

Ancient Architecture Makes Italian Earthquakes Deadly, Professor Says

April 6 2009

A University of Colorado at Boulder professor says the powerful earthquake that knocked down buildings and killed at least 130 people in and around the medieval city of L'Aquila in Italy April 6 is a continuation of violent seismic events that have periodically rocked the region dating back to Roman times.

Geological sciences Professor Roger Bilham has studied tectonic activity in Italy and recently installed a seismic instrument known as a tiltmeter about 125 miles south of L'Aquila, which is located in the mountainous Abruzzo region east of Rome. Italy is the most earthquake-prone country in Europe, said Bilham, and the ancient architecture is a major contributor to [earthquake](#) deaths.

"Italy consistently has the worst [fatality rate](#) when it comes to earthquakes in Europe," said Bilham, also a fellow of the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences. "It is clear there is very high seismic strain in the region, and many of the earthquakes occur in places where the picturesque buildings are many centuries old and vulnerable to collapse by strong shaking."

The earthquake left tens of thousands of people homeless and injured more than 1,500.

Provided by University of Colorado at Boulder

Citation: Ancient Architecture Makes Italian Earthquakes Deadly, Professor Says (2009, April 6)
retrieved 9 April 2024 from
<https://phys.org/news/2009-04-ancient-architecture-italian-earthquakes-deadly.html>

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