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Conference on European Tornadoes and Severe Storms

Historical tornadoes on the territory of Czech Republic before 1990

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The review of tornado occurrences in Europe by J. T. Snow and A. L. Wyatt (1997) lacks the information on the area of Central Europe, due to the fact that fail to appear in the Czech reference books on climatology published so far. It might thus seem that this dangerous meteorological phenomenon does not appear in the past; the contrary, however, is true. The aim of this paper is to briefly inform on the historical meteorological documentation up to now, of tornado and/or spout occurrences on the territory of the Czech Republic before 1900 as well as to bring information about the related terminology.

The oldest documented tornado occurred in Prague on July 30, 1119 (Munzar, 1994). It was described by the words "even the Satan in a whirl appeared himself". So far it was possible to assemble news on more than thirty cases occurred in the course of the nine centuries since. There is rather detailed information however , only for the 9 cases in the period 1801-1900 and another 18 from the years 1901-1990. The most frequent occurrence was that of July, the extreme data limits within the respective years being April 14 and October 13.The latter autumn date was that of Brno in 1870 and it was described, in an extraordinarily clear way, by the well-known geneticist G. Mendel (1871). From the point of view of the presents times it is possible to conclude that the phenomen was related to the passage of a rapidly moving cold front from the western quadrant.

The present paper, a historicizing one, links up closely to the up-to-date evaluation by M. Setvak in his "Tornadoes and severe storms of the 90s in the Czech Republic" presented at this conference.