

## Catalogue

[1]	<b>2nd century A.D. Mcurn [Hösnek]</b>
sources 1	Mov. Xor. 2.36
sources 2	Vard. Ar. 2.17
literature	Manandian (1965); van Esbroeck (1984); TAVO (1987); Garsoïan (1989)
catalogues	Stepanjan (1942); Kondorskaya and Shebalin (1982); Ambraseys and Melville (1982); Karapetian (1991); Guidoboni and Traina (1995)

The seismological bibliography records an earthquake in Armenia in 139 A.D., in the region of Ararat: Stepanjan (1942, p. 40); Kondorskaya and Shebalin (1982); Ambraseys and Melville (1982, p. 36) limit themselves to reporting the Soviet seismological bibliography (most recently Karapetian 1991, no. 2) without indicating the source, and showing some uncertainty in distinguishing the statements of the historical sources from those contained in the seismological publications.

The only earthquake recorded in the Armenian area for this period does not seem to have occurred in the territory of the present Republic of Armenia, but rather in «historical» Armenia, *i.e.* what is now Eastern Turkey. The source is the Armenian historian (5th century A.D.) Movsēs Xorenac'i (2.36). He reports a tradition about the reconstruction of the town of Mcbin-Nisibis by Sanatruk, an historically nebulous personage whom some consider a king of Armenia, others as Parthian invader: «Of the various acts of Sanatruk we have considered nothing worthy of recording except the construction of the city of Nisibis [Mcbin]. Because it had been destroyed by an earthquake, he demolished and rebuilt it more magnificently, fortifying it with a double wall and outwork».

Այլ որ ինչ գործք եղեալ Սանատրուկի՝ ոչ ինչ յիշատակաց արժանի համարեցաք բայց ի շինուածոյ Մծբին քաղաքի: Զի ի շարժմանէ խախտեալ՝ քակեաց և վերստին շինեաց պայծառագոյն, և պարսպեաց կրկին պարսպով և պատուարաւ.

The tradition of this earthquake is not clear. Its location is controversial. *Mcbin* is the Armenian name for Nisibis, which was a city of Mesopotamia and not of Armenia: this would seem to be confirmed by the historian Sebēos (7th century A.D.), who (in chapter 1) mentions a palace of king Sanatruk at Mcbin, or Nisibis. Sebēos drew on earlier sources and perhaps was influenced by Xorenac'i. However a source contemporaneous with the latter, the so-called Faustus of Byzantium (4th-5th century A.D.) says (4.14) that the city reconstructed by Sanatruk was not Mcbin but *Mcurn*, an Armenian city situated on the Euphrates, whose site has not yet been identified. In view of the fact that one of the spellings of Mcbin was also *Mcuin*, it has been suggested that there was a confusion between the two cities. The tradition however is of such complexity as to suggest extreme caution: cf. van Esbroeck (1984, p. 94).

The identification of the earthquake is due to some Armenian scholars (bibl. in Garsoïan, 1989, pp. 475-480). In view of the limited reliability of the sources, which refer to ancient legends and sometimes to oral traditions, it is impossible, on present evidence, to reach any firm conclusion about either the date or the site of the event. It is probable that the name of Mcbin-Nisibis is the result of a later tradition, but not even this is quite certain. Manandian (1965, p. 83), who (in common with various Western scholars) tended to discredit the authority of Movsēs Xorenac'i, went so far as to assert: «The information as to the earthquake and the destruction of Nisibis was probably invented by Movsēs himself». Seismological studies tend to accept the traditional (but by no means certain) date of 139 A.D. for the earthquake, as suggested by Xorenac'i. Ambraseys and Melville (1982, p. 36) do so, though they do not refer directly to the source, but rather to Soviet seismological studies. The tradition about the earthquake is also recorded, on the basis of Xorenac'i, by Vardan

Arewelc'i (13th century, 2.17). The site of Mcurn has not been explored. Its location awaits confirmation; we here accept Hewsens and Bandomer's identification of the site (in TAVO, 1987) with present-day Hösnek in Turkey.

- [2] **363? Aršakawan [Doğubayazit], Šałat [Sisyan]**  
sources *Life of St. Nersēs* 9; Mov. Dasx. 2.1; Orb. 9  
literature Markwart (1932); TAVO (1987); Garsoïan (1989)

Hitherto unrecorded in the seismic catalogues, this earthquake is well attested by the sources. *The Life of St. Nersēs* (8th century, ch. 9) speaks of the destruction of the Armenian city of Aršakawan, which had been built by King Aršak II (350-367): «Then, suddenly, a violent earthquake was felt, and all the inhabitants were crushed. All that remained where there had been a city was just wood and stone debris».

Եւ յանկարծակի լինէր շարժ մեծ, և զամենեսեան առ հասարակ սատակէր. եւ ոչ եւս երեւէր ուրեք նշմարանք, ոչ քանի և ոչ փայտի, որ եթէ լեալ իցէ շէն 'ի տեղւոջն.

Other Armenian writers tell of the destruction of the city without mentioning an earthquake, though they do mention plague. The episode of the destruction of the city later became proverbial (there is a review of the sources in Garsoïan 1989, p. 282, no. 21).

The episode, apparently topical, can be related to another phenomenon recorded in a nearby area, during the same period. Step'annos Orbēlean (13th century, ch. 9) tells how, at the time of Šapur II of Persia's campaign against the Armenian principality of Siwnik' (c. 363 A.D.), the Persians tried to scale an artificial hill which hid the church of Šałat: «But while many slaves were scaling the hill, a sudden earthquake occurred, which threw them aside, and killed those who had reached the top».

Եւ ոմանք 'ի պարսկական պայեկացն 'ի վեր յեկեղեցաբլուրն ելեալ՝ յանկարծօրէն թնդիւն որոտման և շարժումն եղեւ եւ յեկեղեցաբլրէն արտաքս ձգեալ վերելականքն Պարսից սատակեցան.

In chap. 11, Orbēlean tells how the church was buried with all its treasures during the earthquake, but was later rediscovered.

Movsēs Dasxuranc'i (10th-11th century, 2.1) provides a briefer account: «As they went round the country, they came to the mound over the church of Šałat, but when they climbed to the top, a great earthquake occurred, and the Persian army and their general At'aškoday fled in terror».

