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THE DIVISION OF ARMENIA BETWEEN THE ROMANS AND THE PERSIANS AT THE END OF THE FOURTH CENTURY A.D.

The division of Armenia into Roman- and Persian-dominated sectors at the end of the fourth century A.D. has been discussed by a number of scholars. Their primary concern has been to establish the date of the division, the most popular dates canvassed for it being 384, 387 and 389.¹ That no agreement has been reached is due to the nature of the available sources, which fall into two groups, the Greco-Roman writers who offer a chronology for the period but make no mention of Armenian affairs, and the Armenian writers who offer considerable detail on Armenian events for the period but no reliable chronology.² At no point can even a single datum from each of the two groups be correlated with certainty to provide a basis for the linking of other data and the accommodation of the Armenian material to the Greco-Roman chronological framework.

The evidence for the division comes entirely from Armenian sources, whose reliability has been variously estimated.³ The political history in the Greek and Latin sources from 378, when Ammianus Marcellinus ends, to the beginning of the sixth century, when the Persian king Kawad went to war with the Romans, is almost completely silent on Armenia. Although not much weight can be

¹ Most significant discussions up to 1945 are noted by J. Doise, "Le partage de l'Arménie sous Théodose I", *REA* 47 (1945) 274-77; to which add P. Asdourian, *Die politischen Beziehungen zwischen Armenien und Rom von 190 v. Chr. bis 428 n. Chr.* (Diss. Freiburg 1911) 163-68. Chrysos (below at n. 4) is the only significant discussion since 1945. Of great general importance is the paper by R. H. Hewsen, "The Successors of Tiridates the Great: a Contribution to the History of Armenia in the Fourth Century," *Rev. Et. Arm.* 13 (1978-9) 99-126. I owe thanks to Dr. Erich Kettenhofen of the University of Trier who called my attention to Hewsen's paper and to the passage of the *Narratio de rebus Armeniae* cited at n. 47, as well as pointing out some errors and inadequacies in an earlier version of the present paper.

² Syriac and Arabic sources seem to offer nothing relevant.

³ Procopius, *De Aed.* 3, 1 is drawn from an unknown Armenian source and is quite unreliable. The most detailed source is Faustus of Byzantium (tr. V. Langlois in *Historiens anciens et modernes de l'Arménie* I [Paris 1867]), whose reliability for detail (as distinct from numbers and chronology) was asserted by Asdourian, (*op. cit.* [at n. 1] 182f.) and demonstrated for the period that I discuss by N.H. Baynes, "Rome and Armenia in the Fourth Century," *EHR* 25 (1910) 625-43 (= *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays* [London 1955] 186-208). While Hewsen's study radically alters the reconstruction of events in Armenia in the first half of the fourth century, for the second half its effect is more on details, and in general it does not overturn Baynes' attempt to harmonise Faustus and Ammianus. Moses of Khorene (tr. R.W. Thomson, *Moses Khorenats'i, History of the Armenians* [Cambridge, Mass./London 1978]) offers much detail, but is generally unreliable. Lazarus of Pharbe (tr. V. Langlois, *op. cit.* II [Paris 1869]) offers a few details, as does the *Narratio de rebus Armeniae*, ed. G. Garitte in *CSCO, Subsidia* 4 (Louvain 1952).

placed upon this silence, since the sources for the period are parlous, the disappearance of Armenia suggests that it had ceased to be a central issue for the Romans; and this coincides with the generally good relations that existed between the Romans and the Persians at this time. Nevertheless, when Armenia reemerges in the Greek and Latin sources in the sixth century, it is divided into Roman and Persian spheres. Clearly something had happened between 378 and the beginning of the sixth century. The questions are 'what' and 'when'.

Most modern scholars, accepting explicitly or implicitly the primacy of the Greek and Latin texts, have concentrated upon 'when'. More recently Evangelos Chrysos has, however, pointed to evidence in Ammianus Marcellinus which suggests that the division, far from being a fact imposed upon the Armenians by the Romans and the Persians at a particular point in time, was the result of a process that continued over a number of decades (though in his view it did pivot upon a Romano-Persian agreement made in 378).⁴ The failure of the Greek and Latin sources to identify a particular agreement under which Armenia was divided could be taken to lend some support to his view.

While in general I accept Chrysos' approach, which has certainly proven more fruitful than older attempts at the problem, I wish to take issue at two points. First, he underestimates the role that the Armenians themselves played in the division of their country, and, second, he ignores a piece of evidence which suggests a point of contact with the Greek and Latin sources and which, in turn, makes possible an accommodation of the Armenian evidence to a chronology that is different from his own.

The Romano-Persian peace treaty of 363 contained a clause in which, according to Ammianus, the Romans undertook not to help Arsak III, the king of Armenia, against the Persians. Ammianus' version is not a direct reproduction of the clause.⁵ The original was probably left vague,⁶ but at a minimum it abrogated any military alliance between the Roman emperor and the king of Armenia,⁷ which entailed implicitly (though perhaps it did not demand it explicitly) the removal of Roman troops from the country.

