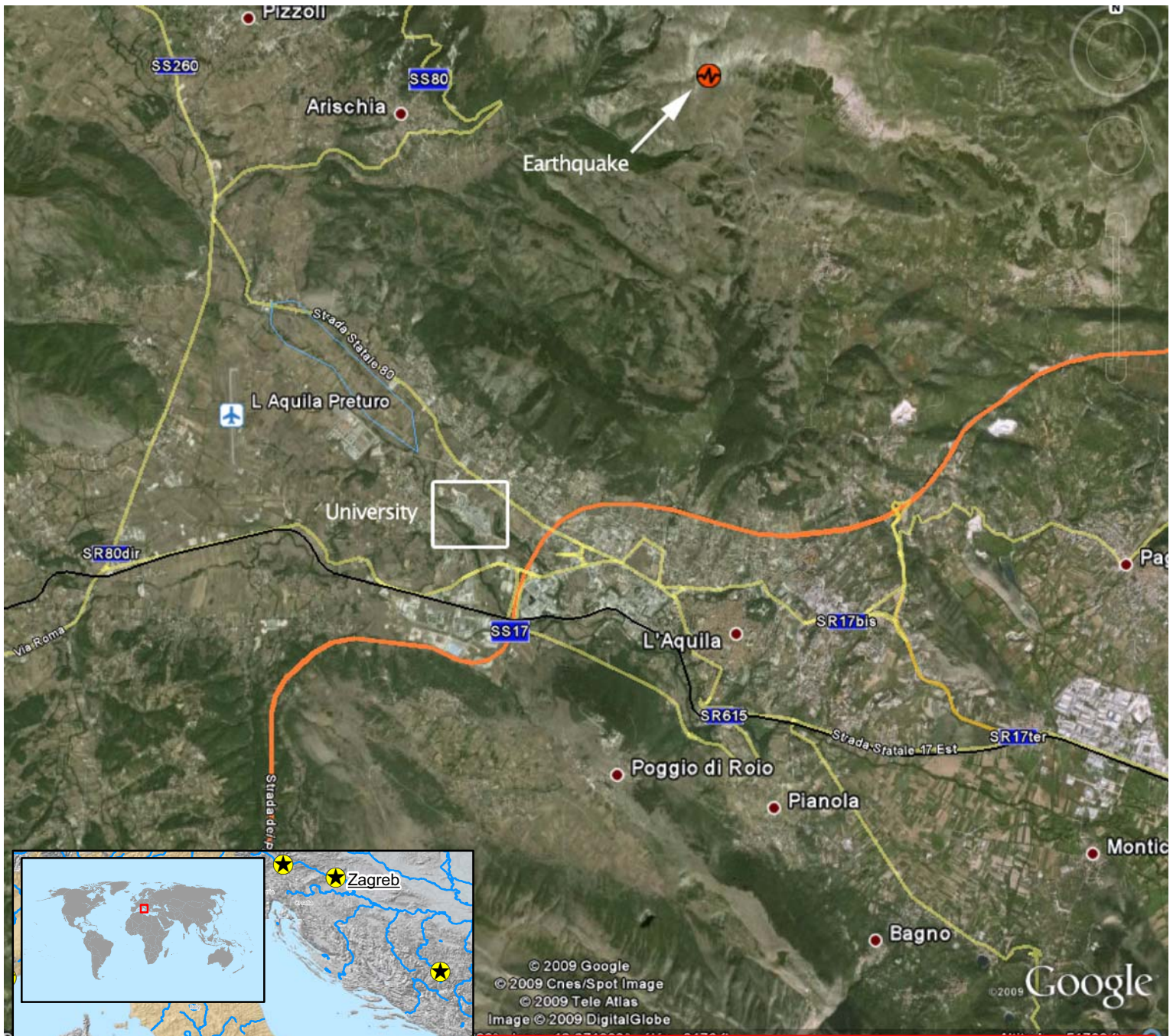




Italy: Earthquake



A strong earthquake measuring 6.3 on the Richter scale hit central Italy shortly after 3:30 a.m. on Monday 6 April 2009. According to the Italian Red Cross at least 27 people have been killed and eight remain missing.

The quake was centred in the mountainous Abruzzo region east of Rome. Houses, churches and other buildings in the old city of L'Aquila, about 95 km east of Rome, and its surrounding villages have collapsed, leaving tens of thousands of people homeless. Part of a university residence collapsed in L'Aquila, but it was not clear if anyone was inside.

The quake is the strongest to have hit Italy in recent years, officials said.