



Summary :

A very powerful earthquake which afflicted the continental part of eastern Asia Minor in 1784.

Date

18th July 1784

Geographical Location

Eastern Asia Minor

1. The destructive earthquake

The earthquake of 18th July 1784 caused great destructions in a great geographical area, from Erzincan until Muş, including the sites of Muş, Kiği, Kozlıca, Tercan and Keyfiyet.

2. Damages at Erzincan and Erzurum

In the city of Erzincan the earthquake caused a sinking of the ground. From the city's 8,000 houses only 500 or 600 survived. [Armenian](#) churches, mosques, inns, a public bath and the city's castle collapsed. The **bezesten** and two public baths survived. Taking advantage of the situation, some Kurds attacked and looted the city. Also three neighbouring villages of Erzincan were destroyed.

At [Erzurum](#) the earthquake demolished the walls of some houses, whereas some other remained crumbling. Also the city's castle was destroyed. The aftershocks lasted five or six months.

3. Damages in other regions

The consequences of the earthquake were felt until the west of lake Van, i.e. in the **kazas** of Erzincan, Kiği, Tercan, Tarom and Ekilis. At Kiği 1,500 people were killed. The villages located along the river Elmalı Dere were totally destroyed, as well as the ones located on the northern slopes of the mountain Koşmur Dağı. In the kaza of Kozlıca the houses of 24 villages were destroyed, whereas most of their inhabitants were killed and many were injured. The survivors asked for their exemption from certain yearly taxes. Also town and villages of the kazas of Erzincan, Kiği and Tercan were totally destroyed. Most of the inhabitants were killed and some survivors found refuge to other places, whereas the ones who remained at their houses asked for tax exemptions. Furthermore the inhabitants of the kazas of Erzincan, Kirocak (Kızocan/Kozlıcan), Tercan and Keyfiyet, due to the earthquake asked not to take part in the obligatory supply of the castles of the eyalet of Çıldır of [Asia Minor](#). From the earthquake the silver mines of Argana or Ergani in the region of Ekilis were flooded.

The earthquake caused destructions also in south-western Muş, where buildings collapsed, amongst which Armenian monasteries, whereas many people were killed too. Many Armenian families of south-western Muş who survived the earthquake moved to Harput.

4. Victims and aftershocks

The total number of victims surpassed the number of 12,000 people. Aftershocks were repeated three to five times each day and continued for four months.



Bibliography :



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

Webliography :



Brief Seismic History of Turkey

http://www.usc.edu/dept/civil_eng/structural_lab/eq-rp/seismicity.html

Glossary :



bezesten (bedesten)

Buliding that hosts various shops and serves as a covered market.



kaza

The basic grade of the Ottoman provincial administration. It included the surrounding region of a city or a town. During the late Ottoman Period it is identified with the kaymakamlık.

Quotations

Description of the earthquake in the city of Erzincan

“There was a great earthquake on the second night of Ramazan and the town of Erzincan completely sunk: however, one hamam and Great Mosque were saved, the rest was demolished. The vali of Erzerum and all his retainers were killed; only his steward and swoed-bearer and a few others were saved: because his secretariat was outside (the town) they were saved”.

Ambraseys, N.N. – Finkel, C.F., *The Seismicity of Turkey and Adjacent Areas: A Historical Review, 1500-1800* (Istanbul 1995), p. 160.