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Translation : *Κούτρας Νικόλαος*
For citation : *IBR , Kountoura-Galaki Eleonora , "Province of Armenia I (Byzantium)", Encyclopaedia of the Hellenic World, Asia Minor*
URL: <http://www.ehw.gr/l.aspx?id=7500>

Summary :

The province of Armenia I was radically reorganized by Emperor Justinian, but this reform did not last long. As an administrative institution its importance diminished with the introduction of the system of the themes in the 7th century.

Other Names

Armenia Prima, Armenia Secunda

Geographical Location

Eastern Turkey

Historical Region

Armenia and Pontus

Administrative Dependence

Diocese of Pontica, Praefectura praetorio per Orientem

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1. The province of Armenia I during the Early Byzantine period

During the Early Byzantine period Armenia I included the cities of Sebasteia, Nicopolis, Coloneia, Satala, Sebastopolis; to the north it bordered on the province of Pontos Polemoniakos. The province of Armenia I appears in this form in the Synekdemos,[1] but in the notitiae episcopatuum is registered as Armenia II, in accordance with the reform of the emperor Maurice.[2] Together with other provinces[3] it belonged until 536 to the diocese of Pontica which initially was administered by the vicarius dioceseos Ponticae, drawn from the senatorial class of the *viri spectabilis*. The diocese of Pontica belonged to the vast prefecture of Oriens (*praefectura praetorio per Orientem*) governed by the praefectus praetorio per Orientem, who belonged to the senatorial class of the *viri illustris*.[4] The political administration of the province of Armenia I was the jurisdiction of the praeses.

2. Modification to the administrative system during Justinian's reign

In 536, Emperor Justinian I (527-565), with his nuvella no 31, radically reorganized the administrative system of the Byzantine Armenia and created four Armenian provinces, numbering them Armenia I to Armenia IV. This measure was intended to strengthen the empire's eastern border. The Justinianic Armenia I was a fresh administrative district, founded to the north of the former province of Armenia I, which was now renamed to Armenia II. The Justinianic Armenia I included the eastern part of the province of Pontos Polemoniakos and the north-eastern part of the former Armenia I. Its capital was Justinianopolis, the ancient city with the Armenian name Bazanis, which Emperor Leo I (457-474) had renamed to Leontopolis.[5] The province was governed by a proconsul drawn from the senatorial class of the *viri spectabilis*; Acacius was the first official to become proconsul of Armenia I. This new province of Armenia I included the cities of Theodosioupolis, Satala, Nicopolis and Coloneia, formerly belonging to the pre-Justinianic Armenia I, as well as the cities of Trebizond and Cerasous, taken from the province of Pontos Polemoniakos.[6] Justinian's numbering of the Armenian provinces (I-IV) was adopted by the Armenian sources.[7]

In 591, the reform of Maurice took place. The early Armenia I persisted with its justinianic appellation (i.e. Armenia II) but justinianic Armenia I was renamed to Armenia III. The province Armenia I of the this period was in fact the early Armenia II, with Melitene as its capital.[8]

3. The abolition of Armenia I

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With the introduction of the themes in the provincial administration during the 7th century, the province of Armenia I ceases to exist as an administrative district, as it is now included in the newly established theme of Armeniakon (the first mention of a strategos of this theme dates to 667) and later in the themes of Charsianon and Coloneia. However, as a geographical term, Armenia I is mentioned on kommerkiarii seals;[9] in all probability, these should have refered to the Armenia I of Maurice (capital: Melitene) and not the early, pre-Justinianic province of Armenia I (capital: Sebasteia). Their existence suggests intense commercial activity in that region.

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2. See Γυφτοπούλου, Σ. «Πολεμωνιακός Πόντος - Λαζική: οι εκκλησιαστικές έδρες, οι εκκλησιαστικές επαρχίες», *Ιστορικογεωγραφικά* 10 (2003/4), p. 111.

3. These are the provinces of Bithynia, Galatia, Honorias, Galatia Salutaria, Cappadocia I & II, Helenopontos, Pontos Polemoniakos, and Armenia II: Seeck, O. (ed.) *Notitia Dignitatum accedunt Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae et latercula Provinciarum*, (Frankfurt 1876, reprinted 1962), Or. XXV, 3-13.

