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Visual Perception of Van through Travel Accounts* Dickran Kouymjian

Van was the capital and most important city of the ancient, medieval, and modern Armenian province of Van-Vaspurakan. Its foundation goes back to the ninth century B.C. when it served as the capital of the Urartean kingdom. Later, in the tenth and eleventh centuries, it was the main city of the Artsruni kingdom of Armenia. From the eleventh century on Van came under the successive suzerainty of the Seljuks, Turkmens, Mongols, Timurids, Persians, and finally the Ottomans. During these years of occupation and oppression, the highest Armenian authority was the regional Catholicos of Aghtamar, headquartered on a nearby island, who administered to the religious and community needs of the Armenian population around Lake Van.

Our earliest description of Van is found in the *History* of Movses of Khoren, traditionally considered to have written in the fifth century, though certain authorities place him in the eighth, even the ninth, century. A long passage covering all of Chapter 16 of Book I, describes how the Assyrian Queen Semiramis built the a royal place and fortified citadel on the site of the rock of Van.¹

[Semiramis] seeing the beauty of the land ... said: "In such a temperate climate and purity of waters and land we must build a city and royal residence, so that we may spend a fourth part of the [year ... in Armenia....

...On the shore of the lake she saw a long hill whose length ran toward the setting sun. To the north it slopped a little, but to the south it looked up sheer to heaven, with a cave in the vertical rock. From it on the south there opened out a wide meadow like a plain, descending from the mountain on the east to the edge of the lake....

Here that resolute and lascivious Semiramis, after careful examination, ordered forty-two thousand skilled workers from Assyria and other lands of the empire and six thousand chosen from her most talented craftsmen in wood and stone, bronze and iron, who were most proficient in their skills, to be brought without delay to the desired spot. And the work was completed according to her command. Immediately a multitude of various workers and skilled and wise craftsmen was brought. First she ordered the aqueduct for the river to be built in hard and massive stone, cemented with mortar and sand, of infinite length and height; it has remained firm ... until the present time. ...And if one were to examine the skill of the cementing around the stones, it would appear to him to have been made with molten wax....

...[S]he ordered the crowd [of workmen] to be divided into many groups and over each group to be set chosen masters of the craft. And thus, by dint of great efforts,

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¹For editions and translations of the *History* of Movses Khorenatsi see Robert W. Thomson, *A Bibliography of Classical Armenian Literature to 1500 AD*, (Turnhout: Brepols, 1995), 156-158.

within a few years she completed the marvelous [city] with strong walls and bronze gates. She also built inside the city many exquisite palaces, adorned with various stones and colors, of two and three stories, each one turned to the sun where suitable. The sections of the city she divided by beautiful and wide avenues. In the middle of the city she built some charming baths for people's needs, with admirable art. She diverted part of the river through the city to serve every necessity and for the irrigation of the parks and flower gardens. The rest she made run along the edge of the lake to the right and left, to water the city and all the surrounding area. All the regions east, north, and south of the city she adorned with villas and with leafy trees that produced varied fruit and foliage. There she planted many fruitful vineyards. The walled city she rendered absolutely splendid and magnificent, settling within a numberless multitude of inhabitants.

...The summit she surrounded with a wall and erected there a royal palace and some fearsome dungeons, difficult of entry and impossible to escape from. ... But we merely say that of all royal works ... this is considered the foremost and most majestic.

Now on the side of the rock that faces the sun, on which today no one can scratch a line with an iron point ... [she had carved out] various temples and chambers and treasure houses and wide caverns; no one knows how she formed such wonderful constructions. And over the entire surface of the rock, smoothing it like wax with a stylus, she inscribed many texts, the mere sight of which makes anyone marvel. And not only this, but also in many places in the land of Armenia she set up stelae and ordered memorials to herself to be written on them in the same script.²

The city is mentioned in the following centuries in Armenian histories, colophons of Armenian manuscripts -- especially of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries -- and many travel accounts. However, our first drawings and engravings of Van are from around 1800, after which there is a regular succession of views during the nineteenth century and up until Van's destruction as a consequence of the Genocide of 1915-1918.