⁴ E. Chrysos, 'Some Aspects of Romano-Persian Legal Relations', *Kleronomia* 8 (1976) 32–45. His discussion develops suggestions made earlier by Asdourian, *ant. cit.* (at n. 1) 163ff.

⁵ Amm. Marc. 25, 7, 12: *ne post haec ita composita, Arsaci poscenti, contra Persas ferretur auxilium* is the key phrase. This is separated in the text from other parts of the agreement and is surrounded by the historian's comments on the purpose and results of the clause.

⁶ See R. C. Blockley, "The Romano-Persian Peace Treaties of A.D. 299 and 363," *Florilegium* 6 (1984) 36, where it is also argued (p. 46 n. 55) that Ammianus himself had two different views of the force of the clause. Cf. the different interpretation of Chrysos (*art. cit.* [at n. 4] 36).

⁷ Ammianus (25, 7, 12) seems to suggest that the clause mentioned Arsak by name, but that may be his own gloss. More likely the reference was to the king of Armenia or the Armenians, which appears to have been the usual manner in which monarchies expressed their relations at the period (cf. Pet. Patr. fr. 14: clause of the Romano-Persian treaty of 299 giving the Roman emperor the right to crown the king of Iberia).

Faustus of Byzantium, in his account of the treaty (4,21), says that the Romans agreed that the Persians were free to conquer half of Armenia if they could do so. In Chrysos' view, Faustus' statement reflects not what was in the agreement but what happened afterwards.⁸ I wish to suggest a different interpretation, as follows. The aim of the Persians in Armenia in 363 and after was the suppression of the Arsacid kingship, its replacement by a Persian *marzban* (governor), and the transfer of the allegiance of the *nakharars* (the hereditary territorial princes of Armenia) to the Sasanid crown.⁹ The Persians could realistically expect that, once Arsak III was removed, they would bring the central province, Ayrarat, and the eastern and southern areas under their control.¹⁰ The western parts of the country – highly Christianized, more Greek influenced, and within easier reach of the Roman armies – were another matter. Here the Persians were more ready to concede Rome's legitimate interests, and great strategic advantage. They, therefore, left Sophanene and Ingilene in Roman hands,¹¹ and agreed not to interfere directly in the western part of the country, not only the far west which came later under direct Roman control (Akilisene, Derxene, Khorazene and Karinitis), but perhaps also Bagravand, Basean and Taron.¹² In these regions the intent of the Persians would have been that, with the suppression of the Arsacid kingship, the allegiance of the *nakharars* would be transferred to themselves or the Romans through negotiation rather than compulsion. The position of these regions would then have become similar to that of the Euphratine and Tigrine 'satrapies' of Sophanene, Ingilene, Arzanene, Corduene and the others designated in the treaties of 299 and 363, whose rulers recognized the suzerainty of the Roman or Persian ruler without ceasing to take part in Armenian affairs as hereditary princes of that country.¹³

⁸ *Art. cit.* (at n. 4) 33.

⁹ The hostility of the Sasanid kings of Persia for the Armenian Arsacids was traditional, and on a number of occasions they had tried to replace the Arsacid crown. On the present occasion there is no mention of a replacement king but of governors, Persian (Faust. Byz. 4, 55) or Armenian (Amm. Marc. 27, 12, 5).

¹⁰ Both Ammianus (25, 7, 2) and Faustus (4, 21) indicate that the Persians began their encroachment from Media Atropatene in the south east.

¹¹ According to Petrus Patricius (fr. 14) in the treaty of 299 the Persians had ceded Intilene (=Ingilene) with Sophene, and Arzanene with the Karduenes and Zabdicene. For an interpretation of this clause, arguing that Sophene probably = Greater Sophene = Sophanene, see Blockley, *art. cit.* (at n. 6) 31 ff.

¹² At Amm. Marc. 30, 2, 3 Shapur demands (early 376) that witnesses to the treaty of 363 be present at the current discussions over Armenia and Iberia. This can be taken as an indication that when the treaty was made there were various understandings reached which were not spelled out in the document.

¹³ On the disposition of the 'satrapies' in the treaties of 299 and 363 see Blockley, *loc. cit.* (at n. 6). On the continued involvement of the 'satraps' in the affairs of the Armenian kingdom see K. Güterbock, *Römisch-Armenien und die römischen Satrapien im 4-6 Jhdt.* (Königsberg 1900) 38.

