

A little known archive of historical earthquakes in Greece for the period 1893-1915

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The seismicity of Greece is very high with an average rate of at least 1 event/yr for earthquakes of magnitude 6 or over. Thanks to the long history of the country hundreds of historical earthquakes were documented from the 6th century BC and several descriptive and parametric catalogues of the Greek historical seismicity have been published. This presentation is about a little known archive of historical Greek earthquakes for the period 1893-1915. The archive was organized at the National Observatory of Athens (NOA) after the establishment on 1892 of the State Seismological Service of the country, the today Institute of Geodynamics. The archive is compiled in two separate books covering the periods 1893-1901 and 1902-1915. In these books hundreds of small and large earthquakes have been documented on the basis of macroseismic observations performed by a network of volunteers acting as local correspondents of NOA. The volunteers were educated persons (e.g. medical doctors, engineers, school teachers) situated in several places of the country. As soon as an earthquake was felt in a place the local correspondent collected information about the earthquake time and perceptibility as well as about its possible impact providing as much detail as possible. This kind of information was collected at NOA in Athens and an entry for each single earthquake event was inserted in the seismological book. The earthquake descriptions often include information on precursory phenomena observed, on the meteorological conditions prevailing at the earthquake time as well as the ground conditions in the observation spots, thus allowing to evaluate the seismic intensity level which for many events was estimated in the 10-degree Forel and Rossi-Forel macroseismic scales.