

Reply to
2nd Reviewer

Dear referee,

thank you very much for accepting to review our manuscript and for the time you dedicated to its revision.

Below we go point by point through your technical corrections, presented in *italic*, detailing how we dealt with your concerns reported in **bold**.

Sincerely,

Emmanuele Russo on behalf of the author team.

Main Comments

The paper is clearly structured, and fairly well written, albeit somewhat dry, dispassionate and with little curiosity for meteorological phenomena underlying the high-resolution weather simulated, and restricting itself to the bare minimum in the climatological analysis in this version of the paper. At 4s/2km resolution, investigating for example storms, or regional effects, could be quite interesting. Some further points are detailed below. All in all a paper that can be improved.

- *Goals: The authors aim to evaluate an apparently bug-fixed version of WRF against data, and contrast model uncertainties from ice height, land cover and convective parameterizations. These are great points to study. However, the study design does not really allow to understand how the different uncertainties play out against one another (nonfactorial), and looking at the figures in the results and discussion section, as well as the supplement, does not elucidate this further.*

Thank you for your comment. Also following a comment from the first reviewer, we decided to review the introduction of the paper in order to make its motivations clearer. We want to clarify

here that among the given paper goals, we do not exactly want to contrast different uncertainties, since this might be challenging given our experimental design for which change in the forcings are applied most of the times both on the RCM as well on the driving GCM. Rather, our goal is to characterize model uncertainties resulting from changes in the simulations setup relative to land cover and ice height. More specifically: "taking into account the role of different large-scale and surface model error sources, we aim to assess the general performance of the model. At the same time, we quantify the possible effect of changes in the model setup on the obtained results, highlighting where results of RCMs can be considered more robust and where factors such as error in the representation of surface features could play a major role in the reconstruction of the European LGM climate". We will try to make this point clearer in the new version of the manuscript. At the same time, following the suggestion of the referee and acknowledging the fact that it might still be important to compare different uncertainties in the model setup one-by-one, we will consider whether to expand the current figures in the supplements, including also the figures with the deviation from the reference run for the experiments considering different sources of uncertainties, for both summer and winter precipitation as well as temperature. Eventually, we will also better discuss the contents of this figure in the manuscript.

- *CO2: One potential reason why the model simulations appear biased dry is not discussed: Namely that the used pollen data suggests dryer conditions than warranted. The water-use efficiency under low CO2 conditions is lower, implying that plants are more stressed under similar climatic conditions [1] – so perhaps the model is less biased than it appears.*

First, we would like to highlight that the model is generally not always biased dry. This depends on the season and considered region. In fact, while the model results are too dry in summer over the Eastern part of Europe, with respect to the pollen-based reconstructions, they are too wet in winter over Western Europe and the Alps. In some cases, some of the considered model uncertainties help to get the model closer to the pollen reconstructed

values. This is for example the case of summer precipitation over the Eastern Mediterranean, where the consideration of different land-cover helps to reduce the model bias against the pollen. Secondly, we would like to highlight here that in our analysis we have taken into account the uncertainty of the pollen-based reconstruction data set when comparing it against model results. In particular, in line with what the referee suggests, from Fig. 6 of the former version of the manuscript it is possible to see that, for both the points characterised by a dry or wet bias, the consideration of the pollen uncertainties is very relevant: most of the model data lie within the pollen uncertainties (large amount of red circles). Also, we want to emphasize that the wet model bias in winter does not improve over just a few points over mountainous regions and for some points at the boarder of glaciers. As we have already specified in the former version of the manuscript, for areas with complex topography even for the present-day observations tend to underestimate precipitation. Therefore, in this case, this is likely not an issue related to the CO₂ sensitivity of the pollen data. We will try to make this point clearer in the new version of the manuscript. However, also acknowledging the possible importance of the point suggested by the reviewer we will eventually consider to briefly discuss the CO₂ issue of the pollen data in the new version of the manuscript.

