

The protection of life and property from destructive effects of earthquakes is an urgent world-wide problem. Seismologists in order to contribute to this problem use the available data with the final goal to understand the nature of strong earthquakes, the validation of the results of any hazard analysis, the calibration and the location of the strong historical earthquakes. Moreover, it is well known that reliable studies of seismicity and the validation of the results of any hazard analysis require seismological information for a long enough time period. Recognizing that the instrumental data cover only a limited time period there is an increase demand to incorporate all the available information to locate and calibrate historical earthquakes.

Even though the strong-motion records are the most useful tool for a most reliable seismic design there are not enough data and for many places there are no data. Therefore even today the macroseismic intensity, although its incongruity, is one of the parameters more frequently used by seismologists for seismic hazard assessment, because is the only available measure of historical earthquakes.

The most important problem related to the macroseismic data interpretation is founded almost exclusively on expert human intervention and this causes differences in the intensity degree assessment because this parameter is estimated by personal judgement.

The preparation of a macroseismic database is intended to provide a tool for further elaborations, which may use intensity data directly or require the assessment of earthquake parameters.

It is well known that the Aegean and surrounding area has both high seismic activity and a long cultural history yielding in the existence of a large volume of information concerning the effects of earthquakes starting from antiquity to the present time. Several attempts were made for the collection of these historical data and elaboration.

Since 80s, after recognizing the importance of the above parameters a systematic effort has been initiated aiming in the collection and the elaboration of all available information in the Southern Balkan region (Papazachos and Papazachou, 1989, 1997, 2003). Furthermore atlases of macroseismic maps (Papazachos et al., 1982, 1997, 2001) have been published depicting the macroseismic field of strong earthquakes of the historical and instrumental periods. Papers have been published on source parameters determination and attenuation studies and based on macroseismic data (Papazachos 1992; Papazachos and Papaioannou 1997, 1998; Papazachos et al., 1999).

Within the module NA4: "A Distributed Archive of Historical Earthquake Data" (coordinator of the module Dr. M. Stucchi) of the EU-NERIES project, a database was compiled on a joint effort of ITSAC (as module Partner) and the Geophysical Laboratory of the Thessaloniki University for the time period 1000-1999, which is hosted by the INGV-Mi (<http://www.emidius.eu/AUTH/>). The source of the data (macroseismic Intensity Data Points) are for the historical (before 1900) earthquakes the books of Papazachos and Papazachou (1989, 1997, 2003) and for the earthquakes of the instrumental era are the bulletins of the National Observatory, the books of Papazachos and Papazachou (1989, 1997, 2003) and individual studies.

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