This hypothesis, that the situation in the west of Armenia was left fluid in 363, is supported by evidence in Ammianus, who indicates that when in 371 a Roman force moved to forestall a Persian attack upon Roman territory, it advanced into Bagravand (which was well beyond the Roman frontier even after the later division of Armenia) without fear that it was in breach of the treaty of 363. On this occasion, the view of the Romans was that a breach would only occur when fighting began with the Persians, that is to say, when the Romans began direct military action against the Persians in Armenia.¹⁴

The part of the treaty of 363 which dealt with Armenia soon proved unsatisfactory. After the Persians had captured Arsak (probably in 368) and had overrun the eastern and southern parts of the country, the Romans allowed Arsak's son, Pap, to return to Armenia (in 369), but without royal rank or military support.¹⁵ Later, probably after the news of the death of Arsak in captivity, the Romans, at the request of the nakharars, permitted Pap's elevation to the kingship and sent an army to support him (probably 370).¹⁶ Even after this force had fought with the Persians, the Romans seem to have refused to concede that they had broken the treaty, perhaps basing their position on the view that the Armenian clause had covered help only to Arsak, not to his successor who had been crowned after Arsak's death at the request of the Armenian princes.¹⁷

After the coronation of Pap the Roman and Armenian forces defeated the

¹⁴ Amm. Marc. 29, 1, 1: ... *Sapor ... erupturos in nostra cataphractos et sagittarios et conductam miserat plebem*. (2) *contra has copias Traianus comes et Vadomarius ... perrexere ... hoc observare principis iussu appositi, ut arcerent potius quam lacerarent Persas*. (3) *qui cum venissent Vagabanta ... procursus hostium ... exceperunt inviti, operaque consulta retrocedentes, ne ferro violarent adversorum quemquam primi et iudicaretur discissi foederis rei*. It is now generally accepted that the account in Faust. Byz. 5, 4 is (despite differences) of the same battle, at Bagavand in the principality of Bagravand (cf., e.g., Baynes, *art. cit.* [at n. 3] 639f.). The Roman forces at this point were so far into Armenia that Ammianus' phrase *in nostra* might suggest that they were defending not Roman territory but territory of the Armenian kingdom under (formal or informal) Roman control.

¹⁵ Amm. Marc. 27, 12, 10. Ammianus deals with a number of years' events in Armenia together without providing a clear chronology, so that the dating is unclear (cf. O. Seeck, "Zur Chronologie und Quellenkritik des Ammianus Marcellinus," *Hermes* 41 [1906] 525). My own chronology works back from Amm. Marc. 30, 2, which describes the Romano-Persian negotiations in the period before the Gothic revolt in the Balkans (see n. 23 below); at some points it differs from that of Seeck, being closer to that of Baynes (*art. cit.* at n. 3).

¹⁶ Faust. Byz. 5, 1; Amm. Marc. 27, 12, 13. Faustus conflates the return and the coronation of Pap and has him crowned and sent back to Armenia at the request of the nakharars led by Mouschegh of the Mamikonian family.

¹⁷ There seems to be no doubt that the Romans did not regard themselves as in breach of the treaty. My suggestion for the basis of their view is, however, highly speculative. It is derived from Ammianus' statement (30, 2, 3) that later (375/6) in reply to a proposal by Shapur, Valens declared that *nihil derogare se posse placitis ex consensu firmatis*, a vague enough assertion that could refer only to the partition of Iberia, which was part of the discussion on that occasion.

Persians and regained effective, if precarious, control of the country. However, after the murder of Pap, which probably took place in 375, the Persian king, Shapur II, proposed to the emperor Valens that *deleri . . . penitus Armeniam*. By this he seems to have meant the abolition of the Arsacid kingship and the transference of the nakharars' allegiance to the Persian king or the Roman emperor.¹⁸ The difference between this proposal and the Persian objective that I have suggested in the treaty of 363 is that, whereas in 363 the Persians intended their unilateral abolition of the Arsacid crown and acquisition of most of the country by force if necessary (with the danger of Roman intervention, which happened), they now envisaged the abolition as a co-operative action which would involve themselves and the Romans equally in subsequent developments. What Ammianus does not say, however, is that Shapur proposed the division of Armenia along an agreed border. He probably envisaged the creation of general spheres of influence and a competition for the allegiance of the nakharars, and thus a period of adjustment as the western part of the country moved towards the Romans and the eastern and southern parts came into the Persian orbit.

If this reading of Ammianus is correct, then Shapur was proposing the abolition of Armenia as an independent kingdom but not its destruction as a social and even political entity at the level of the nakharars.¹⁹ This would fit well with the understanding and sensitivity which the feudal Persian rulers showed towards the nakharars, which was far greater than that showed by the emperor of bureaucratic Rome. The Armenian sources themselves suggest that, except in times of religious conflict, the Persians' preferred approach towards the nakharars was to negotiate and persuade, and, only failing that, to coerce. The Roman approach, on the other hand, seems more often to have been command and coercion, and at the level of the king rather than the nakharars.²⁰ Similarly, the achievement of partition by the imposition of a border agreed upon by the two major powers at a particular point in time

¹⁸ Amm. Marc. 30, 2, 2. The MS reading *deleri* can now be regarded as firmly restored, having been supplanted in a number of editions by Wagner's conjecture *deseri* (cf. Chrysos, *art. cit.* [at n. 1] 37f.). However, the interpretation placed upon *deleri* by Chrysos and by Baynes (*art. cit.* [at n. 3] 205) – that Shapur was calling for the division of Armenia – goes too far and reflects back what happened a few years later. We cannot recover the intentions behind *deleri* (beyond the abolition of the crown), and my own suggestion is merely one of a number of objectives that the framer of the proposal could have had in mind. But the distinction between the abolition of the crown and the division of the country is central to the difference between my view and that of Chrysos of the process that led to the division and the nature and point in time of the division itself.

