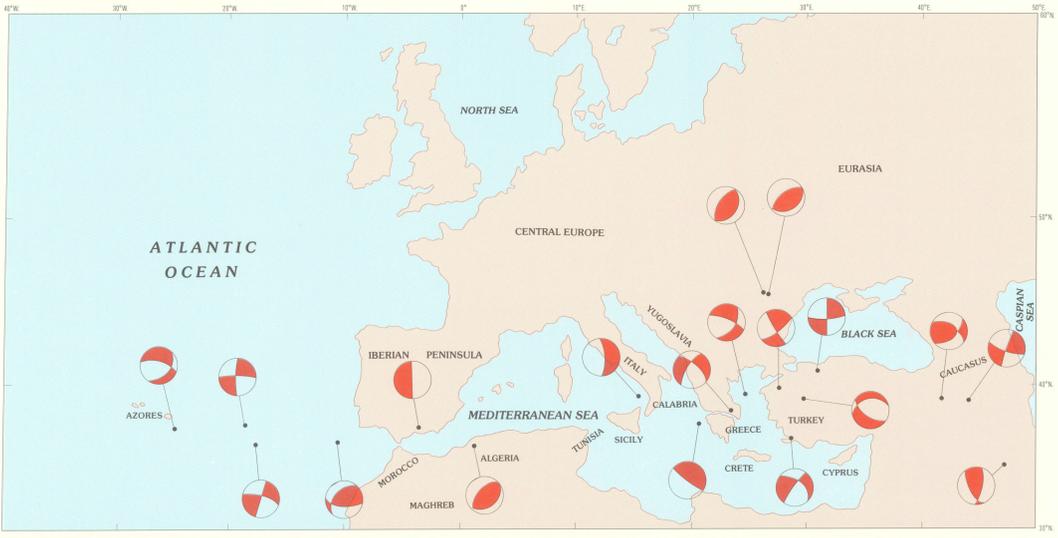
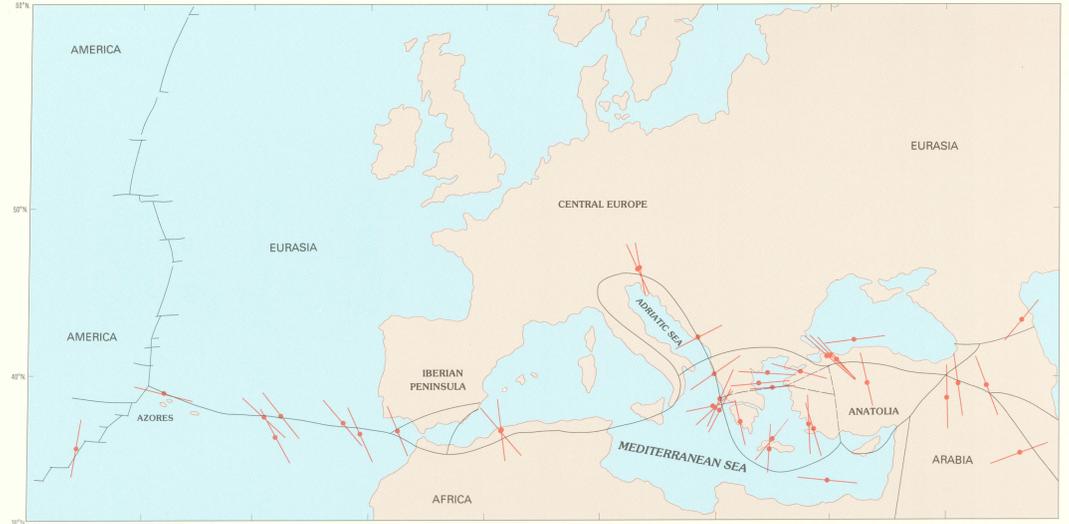


