

The Early-Mediaeval Armenian City: An Alien Element?*

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Long ago, when it was first my privilege to be included among the students of Professor Elias Bickerman, he called our attention to the problem of evaluating the depth of Hellenization in the East after the period of Alexander the Great. Over the years, he continued to sharpen and refine his analysis of the crucial differences between the two societies and set out some of his conclusions with his usual incisiveness in a lecture given at the Hermitage Symposium in Leningrad on 28 September 1971, of which he was kind enough to give me a typescript resumé. One of the fundamental aspects noted by him in this lecture was the rôle of the city:

The "New Rome" is still a country of cities, and the big landowners, the power elite, live in cities. The *polis*-patriotism is still a living force. . . . In the Sasanian Empire, cities, the old ones as well as the new, built by the king on his patrimonial land, are inserts in the "feudal order", and the ruling class lives in castles, outside the city territories.

In view of Professor Bickerman's own estimate of the significance of urban centres, it may not be unwarranted to add here a footnote on the position of cities in the early-mediaeval Armenian kingdom lying athwart the borders of the two world powers with which he was concerned.

Mediaeval Armenian cities have attracted increasing interest in recent times. Beginning with H. Manandyan's publication of the first Russian edition of his *Trade and Cities of Armenia in Relation to Ancient World Trade* in 1930,¹ a number of Armenian scholars, among them S. T. Eremyan and G. X. Sarkisian [Sargsyan], have sought to assess the rôle of the city in the social and economic life of the country and to

* Some preliminary considerations on the present subject were presented to the third International Symposium on Armenian Medieval Art, Vicenza, 1981, see "Quelques considérations sur la connaissance de l'art arménien médiéval," *Atti del III Simposio internazionale d'arte armena medioevale* (Milan, 1984), 8-10. The research for the present article however was done with the assistance of a grant from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation to which I should like to express my thanks.

1 H. Manandyan, *O torgovle i gorodakh Armenii v svyazi s mirovoi torgovlei drevnikh vremen* (Erevan, 1930; 2nd rev. ed., 1954); English translation, N. Garsoïan tr., *The Trade and Cities of Armenia in Relation to Ancient World Trade* (Lisbon, 1965).

reconstruct insofar as possible its internal structure and administration on the basis of admittedly scant materials.² Similar studies of the later mediaeval cities were attempted by H. Manandyan, B. N. Ařakelyan, and more recently, A. Zaryan.³ In the last decades, archaeological excavations at Garni and the Armenian capitals of Artařat/Artaxata, Vařarřapat/Kainē Polis and Duin,⁴ have begun to supplement the interrupted early work of Marr and Orbeli at the later Bagratid capital of Ani.⁵ These studies have primarily been concerned with the significance of these foundations for the contemporary Armenian realm. The purpose of the present study is not to deny the presence of cities in Arsacid or Bagratid Armenia, an assertion patently ridiculous in the presence of both literary evidence and the accumulating archaeological material, but rather to reconsider the position of the city as central or tangential to Armenian mediaeval society. Its main focus will be on the earlier, Arsacid and Pre-Islamic, period but if relevant, evidence from the later Bagratid period will occasionally be adduced.

The presence of cities in Armenia does not seem to go back to great antiquity unless the continuity of major settlements from Urartian times at Van and Armawir can be demonstrated by archaeological evidence.⁶ During his entire journey across the Armenian plateau Xenophon refers to only one city, Gumnias tentatively identified with Giumri (mod. Leninakan) by Manandyan.⁷ Even if this identification is correct, the city seems to have been both peripheral and exceptional and the characteristic settlement described in the *Anabasis* is the village [*kōmē*], occasionally fortified, but clearly belonging to a rural, agricultural clan society.⁸

2 S. T. Eremyan, "Razvitie gorodov i gorodskoi zhizni v drevnei Armenii," *Vestnik Drevnei Istorii* (1953/3), 11-31; G. X. Sarkisian [Sargsyan], "Iz istorii gorodskoi obshchiny v Armenii (IV v. n.ē.)," *V.D.I.* (1955/3), 48-62; Id., *Tigranakert* (Moscow, 1960).

3 Manandyan, *Trade*. See also his study of the cities of Armenia in the tenth and eleventh centuries (Erevan, 1940); B. N. Ařakelyan, *K^cataknera ew arhestnera Hayastanum IX-XIII darrerum* [*Cities and Crafts in Armenia in the IX-XIII centuries*], 2 vols. (Erevan, 1958, 1964); A. Zarian, "Strade, città libere e città regie d'Armenia nei secoli IX-XI," *Atti del III Simposio internazionale d'arte armena medioevale* (Milan, 1984), 629-50; *et al.*

4 B. N. Ařakelyan, *Garni*, I, II (Erevan, 1951, 1957); B. N. Ařakelyan and G. O. Larakanyan, *Garni*, III (Erevan, 1962); E. V. Xanzadyan, *Garni*, IV (Erevan, 1969); Ž. D. Xač^catryan, *Garni*, V (Erevan, 1976); B. N. Ařakelyan, *Artařat*, I (Erevan, 1982); Ž. D. Xač^catryan, *Artařat*, II (Erevan, 1981); A. K^calant^cayan, *Hin Vařarřapati perumnera* [*The Excavations of Ancient Vařarřapat*] (Erevan, 1935); V. Harut^cyunyan, *Dvini V-VII dd. řartarapetakan huřarjannera* [*The Architectural Monuments of Duin in the V-VII centuries*], (Erevan, 1950); K. Łafadaryan, *Dvin k^catak^c ew nra petumnera* [*The City of Duin and its Excavations*], I-II (Erevan, 1952, 19); A. A. K^calantaryan, *Duin*, I (Erevan, 1976). No excavations to date have been done at Tigranakert whose very site remains disputed. The traditional identification of the city with Martyropolis (Mod. Miyařariqin/Silvan) first proposed by K. Lehman-Haupt, *Armenian einst und jetzt*, I (Berlin, 1910), 381-429, 501-23, and a number of preliminary articles, has recently been challenged. See M.-L. Chaumont, "Tigranocerte: Données du problème et état des recherches," *Revue des études arméniennes*, n.s. XVI (1982), 89-110; M. Nogaret, "Quelques problèmes archéologiques et topographiques dans la région de Maiyařariqin," *R.E.Arm.*, n.s. XVIII (1984), 411-33 who suggests the reconsideration of the site of Arzn in Arzanenē, as does T. Sinclair in a forthcoming study of the site.

5 N. Marr, *Ani* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1934). See also P. Cuneo, "Les ruines de la ville d'Ani," *Monumentum* (Louvain, 1970), 49-73. Early excavations at Van have also been interrupted and a considerable amount of material lost.

6 See below n. 10, also Eremyan, *Razvitie*, II who admits, however, that these sites were probably originally mere fortified and possibly administrative centres.

7 Xenophon, *Anabasis*, IV, vii, 19-26; viii, 1-2; Manandyan, *Trade*, 27.

8 Xen. *Anab.*, IV, iii-v.

As observed by Manandyan, Eremyan, and Sarkisian, the real appearance of cities in Armenia coincided with the Hellenistic period.⁹ The earlier capital of the Eruandid or Orontid dynasty, Armawir, may have had ancient antecedents, as suggested by the Armenian historian, Movsēs Xorenac^{ci}, who associates it with Aramayis, the grandson of Hayk, the mythological founder of the Armenian realm; and its site corresponds to that of the Urartian city of Argištihinili. Nevertheless, as we shall see, its eponymous name points rather to a Hellenistic foundation, as does the archaeological evidence.¹⁰ The other Eruandid cities, Eruandašat and Eruandakert came into being shortly before the coup d'état of Artasēs/ Artaxias I inaugurating the Artasēsid dynasty after the peace of Apamea of 188 B.C., and must consequently date from the late third or early second century.¹¹ The other early mediaeval cities known to Armenian and Classical sources: Artašat/ Artaxata, Tigranakert, Vałaršapat/ Kainē Polis, Zarehawan, Zarišat, Mcurñ, Van, Naḫčawan, Karin and Duin all belonged to a somewhat later period with the possible exception of Van. Artašat, Zarehawan and Zarišat were founded in the first quarter of the second century B.C.¹² Tigranakert was inaugurated as a new capital by Tigran II the Great in the seventies of the first century B.C.¹³ Vałaršapat probably came into being early in the second century A.D., although it was not designated as the Armenian capital until the second half of the same century, and its Greek name of *Kainē Polis*, "New City," accurately rendered by Armenian authors as *Nor k^calak^c*, runs counter to Movsēs Xorenac^{ci}'s claim of legendary antiquity.¹⁴ Mcurñ and Naḫčawan,

9 Manandyan, *Trade*, 29–66; Sarkisian, *Iz istorii*, 48. Eremyan, *Razvitie* 11, notes the Urartian origins of Armawir and Van, but admits that the development of real cities in Armenia came with the Hellenistic period, *ibid.*, 10–14, *et passim*; also G. A. Tiratsian, "Goroda Armenii ěllinisticheskogo vremeni v svete arkeologicheskikh isledovanii," *VDI* 1979/2. See also the following note.

