

The Influence of Climatic Conditions on the Religion of the Medieval Balkan States

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Abstract : During most of the Middle Ages, warmer-than-average weather prevailed in the Balkan Peninsula in Southeast Europe. This period is also called Medieval Climate Optimum. It had its most noticeable phases during the 12th and 13th centuries. Due to climatic conditions, the appearance of unstable weather was observed. Strong storms and hail were a frequent occurrence. From the 9th to the 15th century, the Christian religion dominated the Balkan Peninsula. From East-West Schism (1054 A.D.), most of the people in Balkan states belonged to Eastern Orthodox churches: Byzantium, Bulgaria, Serbia and Bosnia. Medieval Croatia and the coastal part (the Adriatic Sea) of Zeta belonged to the Roman Catholic church. In addition to the dominant Christian religion, a lot of pagan Slavic cults remained in the Balkans during the Middle Ages. Various superstitions were a regular occurrence. They were dominant during severe storms, floods, great droughts, the appearance of comets, etc. In this paper, the appearance of warm and cold temperature spells will be investigated. In the second half of the 14th century, the Little Ice Age began and lasted for several centuries. The period of the first half of the 15th century is characterized by cold and snowy winters. Hunger was a regular occurrence. This has given rise to many beliefs which will be researched and mentioned in the paper.

Keywords : the Balkans, religion, medieval climate optimum, little ice age

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