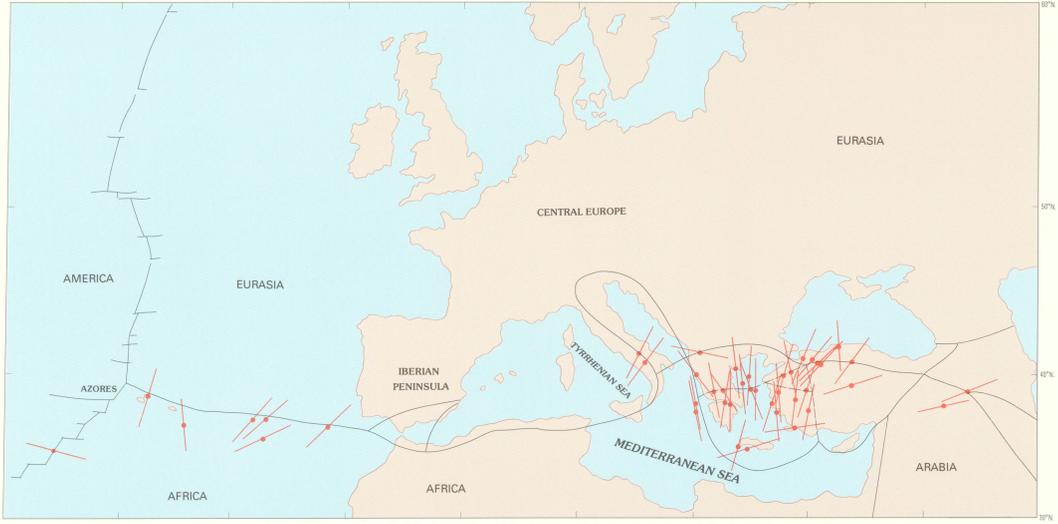
Map A. Seismicity of the Mediterranean and adjacent areas for earthquake epicenters located instrumentally from 1962 through 1991. The data base represents events with magnitude ≥ 4 (M_0 or M_s) which have been reported by 10 or more seismological stations.



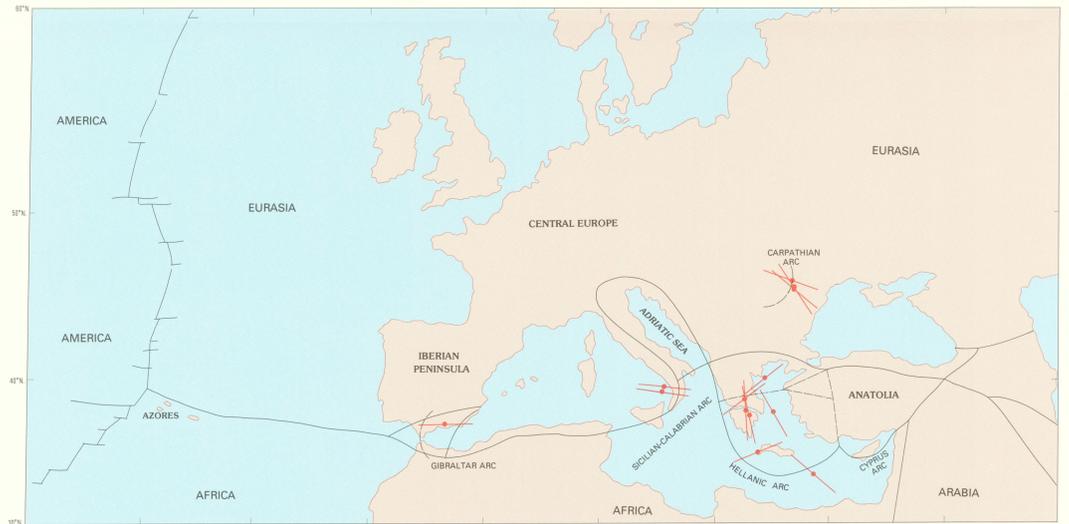
Map B. Focal mechanism solutions for the most significant earthquakes with magnitudes greater than 7 which have occurred in the area of the Eurasia-Africa plate boundary. The focal mechanisms are based on P-wave observations which have been projected on the lower hemisphere of the focal sphere. The red areas denote compressions and the white areas denote dilatations; dots denote the epicenter location. The hypocenter and fault plane parameters are listed in table 1.



