



DVIN

DVIN, city in Armenia located at 40° N, 44° 41' E, north of [Artaxata](#) on the left bank of the Azat (Garnīčāi), about 35 km south of the present Armenian capital at Yerevan. It remained a significant center from the Sasanian period to the 13th century, and its pleasant climate was mentioned by many authors (for maps, see Hewsen, 1987; idem, 1988a; idem, 1988b; idem, 1989).

In Old Armenian sources the name of the city is almost always given as Dowin (e.g., Faustus, pp. 29-30; tr. Garsoïan, p. 75; P'arpec'i, p. 292; Sebêos, p. 67). Later authors (e.g., Samuel of Ani; see *Narratio*, p. 141) wrote Dvin, which is the most common form in the scholarly literature. The assertion by Moses of Khorene (3.8) that the name means "hill" in Persian resulted from his misunderstanding of Faustus (3.8). In fact no plausible Iranian etymology can be traced from a supposed **duwīn* (D. N. MacKenzie, personal communication, 1991; cf. Minorsky, 1930, who suggested that the name was borrowed by the Arsacids from the Turkmen steppe, their original homeland). The reading *'dbyl* for Dvin in *Šahrestānīhā-ī Ērān* (cf. Nyberg, *Manual* II, p. 9) can no longer be accepted (cf. Gignoux, pp. 14-15). Procopius (2.25), Menander (p. 214 frag. 23.11), and Theophanes of Byzantium (apud Photius, p. 78 no. 64) wrote Doubios; other forms of the name that occur in Greek texts are *Tibin (invariable; cf. use in genitive and accusative in *Narratio*, pp. 39, 43), Tibion or Tibios (with genitive Tibiou in Cedrenus, II, pp. 558, 561), Tibi (Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Adm. Imp.* 44.4), and Tibēn (*Narratio*, p. 156). In Latin the name appears as Dubios (*Ravennatis Anonymi Cosmographia*, p. 23); in Syriac as *'dbyn* (cf. Thopdschian, p. 71), *dwyn* (Zacharias, 12.7), *d'wyn*, and *dwbyn* (cf.



Ghazarian, p. 209); in Arabic as Dabīl (the most frequent form; cf. BGA IV, p. 61, s.v.) and occasionally Dawīn/Duwīn (Ebn Ḥawqal, tr. Kramers, pp. 339, 335). Yāqūt (*Boldān*, II, pp. 548, 632) included both forms under different lemmas, without recognizing that they referred to a single city (for other citations from Arabic sources, see Canard, p. 678).

Excavations by Soviet teams have shown that the beginnings of settlement on the site of Dvin can be traced back to the 3rd, possibly even the 4th millennium B.C.E. (Kafadaryan, 1966). It remains uncertain whether occupation was continuous. The excavations have yielded numerous finds from the Hellenistic period (Kocharyan). The hill at Dvin was, in the opinion of the excavators, enclosed within a defensive wall and inhabited in the time of the Armenian Arsacids (Kafadaryan, 1965, p. 284). Possibly in the first half of the 4th century C.E. (the dating is uncertain; cf. Hewsen, 1978-79) the Armenian king Ƙosrow is supposed to have established a hunting park (OPers. *paridaidā*) there (Faustus, 3.8). The often expressed view that Ƙosrow had previously shifted the capital from Artaxata to Dvin is based on an unreliable report of Moses of Khorene (9th century), who relied on the much shorter text of Pseudo Faustus.

