

Droughts in (late) medieval Hungary in an East-Central European context

Andrea Kiss

Vienna Technical University, Institute of Hydraulic Engineering and Water Resources Management, Wien, Austria
(kiss@hydro.tuwien.ac.at)

In the presentation an overview of documented medieval droughts, with a special emphasis on the droughts reported in the 15th-early 16th centuries, are provided concerning the areas that belonged to medieval Hungary, covering the majority of the Carpathian Basin. Whereas in the high medieval period, primarily due to the rather scarce documentation, only a few data on droughts or dry spells can be gathered based on direct or indirect evidence, the increased quantity and high quality of contemporary source evidence allow the detection of some of the most significant drought extremes in 14th, 15th centuries and in the early years of the 16th century. In the high medieval period narrative sources, in the 14th century legal documentation (charters) and partly narratives (a chronicle) are applied, while in the 15th century and early 16th century the main source types include charters, chronicles, official and private correspondence and institutional sources that mainly concern town accounts and related documentation.

Based on this recently developed database, in the presentation three main subject areas are addressed:

- 1) an overview of documented droughts and low water-level evidence (Danube, Tisza) is provided concerning the high- and late-medieval period (ca. 11th-early 16th centuries);
- 2) potential (further) droughts and dry spells are discussed and identified, based on indirect indicators (e.g. socio-economic consequences, harvest and livestock problems, building processes), in a Central-European context, also using the complementary information of the tree-ring based hydroclimate reconstruction (OWDA) database for comparison;
- 3) and finally, examples on the most characteristic drought years and multiannual dry periods (e.g. 1473-4, 1494, 1506-7) are presented as short case studies.