10 Movsēs Xorenac^{ci}, *Patmut^ciwn Hayoc^c*, M. Abelean and S. Yurut^ciwnian eds. (Tiflis, 1913 [= *MX*]), I, xii = R. W. Thomson tr., *Moses Khorenats^ci. History of the Armenians* (Cambridge, Mass.-London, 1978 [= *MK*]), 90. See above n. 6 and Eremyan, *Razvitie*, 18–19. Excavations at Armawir on the north bank of the Araxes have now been undertaken under the direction of G. A. Tirac^cyan. During a visit to the site of Armawir in June 1986, Tirac^cyan pointed out to me that the Hellenistic level there lies directly over the Urartian one without any intervening layer. The cities of Sophenē, Arsamosata and Karkathokerta located closer to the Seleucid centres in Syria may go back to the mid-third century, Polienus, *Stratagems*, IV, 17; Strabo, *Geography*, XI, xiv, 2; Pliny, *Natural History*, VI, x, 26. See also Manandyan, *Trade*, 34–35.

11 *MX*, II, xxxix, xlii = *MK*, 181–83; Sarkisian, *Iz istorii*, 48. Eremyan, *Razvitie*, dates the foundation of the new capital of Eruandašat ca. 220 B.C.

12 On Artašat, see Strabo, *Geography*, XI, xiv, 6 who calls it the royal residence; Plutarch, *Lucullus*, xxxi–xxxii, who attributes the plan of the city to Hannibal, and *MX*, II, xlix = *MK*, 190–91. See also Manandyan, *Trade*, 44–46; Eremyan, *Razvitie*, 19–20, who gives 176 B.C. as the date of the foundation of the city; Sarkisian, *Iz istorii*, 48; and the excavation reports, above n. 4. Zarehawan and Zarišat must date from the same period since they record the name of Zareh [Gk. Zariadris], the father of Artasēs I according to the Aramaic inscription found in the northeastern district of Zangezur. See A. G. Perikhanian, "Une inscription araméenne du roi Artasēs trouvée à Zanguézour (Siwnik^c)," *R.E.Arm.*, n.s. III (1966), 17–29; Sarkisian, *Iz istorii*, 48. Eremyan, *Razvitie*, 11–14, attributes the rise of these cities to the transit trade through Armenia.

13 Strabo, *Geography*, XI, xiv, 15; XII, ii, 9; Appian, *Bell. Mithr.*, x, 67; xii, 84; Plutarch, *Lucullus*, xxii, xxvi; Tacitus, *Annals*, XV, iv; Manandyan, *Trade*, 57–62; Eremyan, *Razvitie*, 20 dates the foundation 77 B.C. Sarkisian, *Iz istorii*, 48; *Id.*, *Tigranakert*.

14 *MX*, II, lxxv = *MK*, 210–11, "Vałaršapat, or ew *Nor k^calak^c*"; Agathangelos, *History of the Armenians*, R. W. Thomson tr. (Albany, 1976 [= *Aa*]), ch. 150/1; Łazar P^carpec^{ci}, *Patmut^ciwn Hayoc^c*, G. Tēr Mkrťec^{an} and St. Małḫasean eds. (Tiflis, 1904 [= *IP^c*]), I, xviii, 38 = Lazare de Pharbe, "Histoire d'Arménie," in V. Langlois ed., *Collection des historiens anciens et modernes de l'Arménie* (Paris, 1869 [= *CHAMA*]), II, 278a; Manandyan, *Trade*, 83–85; Eremyan, *Razvitie*, 21–22; Sarkisian, *Iz istorii*, 48.

known to Ptolemy as Naxuana, must belong to the same period.¹⁵ The last two cities were latecomers. The settlement of Karin seems to have been a mere village until its fortification in the fifth century by the emperor Theodosius II, who gave it his name, and its true importance dates from its reconstruction by Justinian in the sixth.¹⁶ The late fifth century Armenian *Epic Histories* attributed to P^cawstos Buzand still use this toponym to designate the homonymous district rather than an urban settlement.¹⁷ Finally, Duin does not seem to have become the capital of Armenia before the second half of the fifth century, and the site is still referred to as a “hill[*blur*]” rather than a settlement in the *Epic Histories* which thus translate the Persian name of the locality.¹⁸ Such, then is the short list of urban settlements still known in the fifth century. Of them only Van and Armawir had any claim to an earlier past, and their description by Armenian authors suggests, as in the case of “the royal fortress of Garni,” that their survival was due to their strategic importance as hilltop strongholds rather than as significant centres of population.¹⁹

The technical terminology carefully observed by the first Armenian authors clearly confirms the fact that these were indeed the only early Armenian cities. The term *k^catak^c* translating the Greek *polis* was used extremely sparingly by them, or else still carried its original sense of a “walled enclosure,” as in the case of the royal hunting preserve of Aliorsk^c.²⁰ It is found most commonly in connexion with authentic Classical *poleis* outside the confines of Armenia, e.g., Athens, Rome, Caesarea of Cappadocia, Ancyra, Satala, Edessa, Nisibis, Amida, and Roman cities in general.²¹ Within the

15 [Ps.] P^cawstos Buzand^ci, *Patmut^ciwn Hayoc^c*, 4th ed. (Venice, 1933 [= *Ps. P^cB*]), IV, xiv = Fauste de Byzance, “Bibliothèque historique,” *CHAMA*, I (1867), 250b; Ptolemy, *Geography*, V, xii, 5.

16 Procopius, *Bell. Pers.*, I, x, 19; Id. *De aed.*, III, iv, 4–12; v, 2; *MX*, III, lxix = *MK*, 331–32, who also stresses the classical character of the fortress with its Augusteon; N. Adontz, *Armenia in the Period of Justinian. The Political Conditions Based on the Naḡarar System*, N. Garsoïan, ed. and tr. (Louvain-Lisbon, 1970), 115–20.

17 *Ps. P^cB*, IV, xii; V, xxxvii, xliv = *CHAMA*, I, 247a, 299b, 305a.

18 *Ps. P^cB*, III, viii, “*blur* or *anueaneal koči Duin*,” = *CHAMA*, I, 217b; *MX*, III, viii = *MK*, 261; V. Minorsky, “Le nom de Dvin,” *Journal Asiatique* (1930), repr. *R.E.Arm.*, x (1930); Manandyan, *Trade*, 87.

19 *MX*, I, xii; II, xxxix = *MK*, 90, 181 refers to Armawir as a “hill [*blur*]” and *Ps. P^cB*, IV, lix = *CHAMA*, I, 276b refers to Van as a “fortress [*berd*]”, a designation which the place would keep in the later Middle Ages, e.g., T^covma Arcruni, *Patmut^ciwn tann Arcruneac^c* [*History of the Arcruni House*], (St. Petersburg, 1871 [= *T^cA*]), vi, 44, “*k^catak^caberd Van*.” The same military aspect would characterize Karin during the mediaeval period, see below. For Garni, already known as Gornea to Tacitus, *Ann.*, XII, xlv, see *Ps. P^cB*, III, viii = *CHAMA*, I, 216b, who refers to it as “*amur berd<ē>n ark^cuni, orum koč^cen Garni* = <from> the fortified royal stronghold called Garni.”

20 *Ps. P^cB*, III, xx = *CHAMA*, I, 230b, “*teḡwoyn orum anun koč^ci k^catak^c Aliorsk^c* = at the place called the fortified enclosure of Aliorsk^c”; K. Melik^c-Öhanjanyan, “Tiran-Trdati vep^c æst P^cawstos Buzand,” II, *Teḡkagir* (1947/7), 70 suggests the possibility of a symbolic name rather than a real site, but this hypothesis is not borne out by the text. See also *Ps. P^cB*, V, v = *CHAMA*, I, 284a, where *k^catak^c* is used interchangeably with “*berd*, fortress, stronghold.” The fundamental Armenian Classical Dictionary, *Nor Bargirk^c Haykazean Lesui* (Venice, 1837), II, 969 s.v. *k^catak^c*, gives the translation “*astu*” as well as “*polis*” and “*urbs*.” See also Eremyan, *Razvitie*, 17. Unfortunately, early translators of Armenian sources were by no means as careful of their terminology as their originals.