¹⁹ Even after the division of Armenia the nakharars of the two parts continued to communicate (see n. 41 below).

²⁰ This placed the Persians in a far better position than the Romans to exploit the instability and fissures inherent in Armenian feudal society (see C. Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History* (Georgetown 1963) 113ff.). It is notable how many times in the Armenian historians Persian invasion armies are led or guided by renegade nakharars (references in N.G. Garsoïan,

seems to be more a Roman than a Persian conception. And the initiative in 375/6 was Persian.

The emperor Valens rejected Shapur's proposal, declaring that he would break none of the agreements that had been made.²¹ What these agreements were is not clear, though they probably included a commitment by the Romans to defend Varazdat, whom they had created king of Armenia after Pap (Faust. Byz. 5, 34). At any rate, during the period from winter 375/6 to winter 376/7 negotiations continued between the Romans and Persians as relations deteriorated.²² By spring 376 Valens, having perhaps recently settled a revolt by his Arab federates,²³ adopted a more aggressive policy and began to prepare for a confrontation with the Persians in spring 377.²⁴ Victor and Urbicius were sent as envoys to Shapur bearing an ultimatum that he should respect Armenian independence or face war, which the Persian king apparently rejected. The Roman envoys, either while they were on their way to Persia or while in Persia, were offered and accepted for Rome some small territories in Armenia. After their return, Shapur sent the Surena as envoy to Valens offering these same territories (late 376/early 377). This Persian offer, which clearly sought ratification of the acceptance of the first offer, was rebuffed (Amm. Marc. 30, 2, 7–8).

The identity of these territories and the source of the offer are important to the interpretation of the nature of the Persian proposal to 'abolish Armenia completely.' Although the Latin describing the first offer is unclear (30, 2, 5: *legatio . . . oblatas sibi regiones in eadem Armenia suscepit exiguas*), the most likely view is that the offer was made by Armenians and not by the Persians.²⁵

"Armenia in the Fourth Century. An Attempt to Redefine the Concepts 'Armenia' and 'Loyalty,'" *Rev. Et. Arm.* n. s. 8 [1971] 348 n. 25).

²¹ See n. 17 above with the caution entered there.

²² These negotiations are detailed by Ammianus (30, 2, 2–6). The chronology appears to be as follows: late 375, embassy of Arsaces to Valens bringing the proposal *deleri . . . penitus Armeniam*; reply of Valens, presumably carried back by Arraces; late winter 376, second Persian embassy with letter from Shapur demanding the participation in the discussions of those present at the peace of 363; spring/summer 376, embassy of Victor and Urbicius to Shapur; late 376/early 377, embassy of the Surena to Valens.

²³ On the Arab revolt and its settlement see I. Shahîd, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century* (Washington 1984) 142–52. Shahîd would date the settlement with the Arabs to just before 378, but his own argument (*ibid.* 158–64) that Victor played a major role in making peace suggests that the Arab war must have ended before Victor was freed for an embassy to Persia, i.e. before spring/summer 376 by my chronology of the negotiations.

²⁴ Amm. Marc. 30, 2, 4. That this involved an improvement in the Roman position and Valens moving to the initiative is clear from Ammianus' words *ingravescente post haec altius cura, imperator eligere consilia quam invenire sufficiens*, which I translate as, "afterwards the emperor gave greater attention to the matter [i.e. Persian affairs], being now in a position to select his plans rather than respond" (*cura* in Ammianus almost always means "attention" rather than "cares" or "troubles", as Rolfe and others suggest).

²⁵ The ambiguity, of course, lies in *sibi*. That the Armenians made the first offer is the usual and

Chrysos, while holding that Armenians made the first offer, places emphasis on the second offer made through the Surena and sees that as a Persian attempt to persuade the Romans to agree to the division of Armenia which Shapur had proposed in 375/6.²⁶ His view, of course, depends on the assumption that *deleri* entailed division, and it also causes the difficulty, which he himself recognizes,²⁷ that *exiguas* must indicate a substantial tract of land. If my own view of the proposal of 375/6 is correct, then the Persian intention on the present occasion was, by having the Romans accept the transfer of allegiance made by Armenians not under Persian control, to initiate the process of dismembering Armenia through by-passing the Armenian king and establishing the precedent of voluntary allegiance by the nakharars to one of the two major powers.

Valens' rejection of this proposal led to a preemptive Persian attack on the territories that had offered allegiance to the Romans. The Romans were prevented from responding to the attack by the news that the Goths had revolted in Thrace (Amm. Marc. 30, 2, 8). The seriousness of the situation in the Balkans was such that Valens immediately transferred the Roman troops in Armenia to Thrace and sent Victor as envoy to Shapur to settle the Armenian situation as best he could under the circumstances (Amm. Marc. 31, 7, 1-2: *ut super Armeniae statu pro captu rerum componeret impendentium*). The embassy must have been sent in winter/spring 377, yet Valens does not seem to have reached Constantinople until spring 378 at the earliest.²⁸ This suggests that the negotiations over Armenia were protracted.

