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Robinson, Andrew. **Earth-shattering events: earthquakes, nations and civilization.** Thames & Hudson, 2016. 256p bibl index ISBN 9780500518595 cloth, \$29.95

This book synthesizes recent literature on earthquakes in various parts of the world and argues that earthquakes often have had far-reaching social, economic, political, and/or cultural consequences. Robinson offers a balanced analysis, highlighting connections (some more direct than others) between major earthquakes and historical developments while avoiding the pitfalls of environmental determinism. An opening chapter focuses on ancient and medieval earthquakes in the Mediterranean world and Asia. The next 10 chapters focus on specific earthquakes in Europe (1750, 1755, and 1857), South America (1812), the United States (1906), and South Asia (2001, 2004) and East Asia (1923, 1976), ending with the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan. Individual chapters draw mostly from published materials, so specialists will find little new here, but Robinson, a skilled writer, provides engaging accounts of the specific disasters and their impact. A few errors appear (e.g., Port Royal, Jamaica, had a population of no more than 6,500 in 1692, so 25,000 people did not die in that catastrophe), but overall this is a highly readable and informed introduction to the history of earthquakes. **Summing Up:** ★★★ Highly recommended. General, public, and undergraduate collections.—*M. Mulcahy, Loyola University Maryland*

