

Interactive comment on “Climatic information of Western Sahel (1535–1793 AD) in original documentary sources” by V. Millán and F. S. Rodrigo

Anonymous Referee #3

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This is an important paper for two reasons. On the one hand, it demonstrates that people in the communities of the historical Sahel laid down weather and climate observations for several centuries (as did probably most agrarian societies). On the other hand, the observations substantially improve our rudimentary knowledge of extreme events in this part of the world before 1800. I agree with most of the comments and recommendations made by referee#1 and referee*2. In addition to referee#1 I recommend to publish not only the list of sources, but also an English translation of all the observation as Supplementary Information on the internet, as it is customary in Climate of the Past. Moreover I recommend to specially mark years with both droughts and floods (if there are any). Regarding the comment of referee*2 it needs to be stressed that the main sci-

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entific criterion for the classification of descriptive evidence in Historical Climatology is the correct wording and dating of the observations. With respect to dating, the authors need to be critical about the dating style of their evidence, in particular with reference to the year (see e.g. Richards, Mapping Time, Oxford Univ Press 1998). Because many chronicles were written in retrospect errors in this respect cannot be excluded. If solar eclipses are mentioned in the source which is almost always the case, the dating of the source can be checked by comparing it to astronomical tables. The authors should not only reconsider and reframe the relationship with SST as referee*2, recommends, but also include cross references to the Nile floods and ENSO (see e.g. William JH. Quinn, The large-scale ENSO event, the El Nino and other important regional features, Bull. Inst. fr. etudes andines 22/1993, 13-34 and related more recent papers).

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