Faustus of Byzantium (5, 37-38) provides the answer. As soon as the Roman forces had left Armenia, Manuel, the head of one of the most powerful of the nakharar families, the Mamikonians, revolted from Varazdat, drove him from the country, and, acting through Zarmandukht, the widow of Pap, offered Shapur the allegiance of Armenia. The Persian king, delighted to accept the offer, appointed the Surena as marzban and sent him with an army to secure the country.²⁹ Shapur now had no incentive to reach a quick settlement with

most reasonable view, since, if the envoys had accepted a Persian first offer, they would have been acting completely against their instructions, which were to demand that Shapur respect Armenian independence.

²⁶ Chrysos, *art. cit.* (at n. 4) 38f. He rightly rejects Baynes' identification (*art. cit.* [at n. 3] 205) of these areas with the garrison points throughout Armenia which Faustus of Byzantia (5, 34) says Varazdat (or his general Manuel) offered directly to Valens.

²⁷ *Art. cit.* 40.

²⁸ Amm. Marc. 31, 1, 1. Ammianus' expression, *Valens tandem exitus Antiochia*, which probably reflects anxiety and impatience at Constantinople (cf. Soz. *HE* 6, 39), also suggests a long delay at Antioch.

²⁹ Chrysos, *loc. cit.* (at n. 4), places the Persian takeover of Armenia before Manuel's ejection of Varazdat, with the result that he can make the Persian position in the country the basis of their offer of the Armenian regions to the Romans. But Faustus (5, 37 *ad fin.*) makes it very clear that

the Romans since, with the alliance of the Mamikonians, who were powerful in the south-western principality of Taron, he could expect to win control of all Armenia. Unfortunately for Shapur's purposes the alliance with Manuel was shortlived, the victim of intrigues amongst the nakharars and (probably) the suspicions of the staunchly Christian Manuel for the Zoroastrian Persians. At all events, Manuel revolted and destroyed the Persian army and its commander. With the revolt of Manuel, who seems to have carried most of Armenia with him, it was now in the interest of the Persian king to settle with Valens, who had not been panicked into a precipitate march to Thrace but had remained at Antioch and was thus in a position to bring aid to the Armenians. Chrysos thinks that at this juncture the Romans and the Persians agreed to divide the country.³⁰ If one believes Faustus, however, neither the Persians nor the Romans were in a position to do this since, according to him (5, 39–43), the Armenians, under Manuel's leadership, asserted their independence from the Persians and defended it for seven years. In my view, after the revolt of Manuel, the Persians, whose position had deteriorated but (since the Romans were not in the country) was not as bad as in 375/6 when Shapur had made his proposal to abolish the monarchy, sought a revival of the agreement of 363: that the Romans would not intervene militarily on the undertaking that the Persians would not penetrate into the western part of Armenia.

During this period of Armenian independence, Manuel crowned as king Arsak IV whom he married to his own daughter. Towards the end of his life Manuel appears to have been moving back to relations with the Romans; indeed, Faustus (5, 44) appears to indicate that before his death he placed Arsak under Roman protection. After Manuel's death, however, many of the nakharars revolted from Arsak and applied to the Persian king for another ruler (Faust. Byz. 6, 1). The Persian king appointed another Arsacid, Khosro III, and the Persian forces supporting Khosro gained control of the central province, Ayrarat, while Arsak withdrew to the western region of Akilisene to await Roman assistance. Instead of fighting, however, the Romans and the Persians negotiated a division of the country between the two kings, the

Manuel invited in the Persians as a protection against the Romans (who appear to have had no forces in the country at the time) after he had ejected Varazdat. Thus, it seems certain that the usual view is correct (which receives some additional support from Moses of Khorene [3, 40] who says that Varazdat ruled for four years after Pap's death), that Manuel ejected Varazdat and summoned the Persians after the removal of the Roman troops in early 377 and, therefore, after the Persian offer of the Armenian regions.

³⁰ *Loc. cit.* Ammianus (31, 7, 1) says that Victor was sent to make an agreement *super Armeniae statu pro captu rerum*, but he does not actually say that an agreement was made. That one was made is asserted only by the unreliable Eunapius (fr. 42 lines 78f., ed. Blockley) and Zosimus (4, 21). Thus, it is quite possible that after the revolt of Manuel from the Persians, Valens decided to allow the situation in Armenia to drift and no agreement was made. This course might have been especially attractive to Valens if he had heard of the death of Shapur, which occurred in 378 or 379.