Եւ ի շրջելն հասին յեկեղեցաբլուրն Շաղատու. եւ եղեալ ի վեր՝ շարժումն մեծ եղեալ, ահացեալք ի բաց գտացին գունդն Պարսից հանդերձ Աթաշգոտայիւ զօրապետիւն իւրեանց.

Markwart (1932) arbitrarily relates the destruction of Aršakawan to the Nicomedia earthquake of 24 August 358.

Orbēlean, in chap. 12, tells how further relics of the church at Šałat were found after an earthquake «accompanied by an odorous emanation» had detached one of the chapel stones.

The city of Aršakawan has not been firmly identified; we accept Hewsens and Bandomer's identification of the site (in TAVO, 1987), with the present Doğubayazit in Turkey. No field-survey seems to be available for the town of Šałat, situated close to present Sisyan in Armenia.

<b>[3]</b>	<b>461 District of Apahunik'</b>
sources	Yovhannēs Awagerēc', in <i>Chron. min. Arm.</i> 2.1
literature	Tēr Mkrtč'ean and Malxasean (1904); Sargsean (1933); Ananian (1966); Cuneo (1988); Garsoïan (1989); Thomson (1991)
catalogues	Ambraseys and Melville (1982); Guidoboni and Traina (1995)

Ambraseys and Melville (1982, p. 36) record that «in A.D. 461 the district of Malazgirt, north of Van, was destroyed», citing the *Chronicle* of Yovhannēs Awagerēc' (13th century) as the source. The text under the year 461, ind. 13, reports: «there was an earthquake at Apahunik' [province to the north of Lake Van] and it destroyed many villages».

Եղև շարժումն յԱպահունիս և բազում գեղս աւիրէ.

This report, derived from a minor chronicle, would seem at first sight to be wholly isolated in the Armenian historiography of the period, and thus poses problems. Why, indeed, is it only Yovhannēs Awagerēc' who reports this event and none of the other minor chronicles of the period?

A comparison with other seismic events in the region may help us to elucidate the episode. Neither the Greek nor the Syriac sources attest seismic events in Eastern Anatolia or in Armenia round about this date. On the other hand, an Armenian source of approximately half a century later, the historian Łazar P'arpec'i (6th century A.D.), attests an earthquake on 25 July 454 (*cf.* Ananian, 1966). The episode in question refers to the martyrdom of the Saints «companions of Łewond», who were martyred at Rewan, not in Armenia but in Iran, in the territory of Nišapur. The event, which was not recorded by Ambraseys and Melville (1982), is recounted by the historian as follows: «[...] unexpectedly on the evening of that same day [27th hrotic' 454 = 25 July] there was a severe earthquake in that spot. Great noises and fearful voices resounded from the depths; masses of gathered clouds covered the earth; thundering and lightning shook the mountains. A column of light descended like a rainbow from heaven, surrounding and enveloping the bodies of the martyrs. The guards were struck to the ground, half-dead, no one knowing at all where his neighbour was; they rolled on the ground, unable to stand steadily, for the shaking of the severe earthquake threw them up and down to the ground» (transl. Thomson 1991), and, a little further on in his account, he reports that this quake lasted «one day and two nights».

The Armenian historian Elišē (5th or 8th century A.D.) also mentions the earthquake, but in terms far closer to the language of hagiography, and in any case without mentioning the site. The description of Łazar P'arpec'i, on the contrary, with its decidedly realistic details, does seem to be a genuine account of an earthquake. Are there any points of contact between the earthquake of 454 and that of 461? The answer may be sought in an analysis of the text of Łazar P'arpec'i and its recension. The initial passage about the martyrdom of the Łewondian Saints in San Lazzaro's edition (Sargsean, 1933, p. 325) contains in the text an explanation that the site of Rewan was located «in the land of Apar, near the village of the magi called Rewan»; this is followed by Thomson (1991, p. 151). But in the critical edition of Tēr Mkrtč'ean and Malxasean (1904, p. 101) this interpolation does not occur, and it may thus be assumed that this mention of the site of Rewan is a later gloss. On the other hand, the critical edition refers to this site on p. 96, specifying that the village was situated «some six or more leagues distant from Niwšapuh [Nišapur] according to the Persian measure of reckoning».

The question is complex, because in fact the critical edition of Łazar P'arpec'i is far from satisfactory (Thomson, 1991). The linguistic similarity between the place-name Apahunik', mentioned by Yovhannēs Awagerēc', and that of Apar, is also suspect. The suspicion is reinforced by a comparison of the text with the Armenian historian Sebēos (7th century A.D.), who would seem to draw on an older tradition than Łazar P'arpec'i, and who affirms: «... the saints who bore witness to Christ consummated their martyrdom at Apr Šahr, in the vicinity of the city of Niwšapuh, in the

place which is called T'ełark'uni – all this has been written by the hand of others, as the same history shows».

The place-names in question are quite different. Given the obscurity of the period in question, it is hardly possible, on present evidence, to go much further. It would not be absurd, of course, to postulate two distinct tremors, one at Nišapur in 454, and the other to the north of lake Van in 461; but in view of the complexity of the surviving documentation, these dates cannot be unreservedly accepted.

The district of Apahunik' was located to the north of lake Van: according to the *Buzandaran Patmut'wnk'*, i.e. the Pseudo-Faustus of Byzantium, it was not a district in the true sense, but a «quarter» (*erkir*): cf. Garsoïan (1989, p. 444). Its centre was Manazkert (or Manawazakert, Byzantine Gr. Μανζικέρτ, now Malazgirt), which at the time of this earthquake was considered by the Armenian sources as a site of medium or small extension (Garsoïan, 1989, p. 477). Substantial ruins of the Armeno-Byzantine city are still extant in Manazkert today. One of its most important churches, dedicated to the «Mother of God by the Three Altars», seems to date back to the 4th-5th century (Cuneo, 1988, p. 625). A detailed study of the historical topography on the site is however lacking.

