inscription from the time of Ardašīr and means “senior representative of the local nobility” (W. B. Henning, *JRAS*, 1953, pp. 135-36); its literal translation is “holder of the primacy” (see Hübschmann, *Armen. Etymologie*, p. 154; Meillet, *Revue des études arméniennes*, 1922, pp. 1-3; E. Benveniste, *ibid.*, 1929, p. 5; Henning, *Mitteliranisch*, p. 42. The etymology given by N. Adontz in *Armenia*, p. 514, is incorrect). Use of the word “satrap” to translate *naxarar* has often been found convenient but is not entirely correct, because a satrap’s function was at first purely administrative. The title *naxarar*, here rendered as such, occurs very frequently and is applied to all members of the feudal nobility; this may well have been the case in Parthian Iran also, though there is no proof. Other titles used in Armenia which came from the feudal nomenclature current in Parthian Iran were: *nahapet*, apparently from *nāfapati*, Parthian *nāfapat* (see Meillet, *loc. cit.*, and Benveniste, *loc. cit.*). *Nahapet*, literally “head of a clan or line,” must have been in principle a title reserved for heads of great feudal families; it occurs much less frequently than *naxarar*, but sometimes seems to have the same meaning as far as legal and political status are concerned. *Išxan*, literally “king” but more nearly “chief prince” (see Benveniste, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-9), a title applied like *nahapet* to leading feudal noblemen but apparently also sometimes synonymous with *naxarar*. *Sepuh*, a word long recognized as a mangled derivative of *vis-puθra* (see Benveniste, *op. cit.*, p. 9; Christensen, *Iran Sass.*, p. 100 n. 1; A. Perikhanian, *Revue des études arméniennes*, 1968 p. 19). The Parthian and Sasanian form is *vispuhr*, which to judge from 3rd-century inscriptions was mainly a title of members of the royal family, i.e. “royal prince.” In like manner Aršak II’s nephew Gnel is designated “great Arsacid sepuh” (*mec sepuhn Aršakuni*, P’awstos 5.15 = Langlois, I, p. 252). The Armenian term, however, also means “nobleman” or “gentleman” and appears to denote all members of great families other than the heads; it must have undergone a semantic evolution in the local aristocratic and feudal context. *Azat* “free” or “noble.” In Parthian and Sasanian Iran, the *āzād(ān)* formed the fourth and last class of the feudal nobility. In Armenia, the plural noun *azatk’* acquired a broader sense and normally seems to mean members of the nobility in general. (On the use and meaning of this word in Armenian, see Hübschmann, *Armen. Etymologie*, p. 91; Adontz, *Armenia*, pp. 342-43; A. Perikhanian, *Revue des études arméniennes*, 1965, pp. 11f.; see also *Āzād*).

In contrast with the *azatk’*, the lower or non-noble ranks of Armenian feudal society are most often described as the *ramik-k’*, i.e., “common people,” and the



šinakan-k', i.e., “peasants” (cf. Arm. *šēn* “village”) (see Hübschmann, op. cit., pp. 213, 233; G. Widengren, *Der Feudalismus im alten Iran*, 1969, p. 113 n. 46, 123; Adontz, op. cit., pp. 333, 354, 361-62, and index). Both terms are Iranian and probably belonged to the vocabulary of Parthian feudalism.

On the other hand, the only term for vassal (an important concept) is the Armenian word *caṛay*; the Iranian word *bandak*, which had the same sense, is not found in Armenian.

d. *Military organization.* At the top of the military hierarchy stood two officers, the *sparapet* and the *aspet*, with functions and titles manifestly borrowed from Parthian Iran. The *sparapet* or *asparapet* (Parthian *spādapat*, Pahlavi *spāhbed*; see Hübschmann, op. cit., p. 240) was the “general in chief” who commanded all the troops, both infantry and cavalry, and in wartime gave orders to all the *naxarars* (*Greek Life* 98 = G. Garitte, *Documents*, pp. 72-73). He was responsible for organizing military expeditions and arranging royal journeys. The office became hereditary in the Mamikonian family and contributed to the growth of their influence and power.

The *aspet* (lit. “master of the horses”) was the “general in command of the cavalry” (see Hübschmann, op. cit., p. 109), corresponding to the *aspapat* of the Parthians, whose existence as early as the first years of the 1st century B.C. is attested in the texts found at Nisa. In the order of precedence, the *aspet* normally came before the *sparapet* (see M. L. Chaumont, *JA*, 1966, pp. 472, 473, 475, 486); this reflected the original primacy of the office in the Parthian system. Concurrently with the office of *ṭ'agadir* (“bestower of the crown”—see above), it became hereditary in the Bagratuni family, just as in Iran it belonged to the Suren family. Among the less exalted military offices, those of *gundapet* or *gundsalar* “corps commander” or “colonel,” and *gamapet*, roughly “captain,” are mentioned as important. The terms *zawrapet* and *zawravar*, meaning “force commander,” do not appear to be designations of any particular rank.