21 Athens—*Ps. P^cB*, III, xiii = *CHAMA*, I, 223a; Rome—*Aa*, xii, cxxxviii, dcccxxiv; Caesarea—*Aa*, xxxvii, dcccxvi, dccciv, dcccxi; *Ps. P^cB*, III, xii, xvii; IV, iii–iv = *CHAMA*, I, 222a, 228a, 238a, where Caesarea is accurately described as the “*mayr k^catak^c* = metropolis” of Cappadocia. Ancyra—*Ps. P^cB*, IV,

Arsacid kingdom this term was reserved for the cities listed above with the qualification of *mec k^catak^c* “great city” acknowledging the position of Artašat as the metropolis of Armenia.²² All the other numerous localities mentioned are identified as “villages [*gewł*],” “towns [*awan*],” fortresses [*berd, amur, amroc^c*],” and on occasion by the composite term *gewłak^catak^c*, a calque of the Greek *komopolis*, presumably designating a fortified village.²³ Smaller units such as *tehi* “locality,” or *šēn* “hamlet” are also recorded, as are rural “villas, domains and estates [*agarak, kaluac^c, dastakert*],” but no other early Armenian cities are to be found in the sources.²⁴

Despite Sarkisian’s half-hearted suggestion that the Armenian cities might have had oriental antecedents and parallels, the entire thrust of his analysis of the Tigranakert

xi = *CHAMA*, I, 247a; Satala—*Aa*, dcccxliv; *Ps. P^cB*, III, vii, xxi = *CHAMA*, I, 215b, 232a; Edessa/Urha—Koriwn, *Patmut^ciwn varuc^c ew mahuan srboyn Mesropay vardapeti* [*History of the Deeds and Death of the Holy Vardapet Mesrop*], M. Abelyan ed. (Erevan, 1941 [= Koriwn], vii, xix; *Ps. P^cB*, V, xxxii = *CHAMA*, I, 262; Nisibis/Mcbin—*Aa*, dcccxliv; *Ps. P^cB*, IV, xx, xxi = *CHAMA*, I, 256b, 258b; Amida—Koriwn, vii; *Aa*, dcccxliv; *Ps. P^cB*, III, x = *CHAMA*, I, 220a; Cities in general—*Ps. P^cB*, IV, ix–x; V, xxxii, xxxiv, xxxv = *CHAMA*, I, 245a–b, 295b, 297a–b. The term is also used for the Persian capital of Ctesiphon/Tisbon—*Ps. P^cB*, IV, xvi, liv = *CHAMA*, I, 254b, 269b; the Kušan capital of Bałχ—*Ps. P^cB*, V, vii, xxxvii = *CHAMA*, I, 298b but omitted on 285b, and the Caspian Albanian cities of Xałχał and P^caytakaran—*Aa*, xxviii, dcccxliv, *Ps. P^cB*, V, xiv = *CHAMA*, I, 288b; *LP^c*, I, xxxi, xxxiii, xxxv, where Xałχał is referred to as a “village [*gewł*],” although Elišē, *Patmut^ciwn Vardanay ew Hayoc^c paterazmin*, E. Ter Minasian ed. (Erevan, 1957), iii, 75 = R. W. Thomson tr., *Elišē. History of Vardan and the Armenian War* (Cambridge, Mass.-London, 1982), 127, still calls it a *k^catak^c*, “city”; also Elišē, iii, 88; iv, 95 = *Elišē*, 140, 147 for the “city” of P^caytakaran.

22 *Ps. P^cB*, III, viii, xii; IV, lv = *CHAMA*, I, 216b, 222a, 274a. However, *Aa* stresses the importance of the earlier capital of Valaršapat probably because it was to become the holy city of the northern Armenian Church. He identifies it as the “residence” of the Armenian kings (cl) and their winter-quarters (cxxii), whereas he refers to Artašat merely as a “city [*k^catak^c*]” (xiii, xxxiii, cxxii, cxcii, ccxiv, ccvii, ccxix, dclclxxviii, dcccxi). The only other locality identified in the sources as a *k^catak^c* was the ill-fated foundation of Aršakawan to be discussed below.

23 Among a great many others, the better known localities of early-mediaeval Armenia are qualified as follows: Hac^ceac^c, the birthplace of St. Mesrop; T^cil and T^cordan, the burial places of the Gregorid primates of Armenia; Amaraz, the burial place of the Illuminator’s grandson St. Grigoris; Manazkert, the seat of the Albanid patriarchs; Xaχ, where a royal palace was located; and the sites of the great pagan shrines, Erēz and Bagawan are all called “villages [*gewł*],” Koriwn, iii; *Aa*, xlviii, dclclxxxiv, dcccxc; *Ps. P^cB*, III, iv, vi, xi–xii, xiv, xix; V, xxiv; VI, ii; *LP^c*, x, 13; III, lxxxi–lxxxii, 149–50. Erēz, Xaχ and T^cil are also called “towns [*awan*]” on occasion, as was Arest, the site of the royal fisheries, and Van, *Aa*, dclclxxxvi; *Ps. P^cB*, III, ix; V, xxiv; Elišē, iii, 69. The holy site of Ašišat in Tarōn is called both an *awan*, *Ps. P^cB*, III, xix, and a *gewł*, *LP^c*, I, xviii, 38, but it is usually designated merely as a “place of sacrifice” as a derivation of the Persian meaning of its name, or an “ecclesiastical locality,” and the fact that its church had to be fortified does not argue for an extensive or important center although it contained an episcopal palace, *Ps. P^cB*, III, iii, xiv, xix; *Aa*, dcccix. Gaṛni, Artagerk^c, Angeł, Van, Dariwnk^c, Ołakan, Bnabeł, Bołberd, and Ani in Daranalik^c are all called “fortresses” or “strongholds [*berd, amur tet, amur berd, amur k^catak^c*],” *Aa*, dclclxxxvii; *Ps. P^cB*, III, viii; IV, xix, xl, lv, lxix; V, iii, vii; *LP^c*, II, xxxvi, 60; III, lxxx, 146; Elišē, iii, 79. Bagawan, Arest, Angeł and even the capital of Artašat are occasionally referred to as *komopoleis* or “fortified villages [*gewłak^catak^c* or its reverse *k^catak^cagewł*],” *Aa*, dcccxvii; *LP^c*, III, lxx, lxxviii, 127, 144; *Elišē*, iii, 58; see also the list of *awans* and fortresses in Elišē, iii, 68–69; Eremyan, *Razvitie*, 17 stresses the presence of *awans* around cities such as Artašat or Duin, but most seem to have been unrelated to other localities. As can be seen from the examples given the same site could be given different qualifications and the difference between *gewł* and *awan* does not seem to have been altogether clear, but the term *k^catak^c* was rigorously restricted.

24 E.g., *Aa*, dcccxxxvii, dcccxliv—*šēn*; *Ps. P^cB*, III, xvi; VI, x—*agarak*; IV, xii, li—*dastakert*; III, ii—*kaluac*; III, iii, iv; IV, xi, xiv–xv, etc.—*tehi*.

inscription brings out their Hellenistic nature.²⁵ Not only do all of them, except Van, Naḫčawan, and the mysterious Mcurn bear the typical eponymous names honouring their founder inaugurated by the multiple Alexandrias,²⁶ but Sarkisian's study of the Tigranakert inscription identifies from it a *politeia*, with considerable local autonomy and institutions, coupled with a recognition of ultimate royal or state sovereignty, all characteristic of Hellenistic *poleis* or Roman *civitates* in the East.²⁷ No firm conclusions concerning the internal urban structure of these localities is possible on the basis of the fragmentary Tigranakert inscription, whose evidence Sarkisian extends by analogy to other Armenian cities,²⁸ or of the extreme scantiness of other sources, but the few surviving descriptions and the recent archaeological material bear out the hypothesis of Hellenistic typology.

Citing the Greek inscriptions found there at the beginning of this century, Manandyan followed by Eremyan postulated the presence of Greek colonists at Armawir,²⁹ and Classical authors testify to the forcible removal of the Greek population of Mazaka [later Caesarea] of Cappadocia to Tigranakert at the time of its foundation.³⁰ Most of the Armenian cities are described as built at the foot of an akropolis or citadel in classical fashion.³¹ Likewise, the excavations of Artašat clearly reveal the classical character of the city with its akropolis, theatre, heated thermal establishments, and shops, as might well be expected, especially after its reconstruction in the second half of the first century A.D. with the help of Italian workmen sent by Nero, whose name

25 Sarkisian, *Iz istorii*, 51–52, 58 *et passim*; Manandyan, *Trade*, 58 insists on the Hellenistic rather than oriental character of Tigranakert.

26 Very little is known of Mcurn whose name is given as Mcurk^c in the *Epic Histories*, *Ps. P^cB*, IV, xiv = *CHAMA*, I, 250b and which was confused with Nisibis (Arm. Mcbin), see Manandyan, *Trade*, 82–83. The name of Van seems clearly derived from the Urartians' name for their country, Biaina or Biainili, whose capital stood on the site of Van, *ibid.*, 87, though the site seems to have survived primarily as a result of its splendid fortified position above the lake of the same name, see above n. 19. The origin of the name Naḫčawan is unclear, but it clearly contains the suffix *-awan* "town." All the other cities follow the Hellenistic eponymous pattern with suffixes of place or foundation, *-šat*, *-kert*, *-awan*, etc., thus: Armawir/Aramayis who "called [the city]... after his own name," according to *MX*, I, xii = *MK*, 90, Eruandašat, Eruandakert/Eruand, Artašat/Artašēs, Zarehawan, Zarišat/Zareh, Tigranakert/Tigran, Vałaršapat/Vałarš; the village of Karin became Theodosiopolis in honour of Theodosius II, and Artašat briefly turned into Neroneia after its reconstruction in the 1st century A.D. The eponymous pattern was so pervasive, that we have several Zarišats, Zarehawans and Tigranakerts in addition to the well-known cities of that name. See the list given by Eremyan, *Razvitie*, 14. Cf. also *MX*, II, xlix, lxx = *MK*, 190, 210.

