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Guidoboni E. e Comastri A., *Catalogue of earthquakes and tsunamis in the Mediterranean area from the 11th to the 15th century*. Roma-Bologna 2005

490

〈 207 〉

sources 1

1361 July 17 Ascoli Satriano [southern Italy]

Villani M., *Cron.*, II, p.536; Luois (king) and Joanna I (queen), Order, 11 February 1362, in Bonito (1691, p.570)

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- sources 2 ASVat., *Reg. Lat.*, 503, Calixtus III (pope), Letter, 24 September 1455; *Sacra Congr. Conc.*, Rel., b.81A, Asculana et Ceriniolensis I, 1595, 1600, 1607, 1615, 1618, 1624, 1655; Martin V, (pope), Letter, 28 August 1426, in Ughelli (1721, VIII, cols.230-1)
- historiography Bella Bona (1656); Ughelli (1721); Zuccagni Orlandini (1845); Paci (1853); Cardillo (1885); Camera (1889); Rosso (ed. 1907); Nigri (1914); Jacobone (1962); Morea (1968); Passaro (1980)
- literature Molin (1985)
- catalogues d. Manetti [1457]; Bonito (1691); Perrey (1848); Mallet (1853); Capocci (1861); Mercalli (1883); Baratta (1893, 1901); *Boschi *et al.* (1995, 1997, 2000)
- catalogues p. Giorgetti and Iaccarino (1971); Carrozzo *et al.* (1973); Postpischl (1985); CPTI (1999)

On 17 July 1361 at about 17:15 UT (the hour of vespers), there was a destructive earthquake in the hilly area now in the provinces of Foggia and Bari. The worst affected town was Ascoli Satriano, where most buildings collapsed and there were more than 4,000 victims. At Canosa di Puglia, part of the town walls collapsed and many buildings were damaged.

This was the most important area of feudal Apulia, whose only towns of any size were indeed Ascoli Satriano and Canosa di Puglia. From an economic point of view, Ascoli Satriano still held a position of importance even after the earthquake, partly because of the size of its communal estates, and partly because it was a centre of feudal power. But it was another forty years before substantial reconstruction of the town was begun. As far as historical background and institutional forms are concerned, it must be remembered that Ascoli Satriano and Canosa di Puglia were both towns in the kingdom of Naples. They were situated in Capitanata, one of the three provinces into which Apulia was divided (the other two being the Terra d'Otranto and the Terra di Bari).

The earthquake is recorded in two contemporary sources: the chronicle of Matteo Villani and a document of 1362 reproduced in Bonito (1691). Villani records:

"Of great earthquakes which occurred in Apulia and caused massive damage in the town of Ascoli. On 17 July in that year [1361], at the hour of vespers, there were very great earthquakes in Apulia. They damaged the town of Ascoli in Apulia, reducing it almost entirely to ruins and killing more than four thousand people. Part of the town walls collapsed at Canosa, and it reduced many buildings to ruins; but elsewhere it did little damage".

Di grandi terremoti che furono in Puglia, e assai guastarono della città d'Ascoli.

A dì XVII di luglio del detto anno, in sull'ora del vespero, furono in Puglia grandissimi terremuoti, e apersono la città d'Ascoli di Puglia, e quasi tutta la sobissarono con morte d'oltre a quattromila Cristiani. A Canossa caddono parte delle mura della terra, e molti defici puose i[n] ruina; in altre parti fece poco danno.

The earthquake is mentioned in passing in a document which was formerly preserved in the Archivio della Regia Zecca in Naples, but is now lost. The text is given in Bonito (1691, p.570). It is an order issued by king Louis and queen Joanna I, dated 11 February 1362 (in the fifteenth indiction), authorising a certain Cicco Strazzato to retrieve a quantity of wheat which had probably been buried in the ruins caused by the earthquake.

The authorisation refers to the fact that the earthquake had occurred "in recent days": Cicco Strazzato had probably lodged his petition in the days immediately following the earthquake of 17 July 1361. The authorisation granted in reply was issued some months later, but probably reflects an expression used in the petition. Bonito quotes this document within the context of the earthquake of September 1349, but Ascoli Satriano is a long way from that earthquake's known damage zone; and the expressions used by the royal chancery make it unlikely that an earthquake which occurred twelve years earlier is being referred to. The text given by Bonito is as follows: "Authorisation is hereby given to Cicco Strazzato, a servant living at Ascoli, to extract one hundred *salme* of wheat which he still had after the unexpected earthquake of recent days at the town of Ascoli. Given on 11 February, in the fifteenth indiction [1362], by king Louis and queen Joanna".

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Cicco Straczato habitatori Exculi familiari expeditur Provisio pro extractione sal. Frumenti ce(n)tum quae ei remanserant post Terraemotum inopinatum, qui diebus proximo praeteritis in Civitate Exculi contigit. Sub datum die 11. Februarii Indictione 15. per Ludovicum Regem, et Ioannam Reginam.

The earthquake and subsequent wars had substantial long term effects at Ascoli. In a letter (published in Ughelli 1721, cols.230-1) written by Martin V (1417-1431) at Genzano on 28 August 1426 and sent to the bishop of Lucera, the pope points out that because of the earthquake and subsequent wars, the people of Ascoli had been obliged to rebuild their town on a different and more easily defended site. However, they had already rebuilt the cathedral in its original position in the old town, and now complained of the substantial inconvenience and even impossibility of going there for religious services. In a letter written in Rome by Calixtus III (1455-1458) to the bishop of Troia on 24 September 1455, the pope pointed out that Ascoli cathedral had been largely demolished by the duke of Venosa, for fear that it would be occupied by enemies, with the result that the town was still without a cathedral more than ninety years after the earthquake.

▲ 1361 07 17 17:15 UT							
localities	lat.	long.	I	localities	lat.	long.	I
Ascoli Satriano	41 12	15 34	X	Canosa di Puglia	41 13	16 04	VIII