



## BAGARAN

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**BAGARAN** (Turk. Pakran), a town and fortress of the Armenian principality of Aršarunik' (40°12' north latitude, 43°39' east longitude) 5 km (3 miles) west of the right bank of the Axurean river (Arpaçai). Bagaran, lit. "the god's place," was founded at the end of the third century B.C. by the Armenian King Orontes (Eruand) II (ca. 212-ca. 200 B.C.) to house the images of the gods and the royal ancestors brought from the earlier holy city of [Armavir](#). Orontes established his brother Eruaz there as high priest of the Armenian pantheon (Moses of Khorene, 2.40; tr. Thomson, p. 182) and during the king's reign Bagaran became the religious center and holy city of Orontid Armenia. In the time of Artaxias (Artašēs) I (189-ca. 161 B.C.) the idols of Bagaran were transferred to the new capital Artaxata (Artašat, *ibid.*, 2.49) but Bagaran remained an important cult center until the conversion of Armenia to Christianity (ca. 314).

When the Bagratids acquired Aršarunik' in the ninth century Bagaran was only briefly its first capital but in the period of the Bagratid kingdom (884-1045), the town flourished as a stop on the transit trade route from the later Bagratid capital, Ani, to the west.

Bagaran was noted for the fine church of St. Theodore (erected 624-31), now totally destroyed. Bagaran was destroyed in the Mongol period but its remains were still visible in the early twentieth century.



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