From the beginning, all engravings focus on the enormous rock of Van, turned into a fortified palace by the Urartians and maintained as such by later rulers into modern times. The paper will concentrate on a visual presentation of the fortified city, its garden suburbs, and especially its "rock."

Much of the visual material on Van has been brought together by the late Paolo Cuneo in a study, which combines a visual presentation of the city with textual descriptions gathered principally from nineteenth century western travelers.³ A number of more recent books also contain some additional details, among them S. Boghossian,⁴

²Movses Khorenatsi, *Patmutiwn Hayots*, edition M. Abeghean and S. Yarut'iwnean (Tiflis: Aragatip Mnats'akan Martiroseants', 1913), reprinted and augmented by A. B. Sargsean (Erevan, 1991), 50-54; excerpt from Robert W. Thomson, *Moses Khorenatsi, History of the Armenians* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 98-101.

³Paolo Cuneo, "Etude sur la topographie et l'iconographie historique de la ville de Van," *Armenian Studies/Etudes arméniennes: In Memoriam Haïg Berbérian*, D. Kouymjian, editor (Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1986), 125-184. Cuneo was an architectural historian and urbanist; his interest was focused on the monuments, though he offered some descriptive passages and provided the bibliography of his sources.

⁴Sarkis Boghossian, *Iconographie arménienne/Armenian Iconography, Catalogue of reproductions in black and color of 720 original pieces from 15th to 20th century* (Paris: Sarkis Boghossian, 1987); the title,

R. Kévorkian and P. Paboudjian,⁵ and S. Vardanyan.⁶ Boghossian is a collector of engravings and other pictorial material on all aspects of Armenian life; his book, unfortunately, provides almost no text and meager bibliography. The work of Kévorkian and Paboudjian is based exclusively on photographs and postcards with a focus on a very carefully documented discussion of Armenian life in the Ottoman Empire before the Genocide. Vardanyan brought text and pictures together, but relied almost exclusively on Armenian sources or Armenian translations of foreign sources; his publication suffers from the poor quality of reproductions. One might also note the frequently cited and long description of Van, its history, geology, and geography, by H. F. B. Lynch who included a large number of photographs.⁷

Below are presented chronologically the most important textual references to Van. In the late fourteenth century the raids of Timur-Lang in Armenia are often cited by the scribes in their memorials. There are a number from 1387, when in September Timur on his way back to the east, laid siege to Van for 26 days. Without regard to age or race he punished the inhabitants. The men were separated from the women and children, tied up in groups, and cast off from the high ramparts of the Van fortress. In a versed colophon Gregory of Akhlat reports that the pile of bodies at the base became so high that the later victims, when they were thrown down, did not all die because they were cushioned by the mound of corpses.⁸ A quarter of a century later, several colophons attest to the siege and fall of Van in 1425 by the Kara-Koyunlu. Karapet the scribe complains that, "Iskender ... arriving with numerous troops besieged our impregnable fortress of Van for fifty days."⁹ Petros the scribe writing in Berkri the following year, 1427, adds: "This is the third annual arrival of Iskender son of Kara Yusuf; each time he plundered and carried off captives from our regions of Van and Vostan. He then captured the citadel of Van and all of us -- bishops and *vardapets*, monks, priests, grandees, and ladies -- took to flight and wandered about in foreign lands and became strangers."¹⁰

From the 1434 to 1464, Catholicos Zakaria of Aghtamar, through his ceaseless activity, was a major force in Armenian national affairs. A long colophon or 1462 from Arjesh by the scribe Tumashay provides one of the most vivid early accounts we have of life in the city of Van.¹¹ Supported by Jihanshah, the Kara-Koyunlu ruler, Zakaria

a one page introduction, and legends are in French and English. For Van, 255-287, figs. 341-393.

