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Cosmology and the Expansion of the Iranian Empire, 502–628 CE

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In 502 the Iranian king of kings Kawad (488–96, 498–531) personally marched a major field army into Roman Anatolia, dramatically bringing to a close a century and a quarter in which co-operation rather than conflict had characterized Roman–Iranian relations.¹ Kawad found the strategic cities of

Theodosiopolis and Amida woefully under-defended, as neither the reigning emperor Anastasios I nor his immediate predecessors had envisaged the return of major Iranian armies to Roman territories that had remained largely peaceful since the campaigns of Shapur II. Once Amida fell to Kawad's siege engines, the Romans only managed to dislodge Iranian forces from their territory through submitting payments of 1,000 pounds of gold in 504. But this was merely the beginning of emphatically hostile relations between the Roman and Iranian empires. Again in 530 and 540 the kings of kings Kawad and Husraw I (531–79)...

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