Documenting environmental change
Improving the visibility of historical climatology and climate

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1. Main objectives and workflow

This project will concentrate on Portuguese documentary eviden-
ce and early instrumental data from 1645 (beginning of the Maun-
der Minimum) in order to evaluate climate change prior to 1900.

The KLIMHIST PROJECT “Reconstruction and model simulations of
past climate in Portugal using documentary and early instrumen-
tal sources 17th-19th century” (2012-2014) is coordinated by M.J.
Alcoforado. The interdisciplinary team is composed of geogra-
phers, historians, meteorologists and physicists from Portugal and
Spain (Universities of Évora, Lisbon, Oporto, UTAD and Extremadu-
ra). Some team members and the project consultants (R. Brázdil,
D. Camuffo, F. Domínguez-Castro and E. Zorita) have taken part in
historical climate reconstruction projects - ADVICE, MILLENNIUM
and MICE.

2. Current activities

2.1. Search, analysis and production of a database that
gathers documentation:
- Select archives;
- Collect data from the archives (several typologies)
- Verify the quality of data
- Define fields of the database, focused on the climatic event that
  enables serial search.

2.2. Critical reflection about documental data
series:
- The lack of Portuguese rogations cerimonies data series;
- The importance of monastic memories;
- The importance of doctors writings about the relati-
onship between climate and health conditions;
- The evaluation of data confirming or discussing some
  previous knowledge about past extreme events.

Annual Precipitation index:
Example referring to
1675-1715
(Alcoforado et al., 2000)