⁵Raymond H. Kévorkian and Paul B. Paboudjian, *Les Arméniens dans l'Empire Ottoman à la veille du Génocide* (Paris: ARHIS, 1992), "Le vilayet de Van," 507-564, reproductions of photographs, figs. 821-856.

⁶Sergei Vardanyan, *The Capitals of Armenia* (in Arm.), (Erevan, 1995), "Van," 7-46.

⁷H. F. B. Lynch, *Armenia, Travels and Studies*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1901), on Van, II:38-115, figs. 123-137.

⁸Levon Khachikyan, "The Political Condition and Socio-economic Relations of Armenia in the 14th-15th Centuries," *History of the Armenian People* (in Arm.), IV (Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1972), 26-27; Vardanyan, *Capitals*, 15.

⁸Khachikyan, "The Political Condition," 27. Details can be found in D. Kouymjian, "Van under Mongol, Turkmen, Persian, and Ottoman Domination," published elsewhere in this volume; quotations from the sources appearing in that article, normally they will not be repeated here.

⁹L. Khachikyan, *Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts of the Fifteenth Century*, (in Arm.), I (Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1955), 328; Avedis K. Sanjian, *Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts, 1301-1480* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 167.

¹⁰Sanjian, *Colophons*, 171.

¹¹See Kouymjian, "Van under Mongol, Turkmen, Persian, and Ottoman Domination;" a full translation is found in Sanjian, *Colophons*, 271-276.

rescued from Echmiadzin, the Mother See and residence of the Catholicos of All Armenians, the holiest relic of the Armenian Church, the right arm of Saint Gregory the Illuminator, along with a famous processional banner depicting St. Gregory with King Trdat. He brought it back with him to Van and finally his residence on Aghtamar.¹²

One of the earliest European accounts, that of an anonymous Venetian merchant dated to about 1510, provides the first modern descriptions of the fortified city: "The Fortress of Van is built on a rocky outcrop from which sweet water gushes. ... It is more than a mile long, and like the rock on which it is built, narrow and long. Within the fortress there is a large city, the majority of whose citizens are Armenian."¹³ Other groups included a Muslim population of Turks, Kurds, Persians, Yezidis, Circassian, Arabs, as well as Nestorian and Chaldean Christians and Jews.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the major competing forces for the control of Van/Vaspurakan and the rest of Armenia were the Ottoman Turks under Sultan Selim the Grim and the Safavids under Shah Ismail. Selim won the first battle of a war that was to last for 125 years by defeating the Safavids at Chaldiran in 1514, but did not yet succeed in gaining full control of Van. That was achieved under Sultan Süleyman when the Ottoman army captured the city first in 1534 and then again, after ten days of incessant bombardment, in 1543.

The second Ottoman campaign of 1547-1548, began again with the seizure of Van. Süleyman was so pleased about taking Van back that he sent a letter to King Henry II of France in which he spoke of the "impregnability of the fortress which reached to the sky."¹⁴ The French ambassador and military advisor to the sultan, d'Armon, referred to Van as the most famous and impregnable Persian fortress.¹⁵ About this siege, the Ottoman chronicler Solakzade gives a circumstantial account of the thousands of troops and the canons used against the weaker parts of the fortifications as well as the work of sappers who undermined the foundations of the ramparts. Only after ten days of incessant bombardment did the city fall. Solakzade also praised the unusual quality of the Armenian architects and builders of the Van citadel. "This fortress," he wrote "is the key to Persia ...(about which) the wicked Shah boastfully said 'As long as the yellow rock [of Van] is under my command, what need have I to fear the Ottoman Sultans?'"¹⁶

Early in the seventeenth century, the renowned Ottoman traveler, Evliya Chelebi describes the city thus:

The city has inner and outer defense walls. The inner ramparts on the western side of the city are high and cut into the cliff, on one side of which is the city...on the other side, outside the walls, is the mighty fortress. On the western side, where the city is, there is a carved cliff like ramparts. On the outer side, toward the plain descends a hill, on which in places (along the ramparts) are two storied towers. Outside the walls ... carved from the natural rock are three gates, the

¹²Both objects are now in the Manoogian Museum of the Catholicosate of All Armenians in Echmiadzin and reproduced in *Treasures of Etchmiadzin* (Echmiadzin, 1984)

¹³Vardanyan, *Capital Cities*, 15-16.

