

Earthquakes and tsunamis in the past. A guide to techniques in historical seismology.

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Abstract: This handbook defines the discipline of historical seismology by comprehensively detailing the latest research methodologies for studying historical earthquakes and tsunamis. It describes the many historical sources that contain references to seismic phenomena, discusses the critical problems of interpreting such sources, and presents a summary of the various theories proposed (from ancient Greek to modern times) to explain the causes of earthquakes – indispensable factors for understanding historical earthquake descriptions. The text presents numerous examples of interpretations and misinterpretations of historical earthquakes and tsunamis in order to illustrate the key techniques, with a chapter devoted to an explanation of the date and time systems used throughout history in Mediterranean Europe and the Near East. The authors also tie historical seismology research to archaeological investigations and demonstrate how new scientific databases and catalogues can be compiled from information derived from the methodologies described. This is an important new reference for scientists, engineers, historians and archaeologists on the methodologies for analysing earthquakes and tsunamis of the past. Illustrated with examples from a broad geographic region (including Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, central Asia and the Americas), the book provides a valuable foundation for understanding the Earth's seismic past and potential future seismic hazard.

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