

Interactive comment on “Taxation records as a source of information for the study of historical floods in South Moravia, Czech Republic” by R. Brázdil et al.

Dr Macdonald (Referee)

neil.macdonald@liverpool.ac.uk

Received and published: 18 July 2014

Overall: This paper presents a detailed example of how taxation records can be used in reconstructing hydrological extremes. The paper provides a detailed methodology of how past taxation data and taxation relief can be used to reconstruct not just the presence but also potential impacts of extreme events on local populace, providing valuable source information not previously examined in historical hydrology. The paper links to the international historical hydrology literature well. The paper provides a good overview of the benefits of the use of such sources, but also discusses the limitations and potential bias that such records may contain (e.g. preferential recording of summer

C2557

events). The records used within the study are extensive and clearly considerable time has been devoted to the archival analysis; the subsequent analysis and discussion of the results is of a high quality. A detailed section on changes in taxation systems and approaches to taxation collection illustrates the potential challenges faced in comparing data over long time-frames, but also identifies that the value of such analysis is clearly evident, even with the limitations present. The paper is supported with good quality figures and detailed tables, which help the reader review the detailed information presented with greater ease, though these could be improved by making them more easily readable in black and white (currently colour).

An annotated manuscript is provided which includes several suggestions/recommendations of minor edits the authors may wish to consider.

Key Comments: Text: “The title is rather long, the authors might consider: The use of taxation records in assessing historical floods in South Moravia, Czech Lands

Both Czech Lands and Czech Republic are used, is there a difference and should this be consistent throughout?

“The authors may wish to address the issue of urban encroachment and wider use of the landscape as we near the present, this is often felt most keenly on the floodplain, as such the use of taxation reports may also reflect the development of the floodplain and expansion of activities during the study period undertaken on this area, and investment of it. Some discussion of this should be made as this will potentially increase applications for assistance/loss and may help mask climate signals. This has been implicitly discussed, but may benefit from a more explicit discussion.

Figures: “On a couple of the figures (3 & 6) it is difficult to discern classes on a black and white print out, I appreciate the journal provides free colour imagery, but would be good to see in B&W too - as I am sure a number of people will read a printed copy.

C2558

Figure 8 is difficult to see the detail, consider splitting figure into two, or using just one example so that the changes in channel form and landuse are more clearly visible.

Please also note the supplement to this comment:

<http://www.hydrol-earth-syst-sci-discuss.net/11/C2557/2014/hessd-11-C2557-2014-supplement.pdf>

Interactive comment on Hydrol. Earth Syst. Sci. Discuss., 11, 7291, 2014.