

Floods in Catalonia (NE Spain) since the 14th century. Climatological and meteorological aspects from historical documentary sources and old instrumental records.

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Journal of Hydrology

Volume 313, Issues 1–2, 5 November 2005, Pages 32–47

Floods in Catalonia (NE Spain) since the 14th century.
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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhydrol.2005.02.004>

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Abstract

This paper shows a first approximation towards an interdisciplinary treatment of flood events from an historical, climatic and meteorological point of view. Starting from historical document sources, early instrumental data (basically, rainfall and surface pressure) and the most recent meteorological information, the paper analyses the temporal evolution of floods in NE Spain since the 14th century. Results show that the highest number of floods have been recorded in the Ter river, with 121 flood events (1322–2000 AD), followed by the Llobregat river with 112 cases at its mouth (1315–2000 AD). Any trend has been observed for the catastrophic floods. On the

contrary, extraordinary floods show a little positive trend, probably related with the human occupation of the flood prone areas. Besides this, the paper shows an initial approximation of current meteorological master-patterns to the flooding episodes recorded between 1840 and 1870, a period characterised by a higher frequency of flooding. The newness is the reconstruction of those daily charts by using early instrumental data from 11 meteorological or astronomic observatories, some of them collected by the authors in the framework of the SPHERE project. For that purpose, the conceptual models obtained on the basis of the in-depth analysis of recent flooding episodes are compared with the synoptic pattern at the surface of those flood episodes registered in historical times. Following the proposed interdisciplinary approach, the paper bases itself on the documentary collections forming the subject-matter of this study, as well as the older and latest instrumental records.



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Keywords

Catalonia; Climatic analysis; Floods; Historical data; Synoptic analysis

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