<b>[4]</b>	<b>a night in September 499 Abarne, Arsamosata, Neocaesarea, Nicopolis</b>
sources 1	[Jo. Styl.], <i>Syr. versio</i> 34-35; Marcell. Com. p. 95; Theoph. 144.6
sources 2	<i>Chron. Edess.</i> p. 8; <i>Anon. Eccl. Hist.</i> 109; <i>Chron. Syr.</i> 819, 7; Cedren. 628; Mich. Syr. 2.154 and 160; Sam. An., p. 72; [Dio. Tellmahar.], pp. 259-262 and 275
literature	Ramsay (1890); Cumont (1905); Gatier (1984); Russell (1985)
catalogues	Abich (1882); Grumel (1958); Hermann (1962); Guidoboni (1989); Zeyt'unyan (1991); Guidoboni <i>et al.</i> (1994); Guidoboni and Traina (1995)

This earthquake, which occurred on the borders between Pontus, Armenia and Mesopotamia, was first drawn attention to by Cumont (1905), and later incorporated in the list of Grumel (1958). In view of the type of documentation and of the sites struck, it is more difficult to compare it with Armenian seismic activity as a whole. It seems to belong more naturally to the «cultural» area of Asia Minor and Mesopotamia. But it has been considered in the Armenian tradition by Abich (1882, on the basis of Samuēl Anec'i alone), and more recently by Zeyt'unyan (1991). There is some confusion about the date and location of the event, due to the various traditions, and also due to the ambiguous place-name «Nicopolis» which could refer to different towns. For this reason, the event has been inadvertently duplicated by some catalogues.

The text of Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite (5th-6th century, *Syr. versio* 34-35) contains a detailed description of the effects of an earthquake on the city of Nicopolis; and the account pays particular attention to the behaviour of its inhabitants. In chapter 33, the chronicle had dealt with the disasters which occurred in the year 810 of the Greeks [498-499 A.D.], including a plague of locusts which was held to foreshadow «great earthquakes in the land».

In chapters 34 and 35 he records: «In the month of Īlūl [September] there was a violent earthquake, and a great sound was heard from heaven over the land, so that the earth trembled to its foundations; and all the villages and towns heard the sound and felt the earthquake. Alarming rumours and evil reports came to us from all quarters; and some said that a marvellous sign was seen in the river Euphrates and at the hot spring of Abarnē, in that the water which flowed from their fountains was dried up that day. I do not think this is false, because, whenever the earth is rent by earthquakes, the running waters in those places that are cleft are restrained from flowing, and are at times even turned into another direction [there follows a commentary on *Psalm* 18.7vv] There came too in the

course of this month a letter, which was read in church before the whole congregation, stating that Nicopolis had suddenly collapsed in ruins at midnight and buried all its inhabitants. Some strangers, too, who were there, and certain brethren from our schools, who were travelling there and happened to be on the spot, were buried [in the ruins]. Their companions who came [back from there] told us [this]. The whole wall of the city all round, and everything that was within it, was destroyed that night, and not one person remained alive, except the bishop of the town and two other men, who were sleeping behind the apse of the altar of the church. When the ceiling of the room in which they were sleeping fell, one end of its beams was propped up by the altar wall, and so it did not bury them. A certain brother, whose veracity can be depended upon, has told me as follows. «At eventide of the night when Nicopolis fell, a companion and I were in bed. He was very restless, and said to me, ‘Get up, and let us go’ [they go and sleep in a cave outside the town and come back in the morning, finding] all its houses in ruins, and the people and the cattle, the oxen and the camels, buried underneath; and the sound of their groaning was coming up from under the ground. Those who gathered at the spot rescued the bishop from underneath the beams [of the roof] by which he was protected. He asked for bread and wine to celebrate the eucharist, [but could get none], because the whole town was in ruins and nothing in it was left standing [...] Again, in the north there was a church called that of Arsamosata, which was very strongly built and beautifully decorated. [A great crowd gathers together in it for the commemoration of the martyrs], there were terrible flashes of lightning and violent peals of thunder and frightful noises; and all the people fled to the church, to seek refuge with the bones of the saints. And whilst they were in great fear, and were engaged in prayer and service at midnight, the church collapsed and crushed most of the people who were in it. This happened on the same day on which Nicopolis was destroyed».

[illegible]



long life. We may thus identify the Nicopolis in question with the Pontic city of that name, if only on the basis of the undeniably precise and reliable testimony of the Chronicle of Marcellinus (Gatier, 1984, pp.87-88). Neither it nor the other sites of the same name have been subjected to archaeological investigation.

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| [5]        | <b>602-603 Surb Karapet</b>   |
| sources    | [Jo. Mamikon.] 2.30   |
| literature | Thierry (1983); Avdoyan (1985); Cuneo (1988)  |
| catalogues | Abich (1882); Kostaneanc' (1902); Step'anyan (1964); Kondorskaya and Shebalin (1982); Ambraseys and Melville (1982); Karapetian (1991); Guidoboni <i>et al.</i> (1994); Guidoboni and Traina (1995) |

The earthquake is recorded in the seismological bibliography, where it is located in the district of Tarōn.

Pseudo-Yovhannēs Mamikonean (7th century A.D., 2.30) records: «In that year, the [Monastery of the Holy] Karapet, which was in Innaknean, collapsed in ruins, for there was a very severe earthquake; and the houses below it were [also] destroyed. Because the foundations of the church stood in the earthquake area, it shifted and collapsed in ruins».

**ի սոյն ամի Կարապետն, որ յիննակնեանն էր, փլաւ, զի շարժ խիստ եղել:**

The Armenian text of the printed critical edition does not include the details about the collapses, which were corroborated by Avdoyan (1985) on the basis of unpublished manuscripts.

The monastery of Surb Karapet (*Karapeti vank'*) or convent of the nine springs (*Innakneani vank'*), situated in the mountains to the NW of Muš (the present Mount Bazmasar, altitude 2150 m), was the most important centre of the canton of Tarōn, and was an important pilgrimage site for all Armenians. The architectural history of the monastery, reconstructed on several occasions and now in ruins, can only be traced in any detail, however, from the 15th century on. The oldest nucleus of the surviving buildings dates back to the 7th-8th century; it may be inferred that the earthquake razed to the ground a yet earlier monastery.

The date of the earthquake can be deduced from the beginning of the paragraph (in the first year of the reign of P'oukas [the Byzantine emperor Phocas = 602]). Some scholars have expressed doubts as to whether this earthquake really occurred – most recently Avdoyan (1985, p. 361 ff.) – on the grounds that the present remains of the church cannot date any earlier than the 8th century. However, investigation of the terrain and of the church itself has shown that the church was in fact rebuilt at a yet earlier date, so that there is no need to reject Pseudo-John Mamikonean's statement. See Thierry (1983, p. 390). Further bibliography in Cuneo (1988, pp. 620-623).