27 Sarkisian, *Iz istorii*, 50, 53–54, 57–58, *et passim*; Manandyan, *Trade*, 58 and chapter ii.

28 Sarkisian, *Iz istorii*, 54, 57.

29 Manandyan, *Trade*, 37–38, followed by Eremyan, *Razvitie*, 18. This hypothesis is supported by the ostrakon with a fragment of Greek found at Armawir.

30 Strabo, *Geography*, XI, xiv, 15; XII, ii, 9; Appian, *Bell. Mithr.*, x, 67; Plutarch, *Lucullus*, xxvi. Strabo says that the population forcibly settled at Tigranakert returned home after the capture of the city, but it nevertheless retained a mixed population, see below, n. 101.

31 The "citadels [*berd, mijaberd*]" of Vałaršapat, Artašat and Van are explicitly mentioned in the sources, *Aa*, cxvii; *Ps. P^cB*, IV, lxix = *CHAMA*, I, 276b; *MX*, I, xvi = *MK*, 100–101; *LP^c*, III, lxxvii, 121 = *CHAMA*, II, 328a. The fortress-like character of Armawir has already been noted, see above n. 10, and *MX*, II, xli = *MK*, 182 stresses that of Eruandašat. Eremyan, *Razvitie*, 17 argues that the citadel was the nucleus around which the cities grew, as indeed seems to have been the case everywhere.

the city assumed for a time.³² The bronze coins of the city minted in A.D. 183 show its *tychē* wearing a turreted crown and bear the legend, ARTAXISATŌN MĒTRO-POLEŌS, thus following a standard Hellenistic model.³³ Tigranakert, with its theatre and numerous public buildings, must have been laid out as a typical classical city as well.³⁴ An inscription dating from A.D. 185 bears witness to the fact that a Roman army detachment was stationed at Vařarřapat/Kainē Polis at the time, and the city had been designated as the Armenian capital by Martius Verus some twenty years earlier.³⁵ Although clearly fictitious, Movsēs Xorenac^ci's description of the city presumably built at Van by Semiramis and boasting an aqueduct, baths, multiple storied buildings, and broad streets, as well as a varied artisan population is obviously that of a Hellenistic foundation.³⁶ Nothing is known of the other Armenian cities,³⁷ but the existing evidence undeniably points primarily toward the Hellenistic world in which they first appeared.

If a *terminus post quem* of the third century B.C. can be given for the foundation of the overwhelming majority of Armenian cities, the *terminus ad quem* for their existence is equally clear. By the fifth century A.D. Mcurm was only a vague memory.³⁸ More specifically, the Armenian *Epic Histories* of the late fifth century unambiguously state that all the great Armenian cities: Eruandařat, Artařat, Tigranakert, Vařarřapat, Zarehawan, Zariřat, Van and Nařćawan were destroyed during the devastation of Armenia by řahpuhr II that followed the "ignobile decretum" of 363 by which Jovian abandoned the country to the Sasanians, and that their population was deported to Persia.³⁹ Eruandařat, Tigranakert and Zariřat vanished, and in the late fifth century, the *Epic Histories* could still identify the village of Bagawan as being "near the ruins of the city of Zarehawan" demonstrating that no reconstruction had followed the Persian sack.⁴⁰ Vařarřapat continued to enshrine the *martyria* of the early Armenian saints, but lost all urban importance.⁴¹ Greatly reduced, Artařat survived under imperial auspices

32 Plutarch, *Crassus*, xxxiii; Cassius Dio, *History*, LXII, vi, 5-6; Ařakelyan, *Artařat*, I; Eremyan, *Razvitie*, 19-20. As noted above n. 26, Artařat even went so far as to take the name of Neronei for about a century after its reconstruction.

33 Ařakelyan, *Artařat*, I, pl. lxxviii; M.-L. Chaumont, "A propos d'une ère d'Artaxata, capitale de la Grande Arménie," *R.E.Arm.*, n.s. XVIII (1984), 397-409 and pls. xl-xli.

34 Plutarch, *Lucullus*, xxvi, xxix.

35 *CIL*, III, No. 6052; *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, "Marcus Aurelius," ix; "Lucius Verus," vii; Suidas, *Lexikon*, s.v. "Priskos."

36 *MX*, I, xvi = *MK*, 99-100.

37 Note the suspect description of Eruandakert, *MX*, II, xlii = *MK*, 183 and 183 n. 2. A hippodrome is mentioned at Zarehawan, *Ps. P^cB*, V, lviii = *CHAMA*, I, 276a. The excavations at Armawir reveal the same Hellenistic pattern.

38 *Ps. P^cB*, IV, xiv = *CHAMA*, I, 250b. The *Epic Histories* give the name of the city as Mcurk^c, rendered as "Medzourkh" in the French translation. On Arřakawan, see below and n. 103.

39 *Ps. P^cB*, IV, lv = *CHAMA*, I, 274b-75a; *MX*, III, xxxv = *MK*, 293; Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rerum gestarum*, XXV, vii, 12-13.

40 *Ps. P^cB*, V, xliii = *CHAMA*, I, 303b, ". . . or ē mōt yaweraksn Zarehawand k^calak^ci . . ."; *LP^c*, II, xxxii, 63 calls it a "village [gewł]" at the end of the fifth century. See *Ps. P^cB*, V, xxvii for the reference to Tigranakert as an *awan*.

41 Vařarřapat does not seem to have been a large centre, *Ps. P^cB*, III, vii = *CHAMA*, I, 216a mentions it only in passing to record its capture by northern tribesmen, and eventually its sack by the Persians, IV,

as one of the three officially designated custom posts between Byzantium and Persia,⁴² but later mediaeval Armenian and Arab sources know it only as a small community despite its importance in the production of the highly valued red cochineal dye known as *kirmiz*.⁴³ Duin, which had replaced it as capital, is praised as an important centre of foreign trade by both Procopius and the tenth century Arab geographers,⁴⁴ but both this international aspect and its administrative rôle, as the seat of the Persian and subsequently the Arab governors of Armenia, added to its extraterritorial character, despite its unquestionably Armenian population.⁴⁵ Similarly, Karin/Theodosiopolis/Ղալիկա kept its importance throughout the Middle Ages both as the northern anchor point of the Byzantine *limes* in the East and, after its capture in the seventh century, of the Arab fortified zone turned against its former masters. In either case its significance was that of a strategic military stronghold and not of an urban centre.⁴⁶ Thus, the cities surviving in Armenia owed their existence to their importance in the eyes of its neighbours and overlords rather than to the country itself. Nothing more is heard of the other cities. To all intents and purposes they were dead or had become insignificant villages or mere fortresses by the fifth century,⁴⁷ and Sarkisian himself admits that they were rarely mentioned in the Armenian sources of the period and thereafter, until Muslim times created new centres.⁴⁸

lv = *CHAMA*, I, 274b. As noted above, n. 22, *Aa* makes much of Vałaršapat, but he gives no description of it beyond the *martyria* of the saints, dclvii–dclxx. The title of *k^calak^c* still given to it may be in honour of its position as the major shrine of northern Armenia, but it is equally possible that it is merely a result of its Greek name of Kainē Polis translated as Nor K^calak^c = “New City.”

42 CJ, IV, lxiii, 4, but no longer by name in the peace treaty of 562 although the four places of ancient custom are mentioned cf. Menander Protector, “Frag 11” in C. Müller, F. H. G. IV, 212 A–B and K. Gütterbock, *Byzanz und Persien in Ihren Diplomatisch-Fölkerrechtlichen Beziehungen* (Berlin, 1906), 75.

43 In the late fifth century, *LP^c*, II, xlvi, 144 = *CHAMA*, I, 343a, refers to it as a “*gewlak^calak^c*” which probably indicates a fortified village. On the production of *kirmiz* there, see al Balādhuri, *The Origins of the Islamic State*, Ph. Hitti tr. (New York, 1916, repr. 1968), I, 314 and A. Ter Ghewondyan, *The Arab Emirates in Bagratid Armenia*, N. Garsoïan tr. (Lisbon, 1976), 137–39, 140–41.

44 Procopius, *Bell. Pers.*, II, xxv, 1–3. For the Arab geographers, see M. J. de Goeje, *Bibliotheca geographorum arabicorum* (Leiden), I, 188—al Ištakhri; II, 244–45—Ibn Ḥauqal; III, 377, 380—al-Muqaddasi; and the translations of the relevant passages in Manandyan, *Trade*, 143–44, 145. Cf. Sarkisian, *Iz istorii*, 62, for the disappearance of the early Armenian cities and the survival of Duin as a Persian administrative centre and a mart in the international transit trade.