4. Seeck, O. (ed.) *Notitia Dignitatum accedunt Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae et latercula Provinciarum*, (Frankfurt 1876, reprinted 1962), Or. II,
49. Or. XXV, 12, 24.

5. Jones, A.H.M., *The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces* (Oxford 1971), p. 224.

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http://soltdm.com/sources/mss/hierocl/harta1.htm

Notitia Dignitatum (Register of Dignitaries) c. 400

http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/notitiadignitatum.html

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Glossary :

kommerkiarios (commerciarius)

An official of the fiscal service in charge of the levying of the tax called commercion (δεκάτη<, 10%), that was imposed over the portage and the selling of articles. The jurisdinction of each commerciarius was exersised either over specific urban centers with vivid commercial activity or over particular widespread territories of the empire. Since the official had been appointed by the emperor himself he used to be called "royal commerciarius".
In the Late Byzantine era the commerciarius acted also as an individual entrepreneur who used to merchandise silk for his own interest.

Notitia episcopatuum

The Notitiae episcopatuum are official documents of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and Antioch, containing the ecclesiastical dioceses in hierarchical order.These documents were modfied regularly.

novel (novella)

Term meaning ad verbum "new decree" and used since around the 4th century in order to denote the provisions of the emperors as separate from the organized codes. They were written mainly in Greek and used extensively in the Middle Byzantine Era. Since the days of Komnenoi and after, they were replaced by other more specialized terms and they are very rare in the Late Byzantine era

praeses

Provincial governor. According to the later roman and the eraly byzantine administrative organisation, the praeses (praeses, vir perfectissimus as far as the senatorial rank is concerned) served as a governor in certain provinces, expressly intented to exercise political autority.

praetorian prefect of Oriens (Praefectus Praetorio per Orientem)

The latest mention of the office is dated to the year 680. The absolutely high rank official was inequable only to the emperor and possesed a superior rank in compare to all praetorian prefects. He headed the administration of the praefectura praetorio per Orientem.

praetorian prefecture (praefecura praitorio)

In Late Roman Empire it was the basic administrative unit. Prefectures were estabished by Constantine I (4th century). The Empire was then divided to four praetorian prefectures: i) praefectura praetorio per Orientem (prefecture of Oriens), ii) praefectura praetorio Galliarum (prefecture of Galliae), iii) praefectura praetorio per Illyricum (prefecture of Illyricum), iv) praefectura praetorio Italiae, Illyrici et Africae (prefecture of Italia and Africa).

proconsul, -lis

A quite high ranking official, vir spectabilis according to the rank of the senate, who was inequable only to the Domestikos of the Scholae and to the Magister Militum per Orientem. The proconsul usually served as a governor of the Imperial provinces (i.e. in Asia Minor the provinces of Asia and Cappadocia). The office was demoted from the 9th century onwards and the term was in use until the 12th century meaning a dignity.

senator, the (1. Roman, 2. Byzantine)

1. A Roman body of men that originally advised the king and then the consuls; Heredity was not the only means of joining the senate and “new men” or *novi homines* could become part of it; Augustus revised the senate and left the body with less power and bolstered hereditary claims as a means to enter the senate; it continued to make laws and conferred powers on new emperors.
2. Member of the senate. The senate, a roman institution transferred from Rome to Constantinople by Constantine I during the Byzantine period was an advisory body whose rights and responsibilities were not clearly defined. It was consisted of imperial officers coming from the upper and were ranked according to hierarchical levels: viri illustri (perfectus praetoriae and the magister), viri spectabili (proconsul, vicarius and the comes), viri clarissimi (consul praetoriae) and viri perfectissimi (praeses and duces). Since the 6th c. AD a new title was established for the upper officers (viri

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gloriosi). The years that followed officials were entitled to officers regardless their position as senators or if they were about to be admitted to this body.

strategos ("general")