¹⁴M. Zulalyan, *The Jelali Movement* (in Arm.), (Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1966), 118; Vardanyan, *Capital Cities*, 17.

¹⁵Vardanyan, *ibid.*

¹⁶Excerpts of Turkish primary sources have been collected and translated by Aram Safrastyan, *The Turkish Sources on Armenia, the Armenians, and Other Peoples of Transcaucasian* (in Arm.), 2 (Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1964), for Solakzade, 142; Vardanyan, *Capital Cities*, 17.

Tabriz gate on the east, the middle gate, and the Iskele or harbor gate to the southwest; to the southeast are farms and gardens. The city and ramparts are pretty much toward the north of the lake. But there is a path from the ramparts to the lake. During sieges ships can come and go.

Chelebi adds, "When Timur took the city, he assigned one of his officers the task of destroying the fortress of Van. Using various methods and after many trials, the fortress could not be completely destroyed. ... This will give one an idea of the indestructibility of this mountain like fortress and its ramparts."¹⁷

Even though the Ottoman-Safavid wars end in 1639, Van was not yet exempt from suffering. In 1648 a devastating earthquake destroyed large portions of the city and killed many of its citizens. A detailed account is provided by Arakel of Tabriz in his contemporary history.¹⁸ Arakel also describes how the Armenian merchant class, the *khojas*, quickly organized the relief effort and the reconstruction which started almost immediately.

By the very end of the eighteenth and the first years of the nineteenth century, views of Van began to appear in Armenian geographical works. From the beginning, the engravings focus on the enormous rock of Van. The very first pictorial representation (Fig. 1) is found in Mekhitarist Father. Ghukas Inchichean's *Geography* of 1806.¹⁹ Inchichean, who never saw Van, allowed his imagination full freedom. A romanticizing tendency is perfectly evident. The idealized view is fashioned as a fairy tale European styled mountain city, though the mosques are clearly indicated as well as the double wall. This image of a single cliff like pinnacle appears thirty years later in an engraving that seems inspired by that of Inchichean's and though it is in a book on Armenia by the French traveler E. Boré,²⁰ it is equally fantastic, a mixture of the European and oriental elements with Lake Van clearly shown in the background (Fig. 2). Boré entitled his engraving "Château de Semiramis à Van," an identification based on the account of Movses Khorenatsi popularized in Europe by the translation of the *History* and the interest of orientalists. Specifically, the sensational story of the young German scholar Friedrich Eduard Schultz, who in 1827 set out for Van to discover and reproduce the inscriptions spoken of by Movses (see the passage quoted above). It was the French Orientalist Jean Antoine Saint-Martin, himself a translator of Movses, who persuaded Schultz to take on the mission. Schultz somehow got into the citadel and had himself lowered down the rock cliff to copy carefully each of the cuneiform symbols of a language neither he nor anyone else knew how to read. Eventually, these copies were

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 17-18.

¹⁸Arakel Tavrizhetsi, *History* (in Arm.), edition (Vagharshapat: Holy Etchmiadzin, 1884), chap. 35, "About the Earthquake Which Struck Van and the Regions Surrounding It," 378-381; cf. Vardanyan, *Capital Cities*, 19. Translation in Kouymjian, "Van under Mongol, Turkmen, Persian, and Ottoman Domination."

