

Interactive comment on “Droughts in the Czech Lands, 1090–2012 AD” by R. Brázdil et al.

nil Wheeler (Referee)

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Professor Brazdil and his team have established themselves over many years as innovative and informative researchers in this area of documentary-based studies. Their contributions have been notable, and this paper is very much in that same category of excellence. The paper is well-researched and valuably reflective on the unavoidable limitations of their primary sources: the documents. I have few reservations concerning its eventual publication, but I do have a few. 1. I fully appreciate that there are difficulties in deriving drought frequencies from source that do not cover every year and month. But I wonder if drought frequencies might be 'scaled' according to the number of time units for which evidence is available. If this is done for all time periods then more direct comparisons might be possible across the time range. But this is just a thought, rather than a recommendation. 2. Given the seemingly poor links with dendrochronological evidence, I'm surprised that the authors dwell so long on that theme.

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Might it not be dismissed more briefly? 3. I'm sorry, and perhaps it's this reviewer being obtuse, but I cannot understand the final paragraph of section 5.1.1. 4. I have some lingering anxieties, partly prompted by the precipitation map, about the spatial coherence of the evidence and the events they represent. The area covered is a large one and the geography of precipitation suggests the possibility of droughts perhaps being present in one sub-region but not another. The amalgamation of the data in a form that presumes a single climatic entity needs, I respectfully suggest, clearer justification. 5. This is a more general point, and is by no means specific to this paper and is now one that causes me to commit my thoughts to more wider reflection. Over the past 20 years or so Professors Brazdil and Pfister, amongst others, have done much to place documentary studies firmly on the climatic agenda, but this discipline has now reached a stage of maturity where descriptions of past events, changing frequencies etc. etc, whilst valuable, need to be linked more closely, in the interpretive sense, to the fund of knowledge we have on the background climate variations of the time and it would be good to see at least passing recognition identified periods of anomalous behaviour can stand as evidence to support, or indeed refute, the broader picture that is now emerging from the wider climatological community. I hope that these comments are helpful to the authors. They not intended in any way to diminish the valuer of this excellent piece of work.

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