



## **On the selectivity of cultural disaster memory. The example of severe 18th century windstorms in Western and Central Europe**

C. Pfister (1)

(1) Bern, Institute of History, Bern 9, Switzerland (pfister@hist.unibe.ch), (2) Bern, Oeschger Centre for Climate Change Research, 3012 Bern

The cultural memory of storm-tides on the North Sea coast was retained since the Middle Ages. Every disaster was named after the ruling saint and detailed in chronicles. Other storms of equal violence, however, affecting large tracts of western and central Europe as late as the eighteenth century did hardly leave a trace in the cultural memory despite their war-like impacts. This paper discusses reasons for this paradox from the examples of three severe eighteenth century winter storms drawing on the approach Jan and Almeida Assmann: While the severe winter-storms “Marcellus” and “Prisca” (16th and 18th January, 1739) were largely ignored by posterity, others such as the Great Storm in England (December 1703) and storm Barbara in Portugal (December 1739) made their way in the history books. In the final part, consequences of lost cultural disaster memories for present day climate policy are demonstrated from the examples of France and Switzerland.

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