¹⁹Ghukas Inchichean, *Geography of the Four Parts of the World* (in Arm.), (San Lazzaro, Venice: Mekhitarist Press, 1806), I:138-143, the engraving is entitled "Vanaberd, the Fortress of Van"; cf. Cuneo, "La topographie de ville de Van," 140, n. 24, fig. 7; Boghossian, *Armenian Iconography*, 259, fig. 345; Vardanyan, *Capital Cities*, 16.

²⁰Eugène Boré, *L'Arménie*, in the popular series, *L'Univers, ou histoire et description de tous les peuples, de leur religions, moeurs, coutumes*, etc. (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1838), 16-18; Cuneo, "La topographie de ville de Van," 143, n. 26, fig. 8; Boghossian, *Armenian Iconography*, 260, fig. 346, who reproduces a similar German engraving by Verleger of 1840 with slight modifications including the addition of a group of camels and palm trees in the foreground; Vardanyan, *Capital Cities*, 16 engraving of 1840.

published,²¹ but Schultz was murdered in 1829, according to A. Layard by Kurds in a remote area to the east of Lake Van near Bashkale.²² Schultz's killing coupled with the documents he retrieved, resulted in Van's notoriety. A great number of travelers of the period speak of the misfortune of Schultz and the history of the citadel. All of them refer to the rock at Van as the fortress of Semiramis.

Among the more detailed descriptions of Van from the period is that of Reverend Horatio Southgate who visited the area in 1839, about the same time as Layard.

Out of that plain ... rises a calcareous rock to the height of several hundred feet, and about a mile in length (I measured the length only by the eye. Schultz reports it to be three miles.) It is entirely isolated, and presents so strong a contrast with the perfect level of the plain, that one is ready, at first sight, to pronounce it artificial. So indeed Schultz reported it to be; but upon careful examination, I could find nothing to justify the opinion. The direction of the rock is nearly East and West. The Southern side is a bare, solid, perpendicular face, while the Northern slopes gradually down to the plain. At the foot of the rock, on the Southern side, lies Van. The wall of the city, which is double, composed of earth, and in an excellent condition, is in the form of a semicircle, of which the rock itself is the base. ... Nearly in the centre of the vertical face, is a large and close inscription in the arrow-headed character. As it was too far up to be deciphered from the town, Schultz caused himself to be let down from above, and copied the whole. The citadel which crowns the summit, has a wall running along the Northern slope and meeting the wall of the town at its extremities. The garrison consisted of an old Turk, who refused us admittance, until he received a written order from the Pasha. The interior was in a neglected and desolate condition. Most of the buildings were in ruins, among others the mosque—an almost invariable accompaniment of Turkish fortresses. The ordnance consisted of a few old cannon, mounted on broken carriages."²³

The first realistic views of Van were published as engravings in the 1840s, the most famous of them by Charles Texier, the French savant who was very much interested in architecture. It was he who provided the west with the first serious remarks on Armenian architecture. In his *Description* there are three general views (Figs. 3-4) of both sides of the citadel and the very first map of the city of Van including the fortress, the walled inner city, and the garden suburbs.²⁴ Other travelers of the period also

²¹These were eventually published in their entirety, F. E. Schultz, "Mémoires sur le lac de Van et de ses environs," in the *Journal asiatique*, IX (1940), 257-323.

²²Austen Layard, who passed by the area twenty years later in the late 1830s, relates that Nur Ullah Bey, the Kurdish chief of the Hakkari tribe, had him murdered, *Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon* (London: John Murray, 1853), 381-382 in a note. A contemporary traveler confirms the information, Captain Richard Wilbraham, *Travels in the Transcaucasian Provinces of Russia, and along the Southern Shore of the Lakes of Van and Urumiah in the Autumn and Winter of 1837* (London: John Murray, 1839), 357-358.

²³Horatio Southgate, *Narrative of a Tour through Armenia, Kurdistan, Persia and Mesopotamia* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1840), 259-260. There are no engravings of Van among the few illustrations.

