



Summary :

An earthquake which occurred at the bay of Smyrna in 1739 and caused extended destructions in the city (mainly in the Frank quarter) and in Old Phokaia (Eski Foça).

Date

4th April 1739

Geographical Location

Bay of Smyrna, western coast of Asia Minor

1. The earthquake

On the 4th April 1739 an earthquake occurred at the bay of [Smyrna](#) (İzmir).¹ Serious destructions were caused in Smyrna. Especially in the quarter of the Frank quarter (Frangomachalas) many houses collapsed, as well as the consulates of France and Venice, the parish church, the church and the monasteries of the [Jesuits and the Franciscans](#). The destructions in the Muslim and Greek-Orthodox quarters were not serious. With the exception of the destruction of six minarets, no great damages were caused in other public buildings. The number of victims was no more than 80 people. The city's inhabitants remained outside their houses until summer, whereas the aftershocks lasted until September.

2. Destructions outside Smyrna

At the gulf of Phokaia the castles of Old Phokaia (Eski Foça), New Phokaia (Yeni Foça) and Boğaz-i cedid were destroyed. The passage through the gates became impossible, with the result that the inhabitants had to remain outside the city walls. The earthquake destroyed totally $\frac{3}{4}$ of Old Phokaia, where it is documented that the earth opened and tar emerged. According to one source, at Psarochori 13 people were killed, whereas according to another,² part of the delta of Hermus river (Gediz) disappeared.

The earthquake also afflicted [Chios](#), causing many destructions, and was felt in [Constantinople](#) (Istanbul) and the islands of the Aegean.

1. Not all sources agree concerning the day of the earthquake.

2. See Ambraseys, N.N. – Finkel, C.F., *The seismicity of Turkey and adjacent areas. A historical review, 1500-1800* (İstanbul 1995), p. 114.

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

Quotations

Description of the earthquake according to a text from Patmos

“On Friday 24 March 1739 on the 10th hour of the night, there was a great earthquake which lasted five stigmes (10 minutes), and all the houses in Smyrna were rent. At the same time both Foçae, the Old [Eski Foça] and the New [Yeni Foça] were ruined; 13 people were killed at Psarochanon (Agrida); the earthquake was accompanied by a roar and great stench”.

Ambraseys, N.N. – Finkel, C.F., *The seismicity of Turkey and adjacent areas. A historical review, 1500-1800* (İstanbul 1995), p. 114.