According to Abich (1882), an earthquake on the site in 593 was attested by Samuēl Anec'i; in fact, this author cites the following datum for 606: «Various deaths» (պէսպէս մահիբ). The doubt remains as to whether Abich or his informant were drawing on a different manuscript, and one more complete as far as this event is concerned. The question of the date remains however open to debate.

Ambraseys and Melville (1982, p. 36) also took into consideration the statement of Michael the Syrian, who speaks vaguely about earthquakes in the eastern zone of the Byzantine empire (4.387; cf. Guidoboni *et al.* 1994, p. 351); it is not clear, however, whether there is any link here with this particular earthquake, and it is possible that he was confusing it with event [6], though this latter dates to 632.

- [6] **c. 632 Armenia**  
sources Mich. Syr., 4.414  
catalogues Guidoboni and Traina (1995)

An earthquake in Armenia, unattested by the seismological bibliography, is reported by the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian (12th century, 4.414) «And at that time there was another tremor in the region of Armenia, and it destroyed many places»

Երեւոյի շրջանը եւ շատ մօտ ընդհանրապէս չի հիշուիր շրջանը

In view of the chronological unreliability of Michael the Syrian, it is hardly possible to be more specific about the date and place of this earthquake.

- [7] **735 District of Vayoc' Jor**  
sources 1 Mov. Dasx. 3.17; Orb. 31  
sources 2 Kir. Ganj. 2.41; *Synax. Arm. (Patr. Orient.* 21, 767-769)  
literature Gasparyan (1987); Cuneo (1988); Nikonov (1989)  
catalogues Abich (1882); Kostaneanc' (1902); Step'anyan (1964); Kondorskaya and Shebalin (1982); Ambraseys and Melville (1982); Karapetian (1991); Guidoboni *et al.* (1994); Guidoboni and Traina (1995)

The destruction of an entire valley as a result of this earthquake, which caused at least 10 000 victims, is one of the most important events reported by the sources for this period.

As recorded in Armenian sources, this earthquake appears to have been very destructive: mention is made of the collapse of buildings, landslides, and many changes to the water system in the area. Three medieval Armenian historians contain fairly similar reports. The earliest of them is Movsēs Dasxuranc'i (10th-11th century, 3.17), who records: «...and an impenetrable darkness descended over the borders of Mozu, and the earth shook for forty days, and nearly 10 000 souls were swallowed up; and because of this [the place] was called Vayoc'Jor [valley of woe]».

Եւ ի վերուստ խաւար անտեսանելի կալաւ զՄոզանի սահմանն. եւ զաւուրս քառասուն շարժեցաւ վայրն, եւ խորասոյգ եղեալ ընկղմեցան կենդանւոյն ոգիք իբրեւ տասն հազար. վասն այնորիկ վայոց ձոր անուանեցաւ:

Step'annos Orbēlean (13th century, ch. 31) provides the most detailed description of the event: «Suddenly the punishment of God above was felt. There was thick darkness over the whole region for forty days; and a powerful and destructive earthquake occurred. There was such a terrible upheaval of the earth that damage extended from deep in abysses to great heights. The earth heaved like the waves of the sea; mountains collapsed, rocks completely crumbled, while houses and fine palaces became a tomb for their inhabitants. Springs dried up and rivers disappeared. Everywhere shook, and sounds like human voices rose up from the depths into the open air: 'Vay jor, Vay jor' [woe, valley, woe, valley]. Of those who were registered as taxpayers, we know that about 10 000 were swallowed up alive, but no-one knows how many others lost their lives. That is why the place was called Vayoc'Jor».

Ապա յանկարծակի եհաս ի վերուստ պատուհաս Տեառն. եւ կալեալ խաւար շօշափելի զկաւառն ամենայն զաւուրս 40, եւ շարժումն եւ դողդումն սաստիկ. զի եռայր երկիրն ահեղ դողացմամբ յանդնդոց եւ բարձրանայր մինչեւ ի վեր. եւ անդէն իբր զալիս ծովու փլուզանիւր. լերինք տապալէին, վէմք ի հիմանց քակտէին, տունք եւ



ապարանք գեղեցիկը լինէին գերեզմանք բնակչաց. աղբիւրը խցէին. գետ կորնչէին. եւ ամենայն տեղի երեքէր տատանմամբ. եւ ծայնք մարդկեղեն բարբառոյ յանդնոց եւ ի վերուստ յօդոց «վայ ձոր, վայ ձոր». եւ կենդանւոյն ընկղմեցան ոգիք 10000, զորս գիտէին եւ ի թիւ արկին. եւ զանճանօթիցն ոչ ոք գիտէր զհամարն. յաղագս որոյ կոչեցաւ անուն կաւառին վայոց ձոր.

A similar account, but much abbreviated, is found in Kirakos of Ganjak (13th century, 2.41). The tradition of the earthquake was also mentioned by the Armenian Synaxarion (*Patr. Orient.* 21, 767-769).

According to Nikonov (1989), aerial photographic and geomorphological analyses apparently confirm traces of the event on the ground (*cf.* Gasparyan, 1987).

The so-called valley of the Vayoc' Jor (territory of Egnajor, Armenia) comprises various monastic settlements, but many of them are late in date, and none is earlier than the 9th century (*cf.* Cuneo, 1988, pp. 380-401). In the absence of more detailed research and, more especially, of archaeological excavations, it may only be presumed that the earthquake attested by the sources had catastrophic effects on local building, and that the religious centres – for there are no reports of villages – were not reconstructed until long afterwards. An important piece of evidence is, however, provided by the disappearance of the ancient place-name «Mozu», though this is not attested even by the earliest sources. The etymology of «Vayoc' Jor», while no doubt seismically determined, may not indeed have been prompted by this particular earthquake, in view of the fact that a 7th century text like the *Asxarhac'oyc'* (*Geography*) already cites it; this could however be a later gloss.

<b>[8]</b>	<b>743-744 The Gates of the Caspian [Derbend or the territory of Tališ]</b>
sources 1	Theoph. p. 418.14-15
sources 2	Cedren. pp. 805-806
literature	Simonyan (1989)
catalogues	von Hoff (1840); Mallet (1853); Grumel (1958); Ambraseys and Melville (1982); Guidoboni (1989); Guidoboni <i>et al.</i> (1994); Guidoboni and Traina (1995)

This earthquake is cited in some catalogues of the Mediterranean. The event is attested by Byzantine sources.