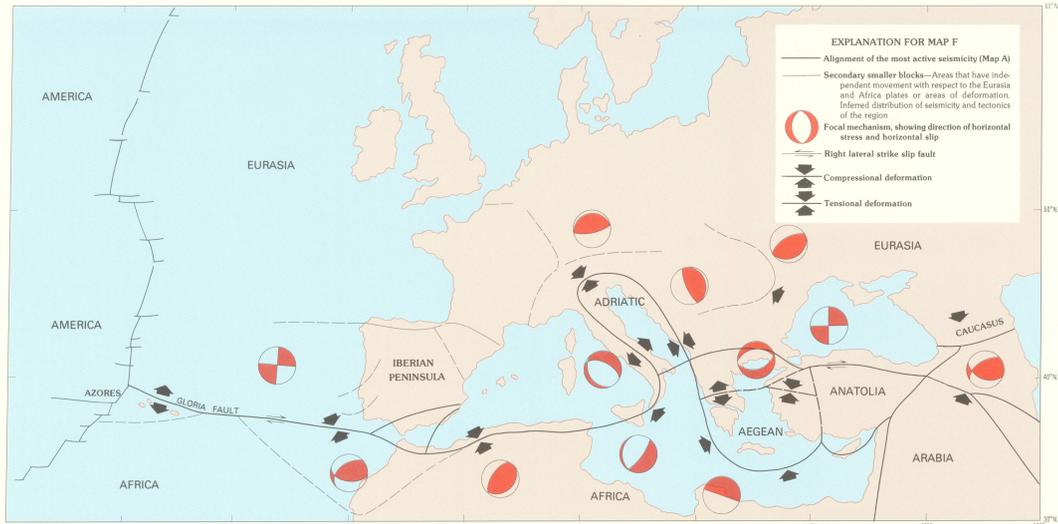
Map C. Horizontal projection of the T-axes, with plunge less than 45°, for shallow depth-of-focus earthquakes ($h \leq 60$ km) with magnitudes greater than 6 in the Mediterranean and adjacent areas. Location of the mid-Atlantic ridge and the simplified Eurasia-Africa plate boundary are shown as a solid continuous line. Table 1 shows list of hypocenters and fault plane parameters.



Map D. Horizontal projection of the T-axes, with plunge less than 45°, for shallow depth-of-focus earthquakes ($h \leq 60$ km) with magnitudes greater than 6 in the Mediterranean and adjacent areas. Location of the mid-Atlantic ridge and the simplified Eurasia-Africa plate boundary are shown as a solid continuous line. Table 1 shows list of hypocenters and fault plane parameters.



Map E. Horizontal projection of the P-axes for intermediate and deep depth-of-focus earthquakes ($h > 60$ km) with magnitudes greater than 6 in the Mediterranean and adjacent areas. Location of the main four arcs referred to in the text are shown and the location of the main plate (solid line) and micro-plate (dashed line) boundaries are identified. Table 1 shows list of hypocenters and fault plane parameters.



Map F. Seismotectonic framework of the Mediterranean and adjacent areas along the Eurasia-Africa plate boundary from its intersection with the American plate near the Azores to its intersection with the Arabian plate.

Table 1. Hypocenters and fault plane parameters for the earthquakes used in this study
(Leaders (-) indicate no information available)

