receiving his investiture from the Greek Herakles as well as the Iranian Mithra; and in the north at the excavations near Tbilisi, where purely classical silver vases lay in graves side by side with the Iranian horse bowls of the Mithraic cult, and the epitaph of the young wife of a local magnate was written in both Greek and Aramaic.

The new Greek elements unquestionably enriched the culture of the Armenian highlands, and Armenia prospered in the Hellenistic period as it became a part of the wider Mediterranean world. Hellenization presented no direct threat in the early Artašēsid period, and the combination of Iranian and Greek traditions helped to produce an increasingly complex and sophisticated Armenian civilization. Nevertheless, from this time on the Armenians would never find themselves again inside a united homogeneous world. As Armenia slowly proceeded in the last centuries preceding the Christian era to the status of a "buffer state," the opposing cultural and more ominously political pressures of the Mediterranean and Oriental worlds eventually increased, threatening at times its unity and its identity.

Armenia under Tigran the Great (95–55 B.C.)

The threat of foreign domination was still distant from Armenia in the second and first centuries B.C. and the temporary absence of external pressures favored the rise of local ambitions. The Seleucids, increasingly embroiled in family quarrels, were in no position to assert their authority outside their diminishing realm. The renaissance of Iran under the new Parthian dynasty of the Arsacids was still being consolidated. Rome had not yet fully committed itself to the tumultuous struggle for power in the Near East into which it was being reluctantly drawn, though its antagonism to the Seleucids could already help local rulers, such as Artašēs and Zareh, to free themselves from the suzerainty of King Antiochos III. The growing resentment of the Oriental population toward their western conquerors, which was soon to explode in the general massacre of Romans in the East in 88 B.C., could be exploited. Conditions were ripe for a bid for power in Armenia.

Not much is known concerning the period between the reign of Artašēs I and the accession of Tigran II in Armenia. The contradictory genealogies of narrative accounts have been clarified by the numismatic evidence, so that it is now clear that Artašēs I was succeeded by two of his sons: Artawazd (Artavazd) I, followed by Tigran I, the father of the

5. THE EMPIRE OF TIGRAN THE GREAT, FIRST CENTURY B.C.

future Tigran II the Great. Artawazd I was defeated in the first Parthian attack on Armenia at the end of the reign of the Arsacid king Mithradates I (128-88 B.C.) and forced to surrender his nephew as a hostage, but nothing is known of the reign of Tigran I beyond a few copper coins that have now been attributed to him and support the claim of the Roman historian Appian ("The Syrian Wars," viii, 48, p. 196/7) that Tigran the Great and the king his father had borne the same name. Sources are plentiful, on the contrary, for the reign of Tigran II in which the Artašēsid dynasty reached its zenith, but our knowledge of it derives almost exclusively from Roman writers invariably hostile to a ruler who had posed a major threat to Roman power in the East. They often present a distorted image requiring rectification, and they are only partly complemented by Tigran's extensive coinage and the imperfect memories preserved in Armenian accounts composed many centuries later.

To obtain his release at his father's death in 95 B.C. Tigran II was compelled to return to Parthia "seventy valleys" (Strabo, XI, xiv, 15, p. 338/9), probably those conquered by Artašēs I in the direction of Azerbaijan, but immediately upon his accession he returned to Artašēs' expansionist policy. His first move was to absorb the neighboring kingdom of Sophēnē, which his grandfather had failed to conquer, thus consolidating most of the Eruandid lands under his power. So far, Artašēsid policy had attracted little attention from the West, but Tigran's next move brought him into conflict with Roman interests. The marriage alliance concluded by him with his northwestern neighbor, King Mithradates VI of Pontus, whose kingdom included the lands of Armenia Minor, led Tigran to support his father-in-law's attempt to annex the adjacent Kingdom of Cappadocia. Provoked by this attack on one of its clients, the Roman Senate sent the general Sulla to drive Mithradates' young son from Cappadocia and to conclude in 92 B.C. an agreement with King Mithradates II of Parthia that first set the Euphrates River as the boundary between the Roman and Iranian worlds.

Armenia's first encounter with the Romans was inconclusive. The Pontic candidate was soon replaced on the Cappadocian throne, but for some two decades thereafter Tigran did not participate in the bitter conflict opposing Pontus to the Roman state, although he may have renewed his treaty of alliance with Mithradates VI. His attention was focused on the more threatening Parthian Empire to the east of Armenia. Making the most of Parthia's temporary weakness at the death of Mithradates II and of the distracting attacks of Central Asiatic nomads on its eastern border, Tigran began the reconquest of the territories ceded

at his accession. A series of campaigns between 88 and 85 B.C. carried the Armenian armies to the gates of the Arsacid summer residence at Hamadan in Media, extending the Artašēsid Empire over the principalities of Atropatēnē, Gordiēnē, Adiabēnē, Osrhoēnē, and Mygdonia in modern Iranian Azerbaijan and Mesopotamia, in a series of victories that justified Tigran's assumption of the Achaemenid title of King of Kings, which appears on his coins after 85 B.C.