Roman-supported Arsak in the west and the Persian nominee, Khosro, in the east.³¹

If one places any credence at all in Faustus – and there is no good reason not to –, then his account of the events after the death of Pap sets the death of Manuel around 385 and the division of Armenia shortly thereafter. The Greek and Latin sources mention six embassies which could be and have been connected with the division: Persian embassies to Theodosius I in 384, 387 and 389; an embassy (or embassies) from Theodosius to *gentes* in the east in 385; and two undated embassies by Stilicho and Sporacius from Theodosius to the Persians.³²

The Persian embassies to Theodosius in 384 and 389 probably announced the accessions of the Persian kings Shapur III and Varahram IV; the claims in the sources that the Persians begged for and received peace probably mean nothing more than that they asked for the reconfirmation of existing treaties with the new ruler.³³ The embassy, or embassies, to the *gentes* in 385 may have included one which made an agreement with Arsak IV, but the phraseology of the sources makes it unlikely that a major peace embassy to the Persians is intended.³⁴ The embassy of Stilicho, made when he was *vix primaeuus* and before he married Serena, can be assigned to no particular date nor associated with any particular event; and though Claudian says that Stilicho made peace, that may well be an inflated evaluation of a minor embassy of congratulations acknowledging the accession of Shapur III.³⁵ The embassy of Sporacius can

³¹ Lazarus of Pharbe (5) places the division of Armenia before the appointment of Khosro III and the flight of Arsak to the west. Faustus' version is, in my view, far more likely, though that of Lazarus, which apparently has Arsak initially ruling over both parts of the country after the division, suggests even more strongly than Faustus that no clear cleavage between the two parts was created at the time.

³² The firm sources for these embassies are: Persians to Theodosius, 384 – Marcell. *Chron. a.* 384; Hydat. *Chron. a.* 384; *Chron. Const. a.* 384; *Chron. Pasch.* p. 563 (Bonn ed.); Oros. *Adv. Pag.* 7, 34, 8; Socr. *HE* 5, 12. Persians to Theodosius, 387 – Liban. *Orr.* 19, 62; 20, 47. Persians to Theodosius, 389 – Pacat. *Pan. Theod.* 22, 5; Claud. *VI Cos. Hon.* 69–72. Theodosius to *gentes* – Marcell. *Chron. a.* 385; Pacat. *Pan. Theod.* 32, 2. Stilicho to the Persians – Claud. *Cos. Stil.* 1, 51–68. Sporacius to the Persians – Lydus, *De Mag.* 3, 53. References to Persian embassies in *Epit. de Caes.* 48, 5; Jordan. *Rom.* 316; Them. *Or.* 19, 227 C; and Claud. *Epith. de Nupt. Hon.* 224f. could refer to any of the Persian embassies.

³³ So Güterbock, *op. cit.* (at n. 13) 11 (embassy of 384) and 17f. (embassy of 389).

³⁴ The phrases *aliquantas nationes . . . subdidit* (Marcellinus) and *regum quibus limes Orientis ambitur* (Pacatus) hardly seem appropriate of the Persians and their king. Perhaps connected with this diplomatic activity is the statement of Orosius (*Adv. Pag.* 7, 34, 9), *Theodosius in Oriente subactis barbarorum gentibus Thracias tandem ab hoste liberas reddidit*, which follows immediately after his notice of the Persian embassy of 384.

³⁵ The chronology of Stilicho's early career is unclear. The embassy which Claudian (*loc. cit.* at n. 32) says he undertook to the Persians (and on which he made 'peace') occurred when he was *vix primaeuus* and before his marriage to Serena. Since Claudian, *Laus Serenae* 184ff., has been taken to indicate that Stilicho held his first comital post (*com. stabuli*) immediately after the marriage, it

also not be placed; but it cannot be the one that made peace with the Persians, since the one clear thing that John Lydus, the source for it, tells us is that it failed.³⁶

This leaves the Persian embassy which, Libanius tells us, was at Antioch in 387, the year of the Riot of the Statues. In his apology for the conduct of the Antiochenes on that occasion the orator says not only that an embassy was present but that there was the possibility of war and that the embassy was thankful to run off home with the security of peace. Libanius' two speeches on the Riot of 387 were perhaps composed some time afterwards;³⁷ nevertheless there is no doubt that the events which they mention took place. The sequence of events – expectation of hostilities, embassy, peace – fits well with the circumstances in Faustus and includes the only indication in the Greek and Latin sources of potential Romano-Persian hostilities during the reign of Theodosius I. This correlation, and thus the date 387, gains some further support from the Armenian historian Lazarus of Pharbe (5), who says that the division took place in the reign of Shapur III (A.D.383-88).³⁸

If a division of Armenia was agreed upon in 387, what form did it take? Here, I think, Chrysos is correct in his view that the Romans and the Persians did not sit down and draw a line which was henceforth to mark the boundary between Roman and Persian Armenia. Faustus' account (6, 1) makes it clear that, whatever had been agreed upon in 363 and 377/8, the division in the reign of Theodosius I resulted from the initiative of some of the *nakharars* in seeking a second king from the Persians which, in creating a split kingship, reflected the divided loyalties of the *nakharars* themselves. It also offered the Persian

is usually assumed that the embassy was undertaken before his promotion to *comes domesticorum* (dated to 385 on the basis of Zos. 5, 34, 6, in this place using the reliable Olympiodorus) and probably in response to the Persian 'peace initiative' of 384 (e.g. by Doise, *art. cit.* [at n. 1] 274f.). Against this view, which holds that Stilicho did make peace (and divide Armenia) in 384, Chrysos (*art. cit.* [at n.4] 41f.) has pointed out that the ceremony described by Claudian does not look like one that sealed peace over Armenia. Perhaps one should not be so categorical about what was probably an imaginative fiction by the poet. But more to the point, it would have been a dire insult to the king of Persia to send as the head of a major peace embassy a junior officer, *vix primaevus*, who was not yet connected to the imperial house. The most that the young Stilicho could have been entrusted with (if he really were the head of the embassy) was a minor ceremonial mission. Any conclusions beyond this are merely unfounded speculations.