Theophanes (8th century, 418.14-5) records an earthquake in this region in the year of the world 6235, during the third year of the reign of Constantine V: «In this year [743-744] a sign appeared in the north, and dust fell in various places. There was also an earthquake at the Caspian Gates».

Τούτω τῷ ἔτει κατὰ βορρᾶν ἐφάνη σημεῖον, καὶ κόνις κατῆλθεν εἰς τόπους. γέγονε δὲ καὶ σεισμός εἰς τὰς Κασπίας πύλας.

Cedrenus (12th century, 805-806) takes up the information provided by Theophanes, repeating his words.

Ambraseys and Melville (1982, pp. 37 and 172) maintain that the earthquake was registered in Iran, to the east of the ancient capital of Ray, in the valley of Tang-e Sar-e Darreh, and explain the fact that it is reported by Byzantine sources by supposing that it was «a large magnitude event». In fact, the name «Caspian Gates» was used in an imprecise way to indicate various mountain passes in the Caucasus which linked the Mediterranean area to the Iranian plateau and Central Asia. The name, already familiar to Greek and Roman authors, had later generally come to refer to the pass of Derbend; this city, even under Islamic rule, was known as «the Gate» or even «the Gate of Gates», since it represented the most important pass between the Caucasus and Northern Iran. An Armenian source like the translation of the Pseudo-Callisthenes (5th century A.D., but revised in the 13th)



Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc‘i (John Kat‘olikos, 10th century, 133-134) records an earthquake at the royal residence at Dvin, after the death of Ašot Bagratuni «prince of princes»: «At this time, a severe earthquake in the city of Dvin wrought great damage to the houses, city walls and palaces. Desolation and tremors filled the city in general, and caused many people to perish. The fear of disaster was so immense, that no one remained under a roof, but lamenting their hardships they all fled to the market places and the streets. The stinging frost of winter augmented their distress, so that many suffered frostbite from the cold».

Բայց զայսու ժամանակաւ ահագին իմն շարժմանց եղելոց ի Դւին քաղաքի, բազում սասանութիւնս եւ փլուզումնս տանց եւ պարսպաց եւ ապարանից լինէր, եւ առհասարակ քանդումն եւ դրդումն առնորք քաղաքն. այլ եւ մահ յոլովից մարդկան ի վերայ հասանէր. եւ այնպէս ահագին իմն լինէր վտանգ տագնապին՝ մինչեւ ոչ ոք մնալ ընդ յարկաւ, այլ ի հրապարակս եւ ի փողոցս ելեալ հաշեալ հառաչէին: Իսկ ցրտաշունչ սառնամանիք ձմեռայնւոյն առաւել բերէր զլքացումն հեծութեան, զի յոլովք մտեալք եւ ծայրատեալք լինէին.

Some details of the event are reported by Step‘annos Tarōnac‘i or Asofik (10th-11th century, 2.2): «In his time [that of Prince Ašot Bagratuni], during Lent, on the day of little Saturday, there was a terrifying earthquake which killed many people and destroyed luxurious houses, and it lasted for three months».

Եւ սորա աւուրս, յժԺ Թուականին ի քառասուններորդս պահոց ի փոգրիկ շաբաթուն եղել շարժումն ահագին եւ զբազումս կոտորեաց եւ զգեղեցիկ շինուածս տապալեաց, եւ տեւեաց մինչեւ ի ժամանակս երից ամսոց.

The number of victims is reported by Movsēs Dasxuranc‘i (10th-11th century, 2.11), though he gives a later date: «In the 318th year of the Armenian era [869-870] there was a terrible earthquake at Dvin, which remained active for a whole year and swallowed up 120 000 people into the abyss. This was an example for the admonition of Man».

Եւ յ318 Թուականին Հայոց անհնարին եւ հիացուցանող շարժ Դվնայ, որ զամ մի ողջոյն դողացեալ խորասուզեաց յանդունդս անձինս իբրեւ երկոտասան բիւր մարդկան: Ահա նմանութիւն խրատոյ այս ի մարդ:

The date of 13 February derives from a 10th century liturgical text, the Palestine-Georgian Calendar, which records under 13 February: «On 13 February there was an earthquake on the feast of St. Denetrios [= Demetrius] and Martinianus Monachus»

օգ. Դոձձ, Յ(ժոջո)օձա ճընյճրյճի (Նօհ), ճձ ժճրյճոճոճոճ ժոճձճոճոճձձ.

The editor of the text, Garitte (1958, p. 158), has pointed out that in the Byzantine liturgy, the feast of St. Demetrius of Thessalonica is held on 26 October, which is the date of two earthquakes which reportedly occurred at Constantinople in 740 and 989, and are recorded in a particular way by the Byzantine liturgy.

In writing about the 893 earthquake at Dvin, T‘ovma Arcruni (11th century, 3.22) records: «This earthquake was more severe than the one in the time of Zachariah Catholicos of Armenia, after the seventh year of the Armenian captivity».

Այս շարժումն սաստնագոյն քան որ եղել յամս Զաքարիայի Հայոց կաթողիկոսի, յետ է ամի գերութեանն Հայոց:

This chronological reference would take us to the year 859/860, as reported by some catalogues, thus duplicating the event, but it is unfortunately rather vague. The date of 863 is confirmed by Samuēl Anec'i (12th century), who assigns the event to the year 312 of the Armenian era. The date of the earthquake varies between 861 and 869. This was a difficult time for Armenia, which was then under Arab domination, and given the uncertainty in the use of chronological systems, it is possible that historians had difficulty in establishing when the earthquake really occurred.

**[11] the night of 27 December 893 Dvin**

- sources 1 al-Tabarī 4.2139; Jo. Cathol. ch. 32, 162-163; unpublished letter of the bishop Maštoc', in Ms. arm. Ven. San Lazzaro 47; colophons published by Yovsēp'ean (1951, nos. 31 and 35); Th. Arcr. 3.22
- sources 2 El. Nisib. 192-193
- literature D'Onofrio (1973); Abrahamyan (1976); Cuneo (1988); K'ałant'aryan (1992); Kalantarian *et al.* (1992)
- catalogues Abich (1882); Kostaneanc' (1902); Grumel (1958); Hermann (1962); Step'anyan (1964); Kondorskaya and Shebalin (1982); Ambraseys and Melville (1982); Karapetian (1991); Guidoboni *et al.* (1994); Guidoboni and Traina (1995)

The city of Dvin was struck by a second earthquake, even more destructive than the former in 863. It is reported in apocalyptic terms by various historical sources. The quake is listed both by the main seismic catalogues and by the earthquake lists compiled by historians.

