Summary :

A powerful earthquake which occurred in 1646 at the region south-east of lake Van and caused many destructions.

Date

7th April 1646

Geographical Location

Region SE of lake Van, eastern Asia Minor

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1. The earthquake

The earthquake of the 7th April 1646 occurred south-east of lake Van[1] and destroyed villages in a region from the city of Van until Ostan (Gevaş), Hoşap and Aghbak (Albağ), in Van's wider area (Vaspurakan). The result was that the region was desolated and the Armenian population particularly suffered. In total forty churches and monasteries were destroyed.

The earthquake caused serious damages also to the city of Van. Part of the walls of the lower citadel collapsed, whereas other parts of the city's fortifications cracked. Also, many houses collapsed as well as many churches and mosques. In the region of the valley of Hayotsdzor (near the river Hoşap) the destructions were great and all monasteries collapsed.

2. Victims and aftershocks

We have no information concerning the exact number of victims, but in the sources it is mentioned that "an innumerable crowd was buried".[2] The number of the fatalities was thus definitely substantial.

The earthquake was felt until Tabriz in Iran, as well as in the Ararat region. The strong aftershocks continued for eight days, whereas the earthquake activity lasted for three more months, until the end of June.

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1. These regions are known from the Armenian sources as Hayotsdzor and Mehmedik.

2. See Ambraseys, N.N. – Finkel, C.F., *The Seismicity of Turkey and Adjacent Areas. A Historical Review, 1500-1800* (Istanbul 1995), p. 67.

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Ambraseys N.N., **Finkel C.F.**, *The Seismicity of Turkey and Adjacent Areas. A Historical Review, 1500-1800*, Istanbul 1995

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