

the first half of the third century. He relates that, in the latter days of Ardeshir, the founder of the Sassanian dynasty (who died in 240), a certain Arpog was King of China, one of whose sons, Mamkon by name, fled from home on account of a charge brought against him, and took refuge in Persia. The Chinese threatening war on account of the shelter afforded him, he was obliged to retire to Armenia, where he was received by the King Tiridates, who eventually bestowed the province of Daron upon him and his Chinese followers. From this Mamkon came the family of the Mamigonians, whose Chinese descent is spoken of by all the Armenian historians.¹

About the same time we find it stated that the Emperor of China offered to mediate between Ardeshir, King of Persia, and Khosru I of Armenia; whilst Suren, a brother of St. Gregory of Armenia, is represented as taking refuge in China. All these circumstances imply some familiarity of relation. The authority quoted for them is Zenob, a Syrian, who wrote in Armenian in the beginning of the fourth century. And he says that they were derived from a history of China written in Greek by one Parta or Barta of Edessa.²

61. The offer at mediation between Persia and Armenia just referred to is apparently unknown to the Chinese Annals. Their first notice of Persia is the record of an embassy to the court of the Wei in 461; succeeded by a second in 466.³ In the year 518-19 an ambassador came from *Kiuhoto* (Kobád), king of that country, with presents and a letter to the emperor. The Chinese annalists profess to give the literal terms of the letter, which uses a tone of improbable humility.⁴

¹ There appears to be some chronological hitch in this account; for Tiridates, who was carried off as an infant to the Romans, was not established on the throne till the beginning of Dioclesian's reign (284), forty-four years after the death of Ardashir (*Smith's Dict. of Greek and Rom. Biog.*).

² *St. Martin*, 29.

³ *Deguignes*, i, 184.

⁴ "To the Son of Heaven, the Sovereign of the Great Realm, whom Heaven hath caused to exist and hath placed at the sun-rising to reign eternally over the empire of the Han; the King of Persia, Kobád, presents his respectful homage a thousand and ten thousand times