Yovhannēs Draxanakerc'i (John Kat'olikos, 10th century, ch. 32, pp. 162-163) records: «Unexpectedly, about this time in the course of the night severe tremors occurred in the city of Dvin and caused extensive destruction, terror, ruin and loss of life to the inhabitants of the city; for the earthquake pulled down all the walls of the city, as both the palace of the magnates and the houses of the common people became in the twinkling of an eye like a desolated tract of rocks. It also demolished and destroyed the Divinely-built church of the Kat'olikosate as well as the other martyria with solid foundations, which appeared to the onlookers almost like holes full of rocks. The destruction of multitudes of men, who had suffocated under their roofs and mounds of earth because their minds had become as hard as rock and without compassion, made them resort to lamentations and tearful cires. I shall not speak of the victims' relatives, sympathizers and spouses, whose cries and lamentations, as well as the piteous voices of the chorus of minstrels [virgins?], accompanied by the wails of black-clad women and griefstricken men reached up to the heavens. As it was not possible to bury the multitude of corpses in graves, many were thrown into abysses, ravines and gorges».

Ձայսու ժամանակաւ ահագին իմն հեղակարծումն: ժամու սաստիկ շարժմանց եղելոց ի գիշերի ի Դուին քաղաքի՝ բազում սասանումն եւ սարսափումն եւ դրդումն եւ կործանումն զբնակչօք քաղաքին զեղեալ, հիմն ի վեր տապալէր: Վասն զի առհասարակ ի վայր փլուզեալ զպատուար պարսպացն եւ զապարանս գլխաւորացն եւ զտունս ռամկաց՝ իբրեւ զերիզուտ վայրս առապարաց յական թօթափել տեսանէր. այլ եւ զաստուածաշէն եկեղեցին կաթողիկոսարանին եւ զայլ եւս հաստահեղոյն վկայարանս՝ դրդեալ քանդեալ աւերեալ ի վայր հոսէր. որ գրեթէ իբրեւ զփապարս վիմուտս դերբկաց սարսափելի տեսողացն երեւէր: Այլ եւ հեղձամղձուկ յարկածաճուկ հողաթաւալ հողահեղձոյց սատակումն դիակոյտ բազմութեանն, որ կարծրագոյն քարեղէն եւ անկարեկին միտս էր ստացեալ՝ յարդարէր զնա ի բազում ողբ եւ յարտօսրաթոր կականմունս: Թողում ասել զազգագիցս եւ զկարեգիցս եւ զլծագից հարազատութիւն մարդկան, որոց կականումն եւ ողբումն եւ աշխարումն գուժից. Ճշոյ եւ կանչոյ եւ կառանչոյ, եւ աղիողորմ

ծայնք երկեցիկ կուսանաց եւ սեւազգած կանանց, եւ արանց վշտահար հեծութեամբ սգացելոց՝ մինչեւ յերկինս բարձրացեալ հասանէր: Իսկ զբազմութիւնսն դիականցն ոչ բաւեալ տալ գերեզմանաց՝ զբազումս ի վիհս եւ ի խորափիտս եւ ի դարափլակս ընկեցեալ ծածկէին:

This description is followed by a copy of the letter of consolation sent to the citizens of Dvin by the ecclesiastic Maštoc<sup>4</sup>, the future patriarch, who at the time was on a spiritual retreat on the island of Sewan. An unpublished version of this letter, diverging in several respects from the text handed down by Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc<sup>5</sup>, is contained in Ms. 47 of San Lazzaro degli Armeni in Venice.

The event is also reported by two colophons of contemporary manuscripts, which enable us to date the event more precisely to the year 893 (Yovsēp'ean 1951, nos. 31 and 35). The colophon of an Armenian gospel (ms. Tübingen 13.4) records: «[It was written... in the year 893...] In that year the city of Dvin was destroyed. Many people lost their lives and the churches were knocked down. [God] did these things to purge our sins».

Յորում ամի կործանեցաւ Դւին քաղաք ի շարժմանէ եւ բազումք մեռան եւ նկեղեցիք տապալեցան: Այս իրս գործեցաւ վասն ծովացեալ մեղաց իմոց:

The colophon in the Eǰmiacin ms. 977/70 provides similar information.

In a recent note, the Armenian philologist Abrahamyan (1976, cols. 139-144) has attempted to correct the date of the earthquake and to assign it to the year 894, rather than 893, on the basis of his calculation of Easter and other chronological evidence yielded by the colophons. But he failed to take into account the Arabic sources which, as we shall see, provide some extremely useful complementary documentation. In fact, this earthquake did not only leave its mark on the Armenian tradition; for since Dvin at the time was ruled by an Arab Caliphate, the earthquake also drew the attention of the central power. A letter was dispatched to Baghdad, as reported by al-Ṭabarī (9th-10th century, 4.2139), from which the exact date of the earthquake can be calculated: «In that year [280 of the Hegira = 23 March 893 – 12 March 894 A.D.] in the month of dū'l-ḥiǧǧa [11 February – 12 March] a letter from Dabīl [= Dvin] reported a lunar eclipse on 14 šawwāl (= 27 dicembre), which lasted all night long. When people woke up in the morning, they found the earth wrapped in persistent darkness. In the afternoon a strong and black wind rose up and lasted for a third of the night. After the wind, the earth shook. In the morning, people saw that the town had disappeared; only 100 houses were still standing. According to the letter, 30 000 people were taken from the ruins and buried. After the first shock, five more followed. It was said that the total number of victims in the ruins was 150 000».

ثم تجلى في آخر الليل من ديبيل بانكساف القمر في شوال لاربعة وفيها فيما ذكر في ذي الحجة ورد كتاب ریح سوداء شديدة مظلمة ودامت الظلمة عليهم فلما فاصبحوا صبيحة تلك الليلة والدنيا عشرة خلت منها الا اليسير الليل زلزلوا فاصبحوا وقد ذهبت فدامت الى ثلث الليل فلما كان ثلث كان عند العصر هبت كت الكتاب ثلثين الف نفس يخرجون من قدر مائة دار وانهم دفنوا الى حين المدينة فلم ينج من منازلها جملة من اخرج من تحت الهدم بعد الهدم خمس مرات وذكر عن بعضهم تحت الهدم ويدفنون وانهم زلزلوا مسون ومائة الف ميتان.