If Tigran's Parthian campaigns were in part a retaliation for the earlier humiliation of Armenia by the Arsacids, his southern conquests were not altogether his own initiative. Weary of the anarchy caused by the constant quarrels of the Seleucids, a Syrian party offered to crown the new conqueror of the East. Turning southward, Tigran annexed Kommagēnē, the Cilician plain, northern Syria, and coastal Phoenicia, and perhaps imposed his overlordship on the Kingdom of Judea, although these campaigns probably proved more difficult than some sources imply. In 84-83 he apparently occupied the Syrian capital of Antioch, as is evidenced by the silver tetradrachms bearing the king's portrait on one side and on the other the fortune of the city represented by a woman wearing a turreted crown and holding the palm of victory. Even hostile Roman authors admit that Syria enjoyed thirteen years of peace under Tigran's rule. His empire now stretched from the Mediterranean to the Caspian Sea.

The Roman republic, occupied by the continued war with Mithradates of Pontus (Appian, "The Mithridatic Wars") and troubled by internal party strife, did not interfere with Tigran's conquests directed against the Parthians and the Seleucids. The Armenian King of Kings was consequently left free to organize his multinational and multicultural empire. No uniform pattern seems to have been imposed on the new territories, all of which paid tribute and supplied military contingents. The Greek cities kept their institutions and some even struck their own coinage. Four vassal kings were in perpetual attendance on Tigran's person, if Plutarch ("Lucullus," XXL, 5, p. 536/7) is to be believed, but as a rule the conquered territories merely acknowledged his suzerainty and preserved their internal autonomy with a few exceptions. Tigran's brother was installed in the important city of Nisibis, which controlled the East–West trade route through Mesopotamia. Nomadic Arabs were resettled in the area to assist in the transport of goods over the Euphrates. In general, massive shifts of population are characteristic of this reign, and a persistent Armenian tradition attributes the settlement of a Jewish population in the cities of Greater Armenia to the policy of Tigran the

Great. A general named Magdates or more correctly Bagdates ruled over the Syrian territories. The figures given by ancient writers for the Armenian armies are unquestionably inflated, but they indicate a powerful war machine largely composed of heavily armored cavalry and experienced in siege warfare.

Since the old Artašēsid capital of Artašat on the Araxes was too remote for the government of the extended empire, Tigran II chose a location far to the south in the early seventies for the new capital to which he gave his name. The site of Tigranakert/Tigranocerta continues to be disputed, since it cannot yet be confirmed by archaeological evidence. We learn from Appian ("The Mithridatic Wars," XII. 84, pp. 398/9) that the city was surrounded by (turreted?) walls fifty cubits (22 meters) high, the base of which was filled with stables and contained a citadel. A palace with "large parks, hunting grounds and lakes," as well as "a strong fortress" were erected nearby and the city also contained a theater. To fill this new capital Tigran forcibly removed the population from the cities of Mesopotamia, Cilicia, and particularly Cappadocia, which he had invaded again in 78 B.C. Strabo and Appian probably exaggerate grossly when they speak of the population of twelve destroyed Greek cities or of the 300,000 Greeks moved from Mazaka (later Caesarea/Kayseri) in Cappadocia (Strabo, XI. xiv, 15; XII. ii, 9; vol. V, pp. 338/9, 366/7. Appian, "The Mithridatic Wars," X. 67, pp. 364/5), but Appian insists that the city was "founded on an ambitious scale" and Plutarch adds that "the city was also full of wealth . . . since every private person and every prince vied with the King in contributing to its increase and adornment" (Plutarch, "Lucullus," xxvi, 2, pp. 552/3). The wealth and power of Tigran, increased by his control of the great cities of Syria and Phoenicia and of the transit trade through Mesopotamia, had become legendary by the days of Movsēs Xorenac'i:

> Who among true men and those who appreciate deeds of valor and prudence would not be stirred by his memory and aspire to become such a man? He was supreme among men and by showing his valor he glorified our nation. Those who had been under a yoke he put in a position to subject and demand tribute from many. He multiplied the stores of gold and silver and precious stones, of garments and brocades of various colors, both for men and women, with the help of which the ugly appeared as wonderful as the handsome, and the handsome were altogether deified at the time . . . The bringer of peace

> and prosperity, he fattened everyone with oil and honey . . . over all alike he spread the mantle of his care. (Movses Khorenats'i, I. 24, pp. 113-14)

This is again an undoubted exaggeration, nevertheless, even Plutarch admitted ("Lucullus," xxi, 2, pp. 536/7), albeit ungraciously, that "the King . . . had become pompous and haughty in the midst of his great prosperity," and the almost contemporary Roman historian Velleius Paterculus (II. xxxiii, 1, pp. 120/1) conceded that Tigran II was the "greatest of Kings."

