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Tornadoes within the Czech Republic: from early medieval chronicles to the internet society

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Abstract

This paper addresses the historical documentation of tornadoes and the awareness of tornadic events in the area of the present Czech Republic throughout the last nine centuries. The oldest records of tornado occurrence in the region can be found in chronicles from the first half of the 12th century—the two most interesting of these are presented here in translation from the original Latin texts. Several other cases of possible tornadoes and waterspouts can be found in chronicles from the 12th and 13th centuries. However, from the descriptions of the events, it is not always clear if the phenomenon was a tornado, waterspout, dust swirl, or if it was of a non-tornadic nature. From the 14th to 19th centuries, tornado records are rather scarce for the region. However, this is likely to have a non-meteorological explanation. Gregor Mendel's (1871) essay “*Die Windhose vom 13. October 1870*” can be considered as a

distinctive “breakpoint” in the documentation history of tornadoes in the territory of the present Czech Republic, followed later by the work of Edler von Wahlburg [Das Wetter 28 (1911) 135] and Wegener [Wind-und-Wasserhosen in Europa. F. Vieweg & Sohn, Braunschweig, 1917]. During the “socialist” period, the term “*tornado*” was seldom used and they were poorly understood, producing a view that “tornadoes do not occur in Central Europe”. The situation began to change with the works of Munzar [Tromby (tonã;da) na Å°zemã±́ Å^eskã© republiky v letech 1119ã“1993. Zbornã±́k Dejin Fyziky, vol. XI. Voj. Akadã©mia SNP, Liptovskã½ Mikulã;Å; pp. 69ã“72, 1993 (in Czech)] and Å Å;lek [Meteorol. Zpr. 47 (1994) 172], and new records showed that about one tornado per year occurred between 1994 and 1999. Finally, between 2000 and 2002, the number of documented tornadoes in the Czech Republic was five to eight cases per year.



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Keywords

Tornado; Waterspout; Damaging winds; Severe convective storm

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