²⁴Charles Texier, *Description de l'Arménie, la Perse, et la Mésopotamie*, 2 vols. of text, a vol. of plates (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1842-1852). Cuneo, "La topographie de ville de Van," 146, figs. 9-12, the map and all three illustrations: "General View or The Middle Gate," "Tabriz Gate," "Harbor Gate"; Boghossian, *Armenian Iconography*, 256-259, figs. 341-344, three views and the map; Vardanyan, *Capital Cities*, 16-17, the three views. Cuneo provides details on the various artists and engravers responsible for the pictures.

sketched or painted the city. Boghossian reproduces a previously unpublished sketch book by an anonymous French artist, executed in October and November 1843, which includes eight genre scenes from in and around the city of Van.²⁵ Better known are a number of paintings and drawings of Van and the citadel by the artist French Jules Laurens executed in 1848. Many served as the basis for the engraved illustrations of a number of travel books including his own,²⁶ and those of Hommaire de Hell²⁷ (Fig. 5) and Deyrolle.²⁸ Layard also included an engraving, "The Town and Rock of Wan," in his book, signed by F. C. Cooper, perhaps a reworking of one of Texier's.²⁹

Though photography quickly became the favored medium in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, engravings continued to be published, sometimes together with photographs, for instance those of Binder,³⁰ Müller-Simonis³¹ and Lehmann-Haupt.³² Of particular interest is Müller-Simonis' engraving of the modern city in 1892 as it looked from the citadel above,³³ a view that Bachmann was to photograph twenty years (Fig. 6) later.³⁴ Among the earliest photographs of Van are those by E. Chantre and Lynch.³⁵ Chantre who seems to have passed through Van in 1881 took a large number of pictures of both monuments, the inner city, its suburbs, and Van's inhabitants. Some of his

²⁵Boghossian, *Armenian Iconography*, 278-287, figs. 376-383, 392. Boghossian (267, fig. 357) also publishes an anonymous pencil drawing of ca. 1840 of the rock and the lake.

²⁶Jules Laurens, *Voyage en Turquie et en Perse* (Paris: Bertrand, 1853), "Vann" in Boghossian, *Armenian Iconography*, 263, fig. 351, reproduced in turn by Vardanyan, *Capital Cities*, 18.

²⁷Xavier Hommaire de Hell, *Voyage en Turquie et en Perse, exécuté par ordre du Gouvernement Français pendant les années 1846, 1847 et 1848* (Paris: Bertrand, 1854); "Citadelle de Vann" and a general view, Cuneo, "La topographie de ville de Van," 151-152, figs. 13-14; Boghossian, *Armenian Iconography*, 261, fig. 348, a colored engraving of the "Citadelle de Vann."

²⁸Théophile Deyrolle, *Voyage au Lazistan et en Arménie - 1869*, in the series *La Tour du Monde* (Paris: Hachette, 1875-1876), reprinted and translated numerous times, with five views, three by Deyrolle ("Panorama," "Le rocher de Van du côté Nord," and a detail of city and rock) and two by Laurens ("Le lac et la forteresse," which is a view from the top of the fortress, and "At-Meidan and Mosque"); Cuneo, "La topographie de ville de Van," figs. 15, 17-18 (engraving of Deyrolle), fig. 16, 19 (Laurens); Boghossian has no views taken directly from Deyrolle and, thus, neither does Vardanyan, who seems to rely heavily on the former.

²⁹Layard, *Discoveries in Nineveh and Babylon*, 393.

³⁰Henri Binder, *Au Kurdistan, en Mésopotamie, en Perse* (Paris: Quantin, 1887), cf. Boghossian, *Armenian Iconography*, 262, fig. 349.