No.	Date	Time	Lat-N	Long	Depth	M/Ms	P-Axis(°)	T-Axis(°)	Ref.
yr-mo-day	(UTC)	degrees	degrees	km					
1	1983-02-25	02 51 37	35.75	25.00E	80	6.75	344/21	212/60	20
2	1938-04-15	02 45 46	39.20	15.00E	270	6.75	260/35	80/55	21
3	1938-04-19	10 59 15	39.50	33.50E	--	6.75	348/14	264/16	14
4	1939-05-08	01 48 50	37.00	24.50W	--	7.10	234/49	233/24	44
5	1939-09-22	00 36 32	39.00	27.00E	--	6.50	70/74	146/05	20
6	1940-02-29	16 07 42	35.50	25.50E	--	6.00	220/30	40/60	20
7	1940-10-22	06 37 00	40.75	36.50E	150	6.50	130/10	162/75	13
8	1940-11-25	01 39 09	45.75	36.50E	130	7.40	303/11	140/78	20
9	1941-11-25	18 03 55	37.50	18.50W	25	8.40	--	42/04	49
10	1945-06-20	15 32 53	41.00	30.00E	--	6.25	132/10	40/10	16
11	1945-09-02	11 53 37	31.75	28.50E	80	6.50	130/00	00/90	20
12	1945-09-07	15 48 22	46.00	28.75E	100	6.50	290/10	132/30	20
13	1945-09-16	07 08 38	37.50	27.00E	--	6.75	102/45	197/05	17
14	1947-06-04	00 29 55	40.00	24.00E	80	6.00	232/25	38/59	20
15	1947-10-06	19 55 37	37.00	22.00E	--	7.00	169/35	258/01	22
16	1948-06-30	12 21 11	38.80	33.00E	--	6.40	205/04	301/57	20
17	1949-07-23	13 03 30	38.50	26.50E	--	6.75	102/45	197/05	17
18	1951-08-13	18 33 30	40.50	31.00E	--	6.75	261/57	37/11	16
19	1952-03-18	11 05 11	40.00	27.50E	7.25	284/02	15/11	16	59
20	1954-03-29	06 17 05	37.00	3.50W	640	7.00	87/43	279/46	12
21	1954-04-30	19 02 36	39.30	22.00E	--	6.87	51/72	253/17	20
22	1954-09-09	01 04 27	36.20	1.00E	--	6.75	171/15	11/74	8
23	1955-07-16	07 07 08	37.50	27.00E	--	6.75	261/57	354/02	16
24	1955-09-12	06 49 20	30.00E	--	6.50	276/05	180/52	62	68
25	1956-02-01	15 10 46	39.50	16.00E	200	6.20	324/62	118/05	5
26	1957-04-25	02 25 42	46.77	28.56E	53	7.10	163/25	262/19	20
27	1957-05-26	06 33 34	40.67	30.86E	--	7.10	312/05	43/12	16
28	1957-05-27	11 01 26	40.50	31.00E	--	6.52	329/14	234/18	22
29	1957-12-13	01 45 05	34.41	46.67E	42	7.25	71/01	340/62	16
30	1959-01-18	06 36 56	35.14	24.84E	--	6.50	132/44	76/14	20
31	1959-11-15	17 08 43	37.83	20.47E	--	6.87	22/37	235/50	20
32	1960-01-03	20 19 50	36.50	15.50E	250	6.20	276/59	95/22	10
33	1960-05-26	05 45 45	40.00	20.00E	6.30	52/16	334/12	20	83
34	1961-05-23	02 45 16	39.50	28.30E	49	6.25	197/17	359/73	16
35	1962-08-21	18 19 33	41.40	15.50E	34	6.00	331/91	205/06	16
36	1962-08-28	10 59 56	42.82	22.89E	100	6.70	179/01	87/68	16
37	1963-09-18	16 58 13	39.80	30.86E	33	6.38	134/57	23/17	14
38	1964-03-15	22 30 26	36.20	7.50W	27	6.88	184/05	304/61	20
39	1964-10-16	14 31 49	39.40	28.20E	10	6.00	354/80	174/10	15
40	1965-03-09	17 57 54	40.30	20.00E	18	6.38	259/00	175/53	16

CONVERSION FACTORS

By	To obtain
centimeters (cm)	inches (in)
meters (m)	feet (ft)
kilometers (km)	miles (mi)

Multiply By To obtain
0.3937 inches (in)
3.2808 feet (ft)
0.6214 miles (mi)

INTRODUCTION

The boundary between the lithospheric plates of Eurasia and Africa extends east from the Azores to the Caucasus where it intersects the Arabian plate. From the Azores to Gibraltar the boundary is relatively simple, separating oceanic lithosphere on both sides. East of Gibraltar, the boundary is formed by the intersection of the continental lithosphere and the oceanic lithosphere of the Mediterranean Sea. The boundary in this region is especially complicated by the presence of small lithospheric blocks and by the distribution of stresses extended over wide areas. The plate boundary must be interpreted in this region as an extended area that follows a complicated system of continental blocks, oceanic blocks, and orogenic belts located between the stable parts of Europe and Africa. Earthquake activity occurs over wide areas in the boundary region and intraplate activity is also present.