- *Discussion: Here you could bring in more depth. You could elaborate whether you expect that the results found here dependent on the version of WRF, and on CESM as a host model? The fact that the 28-year global simulation providing input does lead to significant spread in the regional model results is surprising: Where does this divergence come from? Are these nonstationary effects that suggest that the simulation period is too short? This would also imply that averaging over such a short time period may be inappropriate, weakening the justification of one of the assumptions set out (p5 last paragraph).*

Following the comments of both reviewers we will revisit the methods and discussion sections in order to address possible uncertainties related to the fact that the model climatology computed over a period of 10 years might not be robust enough and results might change when considering different periods of time.

To prove that the differences in the different ensemble members of Fig. 5 and Fig. 6 of the former manuscript version are not the result of simply considering a too short period of time to calculate a climatology, we provide here an example of the maximum range of differences in 2-meter temperature calculated in summer from 20 10-year long periods derived from the 31-year long simulation of Velasquez et al. 2021. The largest differences between these different sub-periods very rarely exceed 2K, against a maximum value of the differences of 14K evinced when comparing the different ensemble members for the same variable. Hence, we conclude that even though the calculation of the climatology based on a 10-year period might have an effect on the given results, the applied changes in the model boundaries can be considered robust and are more important for the calculation of climatological values than the model internal variability. We will add such information in the new version of the manuscript. We will also include Fig. 1 of the current document in the supplementary material section of the new version of the manuscript.

- *Vegetation cover discussion: Given the substantial differences between the land surface conditions fed into the high-resolution simulations – don't you expect to see effects arising simply from the strongly different land cover, for example in North Africa?*

Following the referee's comment we realised that we have not properly discussed the role of land cover changes in the former version of the manuscript. These become particularly important especially over Southern Europe in summer for precipitation (See Fig. ?? in the supplements). We will try to make this point clearer in the new version of the manuscript.

Specific Comments

- *p2l30 "a series of LGM studies have shown..." this sentence needs references.*

Thank you. The references for this sentence are already provided one line below: "Recently, a series of LGM studies have shown

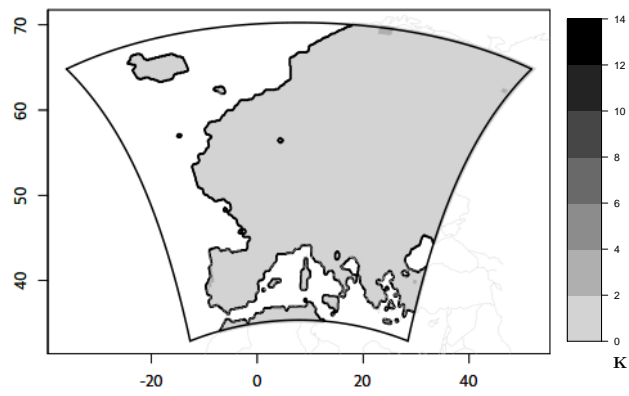


Figure 1: Maximum range of differences between the climatological values of JJA 2-meter temperature derived from 20 10-year long periods from the 31-year long simulation of Velasquez et al. 2021.

... profit from the use of an RCM with convection-permitting resolution. They have also highlighted the important role of land-surface characterization for the representation of LGM climate over Europe [Velasquez et al., 2020, 2021, 2022].” Following the referee’s comment we will move the references at the end of the first sentence on p2130.

- *p2135/p311-3 Here a differentiation to statistical/statistical-dynamical downscaling should be added.*

Thanks. Here, we do not actually agree with the suggestion of the referee. The discussion at the highlighted lines is only inherent to RCMs. We do not think a differentiation between statistical and dynamical downscaling is required here.

- *p3125 "The starting point are the results of earlier studies using the same model version"... so what? What are the results of the earlier studies that imply one should do the same things? It feels like something is missing here.*

Following the comment by the referee we have realised that this part is not very clear and we propose to modify it accordingly in the new version of the manuscript. In particular, even though the starting point of our study is the model version of Velasquez et al. 2021, we will try to make it clear in the new version of the manuscript that their model version required some important modifications for the study of the LGM, not considered before. In particular, we found that the model version used in the work of Velasquez contained a bug in the representation of ice in the soil, particularly relevant for future studies of glacial states employing the same model version.