³¹P. Müller-Simonis, *Du Caucase au Golfe Persique, à travers l'Arménie, le Kurdistan, et la Mésopotamie* (Paris-Lyon: Delhomme et Briquet, 1892), who, according to Cuneo (158), has one of most animated descriptions of the city and mixes recycled images from Texier with original engravings and photographs, including a detailed plan of the city and its garden suburbs; Cuneo, "La topographie de ville de Van," figs. 20 (map), 21-22.

³²C. F. Lehmann-Haupt, *Armenien einst und jetzt*, 3 vols. (Berlin: B. Behr, 1910-1931), though published in 1926, the engraving no doubt is from the pre-war period; Cuneo, "La topographie de ville de Van," 172, fig. 28.

³³Cuneo, "La topographie de ville de Van," fig. 22.

³⁴W. Bachmann, *Kirchen und Moscheen in Armenien und Kurdistan* (Vienna: Hinrichs, 1913); cf. Cuneo, "La topographie de ville de Van," 169, fig. 27.

³⁵Lynch's *Armenia, Travels and Studies*, is amply treated in most literature. The book was translated into both Russian and Armenian and reprinted (Beirut, 1965). Recently some of Lynch's original photographs were on exhibit in Paris, including some of the Van region, Artémis Ohanian, Berge Achdjian, Haroutiun Kévorkian, Dickran Kouymjian, *Fragments d'un discours d'Arménie : photographies originales de H. F. B. Lynch*, Paris: Achdjian Galerie Chirvan, 1990.

photographs of Armenian notables, including the younger Khirimian Hairig as archbishop of Van, are reproduced by Boghossian.³⁶

Photographs and engravings of the old city are doubly precious because that Van no longer exists. Its total destruction by the Turks during the defense of Van by its Armenian population has been well documented. Shots taken during the last years of World War I and just after show the devastation caused by continuous Turkish shelling.³⁷

Both Kévorkian-Paboudjian³⁸ and Vardanyan provide a large number of documentary views of everyday life on the eve of the Genocide, but also of the Armenian resistance fighters during the siege and defense of Van in 1915. And then there is nothing. View from atop the citadel, just a desolate, flat plain, full of hundreds of holes (Fig. 7), where Turks dug for what they believe to be the "treasures" Armenians buried before being driven out forever.³⁹ The minarets of a couple of mosques are visible. The ruins of Armenian churches near by the cliff were photographed by Cuneo and a team of architects from Milan in 1967.⁴⁰ After the Genocide, a new Turkish city of Van has sprung up, without Armenians, about two miles south of the emptiness of the old one and its protective rock. Yet historic Van remains a vivid memory in the spirit of the few Armenian survivors still living and through the pictures of nineteenth and early twentieth century travelers.

Captions for the illustrations (see the printed text).

1. Vanaberd, the Citadel of Van, after Gh. Inchichian, 1806.
2. Citadel of Semiramis at Van, after E. Boré, 1838.
3. General View with the Middle Gate, drawing of R. de la Bourdonnaie, Ch. Texier, 1852.
4. Tabriz Gate, Ch. Texier, 1852.
5. Citadel of Vann, drawing of Jules Laurens, X. Hommaire de Hell, 1854.
6. General View of Van from the Citadel, photograph of W. Bachmann, 1913.
7. General View of the Ruins of Van from the Citadel, photograph by T. Breccia

³⁶Ernest Chantre, *De Beyrouth à Tiflis, à travers la Syrie, la Haute-Mésopotamie, le Kurdistan en 1881* (Paris: Hachette, 1889); Boghossian, *Armenian Iconography*, figs. 358-359, 362, 365-366, 372 (Khirimian).

³⁷Vardanyan, *Capital Cities*, 42, two photos showing the shells of deserted and destroyed buildings.

³⁸Kévorkian and Paboudjian, *Les Arméniens*, references given in note 4 above.

³⁹Cuneo, "La topographie de ville de Van," figs. 1-2.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, figs. 4-6, churches of the Mother of God (Tiramayr) and St. Vardan. In the 1970s the mosques and their minarets were restored by Turkish authorities.