

Interactive comment on “Extreme droughts and human responses to them: the Czech Lands in the pre-instrumental period” by Rudolf Brázdil et al.

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Christian Rohr: Comment on Brázdil, R. et al: Extreme droughts and human responses to them: the Czech Lands in the pre-instrumental period (Climate of the past – Discussions)

This is a very important and rich contribution to historical droughts in Central Europe based on the long tradition of research on weather and climate in the Czech Lands by Rudolf Brázdil and his group. The article is on a very high methodological level by combining a large number of documentary evidence with the most important drought indices (SPI, SPEI, Z-index). The authors testify an excellent overview of the state of the art (see also the large bibliography). In the discussion chapter, they differentiate

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very well when combining droughts with grain prices (which could be influenced by various factors).

Chapter 4 contains a very useful overview of the strongest droughts based on documentary evidence. However, it does not always come clear, whether these reports are fully reliable, because they are contemporary (or even written by eyewitnesses) or not. Some of the sources in the bibliography, but some are not (e.g. AS6: Hieronymus Haura). It will be useful for historians in particular to add a short information concerning contemporary or not in the text.

Chapter 4.2.2.3: I am not really sure, if we can deduce an autumn drought from this relatively poor documentary evidence. As far as we know, summer 1548 was very dry. In this way, low water in late autumn may also result from this period combined with an at least relatively dry autumn, so that people could cross the riverbed of the Elbe River in early December.

Chapter 5.2 is a very important part of the discussion chapter. Maybe you could also add one or two sentences (p. 13, l. 20 sqq.) on the ambivalent consequences of droughts towards fruit production. Whereas fruit trees (apples etc.) were obviously affected by caterpillars or the like, wine was growing even better sometimes, as you show for 1503, 1536, 1540 etc. However, I would also appreciate if you could add some information if there were any learning processes to prevent similar shortages after droughts, e.g. by installing or enlarging granaries (or mention that the sources do not tell us much about prevention).

Please see some minor corrections of typos in the bibliography mostly concerning titles in Latin and German. In addition, as also mentioned by the second reviewer (an English native speaker), the text needs some more corrections on language and style by a native speaker (e.g. missing articles, construction of some sentences).

In general, this is an important contribution, which should be accepted with minor revision, i.e. there are mostly some technical improvements (language, typos) and

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some clarifications needed, as mentioned in my comments.

Please also note the supplement to this comment:

<https://www.clim-past-discuss.net/cp-2018-135/cp-2018-135-RC3-supplement.pdf>

Interactive comment on Clim. Past Discuss., <https://doi.org/10.5194/cp-2018-135>, 2018.