45 Despite al-Ištakhri’s designation of Duin as “the capital of Armenia,” and the residence of king Smbat I in the tenth century, the city was in fact rarely under full Armenian jurisdiction after the fifth century, but rather the seat of foreign governors. See Ter Ghewondyan, *Arab Emirates*, 54–55, 79, 94, 121–23, 134, 143, 179–80; Id., “Chronologie de la ville de Dvin (Dwin) aux 9^e et 11^e siècles,” *R.E.Arm.*, n.s. II (1965), 303–18; V. Minorsky, “Vicissitudes of Dvin,” *Studies in Caucasian History* (London, 1953), 116–24. See also below n. 105.

46 N. Garsoïan, “Karin,” *Dictionary of the Middle Ages* (New York, 1986), 6:214–15.

47 See above n. 19 for Van as a “fortress.” Elišē, iii, 69 = *Elišē*, 119 refers to it as a mere *awan*, a qualification also known to the Continuator of *T^cA*, xxx, 220–21. *LP^c*, lxvii, 121. *LP^c*, III, lxvii, 121 = *CHAMA*, II, 328b refers to Naḫčawan as a “*gewl*,” as he does in the case of Zarehawan, see above n. 40. For the seventh century historian Sebēos, G. V. Abgaryan ed., *Patmut^ciwn Sebēosi* (Erevan, 1979), xl, xlvi = F. Macler tr., *Histoire d’Héraclius par l’évêque Sebēos* (Paris, 1904), 110, 115, Naḫčawan was a “*berd*” and Zarehawan seems also to have been a fortified site. Nothing more is known of the other cities; but see next note.

48 Sarkisian, *Iz istorii*, 49. Once again, the stratification of Armawir bears out the suggested chronology: founded late in the third century B.C. on an Urartian site, the city flourished through the first century A.D.,

Some scholars have suggested that the absence of an urban revival after the Sasanian destruction of the fourth century was due to a shift in the socio-economic pattern of Armenia from the earlier, slave holding model to the subsequent stage of feudalism, in the course of the fifth century.⁴⁹ There is, however, little evidence in the sources for the existence of such a watershed postulated on the basis of Marxist periodization. One and the same society is reflected in the *Epic Histories*' description of the fourth century Arsacid realm, and in the fifth century world of Łazar P^carpec^ci.⁵⁰ Still more importantly, the *nobiles, proceres, and megistanes*, known to Tacitus⁵¹ were clearly the prototypes of the *nařarars* or magnates familiar to fifth century Armenian sources. Their normal residence was in their remote fortresses,⁵² and their favourite pastimes of hunting and banqueting were characteristic of Armenian society at least as early as the first century A.D.⁵³ The one hundred and twenty *strategiae* or *praefecturae* subdividing Armenia in the words of Pliny the Elder were most probably the antecedents of Armenia's semi-autonomous mediaeval principalities.⁵⁴ Consequently, Adontz, followed by Manandyan and C. Toumanoff, traced the typical Armenian *nařarar* social structure of the fourth and fifth centuries back of the appearance of the Arsacid dynasty in the country,⁵⁵ and no appreciable social or economic transformation can be discerned in the country between the first and sixth centuries A.D. A different explanation must therefore be sought for the paucity and disappearance of early mediaeval Armenian urban centres and for the failure of new ones to develop until the period of the Muslim emirates.

In this connexion, the general silence of early Armenian sources on the subject of the city noted above should not be taken as a fortuitous lacuna. The city does not seem

gradually declined and disappeared by the fourth. It was resettled ca. the ninth century, but as a lesser center of population.

49 *Ibid.*, 57–62. The same point of view is to be found in Eremyan's earlier *Razvitie*.

50 Although both the *Epic Histories* and LP^c were set down in the last decades of the fifth century, the former gives an amazingly accurate picture of the fourth century Armenian society under the late Arsacids. See N. G. Garsoïan, "Introduction" to *Ps. P^cawstos Buzandaran Patmu^ciwnk^c*, Delmar, N. Y., 1984), xi–xiii, and especially the "Introduction" to my forthcoming English translation of the text, *Buzandaran Patmu^ciwnk^c*: The Epic Histories Attributed to P^cawstos Buzand (Cambridge, MA, in press).

51 Tacitus, *Ann.*, II, ii, lvi, lviii; VI, xxxi, xlii; XV, i, xxvii, etc.

52 *Ibid.*, XV, xxviii ["Corbulo] consilio terrorem adicere, et megistanes Armenios . . . pellit sedibus, castella eorum excindit. . . ." See below for the residences of fifth century Armenian *nařarars*.

53 *Ibid.*, II, lxvi, "favor nationis [Armeniae] inclinabat in Zenonem Polemonis regis Pontici filium, quod is prima ab infantia instituta et cultum Armeniorum aemulatus, venatus, epulis et quae aliae barbari celebrant, proceres plebemque iuxta devinerat." For the importance of hunting and banquets in Iranian and Armenian mediaeval societies, see, e.g., *Ps. P^cB*, III, xx = *CHAMA* I, 230b; LP^c, I, vii, 10–11 = *CHAMA*, II, 264a, etc.; also N. Garsoïan, "Prolegomena to a Study of the Iranian Aspects in Arsacid Armenia," *Handēs Amsorya/Zeitschrift für armenische Philologie*, XC (Vienna, 1976), cols. 183–84 and nn. 50–59; *Id.*, "The Locus of the Death of Kings: Armenia the Inverted Image," *The Armenian Image in History and Literature*, R. G. Hovannissian ed. (Malibu, 1980), 46–64.

54 Pliny, *HN*, VI, x (26), "[Armenia] dividitur in praefecturas, quas strategiae vocant, quasdam ex his vel singula regna quondam barbaribus nominibus CXX." Cf. Adontz, *Armenia*, chapter xi, and below, n. 62.

55 *Ibid.*, chapters xiv–xv; Manandyan, *Feodalizm Hin Hayastanum [Feudalism in Ancient Armenia]* (Erevan, 1934), 248–51; C. Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History* (Georgetown, 1963), 147–273, especially 197–222 where he traces a number of the great families of mediaeval Armenia back to Urartian or Hellenistic Eruandid/Orontid times.

to have been a central or even an integral part of the Armenians' image of their country, and the attention of the contemporaries was focussed elsewhere. As R. W. Thomson perceptively observed in his commentary on the elegiac meditations attributed by Լazar Բարսեղի to king Aršak III about to leave his homeland,

the numerous rhetorical descriptions of Armenian scenery are couched in terms of the ideal outdoor life of the nobles and the pleasures of the hunt. . . . The Armenian idealized landscapes are a far cry from the groves of Statius or Ovid, for they do not reflect the stylized longings of a city culture. [and further] The Armenians never identified themselves wholly with Greek culture . . . they were very conscious of belonging to a society that was foreign to the city culture of the Hellenistic world and of sharing ancient traditions that derived from the Iranian world.⁵⁶

This predilection for the country life is reflected as much in the descriptions of royal delight in the creation of forest hunting preserves or "paradises" found in the fifth century *Epic Histories*,⁵⁷ as in the tenth century images of a land of milk and honey dotted with fortresses but not with cities to be found in the *History of Tarōn* or the *History of Armenia* of John the Kat^{olikos}.⁵⁸ The reverse of these idyllic scenes in times of catastrophe: the destruction of palaces, castles, gardens and vineyards by the Persians at the time of the Armenian revolt of 451;⁵⁹ the advice of prince Ašot to the Armenian *naḫarars* two centuries later to flee the Arabs abandoning their inherited domains, ". . . your homes, forests, and villages, as well as the graves of your fathers,"⁶⁰ depict the same non-urban world. As late as the tenth century, the historian John the Kat^{olikos} would still speak of fortresses, forests and mountains as the refuges of the nobility, while the poor wandered over the face of the land, in snow and in heat, eating grass and harmful plants, rather than the urban dogs and rats of the classic accounts of famine.⁶¹

It is amply evident from the sources that throughout the Middle Ages the normal dwellings of the Armenian nobility as of their Iranian counterparts were, as we have already noted, the impregnable and distant fortresses of their own domains.⁶² The

56 ԼԲ^Ը, I, vii-viii, 8-12 = CHAMA, II, 262b-64b; R. W. Thomson, "The Formation of the Armenian Literary Tradition," in N. Garsoïan, Th. Mathews and R. W. Thomson eds., *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period* (Washington, 1982), 143-44, 148.

57 Բ. Բ, III, viii = CHAMA, I, 216b; cf. ԹԽ, III, viii = ԹԿ, 261, cf. ԹԽ, II, xli = ԹԿ, 182-83 for the forest preserve of Eruand.

58 [Բ.] Յոբ Գլակ, *Zenobay Glakay Asorwoy episkoposi Patmut^{iwn} Tarōnoy*, 2nd ed. (Venice, 1889), 49 = CHAMA, I, 355, also John the Kat^{olikos}, *Patmut^{iwn}* (Jerusalem, 1867 [= JK]), xl, liii, 198-99, 260. These passages are late and have obvious Biblical overtones, nevertheless, they are interesting as part of a continuing tradition in Armenia, and their stress on the presence of fortresses, but not cities, in the countryside is significant.