³⁶ Lydus, *loc. cit.* (at n. 32): ἐγγὺς ἔπειθε Πέρσαις. On the confused nature of Lydus' account see R. C. Blockley, "Subsidies and Diplomacy: Rome and Persia in Late Antiquity," *Phoenix* 39 (1985) 63-66.

³⁷ P. Petit, "Recherches sur la publication et la diffusion des discours de Libanius," *Historia* 5 (1956) 493ff.

³⁸ Moses of Khorene (3, 42) puts the division of Armenia (and Mesopotamia) at the beginning of Arcadius' reign. If this notice has any value at all, it probably refers to a reconfirmation of existing treaties in 395 when Arcadius became sole ruler of the eastern part of the Roman empire (cf. Chrysos, *art. cit.* [at n. 4] 44f., who points out that the treaty of 363 was for thirty years and had expired shortly before).

king an acceptable alternative to the suppression of the Arsacid crown.³⁹ In consequence, the Romans and the Persians were able to agree that, instead of fighting yet again over Armenia, the two kings would be permitted to remain, Arsak IV based on Akilisene in the west and owing allegiance to the Roman emperor, and Khosro III ruling the east and south from his base in Ayarat and owing allegiance to the Persian king. Yet since the most powerful nakharars, by whose initiative the split kingship had been created, possessed estates and interests that were spread throughout the country, the Romans and the Persians, if they wished to work through them, could not create a closed boundary. In 387, therefore, the two sides probably agreed that the current locations of the two kings should serve as the basis for the Roman and Persian spheres, an arrangement like that envisaged by the Persians in 375/6 (with the exception of the splitting rather than the abolition of the Arsacid kingship). This arrangement, reflecting the strategic as well as the geographical positions of the two sides, gave a considerable advantage to Khosro, who controlled the richer, most urbanized and central province of Ayarat, which was also the traditional locus of the Arsacid kings. But it also met Rome's strategic interests and enabled the nakharars to maintain their interests in the various parts of the country, which they apparently continued to do.⁴⁰

The corollary of this interpretation of the agreement is that a large area between the two spheres, namely Basean, Bagravand and probably Taron, was left of indeterminate status with the understanding that the interests there would gradually align with one of the two powers. The single piece of evidence that supports both this corollary and the underlying contention that the division of 387 did not create a fixed border corresponding to the one later described by Procopius (*De Aed.* 3, 1-2) is a law of Theodosius II and Honorius issued in 408 or 409 (*CJ* 4, 63, 4), in which Artaxata, the old Armenian capital in Ayarat, was recognized as the sole port of trade between the Romans and the Persians in the area.⁴¹ Had a Roman-Persian border existed at that time just to the east of Karinitis, where Procopius puts it, the port of trade would not have been at Artaxata, so far into Persian-controlled territory. Even much later, when the Romans had created a fixed border, there

³⁹ Shortly after Manuel's ejection of Varazdat in 377/8, the Persian king (probably still Shapur II) had signalled his backing away from the policy of suppression of the Arsacid kingship by sending crowns for the young Arsacid princes Arsak and Valarsak (*Faust. Byz.* 5, 38).

⁴⁰ R. Grousset, *Histoire de l'Arménie des origines à 1071* (Paris 1947) 168-70, 177-79. The intercommunication of the leaders of the two sectors both amongst themselves and with the Roman and Persian worlds is well illustrated by the movements and activities of Mesrop and by the manoeuvres over the Armenian catholicos Sahak (Lazarus of Pharbe 9-11 and 16; Moses of Khorene 3, 52-54; 56-58; 60; 65). Cf. also the (probably fictitious) letter of the presiding prince, Gazavon, to Khosro III after the death of Arsak IV in Moses of Khorene 3, 47.