Armenia's increased contact with the more Hellenized regions of Syria and Pontus as a result of Tigran's conquests and alliances also bore fruit. The Armenian court was profoundly Hellenized under the influence of its queen, Cleopatra of Pontus, and Greek rhetoricians and philosophers were welcomed as guests and advisors of the royal family. A troupe of Greek actors was summoned to inaugurate the theater built at Tigranakert (Plutarch, "Lucullus," xxix, 4, pp. 566/7). Greek was probably the language of the court, since Tigran's son and heir Artawazd II wrote, in Greek, tragedies, orations, and historical works, some of which were still known in the second century A.D., and Euripides' famous play *The Bacchae*, was performed at his sister's wedding to the Parthian heir (Plutarch, "Crassus," xxxiii, pp. 420/1, 422/3).

The brilliance of this Hellenic culture should not blind us, however, to the survival of the Iranian tradition that helped preserve Armenia from the total assimilation of Cappadocia or Pontus. Both Tigran's title of King of Kings and the pearl tiara with the star of divinity in which he is invariably represented on his coins belong to the Persian world. It is not certain whether the four kings attending Tigran at all times were the ancestors of the great marcher lords, the *bdešxs* (*bdeshkhs*), so familiar to the fifth century A.D. Armenian authors, but the court ceremonial was Iranian and the presence of a vassal nobility is an element alien to the Classical world. The pleasure gardens and the hunting preserves laid out at Tigranakert (Appian, "The Mithridatic Wars," xii, 67, pp. 398/9) are precisely the "paradises" (Armenian *partēz*) enjoyed by the Arsacid nobility in Iran and subsequently recorded repeatedly in Armenia. We know little of the structure of the country outside the court, but the familiarity of the Roman author of the first century A.D., Pliny the Elder (*Natural History*, VI. x, 27; vol. II, pp. 356/7), with the "120 strategies" composing Armenia one century later suggests that the social pattern of great autonomous families each controlling its own lands, so character-

istic of medieval Armenia and the Parthian realm but unknown to the Roman system, was already developing in Tigranid Armenia. Thus, the philhellenism of the Armenian court does not seem to have set deep roots, nor did it impress the Romans, who invariably viewed Tigran with hostility as a haughty and arrogant Oriental monarch.

The peace imposed by Tigran II did not prove long-lasting, as the imperialist party in the Roman Senate decided to put an end to the drain of the Mithridatic wars and impose its own solution on the East. Tigran delayed the opening of hostilities to the maximum, but late in 71 B.C. Appius Claudius, the legate of the Roman general Lucullus, brought an ultimatum to Antioch. Insolently addressing Tigran as "King" rather than by his official title of King of Kings, Appius Claudius demanded the surrender of the defeated King Mithradates VI of Pontus, who had taken refuge in Armenia. War followed soon upon Tigran's refusal to surrender his father-in-law (Plutarch, "Lucullus," xxi, pp. 534/5, 538/9). In the spring of 69 B.C. Lucullus, who had succeeded in winning over some of Tigran's vassals, suddenly crossed the Euphrates near Melitēnē and marched across Sophēnē directly on Tigranakert. Unprepared to meet this unexpected attack, Tigran withdrew from the capital to join forces with Mithradates and summon his vassals, most of whom seem to have still obeyed. An attempt to raise the siege of the capital succeeded in rescuing the king's treasure and his harem, but the main Armenian army was severely defeated by the Romans near the city. Betrayed by its Greek garrison, Tigranakert finally fell to the besiegers. The enormous booty found in the still unfinished ten-year-old city, even after the removal of the royal treasury, amazed its conquerors, according to Plutarch (Plutarch, "Lucullus," XXX, 2-4, pp. 566/7; Strabo XI, xiv, 15; vol. V. pp. 338/9); Appian, "The Mithridatic Wars," XII pp. 402-3), and provides an additional index of the wealth of Armenia in this period.

The fall of Tigranakert marked the end of Tigran's control of Kommagēnē, Syria, and Mesopotamia, except for Nisibis, as his vassals turned their allegiance to Rome. Even so, the core of the Armenian kingdom was still untouched. Supported by Mithradates and his own son-in-law, the king of Atropatēnē, Tigran harried the Romans while Lucullus struggled to make his way northward to the old capital of Artašat. Sapped by the absence of supplies along the way and delayed by Armenian guerrilla activity, the Romans reached the plateau at the beginning of winter as roads became impassable. The threat of mutiny forced Lucullus to turn back to Mesopotamia, where he succeeded in capturing Nisibis (Plutarch, "Lucullus," xxxi-xxxii, pp. 572/3, 578/9).