During the Roman period his duties were mainly political. Office of the Byzantine state´s provincial administration. At first the title was given to the military and political administrator of the themes, namely of the big geographic and administrative unities of the Byzantine empire. Gradually the title lost its power and, already in the 11th century, strategoi were turned to simple commanders of military units, responsible for the defence of a region.

theme

A Byzantine term that signifies wide military and administrative units under the administration of a strategos (general). The institution was consolidated in the 7th century and was characteristic for the organization and the division of Byzantine Empire at the Middle Byzantine period. The term applies also to the army unit that resided in each administrative unit and was staffed by farmer-soldiers. The thematic system was maintained until the end of Byzantine period. However, in the Later Byzantine period it was used in order to declare mostly tax units.

vicarius

The term refers to the substitute of various officials. Since the 3rd century, the vicarius replaced mostly procuratores from the equestrian class. The most important vicarii were those who replaced the Praetorian eparchs in the dioceses set up by Diocletian. In addition, the vicarii could have military (like the command of the garrison in Egypt) or even judicial responsibilities.

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Quotations

The cities of the earlier province of Armenia I

…. Σάταλαν τὲ καὶ Νικόπολιν καὶ Κολώνειαν ἐκ τῆς πρώτης Ἀρμενίας καλουμένης λαβόντες, … Δευτέραν δὲ ἐτάξαμεν Ἀρμενίαν τὴν ἔμπροσθεν πρώτην καλουμένην, ἧς ἡγεῖται Σεβάστεια πόλεις αὐτῇ προσνείμαντες τὴν τὲ τῶν Σεβαστοπολιτῶν ἣν καὶ πρότερον εἶχε…

Novella XXXI, Corpus Juris Civilis, III. *Novellae*, ed. R. Schöll - G. Kroll (Berlin 1895, ανατ. Dublin-Zürich 1970), σελ. 235-236.

The Nuvella no. 31 on the formation of the justinianic province of Armenia I:

Τοιγαροῦν τέσσαρας εἶναι πεποιήκαμεν Ἀρμενίας. Τὴν μὲν ἐνδοτάτην, ἧς ἡ μητρόπολις τῇ τῆς εὐσεβοῦς ἡμῶν προσηγορίας ἐπωνυμίᾳ κατακεκόσμηται πρότερον Βαζανὶς ἤτοι Λεοντόπολις καλουμένη, ἥνπερ καὶ ἀνθυπατεία τετιμήκαμεν, ἧς Ἀκάκιος προέστηκεν ὁ μεγαλοπρεπέστατος, σπεκταβιλίαν τὲ ἀποφήναντες τὴν ἀρχήν… καὶ πόλεις αὐτῇ δεδώκαμεν Θεοδοσιούπολίν τε, ἥν καὶ πρότερον εἶχε, Σάταλαν τὲ καὶ Νικόπολιν καὶ Κολώνειαν ἐκ τῆς πρώτης Ἀρμενίας καλουμένης λαβόντες, Τραπεζοῦντα τὲ καὶ Κερασοῦντα ἐκ Πόντου τοῦ πρώην Πολεμωνιακοῦ καλουμένου...

Novella XXXI, Corpus Juris Civilis, III. *Novellae*, ed. R. Schöll - G. Kroll (Berlin 1895, ανατ. Dublin-Zürich 1970), σελ. 235-236.

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Chronological Table

536: Justinianic reorganisation of Byzantine Armenia; former Armenia I (capital: Sebasteia) is renamed to Armenia II; Justinianic Armenia I (capital: Justinianoupolis) is founded on the north-eastern part of former Armenia I and also includes cities of Pontos Polemoniakos

536: Reform of Maurice; Justinianic Armenia I becomes Armenia III; pre-Justinianic Armenia II becomes Armenia I (capital: Melitene)

667: First mention of a strategos of the Armeniakon theme

674-681: Peter *apo hypaton* (ex-consul) and general *kommerkiarios* of *apotheke* in Armenia I (or IV)

690/1: Cosmas *apo hypaton* (ex-consul) and general *kommerkiarios* of *apotheke* in Armenia I

695/6: George *apo hypaton* (ex-consul) and general *kommerkiarios* of *apotheke* in Armenia I (or IV)