After the division of Armenia between Rome and Persia in 384 (?) Vałarshapat was in the Persian portion, of which it was the capital; Dvin was also part of the Persian portion. When the Arsacid kingdom was abolished in Armenia in 428 Dvin became the capital (Arm. *ostan*; cf. Hübschmann, p. 460) of Persian Armenia, from which the *marzbān* (Arm. *marzpan*) ruled. The palace and archives (*dīvān*; see [ARMENIA AND IRAN ii](#), p. 432) were located there. The earliest numismatic finds contain the portrait of the Sasanian king Bahrām V (420-38; Mushegyan, 1962, p. 57). According to the so-called *Armenian Geography* of Anania Širakac'i, the *ostan* of Dvin extended as far as the canton of [Ayrarat](#) (Hübschmann, pp. 365-66). Probably in the second half of the 5th century (the date is controversial) it was also the seat of the Armenian patriarch (catholicus) and the center of the Armenian church, where a number of synods were convened (e.g., the first in 505 or 506, the second in 552, 554, or 555; at the latter the council of Chalcedon was condemned and the specifically Armenian calendar adopted; other synods were held in 604? 607? 644? and 646?). As capital and economic and industrial center (particularly famed for “purple” [carpets ii](#)) Dvin became important in trade with Central Asia (cf. Procopius, *De Bello Persico* 2.25.3-4; Arakelyan and Martirosyan, pp. 44-46), which Artaxata had previously dominated. The reputation of the local



manufactures was still known to authors of the Islamic period.

Sasanian efforts to impose the Zoroastrian religion in Armenia never ceased. The construction of a fire temple in Dvin led to a revolt in 571-72. The city was thenceforth often involved in the conflict between Byzantines and Sasanians (cf. Sebêos, p. 68). After the the Sasanian Kōsrow II (590-628) ceded the larger portion of Persian Armenia to the Byzantines in 591 Dvin lay directly on the newly established border, though still within Persian territory (cf. *Narratio*, p. 237; cf., on the other hand, Hage, pp. 44-48; Hewsen, 1965, p. 336). In a campaign against the Sasanians the emperor Heraclius captured and destroyed the city in 623 (cf. Manandean, 1950, plan 1). The city was conquered by the Muslims on 17 Šawwāl 19/6 October 640 and subsequently lost much of its importance. It subsequently became the seat (Arm. *ostekan*) of the caliph's governor and remained so until 173/789. In the 9th and 10th centuries it was caught up in the conflicts between the Armenian [Bagratids](#) and Arab amirs (for detailed references on the early Islamic period, see Canard); no ruler was able to dominate there for long. Early in the 10th century the residence of the catholicus was moved to Coravank' in Vaspurakan. Also in the 10th century the Byzantines reentered the history of Dvin. The city flourished again during the period when the Bagratid king Gagik I (990-1020) was semi-independent in Armenia and able to eliminate the rival amirates. Most of the archeological finds at the site are from the Bagratid period. Dvin remained a bone of contention between Kurdish and Deylamite amirs of Iranian origin; after 1100 the city was briefly ruled by the Turks. A late flowering took place in the time of the Armenian Zak'arids (after 1200) until the Mongol conquerors again destroyed the city, between 1233 and 1236, thus bringing about its definitive decline. Today there is only a small settlement on the site.

The site of Dvin has been continuously excavated since 1937, except for a period during World War II. The finds have been widely published, though certain conclusions must be treated with reserve, for example, the reconstruction of the temple that S. T. Eremyan believed was founded by Tiridates I (1st century C.E.) to honor his ancestors (p. 49). Also dubious is that of the "great throne hall," which has been identified as part of a palace building from the time of King Kōsrow (330s; Kafadaryan, 1966). Slightly more reliable is the schematic reconstruction of the palace of the Sasanian *marzbān*, possibly of the 5th century (debatable), as well as those of the palaces that were rebuilt after the earthquake of 893. The reconstructions of the palace of



the catholicus of the second half of the 5th century, a church with a 6th-century nave (the “martyrium of Yazdbōzēd”; cf. Kafadaryan, 1952, pp. 101-10; [Figure 1](#)), and the three-aisled cathedral church with porticoes on three sides of a courtyard, which was dedicated in the mid-5th century to Saint Gregory the Illuminator, deserve special attention. According to the reports of Armenian authors (e.g., T’omas Arc’runi, 2.1), the last was supposed to have been built on the site of a Sasanian fire temple. After it was destroyed in the early 7th century it was rebuilt with fortifications (cf. Kafadaryan, 1952, pp. 111-22; for drawings, see Khatchatrian, pp. 11-13).

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