A similar account is contained in the Syro-Arabic version of Elijah of Nisibis (10th-11th century, 192-193), whereas Barhebraeus (13th century) locates the event in India; this latter author is the probable cause of the misunderstanding mentioned above. A little less than a century later T'ovma Arcruni (11th century, 3.22) amplified these accounts in a more extensive text full of bibli-

cal images, and containing a number of useful circumstantial details: «In the third year of his [Prince Smbat Bagratuni's] reign over Armenia, God's anger caused the innermost depths to crash together with tremblings and shakings in the abyss like agitated torrents. The lowest part of the earth collapsed and was firmly locked in the region of Sandaramet [the divinity of the underground]; fierce winds blew over the darkened waters, trampling down the deep, solid foundations of the earth and causing its thick, dense and immeasurable infinity to heave, until it burst onto the surface of the earth opposite the city of Artasat, which is called Blur, where the capital city of Dvin stands. This populous [city], surrounded by fortified ramparts and swarming and teeming with commerce and all kinds of impurity, was completely destroyed. Hell opened its mouth wide and swallowed into its depths great numbers of people. For some their houses became their tombs, just as it swallowed up the houses of the army of the Korahites [Numbers 16:30-34]. God who had earlier spared the repentant Ninevites [Jonah 4:11], now had no pity for the stony hearts of the citizens of Dvin. Even the holy places and houses of prayer were a prey to the earthquake, their walls cracking and collapsing, as on the death of King Ozias in the days of the prophet Isaiah, when at the voice of the seraphim the temple of the Lord was shaken and its doorposts destroyed [Isaiah 6:4]. Similarly in the time of Zechariah the prophet there was an earthquake as far as the Mount of Olives [Zach. 14:4]. It is said that the number of people killed by the earthquake was more than seventy thousand. This earthquake was more severe than the one in the years of Zachariah Catholicos of Armenia, after the seventh year of the Armenian captivity. [859/860, or later]. The blessed bishop Grigor, prelate of Rštunik', also happened to be there. He was unable to escape with his companions, since they were then at prayer on the mountain. So some of them were buried in that spot by the same earthquake».

Ի սորա յերրորդ ամի թագաւորութեանն ի վերայ Հայոց աստուածատուր բարկութեամբ շանդղաշարժ վրդովմամբք ներբագոյն խորոցն պատահեալ միմեանց սահանախաղաց դղրդմամբ, հիմնաշարժ տապալմամբ, ներքսագոյն երկիր թուլացեալ պնդափակ աղիեալ սանդարամետական սահմանին, բարկութեան հողմոց շնչեալ բնդ ջրոցն խաւարայնոց, ի կոհակս անդնդաբակս զթանձրայատակ երկրի գկարծր եւ զծանրալիր անկշիռ անբացութիւնն տատանեալ, մինչ յերեսս երկրի ի վեր մղեալ հանդէպ քաղաքին Արտաշատու, որ Բլուր նորուն ասի, յորում շահաստանն Դուին, մարդախիտ պարսպաւոր պատնիշօք պատուարեալ եւ տուրելառիկ վաճառականութեամբ եւ ազգի պղծութեամբ յափրացեալ յղկացեալ՝ զնա ի հիմանց տապալեալ. բերանաբաց դժոխաբար լայնեալ զբերան իւր՝ յոգունց քան թէ սակաւուց արար վիժել յանդունդս, որոց ոմանք եւ տունք նոցա գերեզմանք նոցին եղեն: Գունակ Կորխային բանակին յանդնդաբակ տունսն զքնակութիւնսն արարին, անխայեալ ի նինուէականն ստորջացեալ նախ անդ ո՛չ անխայեալ առ քարեղէն սիրտ քաղաքացւոցն Դուինայ: Նա եւ տեղիք սրբութեանց տունք արօթիցն զշարժմանն կիրս կրեալ, պատառմամբ որմաշարժ լինելով, որպէս յայնժամ ի մահուն Ոգիայ արքայի, յաւուրս ետայեալ մարգարէի՝ ի ձայնէ սրովբէից շարժեալ տաճարին տեառն, մինչ բարձրանալ դրանդեացն: Որպէս եւ առ Զաքարիայի մարգարէի շարժեալ մինչ ի լեառն Զիթենեաց: Եւ ասի լինել թիւ մարդկանն ապականելոց ի շարժմանէ՝ ոգի առաւել քան Հո: Այս շարժումն սաստագոյն քան որ եղել յամս Զաքարիայի Հայոց կաթողիկոսի, յետ է ամի գերութեանն Հայոց: Անդ հանդիպեալ լինէր եւ երանելի եպիսկոպոսն Գրիգոր Ռշտունեաց վսեմ. ոչ կարաց իւրայովքն զերծանել, իբրեւ յայնժամ աղօթաւ ի լեառն: Եւ նորայքն ոմանք ի նմին շարժմանէ գերեզմանացան ի նմին:

At the time, the city of Artasat (Artaxata) was deserted. Nonetheless, its mention by Arcruni is important as evidence of the area affected by the earthquake.

The event was of extreme gravity, and determined the removal of the kat'olikosate from its seat at Dvin to that of Vafarsapat (now Ejmiacin) where it still remains. Traces of this earthquake were

found during recent excavations in the area of the Cathedral and the residence of the Kat'olikos at Dvin (cf. K'ałant'aryan, 1992; Kalantarian *et al.*, 1992; fig. 8). In general, on the monuments of the city, cf. Cuneo (1988, pp. 114-117). For the later Arab authors, who abridge the data of al-Tabarī, cf. Ambraseys and Melville (1982, p. 175, no. 33).

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|-------------|---|
| <b>[12]</b> | <b>c. 906 K'argop'</b>  |
| sources     | Orb. 44   |
| literature  | Cuneo (1988)  |
| catalogues  | Abich (1882); Step'anyan (1964); Kondorskaya and Shebalin (1982);<br>Ambraseys and Melville (1982); Karapetian (1991); Guidoboni <i>et al.</i> (1994);<br>Guidoboni and Traina (1995) |

Approximately a century and a half after the major earthquake of Vayoc'Jor (735 A.D.), another seismic event of some magnitude was recorded in the same region; the sites struck included K'argop' (*i. e.* the monastery of the Vegetarians, *Xotakerk'*). The earthquake is recorded by the seismological tradition.

