

HISTORICAL EARTHQUAKES AFFECTING URBAN LIFE ALONG THE MEDITERRANEAN COAST OF TURKEY

Levent EREL¹, Fatih ADATEPE²

Address: ¹İ.Ü. Hasan Ali Yücel Education Faculty, Vefa, İstanbul.

²İ.Ü. Marine Sciences and Management Institute, Vefa, İstanbul,

E-mail: fadatepe@istanbul.edu.tr

Key words: Mediterranean Coast, Historical earthquakes, ancient cities, urban life.

ABSTRACT *During the historical periods, there existed in the Meediterranean region from west to east, the Carian (Menteşe), Lycian (Teke Peninsula), Pamphylia (Antalya Plain) and Cilician areas. Cilician was divided into the Mountains (Taşeli Peninsula) and Lowland Cilicia (Çukurova) regions. Further east behind the Amonos Mountains, Antiokheia (Antakya), was a completely seperate region.*

All these regions were shaken by numerous earthquakes produced by main fault systems from the Aegean Sea and Mediterranean. The major geological structures are Hellenic Trench, East Anatolian Fault, Ecemiş Fault and Dead Sea Fault in the region. Over the west to east stretch, Knidos (Datça), Kaunos (Dalyan), Kekova (Kale-Üçağız) settlements and cities such as Ksanthos (Kınık), Myra (Demre) and Limyra (Turunçova) situated on small plains along the steep coastline of Teke Peninsula have been badly affected from earthquakes in historical periods. On the Antalya Plain, Attaleia (Antalya) and Side (Selimiye) were cities in which life was interior with earthquakes. Anazarbus in Lowland Cilicia i.e. Çukuruva was a city abandoned as result of a series of eartquakes.

During the reign of the Roman Empire, in Antiokheia which was the political, administrative and religious center of the eastern part the country. There are records of numerous earthquakes during which the emperor himself barely escaped death and many inhabitants including city officers lost their lives, which have shaped urban architecture in these cities. Along with material destruction, earthquakes also result in tectonic rising of the earth, which fills in ports and speeds up the process of port waters getting shallow. Another negative consequence of earthquakes is the drying up of the water sources or the changing their banks.