REGIONAL SEISMICITY

The distribution of epicenters for shallow ($h \leq 60$ km), intermediate ($60 < h \leq 200$ km), and deep ($h > 200$ km) earthquakes with magnitude $M \geq 4$, which occurred between 1962 and 1990 and were reported by 10 or more seismological stations is shown on map A. In addition to the distribution, depth, and magnitude of each earthquake, the volcanoes located in the regions of active subduction in the Mediterranean region are shown. The seismicity associated with the Eurasia-Africa plate boundary trends generally west-east in a wide band extending from 34° N to 50° N. Inside this band the trend of the epicenters changes direction several times, outlining secondary tectonic blocks. The main characteristics of seismicity along the plate boundary are described from west to east. At the Azores, a triple junction marks the boundary of the Eurasian, African, and American plates. East of the Azores (long 24° W), earthquake epicenters are located along the east-west trending Azores-Gibraltar transform fault. Epicenters extend over a wide zone east of long 12° W, in southern Iberia and northern Morocco. In northern Iberia there is a band of epicenters located along the Pyrenees. From northern Morocco, the trend of the epicenters continues eastward along the coast of Algeria and Tunisia. From about long 10° E, the trend of the epicenters changes direction to the northeast to form the Sicilian-Calabrian arc, changing again to a north-south direction along the Apennines in the Italian peninsula. In northern Italy earthquake epicenters form a wide arc throughout the Alps, along the coast of Yugoslavia and northern Greece the trend is to the south. Long 20° E, is approximately the western edge of the Hellenic arc, the area with the greatest amount of seismic activity in the entire region; the arc curves to the south. In northern Greece and western Turkey, just northeast of the Hellenic arc is another area of high activity that trends east-west. To the east of the Hellenic arc, a smaller and less active arc, the Cyprus arc, runs northeast. Two lineaments of earthquake epicenters are located in the Anatolia peninsula, one in the northern part of Turkey that trends east-west along the north Anatolian fault and one in the south that trends southwest-northeast. Both lineaments merge at about long 40° E. From this point on, earthquakes continue with a east-west trend in the Caucasus and a northwest-southeast trend along the northern border of the Arabian plate.

Intermediate and deep earthquake epicenters are located in five distinct areas related to the Gibraltar, Sicilian-Calabrian, Carpathian, Hellenic, and Cyprus arcs. Deep activity associated with the Gibraltar arc became evident during the Spanish earthquake in 1954 which had magnitude $M = 7$ and depth of 640 km. Two other smaller events have occurred since then but at about the same depth. Southern Spain and northern Morocco have experienced earthquakes at depths of 60-160 km. Deep earthquakes associated with the Sicilian-Calabrian arc occurred along its concave side and extend to a depth of 450 km. Most of these epicenters are concentrated between 200 and 350 km, with only a few at greater depths. The distribution of earthquakes and their depths define a subduction zone that trends roughly north-south and dips about 60° to the west under the Tyrrhenian Sea, a strike-slip zone occurs at depths between 60 and 200 km. Deep seismic activity associated with the Carpathian arc is located in a rather small region, known as the Vrancea seismic zone, where depths from 70 to 160 km are known. The distribution of these events at depth suggests a nearly vertical subduction zone where the seismic activity is concentrated in a small volume. The largest concentration of intermediate and deep earthquakes is associated with the Hellenic arc, which spans an area from the western coast of Greece to the southern coast of Turkey. The distribution of earthquake depths defines a well developed Wadati-Benioff zone that dips from the convex side of the arc, down to a depth of 200 km. A second, smaller arc associated with intermediate earthquakes is located near the island of Cyprus.

REGIONAL STRESSES

Many studies have been made on the seismotectonic conditions of this region, two of which include Argus and others (1989) and Udias and Buforn (1991). The direction of the stress axes in the region are shown on the P- and T-axes maps, was derived from focal mechanisms for earthquakes with magnitudes equal to or greater than that occurred in 1955-83. Stress directions can be derived from analysis of fault plane solutions, however, this determination may not correspond to the real situation. Most earthquakes occur on pre-existing faults and slips can occur at different angles relative to the principal axes; the maximum compressive stress may have an orientation anywhere within the dilatational quadrant and not necessarily at 45° to the fault plane. This ambiguity may be resolved when large earthquakes are used because their solutions are well determined and the derived stress directions correspond more closely to the region stresses. The consistency in the stress directions obtained from fault plane solutions of large earthquakes shown on maps C, D, and E confirm this hypothesis.

