

Interactive comment on “The extreme drought of 1842 in Europe as described by both documentary data and instrumental measurements” by Rudolf Brázdil et al.

Anonymous Referee #3

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This is a historical climatological work of high quality based on an impressive amount of data and I recommend it to be published after minor revisions.

In particular, it conforms to the current trend of combining different types of sources. Such source pluralism though, especially when the object of study belongs to modern times, entails rather superficial or nonexistent assessments of the quality of the sources, particularly the documentary evidence. Some words about the problems connected to such anthropogenic sources would be appropriate. The present disposition of the article also allows for that in a pedagogical sense; the documentary sources (2.1 Documentary data) are presented first under 2 Data, and the not unequivocal reliabil-

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ity and representativity of these makes the following presentation of instrumental data the more relevant since the complementarity and usefulness of both source categories become clear.

The discussion about prices (pp 16f) is interesting but also highlights the problems connected to the use of prices to shed light upon climatic extremes. The authors are rightly cautious but the problems could be stressed even more. The climatological signal from agricultural prices is hard to detect without identifying and eliminating the 'noise' in the data and depends on whether market mechanisms are allowed to operate freely, the degree of long-distance market integration etc, all of which is especially true for pre-industrial Europe when market demand for basic foodstuffs varied very little in the short run in contrast to supply. Some of these aspects are indeed mentioned in the present article and cannot be fully addressed there. But I would suggest that the clearly more significant importance of agricultural yields over agricultural prices should be recognized.

Finally, some small linguistic details:

Page 2, line 3: "droughts events" should be replaced by "drought events"

Page 8, line 35: "positives modes" should be replaced by "positive modes"

Page 13, line 1: "led a critical situation" should be replaced by "led to a critical situation"

Page 13, line 35: "permitted" should be replaced by "prohibited" (or something similar)

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