59 Էլիշե, vii, 201 = Էլիշե, 245.

60 Lewond, *Patmut^{iwn} Lewonday meci vardapeti Hayoc^Ը*, 2nd ed. (St. Petersburg, 1887 [= Lewond]), 143-44, ". . . to՛sul z՛zarangut^{iwn} harcⁿ jeroy zbnakut^{iwn}s jer, ew zanta՛s ew zandastans, na ew zgerezmans harc^Ը jeroy ew eri՛al . . . and ark՛ayin Yunac^Ը."

61 ԵԿ, xlvi, li, liii, 227, 246, 261. The one reference to the destruction of cities, lii, 256-57 comes in a highly rhetorical passage rendered still more suspect by the capping quotation from Isaiah, 1:7, "Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire, your land strangers devour it in your presence and it is desolate as overthrown by strangers."

62 See, e.g., the Mamikonean fortresses in the "inaccessible" land of Tayk^Ը, as well as at Erazani and Olakan; or the Kamsarakan stronghold of Artagerk^Ը, Բ. Բ, III, xviii; IV, ii, xviii; V, iii = CHAMA, I, 229a, 236a, 255b, 280b; ԹԽ, III, xxxi = ԹԿ, 287, etc.

historian of the Armenian fifth century rebellion against Persia, Elišē described the contemporary nobles as “raised to dwell at liberty in snowy mountains . . . who like the free deer used to roam flowering mountains. . . .”⁶³ And these untamed magnates abandoned their strongholds only under duress and not always at the king’s explicit summons.⁶⁴ The still visible ruins of the seventh century palaces of the Mamikonean at Aruč and of the Kamsarakan princes at T^calin, at the southern foot of Mt. Aragac, and the still later Pahlawuni fortresses at Amberd in the foothills of the same mountain range, or Bjni further to the north testify to the fact that the seats of the Armenian dynasts continued to lie far from the administrative centre of Duin or the subsequent residences of the Bagratid court.⁶⁵

As we have already seen, both Classical and Armenian sources periodically singled out a particular locality as the “capital” of Armenia, but this title seems to have been relatively ephemeral, and to have meant but little to the actual rulers. The Eruandid kings moved from Armawir to Eruandašat as the Artasēsids and Arsacids would move back and forth to Artasat, Tigranakert, Vařaršapat, and eventually Duin at the very end of the dynasty without showing any particular allegiance or attachment to any of them.⁶⁶ This absence of what might be called “geographical loyalty” to a given capital would remain characteristic of the Armenian crown, as the Bagratids later in the Middle Ages moved from generation to generation from their original seat, the town of Bagaran where they were first crowned, to Širakawan/Erazgawork^c, Kars, and finally Ani in Širak,⁶⁷ before abandoning their Armenian domains like all the later native dynasties to retire in the eleventh century to estates granted to them by the Byzantine authorities in Cappadocia or to isolated mountain fastnesses.⁶⁸ None of these capitals seem to have been major centres since they are styled *awan* or *k^catak^cagewł* by contemporary historians, and some were primarily “fortresses [*berd*]” as was the case of Kars and of Lori, the capitals of the secondary northern Bagratid dynasties of Venand and Tařir-Coraget.⁶⁹ Even Ani, usually considered the mediaeval Armenian capital par excellence, enjoyed this position for less than a century. Beginning its career as a fortress belonging to the Kamsarakan lords of the district, it was bought from them by the Bagratids on their way to power.⁷⁰ Still characterized as a “fortress” by John the Kat^cořikos at the

63 Elišē, vii, 194 = *Elišē*, 238. Cf. Bickerman’s Hermitage lecture, quoted above.

64 *Ps. P^cB*, III, viii = *CHAMA*, I, 217b. However, the royal order that the greatest magnates should remain at court rather than in their domains seems to have done little to curb the centrifugal tendencies of the nobility. See, e.g., *Ps. P^cB*, III, xviii = *CHAMA*, I, 229a.

65 For Aruč and T^calin, see *JK*, xx, xxiii, xl, 90, 107, 197. On Amberd, H. Hübschmann, *Die altarmenischen Ortsnamen* (Strassburg, 1904, repr. Amsterdam, 1969), 399. See also the *Atlas of the Armenian SSR* (Erevan-Moscow, 1961, in Arm.), for these locations.

66 See above.

67 G. Dédéyan ed., *Histoire des Arméniens* (Toulouse, 1982), 215, 218, 222–23.

68 *Ibid.*, 239, 242–43, 245, 251–52. See also above n. 45 for the Bagratid failure to control Duin.

69 *JK* refers to Bagawan as an “*awan*,” to Erazgawork^c as a “domain [*kaluac*]” and subsequently a “*k^catak^cagewł*,” and to Kars as a “*berd*,” xxx, 143–44. The stronghold character of Lori is evident from the alternate form of its name, Loriberd, and the dynasty there eventually retired to their mountain retreat of Masnaberd north of Lake Sevan. The rulers of Siwnik^c held out in the impregnable fortresses of Ernřak, Kap^can, or still further in the mountains, *JK*, xlix, 237; *Histoire des Arméniens*, 243, 245.

70 Toumanoff, *Studies*, 202, 206–7.

beginning of the tenth century,⁷¹ it became the Bagratid capital only from the coronation of Ašot III in 961 to its surrender to Byzantium in 1045, and its importance derived as much from its rôle as junction point in the international trade passing through northern Armenia as from its status as the royal metropolis.⁷²

Neglecting their official capitals in which they were rarely to be found, the Arsacid kings preferred to share with their nobles the aristocratic Iranian diversions of hunting and banqueting.⁷³ Their true residences were to be found in “forest palaces [*tačar mayri*]” and pavilions set amidst hunting preserves created on an Iranian model,⁷⁴ or in one of the semi-permanent “royal encampments [*banak ark^cuni*],” of which the principal seems to have been located at Šahapivan in the district of Całkotr.⁷⁵ The only references to royal palaces [*aparank^c*] place them far from any capital. Such was the one of king Pap at the site of Xaχ, which may not have been anything more than another “royal encampment,”⁷⁶ and which he left for his fatal encounter with the Roman commander Terentius at yet another camp in the plain of Xu in the district of Bagrewand.⁷⁷ As for the palace planned by his father, king Aršak II in his new foundation of Aršakawan, it was almost immediately destroyed if indeed it was built at all.⁷⁸ From all of these indications it seems clear that the peripatetic Armenian court normally steered clear of the existing cities, favoured camps and hunting pavilions of Iranian type, and sought refuge in moments of danger in the great royal fortresses such as Artagerk^c or Angeł which also guarded the royal treasure.⁷⁹ This pattern seems to have survived even in later times, since John the Kat^cořikos normally shows the king camping in small localities of the countryside even in winter,⁸⁰ whereas the Muslim *ostikan* of governor remained firmly ensconced in the city of Duin.⁸¹ The Armenian king’s aversion to cities in general lingered even after their death. The Arsacid

71 *JK*, xxxvii, 186, “. . . merj yamurn Ani.”

72 *Histoire des Arméniens*, 223, 239; Manandyan, *Trade*, 144–45; Marr, *Ani*, etc. It should be noted, as did Manandyan, Minorsky, *Studies*, and others, that Ani continued to flourish in the post-Bagratid period under the Muslim Shaddāids and the Zacharid Georgian viceroys.

73 See above n. 53. Trdat III still resided at Valaršapat, if we believe the highly stylized account of *Aa*, clxxi, declxxviii, dcccxvii, decclxxiii, but this is not true of his successors.

74 *Ps. P^cB*, III, viii = *CHAMA*, I, 216b; *MX*, III, viii = *MK*, 261.

75 *Ps. P^cB*, IV, xv = *CHAMA*, I, 251a. On the “royal encampment” furnished with tents or pavilions rather than permanent buildings, see my forthcoming communication “*Banak Ark^cuni* in the *Epic Histories* attributed to P^cawstos Buzand,” at the fourth International Symposium of Armenian Medieval Art (Erevan, September, 1985).

76 *Ps. P^cB*, V, xxiv = *CHAMA*, I, 290b–91b, which refers both to an “*aparan*” (220) and a “*banak ark^cuni*” (222). Xaχ cannot have been a large centre since the *Epic Histories* first refer to it as an “*awan*” (220), but subsequently as a mere “*gewi*” (222).

77 *Ps. P^cB*, V, xxxii = *CHAMA*, I, 295b–96b. The camp at Xu cannot have been a mere military station, since the banquet at which Pap was murdered clearly took place in an elaborate locale. Pap’s other palace was in the village of Ardeank^c, *Ps. P^cB*, V, vi = *CHAMA*, I, 285a.

78 *Ps. P^cB*, IV, xii–xiii = *CHAMA*, I, 247b. See below for Aršakawan.

