

Interactive comment on “Endless cold: a seasonal reconstruction of temperature and precipitation in the Burgundian Low Countries during the 15th century based on documentary evidence” by C. Camenisch

Anonymous Referee #1

Received and published: 27 April 2015

Comments to the paper entitled "Endless cold: a seasonal reconstruction of temperature and precipitation in the Burgundian Low Countries during the 15th century based on documentary evidence

In the present paper the author provides a new temperature and precipitation reconstruction, based on an impressive database, referring to the areas that belonged to the Burgundian Low Countries in the 15th century. The paper is a clearly well elaborated and carefully written piece of work, and I suggest it for publication in the journal "Climate of the Past". The exceptionally high quality and accuracy of chapters 3 and 4,

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namely 'Sources' and 'Methodology' have to be particularly emphasised. Nonetheless, I have some comments and suggestions to the author which may provide some help in the further improvement of the submitted manuscript.

Major and minor comments, questions:

1) Title: the author chose a nice long title which, however, very well covers the content of the paper. The title starts with a statement "Endless cold" - this sounds great, and clearly raises the attention of the reader. Nevertheless, I would suggest to mention either in the Introduction, Discussion or Conclusion why this statement is so important and applied as the main title of the paper (i.e. what does this title refer to? why is it typical for the 15th century?).

2) Abstract: I would suggest to include in the abstract the main results and findings of the paper in 1-2 sentences.

3) Chapter 3 (Sources): Concerning source types: it would be interesting to know the distribution of information among the different source types: is there any dominant type, or the data is app. evenly distributed among the major sources types? Still concerning this chapter: based on the description it is clear that the author used over 3000 weather information available in more than 100 different contemporary sources. I understand that such an amount of source evidence cannot be simply placed in Supplement or so. However, it would be really interesting to get at least some examples for the actual sources applied. Some typical example could be added, for example, in the 'Source' chapter while listing the major source types; and also in the descriptive part of the reconstruction, while referring to, for example, events occurred in individual years. The author once refers to her other paper where such information is provided in more detail; maybe it would be good to add some more examples to give some insight to the reader (often non-historian) based on what actual evidence the reconstruction (and e.g. the extremes within) is based.

4) I think the paper would need a Discussion chapter: here, for example, such topics

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could be discussed as the comparison of the present reconstruction with the previous reconstruction (when relevant); comparison with other available, documentary based, reconstructions in Europe; comparison with potentially available reconstructions for the same period, based on non-documentary (proxy, natural scientific) evidence. Moreover, in the Introduction, the author very well placed her subject within the research of the scientific community. I think the author has some major findings which may alter our European understanding and knowledge about the place of the 15th century (e.g. also in the LIA-MWP transition) in general, for example, concerning temperature anomalies. Probably it would be useful to dedicate a sub-chapter in the Discussion part for shortly mentioning these main findings in the course of (and comparing with) the major findings of previous literature concerning European overviews (e.g. frequency of hard winters and warm summers; the author partly refers to these questions in the individual sub-chapters, concerning individual decades or years).

5) To the Conclusions: The author could provide a bit more (couple of sentences) conclusion on the overall importance of her findings in an European context.

6) A further comment to Figure 1: on the overview map I would suggest to indicate also the present-day country boundaries - this provides some help for non-historian audience in determining the areas where the climate reconstruction refers to. I would also indicate it in 1-2 sentences in Chapter 2 (Scope).

I hope that the author will find some of the suggestions useful.

Interactive comment on *Clim. Past Discuss.*, 11, 713, 2015.