

grapher might say. The condition of the lake in his day was probably very much the same as it is to-day. Later, however, there appears to have been a change. Near the south shore of the lake there is a little island, on which stand the ruins of an ancient Armenian monastery. Around it the stone houses of an ancient village can be seen submerged in water to a depth of twenty or thirty feet. Local tradition, recorded in a book preserved till the massacres of 1895 in a neighboring Armenian village, relates that the monastery was built about A. D. 500 or 600, at which time the island was part of the mainland. The present bed of the lake, so the record goes, was a cultivated plain, through the middle of which flowed a stream. The stream disappeared at the lower end of the plain, but reappeared beyond the mountains, where it joined the Euphrates. Gradually the underground exit was closed with silt, and the plain was converted into a lake. The reduced size of the lake at some historic period is proved not only by the Armenian monastery, but by a line of forts. The forts, which are from one to two thousand years old, plainly mark the course of an important road from Harput to Diarbekir running directly across what is now the bed of the lake at a point about four miles from its western end.

As to the supposed underground outlet, I could find no proof of its existence, though I searched diligently. Nevertheless, in spite of the improbability that a lake which had existed for ages, as is shown by its deposits in deltas and beaches, should be drained by a temporary underground outlet, which soon became clogged again, I accepted such an hypothesis in 1900 as the most probable explanation.