- *p3129 delete space after 2.3*

Thanks. We will correct the text accordingly.

- *p4113 add space after precession*

We will correct the text according to the referee's comment.

- *p4l4 these sentences on the glacier scheme are confusing. Does ice become supercritical in NOAH-MP? Or is what is meant that there are melt/refreeze processes in the version used in Velasquez et al. (2021) that produce unphysical temperatures?*

The problem in the study of Velasquez et al. 2021 is, as highlighted by the referee in his second comment, that there are melt/refreeze processes in the soil in the model version they used, producing unphysical temperatures. Following the referee's comment we will revise this part of the manuscript, making its contents clearer.

- *p7 sec 2.4 – A key weakness of Davis et al. (2022) is that it does not address the CO₂-caused precipitation bias in the reconstructions, which would be expected to cause a dry bias under the low CO₂ conditions.*

As already stated in our response to the second comment by the referee, in our comparison we actually take into account the uncertainty derived from the data of Davis et al. 2022. Also, the model is drier than the pollen mainly in summer, over the Eastern Mediterranean. On the contrary, in winter the model results too wet. Again, for most of the domain, both the consideration of model and pollen uncertainties helps to bring the model closer to the pollen.

- *p8 l13-15 The narrow distribution of precipitation estimates out of the pollen-based reconstructions is perhaps indicative of the dry bias (s. above)*

The referred narrow distribution of precipitation estimates out of the pollen-based reconstructions is mainly due to the fact that the pollen have too low maxima compared to the model. We want to remark again here that in our analysis we already consider the uncertainty of the provided pollen reconstructions. However, for certain areas, even when considering such large uncertainties, the model is still far-away from the reconstructions. This is mainly

true for mountainous regions, for which we have already specified that the issue is even found for the present-day when using observational data. Following the referee's comment, we will try to make this point clearer in the new version of the manuscript.

- *p9 l27 remove ""*

Thanks. We will correct the text accordingly.

- *p9 l32-35 Indeed, the large differences between the ensemble members are remarkable. But going back to the ensemble description, can this be simply due to internal variability in the non-overlapping subsections of the 28-year simulations? (The description of the ensemble design is confusing).*

As specified above, we conducted a test by considering 20 10-year long periods derived from the simulation of Velasquez et al. 2021. For each of these periods we calculated JJA 2-meter temperature climatological values. The maximum range of differences rarely exceeds 2K in this case, against values of 14K obtained when considering the different ensemble members with different experimental setups presented in the paper. This clearly suggests that the effect of calculating a climatology from a short period of 10-year is not very relevant with respect to the effect of the tested changes in the model setup (see Fig. 1 of the current document). We will add this information in the new version of the manuscript, also providing Fig. 1 of the current document in the supplementary material.

- *p11 Code and data availability: Fix broken reference.*

Thanks, we will correct the previously broken reference in the new version of the manuscript, as suggested by the referee.

References

- P. Velasquez, J.O. Kaplan, M. Messmer, P. Ludwig, and C.C. Raible. The role of land cover in the climate of glacial europe. *Climate of the Past*, 17(3):1161–1180, 2021.
- P. Velasquez, M. Messmer, and C.C. Raible. The role of ice-sheet topography in the alpine hydro-climate at glacial times. *Climate of the Past*, 18:1579–1600, 2022.
- Patricio Velasquez, Martina Messmer, and Christoph C. Raible. A new bias-correction method for precipitation over complex terrain suitable for different climate states: A case study using WRF (version 3.8.1). *Geoscientific Model Development*, 13(10):5007–5027, October 2020. ISSN 1991-959X. doi: 10.5194/gmd-13-5007-2020.