Step'annos Orbēlean (13th century, ch. 44) mentions that, after the death of Prince Ašot Bagratuni, the church of Xotakerk', also called K'argop' [the information given in Ambraseys and Melville, 1982, p. 38 is incorrect], was destroyed in an earthquake, together with the monastery: «After the death of the pious and royal Prince Ašot, the church and the whole monastery building were destroyed in a terrible earthquake».

Եւ ապա վախճանի բարեպաշտ եւ արքայաշուք Աշոտ. եւ ի սաստիկ շարժմանէ տապալին եկեղեցիքն եւ ամենայն շինուածք վանիցն.

There follows the correspondence between Queen Šušan and Bishop Yovhannēs, dated 910, concerning the business of rebuilding church and monastery, which was completed in 911. The monastery of K'argop' (*Xotakerac' vank'*), situated approximately 1 km north of the village of Xačik, was reconstructed after the earthquake. The surviving remains comprise structures built of roughly squared blocks of stone; more symmetrically hewed are the blocks of the external corners and the visible architectonic structures (cf. Cuneo, 1988, p. 395).

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|-------------|--|
| <b>[13]</b> | <b>23 March 995 – 21 January 996 Balu, Cop'k' [Covk'];<br/>Pałnatun [prob. Palin], districts of Hašteank' and Xorjean</b>  |
| sources 1   | St. Tar. 3.36  |
| sources 2   | Ibn Tağrī Birdī (4.169)  |
| literature  | Adontz-Garsoïan (1970); TAVO (1988b)   |
| catalogues  | Abich (1882); Kostaneanc' (1902); Step'anyan (1964); Kondorskaya and Shebalin (1982); Karapetian (1991); Guidoboni <i>et al.</i> (1994); Guidoboni and Traina (1995) |

This earthquake struck a series of districts in the border area between present-day Armenia and Turkey. It is known to the seismological tradition (Karapetian, 1991 duplicates the event, recording one for the Kars area, no. 16, and one for «Balu», no. 17). Cf. also Kostaneanc' (1902, p. 18).

The source is Step'annos Tarōnac'i «Asofik» (10th-11th century, 3.36), who records: «At that time, in the year 444 of the era of the Armenians [23 March 995 – 24 March 996], the earth shook, particularly in the district of IV Armenia: Hašteank', Xorjean, Cop'k', Balu and Pałnatun. And all the buildings collapsed at the same time».

Ի սոյն ժամանակի, ի 444 թուին շարժ եղաւ երկիր, բայց սաստագոյն Չորրորդ Հայոց, Հաշտեանք, Խորճեան, ծոփք, Պալու եւ Պաղնատուն. եւ բոլորովին փլան շինուածք ամենայն ի հիմանէ դողդեալք...

It must be the same earthquake reported by the Arab historian Ibn Tagrī Birdī (15th century, IV, 169): «In that year [385 of the Hegira = 4 February 995 – 21 January 996 A.D.] strong earthquakes caused the world to shake; many people died in the ruins».

وفيهما زلزلت الدنيا زلزلة عظيمة. مات فيها تحت الهدم خلق كثير.

The area affected by this earthquake was of considerable extension (fig. 6). The town of Palu still exists today, while the place-name «Palnatun» perhaps corresponds to Palin (TAVO, 1988b; see also Adontz-Garsoïan, 1970, pp. 16, 32 and 39 f.). The districts of Cop'k', Xorjean and Xašteank', bordering on each other, are situated in the area between the present towns of Erzincan and Diyarbakir. There are no recent studies, or at any rate reliable ones, on the settlement pattern in these mountain districts.

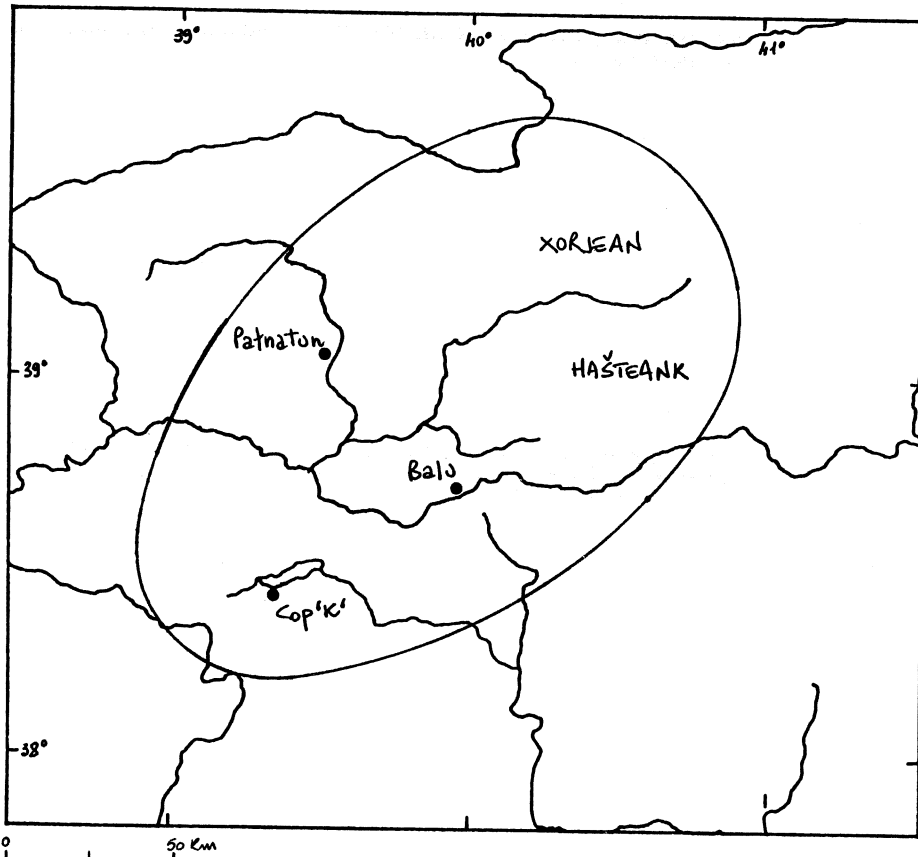


Fig. 6. Map of the major effects of the earthquake of 995-996.