79 *Ps. P^cB*, IV, xix, lv; V, vii = *CHAMA*, I, 256a, 273a–b, 286a. The same pattern of rural pleasures and fortresses can still be glimpsed in *T^cA* and his continuator, I, vi, ix; III, ii, iv, xi, xiii, xx, xxii, xxiv, xxix, 44, 55, 116, 122, 157, 160, 167, 176, 178, 180, 186, 190, 194, 204, etc. and in *JK*, see above n. 58.

80 *JK*, xxx, xl, xlv, 143, 197, 215–16, 218, etc. According to *T^cA Cont.*, xxix, 213, the Arcrunid prince Grigor Derenik also chose a mere *awan* for his winter quarters.

81 *JK*, xxv, xxvi, xl, xlv, lv, 113, 126, 199, 214–15, 216, 218, 289, etc.

nekropoleis were situated first in the fortresses of Ani in the far western district of Daranañik^c or at Angeł on the southern border, and subsequently in the small fortified village of Ałc^c in the foothills of Mt. Aragac.⁸² Similarly, the fourth century Armenian primates from the house of St. Gregory the Illuminator were invariably carried back to their ancestral villages of T^cil and T^cordan in the west to be buried with their ancestors.⁸³

Following the example of the king and the magnates, the Church likewise kept its distance from cities and remained in the countryside. Rather than conform to the customary Christian practice of urban episcopal seats followed even in the adjoining imperial lands of Armenia Minor west of the Euphrates, the bishops of Greater Armenia associated themselves with the great noble houses of which they were usually members and did not reside in cities. Their signatures on the conciliar acts of the fifth and sixth centuries identify them as family representatives—e.g., Neršapuh, bishop of the Mamikonean, Šahē, bishop of the Amatuni, etc.—rather than with a specific locality.⁸⁴ Except for the shrines of the martyrs at Vařaršapat, the basilicas of the fourth and fifth centuries at Ereruk, Ařtarak, Eřward, Tekor or Kasasař, and the great cathedrals of the seventh century were erected far from the centres of population: the *kat^colikē* of Aruĉ and T^calin near the palaces of the local lords, Ojun and Sisian in the far north and east. The smaller churches were scattered far and wide over the countryside, or served as chapels for the nobility, as is the case of the small Kamsarakan church of the Theotokos at T^calin whose still legible inscription explicitly invokes blessings on the immediate family of the donor.⁸⁵

The Gregorid reforming patriarch of the mid-fourth century, St. Nersēs the Great, spread his charitable foundations over villages, hamlets and desert locations, but not a

82 *Ps. P^cB*, III, xi; IV, xxiv = *CHAMA*, I, 221b, 261a–b. On Ani, Angeł and Ałc/Atk^c, see also Hübschman, *Ortsnamen*, 284, 397, 398–99.

83 *Ps. P^cB*, III, ii, xi, xii; V, xxiv = *CHAMA*, I, 211a, 221b, 223a, 291b. The only exceptions were St. Grigoris laid to rest in the ecclesiastical *gewł* of Amaras, *Ps. P^cB*, III, vi = *CHAMA*, I, 214b, and the last patriarch of the Gregorid house, St. Sahak the Great, buried by his kinsmen at the family domain of Ařtiřat in Tarōn, *MX*, III, lxxvii = *MK*, 348, where the sons of the patriarch Yusik had already been buried, *Ps. P^cB*, iii, xix = *CHAMA*, I, 229a–b. For Ařtiřat as a Gregorid domain, see *Ps. P^cB*, IV, xiv = *CHAMA*, I, 250a. The practice of burial in one's ancestral domain seems to have continued since John the Kat^colikos, xlvi, 225, notes that the young Bagratid prince Smbat was carried back for burial "with his fathers," and the later royal houses chose the isolated monasteries founded by them, such as Hařbat, Sanahin, or Tat^cew for their ultimate resting places.

84 N. G. Garsoïan, "Secular Jurisdiction over the Armenian Church," *Okeanos. Essays Presented to Ihor Ševĉenko*. . . . *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, VII (1983), 223–24 and n. 22.

85 On these churches, see among others, S. der Nersessian, *Armenian Art* (London, 1978). The inscription on the facade of the small church of the Theotokos at T^calin invokes benefaction on Nerseh [Kamsarakan] lord of řirak and of Arřarunik^c, on his wife řuřan, and on their son Hrahat. "I Nerseh apo<hy>patos and patrician, lord of řirak and of Arřarunik^c built this church in the name of the Holy Mother of God in intercession for myself and for my wife řuřan and for our son Hrahat. [*Es Nerseh api<hiw>pat patrik řirakay ew Arřaruneac^c iēr řinec^ci zeket^cis yanun Srboy Astuacacnin i bareřawsut^ciwn inj ew řuřanay amusnoy imoy ew Hrahatay ordwoy meroy*]." The exiguous dimensions of the church make it clear that it was meant as a family chapel and no more. See, *ibid.*, pl. 17; *Archittetura medievale armena* (Rome, 1968), 91 no. 26 and pls. 40–41; and for the inscription, L. Aliřan, *Ayrarat* (Venice, 1890), 138. It is interesting to note in this connexion that *JK*, xl, 298–99, commented that the Armenian *nařarars* of the tenth century "built stone churches in isolated spots, villages and settlements."

one was located at the gate of a city as had been done by his Greek predecessor and probable model, Eustathius at Sebastē, and by the bishop of Caesarea for the still more famous Basileia set by him immediately outside his metropolitan seat and the first Armenian councils of Aštišat (354?) and Šahapivan (444) were not held in the capital.⁸⁶ The great Armenian shrines of Aštišat and Bagawan, and even the holy city of Vałaršapat after its fourth century destruction, did not develop into major centres of population.⁸⁷ In the mid-seventh century the kat^colikos Nersēs III “the Builder” eschewed the holy city to erect his new church and palace a few miles away at Zuartnoc^c,⁸⁸ as the tenth century kat^colikos John “the Historian” would select his own village of Biwrakan on the slopes of Mt. Aragac for his new basilica.⁸⁹ In general, the early Armenian primates showed little attachment for their holy city or the royal capital and the Gregorid patriarchs resided in cities no more than their king.⁹⁰ After the disappearance of the Arsacid monarchy, they remained for some time under the protection of the Persian governors at Duin until Muslim oppression set them wandering as far south as Vaspurakan, before turning once more to the north.⁹¹ In the eleventh century the kat^colikoi were to stray from Cappadocia to the region of the middle Euphrates.⁹² To be sure, these journeys were often compelled by external circumstances, but the later patriarchs, just like the earlier predecessors, deliberately bypassed urban centres, settling at the height of the Bagratid monarchy in the village of Argina where they built their church rather than at Ani to which they moved only in 992.⁹³ Even in the still later days of the distant kingdom of Cilicia, the kat^colikos clung to the fortress of

86 *Ps. P^cB*, IV, iv; V, xxxi = *CHAMA*, I, 239, 294–95; cf. *MX*, III, xx = *MK*, 274. See also N. Garsoïan, “Nersēs le Grand, Basile de Césarée et Eustathe de Sébaste,” *R.E.Arm.*, n.s. XVII (1983), 158–60, 165. For the councils, see *P^cB* IV, iv = *CHAMA*, I, 239 (Aštišat), and *Kanonagirk^c Hayoc^c*, ed. V. Hakobyan (Erevan, 1964), I: 422–66 (Canons of Šahapivan).

87 On Aštišat and Vałaršapat see above nn. 23, 41. Bagawan is called an “awan” in the *Epic Histories*, *Ps. P^cB*, IV, xv = *CHAMA*, I, 251b.

88 S. X. Mnac^cakanyan, *Zuart^cnoc^c ew nuynatip hušarjannere* [*Zuart^cnoc^c and Monuments of the same Type*], (Erevan, 1971). *JK*, xix, 88, states that the seventh century kat^colikos Nersēs III settled a large population “on an urban basis” around his new foundation of Zuart^cnoc^c, but no indications can be seen that the site grew much beyond the church, the patriarchal palaces and its dependencies.

89 *JK*, lxxv–lxxvi, 336–41; J.-M. Thierry, “L’église surb-Yovhannēs de Biwrakan,” *R.E.Arm.*, n.s. XIII (1978–79), 203–33.

90 There is very little evidence that the Armenian patriarchs spent much time at the royal court, and even less in the capital. The pattern here seems to have been set by St. Gregory the Illuminator himself who withdrew to the desert after the accomplishment of his mission of Christianization despite the request of the king that he remain with him, *Aa*, dcccxlvi, dccclv, dccclviii. The only patriarch who is explicitly said to have been enthroned at Artašat was St. Gregory’s grandson Yusik, *Ps. P^cB*, III, xii = *CHAMA*, I, 222a, and nothing much is told of the residence of the other patriarchs. The dominant ecclesiastical figure of the *Epic Histories*, St. Nersēs the Great, called his reforming council not to Artašat but to Aštišat of Tarōn, which formed part of the ecclesiastical domain of the Gregorids and where they had an episcopal palace (*Ps. P^cB*, III, xix = *CHAMA*, I, 229). He left the royal camp after the murder of Aršak II’s nephew Gnel not to return, was murdered at Xax, and buried with his ancestors in his own village of T^cil, *Ps. P^cB*, IV, iv, xiv (cf. III, xix), xv; V, xxiv = *CHAMA*, I, 239a, 250a (229a–b), 252b, 254a, 290b, 291b, etc. The last Gregorid patriarch, Sahak I, left Vałaršapat to reside in Bagrawand, *MX*, III, lxxi = *MK*, 346.