Udias and others (1989) published a catalogue of focal mechanisms of 140 earthquakes with magnitudes greater than 6 that occurred in Europe in 1906-85. The subsequent Atlantic block which is separated from the rest of Eurasia in the Azores, is subdivided, pushed from the southeast and there is seismic activity to a depth of about 350 km. In the subducted African plate, the stresses dip steeply to the northwest. The subducting African block which is separated from the rest of Eurasia in the Azores appears as a belt of normal faulting has a motion that differs from the motion of the African plate. These different motions result in reverse faulting and compressional stresses in a north-south-southwest direction along the coast of Yugoslavia. In the northern part, however, the block pushes in a north to northwest direction producing normal faulting. This compression is transmitted to the broad region of the Alps, North of the Alps, a line of deformation extends even further along the Rhine graben. There is seismic activity related to the Carpathian region, coincident with a small vertical subducted block with compressional stresses which is pushing from the southeast. This area of deformation extends to the northwest, and may be considered as formerly part of the secondary block complex forming the plate boundary that is now locked inside the Hellenic arc, between Greece and Turkey; the Paces trend east-west. Along the north Anatolian fault the Paces direction is north-south-southwest corresponding to strike-slip fault mechanisms. In the area of the Caucasus, the Paces trend almost north-south which is normal to the boundary of the Arabian plate and corresponds with thrust mechanisms.

Horizontal projections of the T-axes for shallow earthquakes are shown on map D. Only those with plunge less than 45° are shown highlighting the regions which are under a horizontal extensional regime. In the Azores, the T-axes are normal to the volcanic alignment. Along the Azores-Gibraltar fault, horizontal T-axes in a northeast-southwest direction correspond to the horizontal P-axes. In the Sicilian-Calabrian arc, the T-axes are normal to the trend of the mountain chain and correspond to normal faulting. A large concentration of horizontal T-axes in a general north-south direction is present north of the Hellenic arc; in Greece and western Turkey. Along the north Anatolian fault, the horizontal T-axes have a trend in a north-south-southwest direction corresponding to strike-slip motion along the fault.

For intermediate and deep earthquakes, the directions of the horizontal projections of the P-axes are shown on map E. In southern Spain, the very deep earthquake (640 km) has the P-axes in an east-west direction. In Sicily and Calabria, the P-axes are normal to the trend of the Sicilian-Calabrian arc; the same orientation prevails in the Carpathian Mountains region. Intermediate events in the area of the Hellenic arc have the P-axes in a north-south-southwest direction. In a general north-south-southwest direction corresponding to strike-slip motion along the fault.

SEISMOTECTONIC FRAMEWORK

Map F is a simplified summary of the zone of deformation along the Eurasian-African plate boundary which is based on seismicity, focal mechanism solutions, and the regional tectonics. The alignment of the most active seismicity (map A) is in a broad sense, a simplification of the actual location of the plate boundary, but includes broad areas of deformation that cannot be reduced in a simple manner to the motion of rigid blocks. The predominant type of focal mechanism in each region, the directions of the horizontal stresses, and the horizontal slip are shown on map F.

From west to east the general characteristics of the Eurasia-Africa plate boundary can be summarized in the following general manner. At the Azores triple junction the boundary between the African and Eurasian plates is a ridge and is under horizontal normal tension. From about long 23° W, to 12° W, the boundary takes the form of a transform fault with strike-slip, right-lateral motion, that is, the African plates has moved west relative to the Eurasian plate. Near long 12° W, the motion changes to reverse faulting with the African plate moving under the Eurasian plate. This type of motion is also found in Algeria and may extend as far east as long 10° E. These changes, in such a short distance along the plate boundary, are consistent with a pole of rotation for Africa, not far from the boundary itself at about 21° N, long 20° W. The seismicity in the Azores, off the coast of Portugal, in Portugal, southern Spain, and northern Morocco and Algeria indicates the existence of small block or areas of deformation on both sides of the plate boundary. The earthquakes in the Pyrenees and the northern part of Spain suggest that the stable part of the Iberian peninsula may form a block semi-independent from the Eurasian plate (Udias and Buforn, 1991).

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MAPS SHOWING SEISMICITY AND TECTONIC STRESSES ALONG THE EURASIA-AFRICA PLATE BOUNDARY

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