⁴¹ The other ports named, Nisibis and Callinicum, were on the borders and channeled trade between the Romans and the Persians and the Romans and the Arabs respectively.

is Armenian evidence that Persian control in Taron remained weak;⁴² and as late as 576, when the Persian king Khosro I passed through Bagravand and Taron on his way to attack the Roman border fortress of Theodosiopolis in Karinitis, the peasantry of those regions (unlike that of the more inner region of Artaz) regarded the Persian king as an enemy and fled.⁴³

How the border that Procopius describes in the sixth century emerged, is not clear. But the Roman desire for closer control of their sphere, which would tend towards delimitation, becomes obvious after the death of Arsak, which took place soon after the division of 387. No successor was appointed, and the Arsacid monarch was replaced by a native *comes Armeniae*, who acted as a sort of 'presiding prince' over the nakharars. This action, while not leading to the absorption of the Roman sphere into the imperial provincial system, did move the status of the area closer to that of the 'satrapies' that had been recognized as Roman since 299.⁴⁴ It would probably have also alienated the Mamikonians, who, while staunchly Christian, were generally monarchists and embraced the Roman empire as a poor alternative to independence.⁴⁵

The event that perhaps both marked the decision by the Romans to create a border and provided the conditions for its creation was the building of the fortress of Theodosiopolis in Karinitis at the orders of Theodosius II. This might have been done at the beginning of the 420s in response to the deterioration of Romano-Persian relations at the very end of the reign of Yezdegerd I (d. 421) and the war at the beginning of the reign of his successor, Varahram V; at the latest Theodosiopolis seems to have been built by the 430s. The fortress was intended to serve as a border strongpoint for the supply and mustering of Roman and Armenian forces, similar to the Mesopotamian strongpoints further south.⁴⁶ That the building of the fortress was associated at least in the minds of some with a dividing of Armenia is shown by the *Narratio*

⁴² The history of Taron by John Mamikonian (in Langlois [at n. 3]), admittedly a partisan work, details Persian attempts to control the region during the sixth century.

⁴³ Men. Prot. fr. 18, 6 (ed. Blockley p. 166). Certainly, this occurred at a time of Armenian rebellion against the Persians, but Menander suggests that the unrest was stronger in the western parts of the country. A much earlier example is offered by Moses of Khorene (3, 67), who says that when the catholicos Sahak fell ill at the beginning of the reign of Yezdegerd II he was taken to the village of Blur in Bagravand where he would be safe from the Persians.

⁴⁴ The best treatment is still Güterbock *op. cit.* (at n. 13) 18ff. The Roman sphere (*Armenia magna*) was not absorbed into the provincial structure until the reign of Justinian, but the *comes Armeniae* who replaced the king was more closely aligned with Roman officialdom than the king had been.

⁴⁵ Much of Faustus' History is an exposition of the loyalty of the Mamikonians towards the (often ungrateful) Arsacid kings.

⁴⁶ The most detailed (and partly fictitious) account of the fortification of Theodosiopolis is in Moses of Khorene (3, 58-59). While Procopius (*De Aed.* 3, 5, 2) confirms that it was built during the reign of Theodosius II, the date is not secure. Grousset, *op. cit.* (at n. 40) 181f., opts for 421-3, while *PLRE* II 'Anatolius' 10 says "some time in the mid 430s."

de rebus Armeniae which places its construction during the reign of Theodosius I at the time of the division (by which, of course, the writer means – wrongly, according to my argument – the agreement of division in 387).⁴⁷ At about the same time that Theodosiopolis was fortified the Persians, returning to their former objective, removed the last Arsacid ruler of eastern Armenia and replaced him by a marzban, thus making their sector into a province.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, even after these developments traffic between the two sectors did not cease, and as late as Justinian's reign a part of the border at least remained open.⁴⁹

If the above reading of the sources is correct, the final partition of Armenia was the result of a process that was initiated by the treaty of 363 and was not completed until the 420s or 430s (and even then only in a somewhat limited political sense). The division into spheres in 387 and the subsequent abolition of the Arsacid crown represented the achievement of a policy formulated by Shapur II in 363 and possibly long before. Once the Roman and Persian spheres of influence and control had been established, the Roman military and bureaucratic mind moved (as ever) towards closer control of their sector, which in turn pointed to its geographical delimitation by a border. The Persians, in contrast, more familiar with the characteristics of the nakharars and willing to work through them where possible, were less concerned to establish a border than to create a complex of allegiances involving the nakharars and zones of influence centred upon the cities of Ayrarat. This ultimately enabled them to expand their initially advantageous position in Ayrarat into control of four-fifths of the country,⁵⁰ much of which they held, however, far less securely than the smaller portion taken by the Romans.

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⁴⁷ *Art. cit.* (at n. 3) 4-9. Since Procopius (*De Aed.* 3, 5, 13) has Theodosius II as the emperor who divided Armenia with the Persians, this may not merely reflect the common confusion in the sources between the two Theodosii but also a recognition that some sort of dividing action took place under Theodosius II.

⁴⁸ The last Arsacid king, Ardashir IV, was dethroned in 428 (Asdourian, *art. cit.* [at n. 1] 168f.). A Sasanian prince, Shapur, had ruled the country from 415 to 421, but, if Moses of Khorene (3, 55) is to be believed (cf. Lazarus of Pharbe 12), nakharar hostility towards him was considerable.

⁴⁹ Procopius, *De Aed.* 3, 3, 9-12, says that in Khorzane (=Khorazene) there was no closed border until Justinian, so that the inhabitants of the region, both Roman and Persian subjects, used to mingle freely and even intermarry.

⁵⁰ The figure is from Procopius, *De Aed.* 3, 1, 9. Faustus (6, 1) merely says that Khosro received a larger share than Arsak.