Meanwhile, Mithradates reentered Pontus, and Tigran had already begun the reconquest of territories north of the Tigris and in Cappadocia when Lucullus was recalled to Rome in 67 B.C.

Unfortunately for Armenia, the Roman decision to subdue the East remained unaltered, and the new general Pompey counted on victory to support his bid for power at Rome. The first blow fell in 66 B.C. on Mithradates, who was defeated and fled northward to the eastern shore of the Black Sea. Tigran the Great, faced with the rebellion of his sons Zareh and Tigran the Younger, did not participate at first. But as the younger Tigran took refuge with his father-in-law, the king of Parthia, Armenia soon found itself attacked on all sides.

The Parthian king failed in his attempt to capture Artašat, whose fortifications withstood his assault, but the younger Tigran then turned for help to Pompey, whom he guided to his father's capital in the hope of being rewarded with the throne. Unable to save Artašat, and in order to prevent its sharing the fate of Tigranakert, Tigran II agreed to make his submission to Pompey from whose hands he received back the royal diadem, thus acknowledging the Roman protectorate over Armenia. The peace of 66 B.C. stripped Tigran of all his conquests in Syria, Phoenicia, Mesopotamia, Atropatēnē, Cilicia, Kommagēnē and even Sophēnē, reducing his realm to Greater Armenia proper. A formidable indemnity of 6,000 talents plus additional gifts to each of the Roman soldiers was required of Armenia, and the younger Tigran, to whom Sophēnē had first been offered but who continued to prove untrustworthy, was sent with his family to Rome to be displayed in Pompey's triumph (Plutarch, "Pompey," xxxiii, pp. 202/3-204/5). In spite of this, the situation was by no means desperate. Pompey proclaimed Tigran II a friend of the Roman people, thus halting any further attacks on the Armenian heartland, which remained untouched, and even returned to him considerable territories in Mesopotamia. Still bearing the title of King of Kings, acknowledged to him by Pompey, in spite of the objections of Parthia, Tigran II ruled peacefully for another decade before dying in extreme old age in 56 or 55 B.C.

The far-flung empire of Tigran the Great was probably not viable, since no cohesive framework held together such disparate elements as the Greek cities and the eastern principalities with varying languages and customs. Hellenized and urban Syro-Mesopotamia had little in common with the essentially rural and tribal Armenian plateau. If the surviving references to Arabs and Jews are correct, the transit trade through Armenia remained primarily in foreign hands. No allegiance

tied the forcibly moved population to Tigran. The imported Greek garrison of Tigranakert betrayed it to the Romans, and the displaced groups went home at the first opportunity. But in any case, the beneficial vacuum of power that had favored the rise of Tigran II no longer existed by the middle of the first century B.C. Instead, the revived power of the Parthian Arsacid and Roman imperialism faced each other across the Euphrates and in Mesopotamia in an endemic war that was to last for centuries. The time was past for local initiatives throughout the East, and Armenia did not have the power base to take on the two world powers on either side. Nevertheless, the forty-year reign of Tigran the Great may well have provided the interval of peace needed for the development of Greater Armenia and the nexus of clan relationships that were to preserve the Armenian identity in the troubled years to come.

The End of the Artašēsid Dynasty (55 B.C.–A.D. 6)

Tigran II's son and successor, Artawazd II (55-34 B.C.), tried to make the best of Armenia's new position as a buffer state and to preserve his equilibrium in the repeated campaigns of Rome against Parthia. He offered the support of the Armenian cavalry to the Roman general Crassus in 53 and sought to advise him against the dangerous southern route, which took the Romans to the disastrous defeat of Carrhae in Mesopotamia. He then gave his sister in marriage to the Parthian heir and participated in raids against the Roman province in Syria from 42 to 40 B.C. The letters of Cicero, who was proconsul of Cilicia in 51 B.C., show that the Romans had become suspicious of Artawazd's intentions. These suspicions greatly intensified with Marc Antony's campaign in the East in 37 B.C. during the last throes of the Roman civil war. The withdrawal of the Armenian army, which had first accompanied Antony on his unsuccessful campaign to Atropatēnē, was viewed as a betrayal, although the returning Romans were received and supplied in Armenia, and Antony's vengeance was not long delayed. After an attempt to lure Artawazd to Egypt in 35 B.C., Antony marched on Artašat the following year and finally succeeded in bringing the Armenian king to his camp. The Romans occupied and looted Armenia (Dio, XLIX. 39-41; vol. V, pp. 420/1, 424/5), and Artawazd with most of his family was carried as a captive to Egypt (where Antony celebrated his triumph, commemorated by a coin bearing a representation of the Armenian royal tiara and the legend ANTONI ARMENIA DEVICTA) and eventually executed (Strabo,