The office of *bdeašx* (Parthian *bitaxš*) falls into a different category because it was not solely military. The word is found in varying forms in several languages—Latin as *vitaxa*; opinions on its etymology differ but incline to the interpretation “viceroy” (see Henning, *Mitteliranisch*, p. 62; W. Hinz, *Altiranische Funde und Forschungen*, Berlin, 1969, p. 152 n. 22; for a different view, E. Benveniste, *Titres et noms propres en Iran ancien*, Paris, 1967, p. 65 n. 2). The Armenian *vitaxes* had the attributes of *sahmanakał* or a *marzbān* (see



Hübschmann, op. cit., pp. 119-20; Markwart, *Ērānšahr*, pp. 165f.). Conceivably, among the Parthians the bearer of this title had the same status. It was a hereditary dignity. The title “great vitaxes“ was reserved for the prince of Arzanene, who held a very high position at the royal court of Armenia (P’awstos 3.9 = Langlois, I, pp. 217-18).

The extent to which the Armenians modeled their military system on that of the Parthians is shown by examples of the relevant vocabulary such as *aspar* (shield), *asparakir* or *sparakir*, *asparawor* (shield-bearing), *asparap’ak* or *sparap’ak* (shield-protected), *aspandak* (stirrup), *asparēz* (racecourse), *aspastan* (stable), *aspatak* (cavalry raid), *aspatakawor* (mounted raider), *aspazēn* (harness), all derived from *asp* “horse” (Hübschmann, op. cit., p. 108); *ašteay* (spear, lance), *awer*, *awerak* (ruined, ruination), *drawš* (banner), *drawšakir* (standard-bearer), *gund* (corps, detachment), *hamaharz* (bodyguard), *kaparck’* (quiver), *nizak* (spear), *nizakawor* (spearman), *nšan* (ensign), *nšankir* (ensign-bearer), *pah* and *pahak* (guard, guard corps, garrison), *pahak* also with a geographic meaning, pass, “Gates”), *pahakapan* (guard corps, garrison), *pahapan* (guard, guardian), *pahpanak* (armor, cuirass), *parsawor* (slinger), *paterazm* (encounter, fight), *patkandaran* (quiver), *payik* (foot-soldier), *pešopay* (he who marches ahead), *razm* (flight, battle), *razmik* (warlike), *razmanat* (he who breaks through the battleline; see Hübschmann, op. cit., p. 233), *ročik* (subsistence, keep), *saławar* (helmet), *saławarławor* (helmeted), *smbak* (horse’s hoof, whence the phrase *smbakakox arnem*, “to trample under the hoofs of the horses”), *spah* (army), *sparazēn* (fully armed), *tēg* (spearhead), *ťošak* (rations, food), *vahan* (buckler), *vahanak* (small buckler), *vahanakir* (buckler-carrying), *vahanap’ak* (buckler-protected), *varawand* (part of a horse’s trappings), *varawandaspas* (groom, stableman), *varapanak-k’* (coat of mail), *zawr* (army, forces, troops), as in *zawr pešopay* (vanguard), *zēn* (weapon or armor), *zrahk’* (breastplate), *zrahapat*, *zrahawor* (wearing iron armor, see Hübschmann, op. cit., p. 152 and R. Schmitt, “Iranisches Lehngut im Armenischen,” *Revue des études arméniennes*, 1983, pp. 89-90).

e. *Law*. The stock of legal terms which came into Armenian from Iran is remarkably large. Examples relating to the law of personal status, property, and obligations are *apaharzan* (repudiation of wife), *gir apaharzani* (deed of repudiation), *arzēk’* (countervalue, price), *baš-k’* (share, tax), *baž* (compensation), *darman* (administration, management), *dastakert* (landed estate or immovable property, literally “hand-made;” on this important word,



see Hübschmann, op. cit., pp. 135, 139), *graw*, *grawakan* (pledge, security), *jok* (group, association), *kamk'* (consent, volition), *kamay*, *kamakar* (acting with full discretion, voluntarily, cf. Pahlavi *kām-kār*), *payman* (limit, condition, clause, contract), *partk'* (debt, undertaking), *partapan* (bound by an obligation, debtor), *partawor* (creditor), *partbaxši* (discharge of an obligation, exchange), *paštatakan* (apanage), *patwast* (adoption), *sak* (tribute), *tohm* (ancestry, family), *tohmank'* (fruits, revenue), *uxt* (oath, contract, treaty), *varj* (salary), *vašx* (interest, usury), *včar* (reward, remuneration), *vnas* (loss, damage), *xostak-k'* (possessions, patrimony). The vocabulary of inheritance law includes *andarz* (testament), *bag*, *bazin* (inheritance share), *bazanord* (joint inheritance), *payazat* (inheritor, successor).