91 *Histoire des Arméniens*, 229.

92 *Ibid.*, 317–18.

93 *Ibid.*, 229.

Hromklay on the Euphrates until its sack by the Mamluks in 1292 forced his reluctant removal to the royal capital of Sis.⁹⁴ In the southern Arçrunid kingdom as well, the royal bishop of Naḫčawan preferred to transfer his seat from the city to a smaller *awan*.⁹⁵ Finally, the great monastic academies of Hałbat, Sanahin, Gořavank^c, Narek, Tat^cew, Glajor, and others were not located near the contemporary capitals although nearly all of them were royal foundations. They flourished far from the world and the “desert [*anapat*]” rather than the city remained the focus of intellectual activity.⁹⁶ No important group of city-dwellers can be identified within the ruling class until the end of the Middle Ages.⁹⁷

One more look at the early Armenian cities destroyed by the Persians in the second half of the fourth century may further help explain their alienation from the society that surrounded them. As Manandyan long since noted, much of their prosperity and in some cases their survival was contingent upon external circumstances, specifically upon their favourable position on the transit routes of international trade crossing the Armenian plateau.⁹⁸ Possibly as a result of this circumstance, their population was ethnically mixed, and indeed largely non-Armenian if we are to believe the contemporary sources.⁹⁹ The figures given by the *Epic Histories* for the number of families deported to Persia from the cities sacked by Šāhpuhr II are evidently exaggerated and fictitious, but except in the case of Artařat, and of Vałarřapat whose case is unclear,¹⁰⁰ all the other cities are given a far greater Jewish than native population.¹⁰¹ It is consequently difficult to escape the conclusion that the Armenians of this period were not city-dwellers at any level of society and that this factor unquestionably contributed to the extraterritorial character of these urban centres created on foreign, Hellenistic models.

Neglect and abandon were not the only aspects to be found in the attitude of contemporary Armenian society toward the city. Of particular interest here is the tragic

94 *Ibid.*, 317. See also for the wanderings of the Armenian kat^oolikosate, M. Ormanean, *The Church of Armenia* (London, 1912), 48–49, which gives a resumé of his much longer study in Armenian, *Azgapatum*, I (Constantinople, 1912).

95 *T^cA*, xxv, 194.

96 See the *Atlas of the Armenian SSR* for the location of these monasteries. To be sure, monastic foundations everywhere withdrew from the world, but the Armenian foundations were also academies and as such centres of learning and intellectual life, and we hear of none in the cities.

97 The so-called “*mecatun*” or wealthy merchant nobility of Ani cannot be identified before the thirteenth century. See Manandyan, *Trade*, 185–87.

98 *Ibid.*, 44–52, 57–58, 72–127; Eremyan, *Razvitie*, 12–17, 19.

99 *Ibid.*, 15–20, 24–25; Sarkisian, *Iz istorii*, 49, 58. Both authors take this ethnic mixture as characteristic of Hellenistic cities. The multi-ethnic character of the population of Duin in the seventh century can also be traced in the treaty of Ibn Maslama with the Christians, Jews, and Magians of the city preserved in al-Balādhuri’s *Origins of the Islamic State*, I, 314–15. See also next notes.

100 *Ps. P^cB*, IV, lv = *CHAMA*, I, 247a–b. The population deported from Artařat is given as 40,000 Armenian families and 9,000 Jewish ones. In the case of Vałarřapat, this figure of 19,000 deported families gives no ethnic breakdown, and M. Abelyan, *Hay žolovrdakan araspelnerə M. Xorenac^cu Hayoc^c patmut^cean mēj* [*Armenian Popular legends in the History of M. Xorenac^ci*], (Vałarřapat, 1899), 558–63, suggests a lacuna in the text.

101 *Ps. P^cB*, IV, lv = *CHAMA*, I, 274b–75a. The figures given by the *Epic Histories* for the number of deported families are: Eruandařat—20,000 Armenians, 30,000 Jews; Zarehawan—5,000 Armenians, 9,000

fate of the short lived city of Aršakawan, since it was the only urban foundation of the fourth century.¹⁰² The hatred of the magnates for this royal foundation which they perceived as threatening their hereditary social structure and prerogatives manifests itself unmistakably in the description of the city by their spokesmen as a lair of robbers and evildoers and in the malignant satisfaction of the Armenian authors at its total annihilation brought about either by God's wrath invoked upon it for its sins by the patriarch St. Nersēs, or through the more mundane agency of the enraged nobility.¹⁰³ Urban settlements were intolerable to the Armenian *naxarars* as possible reinforcements to the centralizing policy of the crown and as alien to the ethos of their para-feudal society and culture. Their intrinsic hostility could neither be gainsaid nor averted. Even the hero par excellence of the *Epic Histories*, the heroic hereditary commander-in-chief of the Armenian forces Mušel Mamikonean, saw himself slandered and condemned for planning to "fill the Armenian land with cities and make them garrisons for the settlement of Greek troops," in the later fourth century, thus bringing destruction upon the Armenian realm.¹⁰⁴ No clearer statement could be given of the contemporary perception of the city as alien and destructive for the fabric of the land.

Given this patent alienation and the inexorable hostility of the ruling class, it is little wonder that Armenia's Hellenistic foundations disappeared altogether or at most survived under foreign auspices like Duin or Karin/Theodosiopolis, or that this deep seated aversion cast long shadows into the future. When new centres finally developed in the ninth century at Manazkert, Xlat^c, Arčēš, or Berkri, they were to be found on the lands of Muslim emirs rather than those of Armenian *naxarars*, and the Bagratid kings made but halfhearted attempts to wrest Duin from its Arab governors.¹⁰⁵ Created in the wake of Alexander's conquest on the pattern of the *poleis* of his successors, the Armenian cities were by their very concept and institutions incompatible or at best peripheral to Armenia's essentially aristocratic society devoid of any tradition of municipal or republican institutions necessary for the implantation of a *polis* structure and linked fundamentally with Iran where the city also remained outside the power elite, as Professor Bickerman observed a quarter of a century ago. As such, the early Armenian cities based on a concept artificially imported from outside remained without

Jews; Zarišat—10,000 Armenians, 18,000 Jews; Van—5,000 Armenians, 18,000 Jews; Naḫčawan—2,000 Armenians, 16,000 Jews. Cf. *MX*, III, xxxv = *MK*, 293 who also speaks of the Jewish urban population but gives no figures. See Thomson, *MK*, 157 n. 8 and Manandyan, *Trade*, 64-65 for the anachronisms in the account of the settlement of the Jews in Armenia, which do not, however, affect the present argument.

102 As indicated above, neither Karin/Theodosiopolis nor Duin can properly be called fourth century foundations, and their prosperity in the fifth and sixth centuries was due to foreign interests and patronage.

103 *Ps. P^cB*, IV, xii-xiii = *CHAMA*, I, 247b-48a, 249a-b. Cf. *MX*, III, xxvii, xxx-xxxii = *MK* 282-83, 285, 287, who gives the more rational explanation of Aršakawan's destruction by the Armenian magnates rather than by divine intervention and stresses Aršak II's intent to seek vengeance from the nobles for the destruction of his city. Cf. Eremyan, *Razvitie*, 17 and Sarkisian, *Iz istorii*, esp. 53, for the royal initiative and relation to Hellenistic foundations, and Garsoñan, *Prolegomena*, 187-90, for the failure of the centralizing policy of the Armenian crown vis-à-vis the centrifugal thrust of the magnates.

104 *Ps. P^cB*, V, xxxv = *CHAMA*, I, 297b, "... ayžm zhay erkirs ḡorhe lnul k^calak^cōk^c, ew zōranist aīnē bnakut^cean zōrac^cn Yunac^c."

105 Ter Ghewondyan, *Arab Emirates*, 127-35, 141, and above n. 45, for Duin. It is worth nothing here that the Armenian historian Lewond, x, 36, praises the eighth century governor 'Abd al-Azīz for rebuilding "the city of Duin stronger and greater in size than it was before."

roots within the country and could hardly expect to survive the general ebb of Hellenism in the East.¹⁰⁶

106 A similar periodicization is noted by G. A. Tiratsian, "Kantichnym istokam armianskoï rannes-rednevekovoï kul'tury (po arkhelogicheskim dannym)," *Patmabanasirakan Handes* [Historico-Philological Journal] (1983/2-3), 55, who defines the Armenian early medieval period as being enclosed between the end of ancient urban life in the third-fourth centuries A.D. and the beginning of city building in the high middle ages (ninth-tenth centuries), but does not develop this thesis in the article.