Among the words relating to judicial processes are *band* (prison), *bandakan* (prisoner), *bandapan* (jailer), *dat* (which may mean administration of justice, legal action and especially trial, or judicial decision) and derivatives of *dat* such as *dataran* (law court), *datawor* (judge), *datapart* (legally bound, convicted), *datastan* (trial, sentence), and many more (see Hübschmann, op. cit., p. 136), *p'ursišn* (suit, prosecution, complaint), *hraparak* (market place, forum, with the connotations of tribunal, jurisdiction), *žatagov* (defender, advocate), *včir* and *datavčtir* (judgement, sentence), *toyž* (sanction, penalty), *patuhas* (penalty). Also noteworthy is the stock of terms for a written document or proof of title: *namak* and *yetkar* (both meaning document, title-deed), *murhak* (sealed deed or writ), *uxt* (as explained above, but sometimes with a material sense, e.g. *uxt haštu'ean* “certificate of manumission”), *paččen* (copy, duplicate), etc.

Loan-words are very numerous in the terminology of administration and general public law, e.g. *bašxk'* (tribute, taxes), *dahič* (policeman), *dašn* (treaty), *dehkan* and *dehpet* (village headman), *despan* (messenger), *dpir* (scribe), *drapapet* (head of the scribes), *diwan* (public records), *ganj* (treasure, treasury), *ganjawor* (treasurer), *hambar* and *ambar* (store, public granary), *hamarakar* (chief accountant, tax collector), *handerjapet* (administrator, manager), *hramatar* (director, overseer), *hreštak* (emissary, ambassador), *hrovartak* (letter, warrant, edict), *matarakarar* (superintendent), *nahang* (province), *ostan* (country, also crown land), *pěšapik* (runner, courier), *šahastan/šahstan* (city, capital), *sahman* (limit, competence), *šahap* (satrap, governor), *sak* (tribute, tax), *vičak* (fate, lot, and by extension ecclesiastical district).

f. *Cultural legacies*. In the cultural field, Armenia's reception of Iranian



influences took place in three main phases:

1. The Achaemenid Persian influence began with the annexation of Armenia to the Achaemenid empire and lasted long after that empire's fall, probably in the end merging with the Arsacid influence. Achaemenid practices were maintained under the Orontid satraps and the Artaxiad kings. Strabo (*Geography* 11.13.9) indicates that the Armenians got their customs from the Medes; no doubt he confused the Medes in the strict sense with the Medes of Atropatene. The Armenians certainly had greater affinities with the inhabitants of Atropatene, their immediate neighbors and trading partners, than with the Persians. Moreover the kings of Armenia and Atropatene are known to have made marriage alliances (Strabo 11.13.1).

One attested and interesting fact is that three languages were current in Armenia in the mid-Achaemenid period: (a) Armenian (or proto-Armenian), the unwritten vernacular; (b) a dialect, probably Persian or Medo-Persian, which was spoken not only at the court of the satraps but also (according to Xenophon, *Anabasis* 4.5.10 and 5.34) in quite humble classes of society, and perhaps was already being written in Aramaic characters; (c) imperial Aramaic, the language of government and international relations, which was still used for official documents as late as the beginning of the 2nd century B.C. (cf. above).

2. The Arsacid Parthian influence was the strongest and most durable, beginning with the rise of the Parthians in the 2nd century B.C. and reaching its apogee after the installation of the Arsacids on the Armenian throne in the mid-1st century A.D. Thereafter the kings of Armenia tried to make their court a replica of the court at Ctesiphon, while the Armenian nobles forged close links with the Parthian aristocracy (some of whose families migrated to Armenia) and took its customs as their model. As long as Armenian remained a mere vulgar tongue, the Parthian language prevailed at the court and in the upper class. Most of the Iranian loan-words in classical Armenian stem from this period. The Parthian influence left distinct marks on several aspects of Armenian civilization. Thus the *gusan* (plur. *gusank'*), a kind of bard or minstrel, whom the Armenian authors sometimes mention, is a replica of the *gōsān* of the Parthians (see M. Boyce, "The Parthian *gōsān* and Iranian Minstrel Tradition," *JRAS*, 1957, pp. 20ff., C. J. F. Dowsett, tr., *The History of the Caucasian Albanians by Movsēs Dasxuranc'i*, London and New York, 1961, p. 52 n. 5). During the Sasanian period, Christian Armenia remained on the whole faithful to the Arsacid Iranian tradition.



3. The Sasanian influence was the last to be felt and appears to have been strong enough, though fluctuating with the shifts of Persian political and religious attitudes. At the time of the invention of the Armenian alphabet, Pahlavi was the language of the royal administration and of the court (Movsēs Xorenac'i. 3.52), when the Greek and the Syrian languages were used in the Church. The promotion of the Armenian writing reduced considerably the importance of Pahlavi. However, in Persarmenia this language remained in use for the official documents and sometime together with the Armenian language (see above about the acts of the Council of Dvin). On the other hand, despite the Armenian hostility to Mazdaism the close links between the aristocracies of the two countries were never broken and the Armenians did not remain indifferent to some profane aspects of the Sasanian culture. In the 6th century, Sasanian tolerance of Christians and the presence of many Christians at the Sasanian court made Armeno-Persian relations easier. It is certainly significant that (as mentioned above) the last *marzbān* of Armenia, Varaztiroc Bagratuni, was educated at the palace of the king of kings.

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